

COMMON RESPONSES TO SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

IN THE CLASSROOM



Every victim/survivor is unique.

SO IS THEIR RESPONSE.

Everyone's brain and body will respond to violence/trauma differently, and it's not always possible to predict exactly how this will show up in people's day to day lives. What we do know is that responses are driven by the need for safety and a desire for dignity.

Our brains are working hard to protect us.

THIS MIGHT RESULT IN



- difficulty focusing
- difficulty retaining or recalling information
- intrusive thoughts about what happened
- hyper vigilance
- dissociation
- difficulty regulating emotional responses, particular during times of stress
- withdrawal or isolation

Each of these responses are evidence of the body's attempts to reestablish physical and emotional safety, and often lessen over time with the right supports in place.

This might look like

A STUDENT WHO



- forgets major assignments or misses exams
- seems tired all the time
- suddenly struggles academically
- doesn't show up to class
- seems disengaged or distant
- appears jumpy or unusually alert

What about outside the classroom?

STUDENTS COULD ALSO BE NAVIGATING



- safety concerns
- long wait lists for support services
- medical appointments
- weighing decisions to report or charge
- legal actions
- police investigations
- previous physical or mental health concerns exacerbated by the incident

COMMON RESPONSES TO SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

IN THE CLASSROOM



How can you help?

PROVIDE A POSITIVE SOCIAL RESPONSE

Social responses to disclosures of violence are as impactful as the violence itself. Victim/survivors who receive positive social responses tend to recover more quickly, are more likely to work with authorities and support services, and more likely to report violence in the future. A positive social response includes these steps:

Listening Focus on truly listening to what they're asking for.

Believing Less than 2% of reports of sexualized violence are false. Assure them that what happened wasn't their fault and that help is available on and off campus.

Empowering Help them explore their options for support and information gathering. Remember, sexualized violence is a profound expression of "power over", so it's important to provide opportunities to reestablish a sense of control. Recognize that they hold expert knowledge about themselves and their circumstances.

Go to tru.ca/sexual violence to learn more about how to support victims/survivors.



OFFER ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

- extensions on test, assignments or midterms
- alternative ways to meet course goals (e.g. written rather than oral participation)
- excuse occasional absences from class
- deferrals of course material
- preferential seating in class (able to exit quickly and easily as needed)
- ability to exit and re-enter the class for short periods of time if needed
- recorded lectures
- someone to share notes from class
- option to change discussion or project groups
- accessible exam arrangements

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Manager is available to support students and Faculty in exploring what academic supports best fit the situation. Students may also choose to work with Student Case Managers or Accessibility Services in order to maintain confidentiality around their experience.

Your support matters. Thank you.

sexualized
violence
prevention
and response