

# A College's Role in Addressing Sexual Violence: A Guide for Parents and Families

**I**nstitutions of higher education have both a legal and ethical obligation to maintain a safe environment for your student, which includes taking decisive steps to prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus. It can be hard to understand what colleges need to do and if the school your student attends is doing its best. Read on to learn what you should know about a school's strategy and what you can do to stay engaged.

	WHAT TO KNOW	WHAT TO DO
<b>Title IX Policies</b>	Title IX requires that colleges publish and maintain policies for resolving complaints related to sexual harassment, which includes sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These should be easily accessible on each school's website.	<b>Review the college's Title IX policy</b> and encourage your student to do the same.
<b>Clery Crime Statistics</b>	The Clery Act is a consumer protection law that requires colleges and universities to publish crime statistics annually. Your student's college must publish a report each October that details these statistics, and much more.	<b>Read the institution's latest Annual Security Report<sup>1</sup></b> and compare the data to other institutions with this tool: <a href="https://ope.ed.gov/campussafety">https://ope.ed.gov/campussafety</a>
<b>Survivor Services</b>	Both the Clery Act and Title IX obligate schools to ensure students who experience sexual violence have access to key services. Your student's school should clearly communicate what those services are, and how to access them.	<b>Visit the college website</b> and talk to your student about the services available to them.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to consider a school's Annual Security Report statistics in context. Although at first glance an increase in reports could seem to indicate an increase in incidents, this rise often means the campus is successfully creating a safe community for survivors to come forward. Further, it could indicate that students have a greater awareness of to whom they should report incidents of sexual violence, as well as a greater understanding of their own experiences. It could indicate trust in services and a feeling that the institution takes reports of sexual misconduct seriously.



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<b>Prevention Programs</b>	The Clery Act also requires that schools offer prevention programming to incoming students. At a minimum, your student's school expects your student to participate in an online or in-person training that covers: key definitions, consent, and options for intervening as a bystander.	<b>Ask your student</b> about the prevention education they received and what they learned.
<b>Institutional Strategy</b>	A college should have a comprehensive strategy for addressing sexual violence that encompasses the four areas detailed above, and a lot more, including: supporting student activism, engaging in ongoing self-assessment, and communicating openly with campus stakeholders.	<b>Learn more about best practices</b> for institutions of higher education: <a href="https://cultureofrespect.org/programs-and-tools/signature-tools/">https://cultureofrespect.org/programs-and-tools/signature-tools/</a>

## OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- **Ask campus tour guides** about what the school does to address sexual violence.
- **Find out** if the college has a sexual violence task force or working group and read about their work.
- **Talk to your student** about sexual health, sexual violence, consent, and healthy relationships.
- **Make your voice heard:** tell your school's administrators, your elected officials, and others in a position to shape the culture how important this issue is to you.