

Anticipating Situations and Responses

Responding to Harassment

Reporting Harassment: Secondary Victimization

An LGBTQ+ crime survivor may experience increased discrimination or stigma from others who have learned about his/her/their sexual orientation/gender identity as a consequence of the victimization. Such secondary victimization, which may further intensify the negative psychological consequences of victimization, is often expressed explicitly by representatives of the criminal justice system, including police officers and judges. It also extends outside the criminal justice system. If their sexual orientation becomes publicly known as a result of a crime, for example, some LGBTQ+ people risk loss of employment or child custody. Even in jurisdictions where statutory protection is available, many LGBTQ+ people fear that disclosure of their sexual orientation/gender identity as a result of victimization will result in hostility, harassment, and rejection from others. Secondary victimization may be experienced as an additional assault on one's identity and community, and thus an added source of stress. The threat of secondary victimization often acts as a barrier to reporting a crime or seeking medical, psychological, or social services.

When a student informs you they have been harassed:

Step 1: Ask the student if they are safe. Assess their situation regarding safety.

Step 2: Inform the student that you will protect their confidentiality to the best of your ability; *make them aware of any reporting requirements you have.*

Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

<https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/documents/policies-and-procedures/31006-equal-employment-opportunity-and-non-discrimination.pdf>

OED Reporting Form

<https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/offices/student-affairs/submit-incident-report.html>

Student Code of Conduct

<https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/documents/policies-and-procedures/42001-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>

Step 3: If the student does not feel safe, immediately call campus security, a counselor, and/or the advisor of the LGBTQ+ student group on campus to assist.

Step 4: Make sure identifying information regarding the student is not revealed while communicating the situation with other Safe Zone members.

Helpful suggestions:

Do not handle the situation alone if at all possible. You could spend hours with the student on this issue. Try to refer the student to the Counseling Center and/or campus security. When communicating with campus security, do not expect or assume that they will be sensitive to the issues of LGBTQ+ students. Make sure that the person(s) assigned to your particular case understand/s that the identity of the student cannot under any circumstances be revealed without their permission to the general public or media. Police reports need to be purged of all identifying information (name, address, phone, etc.) before being released to the media and general public.

(adapted from GMU)