



THE SURVIVOR'S REPORT

New Policies 'Under the Influence' at JMU

There are new policies concerning sexual assault and alcohol use at James Madison University. According to JMU Office of Judicial Affairs, "accusing students who report a sexual assault will not be charged with alcohol or drugs, even if alcohol and drugs were involved" (J34-100 Sexual Assault).

In a recent conversation with Liz Howley, Assistant Director of Judicial Affairs, this new policy was created in order to "encourage more students to come forward and to not be concerned with other judicial charges being placed in the event that alcohol and drugs were involved in the incident" (February, 2011).

Why would student survivors refrain from coming forward? Some survivors may fear consequences from judicial for consumption of drugs or alcohol. It is also common for student survivors who were under the influence to blame themselves for the assault. However, sexual assault is never the victim's fault. Consenting to drink alcohol is not the same as consenting to sexual activity.

"Accusing students who report a sexual assault will not be charged with alcohol or drugs, even if alcohol and drugs were involved."

At JMU, sexual assault is considered to be any unwanted or nonconsensual sexual contact, including "intentional touching, either of the victim or when the victim is forced to touch, directly or through clothing, another person's genitals, breasts, thighs or buttocks; rape ...or sexual penetration with an object" (J34-100 Sexual Assault). A student who has become "intoxicated may indicate the inability to give consent" (J34-100 Sexual Assault).

Additionally, in order to appropriately hear these cases, the "Judicial Council and hearing officers are trained on sexual assault cases and processes," stated Howley.

Although not every case is the same, JMU Judicial Affairs follows a protocol for all cases. Howley reports, "the first step in placing charges is to come speak with an administrator in the [judicial] office. Coming to speak to someone also does not mean that you have to place charges—you can simply learn more about the process and what your options are."

If a student survivor chooses to report an assault to JMU Office of Judicial Affairs, he or she has several rights, such as some of the following:

- "To have a support person from the university or attorney present to advise and provide support.
- "To be informed of the results of the judicial proceeding.
- "To be present during the entire proceedings.
- "To relate his or her account of the incident and to make a 'victim impact statement.'" (JMU Student Handbook: Student Rights)."

In the event that an accused "student is found responsible, the sanctions range from probation to an educational program to suspension from the university," Howley stated.

Other ways in which JMU Judicial Affairs currently works to support survivors include attending C.A.R.E. training, educating Residence Life staff about the processes and becoming involved with the JMU Sexual Assault Prevention Task Force.

-Vanessa Olson

James Madison University, Office of Judicial Affairs. (2011). Student Handbook: J34-100 Sexual Assault. <http://www.jmu.edu/judicial/handbook/index.html>



Organizations involved with the JMU Sexual Assault Prevention Task Force

C.A.R.E.

Counseling & Student Development Center

JMU Athletics

JMU Department of Nursing

JMU Department of Sociology

Off-Campus Life

Office of Equal Opportunity

Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life

Office of Judicial Affairs

Office of Orientation

Office of Residence Life

University Health Center

UHC Student Wellness & Outreach

UHC Substance Abuse Prevention

Sexual Assault Response Program News

✓The CSDC has joined with other organizations on campus to form the Sexual Assault Prevention Task Force. Together, members of the taskforce are analyzing what the JMU community is doing well for the prevention of and response to the sexual assault of students. Specifically,

they are looking at the barriers to prevention efforts and ways to break down these barriers. Meetings are held as a collaborative effort where team members can discuss progress on the matter. Stay tuned for more information and updates!

✓Various brochures pertaining to sexual assault response services, multi-cultural survivors of sexual assault, and stalking have been created and will be linked on the Sexual Assault Response page on the CSDC website, along with other useful information and resources.



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 Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Phone: (540) 568-6552
www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/Services/SAS.html



Likely? Unlikely.

Many believe that most sexual assaults are perpetrated by a complete stranger in an unfamiliar, dark place. In reality, approximately 85-90% of sexual assault perpetrators are known by their victims and the assault is likely to occur at a location familiar to the victim. Such relations may include an acquaintance, a classmate, a friend, a former intimate partner, or a current partner. The myth is a pervasive one because it's desirable to see those people we know as safe. Given the statistics, simply be cautious in all situations and trust your instincts.



You Ask, She Answers

I am a junior in college. Lately, I have noticed that my ex-boyfriend is acting really odd. We have been broken up for about a month now but he insists on calling me, sometimes more than four times in one day! Sometimes he just hangs up on me, which is creepy and annoying. When I remind him that we broke up, he tells me, "Whatever, you know you like it."

All of this is getting really weird. I noticed a week ago that he is now in two of my classes. He doesn't even like art.

I'm starting to feel afraid. Three nights ago, the hair on my arms stood on end as I was walking across the parking lot to my car. I didn't see anyone but I still felt afraid. Am I overreacting?

Answer Annie, what are my options? Is he so in love with me he can't bear to be separated? I don't feel like this is normal, but could it be normal since we are former lovers?

-Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

The behaviors you are describing are

NOT normal for former lovers. These behaviors are not how one treats someone that he/she loves. When one requests that an individual refrain from contacting him/her, that person should stop.

It sounds like you may be a victim of stalking. Stalking is a series of behaviors/actions toward a person that make him or her feel afraid or in danger. Some features of stalking include continuous following behaviors, repetitive attempts of unwanted communication, destruction of property or meaningful items, and/or using technology as a means of tracking.

It is important for you to understand that you are not alone. Between 20-30% of college women report that they have been stalked. There are also many cases of stalking that are not reported.

Keep a journal or calendar of all the incidents that occur. This should include telephone logs, printed e-mails, pictures of vandalism and any other unwanted items or communication. Also, ask any witnesses to write down what they saw or experienced.

Myth: Sexual assault has the same implications for everyone. In other words, no matter who you are, you react in the same manner regardless of race, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, etc.

Reality: This idea is false; no two sexual assault situations or victims are the same. In fact, sexual assault can affect individuals in various cultures in many different ways. For example, members of the LGBTQ community may feel further isolated; survivors with strong, deep religious values may feel unworthy of marriage or shameful; male survivors may feel a loss of masculinity or may question their sexual identity. While each case is different, college student survivors may have some reactions in common, including fear of academic decline, depression, isolation, and a longing for close family members who are geographically far away from the survivor. For more information, please see the Varner House website.

You should also create a safety plan for yourself. In other words, establish a location that is safe for you and unlikely to be known by your ex-boyfriend. Be sure that you can trust this other person. As part of this plan, you might want to develop new routines, or spend more time around other people rather than alone. You may also want to consider getting a court order to keep this person away from you. Call the police if you feel you are in danger.

This may be difficult, but do not continue to communicate with this individual, even if you are telling him to "stop." Remember to trust your instincts and take all threats seriously.

Kindly,
 Answer Annie

Alexy, E. M., Burgess, A. W., Baker, T., & Smoyak, S. A. (2005). Perceptions of cyberstalking among college students.

Please be advised that this article is neither a crisis/emergency service nor a correspondence therapy service. If you need either immediate attention or ongoing therapy, call JMU Counseling & Student Development.