

9 General Risk Management

9.1 Drugs and Controlled Substances

The possession and/or use of any illegal or controlled substances, including but not limited to drugs, narcotics, marijuana, or any hallucinogen is illegal and contrary to the Student Code of Conduct of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the State of Texas, and your Inter/National Organization. There will be no possession and/or sale of any illegal or controlled substances at any fraternity/sorority event or at any event possibly associated with a fraternity/sorority. Any illegal possession of drugs and/or use of illegal or controlled substances is subject to disciplinary action by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For more information you can view the Student Code of Conduct at <http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~police/UPD/conduct.htm>.

9.2 Inappropriate Behavior and Vandalism

Inappropriate behavior and vandalism is contrary to the Student Code of Conduct of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Any illegal activities of inappropriate behavior or vandalism shall be subject to disciplinary action by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For more information you can view the Student Code of Conduct at <http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~police/UPD/conduct.htm>.

9.3 Crisis Response

While student organizations are advised to plan their activities and events in such a way as to avert crisis, it is important to proactively plan how to respond in the event one should occur. Intentional development of a crisis response plan prior to an event or activity will empower the organization to effectively respond. *Educating members prior to a crisis is crucial.* All organization members must know who is in charge and be prepared to follow the plan. The following information is intended to assist students in the development of a crisis response plan, but should not be considered a complete plan, rather a guide for designing a protocol that fits the organization's needs.

As a student leader, it is important to understand that a crisis can happen to you and your organization. If this happens, know that you are not alone. Call on the resources in the Division of Student Affairs to assist you. It is important to be aware of your own feelings, perceptions, and issues so that you can monitor your ability to cope with the difficult situation.

9.3.1 General Crisis Response Plan

- 1 Develop a crisis response strategy for your organization prior to your event or program.
- 2 Create a step by step process for what to do in case of a crisis.
- 3 Designate organizational officers and crisis team who can take charge of a crisis situation.
- 4 Review your crisis response plan on a regular basis and update the plan as needed.
- 5 Inform and/or educate organizational members of your crisis response plan at least once per semester.

9.3.2 What to do if there is an emergency

- 1 If off-campus call 911.
- 2 On-campus contact 911 (825-4444 for non-emergency calls on-campus) or get appropriate help.
- 3 There is a network of outdoor emergency phones around campus. These phones are mounted in white towers, have a blue light on top, and are clearly marked "EMERGENCY." Pushing the call button activates a direct phone line with the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Police Department that will automatically pinpoint the caller's location.
- 4 If medical attention is needed, attend to those needs before doing anything else.

9.3.3 Contact the appropriate authorities

- 1 Notify the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Police Department (UPD) at 825-4444. The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Police Department is located in the Physical Plant/UPD building.
- 2 Notify your advisor if he/she was not present during the emergency.
- 3 Notify all organization members in a meeting (Follow 14.5.4 & 14.5.5) and inform them of what to expect regarding the press and possible investigation. Direct members to not discuss the incident with anyone.
- 4 Notify the Dean of Students (UC 318) at 825- 2612 in the event of a serious injury or death.
- 5 ***In the case of a student death, do not contact parents. This is best done by the appropriate authorities, such as the Dean of Students, UPD or other law enforcement.***

9.3.4 Statements about the incident

- 1 Any inter/national policies and procedures regarding press releases and press conferences must be followed.
- 2 Appoint an organizational spokesperson and create an organization statement for media inquiries. You do not have to provide the media with a statement.
- 3 Following the accident, empathize with victims/families but avoid saying anything other than "We sympathize for those affected by this. The situation is under investigation and more information will be shared when it is available."
- 4 When more information does become available to you, your organization spokesperson should decide what information will be released (The decisions should be made in consultation with your inter/national headquarters and the university).
- 5 Consult with your university advisor and/or inter/national representative to discuss what things you should discuss in a post-incident press conference or release.

9.3.5 Post-Incident

- 1 Cooperate fully with those evaluating the incident.

- 2 Gather as a group together as soon as possible. Lack of pertinent and accurate information can contribute to the critical nature of the situation.
- 3 Covering up or ignoring information is never the recommended manner for handling a post-incident situation.
- 4 Learn from the event.
- 5 ***You are not alone. The Department of Student Affairs is always available to help you through difficult situations by providing support and referrals. Contact them at 825-2612 or visit in person at UC 318.***

9.4 Sexual Abuse and Harassment

9.4.1 Sexual Abuse

- 1 Chapters will not tolerate or condone any form of sexist or sexually abusive behavior on the part of its members, whether physical, mental or emotional. This is to include any actions which are demeaning to women or men including but not limited to date rape, gang rape or verbal harassment.
- 2 A chapter will not sponsor or participate in any activity, including competitive games and philanthropic endeavors, that is abusive or demeaning to human beings.
- 3 A chapter will educate its members on the issue of sexual abuse.
- 4 Inter/National fraternity/sorority and campus advisor(s) should initiate appropriate education on issues of abusive behavior and sexual harassment to insure appropriate behavior and protect the membership regarding liability.
- 5 Any incidents of sexual abuse and/or harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For more information you can view the Student Code of Conduct at <http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~police/UPD/conduct.htm>.

9.4.2 Why should we be concerned about sexual abuse?

There are two main reasons everyone should be concerned about sexual abuse. The first is that any type of sexual abuse most often results in harm-physical, emotional or mental, to the survivor. Effects can be short or long term, but either way, it's always difficult to deal with. No person should inflict this type of harm on another person.

The second reason is legal liability. It is possible that a victim of sexual abuse or rape may be able to sue the perpetrator, even though criminal charges are not filed or are dismissed. In such an instance, the chapter, chapter officers, and others may be sued if an incident of sexual abuse occurs at a chapter function.

9.4.3 What is sexual abuse?

In order to understand sexual abuse, we must define both sexual harassment and rape. Sexual harassment is defined as the unwelcome, unreciprocated imposition of sexual attention, usually in the context of a relationship of unequal power. Rape is defined as an act of sexual penetration with a person against his/her will. Both of these actions fall under the definition of sexual abuse.

There are many types of sexual abuse. Recognize that sexually abusive behavior occurs on a continuum ranging from harassment to rape. Sexual abuse usually falls into two categories, verbal and physical.

Verbal abuse may include:

- whistling
- humor and jokes about sex or male or female specific traits
- suggestive or insulting sounds
- sexual innuendoes about your or someone else's personal appearance
- sexual innuendoes about your or someone else's sexual activities
- demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats

Physical abuse may include:

- obscene gestures
- staring suggestively
- any inappropriate touching, pinching or patting
- brushing against someone else's body
- coerced sexual intercourse
- assault

9.4.4 *Why Does Sexual Abuse occur?*

Although there is not one direct cause for sexually abusive behavior, there are some factors that help build an environment conducive to sexual abuse. Factors such as gender role stereotyping – what our society says is “feminine” and “masculine” – are part of the problem leading to rape and sexual harassment.

- Generally, males are socialized to be competitive, aggressive and dominant. Little boys grow up playing games such as “cops and robbers” with a clear winner and a clear loser. As they grow older, males are encouraged to experiment with their sexuality as part of growing up. This environment that encourages males to “win” often leads to the belief in the “right” to have sex.
- In contrast, females are generally socialized to be passive, dependent and people-pleasers. They grow up playing games with little or no rules, such as “house.” Unlike males, females are discouraged from experimenting with their sexuality. The double standard for sex prevails.

This social environment that encourages males to be aggressive and females to be passive is ripe for sexual abuse. Sexual harassment and rape are issues of power abuse. If we can understand how gender role stereotyping often leads to power imbalances, we can better understand how the phenomenon of sexual abuse happens in our society.

9.4.5 *What Can You do as an Individual to Minimize Sexual Abuse?*

- Understand that you are responsible for your own actions as an individual and as a member of a group. Understand your own sexuality and be aware of social pressures.
- Don't assume that previous permission for sexual activity applies to the current situation.

- Don't assume that just because someone dresses in a "sexy" manner and flirts that she/he wants to engage in sexual activity. However, know that type of clothing does not mean intent and can be misinterpreted.
- Don't get into a vulnerable situation with someone you don't know or trust.
- Don't participate in or allow rape to happen. Verbal harassment of women, whistles, snide comments and stares are all assaults on any woman's or man's sense of well being. The underlying intention is to intimidate the person.
- Take an equal role in your relationships with the opposite sex.
- Reject sexual stereotypes that define women as passive, weak and irrational, and men as aggressive, macho and dominating.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol and other drugs that will impair your judgment and interfere with effective communications.
- Don't rape someone. Sexual intimacy is a free exchange between free people. Intimidation, coercion and force have no place in lovemaking. Don't pressure someone into having sex or making it a goal to convince someone to have sex with you or someone else.

9.4.6 *What can we do as a group to prevent sexual abuse?*

- Review chapter and system "traditions" and eliminate sexist, degrading practices that signal to members that it is OK to demean and not respect others.
- Host educational programs for your chapter. Hold a program on human sexuality. Hold another program on alcohol and other drugs. Aggressively address problems of substance abuse that lead to other problems.
- Invite a campus counselor to conduct a program on male-female and/or same sex relationships and assertiveness communication.
- Take a leadership role in the Greek system to condemn sexual harassment and abuse to promote a safe environment for all.

9.4.7 *What can you do if you or someone you know has been sexually harassed?*

- Stand up to the harasser. If you are in a situation that doesn't feel right, let your harasser know that you feel uncomfortable. Tell him/her that you do not like what he/she is doing.
- Keep written details of each incident. It is important to record date, place, time, and the type of harassment and your response to that harassment.
- Seek out support from friends with whom you can share your concerns.
- Explore your options to file a formal complaint with the university. This university has a set procedure to be followed concerning sexual harassment complaints. The procedures to file a complaint are outlined at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/safety/340199C101.html

9.4.8 *What can you do if you or someone you know has been raped?*

- Contact a close friend or relative with whom you would feel comfortable talking.

- If a friend tells you that she/he has been raped, believe her/him. False alarms are extremely rare. It is important to listen to her/him and then encourage her/him to call a crisis center, contact the police and receive medical treatment.
- Call a rape-crisis center or rape-crisis hotline. Rape-crisis centers are staffed with professional counselors who will help you begin to sort through your feelings. Counselors are available 24 hours a day and all calls are confidential.
- Contact the police. By contacting the police, you will have some flexibility in your legal options. You may or may not decide to prosecute. But if you do, the necessary evidence will have been collected. Confidentiality is also observed by the police.
- Get medical treatment. It is important that you receive medical treatment for several reasons. First, you may or may not decide to prosecute. But if you do, evidence will have been collected by medical personnel. Although you may feel very dirty, do not brush your teeth, urinate, or take a shower before receiving medical treatment. It destroys crucial evidence. Secondly, seeking medical help will help prevent any possible consequences of rape such as sexually transmitted diseases or even pregnancy.

9.4.9 What can you do if someone in your chapter has been accused of rape?

The president of the chapter is the spokesperson for the fraternity/sorority. He/She is responsible in an emergency situation and must make all necessary phone calls and important decisions.

- The president should contact the advisor and inform them of the situation.
- The president should then contact the national headquarters and inform them of the situation. They will be able to give you guidance regarding the next step.
- The president should then contact the Greek Advisor and inform him/her of the situation.
- Only the president, national fraternity and the advisor should make comments to the media regarding the situation. Do not feel as though you must give the media an answer. It is all right to offer them "No comment" and tell them that you may call them when you receive any additional information.
- Advise the accused member of the chapter to seek legal advice.