

# Interpersonal Violence: Information and Resources

Created by FGCU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) | 301 Student & Community Counseling Center | 239-590-7950

Interpersonal violence (IPV) is an all-too-common experience for many individuals, including college students. Anyone can experience IPV, regardless of their gender identity, race, income, age, religion, sexual orientation, ability/disability, ethnicity, or other identities.

## What is interpersonal violence? (defined by the World Health Organization)

- IPV is violence perpetrated by one or more individuals against another person.
- IPV can take many forms, including child abuse, intimate partner abuse (sometimes called dating or domestic violence), assault, stalking, harassment, rape, and more.
- IPV can be emotional, sexual, physical, and/or financial; IPV can also include threatening these types of violence.
- IPV may involve threatening or harming loved ones (including pets) to control and/or manipulate.
- IPV can involve the perpetrator(s) threatening or harming themselves to control and/or manipulate.

## What are resources for survivors of interpersonal violence?

- On-Campus:
  - Victim Advocate
    - Confidential advocacy and support services for FGCU students
    - 239-590-7685, 119 Howard Hall
    - Make an appointment directly with the Victim Advocate: [Lauren Strunk, MS, LMHC](#)
  - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
    - Confidential therapy, crisis, psychiatry, and prevention services for FGCU students
    - 24/7/365 Helpline: 239-745-EARS (3277)
  - Student Health Services
    - Confidential medical services for FGCU students
    - 239-590-7966, Adjacent to Parking Garage 2 and Parking Lot 7
    - After Hours Medical Advice Line: 239-590-7966
  - Assault and Rape Information, Support, and Education (ARISE)
    - Provides information, programming, and resources to those impacted by sexual violence
      - Detailed information on how to report sexual assault, where to go for physical and mental health care locally, how to support survivors, myths and facts about sexual assault, and more
        - While ARISE focuses on sexual assault/rape, the information also applies to other forms of IPV
  - Employee Assistance Program
    - Free time-limited therapy services for FGCU staff, faculty, and their families
    - 800-226-7930 OR 239-278-7435 (24/7/365); [solutions@synergyeap.org](mailto:solutions@synergyeap.org); 3949 Evans Ave, Suite 202, Fort Myers, FL 33901
- Off-Campus:
  - Treatment, Advocacy, and Crisis Centers
    - All offer FREE confidential safety planning, information and referrals, therapy, advocacy, information and assistance with restraining orders, forensic exams for those who have experienced sexual and physical violence, crisis services, and more. Students can receive services at these agencies, they utilize the agency that serves their local address.
      - Abuse Counseling and Treatment (ACT): serves Lee, Hendry, and Glades counties
        - 24/7/365 Hotline: 239-939-3112 (TTY)
      - Project Help: serves Collier county
        - 24/7/365 Hotline: 239-262-7227 (TTY)
      - Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (CARE): serves Charlotte County
        - 24/7/365 Helpline: 941-627-6000 (TTY)
        - 24/7/365 Sexual Assault Helpline: 941-637-0404 (TTY)
  - Hospitals
    - Gulf Coast Medical Center: 13681 Doctors Way, Fort Myers

- Lee Memorial Hospital: 2776 Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers
- Cape Coral Hospital: 636 Del Prado Blvd., Cape Coral
- Physician's Regional Hospital: 8300 Collier Blvd., Naples
- NCH Hospital-North: 11190 Healthpark Blvd., Naples
- Fawcett Memorial Hospital: 21298 Olean Blvd., Port Charlotte
- National Resources for Support, Information, and Guidance (all are 24/7/365)
  - [National Sexual Assault Hotline and Online Chat](#): 800-656-4673
  - [National Domestic Violence Support Line and Online Chat](#): 800-799-7233
  - [Safe Horizon Crime Victims Hotline](#): 866-689-4357
  - Family Violence Helpline: 800-996-6228
  - [Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline](#): 800-422-4453
  - [National Center for Victims of Crime](#): 855-484-2846 (multiple languages for services available)

### What options are available to report incident(s) of interpersonal violence?

- On-Campus:
  - [Title IX Office](#)
    - Conducts investigations of reported IPV
    - Visit website for detailed information on reporting options, the investigation process, and protections for survivors
    - Reports can be made in-person, by phone, or online at <https://www2.fgcu.edu/equity/complaint-form.html>
  - [FGCU Police \(UPD\)](#)
    - Available 24/7/365: 911 or 239-590-1911 (non-emergency line)
  - Overview of reporting options (both on- and off-campus): [www.fgcu.edu/arise/reportrape.html](http://www.fgcu.edu/arise/reportrape.html)
    - While ARISE focuses on sexual assault/rape, the information also applies to reporting other forms of IPV
- Off-Campus:
  - Fort Myers Police Department: available 24/7/365, 911 or 239-321-7700 (non-emergency line)
  - Cape Coral Police Department: available 24/7/365, 911 or 239-574-3223 (non-emergency line)
  - Lee County Sheriff's Office: available 24/7/365, 911 or 239-477-1000 (non-emergency line)
  - Naples Police Department: available 24/7/365, 911 or 239-213-4844 (non-emergency line)
  - Charlotte County Sheriff's Office: available 24/7/365, 911 or 239-639-2101 (non-emergency line)

### How do I support someone who experienced interpersonal violence?

- Believe them.
  - Even if you think the survivor knows, it's important you say to the survivor you believe them.
  - Helpful things to consider saying: Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me. This isn't your fault. You didn't deserve this. I'm here for you. I care about you.
    - Things to AVOID:
      - Questions about what the survivor was doing, wearing, acting, thinking, etc. before/during/after violence as these questions tell the survivor they did something wrong and/or caused the violence.
      - Saying 'how much worse it could have been' or 'at least they're alive' as these statements minimize what the survivor went through and suggest that what they experienced wasn't 'bad enough.'
      - Telling survivors that 'it's in the past' and 'everything will be fine' as these statements ignore that the experience may be very present for the survivor and make a promise that can't be kept-we don't know everything will be okay.
- Listen.
  - Avoid rushing to give advice
  - Help them decide what they want to do next, if anything
  - Maintain a non-judgmental attitude
  - Avoid platitudes (e.g., "Everything happens for a reason")
  - Helpful things to consider saying: I'm here to listen. Would you like to talk about it? And it's okay if you don't want to talk about it. What do you need? How can I help? What can I get you? Would it be helpful to talk through your options? I'll be here as long as you need me.
- Act.

- Follow what the survivor wants to do
- Encourage survivor to get medical attention if they've experienced recent sexual or physical violence, even if they don't want evidence collected; continue to support them if they won't seek medical attention
- Offer to contact professionals for help—*if* the survivors agrees
- Follow-up; don't assume survivors will let you know in the future if they need help
- Offer campus, local, and national resources
- Helpful things to consider saying: I can find out about options for medical care or reporting, is that okay with you? I want to make sure you're taking care of your health, would you like me to take you to see a doctor? I'm sure it's scary to consider talking to a doctor/counselor/police/advocate, but they may have important information to share. How would you feel about that? Even if you don't want to press charges or have evidence collected, you can still see a doctor to get checked out. Would you like me to go with you?
- Respect them.
  - Follow their lead
  - Respect their decisions
  - Avoid comparing their experiences to others' experiences or telling them what you would do
  - Helpful things to consider saying: I understand you don't want to talk about it right now, but if you want to talk in the future, I'm always here for you. I will support you regardless of what you choose to do next. You know what's best for you. I'm here to help in any way I can.
- Recognize your reactions.
  - You will likely have strong reactions yourself, do your best to regulate them
  - Always try to center the survivor's needs and experiences; this is about them
  - Make sure to take care of your needs and seek your own support
  - If you're also a survivor, try not to compare your experiences with theirs
    - In the immediate aftermath of IPV may not be the best time to share details of your own experiences; sharing you're also a survivor is up to you
  - Helpful things to consider saying: I'm so angry/sad/frustrated on your behalf that this happened. I can only imagine what you're going through. I see how hard this is. You don't have to take care of me, I will get support for myself, I want to be here to support you.

### **What are common reactions after experiencing interpersonal violence?**

- Reactions vary by person, culture, age, and situation. Not all reactions are visible, immediate, or easily understood; this does NOT make those reactions any less real. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to respond to IPV.
- Common reactions: strong emotions that may change suddenly or frequently (sadness, anger, laughter, numbness, fear, etc.); avoiding thinking or talking about experiences; upsetting and/or unwanted recollections of the events; nightmares or intense dreams; changes in sleep; use of substances, self-harm, food, etc. to manage reactions; changes in school, work, social, and/or family functioning; lowered motivation; anxiety and/or panic attacks; details may be shared out-of-order or in a confusing way; isolating from others or difficulty being alone; sense of waiting for something bad to happen; changes in mood and/or personality; irritability and/or depression; missing memories or incomplete memories; self-blame, guilt, worthlessness, and/or shame; lowered concentration; reduced interest or pleasure in previously enjoyed activities; sense of disconnection from self and/or others; hearing or seeing things others can't hear or see; new or intensified physical health issues

### **How do I learn more about interpersonal violence?**

- <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/interpersonal-violence/>
- <https://ncadv.org/learn-more>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/child-abuse>
- <https://www.safehorizon.org/get-help/stalking/>