



How are sexual violence and the COVID-19 pandemic related?

At Tulane, the exact impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rates as well as the nature of sexual violence remains unclear as of this writing. However, it is plausible that the pandemic has changed the way sexual violence impacts students.

We know that the uncertainty, instability, and inescapability of the pandemic can activate symptoms of trauma. Because we are currently unable to come together in groups or visit each other in our dorms and apartments, it's likely people feel isolated from their support systems and might feel more alone than usual.

It is also possible that students feel less inclined to report sexual violence that occurred while someone was violating COVID-19 guidelines because of fear about conduct consequences. While the impact of the pandemic on students is unclear, we want to make a couple of things clear when it comes to supporting survivors.

We are here to tell you that if you have experienced sexual violence before or during the pandemic: **(1) you are not alone, (2) there is help available, and (3) Tulane will support you through your disclosing and**

investigating wishes regardless of the location of the assault.

Despite changes to the federal Title IX regulations, Tulane continues to provide resources and support to *all* survivors through the Case Management & Victim Support Services Office (CMVSS) and regardless of where the violence occurred, the university will investigate and adjudicate *all* formal complaints of sexual violence through the Office of Student Conduct (when a student is accused) and through the Office of Institutional Equity (when an employee is accused).

Remember, seeking support from Tulane does not mean you have to go through a formal investigation and adjudication process. Moreover, some students may be concerned about reporting their experience of sexual violence because it occurred while they were in violation of COVID-19 policies. However, **Tulane offers students amnesty in these situations.** This means that if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence while in violation of COVID-19 policies, you will **not face disciplinary action.**

Pandemic self-care strategies for survivors and their friends:

- To learn about resources and your rights, go to allin.tulane.edu (check out the interactive guide under the Get Help tab to explore different support options).
- You can also talk directly to a fellow Tulane student about resources by calling the SAPHE helpline at 504-654-9543 for 24/7 confidential sexual violence support.
- Download the RAINN mobile app for support, self-care tools, and information to help manage the short- and long-term effects of sexual violence.
- Connect with an advocate in Case Management and Victim Support Services by calling 504-314-2160, by emailing srss@tulane.edu, or by filing a report at tulane.edu/concerns.
- Schedule an appointment for a counseling session with the Counseling Center by calling 504-314-2277.
- When experiencing a trigger or anxiety, try this grounding activity: Name five things you see, four things you feel, three things you hear, two things you smell, and one thing you taste.
- Take care of your basic needs by drinking a big glass of water, putting together an easy, simple, and yummy meal, and aiming for 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

TUPHE FEATURE

What does sexual health really mean? How can I promote my sexual health?

While we often view sexual health as a solely clinical state, sexual health truly encompasses your emotional, spiritual and social wellbeing as it relates to your sexuality and sexual or romantic relationships. According to the CDC, sexual health is “not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity,” it is an affirmative incorporation of positivity and respect in one’s relationships, as well as “the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.” So your sexual health is a reflection of your overall health! Promoting your own sexual health means looking out for your sexual and reproductive safety, nurturing your sense of self, your erotic self, and your self-confidence, and cultivating intimacy and creative exploration with others.

Here are some ways to promote your own sexual health:

- Practice general self-care. Make the time to do what you love, take naps when you need them, incorporate movement and stretching into your day, surround yourself with supportive friends and/or family, and spend some extra time sitting outside.
- Gaze at your body (naked or thinly clothed) in the mirror; spend some time looking at parts of yourself that you haven’t spent much time on before. If an unloving thought enters your head while you gaze, acknowledge it, and counter it with a loving thought.
- Identify 3 things you like during sex, 3 things you don’t like, and 3 sexual fantasies you have, then make it a point to express one of these 9 thoughts to the next partner you have a sexual experience with.
- Identify a sense (taste, touch, smell, etc.) that you do not often notice and create a slow, loving sensation for it. For example, if your neglected sense is taste, place a piece of chocolate in your mouth, don’t chew, let it melt slowly, and notice the nuances of the experience.
- Make an appointment through the Health Center patient portal to get tested for STIs. (Note: This service is typically covered by insurance; however, an STI test may appear on your statement of benefits.)

live well Highlights



Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April events aimed at raising awareness and understanding about sexual assault intervention and prevention.

More info:
allin.tulane.edu



You@Tulane

This new online tool is designed to help students manage stress, set goals, promote happiness and well-being, and connect to campus resources.

you.tulane.edu