

# **sexual assault resource guide**

What the Castleton Campus  
Needs to Know

policy, campus and community  
resources and risk reduction

# **Vermont State Colleges Policy 311-A**

## **Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking**

**The Policy prohibits sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. Sexual harassment is also prohibited by the Vermont State Colleges (VSC).**

VSC is committed to maintaining an educational and working environment free from all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct. VSC is also committed to maintaining an educational and working environment free from domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. Such misconduct will not be tolerated. These acts not only violate a person's feelings of trust and safety but can also substantially interfere with a person's education or employment.

Please refer to the online handbook at *[www.castleton.edu](http://www.castleton.edu)* for the comprehensive policy.

# Vermont's Sexual Assault Law

**In the State of Vermont**, it is unlawful to engage in a sexual act with another person and to compel the other person to participate in the sexual act:

- without the consent of the other person;
- by threatening or coercing the other person;
- by placing the person in fear of imminent bodily injury.
- by substantially impairing the ability of the other person through the use of drugs or alcohol (administered without the knowledge or against the will of the other person)
- by engaging in a sexual act with a person under the age of 16.

Coercion is the act of compelling or forcing someone to act based on pressure, harassment, threats, or intimidation.

**Vermont law** defines a **sexual act** as contact between the penis and vulva, the penis and anus, the mouth and penis, the mouth and vulva, or any intrusion, however slight, by any part of a person's body or any object into the genital or anal opening of another.

The victim does not have to prove physical resistance to show a lack of consent.

# got consent?

Determining whether consent has been given is a critical factor in any sexual assault. What does it mean to give consent? Consent is the active, “enthusiastic” giving of permission to partake in a particular action. Active consent is a process where each person repeatedly checks in throughout the progression of sexual acts. Verbal consent is recommended; non-verbal indicators are not always accurate.

## Components of Effective Consent:

- Consent cannot be gained by threat, force, coercion or intimidation or by ignoring words or actions indicating objection to the activity.
- Consent can ONLY be given when there is equal power between parties.
- Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
- Consent can be rescinded at any time.
- Silence, lack of protest, or lack of resistance are not sufficient standing alone to establish consent. They must understand what they have agreed to do.
- They must be aware of the consequences of and alternatives to their actions.
- They must know that their decision not to participate will be respected as much as their decision to participate.
- They must voluntarily agree.

The ability to give consent is severely compromised if the person is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Alcohol-related incapacity results from a level of alcohol ingestion that is more severe than mere impairment, being under the influence, drunkenness or intoxication. Indications of incapacity include slurred speech, difficulty walking or standing, vomiting, and losing consciousness.

Use of alcohol or drugs does NOT make a victim at fault for sexual misconduct. The use of alcohol or drugs does NOT minimize or excuse a person's responsibility for committing sexual misconduct.

# THE RED ZONE

The Red Zone is the first six weeks a student is on campus. There is a particularly high incidence of sexual assaults on college campuses during this time. First-Year Students are at a higher risk of victimization.

- 1:4 women is a victim of rape or attempted rape at least once during her four years attending a college or university.
- 78% of all forcible rape victims know their attackers.
- 90% of all acquaintance rapes involve alcohol.
- Women ages 16-24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence

*(source: Bureau of Justice Special Report: Intimate Partner Violence, May 2000)*

## WHY?

First-Year Students are targeted because they may not know campus routines.

They are feeling insecure and alone and feel pressure to fit in.

They are eager to test the limits of a parentless society by drinking heavily and partying enthusiastically.

They are targets for peer pressure relating to sexual activity.

College parties are likely to bring students together in an environment where experimenting with substances and testing limits may have negative consequences.

# Communication and Clarification

Every student comes to Castleton with a different background. Based on your experiences, words may have different meanings and significance for you as compared to another student. It is best to clarify any and all sexual cues!

*Avoid miscommunication in the interpretation of what may or may not be consent messages. Here are examples of statements in need of clarification. It is best to clarify – What do you mean by that?*

*“Do you want to hook-up?”*

(unclear what is intended by the vague definition of “hook-up”)

*“Should we get it on?”*

(unclear what degree of sexual activity this refers to)

*“Let’s continue this in my room.”*

(ambiguous intent)

*“Do you want to get busy?”*

(confusing - different ideas of what “busy” means)

*“Do you want to go to my place to hang out?”*

(confusing – different ideas of what “hang out” means)

## Signs to Stop!

- Verbal Refusal: When someone says “no” or “don’t do that” or “stop” or “I don’t want to do this”
- Implied Verbal Refusal: When someone says “I don’t think I want to go this fast” or “I’m not sure I want to do this”
- Physical Resistance: Trying to get away, trying to leave, rolling over or away, pushing the person off, moving the person’s hands, and putting clothes back on are signs that you do not have consent.

**If you continue with sexual activity after any of these indicators, you are committing a crime. Don’t Guess: ASK!!**

# Bystander Intervention

## “The Castleton Way”

- Have a PACT with trusted friends. Go in groups and be sure to return with the SAME group of friends. Leave NO ONE behind –no excuses. This buddy system also allows for opportunities to check in. Create a code word or a signal that indicates to the others in your group that you are not comfortable in a situation and all should respond to your concerns.
- Be an active bystander. Get involved. Stand up. Say or do something that can make a difference and prevent an assault from happening.
  - \*Intervene when you see someone too drunk, e.g. help them get home safely.
  - \*If you see someone add something to a drink, call them on it, spill it, dump it or tell the person not to drink it.
  - \*Trust your “gut”. If the situation seems unsafe or just doesn’t seem right, check in and see how you can help.
  - \*Break the Bro Code...being a “wing man” is being an accomplice to rape.
- Safe Ride provides off-campus rides and can be contacted at 802-468-1472.
- Call Public Safety at 802-468-1215 for an escort within campus.
- BE AWARE of your surroundings. Know addresses.
- HEED ADVICE from a Community Advisor (CA) or Student Orientation Staff (SOS). They have your well-being and health in mind.
- Make safe choices for yourself.
- Don’t mix sexual decisions with drugs and alcohol. Regardless of how smart you are, it is challenging to make sound decisions while under the influence.
- Be mindful of pick up lines that have hidden meanings.
- Communicate and be assertive. Think about what you really want before you get into a sexual situation, and clearly communicate your boundaries with your partner. If you think you are getting mixed messages, ask for clarification!

# Risk Reduction Strategies

- Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe in any situation, go with your gut and leave. If you see something suspicious, contact your Community Advisor (CA), Area Coordinator (AC) or Public Safety immediately.
- Get to know your surroundings. If you are new to the campus, familiarize yourself with the campus map and know the location of the blue emergency phones. Avoid shrubbery and dark areas.
- Avoid putting your dorm room, campus address, or phone number on your personal profile where everyone can see it.
- Never loan your room key to anyone and always lock your door. Determine rules about who is allowed in your room. Be cautious inviting someone into your room or going to someone else's room.
- Practice safe drinking. Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust and never leave your drink unattended. If you've left your drink alone, just get a new one. Always watch your drink being prepared. At parties, don't drink from punch bowls or other large, open containers. This includes all beverages – those containing alcohol and those that do not.
- Watch out for your friends. If a friend seems out of it, is way too intoxicated for the amount of alcohol they've had, or is acting out of character, get her or him to safety. This may mean calling 911, especially if you believe they have been drugged.
- Don't let your guard down. The campus environment can foster a false sense of security. Don't assume people you've just met will look out for your best interests; remember that they are essentially strangers.
- Walk with roommates or someone you trust. If you are out alone at night, don't put music headphones in both ears so you can be more aware of your surroundings. You can call Public Safety at 802-468-1215 for an escort.

*(Source: RAINN (Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network))*

# Sexual assault is NEVER your fault.

It does not matter if you were drinking (even underage), were flirting, were wearing revealing clothes, initiated the sexual contact, and/or have had sex with that person before.

It is a common misconception that strangers commit most sexual assaults. You are most likely to be sexually assaulted by someone you know – a partner, friend, classmate, neighbor, co-worker – than by a stranger in a dark alley. Physical strength, emotional bargaining, intimidation, blackmail, authority, mind games or using alcohol and/or drugs are some tactics a rapist uses to force a person to have sexual intercourse. Rapes that do not involve a stranger, usually do not involve the use of weapons. They also often involve a “freeze” response. If you do not consent to a sexual act, it is a crime.

Ultimately, there is no surefire way to prevent an assault from happening.

Sexual assault is about power and control, not about sex. Most perpetrators of sexual assault would not consider themselves to be rapists. They do not view their actions as offensive or believe they broke the law. The perpetrator may view it as wild sex or acknowledge that he/she “took advantage” of someone. In contrast, it is very painful and terrifying for the person who was coerced, encouraged to drink too much, given drugs or had his/her boundaries disregarded or disrespected.

Sexual assault can happen to ANYONE. A victim can be of any age, race, national or ethnic origin, disability, sex, gender identity/expression, marital status or sexual orientation.

# What to do if you are the victim of a sexual assault?

**\*Castleton University follows the lead of the victim. You have many options.**

1. You are not obligated to take any form of action. You may decide to process the situation on your own, in your own time. You are encouraged to get to a safe place and contact a trusted person for support. A list of community and campus resources is found on the flow charts within this guide.

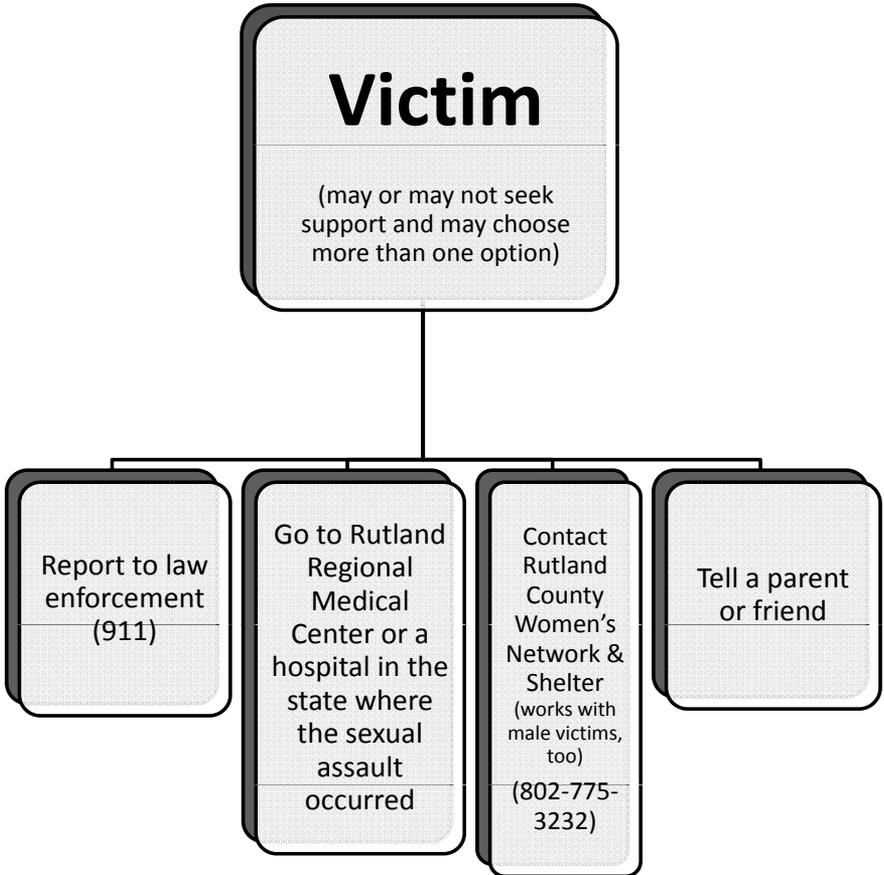
2. If you choose to get medical attention, it is recommended to be seen within 72 hours of the assault. This will ensure that you are medically stable and provide the best evidence against the perpetrator if you decide to pursue official action. You are advised to avoid taking a shower or bath, going to the bathroom, or changing clothing. This will help preserve physical evidence. If you must change clothing, all clothing worn at the time of the incident should be placed in a *paper bag*, not plastic. If medical attention is sought, then you will be offered an advocate from the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter (this resource is provided regardless of the victim's sex). **An exam MUST be conducted in the state where the assault occurred.** During a medical examination, victims have the right to:

- Ask questions.
- Stop the exam and/or collection of evidence at any point.
- Have a friend, family member, counselor, trained advocate or other accompany you during the exam.
- Exclude everyone from the exam except medical staff.
- Ask for the support of a Victim's Advocate. The Victim Advocate's role is to support your emotional well-being and assist you in working with the police and legal system.
- If you choose to go to the Emergency Room for treatment, Vermont law, V.S.A. § 1407 provides compensation for the payment of the cost of the medical examination in cases of sexual assault. The victim is not expected to pay for the collection of evidence under these circumstances. Your health insurance will not be billed or contacted, further protecting your confidentiality. Currently, Vermont doesn't cover the cost of tests for date rape drugs. If you suspect you have been drugged, please ask the nurse examiner about your options.

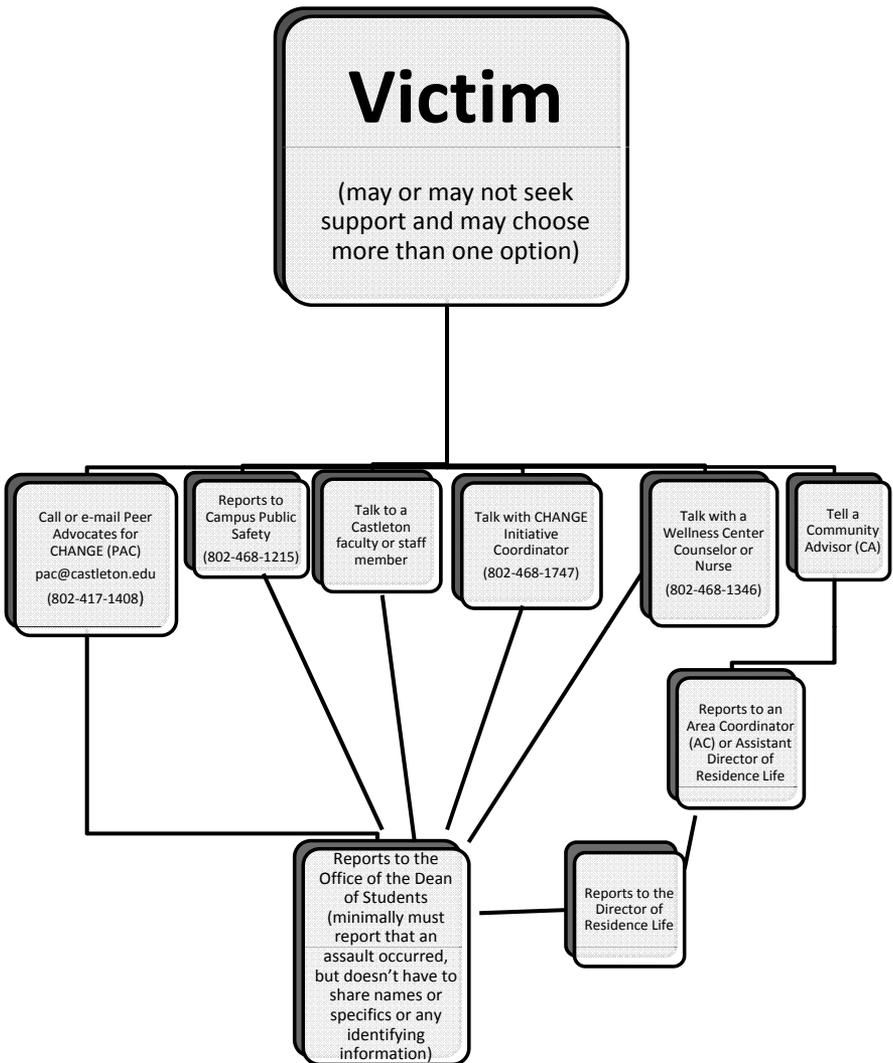
## **Choosing one of the following options doesn't prevent you from pursuing any of the others listed.**

- Medical assistance may be needed. A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) may provide a rape kit for evidence gathering. They can provide prophylactics for STI and pregnancy prevention – even if you opt out of exam. They can also provide follow-up appointments for STI testing and offer the necessary paperwork for free mental health counseling that is available to victims of sex crimes.
- You may pursue action through the criminal legal system, typically starting with an interview with a law enforcement investigator who would determine if there is enough evidence to pursue charges.
- You may submit a request for a sexual assault/stalking order of protection through the county court system . A temporary order may be granted prior to a hearing. Approximately ten days later, both parties appear in court and may be asked to give testimonies before a judge who determines if an order of protection is warranted.
- You may choose to work with the campus system by reporting the sexual assault to a Campus Security Authority. ALL employees of Castleton University fall under this category and are obligated to report the occurrence to the Dean of Students. The Campus Security Authority will not have to share identifying information regarding the assault, including your name. You may wish to request accommodations be made, e.g. housing, classes, gym time, food service, library access, etc. These requests would go through the Dean of Student's office.
- You may choose to make a formal complaint of the 311-A Policy. This starts an investigation through the University. If action is pursued, you may withdraw from the process at any time, but the investigation will continue by the University to the fullest extent possible, especially if there is a risk to the community. You will be offered an advisor and an advocate to assist with the navigation of the process. All formal complaints are filed with the Office of The Dean of Students.

# Community Resource Options



# Campus Resource Options



# What a Sexual Assault Victim May Experience:

- All survivors react in their own way and in their own time, even long after the crime. Take your time and find support.
- Sometimes survivors feel overwhelmed by their emotions. Whatever feelings occur are a natural reaction to a crisis situation and are okay.
- You may experience a roller coaster of strong emotions and responses – fear, anxiety, shame, depression, guilt, disorientation, powerlessness, shame, helplessness, flashbacks, mood swings, numbness, social withdrawal, loneliness, racing thoughts, inability to concentrate, PTSD, insomnia, self-blame, shock, disbelief, embarrassment, denial, anger, lack of trust in yourself and others.
- Physical responses may include sleep disturbances, nausea, stomach problems, change in eating habits, nightmares.
- You may feel confused and alone, wondering if family and friends should be told and, if so, how. People can and do recover from sexual assault. What happened is not your fault. There are campus and community resources available. You are free to choose to use as many or as few resources as desired.

# How to Help a Friend Who Has Been a Victim of Sexual Assault

**Know that no one asks to be sexually assaulted.** No matter what your friend was wearing, how they were acting, how much they had to drink, they are not responsible for being sexually assaulted.

**Encourage your friend to seek medical attention**, if the rape occurred recently. A medical examination can detect and prevent injuries, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy, and may be able to detect memory-altering drugs.

**Help them find services.** No matter where the survivor lives, there are always services listed in the phone book under "Rape" or "Social/Human Services". See the "Community Resource Options" and the Campus Resource Options" charts listed in this booklet. If your friend chooses to utilize one or more of the resources, offer to accompany your friend to the initial resource meeting. Resources can assist your friend in exploring needs for a course of action that may include counseling, medical assistance, disciplinary action, and legal issues, as well as accommodations related to academic concerns and housing.

**Be interested and empathetic, without prying for details or being judgmental.** Although you may not mean to, some questions may imply blame for the victim. For example:

*"Why didn't you just leave?" "Did you scream?" "Why did you go alone?"*

Instead try asking:

*"What happened?" "How are you feeling?" "What do you want to do now?"*

**Be aware that after a sexual assault many survivors do not feel comfortable with physical contact**, even though your natural response may be to give your friend a hug or sit closely with them. If you are male, be aware that female victims may have complicated reactions that are not indicative of your friendship.

**Help your friend find what options they have and be supportive of whatever decisions they make: who to tell, whether or not to report to the police, etc.** The most important part of a survivor's recovery is regaining the control that the rapist took away.

**You may want to talk to a trusted friend or counselor about your own feelings.** Hearing about a sexual assault is an upsetting experience. Supporting a friend is important, and making sure that you are supported is equally important.



## **CHANGE Initiative Coordinator**

(802) 468-1747

The CHANGE office is located next to the mailroom, lower level Campus Center

## **Peer Advocates for CHANGE (PAC)**

*Awareness. Advocacy. Activism.*

24-hr Confidential PAC-Line: (802) 417-1408

Peer Advocates for CHANGE Email: [pac@castleton.edu](mailto:pac@castleton.edu)

## **Castleton University Wellness Center**

*counseling \* health services \* wellness education*

*\* violence prevention and advocacy*

Located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Campus Center

Phone: (802) 468-1346

Fax: (802) 468-1104

## **Castleton University Public Safety**

(802) 468-1215

## **Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter**

24-hr Hotline: (802) 775-3232

[www.rcwn.org](http://www.rcwn.org)

National Sexual Assault Hotline: (800) 656-HOPE

Vermont Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 228-7395

Vermont Statewide Sexual Violence Hotline: (800) 489-7273

Vermont Legal Aid: (802) 775-0021

24 Hour Restraining Orders: (800) 540-9990

Castleton Family Health Center: (802) 468-5641

Rutland Regional Medical Center: (800) 540-9990