Information for Faculty on Trauma and Sexual Violence

Trauma is a response to an event that a person experiences, witnesses, or confronts with actual or threatened death or serious injury, or threat to physical integrity of oneself or others. It often includes intense fear, feelings of helplessness, or horror. It can last for months or years. Those who are victimized by sexual violence commonly report symptoms of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (Title IX Compliance Institute, 2014; Rape Abuse Incest Network).

We understand that receiving a disclosure from a student regarding an incident of sexual violence can be difficult. The following information is intended to support faculty and staff in listening, and supporting, students as best as possible.

- Ask questions and provide options that will allow the individual to feel in control
  - Examples: “Do you mind if we chat in this room?”; “May I sit in this chair?”

- Allow the individual to tell their story at their own pace
  - Do not interrupt or ask the person to provide the “short version” of what happened
  - Keep in mind you are not required to investigate this incident; allowing the student to share what they are comfortable in disclosing is the best course of action

- Avoid probing questions
  - Examples: “Why were you at that party?”; “Why didn’t you leave with your friends?”; “Why didn’t you run away?”

- Outline the various resources that are available on campus (Please see the types of employees sheet handed out during September 9, 2015 Faculty Senate Meeting, or refer to Bentley’s Title IX website: www.bentley.edu/titleix for resources on and off-campus)

- Inform them that Bentley University has many policies, procedures, and support measures in place for members of our community. Let them know that the Title IX staff can share discuss with them further the resources that may be best suited for their needs

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Erin Kelley or Alex Hirs. Contact information:

- Erin Kelley (Director of Student Conduct/Title IX Coordinator): Student Center 320, 781.891.2329. ekelley@bentley.edu
- Alex Hirs (Assistant Director of Gender Equity/Deputy Title IX Coordinator): Student Center 320, 781.891.2364, ahirs@bentley.edu