

# Five Facts Campus Officials Should Know About Dating/Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Threat Assessment

In our work with hundreds of colleges and universities to address Title IX, Clery Act, VAWA compliance and campus threat assessment, we have identified five important facts that campus officials should know about the relationship between dating/domestic violence, stalking, and campus threat assessment.

## 1. Dating/domestic violence and stalking are happening on your campus.

All students of traditional undergraduate age are at significant risk for dating/domestic violence and stalking. *This is not unique to your institution.* Consider these statistics:

- A Centers for Disease Control report indicated that 47 percent of female victims and 39 percent of male victims were between 18 and 24 years of age when they first experienced violence by an intimate partner.
- A College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll found that among college women:
  - 43 percent of those in a dating relationship experienced some violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, technology-enabled, verbal, or controlling abuse
  - 22 percent reported actual physical abuse, sexual abuse, or threats of physical violence
  - 52 percent reported knowing a friend who had experienced violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, technology-enabled, verbal, or controlling abuse

## 2. VAWA compliance may result in more reports of dating/domestic violence and stalking – and that's okay.

Federal legislation requires colleges and universities to take actions that may result in more survivors and witnesses reporting misconduct. An increase in reports is to be expected and suggests that outreach efforts are having their intended effect. Legislation requires institutions to:

- Adopt and publish policies against dating/domestic violence and stalking
- Make the campus community aware of support resources that are available even if the survivor does not wish to pursue disciplinary or criminal proceedings
- Offer extensive awareness and prevention programming to students and employees

## 3. Victims of dating/domestic violence and stalking may be at risk after reporting an incident.

Title IX coordinators, investigators, and student conduct personnel must recognize that reporting an incident does not secure safety for the victim. Research suggests that reporting could even increase the risk of harm, and that a survivor may be at higher risk within the first few months after ending a relationship. One study showed that 54 percent of women killed by a stalker had reported stalking to the police.

If law enforcement contact does not dissuade a perpetrator from committing homicide, college and university officials should be realistic about whether a disciplinary proceeding would, in and of itself, dissuade an abuser from an escalation in violence. Additional consideration must be given to assessing threats to the survivor and others involved such as a reporting witness, student conduct personnel, and friends.

#### **4. Campus threat assessment teams can help keep all parties safe.**

Title IX Coordinators and others responsible for responding to dating/domestic violence and stalking will be increasingly involved in complicated, potentially dangerous scenarios. Campus threat assessment and management (TAM) teams should be called on to evaluate and mitigate any safety risks or threats to help keep the survivor, and those involved with the case, safe during the Title IX process. TAM teams should pursue a forward-facing threat assessment investigation to create a threat management plan while the institution continues the adjudication and discipline process.

#### **5. A multi-disciplinary, integrated approach can enhance campus safety.**

Title IX Coordinators and other responsible officials should not “go it alone” when developing the institution’s response to reports of dating/domestic violence and stalking. Make a concerted effort to understand and incorporate the TAM team and their processes to develop a two-pronged response to reports. If needed, work with the TAM team to ensure that they understand the institution’s Title IX/Clery/VAWA obligations.

### **Learn more**

Your integrated response will provide increased support to survivors and others, initiate disciplinary action as required while enhancing overall campus safety. Learn more about an integrated approach at Title IX, VAWA, and Threat Assessment training. [Click here for dates and details.](#)

### **About the authors**

[Jeffrey J. Nolan, J.D.](#) is a partner with Dinse, Knapp & McAndrew, P.C., where his practice includes representing institutions of higher education. Nolan frequently presents, consults, and provides training on Title IX, Clery/VAWA compliance, and campus threat assessment.

[Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D.](#) is a managing partner of SIGMA Threat Management Associates and an international expert on threat assessment, targeted violence, and violence prevention. She serves as the director of threat assessment for Georgetown University.

Attend Title IX, VAWA, and Threat Assessment Training with Mr. Nolan and Dr. Randazzo. [Click here](#) for details.