

Explaining Your Duty to Report

Strategies and Ideas to Consider When Explaining Your Duty to Report



Turn it into a conversation and be prepared to ask questions.

You may be inclined to rattle off your mandatory reporter language all at once, but that can be overwhelming for the other person.

Explain your duty to report in manageable chunks and ask if they have questions as you go along.



Encourage them to tell you what happened.

It's important for the other person to know that you care and, in addition to your duty to report, you want to help them however you can.

Encourage them to share but avoid pushing them to provide the entire story.



Frame your duty to report as one designed to help them get the support they need.

Your duty to report stems from your institution's commitment to getting its community members the information and resources they need to make an informed decision about next steps, if they want to take any.



Be clear about the difference between private and confidential.

It's important not to promise confidentiality if you are not a confidential resource.



Be able to answer questions about the next steps.

Although you don't need to know all the details, sharing general information and resources is helpful.



Be calm.

The other person might be caught off guard by your duty to report, so it's important that you remain calm.

You may find it helpful to practice having this conversation, either by yourself or with a coworker, to find the language that works for you.

How you explain your duty to report may vary on the situation, your relationship (or lack thereof) with the individual, and your communication style.



Example Script

"I really appreciate you sharing this with me, and I want to help you. I need to let you know, though, that as a professor at ATIXA University, I have an obligation to report any incidents involving things like sex- or gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence when I become aware of them. So, I'll need to let the Title IX Coordinator know what you've told me."

[pause]

"I want you to know that, although I cannot keep what you've told me confidential, I can keep it private. I'm only telling the people I need to tell, and they only share the information with other people who need to know. Only a very limited group of people will know. Does that make sense?"

[pause]

"We have this policy so we can support people like you who are going through some challenges, so we can help you figure out your options. I want to help you, and I appreciate you sharing this information with me, but I wanted to be transparent with you."