Counseling and Mental Health Center

Voices Against Violence (VAV) Advocacy

Survivors’ needs may change over time and decision making is an ongoing process. However, we recognize that some decisions are time-sensitive such as choosing to obtain a sexual assault exam. Survivors are encouraged to consult with a VAV advocate to make informed choices. VAV believes that no one is at fault for their experience of harm or violence. We want survivors to be fully informed of their rights and options both on and off campus.

The goal of VAV Advocacy is to empower a survivor to make the choices that work best for them. There is no expectation that a survivor will choose to report or to seek counseling. Some survivors may choose to attend multiple advocacy appointments to assess their needs and options, while others may choose to not access any additional options. VAV supports the right of survivors to make decisions free from judgment.

Topics covered in advocacy sessions may include:

- Medical concerns
- Reporting options and procedures, both to the University and to law enforcement
- UT administrative options through UT Austin Student Judicial Services
- Legal options, including criminal and civil law (Please note that VAV does not offer legal advice, but we can refer to free legal services for survivors.)
- Obtaining an order of protection
- Safety planning
- Financial resources, including access to the VAV Survivors Emergency Fund
- Counseling options, both short and long-term, on or off campus
- Accompaniment to appointments on campus, or connecting with an advocate from SafePlace for appointments off-campus

Eligibility

Students eligible for Survivors Emergency Fund assistance must meet the following requirements:

- Be a currently enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin.
- Have experienced some form of interpersonal violence (sexual violence, relationship violence, stalking) that has compromised that student’s current safety, coping, and/or independence.

VAV Survivors’ Emergency Fund

Voices Against Violence (VAV) Survivor’s Emergency Fund provides financial assistance to student survivors of sexual violence, relationship violence, and/or stalking, towards the aim of increasing that student’s safety, coping, and independence. The fund was started in 2001 and has been supported entirely via individual contributions. Accessing the fund provides two important messages to survivors of interpersonal violence:

- We believe them
- No one should have to pay for expenses related to an experience of violence that was not their fault.

If you or someone you know would like more information about how to access the Fund, please contact the Counseling and Mental Health Center to schedule an appointment with a VAV counselor by calling 512-471-3515.

Type of Expenses Covered

The range of circumstances and services that may warrant assistance from the Survivors Emergency Fund varies greatly. Typical expenses that may be covered include, but are not limited to:

- Any safety related needs (i.e. changing locks on a vehicle or home, getting an unlisted telephone number or alternate cell phone, etc.)
- Costs related to medical care, including expenses related to a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam
- One-time assistance with rent and/or utilities
- Transportation
- Assistance with legal fees related to abuse and divorce, custody, or immigration issues
- Temporary childcare fees
- Storage and moving fees
- Payment to and from an out-of-town shelter or other safe space
- Books, fees, or other school-related expenses
- Financial bars with the University

More information about VAV issues and prevention can be found at cmhc.utexas.edu/vav

Questions, Comments or Requests? E-mail us at voicesagainstviolence@austin.utexas.edu

Together we can build a safer campus

Voices Against Violence (VAV) provides financial assistance to student survivors of sexual violence, relationship violence, and/or stalking, towards the aim of increasing that student’s safety, coping, and independence. The fund was started in 2001 and has been supported entirely via individual contributions. Accessing the fund provides two important messages to survivors of interpersonal violence:

- We believe them
- No one should have to pay for expenses related to an experience of violence that was not their fault.