

## Your Participation Has Impact

To gather data on the prevalence and nature of sexual assault, harassment, and exploitation, intimate partner abuse (dating and domestic violence), and stalking that CU students had experienced since arriving on campus, the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance ([OIEC](#)) conducted the [first CU Boulder sexual misconduct survey in 2015](#). This survey was not only meant to establish a baseline but also to gain insights into the impact of sexual violence. It helped inform improvements in prevention strategies, education, reporting systems, and support services with the overarching goal of enhancing campus culture.

The survey findings were the starting point for several initiatives and prevention efforts:

- **Enhanced online training for employees** to recognize problems, build skills for fulfilling the obligation to report potential policy violations, and respond effectively to students when they disclose an experience of sexual violence. *As a result of increased training*, reports to OIEC more than tripled from 2014 (466 cases) to 2023 (1692 cases). In 2018, mandatory training frequency was increased from every five years to every three years.
- **Expanded annual in-person sexual misconduct training for student-facing staff** (staff in Residence Life, Student Affairs, and Academic Advising). These sessions cover key issues, emerging trends, CU sexual misconduct survey findings, how to effectively respond to a student who discloses a traumatic event, and mandatory reporting.
- **Sorority and fraternity education:** Education for new fraternity members and sorority pledges was expanded and enhanced. These sessions cover topics like sexual decision-making, understanding affirmative consent, and effective bystander skills. CU sexual misconduct survey results are also presented.
- **Enhanced Community Equity course:** This required online course for undergraduate and graduate students covers university policy and resources for addressing sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment. The content was expanded to include bystander skills and skills for effectively supporting someone who has experienced a traumatic event like sexual assault. This mandatory course has been extended to law students and returning second-year undergraduates, as well.
- **[Don't Ignore It campaign](#):** This comprehensive educational effort includes posters for campus and local bars/restaurants, residence hall bulletin boards, bus and digital ads, and refrigerator magnets for every residence hall room. It also provides an online resource for campus members to learn more about support services (on and off campus), reporting options, and skills for addressing unwanted sexual behavior, abuse in relationships, stalking, harassment, and discriminatory actions. In addition, the website focuses on how to offer support when someone discloses a traumatic event and how to create an effective buddy system for looking out for friends. This campaign was recognized as an innovative practice in the [AAU Campus Activities Report for Combating Sexual Assault and Misconduct](#).

- **Survey data and retention research:** Sexual misconduct survey data were combined with other campus surveys and with institutional records to assess the impact of sexual violence on student retention and to explore how social factors, like belonging and friendmaking, help prevent sexual assault or mitigate its effects.

The [2021 sexual misconduct survey](#) revealed that the prevalence for all types of sexual misconduct had dropped, but lower rates may have stemmed from pandemic factors like decreased contact among students, students living at home with family and away from peers, and decreased interest in being sexually intimate due to infection risk. However, several encouraging findings emerged for students who experienced sexual assault:

- **Increased peer support:** The survey revealed the important role that friends have in supporting students who experience sexual assault. Results showed a substantial increase in the number of students who had talked to someone about being sexually assaulted (87%) compared to 2015 (67%).
- **Positive outcomes of peer disclosures:** Undergraduate women who told a friend or roommate about the sexual assault were significantly more likely to agree they had a sense of community, felt valued, and were treated like they belonged at CU Boulder. They were also significantly less likely to have considered leaving CU Boulder and significantly more likely to have been retained at CU.

In response to the 2021 survey findings, the Provost and COO established the [CU Boulder Sexual Misconduct Task Force](#) to identify academic and social strategies that reduce the risk and impact of sexual assault. This initiative has focused on community, social support, and mutual accountability in the classroom, residence halls, and social spaces on and off campus. Key outcomes include:

- The development and distribution of evidence-based and data-driven prevention strategies tailored by role for students, staff, and faculty supported.
- Support for the assessment of sexual assault and social factors among 2023 first-year students in the [Engineering Connections Residential Community](#) to determine whether the sense of community and mutual accountability fostered by the program would reduce the prevalence of sexual assault among first-year students and, when assault did occur, reduce its subsequent negative consequences.

This fall, the OIEC will administer the [Sexual Assault and Related Harms Survey](#) to measure the current prevalence of sexual misconduct and compare back results from previous years. These findings will inform ongoing efforts to improve prevention and response strategies that promote student well-being and retention at CU Boulder. Please [email OIEC](#) for more information about sexual misconduct surveying efforts at CU Boulder.