

GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO **SENSITIVE CONCERNS**



SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA HUMAN RESOURCES

These talking points can help you respond compassionately and appropriately when someone brings forward a concern that might involve harassment, discrimination, or other misconduct. Use them flexibly to support the individual and meet your reporting responsibilities.



OPENING THE CONVERSATION

- *Thanks for letting me know you have a concern.* Before you share details, I want you to know that there are limits to confidentiality when certain behaviors are reported.
 - *As a supervisor,* if the concern involves sexual harassment, assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, or other protected class harassment, I'm required to notify university offices that can assess and respond appropriately.
 - *If you're unsure about moving forward,* there are confidential resources on campus that can help you understand your options before you decide what to do next.
 - I want to support you and hear your concerns, and I also want you to be able to choose how you'd like to proceed.
 - **Would you still like to share your concern with me?** (*If yes, continue.*)
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LISTENING & GATHERING INFORMATION

- *Please tell me about your concern.*
 - *Thank you for sharing that with me.*
 - If the situation might involve sexual misconduct or harassment, let them know about support available through **RVAP** and **DVIP**.
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UNDERSTANDING NEEDS & NEXT STEPS

- *What outcome are you hoping for?*
 - *Are you comfortable continuing to work in your current assignment or role?*
 - *Is there anyone else you think I should speak with about this?*
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FOLLOWING UP

- I'll follow up with you as soon as I can about next steps.
- I may not be able to share the specific outcome or any disciplinary decisions, but I'll let you know when the issue has been addressed.
- Please know that the university's **Anti-Retaliation Policy** protects you for making a good faith report. If you experience anything that feels like retaliation, let me know right away.