Sexual Misconduct Case Management & Investigation Training

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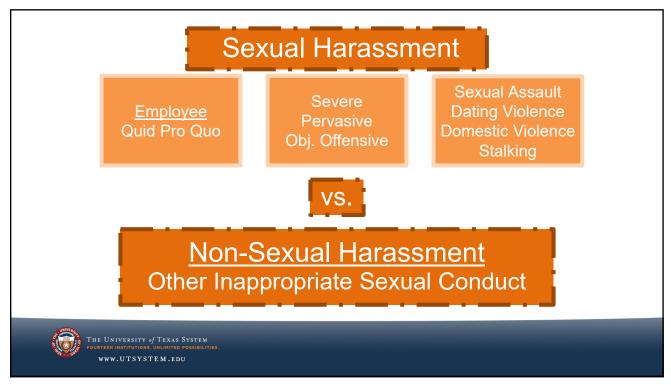
Agenda

- 1. Title IX Introduction
- 2. Triage & Case Management
 - Reports v. Formal Complaints
 - Emergency Removals
 - Formal Complaint Dismissals
 - Informal Resolutions
- 3. Conducting an Investigation

- 4. Interview Approaches
 - General Cases
 - Non-Stranger Sexual Assault Cases
 - IPV & Stalking Cases
- 5. Closing Steps
 - Issues of Relevance
 - Investigation Reports







Definition of "Sexual Harassment" under Title IX

Conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An <u>employee</u> of the institution conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the institution on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (Quid Pro Quo);
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be <u>so severe, pervasive,</u> <u>and objectively offensive</u> that it effectively denies a person equal access to the institution's education program or activity; or
- "Sexual assault," "dating violence," "domestic violence," or "stalking" as defined under Clery/VAWA.



Source: Title IX Regulations (2020)

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Definition of "Other Inappropriate Sexual Conduct"

Conduct on the basis of sex that does not meet the definition of "sexual harassment" (under the Model Policy), but is

- 1. Verbal conduct (including through electronic means), unwanted statements of a sexual nature intentionally stated to a person or group of people, that are objectively offensive to a reasonable person and also so severe or pervasive that it created a Hostile Environment, as defined in the Model Policy.
- 2. Physical conduct.



Source: UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2020)

Definition of "Other Inappropriate Sexual Conduct" (Cont.)

Examples:

- Unwelcome sexual advances (including explicit or implicit proposition(s) of sexual contact or activity);
- Requests for sexual favors (including overt or subtle pressure);
- Gratuitous comments about an individual's sexual activities or speculation about an individual's sexual experiences;
- Gratuitous comments, jokes, questions, anecdotes or remarks of a sexual nature about clothing or bodies;
- Persistent, unwanted sexual or romantic attention;
- Exposure to sexually suggestive visual displays such as photographs, graffiti, posters, calendars or other materials;
- Deliberate, repeated humiliation or intimidation;
- Unwelcome intentional touching of a sexual nature; or
- Deliberate physical interference with or restriction of movement.



Source: UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2020)

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"Education program or activity" under Title IX

Includes <u>locations</u>, <u>events</u>, <u>or</u> <u>circumstances</u> over which the institution exercises **substantial control** over both the respondent and the context in which the alleged sexual harassment occurs, and also includes <u>any building owned or controlled by a student organization</u> that is officially recognized by the institution.

 Example of a "building owned or controlled by a student organization": Fraternity or sorority house that is occupied by students of the organization, and the student organization is a recognized organization with the institution.



Source: Title IX Regulations (2020)

Key Pillars: Title IX Processes

Title IX processes should focus on impartiality, respect, fairness, & equity for all of the participants:

Complainants
Respondents
Witnesses
Third-party Reporters



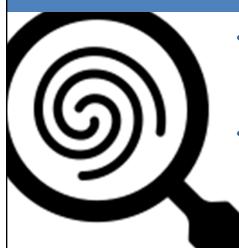
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Serving Impartially in Your Role

- Must avoid prejudgment of the facts at issue
- Must avoid conflicts of interest
- Must avoid bias



Principles for Fact-Finders



- Must maintain **complete neutrality & impartiality at all times** in investigating alleged conduct violations of institutional policies.
- Understanding bias & whether it exists: Need to take an "objective, common sense approach to evaluating whether a person serving in a role is biased." (*Title IX Preamble (2020)*)...



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Avoiding Bias

- Must <u>not</u> treat a party differently:
 - On the basis of the person's sex;
 - On stereotypes about how men or women behave with respect to sexual violence; and/or
 - On the basis of the person's protected characteristics: sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, immigration status, financial ability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristic.



Source: Title IX Preamble (2020)

Principles for Fact-Finders (Cont.)



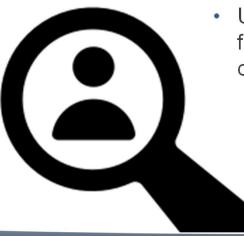
- Must consider all of the relevant evidence, including all possible inculpatory & exculpatory evidence obtained in the investigation
 - Exculpatory: Evidence tending to excuse, justify, or absolve the person of the alleged conduct.
 - Inculpatory: Evidence that places responsibility on the person of the alleged conduct.



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Principles for Fact-Finders (Cont.)



- Use a "reasonable person" standard for weighing all of the evidence in the context of an investigation
 - An objective test to denote a hypothetical person who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct under similar circumstances as a comparative standard.



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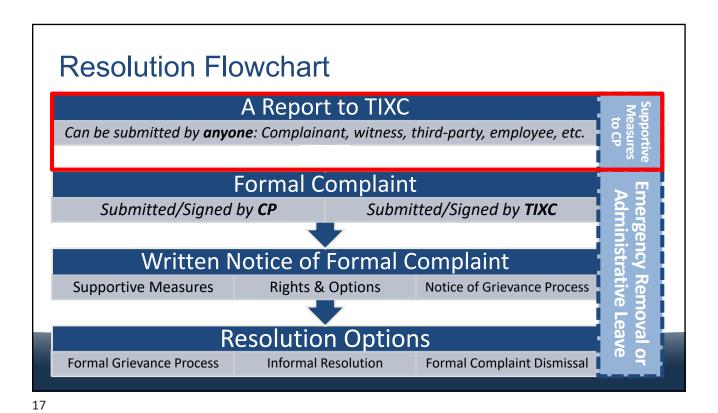
Other Components of this Training

- Conducting an investigation
- Understanding issues of relevance to create an investigation report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence of questions posed and evidence obtained



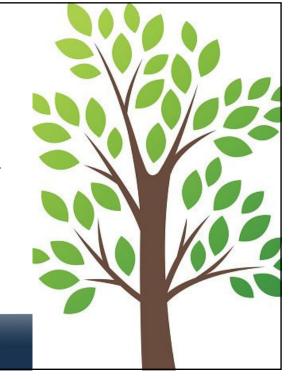
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A Report to the Title IX Coordinator (TIXC)

TIXC must promptly contact the **complainant** to discuss the availability of <u>supportive measures</u> (with or without a formal complaint), consider the <u>wishes of the complainant</u>, and explain the process for <u>filing a formal</u> complaint.





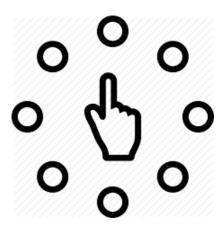
Other Required Action

Type of Concern	Action
Non-emergency behavioral or wellness issues(s)	Refer to Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) or campus equivalent
Immediate safety concerns (emergencies) or welfare check required	Report immediately to 911
Clery reportable crimes that meet Clery geography requirements and/or timely warning requirements	<u>Timely Warnings</u> : Report immediately to campus law enforcement <u>Clery Crime Reporting</u> : Report to the campus Clery Manager
Alleged abuse and/or neglect of minors	Report immediately to Dept. of Family & Protective Services (DFPS): 800-252-5400
Alleged conduct could violate other institutional policies	Refer to the appropriate office(s) who oversees the applicable policies

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TIXC: Options for Next Steps

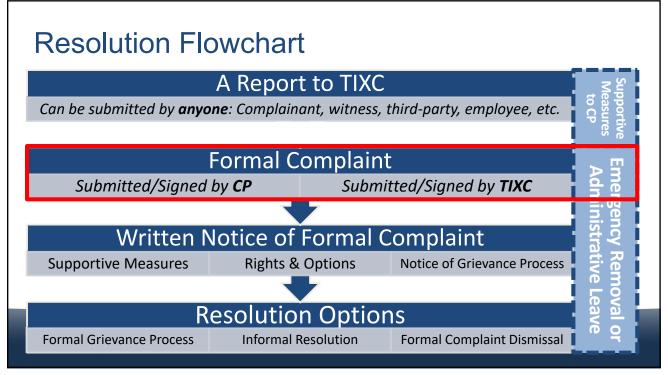
- Supportive Measures for the CP
- CP's right to file a formal complaint
- TIXC files a formal complaint, in lieu of a Reluctant Complainant and/or compelling reasons to investigate further...



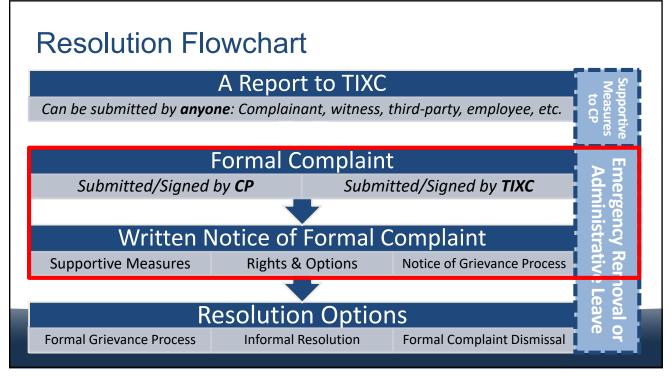


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Written Notice of Formal Complaint

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, promptly send written notice to CP & RP:

- Notice of the grievance process under the policy;
- Notice of the allegations that <u>potentially constitute</u> prohibited conduct under the policy, sufficient details about the alleged conduct: Date(s), time(s), and location(s);
- A statement that the potential policy violations are being investigated;



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Written Notice (Continued)

- A statement that the RP is <u>presumed not responsible</u> for the alleged conduct and that the determination regarding responsibility will be made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
- Both parties may have an <u>advisor of choice</u>, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review all evidence;
- A statement that the parties may review evidence gathered as part of the any investigation;



Written Notice (Continued)

- A provision of the policy that knowingly making <u>false</u> <u>statements</u> or knowingly submitting <u>false information</u> during the grievance process is <u>prohibited</u> and subject to disciplinary action;
- · Any other relevant information for the written notice; and
- A statement that <u>retaliation is prohibited</u> under the policy. (recommended)

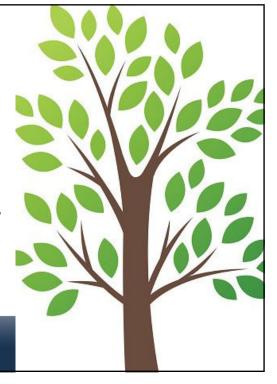


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Other **resources** to include with the written notice:

- Supportive measures available for both parties
- 2. Campus & local resources or services
- 3. Rights & options of both parties
- 4. A copy of the grievance process & policy
- Title IX Coordinator & Investigator(s) contact information





Party's Rights

A **Complainant** and **Respondent** have the following rights during a grievance process:

- To be informed of and have access to counseling, medical, academic, and other applicable support services, including confidential resources.
- To be informed of the importance of a victim going to a hospital for treatment and the preservation of evidence, if applicable, as soon as practicable after an alleged incident.
- To be informed of a notice of formal complaint to the University, whether filed by a CP or the TIXC.
- To receive a prompt, fair, equitable, and impartial grievance process.
- To receive information and ask questions about the formal and informal processes.



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Party's Rights (Cont.)

- To be given equal chance to participate in a grievance process, including the opportunity to identify witnesses and other relevant evidence.
- To choose <u>not</u> to actively participate in the grievance process, if desired.
- To have an advisor of choice present during all meetings and grievance proceedings.
- To have an advisor provided for a party at a hearing under the Title IX/SH grievance process, if an advisor of choice is not present.



Party's Rights (Cont.)

- To have access and equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation, and to receive a copy of the completed investigation report.
- To be equally informed of any determinations regarding responsibility, dismissals of formal complaints, and/or a party's filing of an appeal.
- To appeal a <u>determination</u> regarding responsibility and/or <u>dismissals</u> of formal complaints.
- To file a report with local and/or campus law enforcement authorities.

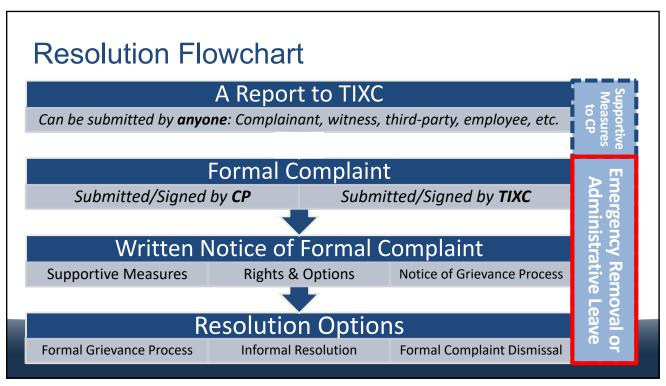


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Complainant's Rights

- To report an incident and/or file a formal complaint with the University.
- To request in writing that the University not investigate a reported incident and be informed of the University's decision whether or not to investigate.
- To request in writing a dismissal of a formal complaint (e.g. withdraws the formal complaint or any allegations therein).





Emergency Removals

- 1. Individualized safety & risk analysis: Determines that <u>immediate threat</u> to the <u>physical health & safety</u> of any student or other individual arising from the allegations <u>justifies the respondent's removal</u> from the education program or activity.
 - Notice & opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.
 - Rights under ADA & Section 504 still apply.
- Doesn't preclude an institution from placing nonstudent employee respondents on administrative leave during the pendency of the grievance process.



Most Critical Warning Signs

- 1. Direct communicated threat.
- 2. Plans, tools, weapons, and/or materials to carry out physical harm.
- 3. Harbors violence fantasies.
- 4. A timeframe or action plan created.
- 5. Fixations and/or focused on a specific target.
- 6. Grudges or resentments.

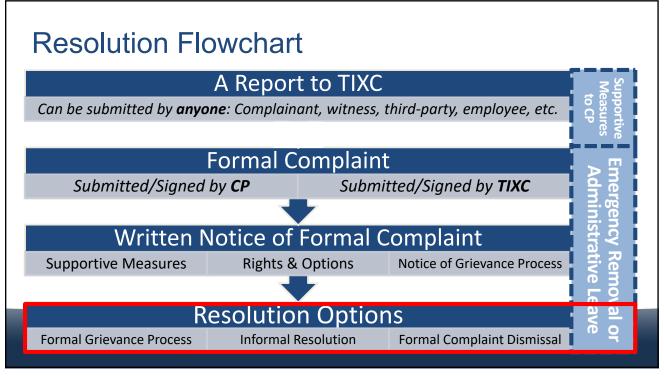
- 7. The specific target has been described negatively in writing by the person of concern.
- 8. "Leakage" concerning a potential action plan.
- 9. Current suicidal thoughts, ideations, and/or plan to die.
- Talks about being persecuted or treated unjustly.
- 11. Engaged in "last acts" behaviors.
- 12. Confused, odd, or troubling thoughts; may hear voices or see things that are not there.

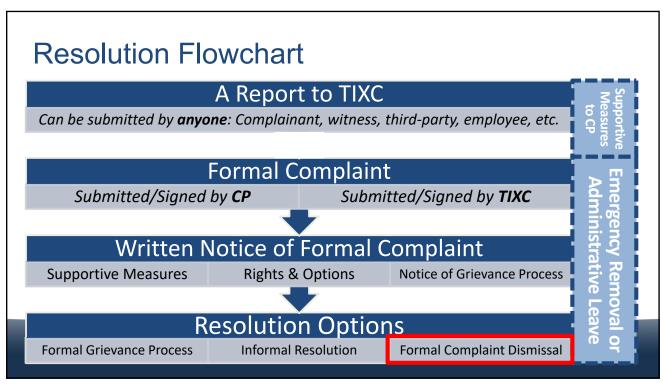


Source: SIVRA-35, NaBITA

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Mandatory Formal Complaint Dismissals under Title IX

Mandatory Dismissals are required when the definitional or any element of the jurisdictional framework under Title IX is not met:

- Conduct alleged constitutes "sexual harassment" under the regulations;
- Conduct alleged occurs in the institution's "education program or activity";
- Conduct alleged occurs against a person "in the United States"; or
- Complainant is participating in or attempting to participate in the "education program or activity" of the institution.



If **Mandatory Dismissal** is required, then are additional <u>discretionary reasons</u> for a dismissal applicable to the specific circumstances?

- CP expressly prefers to dismiss the formal complaint or requests to not investigate the matter.
- RP was an employee and is no longer employed by the institution at the time the formal complaint is filed.
- Any specific circumstances that prevent the institution from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations.
- The conduct alleged <u>does not</u> meet the definition of any prohibited conduct under the institution's Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Additional Considerations



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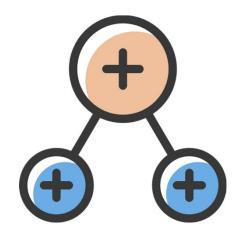
Dismissing a Formal Complaint under Title IX <u>doesn't preclude</u> an institution from addressing conduct prohibited under an institution's policy through a fair and equitable grievance process...



Triage Again

Consider compelling reasons for continuing a grievance process:

- 1. The nature, circumstances, & seriousness of the alleged conduct;
- The safety & risk of harm to others;
- Any pattern evidence, other similar conduct or allegations of the RP;
- 4. RP's affiliation with the institution & applicable options for institutional action; and/or
- 5. Other relevant factors in the specific matter?





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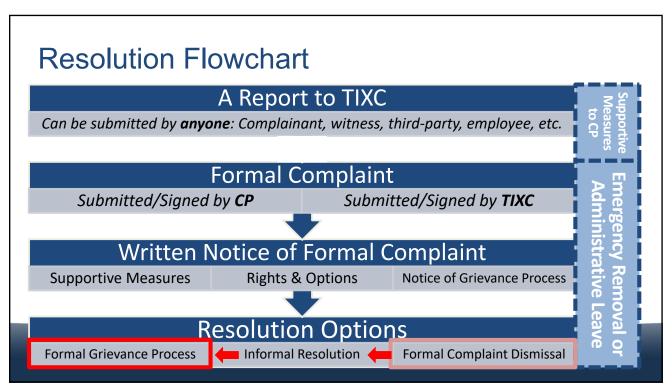
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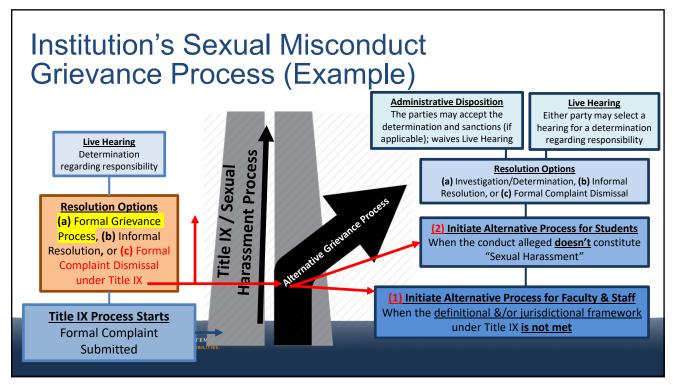
Notice of Formal Complaint Dismissal

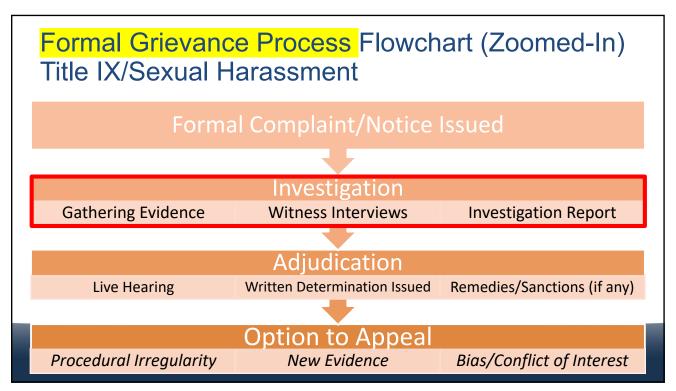
- Note the reasons for the mandatory dismissal "under Title IX" (if applicable).
- 2. Explain the rationale for the following:
 - Additional <u>discretionary reason(s)</u> for <u>dismissing</u> the formal complaint under the institution's policy and <u>closing the case</u>; <u>or</u>
 - Additional compelling reason(s) for <u>continuing a</u> <u>grievance process</u> under the institution's policy (e.g. the allegations still apply to the policy).
- Option to Appeal the F.C. Dismissal
- 4. Outline next steps in the process (if applicable) <u>or</u> note the conclusion/end of the process with this formal complaint dismissal.

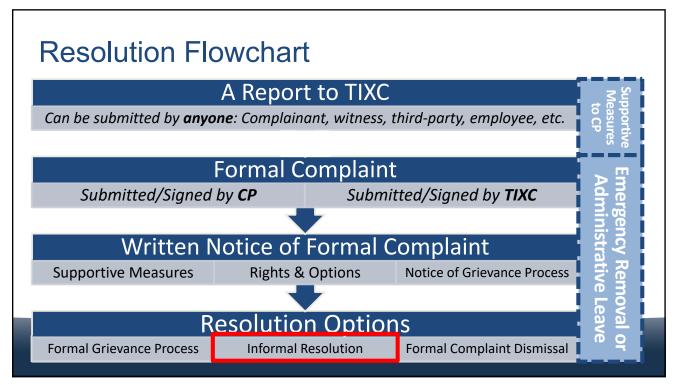












Informal Resolutions

- **1. It's an alternative resolution option** once a formal complaint is filed.
 - Available as an option <u>at any time</u> prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility.
 - o <u>Doesn't</u> involve a full investigation & adjudication.
 - May be facilitated through **mediation** (as an example).
 - Informal Resolution Process must include:

 (a) Written notice of allegations, (b) Requirements of the informal process, & (c) Any consequences resulting from participating in an informal process (e.g. record keeping).



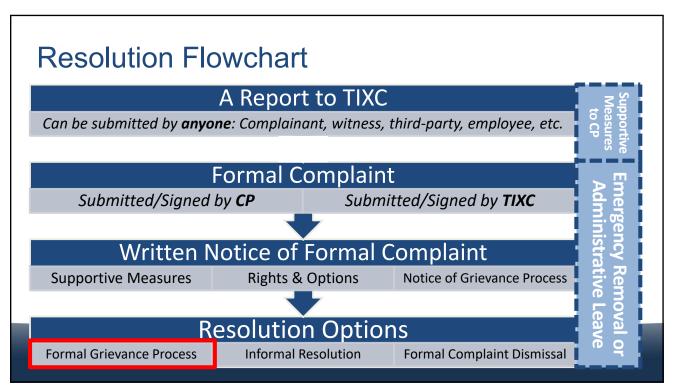
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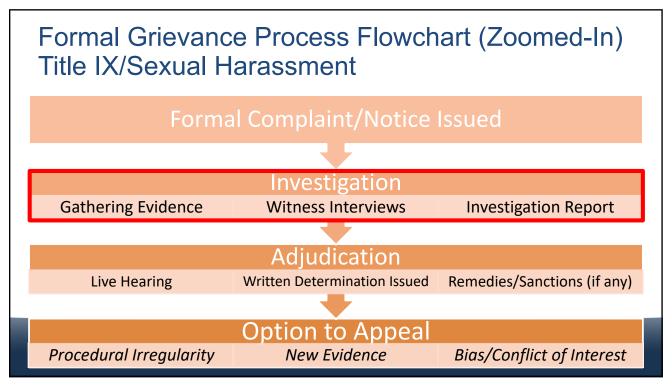
Informal Resolutions (Cont.)

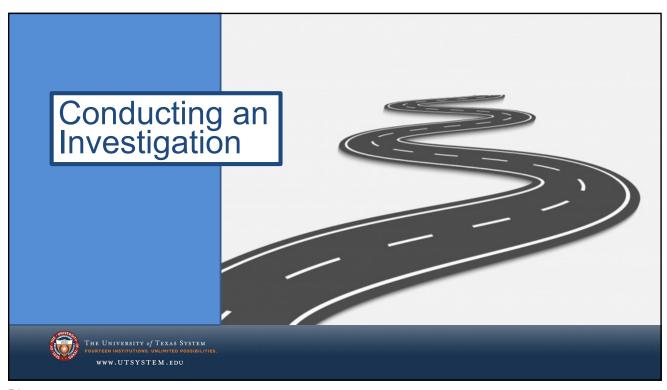
- 2. <u>Not permitted</u> as a resolution option "under Title IX" when an **employee respondent** is alleged of "sexual harassment" by a **student complainant**.
- 3. Examples of other non-applicable reasons* due to seriousness and/or pattern of allegations:
 - Sexual Harassment cases
 - Sexual Violence cases
 - Dating or Domestic Violence cases
 - Stalking cases
 - The same respondent has previous informal resolution agreements

^{*} Check the institution's Sexual Misconduct Policy for specific provisions









Investigation Plan: The Foundation

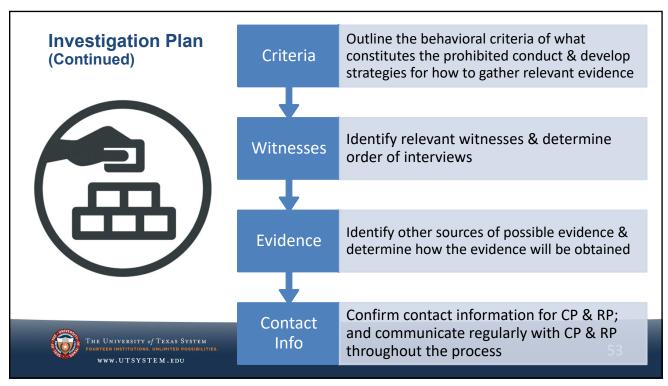
Basis for the investigation?

- Alleged incident of prohibited conduct
- Alleged pattern of prohibited conduct
- Alleged climate issue(s) in an area or department



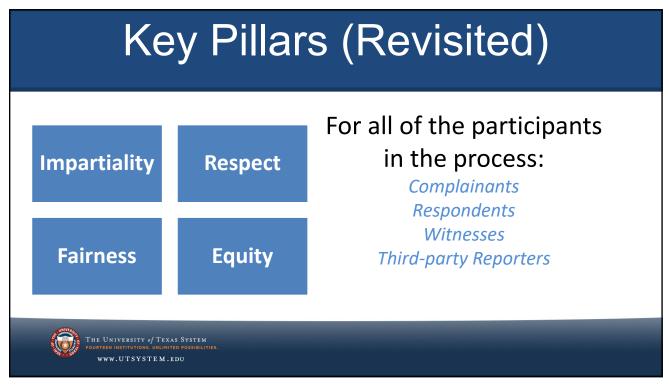


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Basis for a "Trauma-Informed" Approach

- A. Encourages <u>all participants</u> to share what they are able to recall about their experience without demanding chronological recall; and
- B. Facilitates the gathering of information in a <u>balanced</u> manner from all individuals

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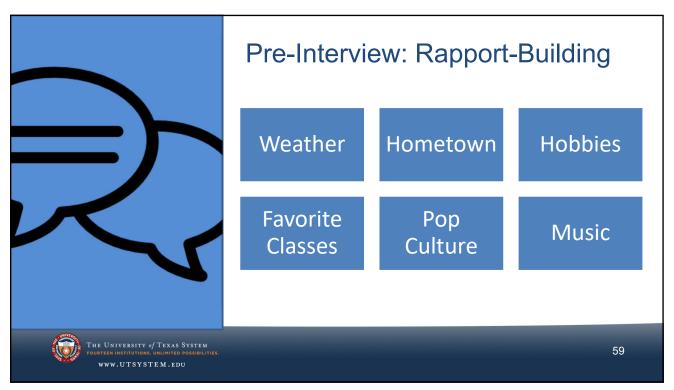
Before an Interview

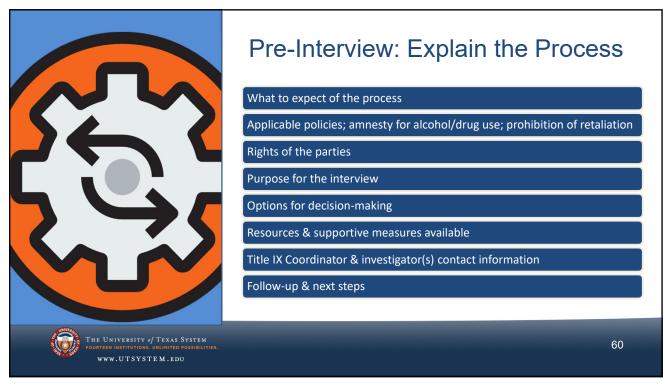
- Develop a safe space for a person's physical & emotional well-being
- Have handouts & resources readily available





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Interview Prompts

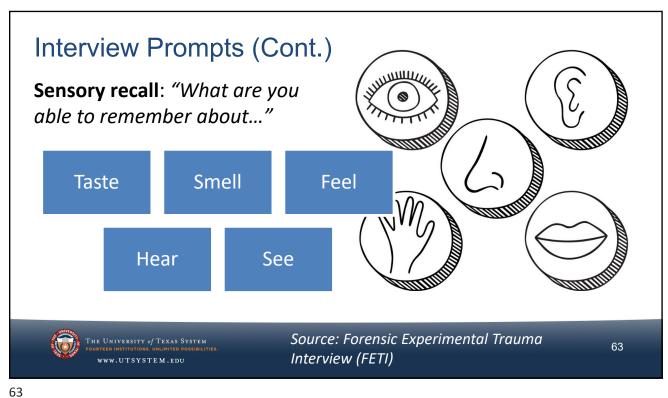
- Seek clarity with "Tell me more about that ... " or "Help me understand..."
 - Attempt to clarify inconsistencies from all parties.
- "What was your thought process...

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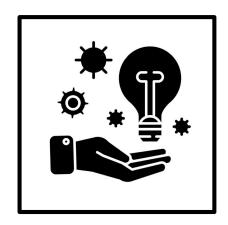
Interview (FETI)

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Interview Prompts (Cont.)

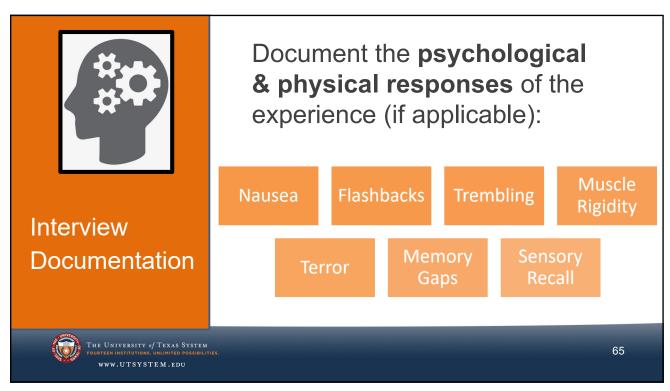
- "What were your reactions to...?"
 - o Emotional response?
 - o Physical response?
- "What was the most difficult part of this experience for you?"
- "What, if anything, can't you forget about your experience?"

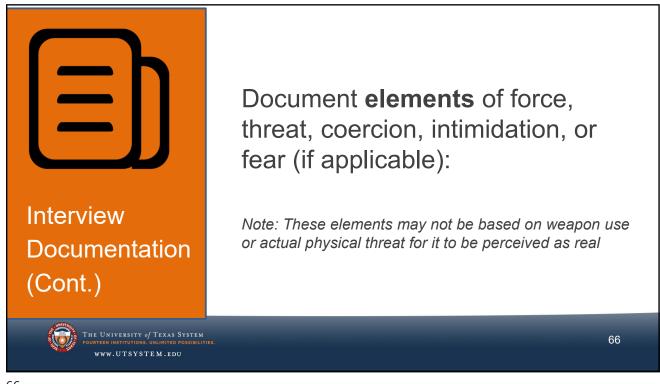


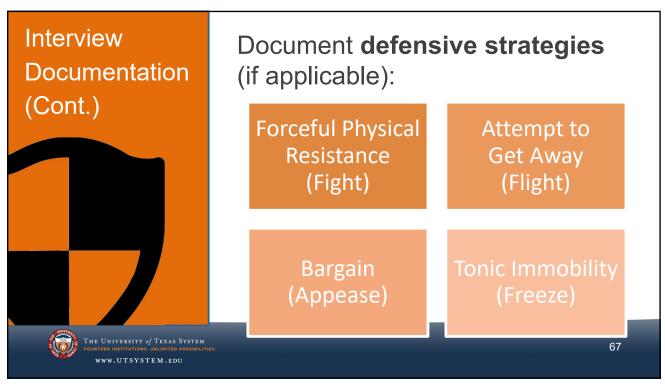


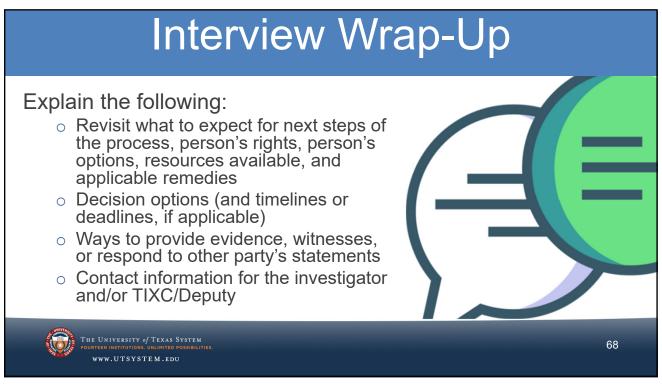
Source: Forensic Experimental Trauma Interview (FETI)

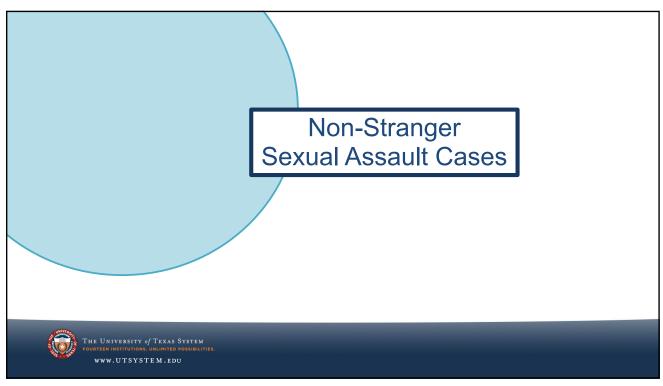
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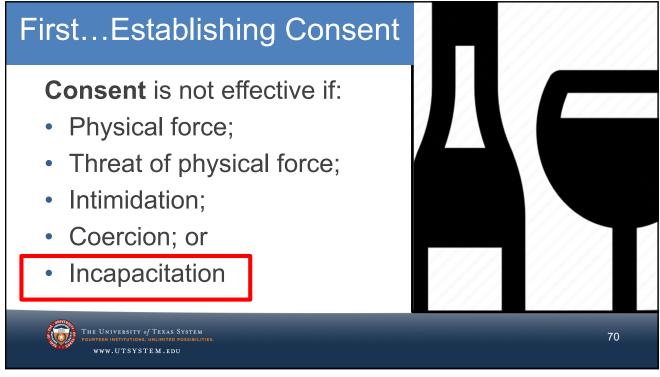












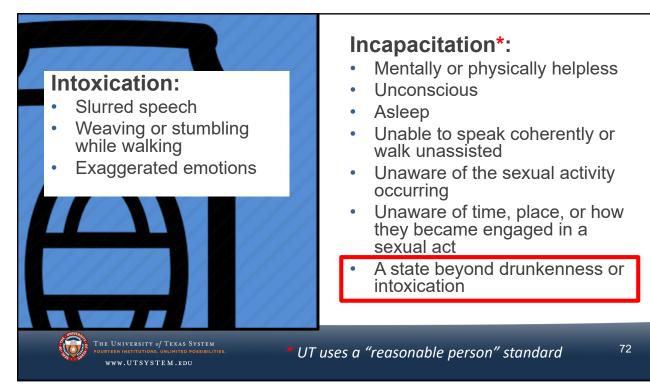
Consent Questions

- Refer to the definition of "consent" based on the institution's policy.
- What was the nature, timing, & scope of the **relationship** btwn the parties?
- What were each party's **expectations** (e.g. perceived, communicated), about the **nature of the contact** on the date of the alleged incident?
- What was the manner of communication **before**, **during**, **& after** the alleged incident (e.g. words & actions) btwn the parties?
- What were the circumstances of the CP's disclosure & the RP's reaction to the disclosure?
- What was the **impact** of alcohol or other drug use in relation to the **ability to give** consent?
- Are there any reported or demonstrated predatory behaviors?



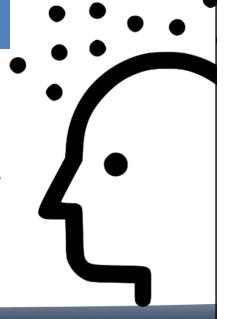
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Incapacitation Questions

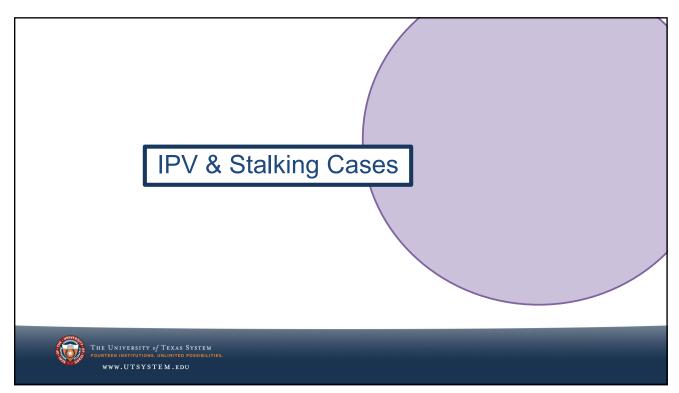
- What were each person's **pre-incident** behavior?
- Quantity and quality of alcohol & other drug use:
 - O What was the nature of the event & setting?
 - o Was there any respective power or control of either party?
 - o Who supplied the alcohol or other drug(s) to either party?
- What were each person's expectations & mindset?
- How did each person reasonably know the level of intoxication of the other party?
- Is there any information from witnesses, video footage, etc. as to the level of incapacitation?
- What were each person's post-incident behavior?



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Determining Predominant Aggressors

Common Considerations:

- Presence or threat of a weapon
- History of dating or domestic violence
- Pre-existing protective orders or "no contact" directives
- Comparative extent of injury (if both are injured)
- Indicators of power & control



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Has the RP:

- Prevented you from talking to others such as family or friends?
- Listened to your private phone calls or read your email?
- Acted jealous?
- Humiliated you at home or in public?
- Broken your personal belongings?
- Behaved violently or aggressively in public?
- Been arrested in the past for violence?

Assessing

Danger

(Example

Questions

for CP)



Assessing
Lethality
(Example
Questions
for CP)

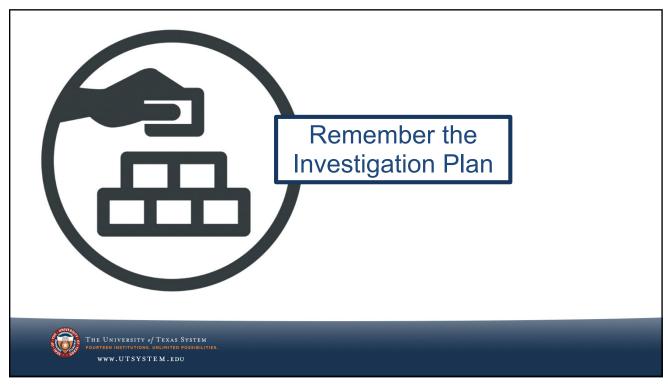
Has the RP:

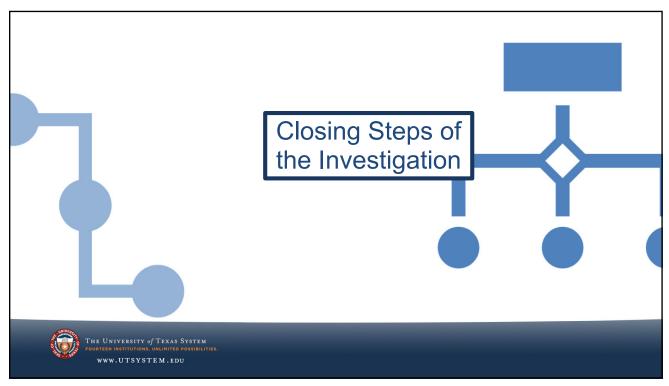
- Have access to a weapon, and/or threatened to use a weapon?
- Threatened to harm or kidnap your children?
- Threatened to kill you, themselves, or others?
- Harmed your pet(s)?
- Been abusing alcohol or drugs?
- Stalked or followed you?
- Forced you or your children to flee in the past?

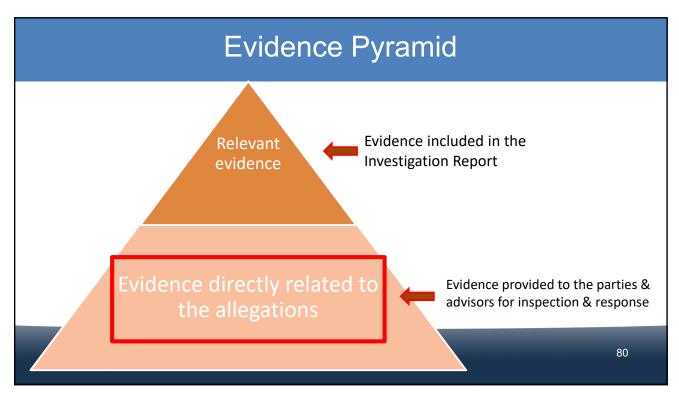


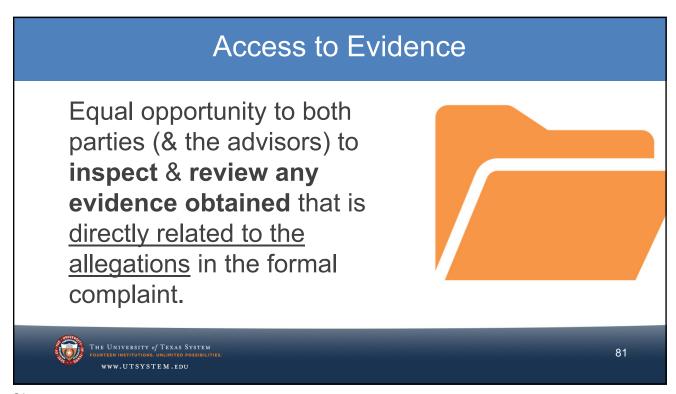
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Access to Evidence (Cont.)

Send each party (& the advisors*) the applicable evidence:

- In hard copy or electronic format
- At least 10 days to inspect, review, & respond to the evidence
- All responses to the evidence must be submitted in writing to the investigator(s)

* Advisor of choice; or the provided advisor by the institution (If applicable)



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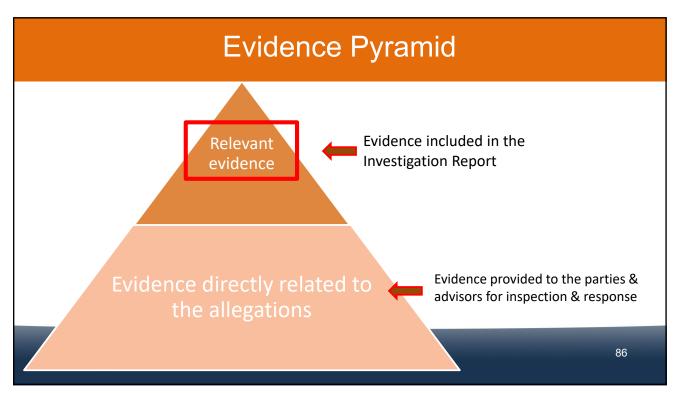
Access to Evidence (Cont.)

The investigators will consider all timely responses submitted by the parties **prior** to completing the investigation report.



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Relevant Evidence



Evidence is relevant if:

- The evidence has any tendency to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without the evidence; and
- The fact is of <u>consequence</u> in determining the action.



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Relevant Evidence



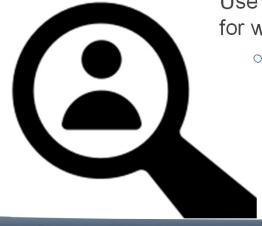
Another way to frame it:

- Exculpatory evidence: Evidence tending to excuse, justify, or absolve the person of the alleged conduct.
- Inculpatory evidence: Evidence that places responsibility on the person of the alleged conduct.



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Use a "reasonable person" standard for weighing all of the evidence:

 An <u>objective test</u> to denote a hypothetical person who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct <u>under similar</u> <u>circumstances</u> as a comparative standard.



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Medical Records Evidence



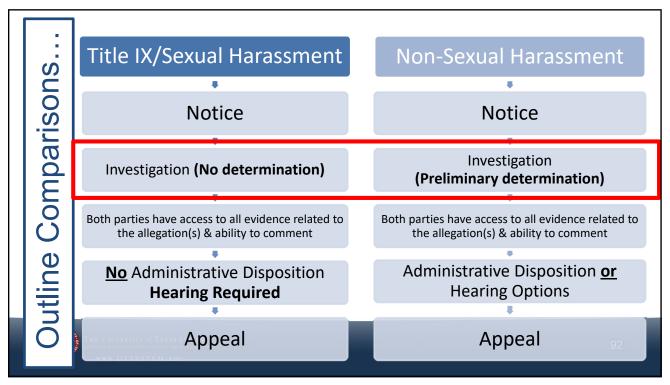
<u>Cannot</u> access, consider, disclose, or use a party's **medical** or **mental health records** as evidence unless the party provides <u>voluntary</u>, <u>written</u> <u>consent</u> to the institution for the grievance process.

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Completed Investigation Report: **Sexual Harassment Cases**

- Outline each of the allegations that potentially constitutes prohibited conduct under the Policy.
- Provide a timeline (e.g. procedural steps) of the investigation. (recommended)





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Sexual Harassment: Completed Investigation Report (Cont.)

- **3. Fairly summarize** <u>relevant</u> <u>evidence</u>, participate statements, and responses to questions.
 - Exculpatory: Evidence tending to excuse, justify, or absolve the person of the alleged conduct.
 - Inculpatory: Evidence that places responsibility on the person of the alleged conduct.



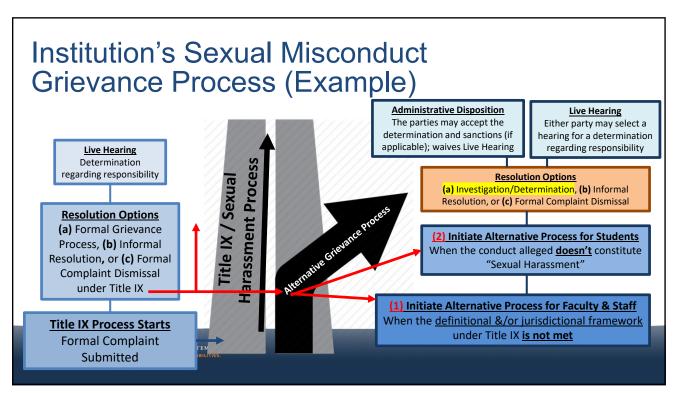
Non-Sexual Harassment: Investigation Report

- Outline allegations related to the Policy
- 2. Timeline of the investigation
- 3. Fairly summarize relevant evidence
- 4. Credibility assessments*
- 5. Evidence analysis & rationale*
- 6. Preliminary determination regarding responsibility*



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Access to the Completed Investigation Report

Send each party (& the advisors*) the completed investigation report:

- At least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing
 - Why? Opportunity for the parties to inspect, review, & respond to the investigation report (at the hearing)
- A copy of the investigation report to the TIXC and hearing officer assigned.

^{*} Advisor of choice; or the provided advisor by the institution (If applicable)



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Contact Information

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