

Concerns about Confidentiality and Privacy

Breaching confidentiality or violating privacy are common concerns for survivors of sexual violence. Often survivors do not disclose sexual violence because they do not want anyone to know¹ and they may feel that their confidentiality may be breached by informal or formal sources.² For example, victims may have privacy concerns if formal supports insist on contacting other support services.³ Visibility and confidentiality concerns can be prominent barriers among sexual violence survivors living in rural communities or ethno-specific communities. Often they worry that once a formal support is contacted everyone in the community will know.⁴ Some may worry that private personal information such as sexual orientation will be revealed if they report sexual violence.⁵

¹ Thompson, M., Sitterle, D., Clay, G. & Kingree, J. (2007). Reasons for not reporting victimizations to the police: Do they vary for physical and sexual incidents? *Journal of American College Health*, 55(5), 277-282.

² Santovec, M.L. (2011). Reducing barriers to students reporting sexual assaults. *Women in Higher Education*, 20, 7-8.

³ Patterson, D., Greeson, M. & Campbell, R. (2009). Understanding rape survivors' decisions not to seek help from formal social systems. *Health & Social Work*, 34(2), 127-136.

⁴ Dylan, A., Regehr, C., & Alaggia, R. (2008). *And justice for all? Aboriginal victims of sexual violence. Violence Against Women*, 14, 678- 696.

⁵Long, S.M., Ullman, S.E., Long, L.M., Mason, G.E. & Starzynski, L.L. (2007). Women's experiences of male-perpetrated sexual assault by sexual orientation. *Violence and Victims*, 22(6), 684-701.