

Gaston College does not endorse a particular service over another; however, some of the services available include the following:

Service	Contact Information
Gaston College Counseling/Career Development Center	704.922.6220 or 704.748.5209
Carolina Center for Counseling	704.861.2234
Family Services, Inc.	704.864.7704
Partners Behavior Health Management Referral Services	888.235.4673
Phoenix Counseling Center	704.854.4830
Piedmont Psychological Associates	704.861.0271
Gaston/Lincoln County 24-hour Rape Crisis Hotline	704.864.0060
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1.800.656.HOPE (4673)
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1.800.799.SAFE (7233)

Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking (Definitions and Examples)

Sexual Assault

A sex offense is any act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.

Consent

An affirmative decision to engage in mutually acceptable sexual activity given by clear actions or words. It is an informed decision made freely and actively by all parties. Relying solely upon nonverbal communication can lead to miscommunication. It is important not to make assumptions; if confusion or ambiguity on the issue of consent arises anytime during a sexual interaction, it is essential that each participant stops and clarifies, verbally, willingness to continue. Individuals should understand that consent may not be inferred from silence, passivity, or lack of active resistance alone.

Domestic Violence

In North Carolina, domestic violence includes the following criminal offenses: Simple Assault; Assault Inflicting Serious Injury; Assault on a Female; Assault by Pointing a Gun; Violation of a Domestic Violence Protection Order.

Dating Violence

Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. Dating Violence includes, but is not limited to sexual abuse, physical abuse, and threat of sexual or physical abuse.

Acquaintance Rape

A term that describes forced intercourse by an attacker that is known to a victim.

Stalking

Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her personal safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress. In North Carolina, stalking includes the following as criminal offenses: stalking, cyber-stalking, and Violation of a Domestic Violence Protective Order.

For more information on topics covered in this brochure, please refer to the Gaston College Annual Security Report (ASR) and the Student Handbook at www.gaston.edu.

Adapted from: Gaston College Annual Security Report (2019, Oct. 10) pp. 3-13



Sexual Violence

Prevention and Education

In accordance with College Policy, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA), and the Clery Act, Gaston College is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from harassment of any kind and specifically sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.



Reporting an Incident of Sexual Misconduct

All persons are encouraged to report incidents of sexual misconduct. Students should consult the Student Handbook for proper reporting procedures.

Gaston College General Crime Prevention Tips

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times including times when you may be less alert and more vulnerable to an attack (e.g., during exams, illness, or when tired).
- Use discretion and caution when taking shortcuts through isolated parts of campus.
- Have your keys in your hand as you approach your car.
- Lock your doors when driving and immediately after entering your vehicle.
- Check the back seat and floor before you enter your vehicle.
- As you approach your vehicle, scan the area under and around your vehicle.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Be especially alert in parking structures.
- If you have vehicle trouble, signal for help by raising the hood or tying a handkerchief to the door. Remain in your vehicle with doors locked until identifiable help arrives.
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle that contains various items such as a flashlight, distress signs, and bottled water.
- Check the inside of an elevator before entering. Wait for the next elevator if you have any concerns.
- When riding an elevator, stand by the control board. If you feel in danger, press all the buttons and get off the elevator as soon as possible. (Note: Gaston College campus elevators are equipped with either emergency phones or push-button alarm bells.)
- Check bus schedules to avoid long waits at a bus stop. Become familiar with routes and timetables in your area.
- Wait for buses at well-lighted stops and, if possible, join others at a nearby stop.
- If someone bothers you on a bus, say loudly, “Leave me alone” or “No, find another seat” and inform the driver.
- Notice others who get off the bus at your stop. If you feel someone is following you, walk towards a populated area. Avoid walking directly home.
- Take a few minutes and think about how you would react to various situations that could arise, such as a robbery or if you are attacked. Remember to: trust your instincts, never be afraid to be impolite or make a scene (even if it is someone you know), and try to remain calm.

Sexual Misconduct and Violence Prevention Tips (Parties and Social Gatherings)

- Be vigilant at parties and other social gatherings that may include the presence of drugs and/or alcohol and never leave your drink unattended.
- Arrive and leave with persons you trust.
- Only drink from previously un-opened containers or from drinks you have watched being made and poured and keep track of how many drinks you have.
- Avoid group drinks like punch bowls.
- To prevent a drug from being slipped into a drink, hold your hand over the top of a container or choose drinks that are contained in a bottle and keep your thumb over the opening.
- If you start to suddenly feel tired or intoxicated, you may have been drugged, so find a friend and ask him/her to leave with you as soon as possible.
- If you suspect you have been drugged, go to a hospital and ask to be tested.
- Don’t give out your personal information (e.g., phone number, address, etc.). If someone asks for your number, take his/her number instead of giving yours.

Warning Signs of Domestic or Dating Violence or Abuse

- You are fearful of your partner.
- You are constantly watching what you say to avoid a “blow up.”
- You have feelings of low self-worth and helplessness about your relationship.
- You feel isolated from family or friends because of your relationship.
- You hide bruises or other injuries from family or friends.
- You feel pressure about working, studying, going home, and/or using technology such as your cell phone.
- You are or feel as though you are being monitored by your partner.

Bystander Intervention

- If you are a bystander to an incident of sexual misconduct, you should ask the victim if they need help and evaluate the risk of trying to stop the incident.
- If you determine that it is too dangerous, yell for help and call 911. As a bystander and witness, try to avoid leaving the scene.
- With your presence, a perpetrator is more likely to discontinue.

Reporting - Sexual Harassment and/or Misconduct

All persons are encouraged to report incidents of sexual harassment and/or misconduct to a College official. Reporting should include the name of the person(s) directly involved in the incident(s); the name(s) of the person(s) who is, are, or may be, a witness to the incident(s); a description of the incident(s), including date(s), time(s), and location(s); the specific code(s) of conduct that is/are believed to be violated; and any action(s) that has/have been taken regarding the matter.

Tips for Handling Incidents of Sexual Misconduct

- Clearly communicate your sexual limits to your partner.
- Forcefully say “no” if pressured for unwanted sex. If saying “no” does not work, try to get away by running and screaming for help.
- Get medical attention.
- Call the police, rape crisis hotline, a friend, or family member.
- Contact a rape crisis or counseling center.
- Go to a safe place.
- Reporting is your choice. If you do not report, try to write down the details of the assault and save them in case you change your mind.
- Whether you report or not, seek medical attention for treatment of external or internal injuries and testing for sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.

If You Are Told About an Incident of Sexual Misconduct

If someone tells you about an incident of sexual misconduct, you should listen carefully and not be judgmental. You should remain patient and give the other person time to talk about the incident. Try to empower the other person, but don’t pressure them into doing anything that they are not prepared to do at that time. You may encourage the person to report a rape or similar incident to law enforcement. If the person has questions regarding the legal process, you can guide them to contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE (4673). If the person is willing to seek medical attention or report the assault, offer to accompany them wherever they need to go such as the hospital, local police, or to the Campus Police and Security Department.

Investigations - Sexual Harassment and/or Misconduct

The College has a compelling obligation to investigate allegations and suspected instances of sexual harassment and/or misconduct. Investigations will be prompt, fair, and impartial, and all individuals will be treated with appropriate sensitivity and respect.

Confidentiality

The College will make every reasonable effort to conduct all proceedings in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of all parties. In certain situations it may be necessary to disclose information as part of any investigation, disclose information to others on a “need-to-know” basis, or disclose information when compelled or required to do so by law. All persons involved should treat the matter with discretion and respect for the reputation of all parties involved.

Rights of the Victim and Accused and Resources

A victim and the person accused have certain rights regarding incidents of sexual harassment and/or misconduct including a prompt, fair, and impartial investigation by qualified persons, the opportunity to have others present during any institutional disciplinary proceedings, including an advisor of their choice, and the right to be simultaneously notified of all outcomes in writing. The College will assist victims with reporting crimes to law enforcement agencies upon request. Individuals may also choose not to report alleged sexual harassment and/or misconduct to a College official or law enforcement authorities. The College will respect an individual’s decision with regard to reporting; however, the College may notify appropriate law enforcement authorities if required or warranted.