Sexual Misconduct Informal Resolution Training

Krista Anderson, Systemwide Title IX Coordinator Sean Flammer, Assistant General Counsel

Fall 2022

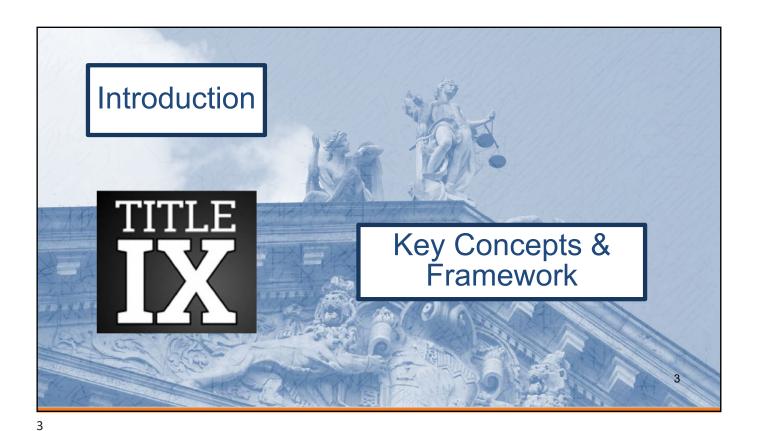


1

Agenda

- 1. Title IX Introduction
- 2. Triage/Case Mgt
- 3. Informal Resolution Process
- 4. Facilitation Approaches
- Documentation & Record Keeping

2



Sexual Harassment

Severe Pervasive Obj. Offensive

Sexual Assault Dating Violence Domestic Violence Stalking

Vs.

Non-Sexual Harassment
Ex. Other Inappropriate Sexual Conduct

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);
- 2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be **so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive** that it effectively denies a person equal access to the institution's education program or activity; or
- 3. "Sexual assault," "dating violence," "domestic violence," or "stalking" as defined under Clery/VAWA.



Source: Title IX Regulations (2020)

5

5

#2 Element Examples

- "Severe": Physically threatening or humiliating; effects of the alleged conduct to a reasonable person (using a "reasonable person" standard)
- "Pervasive": Frequency, duration of the alleged conduct
- "Objectively offensive": To a reasonable person (using a "reasonable person" standard)
- "Reasonable person" standard: 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.
- "Effectively denies...equal access": Totality of the circumstances

For example, the degree of the alleged conduct's interference with the CP or effects in an educational setting, type of alleged conduct, frequency and duration of the conduct, knowingly unwelcome in nature

"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)

7

7

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 prohibited inappropriate or unprofessional sexual conduct.

Such conduct 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.
- Physical conduct that is objectively offensive to a reasonable person and also so <u>severe or</u> <u>pervasive</u> that it created a Hostile Environment.



Source:

UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2022)

3

"Other Inappropriate Sexual Conduct" Cont.

Possible Examples (depending on facts):

- 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;
- Sexual exploitation;
- Unwelcome intentional touching of a sexual nature;
- Deliberate physical interference with or restriction of movement; or
- Consensual sexual conduct that is unprofessional and inappropriate, and created a Hostile Environment.



Source:

UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2022)

9



Key Pillars: Title IX Process

Impartiality

Fairness

Respect

Equity

For all of the participants in the process:

Complainants
Respondents
Witnesses
Third-party Reporters



11

11

Serving Impartially in Your Role

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



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM THISTEEN INSTITUTIONS, UNLIHITED POSSIBLITIES.

Source: Title IX Regulations (2020)

12

Principles for Title IX Process

- 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))...



13

13

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 characteristics: sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, immigration status, financial ability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristic.



Source: Title IX Preamble (2020)



Allegation Type(s): Sexual Misconduct Policy? Dating or Sex Sexual Sexual Assault Domestic Discrimination Harassment Violence Other Sexual Stalking Inappropriate Retaliation Exploitation **Sexual Conduct** Interference False Report Other(s) Failure to or False with an Report <u>Information</u> Investigation THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM 16

Other Triage Analysis & Considerations

CP & RP Affiliation to the Institution?

Incident Location(s)

Date/Time of Incident

Time of Alleged Incident: Institutional Nexus or Jurisdiction?

Institutional Action?
Preventative
Action?
Remedies?

Level of Concern?
Threat Level?

17

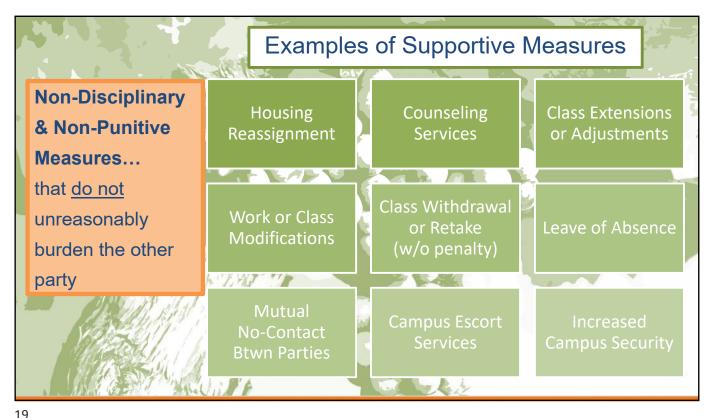
17

A Report to the Title IX Coordinator (TIXC)

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







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.



20

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.



21

21

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.



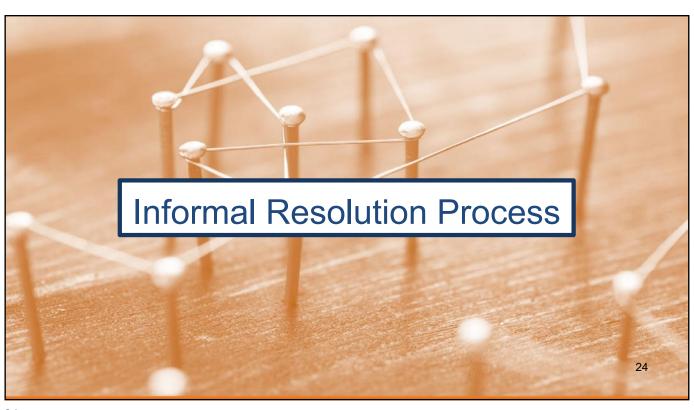
Complainant's Rights (related to the Grievance Process)

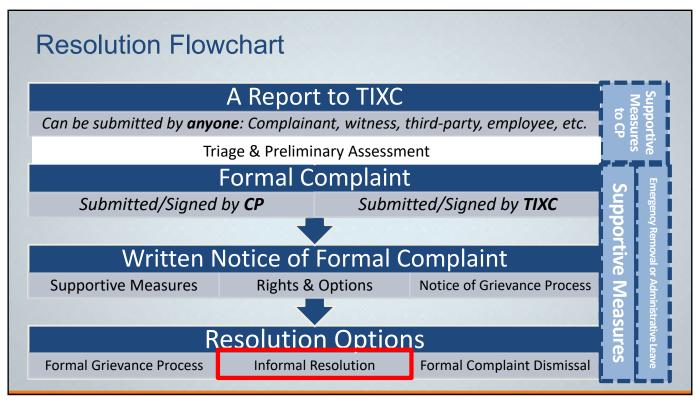
- To report an incident and/or file a formal complaint with the University.
- To request in writing that the University not investigate a reported incident and be informed of the University's decision whether or not to investigate.
- To request in writing a dismissal of a formal complaint (e.g. withdraws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



23

23







Why an Informal Resolution?

- Provide options and choice for the parties to explore their own voluntary terms for a resolution.
- Opportunity to **remedy** and **repair harm** that was experienced through an alternative method.
- Ability to explore non-punitive and/or learning-focused resolutions, if desired.



27

27

Not Permitted When...

- Not permitted as a resolution option "under Title IX" when an **employee respondent** is alleged of "sexual harassment" by a **student complainant**.
- Examples of other non-applicable reasons* due to <u>seriousness</u> and/or <u>pattern</u> 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



Source: Title IX Regulations (2020); UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2022)

28

What's left?

"Other Inappropriate Sexual Conduct"

Possible Examples (depending on facts):

- 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;
- Sexual exploitation;
- Unwelcome intentional touching of a sexual nature;
- Deliberate physical interference with or restriction of movement; or
- Consensual sexual conduct that is unprofessional and inappropriate, and created a Hostile Environment.



Source:

UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2022)

29

29

Once a formal complaint is filed...

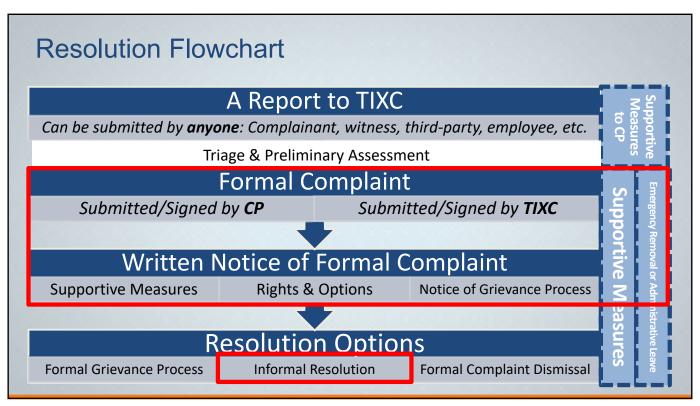
Required Components

An Informal Resolution Process must include:

- a) Written notice of allegations;
- b) Required elements of the informal process; and
- Any <u>consequences</u> resulting from participating in an informal process



Source: Title IX Regulations (2020)





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;

33

33

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)

35

35

Other <u>resources</u> 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







Informal
Process
Considerations

- Under the institution's policy, what is the IR availability? What conditions are permissible for an IR agreement?
- What are the **timeframe** parameters to complete an IR agreement?
- Who will facilitate IR's?
- What **acknowledgments** are required by both parties <u>before</u> an IR agreement?
- What are the consequences resulting from participating in an informal process?



38

Example Acknowledgments & Consequences of Participating in an IR Process

- 1. Acknowledgment of the **written notice** and allegations therein.
- 2. Received **rights and options** of both parties.
- 3. An IR agreement is a **voluntary** option, if available under the institution's policy.
- 4. Each party has the **right to withdraw** from the IR process and resume the formal grievance process...
- 5. IR **timeframe** (example: within 45 days of notice)
- 6. No recording will be made of the IR process...



39

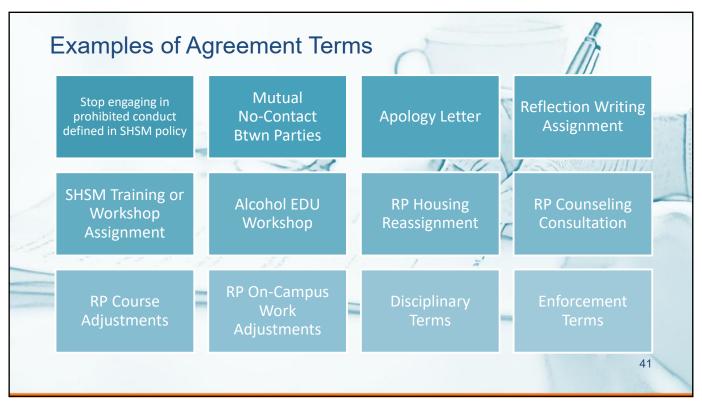
39

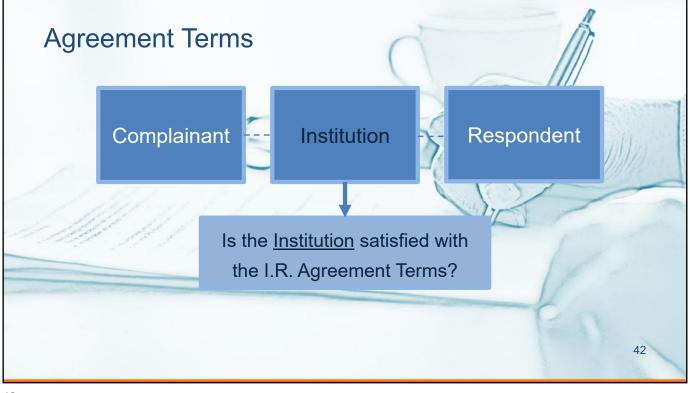
Example Acknowledgments & Consequences of Participating in an IR Process (Cont.)

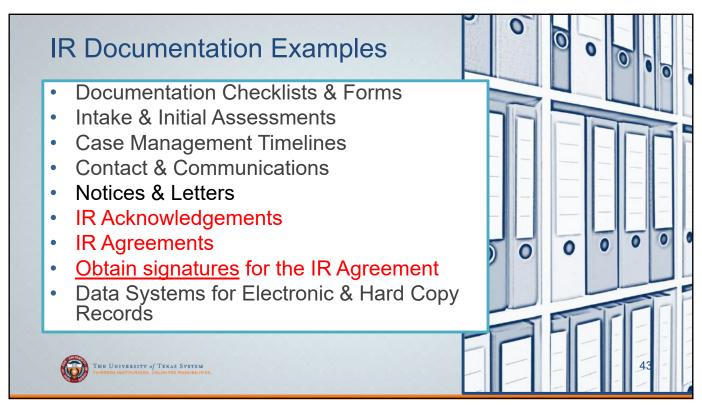


- 7. Any statements made during the IR process may not be used for or against either party... should the parties resume the formal grievance process.
- 8. The respondent will <u>not</u> be eligible for further IR agreements in the future.
- An IR agreement will be based on <u>individual</u> needs, and based on <u>specific facts</u> and circumstances available.
- 10. Documentation & records provisions... <u>7 years</u> retention...privacy and confidentiality of records...
- **11. Terms of Enforcement**: Failure to comply with a provision or term in an IR agreement may result in disciplinary action.

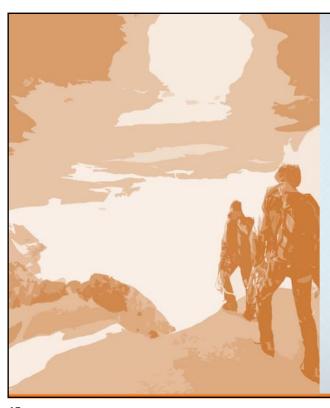
40











Exploration & Mediation Tools

- Rapport-building
- Active listening
- Motivational interviewing
- Indirect facilitation (e.g. shuttle-diplomacy)
- Restorative considerations

45

45

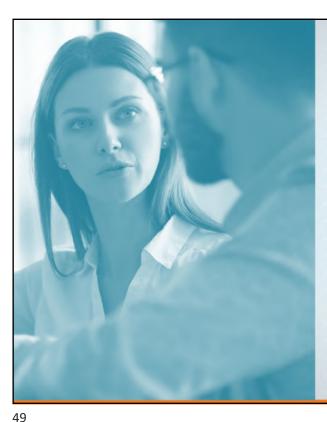
Rapport-Building Prompts "Help me understand how you are feeling right now." "What, if anything, can I explain to you about this process before we get started?" Note: Consider possible barriers or concerns to building trust with a participant. Facilitators: How can you minimize or eliminate these factors? Source: Forensic Experimental Trauma Interview (FETI)

Active Listening

- Goal: Provide the person a sense of feeling heard and understood
- Listener's Mindset: Open-minded, objective, & impartial
- Pay full attention to the person
- Nodding, affirmative non-verbals
- Not interrupting; using silence
- Open-Ended Phrases
- Clarifying checks & validations:
 - Validating & emotional acknowledgements
 - Reflecting (mirroring/paraphrasing)
 - Summarizing
 - Restating



Active Lis	stening: Examples	48
Туре	Example Prompts	
Validating	• "That sounds difficult."	• "It's okay to feel upset."
Emotional Acknowledge- ments	• "You seem <u>disappointed</u> right now."	• "Having to consider different options can be <u>stressful</u> to navigate."
Reflecting	• "What I'm hearing is"	"Sounds like you are saying"
Summarizing or Restating	 "Let me summarize to check my understanding [Repeat back] Did I get that right? 	 "[Repeat/rephrase what the other person said]Is this what you mean?"
Open-Ended Phrases	 "Tell me more about" "Explain/describe"	 "What do you mean when you say?" "Help me understand"
Affirmative Comm	 "Yes" "I see."	 "Go on." "Right."



Motivational Interviewing

- Goal: Provides an avenue for someone to take action for changing behavior
- Conduct-specific focus
- The person is interested in the need for change
- Organize a plan & actionable pathway for change
- Facilitator uses Active Listening skills:
 - Validating & emotional acknowledgements
 - Reflecting (mirroring/paraphrasing)
 - Summarizing
 - Restating
- Avoid conflicts and stay solution-focused

49

Motivational Interviewing: Informal Resolution **Example Prompts**

XX XX		
Purpose	Example Prompts	
Draw out ideas	 "What are <u>your</u> thoughts/feelings about the allegations?" "What was <u>your</u> thought process at the time?" "Who has been affected by <u>your</u> conduct?" "How did <u>your</u> actions impact others?" "How do <u>you</u> want to approach an IR agreement?" "What do you think about?" 	
Be open to <u>all</u> types of responses	 "How would you like to proceed?" "What are some applicable takeaways that you can learn and grow from this experience?" "What are terms or remedies that seem fair to you?" "The decision to accept or not accept certain terms or remedies is up to you." "What do you think might be getting in the way of you doing things differently in the future?" 	

Motivational Interviewing: Other Considerations

- Be mindful of the person's <u>desire</u>, <u>ability</u>, <u>reasons</u>, and/or <u>needs</u> to change one's own behavior, mindset, or attitude on the subject matter.
- Tailor facilitation prompts or responses based on the person's <u>interest</u> to changing one's own behavior.
- Acknowledge the person's <u>concerns</u>, <u>emotions</u>, and <u>needs</u>.

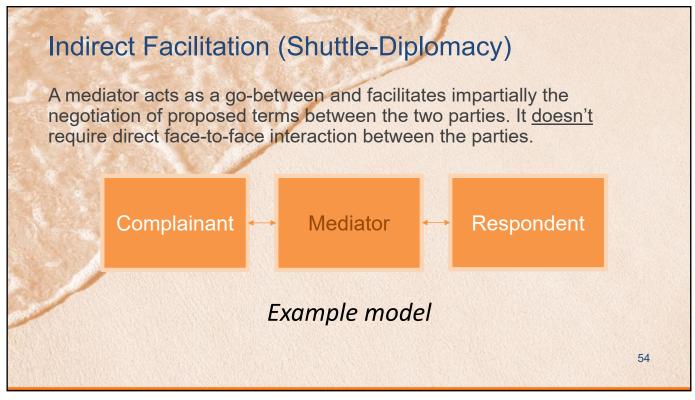
51

51

Motivational Interviewing: Refocusing Conversations

Purpose	Example Prompts
If the person doesn't respond to the relevant prompts	 Rephrase the prompt again. Acknowledge the shift: "It seems like the discussion is evolving to, but we started off exploring"
If the person makes an argument about a different topic	 <u>Acknowledge</u> the concern & attempt to finish the <u>initial discussion</u> <u>first</u>: "I want to talk about that, but let's first finish addressing?"
If the person attempts to change the subject	 It might be to <u>vent</u> or release some tension. <u>Prompt</u> the person to discuss what's on their mind. Then, use <u>active listening</u> to acknowledge the person's current <u>concerns</u>, <u>emotions</u>, and/or needs. Try to <u>link</u> the person's concerns with the initial discussion topic.





Туре	Description
Restorative Conferences	A <u>structured and facilitated conversation</u> between two or more individuals (often the person who has been harmed (CP) and the person who caused the harm (RP)). An agreement between the parties can resolve and address what steps the RP can take to repair the harm and rebuild trust.
Restorative Circles	Similar to a restorative conference, but typically involves a <u>larger group</u> and a <u>community approach</u> to addressing and repairing harm. It involves a structured dialogue of turn-taking between the person(s) harmed (CPs), the person(s) who caused the harm (RPs), and others who have been impacted. Also helpful for community-building or discussing difficult issues.
Surrogate Participation	A restorative circle or conference in which the CP doesn't want to participate in a restorative process but wants someone else (surrogate) to help the RP to understand the impact of the harm.

Informal Resolution Timeframe (Example)

Informal Resolutions of a formal complaint will be concluded within <u>45 days</u> of notice to the institution that both parties wish to proceed with the Informal Resolution process

Note: Circumstances may require a **temporary delay** in this timeframe & the institution may <u>extend</u> this timeframe for <u>good cause</u>.

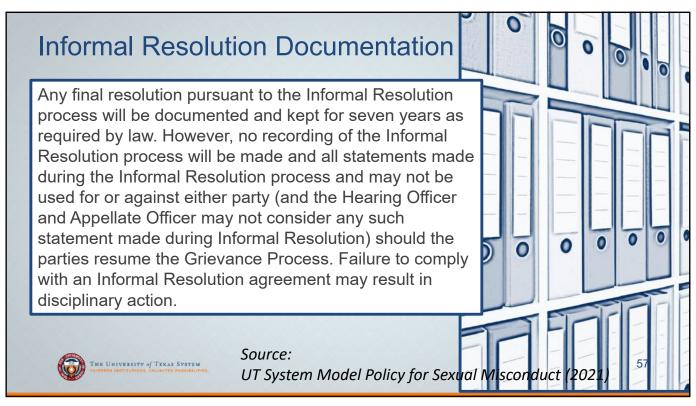
Provide <u>notice</u> to the parties for temporary delays or extensions

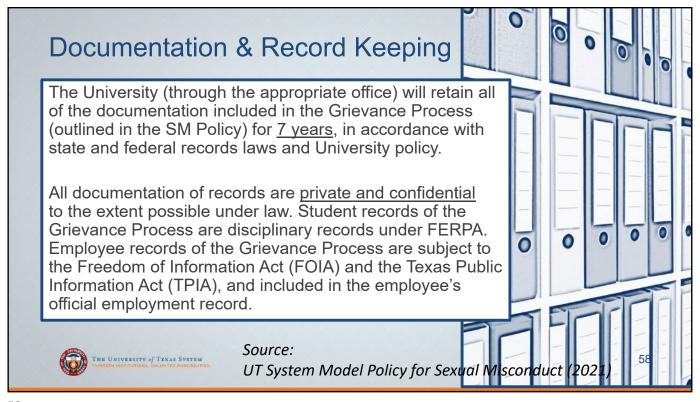


Source:

UT System Model Policy for Sexual Misconduct (2021)

56







Krista Anderson	Sean Flammer
Systemwide Title IX Coordinator	Assistant General Counsel
Office of Systemwide Compliance UT System (Austin, TX)	Office of General Counsel UT System (Austin, TX)
Phone: 512-664-9050	Phone: 512-579-5106
Email: kranderson@utsystem.edu	Email: sflammer@utsystem.edu

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM