

Common Misconceptions of Remaining Anonymous

Many staff, faculty, family members, and concerned others refer students to the CARE Team for various reasons. Occasionally, individuals choose to remain anonymous on the reporting form. The CARE Team would like to outline some common misconceptions about remaining anonymous and how we sometimes encourage the opposite, depending on the situation. It can actually help a student tremendously to know that someone cared enough to refer them to the Team for assistance. We encourage you to read the following information about remaining anonymous prior to making a decision regarding your anonymity so that we can best serve the wellbeing and safety needs of the student and our campus community.

“I’m worried that this student won’t trust me anymore, will become embarrassed, or will be upset with me if I share information they’ve disclosed to me.”

The CARE Team’s primary goal is to offer support to students. We hear and understand this frequent concern. While this may be the case for some students, we find that the majority of students are actually relieved to be connected to support and resources on campus to assist them in their time of need. Connecting the student to support and resources on campus assists them in succeeding both personally and academically. Additionally, a student’s privacy is a top concern of the CARE Team and information we receive is only shared on a need-to-know basis.

“I fear retaliation from a student who acted rudely or aggressively and will now know I made a referral to the CARE Team.”

In our experience, this is very rarely the outcome of a CARE report. The CARE Team strives to serve students, faculty and staff, and the University community as a whole. Often we need to address a student’s behavior if it reaches a certain level of concern to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all involved. This may mean disclosing the origin of the report. We will collaborate with those who made the report as well as the University Police Department to offer support and safety tips to all members of our community. If you ever feel there is an imminent threat to yourself or anyone else, please contact law enforcement first, then follow up with a CARE report.

“I want the CARE Team to address a specific issue, and I want to remain anonymous even though I am the only one who experienced the situation with this student, or it happened via email or online.”

Choosing to remain anonymous in this type of situation creates difficulties for the CARE Team as we look for the best ways to address the concern. In these instances, we are unable to reach out to the student about the specific concern without the student becoming aware of the identity of the reporting party. The Team typically finds that students are appreciative someone connected them to the right office on campus to get help. We may encourage you to reconsider your decision to remain anonymous in these types of situations since the student will know you filed the report. Additionally, if we perceive a direct threat to an individual or the community, we may need to provide information to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

“I have a great relationship with this student. Could I just tell them about campus resources myself and not tell them I submitted a report?”

Depending on the nature of the report, many faculty or staff members opt to work with the student directly by meeting with them, discussing their concerns, and offering support and resources similar to what a case manager from the CARE Team would do. However, please keep in mind that the CARE Team may also need to reach out to the student. If the Team is already aware of the student from a previous interaction or concurrent report, or if the situation is egregious enough that the Team wants to take measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student and campus community, the Team will need to contact the student. It is helpful to file a report regardless of who will be reaching out to the student so that the CARE Team has a complete history of the student’s behavior and patterns may be observed and addressed.