Trauma-Informed Intake Meetings

Title IX In Focus
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Disclaimers

We can't help ourselves. We're Lawyers.

- We are not giving you legal advice
- Consult with legal counsel regarding specific situations
- You should have received slides for today's presentation
  - If not, check the link in the chat box
And another one...

Specific to the Title IX In Focus Webinar Series

• The 2020 Title IX regulations require training on several specific subjects

• While the Title IX In Focus webinar series will discuss *some* of the required subject matter, none of these one-hour webinars will cover *all* of the material required for Title IX training compliance

• Work with your TIXC to make sure that you are trained in accordance with Title IX, Clery, and any applicable state law
Can We Post These Materials?

YES – Post away!

Institutions subject to Title IX are required by §106.45(b)(10)(i)(D) to post materials used to train Title IX personnel on its website.
Agenda

• Three components of intake
• Discussion of trauma and being trauma-informed
• Title IX intake basics & practical extensions
• Practical tips for trauma-informed intake meetings
  • Supportive Measures
  • Process Discussion
  • Gathering Necessary Information
• Initial meetings with Respondents
Three Components of Intake

Supportive Measures, Process, Gathering Necessary Information
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines trauma as “a result from an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.”

The CDC defines trauma as "a physical, cognitive, and emotional response caused by a traumatic event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced as harmful or life-threatening."

See also, DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria for PTSD
How people mentally process what happened to them, affects the way the brain encodes and decodes memories of what occurred.
Understand the Context

Our focus today: Trauma-Informed Intake

Trauma-Informed medical care and mental health support

Trauma-Informed Education

Trauma-Informed First Responders

Trauma-Informed Investigation

Trauma-Informed Resolutions
Trauma-Informed Basics for Intake Meetings

- Assume all parties and witnesses may be dealing with trauma – from this or other incidents
- Meet them where they are
- Help them tell their story as part of the process
- Signs of trauma ≠ policy violation
- No signs of trauma ≠ no policy violation
- If they didn't act the way you might have, that doesn't mean it isn't true.
Title IX Intake Framework

Institutional response to a report:

- Actual knowledge (defined 34 CFR 106.30)
- "Must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent."
- Response to actual knowledge must be equitable
- 34 CFR 106.44(a):
  - The Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss:
    - the availability of supportive measures...,
    - consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures,
    - inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a complaint,
    - And explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

Takeaways from the 2020 regulations: Supportive Measures and Process for Filing a Formal Complaint
Practical Extensions of this Framework

• Information about the resolution process
  o Necessary for informed decision-making

• Discussion of Title IX Jurisdiction
  o Necessary to discuss the applicable process and potential for Exit Ramps

• Potential discussion of definitions
  o Necessary to discuss the applicable process and potential for Exit Ramps

• Information about the interactions between the parties
  o May be necessary to consider supportive measures
Give and Take

- "I need to provide you with information, and I need you to provide me with information."
- Autonomy whenever possible
  - "Would you like me to talk about the process first? Or would you like to share your concerns with me first? Either is fine, and if you can't decide, I'm happy to help."
Big Picture Concepts

- Give autonomy whenever possible
- Remember the context
  - You are not the decision-maker
  - This is not an investigative interview
  - Give the benefit of the doubt to both parties
- Remember what you know about trauma
  - Memories might be encoded in non-linear ways
  - There may be gaps
  - Self-blame
Why it is Important to NOT make assumptions?
Why Don’t People Tell Right Away

• The Preamble to the Title IX Regulations suggests:
  ▪ Shame
  ▪ Fear of retaliation
  ▪ Fear of not being believed
    (Preamble p. 30081)
Why Don’t People Always Remember

- A party should not be “unfairly judged due to inability to recount each specific detail of an incident in sequence, whether such inability is due to trauma, the effects of drugs or alcohol, or simple fallibility of human memory” (Preamble, p. 30323)
Structuring Your Intake Meetings

- Use a list of talking points or a checklist, but...
- Be mindful of the human in front of you
- Be flexible and willing to change direction
- Have your policy close by
- Talk about your process
- Talk about your definitions (if necessary)
Supportive Measures

• What does your policy say?
• Create a list and use it during every intake
  o Both Complainants and Respondents
  o Put it out there – the person may not realize what they need or what's available to them
• Don't overpromise (ex: housing)
• Must not unreasonably burden the other party
• Confirm the discussion and next steps in a follow-up email after each intake meeting
• If a requested supportive measure is not available, explain the rationale and document the decision
Supportive Measures (2020 Title IX Regs)

34 CFR 106.30(a)

- Non-disciplinary, non-punitive
- Individualized services
- Offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, without fee or charge
- Available before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint
- Available if no Formal Complaint is filed
- "Designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party"
  - May include measures designed to protect safety of the parties and the educational environment, or deter sexual harassment
Process Discussion

• What does this look like for you?
  o Review of Policy language
  o Step 1, Step 2, Step 3...
  o Flowchart

• How do you describe the investigation?

• How do you describe the hearing process?
  o Cross-examination

• How do you describe informal resolution?
  o Mutual, informed, written consent
  o Respondent-employees
Process Flow Chart

- Report
- Supportive Measures
- Informal Resolution
- Formal Complaint
- Dismissal
- Formal Grievance Process:
  - Investigation
  - Hearing
  - Determination
  - Appeal
Process Discussion about Jurisdiction

• What does your Policy say about jurisdiction for Title IX matters?

• Discussion regarding referral/"dismissal"
  • If you know this belongs elsewhere, be transparent
  • If you don't know – you can follow-up later
• Remember: If a Formal Complaint has been filed, the case must be "dismissed"
  • Notice of Dismissal required for both parties
    • Show your work!
• Make sure the Notice of Dismissal is NOT the first time the person learns of the dismissal
Gathering Necessary Information

• Remember the goal – to determine where this report fits and what might be done about it
• Think of the basic "W" questions – who, what, where, when, why
• Same level of detail needed for an investigative interview?
  o What if you are the TIXC and the investigator?
  o If not, is it better to get fewer details?
    ▪ Remember – meet the person where they are
Gathering Necessary Information (cont.)

• In most cases, you will need to ask for information
  o "And then he did it."
  o "They were toxic."

• What are the required elements in your policy?
  o Understand the definition
  o Break it down
Breaking the Conduct into Elements

1. Review the definition.

2. **Break down** the definition into elements by making a checklist.
   - Make sure that each element is independent of the others. Don’t put multiple elements into one, as it makes the analysis more difficult.
   - Make it clear when there are multiple options for an element. For example, “Must have one of the following…”

3. Re-read the definition. Have you accounted for all of the language in the definition?

4. Are there any other definitions that should be included in your element checklist? Examples: consent, incapacitation, etc.
Policy definition:
The term “Stalking” means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person with similar characteristics under similar circumstances to fear for their safety or the safety of others; or to suffer substantial emotional distress. A course of conduct includes two or more acts, including but not limited to, those in which the alleged perpetrator directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about the Complainant, or interferes with the Complainant’s property. Stalking governed by Title IX refers to stalking that is based on sex or gender.
Elements of Title IX Stalking

• Course of conduct
  • 2 or more acts
  • Direct or Indirect acts of:
    • Following OR monitoring OR observing OR surveilling OR threatening OR communicating to or about the Complainant, OR interfering with the Complainant’s property

• Directed at a specific person

• Based on sex

• Impact to a reasonable person
  • Would cause a reasonable person
  • with similar characteristics under similar circumstances
  • to fear for their safety or the safety of others; or
  • To suffer substantial emotional distress
Things that *Aren’t* Trauma-Informed

• Multiple meetings to gain additional information
  o It is sometimes necessary – particularly if you are meeting the person where they are
  o But... getting everything you need in one meeting is best

• Shock

• Judgment

• Skepticism
  o "Why are you just now reporting this?"
Initial Meetings with Respondents

“What we do for one, we for the other”

• Will look a bit different,
• But should mirror your Complainant intake as much as possible
• Supportive measures
  • Document
• Process Discussion
• Gathering Information (?)
  • Less necessary than with the initial report
  • Meet people where they are
• Confirm the discussion and next steps in a follow-up email after each intake meeting
## Upcoming Title IX In Focus Webinars

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Upcoming Higher Ed Webinars

• Higher Education **Free** Webinar Series:
  • Athletics Hot Topics – April 12, 2024
  • Title IX Litigation Update – May 10, 2024

• New new regs?
  • Watch for a **Free** webinar around the release of the new Title IX regulations

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