

Manifesto point 2: Every student is well-informed about our support services and reporting procedures, our code of conduct, and the law regarding sexual violence. We accomplish this through online and offline social awareness campaigns. These campaigns preferably involve external partners who provide support to students and staff who have experienced sexual violence.

Effective information campaigns result in students having knowledge about sexual violence and about where to find help in case they need it. A combination of online and offline communication brings the best results. Examples of recommendations are the availability of a comprehensive and clear guide to the university's reporting structure and support services, availability of information on help and guidance outside the university, a trauma-sensitive approach in communication messages, and keeping messages simple and inclusive.

How to ensure students are well-informed?

The main challenge is to ensure that the most important knowledge about dealing with sexual violence reaches students.

Good examples:

- 1) A comprehensive, accessible and clear guide to the university's reporting structure and support services.**

During the conference, several institutions discussed their work on improving visibility and accessibility of the reporting structures and support services. Some institutions **created a guide to, or a flowchart of, all the significant services**. These guides or charts should explain what a student can expect after reporting a complaint or requesting help. When should a student reach out to a study advisor, a confidentiality person or a student psychologist? What level of help can they expect from each of these services? When should a student reach out to external organizations such as Centrum Seksueel Geweld?

Information about the reporting structure and support system is written in understandable and inclusive language. Concrete language such as 'sexual violence' or 'sexually transgressive behavior' is clearer than terms such as 'undesirable behavior'. At universities with a (partly) international student body the information must also be available in English. One institution even has a "panic button" available in all languages.

- 2) Adequate personal guidance from the university to find external help.**

Confidential Advisors and other staff members who frequently interact with students know where to refer students with needs that exceed the university's abilities. They are up to date with the legal procedures regarding sexual violence so they can guide students in filing an effective police report. For further discussion on the reporting structure and referral to outside help see: [Link to Point 4.](#)

- 3) Strategic communication.**

In the experience of universities' staff and external organizations, there are a few strategic considerations that influence how successful an informational campaign is. Firstly, **the message must appear interesting and relevant to the student community**. An example brought up by the Aidsfonds was a booklet which they titled "How to get better in bed" which focused on condom use and preventing sexually transmitted diseases. In the case of face-to-face in-person conversations about sex, **students prefer to speak to a person of similar age**. This links to the benefits of **involving students** in communicating with the wider student community.

Another recommendation is to **engage students in research to investigate the most effective means of communication** and identify key obstacles to overcome. For more discussion about involving students in the implementation of the Manifesto look: [Link to Point 6.](#)

A key point of advice is to **keep the message simple and focus on specific and feasible objectives**. A good example was presented at the conference by Centrum Seksueel Geweld. Their current campaign's aim is that everyone has their phone number (0800-0188) saved in their phone.

4) Trauma-sensitive communication.

In awareness campaigns treating the subject of sexual violence, the approach and language must be trauma sensitive. For an in-depth discussion on trauma-sensitivity see: [Link to Point 3.](#)

5) Online communication

The **platform that students use for daily study-related activities** is a good place to reach students directly to either inform or remind them about the help services that the university offers in case of sexual violence. The institution's website is the place for the **comprehensive, detailed and clear guide to the reporting structure and support services at university and beyond** (as discussed above).

Higher educational institutions also started to **use social media** for spreading crucial information, such as the link to the reporting guideline or contact details to confidential advisors. This has proven to be a fast way to reach a wide audience.

"...The "Consent is Key" campaign is part of this action plan. The website includes information on what sexual violence/harassment is, how to ask for consent and where students can turn for help or survivor care. This is naturally only a start, as work on this topic is relevant at all times."

- Ella Picavet, Student member University Council & Feedback Group Action Plan to prevent sexual violence, Leiden University.

6) Offline visibility and communication.

There are many opportunities to inform students offline, on campus. Higher educational institutions have introduced a variety of ideas such as **displaying infographics** (often with QR

codes for further information) at screens in school buildings, smartly placing **posters and flyers** (for example in toilet cubicles) and having a physical **Student Support Centre**. Among less standard ideas are regular “safety evening tea” events during which students can learn more about where to find support as well as events organized in collaboration with student associations. A discussion about reaching out to student associations to promote workshops can be found here: [Link Point 2\)](#)

During the conference there was a discussion around the **best moments to present key information to students**. Information about the reporting structure and support services should be promoted during the **introductory days**, but it is also important to repeat it as students have a lot on their mind during those days and may not remember everything. Some institutions have chosen to repeat this information during classes of the standard curriculum rather than only at special events.

7) Collaboration with external partners.

Higher educational institutions can reach out to professional organizations for assistance in running informational campaigns. See the list of possible external partners: [Background to the manifesto for higher education institutions - Amnesty International](#).

Contact details and the type of help that Centrum Seksueel Geweld provides can also be a part of the key information that the university provides. See more about CSG here: [Hulp aan slachtoffers van seksueel geweld - Centrum Seksueel Geweld](#).