**HEA Healthy Campus**  **Case Study**

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| **HEALTHY CAMPUS CASE STUDY** | |
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| **Name of institution/ organisation** | University of Limerick |
| **Who led the initiative?** | Dr Marie Connolly, Director of HR – EDI  Maria Healy, Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Officer |
| **Date and timeframe of the initiative** | Development of this initiative began in September 2022 and is ongoing. |
| **What was the reach of the initiative?** | Access to the Student Designated Contact Persons Panel (SDCPP) is available to our entire student community. |
| **Initiative title** | Student Designated Contact Persons Panel (SDCPP) |
| **Aims/ objectives** | The SDCPP was established to act as a fully trained first point of contact for students who have experienced or are currently experiencing incidents of sexual violence and harassment (SVH). The panel consists of ten volunteer staff members from across the university who support students and signpost them to the necessary support services available both internally and externally.  The SDCPP is a confidential, non-judgemental, survivor centred resource that is there to encourage students to come forward and disclose incidents in the hopes that they seek the support needed, while also empowering them to move forward with formal reporting to the university, should they choose to do so. |
| **The rationale for the action, including any identified health needs** | Fostering a Supportive Environment: The establishment of the SDCPP demonstrates UL’s commitment to ending sexual violence and harassment in our institution while fostering a supportive and responsive campus culture the promotes student wellbeing a priority.  Specialised Training: Members of the SDCPP have completed a 4-stage training programme in how to handle disclosures of SVH sensitively, and effectively ensuring our students receive informed and empathetic support from knowledgeable staff. This training is important as it can reduce the emotional and psychological harm that survivors can experience when recounting their experiences, promoting their overall health and wellbeing.  Increased Awareness: By having this visible and active panel, we are raising awareness about the support available for SVH survivors and encouraging students to come forward and seek help.  Accessible Support Network: The SDCPP ensures that students have multiple points of contact across the institution, increasing the likelihood that they can find someone they feel comfortable approaching who is readily available to provide support and information.  Reduced Burden: Having a number of extensively trained individuals helps prevent burnout and ensures the SVH Prevention and Support Officer is not overwhelmed, allowing for more comprehensive and attentive support.  Shared Responsibility: Members of the SDCPP come from various divisions/departments across the institution further enhancing our “whole campus approach” where every individual has a role to play in driving the culture change we seek. |
| **Identify all frameworks, policies, or strategies this initiative aligns to**  **(internal, local or national)** | * [University of Limerick Action Plan Tackling Sexual Violence, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment on campus.](https://ulcampus.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/ULNationalConsentFrameworkSteeringGroup/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BFC98EEA5-4922-45A2-A122-10F953752BC8%7D&file=University%20of%20Limerick%20%20Action%20Plan%20%20Tackling%20Sexual%20Violence%20Sexual%20Misconduct%20and%20Sexual%20Harrassment%20on%20campus%20(004)%20-%20June%202022%20UPDAT.docm&action=default&mobileredirect=true) * [University of Limerick “Healthy UL” Framework.](https://www.ul.ie/sites/default/files/Healthy%20UL%20Framework.pdf) * [Human Rights Equality Diversity & Inclusion Strategy | University of Limerick (ul.ie)](https://www.ul.ie/equality-diversity-inclusion/strategy) * [University of Limerick Strategic Plan 2019-2024](https://www.ul.ie/media/23444/download?inline) * [Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive – Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions](https://www.ul.ie/media/23444/download?inline) |
| **Summary** | Incidents of SVH can profoundly impact a student’s university life, leading to emotional distress, decreased academic performance, and withdrawal from social activities. These experiences can undermine a student’s sense of safety and belonging, potentially affecting their overall wellbeing and success in both their academic and personal lives.  Establishing this Student Designated Contact Persons Panel was essential for addressing these impacts. It provides immediate, empathetic support and guides affected students through the available support services, both internally and externally, to aid their recovery. This resource empowers students to navigate their academic and social challenges while also highlighting a campus environment that promotes healing and resilience.    The SDCPP know and understand the institutions environment and are very familiar with the institutions new Sexual Violence & Harassment Policy and Procedure. By providing multiple approachable and relatable points of contact we are enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of the institutions SVH Policy and Procedure, which will increase the likelihood of reporting.  Following a consultation process with external experts and the panel members, we devised and implemented a four-stage training programme for members of the panel.  It is crucial for a panel member to have this training to ensure the wellbeing of a student, and the panel member themselves, when disclosing an incident of SVH. All of the trainings below addressed vicarious trauma and the importance of selfcare to enhance the sustainability of the panel.   * Training on Handling Disclosures ensures that the contact persons respond with sensitivity and confidentiality, creating a safe space for students to share their experiences. * Knowledge of the SATU and Legal Process enables contact persons to provide accurate information and guide students through necessary steps for medical and legal support. * Training on Responding to Trauma equips contact persons with the skills to address the emotional and psychological impact of SVH, offering compassionate and appropriate support. * Experiential Roleplay allows contact persons to practice and refine their response skills in realistic scenarios, enhancing their confidence and competence in real-life situation.   This comprehensive training programme ensures that students receive the empathetic, informed, and effective support they need during a critical time.  The SDCPP underscores the university’s commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, positive, and supportive environment by engaging the campus community in a collective effort to address and prevent sexual violence and harassment. Through this initiative, UL demonstrates its dedication to the well-being of all students, creating a more inclusive and supportive campus culture. |
| **Did you collaborate with internal and/or external stakeholders to deliver?** | We engaged a number of stakeholders both internally and externally.  **Internally**   * Consent Framework Policy Review Group * Sexual Health & Wellbeing Subgroup * UL Éist Counselling Service * UL Student Life   **Externally**   * Rape Crisis Centre MidWest * Galway Rape Crisis Centre * Active\*Consent * Dr Sharon Lambert * Clinical Supervisor |
| **How was the initiative organised?** | **2022**   * Idea for the initiative was developed by the Consent Framework Policy Review Group. * Specification of the role of the SDCPP was outlined. * Approval was sought from Executive Committee to implement the SDCPP. * Expressions of Interest were sought from staff members across the university. * EOIs were evaluated by Dr Marie Connolly, Director of HR-EDI, and members of the Consent Framework Policy Review Group. The successful applicants were then invited to join the panel. * Approached UL Student Life and offered the upcoming training sessions to their Student Support Coordinators as we felt they would be a resource that would be often used by students as well in these situations. * First training session on Handling Disclosures was delivered by Rape Crisis Centre MidWest.   **2023**   * Training on the SATU and Legal Process was delivered by Rape Crisis Centre MidWest. * Responding to Trauma workshop was delivered by Dr Sharon Lambert * Following the three training sessions mentioned we engaged with the panel for feedback and discussed further training options. * Experiential Roleplay workshop was facilitated by Galway Rape Crisis Centre and the Active\*Consent Team. * Shared a draft of the institutions SVH Policy and Procedure with the panel and invited comments and feedback from them which were then incorporated into the draft document. * Devised a support system for the panel to ensure the wellbeing of the panel members, as well as the sustainability of the panel itself. * Implemented a “Buddy System” for panel members, allowing them to debrief to another panel member if they find a disclosure difficult to deal with while ensuring confidentiality for the survivor. * Liaised with UL Éist Counselling to get advice on Clinical Supervisors for the panel. * Consulted with UL Student Life about a Clinical Supervisor they engage on an ongoing basis. * Engaged a clinical supervisor and met with them to discuss the panel and get their advice on what supports should be offered. * Introductory meeting was held for panel members to meet and discuss the support system and their needs with the clinical supervisor. * Guidelines on availing of the clinical supervisors’ services were drawn up and shared with the panel members. * Final meeting with the SDCPP to discuss the launch of the panel. * Created assets for a poster campaign, social media posts and website presence to launch the SDCPP. * There was a soft launch of the panel during Orientation Week in September 2023, with a larger launch planned alongside the launch of the new SVH Policy & Procedure.   **2024**   * Follow up training organised for panel members who missed previous sessions. * Schedule of regular meetings set up. * Scheduled annual refresher training. * SDCPP resource was highlighted at a number of student events i.e. Student Union Well-Fair Wednesdays, Sexual Health & Guidance Week, UL Global Internation Orientation Fair, Active\*Consent Workshops, Do’s & Don’ts of Handling Disclosure Workshops which are rolled out to staff and students. * Discussed with HR the possibility of the panel being a resource for staff who experience incidents of SVH. * Discussed this suggestion with the panel and it was agreed that following the launch of our new SVH Policy & Procedure that the panel would be advertised as a staff and student resource. * Campaign developed for a larger launch of the SDCPP along with our other suite of resources to coincide with the launch of the SVH Policy & Procedure. |
| **What resources did you need?** | * Staff volunteers * Funding for training, media assets, and clinical supervisor sessions |
| **Has it been evaluated? How successful has it been?** | The SDCPP has not yet been evaluated as it is only a newly launched resource for our institution. |
| **Any future plans, including the sustainability of the initiative?** | * The SDCPP will be relaunched in the coming months as a resource for both students and staff. * We also plan to expand the panel and incorporate staff volunteers from all faculties across the university for greater accessibility. * Refresher training is crucial for current members of the panel to ensure they are in line with best practice with it comes to engaging with survivors of SVH. * Ensuring the panel is well supported and engaging in self-care practices is of the utmost important to avoid burn out and vicarious trauma, which will ensure the sustainability of the panel. |
| **Key learning points** | **Effective Training:** It is extremely important for members of the SDCPP to have comprehensive training so that they can understand trauma and respond appropriately.  **Accessibility & Visibility:** Ensuring that the panel is well publicised and easily accessible to those who need it in order to maximise its effectiveness.  **Continuous Feedback:** from both members of the panel and the students who use the resource. This is crucial to refine and improve the resource.  **Collaboration with Services:** The benefit of strong collaboration with  support services internally, and external experts, has been vital in the development and implementation of this resource, as well as its ongoing success moving forward.  **Confidentiality:** Is key is in building and maintaining trust, which will encourage more students to some forward and seek support.  **Empathy & Sensitivity:** This is critical in all interactions to ensure students feel safe and supported. |

**Healthy Campus Framework Categories (please tick all that apply)**

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| **Healthy Campus Process** | **Whole Campus Approach** | **Topic** | **Population Group** |
| Commit | Leadership, Strategy & Governance | Alcohol | Students |
| Coordinate | Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) | Substance Misuse | Staff |
| Consult | Campus Culture & Communications | Healthy Eating / Food | Wider community |
| Create | Personal & Professional Development | Mental Health & Wellbeing | Other |
| Celebrate & Continue |  | Sexual Health & Wellbeing |  |
|  |  | Tobacco Free Campus |  |
|  |  | Physical Activity / Active Transport |  |
|  |  | Wellbeing on the Curriculum (can also fall under ‘Personal & Professional Development) |  |
|  |  | Health & Sustainability |  |
|  |  | Other |  |

**Contact Details**

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| **Contact Name/s** |  |
| **Date** |  |
| **Email Address** |  |
| **Links** | Please add links to any relevant pages/ documents. Please attach any items not in a link format with your submission. |