

MOU with BHCare Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services (Section 17)

Memorandum of Understanding between BHCare's Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services and Gateway Community College

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by BHCare's Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services (The Organization), and Gateway Community College (GCC). This MOU formalizes the commitment of the parties to work together to provide trauma-focused services to student and employee survivors of domestic violence (also referred to as "Intimate Partner Violence") and stalking and to improve the overall response to domestic violence and stalking at GCC. The parties share the goal of preventing domestic violence and stalking on the campus and in the community and responding appropriately to students and employees who are survivors of domestic violence and stalking.

I. Description of the Partner Organization

The Organization is a non-profit, community-based organization which has a primary area of focus for the provision of services to individuals who are survivors of domestic violence, and their children. The Organization provides free, confidential prevention and intervention services and support to include 24-hour hotline, emergency safe housing, risk assessment, counseling, court based victim advocacy, information and referral.

II. History of Collaboration

GCC and The Organization have collaborated in the past to provide information to students about domestic violence and stalking, organized educational programs for students at GCC, and provided professional consultation training for GCC staff. This MOU builds on the previous collaboration to provide services to survivors and additional school officials as resources and capacity allow.

III. The Role of the Organization

- a. Appoint a qualified staff member to focus on making services accessible to and appropriate for students and employees referred by GCC.
- b. Continue to make 24-hour domestic violence hotline numbers available in both English and Spanish to students and employees of GCC.
- c. Provide confidential crisis intervention, counseling, information and referral, and legal advocacy as requested by students and employees of GCC.
- d. Provide students and employees of GCC with information on reporting options, including how to file a complaint with GCC, how to report a crime to campus or local law enforcement and offer to assist students throughout the process.
- e. Meet regularly with GCC Campus Resource Team (CRT) to share information about the needs of victims, trends in domestic violence and/or stalking services provided, additional services that are needed by students and employees and the effectiveness of GCC's domestic violence and/or stalking prevention and response program.

f. In coordination with GCC, the staff at the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), provide training opportunities to GCC student services staff, officials involved in student conduct proceedings, and GCC on the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence and stalking, types of domestic violence and stalking, orders of protection, the neurobiology of trauma as it relates to survivors, safety planning and appropriate methods for interviewing and communication with survivors.

g. Assist GCC with the development and provision of prevention and training to faculty, students, and school officials.

IV. The Role of GCC

GCC agrees to:

a. Appoint a CRT member to serve as the liaison with The Organization.

b. Provide training to The Organization staff about on-campus resources that are available to student and employee survivors of domestic violence and stalking; the federal and state requirements for colleges in responding to domestic violence and stalking; reporting procedures for survivors who wish to file a report with college police and/or complaint with GCC officials; the student code of conduct and disciplinary process; and the educational accommodations that can be provided to survivors of domestic violence.

c. Provide printed and online materials about reporting options for students and employees, including information about how to file a complaint with GCC and how to report a crime to local law enforcement.

d. Inform The Organization about the reporting obligations of GCC employees and identify those school employees with whom students can speak confidentially (and any exceptions to that confidentiality).

e. Inform The Organization about GCC prohibitions to retaliation: Allegations of retaliation are treated as escalated conduct incidents and can be reported to the Student Development Office (203-285-2090).

f. Ensure availability of the CRT liaison to meet regularly with The Organization.

g. Collaborate with the Organization on prevention approaches and activities.

V. Confidentiality

The Organization and GCC affirm the importance of providing students and employees with options for confidential services and support. All services provided by The Organization to students and employees of GCC will be kept confidential except in the following circumstances:

If the student or employee wants information shared with GCC or campus security, campus or local law enforcement, The Organization will obtain informed consent for release of information. When releases of information are required, they will be written, informed, and reasonably time-limited.

GCC is committed to maintaining the privacy of student record information, consistent with the law, especially with respect to matters pertaining to sexual violence. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that GCC not provide access to or disclose personally identifiable information.