Advocate Meeting: What to Expect

Advocate Role
The advocate is a private resource for students who are impacted by interpersonal violence, a Title IX incident, or for those who want more information about resources and services at the University. The advocate is not mandated to report information regarding a Title IX-related incident to the Title IX Coordinator, other Title IX reporting entities at the university. The advocate can provide assistance including, but not limited to:

- Offer a safe setting to discuss questions, concerns, and experiences regarding an incident of interpersonal violence
- Provide information about students’ rights and options regarding Title IX reporting and investigation process
- Offer assistance with personal or academic remedies, including academic, housing, and financial support
- Discuss and provide referrals for campus and community resources
- Offer accompaniment to students for on-campus services
- Explore safety-related issues and safety planning, if applicable
- Provide space to students for empowerment and independent decision-making

Student Rights
This is a safe space for students to discuss any concerns or questions they may have regarding an incident of interpersonal violence. Students have the right to:

- Disclose as much or as little information as they feel comfortable.
- Determine next steps, referrals, or outcomes of the meeting within the confines of the advocate’s purview.
- End the meeting at any time.

Student Privacy and Documentation
Information shared with the advocate is protected under FERPA as an educational record and cannot be shared without the student’s written consent. When providing resources, referrals or support services (i.e. class absence notifications), information will be shared only as necessary and only with people on a need-to-know basis to provide services. While the advocate is not a mandatory reporter to Title IX, by law must report non-identifiable demographic information to the University for CLERY reporting purposes.

The advocate may seek supervision in order to provide support and comprehensive services to students. This would not initiate a Title IX referral.

Advocacy meeting records will contain documentation relevant to the student’s care with the advocate. It will be retained for at least 7 years after the student’s last contact for services. A meeting with an Advocate is not a part of the student’s academic record.

Limits of Privacy
In most cases, a student’s written and signed authorization is required before information concerning their care will be disclosed to anyone, including parents, roommates, faculty, and partners. However, in certain situations, the Advocate may be required by the University and/or by law to reveal information obtained during a meeting without the student’s permission. Please note the following exceptions:

For information on CLERY reporting, please visit https://compliance.utexas.edu/clery
For information on relevant Title IX policy and practices, please visit http://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/
For information on FERPA, please visit: https://registrar.utexas.edu/students/records/ferpa
• If the advocate has cause to believe that a child, elderly person, or disabled person has been or may be abused or neglected, the volunteer is required to make a report to the appropriate state agency.
• If the advocate believes there is a reasonable fear of imminent harm to the student or the campus community, the advocate may take action to ensure safety.
• The advocate is not protected under Texas law as confidential. If a student's record is requested under certain legal circumstances (e.g. subpoena or court of law) or through an open records request, the advocate will be required to disclose the information.

If a Title IX Report is Filed
If the student decides to move forward with the Title IX process, the advocate can provide assistance in filing a report. The advocate will only participate in the investigation process if the student asks for the advocate to act as an advisor, or consents to them providing information as a witness. The advocate cannot be both an advisor and a witness for a student.

I understand the above rights and responsibilities of the Advocate and myself. By signing below, I am giving consent to document information for record keeping and CLERY reporting.

Student Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________________

Student Name: ________________________________

FERPA: Family Education Rights & Privacy (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records and gives students the right to access and correct their records. Students also have control over their educational records. Other than directory information, information contained in the educational records cannot be shared without the student’s written consent.