UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement

2023-2024 Fellows Research

Resources for Supporting Faculty and Staff During Incidents of Targeted Harassment

*by **Nina Flores***
Associate Professor
California State University Long Beach

Table of Contents

Recommendations for Improving Campus Plans & Resources **3**

Recommendations for Creating & Improving Plans 3

Questions & Considerations for Safety Plans **7**

Resource 1: Sample Questions & Considerations for Developing an Individual Safety & Support Plan 7

Resource 2: Sample Questions & Considerations for Developing a Department Safety & Support Plan 9

Resource 3: Sample Questions & Considerations for Developing a College/University Safety & Support Plan 11

Resource 4: FlowChart: Proactive or Reactive: Is Your Campus Ready to Handle Targeted Harassment? 13

1. Recommendations for Improving Campus Plans & Resources

Campuses with a plan in place to address targeted harassment are still in the minority and should be applauded. However, even the strongest plans have room for improvement. As my research shows, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to address targeted harassment, and many plans or resources miss the mark by offering vague strategies versus an approach that truly centers the person being harassed and makes room for the kind of support they want, need, and deserve. Additionally, this project affirmed the differences between approaches that are intended to support individuals versus serve the campus, as well as the need to clearly define targeted harassment. In this project, targeted harassment is when an individual on campus is targeted by members of the public who are *outside of the campus community* – it does not include interpersonal issues between people on campus, harassment or bullying by co-workers, statements or actions that produce hurt feelings, or harassment by students.

As part of my research, I reviewed a dozen web-based plans or resources that are publicly available online (in some cases, past interviewees directed me to the resources available on their campus websites). During these reviews, I examined each webpage, guide, or set of resources for the information they provided, the ways they wrote about targeted harassment, how they demonstrated their understanding of the experience of enduring targeted harassment, and the support or resources they suggest are available. Reviews occurred between February and April 2024, which is important to note because some of these resources were updated during or shortly after that time. It's unclear why these revisions occurred but given the timing, one possibility is that this is connected to the increase in campus protest activity and potential targeting of individuals during that time.

Together, the interview research, putting the workshops into practice, and reviewing existing resources produced the following recommendations. Again, campuses that recognize the importance of developing plans, policies, and resources for addressing targeted harassment are to be commended. What follows are recommendations to strengthen or create plans, policies, and resources so that they account for the multifaceted implications of experiencing targeted harassment, provide support and follow-up with individuals, and take a person-first approach rather than a liability-first approach.

1.1 Recommendations for Creating & Improving Plans

Policies, plans, and resources should be designed to support people experiencing targeted harassment, so they can take a humanizing approach that acknowledges the wide range of personal, professional, and academic implications.

- Recognize the difference between centering faculty and supporting individuals versus a campus liability-based approach

Resources for Supporting Faculty and Staff During Incidents of Targeted Harassment

- Take a humanizing approach, acknowledging from the outset that targeted harassment is a devastating experience and takes a deep toll
- Use humanizing language. A plan, policy, or resource that only uses legal language or refers to the person experiencing harassment as "the target" creates an unnecessary distance between the person and the purported goals of providing support. Nothing about that language suggests this is meant to support someone in real time; it reads solely as liability-focused.
- Organize an official support team that can work together to ensure the individual experiencing the harassment:
    - is cared for with consistent follow-up,
    - has an advocate on campus focused on their situation,
    - is not subject to a one-size-fits-all approach,
    - is recognized as potentially experiencing multiple effects from harassment (emotional, psychological, physical, professional, etc.),
    - is at the center of decision-making and allowed to change their mind as incidents unfold or evolve,
    - documents their experience in a way that can be shared as necessary so that they are not re-traumatized through repeating their experience,
    - does not have to navigate these incidents alone, and has consistent liaisons with administrators, communications, and/or law enforcement,
    - benefits from a model of scaled support that aligns clear expectations to each level – individual, department, college, and university.
- Request that departments, offices, campus organizations, campus committees, or other units dedicate time to receive training about this issue that recognizes the implications and ongoing effects that people experience.
- Consider whether your plan, policy, or resource truly offers support or creates more work. Take a close look at resources meant to support the person experiencing harassment – are you just asking the person to handle this on their own? Is this just a fine print to-do list?
- Encourage individuals, departments, and offices to develop individual and group safety and support plans. Ensure that your plan includes plans for personal safety other than simply instructing the reader to call 911.
- Clearly share counseling and psychological services support. Note where to turn if someone needs to take a leave of absence.

Is your campus ready to handle targeted harassment? Are you editing your existing plans, policies, and resources? Are you creating new plans, policies, and resources? Consider the following:

- Clearly delineate between what the individual is expected to do in these situations versus what the institution will do for them. What is the role of the department chair or supervisor and what specifically are the responsibilities of higher administrators? Who is in charge and tasked with following up? Push back when plans fail to define the roles and responsibilities of institutional actors and offices.
- Clearly state plans for organizing support and follow-up for the person experiencing targeted harassment. This could include checking in, adjusting workload, putting classes online, removing public profiles and office locations from the website, facilitating communication with administrators, contacting campus police, and more. Not sure where to begin? Try using the Who is Accountable? chart
- Request that departments, offices, campus organizations, campus committees, or other units dedicate time to receive training about this issue
- Ask whether your plan, policy, or resource was reviewed or vetted by someone who experienced targeted harassment. Ask whether you're creating plans, policies, and resources without this important guidance.
- Recognize the silencing and self-censoring that harassment may produce, both for people experiencing harassment and those witnessing it
- Make sure staff members and administrators are included in discussions, both as potentially experiencing harassment and in their support roles
- Push back against plans that place the onus on the faculty member to either avoid targeted harassment or handle it themselves. Avoid advice such as asking readers to simply ignore the harassment. This is unhelpful, and a complete misread on this issue and experience.
- Push back when you see a mismatch of support, for instance suggesting a general campus mechanism to address this specific type of harassment
- Ensure that your plan is more than how to adjust one's online presence. Addressing harassment goes beyond online effects, and people need to know where to turn when they need support navigating the emotional, psychological, and professional implications of targeted harassment.
- Avoid reducing targeted harassment to only experiencing harassment online or on social media. Targeted harassment may include emails, phone calls, mail pieces, and more, directed to campus offices or people's homes.

Resources for Supporting Faculty and Staff During Incidents of Targeted Harassment

- Review resources to make sure they don't read as lists of "what not to do"
- Consider a subscription to a service such as DeleteMe that can remove a person's online presence and contact information from the internet.
- Consider whether a resource that is intended to be comprehensive instead overwhelms the reader with excessive information. How best can you share key information that someone might need in the moment, such as important phone numbers? Where else might you instead locate links to articles or links to community policies for individual social media platforms?

2. Questions & Considerations for Safety Plans

2.1 Resource 1: Sample Questions & Considerations for Developing an Individual Safety & Support Plan

2.1.1 First Steps

- Who is the first person I will reach out to for support?
- What do I think I'll need from this person? Are they local?
- If they are unavailable, who else can I contact?

2.1.2 Home

- Who lives in my home? What will they need?
- Is there somewhere else I can stay if needed?
- Do I have a landline? Can I disconnect it for a few days? Is my phone number listed?
- If I needed to leave for a few days, what essentials would I need to bring with me?

2.1.3 Work (General)

- Who is the first person I will reach out to for support?
- What do I think I'll need from this person?
- Who can I ask for check-in support?
- Who can I ask for support in reviewing my emails or messages?
- Is my office location listed online, and can it be unlisted?
- Do I have public profiles on campus websites that I want to make private?
- Do I have public profiles on research or networking sites that I want to make private?

2.1.4 Campus: If I want to/need to...

- Am I able to shift to remote teaching?
- Can I get help with teaching responsibilities, and if so, who do I ask?
- Can I change the usual routes I usually take to my office or classes?
- Can I have someone sit with me between classes and meetings?
- Can I have a campus escort?
- Can I get support from campus police?
- Can I identify my advocates in this process versus my personal support systems?

2.1.5 Personal

- Do I know how to set my social media accounts to private?
- Who can I ask to check my social media profiles?
- Who can I ask to conduct searches of my name online and monitor changes?
- Should I set up an emergency meeting with a therapist or other support system?
- Who can I ask among my friends/family to regularly check in with me?

2.1.6 Documentation

- Do I have a folder where I can keep documentation and screenshots?
- Who can help me with documentation?
- Is there a designated person or entity who will receive documentation?

2.2 Resource 2: Sample Questions & Considerations for Developing a Department Safety & Support Plan

2.2.1 First Steps

- If our faculty/staff reach out to us because they've been targeted, what are our first steps as a department?
- As a staff member in a department, who is my first point of contact?
- As Department Chair, who is my first point of contact?
- If they are unavailable, who else can I contact?

2.2.2 Department Support

- Who is the point person accountable for organizing department support?
- Whether staff or faculty, what does this person need? They may not know what they need, and what they need may change as the incident unfolds or as they process what's happening. Here are a few options as you continue following up:
    - Are they able to access mental health support easily?
    - Do they need department-level/colleague check-in support? How often will we check in? Who can do that?
    - Do they need email monitoring support? A colleague? Should we contact IT?
    - Do they want us to issue a statement of support? Do we have a template ready so our statement does not sound reactive? Do we need approval?
    - Are they able to teach remotely?
    - Who can help with teaching support, if needed?
- Who can help with organizing documentation as a department?
- As a department, what support do we need from the administration?
- As a department, what support do we need from the campus in general?

2.2.3 Department Safety

- Who is working in our department office? What do they need? Are staff able to shift to remote work? What resources are available to them?
- Do we have student assistants? What support do they need? What resources are available to them? Are there different considerations for student workers?
- Who answers our department phones and email accounts? Do they need special instructions?
- Is our department office location listed online? Should we make this information private?
- Is the individual's office location listed online, and do they want to make this information private? Who can do this?
- Does the individual have a public profile on the campus website that they would like to make private? Who can do this?
- Does the department have social media accounts they need to set to private, or that need careful monitoring? Who can do that?

2.2.4 Campus Safety

- Who can be with the person between their classes and meetings?
- Who can provide escort support throughout the day, if needed?
- Are campus police involved?

2.3 Resource 3: Sample Questions & Considerations for Developing a College/University Safety & Support Plan

2.3.1 First Steps

- If our faculty/staff reach out to us because they've been targeted, what are our first steps as a college/university?
- If a department chair reaches out to us because one of their faculty or staff has been targeted, what are our first steps as a college/university?
- At the college/university level, who are the first points of contact?
- If they are unavailable, who else can we contact?

2.3.2 College/University Support

- Who is the point person accountable for organizing responses and support?
- Who is the point person working directly with the individual? They may not know what that person needs, and those needs may change as the incident unfolds or as they process what's happening. Here are a few options as you continue following up:
    - Does the department have what they need to provide support? How often will we check in with them? Who can do that?
    - Does the department need email monitoring support? Who can do that?
    - Does the individual want the department or college/university to issue a statement of support? If so, do we already have a template ready so our statement does not sound reactive?
    - Does the individual have the ability to teach remotely, if needed?
    - Does the department need teaching support?
- Who is collecting documentation at the college/university level?
- At the college/university level, who do we need to contact?
    - Is the legal team involved?
    - Is the communications office involved? Are we receiving media inquiries?
    - Are campus police involved?
    - Are we in touch with Academic Affairs?
    - Have we alerted the Threat Assessment Team?
- At the college/university level, what support do we need from system-level actors?

2.3.3 College/University Safety

- Have we reached out to our threat assessment team? If this doesn't arise to the level of a campus-wide emergency, is there a secondary set of precautions we need to follow?
- What do our staff in the college/university level offices need? Are staff able to shift to remote work? What resources are available to them?
- Do we have student assistants? What support do they need? What resources are available to them? Are there different considerations for student workers?
- Who answers our phones in the college/university offices? Do they need special instructions? Same for general email accounts?
- Are there social media accounts that need careful monitoring? Who can do that?

2.4 Resource 4: FlowChart: Proactive or Reactive: Is Your Campus Ready to Handle Targeted Harassment?

