

A Letter to Our Community Regarding Interpersonal Violence

Recently the staff of CSU Health Network Counseling Services have been moved by the letters of several students and other organizations across campus regarding interpersonal violence. We feel compelled to add our voice and expertise to the discourse. We are a safe and confidential space for students to process and heal and we have been trusted with students' stories of pain, trauma, growth, and rebirth. Our role, mission, and values remain unchanged. You can read our mission statement [here](#) to know where our values lie. We strive to be a safe space for every single student so they can unpack and make changes to be free from their past trauma, past experiences, and old scripts that told them who they are; things that limit students from achieving their goals.

Stories of interpersonal violence, racism, and countless other traumatic experiences among our students are not new to us. The impacts of interpersonal violence and other trauma are wide-ranging, encompassing both psychological and physical consequences. Severe depression, anxiety, dissociation, and other distress can limit a person's ability to function, and within a university setting, can limit their ability to pursue and obtain their degree. Societal and community reactions to interpersonal violence can be harmful and lead survivors to feel shame, which can marginalize survivors through disconnection and isolation. For people who already hold other historically marginalized identities and suffer the effects of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, and so many others, this disconnection and devastation is multiplied exponentially. Additionally, the research has consistently shown that [false reports of interpersonal violence are exceedingly rare](#), making it important to believe those who come forward with stories of interpersonal violence so as not to contribute to further marginalization. For our part, we believe the students who entrust us with their stories of interpersonal violence.

We know that a student's mental health and wellbeing are tied to the environment in which they live. We believe that some of the best treatment we can provide includes efforts to change systems of oppression that contribute to some of the dysfunction that bring people into our services. We all must take the opportunity to see and to listen and then do the difficult work of making changes with both people and systems to create a community where all students can thrive and achieve their goals.

As we have seen community members across campus show concern and shed light on the impacts of trauma, especially the trauma of interpersonal violence, we know that Rams are concerned about their fellow Rams and want to help. We recognize and appreciate that, structurally, CSU has made strides in acknowledging interpersonal violence. Our department was recently the recipient of funding from the Board of Governors for two positions, Interpersonal Violence Counselor and Trauma Psychologist, meant to help us improve our trauma services and engage the community in a more compassionate and aware approach to survivors on campus. We believe a comprehensive approach that includes access to mental health services alongside a community commitment to supporting survivors is the most promising and effective approach.

In closing, we want student survivors to know we are here for you. You can access our services 24/7 by calling 970-491-6053. Also, you can find out more information about our services by visiting [CSU Health Network Counseling Services' website](#). Most of these services are covered by your student fees and come at no extra cost to you.

CSU Health Network Counseling Services