

As a Responsible Employee, what should I say to a student who reports to me?

Sample: Conversation with Student Who Makes A Disclosure

Provide support

Consider the surroundings:

1. Does the student feel safe right now? What would help the student feel more comfortable?
2. Is this area private?
3. Does the student want a support person there with them? A glass of water? A closed or open door?
4. Turn your full attention to the student, ignoring any distractions such as cell phones.
5. Sit on the same level as the student with open body language, avoid barriers (e.g. desk).
6. Avoid touching or hugging the student, even if you are close with them.

Things you can say:

1. “Thanks for coming to see me (or telling me or calling).”
2. “Take your time.”
3. “What is your biggest concern right now?”
4. “What’s on your mind?”
5. “What can I do to make you feel safer?”
6. “What would help you the most today?”
7. “You have support at SJSU.”
8. “No one should have to face something like this alone.”
9. “How are you feeling right now?”
10. “You did what you needed to do to make it through.”
11. “Feel free to say whatever is on your mind.”
12. “You’re not burdening me, I’m here to help.”
13. “We don’t have to figure everything out at once. Let’s take it one step at a time.”
14. Sometimes nothing. Be comfortable with some silence and pauses.

—Adapted from The Respect Program at Emory University