

Frequently Asked Questions 2017 Cornell Survey of Sexual Assault and Related Misconduct

What resources are available for individuals who have questions or concerns about sexual assault or related forms of misconduct?

Information about reporting options, university policy and procedures, and resources is available online at the [Office of the Title IX Coordinator's website](#) and elsewhere on the [Sexual Harassment and Assault – Response and Education \(SHARE\) website](#); follow the links for Getting Care, Policies and Laws, Reporting, and Resources at the top of the SHARE pages.

Why does Cornell conduct surveys about campus sexual assault and related misconduct?

Sexual violence on college campuses is a serious national problem, occurring with unacceptable frequency at Cornell and on campuses across the country. Although parents, secondary schools, and criminal justice and other public officials must play a significant role, colleges and universities are in a unique position to address the attitudes and behaviors that may lead to sexual violence.

Cornell participated in the 2015 Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, a multi-institutional survey effort organized by the Association of American Universities. This 2017 survey reflects Cornell's ongoing commitment to creating a safer, more caring campus culture in which bias, harassment and violence have no place. In addition, it is in keeping with New York State Education Law Article 129-B which requires colleges and universities to conduct a survey of campus sexual violence no less than every two years.

What are the goals of the survey?

The overarching goals of this survey are to:

- Estimate the prevalence of different forms of nonconsensual sexual contact, harassment, stalking, and domestic and dating violence among students at Cornell; and to examine the context within which these forms of violence occur.
- Assess student knowledge of Cornell resources, policies and procedures related to sexual and related misconduct, including sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and sexual and gender-based harassment; and the obstacles that may prevent the use of available resources.
- Explore factors related to students' decisions to intervene or not as bystanders to various scenarios of sexual assault and related misconduct risk.
- Collect data that will provide guidance for educational and prevention strategies.

What types of questions were asked in the survey?

The survey primarily asked about students' experiences with inappropriate sexual behavior while attending Cornell, including: nonconsensual sexual contact (penetration and/or sexual touching), sexual and gender-based harassment, stalking, and domestic and dating violence. The survey also asked about students' knowledge of Cornell resources and policies concerning sexual assault and related misconduct, and their experiences as bystanders to scenarios of sexual assault or misconduct on campus.

Who took the survey?

A statistically representative sample of 6,000 students from our Ithaca, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Cornell Tech campuses received email invitations to participate in the survey. A total of 2,238 students completed the survey for an overall response rate of 37 percent.

Are the 2017 survey results representative of the full Cornell community?

Survey invitations were sent to a randomly selected sample of students. Since not all students who were invited chose to participate in the survey, a base weight was calculated to adjust for patterns of survey non-response. The percentages shown in the tables of survey results are weighted estimates of the Cornell student population.

How is the 2017 survey different from the 2015 survey?

While much of the content of the 2017 survey instrument was similar to the 2015 AAU Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, several questions were modified to reflect feedback from program staff and refined through pilot tests with students. Questions about campus policies and resources, the context of sexual violence, and bystander intervention were revised to improve clarity and to offer a fuller range of Cornell-specific response options. These revisions produced a shorter and more locally-relevant survey instrument; however, they also restrict our ability to compare 2015 and 2017 survey results, particularly with respect to the prevalence of different forms of sexual assault and related misconduct.

How do Cornell's 2017 survey results compare with results from other surveys about campus sexual violence?

A number of research studies and campus-based surveys have been conducted in an effort to better understand the prevalence of sexual assault and misconduct at colleges and universities. While all share a common focus on campus sexual violence, these efforts have employed different research designs, and asked survey questions that are specific to their research needs. Likewise, the 2017 Cornell survey was designed to reflect our campus context and collect information of use to campus decision-makers. This means that our 2017 survey results are distinct and cannot be precisely compared to our 2015 survey results or to results obtained from surveys conducted by other researchers, colleges or universities. That being said, our 2017 survey results concerning the prevalence of various forms of sexual violence are generally consistent with those reported on the 2015 AAU survey and elsewhere.

How will the survey data be used?

Survey results will help us better understand the attitudes, knowledge and experiences of our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with respect to sexual assault and related misconduct. Select data will guide program and prevention initiatives, help improve services for those who experience sexual assault, domestic/dating violence and stalking and inform our integrated comprehensive approach to these problems on both an individual and a community level.