

# Safety and Support While Studying Abroad:

## *Understanding Sexual Violence, Safety, and Support Systems Abroad*



Marist's commitment to fostering an environment free from violence and abuse extends to all members of the Red Fox community. Marist University's Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code of Student Conduct both apply while you study abroad. If you or someone you know experiences sexual misconduct, such as sexual violence, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment while studying abroad, know that you can reach out to the Office of Equity and Title IX at [titleix@marist.edu](mailto:titleix@marist.edu) for support. This office not only handles Title IX proceedings but also offers support for all types of sexual misconduct you may experience. Your Student Services Coordinator and residence staff are also valuable resources, as they are familiar with country-specific systems and policies.

## Know Before You Go

- Remember that **sexual misconduct is never the fault of the survivor.**
- Before you go, familiarize yourself with your host culture's attitudes towards gender roles, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, and different religions.
- Cultural sensitivity does not mean that you need to submit to behaviors that invade your personal boundaries or that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Educating yourself about sexual harassment, violence, and gender dynamics abroad can empower you and your friends to make choices that maximize your safety whenever possible. Remember: **sexual misconduct is the fault of the offender; it is never a failure of the survivor to "prevent an attack".**
- Laws and systems of justice are not universal. Sexual assault and domestic violence may be handled very differently from how they are in the United States. Familiarize yourself with local laws as much as possible.
- Store numbers of local resources in your phone in case of emergency; make copies of important documents such as your ID, passport, health insurance, etc., and store those copies in a safe place.

## While Abroad

- We offer advice to reduce risk factors. We want to support you in feeling confident to make choices that support your safety. **No matter what precautions are taken, the responsibility for sexual violence always lies with the perpetrator, never the survivor.**
- Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, it's likely for a good reason.
- Balance your independence with your safety.
- If you do need to travel alone, make sure someone in the program knows your whereabouts.
- Safety in numbers; travel in groups.

- Perpetrators of abuse and harassment often prey on people whom they perceive to be vulnerable. If you are feeling lost or uncomfortable, try to remain calm and appear confident; find a trusted establishment, such as a hotel, a restaurant, or the local authorities.
- Never leave a drink unattended or take drinks from those you do not trust. Watch your drink being made when possible; be attentive to people who are breaching your personal space without invitation.
- Be an Active Bystander; if you cannot interrupt a negative situation safely, find someone who can help.
- If you have been harassed, contact your in-country support (student services coordinator/program director/faculty leader/residence life staff). They are the best first resource and will have cultural knowledge and can support you in person.

# Survivor Resources

Survivor advocacy is different from country to country. Contact your program staff if you'd like someone to help you navigate support systems in a specific country.

## Worldwide Resources for Survivors of Sexual Violence

- Rape Crisis Centers around the world: <http://www.ibiblio.org/rcip/internl.html>
- RAINN: International Resources  
<http://www.rainn.org//get-help/sexual-assault-and-rape-international-services>
- Sexual Assault Support & Help for Americans Abroad: You can reach the SASHAA Crisis Center by visiting <http://sashaa.org/> or emailing them at [crisis@pathwaystosafety.org](mailto:crisis@pathwaystosafety.org)
- Marist University Sexual Misconduct Policy: [www.marist.edu/title-ix](http://www.marist.edu/title-ix)

## In Florence:

- Marist Italy's Student Services Coordinator, Marisa Garreffa, is a survivor and an advocate and can help you navigate the Italian legal and support systems.
- Students can also reach out to any trusted staff member, and they can assist.
- Associazione Artemisia Centro donne contro la violenza Catia Franci ONLUS
  - Via del Mezzetta 1, 50135 Firenze
  - [www.artemisiacentroantiviolenza.it](http://www.artemisiacentroantiviolenza.it)
  - +39 055 602311 – 601375
  - Email: [cfranci@fol.it](mailto:cfranci@fol.it), [artemisia@fol.it](mailto:artemisia@fol.it)

## In Dublin:

- Students can reach out to any person from the RA team, the BP COO Karl Dowling, or Marist SD Shane Duffy.
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre - <https://www.drcc.ie/services/helpline/>
  - Contact the freephone 24-Hour National Helpline at 1800 77 8888.
  - Free and confidential listening and support service for anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted, sexually harassed, or sexually abused.