



NAVIGATING COLLEGE TOURS:

ASKING IMPORTANT QUESTIONS
ABOUT **SEXUAL ASSAULT** PREVENTION
AND EDUCATION.

*A guide created by The I AM Journey, in collaboration with Callisto and
#WeRideTogether
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Dear Reader,

Advocating for the prevention and education against sexual assault is not just a cause; it's a deeply personal mission for many, myself included. As both a survivor and a mother of a college student, I intimately understand the profound impact that uninformed decisions can have on individuals and our communities. It's my unwavering belief that fostering awareness, promoting prevention measures, and ensuring education initiatives are crucial to creating safe environments for everyone on college campuses and beyond.



College tours mark a pivotal moment in your education journey. They allow you to delve deeper into learning about your potential university and evaluate its approach to your safety.

In collaboration with Callisto and #WeRideTogether, I am privileged to present this guide. Together, we aim to educate, advocate, and empower communities through sexual assault awareness, prevention, and support.

Drawing from our collective expertise and dedication, we offer critical information, guidance, and key questions for you to ask to enhance your college tours. The information you learn as a result of engaging with this guide will support you in making an informed decision about the place you will call "home" for the next 2-4 years. Let's unite in fostering a culture of care, support, and awareness on college campuses.

In Solidarity,

— *JA*

Jennifer Almonte

Sexual Assault Prevention Educator and Speaker

The I AM Journey



WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

How the U.S. Department of Justice define sexual assault?

The U.S. Department of Justice defines the term sexual assault as, “any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.”¹ This includes a range of behaviors, such as rape, sexual harassment, and unwanted touching. Note, each state has its own laws regarding sexual assault, which may vary in definitions, penalties, and reporting procedures.²

How is sexual assault defined on college campuses?

At the university level, the definition of sexual assault can encompass a broad spectrum of non-consensual sexual behaviors that violate the rights and dignity of individuals within the campus community. This includes, but is not limited to, incidents such as rape, sexual harassment, groping, coercion, and unwanted advances.³ Each university typically defines sexual assault within its own policies and codes of conduct, which often align with legal definitions established by the state where the institution is located.

It’s essential to recognize that colleges and universities must adhere to federal laws such as Title IX, the Clery Act, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), but they also operate within the legal frameworks established by their respective states. Enforcement of state laws regarding sexual assault often intersects with university policies and procedures, as well as federal laws. Universities are responsible for implementing measures to prevent sexual violence, support survivors, and address cases of misconduct according to their disciplinary processes. This may involve offering resources like counseling services, confidential reporting options, and disciplinary hearings for alleged perpetrators.⁴

The approach to educating students about sexual violence prevention also varies among universities. Some institutions prioritize comprehensive prevention programs that engage students through workshops, bystander intervention training, and awareness campaigns.

1 <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/sexual-assault>

2 <https://www.findlaw.com/criminal/criminal-charges/sexual-assault-overview.html>

3 <https://www.findlaw.com/education/higher-education/college-sexual-consent-laws.html>

4 <https://www.aaup.org/report/campus-sexual-assault-suggested-policies-and-procedures#note21>

WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Others may offer less structured initiatives or rely on external organizations to deliver educational content. Additionally, the effectiveness of prevention efforts can be influenced by factors such as campus culture, resources available, and leadership commitment to addressing sexual violence.⁵

Overall, understanding the intersection of state laws, university policies, and campus dynamics is crucial for comprehensively addressing sexual assault on college campuses and fostering a safe and supportive environment for all members of the university community.

There are several ways to gather information about a university's sex and gender-based discrimination policies. You can find significant information about a college you're considering by checking their website. Look for details on crime rates, your rights, rules, prevention efforts, and policies. You can start by using the search feature on the university's website. Try searching for keywords like "Title IX Compliance," "Annual Security Report," "Sexual Assault," "Sexual Assault Prevention," "Sexual Misconduct," And "Crisis Counseling." You can also search for definitions of terms like sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, and stalking to better understand their policies and procedures.

Additionally, you can conduct a general search on Google. Try searching for "sexual assault" along with the name of the university and filter the results under the news category. This can help you find recent articles or reports related to sexual assault incidents at the university.

If you are looking for a more concise way to research campus policies and compare multiple universities, consider using the [Campus Accountability Map + Tool created by End Rape On Campus \(EROC\)](#). It offers comprehensive information on campus sexual assault policies, prevention efforts, and survivor support resources for each institution.

To search for recent articles on abuse and misconduct in sports, visit #WeRideTogether's [Current Events](#) page. News stories are regularly updated, displaying incidents across all sports and every level of play.

5 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/23780231221124574>

SOME STATS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW

Before diving into some critical questions, let's take a moment to shed light on some statistics surrounding sexual assault on college campuses.

Understanding these statistics underscores the importance of asking informed questions and advocating for a safe and supportive campus environment for all.



Prevalence	According to <u>statistics published</u> in 2020 by the Association of American Universities, "Among undergraduate students, 26.4% of females and 6.8% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation." 23.1% of TGQN (transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming) college students have been sexually assaulted. (<u>AAU 2020</u>). <u>The American Psychological Association</u> reports, "A study by the National Council on Disability (2018) showed that 31.6% of undergraduate females with disabilities reported nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force or incapacitation, compared to 18.4% of undergraduate females without a disability." A <u>ChildHelp</u> study showed that "14-29% of athletes have been a victim of at least one form of sexual violence before age 18." Further, " 47% of athletes entering college have already experienced some form of hazing abuse."
Underreporting	<u>RAINN</u> states, "Approximately 31% of rapes are reported, meaning more than 2 out of every 3 rapes go unreported. "

SOME STATS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW

Alcohol Involvement	<u>Alcohol.org</u> reports that about 50% of students' sexual assaults involve alcohol, with both the survivor and perpetrator often under the influence.
Higher Risk Season	<u>The Red Zone</u> "is the time of year, taking place from the beginning of the fall semester to the beginning of Thanksgiving Break, when the majority of college campus sexual assaults happen." It is based on research that concludes that more than 50% of campus sexual assaults occur in the fall semester, with first-year students and transfer students being more affected.
Serial Offenders	One <u>study showed</u> that 68% of initial offenders continued to engage in sexual coercion and assault during college, with 26% committing more severe offenses than their first.
Campus Sexual Assault Prevention Programs	<u>Studies show</u> a lack of understanding regarding consent, with many college students reporting confusion about what constitutes consensual sexual activity. Additional <u>studies</u> indicate that the current framework of campus sexual assault prevention programs, which often focus on the individual and risk reduction, has a very low effect on reducing sexual assault.
Known Offender	<u>The Campus Sexual Assault study</u> in 2007 shared research that found that in approximately 90% of campus sexual assaults and attempted sexual assaults, the perpetrator was known to the victim. They were most commonly an acquaintance, a friend, a partner, or an ex-partner.

WHY SHOULD I ASK ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Understanding the statistics shared assists you in prioritizing discussions about sexual assault prevention and campus safety during college visits. Prioritizing campus safety fosters a supportive learning environment where students can thrive academically and personally. Ultimately, engaging in conversation about sexual assault prevention assists students in selecting a college where they feel safe and supported.

Campus Safety and Sexual Assault Prevention: A Vital Discussion

A secure and supportive campus environment sets the foundation for academic success, personal growth, and a positive college experience. It goes beyond the physical safety of the campus and encompasses creating an atmosphere where every student feels protected, respected, and empowered.

When considering prospective colleges, it would be wise not to overlook the importance of discussing the campus's sexual assault prevention measures. This may require going beyond asking questions during your visit and may include some research, such as looking into [Title IX](#) and [Office of Civil Rights complaints](#). Open dialogues about safety initiatives contribute to fostering a culture of awareness, accountability, and prevention. It is an essential conversation that empowers both students and their parents or guardians to make informed decisions about the institutions they choose.

Why is Campus Safety Important?

- **Academic Success:** A safe campus creates an environment conducive to learning and academic achievement. Students can focus on their studies and growth without compromising their well-being.
- **Personal Well-Being:** Feeling safe and secure on campus is vital for mental and physical health. It allows students to thrive personally, spiritually, emotionally, and socially.
- **Building a Supportive Community:** Campus safety initiatives help build a sense of community where students look out for one another, fostering trust and a positive atmosphere.



TITLE IX ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities, including colleges and universities. Enacted in 1972, Title IX aims to ensure that all students have equal access to education opportunities regardless of gender.

Understanding Title IX's role in preventing campus sexual assault is vital for fostering a safer, more equitable college environment. It empowers individuals to advocate for their rights and holds institutions accountable for student well-being.

Note that the information provided above is a basic understanding of Title IX's role in campus safety, but it's not comprehensive. Regulations may change based on political administration. To stay informed on the latest Title IX rules and regulations, please visit the U.S Department of Education's [website](#).

Role of Ensuring Campus Safety

- **Prevention Programs:** Title IX mandates that educational institutions develop and implement prevention programs to address sexual harassment and violence.
- **Reporting Procedures:** Colleges must establish clear reporting procedures for incidents of sexual assault and harassment, providing survivors with accessible avenues to seek help.
- **Investigation:** Title IX requires colleges to promptly and fairly investigate complaints of sexual misconduct and take appropriate actions to address and prevent recurrence.
- **Supportive Measures:** The law requires colleges to provide supportive measures to survivors during investigations, including academic accommodations and counseling services.
- **Training:** Title IX mandates training for faculty, staff, and students to create a campus culture that promotes safety and prevents sexual misconduct.

Title IX Violations

Title IX violations occur when educational institutions fail to meet the standards set by the law. This can include:

- **Inadequate Prevention Programs:** Failure to implement comprehensive prevention programs discussing sexual assault and harassment.
- **Poor Reporting Procedures:** Colleges with unclear or ineffective reporting mechanisms for incidents of sexual misconduct may be in violation of Title IX.
- **Biased Investigations:** If investigations into sexual assault complaints are not conducted impartially or promptly, it can constitute a Title IX violation.
- **Lack of Supportive Measures:** Failing to provide appropriate supportive measures for survivors during and after investigations is a violation.
- **Insufficient Training:** Institutions that neglect to train their community members on Title IX requirements and the prevention of sexual misconduct are not in compliance.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TOUR

The following pages share some suggested questions that you may want to ask during your college tours.

The questions range from general to questions for athletes and post-assault support. Before you dive into the suggested information, here are some helpful tips to help you navigate the process.

Take some time to review each question and consider which ones resonate most with your needs and interests as a prospective student or parent/guardian.



Keep in mind that your tour guide may only be able to answer some of your questions immediately. Since this is a topic that most prospective families don't ask, they may not have information readily available to answer your questions. Don't hesitate to politely ask to be directed to the appropriate person or department for follow-up.

Consider researching your prospective institutions before your visit to help you determine the questions to ask. Preliminary research may provide you with initial answers and insights, which could lead to formulating additional questions. You may utilize information provided in the "What Is Sexual Assault" section to help guide your search.

Feel free to use this guide to highlight potential questions, add additional questions, capture contact information, and note any observations or thoughts you have during your tours. It may be beneficial to make multiple copies of each question page to collate for each university visit.

Above all, use this resource in whatever ways best suit your needs and preferences. Happy touring!

GENERAL COLLEGE TOUR QUESTIONS

Are you familiar with the distinction between sexual assault prevention and risk reduction?

Sexual assault prevention focuses on explaining the root causes and societal factors that contribute to sexual violence, aiming to stop incidents from occurring altogether. It involves ongoing comprehensive education and awareness programs that promote understanding of concepts like comprehensive sex education, consent, healthy relationships, and respect. Prevention strategies aim to create a culture of accountability and respect where sexual violence is not tolerated.

On the other hand, risk reduction focuses on strategies to minimize the likelihood of an individual becoming a victim of sexual assault. This may include tactics such as avoiding risky situations and learning self-defense techniques. This does not address the underlying societal factors that perpetuate sexual violence. These strategies place the responsibility on individuals to protect themselves rather than considering the actual problem.

Being aware of these definitions will help guide your understanding of the answers you receive to the questions you have chosen to ask.

- How does the university prevent and address sexual assault on campus?
- What campus-wide programs are offered that focus on educating students about sexual assault prevention and campus culture, social norms, and community impact?
- Can you provide me with information on the campus's sexual assault prevention programs that specifically address the needs and concerns of marginalized communities?
- Can you provide information on campus security measures and emergency response protocols?
- What resources are available for survivors of sexual assault on campus?
- How, if at all, does the university go beyond meeting the minimum requirements of Title IX?
- What are the current support groups and/or counseling services for students affected by sexual assault?
- What training programs exist for students beyond their first year regarding sexual assault prevention, education, and healthy relationships?
- How does the university engage with local law enforcement on matters related to campus safety?
- Can you share recent statistics on campus sexual assault incidents?
- What are some of the specific measures in place to ensure a safe and inclusive campus environment?
- How does the university ensure an intersectional approach to investigations, considering the unique challenges faced by individuals from differing backgrounds?

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



[#WeRideTogether](#) and [Callisto](#) are esteemed partners in crafting this comprehensive guide. Both non-profit organizations are dedicated to educating on sexual assault, raising awareness, and equipping communities with supportive tools. Their collaboration has enriched this resource, offering valuable insights to enhance your college search experience.

As you navigate through this guide, take the opportunity to explore more about these organizations. Delve into their missions and initiatives, and discover the impactful contributions they make to fostering safer campus environments. Additionally, pay close attention to the questions they have contributed to aid you in your preparation for college tours. These inquiries are designed to empower you with knowledge and guidance as you embark on your next steps.

#WeRideTogether

ABOUT #WERIDETOGETHER

#WeRideTogether is a nonprofit organization created to cast light upon the endemic issue of abuse in all sports, at every level of play, around the world. We aim to make sports environments safer for all athletes. We believe sport should be the safest and healthiest place for children and young adults to grow and flourish, and that every individual has the right to learn, play, and compete without fear of abuse. We are committed to creating the radical change needed to fulfill that vision by addressing education and awareness, creating a safe place for survivors to find resources and share their voices, and eliminating the stigma around these necessary conversations.

Sexual misconduct is a problem in all sports. Over 50% of athletes have experienced abuse, and 1 in 4 college athletes will be sexually harassed or assaulted by a coach or another athletic authority figure by the time they graduate.

Athletes are vulnerable to abuse and misconduct by figures they emulate and trust. Coaches and individuals in positions of power have a substantial influence and impact on athletes' lives and can greatly affect their mental and physical health. Athlete abuse can include physical, psychological, and sexual misconduct, harm, and neglect, as well as peer-to-peer violence such as hazing and bullying.



For more information, we invite you to connect with us at
www.WeRideTogether.today

#WeRideTogether

QUESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE ATHLETES

To protect our athletes and create safe, healthy sporting environments, we encourage individuals to ask their university, athletic department, and teams essential questions.

- Do teams have a code of conduct and/or safeguarding policy for athletes?
 - Codes of conduct standardize positive behavioral expectations for everyone in athletic environments. Best practices for prevention work to help promote the safety of all participants.
- What types of training, background credentialing, and employment history verification are required for coaches and athletic staff?
 - Researching the reputation and verifying the credentials of coaching staff helps ensure athlete safety.
- What resources and support are available on campus for athletes to support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being?
- What efforts are being made to educate athletes on best practices and what tools/resources are available to them?
- Are athletic staff regularly trained on Title IX and in contact with the university's Title IX Coordinator?





ABOUT CALLISTO

Callisto leverages cutting-edge encryption technology to empower campus survivors, rebuild their sense of agency, and increase the likelihood that serial offenders will be held accountable by harnessing the power of connection. Their innovative system, Callisto Vault, enables survivors to document an assault and/or match with other survivors harmed by the same perpetrator. Within Callisto Vault, survivors can access two tools: the Matching System and Incident Log.

Their proprietary Matching System is the first and only tool that utilizes cryptography to provide a private and secure alternative to a whisper network to determine if the same perpetrator harmed other survivors. The Matching System allows a survivor to enter the perpetrator's unique identifiers (e.g., social media handles), and if another survivor enters the same unique identifier, a match occurs. Any serial perpetrator can be detected, regardless of their university affiliation. Once matched, each survivor is connected with a Legal Options Counselor who will explain their options and can facilitate collective action while protecting survivor privacy.

The Incident Log allows a survivor to create a detailed and timestamped record of what happened as they decide what steps, if any, they might like to take next. This tool can assist survivors in processing trauma and serve as a reference should they decide to report.

Callisto seeks to remove barriers so that survivors can take action on their own terms and increase the likelihood that repeat offenders will be detected and held accountable by establishing a pattern of evidence.

All students, faculty, and staff with a .edu email address have free access to Callisto Vault. We hope that this is a resource that you will never need to use, but can serve as a helpful resource if there is ever a need.

In addition, Callisto offers many resources, such as the ["Survivors Guide to Navigating the Impact of Campus Sexual Assault,"](#) which offers student survivors information about their rights and resources that can support navigating post-assault challenges, including trauma, safety planning, academic, financial, workplace, and mental/physical health impacts.



QUESTIONS WITH A FOCUS ON POST ASSAULT

We hope that sexual violence will not impact your lives; however, statistics tell us that sexual assault will impact many lives. 13% of all students experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation among all graduate and undergraduate students. This stark reality is unfortunately common on college campuses in the United States. While alarming, it's essential to acknowledge the likelihood of someone you know being affected during your college years. In light of this, we provide critical questions to guide your understanding of post-assault resources available on and off campus.

On and Off Campus Resources

- What are the confidential and non-confidential resources available to students?
 - Confidential resources allow survivors to seek support and discuss options without the obligation to report to authorities or Title IX.
 - Non-confidential resources have a responsibility to report incidents of sexual misconduct to authorities or Title IX.
- What campus resources can students access in the community for medical, financial, therapeutic, reporting, and/or legal support?
- Are there any costs associated with using these services? Would health insurance cover some or all of these costs? Are services offered on a sliding scale?
- What community resources can students access for medical, financial, therapeutic, reporting, and/or legal support?
- If students wish to report, what options do they have on- and off-campus?
- Do the options look different if the incident involved another student? professor? community member? underaged drinking? What rights do students have under Title IX?

Title IX

- What does the Title IX process look like, and what are the possible outcomes of going through the process?
- What are some examples of supportive measures that can be put in place to support students' educational success?

Academic Concerns

- If students wish to continue attending classes and engaging in campus life but are concerned about being on campus with their perpetrator, what options do they have?
- If students wish to take a break from academic and campus life, what options do they have?

For more information, please visit www.projectcallisto.org.

RESOURCES



Callisto

Callisto is a nonprofit organization that leverages cutting-edge encryption technology to connect survivors harmed by the same offender to each other and to free legal options counseling, increasing the likelihood that serial perpetrators will be held accountable.



Campus Accountability Map and Tool

This tool empowers current and prospective students, survivors, and their communities with the ability to view in-depth information on each institution's sexual assault investigation policies, prevention efforts, and available survivor support resources as well as high-level statistics on definitions, trainings, sanctions and investigations.



End Rape on Campus

Learn more about Title IX and supportive measures for survivors.



#WeRideTogether

#WeRideTogether is a nonprofit organization created to cast light upon the endemic issue of abuse in all sports, at every level of play, around the world. Their mission is to make sports environments safer for all athletes.



RAINN

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE, online.rainn.org or rainn.org/es) and the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.



Our Wave

Our Wave is a safe space for people affected by traumatic experiences, aiming to foster a supportive environment.



It's On Us

It's On Us is a nonprofit program dedicated to college sexual assault prevention, developing prevention education programs tailored to meet the unique needs of historically excluded and underserved student populations and conducting and publishing research to expand the field of knowledge on violence prevention.



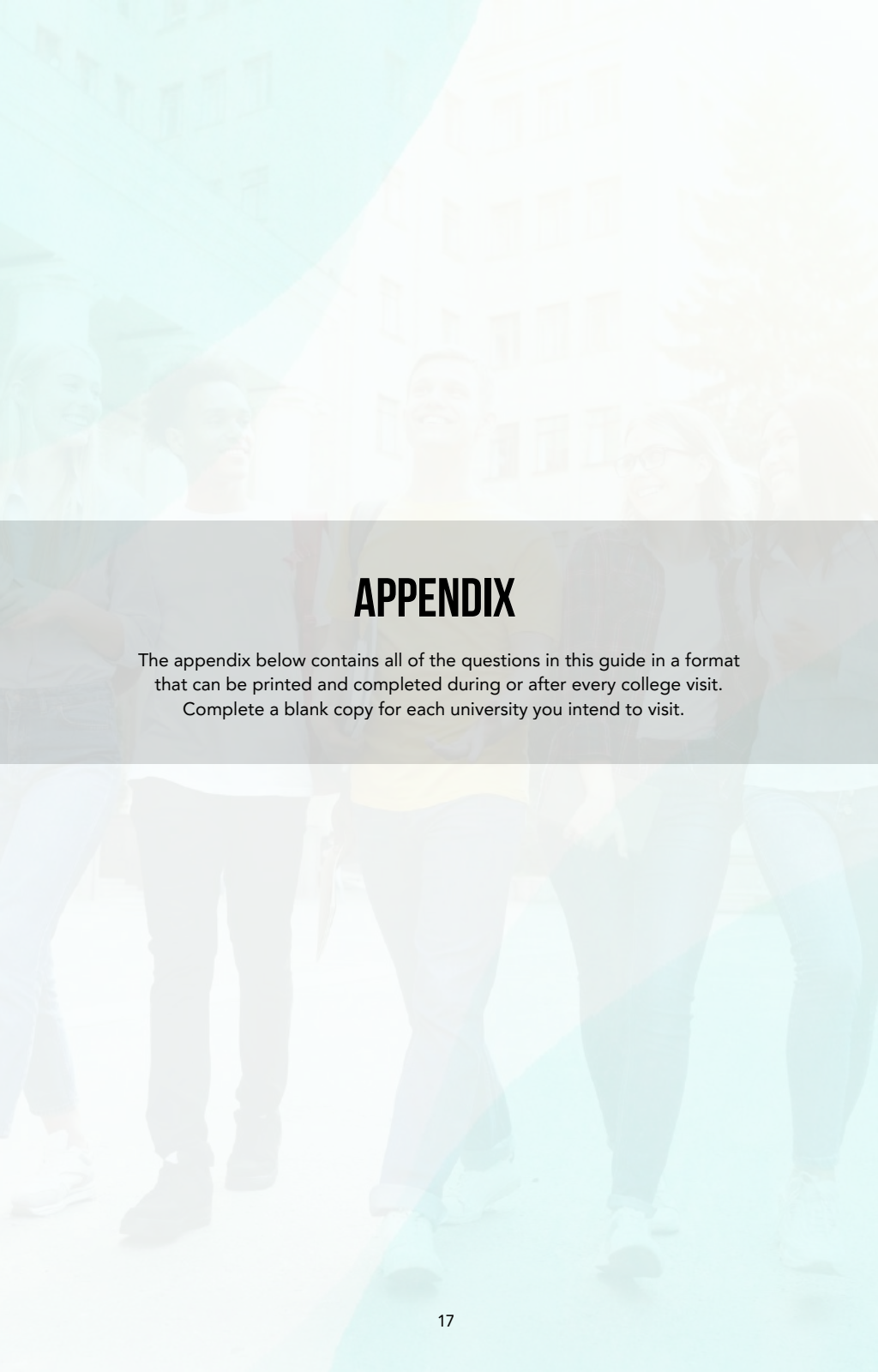
Courage First Athlete Helpline

The Courage First Athlete Helpline supports athletes and sports communities across all disciplines. The Initiative prioritizes fair play and ensures safe participation for athletes of all ages.



Know Your IX

Learn more about Title IX and supportive measures for survivors.



APPENDIX

The appendix below contains all of the questions in this guide in a format that can be printed and completed during or after every college visit. Complete a blank copy for each university you intend to visit.

COLLEGE VISIT LOG

University Name: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Contact Information For Follow-up Questions:



Highlight all of the questions you intend to ask during your college visit based on your preliminary research. Take a moment to draft your own questions if necessary. Note your findings in the space provided.

- How does the university address and prevent sexual assault on campus? _____

- What campus-wide programs are offered that focus on educating students about sexual assault prevention and campus culture, social norms, and community impact? _____

- Can you provide me with information on the campus's sexual assault prevention programs that specifically address the needs and concerns of marginalized communities? _____

- Can you provide information on campus security measures and emergency response protocols? _____

- What resources are available for survivors of sexual assault on campus? _____

- How, if at all, does the university go beyond meeting the minimum requirements of Title IX? _____

- What are the current support groups and/or counseling services for students affected by sexual assault? _____

- ## On and Off Campus Resources

- What are the confidential and non-confidential resources available to students?
- What campus resources can students access in the community for medical, financial, therapeutic, reporting, and/or legal support?
- Are there any costs associated with using these services? Would health insurance cover some or all of these costs? Are services offered on a sliding scale?
- What community resources can students access for medical, financial, therapeutic, reporting, and/or legal support?
- If students wish to report, what options do they have on- and off-campus? Do the options look different if the incident involved another student? professor? community member? underage drinking?
- If students wish to continue attending classes and engaging in campus life but are concerned about being on campus with their perpetrator, what options do they have?
- If students wish to take a break from academic and campus life, what options do they have?

Title IX

- What rights do students have under Title IX?
- What does the Title IX process look like, and what are the possible outcomes of going through the process?
- What are some examples of supportive measures that can be put in place to support students' educational success?

- If students wish to take a break from academic and campus life, what options do they have?

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HAVE A SUGGESTION ON IMPROVING THIS GUIDE?

Email: jenna@theiamjourney.co