Responding to Survivors/Victims of Sexual Violence
Training for Front Line RTL Employees
Draft 2016
You may witness sexual violence on the system, or receive reports from customers.

Your response, though brief, is critical to the survivor/victim(s) and the safety of the system.
“I once had a victim (of sexual violence) come to me. I felt bad, but didn’t know what to say except ‘I’m sorry.’”

“I would respond on gut instinct, but I’m not sure if I’m saying the right thing.”

-quotes from MBTA operators
This training will help you to respond.

By the end of this training you will know:

– How to recognize sexual violence and what to do if you witness an incident.
– What steps to take if an incident of sexual violence is reported to you.
– How to provide support to someone who reports sexual violence to you.
– What supports are available to you.
What is Sexual Violence?

Sexual violence (SV) is any sexual act done against someone’s will. Examples include:

– Rape
– Unwanted touching
– Forcing someone to see a sexual act
– Verbal sexual harassment

Centers for Disease Control
Sexual violence can affect any person regardless of age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, religion, culture, or economic background.
How Often Does Sexual Violence Happen?

Nearly 1 in 2 women have experienced sexual violence.

Nearly 1 in 5 men have experienced sexual violence.

Nearly 1 in 2 transgender people have experienced sexual violence.

Female Survivors
- Female Survivors
- Females

Male Survivors
- Male Survivors
- Males

Trans Survivors
- Trans Survivors
- Transgender People
Rates of sexual violence against people with disabilities are especially high.

Adults with a disability are more than twice as likely to experience sexual violence than adults without a disability.

On the MBTA...

From 2011 to 2015 there were 277 sexual assaults on the MBTA reported to Transit Police.
Why Do We Use “Survivor/Victim”?

• Language influences the way we think.

• Victim
  – Used by law enforcement.
  – Reflects fear and trauma.

• Survivor
  – Provides sense of power over the situation.
  – Suggests ability to heal, recover, and regain control.

• “Survivor/Victim” respects both terms.
If You **Witness** Sexual Violence on the System....

• Do not put yourself in harm’s way.
  – Directly interfering in a dangerous situation may result in further harm.

• Assess for immediate safety issues such as injuries.

• Get a description of events/the perpetrator(s) without endangering yourself or others.

• Call OCC immediately.
  – OCC will dispatch TPD.
If Someone **Reports** Sexual Violence to you...

• If the incident took place **on the MBTA system**, you **must** call it in to OCC.

• If the incident took place **outside of the MBTA system**, you should **offer** to call it in to OCC. You should also **offer** the direct phone number of the Transit Police.
New Code

- Info about new code for calling into OCC
• Let the survivor/victim know that TPD has been called.

• Reassure the survivor/victim that you are there to help. You may not force a survivor/victim or witness to stay until TPD arrives.
How can you support the survivor/victim?

- Safety
- Empowerment
- Empathy
- Knowledge
S.E.E.K.

Safety:

• Ensure the person is no longer at immediate risk.

• Protect confidentiality as much as possible. One reason why survivors/victims of sexual violence are hesitant to report is fear of losing their privacy.
Safety (continued)

Remember, you are in a public setting where others can overhear your conversation.

- Have the conversation in an area of the platform/bus stop where there are fewer people.
- Use a lower tone of voice
- Tell the survivor/victim they don’t have to tell you the details of the incident for you to help.
- Only ask for essential information
Safety (continued)

• Essential information is:
  – Date and time of incident
  – Location of incident
  – Description of perpetrator
Safety (continued)

• Protect privacy after your interaction with the survivor/victim.
  – Do not talk to others who are not relevant to the assistance of the survivor/victim about details of the incident or any identifying information about the survivor/victim or the incident.
S.E.E.K

Empowerment:
• Let the survivor/victim know what to expect

Examples:
– “TPD has been called and is on the way. Another MBTA employee will be coming to wait with you.”
– “I will have to fill out an incident report. The incident report will go to _____”
Empowerment (continued)

- When possible offer options and allow the survivor/victim to make decisions for themselves.

Examples:
  - “Do you want me to call an ambulance?”
  - “If you want to call TPD later here is their phone number. Ask for the detective unit.”
Empowerment (continued)

If the survivor/victim has a disability, remember your training:

• **Ask the person if they require assistance related to their disability.** If they do, ask them how you can best assist.

• **Avoid being patronizing or condescending.**

• **Respect and treat adults as adults.**
S.E.E.K.

Empathy:

• Accept what the survivor/victim is telling you as fact. It’s not your role to determine whether a report is valid.

• Let them know that they are not at fault.

• Tell them that you respect the courage it took for them to tell you.

• Be calm and supportive.
S.E.E.K.

Knowledge:

• Know your role. You are providing an initial response and connecting the survivor/victim to others who can provide further assistance.

• If appropriate, share resources.
Scenario:

A young man approaches you, and says to you that a man on the train grabbed his butt and made a lewd comment.
Incident Report

Write only facts. Do not include your opinions or interpretations.

Document only:

• Name and contact information of survivor/victim and/or witnesses
• Date and time of incident
• Location of incident
• Description of perpetrator
Impact on Employees

• Witnessing sexual violence and/or hearing reports can be traumatic.

• Remember the MBTA does not tolerate any violence against employees. If you experience sexual violence on the job report to OCC or a supervisor.

There is support for you.
MBTA Resources

• MBTA Transit Police Emergency
  – 617-222-1212; TTY 617-222-1200

• MBTA Employee Assistance Program
  – 617-222-5381
  Location: Transportation Building
  10 Park Plaza, Room 7610
  Boston, MA 02116
BARCC Resources

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)
– Support for survivors/victims at any point in the healing process

24-hour Hotline
1-800-841-8371
MASS Relay: 1-800-720-3480
www.barcc.org
This project was supported by Grant No. 2014-FW-AX-K006 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.