

The University of Vermont  
College of Education and Social Services  
Department of Social Work

**SWSS 6000 Foundation Year Field Practicum  
Syllabus Fall 2023/Spring 2024**

**Semester:** Fall 2023/Spring 2024

**Instructors:** Alice Scannell (Faculty Field Liaison & primary course instructor); Jean Sienkewicz (Field Education Coordinator to provide Field program oversight)

**Credits:** 3 credits each semester

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**Phone:** 802-656-8800

**Office hours:** By appointment

**Preferred mode of communication:** Email

**Usual email pattern:** M-F, 9am-5pm

**Co-requisite:** Fall: SWSS 6120 Social Work Practice I

Spring: SWSS 6130 Social Work Practice II

**Pre-requisites:** Fall: Must be a matriculated MSW student

Spring: SWSS 6120 Social Work Practice I & 1<sup>st</sup> semester of SWSS 6000

**UVM LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**UVM is located on the land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples for thousands of years and is home of the Western Abenaki People. We honor, recognize, and respect these peoples, especially the Abenaki, as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we gather today. In that spirit, today we will begin by acknowledging we are guests in this land, and we need to respect and help protect the lands within our use.**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This two-semester course takes place outside the traditional classroom environment and **inside local community human/social service agencies**. Students are placed in approved social work field sites with professional trained social work supervisors. They have one placement throughout the academic year and are required to complete a total of 900 hours over their two years in field, or 450/year.

This social work field experience will provide students with an **educationally based hands-on experience** grounded in our program's philosophy highlighting our commitment to human rights, social, economic, and environmental justice, and critical social construction. Students will integrate more specifically 1) the development of an ongoing and deeply **self-reflective and reflexive professional approach** to the work, 2) learned (and still-learning) social work knowledges, skills, and values typically associated with our unique profession, and 3) an unrelenting focus on **relational and authentic connections with clients, colleagues, the community, and the world**.

The primary objective of the first year of the field education curriculum in an accredited master's program is to provide a foundation in **generalist social work practice**. Specific objectives include working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities from a

person-in-situation perspective and developing broad service coordination skills. All students are expected to move along a continuum from beginning to increasingly complex social work practice skills. The successful completion of this course indicates a student's ability to move into the more advanced and autonomous Specialized Practice year field experience (SWSS 6890).

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES & SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES<sup>1</sup>**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Contextualize generalist social work practice within the particular field placement setting that they are learning in.
- Engage field assignments from a self-reflective and reflexive professional practice stance.
- Make connections between classroom and field experience learning from the philosophical frame of the program.
- Engage in evaluation based on the nine social work generalist competencies described below.

These course objectives align with items in bold in the following list of nine social work education competencies that our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), requires students to master by the time they graduate from the MSW program:

- 1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
- 2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
- 3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**
- 4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**
- 5. Engage in Policy Practice**
- 6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- 7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- 8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- 9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

## **REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

Students are required to read the [UVM Department of Social Work Field Education webpage](#) and sign the [Microsoft Forms document](#) that says they are responsible for the contents and policies on this site. Students are also required to utilize the course Brightspace as stipulated by your assigned Faculty Field Liaison.

## **LEARNING METHODS & RATIONALE**

Students will be learning in a practicum environment, supported by their Faculty Field Liaisons, community social workers (Field Instructors) and if applicable, other human services personnel (On-Site Supervisors). They will complete several written assignments (below) and will be expected to demonstrate social work practice skills and give/receive feedback on an ongoing basis.

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<sup>1</sup> [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\) 2022 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards \(EPAS\)](#).

## LEARNING ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS

Table 1. Fall Assignments, Deadlines & Grading

<b>Fall Learning Assessment Assignments</b>	<b>Dates Due</b>	<b>Points</b>
Progress toward Completion of Field Hours (minimum of 225 required)	Dec 8	30
Attendance and Participation in Monthly Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaison	Monthly (See course outline for dates)	20
Learning Agreement (LA)	Sept 29	15
Process Record #1 with Field Instructor feedback	Oct 27	5
Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment	Nov 10	10
December Evaluation signed by all parties	Dec 8	20
<b>TOTAL</b>		100

Table 2. Spring Assignments, Deadlines & Grading

<b>Spring Learning Assessment Assignments</b>	<b>Dates Due</b>	<b>Points</b>
Completion of Field Hours (Minimum of 450 required)	May 3	30
Attendance and Participation in Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaison	Monthly (See course outline for dates)	20
Learning Agreement Addendum (LAA—review and completion of any updates and revisions to LA)	Jan 26	15
Process Record #2 with Field Instructor Feedback	Feb 9	5
Process Record #3 with Field Instructor feedback	March 8	5
Process Record #4 with Field Instructor Feedback	April 5	5
Ending Evaluation	May 3	20
<b>TOTAL</b>		100

## UVM Grading System<sup>2</sup>:

<u>Excellent:</u>	<u>Good:</u>	<u>Fair:</u>	<u>Failure:</u>
A+ 100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	F 69 or below
A 94-100	B 84-86	C 74-76	AF Administrative Failure
A- 90-93	B- 80-83	C- 70-73	XF Academic Dishonesty

This is a pass/fail course, so the following grades apply:

S = C or better  
U = C- or below  
AF Administrative Failure  
XF Academic Dishonesty

Incompletes: A grade of incomplete (INC) may be assigned when course work is not completed for reasons beyond the student's control. Incompletes may be approved for the following reasons: medical, personal tragedy or academic. In MSW courses incompletes require the approval of the Graduate College dean.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSESSMENTS (GRADED WORK)

In this course, students will earn grades of either an “S” Satisfactory or a “U” Unsatisfactory.

### I. Field Hours

Purpose and Brief Description: Students are expected to complete a minimum of 450 hours, in accordance with professional standards of behavior, in their approved and confirmed field placement for the Academic Year 2023-2024. Policies that guide these hours can be found on the [UVM Department of Social Work Field Education Website](#).

Evaluation Criteria: Students will negotiate a weekly field schedule with their Field Instructor so as to complete 225 hours by the end of Fall semester (for AY 2023-2024, this is December 8), and 450 hours before the last day of classes (for AY 2023-2024, this is May 3). Students will read and adhere to the field policy on the Dept. of Social Work Field website re: hours in the field. Students will read and adhere to both the Student Hours policy re: hours in the field, as well as the Student Guidelines for Professional Behavior in Placement policy, both on the Social Work Field website linked above.

**(NOTE:** Hours should include, at minimum, social work-specific supervision with their MSW-level Field Instructor weekly, or bi-weekly if the student also has an On-Site Supervisor with whom they meet weekly for supervision. Field hours also include at least one required site visit with their Faculty Field Liaison each semester.)

### II. Attendance and Participation in Monthly Field Seminars

Purpose and Brief Description: Six one-and-a-half hour seminars (three each semester) are scheduled on a monthly basis with your Faculty Field Liaison. These on-campus, in-person seminars are purposefully constructed for a small number of students to learn about required field assignments as well as consult with one another about their

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<sup>2</sup> <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/>

practicum experiences and emerging social work identities. These seminars count towards a student's field hours total for the year.

**(NOTE re: Attendance and Illness:** If a student will not be able to attend in-person classes for qualifying health reasons, Student Health Services (SHS) will send a notification to the appropriate Student Services office or designated staff member informing them of this, along with the dates the student is unable to attend. The SHS notification will specify whether the request for flexibility is only around in-person class attendance or includes additional flexibility for assignments and tests because the student is too ill to participate. Students are responsible for working with their Faculty Field Liaison to make up seminar content and work they miss due to a documented illness.)

Evaluation Criteria: Students are expected to attend and participate in *all* scheduled Field Seminars across the academic year.

### III. Learning Agreement (LA) and Learning Agreement Addendum (LAA)

Purpose and Description: Almost immediately, students and Field Instructors will begin talking about the work they will be doing together in the semesters ahead. It is, however, highly unlikely that this is the first time the conversation or the thinking about "student assignments" has happened. Field Instructors would have discussed assignments possibilities in their application for field site approval; students and Field Instructors will have already talked about assignments during the interview; and Field Instructors probably would have already talked with agency/organization colleagues prior to the start of the school year. The learning agreement formalizes and expands on those discussions.

This is a student assignment. However, it requires significant input from the Field Instructor. In reality, it is a deeply relational, co-created document generated at the very beginning of the student/Field Instructor relationship. It is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration, curiosity, discovery, exploration, visioning, agreement, and building authentic connections. The student becomes the document writer and the Field Instructor is the consultant. Please see the Learning Agreement assignment on the [Field Education page](#) of UVM's Department of Social Work website for specific guidance.

While the Learning Agreement is started in the Fall semester, the beginning of the Spring semester offers the opportunity for revisions and updates in a separate reflective assignment called the Learning Agreement Addendum (LAA) which can also be found on the Field Education website.

### IV. Process Record Assignments

Purpose and Brief Description: These assignments are an invitation for students to engage in a time-honored tradition in social work education. For years and years, social work Field Instructors have been assigning process records and students have responded by engaging in this dynamic thinking, writing, and feedback process. In our programs, students complete this assignment four (4) times over the course of the academic year.

These assignments are explicit in their focus on helping students develop a solid self-reflective and reflexive practice. They enable students to look deeply and specifically at

a single practice interaction by writing a verbatim recording of what was said and observational recording that coincides with that. Students provide their own comments about their work using a structured outline.

Equally as important to the student writing is the Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison feedback. Therefore, this assignment is clearly a process that values the generative and collaborative thinking that often (if not always) results in an increase in the quality of student work.

Please keep in mind that process records are not intended to become a part of a client's record but rather part of the education record of the student. Because of this, preserving the confidentiality of the client(s) and/or other professionals involved in the recorded interaction is extremely important. Actual names or other identifying information must either be omitted or disguised.

Detailed guidance for how to complete the Process Record assignment can be found on the [Field Education](#) page of the UVM Department of Social Work website.

## **V. December Evaluation**

Purpose and Brief Description: Students and Field Instructors are expected to participate in a formal evaluation at the end of November or beginning of December, to be completed by the last day of Fall classes (For AY 2023-2024, this is December 8). The content and the timeliness of the evaluation will be considered in assigning the final grade. There is a form with discussion prompts available on the UVM Department of Social Work [Field Education webpage](#); this form is submitted to the Faculty Field Liaison on or before the due date.

## **VI. Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment**

Purpose and Brief Description: There are multiple places in any social work curriculum where students look specifically at practice skills and philosophical approaches to our work with people and systems through an anti-oppressive lens. In an attempt to help integrate Practice and Field along this framework, we are asking students to begin a conversation with their Field Instructors about the anti-oppressive practices in their agency.

Students will work with their Field Instructor(s) to help them identify anti-oppressive practices and perspectives utilized in their program and organization. Faculty Field Liaisons will offer several handouts to ground the discussion, which consists of working through the "Seven Principles of Oppressive Practices (adapted by C. Cuddy from Brisebois & Gonzales-Prendes work in 2014) and record/submit to your field Liaison a summary of salient points from that discussion. Handouts and an assignment description can be found on the [Field Education page](#) of UVM's Department of Social Work website.

## **VII. Ending Evaluation**

Purpose and Brief Description: Students and Field Instructors are expected to participate in a formal evaluation at the end of April or the beginning of May, to be completed by the last day of Spring classes (For AY 2023-2024, this is May 3). The content and the timeliness of the evaluation will be considered in assigning the final grade. The paper

version of this form is available on the UVM Department of Social Work [Field Education webpage](#).

*(NOTE: While the paper version of this form continues to be available on the Department of Social Work Field Education webpage, it should be noted that Field Instructors must enter, and students must sign off on, this data in UVM's College of Education and Social Services' assessment system, TK-20, prior to the end of the semester (for AY 2023-2024, this is May 3). The TK-20 system will send system-generated emails to Field Instructors and students during the Spring semester with instructions and a link to the student's Ending Evaluation. After the Ending Eval has been submitted, students are required to log-in to TK-20 using their UVM log-in credentials to electronically acknowledge (aka, "sign") the evaluation. Faculty Field Liaisons will provide step-by-step instructions for this process for both Field Instructors and students.)*

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE**

### **Fall Semester 2023**

FMSW Field Orientation (required)	Wednesday, August 23, 1-4pm
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #1	Monday, September 18 <i>Time/location TBD via Liaison communication</i>
Learning Agreement (LA) due	Friday, September 29
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #2	Monday, October 16 <i>Time/location TBD via Liaison communication</i>
Process Record 1 due	Friday, October 27
Anti-Opressive Practice Assignment due	Friday, November 10
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #3	Monday, November 13 <i>Time/location TBD via Liaison communication</i>
Progress towards Completion of Hours (Minimum of 225 hours required)	Friday, December 8
December Evaluation due	Friday, December 8

### **Spring Semester 2024**

Learning Agreement Addendum (LAA) due	Friday, January 26
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #4	Monday, February 5 <i>Time/location TBD via Liaison communication</i>
Process Record 2 due	Friday, February 9
Process Record 3 due	Friday, March 8
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #5	Monday, March 4 <i>Time/location TBD via Liaison communication</i>
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #6	Monday, April 15 <i>Time/location TBD via Liaison communication</i>
Process Record 4 due	Friday, April 5
Field Hours complete (Minimum of 450)	Friday, May 3

hours required)  
Ending Evaluation due

Friday, May 3

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Communication**

Check your UVM email and the course Brightspace frequently. Your UVM email and Brightspace Announcements will be the primary mode of notifying students of cancellations, changes, and/or new postings. Be sure that your Faculty Field Liaison, Field Education Coordinator, the Registrar and the Social Work Department all have the correct UVM email address; students are expected to use only their duly assigned UVM email for all course-related communication. For more about how the course will operate, see *Course Learning Methods and Rationale*.

### **Course modality and technical support**

Unlike other courses, this course has no set weekly on-campus day/time for meetings as the bulk of the coursework is to take place within the student's assigned field placement. However, as noted above, students are expected to meet with their Faculty Field Liaisons for a one-and-one-half-hour seminar on a monthly basis for the duration of the academic year. Seminars are intended to be in-person, on-campus, although occasionally there may be a need for the group to meet remotely. Faculty Field Liaisons will communicate with students about days/times/locations for each of these seminars in advance of the semester. Should there be an occasion where the group will need to meet remotely, required platforms and software may include Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom and Brightspace. As noted above, email and Brightspace will be required, and used by the instructor for time-sensitive communication.

As such, your success in the course may depend in part on your use of technology. For technical support, please read [this checklist](#) and install the related software to ensure you are ready for class. [Contact the Helpline](#) for support with any technical issues.

### **Attendance and Illness**

If, for qualifying health reasons, a student will not be able to attend required seminars or their field placement for a length of time, Student Health Services (SHS) will send a notification to the appropriate Student Services office or designated staff member informing them of this, along with the dates the student is unable to attend. The SHS notification will specify whether the request for flexibility is only around in-person class attendance or includes additional flexibility for assignments and tests because the student is too ill to participate. Students are responsible for working with their Faculty Field Liaison and/or their Field Instructor to make up seminar content and/or placement work they miss due to a documented illness.

### **Deadlines/Assignment submission**

Late submission of assignments or absence from the in-class portions of assignments will result in a lower grade (unless excused by the instructor for highly unusual reasons). Students are expected to provide completed assignments to their instructor electronically, via Brightspace or email (as instructed) on or before the date due.



## Research and Citation Help

For help selecting research topics, finding information, citing sources, and more, ask a librarian. The UVM Libraries are eager to help. You may ask questions by phone, e-mail, chat, or text, or make an appointment for an individual consultation with a [librarian](#). The librarian assigned to the Department of Social Work is [Daniel DeSanto](#) or Howe Library.

## Course Evaluation

All students are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. Because SWSS 6000 is a year-long course, this happens at the end of the academic year. As with all other course evaluations, evaluations are anonymous and confidential, and the information gained, including constructive criticism, will be used to improve the course well after semester grades have been issued. UVM's Department of Social Work uses Blue for the purposes of course evaluation. Use the following link to access [student instructions on how to access Blue course evaluations](#).

## Lived Name and Pronoun Information

The UVM Directory includes fields for indicating your lived name and your pronouns. Lived names (preferred names, names in use) are names that an individual wants to be known by in the University community. Entering your pronouns is strongly encouraged to help create a more inclusive and respectful campus community. To update your information, login to the UVM Directory. A preview box will allow you to see how this information will appear in other systems used on campus such as Microsoft Teams and Brightspace. More information about how to make changes to your lived name and pronouns is available in the [Knowledge Base](#). If you need support and/or advocacy with regards to this on a broader University or College level, please be aware that the [Prism \(LGBTQA+\) Center](#) can help to ensure that all of your instructors are using the name/pronouns that you use for yourself.

## Difference and Diversity

In keeping with the program's commitment to promote diversity, human rights, social, economic and racial justice and client strengths in its conceptualization and implementation, courses in the Department of Social Work will affirm and respect difference. Explicit attention will be given, but not limited to, the intersectionality of age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status (Competency 3, CSWE 2022 EPAS)<sup>3</sup>.

This affirmation will be apparent in the construction of the course objectives and course assignments, the selection of course materials and the instructor's ongoing attention facilitating a respectful, engaged learning for all students. Of particular significance, students and faculty should "demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies" (Competency 3).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/94471c42-13b8-493b-9041-b30f48533d64/2022-EPAS.pdf>

## Freedom of Expression & Speech, and Respectful Dialogue

Due to the nature of social work itself, some content and discussions may be emotionally challenging or evoke controversial ideas. Considering and engaging multiple, complex positions is a necessary dimension of the discursive processes and applied learning in social work education. Moreover, as employees of a public university, UVM faculty must seek to protect everyone's First Amendment rights<sup>4</sup> and the free speech exceptions established by the Supreme Court.

Respect for difference and diversity is to be demonstrated toward all members of the class, whether or not agreement exists among the positions taken on an issue. This is an integral part of engaging difference and diversity in social work practice and of participating professionally in the collaborative learning processes of social work courses.

For further understanding of the ethical standards, values and norms informing these policies, see: the *NASW Code of Ethics* (2017),<sup>5</sup> the university's *Our Common Ground*,<sup>6</sup> the core philosophy of the Department of Social Work<sup>7</sup> and the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, specifically Article 9.<sup>8</sup>

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Accommodations

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact SAS, the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student's accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan. Contact SAS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; [access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu); or [www.uvm.edu/access](http://www.uvm.edu/access).

### Religious Holidays

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should submit in writing to their instructors (including Faculty Field Liaisons and Field Instructors within their field placements) by the end of the second full week of classes their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Students must be permitted to make up any work missed for the purpose of religious observance.

### Student Rights and Responsibilities

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript#toc-amendment-i>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>  
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uvm.edu/president/our-common-ground>  
<sup>7</sup> [https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/about\\_us](https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/about_us)  
<sup>8</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Students are responsible for knowing and observing all UVM policies regarding student rights and responsibilities. These policies address the following: *Academic Integrity*, *Class Attendance*, *Athletic-Academic Conflicts* and *Religious Holidays*. Likewise, social work faculty and students are responsible for knowing and observing the *Classroom Code of Conduct*. This is the link to these policies on the [UVM website](#).

### **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

The link to the UVM policy is included at the end of this syllabus but it seems important to mention it here as well. All work submitted in this course must be your own, and it must be produced specifically for this course. If you wish to incorporate some of your prior work into a course assignment, you must have the *prior* approval of your instructor and cite accordingly. You need to read and then integrate the material using your own words no matter the primary source. All sources used in your work (ideas, quotes, paraphrases, etc.) must be properly acknowledged and documented per APA format. Violations of the academic honesty policy will be taken seriously.

### **Grade Appeals**

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures [outlined in this policy](#).

### **Statement on Alcohol and Cannabis in the Academic Environment**

Social work faculty want our students to get the most you can out of your courses. Each individual student plays a crucial role in their own education and in their readiness to learn and fully engage with the course material. It is important to note that alcohol and cannabis have no place in an academic environment and can seriously impair a student's ability to learn and retain information not only in the moment, but up to 48 hours or more afterwards. In addition, alcohol and cannabis can:

- Cause issues with attention, memory and concentration
- Negatively impact the quality of how information is processed and ultimately stored
- Affect sleep patterns, which interferes with long-term memory formation

It is the expectation of the Department of Social Work faculty that our students will do everything they can to optimize their own learning and to fully participate in this, and all other, courses.

### **Promoting Health & Safety**

The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community:

[Center for Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Counseling & Psychiatry Services \(CAPS\)](#), (802) 656-3340

C.A.R.E. If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by [visiting the C.A.R.E. Team website](#).

**Sexual misconduct:**

UVM is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as any kind of sexual misconduct, including harassment, intimate partner and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In the event that a student discloses sexual misconduct or harassment, your instructor, who is deemed a “responsible employee” under the policies referenced above, is obligated to report some information to UVM’s Title IX Coordinator in order to facilitate appropriate support and institutional response.

However, anyone experiencing sexual misconduct can and should talk to someone so they can get the support they need and our school can respond appropriately. Confidential advocacy and support services are available to UVM students of all genders, sexual orientations, and other identities, provided by [HOPEWorks](#), the leading crisis counseling and advocacy agency in Chittenden County, via [UVM’s Center for Health and Wellbeing](#).