

# **Date/Acquaintance Rape**

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## **The Facts**

- Most sexual violence occurs among people between the ages of 18-24.
- One quarter of women in college today have been the victims of rape or attempted rape, and almost 90% of them knew their assailants.
- Of the male students who said they had forced sex on a woman, 100% knew the victim.



## **Rape**

Rape is forced physical intimacy that a woman does not want. More specifically, rape is forced penis-vagina intercourse. Date/Acquaintance rape is forced intercourse by someone the victim knows.

Force can be physical, verbal (this includes coercion, threats, guilt trips) or implied. The victim doesn't have to resist for the forced sexual activity to be considered rape.

Women can be and are sexually assaulted by friends, dates, classmates, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Research has consistently revealed that 65-90% of rape victims knew their assailants.

So much silence surrounds this type of assault that often the victim is unaware that a crime has occurred. Victims sometimes encounter disbelief from friends, family and professionals. Victims may also feel guilty or responsible for the assault, thinking that they should have been a better judge of character.

## **High Risk Factors**

### **Sex Role Stereotypes**

- Women - Be aware of stereotypes that prevent you from self-expression, such as "Anger is unfeminine," "Being passive and submissive is feminine."
- Men - Be aware of stereotypes that promote violence against women, such as "If you think she's been teasing and leading you on, she's asking for it," "It is manly to use force."

### **Ignoring Your Instincts**

Know that you have the right to set sexual limits. If you feel you are being pressured past your limit, you are right. The earlier you let someone know you intend to enforce your limits, the more powerful your limits become.

### **Ineffective Communication**

Communicate your limits. If someone starts to offend you, tell him. Tell him directly and forcefully and don't worry if you have to be firm. Many times a woman who doesn't want to hurt her date's feelings or doesn't want to appear angry, may hold back and try to say no in a nice way. When this happens, the man may misunderstand her niceness and ignore her saying no. What is important is to stand up for your right by saying no clearly and for the man to hear the "no" as "NO!"

### **Suggestions for Men**

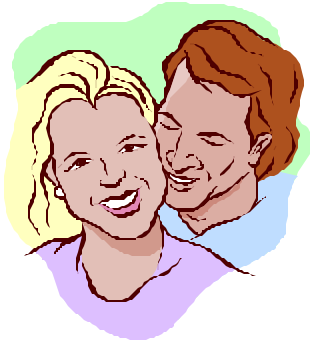
- If you have intercourse without her consent, you are committing a crime called sexual assault even if you previously have had sex with her.
- A woman with previous sexual experience isn't asking to be raped. Neither is a woman who wears what you might consider suggestive or revealing clothing. Sex without consent is still rape.
- Spending money on a woman does not "entitle" a man to sex.
- Psychological pressure is still a form of coercion. Telling a date "everybody is doing it," or "I thought you loved me," or



"I'm going to tell our friends that we did it any way," is emotional blackmail.

## ***Suggestions for Women***

- Think twice about going to a man's room or apartment. Most date rapes occur on the "man's turf."
- Be careful about inviting a man into your room or apartment. Some men may interpret your willingness to invite them as an invitation to sexual activity.
- Be assertive. Men may interpret passivity as permission. When someone does something you don't like and you ignore it, he may continue. It is okay to be direct and firm with someone who is sexually pressuring you, even if it hurts his feelings.
- Heavy petting or removing some of your clothing may confuse your date about what you are willing to do sexually. When you send conflicting messages, the situation may become more difficult for you and your partner to control.



## ***Suggestions for Both Men and Women***

- Use alcohol responsibly. Alcohol and drugs decrease inhibitions and lead to behavior that is less rational and more impulsive. You are committing sexual assault if you have sex with a person who is drunk, under the influence of drugs or unconscious and not able to give permission or to resist.
- Building a relationship requires two people working together as equals. Both men and women have the same rights to initiate contact and to set limits.
- Recognize and deal wisely with peer pressure. Both men and women are sometimes encouraged by their peers to be

sexually active in order to be accepted by the group. As with any serious decision with life-long consequences, think for yourself. You are the one who will live with the consequences.

## ***What To Do If You Are Assaulted***

- 1.** As soon as you are out of the rape situation, find someone you trust - a roommate, friend, hall director or RA, Health Center or Counseling Center personnel - someone who can provide emotional support and help identify courses of action. It's very difficult to think objectively when one is tremendously upset, so provide yourself this support.
- 2.** Do not shower, bathe, douche, or change clothes. These actions would destroy important evidence.
- 3.** Obtain medical assistance immediately. You are strongly encouraged to have a rape examination for the collection of evidence should you decide to prosecute. St. Michael's hospital offers this service. Another important aspect of medical care after rape is the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.
- 4.** If you do not go the police immediately, you should write down all the details of the assault and save them in case you decide to report the assault later. Reporting the assault does not mean you will be required to press charges against the offender. It is simply a way for the police to maintain a record of assaults and offenders.
- 5.** Rape is a complex and painful experience requiring a combination of legal, medical, psychological, religious, family, and personal responses. It can disrupt a person's life in many ways. Support groups and personal counseling have proven to be very helpful and can hasten your recovery. There is no need for you to go through the trauma of the aftermath of rape alone.

If you have questions or want more information, call or visit the UWSP Health Center, Delzell Hall. We are here to help you. (715) 346-4646

