



Rape and Sexual Assault

Risk Reduction Measures

Everyone is a potential victim of sexual assault. All men and women, regardless of race, age, sexuality, or economic status could be victims of sexual assault. Being aware of this danger and taking precautions can reduce a women's likelihood of being a rape victim and a man from being a victim of sexual assault. This does not mean all rapes or sexual assaults can be prevented. **Rapists commit rape – NOT VICTIMS, it is never the victims fault.**

In a Dating/ Friend situation

1. The majority of rapes that occur are "acquaintance rapes" – the rapist and the victim know each other. Trust your feelings. If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, assertively ask the person to leave. Don't worry about hurting their feelings your safety is much more important.
2. If possible, let a friend or roommate know who you are with and where you will be, especially if it is a first date. Try to leave an address and phone number if possible.

In Your Car

1. Keep windows and doors locked.
2. If you should be followed into your driveway, stay in your car with your doors locked. Sound your horn to get the attention of neighbors, or do anything to get the attention of others.
3. When parking at night, select a place that will be well lit when returning to the car and where people will be present.
4. Always make sure the car is locked and have the keys ready when returning to the car.
5. Check interior of car before getting in, and check to make sure trunk is completely closed.
6. If you are having car trouble, do not get into a car with someone you do not know. Go into the store and call the police or a trusted friend.

On The Street

1. Look around you. If you are being followed, walk calmly to the nearest house or store.
2. Walk near the curb and avoid passing close to shrubbery, dark doorways and other places which one could hide.
3. Do not hitchhike.
4. Avoid short cuts through parking lots and alleys, especially at night.
5. Walk with a friend, if possible, to avoid walking alone.
6. If a car approaches you and you feel threatened, scream or attract attention to you and run in the direction opposite that of the car.
7. When arriving home by a taxi or private auto, ask the driver to watch you enter the building.
8. Don't jog in secluded areas.
9. Know the location of the special emergency boxes on campus, and of phones or houses in your town where you could access help.

In Your Home

1. Be sure to keep all doors and windows locked, and all frames are secure.
2. All entrances and garages should be well lit.
3. Never open the door after a knock unless you have checked to see who it is first. If you are unsure of whom it is, ask them to give their name and show proper ID. If you do not know who the person is, refuse to open the door but instead have them talk through the door. If you feel uneasy, call the police or a neighbor.

If you are sexually assaulted

The best thing you can use against an attacker is “common sense”. THINK!! Try not to panic. The most important thing to remember is that you are not trying to fight the attacker, but you are attempting to divert the person long enough to get away. Always look for a way to escape.

Attacker has a weapon

** Common sense, this is a dangerous situation.

1. Try to stay calm. Do not do anything that will upset the attacker.
2. Try to convince the person to put the weapon down.
3. Talk to your attacker, show sympathy and understanding. Rape and sexual assault is about control.
4. Make the attacker see you as an individual and a person, not as an object.

Attacker is unarmed

** Common sense, you may be able to scare, distract or injure the person to escape.

1. Scream “FIRE”, “POLICE”, or create a disturbance that will attract attention.
2. Assert yourself and fight back if you can do so safely.
3. Break away and run toward areas with people.
4. Be observant so that you will be able to remember and identify the assailant and incident.
5. Report the incident to the police as soon as possible.

Remember... you are **NOT** to blame... Even if:

- You attacker was an acquaintance, date, friend, or partner.
- You have been sexually intimate with the person or with others before.
- You were drinking or using drugs.
- You froze and did not or could not say “no”, or were unable to fight back physically.

If you are the victim, be sure to seek medical attention and notify the police or a support group who will help you and support you.

If you would like more information or have any questions about this handout or our program, please contact the Shippensburg University Women’s Center at (717) 477- 1790 or stop by Horton Hall 132