

FREEDOM AND SAFETY

A Guide to Reducing Your Risk of Rape

1. Know your sexual limits. You may want to remain a virgin until marriage, you may want to just kiss, you may want to just fondle, or you may want intercourse. What you want is extremely important. Know what that is.
2. Communicate your desires: where to eat, what movie to see, when and where you want (or don't want) physical contact. Communication leads to stronger, more fulfilling relationships.
3. Avoid aggressive people. If someone is verbally or physically abusive, gets jealous easily, ignores your desires, wants to control the relationship, touches you against your wishes, or acts superior to you, then get away from them as quickly as possible.
4. Avoid being alone in isolated locations. Most rapes occur out of earshot from other people, in parked cars and empty houses. If someone is leading you toward a secluded spot, they may be setting you up and you should try not to go.
5. Stay sober. Often rapes occur while one or both individuals are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Some men become more aggressive and some women become less able to cope.
6. Trust your instincts. Most survivors report having a "feeling" that something strange was going to happen. Don't tell yourself, "Oh, I'm being silly; I *should* trust this person, I care about this person; or I'm just being paranoid." If it feels strange, it is.
7. Act on your instincts. Get up and leave, demand that individuals respect your desires, scream, run, hit him, act crazy, poke him in the eyes, or vomit on him. You may not be able to do anything, but you should plan ahead as to what you might do if you are in a sexually dangerous situation.

Whatever you choose to do or not to do, it's not your fault!