
Don't mask the facts about sexual assault and rape with myths and stereotypes.

Sexual assault and rape are acts of violence, and can happen to anyone. Attackers and rapists can be anyone—strangers, neighbors, boyfriends and husbands, co-workers, classmates, family members, and even friends. In fact, most victims know their assailants.

Here's the good news: you can do a lot to reduce your risk of sexual assault. Practicing the following tips is a good way to start:

Use Your Head

- ▶ Be alert! Walk with confidence and purpose.
- ▶ Walk in well lighted areas and **NEVER** walk alone. Ask a co-worker or a neighbor to escort you.
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings—know who's around you and what's going on.
- ▶ Don't let drugs or alcohol cloud your judgment.
- ▶ Trust your gut. If your instincts tell you to leave, then leave—immediately. If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, remove yourself!
- ▶ If you think you're being followed, change directions and look for open stores, restaurants, or a lighted home.

How To Protect Yourself

- ▶ Make sure all entrances (windows, sliding glass doors, patio doors) are locked at all times with sturdy locks.
- ▶ Never open your door to strangers. Use a wide-angle viewer and make them show identification.
- ▶ Be wary of isolated spots—basements, laundry rooms, and parking lots.
- ▶ Know your neighbors so that you can call on them if you need help.
- ▶ If you come home and see a door ajar or a window broken, call the police immediately. **DO NOT** enter the building.
- ▶ Jog, run, or walk with a friend and stay in well lighted, well-traveled areas.

- ▶ Keep your distance when anyone in a car asks you for directions.
- ▶ Wear clothes and shoes that you are able to move in.
- ▶ Have your key ready before you reach the door—home, office, or the car.
- ▶ Always lock your car. Look inside the car before you get in.
- ▶ Don't hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.

What To Do if the Unthinkable Happens

- It's unpleasant and even frightening to think about, but the best way to prevent or survive an assault is to plan in advance how you would react in the face of a potential assault. Would you run and scream, or would you try to fight back? Some would-be attackers will immediately give up if their target shows the least signs of resistance. Others will become more incensed and more violent if their victims try to fight back. Whatever your decision, be confident and prepared to follow through.
- ▶ Try to escape. Be rude! Scream! Yell! Kick! Fight! Run!
 - ▶ Talk, stall for time, and assess your situation.
 - ▶ If your attacker has a weapon or attempts to move you to another area, do whatever it takes to stay alive.
 - ▶ If your attacker tries to move you to another area, do whatever it takes to prevent that.