

- Talk to other students about the problem of alcohol abuse and sexual assault on campus.
- Challenge sexual stereotypes that may lead to a rape-prone culture. Sexist remarks and rape jokes enable rapists.
- Ensure that sexual assault survivors have readily accessible on campus medical, legal, and counseling services.
- Demand that your campus enforce sanctions for students who engage in disrespectful, abusive or violent behavior.
- Inform/cooperate with local law enforcement agencies in reporting assaults.
- You have a right to effective security measures.

Use the escort service. Ask for and take self-defense classes.

- Help develop policies that stress responsible drinking and accountability.

What if I or someone I know is a rape victim?

Call the campus police or local law enforcement in your community, or talk with a counselor on campus. Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) is a 24-hour hotline that will connect you immediately to the sexual assault center in your area. Call 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE) or visit RAINN on the Web at www.rainn.org.

This brochure is written from a heterosexual perspective. Ninety-two percent of sexual assaults reported by adult survivors involved a female assaulted by a male. Although same-sex and males assaulted by females occur with less frequency, these are also serious societal problems.

Environmental Resource Council, www.envrc.org

Sexual Assault and Alcohol Abuse Myths and Facts

MYTH: Women who get drunk at a party are asking to be raped.

FACT: Nobody asks or deserves to be hurt or violated. Our society is more apt to excuse male drinking behavior; but when a woman drinks and is raped, we hold her responsible for everything, including the behavior of her assailant. The person who committed the crime is guilty, not the victim.

MYTH: Women lie about being raped, especially when the victim has been drinking or using drugs.

FACT: According to the FBI, only three percent of all rape charges are false reports—the same rate as for other felony reports. The emotional ordeal of reporting and testifying and people's tendency to blame the victim does not make it easy to file a charge of rape.

MYTH: Victims of rape are usually bad girls who have a reputation for getting drunk, sleeping around or being a tease.

FACT: Victims of rape are selected because of accessibility and vulnerability. Rape has nothing to do with the victim's character. Rumors about victims are generally untrue and serve only

to perpetrate the belief that women are asking for it. These rumors take attention away from the criminal by blaming the victim.

MYTH: Rape results from intoxicated men losing control over their sexual drive.

FACT: Rape is the ultimate expression of male dominance—it is not about sex. Men who rape see women as objects of conquest and adversaries. The need for power and peer approval can lead men to do things that they know are wrong and against the law. In 46% of rapes and sexual assault in 2002, the offender was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.*

MYTH: It is okay to have sex with somebody who becomes intoxicated and passes out at a party.

FACT: An incapacitated person does not forfeit her/his rights. As a matter of fact it's against the law to sexually touch someone who is drunk.

**Criminal victimization in the United States, December 2003.*

Rape and Alcohol— the Connection



What you need to know about sexual assault and alcohol use on campus.

KIM'S STORY – *I never gave much thought to rape until it happened to me my freshman year in college. I had gone to a party with friends where I ran into a guy from my hometown. We stood around the keg drinking and talking about people we both knew. Around midnight, I decided to leave and he offered to walk me home. I invited him in and we sat on the couch listening to music. I let him kiss me but when he started touching me and pulling at my clothes, I told him, “no,” and said he’d better leave. But he wouldn’t listen. I yelled and struggled to get away. He held me down, and raped me, and I couldn’t stop him. I was crying. He laughed and said I had led him on.*

At first I felt confused and blamed myself. I did not think anybody would believe me. I worried that my parents would be upset about the drinking. Then I started feeling really angry about all the pain he caused me. I knew that he would probably do it to somebody else since he didn’t seem to think that what he did was wrong. I decided to call the crisis center for help.

It’s been a year now, and recovery has been rough, but I am feeling stronger all the time.

Sexual assault is never okay.

Sexual assault, which is sexual contact or penetration against your will, is never okay. You have a right to say no even if you accepted a date; even if your date spent money on you; even if you agreed to a kiss; even if you have had sex with that person before; even if you have been drinking.

You don’t have a right to force yourself on somebody else under any circumstances. If you are getting mixed messages, stop and clarify. Respect others’ wishes without becoming defensive. Examine your attitudes and beliefs. Strive for equality in your relationships.

What does alcohol use have to do with sexual assault?

Although you can be raped whether you are drinking or not, alcohol use lowers inhibitions and impairs judgment.

Alcohol use does not cause sexual violence, but it can contribute to the mistaken notion that anything goes, including rape.

Men often drink to feel less inhibited, more powerful, aroused and aggressive. Peer pressure can further encourage rowdy and aggressive behavior.

Research shows that while under the influence of alcohol, men are more likely to interpret a woman’s smile, laughter, clothes, or body language as evidence that she wants to have sex.

Impaired judgment and lowered inhibition make it easier to force sex on an unwilling partner and to ignore her when she says no.

The majority of acquaintance rapes are planned, and assailants take advantage of the fact that alcohol and other drugs can slow reflexes and impair the victim’s ability to recognize a potentially dangerous situation.

Your personal safety.

The first thing you must do is recognize that rape can happen to anyone—even you. If you feel uncomfortable or afraid, trust your instincts.

- Avoid parties where “getting wasted” is the only reason for going.
- If you do drink, have one drink with alcohol and the next one or two without alcohol.
- Watch out for one another at parties or other social events.
- Seek help (from other women if possible) if a friend passes out. Do not leave her unattended.
- People who drink think they are clever and witty, but spend an evening at a bar sober and see how stupid they really are when they’re drunk.
- Be wary of people who invade your personal space and say things that make you nervous or uncomfortable.
- Be assertive and insist that others respect your feelings.
- Have a safe way of getting home, especially if you are going to be drinking. Call a friend or take a taxi.
- It is smart to refuse rides from people you do not know well.

Even though no one deserves to be raped, some people think “she asked for it.” So take the above common sense precautions because there is no way to be assault proof. Prevention is key to reducing the risk of alcohol-related sexual assault. If a sexual assault does occur, whether or not precautions have been taken, it is never the victim’s fault.

How can I change things?

We all have the right to live and study in a safe, non-violent community. We can do many things as individuals to protect ourselves. We can also work to change society’s attitudes toward women. There are many ways to improve the campus environment.