SEXUAL ASSAULT/ RAPE

Sexual assault occurs in all populations regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or age.

Community Resources

Domestic Violence 24-hour Crisis Line
800 799-SAFE

Project Sister (Rape Crisis Center)
626 966-HELP or 626 966-4155

Support Network
800-572-2782

Myth: Rape is just unwanted sex and isn't really a violent crime.

Fact: Rape is more than just unwanted sex. Rape is an act of violence because the rapist uses force as a motive for power and control. One out of every eight adult women has been a victim of forcible rape. (National Victim Center and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, 1992).

Ways to Prevent Sexual Violence

1. **Be aware of your surroundings.**
   - There is a higher chance of avoiding sexual assault just by being aware of what and who is around you. Being cautious and alert can only be to your benefit.

2. **Know your sexual desires and limits.**
   - Believe in your right to set those limits. There is nothing wrong with not "hooking up".

3. **Communicate your limits as clearly as possible.**
   - If someone starts to offend you, tell the person early and firmly. Being polite is O.K. as long as you are firm and assertive. Say "no" when you mean "no" and be prepared to repeat it.

4. **Dress comfortably.**
   - Dress as you please. However, non-restrictive clothing could be an advantage, if you want to be able to run and fight back if needed. Therefore, tight clothing could be a disadvantage.

5. **Avoid excessive use of alcohol and drugs.**
   - Alcohol and drugs interfere with clear thinking and effective communication.
   - "If you are walking alone, try to have a whistle with you. If you find yourself in danger, blow the whistle to attract attention for help. Another item that may help you if in danger is Chemical Mace, to spray in attackers eyes, take a class on the proper use. Using items such as keys, pencils, pens, or books can also be used to defend yourself against an attacker.

6. **Being turned down when you ask for sex is not a rejection of you personally.**
   - People who say "No" to sex are not rejecting the person; they are expressing their desire to not participate in a single act. Your desires may be beyond your control but your actions are within your control.

Nine Ways to Avoid Rape

Rape is not just an act committed in a dark alley by an unknown assailant. The truth is that most rapes occur in the victim's home. About 60 percent of victims who report their rape know their assailants. Thinking and talking about the different types of sexual assault, and what you might do if you ever find yourself in a bad situation, can increase your chances of avoiding rape.
1. Always walk briskly; look alert and confident, avoid carrying objects requiring use of both arms.
2. Stay away from isolated areas, day or night.
3. Never walk alone when it is dark.
4. If you are being followed, get away fast, change directions, and walk or run to a crowded area.
5. Lock all doors to your car and residence at all times.
6. Before you drive home, call your roommate, family or a friend so they will expect you and be aware if you are excessively late.
7. Encourage group activities in early stages of a relationship.
8. Take a self-defense class.
9. Be aware of legislation that concerns sexual assault and contact legislators to express your views. Stronger legislation often helps to assist victims with various services, punishes and identifies perpetrators, to hopefully reduce the risk of repeat offenders.

What to Do in a Risky Situation

- Stay calm, consider your options and how safe it would be to resist.
- Say "NO" strongly. Do not smile; do not act polite or friendly.
- Say something like "Stop it. This is Rape!" This might shock the rapist into stopping.
- If the rapist is unarmed, fight back physically, shout "NO!" and run away as soon as possible.
- If the rapist is armed, try to talk the person out of continuing the assault, or try passive resistance (vomit, urinate, pretend to faint).

What to do in Case of a Rape

- Get to a safe place.
- Call a friend or family member to be with you.
- Breathe deeply and remind yourself that you are of value, and that what has happened is wrong and in no way your fault.
- Call the police. A crime has been committed.
- Do not bathe, douche, use an enema or change clothes. You may be destroying legal evidence, regardless of whether you pursue legal action or not.
- Go to a hospital emergency department for medical care. This can be done without police intervention, if that is your choice.
- Write down as much as you can remember about the circumstance of the assault and the identity of your assailant.
- Seek the counseling and legal assistance from a rape treatment center. The counselor there can help you deal with the consequences of an assault.

Reporting the assault is a way of regaining your sense of personal power and control. It enables you to actively protest the violent crime that has been committed against you.

Reporting and prosecuting the assailant are essential in establishing new norms that this behavior is NOT okay. Taking legal steps helps prevent rape and protect other potential victims.

How to Help a Friend

- Believe your friend. A few people are going to act as if your friend has lied or done something wrong. She/he will need your support.
- Listen carefully and do not laugh. People often laugh if they are embarrassed or nervous.
- Help your friend to report the rape to someone who can help — a counselor, school nurse, parent, child protective service worker, teacher, or police officer.
- Let your friend know it is not her/his fault. People who have been touched inappropriately often feel that they have done something wrong.
- Be confidential and protect your friend's privacy. Talk to a trusted adult if this situation is bothering you.
- Be verbal in letting your friend know that you care and that you support her/him.