

Campus Security Services Emergency Number: 721-7599

GUIDELINES IN THE EVENT OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

(from Campus Security Services Brochure #1)

Common Myths

Myth: Sexual assault is a crime of passion.

Fact: Sexual assault is a crime of violence acted out in a sexualized way. Power and control are the motives for this crime.

Myth: Sexual assault is a crime committed by perverts or strangers.

Fact: Most offenders appear normal, and the majority are known to the survivor.

Myth: Only young, attractive women are sexually assaulted.

Fact: People of every size, shape and age have been sexually assaulted.

Myth: A sexual offence committed by a husband, brother or father is not a crime.

Fact: Any person, regardless of the relationship to the victim, can be charged for committing a sexual assault.

Myth: People who are sexually assaulted "ask for it" either by the way they dress or the lifestyle they lead.

Fact: Studies of offenders have shown that most sexual assaults are pre-planned and the victim's dress or lifestyle have nothing to do with the offender's actions.

Myth: Sexual assaults occur only at night in dark, isolated places.

Fact: A significant number of sexual assaults occur either in a home or a vehicle, and many of these assaults occur during daylight hours.

Myth: Sexual assaults are only committed by males against females.

Fact: Sexual assault can occur between same sex partners and offenders can be females who assault males, but over 90% of sexual assaults and over 80% of acts of domestic violence are committed by males towards females.

Unfortunately, these misconceptions perpetuate the idea that the women are often to blame if someone assaults them. It is important for women to know the truth about sexual assault, not only so that they will take appropriate precautions, but so that, should an assault occur, they know it was not their fault.

What is sexual assault?

Any form of non-consensual contact ranging from an unwanted sexual touch to forced sexual intercourse. The majority of sexual assaults are committed by people the survivor knows.

Don't be an offender

- Don't ASSUME. It is NEVER okay to force sex on someone.
- If you paid for dinner, all you did was pay for the meal.
- Listen to and respect the person. What is said is what is meant.
- Separate desire from action. Sexual excitement does not justify forced sex.
- Recognize that being drunk is no excuse.

Acquaintance Assault

Acquaintance Assault is a forced, manipulated, or coerced sexual act committed by a friend or an acquaintance. Studies show that acquaintance assault occurs more frequently among university-age students than any other group.

Offenders who commit acquaintance assault often do not believe they have done anything wrong. Many times, survivors do not seek help or tell anyone about the assault, and therefore deal with the assault's trauma and psychological effects without any support.

Acquaintance Assault largely remains hidden because of the fact that few people identify it for what it is - a violent crime punishable by law.

Acquaintance Assault happens on university campuses across Canada. However, we can take measures to stop it.

Avoiding assault

- Be assertive. It is your body, and no one has the right to force you to do anything that you do not want to do. Remember, communicate your feelings.
- Keep in mind that your non-verbal actions can be misinterpreted.
- Know that alcohol and drugs are often related to acquaintance assault. The use of drugs and alcohol compromises your ability to recognize danger and may put you in undesirable situations.
- Trust your gut feelings. If you feel you are in a dangerous situation or that you are being pressured, you are probably right. If you are nervous about someone's behaviour or you feel threatened, leave immediately.
- Be cautious about taking unsealed drinks. A growing number of sexual assailants give their targets drugged drinks.

If you are sexually assaulted

- Always remember, someone else did it to you. What has happened to you is NOT your fault!
- Get to a safe place and call Campus Security and the local police immediately.
- Call the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre: 383-3232.
- Do not take medication, drugs or alcohol.
- Go to the hospital.
- Write down everything that happened.
- Don't change clothes, wash or comb your hair. Important evidence may be destroyed if you do.

