

## Sexual Violence - Risk Reduction Tips

With recognition that *only those who commit sexual violence are responsible for those actions*, these suggestions may help you to reduce your risk of experiencing sexual aggression:

- 1) Have clear limits, and make them known as early as possible.
- 2) Tell a sexual aggressor “NO” clearly and firmly.
- 3) Try to remove yourself from the physical presence of a sexual aggressor.
- 4) Find someone nearby and ask for help.
- 5) Take affirmative responsibility for your alcohol intake/drug use and acknowledge that alcohol/drugs lower your sexual inhibitions and may make you vulnerable to someone who views a drunk or high person as a sexual opportunity (see below).
- 6) Take care of your friends and ask that they take care of you. A real friend will challenge you if you are about to make a mistake. Respect them when they do.

## Alcohol & Sexual Assault

At least 75% of all campus rapes occur under the influence of alcohol.

*\*Please do not hesitate to seek help after an assault, even if you have violated the college's Alcohol & Drug Policy. You will be treated with dignity and care throughout the reporting process, regardless of the circumstances of the assault.*

### **Alcohol and Risk Reduction:**

\*When you go to a party, go with a group of friends. Arrive together, watch out for each other, and leave together. Make sure at least one member of the group to remain sober and look out for others.

\*If you choose to drink, know your limits and stick to them. For instance, have one drink with alcohol and the next one without alcohol.

\*If someone has passed out, do not leave them alone. Turn them on their side and call 911, do not assume they will “just sleep it off”.

\*Trust your instincts about uncomfortable situations. Be aware of your surroundings at all times.

\*Don't allow yourself to be isolated with someone you don't know or trust.

\*State your limits clearly. Don't be afraid to say “No” and/or walk away if you are feeling pressured or coerced, or even just uncomfortable.

\*Educate yourself about Date Rape Drugs. Don't leave your beverage unattended or accept a drink from an open container. Don't drink anything with an unusual taste or appearance. If someone acts extremely drunk after only one or two drinks, they may have been drugged. Call 911 or take them to the hospital.

### *Why do so many sexual assaults happen under the influence of alcohol?*

**Alcohol is often seen as a sexual signal.** Men are more likely to assume that a woman who drinks is a willing sex partner; they are more likely to interpret her behavior, dress or body language as evidence she wants to have sex. Studies have shown that even *without* alcohol present, men frequently misinterpret women's friendly gestures as flirtation or sexual signals.

**Alcohol affects men's willingness to behave aggressively.** Men often drink to feel less inhibited, more powerful, aroused, and aggressive. Peer pressure also tends to encourage rowdy and aggressive behavior.



Alcohol lowers inhibitions – it makes it easier to force sex on an unwilling partner and to ignore “No’s” or other verbal or nonverbal cues that sex is nonconsensual.

**Alcohol's affects women's ability to assess and react to risk.** Alcohol impairs people’s ability to recognize a potentially dangerous situation. When drinking, one may not notice someone’s persistent attempts to get them to an isolated location or to get them to consume more alcohol.

**Alcohol's affects women's ability to resist effectively.** Intoxication also makes it much more difficult to successfully resist a sexual assault – alcohol produces a slow and ineffective response to an attack.

**Legally, an individual is considered unable to consent to sex if they are drunk or otherwise impaired. Having sex without consent is RAPE**

**Alcohol affects perceptions of responsibility.** Our culture has a tendency towards blame-the-victim thinking, particularly if alcohol was involved, (i.e. “she was drunk, she asked for it” attitudes). “I was drunk, I didn’t know what I was doing” is **not** an excuse to perpetrate sexual assault. Legally, perpetrators are held responsible for their actions whether or not they were under the influence. The majority of sexual assaults are planned, and often assailants take advantage of the fact that alcohol or other drugs increase vulnerability.

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