

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

You can never completely protect yourself from being the victim of a sexual assault, but there are things you can do to help reduce your risk of being assaulted.

- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Knowing where you are and who is around you may help you to find a way to get out of a bad situation.
- **Avoid putting headphones in both ears** if you are walking alone so that you can be more aware of what is going on around you.
- **Avoid isolated areas.** It is easier to get attacked and more difficult to get help if no one is around.
- **Walk with purpose and confidence.**
- **Trust your instincts.** If a situation or location feels unsafe or uncomfortable, it probably isn't the best place to be.
- **Try not to load yourself down** with packages or bags as this can make you appear more vulnerable.
- **Make sure your cell phone is with you** and charged so you can call for help.
- **Don't allow yourself to be isolated** with someone you don't trust or someone you don't know.
- **Don't leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from someone that you do not know or trust.** "Date rape" drugs that cause blackout and memory loss can be dropped into a drink.
- **Be very careful with alcohol and drug use.** Drinking and drug use impairs judgment and makes you vulnerable to being a victim of sexual assault or to being accused of sexual assault.
- **Go to social gatherings with a friend.** Friends can watch out for each other and help each other get out of a bad situation.
- **Keep car doors locked while driving, and park in well-lit areas.** Always check the back seat before getting into your car.
- **Do not hitchhike. If your car breaks down,** do not accept a ride. Stay in your vehicle and ask the person to call for help if you cannot call.
- **Consider taking a self-defense class.**

Date or acquaintance rape/sexual assault occurs with alarming frequency in situations where the persons involved know each other. College students are especially vulnerable.

Through no fault of your own, you may find yourself in situations where you are being pressured into sexual activities you do not want. Some things you may try include:

- State clearly what you do not want to do, remembering that you do not need to feel any obligation to do something you are not comfortable with.
- Remain aware of your surroundings and how you could get away.
- Have a special code word with a friend or family member that you can say if you call them during a situation in which you are being pressured into unwanted sex.
- Make up a reason why you need to leave.