

Preventing Sexual Assault: Ways to Stay Safe!

Rape or sexual assault can happen to anyone, and it is NEVER the victim's fault. There are ways we can all help prevent rape or sexual assault.

Alcohol is a factor in almost all sexual assaults on college campuses.

Hold onto your drink even when you go to the bathroom. If it is ever out of your sight, pitch it. Don't accept a drink from anyone. Don't drink from an open container or punch bowl, don't share drinks. If it tastes funny, trust your instincts and throw it away. Alcohol is the most common date-rapist drug, involved in 75% of all sexual assaults.

Many perpetrators of sexual assault are someone you know.

8 out of 10 rapes are committed by someone known to the victim (rainn.org)

Sexual assaults happen on dates.

Know your limits and make them clear from the start. If something feels uncomfortable, trust your instincts. Don't let anyone push you or pressure you into something you don't want to do - stay in control, stay strong, and if all else fails, make a scene. Your best defense is to attract attention. Never go to secluded areas, meet in public places. Make sure your phone is charged and always with you, and that you have money or a way home.

Sexual assaults happen at parties.

Make clear plans before you go out, create code words to stay connected with your friends. Always be aware of where your friend group is, stay with them, even if going to the bathroom. Make sure you all have a plan to get safely home. If something feels uncomfortable, *trust your instincts* and leave (as a group if at all possible).

Learn how to intervene as a "bystander".

Stepping in as a bystander can look like many different things: telling a friend their language or jokes are not ok, leaving a party early with a friend who has had too much to drink, asking someone to go to the bathroom with you to check-in with friends, and more. Be aware of your safety and surroundings, and the safety of others, don't be afraid to intervene early. Sometimes you can be the difference between someone getting home safely and them experiencing a traumatic event.

Resources

It's On Us: itsonus.org

Men Can Stop Rape: mcrs.org

Prevent Connect: preventconnect.org

Onelove: joinonelove.org

Culture of Respect: cultureofrespect.org

RAINN: rainn.org

Local free assistance

Domestic Violence - Safe House of Southeast Missouri: semosafehouse.org/

Sexual Assault - Southeast Missouri Network Against Sexual Violence: semonasv.org