

Avoiding Date Rape

Most women are better prepared to avoid an attack by a stranger than by an acquaintance. In reality, you are much more likely to be raped by someone you know. The following guidelines should reduce your chances of being victimized:

- Communicate assertively and clearly.
- Expect respect and avoid those who do not show it.
- Know your own sexual limits and communicate them clearly.
- Do not allow a person to touch you if it makes you uncomfortable.
- Avoid excessive drinking or drugs as they impair judgment and communication skills.
- Do not leave drinks unattended which could provide an opportunity for someone to drug you.
- Do not assume someone else knows what you are thinking or shares your values.
- Try to avoid situations or locations which keep you isolated from others.
- Stay away from men who are overly critical or belittling of women.
- Make a scene if it becomes necessary. Don't worry about looking foolish.
- Trust your instincts- they seldom fail you.

For more information call the
**Arkansas Coalition Against
Sexual Assault at:**

1-866-63-ACASA

Without Consent

Acquaintance Rape and Teens

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What is Acquaintance Rape?

Acquaintance rape occurs when someone you know uses force, threats, or intimidation to get you to have sex. Teenagers and other young women are especially vulnerable to acquaintance rape. Statistically, your senior year in high school and your freshman year in college are the times when you are most vulnerable to sexual assault.

Many acquaintance rapes begin on the part of the perpetrator, with the intention of having sex. When the victim does not go along with this plan, the perpetrator uses more aggressive measures to assure compliance.

If you say "no" and are forced into sex, it is rape. If you decide not to fight back or go along out of fear, this does not mean that you consented. What you choose to do to get through this assault does not change the fact that sex without consent is still rape.

It is never okay to force sex on someone else. Even if you used poor judgment, you are not responsible for someone else raping you. Foolish choices are not illegal, rape is!

Common Reactions to Rape

There is no right or wrong way to feel after being raped. People are different; consequently they deal with their emotions in many ways. Survivors will commonly experience these feelings.

- Guilt
- Shame
- Shock
- Loss of Trust
- Anger
- Worthlessness
- Self-Doubt
- Fear
- Depression
- Helplessness

Most rape survivors experience one or more of the following reactions:

- Lack of Concentration
- Nightmares
- Sleeplessness
- Eating Disorders
- Excessive Crying
- Mood Swings
- Emotional Numbness
- Anxiety
- Sexual Problems (avoiding sex or becoming promiscuous)

Many victims believe or are encouraged to believe that they should forget about the rape and get on with their lives. This may work on a temporary basis but seldom works long term. Eventually, feelings will surface and will have to be dealt with.

The Alcohol & Drug Connection

Alcohol use is a significant factor in acquaintance rape. Studies have shown that 75% of young men who commit an acquaintance rape do so after using alcohol. Also, 55% of young women who become victims have been drinking as well.

Alcohol use increases the likelihood that a sexual assault will occur. Young men often see themselves as more powerful and sexual after drinking. They may also misinterpret behavior of women as sexual interest. Their judgment is impaired and their tendency to be forceful is increased.

A young woman who is drinking alcohol is frequently setting herself up to be victimized unintentionally. She is likely not as capable of protecting herself. Her perception of danger is distorted; it is more difficult to set limits and communicate them clearly; and her ability to physically resist is lessened.

The use of drugs such as Rohypnol (Rohypnol (Rope) and GHB is making it easier to victimize an individual. These drugs are not expensive or hard to obtain. They are frequently put in a victim's drink without her knowledge and the victim can be incapacitated within minutes. These drugs can render the victim unconscious, and cause amnesia. They are also dangerous because they can bring on severe reactions such as seizures, respiratory arrest, and even death.