

Some Tips on Acquaintance Rape Prevention Rape Prevention Is Men's Work

Real men don't rape. Real men accept the responsibility never to harm another person. They do not abuse the physical advantage or social power accorded to males in our society.

A. CHALLENGE THE ATTITUDES THAT MAKE RAPE ACCEPTABLE:

1. Resist sexist attitudes. Attitudes which suggest that women exist solely for the pleasure of men or that a woman's role is to improve the quality of a man's life become part of a rapist's justification. Until women are seen as whole persons with the right to define the limits of their bodies, the high incidence of rape will persist.
2. Don't make or laugh at degrading jokes about women. Men who make abusive comments or use sexist language to describe women contribute to the conditions that make violence against women so widespread. Voice your opposition to such language.
3. Challenge abuse behavior when you see it. Men respond to social pressure from other men. Actively resisting abusive behavior through one-to-one confrontation, policy-making in your community and public activism are all appropriate courses of action for men committed to stopping rape.

B. EXAMINE YOUR OWN SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND RESPONSIBILITY:

1. It is never OK to force sex on a woman. Even if:
 - She says "no" and you think she means "yes;"
 - you have had sex with her before;
 - you've paid for dinner or given her expensive gifts;
 - you think women enjoy being forced to have sex, or need to be persuaded;
 - she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
 - she "teases" you, dresses "provocatively" or "leads you on."
2. Rape is a crime of violence. Men rape with the intention of hurting, humiliating and degrading their victims, they do not rape out of uncontrollable "lust" or sexual attraction.
3. If you are getting a double message from a woman, speak up. Clarify what she wants. If you find yourself in a situation with a woman who is unsure about having sex or is saying "no," back off. Suggest talking about it.
4. Allow your partner to make her own decision. If a woman is unsure about whether she wants sex, emotional coercion or "guilt-tripping" is a form of sexual abuse.

5. Do not make assumptions. Your partner may welcome some forms of sexual contact and be opposed to others. Don't assume that one form of sexual contact necessarily opens the door to any sexual contact. There may be several kinds of sexual activity you might mutually agree to share.
6. Communicate. The sooner your partner understands your sexual interest and expectations, the better able she will be to respond honestly and directly.
7. Before having sex, take inventory. Ask yourself, "How will I feel if she later tells me she did not want to have intercourse?" If you have any doubts about what your partner wants, STOP, ASK, CLARIFY.
8. Separate desire from action. Your *desires* may be beyond your control, but your *actions* are within your control. Sexual excitement does not justify forced sex.
9. No one *asks* to be raped. No matter how a woman behaves, she does not deserve to have her body violated.
10. "No" means no. If you do not accept a woman's "no," you risk raping someone whom *you thought* meant "yes."
11. Consent means having the ability to make a decision. Engaging in sexual intercourse with a person who is mentally or physically incapable of giving consent ("drunk," for example) is rape. If a woman has passed out, or is not in control of herself, having sex with her is a crime.
12. Intoxication is not an excuse. The fact that you were intoxicated is not a legal defense to rape. You are responsible for your actions, whether or not you are sober.
13. Be responsible about physical advantage. Many survivors of rape report that the fear they felt based on a man's size and presence was the reason why they did not fight back or struggle.

Note: Men can be victims of rape and have the same rights to counseling and legal action as women do.

(This information was prepared by Bucknell University's Women's Resource Center and Susquehanna Valley Women in Transition.)