

SOME FACTS ABOUT ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

Every year, thousands of college students are raped, although many will not use that word to describe their experience. A recent survey of 6,104 students at thirty-three United States colleges indicated that fifteen percent of the college women surveyed had been raped, according to the strict legal definition. In eighty-five percent of these assaults, the women knew their attacker. Not only college women have been victims of sexual violence: five percent of the men in the study reported having been threatened or forced to have sex.

Acquaintance rape does not usually involve the use of weapons. Instead, the acquaintance rapist uses threats, coercion, physical strength, alcohol or authority to intimidate or overpower. Victims of acquaintance rape often report that they initially trusted and liked their assailant, not recognizing the assailant's intent to rape until it was too late to get help.

Frequently, students who have been forced or coerced to have sexual contact do not report the experience to police or authorities. If women do tell someone, they are more likely to confide in a friend or a roommate. Men are even less likely to report forced sexual contact to anyone.

There are many reasons acquaintance rape occurs. One is the myth that women say no to sex when they really mean yes. Another is that some people have learned that it is acceptable to use force to take what they want, especially if they believe that they are unlikely to be held accountable for their actions. Finally, many acquaintance rapes are characterized by unclear or unheard communications, differences in expectations, and consumption of alcohol by one or both parties.

In recent years, cultural stereotypes and cultural climate alike have changed. Both men and women are learning that acquaintance rape, just like "stranger rape," is sexual violence and is intolerable in civilized communities. Both men and women are learning that sexual activity which is not fully consensual by both parties is harmful, degrading to the human spirit, and is against the law.

Only rapists are accountable for acts of sexual violence. However, the following suggestions are offered to help all members of the campus community to understand the scope of the problem and to offer new ways of thinking about some very old issues.

INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

1. Spend time thinking and discussing the role that you want sex to play, if any, in your life right now. If past sexual experiences have been troubling or if you have questions about the role of sex in your life, you may wish to seek out someone you trust (a friend, relative, minister, resident advisor, counselor) and talk out your thoughts and feelings.
2. Communicate your expectations clearly; allow your date/partner to do the same. If you believe that you know just what your date/partner really wants, thinks and feels, even though she/he says the opposite - you are courting disaster.
3. Both men and women have the same rights to initiate contact and to set limits that will be respected. Building a relationship requires two people working together as equals and mutual agreement as to the role sex will play in their relationship.
4. Both men and women sometimes feel pressure to be sexually active. Think for yourself; as with any serious decision, you are the one who will have to live with the consequences.
5. If you use alcohol, use it responsibly. Alcohol and other drugs decrease inhibition, lead to impulsive behavior, and interfere with rational thought. In most reported acquaintance rape cases both the man and woman have been drinking.
6. Sexual aggression does happen and can happen to you. If it does, don't keep silent. Talk to someone about what happened. There are people here who care. A list of campus and community helping resources appears at the end of this leaflet.

INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR MEN

1. Trust that "no" means "no"! It is **NEVER** permissible to force yourself on a woman, even if you think she is leading you on. If she says "no," respect her right to control her own body. Recognize that you must take responsibility for yours.
2. If you are not absolutely certain that sexual activity is mutually agreed upon, **WAIT**. Waiting is always an option.
3. If you have sex without her consent, you are committing a crime even if you have had sex with her previously. Remember, she, like you, can decide to change her mind at any time, and you must respect that decision.
4. Many men in our culture have been taught that the purpose of a date is to "score" or "get laid," and that they have somehow failed if a date doesn't end in sex. Be alert to such cultural baggage in yourself. It can interfere with your ability to listen and be responsive to your date's limits and wants.
5. A woman who has had sex with others is not asking to have sex with you. A woman who wears what you consider to be provocative or revealing clothing is not asking to be raped.
6. Spending money on a woman does not entitle you to sex. It is insulting to women to expect sexual favors as a "repayment."
7. You are committing a criminal sexual assault if you have sex with a person who is intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, unconscious, or otherwise physically helpless or mentally incapacitated.
8. The consequences for being convicted of criminal sexual conduct are very heavy and long lasting. You can go to prison for a long time, you can be expelled from the University, you can be unable to seek employment for the rest of your life without having to report to your prospective employer that you were convicted of rape.
9. Remember that men can also be victimized sexually. If this should happen to you, the same laws apply and the same help resources are available to you that are available for women who have been victimized.

INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WOMEN

1. You have the right to set and to reset sexual limits. Your body is your own, and nobody has the right to force you to do something that you don't want to do.
2. Trust your feelings and thoughts. Sometimes women have a "sense" that something is wrong, yet fail to act on it. If your date makes comments which display hostility toward women, if he insists on making all the decisions, or if he seems extremely jealous or possessive, he may not be respectful of your right to refuse sex.
3. Communicate your limits. You need not apologize for the limits you set. Be firm! If you try not to hurt his feelings by hinting in a nice way, he may ignore your implied "no." It is okay to be direct and firm with someone who is sexually pressuring you, even if it hurts his feelings. After all, he is not attending to your feelings.
4. If you decide you do want to say "No" to your date/partner:

***** MAKE YOUR STATEMENTS SHORT, CLEAR AND AUDIBLE**
***** MAINTAIN DIRECT EYE CONTACT AND ERECT POSTURE**
***** USE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND GESTURES TO ADD EMPHASIS**
5. Educate yourself about men and sex. Many women have been taught by men to believe that a man can not control himself sexually once he reaches a "certain point." This is simply not true.
6. Think twice about going to a man's room or apartment. Most date rapes occur on the man's turf. Be careful about inviting a man into your room or apartment. Some men see this as an invitation to sexual activity.
7. Until you begin to know a man well, try to arrange double dates or schedule the first few dates around public activities such as movies, dinner, concerts, etc.
8. Heavy petting or removing some of your clothing may confuse your date about what you are willing to do sexually. When you send conflicting messages, the situation becomes more difficult for you and your date/partner to control.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

If you are threatened with rape by either a stranger or an acquaintance, you will have to use your own best judgement about how to react. Some experts recommend that you make as much noise as possible, especially if there are people close by who can and will come to your assistance. Other experts believe that calling for help or struggling may simply antagonize or excite a rapist and increase the intent to complete a rape. **PRESERVING YOUR LIFE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT GOAL; NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO DURING THE ASSAULT, YOU ARE NOT THE GUILTY PARTY.**

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

1. As soon as you are out of the sexual assault situation, tell someone you can trust--a roommate, friend, resident advisor or resident coordinator, minister, counselor, or S.A.R.T. volunteer--someone who can provide emotional support and objectively help you to make a plan.
2. If the assault occurs on campus, call **Public Safety** at **(305) 284-6666**. If the assault occurs off campus, call **Central Dispatch** at **911**. Do not change your clothing, bathe or shower. You may wish to have a change of clothing available for later.
3. The police will usually contact a member of the Sexual Assault Response Team (S.A.R.T.) when they are notified of the sexual assault. S.A.R.T. members are volunteer faculty, staff and graduate students who have special training and experience in assisting victims of sexual assault. Team members meet with victims and assist them as they go through the reporting process. If the police do not contact a Team member, you may do so **(305) 798-6666**.
4. The police will take you to the hospital for a medical examination. The S.A.R.T. member may accompany you if you wish. You are strongly encouraged to have a rape examination for the collection of evidence should you decide to prosecute. The physician will examine you, provide appropriate medical treatment, and talk with you about prevention of venereal disease and pregnancy. You may seek medical care at any time after unwanted sexual activity without reporting a crime or notifying the police by going to the Student Health Center.
5. If you are unsure of how you wish to proceed in the aftermath of sexual assault and wish to talk confidentially about options, you may call the S.A.R.T. line directly. You will then be able to talk with a S.A.R.T. volunteer to receive help in dealing with the immediate situation and to plan where to get future help.

6. If you are dealing with painful memories from a past sexual assault, or wish to talk confidentially about options you have for reporting an assault, you may wish to talk confidentially with a counselor. The Counseling Center on UM's campus is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays of the academic year, with after hours crisis access through Public Safety.
7. In addition to being a violation of the State of Florida criminal statutes, sexual assault is also a violation of the UM Student Code. Students who have been sexually assaulted may pursue their complaint through the student judiciary system in addition to the criminal court system. Contact the Office of the Dean of Students to report a violation of the Student Code.

The University of Miami will not tolerate sexual assault in any form, including acquaintance or date rape. Violations by students pursued through the Office of the Dean of Students can result in expulsion of the offender from UM in addition to any criminal sanctions imposed through the criminal justice system.

THE AFTERMATH OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Rape is a complex and painful experience which requires a combination of legal, medical, psychological, religious, family and personal responses. A sexual assault can disrupt a person's life in many ways. Common feelings include fear, anxiety, rage, depression, and even guilt. Thoughts can be contradictory and confusing.

Being raped by someone you initially trusted can be especially devastating because you are left with the feeling that you can't trust your own judgement. Some disturbing feelings and thoughts may not become apparent for days, weeks, months, or even years. Counseling and the support of others have proven very helpful and can hasten your recovery. You need not go through the aftermath of sexual assault alone. A list of helping resources appears below.

HELPING RESOURCES

Counseling Center	(305) 284-5511
Dean of Students	(305) 284-6120
Health Center	(305) 284-5921
*Public Safety	(305) 284-6666
*Sexual Assault Response Team (S.A.R.T.)	(305) 798-6666
*Rape Treatment Center (at Jackson Memorial Hospital)	(305) 585-7273
*24 hours	

POLICY CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

If you are the victim of a sexual assault which is reported to the University, it is the policy of the University that:

1. You and the matter you report will be treated with the greatest concern and seriousness, regardless of your gender or the gender of the suspect.
2. Your name will not be released to the public or media.
3. You will be treated with dignity, courtesy, sensitivity, and understanding; and you will not be prejudged or blamed for what occurred.
4. You will be provided with information regarding your options for reporting the sexual assault, and your right to make choices based on this information will be respected.
5. You will be advised of, and if you desire, assisted in receiving services from University departments and from community service agencies that provide assistance to victims of sexual assault.
6. University staff will neither coerce you to report a sexual assault as a lesser offense nor prevent or discourage you from reporting a sexual assault to another person or authority.
7. You will have the opportunity to pursue all legal and/or disciplinary remedies and obtain counseling services without academic penalty by the University.
8. If you request, the University staff will take any reasonable steps to prevent unnecessary or unwanted contact or proximity with the suspect.
9. If you file a complaint with Public Safety, staff from that office will investigate your complaint. You will be notified of victim's rights and remedies according in the Crime Victim's Rights Act and you will be kept up-to-date on the status of the investigation. If the Rape Treatment Center at Jackson provides medical assistance, appropriate methods for preserving evidence of criminal assault will be followed.

