

Crime Prevention News

To Enhance the Safety of Faculty, Staff and Students

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Sexual Assault

Definition of sexual assault: The forcing of unwanted sexual activity by one person on another, as by the use of threats or coercion. **Statistics on Sexual Assault in the United**

States (1): Sexual assault is taking a devastating toll on our society: Somewhere in America, a woman is sexually assaulted every 2-5 minutes. There are approximately 350,000 instances of sexual assault each year in the United States, as reported by victims. (Some studies suggest that the actual number of assaults may be nearly twice as high.) One out of every three women and one out of every ten men will be the victims of sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

At least one-half of all sexual assaults are committed when the perpetrator is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Nowhere is safe: about 60 percent of sexual assaults take place in the victim's home or at the home of a friend, relative, or neighbor. Only 38% of women in this country feel very safe in their own homes at night. More sexual assaults occur within the property lines of fraternity and sorority houses than in any other specific area in the United States excluding military bases and prisons. The United States has the highest sexual assault rate of the countries that report such statistics—4 times higher than Germany, 7 times higher than the average for all of Europe, 13 times higher than England, and 20 times

higher than Japan. One of the most startling aspects of sex crimes is that only **1 in 3 sexual assaults are reported**. The Justice Department estimates that even fewer—only 26% of all sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults—are reported to law enforcement officials. The University of Iowa Department of Public Safety had three sexual assaults reported in 2000 and six reported in 2001. On the other hand the Rape

Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP) had 49 sexual assaults reported between July 1st, 2001 and June 30th, 2002 where some mention of University of Iowa affiliation was made (but not required since their reporting service is anonymous). In the first quarter of this year, (July, August, and September 2002) RVAP had 14 sexual as-

saults reported to them under the same criteria. (2) Needless to say sexual assault is one of the most unreported crimes in the country. The University of Iowa Department of Public Safety established a Sex Crimes Unit in October 2000. The unit, consisting of specially trained officers, hopes to increase survivors confidence in reporting to law enforcement through continued support, competent investigating and respect for survivors of sexual assaults. With increased reporting of these crimes we hope to decrease the amount of sexual assaults being committed at the University of Iowa.

Sources: 1 Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education. 2. Rape Victim Advocacy Program. 3. Dean of Students Office for Women's Resources and Services McKinley Health Education Dept.

"Sexual assault is one of the most unreported crimes in the country"..



"To Serve and Protect"

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Sexual Assault (cont.)

Sexual assault Protective Measures (3)

Sexual assault is a violent crime, an invasion, a frightening experience. Sexual assault affects all women and men, no matter what their age, race or economic status. All women and men are potential victims of sexual assault. By being aware, anyone can reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of sexual assault. This does not mean all sexual assaults can be prevented.

Psychological Preparedness

Many women/men operate under the illusion "it will never happen to me". It may. Educate yourself concerning sexual assault prevention tactics. Become familiar with community sexual assault prevention and counseling. Become aware of locations and situations where sexual assaults are more likely to occur and avoid them, or take precautions.

In a Dating/Friend Situation

The majority of sexual assaults that occur are termed "acquaintance rapes" - the perpetrator and victim/survivor know one another. Trust your feelings. If you become uncomfortable in a situation, assertively ask the person to leave. Don't worry about hurt feelings. If possible, let a friend or roommate know who you will be with and where you will be. Leave an address and phone number when possible.

In Your Car

Keep windows and doors locked. If you should be followed into your driveway, stay in your car with the doors locked. Sound your horn to get the attention of neighbors or scare the other driver off. When parking at night, select a place that will be well-lit when returning to the car. Always make sure the car is locked, and have the keys ready when returning to the car. Check interior of car before getting in.

On the Street

Be observant of things around you. If someone is following you, go to the nearest house or store. Walk near the curb and avoid passing close to shrubbery, dark doorways and other places of concealment. DO NOT HITCHHIKE. Avoid short cuts through parking lots and alleys. Walk with a friend if at all possible. Don't walk alone. If a car approaches you and you feel threatened, run in the opposite direction of the car. When arriving home by taxi or private auto, ask the driver to wait until you are inside. Don't jog in secluded areas. Know the location of the Blue Cap Emergency Phones on campus.

If You Are Sexually Assaulted

The best resistance you can use against an attacker is your common sense. Think! Don't panic. The most important element to remember is that you are not trying to fight the attacker if they have a weapon, but attempt to divert the person long enough to get away. Always look for a way to escape. If the attacker has a weapon, use your common sense. Fighting against it could be dangerous. Stay calm. Do not do anything that may upset the attacker if they do have a weapon. Try to convince the person to put the weapon down. Talk to your attacker, show sympathy and understanding. Make the attacker see you as an individual, not as an object. If the attacker is unarmed, you may be able to scare, distract or injure the person enough to make your escape. Scream "FIRE," "POLICE," or create a disturbance that will attract attention. Assert yourself and fight back if you can do so safely. Break away and run toward areas with people. Be observant so that you will be able to remember and identify the assailant. Report the incident to the police as soon as possible.

Checklist for Victims of Sexual Assault

You may want to call the Rape Crisis Line: (335-6000) for instructions and support.

1. Report the crime immediately to the police.
2. Do not shower, go to the bathroom, douche, or change clothing.
3. Have a medical exam and internal gynecological exam as soon as possible. A delay in time may destroy evidence.
 - a) Semen smears must be taken by a clinician.
 - b) Inform clinician of exact acts committed upon you and have the clinician note any medical evidence of them.
 - c) Clinician should note any bruises or injuries bleeding, lacerations, etc. external or internal.
 - d) Have clinician test for venereal diseases (and pregnancy later, if relevant).
4. Do not disturb the scene of the assault.
5. Inform police of all details of attack, however intimate, and of anything unusual you may have noted about the attacker. Remember what the person said and how it was said. It may lead to the arrest of the assailant.
6. Show police any external bruises or injuries, however minor, resulting from the attack.
7. Police may request your clothes for purpose of evidence.
8. Inform the police if you remember anything that was not previously reported. ■



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