

## Preventing Sexual Assault

**Primary Prevention\*** methods seek to stop sexual assault before it occurs. These efforts often include changing societal norms to decrease rape supportive attitudes. We can all be a part of primary prevention efforts.

- If a friend, brother, classmate, or team-mate is abusive or disrespectful to girls and women—don't simply ignore it. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. If you don't know what to do, reach out to someone you trust.
- Recognize and speak out against homophobia and gay-bashing. This abuse has direct links to sexism and sexual assault.
- Don't support movies, video games, and musicians that promote sexism. Speak out against "entertainment" that condones violence against women.

**Victims do not decide to be victimized. Rapists decide to rape. Whether you were drinking, doing drugs, on a date, or can't remember all of the details—if a sexual assault took place, you have the right to get help and to decide whether or not to report the crime.**

Risk reduction techniques are a form of **Secondary Prevention\***. Some examples may include:

- ...trust your gut instinct. If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.
- ...communicate your sexual expectations and respect your partner's boundaries. Engaging in one sexual act does not mean consenting to others. If your partner indicates verbally or non-verbally that s/he is not okay with what is happening, STOP what you are doing.
- ...be aware of your surroundings. If you find yourself being lured away from a group, offered drinks without seeing the source, or other suspicious activity, leave or call someone for help.

*Doing everything on this list all the time does not guarantee that you won't be assaulted. Never doing anything on this list does not mean that you will be assaulted.*

\* Source: US Dept of Health & Human Services

▶ For more information about sexual assault, contact your local center:



Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
(CCASA)  
PO Box 300398  
Denver, CO 80203

Phone: 303.861.7033  
Toll free: 1-877-372-2272  
www..ccasa.org  
Email: advocacy@ccasa.org

## About Sexual Assault



Rape and sexual assault are serious offenses. Rape is sexual intercourse without consent. Sexual assault is the touching of another person in a sexual manner without consent. It may or may not involve physical injury. In both instances, the lack of verbal or physical resistance because of force, or threat of force, does not mean consent. More often than not, the victim and the attacker know each other.



**There are many types of sexual offenses, including...**

- ...unwanted touching of sexual organs or genitals, by someone brushing up against you or direct contact.
- ...unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors that directly affect your job, school performance or other consequences if rejected; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- ...being followed, threatened or feeling afraid or in danger because of another person's pattern of behavior.
- ...sexual contact of any kind by a helping professional (teacher, doctor, therapist, priest, police officer, and others) toward a client.
- ...unwanted or forced sexual intercourse or sexual acts with a friend, partner, spouse, other acquaintance, or stranger when you did not give consent. A previous or current relationship with the person does not matter – if you did not give consent to have anal, vaginal or oral sex, this is an offense.



"Got Consent?" T-shirt available at [www.alongwalkhome.org](http://www.alongwalkhome.org)

## Myths About Sexual Assault

### **MOST RAPISTS ARE STRANGERS – THEY JUMP OUT OF BUSHES AND ATTACK WOMEN**

85% of incarcerated sex offenders knew the person they victimized. *(Colorado Dept. of Corrections)*  
 90% of college campus rape and sexual assault victims knew their attacker prior to the assault. *(US Dept. of Justice, 2000)*  
**6 out of 10** rapes are reported by victims to have occurred in their own home or the home of a friend, relative or neighbor. *(US Dept. of Justice, 1997)*

### **IF YOU DIDN'T WANT IT TO HAPPEN, YOU COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED THE SEXUAL ASSAULT**

84% of sexual assault victims reported the use of physical force. **11%** involved the use of a weapon. *(RAINN, 2001)*  
 The primary reaction of almost all sexual assault victims is fear of injury or death. "Freezing" is a well-documented psychological and neurobiological response to trauma that does not equal consent.

### **RAPE IS A CRIME OF PASSION – THINGS JUST GOT CARRIED AWAY**

Rape is not about sex or about someone misunderstanding. It is about power and control. Rape is not an accident – rapists plan their attacks through interacting with the victim, providing drugs or alcohol or ignoring them when they say "no" or do not give clear consent.

### **YOU CANNOT BE RAPED BY YOUR SPOUSE OR PARTNER**

**1 in 7** women will be raped by her husband, yet marital rape is illegal in every U.S. state.  
**76%** of the women who reported being raped after the age of eighteen were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner, boyfriend or date. *(National Women's Study)*

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT IS OVER-EXAGGERATED AND ONLY AFFECTS A FEW WOMEN**

**1 in 4** Colorado women and **1 in 17** Colorado men are raped each year. *(CDC, 2005)*

## If You or Someone You Know Has Been Sexually Assaulted

### First steps...

- ...get to a safe place and take care of any injuries.
- ...be patient with yourself and/or your loved one. Dealing with this crime can be a long process.
- ...understand that there are many responses to this traumatic event. Victims may experience anxiety, depression, panic attacks, flashbacks, memory loss, rage, sleep disturbances, etc.

### There are options...

- ...the victim can call the police and make a report.
- ...a forensic medical exam collects evidence at a hospital. S/he does not have to file a police report in order to get an exam. The victim can also be examined for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy.
- ...if the victim chooses to go to the police, campus security, and/or the hospital, s/he can be accompanied by a friend.
- .....talk to a victim advocate who can confidentially explain options, including victim compensation, the reporting process, forensic exams, counseling and other services. Working with an advocate is of no financial cost to the victim.
- ...join a free or low-cost support group or talk to a counselor. Many victims report feeling better when discussing their assault with others or a trained professional. You can contact CCASA or visit [www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org) for information about your local resources and Rape Crisis Center.

