

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

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The information in this booklet is adapted from:

¹ From Friends Raping Friends: Could it Happen to you? By J.O. Hughes & B.R. Sandler, Project on the Status and Education of Women, American Association of Colleges, 1987.

² The guidelines for men were published in I Never Called It Rape by Robin Warshaw.

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Advice for Men on how not to Commit Sexual Assault

Note: Sexual assault can also happen in same sex relationships. Many of the situations and advice described in this booklet are relevant to gay and lesbian couples and dating scenarios.

Real men accept the responsibility to never harm another person.

It is never O.K. to force yourself on a woman, even if...¹

- ◆ she teases you
- ◆ dresses provocatively or flirts with you
- ◆ she says "no" and you think she means "yes"
- ◆ you've had sex with her before
- ◆ you've paid for her dinner or given her expensive gifts
- ◆ you think women enjoy being forced to have sex or want to be persuaded
- ◆ the woman is under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Rape is a crime of violence. It is motivated primarily by the desire to control and dominate, rather than by sex. It is illegal.

Do not assume you both want the same degree of intimacy. She may be interested in some sexual

contact other than intercourse. There may be several kinds of sexual activity you might mutually agree to share.

Stay in touch with your sexual desires. Ask yourself if you are really hearing what she wants. Do not let your desires control your actions.

Communicate your sexual desires honestly and as early as possible.

If you have any doubts about what your partner wants, STOP. ASK. CLARIFY. Your desires may be beyond your control, but your actions are within your control. Sexual excitement does not justify forced sex.

Do not assume your date's desire for affection is the same as a desire for intercourse.

Not having sex or not "scoring" does not mean you are not a "real man." It is OK not to "score."

A woman who turns you down for sex is not necessarily rejecting you as a person; she is expressing her decision not to participate in a single act at that time.

"No" means no. If you do not accept a woman's "no," you risk raping someone whom you thought meant "yes."

Taking sexual advantage of a person who is mentally or physically incapable of giving consent (for example,

Don't buy the myth that a drunk woman "deserves" to be raped. No woman deserves to be raped. But men often think it's not rape if the woman was too drunk or stoned to know what was going on, or if she had passed out from using drugs or alcohol. Under the law, an intoxicated woman cannot give informed consent to sexual activity. It is a criminal offense to get someone drunk or to drug them in order to commit sexual assault.

Do not "join in" if a friend invites you to participate in group sexual behaviour. Do not join in with a group of men who are having intercourse or other sexual contact with a woman, particularly if she is drunk or stoned. This is gang rape and is against the law. Separate this reality from the "innocent fun" fantasy presented in pornographic movies and pictures. Think of the consequences of contributing to an attack and act on your responsibility to stop it by speaking up, seeking help or calling the police.

Do not confuse "scoring" with having a successful social encounter. Sex is not a pay back for a pleasant evening. You can have intercourse with 100 women and still not know anything about good sex or love or what it means to be a "real" man. Finding someone to ejaculate with is not a big deal, but building a healthy relationship that is mutually sexually fulfilling is the reward of good communication, trust and respect.

Contact Men For Change in Halifax for more information about how men are working to prevent violence against women and to promote positive masculinity.

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for sex. Don't lie to a woman in order to con her into agreeing to have sex either.

Stay sober. Right. This is exactly the same advice given to women. In many individual acquaintance rapes and nearly all gang acquaintance rapes, the men involved had been drinking, taking drugs, or both, and were often intoxicated. Social groups that emphasize heavy drinking and drug taking are often those whose members condone acquaintance rape.

When you're drunk or high on drugs, your decision-making abilities are impaired, your aggression level may rise, and your desire to control your impulses may disappear. Adopt this rule: If you get drunk or stoned, don't have sex. Your intoxicated perception may be that you are seducing a willing woman when in fact you are forcing her to have sex against her will.

It is wrong to get a woman drunk or stoned to "loosen her up" to have sex with you. Just because a woman is accepting the drinks that you are buying her doesn't make her available for you to have sex with her. Since the woman is drunk, she cannot say yes to having sex with you - you wasted your money.

Being drunk is not a legal defense against committing rape or any other sexual assault. You will still be charged with rape, regardless of your blood-alcohol content. And that's a sobering thought.

drunk) is rape. If a woman has had a lot to drink and has passed out, or is not in control of herself, having sex with her is rape. You are responsible for your actions, whether you are sober or not.

Be aware that a man's size and physical presence can be intimidating to a woman. Many victims report that the fear they felt based on the man's size and presence was the reason why they did not fight back or struggle.

GUIDELINES FOR CHANGE²

Never force a woman into sexual activity - even if you think she has "led" you on, even if she has slept with your friends, even if she at first said "yes" and then changed her mind, even if she had sex with you before. This includes all unwanted sexual contact - from kissing to copping a feel" to forcing intercourse on her against her will.

Everyone has the right to set limits on sexual behaviour. As a sexual partner, you must understand and respect these limits. When partners have conflicting levels of desire, in a relationship based on mutual respect, the partner, either male or female, who wants more activity must yield to the one who wants less. She has the right to choose what types of sexual activities she wants to participate in, saying "yes" isn't necessarily a "yes" for all other types of sexual activities.

If your friends think keeping count of the number of times you've had sex is important, tell them that you don't agree. If they continue to demand "body counts" from you and to brag about their own sexual "victories," find new friends. Don't assume that you know what a woman wants and vice versa. Ask her. Give her an unpressured

atmosphere in which to answer. If she doesn't know how involved she wants to be with you sexually, respect her and back off. Just because a woman wants affection (hugging, kissing, sitting close) or sex play (sexual fondling) doesn't mean that she wants sexual intercourse. Again, ask her. You deserve a clear, definitive response. If you don't get one, do not assume that intercourse is OK.

"No" means no. Don't buy into the message that some of your friends or popular media reinforce that all women say no when they really mean yes or are playing "hard to get". This myth is based on degrading stereotypes and is not true in real life.

When a woman says no, believe that she means no. Stop and respect that she is not comfortable proceeding any further at this time. It is manipulative and coercive if you continue by cajoling, trying a new trick to seduce her, argue with her or ignore her needs.

If you think she's saying no to protect her reputation, even though you may assume that she wants to have sex with you, it is still up to you to respect her decision. When, and if, she decides to be sexually intimate the decision will likely be based on mutual trust and respect.

Speak up if you feel you're getting a double message from a woman. Ask her directly what she wants. Again, if she can't tell you, don't have sex with her. Communicate with women. Try talking to women, lots of different women, not just the ones you date or want to date. By talking with women about their lives and

feelings, you can develop an understanding of them that will benefit you in all of your relationships.

Communicate with other men. Talk about sex, dating, and acquaintance rape with your male friends. Let them know you dislike behaviour and talk that is hostile, abusive and even rape threatening toward women. Step in if you think a friend is about to cross the line between sexual interest and sexual assault.

If you live in a dorm, belong to a fraternity, or play on an athletic team, find out what acquaintance rape awareness programs are available for your group. Support and participate in such programs.

Don't participate in any sort of bet or dare to get "laid." Sex is not a game or contest - it shouldn't be about winning or losing. Even if you do not force, pressure, convince, or coerce the person to have sex with you, she is still having sex under false pretenses and you are compromising your values. Imagine how you'd feel if you were being deceived!

Don't pressure a woman to have sex. Men often see their verbal pressuring as being less forceful than women do. Even when the words you use are not threatening, the woman may feel that she is in danger. Just the fact that you are a man can be intimidating. Your size, strength, social role, and age are all factors that can contribute to her feeling powerless against your pressure