

RISK REDUCTION: SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE



Information from the

Minneapolis Police Department

*To protect with courage,
to serve with compassion*

Risk Reduction vs Prevention

Most of the time in crime prevention, our recommendations are a combination of prevention (the action of stopping something from happening) and risk reduction (taking precautionary measures to reduce the likelihood of an event).

This approach works for many crimes. For example, if there is a trend where vehicles are stolen when keys are in the ignition, but they are *not* stolen if keys are not in the ignition, then taking the keys out of the ignition is effective prevention. This is something simple that a potential victim can do to prevent that specific crime.

When it comes to sexual assault and rape, it's important to remember that **the victim is never in the position of preventing the assault**. The only true prevention is if the perpetrator chooses not to commit the crime.

Risk reduction, in this case, covers general safety tips anyone can take.

**REMEMBER: Whether you follow these tips
or not, if you are raped or sexually assaulted
IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT.**

THE PERPETRATOR IS AT FAULT.

The perpetrator made the decision to commit a crime against someone else.

SEXUAL ASSAULT OR RAPE IS NOT THE VICTIM'S FAULT.

Keep this in mind while reading these tips, which are meant to give ideas for personal safety and should not be misconstrued as blaming victims for someone else's choices.

For anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted:

Help is here for you

Sexual Violence Center

24-hour crisis line: (612) 871-5111
www.sexualviolencecenter.org/

Aurora Center (for U of M or Augsburg)

24-hour helpline: (612) 626-9111
<http://www1.umn.edu/aurora/>

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault

<http://www.mncasa.org/>
(651) 209-9993 (not a crisis line)

Project Unbreakable (not a helpline)

projectunbreakable.tumblr.com/

Trust Your Instincts

In law enforcement, we find that people often seem to feel that they need permission to trust their instincts. They think if they can't explain the feeling, then it must be wrong. But the truth is their instincts *should* be trusted.

This is not about it being your fault if something happens (it isn't), but rather us telling you that you feel that way for a reason, whether or not you can identify it.

Most rape and sexual assault is committed by someone the victim knows. Allow yourself the permission to make your instincts be a stronger argument than stranger danger or common myths. (More myth info at: <http://go.usa.gov/3wtEE>)

In the police department, after a crime occurs we sometimes hear people say,
"I knew something was wrong, but..."

Let yourself change your perspective and end the sentence differently:
"I knew something was wrong, so..."

Most Common Trends

The most common trends we see in reported sexual assaults and rapes in Minneapolis are:

- ◇ **Excessive alcohol usage**
- ◇ **Separation from friends**
- ◇ **Being somewhere unfamiliar**
(such as staying at a friend's place)

These are all instances where one party is particularly vulnerable, and that vulnerability is taken advantage of by someone else.

Based on these common trends, we have included low risk options you can take if you want to try to decrease your vulnerability for those situations.

Remember: no matter what you did or didn't do leading up to it, it is *never* your fault if you're sexually assaulted.

It's your body and your limits.

You have the right to choose what you do or don't want, and the other person needs to respect that.

If they don't, it's a crime.



**ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ARE A
FACTOR IN AT LEAST 61% OF
RAPES AND SEXUAL ASSAULTS IN
HENNEPIN COUNTY.**

If someone plans to rape or sexually assault someone who is **drinking, they will likely try to separate them or look for vulnerabilities.**

- ◆ **Friends:** If out drinking, go with friends.
 - ◇ While sober, determine what you feel comfortable doing for the night and tell your friends. No one is allowed to deviate.
 - ◇ If a friend disappears, everyone should track them down.
- ◆ **Drinks:** watch your drink.
 - ◇ Some predators use drugs to force compliance on their victims, which makes it more difficult for the victim to deny advances or remember what happened later. Predators use this to their advantage to pretend they had consent.
 - ◇ Legally, a person cannot consent if they are intoxicated or drugged.
- ◆ **Casual night out:** remember to trust your instincts even if you are meeting an acquaintance for a casual night out, like a coworker or friend.
- ◆ **Be alert:** No matter where you are—staying at a friend's, with friends of friends, even with your significant other, intoxication can be taken advantage of. If you have any reservations at all, always be willing to leave.

If someone plans to rape or sexually assault their **date, they will likely try to coerce them into something they did not agree to ahead of time.**

- ◆ **If meeting someone from online/the first time:**
 - ◇ **Stay in a public place.** Don't let the person convince you to go somewhere else unless you agreed to it ahead of time.
 - ◇ **Tell others:** Tell a friend where you will be and for how long. Check in with your friend throughout the night and make sure your date knows you will be doing this. Make a plan for what your friend should do if you deviate.
- ◆ **Discuss your limits:** Everyone has different comfort levels for what sexual activity they do or do not want to engage in regardless of past interactions with the other person. Discuss limits with your date or significant other. This is best to do ahead of time but can happen up to or in the middle of sexual activity.

Find more tips and information

Our other brochures: **Myths and Misconceptions about Rape**, and **Sexual Assault/Rape: What To Do if it Happens to You**, both found at <http://go.usa.gov/3wtEE>

Aurora, Risk Reduction Tips: <http://goo.gl/InUOGD>

CDC Risk Factors: <http://goo.gl/NiUUy4>

WOAR Risk Reduction: <http://goo.gl/Rs6H8e>

RAINN Risk Reduction: <http://goo.gl/kvYDb5>

MNCASA Prevention Effort Ideas: <http://goo.gl/DMoRso>

FORCE: Upsetting Rape Culture: <http://goo.gl/ZCZAVw>