

SEXUAL ASSAULT & HARASSMENT, DATING/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND STALKING

*Ways to Create a Safer
University of Virginia Community*

A GUIDE FOR
WOMEN AND MEN

INTRODUCTION TO THIS BOOKLET

Sexual assault, dating/domestic violence and stalking are serious problems throughout the world, even in the seemingly protected environment of the University of Virginia. According to confirmed research, one in five women in the United States will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime (including one in four college women)¹ and one in four relationships will be impacted by domestic violence (including many dating relationships).² Most people are unaware of these facts. Their lack of knowledge may impair their ability to resist abuse or recognize dangerous situations. They may not know that far more people successfully resist violence than are assaulted.³ Resistance to violence is a natural, instinctive act, but most women and children (of both sexes) are socialized against it.

This booklet contains important definitions and strategies that may be useful when avoiding or resisting sexual assault, harassment, or abuse. By learning the facts, and developing effective strategies for resistance and prevention, women and men can unite in the fight against sexual and domestic violence. More information is available in the UVA Sexual Assault Education Office, the Office of the Dean of Students, and at the community agencies listed on the last page of this booklet.

We want to state at the outset that sexual and domestic violence are crimes in which females and males can be victims, and females and males can be perpetrators. Yet, the evidence shows that men by far comprise the largest proportions of assailants (ranging from 95-99 percent), even though the majority of men are not perpetrators. So in this booklet, we refer to perpetrators as “he.” Survivors or potential survivors are described as “she” and “he,” in recognition that many men and boys are also assaulted.

FOOTNOTES

1. Koss, M. P., Gidycz, C.A., and Wisniewski, N. (1987). The scope of rape: Incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of higher education students. *Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology*, 55, 152-170.

2. NCADV Webpage: www.ncadv.org

3. Bart, Pauline B. and Patricia H. O'Brien. (1993). *Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies*. New York: Teachers College.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

The University of Virginia defines sexual assault as rape, forcible sodomy or sexual penetration with an inanimate object, the touching of an unwilling person's intimate parts (genitalia, groin, breast, or buttocks, or clothing covering them), or forcing an unwilling person to

touch another's intimate parts. To constitute an assault, these acts must be committed either by force, threat, surprise or intimidation, or through use of the victim's mental or physical helplessness of which the accused was aware or should have been aware.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

UVa defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct or written communication of a sexual nature when:

- ◆ Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational experience.
- ◆ Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual.

- ◆ Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work, academic performance, or participation in extracurricular activities, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment can take various forms, and the determination of what constitutes sexual harassment will vary according to individual circumstances. Sexual harassment may involve behavior by a person of either gender against a person of the same or opposite sex.

As much as eighty percent of all sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim (this may be higher among college students) and ninety percent of attackers are of the same race as the victim.⁴ Sexual harassment also occurs in public places, such as on the street, in public transportation, or at parties, although this kind of abuse is not a crime unless specific threats to safety are made. Just as with workplace or harassment in the classroom, street harassers expect their targets to endure abuse without comment and not to draw attention to it. Most sexual assaults and harassment incidents are planned in advance and follow distinct stages leading up to the attack itself.⁵ By knowing what may happen in a sexual assault you can better prepare to avoid it or, if necessary, defend yourself.

FOOTNOTES

4. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

5. Langelan, Martha J. (1993). *Back Off! How to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

STAGES OF A SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault and sexual harassment are motivated by a need for power, and enforced with the use of sex as a weapon. Many self-defense instructors have developed the concept that an assault has several stages:

Planning

Most sexual assaults are planned in advance. Planning may take the form of fantasies, strategizing what to do if a date is reluctant to participate in sexual activities, or more obvious forms such as staking out a particular location. Or the assailant may simply feel sure that his potential victim is attracted to him—without any confirmation or encouragement from her. While fantasies or hopes are not sole indications of rape behavior, combined with a lack of empathy, belief in stereotypic masculinity, anti-woman feelings, and feelings of male entitlement these are red flags. Other assailants may stalk their victims, or look for people who appear to be easy targets, who are unable or unlikely to resist.

Testing

Nearly all perpetrators test their potential targets psychologically and/or physically to find someone who will not be any trouble. Most attackers want someone they can easily overpower and will move on to someone else if they think a potential target will draw attention to his actions. Testing behaviors also have a pattern:

INTRUDING: At this stage, the attacker violates the victim's space in some way. This may include: unwanted touches, uncomfortable looks or inappropriate personal or sexual conversation. The attacker is testing the victim to see how

she will respond. Specific verbal confrontation strategies can be quite effective in averting both stranger and acquaintance sexual assaults during this stage. Many perpetrators ignore or demean women's requests to cease the behavior or interpret a "look to kill" as an invitation for more, which is why communication is not the issue alone (see sidebar).

WEARING DOWN: At this point, the attacker has repeated the intrusive behavior so often that the survivor accepts it as normal. He may wear her down with verbal pressure that causes her to question her values and her judgement. She may begin to feel she is overreacting. He may contribute to her confusion by making statements such as: "What's wrong with you?" "Don't you like to have fun?" "You're too uptight—why can't you relax?" or "It's just a compliment."

Isolating

Once the offender is alone with the survivor, an assault can easily occur because the victim feels that he has colluded with the behavior and may believe that his cooperation was voluntary. Consequently, he cannot respond quickly and assertively to danger signs. This is also true in cases of *quid pro quo* sexual harassment (sex in exchange for a promotion or better grade).

Physical Assault

This is one of the last stages of an assault, therefore physical self-defense is a last, but necessary resort in this case. Physical attacks rarely happen in public; they usually occur in private residences or where the victim is isolated in some way. This is why it is important to do everything within your power NOT to get into a car with someone against your will. Better to resist on the spot than to think it will be easier later on. If a weapon is present (in sexual assaults, only six percent of all cases), it is generally used to frighten a victim into compliance and then set aside, although one

should always assume that a perpetrator intends to use his weapon.

Recovery

The last stage of an assault is the recovery process. Even people who avoid or escape a sexual assault are traumatized, so it's important not to minimize the impact this may have. Effective recovery includes seeking appropriate, supportive medical and psychological assistance as quickly as possible, and developing or drawing on a network of family and friends who will be there through the healing process.

RESISTING AND AVOIDING SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

No one deserves to be sexually assaulted or harassed. No matter what you do prior to an incident (accept a compliment, drink too much, fight with your partner, agree to go out for a drink, have sex with him in the past), this doesn't give someone the right to harass or assault you. First and foremost, you must believe that you deserve to be treated with respect, and have the right to resist and defend yourself—whatever strategies you use. If you truly believe this, then any verbal and physical actions you take on your own behalf will be more effective.

BASIC SAFETY TIPS

The following brief list is hardly exhaustive; you can probably come up with your own strategies. But lists aren't enough, because most address avoidance of stranger—not acquaintance—assault. Common sense is helpful, of

course, but true preparedness involves learning assertiveness and physical self-defense—just as fire preparedness involves practicing escape routes in your home and workplace, learning signals, and so on. Practicing assertive

responses and physical resistance against abusive behavior will help you to make more effective choices when you need to.

- ◆ Carry enough change to make a phone call.
- ◆ Carry the Yellow Cab number and enough money for a ride home.
- ◆ Avoid places where attackers might hide (bushes, alleys, etc.).
- ◆ Be aware that using alcohol or other drugs hampers your ability to defend yourself.
- ◆ Have your keys in hand before approaching your car or home.

- ◆ Avoid partying, dating, hooking up, or walking alone (or without sober female company) when you are under the influence of any substance that might impair your ability to resist an assault.
- ◆ If you can, avoid meeting your boss/professor/teaching assistant or other authority figure for a “drink” or going to his/her house for a meeting unless other people that you know are present.
- ◆ Use irregular patterns if you run or walk for exercise and tell someone when you leave and plan to return.

IS SEXUAL ASSAULT THE RESULT OF BAD COMMUNICATION?

Appropriate communication between men and women is often considered a key part of preventing sexual assault. Women are often taught to “say what you mean, and mean what you say” or to not send mixed messages in order to decrease their chances of being assaulted. Although clear communication is important in any relationship, this approach conveys the message that the woman is responsible for the assault, or that the assault is caused by miscommunication. It excuses perpetrators who typically choose to ignore the woman’s desires or who adhere to rape supportive myths such as “no means yes.” Researchers at the University of Mississippi demonstrated that men who commit assault often ignore very clear indications from women who communicate that they do not want to participate in sexual activity, such as crying, physical resistance, and verbal resistance.⁶

While a man may mistakenly interpret a woman’s friendly actions as interest in sex and be frustrated, confused, embarrassed or disappointed if he finds out that this was not her intent, this misinterpretation is not a cause of assault. The normal responses to this sort of misunderstanding would be the same as to any other: the man may get angry and leave; he may try to clear up the confusion; he may ask “why not?” The response to a misunderstanding is not to attack the person whom you’ve misunderstood.

So, assertively and clearly stating your desires, particularly during the intrusion stage, may help someone stop the testing behaviors and deter the assault from escalating. However, it is always the perpetrator who is responsible for his actions, and if he chooses to ignore her desires and proceed to assault her, clear communication alone will not help. This is why knowledge of self-defense must include physical resistance strategies. —*Lisa Speidel*

SELF-DEFENSE

Self-defense begins with self-respect: belief in yourself and your right to defend yourself is far more important than perfect technique. As mentioned above, not all self-defense is physical. However, the preparedness means knowledge of as many options as possible. It's not hard: basic self-defense makes use of resources you already have: your intelligence, your reflexes, your physical strengths and your gut feelings. Use the following guidelines to raise your awareness and begin preparing to protect yourself from an attacker.

Self-Defense Guidelines

For every one woman who is sexually assaulted, two avoid or escape an assault, according to researcher Pauline Bart. This is news that most people never hear! You can do it, too:

- 1. Be alert.** Pay attention to your surroundings and the body language of the people around you. Anticipate potentially dangerous situations before they develop.
- 2. Trust your instincts**—they're right more often than not. Act on your feelings. If a situation feels wrong, get out of it. It's much easier to walk out of an apartment or dorm room when you feel uncomfortable than later on when you are pinned down on the sofa. Remember: nobody ever really died from embarrassment.
- 3. Be prepared mentally** and physically to take action. Know what your escape and self-defense options are before a dangerous situation arises. Take an assertiveness and/or self-defense course that's recommended by people who know these issues well (such as a sexual assault crisis center).
- 4. Rely on your own resources.** Your body and mind are your best weapons. Know what you can do by yourself and what you can't, and work to strengthen both. An external weapon is for secondary use—learn how to use it if you have one and be certain you will use it against someone you know (the most likely assailant). But first, take a self-defense class so you know what to do if your weapon isn't available to you whenever you need it.
- 5. Be loud and clear** if you do need help. Leave no room for misinterpretation if you yell for help.
- 6. Intervene to help others** who are under attack. You can do this without putting yourself in danger. Yell at attackers from a distance, tell them that you've called the police, or yell for someone to call 911 if you know others are within earshot.

FOOTNOTES

6. Alan M. Gross and Nathan C. Weed. (June, 1998). "Magnitude Scaling of Intensity of Sexual Refusal Behaviors in a Date Rape." *Violence Against Women* 4:3, 329-343.

CONFRONTING ABUSERS/HARASSERS

One of the most effective defenses against sexual assault or harassment during the rape-testing stage is assertive, persistent, non-violent, righteous confrontation. Since the number one strategy of acquaintance rapists is to ignore their victims, these techniques can be more effective than anger, hysteria, or hurled epithets, which tend to escalate the situation. Confrontation strategies work particularly well because they expose abusive behavior publicly and destroy the assailant's anonymity. Again, if you are familiar with self-defense techniques, you probably will feel—and appear—more confident about using verbal confrontation strategies. This is in part due to awareness of additional options in the event that the assailant escalates the violence. Assertive behavior can be more challenging for some women than physical resistance, since it runs counter to how they are socialized.

Use strong, self-respecting body language, stand up straight, plant your feet firmly on the ground, look directly at your target, and:

1. Name the behavior clearly. Do exactly what the attacker counts on you not to do—point out his or her

actions to anyone within hearing or visual distance.

2. Hold the perpetrator accountable for his actions. Tell him or her that this behavior is inappropriate and that you will not ignore it, and offer an alternative behavior. “Put your penis back in your pants.”

3. Make honest, direct statements, in a low, firm, voice. Avoid equivocating or softening your position with “I’m sorry but...”, “Excuse me, but...”, smiling, squirming or giggling. Speak in statements, not questions. Build up your arsenal of unqualified commands, such as “That’s sexual harassment! I don’t like it, no woman likes it. Stop harassing women!” Practice in front of a mirror so that you will feel comfortable using them when necessary.

4. Stick to your own agenda. Do not let the harasser reframe the true meaning of what he/she has done.

5. End the confrontation on your own terms. You don’t have to have a conversation with your harasser. If he or she tries to argue with you, interrupt and make it clear that the encounter is over, because you say it is over.

PHYSICAL SELF-DEFENSE

It may happen that you are surprised by an assailant, or that assertiveness alone isn’t enough to halt abusive behavior. If someone touches you against your will,

this is the time to match that assault equally. Virginia laws recognize the right of victims to defend themselves as long as the victim’s response is propor-

tional to the assault or degree of threat. Self-defense gives you a greater range of options to draw upon in the event that you are attacked. Self-defense involves a series of simple offensive and defensive techniques that have been shown to be effective when employed properly. This is why it's important to find a

class with a reputable instructor who is trained in sexual assault and domestic violence crisis issues. We are lucky in Charlottesville to have several resources for good self-defense classes. Call the resources at the end of this booklet for information.

WHAT IS CONSENT?

Genuine consent requires the following four conditions:

1. Both parties are fully conscious and unimpaired through alcohol and/or drug use.
2. All parties may stop the activity without fear of humiliation, anger, retaliation, or rejection.
3. All intentions have been communicated clearly.
4. The initiator of the sexual activity has received a verbal, enthusiastic "yes".

DRUGS USED IN SEXUAL ASSAULTS

The drug of choice at the University of Virginia is alcohol, which is still the most common contributing factor (outside of male privilege and sexism) to sexual assault. Attackers can use any substance to incapacitate their victims, from alcohol or prescription drugs, such as Valium, to illegal drugs, such as Rohypnol (or Roofies), GHB or Ketamine. It is much harder to resist an attack if you are too drunk or high. Drink responsibly and try to follow these guidelines to protect yourself from unintentional drug ingestion:

- ◆ Never accept a drink in an open container, especially from anyone you do not know.
- ◆ Always monitor your own drink. Don't give anyone a chance to slip something into it.
- ◆ Do not set your drink down and leave it unattended and then come back to it. Always keep it with you or, if you want to dance and have to set it down, just get a new drink once you are through.

Dating/domestic violence (battering) is a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one individual to control or exert power over another individual in the context of an intimate relationship. Battering includes emotional/psychological, physical, economic, and/or sexual abuse, and affects all types of families, regardless of income, education, race, sexual orientation, or religion.

WHAT MAKES A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

Before describing signs of abuse in a relationship, we need to talk about healthy relationships. Unless we have good role models around us while growing up, most people never really have the chance to think about what a healthy relationship is. People who grow up in abusive families may not know that such a thing is possible, or see emotional abuse and violence as normal. Caring, mutual, respectful relationships don't just happen—they take work and lots of open communication on the part of both partners. If the following characteristics are missing in your past or present relationships, take that as a warning that something is wrong, for they are basic requirements for a healthy partnership:

- ◆ Communication that is open-minded, honest, thoughtful, and non-interrupting.
- ◆ Compromise that indicates a willingness to reach consensus and involves active listening.
- ◆ Caring for one another in order to make communication and compromise achievable.

This translates into:

- ◆ listening to each other's thoughts and feelings, even when they conflict.
- ◆ bringing out one another's better qualities.
- ◆ trusting one another, even when one partner is away or preoccupied.
- ◆ being open to change and growth—even the possibility of breaking up if one grows while the other doesn't.
- ◆ developing other important friendships outside the relationship.
- ◆ expressing your needs and wants and listening to your partner's, and accepting "no" as an answer.
- ◆ giving to your partner without expecting something in return.
- ◆ not expecting unconditional love from your partner.
- ◆ not "losing" yourself in your partner; taking responsibility for your own behavior, and not expecting your partner to "save" you or make your life worthwhile.
- ◆ working to maintain a sense of equality.
- ◆ trusting that your partner will respect your feelings of vulnerability.

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Dating/domestic violence often takes the form of a cycle, with rising tension, physical and/or sexual violence, and then reconciliation. Relationships can also be emotionally abusive without physical violence. Many survivors of abuse claim that the emotional abuse is

the worst part of all because it is so relentless and grinds them down. If you recognize signs of abuse in your relationship, seek help from one of the resources listed at the end of this booklet.

DATING/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL

Batterers utilize a host of emotional, economic, and verbal strategies to control a partner, ranging from humiliating the survivor in front of others, isolating her from family and friends, and controlling her every move, all the way to destroying property, removing telephones, threatening to hurt other family members or children, and killing beloved pets. These methods clearly convey the message that the abuser is capable of anything. When these strategies don't control the survivor to the abuser's satisfaction, then physical violence enforces his power and control.

Most survivors of domestic violence do physically and emotionally resist the abuse, particularly early in the relationship. But, over time, with persistent societal messages blaming them for staying, blaming them for their choice of partners, and blaming them for not being good wives or partners, they eventually give up hope. Resistance also can be very risky, and leaving an abusive relationship is the most likely time for potential serious injury or murder of battered women. Survivors of battering are encouraged to develop a safety plan in the event that they must flee quickly.

DEVELOPING A SAFETY PLAN

- 1.** Think of a safe place to go if an argument occurs - avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons (kitchen).
- 2.** Make a list of safe people to contact.
- 3.** Keep change with you at all times.
- 4.** Memorize important phone numbers.
- 5.** Establish a neutral "code word" or sign so that family, friends, teachers or co-workers know when to call for help on your behalf.
- 6.** Plan what to say to your partner if he becomes violent.
- 7.** Have a set of clothes for yourself and

for your children stored at a friend's house or at work in the event you need to flee your house.

8. Keep sets of important documents (savings account records/check books/safety deposit keys/bank statements), birth certificates for the survivor and her/his children, school records, deeds or leases, proof of income (pay stubs or W-2's, and any documentation of past incidents of

abuse (photos, police reports, medical records, etc.) away from your house in a safe place that only you can access.

9. Remember you have the right to live without fear and violence.
10. Call the police.

If you call SHE when it is safe, a crisis counselor can help you develop a personal safety plan over the phone.

STALKING

Stalking is behavior in which an individual willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly engages in a knowing course of conduct directed at a specific person which reasonably and seriously alarms, torments, or terrorizes the person, and which serves no legitimate purpose. Stalkers may begin with annoying, threatening, or obscene phone calls, letters, or e-mails. They may conduct covert surveillance of the victim, following every move she makes. Most stalkers are former intimate partners who may have abused their victims during the relationship, but this is not always the case—they can be neighbors, classmates, colleagues, or even a complete stranger.

If you are being stalked:

1. Change your phone number.
2. Screen calls.
3. Save and document all contacts, messages, other incidents involving the stalker.
4. Change locks, if the stalker has a key.
5. Avoid staying alone.
6. Plan how to get away if confronted by an abusive partner.
7. If you have to meet your partner, do it in a public place.
8. Vary your routine.
9. Notify school and work contacts.
10. Call the police and report any incidents.
11. Report any on-line or e-mail stalking or harassment (if you are contacted through your UVa electronic ID on a UVa computer through ITC.)
12. Get a copy of a stalking report form from the Sexual Assault Education Office.

Men are critical allies in the fight against sexual assault and domestic/dating violence. By committing yourself to stopping sexist and homophobic behavior wherever you witness it, you can make a real difference. By using the confrontation strategies outlined above and the guidelines below, you can become an agent of social change. What's important in this process is that you must see yourself as an ally—not as a savior. Men must become fully conscious of how they benefit from heterosexual male privilege on a daily basis, and learn to educate their brothers as peers. Going against peer pressure can be a challenge, but most men are concerned about gender violence and want to do something about these crimes. The trick is learning how to be an ally without taking women's agency away from them. Women are very capable of taking care of themselves and don't usually need a knight to ride to the rescue or exact revenge.

1. If you hear sexist jokes or comments, make it clear to the speaker that you are not interested or amused by such behavior. You will discover that most men agree with you and will be relieved that you've spoken out. Make your objections heard and don't let the harasser interpret your silence as approval. Keep it brief: "I'm not interested" or "That's disgusting." Then, step back a step or two, to establish physical distance between yourself and the offender.
2. Strategize effective violence de-escalation techniques that you and your male friends can employ as a group if you witness abusive behavior by another man.
3. Examine how all men benefit from male privilege, even those who are not abusive, and work on unlearning the messages that society, your friends, your family, have taught you that foster sexism, homophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance.
4. Support friends who are survivors of sexual assault, abuse or harassment. Don't challenge their interpretation of events or try to force help on them. Let them tell you how you can help; leave control of the situation in their hands.
5. Commit yourself to never harming another person, and only having sex with someone when she or he gives full and enthusiastic consent. That means being sure that neither of you is drunk or drugged, and that you won't exact negative emotional or physical consequences if your partner says "no".

WHERE TO LEARN MORE OR TO GET HELP

SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES

Sexual Assault Resource Agency	295-7273
UVA Police Department	924-8845
UVA Sexual Assault Education Office	982-2774

Or ask SARA for referrals to local martial arts schools

IN EMERGENCIES

Police	911 (From on Grounds 9-911)
Shelter for Help in Emergency (SHE) <i>24-hour domestic violence hotline</i>	293-8509
Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA) <i>24-hour sexual assault crisis hotline</i>	977-7273
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Emergency line	972-7004

FOR INFORMATION, COUNSELING AND SUPPORT

UVA Sexual Assault Education Office	982-2774
SHE business office	293-6155
SARA	297-7273
CAPS	924-5556
UVA Women's Center	982-2361

STUDENT PEER EDUCATION GROUPS

Sexual Assault Facts and Education (SAFE)	243-9806
One In Four (men only)	924-3736
Peer Health Educators	924-1509

TO REPORT ABUSE/HARASSMENT (NON-EMERGENCY)

Police	924-7166
Online/E-mail Harassment/Stalking	abuse@virginia.edu
Sexual Harassment—Equal Opportunity Programs	924-3200
Anonymous Sexual Assault Reports	
Sexual Assault Education Webpage	www.virginia.edu/~saeo

Gracious contributions and feedback from:

Lisa Speidel, Sexual Assault Resource Agency, and RAD instructor

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Christopher Kilmartin

Michael Scarce

The Sexual Assault Education Office was founded in 1991 to educate University of Virginia students, faculty and staff about sexual and domestic violence, and to provide advocacy to survivors of these crimes and their significant others. We hope this booklet provides you with helpful strategies to protect yourself and others from sexual and domestic violence and harassment. Contact us for copies of Handbook for Survivors of Sexual Assault, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, and Stalking: Your Rights, Your Responsibilities, and other literature published by this office.

**THIS BOOKLET IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF CINDY LAMM
Director of Client Services 1987–1999
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