ACQUAINTANCE RAPE AWARENESS

Every two minutes somewhere in the United States a woman is sexually assaulted. One in four women is a victim of rape or attempted rape. And 57% of rapes happen when on dates. Unfortunately, date rape and sexual assault are occurring more and more often and with the popularity of online dating today, it is necessary that women arm themselves with the knowledge to avoid such attacks.

The circumstances surrounding sexual assaults on college campuses are often quite different from those that occur elsewhere. Many of the incidents occur under circumstances commonly referred to as date or acquaintance rape. Date rape is a sexual assault against a person that is committed by someone the victim knows. The perpetrator may be someone the victim knows well and who may have previously been in his or her company. Because of this familiarity, the victim often fails to see the incident as a serious crime and may, in fact, place some of the blame for the incident upon him or herself. Date rape in college surroundings quite often follows the use of alcohol or other drugs by the victim and the perpetrator. Very often, the victims find that they have been placed in a vulnerable position by trying to make new acquaintances or fit in with a new crowd. All students should remember that date rape is another name for a very serious crime. Every person is an individual and should be able to assert his or her wishes in a relationship. Self-awareness and good common sense are your best weapons against date rape.

Do not jeopardize your physical and emotional well-being for a night out of fun. By observing the following tips, you can still have a great time and acquaintance rape and sexual assault can be prevented because safety is in your hands:

1. Take a self-defense class. Inquire about the R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) Class offered at NC A&T State University. For information about R.A.D., you may contact Sgt. Shannon Mcphail at (336) 334-7128. This is a great tool for women
of any age, dating or not. By preparing for the worst by learning self-defense moves, you will know how to protect yourself if you should be in a dangerous situation.

2. While in your residence hall room or apartment, keep your door locked at all times.

3. Don’t allow strangers to loiter around your room.

4. Choose a public place. If you are meeting someone you’ve been in communication with online for the first time face-to-face, make sure you do so at a crowded, public venue. Do not rely on the guy for transportation—if you are alone in a car with a man you don’t know, you are putting yourself at risk and have an automatic disadvantage. Meet him at the place of your date.

5. Enlist backup. Double-dating or group dating with other couples on the first few dates with someone new is a good way to keep you safe. Having friends around that you trust to look out for you will help you feel more comfortable and decrease your risk for harm.

6. Skip the alcohol. Sound judgment is the first thing to go when drinking and alcohol makes a date rape situation more likely to occur. In fact, of all reported rapes and assaults, alcohol was a factor for 55% of women attacked and 75% of men who raped/assaulted. So for the first couple of dates, make sure you stick to non-alcoholic beverages. However, if you decide to drink and you’re of the legal age to drink, please follow the below safe drinking tips:

- *Drink moderately so that you can keep your wit about you.*
- *Do not leave your beverage unattended.*
- *If for some reason, you must leave your drink, such as while dancing or using the restroom, get a new one when you return.*
- *Don’t drink anything that has an unusual taste or appearance (salty taste, excessive foam, unexplained residue).*

7. Pay your own way. It is also a good idea to ignore the traditional rule of the man paying for your date. Some men tend to think that just because they bought your meal, you owe them something at the end of the night. To avoid any confusion about this, consider going “Dutch” and take care of your own ticket.

8. Give details in small doses. When first getting to know someone, be sure not to dish out every little piece of info on your life. Keep things like your home
address, work address and other personally identifying information to yourself until you are comfortable and the guy has proved he is worthy of your trust.

9. Keep an eye on your belongings. Watch your purse, wallet, cell phone and drink when out with someone you’ve never met before. It is especially important to never leave a drink unattended or ever take a drink from someone you don’t know—there is the chance of being slipped a date rape drug.

10. Inform your friends. Make sure you let a friend or family member know where you are going and who you’re going with. Keep your cell phone on you and have them check in on to see how things are going throughout your date. Be sure to call this person as soon as you get home to let them know you are safe.

11. Consider downloading the React Mobile app for iPhone and Android. Have React Mobile open in case you need to call for help. With the React Mobile “Follow-me” feature activated you can have your trusted contacts follow you in real-time. Should something go wrong you can activate the SOS alert sending an alert message with you GPS location via email, text. Optionally an alert message with your location can be posted to Facebook and/or Twitter.

12. Define the boundaries. To assert yourself as a strong woman who is in control of the dating situation, don’t be afraid to communicate with your date about what you’re comfortable or uncomfortable with. Let him know if you find his behavior unacceptable and if this should anger him, this is a definite red flag that must be heeded. Bow out and end the date right there.

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336.334.7675 – Emergency Number
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