

Sexual assault by someone you know

Sexual assault often occurs between people who know each other. *The perpetrator may be:*

- ◇ A friend
- ◇ An acquaintance (someone you know but not well)
- ◇ A co-worker – supervisor, boss
- ◇ A schoolmate – teacher, student
- ◇ A relative
- ◇ A boyfriend or date

Assaults can occur:

- ▽ In your home
- ▽ In a friend's
- ▽ In vehicles
- ▽ On dates
- ▽ At parties
- ▽ At school or work

Victims can be all ages – children, teens and adults. They can be male or female, single or married. The common element shared by all is that the assaults are committed by someone known and often trusted.

How to protect yourself

There is no perfect way to protect yourself against assault (including rape), but the following have worked for many people:

- * Set sexual limits. You may have different limits with different people, your limits may change. This is your right.
- * Communicate those limits. Tell the person you are with what you expect and what you don't expect.
- * Trust your feelings. If you feel that you're being pressured into unwanted sex, you're right.
- * Make sure your friends or family know where you are going and who you are going with.
- * Say "**NO**" clearly and as loudly as possible, even if it means being rude.

Myths & Facts about sexual assault

Myth A woman who gets sexually assaulted usually deserves it, especially if she agrees to go to a man's home or vehicle with him.

Fact No one deserves to be sexually assaulted. Being in a man's home or vehicle does not mean that you have agreed to have sex with him.

Myth Once men reach a certain point of arousal, sex is inevitable and they can't help forcing themselves upon a woman.

Fact Men are *capable* of exercising restraint. A man who cares about you will not expect you to do anything that you are not comfortable with.

Myth If a woman wears revealing clothing, she is asking to be assaulted.

Fact Women do not deserve to be assaulted, regardless of what they decide to wear or where they decide to go.

Myth Most women lie about assault because they are ashamed or want revenge.

Fact Most women do not lie about assault. If a woman says she's been assaulted believe her. She needs all support she can get.

HELP & SHELTER

227-3454 OR 231-7249



Helping a friend:

- ♣ Make sure that your friend is safe, that nobody has followed her home.
- ♣ If your friend needs medical help, take her to the hospital.
- ♣ Believe your friend – believing in her helps her through the healing process.
- ♣ Listen to your friend – what you say is not as important as your willingness to listen.
- ♣ Be sure that your friend does not blame herself.
- ♣ Support your friend and the decisions she makes.
- ♣ Be available when she needs you.

NO

What part of this word don't you understand?

Services offered by Help & Shelter

- ◆ Counselling for all forms of abuse
- ◆ Support through the court experience for victims of rape and child sexual abuse
- ◆ Consciousness raising for the community
- ◆ Training of new volunteers
- ◆ School talks to educate young people about violence

Our phone number : 227-3454

When can you call: 24-hours/day, 7 days/week

Who will talk with you: A trained counsellor

* All information is confidential

If you need more specific information about sexual assault by someone you know, contact us at Help & Shelter.



Help & Shelter

Next door to Ministry of Housing
Bottom Flat
Homestretch Avenue
D'Urban Park
Georgetown

Phone: 225-4731

Hotline: 227-3454

Fax: 227-8353

Email: hands@networksgy.com

Website: <http://www.hands.org.gy>

Acknowledgements:

CIDA/Gender Equality Fund—September 2002



Help & Shelter

Sexual Assault By Someone You Know

