

Tips to help reduce the risk of sexual assault

- In many cases, the attacker may be someone you know.
 - Give clear messages, both verbal and physical about what you want and do not want regarding physical or sexual contact with the person.
- It is your body and no-one has a right to force you to do anything you do not want to do.
- Be firm and do not worry about being polite or kind...it is important that if you feel uncomfortable in a situation, that you make your feelings clear.
- Do not forget that alcohol and drugs are often involved in sexual assault.
- Keep away from secluded areas where you may be at risk.
- Arrange to meet new dates in public places or with a group of other people.
- Always let someone know where you are going and with whom and when you will be home.
- Make sure you always have some money with you so you can get home if necessary, or make emergency telephone calls.

Safety tips

- Many incidents of sexual assault happen in the victim's home.
- If someone comes to the door and calls, do not let them know you are on your own.

- Never open the door without knowing who is there. Ask anyone who is requesting entry for their identification (which they should pass under the door or show you through a nearby window).
 - Attackers can be very clever and may give you a compelling reason to be allowed in....need a glass of water, need to make an urgent call etc. Do not allow them in. Offer to make the call yourself.
- If you come home and the door or window has been forced open, do NOT go in. The intruder may still be inside.
 - Be aware of your surroundings, especially if it is dark and you are on your own.
- Whenever possible, have a friend with you.
- Stay in well-lit areas and away from deserted places, car parks, etc.
- Walk confidently and avoid bushy areas and places where someone could be hiding.
- Keep your car in good working order and enough gas in the tank.
- Have your car key ready to get in your car immediately and check the back seat before entering.
- Always lock the car door as soon as you are inside.
- If your car breaks down, turn on the flashing lights and call a friend or family member if you have a cell phone. If someone stops and offers to help, remain in the car and ask them to call someone for you. Do NOT get out of the car.

Remember...

Sexual Assault is

Not Your Fault!



Rape



**The Crisis Centre
P.O.Box EE-17910
Nassau Bahamas**

24-Hour Hotline: 328-0922
Family Violence Unit: 322-4999
Fax: 328-7824
email: bahamascrisiscentre@yahoo.com
www.bahamascrisiscentre.org

Rape

Rape occurs when a person forces another to have sexual intercourse against their will. Over half of all reported rapes occur between people who know each other - friends, people who know each other well. People are raped at school, parties, dances, on dates, in dorms, in cars, at the beach, in their homes and in the homes of acquaintances.

Victims can be all ages, children, teens and adults - they can be male or female, they can be single, married, or newly single. The common element shared by all is sexual victimization by some-one unknown or known and often trusted.

Offenders can be friends, neighbours, casual dates - anyone who coerces another into unwanted sexual contact.

Remember...

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Not Your Fault!

If you have, or someone you know has been the victim of rape or any form of sexual assault, please contact

The Crisis Centre on 328-0922

If someone you know has been raped

- * Listen....what you say is not as important as your willingness to listen.
- * Help remove feelings of guilt....be sure your friend understands that he/she is not to blame, that it is not his/her fault.
- * Believe....one of the most hurtful things that can happen to a victim is not to be believed. Believe what your friend is telling you.
- * Support....lots of decisions have to be made - like whom to tell, what to do. Let your friend be in control of those decisions and support him/her.
- * Show that you care....just be there. Don't reject your friend.

If you have been raped

- * Do not wash or bathe until you have been examined by a doctor.
 - * Keep any clothes that were worn during the rape for evidence...do not wash them or throw them away.
 - * Call a close friend or relative to support you.
 - * Call the Crisis Centre and the police.
- Go to hospital to get tested for STD's and pregnancy, treated for any physical injuries and to get evidence collected in case you decide to press charges.

Facts about Sexual Assault

- Sexual assault is a violent crime, an attempt to hurt or humiliate. It includes rape, attempted rape, incest, date rape, acquaintance rape, sexual harassment, stalking, fondling. It is any sexual act that occurs against the victim's will.
- It can happen to ANYONE
- It can happen anywhere and at anytime, in a public place or at your own home or office, day or night.
- Quite often the attacker is someone you know...not a stranger at all. It could be an acquaintance, date, family member or friend.
- Sexual assault is one of the most unreported crimes.

The Effects of Sexual Violence

The effects of sexual violence can be devastating and include:

Physical symptoms and illnesses:

- Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, infertility and sexual promiscuity

Psychological trauma:

- Shock, fear, shame, guilt, depression, sexual dysfunction, anxiety, alienation, sleep disorders, eating disorders, flashbacks and low self esteem.

Sexual violence can affect relationships within the family and sexual relationships.