

# Reducing the Risk

## What Is Rape Prevention vs. Risk Reduction?

**Prevention** education goes beyond cautioning people to avoid certain behaviors or situations. Prevention of sexual violence takes a community effort. By examining the root causes of this violence we can do a lot more to address it. For more information about preventing rape and sexual assault contact the UNA POLICE DEPARTMENT AT 256.765.4357

**Risk reduction** strategies may be helpful in some situations, however cannot prevent all assaults. A person can take protective measures, yet still experience violence. *Sexual Violence is NEVER the fault of the survivor, no matter what happens or what the situation is - the person at fault is the person who chooses to use violence.*

## Risk-Reduction Strategies:

### STRANGER RAPE

#### *On the street or in your car:*

- Contact the campus escort service **SNAP** if you would like accompaniment walking across campus: 256.765.4357 (8 pm - 2:00 am)
- After dark, try to walk on well-lit streets; avoid doorways, shrubbery, or dark areas near buildings and other places where an attacker might hide If possible walk with a friend
- Cross the street if you see anything on your side which makes you nervous or uncomfortable
- Walk with confidence and show that you are alert by glancing around and making eye contact with other people on the street
- Be cautious about revealing cash or credit cards
- Be cautious about helping strangers by yourself, offer calling **UNA POLICE** to assist them with their problem: **256.765.4357**
- Keep car doors locked and windows rolled up most of the way if you are being followed, don't go home. Drive to the nearest police station (or any safe place with people visibly present)
- Park your car in well-lit places and lock all doors
- Check the back seat and floors before you get into your car to be sure no one is hiding
- Keep car keys in hand when approaching your vehicle so that you may enter it with ease

#### *In your home:*

- Change old locks when you move to a new residence. Make sure your doors have dead bolts, security chains, and peepholes. Use them
- Be cautious around elevators. Don't get on if you are feeling uncomfortable or unsafe. Get off if a fellow passenger seems odd or threatening
- Instruct children and baby-sitters not to give out information about who is home
- Don't hide spare keys outdoors. They are too easy to find
- Lock your doors and windows, draw shades/blinds at night, and leave a light on implying that someone is home

### ACQUAINTANCE RAPE:

- Trust your instincts. Listen to your inner voice and act on it
- Ask yourself, "Am I able to say 'no'?" and "Am I comfortable with what is happening?"
- Communicate clearly if you don't like what someone is doing - don't be afraid to make waves
- Take care of yourself on a date: Be prepared to pay your own way, have access to a phone, arrange for transportation
- Get out of the situation as soon as you sense danger or feel afraid
- Learn about your ability to protect and defend yourself. Take assertiveness training and self-defense courses

# REDUCE THE RISK OF RAPE AND ASSAULT

## WAYS TO PARTY SAFE:

### *Before the Party*

- Plan a safe ride home; designate a sober driver
- Plan events where alcohol is not the primary focus
- Eat some food
- Plan ahead what you can say or do if you are in an uncomfortable situation
- Go to the party with friends and agree to leave together

### *During the Party*

- Remember: when alcohol and drugs are involved, a person may become too intoxicated to consent to sexual activity and be more vulnerable to assault
- Pace your drinks to 1 or fewer per hour
- Eat some food while drinking
- Alternate non-alcoholic beverages with alcoholic beverages
- Determine in advance not to exceed a set number of drinks and keep track of how many drinks you consume
- Have a friend let you know when you've had enough
- Avoid drinking games
- Watch your drink being prepared or prepare it yourself and don't leave it unattended
- Use the buddy system - keep track of your friends
- Communicate clearly about your sexual limits and expectations
- Trust your instincts - speak up or leave the party if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- Don't be afraid to make a scene if someone is stopping you from leaving or making you feel uncomfortable
- Intervene if you see someone at risk

## Red Flags & Warning Signs:

Although violent behavior often surprises victims, there are generally warning signs before an assault occurs. Victims may ignore their gut instinct about the danger a person may pose (especially if they know and trust them, or make excuses for their behavior ("they are just being nice", "they are under a lot of stress", "they are just drunk", etc.) Ignoring feelings of caution or fear or making excuses for another's behavior can reduce your ability to clearly read situations and take protective measures.

The following is a list of common "**red flags.**" (Each situation is unique and may not include the behaviors.)

- Disrespects personal boundaries and space or ignores nonverbal cues such as pulling away or securing clothes tighter on body
- One partner feels entitled to sexual activity, i.e. paid for dinner, is really popular, or has had sexual relations with partner before
- Demonstrates poor communication and fails to ask partner about thoughts, feelings, and wishes regarding sexual activity
- Does not listen or take seriously partner's expressed concerns and wishes regarding sexual activity
- Pressures or threatens partner to submit to sexual contact regardless of their feelings
- Pushes a partner's nonsexual boundaries, i.e. insisting they drink more than they are comfortable with
- Uses manipulation tactics to get their partner to do things against your will
- Exhibits a Dr. Jekyll/ Mr. Hyde personality (sudden mood changes or explosive temper)
- Has a reputation or past history of abuse or sexual violence
- Tries to isolate partner from friends at social gatherings - may use alcohol or drugs to reduce resistance