



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Student Affairs
Sexual and
Relationship Violence Center



Sexual Assault – Reducing the Risk

Sexual assault is a community issue.

It is a violent crime that affects all, no matter age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, level of education, or economic status. The effects of sexual assault affect not only the victims/survivors, but also those who care about the individuals who are violated.

Through awareness, risk reduction is possible. Certain behaviors and strategies can be used to decrease the likelihood of sexual assault. However, even if all the strategies are followed, it is still possible for sexual assault to occur. True prevention only occurs if those who commit sexual assault would stop doing so.

It should always be remembered that if sexual assault does occur, ***it is never the victim/survivor's fault.*** A victim/survivor should never be blamed for the fact that someone else chose to overpower or take advantage of a situation. Rather, blame should be placed where it belongs. That is, offenders of sexual assault should be held accountable for their choices and actions.

Risk Reduction Strategies

Be alert. Know what is going on around you. Try to avoid areas or times of isolation from others.

Walk with confidence. Using skills of assertiveness, a person is less likely to be targeted. Although stranger rape is less common than acquaintance rape, walk in well-lit areas, park under streetlights, stick to main paths and routes.

Communicate clearly. Be familiar with your own sexual desires and limits. Openly and honestly discuss them with your partner. Ask clarifying questions if you are not sure what your partner wants. Listen to and respect each other. Only engage in what both agree to.

Trust your instincts. If you are uncomfortable about a situation, leave right away. Trust your gut feelings.

Use caution when first dating. When dating someone new, remember that you still don't know this person yet. Arrange to meet at public locations for the first several dates as you get to know each other better. Have your own transportation to and from your first several dates. Let others know where you will be and when they can expect you to be back.

Use alcohol responsibly. If you choose to drink alcohol, drink responsibly and know your limits. Remember to eat hearty before drinking and snack while drinking. Space drinks apart. It's also okay to choose not to drink alcohol.

Protect your drink. Never drink beverages from open containers or punch bowls when at a party or bar. Never leave a drink unattended. Never accept a drink from someone other than the bartender, waiter, or waitress. "Date rape drugs" are often colorless, tasteless, and odorless. They can easily be slipped into drinks, rendering a person helpless. Also, be aware of just how much alcohol is in a drink.

Use the Buddy System. Go out with and return home with friends. Never leave a friend behind, especially one who is under the influence.

Be aware of your actions. Some people like to use the excuse that the way someone acted or dressed was the reason that they were raped. These notions are myths. No one deserves to be raped. Realize that certain behaviors can attract some negative attention. Be aware of this and be able to assertively respond to it.

Be an Active Bystander. If you see something, say something. Often incidents could have been avoided if someone else would have spoken up or alerted someone to the situation.

Sexual and Relationship Violence Center

640 N Garland, Suite 113, Fayetteville, AR 72701 | srvc.uark.edu | 479-575-4000

What can you do?

- **Be aware of language.**

Words are powerful. It is common in our society for derogatory, sexualized words to be used that put others down or marginalize groups (e.g., slut, whore, dog, bitch, fag, dyke, and many more). Such language sends messages of superiority vs. inferiority, as well as and it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights, and ignore their well-being.

- **Speak up.**

Talk with others when you hear attitudes, jokes, and language or see behaviors that are degrading and promote rape culture. Talk with others while debunking myths about rape, identifying attitudes and beliefs that blame victims/survivors, and support concepts that result in overlooking offender behavior. Conversation is critical for taking awareness to the next step of creating change.

- **Communicate.**

Talk honestly and openly about sex. Effective and clear communication about personal desires and listening to your partner allows you to clearly understand what is okay or not. When uncertain or unclear about another's willingness, stop and clarify.

- **Don't ever have sex with anyone against their will or with someone who is incapacitated.**

Sexual activity should only be engaged when those involved are actively and knowingly participating. No one should ever be pressured or feel pressured to do something. And, if your partner has been using alcohol or other drugs, take caution not to take advantage of any state of incapacitation. If you are uncertain if they have had too much and may not be able to give clear and conscious consent, then wait until they are sober. Clear and conscious consent not only reduces the risk of being sexually assaulted but reduces the risk of committing sexual assault.

Campus Resources

SRVC	479-575-4000
Advocacy email	survivor@uark.edu
Education programs email	respect@uark.edu
CAPS 24 HR Crisis Line	479-575-5276
(Counseling & Psychological Services)	
Pat Walker Health Center	479-575-4451
(University Health Services)	
U of A Cares	479-575-5004
University Police	479-575-2222
Title IX	479-575-7111
	titleIX@uark.edu
Student Accountability	479-575-5170
	judicial@uark.edu
Reports for Any Concern	report.uark.edu

In the event of an emergency, call 911

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Campus Resource Options

If you want to speak on campus with someone **confidentially** about sexual or relationship violence, you may do so with a victim advocate at the SRVC or a mental health counselor. Faculty and staff are required by university policy to report incidents of sexual or relationship violence to the Title IX coordinator for the University to investigate. An advocate is available through the SRVC and may be reached by emailing survivor@uark.edu or calling 479-575-4000.

For more information, visit srvc.uark.edu

Forensic Evidence Collection ("a Rape Kit") is available by appointment at the NWA Center for Sexual Assault, 1670 W. Sunset, Suite B, Springdale, AR 72762. Call 1-800-794-4175 to arrange for an appointment or contact the campus SRVC for assistance with this.