

# Prevention of Sexual Violence

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- **Examine your feelings about sex.** Decide early if you want to have sex. In the "heat of the moment" is not a good time to start thinking about it and it gives the other person too much power. The sooner you communicate firmly and clearly your feelings about sex, the better your partner will accept your decision.
- **Set sexual limits.** It is your body, and no one has the right to force you to do anything you do not want to do. Stopping sexual activity does not mean you are not a "real woman" or a "real man".
- **Do not give mixed messages.** Be clear and say "yes" when you mean "yes" and "no" when you mean "no". Do not expect your partner to be able to read your mind.
- **Be alert to unconscious messages you may be giving.** Your partner may interpret your behavior differently than what you intended. 90% of communication is nonverbal and often we send strong nonverbal cues of willingness to enter into a sexual relationship. Be aware of the signals you send with your posture, tone of voice, clothing, gestures, and eye contact.
- **Be forceful and firm.** Do not worry about being polite if you are in an uncomfortable situation. Politeness or passivity can be misinterpreted as permission. Use phrases such as: "Stop! I'm not enjoying this" or "If you don't respect my wishes, I am leaving."
- **Avoid falling for lines like "you would if you loved me".** If your partner loves you they will respect your wishes and not try to coerce you into something you do not want to do.
- **Be independent and aware on your date.** Do not be totally passive and do have opinions on where you go. Do think about appropriate place to meet (not necessarily at your room or theirs), always have money with you, and offer to pay your half of the date or suggest activities that don't cost money.
- **Be aware that drugs and alcohol are often related to acquaintance rape.** Drugs and alcohol impair your ability to make responsible decisions. Be responsible and be able to get yourself home without others having to "take care" of you.
- **Avoid secluded places where you are vulnerable.** This is especially true if you are in the beginning of a relationship. Establish a pattern of going where there are other people, where you feel comfortable and safe. This will give you a chance to get to know your date better.