

# When "no" means "no!"

## Date and acquaintance rape

The contrast between the images conjured up by the word "date" and the word "rape" are confusing. "Dates" are supposed to be fun. "Rate" is an act of violence.

The creation of the new terms "date rape" and "acquaintance rape" have led to some disturbing questions and statistics about old stereotypes and myths about rape, rapists and their victims.

A recent study done by MS> Magazine found that one in 12 male students surveyed committed acts that met the legal definition of rape or attempted rape. It also found that only 27% of women whose sexual assault met the legal definition of rape realized they were rape victims.

To understand date rape, let us look at a classic case.

*"He was some nice boy... the kind you would bring home to meet your parents. So I had known his cousin in high school... As the night wore on and I was drinking hard liquor... I normally don't drink much so I had no idea what it was doing to me. I ended up getting really drunk. We went back to the guys apartment and my friend Bob went too. I didn't think much of it because we were just going to be sleeping there... I had stayed at friends' places before.*

*After they got into bed, Jenny's date started kissing her, then escalated his sexual attention. Despite her repeated "no, no, no" and her physically pushing him away he used the advantage of his much larger upper body to overpower her five-foot-two inch frame.*

*"At first I couldn't believe this was happening to me... I realized I had no choice. I didn't feel that I could stop him. It was awful... a really painful experience. He drove me home to my parent's house the next day. He acted like nothing happened. I felt raped but I didn't realize I had been raped. I thought that the woman was guilty until it had been proven that she had been beaten and mutilated before being raped and then murdered.*

*"I didn't think to hurt him, to kick him in the balls or punch him in the eye. Good girls don't do that. You sort of just lie back and let this happen and then you deal with the consequences."*

Like most women, Jenny did not report the rape, and at first, didn't even understand that it was rape. Instead she felt isolated and blamed herself. She changed her life. She is filled with doubts about her own judgement, fears socializing with men and despairs about her own ability to have a "normal relationship." And, most damaging, she has lost trust in everyone.

But, most people don't see this side. According to surveys, the majority of people will say about Jenny:

- She deserved it.
- What did she expect? She went to his house and she was drunk.
- She was asking for it.
- He was her date so she must have liked him, so...
- She probably like it.
- She wasn't a virgin anyway.
- If it was rape why didn't she call the police?
- Due to strong myths about rape and stereotypes about men and women, the reality and extent of date is easy to ignore.

### MYTH

- Rape is committed by some pervert in a dark alley
- If he buys you dinner or invites you home, you're asking for it
- No means Yes or Maybe
- Kissing and petting means you want intercourse
- When men are sexually aroused they can't control themselves
- Women lie about being raped
- If rape is so widespread, then why don't more women report it?

### REALITY

- 84% of rapists are known to the victims
- No one deserves to be raped, and spending time with someone is not an invitation to be raped
- No means no
- Kissing and petting is just that. Every woman has the right to set limits
- Men can control themselves
- Rape has a less than 2% reporting rate just like every other crime
- Rape has the lowest conviction rate of all types of crimes and women still feel they are on trial, not the rapist

### Sexual Assault

One in four women and one in ten men will be sexually assaulted. Eighty per cent of the victims are under the age of 21 - which makes university students prime targets.

In Canada, a woman is sexually assaulted every 17 minutes.

Legal Definition: Sexual assault is any form of unwanted or forced sexual contact, ranging from touching, fondling and/or kissing to sexual intercourse.

### Acquaintance and Date Rape

- 1 in 4 women are raped
- 1 in 10 men are raped
- 84 per cent know their attackers
- 57 per cent of rapes happen on dates
- 1 in every 12 men admit to committing acts that meet legal definitions of rape

If you are a woman, your risk of being raped by someone you know is four times greater than your risk of being raped by a stranger.

This mainly unreported phenomenon is known as date or acquaintance rape. And it is a common occurrence on university campuses. Rapists can be someone you met once, someone you date, someone you've known for years, a neighbor or a friend. Anyone can be a victim.

### Recognizing the Danger Signs

Most women are at a disadvantage when an acquaintance or date's actions begin to escalate toward rape: A woman is less likely to identify threatening behavior in a friend than in a stranger.

Also, because the man is known to the victim, she may not think of screaming for help, hitting him, running away or even realize she is in danger until it is too late.

Danger signs to be aware of:

- someone who doesn't respect your "no" and continues to make sexual advances.
- acts in an intimidating way.
- doesn't view you as an equal.
- talks negatively about women in general.
- someone who is extremely possessive, to the point of making you uncomfortable.
- someone who doesn't listen or respond when asked to leave your home, car, etc.

### Be Prepared

Women do not cause rape, rapists do. However there are things women can do to reduce their risk of becoming a victim.

1. You have the right to set sexual limits and to communicate those limits. Know what your limits are before engaging in sexual activity and tell your partner clearly.
2. Be assertive: Forget the cultural training that taught you to be coy. Being feminine does not mean being passive.
3. Stay aware: Your best chance for staying in control is not to lose touch with what's happening around you. If you drink, do so in moderation. Alcohol is often involved in sexual assault situations.
4. Find out about a new date: Double date with friends. Ask around to find out about him from other women he has dated. Don't leave a party, bar or anywhere else with a man you don't know very well.
5. Remain in control: On a date, pay your own way so that the date is not interpreted as a transaction in which you "owe" the man something.
6. Trust your feelings: If you're getting bad vibes about a guy, don't assume there's something

wrong with you.

For first year university students the Red Zone of danger is the period between move-in day and the first holiday break. Why? Because these young women are especially vulnerable because they don't know campus routines or geography, they may be feeling insecure and alone, yet may be eager to test the limits of a parentless society by drinking too much and partying a lot - behavior that will win them peer approval.

### What to do when confronted with acquaintance rape

1. Stay calm: Concentrate on being assertive.
2. Appraise your situation, the act quickly: Try to evaluate how much danger you are in. If you yell, will someone hear you? How violent is the man? If you run, can you get to an area where there are other people?
3. Try to get away: Running away may catch an attacker off guard. Don't worry about embarrassing yourself by running into a crowded room or restaurant.
4. Yell for help.
5. Attack if necessary: fight and fight dirty. Your goal is to stop him long enough for you to get away.

Remember: Giving in is not consent. Giving in may have to be a survival strategy. Remember getting out alive is your main goal

### Men who are raped

One in ten men is raped - most often by another man. This is a frightening, painful, emotionally scarring experience for men, as it is for women.

### When men rape

Rape has to be understood by men as their problem too. Rape is a devastating experience that has or can happen to their sisters, girlfriends, mothers, grandmothers, wives, friends and to them. The following are guidelines for men to help solve the problem.

1. Never force a woman to have sex - even if you believe she has led you on.
2. Don't pressure a woman to have sex. Men often see their verbal pressure as being less forceful than women do.
3. Stay aware. Your intoxicated perception may be that you are seducing a woman when in fact you are forcing her to have sex against her will. Drunkenness is not a legal defense.
4. Don't buy into the myth that a drunk woman "deserves" to be raped. No one deserves to be raped.
5. Don't confuse "scoring" with having a successful social encounter. Ejaculating is no big deal: having a mutually satisfying and agreed upon relationship is.
6. Don't assume you know what a woman wants. Just because a woman wants affection (hugging, kissing, sitting close) or sex play (fondling), doesn't mean she wants intercourse.
7. Remember "No" means "No" and nothing else.
8. communicate with women.

### If you have been raped

1. It wasn't your fault
2. Tell someone - a close friend or someone you trust.
3. Get medical help.
4. Take time to recover.
5. Get counselling.

We at the rape crisis centre and the UNB Women's Committee are here for you. Call the Crisis Line at 454-0437 or contact a member of the Women's Committee by leaving a message in our mailbox (SUB Help Centre) or drop by our office in Annex C, Room 31 (Anthropology Building) - hours are M-W-Th 11:30 am to 1:15 pm and T-F 11:30 am to 4:30 pm.

**The Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre**

