

Students face date rape

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date],” he said.

Because this increase in communication within the community reduces South Asian women’s fear of unfair judgment, many believe opportunities for men to victimize South Asian women on dates should decrease.

While most South Asian students are encouraged by steps taken to face problems of date rape, many women feel there is far more work to be done.

Many South Asian women trace problems of date rape to having to constantly deal with an ingrained ‘we know what’s best for you’ attitude.

“It’s about having our decisions respected,” said Harjeet Badwall, a third year English student, referring to the treatment of South Asian women by both parents and young South Asian men.

At the most recent meeting of the discussion group, some suggested that many South Asian women have entered relationships without the ability to appear decisive about their own sexuality.

“We need to find strong female role models from our own community,” says Rajinder Dhaliwal, a second year student.

Furthermore, many students feel their parents’ culture shock over “western sexuality” still clouds discussion on issues like dating and date rape.

“No wonder they’re so worried,” said Keka Dasgupta, a psychology major, referring to parents’ reaction to images of women and sex in western media.

Adding to these problems, South Asian family services are “few, far between, and grossly underfunded,” says Malhotra.

“There’s very little funding given for research into problems, like date rape, in our community.”

The sexual harassment centre at York works with the office of Race and Ethnic relations “so we’re able to be sensitive to the needs of different communities,” said Hall.

“Some women just want counseling, someone to talk to, and that’s fine.”

Hall said she can arrange off-campus meetings for those reluctant to be seen walking into the sexual harassment office.

New group talks about South Asians

The newly formed South Asian Social Issues Discussion Group aims to address concerns that are usually swept under the rug in the South Asian community.

“We want to raise awareness of certain issues within the community that need attention,” says Harjeet Badwall, one of the group’s leaders.

The idea for the group stemmed from a meeting held at York last year to discuss drinking in the Punjabi community.

“What ended up happening was that as we sat around and talked about this one issue, other issues started unfolding,” says Badwall.

She added that she found it an enriching experience to be verbalizing matters that were sometimes denied.

Many South Asian students at York have also suggested discussion topics on arranged marriages, power struggles within the family, and culture clash.

“This is a group that can serve as a place where we can debate issues or it can serve as a support system,” Badwall said. She hopes the group will not only discuss problems, but actually help to solve them.

The group leaders would like to stress that the discussions are open to anyone with an interest in the South Asian community.

Badwall worked with two other York students Nayyer Razvi and Rajinder Dhaliwal over last summer to make plans for the group.

— Lennox White

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