

REDUCING RISK OF SEXUAL ASSAULT IN DATING SITUATIONS

There are some things people can do to help reduce the risks of a sexual assault in dating situations. However, remember that being raped is NEVER the fault of the victim.

- **Set sexual limits that YOU are comfortable with.** You have the right to make decisions about your own body and your own desires. Refusing sexual activity doesn't mean you are "frigid" or that anything is wrong with you.
- **Be clear and consistent in communication.** Although it can be difficult, it is important that the other person understand clearly what you do and do not want to do.
- **Be firm and assertive.** Being passive or "polite" may be misinterpreted as giving permission.
- **Be independent on dates.** Go to places where you feel comfortable, express opinions on what to do, where to go, etc., carry money or have a way to get home if necessary.
- **Don't do things you don't want to in order to avoid making a scene or being embarrassed.** Don't worry about hurting the other person's feelings; obviously he or she isn't worried about how you feel about the situation.
- **Trust your gut.** If something doesn't feel right or if you feel pressured by your date, trust your feelings and try to get out of the situation as soon as possible.
- **Remember that alcohol and drugs are often involved in date rape situations.** On average, 50% of victims and 75% of offenders have used drugs or alcohol prior to date rape. In addition, date rape drugs are often slipped into drinks to lower a person's ability to make decisions.
- **Make sure someone you trust knows where you are.** Let a friend, family member, roommates, etc. know where you will be and call them if the plans change.