

Rape Hurts Foundation (RHF)

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Sexual Assault Prevention

Through Research and Sharing/Testimony giving, Rape Hurts Foundation (RHF) has developed some measures and we impart this knowledge and skills to especially Women/girls and Children. We have developed a Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights program for the youths in Eastern Uganda. RHF has also used other methods in preventing rape;- distribution of Pepper Spray to Women and Girls at risk especially “ladies of the night” and party animal teenagers, women who work at night and girls in the entertainment industry. We have distributed whistles for attracting attention and light solar powered torches. We have established a working relationship with the Uganda police and we have a hotline for women at risk. RHF has a running legal aid program. We have in place a 24/7 counseling program dedicated to women and children in this situation.

These are some of the skills and knowledge shared in our trainings of Rape & Sexual Harassment Prevention.

Preventative Measures to Help Avoid Risky Situations from Escalating into Rape ..Anyone can be the target of sexual assault, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual history, or social class. There is no stereotypical victim or rapist. Nearly 85% of all victims of sexual assault knew the person who raped or assaulted them. Often a situation starts off innocent and fun, but can then very quickly escalate out of control. At RHF when we are conducting seminars, training and awareness exercises on communities, schools, colleges etc we always tell the women this first hand.

Avoid hazardous situations. ..Sexual assault can occur in any situation and is never your fault regardless of the circumstances. However, by taking such steps as traveling accompanied and avoiding alcohol and drugs, you can substantially reduce your risks for being victimized. RHF has conducted trainings in this area. This doesn't only concern adults but also children and teenagers. Parents should not risk their children by sending them in the night or leave them unattended to.

Communicate your limits clearly....If someone starts to offend you or cross a line that you have set for yourself, tell them firmly and early. Polite approaches may be misunderstood or ignored. If the person does not respect your wishes, remove yourself from the situation immediately. Miscommunication can be explained later. Do not give someone the chance to violate your wishes or boundaries. This can often contribute to the guilt felt following unwanted sexual advances, but it does not make it your fault. This message we have always told our target groups has already started showing results. So many teenagers are being saved and we have documented several cases.

Be assertive. ...Often passivity can be interpreted as permission - it is not. Be direct and firm with someone who is sexually pressuring you. Tell an acquaintance or your partner what you want - or don't want - and stick with your decision. Regardless, there must always be active consent on both sides. Consent to one thing does not imply another. We have trained law enforcement officers to also share this message with the locals.

Trust your instincts. ..If you feel you are being pressured into unwanted sex, you probably are. If you feel uncomfortable or threatened around an acquaintance or your partner, get out of the situations immediately. If you misread someone's signals, you can always explain later. RHF believes anybody has a right to say no to sex even married couples. It's a right. Rights training were included into our training programs in 2010

Respond physically. ...Even clear communication is not always effective. Some people simply don't listen or don't care. If either person is intoxicated or high, it may also complicate the situation. However, it is not an excuse for someone to commit sexual assault. If someone is assaulting you and not responding to your objections, you have the right to respond physically or to physically defend yourself if you feel you can do so. If possible, push the person away, scream "No!", and say that you consider what the person is doing to be rape. It is understandable that most people instinctively do not respond forcefully to people they know. It is not your fault if you find that you are unable to do so. Without clear consent from both parties it is still sexual assault and no one ever deserves to be raped or assaulted!

AT HOME

- Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely, particularly sliding glass doors. Use the locks. Keep entrances well lighted.
- Check the identification of any sales or service person before letting him in.
- If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.
- If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call the police.

WHILE WALKING

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream, yell for help, or yell "Fire!"
- If you feel you're being followed, walk into a store or knock on a house door.

WHILE DRIVING

- Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- Park in well-lighted areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.
- When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.
- Drive with all the doors locked.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe well-lighted and well-traveled area.
- Exercise extra caution when using underground and enclosed parking garages. Try not to go alone.
- If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station and honk your horn. Or drive to an open gas station or other business where you can safely call the police. Don't leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely. Try to obtain the license plate number and description of the car following you.