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CHAPTER 4  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS

## BE AWARE. BE SMART.

### What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence refers to sexual activity where permission is not freely given. Anyone can be a victim of sexual violence. The offender is usually someone known to the victim and can be, but is not limited to, a friend, coworker, neighbor, or family member.

There are many types of sexual violence, including acts that do not have physical contact between the victim and the offender—for example, sexual harassment, threats, and peeping. Sexual violence may also include physical acts, such as unwanted touching and rape.

There are two commonly known types of rape: acquaintance rape and stranger rape.

### What is acquaintance rape?

Acquaintance rape, commonly referred to as “date rape” is the most common form of rape/sexual assault.

It happens when someone you know (**also called an acquaintance**), makes you do sexual activities that you don’t want to (happen against your will). This could be by force, violence, blackmail, threats or fear of them hurting you. It can happen on dates, with friends, friends of friends, with family/relatives or just acquaintances.

### What is stranger rape?

Stranger rape is less common than acquaintance rape but is the type of rape that you typically hear about on TV and/or in newspapers. Stranger rape can happen in two ways:

- **Blitz sexual assault** is where the offender/perpetrator doesn’t know the targeted person. In this type of assault, the offender rapidly and brutally assaults the victim. Blitz assaults usually occur at night in a public place.
- **Contact sexual assault** is where the suspect contacts the target and tries to gain her or his trust and confidence before assaulting her or him. Contact perpetrators find their targets in movie theatres, malls, walking to/from school, walking to/from stores/friends’ houses and in bars. Perpetrators lure them into their cars or try to bully the target into a situation of sexual assault. That inner gut feeling, where something doesn’t ‘feel’ right? Go with your ‘gut’ feeling! STAY AWAY!



## DOES THIS REALLY HAPPEN?

Sexual violence is a major problem in the United States:

- In a nationwide survey, 8% of high school students reported having been forced to have sex. More female (11.8%) than male (4.5%) students said they had experienced forced sex in their lifetimes.
- An estimated 20% to 25% of college women in the United States have experienced an attempted or complete rape during their college career.
- Nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men in the United States have been raped at some time in their lives.

These numbers underestimate the problem. Many cases are not reported because victims are afraid to tell the police, friends or family about the abuse. Victims may also think that their stories of abuse will not be believed and that police cannot help them. They may be ashamed or embarrassed. Victims may also keep quiet because they have been threatened.

### What can I do to prevent it?

- You have the right to not be alone with someone you do not know or trust.
- You have the right to think about how far you want to go in a relationship.
- Be aware of “rape drugs” that can be slipped into your or any one’s drink without knowing. These drugs may make you feel drowsy, confused, physically weak, and/or knock you out. The drugs may also affect memory and you and your friends may not be able to remember what happened. Watch your drink, take it wherever you go!
- Be cautious of accepting a drink from an open container or from someone you don’t know or trust.
- When you go to a party, go with a group of friends – arrive together, watch out for each other and leave together.

### Resources

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
Sexual Violence Prevention & Education in Arizona,  
[www.azrapeprevention.org](http://www.azrapeprevention.org)



### DID YOU KNOW

Over 80% of offenders are known to the victim/survivor. Some Key Reminders:

- A prior or current relationship is NOT a sign of consent.
- Previously having sex with someone is NOT a sign of consent.
- You must verbally say you agree to any sexual activity (e.g., kissing, moving from kissing to foreplay, from foreplay to sex, etc.).
- Acquaintance rape/assault happens when a person feels the need to control and to humiliate a person. It can increase to violence.