

Are You Ready for Close Encounters of the CREEPY Kind?



(Or, what every woman and girl needs to know
about sexual assault)

Not-So-Fun Facts

Most rapes are planned in advance. The perpetrator carefully selects targets that seem naïve. He cultivates their trust, and leads them to circumstances that favor a successful assault. The perpetrator often tries to diminish their target's decision-making ability (90% of teen sexual assault involve alcohol and/or drugs), as well as their ability to effectively respond or fight back against an assault.

In 80 to 90% of cases, the perpetrator and victim knew each other. Perpetrators are most often classmates, boyfriends, or ex-boyfriends. In fact, the closer the relationship the more likely it is for a rape to be completed rather than attempted.

The after-effects can be profound and long-lasting. Victims of sexual assault are 3 times more likely to suffer from depression; 6 times more likely to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder; 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol; 26 times more likely to abuse drugs; and 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide than their peers.

More Actions You Can Take

Make a deal with your friends that you'll all look out for each other at parties. If you think your buddy was drugged, go to the ER ASAP. Know available resources in your community (such as Harborview Sexual Assault and Trauma, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center, and on SARIS on the UW campus). Take a self-defense class.

For college girls: Know where the emergency phones are. Have the numbers for late-night vans and NightWalk services in your cellphone. Have agreements with your roommates about overnight guests. Know the help resources available on campus as well as in the community.

For Everyone: Demand justice.

Top Five Actions to Take When Feeling Threatened

- **Pay attention to your gut feelings!** Intuition is powerful and critical to your safety. "Creepy" feelings are your brain's way of saying PAY ATTENTION!
- **Pay attention to unusual behavior.** Most assailants are classmates, friends, boyfriends, and ex-boyfriends. When contemplating assault, their body language changes; you may not understand why, but a feeling that something's wrong is an alarm.
- **Unusual behavior is often a "test."** This is the test you want to fail! The test is often a minor boundary violation the assailant commits to gauge your reaction. Do you assert your boundaries (bad victim), or giggle nervously and tolerate the violation (more likely victim)?
- **Interrupt.** Nobody every REALLY died of embarrassment – but women have died because they didn't want to make a scene. Use your voice, and insist on controlling your own safety. Leave an uncomfortable situation.
- **Fight back. It works.** Most women who fight back, prevail. Predictors of successful self-defense are (a) the target recognizes that an assault is happening, (b) she resists the assault.

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