

## Ways to Reduce Our Risk of Sexual Assault

Although there's nothing we can do to guarantee that we won't be victims of sexual assault, there are some steps we can take to help reduce our risk. Regardless of what actions we take or don't take, though, sexual assault is never the victim's fault!

### Safety When Out and About

- We should try to always be aware of our surroundings, and when possible, avoid isolated areas. Knowing where we are and who else is around us can be helpful if things begin to feel unsafe. And although it may be enjoyable to listen to music through headphones when walking, keeping one ear free allows us to be more aware of what's going on around us!
- Making it clear by the way we carry ourselves that we're confident and know where we're going (even if we don't) can help us to look less like an easy target.
- Trying to avoid loading ourselves down with lots of bags or packages might also help us look less vulnerable to attack.
- Keeping a fully-charged cell phone with us is a good safety mechanism, too. That way, if things begin to feel unsafe, we can call for help. Sometimes even pretending to be talking on our cell phone as we walk - while still remaining fully aware of our surroundings - will act as a deterrent, since it would seem to anyone watching that the person we're "speaking with" could call for help.

### Safety in Social Situations

- Safety in numbers is a true adage! It's always best to go to parties with a group of friends, and have an agreement to check in with each other and leave together.
- We shouldn't hesitate to tell our friends if we begin to feel uncomfortable or unsafe, or if we're worried about our friend's safety.
- We should try to avoid being alone with someone we don't know well - and sometimes even with those we do know well, if we're not sure we trust them yet! It's usually best to stay with a group of people or in a public place.
- We should always practice safe drinking, especially if we choose to drink alcohol. Alcohol is frequently a factor in date rapes, since it impairs decision-making abilities and lowers inhibitions.
- Regardless of whether we're drinking alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, we should remember to discard any drink that we've left unattended for any length of time, and never accept drinks from anyone we don't know or don't trust.