

Date / Acquaintance Rape

What is date rape or acquaintance rape?

Acquaintance rape or sexual assault happens when a person is forced to be sexual with someone they know such as a friend, co-worker, neighbour, or classmate.

Date rape or sexual assault happens when a person is forced to be sexual with someone they date or go out with.

The difference between sex and rape is consent. Consensual sex is when both people have agreed to be sexual with each other. Informed consent is when you agree to sex and are capable of knowing all the consequences of the act.

It is never okay for someone to force you to be sexual. Even if you flirt or initiate a relationship, you do not owe sex. You never owe sex. You have the right to decide to not have sex.

Rape is an act of violence. It is one form of sexual assault. Sexual Assault is against the law.

What do I do now?

There is no easy way to cope; every sexual assault is different.

Right after the assault:

- Try to leave the situation
- Try to get to a safe place

Once you are safe:

- It's important to tell someone
- Call the Rape and Sexual Assault Center
- It is important to see a doctor for possible injury, pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases
- Decide whether you want to tell the police
- Continue to get support while you deal with the effects of the assault
- Remember – it was not your fault

How can I prevent date or acquaintance rape?

Set clear limits. It is important for you to be clear and honest about what you want. Give clear and straightforward messages about what you expect and what your limits are. You have the right to say “no” and have your choice respected.

Many date rapes happen with alcohol or drugs involved. When you go to parties or bars, take some friends and look out for one another. Designate a driver and someone to ensure everyone gets home safely. If you are raped or sexually assaulted when you have been drinking, it is not your fault. If you plan to drink, ensure you have a sober friend to try to keep you safe.

You have the right to say “no” or to change your mind at any time.

No Means No

Legal Action

When the attacker is someone you know and felt you could trust, it may be very difficult to report to the police.

It's your choice to report to the police

If you decide you want to report the assault, there are some steps you should take.

Immediately after the assault:

- Keep the clothes you were wearing; do not wash them
- Do not shower, douche or bathe
- Keep anything that could serve as evidence to identify your attacker
- If you were drugged, try to save some of the drugged drink
- Go to the hospital immediately

Later on:

- Call the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre for support and information at 566-1864
- Call CLIA, Community Legal Information Association for information about the legal process at 892-0853 or toll free at 1-800-240-9798
- Call Victim Services. They can support and help you through the court process in Charlottetown: 368-4582 or Summerside: 888-8217