

The myths - The truth

- ***"It can't happen to me."***

Anyone can be sexually assaulted. Studies show that victims range in age from infancy to people in their nineties, and include people from every racial, economic, religious and social background. Each minute, 1.3 women are raped (National Victim Center and Center for Crime Victims Treatment and Research, 1992).

- ***"She asked for it."***

No one asks to be sexually assaulted. Nor does anyone's behavior justify or excuse the crime. People have a right to be safe from a sexual violation at any time and place, and under any circumstance. The offender, not the victim, is responsible for their actions.

- ***"Most offenders are men who differ from the victim in race or ethnicity."***

Over 90% of sexual assaults occur between people of the same racial or ethnic background.

- ***"Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers at night in out-of-the-way places."***

Familiar people and places are more dangerous. As many as 80% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows (FBI statistics). Over 50% of sexual assaults occur in the home and as many occur during the daytime as happen at night.

- ***"Only women can be raped."***

The FBI estimates that as many as one in 10 men are victims of sexual assault. Other researchers estimate that between one in four and one in seven male children are sexually abused.



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DATE RAPE



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- *Rapists are not always strangers or anonymous attackers.*
- *When someone you know - a date, steady boyfriend, casual friend or partner forces you to have sex, it's still rape.*
- *The Bureau of Justice reports that seven out of 10 victims of sexual assault know their attacker.*

Preventing Date Rape

There are several things you can do to protect yourself when you are dating:

- Do not let alcohol or other drugs decrease or interfere with your ability to take care of yourself and make sensible decisions.
- Do not accept beverages from someone you don't know and trust. Always watch your drink and never leave it unattended, at any time.
- Follow your instincts. If a place or the way your date acts makes you nervous or uneasy, get out. If you need to, call a friend to escort you home.
- Check out a first date or a blind date with friends. Meet in and go to public places. Don't leave a social event with someone you have just met or don't know well.
- Carry money for a phone call or taxi, or, better yet, take your own car

What to do when someone you care about has been sexually assaulted

When supporting a survivor of sexual violence, don't be judgmental or take control away from the victim. Try to communicate the following ideas to the victim which will greatly assist healing.

- *"I'm glad you're alive."*
- *"It's not your fault."*
- *"I'm sorry it happened."*
- *"You did the best you could."*

The following guidelines will also help to build a sense of trust and safety for the survivor.

- ✓ Let the victim make his/her choices.
- ✓ Be a good listener.
- ✓ Try to minimize the number of times the victim must tell what happened.
- ✓ **Always** respect the survivor's confidentiality.

If you have been raped . . .

- Get medical attention as soon as possible. Do not shower, wash, douche, or change your clothes. Valuable evidence could be destroyed.
- Don't isolate yourself, don't feel guilty, and don't try to ignore it. Rape is a crime and should be reported.
- Get counseling to deal with the emotional trauma. Call your nearest rape crisis center.

If you think you've been assaulted while under the influence of a drug such as Rohyponol or GHB, seek help immediately, try not to urinate before providing urine samples, and, if possible, collect any glasses from which you drank.

What are "date rape" drugs?

Rohyponol ("roofies," roopies," "circles," "the forget pills") works like a tranquilizer. It causes muscle weakness, fatigue, slurred speech, loss of motor coordination and judgment, and amnesia that lasts up to 24 hours. They look like an aspirin — small, white, and round — and are colorless and flavorless. When dissolved in liquids, they can take effect in as little as 20 minutes.

GHB (also known as "liquid X," "salt water," or "scoop") also causes quick sedation. Its side effects include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, headaches, dizziness, coma, and death. The drugs most common form is a clear liquid, although it can also be a white, grainy powder.

Rohyponol and GHB are called the date rape drugs because when they are slipped into someone's drink, a sexual assault can take place without the victim being able to remember what happened.

Both of these powerful sedatives are *illegal* if possessed in New York State, especially if used in the commission of a sexual assault.

If you think you've been assaulted while under the influence of Rohyponol or GHB, seek help immediately. Try to save your urine in a clean glass container, as well as any glasses from which you may have drank.