

## What If It Happens to Me?

Remain calm and use your head. Look for a way to attract attention from others who might be able to help you. Do your best to run away to a safe place.

Putting up a fight may make him angrier and you could get hurt. You need to decide for yourself if it is worth the risk.

If submission is your only choice, which it often is, do not feel guilty. You did not ask to be hurt.

Tell someone you trust - a parent, a friend, a teacher, a clergyman - and let them help you. Your local Rape Crisis Center will have a 24 hour crisis hotline. You can call them any time and ask for their help.

## How Can I Help a Friend?

You may be in a position to help a friend who has suffered a sexual assault. Here are some simple, helpful messages your friend needs to hear from you:

- ❖ I'm glad you told me.
- ❖ I believe you.
- ❖ It was not your fault.
- ❖ I'm here to listen whenever you want to talk.

Encourage your friend to call the Rape Crisis Center for help. Trained staff and volunteers can help him or her to sort through those feelings of anger, guilt, fear, and helplessness. They can also help him or her make important decisions concerning reporting to law enforcement without pressure and in complete confidentiality.

### Emergency Telephone Numbers

Victim Advocate/Orange County... 407-254-7248  
Sexual Assault Hotline..... 407-497-6701 or  
..... 866-757-2047  
Teen Hotline (24 Hour) ..... 407-841-7413

## What Can Boys Do to Help?

- ❖ Treat girls with honesty and respect you would want for yourself.
- ❖ Discourage locker room humor that treats girls as objects rather than individuals.
- ❖ Respect the boundaries of others. If someone says, "No," don't push them any farther.
- ❖ Question your friend's "macho" attitude.
- ❖ Recognize that to "be a man" has nothing to do with a sexual scoring system.
- ❖ Treat this subject seriously. It could be your girlfriend, your sister, or your mother who may some day be hurt.

None of us like thinking that bad things might happen to us. Admitting the possibility and taking simple precautions can go a long way towards insuring that we live safe, comfortable lives. Remember to follow your instincts, practice communicating your boundary limits, and share what you've learned with your friends.

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This project is partially funded under an agreement with the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Rape Awareness Program through the Federal Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant.



ORANGE COUNTY  
SHERIFF

*Sheriff Jerry L. Demings*



# Date Rape

Judy is flattered that Rob invited her out after the basketball game. She watches him score points and thinks about how envious all her friends will be when they see her with Rob at the pizza parlor. She is a little nervous, too. She has never gone out with anyone quite like Rob before.

“Hey Beautiful!” Judy blushes when Rob picks her up after the game. The way he looks at her makes her feel a little uncomfortable. She compliments him on the way he played the game tonight, but he doesn’t seem to be listening to her.

“Why don’t we go to the lake tonight, just you and me?” Rob asks.

“But I thought we were going to get a pizza - to celebrate winning the game.”

“Sure, we can go there later. Right now I want you all to myself. You’re not afraid of me, are you?”

Judy is a little afraid, but she doesn’t want to hurt Rob’s feelings...and she does want to go out with him.

“Maybe for a little while.”

Rob doesn’t talk much on the way. Judy feels like she is chattering away in a one-sided conversation. She is a little relieved when Rob stops the car in a secluded spot by the lake. Her heart pounds when he pulls her closer to him and begins kissing her. She begins to enjoy his caresses. Those caresses, however, turn more and more demanding. His hands seem to be everywhere, and the more she struggles and says “no,” the angrier he becomes. Judy is afraid of Rob now. And in her fear, she unwillingly gives into his demands for sex.

Judy feels used. She is confused, embarrassed, and ashamed. She does not want to see her friends now. They might somehow guess what has happened. She feels guilty. Over and over, the tape plays in her head. “If only I hadn’t...”

*Was Judy raped? Yes, Judy has experienced acquaintance rape. Someone she knows forced her to have sex against her will. She did not consent. Her “no” was ignored and she felt powerless to resist.*

## Could It Happen to You?

Most of us like to believe that we really are safe and bad things happen only to “other” people. Every day, young women find themselves in Judy’s position. The acquaintance may be a date, a schoolmate, or a family friend. Young men can also be the target of a sexual assault. Studies estimate that one out of every four young women and one out of every seven young men are likely to experience some form of sexual assault.

The scars that come from a rape experience are not likely to be physical. Rarely is a victim beaten or killed. But there are scars. The damage is done to the heart and mind where no one can see it. The victim experiences a sense of self-blame and guilt. “Who can I trust now?” becomes an important question.

## How Can You Be Safe?

### 1. Learn to follow your instincts.

We want so much to be accepted and liked that we ignore our inner feelings of discomfort. Acquaintance rape generally begins with some form of “intrusion.” The offender violates the comfortable space of his victim. Rob made Judy feel uncomfortable by the way he looked at her. He violated her space without even touching her. He further tested her by asking, “Are you afraid of me?” Instinctively, she was afraid and she would have followed that instinct.

When you feel uncomfortable, it is a warning signal. Pay attention to your feelings.

### 2. Learn to assert your boundaries.

Most young men and women have never identified their personal boundaries. Know what kind of touching you are comfortable with; draw a line there, and learn to clearly state when you are not comfortable.

The second stage of acquaintance rape is “desensitization.” Rob’s refusal to speak to

Judy and forcing her to chatter is a way of increasing her discomfort. But when he stopped the car and began to kiss her, she pushed aside her uncomfortable feelings in a kind of relief, thinking, “I guess he’s all right after all.” She is no longer sensitive or aware of the intrusions. It is at this point that she needs to know her boundaries and stick to them.

### 3. Learn to recognize unsafe situations.

As a young person today, you have a great deal of freedom to go when and where you please. You also have freedom to choose to be with anyone you like. Be cautious about the places you go and the people who accompany you.

The third step in acquaintance rape is isolation. Rob has Judy alone where there is no one to call for help. He also knows that by luring her there by consent, she will be unlikely to report to law enforcement. The pizza place would have been much safer for Judy.

### 4. Prepare yourself for any situation.

Always carry money for an emergency phone call.

Know someone who is willing to come get you. Teens are sometimes more fearful of a parent’s wrath than they are of an unsafe situation.

Alcohol and drugs play a big part in lowering inhibitions. It is hard to recognize an unsafe situation when you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It also helps an offender gain the courage he needs to do something he normally would not do.

Practice saying what you feel in uncomfortable situations. Learn to be honest and forthright in communicating what you want and what you know is best for you.