

Other Incidents: Sexual Harassment, Assault

Auburn University Safe Harbor offers advice and resources to assist faculty, students and staff in the event that they are a victim of Sexual Harassment or Assault as well as precautions. **Know that sexual assaults happen to men and boys, too. All of these suggestions can be applied to males as well as females..*

What to do if you or someone you know has been raped: (Source: Safe Harbor)

For victims of rape: http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_affairs/safe_harbor/raped.html. This website is summarized below for quick reference. Phone number for Safe Harbor: (334) 844-5123.

1. Remain calm and alert and get to a safe place.
2. Get medical attention within 72 hours if possible – an exam is necessary to diagnose and treat possible internal injuries and/or sexually transmitted diseases, and to gather evidence necessary for investigating the crime. Contact your program director or call MEDEX to identify closest hospital and go to the emergency room. Tell them that you believe you have been sexually assaulted and ask for a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurse or area equivalent, this is a specially trained nurse for sexual assault cases. Tell the ER or SANE nurse if you think you have been drugged.
3. Do not change your clothing, shower, bathe, or brush your teeth, and do not apply medication to any injuries unless absolutely necessary.
4. If you suspect you were drugged, delay urinating until a sample can be collected.
5. Consider reporting the attack to law enforcement. Safe Harbor advocates can help with this process, and you may help others by reporting. Reporting is not the same thing as prosecuting, and that decision is up to the victim.
6. Contact Safe Harbor and seek counseling – those who get help resolve their experiences faster than those who don't, and Safe Harbor provides limited free confidential counseling and other services for students.

Safe Harbor information on talking to victims:

Responding to a sexual assault victim can seem intimidating to even the most seasoned professional. This tips sheet is designed to prompt you but is no substitute for honest compassion and resourcefulness. We advise the strategy of Believe and Refer. It is not our job to unravel the facts.

- **Believe the victim.** You may be the only person the individual has told. Assure her that you understand that it wasn't her fault and that if she's wants you will attempt to help.
- **Check safety.** Were you hurt physically and need medical attention? Are you fearful that he may return? Do you have someone who can stay at your place?

- **Ask what you can do to help.** How can I help? What do you want me to do? Some individuals may want nothing more than you to listen.
- **Make him/ her aware of options.** Safe Harbor, East Alabama Medical Center Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, Rape Counselors, Family Physician, Police, Counseling. Check understanding—it would not be uncommon to be very overwhelmed even if they look and act very calm. Individuals deal with trauma in unique ways.
- **Support without being directive.** Acknowledge your desire to help but recognize his/her need to make the decisions. Let him/her know that you will support her choices and will help as much as you are willing. Try to avoid sweeping statements about ‘everything being ok’. Recovering from a traumatic event takes time and varies by individual.
- **Consult the experts.** If you are unsure about how to proceed, don’t hesitate to ask professionals with more experience. You can do this without divulging the name of the individual or major details of the case. This will also help you to provide the most accurate information.
- **Be patient.** Talking about an assault is very difficult for many people. Try not to appear pushed for time—even if you are.
- **Be grateful.** When a student comes to you with this type of information, recognize that they see you as a person worthy of trust and willing to help.

I. RESPECT the victim.

- **Responsibility-** *Remember that sexual assault is never the fault of the victim.*
- **Empathy-** *Listen and believe what the victim says to you. Psychological effects of not being believed can be as damaging as the assault itself.*
- **Support-** *Victims often feel alone. Reinforce that you are with her. Try not to act pushed for time even if you are—you maybe the only person who ever gets told.*
- **Power-** *Victims often feel powerless. Don’t make decisions for him or her. Help him/her to learn her options and honor choices even if you don’t agree.*
- **Encourage safety-** *Help the victim actively pursue safety without destroying evidence.*
- **Comfort-** *Lend a “shoulder” and an “ear.” Often, at first, this is enough.*
- **Tools-** *Offer the victim options of medical care, counseling and legal aid.*
- Be sensitive to the needs of the victim.
- Ask the survivor what you can do to help?
- Be non-judgmental. Check your personal opinions at the door.
- Don’t assume you “understand how she is feeling”.
- Respect disclosure. Let hm/her decide whom else to tell.
- Present all the options to the victim. Offer to go with her to the police, hospital or rape crisis center if you are comfortable doing so.
- Check understanding of options—often survivors are very overwhelmed.
- Remember to let him/her make the final decision even if you don’t necessarily agree.
- Try to avoid sweeping statement’s that indicate that “everything will be ok.” Healing from assault is a process and recovery time varies for every individual.

Contact a rape crisis center at your program or the Citizens Services Section of the Closest US Consulate. Even if the survivor doesn’t want to talk with a counselor, the counselor can help you help her and educate you on the local law enforcement and medical systems.

Safety Precautions for Men and Women (Source: Safe Harbor)

“Although you cannot guarantee that you will not be a victim of sexual assault, you can take precautions to minimize your risk. It is important to remember, however, that the rapist is the one who has committed the crime, and no woman ever asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted, regardless of her behavior, alcohol consumption, actions, or dress.”

*** Learn about the culture you will be visiting, the standard dress, personal space – these items can be found in travel guide, on the State Department travel site at www.travel.gov or at the Peace Corp site.

1. Set personal decision about sexual activity (to have or not) and if you do, set sexual activity limits and stick to them. Be clear about what you are not comfortable with.
2. Be cautious when choosing to be alone with someone you don't know very well – rape can happen anywhere, even in a bedroom with 50 people in the next room
3. Don't accept drinks from strangers and never leave your drink unattended – it only takes a drop or two of a date rape drug to have an effect on you.
4. Limit alcohol consumption – it makes it harder to make judgment calls about your situation if you're drunk.
5. Be independent and aware. If you've just met someone, go on a group or double date, or meet in a public place and have your own transportation.
6. Always leave word with a friend or roommate about where you are going and when you expect to return. Use the Buddy System, double date.
7. Trust your instincts. If your gut feeling tells you something is wrong, listen – it probably is.
8. Be careful and alert when you invite someone into your home and when you are invited into someone else's – these are the places where sexual assault is most likely to occur.

Additional Safety Tips from Safe Harbor regarding Internet Stalking:

Found at: <http://www.sfga.org/gateway/stalking.htm>