

# Staying Safe on Campus

College campuses can give you a sense of security—a feeling that everyone knows each other and watches out for one another. There are perpetrators who take advantage of this feeling of safety and security to commit acts of sexual violence.

We can all take steps to increase safety on college campuses. As bystanders, students can learn ways of stepping in to prevent crimes like sexual assault from occurring. When it comes to personal safety, there are steps you can take as well, and some of those tips are outlined below. No tips can absolutely guarantee safety—sexual violence can happen to anyone, and it's not the only crime that can occur on a college campus. It's important to remember that if you are sexually assaulted on campus it is not your fault—help and support are available.

## Increasing on-campus safety

The following tips may reduce your risk for many different types of crimes, including sexual violence.

- **Know your resources.** Who should you contact if you or a friend needs help? Where should you go? Locate resources such as the Student Wellness Center, Campus Safety, and a local sexual assault service provider. Notice where emergency phones are located on campus, and program the Campus Safety number into your cell phone for easy access (**UC Campus Safety phone number: 315-792-3046**).
- **Stay alert.** When you're moving around on campus or in the surrounding neighborhood, be aware of your surroundings. Consider inviting a friend to join you or asking campus security for an escort. If you're alone, only use headphones in one ear to stay aware of your surroundings.
- **Be careful about posting your location.** Many social media sites, like Facebook and Foursquare, use geolocation to publicly share your location. Consider disabling this function and reviewing other social media settings.
- **Make others earn your trust.** A college environment can foster a false sense of security. They may feel like fast friends, but give people time to earn your trust before relying on them.
- **Think about Plan B.** Spend some time thinking about back-up plans for potentially sticky situations. If your phone dies, do you have a few numbers memorized to get help? Do you have emergency cash in case you can't use a credit card? Do you have the address to your dorm or college memorized? If you drive, is there a spare key hidden, gas in your car, and a set of jumper cables?
- **Be secure.** Lock your door and windows when you're asleep and when you leave the room. If people constantly prop open the main door to the dorm or apartment, tell security or a trusted authority figure.

## Safety in social settings

It's possible to relax and have a good time while still making safety a priority. Consider these tips for staying safe and looking out for your friends in social settings.

- **Make a plan.** If you're going to a party, go with people you trust. Agree to watch out for each other and plan to leave together. If your plans change, make sure to touch base with the other people in your group. Don't leave someone stranded in an unfamiliar or unsafe situation.
- **Protect your drink.** Don't leave your drink unattended, and watch out for your friends' drinks if you can. If you go to the bathroom or step outside, take the drink with you or toss it out. Drink from unopened containers or drinks you watched being made and poured. It's not always possible to know if something has been added to someone's drink. In drug-facilitated sexual assault, a perpetrator could use a substance that has no color, taste, or odor.
- **Know your limits.** Keep track of how many drinks you've had, and be aware of your friends' behavior. If one of you feels extremely tired or more drunk than you should, you may have been drugged. Leave the party or situation and find help immediately.
- **It's okay to lie.** If you want to exit a situation immediately and are concerned about frightening or upsetting someone, it's okay to lie. You are never obligated to remain in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, pressured, or threatened. You can also lie to help a friend leave a situation that you think may be dangerous. Some excuses you could use are needing to take care of another friend or family member, an urgent phone call, not feeling well, and having to be somewhere else by a certain time.
- **Be a good friend.** Trust your instincts. If you notice something that doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Learn more about how to keep your friends safe in social settings.

### Feeling safe after an assault

If you have experienced sexual assault, there are steps you can take to feel safer.

- **Make use of on-campus resources.** Colleges often provide a host of services to students for free, including security escorts, health centers, counseling, and sexual assault services.
- **Request a schedule or housing change.** If you have classes with the perpetrator or live in the same building, you can request a change from your college administration. Federal laws, such as the Campus SaVE Act, require colleges to honor these requests.
- **Access off-campus support services.** If you are concerned about anonymity, you can seek out resources located off campus in the community, like a local sexual assault service provider or domestic violence shelter.
- **Seek a civil protection order (CPO).** A CPO, sometimes also referred to as a temporary restraining order (TPO), is a legal document that bars an individual from certain types of contact with the person who is awarded the order. An individual who violates the terms of the restraining order can face criminal charges. Each state has its own rules and regulations for Sexual Assault CPOs that you can learn more about through the American Bar Association.
- **Create a safety plan.** If you are concerned for your ongoing safety, it can be worthwhile to create a safety plan. Safety planning is about finding ways to be safe in the present while planning for your future safety as well.

*Source: [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)*