

Risk Reduction

With no intent to victim blame and recognizing that only abusers are responsible for their abuse, the following are some strategies to reduce one's risk of sexual assault or harassment:

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.

Know your resources. Who should you contact if you or a friend needs help? Where should you go? Locate resources such as the campus security station and a local sexual assault service provider. Notice where emergency phones are located on campus (*yellow emergency call boxes inside buildings*), and program the campus security number into your cell phone for easy access (*Emergency # 505-224-3001, Non-emergency# 505-224-3002*).

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.

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.

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.

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.

Keep an eye on your friends. If you are going out in a group, plan to arrive together and leave together. If you decided to leave early, let your friends know. If you're at a party, check in with them during the night to see how they're doing. If something doesn't look right, **step in.** Don't be afraid to let a friend know if something is making you uncomfortable or if you are worried about their safety.

Know what you're drinking. Don't recognize an ingredient? Use your phone to look it up. Consider avoiding large-batch drinks like punches that may have a deceptively high alcohol content. There is no way to know exactly what was used to create these drinks.

Don't leave your drink unattended while talking, dancing, using the restroom, or making a phone call. If you've left your drink alone, just get a new one.

Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust. If you choose to accept a drink, go with the person to the bar to order it, watch it being poured, and carry it yourself. At parties, don't drink from the punch bowls or other large, common open containers.

Be aware of sudden changes in the way your body feels. Do you feel more intoxicated than you are comfortable with? Some drugs are odorless, colorless and/or tasteless, and can be added to your drink without you noticing. If you feel uncomfortable tell a friend and have them take you to a safe place. If you suspect your or a friend has been drugged, call 911, and tell the healthcare professionals that you suspect you or a friend have been drugged so they can administer the right tests.

Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe in any situation, go with your gut. If you see something suspicious, contact law enforcement immediately (local authorities can be reached by calling 911 in most areas of the U.S.).