

## **RAPE PREVENTION AND PERSONAL SAFETY EDUCATION**

### **DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS?**

True or False

1. Rape is motivated by sexual desire.

*False.* Rape is an act of violence, not sexual passion. It is an attempt to hurt and humiliate, using sex as the weapon.

2. Most women are raped by strangers in high-risk situations - hitchhiking, walking alone at night, going alone to a bar.

*False.* Rapes can happen in these situations, but approximately one-third of all victims are attacked in their homes and in over half the reported rapes, women know their attackers.

3. Women invite rape by dressing seductively.

*False.* Victims do not cause rape. It can happen to anyone - children, grandmothers, students, working women, mothers, wives, the rich and the poor. In fact, police believe that in the stranger-rape situation, rapists tend to prey on women who look frightened, easily intimidated, or seem to be daydreaming. In other words, rape victims often are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

4. The majority of rapists continue until caught.

*True.* And rape is one of the most under-reported crimes.

### **REDUCE THE RISK OF BECOMING A RAPE VICTIM**

#### **AT HOME**

\*Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely, particularly sliding glass doors. Use the locks. Keep entrances well-lighted.

\*Install a peephole in the door and use it.

\*Check the identification of any sales or service person before letting him in.

\*Don't let any stranger into your home when you're alone - no matter what the reason or how dire the emergency is supposed to be. Offer to make an emergency phone call while they wait outside.

\*Never give the impression that you are at home alone if strangers telephone or come to the door.

\*If you live alone, use only your last name and initials on mail boxes and phone directories.

\*Get to know your neighbors - someone you can turn to if you're worried.

\*If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.

\*If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call the police.

#### **WHILE WALKING**

\*Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.

\*Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.

\*Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.

\*Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.

- \*Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement.
- \*Don't walk alone at night and always avoid areas where there are few people.
- \*Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never get too close to the car.
- \*If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream, yell for help, or yell "Fire!"
- \*If you feel you're being followed, walk into a store or knock on a house door.

#### WHILE DRIVING

- \*Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- \*Park in well-lighted areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.
- \*When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.
- \*Drive with all the doors locked.
- \*Never pick up hitchhikers.
- \*If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe well-lighted, and well-traveled area.
- \*If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, and put on the flashers. Use flares if you have them and tie a white cloth to the antenna. If someone stops to help, don't get out of the car, but roll down the window slightly and ask the person to call the police or a tow service for you.
- \*If you see another motorist in trouble, don't stop. Help by going to a telephone and calling the police for assistance.
- \*Exercise extra caution when using underground and enclosed parking garages. Try not to go alone.
- \*If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station and honk your horn. Or drive to an open gas station or other business where you can safely call the police. Don't leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely. Try to obtain the license plate number and description of the car following you.

#### IF YOU'RE ATTACKED

- \*Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.
- \*It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But, don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.
- \*Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options in addition to nonresistance are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming to attract attention, and physical resistance.
- \*You may be able to turn the attacker off with bizarre behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or picking your nose.

#### AFTER AN ASSAULT OR RAPE

- \*Go to a safe place and call the police. The sooner you make the report, the greater the chances the attacker will be caught.
- \*Do not shower, bathe, douche, or destroy any of the clothing you were wearing at the

time of the assault. Do not disturb anything in the area where the assault occurred. It is important to preserve all physical evidence for court use.

\*Go to a hospital emergency room for medical care. Ask the examining doctor to make a note of all injuries received as a result of the rape. Make sure you are evaluated for the risks of pregnancy and venereal disease.

\*Call someone to be with you. You should not be alone. Contact a rape treatment or crisis center to help you deal with the consequences of the assault.

\*Write down a description of the assault's circumstances and the attacker. Police need all the information they can get about the assailant.

### **TAKE ACTION - TODAY**

1. Practice being alert and observant. You can avoid many threatening situations, and if you are attacked, you will be able to accurately describe the assailant to the police.
2. See if your community has a rape crisis center. Read their information and carry the telephone number with you. Volunteer to help.
3. Check if your school or police department has a child sexual abuse prevention program. If not, help them start one.
4. Get your Neighborhood Watch to organize a workshop on rape prevention and child protection.
5. If someone down the block has been attacked, be a good neighbor. Lend an ear and lead them to others who can help.