

FACT SHEET — *This fact sheet is for people of all ages.*

Date or acquaintance rape

Date rape happens when someone you know forces or manipulates you into having sex, but you have not given them consent. It can happen on dates, with friends, friends of friends or just acquaintances. It can also happen between partners who are already in a committed relationship. Consent is required for sexual intercourse.

The term 'date rape' assumes you're acquainted with your attacker (as opposed to 'rape' where you may not know your attacker). It is sexual assault and can meet the legal definition of a criminal offence.

Is date rape common?

Victims of date rape can feel great pressure not to report the crime — and like all forms of sexual assault it's under reported. Recent research shows that up to 1 in 4 women have had an experience that meets the legal definition of rape. Date rape is extremely common amongst younger women with minimal sexual experience.

What is consent?

Deciding to be sexual with someone should be an experience that you both want and makes you both feel good. If at any time you don't feel safe or you're not enjoying the experience, you have the right to stop what is happening.

YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN CONSENT if you:

- submitted to sexual intercourse because of force or the threat of force; were held captive;
- were asleep or unconscious;
- drunk or under the influence of drugs making you incapable of agreeing or saying no;
- didn't understand the sexual nature of what was happening;
- felt too scared to say no;
- felt pressured by emotional threats such as "You know you really want this" or "Why else did you come here?";
- were threatened with a relationship break up if you didn't participate;
- were verbally abused as part of the attacker's manipulation and coercion.

Is it my fault if I have agreed to meet them in the first place?

No, no, no! Sexual assault is never your fault. It's ok to meet someone, have a few drinks, go back to their place, and kiss or make out with them. If you do not consent to sex, then it is a crime if you are forced to do so against your will. It is also an abuse of your basic human rights. No one can force themselves sexually onto someone else. A person who genuinely cares for you will respect your decision or unwillingness to proceed.

What can be done about it?

It isn't be your responsibility to prevent date rape! People who perpetrate sexual violence are always responsible for their actions.

Here are some things you can do:

- Set your own sexual limits — and say no when you have had enough;
- Trust your instincts — trust your own limits and don't be embarrassed to make these known to others;
- Call out inappropriate behaviour;
- Remove yourself from a situation if emotional threats or verbal abuse are being used;
- Be mindful of your vulnerability when under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
- Being assertive is sometimes difficult but all you need to say is one word: No.
- You can seek help and advice from your parent, friend, CASA or Police if you feel confused about what has happened.

Who should I contact if I have concerns and need help?

- Call 000 if you're worried about safety, or anyone else.
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line (www.sacl.com.au) — 1800 806 292
- CASACV (CASACV.org.au) — 5441 0430
- Victoria Police Sexual Offences Child Investigation Team — 5444 6752
- 1800Respect (National Sexual Assault, Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Line) (www.1800respect.org.au) — 1800 737 732