



Off to College

Safety, Consent & Healthy Relationships

Campus Sexual Assault

23%

of women will experience a sexual assault while in college.

5%

of men will experience a sexual assault while in college.

4%

of college students will experience at least one incident of stalking.

Most survivors report an assault during their freshman year during the fall.

As summer winds down, many of you are sending a child off to college. Whether it is your own child or a youth you care about, your emotions are likely mixed. You are excited for them to take the next steps into adulthood and may be anxious about what the college experience will hold. The reality is that the youth in your life will be faced with making choices without your direct involvement.

Having conversations with the youth in your life about what to expect is an important way of sharing information with them and letting them know that you are still there when they need you. Talking honestly about relationships, consent, and the risk of sexual assault is an important conversation but not always an easy one. We share the information below as a starting point for parents and caring adults.

Plan for Safety

Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim can occur even when precautions are taken. Rapists look for vulnerability and there are steps that can reduce risk and vulnerability. It's also important to remember that when you talk with your child, you are not only helping them stay safe but also how to look out for friends and classmates.

Be Aware of Campus Resources

Before your child leaves for campus, identify important resources and talk about them with your child. This should include campus police, the health center, sexual assault resource center, etc. When you arrive, tour the campus and identify where each is located and notice where emergency phones are located. Ask about shuttles or escorts available on campus after dark and on weekends. Ask your child to enter important phone numbers into their cell phone upon arriving on campus.

Plan How To Get Around Campus

Encourage your child to use shuttles or campus escorts if available or to study with friends to encourage walking in groups. Discourage using earphones (or only using one earbud) when walking and talk about awareness of surroundings.





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Be Thoughtful About Social Media Use

We live in a time where checking in and sharing pictures is the norm. It's also normal to "friend" new people quickly even if you don't know them well. Talk with your child about how much to post about their location and how to use location and security settings to limit who sees information.

Make Others Earn Trust

College is a unique environment that fosters a false sense of security and many students are forming many new friendships quickly. Talk to your child about what are reasonable expectations of building trust. Sharing information about what dorm you live in may be fine but avoid sharing room numbers until you know someone better.

Have a Back Up Plan

Students will go to events where they may recognize others but not know them well. Talk about how to have a Plan A and Plan B. If you go to a party with friends and want to leave early, do you have access to a ride share app or emergency cash for a cab? If you are out with friends and become uncomfortable, do you know how you would summon a ride and leave? Remind them to never get in a car driven by someone who has been drinking.

Parties Are Going To Happen

Students will go to parties and even if they do not drink alcohol, they should be conscious of who has access to their drink. Talk to youth about not leaving a drink unattended and having a core group of friends who can watch each other's drinks, too. Don't accept drinks you have not poured yourself or watched being poured. Encourage the youth in your life to know their limits and be aware of how much others are drinking around them.

Be a Good Friend

Encourage your child to look out for others. If something doesn't look right, it's okay to intervene and help someone get home – even if they do not know them well. Encourage your child to socialize with known friends while building relationships with others. If a friend shares that they have been assaulted, encourage your child to believe them and support them without judgement.