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It could never happen to me...

You hear all the time about girls who have been date raped but you think there is no way it could ever happen to you. Have you ever been given a drink by someone without seeing what went in it? Ever left a social event with someone you barely knew? Has your boyfriend ever pressured you into having sex when you didn't want to? If you answered yes to any of these, date rape could in fact happen to you. While date rape may happen more often to women, men too can be a victim of date rape. It can happen to anyone.

Why does date rape happen?

- There is increased pressure on men to be competitive and aggressive.
- Women are viewed by society as being passive and submissive.
- Some people still think it is okay for men to demand sex from women.
- Men say they "misunderstand" women's words and actions. Some men believe "no" really means "yes."
- Some people enjoy having power over another and forcing them to do what they want.
- There is disrespect for another person.
- One or both people are under the influence of alcohol or drugs and are not making good decisions.

How can I prevent it from happening to me?

- Be clear with men about any sexual behavior (if any) that you are comfortable with.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Trust your gut feeling.
- Always leave social events with friends. Avoid leaving alone or with someone you hardly know.
- Don't accept drinks from someone you don't know.
- Never, ever, leave your drink unattended.

Men should realize that...

"No" means NO.

- Forcing a woman to have sex is always rape and it has serious consequences.
- Using drugs or alcohol hinders a girl's judgment about what is right and wrong.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time,. Any further sexual activity after the withdrawal of consent, constitutes rape.

It doesn't matter if...

- You were wearing revealing clothes.
- You've been dating a long time.
- You've had sex before.
- You had a drink.
- You consented to sex but changed your mind.

What if it happens to me?

- Know that it is not your fault.
- Get help immediately. Call the police, a rape crisis center, or tell someone you trust.
- Do not shower, wash, douche, or change clothes. Get medical attention immediately.
- Get counseling to help you through the recovery process.

Remember, rape can happen in committed relationships. Even if you have agreed to have sex before, being pressured to go all the way when you don't want to is rape.

If you or someone you know has been raped or sexually assaulted, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE.



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