



girls
FIGHT BACK

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A World that is Safer for Women is Safer for Everyone !

acknowledgement

We would like to thank,

Gitta Ridder for her support in bringing out this booklet.
Wendi Deetz at Women's Safety Project, Alice Macpherson and
the women at W.E.S.T (Women Educating in Self-defense Training)
for giving us permission to use material from their booklet 'Reduce the Risk'

Sections of this booklet have been taken from the following sources:-

WOMEN EDUCATING IN SELF DEFENCE www.kwantlen.bc.ca/pscm/wenlido/wenlido.htm

KIDPOWER TEENPOWER FULLPOWER INT. www.kidpower.org

WOMEN'S SAFETY PROJECT: www.safetyproject.org/resources.html

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME www.ncvc.org

OTHER WEBSITES www.womensdefensecenter.com

www.wendo.ca

www.ifightlikeagirl.com

This booklet has been produced by

Jagori Women's Resource Centre, New Delhi, 2003.
Material from this booklet may be used for non-commercial
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**Jagori is a women's resource centre based in New Delhi, which works to spread
feminist consciousness for the creation of a just society.**

**Our activities include documentation, training, research, creation of material
in different media and campaigning on issues related to women's rights.**

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introduction

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 1993 adopted by the UN General Assembly, defines violence against women as: "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".

Violence against women is often hidden, both in the public and private domains. It is rarely on the public agenda, although it affects millions of women and girls all over the world. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, Crimes in India, in the year 2000, at the all-India level:

every day:

- 480 cases of crime against women are reported;
- 45 women are raped; and
- 19 cases of dowry deaths occur.

every hour:

- 5 women face cruelty at home; and
- about 4 cases of molestation are reported.

These are only reported cases, women rarely feel free to access the institutions which are meant to protect them. In fact, women often face violence at the hands of their very 'protectors'.

Statistics show that in India, crimes against women have been increasing at a higher rate than is the case for overall crimes in society. (NCRB, 1999). Crimes against women take many forms: sexual assault, threat of violence, sexual harassment, or what is wrongly called 'eve-teasing', sexual harassment at the workplace, domestic violence, dowry harassment, child sexual abuse, murder and so on. Violence against women is known to be all-pervasive; it can happen anywhere, in the street, at home, at work or at social events, to women of all socio-economic groups and ages.

Beyond the actual perpetration of violence is the **fear** of violence which severely limits women's lives and curtails their ability to enjoy their other rights. This constant fear of violence, and threat of sexual violence in particular is a hindrance in attaining our potential; it affects girls' education, mobility, employment, skill building, income earning capacity, and political participation among many others.



In such a context, where can a woman who wants to learn about self-protection go for information and advice? Traditionally women have been given a selection of options that are either impractical or conjectural, or don't cover the whole spectrum of possibilities in which self-protection might be necessary. For example, advice such as "Don't go into dangerous areas at night, stay home" ignores the fact that a high percentage of assault occur when the woman is in her home, or takes place in daylight. Even if it were possible to follow all this advice, these "Don'ts" will not stop a determined assaulter. In addition to being false tenets to ensure women's safety, these 'Don'ts' are only ways of controlling our movement, limiting our lives and curbing our freedom. The only option for women and girls, in order to guard our freedom and rights, is to respond to these injustices and as far as possible, fight back.

Just bringing ourselves to respond to violent situations is a journey in itself. The first step is to realize that we are really worth defending, and are capable of doing so!

This booklet is meant to inform women and girls about some strategies that are useful in preventing dangerous situations, ways of reacting in such situations, as well as everyday measures of creating a safer environment for ourselves. Self defence is not only the concern of women, or women with children, it is important and useful for everyone.

Women have a right to walk on roads, travel on buses, in trains, work outside the home, come out of their homes without the fear of being harassed and assaulted. Women have a right to live their lives on their own terms and make their own choices. This booklet is aimed at inspiring women to take charge of their lives, and to provide tools to understand and deal with violence in their lives.

To defend our body when threatened, can change how we see ourselves and the world we live in. We have great hope with the amount of women seeking solutions today that we will see changes in our societies as women take up more space, more confidently, more empowered...

A WORLD THAT IS SAFER FOR WOMEN IS SAFER FOR EVERYONE !

what IS SELF-DEFENSE

Self-defense means personal defense in all situations, including so-called "harmless", everyday situations - defense, for example, against sexist jokes or repeated interruption when talking, defense against men who challenge women's personal boundaries by staring at them or making shameless, or lewd, comments. There is a lot more to self-defense than simply dealing with physical conflict.

Women's self-defense is not just knowing how to repel an attacker, it is refusing the role of a victim in every day life. It is important to recognize that often feelings of shame and guilt associated with being a target of violence are results of our social conditioning, that teach us to be ashamed of our bodies and sexuality and to maintain silence around issues of abuse and violence.

Women in most societies are expected to be submissive and docile, and are not taught to fight back or confront aggressors. We also do not hear of many women who have successfully confronted or fought back, so when faced with a situation where we should respond, we simply do not know how. We are also taught that women are weaker than men, so when confronted by a man women usually give up believing that we will be unable to confront them successfully. How do we unlearn these socialized messages, move beyond these inhibitions, and bring ourselves to fight back in vulnerable situations?

It is no accident that women are led to believe that they are somehow responsible for men's violence against them.

The kind of language we hear is intended to perpetuate this myth:

MYTH

"Why did you wear that?"

"Why did you go there?"

"She had it coming!"

These are effective means of placing shame, blame, and guilt onto women so that men suffer very few negative consequences for their choice to use violence



against women. There are men's groups making efforts to change this with an emphasis on the importance of male responsibility in stopping violence against women. But until men choose to stop using violence against women we need to have realistic options for defending ourselves.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT SELF-DEFENSE? BECAUSE:

- The most susceptible victims are the ones who do not fight back.
- The best self-protection for most crimes is prevention. However, if prevention fails, your best chance is to fight back.
- Reality is that, at the time of an assault or attack, the only 'people' that you can rely on is yourself.
- By successfully defending yourself, you help to make the world safer for all other women, because you prove, to at least one criminal, that women are not easy prey.
- The side effects of being the victim of a violent assault can be significant. Fighting back is justified because it can save you from having to deal with the mental and physical scars of an assault for the rest of your life.

SOME DOUBTS ABOUT USING SELF-DEFENSE...

Is it better to fight back, or not?

It's virtually always better to fight back, particularly if you are trained in how to fight back. Women who fight back are injured less often, are more successful in stopping the attack, regardless of what kind of attack it is, and feel better about themselves afterwards.

Should I fight back physically?

It depends on the situation. Defending yourself starts with the same determination that most mothers feel in protecting their children. If someone told you that you shouldn't defend your three year old child, what would you think? If we are willing to try and protect our children we can try and protect ourselves. Determination to succeed is a key factor in the decision to resist an attack.

Thousands of women have defended themselves successfully. Most without ever taking a self-defense class.

'I could never fight back'

People who've never been in a situation where they wanted to fight often think that they couldn't fight. Some people believe that women are physically weaker and thus will never be able to defend themselves. But you will find, if you're faced with a life or death situation, that it's very easy to fight.

The adrenaline that comes to you in any fearful situation can make five times stronger and three times faster than you normally are. This is a tool that you have to increase your chances of escape. Use your fear positively and you will convert it into a strength. If you truly believe that you can defend yourself, you actually can. You are stronger than you think you are.

successstory FROM ANIA S., TORONTO

After all, it was a success - I escaped, I fought with all my strength and I knew he had no right to hurt me. During the struggle I had a flash-image of my body assaulted, abused and raped, and I knew it could not happen. I wouldn't let it happen. At the time, I didn't think of it that way - I just used all my strength and instincts and fought...

At about 8:30 a.m. I went for a run in the local park just outside of town. I had run perhaps 1K up a mild hill when I saw a man in his forties walking down. As I was passing by him, he asked what time it was, and after receiving an answer that I had no watch, he grabbed both my wrists and started pulling me to the side of the pathway. I was in shock - nothing like this had ever happened to me, and I had never suspected passing strangers of wanting to harm me.

I yelled for help, I yelled "NO!" I asked what he wanted and received no answer. I was told to be quiet - I screamed at the top of my lungs... As I was struggling against his hands and arms, the attacker attempted to choke me and kept pulling me away from the walkway. I was losing my strength. I decided to stop fighting; I hugged a tree very tight and gathered my thoughts. I gave him a few kicks to the shins and knees and awaited an opportunity to free myself and run.

The moment came when, during another struggle, I managed to free my body from his arms. He was holding the sleeve of my sweatshirt - I jerked my arm, with the sleeve, and.... Ran! I ran the fastest and most exhausting



distance of my life. I knew he wouldn't catch me, but I looked behind and kept running until I was amongst people.

Although at the time of the attack I didn't know any self-defense moves, I think I had what is the driving and underlying principle of self-defence – I believed that no one has the right to do any harm to me. I also had the drive and power not to allow it. I just knew that the flash of my body – humiliated and abused - could not happen. I did not and do not deserve to have that happen to me. No one does.

(Toronto, September 1999 <http://www.wendo.ca/>)

STRATEGIES FOR prevention

why is your brain a defensive tool?

Your brain is your best weapon. It is always with you, ready to be used, and you can exercise it without leaving your chair. Your brain creates your attitude, which is one of the most important survival characteristics you can possess. If you believe that you are worth protecting, and if you project that attitude to those around you, most criminals will simply leave you alone. Your brain can also provide you with solutions to handle any situation to your advantage.

10 The best self-protection for most crimes is prevention, and you can easily prevent many crimes just by being aware (using your eyes, your ears, and yes, your brain) of who and what is around you. If prevention fails you may have to think of other tools and techniques to get out of a potentially dangerous situation.

A woman can and indeed should be armed with courage, determination, spirit and knowledge, whether or not she is armed with anything else.

STREETSMART STRATEGIES

successstory

Nandini, a college student from Delhi, while on her way home noticed a man on a bike watching her. Sensing his intentions she crossed the road and took the first bus that came to avoid him. As she got off the bus she realized that he had followed her. He told her to come with him and demanded a kiss. Nandini felt that in this case it would be better to tackle him in other ways than to retaliate physically. She pretended that she was charmed by him and that she would meet up with him the next day... she would not be able to come immediately as she had other work for today and there were people waiting for her, she said. The man agreed to meet her the



next day at the same place and left while a relieved Nandini made her way home safe and unhurt. Needless to say she did not keep her appointment for the next day.

USE YOUR AWARENESS

Awareness can be a lifesaver. It is very important to pay attention at all times to whatever is going on around you. It takes time to get used to being aware. Some people feel they are being paranoid when they first begin practicing awareness. However, with time it will develop into a natural habit.

When you are aware of what is happening around you, you have a better chance of seeing a developing problem and getting away before it becomes a personal threat. Listen to, and act on your own feelings about situations; they are valid evidence that something may be happening around you and to you. We want to be aware of (and avoid) potentially dangerous situations whenever possible. One place is not necessarily more dangerous to be in than another place. No place is a problem unless it has an attacker in it. If you walk past a dark park and you are nervous, it may be because of fear of the dark or it may be because there is someone there. When we do not know it is better to avoid or to research from a safe distance.

USE YOUR INTUITION

What if nothing is happening but you don't feel right? You are hearing your intuition (gut feelings, hunches) and you need to listen and respond to this feeling. Unless you are a nervous person by nature, you will find these feelings to be a valuable early warning device. For the majority of people and situations they are the most reliable indicators that something is about to happen.

Listen to your inner voice, if you feel uncomfortable in any situation acknowledge that there may be danger and think of ways to get out safely. If you ever get a feeling that you are being watched or you think someone is following you, turn around and look to make sure. Looking at a person, especially if you make eye contact, gives you important information about his appearance and intent. It also sends him the message that you are alert and therefore will not be an easy target. Trust yourself and your feelings, and then ACT on these intuitions to reduce the risk and stay safe.

USE ASSERTIVE BODY LANGUAGE

Another way to prevent aggression is to be assertive in your walk, using a firm, steady pace. A passive or fearful walk gives an image of vulnerability and sets you up as an easy target. Keep a strong stance and good body posture that reflects the attitude that you are assertive/ strong and no one can take you for granted.

Show no fear. Aggressive men try to intimidate women in various ways - men who feel insecure or weak try to feel power by intimidating or using their power over someone they perceive as weaker than them. This is one of the reasons why most attackers choose children, women or men weaker than themselves as victims. By confronting them you refuse to act as the victim and give them the message that you are not afraid to face them. Confronting them firmly and telling them to STOP the offending behavior will itself make most men back off.

THE PATTERN OF AN ATTACK FOLLOWED BY MOST ATTACKERS IS:

- Select an easy victim - someone who seems oblivious, fearful, or unaware.
- Create a position of advantage to gain privacy and control.
- Dominate the victim through intimidation, sexual threat, physical assault, or robbery.
- Escape so they can get away without getting caught.

Your strategy is to interrupt this pattern in any way and increase your safety. The main thing the attackers are looking for is a woman they can grab and quickly move to a second location where they don't have to worry about getting caught. If you put up any kind of a fight at all, they get discouraged because it only takes a minute or two for them to realize that going after you isn't worth it.

USE BASIC ASSERTIVENESS AND CONFIDENCE

If you are confronted, with stares/ lewd glances and so on look your aggressor in the eye for three seconds (count: 1001, 1002, 1003), then look away. This acknowledges the other person, and indicates that you are unafraid. By looking away, you further show that you are not interested. It works best to glance with a "soft eye" towards the person rather than making prolonged eye contact. The message is "I see you", not "I'm challenging or inviting or afraid of you."



Communicate your limits clearly

If someone starts to offend you, tell them so firmly and explicitly - immediately. Respond as soon as you can. Remove yourself from the situation as soon as possible. Be assertive and tell the confronter to "Back off", "Go Away" or "Leave Me Alone" or "I'm Not Interested." If the person claims to misunderstand you, repeat yourself more firmly till they understand. Speak louder and insist that the person hear you. Keep saying what you want till they get the message.

Try controlling distance so that a potential attacker does not have the opportunity to create a position of advantage by getting close to you. Just leave cheerfully and get to a safe place. If you can't just leave, take charge by setting a boundary (personal comfort zone, let the person know through your vibes, voice and actions that he dare not cross the limit). Stand your ground, face the person squarely, look them in the eye and tell them firmly and assertively what you want, "Stop right there..." Be sure you use a calm firm voice and strong body language.

POWER OF SPEECH

SUCCESSstory

On a serene, blissful, rare Sunday afternoon, I was venturing out on my bike. ~~When~~. Immediately on exiting the alley alongside and behind the apartment building in which I reside, I sighted a violent physical assault on a petite female. The woman was bravely trying to block the wild male's glancing blows to her person. They were on a building verandah, somehow he had cornered her. After careful consideration I resolved to try and help her. I sat on my bike and ordered him not to hurt her, like this, "Don't hurt her!". I contrived to keep my tone of voice steady, firm and assertive. On hearing me, he ceased pounding her and nonchalantly sauntered away. To this day I am amazed by the power of speech and action in critical situations. The woman thanked me profusely, and I rode off in disbelief. So much for the myth about quiet Sunday afternoons.

(Toronto, September 1999 <http://www.wendo.ca/>)

Support to the woman

WHAT actions CAN YOU TAKE

STRATEGIES TO USE WHEN CONFRONTED

- Remove yourself
- Respond verbally
- Respond physically by counter attacking
- Remove yourself!!!

14 Generally, the earlier you begin to deal with a situation and the more strategies you try, the more likely you are to get away and survive. Anything that you can do to break out of the role of victim that they are projecting on you will help you to escape. Acting crazy, faking a seizure, being bold, saying or doing something unexpected, can be used to shock them and break their concentration and can give you an escape opening.

Try negotiating with them, if only to gain time. Be as outwardly calm as you can and keep talking. Adopt a "take charge" attitude. Lie to them. Promises made under pressure are not binding!

When it is a choice between people (you/ your child) and property, consider surrendering the property. Your car, purse, jewelry, or money can be replaced - give up the object and look for a way out. Remember that this may not stop the violence, but it might buy you some time.

FAKING IT!

successstory

Rampyari, an activist with a women's organisation in a small town, was getting home late after work. A man watching her walk home alone grabbed her from behind and insisted on taking her with him. She tried her



best to break away from him, but was unsuccessful in her attempts. She knew she had to try something else to get out of the situation. She pretended that she would want to go with him, that she was sick and tired of living with her husband and she would be more than happy to make a new beginning. She however said that she needed to go home and get her clothes and jewellery. He made her promise that she would come back to him. She agreed and as soon as he let her go she made it back home safely and stayed there. Sometimes the most unexpected strategies work!

Know where safety is AND HOW TO GET HELP

Always have a plan for where you would go if you have a problem. Be willing to make a scene and order bystanders to call the police or come to your aid. Be willing to embarrass, inconvenience, or offend other people in order to protect your well being. Keep your well being as your top priority; know that you are worth protecting. Know how to set clear boundaries with people you know. Most of the people who bother us are people we know. If you are uncomfortable doing something, or being with someone, learn to say 'NO' assertively in a firm voice till the time the other person backs off. Take charge of the situation; do not let anyone else control you through flattery, persuasion, begging, emotional blackmail and so on.

Getting help FROM STRANGERS

Getting help from strangers is not easy. People typically respond to a direct instruction more readily than to a general plea for help. So, to get someone to call the police for you, it is more effective to yell, "You in the blue shirt, go call the police right now!" than it is to scream "Police!" Another important tip is to make it clear to anyone who can hear you that you do not know the person who is bothering you.

(You can lie about this one if needed – most people will not think a domestic fight is any of their business.)

successstory

Palash, a working woman from Delhi, related an incident of a man who used to harass her on a regular basis. During the festival of Holi he threw a water balloon at her from a nearby building. She pretended she was hurt and fell on the road moaning. Passers by rushed to her aid and when she came to, she pointed to the man as the one who had hurt her. The people immediately dragged him down to where she was lying. This, and the fact that she could be hurt, scared him. He was reprimanded by the crowd and by Palash who warned him that he could have hurt her seriously and this was not a joke. He apologized for his behavior and never harassed her again.

Helping YOURSELF

Sometimes, violence occurs despite the best possible avoidance measures, and when it does, there is often no opportunity to summon help. In those cases, a woman is forced to face her attacker alone, using only her own resources and knowledge to survive. If threatened by an attacker with a knife you must consider whether or not to fight. Obviously you should try to get away if you can but whether you can outrun your assailant depends a lot on how close you are to a safe place, your physical stamina, terrain, your shoes, clothing and so on.

Don't let anyone tell you what you should have done because this split second decision is up to you. It is better to have good facts on which to base your response. If escape is just a little distance away you may want to throw dirt, stones or rocks into the attacker's face and kick his knee or groin. It may also be best may be to throw or toss your wallet or purse to the attacker's knife hand as you run away.

If you decide not to fight, get a good description and remain alert for any chance to escape.

Attackers ARE VULNERABLE TOO

Every attacker has vulnerable areas on his or her body. The primary targets on a male attacker are eyes, nose, groin, throat, and knees. Women who keep in mind that an attacker is vulnerable are also using the idea of vulnerable targets



to form an emotional defence. Psychological defenses such as this also prepares a woman for good physical defence. When she decides to fight, she will know exactly what to aim for.

Use SURPRISE

An assaulter does not know what you will do and they cannot read your mind, no matter how experienced they are. Your attacker does not expect you to fight back effectively. He may expect you to cry, cringe and plead with him, or to scream and struggle. However, attackers tend to pick on smaller and weaker people and believe that no woman is a match for them. In a fair fight, he may be right. An assault is not a fair fight.

When you use physical defence effectively or some other quick physical technique, he will be the one who is surprised, and incapacitated. Then, you make your escape.

SOMETIMES WE SAY THE MOST SURPRISING THINGS (AND THEY WORK SO WELL!)

successstory

A woman was just coming out of her apartment building when a man, a complete stranger, walked up to her and said lecherously, "Hey...I'd like to have sex with you." She was shocked, but stood her ground, and said matter-of-factly, "You'd better stay away from me. The police are looking for me. I've just killed my husband." She was completely taken aback by what had just come out of her mouth, but more importantly, so was he. He gave her a startled look, walked quickly away, and didn't bother her again.

(Toronto, September 1999 <http://www.wendo.ca/>)

But, What If...

You can follow all these suggestions to make your environment as safe as possible. However, if despite all your precautions, you are harassed or physically assaulted, it is not because you are doing "something wrong". It is not "justified" and it is not your fault. What you do, where you are, or what you wear, does not cause attacks to happen.

everyday

SITUATIONS

Making Everyday Life Safer

There are several strategies and habits we can develop to take precautions in our everyday life and reduce the risk of being in a vulnerable situation. Here are some practical suggestions for everyday situations which could help in making our lives safer.

Out SHOPPING

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Take the money and cards that you need to use, instead of every piece of identification you have. Plan your shopping to carry the least amount of stuff around with you.

Devise an alternative to carrying a purse, particularly when you are shopping. It's hard to hold on to a bag firmly while you are active. Another option is to wear clothing with inside pockets or sew secure pockets into clothing that you already have and use these to carry your valuables.

In Public OR OUT ON THE TOWN

Should you be approached by a person in a public place, you need only talk to them if YOU want to. Should they start politely and then become rude you can turn away. If they bother you, draw public attention by telling them to back off!, and stop the offending behavior or report this to the police, security guard.

Whether you are out alone or out to party with friends, you deserve to be treated with respect. Some assaulters are looking for a victim who appears to be inebriated or not in control. Be careful in your consumption of alcohol around people who have the potential to harm you.

Be clear and assertive with anyone who tries to push into a group where they are not wanted. Be aware that some people may listen in to conversations to try and find out more about you or to find out where you are going next. When you enter into a conversation with any person, avoid giving out your name,



address, or place of employment. Better still, ask them for their number and you can call them if you do want contact. Should you meet a person that you would like to contact further, arrange to meet in a public place or where you have other friends present.

If someone is insistent that you tell them something that you do not want to, just say NO, you don't owe anyone any explanations it's your life. If you want to distract them you can give them wrong information. If you decide to lie, **KISS (Keep It Simple Sister!)**.

Canine FRIENDS

Women with dogs are rarely attacked, although this is hardly enough to stop a persistent attacker! Any dog, even a small one may be an inhibiting factor in an incident. People are never sure how the dog will react. Only get a dog if you like them, have space, and enough time to take care of them and train them properly.

On the MOVE

START WITH A PLAN

Be aware of where you are going, where you are at any given time, how you are travelling, and think of ways you can make it safer. Where possible, use information phone numbers, maps, and timetables in advance to plan your routes.

Take as few valuables as possible to minimize the hazard. Carry your ID, money, credit cards, etc., in an inside pocket rather than in your purse. Purse-snatchers tend to grab any bag that's not being watched or firmly gripped. Sort your money or valuables in a private place to avoid a theft attempt by an opportunist. If a robber asks for your wallet or purse, do not hand it to him. Toss it away from you.... Chances are that he is more interested in your wallet or purse than you and he will go for the wallet or purse. Use this opportunity to RUN to safety.

HAVE STRATEGIES READY

Know places that are relatively "safe" such as stores that are open late, neighbours that are likely to be up, friends, police, 24-hour petrol pumps, phone booths. Lights and people inhibit the attacker, although attacks are known to happen in well lit, well-populated areas as well.

WHEN WALKING

As you walk, attempt to stay near lights from street lamps or buildings and away from dark building corners or shrubbery that may provide hiding places for others. This may be difficult so it is also helpful to be aware of how far you can see (line of sight) into or out of an area and watch for movement.

Walk with or near others whenever possible. Even if you do not know them, you can still walk along with a crowd on the street and you will look as if you are with them.

If you think you are being followed, FIND OUT by looking back, changing your pace, or crossing the street. Go to a public or open area, preferably well lit. Look for places where there are people. Go up to an occupied house and ask for (insist on) assistance.

If a person in a vehicle is following you, turn and walk in the opposite direction to get away from them. It will take them time to turn around, time that you can use to head for safety. Walk opposite to the flow of traffic. Write down or memorize the license plate or vehicle description.

When waiting for transport, lean against a wall so that you can see the area. Try to work transportation out with others. Get a lift with a friend. Ask someone to call and check that you are home and safe.

WHILE RUNNING/JOGGING

Carry your keys, small change for phone calls, and some identification so that you always have resources with you. Keep your eyes open and watch the people and spaces around you. If something does not look or feel right, change your route immediately.

Listen for sounds around you and try to identify them. Keep your ears clear so that you can hear if someone is coming up behind you.



A radio or tape player will distract you. Be aware of places on your route where you could seek help if you needed it. Run with others (or a dog) if you can. Make the last part of your route through the "safest" (easiest to get help) area since you will probably be the most physically tired then.

Using PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Whenever possible, sit near the driver or the conductor on transit if there is one. If you are being harassed, stand up and insist they STOP, move away, push past them if necessary. Report them to the driver; stay on the bus, as your harasser will probably get off. Even if it is your stop, the bus with people may be safer when there is an incident in progress. Tell the driver and insist on a response. You can demand that driver take the bus to the nearest police station to lodge a complaint.

TURNING THE TABLES!

successstory

This is a story related by Sonya of how a woman traveling in a public bus was harassed by a man who exposed his genitals to her. Feeling shocked and embarrassed she immediately got off the bus. Another woman who was similarly harassed, instead of looking shocked and ashamed (which is what the man wanted) laughed loudly and pointing at his genitals said "Oh my goodness, they are sooo tiny!". It was now his turn to get embarrassed... and it was he who got off the bus this time!

AROUND YOUR VEHICLE

Always keep your vehicle securely locked. Have your keys in your hand and ready to use before you arrive at the vehicle so you are not fumbling. Look around and under the vehicle to see if anyone is lurking or hiding. Check and see if someone is hiding behind the front seat while still at a safe distance from the car. It is easy to enter a car (or any other place) without keys for those who know how to.

Park your vehicle under lights, when possible, so that it is easier for you to find and less of a temptation for someone else to break into. Place parcels and objects out of sight or in the dickey to further limit temptation.

Maintain your vehicle with regular servicing so that it will keep running and be reliable. Keep the fuel tank at least half full at all times. Check your lights and brakes every time you go for a drive.

Should your car break down in a deserted area, raise the hood or put a Help Police sign in the window and stay in the locked car on the passenger side while you wait. If someone comes to offer help, roll the window down a little to talk to them. Give them change for the phone and ask them to call a friend of yours, a tow truck or whoever you have decided is the best person to contact. Keep your windows mostly up and doors locked when driving, since people could jump in at red lights. If someone tries to flag you down, keep going. To respond to a threat from outside the vehicle, stay in with the doors locked and windows closed. If you have a cellular phone, call 100. Honk your horn to alert others. Drive away to a safer area if possible. Be observant of any vehicles that pull away at the same time as you do. If you notice this type of situation, note the license plate number. If a vehicle runs into you in an isolated situation, consider staying in your vehicle as it may be an opening for a physical assault. Drive to a police station if you fear for your safety. However police impostors have also been known to pull women drivers over.

Choose who you let into your car carefully. Knowing them previously does not guarantee their good intent. Giving a ride to an unknown person also includes an unknown risk. If there is someone in your vehicle who is trying to force you to drive somewhere, you can still drive to a safer place (or police station, petrol pump, area with people, etc.). You could park in the middle of, or jump out of the car at an intersection, or honk loudly at passing vehicles. On a bicycle, be aware of what you are approaching. If threatened when riding your bike, ride away to a safer area as quickly as possible. If it appears that you are being followed, stay on populated streets and head for a police station or open shops, office complexes where there are other people.

TAXI!

When taking a taxi, watch where you are going and ask questions about the route if it seems strange. Insist that the driver go the way you want to go. Take down their number and make a complaint if necessary.



RIDING WITH OTHERS

If you are accepting a ride in a car with someone else, this may be the circumstance that a potential assaulter wants. You may be offered a ride home from work, after a party, or you may be hitchhiking. A female hitchhiker is often seen as being "vulnerable" or "available". No matter what the situation, try to take precautions before you get in the vehicle. If you do accept any ride, go in pairs if possible check the colour, make and license of the car before you get into any vehicle.

Ask the driver where and how far they are going before you tell them where you are headed. If you do not like the looks, comments or attitude of the driver, DON'T get in. You are never obligated to accept any ride - walk away.

Avoid taking lifts in a vehicle with more than one person in it when you are alone. Avoid getting into cars with doors with no inner handles or those with automatic locks controlled by the driver. Look and refuse if necessary.

Once in a vehicle, talk - about almost anything (the weather, economy, the more general, the better). It makes you seem more real to them. It is important to be seen as a genuine human being instead of an object upon which they can easily project their negative fantasies.

Sit next to the door. If the driver or other passengers appear unwilling to let you sit there, mention that, "I get car sick very easily and it would be best if I sit somewhere with easy access to fresh air." Fake vomiting if you need to get out.

WHEN YOU TRAVEL AWAY FROM HOME

Use all of your safety strategies from home. Most of them work well around the world. Look as inconspicuous and casual as possible. Even though you will stick out as a tourist, you can appear to be of moderate means. Avoid talking about your destination when others are around to overhear. If you are asked for your destination by casual acquaintances, keep any information that you choose to share with them brief and somewhat vague to avoid being targeted by opportunistic theft or assault.

Keep traveler's cheques and travel document close to your skin instead of in purses or suitcases that could be easily stolen. Watch your luggage at all times or consign it to secure storage. Ensure that trusted persons are aware of your itinerary and that you contact them regularly to let them know of any changes and that you are safe.

At HOME

If you live in an apartment building and there is someone claiming to be from the gas agency, electrician, plumber – insist on identification and also check with the company, agency or housing association. It may be legitimate or it may be a scam to gain entry to the building.

When someone rings or knocks inspect who is at the door before you open it. Get a peephole installed in the door. Insist on official ID from service or sales people who wish entry and then call their office if still unsure or uncomfortable. If you are uncomfortable, ask them to return later. Indicate that you are busy, or your husband is asleep (even if you are single) and wakens easily, (rather than alone, nervous, etc.). Arrange a time when you are able to have another person, whom you trust, with you.

When someone comes to your door and requests to use your phone, you may choose to place an emergency call for them while leaving them waiting outside rather than allow entry. A person may use the request as a ploy to get in and possibly have an accomplice waiting just out of sight.

Meet and make friends with your neighbours. If you feel comfortable with them and have a friendly connection, they are a good safeguard.

RESIDENCE SECURITY

Carry your keys in a separate place from your personal identification. If keys are lost or stolen and identifiable, change your locks or have them re-keyed immediately. When you move in, change the locks. If a key is lost, change the lock. Should you need to have a key outside your premises, leave it with a trustworthy friend or neighbour. Burglars know all the usual hiding places! Have good locks and use them. Lock your doors, windows and the garage when you are home and when you are going out for even "just a minute". Leave your outside lights ON during the hours of darkness - a lit doorway makes it hard to hide.



WHEN YOU ARE AWAY

When you go away, you could have someone stay in your home. If possible, have a friend pick up your mail and papers, water the plants, move the curtains, turn the TV on and off, change the light patterns, and so on. If possible ask trustworthy neighbours to look out for your home and do the same for them when they are away.

UNWANTED PHONE CALLS

Keep a list of current emergency numbers in a prominent place on or next to each of your phones. (*Do you know the emergency number(s) in your area?*) Update it as necessary, and ensure your household members know where it is and how to use it.

A person who calls you should identify himself or herself first. If there is a problem, ask them what number they dialed rather than giving your number. Avoid giving your name or numbers to people you do not want to have active contact with. People who call have no right to any information, including whether you are home alone. Refuse to tell them.

If you get obscene calls, hang up - they are looking for a reaction. These calls rarely lead to a physical situation but can be annoying. Threatening ones are frightening. This is the intention of the caller who wants you to respond by being upset or scared. They are illegal and should be reported to the telephone company. Jot down the time of each one if they do reoccur. If you have call display, note the number. Your answering machine or voice mail message can be very neutral. Have an ambiguous message. There are tapes of humorous generic messages available or you might ask a friend to do your message if you would prefer not to use your own voice.

Out CELEBRATING

Using any of the strategies mentioned under On the Move could be helpful.

FOOD AND DRINK

A person adding a substance to your food or drink is a possibility. Ensure that a trusted companion attends to your drink if you must leave to attend to other business. Knowing your personal limit and

avoiding getting out of control under the influence of alcohol or drugs, is important to avoid becoming a target of assault. If you feel that you may lose control, or have a tendency to do so, ensure you have a trustworthy person with you to take care of you and take you home safely.

Be aware that certain celebrations, such as the festival of Holi, can be used to legitimize harassment. Decide how and who you want to celebrate with. Be firm and demand that people respect your wishes not to participate in activities that make you uncomfortable.

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR POSSESSIONS

Keep your money and identification on your person rather than in a purse or coat pocket.

DEALING WITH PEOPLE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

People can become irrational and unpredictable when they are inebriated. If you are with people who are becoming inebriated or in a physical space where others are getting rowdy, you may choose to leave. You are not required to stay in any situation that makes you uncomfortable.

At Work, SCHOOL, COLLEGE OR IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Apply the same safety measures here as you would in any other situation. Walk out with a group after work or classes whenever possible. Get to know the people around you. Ask for help if you need it.

When you are in a public rest room ensure that the cubicle that you are using is locked. Leave if you feel uncomfortable with the situation. If you are required to wear an ID badge, only put your first name on it. You do not need to give out any personal information to clients. Keep it professional. Ensure that others know where you are if you are working late or alone. At the end of your work shift check to see if all of the doors are locked and the rest rooms are empty with another co-worker. If someone is lurking (inside or outside) call the police. If you feel someone is in the building when no one should be there, go to a lockable room and phone for help. If you must challenge a person, imply that there are other people around even if you are alone.



USING LIFTS

Observe the lift's interior before entering. Wait until the next lift if you are uncertain of any occupant. Should you be nervous at any time about getting into a lift with one or more persons, wait for the next one. Consider using stairs if it feels more comfortable. If a suspicious person enters the lift, exit before the door close.

If you do choose to get on, let them push their floor number first or just push for the next floor and be prepared to get off. Also be aware of all occupants and their actions, stay near the control panel and identify the emergency button. This sets off bells or buzzers and stops the lift at the next floor so you can get off. When riding the lift, try to stand near the control panel. If accosted, press ALL buttons.

BUILDING SAFETY

Whether it is an office or apartment building, similar strategies can be adapted to fit your situation. If you are working in any office or building after hours, keep the doors locked.

In an underground parking, cruise the garage and watch for other people before you park and get out of your vehicle. Look for lights that are burned out as it may have been done deliberately to create a hiding place. Avoid that area. Drive out if you feel uncomfortable. If confronted in a building, yell "Fire" rather than "Help", in order to get a response. Get others around you involved by making noise and demanding assistance. Request and expect a safe work and education environment from the management and administration.

safety

FOR CHILDREN

Who Targets Children?

Child assaults are predominantly perpetrated by people who are familiar to the child, such as people who work for the family, relatives, friends of the family, and those who are normally in authority over them such as teachers, tutors, ~~babysitters~~. Any changes in the child's behavior should be followed up.

Protecting CHILDREN

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Educate children about safety by talking to them at their level of comprehension and reviewing strategies with them regularly. Make a (serious) game so that it becomes second nature for them (*What will or can you do if...? Where will you go? How can you get help?*). Break the myth that all strangers are dangerous. Identify strangers who could help (like people in uniform, doctor's clinic - the plus sign and so on), and teach them how to find other adults and approach them for help.

Practise with them skills such as how to use a telephone, how to get help, remembering their own phone number, your name (rather than 'mummy'), and how to contact you.

Every child should know their full name and the full name of their parents so that they can identify themselves if necessary. Teach them when to say NO, to be loud, to run, to get away and get help. Practise both verbal and physical techniques for getting away and getting help.

Communications WITH CHILDREN

Support them and show your trust in them in areas where they have shown responsibility. Trust starts with the small things. Be available for all of your child's



problems, the little and the big ones. You can't solve all problems, but you can help them learn how to workout solutions, or to find other sources of information and get help when they need it.

Encourage your children to trust their feelings and to speak up, using language like 'we feel', 'it's okay', 'you have rights', 'it's your body' and so on.

Encourage communications between you and your child by asking open questions, rather than telling them answers. Ask: "How do/did you feel? What did you do? What do you want to do now?" Provide support for their choices and feelings.

Give your children support to tell someone and to know that they can ask for help if something happens. Encourage them to keep trying to tell, even if the first person will not listen. Help them identify the adults in and outside your family whom it would be the most appropriate to talk to.

Education and Support FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Explain about the possibility of sexual assault at their level. Encourage discussions, questions, and assertiveness techniques. Good Touch/ Bad Touch and Yes Feelings/ No Feelings are understandable at a very young age and allow them to express what is happening to them, to seek help and to stand up for their rights. Inform your children early that they have the right to choose who may touch them and who may not.

Child CARE

Do a careful reference check of all baby-sitters, creches, etc. that you plan to use for your child. If you are not comfortable with a person or place, go somewhere else. Emergency numbers should be available, reviewed, and posted by each phone so there can be no confusion. This includes a number where you can be reached, updated for each situation.

The following are some useful tips, though they need to be adjusted to the age and needs of your child:

Establish a "family password"...

and drill your kids so that they understand that if anyone ever comes to pick them up from school "because Mummy or Daddy is sick" that person must give

them the family password, else the child should not leave with them. Kids like family secrets, and should have no trouble dealing with this concept.

Tell them success stories...

about kids defending themselves. For example a 12 year old girl was once accosted by a man with a gun on her way to school. He told her to get into his van. She was more afraid of the van than the gun, and managed to break free and run away. He didn't shoot at her, and was later picked up by police and charged with several child murders. The point is that it is important to resist strongly and early in the interaction, not to go along (in the van, for example), hoping that the situation will somehow get better later on.

Role play with them...

in a low key way, so that they really know how to respond to a variety of situations. One girl was walking home from school. When she was accosted, and had trouble running away because she was afraid to drop her schoolbooks, fearing that her father would be angry at her if she lost the books. Parents spend a lot of time trying to get kids to understand and adopt our usual adult priorities, and it is very important that kids understand that all those normal rules are suspended if they are in personal danger!

Far more important...

than formal classes are the attitudes about self-protection that parents convey to kids. If Mummy is alert, unafraid, and self-reliant, the kids will tend to be so, too. Teach them that it is OK to scream, really loud, if they are in danger. If someone covers their mouth, teach them that it is alright to kick and scratch (not wildly, but targeted areas such as groin, eyes, throat and knees).

Don't...

have school bags and clothing with the child's name visibly on it. It allows a stranger to call the child by name, and kids are less suspicious of (and more likely to obey) someone who knows their name.

Remember...

that the media strive to entertain as well as inform, and horror stories involving children get a huge amount of press and air time, because they sell a lot of papers and make people watch TV, not necessarily because they happen often. Kidnapping is every parent's worst nightmare, but it is not a common crime. While teaching your children how to protect themselves from that, don't forget to teach them how to protect themselves from much more common threats,

such as school yard bullies, friends experimenting with drugs, paedophiles, bag snatchers, and so on.

What do children need to know about protecting themselves?

There are a number of programmes that claim to teach self-defence for kids. Be cautious about them. Most local martial arts groups and karate clubs are great for exercise and confidence building, but may not be good for self-defence. Look for programmes that teach a combination of boundary setting, verbal and physical techniques.

EVERYDAY violence

Stalking

WHAT IS STALKING?

Fundamentally, stalking is a course of action that puts a person in fear for their safety. The stalker may follow you, harass you, call you on the telephone, watch your house, send you mail you don't want, or act in some other way that frightens you.

Virtually any unwanted contact between a stalker and their victim which directly or indirectly communicates a threat or places the victim in fear can generally be referred to as stalking, whether or not it meets the exact legal definition.

THE BEHAVIOR OF A STALKER OR HARASSER OFTEN INCLUDES:

- Harassing a person at home and work on the phone.
- Telling untruths about a person to their friends or employer.
- Showing up at a person's house unwanted and uninvited.
- Leaving threatening notes on a person's car or in their mail or under their door.
- Vandalism towards a person's car, home or other possessions.
- Stealing, hurting, or killing a family pet.
- Breaking into a person's house and disrupting or damaging items or making threats.



Stalkers use a wide variety of methods to harass their targets. The inventiveness, persistence, and obsessive nature of stalkers is almost unimaginable, until you have experienced being the target.

Stalking is a serious, potentially life-threatening crime. Even in its less severe forms, it permanently changes the lives of the people who are victimized by this crime, as well as affecting their friends, families, and co-workers.

Stalking is more common than you might think, although it is hard to get accurate figures.

Are stalkers really dangerous?

They certainly can be! Many stalkers change behavior over time and escalate the frequency or the intensity of their contacts. Some of the most dangerous stalkers give little or no warning before they attack. Some people who are being stalked are more afraid than they need to be, and others are not as afraid as they should be.

Are you being stalked? Do you know someone who is?

It started with an invitation to dinner. Or perhaps it began with a gift of flowers from an anonymous admirer. Or maybe it began with a peculiar letter from a "fan". Or it started with a silent, ominous watcher. However it started, you now feel uncomfortable every time the phone rings, every time you have to be out alone at night, every time you go to your car or reach for your mail. He is out there, somewhere, and his unceasing, unwanted attentions make your skin crawl and your hands clammy.

You never thought it would happen to you, but you are being stalked. Stalking is an insidious crime that eats away at your sense of security, leaving you feeling more vulnerable than ever before in your life.

Should you take threats seriously?

Absolutely! It may be hard for you to realize that your life is actually in danger but, if someone is making credible threats, you must take steps to protect yourself. Report it to the police. Find local organizations that can help you. You may decide to make yourself hard to find. If you want to move to a new location, you must not let your address or telephone number be known to people; use a post office box for all of your correspondence.

If your life is being threatened, you should consider yourself a stalking target, and take steps to protect yourself. Even if you are not being stalked, this information may be highly relevant to you.

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

If you are being stalked, harassed or threatened, remember, it is not your fault. Report all vandalism and incidents to the police or a women's organisation. The police will not be able to give you round-the-clock protection. If the harasser continues their threatening behavior, you need to continue to keep the police informed and keep a journal of what is going on as well. (The journal is a detailed written record of the incidents that occurred, their dates and times, and your feelings and thoughts at the time.) Keep written notes or letters that you receive. It is preferable that they handle such communications as little as possible, and place such material in a plastic bag to be retained for investigative purposes.

If you are receiving harassing phone calls, tape them on an answering machine, or buy a special recording device to do so, noting the date and time of each recording. Use an answering machine and/or call display, if it is available, to screen your calls. If possible you could change your phone number. Once you have a new phone number, be very cautious about who you give it to.

34 If the situation escalates, consider staying at a friend or relative's place for a while or moving to a different residence if possible. Inform friends, family, neighbours and, if necessary, co-workers and office security staff of the situation to enlist their support and to prevent them from providing sensitive information to the harasser. Try to vary your schedule and have others accompany you when departing and arriving at your residence or elsewhere. If you believe that you are being followed and feel threatened, go to the police station.

Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA GUIDELINES, DEFINES SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS

- unwelcome physical contact or advances;
- demand or request for sexual favours;
- sexually suggestive remarks;
- display of pornography;
- any other physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.



It could be something as innocuous as a 'compliment' about your figure that leaves you feeling uneasy and violated, right upto explicit demands of sexual favours by those in positions of power. The key word is 'UNWELCOME' contactor advances. Usually *we know* that something is amiss when such advances are made, even though they may have been done in subtle ways.

Should any of these happen, react as soon as you can. State clearly why you find the remark or behavior objectionable and inappropriate and that you want the person to stop the negative comments and behavior.

If harassment continues, document the situation and report it to management or administration. Use union and company structures that are available to pursue and correct the situation. No one deserves harassment and any harassment that is condoned implies that all harassment is permitted. If you see harassment happening to someone else - speak up!

Refuse to laugh at harassment disguised as "humour". Talk to others in your work environment and get their support. Be supportive to those who are or have been harassed. Clearly state that you do not like harassment in any form, to anyone. If nothing is said, it will continue.

Harassment doesn't go away by itself. It poisons the working environment, damages individuals, and impairs teamwork. For a safe women-friendly working environment, you could get the Supreme Court Guidelines implemented in your workplace; and get the management to set up a committee on sexual harassment. Consult an organisation in your area which could help you.

Get it out in the open and get justice!

Domestic violence

HOW CAN I TELL IF I AM BEING ABUSED?

The answer isn't always obvious. The RYKA ROSE¹ foundation provides the following questions to help you determine whether you are in an abusive relationship. Do you recognize yourself, or a friend, here?

¹The R.O.S.E. Fund, Inc. (Formerly Ryka Rose Foundation); The R.O.S.E. (Regaining One's Self-Esteem) Fund is a national non-profit organization committed to ending violence against women and their children by assisting women survivors of violence to regain their self-esteem.

DOES THE PERSON YOU LOVE

- Keep track of you all the time?
- Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- Prevent you from working or attending college/courses/ school?
- Criticize you for little things?
- Anger easily when drinking or on drugs?
- Control all finances and force you to account for what you spend?
- Humiliate you in front of others?
- Destroy your personal property or sentimental items?
- Hit punch, slap, kick, or bite you or your children?
- Threaten to hurt you or your children?
- Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?
- Force you to have sex against your will?

If you find yourself saying yes to several of these questions, you need to learn more about domestic abuse right away.

What is different about being abused by someone you know?

It may be harder to recognize and to acknowledge that it is happening to you. There are strong emotional and social forces that can keep even a very abusive relationship going for a long, long time. It can also be emotionally more difficult to decide that you need to take strong action to protect yourself, but knowing your attacker does not change your right to protect yourself.

What to do if you are being abused

If you're in an abusive situation, you should get help from a local shelter, women's group, or Crime Against Women cell of the police. Your danger may temporarily increase when you try to separate from your abuser, so get help to plan that step carefully. Some sources for that help are local women's shelters. See appendix for select helplines and crisis intervention centres.



Rape/ Sexual Assault

YOU HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED IF, AGAINST YOUR WILL, YOU HAVE BEEN:

- Kissed.
- Fondled/ caressed.
- Forced to have sexual intercourse.
- Sexually violated through anal or oral intercourse.
- Penetrated with a foreign object.

Many of us have sexual experiences or relationships which are abusive, painful and humiliating. Sexual violence, either a one-time assault or protracted abuse, damages our concept of sexual intimacy, trust and sometimes, even of our own body. Women and girls are common victims of such abuse, though boys and men face sexual assaults too. The conspiracy of secrecy and shame attached to sexual violence allows us neither to forget nor break the silence.

The resulting loss of self-esteem and confidence can be more crippling than the physical injury. If you have been sexually assaulted you may feel ashamed, guilty, depressed, angry, voiceless. This is natural, but silence is not a solution. Counseling and healing are important to help tend to your bruised self and move on. Legal options are available to get justice in the event of sexual assault or rape.

How common is rape?

Although the reported incidence varies somewhat from year to year, most authorities agree that the number of rapes far exceeds the numbers actually reported. All forms of sexual assaults occur across geographical, cultural, and economic boundaries.

Should I try to talk him out of it?

You should use whatever method you think will be appropriate. For a rapist who is fairly casual about the situation, it might be possible to talk him out of it but, in most cases, that's not something you can count on. You should definitely have a repertoire of other things that you can do if talking doesn't work or if there isn't time to talk.

How serious is rape?

Even if a minimum of force is used to carry out the rape, the possible consequences to the woman (pregnancy, AIDS, herpes, other venereal disease, and post-traumatic physical and psychological effects) are extreme, severe, and could be long-lasting.

What to do if it happens?

The attacker makes no distinction between age, race, appearance or any other characteristics. Common sense is your best defense against attack. Because every rape is different, there's no one solution for thwarting an attack.

If you are attacked, evaluate the situation and look for ways to escape. Some women have avoided rape by talking their way out of it, acting crazy or fighting back. If you decide to respond physically, remember that your first priority is to get away. Act quickly and decisively to throw the attacker offguard while you escape.

AFTER AN ATTACK:

- Go to a safe place and contact someone whom you trust.
- Call the police, women's organisation or friend who will provide you the support you need.
- Preserve evidence - don't shower or douche; blood and semen are important evidence. And don't change your clothes or disturb the scene of the crime.
- Get medical care.

Medical attention is vital! Many hospitals provide special care for rape victims. Remember, even if you do get treatment immediately, follow-up tests are essential.

Don't be embarrassed because of the incident; it is not your fault. Although rape is difficult to talk about, it is important to tell doctors what sexual acts took place so they will know what medical attention is needed.

Try to remember in detail your exact experience, for police records. Give as accurate and complete description of your assailant as possible. This is extremely important! Your complete co-operation with local authorities may help in preventing similar attacks on other girls and women.



If you have been sexually assaulted in any way call the police and a local women's group or NGO for support.

Remember that unlike what we may have been taught, being sexually assaulted is not the end of the world. Women all over the world survive assault and have dealt with it, continuing to lead healthy positive lives.

Acquaintance Rape/Date Rape

The issues raised here are relevant in most intimate relationships, both in courtships as well as young romances, where the possibility of violence is also high.

The typical image of a rapist is a crazed maniac who jumps out of the bushes, brandishes a knife or gun and forces a woman to have sex with him. Images like this are strong and lasting but they mask the essential fact that acquaintances and lovers commit most sexual assaults. The false image lives on because few rapes/sexual assaults by acquaintances are reported. The definition of rape is sexual intercourse against someone's will and without their consent. The victim does not have to be threatened with a dangerous weapon or be injured for an incident to be considered rape. Coercion or threat of force or violence is sufficient.

SOCIALIZING FACTORS THAT LEGITIMIZE SEXUAL ASSAULT

How can 'nice' men with 'good intentions' coerce someone to have sex?

It is because men and women in the process of becoming social beings learn communication patterns that make acquaintance rape or date rape likely. Men are often taught, through socialization, to view women as either virtuous or sexually loose, which contributes to uncertainty about female desires. Men are taught to not take women seriously, that women do not really mean what they say, that a woman's 'NO' means 'YES'. Young women are taught that males know more about sex than females, so the female should comply with the male's demand. Both males and females feel certain behavior allows a man to force sex, such as the woman "leading the man on."

These uncertainties are often based on the reluctance of women and men to express their feelings. Many times in verbal communication if something is clearly wrong with a woman (she is crying or slamming doors) and she is asked what is wrong, she may say "nothing" rather than express her true feelings. Men display this same type of behavior, expressing anger or frustration by punching walls or speaking through clenched teeth, but still saying nothing is wrong.

The message is that in a situation where verbal and nonverbal messages are inconsistent, the verbal message is not accurate. Some men do not believe a woman's verbal messages in sexual encounters either. In fact, a man may actually feel he is doing a woman a favor by pushing her sexually. If she says no to a sexual overture, she may really want to say yes but is afraid she will be viewed as loose. He thinks she says no because she is worried about her reputation, not because she really does not want to have sex with him. So if he pushes her even if she is saying no, they will both ultimately get what they want: she will get sex without tarnishing her reputation, and he will be satisfied. In this type of interaction the male feels that he is acting as he should and would probably be surprised to find that **women really mean it when they say 'NO'.**

Women and men are also led to believe that men should know more about sex. If he tells her that "everyone else is having sex", and that "something is wrong with people who don't" she may be willing to have sex with him even though it is not what she wants to do. There is also tremendous peer pressure for the male to have sex. Even if he does not want to initiate sex, a man may feel he has to. He is encouraged by other young men to "score" sexually to be considered manly.

WHEN DATE RAPE BECOMES 'ACCEPTABLE'

Some men feel that some particular female behavior permits a man to force a woman to have sex. Charlene L. Mullenhard of Texas A&M University² and Richard McFall of Indiana University reported the results of a study in which 106 college students were asked to respond anonymously about acceptable behavior in dating situations.

The subjects were given descriptions of three types of dates that varied in respect to who initiated the date, where the couple went, and who paid. They were then asked if there were any circumstances in which forced sex was

² Mullenhard, C.L. and R.M. McFall. "Dating Initiation From a Woman's Perspective," *Behavior Therapy*: 1981: 12. <http://www.womensdefensecenter.com/daterape.htm>



justified. Men rated intercourse against the woman's wishes as significantly more justifiable when the woman initiated the date, when the man paid and when the couple went to the man's apartment.

Patterns in acquaintance rape

Groth and Birnbaum³ reported a three-stage pattern in rapists' behavior concerning acquaintance rapes. First a rapist will invade a woman's personal space (for instance, by putting his hand on a woman's knee in a public place). This is common in parties and in bars when the music is so loud the couple must be close to hear each other. It is advisable to set your boundaries by firmly telling him that you do not like his behavior at this point itself. If the woman does not object, the rapist proceeds to the second stage in which he will desensitize her to the intrusion by escalating the behavior (moving his hands to her buttocks, for example). It is unlikely that she will tell him that she is uncomfortable with his "roaming hands" but she may feel uneasy as a result of this behavior and suggest going someplace less crowded. She does not want her friends to see how forward he is being, and she does not want to stay close to him. He may misinterpret her suggestion as her way to be alone with him. The third stage is when they are in an isolated place and the rapist attacks.

This is a general pattern in acquaintance rape, and though all victims and rapists are different, alcohol and drugs are often involved in incidents of acquaintance rape. In a study on rape in Canada⁴, alcohol was used by half of all offenders and by one third of the victims. This is important for young adults since peer group expectations usually include consumption of alcohol at social events.

HOW CAN MEN DEAL WITH THEIR VIOLENCE?

There are many things men can do to view forced sex for what it is and to begin to try to stop it on a personal or societal level. First, they must understand that forced or coercive sex is rape even if the partner is a friend or lover. It is never acceptable to force yourself on a woman even if you think she's been leading you on or you have heard that women say no but mean yes. Forced sex is a punishable crime.

Since socialization is responsible for many attitudes towards sex and sexuality, both men and women must be willing to explore the importance of traditional socialization on their behavior. College men, for example, are exerting peer pressure to condemn, rather than condone the notion of women as conquest.

³Groth, A.N. *Men Who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender*. New York: 1979

⁴British Columbia Rape Prevention Project "Rape Prevention Resource Manual," based on a study of rape in Canada and Vancouver, MTI Teleprograms: 1980. <http://www.womensdefensecenter.com/daterape.htm>

Adult females who influence male children must be clear about messages, truthful about feelings and consistent in disciplining. Failure to do so may lead to young men not taking women's verbal messages seriously.

Once these men become adults themselves they have the potential to influence the socialization of children. They can teach children about the importance of communicating their feelings clearly and consistently.

RAPE IS A MAN'S PROBLEM TOO!

All men are not violent, but it is a fact that the majority of perpetrators of all forms of gendered-violence are men. Therefore, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, and so on are as much "men's problems" as they are women's problems. Men need to take responsibility and become allies in the struggle to end violence against women.

Some men have begun to form progressive anti-rape organizations in order to deal with issues of masculinity and violence. The organization Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR) "believes that rape is a choice men make to exert power over others and is, therefore, a men's issue". MCSR believes men can live peacefully with women and other men, but to do so, "we must redefine what it means to be a man."

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LET'S **fight** BACK TOGETHER

Daily Acts of Activism

If we are to effectively address violence against women, we must act collectively as well as at the individual level. Here are a few ways you can resist on a daily basis:

- Interrupt jokes of a sexist, racist, and/or homophobic nature-if you laugh or say nothing when someone tells one of these jokes you are not only perpetuating the cycle of exploitation, you are sending a clear message that you don't mind.
- Identify and label oppressive behavior-calling people on their sexism, racism and homophobia. Find your own way to be assertive that suits your personality and still serves your purpose.
- Send letters of complaint to artists, advertising agencies, magazines broadcasting companies, newspapers, etc. who participate in the production of images that degrade women as well as racial and sexual minorities or that glorify violence.
- Refuse to buy products wherein the producer engaged in any of these oppressive practices.

LET'S BUILD THOSE COALITIONS

We are all affected by violence. As long as we keep labeling rape a "woman's issue" or anti-gay hate crimes a "queer issue" or street harassment a "non-issue" it is difficult to see how different struggles coincide and are essentially connected. We must build coalitions across lines of sex, race, class, age, sexual orientation, as well as state and national borders to dismantle structures which encourage a culture of violence, fear and subordination.

You are equipped to help yourself. You can be effective. You can survive!

Helplines & Crisis Intervention Centres for Women

NAMES OF THE ORGANISATIONS	TELEPHONE NOS.
NEW DELHI	
Nari Raksha Samiti	(011) 23973949
Snehi	(011) 26521415
Prayatan	(011) 26524065
Human Rights Law Network <i>Runs Madhyam Helpline & provides legal services</i>	(011) 24316922 / 24324503
Women's Cell, Delhi Police	(011) 24673366 / 4156 / 7699
Delhi Police HELPLINE	1091
Delhi Commission for Women	(011) 23379150 / 23378936
National Commission for Women	(011) 2323620 / 23237166
National Human Rights Commission	(011) 23362018 / 23344346
MARG (<i>Multiple Action Research Group</i>)	(011) 26497483 / 26496925
Shakti Shalini - <i>Women's shelter</i>	(011) 24312483
Lawyers Collective Women's Rights Initiative <i>LCWRI runs a pro-bono legal aid cell for domestic violence cases</i>	(011) 24316925 / 24313904
Sakshi - <i>Violence intervention centre</i>	(011) 24648782 / 24647540
Saheli - <i>A women's organization</i>	(011) 24616485 (Saturdays)
IFSHA <i>Interventions For Support Healing & Awareness</i>	(011) 26253289
RAHI <i>Recovering and Healing from Incest. A support centre for women survivors.</i>	(011) 26238466, 26224042
Sanjeevani	(011) 26862222/ 26864488
SAARTHAK	(011) 26853846/ 26524061
Naz Foundation India Trust	(011) 26567049/ 3929



ANDHRA PRADESH

Asmita (040) 27733745
10-3-96, Plot 283, 4th Floor, Street 6,
Teacher's Colony, East Maredapally,
Secunderabad

Anveshi (040) 2868489
2-2-18/49, Durgabai Deshmukh Colony,
Baghamburpet, Hyderabad

ASSAM

North East Network (0361) 2631582
J.N. Barooah Lane, Guwahati

BIHAR

Purna Bharti (06438) 224359
College Road, Patherchapti,
Post Madhupur, Dist Deoghar

CHANDIGARH

Samvad (0172) 2546389

CHHATTISGARH

Chhattisgarh Mahila Jagriti Sanghatan (0771) 2420338
7 Geetanjali Nagar, PO Shanker Nagar, Dist: Raipur

GUJARAT

Olakh (0265) 2486487
24 Jalaram Park, Opp Lal Bahadur Vidyalaya,
Harni Road, Vadodara

Sahrwaru (079) 26857848, 26858195, 26843395
O-45,46 4th Flr, New York Trade Centre,
Near Thaltej Cross Road,
Sarkhej-Gandhinagar Highway,
Ahmedabad

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Jagori Rural Resource Centre (01892) 246857
Pathania's Bungalow
Village Sidhpur
District Kangra

KARNATAKA

Vimochana / Angala (080) 5492782
C/o AWHRC, 33/1-9,10 Thyagaraj Layout,
Jai Bharath Nagar, Bangalore

KERALA

Sakhi (0471) 2462251
TC 27/2323 Convent Road. Thiruvananthapuram

MADHYA PRADESH

Sangini Gender Resource Centre (0755) 25276158
Flat No.11, E-6/98 Shalimar Jeevan Deep Apts.,
Arera Colony, Bhopal

MAHARASHTRA

Majlis-Mashwara (022) 26180394
A-2 Golden Valley Building, No.4,
Opp Canara Bank, Kalina Kurla Road, Kalina

Awaaz-e-Niswan (022) 23439421
84 Samuel Street, (Palagali),
Jain High School, 1st Floor, Dongri

Women and Law Unit (*legal aid and counseling*) (022) 26439029

RAJASTHAN

Vividha (0141) 2762932
335 Mahavir Nagar- II, Maharani Farm,
Durgapura, Jaipur

TAMIL NADU

The Banyan (044) 26357049/ 26356105
6th Main Road, Mogapair, ERI Scheme, Chennai

UTTAR PRADESH

Sahyog (0522) 2387010
C 2015 Indira Nagar, Lucknow

Vanangana (05198) 236985
Dwarikapuri Colony, Opp Bus Stand,
Chitrakoot, Karvi

Aali (0522) 2782066/60
C 33A Sector A, Mahanagar, Lucknow

WEST BENGAL

Swayam (033) 22803429, 22803688
11 Balu Hakkak Lane, Kolkata



What is Wenlido ?

'Wenlido' (translates as women's path of strength) helps women connect with their strength, overturning centuries of conditioning which convinces women that they are the 'weaker sex'. As much as learning techniques of physical self-defense, Wenlido training involves the evolution of a woman from a passive victim into a strong capable individual who can control her own life. The Wenlido workshop combines physical techniques as well as consciousness raising discussions resulting in a profound transformation of the participants.

How can Wenlido help me?

Women suffer a great deal from a sense of powerlessness over our lives especially in close relations. On the physical and emotional level Wenlido offers 'ways out' of 'stuck' (powerless) situations. Emphasis is put on finding solutions that empower us as individuals. This may relate to many levels of our realities. In the workshop not only do women learn to protect themselves, but also how to recognize potentially dangerous situations early on, how to respond verbally effectively when harassed, become aware of personal boundaries, problem-solve together on how to stay safe and get out of inner victim mode.

Why do you need Wenlido?

Wenlido is a highly essential personal tool which every woman irrespective of her class, caste, religion, region, politics, educational background, age, level of consciousness and other differences should possess and will benefit from. However much a woman may be educated, conscious, or advance in life there is always a lurking fear that in an actual situation of physical assault we may become helpless or easy victims. This creates a deep-seated fear in women and creates hurdles in her development. Learning martial arts is not an easy solution to combat violence on women. It is because martial arts require years of disciplined training the time for which every woman does not have. Besides these martial arts are mainly designed for men and does not help women in gaining consciousness and confidence as it does not address the ideological issues related to violence against women. There have been known cases where female martial art champions ended up paralyzing in fear, in spite of being highly skilled.

How can I learn Wenlido?

Jagori women's resource centre organizes Wenlido workshops in Delhi and in other parts of India. Please get in touch with Jagori for further details.

I FIGHT LIKE A GIRL

I fight like a girl who refuses to be a victim

I fight like a girl who's tired of being

IGNORED and HUMORED and BEATEN and RAPED

I fight like a girl who's sick

of not being taken seriously

I fight like a girl who's been pushed too far

I fight like a girl who OFFERS and DEMANDS RESPECT

I fight like a girl who has a lifetime of

ANGER and STRENGTH and PRIDE

pent up in her girly body

I fight like a girl who doesn't believe in

FEAR and SUBMISSION

I fight like a girl who knows that

THIS BODY and THIS MIND are mine

I fight like a girl who knows that

YOU ONLY HAVE AS MUCH POWER

AS I GRANT YOU

I fight like a girl who will never allow you

to take more than I offer

I fight like a girl who FIGHTS BACK

So next time you think you can distract yourself

from your insecurities by victimizing a girl,

THINK AGAIN

She may be ME and

I FIGHT LIKE A GIRL

(Source: www.ifightlikeagirl.com)

