

# DATE RAPE

By Orli Zaacks- Child Therapist

(The Anxiety and Trauma Clinic)

## 1. HOW PREVALENT IS DATE RAPE?

The crime of date rape is becoming more and more prevalent. Fortunately, extensive media coverage of this crime and so called date rape drugs have made women more vigilant and aware of this potential threat. Still, despite increased awareness, the number of these incidents continues to climb.

## 2. WHAT CAN WOMEN DO TO PREVENT DATE RAPE?

When you meet a person for the first time and they ask you out, there are some common sense tips that you should follow to keep from ending up with a bad experience. Domestic attacks on women have risen lately and the instances of date rape have gone up dramatically. If you use your head instead of your heart, you can protect yourself from physical or emotional harm and maybe save your life.

When you meet a person for the first time and decide to go out with them, find out all you can about that person. The more information you have, the safer your date will be. On the first date never have your date pick you up at your house. Meet them at the location of the date or at least a public place. A walk in the park or any other isolated place may not be a good choice. Choose a well lighted restaurant or a theatre. There will be a lot of people that will notice if your date is not being safe. Double date if possible, this will give you a safe date in which you can learn more about the guy.

Watch your drink and food during your first date. Many girls have had their food drugged while they were at the bathroom. You will lose your common sense and do things that you probably would not have done sober. Also do not drink a lot of alcohol or none at all. You will probably make poor decisions if you are a little bit tipsy.

When you leave for the date, leave from the restaurant or theatre alone. Do not let him follow you out to his car. If he has any negative plans your car is where they will take place. Unless you know him well, never go home with him on the first date and especially at night. If you want to visit his home, do so in the day light.

Dating is a wonderful experience, but you have to be alert to your surroundings at all times. It is sad we live in a time where a woman has to be so careful, but to not be that way is a ticket for disaster.

Parties, bars and night clubs are prime breeding grounds for acts of violence, assault and rape. With this in mind, these simple safety tips are important to keep in mind and pass along.

Always get your own drink, and watch it being poured. Never leave your drink unattended. If you need to use the restroom and can't take it with you, leave it with a trusted friend-not a new date!

If your drink tastes funny, do not drink it and dispose of it so no one else does. Keep in mind that most

drugs used to spike a drink are colourless and tasteless, so not allowing your drink out of your sight is paramount.

Be aware of how your friends are acting. If they seem more "out of it" than usual, be very wary and keep an eye out for them.

When it's time to leave, you may have met someone you are interested in. Ask yourself if you really trust this person. Can you be sure they won't make you do anything you don't want to do? Are you confident they will take NO for an answer? If you've asked yourself these questions and still want to leave with this person, be sure to introduce them to friends and let your friends know you are leaving with them.

### **3. WHAT IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE RAPIST?**

Rapists who assault women lead double lives. On the outside they may appear no different from other men. They are members of every race, religion, profession, and socioeconomic group; they are of varying ages. Many of them impress others as dedicated family men who are good providers.

They are not insane. They are men who have serious psychological or personality disorders, which they discharge through sexual violence. The consequence of this behaviour (what may happen to him or to others) has no meaning to the rapist at the time of the assault. Therefore, he is not deterred by such logical considerations as punishment, disgrace to his family and injury to his victim.

Rape is always an aggressive and/or violent act. In every act of rape, aggression is involved, but it is clear that the sexual acts are the means of expressing the aggressive needs and feelings that operate in the offender. Either anger or power is the dominant component so that rape, rather than being primarily an expression of sexual desire, is in fact the use of sexuality to express his issues of power and anger. Basically, it involves sexual behaviour in the primary service of non-sexual needs.

### **4. WHAT DAMAGE IS INFLICTED? APART FROM PHYSICAL?**

Rape isn't just physically damaging, it can be emotionally traumatic as well. The right emotional attention, care, and support can help a person begin the healing process and prevent lingering problems later on.

Someone who has been raped might feel a lot of things: angry, degraded, frightened, numb, or confused. It's also normal for someone who has been raped to feel ashamed or embarrassed. Some people withdraw from friends and family. Others don't want to be alone. Some feel depressed, anxious, or nervous.

Sometimes the feelings surrounding rape may show up in physical ways, such as trouble sleeping or eating. It may be hard to concentrate in school or to participate in everyday activities. Sometimes it may feel like you'll never get over the trauma of the rape. Experts often refer to these emotions — and their physical side effects — as rape trauma syndrome. The best way to work through them is with professional help.

It can be hard to think or talk about a frightening experience, especially something as personal as rape. People who have been raped sometimes avoid seeking help because they're afraid that talking about it will bring back memories or feelings that are too painful. But this can actually do more harm than good.

Talking about rape in a safe environment with the help and support of a trained professional is the best way to ensure long-term healing. Working through the pain sooner rather than later can help reduce symptoms like nightmares and flashbacks. It can also help people avoid potentially harmful behaviours and emotions, like major depression or self injury

Every rape survivor works through his or her feelings differently. Some people feel most comfortable talking one-on-one with a therapist. Others find that joining a support group where they can be with other survivors helps them to feel better, get their power back, and move on with their lives. In a support group, you can get help and support as well as give it. Your experiences and ideas may help others heal.

#### 5. **WHAT SHOULD ONE DO AFTER BEING DATE RAPED?**

If you have been a victim of 'date rape' it is very important that you report the incident to the police as soon as possible. You can report the rape by going to the closest police station and insist that they take a blood and urine sample. When reporting the incident, make sure that you are accompanied by a family member, a friend or someone you trust and can be there to support you. At the police station, you can ask to speak to a woman police official. However, a woman may not always be available. You do not have to give all the details of what happened in the charge office when reporting the rape. After you have said that you want to report a rape, you should be taken to a private space such as an office, or to the trauma room which is a more comfortable room that often also has trained volunteers to help you. Most police stations have trauma rooms that are supposed to be open all the time, even on weekends and at night. You need only give a brief statement of what happened before being taken to have a medical examination. You should try to give a detailed description of the rapist and where you last saw him immediately so that the police can try to arrest him as soon as possible.

You only need to give a detailed statement of what happened during the rape after the medical examination, usually a day or so later, when you have had some time. The detailed statement will be given to a detective (investigating officer) who will be the only police person to know about the details of the case.

It is also advisable to visit your doctor or local clinic for tests to ensure that you have not been given a sexually transmitted disease. The doctor must also give you medication to prevent HIV/Aids. It is very important that you do not shower or clean yourself off after being raped until you have got medical attention. You may possibly have evidence such as hair, semen or blood from your attacker on your body, clothes or hair. If you take a shower or clean yourself off then you have literally washed all the evidence down the drain. Finally, if you have been date raped, it is of utmost importance that you seek help and support from counselling.

## 6. HOW DOES A WOMAN TRUST AGAIN AFTER A DATE RAPE?

Often, date rape survivors develop trust issues after their assault. That is, they find it nearly impossible to trust many people because of fear about whether these people will hurt them as their rapist has. If you are experiencing something similar, have faith that you will gradually learn to trust again. A good way to start is by confiding in your family. Slowly, this tends to branch out into trusting close friends, then other friends. You eventually will get to the point where, when you see a casual acquaintance or see a stranger in a public place, your first thought will not be that he is there to rape you. This is an ideal to which many rape survivors aspire, and reaching out to others helps greatly to get there. Seeing a therapist or counsellor also helps tremendously. It may seem a bit scary or daunting at first, but such help speeds up the healing process and also makes it smoother, less painful. There is also more chance that you will make a full recovery if you actively seek assistance, whether it be by one-on-one sessions with a therapist, or by group therapy sessions. Regaining a sense of control over life usually only starts to happen after a survivor starts to deal with his or her doubts and fears. Only then will he or she begin to put the experience behind him or her and be empowered to once again have a normal life.

## 7. WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF PROSECUTION?

Unfortunately, it may take a very long time for your case to go to court for trial, and if the police cannot find enough evidence, the prosecutor may decide not to prosecute. Officials need to learn to handle rape victims sensitively and to gather proof properly. The more thorough an officer was the more chance there is for successful prosecution.

## 8. HOW DOES DATE RAPE DIFFER FROM "ORDINARY RAPE"?

### **What is rape?**

Rape occurs when sex is non-consensual (not agreed upon), or a person forces another person to have sex against his or her will. It also can occur when the victim is intoxicated from alcohol or drugs. Rape includes intercourse in the vagina, anus, or mouth. It is a felony offense, which means it is among the most serious crimes a person can commit. Rape is a crime that can happen to men, women, or children.

Many times, the person who commits rape uses violence to force the person to have sex. An attacker can also use fear alone to commit rape. Rape causes both physical and emotional harm to the victim.

### **What is date rape?**

Date rape also occurs when one person forces another person to have sex. This crime is also a felony offense. The difference between rape and date rape is that in cases of date rape, the victim agreed to spend time with the attacker. Perhaps the victim even went out with the attacker more than once. Date rape is still rape.

**9. DO RAPISTS ALSO SEEK TREATMENT FROM TIME TO TIME? WHAT DO YOU DO IN SUCH A SITUATION AS THE INFORMATION HE GIVES YOU IS CONFIDENTIAL?**

Therapists should understand that despite the nature or source of referral, the rapist has problems and vulnerabilities just like everyone else. Many of these clients experience intense anxiety and an unbridled sense of fear during their initial therapeutic session. They may be uncertain of what to expect, and are, undoubtedly, terrified at the thought of relating their innermost sexual behaviours and fantasies to a stranger. They also are fearful of the prospects of incarceration. Furthermore, these clients often have lived with an overwhelming sense of shame, guilt, and embarrassment, and poor self-perception. If a therapist does not develop a solid therapeutic relationship with a client who experiences these dynamics, little, if any, progress will be attained. The therapist, who is capable of facilitating a therapeutic alliance in an expedient and professional fashion, while displaying unconditional human kindness, will produce a more successful treatment outcome. They must believe that although the rapist is their client, public safety takes precedence over confidentiality.

If you have experienced any of the above or you know of someone who has and would like further advice, please contact The Anxiety and Trauma Clinic.

Tel: (011)883 4552

E-mail: [info@atclinic.co.za](mailto:info@atclinic.co.za)

Website: [www.atclinic.co.za](http://www.atclinic.co.za)