



# Avoiding Abuse While Going Out & Dating

- *It is estimated that about one in three Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their adult life.*
- *2 in 3 assailants are friends, acquaintances, boyfriends, co-workers or relatives.*
- *The majority of date and acquaintance rape victims are young women aged 16–24.*

ONTARIO WOMEN'S DIRECTORATE

## TEENS, SINGLE, ADULTS

### Separated/Divorced/Widowed

Abuse is a common and widespread problem that can begin at an early age and has the potential to affect anyone—male, female, young or old. Abuse may involve the use of physical, emotional or sexual behaviour to control and maintain power over another person and can take many forms. Common forms of abuse include verbal, emotional, psychological, financial, physical and sexual including stalking and sexting -- many of which are illegal. A great deal of abuse can be avoided if you exercise caution, watch for warning signs and are prepared to take action.

## EARLY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABUSE

For most people, their first encounter with abuse is at the hands of a bully (see Bullied, Bullies and Bystanders fact sheet). As people progress through life and enter their teenage years, the opportunities for abuse tends to centre around:

- gatherings where drugs and alcohol may be present,
- cyberspace (see Computer Safety – Internet Safety fact sheet Video Chat Rooms), and
- dates and dating relationships.

## AVOIDING ABUSE WHERE ALCOHOL & DRUGS MAY BE PRESENT

The availability, service and/or over consumption of drugs and alcohol greatly increase the chance of abuse in two significant ways. First, it lowers natural inhibitions that tend to control and govern behaviour of all parties. Second, it presents an opportunity to drug an unsuspecting victim. This is typically accomplished by mixing GHB (Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate) with any drink. GHB is a tasteless, odourless and colourless drug commonly known as the “date rape” drug.

### TIPS

#### Avoiding Stranger/ Acquaintance Abuse

- Go with and use the buddy system while at parties, bars etc.
- Never accept a drink from a stranger/acquaintance.
- Never leave a drink unattended.
- If one of your friends seems really “drunk” after one or two drinks, passes out or has trouble breathing, take steps to ensure their safety.
- Stay sober and aware.

## DATES & DATING RELATIONS

Dating presents a number of unusual opportunities for potential offenders in that it provides extremely close access to persons and their property which is extended, in part, as an act of trust. This can easily be betrayed when dealing with



persons who you don't know well or someone who you may feel comfortable with based on an arm's length relation. In order to minimize these opportunities, it is important to follow these tips when dating someone new.

### TIPS

#### Preventing Abuse When Dating Someone New

- Do not give your home address until you have met and are satisfied that this person does not present a danger.
- Arrange to meet the person with friends or meet in a public place and arrange for your own transportation to and from the date.
- Never leave a drink unattended.
- Stay sober and aware.
- Avoid secluded places (this includes your own residence).
- Say good-bye in an active, public place.
- Take a self-defence course.

## A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

### PEEL REGIONAL POLICE

#### Crime Prevention Services

7750 Hurontario Street

Brampton, Ontario

L6V 3W6

Dial ..... 905-453-2121 EXT. 4021

Fax ..... 905-456-5910

Online ..... [www.peelpolice.ca](http://www.peelpolice.ca)



@PeelCrimePrev

# AVOIDING ABUSE WHILE GOING OUT & DATING

## DATE RAPE & OTHER UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCES

Date rape typically involves someone who is known and trusted by the victim. This helps to explain why:

- the majority of rapes happen while on dates,
- the majority of those happen in one of the partners' homes,
- the survivor may experience conflicting feelings of anger, self-doubt and blame,
- date rape has the lowest reported rate of all forms of sexual assault.

Date rape is about power and control. It should never be confused with "intense" feelings or passion as it is an aggressive act of violence that has nothing to do with love.

### TIPS How To Prevent Date Rape

- Watch for signs of an unhealthy relationship.
- Don't drink anything that has an unusual appearance or taste.
- Set limits on the nature of your sexual activity before you become intimate.
- Communicate and be clear what you are willing to do and what you do not want to do.
- Be assertive and direct when expressing yourself.

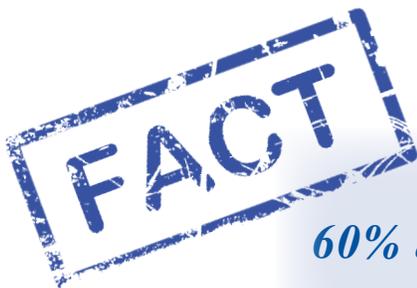
## HEALTHY vs UNHEALTHY LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

A successful relationship is a healthy relationship. Healthy relationships are based on respect, trust and consideration for the other person. Unhealthy relationships should never be confused with healthy relationships. Unhealthy relationships can be abusive and/or obsessive and can lead to serious problems and harm.

## HEALTHY vs ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Serious problems are best avoided by recognizing signs of abuse and taking early action to end the relationship. Signs of an abusive relationship include:

- **VERBAL ABUSE**  
put downs/humiliation/blaming.
- **CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR**  
including how you dress, who you hang out with, demanding to know where you are, statements like: "if you loved me, you would ...", "I only had to wait three weeks with my last girlfriend."
- **JEALOUSY/ANGER**  
when speaking to others or hanging out with friends.
- **THREATS**  
to harm you or yourself, if you leave the relationship.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE**  
including unwanted sexual advances/pressure to have sex.
- **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**  
of any kind directed towards you.



*57% of "rapes" happen while on dates.*

*60% of date rapes occur in the home of one of the partners.*

*Only 1% of all date rapes are reported to Police.*

## COMMON FORMS OF ABUSE

<b>VERBAL</b>	Insults, shouting, swearing, put-downs, threats and degrading language.
<b>EMOTIONAL</b>	Threatening behavior (i.e. threats to harm or murder the victim or loved ones including taking away family members, threats to commit suicide and/or murder-suicide).
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>	Inducing fear, accusations, excessive suspicions, isolating and undermining a person's self-esteem.
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	Controlling the family finances to disempower the person/defrauding the person.
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	Threats, slapping, shoving, hitting, stabbing, beating, assault with a weapon, torture, and/or murder.
<b>SEXUAL</b>	Any act of sexual nature that is unwanted.
<b>STALKING</b> CRIMINAL HARASSMENT	Persistently following someone, harassing telephone calls/e-mails/text messages.

## NEVER CONFUSE OR EXCUSE SEXUAL ASSAULT OR OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE FOR INTENSE FEELINGS OR PASSION

### IS YOUR PARTNER OBSESSIVE?

Obsessive partners can create significant problems/disruptions in a person's life which can escalate further in the event of a break-up. It is important to learn to recognize the signs of an obsessive relationship and effectively deal with the problem to prevent it from developing.

#### SIGNS OF AN OBSESSIVE RELATIONSHIP

- Fixation/excessive demands for your time.
- Rapid and repeated contact.
- Lack of respect for normal boundaries such as calling past midnight, showing up at your work, especially when asked not to.
- Excessive jealousy/accusations of cheating.
- Monitoring of your activities.

Learn to recognize dangerous behaviour and seek professional counseling and/or get out.

### GETTING OUT OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

#### HEED THE WARNING SIGNS

People stay in unhealthy/abusive relationships for a number of reasons. They can fail/refuse to recognize the warning signs, are afraid of the consequences, believe they have limited options or are otherwise conditioned to believe that they don't deserve

respect and it is partially their fault. They may also want to believe what the abuser will tell them to justify their behaviour or that they can change the person for the better and/or the abuser deserves a second chance.

It is important that abuse not be tolerated as the most likely outcome is further abuse or harm! Always remember that:

- you have the right to be treated with respect,
- you do have options, and
- abusive behaviour is a warning that needs to be recognized and acted upon.

#### SEEK HELP

You should seek help if you feel afraid or are trapped by an abusive relationship, and the greater your fear and/or the abuse, the greater the need for help.

- Tell an adult family member, trusted friend or person in authority, (e.g. teacher, guidance counsellor, etc.) at the first warning sign.
- Call 9-1-1 if you are being threatened or physically attacked.
- Call 905-568-1068 or visit: [www.vspeel.org](http://www.vspeel.org) with respect to crisis counselling, accessing transitional support/shelter and/or developing a safety plan for your home, work and school.

#### FENDING OFF AN OBSESSIVE EX-PARTNER

Breaking up can be extremely difficult when one of the parties refuses to accept the end of the relationship. If you are attempting to end an obsessive relationship, it is important to take immediate steps and send a clear and consistent message.

<b>IF IN DOUBT, GET OUT!</b> <b>ENDING AN OBSESSIVE RELATIONSHIP</b>	
<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
✓ Clearly state that you wish to be left alone.	✗ Negotiate.
✓ Speak about present and future plans only.	✗ Talk about past good times shared.
✓ Refuse any offers to meet after the initial break-up.	
✓ Inform family and friends of the situation.	
✓ Return the ex's belongings/gifts in a single shipment.	
✓ Maintain a record of any undesired contact.	
✓ Call Police in the event you feel threatened or harassed.	

# AVOIDING ABUSE WHILE GOING OUT & DATING

## MATURE ADULTS

### Separated/Divorced/Widowed

Despite their life experience, many mature adults are ill prepared to deal with threats associated with their re-emergence on the dating scene. These threats come from a variety of sources, including threats posed by persons from past relationships and a general overconfidence in the ability to judge a would-be suitor's character particularly those found on-line or through a web-based dating service.

## INTERNET DATING

For many mature adults with busy lives, internet dating is the solution. Unfortunately, internet dating is fraught with danger as there is often no easy way to guarantee the true identity or personality of the person on the other end. A habitual con artist can actually portray him or herself as the perfect mate. Michael Rafferty, convicted child killer of Tori Stafford, claimed to have a "master's" (degree) in culinary arts and told various women that he had met through an internet based dating service that he had a kinesiology degree, taught ballroom dancing and had his own contracting company.

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Use caution when posting information about yourself on social networking sites such as Facebook or Foursquare as this information can be used by a potential suitor to learn your likes and dislikes for the purpose of taking advantage of you. Be extremely skeptical when visiting another person's social media profile, as the profile can be expected to be crafted in an extremely favourable light

to the point of being deceptive. For further information refer to the Computer Safety – Internet Safety fact sheet.

## ASSAULTED WOMEN'S HELP LINE

GTA ..... 416-863-0511  
 Toll Free 1-866-863-0511

TTY ..... 416-364-8762  
 Toll Free 1-866-863-7868

Mobile .....SAFE (7-2-3-3)

## WANT FURTHER INFORMATION – INCLUDING A SAFETY PLAN?

Contact the Peel Regional Police Family Violence Unit and/or request a copy of the Intimate Relationship Domestic Violence/Abuse pamphlet (available in French, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu) for information on what happens if the Police become involved, agencies that can assist you, their support programs and safety tips.

For a copy of a comprehensive safety plan, visit: [www.peelpolice.ca/en/crimeprevention/resources/mypersonalsafetyplan.pdf](http://www.peelpolice.ca/en/crimeprevention/resources/mypersonalsafetyplan.pdf)

Additional Safety Planning is also available in a wide variety of languages through the Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse (PCAWA) at: [www.pcawa.org](http://www.pcawa.org)

For information on Domestic Abuse and Violence while in a common-law relationship or when married, separated or divorced check out the Domestic Abuse & Violence Fact Sheet at: [www.peelpolice.ca](http://www.peelpolice.ca)

INTERNET DATING	
DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Be on guard and exercise extreme caution particularly when:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there are large discrepancies in age, income and even looks.</li> <li>- the person is persistent, pushy, in a hurry and/or boastful.</li> <li>- the person is from a foreign country or lives a distance that prohibits visiting.</li> <li>- the relationship is one-sided.</li> <li>- the person discourages you from meeting their family or seeing where and how they live.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Over-estimate your abilities to judge the character of another person.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use e-mail as the primary source of communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Confuse internet derived familiarity that can develop over time with actually knowing that person.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Keep financial information private.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Be in a hurry/rash/act impulsively.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Remember pertinent information and look for inconsistencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Accept posted information, including photos, at face value until they can be verified.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ An open source (internet) background check.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ask yourself what concerns you would have, if you heard another person was contemplating what you are planning.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Seek out the advice of a family member or trusted friend and be open to their advice.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Follow the tips set out in the "Tips on Preventing Abuse When Dating Someone New" section of this fact sheet, should you decide to meet.</li> </ul>	