

What is a date or acquaintance rape?

Although our discussion is about more than rape, it is useful to be able to explain an understandable definition of acquaintance rape. Individual state laws will differ slightly, but generally, date rape is an act of sexual intercourse with a person (usually a woman) committed against their will or consent... in this case it is committed by an acquaintance or date. The rape would include some type of penile penetration, either vaginal, oral, or anal. Even if the penetration is slight, and even if the man does not ejaculate, the crime is still rape.

Although many date rapes might include physical force, force is not necessary to meet the legal definition of rape. The threat of violence, threat of retribution, coercion, the victim being impaired or unconscious through the use of alcohol or drugs, would all meet the definition of rape.

The important issue here is that many students erroneously believe that if little or no physical violence occurs, if they have had sex with the same person before, if they have been making out and come close to intercourse before, or if the victim is drunk or unconscious then rape has not occurred... they are wrong!

Facts about rape

- 1 out of every 4 women has been a victim of rape.
- 1 out of every 8 men has been a victim of rape.
- Women age 16-24 have 4 times higher risk of being raped than any other population group.
- The average age of a rape victim is 18.5 years old.
- Nationally, 70-75% of victims knew their assailants.
- Locally, 85-90% of victims knew their assailants.
- 75% of sexual assaults occur in the victim's home.
- 57% of rapes occur on a date.
- About 80% of men and 70% of women involved in acquaintance rape have had some kind of chemical involvement prior to the assault.

- Rape is one of the fastest growing and most underreported crimes in the nation according to FBI crime statistics. 95% of the time, the perpetrator is not caught. The average rapist attacks ten times before he is caught.

- Sexual assault is about anger, violence and control. It is an act of one person exerting ultimate power over another.

*Statistics come from information distributed by **The Rape & Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-Moorhead (2004)**.