

**Situation A:**

A girl goes to a party and flirts with a guy she knows from one of her classes. She has too much to drink, and he helps her back to her dorm room. He then has sex with her even though she is too drunk to consent. She doesn't report the incident since she isn't sure that it is rape, and thinks it is her fault because she had too much to drink.

**Situation B:**

After a date, a girl tells her boyfriend she doesn't want to have sex, and he forces her to have sex anyways. He is bigger and stronger so she doesn't fight him. She knows she can't stop him from doing what he wants. There are no marks on her, but she is hurt, ashamed and embarrassed. She doesn't know what to do about it. She doesn't think anyone will believe she was raped since she has agreed to have sex with him before.

**Situation C:**

During a fraternity party, some of the guys keep plying a girl with drinks until she is really drunk. They take her into one of their rooms and proceed to take turns having sex with her since she is too drunk to put up a fight. They tell her no one will believe her if she tells, and that they will make life hell for her unless she keeps quiet, so she is afraid to report it.

**Situation D:**

A man jumps out of the bushes and grabs a girl and tries to rape her. She yells and fights him, but he is stronger and he hurts her and forces her to have sex. She immediately goes to have a rape kit done and reports the incident to the police.

Which of these situations are considered rape? Although many people think of situation D when they think of rape, and this is the type of rape that most efforts at rape prevention at college spend the most time and money trying to prevent, it is actually one of the less common forms of rape on college campuses. All four situations describe rapes. Acquaintance rapes like those described in situations A, B, and C are actually the most common type of rapes on college campuses. Those that occur on non-date situations, such as at parties or study groups are more common than date rape scenarios, and date rape is more common than gang rape.

Just how common is this problem? Some estimates are as high as one in four college students having experienced rape since they turned fourteen. Women are most likely to be raped between the ages of 16 to 24, which means that girls in high school and college are the most vulnerable since they are four times as likely to be raped as other women. This is why courses and other efforts aimed at rape prevention at college are so important.

**Why is rape more common on college campuses?** Well, some of the conditions present during college life make it easier for people to commit this crime. There are a lot of parties with alcohol, and a lot of individual rooms where people can go. Students live on their own without a lot of supervision, unlike in high school where parents provided a bit more supervision.

If rape is so prevalent on college campuses, why don't we hear about it more often? The fact is, a lot of women do not report the fact that they were raped. Based on one study, there would be an average of about 350 rapes per year on a college campus with 10,000 female students. However, official reports for 1999 only showed records of 2,469 sexual offenses for all colleges. This shows

that it is likely that a lot of rapes go unreported, although it is impossible to know how many for sure.

**Why don't more rapes get reported?** First of all, women who get raped are frequently ashamed and embarrassed that this happened to them. They don't want anyone to know. At most, they might tell a friend. About 23 percent of victims do this. Especially if there are circumstances that other people might consider as contributing to the reasons why they got raped. Maybe they were drinking or doing drugs, dressed provocatively, or even just flirting with a guy. Maybe they felt that they didn't do enough to fight the rape, regardless of the fact that it was probably unlikely they could have stopped the guy if he was determined enough. Some of these women think that the rape was their fault. Even in this day and age some people think that rape victims must have been asking for it. Then there is the fact that they must have let the guy get them alone, or that they might have dated the guy or had sex with him in the past. Some people don't even consider a lot of rape situations as actually being rape. They think that if a girl doesn't have a lot of injuries to prove that they guy used force, it wasn't rape. Many women also don't want to go through the whole legal process. They know that it is possible nothing good will come out of it, and they will have to live through the whole experience again in the public eye. This can be very traumatizing. In the end only about 5 percent of rape victims in college actually report it to the police. About 40 percent of those who do not report the crime to the police say that they were afraid that the rapist would do something bad to them if they did. Others think that they won't be believed by the police or others.

Police really need to be better trained on what situations are considered rape. A lot of police officers think that women make a lot of false and unfounded reports of rape because they do not use the right criteria to determine whether or not women were really raped. These officers think that it isn't rape if the victim had a relationship with the rapist in the past, if the victim isn't visibly injured, if the victim was drinking or doing drugs, if she didn't report the rape immediately and get a rape kit done, or if she blames herself for the rape. They file these reports with those that are unfounded, which isn't right.

Since ninety percent of college rapes are acquaintance rapes, this is where the main focus of efforts for rape prevention at college should be directed. There are a number of different types of acquaintance rapes which should be understood when planning programs for rape prevention at college. These include rape at parties (by one or more assailants), date rape, rape that takes place during other events (such as while studying together), rape by someone a woman used to be intimate with, and rape by a person that a woman is currently intimate with.

It is also important to look into the circumstances that led up to the rape. Some situations make it easier than others. For example, during a college party there usually isn't supervision, alcohol is plentiful for men to use to get women drunk, there are lots of rooms available, the music is so loud other guests will be unlikely to hear if a woman cries out, and there might even be friends to help keep the rape a secret. During a date rape situation the rape usually occurs either in a room or a car either during or after the date, and stranger rapes usually occur in locations that are isolated. Different methods are needed for each type of situation when coming up with plans for efforts at rape prevention at college.

So far, studies have shown that most rapes of college women occur after 6 p.m., with the majority of these happening after midnight. During college, women are especially vulnerable to rape during the first few weeks of their first and second years at school, which means that courses for rape prevention at college should be given right away during orientation if they are going to be at their most effective.

Not all rapes that occur during college happen on campus. Only about 34 percent of attempted rapes and 45 percent of rapes happen on campus, with most of these (about 60 percent) happening in the woman's place of residence, another 31 percent happening in another residence, and 10 percent happening in fraternity houses. This means that although fraternity houses have a bad rep when it comes to rape, women are actually more likely to be raped somewhere else (although care should still be taken at fraternity parties).

Many people, including a lot of police officers, assume that rape victims always have extra injuries. This is not actually the case though. In fact, only about twenty percent of rape victims have such injuries as chipped teeth, black eyes, bruises, cuts and swelling. These injuries are not necessary for a rape to have occurred.

Different victims resist in different ways. Half of all victims of attempted rape or rape tell their assailant to stop, and half of them use force to try to stop the rape. Other methods of trying to stop a rape include begging, screaming, and running away. Not all victims have a chance to use force, and some are afraid to do so in case that makes the ordeal even worse.

Even though instances of stranger rape are much rarer than those of acquaintance rape, this is the type of rape that most women fear the most and take the most precautions against. This is even true of victims of rape by an acquaintance! Courses on rape prevention at college definitely need to address this discrepancy and make sure women know in what situations rape is most likely to happen, and what they can do to minimize the chances of this happening to them.

College women who are raped by acquaintances suffer not only the emotional consequences that all women who are raped have to deal with (including anger, anxiety, depression, distrust of others, fear of AIDS, guilt, humiliation, loss of self esteem, shock, social isolation, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts), but they also have to deal with the fact that they will see the person who raped them on a somewhat regular basis. Many women can't deal with this, and they end up dropping out of school. If a woman doesn't report the rape, there is nothing the school officials can do to protect them from their rapist since they don't know the incident even occurred.

Even though victims of acquaintance rape suffer as much or more than victims of stranger rape, many people and even officials in society today still believe that stranger rape is more serious and more damaging. Because the situations that result in acquaintance rape are much more complicated, it is harder for people to understand and deal with. Programs for rape prevention at college need to address this issue.

Since acquaintance rape is not as random as stranger rape, there is more that can be done toward efforts at acquaintance rape prevention at college. Women need to understand in which situations they are most vulnerable to this kind of rape so that they can take steps to prevent this from happening to them. Their vulnerability is increased when they drink so much that they are longer be able to resist any unwanted sexual advances, get drunk often, if either they or their assailant have been drinking or using drugs, if they have been a victim of sexual assault in the past, if they were single before school started, if they participate in social activities with men that are sexually predatory, if their attitudes toward sex are less conservative, or if there is some sort of miscommunication about sex.

Unfortunately, it seems like one of the factors that puts you more at risk of being raped is having been sexually assaulted in the past. The theory is that men who are predatory can sense which women are the most vulnerable to this type of abuse. Those who have been victims in the past are twice as likely to become victims again. A large study showed that as many as 22 percent of rape victims in college had been victimized previously. Perhaps there could be special instruction in rape

prevention at college given to those who report being raped in order to try to prevent this happening to them again.

Not only are their repeat victims of sexual assault, there are also repeat offenders. However, it is harder to track these individuals since so many rapes do not get reported. It is clear though that there are individuals that have committed multiple rapes on campus. One study showed that 187 rapes were committed by 96 men in college, proving that there must be at least some individuals committing multiple rapes. If more rapes were reported it would be easier to figure out who these men were and get them off campus, lessening the chance that women would get raped on campus.

Shocking though it may seem, there were actually studies in the 1980s and 1990s where one third of the men involved admitted that if they thought they could get away with it they would rape a woman. Some men actually think that women say no just to keep a good reputation, even if they really want to have sex, so they should keep going even if a woman says no. Or that if a woman flirts with them and teases them she wants to have sex, and that a claim of rape just means that she changed her mind afterwards. There are also guys that just don't care what a woman wants or feels, they just want to "score", and will do whatever is necessary in order to achieve that aim, including getting a girl drunk. A lot of guys don't even realize that it is rape if you have sex with someone who is drunk. What is even worse is that somehow it seems like men who are predators end up making friends with others of similar beliefs, and then they help to support each other and validate their actions. In order to overcome the misconceptions that guys have in regard to women and sex, it might be helpful if efforts focused on rape prevention at college also included some instruction for men on what is considered rape.

One of the largest risk factors for acquaintance rape is the drinking of alcohol. Although rape is not caused by alcohol, alcohol makes for situations where this is more likely to happen, so alcohol use should definitely be discussed in any programs for rape prevention at college. Studies have shown that in three fourths of rapes in college the victim, the assailant, or both had been drinking prior to the assault. Drinking alcohol causes inhibitions to be lowered, meaning that women might be more likely to go into an isolated location with a guy, and a guy might be more likely to act on sexual urges (regardless of resistance by the woman). It also makes miscommunication a lot more likely. Women might not realize that guys are reading more into what they are saying than they would like them to, or the fact that a guy might be urging her to drink more than she should. Some guys think that if a woman drinks she is more likely to have sex, and some guys use the fact that they are drunk to excuse behavior that they know is wrong. Alcohol also makes it so that a woman is less physically capable of resisting a rape attempt, which is why most rapists admit that they try to get potential victims drunk. Unfortunately, a lot of people in society today still think that if a woman was drinking she is more responsible for the rape than if she wasn't drinking.

Two groups of men are commonly thought to be more likely to be involved in rapes. These are college athletes and fraternity members. In the case of athletes, they are popular stars on campus, and have a lot of groupies available to them. They also, in some cases, think that the rules do not really apply to them. This can make for a dangerous combination. With fraternities, there is a lot of binge drinking and parties, where there are a lot of women available. There is also a tie between brothers which sometimes makes them loath to turn in a fellow brother. More than half of gang rapes on campuses have been shown to happen in fraternity houses, a fact which has led many fraternities to require that chapter members get some education on alcohol consumption and sexual assault to try to minimize the chances of this happening. Some fraternities have gone so far as to require their chapters to be dry houses. Efforts toward rape prevention at college should include education aimed toward these groups about what is considered acceptable behavior, and the consequences of unacceptable sexual behavior.

Schools are required to make efforts to prevent crimes from happening. However, rapes are so uncommonly reported that not as much is being done about this as what should be. Since rapes by strangers generate so much publicity, this is where most of the efforts toward rape prevention at college are aimed at making this sort of rape less likely. There is very little money spend toward acquaintance rape prevention at college. Instead more lighting is installed, buildings are locked, foliage is trimmed, installing cameras in garages, providing shuttle service late at night, having students patrol the grounds, and installing phones for emergencies around campus. A more effective approach to rape prevention at college would be to study where, when, by who, and how these rapes are occurring so they can take action to prevent further occurrences and limit repeat offenses. In order for this to work well though victims need to report rapes more often, even if they do in anonymously. Schools might be advised to set up a system for reporting rapes anonymously so they can collect the relevant data to use for activities for rape prevention at college.

The statistics that we have been mentioning about rape are general statistics. The situation at each college and university is different. In order to design effective programs for rape prevention at college, you need to find out more information about the situation at your school. Anonymous surveys might be the best way to do this since many victims do not want to report that they have been victims of this crime. The more information you can collect, the more accurate you can make your program for rape prevention at college.

In order to get useful information, you need to ask the right questions. You need to find out information on how many students at the school are victims of rape (including whether the rape was before college or during college), how many of these occurred at the school, how they were related to the assailant, whether or not it was reported (and if not, why not), whether alcohol or drugs were involved (and whose choice was it that they were involved), why were they raped, and had they attended any programs on rape prevention at college. Students who leave school should also be given the survey to find out whether or not this might be a reason for them leaving school, as well as to get a more accurate tally of rapes on campus. These questions will give you a general idea of how much of a problem rape is at your school, and whether or not alcohol is usually involved.

More specific information on when and where the rapes occurred is also important to collect. You should find out what time of day or night the rapes occurred, what day of the week they occurred, and at what point during the school year they occurred. You also want to figure out where on campus they occurred, whether or not any particular places have a reputation as being rape locations and why, and what event (if any) preceded the rape. These questions will help to determine whether or not there are any patterns in regard to time and location of the rapes that occur on campus. The people can be advised appropriately during programs on rape prevention at college.

The next category of information that it is important to collect in your survey is information on the rapists. What group do these people belong to? If they are students, what year are they and are they participants in any team sports or groups like fraternities? Or are they faculty members or other non-student males? Are there any groups who have parties that are known to be more or less safe to attend in terms of the likelihood of rape? You want to make sure that programs for rape prevention at college are aimed toward the groups that are at the highest risk, and you want to make sure that any punishments are publicized so that as many of the likely assailants as possible hear about them, as this might deter potential rapists.

Once you have surveyed the students and analyzed the information that you received, it is important to use this information to help you evaluate your current programs for rape prevention at college. You can see where you are doing a good job, and where you need to make changes in order to do a better job when it comes to rape prevention at college.

The evaluation of your current efforts toward rape prevention at college should include information in the following areas: the amount of money spent toward prevention of acquaintance rape versus the amount of money spent toward prevention of stranger rape, whether campus police or school officials provide security anywhere that acquaintance rapes have occurred, and whether investigators use lack of consent in order to determine whether or not a rape occurred. It is also important to make sure that the right groups are attending your programs for rape prevention at college, and that these programs provide accurate information that addresses the problem areas at your college. You want to make sure your program for rape prevention at college is focused on behavioral change, and that it is offered in a timely manner to prevent rapes. It is important to continue evaluating the situation and the program on rape prevention at college so that you can make sure that it is effective for rape prevention at college. The number of rapes that occur should go down. In order for the program on rape prevention at college to be the most helpful, it needs to provide women with actions that they can take in risky situations in order to prevent rapes from occurring. Finally, you need to make sure that the college has effective punishment policies for offenders, and that these policies are well known and enforced. The people in charge of enforcing these policies and taking disciplinary action need to be informed about the exact nature of the problem on campus (as well as the facts on what is considered rape and who should be punished).

Since acquaintance rape is hard to deal with and usually consists of conflicting accounts of what happened, most schools have been choosing to focus on prevention. However, since most of their efforts involve things such as self defense classes and making changes to environmental factors such as adding cameras, lighting, and locks, this tends to give people the impression that stranger rape is more important to them, and more real of a threat. Efforts for rape prevention at college need to make sure to focus just as much on efforts to prevent acquaintance rape in order to avoid giving this impression.

Programs for rape prevention at college need to be created so that they are educational, and so that they promote behavior change as well as a change in attitude. It is not enough for them to be offered just once, they need to be given before the times of the highest prevalence of rapes, as well as periodically throughout the year to reinforce the message. The content should be aimed toward the groups with the highest risk of being raped. Finally, proper evaluations are a must so that it can be determined whether or not the programs are reaching the right people, and whether or not they are effective in preventing rapes, especially acquaintance rapes since these tend to be the most prevalent on college campuses.

Women ages 16 to 24 experience rape at rates four times higher than the assault rate of all women, making the college (and high school) years the most vulnerable for women. College women are more at risk for rape and other forms of sexual assault than women the same age but not in college.<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that almost 25 percent of college women have been victims of rape or attempted rape since the age of 14. Rape rates vary to some extent by school, type of school and region, suggesting that certain schools and certain places within schools are more rape-prone than others.

Some features of the college environment—frequent unsupervised parties, easy access to alcohol, single students living on their own, and the availability of private rooms—may contribute to high rape rates of women college students.

The most recent large-scale study, including students at both two- and four-year colleges, found 35 rapes per 1,000 female students over seven months (rape was defined as unwanted completed penetration by force or threat of force). Based on this study, a college with 10,000 women students could experience 350 rapes a year. This conflicts with official college data. In 1999, reported forcible and non-forcible sexual offenses totaled 2,469 incidents for all U.S. college campuses combined, underscoring the low levels of rape reporting. Stranger rape of college students is less

common than acquaintance rape. Ninety percent of college women who are victims of rape or attempted rape know their assailant.. The attacker is usually a classmate, friend, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, or other acquaintance (in that order).

Most acquaintance rapes do not occur on dates; rather they occur when two people are otherwise in the same place (e.g., at a party, studying together in a dorm room). Thus, date rape (rape that occurs during or at the end of a date) is not the appropriate term to describe the majority of acquaintance rapes of college women, as date rapes account for only 13 percent of college rapes (although they make up 35 percent of attempted rapes). Gang rape of college women (multiple men taking turns raping a woman) is also a problem, although to a lesser extent than even date rape.

### **Victim Underreporting**

Fewer than 5 percent of college women who are victims of rape or attempted rape report it to police. However, about two-thirds of the victims tell someone, often a friend (but usually not a family member or college official). In one study, over 40 percent of those raped who did not report the incident said they did not do so because they feared reprisal by the assailant or others. In addition, some rape victims may fear the emotional trauma of the legal process itself. Low reporting, however, ensures that few victims receive adequate help, most offenders are neither confronted nor prosecuted, and colleges are left in the dark about the extent of the problem. Many acquaintance rape victims (using the legal definition of rape) do not label their assault as rape.† Perhaps it seems unimaginable that an acquaintance would rape them, and victims often initially blame themselves.

- Acquaintance rape victims offer a range of reasons for not reporting the rape to authorities:
- embarrassment and shame
- fear of publicity
- fear of reprisal from assailant
- fear of social isolation from the assailant's friends
- fear that the police will not believe them
- fear that the prosecutor will not believe them or will not bring charges
- self-blame for drinking or using drugs before the rape
- self-blame for being alone with the assailant, perhaps in one's own or the assailant's residence
- mistrust of the campus judicial system
- fear that their family will find out.

Some police officers believe that there is an unusually high rate of false rape reports (by both college students and the general population of women). The FBI does not separately track false reports; it tracks only the total number of unfounded reports. The category of unfounded consists of both baseless cases—in which the elements of the crime were never met—and false reports. Unfounded rape reports account for 8 percent of total reported rapes; however, this number is

questionable. Some police officers incorrectly think that a rape report is unfounded or false if any of the following conditions apply:

- the victim has a prior relationship with the offender (including having previously been intimate with him)
- the victim used alcohol or drugs at the time of the assault
- there is no visible evidence of injury
- the victim delays disclosure to the police and/or others and does not undergo a rape medical exam and/or
- the victim fails to immediately label her assault as rape and/or blames herself.†

### **Types of Acquaintance Rape**

In examining the problem of acquaintance rape of college students (which, as noted, accounts for 90 percent of college rapes), it is important to define the subproblems for analysis, investigation and prevention purposes. Among them are:

- party rape (can also include gang rape)
- date rape (usually takes place in the victim's or offender's residence or in a car after the date)
- rape in a non-party and non-date situation (e.g., while studying together)
- rape by a former intimate; and

rape by a current intimate

In each case, the offender's behavior before the attack and the contributing environmental factors during the attack may be different.† For instance, the typical party rape occurs at an off-campus house or on- or off-campus fraternity and involves the offender's plying a woman with alcohol or targeting an intoxicated woman. Environmental factors that could facilitate the rape include easy access to alcohol, availability of a private room, loud music that drowns out the woman's calls, and, potentially, a cover-up by the house's residents, who may choose to maintain group secrecy over reporting the rape. By contrast, a date rape typically involves two people who are just becoming acquainted, and the offender rapes the woman in a car or residence after the date. [Stranger rapes tend to occur in isolated areas of campus (e.g., parking lots or campus garages) or in the woman's dorm room. In these cases, the victim usually has not drunk any alcohol, and there is no prior relationship or even acquaintance between the victim and the rapist.]

### **When Is Rape Most Likely**

College students are the most vulnerable to rape during the first few weeks of the freshman and sophomore years.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the first few days of the freshman year are the riskiest, limiting the value of any rape prevention programs that begin after that. Research has shown that rapes of college women tend to occur after 6 p.m., and the majority occurs after midnight.



## **Geographic Patterns**

Thirty-four percent of completed rapes and 45 percent of attempted rapes take place on campus. Almost 60 percent of the completed campus rapes that take place on campus occur in the victim's residence, 31 percent occur in another residence, and 10 percent occur in a fraternity.

## **Victim Injuries**

Only 20 percent of college rape victims have additional injuries, most often bruises, black eyes, cuts, swelling, or chipped teeth.<sup>22</sup> Thus, investigative practices should be modified to obtain more subtle evidence of lack of consent, rather than just use of force.

## **Victim Resistance**

Slightly more than 50 percent of college rape and attempted rape victims use force against their assailant, and 50 percent tell the person to stop. Most victims try to stop a rape by doing one of the following: using force, telling the assailant to stop, screaming, begging, or running away.

## **Fear of Rape**

The fear of rape is widespread among college women, although they fear stranger rape more than acquaintance rape, even though the latter is much more common. College women—even those aware of acquaintance rape's pervasiveness—take more precautions to guard against stranger rape—even if they have been a victim of acquaintance rape.

## **Psychological Harm to Victims**

Acquaintance rape victims suffer the same psychological harms as stranger-rape victims: shock, humiliation, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, loss of self-esteem, social isolation, anger, distrust of others, fear of AIDS, guilt, and sexual dysfunction. College acquaintance rape victims face additional consequences. Many drop out of school<sup>27</sup> because, if they stay, they might regularly face their attacker in class, in their dorm, in the dining hall, or at campus functions and events. Since most victims do not report, colleges cannot intervene to protect them from encountering their attackers.

## **Societal Attitudes About Acquaintance Rape**

During the 1990s, researchers found that attitudes about acquaintance rape victims improved. However, in general, college students, campus administrators, police, prosecutors, judges, and juries still overwhelmingly view and treat acquaintance rape less seriously than stranger rape, sustaining the myth that stranger rape is real rape, while acquaintance rape is less serious and less harmful. College studies still find that many on campus, both men and women, have little understanding of acquaintance rape because, as discussed below, it is a much more complex crime than stranger rape. Rape myths allow us to believe that a real rape is one in which a victim is raped by a stranger who jumps out of the bushes with a weapon, and in which she fought back, was beaten and bruised, reported the event to the police, and had medical evidence collected immediately. In a real rape, the victim has never had sex with the assailant before, is preferably a virgin, was not intoxicated, was not wearing seductive clothing, and has a good reputation. Unfortunately, acquaintance sexual assaults contain few, if any, of those elements. In many acquaintance rape situations, the victim had been drinking, did voluntarily go with the man to his apartment or room, was not threatened with a weapon, did not fight back, did not report the event to the police immediately, did not have medical evidence collected, and may have even had sex with the assailant voluntarily before.

## **Risk Factors Associated With Acquaintance Rape**

Understanding the factors that contribute to your problem will help you frame your own local analysis questions, determine good effectiveness measures, recognize key intervention points, and select appropriate responses. Acquaintance rape is less random and more preventable than stranger rape. A woman's condition or behavior does not cause rape, but certain factors appear to increase a woman's vulnerability to it:

- frequently drinking enough to get drunk;
- drinking to the point of being unable to resist forceful sexual advances
- using drugs and/or drinking (both the victim and the assailant)
- having previously been the victim of sexual assault, before the start of the school year
- being single
- engaging in social activities with sexually predatory men
- being at an isolated site
- miscommunicating about sex
- holding less conservative attitudes about sexual behavior

## **Repeat Victimization**

Numerous studies of campus rape have found that a small number of victims are repeat victims. One of the largest studies to date found that 22 percent of college rape victims had been victimized before. College women most at risk of rape are those who were previously victims of childhood or teen sexual assault. Prior victims are nearly twice as likely to be raped in college as those with no previous history of sexual assault. Adolescent/young adult victimization is the most robust risk factor for victimization in the college years, and victimization in one semester predicts victimization in the following semester. Some researchers believe that college men can sense out women who are less able to defend themselves, or target women whose behavior (e.g., binge drinking) weakens their credibility.

## **Repeat Offending**

It is unknown how many college rapists are repeat offenders. Most college acquaintance rapists go unpunished (in part because reporting is so low), so the number of serial offenses is difficult to determine. However, one study found that 96 college men accounted for 187 rapes, suggesting that further research may establish that serial rapists are a common component of the acquaintance rape problem. Lack of reporting complicates the problem, since it may prevent colleges from identifying and ridding themselves of their most dangerous students.

## **Why Some College Men Rape**

In studies in the early 1980s and 1990s, approximately one-third of college men reported they would

rape a woman if they knew they would not get caught. Given the number of college women raped, researchers have tried to explain the problem's prevalence:

- Some men have stereotypic views of women's sexual behavior. In light of the high number of rapes, researchers believe that rape is not the product of psychopathic behavior; rather it is the product of mainstream beliefs about women's role in sexual situations. For example, many men are socialized to believe that women initially resist sexual advances to preserve their reputation and, because of this, prefer to be overcome sexually. If a woman says no, a man is to proceed as if she said yes. In addition, some men believe that if a woman is a tease or loose, she is asking for sex. If she then claims rape, she changed her mind after the fact. Such men generally believe that most rapes are false reports.
- Some college men have sexist attitudes and seek sexual conquests. Some men simply do not care about women's feelings. They have learned that what counts, in the popular sports term invariably adopted...is that they 'score.'  
Some men see alcohol as a tool for sexual conquest. While alcohol use does not cause rape, alcohol abuse is strongly related to abuse of women. In addition, many college men may be unaware that having sex with someone who is drunk is rape.
- Some men receive peer support for sexually abusive behavior. Sexually abusive men often are friends with and loyal to other sexually abusive men and get peer support for their behavior, fostering and legitimizing it.<sup>50</sup> During the 1980s and 1990s, a series of rapes in fraternity houses, and subsequent cover-ups by fraternity members, suggested to researchers that certain all-male living arrangements foster unhealthy environments conducive to rape.

### **Alcohol's Role in Acquaintance Rape**

Alcohol appears to play a large role in acquaintance rape, although it is not the cause. Research indicates that in over three-quarters of college rapes, the offender, the victim or both had been drinking.<sup>52</sup> Researchers provide several explanations for alcohol's presence in so many rapes: Men expect to become more sexualized when drinking. Men view the world in a more sexualized manner than women do and, consequently, are more likely than women to interpret ambiguous cues as evidence of sexual intent.

- Alcohol increases misperceptions because it reduces a person's capacity to analyze complex stimuli. Alcohol (and drug) use increases the risk that men and women will misinterpret messages between them.
- Some men believe in stereotypes about women and drinking. Some men believe that women who drink are more sexually available than those who do not.
- Some men use alcohol as a justification or an excuse. Some men use alcohol to justify or excuse acting out, misbehaving or committing a crime.
- Alcohol causes poor sending and receiving of friendly and sexual cues. While drinking alcohol, a woman may not notice her date's persistent attempts to get her into an isolated location or encourage her to consume even more alcohol. In one study, 75% of the acknowledged date rapists interviewed said that they sometimes got women drunk in order to increase the likelihood of having sex with them.
- Alcohol decreases women's ability to resist rape. Alcohol slows motor functions, reducing the likelihood that a woman can verbally or physically resist a rapist. Research has found that

when alcohol or drugs are involved in acquaintance rape—which is frequently the case—peers tend to hold women more responsible for the rape, and men less responsible for it.

### **Athletic Teams, Fraternities and Acquaintance Rape**

College athletes are disproportionately reported to campus judicial officers for acquaintance rape. It is unclear whether they actually offend more, or whether students tend to report them more (perhaps angered by athletes' esteemed and privileged status). On some campuses, revenue-generating athletes (usually football and basketball players) may believe they are immune to campus rules (and sometimes are), and take advantage of groupies or other women they perceive as sexually interested in them. As for fraternities, a disproportionate number of documented gang rapes involve fraternity members. Research on reported gang rapes committed by college students from 1980 to 1990 found that fraternity members committed 55 percent of them. Fraternities often have a unique place on campus; they are typically housed in private residences (with many private rooms) and hold large unsupervised parties, often with free-flowing alcohol. Some fraternity members approve of getting a woman drunk to have sex. This, combined with some fraternities' emphasis on loyalty above identifying members who rape, has put fraternities in the center of controversy because a disproportionate number of reported rapes occur on their property. A number of researchers believe that certain fraternities, because of their practices, are more rape prone than others, placing sorority members (and other frequent women attendees at fraternity parties) at greater risk of rape. Some researchers also believe that binge drinking makes certain fraternity's high risk for rape. Many national Greek organizations now require education for their local chapters concerning sexual assault and alcohol consumption, and some now mandate dry houses.

### **Legal Obligations of Colleges**

The more that acquaintance rape remains a hidden crime, the less incentive that schools have to invest sufficiently in its prevention. Stranger rape results in dramatic and unwelcome publicity for colleges. Administrators try to prevent such victimization by putting cameras in parking garages, running late-night student escort and/or shuttle services, deploying student patrols, placing emergency telephones throughout campus, locking buildings to prevent strangers from entering, trimming obstructive foliage, and improving the lighting in dark or less-traveled areas. The costs of these prevention initiatives far exceed the dollars spent on acquaintance rape prevention, even though acquaintance rape is a much more likely occurrence. Increased reporting—even anonymous reporting—may push colleges to further invest in more effective acquaintance rape prevention. Colleges have a legal duty to warn students of known risks and to provide reasonable protection. If a crime is foreseeable, then a college can be held liable for not sufficiently protecting against it. As noted, acquaintance rape is the most common violent crime on college campuses. If acquaintance rape(s) occur at predictable times and places, the school must make reasonable efforts to prevent a recurrence; and the school may be liable if it fails to deal effectively with repeat student offenders, including rapists, whose conduct eventually results in more damage.<sup>1</sup>

### **Understanding Your Local Problem**

The information provided is only a generalized description of acquaintance rape of college students. You must combine the basic facts with a more specific understanding of your local problem. Analyzing the local problem carefully will help you design a more effective response strategy.

### **Asking the Right Questions**

The following are some critical questions you should ask in analyzing your particular acquaintance rape problem at the college you are interested in, even if the answers are not always readily

available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you choose the most appropriate set of responses later on.

- How many reported rape victims does the college have?
- What percentage of the reported incidents are acquaintance rapes?
- What percentage of female victims are raped by college students?
- How many of the college's students have been acquaintance rape victims in the past two years, but did not report? A two-year period can provide useful trend data. A victimization survey may be the best means to capture this information. It may also be valuable in revealing reasons for not reporting.
- Were the victims previously raped during college? If so, where and when? Were the victims previously raped before attending college? Police should also ask college counselors to pose these questions to all rape victims who come to their attention, and to track this information each year in order to tailor rape prevention programs.
- What is the offenders' relationship to the victims (e.g., boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, dorm mate, classmate, stranger)?
- Did the acquaintance rape victims drink alcohol or use drugs before the assaults? If so, what kind and how much? Did they do so at the offenders' insistence or encouragement?
- What reasons do the victims give for the rapes? A survey may include optional answers such as those listed below, allowing the victim to check all that apply:
  - \_\_\_ "He did not listen to me."
  - \_\_\_ "He did not respect my wishes."
  - \_\_\_ "We were both drunk."
  - \_\_\_ "He kept giving me drinks."
  - \_\_\_ "He drugged me."
- Did the victims attend any rape prevention programs before the assaults?
- Does the college conduct exit interviews of non-returning students that include questions about, among other things, whether the students were raped?

### **Locations/Times**

- Where did the acquaintance rapes occur? The victimization survey may be the best way to get this information. Possible answers should be listed and might include the offender's residence hall room, the victim's residence hall room, a fraternity house bedroom, a fraternity house bathroom, a sorority house, a car, a college-sponsored party, a nonstudent party, etc.
- Who owns the premises or locations where the rapes occurred?
- Do certain campus fraternities have reputations as places where rapes occur? If so, why?

- What specific event preceded the rapes (e.g., fraternity party, intercollegiate athletic party or game, college sponsored party, residence hall party, date, drinking at a bar)?
- At what times and on what days did most of the rapes occur?

Based on the victimization survey, when do the rapes cluster (e.g., the first week of school; the first month of school, but not the first week; the first semester of school, but not the first month; spring break; the beginning of the sophomore year)?

### **Offenders**

- Who are the offenders (e.g., freshmen, sophomores, non-students, fraternity members, athletes)?
- Are rape prevention programs targeted, tailored and timely enough to address the offender group(s)?
- Are certain campus fraternities or athletic teams thought to have parties that are high or low risk for rape? A survey of the college's women may help to identify high-risk groups.
- Have the high-risk groups attended rape prevention programs?
- Are the sanctions against potential offenders sufficiently publicized to reach the targeted group(s)?

### **Current Responses**

- How much money has the college invested in preventing stranger rape compared with preventing acquaintance rape?
- Does the college or do campus police have a security role at any of the places or functions (on or off campus) where acquaintance rapes have occurred?
- Are current investigative methods designed to counter the most predictable defense in acquaintance rape: consent?
- Does the rape prevention program provided by the college or by campus or municipal police specifically address that college's problem? Does the curriculum contain valid information?
- Is the curriculum designed to focus on behavioral change? Has the program reduced the number of reported and unreported acquaintance rapes? Has the program been evaluated?
- Are the right people attending the program?
- Is the program timely enough to prevent most acquaintance rapes? Is the information provided sufficient to stop the different types of acquaintance rape from occurring?
- Does the curriculum provide potential victims with skills to deal with a variety of risky situations (e.g., at parties, in cars at the end of dates, in encounters in an apartment, when the man or woman is drinking heavily)?

- Do the college's rules effectively address acquaintance rape? Does the college enforce the rules?
- Are the people who make disciplinary decisions about acquaintance rape educated about the problem, including the temporal, geographic, victimization, and offending patterns for the college?
- Are police and college public safety officers adequately educated about the exact nature of the problem at the college?
- Are college officials and public safety officers trained concerning the UCR's "unfounded" category, and do they understand that certain conditions (e.g., the victim's intoxication or prior intimate relationship with the offender) do not allow for "unfounding" a case? Do campus judiciary decisions in acquaintance rape cases properly reflect this?

### **General Considerations About Acquaintance Rape Prevention Programs**

Because acquaintance rape of college students often involves conflicting accounts of what occurred and, without the help of witnesses, determining which account is more credible, tailored prevention is the primary approach police, especially campus police, should use. Typically, the campus police role in rape prevention consists of providing self-defense training, doing environmental assessments of outdoor areas vulnerable to rape, and recommending the installation of cameras, lights, locks, etc. There is a strong argument that these approaches do not focus on preventing the most prevalent type of campus rape: acquaintance rape. If campus police predominantly invest in such approaches, the message to students is that "real rape" is stranger rape, and that is what police prevent, while acquaintance rape prevention is left to other campus departments or student organizations.

Educational programs should involve multiple intervention efforts, with repeated and reinforced exposure to the issue. Police and other trained professionals should conduct the programs before the most high-risk times, and again at later intervals, tailoring them to high-risk groups.

Programs should focus on changing behavior, not just attitudes, and program evaluations must be done to determine if the various components are effective for your particular population.