

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a term that addresses a whole spectrum of unwanted behaviors, from verbal harassment to sexual assault and rape. What all these actions have in common is that they are unwanted – that is, the victim has not consented to them. Men and women both experience sexual violence, although women are victimized at significantly higher rates.

Rape and Sexual Assault

According to the Department of Justice, 20 – 25% of women and 15% of men experience forced sex during their time in college. A common rape myth is that the majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by strangers. A 2005 National Institute of Justice study shows that 80% of the victims know the rapist. Alcohol or other drugs are involved in approximately 60% of all sexual assault situations. The most commonly used date rape drug is alcohol, but other drugs (such as Rohypnol (Roofies), GHB, or even over the counter medications like Benedryl) are sometimes combined with alcohol to render the victim helpless.

Sex without Consent Is a Crime

Consent is defined by Stony Brook University as the agreement to engage in specific sexual contact; this may be given by verbal agreement or active and willing participation in the sexual activity. Silence, previous sexual relationships, current relationships, or the use of alcohol and/or drugs cannot be taken as an indication of consent. The use of force, threat of force, threat of immediate or future harm, or use of physical intimidation to secure compliance with sexual activity implies lack of consent. Although consent may be initially given, it may be revoked at any point, either verbally, through physical resistance, or by losing consciousness. Failure to respond promptly to a withdrawal of consent constitutes sexual assault. Consent cannot be given if an individual is under the age of 17, physically helpless, mentally incapacitated, and impaired and/or incapacitated because of drug or alcohol intoxication. If a person is unconscious or their judgment is impaired by alcohol or drugs, they cannot give consent. The offender is responsible for their actions no matter how intoxicated they, themselves, may be.

It is really important to understand that no one deserves to get sexually assaulted or “asks” for it. It is not the survivor’s fault. If you or someone you care about experiences any form of violence, Stony Brook is here... If someone tells you about their experience, be supportive and refer them to available help on campus.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted within the last 96 hours you are entitled to receive FREE comprehensive medical treatment and forensic evaluation at the Stony Brook University Medical Center SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) Center. You do not need parental consent, health insurance, or police involvement to receive this service.

Also, you can reach out for confidential support and counseling services at the Center for Prevention and Outreach / Counseling and Psychological Services at 631-632-9666 or 631-632-6720 any time after the assault. For more information, go to www.stonybrook.edu/besafe .

