Why is it important to think about violence prevention?

According to research, there is an increased risk of sexual assault while traveling abroad. One study found that while abroad, 27.5% of women reported experiencing unwanted touching, 6% reported experiencing an attempted sexual assault, and 4.6% reported rape. (Kimble, Flack, & Burbridge, 2012)

ALL genders should be aware of and concerned about these statistics. Sexual assault is not gender-specific (it can happen to anyone). If you know someone who has been sexually assaulted, you can be an ally. You may be able to support them or connect them to resources.

It’s never your fault. Sexual assault happens because people choose to behave in sexually oppressive and violent ways. If you or someone you know is sexually assaulted, it was not your fault; the person who chose to perpetrate sexual violence is the person who is responsible.

Safety & Prevention Tips

There may be ways for you and your friends to feel an increased sense of safety and empowerment.

Learn about local customs ahead of time. Think about gender customs and common dating practices. Define what is considered appropriate within the culture. Be sensitive to these customs, in terms of your own behavior, but don’t feel pressured to sacrifice your personal sense of safety or comfort for the sake of cultural sensitivity.

Identify a unique safety plan. Learn about your resources and know who you can contact in case of an emergency.

Drink responsibly. Alcohol does not cause sexual assault, but it can be used as a tool by a potential perpetrator. Consider setting a “drink limit” ahead of time and/or asking a trusted friend to stick with you throughout the time you are drinking.

Consider using the buddy system. You have the right to explore on your own, but it may be helpful to have someone you know and trust by your side.

Listen to your intuition or your “gut feeling.” Set your own personal boundaries (physical and emotional guidelines). When someone crosses a boundary, an internal “alarm” may go off. Pay attention to this “alarm” and if something doesn’t seem right or doesn’t feel right, consider removing yourself from the situation.

What should you do if you’ve been assaulted or harassed?

Find a safe place and a trusted person in your location; Call a friend or family member for additional support. Call an identified help line or contact an emergency organization. Contact local police as soon as possible if you’d like to report the incident. You may also be able to report to WWU. Also consider seeking support when you return:

- CASAS (360)650-3700 • WWU Counseling Center (360)650-3164 • Student Health Center (360)650-3400 •


www.nafsa.org