

## Sexual Harassment: Education, Awareness and Resources

Suffolk County Community College is dedicated to providing an environment conducive to intellectual and personal growth. For the College, this means maintaining a firm institutional commitment to the highest standards of professional and interpersonal behavior and respect among members of the community. Thus, there is zero tolerance for any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by both State and Federal law. No member of the College community should tolerate sexual harassment from a campus visitor, faculty member, colleague, supervisor, student or any other member of the College community.

### Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined in the *Student Handbook* as 1) a person's use of power or authority to elicit sexual submission or 2) unwelcome sexual conduct, or conduct directed at a person because of his or her sex that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for working or learning. Sexual harassment can include a wide range of behaviors, from the actual coercing of sexual relations, or the attempt thereof, to the unwelcome emphasizing of sexual identity. Students are encouraged to refer to the full definition of sexual harassment as is outlined in the *Student Handbook*. Clearly, sexual assault is a serious form of sexual harassment. Sexual assault is one of the most frequently committed crimes and the most unreported. Acquaintance rape, a form of sexual assault that occurs between people who know each other, is in fact more common on college and university campuses than stranger rape. Acquaintance rape is just as serious as any other form of sexual abuse.

### Sexual Offenses

No one wants to think about sexual offenses. It can make you feel angry, sad, frightened, embarrassed or uncomfortable; but one cannot ignore the subject. One can not assume with certainty that sexual assaults, rape or harassment will not take place. One can not assume that victims of sexual assault are limited to a particular sex. Sexual assault occurs regardless of one's sexual orientation.

**Rape.** If a person engages in nonconsensual sexual intercourse through physical force, coercion, incapacitation or threat-actual or implied- the act is considered rape in New York State. Sexual intercourse is defined as any penetration. A person who is mentally incapacitated, a minor, asleep, physically helpless or impaired due to drug or alcohol consumption or unconscious is considered unable to consent. If sexual intercourse takes place without consent for any reason, it is considered rape, which is a felony in New York State.

**Sexual Abuse.** If a man or woman is forced to engage in any form of sexual contact other than vaginal intercourse, under the circumstances mentioned above, it is considered sexual abuse. If penetration is involved (other than vaginal), it is considered sodomy, also a felony in New York State.

### Prevention

Your safety and well-being depend mostly on you:

**Be Alert.** Just being aware of the possibility of becoming a victim is the first step to prevent becoming a victim. Trust your instincts and react to any signs that make you uneasy.

**Reduce your risk.** If you have any doubt as to what you should or should not be doing, just imagine yourself as a potential victim and ask yourself, "How can I avoid the dangerous situation?"

**Remember.** You can err on either of two extremes: by neglecting prevention and by your overuse of caution. Those who don't take any prevention measures are certainly vulnerable. Yet those who drastically alter their lifestyle for the sake of security become victims of fear and paranoia. People can become victims of a crime despite their best efforts.

## Prevention Tips

- Avoid working, studying or being alone in buildings or in isolated areas of the campus.
- Do not shower in an empty or unlocked gym shower.
- Use paths that are well-populated when you walk, bike or jog.
- Do not wear earphones while jogging or biking.
- Have your keys ready in your hand when going to your car. Do not place tags with your home address on your key ring.
- Always lock your car and close your car windows when you park and leave your car.
- Be cautious about dating someone you do not know well. Obtain information from a mutual acquaintance or meet together with other friends.
- Never agree to meet alone with a person who you met online.
- Avoid alcohol or drugs. Alcohol and drugs interfere with clear thinking and effective communication.
- Don't accept a drink or substance from someone who you do not know at a party, club or bar. In addition, do not leave a drink (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) unattended.
- Do not leave a club, bar or party with a person who you just met at the event.
- Know your sexual desires and limits. Communicate them clearly.

## Date Rape Drugs

Date rape drugs are becoming more and more common. Drugs such as Rohypnol (Roofies) and GHB can cause a person to pass out and forget events that occur while under the influence. These drugs are odorless, colorless and tasteless when placed into most drinks. Their effects can be compounded by alcohol. As mentioned above, do not accept a drink from anyone that you do not know. One should also be very careful if they set their drink down and leave it, even for a moment. If you find yourself in the presence of someone who you suspect might have ingested one of these drugs, you should get them medical attention as quickly as possible.

## The Internet

The Internet has become a source of information world-wide. While it is an effective communication tool, it can also be used for illegal practices. Never give out either your name or personal information on the internet to individuals that you do not know. Should you elect to meet an individual in person after meeting on the internet, it is strongly recommended that you meet them in a very public place, preferably with friends present.

## Advice for Victims of Sexual Assault

**Obtain medical care.** Have someone take you to the nearest hospital. It is important that any injuries be treated by competent medical professionals. It is also important that all physical evidence be obtained as soon as possible after the assault. Do not bathe, change clothes or throw any clothes away.

**Obtain professional support.** Victims of a sexual assault often feel guilt, anger, fear or grief. You need to obtain support from a trained professional to deal with both the physical and psychological trauma that you have experienced. There can be long term psychological effects including depression, phobias, unexplained behavior, unpredictable anger and even worse, self destructive tendencies. Victims are strongly encouraged to contact the Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk County (VIBS). VIBS will send an emergency room companion (ERC) to meet you at either your location or the hospital. ERC's are specially trained volunteers who provide emotional support and information to victims.

**Call the police.** Sexual Assault is a crime. Suffolk County Community College strongly recommends that all crimes be reported to local law enforcement. Law enforcement personnel can take a formal report at the hospital. It is critical that all information and evidence be obtained as soon as possible. Victims do not need to make the decision to press charges at the time of the report, but can instead defer that decision.

## **College and Community Resources**

Listed below are the offices on each campus and in the local community which can offer information, assistance and support to victims of a crime:

### **Ammerman Campus**

Counseling Center  
Rm. 209, Ammerman Bldg.  
451- 4053

Health Services  
Rm. 25, Kreiling Hall  
451-4047

Public Safety  
Basement, NFL Bldg.  
451-4212

Associate Dean of Student Services  
Rm. 200, Ammerman Bldg.  
451-4043

College Office of Student Affairs  
NFL Bldg., Rm. 120  
451-4737

### **Grant Campus**

Counseling Center  
Rm. 20 Caumsett Hall  
851-6250

Health Services  
Rm. 105, Captree Commons  
851-6709

Public Safety  
North Cottage  
851-6777

Associate Dean of Student Services Office  
Rm. 106 Caumsett Hall  
851-6760

### **Eastern Campus**

Counseling Center  
Rm. 122, Peconic Bld.  
548-2527

Health Services  
Rm. 115, Peconic Bld.  
548-2510

Public Safety  
Rm. 120, Shinnecock  
548-2573

Associate Dean of Student Services Office  
Rm. 224, Peconic Bld.  
548-2560

### **Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk**

360-3606

[www.vibs.org](http://www.vibs.org)

### **Response of Suffolk County**

A crisis hotline which provides 24-hour crisis information services

751-7500