

# **Risk Reduction for Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Violence**

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Victim-blaming is never appropriate, and Napa Valley College fully recognizes that only those who commit sexual misconduct are responsible for their actions. The following suggestions are being provided, as a proactive measure, to help individuals reduce their risk of being victimized, and their risk of committing acts of sexual misconduct.

## **Reducing the Risk of Victimization**

Make any limits/boundaries you may have known as early as possible.

Clearly and firmly articulate consent or lack of consent.

Remove yourself, if possible, from an aggressor's physical presence.

Reach out for help, either from someone who is physically nearby or by calling someone. People around you may be waiting for a signal that you need help.

Take affirmative responsibility for your alcohol and/or drug consumption. Alcohol

Clearly communicate your intentions to your potential sexual partners, and give them a chance to share their intentions and/or boundaries with you.

Respect personal boundaries. If you are unsure what's OK in any interaction, ask.

Avoid ambiguity. Don't make assumptions about consent, about whether someone is attracted to you, how far you can go with that person, or if the



knew the person who sexually victimized them. Most often, a boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, classmate, friend, acquaintance or co-worker sexually victimized the person. It is important to remember th

as most vulnerable to attack or over whom they believe they can assert power. Men and boys are also sexually assaulted, as well as persons with disabilities. Assumptions about the “typical” victim might lead others not to report the assault because they do not fit the stereotypical victim.

**Myth:** It’s only rape if the victim puts up a fight and resists.

**Fact:** Many states do not require the victim to resist in order to charge the offender with rape or sexual assault. Those who do not resist may feel if they do so, they will anger their attacker, resulting in more severe injury. Many assault experts say that victims should trust their instincts and intuition, and do what they believe will most likely keep them alive. Not fighting or resisting an attack does not equal consent.

**Myth:** Someone can only be sexually assaulted if a weapon was involved.

**Fact:** In many cases of sexual assault, a weapon is not involved. The offender often uses physical strength, physical violence, intimidation, threats, or a combination of these tactics to overpower the victim. Although the presence of a weapon while committing the assault may result in a higher penalty or criminal charge, the absence of a weapon does not mean that the offender cannot be held criminally responsible for a sexual assault.