

National Week of Action:

*A conversation toolkit for talking about
campus sexual assault*



Created by RAINN, the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization.
RAINN.org



One of "America's 100 Best Charities"
— *Worth* magazine

Dear Campus Organizer,

Thank you for joining the *It's On Us* National Week of Action (November 8 – 14). As a student leader, you can use this toolkit to guide your conversations about sexual violence and safety on campus. The resources included highlight the important role that students can play in keeping their friends safe and preventing sexual assault on campus.

Included in this toolkit, you'll find the following:

- Campus Safety Tips
- Protecting Your Friends
- How To Support a Friend After a Sexual Assault
- Understanding Consent
- Questions For Students, Administrators and Policymakers
- How To Get Involved Long-Term
- Social Media Content
- Hotline Info Cards (formatted for double-sided printing)

Thank you for working to end sexual violence on college campuses. We hope these resources spur conversations on campus and inspire change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Berkowitz".

Scott Berkowitz
President and Founder, RAINN

PS: Stay tuned to our [Facebook page](#) (facebook.com/RAINN01) in the coming weeks for additional updates and shareable graphics.

Getting Started: Campus Safety Tips

Your role in creating a safe space

College campuses can give you a sense of security—a feeling that everyone knows each other and watches out for one another. While no measure can absolutely guarantee safety, sexual violence can happen to anyone, and it's not the only crime that can occur on a college campus. Know how to care for yourself, no matter what the setting or situation.

Around Campus

- *Know your resources.* Who should you contact if you or a friend needs help? Where should you go? Locate resources such as the campus health center or campus police.
- *Stay alert.* When you're moving around on campus or in the surrounding neighborhood, stay aware of your surroundings. Consider inviting a friend to join you.
- *Make others earn your trust.* A college environment can foster a false sense of security. Give people time earn your trust before relying on them.

In Social Settings

It's possible to relax and have a good time while still making safety a priority. Consider these tips for staying safe and looking out for your friends in social settings.

- *Make a plan.* If you're going to a party, go with people you trust. Agree to watch out for each other and plan to leave together.
- *Watch your drink.* If you go to the bathroom or step outside, take the drink with you or toss it out—and offer to do the same for a friend. It's not always possible to know if something has been added to a drink.
- *Know your limits.* Keep track of how many drinks you've had, and be aware of your friends' behavior.

After an Assault

It's important to remember that if you are sexually assaulted on campus it is not your fault—help and support are available.

- *Make use of on-campus resources.* Colleges often provide a host of services to students for free, including security escorts, health centers, psychological services, and sexual assault services.
- *Request a schedule or housing change.* If you have classes with the perpetrator or live in the same building, request a change from your college administration. Federal laws, such as the Campus SaVE Act, require colleges to honor these requests.
- *Access off-campus support services.* If you are concerned about anonymity, you can seek out resources located off campus in the community, like a local sexual assault service provider or domestic violence shelter. Visit centers.rainn.org to locate one.



If you or someone you know has been affected by sexual violence, it's not your fault. You are not alone. Help is available 24/7 through RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE and online.rainn.org y en español a rainn.org/es. If you know a friend who is in immediate danger, call 911.

Protecting Your Friends

How you can prevent sexual assault and keep friends safe

You have a crucial role to play in keeping your friends safe. No matter what the setting, if you see something that doesn't feel quite right or see someone who might be in trouble, there are some simple things you can do to help out a friend.

What is a bystander?

A bystander is a person who is present when an event takes place but is not directly involved. Bystanders might be present when sexual assault occurs—or when it is about to occur. Use the C.A.R.E. acronym to remember four different ways you can intervene:

- **Create a distraction.** If you see a friend in a situation that doesn't feel quite right, create a distraction to give the person at risk a chance to get to a safe place. Try asking questions like: "Do you want to head to the bathroom with me?" or "Do you want to head to another party—or grab pizza?"
- **Ask directly.** If you see someone who looks uncomfortable or is at risk, step in. Don't be shy about directly asking the person if they need help or if they feel uncomfortable. Ask questions like, "Who did you come here with?" or "Would you like me to stay with you?"
- **Refer to an authority.** Sometimes the safest way to intervene is to refer to a neutral party with the authority to change the situation. Talk to the RA, bartender or other people in the area as reinforcements to help defuse a dangerous situation and get the at-risk person home safely.
- **Enlist others.** It can be intimidating to approach a situation alone. If you see someone who has had too much to drink or could be vulnerable, enlist a friend or bystander to try to get the at-risk person to a safe place.

*Even if you weren't around when the assault occurred, you can still support after an assault. For ways to support a friend, see RAINN's tip sheet "**Six Ways You Can Respond to a Survivor**", included in this conversation toolkit.*



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“Something happened to me.”

Six ways you can respond to a survivor

It can be difficult to hear that a friend has been sexually assaulted. But the reaction of the first people a survivor tells can significantly impact a survivor’s decision to move forward and get help. You can have a profoundly positive impact just by the language you use.

- 1. “I’m sorry this happened.”** Acknowledge their experience and how it affected their life. You can use words to show you empathize using phrases like, “This must be really tough for you” and “I’m so glad you are sharing this with me.”
- 2. “It’s not your fault.”** Survivors may blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind your friend—maybe even more than once—that they are not to blame.
- 3. “I believe you.”** It can be extremely difficult for people to come forward and share their story. They may feel ashamed or they may fear being blamed for the assault. So when someone shares their experience with you, the best thing you can do is to believe them.
- 4. “You are not alone.”** Remind your friend that you are there for them and willing to listen. Remind them that there are other people in their life who care and that there are service providers who will be able to support them as they recover from the experience.
- 5. “Are you open to receiving medical attention?”** Your friend might need medical attention, even if the event happened a while ago. You can ask, “Are you open to seeking medical care?” or offer to send them information about health resources on campus.
- 6. “You can trust me.”** If a survivor opens up to you, it means they trust you. Reassure that you won’t judge them and respect them by respecting their privacy. Before you share their story with others, make sure it’s okay with them. They may not be ready to take that step yet.
- 7. “This doesn’t change how I think of you.”** Some survivors are concerned that sharing what happened will change the way other people see them, especially a partner. Reassure the survivor that surviving sexual violence doesn’t change the way you think or feel about them.



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Q&A: Understanding Consent

What consent looks like—and what it doesn't

The laws about consent vary by state and situation. It can make the topic confusing, but you don't have to be a legal expert to understand how consent plays out in real life.

What is consent?

Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity.

What if I change my mind?

You can withdraw consent at any point if you feel uncomfortable. It's important to clearly communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. The best way to ensure both parties are comfortable with any sexual activity is to talk about it.

How does consent work in real life?

When you're engaging in sexual activity, consent is about communication. And it should happen every time. Consent might look or sound like this:

- Communicating when you change the type or degree of sexual activity with phrases like, "Is this OK?"
- Explicitly agreeing to certain activities, either by saying "yes" or another affirmative statement like, "I'm open to trying."
- Using physical cues to let the other person know you're comfortable taking things to the next level

What doesn't count as consent?

Some signs that consent has not been given:

- Refusing to acknowledge "no"
- Assuming that wearing certain clothes, flirting, or kissing is an invitation for anything more
- Someone being under the legal age of consent, as defined by the state
- Someone being incapacitated because of drugs or alcohol
- Pressuring someone into sexual activity by using fear or intimidation
- Assuming you have permission to engage in a sexual act because you've done it in the past

Note: If you need legal advice upon which you intend to rely in the course of your legal affairs, consult a competent, independent attorney.



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Feeling Pressured? 5 Ways to Respond

Remind yourself this isn't your fault. The person pressuring you is responsible—not you.

Trust your gut. Do only what feels right and is comfortable for you.

Have a code word. Develop a code with friends or family to signal if you need to get out of a situation.

It's okay to lie. Come up with an excuse to get out of a situation that feels uncomfortable.

Think of an escape route. If you had to leave quickly, how would you do it? Are there people around who could help? Identify exits.

Get Informed and Inspire Change:

Questions for students, administrators and policymakers

Consider the questions below to assess how well you, your college and your members of Congress are informed about campus safety resources and policies. During the *It's On Us* National Week of Action, here are some questions to get the conversation started.

Ask Yourself:

- Do you know where to send a friend in need of medical attention resulting from sexual assault?
- Do you know where to submit Title IX complaints?
- Do you know how to access 24/7 confidential support through National Sexual Assault Hotline?
- Do you know who you can talk to confidentially about sexual assault on campus?

Ask Your College Administrator(s):

- What training is available to students and staff about sexual assault?
- What happens if I report a sexual assault?
- Where can I find our school's policies and information about crimes on campus?
- How does this school protect the privacy and safety of those who come forward about a sexual assault?

Ask Your Member of Congress:

- Do you support the Campus Safety and Accountability Act (CASA) or other legislation regarding campus safety?
- Will you visit my campus and speak to students about your work on this issue?



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Take the Next Step:

Three ways you can make a difference

Looking for more ways to help survivors? Extend your efforts from the *It's On Us* National Week of Action to make an impact all yearlong by volunteering, supporting survivors and raise visibility of the issue on social media. Remember: no action is too small to make a difference for someone impacted by sexual violence.

1. Volunteer. Volunteer for your local sexual assault service provider or an on-campus organization.

- Search for volunteer opportunities at a center near you: volopps.rainn.org
- Contact your school's health or counseling center for on-campus opportunities.
- Survivors can join the **RAINN Speakers Bureau** to share their story with the public.

2. Support survivors. Ensure that survivors have access to the care they deserve through the National Sexual Assault Hotline.

- \$10 provides help for one survivor through the National Sexual Assault Hotline.
- Host a fundraiser or donation drive for RAINN with your friends or campus organization.
- Connect survivors with help using RAINN's free [print materials](#).

3. Become an online ambassador. Share crucial resources and engage your friends with the power of social media.

- Connect with RAINN on social media to stay informed on issues related to sexual assault: @RAINN01 on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).
- Sign up for **RAINNNews**, a monthly update about sexual assault issues.
- Share the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE and online.rainn.org) on social media to let even more people know that help is available.



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Social Media Content:

Help spread awareness on social media during the National Week of Action

Let's connect! Follow RAINN on social media via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#). Look for graphics from RAINN that you can share on social media.

Facebook:

- Ready for the #ItsOnUs National Week of Action? Get started by sharing ways to create a safe campus environment: <http://ow.ly/TR4Xq>. #ItsOnUs
- Do you have a friend or loved one who has been affected by sexual assault? Share RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800.656.HOPE and online.rainn.org. #ItsOnUs
- Show your support for survivors! Take a picture of yourself with the #ItsOnUs hashtag to commit to creating a safer, more supportive campus.
- Do you know how to respond to someone who discloses sexual assault? Read @RAINN01's tips for friends and loved ones: <http://ow.ly/TR6Hm>. #ItsOnUs
- See something? Speak up. Step in. #ItsOnUs to create a safe community at [college/university]. Learn more about how you can protect your friends at rainn.org.

Twitter:

- Know how to create a safe campus? Get started with these tips from @RAINN01: <http://ow.ly/TR4Xq>.
- #ItsOnUs to support survivors. Share @RAINN01's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800.656.HOPE and online.rainn.org.
- What does consent look like? RAINN explains: <http://ow.ly/TMaNv>. #ItsOnUs
- Need to talk? Reach out to @RAINN01's National Sexual Assault Hotline 24/7: online.rainn.org. #ItsOnUs
- Know how to step in when something doesn't look right: <http://ow.ly/TMxLU> #ShowYouCARE #ItsOnUs
- Do you know what to say when a friend has been raped? @RAINN01 has ideas to support a friend or loved one: ow.ly/sUYLM. #ItsOnUs



Get visual! Show us how your school is taking action by tagging @RAINN01 in your pictures on Pinterest and Instagram, along with the #ItsOnUs hashtag.

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On-campus resources:

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