



# SASARI.org

## Students Abroad Sexual Assault RESOURCE INITIATIVE

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**As a student traveling abroad you should have two emergency contacts in place. Please talk to them about the possibility of sexual assault and yourself. Say something along the lines of "I know there is a possibility that I could be sexually assaulted no matter where I am. I am doing everything I can to prevent this from happening, but I wanted to bring this subject up with you because if I were ever sexually assaulted I would want to be able to come to you." You can then direct them to the resources later on in the page, \* Helping Someone You Care About. Including your parents may be wise. It is important to know your sources of support in case the inconceivable happens..... 17**

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As the founder of SASARI and rape survivor, I thought that when I utilized the resources provided on my site, different organization's services, everything would magically just fall into place. What I was expecting and what I received were vastly different. I can say with confidence that everything has happened the way it was meant to be. For example, my rape statement wasn't complete after all. More needed to be revealed to me, there was more for me to remember. Or, the timing wasn't right and I can do it without their help after all. Surviving sexual violence is tough work, but I know how good it feels to heal from it too. When I think of a survivor I think of someone who can accomplish anything they set their mind to and can make a positive difference in the lives of those around them. Be your own advocate. You know yourself and what your needs are. Listen to yourself, but be willing to listen to others as well. You have been through a very traumatizing experience, but better things are in store for you! I have worked hard to gather the resources available to you and know in my heart that they can make a positive impact on your life in one way or another. I want to help set you up to succeed.

# Preventing Students Abroad Sexual Assault

## Introduction

Young adults are at an increased risk to be sexually assaulted no matter what they are doing with their lives. No one can guarantee security in the U.S. or abroad. Sexual assault is difficult under any circumstances, but if it happens while abroad there are special considerations that need to be taken into effect and it starts with a prevention mentality. A sexual assault victim can get support no matter where they are in the world. We are aware that sexual assault is a very under reported violent crime. I want to do my part to make sure students know their options and know they matter in regards to being sexually assaulted abroad. Please join me on this anti-sexual assault movement. We must do more with our hearts and heads/minds. We need to work together to reduce the rate of perpetration. Answer the question as to why people are using sexual violence against other people. Leadership is necessary especially in those who are in positions of power.

**It is important for you to know what to do if you have been sexually assaulted or if you're not sure that what happened to you was a sexual assault.**

**This is a human rights and civil rights issue.**

If you believe sexual assault can never happen to you you are at an increased risk of sexual assault.

When I studied abroad the idea that I could be the victim of sexual violence didn't even register. You never know what to fully expect when you study abroad.

When traveling abroad there is a lot of preparation work to do. You are probably very excited about the opportunity to explore a new country, culture, and perspective. Travel does involve potential vulnerability and danger. It is important that you learn about ways sexual assault may be prevented and to be prepared in case the inconceivable happens, you are sexually assaulted. If you are sexually assaulted abroad there may be additional obstacles including cultural, legal, and societal. Awareness and empowerment is important. The risk of sexual assault should not deter any student from traveling abroad.

Sexual assault is an issue of safety. Your safety is vital to having a positive, successful travel experience. We all want you to be safe and to make sure security best practices are in place.

I would encourage you to consider abstaining from sex while abroad. If you do decide to engage in sex, be sure to use a condom and be a responsible sexual partner. There are places in the world where there is a higher rate of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and hepatitis.

## **Dear General Population**

It is important that we believe people who confide in us or come forward as a sexual violence victim/survivor and support them. Help them find professional support. Never blame them.

It is important that we listen to victim/survivors and decrease barriers for the well being of everyone's future.

Anyone may be the victim of sexual assault. Sexual violence affects people of every age, sex, gender, race, sexual orientation, sexuality, ability, relationship status, and class/socio-economic status. Sexual assault can happen any time and any place. It is prevalent globally and no one is immune. While females are more susceptible to these kinds of incidents, male students should also exercise awareness.

Most men are not offenders, not only men offend, and people who sexually assault and abuse come from a very wide array of backgrounds.

We all have the same needs. Just revisit Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Every human being is unique and so is every act of sexual violence.

## Definitions and the Basics

For the purposes of SASARI **abroad** can be defined as...

adverb:

1. **in or to a foreign country or countries**
2. in or to another continent, as in overseas
3. away from one's home

noun:

1. foreign countries considered collectively

Sexual violence is about hurting, overpowering, or otherwise humiliating another. Most sexual assaults are planned ahead of time.

**Sexual assault:** non consensual contact (sexual, physical, verbal, or visual act)

**Rape:** non consensual penetration of the vagina, anus, or mouth by a penis or other object

Sexual assault occurs when a person does not or cannot consent to any kind of sexual activity.

The definitions and laws in regards to sexual violence varies depending on where you are located at the time.

Rape is not sex. Sexual assault uses sex as a weapon to dominate, humiliate, and punish victims. Rape is not a sexually motivated act. Sexual violence is not just an individual or relationship problem, but stems from institutional sexism, racism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression. Oppression is a root cause of sexual violence.

When you see oppression speak out and act with integrity. Create change safely. If you are privileged, promote justice. Oppression is pervasive and hurts us all.

Sexual assault is always a crime/issue of power and control, not sexual attraction. Sexual arousal does not need to be followed by sexual

intercourse. Although "sexual" in nature and manner, sexual violence is an act/assertion of hostility, power, aggression, domination and control. Perpetrators use violence to maintain power and control. They gain control or overpower another. Most sexual violence occurs within the cultural context of the devaluation of women.

**Trauma-informed leadership** is a way of life: A set of beliefs and practices you bring to every dimension of who you are and what you do to make a positive difference in the lives of those suffering from trauma. -Sarah Super, Whole Being Solutions

**Feminism:** the social, economic, and political equality of ALL genders

**Morals:** a person's standards of behavior or beliefs concerning what is and is not acceptable for them to do

**Values:** a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life

**Wisdom** is the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment; the quality of being wise.

**Gaslighting:** Emotional Abuse- False information presented with the intention of making victims doubt their own memory, perceptions and sanity.  
([streetsmartwomen.com](http://streetsmartwomen.com))

## **Consent**

Sexual violence exists when consent is not gained.

Understanding consent, more precisely consensual sex, is of ultimate importance.

Please exercise caution when reading this as it may be triggering.

Consent education may not prevent rapists from raping. I do believe it is important to learn though because it helps educate you on the very basis of sexual violence. It confirms to you that what happened to you was wrong; it is wrong for anyone to have any sexual contact with you without your consent. If you understand consent, there will ideally be less self-blame if sexual violence takes place.

Consent is a public health issue and everybody should be educated on it starting in childhood.

Teaching a person about consent doesn't give them permission to have sex, rather gives them permission to have a voice that is heard and respected. This is how we best protect our children from abuse.

You have the right to get consent for all contact and not just sexual. The best way to start is by using it yourself. If you want to touch someone, ask them for permission first. Each individual should have permission to not have to give or accept any unwanted contact from ANYONE that doesn't feel safe, comfortable and right for them. Options are ideal.

Teach consent by requiring children to ask before touching other people's bodies as early as preschool. Do not require hugs and kisses, but give them the option of smiles, waves, or high-fives. Your body belongs to you! No one has the right to touch you. Also, teach them the power of the words no and stop. Stop tickling them or wrestling with them immediately when they say it. Don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry."

Consent is something that you have to give and receive from others.

The best way to get consent is to **ask**. Consent is key to good, fun, healthy, mutually respectful/satisfying intimate relationships. Communication is vital. Consent should be mandatory/required/essential for sexual activity. Pay attention to body language, but do not rely on it. Listen carefully. Establish limits. Consent means making sure everyone is on the same page.

What defines an act as sexual violence is lack of consent, not the identity and behavior of the victim. It is a violation of a boundary.

**sexual assault:** non consensual contact (sexual, physical, verbal, or visual act)

**rape:** non consensual penetration of the vagina, anus, or mouth by a penis or other object

You can't buy consent or take consent from somebody. No one owes sex. If someone does not or cannot consent to sex, it's rape. A crime in most places.

Consent does not vary based upon a person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Certain clothes, flirting, or kissing is not an invitation for anything more.

Consent is an agreement between two participants to engage in sexual activity. It is the responsibility of each person who wishes to engage in the sexual activity to obtain consent by exchanging permission/approval in agreement. Consent does not need to be verbal, but it helps you and your partner respect each other's boundaries, wants, and needs. Consent is **informed, freely** and **actively** given, and **mutually** understood. Both parties should be really, truly into what is going on.

Ask why you are having sex in the first place.

Ask if you are being honest with your partner. Birth Control, STDs, other partners...

“Yes means yes” Yes means consent. It requires an **affirmative**, conscious and voluntary agreement between individuals before beginning/engaging in sexual activity. You must have **explicit** permission before engaging in any touching, kissing or other sexual activity. Did the person express overt actions or words indicating agreement for sexual acts?

If you or your partner feels apprehensive and merely willing, do not proceed!

No means no. This can be verbal or nonverbal/physical (e.g. crying, kicking, moving/pulling away, or pushing away)

The absence of “no” is not a “yes.” A lack of protest, the absence of resistance, and silence do not indicate consent.

Past/previous consent of sexual activities/interactions/encounters does not imply ongoing future consent to sexual activity. Never assume consent. NOBODY is ever obligated to give consent just because they have done so in the past.

If someone consents to something with someone else, it does not mean you have consent to the same thing with them.

Make sure each step in a sexual encounter is met with consent. If you want to initiate things to another level, ask first so everyone is **clear**. Be specific. Do not assume. Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity. Sexual activity can start out as consensual and turn into a sexual assault. Consent doesn't need to interrupt sex; it can be a part of sex. Talk about what you want. Check in and build intimacy. Detect your partner's desires and verify it with consent. Consent is an enthusiastic, clearly communicated agreement and ongoing yes that can enhance sexual interactions. Articulate what you want to do. Share your comfort level and clearly express what is wanted.

Consent is unambiguous, not open to more than one interpretation.

You can withdraw consent at any point during an encounter if you feel uncomfortable. Communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. All sexual activity must stop. Even if it was agreed to earlier.

If you are confused or unsure about the state of consent, sexual activity must stop until both parties consent again. An example would be if the other person is not actively participating.

Both people must be able to consent.

Consent must be freely given. A person must be able to say no to sexual activity without the use of violence, fear, physical force, trickery, intimidation, threat, fraud, and/or coercion. Pressuring, persuading, convincing, manipulation,



bribery, guilting, or harassing someone into saying yes or doing things they may not want to do is NOT consent.

The individual must have the capacity, or legal ability, to consent. These factors vary from state to state.

*Are both parties of legal age to give consent, as defined by the state?*

**statutory rape:** *sexual activity/intercourse/relations in which at least one person is below the legal age of consent*

*The presence of consent and force is irrelevant.*

*The legal age of consent for sex exists because of vulnerability due to age.*

*Individuals do not have the maturity and judgment to consent yet.*

*A misuse/abuse of position of power/position of authority/position of influence could quite possibly be involved.*

- *Age of consent for sex varies by state.*
- *Age of consent for marriage varies by state.*
- *Statutory rape laws vary by state.*

*Is there an inability to communicate because of a physical or mental condition?*

*If an individual is unable to understand the fact, nature or extent of the sexual situation because of mental or physical incapacitation, impairment, or helplessness there is no consent. Physical disability, developmental disability or cognitive impairments (such as intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and dementia) can temporarily or permanently prevent a person from being able to legally consent to sexual activity.*

*If an individual is incapacitated or (substantially?) impaired due to the influence of drugs or alcohol, even 'yes' means 'no'. Impaired consent is no consent.*

*A person who is intoxicated is not legally capable of consenting to sexual acts because it impacts decision making. Alcohol exploits and enhances vulnerability and lowers inhibitions. In some states it matters whether you voluntarily or involuntarily became intoxicated.*

*An individual who is asleep, unconscious, sedated, strangled, suffering from physical trauma, or involuntarily physically restrained cannot give consent.*

*If the person is elderly or ill they are considered a vulnerable adult. If an adult is dependent on others for care they are also considered a vulnerable adult.*

Sex education on consent should include that some people don't want to have sex at all and that's okay. It gives space to exist, improves overall understanding, and involves feelings. Asexual or Ace is an identity which means a person who does not experience sexual attraction.

Nonconsensual sex is rape. **Don't rape.**

Sex is about connection and pleasure. There should be a shared enjoyment. Consent is necessary.

**Additional Resources:**

We-Consent is an app that exists, but it is very controversial. It is not recommended.

A great resource: <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/its-time-talk-about-consent>

**Videos, comic strip, etc. on consent:**

[2 Minutes Will Change the Way You Think About Consent](https://youtu.be/laMtr-rUEmY) by CampusClarity  
<https://youtu.be/laMtr-rUEmY>

What If We Treated All Consent Like Society Treats Sexual Consent?  
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/how-society-treats-consent/>

Understand Consent With the Help of Stick Figures and a Cup of Tea  
(some believe it dilutes the gravity of rape)

<https://magazine.good.is/articles/tea-never-looked-so-good>

Tea Consent (Clean) by Blue Seat Studios <https://youtu.be/fGoWLWS4-kU>  
<http://metro.co.uk/2015/10/28/this-new-sexual-consent-and-tea-video-from-the-police-is-brilliant-5466392/#4583678641001>

Cycling Through Consent  
<https://youtu.be/-JwKjRaUaw>

WANNA HAVE SEX? (CONSENT 101)  
<https://youtu.be/TD2EooMhqRI>

Guante - "Consent at 10,000 Feet" by Button Poetry  
<https://youtu.be/VzR5Wjnk2hk>

Woman Explains Difference Between Rape And Consent In 5 Tweets To Men Who Still Don't Get It  
[http://www.boredpanda.com/sexual-assault-consent-analogy-tweets-nafisa-ahmed/?page\\_numb=1&utm\\_source=best&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=ANAD](http://www.boredpanda.com/sexual-assault-consent-analogy-tweets-nafisa-ahmed/?page_numb=1&utm_source=best&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ANAD)

Within the United States the laws vary by state and situation on how they define someone's ability or inability to consent to sex, so as you could imagine it varies

greatly worldwide as well. To find out how they vary throughout the United States we have two resources below:

Find out how consent is defined in your state with the State Law Database:

<https://apps.rainn.org/policy/>

See the "Yes Means Yes" campus and legislative policy being tracked within the US:

<http://affirmativeconsent.com/affirmative-consent-laws-state-by-state/>

[View image on Twitter](#)



[Africana WomaNINJA](#) @MelanieCoMcCoy

TEACH AFFIRMATIVE/ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT #KnowNo

[1:00 PM - 5 Sep 2016](#)

**Resources that help you educate a person on consent as they grow in age:**

**EMPOWER and LISTEN to your child(ren).**

**Be age appropriate.**

**Do not demand. Ask.**

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2013/03/teaching-kids-consent-ages-1-21/>

<http://www.npr.org/2013/04/11/176930960/how-parents-talk-to-children-about-consent>

<http://www.bustle.com/articles/110834-6-ways-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-consent>

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent>

<http://onehundredconversations.squarespace.com/100conversations/category/consent>

<http://www.todayparent.com/blogs/tp-loves/this-moms-super-cute-video-explains-consent-in-a-kid-friendly-way/>

Consent feels so good!

## The Victim

The truth is, you can be doing everything "right" and still be sexually assaulted.

Sometimes bad things happen for no reason.

Anyone can be a victim/survivor of sexual violence; anyone can be an assailant.

It is never okay for someone to be sexual with you without your express permission/consent. You have the right to say no. It can still be a sexual assault even if you didn't say no.

No one deserves to be sexually assaulted/victimised. You did not ask for it or want/choose it. You did not cause it. It is not your fault.

All victim/survivors deserve help and support. It is normal for victims to feel alone, isolated, to blame. Like no one else has had this experience. Do not stay silent! Take control of what happened to you. Help is out there, seek it! It takes strength, courage, and trust to talk about surviving sexual violence. Create the good in the world.

I created SASARI because I felt that student travelers were an underserved population from personal experience. Typically when you read about underserved populations the following are listed: people of color, people with disabilities, foreign language speakers, the elderly, and the LGBT community. Other victims are also represented like male victims.

### Male Victims of Sexual Assault:

- are less likely to report for fear of ridicule or disbelief
- may prefer to speak to or be examined by male OR older female

The vast majority of boys who are sexually abused will never sexually abuse or assault anyone else.

Asking for help is a courageous act. Everyone deserves support to heal from this trauma.

Sexual Assault of Men and Boys information:

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-assault-men-and-boys>

## **The Perpetrator**

You may know the person sexually assaulting you or you may not know them at all. You can be assaulted by anybody.

Progressive invasions start with a touch. You may feel wary, but talk yourself into thinking you are overreacting. They are thinking - How much will they tolerate, how long can I get away with this before they call me out?

Be cautious of people who ignore your personal space, do not listen to you, make you feel guilty if you resist their advances or appear drunk.

Be wary of overly friendly and persistent individuals.

Predators are manipulative. The book Gift of Fear elaborates on how so.

If you are too drunk to understand a person trying to say "No" or you are too drunk to listen and respect a person trying to say "No" it is considered sexual assault. Even if you think you would never force sex on a person, you might lose control if you have been drinking.

Do not misread/misjudge/inaccurately perceive friendliness as an interest in sex. Read sexual cues and learn feedback. Ask about sexual interest.

People who are privileged feel entitled.

You are never entitled to the bodies of others. Sexual aggression should never be established.

When you sexually assault a person you take something from them, something that cannot be given back. They are changed for life.

The shame and guilt of sexual violence belong to the perpetrator. Sexual assault is always the responsibility of the perpetrator and never the responsibility of the victim/survivor.

The Sexual Misconduct Policy/Student Conduct Code applies to you regardless of if you are on your home campus or studying abroad. And you are punishable under law. Some country's penalties are harsher than the United States'.

Do the right thing.

Don't rape!

## Your School

You may file a report with the university. If you are on a study abroad program, the university's Sexual Misconduct Policy/Student Conduct Code applies to all actions committed abroad. Your school's resources are available to you. Know your options. As a study abroad student you should already have the proper contacts for this.

## Bullying

I, Callie, am not the biggest fan of the word bullying. I feel as though the word bullying incites more of just that: bullying. What I can tell you is that this is a matter of respect. When somebody is being bullied there is a blatant lack of respect.

The first time I positively remember being sexually assaulted was while in Mexico for Spanish class. One male individual was sexually assaulting me while several of my roommates cheered him on. I was being sexually assaulted and bullied.

My worst sexual assault was while studying abroad. Person A should never tell Person B that they think Person B needs to/is due to have sex and throw them into a dangerous situation. If you are receiving unwanted sexual contact do not off load the person onto an unsuspecting "friend" and say they would be interested. I make this statement because that is exactly how I ended up being raped. This is bullying at its absolute worst. Remember: having sex is a very personal, serious, and intimate decision. Worry about your own sexual activity. Help each other, don't hurt each other.

When being trained to become a sexual assault advocate I learnt early on that all violence is interconnected. I do believe I have laid out prime examples of this for you above. **It is important to respect all of your peers and treat all with equality.** Use common sense and expect the same from those you trust. Does your institution have strong anti-bullying policies that are enforced?

It is important that you stand up to bullying and defend yourself, but do it in a safe manner.

You cannot be neutral to bullying and that is why Bystander Intervention is coming next.

Bullying can include, but is not limited to: cyberbullying, teasing, hazing,

October is National Bullying Prevention Month: [pacer.org/bullying/nbpm](http://pacer.org/bullying/nbpm)

## **Prevention, Bystander Intervention, Upstander**

Primary prevention is the best way to create safer communities. It is activity which takes place before the harm has occurred in order to stop sexual violence before it starts/begins. Creating consistent policies and practices that focus on victim safety and offender accountability is a good example. Awareness building and education is necessary to get these changed.

The [Violence Against Women Act, reauthorized in 2013](#), requires federally funded universities to provide rape prevention and awareness programs on campus.

Preventing sexual violence is everyone's responsibility. **Sexual violence is everybody's problem.** Sexual violence impacts not only the victim, but our communities as well. All people are impacted by interpersonal violence.

If they don't consent – or can't consent – it's a crime. Bystander intervention is vital. If you identify troubling behaviors happening, help them, don't blame them, speak up. Change the circumstances. Be an active bystander. Have the courage to speak out against rape culture. Active bystanders can disrupt dangerous behavior. Help a person you're concerned about get to a safe place. Explain that a rape joke isn't funny. Confront a person who is behaving inappropriately. Intervene if you think someone is in a risky or harmful situation. Intervene if someone is at risk of being sexually assaulted. If a situation doesn't seem right, step in. Get security involved when someone is being aggressive. It is easier to act with someone else. Everyone has a role in prevention. If 1 in 5 women in college are sexually assaulted that means there are many people there to help them. We need to actively teach and encourage our male population to express healthy masculinity. We must teach men not to rape rather than teach women to avoid rape.

You can search for prevention programs here:

- [cultureofrespect.org/colleges-universities/programs/](http://cultureofrespect.org/colleges-universities/programs/)
- [preventionnavigator.rainn.org/](http://preventionnavigator.rainn.org/)
  - [preventionnavigator.rainn.org/review-a-program/](http://preventionnavigator.rainn.org/review-a-program/)
- [acalltomen.org/liverespect-on-campus](http://acalltomen.org/liverespect-on-campus)

An **upstander** is someone who recognizes when something is wrong and acts to make it right. They step in and stop the problem. They speak up/out. Upstanders create positive change in our world, are socially responsible.

Steps You Can Take to Prevent Sexual Assault [rainn.org/articles/steps-you-can-take-prevent-sexual-assault](http://rainn.org/articles/steps-you-can-take-prevent-sexual-assault)



## Bystander Intervention Programs: Do They Curb Campus Sexual Assault?

<http://health.usnews.com/wellness/articles/2016-09-07/bystander-intervention-programs-do-they-curb-campus-sexual-assault>

## U.S. Department of State

Informative websites:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>

Help for U.S. Citizen Victims of Crime Overseas from U.S Department of State:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/victims.html>



While there enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency while you are abroad. It is free.

## Sexual Assault Safety Profile

[SASARI Sexual Assault Safety Profile \(will open as a Word document\)](#)

Know how to connect with both formal and informal sources of support who can help you in the event you are sexually assaulted and keep their contact information handy so that you can access it readily. Keep an open mind when preparing this document.

Early on in the SASARI founder's vision for her organization she brainstormed the need for a sexual assault safety profile for each student. Fill it out as best you can and use your study abroad program as a resource.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when completing your Sexual Assault Safety Profile:

- Which emergency numbers should be programmed into the cell phone?
  - **911 isn't the emergency number everywhere. Additionally, in some places you aren't advised to tell law enforcement about being sexually assaulted.**
  - Read more on cell phones here: \*Cell Phones
- If the student needs to know where something is located, make sure there are detailed directions. I.e. car, bus, light rail, foot, etc.
- If you are traveling to your host school or are traveling back home and are sexually assaulted, who can you contact for help?
- If a student is alone and suspect they've been given a date rape drug or "roofie" what steps should they take?

As a student traveling abroad you should have two emergency contacts in place. Please talk to them about the possibility of sexual assault and yourself. Say something along the lines of "I know there is a possibility that I could be sexually assaulted no matter where I am. I am doing everything I can to prevent this from happening, but I wanted to bring this subject up with you because if I were ever sexually assaulted I would want to be able to come to you." You can then direct them to the resources later on in the page, \* Helping Someone You Care About. Including your parents may be wise. It is important to know your sources of support in case the inconceivable happens.

## Sexual Violence During a Flight

- Many of these incidents are happening on long-haul, red-eye overnight flights.
- Many reports of sexual violence on flights involve alcohol, sleeping passengers, someone who is seated in the middle of a row, or a combination of all three factors.
- Offenders will often test their victims so be prepared to speak up right away if you feel violated.
- Create a scene when you are sexually assaulted to get attention of witnesses. Understand that you can't exactly control how you respond to sexual violence, so don't beat yourself up if you can't or don't!
- Report sexual assaults to the flight crew right away. Most flight attendants are not trained to handle sexual violence, but protocol is being developed.
- Ask to have your seat moved when reporting sexual assault.
- Insist the pilots radio the ground, but remember, the FAA does not have a requirement for flight crews to notify authorities when a passenger alleges a sexual assault during a flight. There is no federal regulatory agency that tracks this data nationwide let alone internationally.
- Offenders can face state and federal charges. Sexual assault on a commercial flight is a federal crime, with a punishment of up to 10 years in prison.
- The FBI's Criminal Investigative Division handles sexual assaults on planes.

## General Safety Tips/Common Safety Precautions/Risk Reduction

Risk reduction is not prevention work and has its downsides.

1. It shifts focus from the perpetrator to the survivor.
2. It aids in the victim blaming mentality. Did the victim follow the recommendations?
3. It is not an accurate picture of sexual assault. For example, many people are assaulted by people they trust and/or when no alcohol is involved.
4. It contributes to creating a "typical predator".

I still think it is important to include. You may need to change your behavior to stay safe.

- A wonderful resource: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/how-respond-if-someone-pressuring-you>
- Connect with past participants of your study abroad program. Ask them about what to expect and specifically ask for their advice about the social culture and personal body safety.

- Learn about local customs, culture, dress, expected behavior, laws, and attitudes about drugs and alcohol, etc.
- Avoid standing out. You want to blend in and not look like a tourist.
- Do not take a lot of money and jewelry with you.
- Have a photocopy of your passport (leave the original at home or in a hotel safe).
- Make sure someone - like a roommate, friend, or parent - knows where you are going and when you plan to arrive at your destination at all times, like when you are traveling across campus. Inform them if plans change.
- Don't hesitate to report suspicious persons or activities, or if you feel unsafe.
- If someone is hollering for help it could be a trap. Find someone more qualified to help them. Work as a team to watch out for each other.
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings. If you're alone only use headphones in one ear. Do not be distracted on your phone. Be careful about posting your location. Listen to what is being said around you and know what suspicious activity looks like. Stay in control of every situation. Look and act confident. Know where you are going or at least act like it. Do not look lost or confused.
- Stay in pairs or groups, especially at night. There is strength and safety in numbers, so never travel alone. You should always be accompanied by someone you trust and agree to watch out for each other. Designate someone who will keep an eye on the others. **Preplan how you will get home. Make sure everyone gets home safely. Don't leave anyone behind, insist on staying together.**
- Keep interactions with strangers to a minimum. Never go, or allow a friend to go, anywhere with someone you just met, a stranger. Give people time to earn your trust before relying on them. Be wary of new 'friends', even if they are fellow travelers. Don't tell strangers where you are staying or give out too many details about your travel plans. Never leave your key where someone can note your room number. **Do not invite strangers into your living quarters.** Keep your door(s) and windows locked when you're asleep and when you leave the room. Do not open a residence door if uncomfortable or alone. If the door has a spy-hole or chain, use these before opening the door to unexpected visitors. Always keep your blinds closed or curtains drawn when changing clothes.
- Stay in well lit areas that are well-traveled. Stay out of potentially dangerous areas and areas you don't know well.
- Avoid public demonstrations or other civil disturbances and large groups of men.
- Use safe forms of transportation. Public transportation can increase risks. Never hitchhike or accept car rides from strangers. Ask your accommodation to recommend a taxi firm. Carry enough cash to get home. When using a taxi write down the name of the company, license

plate number, and driver's name. Prior to going out, schedule a taxi or car service to meet you at a prearranged time and location.

- Ignore unwanted/unwelcomed attention.
- If you are experiencing street harassment and you feel safe enough state aloud "Don't harass me." and keep going.
- If you ever feel uncomfortable or in danger, don't be afraid to draw attention to yourself by shouting and making a fuss.
- Do not purchase or use drugs. Drugs are illegal in every country and laws are strictly enforced.
- "College alcohol statistics show that drinking puts people at a higher risk of becoming victims of sexual abuse and assault. Drinking alcohol causes a person to become less aware of his or her surroundings and lowers levels of physical coordination. It makes it more difficult for that person to defend against an attack or assault.

According to a nationwide [Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#), 25 percent of female college students and 7 percent of male college students reported they had been subject to unwanted sexual advances during their time at school. Two-thirds of these victims had been drinking alcohol at the time of the incidents."

<https://addictionresource.com/alcohol/resources/college-alcohol-abuse/>

- Alcohol and drug facilitated sexual assault and how to protect yourself. Have a nondrinking friend with you to make sure nothing happens. If you choose to consume alcohol, be responsible about it. Drinking makes you a target for crime. Do not overindulge or drink beyond your limits. Limit the number of drinks you consume. If somebody is buying you shot after shot they could have poor intentions. Try to get drinks that are sealed from the distributor and open the container yourself. It is easy to keep the opening covered with a thumb and there is more assurance that something wasn't put in it before you get it. If it is a bottle keep the cap so it can go back on the bottle between drinks. **Always watch your drink** as it's being made or poured. Do not accept drinks from anyone but the bartender or wait staff. Do not accept drinks from other people, exchange/share beverages with other people, or drink from shared containers like punch bowls or other common, open containers with other people especially strangers. They may already have drugs in them. Keep your drink with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom. If a beverage looks, smells, or tastes strange/different, or, if it has been moved or topped off, do not drink it; get another one. If you start to feel strange, sick/nauseated or drunk/overly intoxicated (effects are stronger than usual) after taking a drink or a couple of drinks find a friend or help immediately so they can take you to a safe place. Date rape drugs may cause disorientation/confusion, blacking out, speech and balance impairment and excessive sedation(weakness) in some. Some victim/survivors cannot remember part of the evening. If you must tell

someone behind the bar. Go somewhere safe and call for help. Do not let strangers help and do not attempt to go home alone. If someone in your group collapses or becomes unconscious immediately call an ambulance, advise the facility's management, and do not leave the individual alone. If you suspect you are the victim of spiking and you are sent to a hospital, tell the medical staff so they can run the proper tests. If you are still at the club, ask management to hold on to the drink (as possible evidence). Date rape drugs can be sold as odorless, colorless and tasteless, are prevalent, and are used in unscrupulous ways: food, soft drinks, water, and gum can be spiked in addition to alcoholic beverages. If you suspect you have been the victim of a drug facilitated sexual assault it is crucial that your first urine/bladder void is collected. Either wait to urinate at the ER or collect the first bladder void in a jar and bring it with you. This urine sample may be the only thing which contains the evidence to show that you have been drugged. Even cigarettes, soaked in various substances, have been used in drug facilitated sexual assaults. When lit, the inserted substance evaporates; during inhalation, it is absorbed almost immediately into the lungs and then to the brain. Only smoke cigarettes from someone you trust. If a date rape drug is used you may wake up and not know where you are because they can make you virtually unconscious and defenseless. Alcohol may affect you differently. The alcohol content in their beverages may be stronger than what you are use to and the climate you are in may cause the alcohol to affect you differently from what you are use to. Alcohol is the drug most commonly used to help commit sexual assault as it affects your judgement and behavior. Spend some time learning about date rape drugs. It can be hard to tell if your drink has been spiked and it happens quickly without your knowing. I had no idea one of the side effects is vomiting. Remember, it is never your fault if you have been sexually assaulted.

- Women who are vulnerable, who are perhaps often partially intoxicated, are being preyed upon by people who will sexually offend against them.
- [rainn.org/articles/alcohol-safety](http://rainn.org/articles/alcohol-safety)
- [rainn.org/articles/drug-facilitated-sexual-assault](http://rainn.org/articles/drug-facilitated-sexual-assault)
- Some people have used an over the counter drug test when they suspect they have been drugged.
- Carry emergency funds.
- Have emergency contact information readily available.
  - Keep a notebook and writing utensil on hand for emergency purposes. It is important to document things in the event of an emergency. If you experience or witness an act of sexual violence make a log of the incident including date, time, witnesses, details, etc. Even if you do not report right away you still want to know the exact date the assault happened.

- Immerse yourself in the culture and experience of being abroad, but be clear about your boundaries. It can be easy to get caught up in new experiences and adventures but you never want to do something that would be against your ethics.
  - Plan your daily itinerary - know where you're going, what you're doing and how to get back. When you travel make sure you share your itineraries (departure, destination, and expected return date) and lodging information with both schools, family, and friends. Do research on customs for each travel destination, see \*Country Specific Details section. Maintain regular contact with friends and family in general during your time abroad.
  - Lodging Safety: try staying in rooms that have double locks, are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor or higher, have limited access from the outside, and have 24-hour onsite security
- Additional Information:
  - AIG Women's Travel Safety Initiative  
[travelguardworldwide.com/aig-travel-for-women](http://travelguardworldwide.com/aig-travel-for-women)
  - AIG LGBT Travel Safety Education Initiative  
[travelguardworldwide.com/lgbtq](http://travelguardworldwide.com/lgbtq)
- One of the most important things you can do is listen to yourself. Trust yourself and your instincts, then trust others.

**Of ultimate importance: instincts, gut feelings, intuition**

- Listen and you will develop intuition.
- Intuition is "knowing" something without being able to explain how you came to that conclusion rationally. It's that mysterious "gut feeling" or "instinct" that often turns out to be right, in retrospect.
- Humans are known for ignoring their instincts. There is a fear of embarrassing yourself, hurting another's feelings, not meeting another's expectations, or what will be said.
- Between our heads, hearts, and guts we know what is good for us. They are there to protect us from wrongdoing.
- If something feels wrong, chances are it is wrong and your body knows it. Trust the feeling of discomfort. Weigh your options to overcome interferences and act on instinct. Focus on happiness and listen to yourself.
- Never doubt your instinct. Follow your intuition. Intuition is the voice of the Soul, listen and let it speak to you.
- Honor your instincts, gut feelings, intuition. Being able to act on them shows bravery and is empowering.

There are things you can do to improve your abilities.

- Meditate and practice clearing your mind.

- Keep an intuition journal. "I have a feeling that..." or "My intuition tells me that..." Include sensations associated with your intuition, such as a vision, or physical discomfort. Looking back in your journal, see how often you are right, have intuitive power.
- Exercise the right side of your brain which controls nonverbal, holistic thought and expression by being creative. Dance, paint, visualize, brainstorm.

"The language of the head and the language of the heart are often in competition. Logic says one thing, emotion says another. Your feeling sense, however, your gut instinct, which is literally felt just above your belly button, is the place where you will get a neutral, truthful and clear answer to any question you may ever have. It may not reveal the answer you want, but will offer you the answer you need." - Jeanne Daniels, Integrative Healing Therapies



If you are confused by an interaction use your communication skills. Communication skills can keep you safe. Communication is key. Make your body language match your words.

Consent education should include communication skills, decision making, and respect for personal boundaries.

### **Additional Resource**

[studyabroad.com/blogs/study-abroad-safety-tips-female-students](http://studyabroad.com/blogs/study-abroad-safety-tips-female-students)

[rainn.org/articles/9-tips-stay-safe-campus](http://rainn.org/articles/9-tips-stay-safe-campus)

### **Miscellaneous Items**

Acknowledge the word vulnerability and how it may be associated with sexual violence. Perpetrators often choose victims whom they perceive as

vulnerable. If you've been the victim of sexual assault before, you are at a higher risk to be a victim again per the CDC. Get help from a sexual assault advocate or counseling professional before it happens again! There is a saying I repeatedly see that says "Nothing about who you are or what you did caused your assault.", but it makes me wonder because of the above statements. Just remember that nobody deserves to experience sexual violence.

Who is responsible for committing/causing sexual violence? The perpetrator.

Perpetrators create, use, or take advantage of situations in which victims/survivors are vulnerable.

Practice writing letters to survivors of sexual violence. Share them with a sexual assault advocate if you so please.

Consider group tours run through companies like Intrepid, Contiki or Trek America. They allow you to travel in a group of like-minded individuals, with the safety of a local guide who can help in any difficult situations. Still exercise caution. In December 2016 there was an article online titled "India's Police Investigating Rape Accusation by American Tourist".

**Don't tell somebody you just met (a stranger) that it is your last night. Men have preyed on women who are leaving the next day.**

Depict healthy consent negotiations.

Rehearse scenarios where a person might be at risk of sexual assault including how you would react to certain situations. You can do so by yourself, or with a trusted friend(s) or family member(s). Include verbal and physical reactions.

Hypothetical Situations/Examples:

- You are touched inappropriately. i.e. grabbed at a bar on the dance floor
  - Step on their foot and put your elbow into their stomach.
- You are offered a ride.

Assess risk, overcome emotional barriers in acknowledging danger, and engage in effective verbal and physical resistance/self-defense. Never panic.

When Americans travel abroad we tend to be treated the way we are portrayed in the media. Misperceptions are prevalent about American women and sex. Stereotypes and assumptions do exist and need to be talked about and understood.



Keep a journal while you are abroad. Write about your emotions and your feelings as they arise. Find somebody safe to talk to if you feel the need. Some travel insurance provides support for travelers feeling low or anxious.

I have not heard human trafficking mentioned in the work I've done thus far with students traveling abroad, but didn't want to leave it out of my information to you because it is such an important thing to know about. The United States federal definition of human trafficking is a situation in which an individual is compelled to work or engage in commercial sex through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, or if the individual engaged in commercial sex is under 18 years of age, force, fraud or coercion need not be present. Prostitution is an example of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a hidden crime because victims rarely come forward to seek help.

Consider self defense and self protection options available.

- Take a self defense or martial arts class before you go to learn how to physically defend yourself. You may learn to be aware/mindful of your surroundings as well as deterrent and escape techniques. It also helps to train your reflexes.
- Carry a whistle, alarm, canned air horn, or pepper spray.
- One personal protection website: [mydamselpro.net/maryb](http://mydamselpro.net/maryb) The only thing I add is that you be cognizant of things like airport security and the laws of the places you will be traveling when carrying and utilizing these tools.
- If a male is in the process of sexually assault you remember how sensitive their genitals are. Hitting them there could give you the time you need to get to safety.
- In the face of danger/trauma a person can't necessarily control how they react to a sexual assault. Never beat yourself up about it. You never know what the perpetrator is capable of or prepared to do to you. Your body is trying to process what is happening the best way it knows how and these are defensive ways it may respond/react.
  - We all know about Fight, Flight(flee), and Freeze. When freezing a person is assessing the situation and making a decision that isn't impulsive. When you know the person who is harming you it may also contribute to the freezing reaction. We have learned that these categories don't accurately portray sexual violence situations, so please read on.
  - Submit is the safest and gets the sexual assault over the quickest.
  - Victims withdraw or escape mentally.
  - Dissociation is when you disconnect from the situation.
  - Tonic immobility is also very common. It is a basic defense strategy, a natural state of paralysis, a way of avoiding or deterring

- predators, an induced response to threatening stimuli characterized by complete loss of muscle strength.
- Tonic immobility is also called involuntary paralysis which is temporary and keeps victims from fighting back or screaming. During extreme paralysis victims are effectively catatonic.
  - Why many rape victims don't fight or yell By James W. Hopper
    - [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/06/23/why-many-rape-victims-dont-fight-or-yell/?utm\\_term=.caa3085b1ad9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/06/23/why-many-rape-victims-dont-fight-or-yell/?utm_term=.caa3085b1ad9)
  - Women who experience paralysis while being assaulted are at a higher risk of subsequent PTSD and depression.
    - [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/women-involuntary-paralysis-freeze-rape-fight-back\\_us\\_5936f8e7e4b0099e7faff1dc?ir=Women&utm\\_hp\\_ref=women&utm\\_content=bufferfdb4b&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer#](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/women-involuntary-paralysis-freeze-rape-fight-back_us_5936f8e7e4b0099e7faff1dc?ir=Women&utm_hp_ref=women&utm_content=bufferfdb4b&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer#)

## Positive Self Talk

Using positive self talk is a great thing to practice daily no matter what your circumstances are. Intentional thinking, mantras, affirmations, and credos are examples of things that fall under the category of positive self talk. I have created an inspirational piece for students to use as an example.

I respect my whole self and expect everyone else to too.

I deserve to discover the world and experience positive growth.

Those who feel powerless often cause others the most suffering.

I trust God and believe in good things to come.

(Reminder: People who rape are known to do so because they feel powerless.)

Live with a safe heart.

## Cell Phones

If you will be living abroad having a cell phone is a must. It is important for safety purposes. It is also a lifesaver in unfamiliar places... you can look up directions or public transport connections, currency exchanges, and translations. Some universities require students to carry a cell phone on

them. Some people bring their phones from home and some buy/rent them locally. It is handled differently depending on where you will be going and for how long. It is generally cheaper to purchase a phone/plan/SIM card in the abroad country. I read online that it is recommended to go prepaid. If you are studying abroad ask the program you are participating in for their advice on acquiring a cell phone and learning how to use it in a foreign location.

It is important that you know how to dial the phone in your foreign country, especially dialing for help. Every country can be different.

+1 is the code to dial into the United States.

### **Always carry your cell phone and keep it fully charged.**

There is a lot of information on the internet to prepare you before you travel abroad, so do some research.

Consider adding apps for your safety such as:

[www.circleof6app.com](http://www.circleof6app.com) , a free app that prevents violence before it happens

Delhi Police in India have a safety app for women.

[Verizon Information](#)

## **Travel Smartly with Prescription Medications and More**

If you have pre-existing medical problems you should carry a letter from the attending physician, describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic name of prescribed drugs. Ensure that you have enough medicine in the event your return trip gets delayed. Bring any medicines you need in your carry on. Any medications you carry overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled. Some U.S. prescription medications are illegal in foreign countries and may subject you to arrest. Be sure to check with the foreign embassy of the country you are visiting or transiting en-route to make sure your medications are not considered to be illegal narcotics in that country.

If you are on birth control or want to be on birth control while you are there bring a full supply with you.

Pregnancy can be a serious concern for victim/survivors of sexual assault.

Emergency Contraception (EC) is a method that can prevent the possibility of pregnancy. (MNCASA)

- A pregnancy test is usually required before dispensing EC. (MNCASA)
- EC. Often called the “morning after pill”, is marketed as Plan B. Plan B is similar to a high dosage of birth control pills. EC can prevent pregnancy when a woman takes it within 72 hours (3 days) of sexual contact. When taken within 72 hours, EC can reduce a woman’s chance of becoming pregnant by 75-89 percent. It is important to note that EC is most effective when taken within the first 24 hours. (MNCASA)
- EC, like ordinary birth control pills, can prevent ovulation, fertilization, or implantation before pregnancy occurs when taken within the 72 hour timeline. (MNCASA)
- EC cannot cause an abortion or harm an already established pregnancy. (MNCASA)
- When administered by medical professionals, EC is not typically dangerous for a woman and does not usually result in serious side-effects. The most common side-effects include nausea, vomiting, and cramping. It is important to follow the medical professional’s directions. (MNCASA)
- EC should not be confused with the drug, RU-486, a non-surgical abortion option for early pregnancies. Unlike EC, RU-486 obstructs a hormone that is required for pregnancy to continue (FDA, 7/20/05). (MNCASA)

Emergency contraception may be available through a medical facility, by prescription, or at a local pharmacy. If the victim is 18 years of age or older, she may obtain it without a prescription from some pharmacies for approximately \$40. In the case that she would like to use insurance to help her cover this cost, she will need a prescription. Some clinics are willing to keep a prescription on-hand (NARAL\*). If the victim is 17 years or under, she will need a prescription to obtain EC. She may check her local family planning clinic (such as Planned Parenthood) or with her doctor. It is important to remember that it must be taken soon in order to be effective. (MNCASA)

Work with your local medical providers and pharmacists to know where a person can and cannot obtain EC. (MNCASA)

You may want to purchase Emergency Contraception before leaving the US to go abroad, but make sure it is not illegal in that country. The information cited as (MNCASA) isn’t practiced everywhere around the world.

Bring latex condoms with you.

Some people travel with pregnancy tests just in case. This "saved" me 3 weeks post rape.

# The importance of community response to sexual assault

**By Dani Bostick Nov 10, 2015, Taken from Huffington Post via SB Nation**

How we react to sexual assault as a community can have damaging effects on victims.

If you hear about an allegation either in the media or in person, think before you react. It took a lot of courage for the alleged victim to report the crime to law enforcement, or simply share his or her concerns with a friend. Your reaction can contribute to a culture in which victims are silenced and do not pursue justice for crimes. Or, you can start making your community a safer, more comfortable place for victims, one in which they do not have to worry about having their reputations maligned while their perpetrators are heralded as model citizens.

It is not up to you to decide whether a crime happened. It is up to you, however, to contribute to an environment where alleged victims feel comfortable pursuing justice without being victimized a second time.

Bystander intervention doesn't need to involve heroics. Ask yourself: Do my words and actions help my community be a safe place for victims to report their crimes and deal with the aftermath of their assault? Or, am I contributing to a culture that imprisons victims in silence and shame?

The author would also like to share a video which can be found online with her main message called "[Victim, Unashamed and Unsilenced](#)" [Dani Bostick TEDxColoradoSprings](#)

## Country Specific Details

Email [www.sashaa.org](http://www.sashaa.org) at [knowb4ugo@866uswomen.org](mailto:knowb4ugo@866uswomen.org) to get country specific information on local cultures, safety tips, dress, sexual assault laws and other travel considerations for all your travel destinations. They can help you understand what to expect in regards to attitudes towards women.

[travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html) , Learn About Your Destination

It is important you know the norms: social environment and cultural context before you go. You must be respectful of the country you are visiting and its citizens. Cultural sensitivity is the doorway to a positive cultural experience, but

never submit to uncomfortable behavior or compromise your ethics/relax your personal boundaries. Don't feel compelled to return unwanted attention or engage in conversation. If you feel uneasy get out of the situation. Never sacrifice sense of safety for cultural sensitivity. Laws and attitudes vary greatly from country to country.

Learn more about social norms and prevention here: [vetoviolenace.cdc.gov/violence-prevention-basics-social-norms-change](https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention-basics-social-norms-change)

A few things SASARI has learnt of:

In Spain if you accept a drink from a man or go home with them you are agreeing to sex.

In England the term fanny does not mean a purse you wear around your hips but rather a slang term for women's genitalia.

In 2014, a Norwegian woman was jailed after reporting being raped in Dubai. She was later charged with unlawful sex (outside of marriage) and of making a false statement.

A November 2016 article is titled "Briton who reported rape in Dubai could face jail for extramarital sex".

Despite the 2012 Delhi gang-rape incident, in April 2013, courts in India expressed concern that women would begin to abuse the legal system by claiming rape either to incriminate anyone or to use it as a weapon for vengeance.

## **Additional Resources**

### **U.S. Department of State's Overseas Advisory Council (OSAC)**

[osac.gov](https://osac.gov) , Review the OSAC Crime and Safety Reports prior to departure. They will give overviews of and contact information for various law enforcement agencies and medical facilities. They can also discuss vulnerabilities for minority travelers (such as women or those within the LGBT community).

OSAC is an invaluable resource for responding to overseas emergencies. OSAC was created in 1985 and is a federal advisory committee responsible for promoting cooperation between private sector interests worldwide and the U.S. State Department.

OSAC is available to offer any guidance or consultations prior to departure or to help facilitate communications with the U.S. diplomatic presence responsible for the location where your students might be. OSAC can be a valuable tool for the U.S. private sector on security-related issues in a foreign environment.

- For travel to the Western Hemisphere: OSACWHA@state.gov
- For travel to Africa: OSACAF@state.gov
- For travel to Europe: OSACEUR@state.gov
- For travel to the Middle East and North Africa: OSACNEA@state.gov
- For travel to South and Central Asia: OSACSCA@state.gov
- For travel to East Asia and the Pacific: OSACEAP@state.gov

OSAC cannot authorize SASARI website references to OSAC and use of OSAC information. SASARI does not use the name of the U.S. Department of State or the OSAC in such a way as to imply any endorsement of SASARI by the State Department, OSAC, or the U.S. Government. The Department and OSAC must avoid even the appearance that they are promoting private gain in discharging their public functions.

## The World Health Organization

WHO has information on sexual violence. Pay close attention to the related links and related documents sections along the side and bottom of the pages when using the below hyperlinks because there is more information available. The World Health Organization hasn't been able to communicate with me yet. These sites weren't easily located and do not appear to be mainstream on their site.

- [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/)
- [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/activities/sexual\\_violence/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/sexual_violence/en/)
- [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/capacitybuilding/courses/intimate\\_partner\\_violence/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/capacitybuilding/courses/intimate_partner_violence/en/)
- [Read The World Health Organization's chapter on sexual violence \(will open as a PDF\)](#)

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)
- Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program
  - [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe)
  - [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/states.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/states.html)
- [www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence)
- Help stop violence before it happens: [vetoviolence.cdc.gov/](http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/)

## Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- [girlshealth.gov/body/sexuality](http://girlshealth.gov/body/sexuality)
- [girlshealth.gov/safety/saferrelationships/daterape.html](http://girlshealth.gov/safety/saferrelationships/daterape.html)
- [womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women](http://womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women)

## Study Abroad Statistics

**Institute of International Education** shares data through what is called **Open Doors**. "a comprehensive information resource on international students and scholars studying or teaching at higher education institutions in the United States, and U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit at their home colleges or universities"

[iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors](http://iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors)

## International Students

RAINN Partners with Health Insurance Provider to Develop Resource for International Students: [rainn.org/news/rainn-partners-health-insurance-provider-develop-resource-international-students](http://rainn.org/news/rainn-partners-health-insurance-provider-develop-resource-international-students)

(International Student Insurance and RAINN Announce Sexual Assault Training Program for International Students: [prweb.com/releases/2017/10/prweb14848722.htm](http://prweb.com/releases/2017/10/prweb14848722.htm))

## Response to and Recovery from Students Abroad Sexual Assault

### If you have been sexually assaulted abroad:

- Find a place where you feel safe.
- Find someone knowledgeable who can help you find the support and information you need, both right now and in the future. Examples of people you can trust include your study abroad advisor (should make sure you are accompanied during all your proceedings and that you have input on who accompanies you) or your home campuses 24 hour helpline. Before talking, ask whether your conversation with this person will be **confidential**. Confidentiality is the beginning of empowerment, for it



assures the victim/survivor that s/he alone has the right to choose to disclose information about the sexual violence. A friend or relative may also be able to support you.

- It is important for you to get your power and control back, reclaim it, but be gentle with yourself as you are very sensitive. Sexual assault is a traumatic event. You may not remember everything. Every sexual assault is unique because every human being is unique. This includes the emotional response to sexual assault. Everyone reacts differently. You might feel burdened, embarrassed, afraid, hurt, confused, angry, scared, sad, shocked, fear, shame, doubt, self-blame, numb, and/or degraded - these are all normal. Allow yourself to experience your feelings and emotions. Give them space to happen. Your responses are normal reactions to an abnormal experience. Your feelings change and develop even for years throughout your journey to healing. Feeling all alone is very common. A person who has been sexually assaulted may not grasp just how many other survivors there are out there, their ability to properly judge reality is off kilter. Survivors almost always eventually blame themselves and this is why it is so important to get help from professionals. Your self-esteem and spirit need to be uplifted. Remember, no one deserves to be sexually assaulted and it is not your fault. You are not alone. The only person who is to blame is the perpetrator. Know that sexual assault survivors are strong and brave. Rebuilding feelings of safety, trust, control, and self-worth can take quite a long time, but that is okay. You can't change what has happened, but you do get to make your own decisions about what is best for your recovery.
- To protect/preserve evidence **DO NOT**
  - shower, bathe, douche, wash hands
  - brush your teeth
  - change/destroy clothes
  - straighten yourself up
  - comb hair
  - eat, drink, smoke, chew gum, or take medications
  - urinate/defecate
    - If the victim/survivor must urinate, collect the urine in a clean container so that it can be brought to the ER/ED to be tested for date rape drugs, including alcohol, and to keep the specimen in their possession until they give it to the appropriate medical personnel. The purpose for doing this is to gather evidence of chemicals including alcohol that may have been used to facilitate the assault. The first urine void is the most promising way to catch some drugs that leave the system very quickly.

- wipe after urinating
- throw anything away, try to clean up, or move things around the room or area where the incident occurred
- Do save physical evidence like sheets, blankets, or anything else that may have evidence as well.
- Do place in a paper bag which allows the items to dry naturally without destroying evidence (plastic bags cause condensation and supports the growth of mold and mildew, which interferes with analysis.)
- Arrange to take a change of clothing along to the hospital because the clothing wore during the assault may be collected as evidence.
- Arrange a safe place for you to go to after leaving the hospital. Your study abroad program or a sexual assault advocate can help with this.
- Your safety, well-being, and health are priority and can help you deal with feelings of being scared and hurt by the assailant.
- Contacting a **sexual assault advocate/rape crisis center personnel** is vital. They provide free and **confidential** services. They facilitate recovery, are there to support and assist you. It is their job to make a strong positive impact and show that they can be a support system. They want you to make informed decisions. Advocates are specifically trained to provide emotional support and assist you with communicating your feelings. They provide referrals, connect you with information/resources, and provide guidance on navigating medical and legal support systems. They will not judge you or make decisions for you. They can be by your side supporting you during a sexual assault/forensic exam. They can help you with other needed accommodations. Discuss your concerns and questions regarding the assault. They help you advocate for yourself so you may deal with the assault properly and help you create effective and healthy coping mechanisms. You have a lot of choices to make about decisions affecting your life. Make plans.
  - **Reporting**
    - Sexual Assault Advocates can help you determine if reporting the crime to law enforcement is best/safe to do. It is important to document as much information as possible about your rape as quickly as possible. If you do report the crime to law enforcement ask for a copy of the police report.
    - Sexual Assault Advocates can help you navigate your school's grievance/disciplinary/reporting process.
    - We need more justice and peacemaking.
  - Here are the options we know of for sexual assault advocates:
  - Your home campus or host campus should be able to help you locate a sexual assault advocate
  - **Sexual Assault Support and Help For Americans Abroad (SASHAA)**
    - [sashaa.org](http://sashaa.org) ([866uswomen.org](http://866uswomen.org))

- Provide survivors of all genders with the knowledge on the country specific laws, services, and cultural norms. They even help you navigate the legal process. They break things down by the following categories:
      - Advocacy and Counseling
      - Medical Services
      - Law Enforcement
      - Criminal and Civil Prosecution
    - They can be contacted 24/7 by phone (1-866-US-WOMEN/1-866-879-6636), e-mail (crisis@866uswomen.org), or live chat.
  - **Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)**, the United States of America's largest anti-sexual violence organization and advocacy group.
    - [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)
    - National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673). They provide free counseling 24 hours a day. The call is anonymous and confidential.
    - Online hotline: [hotline.rainn.org/online/terms-of-service.jsp](http://hotline.rainn.org/online/terms-of-service.jsp)
    - Sexual Assault Service Providers: [centers.rainn.org](http://centers.rainn.org)
    - [www.rainn.org/get-help/sexual-assault-and-rape-international-resources](http://www.rainn.org/get-help/sexual-assault-and-rape-international-resources)
  - **United States State Agencies:**
    - [www.mncasa.org/state-casa-groups](http://www.mncasa.org/state-casa-groups)
    - These websites can direct you to help throughout each specific state. 24-hour crisis phone support, individual in person counseling and therapy, and legal advocacy for survivors of sexual assault and abuse are types of services that may be provided by a specific agency. Some even offer support groups, healing circles, and healing through the arts courses that you can utilize once you return home.
- Contact U.S. **Embassy/Consulate** - [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov)
  - You may have challenges that further complicate things including language barriers, financial and medical expenses, and the country's own laws, culture and attitudes toward specific crimes.
  - Their mission is to ensure the safety and security to U.S. citizens who travel abroad. They are the best resource to provide support and assistance helping a sexual assault victim navigate the medical, judicial and legal systems in the country where the crime occurred.
  - They play a diplomatic role and must abide by the laws within that country. To determine how they can help visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/victims.html>

- **Seek medical attention/care.** Even if you do not want to report the assault to law enforcement and/or think you are not injured physically you still need medical attention/assistance/care to protect your health. The Medical provider/personnel/health care professional can have a variety of job titles.
  - **Resources that can be provided by the emergency room/emergency department/why the medical/evidentiary examination is important:**
    - To document any injuries the victim has and to begin treatment for those injuries no matter how minor. Frequently following an assault, a person's normal state of shock may mean they are unaware of injuries;
    - To prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
      - These tests establish a baseline against which to test the victim in the future. They can get you/administer medications for potential sexually transmitted infections (prophylactic treatment), including anti-HIV/AIDS medications. Prophylactics are a heavy dosage of antibiotics to counteract any possible infection, is the prevention of disease. Due to the prevalence of STIs today, it is safe to assume that the victim/survivor was exposed to an STI. This is an acceptable and common way to respond to the threat of infection.
    - To evaluate and prevent the risk of pregnancy resulting from the assault;
      - Access to the morning after pill/emergency contraception/pregnancy prevention/emergency pregnancy interception may be available if you so choose.
    - To collect evidence for possible prosecution if and when the victim/survivor chooses to report the assault to law enforcement. It is vital that this evidence be collected as soon as possible for it will be lost as time passes; and
    - To take the first steps toward regaining control of one's life.
- Getting medical attention should offer you a safe and caring environment. You can get medical attention without having to go through evidence collection. You should be able to get these services at a local hospital/medical facility, but not all medical settings in a community perform the evidentiary exam.

- If you have a sexual assault evidence exam/forensic medical exam/medical-forensic examination/medical-evidentiary exam/evidentiary exam/forensic sexual assault exam/Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit/rape kit(if available) done right away it may give you more options later in a criminal proceeding. During the pelvic exam the physician will be as gentle as possible. Collect that evidence to help in apprehending and prosecuting the assailant(s). If the victim/survivor ultimately decides to report the assault, it may greatly enhance the case if physical evidence was collected and is available. Chances are your rapist has or will sexually assault(ed) someone else. Forensic evidence wise, it is best to have the physical examination performed in the first 24 hours, but can be performed up to 72 hours after the assault. Evidence still may be found after the 72 hour window has expired. The medical personnel, based on their professional opinion, will decide if an exam should still be completed. A SANE(Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) or SARS (Sexual Assault Resource Service) nurse may be available to you. If the victim/survivor forgoes the exam, it does not close their options for reporting or prosecuting. The choice is the victim/survivor's.
- Make sure you go to follow up medical exams/post-assault care!
- Helpful website I found because of mental health information: MedlinePlus <https://medlineplus.gov/>
- Pay special attention to other health-related concerns like your mental health. A small mental health problem can turn into a very big one. Depression and anxiety are the most common mental illness. Mental health problems do co-occur. If you notice something that is not right don't be afraid to tell a medical professional about it. If you are trying to deescalate a situation with an individual be sure to use I statements and not you statements.
  - [nami.org](http://nami.org) , NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI helpline: 1-800-950-6264
  - If you struggle with thoughts of suicide please reach out. There are people who care. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) any time for free confidential help. Crisis Text Line: Text START to 741-741. [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
  - If you are outside of the US, visit [iasp.info](http://iasp.info) to find resources in your area.
  - [makeitok.org](http://makeitok.org) , It's time to start talking about mental illness.
  - Suicide Awareness Voices of Education [save.org](http://save.org) 1-888-511-SAVE (7283)

- [affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/college-suicide-prevention/](http://affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/college-suicide-prevention/)
  - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov) 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
    - [DrugRehab.com](http://DrugRehab.com)
  - Alcoholics Anonymous [aa.org](http://aa.org)
  - Narcotics Anonymous [na.org](http://na.org)
  - [AddictionCenter.com/treatment/inpatient-rehab](http://AddictionCenter.com/treatment/inpatient-rehab)
  - [projectsemicolon.org](http://projectsemicolon.org) , Project ; "your story is not over"
  - [twloha.com/](http://twloha.com/) , "To Write Love on Her Arms is a non-profit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. TWLOHA exists to encourage, inform, inspire, and also to invest directly into treatment and recovery."
- Report your assault to the study abroad programs and university officials. Know who to contact in case of conflict of interest due to perpetrator involvement. The study abroad programs need to know so they can take appropriate measures to reduce the risk of something happening to other participants. They can help you get the support you need and deserve. What are the reporting options if you are on campus? Are there interim measures that can be taken like a no contact order, class schedule change, or change in housing? If alleged perpetrator is another student what is the protocol? Has the Title IX Coordinator been informed?
  - **Talk to a counseling professional** who can help you begin to process and understand what happened. This person can help you cope with emotional difficulties that may arise after an assault, help you regain a sense of control and safety thereby heal. These individuals should also be able to provide you with **confidentiality**. Ask your loved ones if they have any recommendations on who to talk to. Please don't get discouraged if a psychologist does not meet your standards because there are others out there to try. If you have no recommendations to go off of, try searching these websites:
    - [https://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/?utm\\_source=PT\\_PsychToday&utm\\_medium=House\\_Link&utm\\_campaign=PT\\_TopNavF\\_Therapist](https://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/?utm_source=PT_PsychToday&utm_medium=House_Link&utm_campaign=PT_TopNavF_Therapist)
    - <https://www.rainn.org/articles/how-can-therapy-help>
      - EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy) may be able to help with PTSD symptoms as well.

## Rape Trauma Syndrome

Rape Trauma Syndrome does exist and manifests in different ways.

## For Victim/Survivors

If you have been sexually assaulted it is not your fault. No one deserves to be sexually assaulted. Make it your initiative to actually believe and feel it! (Reading my rape statement which included why I blamed myself to my psychologist is what helped get me in the right direction. You are not to blame!) Telling your story will help. Just make sure to start with those who are safe and qualified.

Move through your trauma, do not move on.

Be patient with yourself. Give yourself credit for the progress you have made.

Practice deep breathing whenever you feel anxious or panicked. It calms and centers your body. Make deep breathing a habit throughout your life.

Every victim responds to sexual violence differently. It may be in ways you may not expect in an effort to protect yourself. Everyone experiences crisis differently. Take control of how you respond to acts of sexual violence. Overcome it. Your body is your temple. The most important thing that belongs to you. You need to restore it to wholeness! You are not alone!

The crime of rape is the ultimate violation. Rape isn't something a person "gets over", it is a lifelong event. It is important that you work on healing and learn to cope with it in positive ways. Healing and recovery is possible. It takes courage and time to heal from rape. It is never too late to address and there is no wrong way to heal as long as you are making healthy choices. Claim your experience. Don't let it claim you!

Love heals.

"Recovering from sexual assault or abuse is a process, and that process looks different for everyone. It may take weeks, months, or years: there's no timetable for recovery and healing. Here are some resources to help you navigate the process: [rainn.org/recovering-sexual-violence](http://rainn.org/recovering-sexual-violence)"

[rainn.org/student-activism](http://rainn.org/student-activism)

## Discontinuation of Bad Experiences

If you aren't happy with the service you receive from one professional do not be afraid to find a second or even third opinion. It is important that you find professionals that are right for you. Try meeting with someone of a different

gender. Do not let one bad experience with a professional hamper your healing journey! For healing purposes you can't stay silent. When you speak up you start to heal. When you reach out for help you are saying your sexual assault was not right and you deserve better. But not all people out there who are employed do their job well so don't give up. Your sexual assault should be the worst thing to happen and nobody should be making it even worse.

Suppressing your feelings around your rape and not working through the trauma can cause illnesses like heart disease, depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can leave you with lingering or perhaps even debilitating symptoms. Most common among these symptoms are nightmares, flashbacks, avoidance of sexual intimacy, impaired concentration, mood fluctuations and sleep and appetite changes.

“Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder that can result from a traumatic event. Survivors might experience uncharacteristic feelings of stress, fear, anxiety, and nervousness—and this is perfectly normal. With PTSD, these feelings are extreme, can cause you to feel constantly in danger, and make it difficult to function in everyday life.” – rainn.org

Your thoughts affect your mood, behaviors, and emotions, what appears in your reality.

## **“The Right Thing to Say Is Also The Hardest” campaign by It's On Us**

It's uncomfortable to call out a friend who has done the wrong thing.

It's also the right thing to do.

[“Three Dots”](#) (our sequel piece to our [Autocorrect video](#)) shows what happens when you've got something hard to say, but don't.

If you know someone who has sexually assaulted another person, you must confront them -- even if they are your friend, your teammate, or your classmate.

It's On Us to say something out loud, to address the person, to call their wrong by its name: rape.

Rape is never a joke. College sexual assault is pervasive -- in the United States, 20% of women, 13% of men, and 25% of trans and gender nonconforming students will experience sexual assault at some point during their college career -- but it doesn't have to be.



When we stand up and say something, even when it's hard, we help to change the culture.

Don't let comfort dictate your actions. Call it out. Say something.

## Helping Someone You Care About

It is good to have an understanding on how to respond to a disclosure of sexual violence. Survivors are looking for support and safety when they disclose. The way that a victim/survivor is treated by the support people around them when they disclose a sexual assault greatly affects their healing. Every interaction with a survivor is either helpful or hurtful. There is no neutral interaction. Every victim behaves differently. They may be expressive or they may be controlled. Truly see the person who is hurting. Remember that the healing process is fluid. Everyone has bad days. Don't interpret flashbacks, bad days, or silent spells as "setbacks." It's all part of the process. Here are tips for helping someone you care about.

- **#1 Show the victim/survivor compassion and empathy.** Speak from your heart and treat them with humanity. Be warm and consistent.
- **Acknowledge and validate their feelings and pain.** Encourage them to express their feelings. (identify, label, and communicate feelings)
- Offer words of encouragement. Convey **hope**.
- Provide a nonjudgmental safe space.
- **Listen.** Be there. Be a friend. Be considerate.
- Let them talk, cry, tell their story or whatever they need to do. Let them share as much or as little information as they want to.
- Be **supportive**. Mitigate(make less painful) the impact of the event.
- If you **empower** victim/survivors they will start to regain control.
- **Do not judge, make assumptions, criticize, doubt, shame, or imply blame.**
- Do not give advice unless they ask for it.
- Enable/facilitate decision making. Let them make their own decisions.
- Be gentle.
- Give them time and be patient. Remember, there is no timetable for recovering from trauma. They deserve to have control of coping and healing in the own time. Avoid putting pressure on them to engage in activities they aren't ready to do yet.
- Stand by your friend and tell them they are loved. (Compliment them, even show gratitude.)
- Offer to be there when help is needed. Seeking medical attention, reporting, obtaining support services like a counselor or advocate. Do not pressure them. Your presence can offer the support they need. Realize that only they can make the decision to get help.

- Encourage them to practice good self-care during this difficult time.
  - Help establish a safety plan.
  - Check in periodically. Remind them you still care about what happened to them, care about their well-being, and believe their story.
- Companionship.
- The victim deserves action, engagement, and remembering.
  - Be respectful, show them **dignity**, and have a positive impact on their life.
  - Be **understanding**.

How to respond to a disclosure:

- Do you feel safe?
  - I believe you.
  - **You are not/never alone.** I am here for you. I will listen. There are others who care.
  - **You are brave.**
  - I am (so) sorry this has happened to you.
  - This must be really tough for you.
  - I'm so glad you are sharing this with me.
  - **It's not your fault.** You did not deserve this. You are not to blame. You are not responsible for this. You did nothing wrong.
  - That's terrible! What can I do to help? How can I help?
  - I'm here to support you and look out for you. I care.
  - Would you like to talk about it?
  - If you want to talk about this later, I am here for you. I'll be thinking of you and be ready to support you. Come to me as many times as you need. Healing is a process, so when things change and coping gets challenging **I am here for you.**
  - Are you open to seeking medical attention/care? Even if it happened a while ago.
  - Would you like me to help you find resources? **You have options.** Let me help you find an organization/professional help and support available to you. Service providers are able to support you as you recover.  
(Encourage)
  - You are being heard.
  - You can trust me. I will respect your privacy.
  - I support you and trust your decisions. Only you can make the decision to get help.
  - Thank you for telling me.
  - This doesn't change how I think of you.
  - It is important to take care of your health.
- Avoid asking too many questions at once.
  - Avoid "why" questions. (They can make people feel defensive.)
  - Avoid saying that you understand what they are going through.

Resources:

- [rainn.org/articles/help-someone-you-care-about](http://rainn.org/articles/help-someone-you-care-about)
- [rainn.org/articles/tips-talking-survivors-sexual-assault](http://rainn.org/articles/tips-talking-survivors-sexual-assault)
- [rainn.org/articles/lgbtq-survivors-sexual-violence](http://rainn.org/articles/lgbtq-survivors-sexual-violence)
- [nomore.org/how-to-help/what-to-say/#help](http://nomore.org/how-to-help/what-to-say/#help)

It is very possible that when you are trying to help a survivor you actually trigger them.

### When You Trigger a Survivor

1. Take accountability.
  - “I’m sorry for causing you pain.” - own the pain
  - “I’m sorry for the sexist thing I said.” - own the wrongs
2. Offer choices on how you might make things better. State what you can't do, if necessary.
3. Ask the survivor how you can make it right. “What can I do to make things right?”
4. Follow through on what you agree to.

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It is stressful to care for someone who has been sexually assaulted, be a secondary victim. Listening to their story can be traumatic (secondary traumatization). Take care of yourself and your own needs so that you can be at your best for the victim. Relax. Talk to someone about the feelings you are experiencing and recognize denial. Sexual assault advocates, hotlines, and counseling professional are there to help you so utilize your resources. You can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or visit [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org) and receive confidential support. Your feelings need to be validated too. Recognize your limits and be honest with yourself. Helping yourself in turn helps the victim/survivor.

Resource: [rainn.org/articles/self-care-friends-and-family](http://rainn.org/articles/self-care-friends-and-family)

**Make sure to let your loved ones know that you've read this!**

## Financial Burdens

Do not let money hinder your desire to seek help. Resources are available.

SASHAA can sometimes assist financially, may it be with medical assistance (to be seen by a medical professional), a danger to safety relocation, etc. It depends on each unique situation and what SASHAA's budget allows.

The embassy may be able to help: [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov)

If you have your school's required medical, evacuation, and security insurance it should be covered as well.

You may be covered by your homeowners or travel insurance for any belongings you may have lost at the time of the assault. It is likely you will have to report the incident to law enforcement in the country that you are in for the insurance to be valid. Make sure it is safe to report an assault to law enforcement before contacting them.

[ithappenedtoalexa.org](http://ithappenedtoalexa.org) , provides family members or trusted friends financial assistance to be able to attend a court trial with their loved one who has been a victim of sexual assault.

## Lifestyle Choices

Lets face it, living a negative life is exhausting.

### Positive

After a sexual assault it is vital that you utilize positive coping skills and practice self care. Bad things happen to good people. Find a healthy outlet to express your emotions and feelings. Practice self-expression. This can help rebuild your confidence and your sense of empowerment. Focus on your well being as a whole because all your boundaries have been violently invaded: mind, body, and spirit. The resources are endless, so please take time to do some searching. It is possible to live a healthy, full life.

Keeping a journal is something that is widely recognized as beneficial and healing. Don't forget to write about your future too!

One method to helping you live a positive life is to create a list of all thing things you are grateful for each morning. As the day goes on add to the list.

~~Self-care does not heal trauma. "Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation." Judith Herman, Trauma & Recovery~~

I think healing can take place during some of the least expected times and the benefits of healing are better than you could ever expect.

“Post-traumatic growth is an idea that looks at the transformation that can come after trauma. It focuses on five areas: 1) appreciation of life, 2) relationships with others, 3) new possibilities in life, 4) personal strength, and 5) spiritual change. That's not to say that trauma is usually a vehicle for positive change. Without treatment, trauma destroys lives. Yet, for those of us who have felt the sting of abuse, we must find a way forward, and for me, experiencing growth from the horror of my own abuse was the path to move beyond what happened to me into the person I would become. Post-traumatic growth is a process and not just an outcome. It's about maintaining a sense of hope that after trauma you cannot only survive, but also experience positive life changes as a result.” Jenna Quinn

[CaringBridge.org](http://CaringBridge.org) is a nonprofit that supports the love and connection of more than 500,000 people every day. They provide personal, protected websites where people can share updates during any type of health event. They believe that in times of need, the greatest source of hope and healing is the love of family and friends. Through a CaringBridge website, everyone can stay informed and leave messages of support and encouragement. It is a great tool for journaling even if you need it just for yourself.

"Have happiness be your end goal no matter what." Elizabeth Smart

## Negative

Please be aware of common negative effects of a sexual assault and know there is help available. [www.rainn.org/get-information/effects-of-sexual-assault](http://www.rainn.org/get-information/effects-of-sexual-assault)

## Victim vs. Survivor vs. Thriver

You have your whole life to live as a rape survivor and I want you to thrive.

**Victim:** victimized. one that is acted on and usually adversely affected by a force or agent; one that is injured, destroyed, or sacrificed under any of various conditions; one that is subjected to oppression, hardship, or mistreatment

Implies passivity(allowing others to do things to you without complaining or pushing back), acceptance of one's circumstances, and casualty. Robs individuals of their ability to fight back. Powerless, at the mercy of others. Diminishes strength and resilience. Keeps focus on their traumatic experiences instead of everything they've accomplished since then. Contributes to the feeling that they are irreparably damaged. Violated, vulnerable, helpless.

Need to heal mentally, physically, and emotionally from the assault. Move forward.

Body, emotions, thoughts, behaviors, spirituality and relationships.

Somebody with a “victim mentality” is simply lacking power and is in need of help. Asking for help isn’t a sign of weakness. Getting help is refusing to stay stuck.

**Survivor:** one who lives through affliction; one who continues to function or prosper in spite of opposition, hardship, or setbacks.

With growth and healing you become a survivor.

Has reclaimed their power. Helps them regain the power that was taken from them. It distinguishes them from people who did not survive.

Imparts a sense of movement, of moving on beyond the event, and of reclamation, taking back your life.

Displays the individual’s ability to take action in the face of immense obstacles. For many survivors of trauma, making it to the next moment, minute, hour, day can involve immense strength and determination. Implies ingenuity, resourcefulness, and inner strength.

If you have been assaulted and live to tell the tale you are a survivor. If you are seeking support you are a survivor, no matter what your story is. Would be a victim and survivor of a crime.

It takes courage, bravery, and strength to tell your story. Support that journey every step of the way.

Recognize other survivors, recognize your positives, gain a fresh understanding, deal with it/cope/develop a toolbox of strategies that helped you get through, you have a choice, make it. Show creativity. Be introspective, caring, and strong, but recognize you are flawed.

**Thrivers:** truly moving forward, being mentally/physically/spiritually healthy, being able to enjoy a stable life financially, having healthy relationships, and being open to love. Having the opportunity to shape life the way you want it, to make the most of life, and to find joy in everyday life. Thriving centers us.

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It is up to you to decide how you identify yourself.

Allies support decisions and use familiar language to show solidarity and support.

Identity: look inside and define yourself. Identity is a fluid thing. The way you see yourself has a massive impact on the way you make sense of your experiences. You are not limited because you are a survivor. Find new experiences, challenges, understanding.

Remember: "Those who have hurt me have no power except that which I give them." Do not let yourself or your life be defined by your assault.

## **Support System**

Having a strong support system is important. Your support system can include family, friends, and more. Sexual assault survivors deserve compassion and empathy. Connecting with other survivors of sexual assault can also be very beneficial. Please talk openly about your feelings to your support system, it helps!

## **Justice**

Because the United States can't do a lot to help students abroad, justice can be hard to attain. Every act of sexual violence is unique. One option is restorative justice. Here is an article that I found enlightening in regards to justice:

<http://www.npr.org/2017/07/25/539334346/restorative-justice-an-alternative-to-the-process-campuses-use-for-sexual-assault>

## **Pregnancy**

If you become pregnant due to your sexual assault know that there is support for you out there. There is a tremendous amount of information available online and any sexual assault advocate can help too.

## **Students Abroad Sexual Assault Advocacy**

If your life has been affected due to a student being sexually assaulted while abroad I welcome you to make contact with me (callie@sasari.org) if this is something you feel comfortable with. I keep regular contact with elected officials about this cause and welcome other's input. I think if there is anybody that can help us improve all things students being sexually assaulted abroad it is the survivors themselves, so please provide me feedback on the material found throughout this website or lack thereof. I am open to recommendations. If you have a specific item like a risk reduction technique you would like me to give emphasis to in any way I would be willing to consider

your input. Please be gentle with yourself and utilize your support system and resources.

I have found meeting other sexual assault survivors helpful towards my healing journey and would be happy to hear from you!

Sexual assault survivors can expect **confidentiality** from SASARI.



## Other Resources:

- In the US and in crisis? Text HELLO to 741741. [crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)
- [ItsOnUs.org](http://ItsOnUs.org) , It's On Us, It's on us to stop sexual assault
  - [itsonus.org/#pledge](http://itsonus.org/#pledge)
- [whitehouse.gov/1is2many](http://whitehouse.gov/1is2many) , launched by Vice President Biden
- [cultureofrespect.org](http://cultureofrespect.org) , Culture of Respect strengthens sexual assault prevention efforts on college campuses
- [oneinfourusa.org](http://oneinfourusa.org) , Dedicated to the prevention of rape
- [ihollaback.org](http://ihollaback.org) , From online to on the streets, you have the right to be in public space. Hollaback!
  - [ihollaback.org/resources/bystander-resources](http://ihollaback.org/resources/bystander-resources)
  - [iheartmob.org](http://iheartmob.org) , addresses online harassment
- <https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/workplace-campus-harassment/>
- <https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/healthy-relationships-intimacy/>
- <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/sexual-assault-awareness-recovery/>
- [decisions-that-matter.com](http://decisions-that-matter.com) , interactive graphic novel created by students
- [preventconnect.org](http://preventconnect.org) , PreventConnect, a national online project dedicated to the primary prevention of sexual assault and domestic violence.
- [collegestats.org/resources/sexual-assault-prevention](http://collegestats.org/resources/sexual-assault-prevention) , Prevent Sexual Assault: A Guide For College Students
- [safercampus.org](http://safercampus.org) , SAFER (Students Active For Ending Rape) focuses on strengthening student-led movements to combat sexual violence on college campuses around the United States of America.
- [nomore.org](http://nomore.org) , together we can end domestic violence and sexual assault, national awareness group
- [nsvrc.org](http://nsvrc.org) , **National Sexual Violence Resource Center** works to eliminate sexual violence across the United States of America. 717-909-0710
  - [nsvrc.tumblr.com](http://nsvrc.tumblr.com)

Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention by Joan Tabachnick

- [www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/engaging-bystanders-sexual-violence-prevention](http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/engaging-bystanders-sexual-violence-prevention)
- [www.nsvrc.org/elearning/3546](http://www.nsvrc.org/elearning/3546)
- The National Center for Victims of Crime Victim Service Helpline, 1-800-FYI-CALL or 1-800-211-7996 (TTY/TDD)

- [notalone.gov](http://notalone.gov) , Not Alone is part of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault
- [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) , a dating abuse helpline for teens, 1-866-331-9474
- [lin6.org](http://lin6.org) , Resources for Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse
- [csfes.org](http://csfes.org) , Committee for Safety of Foreign Exchange Students
- [endrapeoncampus.org](http://endrapeoncampus.org) , End Rape on Campus (EROC)
- [pandys.org](http://pandys.org) , Pandora's Project, Support and resources for survivors of rape and sexual abuse
- [evawintl.org](http://evawintl.org) , End Violence Against Women International
- [forumea.org](http://forumea.org) , The Forum on Education Abroad
- [nafsa.org](http://nafsa.org)
  - [http://www.nafsa.org/Professional\\_Resources/Browse\\_by\\_Interest/Education\\_Abroad/Supporting\\_Education\\_Abroad/](http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Browse_by_Interest/Education_Abroad/Supporting_Education_Abroad/)
  - [http://www.nafsa.org/Professional\\_Resources/Browse\\_by\\_Interest/Education\\_Abroad/OSAC\\_Study\\_Abroad\\_Safety\\_and\\_Security\\_Seminars/](http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Browse_by_Interest/Education_Abroad/OSAC_Study_Abroad_Safety_and_Security_Seminars/)
- [justice.gov](http://justice.gov) , The United States Department of Justice
- [survjustice.org](http://survjustice.org) , SurvJustice, Increasing the Prospect of Justice for Survivors
- [civilsocietyhelps.org](http://civilsocietyhelps.org) , Civil Society, can interview students to determine what legal and advocacy services are needed
- [bravemissworld.com](http://bravemissworld.com) , Miss Israel Linor Abargil's story, take notice to Get Help and Speak Out tab
- [amnestyusa.org](http://amnestyusa.org) , Amnesty International is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights
- [ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices) , Directory of Crime Victim Services, a resource from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)
- Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime
  - Help for Crime Victims, Resources for International Victims <http://ojp.gov/ovc/help/international.html>
  - Resource Guide for Serving U.S. Citizens Victimized Abroad <http://ojp.gov/ovc/publications/infores/ServingVictimsAbroad/welcome.html>
- [state.gov/m/ds](http://state.gov/m/ds) , Bureau of Diplomatic Security (BDS), an agency that protects diplomats abroad
- [change.org](http://change.org) , the world's largest petition platform, empowering people everywhere to create the change they want to see
- [cruiserape.com](http://cruiserape.com) , Cruise Ship Rape & Sexual Assault Support Center
- [internationalcruisevictims.org](http://internationalcruisevictims.org) , International Cruise Victims

## Missing Abroad

If the person abroad is missing visit the Natalee Holloway Resource Center (NHRC) website at [www.crimemuseum.org/help-the-missing](http://www.crimemuseum.org/help-the-missing)

## Progress

"Said the river: Imagine everything you can imagine, then keep on going."  
- Mary Oliver

## Website Suggestions Sought

I believe our students traveling abroad deserve the best. I created this website knowing I want people to help me improve what is available on my website. I believe there is always room for improvement. Please e-mail me with any ideas in regards to website material! [callie@sasari.org](mailto:callie@sasari.org) The website is always evolving, so make sure to keep checking back!

(MNCASA) signifies that the information was received from Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault's **Sexual Violence in Minnesota: A Resource Manual for Advocates**.