

ACTION PLAN FOR PARENTS:

The price of a good education should NOT include sexual assault.

#1 Do Your Homework

First, the bad news: Sexual assault is a big problem on campuses across the country. The good news is that there is valuable information available and we've compiled some of the best resources for you.

But know the basics:

- Girls between 16 and 24 are at the highest risk of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- Young women who go to college are more likely to experience rape than young women who do not.
- Most rapes are committed by a small group of college men, who are considered serial rapists.
- Rape happens to young men and in same sex relationships.

Find out the school's reporting policies and get the number of the local police department, school health center, or local community health center, in addition to campus security, local rape crisis center, or domestic violence program. In a crisis, it's always hard to remember what to do and who to call. Be prepared.

Three pieces of legislation—[Title IX](#), [The Clery Act](#), and [The Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#)— govern the rules about sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking in higher education. We also recommend www.notalone.gov, www.data.gov, and KnowYourIX.org, which have information for parents, students and, others interested in learning more.

#2 Start and Keep a Conversation Going

As parents, we know that what we do and what we say matters to our children (even though they don't always let us know that!). That's why we talk to them about studying, partying, money matters, and all the things they need to know as they venture off to college. Somehow, sexual assault is often left off the list. Unfortunately, violence (in all forms) thrives in silence. Start a conversation and keep it up—not to scare your child—but to help them stay safe and learn about healthy and consensual relationships.

Tell them about www.circleof6app.com, an app for their phone that helps people choose six people in their life who will have their back if things get complicated or scary. You may want to talk to other parents you know who have kids in college or are college-bound. They can help support what you are doing and share tips they have learned along the way.

#3 Ask Questions

So, this is where the rubber meets the road. Let's face it— we weigh in (sometimes heavily) on where our children go to college. Ask questions about schools' sexual assault policies and prevention programming. Ask if they have had lawsuits filed (you can see on www.notalone.gov which schools are currently under federal investigation for Title IX infractions).

Here are a couple questions and best answers to get you warmed up:

Q: What kind of training does the school offer students and staff about sexual assault on campus?



A: We train everyone. Our President makes a public speech and comprehensive training is offered to all students, faculty, staff, and contractors.

Q: What prevention programs are in place? Do they extend beyond incoming freshmen?

A: We use [X] program because there is research and evaluation to support its effectiveness. Yes, prevention activities and campaigns are directed to all levels of the students, and the entire campus community all year, every year.

Q: If violence or sexual assault does occur, how does a student report it?

A: We communicate clear reporting policies on our [X] (website, handbook, etc.). Students have a choice between confidential and non-confidential reporting.

Q: How many students actually report violence at this school?

(This is the million dollar question and the answer says a lot about the school. Most people would likely assume that a small number is a good sign. In fact, small numbers can be a signal that students are not reporting because they believe that the school response is not fair, or sometimes victim-blaming occurs. The answer you are looking for goes something like this.)

A: We are looking closely at what those numbers mean and what they don't mean. The numbers themselves do not create a clear picture of what is happening on campus, but they are a very important indicator of what is working and not working.

Q: Who should I call to get more information about your sexual assault policies and prevention activities if I have further questions?

A: [A specific name and contact info.]

(It's important that the school provides you with the name of a specific staff person that is responsible for handling these issues. This tells you that the school has dedicated personnel that is trained and hired to seriously review and monitor their policies and prevention activities).

#4 Use Your Sphere of Influence

Many parents wear several hats. For example, some of us are also alumni, professionals in higher education, healthcare, media, or law enforcement. How do your connections matter to preventing sexual assault and violence on campus? Consider these scenarios:

- Maybe you were a member of a fraternity or sorority, and can recruit others to make some noise about the issue.
- Maybe you're a doctor or nurse in a city that is occupied by a college or many colleges. Talk to your colleagues and see what they are noticing and what you can do to help.

As alumni, we can take all kinds of actions. For one, ask questions before you write the check or send your President an email.

The bottom line is many of us have influence beyond our role as parents. **Use yours.**



For more than 30 years, Futures Without Violence has led the way and set the pace in innovative educational programs, public action campaigns, policy development, and leadership training designed to end violence against women, children, and families around the world. Instrumental in developing the landmark Violence Against Women Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1994, Futures Without Violence has established an International Conference Center that will engage today's diverse national and global leaders, stand with survivors, and continue working to break the silence around gender-based violence. Learn more:



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