

Let's Talk About Sex : A Strategy for Reducing the Risk of Rape Among College Students

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Seducing Norms:

In our culture, we frequently use body language to communicate about sexual desire. As college students, perhaps you are familiar with this scene:

A couple is kissing and hugging, enjoying the intimacy. After a few minutes, someone initiates a deeper level of intimacy. Usually this is done with "hand signals." Hands roam and probe, over clothes, under clothes....testing whether the partner is interested in sexual contact.

Whether the answer is "yes" or "no" is typically conveyed with body language, as well. "Yes" may be indicated by the partner's hands joining in the roaming activities. "No" may be indicated by moving the partner's hands away, moving away, straightening the shirt, pulling the pants back up. Often this happens while the kissing and hugging continues.

Typically, hand signals are followed by body language are followed by more hand signals, more body language and the cycle continues until...

Until what? Until sexual desire is fulfilled? Until someone says "stop," or "not now," or "don't do this to me"? Until someone is raped?

Let's talk about sex:

Let's change the way we seduce each other. Let's change the norm. Can you picture the following scene?

A couple is kissing and hugging, enjoying the moment. After a few minutes, one of them says, "This is nice.....I would like to be more intimate with you. Would you like that?" A verbal response to this question would be clear, whether the answer is "yes," "no," or "not yet".

Using words to say "no," "not now," or "not yet" should prevent misinterpretation of the message. If you say "no," "not now," or "not yet" to sexual touch and the sexual touch continues, you can be certain this person does not respect your words, your wishes, you. When using body language, you can always tell yourself that he/she didn't understand what you meant. When using words, it is clear. If intimate touch continues after you say "no," take action. Get out of there, fast.

Alcohol, Drugs and Communication:

Nearly all date and acquaintance rapes involve alcohol or drugs. Alcohol and drugs affect our ability to use body language effectively to communicate our sexual intentions. Alcohol and drugs influence our ability to understand and interpret body language. Yet many people use alcohol and drugs to loosen up, to make it easier to flirt, to dance, to talk.

Remember, it is hard to tell how intoxicated someone else is if you have been using alcohol or drugs. On the other hand, it is much easier to tell if someone is high if you are sober. Legally, consent for sexual touch cannot be given by someone who is intoxicated.

Summary:

If you are interested in sexual contact, make sure you are agreeing together to have sex. Talk about your sexual intentions, ask about your partners sexual intentions. Make sure you are both able to give consent (not buzzed). Change your seducing techniques to include words. Let's talk about sex...