# Risk Reduction Tips

*With no intent to blame victims, and in recognizing that only abusers are responsible for the abuse they perpetrate, the following are some strategies to reduce one's risk of sexual assault.*

1. **Be aware** of your surroundings. Knowing where you are and who is around you may help you to find a way to get out of a bad situation.

2. **Avoid isolated areas.** It is more difficult to get help if no one is around.

3. **Walk with purpose.** Even if you don't know where you are going, act like you do.

4. **Try not to load yourself down** with packages or bags as this can make you appear more vulnerable.

5. **Make sure your cell phone is with you** and charged, and that you have money.

6. **Don't allow yourself to be isolated** with someone you don't trust or someone you don't know.

7. **Avoid putting music headphones in both ears** so that you can be more aware of your surroundings, especially if you are walking alone.

8. **When you go to a social gathering, go with a group of friends.** Arrive together, check in with each other throughout the evening, and leave together. Knowing where you are and who is around you may help you to find a way out of a bad situation.

9. **Trust your instincts.** If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable in any situation or location, go with your gut—it probably isn't the best place to be. If you see something suspicious, contact law enforcement immediately (local authorities can be reached by calling 911 in most areas of the U.S.).

10. **Don't leave your drink unattended** while talking, dancing, using the restroom, or making a phone call. If you've left your drink alone, just get a new one.

11. **Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust.** If you choose to accept a drink, go with the person to the bar to order it, watch it being poured, and carry it yourself. At parties, don't drink from the punch bowls or other large, common open containers.

12. **Watch out for your friends, and vice versa.** If a friend seems out of it, is too intoxicated for the amount of alcohol they've had, or is acting out of character, get him or her to a safe place immediately.

13. **If you suspect you or a friend has been drugged, contact law enforcement immediately (local authorities can be reached by calling 911 in most areas of the U.S.).** Be explicit with doctors so they can give you the correct tests (you will need a urine test and possibly others).

14. **If you need to get out of an uncomfortable or scary situation** here are some things that you can try:

    a. **Remember that being in this situation is not your fault.** You did not do anything wrong, it is the person who is making you uncomfortable that is to blame.

    b. **Be true to yourself.** Don't feel obligated to do anything you don't want to do. "I don't want to" is always a good enough reason. Do what feels right to you and what you are comfortable with.

    c. **Have a code word with your friends or family** so that if you don't feel comfortable you can call them and communicate your discomfort without the person you are with knowing. Your friends or family can then come to get you or make up an excuse for you to leave.

    d. **Lie.** If you don't want to hurt the person's feelings it is better to lie and make up a reason to leave than to stay and be uncomfortable, scared, or worse. Some excuses you could use are: needing to take care of a friend or family member, not feeling well, having somewhere else that you need to be, etc.

15. **Try to think of an escape route.** How would you try to get out of the room? Where are the doors? Windows? Are there people around who might be able to help you? Is there an emergency phone nearby?

16. **If you and/or the other person have been drinking,** you can say that you would rather wait until you both have your full judgment before doing anything you may regret later.

*Source:*
Ways to Reduce your Risk of Sexual Assault (n.d.). *Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network*. Retrieved April 23, 2015 from https://rainn.org/get-information/sexual-assault-prevention