

## Primary Prevention and Awareness Policy

Programs to Prevent Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking:

Mercyhurst University engages in annual comprehensive, intentional, and integrated programming, initiatives, strategies, and campaigns intended to end dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking at the individual, relationship, and institutional levels.

The University's educational programming consists of primary prevention and awareness programs for all incoming students and new employees and ongoing awareness and prevention campaigns for students that:

- A. Clearly communicate that the institution prohibits the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking (as defined by the Clery Act);
- B.



EverFi's online sexual assault prevention course is required of all freshmen students to learn effective ways to prevent and report sexual assault on our campus.

- **Orientation Programming**  
Incoming first year students participate in information sessions about healthy relationships, the sexual misconduct policy, consent, bystander intervention, and campus and community specific resources. New faculty and employees receive Clery Act and Title IX information during their orientation programs.
- **Extended Orientation Programming**  
Incoming first year students take an introduction to Mercyhurst course that addresses civility, sexual violence, bystander intervention, and other topics to introduce students to the university.
- **Step Up! Bystander Intervention Workshops**  
Step Up! Bystander Intervention Presentations help people understand what stops us from intervening in potentially harmful situations and provides tools to intervene. Bystander Intervention workshops cover bystander effect and ways to decide to act when we see someone in need. Participants leave with practical tips to intervene.
- **Healthy Relationships Curriculum** functions on a series of educational modules about relationships: with others (intimate partnerships, dating, ending relationships) and with the self (knowing boundaries, finding one's voice to set boundaries, discerning what is appropriate for the individual, etc.).

#### Risk Reduction:

With no intent to victim blame and recognizing that only abusers are responsible for their abuse, the following are some strategies to reduce one's risk of sexual assault or harassment (taken from Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network, [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org))

- 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.
- Try to avoid isolated areas. It is more difficult to get help if no one is around.
- Walk with purpose. Even if you don't know where you are going, act like you do.
- Trust your instincts. If a situation or location feels unsafe or uncomfortable, it probably isn't the best place to be.
- Try not to load yourself down with packages or bags as this can make you appear more vulnerable.
- Make sure your cell phone is with you and charged and that you have cab money and/or an on-demand driver app loaded.
- Don't allow yourself to be isolated with someone you don't trust or someone you don't know.

- Avoid putting music headphones in both ears so that you can be more aware of your surroundings, especially if you are walking alone.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Watch out for your friends, and vice versa. If a friend seems out of it, is way 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.
- 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).
- If you need to get out of an uncomfortable or scary situation, here are some things that you can try:
  - 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.
  - 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.
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