Malorie was invited to the party by a coworker she had known for a while: Rick*. He was tall, muscular, funny, and charming. Rick had just graduated from the college Malorie attended and was soon heading back home to Michigan. They grew to be friends through work.

Malorie was excited when he invited her to come over to his place for his roommate’s party.

Upon arriving, Malorie mingled and drank; she played a few rounds of beer-pong and flip-cup. At about 1 a.m. the party began to die down and Malorie realized she needed to sober up and stop drinking. She went into the kitchen to grab some water when Rick came in. They flirted as she filled up her glass and after a couple minutes of talking, Rick asked Malorie if she wanted to go somewhere quieter so they could continue their conversation.

Malorie was led to his bedroom where they continued talking. Eventually, Rick leaned in for a kiss. After a couple minutes of kissing, things began to escalate and Malorie started to feel uncomfortable. She was a petite girl and Rick easily overpowered her. As he climbed on top of her and began groping underneath her dress, she asked him to please slow down and suggested they go back to talking or rejoin the party. Rick had other ideas: he flipped her over, pinned her against the wall, and used his size and stature to keep her there while he raped her.

As soon as he let her go, Malorie grabbed her things and left. She was confused: wasn’t Rick supposed to be her friend? Shouldn’t she have been able to trust him? She wasn’t supposed to experience something like that—rape only happened to women who dressed provocatively and flirted wildly with any and all members of the opposite sex, right?

Rape wasn’t supposed to happen to her—she was working her way through college, paying bills, and preparing to apply to graduate school. Was it her fault? She had flirted with Rick and let him kiss her. Had she led him on? She didn’t treat Rick any differently from any of her other male friends. She had told him to stop and she knew that she did not want to have sex with him. What should she do? Should she tell someone? Would she be blamed?

Rick left two days later for Michigan and Malorie never heard from him again. It took her months to tell her closest friend what had happened that night; it took even longer to tell her parents. They suggested she press charges, but Rick had changed his phone number and she had no idea where he lived in Michigan. Malorie never pressed charges and pursued therapy to address the confusion and stress she experienced.

Unfortunately, Malorie’s experience is not a unique one. Research shows that anywhere from $\frac{1}{3}$rd to $\frac{1}{4}$th of college attending women will experience sexual assault or rape by the time they have completed their senior year. Research also shows that 80-90% of victims know the perpetrator in some capacity, and the more intimate the relationship, the more likely the situation will end in a completed rape.

These astonishing statistics do not imply that women who are raped are to blame. Sexual violence and rape in college-aged individuals is not a new topic of discussion for government, policy makers, university officials, or society in general; nevertheless, it is an important issue that affects the health and well-being of young women in this country and ought to be addressed. This article is written for all Cosmo readers; for young women who may or may not be school bound; for their friends and family members; and even for their teachers/professors.

Cosmo wants to shed light on this issue. We represent you, lovely ladies, and we want you to be educated, well-represented, and safe! We hope you’ll join our online fight against sexual assault on campus by giving you What You Need to Know, sharing how Taking Action through 1) sharing your story, 2) reporting sexual assault, 3) changing your school’s sexual assault policy works, and tips for Staying Safe.*

*DID YOU KNOW?

**RESEARCH SHOWS THAT ANYWHERE FROM $1/3$TH TO $1/4$TH OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS WILL BECOME VICTIMS OF A SEXUAL ASSAULT BY THEIR SENIOR YEAR.**

*Names have been changed to adhere to confidentiality laws.
to retire early and go to sleep while the party was still raging because she had overdone it on the whiskey and felt sick. When her perpetrator entered the room, she was too incapacitated to fight him off.

**Keeping it on the Down Low**

Sexual assault is considered the most underreported crime in America, and less than 5% of completed and attempted rapes are reported to campus authorities or law enforcement. College campuses that receive Federal funding are required by the Clery Act of 1990 to submit a security report annually, which includes data on specific sexual crime categories. Additionally, in 1992 the Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights was added to the Clery Act, which "required schools to develop prevention policies and provide certain assurances to victims." Almost 80% of schools adhere to this mandate and send their report to the Department of Education, as they should! Additionally, the Department of Justice sent out a report that shows only 37% of universities fully comply in reporting crime statistics.

Readers, I’m sure you want to know: 1) what is going on with our universities, and 2) what about the universities that claim sexual assault is not an issue on their campus? A related *Cosmo* article suggests that some campuses may peddle the fifth when it comes to their numbers because they don’t want to scare away prospective students. Shame on them!

**Taking Action**

**When Not to Keep Your Mouth Shut.**

As was the case for both Malorie and Grace, the first person they opened up to about their sexual assault was a female friend. Research states that your best girlfriend may be the best person to talk about a scary and unwanted sexual encounter. A study printed in *Violence Against Women* reported 88% of college women disclosed experiences of sexual victimization to peers, 10% to a family member, 4% to a campus authority, and 3% to a counselor. This suggests that you may not be utilizing all the resources available to you on your campus in case of an emergency. We hope this article helps you identify where you can go and who you can talk to.

Survivors of sexual assault are clinically shown to experience both short-term and long-term reactions from being a victim of sexual assault or rape. Short-term reactions include shock and disbelief, whereas long-term consequences of sexual assault include serious feelings of anxiety, terror, depression, high rates of suicidal ideation, and post-traumatic stress disorder. For both victims and friends of victims, *Cosmo* encourages you to SPEAK UP, even if you don’t report the incident to campus authorities or police! The farther you reach out, the healthier you are in the long run: women who delay disclosure and treatment seeking report higher levels of rape-distress, anxiety, and fear. There’s nothing more important than getting help when you need it, whether it’s physical, mental, or emotional.

**Get to Know Your School’s Policy on Sexual Assault**

Educate yourself! Find out what your school’s sexual assault response policy is. It may be of particular importance for you to find out whether anonymous or confidential reporting is allowed by your university. The Department of Justice states that although 84% of surveyed schools offer confidential reporting, only 46% allow anonymous reporting.

There is a difference between *reporting* a sexual assault and *charging* someone with sexual assault – if you tell a friend, family member or counselor that you have been victimized and need help, they may encourage you to speak up, but will not necessarily make you name names. Depending on your school’s sexual assault policy, you may or may not have to give the name of your assailant. This is why it’s so important to know the rules of the game. Also, *Cosmo* wants to remind you that if you choose to speak up, it doesn’t always mean your perpetrator is jail-bound. In fact, many perpetrators don’t see a single day behind bars.

**Rape Myths: Why More Women Don’t Speak Up**

Rape myths are “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false, but are persistently held, and serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women. Rape myths include the beliefs that women lie about rape and only certain women get raped.” The biggest part of this myth is that women who are sexually assaulted often blame themselves for being too available.

**MY “NO” DOES NOT MEAN “YES” RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN COLLEGE TODAY**

**What You Need to Know:**

**One Tequila, Two Tequila, Three Tequila, Floor**

College is a good time! Young men and women are being intellectually challenged, being exposed to different ways of thinking, pursuing education in a specified field, and may be away from home for the first time. Can anyone say “Party Time”?! Finally escaping the watchful eyes of parents is a long-awaited and celebrated experience for many, but there are some college students who are overwhelmed by their new sense of freedom and feel pressure to explore the party scene, experiment sexually, and partake in underage/risky drinking and drug behavior.

In two studies of recorded sexual assault cases, 20-90% of women reported drug or alcohol use the night they were sexually assaulted or raped. We are all aware that drinking is a normal part of life for many 20-somethings, but we want our readers to party smarter - not (necessarily) harder! Playing games like beer-pong or forgetting to eat before drinking can make you vulnerable to a variety of negative outcomes. Drinking often takes place in sexually charged atmospheres, so “let Cosmo fill you in before you fill ‘er up!”

**GAME-PLAYERS PLAYING GAMES WITH ALTERED MOTIVES?**

**NINETEEN PERCENT OF GUYS WHO PARTICIPATED IN A RESEARCH SURVEY AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY SAID THEY HAD SLEPT WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS TOO DRUNK TO GIVE CONSENT AFTER PLAYING DRINKING GAMES.**


Research shows that women who consume alcohol use less effective strategies to protect themselves from sexual aggression. They have decreased verbal and physical resistance due to the dizzying effects of alcohol.

Grace*, a young college student in her junior year, recalls the night she was raped by one of her brother’s friends – someone she had known for 12 years. She was the hostess of the party, but decided to serve the alcohol.

**WANT TO KNOW HOW SAFE YOUR CAMPUS IS?**

Check out [http://vicrime.com](http://vicrime.com) to get the nitty-gritty info your admissions counselor may have left out!

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* This is a fictional name. All names are fictional and no identifying information was used in the case studies. All statistics are either pulled from a research study or learned from personal experience.
If you answered true to any of the questions to your left, you may be participating in the cultural attitudes that condone violence against women, which is thought to partially explain the high rates of rape documented in the United States. We aren’t saying that you are at fault for this, but as Cosmo readers, we want to encourage you to challenge popular ideologies that inhibit women from receiving the respect they deserve in an often male-dominated society!

Our lady fixin’ fem-friends have a theory which suggests that sexual violence takes place because of the “rape culture” women live in. A rape culture is defined as a “complex system of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women.” Women (and men) are often unprepared to prevent themselves from participating in these ideologies, or may be altogether unaware they are participating in a culture that hurts their loved ones physically and mentally.

Those who are the recipients of unwanted sexual contact and assault often align themselves with rape myths and blame themselves for being raped or sexually victimized. These ideas are reflected in American culture and are evident in Malorie’s story: she experienced a great deal of confusion and questioned the role she played in her own rape – was she responsible? This often happens when the victim has been drinking, as they believe their non-sober state facilitated the rape or sexual assault they experienced. In fact, because a majority of women who are sexually assaulted know their perpetrator, they are often unsure if they can prove that a crime occurred or that the perpetrator will be punished. Non-stranger rapists are very rarely convicted of their crimes.

This also affects the rate at which women seek help from university officials or police. In Hope’s case, she immediately reached out to her friends, family, and local authorities to press charges against her perpetrator. Despite having been drinking, she did not budge when questioned about whether the incident between her and her rapist was consensual. When the police questioned Hope’s rapist, he claimed that she “wanted it” and “liked it” (which are other common examples of rape myths – ew!). Hope is now in the process of pressing charges. Cosmo wants to remind you, lovely ladies, that there are things more important than pressing charges, like getting help! If you feel uncomfortable outing the person who assaulted you, that’s okay, but please seek help from a counselor or friend ASAP.

In many ways, Hope’s story is unique: not everyone receives support from friends, family, and the community. This, unfortunately, was the case for Beckett Brennan, a female athlete attending the University of the Pacific who was sexually assaulted and raped by three star-university basketball players. Beckett’s story was covered by 60 minutes and documented. After receiving initial support for her decision to press charges, when it finally came time to speak to the university board about the assault, their “questions made (Beckett) feel like the case had suddenly become less about the basketball players, and more about her behavior that night... tons of questions [were asked] about how much [she] was drinking [and] a focus on flirting.” Cosmo wants all our readers to know: we don’t care how you dress or how you bat your eyelashes, no one deserves to be raped!

Power to the People: Know Your School’s Policy on Sexual Assault

In Beckett’s case, each of her assailants received different punishments, despite all being guilty of violating the same policy on sexual assault. One was expelled, one was suspended for a year, and the other for a semester. In reaction to these university mandated punishments Beckett said, “I didn’t understand how you can find somebody guilty of sexual assault and not expel them.” Beckett left the University of the Pacific after experiencing negative stigmatization from her classmates; she said “everything was different.” Three months after she left, one of her assailants returned to the university and the basketball team’s starting lineup. The following semester, his teammate rejoined him for fall training.

Research shows that most reports of sexual assault on campus are dealt with through binding administrative actions, such as a no-contact order. The most common penalty for violating a university’s policy against sexual assault is expulsion, which is imposed by 84% of schools. According to the Department of Justice, any university’s sexual assault policy should be “reader friendly, easily accessible, and widely distributed.” It should include information and definitions about all forms of sexual misconduct, consent, and what “sexual assault” means for that particular
Staying Safe
How Not to be “Sorry for Party Rocking”

The lesson here is to be safe, be smart, and be supportive of your fellow females who want to go out and have a good time, while remaining in control. We want to remind you, “the more the merrier,” and we don’t mean in the bedroom. Ladies: support each other and use the buddy system. Agreeing to follow through on “door-to-door” service can protect all your friends from being left alone and vulnerable to what could be a scary situation. Take turns being designated driver – it’s smart to have one person who has not been drinking to serve as an official lookout for the evening. We know your friends are hot! Make sure no one puts their fingers where they shouldn’t, or else they’re gunna get burned in a hurry.

Know if you are “At-Risk”

It is impossible to predict who will or will not become a victim of rape or sexual assault, but researchers have put forth an effort to explore certain factors that may put a woman at increased risk. If you have experienced sexual abuse or victimization as a child or young adolescent, you may have a harder time detecting whether or not you are in a risky situation. Women who struggle with recognizing when they may be in a sticky situation may be at an increased risk for being sexually assaulted. Women who have been victimized in the past reported leaving risky situations later than their non-previous victimized counterparts. Run through some scenarios with your gal-pals and make sure you know when it’s time to take off! If you feel uneasy listen to your gut and say goodnight. Or if you don’t feel comfortable with your own self-alarm system, put a friend on watch-out!

Cosmo would like to make it explicitly clear that even if you fall into one of these categories, it does not mean you will get raped! We just wanna make sure you use protection and proper precaution when you go out and party like a rockstar.

On Watch

App sends your exact Google location to people you have preselected. You can set an alarm to go off and a text message to be sent out at a specified time to make sure your roommates know when to check you are home safe and sound!

Panic Guard

Be prepared to plug your ears! This is an application that acts as a rape whistle AND a video recording device. When you need it to go off, it sends your emergency contacts an email with your exact location and begins to record your attacker to potentially help identify them later.

Circle of Six

This app has got your back! Use it to send a text to six preselected friends who make up your circle. Have them call you back to fake an interruption – it’s easy and free!