

# Are You Ready for Close Encounters of the CREEPY Kind?



(Or, what every woman and girl needs to know  
about sexual assault)

## Not-So-Fun Facts

Most rapes are planned in advance. The perpetrator carefully selects targets that seem naïve. He cultivates their trust, and leads them to circumstances that favor a successful assault. The perpetrator often tries to diminish their target's decision-making ability (90% of teen sexual assault involve alcohol and/or drugs), as well as their ability to effectively respond or fight back against an assault.

In 80 to 90% of cases, the perpetrator and victim knew each other. Perpetrators are most often classmates, boyfriends, or ex-boyfriends. In fact, the closer the relationship the more likely it is for a rape to be completed rather than attempted.

The after-effects can be profound and long-lasting. Victims of sexual assault are 3 times more likely to suffer from depression; 6 times more likely to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder; 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol; 26 times more likely to abuse drugs; and 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide than their peers.

## More Actions You Can Take

**Make a deal with your friends** that you'll all look out for each other at parties. If you think your buddy was drugged, go to the ER ASAP. Know available resources in your community (such as Harborview Sexual Assault and Trauma, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center, and on SARIS on the UW campus). Take a self-defense class.

**For college girls:** Know where the emergency phones are. Have the numbers for late-night vans and NightWalk services in your cellphone. Have agreements with your roommates about overnight guests. Know the help resources available on campus as well as in the community.

**For Everyone: Demand justice.**

## Top Five Actions to Take When Feeling Threatened

- **Pay attention to your gut feelings!** Intuition is powerful and critical to your safety. "Creepy" feelings are your brain's way of saying PAY ATTENTION!
- **Pay attention to unusual behavior.** Most assailants are classmates, friends, boyfriends, and ex-boyfriends. When contemplating assault, their body language changes; you may not understand why, but a feeling that something's wrong is an alarm.
- **Unusual behavior is often a "test."** This is the test you want to fail! The test is often a minor boundary violation the assailant commits to gauge your reaction. Do you assert your boundaries (bad victim), or giggle nervously and tolerate the violation (more likely victim)?
- **Interrupt.** Nobody every REALLY died of embarrassment – but women have died because they didn't want to make a scene. Use your voice, and insist on controlling your own safety. Leave an uncomfortable situation.
- **Fight back. It works.** Most women who fight back, prevail. Predictors of successful self-defense are (a) the target recognizes that an assault is happening, (b) she resists the assault.

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# Are You Ready for Creepy Encounters of the Intimate Kind?



(Or, what every woman and girl needs to know  
about dating or domestic violence and abuse)

## Not-So-Fun Facts

Intimate partner and dating violence often begins with slow, even seemingly playful, power and control games. It usually escalates over time, and soon it's no longer cute or flattering. Over time it may become dangerous, even life-threatening.

An abuser often works to isolate their partner from all kinds of support. Physical, social, and financial isolation serve to keep you from leaving. That means you may have few, if any, friends, and little contact with family.

Intimate partner violence is planned. It's not that the abuser simply cannot control their temper. The abusive person wants power over you, and has learned a variety of behaviors (see list on right) to control your actions.

## If You Believe Someone You Care About is Being Abused

**ASK.** Find a private moment. Tell her what you've observed that worries you. Tell her that if she ever wants to talk about it, you're there for her (remember, abusers try to create isolation -- work to break it). Support her choices (abusers try to deny their victims free choice). Let her know you don't believe it's her fault, regardless of what the abuser says (and really believe it yourself). Say she deserves to be treated well. Don't pressure her to leave, that takes time. Contact a battered women's hotline -- advocates on the other end are there to counsel not only battered women but those who care about them.

### Seattle Area Resources:

Domestic Abuse Women's Network ([www.dawnonline.org](http://www.dawnonline.org)) 425-656-7867  
New Beginnings ([www.newbegin.org](http://www.newbegin.org)) 206-522-9472  
NW Network for Bisexual, Trans and Lesbian Survivors of Abuse ([www.nwnetwork.org](http://www.nwnetwork.org))  
206-568-7777  
Eastside Domestic Violence Program ([www.edvp.org](http://www.edvp.org)) 800-827-8840  
For a Safety Plan blueprint see <http://www.kccadv.org/safe.html>

## How to ID Abuse

### Does your partner:

- Criticize or humiliate you?
- Yell at you for little things?
- Tell you that s/he's jealous only because they love you so much?
- Try to prevent you from seeing family or friends?
- Get angry if s/he sees you talking to a friend?
- Call and text you all hours of the day and night?
- Rummage through and read your personal mail, email, diary, financial transactions, or text messages to and from others?
- Try to control your money?
- Damage or destroy your stuff?
- Force you to have sex when you don't want to?
- Push you to drink alcohol or take drugs?
- Slap, push, punch, or bite you?
- Blame you for their poor behavior towards you?

### Do you often feel:

- Afraid of your partner?
- That you can't do anything right?
- Stupid?
- Emotionally numb or overwhelmed?
- That you're going crazy?

### If You Recognize That You're Being Abused:

**Know you did not cause the abuse.** Seek help from battered women's advocates (look left for resources). Create a safety plan. Find supportive people among your friends and family. Plan where you could go if you needed to escape, and what you'd need to bring. Know that you may involve the police or courts at some point. In addition to a good advocate, you may need a good lawyer and a good therapist.

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Are You Ready For

# Close Encounters

## of the Romantic Kind?

In self-defense classes we spend a LOT of time examining bad and abusive relationships. What a bummer! Just as important is looking at what makes a GOOD and HEALTHY and FULFILLING relationship. Not just in February, when Cupids and greeting-card sentiments abound, but all year long. People in healthy relationships know that conflict happens, and expect it is handled in a non-abusive manner.

### Fun Factoids

People in healthy relationships are happier.

People in healthy relationships are healthier. From colds to heart disease, people in healthy relationships get sick less often.

People in healthy relationships report better job satisfaction and get along better with co-workers.

### If You Believe Someone You Care About is in a Healthy Relationship

Bask in their company, hoping some of that happiness positively influences you.

If you or someone you care about is in an unhealthy relationship, you can seek help and advice at <http://www.StrategicLiving.org/TG-DV-10.pdf>.

### Recognize a Healthy Relationship

**Trust and Honesty:** You feel safe expressing your thoughts and feelings with your partner. Each accepts responsibility for their own actions and feelings. Each owns up when they're wrong.

**Accepting and Supportive:** You and your partner accept each other's goals, dreams, and plans. You respect each others' feelings, friends, activities, and opinions.

**Partnership:** You and your partner value each other's contributions to the relationship. You strive for a fair balance of effort put into your relationship. You each have access to financial resources.

**R-E-S-P-E-C-T:** As Aretha sang, this is the essential key. Respect is when you listen to your partner, and affirm and support each other. Dr. John Gottman (University of Washington) has identified the opposite of respect -- contempt -- as the most poisonous emotion in a relationship.

Joanne Factor

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