

Personal Safety Skills

Introduction

Information about what we need to do to stay safe are all over the place. Personal safety instructions like watch your food and drink, always lock up, Keep your phone battery charged, avoid walking alone at night, don't open your door to strangers etc., are not new to most of us. We know them, we do them sometimes, but not always.

This unit will teach you how to be intentional about your personal safety to ensure you remain safe and protected while you go about your life and also, in your relationships.

Personal safety skills

- Are not foolproof in preventing sexual and gender-based violence.
- Will not stop perpetrators from being abusive or violent.
- Will not work every single time.
- Will reduce your likelihood of getting hurt.
- Will help you develop a safety plan in any relationship or situation.
- Helps you to do your possible best to stay safe.

In the following slides, we will be discussing four (4)Nuggets of personal safety.

Nugget 1 - Trust your instincts.

- Women are believed to be more instinctive than men; this trait should be used to advantage in risky situations.
- It is better to apologize later for over reacting than to regret your lack of reaction.
- If the date doesn't feel appropriate, cancel it.
- If you sense something off at a get together, immediately find your way out.
- If you start to feel uncomfortable during a ride, think of a non-obvious way of getting off; if not, try to get someone's attention through any means.
- Shout before you are silenced.

Nugget 2 - Review Personal stereotypes and belief system

- Don't have a stereotype of what a bad or dangerous person looks like
- Nice is not always safe. Don't get carried away because someone is nice.
- You don't have to/or respond to every stranger; even if it may be perceived as being rude
- Faster is not always safer. Better to take a slower and safer route than to take a faster but dangerous route. Avoid enclosed spaces even if it is faster
- Don't have a false sense of safety because you are all covered up. Perpetrators will be perpetrators no matter what you wear or don't wear.
- Evidence is good but safety is priority.

Nugget 3- Give attention to your relationships

- Most sexual assaults are planned. Watch out for red flags and don't ignore them.
- Don't compromise your safety for intimacy.
- Separate romantic and loving gestures from violent characters. Many survivors of domestic violence are lured into staying by gifts and sweet words.
- Be unpredictable: Unpredictability may be useful especially when you are in an uncertain relationship.
- Be in control of your outings; be able to end a date independent of anyone. Always have an independent means of transportation.
- Trust should not be given as a gift; it should be earned.

Nugget 4 - Learn from history

- Most perpetrators get their inspiration from other perpetrators.
- You should learn from how others have escaped being harmed or the mistakes that put them in harm's way.
- People share stories on different social media platform; your job is not to validate the story, but to identify lessons you can pick from the story that improve your personal safety.
- Never say never to a potentially dangerous scenario. You will likely make a smarter decision if you have rehearsed possible ways to come out of such situations

In conclusion

We know the personal safety rules;

- The only time you break the rule may be the only time you actually need it.
- Own your safety habits; don't be ashamed of them. Talk about it freely.
- Personal safety rules are not meant to isolate you, but to ensure you are safe whether alone or with company.
- Constantly review your personal safety level and make necessary adjustment.