

IMPACT

New Mexico

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**Transforming Discussions around Safety:
Moving Beyond Harmful Safety Tips
National Sexual Assault Conference 2016
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<i>Advice many in our communities have been given</i>		
<i>Don't go out at night</i>	<i>Carry keys in your hand</i>	<i>Don't go to "nice" neighborhoods</i>
<i>Don't go out alone</i>	<i>Yell "Fire!"</i>	<i>Don't hang out in a group</i>
<i>Use a buddy system</i>	<i>Don't "flaunt" it</i>	<i>Use a fanny pack</i>
<i>Don't dress provocatively</i>	<i>No PDA (public affection)</i>	<i>Don't be too independent</i>
<i>Don't leave your drink unattended</i>	<i>Act "straight" / "butch it up"</i>	<i>Get a home security system</i>
<i>Don't drink</i>	<i>Don't talk to strangers – "stranger danger"</i>	<i>Tell people where you're going</i>
<i>Carry a gun/mace/weapon</i>	<i>Be submissive with police & others who feel they have authority</i>	<i>Don't be too trusting</i>
<i>Be careful at ATMs</i>	<i>Don't wear certain colors</i>	<i>Get a guard dog</i>
<i>Don't go to "bad" neighborhoods</i>	<i>Don't wear hoodies, jeans</i>	<i>Don't fight back</i>
<i>Pretend to talk on your phone</i>	<i>Look "respectable"</i>	<i>Be wary of anyone who expresses sexual interest</i>
<i>Be aware of your surroundings</i>	<i>Hands visible at all times</i>	<i>& more...</i>

The above is advice that various community members we've worked with have named based on gender, age, gender expression, sexuality, race and ability/disability.

What are some concerns we might have with the "advice" above?

- It is fear-based.
- It is very restrictive.
- It blames the victim instead of the perpetrator.
- It only focuses on physical threats.
- It focuses on strangers, not the more likely scenarios with people we know.
- It reinforces biases instead of challenging them.
- It focuses on the idea of individual "problems" or "mental illness" instead of societal problems and patterns.

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Why, then, do we as a society, continue to spread these messages?

- It's easier to hand out a list of advice than prepare for complex situations.
- Denial – we don't want to believe that 80% to-90% of the time, the perpetrator is someone we know.
- We're not sure what else to do.
- They maintain the status quo, including systems of power and oppression.

Here's an alternative perspective that has gone viral on the Internet, reframing the dialogue:

TEN RAPE PREVENTION TIPS

1. Don't put drugs in women's drinks.
2. When you see a woman walking by herself, leave her alone.
3. If you pull over to help a woman whose car has broken down, remember not to rape her.
4. If you are in an elevator and a woman gets in, don't rape her.
5. When you encounter a woman who is asleep, the safest course of action is to not rape her.
6. Never creep into a woman's home through an unlocked door or window, or spring out at her from between parked cars, or rape her.
7. Remember, people go to the laundry room to do their laundry. Do not attempt to molest someone who is alone in a laundry room.
8. Use the Buddy System! If it is inconvenient for you to stop yourself from raping women, ask a trusted friend to accompany you at all times.
9. Carry a rape whistle. If you find that you are about to rape someone, blow the whistle until someone comes to stop you.
10. Don't forget: Honesty is the best policy. When asking a woman out on a date, don't pretend that you are interested in her as a person; tell her straight up that you expect to be raping her later. If you don't communicate your intentions, the woman may take it as a sign that you do not plan to rape her.

VIA 9GAG.COM