



## The Best Rape Prevention? Change the Behaviour of the Perpetrators, Not the Victims

On Wednesday, [Slate Magazine's Emily Yoffe](#) caused outrage with an article about rape prevention on college campuses. Rife with victim-blaming, the article carried the aggressive tagline: “The Best Rape Prevention: Tell College Women to Stop Getting So Wasted”, and then proceeded to set the example by commanding, “College Women: Stop Getting Drunk”.

To me, the strangest thing about the article was the imaginary world Yoffe had created, a beautiful, feminist world where society is “reluctant” to mention how drinking makes women vulnerable to sexual assault. Oh, Yoffe, if only that were so. The sad reality is, Yoffe's view is echoed a thousandfold by mainstream society, a society where the victim of Steubenville was blamed for her own rape due to her being drunk at the time, where the victim of Ched Evans was likewise blamed for appearing to be drunk on security cameras, where government and police sponsored rape prevention posters say things like — “[Alcohol is the number one rape drug](#). How much have you taken already? Be smart,” “[Don't leave yourself more vulnerable to regretful sex or even rape](#). Drink sensibly and get home safely,” and the awful “[Stop, no. Stop please](#), no, please. Please stop taking unbooked minicabs,” complete with a horrible picture of a woman being attacked. Granted, the last one isn't about drinking, but it fits into the victim-blaming pattern perfectly, where the onus is on women to protect themselves from the accepted-as-inevitable rapists out there, rather than trying to modify the behaviour of potential perpetrators.

Yoffe may be touting her victim-blaming method as “the best rape prevention”, but it does not sit with the facts and stats on rape at all. [Over 80% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, and 60% of assaults happen in the home](#). In an American study, only [21%](#) of college women were intoxicated at the time of the assault. Women who have been raped come from all age groups, all races, all classes, and are of different shapes and sizes. Some were wearing skirts, some were wearing jeans, some were wearing religious attire. They had long hair or short hair, heels or trainers; some carried pepper spray, some carried rape alarms, some were weaponless. In short, there is no commonality between the victims, nothing we could point to as a reason for the rape to have happened. And that means that there is nothing that we, as women, can do to stop being raped. For the simple reason that we're not the ones doing it.

But when it comes to the perpetrators, there is something that binds them together. No matter what their background, no matter what their race, age, social status, or clothing; all of them — every single one — made the decision to rape. That is the commonality we should be looking at, that is the behaviour we must change. It is a problem of masculinity, and needs to be addressed by the male community. It is not women's responsibility to stop attacks from happening to us; it is men's duty to ensure that masculine socialisation stops producing these attackers, over and over again.

And Yoffe? You don't need to tell women to stop getting drunk. We've already been told this all our lives.