

## Discussion Guide

# Off-Campus Safety

### Overview

Student life doesn't happen only on campus, so any discussion of safety must invite students to consider their personal safety and the safety of others as they travel to destinations off campus. Being streetwise is essential for pedestrians, cyclists, rideshare riders, mass transit users, and drivers. Once students arrive at their destinations, they should be equipped to make good decisions regarding common college and university activities, such as drinking. When students take care of each other both off campus and on campus, the whole community benefits.

### Prepare

Before you photocopy the student handout, add phone numbers, addresses, and/or URLs for essential local services including the campus security number, police non-emergency number, city information line, and any other relevant off-campus services available to students.

### Discuss

Invite students to share strategies they use to stay safe when out and about. Encourage students to consider different scenarios such as walking at

night, going out to a bar, riding mass transit, navigating crowds, or riding a bike on city streets. Record responses on the board. Emphasize that traveling with a friend and sharing your plans with someone before you go are important ways to increase personal safety.

Use a crime-tracking tool like CrimeReports.com to examine local crime trends. Share with students that understanding crime patterns can help them stay safe in a new area. Review the map, add additional insights on local crime patterns, and reinforce how being informed and alert can help reduce their risk of becoming a victim.

Share the key facts about drinking provided below. Remind students that alcohol can make almost any situation dangerous, so it's important to be smart about drinking and to look out for friends if they choose to drink. Keep in mind that, by law, you need to be 21 to drink in the U.S., and 18 or 19 in Canada, depending on location. Invite students to discuss these questions:

- *At what kind of occasions do you think drinking will come up?*
- *What could you say if someone offers you a drink, but you don't feel like drinking?*



- *What are some strategies for exiting a situation if it becomes uncomfortable? How could you and a friend work together to help each other?*

### Handout

Distribute copies of the *Play It Safe Off Campus* handout and give students time to review it. Highlight the local resources listed on the sheet and encourage students to add this information to their phones.

### Wrap-Up

Ask students to share any questions they have about off-campus safety. Reinforce the message that communities become safer when more people are paying attention, making safe choices, and looking out for each other. As a group, brainstorm ways to share this important information with others in the community.

### Share Out

Share this part of the toolkit with community members who play an important role in helping students stay safe off campus such as club and restaurant owners, apartment managers, mall managers, theater managers, and others at places where students go off campus.

### Resources

Crime Reports: [crimereports.com](http://crimereports.com)

College Drinking Statistics and Resources: [collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov)

NCPC Streetwise Tips: [ncpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/streetwise.pdf](http://ncpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/streetwise.pdf)

### Key Facts<sup>1</sup>

**57%** of full-time college/university students ages 18 to 22 surveyed in 2016 drank alcohol in the past month and...

**38%** ...engaged in binge drinking (5 or more drinks on a single occasion for men and 4 or more drinks for women).

Each year, drinking by college/university students ages 18 to 24 is involved in an estimated:

**1,519** student deaths

**696,000** assaults

**97,000** cases of sexual assault

<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, [niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/time-for-parents-discuss-risks-college-drinking](http://niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/time-for-parents-discuss-risks-college-drinking). Some percentages have been rounded.

# Play It Safe Off Campus

**THERE ARE IMPORTANT ACTIONS THAT YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE WHEN YOU'RE OFF CAMPUS. CHECK OUT THE TIPS BELOW. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE SAFER?**

## Be Streetwise

- Go with a friend whenever possible and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to be back.
- Stay alert to your surroundings and stick to well-lit, well-travelled streets.
- Use a mapping app to familiarize yourself with the area before you go.
- Keep your backpack or purse close to your body and keep it closed.
- Have your car key or house key in hand before you reach the door.
- If you think someone is following you, switch directions or cross the street. If they're still there, move quickly toward an open store, restaurant, or lit home.

## When Drinking Occurs

- Make a plan for getting home before you head out.
- Go out with a friend or group and always leave together.
- Offer to be the designated sober member of the group to keep an eye on your friends, ensure they

don't leave with someone they don't know, and make it home safely at the end of the night.

- Decide how many drinks you'll have or set a spending limit for yourself before you start drinking.
- Prepare a way to say "no" when offered alcohol if you're not interested in drinking.
- Do not leave your drink unattended and never accept drinks from someone you don't know.
- Avoid drinking games and shots of liquor.
- Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Space out your drinks over the course of an evening.
- Eat food while you drink to help slow down the absorption of alcohol by your body.
- Don't buy alcohol for anyone who is underage or give them alcohol; this can have legal ramifications.

## Take Care of Each Other

How can you and your friends take care of each other when you're off campus? Think of additional tips and write them on the back of his sheet.

## Numbers to Know

Emergency: **911**

Campus Security: \_\_\_\_\_

Police (Non-Emergency): \_\_\_\_\_

City Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Off-Campus Student Support: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Legal Services: \_\_\_\_\_

Confidential Sexual Assault Hotline: \_\_\_\_\_

## Facts About College/University Drinking<sup>1</sup>

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