



## MEMORANDUM

To: Parents  
From: S/HE staff  
Re: Secure/ Higher Ed Sexual Assault Facilitated Education (S/HE SAFE)  
program FAQs  
Date: September 11, 2015

*What is the S/HE SAFE™ program?*

The S/HE SAFE™ program is a facilitated education program designed to help young women beginning at around age 16 (depending on maturity) to recognize and avoid situations that may lead to sexual assault, escape those situations where avoidance fails, and fight their way out if escape is not possible.

*Why should a young woman around 16 years of age take the S/HE SAFE™ program? Shouldn't this wait until college?*

A study published in June 2015 surveyed 483 first-year women, most (94%) aged 18 years, constituting just over one quarter of the females in the incoming class at a large private university in upstate New York. **The survey showed that between the age of 14 and the date they entered college, 28% of these women had already suffered an attempted or completed rape.** This survey demonstrates that a college-based program takes place far too late to help a significant number of young women.

*Isn't my daughter safe from sexual assault given that she gets good grades, we live in an affluent neighborhood, and her peers are all from good families?*

The women in the June 2015 study were largely from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds, with the following racial demographic characteristics: 66% white, 11% Asian, 10% black, and 13% multiple races; 9% Hispanic.<sup>1</sup> By virtue of the prestigious private university they were attending, the women were clearly high achievers with excellent grades and college-entrance exam scores. **The fact that 28% of these young women had suffered an attempted or completed rape before entering college suggests that**

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<sup>1</sup> Kate B. Carey, Sarah E. Durney, Robyn L. Shepardson, & Michael P. Carey, *Incapacitated and Forcible Rape of College Women: Prevalence Across the First Year*, JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH, June, 2015. To fully understand the data, the study must be read in conjunction with a companion study. See Robyn L. Fielder, Jennifer L. Walsh, Kate B. Carey & Michael P. Carey, *Sexual Hookups and Adverse Health Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study of First-Year College Women*, JOURNAL OF SEX RESEARCH, 51:2, 131-144 (2014).



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**this demographic is *more* vulnerable to sexual assault than young women from less affluent backgrounds.**

*What are the consequences of a sexual assault?*

According to a study conducted for the National Institute for Justice, “Being a victim of sexual assault is one of the most violating experiences anyone can endure and can cause immediate, as well as long-term, physical and mental health consequences.” Of rape victims, approximately 35% suffer from nongenital trauma; 21% suffer from genital trauma; up to 40% get sexually transmitted infections; and up to 5% become pregnant. Four out of five rape victims subsequently suffer from chronic physical or psychological conditions, and rape victims are 13 times more likely to attempt suicide than people who have not been crime victims and six times more likely than victims of other crimes.<sup>2</sup>

*What is the S/HE SAFE™ program curriculum? What will my child be asked to learn?*

Your child will learn: (1) how to recognize situations that are high risk for sexual assault; (2) strategies to avoid those situations; (3) strategies to peacefully escape those situations; (4) methods of working with friends to protect each other; (5) methods of saying no to verbally and physically coercive behavior; and (6) techniques to overcome physically coercive behavior when saying no is not enough.

The curriculum consists of games, videos, role playing, and facilitated discussions designed to teach young people about situations they will certainly encounter during their education that are risky and how to reduce those risks. Interspersed throughout the curriculum are physical defense techniques, which are learned and re-learned for reinforcement, and videos (many of them humorous) designed to explode the myths that perpetuate sexual assault.

*Why should we believe the S/HE SAFE™ program will be effective?*

S/HE personnel are educators, counselors, facilitators, doctors, attorneys, human resource professionals, law enforcement personnel and martial artists with decades of experience in both education and dealing with virtually every aspect of sexual assault, from the investigation, conviction, incarceration, and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>



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counseling of the offender to the protection and treatment of the victim. The S/HE SAFE™ program is based on the latest research concerning sexual assault, physical resistance, facilitated education, and effective messaging.

SH/E personnel have developed the S/HE SAFE™ program from multiple perspectives, but with a single agenda: create a program that works to make sexual assault less likely for program participants, and turn those students into leaders at their schools to organize others for protection and to effect a real and lasting change. S/HE is self-funded, and is beholden to no political party, religious institution, school, government agency, financier, or any other entity that could seek to influence its programs. S/HE involves parents in the program because parents are the most significant influence on and greatest source of help and comfort to their children.

*What research indicates that a program can reduce the incidence of sexual assault?*

In Canada, a program consisting of four three-hour instructional units taught female college freshmen to recognize and exit dangerous situations. The program provided two hours of self-defense training based on Wen Do (a female self-defense discipline developed in Canada). The program was tested at three Canadian universities using an experimental group and a control group. During their freshman year, program participants had 1/2 as many completed rapes and 2/3 fewer attempted sexual assaults than control group members. This is the first program addressing college sexual assault with empirical proof that it actually works, and the results are very encouraging.<sup>3</sup>

*How is the S/HE SAFE™ program different from the Canadian program?*

The S/HE SAFE™ program differs from the Canadian program to account for significant differences between the United States and Canada and to meet the needs of young women during high school. Thus, the S/HE SAFE™ program: (1) begins before college (at about age 16) as opposed to freshman year, and therefore has a curriculum aimed at a younger demographic; (2) demonstrates the negative consequences and absurdity of the “hook up” culture taking root at many high schools and colleges; (3) devotes significant time to realistic alcohol and drug education;<sup>4</sup> (4) does not devote time to the

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<sup>3</sup> Charlene Y. Senn, et al., *Efficacy of a Sexual Assault Resistance Program for University Women*, NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE, June 11, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> The S/HE SAFE™ program does not encourage the use of drugs or alcohol, but does acknowledge that some students will experiment with drugs or alcohol, and tries to educate



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participants' individual sexual preferences and practices; (5) teaches students how to recognize and escape abusive relationships; (6) has an optional parental education component, where parents are educated about high school and college sexual assault; and (7) has an optional facilitated meeting where parents express to their children their desire to offer unconditional help and support in the event the child is ever sexually assaulted.

*Why should I participate in the optional parental component of the S/HE SAFE™ program?*

Our experience demonstrates that most college sexual assault survivors' trauma is compounded by the fear that their parents will find out. This fear leads them to attempt to cope without parental resources or support, and suffer in fear of parental rejection if the truth comes to light. The parental component helps alleviate your child's fear of telling you about a sexual assault. It also provides you with tools you will need to help you cope with what will also be a traumatic experience for you, so you can offer your child the best support possible.

*Aren't the colleges protecting students from sexual assault?*

No. According to the Department of Justice, *one in five women* is sexually assaulted while in college. A study by NPR in conjunction with the Center for Public Integrity found that:

... colleges almost never expel men who are found responsible for sexual assault. Our colleagues at The Center for Public Integrity discovered a database of a small number of colleges and universities . . . that had applied for federal grants because they wanted to do a better job of fighting sexual assault. And even at these schools, these motivated schools, when a man was found responsible for a sexual assault, just 10 to 25 percent of them were expelled.<sup>5</sup>

Colleges, moreover, have a conflict of interest: It is in their best interest to discourage reporting of sexual assaults and, in the rare case where one is reported to school authorities, to find that no sexual assault took place. A more recent study published in June 2015 found that, *during the first year of college*, 15.4% of the women reported an attempted or completed

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program participants about the dangers of such experimentation at co-ed parties and/or on dates.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124148857>.



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incapacitated rape, and 9% reported an attempted or completed forcible rape. Despite the attention being paid to this issue, things seem to be getting worse, not better.

*What are sororities and fraternities doing about sexual assault on campus?*

A recent report revealed that the sororities were sending their student members (along with fraternity members) **to lobby Congress to pass a law that a student facing criminal charges for rape cannot be expelled from school** pending the resolution of the criminal charges by the court system.<sup>6</sup> This demonstrates incredible ignorance on the part of these organizations' leadership and members.<sup>7</sup> It is very rare for a prosecutor to file charges in a "he said/she said" rape case. The cases that get prosecuted are the most egregious; where there is virtually no doubt that the defendant committed the crime because of video evidence or physical evidence (like severe physical injuries to the victim) that would prove to any reasonable person that the encounter was not consensual. To leave a student like that on campus is both foolish and incredibly dangerous.

*Must a child be 16 to participate in the S/HE SAFE™ program?*

It is up to the parent whether their child is mature enough to participate. S/HE recommends the age of 16 because a child is at this point probably driving (or is friends with other students who are driving) and therefore at a higher risk of sexual assault than a student who relies on parents for transportation.

*Why is humor used in the curriculum given that sexual assault is such a serious subject?*

S/HE is not making jokes about sexual assault, which it takes very seriously. But many of the attitudes that contribute to or perpetuate sexual assault are subjects of ridicule in the S/HE SAFE™ curriculum because humor is an effective teaching tool, particularly in exposing faulty thinking. For example, many college students perpetuate the myth that "People here are too busy to

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-24/fraternities-lobby-against-campus-rape-investigations>

<sup>7</sup> The sororities supporting this lobbying effort are those sororities who are represented by either the National Panhellenic Council (NPC) or the Fraternity & Sorority Political Action Committee (FSPAC). The member sororities of the NPC are listed here: <https://www.npcwomen.org/about/member-organizations.aspx>. FSPAC contributors are listed here: <http://www.fspac.org/contributors/>.



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date so everyone just hooks up.” Seriously. Who can stop themselves from ridiculing that?

*What if my child has already suffered a sexual assault?*

Students who have suffered an attempted or completed rape in high school are at the highest risk to be assaulted again in college. But, as the results of the Canadian program demonstrate, that risk can be reduced through comprehensive training.

Importantly, S/HE personnel and facilitators are most likely deemed mandatory reporters in your state, meaning that if anyone at S/HE is told about a prior sexual assault of a minor, they are legally obligated to report it to authorities.

*My child identifies as LGBTQ. Is my child at risk for sexual assault?*

Students who identify as LGBTQ students are at a higher risk for college sexual assault than students who identify as heterosexual.

Because the S/HE SAFE™ program does not spend time discussing or reinforcing any type of individual sexual preference, and is geared toward circumstances that all students would encounter, S/HE believes the program is useful for students irrespective of their sexual orientation.

*My child is very religious and committed to abstinence. Is my child at risk for sexual assault?*

By its very nature, rape is non-consensual, so your child’s wish to remain abstinent will not prevent a sexual assault. The consequences of sexual assault to a child who wishes to remain abstinent, unfortunately, can be tragic. By way of example, a young woman who wished to remain abstinent attended an all-girls religious college. She reported being sexually assaulted in a dorm room by a student at a nearby religious university. Ten days after her report, the university’s police still had not interviewed the accused, and the distraught young woman committed suicide. The university, without a live victim, ultimately found the accused student “not responsible” for the sexual assault, and no criminal charges were filed.<sup>8</sup> The Department of

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<sup>8</sup> The accused went on to graduate in 2014 and was reportedly fired from his job after being charged with felony animal cruelty for allegedly kicking and killing his then-girlfriend’s small dog. He pled guilty to a misdemeanor and paid a fine.



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Education launched an investigation into the case – which the assistant secretary for civil rights called “egregious” — resulting in a settlement so that the university could avoid a potential loss of federal funds.

*What kind of physical training is involved in the S/HE SAFE™ program?*

The physical resistance techniques were developed specifically for the S/HE SAFE™ program by eighth-degree black belt Master Buddy Hudson and fourth-degree black belt Jennifer Lane of the Professional Black Belt Academy. Master Hudson has trained thousands of students of all ages and backgrounds and is recognized as one of the top martial arts instructors in the world. He is a seven-time national fighting champion, a World Games silver medalist, and has been inducted into the International Karate Hall of Fame and the Masters Hall of Fame.

In August 2015, Jennifer Lane became the United TaeKwon-Do Alliance National Fighting Champion.

The physical resistance techniques are designed for use against a stronger attacker in the most common sexual assault situations. There are only a few techniques to learn, and the focus is on learning those well over the course of the program. A person of virtually any size and strength can utilize the techniques. Please let your S/HE SAFE™ facilitator know if your child has physical limitations or other issues that could lead to injury from light physical activity.

*What should my child wear to the training? Does my child need to bring anything to the training?*

Something comfortable. Normal school clothes or sweats are fine. Your child does not need to bring anything to the training.