

# Sexual Violence Prevention While Abroad

Sexual harassment, assault, and interpersonal violence can happen anywhere. Unfortunately, study abroad programs are no exception. It is important to remember that different cultures and governments have varying attitudes, societal norms and laws regarding sex, sexuality, harassment and violence. However, respecting and adapting to cultural differences does not mean that you need to submit to behaviors that invade your personal boundaries or that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

**If you experience sexual misconduct, know that there is support for you abroad and at Gonzaga in Spokane to assist in getting medical and counseling help, assistance reporting to the police and to Title IX should you choose to do so. Visit [How to Report Sexual Assault Abroad](#).**

## PREVENTION

- Research, learn and understand your host country's perceptions, values, attitudes, and laws pertaining towards sexuality, sex and gender, particularly when it comes to dress, speech, eye contact, being alone, etc.
- Follow [safety guidelines](#) to minimize risk of becoming a victim.
- Never go out alone. If you are separating from your group, tell someone what you are doing. The better option is to stay with your group/buddy.
- Have a safe plan to/from your residence particularly at night.
- Be alert and informed.
- Do not try to behave like you would in the United States.
- Memorize important phrases in the host country's language. These could be phrases like "I need help!" or "Where is the nearest clinic?" Alternatively, you could carry a translation booklet or download a translation app on your smartphone.
- Consume alcohol in a responsible, culturally appropriate manner, within the laws of your host country.
- Alcohol impairs judgment which increases your risk of becoming a victim of theft, assault, and sexual violence/misconduct.
- Understand you don't have to be polite. It is okay to say no.

## CONSENT

Different cultures and countries have varying attitudes and norms and laws regarding sex, sexuality, harassment and domestic/relationship violence. It is extremely important to understand how these attitudes and norms differ from the United States.