

Date Rape  
By Janet Maurer, Ph.D.

The entire Upper School was held spellbound by a presentation on date rape by Katie Koestner. Ms. Koestner recounted her own story of being raped at age 18 while on a date with a fellow student during her first month at college. Using humor to introduce this serious topic, Ms. Koestner described the nightmare that began when her initial attraction to a boy at school turned to fear and violation. She described the ensuing harassment she suffered as a result of speaking out and naming her attacker. At the time of this incident, the term 'date rape' was not in our lexicon; in fact, by speaking out about her experience Ms. Koestner helped bring this under-reported crime into our national awareness. Ms. Koestner was on the cover of TIME magazine's date rape issue, she was the subject of an HBO movie, has co-authored two books on sexual assault, and continues to appear on TV talk shows speaking out about relational violence risk management. At GA, Ms. Koestner challenged the audience, particularly the males, to stand up and say 'NO' to sexual violence: Imagine if it were your mother/sister/daughter/friend who was the victim of such a crime. How would you prevent it from happening?

This powerful, moving, and at-times-disturbing presentation was followed by 2 single-sex student discussion groups. In this smaller format Ms. Koestner offered additional factual information:

- The definition of date rape varies from state to state.
- In Pennsylvania, date rape=any penetration (vaginal, anal, oral) by a man or woman against a man or woman without effective consent.
- Effective consent cannot be given by someone who is mentally incapacitated, a minor (15 or younger in PA), or under the influence of drugs/alcohol such that one does not understand what s/he is consenting to.
- If force is used, consent is invalidated.
- If both parties are incapacitated, the person who initiates a sexual encounter without consent is still held accountable.

Ms. Koestner closed with the following question: "Can a girl like a guy, fool around, and then say 'No?' We all know what the answer should be.

**Katie Koestner [Profile](#).**

Suggested web sites:

- [www.campusoutreachservices.com](http://www.campusoutreachservices.com)
- [www.awomansplace.org](http://www.awomansplace.org)
- [www.bernicesandler.com/id3.htm](http://www.bernicesandler.com/id3.htm)
- [www.campusoutreachservices.com](http://www.campusoutreachservices.com)