

A NOTE ON INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

As we know, interpersonal violence can happen anywhere and to anyone. We don't say that to cloud an otherwise exciting time with fear, but we do want you to consider how you can play an active role in keeping yourself - and those around you - safe while studying abroad!

It is also important to note that, even though we are recommending strategies that place responsibility for prevention on the individual, it is NEVER the fault of the person who experiences harm.



WHAT IS INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE?

At DU, we use interpersonal violence as an umbrella term to include: sexual harassment, stalking, dating/domestic violence, and sexual assault.

Despite the focus of some of these tips, it is important to remember that interpersonal violence is usually perpetrated by people we already know.



Navigating Street Harassment

Street harassment, including catcalling, may be something you encounter while abroad. The following tips may help you navigate these difficult situations:

- Try to stay calm. It is completely normal to be upset by street harassment. Harassment, of any kind, is never okay. Remaining as calm as possible can help you make clearer decisions around your safety.
- Avoid confrontation. You may want to react to harassment by confronting the individual(s). While it is understandable to be angry, it is best not to escalate the situation - especially in an unfamiliar environment.
- If possible, remove yourself from the situation. Get to know your area and designate safe places you can go in case of harassment. This should include places that have 24/7 staffing in case of a late-night incident (like hospitals or police stations).
- Consider methods of prevention. It shouldn't be your responsibility to prevent your own harassment, but researching norms around gender expression and acceptable dress could help you navigate a new culture and avoid unwanted attention.



Get to Know Your Environment

Perpetrators of violence can exploit the vulnerability of those who are unfamiliar with an area. Familiarize yourself with your environment - confidence can be a deterrent!



Stay in Groups

You'll want to go out and explore your new city while abroad! It's best to stay in groups of people you trust and be sure everyone you came with also gets home safely.



Be Mindful of Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Perpetrators may also target those who are impaired by substances. If you think you may use drugs or alcohol while abroad, make a proactive plan using some of Thrive's safer consumption strategies.



Know Your Resources

Determine who you can reach out to if you experience an act of interpersonal violence. This could include a trusted person within your program, local emergency services, and DU's [Center for Advocacy, Prevention, and Empowerment \(CAPE\)](#).