

There are many things that can be done by individual women, or by society as a whole, to reduce the threat of sexual assault. In a review of the professional literature, we found 408 different strategies; a series of questionnaire studies with varied groups of respondents added another 732. A unifying typology was developed to organize this unwieldy collection. It distinguishes (a) whether the action is undertaken by an individual or by society; (b) whether it is aimed at preventing rape assaults from ever beginning, at preparing for an assault, or at coping with an assault once it has commenced; (c) what its intended effect is, as a way to stop rape assaults. In this typology, strategies are all expressed in terms of a common strategy grammar: "Doing X in order to achieve effect Y (which is expected to reduce the threat of rape)." The typology can help improve the study of strategy effectiveness by ensuring the precision and comparability of strategies. It can also facilitate communicating rape prevention strategies to women by providing an easily understood and unambiguous formulation.

Rape Prevention ***A Typology of Strategies***

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Sexual assault is such a pervasive problem in our society that a myriad of strategies have emerged for reducing its threat. Some of these strategies are implemented by millions of individual women every day (Gordon, Riger, LeBailly, & Heath, 1980). They represent part of the "tax" that this problem exacts from women. These strategies include both measures to keep rape assaults from occurring and ways of thwarting assaults once they are underway. Other strategies are enacted by society as a whole on behalf of women. Ideally, society would assume complete responsibility for rape prevention, elim-

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inating the burden that even successful strategies exact from women. Until that happens, women need to defend themselves, whether through individual or collective action. In doing so, it is essential that they be able to choose the best strategies, those providing the most protection at the least cost. Society, too, needs to invest its rape prevention resources wisely.

Public discussion and awareness of rape prevention methods have increased dramatically over the past decade, as has advice to women about which measures are more effective. Unfortunately, there is relatively little empirical work on which to base such advice (Furby & Fischhoff, in press). As a result, rape prevention experts are forced to rely heavily on personal experience with rape cases and on their best guesses about rapists' motives and what might deter them. The lack of empirical data has created disagreement and confusion surrounding the issue of rape prevention (Morgan, 1986). Not only is the advice regarding individual strategies inconclusive, but the number of possible strategies is bewildering. It would be hard for women, rape prevention practitioners, or researchers to give serious attention to more than a small proportion of the strategies that various people have advocated.

Here, we report an attempt to bring some order to the universe of rape prevention strategies, by first compiling a comprehensive list of such strategies and then organizing them into meaningful and communicable categories. Our scheme is intended to aid researchers, practitioners, and individual women by enabling them to consider the full set of strategy options in an orderly fashion. The scheme is intended to help researchers by facilitating the selection of strategies to study and the aggregation of results across studies. For example, in situations where there is insufficient evidence to say anything definitive about an individual strategy (e.g., scratching the assailant), it may be possible to reach stronger conclusions about the category to which it belongs (e.g., physically impeding the assailant) by pooling the results for member strategies.

In order to develop a full list of rape prevention strategies, we (a) conducted a detailed review of the rape prevention literature to collect strategies mentioned there and (b) administered a questionnaire on rape prevention measures to over 200 women and men, including sexual assault experts, to elicit the strategies salient to them. From the more than 1,000 strategies that were generated, we developed our categorizing scheme.

There were few precedents for this work, as previous categorization attempts have encompassed at most several dozen strategies, divided into a few categories. In these efforts, the categorization principle has typically been similarity of the actions involved. Thus "physical fighting" (e.g., hit, scratch, bite, kick) is a common category in studies of self-defense strategies, and "verbal resistance" (e.g., tell him that he'll get caught, that he'll hurt you, that he'll catch VD) is another (e.g., Bart & O'Brien, 1984; McIntyre, 1979).

One alternative categorization principle is the judged effectiveness of strategies. For example, Riger and Gordon (1979) elicited effectiveness judgments for eleven prevention measures from 299 women in three major cities. A factor analysis of these responses yielded two factors that Riger and Gordon labeled as "restrictive" measures (limiting one's actions in some way) and "assertive" measures. These two factors predicted race and gender differences in beliefs about rape prevention. However, the factors encompassed only nine strategies and accounted for only 37% of the variance in effectiveness ratings.

A second alternative approach to category construction relies on theoretical distinctions drawn from the general literature on crime prevention. For example, "avoidance" behaviors (which attempt to reduce exposure to risk) are sometimes distinguished from "mobilization" behaviors (e.g., Furstenberg, 1971) and from "self protection" or "managing risk" (DuBow, McCabe, & Kaplan, 1979; Skogan & Maxfield, 1980)—although some of the underlying theories have met with only mixed success in empirical tests of their construct validity (Lavrakas & Lewis, 1980). The law enforcement community sometimes distinguishes among "primary" (preventing assaults from ever being attempted), "secondary" (preventing "high-risk" individuals from being involved in assaults), and "tertiary" (preventing individuals already involved in assaults from being involved again) prevention. Insofar as these various formulations distinguish strategies intended for quite different circumstances, some such distinctions seem essential. However, so few categories can provide only a crude organization for the more than 1,000 rape prevention measures.

We propose another theory-based approach to rape prevention that is more comprehensive and detailed and that has proven itself useful in a secondary analysis of existing studies of strategy effectiveness (Furby & Fischhoff, in press). Its fundamental assumption is that the definition of a *strategy* must consider both the *preventive act* and

its *intended effect*, that is, how it is expected to prevent sexual assault. Both aspects are necessary because the same action may represent different strategies if different goals are intended. For example, a woman may call "John, come quick" in order to get John's help or in order to make the assailant think that help is on the way even though there is no John. Conversely, two very different actions might represent similar strategies if they are directed toward the same end. For example, both yelling and turning a radio way up might be attempts to obtain outside intervention.

In this light, a strategy may be ineffective either because it fails to produce the intended effect (e.g., threatening to report the assailant may not increase his estimate of the likelihood that he will be punished) or because that effect does not deter rape assaults (e.g., increasing the perceived chance of punishment may not deter a rapist). Looking at the effectiveness of all strategies having the same intended effect should help reveal whether that effect deters rape. Looking within a category should help reveal which actions achieve that effect. As a result, we have adopted a "strategy grammar," according to which strategies are expressed in the form, "Doing action X in order to achieve effect Y (which is believed to deter rape)."

These intended effects are then divided into three superordinate categories corresponding to three generic situations in which women may find themselves: (a) preventing an assault from occurring, (b) preparing oneself for reacting to an assault if it does occur, and (c) defending oneself during an assault.¹ Strategies at the first stage (e.g., stop teaching men to view women as sex objects) are often referred to as "prevention" and those at the third stage (e.g., yell "fire") as "self-defense." Second stage strategies (e.g., learn judo) are sometimes referred to as "mobilization" measures. These stages are distinguished because they represent such different types of prevention: The first consists of actions that keep an assault from ever beginning; the second also involves actions taken before an assault, but they are ones whose primary benefits will be realized only once an assault takes place; the third involves reacting to an actual assault.

A final distinction, which cuts across all three stages, is between individual and societal actions. Although the vast majority of rape prevention measures are actions taken by individual women, that need not be the case. Some measures require a group effort or even a fundamental change in social structure. Although such strategies are too rarely undertaken, retaining their place in a categorization

scheme is important for keeping open the question of who is responsible for rape prevention, as well as for ensuring a comprehensive set of options.

METHOD

Data Collection

Two different sources were used in developing the full list of strategies. One was a sample of fifty books, articles, and pamphlets on rape prevention written over the past 15 years (see Morgan, 1986). A list was made of all prevention strategies that they mentioned. These publications were chosen to represent a broad spectrum of opinions and approaches regarding rape prevention. Our continued reading of additional books and articles has yielded few strategies beyond those provided in this sample.

The second source of strategies was an open-ended questionnaire given to a diverse group of respondents (described below). Initially, it asked respondents to list as many prevention measures as they could. Once respondents had exhausted the store of strategies that came to mind spontaneously, they received various prompts. Some were specific to the individual (e.g., "We would like to know what things you personally do, or have done, to reduce the chances of being raped"), whereas others were more general (e.g., "We are also interested in rape prevention measures that you do not use yourself but which might be appropriate for someone else. Here, think about things that you have considered doing but choose not to do, things that you have considered doing but have not yet done, things that you have heard other people talk about doing, and things that you have read about"). Some prompts focused on actions by individuals (as in the above examples), whereas others stressed societal measures (e.g., "We would like you to think about measures that are not individual actions, but rather are things that can be done by groups of individuals or by society as a whole to reduce the chances of women being raped"). Several questions posed specific situations (e.g., "A woman and man are riding an elevator in a downtown office building"), and respondents were asked if these situations called to mind additional strategies. The questionnaire then used a series of increasingly focused questions to elicit strategies for self-defense.

Five groups of volunteer respondents participated in the study: (a) 43 women recruited through a university newspaper advertisement (mean age = 22.6), (b) 44 men recruited through the same advertisement (mean age = 23.6), (c) 44 women belonging to support groups for parents of young children (mean age = 28.1), (d) 45 female university alumnae (mean age = 48.8), and (e) 43 sexual assault experts of both genders, working primarily in criminal justice, victim assistance, or private consulting. Samples of men and of sexual assault experts were included on the assumption that their perceptions of rape prevention strategies might differ from those of women. The female groups were selected so as to include a wide range of ages, income levels, and home living situations. Of the respondents, 12% in the three female groups reported having been the victim of a rape or an attempted rape by a stranger, and 27% by someone they knew.²

Strategy Coding

In both the literature search and the questionnaire analysis, every new strategy that we encountered was added to our list. In general, "new" was defined quite liberally, so that relatively fine distinctions were maintained between strategies. For example, "do not go downtown" and "do not go downtown at night" appeared separately. Similarly, "lock your doors when home alone," "lock your doors when at home," and "lock your doors" were treated as three separate strategies. Strategies were held to be different if it seemed plausible that the difference between them might affect women's usage decisions (either because the strategies might be judged to differ in their ability to reduce the risk of rape, or because they might be judged to differ in their consequences other than rape-risk reduction).³

One problem in such coding is that authors or questionnaire respondents often state a strategy categorically, without indicating whether they mean to say "always" or if they had some limiting conditions in mind (e.g., do this only with acquaintances, or only at night, or only when the assailant is unarmed). In the absence of explicit qualifications, there is the risk of miscommunication between people who guess wrongly about one another's implicit qualifications (e.g., between sexual assault experts and the women who receive their advice; between interviewees and the researchers who code their responses). Ambiguity or inconsistency in limiting conditions also complicates comparing and combining studies of strategy effective-

ness insofar as each definition represents a somewhat different strategy (Furby & Fischhoff, in press; Holsti, 1969).

Further research may show that some of the strategies that appear separately in our canonical list are distinguished neither in women's minds nor in their ability to prevent rape. However, retaining their separate identities here maintains the option of further empirical clarification (albeit at the price of maintaining a somewhat cumbersome list and including entries that are not mutually exclusive).

Strategy Categorization

Elaboration of the typology required determining for each strategy: (a) the *stage* at which it is presumed to be effective (preventing an assault from occurring, preparing to react to an assault, and defending oneself during an assault), (b) the *level* of action involved (individual or societal), and (c) its *intended effect*. Determining a strategy's stage was relatively straightforward, except where it was unclear whether the beginning of an assault was assumed by the strategy. In such cases, we treated as "defending oneself during an assault" those actions that could be used in response to any indication that a man might be commencing an assault (e.g., running after the woman). Determining each strategy's level of action involved the relatively straightforward judgment of whether the strategy required action by more than one person.

The scheme for determining intended effects was developed by an iterative procedure. A preliminary set of intended effects was defined and then modified to accommodate strategies that were difficult to code. This procedure was repeated until all three investigators were satisfied (a) that there was a category for each intended effect of each strategy and (b) that the intended effect categories for the different stages and action levels were as parallel as possible, both for the sake of consistency and to facilitate comparisons across stages and action levels. Because many strategies were stated quite imprecisely, achieving unanimous agreement on the action category for each was an unrealistic goal. However, unanimous agreement that all possible intended effects were represented in the scheme was essential to creating a clear, comprehensive typology. Once that agreement was obtained, a fourth individual who had not been involved in earlier rounds coded the entire list of strategies according to the scheme.

Although the disagreements were not large, the scheme was modified further to accommodate them.⁴

RESULTS

The Typology

Table 1 presents the final typology. Although the *stage* and *action level* labels are self-explanatory, those for some of the *intended effects* require elaboration.

An intended effect represents the way a strategy is believed to work, that is, what effect it produces that is then expected to reduce the threat of rape. Two ways to prevent an assault from occurring are to reduce a woman's *visibility* to a potential assailant, by preventing him from ever seeing her or knowing of her existence, and to reduce her *accessibility*, by maintaining a physical barrier or distance between a woman and a potential assailant who already knows of her existence. Thus "staying away from dangerous neighborhoods" prevents men in those neighborhoods from ever seeing a woman (i.e., reduces visibility), whereas locking the house door keeps a barrier between the woman and a potential assailant who knows that the woman is inside (i.e., reduces accessibility).

Two intended effects, which appear at all three stages, are "increase a woman's ability to cope with an assailant" and "increase the chances of outside intervention." The former focuses on the *woman's* own ability to prevent the assault, whereas the latter focuses on what she can do to affect *other people's* actions.

"Reducing a man's propensity to rape" refers to changing his motivation (or desire) to rape. This appears in the scheme both as a way to prevent him from initiating an assault and as a way to stop him once an assault has commenced.

"Managing yourself in ways that maximize ability to implement prevention (or self-defense) measures successfully" includes strategies intended to amplify other strategies' ability to achieve their intended effect. Often the exact mechanism by which this was intended to happen was not entirely clear. "Be alert at all times" is an example of such a strategy, because it is unclear exactly how this will prevent rape. In contrast, "be aware of who is sitting by you at a movie theater

TABLE 1
Rape Prevention Strategy Typology

Stage	Action Level	Intended Effect
Prevent assault from ever occurring	Societal	(1) reduce visibility of women to potential assailant
		(2) reduce accessibility of women to potential assailant
		(3) increase women's perceived ability to cope with potential assailant
		(4) increase perceived chances of outside intervention
		(5) increase perceived chances of punishment
		(6) reduce men's propensity to rape
		(7) increase women's ability to implement prevention measures successfully
		(8) alter societal beliefs and attitudes that promote rape
		(9) alter structural characteristics of society that promote rape
Individual	Individual	(1) reduce visibility of woman to potential assailant
		(2) reduce accessibility of woman to potential assailant
		(3) increase perceived ability to cope with assailant
		(4) increase perceived chances of outside intervention
		(5) increase perceived chances of punishment
		(6) reduce potential assailant's propensity to rape
		(7) manage yourself in ways that maximize ability to implement prevention measures successfully

	(8) contribute to societal action	
Prepare for reacting to an assault	Societal	(1) increase women's ability to cope with assailant (2) increase chances of outside intervention
	Individual	(1) increase ability to cope with assailant (2) increase chances of outside intervention
Defend yourself during an assault	Societal	(not applicable)
	Individual	(1) manage yourself in ways that maximize ability to implement self-defense measures successfully (2) reduce/minimize assailant's propensity to rape (3) increase perceived ability to cope with assailant (4) increase perceived chances of outside intervention (5) increase actual chances of outside intervention (6) increase perceived chances of punishment (7) establish distance or barrier between self and assailant (8) physically impede or incapacitate assailant

and move if he seems suspicious" has a clear intended effect, namely, reducing the woman's accessibility to a potential assailant (where that strategy was categorized).

The Strategy List

The rape prevention literature yielded 408 different strategies, to which the questionnaires added another 732. The full list of strategies, organized according to our typology, is available from the authors. Table 2 illustrates the categories with examples of more frequently mentioned strategies.

Each of the 1,140 strategies was categorized according to its principal intended effect. As a result, some categories have few (or even no) strategies. For example, although "do not parole rapists" could be a societal strategy for reducing the visibility of women to assailants, it is listed under reducing women's accessibility, which seems to be its primary intended effect. Many of the strategies in the table have more than one possible intended effect (e.g., a woman might yell so as actually to obtain help from others and/or simply to make the assailant think that help from others is likely). A more elaborated strategy list could include each strategy under all its intended effects.

DISCUSSION

Although our full list of 1,140 strategies may not contain every possible strategy that anyone has ever considered, it is quite comprehensive. It certainly represents the full range of strategy types and constitutes a sound data base from which to construct alternative typologies, whether for research or applied purposes. For those women (and men) intending to act in order to reduce the risk of rape, the typology offers a wide set of possible options, some of which may have escaped notice, but still merit attention. Anecdotally, our experience with people who have gone through the list is that they find it to be useful information.

The contents of the list, with strategies expressed in our respondents' own terms, provide some feeling for how people think about this problem. To the observer, some strategies may seem inappropriate, inaccurate, angry, or unrealistic.⁵ However, they

TABLE 2
Rape Prevention Strategy Typology (with Verbatim Examples
from Respondents, Preceded by Hyphen)

Prevent Assault from Ever Occurring

Societal Action

- (1) reduce visibility of women to potential assailant (measures intended to prevent him from ever seeing woman or knowing of her existence)
- (2) reduce accessibility of women to potential assailant (measures intended to maintain a physical barrier or distance between woman and assailant, given that he knows of her existence)
 - provide safehouses
 - law forbidding hitchhiking
- (3) increase women's perceived ability to cope with potential assailant if assault were to take place
 - set up dog escort services
 - publicize that there are rape resistance study groups and self-defense courses for women (so rapists will know)
- (4) increase perceived chances of outside intervention if assault were to take place
 - put emergency sounding devices on every block
 - set up neighborhood watch programs
- (5) increase perceived chances of punishment if assault were to take place
 - make laws against marital rape
 - encourage your community to set up a rape crisis center
- (6) reduce men's propensity to rape
 - have complete psychological rehabilitation for rapists
 - therapy for men who are lacking in self-confidence
- (7) increase women's ability to implement prevention measures successfully
 - public school education programs for females on rape prevention
 - post notices on bulletin boards and in newspapers of rape prevention clinics
- (8) alter societal beliefs and attitudes that promote rape
 - portray rape as a violent crime, not as a crime of passion
 - change attitude that sex is a commodity
- (9) alter structural characteristics of society that promote rape
 - eliminate poverty
 - full employment in the country

(continued)

TABLE 2 Continued

Individual Action

- (1) reduce visibility of woman to potential assailant
 - avoid dangerous neighborhoods
 - do not hang around bus terminals
- (2) reduce accessibility of woman to potential assailant
 - do not hitchhike
 - move to a place with a doorman
- (3) increase perceived ability to cope with assailant if assault were to take place
 - when approached by a stranger, make direct eye contact
 - when entering house, let dog in first to scare person
- (4) increase perceived chances of outside intervention if assault were to take place
 - do not drive alone
 - fake presence of others
- (5) increase perceived chances of punishment if assault were to take place
 - wear identifying armband to designate membership in rape prevention group
 - report known rapists/press charges
- (6) reduce potential assailant's propensity to rape
 - don't wear tight or revealing clothes
 - women should be available for proper relationships and willing to go on dates
- (7) manage yourself in ways that increase ability to implement prevention measures successfully
 - get educated about high-risk situations
 - notice other people's behavior
- (8) contribute to societal action
 - be involved in political action
 - encourage setting up or participate in rape crisis center

Prepare for Reacting to an Assault

Societal Action

- (1) increase women's ability to cope with assailant in the event of an assault
 - inform women about common elements in rape assaults
 - whistles, batons, and other defensive weapons provided by police departments

TABLE 2 Continued

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- (2) increase chances of outside intervention in the event of an assault
- set up escort services
 - public transportation buses should run later in the evening
- Individual Action
- (1) increase ability to cope with assailant in the event of an assault
- own a dog
 - learn self-defense
- (2) increase chances of outside intervention in the event of an assault
- install burglar alarm system
 - carry noisemaker
- Defend Yourself During an Assault
- (Societal Action—not applicable)
- Individual Action
- (1) manage yourself in ways that maximize ability to implement self-defense measures successfully
- do not faint or pass out
 - assess attacker's personality
- (2) reduce/minimize assailant's propensity to rape
- do crude, unfeminine things
 - make him see you as a human
- (3) increase perceived ability to cope with assailant
- make it known you have a weapon
 - clear verbal resistance
- (4) increase perceived chances of outside intervention
- fake arrival of others
- (5) increase actual chances of outside intervention
- yell "fire"
 - summon nearest male
- (6) increase perceived chances of punishment
- state you will press charges against attacker
- (7) establish distance or barrier between self and assailant
- get out of house
 - run away
- (8) physically impede or incapacitate assailant
- incapacitate him with drugs or alcohol
 - kick
-

express how at least some people think about rape prevention. If laypeople believe in seemingly unreasonable strategies, then those strategies particularly merit empirical study to confirm or disconfirm laypeople's hypotheses. Either laypeople know something that the experts do not about strategy effectiveness or they are mistaken in ways that might take strong evidence to change. Furby, Fischhoff, and Morgan (in press-a, in press-b) present a detailed analysis of the types of strategies mentioned by laypeople and by experts.

The typology describes strategies by both the nature of the action involved and its intended effect (i.e., the way in which it is believed to deter rape). By grouping strategies with the same intended effect, researchers can assess the effectiveness of different effects in preventing rape. Given the enormous number of strategies that could be studied, some grouping of strategies is necessary if enough data are to be collected to make any reliable statements about effectiveness. Grouping by intended effects exploits the opportunity to pool the results from seemingly diverse actions having the same intent. In a review of all empirical studies of the effectiveness of self-defense strategies, we found that there were seldom enough data to make strong statements about individual actions. However, at the level of intended effects, some moderately strong patterns emerged (Furby & Fischhoff, in press). The fact that the different categories in our typology were associated with different degrees of strategy effectiveness (both actual and perceived) is one indication of its construct validity. In a study of the perceived effectiveness of both rape prevention and self-defense strategies, we also found some correspondence between a strategy's intended effect and its judged effectiveness (Furby, Fischhoff, & Morgan, 1987).

A canonical typology also helps ensure clarity in the definition of strategies. In conducting our empirical review, we often found ambiguity in the strategies studied, needlessly blurring the research results. The present scheme could have practical value in helping women (or men) in their efforts to prevent rape. When experts describe strategies, use of a strategy grammar would help make their message clear, allowing listeners to know what action and effect were intended and the stage at which the strategy is directed. If the intended effect is unconvincing to listeners, then the advice can be discounted or at least subjected to greater scrutiny. If the intended effect seems persuasive, but the action seems like an ineffective way to achieve it, then it may be productive to think about other actions better able to achieve that effect.

More generally, thinking about intended effects may help to focus consideration of rape prevention measures. Such organization may be particularly helpful at the time of an assault. Goal-directed prompts such as "How else can I achieve [intended effect Y]?" may be a good way to stimulate option production (Pitz, Sachs, & Heerboth, 1980). Finally, the parallel structure for individual and societal strategies may help maintain awareness that action is possible on both levels and reduce the tendency to view rape as only individual women's problem. It may also encourage consideration of the long-term benefits to women of societal strategies that reduce the overall rate of rape rather than focusing solely on the immediate benefits of individual strategies that can at best reduce the risk of rape only for certain women.

NOTES

1. We use the term *rape prevention* to refer to all three stages.
2. Although the responses of these groups are pooled here, fuller reports comparing the options produced by the different groups may be found in Furby, Fischhoff, and Morgan (in press-a, in press-b).
3. Elsewhere, we report the results of asking people about the effectiveness of rape prevention strategies (Furby, Fischhoff, & Morgan, 1987) and various consequences of using those strategies.
4. Our thanks go to Beth Melina, former director of the London (England) Rape Crisis Center, for her diligent and insightful work on this task.
5. Examples, as identified by one reviewer, include "give all rapists a sex change operation," "sterilize rapists," "prevent retailers from selling sexually suggestive clothing," "do not go out alone," "when strangers are nearby, hide so as not to be seen by them," and "avoid living in the same neighborhood as a rapist."

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