

'Fighting Chance' offers alternatives to rape

(Continued from page 1)

The workshops are offered to church groups, PTAs, women's groups and some business clubs, as well as colleges.

The primary goal, according to Landau and Cheek, is to teach assertiveness and present facts and figures on assault.

"Being straight forward and honest is saying 'I'm in control.'"

"We try to teach women to be assertive. Not just during an attack, but 24 hours a day to decrease vulnerability and live a better life," Landau said.

"We focus on assertiveness because rapists aren't fools. They'll pick women who give in and who'll be too ashamed to tell anyone after."

Landau pointed out that rapists will frequently test their potential victim and use their reactions as an indicator. One example given was "being touched while on a bus. If the woman scoots way over in her seat and doesn't say anything, then that's a sign of a submissive victim. If she uses a clear voice and good eye contact, and says 'Please don't touch me', then he'll probably leave her alone," Landau explained. "Being straight forward and honest is saying 'I am in control'."

Landau and Cheek (who use the working title LC Associates) stress the statistics of assault due to the wealth of misinformation that exists. For example, most assaults are not committed by dark and scary strangers. In Multnomah County, 67 percent of assaults are committed or attempted by someone the victim knows, either casually or intimately.



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Landau also pointed out that, while the act of rape is violent in nature, it is rarely violent in fact. Only about nine percent of rape victims are injured enough to require

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medical attention. Rapists and killers are two different animals," Landau said.

Another misconception is the location of attacks. The places that women most fear, such as parking lots, empty buildings or even campus at night, are the locales of approximately 15 percent of reported assaults. The three most likely places to be attacked are the victim's home, the assailant's home and in a car.

The foundation of the Fighting Chance workshop is the teaching of physical skills. "We teach skills that are designed for any woman's natural strength, and focused upon the vulnerable areas of any human being," Landau said.

Those vulnerable areas are the esophagus and windpipe, eyes and knees. That list does not include the groin, which Landau feels is not as vulnerable as most people think. "The attack areas should have four assets," she said. "They should be easy to get at, produce a disabling injury, have no physical defense and no instinctive defense. From the age of two, men know to protect their testicles if attacked. Also, although kneeling someone in the groin will hurt them, it probably won't disable them. On the other hand, if you crush someone's windpipe or put out his eye, chances are he won't be getting up too soon."

The survival skills taught in the workshop do not depend on physical strength. Landau pointed out that they have had students ranging from 10 years of age to the mid-60's.

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"What people have to get into their heads is that they are fighting for their lives, and to do whatever is necessary to protect themselves,"

and to do whatever is necessary to protect themselves," she said.

Landau and Cheek are quick to point out that fighting is not the only option, nor is it always the best one. "When faced with four guys, and three of them have guns, we don't expect anyone to try to break all their knees," Landau said.

On the other hand, the idea of fighting only as a last resort is also not advised. The longer the attack goes on, the more confident the assailant becomes, and the chances of beating him less likely.

If a woman must fight, then LC Associates hopes to provide her with the skills necessary to do it right. Landau explained that 80 percent of all unsuccessful rape attempts are foiled by a victim who fights back.



"ALTHOUGH KNEEING SOMEONE in the groin will hurt them it probably won't disable them."

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page 3

