

# Girl\$avvy

## Financial independence for young women

***A one-day hands-on workshop for young women, Girl\$avvy aims to inspire young women to think about the options available to them and the benefits of being financially independent.***

Delivered by the NSW Premier's Department, Office for Women, in partnership with the YWCA of Sydney, Guides Australia (NSW) and Business & Professional Women, *Girl\$avvy* is a one-day workshop which aims to alert young women to the diversity of job options available and to equip them with skills and confidence to plan for their future and become financially savvy.

One of the strengths of the workshop is that it brings together young women with local business and professional women mentors. As part of the workshop participants are divided into small teams to work with key local women.

Girls need role models, and we want to ensure that girls have access to successful women from their local community. We try and get mentors from a range of ages

and backgrounds to give girls an idea of the variety of career options available.

*Girl\$avvy* received a Commended Award under the Community Building category at the 2005 Premier's Public Sector Awards, which acknowledge projects and initiatives that have produced measurable outcomes, with proven results and benefits to the people of NSW.

From October 2002 to June 2006, a total of 91 workshops were held for some 4926 young women, involving 774 mentors. Approximately two thirds of the workshops have been in regional centres and rural areas, and the remainder in metropolitan Sydney.

In the first two terms of 2006, *Girl\$avvy* visited Lismore, Queanbeyan, Cessnock, Bombala, Warren, Orange and Young, and is



*As well as the Girl \$avvy program, the Office for Women (OFW) deliver a range of other programs including: **Sista Speak** – a program designed to encourage young Aboriginal women to learn leadership skills and continue their education; and **The Lucy Mentoring Program**, which provides female university students with mentors who motivate and educate them about the opportunity to gain top positions in the public and private sector. Contact OFW for more information.*

expected to be in Dungog, Griffith, Wee Waa and Albury in Term 3.

Mentors often comment that *Girl\$avvy* workshops are inspirational, fun and valuable and made them reflect on their own careers and lives. They also enjoy the opportunity to network with other mentors.

Some of the comments made by the mentors include:

- An excellent day – engaging, fun and very well organised. It has given the girls a marvellous opportunity to gain ideas for future career development which are rewarding and interesting and can lead to financial independence. If the girls took one message away today, it was worth it.
- Great fun and beneficial to any young person embarking on life after school. It is not a common occurrence in regional areas to have something directed at teenage girls that is positive.

Nearly 100 percent of the girls who participate in the *Girl\$avvy* workshops rate the workshop as interesting and state that they liked what happens on the day. Talking with mentors is often a highlight for the girls.

The main messages girls get from the workshops include:

- Start saving money and invest and you can achieve what you want.
- Never give up and always try your best.
- Take challenges and be passionate about what you do.
- Believe in yourself. You can do anything you want if you are not afraid to fail.
- Take every opportunity to learn from people around you.

***For more information and future workshop dates, contact the Office for Women on Ph: 02 92283141, Fax: 02 9228 3571, Email: [ofw@premiers.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ofw@premiers.nsw.gov.au) or Visit: [www.women.nsw.gov.au](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au)***

***We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does. Lighthouses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining – they just shine.***

SOURCE UNKNOWN

*Research shows that mentoring is one of the most effective ways of sharing knowledge within communities and providing a 'significant other' for those who are lacking positive role models.*

Since 1995 The Smith Family has been supporting students by linking them with volunteer mentors. Current mentoring programs include:

**Tertiary Mentoring Program** – matches students on *Learning for Life* tertiary scholarships with mentors who have achieved professional success in the students' chosen field of interest. We currently have mentors with backgrounds in law, engineering, journalism and medicine.

**eXLR8** – is a one-to-one mentoring program to assist young people in developing useful skills that can be readily applied in the workforce.

**Next Steps** – teaches *Learning for Life* students the skills they need to find, apply for and secure a job.

**Plan-IT Youth** – offers young people at risk of leaving school early the opportunity to plan for their futures by linking them with trained mentors from the community.

**iTrack** – informs students of the varied options for life after school.

# Learning for life

By David Ballhausen, The Smith Family ([www.smithfamily.com.au](http://www.smithfamily.com.au))

Approximately 700,000 Australian children live in jobless households throughout Australia, where financial disadvantage restricts families' ability to support their children's education.

Without the money for things like school books, uniforms or even transport to school, many students – through no fault of their own – do not have the same access to educational opportunities as others.

Without many of these basics that their friends take for granted, financially disadvantaged children can feel left out and isolated, often with a negative attitude towards education. As a result, these young people are more likely to leave school early and less likely to go on to further study or training. This reduces their employment opportunities and puts them at risk of becoming disadvantaged adults.

## LEARNING FOR LIFE

Learning for Life is an education support program developed by The Smith Family that works in two ways. First, it provides financial assistance to help meet the education needs of the child and second, it provides personal support to the child and family from a qualified Learning for Life Worker. Learning for Life Workers provide advice and access to other Smith Family programs such as literacy and technological support.

The major financial component of the Learning for Life program is a scholarship which directly benefits the student. Most of the scholarships are funded by

generous Australians through a sponsorship arrangement with a particular child, so they are able to directly see the impact of their support.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

There are more than 120 Smith Family Learning for Life Workers based in 73 locations across Australia.

They are trained professionals with backgrounds in education, social work or psychology and are a critical part of the program's success. They work closely with students and families and link them to support programs offered by The Smith Family and other local agencies or community groups. Learning for Life workers build community capacity by collaborating with local groups and organisations to ensure that the services delivered are relevant and meet the needs of the individual community.

## COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM LEARNING FOR LIFE

Learning for Life is about creating opportunities today, while investing in future generations. The program facilitates the transfer of resources from a section of our society that has a current capacity to give to those who have a current need of support. Beyond the individual children and their families, there is a long term benefit to the communities involved.

Some of the community benefits of the program include:

- Injection of funds into disadvantaged communities;

- Increased access to educational support;
- Improved self-esteem among youth and families;
- Improved local networks between home, school and other services; and
- Future generations will no longer fall into the same cycle of disadvantage.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Blayney VIEW Club has been involved with the Learning for Life program for many years. It currently supports seven students. The Club receives regular updates on the students to see their progress and how the program is helping create opportunities for them in the future.

A member of the Rural Women's Network State Advisory Committee, Sally Green is also an inaugural member of the Blayney and District VIEW Club which began in August 1997.

She says, 'I encourage you to support a student through the Learning for Life program, whether as a family unit, on an individual basis or as a Club. All funds directly benefit the students. This may mean that a child has money for an excursion or school uniform/shoes that they would not normally have, making it easier for them to enjoy school life and concentrate on learning. Assistance with their homework and general education is also available as well as a Student-to-Student mentoring program'.

*For less than \$1 a day, you can sponsor a child today. Visit: [www.smithfamily.com.au](http://www.smithfamily.com.au) or Ph: 1800 633 622 freecall.*

# Date Rape

## SPOTTING THE WARNING SIGNS

Information from [www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au](http://www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au)



Date rape is when someone you know socially makes you have sex when you don't want to. It could be someone you have just met, a friend, a workmate, or someone you love and trust, like your boyfriend.

They might use physical and verbal threats, emotional blackmail, or alcohol and drugs to force or trick you into having sex. And it's not just sexual intercourse – it can be oral sex or some other kind of sex. You may even agree to have sex with someone and then decide that you want to stop, but they force you to keep going.

Date rape can happen to women of all ages but young women between 15 and 24 are at highest risk. While it's mostly women who are raped, guys can be victims of date rape too. And, as with female victims, guys are usually assaulted by other men.

Sexual assault is a crime... whoever commits it, or however it happens, sex that you have not freely agreed to is rape. Rape has nothing to do with love – it's about power and control.

Unfortunately date rape is much more common than you'd believe. Most people think of rape as an act committed by a stranger but date rape is actually much more common than rape by a stranger.

### SAFETY TIPS

You should never see date rape as your responsibility to avoid, or 'your fault' if it happens – it's always the attacker's fault. However, it is sensible to be aware of the signs that something might be happening. One issue that has got a lot of attention lately is spiked drinks, but there are also other ways in which date rape happens.

### Spot the warning signs

There are a few things you can look out for to avoid ending up in a situation where you don't feel comfortable.

### Going out or going on a date

If you're going on a date or meeting up with somebody you don't know very well, you might like to:

- Go out in a group or on a double date so you can suss him out;
- Pay your own way so he doesn't get the wrong idea about you 'owing' him anything (but remember – even if he does pay, you never owe him sex);
- Organise your transport home before you leave;
- Take a mobile phone with you;
- Be careful about inviting him into your house or going to his (most date rapes happen in the home).

### Trust your gut feelings

Never feel that you have to spend time alone with someone who makes you feel uneasy or uncomfortable. Listen to your instincts and leave situations that you don't feel good about. Don't wait for someone to look out for

you or for things to get better, because chances are they won't.

### Alcohol

The use of alcohol and drugs is a major issue in date rape. A 1996 survey found that alcohol had been involved in 44.9 percent of sexual assaults for women 15 years and over.

Some guys will be really generous and buy you drinks all night, but they might have hidden reasons. Getting a girl drunk is a common way to make her drop her inhibitions. You may be less able to refuse someone who is making a move on you or pressuring you to do something you don't want to do. It's best to buy your own drinks and to keep an eye on them.

### Be choosy about guys

Be careful about who you hang out with. There's no sure way to tell which guys could be dodgy, but watch out for guys who:

- Ignore you or don't really listen to you;
- Do unwanted touching or invade your personal space;
- Want to control what you do and make decisions for you;
- Make suggestive or crude remarks about women.

### Know your sexual rights

How often do guys say 'You would if you loved me ...'? Sex shouldn't be the only way you can show somebody you love them. And sex is not meant to one-sided – it should be something you both want. Remember, you have the right to say no, even if you've had sex with him before, and you also have the right to change your mind. It is never OK to force somebody into having sex.

It can be particularly hard to say no to a guy you like – you

might enjoy kissing and touching but aren't ready to have sex just yet. It's good to be firm and straightforward about what you do and don't want to do. In an equal relationship, each person has the right to stop the activity at any time. If he really cares about you he will respect your decision and will not start or continue anything you don't like.

### Look out for your mates

When you go out in a group look out for each other and make sure that everyone you came with gets home safely. If you're concerned about what a friend is doing, talk to them about it.

### Break the silence

If you've been forced into sex against your will it is not your fault. It may help to talk to somebody about what happened, like a friend, a trusted adult or a counsellor at a sexual assault service or crisis line. Remember, you're not alone.

### 10 warning signs

1. Being alone with someone you don't know well
2. Not knowing how you're going to get home
3. An instinctive 'bad feeling' about a situation
4. Drinking too much alcohol
5. Accepting drinks from people, particularly if the drink tastes or smells 'funny'
6. Guys who don't listen to you or show respect
7. A guy who insists on coming into your house when he drops you home
8. Unwanted touching by a guy
9. Guys who say 'You would if you loved me ...'
10. A friend who's not in control and is being taken advantage of.



## FINDING HELP

Sexual assault services can offer help after you have been assaulted. They are located in Community Health Centres or hospitals. On weekends or at night, sexual assault crisis services are usually provided by the nearest hospital. Some sexual assault services list an after hours number, to be used outside of business hours (usually 9 to 5). These services are private and confidential and you don't have to give your name if you don't want to.

### NSW Rape Crisis Centre

is a 24-hour service providing phone counselling, information and referrals to other services or support groups. Ph: 02 9819 6565 or 1800 454 017 (if calling from regional NSW)

**Triple 000** – You can contact the police directly at any time if you've been assaulted. You can ask to speak to a female officer or a police officer who is specially trained to respond to sexual assault crimes. Any service you go to first will help you contact other relevant services.

### Violence Against Women Specialist Unit website

This website lists the contact details of other services in NSW that offer help for women who have been sexually assaulted. Visit: [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/vaw/ll\\_vaw.nsf/pages/vaw\\_index](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/vaw/ll_vaw.nsf/pages/vaw_index)

**Kids Help Line** – Provides telephone counselling for children and young people under 18 years. This service also provides support through email and online counselling. Ph: 1800 551 800 (calls to this number will not appear on your phone bill) or Visit: [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

# health ■ cervical cancer

## Where silence is not golden

Recently a friend's girlfriend was diagnosed with cervical cancer – she is 21 years old and a university student. When most of us think about cancer, we think mums and grandmas, and lung cancer and smokers; not happy, young and fresh uni students. For Amanda it came as a major shock, and so much more.

'My journey started in December 2005; I had gone to my GP for an unrelated health issue and at the same time, she insisted I have a Pap smear, something I had been putting off.

The results were in the next day: CIN 3. My GP thought it might be a false positive for pre-cancerous cells so she performed a Thin Prep and a regular Pap. When I visited my GP again for the new results they weren't ready – she told me there wouldn't be anything to worry about and was happy to give them to me over the phone. I was walking back to work when the phone rang; she asked me to come back immediately. I knew that there was something wrong and allowed myself a cry before I got there – I wanted more information and being on the verge of tears wasn't going to be conducive to that.

'When I arrived, she handed me a copy of a lab report. I only understood a few things on there: I knew that Squamous Cell Carcinoma meant cancer; that HPV was present; and the last phrase which read: 'Both tests showed the same result.' I was booked in for an 'urgent' biopsy (it took three weeks before it was performed, then another three weeks for the results).

'My biopsy revealed squamous

cell carcinoma. Since that day I have undergone five different treatments. Finally in May, the sections removed during the last surgery showed there was no cancer left in my body. I will still have to undergo treatment on these cells, however I have a three month reprieve from treatment.'

Kath Mazzella is another woman who has been affected by cancer, having being diagnosed at the age of 42 with vulva cancer.

'I discovered a lot of people found me revolting and disgusting so I turned to a women's group who told me it was better not to discuss these things as I may upset some people!'

After overcoming cancer, Kath was determined to make a difference for other women so in 2000 established GAIN, the Gynaecological Awareness Information Network.

'Many women afflicted with gynaecological conditions feel alienated and isolated. They often suffer in silence, afraid of what they don't know, and lack the courage to share their anguish. GAIN is there to support them, as well as their partners and family.'

### CANCER BASICS

Cancer begins in cells, which are the building blocks that make up tissues. Normally, cells grow and divide to form new cells as the body needs them. When cells grow old, they die, and new cells take their place. Sometimes, this process goes wrong. New cells form when the body doesn't need them, and old cells don't die when they should. These extra cells can form a mass of tissue called a growth or tumour. Tumours can be benign (the not-so-bad type) or malignant (the bad type). Certain things can

make us more prone to having cancer cells form, like family history of cancer, smoking, age, etc. For cervical cancer the biggest risk factor is not having regular Pap Tests to detect abnormalities early.

### THE FACTS

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable and curable of all cancers.

A Pap Test is a quick and simple screening test which looks for cell abnormalities in the cervix which could lead to cervical cancer if left untreated, and so is the best protection.

All women between the ages of 18 and 70 who have ever been sexually active should have a Pap Test every two years.

If you notice any unusual bleeding, discharge, burning or pain, lumps, ulcers or patches of skin that look white or feel rough to touch, contact your GP immediately.

HPV is the main risk factor for cervical cancer. HPV infections are common and can be passed from person to person through sexual contact. Most adults have been infected with HPV at some time in their lives. Some types of HPV can cause changes to cells in the cervix. These changes can lead to genital warts, cancer, and other problems.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kath suggests asking the person straight out how you can support them. Let them know you'll be there for them every step, and of course, direct them to the GAIN website: [www.gynsupport.com](http://www.gynsupport.com)

*For more information, Visit:*

[www.cervicalscreen.health.gov.au](http://www.cervicalscreen.health.gov.au) or [www.cancer.gov/cancer\\_information/cancer\\_type/cervical](http://www.cancer.gov/cancer_information/cancer_type/cervical)

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# How to network your way to your next board appointment



By Robyn Henderson ([www.networkingtowin.com.au](http://www.networkingtowin.com.au))

*It's not what you know – it's who knows what you know! Why do we continue to see the same names popping up on boards throughout Australia and New Zealand? What do these people know that the people wanting to secure board seats don't know? Is there a shortage of opportunities? Well, you only have to read the financial pages to see the highs and lows of board members and chairs alike. One thing for certain is that you have to be visible, a strong decision maker, be prepared to make the tough calls and undergo public scrutiny.*

So have you got what it takes to get on a board? Let's look at three key areas that may assist you to secure your first or next board appointment.

## 1. Be prepared to ask for help

Identify all the people in your network who are currently on boards or have held board seats in the last five years. Highlight the names of those people you would feel comfortable phoning and asking for a ten-minute phone meeting. Now you might be thinking you would prefer to take that busy person to lunch or dinner, and chat in a more relaxed manner. Maybe you give your contact that choice. But I can assure you it is no fun for the person being questioned as they try to eat a meal whilst being on the end of a barrage of questions. More often than not, their food goes cold, and it's not

exactly a pleasant experience for them. And in this time-poor society, you are probably not a major priority for them and, let's face it: they can buy their own lunch any day. Yet asked courteously they will be more than happy to give you phone time. Your call might go something like this: 'Mary, I am keen to get on a not-for-profit board in the charity area; I know you have been on X board for some time, and I was wondering if I could arrange a phone appointment with you to ask you three quick questions.' When your objectives are clearly explained, often you will receive your answers on the spot – which saves both of you time. However, if the appointment is confirmed, don't be surprised if it may be cancelled once or twice. Remember this is a priority for you, not for them.

## 2. Do your homework before your phone appointment

Be courteous enough to know as much about this person as possible. Know which boards they are currently on, the ones they may have resigned from and any challenges within the industries they currently represent. It could be considered a serious waste of their time if you have not bothered to research and prepare for the call. And this may reflect badly in the future, should they ever be asked to give you a reference or testimonial. Don't waste their

time with stupid and obvious questions.

## 3. Be specific with your questioning

Prepare your questions as succinctly as possible. Write them down and refer to the list as you go. Write notes: don't think you will remember everything, particularly if you are a little nervous; you are bound to forget something important. Be direct, but avoid confrontation. Remember, they are helping you and giving freely of their time.

Your questions may include a brief background summary. With their agreement, you may even send a brief résumé and your questions a couple of days before the phone meeting. The busy person may not read your information word for word, but they may be impressed with your professionalism. Your questions may include:

- How did you get your first board appointment?
- My situation is this: I am experienced in these areas; I am keen to get on boards in the X area. What should I be doing to increase my chances of being considered for a board?
- I have set a target of obtaining X board appointments in the next X years; is there anyone else you would recommend that I speak to, who may be able to offer a different perspective? And may I mention your name when I make contact with them?

- What have you found to be the biggest obstacles to getting onto boards?
- Is there a downside to being on a board?
- Other than a financial gain, what specific benefits have you experienced?
- What would you recommend I do in the next 6-12 months to increase my chances?
- Final question – I am very grateful for your time. Is there anything at all, in any area of your life, that I could possibly help you with today? (Don't be surprised how simple a request you might receive at this time.)

Be mindful of the time you have asked for – ten minutes – it is not your call to extend the time unless this is offered to you. Always, always, always send a thank you note thanking the person for their time and making reference to one or two points that you will be acting on. Remember also to keep them in the loop with your progress – this doesn't mean weekly calls, but it does include a quarterly update, either written or posted. A wise person once said that your network is your net worth – this certainly applies when it comes to board appointments. Happy networking!

**For more articles by Robyn Henderson, visit her website: [www.networkingtowin.com.au](http://www.networkingtowin.com.au) or send an email to: [robyn@networkingtowin.com.au](mailto:robyn@networkingtowin.com.au)**