

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of October 19, 2015 – Circle of 6

I decided to send this particular message out even though I have presented this topic at a number of events including as opening remarks for meetings and tailgates. The fact is many people- especially women, still are not aware of the computer App, “Circle of 6.” I hope everyone will take a few moments to read this message and pass it on to all your friends. It could just prevent an unwanted sexual advance or assault and even save someone’s life.

Circle of 6 is a free app for iOS and Android devices that lets you build a support network consisting of six friends or trusted people to quickly call when you're in danger and need help, or in a bad situation with someone else, or need to reach the authorities. With one touch, the app pings your trusted friends or emergency services with your request for help. Because the message automatically includes your current location, they can find you.

This App is primarily designed to prevent domestic and sexual violence, and help people who may find themselves in a dangerous or uncomfortable situation get out of it quickly. The idea is sound for anyone who may need help that doesn't necessarily involve calling 911: if your car's broken down and you need a lift, one tap sends your friends a message saying you're in trouble along with the address where you are so they can pick you up. If you're in the middle of a horrible date and need a distraction, the app can help with that too. Whether you install it on your own phone or suggest it to a good friend, Circle of 6 is worth an install. It's available for free. Just Google “Circle of 6.”

Circle of 6 has a number of easy-to-use features. For instance, if you find yourself alone at a party (where did my friend(s) go?!) and you would just feel comfortable to let someone take you home, or you decide to leave the party and need to be assured that your friends know what's going on, then there is a “Getting Home Safely” button which has a GPS function that can alert your friends where you are.

Another button is often referred to as the “the bad date button.” Someone is cornering you at a party, or you're stuck on a bad date, you're desperate for an interruption and hoping your phone will ring but you can't send a text to a friend asking to “call me right now.” One touch of Button #2 and, Viola! a message to your circle goes out saying “Give me an out, please.” Soon you get a call from a friend and now you have an “out” to excuse yourself

Still, another button is the emergency button, which can be programmed to your campus, campus police, the women's center, etc. Two national hotlines are programmed in for you, and the third is of your own choosing, and therefore, lets the user choose what feels safe to them and what feels best for getting help.

Here are a few typical scenarios that women may find themselves for which Circle of 6 can be very helpful:



TerranearPMC Safety Share

- You're out late and you lose track of your friends. Use Circle of 6 to send your circle a “come and get me” message- with a map using GPS to show your precise location.
- You're on a date that starts to get uncomfortable. You need a polite way to excuse yourself. Use Circle of 6 to alert your circle to call you and interrupt the situation.
- You're seeing someone new, but you have some doubts about how things are going. Use Circle of 6 to access a wealth of online information about healthy relationships.
- In critical situations, use Circle of 6 to call two pre-programmed national hotlines or a local emergency number of your choice.

Below is a brief description of the usefulness of the App's Icons:

CAR ICON: COME GET ME. An SMS message will be ready to send that reads: “Come and get me. I need help getting home safely.” It will send a map using GPS to show your circle exactly where you are.

PHONE ICON: CALL ME. An SMS message will be ready to send that reads: “Call and pretend you need me. I need an interruption.”

CHAT ICON: I NEED SOME ADVICE. An SMS message will be ready to send that reads: “I'm looking up information about healthy relationships and respect. Just letting you know.” There will be links to loveisrespect.org and whereisyourline.org. This keeps your circle informed of what's on your mind, but doesn't ask for immediate action.

EXCLAMATION POINT: Pre-programmed national hotlines and a local number the user can customize.

Ideally, all of your friends will be part of this culture whether or not you program them into our app. But how do you choose your Circle of 6? Here are some tips:

THINK: Take time when choosing which six friends to add to your Circle. You may be tempted to just add the people you see the most, but think carefully: who is likely to answer your text? Who keeps their phone on and next to their pillow all night, and who turns it off? Who has reliable transportation to pick you up if needed?

KEEP IT LOCAL: Make sure that most of your Circle lives close by so when you need them they're just a short trip away.

TALK IT OVER: You should talk to the people who you want to add to make sure they understand the responsibilities involved. Check out our “how to help” page for tips and resources for the people in your Circle.

TRUST: Your Circle should be made up of those people you trust the most and who have proven themselves to be reliable friends.

REVISE: Remember, you can change who is in your Circle at any time with a few taps.

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.

Mark Twain

