

My fashion is not an invitation to rape

excal.on.ca/my-fashion-is-not-an-invitation-to-rape/

9/7/2017



Angelica Babiera | Arts Editor

Featured Image: There is an ongoing battle about what is deemed “provocative”—and the perceived correlation between fashion and consent. | **Basma Elbahnasawy**

Ah, frosh. The gateway to all the parties university has to offer. It’s a fleeting moment filled with hype and rush. It’s hot and filled with sweaty people experiencing the same things you are.

My frosh happened two years ago and it was anything but dull. However, I remember feeling a tad vulnerable. There was a little voice in my head that kept nagging about how I decided to dress for the week. Don’t bend too much or else your butt will show. Your dress is a little too revealing.

My fellow freshman girls and I wore short shorts during the day. At night, we wore tight dresses or much more revealing tops as we danced the night away. Our fashion made us out as bait to concupiscent freshman boys—those who cannot control their hands from reaching down my thighs or grinding against my body without my permission. It opened my eyes to the on-going battle between what is deemed as “provocative”—and the perceived correlation between fashion and consent.

I've heard arguments that sexual assault and rape can be prevented by changing the way women parade themselves in public, which includes the way that they dress. People preach that men will not be provoked if women don't wear short shorts or tight dresses, like my girlfriends and I wore at frosh. Meanwhile, others argue that women should not have to change the way they look, but rather, press to change the idea of the sexualization of the female body. I agree with the latter.

Women should feel comfortable and safe in a school event. Our clothing shouldn't be a defense of the lustful actions that could lead to rape or sexual harassment. It shouldn't be our fault that a man can't contain his sexual desires. We have the right to be able to dress however we please.

However, it's still important to note that frosh is still a school event, and implementing a dress code could help to solve some of these problems.

"No amount of provocative clothing is an invitation to rape, regardless, of the setting... but people shouldn't be dressing the same way they would if they were going to a club or a rave. They could wear whatever they want but it should be a little more restricted. I know this sends the wrong idea to girls that they have to watch what they wear but it's still a school event," says Katarina Pupovac, a first year International Studies and Business Administration student.

Nevertheless, frosh is a fun event; its sole purpose is to welcome freshmen to university life. School should be a place for exciting experiences, and not a place for worry or trauma.

On top of implementing a dress code for frosh, the YFS should focus on initiatives that teach the incoming male freshman about consent, specifically explaining that a girl's outfit doesn't imply consent.

Girls are just trying to have fun, while trying to dress appropriately for the weather and look cute. My little black dress, short shorts, or tank top is not an invitation for sexual assault. My fashion choices don't imply consent.