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Pedicure, Full Set[MORE COUPONS](#)**Published - Saturday, February 12, 2005****Viterbo promotes 'healthy dating'**

By CHANEL BANKS / La Crosse Tribune

As the date winds down, your partner leans in — but first asks, "Can I kiss you?"

Always ask first — give the choice to be intimate, said Mike Domitrz, an expert on "healthy dating."

"Most people wonder if asking really works or if it can ruin the moment. But after they see the presentation, they realize asking makes the moment," said Domitrz during a presentation on dating and sexual assault awareness for Viterbo University on Thursday.

As Valentine's Day and the university's homecoming approach, Viterbo administrators were looking to promote healthy dating, said Jason Ramaker, director of residence life at Viterbo.

"Sexual consent is an important topic our students need to think about," he said, then added, "We have not seen a rash of events. (The program) is a proactive effort."

Asking the question first establishes consent among couples and could prevent sexual assault, said Domitrz, author of "May I Kiss You? A Candid Look at Dating, Communication, Respect, and Sexual Assault Awareness."

"And consent is the key to understanding what sexual assault is," Domitrz said.

After the evening program, some students said they will encourage others to take Domitrz's advice.

"I think it was a wonderful eye-opener. I've never had a guy ask," said April Anderson, a 19-year-old junior.

"I would feel very honored and respected if asked," added Krissy Willaby, 20.

Nearly 100 sexual assaults were reported in La Crosse in 2002, according to a UWnLa Crosse Student Life web site.

Nationally, 3 percent of college women experience a completed or attempted rape during a class year, according to a 2001 study by the National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

But many sexual assault and misconduct cases go unreported, Ramaker said.

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A 2003 study by the same bureau confirmed this. Between 1995 and 2000, only 12 percent of total rapes and sexual assaults were reported to the police, the report stated.

When someone does report a sexual assault, be willing to take action, Domitrz said. "The first person a survivor turns to influences if they tell," he said.

"Do what you can do to help. Help them find places they can go. Get them to the next resource," he said.

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