



SEXUAL ASSAULT/RAPE MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH: Sexual assault is caused by lust or uncontrollable sexual urges and the need for sexual gratification.

FACT: Sexual assault is an act of physical violence and domination that is not motivated by sexual gratification.

MYTH: Once a man gets sexually aroused, he can't just stop.

FACT: Men do not physically need to have sex after becoming sexually excited. Moreover, they are still able to control themselves after becoming aroused.

MYTH: Women often lie about sexual assault or falsely accuse someone of sexual assault.

FACT: Studies indicate that false reports make up 2% or less of the reported cases of sexual assault. This figure is approximately the same for other types of crimes. And, over 54% of rapes are never reported to the police.¹ Rapes by someone the victim knows are the least likely to be reported.

MYTH: Women provoke sexual assault by their appearance. Sexual attractiveness is a primary reason why a rapist selects a victim.

FACT: Rapists do not select their victims by their appearance. They select victims who are vulnerable and accessible. Victims of sexual assault range in age from infants to the elderly. Sexual attractiveness is not an issue.

MYTH: Sexual assaults are committed by strangers at night in dark alleys.

FACT: It is far more common for a woman to be raped by someone she knows than by a stranger. And, it happens at any time of the day or night.

MYTH: Sexual assault is a topic that only concerns women, and men do not have to be concerned about sexual assault.

FACT: Men, both straight and gay, suffer 6-11% of the sexual assaults reported in the United States.² In addition; men have girlfriends, wives, friends, sisters, mothers, and daughters who may someday need assistance in coping with sexual assault. Sexual assault is a concern for everyone.

MYTH: If a woman really did not want to be sexually assaulted, she could prevent it.

FACT: Even if the rapist is not carrying a weapon, the element of surprise, shock, fear, the threat of harm, or being incapacitated by drugs or alcohol can overpower a survivor.

1. U.S. Department of Justice. National Crime Victimization Survey: 2006-2010

2. U.S. Department of Justice. National Crime Victimization Survey: 2002