

TOP 10 MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT:

- MYTH:** Rape is a rare occurrence: "It will never happen to me."
FACT: There is a rape once every six minutes in the United States. One in four women and one in eight men will be the victim of sexual assault or rape in their lifetimes. The United States has the world's highest rape rate of the countries that publish such statistics—13 times higher than England's, and 20 times higher than Japan's.
- MYTH:** Only young, beautiful women in mini-skirts or women with "reputations" get raped.
FACT: Rapists choose their victims for their vulnerability and accessibility, without regard to physical appearance or reputation. Victims are young and old, single and married, rich and poor, male and female. Victims of reported assaults have ranged from six weeks to 93 years old. Of note, however, is that women aged 12-20 run a greater risk of being raped than any other population group. Women have a right to dress any way they want. It is the rapist who makes the choice to rape them.
- MYTH:** A rapist is more likely to be a masked, crazed stranger who jumps out of the bushes, than a good looking college student.
FACT: About eight-five percent of rape victims know their assailants. Thirty-five percent of sexual assaults occur within the family. It is estimated that incest occurs in one out of twenty families. Most rapists are ordinary males with no history of mental illness
- MYTH:** Rape is an act of sex and passion. For example, a sexually frustrated man sees an attractive woman and can't control himself.
FACT: Ninety percent of all rapes are planned. The rapist has planned to have sex with a specific woman or man. Rape is a violent crime that uses sex as a weapon of power and control. The average rape last 2-4 hours.
- MYTH:** It's not your fault if you force someone to have sex or don't get consent when you are drunk.
FACT: If you are drunk you are still responsible for your actions, just as in drunk driving. It is never OK to force someone to have sex. Furthermore, someone who is incapacitated cannot give consent. Ninety percent of college and high school rapes involve alcohol or other drugs.
- MYTH:** A woman could prevent herself from getting raped if she really wanted.
FACT: Eighty-five percent of stranger rapes involve physical force. In eighty-seven percent of stranger rape cases, the perpetrator either carried a weapon or threatened to kill the victim. Twenty percent of rape victims are killed or permanently injured.

7. **MYTH:** Many women say "NO" when they mean "YES."
FACT: If a woman says "NO," that "NO" must be respected. There is no such thing as "the point of no return" or "not being able to stop." If at any point a person says "NO," you must stop. If someone tells you to stop, they may be uncomfortable for a variety of reasons, one of which might be that they have been assaulted in the past.
8. **MYTH:** Women often lie about getting raped to get back at someone.
FACT: FBI statistics are that only 1-2% of reported rapes are false. This is the same percentage of false reports for all other crimes. Also, only about one-in-ten to twenty rapes is reported, and only one-in-one hundred is prosecuted.
9. **MYTH:** Real men do not get raped. If a man is raped, it is by a homosexual male.
FACT: Same sex assault does occur, but it is estimated that less than one percent of men report their rapes. Some studies estimate that as many as 1-in-8 men are victims of some type of assault or abuse. Ninety-six percent of rapists are heterosexual and only four percent of same sex assaults are homosexual assaults. Same sex assault is typically more physically violent than opposite sex assault and there is frequently more than one assailant and use of a weapon.
10. **MYTH:** Rape is the victim's fault if the victim sleeps around/drinks/invites him/her to his/her room .
FACT: No one asks to be raped. Believe the victim. If the victim is female, she might be pregnant. The victim may have contracted a sexually transmitted disease. The victim is probably experiencing a loss of trust, confusion, self-blame, and shame and needs support.