

Common Sexual Assault Myths

MYTH: People often falsely report being raped.

FACT: The FBI finds that only 2% of rape accusations are false.

MYTH: It is not rape if the victim isn't a virgin.

FACT: Rape is rape, even if the person willingly had sex with the same individual before or with someone else.

MYTH: Acquaintance rapes are not as serious as stranger rapes.

FACT: Acquaintance rape is as serious as rape by strangers. People who are raped by someone they know experience a similar degree of trauma. Sexual assault laws make no distinction between rape by a stranger and rape by someone the victim knows.

MYTH: Women provoke rape by the way they dress or flirt.

FACT: There is no correlation between who is raped and the clothes they are wearing or flirtatious behavior. A man may justify rape by pointing to the woman's behavior, but this is an excuse and not a reason. It is cruel irony in our society that we encourage women to be sexually attractive and seductive but if they are raped, they are blamed for the other person's violent act.

MYTH: Men cannot be raped.

FACT: Men can and are sexually assaulted. 1 in 33 men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetimes. In these cases, the assailants are almost always male. Sometimes the assailant is heterosexual and homophobic. The victims of these assaults are both gay and straight men.

MYTH: People who do not fight back haven't been raped.

FACT: Though in some situations people do fight back, it is not uncommon if they do not. Reasons for not fighting back vary from a real or perceived threat such as a weapon to incapacitation due to intoxication, from the confusion of having a relationship with their attacker to a very real belief that their lives are in danger. It is never the victim's responsibility to prevent rape.

MYTH: People rape because they are overly aroused sexually or have been sexually deprived.

FACT: Most people who rape have available sexual partners. People rape to exert control and confirm power. Rape is NOT about sex.