

Myths About Rape

Assumption: Most rapes are the outcome of sudden impulse.

Fact: Approximately 82% of rapes are premeditated. Most rapists plan their attack, just as most criminals plan their crimes.

Assumption: Most rapists attack their victims suddenly and unexpectedly.

Fact: Approximately 70% of rapes are preceded by some conversation.

Assumption: Rapes occur because of lack of sexual outlets for men.

Fact: Many rapists have access to consensual sex; what they want to express is power, dominance and control.

Assumption: Rape victims are almost exclusively young, attractive, single women.

Fact: All women are vulnerable to attack regardless of age, physical appearance, marital status, economic status, or ethnicity.

Assumption: Many women do not report rapes because they know they provoked the attack.

Fact: Rape is never the victim's fault. The decision to report or not report the rape depends on several factors including the anticipated reaction of family and friends.

Assumption: A woman can spot a rapist or potential rapist.

Fact: As in the case of other crimes, there is no way of recognizing a rapist beforehand. Rapists come in all ages, sizes, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups.

Assumption: Rape is mostly an interracial crime.

Fact: Most rape is not interracial.

Assumption: The best way to stop rape is to increase police patrols and police visibility.

Fact: Since most rapes occur indoors, increased police presence would not necessarily have much effect. The most effective way to stop rape is to educate women and men about rape and change the underlying social values that make sexual aggression by men acceptable.

Assumption: Most victims of rape who suffer more than minimal emotional trauma were already unstable prior to the rape.

Fact: Rape causes severe emotional trauma for all victims and also affects their families and friends.

Assumption: Only women are victims of sexual assault.

Fact: Although most victims are women, there is an increasing number of children and men being victimized. Any man, woman, or child is a potential victim.