

Rape Myths and Facts

- 1. You are safe at work.**
Fact: Over 13,000 women are raped on the job each year in the United States. (Taken from N.I.O.S.H. Nonfatal Assaults in the Workplace, Table 13, 1994)
- 2. Rape doesn't happen very often.**
Fact: Every 6 minutes another woman is raped in the United States. (The Police Notebook by the University of Oklahoma, Trust Your Instincts Booklet and FBI Statistics.)
- 3. Rape is just "no big deal".**
Fact: Rape has a devastating effect on its victims. Nearly one-third of all rape victims will have rape-related PTSD. (National Victims' Center -Now called National Center for Victims of Crime - Infolink 35)
- 4. Real rapes are only committed by strangers.**
Fact: As many as 80% of the victims will know their attacker. (National Victims' Center -Now called National Center for Victims of Crime - Infolink 0001)
- 5. Women who are raped are just asking for trouble.**
Fact: No one EVER deserves to be raped. Victims cannot suffer the blame for the actions another person uses against them.
- 6. Unless a weapon is used it isn't rape.**
Fact: Anytime someone uses force with intercourse it is rape. The force may include weapons, intimidation, drugs, alcohol, or a victim's own diminished mental capacity.
- 7. If he bought dinner she "owes" him sex.**
Fact: No one "owes" sex for anything.
- 8. If a woman doesn't fight against her attacker it isn't really rape.**
Fact: Any sex act forced against another person is rape. It doesn't matter if the victim was able to fight back or not.
- 9. If the victim isn't a virgin then it wasn't really rape.**
Fact: Even if the victim is not a virgin and forced to have sex against her or his wishes, then it is rape.
- 10. Husbands can't rape their wives. It's her duty.**
Fact: As many as 14% of women who have been married have also been victims of rape by their husbands. (Battered Women Support Services Pamphlet, Forced Sex in Marriage 1994.)
- 11. Women cry rape because they had sex and changed their minds.**
Fact: Rape is the most underreported crime in the country. Only 16% are ever reported to the police.
- 12. If it is really rape then the victim will report it immediately.**
Fact: Responses collected from the National Women's Study show 84% of rape victims never reported the crime at all. (Taken from the Center for Diseases Control Fact sheet, 2/2000)
- 13. She really wanted to have sex so it was ok to get rough.**
Fact: We all have the right to say no, to change our minds, or decide not to have sex. It doesn't matter what activity preceded the "no".
- 14. Rape only happens to women.**
Fact: Children (boys and girls) and men are also victims of rape. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997)
- 15. Rape only happens to women who are on the streets late at night.**
Fact: Rape happens everywhere. It happens on the job, in our homes, in parking lots and at schools.

16. I don't know anyone who's ever been raped.

Fact: Rape victims are doctors, teachers, nurses, pastor's wives, checkout clerks, accountants, engineers or anyone. Most people know someone who has been raped. You may just not know who it is.

17. Men rape women because that is men's nature and biological role.

Fact: There are many societies in which men never rape women. The fact that rape is high in some societies and low or non-existent in others suggests that rape behavior can be encouraged or discouraged depending on the values of the society. Societies that regard the roles of women and men as equal status; even through different are societies with little or no rape.

18. Men rape women because they are overly aroused sexually or have been sexually deprived.

Fact: Most men who rape have available consensual sexual partners. Men rape women to exert control and confirm power. Motives for rape often include hostility against women, the desire to feel and exert power and control, the desire to humiliate and degrade, and in some cases, the desire to inflict pain.

19. Acquaintance rapes are not as serious as stranger rapes.

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

20. 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 purely an excuse. 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.