

MYTHS ABOUT RAPE AND RAPISTS—KEY

MYTHS AND FACTS:

1. Men are never raped.
FACT M: Same-sex assault is a traumatic and life-threatening experience for the victims. It is an act of hostility and domination. It includes both sexual penetration and aggression. Same-sex assault is usually more violent than opposite-sex assault. There is usually more than one rapist. Weapons and instruments are used. Serious injury is common.
2. If she really wanted to, a woman could prevent being raped.
FACT G: Rape occurs with intimidation, with a weapon, threat of harm or injury, and/or brute force. Physical resistance by the victim will discourage one rapist, but excite another.
3. One way to stop rape is to legalize prostitution.
FACT H: Prostitution is not a solution because the offender is not seeking sexual gratification. Sometimes prostitutes are raped.
4. Rape occurs because of pornography and sex on television.
FACT I: The arousal of anger or fear, not sexual arousal, leads to rape. Blaming pornography, alcohol, drugs, and the dress and behavior of the victim are ways the offender shifts the responsibility to something outside of himself/herself. The rapist cannot face the fact that he/she has serious problems which cause anti-social behaviors.
5. Castration is the solution to prevent of rape.
FACT J: Anger, fear, and rage will continue to find outlets, if not in rape, then in other forms of violence--assault and battery, homicide, and suicide.
6. Prisons rehabilitate rapists.
FACT K: Mental health programs are required to treat the underlying causes of why rapists rape.
7. Rape is the result of sexual arousal.
FACT B: Many offenders are married and are sexually active with their wives at the time of their assaults. Most unmarried offenders were actively involved in consenting sexual relationship with other people at the time of their offenses. Rape is usually a desperate act by an emotionally weak and insecure person who is not able to handle the stresses and demands of life.
8. Rapists are insane.
FACT C: Most rapists are not insane. A rapist is a person who has serious problems in relating to other people. When under stress a rapist acts out sexually. The biggest problem most rapists have is the absence of any close, emotionally intimate relationships with other people, male or female. Rapists have little awareness of warmth, trust, compassion, or empathy. Rapists are self-centered. Their relationships lack a sense of sharing.
9. Rape is a one-time-only crime.
FACT E: Offenders who find it very difficult to handle stress and who use sex to handle this stress make the possibility of re-offending very high.
10. Rapists are "oversexed".
FACT A: Rape is NOT an expression of sexual desire as much as it is an expression of other, nonsexual needs.

11. Rapists are stupid.

FACT D: Most rapists are intelligent. When under stress, the rapist's judgement is poor. Rape is a last desperate attempt to deal with stresses the rapist fears will destroy him/her. A rapist fears loss of control and insanity. They do not think about consequences of their actions.

12. Myths about rape make rape a simpler problem than it is.

FACT L: Rape is a serious, complex, social problem with no simple answers. Rape is a problem at all levels--individual, social, cultural, legal, economic, and political.

13. The victim of a rape gets what she asked for.

FACT F: Careful study of the offender will show his/her responsibility for the offense: poor self-control, little respect for others, high stress, and few social skills. Victims include males, infants, and old people.

14. Only young, beautiful women dressed in sexy outfits are raped.

FACT S: Victims of sexual assault are victims of violence. Victims are chosen without considering physical appearance. Victims are all ages, shapes, races and social classes.

15. Women are raped when they are out alone at night, primarily in dark alleys, so if women stay home at night, they won't be raped.

FACT O: Research shows that 1/3 to 1/2 of sexual assaults take place in the victims' homes. Half of all rapes take place in private residences.

16. Sexual assault occurs only among strangers.

FACT Q: In 34% of sexual assaults, the victim and the offender know each other. In 14%, the rapist was a close personal friend, a family member, or a friend of the family. These statistics are reported cases. People are MORE likely to report sexual assault by a stranger than by a friend.

17. Most rapes involve black men and white women.

FACT P: FBI statistics show 3% of rapes involve black men and white women. 4% involve black women and white men. Usually, rapes involve a rapist of the same race and socio-economic class as the victim.

18. It is easy to prosecute rapists.

FACT R: In 1970 approximately 365 rape cases were reported in Minnesota. Only 23 of the cases were prosecuted. Only 12 of these cases resulted in conviction.

19. Women frequently cry rape--there is a high rate of false reporting.

FACT N: Studies show that only 2% of rape calls are false reports.

20. Rape is impulsive, uncontrollable sexual gratification.

FACT T: In studies completed, 71% of all rapes were planned. The rapist planned to rape any person, or sometimes had a specific person in mind. Rapists take advantage of people in vulnerable situations such as hitchhiking, walking alone at night, drunk, etc. Only 16% of rapes were spontaneous.