

SAAVI Office

Sexual Assault and Anti Violence Information

Tel: (435) 797-1510

Hotline: (435) 797-RAPE (7273)

www.usu.edu/saavi

RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT MYTHS AND FACTS

There are many popular myths about rape and sexual assault. They are society's way of coping with the fear of rape. Unfortunately, these myths foster a false sense of security. While their grip on our society is weakening through public education, many still believe these false notions. Knowing the truth about rape allows us to recognize its reality and, therefore, take measures to end sexual violence. Additionally, many victims blame themselves for being attacked instead of seeing rape as a social problem. They fail to place blame on the rapist, because they too, by into myths surrounding sexual violence.

The underlying foundation of all rape myths is, "RAPE IS SEX." Rape and other sexual assaults are crimes of VIOLENCE. The victim suffers both physical and psychological trauma. Although there is a sexual component to the crime, the rapist's underlying motive is the need/desire to gain power/control, and in some cases, to express hostility, anger, and resentment towards women and/or society as a whole.

Myth: Nice girls don't get raped

- Victims come from all ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups.
- Victims in Utah range from two months to 94 years of age.

Myth: Men can't be raped

- Men are victims of robbery, muggings, etc. without questioning their masculinity.
- Gay and straight men are victimized by rapists for the same reasons women and children victimized.
- Men are less likely than women to report a rape. Only 1 in 100 report the crime.
- Men are less likely to be believed by *law enforcement personnel, making it traumatic to report and unlikely that a man would falsely claim to be raped. (*NOTE: We have a well-trained, highly sensitive police force at USU. Our officers take all rape/sexual assault reports seriously, and understand that making such a report is a difficult decision—they are committed to responding with respect and compassion, whether the survivor is female or male.)

Myth: Rapes occur in places where women shouldn't be anyway

- 43% of rapes occur in a residence, often the victims own home, and 36% occur in cars.
- Most rapists are someone the victim knows and trusted.

Myth: Rape victims provoke the attack by wearing provocative clothing

- Most convicted rapists do not remember what their victims were wearing.
- Victims range in age from days old to those in their nineties, hardly provocative dressers.
- A Federal Commission on Crime of Violence Study found that only 4.4% of all reported rapes involved provocative behavior on the part of the victim. In murder cases 22% involved such behavior (as simple as a glance).

Myth: All women secretly want to be raped

- A so-called "rape fantasy" is a self-controlled dream more appropriately termed a "seduction fantasy."
- In dreams, the dreamer has control of what is happening and is not experiencing the terror of someone invading or controlling her body.