

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

Rape myths are society's way of coping with the fear of rape. Unfortunately, myths foster a false sense of security. While their grip on 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. **Myths also encourage survivors of sexual violence to blame themselves for being attacked** instead of seeing rape as a social problem.

The underlying message of all rape myths is, "RAPE IS SEX." Rape and other sexual assaults are crimes of **VIOLENCE**. A survivor suffers physical and psychological trauma. Sex is the rapist's weapon to gain power and control, or express hostility, anger, and resentment towards women 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

- The masculinity of male victims of robbery, mugging, etc. isn't questioned.
- Gay and straight men are raped for the same reasons women and children are raped, and **most often by other men.**
- Men are less likely than women to report a rape. **Only 1 in 100 men report.**
- 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 well-trained, highly sensitive officers at USU who 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

- Almost 60% of rapes occur in the survivor's own home, about 30% occur in another residence, and many occur in cars.
- 2/3 of rapists are someone the survivor 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 their body.