

Rape Myths



Commonly held rape myths / Narratives based on myths about rape	Alternative narratives
Rape occurs between strangers in dark alleys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The majority of rapes (66%1) are committed by persons known to the victim - Victims are often raped in their homes
People provoke rape by the way they dress or act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dressing attractively and flirting can be an invitation for attention, admiration, or consensual sex. It is not an invitation for rape
People who drink alcohol or use drugs are asking to be raped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being vulnerable does not imply consent - If a person is unable to give consent because they are drunk, drugged or unconscious, it is rape
Rape is a crime of passion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forcing someone to have sex against their will is about power, control, and violence – not sexual desire, romance, or passion. - Many rapes are premeditated and planned - Many rapists fail to get an erection or ejaculate
If she didn't scream, fight or get injured, it wasn't rape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victims in rape situations are often legitimately afraid of being killed or seriously injured and so co-operate with the rapist to save their lives - The victim's perception of threat influences their behaviour often leading them to freeze or go limp - Rapists use many manipulative techniques to intimidate and coerce their victims - Non-consensual intercourse doesn't always leave visible signs on the body or the genitals.
You can tell if she's 'really' been raped by how she acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reactions to rape are highly varied and individual - Many women experience a form of shock after a rape that leaves them emotionally numb or flat - and apparently calm.

Women cry rape when they regret having sex or want revenge	- Data from 2643 cases suggests that the level of false reporting is somewhere between 8% (a case recorded as a false allegation by the police) and 0.2% (cases where an individual is arrested for a false allegation) (Kelly, Lovett, & Regan, 2005).
Male rape is an offence that takes place between gay men	- Rape is not about sexual desire; consequently men who rape other men are often heterosexual. Their victims are often heterosexual too.
Sex workers cannot be raped	- Sex workers have the same rights with regards to consent as anyone else: the transactions they negotiate with clients are for consensual activities, not rape.
If the victim didn't complain immediately it wasn't rape	The vast majority (estimated at 90%) of victims <i>never</i> report the rape to the police - Trauma, feelings of shame or fear of the consequences can all delay reporting to the police. - Some victims do not immediately recognise that they have been raped, particularly if their experience does not match their idea of what rape is e.g. stranger in a dark alley.
Victims hate their abusers	Bonding with the abuser can be a survival technique for victims, as in Stockholm Syndrome. Victims may be subjected to intermittent periods of abuse and loving affectionate behaviour.

(adapted from Saunders, 2012)