

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

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)