

Shattering the Myths about Rape

Linda J. M. Holloway*

Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Psychology and Counseling, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Alabama, USA

***Corresponding Author:** Linda J. M. Holloway, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Psychology and Counseling, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Alabama, USA.

Received: April 15, 2017; **Published:** April 26, 2017

There are lots of myths concerning the issue of rape. Many of these myths have been in existence for a long time that people take them as the gospel truth. Myths, concerning rape, often lead people to respond to rape survivors in very stereotypical ways. Being able to understand myths concerning rape would in fact shed a great deal of light on the topic.

Listed below are of some of the most commonly held myths rape followed by the facts:

Myth: Women are most likely to be raped in the dark, while they are outside alone by a stranger; therefore, women should not be out alone at night.

Fact: Approximately 10 % of rapes are committed by strangers. Rapes occur among survivors that they know they know or have been in previous contact occurs 90% of the time. People can be raped anywhere- their homes, workplaces, and other places where they thought they were safe. A rapist can be a friend, colleague, client, neighbor, family member, partner or an ex-boyfriend. The idea of women getting raped should not prevent her from having freedom of movement within their environment.

Myth: Only women and girls who are considered attractive, flirtatious, and wear tight fitting garments get raped.

Fact: Rape is never the victim's fault. Rape is an act of violence and control; the attractiveness of the person has nothing to do with the individual being raped. What someone is wearing is irrelevant to the perpetrator who commits the crime. People of all ages, classes, abilities, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, race and religion can be raped.

Myth: When it comes to women and girls, and sex, women like to play hard to get, so when they say 'no' they really mean 'yes'.

Fact: The rights of people must be respected. There should be an understanding that when a person says 'no' that really means 'no'. When a person says 'no' and the other individual proceeds against the other person, then they are committing a crime. People do have the choice to say 'no' at any point and their right to say 'no' needs to be respected.

Myth: A previous sexual partner automatically has the right to demand sex without that person permission.

Fact: Because a person has had a sex with someone in the past, does not mean the person can have sex with the person in the future without their permission. Consent from the person must be granted each time that person would like to engage in a sexual relationship.

Myth: People who are stressed, depressed, and use alcohol can become rapists.

Fact: Stress, depression and alcohol does not lead to a person committed rape. It is much more complex; individual rapists suffer from deep behavioral problems. Rape is a crime.

Myth: A person who intentionally gets drunk and then gets raped does not have the right to complain about being a raped victim .

Fact: The law requires that a person must be fully able to give consent. Consequently, if the person is unable to give their consent due to being unconscious or incapacitated, that constitutes rape.

Myth: Rape is when someone is physically forced to engage in a sexual act and has injuries to show.

Fact: There are people who are raped, but their injuries are internal versus external. A rapist can use a weapon and there is not a physical struggle. The survivor did what they had to do to survive. Just because an individual does not sustain visible injuries does not mean that they were not raped. If the person did not give consent, they were raped.

Myth: Men from some certain ethnic and racial backgrounds are more prone to commit acts of sexual violence.

Fact: There is no specific racial profile of a rapist. Men from all ethnic and racial backgrounds can commit sexual violence.

Myth: When a man becomes sexually aroused, he has no control of his behavior, he has to have sex.

Fact: Rape is an act of violence and not a form of sexual gratification. Men can control their sexual urges and do not have to commit the crime of rape.

Myth: Many people often lie about being raped because they regret having sex with the person or they simply want to be vindictive.

Fact: The media tends to focus on false allegations concerning rape. This gives the public the wrong perception that a large number of people give false reports, when in fact many survivors do not even file a report with authorities. However, false reports of rape are extremely rare. Rape survivors often refuse to file a report because they fear they will not be believed.

Myth: Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse grow up to be abusers.

Fact: An adult who has been sexually abused as a child does not mean they will inflict the same pain on another individual. Many people often use this premise to explain why adult survivors sexually abuse children. This is not an acceptable excuse for sexual violence against a child or an adult.

Myth: Men do not get raped and women cannot be a perpetrator of sexual violence.

Fact: Men raping women are the most typical type of sexual assault that occurs; however, men do get sexually assaulted by women. It seems a bit embarrassing and unbelievable that this type of act would occur; consequently many men do not file reports of being sexually abused by a woman. This makes it difficult for many of the male survivors to seek justice.

Shattering the myths about rape will greatly increase public awareness on a topic many consider taboo. In order to deal with the issues of rape, the myths must be openly discussed. So, survivors are given the necessary space to speak openly about being raped. Thereby allowing their voices to be heard and not dismissed. This also allows those who have been wounded, as result of rape to begin the healing process.

Conflict of Interest

It does not constitute a conflict of interest for the authors.

Volume 3 Issue 4 April 2017

©All rights reserved by Linda J. M. Holloway.