

SEXUAL ASSAULT MYTHS & FACTS QUIZ

1. Most sexual assaults occur between strangers.

False. According to the United States Department of Justice, at least 70% of all sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows—a date, friend, co-worker, boss, neighbor, teacher, coach, etc.

2. Sexual assault is a rare but serious crime in the United States.

False. Although sexual assault IS among the most serious crimes, it is unfortunately very common. According to the National Victim Center, approximately one in four girls and one in ten boys will be sexually assaulted prior to age 18. Approximately one in three women and one in seven men will be sexually assaulted at some point during their lives. In 1991, the United States Senate Judiciary Committee put the problem of sexual assault in perspective when it reported that more women were injured by rapists in 1990 than Marines were injured during World War II. The Judiciary Committee also estimated that 25 million American women have been victims of sexual assault.

3. If the victim doesn't fight, the sexual assault is her fault.

False. Under Ohio Law, physical resistance by the victim is not required. Instead, the issue is consent. If the victim did not give her/his consent to sexual activity, a crime occurred. The law recognizes that there are many reasons why a victim might not physically fight her attacker, including shock, fear, threats, the size and strength of the attacker, or the victim's lack of awareness that an assault is occurring because she is asleep, etc.

4. Some people ask to be raped by their behavior or the way they dress.

False. No one asks or wants to be raped, just as no one asks or wants to be robbed or struck by a hit-and-run driver. Think about why you chose the outfit you are wearing today. Perhaps you were simply down to your last choice before having to do laundry. You might have chosen your clothing in order to look nice, to be fashionable, to get attention or make a statement, to catch someone's eye, to be comfortable, etc. No one has the right to assume that what you are wearing has a hidden meaning; instead, a person who feels s/he is getting some kind of signal or message should talk to the other person to find out if they are correct.

5. Some people feel peer pressure to have sex.

True. It is important to realize that if your date is responding to peer pressure instead of communicating with you about what you want, you can be in a potentially dangerous situation. It is not uncommon for someone to take advantage of another person to "prove" something or as part of a dare, bet, "game" or competition. No one ever has the right to force or pressure another person into having sex.

6. There is a higher rate of false reporting of sexual assault than other crimes.

False. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, less than 2% of sexual assault reports are false. This is the equivalent of the false reporting rate for all other major crimes—in other words, a person is no more likely to lie about sexual assault than to lie about her/his car being stolen.

7. If the victim was using drugs or alcohol, it isn't considered a sexual assault.

False. Under Ohio law, people who are intoxicated or high are considered unable to give consent to sexual activity; neither the victim's nor the perpetrator's alcohol or drug use is an acceptable defense in a sexual assault case.

8. Most sexual assaults are planned ahead of time.

True. Studies of convicted rapists over the last fifteen years indicate that over 80% of sexual assaults involving one perpetrator are planned in advance; over 95% of gang rapes are planned in advance. The premeditation might involve stalking a particular victim, asking a woman on a date with the intention of raping her, or serving alcohol at a party with the intention of trying to get one or more of the guests intoxicated in order to make them vulnerable to sexual assault.

9. Unclear communication between dating partners can contribute to date rape.

True. Open communication can help to reduce your vulnerability to becoming a victim of date rape. Again, dating partners need to talk openly about their expectations before becoming sexually involved. They need to listen to each other carefully and to always accept that "no" means "no".

10. Sexual assaults have a devastating emotional impact upon victims.

True. Sexual assault impacts every victim differently. However, it is highly correlated with depression, relationship problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, substance abuse, suicide, and other psychological and emotional problems. One study indicated that rape victims may be 13x more likely than the general population to commit suicide. The impact of a sexual assault upon the victim often depends upon the level of support and assistance s/he receives in the aftermath of the crime. The most important messages you can convey to a sexual assault survivor are: I believe you, You are not to blame for the assault, Help is available. You do not have to cope with this alone.

11. Sexual assault is defined as any sexual activity which occurs without the consent of the victim.

True. The bottom line is that when there is no consent for sexual activity of any kind, it is considered a crime. Under Ohio law, sexual assaults include vaginal, oral, or anal penetration, as well as unwanted touching of the “erogenous zones” (the parts of the body which your bathing suit would cover up). Some people are also considered unable to give consent under the law, including anyone under the age of 13, people who are drunk or high, people who are asleep or comatose, and people who have a mental impairment which makes them unable to give consent (for example, a person with profound mental retardation/developmental disabilities). In Ohio, there are also some additional situations in which teens are considered unable to give consent to sexual activity:

-When one person is between 13-15, and the second person is 18 or older, vaginal, oral, and anal sexual intercourse between them is illegal;

-When one person is between 13-15, and the second person is 18 or older and at least four years older than the first person, any touching of the erogenous zones is illegal.

<http://www.helpandhealing.org/MythsFacts.htm>