

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ASSAULT: Myths & Facts



Myth/Fact Quiz:

- **T or F** Most sexual assaults/rapes are committed by strangers.
- **T or F** In a recent survey, almost one-fourth of college females said they had been the victim of a sexual assault, or attempted sexual assault, during their college years.
- **T or F** Many women claim they were raped to protect their reputations or to seek revenge on someone.
- **T or F** When a woman engages in other sexual acts, she implicitly demonstrates a desire to have intercourse.
- **T or F** Women often provoke rape by their own behavior, wearing low-cut or tight clothing, going out alone, staying out late, being drunk, flirting, etc.
- **T or F** Most acquaintance rapes on college campuses involve alcohol.
- **T or F** Having sex with someone who is intoxicated is considered sexual assault.
- **T or F** You can tell if a person wants to have sex with you by their behavior and body language.
- **T or F** Women say "no" to sex, but they really mean, "yes"; they just don't want to appear "easy."
- **T or F** If she didn't struggle or fight back, it was not rape.

Myth/Fact Answer Sheet and Discussion:

1. **False:** 80% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the individual knows – A friend, acquaintance, partner or family member.
2. **True:** Based on college surveys across the country, 1 in 4 college women indicate having been the victim of a sexual assault, or attempted sexual assault during her college years.
3. **False:** The incidence of "false reporting" is estimated at 2%. Reporting a sexual assault is not easy, and most sexual assaults are not reported. The false report rate is no greater than the false report rate for any other felony.
4. **False:** Consent cannot be assumed, one must obtain consent for sex. Women engage in other sex acts (kissing, making out, etc.) because that is what she wants to do. It is dangerous to assume that any level of intimacy indicates a desire for sex.
5. **False:** Victims cannot be held responsible for someone else's behavior. The rapist is solely responsible for his/her own actions. You cannot blame the victim for the perpetrator's behavior. Just as you cannot "blame" another driver on the road for being hit by a drunk driver, you cannot blame the victim of an assault for someone else's actions.
6. **True:** 75% of acquaintance rapes on college campuses involve alcohol. Alcohol impairs judgment, makes it more difficult to make good decisions, wise choices, or avoid dangerous situations. Limiting alcohol intake enhances personal safety – for many reasons.
7. **True:** Legally (as defined by both the Texas Criminal Code, and SMU's Student Code of Conduct), an individual cannot consent to having sex if they are incapacitated by alcohol or drugs.
8. **False:** Relying on body language or other cues is dangerous. In order to know if someone wants to have sex, you must ask.
9. **False:** "No" means "no"; one cannot assume that a woman is playing "hard to get," that puts everyone in a very vulnerable position.
10. **False:** Submission is not consent; lack of a "no" does not mean, "yes." There are many reasons why it may not be "safe" or possible for women to physically resist or fight back