Myths and Facts

Sexual assault is a crime.

It can happen to anyone and is never the fault of the person who has experienced the violence.

Myths exist only to blame the victim for what has happened and give excuses to the perpetrator for their actions and behaviour.

Understanding the reality of sexual assault is a major step in reducing the incidence and impacts of sexual assault. It will also help those who experience such violence to seek assistance in their recovery and justice for the crimes that have been committed against them.

Contact Details

1800RESPECT (24/7) 1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au
NSW Rape Crisis (24/7) 1800 424 017 nswrapecrisis.com.au
Sexual Assault Counselling Australia 1800 211 028 sexualassaultcounselling.org.au
Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia Administration 02 8585 0333 rape-dvservices.org.au
Myths and Realities

It could never happen to me.
Anyone can experience sexual assault.
1 in 5 women in Australia will experience sexual assault at some time in their life. 7% of all people who experience sexual assault are adult men. While age is no barrier to experiencing sexual assault, women aged 15 to 24 years are most at risk.

Sexual assault is about uncontrolled lust.
Sexual assault is a violent assault. Research shows that most offenders plan their attacks.

Women ‘ask for it’ by the way they dress and behave.
If you have money in your pocket does that mean you want to be robbed? Research shows that sexual assault is not caused by the look or behaviour of the victim.

Sexual assault is committed in dark alleys by strangers.
Most know their attackers. In 70% of sexual assaults the offender is a family member, friend, work or school colleague. Of the remainder, the offender is usually someone the person meets socially or dates.
Most sexual assaults occur in the victim’s or perpetrator’s home, car or workplace. Sexual assault by a stranger accounts for less than 1% of sexual violence and an attack by a stranger in a dark place is even less common.

A sex offender is easy to spot.
Sex offenders look perfectly normal. They come from every class, profession, age and culture. They are not confined to any particular group or activity. They are usually ‘nice’ and social. This is how they establish trust and are then able to manipulate the person into a location where they can commit their act without interruption or witnesses.

It’s not sexual assault if those involved have had sex with each other before.
Forced sex is sexual assault. Consent must be given for every occasion of intimacy - consent last night does not mean consent tonight and consent to one does not mean consent to others.
If consent is withdrawn that must be respected. Absence of ‘no’ is not consent. When negotiating a sexual encounter both parties have a responsibility to ensure the other is consenting.
If a person is affected by alcohol or other drugs to the point that they do not know what they are doing, it is sexual assault to have opportunistic sex with them.

A husband cannot rape his wife.
Being married does not mean permanent consent. Sexual assault in marriage is a crime.

Men don’t get sexually assaulted.
Yes, they do.