



RASASC
rape and sexual abuse
support centre
RAPE CRISIS
SOUTH LONDON

Challenging myths about rape

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People don't like talking about sexual violence, and when they do, they say a lot of things that aren't true. There are a lot of 'myths' that have developed because of this, which often protect abusers and blame survivors. This sheet aims to challenge some of the common myths around rape and support you to remember that you are not to blame for what happened to you.

MYTH	TRUTH
Rape is committed by strangers in dark alleys.	Around 90% of rapes are committed by known men, and often by someone who the survivor has previously trusted. People are raped in their homes, their workplaces and other settings where they have previously felt safe.
Women provoke rape by the way they dress or act.	Dressing attractively and flirting can be an invitation for attention, admiration, or consensual sex. It is not an invitation to rape. Rape is an act of violence and control; what someone was wearing when they were raped or how they behave is irrelevant.
People who drink alcohol or use drugs are asking to be raped.	Being vulnerable does not imply consent. If a person is unable to give consent because they are drunk, drugged or unconscious, it is rape.
Rape is a crime of passion - men cannot control themselves.	Forcing someone to have sex against their will is about power, control and violence - not sexual desire, romance or passion. Many rapes are planned.
If she didn't scream, fight or get injured, it wasn't rape.	Women are often legitimately afraid of being killed or seriously injured and so co-operate with the rapist to save their lives. Sometimes the body responds to this fear by freezing or going limp. Rapists are manipulative and want to intimidate women. Rape often doesn't leave any visible signs.
You can tell if she's 'really' been raped by how she acts.	Each woman reacts differently to sexual violence. There is no right or wrong way to respond and cope. Many women experience a form of shock after a rape that leaves them emotionally numb or flat - and apparently calm.
Women cry rape when they regret having sex or want revenge.	Data from 2010 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).
If she didn't complain immediately it wasn't rape.	The vast majority (estimated at 90%) of victims never report the rape to the police. Trauma, feelings of shame, confusion, or fear of the consequences can all delay reporting to the police.
Sex workers cannot be raped.	Just like any other woman, she can withdraw her consent at any point. 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.