

EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT RAPE IS WRONG.



THE
REPRESENTATION
PROJECT

Our society holds harmful myths about sexual violence that retraumatize survivors and prevent justice. The goal of the Representation Project's End Rape campaign is to raise awareness of common myths about sexual assault and survivors. Together, we can create a world where survivors are believed and supported, and receive the justice they deserve.

COMMON BELIEF

THE FACTS

FALSE RAPE ACCUSATIONS ARE COMMON.

False rape accusations are rare— only 2% - 6%, and similar to false reports of other crimes (Lisak et al., 2010). In fact, the majority of rape and sexual violence survivors never report the crime to law enforcement.

“REAL” RAPE IS A STRANGER JUMPING OUT OF THE BUSHES AT NIGHT.

Most rape is perpetrated by someone known to the survivor. Over 75% of rapes are committed by an acquaintance, friend, or family member, and over half occur at or near the survivor's home (DOJ, 2013; DOJ, 2017).

IF THEY DON'T FIGHT BACK, IT WASN'T RAPE.

Research shows it is normal for survivors to experience a temporary paralysis during the assault, so few rape survivors fight back (Möller et al., 2017). Freezing is a common response and survival mechanism in the face of sexual assault.

IF THEY WAITED TO REPORT, THEY MUST NOT HAVE BEEN RAPED.

Most survivors never report their rape to authorities. Two-thirds (66%) of rapes are never reported to law enforcement and reporting often happens many years after the crime because of the stigma and fear of retaliation survivors face (Klemmer et al., 2021; Tavarez, 2021).

IF THEY CAN'T REMEMBER THE DETAILS, THEY MUST NOT HAVE BEEN RAPED.

Disassociation is a common response to traumatic events like rape and often causes central memories of the trauma or the order of events to become inaccessible to the person who experienced it (Torkin Manes, 2019).

THE SURVIVOR IS PARTIALLY TO BLAME FOR THEIR RAPE.

Rape is a felony, the only one we commonly blame on the survivor. Wearing revealing clothing or getting drunk does not justify perpetration of a crime. The rapist is solely and wholly responsible for their criminal behavior.

IF THEY DIDN'T SAY “NO,” IT WASN'T RAPE.

Consensual sex requires consent, not the absence of protest. If someone seems unsure, stays quiet, moves away, or freezes, they are not agreeing to sexual activity. Consent must be clear and affirmative.

“REAL” SURVIVORS DON'T CONTACT THEIR RAPIST AFTER THE RAPE.

Many survivors are in contact with their rapist after the crime— because they are family members, to avoid additional violence, or as a way to help make sense of what happened.

MANY MEN ARE RAPISTS.

While almost all rapes are committed by men (98%), just a small number of serial rapists are driving the problem (6% of men commit 91% of sexual violence) (DOJ, 2002; Lisak, 2002).

MEN CAN'T BE RAPED.

In the US, 1 in 6 men are raped (Dube et al., 2005). Men are far more likely to be a survivor of sexual assault than a perpetrator of sexual assault.