

## Some further examples of rape myths\*

### - Rape is a crime of passion

#### Implications:

- assumes that rape is impulsive and unplanned;
- assumes men to be incapable of delaying gratification or controlling sexual urges;
- assumes that rape is about uncontrollable lust;
- attempts to excuse, minimise and romanticise rape;
- assumes that only 'attractive' women are raped;
- disregards elements of power, aggression, violence, control and humiliation in rape; and
- attempts to remove the responsibility for the rape from the rapist.

#### Facts:

- research and evidence from rapists themselves suggests that most rapes are premeditated and planned;
- many rapists fail to get an erection or ejaculate;
- interviews with rapists reveal that they rape to feel powerful and in control, not for sexual pleasure;
- there is no typical victim of rape. Girls and boys and women and men of all ages can be victims; and
- many rapists are involved in sexually satisfying relationships with their partners at the time of the rape.

### - You can tell if she's 'really' been raped by how she acts

#### Implications:

- disbelieves and re-traumatises the victim;
- invalidates the victims experience and individuality; and
- discourages her or him from seeking help.

#### Facts:

- reactions to rape are highly varied and individual; and
- many women experience a form of shock after a rape that leaves them emotionally numb or flat - and apparently calm. Male victims can exhibit a similar reaction.

### - Prostitutes cannot be raped

#### Implications:

- further disempowers sex workers; and
- provides an excuse for abuse

**Facts:**

- prostitutes have the same rights with regards to consent as anyone else: the transactions they negotiate with clients are for consensual activities, not rape. The law does not distinguish between prostitutes who are raped and victims who are not prostitutes.

**- If the victim didn't complain immediately it wasn't rape**

**Implications:**

- disbelieves and re-traumatizes the victim;
- invalidates the experience of the victim; and
- discourages her or him from seeking help.

**Facts:**

- the trauma of rape can cause feelings of embarrassment, shame and guilt which might inhibit a victim from making a complaint. There are many other reasons for delayed reporting, too. For example, a victim might delay because she or he may seek support from someone she trusts such as a friend or family member before reporting.

\*This text has been slightly revised and is taken from the Crown Prosecution Service web site:  
[http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p\\_to\\_r/rape\\_and\\_sexual\\_offences/societal\\_myths/#a01](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/rape_and_sexual_offences/societal_myths/#a01)



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