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*