

A LINE ON LIFE

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What Do You Know About Rape? *

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Do you think you know about sexual assault (rape)? Or do you believe some of the myths about rape? To find out, answer the true-false questions below.

1. Only women are raped.
2. Women asked to be sexually assaulted by the type of clothing they wear and by the way they act.
3. The most common sexual assault situation involves a stranger attacking a lone woman in a deserted area, such as a parking lot or alley.
4. If women stayed at home, they would not be raped.
5. Most rapes involve an assailant and victim of the same race.
6. Most rapists are psychopaths with uncontrollable sexual urges.
7. Most women secretly want to be raped.
8. If a woman is legally drunk when she has sexual intercourse, the man can be charged with rape.
9. Women often mean "yes" or "maybe" when they say "no" to sexual intercourse.
10. Very few women falsely accuse a man of rape.

Now compare your responses to the answers below.

1. **False.** Even though the overwhelming majority of sexual assaults are committed by men against women, men have also been victims. Men are very unlikely to report their situation, because they think it would threaten their masculine image to do so. Also, others are more likely to see men as willing participants than as victims.
2. **False.** This myth makes some women feel "safe." If they do not dress or act in the designated manner, they will not be at risk. Rather than specific attire or actions, rapists merely look for a *vulnerable* victim. Many victims are young children or elderly women. This myth also provides men with an excuse for forcing a woman to have sex. Some men justify their actions by saying, "She was asking for it."
3. **False.** Rape is most likely to happen between people who know each other, in the daytime hours, and in the victim's home. This type is often called "acquaintance rape" or "date rape."
4. **False.** Between 55-65% of all rapes occur in the woman's home, with a car being the next most likely location.

5. **True.** From FBI statistics, almost 75% of all sexual assaults are among members of the same race.

6. **False.** Among convicted rapists, 60% are married or have regular sex partners. Rather than seeking sexual satisfaction, their motives are aggression and dominance. In one study of 1300 convicted rapists, very few were diagnosed as mentally or emotionally ill.

7. **False.** Even if women fantasize about being raped, they are in complete control of their fantasies. In an actual rape, she is terrified and fears for her life. Because she has no control, rape is definitely not enjoyable.

8. **True.** Women who are intoxicated cannot legally consent to engage in sex. They are incapacitated. You might want to remember this, if you try to get your partner drunk in order to have sex.

9. **False.** Even though some women may have mixed feelings, no always means no. Some women hesitate to refuse or give conflicting indications, because they don't want to be rejected. Women need to communicate their refusal clearly, and men need to hear and follow their request. Even if a woman has consented to sex, she still has the right to change her mind at any time. If her partner really cares about her, he will respect her wishes. (This even includes husbands.)

10. **True.** As with other violent crimes, false allegations are in the vast minority of cases. In contrast to the rarity of false accusations, many women are fearful or reluctant to press charges against an actual rapist, especially in the case of date rape.

No matter how you scored on this test, you may want to learn more about rape and other types of coercive sex. To learn more about this topic and sexuality as a whole, you can take the [Human Sexuality, Psy/Soc 170](#) course taught each semester at Arizona Western College. The course is team-taught by Mrs. Gay Thrower and myself. We take a straightforward approach to all aspects of sexuality and provide an atmosphere for honest, thought-provoking discussion.



However, if you have been a victim and need more immediate help, there is still something you can do. Tell someone you can trust. In Yuma, we have Amberly's Place, named after a 9-year-old Arizona girl, who was raped and killed. Diane Umphress, Director of Victim Services, or trained volunteers are available on a 24-hour, 7 days a week basis at 928-[373-0849](#). Amberly's Place offers complete and compassionate "one-stop" victim services that empower victims and those close to them to deal with their trauma. The services involve a coordinated effort among physicians on call (some of them pediatricians), Child Protective Services, Adult Protective

Services, the Yuma Police Department, the Yuma Sheriff's Office and the Yuma County Attorney. The teamwork among these agencies means that you may get all the help you need within a few hours.

* Adapted from Diana Barthlow and Mary Haskett's "Increasing Student Awareness of the Impact of Sexual Assault," *The Psychology Teacher Network*, September/October, 1992, pages 9-11.