
FACTS ABOUT

RAPE



Challenging rape myths



A person in a light-colored jacket stands on a stone wall, looking out over a landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and blue. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a long shadow of the person onto the wall. The wall is made of rough-hewn stones and has a thatched roof structure above it.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides you with information to help you better understand the facts and challenge myths on rape. It also presents information about your rights and what to do in case you experience sexual violence.



What is rape?

Our definition of rape is broader than most conventional or legal definitions. We place rape within a continuum of sexual violence that can take many different forms, including sexual harassment, verbal abuse, leering, threats, exposure, being forced to watch pornography, unwanted touching, incest, penetration, mutilation, and ritual abuse.

Rape may also be defined as a process by which people feel that they do not have the right to say no and have their rights respected.

“ Rape is any form of
unwanted sexual
behaviour that is
imposed on someone ”

SOME EXAMPLES OF RAPE MAY INCLUDE:

- An adult relative using trickery and bribes to make a child participate in a sexual activity.
- A person manipulating a partner into having sex in order to 'keep the peace' or 'show love'.
- Sex as a 'a duty' or 'an entitlement'.
- Any sort of pressure or coercion to have sex.
- Sex expected after buying a person a drink or dinner.
- Sex when the person is intoxicated.
- A general practitioner convincing a person to undertake an intimate examination when it is unnecessary or inappropriate.

MYTHS & REALITIES

- Myths are widespread and serve to silence victims.
- Myths often affect a survivor's family and their ability to provide support.
- Survivors may not be believed, as their experience might not fit a legal definition of rape or they may not present as the stereotypical victim.
- Perpetrators lie deliberately to perpetuate the myths that allow rape to continue.

“ Myths serve to legitimize rape. The reality of a victim’s trauma is minimized and denied as these myths put the responsibility on the victim instead of the rapist ”

RAPE IS ABOUT CONTROL

- Rape often involves the use of power, manipulation or force to intimidate, humiliate, exploit, degrade or control another person.
- Rape has been used as a weapon in war, in racial violence and in everyday life.
- Rape diminishes a person's dignity and their human rights to safety, choice and consent.
- Rape is a crime and the responsibility always lies with those who commit it.

“ Rape is more about the abuse of power than about sexual attraction or the desire for sexual gratification ”

MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT RAPE

1

Rapists are
insane

- The "average" offender is likely to be viewed as a "normal" man who is expressing a commonly accepted male behavior which reflects a very low regard for women.
- Rapists are rarely classified clinically as insane or mentally ill.

2

A rapist is
easy to
identify

- Most men who commit acts of sexual violence look completely normal.
- They can be any age, race, culture, occupation or class. Powerful white middle class men are seldom prosecuted for perpetrating violence and therefore their actions are seldom publicized.
- Rapists are friends, relatives, neighbours or total strangers.
- There is no such thing as a particular "type of man" who rapes.

3

Rapists are always strangers

- Although many women are raped by strangers, overwhelmingly women are raped by someone they know. In fact, more than half of all rapes are committed by persons known to the survivor.
- It is always rape if the woman does not consent, no matter what her relationship with the man.
- Women are often raped in their own homes or the home of the perpetrator.

4

Men rape because they have uncontrollable sexual urges

- No sexual urge ever gives a man the right to rape a woman or child.
- Rape is an act of violence not sexual desire.
- Anyone, regardless of age, sex, physical appearance, marital status, ethnic, religious or socio-economic background can be raped.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is never an excuse for violence.
- Interviews with rapists reveal that they rape to feel powerful and in control, not for sexual pleasure.

5

Women
provoke
sexual
violence
by the
way they
act or
dress

- Women do not "provoke" men to rape.
- Dressing attractively is never an invitation for rape or harassment.
- Being vulnerable does not imply consent. If a woman is unable to give consent because she is drunk, drugged, or unconscious, it is rape.
- Women of all ages, classes, races, religions, sexualities, abilities and physical appearance or attributes, are raped.
- Only the rapist is responsible for the rape.

6

Women and
children lie
about
experiencing
sexual
violence

- Women are often too ashamed to tell anyone that they have been raped. They fear being blamed or fear not being believed at all.
- Most rapes are never reported to the police.
- The majority of women who are raped do not report because they are acutely aware of legal and societal attitudes that continue to oppress and re-traumatise women.

7

7

Women enjoy being raped

- Rape is a terrifying demonstration of the lack of control women have over their bodies and lives.
- Rapists use many manipulative techniques to intimidate and coerce women.
- Women who are sexually assaulted very often become physically paralyzed (frozen) with terror and are unable to move or fight.
- Rape does not always leave visible injury.
- Many women experience shock or dissasociation after a rape, that leaves them emotionally numb.

8

Women's liberation increases rape

- The women's movement has spread awareness about sexual violence in society and has empowered women to report rape, but is not responsible for actual increase in rates of rape.
- This myth is used to (again) blame women or victims for their rape.
- The responsibility lies solely with the perpetrator.

**For more information please follow this link:
<https://brissc.org.au/resources/facts-on-rape/>*



RAPE & THE LEGAL SYSTEM

- Under the law, rape and other forms of sexual assault are seen as "criminal acts".
- In court, the Government prosecutes the 'accused' rapist and the rape survivor is the chief witness for the prosecution.
- Law relating to sexual offences differs from state to state. In reporting sexual offences, the laws that apply are from the state in which the offence occurred.



RAPE IN QUEENSLAND'S LEGAL SYSTEM

In Queensland, rape and indecent assault are dealt with under sections 349 and 350 of Queensland Criminal Code 2000 (QCC). The criminal code defines rape as:

- Sexual intercourse without consent (in the QCC the expression "carnal knowledge" is used to describe the act of penetration in sexual intercourse - this includes anal intercourse).
- Penetration of a persons vulva, vagina or anus to any extent with a thing (for example, an object, like a stick or a bottle) or any body part (eg. a finger) without consent.

SEXUAL ASSAULT COUNSELLING NOTES PROTECTION (SACNP)

If you have been a victim of sexual assault in QLD you have the right to keep your counseling records protected and not made available during a court case. The court's permission is also required before issuing a subpoena* to obtain a copy of your counselling records.

According to the SACNP you do not have to consent to your counselling records being given to the police or a prosecutor and you are entitled to obtain independent legal advice about your rights.

To obtain free legal advice and representation, call the Counselling Notes Protect Service (CNP) at:

- Legal Aid Queensland on 1300 267 762 and,
- Women's Legal Service on 1800 957 957.

*A subpoena is a court order that requires someone to give documents to the court.

**Information extracted from Women's Legal Aid website: www.wlsq.org.au.



NON CONSENSUAL SHARING OF INTIMATE IMAGES

Revenge Porn is now a criminal offence in QLD. According to the Criminal Code (Non consensual sharing of intimate images) Amendment Bill 2018, people convicted of sharing intimate images could face a maximum penalty of three years jail.

The Bill also allows courts to make a rectification order, which means the images must be removed or deleted, and if they aren't a person could face a two-year jail term.

The offence is extended to photoshopped images, which include altered pictures to portray a person in an intimate way.

These laws apply to both sending, and threatening to send or distribute intimate material without consent.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT?

You will be faced with decisions like who to tell, how to cope, how to feel safe, whether to get medical attention, whether to tell police.

You may have someone close to you who can provide you with support or you may feel that you would like additional support.

It is important to remember that you have the right to deal with your own life, in your own way and at your own pace. There is no "right way" to deal with rape and incest.



YOUR RIGHTS

If you are raped, you have the right to be supported, and you have the right to:

- be safe
- be believed and NOT to be blamed
- be upset
- be silent
- speak
- be heard
- privacy and confidentiality
- information
- make your own decisions
- choose who to tell and not tell
- a sympathetic and gentle medical care
- be treated with respect
- NOT forgive the rapist
- report the crime to the police
- request a female medical practitioner or female police officer.

PLAN FOR THE CHALLENGING TIMES

When things get difficult you might like to try some of the following strategies:

- Think thoughts that ground you in the present.
- Make a list of things that help when you are not feeling well.
- Find a place in your home where you can feel safe.
- Take note of thoughts or events that trigger your feelings and protect yourself from these feelings.
- Breathe in and breathe out, as this will help to ground and ease physical anxiety.
- Racing heart, shivering or sweating may be normal bodily reactions when remembering a traumatic event, reassure yourself that these sensations will pass.
- Allow yourself to have the range of feelings that may surface for you.



FIND SUPPORT

You are entitled to support and to make your own decisions. It may help to have a network of people you trust to turn to.

You might feel that you can trust some of your friends and family to respond in a more sensitive way than others.

It is up to you to choose whom you tell and what you tell them.

If you want or need additional support, you can contact BRISSC and talk to a support worker.

FACTS ON RAPE



1 in 6

Australian women since the age of 15 had been sexually assaulted by a person they knew.

18% of women have experienced sexual violence (sexual assault and/or threats) since the age of 15.



*According to the Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, 2018. AIHW and the ABS 2017b.



Contact us

Support line: 07 3391 0004
admin@brissc.org.au
www.brissc.org.au

Service Locations:
Main Office
15 Morrissey St,
Woolloongabba.
QLD, 4102

BSwS
Corner of Old Progress
and Orchard Rd.,
Richlands. (Inala)
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5/1180 Sandgate Road
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