

Myths and Facts around sexual violence

Myths are thoughts and beliefs that some people think are real. Myths around Sexual violence and abuse can affect how survivors of abuse are treated by others including friends and family. This could have a huge impact on how survivors cope with their feelings and emotions afterwards. It can leave them feeling not believed, unable to trust and with feelings of shame and guilt.

MYTH	TRUTH
A child or young person can give consent to sex after drinking alcohol or taking drugs whatever their age	No they cannot. You are not able to consent at any age when drunk or drugged.
It is ok to have sex with your partner while they are asleep because they always consent to sex anyway.	No, it is not O.K., you must always make sure your partner consents to sex regardless of if you think they will say yes.
The child or young person kept seeing the abuser, did not try to escape or tell someone what was happening so they can't have been forced.	There are many reasons why children and young people may feel unable to escape or tell anyone, including fear of something they seem worse, such as threats against their family. A vulnerability, such as a disability or the age of the child. It could be due to dependency on the person exploiting them such as a parent or loved one. Failing to escape does not mean they are not being forced to do things they do not want.
Sex trafficking only happens in other countries	Sex Trafficking can occur anywhere at any age and can happen to males and females. You do not have to move countries to be trafficked. Moving from one town to another is trafficking. (link to what is trafficking)
Only attractive people get raped	This can happen to anyone of any age or gender

MYTH	TRUTH
Grooming is only carried out by men.	Women are known to be perpetrators of this crime too. They may use different grooming methods but are known to target both boys and girls.
You can only be raped by an adult	Young people can rape and abuse too. Sometimes young people are known to invite other young people to parties where they will then be introduced to other young people or adults and forced to perform sexual acts on young people and/or adults. Young people are also known to use 'sexting' as a way of communicating and distributing images.
You can only be abused if you are alone	This can happen regardless of who or how many people you are with
If someone doesn't say no to sex they must have consented	Just because someone doesn't say no does not mean they consented, some people can freeze when they are scared.
My boyfriend pays for all the bills, so I cannot say no to sex	If you are in a loving relationship then your boyfriend should respect you, your body, and your choice. If someone expects something in return for gifts, or things they do for you. Sex should not be a reward or payment. This is not a healthy relationship.
I had an orgasm so I must have consented or wanted it.	This is not true, the body can react to touching in the same way as when you are tickled. For example you may laugh but you don't want to be tickled. Also when you are in fear you can be more sensitive to touch. This is just a physical reaction not a choice, it does not mean you enjoyed it or wanted it.