

## **Myth Busting Mondays**

March 18, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 1

**Myth: Someone who was drinking or drunk when sexually assaulted is at least partially to blame.**

Fact: Sexual assault survivors are never responsible for the attack. Responsibility always lies with the offender.

March 25, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 2

**Myth: When sexual assault occurs it is usually committed by a stranger.**

Fact: In most cases of sexual assault the offender is known to the survivor (80-85% of cases).

April 1, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 3

**Myth: Sexual assault offenders are easily recognized**

Fact: Most sexual assault offenders appear to be normal. Most are married and young. They can be of any race, sexual orientation, colour, or economic class. In fact, 50% of offenders at the time of the assault are married or living common-law, have children, and are considered responsible members of the community

April 8, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 4

**Myth: Men cannot be sexually assaulted**

Fact: Men can be, and are, sexually assaulted every day. It can happen to any guy, regardless of his sexual orientation, size, strength, appearance, occupation, race or culture. It happens at

home, at work, in locker rooms and in cars — just about anywhere a perpetrator thinks he can get away with it.

Researchers have found that 1 in 6 men have experienced abusive sexual experiences before age 18. And this is probably a low estimate, since it doesn't include noncontact experiences, which can also have lasting negative effects.

April 15, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 5

**Myth: Men who experience child sexual abuse will grow up to become abusers themselves.**

Fact: Although premature sexual experiences often cause profound emotional damage to boys, most male survivors don't repeat the abuses that happened to them. In fact, statistics show that many men who commit sexual abuse or sexual assault actually suffered from something OTHER than child sexual abuse (most likely physical or emotional abuse or witnessing domestic violence) when they were young.

April 22, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 6

**Myth: Sexual assault happens because men can't control themselves.**

Facts: Sexual assault is an act of violence against another person where sex is the weapon. Sexual assault is a crime. We all have the ability to control our behaviours and actions.

For more information on the SAV Calgary collaborative and the "Don't Be That Guy" campaign please visit:

[www.savcalgary.ca](http://www.savcalgary.ca)

April 29, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 7

**Myth: Once a person starts to engage in a sexual activity, they cannot change their mind.**

Fact: Everyone has the right to have control over what happens to their body. They can choose with whom, when and for how long any activity takes place. No matter how far along, or even during sexual activities, a person can change their mind. A kiss is not a contract.

May 6, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 8

**Myth: Sexual assault is rare**

Fact: In Canada, 39% of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of sexual assault after the age of 16 (CPVAW, 1993). We also know that sexual assault is one of the most under reported crimes in Canada. Studies show that upwards of 85-90% of occurrences of sexual assault are not reported.

May 13, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 9

**Myth: Children do not need to know about child sexual abuse, and talking about it with them will only frighten them**

Fact: Numerous educational programs are available to teach young children about body safety skills and the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches. This knowledge can be empowering for children and research demonstrates that similar to other safety programs (i.e. fire drills, street safety) children are not more frightened after participating.

See the "Who Do You Tell?"<sup>TM</sup> section on CCASA's website for information on CCASA's child sexual abuse education, safety and empowerment program.

<http://www.calgarycasa.com/who-do-you-tell-wdyt/>

May 27, 2013

Myth Busting Monday #10

**Myth: Women who are sexually assaulted dress provocatively, or are out alone at night or use poor judgment. “Nice” women don’t get sexually assaulted**

FACT: All people are vulnerable to sexual assault. Anybody of any age, sex, class, race, religion, sexual identity, occupation or physical appearance can be sexually assaulted. Most women who are sexually assaulted are assaulted in their homes (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1994).

Holding this myth perpetuates victim blaming language and ideas. Responsibility for a sexual assault lies solely with the offender and the victim is in no way responsible for the crime committed against them.

June 3, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 11

**Myth: Child sexual abuse that is not physically violent does not result in harm to the child**

Fact: More than any physical injuries the victim sustains, the violation of trust that accompanies most sexual assaults has been shown to dramatically increase the level of trauma the victim suffers. Emotional and psychological injuries cause harm that can last much longer than physical wounds (Brown, n.d.; Perry, 2009).

Please stay tuned every Myth Busting Monday to dispel the myths and reveal the truths surrounding sexual violence.

June 17, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 12

**Myth – People with activity limitations (disabilities) are less likely to be sexually assaulted.**

Fact: People with activity limitations are more vulnerable in our society because they rely so heavily on other people. They have a much higher risk of being sexually abused – at least 2.4 times higher than the risk for people without activity limitations (Criminal Victimization and Health 2009)

June 24, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 13

**Myth: Children could just say ‘no’ and tell someone if they were being sexually abused**

Fact: Children do not usually feel empowered to say “no” to the person who is sexually abusing them or to tell. Children:

- Are told to keep it a secret.
- Are threatened.
- Are often in dependency relationships with the youth or adult who is abusing them.
- Are often taught to be unquestioningly obedient to older youths and adults.
- Believe in the myth of the dangerous stranger.
- Care about and want to protect the offender.
- Trust the youth and adults who care for them.
- Often don’t tell until at least 5 years have passed and many don’t until adulthood.
- Feel embarrassed or ashamed or confused.

(Brown, n.d.; CCASA, 2007; London, Bruck, Ceci & Shuman, 2005; Smith et al., 2000)

July 15, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 14

**Myth: Someone in a committed relationship (marriage, dating, common-law) cannot be assaulted by their partner**

FACT: Entering into a relationship does not give anyone the right or ownership of another person’s body. Even in a committed relationship there are still two separate individuals involved, and they each have the right to communicate “no”. Being in a committed relationship is no different than any kind of hook up, when it comes to consent. Therefore every time two people engage in sexual activities, consent must be obtained.

July 22, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 15

**Myth: It’s only sexual assault if the survivor was beaten and bleeding, or they were threatened with a weapon.**

FACT: According to the Criminal Code of Canada, sexual assault is any sexual activity without consent, regardless of whether there are physical injuries or a weapon used. According to one study, 86% of women who were sexually assaulted experienced little or no physical injury (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2004). Our Canadian Criminal Code was changed in 1983 to reflect the level of physical violence used during a sexual assault; level one sexual assaults are the most common.

July 29, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 16

**Myth: Teaching children the proper names for their body parts (aka genitals) will make them grow up too quickly or frighten them. Cutesy names are fine for young children.**

Fact: If children grow up learning nonsensical words to describe their genitals, confusion, shame and embarrassment are going to be associated with the proper names.

When teaching children the names for the parts of their bodies, don't create fictitious names for the their genitals (vagina and penis). Call them what they are (proper names) so children feel comfortable with who they are and can engage in dialogue with their parents about their bodies without shame or embarrassment.

August 12, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 17

**Myth: Only gay males are sexually assaulted.**

Fact: The incidence of sexual assault involving gay male victims is slightly higher than for heterosexual males, but this is largely due to the fact that gay men can become the target of anti-gay violence perpetuated by other men. Heterosexual males can be, and are, sexually assaulted in large numbers.

August 26, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 18

**Myth: Few boys are sexually abused**

Fact: Depending upon the definition used and the approach to data collection, 6 to 15 % of adult men report a history of child sexual abuse (Badgley, 1984; Briere, 1992; Finkelhor, 1994).

- Common attitudes about masculinity place an unrealistic expectation on boy children to protect themselves from people who sexually abuse children (Finkelhor, 1994, 2009).
- Homophobic attitudes and a lack of information about people who offend against children can make it more difficult for boy children to disclose abuse by males (Finkelhor, 1994; 2009).
- Attitudes about male heterosexuality and sexual development can contribute to boys not identifying or disclosing sexual abuse by adolescent or adult females (Finkelhor, 1994; 2009).

### September 9, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 19

**MYTH: If details of a story are changed, or someone waits to report a sexual assault, it means the person lied about having been sexually assaulted.**

FACT: Very few sexual-assault victims report the incident immediately, and details usually do get changed in the repeated telling.

### September 16, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 20

**Myth: Sexual Assault is a commonly falsely reported crime**

FACT: Most statistics show approximately 2% or less of sexual assaults reported as false reports

### September 23, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 21

Myth: Getting involved, speaking out and challenging myths surrounding sexual violence will not make a difference or cause change

Fact: The article below helps prove to us that this is false. It is because people got involved, challenged ideologies and spoke out against the frosh week chants at both SMU and UBC which

condoned the sexual assault of underage girls that positive action was taken by both schools to provide more education to young adults surrounding this issue.

The article below shows that the UBC Commerce Undergraduate Society is committing \$250,000 to provide sexual assault education.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2013/09/ubc-commerce-undergraduate-society-to-spend-250000-on-anti-rape-education/>

September 30, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 22

Myth: Children and adults often lie about being sexually abused or sexually assaulted.

Fact: In child abuse cases reported to Children's Services in 1998 only 4% of those cases were considered intentional 'false allegations'. Of those, the majority were related to neglect rather than sexual abuse, and most occurred within custody or access disputes (Vine, Trocmé, and Finlay, 2006). In sexual assault cases the statistics show a similar trend. It is recognized that 96-98% of all reported sexual assaults are legitimate claims and that false reports of this crime occur no more often than any other type of reported crime (<http://www.sexassault.ca/statistics.htm>).

To disclose an abuse requires trust as well as a profound hope that no judgment will be passed. How someone responds to a disclosure will have considerable impact on the person disclosing (child/adolescent/adult) as they move through the process of dealing with the abuse and toward eventual healing.

<http://metronews.ca/news/halifax/807558/sexual-assault-centre-launches-new-campaign-about-believing-victims-not-blaming-them/>

October 7, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 23

Myth: If the perpetrator is a woman, a boy or teenager should consider himself to have been "initiated" into the exciting world of sex.

Reality: No matter who provokes it — a relative, babysitter, teacher, boss or other woman in a position of power or authority over a young male — that kind of sexual experience is all about control and

domination, not gratification and pleasure. Premature or forced sex causes confusion, anger, depression and other major psychological problems. To be used as a sexual object by a more powerful person is always abusive and traumatizing.

October 21, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 24

Myth: Women can prevent their own sexual assault by simply not drinking to excess at parties and being "careful" of who they choose to hang around with.

Fact: Sexual Assault is a crime that can happen to anyone and it happens ONLY because of a choice made by the offenders of the crime.

In an article shown below the author states that by teaching our young females about not drinking too much we can help them to prevent their victimization from a sexual assault.

What people fail to realize is that past prevention tips such as the myth listed above do not address the root cause of the crime, and instead act as a technique that may or may not prevent a crime from occurring. In order to address the crime of sexual violence, we need to understand how and why people get messages that suggest they have the right to treat another person in a harmful way, and why they feel they have the right to exercise power and control; take ownership and decision making power over person and strip them of the fundamental human rights of safety and control over their own body.

We need to have the conversation surrounding treating people with respect and equality and if you see someone in a vulnerable position, to step up and be a friend and help them get home safely, not be an offender and take advantage of them when they cannot give consent (in the article below the girl was completely passed out from what the older boys gave her to drink. Someone who is passed out cannot consent).

Regardless of how much someone may or may not drink at a party, they do not deserve to be sexually assaulted. Maybe they deserve to have a hangover for drinking; get grounded for breaking some house rules by sneaking out; etc. but to have a group of boys sexually assault a person because she/he is passed out is simply sick and a crime. These people need to be judged not the young girl who simply made a very common adolescent choice of drinking under age and house rule rebellion.

Where is the accountability for the young men who purposely gave 100 proof alcohol to young girls with the goal of getting them drunk to sexually assault them? Where is the accountability for the young men who followed through with the sexual assault of two girls who were passed out? Where is the accountability for dumping the girls home leaving one on the lawn like garbage to freeze while they go away laughing and celebrating their conquest?

Let's rethink prevention and place responsibility for stopping the crime of sexual assault on the ones who are committing the crime and hurting people who cannot consent to the act in the first place.

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sexual violence.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/warning-girls-about-dangers-of-alcohol-is-not-shaming-them/story-fni0fhie-1226744059639>

October 28, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 25

Myth: Domestic and sexual violence doesn't happen as frequently in the LGBT communities.

Fact: Domestic and sexual violence victimization is often reported as higher in vulnerable communities due to isolation, fear, judgment, blame, negative stereotypes regarding their sexuality etc. resulting in barriers for individuals to access support services.

We need to create a culture where individuals in all communities are able to access support services and information and be free from the lived reality of violence.

<http://thefeministwire.com/2013/10/in-every-community-lgbt-domestic-violence/>

November 4, 2013

Myth Busting Monday # 26

Myth: Men do not have a role to play in ending sexual violence

Fact: Ending sexual violence is a community issue and we need all members of the community to engage in the conversation and get involved to create change.

Tune in to 90.9 FM - CJSW Calgary's Independent Radio tonight between 8:00-8:30 pm to hear CCASA Sexual Assault Educators Joe Campbell and Joe McGuire in an interview on the "Yeah What She Said" radio show talking about CCASA's new male leadership and empowerment program "ManEnough".

To listen live tonight please visit the link below:

<http://cjsw.com/listen/>

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