

# Rape culture, myths and it's impacts

## Rape Culture

- Common social beliefs, attitudes and morals normalise sexual violence, encourage people to associate sex with violence, and minimise the seriousness of sexual violence (Wright, 2015).
- Harmful sexual behaviour is accepted, justified and not challenged enough by society (Field, 2004).

## Rape Myths

- Rape myths are assumptions about harmful sexual behaviour, and people who experience harmful sexual behaviour.
- Rape myths reduce empathy for and even shift blame to the victim/survivor.
- Although these are myths and not facts, they are widely believed and accepted.

## Impacts

- Women especially are made to feel as though it is their responsibility to avoid being sexually assaulted and police their behaviour.
- Enforce the false belief that men cannot be victims of sexual violence, among other harmful beliefs.

# Rape myth examples

Myth: Harmful sexual behaviour is only committed by strangers.

**Fact: Three-quarters of people who experience sexual violence know the offender(s) before the incident occurs. Strangers are the offender(s) in only a quarter of sexual assaults (Morris, Reilly, Berry, & Ransom, 2003).**

Myth: It is common for people to lie about harmful sexual behaviour happening to them.

**Fact: Only 8% of sexual violence cases reported to police in NZ are false complaints - this is lower than many other crimes (Triggs, Mossman, Jordan, & Kingi, 2009).**

Myth: If someone gets sexually assaulted while intoxicated; walking alone at night; or wearing 'revealing clothing', it's their fault.

**Fact: It is NEVER the fault of the person who experiences sexual violence, it is always the fault of the person who has committed sexual violence and who has therefore done the harm.**

Myth: Alcohol causes harmful sexual behaviour.

**Fact: Harmful sexual behaviour is not caused by alcohol, but it does increase the likelihood of it happening. Alcohol and other drugs affect the brain in a way that reduces inhibitions, but this does not mean the responsibility of someone committing harmful sexual behaviour disappears.**

Myth: Harmful sexual behaviour cannot occur in a marriage/long term relationship.

**Fact: Harmful sexual behaviour can occur within marriage and/or relationships, no matter what age, gender or sexuality the people are in the relationship.**

Myth: Anyone who experienced child sexual abuse, will become a perpetrator of harmful sexual behaviour.

**Fact: The majority (99%) of child sexual abuse survivors do not have a sexual offence charge (Cutajar, Ogloff, Mullen, & Mann, 2012).**