

Myth: Women who are sexually assaulted by men become lesbians because they don't like the abuse and learn to hate all men.

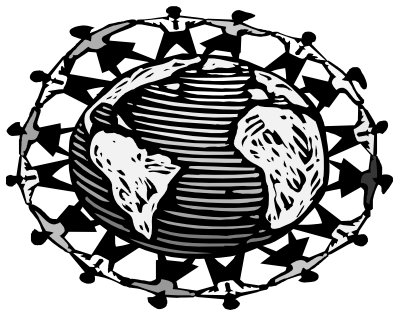
Fact: No one can "become a lesbian"; you either are or you are not one. Being a lesbian means having an intimate relationship with another woman. How lesbians view men varies, just as it does with the heterosexual population. If all women who were sexually assaulted by men "became" lesbians, there would be a lot more lesbians in the world.

Myths: Drugs and alcohol are often the reason that sexual assault occurs.

Fact: Drugs and alcohol are involved in many sexual assaults, but they are not the cause of sexual assault. They are just the excuse for it. Even in court, being high or drunk does not take the responsibility off the attacker.

Myth: Only young, attractive women are sexually assaulted.

Fact: Women of any race, age, class, religion, culture, sexual orientation, physical ability and lifestyles are potential sexual assault victims.



## About Avalon Sexual Assault Centre Who We Are

Avalon Centre is the only sexual assault centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We are a registered, not-for-profit, community based, charitable organization. The agency was established in 1983 and incorporated in 1984. We are a women-centred organization and provide a leadership role in ending all forms of sexual violence against women and children. We are committed to providing support programs, counseling, education, and advocacy for women affected by sexual violence. Our vision is to eliminate sexual violence, social injustice and other forms of oppression.

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support provided by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Community Services; Capital Health; and the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

All donations from the public are gratefully accepted. Tax receipts will be issued upon request. We are an Associated Member of the Metro United Way's Donor Option program.

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## Sexual Assault: Common Myths and the Real Facts

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## Common Myths and the Real Facts

Myths: Sexual assault is an act of sex, committed by sexually starved men.

Fact: Sexual assault is a crime of violence, committed by ordinary men; even by men you know.

Myths: Sexual assault usually occurs in a dark, isolated location, such as an alley or parking lot.

Fact: Most sexual assaults occur in someone's home or car.

Myth: Women say "NO", when they really mean "YES".

Fact: No means no. If a woman says no, and you continue to pressure, coerce or force her into any sexual act, IT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT. All women have the right to say no (and yes) and the right to have their decisions respected.



Myth: If a man spends money on dinner or drinks for a woman, then she owes him sex.

Fact: No one should ever feel they owe sex as a payment to someone else.

Myth: She didn't fight back or report it, so it was not sexual assault.

Fact: Lack of bruises or injury does not indicate a woman has not been sexually assaulted. Only 10% of sexual assaults are reported, and even less go to court.

Myth: Only women can be sexually assaulted.

Fact: Men can also be sexually assaulted. Approximately 10% of reported sexual assault cases are of males being assaulted, with the offender also being male.

Myth: Most girls who wear tight-fitting or skimpy clothing are willing to have sex with anyone.

Fact: People have the right to wear whatever they choose; this is not an invitation for sex, sexual assault or sexual harassment.

Myth: Most victims of sexual assault are at least partly responsible for the assault.

Fact: The victim is never to blame. The perpetrator is 100% at fault.

Myth: Women involved in the sex trade cannot be sexually assaulted.

Fact: Women who are prostitutes, exotic dancers, work in the pornography industry, along with all other women, are sexually assaulted when a sexual act is forced upon them.

Myth: If a woman has been with her partner for a couple of months, and they have fooled around a lot, but not had sex, her partner has the right to expect sex.

Fact: There is no time limit or deadline on how long a person or couple waits to have sex. They should mutually decide if and when the time is right for them.



Myth: A male who has been sexually assaulted by another male is gay.

Fact: Both straight and gay males can be assaulted by other men. Just because a male has been abused, it does not mean he is gay. 95% of abusers of both males and females are men.

Myth: Once a woman has said yes to sex, she is not allowed to change her mind.

Fact: Every person has the right to change her/his mind about having sex at any time.

Myth: If a man is sexually aroused when fooling around, he must have sex.

Fact: This is absolutely untrue! There are many situations in which males get sexually aroused but are not able to "get off." This is not an excuse to force someone to have sex with you.

Myth: Women really do like to be forced into having sex. They find it erotic.

Fact: It is never O.K. to force someone into having sex, even if they have fantasies about violence.