

DEBUNKING MYTHS

Myths about sexual violence are pervasive and harmful. It can make it more difficult for people who have experienced any form of sexual violence to get support .

Myths

Facts

People who experience sexual violence rarely know the person who chose to use sexual violence.

Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the person knows including friends, partners and acquaintances.

Sexual assaults and child sexual abuse are rare.

Sexual assaults and child sexual abuse are common. Forty-five percent of adult Albertans have experienced some type of sexual abuse in their lifetime. That's almost one in every two. (AASAS, 2019)

People lie about being sexual assaulted.

People rarely lie about being sexually assaulted. False reports of sexual assault only occur about 2-8% of the time, which is the same as false reporting rates for any other crime. People are generally more likely to lie about sexual assault to protect the person who chose to use sexual violence.

Women who are sexually assaulted "ask for it" in some way.

Regardless of the situation, no one asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted. Sexual assault *only* occurs because someone chooses to use sexually assault someone. The responsibility for sexual assaults always lies with the person who chose to use sexual violence.

A person's sexual history or personal choices can make them less credible.

There is no "perfect victim". No one asks to be sexually assaulted. Everyone deserves to be believed, regardless of any of their sexual history, personal choices or identity.

Sexual assault is a sexual act

Sexual Assault is not a sexual act. It is an act of violence which uses sex as a weapon. It is not motivated by sex or a lack of control. It is motivated by aggression and by the desire to exert power and control over someone else.

Sexual assault requires physical force and often results in physical injuries

Most sexual assaults do not involve physical force. People who choose to use sexual violence often use fear tactics such as verbal pressure, threats, tricks. Fear and trauma responses impact a person's ability to physically resist a sexual assault.