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**What is rape culture?**




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“...a complex set of beliefs that encourage sexual aggression and supports sexual violence. In a rape culture, social norms condone, normalize, and excuse sexual violence.

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*Includes jokes, TV, music, advertising, legal jargon, laws, words, and imagery that make violence against women and sexual coercion seem so normal that people view rape as inevitable*

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Desiree Dallagiacomo & FreeQuency  
"American Rape Culture"



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### 6 Social norms that support violence

1. Gender
2. Power
3. Violence
4. Masculinity
5. Privacy
6. Oppression



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## Gender

Limited roles, objectification, and oppression

### Girls/Women

- ◀ Sexualization of girls/women
- ◀ Women who don't buy into this paradigm are labeled
- ◀ Lower pay for women than men in comparable positions
- ◀ Expectation of what a "good woman" is
- ◀ Limited career opportunities for women
- ◀ Pressures for women to be primary care givers of children
- ◀ Others?

### Boys/Men

- ◀ Toxic masculinity
- ◀ Expectation to be strong, powerful, take control
- ◀ Hypersexual
- ◀ Lack of victimization visibility
- ◀ No threat or fear of violence hanging over their head
- ◀ Homophobia
- ◀ Others?




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## Power

Value placed on claiming and maintaining power (exerting power over another)

- ◀ We expect that someone is in charge
- ◀ Power is glamorized
- ◀ We place high value on power – think icons of power and how we idolize them
- ◀ Using power over another is expected from those "in charge" in all major institutions
  - ◀ Business/corporate culture
  - ◀ Government
  - ◀ Religion
- ◀ Others?




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## Violence

Tolerance of aggression and attribution of the blame on survivors

- ◀ Violence is seen as necessary to solve some problems
- ◀ "They brought it upon themselves"
- ◀ "The survivor should have known better"
- ◀ "I can't help it"
- ◀ Much entertainment focuses on violence – TV, movies, music, video games
- ◀ Others?




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PROPERTY OF IOWACASA  
DO NOT DUPLICATE



### Masculinity

Traditional constructs of manhood, including domination, control, and risk-taking

- History of male-only combat units
- Expectation is that a "real man" is not gay
- Someone who must be in charge – and it should be a man
- Males who do not buy into this paradigm are labeled
- Men are expected to be autonomous and in control
- Others?




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### Privacy

Notions of individual and family privacy that foster secrecy and silence

- "This is a family matter. I have no right to intervene"
- "A man's home is his castle"
- "You just don't talk about some things outside of your family"
- Family has an image to uphold in the community
- Loyalty to "family above all" is modeled in much entertainment
- Others?




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### Oppression

Rape is a way of maintaining systems of oppression

- Rape of enslaved people by slave owners
- Rape of prisoners in detention facilities
- Rape of Native American children in boarding schools
- Rape in internment camps; relocation camps by conquering forces
- Rape as a tool of war
- Rape as a tool to "cure" and humiliate LGBTQ people
- Rape of children because they are powerless and exist to serve adults




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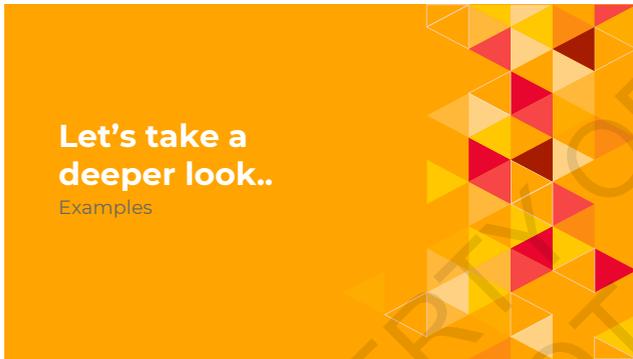
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**Ireland thong case**

- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/15/thong-protest-in-belfast-raises-concerns-over-trials>
- lawyer defending a man accused of rape suggesting the 17 year old victim was "open to meeting someone", "You have to look at the way she was dressed. She was wearing a thong with a lace front."




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### 30-day sentenced for rape of 14 year old girl

- A judge who sentenced only 30 days in jail to a 50-year-old man who raped a 14-year-old girl (who later committed suicide) <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/30/justice/montana-rape-30-day-sentence/>
  - When District Judge G. Todd Baugh imposed the sentence, he said the teen victim "seemed older than her chronological age."



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### "Legitimate Rape"

Politicians distinguishing "legitimate rape" and stating that rape is "something that God intended to happen,"

- U.S. Rep. Todd Akin's said that it was his understanding from doctors that it's rare for someone to become pregnant from rape. He said, "The female body has ways to try and shut that whole thing down."
- Republican candidate Richard Mourdock suggested that pregnancies resulting from rape are "something that God intended to happen," despite the "horrible situation" from which they derived.



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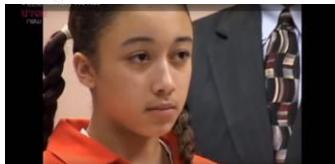
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### Cyntoia Brown

- Forced into sex-trafficking as a child
- At 16, was convicted of murdering a man in self-defense who bought her for sex
- Sentenced to life in prison with a mandated 51 years before eligible for parole consideration




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**Journalists who substitute the word "sex" for "rape" – as if they're the same thing.**



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### **Other examples**

- We make lists of "prevention tips" for women but fail to teach men not to rape.
- Lack of proper sex ed. Consent isn't discussed until college
- Mothers who blame girls for posting sexy selfies and leading their sons into sin, instead of talking with their sons about their responsibility for their own sexual expression



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### Other examples

- Every rape on TV is a stranger in the alley or a rich playboy who drugs you. Rarely the friend or intimate partner who pressures.
- Speaking out about being raped subsequently leads to receiving rape and death threats
- Supporting athletes who are charged with rape and calling their victims career-destroyers



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### “Why don't you just report your sexual assault?”

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# What is the impact of rape culture on all of us?



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# What is Sexual Assault?

- Rape
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault
- Incest
- Sexual Exploitation
- Exhibitionism/Voyeurism
- Marital Rape
- Molestation/Fondling
- Workplace Sexual Assault
- Sexual Harassment



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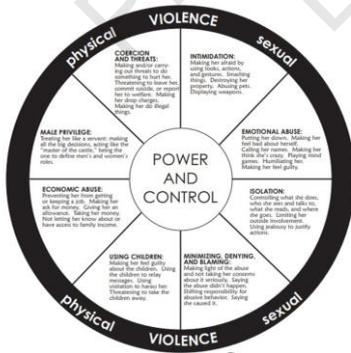
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**1 in 3**

Women experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime

**1 in 6**

Men experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime

**8 out of 10**

Cases of rape, the victim knew the perpetrator

**63%**

Of sexual assaults are not reported to police. Rape is the most under-reported crime



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**Common Cultural Misconceptions**

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“ *Rape is motivated by sexual gratification* ”

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“ *If victim doesn't fight back, it's not assault* ”

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“ *Victims will be battered, bruised, and hysterical* ”

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“ *People who commit sexual assaults are mentally ill, abnormal perverts* ”

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PROPERTY OF IOWACASA  
DO NOT DUPLICATE



*There's no reason for a victim not to report assault to law enforcement*

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*Most rapes are committed by strangers who attack women at night in alleys or other deserted places*

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*Victims asked to be sexually assaulted by the way they dress or how they behave*

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PROPERLY OF LOWACASA  
DO NOT DUPLICATE



*A victim who is sexually assaulted by someone of the same gender will become gay*

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*Substances and/or alcohol are often used by those that cause harm to justify sexual abuse*

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*Boys/Men can't be sexually assaulted*

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PROPERTY OF IOWACASA  
DO NOT DUPLICATE



*Women falsely accuse men of sexual assault or "cry rape"*

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*If a person is aroused during the assault, then it is not really sexual assault*

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### Why victims don't tell/report

- Fear
- Threats/retaliation
- Power dynamics
- Family beliefs
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Shame and embarrassment
- Previous victimization/experience
- Feelings of responsibility
- Protecting others
- Worried about causing more trouble for themselves
- Process is very re-traumatizing
- May not understand what happened to them
- Privacy/confidentiality
- Not wanting to be identified as a "victim"
- Lack of support or being believed
- Not ready to handle or come to terms with what happened
- Not being taken seriously
- Others?

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# Sexual assault is an event – not a condition.



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**3X**

More likely to suffer from **depression**



**6X**

More likely to suffer from **PTSD**

**13X**

More likely to **abuse alcohol**

**26X**

More likely to **abuse substances**

**4X**

More likely to **contemplate death by suicide**



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PROPERLY OF IOWACASA  
DO NOT DUPLICATE



### Impact of sexual assault

- Depression
- Flashbacks
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Self-harm
- Substance abuse
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Sleep disorders
- Suicide
- Dissociation
- Confusion




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### Impact of sexual assault

- Powerlessness
- Shock
- Fears and phobias
- Shame
- Guilt
- Anger
- Grief and loss
- Difficulties with relationships
- Isolation
- Hypervigilance
- Difficulties with self-esteem




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### Responsibilities of the Service Provider

- Examine your own attitudes about sexual assault
- Explore your own histories and fears; seek support if needed
- Be informed about the trauma and the effects of sexual assault
- Be aware of the inclination to impose your views on the client's feelings and/or experiences




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### What creates obstacles to support?

- Belief in hierarchy of abuse
- Belief in a 'normal' response to trauma
- Victim blaming/judging
- Rescuing
- Disbelief
- Inability to witness great pain




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### What creates support?

- Belief
- Validation
- Support choices
- No judgments

#### BASER Model

Believe – Affirm – Support – Empower – Refer/Resources




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**Thank you!**

**Questions?**  
**Comments?**

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PROPERTY OF IOWACASA  
DO NOT DUPLICATE