Myth: Sexual assault doesn’t really occur that often on college campuses.

Fact: Since the 1980s, the rate has remained much the same (Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski, 1987): one in four college women report being a victim of a rape or an attempted rape at some point in their lifetime (Fisher, Cullen and Turner, 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2006). One in 33 men have reported the same (rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence).

Myth: Sexual assault is usually a misunderstanding.

Fact: Psychologist David Lisek studied more than 2,000 college men over a 20-year period, and found that one in 16 reported having either used force to gain sex or had relations with someone who did not want to. He also discovered that nine out of every 10 rapes on college campuses are committed by repeat offenders. And, those most likely to be the victims were first year college students. Remember, victims are not at fault.

Myth: If I wouldn’t have dressed so provocatively, I wouldn’t have been raped.

Fact: The manner of dress has nothing to do with the reasons rapists seek out their victims and no studies prove this. No matter what the attire, no one deserves to be sexually assaulted.

Myth: If I don’t fight back, I can’t claim I was raped.

Fact: Most rapes occur because someone threatened or coerced the victim, or the victim was incapacitated (i.e. under the influence of drugs/alcohol or lack the emotional capacity to consent) and unable to react. A victim may be so shocked by what is occurring that they are often frozen with fear and cannot react. If the victim does not consent or withdraws consent during the act, and the aggressor does not stop, that is rape. The victim is not at fault.

Myth: Victims lie about rape because they made a bad decision and need to cover that up.

Fact: Only about 2-10 percent of all reports, about the same as other crimes, are false reports (nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Overview_False-Reporting.pdf). Actually, more than 60 percent of all sexual assaults are never reported (rainn.org/statistics).

Myth: If I don’t report my rape to the police or to the Title IX Coordinator, then it must not have happened.

Fact: There are many reasons victims are not ready to report a sexual assault incident to authorities. That is why the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act requires all victims to have access to a confidential advisor and confidential resources. The Confidential Advisor helps advocate for the victim, provides services and outlines available resources both on-campus and off-campus. At NIU students contact Counseling and Consultation Services (niu.edu/counseling, Campus Life Building 200, 815-753-1206).

Myth: If I wouldn’t have been intoxicated, I wouldn’t have been raped.

Fact: While alcohol is involved in 90 percent of acquaintance rapes per the Campus Safety magazine, this is no excuse to use force, coercion, threats, deception, abuse of authority or otherwise take sexual advantage of any individual. Rape is a crime and the victim is not at fault.

Get Help

Safe Passage
DeKalb County 24-hour Rape Crisis Center and Domestic Violence Shelter
(815) 756-5228

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-8255

Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance is a resource promoting equality, fairness, non-discrimination and compliance with employment and labor laws at NIU. For more information see our website at http://www.niu.edu/aaec/index.shtml or contact us at aaec_training@niu.edu.