

Sexual Assault FAQs

1. How often does sexual assault occur in the United States?

Every 107 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted.

2. How many perpetrators are actually punished?

According to the Rape Abuse & Incest National Network ([RAINN](#)), only two out of every 100 rapists will ever spend even a single day in prison. This is primarily due to the high number (68%) of unreported sexual assault. The remaining 98 will walk free, facing no consequences for the violent crime they have committed.

3. True or False: A large percentage of sexual assaults are falsely reported.

False. Only 2-8% of sexual assaults are falsely reported.

4. True or False: Sexual assault is a crime of passion and lust.

False. Sexual assault is a crime of violence. Perpetrators seek to dominate, control, humiliate, and/or punish their victims. Sexual gratification is often a secondary goal.

5. What is the difference between sexual assault and rape?

Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted/forced sexual contact when the victim does not or cannot consent. This includes any intentional sexual touching with an object or body part, coercing/forcing someone to touch another, exposing sexual body parts, peeping, sexting, posting explicit photos/videos online without the person's consent, etc. **Rape** is defined by the FBI as "Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."

6. True or False: Victims are usually raped by strangers.

False. A recent [CDC](#) report indicates that over 84% of rapes are committed by someone the victim knows (e.g. intimate partner, acquaintance, friend, etc.).

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

7. True or False: A woman who is drunk and/or high is asking to be sexually assaulted.

False. Being under the influence is not an invitation for unwanted sexual contact. Both women and men have the right to choose if, when, and with whom to engage in sexual activities.

NOTE: A person who is overly intoxicated (e.g. slurring, unable to walk without assistance, hearing/seeing things) is unable to consent to sexual activity.

8. True or False: Women provoke perpetrators by wearing revealing clothes and/or acting seductively.

False. Clothing choice and flirting have nothing to do with sexual assaults; after all, women have been assaulted while wearing a variety of clothing and engaging in a wide range of activities. Sexual assault is not about sex instead, perpetrators use sex as a tool to exert power and control over another person. As such, there is nothing a person can wear or do to provoke a sexual assault.

9. When a victim gets sexually aroused or has an orgasm during the assault, does it mean he/she enjoyed it?

No. The stress of a sexual assault can cause the body to respond in a sexual way. This reaction is automatic and does not mean the person enjoyed it. In fact, this biological reaction can make the assault even more traumatic for the survivor.

10. How do I know if I have my partners consent?

In this context, consent is communicated through words and/or actions that indicate all involved persons mutually agree to engage in sexual activity with each other. Consent is voluntary and may be rescinded at any time. It also requires that all parties have the capacity to give consent (e.g. of age, sober, etc.). To be clear, the absence of a “No” is not consent. You only have consent when a “Yes” is present. When in doubt, ask your partner!



For more information about sexual assault, available services, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities, please call the Sexual Assault Center hotline at **703.683.7273** or visit our website at: alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence



Department of Community
& Human Services