

rape & sexual assault prevention campaign

fact sheet



- An estimated one out of every eight adult women living in Maryland has been forcibly raped one or more times during her lifetime. (*Source: Rape in Maryland: A Report to the State, 2003*)



- This “One in Eight” figure is a **conservative estimate** that does not reflect the number of attempted rapes, alcohol or drug-facilitated rapes, incapacitation rapes or statutory rapes that have occurred in the State. Nor does it include male rape victims.



- **Rape and sexual assault are the crimes least often reported to law enforcement**, so the true prevalence of these crimes in Maryland is difficult to determine. It is generally accepted that between **70 and 90% of all rapes are never reported to authorities**.



- Violent sexual crimes take an **enormous personal and economic toll**. As many as 80% of sexual assault survivors will experience one or more of the following: post-traumatic stress disorder, drug abuse and addiction, alcoholism, promiscuity, depression, and suicidal thoughts.



- Nationally, the total economic cost in medical and mental health care and lost wages resulting from these crimes is estimated at **\$2.1 billion per year** (*AMA, 1995*).

- Rape and sexual assault are **crimes of violence** that stem from one person’s determination to humiliate or exercise power over another. Survivors of rape and sexual assault are **not responsible for the assault**.



- A statewide Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention media campaign is underway. The statewide media campaign has three goals: to increase awareness of the incidence of rape and sexual assault; to dispel myths and misperceptions about rape and sexual assault; and to publicize rape recovery services and resources available to survivors, since many are unaware of their existence.

- Rape recovery programs are located in each of the 24 jurisdictions throughout the State of Maryland. Survivors of sexual assault are encouraged to contact these resources. **No matter how long it’s been since the assault, it’s never too late to begin to heal.**

no matter what, without consent, it’s rape ■ most rapists are people you know ■ it’s never too late to begin to heal

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Common myths and misperceptions about rape and sexually violent crimes:

Myth 1: Most rapes are committed by strangers. In fact, research has shown nearly 90% of rapes are committed by **someone known to the victim**, including ex-husbands, boyfriends, other relatives, or acquaintances/dates.

Myth 2: The victim—rather than the assailant— is somehow to blame for the rape. This myth serves to reinforce feelings of embarrassment, shame, and/or guilt among rape survivors and discourages them from coming forward. **No matter what the circumstances, if one person has sex with another, without consent, it is rape.**

The following segments of the population are at risk since they may have been victimized in the past or because of their age: (*Resource: National and Maryland incidence data*)

- Females who have been raped—likely to be victimized more than once
- Females 19–24 years old—highest age segment at risk
- Females 16–18 years old—2nd highest age segment at risk
- Females 25–49 years old—3rd highest age segment at risk
- Males during adolescent years

As mentioned above, sexual assault victims are generally reluctant to come forward. The ordeal of **interacting with the police and completing a hospital exam** were perceived as two of the major barriers to reporting a rape. Other barriers include: feelings of shame or embarrassment, fear of retaliation, and fear of rejection by family members and friends.

The same factors that prevent a person who has been sexually assaulted from reporting a rape also prevent them from seeking treatment. These barriers include **denial, fear and embarrassment**.

For further information about the Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Program, call 410-767-4090.

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