

Rape- Culture

Many people have already begun the examination their own behaviors to prevent themselves from committing acts of sexual violence. It is also important to examine our attitudes—our own as well as those of our communities, societies, and cultures.

Here in the US, and in many parts of the world, the dominant culture's attitudes about gender, sex, and sexual assault make up what we call rape-supportive culture. Rape-supportive behaviors and attitudes contribute to the idea that sexual assault is not really a big problem. They imply to perpetrators that the crimes of sexual assault are natural, tolerable, expected, or encouraged, and they will probably be overlooked. Sexual assault prevention means changing our rape-supportive cultures. It means thinking about our own attitudes. It means having courage, taking the risk of feeling uncomfortable in speaking up when we see or hear other people participating in rape-supportive culture.

Here a few examples of the many components of Rape-Culture:

- ◆ Glorifying violence, whether it is through advertising, movies, books, magazines, TV shows, etc., or in real life.
- ◆ Believing that women are subordinate to men.
- ◆ Admiring people who assert control over other people.
- ◆ Believing that some people owe sex to other people (for example, when one partner pays for dinner on a date, the other person owes physical intimacy, or that husbands have the right to sex when they want it).
- ◆ Blaming victims of sexual assault (for example believing that the victim "asked for it" by behaving or dressing in certain ways).
- ◆ Acting as if sexual urges must be immediately gratified (the myth of blue balls).
- ◆ Teaching others that "real men" are dominant, powerful, and in control.
- ◆ Making jokes or comments that degrade women.
- ◆ Thinking that "real men" have no emotion but anger.
- ◆ Teaching that survivors should be ashamed that sexual assault happened to them, that they are somehow tainted.
- ◆ Disrespecting men who show emotion or who are not powerful.
- ◆ Assuming that people are incapable of understanding their own sexuality (for example, gay men just want to be women, lesbian women just need "good sex" with a man to convert them, and women need a men to show them how to have and enjoy sex).

There are many more examples than this. Think of some on your own.

Adapted from Minnesota State University, Women's Center

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If you or someone you know has been a victim of violence, contact:

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