

# Rape Culture

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In the U.S., the dominant cultural attitudes about gender, sex, and sexual assault contribute to rape culture. Rape-supportive behaviors and attitudes contribute to the idea that sexual assault is not really a big problem. They imply to perpetrators that sexual assault is natural, tolerable, expected, or encouraged, and it will be excused.

Sexual assault prevention means dismantling rape culture. 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 culture.

Some examples of components of rape culture include:

- 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 dominant.
- 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).

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