

# Rape and issues in the world today criminology essay



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Rape is a huge issue that plagues the world today. It is a worldwide issue, and is not specific to any one country. Rape also can impact anyone at any time. It is not specific to any one neighborhood, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or financial status. Rapes continue to happen frequently, and yet many are not reported to the police. Rape is widely thought to be the most underreported crime. There are many stigmas that go along with rape, so it makes it difficult to come forward. Also, it is sometimes difficult to prove rape when there are no physical signs. The victim may also fear being further victimized through the investigative process, so the crime is not reported.

Furthermore, with the easy availability of illegal drugs, date rape has become more commonplace. Although date rape can occur without drugs, many times people use illegal substances to render their victims powerless against their advances. This is one form of date rape. In these cases, the victims do not even know what happened to them, and if they were even raped. Some of the drugs can create loss of memory, so it makes it impossible for the victim to express what happened. There are many different drugs used for date rape. Some, like alcohol, are not illegal substances. However, many of the drugs used in date rape are illegal substances. Rape can leave the victim feeling powerless. Many victims experience rape trauma syndrome, which can severely impact their lives.

With the prevalence of rape in all communities, it is crucial for people to stay vigilant and aware of their surroundings. Although it is impossible to ensure complete security, there are ways to maintain safety. It is important for everyone to make their own drinks so that no one can slip any drugs into

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them. Also, a buddy system can be very beneficial to help everyone stay safe, and not end up a bad situation.

### Reasons Why Rape is Underreported

Rape is one of the most underreported crimes. The Uniform Crime Report is an annual report that “ includes offenses reported to law enforcement agencies at the city, county, and state levels” (Meadows, 2010, p. 5). This report details the offenses that are reported to the authorities. The National Crime Victimization Survey is a source of data that “ recognized incidents not reported to the police and includes a detailed report of crime incidents, victims involved, and trends affecting victims” (Meadows, 2010, p. 9). Both the Uniform Crime Report and the National Crime Victimization Survey include information about rape, yet they each report drastically different numbers. There are significantly more rapes reported in the National Crime Victimization Survey than in the Uniform Crime Report. It has been reported by the U. S. Department of Justice that only “ 31% of all rapes are reported to the authorities” (Arrigo, 2006, p. 108). This creates a problem in the criminal justice field because it is difficult to put a stop to rape when most people do not report their victimization.

There are many reasons why rape is underreported. The National Crime Victimization Survey found that “ the most common reason given by victims of violent crime (including rape) for not reporting a crime was that it was a private or personal matter” (Meadows, 2010, ps. 9-10). Other reasons why victims may not report rape include “ fear of reprisal, embarrassment, or the

belief that the victim may not be believed” (Meadows, 2010, p. 10). These issues all contribute to the underreporting of rape.

Rape is a profoundly different type of crime as the attacker is using their body as a weapon. Instead of merely stealing some personal item that can be replaced, the attacker takes something from the victim’s body and mind, which can never be replaced. This ordeal may only last a few minutes, but feels like hours to the victim as they wonder what will happen next. Also, it can last longer in cases of gang rapes. Once the event is finally over and the victim realizes they have survived, they may not want to talk about it with anyone, and especially not law enforcement officers and prosecutors.

Rape truly is the most personal of all crimes. Many people do not talk about sexual matters at all, so they are even less likely to discuss rape. If someone was raised in an environment where they did not talk about sexual things, they will be less likely to report a rape as an adult. It is difficult enough for the victim to get through the actual experience, and victims do not want to have to relive it several times with many different people. Unfortunately, that is the only way to bring justice to the attacker. If the victim comes forward about the attack, they will have to talk to the police at least once, talk to the prosecutor, and talk to the judge or jury depending on the type of case. It would not be as difficult if the victim only had to discuss the issue once, but they continually have to discuss it with different people, all of whom are strangers to them.

Rape can occur between a stranger and a victim, but “ many sexual assaults, however, occur between victims and offenders who know each other”

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(Meadows, 2010, p. 98). This leads the victim to fear retaliation if they do report the attack. Many rapists may even threaten the victim to prevent them from going to the police. Victims take these threats seriously because the attacker has already shown their violent nature, so they may be capable of much worse. In the case of date rape, the attacker may know where the victim lives and works, and this makes their threats more dangerous because they know how to find the victim. A survey of college women showed that “ 38% reported sexual victimization that met the legal definition of rape or attempted rape, yet only 1 in 25, or 4% reported the incident to the police” (Arrigo, 2006, p. 109). This is just a small illustration of how many rapes go unreported, and how many rapists are free to rape again.

Rape victims also have to fear the embarrassment that a rape case can bring. When someone does report a rape and it goes to court, the defense may try to prove it was consensual, or that the victim “ wanted it.” Also, the police officers may ask questions that appear to blame the victim. Although there are laws protecting rape victims to a certain extent, there is still embarrassment that goes along with reporting a rape. Many date rape victims “ are reluctant to report the act for fear that their own behavior will be scrutinized by others” (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). This may be because “ many of the victims of date rape had been drinking or otherwise involved in some type of festivity when the rape occurred” (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). Because of their partying, victims may not want to come forward. This also brings embarrassment into their family. If the rape is reported to the police, the family will find out eventually, and the victim may not want them to know. They may want to protect their family, or are simply too embarrassed

about the attack. They may not want their parents to know the terrible thing that was done to them. They also may feel partially responsible because they had too much to drink. Ultimately, they do not want to have to talk to complete strangers about what someone did to their own body.

Rape is also underreported because victims fear they will not be believed. Many rape cases end up being “he said, she said” because there is no physical evidence. If there are no bruises or cuts on the victim, it is difficult to prove rape. The emergency room doctor can do a rape kit shortly after the attack to see if there is any evidence. However, even if bodily fluids are found on the victim, that only proves that there was a sexual encounter, it does not prove whether or not it was a consensual act. Many rapists may use verbal threats to get the victim to comply, so there may be no physical marks or bruising. Some women fight back, but others do not because of fear. Rapists may have a weapon they threaten the victims with, so it may be smarter not to fight back in that case. However, this makes it difficult to prosecute. If victims know that there are no bruises or cuts on their body, and it will be difficult to win a case, they may not even report it.

Some victims may not report rapes because they do not trust the police. This is especially seen in certain cultures that exhibit a distrust of law enforcement. This may be for many reasons. They may have grown up in a low-income environment where many people participated in illegal activities. They also may have had negative personal experiences with police officers. Also, if they are in the country illegally, they are less likely to report a crime. They may also have a friend or family member who was arrested, and that makes them dislike the police as well.

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It can also be difficult for victims to come forward regarding sexual assault due to the large percentage of male law enforcement officers. When someone reports a rape, they are asked extremely precise and intimate questions about what exactly the attacker did to them. They have to give details about the encounter that may be difficult to talk about, and it is even worse when the victim is female, and has to discuss it with a male. Although males can be victims of sexual assault, many victims are females, and they have to talk to male officers about their sexual assault. It is uncomfortable for many people to talk to a stranger about anything sexual, so to discuss a sexual assault is even worse. This is made even more challenging as officers can sometimes seem to be uncaring. The officer's job is to collect the information about the crime. They are not responsible for consoling the victim, so they may come across as being abrupt or unsympathetic. This only causes the victim more pain as they have to discuss the assault and feel like they are not getting any sympathy.

These are only a few of the reasons why rape is underreported. Victims have their own reasons for not reporting rapes, including fear of embarrassment, fear of retaliation, and the fear that they will not be believed. They also may not want to discuss this due to the personal nature of the crime. Victims may just want to move on with their lives and act like the assault never happened.

What is date rape?

There are many different types of rape. One type is called stranger rape. This is when a complete stranger rapes someone. These rapists often use

weapons and threats of violence to gain the victim's submission (Arrigo, 2006). However, the most common type of rape is called date rape. This occurs when someone is raped by a person they know. They may be on a date with this person, or be socializing with them at a party. This is extremely common, and often happens on college campuses. Date rape can also include when the assailant uses some type of drugs to make the victim powerless against the attack.

Most rapes occur between victims and attackers who are known to each other. In fact, "among victims 18-29 years old, two-thirds had a prior relationship with the rapist" (Meadows, 2010, p. 97). Many rapists attack ex-girlfriends, casual acquaintances, or people they are currently dating. These rapes are especially difficult as the attacker is someone the victim knows and trusts. The victim may even have to see the rapist around town if they decide not to report the rape.

In addition, "studies on college campuses have indicated that date rape is increasing" (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). An alarming survey shows that "more than half of a representative sample of more than 1,000 female students at a large urban university had experienced some form of unwanted sex" (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). Of these reported acts, twelve percent were done by casual dates, while 43 percent were done by steady dating partners (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). One study found that "many women raped by men they know do not think of themselves as rape victims" (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). Perhaps they think the rape was simply a misunderstanding. Still another study shows that date rape primarily occurs when "the date was unplanned or the woman had been picked up in a social setting (Meadows, <https://assignbuster.com/rape-and-issues-in-the-world-today-criminology-essay/>



2010, p. 98). Further studies have shown that “ 1 in 4 college women . . . [have] been raped or [have] suffered an attempted rape” (Arrigo, 2006, p. 109). These studies show the frequency of date rape occurring on college campuses.

Many researchers have attempted to determine why date rape is so prevalent on college campuses. Mary P. Koss is considered to be “ one of the most prolific researchers on rape” (Schmalleger, 2009, p. 403). Koss conducted much research on college campuses, and found that “ 73% of the rape victims reported that the offender was drinking” (Schmalleger, 2009, p. 403). Some researchers point to the college lifestyle as the reason why date rape is so common. Fraternities can “ contribute to the formation of attitudes that and behaviors that objectify women and normalize sexual coercion” (Schmalleger, 2009, p. 403). Fraternity parties have a long history of underage drinking and random sexual acts. This is a problem when the sexual acts are not consensual. Furthermore, fraternities are about brotherhood, and this creates “ a preoccupation with loyalty, group protection and security, use of alcohol as a weapon, involvement in violence and physical force, and an emphasis on competitiveness and superiority” (Schmalleger, 2009, p. 403). This brotherhood mentality makes it difficult for anyone to come forward if they witness anything inappropriate. Even if a victim comes forward, the attacker’s entire fraternity house may come to his defense, making it difficult to win a criminal case.

Date rape is far too common amongst young people today. Victims do not typically come forward to report what happened, which leaves the rapist able to do the same thing to yet another victim. The partying lifestyle found at <https://assignbuster.com/rape-and-issues-in-the-world-today-criminology-essay/>

some colleges contributes to the rape problem. Parties can end up being a place where drunken men force themselves upon others, who are unable to resist. The victim is left feeling helpless and afraid, and in some cases may not even know what happened.

### Drugs Used in Date Rape

Sometimes rapists use drugs to make their victim drowsy or unable to fight back. There are many different types of drugs used in this way. Rohypnol, gamma hydroxybutyric acid (more commonly known as GHB), and ketamine are just a few date rape drugs that may be slipped into an unwilling participant's drink. These drugs are used for date rape because they “produce prolonged sedation, a feeling of well-being, and short-term memory loss” (Meadows, 2010, p. 98). In addition, many drugs on the market “have no particular color, smell, or taste,” which makes it easy to add to a victim's drink without anyone knowing (Meadows, 2010, p. 99). Because these drugs can create short-term memory loss, the victim may not even know if they were raped or not.

Rohypnol is a drug prescribed for insomnia, and is also used as preoperative anesthetic (Meadows, 2010). It also has medical uses as a muscle relaxant, hypnotic, anti-convulsant, sedative, and anti-anxiety medication (Schmallegger, 2009). Rohypnol is the trade name for flunitrazepam. It is a benzodiazepine, and is a central nervous system depressant. Rohypnol can “incapacitate victims and prevent them from resisting sexual assault” (Meadows, 2010, p. 99). It also can create anterograde amnesia, which makes the victim not remember anything that happened while under the

influence of the drug. The effects of Rohypnol can be felt within about thirty minutes of ingesting the drug (Weiss, 2008). The effects of Rohypnol can last from one to eight hours (Schmallegger, 2009). This can make the entire night a blur, and the victim may not remember anything about the night. A further danger of Rohypnol is that it can be lethal when it is mixed with alcoholic beverages or other depressants. This could cause a date rape to turn into a murder. This drug is not approved for use in the United States. However, the drug became more commonplace in the 1990s for date rape purposes, and became known as a roofie (Meadows, 2010).

Gamma hydroxybutyric acid is another central nervous system depressant. GHB, also called Liquid X, has been used since the 1990s in the United States for its “ euphoric, sedative, and anabolic (body-building) effects” (Meadows, 2010, p. 100). This drug was actually sold in health food stores in the 1980s and the early 1990s (Meadows, 2010). Like Rohypnol, GHB can have negative effects if taken with alcoholic beverages. It can cause breathing problems and nausea (Meadows, 2010). GHB can take effect within fifteen minutes of being drugged (Weiss, 2008). The effects of GHB can last between three and six hours (Meadows 2010). Some of the effects of GHB use are “ slurred speech, disorientation, drunken behavior without odor of alcohol, [and] impaired memory of events” (Schmallegger, 2009, p. 540). Also, a study was conducted with 17 GHB users being interviewed about their drug use. This study found that while on the drug, 65% of users had an increased sexual desire, and 47% had decreased sexual inhibitions (Lee & Levounis, 2008). Some of the subjects even mentioned that GHB could “ cause poor decision making in sexual situations” (Lee & Levounis, 2008, p.

245). This further illustrates why assailants would use this drug. If the victim is given too much GHB, the effects of overdose include “ shallow respiration, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak and rapid pulse, coma, and possible death” (Schmallegger, 2009, p. 540). This drug can be very dangerous.

Ketamine, also known as Special K, is another date rape drug. Ketamine is used in the United States as an anesthetic, and is predominantly used on animals in veterinary offices (Justice. com, 2011). According to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, “ recent press reports indicate that a significant number of veterinary clinics are being robbed specifically for their ketamine stock” (Justice. com, 2011). Thieves are stealing the ketamine and selling it as a drug to party-goers. It can come in a clear liquid form, so it is very easy to slip into drinks undetected. This drug is often used as a club drug, so it is easily accessible to students who may be planning a date rape. Some of the effects of ketamine are “ delirium, amnesia, depression, and long-term memory and cognitive difficulties” (Justice. com, 2011). This drug, like GHB and Rohypnol, leaves the victim unsure of what has taken place. The effects of ketamine can be felt almost immediately (Weiss, 2008). Also, the victim may be aware of what is taking place, but unable to stop it (Weiss, 2008).

One date rape drug that is commonly used at parties is alcohol. According to the National Women’s Health Information Center, “ any drug that can affect judgment and behavior can put a person at risk for unwanted or risky sexual activity” (Weiss, 2008). This definition includes alcohol. Even though the victim may be willingly ingesting the alcohol, someone may take advantage of them once they are drunk. Alcohol can make it difficult to think clearly, <https://assignbuster.com/rape-and-issues-in-the-world-today-criminology-essay/>

harder to tell if a situation is dangerous, and harder to fight back if attacked (Weiss, 2008). Also, like the other date rape drugs, alcohol can cause memory loss, or a black out (Weiss, 2008). The victim may black out and be raped, and not remember what happened the next day.

One common effect of date rape drugs is their ability to inhibit the victim's memory. These drugs cause short-term memory loss so the victim is unsure if they were raped. This makes it less likely that the victim will report the incident to the police. In fact, the victim may not even realize they were drugged at all. If the victim was drinking the night before, it is possible they will think they simply had too much to drink. This further illustrates why date rape is drastically underreported.

#### What Happens in the Emergency Room?

After someone is raped, they may need medical attention. Most often they visit their local emergency room for treatment. It is estimated that “ 75% of female rape victims require medical attention after their attack” (Arrigo, 2006, p. 109). Although different areas and hospitals may have different procedures for handling a rape victim, typically the process is similar. The medical staff will call law enforcement to make a police report, will call the local rape crisis group, will call the Division of Family and Children Services if a minor is involved, and will perform a full examination of the victim.

When the police officer arrives to take a report of the alleged rape, they must speak to the victim. They will ask the victim to recall everything that happened in the attack. If the area has a local rape crisis advocacy group, there may be a victim's advocate there to help the victim with this process.  
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In an ideal situation, the victim can explain to the officer, victim's advocate, and medical staff what took place at the same time so they do not have to repeat themselves. However, many times all parties are not present at the same time, and the victim is forced to relive the event multiple times. The victim must give details about the location of the attack, and what the attacker did specifically. They must tell exactly where the attacker touched them, and where the attacker kissed them. All of this information is crucial for the evidence collection process. Once the police officer has made the report, they will leave.

The victim will undergo a thorough medical examination to ensure there are no health concerns. Depending on the nature of the attack, the victim may have a pregnancy test done. Charlotte Murton, a rape crisis specialist, noted that it is also common for the medical staff to check for gonorrhea and Chlamydia (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). The victims must follow up with their personal doctor or local health department to have a more complete sexually transmitted disease screen at a later time. Most victims are also given antibiotics to ward off possible infection. The medical staff will also check for any tearing or irritation in the areas of the attack.

When the victim goes to the emergency room, they may have the option to do a rape kit or evidence kit. If the assault happened within 120 hours of the emergency room visit, the medical staff can do the evidence kit (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). This will help collect evidence for a possible trial if the victim decides to press charges. This

process is extremely invasive and can even be painful, but it is the only way  
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to collect certain evidence. Typically a rape crisis advocate will stay with the victim throughout the entire process. The process for collecting evidence in Augusta, Georgia is very specific, although the order may be changed. First, the victim must stand on a large piece of paper and undress. The paper is there to collect any loose fibers as the victim undresses. The victim's clothes will then be bagged up separately in case there is evidence on the clothes (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). All of the clothes, including underwear, will be kept as evidence. Once the victim is undressed, the medical staff will do a visual inspection to see if there are any obvious injuries. If so, these injuries will be documented and photographed. Then the victim will have to give 25 hairs from their head (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). This serves to show the DNA of the victim. Any areas the victim was licked or kissed will be swabbed for possible DNA. There also may be a swab of the victim's mouth if there was any type of oral contact.

The victim will then lie down with a large piece of paper below them to catch any loose hairs or fibers. The nurse will use a comb on the victim's pubic hair to gather any loose hairs that may be from the attacker (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). The nurse must then use a special comb that rips out hair to gather 25 of the victim's pubic hairs from the root (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). This process is especially painful. The nurse will also use a black light to see if there are any fluids that fluoresce. If something does show up, that area will be swabbed (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, September 17, 2010). If the victim fought against the attacker, the nurse will

clean under the victim's nails to get possible debris. The nurse will also swab the victim's vagina, anus, or penis depending on the nature of the attack (Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training, 2010). If the victim was drugged and is unsure what happened, all areas will be swabbed. There will be several swabs of each area. The victim will then be given clothes or scrubs to wear home.

In areas that have a rape crisis center, volunteer advocates are on call at all times to help a victim in need. They are called in to be with the victim throughout the entire emergency room visit, and will follow up with the victim at a later date. These advocates act as liaisons between the victim, medical staff, and police officers. They can let the victim know what to expect in the examinations, and what to expect if they press charges. They also have information about places to obtain counseling and support. This is particularly important for victims who do not have family or friends with them in the emergency room.

The process that victims undergo at the emergency room can be very painful and draining. They have to relive the experience to many different people and discuss extremely private matters. Many times, law enforcement officers are male, and the victim must discuss sexual things with this male. This proves to be a difficult experience as sometimes victims are not even able to articulate what happened. They may want to forget about it or not talk about it. Then they have to go through a medical examination to make sure they are healthy. If they decide not to do an evidence kit, it is still recommended that a doctor do a pelvic exam and take swabs for possible sexually

transmitted diseases. If the victim does decide to go through with an  
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evidence kit, it is a painful and invasive process. There may even be pictures taken of the victim's body if there are bruises or cuts. In addition, in some areas the rape kits may not even be tested. The Texas Tribune reports that the state is so behind in testing rape kits that it is impossible to catch up (Grissom, 2011). Some unprocessed rape kits in Texas date back to the 1980s (Grissom, 2011). Even if the kits are processed, it can take a year before the results are known (Grissom, 2011). This gives insight into why so many rapes go unreported, and why so many people choose not to have an evidence kit.

### Consequences of Rape

Rape is a horrifying and invasive crime. It has the potential to completely change the victim's life. With some crimes, once the actual crime is over, the victim can move on with their life. This is not the case with rape victims. Once the attack is over, there are many other issues the victim will encounter. Many victims of rape experience long-term consequences of their attack. There may be physical consequences deriving from the attack. There also may be emotional consequences. Many rape victims have difficulties returning to their normal lives after the attack. They may exhibit symptoms of rape trauma syndrome, a type of post-traumatic stress disorder.

There are many physical consequences that can arise from rape. The victim may become pregnant from the attack. This leads to a difficult decision for the victim, made even more difficult if they do not believe abortion is an appropriate option. Some women may have religious or personal views that prevent them from getting an abortion, and thus are forced to go through a

pregnancy resulting from a rape. In addition, the adult rape pregnancy rate is actually increasing based on United States Census Reports (Meadows 2010). It is estimated that “ there may be 32, 100 rape-related pregnancies annually among America women over the age of 18 years” (Meadows, 2010, p. 102). This statistic does not even include all the minors who become pregnant due to a sexual assault.

Rape victims can also contract sexually transmitted diseases from the attack. Depending on the disease, there may be an easy cure, or they may have to live with the disease for the rest of their lives. If they contract acquired immune deficiency syndrome, more commonly known as AIDS, their life may actually be shortened. This is why many emergency rooms administer antibiotics when someone claims they have been raped. This is an attempt to cure a disease before it is even diagnosed. Also, some emergency rooms may have prophylactic treatment for those who may have been exposed to AIDS.

Rape victims may also have acute injuries resulting from the rape (Meadows 2010). Depending on the level of violence in the rape, these injuries can be minimal to severe. Typically the most violent rapes are stranger rapes. This is because “ stranger rapists are more likely to involve the use of a weapon” (Arrigo, 2006, p. 109). This weapon is most frequently a knife (Arrigo, 2006). If the attacker used the knife to stab the victim, there may be internal injuries or bleeding. Attackers also may beat their victims. This can lead to simple cuts and bruises or more complex injuries like broken ribs. In addition, the victim may experience vaginal or rectal tears from the rape.

There are both emotional and psychological issues resulting from rape that are included in rape trauma syndrome. There are two phases of rape trauma syndrome. The first phase is the acute phase. In the acute phase, the victim “ experiences a complete disruption of her life, resulting from the violence she experienced” (Meadows, 2010, p. 38). The victim may have a range of emotions during the acute phase, including “ crying, shouting, swearing, or laughing inappropriately” (Meadows, 2010, p. 38). The victim may experience severe mood swings, and change emotions very quickly. They may be fearful to even leave their home. If the attack happened in their home, they may not feel safe living there anymore.

The second phase of rape trauma syndrome is the reorganization phase. In the reorganization phase, victims must reorganize their lives (Meadows, 2010). This is accomplished with help from friends and family members (Meadows, 2010). During this phase, the victims have to learn ways to cope with their daily lives, and the disturbing thoughts that may enter their minds at any time. They may return to work and attempt to move on, but the pain and fear is still present in their minds.

There are many different symptoms of rape trauma syndrome. Some of the symptoms include “ fear, helplessness, shock, disbelief, guilt, humiliation, embarrassment, anger, self-blame, flashbacks of the rape, avoidance of previously pleasurable activities, avoidance of the place or circumstances in which the rape occurred, depression, sexual dysfunction, insomnia, and impaired memory” (Meadows, 2010, p. 102). These symptoms greatly inhibit the victim’s ability to heal and move on with their life. They may be happy one moment, and then suddenly be overcome with sadness and not able to

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understand where the sadness originated. While in the acute phase they may experience a wide range of emotions. When they enter the reorganization phase, they may not have quite as many mood swings, but may experience flashbacks of the attack. This contributes to their insomnia. Victims are afraid to go to sleep because they may have nightmares of the attack. They also lost their sense of control when they were attacked, and going to sleep leaves them vulnerable yet again.