

# Acquaintance rape

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Running Head: ACQUAINTANCE RAPE Acquaintance Rape: It Could Happen To Anyone Abstract Anyone can be a victim of acquaintance rape. It does not matter if the victim is male or female, old or young; it can still happen. Just by being at a party full of friends or even going on a date with a significant other, everyone is at risk. It is never the victims fault. There is no possible way to know when or to whom it will happen. Acquaintance Rape: It Could Happen To Anyone We are taught “ don’t get raped”, rather than “ don’t rape. ” Rape is defined as an act of sexual intercourse without legal consent (Harrison, 1996, p. ). The word rape is derived from the Latin word rapere, meaning to steal, seize, or carry away (Katz & Mazur, 1979, p. 10). There is more than one type of rape; they are all considered rape, but by different standards. For example, acquaintance rape refers to rape by a person known to the victim. Statutory rape means that one of the parties involved is under the “ age of consent”, which varies from the ages of 14 all the way up to 20. Rape by deception is getting the victim to agree under false pretenses. Regardless of which type it may be, it is all considered rape.

In America, a rape occurs every six minutes (Keller, 1996, p. 312). Rape is rape, whether it is by a complete stranger or by someone known to the victim. There are some common questions people think about when discussing the topic of rape, such as: How can I tell who is a rapist and who is not? What kinds of people get raped? Do the victims know their attackers or are they strangers? Can men get raped? Are women rapists too? Who is to blame, the victim or the attacker? Is it still rape if I am in a relationship with the person? Why are women the weaker or ‘ safer’ target?

Is rape justifiable? Do they deserve it? How can we eliminate rape? Unfortunately, there is no way to tell who is a rapist and who is not just by looking at the person. It could be a boyfriend, a teacher, a friend, a classmate, or even just someone who lives next door. Even though there is no way to physically determine who is a rapist and who is not, there are certain behaviors that they portray that can make it easier to spot them. One of the main goals of the attacker is to increase the victim's vulnerability. If the victim is vulnerable then she will be easier to control.

The attackers use the vulnerability to their advantage; they may manipulate the victim to be alone with them, in which case it would be easier to rape them. Because of her personal relationship with the attacker, however casual, it often takes a woman longer to perceive an action as rape when it involved a man she knows than it does when a stranger assaults her. Acquaintance rape could happen to anyone. There is not a certain type of person that gets raped. Many people believe that women who wear provocative, or revealing, attire or women that are a "tease" are more likely to get raped than people who dress and act more modestly.

A "tease", according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, means to tantalize especially by arousing desire or curiosity often without intending to satisfy it. But the truth is, it does not matter what the victim is wearing or the manner in which they are acting it can still happen. When most people hear the word rape, it is believed to be by a big guy in an alley that is going to rape and beat them. Just by going to a friend's house or going to a party surrounded by peers there is a greater risk of getting raped there than by a random stranger on the street.

Most acquaintance rapes happen on college campuses, thirty-eight percent of women who had been raped were between the ages of 14 and 17 at the time of their assaults (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 117). In a survey of 32 college campuses, 1 in 4 women surveyed were victims of rape or attempted rape. Of those raped, eighty-four percent knew their attacker (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 11). Men and women are four times more likely to get raped by someone they know rather than a stranger. Seventy to eighty percent of rape crimes are acquaintance rapes (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 2). Many people do not believe that men can get raped, or that women could be rapists. Usually men are raped by other men, but there are some instances where women do rape men. Women rape children more than grown men. It has been calculated that approximately ten percent of victims going to rape centers are males even though men are far less likely to actually seek help or even admit it was rape (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 98). But men are not immune, sixteen percent of male college students admit to having been forced into rape (Keller, 1996, p. 312).

Most of the time when men are raped, it is by people they do not know in order to establish power and masculinity when there is no other way to express power (Hopkins, 1984, p. 46). Ninety-eight point seven percent of all rapists are male, but of those only eighty percent are over the age of 21 (Harrison, 1996). But men can still be raped by people know to them also. Most male rapes are heterosexual rapes. When men rape it is because they are trying to establish dominance. Rape is not the unleashing of male desire; it is rather the articulation of male meaning (Hopkins, 1984, p. 42).

In acquaintance rapes, many people believe that since the attacker is known to the victim then it is not really considered rape. Many acquaintance rapes happen because of miscommunication. The man may think that the woman was suggesting or hinting at sex with her attire or actions; whereas, the woman may have no idea that the man feels that way. It is not the victim that causes the rape (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 22). Many people believe that the women could have prevented the rape if they knew who the attacker was. The truth is there is no way to determine who is going to get raped; only the attacker knows.

Most people have a “ gut feeling” when it comes to new people, and many just push it aside until something bad happens, and then the feeling comes back again. If a woman goes on a date or is with friends and they get that “ gut feeling” again, then it could possibly end badly. People do not know what is going to happen to them every second of their lives. There is no way to know who it will happen to or when it will occur and by whom. An evening planned with friends could all go awry without any warning. A victim usually doesn't think that someone they know would even consider raping them.

So the attacker is to blame because they are the ones who planned it. In a relationship, if the significant other says ‘ no’ it is still considered rape if the attacker proceeds. Most people don't think that rapes occur between people in a relationship. Men have been taught that women resist sex to avoid looking “ promiscuous” by indulging in casual and indiscriminate sexual relationships. Men think that women will always say “ no” even if they really mean “ yes”; many women want a strong dominant leader, some men take advantage of this.

Sex to men can become an addiction which can cause them to thrive after it. Sex may become a need instead of a pleasure. If a man's main focus is sex then it is easier to rape and not consider it as so. Many men have resorted to using violence to get what they want, and it may not be with any form of weapon, but men are generally larger and stronger than females. Seventy-one percent of rape victims report the use of a weapon (Harrison, 1996). If women have been in an abusive relationship it may be harder to admit it was rape due to the fear they already have towards their partner.

After being in an abusive relationship, the woman may become desensitized. Desensitization means to decrease the abnormal fear in (a person) of a situation or object, by exposing him to it either in reality or in his imagination. Once the woman starts to desensitize, it may become easier for the man to rape her because she may not fight back as much because it is the type of behavior she may be used to from the relationship. If the attacker is a former partner then the man may not consider it rape because he is establishing "old rights".

If the couple had sex in their relationship and then broke up then the man feels that he should still get sex from her. He may not only want to have sex though, he might want a relationship again and think that having sex will mean that she wants him back. He may just be trying to get back at her if she is the one who ended the relationship in the first place. Most women would not have gone back out with the person if they were able to clearly recognize it was rape in the first place (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 64).

Eighty-four percent of men who had committed rape said that what they did was "definitely not rape" (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 90). Women are the "

safer” target for attackers because they are less likely to report the rape, especially if the attacker is known to the victim. There are anywhere between five hundred twenty-five thousand to two million additional rapes are believed to go unreported every year (Harrison, 1996). Women are unknowingly taught to be “ safe” targets. Many women are thought of as passive and weak so that is what they believe, so when a situation arises they do not know what to do.

Seven main reactions that victims have which classify them as “ safe” victims are denial, dissociation, self-blame, ignoring the “ little voice”, not fighting back, not reporting the attack, and becoming a victim again (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 54-63). In a study done on acquaintance rape victims forty-two percent of women who were raped said they had sex again with the men who assaulted them (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 63). Acquaintance rape has become more frequent in today’s society. Rapes between men and women who know each other are happening in big cities, small towns, and rural areas.

They occur among all ethnic and religious groups, regardless of education or wealth. Many of the rapes are rooted in the social behavior men and women learn (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 35). Society’s attitude is that if a person dresses provocatively or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, then the victim must endure the consequences of their actions. “ In the majority of rapes, the victim was promiscuous or had a bad reputation (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 45). ” When a woman is drinking, even if she is not drunk, some men believe that the rape is justifiable because “ good girls” do not drink.

About seventy-five percent of men and at least fifty-five percent of women involved in acquaintance rapes had been drinking or taking drugs just before the attack. Forty-five percent of all reported rapes involved drugs and/or alcohol: sixty-six percent for alcohol, fourteen percent for drugs, and fifteen percent for both drugs and alcohol (Harrison, 1996). Alcohol and drugs can alter the senses. While on drugs there may be hallucinations or black outs, and with alcohol the brain cells start to slow down and vision starts to become impaired.

Men take advantage of these effects. If a woman's vision is impaired then she will not be able to fully see the attacker which means she cannot identify him. If the woman is blacked out she has no way of even knowing what is happening to her and cannot identify the attacker because she has no memory of what happened during the black out. At a bar it is easy to drink too much and not remember anything. Being raped is not something to take lightly, but if the victim cannot remember anything then it will be harder to believe their story.

Attackers do not want to be considered " rapists" but if the victim does not defend themselves or say ' no' then the attacker does not see it as actual rape. Women under the influence are easier to take advantage of because they will not fight back as much because they may not even know what is happening. Forty percent of men and eighteen percent of women agree that the degree of a woman's resistance should be the major factor in determining if the rape has occurred (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 6). But with drugs and alcohol a woman may not even be conscious so she would not be able to resist the attack. Research shows that today's society will go to many



lengths to justify rape. Some of these ways are: if the woman invites the man out on the date, the man pays for the date, she dresses “ suggestively” by wearing revealing attire, they go to his place rather than to a movie, or she drinks alcohol or does drugs (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 43). In a study conducted by Martha R.

Burt involving 598 Minnesota adults more than fifty percent agreed that if a woman goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date, then she is implying that she is willing to have sex (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 45). Research shows that men may feel “ led on” or misled, whereas the woman may not even know that the actions being portrayed as sexual. In Eugene Kanin’s observation, sexually aggressive college men believed that their aggression was justifiable if the woman was “ a tease” (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 45).

In a survey of four hundred undergraduate students, fifty percent male and fifty percent female, conducted by Nona J. Barnett showed that seventeen percent of men and four percent of women agreed that when a woman was raped, she was asking for it; also fifty-nine percent of men and thirty-eight percent of women agree that women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 46). Some women may express with their body language, actions, clothing, or words that they are willing to have sex but later on they may change their mind.

When a woman agrees to kissing or other sexual touching a man may feel that she is also willing to have sex, even if she never actually says that she does. If a woman is willing to do sexual things a man may feel that she is willing to have sex. One minute she might be saying yes and then the next

she might be saying no and pushing him away. A man in the moment may not think anything of her actions and proceed. But if it happens before the partners have intercourse then these “ mixed signals” may make the man angry, especially if he has already become aroused.

Some men assume that if the person has had sex with them before then they are willing to have sex every time. Men are not mind readers; if a woman does not want to have sex then she needs to verbally let him know because he will not know any other way. Some people hope that improving the woman’s ability to clearly communicate what she wants will naturally lead men to understand how to proceed with their actions. This leads us to the common question of “ How can we eliminate acquaintance rape? There is no way to entirely eliminate acquaintance rape, but by changing society’s view of “ don’t get raped” rather than “ don’t rape”, then more people would become aware of the issue and help to lessen the number of victims because of the newfound knowledge of the subject. Women are indeed the weaker sex, but with knowledge of the subject it would be easier to be more aware of the possibilities. If more people are aware, then more people will take precautions. If society’s attitude changed, then it would be easier for women to defend themselves.

Women can defend themselves by taking karate classes, Tai kwon do, carrying a weapon, or taking self-defense classes. If women knew about acquaintance rape in more detail and knew that society was not against them, then more women would confess to it. Most women do not report this kind of rape, especially if their attacker is known to them. Acquaintance is the most prevalent rape crime today. Seventy to eighty percent of all rape

crimes are acquaintance rapes (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 12). One in four women has been raped. A large selection of men and women believe that some women “deserve to get raped”.

Sometimes the attacker may feel that the victim “deserved it” or were “asking for it”. In an interview with Shelby Bengston when the question was asked, “Do you think it is wrong for a person to be raped because he or she went into the house or vehicle of a friend or acquaintance?” Her response was “I don’t think it is right, but I do think they were asking for it.” In a protest walk against sexual harassment at Princeton University, as the 200 marchers passed in front of several all-male eating clubs, they had cups of beer hurled at them along with cries of “Go get raped!” (Warshaw & Koss, 1988, p. 46).

Most people won’t come out and say that people “deserve” to get raped but if people are getting raped then obviously the attacker feels that the victim “deserves” it. How do we determine who “deserves” to be raped? Do we only wish it upon the promiscuous? Or on the people we despise? Who are we to judge if someone should get raped or not. No matter the reason, nobody deserves it. Whether the victim was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or whether they wear provocative attire every person has rights and deserves to be treated with respect. Rape is violence, not seduction.

(1996). Date rape: Ultimate issues ed. , p. 312) Student's Life Application Bible. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Warshaw, R. , ; Koss, M. P. (1988). I never called it rape: the Ms. Report on recognizing, fighting, and surviving date and acquaintance rape. New York: Harper ; Row.