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Educating Helping Professionals: Public Attitudes and Rape Myths

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EDUCATING HELPING PROFESSIONALS:
PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND RAPE MYTHS

by
Linda Breedlove

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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VITA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rape is a growing concern in our society. In 1987, there were 91,100 reported forcible rapes in the United States, which is a 34.8% increase since 1978 (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1989). Because of reforms to improve the treatment of the victim there is confusion about whether the actual number of rapes is increasing; or if more victims are reporting rape (LeBeau, 1988). Whatever the reason may be, rape is still the most under-reported crime (Brownmiller, 1975; Bunting & Reeves, 1983; Check & Malamuth, 1985; Ellis, 1989; Larsen & Long, 1988; LeBeau, 1988; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). Estimates range between 50% to 95% of the proportion of unreported rapes (Check & Malamuth, 1985). Researchers believe that embarrassment, lack of social support, and the stigma attached to being a rape victim are responsible for this extremely high rate of unreported rapes (Brownmiller, 1975; Bunting & Reeves, 1983; LeBeau, 1988; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983; Weidner & Griffitt, 1983).

Although rape is a widespread and growing problem, the subject of rape is still a taboo topic (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). Because of the lack of open communication and information, there is much confusion regarding the subject of rape. Many researchers discuss the

confusion in defining rape (Bart & O'Brien, 1985; Bourque, 1989; Burt & Albin, 1981; Dean & Kops, 1982; Ellis, 1989; Remer & Witten, 1988; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; Tomaselli & Porter, 1986). Rape is defined either in legal or social terms (Rockwell, 1978).

The social definition of rape varies a great deal (Bart & O'Brien, 1985; Burt & Albin, 1981; Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976). An illustration of the variation of social rape definitions is provided when Bart & O'Brien (1985) compared avoidance strategies with women who identified themselves as either being raped or avoiding rape and found "What was one woman's rape seemed to be another woman's avoidance" (p. 9). For example, some women defined being forced to comply with certain acts as rape, while other women forced to comply with the same acts considered themselves as avoiding rape.

Burt & Albin (1981) identified rape definitions as ranging on a continuum from broad to narrow in scope:

At the inclusive extreme, radical feminists would maintain that all coerced sex is rape, whether the coercion used be physical, psychological, or economic. At the restrictive extreme, many people believe that there is no such thing as rape-their definition constitutes the empty set. Most people's definition of rape falls somewhere between these two extremes... (p. 213).

The inclusive definition of rape (all coerced sex is rape) is related to the rejection of rape myths. Because the inclusive definition rejects rape myths, it can result in increased conviction rates, and making the victim's recovery less traumatic (Burt & Albin, 1981). An illustration of an inclusive definition of rape is provided when, Brownmiller (1975) gives an example of a therapist "practicing rape upon a vulnerable victim" when he tells a client that having sex with her will cure her problems of frigidity (p. 283). Brownmiller (1975) argues that the victim's foolishness should not minimize the offender's actions, and provides the analogy that victims of robberies and con-games might behave foolishly, however, the offender is still held accountable.

The restrictive definition of rape (rape is not possible) is one of the many misconceptions of rape, and is among the rape myths to be discussed in the body of the paper. The acceptance of rape myths is related to a restrictive definition of rape (Burt & Albin, 1981). Burt & Albin (1981) describe the restrictive definition of rape as being "rape supportive because it denies the reality of many actual rapes" (p. 213). Because the restrictive definition denies rape, it can result in making "rape prosecution harder, the victim's recovery more difficult, and the assailant's actions safer" (Burt & Albin, 1981, p. 213).

Although the legal definitions of rape are more explicit and objective than the social rape definitions, there are still problems with their application (Bart & O'Brien, 1985; Brekke & Borgida, 1988). The first legal definitions of rape originated as property crimes, where the woman was viewed as being the property of either her father, husband, or some other male guardian (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1971; Medea & Thompson, 1974; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). If this woman was raped, it lowered her market value, and therefore her owner (guardian) could seek retribution. Today some feminists believe that rape is still treated as a property crime (Brownmiller, 1975; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Griffin, 1971; Medea & Thompson, 1974). Medea & Thompson (1974) show support for this property crime theory by demonstrating that in some states it is not illegal for a husband to rape his wife. However, MacKinnon, (1983) and Schwendinger & Schwendinger, (1983) argue that considering rape as a property crime in today's society is too simplistic.

Dean & Kops (1982) provide a traditional legal definition of rape:

Even as late as the mid-twentieth century, most rape laws in the United States were still based on a 200-year-old definition that rape is the unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman, not one's wife, by force and against her will (p. 23).

Recently there are many legal reforms changing the rape laws which can be attributed to the women's movement (Bourque, 1989; Shrink & LeBeau, 1984). The legal definitions vary depending on each state. Overall, the gender specific language has been changed "the offender is referred to as the actor and the victim as the victim or the other person " (Dean & Kops, 1982, p. 24). In addition, in some states it is illegal for a husband to rape his wife (Dean & Kops, 1982; Ellis, 1989). New laws also divide rape into degree of severity, depending on the degree of force (Dean & Kops, 1982; Ellis, 1989).

There are many problems with interpreting and applying these legal definitions of rape. Studies have shown both juries (Brekke & Borgida, 1988; Field & Bienen, 1980; Frazier & Borgida, 1988; Kalven & Zeisel, 1966; LaFree, Reskin & Visher, 1985; Reskin & Visher, 1986) and judges (Bohmer, 1974) demonstrate biases in rape cases. "Applications of the legal definition of forcible rape vary and the victim becomes doubly victimized by the rapist and by the society" (Rockwell, 1978, p. 522).

Using either the legal or the social definition, consent becomes the crucial issue in defining rape (Bourque, 1989; Burt & Estep, 1981; Ellis, 1989; Groth, 1979). "Since, legally and in the public mind, a sexual assault differs from 'just plain sex' chiefly in the area of consent, attributions about the claimant's motivation or

willingness to participate in sexual acts assumes primary importance" (Burt & Estep, 1981, p. 21). In the past, the defendant could attempt to demonstrate consent by revealing "evidence" such as the victim's character, reputation, and past sexual history (Berger, 1977; Bourque, 1989; Burt & Estep, 1981). If the victim had a "bad" reputation, then she was assumed to have consented (Bourque, 1989; LaFree et al., 1985). "At its most extreme, this belief maintains that women say 'yes' to all men for all time in the process of saying 'yes' to the first one" (Burt & Estep, 1983, p. 21). Currently, most states have adopted rape shield laws which attempt to protect the victim by disallowing this type of sexual history in court (Berger, 1977; Bourque, 1989). Unfortunately, there are still problems because the victim's sexual history can be admissible in court, if determined to be relevant to the case (Bourque, 1989). Usually, it is the judge's discretion which determines whether this type of "evidence" is considered relevant (Berger, 1977).

Another approach the defendant's attorney may employ is to imply consent by demonstrating a lack of corroboration (Berger, 1977; Bourque, 1989; LaFree et al., 1985). The corroboration rule requires witnesses or physical evidence to verify the victim's accusation. If there are no witnesses or evidence to demonstrate resistance; such as injuries, bruises, blood, or torn

clothing the assumption is the victim consented (Bourque, 1989; Burt & Estep, 1983). Due to the legal reforms, most states no longer require corroboration (Bourque, 1989). However, Kalven & Zeisel, (1966) found that juries have different interpretations of written laws and basically rewrite these laws. "Police reported that they often found themselves in the anomalous situation of congratulating a victim for escaping without injury while lamenting that she did not have a little more blood to show the jury" (Burt & Estep, 1981, p. 22)

There are some exceptions when consent is not crucial to the definition of rape (Bourque, 1989; Groth, 1979; Russell, 1984). In statutory rape, the minor can consent, however, the law views this as rape because she is not considered to be mature enough to make an intelligent decision regarding intercourse (Bourque, 1989; Groth, 1979; LeGrand, 1973). In other situations the victim is physically unable to consent (Brownmiller, 1975; Groth, 1979; Russell, 1984). Russell (1984) provides examples of this definition of rape in "cases where, by virtue of being unconscious, drugged, asleep, or in some comparable state, the woman is in no position to consent to the act" (p. 13). Although legally some states regard this inability to consent as rape, it is difficult to obtain a conviction, because jurors' and judges' social definitions of rape interfere with interpretation of legal definitions (Burt &

Albin, 1981; Frazier, & Borgida, 1988).

For purposes of this thesis, the rape definition will be "rape is any sexual intimacy forced on one person by another" (Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 12) The terminology rape, sexual assault, sexual violence and forced sex will be used interchangeably. In addition, the terms rapist, offender, and defendant will be synonymous.

In addition to the confusion in defining rape, there are many misconceptions concerning the subject of rape, referred to as rape myths, rape beliefs, or rape attitudes (Briere, Malamuth & Check, 1985; Burt, 1980; Burt & Albin, 1981; Mazelan, 1980; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). Rape myths can be defined as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists-in creating a climate hostile to rape victims" (Burt & Albin, 1981, p. 217). The purpose of these myths is to "deny or make light of its effects on the victim, or in fact, blame the rape on the victim" (Briere et al., 1985, p. 398).

A large portion of the sexual assault literature discusses rape myths (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Burt & Albin, 1981; Dean & Kops, 1982; Gordon & Riger, 1989; Heath & Davidson, 1988; Mazelan, 1980; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984; Schwendinger, & Schwendinger, 1983; Williams & Holmes, 1981). Researchers have found that these myths are in the belief systems of the general public (Briere et al., 1985;

Burt & Albin, 1981; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Giacobassi & Dull, 1986). These myths are believed by professionals; such as physicians (Rockwell, 1978), mental health workers (Rockwell, 1978), police, (Feild, 1978; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985; Lester, Gronau & Wondrack, 1982;) and in the judicial system; judges (Bohmer, 1974) and jurors (Feild & Bienen, 1980). These myths are rooted in the foundation of our laws (Berger, 1977).

Researchers have demonstrated that rape myths are related to a variety of issues. Burt (1980) found that certain attitudes are related to rape myth acceptance, "the higher the sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence, the greater a respondent's acceptance of rape myths" (p. 217). Margolin, Miller & Moran (1989) studied rape myth acceptance in violations of consent in kissing, and found that subjects who excused violations of consent in kissing also excused rapists in sexual assault. Studies have demonstrated that the acceptance of rape myths can be related to facilitating rape behavior (Check & Malamuth, 1985), increasing the stigma attached to rape victims (Weidner & Griffitt, 1983), and promoting victim blaming (Calhoun, Selby & Warring, 1976). Those who accept rape myths are responsible for the humor found in rape jokes (Schrink, Poole, & Regoli, 1982). Accepting rape myths leads to more restrictive definitions of rape, Burt & Albin

(1981), while rejecting rape myths is related to inclusive definitions of rape (Burt & Albin, 1981). Exposure to pornography is associated with increasing rape myth acceptance (Malamuth & Check, 1985; Mayerson & Taylor, 1987). Giacomassi & Dull (1986) found that "it is apparent that there is no racial and gender grouping that consistently accepts or rejects the myths to a greater degree than all other racial and sexual categories" (p. 71).

Various hypotheses explain the purpose of rape myths. Some of these hypotheses are: feminist theory, (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1971), just world theory (Lerner & Miller, 1978), defensive attribution (Shaver, 1970), and the fear reduction model (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). The feminist theory explains rape myths as a form of controlling women by restricting their activities (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1971; Medea & Thompson, 1974). For instance the myth, "women provoke rape by the way they dress or act" places limitations on a woman's behavior (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). The just world theory states that the world functions in a predictable manner and "what comes around goes around" (Lerner & Miller, 1978). According to the just world theory the myth, "only bad women are raped" provides the observer with a rationale that the victim deserved to be raped. In addition, the observer is protected from rape because the observer is a "good

person" (Lerner & Miller, 1978). The defensive attribution theory "proposes that individuals attribute cause for negative events in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of their being held responsible in the event that they should find themselves in a similar situation" (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984, p. 11). The myth "women falsely accuse men of rape" provides men with an explanation to reduce responsibility (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). The fear reduction model discusses these three theories and finds that the theories can not explain every myth; however, they all have the common theme of reducing fear (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). The fear reduction model proposes that the origination and development of rape myths provides a "false security" explanation (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984).

The widespread belief in rape myths leads to a secondary victimization (Weidner & Griffitt, 1983; Williams, 1984; Williams & Holmes, 1981). This secondary victimization and the helping professional's role will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

My study will differ from these previous studies in that the purpose of this thesis is to provide information specifically for helping professionals who work with rape victims. In the literature review public attitudes toward rape myths will be explored. The terminology, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs will be synonymous. In addition, the expression "helping professional" will refer to those

individuals who have contact with rape victims through their profession, such as: hospital personnel, physicians, police, counselors, advocates, rape crisis workers, lawyers, and judges. The terminology helping professional, helper, and professional will be used interchangeably. Other studies discuss rape myths, as mentioned previously; however, they do not provide a review of the public perceptions related to each myth. There are numerous common rape myths in the literature which overlap each other (Dean & Kops, 1982; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). It is essential to realize that some of these myths are contradictory, for example; "women can not be raped" and "women enjoy being raped" (Shrink & LeBeau, 1984). The purpose of this thesis is not to review every myth, instead only the myths that have most impact on helping professionals.

Chapter one has provided an overview of the thesis. In chapter two, the rapist myths will be presented. Chapter three will discuss the victim myths. Chapter four will inform helping professionals on public attitudes and the effects of secondary victimization. Chapter five will provide a summary and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

RAPIST MYTHS

SEX STARVED, UNCONTROLLABLE URGES, & MENTALLY ILL

The first rape misconceptions which will be discussed are the rapist myths. The underlying belief in the majority of the rape myths is that the rapist's motives are sexual; therefore, rape is a sex crime (Barnett & Feild, 1977; Bunting & Reeves, 1983; Burt, 1980; Burt & Albin, 1981; Dean & Kops, 1982; Giacomassi & Dull, 1986; Lottes, 1988; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983; Yonker, Laubacher & LaMarco, 1986). Although there is no evidence to support the sex crime theory, researchers have demonstrated the widespread belief in this sex crime myth (Bunting & Reeves, 1983; Giacomassi & Dull, 1986; Yonker, et al. 1986). For example, Yonker et al. (1986) found that 53% of the college students in the sample agreed with the statement "Rape is a sex crime" (p. 8).

The belief that rape is motivated by sex can be found in traditional rape literature (Cohen, Garofalo, Boucher & Seghorn, 1977; Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy & Christenson, 1965; Guttmacher & Weihofen, 1952). However, there has not been empirical evidence to verify this sex motivation theory.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that rape is not a

sex crime, but a crime of violence (Amir, 1971; Briere & Malamuth, 1983; Check & Malamuth, 1985; Groth & Burgess, 1977; Groth, Burgess & Holmstrom, 1977; Groth, 1979; Malamuth, 1981; Marolla & Scully, 1986). Groth (1979) studied over 500 rapists from various samples of offenders. In these studies, Groth (1979) found three basic motives of rapists: anger, power, and sadism. The rapist motivated by anger uses violent physical force when attacking the victim. The angry rapist will use more force than necessary to overpower the victim.

The rapist motivated by power tends to threaten the victim with a weapon, rather than using extreme physical force, and the assault is usually planned. "His aim is to capture and control his victim" (Groth, 1979, p. 25). The majority of rapes are power rapes (Groth, 1979). The sadistic rapist is a combination of the rapist whose motives are anger and power. "The assault usually involves bondage and torture and frequently has a bizarre or ritualistic quality to it" (Groth, 1979, p. 44). The sadistic rapist is the least common.

As a result of the underlying belief that rape is a sex crime, two misconceptions developed to explain the rapist's behavior: the rapist is a sex starved maniac, and the rapist has uncontrollable sexual urges (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). Other misconceptions not related to the sex crime theory is that the rapist is mentally ill (Schrink &

LeBeau, 1984) and usually a stranger to the victim (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). Each of these myths will be presented with public attitudes, and empirical evidence, regarding that particular myth.

The first myth which is used to explain the rapist's behavior is that he is a sex starved maniac. Researchers have found that many people believe lack of sex is the reason for rape (Barnett & Feild, 1977; Giacomassi & Dull, 1986, Yonker et al. 1986). Barnett & Feild (1977) sampled 200 female and 200 male college students to examine sex differences in regard to attitudes toward rape. The Attitudes Toward Rape Questionnaire was administered and the results showed that 80% of both female and male college students agreed with the statement "rapists are sexually frustrated individuals" (p. 94).

This sex starved myth is presented in some forms of rape literature. Sussman & Bordwell (1981) interviewed rapists with the purpose of providing new information regarding the crime of rape. Instead of providing information, this book compiles many stereotypes and rape misconceptions. In the introduction, Ellen Frankfort divides rapists into two categories "After listening to several talk (reading these interviews feels like listening to a conversation), I am convinced that there are differences among rapists" (p. 4). Without any type of empirical evidence she categorizes rapists as:

Those who rape strictly for the pleasure of harming and humiliating a woman, and those who, isolated from people, especially women, see rape as a desperate means of having sex (these are often Southern white rural and religious men, to judge from the present sample (p. 4).

Because of the widespread belief in this sex starved myth, researchers note that some people believe legalizing prostitution would be a solution to rape (Groth, 1979; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984), or "one form of exploiting women is viewed as reducing another form of female exploitation" (Shrink & LeBeau, 1984, p. 3). However, there is evidence demonstrating the opposite effect. Schwendinger & Schwendinger (1983) cite the number of reported rapes and other sexual crimes is one of the highest in Las Vegas where prostitution is legal. Schwendinger & Schwendinger (1983) also provide examples of three cities (Terre Haute and Gary, Indiana, and Honolulu) where the number of reported rapes and other sexual crimes dropped when prostitution became illegal. Groth (1979) acknowledges that even though prostitution is illegal in most states, it does exist regardless, and often prostitutes are raped.

There is empirical evidence which disproves the sex starved myth (Groth & Burgess, 1977; Groth, 1979). In

these studies (Groth & Burgess, 1977; Groth, 1979), over 500 offenders were interviewed as mentioned previously. The results show that at least one third of the offenders were married and having sexual relations with their wives on a regular basis. The majority of the single offenders were also having consenting sexual relations regularly. "In no case have we ever found that rape was the first or only sexual experience in the offender's sexual history, or that he had no other alternatives or outlets for his sexual desires" (Groth, 1979, p. 28).

The second misconception regarding the rapist's behavior is that he has uncontrollable sexual urges. Researchers have found many people believe this myth (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). Giacopassi & Dull (1986) administered a questionnaire to college students which showed 28.4 percent agreed and 8.5 percent strongly agreed to the statement "rape is usually an unplanned, impulsive act" (p. 69). This myth also exists in the traditional rape literature; for example, Cohen, et al. (1977) describe one type of rapist motive: "rape motivated by sexual impulses whose intensity has become so great that whatever defensive or controlling factors were present were overwhelmed and the sexual desire is expressed" (p. 296). There is no empirical evidence to verify this conclusion.

Empirical studies do not support the uncontrollable

sexual urges theory (Amir, 1971; Groth & Burgess, 1977; Groth, 1979). Evidence disproving the uncontrollable sexual urges motive was found in one of the first empirical studies of rape (Amir, 1971). In this study, Menachem Amir analyzed the reported rapes occurring in Philadelphia in 1958 and 1960, which resulted in 646 rape cases. "We find that of 646 rape events, 71 percent are planned rapes; 11 percent are partially planned; and in 16 percent of the cases the offense is an explosive event" (Amir, 1971, p. 142). Amir (1971) also found significant differences between the types of rape and the types of planning. "Strictly planned events constitute 90 percent of group rape, 83 percent of pair rape, and 58 percent of single rape" (Amir, 1971, p. 143). These large percentages demonstrate that the majority of rapes are planned, and are not a result of spontaneous uncontrollable urges.

In another study disputing the uncontrollable sexual urges theory, Groth & Burgess (1977) sampled 170 offenders and found that 34% of the men experienced some type of sexual dysfunction during rape, while only 25% experienced no type of sexual dysfunction during rape. Groth & Burgess (1977) advise caution in interpreting these percentages, because they are conservative estimates; since 11% of the assaults were interrupted, sexual dysfunction was not applicable. Furthermore, the majority of offenders reported no sexual dysfunctions in their consenting sexual

relations (Groth & Burgess, 1977). Groth & Burgess (1977) conclude, "the dysfunction appears specific to the context or situation of rape" (p. 765). This large frequency of sexual dysfunction provides further evidence that these men are not raping as a result of uncontrollable sexual urges.

This uncontrollable urges myth is especially damaging to the victim because many blame her for "provoking rape" (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). The victim is viewed as being responsible because she dressed or behaved in a way in which the rapist could not control himself. The victim provoking rape myth is among the victim myths to be discussed in chapter three. Medea & Thompson (1974) advocate "we would prefer to suggest that men are not beasts, that they are quite capable of controlling themselves, and that it is not the woman's responsibility to do it for them" (p. 45). Medea & Thompson (1974) continue to argue, "Men know that, even if women don't. They know that they don't 'get out of control'. That myth has provided a convenient way for them to evade responsibility for their own sexual actions" (p. 45).

The final myth hypothesizing the rapist's behavior is that he is mentally ill or insane. Public perceptions also demonstrate that many people believe this myth (Barnett & Feild, 1977; Giacomassi & Dull, 1986; Yonker et al. 1986). Giacomassi & Dull (1986) found that 75% of the college students sampled agreed with the stereotype that rapists

have severe psychological problems, making it the myth most believed in their study.

There is empirical evidence which demonstrates that the majority of rapists are not mentally ill (Abel, Becker, & Skinner, 1980; Amir, 1971). "Although the psycho rapist, whatever his family background, certainly does exist, just as the psycho murderer certainly does exist, he is the exception and not the rule" (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 191-192). Abel et al. (1980) found that only approximately five percent of rapists are psychotic. Amir (1971) concluded from the Philadelphia data that, "These studies indicate that sex offenders do not constitute a unique clinical or psychopathological type; nor are they as a group invariably more disturbed than the control groups to which they were compared" (p. 314).

Other studies attempted to distinguish differences between convicted rapists and nonrapists (Karacin, Williams, Guerrero, Salis, Thornby, & Hursch, 1974; Marolla & Scully, 1986; Perdue & Lester, 1972). These studies used psychological tests, such as the Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale (Marolla & Scully, 1986), Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Marolla & Scully, 1986), Hostility Toward Women Scale (Marolla & Scully, 1986), Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, (MMPI) (Karacin et al., 1974), Rape Stereotype Scale (Marolla & Scully, 1986), Rape Vignettes (Marolla & Scully, 1986), and

the Rorschach Inkblot Test (Perdue & Lester, 1972). These studies found minimal differences between the two groups, which provides further evidence that the majority of rapists are not mentally ill.

Attitudes of rapists have also been studied and compared to various control groups (Feild, 1978; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Marolla & Scully, 1986). Feild (1978) compared attitudes of rapists with police, crisis counselors and citizens, using four different instruments: the Attitudes Toward Rape Questionnaire, Rape Knowledge Test, Attitudes Toward Women Scale and Personal Data Sheet. No differences were demonstrated in 50 percent of the attitudinal dimensions between rapists and police, Feild (1978). "It is also interesting to note that the citizens tended to be more similar to the rapists and the police in their perceptions of rape than they were to the counselors" (Feild, 1978, p. 175). Although there are many similarities in attitudes among rapists and the general public, studies have demonstrated that rapists tend to be more accepting of rape myths than other control groups (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Feild, 1978; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Marolla & Scully, 1986).

Other studies test the normality of rape with men from the general public (Briere & Malamuth, 1983; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Check & Malamuth, 1985; Greendlinger & Byrne, 1987; Koss, Leonard, Beezley & Oros, 1985; Malamuth,

1981; Malamuth & Check, 1985). Malamuth (1981) sampled male college students and found an average of 35 percent self-reported the possibility of raping if guaranteed no penalty, with 20 percent indicating a strong likelihood of raping. More recently, Check & Malamuth (1983) found 44 percent of male college students indicated likelihood of raping when guaranteed no penalty. Furthermore, in another study, Briere & Malamuth (1983) found 60 percent of the male college students sampled self-reported the likelihood of raping or likelihood of using force if guaranteed no penalty. Greendlinger & Byrne (1987) also administered questionnaires to 114 male college students who self-reported likelihood to rape and showed, "likelihood to rape was found to be correlated with reports of coercive sexual fantasies ($r = .51$, $p < .001$), rape myth acceptance ($r = .21$, $p < .05$), and aggressive tendencies ($r = .21$, $p < .05$), yielding a multiple R of $.41$ ($p < .05$)" (p. 1). These studies support the normality of rape hypothesis.

Check & Malamuth (1985) provide examples of two additional studies to dispute the myth that most rapists are mentally ill. In the first study, sexual aggression was not determined to be related to the MMPI Psychopathic Deviate scale. However, sexual aggression was related to social attitudes involving rape, women and sexual relations (Koss, Leonard, & Beezley, 1985). In the second study, college males self-reported likelihood of raping was weakly

related to Eysenck's Psychoticism Scale. However, there was a strong relationship between likelihood to rape and the acceptance of rape myths, violence against women and sex role stereotyping (Check & Malamuth, 1985). "Both of these studies therefore support the hypothesis that sexual aggression is more closely linked to socially-acquired beliefs, roles, and attitudes about rape than to gross psychological abnormality" (p. 415). Therefore, numerous empirical evidence tends to reject the theory that rapists are insane and supports the feminist hypothesis regarding rapists as normal males socialized in a violent sexist society (Check & Malamuth, 1985).

The myth claiming most rapists are mentally ill can be destructive when jurors and judges believe this myth, because it can contribute to the low conviction rate of rape cases. "For example, if jurors think of a stereotypic rapist as being a psychopathic degenerate, when confronted with an individual who does not look like their conceptions, the jury may acquit" (Feild & Bienen, 1980, p. 56).

All three of these myths explaining the rapist's motives diminish the rapist's responsibility (Dean & Kops, 1982; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Groth, 1979; Medea & Thompson, 1974). In all of these myths the rapist has no control over his actions, because he is either some type of sex maniac or insane. However, the victim is viewed as

being responsible and blamed for provoking this "helpless person".

Another common theme among the three rapist myths is to create a false feeling of safety among women when interacting with "normal" men. Women who believe these myths are in a potentially dangerous situation, because they might not conceive that men who appear "nice" and "normal" are capable of rape. An illustration is provided when one woman described her first impression of her rapist: "he seemed very refined and very nice", consequently; she accepted a ride from him (Russell, 1984, p. 222). "It is time, then, for women to stop thinking of rapists as sick or crazy men....the rapist is the man next door" (Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 36). However, this is not meant to imply women should restrict their behavior. "The irony, of course, is that these restrictions do not guarantee their safety and may, in the final analysis, result only in increased fear" (Gordon, Riger, LeBaily & Heath, 1980, p. S159). It is important for women to be aware that the rapist should not be stereotyped into a particular category for self-protective measures.

In conclusion, all three of these myths diminish the rapist's responsibility while providing women with a pseudo feeling of safety among "normal" men. The next section will discuss the myth that the rapist is a stranger to the victim.

STRANGER

Another common myth regarding the rapist is that he is a stranger to the victim (Dean & Kops, 1982; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Gordon & Riger, 1989; Russell, 1984).

'Stranger' rapes are what most people think of as 'typical'-a stranger, wearing a ski mask; lurking in bushes in a darkened area; grabbing a young innocent passerby; raping and brutalizing her; leaving her minutes later, clothing ripped, half-naked, shaken and terrified, to be found by a passerby who may or may not give her aid (Gordon & Riger, 1989, p. 25).

However, perceiving the rapist only as a stranger is misleading because there are other types of rapists (Amir, 1971; Dean & Kops, 1982; Gordon & Riger, 1989; LeBeau, 1987; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983).

"Police, victim surveyors, and other analysts classify rapes according to the relationship of people involved, as 'stranger' or 'acquaintance' rapes" (Gordon & Riger, 1989, p. 25). This dichotomy is also misleading because it is too simplistic and does not take into account the various degrees of relationships (Amir, 1971; Dean & Kops, 1982; Gordon & Riger, 1989; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). For example, Dean & Kops (1982) suggest, "These relationships can be divided into four

classifications: (1) total stranger rape, (2) stranger who has gained confidence of the victim, (3) the acquaintance who is not well known, and (4) the acquaintance who is well known" (p. 46-47). In addition, Amir (1971) separates the relationships into seven categories: "stranger, stranger but general knowledge, acquaintance, neighbor, close friend or boy friend, family friend, and offender [who] is a family relative" (p. 233).

Although the specific classifications of rapist and victim relationships are more extensive than the simple dichotomous classification, for purposes of this thesis the two categories stranger and acquaintance will be adequate. In this thesis, stranger rapist/rape will refer to sexual assault in which "no previous contact existed, and no acquaintanceship established before the offense" (Amir, 1971, p. 233). Acquaintance rapist/rape will refer to all offender and victim relationships other than stranger. In addition, the terminology nonstranger rapist/rape and date rapist/rape will be used interchangeably with acquaintance rapist/rape.

The myth regarding the rapist as a stranger is prevalent among the general population (Feild & Bienen, 1980). Feild & Bienen (1980) compared attitudes of 1,056 citizens, 118 rape crisis counselors, 254 police officers and 20 rapists using the Rape Knowledge Test. The question was asked: What percentage of women are raped by

acquaintances? The correct answer is 45 percent (Feild & Bienen, 1980, p. 77). The results showed that 70 percent of the citizens, 63 percent of the police, and 75 percent of the rapists believed only 5 to 25 percent of the victims knew the rapist. However, only 27 percent of the counselors believed that 5 to 25 percent of the women knew the rapist; this group also had the highest percentage to respond with the correct answer. Therefore, these results demonstrate that a large proportion of citizens, police and rapists falsely believe few rapes are committed by acquaintances.

Empirical studies provide evidence disputing the myth that rapists are only strangers (Amir, 1971; Muehlenhard, Friedman & Thomas, 1985, Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; Warshaw, 1988). In analyzing the Philadelphia data of 646 reported rapes, Amir (1971) found that in only 42 percent of the cases the rapist was a complete stranger. Amir (1971) cautions:

It should be noticed that girls who trust their boy friends and those whose families have confidence in their friends or relatives, may not be spared from becoming victims of rape. In 29 percent of primary relationship cases, gentlemen forfeited their positions of trust and committed the crime of forcible rape (p. 235).

Several studies demonstrating the prevalence of acquaintance rape have been administered on college campuses, sampling college students (Koss, 1983; Lewin, 1985; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). Shotland & Goodstein (1983) summarize findings comprised during 20 years of research, "...between one-fourth and one-fifth of college women surveyed reported forceful attempts at sexual intercourse by their dates in which the women reacted by screaming, fighting, crying and pleading" (p. 220). These findings are consistent with Koss (1983) who found 24 percent of college women experienced forceful sexual attempts which met the legal criteria for rape in the state of Ohio.

In another study concerning date rape and college students, the results showed 30 percent of the senior women college students had encountered unwanted sexual intercourse (Lewin, 1985). In this study, over 50 percent of the subjects' unwanted intercourse occurred on a date with an acquaintance they knew briefly. Approximately 33 percent of these date rapes occurred in serious dating relationships, while the others occurred with close friends (Lewin, 1985).

Muehlenhard & Linton (1987) studied rape and sexual aggression on dates. "Results showed that 77.6 percent of the women and 57.3 percent of the men had been involved in one form of SA [sexual aggression]; 14.7 percent of the

women and 7.1 percent of the men had been involved in unwanted sexual intercourse" (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987, p. 186). Muehlenhard & Linton (1987) also found, "...unfamiliar partners seemed least likely to be a risk factor. Although it might be comforting to think that SA [sexual aggression] occurs only between relative strangers on first dates, this is not the case" (p. 194).

Recently, a national survey was administered at 32 different colleges to over 6,100 college students (Warshaw, 1988). This study showed that 84 percent of the victims knew their rapist, and in 57 percent of the cases the rape occurred during a date (Warshaw, 1988).

Although there is evidence to demonstrate that a large portion of rapes are committed by nonstrangers, "there is a definite reluctance on the part of people to define as rape a forced sexual intercourse that occurs on a date or between couples who are romantically involved" (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987, p. 875). Researchers have demonstrated that many do not consider acquaintance rape as being "real" rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). Giacomassi & Dull (1986) note:

In effect, only those actors who fulfill the extreme yet narrow cultural stereotype of rape as an act of forced sexual conduct committed by a stranger in a violent and brutal manner on a female of good

reputation whose actions were beyond reproach are considered "real" rapists or "legitimate" victims of rape (p. 64).

This reluctance to consider nonstranger rape as a legitimate rape can be damaging in several ways: (1) It contributes to unfounding and underestimates of rape cases (2) promotes acquaintance rape (3) denies the victim social support, and (4) provides women with a pseudo feeling of safety with nonstrangers.

First, the belief in the myth that the rapist is a stranger can contribute to police unfounding rape cases and underestimating the actual number of rapes (Brownmiller, 1975; Feild & Bienen, 1980). "A case is declared 'unfounded' if after investigation of the available evidence, police or the district attorney's office decides that there is not enough evidence to bring charges or conduct a trial" (Bourque, 1989, p. 373). The police tend to be skeptical toward non-stranger rape cases (Brownmiller, 1975; Feild & Bienen, 1980). "Stranger rape has clearly been the preferred category from the point of view of the police precinct, the category most likely to win the determination of 'founded'" (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 392-393). Feild & Bienen (1980) showed "...the police appeared to believe that relatively few victims know the rapists. As a result, crime statistics regarding rape which are derived from police reports may be an

underestimate of rapes committed by acquaintances" (p. 77-78).

Second, the general public may actually promote acquaintance rape when it views only stranger rape as being a legitimate rape. Often the acquaintance rapist does not consider his actions as rape (Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). "Although the victim may have resisted and been forced, she herself may not recognize it as rape because she was on a date" (Gordon & Riger, 1989, p. 27). Floerchinger (1988) reports a low percentage of college student women and men respond "yes" to questionnaires asking whether they have ever been raped or if they have ever raped someone. In contrast, when the wording is changed, a much higher percentage respond "yes" to questionnaires asking whether they have ever had sexual intercourse without their consent or against their partner's will. "However, if a man's having intercourse with his date against her wishes is not perceived as rape when men are filling out a questionnaire, it might not be perceived as rape when they are actually in such dating situations" (Muehlenhard et al., 1985, p. 308). Therefore, for purposes of rape prevention, it is important for men and women to realize that "having intercourse without a date's consent" is actually rape, regardless of whether the victim knows her offender.

Furthermore, this myth of the stranger rapist impacts

the victim since she might not be viewed as a "real" victim, because her rape does not match the public's pre-conceived idea of a stereotypical rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Weis & Borges, 1973). "When the situation is not congruent with this stereotype, the respondent is forced to look for interpretations other than rape, often reflecting the view that the woman is in some way to blame" (Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976, p. 145). If the victim of acquaintance rape is not considered to be a legitimate victim, she might not receive the social support needed after her rape experience (Golding, Siegel, Sorenson, Burnam & Stein, 1989; Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987). Jenkins & Dambrot (1987) state that acquaintance rape "...is as psychologically damaging to the victim as an assault by a stranger" (p. 875). Consequently, it is important for acquaintance rape victims to be acknowledged as true victims and provided with social support.

Finally, as with the other rapists' myths in the previous section, the myth of the rapist being a stranger can contribute to a false feeling of safety, placing women in a potentially dangerous situation. If women expect a rapist to be a complete stranger, they might not use precautionary behavior with a "friend", because they would never conceive that their "friend" is a rapist. Heath & Davidson (1988) suggest:

Materials need to be developed that emphasize the

situations in which women do have some control over their safety, while still pointing out the existence of random, uncontrollable attacks. Simply making women aware of tactics for preventing date rapes, a prevalent form of attack during the ages of highest sexual assault incidence, could prevent learned helplessness responses without perpetrating myths or inducing victim blame (p. 1350).

Therefore, it is important for women to be educated on the myths regarding stranger and date rape for preventive purposes.

The myth that the rapist is a stranger to the victim is widely believed by many people, even though there is research which disputes this myth (Amir, 1971; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Floerchinger, 1988; Warshaw, 1988). This myth is harmful for many reasons; consequently, it is essential that the general public perceive nonstranger rape as legitimate.

In summary, the myth that rapists are strangers, along with the other rapists myths (i.e. that rapist are sex starved maniacs, suffer uncontrollable urges and are mentally ill) are widespread and damaging in many ways. All of these myths have a detrimental effect on the victim. Therefore, it is important to understand that these misconceptions are not based on factual data and are clearly debunked with numerous empirical studies.

CHAPTER III

VICTIM MYTHS

IMPOSSIBILITY OF RAPE

The first victim myth to be discussed is the impossibility of rape. "Fortunately, the myth of unrapable women is not as popular as it once was. A less extreme and more widely held belief is that rape does happen, but very rarely." (Russell, 1984, p. 260). Giacomassi & Dull (1986) administered questionnaires to 449 college students and found 8.7 percent strongly agreed, 8.3 percent agreed, and 5.6 were undecided about the statement "a female cannot be forced to have intercourse against her will" (p. 69). Although the low percentage of agreement with this statement is encouraging, this myth is still common among the general public (Schrink, Poole & Regoli, 1982). This myth also persists in the traditional literature (Mead, 1963) and in laws requiring victim resistance (Berger, 1977; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983).

The myth of the impossibility of rape is revealed in statements made by the general public and by helping professionals in many different expressions, such as "a healthy woman cannot be raped against her will" (Dean & Kops, 1982; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984), "one cannot put a sword in a

moving sheath" (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984; Schrink et al., 1982) and "one cannot thread a moving needle" (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984, p. 4). All of these expressions imply women cannot be raped if they resist.

Schrink et al. (1982) conducted a content analysis of rape "jokes" obtained from 125 college students. They provide an example of a "joke" which suggests women can prevent rape: "Confucius says rape is impossible because woman can run faster with dress up than man can with trousers down" (p. 4). This "joke" does not consider the realistic rape situation and "it ignores the fact that most rapists do not approach their victims with their trousers down around their ankles" (Shrink et al., 1982, p. 4).

One popular illustration used in court by Clarence Darrow to demonstrate rape is impossible is asking someone to place a pencil in a moving cup (Russell, 1984). The pencil is symbolic of the penis and the cup represents the vagina. One rape victim describes her experience with this illustration:

my experience with the doctor was much worse than with the police. The doctor said he didn't believe in rape if a girl really wanted to resist it. He performed a little trick with me holding a cup and showing that if I moved it around he couldn't put a stick in it. He scoffed at me (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974, p. 20).

Once more, the realistic rape situation is ignored, such as the use of a weapon or coercion to force the pencil into the cup (Russell, 1984; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983).

Furthermore, Schrink & LeBeau (1984) state that:

totally ignored is the fact that the victim's potential resistance may be reduced through surprise, that the victim may be paralyzed out of fear for her own life or her children's lives, or that the rapist or rapists may merely overpower the female who is usually smaller than the male and who has been socialized to be passive rather than aggressive (p. 5).

These explanations are disregarded since "...they contradict the myth that women cannot be raped" (Russell, 1984, 257). All of these expressions, jokes, and illustrations have a common theme: women are ridiculed for being raped (Schrink et al. 1982).

The impossibility of rape myth is also in the traditional professional literature (Mead, 1963). Anthropologist Margaret Mead studied rape in primitive societies and erroneously concluded, "by and large, within the same homogeneous social setting an ordinarily strong man cannot rape an ordinarily strong healthy woman" (Mead, 1963, p. 207). Schwendinger & Schwendinger (1983) criticize Mead, arguing:

...deriving typical rape conditions from the health

and vigor of participants can be misleading. Of greater importance is the frequent occurrence of other factors, such as the victim's paralyzing fear, the suddenness of the rapist's attack, and the possibility of injury or death, which may lead to an inability to resist (p. 20).

Unfortunately, many people other than Mead overlook these explanations and fail to understand the complexities of the rape situation (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). "It is remarkable that so many people retain that myth in the face of the increasing incidence of reported rape, and despite bloody cases of rape that make headlines" (Russell, 1984, p. 257).

The myth of the impossibility of rape is the foundation of the corroboration laws requiring the victim to demonstrate resistance (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). This resistance requirement assumes: "... that a woman who fights back cannot be raped unless she is rendered unconscious or is subdued by the threatened use of a weapon" (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984, p. 4). However, researchers note that victims of other crimes, such as muggings, are not required by law to demonstrate they resisted (Berger, 1977; Rockwell, 1978). Fortunately, legal reforms have eliminated the resistance requirement; however, some states still have stipulations. For example, "the stipulation

that 'the resistance must be proportional to the outrage' retains the sexist imprint of the mythical impossibility of rape" (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974, p. 21). Although resistance might not be required legally, it is important to remember that judges and jurors have their own biases in interpreting the law (Feild & Bienen, 1980).

There are no empirical studies testing whether rape is actually possible; however, other sources can be used to provide evidence that women can be raped. For instance, the number of forcible rapes reported to... police records, corroboration evidence, medical evidence, and hospital records, all provide evidence not only that rape is possible, but a widespread problem (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1989).

Russell (1984) discusses several adverse consequences of believing in the impossibility of rape myth. First, men do not see themselves as rapists. "If women cannot be raped, it is not surprising that men who rape often see themselves as lovers, not as rapists" (p. 258). Second, women are dependent on men and do not like to perceive men as being violent toward women. Third, women do not perceive themselves as rape victims since if rape is impossible, "the experience of forcible intercourse must be something else" (p. 259). Finally, this myth doubly victimizes the victim: "while the myth generally protects men's image in the eyes of women, one of the consequences

is that women, like men, often 'put down' raped women by disbelieving them, or by seeing them as responsible for their victimization" (Russell, 1984, p. 259). Therefore, this misconception is damaging in many ways and needs to be acknowledged as a myth lacking factual data. The next section will discuss the myth that women provoke rape.

VICTIM PROVOKING

Another common myth regarding the rape victim is that she provoked being raped (Dean & Kops, 1982; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). In this myth, the victim is responsible for provoking rape for two different reasons. The first misconception claims, "she asked for it" because of her behavior and/or appearance. The second myth alleges, "she wanted it" because she desired or enjoyed rape. These myths will be reviewed by discussing the public perceptions of these myths and providing empirical evidence (when applicable) regarding them.

Before reviewing these myths, it is important to understand the term victim precipitation. In the rape literature, sometimes researchers confuse the terms victim provoking or victim blaming with victim precipitation (Amir, 1971). When victim precipitation is not defined correctly, this term can be misleading. For example, Amir (1971) incorrectly defines the concept of victim precipitation:

Here, the victim is the one who is acting out, initiating the interaction between her and the offender, and by her behavior she generates the potentiality for criminal behavior of the offender or triggers this potentiality, if it existed before in

him. Her behavior transforms him into a doer by directing his criminal intentions which not only lead to the offense but also may shape its form (p. 259).

"In its most extreme form, victim precipitation becomes blatant and illogical victim-blaming, as illustrated in the case of a judge who referred to a five year old victim of sexual abuse as 'seductive'" (Williams, 1984, p. 67). These are radical examples of misusing the victim precipitation definition and confusing it with victim provoking or victim blaming. Heath (1984) clarifies this confusion by defining a victim precipitated crime as one in which "the presence of precipitating factors indicates that actions taken by the victim increased the likelihood that he or she would become a crime victim, not that the victim caused the crime or deserved to be victimized" (p. 264). This definition provides the correct usage of the term victim precipitation, and will be used for purposes of this thesis.

The first misconception, that the victim provoked rape by her behavior and/or appearance, is prominently accepted in the general population (Feild & Bienen, 1980; Williams & Holmes, 1981). Feild & Bienen (1980) studied four different groups (1,056 citizens, 20 rapists, 254 police, and 118 rape crisis counselors) using the Attitude Toward Rape Questionnaire. The results showed 66 percent of the citizens, 65 percent of the rapists, 78 percent of

the police officers, and 10 percent of the crisis counselors agreed with the statement, "women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior" (Bienen & Feild, 1980, p. 52). In examining the questionnaire results, it becomes understandable why so many rape victims criticize the police as being insensitive, since such a large proportion agree with this myth. "If the trends in our set of data can be extrapolated to other populations, it would appear that rather substantial numbers of people attribute rape primarily to women, not to men" (Feild & Bienen, 1980, p. 54).

The misconception of a victim provoking rape by her behavior will be discussed first. Studies have shown many people believe some rapes are justified because of the victim's behavior (Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Russell, 1984). Usually, when women engage in non-traditional behavior, the general population regards this as "provoking" or "asking for" rape (Acock & Ireland, 1983; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Schwendinger & Schewendiger, 1974). These non-traditional actions could be hitchhiking (Russell, 1984) going out late at night alone (Damrosch, 1985), initiating a date (Muehlenhard et al., 1985) or having a non-traditional career (Acock & Ireland, 1983). Basically these are activities or behaviors that men freely participate in without criticism, but women are blamed and perceived as causing an attack when they participate in the

same behaviors.

Another behavior considered by many people as provoking rape is when women "lead men on" or behave in a "seductive" manner (Mahoney, 1983; Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988). For instance, Giarrusso, Johnson, Goodchilds, & Zellman (1979) found in a sample of high school students that 54 percent of the males and 27 percent of the females believed it was acceptable for men to force intercourse on a female that aroused him sexually or changed her mind after promising sex. These findings are consistent with Mahoney (1983) who found 45 percent of the college males reported it was acceptable to force intercourse on a woman if she got him sexually aroused. Mahoney (1983) labels this as "male sexual access rights" since males tend to believe they have the right to force intercourse on women in certain situations (p. 431).

However, women are often unaware that their behavior is misinterpreted as being "suggestive" (Abbey, 1982; Abbey, Cozzarelli, McLaughlin, & Harnish, 1987). Abbey (1982) found college males often tend to distort a woman's friendliness as an indicator of desiring a sexual encounter. Burt (1980) interviewed a random sample of 598 Minnesota adults; the results showed over 50 percent agreed with the statement "A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date implies she is willing to have sex" (p. 229). Schwendinger & Schwendinger (1974) criticize the

victim blaming interpretation of women's behavior:

Under ordinary conditions, therefore, women as catalytic agents may typically be seen as wearing something rapists consider provocative; their willingness to make a friendly response to a strange man's conversation is interpreted as an invitation of sorts; and the acceptance of automobile rides, invitations to dinner, or entering apartments alone with a male may be misunderstood or intentionally rationalized as a sign of their consent. This way of thinking rarely questions the oppressive sexist norms that regulate the everyday activities of women (p. 21).

Therefore, any behavior or activity of a woman can be distorted by the "male mentality" as being provocative and thus justifying rape. In discussing "rape preventative measures", such as restricting women's behavior, Muehlenhard et al. (1985) argue "since it is men who rape, we think society's goal should be to change the behavior of men, not women" (p. 308).

The next misconception is that victims provoke rape by their appearance. There are many myths regarding the victim's appearance, such as "only young beautiful women are raped" or "women who dress in revealing clothing provoke rape" (Abbey et al., 1987; Brownmiller, 1975; Edmonds & Cahoon, 1986). In reality, women of all ages are

raped, as Brownmiller (1975) reports Hayman's Washington study which showed that rape victims range in age from 15 months to 82 years. Women wearing varieties of clothing are also raped, even women wearing bulky winter coats (Bart & O'Brien, 1985). An individual's appearance consists of many different factors; however, for purposes of this thesis, the discussion on appearance will only include the victim's physical attractiveness. It is important to realize the discussion on attractiveness focuses on public perceptions toward provoking rape, not that the victims are actually provoking rape.

In discussing the role of victim attractiveness Seligman, Brickman, & Koulack (1977) hypothesize: "...a person's physical attractiveness will influence another's judgement of that person only to the extent that the attributer holds beliefs about the causal relationship between physical attractiveness and the specific behavior being judged, e.g., likelihood of being raped or robbed" (p. 561). According to this theory, rape is viewed as an attractiveness related crime; observers view the attractiveness of the victim as playing a role in provoking the crime (Seligman et al., 1977). In contrast, other crimes such as muggings are not attractiveness related; observers do not make judgments regarding victim responsibility based on the victim's attractiveness (Seligman et al., 1977). However, Dion, Berscheid, &

Walster (1972) found in general when comparing physically attractive and unattractive people that the attractive person is viewed more favorably; this is referred to as "what is beautiful is good". Rape is considered an attractiveness related crime, therefore the "what is beautiful is good" theory might not apply in rape cases.

Some researchers found physically attractive rape victims were perceived as being more responsible for provoking an attack (Calhoun, Selby, Cann, & Keller, 1978). Seligman et al. (1977) suggest the underlying reasoning of this perception: "to the extent that people believe that a beautiful woman, because of her beauty per se, triggers a rape attempt, then a beautiful woman would be seen as more causally responsible for being victimized than a physically unattractive woman" (p. 555).

In contrast, other researchers found physically unattractive victims were perceived as more responsible for provoking an attack (Gerdes, Dammann & Heilig, 1988; Seligman et al., 1977). The rationale is, "...if people believe it is unlikely that an unattractive woman might be raped, and she is, then one may conclude that the victim must have acted in some way to encourage the rape" (Seligman et al., 1977).

Seligman et al. (1977) found subjects were more likely to believe a rape actually occurred when the victim was physically attractive. These findings correlate with

Kanekar & Nazareth (1988) who found longer prison terms were recommended for the rapist when the victim was attractive. This finding could be attributed to the belief that the attractive victim experienced a "real rape". Therefore, the rapist should be severely punished.

Observers are more likely to believe that an unattractive women will not be raped (Feild & Bienen, 1980; Seligman et al., 1977). For example, "following the trial, one of the jurors was found to reason that since a plain-looking girl was the victim, she (the juror) found it hard to believe anyone would want to rape her" (Feild & Bienen, 1980, p. 47). Deitz, Littman & Bentley (1984) found observers considered unattractive victims who assertively resisted the attacker were perceived as being the least favorable. This contradicts many findings demonstrating victims who resist are viewed more favorably and regarded as legitimate victims (Feild & Bienen, 1980; Burt & Estep, 1981). Deitz et al. (1984) provide an explanation to clarify these results: "...subjects may have perceived the unattractive rape victim who actively resisted her assailant as violating sex-role stereotypes associated with femininity" (p. 276). This victim could be viewed "as being farthest from the subject's ideal of femininity" (Deitz et al., 1984, p. 276). Therefore, the unattractive, assertive victim disregarded several traditional social norms and was ostracized.

The irony in reviewing perceptions toward physically attractive and unattractive victims is that both are held responsible for provoking their rapes. The attractive victim is blamed for provoking a rape because "she is so beautiful the rapist could not control himself". In addition, the unattractive victim is also blamed because a rapist would "never attack her since she was too ugly to rape;" hence, her behavior provoked the rapist. Therefore, regardless of a victim's physical attractiveness, public perceptions can rationalize that the victim is responsible.

There has been no empirical evidence to support the myth that women provoke rape by their behavior or appearance. Studies have attempted to differentiate characteristics between victims and nonvictims without success (Medea & Thompson, 1974; Clark & Lewis, 1977). Studies have shown that rapists' motives are not sexual (Amir, 1971; Groth, 1979; Groth et al., 1977) and that rapists are not selecting their victims according to a victim's behavior or appearance (Groth, 1979). Often the rapist does not even remember what the victim looked like (Groth, 1979). It is important to realize that when a woman is asleep in her home and awoken by a rapist with a knife at her throat, it was not her behavior or appearance that was responsible for his presence.

Another victim myth is that women provoke attacks because they desired or enjoy being raped. This

misconception assumes women fantasize about rape and is commonly believed among both the general public and professionals (Feild & Bienen, 1980; Russell, 1984). Feild & Bienen (1980) found that 50 percent of the rapists agreed with the statement "Most women secretly desire to be raped" (p. 52). The other groups' percentages of agreement with this statement are as follows: citizens 13 percent; police 11 percent, and counselors one percent. Fortunately these are not large percentages (Feild & Bienen, 1980).

Russell (1984) provides an illustration of the acceptance in the "professional" community regarding belief in this misconception:

I was appalled to find how common it is for clinicians and researchers (usually male) to assume that rape victims enjoy being raped. Only this week I received a letter from an associate consulting editor of Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality inviting me to answer a question sent by a physician for publication in the journal: 'In cases of forcible rape what percent of the victims experience orgasm?' (p. 13).

Feild & Bienen (1980) hypothesize the reasoning process underneath this myth: "... the logic that 'rape is sex, sex is fun; therefore, rape is fun' may subconsciously be used by some in perceiving rape" (p. 55). "It is probably not surprising that in a male-dominated society, what is seen

as potentially enjoyable to a male would be expected to be enjoyable to a female as well" (Schrink & LeBeau, 1984, p. 9). Thus, the forceful, violent and life-threatening nature of the crime is ignored.

Empirical studies have attempted to determine if women fantasize about rape or have a secret "rape wish" (Bond & Mosher, 1986; Kanin, 1982). In one study, Bond & Mosher (1986) sampled 104 college women who were randomly assigned to different guided imagery conditions. These guided imagery conditions were divided as an erotic fantasy of "rape" or a realistic rape. The results showed that "although women may be sexually aroused and experience positive affects during the guided imaging of an erotic 'rape' fantasy, women respond to guided imagery of a realistic rape with negative affects and no sexual arousal" (p. 162).

These results are consistent with another study in which Kanin (1982) sampled 203 college women using a questionnaire and concluded, "the evidence does not support hypotheses regarding the masochistic nature of female sexuality as embodied in the idea of a rape-wish" (p. 114). In this study, 57 percent of the women claimed to experience rape fantasies, but upon closer examination it was discovered that approximately half of these were actually seduction fantasies, while 28.6 percent of the women appeared to experience unpleasant rape fantasies.

Caution is advised in analyzing rape fantasies of subjects, since there are a variety of meanings attached to the term rape fantasy. For instance, Kanin (1982) warns "one distressing but significant lesson gleaned from this investigation is that when a female indicates having rape fantasies we are not sure whether she means rape or seduction" (p. 120). Remer & Witten (1988) found similar confusion in defining rape fantasies: "although the fantasies were labeled as rape fantasies ... they were better described finally as seduction fantasies" (p. 217). This confusion and lack of consensus in correctly defining rape fantasies is damaging because it promotes the myth that women provoke attacks because they desire to be raped. "...Rape as an erotic fantasy must be differentiated from the violent reality of rape to deneutralize and desexualize the willing victim myth" (Bond & Mosher, 1986, p. 163).

There are a variety of studies that do not support the myth that women enjoy being raped (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976; Russell, 1984; Williams & Holmes, 1981). For instance, in interviewing rape victims, Russell (1984) states "the interviews in this book emphatically contradict the prevalent view of male authors, clinicians, and doctors, that women enjoy being raped" (p. 13). Therefore, empirical evidence supports that women do not enjoy being raped and do not enjoy fantasizing realistic rape situations (Bond & Mosher, 1986; Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974;

Russell, 1984).

The myth that victims provoke their attack either by "asking for it" (behavior/appearance) or by "wanting it" (desire/enjoy/fantasy) are widely believed, but are not realistic, nor based on evidence (Feild & Bienen, 1980). "In reality, however, reported rape cases appear to involve relatively few instances of victim precipitory acts" (Feild & Bienen, 1980, p. 54). Brownmiller (1975) provides evidence from a survey conducted by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence which compares victim precipitory behavior of various crimes. In this survey, victim precipitation is defined according to the crime. For example, in robbery, victim precipitation is defined when the victim does not use reasonable precautionary care in protecting one's valuables. In rape, victim precipitation is defined when the victim changed her mind after agreeing to sexual relations. The results of this survey show that rape is the lowest victim precipitory crime (4.4 percent) compared with other crimes ranging from 6.1 percent to 22 percent. In analyzing the Philadelphia data, Amir (1971) estimated the rape victim precipitory rate at 19 percent. This discrepancy in figures between the two studies could be the result of Amir's subjective definition of victim precipitation.

The misconception that women provoke rape has a detrimental effect on the victim. As with the other myths,

this blames the victim for the assault. This victim blaming is harmful to the victim because she might experience guilt and even believe she was responsible for the attack, which can negatively affect the recovery process (Rockwell, 1978). Thus, it is imperative that victims do not internalize responsibility for the attack and instead realize the absurdity of this myth.

In summary, the victim myths distort the reality of sexual assault by claiming rape does not exist or blaming the victim for its occurrence. It is interesting to note the overlap between the victim myths and the rapist myths. For example, the majority of the rapist myths assume he rapes because of sexual motives, while the victim myths assume she provokes the man sexually either by "suggestive" behavior, her attractive appearance, or her "desire" to be raped. These destructive myths "compliment" each other in creating a hostile, non-supportive environment for the rape victim.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATING HELPERS

SECONDARY VICTIMIZATION

The previous chapters have reviewed several of the rapist and victim myths. However, there are numerous other rape myths in the rape literature. Discussing all of these rape myths in detail is beyond the scope of this thesis, yet it is important to be knowledgeable of their existence. The following are some of the other common rape myths: rapes only occur in alleys or dark secluded places (Dean & Kops, 1982; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984), rape is an interracial crime (Dean & Kops, 1982; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984), it is impossible for women to resist being raped (Bart & O'Brien, 1985), only bad women are raped, good women are not raped (Dean & Kops, 1982; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984), and women falsely accuse men of rape (Dean & Kops, 1982; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). Like the rapist and victim myths discussed in previous chapters, these additional myths are not realistic, nor is there empirical evidence to verify their accuracy. "It is not surprising, really, that a myth should fail to match a reality. What is surprising is that, in the case of rape, myth has for so long been served up to us as reality" (Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 17). Although these additional myths are not factual, they

are just as widespread and damaging to the victim as the other rape myths mentioned earlier (Dean & Kops, 1982).

Rape myths are commonly believed by the general population (Feild & Bienen, 1980; Schrink & LeBeau, 1984). Researchers have demonstrated that a large portion of the public perceives rape myths as facts (Briere et al., 1985; Burt & Albin, 1981; Feild, 1978; Giacomassi & Dull, 1986). They have also shown that myths are the foundation of our belief system on rape (Burt & Albin, 1981). In addition, rape myth acceptance can predict attitudes toward victims (Check & Malamuth, 1985). Often the rape victim believes these rape myths (Russell, 1984). Even the helping professionals perceive these myths to be true (Feild, 1978). "Thus, medical institutions, law enforcement and the prosecutory system reflect the same mythology which society at large perpetuates about rape" (Hilberman, 1976, p. 3).

This widespread belief in rape myths leads to a secondary victimization (Rockwell, 1978; Weidner & Griffitt, 1983; Williams, 1984; Williams & Holmes, 1981). "Secondary victimization is a prolonged and compounded consequence of certain crimes; it results from negative, judgmental attitudes directed toward a victim of crime and resulting in a lack of support, perhaps even condemnation and/or alienation of the victim" (Williams, 1984, p. 67). Many researchers write about the detrimental effect this

secondary victimization has on a rape victim (Golding et al., 1989; Rockwell, 1978; Williams & Holmes, 1981). This secondary victimization is also referred to as the second assault, doubly victimized, or twice victimized. "It is the public's (audiences comprised of significant and generalized others) response to the victim-criminal relationship and its impact on the victim which gives origin to a kind of secondary victimization" (Williams, 1984, p. 67). The second assault of significant others and helping professionals will be reviewed next.

First, the role of the significant others in the secondary victimization process will be discussed. For purposes of this thesis, significant others will refer to the victim's family, spouse, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. All of these people play an important role in the recovery process of the rape victim (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976; Golding et al., 1989; Rockwell, 1978; Williams & Holmes, 1981). If the rape victim's significant others believe in the common rape myths, this can create a hostile environment of blaming the victim for the attack (Rockwell, 1978; Williams & Holmes, 1981). Rockwell (1978) discusses the adverse consequences when the victim's significant others believe in rape myths:

The victim's family and others may believe that 'she asked for it' since they believe that rape can only occur that way. Rather than support the victim

emotionally, the family may withdraw, be openly critical, or wonder how they failed as a family. The victim's social partner may feel that the victim is untouchable, dirty, or no longer worthy of respect (p. 523).

When significant others blame the victim for the attack, this can lead the victim to doubt herself, feel guilty, and believe she is responsible for being raped (Rockwell, 1978). An illustration of this is provided when a rape victim reports her experience with a co-worker: "one girl in my office said that there's no such thing as rape—a girl could stop the attacker if she really wanted to, and I went home that night and cried wondering if I could have" (Mazelan, 1980, p. 130). Another victim comments on her "boyfriend's" reaction: "I couldn't understand my boyfriend's response when I told him. He was angry with me for being stupid enough to get raped" (Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 26). Thus, significant others' lack of factual knowledge on rape and belief in rape myths compound the victimization process.

The reactions of helping professionals can also negatively affect the victim, creating a second assault (Rockwell, 1978; Williams & Holmes, 1981). The helping professionals' role is especially important because, usually, they are some of the first persons the victim has contact with after the attack (Rockwell, 1978).

Unfortunately, the helper can be a negative role model. For example, when a victim's significant others observe hospital personnel behaving disrespectfully toward the victim with accusatory overtones, this can influence their reactions to the victim. This can be especially damaging if the helper is of a high status or in an authority position, since the significant others might be influenced by this "expert" as knowing the "truth", that she really did "ask for it". Even the victim's own personal reaction to her experience could be influenced by the helper's behavior.

The helper's belief in rape myths can also affect the victim and promote victim blaming, creating a secondary victimization (Rockwell, 1978). One rape victim describes her encounter with a psychiatrist commenting on her attack: "But the psychiatrist said, 'You know, things don't just happen. You make them happen' (Russell, 1984, p. 225). Another victim described her experience: "the reaction of the police was, if possible, worse than the rape....these reactions often seem worse than the rape because they are so unexpected and what they imply is so terrible" (Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 26).

Williams & Holmes (1981) interviewed 61 rape victims and found many victims did not perceive helping professionals as providing adequate assistance. "Specifically, more than half the Blacks (54 percent),

nearly 39 percent of the Mexican Americans, and approximately 31 percent of the Anglos felt they had been treated badly or disrespectfully by someone [helper]" (Williams & Holmes, 1981, p. 91). More precisely, Williams & Holmes (1981) found "the exact nature of what had happened centered around one of the following areas: 39 percent said their needs were ignored, 35 percent felt they were confronted with judgmental attitudes, and 26 percent felt that services were inadequate" (Williams & Holmes, 1981, p. 91).

Williams & Holmes (1981) provide greater detail of these findings by asking the victims specifically which helpers were involved in this adverse treatment; the results showed 56 percent were police or detectives, 22 percent were medical personnel, 13 percent were district attorneys, and the remainder were a nurse and the defendant's lawyer. Furthermore, Williams & Holmes (1981) found clergy were perceived by victims to be least helpful, followed by professional counselors and police, respectively, while rape crisis counselors were perceived to be most helpful. This study varies with a recent study in which Golding et al. (1989) showed victims perceived police as least helpful (38.2 percent), followed by physicians (55.6 percent) and clergy (66.6 percent), while rape crisis centers were most helpful (94.2 percent). Williams & Holmes (1981) recommend "the comparatively low

ratings for professional counselors and clergy may suggest a need for them to reexamine their approach to working with victims of rape" (p. 89). Golding et al. (1989) suggest comparing rape crisis counselors' techniques with other helper's, due to the extremely high helpfulness ratings of this group.

Second assault is damaging to the victim for many reasons (Rockwell, 1978; Williams & Holmes, 1981). The victim may experience feelings of isolation due to lack of understanding social support (Rockwell, 1978). "Feeling suicidal is concomitant to feeling isolated due to the social stigmatization of rape, the inability to put into words the terror and guilt, and the inability to find people who are genuinely empathetic" (Rockwell, 1978, p. 523). As mentioned previously, the victim often experiences self-blame and guilt because of the reactions she encounters from public attitudes (Russell, 1984). Medea & Thompson (1974) comment on a victim's typical response to the negative public attitudes:

But when the authorities and her family treat her with the same horror and contempt that should be directed at the rapist, she is forced either to question society's attitude toward rape or to begin to doubt herself. Unfortunately, the latter is what most often happens (Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 26).

The secondary victimization severely hinders the victim's

recovery process; therefore, strategies are needed to combat this second assault. The next section will expand on one strategy by actively involving the helping professionals. In this section, the helpers' role concerning public attitudes and rape myths will be explored.

THE ROLE OF HELPERS

Helping professionals have a primary role in regard to assisting the victim and her significant others. The helper's function is especially important since the victim will usually be in contact with a helper directly after the attack. "Support that is given in the first few weeks can be of major influence in the overall settlement of the total crisis" (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976, p. 32). If misused the helper can negatively affect the rape victim, as mentioned, in the secondary victimization section. However, the helper also can influence the victim's recovery process in a very positive manner, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this section.

Unfortunately, helpers are often not educated on the subject of rape, rape myths, or public attitudes associated with rape (Rockwell, 1978; Russell, 1984). For example, Rockwell (1978) mentions presenting a speech on disputing rape myths at a lecture for mental health professionals consisting of "psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, nurses, technicians, and related mental health students" (p. 528). In this lecture, Rockwell (1978) observed:

Mental health personnel who, it was erroneously assumed, were an enlightened group, were outraged and skeptical, and seriously questioned the premises of

the lecture. It seemed that these people were no different from the lay public—they too had their biases, and to some extent share the beliefs in the mythology surrounding rape. They had to be reeducated in the same way that the rape victim and her significant others had to be (p. 528).

The helper's lack of rape knowledge has detrimental effects; hence it is essential that these helpers understand the public attitudes and myths, so that in working with victims and their significant others, these misconceptions and the second assault can be corrected. "It is noted that victims who receive active assistance from their family and social network cope and adapt more quickly" (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976, p. 32).

To combat this second assault of the victim, helpers first need to learn about rape myths and develop an awareness of how their own biases and stereotypes influence rapport with a rape victim and her significant others. Second, helpers should become positive role models, with a non-judgmental attitude toward the victim. Finally, helpers need to develop an awareness of their own beliefs about rape myths and how these are expressed in their attitudes toward victims and significant others. They must also provide information disputing the myths.

In regard to helpers learning about rape myths and developing self-awareness on their own biases, Rockwell

(1978) advises, "Any group of people interested in being with rape victims should do its own soul-searching. The myths are there and need to be revealed-before the victim comes in" (p. 524). "This is the human condition: people are individually and collectively governed by their value systems, prejudices, biases, and enthusiasms" (Rockwell, 1978, p. 528). Thus, it is essential that helpers are aware of their biases toward rape victims because "not only is there projection on the part of the victim, but there are projections onto the victim" (Rockwell, 1978, p. 525). Therefore, helpers need to understand their own personal beliefs in rape myths and how these beliefs can impact the victim.

Second, helpers have the potential for providing the victim and her significant others with a positive role model. As mentioned in the secondary victimization section, there are adverse results when victims and significant others are provided with negative role model helpers. In contrast, a positive role model helper can treat the victim with a non-judgmental, respectful attitude while demonstrating empathy. When significant others observe this positive approach to the victim, they could also view the victim in a less blaming manner. In addition, with this positive approach, the victim might view herself as less responsible for the attack.

Finally, helpers need to be aware that the

significant others and even the victim could believe in these rape myths. It is not unusual for victims to believe in rape myths. "Prior to a rape experience, most victims, not surprisingly, subscribe to the same myths about rape as everyone else" (Russell, 1984, p. 43). "The responses to rape that a victim has are also contingent on the myths that most people have grown up with and to some extent share as a result of relatively common socialization experiences" (Rockwell, 1978, p. 523). Helpers need to recognize when victims and significant others believe in these myths so that information can be provided to dispute these myths and hopefully eliminate or at least reduce the secondary victimization. Therefore, it is crucial that professionals are aware of these attitudes in order to educate and provide the victim with the best treatment available.

Groth (1979) found victims of an anger rapist experienced less prolonged effects compared with other victims. In an anger rape, the rapist is usually more physically violent and the victim is more likely to have physical injuries; as a result of these visible injuries the victim is treated with less suspicion. "She may receive much more comforting and support from those who subsequently come into contact with her (police, hospital personnel, family, and friends), and there may be less of an accusatory undertone to their questions and comments"

(Groth, 1979, p. 24). Therefore, if the anger rape victim suffers less trauma because she is given support and treated as a legitimate victim, this can demonstrate the powerful positive influence both significant others and helping professionals can have on the victim's recovery process.

RAPE EDUCATION

In efforts to alleviate the second assault, many advise public education on rape (Burt, 1980; Feild & Bienen, 1980; Gordon & Riger, 1989; Russell, 1984; Shrum & Halgin, 1985). In addition, Russell (1984) recommends, "The sexist notions that many clinicians, doctors, policemen, and attorneys have about rape need to be refuted through extensive documentation to help convince many who require this kind of evidence before they believe what they would rather not believe" (p. 293). These recommendations were used as a guideline in this thesis.

Researchers have shown education contributes to rejecting rape myths (Burt, 1980; Yonker, et al., 1986). Gordon & Riger (1989) report a study administered by Latta & von Seggern; in this study, "college students who had factual knowledge about rape rejected rape myths, suggesting that a policy of public education may help to dispel these myths" (p. 7). Burt (1980) found, "..., younger and better educated people reveal less stereotypic, adversarial, and proviolence attitudes and less rape myth acceptance" (p. 217). Yonker et al. (1986) administered the Attitudes Toward Rape questionnaire to 500 college students and found "for three of the eight common myths about rape, the degree of agreement with myths about rape decreased with increased exposure to a college environment"

(p. 14). Malamuth & Check (1984) studied the effectiveness of rape debriefing techniques and found "the results indicated that those exposed to the rape depictions followed by a 'rape debriefing' were less accepting of certain rape myths..." (p. 1). These studies all suggest rape education will reduce the acceptance of rape myths.

Although rape education can be important in disputing rape myths and alleviating the second assault, it is crucial that empirical studies are conducted to determine which methods of rape education are most effective. Winkel (1984) criticizes some rape educational programs because "recent proposals to use informational campaigns to remove public rape misconceptions take for granted the assumption that these are effective instruments resulting in success" (p. 262). The following study demonstrates the need for empirical research on rape education methods.

In this study, Borden, Karr, & Colbert (1988) sampled 100 college students to determine the effects of a rape education lecture on the attitudes and empathy toward rape. The Attitudes Toward Rape Questionnaire and Rape Empathy Scale were completed by both groups; however, the treatment group attended a 45 minute lecture on rape. Four weeks later both groups completed the same questionnaires and the results showed that the lecture was not successful in changing attitudes toward rape. "The nonsignificant results for the program were not anticipated because the

university rape prevention program has received strong support and praise by students, as well as faculty" (Borden et al., 1988). If empirical methods were not administered to objectively test the successfulness of the lecture, many people might have erroneously concluded the lecture was successful, since there was numerous positive feedback.

Winkel (1984) advises two strategies to assist in educating audiences on sexual assault. First, the broad front theory hypothesizes using a variety of senders or lecturers. "Naturally, the greatest possible diversity of senders should be aimed at. It pays for example to mention the police and the youth advisory center in the same breath" (p. 268). Second, the foot in the door technique advises "starting from the 'agreement' one should then slowly develop the 'standpoint to be communicated' in small, measured steps" (Winkel, 1984, p. 267). For example, the lecturer could begin by expressing that he or she once believed rape myths, and gradually communicate to the audience how this opinion changed when confronted with facts and evidence which disputed the rape myths. Winkel (1984) explains why some rape educational seminars are ineffective:

Both the broad front theory and the foot-in-the door strategy make it clear that informational campaigns carried out by one or more women's groups which are perceived as radical will probably fail in their

objective of ridding a large section of the public of misconceptions (p. 268).

Borden et al. (1988) recommends another suggestion for implementing rape educational programs: "this study would support the need to introduce new, more dynamic, vivid interactive program formats to enhance the desired effects of conscious raising, attitude change, and empathy toward rape" (p. 135). Therefore, the methods of educating audiences on the subject of rape are important and need to be empirically tested to achieve the most effective results in educating and correcting misconceptions regarding rape.

In conclusion, significant others and helpers play primary roles in the secondary victimization process of the rape victim (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976; Williams & Holmes, 1981). This second assault is greatly influenced by people's beliefs in rape myths, and lack of accurate factual knowledge on rape. This double victimization can severely affect the victim and prolong her recovery process (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976; Rockwell, 1978; Williams & Holmes, 1981). Because of the damaging effects the secondary victimization process has on the victim, helping professionals need to evaluate their role in working with rape victims to avoid contributing to a second assault. Helping professionals can do this by learning about the role of rape myths in the secondary assault and informing both the victim and her significant others.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Rape was shown to be a widespread problem with many public perceptions based on misconceptions. Several of these misconceptions were discussed. First, the rapist myths were presented, those being that the rapist is either sexually motivated (i.e. he is a sex starved maniac or suffers from uncontrollable urges) or is mentally ill. The other rapist misconception reviewed was the belief that the rapist is usually a stranger. Second, the victim myths were discussed, for example, the belief that rape is impossible and that victims provoke rape through their behavior, appearance, desire and/or enjoyment of being raped. Both the rapist and victim myths were presented with public attitudes and empirical studies to demonstrate the widespread public acceptance and lack of factual data in regard to these myths.

The prevalent beliefs in rape myths were reviewed, demonstrating the damaging ways these can effect the victim and contribute to a secondary victimization. Helping professionals and the victim's significant others' role in contributing to the second assault were discussed. Helpers were provided with several methods to assist in combating the double victimization, such as educating themselves on the role of rape myths, representing positive role models in

interacting with the victim, and providing information to the victim and her significant others disputing rape myths. Educating helpers on rape myths and public perceptions associated with rape myths is crucial in order for helpers to provide rape victims with effective non-judgmental treatment.

Future sexual assault research needs to focus on innovative solutions for combating the secondary victimization of the rape victim. First, long term strategies need to concentrate on empirical research which would study methods to effectively educate the public on rape. Second, short term empirical research strategies need to focus on immediate innovative alternatives for reducing the secondary victimization, such as providing rape victims with access to a rape shelter. Third, more sexual assault research studies are needed using large random samples from the general population. Unfortunately, a great amount of the empirical studies in the sexual assault literature are conducted on small samples of college students which lack generalizability.

Long term strategies need to focus on empirical studies determining the most effective methods of educating the public on sexual assault. As mentioned in chapter four, it is crucial to empirically study the effectiveness of rape education programs, rather than assume these programs are effectively changing public misconceptions

regarding rape. Unfortunately, the long term process of educating the public and improving attitudes toward rape and the rape victim will not change immediately. Realistically, these changes in public attitudes will be a slow process; therefore, empirical studies are needed for short term strategies to reduce the second assault of the rape victim.

Currently, researchers need to be creative and hypothesize innovative non-traditional empirical research studies for solving the problem of secondary victimization. One example, meriting study, is the establishment of a rape shelter where rape victims could stay overnight or reside a few weeks. The underlying philosophy of this suggestion is that until society can provide the rape victim with an emotionally safe, supportive environment, these shelters can become a safe refuge where the rape victim is enclosed with emotional support, until she feels emotionally strong enough to return to society. A rape shelter might be especially helpful if the victim was raped in her home because she would have an emotionally supportive place to stay until she felt comfortable returning home. These rape shelters could be designed similar to the battered women's shelters, except programs would be developed specifically to meet the rape victim's needs, such as counseling and various information services regarding legal and medical care.

However, before a rape shelter is implemented it is important to empirically research this to determine if there is an adequate demand, instead of merely assuming victims will use this type of service. Empirical research studies would also need to focus on developing effective counseling programs for this shelter. Once a rape shelter program is implemented, additional empirical research is needed to determine its successfulness in reducing the secondary victimization as compared with victims not using the shelter. Therefore, empirical research is advised in future studies designing, implementing, and evaluating innovative solutions concerning the problem of secondary victimization.

In discussing other strategies concerning the problem of rape, Medea & Thompson (1974) caution "...women must realize that most of these projects, as important as they are, do nothing more than bandage the wounds of a sick society" (p. 130). The underlying problem regarding rape is that we are socialized in a violent, sexist, and racist society (Medea & Thompson, 1974; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983; Williams & Holmes, 1981). "A substantial decrease in both racial and sexual inequality is required to reduce the rape problem to one of infrequent incidents of aberrant behavior" (Williams & Holmes, 1981, p. 186). "Rape is only a symptom of the massive sickness called sexism, and the sickness itself must be cured"

(Medea & Thompson, 1974, p. 130). Therefore, the long range goal of living in an egalitarian society appears to be the only true solution for the problem of rape.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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