



What Is Rape?

Rape is a violent crime that includes any of the following acts:

- sexual intercourse without consent;
- sex with a minor (someone under 16);
- sex with a person with intellectual disabilities; or
- sex with a person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Under South African law, rape is defined as “intentional unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent” but there are problems with this definition. It excludes forced anal or oral sex, penetration with an object or body part other than the penis and violent sexual crimes between people of the same sex. People Opposed to Woman Abuse (POWA) anticipates that the current definition of rape will soon be expanded to include any forced or coerced genital contact or sexual penetration: by men on women or men on children; women on men or women on children; men on men or women on women; and children on children.

**Rape is an expression of power and aggression against the vulnerable or the defenceless.
Rapists rape to feel powerful and in control - not only for sexual pleasure.**

Types Of Rape

There are different types of rape:

- Acquaintance rape
- Date rape
- Stranger rape
- Gang rape
- Marital rape

Many people think that rape only occurs between strangers. This is not true. Acquaintance rape and date rape are the most common kinds of rape. Many people also believe that a man can't rape his wife, or that a boyfriend can't rape his girlfriend. This is also untrue. Rape is sex without consent. It doesn't matter if the woman knows the man, if they've gone on a date, if she's had sex with him before or if she's married to him.

The main problems facing young women at secondary schools are date rape and acquaintance rape. - Aubrey Pieterse, TBS Services

Sexual Stereotyping

Let's look at sexual stereotyping and how men and women talk to each other. Although things are changing, society still encourages men to be competitive and aggressive and teaches women to be passive and avoid confrontation. Men are considered more serious and women more playful and coy. The result is that men often misunderstand women's words and actions:

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As a woman:

Don't allow alcohol or other drugs to decrease your ability to make sensible decisions. Trust your gut feelings. If a place or the way someone behaves makes you nervous or uneasy, get out. Go on a first date or blind date with friends. Insist on a public place like a movie, sporting event or restaurant. Carry money for a phone call and taxi, or take your own car. Never leave a party, concert, game or other social occasion with someone you don't know well. Be wary of anyone who puts you down, or tries to control how you dress or your choice of friends. In a relationship, talk openly about sex and keep talking as your feelings intensify

She said 'No', but she meant 'Yes'.

As a man:

Ask yourself how sexual stereotypes affect your attitudes and behaviour towards women. Accept a woman's decision when she says "No". Don't see

it as a challenge. Realise that forcing a woman to have sex against her will is rape - a violent crime with serious consequences. Never allow yourself to be drawn into a gang rape by other people. Seek counselling or a support group to help you deal with feelings of violence or aggression against women.

Tips For Rape Prevention

If your personal space is being invaded or someone's advances are making you feel uncomfortable, let them know in no uncertain terms that their behaviour is unacceptable. And remove yourself from their presence before things go too far!

Unarmed advances

If a man (stranger, acquaintance, friend or family member) becomes forceful when he is unarmed, i.e. has no weapon:

- If you can, run!
- If he has a hold on you, pretend to faint, cry hysterically or act insane.
- Make as much noise as you can.
- Become extremely aggressive: instead of being the victim, become the attacker.
- React as you would if you were a mother protecting your child.
- Target the eyes (claw, poke) and groin (hit, kick, grab and twist).
- Remember that your elbow is the strongest point on your body.

Armed advances

If your attacker (stranger, acquaintance, friend or family member) has a weapon: Don't immediately retaliate!

- Assess the situation.
- Try to calm your attacker down.
- Make him believe that you will do what he says.
- Allow him to get closer.
- Then, create the opportunity to escape. Your intention should be to distract or injure your attacker so that you can run away. You're not trying to "pay him back". He's armed. Just get out of there!

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What Should A Person Do After Rape?

- Get to a safe place.
- Not wash or change clothing. It's evidence.
- Tell someone they trust about what happened or write it down
- Never blame themselves! Rape is wrong and it's against the law!
- Report to the nearest police station.
- At the police station, survivors of rape have the right to be treated with respect, to make a statement in private and to make sure that they understand and agree with the statement before they sign it. It's very important that the survivor writes down the name of the police station, the case number and the name of the investigating officer.

The police (or any support organisation that a rape survivor approaches) will then take or refer the survivor to the nearest health centre for medical assistance.

The Survivor Should

- Take spare clothing. The doctor may need current clothing for evidence.
- Ask for treatment to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- Ask for treatment to prevent Hepatitis B.
- Ask for the "morning-after pill" to prevent pregnancy.
- Ask for treatment to prevent HIV infection.
- Seriously think about seeking counselling from social workers, psychologists or school counsellors. Counselling is an effective way to deal with the emotions that can result from rape - like anger, shock, guilt, feeling dirty, moodiness or fear.

Information courtesy of POWA: (011) 642 4345

TBS Services: www.tbsservicesonline.com

Please report rape to the police. It's the only way to ensure that rapists are caught and punished.

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