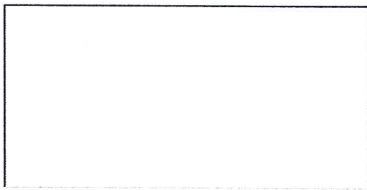


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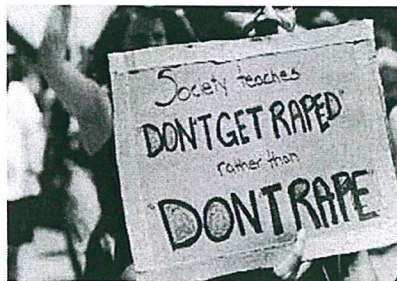
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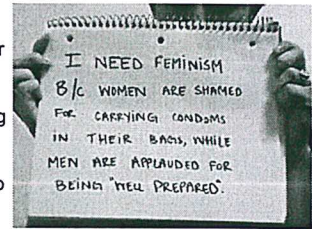
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Slut-Shaming and Victim Blaming: Part 2



Psychological Effects of Slut-Shaming and Victim Blaming

Holly Brown, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, looked at the psychological effect of slut-shaming on boys and girls. With the buzz in the media on different issues, Brown says that adolescents may start to wonder how they are supposed to act in society to not get a negative label. Brown states: "It seems likely that my daughter will learn, before she even has breasts that she is supposed to be "hot." She is supposed to seem comfortable with her sexuality, to brandish it even, because the only thing worse than being called a slut is being called a prude."



Young girls should be comfortable with their sexuality and they should not have to be slut-shamed for wanting to represent themselves in any way. As Brown states, people should not be disqualified of competency in certain areas of their lives for taking liberties of their bodies. Focusing on other peoples' behaviors and decisions in regards to their sexuality does not raise your own self-esteem. Seeing women being slut-shamed and victim blamed in the media only paints a picture in a little boy's mind that degrading women is acceptable and just a fact of life.

Brown ends with an excellent point: "When a boy and girl have engaged in the same act, one shouldn't get high fives while the other gets averted glances, whispers, or nasty comments."

Our society should be raised to see women and girls as three-dimensional people instead of objects. Everyone should also learn from a young age that sexual expression is a healthy, normal part of growing up. No one should be criticized for wanting to express the rights we have of our bodies.

"Viewing women only as victims of men's sexual dominance fails to hold women accountable for the roles they play in reproducing social inequalities," Elizabeth Armstrong, a sociology and organizational studies professor at the University of Michigan, said in a release.

The Legal System and Sex Crimes



Rape victims may feel that the legal system does not take them seriously.

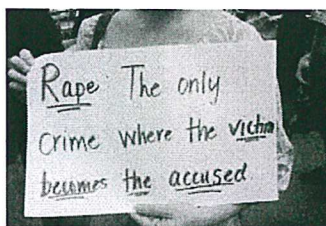
Rape actually originated as a crime against property not a crime against a person. Sweeping sex crime law reform began in the 1970s as feminists rejected the notion that women are the property of men. As a result of this activism, most states have expanded the definitions of sex crimes to eliminate disparities based on gender and marital status.

Many judges and jurors expect proof of resistance and injury to overcome a consent defense. Victims are viewed as more credible if weapons are used or victims are injured, even though this puts the victim at a disadvantage because there may have been no weapons or injuries. As a result of these biases held by police and judges, jurors often fail to convict rapists.

From a legal point of view, rape cases can be difficult to prove and alcohol and drug-facilitated rapes may involve impaired memory as well as biases against intoxicated victims. This is where slut-shaming and victim blaming come into play. The victim is made to feel like the sexual assault was their fault because of how they were dressed, how much they were drinking, etc. Rather than trying to overcome the misconceptions and challenges of rape victims, prosecutors often decide not to prosecute. The mishandling of rape and other sex crimes puts victims at a disadvantage in the criminal justice system, decreasing the rate of reporting rape and other sex crimes.

One of Australia's leading forensic clinical forensic medicine, Associate Professor David Wells, said, "There is something fundamentally wrong with the way we treat the majority of rape victims. Most never get their day in court and never get to hear the words, 'guilty as charged', the vast majority of cases the victim knows the accused and the prosecution goes nowhere."

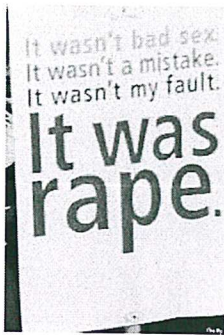
Wells states over and over again that the criminal justice system does not have a lot to offer to rape victims, so the victims fall back into the cycle of being blamed and slut-shamed for the sex crime.



Pressing Charges

There is a difference between reporting the attack and choosing to press charges. A victim may choose not to immediately press charges following a report to police for a number of reasons, a big one being emotional trauma. While there is no barrier to reporting the crime even months afterwards, contacting the police and informing them as soon as possible will allow for the strongest evidence to be brought to light.

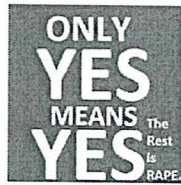
There are certain circumstances in which the prosecutor will move forward with charges based solely on the evidence presented. For instance, cases involving incidents of sexual violence may be pursued by the state regardless of the victim's decision to be involved with the investigation.



Many sexual assault cases are resolved through a plea bargain, in which the defendant agrees to plead guilty to a crime in return for a reduction in penalty (i.e. a lighter sentence). In instances in which a plea bargain is reached, there is a high probability that a victim/survivor will get justice without having to testify. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that a case will end with a plea bargain.

California's "Yes Means Yes" Law

As of September 2014, the California state Senate approved legislation to define consent when used to investigate sexual assault allegations on campuses. The law states that there must be an affirmative and conscious decision by each party to engage in sexual activity. The law requires that all colleges (public and private) that have student financial aid funding from the state must agree that resistance and drunkenness are not acceptable defenses. The bill also requires colleges and universities to adopt victim-centered sexual assault response policies and programs to prevent assault



"With this measure, we will lead the nation in bringing standards and protocols across the board so we can create an environment that's healthy, that's conducive for all students, not just for women, but for young men as well too, so young men can develop healthy patterns and boundaries as they age with the opposite sex."

- Sen. Kevin de Leon of Los Angeles

Services at The Women's Center

Always remember that Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault are crimes. We have many different resources to help you.

We have a 24/7 hotline where you will always be able to speak to an advocate:

Phone: (570) 784-6631 | Toll-free: (800) 544-8293

All services are free and confidential.

We also have a Legal Department to provide you with vital information and support with assistance in the criminal justice process. A legal advocate can assist you with Protect From Abuse (PFA) orders, legal representation, anti-stalking kits, safety planning, Victims Compensation Assistant Program (VCAP), and informational packets. If you are interested in reaching our Legal Department, please call (570) 784-6632.

If you are interested in learning more about the sources used to make this page, please check out the links below:

- [Aftermath: Working with the Criminal Justice System](#)
- [California adopts 'yes means yes' law](#)
- [Criminal justice system 'failing' most rape victims](#)
- [Rape and Sexual Assault in the Legal System](#)
- [Slut-Shaming: The Psychological Impact On Our Daughters \(And Our Sons\)](#)

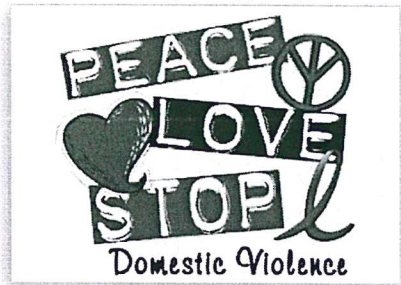
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