

## Attachment E: Myths and Facts about Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault

### Common Myths and Facts about the Causes of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault

- 1) Myth: Individuals provoke Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault<sup>1</sup> by the way they dress or when they act in a promiscuous manner.

Fact: Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault is the fault of the victim. Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault is an act of violence and control that stems f

3) *Myth*: It is not Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault

- 7) Myth: A person who has experienced Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault will report the crime immediately to the police. If they do not report it or delay in reporting it, then they must have changed their minds after it happened, wanted revenge, or didn't want to look like they were sexually active.

Fact: There are many reasons why a person may not report the assault to the police or campus officials. It is not easy to talk about being sexually assaulted and can feel very shameful. The experience of retelling what happened may cause the person to relive the trauma. Another reason for delaying a report or not making a report is the fear of retaliation by the offender. There is also the fear of being blamed, not being believed, and being required to go through judicial proceedings. Just because a person does not report the incident does not mean it did not happen.

- 8) Myth: Only heterosexual women are assaulted.

Fact: Sexual violence affects people of every gender identity and sexual orientation. While women and girls experience sexual violence at high rates, men and boys also experience sexual assault. Transgender and nonbinary individuals experience high rates of sexual violence. It is important to remember that Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault can occur in heterosexual and same-gender relationships. Assumptions about the "typical" victim might lead others not to report the assault because they do not fit the stereotypical victim profile.

- 9) Myth: It's only Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault if the victim puts up a fight and resists.

Fact: There are a number of reasons why a person who is sexually assaulted may not resist. They may experience an involuntary response to what is happening that physically prevents them from resisting or moving (sometimes called "tonic immobility"). A person may also fear that if they resist, they will anger their attacker, resulting in more severe injury. Many assault experts say that victims should trust their instincts and intuition and do what they believe will most likely keep them alive. Not fighting or resisting an attack does not equal consent.

- 10) Myth: Someone can only be sexually assaulted if a weapon was involved.

Fact: In many cases of Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Assault, a weapon is not involved. The offender often uses physical strength, physical violence, intimidation, threats, or a combination of these tactics to overpower the victim. Although the presence of a

weapon while committing the assault may result in a higher penalty or criminal charge, the absence of a weapon does not mean that the offender cannot be held responsible, criminally or otherwise, for a Sexual Assault.