

MYTHS AND MISPERCEPTIONS PART I: THE ASSAULT | Basic

IMPORTANT! This video may trigger an emotional response in some viewers who may have experienced a sexual assault or know someone who has. Before playing this video, say the following:

- In this video, sexual assault survivors share their stories—circumstances, impacts, and response experiences vary.
- These individuals give us insight into several issues that survivors of sexual assault face.
- If at any point you need to step out of the room, please do so.

NOTE: Listen for the sample responses provided below the questions. These are not all encompassing; they are ideas to generate discussion. If participants offer these answers, validate them as accurate. When participants describe misperceptions, make sure you clearly state “that is a common misperception” to differentiate fact from myth. If attendees are not participating, you can share the sample answers.

PRE-VIDEO QUESTION:

1. Think about TV shows and movies, or think back to a high-profile sexual assault case; you might pick up on some common yet inaccurate assumptions that we as a society make about sexual assault. Can you describe some of these?

- Listen for:**
- People become victims because they dressed provocatively, drank too much, etc.
 - Rapists are creepy male strangers in alleys seeking sex; all victims are female.
 - Victims frequently lie about being sexually assaulted.

- Facilitator wrap-up:**
- As we’re about to hear, these misperceptions affect victims’ recovery and how they choose to report.

POST-VIDEO QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn in this video that you did not know before—or, what was clarified for you?

Listen for: (Responses will vary.)

2. Several survivors said that the person who sexually assaulted them was someone that they knew and trusted. The message is not that we shouldn’t trust our shipmates. What else do you think they wanted you to know?

- Listen for:**
- The impact of sexual assault is tremendous!
 - It takes time to rebuild trust.
 - It can be difficult for a survivor to report, because it feels like they’re “getting this person in trouble.”
 - It can impact a survivor’s confidence in their judgment and their ability to make decisions.

3. Though common, why would a “freeze” response potentially make sexual assault victims hesitant to report?

- Listen for:**
- They may fear judgment for not reacting with a “fight” or “flight” reaction.
 - They may worry that others may accuse them of consenting, when in fact consent is not: a lack of verbal or physical resistance; submission due to force, threat of force, or fear; implied due to dress or previous sexual relationship; or possible if someone is sleeping, unconscious, or incompetent.

4. In the video, Secretary Mabus says, “There has to be a cultural change.” What does he mean by this?

- Listen for:** We in the Navy and Marine Corps need to...
- Recognize sexual assault as a crime; we need to take it seriously.
 - Accept that the perpetrator may be “the nice guy or nice girl” and refuse to tolerate it regardless.
 - Understand that victims can be male and female, and that we encourage all victims to seek care.
 - Call out low-level continuum of harm behaviors and make it known they are not acceptable.
 - Identify and squash myths and misperceptions.

MYTHS AND MISPERCEPTIONS PART I: THE ASSAULT | Advanced

IMPORTANT! This video may trigger an emotional response in some viewers who may have experienced a sexual assault or know someone who has. Before playing this video, share with participants the three bullets on top of the “Basic” guide (previous page).

NOTE: Listen for the sample responses provided below the questions. These are not all encompassing; they are ideas to generate discussion. If participants offer these answers, validate them as accurate. When participants describe misperceptions, make sure you clearly state “that is a common misperception” to differentiate fact from myth. If attendees are not participating, you can share the sample answers.

PRE-VIDEO QUESTION:

1. Think about TV shows and movies, or think back to a high-profile sexual assault case; you might pick up on some common yet inaccurate assumptions that we as a society make about sexual assault. Can you describe some of these?

Listen for:

- People become victims because they dressed provocatively, drank too much, etc.
- Rapists are creepy male strangers in alleys seeking sex; all victims are female.
- Victims frequently lie about being sexually assaulted.

Facilitator wrap-up:

- As we’re about to hear, these misperceptions affect victims’ recovery and how they choose to report.

POST-VIDEO QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn in this video that you did not know before—or, what was clarified for you?

Listen for: *(Responses will vary.)*

2. How can we maintain a healthy environment when the victim and alleged offender are in the same workplace/command?

Listen for:

- Ensure the safety of all involved parties.
- Be alert to all gossip, rumors, retaliation, revictimization, ostracism and maltreatment—and shut it down and report it.
- Ensure you (and others) remain neutral and allow the process to work.

3. Victims who don’t fit into the “male perpetrator-female victim” scenario can be especially reluctant to seek help. What can we do to help all survivors find the confidence to reach out?

Listen for:

- Reinforce the message that all victims of sexual assault are encouraged to seek assistance.
- Take all reports seriously.
- Allow the legal and investigative process to work; encourage everyone to remain professional.
- Make sure our individual biases aren’t creating a barrier to reporting.
- Educate about the reality of sexual assault to reduce the stigma.
- Talk about all types of sexual assault (male/male, male/female, female/male, female/female).

4. Secretary Mabus says, “There has to be a cultural change.” What does he mean by this?

Listen for: We in the Navy and Marine Corps need to...

- Take sexual assault seriously as a crime.
- Accept that the perpetrator may be “the nice guy or nice girl” and refuse to tolerate it regardless.
- Understand that victims can be male and female, and that we encourage all victims to seek care.
- Call out low-level continuum of harm behaviors and make it known they are not acceptable.
- Identify and squash myths and misperceptions.