

RAPE CULTURE

THE ISSUE

“Rape culture” means a culture where sexual assault is not only prominent and common, but also tacitly sanctioned through widely promoted attitudes about gender, sexuality, and violence. Rape culture is perpetuated by: misogynistic advertising; entertainment and other forms of media that sexualize violence; victim-blaming reporting of sexual assault; and the propagation of sexual assault myths.

“The transformation of a rape culture demands a revolution of values.”
–Transforming a Rape Culture⁹

DEMAND CHANGE

Everyday Actions

1. Interrupt jokes of a sexist, misogynistic, heterosexist, racist, and/or homophobic nature. If you laugh or say nothing when someone tells one of these jokes, you normalize intolerance and hate against marginalized groups.
2. Write a Letter-to-the-Editor if media coverage of sexual assault is disrespectful, objectifying, or victim-blaming.
3. E-mail complaints and concerns to advertising agencies, magazines, broadcasting companies, newspapers, etc. who participate in the production of images that degrade minorities or that glorify violence.
4. E-mail compliments to artists and public personalities who publicly take a stance against rape.
5. Refuse to buy products whose advertisements promote the notion that women should or do get sexual pleasure from being dominated or aggressed against.
6. Help dispel some commonly held rape myths: <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/3925/myths.html>
7. Teach children to be respectful of one another, and celebrate perceived differences. Model for them that everyone has different skills and abilities that are based on their various backgrounds.
8. Engage male allies. Explain that rape is not simply a women’s issue, and that men play a key role in stopping rape.

Keep Learning

9. Continue to educate yourself about rape culture by reading books, such as *Transforming a Rape Culture* by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher, and Martha Roth or by watching documentaries such as *Rape Culture* (www.cambridgedocumentaryfilms.org).
10. Learn more about the issue. Check out these Web sites for more information:
 - Feministing: www.feministing.com
 - Genderberg.com: www.genderberg.com
 - The Voices and Faces Project: www.voicesandfaces.org
 - Counterquo: www.counterquo.org
 - The Anti-Violence Resource Guide: www.feminist.com

9. Buchwald, E., Fletcher, P. & Roth, M. (eds 2005). *Transforming A Rape Culture*. Milkweed Editions.