

The myth of the stereotypical rape

Survivors that experienced assaults consistent with stereotypical perceptions of a sexual assault (e.g., perpetrator being a stranger, the perpetrator using a weapon, and the victim being physically injured) were more likely to disclose to both formal and informal support sources compared to victims/survivors who experienced non-stereotypical assaults.^{1 2} Additional findings indicate that survivors of stereotypical assaults are more likely to disclose to formal supports because the assault had characteristics that made it more “believable.”³ Fewer disclosures to police occur when factors are present that have been erroneously used to shift responsibility for sexual violence to the victim (e.g., alcohol and drug use by the victim).^{4 5} In the case of male survivors, believability has been linked to the severity of the sexual violence.⁶ ([link to Warren M and UR](#))

¹ Starzynski, L.L., Ullman, S.E., Filipas, H.H. & Townsend, S.M. (2005). Correlates of women’s sexual assault disclosure to informal and formal support sources. *Violence and Victims*, 20(4), 417-432.

² Patterson, D., Greeson, M. & Campbell, R. (2009). Understanding rape survivors’ decisions not to seek help from formal social systems. *Health & Social Work*, 34(2), 127-136.

³ Fisher, B.S., Daigle, L.E., Cullen, F.T. & Turner, M.G. (2003). Reporting sexual victimization to the police and others: Results from a national-level study of college women. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 30(1), 6-38.

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⁵ Felson, R.B. & Paré, P. (2005). The reporting of domestic violence and sexual assault by nonstrangers to the police. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 597-610.

⁶ Davies, M. (2002). Male sexual assault victims: A selective review of the literature and implications for support services. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 7, 203-214.