MYTHS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSUALT

Myths can increase the vulnerability of people with disability to assault, and worsen their suffering if they are assaulted.

1 **MYTH:** **Sexual assault is an act of passion that the offender can't control.**
FACT: Sexual assault is about power and control not sexual gratification.

2 **MYTH:** **The victim-survivor must have done something to make the assault happen**.
FACT: Sexual violence is NEVER the survivor's fault. The perpetrator is a criminal who deliberately selects the victim-survivor.

3 **MYTH:** **People will lie about being assaulted.**
FACT: It is very difficult for any victim-survivor to tell someone that they have been sexually assaulted. False reports are no higher than for any other crime.

4 **MYTH:** **Sexual assaults most often occur in public or outdoors.**
FACT: Assaults most commonly occur in or near the victim-survivor's home or a relative's home.

5 **MYTH:** **If you avoid strangers you won't be sexually assaulted.**
FACT: Most offenders are known to the victim-survivor and may be a family member or carer.

MYTHS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

6

MYTH: **There is nothing we can do to prevent sexual violence toward people with disability.**

FACT: There are many preventative strategies that can be adopted. We can promote social norms that protect against violence, intervene as a bystander, teach healthy, safe relationship skills, promote healthy sexuality, create protective, environments and support victim/survivors.

7

MYTH: **Because a person has a disability they won't be a credible witness in court.**

FACT: With the right support, a person with a disability can convincingly tell what happened to them to Police and the court.

8

MYTH: **Getting help is expensive for victim-survivors of sexual assault.**

FACT: Services such as counselling and advocacy are offered for free or at a low cost by sexual assault service providers.

9

MYTH: **You can't report an assault if it happened a long time ago.**

FACT: You can report an assault at any time. You can get advice from a sexual assault service about your options.

Myths & Facts About Sexual Violence Against People with Disabilities. https://www.ncedsv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Myths-Facts-final.pdf

Laurel House
SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT
COUNSELLING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • CHANGE