Myths and Facts about Sexual Assault

MYTH: If you do not struggle or use physical force to resist you have not been sexually assaulted.
If you are forced to have sex without your consent, you have been assaulted whether or not a struggle was involved.

MYTH: You cannot be assaulted against your will.
Assailants overpower their victim with the threat of violence or with actual violence. In cases of acquaintance rape or incest, an assailant often uses the victim's trust in assailant to isolate the victim.

MYTH: A person who has really been assaulted will be hysterical.
Survivors exhibit a spectrum of emotional responses to the assault: calm, hysteria, laughter, guilt, anger, apathy, shock. Each survivor copes with the trauma of the assault in a different way.

MYTH: Assailants are usually crazed psychopaths who do not know their victims.
As many as 80% of all assaults involve either a known acquaintance, or someone the victim has had contact with, but does not know personally.

MYTH: Many women claim they have been sexually assaulted because they want revenge upon the man they accuse.
Only 4-6% of sexual assault cases are found to be based on false accusations. This percentage of unsubstantiated cases is the same as with many other reported crimes.

MYTH: Persons who dress or act in a sexy way are asking to be sexually assaulted.
Many convicted sexual assault assailants are unable to remember what their victims looked like or were wearing.

MYTH: It is impossible to sexually assault a man.
Men fall victim for the same reasons as women: they are overwhelmed by threats or acts of physical and emotional violence. Also, most sexual assaults that involve a male victim are gang assaults, by other males.

(Tempe, Az, Crime Prevention Unit)