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Rape and consent: All you need to know and the effects

Rape is defined as “The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus or any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim” by the department of justice. Meanwhile in this case, consent is defined as a given explicit “permission for something to happen”, which also means that a person cannot consent to something they know nothing about, thus children or minors under the age of 18 or 16 in some places cannot consent to engage in sexual intercourse.

When it comes to rape, there isn’t much to talk about if we are to talk about the process or how to avoid it, because I believe the only way to truly avoid rape is to; learn how to defend oneself, stray away from going out alone, avoid dark places and places where there is no one else and make sure you know how to deal with a potential rapist. Although when it comes to effects, there is a lot we can talk about; from physical effects to emotional and psychological effects.

The physical effects of rape: these may be instantly obvious if the assailant was violent during the assault upon which the victim will definitely need hospital treatment. Other possible physical effects of rape that must be discussed is the possibility of getting a sexually transmitted disease or infection (STI), thus rape victims must immediately get themselves tested if they ever visit the hospital or clinic.

The emotional effects of rape: these are more numerous than the physical, and it varies from person to person, rape can cause; hatred for the other gender, depression, suicidal thoughts, disassociation, trauma and fear. To speak about a few; disassociation and depression, disassociation means to isolate oneself from others, which is a perfectly natural response to deal with something that your normal coping mechanism cannot handle. And lastly depression can be expected as victims start to come to terms with what has happened to them, after going through the stages of fear, embarrassment/shame, guilt and anger. Not to mention that the process of even just dealing with rape causes a lot of emotions; having to go to the police, tell them your story, wait for them to find your rapist, having medical examinations, going to court, testifying in front of a jury if it ever gets to that level. ALL of which doesn’t make things easier on the victim.

Now, when talking about consent, it must be known that consent is not a one-time thing, consent is continual. Just because a woman or man consents to doing something today doesn’t mean they’re going to do it tomorrow, a spouse or sexual partner must make sure to continually get consent, if not the other party can file a claim of rape anytime. Sexual consent means actively agreeing to be sexual with someone; sexual activity without consent is rape or sexual assault. When talking about sexual consent, believing in body cues is not enough there are a few rules when it comes to consent. Consent is not;

1. When someone says “No”
2. The absence of a “no”
3. Saying yes while you are intoxicated or otherwise incapable of giving consent
4. Not saying anything (silence)
5. Pressuring someone to say yes.

Consent is said to be as easy as FRIES; Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific. These mean it’s a choice you make whenever you want, you can take back that choice at any time, you can only consent when you know what your consenting to, you should only do what you want to do (that’s the enthusiastic part) and you have to be specific; saying yes to going to the bedroom doesn’t mean you have consented to doing anything else.

In conclusion, rape and consent goes hand in hand. One must make sure to get consent before engaging in sexual activity in order to avoid rape accusations.