

Ten Things to Consider about Sexual Assault Allegations

- 1 There's a 6% probability an allegation is false meaning there's a 94% probability it's true.
- 2 Often, when false allegations do occur, they're being used as a weapon during divorce (referred to as SAID or Sex Abuse in Divorce syndrome) and custody battles.
- 3 It is common for survivors of sexual assault to either not report or delay disclosing abuse due to the tragic prevalence of victim blaming and shaming. Those individuals who do come forth are often subjected to degradation and marginalization reinforcing the idea that it's better to suffer in silence than invite a second wave of trauma.
- 4 People who become intoxicated and buttressed with power, money, and celebrity are at risk of using their power to prey upon the vulnerable. So, although it may appear that rich and powerful celebrities are more likely to be accused of assault because an alleged victim wants to take them down or get their money, this isn't a proven phenomenon.
- 5 Misidentification of the perpetrator can happen in stranger-rape cases but rarely in acquaintance-rape unless it's unsafe for the victim to identify the real perpetrator (i.e., perpetrator threatens family members).
- 6 Initially, most perpetrators will deny their abuse. Some remain in denial even after being convicted
- 7 by the high criminal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt" (ex. Bill Cosby). It's not unusual for perpetrators to show outrage at being accused, along with sadness and anguish due to their experience of tumult and potential loss of entitlements. The tears of rage and hurt can simply be another sign that it's all about them and their needs and wants.
- 8 Despite the #MeToo movement's highlighting the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment of women, many people remain unaware that it's most likely they know more women who have been harassed or assaulted in their lifetime than women who have not.
- 9 Being quick and compulsory to blame assault survivors sends a tragic message to young men — they can use and exploit women for personal gain and satisfaction and not incur any consequences for doing so. In fact, the unrelenting patriarchal and sexist culture will enable and protect them. By not facing and addressing these realities and their painful legacy, we put women at risk and elevate lesser versions of men who end up viewing women as objects with which to score points in woeful pursuit of a toxic masculinity.
- 10 We need to raise up and celebrate better versions of men who value and respect women.
- 11 Raising relationally- and emotionally-intelligent males isn't just good for women, it's good for men.

