

# MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT SEX OFFENDERS

**MYTH:** Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers.

**FACT:** According to the U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Victimization Study (2005), 73% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a non-stranger.

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**MYTH:** The majority of sexual offenders are caught, convicted and in prison.

**FACT:** The U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Victimization Study (2005) found that 60% of sexual assaults go unreported. Factoring in the unreported cases, the National Center for Policy Analysis estimates that only about 6% of rapists will ever spend a day in jail (Crime and Punishment in America, 1999).

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**MYTH:** Children who are sexually assaulted will sexually assault others when they grow up.

**FACT:** Early childhood sexual victimization does not automatically lead to sexually aggressive behavior. While there is a higher rate of sexual abuse in the histories of sex offenders than the general population, only about 30% of adult sex offenders have been sexually abused (Becker and Murphy, 1998).

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**MYTH:** Sex offenders commit sexual crimes because they are under the influence of alcohol.

**FACT:** Annual crime reports indicate that roughly 30% of all reported sexual assaults involve alcohol use by the offender, however it is unlikely that an individual who otherwise would not commit a sexual assault would do so as a result of excessive drinking (Greenfeld, 1998).

**VOICES**  
some secrets  
should NOT be kept

*Against Sexual Assault*