RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT: DEFINITION OF TERMS

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**Rape:** A sexual assault involving some type of penetration (i.e., vaginal, oral, or anal) due to force or threat of force; lack of consent; or inability of the victim to provide consent due to age, intoxication, or mental status. Rape laws vary by State; however, the aforementioned description conforms to the definition used at the Federal level and by most States.

**Date rape:** Rape committed by someone that the victim is dating. Among college students, approximately one-half of all rapes are committed by a date.

**Acquaintance rape:** Rape committed by someone that the victim knows, such as an acquaintance, friend, co-worker, date, or spouse. Most rapes are acquaintance rapes.

**Stranger rape:** Rape committed by someone that the victim does not know. Less than 20 percent of rapes are committed by strangers, although most people believe that stranger rape is the prototypical rape.

**Alcohol-involved rape:** Rape in which the perpetrator, the victim, or both are under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident.

**Marital rape:** Rape committed by the victim's spouse. Marital rape often is committed in association with verbal and physical abuse.

**Attempted rape:** An act that fits the definition of rape, in terms of the strategies used, but does not result in penetration.

**Sexual assault:** The full range of forced sexual acts, including forced touching or kissing; verbally coerced intercourse; and vaginal, oral, and anal penetration. Researchers typically include in this category only acts of this nature that occur during adolescence or adulthood; in other words, childhood sexual abuse is defined separately. Both men and women can be sexually assaulted and can commit sexual assault. The vast majority of sexual assaults, however, involve male perpetrators and female victims.

**Alcohol expectancies:** A person's beliefs about the effects that alcohol consumption will have on himself or herself as well as on other people.