



### **Slut Shaming and Rape Culture**

Roughly 1 in 6 women and girls, 1 in 10 men and boys and 21% of trans college student experience sexual assault and those numbers are consistent over the past decade. We collectively perpetuate a culture where rape is normal and allowed to thrive. Rape culture is rooted in a puritanical foundation (as much of our culture is), it can be witnessed in our use of language, objectification of bodies, glamorization of sexual violence, a trivializing of sexual assault, a dramatic misunderstanding of sex and human behavior... this creates a society that disregards victims' rights and safety and is even entertained and aroused by sexual violence. Media and entertainment also shapes our beliefs and values.

To further complicate it, our roles in this culture are unclear and damaging. Men and boys live with unrealistic expectations surrounding their masculinity, their sexual prois, their ability to provide or generate wealth- these expectations damage their emotional and phycological wellbeing and hinders their ability to be whole and loving human beings. Women and girls live with complicated sexual expectations where they are expected to walk the fine line of being “the lady in the street and the freak in the sheets”, their worth is often wrapped up in their appearance, their voice is discouraged and/or disparaged, and they suffer from body image issues including a dramatic fear of aging. People who identify as trans experience the same complicated gender issues, but their experience is compounded by the limitations and violence of being non-binary in a binary society. When we step outside of our designated gender roles, there is a tangible price to pay.

Slut shaming plays a direct role as it is related to victim blaming. This presentation will explore the phenomena and its relationship to access to justice, investigation and prosecution.

Sex offenders thrive in this rape-prone, rape myth-accepting culture. This presentation will explore many societal myths and bias that enable sex offenders to operate successfully without suspicion and detection. We will discuss the strategies they use to deceive us, why they do what they do and how we can peer through the fog and identify them to expose their horrific acts. This session will take what we've been taught about typical offender typologies and compare what we think we know with empirical research and current state of knowledge. Participants will be presented with up-to-date research, case studies, and strategies on understanding sex offenders from a criminal justice viewpoint. Evidence on how offenders, not only groom and manipulate victims, but also their own community: coworkers, friends, relatives, neighbors--- **and the professionals** who are charged with catching them.

This presentation will also take a critical look at the impact of media and the entertainment industry that promulgates many cultural beliefs surrounding the issue of sexual violence.

**Sexual assault victims don't witness sexual assault, they experience it**, and the impact can be significant. We will explore what we now know about the neuroscience of sexual trauma and suggest better response modalities. We can do better. We will build on education, theories, promising best practices, and research to actively and intentionally change our culture to reduce—with a vision, to possibly eliminate the likelihood of sexual assault in our society.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Defining Slut-Shaming and how it relates to Victim Blaming, Rape and Justice
- Identify rape myths that enable sex offenders to thrive in our society
- Take a critical look at “main stream” representations of sex and sexuality
- Consider porn and its role in rape culture
- Understand the impact and neuroscience of sexual assault
- Define culture change and implement actions to create positive change