

Lincoln Coalition Against Rape holds rape escape workshop

By Mary Kay Roth.

"No woman should be a passive rape victim, and I'm going to teach you how to fight it," Gina Washburn, a UNL student said Wednesday afternoon at this week's Women/Speak '74.

This week the Lincoln Coalition Against Rape sponsored a workshop aimed at awakening women to facts, figures and preventative measures of rape. Representatives from the coalition included Washburn; Linda Steinman, a Lincoln police officer and Mary Heppner, of the Women's Resource Center.

Heppner attempted to quash popular myths surrounding the crime of rape.

"Chances are you won't be raped by a sex-starved deviant that you have never seen before," Heppner predicted. She said 48 per cent of rapists in the United States are friends or neighbors of their victims.

She attributed this fact to the way in which men are conditioned to act aggressively and "take whatever they want."

In the same way, she said, women are socialized to dress and behave in ways that are appealing to men. Another myth evolves from this situation, Heppner explained, because rape victims are often accused of provoking the rapist.

Violent crime

"No woman deserves to be raped because of the way she dresses, walks or acts. She deserves by law not to be raped," Heppner emphasized.

She said it is time the public realizes that police departments consider rape a violent crime.

Washburn, an amateur in self-defense techniques, agreed. She said that the victim should also treat the rapist in the same violent manner.

"Let him know that if he's planning to rape you, he's going to have a rough time," Washburn said.

She proceeded to demonstrate various methods of defense and attack to use on a rapist. She borrowed a member of the audience to illustrate especially vulnerable areas to aim at—throat, thorax, temples, eyes, behind the ear lobes, lymph glands and the groin area.

A woman in danger of being raped

should use any available means of defense, Washburn suggested, for instance: a lighted cigarette, a hair pin, a nail file, an umbrella or even a plastic lemon filled with ammonia or lemon juice.

Preventative measures

Washburn said a woman could also use her body to defend herself—bumping with the head, kicking and scraping shins, bending joints backward and jabbing with elbows.

She also offered preventative measures every woman should apply out of common sense. Lighting should be present throughout a woman's neighborhood, doors should be locked, curtains drawn at the proper times and a woman should always be prepared.

"Above all, look self-confident," Washburn advised, "and stand ready to run if you need to."

If all defenses fail and a woman is raped, police officer Steinman urged women to report the crime. It is unfortunate that only one in ten rapes are reported in the United States, Steinman said, due to unfounded guilt feelings and fears on the part of the victim.

Only female officers

It is now a policy of the Lincoln Police Dept. that only female police officers will deal with rape victims. Steinman said she hoped this would encourage women to report rapes, because female officers could be more empathetic with rape victims.

"They won't have to report to a cynical police officer," she explained, "who might doubt their story."

Steinman said a rape victim shouldn't change her state of being in any way, such as changing clothes or showering.

She should immediately call the police and they will take her to the hospital for a complete physical examination.

Although she might be questioned several times, Steinman stressed, the female officer will conduct all interviews.

Although the county and state courts have been fairly sympathetic to rape victims' needs, Steinman said, new legislation is still needed.

She said new legislation is now being drafted for the 1975 Unicameral, which will improve present procedures.



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