

Sexual Abuse Violence Education

Imagining the Solution 2013

Rape Crisis

- Our philosophy defines sexual violence as an umbrella term where rape is considered a specific form of sexual abuse and sexual abuse encompasses any form of unwanted sexual contact and non-contact. Contrary to New Zealand law, we consider rape to be all sexual acts that are forced upon unwilling participants, not specifically penis to vagina. We also consider all forms of coercion, not only physical, to constitute rape.

Rape Crisis

- Rape Crisis philosophy does not create a hierarchy of violence
- It does not consider any act of sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'more serious' than any other act
- We acknowledge that all acts of sexual violence are a degradation of a person's whole self and that "rape and the fear of rape affect all women all of the time"

Gender

- Judith Butler: gender, rather than being natural is constitutive and a subject is brought into being through performing social norms and therefore it becomes a man or a woman.
- One performs gender roles because there is nothing else to perform, to exist in any meaningful way is to exist in relation to regulatory norms and we are constituted as gendered subjects through the repeated performance of these socially determined norms.
- Fundamental to these norms of gender is the construction of heterosexuality as 'natural' and benign and these norms act to police and create compulsory heterosexuality

(Hetero) Sexuality

- Hollway (1986) the 'male sex drive' discourse. Men are constructed as having a 'need' for sex which is natural and necessary.
- Women have a 'lack' of desire (problematic) they are only interested in sex as a means of gaining emotional feeling. The 'have and hold' discourse.
- Women are 'gate keepers' they decide when to 'let' men fulfill their 'need' for sex.
- The 'coital imperative' penis to vagina sex is compulsory.

Gender roles and sexual violence

- Research has highlighted that rape proclivity is strongly associated with hyper masculinity or the tendency to over conform with male gender role expectancy (Berkowitz, n.d.).
- Violence against women is more likely in contexts where manhood is culturally defined in strong opposition to femininity, where masculinity is linked to dominance, toughness or male honour (Hong, 2000).

Resignification

- Gender is perceived as natural and uninfluenced by society. If we highlight the ways that gender is constructed we can remove the 'taken for grantedness' of how things are done and we can show that things may be different from the way they currently are (Sanger, 2008).
- Thus Butler believes that resistance is possible upon the understanding of performativity as performativity and that 'resignification' (resistance or change) is possible if actors refuse gender on the grounds of nature and incorrectly cite or perform gendered norms

Rape Myth

- Surveys show that 56% of people think women are to blame for sexual violence. 23% believe survivors are to blame if they danced suggestively and 31 percent thought she was to blame if she wore provocative clothes and 30% if she had been drinking (Shugart, 1994).
- This is in line with other research that suggests that most frequently endorsed rape myths are those which suggest the survivor is somehow responsible (Franiuk, Seefeldt, & Vandello, 2008).
- These rape myths have significant impacts for survivors who are much less likely to understand their experience as sexual violence because it does not fit a 'real rape' scenario.
- Survivors who believe rape myth are less likely to report their assaults due to fear of judgement, self blame and fear of not being believed and are more likely to experience severe and long term psychological effects

Rape Myth

- The endorsement of rape myth is connected with hostile attitudes towards women, support of rigid gender roles and less sympathy for survivors.
- Men's endorsement of rape myth is also associated with men's likelihood to report sexual aggression, current and past use of sexually abusive behaviour and non-sexual aggression towards women.
- Strong belief in rape myth is also found to decrease men's ability to recognise their own behaviour as sexually abusive.