Rape Culture

What is the "Rape Culture?"

Rape Culture is an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence against women is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. Rape culture is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the objectification of women's bodies, and the glamorization of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women's rights and safety.

Rape Culture affects every woman. The rape of one woman is a degradation, terror, and limitation to all women. Most women and girls limit their behavior because of the existence of rape. Most women and girls live in fear of rape. Men, in general, do not. That's how rape functions as a powerful means by which the whole female population is held in a subordinate position to the whole male population, even though many men don't rape, and many women are never victims of rape. This cycle of fear is the legacy of Rape Culture.

Examples of Rape Culture:

- Blaming the victim ("She asked for it!")
- Trivializing sexual assault ("Boys will be boys!")
- Sexually explicit jokes
- Tolerance of sexual harassment
- Inflating false rape report statistics
- Publicly scrutinizing a victim's dress, mental state, motives, and history
- Gratuitous gendered violence in movies and television
- Defining "manhood" as dominant and sexually aggressive
- Defining "womanhood" as submissive and sexually passive
- Pressure on men to "score"
- Pressure on women to not appear "cold"
- Assuming only promiscuous women get raped
- Assuming that men don't get raped or that only "weak" men get raped
- Refusing to take rape accusations seriously
- Teaching women to avoid getting raped instead of teaching men not to rape

How can men and women combat Rape Culture?

- Avoid using language that objectifies or degrades women
- Speak out if you hear someone else making an offensive joke or trivializing rape
- If a friend says she has been raped, take her seriously and be supportive
- Think critically about the media's messages about women, men, relationships, and violence

- Be respectful of others' physical space even in casual situations
- Always communicate with sexual partners and do not assume consent
- Define your own manhood or womanhood. Do not let stereotypes shape your actions.
- Get involved! Join a student or community group working to end violence against women.

Sourced from http://www.marshall.edu/wpmu/wcenter/sexual-assault/rape-culture/