Language in News Media Regarding the Victim Precipitation and Sexual Assault of Women

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Keywords
victim precipitation, sexual assault, rape, influence of language in news media, news media

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Language in News Media Regarding the Victim Precipitation and the Sexual Assault of Women

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Abstract
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Introduction
A statistic from Steve Barkan’s widely read and referenced textbook work Criminology: A Sociological Understanding revealed that approximately seven percent of women around the world have been sexually assaulted or raped by a non-intimate person in their lives (Barkan 221). Hypothetically speaking, if the populations of men and women were equal amongst the roughly estimated seven billion people living on planet Earth, then roughly 245,000,000 women have been sexually assaulted or raped during their lifetime. Unfortunately, this statistic only accounts for cases of violence against women that that have been reported. For centuries, women have been targeted for violence, because they were treated as less than men.

These ideals of inferiority have permeated into modern society and have allowed women to continue to be targeted and blamed for whatever unfortunate affairs befall them. Mass media plays a role in the way women are viewed in society, and has proven to be a powerful distributor of information because they provide convenience for the majority. Victim precipitation is often considered when determining where to place blame for a crime, and the media is often brought into discussion when analyzing why victim precipitation is so prevalent in public opinion. The language used in mass media sources, such as print media, television news broadcasts, and news coverage websites on the internet, amplify victim precipitation, and reinforce this dominant ideology that we can control our own victimization.

Defining Victim Precipitation
Victim precipitation can be defined simply as blaming a victim for his or her own victimization. In more detail, it is the idea that the victim’s actions, decisions, locations, word exchanges, etc., led the victim to his or her victimization. In theory, when someone commits a criminal act he or she should be held accountable and solely responsible. However, in reality this is not the case. There is a dominant ideology that victims bear some of the blame for what happened to them. Some theories, regarding lifestyle and routine activities, fuel the ideology “that people would be safer from crime if they changed their behavior,” thus bestowing some of the responsibility to the victim (Barkan 77). Bearing responsibility
means controlling other people’s behavior, leaving women with “the burden of avoiding rape,” since society is “fed common myths about the nature of rape” (Barkan 77). Victim precipitation is applicable to any victimization, but this argument will focus exclusively on the sexual assault and rape of women.

In order to understand the influence the media has on victim precipitation and why it is the popular belief, we need to understand first the ideologies and contributing factors that underlie or are related to victim precipitation. The explanations of these ideas are provided in the next several sections to give a more factual based and sociological understanding of why victim precipitation is so prevalent, and how its popularity permeates into media coverage. The most substantial underlying cause of victim precipitation involves gender, and the societal norms for each.

Gender Polarization

There is a multifaceted mentality that is partially responsible for the widespread belief of victim precipitation. This mentality is a control myth, or a societal belief, used to maintain control of the public. This belief concerns gender and how as a society, we try to polarize it. Gender polarization plays a monumental role in the victimization of women, because it is used to justify a man's violent or aggressive behavior. Barkan briefly states that “women are the primary target in rape and sexual assault precisely because they are women,” asserting that the fundamental reason for women being more frequently victimized (specifically for sexual assault and rape), is because they are women (220). Studies have compared rape to victim-blaming manipulated by gender, to determine if there were different types of blame between female and male victims, or if there was a statistically significant difference in the amount of blame on a female victim and a male victim. Two studies found such results, stating “female rape victims were blamed for a stranger rape based on the distinctions between behavioral and characterological blame, such as “being careless or too trusting” (Davies and Rogers 369; van der Bruggen and Grubb 525). The results attributed women's behavior to their own victimizations, and how women have historically been victims of sexual assault and rape more than men.

Women are frequently victimized because societal gender polarization enables them to be dehumanized and objectified by strangers of the opposite sex. To objectify is to present something as an object in the physical sense and thereby externalizing the object. Women are sexually objectified by men, making it easier for them to be violated and mistreated. Externalizing an object or person makes it is easier to damage, because it exists outside the realm of conscious thought. It is difficult for humans to hurt their loved ones, because we value their life and well-being. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) states that "nonstrangers commit 74% of women's victimizations, “which relays the idea that we do not try to hurt our loved ones (Barkan 71). A non-stranger is a general term, for most non-stranger offenders are not family members or friends but rather acquaintances.

Men and women are sexually polarized because of the conventional wisdom that men and women are not alike, and this separation creates sexual double standards. In her book The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality, Sandra Lipsitz Bem condemns our social lives for the differences in gender: social life is so linked to this distinction that the all-encompassing division between masculine and feminine [qualities] still pervade virtually every aspect of human experience, including not just modes
of dress and social roles but ways of expressing emotion and experiencing sexual desire (Bem 80).

The idea that men have sexual freedom and women do not is an existing sexual double standard, which creates difference between genders in regard to sexual behavior. Stereotypically, men are known to have a high sex drive, and according to gender polarization ideals this means women have a low sex drive. Kevin Clarke, a sociologist and professor at St. John Fisher College, discussed gender polarization and explained that having a high sex drive forces men, by nature, to be more sexually aggressive (Clarke). Sexual aggression is a double standard for men that creates a notion that “[they] have to make the first move,” alluding that the only way a man will be able to have sex is if he is aggressive or proactive. Also the “traditional component of masculinity [says] that men are more masculine, or ‘studs,’ if they have a lot of sex” is still very present in society today (Barkan 230). Men are sexually aggressive and when aroused are said to be “out of control,” which means women are sexually passive and are in “complete control” when aroused (Bem). This idea leads people to believe that because women are in complete control, they are responsible for what happens to them. Since men are perceived as out of control, women are therefore responsible for being in control of themselves and of the men around them. While in control, it is believed that they should be able to prevent and curb their own victimization (Clarke). If a women is sexually assaulted or raped, then she is at fault because she should have done more to stop it from happening. She needed to prevent her assault because her male counterpart could not, since he was physically incapable of controlling his sexual urges.

A Control Myth: “Beauty is a Woman’s Greatest Asset”

In several lectures that took place at Saint John Fisher College in an elective Criminology course, Sociologist and Professor Kevin W. Clarke discussed the pieces of a control myth regarding a woman’s beauty and sexuality. He explained how women are taught that “their beauty and sexuality are their greatest assets,” which influences beliefs in victim precipitation. This control myth is also related to gender differences. Since women are told that beauty is the most important feature, they flaunt it and change their behavior, in order to conform to the expectations they are being taught. Conformity is an issue because it “deemphasizes everything else about woman,” like intelligence, accomplishments, and other important features about their personalities (Clarke). Women and adolescent girls who believe in this myth may then dress more provocatively, or in such a way that they think will receive more attention. In some cases, a woman’s attire is one of the reasons she is victimized, because some people believe dressing provocatively suggests that she wants to participate in sexual activity. This is explained in more detail in another section (Rape Myths).

Conformity is related to the term “interpersonal power,” which is related to women controlling men's behaviors since they are incapable of doing so themselves (Clarke). Interpersonal power is getting people to do things for oneself. In this case, it means women getting what they want by having men do it for them. Clarke used buying alcohol at a bar as an example of interpersonal power. Women rarely buy drinks for themselves, because men are supposed to buy the drinks, in the same way that men are supposed to “make the first move,” or sexual advance, even though they are said to be out of control. The idea is that
a woman controls a man and can force him to buy her drinks, and has the power to get him to do whatever she likes (Clarke). Therefore, if a woman is alone at a bar and dressed provocatively or boldly, it is assumed that she has the interpersonal power to control the men around her. This example reinforces that beauty and sexuality are perceived as the most important features of a woman, because that is how she will get attention and gain control of men, so therefore, women are trying to get attention using their bodies and not their minds.

Conformity, beauty, and sexuality are also encouraged by what we are exposed to through the sex industry. This attribute is slightly out reaching or a bit of a stretch but still very relevant to conformity and how we believe beauty and sexuality are of most importance. During his lecture, Professor Clarke broadly defined the sex industry, by creating a continuum starting with bartending and ending with prostitution and the porn industry. The United States has allowed people make money from the sex industry in many ways, and the exposure to this industry has affected the way women behave. Our society has created the notion that a woman is desirable if she wants to have sex, and if a woman wants to be desired she may feel pressured to conform to this illusion. Modeling companies such as Victoria's Secret, and occupations such as swimsuit or nude models, exotic dancers, prostitutes, and porn stars sexually objectify women; feeding the notion that women want to have sex and are more desired if they are willing to give sex (Clarke). This supports the idea that women ask for sex, and if they are victims of sexual assault or rape they deserved it, because they ask to be desired. Thus, they precipitate their own victimization.

The three pieces of this control myth: conformity, interpersonal power, and the sex industry, dehumanize and sexually objectify women, and promote violence against women. They augment victim precipitation because they are allowing young girls and women to believe beauty, sexuality, and body language are the sole way of getting what they want from men, assuming the only thing women want is a man's attention. This insinuates that women bear some blame for their victimization, because they wanted to feel desired or craved.

**Public Control of Women's Behavior**

Gender roles, beauty, and sexuality control myths also control a woman's behavior in public. Students in Professor Clarke's criminology class created a list rules they believed women were taught to follow while in public. This list included: (1) travel in groups, (2) alcohol consumption must be limited, (3) be conscious of what they wear, (4) be alert or on guard, (5) places they travel to (destinations) are restricted, (6) be more tied to social networks and technology (cell phones, pagers, etc.) for their safety, and (7) restrict their movements or hold themselves (physically) appropriately. Though these factors require more research and analysis to generalize their validity to the entire population, they make a statement attesting to what limitations college students think women have. The extent to which women are persistently victimized and sexually violated has created a sense of paranoia and a set of rules intended to help women avoid being raped. Men do not live with a list of rules, and the list put together by Professor Clarke’s students is not much different than the set of rules the public enforces on women, where the public is an intangible being enforcing rules founded on gender norms. These “rules” illustrate how much environment controls women’s behavior. Professor Clarke described this illustration as a “hidden message” which supports male dominance, and tells women “they do not
belong here [in public].” Likewise, if a woman is assaulted in public, she deserved it and precipitated her victimization, because she does not belong in public to begin with.

**Rape Myths**

Victim precipitation is an ideology, but it is also one of two common rape myths that exist in the United States. Barkan briefly describes this myth as the belief that “women ‘ask’ or ‘deserve’ to be raped by the way they dress and/or behave and thus precipitate their own victimization” (230). This means “if a woman dresses attractively, drinks, walks into a bar by herself, or hitchhikes, she wants to have sex” (230). In this view, her decisions, actions, and behaviors brought upon her victimization. It is the thought that if rape occurs under these circumstances, then veritably she wanted it to happen, and deserved it. This coexists with the belief that there is such a thing as a “real rape,” and only occur when an injury is present, when there is evidence of forced intercourse, or when the women did not dress in a way that may have suggested that she wanted to participate in sexual activity (230). Unfortunately, most rape does not consist of signs of physical trauma, and what people consider to be appropriate dress attire or dress that suggests sexual behavior is subjective and extremely individualistic. It may be postulated that a woman wanted to engage in sexual activity when realistically she did not want to do so. ‘Real rape’ is an example of how people objectify strangers, allowing them to justify their violent or abrasive actions. This belief is equivalent to thinking that a woman who is wearing a mini-skirt wants to have sex when that is in no way the literal meaning. Assuming women ask for sex by their location or the way they dress does not give consent to participate in sexual activity.

The other common rape myth also deals with a woman’s decisions and behaviors, specifically in clothing, but centers around the idea that women fantasize about rape and being raped, and therefore ‘ask’ to be raped. Barkan confesses that “traditional psychoanalytic views of women support the idea that they want to be raped,” and contrary to definition, rape is consensual (230). According to this myth, women secretly want to be raped and fantasize about a man raping them. Psychoanalyst Karen Horney stated “what the women secretly desires in intercourse is rape and violence, or in the mental sphere, humiliation” (Horney 24). This means that women want to be humiliated by being taken advantage of, violated, or raped. Barkan also references psychoanalyst, Ner Littner, who proposed the idea of two different types of victims: the ‘professional victim’ and the ‘true victim;’ a professional victim unconsciously wants to be raped, whereas the true victim unconsciously does not want to be raped (Barkan 230). These ideas lead men to believe that women want to be raped despite the claim ‘no means no,’ and that they “find the idea of forcing a women to submit to them to be sexually stimulating,” and as a result, may choose to rape a woman because subconsciously she is asking for it (230).

These rape myths complicate the definition of consent, and the next section discusses the problems with consent and rape laws, and how they are related to rape and control myths, and gender polarization.

**The Issue of Consent in Sexual Assault and Rape**

One of the reasons rape offenders are rarely convicted is because the definition of consent is ambiguous, and what people consider is consenting to sexual activity varies from person to person. Issues with consent are tightly related to rape myths and how they influence people's perceptions of what is required for a sexual act to be considered rape. Martha Burt in her
forthcoming work *Confronting Rape and Sexual Assault*, states that “in a world without rape myths, the general public would understand that every act of coerced sex involving penetration is rape” and that it “does not require resistance on the part of the victim. Its critical elements are that sexual acts have occurred against the victim's will” (Burt 129). Many people believe that resistance must be present in order for rape to occur so this creates discrepancies in the true definition of rape and consent. Experts struggle with defining each term and who has to power to do so. However, rape is defined inclusively and exclusively. Burt explains these thoroughly:

_People whose definitions are at the inclusive extreme believe that all coerced sex is rape, whether the coercion used is physical, psychological, or economic. Those whose definitions lie at the restrictive extreme (exclusive) believe that there is no such thing as rape □ no matter what occurred, these people will find a way, using rape myths, to conclude that no rape happened. Most people’s definition of rape falls somewhere between these two extremes, including some of the coerced sex but also excluding many on the basis of belief in rape myths_ (Burt 129-130).

Varying degrees of what people consider is rape promotes violent behavior, because there is no concrete, rigid definition accepted by the majority of people. In theory, a victim should not bear any responsibility if he or she is sexually assaulted, but different presumptions of rape and consent render the victim to share part of the blame. Having mixed views about consent makes it difficult for observers to declare what acts would be considered coerced and unwanted sexual advances, and which are mutually desired. Wary explanations lead observers to believe that victims generate their own victimization, thus making them at least partly responsible for what happened to them and other men's behavior.

**The “Belief in a Just World” Theory**

Compared to the rest of the western democratic nations, the United States has a very high sexual assault and rape of women rate and it is considered a ‘rape prone’ society. Approximately 27% of sexual assaults and rapes are reported, and less than half of them result in an arrest (Clarke). To combat these statistics, an anti-sexual assault organization named RAINN found that only 2% of rapists will serve a day in prison (RAINN). In our society we have a tendency to blame the victim for reasons mentioned like gender differences, beliefs that women ask, fantasize, and deserve to be raped, and the ambiguity of consent, but we also want to believe that we live in a ‘just world.’ A ‘just world’ is synonymous with karma, or what goes around come back around. The belief in a just world is ‘that if I am good and I behave, nothing bad will happen to me’ (Clarke). This notion allows us to believe that if someone is attacked in some way, he or she must have provoked it, because according to this theory, humans cannot be so vicious to attack another person without instigation. In the case of rape, this assumes women aid their victimization because they did not behave, and so karma is punishing them for their wrong-doings. In this sense, it “gives people a sense of control, order, and justice” and a sort of reassurance that we control what happens to us, and can also dictate our victimization (van der Bruggen and Grubb 524).

**The Influence of the Media's Use of Language**

Now that we have explored numerous factors that account for victim
precipitation, it is time to discuss and understand how influential the media is on people and how we perceive others in regards to sexual assault and rape. All of the mentioned concepts contribute to the reasons why we believe in rape myths with little factual fundamentals to them. The media feeds off of these ideologies because the people who run media believe in them as well, and are just as vulnerable to believing in them and implementing those beliefs into broadcasts or news reports. Broadcasting about a rape case on television or writing about it for a website or newspaper under the assumptions that victim precipitation is true may expose some biases or predisposed notions of what happened and who is at fault. Though the news is supposed to be strictly factually based information, the language used in the media often portrays female victims of sexual assault and rape as responsible for their own misfortune, and implies that women can control their own victimization.

Mass media and news coverage companies are privately owned, and as businesses they hold primary goal of making money. The media turns a profit from the commercials aired in between broadcasts and advertisements included on the web pages or newspapers. The amount a company is charged to include a commercial on a particular news source depends on the duration of each commercial, and more importantly how many people watch that station, subscribe to online reports, or read the newspaper, which makes news companies biased towards the number of viewers their stations have each week (Clarke). We choose to believe that the news media provides accurate information, but realistically it provides content that will maximize viewers.

There is a saying in journalism that goes, ‘if it bleeds it leads.’ This refers to stories about violent crimes, because those kinds of stories bring in the most viewers and therefore the most revenue. The media focuses heavily on violent crime because as a majority, people “love violent content,” and we are drawn to it because it evokes fear (Clarke). There are a small number of people who determine what the public will or will not see and they “gate keep” or censor the information to their liking (Viano 43). Gatekeepers have a substantial amount of control and power as to how the public will respond to the received information, and the people in charge of dispersing news information are biased towards increasing the number of viewers by devoting attention to the stories people want to hear regardless if they are realistic or even true. They are biased towards how much revenue they can produce. For these reasons, public opinion is often inaccurate. People make assumptions because they take the news' word for the stories they provide, rather than examining all available avenues of evidence.

Print and online news websites
Unlike television news, print media and online news websites provide more contextually based information about crime, however their stories “include graphic depictions of grief, anguish, victims in embarrassing (e.g., nudity), gruesome and bloody situations” (Viano 44). This is particularly relevant to cases discussed in the media but have not been closed by law enforcement. Media will sensationalize reports by “ignoring the actual victim and focusing on the offender,” which Emilio Viano says is “superficial,” in his text “Victims, Crime, and the Media. Competing Interests in the Electronic Society” (44). These approach gives print media and online websites the opportunity to portray the individuals involved in a way that best fits their headlines and angle for the story. Their version of what happened is then interjected to the public. Viano also notes that different
types of media “often describe victims selectively and negatively, utilizing stereotypes that lead to the actual blaming of the victim” (44-45). Print media and online news websites use elaborate headlines and draw from existing stereotypes, which can lead people to reinforce the idea that victims precipitate their own victimization. Stereotypes regarding female sexuality mentioned before (fantasizing rape, deserving of being raped due to the way they dress or where they go, etc.) encourage people to believe that they could have controlled their victimization, and are to blame more so than their attacker.

**Television News Broadcasts**

Television news broadcasts can be considered the guiltiest of the three media sources for implementing victim precipitation into information they share with the public. This is because can viewers can visualize their opinions. Intuitively, television news broadcasts are mostly filmed in a live studio, and the viewers can see the broadcasters’ faces. The smallest nonverbal cues (e.g., tone changes, head tilts, eyebrows raises, or hand gestures) can indicate their opinion on the information. In addition, “television news and crime-reality programs appear to have the strongest effects on perceptions of crime risk and fear of crime,” and if their words are able to elicit fear in their viewers’ minds, it will be easier to convince their viewers what they are saying has validity (Rosenberger and Callanan 6). This concept is the same in regards to electing blame for a rape or sexual assault charge because “television news is likely to be framed in a way that elicits an emotional response from its viewers by often depicting the most gruesome and heinous crimes with little or no contextual-level analysis” (6). Too often during news reports does the public hear, “she (the victim) was in fact, drinking” or something to a similar extent. The word “drinking” could be replaced with “walking alone at night” or “dressed provocatively;” regardless, the words “in fact” are what should be given attention. They imply that she precipitated her own victimization, because according to the broadcast, her consumption of alcohol is the only variable that could have provoked her attack. There is normally no mention of any other factors which could have led to her attack.

Rosenberger and Callanan also included in their study, “The Influence of Media on Penal Attitudes,” that “although there are differences between media channels and various crime-related genres, the literature suggests that crime-related media may have similar influence on viewers’ opinions about crime,” and they attest this to "the way in which crime-related media usually frame representations of crime and the criminal justice system" (7). News media does not want to portray the criminal justice system as inadequate or incapable of performing their duties to the public. Doing so has the potential to cause unrest for the company as a whole, and so some information about what actually happened may not be disclosed to the public. The media censors information in order to “help viewers interpret [the] media[‘s] representations of crime” (Rosenberger and Callanan7). As mentioned before, the media’s representation, or more accurately their interpretation of crime, may not be completely truthful. The media’s use of censorship in their language enables them to twist the truth of a story, and they may alter the truth in order to blame the victim for what happened in order to spice up their broadcast.

**Changes must be Made Immediately**

Victim precipitation has become a part of traditional thought. The purpose of this analysis is to shed light on these beliefs,
and illustrate how they are forcing women to fight a battle that they will inevitably lose. This ideology challenges the "innocent until proven guilty" civil rights guarantee that the United States provides its citizens, but in reality there is no competition because women have been already presumed guilty. We are concerned about everyone’s equal treatment, and, historically, this country has fought for fairness because equality surpasses everything else. Fairness is all we seem to be concerned about, and the true American way is to protest what or who makes society unfair. This idea begs many questions about the reality in American justice women face. What is fair about blaming women for their victimization? What is fair about deeming women responsible, not just for their own, but other people’s behavior, as a means of deterring violent behavior? How is it fair that women have to restrict themselves in public because it is the “best way” to avoid being sexually assaulted? Especially, when their male counterparts do not live with these restrictions. Most importantly, what is fair about being so afraid of others’ perceptions and predispositions that many women choose not to come forward because they are afraid of being blamed for what happened to them? There is no justice in victim precipitation.

If, as a nation, we are so adamant about equality and fairness, then we should not allow the media and others to portray women this way. If we are going to fight for equality in the treatment of the sexes, we cannot pick and choose who lives equally and who falls short. Changes must be made immediately. I recognize the challenges I make against traditional ideology, and I know this fight will not be easy, but I am asking for help. I cannot make a difference by myself; it needs to be a united effort. I want all women and young girls who have been hurt, violated, and taken advantage of to know that there are others here to help. I am here to be your voice and advocate for your justice. Please do not stay silent; it will only cause you more pain. You have your own voices and I will be your shoulder to lean on until you are ready to speak up. You are strong and you will heal. In the words of Mariska Hargitay, “we hear you. You have suffered enough. Your healing ☝ and pursuit of justice ☝ are our priorities” (Hargitay). It is time for everyone to speak for those who remain voiceless.

Ways to Reduce Victim Precipitation and Violence against Women

In order to reduce and possibly eliminate victim precipitation, and more generally violence against women, we need to change the way we think. In other words, we have to change the nature and norms of thought. I believe that violence against women is, as Barkan describes it, “a consequence of gender inequality” and “the nature of masculinity” (235). Victim precipitation is highly related to gender differences and society’s relentless efforts to polarize men and women. It is true that there are clear physical differences between men and women, but intellectually and psychosocially men and women are more alike than we care to admit. Of course there are discrepancies in these two areas as well, but men and women are not entirely perpendicular. Barkan states “if violence against women is consequence of gender inequality, to reduce it we must first reduce male dominance,” and we need to stop portraying men to be better and more ideal than women (235). If gender inequality causes women to be raped more frequently, then we need to explore “on a massive scale” the reasons for sexual inequality in our society (Barkan 235). There needs to be more effort in making men and women equal. We cannot continue to think that women precipitate their own demise because
men have no control of the sexual urges or needs. That is not fair to either gender. Women cannot bear the burden of being responsible for both their behavior and that of the men around them, and it is not fair to say that men are incapable of controlling themselves, because that would make them inferior. We have to start treating the opposite sex as our equal and not the lesser.

Secondly, the “nature of masculinity” needs to be reformed. It is true that “the violent nature of masculinity underlies much violent crime[s],” and if we teach men and young boys to be violent “it is no surprise that they commit violence against women” (Barkan 235). Masculinity was socially constructed therefore, if it was made by men, then it can be changed by men. We can no longer associate violence with masculinity, because it has on an infinite number of cases had detrimental consequences. Masculinity is a primary cause for violence against women, so we must, as Barkan expresses “change the way we raise our boys” (235). Boys should not and cannot grow up thinking they are better than women and should be violent by nature if we want to reduce the victimization of women. We need to reconstruct the social definition of masculinity by eliminating the idea that in order for a man to be considered masculine or powerful he needs to be violent. Historically, men are measured by their strength, courage, and intellect, but there is nothing strong, courageous, or logical about raping and assaulting women.

Another way we can help is by becoming involved with the cause and spreading awareness. Anyone is able take the pledge for the NOMORE campaign, and there are organizations, like the Joyful Heart Foundation, whose goal is to give victims of sexual assault, rape, and domestic violence their lives back. Golden Globe and Emmy Award-winning actress Mariska Hargitay, founder and president of the Joyful Heart Foundation, explains its “vision is a community with no sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse. [Its] mission is to heal, educate and empower survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse, and to shed light into the darkness that surrounds these issues.” These efforts, along with many others, are working hard to change the world, and they encourage others to get involved in any way they can and to spread the word to their friends and family.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the media is a very powerful institution responsible for providing information to the public, and my evidence shows that it has a paramount effect on the way people perceive women as victims of sexual assault and rape. The language used in the media does in fact amplify victim precipitation and helps it protect the dominant ideology, but this ideology is not true. Women cannot be responsible for or expected to control their own victimization, and we need to diminish these beliefs, immediately. The desire for change needs to come from us the people because the media will not change unless we start to change our minds and traditional beliefs. Mass media is the most convenient and effective way of spreading information, and I suggest we use media resources to evoke change. I am asking the victims to speak up, telling your stories will help you heal. I am asking observers to advocate; do not wait for someone else to make noise. Most importantly, I am asking men for help. Men have sexually assaulted and raped women, but now it is time to for men to help rebuild those shattered women. They are the ones who can create the most change, and it is in their best interests to destroy these beliefs to help their female counterparts live as their equals. It takes only one person to start a trend, but it takes a majority to start a
revolution. It is time to say no more violence against women, and really mean it.

References