

# State and Local

## Psychologist: Education key to increasing report of rapes

By Daniel A. La Bry  
Staff Writer

Rape does happen at Texas A&M—it's just not reported.

That's what Mark Stevens, a nationally recognized psychologist on rape and sexual assault from the University of Southern California, told a group of about 35 A&M faculty and staff members Tuesday afternoon at a session on rape in the university community.

The session was sponsored by C.A.R.E.—Create Attitudes for a Rape-free Environment.

Stevens said he was shocked by the small number of rapes reported at Texas A&M over the past few years.

Many college women experience sexual aggression from an acquaintance in the form of threats, coercion or violence, he said. Most women are reluctant to report these types of crimes to the police because of the difficulty of the prosecution.

"At this point in our culture most women are afraid to report rape because they think they're going to be put on the jury stand and have to prove they're innocent," Stevens said. "Women start feeling guilty if they've slept with somebody else before and therefore they must be a slut and easy and they asked for it. Women don't want to go through that."

Rape has been a social taboo for too long, he said. In order for society to evolve, a few men and women must take the first step to educate society about rape and demand public recognition of the seriousness of the problem.

The first major step in rape education at the university level, Stevens said, is a women's service center designed to educate women and men on rape and societal conditions that allow rape to exist.

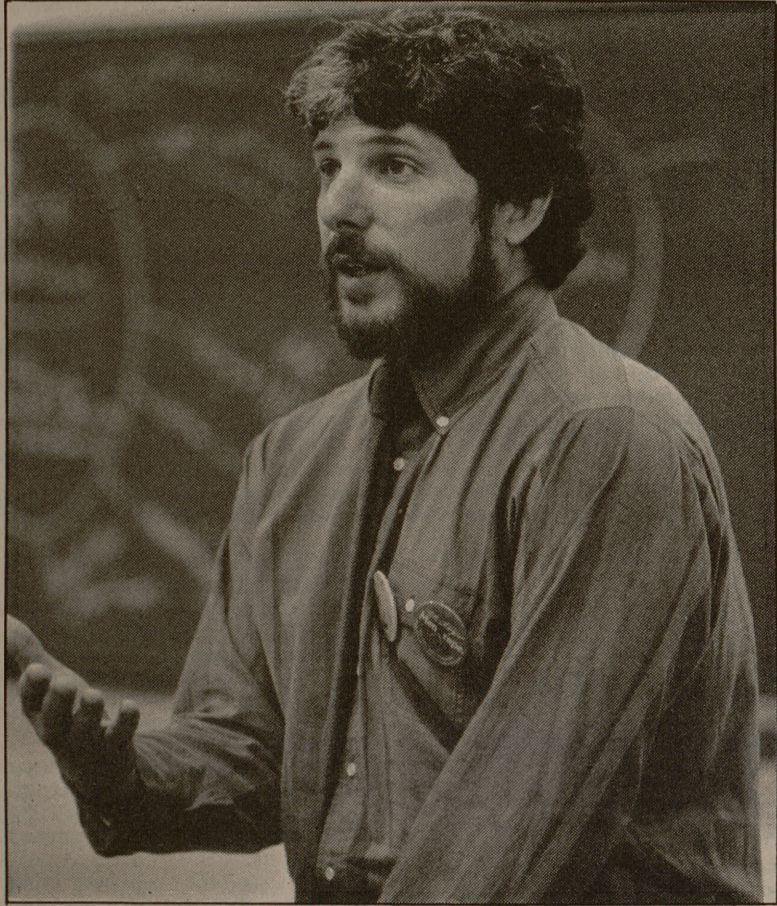


Photo by Doug La Rue

Dr. Mark Stevens tells A&M faculty about rape prevention.

"It won't happen from the president's office," he said. "It will have to happen from more of a bottom up movement, rather than a top down."

After Stevens urged the group to take action on getting a women's center started, Debbie Spencer, the south area student development specialist for Student Affairs, asked people interested in forming a committee to

discuss the possibilities of starting a center to sign a sheet passed around the room.

Stevens warned the group that rape education often is followed by conservative opposition.

"If parents start to hear (about rapes going on), what's going to happen?" he asked. "They're not going to send Johnny or Suzie to Texas A&M."

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## Expert: Key to unraveling sexual myths within reach

Communication can help clear confusion

By Audrey Cardenas  
Reporter

Communication is the key to unlocking the misconceptions and confusion that surround sexuality, Clinical Psychologist Mark Stevens said Tuesday night.

In an audience-participation lecture held in the Memorial Student Center, Stevens told a group of about 60 students that most sexual misconceptions stem from a lack of honest communication between males and females.

"Men and women have been socialized differently," he said, "and so their conceptions about sex are different."

Men think that they must initiate sex, "and view sex as a conquest, as another notch on their belts," he said.

But women often feel violated and find it hard to say no to men, he added. So men often think a woman means yes when she says no and date rape can occur, he said.

To solve this problem, an understanding must be reached. When a woman says no, she must be sure that she means no, and the man must be sure he hears no, he said.

"The man must not wait for the woman to say no five times before he

*"Many people don't communicate because they're afraid of getting rejected. It still means a lot to have a date on Saturday night."*  
— Dr. Mark Stevens

believes her," he said, "and a woman shouldn't say no if she means maybe."

For many women, aggressiveness is still viewed as a taboo, and they feel guilty when they want to initiate sex, Stevens said. But instead of feel-

ing ashamed, they should discuss their confusion openly with their dates, and their dates should respond honestly, he said.

"Many people don't communicate because they're afraid of getting rejected," Stevens said. "It still means a lot to have a date on Saturday night. Dating gives status."

Many women think that if they say no to a man then he will not ask them out again, he said. For men, no is a sign of rejection because they have fragile egos, he added.

Stevens, who defines sex as "mutually consenting physical involvement that can include touching, kissing or cuddling," said that it also can be violent.

Several terms used to describe sex are abusive and this affects people psychologically, Stevens said, giving some a violent perception of sex.

"A woman that is raped or violated is never asking for that," Stevens said. "The victim should not be blamed."

## Psychologist: All men socialized to contribute to culture of rape

By Mark Figart  
Reporter

A psychologist told an all-male audience Tuesday in Rudder Tower that each of them was guilty of rape.

"I'm proposing that all of us in here are rapists, that all of us have contributed in some way to our rape culture," said Mark Stevens, coordinator of training for a counseling center at the University of Southern California.

"Men Can Stop Rape" was the theme of the two-hour session, which encouraged participants to explore their own socialization, to personalize emotionally the rape experience of women and to discuss strategies for stopping rape.

Stevens described a rape culture that is supported by factors such as rape jokes, peer pressure and legal definitions.

"Men typically are socialized to contribute to this culture," he said.

"When I go out on a date wondering how far I'm going to get with this person, I'm contributing to the rape culture," he said.

The group of nine students, five staff members, and three officers from the University Police Department discussed other ways they might contribute to the rape culture, including gestures, vocal sexual "approval" of women, or trying to ma-

nipulate women to commit sexual acts they might not feel comfortable about, known as date rape.

"I can guarantee you that on some level, that person is scared," Stevens said of the woman who finds herself in one of these situations.

Stevens cited a feeling of power as a reason why men commit rape. By displaying authority over an individual, a man can boost his self-esteem.

One student, who asked to remain anonymous, agreed.

"I find myself saying, 'Yeah, the only reason I kept putting my hand on her leg was for the power; could I make her do it?'" he said.

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