

RAPE

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not be believed, she said.

Parks assists student rape victims who wish to file a rape report with the University or with the police.

"I offer advocacy, meaning I can walk with the survivor through every step of the process, (including) the police interview, the examination and subsequent events," Parks said. "I offer personal assistance, one on one contact, and not this assembly line justice."

She says one of the main deterrents to rape convictions is the student conduct code. The code does not specifically mention rape by name. It says that disciplinary action may be taken if a person engages in behavior that "threatens imminent physical harm, endangers the health or safety of any person, or which a reasonable person would know was unwanted and would cause emotional distress."

Parks believes this code makes it difficult to convict

someone of acquaintance rape.

"Getting justice out of that code is damn near impossible," she said.

Several sources said they believe the reasons for the low report rate point to the heavy emotional trauma associated with rape. Acquaintance rape could be under-reported because many rape victims experience needless feelings of guilt, they say.

Women who have been raped by men they know often feel as though the rape was their fault, said Sho Shigeoka of the University's Sexual Assault Task Force. Local groups that help rape victims said this guilt is one of the primary reasons why women fail to report rape.

"A lot of people who experience (sexual assault) tend to blame themselves," said Shigeoka.

Failure to recognize rape in relationships where it repeatedly occurs is part of a cycle of denial, said officials from Womenspace and the Sexual Assault Task Force. Rape victims often do not want to believe a person they

know or love would rape them.

"There is so much guilt in our society that (if a woman is raped by her romantic partner) she will try really hard to convince herself that it wasn't a rape, that it was part of the relationship," said Ingrid Parmeter, a volunteer for Womenspace. "And if she stays in the relationship she can keep convincing herself that it's just a normal sexual relationship."

Rape activists say these types of relationships often include physical or emotional abuse. They say almost all rapes are the result of a person's desire to have power over another.

"Any time you have a difference in status or power, there is a possibility for rape," Scott said.

Rape occurs because this is an abusive society for women, Parks said. This is a society where men and women are taught that women are subordinate to men, she said. Men take this power structure and apply it to sexuality, she said.

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