

THE MYTHS ABOUT INCEST

Incest is something that people don't want to talk about, much less acknowledge that it even exists. This is also why there are many myths that exist about incest. Below are some of them.

Myth: Incest is a rare occurrence.

Reality: In my own counseling and in my talks with some professionals, I have found numerous cases of incest. A well-known psychiatrist recently shared with me that he has handled many cases of incest. It's just that people do not acknowledge it as such. They recognize only the strict definition of incest that is intercourse among blood relatives. They refuse to accept that there are a number of other ways that a child can be abused and that such abuse among family members and significant others constitute incest.

Myth: Incest happens only in poor or uneducated families.

Reality: Incest cuts across all classes and economic conditions. It can be found all over the country.

Myth: Incest aggressors are social and sexual deviants.

Reality: The typical incest aggressors can be anybody. There is no common denominator or profile. They might be hardworking, respectable, and churchgoing, seemingly average men and women. They come from all walks of life.

Myth: Incest is a reaction to sexual deprivation.

Reality: Most aggressors have active sex lives within marriage. They turn to children either for feelings of power and control or for the unconditional, nonthreatening love that only children can provide. Although these needs and drives become sexualized, sexual deprivation is rarely the trigger.

Myth: Children, especially teenage girls are seductive and at least partially responsible for being molested.

Reality: There is only one innocent in any incestuous relationship and that is the child. It is ridiculous to think that a child can seduce an adult. It is always 100 percent the adult's responsibility to exercise appropriate control in these situation and not act on one's own impulses.

Myth: most incest stories are not true.

Reality: in the old days, the developed countries also believed this myth. It has only been in the past 30 or so years that the truth has emerged as to the extent of the problem. Now there is a flood of cases that have come forth. Incest was always there. It is only recently that it is being recognized.

Myth: Children are molested more often by people they don't know.

Reality: The majority of incestuous acts are committed by trusted members of the family, caregivers and significant others.

Myth: Parents and trusted family members are incapable of doing such terrible things to their children. It goes against the nature of fatherhood and motherhood.

Reality: Parents and trusted family members are very capable of incest. There is nothing in their nature that makes them unable to commit such acts. The sexual drive does not distinguish between strangers and family members.