

Letter to the Editor on Victim Blaming



Dear Editor,

Yesterday, it was reported in the News Straits Times (<https://my.news.yahoo.com/teen-believed-raped-mum-001131879.html>) that a 15 year old boy allegedly raped his mother in their family home. At the time of the incident, the mother, who was under the influence of alcohol, and unaware of her surroundings, accidentally fell asleep in her son's room after returning from work. Upon waking up, she found her son lying naked on top of her.

Since news of the incident broke, over 100 comments have been posted on the article, many of which blame the survivor on the basis of stereotyped gendered roles and attitudes.

The fact that the woman worked as a waitress in an entertainment bar does not justify the misogynistic (dislike and contempt of women) comments that have been directed at her. Furthermore, the fact that she was under the influence of alcohol in no way validates the fact that she was raped.

Rape and sexual violence are never acceptable in any circumstance and the willingness of the community to place the blame on her shoulders is appalling. How a person is dressed does not justify rape. A person's job does not justify rape. A person's level of alcohol consumption does not justify rape.

Furthermore, there is the issue that the son was watching pornography whilst the mother was at work. More blame has been placed on the mother for allowing her child access to this kind of material but these days it is incredibly simple to access pornography from almost any device at any time.

Instead of placing blame, we need to make sure we work with boys to change their mindsets on stereotypical gendered roles and ideas which they will carry forward into their lives as men, which in turn will lead to less of these incidents occurring in the future. Teaching respect and introducing preventive education and public awareness programs that address these issues can go a long way.

Effective and early implementation of these programs is a critical step in ensuring the elimination of long-held prejudices and beliefs about what is deemed socially acceptable for women.

From all of us at,
All Women's Action Society (AWAM)

22nd August 2014