

in prisons, institutions, or areas of military conflict. Sexual assault remains underreported for multifactorial reasons.

An understanding of the legal definitions of sexual assault, rape, acquaintance rape, and statutory rape is essential for the nurse to identify, treat, and manage adolescent victims (Box 16-2).

Box 16-2

Definitions of Sexual Assaults

Sexual assault: Comprehensive term that includes various types of forced or inappropriate sexual activity. Sexual assault includes both physical and psychological coercion as well as touch, penetration, and other sexual contact.

Rape: Forced sexual intercourse that occurs by physical force or psychological coercion. Rape includes vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by body parts or inanimate objects.

Acquaintance rape (date rape): Applied to situations in which the assailant and victim know each other.

Statutory rape: Consensual sexual contact by a person 18 years old or older with a person under the age of consent or unable to consent because of developmental disability. Age of consent varies by state.

Statutory rape laws have been revised in many states across the country. The motivation for tougher laws and greater enforcement is to decrease teen pregnancy, increase male responsibility, and decrease welfare dependency. Traditionally, statutory rape laws have been concerned with the protection of girls. In the past 20 years, many laws have been rewritten to be gender neutral. Statutory rape laws require reporting to child protective services or local law enforcement. One risk of strict statutory rape enforcement is that girls may not seek health care for reproductive care, prenatal care, or domestic violence. Young people may fear not only for themselves but also for their partners. However, sexual coercion of teens by adults remains a problem and results in STIs and adolescent pregnancy.