



Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

Sexual violence is any act (verbal and/or physical) which breaks a person's trust and/or safety and is sexual in nature. Sexual assaults are acts of violence where sex is used as the weapon. Assaults are motivated primarily out of anger and/ or a need to feel powerful by controlling, dominating, or humiliating the victim. Victims/survivors of sexual assaults are forced, coerced and/or manipulated to participate in unwanted sexual activity. Victim/survivors do not cause their sexual assaults and are not to blame. Offenders are responsible for assaults.

Our society's prevalent images of men claim that men are always strong, invulnerable, stoic, and in control. Despite these stereotypes, men of all ages, sizes, strengths, looks, personalities and sexual orientations are victims of sexual assault. Males are sexually assaulted both as adults and as children. Since sexual assaults result from perpetrators attempts to feel more powerful, those individuals society perceives as having less power are often at a greater risk. Therefore, males are less often sexually assaulted than females and male children are at a greater risk of sexual assault than adult males.

Although there are some different issues for male survivors, on an individual emotional level they are as profoundly affected by assaults as women. Male survivors frequently experience emotions including: pain, anger, loneliness, shame, anxiety, and confusion over sexual intimacy. A sexual assault may leave a male survivor questioning his masculinity. This along with the fact that men are more frequently assaulted by other men may cause a survivor to question his sexual orientation. These reactions are common because our society perpetuates the myth that sexual assaults are about sexual attraction and not about domination and power. This myth also acts as an obstacle when survivors seek out assistance.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

- Both adult males and children are victims of sexual assault. Assaults can and do happen anywhere: homes, schools, prisons, public places, etc.
- 92,700 men are forcibly raped each year in the United States. (Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. U.S. Department of Justice, Centers for Disease Control. November, 1998.)
- 11% of total sexual assault victims are male, 89% are female. (1999 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000)
- A greater percentage of juvenile sexual assault victims were male (18%) than were adult sexual assault victims (4%). Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident and Offender Characteristics. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000.)
- The year in a male's life when he is most likely to be a victim of sexual assault is the age of 4. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000.)
61% of male sexual abusers are male, 28% are female, and 11% reported being assaulted by both males and females. (Gartner, R. Betrayed as Boys: Psychodynamic Treatment of Sexually Abused Men. Guilford Press, 1999.)

This information sheet was compiled in 2000 by the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA). WCASA is a membership organization of sexual assault centers, other organizations, and individuals throughout Wisconsin working to end sexual violence. For information sheets on other topics or to become a member, contact WCASA 600 Williamson St., Suite N-2, Madison, WI 53703, (608)257-1516, www.wcasa.org. For more information about sexual assault or to receive support with a sexual assault experience, contact your local sexual assault program. This sheet may be reproduced in its original format only.

- Boys are less likely than girls to report sexual abuse because of the fear of retribution, the social stigma against homosexual behavior, the desire to appear self-reliant, and the concern about loss of independence following disclosure. (Holmes, W., Slap, G. Sexual Abuse of Boys: Definition, Prevalence, Correlates, Sequelae, and Management. The Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 280. 1998.)
- Up to 1/2 of the female perpetrators were adolescent aged babysitters. (JAMA, 1998.)
- Female perpetrators used coercion, rather than force in 91% of the cases, and 26% promised special favors to boys for participation in sexual acts. (JAMA, 1998)
- 77% of sexual assaults against males take place in a residence. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000.)
- One in four victims of sexual assault under the age of 12 are boys. (Juvenile Offenders and Victims 1999 National Report, Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, 1999.)
- 48% of males were raped by strangers, compared with 28% of females. (Criminal Victimization in 1999: changes 1998-1999, with trends 1993-1999. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. August, 2000.)
- A rapist's motivation is primarily to humiliate, hurt and destroy, not to release a normal sex drive. Hence, the majority of rapes of males are perpetrated by caucasian, heterosexual males, who often commit their crime with one or more cohorts. (Scarce, Michael. Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame. Plenum Press. New York, New York. 1997.)
- Many rapes and sexual assaults are perpetrated by other heterosexual men, in all-male environments, often as part of an initiation. Incidences of this have been documented in military organizations, fraternal organizations, athletic organizations, prisons etc. (Scarce, 1997.)
- The organization Stop Prison Rape conservatively estimates that 360,000 men are sexually assaulted in prisons in the United States each year. For at least 2/3 of these inmates the rapes are not isolated events, but a repeated pattern (often as gang rapes). (Scarce, 1997)
- States of intense pain, anxiety, panic, or fear may cause spontaneous erection and ejaculation in some men, which may cause heterosexual victims to question their sexual orientation. (Scarce, 1997.)

FACTS FOR WISCONSIN:

- In 1998, 17% of all reported cases of sexual assault involved a male victim (Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance Statistical Analysis Center (OJA), 1999). The number of assaults reported for males may be especially low because survivors fear they will be met with both homophobic reactions and disbelief.
- Of the 967 reported sexual assaults of males in 1998, 63.1% of the perpetrators were male (Wisconsin OJA, 1999).
- From 1997 to 1998 the reported number of sexual assaults of males increased by about 2%. (Wisconsin OJA, 1997; 1999.)