

Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys

Sexual violence against men and boys is a significant problem. With the exception of childhood sexual abuse, it is one that has been neglected in research. Rape and other forms of sexual coercion directed against men and boys take place in a variety of settings, including the home, the workplace, schools, on the streets, in the military and during war, as well as in prisons and police custody.

Extent of the problem

- Studies conducted in mostly developed countries indicate that 5% to 10% of men report a history of childhood sexual abuse.
- Studies from both industrialized and developing countries also reveal that forced first intercourse is not rare.
- Most experts believe that official statistics vastly under-represent the number of male rape victims.
- The evidence suggests that males may be even less likely than female victims to report and assault to authorities.
- Statistics suggest that between one (1) and six (6) boys will have an unwanted sexual experience before the age of 18.

Reasons why male rape is under-reported

- Shame
- Guilt
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of being criticized for what happened
- Myths and strong prejudices about male sexuality also prevent men from reporting (being accused of being gay, the victim gave the impression they were gay, a man should be able to defend himself, etc.)

Effects of sexual violence

- Guilt
- Anger
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Sexual dysfunction
- Somatic (*no medical explanation*) complaints
- Sleep disturbance
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Attempted suicide
- Substance abuse
- Violent behavior
- Stealing
- Absenteeism from school/work
- Confusion about sexuality

All men (heterosexual or gay) need to remember sexual assault/abuse is about power and control – not sexual attraction. Sexual assault/abuse is a disrespect of a person's sense of safety and trust. No one deserves or asks to be sexually assaulted or abused.