

Male Survivors

Boys/men don't cry.

Suck it up.

Boys will be boys.

Don't be a sissy.

Take it like a man.

These false stereotypes say men are not supposed to be victims of any kind, least of all, of sexual assault and abuse. Society labels these men as less manly for “allowing” themselves to be victimized. These pressures make it difficult for men to speak out when something is wrong, and consequently, many men continue to suffer in silence. It is the goal of the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center to dispel these **myths** and **empower of all victims** regardless of gender.

Myths & Facts

MYTH: Only women can be sexually assaulted.

FACT: Men can be and are sexually assaulted every day and their perpetrators can be male or female.

MYTH: Men who sexually assault other men are gay.

FACT: Sexual assault is not about sexual orientation or desire - it is an act of power and control. The motivation of the perpetrator is to humiliate and/or brutalize another person.

MYTH: Male childhood survivors of sexual abuse or assault will become perpetrators.

FACT: While many perpetrators were themselves victimized, the majority of survivors do not continue the cycle of violence.

MYTH: Men assaulted by other men must be gay.

FACT: Both straight and gay men can be raped; most studies report that at least half (and more often the clear majority) of victims are heterosexual.

Impact of Sexual Abuse and Assault

Trust

Establishing and maintaining relationships may be difficult. Many problems can be traced to difficulty being vulnerable and trusting others, including one's self.

Compulsive Behavior

Most compulsive behaviors serve the purpose of alleviating anxiety and avoiding pain. Frequently seen compulsive behaviors include sex, alcohol and other drugs, work, gambling, exercise and food.

Sexuality

Confusion may arise in male survivors around sexual thoughts, desires and behaviors. Letting go of unhealthy or compulsive sexual behaviors is possible. Sorting out one's sexual orientation on the straight/bi/gay continuum can be challenging. Reclaiming a healthy sexuality is possible when a survivor is ready.

Physical Symptoms

Physical symptoms are not uncommon. Some areas of the body may be extremely sensitive to touch and there may be a general tightness or tension within the body. Frequent headaches and other body aches, hypertension, and sleeplessness are not unusual. Sometimes the rectum can be injured from forced anal penetration. Sometimes there is a feeling of being disconnected from one's body like it belongs to someone else.

Feelings & Thoughts

A variety of feelings and thoughts may be associated with sexual assault. Some of these include depression, rage, anxiety, hopelessness, shame and guilt, thoughts of suicide, difficulty concentrating, memory problems and flashbacks.