

About Male Survivors

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 vulnerable to sexual assault. 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.)

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. This information does not constitute legal advice.