

Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse.	
Definitions	<p>MALE SEXUAL ABUSE: Male sexual abuse is defined as any non-consensual act of sexual coercion and/or domination which threatens the physical and/or psychological well being of a boy or male adolescent or adult. These acts involve a misuse of power and may or may not involve physical force.</p> <p>Male sexual abuse can occur in one's family of origin, in trust relationships with older youth or adults, in institutional settings that house boys or male adolescents (e.g., residential treatment centres), in peer groups and social clubs and in dating relationships.</p> <p>Male sexual abuse includes - but is not limited to - unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual exposure, unwanted exposure to pornography, sexual harassment, incest, child prostitution, sexual assault and rape.</p> <p>Perpetrators of male sexual abuse can include parents, siblings, extended family members, family friends, dates, intimate partners, acquaintances, peers and strangers.</p> <p>1 in 5 males have experience childhood sexual abuse (www.malesurvivor.ca)</p> <p>MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT: Male sexual assault is defined as any non-consensual act of sexual coercion and/or domination which threatens the physical and/or psychological well being of a man. These acts involve a misuse of power and may or may not involve physical force.</p> <p>Male sexual assault can occur in intimate relationships, dating situations, institutions (e.g., prisons), hate-crime situations, and among strangers. Male sexual assault includes acts such as sexual touching, and oral and anal rape. Perpetrators of male sexual assault can include intimate partners, dates, friends, relatives, clients of sex trade workers, co-workers, acquaintances and strangers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Rick Goodwin, MSW RSW Copyright: The Men's Project, 2004</small></p>
10 Facts About Sexual Abuse of males.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to one out of six men report having had unwanted direct sexual contact with an older person by the age of 16. If we include non-contact sexual behavior, such as someone exposing him- or herself to a child, up to one in four men report boyhood sexual victimization. <u>(1, 2)</u> 2. On average, boys first experience sexual abuse at age 10. The age range at which boys are first abused, however, is from infancy to late adolescence. <u>(1, 2)</u> 3. Boys at greatest risk for sexual abuse are those living with neither or only one parent; those whose parents are separated, divorced, and/or remarried; those whose parents abuse alcohol or are involved in criminal behavior; and those who are disabled. <u>(3)</u> 4. Boys are most commonly abused by males (between 50 and 75%). However, it is difficult to estimate the extent of abuse by females, since abuse by women is often covert. Also, when a woman initiates sex with a boy he is likely to consider it a "sexual initiation" and deny that it was abusive, even though he may suffer significant trauma from the experience. <u>(1)</u> 5. A smaller proportion of sexually abused boys than sexually abused girls report sexual abuse to authorities. <u>(3)</u> 6. Common symptoms for sexually abused men include: guilt, anxiety, depression, interpersonal isolation, shame, low self-esteem, self-destructive behavior, post-traumatic stress reactions, poor body imagery, sleep disturbance, nightmares, anorexia or bulimia, relational and/or sexual dysfunction, and compulsive behavior like alcoholism, drug

	<p>addiction, gambling, overeating, overspending, and sexual obsession or compulsion. <u>(3, 4)</u></p> <p>7. The vast majority (over 80%) of sexually abused boys never become adult perpetrators, while a majority of perpetrators (up to 80%) were themselves abused. <u>(1)</u></p> <p>8. There is no compelling evidence that sexual abuse fundamentally changes a boy's sexual orientation, but it may lead to confusion about sexual identity and is likely to affect how he relates in intimate situations. <u>(3, 4)</u></p> <p>9. Boys often feel physical sexual arousal during abuse even if they are repulsed by what is happening. <u>(4)</u></p> <p>10. Perpetrators tend to be males who consider themselves heterosexual <u>(5, 6)</u> and are most likely to be known but unrelated to the victims. <u>(3)</u></p> <p>1. Lisak, D, Hopper, J, Song, P (1996). Factors in the cycle of violence: Gender rigidity and emotional constriction. Journal of Traumatic Stress, 9: 721-743 2. Finkelhor D, Hotaling G, Lewis IA, Smith C. (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors. Child Abuse and Neglect, 19:557-68 3. Holmes, W, Slap, G (1998). Sexual abuse of boys: Definition, prevalence, correlates, sequelae, and management. Journal of the American Medical Association, 280:1855-1862 4. Gartner, RB (1999). Betrayed as Boys: Psychodynamic Treatment of Sexually Abused Men. New York: Guilford Press 5. Groth, AN, Oliveri, F (1989). Understanding sexual abuse behavior and differentiating among sexual abusers. In S. Sgroi (Ed.), Vulnerable Populations, (Vol. 2, pp. 309-327). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books. 6. Jenny C, Roesler TA, Poyer KL (1994). Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals? Pediatrics; 94:41-4</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.malesurvivor.org</p>
<p>Challenges for male survivors</p>	<p>There is a misconception that if a man has an erection or ejaculates they are a willing participant. The reality is that the body reacts to the stimulation and this is NOT consent. (The Men's Project)</p> <p>Males who are abused by females at a young age, have a difficult time recognizing that what happened was sexual abuse, as it is often viewed or labeled a sexual initiation or a 'coming of age'.</p> <p>A male who has experienced abuse often questions his sexuality, particularly if the perpetrator was male. If he identifies as homosexual he can have feelings of self-loathing attached to his sexuality. (www.utexas.edu)</p> <p>Cultural norms that define 'masculinity' often restrict males ability to disclose sexual abuse and create a mistaken belief that males are immune to sexual victimization. These cultural norms minimize a male survivor's trauma and often deny him to right to 'heal'.</p> <p>Physical force is not essential for an unwanted sexual act to be considered assault or abuse. Non-consent may be due to threats, coercion or from effects of substance (eg. date-rape drugs). (The Men's Project)</p> <p>Male survivors must battle myths about male sexual victimization, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Males cannot be sexually abused or victimized. • Sexual abuse turns a boy/youth gay. • Sexually abused boys inevitably become sexually abusive men. • Males are less traumatized by sexual abuse than females. • Boys/males can say no to abuse if violence is not used. <p style="text-align: right;">(Adapted Gartner, Betrayed as Boys, 1999)</p> <p>Childhood Sexual abuse is the most prevalent form of male sexual abuse, however sexual assault does occur to male adults.</p> <p>Anal rape is the most common form of male sexual assault.</p> <p>Many male survivors report multiple perpetrators and assaults, including multiple perpetrators per assault. (Goodwin, The Men's Project 2004)</p> <p>Survivors often view their assault as a loss of their manhood. (www.utexas.edu)</p>

	<p>Prison rape is prevalent and has lasting negative implications for males.</p>
<p>Characteristics Observed In Male Sexual Abuse Victims</p>	<p>Denial of Vulnerability</p> <p>Difficulty recognizing that what happened was sexual abuse. High need for control in interactions with others. May appear stubborn and rigid for control in interactions with others and frequently engage in power struggles, or seem passive, codependent and conforming. Both are protection from feelings of vulnerability.</p> <p>Confusion Regarding Sexual Orientation</p> <p>Orientation is exhibited in many ways. Some men claim heterosexuality but are sexual with other men. Some homosexual men question their orientation and wonder how they might be different had they not been abused. Other men may not engage in any sexual behaviors with males or females and are unable to determine their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Confusion of Emotional Needs With Sex</p> <p>Needs for nurturance may be identified as sexual. Many needs may have been met through the sexual abuse and sex continues to be viewed as the only way to be cared for. Real relationships with other men and women are often seen as threatening and sexual behavior may actually be one of the few ways to relate superficially and still have some needs met. Societal norms encourage men to equate sexual prowess with personal value and discourage direct expression of emotional needs. Some men become "Don Juans" or give the impression they are "superstuds" as a way of proving to themselves and the world that they are not gay or weak because of their victimization histories.</p> <p>Gender Shame</p> <p>Confusion and anxiety regarding masculine identity. Extremely uncomfortable around other men. Does not like to be touched by men and often avoids situations where he may be seen unclothed. Because he does not feel part of the group, he is often isolated with few male friends. Shame is especially powerful regarding feelings about masculinity. "Real men" don't get abused, they can protect themselves. Internalized male models are shaming or nonexistent. May exhibit more feminine characteristics as an attempt to separate from negative masculine image or to avoid identifying with the male abuser.</p> <p>Multiple Compulsive Behaviors</p> <p>Sex, food, chemicals and work are examples of common compulsive behaviors used to satisfy an internal drive to continually push oneself to avoid feeling pain and to meet dependency needs but is not productive or helpful.</p> <p>Physical and Emotional Symptoms</p> <p>Hypertension and frequent chest pains. Recurring dreams or nightmares of being chased or attacked, choked or stabbed. Difficulty urinating in public restrooms. Depression and anxiety.</p> <p>Pattern of Victimizing Self or Others</p> <p>Most victims do not become offenders. Many dysfunctional behaviors may be seen as an attempt to feel more powerful, punish oneself or numb the unwanted feelings connected with the abuse. This may involve passive-aggressive behaviors or subtle put-downs. Some men, act out by exposing, obscene phone calling or voyeuristic activities. Anger toward self can involve suicide attempts or putting oneself in a high risk situations which could lead to injury or death without actually attempting suicide. Victim may react to a current situation as if it were similar to the childhood abuse experience. Victim feels</p>

	<p>powerless and cannot see the current situation for what it is. Coping mechanisms mimic survival means used during childhood. May actually become involved in abusive relationships as an adult that are in many ways similar to the childhood sexual abuse experience.</p> <p>Boundary Transparency</p> <p>Unrealistic fear that others can see their failures and vulnerability. They fear they can do nothing to protect themselves. This inability to protect self and feeling unsafe can result in difficulty establishing even minimal trust. Other reactions include anxiety, rage and withdrawal. May have a history of boundary intrusions other than sexual abuse, especially physical and emotional abuse.</p> <p>Chaotic Relationships</p> <p>Many difficulties around intimacy, autonomy (self-sufficiency) and commitment to a relationship. Extreme and intense swings in needs for closeness and distance with others. The need to be cared for and have dependency needs met is in conflict with fear of vulnerability and re-victimization. This behavior repeats the victim-perpetrator experience with the partner when that person alternately becomes a perpetrator and a protector.</p> <p>Poorly Defined Sense of Self</p> <p>Self protection has resulted in submersion of self with little internal locus of control. Behaviors are similar to codependency. Importance placed on attempts to avoid feelings of confusion and vulnerability.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ken Singer, LCSW www.malesurvivor.org</p>
<p>Coping</p>	<p>Though media and communities may minimize or not identify the prevalence of male sexual abuse, recognize that you are not alone. Male sexual abuse is more common than thought.</p> <p>Your reactions are NORMAL; you are not going Crazy.</p> <p>You are NOT responsible for the other person's behaviour.</p> <p>You have the right to identify FEELINGS about your experience. Talking about feelings does not deny your masculinity.</p> <p>Seek professional support. You can choose to have either a male or female counselor-decide what you are most comfortable with.</p> <p>Reflect upon any negative or harming behaviour in your life. Assess whether these are 'coping mechanisms' which are a reaction to your experience. Consider the time frame prior to your negative behaviour; did something 'trigger' this reaction? Was or is there another way you could have reacted to that trigger? At a time when you are in a positive head-space make a list of 'intervention' activities you can do that are positive or empowering rather than defeating.</p> <p>Types of Interventions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By myself: Reading, bath, online support group. 2. With others: calling a friend, support groups. 3. Physical: shooting hoops, going to the gym, walk/run. <p>Identifying Triggers: http://www.malesurvivor.ca/english/breaking.htm</p>

	<p>With each trigger feeling and thought(s) that typically accompany them, you can write the negative behavior you often do. A list might look something like this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling: rejected • Thought: Nobody cares about me. I can't depend on people. • Behavior: Isolate, over-eat. <p>The more trigger feelings you identify, the easier it is to see a pattern emerging.</p> <p>Try an online support group that allows you to discuss your experience and trauma with other male survivors. You will also receive support and validation for your experience.</p> <p>Talk and confide in someone you trust.</p>
<p>Tips for Supporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help him find a place where he feels safe. • Listen to him and believe him. • Don't minimize his experience. • Be aware of your own assumptions about males who have been sexual assaulted. • Respect his decisions and provide options not advice. • Reassure him that the assault was not his fault. • Remind him that the abuse was abnormal, his feelings and reactions are normal and his way of coping. • Encourage him to seek professional support. • Validate his strength and how difficult it must have been to disclose his abuse.
<p>Family and Friends – Understanding and being supportive.</p>	<p>Some tips for understanding the reactions of your loved one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse survivors often find themselves in a cycles of self-damaging or defeating behaviour (aggression, substance abuse, over-eating, over working). • Helping or encouraging your loved one to address the triggers for these behaviour is helpful. Talk about putting measures in place to reduce or delay the behaviours (alternatives for the behaviour once the triggers are identified). • Negative thoughts or perceptions may not seem real or rational, however the feelings ARE real. Do not minimize these feelings, rather let them take ownership of their feelings. • Negative or harmful reactions may be a way of compensating for perceived feelings rather than intention.
<p>Resources</p>	<p>The following internet links can offer information, support and additional resources for male survivors and their supporters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.malesurvivor.ca • www.malesurvivor.org • http://www.xris.com/survivor/msb/ • http://www.aest.org.uk/survivors/male • www.bc-malesurvivors.com • http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/booklets/maleassault/menassault.html