



Male Sexual Assault and Rape Fact Sheet

History and mythology tell us that male rape was a widespread practice in societies around the world. However, many people think that this practice is extinct in the “everyday” world and only happens in the prison setting. This is simply not the case. While it is a seriously underreported and under-discussed crime, sexual assault and rape of males is an issue that must be addressed.

Statistics are very difficult to interpret because many males do not report rape and sexual assault to the authorities. However, many experts estimate that as much as 10-20% of all males will be sexually violated at some point in their lives. According to the Bureau of Justice, approximately 4900 rapes of males aged 12 and older occurred in 1994 alone. It is also important to note that while females can be perpetrators of sexual violation, more than 86% of male survivors were assaulted or raped by another male. These male perpetrators are heterosexual in almost all cases. Some studies indicate that offenders will rape male victims of other crimes such as robbery just to keep the male victim from going to the police.

Often males will experience many of the same aftereffects that female survivors experience. These normally include depression, anger, guilt, self-blame, sexual dysfunction, flashbacks, and suicidal ideation. However, males will frequently have some key differences in their reaction to the assault or rape. Males tend to show more hostility and aggression immediately after the assault. Over time, males may act out in a sexually aggressive manner, question their sexual identity, have a more damaged self-image, create emotional distance from loved ones, or have an increased sense of vulnerability. Research suggests that males may have these different reactions because males, unlike females, are socialized in our society to believe that sexual assault and rape will never happen to them and therefore they are less equipped to deal with the vulnerability they feel after the assault. These aftereffects may also be amplified by increased weapon use, physical injury, and having multiple attackers which are all more common in male rape and sexual assault.

Many male survivors do not seek help from professional counselors about the assault because of the shame and guilt they feel due to a little known physiological (bodily) response. We all know that the body reacts physically to pain, anxiety, fear, and panic – all things the body is likely to experience during a rape or sexual assault. However, what many people do not know is that occasionally males will experience spontaneous erection and ejaculation. Those males who experience this reaction often wonder if they secretly are homosexual or enjoyed, wished for, or caused the rape to happen. These self-doubts commonly hinder the sexually assaulted male from seeking therapy.

Whatever the case may be, male survivors of rape and sexual assault need support, nonjudgmental listening, and to be believed.

Information adapted from The National Center for Victims of Crime *Male Rape*, retrieved 7/7/2006, from www.ncvc.org; *The Sexual Assault Report, Volume 2, Number 4*, March/April 1999; When Men are Raped, Ohio State University Rape Education and Prevention Program, 1997; Men Can Stop Rape, *Male Survivors: What You Should Know*, 1998, 2001; Donald Donaldson “Rape of Males” in *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality* (1990); Nicholas Groth and Ann Burgess “Male Rape: Offenders and Victims” in *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 137(7), (1980); Paul Isley “Adult Male Sexual Assault in the Community: A Literature Review and Group Treatment Model” in *Rape and Sexual Assault III: A Research Handbook* (1991); and Gillian Mezey and Michael King “The Effects of Sexual Assault on Men: A Survey of 22 Victims” in *Psychological Medicine*, 19(2), (1989)

