

Information for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Rape

SURVIVORS UK

We Support. We Challenge. We Build.



ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE INCLUDING MEN

What is male sexual abuse?

Male sexual abuse is any unwanted or non-consensual sexual act performed against a man or boy at any time in his life.

Who can it happen to?

Quite simply, it can happen to anyone. It could have happened while you were a child or teenager, or as an adult.

How often does it happen?

More often than you think. An estimated 12,000 men are raped in the UK every year, and more than 70,000 are sexually abused or assaulted. The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse estimates that at least 5% of boys and young men experience sexual abuse before the age of 16.


1 in 6

**men are estimated to
experience sexual abuse
in their lifetime**

**“No one is responsible for
their abuse. No one should
feel ashamed.”**

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MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS



Myths about the sexual abuse of men can make the reality of being a survivor a difficult one, increasing isolation and maintaining stigma.

Below we dispel some of the common myths surrounding male sexual abuse.

Myth: Men can't be sexually abused.

Reality: They can. Any man or boy can be sexually assaulted regardless of size, strength, appearance or sexual orientation.

Myth: If I was drinking or taking drugs, then it was my fault.

Reality: Nothing you do entitles another person to assault you. If you had been drinking or taking drugs and someone sexually abused you, that doesn't make it your fault or mean that you asked for what happened.

Myth: Only gay men and boys are sexually abused.

Reality: Anyone can be sexually abused, including heterosexual men. Being sexually abused has nothing to do with your current or future sexual orientation or gender identity.



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Myth: Only gay men sexually assault other men.

Reality: Sexual assault is primarily about violence, anger, power and control over another person, not sexual attraction.

Myth: Being sexually abused makes you gay.

Reality: Sometimes survivors question whether the sexual abuse has had an impact on their sexual orientation. You may worry that you were abused because you were gay, or that the abuse 'made' you gay. In our experience, the majority of men sexually abused by other men in childhood identify as heterosexual in adult life. What research there is points to sexual abuse having no significant effect on sexual orientation.

Myth: Men cannot be sexually abused by women.

Reality: Although the majority of perpetrators are male, men can also be sexually abused by women.

Myth: Erection or ejaculation during sexual abuse means you "really wanted it" or consented to it.

Reality: Erection and ejaculation are physiological responses that may result from mere physical contact or even extreme stress. These responses do not imply that you wanted or enjoyed the assault and do not indicate anything about your sexual orientation.

Myth: Being sexually abused will turn you into an abuser.

Reality: The vast majority of men who have experienced childhood abuse or adult assault do **NOT** go on to sexually abuse others.

THE IMPACT OF ABUSE

Sexual abuse affects everyone differently

The impact is deeply personal and unique to you, but you may find it influences your feelings about yourself, the world and your relationships with other people.

You may find that you 'forgot' what happened to you, until a later point in life when memories resurface, and/or you may find the memories are hazy and fragmented. This can make it harder to understand or speak about what happened to you.

Common feelings

Below are some of the feelings survivors often experience whether immediately following an assault or for many years after sexual abuse.

Disbelief or Denial: Did it really happen? Why me? Maybe I imagined it. It's not important.

Embarrassment: What will people think? I can't tell anyone. Nobody can know.

Shame: I feel filthy, disgusting, like there's something wrong with me. I can't get clean.

Guilt: I feel as if it's my fault, or I should've been able to stop it. If only I had done...

Depression: How am I going to get through the day? I'm so tired! I feel hopeless.

Flashbacks: I'm reliving what happened. When I remember it's like it's happening again.

Fear: I'm scared of everything. I can't sleep because I'll have nightmares.

Anger: I feel like hurting the person who attacked me or lashing out at the world.

Anxiety: I'm having panic attacks. I can't breathe. I can't stop shaking.

REMEMBER



It was not your fault

You are not alone

**You don't have to stay
silent. You can speak to
someone in confidence**

CONTACT SURVIVORSUK

SurvivorsUK support men and boys who have experienced sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape. We offer a range of services including an online webchat, group work, individual counselling and advocacy to support survivors in reporting to the police.

We are an inclusive service and welcome anyone who identifies as male, non-binary, trans or anyone who feels that we are the right fit for them. We're also here for loved ones.

If you need help, please get in touch

Talk to our National Survivors Online Helpline at
www.survivorsuk.org

Call our office on **0203 598 3898**

Email **help@survivorsuk.org**



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