

TRAUMA AND POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

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Common Types of and Prevalence Estimates for Exposure to Traumatic Stressors

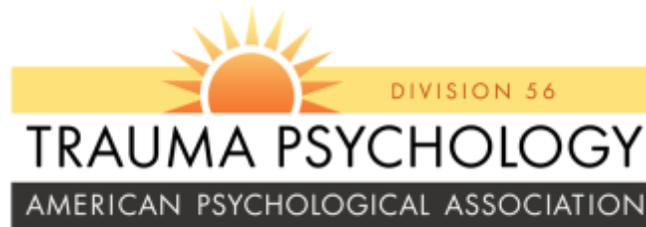
- Within the U.S. as many as 1 in 4 males will experience some form of sexual abuse during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011).
- It is estimated that 1 in 6 boys will experience child sexual abuse (Black et al., 2011).
- The number of males who are sexually abused during military service is greater than the number of female service members (Morrall et al, 2015).
- Males who are incarcerated face significantly elevated risk for sexual assault (Human Rights Watch, 2007).
- As many as 50% of the children who are sex trafficked in the US are males (Friedman, 2013).

Behavioral and Physical Health Impact of Trauma on Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse contributes to elevated risk of a wide range of mental health issues for this population, including depression, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and suicidal ideation.
- Cultural biases often lead to unwillingness amongst males to disclose victimization and downplay any connection between sexual abuse and long term impact.
- Perhaps the most important risk factor for male survivors is their gender:
 - Serial offenders who prefer boys have 3 times as many survivors as those who target girls (Lanning, 2010).
 - Male survivors of sexual abuse are less likely to report abuse, less likely to identify experiences they have had as abusive, and less likely to seek support for distress they experience that may be rooted in abusive sexual experiences (Lisak, Hopper, & Song, 1996).

New Developments in Research on the Impact of Trauma on Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

- Overall, there remains a critical lack of research into the impact of sexual abuse on male survivors.
- Culturally there is far less emphasis on the indignity and damage caused to male survivors of sexual assault. We do not know with high levels of certainty what risk factors increase the likelihood of this type of victimization. This makes it difficult to develop better prevention initiatives and treatments that can reduce the risk of long-term negative impact.



- Significant levels of sexual victimization of boys and men in prison populations have been demonstrated across research studies (e.g. Black et al., 2011; Felitti et al., 1998; Morral, Gore, & Schell, 2015)
- As many as half of all the survivors of child sexual exploitation may be male/male identifying (Curtis, Terry, Dank, Dombrowski, & Khan, 2008).
- Research has also shown that the majority of male perpetrators self-identify as heterosexual or bisexual.
- In addition, research shows a significant number of perpetrators of sexual abuse and sexual coercion against males are reported to be female (French, 2015).

Clinical Considerations for Practitioners Treating Traumatized Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

- According to experts, “fewer boys and men consciously identify their experiences as abusive. Cognitively, they may feel less traumatized, despite having a wide range of symptoms related to it” (Gartner, 1999, p 29).
- The violation of trust experienced by many survivors can often negatively impact male survivors’ ability to develop effective therapeutic partnerships with providers.

Information for Families and Friends of Traumatized Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

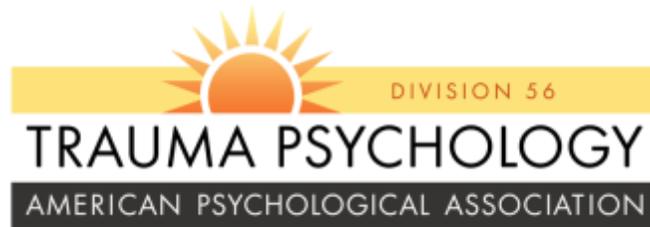
- It is important for family members and friends of survivors to be educated about the impact of sexual abuse on survivors and how victimization can negatively impact survivor’s ability to form healthy relationships.
- It is also important for loved ones to be educated that being a survivor of sexual abuse does not imply that a survivor is more likely than not to become an abuser themselves. This stigma is one that many male survivors fear and can be reinforced by family members and loved ones.
- It is also important for the loved ones of survivor’s to understand that they have the right to seek out support and assistance for themselves, as the negative impact of this trauma can often cause damage in the lives of others who are close to a survivor.

Resources for Professionals Seeking More Information about Traumatized Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

- MaleSurvivor -- www.malesurvivor.org

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