

MYTHS

MYTH: Boys and men can't become victims of sexual abuse.

Boys and men of all sexual orientations can and do become victims of sexual abuse, rape and violence. Male sexual abuse is a serious crime that affects many men worldwide. It is believed that 1 in 6 males will be sexually abused before the age of 18.

MYTH: All sexual abusers are male.

This is wrong! Although the vast majority of sexual abusers are male, females can also be sexually abusive and violent, causing as much harm as a male sexual perpetrator.

MYTH: You will become gay or bisexual after being sexually abused.

In no way is an act of sexual abuse related to your sexual orientation and your choices, in no way can it make you gay or bisexual. You may question your masculinity due to the traumatic nature of the event, but it cannot change your orientation.

MYTH: Men can deal with sexual abuse better than women.

Males may be even more harmed by society's rejection and reluctance to accept their victimization. The belief that men are strong and emotionless has created a trend for men to put up with their abuse alone and in silence. The long term effects of male sexual abuse are detrimental to both men and women and causes serious suffering and trauma for any victim.

MYTH: It is your fault if you are sexually abused.

Being sexually abused is never your fault! For no reason should you ever blame yourself for what happened. The only way for a rape or sexual violation to occur is if there is a sexual criminal or rapist present. They are responsible for everything and are the ones to blame!

“Sexual assault is an act of violence where sex is used as the weapon”

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTION: Is male sexual abuse an act of homosexuality?

ANSWER: Rape and sexual abuse is an act of violence, control and aggression, and not one of sexual gratification or orientation. In most cases, convicted rapists and male sexual abusers describe themselves as being heterosexual, not gay. These criminals also state that it never mattered whether their victims were male or female. Therefore male sexual abuse is not an act of homosexuality.

QUESTION: Who do I speak to when I am ready to share my story?

ANSWER: Disclosing your sexual abuse encounter can be an extremely difficult thing to do. Choosing the right person to share your story with can really make things easier, allowing you to feel a lot better about yourself and your situation. Pick someone that you can trust, someone you know will respect you and stand by your side during your disclosure. This individual should be able to listen and care about what you are feeling. Consider seeking professional help from a therapist, social worker or counsellor.

QUESTION: I was sexually abused, why do I feel so numb and emotionless?

ANSWER: Feelings of numbness and a lack of emotion are common experiences many sexual abuse survivors face. Following sexual abuse, this lack of emotion and numb exterior presents itself as a survival coping mechanism to deal with the trauma you have recently or previously faced. It is used to protect you from hurting until you are ready to allow yourself to open up and feel again.

QUESTION: My partner or loved one is acting strangely, are there signs to tell if he was sexually abused?

ANSWER: There are indeed common signs to look for when you suspect a loved one may have fallen victim to sexual abuse. The following symptoms are common to sexual abuse but do not always lead to the discovery of a loved one being sexually harmed and may be linked to something else they are facing. Victims/survivors may experience feelings of; being dirty, confusion, anger, shame, powerlessness, guilt and isolation. They may have nightmares, bouts of anxiety or depression, a lack of emotions, a feeling of numbness, mood swings and a lack of sexual interest and desire. Sexual abuse survivors may also have addictive or compulsive behaviours.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT

People from all walks of life can be victims of sexual abuse. It doesn't matter your age, race or cultural background. Everyone is at risk of becoming a victim. It must be known that you did not choose for this to happen to you. There is nothing specific about you that makes you more vulnerable to this abuse.

Sexual abuse, like any form of abuse is a criminal offence and is never the fault of the person it happens to. It doesn't matter whether you were drinking or drugging. It doesn't matter what you were wearing or saying. It doesn't matter if you knew the abuser or were having an argument. You are, Under No Circumstances responsible for being assaulted or sexually abused. The person who did this to you is the only person responsible for the sexual assault.

MEN CAN BE SEXUALLY ABUSED OR RAPED

Men can be victims of rape when being highjacked or robbed. Drinks can be spiked with drugs resulting in the lack of ability to refuse sex or defend themselves successfully. Alcohol can affect their judgement and behaviour and put you at risk for unwanted or risky sexual activity. If this does happen you must get to a hospital emergency room IMMEDIATELY to assess your injuries, administer ARVs and other medication to prevent STD's.

If you choose to report the rape don't go to the toilet, wash or shower, brush your teeth or change clothing. Call the police from the hospital and tell the police exactly what you can remember.

Feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and shock are normal and you should get trauma counseling or psychological help. Remember you do not need to disclose anything, just talking will do.

CONTACTS

Resource Webpage: www.samsosa.org

Email: admin@samsosa.org

Landline: 011 333 1000 | **Mobile:** 071 280 9918

Facebook: South African Male Survivors Of Sexual Abuse

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Address: 2nd Floor, 109 Pritchard Street, Johannesburg

The rape and sexual abuse of both adult and young men around the world has been so greatly ignored, disrespected and discounted, that it has created a major misconception in many that such an occurrence does not exist. Many services currently available are solely focused on meeting the needs of female victims who have been abused and sexually assaulted. This exclusivity silently perpetuates the fallacy that male rape does not exist. The vast majority of male rape and abuse victims do not report their trauma due to a lack of awareness and misunderstandings of male sexual abuse as well as the current lack of support services available. Instead they suffer its effects alone and in silence.

QUICK FACTS

- **Both adult males and boys are victims of sexual assault and rape.**
- **Many professionals believe that 1 in 6 males will be sexually abused before the age of 18 compared to 1 in 4 females.**
- **A rapist's primary motive is to hurt, humiliate, destroy, cause pain, insecurity and hopelessness in the victim.**
- **Sexual abusers can be acquaintances, friends, partners and even parents.**
- **Adolescent boys are often groomed by adult abusers before becoming victims to sexual abuse.**
- **The biggest reasons for not reporting a male sexual assault are the fear of their sexuality being questioned, shame, and the fear they will not be believed.**
- **Men are the majority of reported abusers in male sexual abuse.**
- **Being sexually assaulted is NEVER your fault!**
- **Sexually abused children are 5 times more likely to commit suicide.**

**"You are,
Under No Circumstances
responsible for
being assaulted
or sexually abused."**

South African MALE SURVIVORS of Sexual Abuse is a non-profit company, registered in terms of section 14 of the Companies Act, 2008 in South Africa. Our registration number is 2012/176739/08 and we are based in the central business district of Johannesburg, South Africa.

SAMSOSA (South African Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse) serves as a resource and referral centre, providing information, support and training for victims, affected individuals and organisations in a safe, non-judgemental structure. In addition, we act as an advocacy group for non-offending male rape and abuse survivors to create awareness and understanding that will change social attitudes and structures

VISION: To change lives by providing information, a structure of strength and compassion for male survivors as they embark on their journey of healing, transforming from victim to survivor and ultimately to become a thriver.



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**Victim
Survivor
Thriver**

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