

Effects of Sexual Violence on Survivors



Sexual violence may be a one-time incident, but it is more often a repeating pattern of behavior. The idea that most cases happen in a dark alley by a stranger is simply not true. **69% of the teen sexual assaults reported happened in the home** of the victim, the offender or another individual². **7 out of 10 rape or sexual assault victims knew their attacker**¹.

For survivors of sexual violence, the pain does not stop after the attack. Many experience:

- Anxiety
- Fear
- **Anger**
- Suicidal thoughts
- Chronic pain
- Headaches
- Stomach problems
- **Grief and loss**
- **Shame/self-blame**

Sexual violence affects everyone differently. But often, these experiences have drastic negative effects on the lives of those survivors.

- **Eating disorders** (26.6% of women with bulimia nervosa were raped at some point in their lives compared to 13.3% of women with no eating disorders who had been raped.)³
- Survivors are three times more likely to suffer from **depression**
- Survivors are four times more likely to contemplate **suicide**
- Survivors are 13 times more likely to **abuse alcohol** and 26 times more likely to **abuse drugs**.⁴
- Problems sleeping
- Self-cutting/burning
- Difficulty with sexual intimacy

People dealing with these, or other effects of sexual violence can call or visit their local emergency assistance or resource centers. [SVC offers a list of referrals here.](#)

For survivors in the Twin Cities metro area, call the SVC 24-hour free and confidential crisis line at **612-871-5111**. We offer direct services to those who have just been assaulted *and* those who have been living with the effects of sexual violence for years, all at no cost.

Our services are client-driven, meaning we never force anyone to do or say anything they do not want to. **We believe our clients know what is best for their own personal healing.**

1. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, *Criminal Victimization 1998: Changes 1997-1998 with Trends 1993-1998*. 1999.
2. U.S. Department of Justice Statistics, *Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics*. 2000.
3. International Journal of Eating Disorders, *The National women's Study: Relationship of Victimization and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to Bulimia Nervosa*. 1997.
4. World Health Organization, 2002.