

# Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

## *Common Reactions and Help*



Boys and men often experience some of the same reactions to being sexually assaulted as girls and women do. For example, they may experience:

- Denial and/or guilt
- Shame or humiliation
- Fear and a feeling of loss of control
- **Powerlessness**
- Loss of self-respect
- Flashbacks
- Anger and anxiety
- Nervous or compulsive behavior
- **Depression and mood swings**
- **Withdrawal from relationships**
- Changes in sexual activity
- Substance abuse
- Self-injurious behavior
- Hyper vigilance
- Sleep disturbances and nightmares
- Eating disorders

Some reactions can be somewhat unique to male survivors.

- **Male survivors may feel embarrassed** and avoid talking about the abuse or seeking support.
- Male survivors often feel very isolated.
- Male survivors may feel that they will not be believed.
- Male survivors may have feelings of inadequacy and shame about their gender.
- If a male victim had an erection or reached orgasm they may have a hard time viewing the experience as abusive or non-consensual.
- Male survivors may feel that if they talk about the abuse, they will be perceived as being gay.
- Male survivors who were abused by females might believe that something is wrong with them if they didn't enjoy the experience.
- **Male survivors often become confused**, questioning their sexual orientation and their notion of masculinity.
- Male survivors often feel that they should have been able to stop the abuse or that they are to blame for the abuse.
- **Male survivors might have a hard time expressing** some of the intense emotions that follow an assault.
- Male survivors may be more apt to minimize the effects of the abuse and push themselves to forget it and move on.

*SVC provides services to people of all genders and offers services specifically for men. We offer support groups for male victim/survivors in a safe and supportive environment. A male counselor can also be requested for 1:1 counseling. **Call the Sexual Violence 24 hour crisis-line at (612) 871-5111.***