

SUPPORTING A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

- ♣ *Believe him.*** Try to understand that what he is experiencing is traumatic.
- ♣ *Listen to him.*** Let him know that he can talk to you when he is ready. When he does talk, be supportive. Don't ask "why" questions & don't ask for details. Don't judge or blame, regardless of where he was or what he was doing. Clearly tell him, "It was not your fault".
- ♣ *Accept his decisions.*** Help him to explore his options, but don't offer your opinions or advice on what he should do. Be patient and allow him to choose his own path to recovery. Respect his choices.
- ♣ *Seek support for yourself.*** The impact of sexual assault extends beyond the survivor. Feelings of anger, blame and helplessness can be overwhelming. Suppression of these feelings can interfere with your emotional ability to provide emotional support for the victim.

IF YOU ARE ASSAULTED

- ♣ *Go to a place where you can be safe.*** Call someone you trust to help you. Go to the police, hospital, or local crisis center.
- ♣ *Don't shower, eat, drink, brush your teeth, or change your clothes.*** Valuable physical evidence may be collected from your body and clothing.
- ♣ *If appropriate, seek counseling.*** Sexual assault is a violent, traumatic experience. Dealing with your feelings will help you heal and regain control over your life.
- ♣ *Seek medical attention.*** Even if you do not seem physically hurt, it is important to receive a medical exam. You may have internal injuries that require medical attention and the medical staff can provide preventive treatment against STD's and HIV. Follow up with a doctor after the initial screening

RESOURCES

Marion County Victim Assistance
503-588-5253
1-866-780-0960 toll free

Marion County Mental Health
503-588-5351

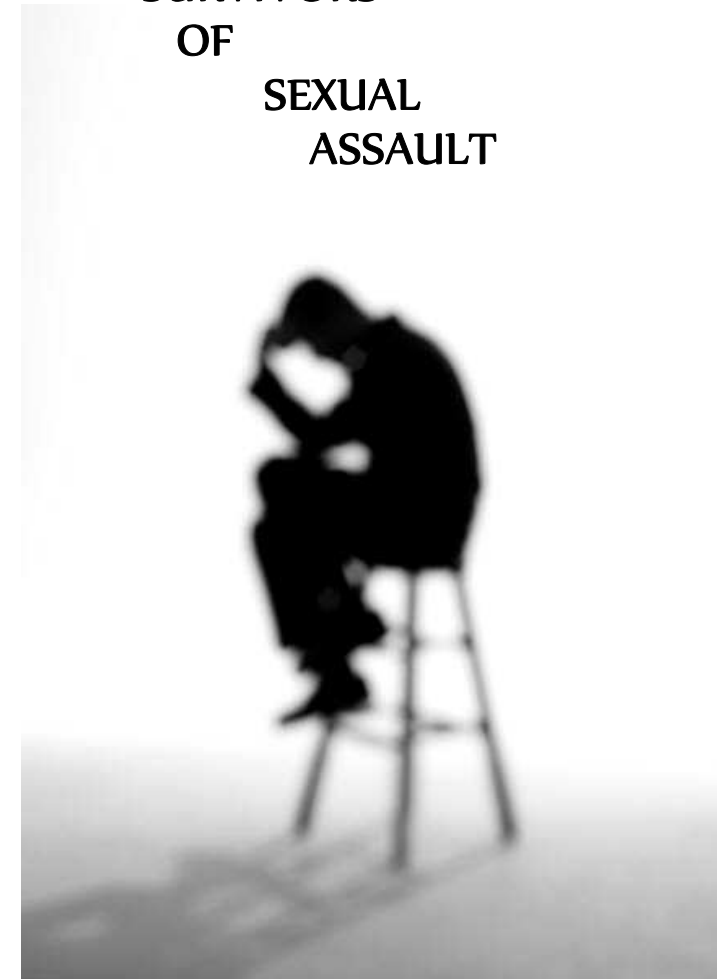
NW Human Services
503-581-5535
1-800-560-5535

**The National Sexual Assault
Hotline**
1-800-656-HOPE

www.malesurvivor.org
www.silencealoud.com



MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT



WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

- ☛ Sexual assault is defined as any sexual contact that occurs against a person's will or without consent. This includes situations which involve coercion, weapons, force, the threat of force, or when the victim is incapable of giving consent due to age, or use of intoxicants such as drugs, and alcohol.
- ☛ Anyone can be the victim of sexual assault including men.
- ☛ It is estimated that 5% to 10% of all sexual assaults involve male victims.
- ☛ One in every six men are sexually assaulted in his lifetime.
- ☛ 25% to 35% of child victims of sexual assault are males.

FACTS ABOUT MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT

- ☛ **Men can be sexually assaulted.** Any man can be sexually assaulted by a friend, stranger, or significant other. Males can be victims regardless of size, strength, appearance, or sexual orientation. Sexual assault is not about sex or desire, it is about power and control. Alcohol or drugs may also be used in the assault.
- ☛ **Men can be sexually assaulted by women.** Although the majority of perpetrators are male, men can be sexually assaulted by women. This includes boys under the age of eighteen who are sexually exploited by older women.
- ☛ **Sexual orientation does not affect the risk of victimization.** Sexual orientation is not a factor in sexual assault. Heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual men are equally at risk. Sexual assault is about power and control, not about sexual attraction. Sexual assault is not the result of a man's sexual orientation nor will it change his orientation afterwards.

☛ **Sexual arousal or orgasm during a sexual assault does not indicate a willing participant.** Erection and ejaculation are physiological responses that can occur even in traumatic or stressful situations. These responses do not mean that the survivor wanted or enjoyed the assault. Perpetrators often use the victim's feelings of confusion and shame to maintain control and discourage reporting of the crime.

☛ **REMEMBER- IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT!** Even if the attacker was a friend, acquaintance, date, or partner. Even if you had previously been sexually intimate with the perpetrator or if you were using drugs or alcohol, IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT!

COMMON MYTHS

- Myth:** Males who are sexually abused do not suffer to the same extent that females do.
- Fact:** Sexual assault is a violent crime in which all victims suffer regardless of gender.
- Myth:** Males who are assaulted by another male are or become a homosexual.
- Fact:** Sexual abuse is not an act of sex, passion, or desire; it is a crime of violence meant to exercise power and control over the victim. The sexual orientation of the victim is not changed by the attack.
- Myth:** Males are only abused by homosexual males.
- Fact:** The majority of sexual offenders are heterosexual males. Females can assault males; this is seen mostly with child or adolescent victims using coercion or threats of force.

Myth: A strong man can't be sexually assaulted; he must have consented.

Fact: Being strong is not a defense against sexual assault and just because a man did not fight off his attacker does not mean that he consented. Fighting back may be impossible when faced with surprise, weapons, being out numbered, or frozen in fear.

Myth: Men do not usually know their assailant.

Fact: Stranger to stranger sexual assault is rare. Perpetrators of sexual assault are most likely to be acquaintances, friends, family members, or others who may be trusted by the victim

COMMON REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Flashbacks	Disbelief/Denial
Rage/Anger	Humiliation
Depression	Guilt
Concern about sexual orientation	

☛ Men may experience doubts about their masculinity and feelings of inadequacy, believing they failed to defend themselves or stop the attack. Some men develop self-destructive behaviors such as increased alcohol or drug use. Others may engage in aggressive, high-risk behaviors leading to fights or physical injury. Survivors may find it difficult to resume sexual relationships or to begin new ones. Men commonly experience feelings of self-blame, especially if sexual orientation is an issue. **YOUR FEELINGS ARE NORMAL; BUT REMEMBER- SEXUAL ASSAULT IS NEVER THE VICTIM'S FAULT.**