

## **Sexual Assault of Males**

### **What Is It?**

The sexual assault of a male is forcing a man or boy into sexual acts. Sexual assault may involve touching, fondling, contact between the mouth and either the victim's or the abuser's private parts (genital area), and putting body parts or other objects inside the victim's body. Sexual assault is an act that is done to the victim or that the victim is forced to do with someone else. Every state has laws against sexual assault, whether the victim is male or female.

### **Who Commits Male Rape?**

Most perpetrators of male rape (those who commit the crime) are male. But men and boys can be victimized by females, too. Some victims are hurt by strangers. But most are assaulted by someone they know: family, friends, romantic partners, acquaintances, or dates.

### **How Do Rapists Control Victims?**

Rapists don't always use physical force or weapons to commit the crime. They may threaten to hurt victims or someone they care about if victims do not cooperate. They may isolate them (take them to a place where there are no other people who might help victims). Or they may give the victims alcohol or drugs so they have trouble protecting themselves.

### **How Does Sexual Assault Affect Male Victims?**

Victims react to the crime in many different ways. They may not tell anyone about what happened. They may be ashamed or afraid of what people might think. Or they may blame themselves or think they should have been able to protect themselves. They may think the police might not believe them or take the assault seriously.

Some male sexual assault victims are concerned because they had a physical response or arousal during the attack. This does not mean that they enjoyed what happened or wanted to be attacked. Sexual assault is forced on the victim without his consent.

Some victims wonder why the rapist chose them. Both straight and gay men may fear they were targeted because the rapist thought they were gay. They may not know that sexual assault often has little to do with the sexual orientation of the rapist or the victim. Rapists may choose victims simply because they are available, without concern for sexual orientation, gender, or age.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, "Factsheet: Male Rape," [http://www.nycagainstrape.org/survivors\\_factsheet\\_38.html](http://www.nycagainstrape.org/survivors_factsheet_38.html) (accessed May 7, 2008).

## If You Are A Victim

**How You May Feel:** You may feel angry, anxious, scared, or depressed. You may feel guilty or ashamed and not want to talk to anyone. You may find you have trouble sleeping or eating—or that you want to sleep and eat all the time. You might have flashbacks of the assault or have a hard time concentrating. Or you may have none of these feelings.

**Common Injuries:** You may have bruises, cuts, and soreness in your genital area or any part of your body that the rapist had contact with. You may feel nauseated. Or you may have no physical injuries, as far as you can tell. However, you may have been exposed to sexually transmitted diseases that might surface later on.

### Decisions to Consider:

- **Medical Care:** Will you seek medical care to treat your injuries and be tested and treated for sexually transmitted diseases? You may want to seek such help, even if you decide not to report the crime.
- **Counseling:** Will you deal with your feelings privately or seek the help of a trained professional? Counseling can help you cope with the emotional and physical impact of the crime and regain a sense of control over your life.
- **Reporting the Crime:** Will you report the crime? If you decide to file a report, timing is important. The sooner police know about the crime, the more quickly physical evidence can be found. If the police request a forensic exam (sometimes called a rape kit), the exam can be done as soon as possible to collect any physical evidence.

## Resources

The best way to find out about these options is to talk to a crime victim advocate. The National Crime Victim Helpline (**1-800-FYI-CALL**) advocates can help you think through these decisions and refer you to resources in your area where you can get more help. Helpline services are free and confidential.

### National Crime Victim Helpline

1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255)

1-800-211-7996 TTY

8:30 am – 8:30 pm EST weekdays

Or visit: **Help for Crime Victims:** [www.ncvc.org/victimassistance](http://www.ncvc.org/victimassistance)

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