

# What Do Victims Feel?

It is important for you not to judge a victim's response. One victim may react very emotionally and another may be extremely calm. No matter how a victim reacts, their emotions are normal and okay. Male victims, whether abused as children or adults, may experience fear, anger and an overwhelming sense of loss of control over their bodies and themselves. They may experience:

- Crying, sobbing
- Shaking
- Laughter due to shock
- Denial
- Feelings of fear, anger, shame
- Self-blame
- Feelings of guilt and helplessness
- Abrupt mood changes
- Embarrassment

Over time, these reactions may fade, but other difficulties may continue for some time. Other long-term reactions include:

- Fear of being alone
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares
- Trouble concentrating
- Depression
- Traumatic impact to sexuality or sexual dysfunction
- Sexual identity concerns
- Aggression
- Trust issues in relationships
- Flashbacks of the assault
- Anxiety
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Engaging in high risk behaviors
- Suicidal thoughts

Remember, help is available for victims and their loved ones during all phases of recovery.

There is help... you can talk with someone who will listen, who will understand.

You don't need to hide your feelings or pretend they are not there.

You are not alone.

**For more information,  
contact your  
local rape crisis center.**



## **Florida Council Against Sexual Violence**

1820 E. Park Avenue, Suite 100  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

**Information Line: 1-888-956-RAPE**

Office: (850) 297-2000  
email: [information@fcasv.org](mailto:information@fcasv.org)  
[www.fcasv.org](http://www.fcasv.org)

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# **When Men Are Victims**

# **R A P E**

# RAPE: WHEN MEN ARE VICTIMS



Men and boys can be victims of sexual violence as children, teens or as adults. Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual contact. Perpetrators of sexual violence against men act out of power and control. Sexual violence includes such crimes as rape, incest, statutory sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation of children or any sexual contact without consent.

Anyone who has been the victim of a sexual assault needs compassion, sensitivity and caring, and male victims may also have special needs to consider.

In the United States, about 10 percent of reported rapes involve male victims, and many more go unreported. Men and boys

are often reluctant to report the crime of sexual assault, or to seek services, because they feel humiliated, shamed or confused by the crime or because they feel that seeking help will make them feel vulnerable or weak. Most perpetrators of male assault are men, and they rape both gay and straight men because rape is an act of violence, not of sex or sexual desire.

Help is available. Most rape crisis centers provide free and confidential services for all people who have been hurt by sexual assault, including men. They also will provide help for the friends and family members of victims who want to help their loved one or who need support for their own feelings.

**Studies show that one out of seven boys will be the victim of some type of sexual assault before age 18.**

- Continue to educate yourself. Telling someone about an experience of sexual assault is a difficult decision that should be met with caring support.
- Encourage medical attention. Care is important because there may be internal injuries that are not obvious, or he may have been exposed to sexually transmitted diseases. Victims are entitled to a forensic medical exam, whether or not they decide to report the assault.
- Give the victim control. All control has been stripped from him during the assault. Allow the victim to make decisions about what steps to take next.
- Maintain confidentiality. Let the victim decide who will know about the assault.
- Let him express his feelings. Listen without adding your opinions. If the victim wishes to remain silent, do not force a discussion. Say you will be there to listen always.
- Believe him. Make it clear to the victim that you believe the assault happened and that the assault is the fault of the abuser, NOT the victim.
- Encourage counseling. Give the victim the hotline number for the nearest sexual violence crisis center, but let the decision be his.
- Seek help for yourself. Don't ignore your own feelings, but you may not be able to share all of them with the victim right now. Your local crisis center can provide counseling for you if you need to talk.

**How You Can Help**