



Fact Sheet: Information for men on childhood sexual assault

Talking about sexual assault is never easy. Talking about something that happened in your childhood is often extremely difficult. For men talking about personal topics may be even harder than for women. If, however, childhood sexual assault is affecting your life you may find you need to discuss your situation with someone.

According to Fergusson and Mullen (1999) 1 in 6 males will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18. This can be you, your friend, your brother or another close relative. (Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault, 2008)

What is child sexual abuse?

Sexual assault occurs when an adult or someone bigger and/or older uses power and authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. Physical force, emotional threats or coercion may have been involved.

Childhood sexual assault involves a wide range of sexual activity. This may include:

- Touching, fondling or kissing a child's genitals;
- Being masturbated or forced to masturbate the perpetrator;
- Being made to look at, or pose for, pornographic photos;
- Voyeurism;
- Verbal harassment or innuendo;
- Oral/genital contact;
- Penetration of the victim's anus or mouth with a penis, finger or object;
- Being made to penetrate the perpetrator's mouth, anus or vagina.

Misconceptions about male childhood sexual assault

Male children are not abused

1 in 6 male children are abused by the age of 18 years.

Children are seductive or precocious

Sexual assault is always the responsibility of the adult. Children are blameless.

Children are attacked by strangers

Most people know their attacker. Only 15% of sexual assaults are by strangers. In the case of children and young people, the perpetrators are often family members or family friends.

Children/young people make up stories about sexual assault

Why would they? Small children do not have the language, knowledge or life skills to fantasise about sexual assault.

Children or young people who have been assaulted are damaged for life

Dealing with the consequences of sexual assault can be hard work but people do recover. Children and young people who feel supported by their family or significant others can, and do, recover from being assaulted.

Impacts of childhood sexual assault

Childhood sexual assault disrupts psychological development, sometimes leaving male children with problems with intimacy and authority figures.

This can manifest itself in many ways in childhood and later life and may include:



- Sexual dysfunction;
- Relationship problems;
- Mental health problems.

References

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