

Rape as a Men's Issue

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Why should men care about sexual violence?

1. Men rape

The great majority of all sexually violent crimes are committed by males. Even when men are sexually victimized, other men are most often the perpetrators.

2. Men ARE raped

We don't like to think about it, and we don't like to talk about it, but the fact is that men can also be sexually victimized. Studies show that a staggering 10-20% of all males are sexually violated at some point in their lifetimes. Men are not immune to the epidemic of sexual violence, nor are male survivors safe from the stigma that society attaches to victims of rape. Male survivors are often disbelieved, accused of being gay, or blamed for their own victimization when they report an incident of sexual assault. Frequently, they respond, as do many female survivors, by remaining silent and suffering alone.

3. Rape confines men

When some men rape, and when 80% of those who are raped know the man who attacked them, it becomes virtually impossible to distinguish men who are safe from men who are dangerous, men who can be trusted from men who can't, men who will rape from men who won't. The result is a society with its guard up, where relationships with men are approached with fear and mistrust, where intimacy is limited by the constant threat of violence, and where all men are labeled "potential rapists."

4. Men know survivors

At some point in every man's life, someone close to him will likely disclose that they are a survivor of sexual violence and ask for help. Men must be prepared to respond with care, sensitivity, compassion, and understanding. Ignorance on the part of men about the situation of rape and its impact can only hinder the healing process and may even contribute to the survivor's feeling further victimized. A supportive male presence during a survivor's recovery, however, can be invaluable.

5. Men can stop rape

Rape is a choice men make to use sex as a weapon for power and control. For rape to stop, men who are violent must be empowered to make different choices. All men can play a vital role in this process by challenging rape supporting attitudes and behaviors and raising awareness about the damaging impact of sexual violence. Every time a man's voice joins those of women in speaking out against rape, the world becomes safer for us all.