

## 1: Sexual Assault | Villanova University

*And for anyone who has ever asked, Advertisement.*

Time limits for Reporting Sexual Assaults? The activities themselves vary widely, including sexual harassment that may consist of verbal taunting, sexual innuendos, threats of career derailment and physical violence, inappropriate and unwanted physical and sexual contact and rape. Many of us feel betrayed each day by these famous men we have never even met in person. The topic is ubiquitous and discussed wherever two or more gather. Momentum continues to grow for holding individuals, and recently almost exclusively men, accountable for their sexual offenses. Clearly this is a moment in time for the tide to turn on this matter. It has been allowed to fester for far too long. Some however are struggling with this movement. Some are holding on tight, looking for ways to dismiss the dismal and pervasive reality of sexual assault and are questioning the validity of our society facing this shadow. Women who have the courage to speak out and be a part of the metoo movement are being accused of lying because their stories are not coming out for years and even decades after the events. Accusations of political motivation and conspiracy abound. After all, if such traumatizing events really happened, they would have reported it when it happened, right? The scope of this problem is larger than we want to know. How bad is it in the U. On average, there is a rape and sexual assault every 98 seconds. One in five adult women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives. One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old. These numbers are staggering and hard to fathom. Such events have significant ramifications on the health of a society even beyond the trauma to the individual. The personal effects of such trauma are not isolated incidents and often last a lifetime. Certainly such offenses that traumatize victims would appear to demand vindication or justice, but here is the reality: So sexual assault is rampant and a minority of these are being reported and the reported numbers alone are already mind numbing. A major survey in the UK, highlights just how frightened women are to report such events and not be believed. More than 80 per cent of the 1, respondents in the study said they did not report their assault to the police, while 29 per cent said they told nobody “not even a friend or family member” of their ordeal. Why would someone not report such an event? Do they not want to see responsibility be taken, justice served and others protected? This is a difficult topic for many to understand. Sexual assault is unique and has qualities very different than most other crimes. It traumatizes the very essence of a person, often making them question themselves and is imbued with elements of sexuality, violence and power imbalance. A brief list of explanations for lack of reporting studied include: Fear of not being believed or of being accused of playing a role in the event. A lack of trust in the criminal justice system.

## 2: Challenging the Rape Schedule

*After a short burst of attention toward rape and sexual harassment by foreign and local activists in the early s, these issues were virtually ignored by policymakers, and Russians, if anything, became more likely to blame women for their own sexual assault.*

Sexual Assault Defined Unfortunately, non-consensual sexual contact occurs all too frequently during the college years. Sexual assault can happen to both males and females. Statistics suggest that 1 in 5 college women have been victims of attempted or completed assault. However, it is difficult to determine with certainty the actual incidence of sexual assault because most women do not report what happened to campus security, school administrators, or police. In fact, many women never tell anyone about the assault, and are left to cope with the emotional consequences alone. Unfortunately, avoiding seeking help from others limits recovery and healing from the trauma of a sexual assault. Acquaintance or date rape, in which a woman is assaulted by someone known to her, is by far the most common kind of sexual assault for both college-aged women and women in general. For college women, a potential assailant may be a man she meets on campus or through friends, someone she encountered at a bar or party, or a current or ex-boyfriend. In many cases, substance use, especially alcohol, plays a role in sexual assault. Estimates are that 3 out of 4 men who assault a woman, and 1 in 4 women who are assaulted were drinking or using drugs at the time of the assault. Alcohol use increases the likelihood of assault in part because intoxication contributes to poor communication about sexual intention and expectations. There are some men who purposefully intend to assault women who are in vulnerable situations. However, many men who commit sexual assault do not see their actions as wrong, and do not think that they have caused harm or injury. He may view her style of dress, flirtatiousness, or his own sexual arousal as justification for the assault. Or he may believe that her initial willingness to kiss or touch meant it was ok to keep going without her consent. For a woman who has been sexually assaulted, these kinds of justifications can be confusing and difficult to reconcile with her own experience of violation, betrayal, and serious emotional and physical pain. To recover, she must recognize that situational circumstances e.

**Emotional Consequences of Sexual Assault** Women who have been sexually assaulted typically experience symptoms of emotional trauma. The following emotional consequences of sexual assault are common, and are expected reactions to a traumatic event:

- Shock or Numbness** After being sexually assaulted, many women initially experience emotional shock and numbness. Common reactions to sexual assault include feeling emotionally detached, feeling confused and in a state of disbelief. A woman is likely to feel that something very wrong has happened, but does not yet know how to understand or make sense of what occurred. It is also common to experience difficulty keeping track of time, making it to class and keeping appointments.
- Fear and Anxiety** Feelings of fear and anxiety typically occur after a sexual assault. A woman who is sexually assaulted may fear encountering her assailant, and may experience intense distress at reminders of the assault. She may also have more general fears, such as fearing men, being afraid of being alone, or just feeling afraid much of the time without obvious cause. It is also common to feel keyed up and nervous, to experience panic attacks, or to be unable to sit through class or interact with others. Some women may cope by appearing outwardly calm and controlled, but underneath feel very distressed.
- Reliving the Memory of What Happened** A woman who has been sexually assaulted typically relives the event in some way.
- Minimizing or Not Believing What Happened** A woman who is sexually assaulted may want to just forget what happened, and may avoid thinking about it. She may be reluctant to label the experience as an assault or rape. She may even feel that it is behind her initially, but then experience difficulty later.

Abuse of alcohol or drugs may result from trying to forget. A woman who has been sexually assaulted often fears not being believed, and she is likely to avoid going to friends and family who could provide support and legitimize her experience.

**Self-blame and Guilt** Many women who have been sexually assaulted feel that they are to blame for what happened. Self-reproach about incidents leading up to the assault, or not doing enough to prevent it is common. It is important for her to recognize that freezing or emotionally shutting down during a sexual assault is a common way that the mind deals with serious threat. Women who do not tell friends or family what happened are forced to deal with the

emotional aftermath alone. This can lead to long term psychological difficulties. It is important to remember that she is not responsible for his actions. Shame Many women who have been sexually assaulted feel deeply ashamed. This shame contributes to feeling isolated and different from others. Depression A woman who has been sexually assaulted may struggle with symptoms of depression, including sleep problems, fatigue and difficulty concentrating. Loss of Trust and Relationship Difficulties A woman who has been sexually assaulted often loses her natural ability to trust and rely on others. She may also lose faith in her own ability to discern danger, and to accurately judge the character and trustworthiness of others. Isolation, withdrawal and interpersonal conflicts in friendships and family relationships are also common after sexual assault. Women who have been sexually assaulted may fear dating situations, experience difficulty in relationship with males and have sexual difficulties. Anger Women who are sexually assaulted may feel angry. Anger may be directed toward the assailant, themselves, the assault itself, or the way others reacted. Anger may also generalize to daily irritations in life that ordinarily would be experienced as minor. A Sense of Loss of Control A woman who has been sexually assaulted is likely to feel that her personal control over her life and her privacy have been taken away from her. She may feel powerless and helpless as a result of the assault. Academic Difficulty and Disorganization College women who have been sexually assaulted may have academic difficulty, due to missing classes, deadlines and appointments. Confusion, sleeplessness at night, depression, anxiety and withdrawal can lead to academic crisis. Physical Problems Emotional consequences of the assault may emerge as physical symptoms, such as stomach distress, headaches, or muscle tension.

### 3: Time limits for Reporting Sexual Assaults? | ACEsConnection

*This starts with the language around sexual assault. I walked alone in my shame for years. I only recently told my girlfriend, and she was the first person I ever shared my story with.*

As an Army Soldier, you should report immediately any activity that indicates a sexual assault may take place or has taken place. You should also remember the following: Get assistance for the victim, but never leave the victim alone. Demonstrate empathy by concentrating on helping your friend, fellow Soldier, or colleague. Listen to the victim and take the allegations seriously, without asking the victim for details. Do not make judgments about the victim or the alleged offender. Encourage the victim to report the crime; however you should report the sexual assault to the proper authorities. Repeat this message to the victim: You are not to blame. The safety of your fellow Soldiers, your unit, and your community may depend on your reporting of these incidents. You should report any suspicious behavior immediately. The charter was to develop a prevention and response program for Soldiers. Currently the program is designed for Soldiers and adult Family members 18 years of age and older who are eligible for treatment in the military healthcare system. The program also provides limited services to DoD Civilians and their adult Family members 18 years of age or older who are eligible for treatment in a military healthcare system. Can a person who has been sexually assaulted a year ago still report it? Sexual assault can be reported at any time. Once CID or medical is notified of a sexual assault, the procedures are the same regardless of the amount of time since the assault. Soldiers should be encouraged to come forward as soon as possible, so that all possible evidence is collected and preserved before it is lost, destroyed or altered. Early reporting also provides the best opportunity to gather testimony from possible witnesses before their memories fade or they move to other locations. Delayed reporting makes it more difficult to investigate the incident and reduces the ability to prosecute the case. However, victims are strongly encouraged to report crimes, no matter how long after an assault occurred, and CID agents will do their best to investigate the incident and provide a factual and actionable report to the appropriate judicial authority. Even late reporting can impact other investigations and may assist in identifying and prosecuting a criminal. What resources are available to care for victims of sexual assault? The Department of Defense DoD Safe Helpline provides confidential crisis intervention, support and information to Service members of the DoD community who have been sexually assaulted. DoD Safe Helpline is available anytime, anywhere - hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, worldwide at Army psychiatric counselors, and chaplains are confidential counseling channels. When recovering from a sexual assault, what may a victim expect? Every person reacts differently to sexual assault. There are five stages of recovery, which most victims will experience to some degree. It is not unusual for different people to experience the stages in different orders or even to repeat stages several times. Initial Shock - Shock following an assault can take on many forms. Victims may or may not feel comfortable communicating these feeling others. This denial or rationalization of what happened is an attempt to deal with inner turmoil. Reactivation - This stage involves a re-experiencing of the feelings from Stage 1, usually brought on by the triggering of memories of the assault. Feelings of depression, anxiety and shame increase. Other symptoms can include nightmares, flashbacks, and a sense of vulnerability, mistrust and physical complaints. Sometimes through counseling, this anger can be dispelled. Integration Closure - As victims integrate the thoughts and feelings stemming from the assault into their life experience victims will begin to feel "back on track."

### 4: The Limits of Blame and Shame | Copyright articles about everything

*A brief list of explanations for lack of reporting studied include: self-blame or guilt, shame, embarrassment and a desire to keep the assault a private matter. Humiliation or fear of the perpetrator or other individual's perceptions.*

Many of the posters focus on festive party goers and seem to be putting the blame into the hands of the victim, and even their friends. Campaigns like consentis from the CPS are trying to change this culture, shifting the focus onto consent and really trying to raise awareness about rape. The other thing that really stands out for me about these poster campaigns is that most of the time the victims are women and the perpetrators are men. This once again reinforces a cultural myth that it is only women who can get raped. Generally, men are more at risk of being a victim of violent crime outside of the home and 1 in 6 men have been targets of rape or sexual abuse. Here are some of the myths around rape and sexual abuse – you will see that most of them are linked to blaming or shaming the targets of the abuse. Abusers do not discriminate – it can happen to any gender, age, race, class or sexual identity. People of all genders can act in ways that are sexually abusive. It is estimated that 1 in 4 perpetrators of sexual abuse are female. Men who are raped are gay FACT: Being raped by another man does not make you gay. Men who rape men are gay FACT: Rape is about power, control and violence not sexual desire. The majority of men who rape other men identify as heterosexual. Rapists are all strange men in dark alley ways FACT: It is more likely that a target of rape will already know the perpetrator in some way MYTH: People provoke rape by the way they dress or act FACT: The way you dress or behave is irrelevant. There is no excuse for someone to rape another person MYTH: People play hard to get and say no when they really mean yes FACT:

### 5: GIVE IT BACK! Breaking Through The Shame Of Sexual Abuse - Counselling Directory

*Self blame and guilt can be one of the most challenging and complex aspects of working with young male survivors of sexual assault. In working with young men's sense of self-blame and guilt, I find it helpful to explore its unique meanings.*

Why would someone claiming abuse wait so long to come forward? Research indicates the answer is complicated. One reason is self-blame, said Karen G. Weiss, an associate professor of sociology at West Virginia University whose research focuses on sexual violence. Seemingly innocent questions from family and friends can trigger self-doubt and prevent victims from reporting to police. They may also question what they did wrong and believe it was their fault. This list includes studies that look at factors that discourage or prevent reporting among specific groups, including teenagers, college students, prison inmates and women serving in the military. The 28 studies focused on the experiences of a total of 5, women who had been raped at some point in their lives after age 12. Across the studies, the researchers find that violence and victims, in this study, Weiss investigates why many teenagers who experience unwanted sexual contact from other teens trivialize those experiences as unimportant or normal. She relies on data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, administered each year to tens of thousands of individuals aged 12 years and older. Weiss examined information collected on sex-related incidents between and among teens. According to survey data, 92 percent of teens who say they experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact are girls, 81 percent are white and 13 percent are Hispanic. Just over half of these incidents—53 percent—involved sexual coercion such as rape and attempted rape while 47 percent involved other contact such as groping. Almost half of teenagers—44 percent—said the perpetrators were other youth between the ages of 12 and 17. Teens who experience unwanted contact rarely report it. Five percent of incidents were reported to police and 25 percent were reported to other authorities such as school officials or employers. In this manner, ambivalence protects teens, at least temporarily, from social disapproval and interpersonal conflict associated with disclosing peer offenses. *Feminist Criminology*, July. She examined their responses to a survey question asking them to describe what happened to them. She also examined structured responses to questions about sex-related incidents. The federal Bureau of Justice Statistics allowed her to access photocopies of information collected from survey respondents between 1995 and 2000. The sample for this study consisted of 100 females and 20 males, most of whom were under age 18. Thirteen percent of incidents made some reference to shame. *Journal of American College Health*, For this study, a research team from the University of Missouri-Columbia surveyed students at a large, Midwestern university to better understand what they perceive as the biggest barriers to reporting rape and sexual assault for men and women. Of the students who participated, however, students rated shame, guilt and embarrassment as a much larger barrier for men than women. Another major barrier to reporting for men, according to students, is the fear they could be judged as being gay. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, July. For this study, researchers interviewed women who had served in the U. Army or Air Force and acknowledged at least one attempted or completed sexual assault while they were in the military. Of the 100 women interviewed, 18 percent said they had experienced sexual assault while serving on full-time active duty. Meanwhile, 12 percent said they had experienced sexual assault while serving in the Reserves or National Guard. Among the key findings: Three-fourths of servicewomen did not report their assaults. The researchers found that sexual assaults were more likely to be reported if they occurred on base or while on duty or if they resulted in a physical injury. They also found that enlisted women who had never gone to college were most likely to report. The most common reasons women gave for not officially reporting their assault were embarrassment and not knowing how to report. Other common reasons included worries about how reporting might affect their careers and whether confidentiality would be kept. Some women believed nothing would be done and some blamed themselves for their experiences. A few women said they did not report because the person they had to report to was the perpetrator or a friend of the perpetrator. Kristine Levan, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Idaho, surveyed a random sample of inmates from eight state-run prisons in Texas to understand why a male prisoner might not report sexual assault. Inmates said the three most common reasons prisoners may not report sexual assault are

embarrassment, retaliation from other inmates and a fear of harassment and abuse from other inmates. The Prison Journal, A research team led by Shannon K. Fowler , an associate professor at the University of Houston, examines whether prisoners would report sexual violence or recommend that other prisoners report violence they had experienced. The team surveyed male and female inmates from a large Southern prison system. Most inmates said they would report their sexual assault. However, those who already had experienced assault while incarcerated were less likely to say they would. Black inmates were Inmates who completed high school were The researchers also found that male inmates were 81 percent less likely than female inmates to recommend that a fellow prisoner report their assault to prison authorities. Other resources that may find helpful to journalists: The National Sexual Violence Resource Center is a leading source of data and information about sexual violence. The Prison Rape Elimination Act of requires states to implement a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault within correctional facilities. It also requires the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics BJS to track and analyze the incidence of prison rape annually. The BJS provides a variety of related reports on its website. A study published in the academic journal PLOS One finds that 22 percent of all college students have experienced sexual assault but that women and gender non-conforming students are much more likely than men to say they have been assaulted. The study finds that 28 percent of women, 12 percent of men and 38 percent of transgender and other gender non-conforming students said they experienced at least one sexual assault while in college. This annual report from the U. No changes were made.

### 6: Sexual Assault of Men and Boys | RAINN

*In the case of Audrie Pott, the harassment and subsequent shame following her sexual assault led her to take her own life. Stop the Shame These are stories that need to be heard. 1 in 3 victims we surveyed did not tell anyone about sextortion incidents, often because of shame, embarrassment and self-blame.*

Mic invites contributors and staff to share their personal stories and perspectives. I am a sexual assault survivor. I never thought they would be. Denial felt safer than having to process and work through my reality. I want to share my story now because too many of us suffer in silence. For me, it was the shame around being someone that this happened to. I had to work through my own bias around the way I viewed people who experienced sexual assault. None of us are immune to the social misconceptions around sexual assault. There is no immunity, only awareness. Isolation is a place where shame thrives. As I started to come to terms with my experiences, I kept returning to a book I read last year called *Daring Greatly*. As young girls, we are taught not to go to the bathroom alone, to walk down well-lit streets, to be careful of what we wear. Ultimately, the message is: Instead, we should be asking: This starts with the language around sexual assault. I walked alone in my shame for years. I only recently told my girlfriend, and she was the first person I ever shared my story with. Something that I should not have felt I had to carry. That starts by us being aware of how we participate in this toxic culture. Every single one of us can help combat sexual assault by educating ourselves For more information and resources, check out [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org).

### 7: As a sexual assault survivor, I walked alone in my shame for years

*Understanding more about the emotion of shame can help explain why women blame themselves when they are violated, and why more women do not report sexual assault or harassment. Shame is a feeling.*

Search Sexual Assault of Men and Boys Sexual assault can happen to anyone, no matter your age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Men and boys who have been sexually assaulted or abused may have many of the same feelings and reactions as other survivors of sexual assault, but they may also face some additional challenges because of social attitudes and stereotypes about men and masculinity. Common reactions Men and boys who have been sexually assaulted may experience the same effects of sexual assault as other survivors, and they may face other challenges that are more unique to their experience. Many men who experienced an erection or ejaculation during the assault may be confused and wonder what this means. These normal physiological responses do not in any way imply that you wanted, invited, or enjoyed the assault. If something happened to you, know that it is not your fault and you are not alone. Men who were sexually abused as boys or teens may also respond differently than men who were sexually assaulted as adults. The following list includes some of the common experiences shared by men and boys who have survived sexual assault. It is not a complete list, but it may help you to know that other people are having similar experiences: Avoiding people or places that remind you of the assault or abuse Concerns or questions about sexual orientation Fear of the worst happening and having a sense of a shortened future Feeling like "less of a man" or that you no longer have control over your own body Feeling on-edge, being unable to relax, and having difficulty sleeping Sense of blame or shame over not being able to stop the assault or abuse, especially if you experienced an erection or ejaculation Withdrawal from relationships or friendships and an increased sense of isolation Worrying about disclosing for fear of judgment or disbelief Who are the perpetrators of sexual assault against men and boys? Perpetrators can be any gender identity, sexual orientation, or age, and they can have any relationship to the victim. Like all perpetrators, they might use physical force or psychological and emotional coercion tactics. Can being assaulted affect sexual orientation? This can be especially true if you experienced an erection or ejaculation during the assault. Physiological responses like an erection are involuntary, meaning you have no control over them. In no way does an erection invite unwanted sexual activity, and ejaculation in no way condones an assault. How to support male survivors It can be hard to tell someone that you have experienced sexual assault or abuse. You may fear that you will face judgment or not be believed. For many male survivors, stereotypes about masculinity can also make it hard to disclose to friends, family, or the community. Men and boys also may face challenges believing that it is possible for them to be victims of sexual violence, especially if it is perpetrated by a woman. Below are a few suggestions on how you can support a man or boy who discloses to you that he has experienced sexual assault or abuse. Many people in crisis feel as though no one understands them and that they are not taken seriously. Show them they matter by giving your undivided attention. It is hard for many survivors to disclose assault or abuse, especially if they fear not being believed because of stereotypes about masculinity. Even if you are curious about what happened and feel that you want to fully understand it, avoid asking for details of how the assault occurred. However, if a survivor chooses to share those details with you, try your best to listen in a supportive and non-judgmental way. For example, trans men may face barriers when navigating medical care or black men may have concerns about reaching out to law enforcement. Be sensitive to these worries, and when supporting a survivor try your best to suggest resources you feel will be most helpful. What if I experienced sexual assault as an adult? If you were sexually assaulted, it was not your fault. You can find help at [1in6](#), an organization RAINN partners with that is dedicated to helping men who have survived unwanted or abusive sexual experiences. What if the abuse happened when I was a minor? If you were sexually abused when you were a child or a teenager, you may have different feelings and reactions at different times in your life. The [1in6](#) website has answers to many of the questions or concerns you might have as an adult survivor of child or teen sexual abuse. How could this affect my relationships? Coming forward about surviving sexual assault or sexual abuse can be difficult. It requires a lot of trust and understanding both for you and the person you choose to tell. You can find answers

to some of the questions you might have about telling a partner at 1in6. Finding support If something happened to you, know that you are not alone. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline. HOPE to be connected to a trained staff member from a local sexual assault service provider in your area. Consider therapy or other mental health support. Some therapists specialize in issues you may be facing as a result of the abuse or assault. You may want to speak on the phone or meet with a few therapists before deciding which one is the best fit for you. You can ask your insurance company which providers are covered by your insurance plan. Find the center that is closest to you and best fits your needs. Read more at Jimhopper. The articles on this website provide information about the effects of child sexual abuse on adult men and their loved ones. Read more at Malesurvivor. This resource contains general information as well as a therapist search specifically designed for male survivors of sexual violence. More resources Being able to share your story with other male survivors may be important in feeling less alone and connecting with others in your healing process. Read survivor stories of men who have experienced sexual assault or abuse as children, teens, and adults. We have a lot of pain that is unattended to.

### 8: Gift From Within - Article: "Healing from Shame Associated with Traumatic Events"

*Sexual assault and shame seem so intertwined not only due to the base nature of sex and violence, but because their coupling is reinforced by people and the culture at large.*

Bookmark The UK has recently been shocked at the revelations that one of its best loved entertainers - Jimmy Savile - has been uncovered as a prolific sex offender. Commander Peter Spindler of the Metropolitan police said Savile used his fame and celebrity status to "hide in plain sight", adding that he had "groomed the nation". Many people were surprised at the number of people coming forward for help so many years later "so why do victims of such a serious crime keep this traumatic event a secret for so long? Shame is the big issue with abuse It is often shame that keeps victims hiding the abuse and secrets, which keeps them isolated and lonely " often accompanied by feelings that they are somehow to blame for what happened to them. Ironically, the way out of shame is to talk about it with trustworthy people, the very thing many people find so difficult. One of the issues is the silence that often surrounds abuse. Most people would admit that abuse goes on, but no-one wants to admit it happens here in this situation or community and especially not in this family. This is simply too terrifying for people to think about. This is why sexual offenders are often demonised in the media and compared to monsters. People feel safer thinking about abusers this way and makes them think they will be able to spot them " giving them power in the situation. Thinking that an abuser could be a normal person " someone they know and even like " makes people feel frightened and powerless. How widespread is Sexual Abuse? The figures are very upsetting. The findings of this report show the continuing pervasiveness of sexual abuse in the UK: Nearly a quarter of young adults Almost one in 10 children aged 9. Teenage girls aged between 15 and 17 years reported the highest past year rates of sexual abuse. Other surveys also confirm the high occurrence of sexual abuse in the UK: A study in Cawson: In October more than 1, teachers were sacked in Kenya for sexually abusing girls; most of the victims were aged between 12 and BBC News website 7thOctober Abuse remains a secret to adulthood Sadly however, the shame and silence around abuse often continue into adulthood. Child abuse and neglect in the UK today Radford et al, This means that people suffer in silence for years with hugely damaging results on their adult life. But abuse does not just impact the victim him or herself, the legacy of untreated sexual abuse on our society is devastating: Adults who experience child sexual abuse are 12 times more likely to attempt suicide Felitti and Adna, American Journal of Preventative Medicine It is like life imprisonment for a crime that someone else has committed. Behaviours characterised by shame can include: One of the main reasons that victims carry so much shame may be because they can often look back at the situation as adults and feel they could have or should have done something differently to prevent it happening. Victims can tend to forget as children or young people they had very little power. They imagine that the choices they had as children are the same as the ones available now. This intensifies the shame and mental trauma. In order to start being free of this it is critical to understand that abuse is largely about power and intention. It is vital to remember this even though there may have been exchanges. Some questions you might like to consider could be: Critically " who had the real power in that situation? Who originally initiated things? What was your fundamental motive as a child when you met this person? If this person gave you affection did you get much attention elsewhere in your life? If you accepted sweets or money did you really understand what was happening? And what the price would have to be for you? If you could have told someone " who realistically would have helped you? It is also critical to understand abuse and shame exist in an environment of secrecy and the way out of shame that includes any shame! This sharing could be in a recovery group, a counsellor, through close friends or a combination of these. When you begin to freely speak the truth about your life, your sense of shame will diminish! Secrets destroy people and they destroy them unnecessarily. Isolating yourself can be a natural response to so much pain " however loneliness can bring even more suffering. Time after time I have worked with Survivors of abuse who say that just speaking out with a counsellor or being in a support group with other Survivors has helped them so much. This might not be right for you, but do consider joining a self help group or community group that can provide the companions you need in your journey into recovery. The views expressed are those

of the member who wrote the article. Find a counsellor or therapist near you Abortion.

### 9: Guilt and Shame of Being Raped | HealthyPlace

*Sexual assault is in no way related to the sexual orientation of the perpetrator or the survivor, and a person's sexual orientation cannot be caused by sexual abuse or assault. Some men and boys have questions about their sexuality after surviving an assault or abuse—and that's understandable.*

Although what happened to them was not their fault, many rape survivors experience both guilt and shame after being sexually assaulted. Here is a place to explore the cause of these emotions and hopefully find our way past them. Many people think of guilt and shame as the same thing and the dictionary defines them this way. They are, however, extremely different. They feel guilty because it seems like their actions caused the assault. Shame is what prevents many survivors from speaking about what happened to them. Shame is an attack on the survivor as a person "I am a bad person because this happened to me It is the feeling you get when you are sure that someone will think poorly of you because you were assaulted. Shame is longer lasting, and ultimately more dangerous than guilt. Nancy Venable Raine, in her book *After Silence: Rape and My Journey Back* discusses the difference between guilt and shame: Shame is often confused with guilt, but Lewis notes that whereas shame is "the complete closure of the self-object circle Guilt is less intense than shame and less negative because the focus is an "action of the self rather than the totality of the self. Rape, by definition, is a situation where corrective action is impossible. The feeling of shame is so intense for rape victims that many never tell anyone what happened to them. Even in psychotherapeutic settings, victims of rape often avoid talking about what happened to them. Despite more than two decades of change in social attitudes about rape, I still found it difficult not to feel ashamed when others reacted to me with embarrassment or discomfort. And this feeling of shame silenced me. Lewis notes that an intense feeling of shame can actually cause loss of memory. Shame silences because it encloses the entire self. Rape shame is hard to escape Attempts to dissipate the same by giving words to the unspeakable seem only to increase it. The shame is mirrored by the listener, sometimes quite obviously by a blush, an averting of the eyes, or a hunching of the shoulders, sometimes by silence. The telling then feels like a confession, an admission of wrongdoing, and the sense of is deepened. Shame is what the rapist, not the victim, should feel. Yet his shame is transferred to the victim, and her shame renders her mute. And her muteness seems to confirm the moral rightness of this transfer. The feeling of shame seems to make being the victim of rape an act of wrongdoing Here are some suggestions for combating guilt and shame: When you are feeling guilty about being sexually assaulted, take a minute to look up the definition in the dictionary. It sounds silly, but sometimes it is all it takes to help you remember that you are not the one who committed the crime. It is the person who assaulted you who should feel guilty about their actions. When you are feeling ashamed or guilty, write down your feelings. Then, write a paragraph about why you are feeling that way "I feel ashamed because I told my friend what happened to me today, and she seemed embarrassed Sometimes it helps to have another person tell you that what happened was not your fault. Talking about your feelings can help you make sense of them. Buy *The Courage to Heal Workbook* and do the exercises. Many of them will help relieve your feelings of guilt and shame.

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