

FACT SHEET



Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys

Men and Boys are Also Harmed by Sexual Violence

In 2020, AASAS released the findings of our Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Childhood Sexual Abuse in Alberta survey.¹

- 29% of men have experienced some type of sexual abuse in their lifetime.
 - 24% of boys have experienced sexual abuse under the age of 18.
 - 17% of men have experienced sexual assault over the age of 18.
 - Those who experience sexual abuse as a child are more likely to experience sexual assault again as an adult.

A significant number of people who have been sexually assaulted in Canada are male:

- 13% of police reported sexual assaults in Canada are from men.²
- 19% of children/youth who have been sexually abused are male.³
- Men who are gay, transgender men,⁴ and men with disabilities,⁵ statistically experience higher rates of sexual violence.
- A systematic review of sexual violence against gay, lesbian, or bisexual people in the United States found that on average, 30% of gay and bisexual men reported being sexually assaulted at least once in their lifetime.⁶
- There is emerging evidence that sexual assault against men is under-reported and that prevalence rates may be much higher.⁷

¹ Summary of Key Findings: Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Childhood Sexual Abuse in Alberta (2020). *Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services*.

² Rotenburg, C. (2017). *Police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, 2009-2014: A statistical profile* [Data set]. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/54866-eng.htm>

³ Statistics Canada (2012). *Police-reported sexual offences against children and youth in Canada* [Data set]. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14008-eng.htm>

⁴ Simpson, L. (2018). *Violent victimization of lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Canada, 2014* [Data set]. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54923-eng.htm>

⁵ Conroy, S., & A. Cotter. (2017). *Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014* [Data set]. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14842-eng.pdf?st=Hhk8zFBY>

⁶ Rothman, E. F., Exner, D., & Baughman, A. L. (2011). The prevalence of sexual assault against people who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual: A systematic review. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 12, 55-66.

⁷ Pearson, J., & Barker, D. (2018). Male rape: what we know, don't know and need to find out: A critical review. *Crime Psychology Review*, 4(1), 72-94.

Impacts of Sexual Assault

There are many impacts following a sexual assault for men.^{6,8,9}

- Men may experience a range of psychological impacts following an assault. This includes anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), complex trauma, shame, and guilt.
- Struggles with addiction, intimacy, and low self-esteem are also common.
- Self-blame – some men will blame themselves for not being able to stop the assault. Male socialization asserts that men should be able to physically stop an assault.

For adult men, the impacts of childhood sexual abuse can include:^{10,11}

- Increased hostility
- Depression, anxiety
- Somatic symptoms such as pain
- Struggles with masculinity and sexuality
- Thoughts of suicide

Who Commits Sexual Assault Against Men?

There is a smaller body of available research on adult men who commit sexual assault. Research to-date indicates that the majority of people who perpetrate sexual assault¹² against men are other men, however, women can and do commit sexual violence. In a systematic review of research on male-on-male sexual assault, the majority of individuals who sexually offended:¹³

- Were heterosexual (82%)
- Were Caucasian/white (79%)
- Were known to the person who was assaulted such as an acquaintance (67%)
- Tended to be young (average age 25.8 years).

AASAS welcomes your suggestions and recommendations about other relevant Canadian research references that could be included on this handout. Please e-mail us at mailbox@aasas.ca

⁸ Lowe, & Rogers. (2017). The scope of male rape: A selective review of research, policy and practice. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 35, 38-43.

⁹ Peterson, Z., Voller, E., Polusny, M. & Murdoch, M. (2011). Prevalence and consequences of adult sexual assault of men: Review of empirical findings and state of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(1), 1-24.

¹⁰ Easton, S. (2014). Masculine norms, disclosure, and childhood adversities predict long-term mental distress among men with histories of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38(2), 243-251.

¹¹ Easton, & Kong. (2017). Mental health indicators fifty years later: A population-based study of men with histories of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 63, 273-283.

¹² Choudhary, E., Gunzler, D., Tu, X., & Bossarte, R. (2012). Epidemiological Characteristics of Male Sexual Assault in a Criminological Database. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(3), 523-546.

¹³ Ioannou, M. Hammond, L. & Machin, L. (2017). Male-on-male sexual assault: Victim, offender and offence characteristics. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, 14(2), 189-209.