



Impact of Sexual Assault on Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals

Adapted from OVC TTAC: Sexual Assault Advocate and Service Provider Training - Module 9: Impact of Sexual Assault on Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals: Participant Manual

Purpose

The purpose of this module is to describe the impact of sexual assault on men and people who are LGBTQ+, describe the barriers that exist when these individuals seek support and services after experiencing sexual violence, and explore culturally responsive approaches to serving those who experience sexual violence.

Lessons

1. Impacts of Sexual Assault on Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals
2. Barriers to Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals in Seeking Support and Services After Sexual Assault
3. Assisting Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals Who Experience Sexual Assault

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the impacts of sexual assault on men and LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Describe the barriers that exist when men and LGBTQ+ individuals seek support and services after experiencing sexual violence.
- Explore culturally responsive approaches to serving men and LGBTQ+ individuals who experience sexual violence.

Participant Worksheets

Worksheet 9.1, Thinking Outside of the Box

1. Impacts of Sexual Assault on Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals

Statistics on the Impact of Sexual Assault

Because sexual assault against women is the type of sexual violence most commonly reported, you may support fewer men and people who are LGBTQ+. It is important to acknowledge regardless of a person's gender or sexual orientation, each person's experience is unique and is to be treated with respect.

The following are some statistics on the impact of sexual assault on men and the LGBTQ+ population:

- 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18 (Finkelhor et al., 1990).
- 27.8 percent of men were age 10 or younger at the time of their first sexual assault (Black et al., 2011).
- In one study using statistics from the National Crime Victimization Survey, males ages 18-24 accounted for 4 percent of rape or sexual assault victimizations, and males in college accounted for 17 percent of sexual assaults (Sinozich & Langton, 2014).
- According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, 47 percent of transgender people are sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime.
- Additionally, the CDC 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reported 26 percent of homosexual men and 37 percent of bisexual men experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. The survey also reported 44 percent of homosexual women and 61 percent of bisexual women experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner.
- Transgender and other gender nonconforming (TGNC) students who are native, multiracial, or Black report higher rates of sexual assault in grades K–12 (Grant et al., 2011).
- Black TGNC students in college experience a higher risk of sexual assault (Coulter & Rankin, 2017).

To be clear, it is not the nature of these identities that places these communities at greater risk. Abuse happens in every walk of life, from economic and religious to gender orientation. Yet, while the data show these individuals are at the most significant risk, these are rarely the identities of the people we are serving in our programs and organizations.

2. Barriers to Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals in Seeking Support and Services After Sexual Assault

Some barriers that exist for men and LGBTQ+ individuals when seeking assistance from victim service organizations include:

- Long-standing bias and discrimination in the criminal justice process.
- Negative experiences from a previous service provider either at the same or another agency.

3. Assisting Men and LGBTQ+ Individuals Who Experience Sexual Assault

As we've discussed, developing a more inclusive and comprehensive view of the dynamics of sexual assault among advocates and victim service providers is the first step toward developing reliable and inclusive services for men and LGBTQ+ people who experience sexual assault.

Support services are knowledgeable and understanding of the specific needs of all people who experience sexual assault need to be available.

For example, during a medical-forensic exam, the health care provider will treat the knowledge that the person is LGBTQ+ as protected medical information subject to all confidentiality and privacy rules. Be aware family and friends of LGBTQ+ victims may not know their gender identity or sexual orientation (Office on Violence Against Women, 2013). Therefore, the victim may need privacy during the medical history to protect their identity.

Conventional biases surrounding gender and sexual orientation are often obstacles to seeking help and benefiting from the help available. It is best to offer a lot of choices to someone who experiences sexual assault. For example, some people may feel more comfortable with an advocate of a particular gender.

Some resources are available to your programs and survivors specifically designed for men and LGBTQ+ people who experience sexual assault.

The mission of the nonprofit organization 1in6 (n.d.) is to "help men who have had unwanted or abusive sexual experiences live healthier, happier lives." The organization also serves family members, friends, partners, and service providers by providing information and support resources on the web and in the community. Its services include a 24/7 online helpline where men and their families and friends can speak with a trained advocate, free and confidential weekly online support groups, trauma-informed trainings and webinars, and a narrative gallery of survivor stories.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) is a national coalition of local member programs, affiliate organizations, and individual affiliates working to create systemic and social change to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within LGBTQ+ communities. Note while there are local programs across the country, there is not one in every state. NCAVP strives to increase power and safety for LGBTQ+ individuals through data analysis, policy advocacy, and education and technical assistance.