

rape as a man's issue

why should men care about sexual violence?

men rape

Males commit the majority of all sexually violent crimes. Even when men are sexually victimized, other men are most often the perpetrators.

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.

rape confines men

When some men rape, and when 80% of those who are raped know the man who attacked them, it becomes difficult 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."

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.

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 by raising awareness about the damaging impact of sexual violence.

rape is a crime.
always.

what can men do to stop rape?

All men can play a vital role in rape prevention. Here are a few of the ways:

- Be aware of language. Words are very powerful, especially when spoken by people with power over others. We live in a society in which derogatory words are often used to put women down. Such language sends a message that females are less than fully human. When women are seen as inferior, it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights and ignore their well-being.
- Communicate. Sexual violence often goes hand in hand with poor communication. Our discomfort with talking honestly and openly about sex dramatically raises the risk of rape. By learning effective sexual communication -- stating your desires clearly, listening to your partner, and asking when the situation is unclear -- men make sex safer for themselves and others.
- Speak up. You will probably never see a rape in progress, but you will see and hear attitudes and behaviors that degrade women and promote rape. When your best friend tells a joke about rape, say you don't find it funny. When you read an article that blames a rape survivor for being assaulted, write a letter to the editor. When laws are proposed that limit women's rights, let politicians know that you won't support them. Do anything but remain silent.
- Support survivors of rape. Rape will not be taken seriously until everyone knows how common it is. One out of every four women and one in seven men will be sexually assaulted during their lives. By learning to sensitively support survivors in their lives, men can help both women and other men feel safer to speak out about being raped and let the world know how serious a problem rape is.
- Contribute your time and money. Join or donate to an organization working to prevent violence against women. Rape crisis centers, domestic violence agencies, and men's anti-rape groups count on donations for their survival and always need volunteers to share the workload.
- Talk with women... about how the risk of being raped affects their daily lives; about how they want to be supported if it has happened to them; about what they think men can do to prevent sexual violence. If you're willing to listen, you can learn a lot from women about the impact of rape and how to stop it.
- Talk with men... about how it feels to be seen as a potential rapist; about the fact that 10-20% of all males will be sexually abused in their lifetimes; about whether they know someone who's been raped. Learn about how sexual violence touches the lives of men and what we can do to stop it.
- Organize. Form your own organization of men focused on stopping sexual violence. Men's anti-rape groups are becoming more and more common around the country, especially on college campuses.
- Don't ever have sex with anyone against his or her will. No matter what!

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