

When a Man Is Raped

Rape, a violent act against a human being, should never take place in any society. For many years we only heard about females being raped. Even when rumors did circulate that a male was raped it became one of the greatest kept secrets of our times. In fact, most did not believe it and often made jokes about it. The folklore of many cultures suggests that “males cannot get raped . . . it is impossible.” It suggests that because of the physiological make up of women it is “expected” that women can be raped, but not men. This is a myth. Psychologist, Margret Roberts, in her book “When a man is raped . . . a survival guide” states that “male rape happens more often than most people believe. . . . When we hear the word “rape”, our mental image is usually that of a male perpetrator and a female victim. But men do get raped. Just as several decades ago, the rape of women and children was neglected and collectively denied, so also has the rape of men.”

Sadly, many believe that male rape is only possible between homosexual males or among prisoner. This is another myth. Many also believe that rape is only possible by a male perpetrator on another male or female. The truth is that anyone, male or female, can be a perpetrator or victim of rape. Yes, women can rape men and it does occur. Please don't get in a argument with me about the subject. Just accept the facts. Perhaps those who argue that women cannot rape men may also have difficulty agreeing that a husband can rape his wife. As one author said “If someone does not agree to have sex with another and a sexual act is forced upon them, that is called rape.” The sexual act does not have to be penetration. It can be forced oral sex or the use of an object in any cavity.

Margaret Roberts in her book makes it very clear about men who rape men. Let us read: “Perpetrators of male-to-male rape have an average age of 26 years. They commonly identify as heterosexual and are usually involved in consensual sexual relationships with others. Many men who rape men state that the gender of the victim does not matter to them. They rape to: conquer and control, act out feelings of revenge, resolve conflicts about their own sexuality, and gain status among similar men by being an aggressor.

We must become more compassionate and understand to all victims of rape. The affects of sexual assault is serious. Let me share with you what is considered the “Checklist of Universal Reactions to Sexual Assault” Here it is:

1. Emotional Shock: I feel numb. How can I be so calm? Why can't I cry? Or get angry?
2. Disbelief and/or Denial: Did it really happen? Why me? Maybe I just imagined it. It wasn't really rape.
3. Embarrassment: What will people think? I can't tell my family or friends.
4. Shame: I feel completely filthy, like there's something wrong with me. I can't get clean.
5. Guilt: I feel as if it's my fault, or I should've been able to stop it. If only I had...
6. Depression: How am I gonna get through the next few days? I'm so tired! I feel so hopeless. Maybe I'd be better off dead.
7. Powerlessness: Will I ever feel in control again?
8. Disorientation: I don't even know what day it is, or what I'm supposed to be doing right now. I keep forgetting things.

9. Flashbacks: I'm still re-living the assault! I keep seeing that face and feeling like it's happening all over again.
10. Fear: I'm scared of everything. What if I have herpes or AIDS? I can't sleep because I'll have nightmares. I'm afraid to go out. I'm afraid to be alone.
11. Anxiety: I'm having panic attacks. I can't breathe! I can't stop shaking. I feel overwhelmed.
12. Anger: I feel like killing the person who attacked me!
13. Physical Stress: My stomach (or head or back) aches all the time. I feel jittery and don't feel like eating.
14. Remembering past assaults: I'm getting back memories of what happened to me as a child, since the rape. They won't go away.

Send your questions and comments to marriage and family therapist, Barrington H. Brennen P.O. Box CB-13019 or email at [NK"mailto:question@soencouragement.org"](mailto:question@soencouragement.org) question@soencouragement.org or visit the website www.soencouragement.org