

# Understanding and Supporting Men who Experience Sexual Harm

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# Content Note

All videos were produced and edited by MenHealing, all visuals are possessions of MenHealing, and all content is from trainings prepared by me and/or other members of MenHealing Staff.

# Introductions

Please put it in the chat:

- Name
- Pronoun
- Identities you would want acknowledged in this space
- Anything else you would like to share

# Goal

- Recognize men as survivors and challenge bias in order to promote open and safe spaces for men to share their experiences of sexual harm and receive support.

# Objectives

- Participants will learn the facts and dynamics of sexual harm done to men
- Participants will explore personal bias about men being victims of sexual harm in order to dismantle barriers to support.
- Participants will learn about MenHealing as a resource

A grayscale portrait of Michael Guinn, a Black man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a dark t-shirt. The background is a light gray with a large, faint, circular graphic element on the left side.

590K IN 90 DAYS

**MICHAEL GUINN**  
**MY STORY MATTERS**

# Video

- In one word, what are you feeling right now in response to Michael's story?

# Video

- In a few words, what did you hear Michael say about his struggles or impacts of sexual harm in his life?



# Video

- In a few words, what did Michael say contributed to his healing?

# Men Survivors

- Men survivors include anyone who sees or identifies themselves as a man, can be transgender or cisgender man, and/or non-conforming
- Some of the topics we discuss today will be relevant for any survivor who has a penis, even though we recognize that body parts are not the same as gender
- Not here to compare and contrast populations of survivors and their experiences, here to talk about a specific population and their experiences.
- Can be experiences of sexual harm in childhood, adulthood, or both

# Sexual Harm

- Sexual harm comes in lots of different forms
- When someone has a sexual experience they don't want, or are forced into any kind of sexual act by another person, they've experienced sexual harm.

Source: Safe To Talk [safetotalk.nz](https://safetotalk.nz)

# Sexual Harm

Sexual harm can happen in lots of different ways:

- It might involve physical contact or it could be online.
- It might have happened once or maybe lots of times.
- It might involve one, two, or more people.

Source: Safe To Talk [safetotalk.nz](https://safetotalk.nz)

# Reflection

- What do you think is your role when understanding and supporting survivors of sexual harm?
- Does this role change when it is a man who experienced sexual harm?

# Barriers

- Survivors don't have barriers:
  - Institutions and systems have barriers
  - We as people responding to survivors have barriers

Source: Vera's Center on Victimization and Safety: Healing Informed Care for Survivors from Historically Marginalized Communities. Speaker was Zoe Flowers.

# Barriers

- It is up to **US** to be aware and to dismantle those barriers to:
  - Provide an appropriate response
  - Support healing
  - To really work towards ending sexual harm

# Scenario

Someone comes to you and they tell you there were sexually harmed. They tell you the offender was someone they know.



# Refection

- How do these barriers make it difficult for men to see themselves as survivors of sexual harm?
- How do these barriers make it difficult for men to disclose?
- How do these barriers impact your responses to men who disclose?

“When I was raped I was 6’4” and 220 lbs. I truly believed that I could go anywhere I wanted and no one would bother me—I’m part Samoan, I’m hefty, I wear cowboy boots that make me even taller—I was the defender. Everyone always said ‘Go with Johnny, you’ll be safe with him.’ I’ve been told my entire life that it was impossible for this kind of thing to happen to me.”

-Johnathon, taken from

<https://www.rainn.org/survivor-stories/johnathons-story>

“Showing emotion about being abused? It's not well-accepted. As a Black man, you've been broken down so much that you have to put on a face of being strong. We have a lot of pain that is unattended to.”

-Brian, taken from  
<https://www.rainn.org/survivor-stories/brians-story>

# Statistics

- Research has identified that at least 1 of every 6 men or male-identified individuals will experience sexual victimization during their life (Source: CDC Survey of Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence Survey)
- The prevailing length of time before males disclose being sexually victimized is 20 years (Source: Easton, et. al, 2013)

# Impact of Truths and Untruths about men as victims / survivors

Here is a sample of what **IS true** and what is **NOT true** about boys and men who have experienced sexual harm in their lifetimes

## TRUE

Boys are as vulnerable to sexual harm as girls. And no matter how old a person is, perpetrators can be bigger, stronger or in positions of greater power than the person they seek out.



## NOT TRUE

Boys and men can't be victims of sexual harm because males can protect themselves.



Boys and men can not be sexually assaulted by girls or women.



There is no evidence that being sexually harmed has an impact on sexual orientation.

Boys or men who have been sexually harmed will become homosexual.



Sexual harm of boys by an older female is never a rite of passage regardless of how the culture may portray it. It is the responsibility of all adults to protect children from harm.

Sexual acts forced upon a boy by an older girl or an adult woman is "just a rite of passage."

## TRUE

Sexual arousal is a reality of the body, even in situations of trauma or when sex is not consensual; arousal can be mistaken as an indicator of pleasure and create considerable confusion for male victims.



Boys and men CAN be sexually harmed by girls or women. For boys this may be disguised as care giving or personal hygiene, and older boys and adult men can be emotionally or physically pressured into unwanted sex.



Current research shows that most men who offend boys actually identify as heterosexual ("straight").



While it is true that males who are sexual offenders often have a history of having been a victim of sexual harm themselves, most male victims do NOT become sexual offenders.



## NOT TRUE

Boys or men getting aroused or having an orgasm during sexual harm means that he was a willing partner or that he enjoyed the experience.

It is not possible for boys or men to be sexually harmed by girls or women.

Most sexual harm of boys or men is done by homosexuals.

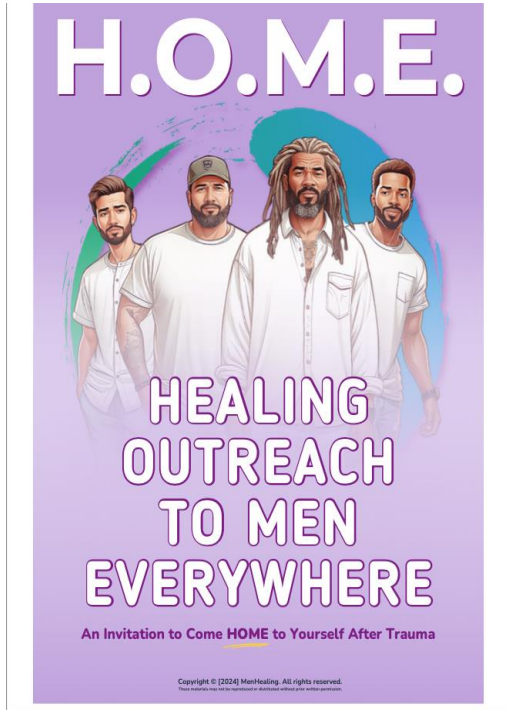
A boy or man who has been sexually harmed will become sex a offender is NOT TRUE.



Facilitated by trained Peer Leaders who receive ongoing supervision

- Community
- Alumni
- Partners

# MenHealing: H.O.M.E



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# MenHealing:Weekends of Recovery (WOR)





# MenHealing Website Links

- [menhealing.org](https://menhealing.org)
- Healing Outreach for Men Everywhere: <https://menhealing.org/healing-outreach-for-men-everywhere/>
- Peer Support Groups: <https://menhealing.org/peer-support-groups/>
- Publications Page: <https://menhealing.org/publications/>
- Video Library:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3NmW9Wlb4Kg4AH9kgtkkFYtxwHxAPfN7>
- Weekends of Recovery: <https://menhealing.org/goals-of-weekends-of-recovery/>

# Takeaways

- What are you taking away from today's presentation?

# Takeaways

- Men and boys are victims of sexual harm
- We have barriers to men disclosing and seeking help, we have to acknowledge and dismantle these barriers
- Create space where men survivors can feel comfortable asking for support and disclosing experiences of sexual harm by understanding the context and facts around sexual harm done to men.

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1in6.org, Survivors of Sexual Trauma Reveal an Important Truth, video;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3HRD47LovQ>