

## Prevalence and Research

The ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) study, with a sample size of more than 17,000 participants, finds that 16% (or 1 in 6) of adult male respondents reported contact sexual abuse before the age of 18.

Service providers should recognize the possibility of childhood sexual abuse in every client's trauma history.



## Resources

### The ACEs Study and male victims

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15894146>

### APA Guidelines for working with boys and men

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/boys-men-practice-guidelines.pdf>

**MaleSurvivor.org** national organization against male victimization.

<https://www.malesurvivor.org/index.php>

**1in6** non-profit organization helping men who have had abusive sexual experiences live healthier, happier lives.

<https://1in6.org>

**RAINN** national anti-sexual violence organization.

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-assault-men-and-boys>

# UP Project

## Underserved Populations Training Project

Produced by the Center for Innovation and Resources, Inc. (CIR) with funding from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), Victim Services Branch with funding made possible through the United States Department of Justice, Victims of Crime Act, 2015-VA-GX-0058.



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**Additional UP Project resources on topics related to male victims:**

<https://cirinc.org/up/archive.html>

<https://cirinc.org/up/resources.html>

<https://cirinc.org/up/events.html>

## Considerations for Serving Male Victims of Sexual Assault and Abuse



## A Resource for Service Providers

## Providing Trauma Informed Services to Male Victims

Understand that it can be difficult for any victim to seek help, but there are specific societal conditions that may further deter men.

Any service provider could be the first person that a victim has told. Always be ready to listen.

It is important for survivors to feel safe, respected, and believed.

Be aware of the many ways trauma can manifest itself in a survivor, particularly when he is seeking help.

Male survivors may not identify childhood sexual trauma as the reason for seeking support. They may present concerns about relationships, addiction, or other issues which they perceive as less threatening to discuss — or they may have blocked or repressed memories of abuse.

Make yourself and your space accessible and welcoming to male victims. Be aware of messages conveyed by your brochures, website, waiting room, and body language.

If possible, consider or discuss the victim's preference or comfort level related to gender of service provider.



## Factors Unique to Male Victims

**Masculinity:** Some men may feel as though their masculinity is questioned if they identify as a victim. They may feel as though they are expected to defend themselves in an assault.

**Sexuality:** If the perpetrator is also male, the victim could experience confusion or fear regarding the effects on his own sexuality. There is also a general belief that most male victims become perpetrators, when this may not be true.

If the perpetrator is female, the victim may face further skepticism regarding his lack of power in the situation, and his willingness to engage in sexual activities with the perpetrator.

**Involuntary responses:** Male victims may experience noticeable involuntary physiological responses during an assault, such as erection and/or ejaculation. The victim and others must understand that these physiological responses are not indicators of willingness.

**Disclosure:** In addition to the shame that may be felt by any victim, the factors above may make it especially difficult for males to disclose.

Providers should consider all of these unique factors and make efforts to create a supportive and welcoming environment that encourages male victims to access services.

For more information, please visit <https://cirinc.org/up/resources.html>

## Responding to a Disclosure



Stay present and listen to the survivor even if the entire circumstance doesn't fit the profile of what you believe about abusers and abuse.

Respect the client's pace and manner.

Listen fully and presume nothing.

Responses:

- *I'm here to listen and I have some questions.*
- *It wasn't your fault.*
- *I'm glad you're safe now (if true).*
- *What do you need right now? How can I help you get it?*
- *I'm very sorry that happened to you.*
- *I know this could be hard to talk about.*
- *Thank you for being willing to talk with me.*

Consider that some may prefer to use "survivor" rather than "victim." It doesn't hurt to ask.

Avoid phrases like "I understand," because they can be isolating. Each man's trauma experience is unique and complicated by constructs and perceptions of masculinity and sexuality.

Create a plan for safety following disclosure — support, follow-up, an emergency plan. The survivor may experience anxiety or remorse after disclosing and be at increased risk for self harm or harm from his abuser.

Acknowledge the client's current coping behaviors — from denial of trauma to substance abuse — however self-defeating, until he can practice more constructive strategies.