



JAKE'S STORY

Jake was an active duty soldier deployed in Afghanistan. He had a beautiful wife and baby waiting for him back home and had already made it through one deployment. One afternoon when he was on his way to the showers he was accosted by his superior and sexually assaulted. He felt so ashamed and afraid to tell anyone. After all, he was a soldier and should have been able to take care of himself.

When Jake got home it was hard for him to go back to his normal life. His wife noticed changes in him unlike when he had deployed before. He was very distant with her and became angry and violent. She assumed it was due to all the stress of fighting and thought it would pass the longer he was home. Jake just couldn't deal with all the guilt he was feeling.

Jake ended up taking his own life. All the warning signs had been there, but his wife didn't know what to do.

WHAT TO DO IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU?

1. Find a safe place to go away from the perpetrator, possibly with a close friend or family member that you trust.
2. Remember that what happened is never your fault, so do not blame yourself.
3. Do not bathe, wash your hands, brush your teeth or smoke. There may be residual evidence that needs to be collected if you plan on pressing charges against the perpetrator.
4. Report the attack to the police as soon as possible.
5. Seek immediate medical attention in order to test for STDs or check for injury.
6. Remember that healing takes time. Even if you did not report the attack at the time, it is never too late to get help.

WHERE TO FIND HELP?

If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault, there is help out there for you. Please, remember it is never your fault and you can survive.

The National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE.

Department of Defense Safe Helpline for Military Sexual Assault:
1-877-955-5247

TEST YOURSELF!

Test your knowledge by answering the following questions:

1. Sexual Assault never happens to men because they are too strong to be victims.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. If a young man is assaulted by a woman, then he should feel lucky, not bad about it.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Just because a man has a physical reaction to an assault, does not mean he wanted it to happen.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Being sexually assaulted by someone of your own sex does not make you a homosexual.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Sexual assault is consensual.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers: 1. b; 2. b; 3. a; 4. a; 5.

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MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE MILITARY



STAY SAFE SERIES

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YOU'RE NOT ALONE

WHAT IS MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sexual Assault is defined as a forced or coerced sexual encounter that is non-consensual. Sexual assault is an act of violence and is about power and domination. Many times perpetrators will threaten the victim's family or use violence. Still other times, perpetrators will prey on the vulnerabilities of a victim and offer gifts and attention before committing the crime.

Male sexual assault involves the sexual abuse of boys or men. Boys and young men are just as vulnerable as women when it comes to sexual assault. As a society, we are led to believe that sexual assault is something that only happens to women. The facts prove this to be false.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Myths and misconceptions

There are many misconceptions involving male sexual assault that have led people to believe it's not a problem. Here are a few of those myths:

Myth: Males are not vulnerable to sexual assault because they are too macho and strong.

Truth: The truth is that men and boys need to be protected just as much as girls and women. Due to gender roles in our society, males who have been sexually assaulted many times feel that they should have been strong enough to prevent this from happening to them.

Myth: Because a man has a physical reaction to the assault, then he must have "liked it" and therefore it was consensual.

Truth: Many times, men who are sexually assaulted may have an involuntary physical reaction while being sexually assaulted, including erection or ejaculation. This does not mean that they wanted it or liked it.

Myth: If a young man is assaulted by a woman then he should feel lucky.

Truth: Sexual assault is about power not pleasure, and whether the perpetrator is male or female, it makes no difference. Sexual assault is always an act of violence.

Myth: Sexual assault only happens if you are a homosexual.

Truth: Sexual assault happens to both heterosexual and homosexual men. In both instances, it is a violent crime and not an act of pleasure.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT

The truth is that boys and men are just as vulnerable as girls and women. Male sexual assault is believed to be under-reported due to these myths and the stigma attached to it.

Many heterosexual victims begin to question their sexuality and fear telling anyone for this reason. Many homosexual victims do not report sexual assault because they feel guilty and feel that their lifestyle may be the cause of the assault. What a victim needs to understand is that it is never their fault and that there is help available to them.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

Know the Signs

What are the warning signs of sexual assault?

- The victim is easily startled or distressed around certain people.
- There is a constant sense of fear.
- The victim withdraws from family and friends and makes excuses to break social engagements.
- There may be physical signs of the assault including bruising, cuts, or other marks.

Long term effects of Male Sexual Assault:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Intimacy issues
- Self-hatred
- Anger and violent behavior
- Suicidal thoughts

What the statistics show

According to the Center for Disease Control, 1 in 73 men has been sexually assaulted in his lifetime. Many researchers on the subject believe the actual number to be closer to 1 in 6 men because male sexual assault is grossly under-reported due to the stigma attached to it.

In an anonymous survey of military members done in 2013, the statistics showed that male sexual assault in the military had increased by 20% since 2006.



REDUCING THE RISK OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Making Smart Decisions

Always be firm

- Be firm when you tell someone what you want or don't want to happen.
- "No" always means "No"; speak plainly and clearly. Do not worry about being impolite.
- Make sure that your body language matches what you are saying; do not smile or laugh but use firm posture and eye contact.

Always plan ahead

- Always carry a cell phone or be in close range of a phone.
- Always prepare for your own transportation and bring extra money just in case you need to catch a bus or cab.
- Travel with a friend or group of friends and check in with each other often.
- Never give someone you do not know well your home address.
- Never leave your drink unattended; drugs used for date rape and sexual assault are odorless and colorless and can be easily slipped into someone's drink.
- Always keep house and car doors locked, even in daylight.

Always be aware of your surroundings

- Always know where you are and who you are with.
- Take note of your surroundings, and if you feel unsafe, get to a safe place and report any suspicious activity to the police.
- Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel safe, then it probably isn't.

SPECIAL TIPS FOR DEPLOYED MILITARY PERSONNEL

Many times soldiers in deployed areas face special risks. It is very important to be on guard when in such a situation.

- Always travel with a buddy. Many military sexual assaults happen in instances when a weapon is not being carried, such as going to showers or latrines. Go in groups to these areas when possible.
- Make sure all barracks are secure even during the day.
- Report any unauthorized personnel immediately and find a secure place away from said individuals.
- Regardless of respecting other cultures, if something is making you uncomfortable, take yourself out of the situation immediately.