

MYTHS ABOUT MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- 1. Boys And Men Can't Be Victims: Males Are Able To Protect Themselves From Sexual Abuse**
Cultural norms promote the belief that "male" and "victim" is an oxymoron; a small boy is equally vulnerable as a female child to victimization when their offender is bigger, older, or more powerful.
- 2. Males Are Sexually Abused Less Frequently Than Females**
Current research indicates that 1 of every 4 females and 1 of every 6 males will experience sexual victimization before the age of 18.
- 3. Males Are Less Traumatized Than Females By The Experience Of Sexual Abuse**
The physical and emotional trauma of sexual abuse is equally as destructive for males as for females
- 4. Arousal Or Orgasm By A Boy During Sexual Abuse Means That He Was A Willing Participant Or That He Enjoyed The Experience**
Arousal is a predictable physiological response, even in situations of trauma or non-consenting sexual contact; arousal is often mistakenly assumed to imply pleasure.
- 5. Males Who Are Sexually Abused Will Become Sexual Offenders (i.e., the "Vampire Syndrome")**
While it is true that most male sexual offenders have themselves been the victim of sexual abuse, most male victims of sexual abuse do not become sexual offenders.
- 6. Males Who Are Sexually Abused Will Become Homosexual**
There is no research to support the inference that male victims of sexual abuse are at greater risk for becoming homosexual. It is also important to challenge the myth that homosexuality is a "pathology" and assert that reality that healthy sexuality exists on a continuum of sexual orientations.
- 7. Most Sexual Abuse Of Males Is Perpetrated By Homosexuals**
To the contrary, prevailing research reveals that the predominance of sexual offenders are self-identified heterosexuals.
- 8. Boys Cannot Be Sexually Abused By A Female**
Boys are also susceptible to non-consenting sexual contact with females; some female caregivers of young boys disguise sexually invasive behaviors under the umbrella of personal hygiene.
- 9. Sexual Activity Between An Adult Female And a Boy Is A "Rite Of Passage," Not Abuse**
It is common to minimize the victimization aspects when an older female engages in sexual conduct with a younger male; Cultural norms commonly portray this kind of sexual behavior as a "rite of passage" rather than victimization.

**Prepared By: Jim Struve, L.C.S.W.
Salt Lake City, UT.
www.mindfulpresence.com**