



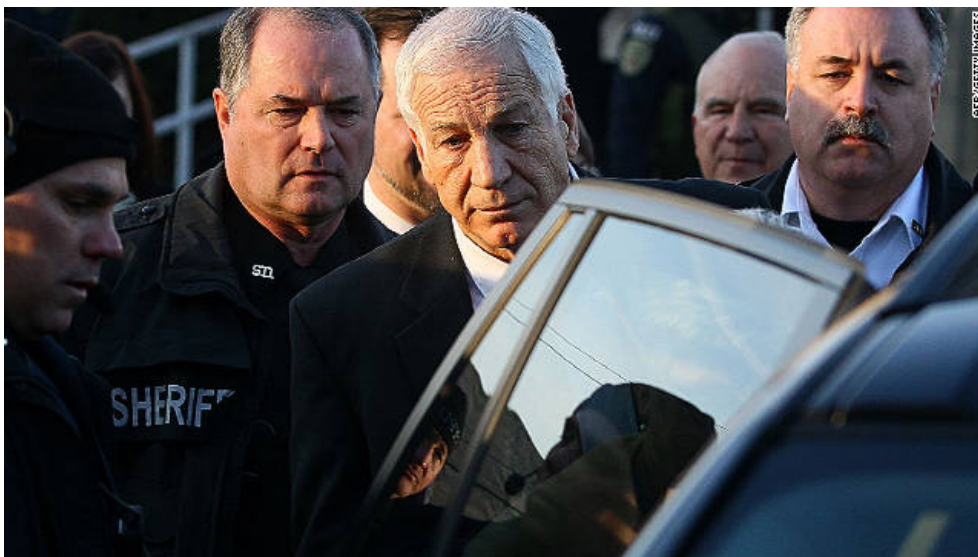
For men and boys, a silver lining amid sex abuse scandals

By **Jessica Ravitz**, CNN

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Groups that help male sex abuse victims have seen Web traffic and hotline calls increase since the Sandusky scandal broke.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Allegations at Syracuse, The Citadel, elsewhere followed the Penn State scandal

Some men and boys who are sex abuse survivors say news offers an opportunity

Advocates, therapists and lawyers see more men reaching out and facing their pasts

Experts say one in six men were sexually abused as children

(CNN) -- Advocates and therapists for survivors of male sex abuse say the recent scandals at Penn State and elsewhere may help men who were abused as children, and boys being abused today, step out of the shadows and get the support they deserve.

They also hope society can become better educated about the issue.

"The allegations have kick-started a public dialogue about sexual violence and the community's responsibility," says Jennifer Marsh, who directs hotlines at RAINN, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. "It's a conversation we have to have and can't shy away from."

If increased Web traffic and calls to hotlines are any indication, the tide for men and boys may, in fact, be turning.

National organizations like RAINN, MaleSurvivor and 1in6 -- a reference to research estimates that one in six men have been sexually abused as children -- all report increased attention since the story about former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky first broke in early November, setting off what seemed like a domino effect of allegations at Syracuse, The Citadel, the Amateur Athletic Union and elsewhere.

RAINN saw a 54% increase in traffic to its online hotline in the week after the Penn State story made headlines. Though RAINN does not ask the gender of hotline visitors, Marsh says the organization has anecdotally seen "a significant increase of male visitors."

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The experience of two organizations that specifically exist for the benefit of men and boys may be even more telling.

Words matter in Penn State perjury case

MaleSurvivor, which provides resources, information, discussion boards and recovery retreats, received nearly 135,000 online visits in November, a dramatic jump from its monthly average of 100,000.

Likewise, website traffic at **1in6** has boomed from an average 475 visits a week to as many as 1,200, according to a founding board member.

Calls to the **Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP)** also have gone up, both locally and nationally, by 20% to 30% since the recent wave of stories broke, says David Clohessy, the organization's executive director.

Both hope and desperation could be driving the increase, he says.



KTH: Mike McQueary testifies

Survivors of clergy sex abuse who didn't come forward before -- or did but didn't feel heard -- may see the overwhelming attention and outrage and believe this is their time to talk. And they may be motivated by the realization that society has not progressed as much as they had hoped.



Ex-Citadel counselor facing sex charges

"There's an assumption that surely, after all these [Catholic Church] lawsuits and payouts and scandals, surely no institution ignores child sex abuse these days," Clohessy says. "So when they see the stories out of Syracuse, Penn State and The Citadel, they might think, 'My gosh, I better come forward.'"

Another motivation to speak up now, Clohessy says, is thanks to the wonders of the Internet.



AAU investigates sex abuse claims

The stories in the news have prompted men, who may have put aside thoughts of their former abusers for years, to search online for their abusers' names. Clohessy says these men are finding out that maybe the teacher who officials vowed would never teach again is now offering private music lessons in his home, or the coach who was ousted has a wife running an in-home day care center. Betrayed by false promises and outraged, some of these men are compelled to act.

They're not alone

Coming forward for any survivor of sexual abuse is complicated, and it's only more so for men and boys, experts say.

Men may have a harder time seeing themselves as "survivors" or "victims." Even identifying what they experienced as "abuse" can be a stretch for some, says Jim Hopper, a clinical psychologist who's worked in the field for 20 years. And strolling into, or calling a hotline affiliated with, a "rape" or "sexual assault" crisis center? That may be years off, if that day ever comes.

It's for this reason that 1in6, which Hopper helped found, avoids using labels. With pages like "**Sorting It Out for Yourself**," 1in6's website offers a safe entree for men to explore whether something that might have happened to them as children is affecting them today -- whether it's fear of intimacy, drug dependency, pornography or sex addiction, Hopper explains.

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Did Syracuse cover up sex abuse?

The 1 in 6 stated mission is "to help men who have had unwanted or abusive sexual experiences in childhood live healthier, happier lives."

Jim Struve, a psychotherapist in Salt Lake City, has worked with male sex abuse survivors for 35 years. He helped organize the first conference exclusively for male survivors, which brought 450 people from 14 countries to Atlanta in 1989. He served on a committee that would establish the National Organization Against Sexual Victimization of Males, which later merged with and became known as MaleSurvivor. He's facilitated 35 weekend recovery retreats for the organization since 2003.

Like Hopper, he says language matters.

"How males are asked about abuse influences their answers," he says. "If you ask most males, 'Were you sexually abused?,' they will answer, 'No.' But if you ask them behavioral/descriptive questions like, 'What age was your first sexual experience?' 'How old was your partner?' or 'Was this sexual experience consensual?' ... men will often describe situations that are abusive, while not defining them as abuse."

One in eight rape victims is male. One in six men were sexually abused as children. These are facts that experts like Struve say need to be heard, repeated and accepted.

Male survivors "have been in the shadows," says Struve, who runs therapy groups for male survivors both at his private practice and through [Salt Lake City's Rape Recovery Center](#). His groups are filled to capacity with waiting lists.

"Most men think 'I'm the only one.' But that's dramatically shifted," he says, as more men face their past and realize they're not alone.

The surge of recent stories also has given hope to those not working exclusively with men.

"We feel very optimistic about the fact that we're at a time in our history when so many male survivors will come forward," says Megan O'Bryan, president and CEO of the [Cleveland Rape Crisis Center](#). "Ten years ago, we wouldn't have been in that place."

Why now?

It was nearly 10 years ago that the Catholic Church sex abuse scandal in Boston blew wide open, spawning an abundance of similar allegations across the globe.

While that story certainly grabbed headlines, the publicity may not have spoken to men in the same way the allegations at big university sports programs have.

These recent stories reach a wider audience, including the sorts of men who flip first to the sports page, tune into ESPN or worship at the altar of football or basketball.

And that may help account for the increase in accusations and calls to organizations, SNAP's Clohessy says.

"In my experience, many people, including many survivors, seek out the entertainment news and sports news and deliberately turn away from the horror that is often in the 'news news' section," he says. "Anytime child sex crimes make it into entertainment programs or sports programs, it does, in fact, bring more survivors of abuse forward and forces them to think about what they've experienced."

Another way in which men appear to be coming forward is through

the legal system.

Take, for instance, the influx of calls to the attorney referral line offered by the [National Center for Victims of Crime](#), a Washington-based resource and advocacy organization that helps crime victims rebuild their lives.

Requests for referrals in the area of child sex abuse have tripled since the Penn State story broke, says Mai Fernandez, the organization's executive director. And while some callers have acknowledged that the statute of limitations in their states will probably prevent them from suing, she says men are adamant that they must do something.

They'll say things like, "If I can't sue the guy, I want to expose him in some way so he can't hurt others," she says.

Kelly Clark, a Portland, Oregon, attorney specializing in child sex abuse cases, says he's seen several significant developments specifically triggered by the news.

He says he's gotten about 40 calls from people who want to explore their legal options. Of those, he says about a dozen live in states where they're still within their statute of limitations. He's also received a flood of calls from former and existing clients in need of emotional support. News reports showing people initially more concerned about the Penn State sports program and its legendary coaches than about the victims left them reeling, Clark says. And then they saw Sandusky's denials.

"When child abuse survivors see denials of credible allegations, it tends to send them into orbit because the thing they've fought their whole lives to overcome is the fear that people won't believe them."

Looking ahead

The spotlight has, indeed, stirred a wider conversation. Male survivors may be looking inside themselves and reaching out, just as advocates look and plan ahead.

Like so many other organizations, [Childhelp](#), which helps abused and neglected children, has felt the fallout. Calls to its hotline have gone up, but so has the group's determination to do something in response to what's in the news, says Daphne Young, the group's public relations director.

While initial conversations had already started with the [Foundation for Global Sports Development](#) -- a nonprofit previously known as Justice for Athletes -- Childhelp has ramped up the partnership to launch a campaign called "Blow the Whistle on Child Abuse," a crisis intervention and prevention plan for young athletes, their parents, coaches and educators.

The goal is to roll out the campaign in April, Young says. She also says the organization is taking on legislative initiatives, including one that would make it against the law to witness child abuse in action and not intervene and report it.

Other groups are also putting forth proactive measures. The [National Sexual Violence Resource Center's website](#) now has on its homepage links specifically tied to the Penn State scandal, including a collection of resources and articles on child sex abuse, including literature about prevention and risk reduction, answers to common questions and a piece about bystander training.

That men are calling hotlines and visiting websites in greater numbers also signifies an increased need for services tailored to

them, such as additional male support groups, says Karen Baker, the center's director.

"They're examining things that happened in their own lives. ... There's a lot of soul searching," she says. "Men are calling in. They're reading about it in the news, and it's triggering them."

She and others say the swift and serious response from authorities, and from those who've come out in support of survivors, is emboldening men and suggesting that times are changing.

"When this kind of story broke with the Catholic Church, it was perceived as still being swept under the rug. This time, there's outrage and heads are rolling," she says. "In that regard, maybe this is going to be a blessing for some people. Maybe it'll be the tipping point."

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CrazyTown

Someone just castrate these abusive predators...

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7685540

Outside the U.S. white male pedophiles are almost untouchable. They can literally finger a 5 year old girl up the skirt on a public street and get away with it, even brag about it on youtube.

1 hour ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)



Austrain

BS. There have been men caught on CCTV in America molesting children in shops and nothing has happened to them. You just love talking about what child molesters do to little girls don't you? (why even say

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it)

1 hour ago | [Like \(3\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



MikeandMyrt

When I was a kid, forced into the local native school, we had nowhere to turn and when we tried....well it goes without saying that the LILLY WHITE SOCIETY refused to listen to our accusations. Once, when I went public against the Catholic Priests who tough at the local Indian School, especially the ... [more](#)

2 hours ago | [Like \(1\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



timlennon

The victims and survivors of childhood sexual abuse who step forward and report abuse are to be admired for their courage. Witnesses and whistle blowers are to be admired for reporting. Protecting children is the responsibility of all. I was abused by a priest when I was 13. Important steps in my ... [more](#)

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nobody2u

they don't have a conscience. they should work it up backwards...and try to get a better picture on sociopaths so we can get them identified earlier. they will just take advantage of naive parents or no parents. reminds me of the fish monster. we lived by a river and dad was always scared that o... [more](#)

6 hours ago | [Like \(5\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



SNAPJudy

I agree..."65Truck You should change you screen name to Somebody2u

You are admired for sharing you pain..

5 hours ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)



65Truck

You should change you screen name to Somebody2u. I have been reading your comments and reflecting myself. Hopefully you will go back to one of your earlier posts and read my 2 replies. You are a good person speaking from the heart.

6 hours ago | [Like \(3\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



KingBradley

Umph, what a sordid little story this is. Just a shame, such dirt, so many snakes and snails and puppy dog tails!

7 hours ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)



KingBradley

Wow, this sounds like a circus act!

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nobody2u

train wreck

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SNAPJudy

This is an excellent article. I have worked with SNAP for nine years now, and after hearing hundreds of horrific stories of kids who were sexually abused, I learned something new a couple of weeks ago, from a newly forthcoming victim. She said the reason she finally decided to speak up and seek help w... [more](#)

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nobody2u

i think people want to see a happy ending...like tv. but real life isn't like that. people that don't understand

trauma think it works like that, but it doesn't. makes a good tv show. but people that have actually been through trauma aren't buying it. it doesn't work that way.

7 hours ago | [Like \(1\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



nobody2u

nontheless...kids don't have resources and the system is stacked against them. maybe its getting better now. cnn seems to do a good job with it.

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nobody2u

i probably watched too much television.

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nobody2u

i didn't want my dad to go to jail for killing three stupid boys at high school. (i was probably exaggerating how my dad would react. but it seemed appropriate to me.) like i said...kids think different.

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nobody2u

i believe that. i didn't think anyone would help me when i was a kid. and i heard on the news that the governor of our state raped an indian girl. so i didn't think anyone would help me. i was mostly protecting my grandpa because i knew that he read the newspaper every day. i thought if i told ... [more](#)

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KingBradley

Oh, how sad, I thought maybe there really was a "silver lining" and it came out finally, that the whole thing was just a silly misunderstanding. This sure is a sordid news event that will go down in history and be read over the ages to people worldwide as a lesson in understanding the antics of male... [more](#)

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nobody2u

go to mitworld video and watch Learning to See in the Dark. The books are better. They can only say so much in a lecture.

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nobody2u

patriarchy rather. and sociopaths. they don't think they did anything wrong.

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nobody2u

its not athleticism so much as patriarhcy maybe that you are referring to. but...true sociopaths in there too.

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nobody2u

there is no silver lining to rape. or childhood sexual abuse. seems like you spend most of your life trying not to kill yourself. its work.

8 hours ago | [Like \(2\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



nobody2u

i have a hard time admitting to my own self what happened to me. my brother was abused also (by a different person). i still have a hard time with the imagery of my own self in that position. and that people hated us that bad. that they would destroy our family and our selves like that. our cas... [more](#)

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nobody2u

we both went to therapists. but they told me that they really don't have anyone that is good at it. i got some help there, but mostly had to get myself through it with books and such. i would say that it was harder for me to tell another person because i have a hard time with the perception of my... more

3 hours ago | [Like \(1\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



65Truck

Second thought. I had enough courage as a Father of two daughters to break the chain of child abuse. My wife and daughters are my life. We have a choice, and breaking the chain of abuse is the best thing possible.

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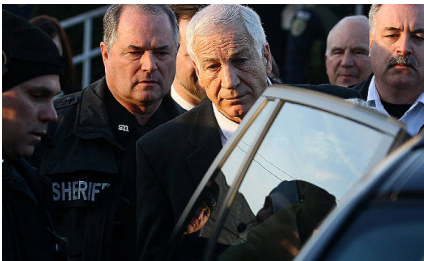
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For men and boys, a silver lining amid sex abuse scandals - CNN.com

By Jessica Ravitz, CNN

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(CNN) -- Advocates and therapists for survivors of male sex abuse say the recent scandals at Penn State and elsewhere may help men who were abused as children, and boys being abused today, step out of the shadow and get the support they deserve.

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"The allegations have kick-started a public

