

Supporting Men and Boy Survivors of Sexual Abuse

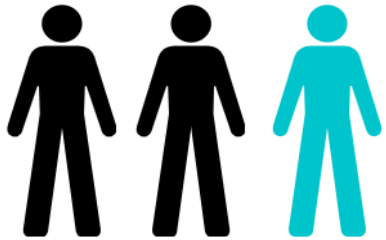
MCASA
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

SALI
Sexual Assault Legal Institute

Objectives

- Participants will be able to
 - Recognize the prevalence of sexual violence against men and boys
 - Understand the importance of socialization and masculinity
 - Identify barriers men experience when seeking services
 - Understand the way trauma affects male survivors
 - Reevaluate their own biases and accessibility of services for men

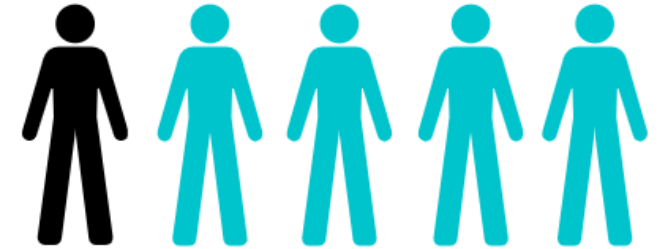
Prevalence in Society



1 in 6 men have experienced contact sexual violence



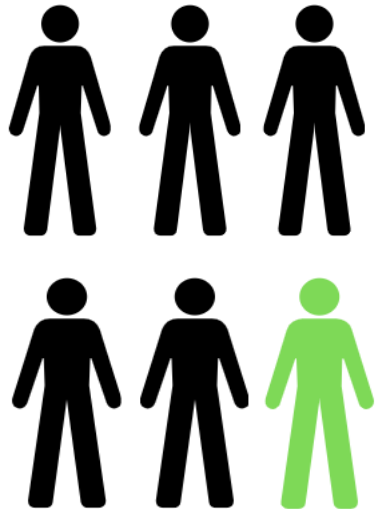
1 in 8 have experienced non-contact sexual violence



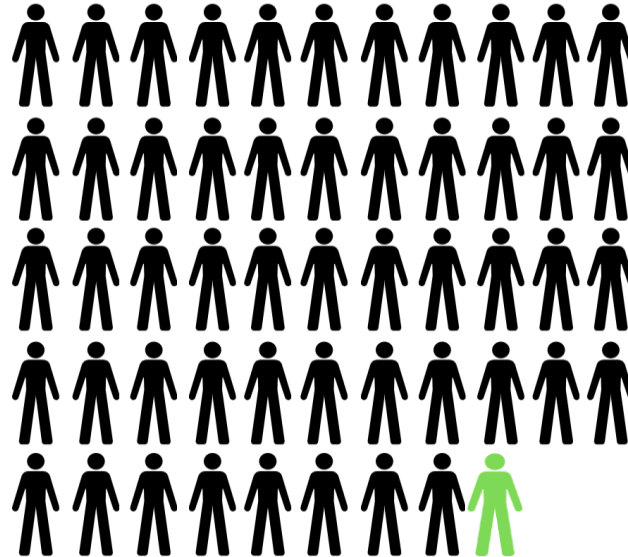
4 in 10 men have been stalked

(1)

Sexual Abuse of Boys



1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old



1 in 53 boys (<18) experienced sexual abuse by an adult

52

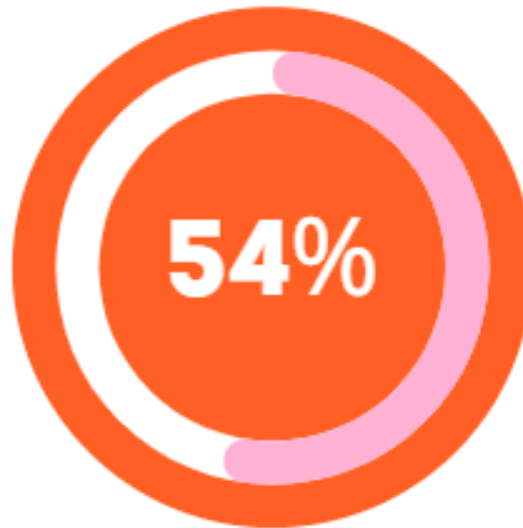
Years old is the median age at the time of reporting child sex abuse

(3,33)

Prevalence in People with Disabilities



Of men with developmental disabilities have experienced sexual assault



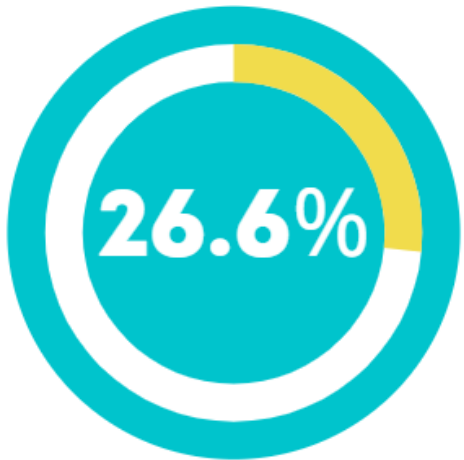
Of boys who are Deaf have been sexual assaulted



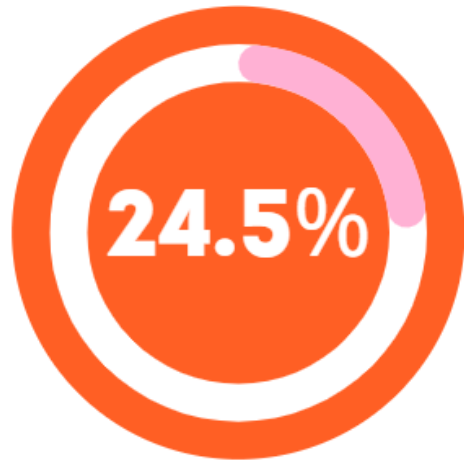
Of men who experienced sexual violence other than rape had a disability

(31, 32)

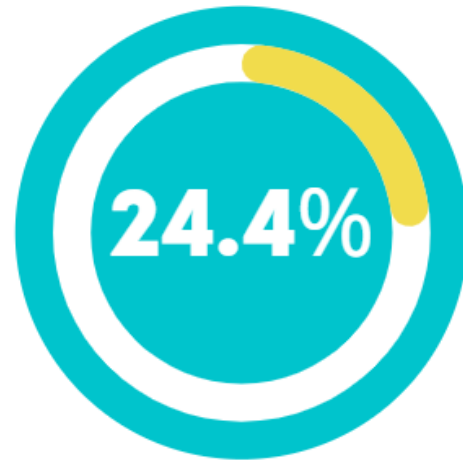
Prevalence for Men of Color



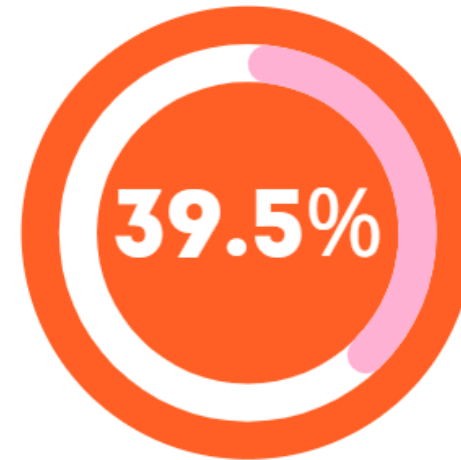
HISPANIC



**AMERICAN
INDIAN/ALASKA
NATIVE**



**NON-HISPANIC
BLACK MEN**



**MULTIRACIAL
MEN**



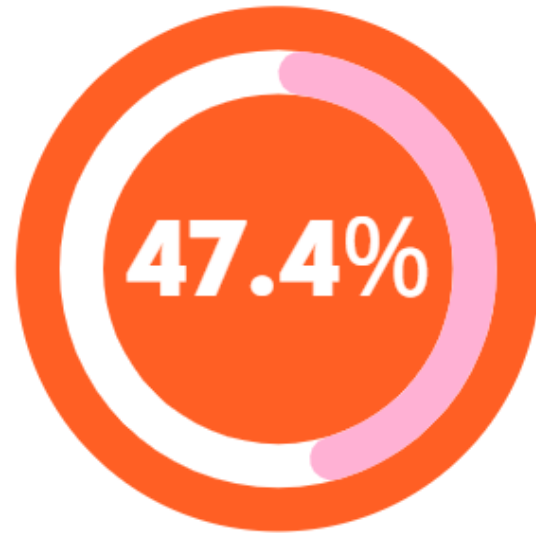
**ASIAN/PACIFIC
ISLANDER**

(2)

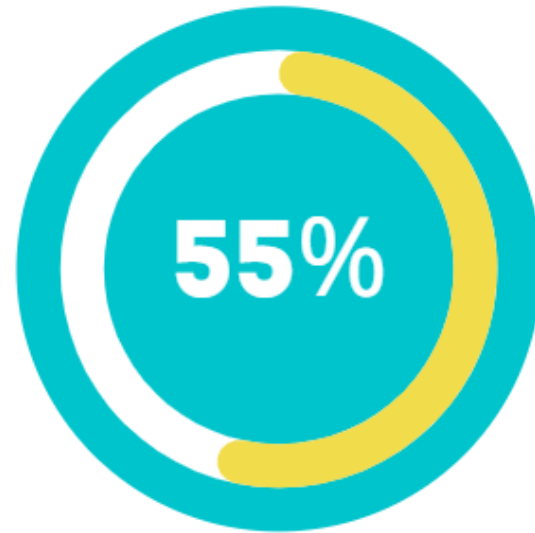
Prevalence in the LGBTQ+ Community



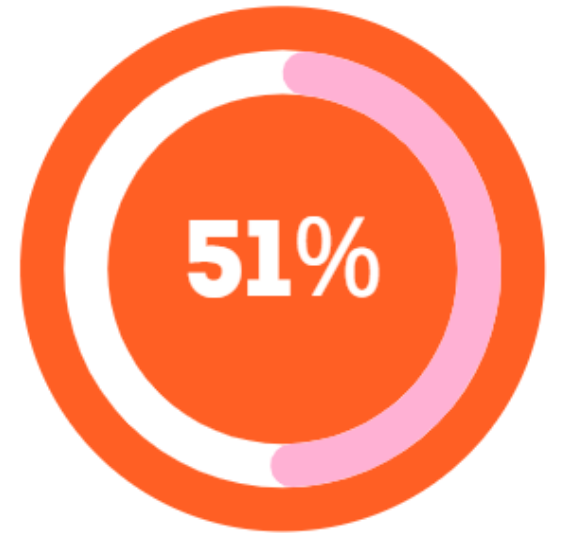
GAY MEN



BISEXUAL MEN



NON-BINARY



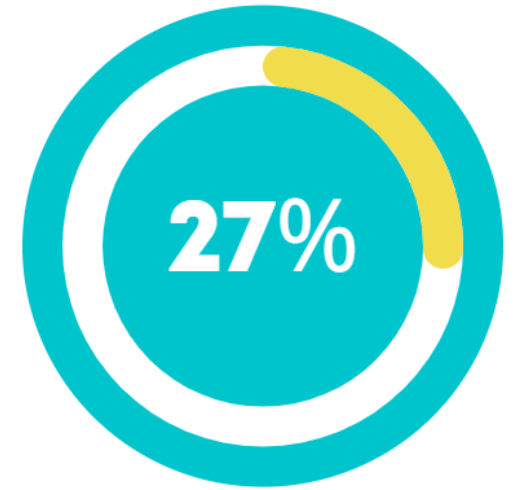
TRANS MEN

7,500

Incarcerated men
experience sexual
assault while in prison

1 IN 5

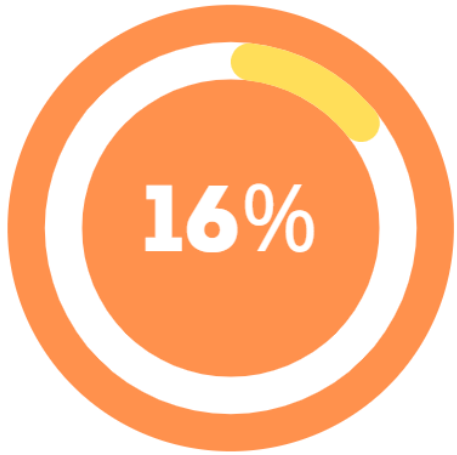
homeless (or marginally
housed) reported physical
or sexual violence



Men in the military
reported experiencing
sexual violence in 2019

Unique Populations

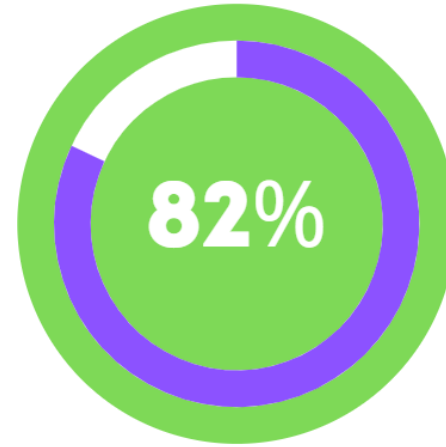
(7,6,8)



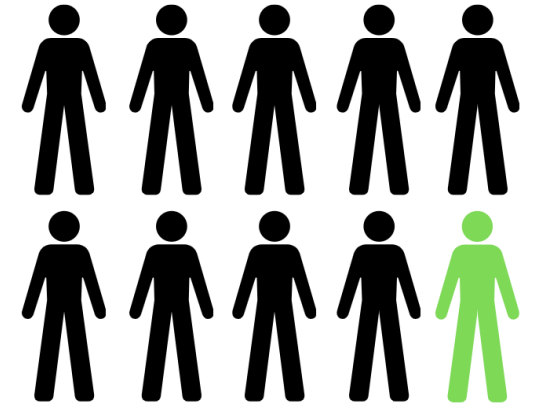
report sexual assault as a reason for running away

11 TO
13

Is the average age boys become victims of sex trafficking



of sexual assault in youth detention are committed by women staff



1/10 youth report sexual abuse in confinement

Boys in Unique Populations

Men

- **52%** are raped by acquaintances
- **15%** reported being raped by strangers
- **10%** of men have experienced IPV
- **34.7%** of reported incidents involved a female perpetrator

Boys

- **93%** know their abuser
- **<10%** are sexually abused by a stranger
- **50%** of the time children under the age of 6 were molested by family members

(1,2)

Socialization

- What is socialization?
- Parents and peers play critical role
- Key themes ⁽⁹⁾
 - Emotional stoicism
 - Heterosexual prowess
 - Physical toughness
 - Autonomy



Media and Socialization

- Portrayed as tough, independent, and sexually aggressive
- This perspective changes over time ^(10, 11)
 - Children shows
 - Young adult
 - Older audience



Media and Socialization

- Other areas include:
 - Violent video games
 - Unhealthy Pornography
 - Memes
 - Stereotypical representation of gay men in media
- Leads to toxic masculinity



Poll Question

Where do you see unhealthy portrayals of men in media?

Toxic Masculinity

- Harmful to everyone including men
 - Men represent **79%** of all US suicides and are **4x more likely** to die by suicide than women
- Expectations:
 - Suppress emotions
 - Use violence to solve issues
 - Objectify women
- **Power and control** (12)



True or False?

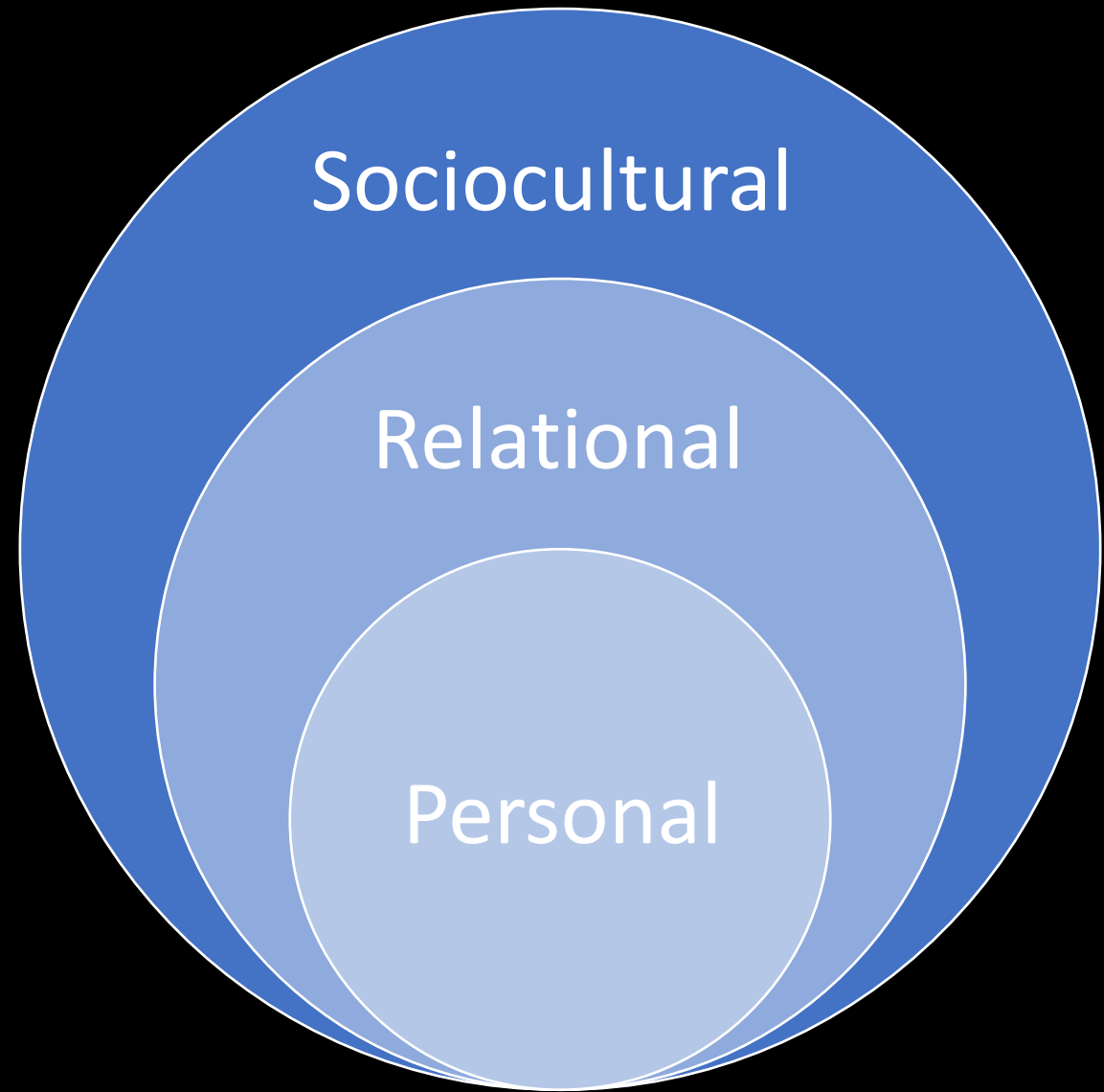
Activity and Discussion

#1: Black or brown men are more likely to commit sexual violence than white men.

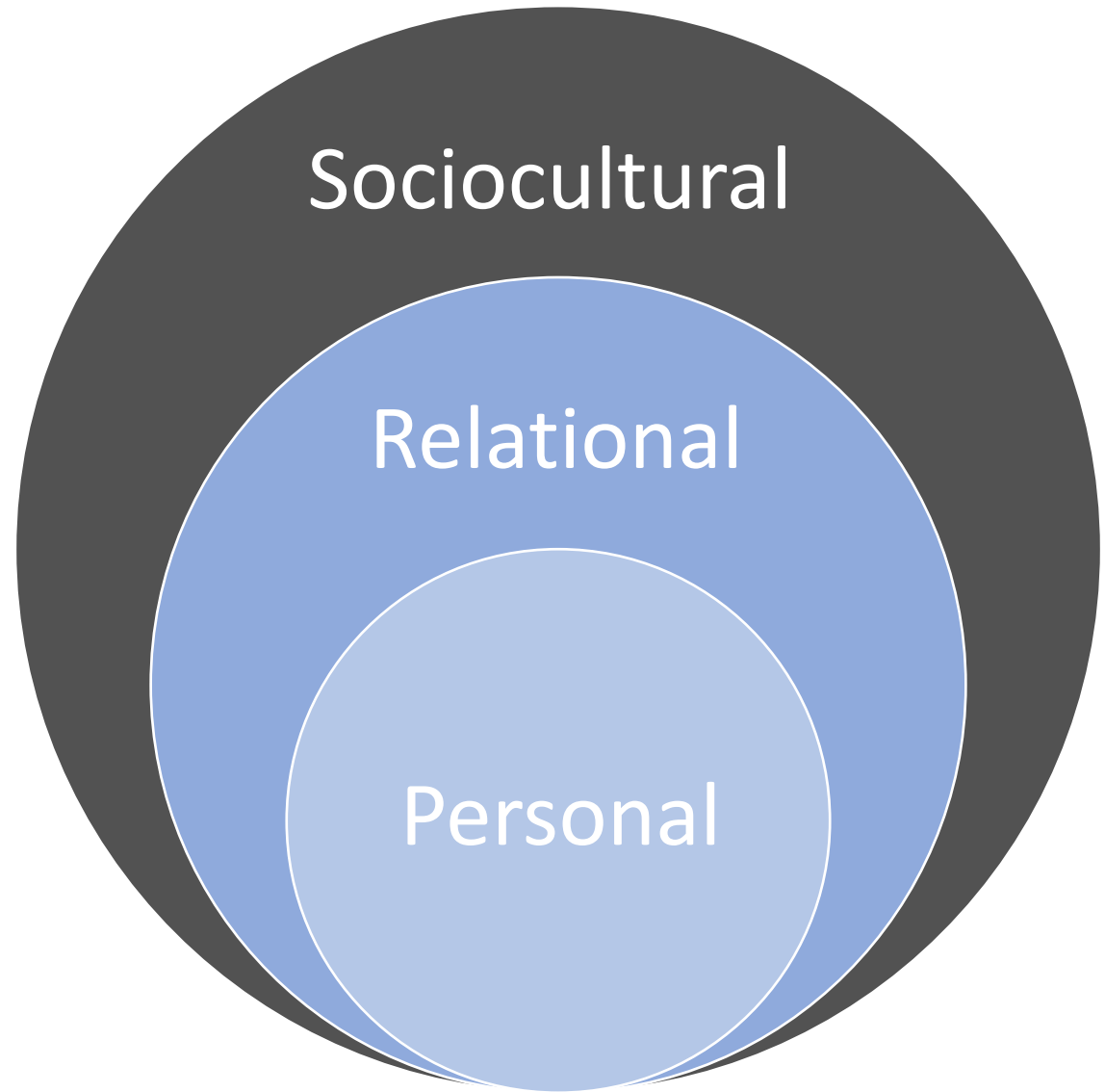
#2: Sexual arousal does not mean the male individual enjoyed it.

#3: Only gay men abuse other men.

Barriers to Reporting



Sociocultural Factors



Rape Culture

- Consequences:
 - Allows behaviors of sexual violence to be tolerated and accepted
 - Discourages from reporting
- Victim blaming:
 - Not strong enough to fight them off
 - Gay men “provoked” the behavior (12)

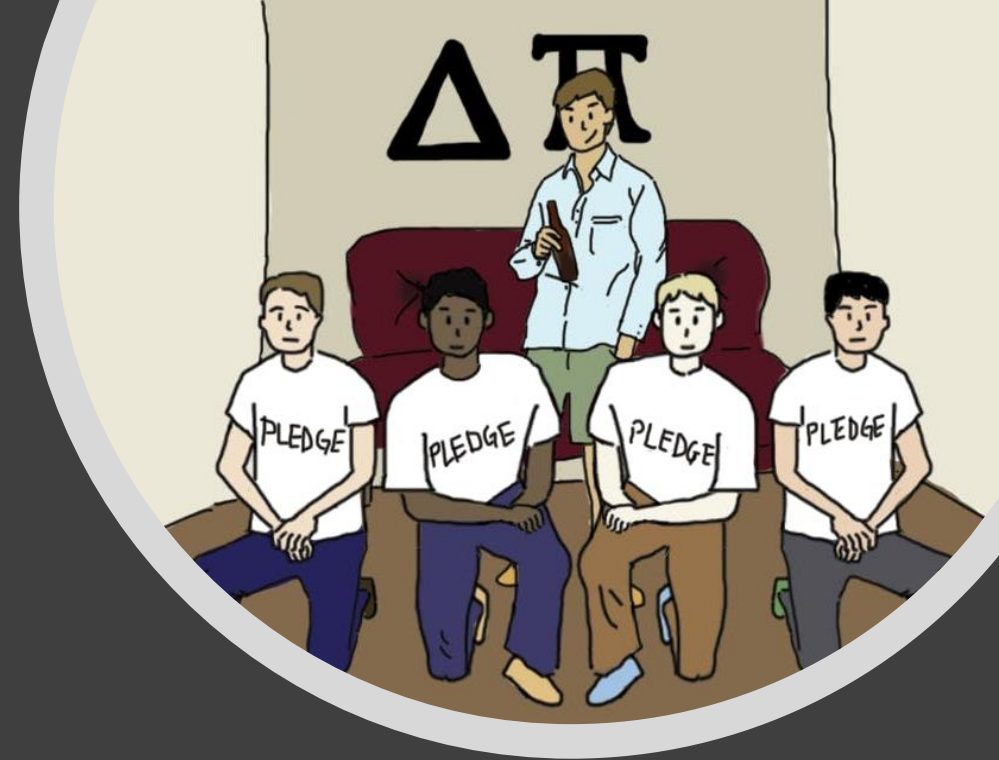


Rape Culture cont.

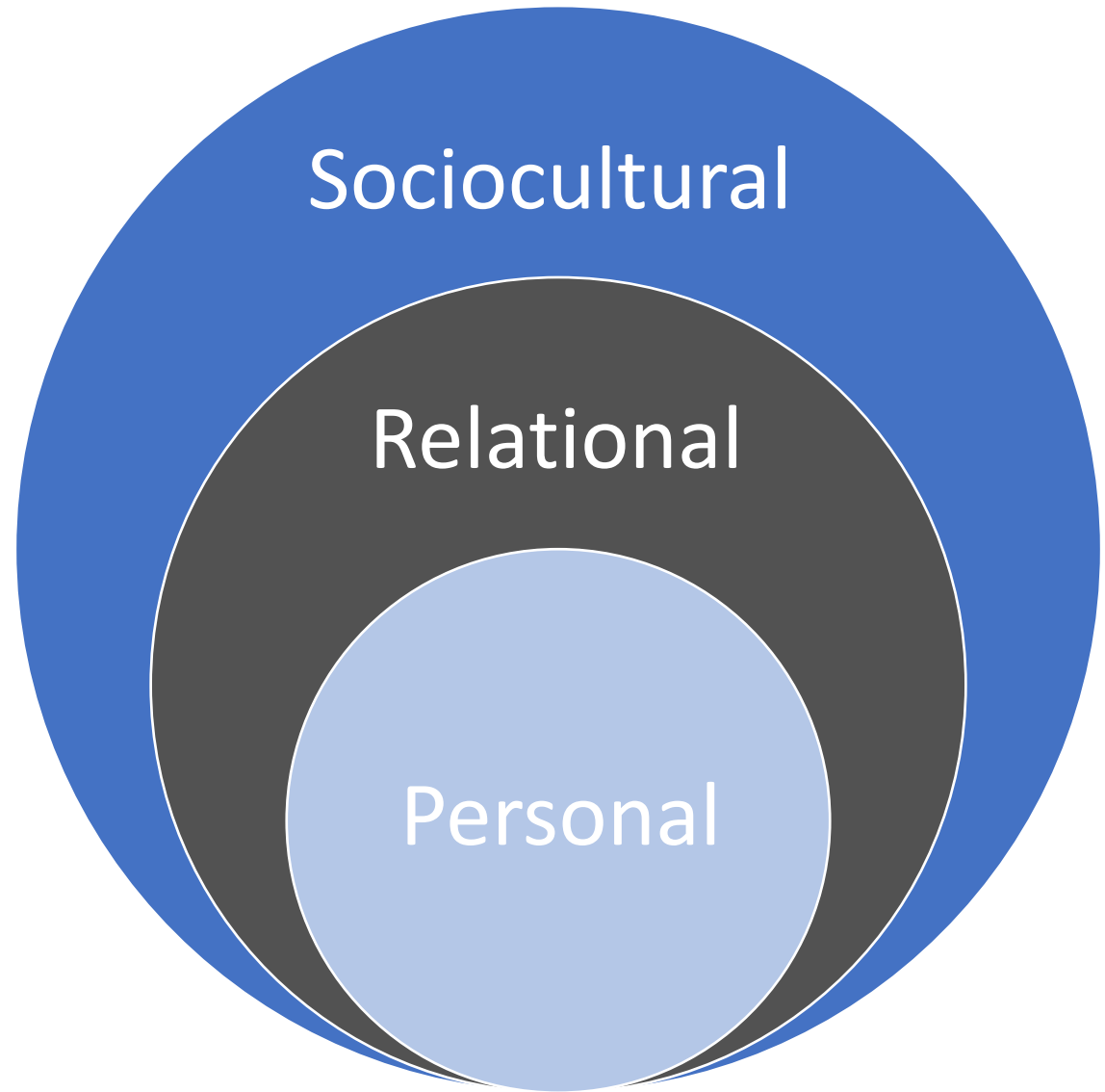


Sociocultural Factors

- Hazing ⁽¹³⁾
 - Used to show new people who is in control
 - Exists in hypermasculine environments
 - Survivors struggle to speak out
- Lack of success in Court System ⁽¹⁴⁾
 - Cases involving survivors who are men are less likely to be prosecuted compared to survivors who are women.
- Distrust between certain communities and systems



Relational Factors



Relational Factors

- Biggest concern is confidentiality ⁽¹⁵⁾
- Concerns over perception of their sexuality
- Relationship with abuser (older woman vs. male family) ⁽¹⁶⁾

Relational Factors in Boys

- Face backlash differently than girls, especially in early and teen years
 - While girls are more often accused of lying, boys are accused of taking the assault too seriously
- **Grooming:** when a person tries to build a trusting relationship with a child or a child's family so that they can sexually abuse the child.
 - Hard for children to have negative feelings towards a familiar adult so the child often takes the blame for the assault

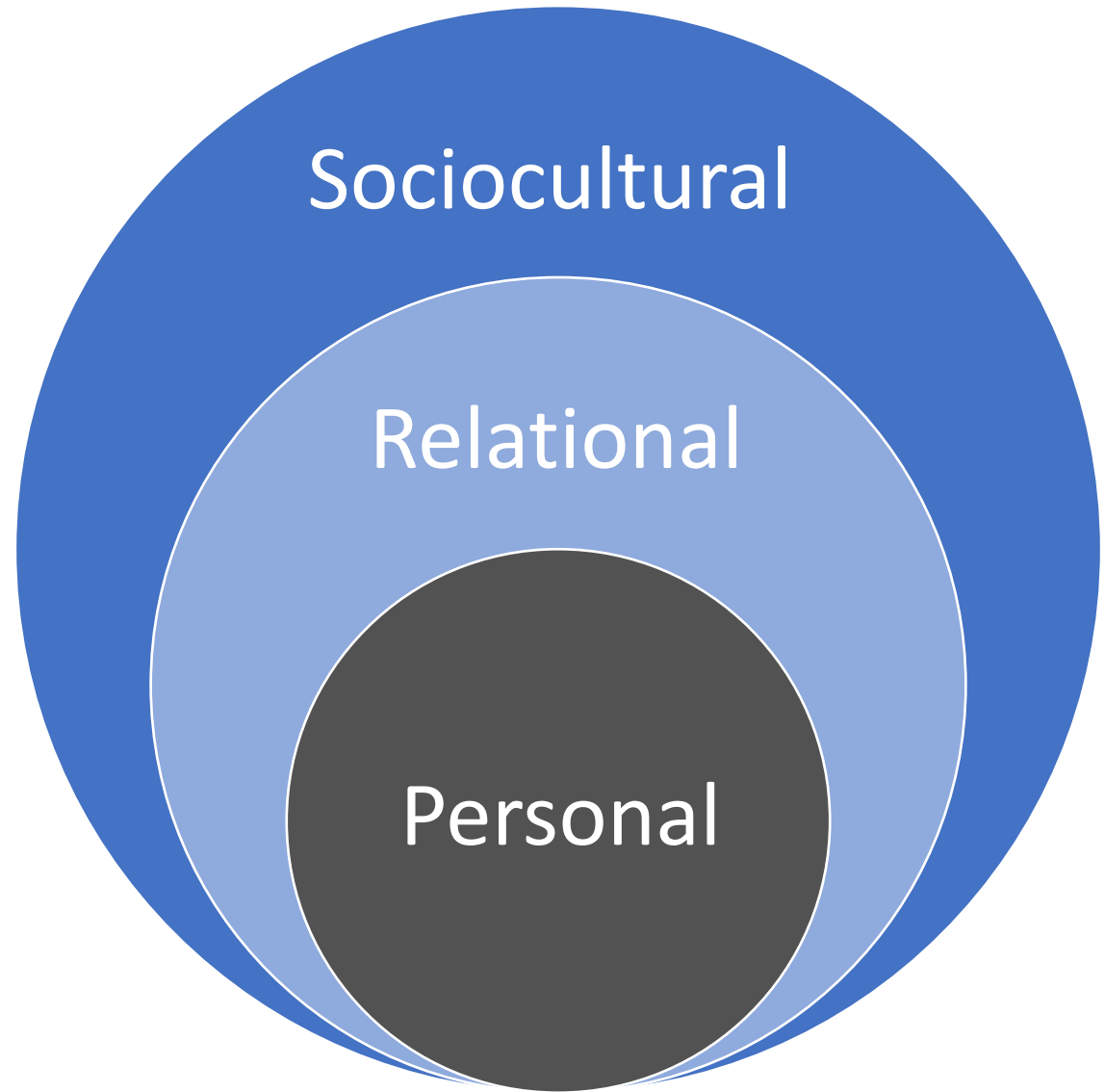


Relational Factors Across Cultures



- **Latin men:** ⁽¹⁷⁾
 - Machismo → hypermasculine ideologies and behaviors
 - Fear being feminized or appearing weaker
- **African Americans:** ⁽¹⁸⁾
 - Portrayed as predatory and “animalistic”
 - Strong, hypermasculine (e.g., Terry Crews)
- **Asian Men:** ⁽³³⁾
 - Collective culture
 - Pressure on older son to stand in for father
 - “Loss of face”

Internal Factors





Internal Factors

- Struggle to identify sexual violence
- The more they identify with masculine norms, the stronger the relationship is between negative attitudes towards psychological health seeking behaviors (19)
- Common issues: (20)
 - Shame
 - Guilt
 - Self-blame
 - Denial
 - “Vampire Myth”

Trauma in Men

How is this different from other types of survivors?

Trauma Responses

- 3 types of responses:
 - Fight
 - Flight
 - Freeze
- Biological responses ⁽²⁸⁾
 - Stress hormones impair the functioning of the prefrontal cortex
 - Hippocampus is disrupted when someone feels scared



Effects of Trauma

- Post-traumatic stress disorder is commonly diagnosed in sexual assault survivors
- Symptoms of PTSD include ⁽²⁹⁾:
 - Re-experiencing
 - Avoidance
 - Isolation
 - Negative thoughts or feelings
- Other consequences include depression and dissociation

Poll Question

What might trauma symptoms look like in Men and Boys?



Trauma in Men

- 5 areas where men are affected:
 - Biological
 - Psychological
 - Behavioral
 - Social
 - Sexually



Biological Effects

- Early exposure causes long lasting effects ⁽²¹⁾
 - Lose grey matter in limbic system
 - Over-activity increases connections within salience hubs
- PTSD causes:
 - Smaller hippocampus and prefrontal cortex
 - Enlarged amygdala



Other Effects of Trauma

Psychological

- Elevated levels in:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - PTSD
 - Eating disorders
- Question their masculinity
- Shattered self-esteem (22)

Behavioral

- Self-destruction (22)
 - Suicidality
 - Risky Behaviors
 - Neglecting health
- Substance use (23)
- Irritability
- Hypervigilance

Social

- Loneliness
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Fear of disclosure
- Academic struggles

Sexuality

- Confusion
- Hypersexual or lower sex drive

Trauma in Boys

Psychological

- Depression and anxiety
- Higher rates of suicide
- Body issues and eating disorders
- Heightened symptoms of PTSD lasting into adulthood

Behavioral

- Disruptive behaviors
- Drug and alcohol misuse

Social

- Educational outcomes
- Problems with future interpersonal relationship

How can we help?

Group Breakout

1. What does your agency do to ensure male survivors are supported?
2. How can your organization improve its accessibility for this group?
3. What are some strategies you have used to support a male survivor?
4. How is this similar or different from working with other groups?

Working with Male Survivors

- Male survivors are concerned with unpredictable responses when they disclose and believe nothing good will come out of it ⁽²⁴⁾
 - First response is the **most** important
- Trauma informed approach

Trauma Informed Approach

A **trauma-informed approach** reflects adherence to six key principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. These principles may be generalizable across multiple types of settings, although terminology and application may be setting- or sector-specific:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues*

Working with Male Survivors

- Evaluate our own bias and use of language
- When speaking with them:
 - Be empathetic and normalize their feelings
 - Use masculine-positive phrasing ⁽²⁵⁾
- Consider cultural differences

Working with Male Survivors of CSA

- Actively seek to avoid re-traumatization
- Acknowledge compounding isolation
 - Lack of support from family
 - Lack of community resources
 - Culture of being a male survivor
- Remember – median age of disclosure is 52.
 - Repressed memory
 - Keeping family secrets
 - Unaware of CSA of boys
- Help survivors understand “Post Traumatic Anger”
 - “Go-to” emotion of male survivors of CSA

Working with Boy Survivors

- Remain calm in your response
 - Children will often mirror your reaction
- Do not engage in fact-finding, listen attentively
 - Very few allegations of child sexual abuse are false.
 - Do not pry for more information than the child is willing to give
- Follow appropriate mandatory reporting laws, if applicable
 - ALL Marylanders are mandated reporters of child sexual abuse, with few exceptions.
 - This includes adult male survivors of CSA
- MCASA CSA Training: <https://tinyurl.com/uvas4fcn>

Strengthen our Resources

- Ask yourself – how does our organization work with men and boys?
 - Crisis Hotline study ⁽²⁵⁾
 - Resources on college campuses ⁽²⁶⁾
 - Reevaluate language on materials to reflect male survivors
 - Ex. “Violence against Women;” female pronouns when referring to survivors
- Create more male exclusive support groups ⁽²⁷⁾
- Increase male representation in program or on staff
- Advocate for:
 - Increased funding
 - Organizational policies that reduce one adult and one child interactions
- SAFE exams for male survivors, eliminating medical biases against male survivors

Local and National Resources

Maryland

Maryland Rape Crisis
Centers



National



Questions?

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Sexual Assault Legal Institute

MCASA

(301) 328-7023

SALI

(301) 565-2277

Website

mcasa.org

CONTACT INFO

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