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A FACT SHEET ABOUT

SEXUAL ASSAULT: The Mental Health Impact

MEMBERS:

RESPONSE to Sexual & Domestic Violence

Berlin
Colebrook
Lancaster

Women's Supportive Services

Claremont
Newport

Rape and Domestic Violence Crisis Center

Concord

Starting Point

Conway
Ossipee

Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP)

University of New Hampshire
Durham

Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention

Keene
Jaffrey

New Beginnings: A Women's Crisis Center

Laconia

WISE

(Women's Information Service)
Lebanon

The Support Center at Burch House

Littleton
Woodsville

YWCA Crisis Service

Manchester
Derry

Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support

Nashua
Milford

Voices Against Violence

Plymouth

A Safe Place

Portsmouth
Rochester
Salem

Sexual Assault Support Services

Portsmouth
Rochester

A study of 1400 adult female twins found that women who had been raped as girls were three times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders or abuse alcohol and drugs than their twins who had not been sexually abused.

(Kendler, Kenneth S., et al, Medical College of Virginia Commonwealth University, Archives of General Psychiatry, 2000, vol. 57, p. 953. Cited by Suzanne Rostler in "Sexual Abuse in Girls Leads to Later Substance Abuse," www.soc-um.org/statsandlaw/a.html)

A review of 166 studies between 1985 and 1997 found that, compared to boys who were never abused, sexually abused boys were four times more likely to suffer from major depression, three times more likely to be bulimic, and at least two times more likely to have antisocial personality disorder, behavioral problems, low self image, or runaway behavior. In addition, sexually abused boys were one and a half to fourteen times more likely to attempt suicide.

(Holmes, William C., "Sexual Abuse of Boys: Definition, Prevalence, Correlates, Sequelae, and Management," Journal of the American Medical Association, 1998, vol. 280, p. 1858)

In a 1999 study of 2,186 female high school students in Massachusetts, recent suicide ideation and actual suicide attempts were six to nine times as common among girls who reported having been sexually and physically hurt by dating partners.

(Silverman, Jay G., et al, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy and Suicidality," Journal of the American Medical Association, vol. 286, p. 572)

In the nationally representative Survey of Women's Health by the Commonwealth Fund in 1998, women who experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner were four to five times more likely to suffer from depression or anxiety than women who did not experience violence.

(Plichta, Stacey B. and Marilyn Falik, "Prevalence of Violence and its Implications for Women's Health," in Women's Health Issues, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 250)

Mental health costs of sexual assault are very high. Estimates indicate that one-quarter to one-half of rape and child sexual abuse survivors receive some form of mental health treatment as a result of the victimization.

(Miller, Ted R., Mark A. Cohen, Brian Wiersama, "Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look," U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, 1996)

For information or help,
call toll free 1-800-277-5570
for sexual assault,
or 1-866-644-3574 for
domestic violence.

SEXUAL ASSAULT: The Mental Health Impact Page 2

Child and/or adult history of sexual and physical abuse appear frequently to be the first experience in a sequence that leads to homelessness for women and men.

(Anderson, Catherine M. and Katherine B. Chiocchio, "Sexual Abuse in the Lives of Women Diagnosed with Serious Mental Illness," Homelessness, Addictions, and Mental Illness, Maxine Harris, ed., 1997, p. 21-37)

In one New York City comparative study, rape survivors seen by rape crisis center advocates during their initial emergency room visits reported the fastest recovery path from their psychological injuries and returned soonest to normalized daily routines.

("Study Finds Rape Crisis Programs Do Work," Sexual Assault Report, 1997, vol. 1, pp. 17, 30)

Estimates of the total annual cost of mental health care for victims of attempted or completed rape is \$863 million. Estimates of the same costs for adult survivors of child sexual abuse are even higher, \$2.1 billion.

(Miller, Ted. A, Mark A. Cohen, Brian Wiersama, "Victims Costs and Consequences: A New Look," U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, 1996)

Numerous nationwide studies consistently show prevalence rates of sexual abuse histories at 22% to 54% among women receiving case management mental health services and 50% to 70% among women in inpatient psychiatric facilities.

("On Record: Facts about Mental Health & Physical and Sexual Abuse," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Mental Health Services, 1994)

The 14 member programs of the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence assist survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, and members of their families, with 24-hour crisis lines, emergency shelter, counseling, support groups, and help dealing with police, medical, and court personnel. The crisis centers also provide speakers and educational programs to community groups. In 2003, Coalition member agencies assisted 1,325 sexual assault survivors.

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