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English essay

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds, including: rape, sexual abuse (including in childhood), sexual assault, sexual harassment, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), trafficking, sexual exploitation (including child sexual exploitation), and others

The effects of rape will vary for each person as we are all affected in different ways and recover at different rates. However, from our work with survivors we know that there are some common responses to rape and sexual violence. We also know that the effects can last many years and can take many years to show themselves. Here are some of the common effects.

Physical effects: These may be instantly obvious if the assailant has used violence during the assault and you may need immediate hospital treatment. However, it is also worth considering physical effects that might arise in the future such as sexually transmitted infections. If you don't report the rape and / or you don't want to use your local doctor, you can visit a local GUM (Genito-urinary medicine clinic) to get checked for infections. You can search the internet for details of your local clinic.

Disassociation / emotional numbness: For many an initial reaction to being raped is one of shock and emotional numbness. Many people initially feel calm and shut off from what's happened. This reaction can sometimes surprise friends, family and professionals who expect survivors to be distraught immediately after an assault. However, disassociation is a natural defence mechanism and is perfectly normal. Usually after a few days or weeks you will begin to have a range of other reactions including anger, fear and shock.

Fear: Depending on the circumstances you may feel fear about a number of things. You might have been physically threatened during the assault, you may be fearful of reporting to the police because you are worried about what this will lead to, you may feel reluctant to tell friends and family for fear of upsetting them. If you know the assailant or he knows where you live you might be afraid of continued violence. You might feel worried about becoming pregnant or contracting an STD. Later on you may worry about being able to be in an intimate or sexual relationship.

All of these fears are absolutely normal and common and given time and support they can be overcome. Discussing them with a friend or counsellor will help.

Embarrassment & shame: A significant number of people who've been sexually assaulted feel embarrassed or shameful about what has happened. Most of us find it difficult to discuss intimate things so it is not surprising that you might not find it easy to discuss what has happened with strangers or even friends. In these circumstances it is sometimes easier to talk to someone on a telephone helpline who should take things at your pace.

Rape is now becoming common in male too which is very sad and disgusting.