



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

Facts and Statistics

Providing facts about sexual abuse is one of the ways to raise awareness about sexual abuse. Awareness of the facts is one of several preventive measures that can be taken to assist you in making better decisions to keep you and someone you know safe.

The facts and statistics provided below are selections from studies and provide factual information based on the research team's findings. The information is not intended to diminish the possibility of risk to you or someone you know. The facts and statistics presented are divided into several categories:

- [Sexual Abuse](#)
- [Victims](#)
- [Disclosure Among Victims](#)
- [Abuse via Technology](#)
- [Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse](#)

Sexual Abuse

- Approximately 30% of sexual assault cases are reported to authorities. ³
- 9.3% of cases of maltreatment of children in 2012 were classified as sexual abuse. ⁹
- 62,939 cases of child sexual abuse were reported in 2012. ⁹
- According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Criminal Victimization Survey, in 2012, there were 346,830 reported rapes or sexual assaults of persons 12 years or older. ¹⁷
- In 2010, 12% of rapes and sexual assaults involved a weapon. ¹³

- In 2010, 25% of the female victims of rape/sexual assault were victimized by strangers. ¹³
- According to “Have Sexual Abuse and Physical Abuse Declined Since the 1990s?” an article released by the Crimes Against Children Research Center in 2012: ¹⁹
 - There was a 56% decline in physical abuse and a 62% decline in sexual abuse from 1992 to 2010.
 - Despite some skepticism of reporting methods by various agencies, declines in child physical and sexual abuse since the 1990s, as reported to National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), reflect a true decline in prevalence.

The decline in sexual abuse in NCANDS was consistent with other data sources.

Victims of Sexual Abuse

Adults

- About 20 million out of 112 million women (18.0%) in the United States have been raped during their lifetime. ¹²
- Only 16% of all rapes were reported to law enforcement. ¹²
- In 2006 alone, 300,000 college women (5.2%) were raped. ¹²
- Among college women, about 12% of rapes were reported to law enforcement. ¹²
- A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey on the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking found:
 - 81% of women who experienced rape, stalking, or physical violence by an intimate partner reported significant short- or long-term impacts. ¹⁸
 - About 35% of women who were raped as minors also were raped as adults, compared to 14% of women without an early rape history. ¹⁸
 - 28% of male rape victims were first raped when they were 10 years old or younger. ¹⁸

Child/Teen Victims

- In a 2012 maltreatment report, of the victims who were sexually abused, 26% were in the age group of 12–14 years and 34% were younger than 9 years. ⁹
- Approximately 1.8 million adolescents in the United States have been the victims of sexual assault. ⁴
- Research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that approximately 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18. ¹
- 35.8% of sexual assaults occur when the victim is between the ages of 12 and 17. ¹
- 82% of all juvenile victims are female. ⁵
- 69% of the teen sexual assaults reported to law enforcement occurred in the residence of the victim, the offender, or another individual. ⁵

- Teens 16 to 19 years of age were 3 ½ times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.⁶
- Approximately 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.⁷

Disclosure Among Victims

- Not all sexually abused children exhibit symptoms—some estimate that up to 40% of sexually abused children are asymptomatic; however, others experience serious and long-standing consequences.¹
- A common presumption is that children will give one detailed, clear account of abuse. This is not consistent with research; disclosures often unfold gradually and may be presented in a series of hints. Children might imply something has happened to them without directly stating they were sexually abused—they may be testing the reaction to their “hint.”¹⁴
- If they are ready, children may then follow with a larger hint if they think it will be handled well.¹⁴
- It is easy to miss hints of disclosure of abuse. As a result, a child may not receive the help needed.¹⁴
- Disclosure of sexual abuse is often delayed; children often avoid telling because they are either afraid of a negative reaction from their parents or of being harmed by the abuser. As such, they often delay disclosure until adulthood.¹⁴
- Males tend not to report their victimization, which may affect statistics. Some men even feel societal pressure to be proud of early sexual activity, regardless of whether it was unwanted.¹
- Studies of adults suggest that factors such as the relationship to the perpetrator, age at first incident of abuse, use of physical force, severity of abuse, and demographic variables, such as gender and ethnicity, impact a child’s willingness to disclose abuse.²¹
- When children do disclose:²¹
 - It is frequently to a friend or a sibling.
 - Of all other family members, mothers are most likely to be told. Whether or not a mother might be told will depend on the child’s expected response from the mother.
 - Few disclose abuse to authorities or professionals.
 - Of all professionals, teachers are the most likely to be told.
- Historically, professionals promoted the idea that children frequently report false accounts of abuse. Current research, however, lacks systematic evidence that false allegations are common. Recantations of abuse are also uncommon.²¹

Abuse via Technology

- Approximately 1 in 7 (13%) youth Internet users received unwanted sexual solicitations.⁸
- 9% of youth Internet users had been exposed to distressing sexual material while online.⁸
- Predators seek youths vulnerable to seduction, including those with histories of sexual or physical abuse, those who post sexually provocative photos/videos online, and those who talk about sex with unknown

people online. ¹⁰

- 1 in 25 youths received an online sexual solicitation in which the solicitor tried to make offline contact. ¹⁰
- In more than one-quarter (27%) of incidents, solicitors asked youths for sexual photographs of themselves. ¹⁰
- The most common first encounter of a predator with an Internet-initiated sex crimes victim took place in an online chat room (76%). ¹⁶
- In nearly half (47%) of the cases involving an Internet-initiated sex crimes victim, the predator offered gifts or money during the relationship-building phase. ¹⁶
- Internet-based predators used less deception to befriend their online victims than experts had thought. Only 5% of the predators told their victims that they were in the same age group as the victims. Most offenders told the victims that they were older males seeking sexual relations. ¹⁶
- 15% of cell-owning teens (12–17) say they have received sexually suggestive nude/seminude images of someone they know via text. ¹¹
- Of respondents to a survey of juvenile victims of Internet-initiated sex crimes, the majority met the predator willingly face-to-face and 93% of those encounters had included sexual contact. ¹⁶
- 72% of teenagers and young adults believe that digital abuse is something that should be addressed by society. ¹⁶
- 11% of teenagers and young adults say they have shared naked pictures of themselves online or via text message. Of those, 26% do not think the person whom they sent the naked pictures to shared them with anyone else. ²⁰
- 26% of teenagers and young adults say they have participated in sexting (12 different forms of sexting were examined), a 6% decline since 2011. ²⁰
- Nearly 40% of young people in a relationship have experienced at least one form of abuse via technology. A large majority (81%) say they rarely or never feel their significant other uses technology to keep tabs on them too often. ²⁰

Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse

- An estimated 60% of perpetrators of sexual abuse are known to the child but are not family members, e.g., family friends, babysitters, child care providers, neighbors.
- About 30% of perpetrators of child sexual abuse are family members.
- Only about 10% of perpetrators of child sexual abuse are strangers to the child.
- Not all perpetrators are adults—an estimated 23% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18.
- [Fact Sheet: What You Need to Know About Sex Offenders](#) (pdf)

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