



Men are becoming more open about childhood sexual abuse

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When the term sexual abuse comes up, it is most often associated with girls and women. According to the 2000 Bureau of Justice Statistics, however, one in six men will experience a sexual assault in his lifetime.

Some studies suggest that as many as one in four men have been subjected to inappropriate sexual behavior at some time during their childhood. A subject that was once ignored is now making headlines as men are coming forward sharing their stories.

Tyler Perry, actor and director, is just one individual that has recently come forward to talk about the many years of sexual abuse that he endured as a child.

Perry, along with 200 men, recently appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show to talk openly about their experiences of being sexually abused as children.

For each of these men, the road that their life has taken has been greatly affected by the abuse they suffered. Many individuals have tried to cover up the pain of the past through substance abuse, while others have lashed out, committing crimes from the bottled up anger. All agreed that it has affected relationships and their ability to trust or get close to those they care about.

Individuals such as Perry and Oprah, who also suffered sexual abuse as a child, have come forward to educate society on sexual abuse among children and to offer hope to those adults living with this childhood nightmare. For men, it can be especially hard to admit to having been sexually assaulted. Although it took place when they were children, the emotions of shame, confusion and anger are difficult to accept, let alone talk about. The hope is that sharing Perry's and others' experiences will open the door to those men who have had to live with this secret, to know they are not alone and that help is available.

Statistics show that about 90 percent of children molested know the abuser. In many cases, it can be a parent, family member or someone close to the family. Talking with children and educating them about sexual abuse is a beginning to ending this type of assault.

If you have been a victim of sexual assault or know someone who has, please know that you are not alone and that help is available. Cowley County Mental Health & Counseling Center has trained and compassionate professionals who can help an individual deal with the trauma and get on the path to healing.

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