



FAMILY SERVICES *of* PEEL

Since 1971

Male Survivors

The Fathering Equation

Exploring Fatherhood in the Context of Male Sexual Assault and the Male Identity



An agency of the Government of Ontario.
Relève du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Introduction

To expose and combat inter-male violence is to reject the reproduction of static gender identities, which are defined through binary oppositions. To understand the challenges faced by male survivors of sexual assault is to recognise the crisis that male identity finds itself in as long as it remains synonymous with “masculinity”. In this sense, therefore, to be male is to be aggressive, strong, and emotionally detached. If male identity is only understood through this lens, then male identity can only exist as a negation of its opposite: femininity.

Years of feminist research has described a system of differences and oppositions, hierarchically and sexually organized, shaping the symbolic and material world. Feminist researchers were first to study society as not only dominated by patriarchal social relations, but also comprised of an interconnectedness between ideas and social structures. This has had a mirror-like effect, whereby male identity – understood as masculinity – has been projected outwards, from the private to the social. Societal attitudes and messages identified as “masculine” have moulded values, behaviours, and institutions. Addressing patriarchy and challenging the binary opposition, which exists when theorizing masculinity and femininity, requires first and foremost an un-doing and de-hierarchizing of male identity.

From the turn of the 20th century women have enjoyed steady political success in altering the socio-economic foundations that have sustained inequalities. As such, the perceived “natural order of things” has become less natural and destabilized. This has had an immense impact in not only altering gender relations, but also the way in which men and women have come to understand themselves. These changes have resulted in the opening up of space free from stereotypical behaviours, insecurities, and confusion. However, the tearing down of these boundaries has also had the effect of changing personal balances that have been built on centuries-old foundations that are proving difficult to overcome – particularly for men – and have deprived men of their historically unconditional power.

Accompanying this process of change has been an increase in social and direct violence. Violence responds to the absence of “masculine” work and traditional roles, which has been “threatened” by the entrance of women into the public sphere. It attempts to make sense of a world where patriarchal privileges are diminishing and the boundaries of man’s rigid identity questioned. Violence, therefore, seeks to rescue masculinity from emasculation by targeting groups that are deemed less threatening, such women and children.

The propensity to reclaim masculinity has made it especially difficult for male survivors of sexual assault to disclose their abuse and seek help. Suffering from stigma, male survivors of sexual abuse are led to believe their pain is abnormal and goes against prevailing beliefs that males are in full control of their bodies, and therefore cannot be violated. To meet the challenges, it is crucial that stereotypes concerning gender identity – roles and expectations – are systematically critiqued.

Recognizing the need to fill the research void on male survivors of sexual assault, male identity, and its consequences on fathering, the Peel Institute on Violence Prevention engaged in two initiatives. The first consisted of a literature review titled, “Male Survivors of Sexual Assault,” which surveyed the dominant research on the topic. Its findings were staggering – research on male survivors is up to forty years behind that of female survivors (McDonald & Tijerino, 2013). The second initiative, “Male Survivor Fathers of Sexual Assault,” was a joint conference with Family Services of Peel, which explored fatherhood and male identity through a survivors’ lens and developed strategies for raising awareness on a large scale.

Family Services of Peel works with males who have experienced childhood sexual abuse in two of their programs, the Fathering Program and the Men’s Program. It was through these programs that Family Services of Peel became aware of the need to make visible

one aspect of a largely hidden issue: inter-male violence and the need to create a space where men who have experienced it, can analyze, elaborate its effects, and identify strategies to help other men come forward. The agency's research has shown that one of the main obstacles preventing victims coming forward is the stigma of feminine characteristics, namely: passivity and weakness. To fully understand the issue and the difficulty in making it visible, and for the survivors to "come out" with less resistance, we have to understand the issue in a broader context: the creation of gendered identities as polarised, opposed and complementary at the same time. This "mythology" lies not only at the core of human behaviour and experiences, such as self-image and love, but also at the core of the construction of the social institutions.

Literature Review

A boy grows up aspiring to be a super-hero and those close to him look on with approval. As he matures into a man, he turns his attention towards fulfilling "expectations" of physical strength, protector of the weak, and leader among men. What happens if, in the midst of becoming a super-hero, our young male becomes a victim of violence? What if he tragically becomes a victim of sexual assault? Family Services of Peel has dealt extensively with male survivors of sexual assault in, "The Fathering Program" and male survivors of sexual assault through, "The Men's Program", and found that male survivors of sexual assault far too often suffer alone.

Consequences of Sexual Assault

Male survivors of sexual assault experience a considerable amount of psychological distress, such as: Anxiety, depression, hostility, intrusive thoughts, avoidance, dissociation, sexual concerns, dysfunctional sexual behaviour, impaired self-reference and a greater likelihood of engaging in tension-reduction activities such as self-mutilation, angry outburst, suicide threats, and risk-taking behaviours (Du Mount, Macdonald, White & Turner, 2013). Irrespective of sexual orientation, sexual assault is associated with serious and long-term psychological consequences. According to a study conducted by Walker et al., (2005), 35% of the males sampled reported having sought medical care. In addition, only 58% sought psychological support following the attack. This represents a very low utilization rate of service use, with the same study indicating that lack of psychosocial treatment following sexual assault was strongly associated with attempted suicide. Men who have experienced sexual assault often deny that what they have experienced constitutes assault, or victimization at all (Fisher, Goodwin, & Patton, 2009). It is unclear whether this is an attempt to be perceived as more “manly” and “dealing with it as men should,” or if they truly do feel as if they have not been victimized. Clearly, there is no one answer, as men who have experienced unwanted sexual advances are dealing with many unfamiliar and unexpected grey areas. Boys are typically not taught about the possibility of being sexually abused. Therefore, it has not been thought of as an issue impacting males. As such, if a boy is indeed victimized, he is totally unprepared to face

it. Once assaulted, he may even feel that there is something wrong with him. As a result, boys should be taught that sexual victimization can happen to anyone, anywhere, and that the blame must not to be placed on the survivor, but rather, on the perpetrator.

Reporting and Male Identity

Male identity has traditionally meant a repudiation of feminine characteristics, such as emotionality, vulnerability, and passivity; homophobia; the expression of aggression, power and sexual prowess; self-reliance; and stoicism (Connell, 2005; Cossins, 2000; Kia-Keating Grossman, Sorsoli, & Epstein, 2005). The reasons why male survivors experience stigma, shame and barriers to disclosing instances of sexual abuse is because of the stereotypical and narrow view of what constitutes a man (Price-Robertson, 2005). The traditional male identity is narrow (Coles, 2008) and as such, is in need of being questioned and re-examined. Many men who have been sexually abused by other men fear that their sexual orientation will be called into question by others if they were to disclose (Walker, Archer, & Davies, 2005). This can exacerbate the issue of underreporting. Therefore, there must be an unequivocal emphasis on redefining the narrow definition of what it is to be a man.

Services for Male Survivors

Services for male survivors do exist and have shown that they do indeed help (Fisher, Goodwin, & Patton 2009). The literature on this subject demonstrates that male survivors face considerable stigma, which in many cases prevents them from disclosing their abuse for many years – if at all (Du Mount et al., 2013). This results in men suffering alone and not utilizing supportive services. They often feel that their pain is abnormal and that there is something wrong with them – this is where supportive services prove to be beneficial in terms of normalizing one’s trauma experience (Papaikonomou, 2009). Family Service of Peel offers free counselling support to men who have experienced sexual abuse or assault. These services include personal face-to-face counselling, telephone counselling, E-counselling, therapeutic groups, as well as peer to peer counselling groups. Due to the inherent stigma and shame that male survivors experience, one might be drawn towards the conclusion that “non face-to-face” support might be more appealing. On the contrary, however. According to individuals who work with and oversee the Men’s Program at Family Services of Peel, male survivors tend to prefer in-person counselling. The sense of comradery and the normalization of the emotions experienced by survivors in group counselling can be very therapeutic (Fisher et al., 2009). In the Men’s Program, Family Services of Peel utilizes an employment assistance model with other service providers in the Central West Region of Ontario providing the opportunity for clients to have individual, group telephone and peer to peer sessions. The services for male

survivors of sexual assault do exist; the issue is awareness of the existence of services and being able to access and utilize them. This is where stigma reducing and attention raising efforts are vital.

Fathering

The decision to become a father is one of the most significant decisions in a man's life. This decision, however, can be impacted by a history of sexual abuse victimization (Price-Robertson, 2005). As such, some male survivors decide not to become fathers for fear that they might perpetrate the same abuse that they have experienced (Price-Robertson, 2005).

Moreover, the ability to father can be negatively impacted if a man is a survivor of abuse. This can manifest itself by the father being emotionally and physically distant with his children out of the aforementioned fear of becoming the abuser (Price-Robertson, 2005). Though the opposite can be true as well, which can be manifest by the father being extremely overprotective of his child, due to the fear that they could experience abuse (Price-Robertson, 2005). The importance of the father equation in the lives of their children is vital. Therefore, it is essential for male survivors to know that it is a myth and that their experience of abuse does not necessarily mean that they will go on to perpetuate abuse themselves (Burrowes & Horvath, 2013).

Although research suggests that certain factors, such as a lack of supervision, neglect, and sexual assault are all associated with an increased risk of perpetrating sexual assault, the vast majority of survivors do not go on to be abusers (Glasser et. al., 2001). Frontline staff need to be aware of this myth as they work with male survivors to help dispel such notions. Fatherhood can very well prove to be a healing experience for some male survivors, but it can also act as catalyst for the resurfacing of trauma for others (Price-Robertson, 2005). If the stigma of being a male survivor of abuse is removed and the aforementioned myths dispelled, male survivors of sexual assault could come forward in increasing numbers. The healing process could begin, and their effectiveness in the role of father would improve.

It is difficult to tell how many men have suffered from sexual abuse, as male survivors are far less likely to report their victimization than female survivors (McLean, Balding, & White, 2005). Research has indicated that one in six men will be the victims of sexual assault in their lifetimes (The One in Six Statistic, 2013).

Outreach campaigns could go a very long way in rectifying problems male survivors of sexual assault experience. There have been publicity campaigns for female survivors of sexual assault, as well as campaigns on the issue of elder abuse (Ontario's Sexual Violence Action Plan, 2013; The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, 2014). Undoubtedly, the awareness of simply the *existence* and a decrease in the stigma were

both achieved due to these publicity efforts. Male survivors of sexual assault need the same attention, support, and publicity campaigns, in order to attain similar positive outcomes.

The Conference

Family Services of Peel and The Peel Institute on Violence Prevention hosted a conference on Male Survivor Fathers of Sexual Assault on December 3, 2014. The main topics of discussion were as follows:

- Raising awareness of the very existence of the issue of “male survivors of sexual assault” on a societal scale,
- Looking at and re-examining the male identity,
- Reducing the stigma that male survivors are forced to live with, and to create an awareness of supportive allies who are willing to fight alongside male survivors, so that they are not alone in their healing journey,
- Exploring fatherhood – model of fatherhood and challenges in the context of a survivor’s lens,
- Exploring male identity and sexual abuse,
- Examining best practices for supporting “father survivors”,
- Exploring gaps and barriers that male survivors experience, and
- Children and the “father factor”.

The conference took place on Wednesday, December 3, 2014, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm at The Living Arts Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. A flyer to promote the event (Appendix 1) was designed and distributed via community outreach and target audience included survivors, as well as community-based organizations currently working with survivors of sexual assault. These flyers were distributed to more than 150 agencies and organisations in Peel and Toronto. Various sectors and groups were contacted, including Aboriginal

community health, social service, academia, and police in Peel and Toronto. Social media, email, mailing, bulletin postings at local community centres, walk-in clinics, and local libraries were the promotion methods used to gain publicity and raise awareness.

In addition, five men who had experienced working with male survivors of sexual assault were assigned to lead small group discussions. Michael Kaufman co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign was the Keynote Speaker (Appendix 3). To represent the voices of survivors, clients accessing the Men's Program at Family Services of Peel were contacted and three survivors shared their story at the conference.

The agenda for the conference was established (Appendix 2). The subject of male identity was examined, what it means to be a man, society's view of how a man should be perceived, the constricting and harmful way men are portrayed, and how that portrayal impacts survivors of sexual assault. Following the keynote address there was testimonials from survivors (Appendix 4) and one read on behalf of the client who could not attend (Appendix 5). The event concluded with a small group discussion.

Michael Kaufman: Summary of Keynote

Worldwide discussion about violence – sexual assault and abuse. What is happening?

Progress for the women's movement against sexual violence began in the 1960s. In recent years, men have begun to speak up against violence. Men and women have come forward. Abuse was extremely common in residential schools and orphanages. What brings us together tonight is to work to end the problem of violence. This is a night to demonstrate that we are going to make a difference. We will talk about maleness and masculinity - what it means to be a man and how society and popular culture portray a stereotypical and unrealistic idea of maleness. What are some of the underlying causes of violence? I will examine critical thoughts about the actions and behaviours related to violence. Men are not monsters, although women and men are capable of doing monstrous things. Interpersonal violence is committed by a significant minority of men. Men do not have the monopoly on violence, but they do have franchises.

We want to make visible the invisible. Male survivors of violence have, up to this point, been invisible. We need to talk about the lives of men, and we need to have a gender discussion about men. What are the ideas about violence and masculinity? When does violence happen? Nurturing and the ways we are raised are both factors which can help

explain violence. Human beings, as a species have the ability to harm others species and themselves.

It must be said, however, that most men do not use violence. Men who commit violence are a significant minority. Let us paint a picture of culture around the world. Violence exists in other societies; it is not unique to ours. Half of all societies have violence, and the other half have little violence. We have found that non-violent societies have a high degree of gender equality. Whereas, male dominant societies (patriarchy) such as the one we live in, in which males make more money, control the government, train soldiers, run the economy, and where athletes are important role models, experience a great deal of violence. Men are in charge of sexuality – this is thought of as a man’s role. Consider, for example, rape scenes in movies, such as in “Gone with the Wind,” where there is a blatant rape scene. This has been accepted as normal, “just the way it is”. This idea needs to be questioned. Men are taught that they are supposed to “own the show”. Men give their daughters to other men, which is essentially an exchange of property. At the same time, children are thought of as property of adults.

How should we raise boys? We live in a society where men have the power, with girls and boys being treated differently. For example, when Michael’s first born was delivered, the nurse deepened her voice to describe the son, only to realize the baby was a girl and then

she significantly raised her voice to a higher pitch. This is an example of a gender stereotype, which was voiced as soon as the girl was born. These are unrealistic and unnecessary stereotypes, which must change.

Society dictates that men are supposed to be successful, rich, powerful and in charge of sex at all times. Some men who do not have this power will use violence to maintain their status in relationships. Some men will also use alcohol to justify violence – “I hit her because I was drunk”. Often, our experience is that men do not have power, with the privilege that they experience being invisible to them. Hierarchy of some men over other men exists as well. Men cannot live up to these expectations. Men are taught they should not experience and express emotions. If they experience abuse, how are they supposed to deal with it?

Social acceptance of violence exists in our society. It has been thought of as a private matter. It is still legal in Canada for parents to hit their children. This teaches our children that love and hurt go hand in hand, thereby normalizing it. This also tells children that they are thought of as property. Humiliation – we shame boys and use violence to compensate – against somebody under them who is defenseless. With women being thought of as objects of male violence. We live in a culture of sexual repression. It is not always acceptable to be with a person of the same sex. Society has a collective silence

regarding these issues – this is why it is important that we are here tonight, talking about these issues that have been kept silent.

Male survivors will not come forward if we continue to remain quiet. The heroism of men coming forward to tell their own story should be encouraged. Women came forward earlier in the 1960's through the Women's Rights Movement. We have the image of "Father Knows Best", father is punisher, "Wait until your father comes home." In most cultures, however, men are absent and women are the punishers. Corporal punishment of children is done by women. What do we do about this? The main skill needed to look after babies is empathy – why? Can empathy be taught? Men are more distant, men cannot do it, and men do not develop empathy. We use violence against men. They believe they are not hurting because they do not have empathy - Empathy is a big piece of this problem, the lack of it contributing to the issue of violence. Men are becoming more active in the care of children and trying to have equal participation in parenting. Female partners are happier because, with the man's increased role in the family, the woman has more free time. This allows children to do better at school. Men feel better and are healthier; they lose fewer working hours, and they engage in sex more often. Kids who have grown up in families with abuse, will abuse and use abuse. How, as a society, can we be supportive? We have to start with individual change.

Moving fathering into a more nourishing and caring role is important. There needs to be a historical shift. Support institutional change – As a culture, we need to find ways to improve.

We need to focus on our own personal stories – speaking openly, letting it be known that “This happened to me and I am still here. I am still fighting to bring changes”. The courage of survivors needs to be recognized and acknowledged. This is about change and the possibility of transforming a century of forced silence and abuse. This has got to stop. We possess the capacity for change. Male survivors are trapped in the past, and the need to bring abuse to an end is now.

Guiding Questions – Small Group Discussion

Small group discussions were held in order to give guests the following opportunities:

- Talk about and reflect on what Michael Kaufman spoke of in his keynote address.
- Share the opinions and discuss the knowledge base of guests on the topic of male survivors.
- Provide an opportunity to respond to challenging and stimulating questions on the topic.

PRIMARY question # 1

- What led you to sign up for the conference?
- Has anything that Michael Kaufman said made you question your perception of what it means to be a man?
- What has he said that has impacted you most?

Sub Question # 1

Has anyone been involved in a situation where you have helped change, or witnessed, something change from bad to good? If so, how did you do so? What did you learn that we might be able to apply here?

PRIMARY question # 2

- Examining the various male survivor myths, what myths exist?

Sub question #2

What can be done to overcome these myths? Men coming forward and talking about this, publicity, experts talking about it. Often people do not respond until they have read it over and over again. Increasing the awareness of what men will experience in receiving services, what they can expect in terms of outcomes. They can expect to be anxious going in, dark thoughts, dealing with things that they might not want to deal with – this takes time. Non-linear fashion, will seek services when they are ready.

Primary Question # 3

- What are some specific challenges experienced by male survivors who are also fathers? How do they manage these challenges? What are some strategies that can help to being the best father possible?

Small Group Discussions (the responses of the group participants have been documented as uncut as possible)

What led you to sign up?

I came to hear a different perspective. The fact that the male perspective isn't a "heard voice" led me to sign up for the conference. Parenting is an important piece to me. Families are struggling with sexual abuse. My interest is in male studies and wanting to hear new perspectives. The importance of engaging fathers who are caught in violent situations, especially when it stems from trauma. The importance of this topic! This problem has not been sufficiently addressed. Domestic/sexual abuse is a problem in the

community. The importance of education led me here. I have a broad background in feminism, but want to learn about violence against men as well. Desire to expand knowledge about men and the violence they suffer from. Desire to work with men who perpetrate violence led me to sign up. Professional experience of working with men who abuse women; sometimes, men disclose about their abuse, so I wanted to learn more. One in six are abused; men and society are not talking about this. The opportunity to listen more about the subject. I work at a sexual assault agency - knowledge from a male's perspective and how society works is important to learn about.

"Actually, I'm glad that I came here just because I got to hear of your experience" (referring to hearing a survivor's experience). I didn't expect to hear this political and feminist approach. I was waiting for another, statistics, numbers, to say that it is a patriarchal society. I was expecting more as a sexual abuse survivor. Social work is dominated by females. I've left other agencies that are (feminist). This agency is great. I'm a gay survivor... I didn't hear tools in the first half of the conference. And hearing about empathy helped me a lot. For me, it made a huge difference, being seated with them every other Monday. I thought, 'yeah...I'm not alone'.

It was too broad for me. I couldn't focus on the point he was trying to make. It wasn't straightforward. The Keynote was presented to counsellors. We did not hear more

testimonials of real life and we came to hear that. For me, the combination of group experience and individual therapy has helped a lot. We do a set topic for the group and I look to see the group and the facilitator beat themselves up, beating myself up, and I stopped. I work with men who are abusers and I've been very glad to meet and hear this experience, connected with the experience. It was very special, because I was always alone. I've been encouraged by previous counsellors and I was afraid about my kids... the topic drew my interest, that's why I'm here."

A Situation where something bad has turned into something good

Not too long ago, hockey players were shamed and told that they were weak if they were injured while playing (i.e., head injuries), and did not continue to play. This is no longer the case; there is now a concussion protocol in place. This is an example of a situation that was negative, and over time, due to studies done on the impact of head injuries, etc., players were no longer looked at as weak. They were not allowed to continue playing if they sustained a head injury during a game. Another example is smoking. The smoking of cigarettes was far more publicly acceptable ten or so years ago. Smoking indoors was commonplace 15 to 20 years ago as well. Now we see a shift, due to an increased understanding of the impact of second-hand smoke. Change is possible; it takes time and effort. The same principle can be applied to the topic of male survivors of sexual assault. Public campaigns against elderly abuse and against violence against women saw

an increase in service utilization on both issues. More people came forward, and in all likelihood, the stigma was decreased. Male survivors would benefit from a similar effort.

Male Identity

Men are supposed to be in control, all-powerful, and enjoy sex at all times. These ideas are unrealistic and inaccurate. They are harmful and are part of what makes up the male identity. These notions of what it is to be a man needs to be questioned, because they hurt everyone, especially male survivors. Parents physically punishing their children: “I love you but I hit you” – this is harmful because it sends the wrong message. It is typically the man who carries out the physical punishment and this is harmful to what is thought of as the male identity. The idea of a man always being in control hurts male survivors, because if you are always in control, then how could you be a victim? The result of this is that men suffer alone. The fact that male identity differs from one culture to another makes it even more difficult to tackle this problem.

Examining Myths

If a man is victimized by another man, that must make him gay. Abused men are not supposed to trust anyone in discussing such a topic, not supposed to talk about it, and not supposed to feel anything. Some male survivors adopt the mentality that they are “dirty and used up”. It cannot be abuse if he liked it. If he enjoyed it, he is not a victim.

The idea that males think they could have done something to prevent the abuse is a myth. Male survivors are weak and should not talk about it or burden anyone with it, and are indeed to be blamed for the abuse. That sexual abuse simply does not happen to men. A boy should be lucky to have had sex with an older woman; it is a coming of age experience, not abuse. Guys are not supposed to feel.

One group member posed the question: "How can a man get an erection if he is being abused?" To which another responded: "According to what I read, physiologically the body will react". This response is correct. "I have known friends who had terrible trauma, who had his father perpetrate abuse. People think, how is that even possible?"

One survivor shared: "I was sexually abused when I was 8 and felt like I actually enjoyed it". I used violence and anger to diffuse this guilt, and pleasure and control are different. Men begin to question their interactions and reactions, if they are aroused... Are male abusers gay? The reality is that male abusers are heterosexual. Are all pedophiles gay? This is a myth. Society believes you're not a man if you've been abused, "not a manly man". One survivor remarked: "I voiced the one about gay people are prompted to be abusers". Perpetrators have often been through abuse, with the stigma that if you were abused, you are a perpetrator. "I'm hyper-vigilant about that, I have nephews and I'm hyper vigilant. I felt ashamed when I went with my in-laws, they were afraid that I'd

become a perpetrator after 10 years... My parents thought that he was going to turn into his father and it's the opposite... after 10 years of marriage...". "Why didn't you run? Why did you allow it?" "Oh, I didn't have good hiding spot."

"Victims will become abusers, this is a big myth and frontline staff and community members must understand this. The education of children, the community and service providers is crucial. A step in the right direction, towards dispelling these myths, must entail deconstructing male identity. Deconstructing male identity is important to dispelling these myths."

What can we do now? How do we Transform these Myths and Move the Male

Survivor Movement Forward?

Information learned at the Father Equation will be relayed to corresponding agencies in an effort to challenge the myths, and gender, role and employment stereotypes. Sharing experiences is important. If abuse remains hidden nothing will change. Educating the public, having politicians address this issue, reaching out to kids, raising public awareness, are all key. Boys must be educated about what constitutes good and bad touching. Providers must be taught how to support people and to help make it easier and conducive for men to disclose the abuse they have experienced. Next, a systemic approach must be taken, because most services are geared towards women. Demonstrating compassion for

survivors is important but not possible if it remains hidden. People need to know that it can happen to men as well. Transformation is possible on many different levels – research, policy and clinical work. Shame has a tendency of making you want to hide; talking and seeking services helps break the shame. Those segments of the population that are not being reached about this topic, need to be. Some cultures more than others are not ready to deal with it. That the United Nations has 16 days of action against gender violence is helpful and presents an opportunity.

We need to talk about everyone's experiences; when we do not do this, some can internalize and turn to addictions, lashing out, experience anxiety, risky sexual behaviour, self-harm, affection issues, and distancing can all happen if we keep abuse concealed. Trust in the therapeutic relationship is key to being open to disclosing, but frontline workers are unprepared and not trained to deal with these disclosures. There are limited services for fathers and male survivors. It will take a large effort to bring about changes, because these things are so deeply ingrained in society. Create opportunity: there is a lack of knowledge about male survivors of abuse. Educate and inform the community that men also experience abuse. In recovery, forgiveness plays a large role, in addition to love and healing.

Challenges Experienced by Survivors

Some male survivors have not become fathers because they fear that they will become the abusers of their own children. Other male survivors are either emotionally and physically distant from their child, or overprotective out of the fear of becoming the abuser or having someone else abuse them. Some male survivors haven't even told their significant others about their abuse and will call the crisis line for support. More male survivors are calling the crisis lines now. Society – 35 years ago did not know about this problem; we hear more about it now. One survivor explained, "When I started to see my son at 7 years old, that's when I started to really think: oh my God! I could never do that. I could never hurt him. But also, that I'm lost because I never had that direction. Now I am more vulnerable and stronger. I blew off what my parents had done. Oh my God! How could they do that? My picture of my childhood – I couldn't recognize myself. All pictures of my childhood are gone." "Mine are gone too," said another survivor. "What did I do? They didn't do anything. When I look at my children. I'm very close to my siblings and their kids. I have the tendency of blaming myself, therapy helped me. Also, kids' emotion, I couldn't handle being afraid... That's one thing I used to get a lot from my father, 'stop whining'... It becomes difficult when you are alone."

Some survivors think that it was their own fault that they were abused, which is both a myth and a challenge that can be overcome. Male survivors experience shame and guilt,

which are both obstacles to disclosure and assistance. Fear of security, fear of not being believed and the stigmatization experienced by survivors are obstacles. These fears can re-victimize survivors once they disclose and begin to receive services. The fear of being judged, the lack of services, and the lack of information that exists on the subject are a challenge. Male survivors in court may not be believed, which would prevent them from disclosing. If a man is looking for help and has been victimized by a woman, it is difficult. This speaks to the idea of male identity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There was a need to gauge the interest of the community on tackling the aforementioned issues experienced by male survivors of sexual assault. It is the idea of gathering service providers, survivors and members of the community together in one space to discuss these issues was born. We are beginning to determine some of the next steps to move the male survivor movement forward, with discourse being key. Talking about this issue openly is central to de-stigmatizing it. How can male survivors feel able to come forward and disclose their abuse if society refuses to acknowledge that men can, and indeed are, survivors of abuse? There are more services for male survivors than there have ever been before (Strengthening Support for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse, 2011). Holding a conference on these very issues was the first step to actively engaging the public within the Region of Peel about the challenges experienced by male survivors.

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: The Fathering Equation demonstrated that there is a keen desire to talk about this veiled subject, and that there is much work to be done. This is why we must continue to talk about the issues that male survivors experience openly, and why the conference was a vital starting point for this purpose. The conference was a success in that it was well attended. Surveys which were completed were, for the most part, positive. The keynote address by Michael Kaufman was received well by some guests, while others felt that the material he covered was perhaps outdated and stale. Going forward, it might prove beneficial to hire a keynote speaker who has specific experience working with male survivors of sexual assault, as this would be more relevant to the discussion. It would also be useful to meet with any future speakers to go over the material they plan to present.

One of the fundamental goals of holding a conference about male survivors of sexual assault was to gauge whether or not the public has an interest in examining this issue – it is safe to say the answer to this question is “yes”. Some of the primary goals of the conference, as mentioned, included:

- Raising awareness of the very existence of the issue of male survivors of sexual assault on a larger scale,
- Looking at and re-examining the male identity,
- Reducing the stigma that male survivors are forced to live with and to let it be known that there are supportive allies who are willing to fight alongside male survivors to ensure that they are supported and not alone in their healing journey,

- Exploring fatherhood – model of fatherhood and challenges in the context of a survivor’s lens,
- Exploring male identity and sexual abuse,
- Examining best practices for supporting “father survivors”,
- Exploring gaps and barriers that male survivors experience, and
- Children and the “father factor”.

The simple act of gathering, and indeed having a healthy turnout for the conference helped to raise the awareness of the very existence of the issue of male survivors of sexual assault.

Through Michael Kaufman’s keynote speech, our small group discussions, and the two-page summary of the literature review, which was included in the package for guests, we examined male identity, explored fatherhood, specific issues that male survivors contend with, and highlighted the lack of services that exist for male survivors. The conference represented a step in the right direction – one that was a long time coming indeed. *Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: The Fathering Equation* represents a proverbial dipping of the toe in the water. With the toe representing male survivors and their allies; the water representing our society.

In today’s society, the absence of work and the loss of “traditional” roles have created a feeling of emasculation among men. This produces an environment of increased violence. The violence is then aimed at the easiest targets, those who are most emotionally vulnerable.

The conference was well received and the interest it generated demonstrates that as a society we are indeed willing to acknowledge and talk about this issue, which has until this point, remained largely hidden. A larger conference on the topic would help advance the male survivor movement forward. A publicity campaign would, perhaps, be the most effective tool to reduce the stigma, increase the public's awareness of the various challenges that male survivors of sexual assault experience, as well as making the public, as well as survivors, aware of the supportive services that exist. In turn, this would likely increase the service utilization for supportive services for male survivors. We need to speak about this hidden subject openly in order to enact real and positive change.

Helpful Websites

maleabuse.org
themensproject.ca

Conference Evaluation

Participants of the conference were asked to complete a survey to help give us a better understanding of who they are and their opinion of the conference. The following graphs and tables represent the results of the completed surveys.

Which of the following best describe(s) your role in the community?	Female	Male	Total
Community Member	3	3	6
Health Care Professional	7	5	12
Peel Service Provider	1	1	2
Researcher	4	1	5
Student	1		1
Survivor	3	10	14
Total	19	20	40

* Researcher and Health care Professional (1 case) added to Researcher

* All survivors added together

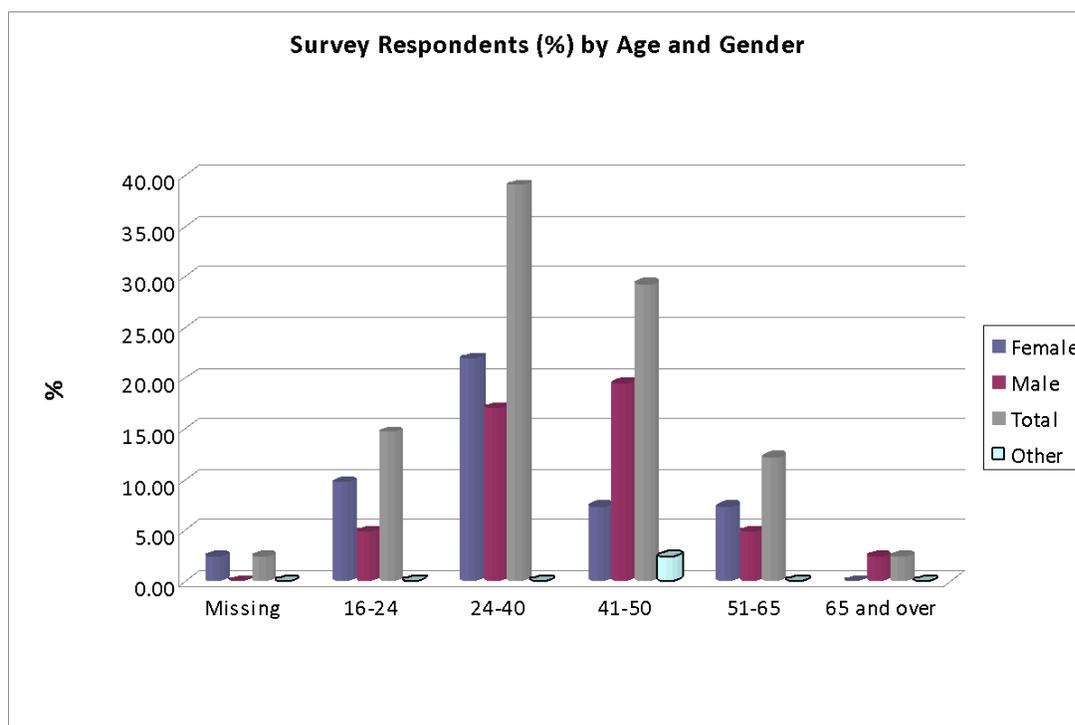
* Peel Service Provider category instead of Peel Service User as there is no response for this category

By Their Role in the Community and Age Group

q1-Which of the following best describe(s) your role in the community?	Total	16-24	24-40	41-50	51-65	65 and over
Community Member	6	2	4			
Health Care Professional	12		4	4	2	1
Peel Service Provider	2		2			
Researcher	5	1	3	1		
Student	1	1				
Survivor	14	2	3	7	2	0
Total	40	6	16	12	4	1

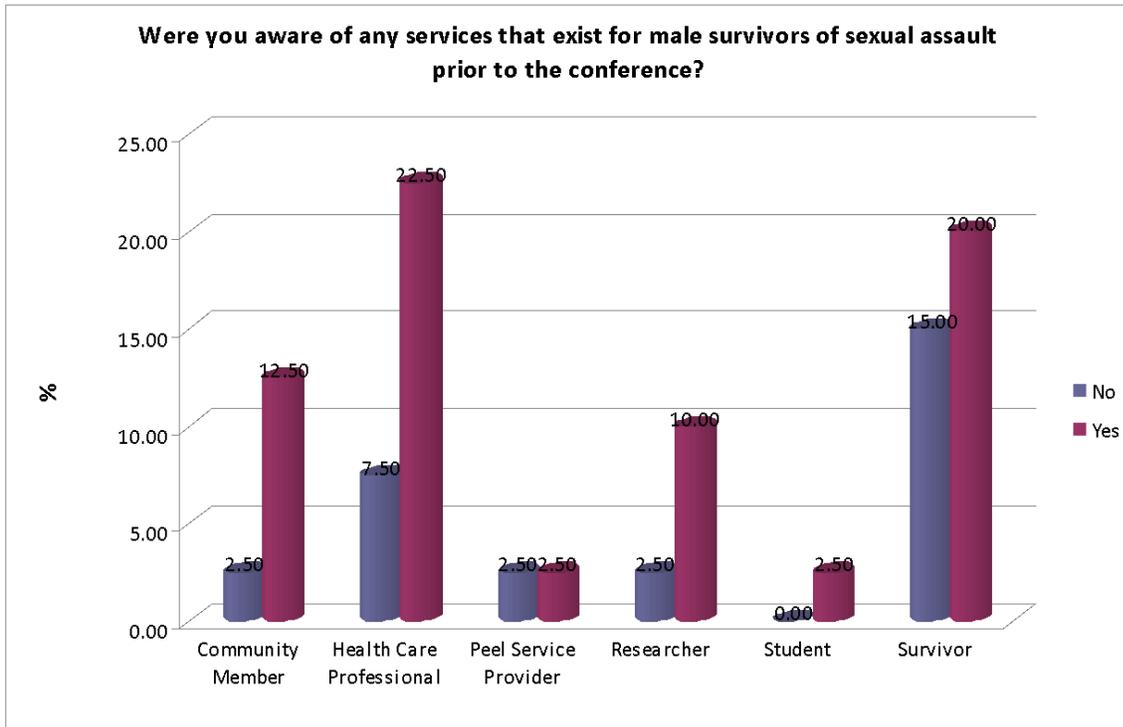
q1-Which of the following best describe(s) your role in the community?	Total	16-24	24-40	41-50	51-65	65 and over
Community Member	15.00	5.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health Care Professional	30.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	2.50
Peel Service Provider	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Researcher	12.50	2.50	7.50	2.50	0.00	0.00
Student	2.50	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Survivor	35.00	5.00	7.50	17.50	5.00	0.00
Total	100.00	15.00	40.00	30.00	10.00	2.50

By Gender and Age Group



q2-Gender	Total	Missing	16-24	24-40	41-50	51-65	65 and over
Female	20	1	4	9	3	3	
Male	20		2	7	8	2	1
Other	1				1		
Total	41	1	6	16	12	5	1

Awareness of the Conference's Subject



* Researcher and Health care Professional (1 case) added to Researcher

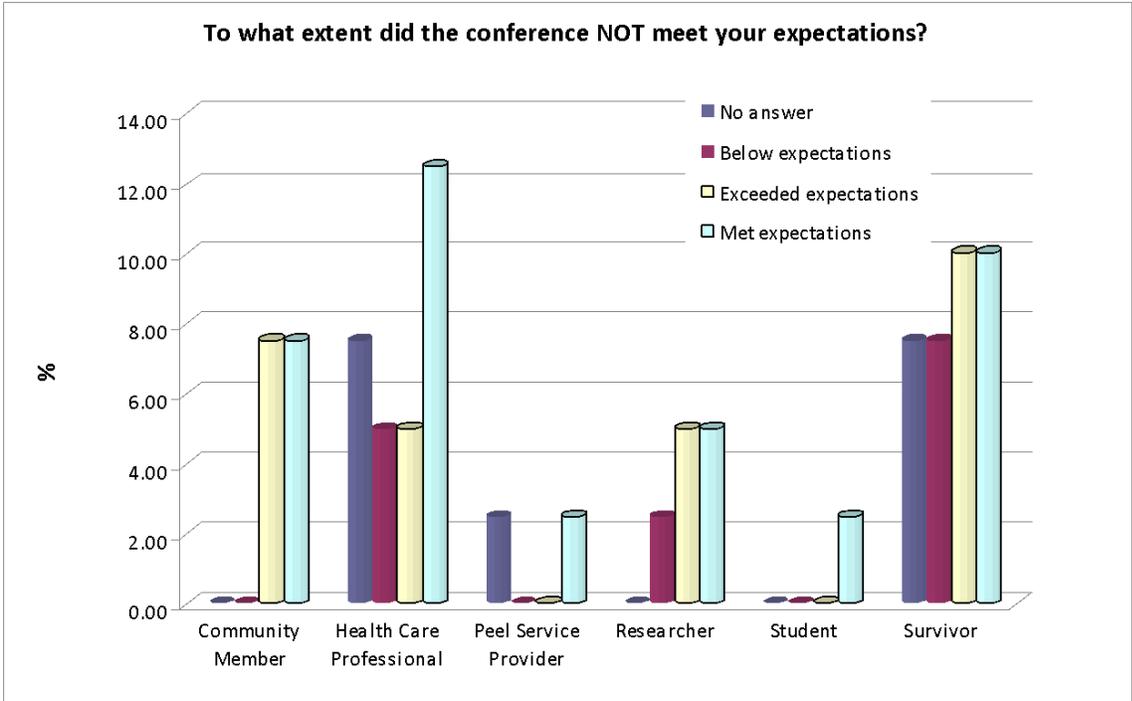
* All survivors added together

* Peel Service Provider category instead of Peel Service User as there is no response for this category

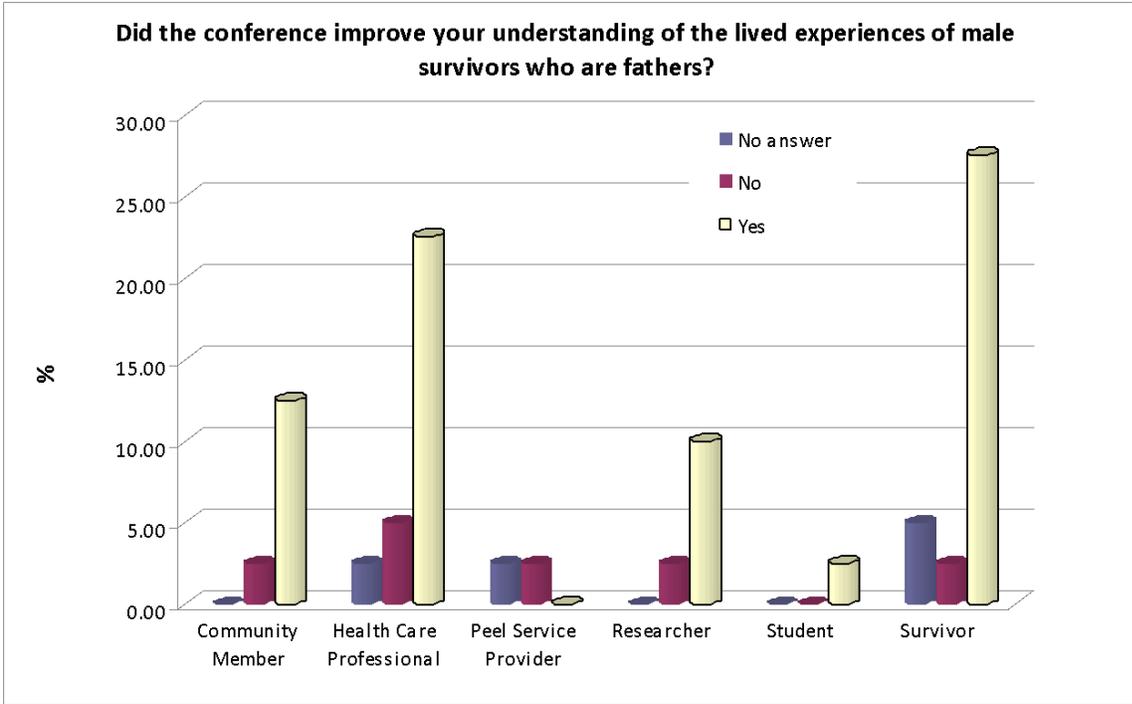
The expectations



- * Researcher and Health care Professional (1 case) added to Researcher
- * All survivors added together
- * Peel Service Provider category instead of Peel Service User as there is no response for this category
- * Mostly added to Yes
- * Inadequately category added by respondents



- * Researcher and Health care Professional (1 case) added to Researcher
 - * All survivors added together
 - * Peel Service Provider category instead of Peel Service User as there is no response for this category
- No answer category added as it is 17.5% (7 cases) from responds in this question



- * Researcher and Health care Professional (1 case) added to Researcher
- * All survivors added together
- * Peel Service Provider category instead of Peel Service User as there is no response for this category
- No answer category added as it is 10% (4 cases) from responds in this question

Appendix A: Flyer

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: The Fathering Equation

Family Services of Peel and
Peel Institute on Family Violence

INVITE YOU TO A CONFERENCE ON

“Exploring Fatherhood in the Context of Sexual Assault and Male Identity”

*Keynote Speaker – Michael Kaufman, Ph.D.
White Ribbon Campaign Founder*

Join us for an evening of invigorating discussions on the impacts of sexual assault on men, especially in their roles as fathers. We will be exploring male identity, the paradigm of maleness as we engage the voices and experiences of men, fathers, survivors and service providers who work with men.

Topics of Discussion Will Include:

- Fatherhood – Models of Fatherhood and challenges in the context of a survivor’s lens,
- Exploring male identity and sexual abuse,
- Examining best practices for supporting “fathers survivors”,
- Exploring the gaps and barriers that male survivors experience, and
- Children and the “father factor”.



FAMILY SERVICES of PEEL
Since 1971

WHEN:
December 3rd, 2014

TIME:
6:30pm to 9:00pm
(Registration and
Networking at 6:00pm)

WHERE:
Living Arts Centre
4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga
Staging Room
(FREE Underground Parking)
* A light dinner will be served

COST: \$45.00

TO REGISTER:
Please contact
Cameron Turner at
905-270-2250 Ext. 270,
cturner@fspoel.org OR
Franca Vettese at
905-270-2250 Ext. 271,
fvettese@fspoel.org



Appendix 2: Agenda



FAMILY SERVICES of PEEL

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: The Fathering Equation

Agenda:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm | Registration and Reception |
| 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm | Dinner and networking |
| 7:00 pm to 7:10 pm | Introduction:
Chuck MacLean, Executive Director, Family Services of Peel
<i>Some of Chuck's roles in social services have included working in a children's day treatment centre as a Supervisor, an itinerant youth counsellor with the local school board in Kitchener, a Director of Residential Services for a Women's Shelter and most recently, Executive Director at Family Services of Peel</i> |
| 7:10 pm to 7:40 pm | Keynote Address:
Michael Kaufman – The White Ribbon Campaign
<i>Questioning and de/reconstructing the male sexual identity; the paradox of male identity; Fatherhood – models of fatherhood and challenges in the context of a survivor's lens</i> |
| 7:40 pm to 7:50 pm | Testimonials by survivors |
| 7:50 pm to 7:55 pm | Acknowledgement of speakers and introduction to small group discussion |
| 7:55 pm to 8:30 pm | Small group discussions |
| 8:30 pm to 9:00 pm | Debrief/closing |

Appendix 3: CV for Kaufman

Michael Kaufman, Ph.D., is an educator and writer focused on engaging men and boys to promote gender equality and end violence against women. He has worked in forty-five countries, including extensively with the United Nations, numerous governments, and NGOs. He is the co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, a decentralized effort to engage men to end violence against women, which has spread to over seventy-five countries. He's the author and editor of six books on gender issues, on democracy and development, as well as the author of two novel: the *A-Z* book and *The Guys Guide to Feminism*. His articles have been translated into fifteen languages. He is married with two grown children and resides in Toronto.

Appendix 4: Bio and Testimonial for Roger

Biography

I'm a 48 year old Caucasian male. Married for 24 years and the father of a 17 year old male.

Testimonial

My Life

Isn't it funny how you want to be a different age than your present one? When you're young you can't wait till you're older and then later in life you wish you were younger again. That's the normal progression but at age eleven I was burdened with why me. Ever see the episode of "The Big Bang Theory" in which Sheldon and Leonard are given a Toy from Penny, but they won't open it? It's mint condition in box, and if opened will lose its value. But Sheldon opens and breaks his. I'm that toy at eleven someone decided they would change my life forever. I went from mint in box to broken in seconds and life would never be the same. Doesn't matter if it happened one time or several times over several years; once that box has been opened it cannot be closed! So my new journey began when I was so young, but I didn't think I was young. I was eleven for god's sake, I was a big boy, strong, fearless, and eager, you name it, I was it. I can't tell anyone, like I said I'm eleven, not a little kid, eleven! So here we go years of not telling people, treating the ones who love me differently and them never knowing why. Remember why me? Why did this

man choose me? What did I do? What could I have done differently? The answer nothing, there is nothing I had to do. Why, because I was eleven. This didn't happen to the 6'2" 220 lb man that I am now. This happened to the innocent 4' 60 lb eleven year old boy that I was then. But it never goes away, gets easier but never forgotten. It was the summer of 1978 and you're thinking, "big deal what happened in '78." Elvis died that summer and every year I get a constant reminder of that summer. There are other things too but that's the big one. So I get constant reminders of the worst thing that has ever happened to me and at the age of eleven and on I have to figure out how to deal with it. Telling people was easy, easy if I was liquored or high and only to very close guy friends. Then came family and the first time telling my parents was after being released from the hospital after an accidental drug overdose. Now why I had changed made sense. Some of my bad decisions became clear not just to me, like my impaired charge. I don't wear a sign that lets everyone know what happened; no one can tell. I'm just a fun loving happily married do-anything-for-a-friend kind of guy. Never shows too much negative emotion, not really any emotion unless it's funny; guess that's not so bad. Went for help but not enough, then my son turns eleven and I become a raging lunatic and he is asking why me? So I go for more help and it gets easier but never forgotten. The good news is the help helped. I can tell my life's story without any substances. When I get those reminders, I don't go running into trouble and I can share more emotions than just humour. The

biggest thing is I can forgive but never forget. How I wish that box was never opened, but we are fixing that broken toy!!!!

Appendix 5: Bio and Testimonial for Jay

Biography

Jay, 44 years old and was born in Grimsby and I grew up between Niagara and Midland. We now live in Mississauga. I was a restoration carpenter from 15 until I was 32. I got my structural design license in 2003 and I have my own structural design firm. I have a daughter who is 19 and a son who is 16. I met my wife when I was 16 and we have been married for 22 years.

Testimonial

I am here because I was a victim of childhood sexual abuse. I was asked what I thought of the label survivor. To me the name survivor doesn't go far enough. To me a survivor has gotten through the abuse but hasn't taken their life back from the abuser. My uncle doesn't have any power over me any longer. My life is mine finally and that's why I'm a victor. I connect to that word because it means I'm winning. My uncle started abusing me when I was 4 years old and stopped when I was 9 and too old. He then went on to the next one of my cousins. I wasn't the first or the last but I was an easy target. My

parents were messed up and abusive and if someone would take me off their hands, so much the better, so they would drop me off at his house. Two years ago I walked into the office of an amazing therapist who saved my sanity, marriage, family and let me live again. I found out I have PTSD and attachment disorder but I also found out how to live. I found out how I use what happened to me to be a strong person and it's letting me tell my story. One of the big things I had to overcome was the oppressive weight of the male stereotype that we live with and learned to be the real me. At 15, I needed a safer life so I left home, quit school and went to work in the construction industry. It's an industry that promotes what I believed was the way to be stronger and bullet proof. The way to being safe finally. I worked in fire restoration, specializing in large loss. It is one of the hardest industries and not many people last very long. I made sure I was harder and stronger and worked more than anyone else. The more dangerous the job, the more I wanted to do it. I believed that the colder and quieter and introverted, the stronger it made me. The more I worked at it, the more the walls went up, the more isolated I became, and the more alone which I believed was how to live but it was the opposite. Now that I have worked to deal with the past, I realized the strength is in being vulnerable and authentic and open. The harder I work at those things, the more the walls drop and I start to finally live. If I look back at deciding to have kids, it's because I wanted a family. I wanted what I never had but was desperate for. I didn't know back then that I wasn't capable of opening up to that world. I had shut down so completely that I could watch it all happening but I wasn't a true part

of it. The only thing that I could let out was anger. Even holding them was more clinical than authentic. I held them because that was what you're supposed to do, not because I felt anything. I love them but I couldn't attach. The older they got, the harder physical contact got. After 18 months of weekly therapy, I finally found the words that described part of the block that was holding me back and it was "adults don't touch kids" period and that included me. I was unable to open myself up to them but I protected them fiercely. I wouldn't let them stay with my parents. I wouldn't let their grandparents neglect the kids like I was. After all it was my parents that dropped me off at my uncle's house. I felt they delivered me to my abuser. I also have huge triggers to injustice so if someone treated my kids unfairly I pulled them out of the situation or made sure they couldn't be hurt in any way. Even now my daughter is 19 and I can't handle hearing about boyfriends. I have gotten better in the last year with them now that I'm able to see what was causing all of it. I'm learning to change the thought patterns and to think about triggers more as insights into what needs to be worked on. I have spent a bit over 2 years in weekly therapy and in many ways it's saving my real life. My therapist has been incredible and has worked to help me get to the places I couldn't go on my own. She got me to the family services open support group meeting. It helped me to learn that I could talk and be in a safe place and that I wasn't being judged or looked down upon. I found it was good to get me to the point that I was comfortable being in a support group but it wasn't helping me move ahead. I started going to the gatehouse phase 1 group and I started taking big steps

forward. The way they have set it up worked for me. The group is run by two trained facilitators who have also lived through sexual abuse. They connect in a way that helped to let out what has been locked away for so very long. I am done the phase 2 co-ed program in 2 weeks and I have one more week in a couples program with my wife. I have worked through the facilitator training and will be co-facilitating a group in February. It took a lot of different resources to get better and no one thing did it all but together they are letting me finally live my own true life.

References

- Anderson, C. L. (1982). Males as sexual assault victims: Multiple levels of trauma. *Journal of Homosexuality, 7*, 145-162.
- Coles, T. (2013). Finding a space in the field of masculinity. Lived experiences of men's masculinities. *Journal of Sociology, vol. 44 no. 3* 233-248.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Cossins, A. (2000). *Masculinities, sexualities and child sexual abuse*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International.
- Davies, M. (2002). Male sexual assault victims: A selective review of the literature and implications for support services. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 7*, 203-214.
- Du Mount, J., Macdonald, S., White, M., & Turner, L. (2013). Male Victims of Adult Sexual Assault: A descriptive Study of Survivors' Use of Sexual Assault Treatment Services. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. doi:10.1177/0886260513487993
- Fisher, A., Goodwin, R., & Patton, M. (2009). *Men & Healing: Theory, research, and practice in working with male survivors of childhood sexual abuse*.
- Glasser, M., Kolvin, I., Campbell, D., Glasser, A., Leitch, I., & Farrelly, S. (2001, Dec). Cycle of child sexual abuse: Links between being a victim and becoming a perpetrator. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 179*, 482-494.
- Kia-Keating, M., Grossman, F. K., Sorsoli, L., & Epstein, M. (2005). Containing and resisting masculinity: Narratives of renegotiation among resilient male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 6*(3), 169-185.
- McDonald, S., & Tijerino, A. (2013). *Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault: Their Experiences*. *Research and Statistic Division, Department of Justice Canada*.
- McLean, A, Balding, V., & White, C. (2005). Further aspects of male-on-male rape and sexual assault in greater Manchester. *Med Sci Law, 45*(3): 225-32.

Ontario's Sexual Assault Violence Action Plan. (2013). Changing attitudes, changing lives. Retrieved from: www.women.gov.on.ca/owd/docs/svap_progress.pdf on December, 12, 2014.

Papaikonomou, M. (2014). Rape and trauma: A case study of journey recovery. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, vol. 19.

Price-Robertson, R. (2005). Child sexual abuse, masculinity and fatherhood. *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(2-3) 130-142.

Scarce, M. (1997). *Male on male rape: The hidden toll of stigma and Shame*. New York: Insight Books.

Strengthening Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Assault. (2011). Attorney General. Retrieved from <http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/news/2011/20110413-male-nr.asp> on December, 17, 2014.

Tewksbury, R. (2007). Effects of Sexual Assaults on Men: Physical, Mental and Sexual Consequences. *International Journal of Men's Health*, 6(1).

The One in Six Statistic. (2014, November 26). Retrieved from: <https://1in6.org/the-1-in-6-statistic/> on December 7, 2014.

The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (2014). Retrieved from www.onpea.org on December 13, 2014.

Walker, J., Archer, J., & Davies, M. (2005a). Effects of male rape on psychological functioning. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 44, 445-451.