

# ASSESSING OUR CAPACITY FOR SERVING MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE





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# ASSESSING OUR CAPACITY FOR SERVING MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Due in large part to stigma and the prevalence of harmful norms around masculinity, men may struggle with particular challenges in their healing journey from sexual assault and harassment. As an advocate, you already have lots of knowledge, skills, and experience to serve all survivors of sexual violence. But there may be areas where you might lack the capacity to serve men. This tool will help advocates dig deeper to ensure they can provide the best services possible to male survivors.

Learn more about working with male survivors at [www.nsvrc.org/working-male-survivors-sexual-violence](http://www.nsvrc.org/working-male-survivors-sexual-violence).

Sexual assault advocates and rape crisis centers can use this self-assessment tool to reflect on your current work serving men who have had unwanted sexual experiences. The tool offers reflection questions related to individual and organizational capacity to serve male survivors, broken down by the following key areas:

- **Section 1:** Understanding Male Socialization, Stigma, and Reactions to Sexual Violence
- **Section 2:** Reaching and Engaging Male Survivors
- **Section 3:** Creating Partnerships in Your Local Communities to Support Male Survivors
- **Section 4:** Sexual Assault Services that Support Healing for Male Survivors

This tool is designed to help advocates and centers evaluate strengths and identify areas for growth. Ask yourself and your group, team, or organization to consider whether:

- *The statements are true consistently.*
- *The organization has sufficient knowledge of the topic.*
- *The organization takes action in each area.*

Consider the organization's policies, procedures, documentation, training, and culture and how they reflect on knowledge of and response to sexual assault and harassment.

Read through the prompts and keep a journal of your reflections. Then answer the questions at the end of each section.

The assessment is designed to be adapted for many types of use. Consider using the individual prompts for personal use, or as part of a larger activity where you share and debrief with colleagues. Consider using the organizational prompts as a team activity or discussion at a staff meeting. We recommend completing the assessment tool on a regular basis to track progress and celebrate growth.

## Section 1: Understanding Male Socialization, Stigma, and Reactions to Sexual Violence

Read through the prompts and keep a journal of your reflections.  
Then answer the questions at the end of each section.

### **Individual**

I can provide current information on the general frequency and facts surrounding sexual violence against men.

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I can provide information on the services my program offers and how they are relevant to male survivors.

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I understand the common reactions to sexual violence for male survivors, including common immediate and longer-term physical, mental, and behavioral reactions.

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I have an awareness of aspects of male socialization experienced by men from various cultures and demographics of my service area, including communities of color, LGBTQ communities, disability communities, and immigrant/refugee communities, among others.

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***What are your strengths in understanding distinct issues for male survivors?***

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***Where do you feel challenged in understanding distinct issues for male survivors?***

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**What are some action steps you can take to learn more about the needs of male survivors?**

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**Organizational**

Our staff proactively seeks information and learning opportunities on issues related to male survivors of sexual assault.

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Our staff understands the potential impact of sexual victimization of men. Our staff understands the potential impacts faced by men from various cultures and demographics in our service area including communities of color, LGBTQ communities, disability communities, and immigrant/refugee communities, among others.

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Our staff has a good comprehension of gender identity and is comfortable, willing, and able to serve transgender men and transmasculine people.

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***What are the areas that you have identified in which your organization shows strength in understanding the needs of male survivors?***

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***In what areas can your organization improve its understanding of the needs of male survivors?***

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***What are action steps your organization can take to educate and train staff on understanding male survivors?***

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## Section 2: Reaching and Engaging Male Survivors

Read through the prompts and keep a journal of your reflections.  
Then answer the questions at the end of each section.

### **Individual**

I understand the prevalence, differences, risk factors, and the effects of sexual violence among male survivors in underserved populations in my service area. (Consider men with disabilities, transgender men and transmasculine people, gay and bisexual men, currently and formerly incarcerated men, men of color, men whose primary language is not English, men with mental health concerns, male immigrants and refugees, adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse, and others. Consider men who are part of more than one marginalized community.)

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I understand the prevalence, differences, risk factors, and the effects of sexual violence among men using substances or self-injury as coping mechanisms to deal with sexual assault in my service area.

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I know what culturally specific outreach is and how to do it within or with various communities.

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***What do you feel your strengths are to reach male survivors?***

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***Where do you feel challenged in reaching male survivors?***

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***What are some action steps you can take to improve outreach to male survivors?***

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***Organizational***

Our organization does ongoing assessment of the community's need for its services to male survivors of sexual assault.

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Our organization's vision, mission, and values statements make it clear that we serve sexual assault survivors of all genders.

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Our organization makes public statements illustrating a commitment to serving male survivors.

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Our organization's name, outreach information, intake forms, and other materials make it clear that we serve survivors of all genders.

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Our organization has specific outreach and awareness campaigns targeted to male survivors of sexual violence.

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Our organization uses an anti-oppression approach to our work, and this approach helps us reach and engage men who experience oppressions.

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Our physical and virtual spaces reflect a commitment to equity and inclusion such that a male survivor would know they are welcomed from the moment they encounter services. Our office is accessible to men with disabilities. Our website and the way we provide virtual services (chat, hotline, counseling sessions) reflect these commitments as well.

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***What are the areas that you have identified in which your organization shows strength in reaching male survivors?***

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***In what areas can your organization improve your reach to male survivors?***

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**What are action steps your organization can take to improve outreach to male survivors?**

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## Section 3: Creating Partnerships in Your Local Communities to Support Male Survivors

Read through the prompts and keep a journal of your reflections. Then answer the questions at the end of each section.

### **Individual**

I understand the short-term services (including housing, legal, medical, and reentry) available in my community for male survivors and am able to provide referrals to male survivors of sexual violence or their family, partners, or friends.

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I understand the longer-term services available (including housing, healing therapy, bodywork, art and music, employment, medical, educational, financial, and support groups) in my community for male survivors and am able to provide information and referrals to male survivors of sexual violence or their family, partners, or friends.

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I understand culturally relevant services outside of my agency available for male survivors.

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***What do you feel your strengths are in creating partnerships within your community to support male survivors?***

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***Where do you feel challenged in creating partnerships within your community to support male survivors?***

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***What are some action steps you can take to help improve or create partnerships within your community to support male survivors?***

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**Organizational**

Our organization has established partnerships with organizations that can help meet the needs of male survivors of sexual violence.

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Our organization has established partnerships with organizations that could benefit from working together on improving services for male survivors of sexual violence.

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Our organization is positioned to establish new partnerships with organizations that interact with male survivors of sexual violence.

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***What are the areas that you have identified in which your organization shows strength in creating partnerships within your community to support male survivors?***

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***In what areas can the organization improve partnerships within your community to support male survivors? In what ways can you raise awareness about your services to current or potential community partners?***

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***What are action steps your organization can take to improve community partnerships within your community to support male survivors?***

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## Section 4: Sexual Assault Services that Support Healing for Male Survivors

Read through the prompts and keep a journal of your reflections.  
Then answer the questions at the end of each section.

### ***Individual***

I am comfortable talking with men about their experiences of sexual assault, or unwanted sexual experiences.

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I understand distinct challenges and needs of serving male survivors and can provide trauma-informed services to male survivors of sexual assault.

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I can respond to male survivors who have experienced sexual violence within the context of the intimate partner relationship, as well as outside the context of an intimate partner relationship. I can respond to adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and male survivors who were sexually victimized as adults.

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I can provide crisis intervention for male survivors of sexual assault.

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I understand the short-term/long-term services (including crisis intervention, therapy, support groups, housing, legal, and medical advocacy, and any other immediate or long-term needs) available in my agency for male survivors. I am able to provide information and referrals to male survivors and their family, partners, or friends.

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I am able to assess and ask appropriate questions regarding the impact of sexual victimization throughout a male survivor's life.

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I have training and skills in providing culturally relevant services and understand how to apply those skills in working with male survivors.

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I have a support system in place within my organization to assist me with any vicarious trauma I may suffer as a result of my working with male survivors of sexual violence.

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***What do you feel your strengths are in serving male survivors?***

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***Where do you feel challenged in serving male survivors?***

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***What are some action steps you can take to improve your service delivery to male survivors?***

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***Organizational***

Our services for survivors are available to men and are relevant to men's needs as survivors.

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Our organization's policies, process, and forms reflect that our services are available to survivors of all genders.

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Our organization provides a space for staff and volunteers to unpack any issues that are getting in the way of serving male survivors. (Issues getting in the way of serving male survivors may include: having worries about serving men who have perpetrated violence, having trouble serving survivors who are incarcerated or having trouble comprehending that someone who has been charged with a crime might also be a victim, taking abuse committed by women against men seriously, and more.)

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Our organization has systems in place to respond to vicarious trauma that might come up for staff and volunteers working with men.

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Our organization proactively addresses trauma of advocates who have experienced violence perpetrated by men.

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Our staff is comfortable, willing, and able to provide services to male survivors across the lifespan who present as survivors of sexual assault or who have had unwanted sexual experiences.

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Our staff possesses the knowledge to provide crisis intervention, advocacy services, and referrals for male survivors.

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Our organization evaluates how well we serve male survivors. We evaluate how well we've reached goals related to quality (for example, how well our services meet the needs of male survivors) and quantity (for example, how many men use our services).

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***What are the areas that you have identified in which your organization shows strength in providing services to male survivors?***

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***In what areas can your organization improve services to male survivors?***

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***What are action steps your organization can take around policies and procedures to improve service delivery to male survivors of sexual violence?***

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## Acknowledgements

From “Personal Assessment for Advocates working with Victims of Sexual Violence” by Resource Sharing Project and National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2010. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. [https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018-04/Publications\\_Personal-Assessment.pdf](https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018-04/Publications_Personal-Assessment.pdf). Adapted with permission.

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