

Sexual Violence

Effects, Costs, and Prevention

mecasa
MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual violence is a complicated, multi-layered issue that requires specially trained advocates and specialized services for the best quality response. Anyone can experience sexual violence regardless of race, color, creed, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, religion, age, or financial status.

What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is an umbrella term for a range of behaviors. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, street harassment, sexual coercion, commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, prison rape, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, unwanted sexual contact, sexual abuse by a caregiver, stalking, drug- and alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, a power differential which makes sexual contact inappropriate or illegal (e.g., student-teacher or doctor-patient), sexual assault, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

Sexual violence is the most chronically underreported violent crime in the US.¹ Each year 14,000 Mainers experience some type of sexual violence.² However, in Maine in 2014, only 356 rapes or attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement.³ Survivors often do not report for fear of not being believed, safety issues, ability, and concerns about the criminal justice process.

Effects of sexual violence

The effect of sexual violence varies for each survivor depending upon the individual's gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, cultural views, support system, and life history. There are several possible effects, including sexual concerns or problems; sexually transmitted infections; fatigue; anxiety; depression; obesity; post-traumatic stress disorder; substance abuse; self-harm or self-injury; pregnancy; and suicide.

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Cost of sexual violence

Because it is so underreported, it is difficult to quantify the cost of sexual violence. Yet, we know that the economic impact of sexual violence is profound, and includes costs associated with: crisis services; medical treatment for victims/survivors (both short term and long term, mental and physical); lifetime loss of income; the criminal justice process; and incarceration for perpetrators, including treatment and management (probation, the sex offender registry, etc.).

Rape is the most costly violent crime, costing 127 billion dollars annually, excluding the cost of childhood sexual abuse.⁴ According to a recent report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the total lifetime estimated financial costs associated with just one year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect) is approximately \$124 billion.⁵

Prevention is possible

At MECASA, we believe that everyone has a part to play to end sexual violence. We ask that everyone explore why sexual assault occurs, and what we all can change within ourselves and our communities to make a difference. Sexual violence prevention is about changing our social and cultural norms in order to create a safer, healthier world for all of us. For more information on preventing sexual violence, visit mecasa.org.

Learn More

[Maine Network of Children's Advocacy Centers](#)

The Network is a membership organization committed to promoting Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and supporting existing and emerging centers. The Network promotes the development, growth, and utilization of CACs and multi-disciplinary teams to more effectively respond to Maine's sexually abused children and their families. The Network provides statewide representation and support for Maine's local Children's Advocacy Centers.

[Maine Sex Trafficking & Exploitation Network](#)

The Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network provides training, technical assistance, and resources to direct service providers engaged in anti-trafficking efforts in Maine, as well as community awareness and public policy support. The effort is supported by a statewide Sex Trafficking Provider Council. Maine STEN engages in many human trafficking programmatic efforts, such as managing a victim's support fund, developing a volunteer bank, a bi-weekly news and resource roundup, and a human trafficking-specific media guide for Maine journalists.

[National Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#)

The mission of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) is to end sexual violence by

strengthening national public policy related to sexual assault survivors and the issue of sexual assault. NAESV advocates for the rights of sexual assault survivors, support for rape crisis centers, and the advancement of comprehensive strategies for ending sexual assault.

[National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Violence \(SCESA\)](#)

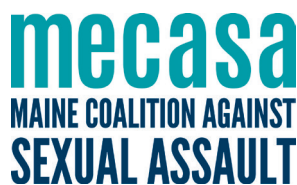
The National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA) is a Women of Color-led nonprofit dedicated to working with our communities to create a just society in which Women of Color are able to live healthy lives free of violence.

[National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is a national information and resource hub relating to all aspects of sexual violence. Founded by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, NSVRC staff collects and disseminates a wide range of resources on sexual violence including statistics, research, position statements, statutes, training curricula, prevention initiatives, and program information.

Sources

1. Langton, L & Truman, J. (2015). *Criminal victimization, 2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv14.pdf>
2. Dumont, R & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.
3. Maine Dept. of Public Safety. (2015). *Annual crime in Maine 2014*. Augusta, ME.
4. Miller, Ted, Cohen, Mark and Wiersema, Brian. (1996). *Victim costs & consequences: A new look*. National Institute of Justice Report, U.S. Department of Justice.
5. Fang, X. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. *Child Abuse and Neglect* 36(2), 156-165.



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Statewide Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Line: 1-800-871-7741/TTY 1-888-458-5599