

# BREAKING THE SILENCE; WORKING WITH MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

PRESENTED BY:  
JIM STRUVE, LCSW

## When:

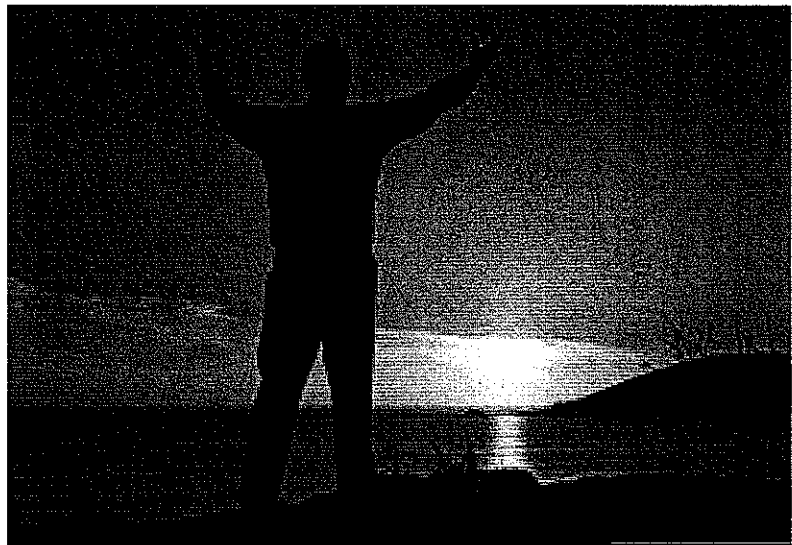
Friday, January 25th

9 am-12 pm

## Where:

Taggart Student Center

Ballroom—West



## CO-SPONSORS

COUNSELING AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

SOCIAL WORK  
DEPARTMENT

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

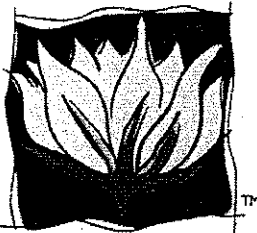
Drawing on 35 years of experience with male survivors, the presenter will focus on ways for clinicians and trainees to enhance their work with male survivors. The workshop will elaborate effective treatment approaches, outline strengths that may result along the healing path, discuss unique challenges to minority men from different lifestyles and cultures, and explain potential counter-transference challenges.

Utah Psychological Association endorsement for 3 CE's which may be used for re-licensure is pending.





## WORKING WITH MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE




- Utah State University

January 25, 2013

Jim Struve, LCSW

## Welcome to the Male Survivor Community!

- By your presence here, you are expressing your desire to help
- The need for more mental health professionals and allies to be trained and educated is urgent



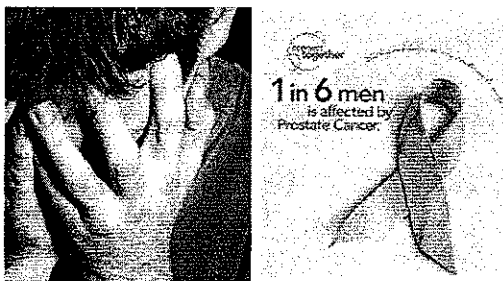
### What We Know

- 1 in 6 boys are overtly sexually victimized before the age of 18
  - With 313 million Americans, there are upwards of 26 million male survivors of sexual abuse

1 in every 8 rape victims is a man

Sexual Victimization is not "an act of sex"

The number of adult men with histories of sexual abuse are the same as the number of men who develop diagnosed prostate cancer in their lifetimes



### What We Know

- Of men who are sexually victimized
  - 59% report male abuser
  - 29% report female abuser
  - 11% report both
- Average age of 1<sup>st</sup> abuse: 10.1 years
  - Some men report anal penetration as early as late infancy
- 36% of males report their sexual assault included force, intimidation, or threats
- Males who are sexually victimized commonly report multiple offenders (over time).

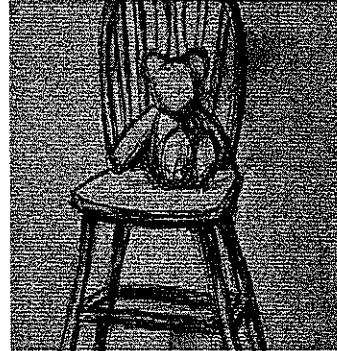
### Rape

- A form of sexual victimization that involves "any penetration, no matter how slight, of a man's mouth or anus by a object or penis without that person's consent" Source: Scarce, *Male on Male Rape*, 1977
- Recently FBI has changed their definition of rape so that the gender of the perpetrator and the gender of the victim are not specified
- At least 1 in 8 rape victims are male
- Perhaps the most underreported and unaddressed violent crime
- Gay men (or men perceived to be gay) and African American male rape survivors are overrepresented relative to population percentages
- Weapons frequently used; some use of force or threat of force is almost universal
- Anal penetration is most common form of men with men
- Men & women who rape men do so almost exclusively out of anger or an attempt to overpower, humiliate or degrade their victims

### Incest

- Sexual betrayal is a prominent feature because...
  - the perpetrator is believed and trusted
  - The perpetrator is frequently in a protector role for the victim
- Incest can include any older caretaker, not just a family member; can include persons who are in the role of family, such as clergy

### Clues that a boy has been sexually abused



### Clues for Boys

- Poor student suddenly stops doing well
- Boy uncharacteristically becomes withdrawn, moody, angry, or defiant
- Premature sex play or sexual knowledge
- Heightened fear of males, especially in locker rooms or public rest rooms
- Inflated attention on body building
- Hyper-vigilant attention about control
- Risky/self-destructive behaviors

### GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL ABUSE



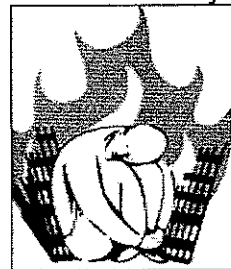
The primary difference between male & female victims of sexual abuse emerges from differences in gender socialization & the different response (self & others) to the sexual abuse

### GENERIC ASSESSMENT FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

- Always ask the same questions of male and female clients
- Practice gender neutrality



### Males Are Less Likely to Identify As A "Victim" After Being Sexually Abused



- For many males, "victim" and "male" is an oxymoron

### Assessing for the possibility of abuse if you suspect it

- Ask behavioral questions
  - Many males
    - ...have not coded what was DONE to them as abuse; rather the experience is internalized as when they
      - first had sex
      - first got initiated
      - got treated special
      - it was just experimentation
    - ...may deny or minimize the impact of victimization
    - ...may not feel safe enough to disclose

### Who Sexually Abuses Boys? Common Demographic Traits

- Heterosexual males who abuse power and privilege
- Males with “sexual identity disturbance”
- Females with “dysfunctional intimacy boundaries”
- Acts of aggression and/or hatred that emerge from homophobia

### Males Are More Commonly Victimized by Someone Who is Familiar to Them but Outside the Immediate Family Constellation

- Coach
- Clergy
- Extended Relative
- Mentor
- Babysitter
- Friend of Parent or Sibling

### Boys Who Exhibit Gender Non-Conforming Traits Are At Risk for Sexual Victimization

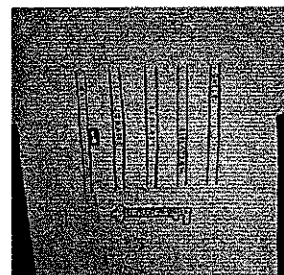
- Heterosexism makes them vulnerable “targets”
- Isolation/Rejection makes them vulnerable to “grooming”
- Lack of safe access to peers makes them susceptible to age inappropriate sexual partners
- False security of internet world makes them targets for “cyber-trolling”

### Common Symptoms Exhibited By Male Survivors

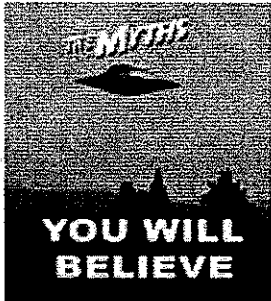
- Trust Issues
- Relationship Issues
- Anger management / Aggression
- Intimacy
- Sexual Addictions
- Power and control
- Questioning of Masculinity
- Sexual orientation confusion
- Self-Harm Behaviors

### Reasons Males May Not Feel Safe to Disclose

- Dominant stereotypes of masculinity
- Homophobia
- Myths about males and sexual victimization




**MYTHS ABOUT MALE SURVIVORS**




**Myth**

- **Boys & men can't be victims**
  - Males are able to protect themselves
  - "If you didn't want it, why didn't you stop it"




**Myth**

- **Arousal or ejaculation for a male means that he was a willing participant or that he enjoyed the experience**
  - Perps often use this to silence the male victim




**Myth**

- **Males who are sexually abused will become sexual offenders**
  - The "Vampire Syndrome"



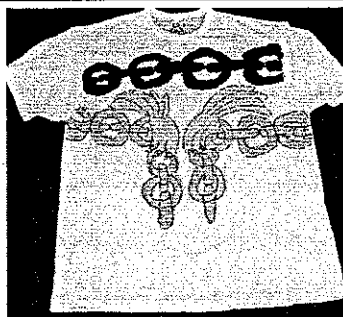
**Myth**

- **Boys who are sexually abused will become homosexual**



**Other Common Myths**

- Males Are Less Traumatized Than Females By The Experience Of Sexual Abuse
- Boys Cannot Be Sexually Abused By A Female
- Most Sexual Abuse Of Males Is Perpetrated By Gay Men
- Sexual Activity Between An Adult Female And a Boy Is A "Rite Of Passage," Not Abuse



For any male who has been sexually abused, becoming free of these myths is an essential part of the recovery process

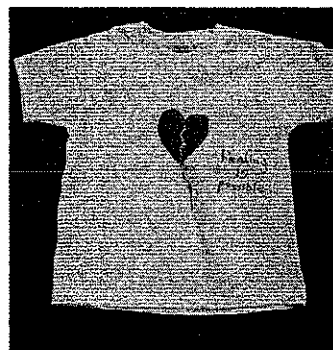
Anyone who is in a helping/support role for a male survivor must be willing to challenge his/her own biases surrounding these myths



### Impact of Sexual Abuse Scandals

- Giving permission for more male survivors to come forward
- Causing much more pain and suffering for men who have already come forward
- Opportunity to reframe abuse when the same or similar circumstances are reported by other victims
- Any denial of responsibility for victimizing or any denial of responsibility for protecting victims can be especially re-traumatizing
- The role of bystanders who do not report abuse has been called into serious question
- Whole communities /organizations/institutions are traumatized by the disclosures and can undermine trust

### PATHWAYS TO HEALING



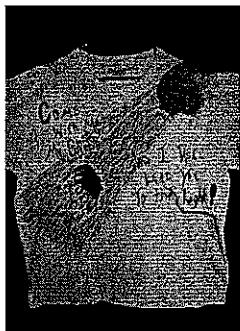
### General guidelines for healing

- Clinician must believe healing is absolutely possible for all survivors
- Healing takes great courage and persistence
- Healing is a process, not a race or a competition—especially important for men to hear—pacing is very important; taking breaks is necessary
- Very important to help survivors give themselves credit for any steps they have taken to get to this point
- Very important to honor all the defenses a survivor has used to cope until now
- Very normal to ask questions like: Will I ever recover? Why does this have to take so long? How long will this take?
- Very normal to shift into denial or minimizing
- Encourage survivors to reach out for support as soon as possible to address isolation and shame: [www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org) and [www.1in6.org](http://www.1in6.org)

### Deciding to Heal

- Something is wrong; often is a vague sense
- Some “hit bottom”; the consequences of their dysfunctional behavior catch up with them
- Knowing I can't go on and on like this
- Daring to dream I might find some help
- Searching to find someone who can help

### MOTIVATION TO HEAL



- Explore previous efforts to seek help
  - Were they believed?
  - Was their abuse minimized?
  - Were they re-abused?
- Help men find resources
  - books, groups, networking

### What to assess for if a man tells you he was abused

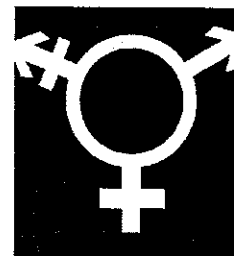
- Presence of addictions /abuse of substances, sex gambling or food (ex: 81% of sex addicts have a sexual abuse history)
- Sleep disturbance-poor sleep, nightmares, insomnia or hypersomnia
- Appetite disturbance or disordered eating patterns; disordered body image
- PTSD-presence of flashbacks, body memories, or blocks of time with no memory
- Attempts to "prove" masculinity (multiple partners, engaging in risky or self-destructive behaviors) or forced heterosexuality (if they think they may be gay and that is undesirable)

### Features of Untreated Trauma Important Clinical Issues

- About 80% of young adults who were abused meet criteria for at least one psychological disorder.
- Children who experience child abuse & neglect are :
  - 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile,
  - 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and
  - 30% more likely to commit violent crime.
- US Department of Health & Human Services, 2006

### The Possible Effects of Sexual Trauma on Sexual Orientation

- Sexual Orientation may not be impacted by sexual trauma
- Sexual Orientation may be impacted if sexual trauma occurs at a young age before sexual identity awareness has emerged

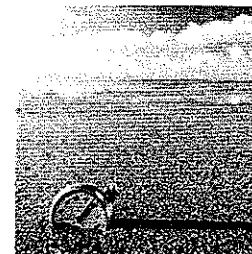


### ...if arousal or pleasure, the male survivor may assume he is gay

- Does not question being gay; distress is equated with sexual trauma, not authenticity
- Knows he is gay but denies authentic orientation – too closely identified with sexual trauma; struggle to avoid authenticity
- Knows he is straight but struggles with "homoerotic response patterns"
- **Resolution and healing are necessary to gain clarity about sexual orientation**

### ...the male victim may become "developmentally frozen"

- Physically develops but lag in emotional maturity
- Life experience has overtones of "stuck in time"





...responses to sexual orientation when male victim is developmentally frozen...

- Becomes bonded to sexual practices of trauma; locked into repetitive behaviors
- Dissociation of sexual energy; asexual, sexual anorexia, sexual ambivalence
- Stuck in identification of self at age of trauma; attraction to children at that age; sexual reactivity, not pedophilia
- **Sexual trauma becomes the sexual orientation**

### Assessing For Sexual Offending Behaviors

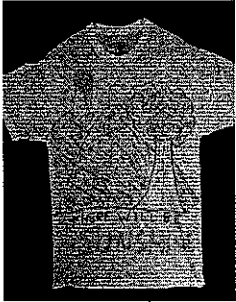
- Differentiating "sexual reactivity" from "predatory" behavior
- Evaluating for pedophilic mindset
- Determining age of maturity
- Implications for individual vs. group treatment setting

### Assessing Survivors With Offending History – Non-Pedophilic Traits:

- *Taking responsibility (even minimally) for offending behavior and incidents*
- *An interest in developing support vs. remaining in isolation*
- *Emotional expression seems real rather than manipulative*
- *Openness to question himself and to confront others in the areas of denial, repression, and projection*
- *Ability – or willingness – to identify with others and to apply their process to himself.*
- *Striving to develop an inner locus of control.*

### SAFETY

- External Safety
  - Co-creating a safe environment
  - Not trusting is validated
  - Blind trust is challenged
- Internal Safety



- Safety is a fundamental cornerstone required for any healing of trauma
- Goal to address "safe enough" vs. ideal safety
  - Safety is subjective experience of survivor vs. objective factors of
  - Safety ultimately a matter of internal vs. external
- Important to understand the pathophysiology of addictions
  - Trauma survivors may experience risky compulsions as "safe"
  - Distorted assessments of safe and dangerous

### Establishing internal safety

- Normal response to trauma
  - Close up, tighten up, withdraw, stop breathing, dissociate
  - "Smallify"
- New responses
  - Mindfulness, meditation, self-defense
  - ***Winning is Healing: Body Awareness & Empowerment for Abuse Survivors*** by Paul Linden: [www.being-in-movement](http://www.being-in-movement)

## Being Honest About the Limitations of External Safety

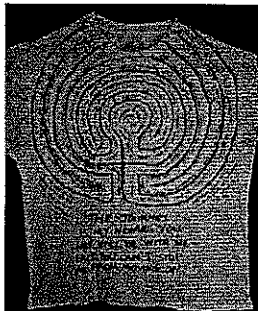
- Important to communicate the realities of safety
  - "safe enough" vs. guaranteed safety
- Systemic oppression & cultural bias may create inherent & unavoidable "un-safety" for a survivor



## LEARNING THE SKILLS OF MIND-BODY AWARENESS



## MIND-BODY AWARENESS



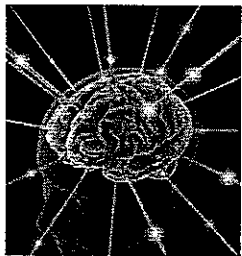
- Re-connecting physical, emotional, & cognitive self
- Learning the skills of mindful awareness
- Setting boundaries - then maintaining & extending them

## BREAKING THE SILENCE

- Uncovering the truth
- Learning the context
- Telling the story
- Feeling the impact



## Memory



- Memory is not always linear
- Memory is sometimes subjective
- Memory has natural "circuit breakers" that impair information retrieval

## Dissociation – A Trauma Response for Organizing Memories

- Dissociation
  - a Psychological phenomenon in which elements of an experience are not integrated into a unitary whole, but are stored in memory as isolated fragments and stored as sensory perceptions, affective states or as behavioral reenactments
- Dissociation is functional in the context of a dysfunctional experience
- Dissociation is not just a fear response

### Uncovering/Remembering: guidelines for memory work

- Reminder that reliving a memory is a part of healing and they have already survived
- Important to connect with feelings as well as the facts
- Body memories are real-may feel crazy
- Unnecessary to remember EVERY instance
- Support is essential in and out of therapy
- How to help a client see abuse as abuse and not their fault: externalize it
- Memories often remembered in dreams, or in small details
- Most effective to combine memory work with some type of protective work too
- Important to be trained in hypnosis (preferably Ericksonian) and/or EMDR

### ACCESSING & INTEGRATING EMOTIONS

- The language of emotions
- Experiential activities
- Working with the physical body



### Finding authenticity thru creative expression



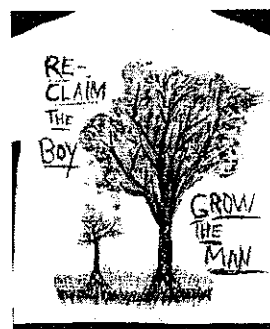
### Empowerment: Blocks to Forgiveness

- One of the most controversial subjects for survivors:
- Religious blocks -- "turn the other cheek"
- I am unworthy as I am to blame for the abuse done to me
- I have hurt too many others so I am not worthy of forgiveness
- I cannot achieve forgiveness because I don't have the courage to confront my perpetrators.
- I cannot achieve forgiveness because my perpetrators won't admit they abused me.
- I cannot achieve forgiveness because I can't find my perpetrators or they refuse to talk with me.
- If I could just put the right combination of words together, then surely the perpetrator (s) in my life would see the light and accept their responsibility.
- I can't ever forgive my perpetrator--what they did to me is unforgivable
- No understanding of the importance of self forgiveness

### Empowerment: 4 Components of Forgiveness

- the process of living your life believing you are worthy of being loyal to functionality as fully as possible
- the power of you achieving a state of forgiveness must reside in your hands, in your mind, in your spirit
- process of stating your truth unequivocally, and then living your life believing in your truth, regardless of what others may tell you
- process of believing you are worthy of reaching out to a community of people who have the ability to offer you unconditional acceptance just the way you are; as the process unfolds, you allow their acceptance to enter your heart, mind and spirit and you offer the same degree of unconditional acceptance to each of them.

### EXPANDING LIFE SKILLS



- Busting thru shame
- Reclaiming the boy
- Learning to play
- Daring to Dream

### Celebrating the New - Evolving from survivor to thriver

- Forming healthy adult relationships
- Learning to have healthy sexual relationships
- Choosing to thrive in life with balance of work/play
- Learning to take healthy risks
- Expanding ability to be compassionate
- Being supportive of other people's recoveries
- Developing healthy pride
- Embracing masculine/feminine aspects of personality
- Acknowledging our own mistakes/flaws, take full responsibility & continue to grow and heal

### Cultural Differences Matter

- Asian survivors:
  - Saving face is of highest priority—implication: Shame may be intensely experienced & intensely denied; great shame in being violated/subjugated as a male; getting support from family seen as nearly impossible; important to affirm masculinity
  - Problems are physical, not emotional; mental illness is seen as an imbalance or lack of will power; implications: self blame common, denial of emotional problems, may likely seek shorter term solutions and/or focus on internal problem solving

### Cultural Differences Matter

- African-American Male Survivors:
  - Masculinity is extremely important
  - Experienced cultural disempowerment on top of sexual victimization
  - Even more difficult to reach out for help
  - Daily stressors may make focusing on the past more of a challenge
  - Church is an important part of culture

### Cultural Differences Matter

- Hispanic Male Survivors:
  - Important to know degree of acculturation, from those who totally reject Hispanic background to those who totally reject Anglo-American culture
  - Machismo most important value for men; chivalry, physical strength, sexual attractiveness, virtue & potency
  - Catholic religion major influence: sacrifice, charity, enduring wrong doing of others
  - Family unity very important
  - Hispanic hierarchy in family

### Cultural Differences Matter

- Gay/bisexual male survivors:
  - Already feel isolated/different/defective/shameful
  - Normal to keep aspects of life secret
  - If disclose abuse, especially if by a male, it means disclosing sexual orientation, often long before they are emotionally ready
  - More likely to be violated than heterosexual boys proportionately
  - Likely to frame violation as initiation
  - Sexual orientation confusion common
  - Getting sexual needs met also very confusing
  - Significantly more likely to become HIV +

### Cultural Differences Matter

- Native American/First Nations survivors:
  - Sexual abuse may have been tool of cultural genocide
  - Healing does not adhere to Medical Model – or even Feminist Model – paradigm
  - Assessment of degree of healing can become entangled with expectations for acculturation
  - Easy to misinterpret behavior responses as shame-based
    - e.g., no eye contact may not reflect hiding in shame
  - Spirituality is a deeply significant component in healing

## Vicarious Traumatization

- Can impair the therapist's:
  - Frame of reference, identity, world view, spirituality, self-capacities, ego resources, and psychological needs
- Examples:
  - Not feeling safe
  - Not trusting your own judgment; being more self critical
  - Isolating and avoiding social situations due to feeling down, depressed, and anxious
  - Awareness of pervasive human cruelty which leads to numbing
  - Diminished sense of self control and helplessness

## Rewards of Doing This Work

- We can co-create a much more healed & healthy community
- Immense satisfaction in helping to heal wounds
- Immense satisfaction in inspiring hope
- Lots of opportunity for personal growth & healing & collegial support
- Being inspired by resilience of survivors
- Increased intimacy and joy as result of working through your own VT

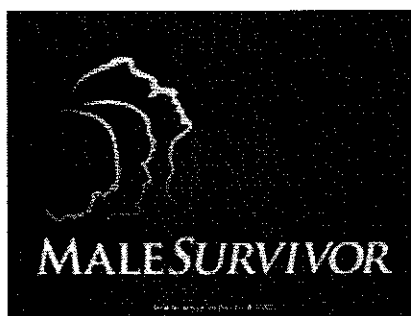
## Resources

- [www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org)
  - Weekends of Recovery
  - Moderated chat room
  - Bulletin boards
  - Resources for support: Therapist listing; support groups; library of articles for professionals, survivors and allies; bookstore
  - Bi-annual conference in NYC (next in 2012)
- [www.1in6.org](http://www.1in6.org) support for survivors & training
- Plus many more on your resource list

## WEEKENDS OF RECOVERY A Growing Community



[www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org)





# RESOURCES: TRAUMA & SEXUAL ABUSE OF MALES

Compiled By: *Jim Struve, LCSW*  
*Salt Lake City, UT.*  
*www.jimstruve.com*

## RESOURCES FOR MALE SURVIVORS:

- Adams, Kenneth M. (2007). *When He's Married to Mom*. New York, NY: Fireside Books (Simon and Schuster).
- Browne, Marie, with Browne, Marlene. (2007). *If the Man You Love Was Abused*. Avon, MA: Adams Media.
- Cassese, James, ed. (2001). *Integrating the Shattered Self: Gay Men and Childhood Sexual Trauma*. New York, NY: Haworth
- Fradkin, Howard. (2012). *Joining Forces: Empowering Male Survivors to Thrive*. New York: Harcourt.
- Gartner, R. B. (2005). *Beyond Betrayal: Taking Charge of Your Life after Boyhood Sexual Abuse*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Hunter, Mic (1989). *Abused Boys: The Neglected Victims Of Sexual Abuse*. New York, NY: Lexington Books.
- Hunter, Mic. (1992). *Joyous Sexuality: Healing From Family Sexual Dysfunction*. Minneapolis, MN: Comp Care Publishers.
- King, Neal (1995). *Speaking Our Truth: Voices of Courage and Healing for Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Library.
- Lew, Mike. (1988 - 2nd ed. 2004). *Victims No Longer: Men Recovering from Incest and Other Sexual Child Abuse*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Lew, Mike. (2000) *Leaping upon the Mountains: Men Proclaiming Victory over Sexual Child Abuse*. New York, NY: North Atlantic Books.
- Linden, Paul. (2001). *Winning is Healing: Body Awareness and Empowerment for Abuse Survivors*. E-book available at [www.being-in-movement.com](http://www.being-in-movement.com)
- Linden, Paul. (2004 ). *Winning is Healing Basics: An Introduction to Body Awareness and Empowerment for Abuse Survivors*. ebook available at [www.being-in-movement.com](http://www.being-in-movement.com)
- McEvoy, Alan, Brookings, Jeff, and Rollo, Debbie, eds. (1999). *If He Is Raped: A Guidebook for Parents, Mates, and Friends*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications.
- Moran, Martin (2005). *The Tricky Part: One Boy's Fall from Trespass into Grace*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Mura, David. (1987). *A Male Grief: Notes on Pornography and Addiction*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.
- Preble, John & Groth, Nicholas. (2002). *Male Victims of Same-Sex Abuse*. Washington, DC: Sidran Foundation Press.
- Scarce, M. (1997). *Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame*. New York, NY: Insight Books (Plenum Press).
- Wright, Leslie, Loiselle, Mindy, Bear, Euan, eds. (1999 ). *Back on Track: Boys Dealing with Sexual Abuse*. Syracuse, NY: Safer Society Press.

## **RESOURCES FOR CLINICIANS AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS OF MALE SURVIVORS:**

Bolton, F.G., L. Morris, & A. E. MacEachron. (1989). *Males At Risk: The Other Side of Child Sexual Abuse*. Sage Publications, Inc.: Newbury Park, CA.

Gartner, R. B. (1999). *Betrayed as Boys: Psychodynamic Treatment of Sexually Abused Men*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hunter, Mic (1990). *The Sexually Abused Male: Prevalence, Impact, & Treatment (Volume 1); The Sexually Abused Male: Application of Treatment Strategies (Volume 2)*. Lexington Books: New York, NY.

Porter, Eugene (1986). *Treating the Young Male Victim of Sexual Assault*. Syracuse, NY: Safer Society Press.

Struve, Jim & Hunter, Mic (1997). *The Ethical Use of Touch in Psychotherapy*. Sage Publications, Inc.: Newbury Park, CA.

## **MEDIA PRESENTATIONS ABOUT MALE SURVIVORS:**

“Men & Boys Healing” by Big Voice Pictures: [www.bigvoicepictures.com](http://www.bigvoicepictures.com)

Oprah Shows on “Male Survivors” – Part 1: November 5, 2011; Part 2: November 12, 2011 – [www.oprah.com](http://www.oprah.com)

## **RESOURCES ABOUT TRAUMA:**

Brown, L. (2011) *Becoming a Trauma-Aware Therapist: Definitions and Assessment*. Free Internet Download: [ContinuingEdCourses.net](http://ContinuingEdCourses.net)

Brown, L.S. (2009). *Cultural competence in trauma therapy: Beyond the flashback*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Courtois, C. A. & Ford, J. D. (Eds.) (2009). *Treating complex traumatic stress disorders*. New York: Guilford.

Foa, E. B., Keane, T. M., Friedman, M. J., & Cohen, J. A. (Eds.) (2009). *Effective treatments for PTSD: Practice guidelines from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies*. New York NY: Guilford.

Freyd, J. J. (1996). *Betrayal trauma: The logic of forgetting abuse*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Herman, J.L. (2009). Forward. In C.A. Courtois & J.D. Ford, (Eds.). *Treating complex traumatic stress disorders* (pp. xii-xvii). New York: Guilford.

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions*. New York: Free Press.

## **WEBSITES WITH RESOURCES FOR MALE SURVIVORS AND THEIR ALLIES:**

[www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org) - includes discussion boards & interactive resources

[www.lin6.org](http://www.lin6.org)

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)