

The Side-effects of Sexual Violence

Sexual Assault Awareness encompasses more than 'assault'. It is the umbrella term for any sexually offensive, violent or invasive act against another person causing trauma, emotionally, physically, mentally or otherwise. Often, society does not consider the effects that childhood molestation, rape and violence have in the lives of adult survivors. These things can result in lifelong defects in victims that many don't realize.

- Many studies have shown that childhood sexual abuse can have a **wide range of consequences** that carry into adulthood and across multiple spheres of functioning.
- Not only can childhood sexual abuse have **lasting effects** throughout adulthood, but the effects can **take new forms** in adulthood, affecting marital and parental life as well.

Below is a poem submitted by an adult survivor of childhood molestation. One thing is for certain, it is never too late to seek support, counseling or therapy for anything that has caused trauma.

Soap

Dove, Caress, Ivory, Tone.
No matter the brand none of it was ever strong enough to wash away the stench that your body left upon mine.
No matter how many showers I took, the lather wouldn't allow me to wash away the sin.
It was as though you marked your territory with your predatory actions leaving me with a lifetime of distrust of any man who would ever cross my path.
Hence, your actions made me your slave mentality, emotionally and physically for years to come.
I even tried washing my body with lye thinking it would burn away the traces of secrecy I share with you; and just as I thought it had eaten the dirt and memories away. There you were again, ready to invade the sanctuary known as my body.
So, I washed, I scrubbed until my skin bled raw trying to clean the mess you made of my life.
No matter how much I lathered, no matter how hot the water was, I could not scald away the feeling of uncleanliness that you left upon a little girl's soul.
No soap was ever a trusted brand because the dirt of your touch clung to me
And now here it is years later, and I still scrub my skin red trying to escape the stench.

By Spoken Word Artist & Survivor - Floetic Flo

Submitted in recognition of
National Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month
and National Poetry Month by The K.A.S.S.I.E. Project

Keeping All Survivors Safe Informed & Emancipated
The K.A.S.S.I.E. Project
SHARE....HEAL....LIVE....

Possible adverse effects of childhood sexual abuse exhibited in adulthood[5,10,11,12,13,14,15,16]	
Sexual and physical health	• Somatic problems • Risky lifestyles (e.g. smoking, alcohol and drug use) • Poorer physical health • Poorer perception of physical health • More frequent visits to the physician • Occupational disability • Chronic diseases • Chronic pain • High-risk sexual behavior (unprotected sex, multiple partners, etc.) • Gynecological and perinatal complications • Sexual problems (e.g. painful intercourse, vaginismus in women) • Greater risk of contracting HIV
Psychological	• Mental health problems (depression, personality disorders, psychotic disorders, panic disorder, etc.) • Psychological distress • Dissociation • Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder • Anxiety • Self-mutilation • Suicidal thoughts, attempted or completed suicide • Drug and alcohol abuse
Relational and marital	• Less trusting of others • Commitment issues • Greater family and personal conflict • Isolation • Fear of intimacy • Marital dissatisfaction • Less stable relationships with partners • Marital conflict • Spousal violence

Parental*	• Permissive parenting practices • Parenting stress • Parentification of children • Troubled parent-child relationships
Perinatal period	• Early motherhood • Renewed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (during pregnancy, delivery, nursing) • Premature births • Postpartum depression

**Studies focused on mothers who were sexually abused in childhood.*
Source - National Institute of Public Health

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