

Gang Rape

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While there are many similarities in the healing process for survivors of all types of assault, each also carries its own implications for healing.

The term 'gang rape' refers to sexual assault that is perpetrated by two or more people.

While there is a significant lack of literature out there for survivors of gang rape, this does not mean that you are alone. In fact, numerous studies and statistics on gang rape have shown that it is a crime that is committed far too often; occurring in all kinds of circumstances, by all kinds of groups.

Group dynamics & the 'audience factor'

It is incredibly intimidating to be confronted by a group of people, particularly if their intent is to cause physical harm. Additionally, there is a great deal of humiliation in knowing that there was an audience witnessing the rape. Not only are multiple people committing sexual assault against you, but also watching in the same room/area. Other people may know what is going on, and not do anything to help or stop the assault.

The group dynamics of gang rape may have left you feeling uncomfortable with any audience, regardless of whether they are supportive. There's a certain powerlessness that stems from not having anyone on your 'side,' and this might later cause you to feel anxious or intimidated in any social situation. Confrontation of any sort might leave you feeling 'ganged up on' and frightened. You may find yourself feeling overwhelmed by crowds, or even smaller groups of people. These are all very natural reactions to what you have endured, and they will lessen with time, and as you move forward with your healing.

A significant aspect of gang rape is the function it serves in reinforcing a sense of worthlessness in the victim. Gang rape often involves elements of torture and ridicule;

thereby causing a victim to feel like they are 'less than' their perpetrators. While those feelings of humiliation may be strong, they are not yours to own. Their actions are solely a reflection on them.

Dealing with the aftermath of a gang rape can be a very isolating experience, and while you may struggle with reaching out, it's very worthwhile to seek the guidance and support of a professional.

It is likely that you experienced some form of disassociation during the trauma, and it can be difficult to re-connect yourself to that experience. You may find that the only way you can even begin to process and work through your ordeal, is to break it down into smaller pieces or 'compartments'.

Gang rape survivors often express a common fear of their experiences sounding like 'dirty porn' or 'made-up horror stories.' Such heinous acts can feel 'unbelievable,' and may prevent a survivor from feeling able to speak out about their experience.

The unfortunate reality is that these things do happen. YOU know your truth, and there will be many others who will too.

When something as traumatic and harrowing as gang rape happens to you, the future might lose its relevance; you might feel like you'll never have control over your own life again. Recovery is not easy, but the fact that you have survived against terrible odds demonstrates that you have the capacity to move forward through the pain. Be understanding of yourself, and honour the courage that has led you to this point. You can make it through.

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