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Brian O’Leary, 57, from Saugerties, N.Y., says he was raped as a child by his neighbor. He is now organizing to change the statute of limitations in New York for childhood sex abuse.

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WASHINGTON – [One in five](#). The White House says by the time women reach their senior year in college, this is the proportion who have experienced sexual violence. But this number is significant for more than one reason.

One in five men and half of women are likely to face sexual violence in their lifetimes, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Women can get a lot of recovery help from groups who cater specifically to them, but men facing the same problems are largely ignored.

Lara Stemple, co-author of [“The Sexual Victimization of Men in America.”](#) said now is the time to provide them with equal help.

“We are in the same place that we were 40 years ago when we were working to eliminate sexual violence against women,” Stemple said.

[Chris Anderson](#), executive director of [Male Survivor](#), which provides support to men who have been sexually assaulted, said men have a hard time finding a place where they can tell their story.

“Almost every story I have heard has basically said there were no resources available to me that were easily available. If I were a woman, I knew where I would go,” Anderson said.

The comparison between genders is closer than most people think, which is evident in a report started by the CDC in 2010. The CDC includes more categories than the FBI or Bureau of Justice Statistics as to what constitutes sexual assault. It does a better job of including data about men and sexual assault than reports released by the FBI or Bureau of Justice Statistics.

According to the [CDC](#), of all male rape victims, about 71 percent are raped for the first time before they turn 17.

More than 18 percent of victimized men are raped by a woman. Nearly half of the men who said they were raped identified the perpetrator as an acquaintance.

In 2012, more than 63,000 cases of child sexual abuse were reported to authorities, according to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).

But a majority of cases are not reported to the police, which makes it hard for government agencies to accurately portray American victims of rape and

sexual assault, especially men.

Even if these crimes are reported, some definitions do not classify the sexual violence men face as rape.

Consensual sexual intercourse is commonly described as sex between a man and woman when the man penetrates the woman. The problem with this definition — other than the fact that it leaves out lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender couples — is that it implies men cannot be forced to penetrate and women cannot be perpetrators.

One example is the [Uniform Crime Report](#), which began in 1930. The UCR is based on voluntary information given to the FBI about crime reported to police.

Until recently, the FBI defined [“forcible” rape](#) as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” This definition meant only women could be raped.

After several groups pushed for a more up-to-date definition, the FBI changed the definition in 2013 to any kind of penetration, including oral or anal, for the first time.

David Cuthbertson, who retired in 2014 as the FBI assistant director of the [Criminal Justice Information Services](#) division, said he expects the number of reported crimes to grow to reflect more rapes of men.

“As we implement this change, the FBI is confident that the number of victims of this heinous crime will be more accurately reflected in national crime statistics,” Cuthbertson said in a statement.

This definition includes men and women, but Stemple pointed out that the FBI misses one form of sexual violence: forcing the victim to penetrate someone.

“The FBI definition is not really clear if it includes penetrating someone else or not,” Stemple said. “You just can’t tell. It’s really open to interpretation.”

The BJS has released a report annually since 1973 called the [National Crime Victimization Survey](#) using data collected by the Census Bureau. The census surveys every member of a household 12 and older in 90,000 households. Each household is interviewed every six months for a total of seven times.

The BJS and the CDC define rape in a way that includes both forced intercourse for men and women.

Being made to penetrate someone, a phrase not included in any national survey definition, is problematic. Stemple said modern-day researchers do include it in their definition of rape.

“I don’t know why they did it, but it certainly downplays male victimization in a way that’s problematic,” Stemple said.

The CDC began the [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#) in 2010. It collects surveys about sexual violence in the last 12 months and over a lifetime.

Anderson said he quotes CDC data because it’s “the only national survey that has a comprehensive review of all forms of sexual violence.”

Brian O’Leary, 57, of Saugerties, N.Y., said he was sexually victimized and raped from age 12 to 17. But he said no one took notice of what was happening because “it was so far out of everyone’s reality.”

He said he is still traumatized by what happened to him and battles flashbacks every day.

“People have to stop pretending it doesn’t happen in your town,” said O’Leary, who is caring for his elderly mother.

In an effort to bring a voice to men who have been victimized, O’Leary is using April, [Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Month](#), to organize support in New York for a new state law: the [Child Victims Act](#). The bill would eliminate the statute of limitations for child sex abuse.

In 2013, the last year data were available for both men and women, the FBI said almost 80,000 rapes were reported, while the JusticeDepartment said more than 300,000 rapes occurred. This wide gap between rape reported to the police and reported in surveys has been clear for years.

Even though the BJS counts more sexual assaults each year than the FBI does, the sample size is not big enough to have accurate data on male victimization. Lynn Langston, a BJS statistician, said 9 percent of the men surveyed said they had been raped.

“We have more power, more reliable numbers for females,” Langston said.

Both surveys rely on sexual assault survivors to volunteer this information, which means there could be more people not coming forward, especially men who might consider their masculinity to be lost.

“It doesn’t affect the law. It’s just a definition in a category, which is important symbolically, but when it comes to actually filtering down into states, there’s still a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done,” Anderson said.

Tags: [child sexual abuse](#), [Rape](#), [sexual victimization of men](#)

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