



Sexual Violence: Risk Factors for Perpetration

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Risk factors are associated with a greater likelihood of sexual violence (SV) perpetration. They are contributing factors and may or may not be direct causes. Not everyone who is identified as “at risk” becomes a perpetrator of violence.

A combination of individual, relational, community and societal factors contribute to the risk of becoming a perpetrator of SV. Understanding these multilevel factors can help identify various opportunities for prevention.

Individual Risk Factors

- ▶▶ Alcohol and drug use
- ▶▶ Coercive sexual fantasies
- ▶▶ Impulsive and antisocial tendencies
- ▶▶ Preference for impersonal sex
- ▶▶ Hostility towards women
- ▶▶ Hypermasculinity
- ▶▶ Childhood history of sexual and physical abuse
- ▶▶ Witnessed family violence as a child

Relationship Factors

- ▶▶ Association with sexually aggressive and delinquent peers
- ▶▶ Family environment characterized by physical violence and few resources
- ▶▶ Strong patriarchal relationship or familial environment
- ▶▶ Emotionally unsupportive familial environment

Community Factors

- ▶▶ Lack of employment opportunities
- ▶▶ Lack of institutional support from police and judicial system
- ▶▶ General tolerance of sexual violence within the community
- ▶▶ Weak community sanctions against sexual violence perpetrators



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Societal Factors

- ▶▶ Poverty
- ▶▶ Societal norms that support sexual violence
- ▶▶ Societal norms that support male superiority and sexual entitlement
- ▶▶ Societal norms that maintain women's inferiority and sexual submissiveness
- ▶▶ Weak laws and policies related to gender equity
- ▶▶ High tolerance levels of crime and other forms of violence

Protective Factors for Perpetration

Protective factors may lessen the likelihood of sexual violence victimization or perpetration by buffering against risk. These factors can exist at individual, relational, community and societal levels.

Source: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html