

When Men Are Sexually Abused in the Military



Loren Elliott/Reuters

To the Editor:

Re “Men Tell Their Stories of Rape in the Service” (news article, Sept. 12):

As trauma psychologists, we thank you for shining a spotlight on the high prevalence of sexual assault of men in the military and the incredible pain associated with it.

For too long, this experience has been denied or minimized. The sexual violation of boys and men is a much bigger public health problem than previously realized. Indeed, at least one in six men is sexually abused before his 18th birthday, and this number rises to one in four across a man’s life span.

The negative mental health consequences from such terrifying violations include post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, depression, anxiety and suicidal behavior. The effects don’t stop there.

Many men live with related impairments in their relationships, finding it hard to trust or feel safe in communion with others. They largely live in silence, fearing that if they tell someone, all the negative things they think about themselves will be confirmed.

Our group at Yale is conducting a national study trying to help male sexual abuse survivors get the help they need. Healing from sexual trauma is possible, and even probable, with evidence-informed interventions.

Joan M. Cook

Amy Ellis

Dr. Cook is an associate professor at the Yale School of Medicine. Dr. Ellis is co-director of the Trauma Resolution and Integration Program at Nova Southeastern University.

Correction: Oct. 2, 2019

An earlier version of the second letter about impeachment referred imprecisely to the timing of the 1998 midterm election and the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. The House began impeachment proceedings before the election, but the formal impeachment vote came after it.

A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 2, 2019, Section A, Page 26 of the New York edition with the headline: Impeachment Today, and Lessons From the Past