

PTSD Symptoms of Sexual Abuse and Covert Cultural Sexual Abuse

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| Sexual Abuse Survivor | Covert Cultural Sexual Abuse Survivor |
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| Sexual secret about abuse | Sexual secret about homosexuality |
| Pretend nothing is wrong and abuse is not happening | Pretend nothing is wrong and pretend not to be lesbian/gay by role playing heterosexuality |
| Self-perception is hopelessly flawed | Self-perception as gay/lesbian is that you are hopelessly flawed |
| Confusion about your sexual orientation | Confusion about whether you are gay or straight |
| Self-hate and blame for what is done to you | Self-hate and blame for being gay or lesbian, resulting in internalized homophobia |
| Believing you are to blame for the abuse | Believing you are to blame for not being able to suppress same-sex desires |
| Belief that people who care for you may kill you, abandon you, or be harmed themselves | Belief that people who care for you may abandon you, shame you, or harm themselves upon learning about your homosexuality |
| Isolation from others out of fear and distrust of intimacy | Isolation from others (especially gays and lesbians) out of fear of betrayal and distrust of intimacy |
| Deadening of all feelings to avoid sexual arousal | Deadening of all feelings to avoid same-sex arousal (staying closeted) |
| Self-abuse/injury through drugs/alcohol | Self-abuse through drugs/alcohol and unsafe sex |
| Suicidal thoughts, gestures, and attempts | Suicidal thoughts, gestures, and attempts |
| Fear and avoidance of sexual arousal | Fear and avoidance of same-sex arousal |
| Displays of affection are inappropriately sexualized | Displays of affection are inappropriately sexualized (more so for gay men) |
| Becoming master of pretense and living out of integrity | Becoming master of pretense and living out of integrity, role playing heterosexuality |
| Settling for too little | Settling for too little and not expecting much as gay or lesbian |
| Short-lived and volatile relationships | Short-lived and volatile relationships before fully coming out of the closet |