

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 25, 2025

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NYPD SVU SERGEANT SHARES HIS STORY FOR THE FIRST TIME AT POWERFUL PANEL EVENT FOR MALE SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

STATEMENTS FROM ACTORS & ADVOCATES MARISKA HARGITAY, PETER HERMANN

EVENT HOSTED BY THE MAYOR'S OFFICE TO END DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (ENDGBV), NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT (NYPD) AND THE MOUNT SINAI SEXUAL ASSAULT AND VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM (SAVI).

NEW YORK, NY – NYPD Sgt. Kevin Fulham today for the first time shared his story as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse and how it informs his work in the Special Victims Unit. He spoke as part of a powerful panel on male survivors of childhood sexual abuse—a routinely underreported topic that often sits in the shadows.

Sgt. Fulham bravely joined fellow panelists at Queens Borough Hall to uplift male survivors, cultivate dialogue, hold space for healing and champion sustained advocacy. The panel delved into lived experiences of male survivors, barriers to disclosure, the critical need for trauma-informed responses and the transformative power of community and ongoing advocacy.

[>> CLICK HERE FOR PICTURES FROM THE PANEL EVENT <<](#)

Forty-three percent of men experience some form of sexual harassment or assault in their lifetimes, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, and 51 percent of male survivors say they experienced an attempted or completed rape prior to age 18. Newly released NYPD data show there have been 1,204 sex crime complaints since 2020 in which the victim was a 17-year-old male or younger.

New York is leading the way in supporting male survivors by modernizing its laws to be more gender inclusive. The *Rape is Rape Act*, enacted in September 2024, broadened the legal definition of rape to include not only nonconsensual vaginal penetration but also oral and anal contact. As a result, 22 percent of reported assaults this year have been directly tied to the expanded definition. At the same time, rapes defined under the previous, narrower statute have decreased by five percent. These shifts suggest that legal reform not only helps validate more survivors' experiences but also promotes clearer reporting and accountability. By recognizing the full spectrum of harm, regardless of gender identity, New York is setting a precedent for inclusive justice.

“It’s taken me most of my life to reach a place where I can speak openly about the things that were done to me and the impact those actions have had on my life,” **said Sgt. Kevin Fulham of the NYPD’s Special Victims Unit.** “So, to be part of a forum like this, to speak of my experience both personally and professionally, and to possibly help someone else find their voice or to help one of the supporters attending gain deeper insight, is an honor and a responsibility that is both humbling and deeply meaningful to me.”

“As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I’m proud to join the conversation about this difficult issue,” **said panelist Peter Hermann, actor, writer, advocate and board member of the Joyful Heart Foundation.** “Can it be hard to talk about? Of course. Is it especially challenging for men? Sure. Should we go ahead and talk about it anyway? Absolutely.”

“The barriers to sharing experiences of childhood sexual abuse can be especially high for men,” **said Mariska Hargitay, actor, advocate, Founder & President of The Joyful Heart Foundation and Hermann’s wife.** “It is my fervent hope that we as a society learn to lower these barriers—and until they’re lowered, that men break through them, speak boldly and walk together towards healing.”

“We must remember that anyone, of any gender identity, can suffer the devastating impacts of sexual violence,” **said Saloni Sethi, Commissioner of the NYC Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.** “Male-identifying survivors face complex barriers to reporting, including social stigma, rigid gender norms and other systemic challenges. ENDGBV is committed to reducing these barriers and supporting survivors of all genders. The courage of the survivors who spoke today exemplifies the progress we can make when we collaborate with our partners at the NYPD and Mount Sinai.”

“It is of the utmost importance that we hear from all those who have been impacted by childhood sexual violence because, simply put, abuse has no gender. On behalf of ACS, I commend the survivors for courageously sharing their experiences today with members of the public and I thank ENDGBV for lifting up their voices. We will continue to work closely with the NYPD, ENDGBV, the Child Advocacy Centers and others to keep NYC children safe and make sure all survivors are supported,” **said Commissioner Jess Dannhauser of the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS).**

“The numbers make it painfully clear – instances of sexual abuse amongst male survivors are vastly underreported. This event is a critical step in breaking that silence,” **said Kathleen Baer, Director of the NYPD’s Special Victims Unit.** “Too often, young male victims internalize their trauma, believing they must shoulder the weight of the abuse alone. That silence can last for years, even decades, and it’s time we changed that. At the NYPD, we stand with all survivors. We are committed to ensuring that male survivors are seen, heard, and supported – not just in seeking justice, but in finding the resources they need to heal.”

“It is critical we highlight the unfair burden of shame and self-blame survivors of childhood sexual abuse often carry, and the additional stigma that is attached to being a male survivor of sexual violence,” **said Angela Fernandez, Assistant Director of The Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI) Program.** “The courageous panelists who spoke today exemplified the importance of collaboration across systems and communities, to ensure male survivors of sexual violence are heard, believed, and have access to compassionate, trauma-informed support services.”

About the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

The Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) develops policies and programs, provides training and prevention education, conducts research and evaluations, performs community outreach. We collaborate with City agencies and community stakeholders to ensure access to inclusive services for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence (GBV). GBV can include intimate partner and family violence, elder abuse, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. ENDGBV also operates the [New York City Family Justice Centers](#), co-located multidisciplinary service centers providing vital social services, civil legal,

and criminal justice assistance for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence and their children—all under one roof. For more information, visit nyc.gov/ENDGBV. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the New York City Police Department

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) is the largest and one of the oldest municipal police departments in the United States, with approximately 36,000 officers and 19,000 civilian employees. The NYPD was established in 1845, and today, is responsible for policing an 8.5-million-person city, by performing a wide variety of public safety, law enforcement, traffic management, counterterrorism, and emergency response roles. In the past 25 years, the department has achieved spectacular declines in both violent and property crime, ensuring that New York City has the lowest overall rate of major crimes in the 25 largest cities in the country. The NYPD is divided into major bureaus for enforcement, investigations, and administration. It has 78 patrol precincts with patrol officers and detectives covering the entire city. The department also has 12 transit districts to police the subway system and its nearly six-million daily riders, and nine police service areas (PSAs) to patrol the city's public housing developments, which are home to more than 400,000 residents. Additionally, uniformed civilians serve as traffic safety agents on the city's busy streets and highways, and as school safety agents, protecting public schools and the over-a-million students who attend them.

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