

#MeToo: Why women delay reporting sexual assault

By Jane Salmon

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Victims have no energy for blame or public accusations because society only rewards confident, hopeful, positive and compliant women with an extra layer of confidence, writes [Jane Salmon](#).

THE POINT IS, for a woman, the experience of sexual assault is very damaging because it is about power over life and death, not the sometimes pleasurable experience of sex.

Men miss that. How can all that is celebrated as wonderful about sex suddenly be seen as damaging and malicious? Many men minimise the negatives of sex, anyway. Men rarely experience untoward aspects of sex themselves. And many women tolerate one-sided male sexual gratification so politely. They would, therefore, prefer to ignore the messaging and practical implications of it, too.

An assault victim, on the other hand, is likely to be feeling psychologically alienated from much of society from the moment the assault occurs, regardless of her own backstory. Her

life has been threatened. Her agency was taken away. Her choice was removed.

At the same time, she is required to continue to merge into and operate as a compliant member of what remains a fairly male-dominated society.

Suppressing the insights arising from the trauma – so that one can behave as patriarchal society deems a conventional woman should – takes a lot of energy.

Why do sexual assault victims stay silent? Psychotherapist [@JHammerslough1](#) tackles that and the culture of victim-blaming in this timely interview. [#WhyIDidntReport pic.twitter.com/yEkjKhz92i](#)

— Brut America (@brutamerica)
[September 26, 2018](#)

The fear, revulsion, disgust, self-blame and loathing that the abuse has triggered may leak out as problem behaviours.

Success becomes harder. In fact, everything becomes harder.

This is in fact, the point of the abuse. Mediocre men who rape, with power and competence issues, don't want actualised women to compete with. So they break or diminish as many as they dare.

They work off their inferiority in animalistic attacks that neutralise and terrorise almost all women.

A woman who felt whole, safe and intact before an assault is intent on recovering that previous self. That is where her energy goes. She wants to recover her faith and optimism.

She initially has no energy for blame or public accusations because society only rewards confident, hopeful, positive and compliant women, with an extra layer of confidence. Concealing the damage and suppressing the trauma-triggered insights takes all the survivor's energy.

Victimhood is never rewarded by the legal process or by a male-dominated society.

It's unfunny. Victim blaming and self-blaming goes on and on. Even other women recoil from those who are not blithe, confident, self-trusting, successful, powerful or carefree.

And so we conceal.

Jane Salmon did report her sexual assault. You can follow Jane on Twitter [@jsalmonupstream](https://twitter.com/jsalmonupstream).

Playing the victim...
[#ChristineBlaseyFord](https://twitter.com/ChristineBlaseyFord)
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pic.twitter.com/zMsAv2yEF6

— Adam Zyglis
([@adamzyglis](https://twitter.com/adamzyglis)) [September 28, 2018](https://twitter.com/AdamZyglis/status/1004444444444444444)

Kavanaugh showed what is becoming the playbook against [#MeToo](https://twitter.com/MeToo): Focus on the suffering the accusation is causing the accused, activate the empathy of other men for what he and his family are going through.
<https://t.co/xpb44gTiFS>

— Ezra Klein
([@ezraklein](https://twitter.com/ezraklein))
[September 28, 2018](https://twitter.com/EzraKlein/status/1004444444444444444)