

How does IPSV Affect Victims?

When you are raped/sexually assaulted by someone you share a life, home, and family with, you experience profound psychological injuries. The victim is not only violated sexually, but their intimate relationship has been betrayed as well. Many victims of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence have to cope with a deeply seeded lack of trust in their partners, acute fear, self-doubt, and the overwhelming reality that the sexual attack is likely to happen again. Research has shown that survivors of marital rape are much more likely to be victimized on multiple occasions. These facts are coupled with the reality that most Americans view marital rape as being “less harmful” than other forms of sexual violence, so a survivor may experience limited support from others. Because victims of IPSV usually share homes and children with the offender, they are often unlikely to report rape or other forms of abuse and are more likely to have been raped multiple times.

IPSV and the Law

IPSV is illegal in all 50 states. A perpetrator of IPSV can be charged in the same manner as other sexual assault cases. The interview and examination process is the same as with other types of sexual assault.

If you are a victim of IPSV...
Contact Support Within Reach for a confidential listening ear, learn more about options and resources, support group offerings, and more.

Available Services:

Crisis Intervention ~ Ongoing Support
Assistance in obtaining Protection Orders
~ Information ~ Referrals ~
Support Groups ~ Follow-up Assistance



Itasca County Office:

1325 4th Street NW
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218.326.5008 • 866.747.5008

Aitkin County Office:

204 2nd Street NW
Aitkin, MN 56431
218.927.6266 • 866.747.5008

Funding Sources:



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*Intimate Partner
Sexual Violence
(IPSV)*



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What is Intimate Partner Sexual Violence?

Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV) is a term used to describe nonconsensual sexual acts between an individual and their spouse, ex-spouse, intimate, or long-term partner. These sexual acts can include: forced or coerced intercourse, anal or oral sex, forced sexual behavior with other individuals, and other unwanted, painful, and humiliating sexual activities. It is rape if your partner uses force, threats, or intimidation to get you to submit to sexual acts. IPSV is often part of relationships in which other types of violence or battering are co-occurring. IPSV can occur in dating relationships or long-term cohabitating relationships. Sexual violence is not about sex or sexual orientation, it is a crime of violence motivated by a need for power and control. Sex is used as a weapon to humiliate and degrade the victim.

Types of IPSV

- **Battering Rape** - Involves forced sex combined with beatings. This type of sexual assault is primarily motivated by anger toward the victim.
- **Force-Only Rape** - The offender uses only as much force as necessary to coerce their victim into sex. This type of sexual assault is primarily motivated by the need for power over the victim.
- **Obsessive Rape** - The partner's/abuser's sexual interests run toward the strange and perverse, and they are willing to use force to carry these activities out.

(Source; [License to Rape: Sexual Abuse of Wives](#) By D. Finklehor & K. Yllo

Myths and Facts

MYTH: IPSV isn't as serious as other forms of sexual assault, its just one partner not being in the mood and the other partner insisting.

FACT: IPSV is just as violent, just as degrading, and just as traumatic as other forms of sexual assault. IPSV can be perpetrated with knives, at gunpoint, repeatedly, brutally, and in front of others. Most often it is the final violent act in a series of physical and emotional abuse.

MYTH: IPSV isn't offensive. After all, they have had sexual intercourse before. What's one more time?

FACT: In IPSV the victim not only has to live with the memory of what happened, but also the offender. Many victims, trapped in a reign of terror, experience repeated sexual assaults over a number of years. The trust and intimacy in a marriage is destroyed when the person who has promised to love and protect, and on whom one may be economically dependent, commits such a brutal and violent crime.

MYTH: When someone marries, consent to sexual intercourse is part of the marriage contract.

FACT: Sexual expression of love is one thing. Forced, brutalized sex is another. No one consents to violence by marrying, nor do they waive their right to protection. No one deserves to be raped regardless of the situation!

MYTH: If prosecutions are allowed for IPSV, a lot of innocent partners/spouses will have sexual assault charges filed against them by angry, vengeful spouses who hope to bargain for a better settlement in a divorce action.

FACT: This myth is built on the ill-founded belief that people are innately vengeful and willing to go through the torture to a courtroom trial in order to get back at their spouses. There are many other types of complaints which a spouse could file in retaliation that would require less public exposure and trauma. Further, our legal systems have built-in mechanisms to determine the merits of a complaint. Police investigators, prosecutor discretion, and jury deliberation are employed to learn if a criminal charge is true or false. Why should IPSV be treated differently?

MYTH: IPSV is simply one persons word against another. It would be difficult to prosecute and hard to prove.

FACT: All forms of sexual violence are generally one persons word against another and are also difficult to prove, but nevertheless can be prosecuted. SWR can advocate on your behalf throughout the reporting/court process.

A Victim of IPSV may experience the following symptoms:

- ◆ A sense of betrayal
- ◆ Rage
- ◆ Shame/humiliation
- ◆ Fear
- ◆ Self-Blame: victims of IPSV may experience heightened forms of self-blame for being in or staying in the abusive relationship.
- ◆ Loss of control
- ◆ Fear of not being believed
- ◆ Somatic responses, i.e.: pain, aches
- ◆ Sleep loss
- ◆ Nightmares/flashbacks
- ◆ Heightened fear/anxiety (i.e.: post traumatic stress disorder, and disassociation)
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Fear of being intimate
- ◆ Emotional numbing
- ◆ Generalized fear of things that remind him/her of the sexual assault
- ◆ Heightened responses at the anniversary time of the assault
- ◆ The victim's sense of trust and judgment is strongly effected, because the victim chose to be intimate with their partner on other occasions