



- Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services
- Strategies to End Gender-Based Violence
- Crime Victims Services

Facts about Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse

How do domestic violence and sexual assault intersect?

Perpetrators who are physically violent toward their intimate partners are often sexually abusive as well. Victims who are both physically and sexually abused are more likely to be injured or killed than victims who experience one form of abuse. Abusers assault people of all genders, races, ages, social classes, and ethnicities. Women who are disabled, pregnant, or attempting to leave their abusers are at greatest risk for intimate partner rape.

Did You Know?

- 1 in 5 women will be raped in her lifetime.
- Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lives.
- Intimate partner sexual assault and rape are used to intimidate, control, and demean victims of domestic violence.
- Intimate partner sexual assault is more likely than stranger or acquaintance assault to cause physical injury.
- 14%-25% of women are sexually assaulted by intimate partners during their relationship.
- Between 40 and 45 percent of women in abusive relationships will also be sexually assaulted during the course of the relationship.
- Over half of women raped by an intimate partner were sexually assaulted multiple times by the same partner.
- Women who are sexually abused by intimate partners report more risk factors for intimate partner homicides than non-sexually abused women.
- Women who are sexually abused by intimate partners suffer severe and long-lasting physical and mental health problems, similar to those of other rape victims. They have higher rates of depression

and anxiety than women who were either raped by a non-intimate partner or physically abused, but not sexually abused by an intimate partner.

Marital Rape

- 18 percent of female victims of spousal rape say their children witnessed the crime.
- Between 10 and 14 percent of married women will be raped at some point during their marriages.
- Only 36 percent of all rape victims ever report the crime to the police. The percentage of married women who report a spousal rape to the police is even lower. Marital rape is the most underreported form of sexual assault.
- Until 1976, state laws specifically exempted spousal rape from general rape laws. In 1976, Nebraska was the first state to legally recognize nonconsensual intercourse with a spouse as rape. By 1993, all 50 states had either completely or partially repealed their spousal rape exemptions. However, even now, some states still have some form of spousal rape exemptions, and it is often legally considered a different, lesser crime than non-spousal rape.
- Many Americans do not believe marital rape is actually rape.

How to Help

- Encourage primary care physicians and OB/GYNs in your community to screen women for signs of physical and sexual violence and ask if they are in violent or abusive relationships during regular check-ups.
- Demand state legislators update rape laws to include marital rape rather than considering marital rape a different crime.
- Work with local schools, religious youth groups, and other youth-oriented programs to teach about healthy sexuality and healthy relationships.
- Ask local schools and universities to address the issue of sexual violence in their classrooms and through victim assistance programs.
- Ask your members of Congress to support funding for direct surveys and programs created in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
- Volunteer at your local rape crisis center or state sexual assault coalition. Visit the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at www.ncadv.org, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence at www.naesv.org, or find a local program at www.Domesticshelters.org to learn about volunteer opportunities in your community.