

Why is Intimate Partner Sexual Violence so damaging?

Victim/survivors of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence have not only been sexually violated, but have also been betrayed in their intimate relationship, which can have a profound psychological effect.

Victim/survivors experience a lack of trust in their partner and often a lack of confidence in themselves as they doubt their own ability to choose someone trustworthy.

The reality is that the sexual violence is very likely to happen again. Research has shown that victim/survivors of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence are more likely to be victimised on multiple occasions than victims of other kinds of adult rape.

Many members of the community still believe that Intimate Partner Sexual Violence is less serious and less harmful than stranger rape, so victim/survivors may receive limited support from others around them.

For many people, sexual violence is a difficult subject to talk about. It is hard to admit that the person you love is hurting you sexually.

If you have experienced Intimate Partner Sexual Violence, what can you do?

- Try and get to a place where you feel physically safe.
- Talk to a trusted friend about what has happened or telephone a crisis support service.
- Telephone a Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence Service for information and options about safe accommodation, medical and legal responses and consider counselling with trained professionals at these services.
- Seek medical assistance from your doctor or the nearest hospital if you have injuries or medical concerns including pregnancy or STI's.
- Think about reporting to the police, you can take a friend or support person with you if it helps you feel more confident.
- Find safe ways to express your feelings, don't hurt yourself or others.
- Do NOT blame yourself - no one deserves to be raped, no matter what the circumstances.

STATEWIDE HELP LINES IN QLD

Sexual Assault	1800 010 120
DV Connect Womensline	1800 811 811

GOLD COAST SERVICES

GC Centre Against Sexual Violence	
www.stopsexualviolence.com	5591 1164
Domestic Violence Prevention Centre	
www.domesticviolence.com.au	5532 9000

INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE



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What is Intimate Partner Sexual Violence?

Intimate Partner Sexual Violence is the aspect of Domestic Violence that is least recognised and least talked about.

This term is used to describe sexual activity without consent between intimate partners, whether married or not and in either heterosexual or same sex relationships.

It includes all forms of rape, such as forced vaginal, anal or oral sex and other unwanted, painful or humiliating sexual acts. It is rape if your partner uses force, threats or intimidation to get you to submit to any sexual act.

The law and Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence is a crime, regardless of the relationship between victim and offender. It is illegal in all states of Australia for a husband to rape his wife. Marital exemption was removed from the Criminal Code in Queensland in 1989.

A victim/survivor of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence can report to the police in the same manner as all other sexual assault cases. This involves making a statement to a police officer, and then any interview, examination and investigation processes that follow are the same as for other sexual crimes. If the alleged offender is charged, there will be a committal hearing, and if the Magistrate thinks there is sufficient evidence, the case is sent to trial before a judge and jury.

Myths and Facts

Myth ✗ When you are in a relationship, it's not really rape, it's just sex one more time with someone you know.

Fact ✓ It is still rape regardless of the relationship. Sexual activity without consent is NOT sex, it is a sex CRIME.

Myth ✗ Sexual violence does not happen between same sex partners.

Fact ✓ Sexual violence can and does happen in same sex intimate relationships. In any relationship each partner has the right to say yes or no to any sexual act every time.

Myth ✗ Women always have to obey their husband or partner's sexual demands.

Fact ✓ You do not have a duty to engage in sexual activity when you are in any relationship. Marriage does not mean that one person becomes the property of another person. No one consents to violence by marrying, nor do they give up their right to protection. The marriage licence is NOT a licence to rape. Rape in marriage is a crime in Australia.

Myth ✗ Rape by a partner is not as serious as rape by a stranger.

Fact ✓ Rape by a partner is just as serious and often more traumatic than stranger rape because trust and intimacy are destroyed when a partner commits such a crime. No one should force you to do something sexually that you don't want to do.

Common feelings and reactions after experiencing Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

- Shock
- Disbelief
- Anger
- Hatred
- Overwhelmed
- Guilt
- Confusion
- Self blame
- Shame / Embarrassment
- Fear
- Sleep disturbances
- Depression
- Lack of trust
- Alone
- Not wanting to be touched
- Powerless

Remember everyone is different and you may have other feelings and reactions.