



Welcome to Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition

committed to the prevention and elimination of domestic and sexual violence

Sexual Assault in Intimate Relationships Information Sheet

Sexual assault in an intimate relationship remains a “hidden crime” with many survivors not identifying forced or coerced sex as sexual assault. In 1993, marital rape became a crime in all 50 states, in at least one section of the sexual offense codes.¹

Prevalence

- 7.7% of U.S. women reported that they had been raped by an intimate partner in their lifetime.²
- 76% of the women who were raped and/or physically assaulted since age 18 were assaulted by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner, or date.³
- 45.9% of the battered women who reported abuse also reported being forced into sex by their intimate partners.⁴
- In one study, over half of marital rape survivors surveyed experienced more than one sexual assault in a 6-month reference period before the survey.⁵
- Approximately half (51.2%) of the women raped by an intimate partner said they were victimized multiple times by that same partner. Overall, female rape victims averaged 4.5 rapes by the same partner.²
- Although sexual assault is perhaps the most understudied topic of same-sex violence, clinical work and advocacy efforts show that lesbians and gay men endure the same types of abuse that heterosexual women suffer, including sexual assault.⁶

Effects

- Compared to other sexual assault victims, marital rape victims are more likely to be injured or seriously assaulted, but less likely to seek medical help.⁵
- Women who were raped since age 18 were nearly twice as likely as their male counterparts to report an injury other than the rape itself.³
- Research indicates that women who are raped by their husbands are just as likely to experience a variety of psychological reactions as women who are raped by strangers or acquaintances.⁷

¹Bergen, R. Marital Rape. VAWnet. www.vawnet.org. 1999.

²Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. July 2000.

³Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. November 1998.

⁴Campbell, J. and Soeken, K. (1999). Forced Sex and Intimate Partner Violence: Effects on Women's Risk and Women's Health. *Violence Against Women*, 5, 1017-1035.

⁵Mahoney, P. (1999). High Rape Chronicity and Low Rates of Help-Seeking Among Wife Rape Survivors in a Nonclinical Sample. *Violence Against Women*, 5, 993-1016.

⁶Elliott, P. Shattering Illusions: Same-Sex Domestic Violence. In C. Renzetti & C. Miley (Eds.) *Violence in Gay and Lesbian Domestic Partnerships*. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc. 1996.

⁷Monson, C., Byrd, G. & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J. To Have and to Hold: Perceptions of Marital Rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 11, 410-424. 1996.