

When the Rapist is Her Partner

AN INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE TRAINING WORKSHOP

QUICK IPSV TIPS FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT ORGANIZATIONS

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- IPSV is not either sexual assault or domestic violence, it is “both/and” therefore both Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence organisations must be prepared to respond. It can be harmful to assume that IPSV is just another form of domestic violence ¹
- IPSV concurrent with physical violence has the potential to be lethal.² When the perpetrator is the survivor’s partner, always screen for other types of violence
- IPSV can have longer and more serious impact than other types of sexual assault ³
- IPSV survivors often fear in a similar way to other rape survivors that they will be killed ⁴
- Survivors of IPSV need validation that what happened to them is real rape/sexual assault and will be taken seriously. Use their terminology first and then reframe and say “what you have described is actually rape/sexual assault” OR “what you have described could be legally defined as rape/sexual assault”⁵
- Familiarize yourself with why women often don’t leave violent partners
- Be prepared to reframe issues of shame, for example feeling foolish for staying in the relationship or accommodating the sexual abuse
- Understand that the survivor may still carry positive feelings for the perpetrator
- Refer the survivor to a domestic violence service for safety and other issues, but let her know you are still available to assist her in dealing with the sexual assault
- Network with other systems and organizations that can be of assistance to the survivor
- Make some domestic violence training an integral part of sexual assault worker training and vice versa. “Regardless of which support agency is approached, the first door must be the right door for survivors of violence”⁶
- Provide outreach – clearly name IPSV and invite survivors to seek help with your service.

¹McOrmond-Plummer, L. (2008), ‘Considering the differences: IPSV in sexual assault and domestic violence discourse’, *In Intimate partner sexual violence: Sexual assault in the context of domestic violence* (2nd ed.). Olympia, WA: Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. [Electronic version available at <http://www.wcsap.org/sites/www.wcsap.org/files/uploads/documents/IPSV2008.pdf>]

² Campbell, J.C. and Alford, P. (1989) "The dark consequences of marital rape." *American Journal of Nursing* 89, 946-949.

³ Finkelhor, D. & Yllo, K. (1985). *License to rape: Sexual abuse of wives*. New York: The Free Press.

⁴ Finkelhor, D. & Yllo, K. (1985). *License to rape: Sexual abuse of wives*. New York: The Free Press.

⁵ Parkinson D. and Cowan S. (2008) *Raped by a Partner: Nowhere to Go, No-one to Tell*. Victoria: Women’s Health Goulburn North East.

⁶ Macleod, D. (2014), “Real Not Rare – Cross-training for sexual assault and Domestic Violence workers to understand, recognize and respond to intimate partner sexual violence”, in L. McOrmond-Plummer, P. Easta, and J.Y. Levy-Peck (eds.) *Intimate Partner Sexual Violence A Multidisciplinary Guide to Improving Services and Support for Survivors of Rape and Abuse*, London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers,