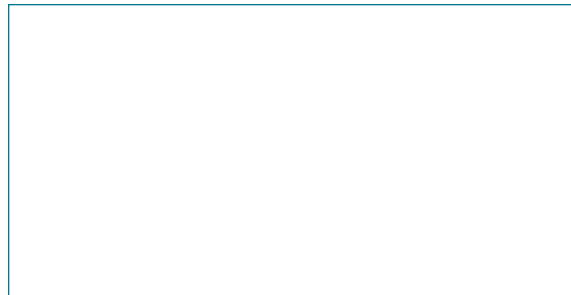


Understanding The Issue

- Marital Rape is the term used to describe sexual acts committed without a wife's consent and/or against her will by the woman's husband. He may use physical force, threats of force to her or another person, or implied harm based on prior assaults, causing the woman to fear that physical force will be used if she resists.
- Researchers who have spoken to husband-rapists conclude that they rape to express anger, and to reinforce power, dominance, and control over their wives and families.
- Stereotypes about women and sex such as women enjoy forced sex, women say "no" when they really mean "yes," and it's a wife's duty to have sex continue to be reinforced in our culture. Such stereotypes mislead men into believing they should ignore a woman's protests. These stereotypes also mislead women into believing they must have sent the wrong signals. Women blame themselves for unwanted sexual encounters, believing they are bad wives for not enjoying sexual encounters, or believing they are bad wives for not enjoying sex against their will.

***No One Deserves To Be Raped.
Rape Is Never The Victim's Fault.***

Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault



This brochure is funded through the WC Griffith Foundation and the Rape Prevention Education funds through the Indiana Department of Health from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention NCIPC.

INCASA is an equal opportunity/equal access organizations.

To connect with the crisis line
in your area, call:

1-800-656-HOPE

(Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network [RAINN])

For more information:

INCASA
55 Monument Circle, Suite 1224
Indianapolis, IN 46204

317-423-0233

1-800-691-2272

email: incasa@incasa.org
website: www.incasa.org

Family Wellness Helpline
Indiana State Department of Health
V/TDD 1-800-433-0746

Marital
Rape



"Marital rape is a husband forcing his wife to have sex against her will and/or without her consent."



Facts & Statistics

- Fourteen percent of married women report they were raped by their spouse. This percentage probably underestimates the true prevalence of marital rape. (Russell)
- Of reporting women, 23 percent reported rape and sexual assault as the only abuse in the marriage. (Russell)
- As with rapists in general, the marital rapist is not a “crazed sex fiend.” He is generally a man who sees sex as a solution to all marital problems, as well as the source of validation for masculine identity.
- Marital rape is not always a part of battered women’s syndrome. However, at least half of all battered women are also survivors of marital rape. (Russell)
- Adult female survivors of marital rape are in a higher percentage bracket to have been sexually molested as children. (Lystad, Frieze, Russell)
- A national survey found 10 percent of all sexual assault cases reported by women involved a husband or ex-husband attacker. (Rape in America, 1992, National Victim Center)
- Under at least one section of the sexual offense codes (usually those code sections regarding force), marital rape is a crime in all 50 states.

Types Of Marital Rape

- **Force Only Rape:** The term “force only rape” describes a husband who uses threats and violence only to the degree necessary to coerce sex. This type of rape usually occurs in relationships where violence is predominately verbal, and/or in relationships where violence occurs only/primarily in sexual interactions.
- **Battering Rape:** When beatings and rape are combined, it’s referred to as “battering rape.” The sexual abuse is part of the general pattern of psychological, verbal, emotional, economic, and physical abuse. Often the rape occurs as a continuation of the physical assault. In some cases, the physical violence continues during sex, and the sexual act is also violent.
- **Obsessive Rape:** The most openly sadistic form of rape is called “obsessive rape.” The abuser seems obsessed with sex, and the act itself is violent. In these relationships, the abuser may use violence to become aroused. (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985)

The Effects

Studies indicate that women are especially traumatized by a rape at the hands of a spouse. They are violated by someone with whom they share their lives, homes, and possibly children. In addition to violation of their bodies, they are faced with a betrayal of trust and intimacy.

Marital rape victims are more likely than stranger and acquaintance rape victims to experience multiple rape incidents. Marital rape victims suffer long-lasting physical and psychological injuries that are as severe or more severe than victims of stranger rape experience. Effects include: humiliation, fear, guilt, blaming themselves, injuries such as black eyes, and broken bones.

Victims of marital rape may remain in the marriage for a variety of reasons. These include: fear of more violence, loss of financial security, a low sense of self-worth, and false hope that their partner will change.

What Can Help

For the victim:

- Friends and family can be a great source of comfort and support.
- Shelters can provide a temporary safe place to stay. Shelter staff also may help by pointing out options to consider.
- Hotlines offer immediate support and referrals to social service agencies.
- Legal aid services can offer low-cost or free legal information or assistance.
- Support groups can be helpful, allowing victims to talk with other people dealing with partner abuse.

In the community:

- Express your support for strong enforcement of current laws and for new legislation to combat domestic and sexual violence.
- Support educational and prevention programs on local, state, and national levels.

At home:

- Set an example for your children. Teach them with your actions that violence and abuse are not part of family life.
- Get help if you and your partner can’t resolve problems. It isn’t always possible to solve your differences on your own. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If necessary, get help on your own.
- Resolve conflicts by discussing. Talking isn’t always easy, but the results are worth the effort.