

Factors Impacting Understandings of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

Our Current Understanding

Understanding and responding to IPSV can be complex. There are many inter-related factors that work together to shape the larger issue and many important facts to keep in mind. Here is what we have learned so far from survivors, practitioners and researchers:

- IPSV impacts physical and mental health
- IPSV is an expression of intimate partner violence
- Some survivors do not define their experience of IPSV as assault
- Survivors of IPSV are less likely to seek help than survivors of other forms of intimate partner violence
- IPSV often emotional coercion only
- Many forms of IPSV are NOT criminalized (e.g. telling others intimate details about sexual relationship without partner's agreement)
- IPSV can be part of a larger coercive control
- The relationship between the survivor and perpetrator of IPSV can create confusion or uncertainty
- Societal norms, attitudes, and belief affect experience of and responses to IPSV
- IPSV differs from non-sexual physical and emotional intimate partner violence
- When IPSV involves physical violence, frequently results in bodily harm
- There is limited research on IPSV, especially among diverse groups
- Sexual violence can – and does – happen in all types of intimate relationships
- Intimate partner and sexual violence are often framed as separate issues – but they are not always