

Intimate Partner Sexual Violence: Myths and Facts



- ✚ Since 1983, it has been a crime in Canada to sexually assault one's spouse. Yet intimate partner sexual abuse continues to occur and remains a deeply misunderstood form of domestic violence.
- ✚ According to the Centre for Court Innovation (n.d.) “intimate partner sexual abuse involves forcing, threatening, coercing, demanding, or pressuring an intimate partner to commit sexual acts” (para.4)
- ✚ A 2015 survey from the Canadian Women's Foundation found that **1 in 10** Canadians believe consent is not required or don't know if it's required between spouses or long-term partners (retrieved from: <https://www.canadianwomen.org/>)
- ✚ Cultural myths and norms about sexual abuse and gender roles in relationships perpetuates the widely held false belief that marriage or a long term relationship implies on going consent.



About Intimate Partner Sexual Assault

Myth: Marriage implies consent. When individuals are married or in a long term relationship they are in a state of continuous consent to sexual activity with their spouse or partner.

Fact: It is legally required to obtain consent before any sexual contact with another person regardless of relationship status. According to Canadian law consent should be both positive, explicit and ongoing (e.g. continues during the sexual activity).

Myth: Individual who are married or in a long term relationship cannot credibly claim rape if they have had consensual sex with their partner following or prior to the assault.

Fact: Regardless of the relationship status consent may be revoked, or reinstated at any point in time as long as it is given freely

Myth: Individuals may fabricate stories of spousal sexual assault to gain an upper hand in custody and access disputes.

Fact: In 2017, there were 28, 551 incident of sexual assault reported to the police, out of this number only 14% of sexual assaults reported to police were classified as “unfounded” (Statistic Canada, 2018, Unfounded criminal incident in Canada, 2017).

If you require additional information, support or counselling services please contact the Elmwood Community Resource Centre at **204-982-1720**