

REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES & IPV

How are reproductive choices related to intimate partner violence (IPV)?

Intimate partner violence is characterized by physical, sexual or emotional abuse that is used to control a current or former partner or spouse. It may also include coercion or threats made against a partner's reproductive health or reproductive decision-making. Abusive partners may also force victim-survivors to become pregnant against their will, force sex and/or interfere with the use of birth control methods. These tactics are referred to as "reproductive coercion." Many people are not aware of this component of intimate partner violence.

Reproductive coercion includes the following behaviors:

- Pressure to become pregnant early in the relationship or before the partner feels ready.
- Threatening to leave a partner if they do not get pregnant;
- Pressuring a partner to have an abortion;
- Intentionally exposing a partner to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or HIV;
- Attempting to impregnate a partner against their will, or forcing a partner to impregnate them;
- Intentionally interfering with a partner's birth control; and
- Threatening violence or acting violent if a partner does not comply with the abuser's wishes regarding contraception or the decision whether to terminate/continue a pregnancy.

IS THIS COMMON?

Intimate partner violence is a costly and pervasive problem, and women of reproductive age—in particular those ages 16 to 24 are at the greatest risk.

- As many as two thirds of adolescents who become pregnant were sexually or physically abused some time in their lives.
- A study of over 450 adolescent mothers on public assistance found that 51 percent experienced some form of birth control sabotage by a partner, and two-thirds of that 51 percent had experienced IPV at the hands of their partner(s).
- Forty percent of pregnant women who have been exposed to abuse report that their pregnancy was unintended, compared to just eight percent of non-abused women.
- Women disclosing physical violence are nearly three times more likely to experience a sexually transmitted infection than women who don't disclose physical abuse.



Source: "The Facts on Reproductive Health and Violence Against Women." Futures Without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund).

GET HELP

If you recognize any of the behaviors relating to reproductive coercion, there is help available. There are people in your community (advocates & health care professionals) that can offer support and assistance. No one deserves to be hurt, physically, emotionally, or sexually. You did not make the other person hurt you. It is not your fault and you are not alone!

Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline to locate a community-based advocacy program in your area and ask to speak with an advocate. All services are premised on support, empowerment, options and safety for you and your children.

If you are a health care professional, you can make a difference...

Clinical professionals can discuss intimate partner violence and ask their patients:

- Has your partner ever used verbal demands, threats and physical violence in an attempt to force you to become pregnant?
- Has your choice of birth control ever been sabotaged by someone flushing birth control pills down the toilet, intentionally breaking condoms and/or removing contraceptive rings or patches?

If the response is "yes" offer suggestions on "invisible" methods of pregnancy protection and forms of emergency contraception. Conducting this brief screening for reproductive coercion, referring patients to community-based advocacy programs and educating them about healthy relationships may be significantly reduce the odds of abuse.

IF YOU NEED HELP, PLEASE CALL:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.SAFE or 1.800.799.7233
1.800.787.3224 (TTY)
www.thehotline.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1.800.656.4673
www.rainn.org

Hotlines provide crisis intervention, information, referrals and safety planning. Both hotlines are toll-free, confidential, anonymous and operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Se habla español

www.stoprelationshipabuse.org
www.preventchildabuse.org
www.loveisrespect.org (chat or text)

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Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCEDSV) is a statewide organization that was formed in 1980 to work toward the elimination of domestic and sexual violence against all persons and the empowerment of women and children.

NCEDSV helps Nevada's communities respond creatively and effectively to the needs of violence victims by providing information to service providers in the fields of domestic and sexual violence. In addition, NCEDSV provides education and advocacy to the general public and actively educates legislators on issues of concern to Nevada families.



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"CONTROLLING AND VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS COME IN MANY FORMS INCLUDING UNWANTED OR MISTIMED PREGNANCIES"

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www.futureswithoutviolence.org