

Pregnancy and Domestic Violence Homicide

Washington State Domestic Violence Fatality Review

December 2013

Domestic violence, sexual coercion and pregnancy are strongly linked.

Women age 16-44 who were killed by an intimate partner in Washington State were more than 4 times more likely to have been pregnant within a year, compared with women who died from other causes. (Domestic Violence Fatality Review, 2013)

40% of abused women reported that their pregnancy was unintended, compared with 8% of women who were not abused. (American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2000)

Approximately 1 in 20 heterosexual women (4.5%) and 1 in 7 bisexual women (14.9%) in the U.S. reported ever having a partner try to get them pregnant when they did not want to be. (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010)

1 in 4 women who called the National Domestic Violence Hotline had experienced some form of birth control sabotage or pregnancy coercion. (2010)

Two-thirds of teen mothers reported some form of birth control sabotage by their boyfriends. ("Teens Having Babies: The Unexplored Role of Domestic Violence" *The Prevention Researcher*, 2006)

In Washington State, 10% of women and 22% of teens report being abused by a partner around the time of pregnancy. (Washington State Department of Health, 2010)

Almost half of women who are physically abused by an intimate partner also reported forced sex by their partner. ("Forced sex and intimate partner violence: Effects on women's risk and women's health." *Violence Against Women*, 1999)

In-depth reviews of domestic violence homicides in Washington State revealed the many ways abusers used sexual violence and reproductive coercion as tools of control.

“She became pregnant with her youngest son when her husband raped her in order to ‘tie her down’ with another baby. She had planned to leave him when their children were grown.”

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“Her husband stole her birth control, and threatened her with deportation if she did not become pregnant.”

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“He forced his wife to have sex with him throughout their marriage, even after she left him. He pressured her into two unwanted abortions, threatening her and keeping her awake for days at a time.”

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“He was ‘very involved’ with her pregnancy, and came to all her prenatal visits. Most of the providers interpreted his controlling behavior as a positive sign that he would be an active teenage father.”

New Resources for Advocates & Health Care Providers



PregnantSurvivors.org Practice Guidelines for working with Pregnant and Parenting Survivors: an integrated approach to intimate partner violence and reproductive and sexual coercion.

KnowMoreSayMore.org Reproductive health consequences of sexual violence and coercion.

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