

## Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse: Adjudicating this Hidden Dimension of Domestic Violence

The National Judicial Education Program Announces a New, Free Web Course and Resource for Judges and Other Justice System Professionals:

[www.njep-ipsacourse.org](http://www.njep-ipsacourse.org)

*"This course is superb. Every judge, prosecutor, public defender, probation and parole officer, and police officer should take it. I highly recommend this course for all involved in the criminal justice system. Well done and thank you. I will be a better judge as a result."*

Sexual abuse is far more prevalent in cases involving other forms of intimate partner violence than is generally recognized. Recent research with battered women reveals that intimate partner sexual abuse is a hidden but frequent aspect of family violence with significant implications for the courts, particularly with respect to risk assessment.

The term "intimate partner sexual abuse" encompasses a continuum of behaviors from verbal degradation relating to sexuality to felony-level sexual abuse and torture. Cases involving this type of abuse present complex challenges for the judiciary, beyond the overarching goal of protecting victims and their children while insuring due process for the accused. Intimate partner sexual abuse is an important factor in risk assessment; in decision-making in civil, criminal, family, juvenile and probate cases; and in custody and visitation determinations. Thus, it is important for the justice system to have strategies that encourage victims to disclose such abuse and resources for effective offender dispositions and management.

***Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse: Adjudicating this Hidden Dimension of Domestic Violence*** provides current interdisciplinary research from law, medicine and the social sciences. Registrants for this course will learn about the implications for the courts of the severe impact of intimate partner sexual abuse, how the law itself often undermines victim safety, how to create a court environment in which victims feel safe disclosing, cultural issues that affect disclosure, which risk assessment instruments include intimate partner sexual abuse as a factor, how to assess the capability of batterer intervention and sex offender treatment programs to address intimate partner sexual abuse and more.

This web course was developed and written by the National Judicial Education Program, a project of Legal Momentum in cooperation with the National Association of Women Judges. Instructional design and technology were provided by the Rozier E. Sanchez Judicial Education

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The course was written with a focus on judges but the research and materials cited are useful for all justice system professionals. This Web site can also be used as a resource to be consulted as needed. The course consists of thirteen modules, self-tests and answers, reflection questions, civil and criminal case studies, questions and commentary.

### Course Modules and Case Studies

**MODULE I:** Defining Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse and Assessing Its Prevalence

**MODULE II:** Victims and Offenders

**MODULE III:** Risk Assessment

**MODULE IV:** Statutory Constraints

**MODULE V:** Why Victims Don't Report

**MODULE VI:** Institutional Responses

**MODULE VII:** Custody and Visitation When Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse is a Factor

**MODULE VIII:** Jury Selection

**MODULE IX:** Evidentiary Issues

**MODULE X:** Marital Privilege and Confidentiality of Victim Records

**MODULE XI:** Cultural Defenses and Cultural Evidence

**MODULE XII:** Orders of Protection, Pre-Trial Release and Dispositions

**MODULE XIII:** Recommendations for Improving Court Response to Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse

### DEVELOPING ISSUES

**CASE STUDIES:** Eight civil and criminal case studies that provide opportunities to apply the information explored in the modules.

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