



MLCPC 203:

The Face of Pain:

Sexual Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence

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Abstract

This session will teach coaches how to understand and respond to women who have experienced sexual abuse, rape, or domestic violence. Participants will become aware of the statistics surrounding these issues and will be taught what constitutes these acts. Dr. Mintle will equip coaches with greater understanding surrounding sexual trauma.

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will study the prevalence of sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence.
2. Participants will be able to recognize the warning signs of sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence when working with clients.
3. Participants will explore situations in which clients may need to be referred to professional caregivers.

I. Facts and Statistics

- A.** These facts are provided by **RAINN**, The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, the nation's largest anti-sexual violence agency.
 - 1.** Every two minutes, someone in the US is sexually assaulted.¹
 - 2.** 44% of victims are under age 18.²
 - 3.** 54% of sexual assaults are not reported to police. And I would suspect this number to be even higher.³
 - 4.** Approximately 2/3 of assaults are committed by someone known to the victim; For example, 38% of rapists are a friend or an acquaintance of the victim.⁴
 - 5.** According to medical reports, the incidence of pregnancy from one-time unprotected sexual intercourse is 5%.⁵
- B.** The reality is that women can be impregnated by rape, sexual abuse, incest, and through violent acts towards them.
- C.** Less than half of all reported victims of sexual assault are under the age of 18. Older women are sexually assaulted as well, particularly in cases of domestic violence and marital rape.⁶

II. Coaching Goals

- A.** You may have to address questions as to why the abuse or trauma happened.
- B.** There is no easy answer. In fact, the psalmist asked God why the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. God answers that it might look like the wicked prosper, but eventually their end is destruction if they don't repent. There are wicked and sinful people who

hurt good people and cause them to suffer. But in the end, the story comes out right. Injustices will be righted. Victims will be free of pain and the perpetrator will be judged.

1. Your **initial goal** is to create a place of safety so any teen or woman can talk about her life without feeling judged or scared. This is the place for coaching to begin:
Create a place of safety so the story can be told.
2. **Know what constitutes rape, incest, and sexual abuse and what it means to be violated sexually.** In order to help the victim work through what happened, you both need to agree that she was violated. Know and use the terms correctly.

III. Defining the Terms

- A. **Sexual assault** is unwanted sexual contact that stops short of rape or attempted rape. This includes sexual touching and fondling. (Some states use this term interchangeably with rape). Sexual assault can lead to sexual intercourse. Sexual assault on minors is still abuse whether or not it is forced or coerced. This is important to note because children and teens often feel responsible for sexual assault when the perpetrator acts in ways that seem “nice.”
- B. **Rape** is forced sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Penetration may be by a body part or an object. There are different types of rape—acquaintance or date rape, stranger rape, marital rape, and incest. All can lead to an unexpected pregnancy.
- C. One of the issues you may initially encounter is that a woman might have trouble deciding if she was really raped. When this is the case, you can ask these three questions to help work the person through this dilemma:

1. Is the person old enough to give consent?

Children cannot give sexual consent. In most states, the law for the age of consent is either 16, 17 or 18 years of age. If you are unsure of the law in your state, call your local crisis center or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE.

2. Do both people have the capacity to consent?

Consent does not mean you didn't fight back. The way a person responded to a rape cannot be used against him or her. Some people, for example, do not resist because they believe the attacker will become more violent if they do.

3. Did both participants agree to take part?

If there was physical force or threats, it is rape.

D. Three common issues are regularly encountered in rape cases:

1. I should have responded differently. Those who have survived a rape did the right thing. People respond differently. Help the person understand that there is no right way to respond.

2. I may have caused this. No person ever causes a rape. Rape is a sinful, violent act that is never justified. Some women feel that because they knew the person, they somehow caused the rape. In many cases the person knows his or her rapist. Rape is about power and control, not about a specific woman.

3. **I do not remember the assault so maybe it didn't really happen.** Drugs or alcohol may have been involved. The woman may have been unconscious. Just because a woman doesn't remember does not mean she wasn't raped.

E. Four Phases of Healing:

1. **Telling the story.** Reviewing and accepting what the woman did during the attack.

2. Dealing with **acute reactions**.

- Shock
- Pain or irritation where touched or hurt
- Soreness and tension
- Pain in lower back or stomach
- Unstable mood—crying, anger, confused, shame, etc.
- Becoming withdrawn

3. **Reorganization**

- Try to make sense what happened, find safety, and coping skills
- Intrusion symptoms like flashbacks, crying, etc.
- Avoidance symptoms
- Arousal symptoms that keep the memory alive: insomnia, nausea, sweats, etc.

4. **Resolution and integration phase** in which the trauma is processed and the memory loses its power and control over the person's life. It may involve taking legal action, turning the offender over to God for ultimate judgment, and reintegrating back into life with on-going healing. True resolution usually requires forgiveness towards the offender. Forgiveness is different than reconciliation. It is a **gift one give to herself** in order to release the power of the offender. Forgiveness prevents resentment and bitterness from taking hold.

IV. Other Types of Rape

A. Acquaintance or date rape involves coercive sexual activities that occur against a person's will by means of force, violence, duress, or fear of bodily injury. These sexual activities are imposed upon a person by someone she knows (a friend, date, acquaintance, etc.).

1. Even when a woman has had previous sexual relations with someone she knows date rape is still possible when she does not give consent. This type of rape is motivated by a need to control, humiliate, and harm.
2. Most often women need help to accept that they are not responsible for any type of rape. Rapists will suggest that the way they dressed, or a prior sexual involvement invited the rape. Family/friends may blame the victim. Your job is to help the woman see that nothing she did deserved this type of violence towards her.
3. When coaching a person through a rape crisis, you will encounter obstacles in coping and recovery. These obstacles include fear. A person may be afraid of:
 - Retaliation
 - Subsequent harassment
 - Future harm
 - Harassment from family and friends of the person responsible for the assault
4. Coaching issues include:
 - Helping the person come to the reality that she was raped and may be pregnant
 - Helping the victim return to a normal routine (this is especially the case if the assailant is a part of the victim's daily routine)
 - Helping the woman know what to do when she encounters the person after the rape
 - Dealing with on-going fear of seeing the person and feeling humiliated

- Releasing self-blame
- Educating the victim on the 3 stages of date/acquaintance rape:
 She will feel a violation of personal comfort
 Because of familiarity with the person who raped her, there is a tendency to minimize the feelings
 There will also be a tendency to isolate from others

5. Physical and Emotional Reactions:

- Sleeping and eating disturbances
- Mood swings
- Feelings of humiliation and self-blame
- Nightmares
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Helplessness
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal ideation/behavior, self-harm
- Depression

B. Marital Rape

1. Legal definitions vary but marital rape is generally considered to be unwanted intercourse or penetration by force, threat of force, or when the wife is unable to consent.⁷
2. It is estimated that between 10-14% of married women are victim to this type of violence.⁸ This data is usually gathered by interview from women who will talk about sexual violence. Typically, samples come from battered women's shelters. Because of this, the numbers may not represent the general population.

3. There are those who believe marital rape isn't possible. These people often view women as property or objects, and feel that married men are entitled to sex no matter what the resistance. When battered women have gone to clergy for help, a small number have reported being told to obey their husbands and that it is sinful to resist sex under any circumstances. Obviously, this is not the view of most clergy or religious institutions, but it does exist.
4. A husband who rapes his wife usually does so multiple times. Because these women live with their abusers, emotional consequences are devastating.
5. Marital rape is usually categorized in these three ways:
 - Force-only rape in which a husband uses force to coerce his wife
 - Battering rape in which physical violence is also involved before or during a sexual assault
 - Sadistic/obsessive type rape in which torture or perverse sexual acts are involved (pornography is often included)
6. Studies by Russell (1990) and Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) found that marital rape:
 - Occurs in all types of marriages
 - Includes a variety of ages, with most occurring under the age of 25
 - Is reported more by lower socio-class women
 - Is reported at higher rates by African American women than Caucasian, Latinas and Asian women
 - Is less likely to be defined as rape by Latina women
 - Prompts more Caucasian women to leave their husbands compared to other ethnic/racial groups studied
 - Is viewed as self-blame more often by traditional wives⁹

7. The effects of marital rape are serious and can be long-lasting. There may be multiple physical injuries as well as psychological difficulties. Women can become anxious, fearful, depressed, or suicidal and can have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, marital rape can affect a woman's eating, sleep, sense of self, and ability to trust in the relationship.

8. Risk factors for marital rape include:

- Women who are married to men who view them as property and are domineering (This is not definitive but often reported by women)
- Physical violence in the marriage¹⁰
- Women who try to leave their abusers¹¹
- Women who are pregnant.¹² Getting pregnant is a consequence of rape, but being pregnant can also bring on more violence.
- Women who are ill, recovering from surgery and discharged from the hospital¹³
- Separation and divorce¹⁴

C. Incest (direct from RAINN)¹⁵

1. Incest is sexual contact between persons who are so closely related that their marriage is illegal (e.g., parents and children, uncles/aunts and nieces/nephews, etc.). This usually takes the form of an older family member sexually abusing a child or adolescent.

2. We don't have reliable statistics on incest rates because so many cases are never reported. Incest:

- Violates the person's primary support system and safety issues
- It may be covered up by the family
- It damages trust and feelings of protection
- It creates issues with the non-abusing parent, especially if that parent chooses not to address the incest even with a pregnancy

3. The coach also has to deal with:

- The victim's possible feelings of care or love for the perpetrator
- The fear of telling someone who the father is
- How other people will react to the pregnancy
- How to stop normalizing what happened
- The fear that no one will believe what really happened
- The fear that they somehow did something wrong

4. Your job is to help the victim realize the crime, and deal with the emotional realities and reactions of others.

D. Domestic violence (direct from RAINN)¹⁶

1. Domestic violence is any act, attempt, or threat of force by a family member or intimate partner against another family member.
2. Domestic violence occurs in all socio-economic, educational, racial, and age groups. The issues of **power and control** are at the heart of family violence. The batterer uses acts of violence and a series of behaviors to gain power and control.
3. How does domestic violence relate to unexpected pregnancy?
 - Unexpected pregnancy is common among abused women. Research has found that some abusers force their partners to have sex without birth control and/or sabotage the birth control their partners are using, leading to an unexpected pregnancy.
4. About **1 in 2 men** who abuse their wives also abuse their children. Children who grow up with violence in the home are more likely to become abusers as adults and have physical and emotional problems.¹⁷

5. Behavioral signs to look for:

- **Intimidation:** Smashing things, abusing pets, destroying victim's property, displaying weapons
- **Threats:** Making and/or carrying out threats to harm the victim, to commit suicide, to report the victim to child welfare in order to make her drop charges
- **Isolation:** Controlling what the victim does, sees, and reads, limiting who the victim talks to
- **Emotional abuse:** Putting the victim down, calling her names, making her think he or she's crazy, playing mind games

6. Warning signs:

- **Inconsistent explanations:** Victims may provide inconsistent explanations as to the cause of their injuries due to fear of alerting others to the severity of their situation.
- **Alcohol abuse:** Victims may use alcohol as a means of escape from their everyday reality of abuse.
- **Injuries in multiple stages of healing:** Bruises are the most common form of injury and have the following stages of healing: purple to green to yellow.

7. It is important for a coach to understand why certain people stay in abusive relationships. RAINN identifies the following five reasons:

- **Financial dependence:** Batterers may have forbidden their partners from getting or keeping a job or may have kept secret the location and balance of bank accounts
- **Lack of social support:** A batterer may have controlled the victim's contact with friends, family, and the outside world. Such isolation limits her ability to obtain help with an escape.
- **Fear of severe physical attack:** Batterers may use threats of attack to keep victim in a state of perpetual fear. The batterers may tell their victims that, if they leave, they will be killed.

- **Self-blame:** It is not uncommon for victims to believe that the abuse is a result of their real or imagined offenses.
 - **Belief that the violence is temporary or caused by unusual circumstances:** Often batterers place blame for abuse on external sources, alcohol, work pressures, etc. and do not take responsibility for their actions.¹⁸
- 8. One of the most important goals for the coach is to help women be safe.** Providing resources for battered women who are pregnant is vital.
- **The National Domestic Violence Hotline**
<http://www.thehotline.org/>
 800-799-SAFE (7233)
 800-787-3224
 Available for the hearing impaired
 Spanish speakers are available

V. When to Refer

- A.** Women who become pregnant from sexually traumatic experiences most often need help beyond what coaching can provide. They need therapists and counselors trained in specifics related to sexual trauma, including:
- 1.** PTSD
 - 2.** Substance Abuse
 - 3.** Self-injury/self-harm
 - 4.** Stockholm Syndrome where the victim bonds with the abuser

- 5. Depression**
 - 6. STIs**
 - 7. Flashbacks**
 - 8. Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)—often a long term impact of child sexual abuse**
 - 9. Adult survivor of sexual assault**
 - 10. Sleep disorders**
 - 11. Eating disorders**
 - 12. Body memories that become physical symptoms**
 - 13. Dissociative Identity Disorder**
 - 14. Suicide**
 - 15. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) psychological trauma for military personnel who experienced sexual assault or harassment as classified by the Department of Veteran Affairs**
- B. When you see a woman reacting to her pregnancy in ways that indicate the above or in ways that impair her everyday living, refer her for professional therapy.**

VI. There is Hope

- A. God knows the pain and there is hope for comfort and healing.
- B. The Christian coach should try to be a reflection of Christ—a safe harbor, a listening and empathetic ear, an encourager of doing the hard work to move through trauma and forgiveness to the other side of healing, and the coach is the voice of hope in terms of the purpose and future God has for the mother and the baby. What the enemy meant for evil, God can use for good. No life is a mistake. Pray that the child of such trauma will be a mighty man or woman of God, able to touch others with his or her life story and bring glory and honor to God’s name through redemption.

“Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you.”—Psalm 143:8

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.”—Isaiah 41:10

VII. Suggested Reading

- A. *Healing the Incest wound: Adults Survivors in Therapy* by Christina Courtois (Norton Professional Books, 2010)
- B. *Adult Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Trauma, Treatment and Living in the Truth* by Diane Langberg in *Caring for People God’s Way* edited by Clinton, Hart and Ohlschlager (p. 411-445). Thomas Nelson Publisher, 2005.
- C. *On the Threshold of Hope* by Diane Langberg, Tyndale Publishers, 1999.
- D. *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* by Diane Langberg, Tyndale Publishers, 1997.

Endnotes

¹"Statistics," *Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://rainn.org/statistics>

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷R.K. Bergen, *Wife Rape: Understanding the Response of Survivors and Service Providers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996); D.E.H. Russell, *Rape in Marriage* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1990); M.D. Pagelow, *Family Violence* (New York: Praeger, 1984).

⁸D.E.H. Russell, *Rape in Marriage* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1990).

⁹D.E.H. Russell, *Rape in Marriage* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1990); D. Finkelhor and K. Yllo, *License to Rape: Sexual Abuse of Wives* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1985).

¹⁰I. Frieze, "Investigating the Causes and Consequences of Marital Rape," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8 (1983):532-553.

¹¹D. Finkelhor and K. Yllo, *License to Rape: Sexual Abuse of Wives* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1985).

¹²R.K. Bergen, *Wife Rape: Understanding the Response of Survivors and Service Providers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996);

¹³J.C. Campbell and P. Alford, "The Dark Consequences of Marital Rape," *American Journal of Nursing* 89 (1989): 946-949.

¹⁴R.E. Dobash and R. Dobash, *Women, Violence and Social Change* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992).

¹⁵"Statistics," *Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://rainn.org/statistics>

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Cathy Meyer, "Physical Abuse Statistics," *About.com Divorce Support*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/abusiverelationships/a/physicalabusestatistics.htm>

¹⁸"Statistics," *Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://rainn.org/statistics>