

## **Abstract**

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### **Sexual violence as part of domestic violence**

There are many ways of becoming aware of and subsequently exploring sexual violence, including rape. My awareness of 'it' was triggered by an interview I did with a woman who had been in a relationship with a violent man for many years before she managed to get out of it. Like the other 19 women I interviewed for the research project, she was asked to tell her story of violence in her own way and her own time and she told of serious physical violence and how her husband controlled her in every way. She did not, however, mention anything about sexual violence until I asked her directly after she had finished her story. My asking was pure routine as she had not given any hint about sexual violence. Her answer took me by surprise and gave me a kind of aha-experience. She said: "It was just part of it all".

It turned out that this woman was not the only one who did not mention sexual violence by herself. Based on interview material for the research project, the paper will reflect on the circumstances in which women will tell about sexual violence and their reasons for not telling. Considering that rape is often regarded as one of the most serious injustices and/or crimes how come it is sometimes not mentioned explicitly? Is it considered to be too painful and/or shameful? Is it considered to be unnecessary to spell out because it is "just part of it all"?

That sexual violence is "just part of it all", that is, an integrated part of domestic violence, is common knowledge among shelter staff and most researchers of violence. The categories we use are overlapping: domestic violence, sexual violence, rape, stalking, honour-related conflict or violence, teen dating violence, etc. Even so, it is a reminder that we need to have a holistic approach in order to encompass the whole range of inter-connected experiences of victims of violence.

See:

Sørensen, Bo Wagner (2013): Voldens kontinuum og kvinders voldserfaringer. I: *Sosiologi i dag* 42(4): 69-93.