

OVERTURNING ROE V. WADE IMPACT ON INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE



August 1st, 2022

The Center for Empowerment and Education is a client-focused organization that empowers individuals and families to make their own decisions, especially decisions affecting their autonomy, well-being, and safety. We strive to ensure that our clients find safety and are empowered to gain or regain their voice so that they may become their own best advocate. We believe that the right to choose is an individual choice. We know that the choices they make impact their ability to move through, and recover from the trauma of violence.

We believe in equality for all, and we know that the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade may impose harmful consequences on victims of Interpersonal Violence (IPV). We know that if and when a person has to make the difficult decision to terminate a pregnancy, it is not a decision taken lightly.

For victims of domestic violence, abusers who want their partner to abort may increase violence to horrific lengths to force a miscarriage; intimate partner homicide may increase as a result. Those who may start rejecting sex out of fear of becoming pregnant may experience further sexual violence from predators that won't take 'no' for an answer. Abusers will also have more opportunities to trap and control their partners who lack access to abortion services, resulting in more victims trapped in abusive relationships due to pregnancy. We know that leaving an abuser takes extreme courage, and we also know that an abuser can and does use reproductive coercion as a form of control and manipulation. Reproductive coercion is another form of sexual violence (SV). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (the "CDC") "Reproductive coercion is a form of SV that involves exerting power and control over reproduction through interference with contraception use and pregnancy pressure." The CDC states that over 18 million women have experienced rape in their lifetime, and almost 3 million women will become pregnant due to rape. When a woman is sexually assaulted and becomes pregnant, she did not consent to sexual activity, let alone pregnancy.

Our experience suggests that the decision overturning Roe may significantly and disproportionately impact women of color. Today, more than 20 percent of Black women are raped during their lifetime - a higher share than among women overall, with 40-60% of Black women reporting coercive contact of a sexual nature by age 18 (Institute for Women's Policy Research, National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community). In 2020, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic Black women was 55.3 deaths per 100,000 live births, 2.9 times the rate for non-Hispanic White women (NCHS).

Additionally, LGBTQ+ individuals, especially non-binary and transgender individuals with uteruses, will be greatly impacted. Nearly half (47%) of transgender individuals have been sexually assaulted at some point in their life. (2015 U.S. Transgender Survey). National-level data also reports, "44% of lesbians and 61% of bisexual women experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, compared to 35% of straight women. 46% of bisexual women have been raped, compared to 17% of straight women and 13% of lesbians." (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control).

The Center for Empowerment and Education continues to be a client-focused organization that empowers each client to make their own decisions. We know that each of the individuals we work with have a unique story that requires a client-centered response to meet their needs. We support each survivor as they work through the trauma of violence.

During this difficult time in our country's history, we want to remind our community that we are here. If you or someone you know needs support, our no cost confidential hotlines are available 24/7.

 **24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline (203)731-5206**
24/7 Sexual Assault Hotline (203)731-5204

 **TheCenterCT.org**

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