

Violence in GLBT Relationships

Relationship or domestic violence is physical behavior, threats of abuse, or emotional abuse directed toward a current or former partner/spouse, family or household member (including roommates). Behaviors are used by one person in a relationship to control and hurt the other. **Relationship violence occurs in GLBT communities as often as it occurs in straight communities.** About 1 in 4 people in straight or GLBT relationships report experiencing some form of violence (Jane Doe, Inc.).

Examples of abusive behavior include:

- Physical and sexual abuse
- Property destruction
- Emotional abuse
- Homophobic manipulation
- Public humiliation
- Economic abuse
- Controlling what a person does or whom he/she sees or talks to

Unique barriers to seeking support in abusive GLBT relationships:

While victims/survivors in GLBT relationships face similar challenges in abusive relationships as straight victims/survivors, there are additional barriers that often make it difficult to seek support. Some examples of these barriers are listed below.

- Isolation: Due to being in a GLBT relationship in a homophobic society. Additionally, silence about violence in the GLBT community prevents victims/survivors from seeking support.
- Heterosexist manipulation: A batterer may threaten to “out” the victim/survivor against his/her will.
- Fear of further oppression: The GLBT community is hesitant to address issues that may bring further discrimination to their community.
- Gender myths: Many people believe that men cannot be victims and that same-sex violence must be mutual.
- Historical oppression: GLBT victims may fear re-victimization when approaching social service agencies, shelters, service providers, police and the courts.

Did you know?

- **The law protects victims of same-sex relationship violence. Massachusetts domestic violence laws are gender neutral.**

Resources and Options:

- Call the **Everywoman’s Center** 24-hour hotline for free and confidential safety planning and counseling: (413) 545-0800 or (888) 337-0800 (local long distance).
- The **Stonewall Center** is a GLBT educational resource center at UMass: (413) 545-4824
- **Safe Passage** provides crisis intervention, shelter and support groups for battered women, including lesbians: (413) 586-5066, 1-888-345-5282 (24-hour hotline).
- The **Men’s Resource Center** in Amherst provides information and referrals on issues concerning men: (413) 253-9887.
- The **Gay Men’s Domestic Violence Project** provides support, emergency housing, resources and information: 1-800-832-1091 (24-hour crisis line), (617) 354-6056.
- Contact the **UMPD Sensitive Crimes Unit** : (413) 545-3888 or **Health Services**: (413)577-5000.
- Contact the **Dean of Students Office** for assistance or information about the campus judicial system: (413) 545-2586.
- Visit Everywoman’s Center’s website for more information: <http://www.umass.edu/ewc/ea/index.html>



everywoman’s center

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ewc main office: (413) 545-0883 (TDD)
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