

ABUSE IN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANS RELATIONSHIPS



LOUISIANA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
WWW.LCADV.ORG

A DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Abuse in intimate partner relationships, also known as domestic violence, battering, partner abuse, and dating violence, is a pattern of behaviors where one person strives to establish or maintain power and control over the other person. Behaviors that are abusive may come in a form that is physical, emotional, sexual, economic, and/or spiritual.



PARTNER ABUSE ISN'T ONLY A STRAIGHT PROBLEM

Partner abuse does exist in LGBT communities. It affects every race, class, ethnicity, age, ability, and religious group of our community. We must work together to break the silence on this issue and recognize that it is only when everyone within our LGBT communities is safe that we can effectively stand together against oppression directed toward us from outside of our communities.

HAS YOUR PARTNER TOLD YOU...

“WOMEN ARE SAFE.” OR “A MAN CAN’T BATTER ANOTHER MAN.”

According to a 10 year, 10 city study by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects, abuse occurs in 25%-33% of all LGBT relationships – the same rate as in straight relationships. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people have been seriously injured and killed by their partners. People of any gender can abuse and be abused.

“BUT I’VE NEVER HIT YOU!”

Abuse is not just about physical violence – it’s about non-consensual power and control. Hitting is often not needed to maintain power and control in a relationship. Verbal, emotional, economic, and spiritual abuse are tools used to control as often as physical abuse.

“YOU’VE HIT ME, TOO – SO IF I’M ABUSIVE, SO ARE YOU!”

Remember abuse is about a pattern of behaviors used to establish or maintain power and control. Although either or both partners may use violence, abusers do so to increase their control over their partners. Survivors have used violence for many reasons. Some include self-defense, desperation, and anger. When survivors use violence, the results are complicated. They may not be believed by friends or family about the abuse, be made to feel guilty and persuaded into staying longer in the relationship to “make up for” their actions, or arrested. Using violence to survive is a sign that something is wrong; developing a safety plan and getting support is important.



“HOW CAN YOU SAY I’M ABUSING YOU? YOU’RE SO MUCH STRONGER THAN I AM.”

Abuse is about control, not physical or emotional strength. Abusive control is often ignored by friends and family when survivors are strong, capable, and “have it together”. Survivors may feel responsible for their abuser’s actions. Ignoring the abuse when it happens to a “strong” person can increase the danger. Abusers can use their vulnerabilities as well as their strengths to manipulate others. Abusive control is not excused because an abuser had a violent childhood, has been hurt in the past, struggles with addiction, or feels scared or angry.

NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO ABUSE.
NO ONE DESERVES TO BE ABUSED.
THERE IS NOTHING THAT YOU
CAN DO OR SAY TO
CAUSE SOMEONE TO ABUSE YOU.

“I’LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN, I PROMISE. WE’LL GO FOR HELP IF YOU’LL STAY WITH ME.”

People who are using power abusively may be or may appear to be sorry. To change their behaviors and their lives, abusers have to take full responsibility for the abuse and commit to non-abusive behaviors, whether or not you stay together. This kind of change doesn’t happen overnight and usually requires the help of a qualified intervention program for batterers and/or another comprehensive system of accountability for the abuser. Even when abusive partners have experienced terrible abuse, hate crimes and/or oppression, they still have to take responsibility and change behaviors. They can get help, but no one else, not even you, can change their life for them. Couples counseling does not help abusers stop abusing, and can actually be dangerous for you. Abusers can use couples counseling to further control and manipulate their partners.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ABUSE

The following are some ideas about getting safe. Use your instincts about which safety measures are right for you.

- ✔ Let a trusted friend or family member know what is happening and what you would like them to do in an emergency.
- ✔ Store your money, clothing, an extra set of keys, medication, important documents and anything else you may need somewhere your partner will not be able to find but you can access quickly.
- ✔ Know that you don't have to leave or want to leave your partner to get support. Contact family and friends you can trust or the resources listed in this pamphlet for help.
- ✔ Work with an advocate to explore civil legal options. Protection orders require your partner to stop the abuse and stay away from you, your home, workplace, and children. Violating an order of protection is cause for arrest, but be aware that this legal measure may not increase safety for all survivors of abuse.
- ✔ During an incident, you can move into a room with no weapons, try to be near a door or other escape route, and/or call the police. Although LGBT survivors have sometimes faced barriers in accessing justice through the legal system, if you feel that the police could help in your situation, don't hesitate to call them.
- ✔ If you decide to leave, find a safe place to stay such as a family member, friend, or coworker's home, a domestic violence shelter or a hotel. If you need to get out but can't find a place to stay, hospitals and airports are two places that are open 24 hours.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU THINK A FRIEND IS EXPERIENCING ABUSE

- ✔ Ask your friend what kind of help or support would be useful.
- ✔ Keep what your friend tells you confidential.
- ✔ Don't confront your friend's abuser. This could be very dangerous for both you and them.
- ✔ Help your friend identify options and resources. Call your local LGBT community center and/or the domestic violence hotline and ask how they can help an LGBT person who is being abused.
- ✔ Respect your friend's decisions to either leave or stay in the relationship. Making this decision depends on many things you may not understand.
- ✔ Emphasize that your friend is not alone and the abuse is not their fault.
- ✔ Don't suggest couples counseling. This can be very harmful in relationships that have patterns of power and control.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU THINK A FRIEND IS BEING ABUSIVE

- ✔ Talk honestly with your friend about what you see happening.
- ✔ Help your friend understand that abuse is a choice, and that it is their responsibility to change their behavior.
- ✔ Support your friend. Call your local LGBT community center and/or the domestic violence hotline and ask how they can help an LGBT person who is being abusive to their partner.



YOU MAY BE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP IF YOUR PARTNER...

- ✘ Threatens to “out” you to your employer, family, friends, ex-spouse or others.
- ✘ Threatens you, screams at you, throws things, opens your mail, reads your journal, or breaks or steals your things.
- ✘ Often becomes jealous, needy, angry, or sick when you try to spend time away or with your friends and family.
- ✘ Forces you to “walk on eggshells” or change your behavior to deal with their moods.
- ✘ Uses your race, age, sexual identity, gender identity or transition, immigration status, class, body size or appearance, religion, HIV or other medical status, etc. against you.
- ✘ Has slapped, punched, pulled your hair, spit on, or restrained you against your will.
- ✘ Blames their behavior on a history of childhood or other abuse or on drugs or alcohol.
- ✘ Prevents you from sleeping or controls when and what you eat.
- ✘ Has forced or pressured you to have sex against your will or hurt you during sex.
- ✘ Tries to control where you go and what you do or you have to lie to them just to “get out” for a while.
- ✘ Withholds your medications or puts you in situations that endanger your health.
- ✘ Withholds affection or punishes you with the silent treatment.
- ✘ Threatens to have your kids taken away from you and/or hurts the kids.
- ✘ Accuses you of having affairs.

FOR HELP OR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
PROGRAM IN YOUR AREA.

**BEAUREGARD COMMUNITY CONCERNS
JUNE N. JENKINS WOMEN'S SHELTER**

Parishes Served: Beauregard, Vernon
CRISIS LINE: **337.462.6504**

CHEZ HOPE FAMILY VIOLENCE CRISIS CENTER

Parishes Served: Assumption, Iberia, St. Martin, St. Mary
CRISIS LINE: **337.828.4200**
WWW.CHEZHOPE.ORG

DOMESTIC ABUSE RESISTANCE TEAM (DART)

Parishes Served: Bienville, Claiborne, Grant, Jackson,
Lincoln, Union, Winn
CRISIS LINE: **318.251.2255**
WWW.DARTLA.NET

FAITH HOUSE

Parishes Served: Acadia, Avoyelles, Evangeline,
Lafayette, Rapides, St. Landry, Vermillion
CRISIS LINE: **337.232.8954**
WWW.FAITHHOUSEACADIANA.COM

THE HAVEN, INC.

Parish Served: Lafourche, Terrebonne
CRISIS LINE: **985.853.0045**
WWW.HAVENHELPS.ORG

IRIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTER

Parishes Served: Ascension, East Baton Rouge,
East Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee,
West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana
CRISIS LINE: **225.389.3001**
WWW.STOPDV.ORG

**JEFF DAVIS COMMUNITIES
AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE (CADA)**

Parish Served: Jefferson Davis
CRISIS LINE: **337.616.8418**
WWW.JEFFDAVISCADA.COM

METRO CENTERS FOR COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Parishes Served: Jefferson, St. Charles, St. James, St. John

CRISIS LINE: 504.837.5400

WWW.MCWCGNO.ORG

NEW ORLEANS FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

Parish Served: Orleans

CRISIS LINE: 504.866.9554

WWW.NOJFC.ORG

OASIS: A SAFE HAVEN FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Parishes Served: Allen, Calcasieu, Cameron

CRISIS LINE: 337.436.4552

WWW.CWSHELTER.ORG

PROJECT CELEBRATION: TAYLOR HOUSE

Parishes Served: Bossier, Caddo, DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Webster

CRISIS LINE: 318.256.3403

SHREVEPORT AREA CRISIS LINE: 318.226.5015

WWW.PROJECTCELEBRATION.COM

SAFE HARBOR

Parish Served: St. Tammany, Washington

CRISIS LINE: 985.626.5740

WWW.SAFEHARBORNORTHSHORE.ORG

ST. BERNARD BATTERED WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Parishes Served: Plaquemines, St. Bernard

CRISIS LINE: 504.277.3177

WWW.STBERNARDBWP.ORG

SOUTHEAST ADVOCATES FOR FAMILY EMPOWERMENT (SAFE)

Parishes Served: Livingston, St. Helena, Tangipahoa

CRISIS LINE: 985.542.8384

WWW.SAFELOUISIANA.ORG

THE WELLSPRING ALLIANCE FOR FAMILIES

Parishes Served: Caldwell, Catahoula, Concordia, East Carroll, Franklin, LaSalle, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, West Carroll

CRISIS LINE: 318.323.1505

WWW.WELLSPRINGALLIANCE.ORG

LOUISIANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1.888.411.1333

FREE • CONFIDENTIAL • 24 HOURS

*If you are in a violent relationship, help is available.
This is a free call to a domestic violence program
in your area of Louisiana.*



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