

Challenges when Working with LGBT Survivors of IPV



*Brittany Harrison, BSW
MSW Graduate 2015*

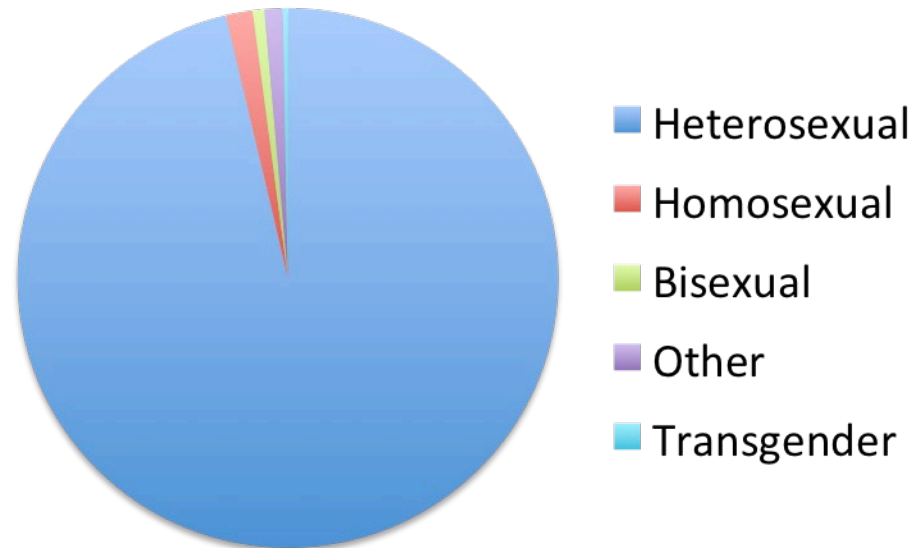
Center on Violence Against Women and Children



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The LGBT Population

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
- 2015 United States Population: 320 Million People
 - **5,120,000** adults self-identified as Gay or Lesbian
 - **2,240,000** adults self-identified as Bisexual
 - **3,520,000** adults identified as “other”
 - **960,000** adults identified as transgender



Myths About LGBT IPV

- Domestic violence does not occur in lesbian couples, women are always the victims.
- Heterosexual domestic violence is much worse as men are much stronger than women; same sex couples are equally matched in their physical strength.
- The perpetrator must either be a male, “butch”, or a “tom boy” as that is the dynamic in which domestic violence normally occurs.
- Homosexuality and Transgenderism are immoral, therefore domestic violence is acceptable.

Facts About LGBT IPV

- 89% of Police Officers stated that they have responded to at least one patrol call for a same-sex or sexual minority incident of domestic violence (Tesch et. al, 2010).
- “The National Violence Against Women (NVAW) survey found that 21.5% of men and 35.4% of women reporting a history of cohabitation with a same-sex partner had experienced physical abuse in their lifetimes; the corresponding rates for men and women with a history of only opposite-sex cohabitation were 7.1% and 20.4%, respectively” (Ard & Makadon, pp. 630, 2011).
- “Transgender [individuals] reported lifetime physical abuse rates by a partner of 34.6%, versus 14.0% for gay or lesbian individuals” (Ard & Makadon, pp. 630, 2011).

Heterosexual vs. LGBT Domestic Violence

Similarities:

- The role of power and control.
- The cycle of violence.
- The escalation of abuse over time.
- Types of Abuse:
 - Physical
 - Sexual
 - Emotional
 - Verbal
 - Financial

Differences:

- “Outing” may be used as a tool for abuse or a barrier to seeking help.
- Abusers exploit the fear of “coming out”.
- Forcing the victim to “out” themselves.
- Further isolation from friends/family due to issues with “coming out”.
- Heightened stigma or disbelief from law enforcement or criminal justice system.

Gaps in Services to the LGBT Population

- Non-existent LGBT domestic violence shelters.
- Traditional domestic violence shelters do not house male victims (trans- or cisgender).
- Domestic violence policies and laws are gender-biased or heterosexist in nature.
 - 30 states have non-gender based language
 - 14 states have non-discriminatory language in regards to a “household”
 - 20 states still have heterosexist language in DV policies and laws
- Lack of culturally competent practitioners and workers, especially for the transgender population.
 - Workers feel more confident in their work/ability to help with male-on-female heterosexual violence.
- For Lesbian/Bisexual Couples: Female perpetrator may enter shelter covertly
- Lack of education for LGBT teen dating relationships.

Case Briefing

- **Role:** Advocate at DV shelter
- **Client:** Identifies as a female victim of verbal and physical violence by her male partner.
- **Seeking:** Shelter and supportive counseling for her DV experiences.
- **Situation:** This client arrives at your facility and based on her appearance you begin to question her story and identity as a female.

What would you do next?

What are some of your initial reactions?

Do you feel comfortable allowing a trans-female to stay in your all-female facility?



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