

# There's No **Pride** In Domestic Violence



**MOST** GAY AND LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE BASED ON LOVE AND RESPECT. **SOME** ARE BASED ON ABUSE AND CONTROL.

**Domestic violence exists in our community**

**This pamphlet contains information on domestic violence in same-sex relationships.**

## What is domestic violence?

**Domestic Violence is any form of abusive behaviour that one partner or ex-partner uses to get and maintain control over the other.**

**Domestic violence will often include physical or sexual violence but many types of abusive behaviour are not physical.**

## Types of abuse

There is a range of ways one partner might try to get and maintain control over the other. The ongoing presence of any of these behaviours in a relationship indicates domestic violence.

- ▶ **Emotional Abuse** - where one partner tries to make the other partner feel worthless, eg: name calling, ridicule and public humiliation; threats to hurt themselves, their partner, their children or pets; and threatening or actually 'outing' their partner in terms of their sexuality or HIV or other health status.
- ▶ **Social Control** - where one partner tries to isolate the other from friends, family or community activities, eg: monitoring phone calls or bills; causing fights with, or preventing family or friends visiting; preventing participation in gay/lesbian or other cultural events like church.
- ▶ **Financial Control** - where one partner attempts to make the other financially dependant, eg: taking control of all the couple's income; threats to, or actually withdrawing financial support; and making them account for all their spending.
- ▶ **Sexual Abuse** - when one partner uses sex as a form of control, eg: forcing them to have sex or

engage in acts like threesomes or group sex against their will; non-consensual BDSM; and other forms of sexual assault.

- ▶ **Physical Abuse** - where one partner uses physical violence to maintain control, eg: punching, slapping, biting, wrestling, strangling or burning, and using weapons like knives, guns or blunt objects.
- ▶ **Stalking** - any behaviour that one partner uses to monitor or harass the other, eg: calling, texting or e-mailing inappropriately; and following their partner to and from or loitering around their home, work or social settings.

## Domestic violence is a gay and lesbian issue

The police, health care providers, gay and lesbian organisations and legal services are aware that domestic violence happens in same sex relationships as they are working with the people who have, or are experiencing it.

Studies from around the world have attempted to identify the percentage of same-sex relationships that include domestic violence. To date there is no consensus among these studies. However, they do show that the overall patterns and effects of domestic violence in same-sex relationships are very similar to those in heterosexual relationships.

## Effects of domestic violence

Over time a victim of domestic violence may suffer a wide range of negative effects, eg: physical injuries; emotional and mental health problems like stress and anxiety; social and cultural isolation; loss of family relationships; and loss of confidence and self-esteem.

## Myths and facts about same-sex domestic violence

*Myth* Women aren't violent and men can't be victims of domestic violence.

**Fact** Domestic violence happens in same-sex relationships. We know from research and the personal stories of those who have experienced it that women are capable of committing violence against their partners and men can be victims of violence in relationships.

*Myth* Violence between same-sex partners is a mutual fight.

**Fact** An abusive relationship will almost always involve a number of forms of abuse. Physical violence will only be one of those. Being able to fight back, however, does not mean the person isn't being abused.

*Myth* Drugs make him/her violent.

**Fact** Some drugs (especially amphetamines) may trigger violent behaviour in some people. However if the person uses the drug knowing they may become violent and/or the violence is targeted towards their partner then this is domestic violence and they are responsible for their actions.

*Myth* The law can't help and the police aren't interested.

**Fact** Threats, stalking and physical and sexual violence are all illegal. The law in NSW offers the same protection to same-sex victims of domestic violence as it does to heterosexual victims including police protection, access to Apprehended Violence Orders and (after two years together) division of joint property.

The police have a duty of care to provide protection to anyone experiencing domestic violence - regardless of their sexuality. People who feel the police response has not been appropriate have the right to make a complaint.

## Safe and healthy relationships

Domestic violence affects not only the people in the relationship but their friends, family and community. These effects can be painful and destructive but there are services that can offer help, information and support.

Most gay and lesbian relationships are based on love and respect and everyone has the right to seek a safe and healthy relationship.

## More Information

To find out more about domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships check out <http://ssdv.acon.org.au> or call ACON on **1800 06 30 60 / 9206 2000** (9am-6pm, Mon-Fri).

## The Police

In an emergency call the NSW Police on **000**. To find a local **Gay and Lesbian and/or Domestic Violence Liaison Officer** call the Police Switchboard on **9281 0000** or the Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project on **1800 06 30 60 / 9206 2116**.

## Support and Referral

If you think you, a friend or a family member may be in an abusive relationship call the NSW Department of Community Services Domestic Violence Line on **1800 65 64 63** (24 hrs, 7 days) for information and referrals. For same sex and heterosexual domestic violence. Calls to this number from your mobile will be charged to your account and the number will appear on your bill. Calls from home phones and public phones are free and number will not appear on your bill.



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