

# LGBTI DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

## Facts for service providers and professionals

Domestic and family violence (DFV) in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI) relationships is as common as it is in non-LGBTI relationships, about 1 in 3 having experienced it. Studies indicate that violence within LGBTI relationships is similar to non-LGBTI relationships in terms of prevalence, severity and the effects of relationship abuse. However, homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and other gender-based discrimination often create additional and specific difficulties for LGBTI people seeking service provision and support.

### HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?

Violence in LGBTI relationships have the same elements as all violent relationships, but there are some unique differences for LGBTI people:

- Using someone's intersex status, sexuality, gender, gender expression or transgender status against them.
- Using 'outing' as power and control. Outing can include someone's gender, sexuality, intersex status or HIV status.
- Controlling someone's HIV medications or access to gender transition related healthcare.
- Confidentiality and isolation within LGBTI communities.
- A lack of mainstream services that address the needs of LGBTI people, such as services for male victims, female perpetrators and transgender inclusive services.
- A fear of minimisation and/or discrimination from police and service providers.
- Fear around differing legal rights over children and assets.
- Many people find it difficult to recognise and accept abuse in LGBTI relationships due to gender stereotypes.

### HOW IT AFFECTS PEOPLE?

Most campaigns, publicity and literature on DFV focuses on non-LGBTI relationships which contributes to a general lack of awareness about what constitutes abuse and therefore LGBTI people may either not be aware that they are in an abusive relationship or not feel comfortable enough to talk about it. For many LGBTI people, they are not able to be open about their relationships, which limits their ability to reach out for help.

Finding appropriate support for LGBTI people remains a major issue. Homophobia, a fear of homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and societal constructs around gender prevent people from accessing services and impacts on support given to them.

There are currently no refuges for gay, bisexual and transgender men seeking to escape DFV and most existing services are accessible only to women and children.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Don't assume someone is or isn't LGBTI because of the way they look or what you see.
- Don't assume the gender of someone's partner.
- Treating everyone the same is not necessarily meeting their individual needs.
- Create a welcoming, confidential and culturally appropriate environment for LGBTI people.
- Use inclusive language, for example change the word 'spouse' to 'partner', don't use 'mr', 'miss', 'mrs', 'sir' or 'ma'am' at all or until you are sure that it does not offend anyone.

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### HOW CAN YOUR ORGANISATION HELP?

- Ensure your staff understand the unique aspects of LGBTI relationships and LGBTI DFV.
- Encourage and allow time for all staff to participate in LGBTI DFV educational programs (For upcoming training and events visit [www.acon.org.au/dfv](http://www.acon.org.au/dfv)).
- Make sure that your organisation does not uphold any exemptions from the Antidiscrimination Act.
- Display LGBTI DFV resources and materials in your organisation.
- Nurture active partnerships with LGBTI organisations.
- Add an inclusivity statement on your webpage or Facebook page.
- Add a sexual identity field and a gender identity field in intake forms.

### LGBTI SPECIFIC SERVICES IN NSW

#### ACON

LGBTI health organisation offering information, referrals, counselling, advocacy and practical support for LGBTI people in NSW experiencing DFV.  
92060 2000  
[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

**Inner City Legal Centre, Safe Relationships Project**  
Free legal advice and court support for LGBTIQ people experiencing DFV in NSW.  
9332 1966  
[www.iclc.org.au/srp](http://www.iclc.org.au/srp)

#### QLIFE

Free telephone and web based counselling, referrals and support for LGBTI people and their families.  
1800 184 527  
[www.qlife.org.au](http://www.qlife.org.au)

#### Twenty10

Provide a wide range of support services across New South Wales supporting people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities, their families and communities, people of all ages, including specialised services for young people.  
8594 9555  
[www.twenty10.org.au](http://www.twenty10.org.au)

#### The Gender Centre

Provides services such as counselling, accommodation, outreach and support for transgender, gender queer and gender questioning people in NSW.  
9569 2366  
[www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)

#### OII Australia – Intersex Australia

Provide information, education and peer support for people with intersex variations, nation-wide.  
[www.oii.org.au](http://www.oii.org.au)

#### 1800RESPECT Helpline

The 1800RESPECT website has LGBTIQ specific information sections for workers, friends & family and anyone experiencing DFV in LGBTI relationships.  
1800 737 732  
[www.1800respect.org.au/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-where-can-i-find-support](http://www.1800respect.org.au/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-where-can-i-find-support)

#### Another Closet

For information and referral details on LGBTIQ domestic and family violence.  
[www.anothercloset.com.au](http://www.anothercloset.com.au)

