

MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT SAME-SEX DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Wherever you are in your personal life, you deserve a healthy and safe relationship. All too often, GLBT folks are invisible victims of domestic violence. The fact is that domestic violence occurs in 25-33% of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships – approximately the same rate as in heterosexual relationships.

Myth

Abuse/battering that occurs in same-sex relationships is usually mutual.

Fact

“Mutual battering” is rare. A consensual “fight” is not going on. A cycle of violence that includes control and domination by one of the partners is occurring.

Myth

Women do not abuse; lesbian relationships are egalitarian. When women fight, they are not violent.

Fact

Abuse is about power and control, and all relationships are affected by issues of power. Even though two partners may be the same sex, differences in power can come from differences in financial earning or other factors.

Myth

It isn't really violence at all when gay men fight; it's just ‘boys being boys’.

Fact

The commonly held belief that it is acceptable and normal for men to be violent is false. This is much more than “boys being boys.” It is abuse. Unfortunately, with few positive relationship role models available, many same-gender couples view and accept violence by their partners as normal.

Domestic violence in same-sex relationships is distinctive in certain ways from domestic violence in heterosexual relationships.

- Lesbian and gay victims are more reluctant to report abuse to legal authorities.
 - Victims may not contact law enforcement agencies because doing so would force them to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Gay or lesbian batterers will threaten to “out” their victims to work colleagues, family, and friends.
 - This threat is amplified by the sense of isolation among gay and lesbian victims, since some may still be closeted from friends and family, have fewer civil rights protections, and lack access to the legal system.
- Abusers can threaten to take away the children from the victim.
 - In some states, adoption laws do not allow same-sex parents to adopt each other's children. The abuser can easily use the children as leverage to prevent the victim from leaving or seeking help.

Only 1 in 5 GLBT victims of domestic violence get help from service providers. If you or someone you know is in a violent relationship, help is available. Call your Employee Assistance Program. Counselors are available 24/7 to provide support and resources.

800-451-1834

MIIA MASSACHUSETTS
BASED
MEMBER
DRIVEN