

BEST PRACTICES — TOOLKIT —

NEW YORK STATE
LGBTQ
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE
— NETWORK —

INCREASING SERVICES
TO LGBTQ SURVIVORS
OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

INTRO

The New York State LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence Network (the Network) seeks to raise awareness of and improve response to the intimate partner violence that impacts lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities throughout the state. The Network supports service providers, advocates, policymakers and others by providing education and advocacy, fostering collaboration, and identifying and working towards needed change. This toolkit is a guide to help you begin to make your shelter space LGBTQ inclusive and ensure that LGBTQ survivors have better access to services statewide.

Intimate Partner Violence

— A pattern of behavior where one partner coerces, dominates, or isolates the other partner. It is the exertion of any form of power that is used to maintain control in a relationship.

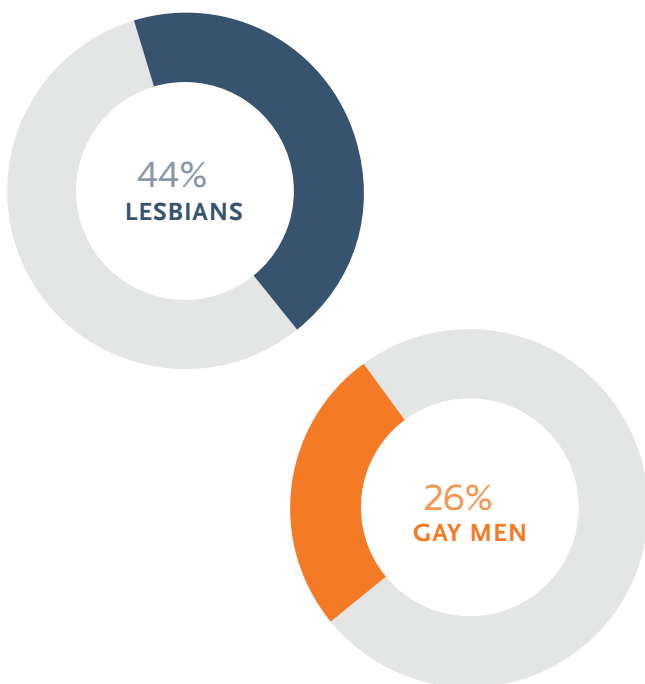
THE PROBLEM

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) affects many LGBTQ people, but there remains a great deal of silence surrounding IPV, both within LGBTQ communities and from traditional domestic violence service providers. Many domestic violence programs in New York State often focus solely on a heteronormative paradigm of domestic violence, i.e., on men's violence against women. Historically, DV programs have denied many LGBTQ survivors full access to services, including safe shelter, because LGBTQ survivors do not meet many programs' traditional understanding of who a survivor is or have not structured their programming to assist people beyond the heteronormative construct. As a result, LGBTQ survivors are forced to endure abuse far longer and with greater intensity because no competent service providers have opened their door to them. Some have been forced to choose between homelessness or going back to their abusive partner. This form of institutional oppression is retraumatizing and further isolating. Resources are often not prioritized in a way that provide the necessary support to LGBTQ survivors, nor that support prevention efforts, including the cultural transformation necessary to end the stigma and silence around IPV within LGBTQ communities. Transgender survivors of IPV often face even more pervasive and unique barriers and discrimination in trying to access safety and support. Raising awareness and education about these issues is one of the first steps to creating cultural change and policy shifts within your agency, to ensure that all survivors, across gender identity and sexual orientation, have access to safety, support, and services.



By framing IPV as an issue that exclusively impacts heterosexual, cisgender individuals, LGBTQ victims and survivors remain invisible and in danger, unable to access critical lifesaving prevention and support services.¹ This approach also does not accurately reflect both the lived experiences of survivors, as well as a growing body of research. NCAVP's most recent national report on intimate partner violence in 2013 documented 21 LGBTQ intimate partner violence homicides and over 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence from LGBTQ survivors across the country. NCAVP also found that

TRANSGENDER SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE WERE 1.9 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO FACE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, AND 3.9 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO FACE DISCRIMINATION DUE TO IPV².



Victims of SEXUAL VIOLENCE by intimate partner

1. Walters, M.L., Chen J., & Breiding, M.J. (2013). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)²
2. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-affected Intimate Partner Violence in 2013. Rep. New York: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2013. (Last ret. 8/27/2015).

Further, in January 2013, the Centers for Disease Control found that lesbian, gay and bisexual people experienced intimate partner violence and sexual violence at the **SAME OR HIGHER RATES AS HETEROSEXUAL PEOPLE:** nearly **44% OF LESBIANS** and **26% OF GAY MEN** have been the victim of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner over the course of their lifetime. **THE LIFETIME PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY ANY PERPETRATOR WAS: LESBIAN 46.4%, BISEXUAL (74.9%), GAY MEN (40.2%), and BISEXUAL MEN (47.4%).**

GENDER IDENTITY:

A term that describes how a person **IDENTIFIES** their own gender. A person's gender identity may be different than social norms and/or stereotypes of the sex they were assigned at birth. There are a **WIDE RANGE** of gender identities and expressions, including identifying as a man, woman, transgender, genderqueer, and/or identifying as gender non-conforming.

Gender identity **IS NOT STATIC AND CAN CHANGE** over time.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

A term that describes a person's physical or emotional **ATTRACTION** to people of a specific gender or multiple genders. It is the culturally defined set of meanings through which people describe their sexual attractions.

Sexual orientation **IS NOT STATIC AND CAN CHANGE** over time.

What is LGBTQ?

L **LESBIAN** term that describes a person who **IDENTIFIES AS A WOMAN** who is primarily or exclusively **ATTRACTED** to other people who identify as **WOMEN**.

G **GAY** A term that describes a person **WHO IDENTIFIES AS A MAN** who is primarily or exclusively **ATTRACTED TO** other people who identify as **MEN**. It is also sometimes used as an **UMBRELLA TERM** to describe LGBTQ communities

B **BISEXUAL** A term used to indicate attraction or potential for **ATTRACTION TO MORE THAN ONE GENDER**

T **TRANSGENDER** A term used broadly that refers primarily to individuals **WHO IDENTIFY DIFFERENTLY FROM THE SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH** or a term used by people for whom the sex they were assigned at birth is an incomplete or incorrect description of themselves. The term "genderqueer" has the same basic meaning but is used somewhat more loosely.

Q **QUEER** A political and sometimes controversial term that some LGBTQ people have reclaimed. Used frequently by younger LGBTQ people, activists, and academics, the term is broadly inclusive, and **CAN REFER EITHER TO GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR BOTH**. It is also sometimes used as an **UMBRELLA TERM** to describe LGBTQ communities.



ADDITIONAL TERMS:

HETERONORMATIVE – Systemic belief that heterosexuality and the binary gender system are superior. Also, the overall creation of institutions that benefit heterosexual people exclusively and/or oppress LGBTIQ people.

CISGENDER – The term used to describe people who is not transgender, or whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING – Adjective used by someone whose gender expression does not fit traditional socialized expectations of masculinity or femininity. This term is not synonymous with transgender identity, as not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender and not all transgender people identify as gender non-conforming.

TRANSMAN – Typically refers to an individual assigned as female at birth who at some point, starts to identify in a masculine way or as a man.

TRANSWOMAN – Typically refers to an individual assigned as male at birth who at some point, starts to identify in a more feminine way or as a woman.

TRANS* – Typically refers to someone who does not identify as cisgender and whose gender identity falls somewhere along the gender non-conforming spectrum. Someone who identifies as trans* may not identify with any iterations of masculine or feminine identities.

Barriers to Service³

Due to the problem outlined above, LGBTQ survivors of IPV face a host of barriers in attempting to seek safety, healing and services, including when survivors:⁴

ARE DENIED SERVICES or given access to limited range of services, such as emergency shelter (many of which are improperly classified as “women only”), due in part to gender identity or perceived gender identity, because these spaces are reserved for “women only,” which leaves gay and bisexual men, as well as transgender and gender non-conforming people, with limited or no access to shelter

EXPERIENCE INVISIBILITY and/or **REVICTIMIZATION** by service providers due to:

LACK OF LGBTQ INCLUSION in outreach and service material about IPV

Having to educate providers on LGBTQ sensitivity and cultural competency when seeking assistance

Facing **UNWELCOMING INTAKE** and other forms that do not reflect their experiences

FEAR OF COMING OUT/BEING OUTED

Experience **DISCRIMINATION** and **VIOLENCE WHEN REPORTING IPV** to authorities due to criminalization of LGBTQ communities

Experience **DISPROPORTIONATE RATES OF POVERTY** and **JOB INSTABILITY**, which in LGBTQ communities exacerbates inequities, often translating into **LIMITED HEALTH BENEFITS** and **LOWER ABILITY TO PAY** for needed services out of pocket.

3. Community Action Toolkit: For Addressing Intimate Partner Violence Against Transgender People, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp_trans_ipvtoolkit.pdf (Last Ret. 8/27/15)

4. the Network la Red Toolkit: Information on LGBTQ Partner Abuse <http://tnlr.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Partner-Abuse-handout-2010-for-providers.pdf> (Last Ret. 8/27/15)

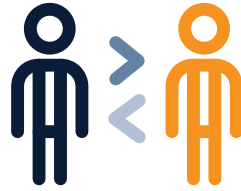
ACTION STEPS

There are many action steps you and your organization can take to work towards providing culturally competent and inclusive services to LGBTQ survivors of violence. Here are a few to start with:



ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL ACTION STEPS:

- **CREATE** LGBTQ inclusive forms, materials, internal policies and procedures
- **CREATE** all-gender, non-segregated restrooms
- **CREATE** a welcoming environment ⁵
- **DISPLAYING** LGBTQ-inclusive posters and images in the office or shelter
- **MAKING** LGBTQ books, resources, and pamphlets available to survivors
- **TRAIN ALL LEVELS OF STAFF** – especially security, reception, intake – in LGBTQ sensitivity
- **TRAINING** should be provided in new staff and volunteer orientation trainings as well as on an on-going basis as part of an agency's regular staff development.
- Agencies should **ENCOURAGE** and support staff in seeking out other LGBTQ trainings in the community.
- **DEVELOP** resources – create connections with LGBTQ service providers & organizations in your region
- **REVIEW EMPLOYMENT POLICIES** procedures and hire staff reflective of community diversity (LGBTQ diversity, racial diversity, etc.)
- **CREATE** advisory boards for LGBTQ individuals to shape/inform institutional policies
- **CREATE** and Implement anti-discrimination policies



INTERPERSONAL ACTION STEPS:

- Use **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE** (such as “partner”) and avoid gender binaries
- Refer to people by **THE NAME THEY PREFER** regardless of what you may see on their identification.
- When referring to the person, use **THE PRONOUN** they currently use.
- If you do not know, then **DO NOT ASSIGN ONE TO THEM**. Use ‘they’ or “that person” in place of the pronoun
- **DON'T ASSUME** anyone's sexual orientation or gender identity
- **AVOID “SIGHTSEEING”** into people's lives – ask yourself if your questions are relevant to your work.
- **RESPECT** self-identification & self-determination
- **ALLOW SPACE** for clients to build trust with you
- If you make a mistake, **DO NOT OVER-APOLOGIZE**
- **CONFRONT CONDUCT** of other clients or staff that may be discriminatory or prejudice (jokes, comments, intentional mis-gendering)

5. Ibid

TRAININGS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE:

Remember, this toolkit is just a beginning. As you work to create an inclusive shelter space, it is important to provide extensive training for all levels of your staff. You can request a free training from the **NEW YORK STATE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE LGBTQ TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER.**

TAKE ACTION!

If your organization is interested in taking on-going action please consider applying to join the
**NEW YORK STATE
LGBTQ INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE NETWORK.**

**FOR MORE
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This toolkit was created by the
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THE NEW YORK STATE LGBTQ
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THE NEW YORK CITY ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT.