



**Domestic Violence
and Abuse, and The
Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, and
Transgender +
(LGBT+) Communities**





0800 999 5428
www.galop.org.uk

This information sheet offers advice on what constitutes domestic violence and abuse, and outlines some of the unique aspects of domestic abuse as experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender + (LGBT+) people.

Your safety should always be your first priority and if you are ever in immediate danger, call the police on 999. Local domestic abuse services should be able to provide support. If you need confidential advice from an LGBT+ specific service, you can contact the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0800 999 5428.

Contains information about:

■ Domestic Abuse

What is domestic violence and abuse?

The UK Government defines **domestic violence and abuse** as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Domestic abuse also includes forced marriage, so called 'honour'-based violence and female genital mutilation.

Forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage, and pressure or abuse is used. Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as form of violence against men and women, domestic abuse, child abuse, and is a serious abuse of human rights.

'Honour'-based abuse is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour or the family and/or community.

Domestic abuse can be perpetrated in the **home, workplace or a public place**, as well as by **phone, text message or online**.

Domestic abuse is a crime which affects individuals across all cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, income groups, ages, and religions.

LGBT+ people's experiences of domestic abuse

There are many parallels between LGBT+ people's experiences of domestic abuse and that of their heterosexual cisgender peers. This includes the impact on the survivors and a range of violent behaviours which may include psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, forced marriage and so-called 'honour'-based violence.

In addition, LGBT+ people may also have their sexuality and gender identity used against them as a tactic for the abuser to keep the power and control in the relationship.

These additional factors often underpin the complexity of issues LGBT+ survivors face and include the following abusive behaviours:

- Intimidation and threats of disclosure of sexual orientation and gender identity to family, friends, work colleagues, community and others.
- Disclosing gender history, sexual orientation or HIV status without consent.
- Undermining the sense of sexual and/or gender identity/self-expression, or making a person feel guilty or ashamed of their sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Limiting or controlling access to LGBT+ spaces or resources.
- Using immigration law to threaten a person with deportation to the country of origin, which might be unsafe due to e.g. anti-gay legislation.

LGBT+ survivors may also be coerced or manipulated to believe:

- That no help or support is available to them because they identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or that for this reason, they deserve the abuse.
- That driven by societal misconceptions of what constitutes domestic abuse, LGBT+ survivors have not been subject to domestic abuse.

Trans survivors are one of the most hidden groups of domestic abuse survivors. While trans and cisgender people may face similar patterns of abuse, many trans survivors also face specific forms of abuse related to their trans identity.

Trans specific abuse may include:

- Outing a person as trans and/or disclosing their gender history without consent.
- Deliberately using the wrong pronoun or using a person's 'deadname'.
- Forcing a person to perform a gender they do not wish to present as.
- Coercing a person into not pursuing gender transition (including denying or withholding access to medical treatment or hormones etc.)
- Ridiculing or exotifying body or body parts.
- Assaulting medically altered body parts or forcing exposure of surgical scars.
- Exploiting internalised transphobia.

With specific reference to LGBT+ people's experiences, domestic abuse can encompass the following forms:

- **Psychological** – (Threat of) disclosing sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status or any other personal information to family, employers, friends etc, without consent. Using other personal characteristics or circumstances, such as an individual's race, age, immigration status, religion, physical ability and/or ethnicity, against a person.
- **Physical** – Pushing, hitting, punching, choking, biting, throwing things, assault with a weapon, withholding medication, forced substance abuse, hurting pets, damage to property, controlling food intake, stalking or murder.
- **Sexual** – Unwanted advances, unwanted sexual contact, corrective rape, rape, forcing sex, intentional exposure to HIV or sexually transmitted infections, incest, or the filming and distribution of sexually explicit images or video without permission.
- **Financial** – Controlling money and resources, forcing/coercing a person to pay for most things, forcing/coercing a person to live beyond their means, or taking out loans in the individual's name without their permission.
- **Emotional** – Name-calling and insults, lying, belittling, and undermining self-esteem, undermining gender identity or sexuality, manipulation, humiliation, threats of suicide, self-harm, limiting and individual's movement or monitoring whereabouts.

Domestic violence and abuse check sheet

Does your partner, former partner, or a family member?

- Call you names, humiliate, criticise or belittle you?
- Use your gender or sexuality as a basis for threats, intimidation or harm?
- Threaten to harm you or others that you love?
- Threaten to hurt your pets?
- Control your access to money and require you to account in detail for what you spend?
- Make unwanted advances or force you into unwanted sexual contact?
- Hit, kick, bite, slap, throw things or use other forms of physical violence on you?
- Control or discourage your contact with friends, family, work or the LGBT+ 'scene'?
- Emotionally blackmail you and threaten to harm themselves if you leave or seek help?
- Limit your movement or monitor your whereabouts?
- Accuse you of cheating on them?
- Prevent you from working or attending school/education?
- Refuse to engage in safe sex?
- Blame their drinking or drug use for their abusive behaviour?
- Use, or threaten to use, a weapon against you?
- Damage your belongings?
- Intentionally use the wrong gender pronoun?
- Deny you access to medical treatment or hormones?
- Monitor your communication with others?
- Uses your race, immigration status, physical ability and/or ethnicity against you?
- Pressure or force you into marriage without your consent?
- Seek to minimise the harm caused by their behaviour?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you may be experiencing domestic abuse.

To explore your options, contact: National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline Tel: 0800 999 5428 / Email: info@galop.org.uk