Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ communities

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- Intimate Partner Violence
- Anti-LGBTQ Hate Violence
- Sexual Violence
- Anti-LGBTQ Police Misconduct

• Free advocacy, counseling, support groups, and legal services
• Specialized in serving the LGBTQ community
• Services in Boston, Western MA, Fall River, and Cape Cod
• Education for providers
• Community events
EXISTING RESEARCH SHOWS

30% to 50% percent of transgender people experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime

DEFINITION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

A pattern of behavior used by one person in an intimate relationship to assert power and control over the other person.

*IPV does not have to include physical violence.

*IPV is also called domestic violence, partner abuse, or dating violence.
CYCLE OF ABUSE

**Phase II:**
**Tension building**
- The abusive partner may make threats, angry gestures, or looks.
- The survivor feels like they are “walking on eggshells” to avoid upsetting their partner.

**Phase I:**
**Kindness and loving**
- The abusive partner may be loving, apologetic, attentive, or promise change.
- The survivor may feel guilty, responsible, minimize the abuse, or consider reconciliation.

**Phase III:**
**Abusive incidents**
- The abusive partner uses tactics of abuse, is unpredictable, claims a loss of control, or blames their partner.
- The survivor may feel traumatized, afraid, trapped. The survivor is most likely to leave at this time.
Of trans survivors of IPV, it is estimated that 25% do not identify their experience as abuse.

As providers, we are in a position to help trans survivors identify IPV and get support.
### Common Tactics of Abuse May Include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Yelling, Blaming, Lying, Jealousy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Monitoring calls, Not allowing contact with others, Disrupting friendships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Controlling money, Disrupting work or school, Not paying bills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Coercion, Assault, Sharing videos or photos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Threats, Hitting, Kicking, Disrupting sleep</td>
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Fenway Health

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WHY ISOLATION?

- creates a social deprivation
- creates dependence on the abusive partner
- allows dominance of abusive partner’s worldview
- prevents friends and family from contradicting abusive partner
- prevents the partner from seeking support from others
# Trans-Specific Isolation Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denying the survivor access to trans community</th>
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<td>Causing scenes at Pride or other LGBTQ events</td>
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<td>Outing a survivor to family, their work, or their religious group</td>
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<td>Convincing the survivor they will be rejected by others for their trans identity</td>
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<td>Using the fear of external transphobia to as a justification to isolate</td>
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<td>Acting as a gatekeeper to trans community</td>
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CASE EXAMPLE

Lesbian cisgender woman isolates her partner, a transman, from LGBTQ community
TRANS-SPECIFIC EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Blaming abuse on the partner’s trans identity
- Not allowing the partner to be out
- Pressuring partner to be out
- Saying they are embarrassed to be seen in public with their partner

IDENTITY/CULTURAL ABUSE

using personal characteristics to demean, manipulate and control the partner.

Some of these tactics overlap with other forms of abuse, particularly emotional abuse.

This category is comprised of oppressions including racism, sexism, classism, ageism, able-ism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.
TYPES OF ANTI-TRANS IDENTITY ABUSE

- Denial of trans identity
- Using anti-trans slurs
- Using gender stereotypes
- Control of gender expression
- "You are not trans"
- "You aren't doing it right"
- "I will show you how"
- "It's not okay to be trans"

CASE EXAMPLE

Straight Cisgender woman becomes abusive when her “husband” transitions to be a woman
TRANS-SPECIFIC SEXUAL ABUSE

- Demanding sex as a way to affirm gender identity
- Intentionally calling body parts by the wrong names
- Using gender roles to control how the survivor has sex
- Coercing survivor into having sex in a way that doesn’t align with their gender
- Forcing sex in exchange for housing
- Eroticizing the survivor’s body without permission

TRANS-SPECIFIC FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Outing the survivor at work
- Not allowing survivor to pay for transition expenses
- Not allowing the survivor to buy gender-related products
- Supporting the survivor financially in order to control
- Using gender roles as a way to demand the survivor pays more

CASE EXAMPLE

Cisgender man offers to take care of a transgender woman financially and then uses this as justification for control and abuse.
TRANS-SPECIFIC PHYSICAL ABUSE

Targeting genitals or chest for physical violence

Not letting the survivor heal from gender-related surgeries

Denying the survivor access to hormones

Blocking transition-related care and recovery

Threats of to commit suicide or homicide

TACTICS WHEN A TRANS PERSON IS ABUSIVE

- Demanding sex as a way to affirm gender identity
- Demanding survivor pay for transition expenses
- Accusing survivor of transphobia to control behaviors
- Claiming survivor's identity undermines theirs
- Denying partner is affected by transition
- Threats of to commit suicide
CASE EXAMPLE

Transgender individual is abusive of their partner who identifies as non-binary
BARRIERS FOR TRANS SURVIVORS

- Police
- Health care
- Social services
- Courts
- Systemic transphobia
- Work
- Church or temple
BEST PRACTICES

- Continue to learn about transgender communities and their needs.
- Use gender neutral language to refer to clients (they, them) until you learn otherwise. Then ask for the survivor’s name and pronoun.
- When you see signs of abuse, discuss it with the trans individual.
- Tell them it is not their fault.
- Be able to refer to an LGBTQ-specific organization.
- Be realistic about homophobia & gender bias a person might encounter. Respect their choice if they opt not to enter a system they perceive to be biased.
- Have images that reflect the diversity of people you serve in your office and promotional materials.
- Be aware of your own areas of discomfort and biases.
- Get more training and educate others, especially providers.
LGBTQ-SPECIFIC IPV RESOURCES

- FORGE- Trans-specific anti-violence resources: forge-forward.org
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs: www.avp.org
- The Northwest Network: nwnetwork.org
- National LGBTQ Institute on IPV: LGBTQIPV.org
- VAWA special collections - Serving trans and non-binary survivors of domestic violence:
  vawnet.org/sc/serving-trans-and-non-binary-survivors-domestic-and-sexual-violence
QUESTIONS