

violence. Even today, there are fewer support groups for lesbian and bi-sexual women and such groups for transgender individuals are even more rare. Anger management programs for female perpetrators may be difficult to locate or not available. In some locations, restraining orders for same-sex partners are not available. Victim's advocates may not be familiar with lesbian, bi-sexual female or transgender relationships. Often, however, the crisis lines, shelters, police, and community organizations are very helpful.

What You Should Do

- *Never* be provoked into retaliating with physical or verbal abuse yourself.
- *Always* talk to your doctor about your health and seek medical attention for any injuries. If you are seeing a mental health counselor, tell them about your concerns. They may not ask. Many counselors believe it only happens to heterosexual women.
- *Always* keep a record of dates and times of incidents and keep copies of medical records and police reports. Take photographs of injuries. Keep these documents in a safe place.
- *Always* take legal advice.
- *Insist* that police record your injuries, take a report, and that it is recorded accurately.
- *Don't keep silent.* Seek out counseling for yourself, contact official domestic violence and victim services offices where available, tell a friend.
- *Recognize* that it happens to others. You are not alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help from others. It is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength.
- *Find help.* The Stop Abuse For Everyone™ website www.safe4all.org has a list of resources which may indicate what kinds of help are available in your area. Listings are frequently updated. *If there is a helping organization in your area that stamped their contact information on this brochure, you should*

contact them first. The SAFE website also has an on-line support/discussion group which you can join.

- *Plan for the worst.* Have a safe and secret place to go to, and have emergency money ready.
- **Don't make excuses for the abusers violence—get help and leave!**
- *Volunteer.* When you have become a survivor of domestic violence, volunteer with the organization that gave you this brochure, or Stop Abuse For Everyone™, and help others in similar situations.
- *Read more about it.* *Naming the Violence—Speaking out about Lesbian Battering*, K. Lobel, Ed., Seal Press, 1986. *Violence in Gay and Lesbian Domestic Partnerships*, C. Renzetti & C. Miley, Harrington Park Press, 1996. *Intimate Betrayal: Domestic Violence in Lesbian Relationships*, E. Kaschak, Ed., Haworth Press, 2002. *Women to Women Sexual Violence—Does She Call it Rape?* L. Girshick, Northeastern University Press, 2002. Most books are available through a link via the SAFE website or order through your local bookstore.

The helping agency that gave you this brochure can be contacted here:

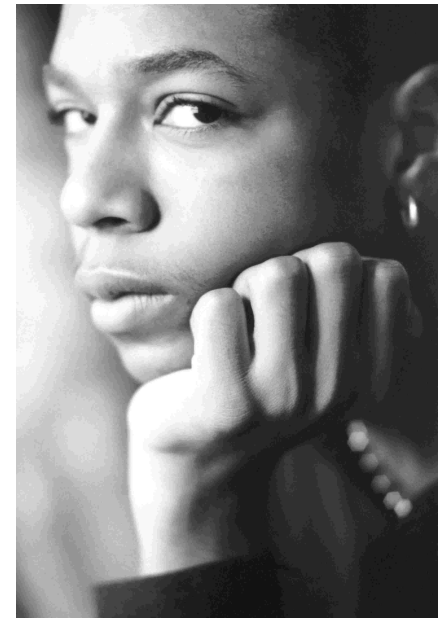


Stop Abuse For Everyone™ is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. PO Box 950 Tualatin, OR 97062. www.safe4all.org
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ARE YOU

(Or Someone You Care About)



**A
 LESBIAN, BISEXUAL
 OR TRANSGENDERED
 FEMALE VICTIM
 OF INTIMATE PARTNER
 VIOLENCE!**

SAMPLE

Yes, it does happen to lesbian, bi, and transgendered women! According to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' 1998 report: "The findings suggest a domestic violence prevalence rate of between 25 and 33%, comparable to the findings on prevalence in heterosexual couples."

What are the signs of domestic violence?

- Do you change your behavior because you are afraid that violence might result if you don't? Do you often have the feeling of "walking on eggshells"?
- Do you feel that no matter what you do, you can't do anything right? Do they tell you that you are worthless, unattractive, that no one else would want you?
- Has your partner ever hurt or threatened to hurt you or your children?
- Does your partner abuse drugs or alcohol? Do they become out of control get extremely angry and then try to make up afterwards, say they are sorry, but you constantly worry about the next time they get high?
- Has your partner ever tried to keep you from getting medical help?
- Do they prevent you from sleeping at night? Are you worried about being attacked in your sleep?
- Has your partner ever deliberately destroyed or damaged something you value?
- Does your partner do things at you break objects during an argument?
- Is your partner extremely jealous? Does your intimate partner unjustly accuse you of flirting with others or having affairs? Is it hard for you to maintain relationships with others because your intimate partner doesn't like them?
- Does your partner force you to have sex that made you do things during sex that make you feel uncomfortable or forced sex with others?
- Does your partner sometimes spend large sums of money and refuse to tell you why or what the money was spent on?

- Has your intimate partner ever kicked you, or thrown hot liquids at you? Has your partner ever bit you, hit you with a hard object, scratched you, slapped you, hit you with their fist, thrown hard objects at you, or threatened you with a knife or gun? Threaten suicide if you leave?
- Has your partner threatened to 'out' you if you didn't do what they wanted?
- Told you that abuse is just part of B/D or S/M sex play, even when you don't consent?
- Tell you that police or other authorities don't care and won't respond to a lesbian, bi-sexual female or transgender complaint?
- Threaten to reveal private things about you to the courts or ex-spouse so that you might lose custody or visitation rights with your children?
- Blame you for 'causing' her to lose control?

If any of the above has happened to you, you are experiencing domestic abuse. If several of the things above have been happening, you are in severe danger.

How Lesbians Cope

- *Take on an "I can handle it" attitude.* Even if you have been hurt much worse by an accident, playing sports or other physical activities, that is not the same thing as being physically attacked by your intimate partner. It hurts emotionally as well as physically. Continuing this pattern can result in depression, substance abuse, loss of confidence, and suicide. You can also get in debt, and lose your job or by someone your partner has induced to leave you.
- *"Don't Do Nothing Must Be Me."* While it is true that when committing all types of crimes, men commit more crimes than women, the Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* and other sources, indicate that women are increasingly engaging in all types of crime, and will eventually equal the male rate in nearly every type of crime. Domestic violence is a crime. Abusers often blame the victim or contend it was only because they were drunk or stoned. Ask yourself this question: "If a TV news crew were

here at the time-would they have been able to control themselves?"

- *Hiding From it*-Women in the lesbian or bi-sexual community and transgender people may already feel isolated, and feel there is no place to turn to, and fail to seek out available resources. In a report from Health Canada** NONE of the women self-identified as being in abusive lesbian relationships sought help from police, shelters, or crisis lines.

* Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology Vol. 16, No. 2 Fall, 2001.

**Abuse in Lesbian Relationships: Information and Resources Minister of Public Works and Government Services Cat. H72-21/153-1998

Why Lesbians Stay

- *Fear of economic and material loss* - Lesbian and bi-sexual or transgender people who live together often make agreements on household duties and sharing of finances. Leaving means breaking that agreement, and possible loss of possessions and money.
- *Protecting others* - The abusive partner may have children, and the other partner may stay in order to continue to act as a protector for the children from abuse. The victim may feel that her children may be damaged if she leaves a stable home environment that she helped create. The victim may be concerned her partner may reveal private things about her to others or her ex-spouse that may cause her custody or visitation problems.
- *Fear of Outing* - For lesbians who have not revealed their sexual orientation to others, a common tactic of the abusive partner is to threaten to reveal the sexual orientation and thereby cause problems, such as loss of relationships or even employment.
- *Few Resources* - There are 24 hotlines and shelters available for female victims of domestic violence, but until recent years, few knew how to deal with victims of female partner

