



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

# Intimate Partner Violence & LGBTQ+ Community

PHE NEY (Yorkshire & Humber)

# Today's talk

Domestic Violence and Abuse - Terms and Definitions

Causes and nature of IPV

Current situation in UK

Gender and Sexuality Considerations & Variation

- Gender

- Sexuality

Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

- Mental health

- Physical health

- Behavioural

Services & Gaps

Key messages from today

# Domestic Violence & Abuse - Definitions

## Domestic violence and abuse - Crown Prosecution Service (2017)

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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

## Serious Crime Act 2015

### **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.

### Intimate Partner Violence

Any physical, sexual or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse

# Current situation

ONS Crime Survey England & Wales – Year ending March 2020

- 5.5% of adults 16-74 experienced DVA in past year – 2.3 million.
- Ratio 2:1 women to men
- Asked 'since age 16' – 8.8 million adults, or over 20% of adults
- Likely to be underestimated as domestic abuse largely goes unreported

## Covid-19 Impact

Police reports increased – but this trend started pre-Covid so impact not clear

London Metropolitan police service received increased number of calls for domestic incidents

Largely driven by third-party calls

People spending more time at home (?)

General increase in demand for domestic abuse victim services

May be increase in number of victims

May be increase in duration or severity of abuse due to lockdown restrictions

More information and research needed

21% of victims  
report abuse to  
police

# Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

UN defines as an 'act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.'

ONS Crime Survey England & Wales – Year ending March 2020

- Ratio 2:1 women to men

Traditional gendered models focus on influence of patriarchy and constructed nature of coercive control creating men's violence towards women

Traditional views of the “violent nature” of men versus women

# Causes and nature of IPV

- Complex combination of motivations: Power/control, self-defence, expression of negative emotion, retaliation, jealousy
- While abuse may be impacted by both gender and sexuality – too often these are conflated
- Important to consider unique experiences associated with both

# A variety of issues faced in LGBTQ+ community

## **Studies show LGBT people are:**

- less likely to name IPV or domestic abuse (but experience IPV and abusive behaviour)
- greater risk in some health areas; self harm, addiction, suicide, alcohol
- if disabled or have a minority ethnicity – an even greater risk
- fear of “coming out” to eg, GP/service providers and so less likely to take up screening, information, and preventative services

# Gender – Cisgender people

## Cisgender Female

- Majority of research on IPV victimisation focuses on female victims in opposite-sex relationships
- Is a substantial issue worldwide

## Cisgender Male

- Research on male victims in opposite-sex relationships – less well studied
- Experiences similar to female victims in opposite-sex relationships, but also some differences
- Less visible in society – possibly due to different coping mechanisms



# Gender - Transgender People

Research on transgender people and IPV victimisation – limited amount of research

Existing research suggests higher number of incidents of IPV than cisgender people

Small study in Scotland – one of only to study experiences of IPV victimisation of transgender people  
(The Scottish Trans Alliance, 2010)

- 80% respondents had experienced abuse by a partner
- Only 60% recognised this as abuse
- Most common was transphobic emotional abuse
- Of those reporting abuse – 98% reported at least one negative impact on their wellbeing – psychological and emotional issues most common

## Unique experiences with IPV

Some similarities to experiences of cisgender victims (e.g., control, physical violence)

Some abuse targeted at gender identity – inappropriate pronouns; telling them they're not a “real” man/woman; ridicule of gender identity; denying access to medical treatment (e.g., hormones); hiding items that allow expression of gender identity; threats to “out” the victim to friends/family

# Sexuality

Most research on IPV concerned with women in opposite-sex relationships

Needs of people in same-sex relationships in relation to IPV are under-researched

Evidence that violence in same-sex relationships occur at similar rates to opposite-sex relationships

Likely to be higher as LGBTQ+ victims less likely to report abuse (Sylask & Edwards 2015)

Some research supports higher rates of IPV in same-sex relationships

Traditional views may be shaping perception/expectation

E.g., male same sex relationships more violent because men are more violent; female same sex relationships not violent because women are not violent

Views perpetuate invisibility of victim groups & may lead to victims not recognising abuse

Types of abuse – Similar to transgender people, can be linked with sexual identity

Threats of “outing” to friends, family, place of work.

# Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

All forms of IPV and DVA linked with negative health and wellbeing outcomes for all victims

Different types of abuse experienced together – effects worse than any single type – cumulative effect

Impacts on mental health – PTSD, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, social connectedness, loneliness.

Impacts on physical health – injury, sexually transmitted diseases, migraines, sexual issues, low health-related quality of life (HRQoL)

Behavioural impacts – substance misuse, smoking, alcohol abuse

# Potentially unique issues for LGBTQ+ community

- Difficulty recognising abuse
- Lack of LGBTQ+ awareness of IPV
- Isolation from LGBTQ+ community
- Experiencing marginalisation in multiple forms
- Cumulative effect – multiple types of abuse create more negative outcomes

# Limitations to research

Most studies pull samples from help-seeking populations - people who don't seek help or who don't recognise abuse are not included in research looking into experiences of IPV

LGBTQ+ populations largely unrepresented in research

Priority on women and girls in opposite-sex relationships not misplaced – supported by crime statistics  
However, focus on transgender people and those in same-sex relationships is greatly needed.

# Prevention of DV – LGBT communities

Understanding of LGBT context is necessary to identify DV!

## Similarities

- DV is about power & control, interpersonal violence, isolation, with at least 1 in 4 prevalence

## Differences

- Lack of awareness of LGBT DV (within & outside of LGBT communities)
- Additional LGBT barriers; homophobia, gender stereotypes, coming out
- Lack of services – what's the point of disclosure?
- Perpetrator/s use additional strategies eg, threats to out, the past
- Perpetrator's power is reinforced when agencies, CJS fail to intervene

Inclusive approach to DV assessment needed including LGBT considerations

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50/evidence/report-4-broken-rainbow-uk-national-lgbt-domestic-violence-service-pdf-430408045>

# Effective responses to LGBT DV

- Helping health practitioners to respond effectively
- Integrate LGBT domestic violence risk factors in assessments; first relationship, under 35yrs of age if LGBT identified, (need more research)
- Reinforce confidentiality statements to include sexual orientation (encourage disclosure)
- Apply DV protocols equally; where DV suspected, separate and treat individual away from partner/friend/abuser
- (similar to heterosexual victim separated from abuser/male partner)
- Have referral/sign post information available in public areas

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50/evidence/report-4-broken-rainbow-uk-national-lgbt-domestic-violence-service-pdf-430408045>

## LGBT people experience domestic violence too...

Does your partner use your sexuality by:

Telling you that all abuse is 'mutual' in a same sex / lesbian / gay relationship?

Making threats to 'out' you at work, with family or friends?

Questioning where you go, or put you down for going out on the Scene?

Getting jealous, possessive or angry about your friends or family?

Telling you you're not a real LGBT person based on how you look, act, or past relationships?

Do you:

Feel responsible for your partner's behaviour and take the blame for their problems?

Worry about upsetting your partner, or being the cause of an argument?

Sometimes get the 'silent treatment' and feel on edge?

Feel nervous in your partner's company, but when away from them feel more confident and easier?

**You're not alone.**  
**Research shows 1 in 4 LGBT people may experience domestic violence.**



## Broken Rainbow National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline

**0300 999 5428 (LGBT)**  
(LGBT = 5428 on telephone keypad)

Run by LGBT people for LGBT people

Office: 08452 60 55 60  
mail@broken-rainbow.org.uk  
www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

\* 0300 numbers are billed as 01/02 landline numbers.

Funded by:  


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Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic Violence Service (UK).  
Charity Reg No: 1103624. Company No: 5009850.  
We are members of the Telephone Helpline Association.



## Broken Rainbow UK

*LGBT people experience domestic violence too..*



For lesbian, gay, bisexual  
& transgender people  
experiencing  
domestic violence



# Key messages from today

- Domestic violence is a serious public health issue with serious impacts on the health and wellbeing of victims
- Focus on women in opposite-sex relationships is essential
- Focus urgently needed on IPV and people across gender and sexual identities
- Under-reporting – the true numbers are not in the numbers
- Cumulative effect – layers matter and increase severity of impact

# Thank you.

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