

# Intimate Partner Violence Fact Sheet

## What is Intimate Partner Violence?

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is emotional, verbal, physical or sexual violence occurring between partners. IPV takes place regardless of sexual orientation, race, social status, economic status, age group or educational background. IPV is not a heterosexual phenomenon nor is it based on gender. IPV is a choice to exert power and control over one's partner.

## Is IPV Always Physical Abuse?

In IPV abusers use control, rape, power, manipulation, isolation, lies, intimidation, weapons, economic control, harassment, verbal and emotional abuse, racism, and coercive and violent actions against their partners. IPV does not necessarily leave a visible wound or bruise.

## Unique Challenges That LGBTQ Individuals Face When Experiencing IPV

- Homosexuality is a divisive issue for many families that may result in the rejection of the family members who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Therefore, many LGBTQ individuals find a sense of belonging with their partners that they may not experience with their own families. This sense of belonging can make it difficult to end an abusive relationship.
- Institutional biases, such as heterosexism and homophobia, may decrease access to the services or support available to LGBTQ individuals who are experiencing IPV.
- Abusers may employ homophobic rhetoric in the treatment of their partners, reinforcing shame and fear in their partners.

## Statistics About Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Communities

Little research has been done on LGBTQ IPV. One reason is that scholarship on the LGBTQ community is in its infancy, and much of the research that exists concentrates on sexuality or the experience of coming out. Second, LGBTQ IPV is under-reported because of victims' experiences of homophobia, heterosexism and racism.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), which is made up of 33 members nationwide, is one of the few organizations that gather statistics on IPV in LGBTQ relationships. **NCAVP reports the following:**\*

### Nationwide:

- IPV occurs in 1 out of 4 heterosexual relationships, and it is predicted that similar rates exist in LGBTQ relationships.
- About 34% of the reported victims of IPV were between 19 and 49 years old.
- Over 38% of the victims who reported incidences of IPV were people of color.