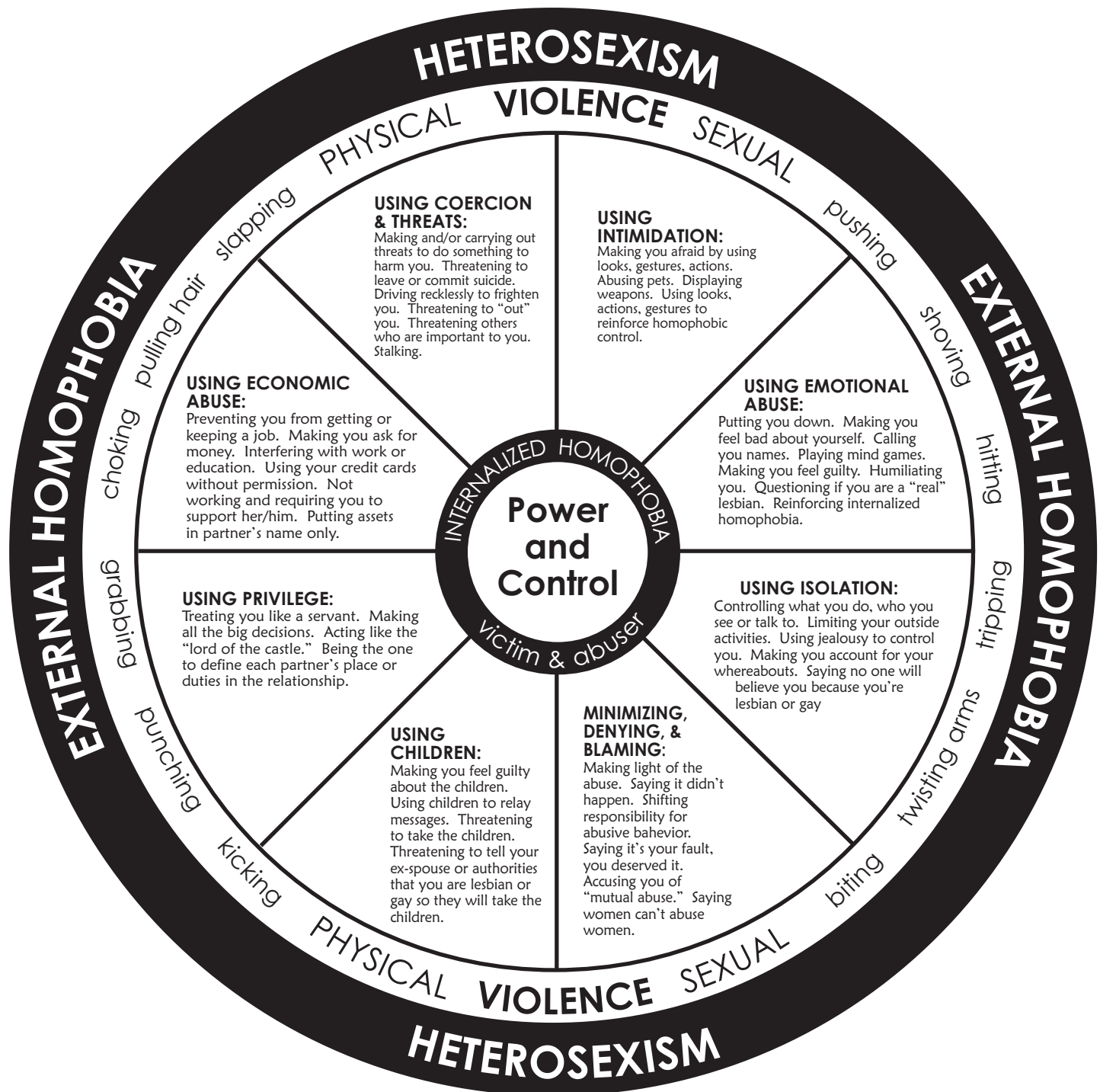


LESBIAN/GAY POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Produced and distributed by:

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Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence

IPV Survivors--including LGBT Survivors--may experience:

LGBT Survivors may also experience:

Emotional Abuse

- Put downs
- Humiliation
- Questioning the validity of the survivor's gender identity or sexual orientation
- Controlling how partner expresses their gender or sexuality
- Using homo/bi/transphobic slurs

Minimizing, Denying or Blaming

- Minimizing abuse
- Blaming survivor for the abuse
- Accusing survivor of "mutual abuse"
- Denying abuse can occur in same sex relationships or with transgender partner

Physical Abuse

- Shoving, pushing
- Slapping, hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Strangulation
- Withholding hormones for gender transition
- Forced public displays of affection in areas that are not LGBT friendly to intimidate or scare partner
- Forced public displays of affection that "out" a partner

Sexual Abuse

- Physical assaults to "sexual" body areas
- Forced sex
- Refusal to allow safe sex practices
- Using gender roles to control what partner does sexually
- Forcing partner to have sex in a way that doesn't align with their gender identity

Cultural/Identity Abuse

- Using the survivor's culture/identity against them
- Preventing survivors from observing the customs of their faith
- Using the survivor's sexual orientation or gender identity against them
- Reinforcing internalized homo/bi/transphobia

Using Children

- Using children to relay abusive messages
- Threatening to take the children
- Threatening to harm the children
- Threats to or revealing sexual orientation and gender identity to children
- Threats to use sexual orientation or gender identity to gain custody of children

Using Isolation

- Limiting the survivor's activities and contact with others
- Making survivors account for their whereabouts
- Threatening to or isolating from LGBT networks and social spaces
- Threatening to "out" survivors to estrange them from family or friends

Economic Abuse

- Controlling finances
- Making survivor ask for money
- Interfering with work or education
- Using credit cards without permission
- Threatening to "out" partner to employer
- Identity theft which can be easier if the partner is the same sex

“I have known I was lesbian since I was in high school. Last year I met an amazing woman at a conference. We visited one another to check out our attraction and it was electric. I was on long-term disability from my job because of health problems. We decided that I would leave my home in the city and move in with her on an acreage near a lake.

I knew she was volatile – that was part of the excitement – but after the first few days, I realized this was something different than I’d experienced before. She would flip out over nothing, yell at me, and then go silent for hours. One day she came at me screaming, scratching and kicking. I fought her off, but I had scratches and bruises all over.

That was just the first time. Now I’m on “red alert” all the time, because I don’t know when she will flip out again. I am hundreds of miles from my friends, I’ve sold most of my possessions, and I know almost nobody in this new community. I love being by the lake, but I need to get away from her and re-build my life.”

So what is abuse?

ABUSE IS A PATTERN OF CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

Abuse in LGBTQ relationships happens when partners use psychological or physical ways to get and keep control over the other partner. They may do it to express feelings, to get their own way or to prevent the abused partner from leaving the relationship. Abused partners often change their own behaviour to meet the abusive partner’s demands, hoping the abuse will stop.

The abuse can and does result in physical, sexual, emotional or financial harm. The harm can be to the abused partner’s public or private life.

Abuse and violence in intimate relationships do not happen “just once.” They are not “an isolated incident.” Abuse happens over months and years. If the abuse continues, it usually becomes more frequent and more severe.

Abusive behaviours are always a choice. It does not matter what the abuser’s background or experience is. Abusive partners must take responsibility for their behaviour. No one has the right to abuse someone else, and no one deserves to be abused.

TACTICS OF ABUSE

Abuse can take many forms. Whatever the form, abuse tactics are intended to undermine the partner and lower the partner’s sense of personal strength and value. The most visible abuse tactics may be physical, but less visible forms of abuse can be just as destructive.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE TACTICS cause emotional pain and injury. The abusive partner uses emotional or mental weapons rather than physical assaults on the abused person. Psychological abuse virtually always accompanies other forms of abuse and includes:

Emotional abuse tactics

- Puts down, insults or humiliates the other at home or in public
- Blames the other partner
- Lies to the other partner
- Has peaks and valleys of emotional extremes: happy one moment, outraged the next

Control tactics

- Isolates the other partner and restricts his or her freedom
- Controls contact the other partner has with friends and relatives

Spiritual abuse tactics

- Interferes with or makes fun of the other’s spiritual beliefs and practices
- Makes it difficult for the other partner to be in contact with his or her spiritual community

Financial abuse tactics

- Controls all the finances so the other partner has little access to financial information
- Steals money or uses the partner’s credit cards without permission
- Tries to make the other partner financially dependent
- Makes financial decisions that affect the partner without consulting him or her

Intimidation tactics are any words or actions one partner uses to scare the other.

One partner could:

- Destroy the other partner’s property or possessions
- Threaten to harm or kill the partner
- Threaten to harm or kill the partner’s children or pets
- Stalk or harass the other partner after the relationship has ended
- “Out” or threaten to “out” a partner to family, friends, work or the community

PHYSICAL ABUSE TACTICS include any activity that can cause physical pain or injury

- Shoves, slaps, hits, kicks, bites or does anything else that physically hurts the partner
- Throws things
- Uses a weapon
- Interferes with basic daily requirements for food, shelter, medicine and sleep

SEXUAL ABUSE TACTICS cause both emotional and physical harm, and include:

- Uses force or pressure to get the other partner to have sex
- Uses force or pressure to get the other partner to have sex in a particular way
- Criticizes or ridicules the other partner's performance
- Refuses to be affectionate or to have sex in order to punish the other partner
- Uses unsafe sexual practices

Abused LGBTQ partners usually experience more than one type of abuse. For example, emotional abuse accompanies almost all other forms of abuse or intimidation tactics.

ABUSE IN LGBTQ RELATIONSHIPS

SOME FACTS

- Partner abuse can occur in all segments of the LGBTQ community
- Partner abuse has nothing to do with gender, masculine or feminine traits, physical appearance or stature
- Partner abuse is not "mutual abuse." One partner is controlling the other through abuse

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT MAKES IT EVEN HARDER

- Homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism increase the isolation of people who are experiencing partner abuse in LGBTQ relationships
- Many LGBTQ individuals do not want to report abuse. They fear that the therapist, social worker, medical person or police will not believe them
- Specialized services are limited for abused and abusive partners in LGBTQ relationships
- Mainstream services may not be aware of dynamics in LGBTQ relationships
- Partners in abusive LGBTQ relationships may fear that they will lose their privacy if they speak out

LGBTQ PARTNERS CAN USE HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND HETEROSEXISM AS WEAPONS OF CONTROL

- They can "out" or threaten to "out" their partners to friends, family, employers, police, church or others in the wider community
- They can tell their partners that help is not available to them because the police and the justice system are homophobic or transphobic
- They can tell their partners that no one will believe them because lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, trans-identified, two-spirited or queer people do not sexually assault or abuse their lovers
- They can say that their partners deserve abuse because they are LGBTQ. This form of abuse is often the result of the abusive partners' own homophobia or transphobia
- They can tell their partners that they are not 'real' LGBTQ people because they have opposite sex friends, have children, prefer certain sexual practices or used to have intimate relations with the opposite sex
- They can try to convince a partner that the abusive behaviour is normal and that the abused partner does not understand LGBTQ relationships
- Because of heterosexist stereotypes about LGBTQ relationships, abusive partners can give the idea that the violence is mutual or that the abused partner consents to the abuse. That increases the abusive partner's power and control
- Men can tell LGBTQ partners that abusive behaviour is not domestic violence but an expression of "masculinity"

"Chase was fired from his job a couple of weeks ago. The boss lost his temper and called Chase all kinds of filthy names. I told Chase he should contact Human Rights but he just yelled at me to stop telling him what to do. Lately he's acting weird, not like himself at all. The other day he actually slapped me. He apologized afterwards and promised it wouldn't happen again. As a peace offering, he brought me a bottle of my favorite wine, as if that would make it okay. I can understand that he is frustrated because the boss treated him unfairly. Being without a job right now is stressful for him. But other people have job troubles and stress. They don't hit people."

Signs of a **HEALTHY** Same-Sex Relationship

- feeling comfortable communicating and listening to one another
- negotiating and trying to find common ground during disagreements
- respecting each other's identity, including culture, race, age, class, spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, appearance, ability and health status (including HIV status)
- being out, or discussing and respecting each others' decisions about coming out
- valuing each other and treating one another respectfully
- staying connected with family and friends; not feeling threatened by each other's relationships; spending some time alone, and seeing this as being healthy
- talking about finances; making financial decisions together
- respecting boundaries about physical affection and sex; not pressuring a partner to do anything they don't want to do
- not using physical violence; speaking calmly and respectfully

People in abusive relationships often feel ashamed, depressed and worthless. Experiences of homophobia can add to these feelings. Low self-esteem and a lack of confidence make it more difficult to seek help.

Also, women in abusive, same-sex relationships may fear homophobic responses from those who could help them. For both women being abused and those who are abusive, this can affect how safe and comfortable they feel seeking help.

Signs of an **UNHEALTHY** Same-Sex Relationship

- feeling uncomfortable being open; not caring about a partner's feelings and opinions
- not discussing problems or listening to each other's views
- not valuing aspects of a partner's identity
- feeling stressed and disagreeing often because of differences in how out partners are
- behaving inconsiderately toward one another
- spending nearly all of your time together, and little time with friends/family or alone
- not communicating about finances; resenting how money is being spent
- embarrassment communicating about sex; sometimes going along with things
- raising voices toward one another sometimes or making insensitive comments (but neither partner fears the other)

Unhealthy relationships may gradually become worse, and eventually abusive. If your same-sex relationship seems unhealthy, consider getting help from a counsellor, friend, family member, workshop or book.

If you know someone experiencing abuse and would like tips on how to talk to them, go to: manitoba.ca/stoptheviolence/know_someone

Signs of an **ABUSIVE** Same-Sex Relationship

- feeling afraid to be open with a partner; feeling afraid that a partner may use insults or become violent
- feeling afraid that disagreements will lead to anger and abuse
- insulting a partner's identity; threatening to deport them; threatening to disclose health conditions; not allowing a partner to get medical care; threatening to infect a partner with HIV (if a partner is HIV positive)
- threatening to out a partner to family, friends, co-workers, cultural community or spiritual community
- treating a partner disrespectfully (Ex: name calling, insults)
- behaving jealously or possessively (Ex: not allowing a partner to spend time alone or with family/friends; telling a partner where they can go; checking on them all the time)
- controlling the finances completely; taking a partner's money
- forcing a partner to have sex, or to do things they don't want to do
- yelling or screaming at a partner; using or threatening physical violence: (Ex: kicking, hitting, slapping, shoving, scratching or biting); hurting, or threatening to hurt people or animals a partner cares about; threatening to take the children or turn them against a partner; destroying a partner's belongings

Relationship abuse happens in all segments of LGBTQ+ communities. It affects people of all ages, cultures, income levels, spiritualities, professions, abilities and regions of the province.

Terrified To Go Home

David (27)

I met Anthony through work when I was 22. The relationship seemed okay in the beginning, but in hindsight, there were warning signs of what was to come. They were little things at first: coming over unannounced; showing up unexpectedly when I was out with my friends; phone calls that seemed to be a little too frequent. I made the mistake of interpreting these early signs as strong romantic interest. Before long he had moved in with me and his behaviour had become obsessive and controlling.

Anthony was really threatened by my friends and my social life. He hated that other guys would look at me, or that I'd slept with other guys around our neighbourhood, even that I had quite a lot of friends who he felt "competed" with him. Tiny things that had not even occurred to me as being possibly offensive would cause enormous rage. The more I was attacked, the more and more I withdrew. It was a self-defence mechanism – I figured if I could stay away from anything that might cause him to get upset then that would keep him calm. That didn't work of course – he simply found new things to be insecure about. I realise now the whole strategy was to keep me feeling perpetually blamed, inadequate and not doing enough to keep the relationship together. I isolated myself from my friends, my family and from everything that I used to enjoy doing. To get me away from my previous life, friends and sex partners we moved to a different city where I knew no one except him.

I was by nature a very happy, outgoing person, but I quickly became cautious and scared all the time. My fear escalated when the physical violence began. The first time was because he had seen me talking to someone I'd had a fling with in the past and he punched me in the face because of it. From that time on, even though the physical violence was occasional, the fear of it happening pervaded my life and he would threaten me with it often. Punching, pushing, restricting my physical movements (like blocking doors if I was trying to leave a heated situation), destroying or giving away my property and refusing to take care of me if I was sick were punishments that would be meted out when simply threatening me or humiliating me in public wasn't enough.

Anthony was from a racial minority. One of the most confusing things was being told that the violence was part of his "culture" and the fact that I had a problem with it meant that I was racist. The problem according to him was not the violence – it was the fact that my racism meant I couldn't accept who he was. It was me

not him that had to change. I now understand that violence is not culture – there is no ethnic group on the planet that celebrates partner abuse as a cultural identity.

Apart from my massive social withdrawal, the affect on my sexuality was really destructive. I became ashamed about being gay, about being sexually attractive and about having sexual desires. It was like going back in the closet.

Money was another big problem. Successive rent periods came where Anthony would spend all of his pay on gambling and alcohol within 48 hours of receiving it, leaving me to pay all the rent and then provide food for us for a fortnight – impossible and it meant instant poverty. As a “solution”, Anthony put me in control of his finances but it was only a licence for him to be as irresponsible as he liked and simply demand more money whenever he wanted it. Of course, refusing because the rent needed to be paid for example, was a dangerous move. On top of all of this, he would also frequently get me to do his work for him. It wasn't uncommon for me to be producing his reports until all hours of the morning while he watched TV. I had given up on my life ever being enjoyable again. My whole sense of individual identity was gone and I felt as though I barely existed.

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A friend from the previous city I lived in sent me a book. There was a checklist of questions to ask yourself to determine whether you were in an abusive relationship and when I found I was answering yes to almost everything, a crack appeared in the brainwashing and manipulation that had filled my head. I suddenly realized that I had to accept that I was in an abusive relationship.

I took the grand leap of confiding in someone I worked with about my situation and one afternoon, after Anthony threatened to “break both my legs” when I

got home that night, this colleague generously lent me his spare room for a week while I “disappeared” from my home.