

# INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN LGBTIQ+ RELATIONSHIPS

This resource was produced in partnership between Safe Campuses, Student Health, Counselling and Wellbeing and the Griffith Pride Committee

*While we generally hear about violence in the context of heterosexual relationships, people who identify as LGBTIQ+ can also experience power and control behaviours in relationships including physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse, isolation and financial control.*

*There are also elements of abuse which are unique to the LGBTIQ+ community and these factors may add to the complexity of someone seeking support and leaving the relationship.*

## Identity-based abuse

Identity-based abuse involves using how a person identifies to isolate, control or threaten them. This may look like:

- **Threatening to “out” someone:**  
Including a person’s sexuality, gender, intersex status or HIV status. A perpetrator might also force their partner to stay quiet about the relationship and abuse because they don’t want to come out themselves.
- **Tapping into internalised shame about identity:**  
A perpetrator might exploit their partner’s insecurities about identifying as LGBTIQ+ which could include saying that they deserve the abuse because of how they identify or that no one will help them because they are LGBTIQ+. They may also justify abuse or attempt to isolate someone from their peers by questioning their partner’s identity and saying that they do not fit with how they identify e.g. not “man” enough or not a “real” transperson.
- **Control of medications or access to health care:**  
A perpetrator may deny their partner access to medication or health care related to their gender identity, force them to medically transition or deny access to HIV medication.
- **Minimising violence:**  
This may include claiming that a person cannot be a victim in same-sex relationships because they are of equal (gender) standing or trying to justify the violence as an expression of cultural norms.

## Barriers to seeking support

There are extra barriers to seeking help or leaving the relationship that those who identify as LGBTIQ+ may experience including:

- **Fearing loss of community or supports:**  
This could be fear they would lose their LGBTIQ+ community if they spoke up about the abuse, particularly as there can be concern around bringing any kind of negative attention to the community. A person could also fear losing supports if they have to come out to be able to discuss the abuse.
- **Limited friendship circles:**  
There may be a limited number of LGBTIQ+ networks, particularly in rural and regional areas, and if the victim is in the same friendship group with the perpetrator they may worry they will not have any supports if they talk about their abusive relationship.
- **A lack of obvious supports for LGBTIQ+:**  
There is a deficiency of mainstream media and services addressing LGBTIQ+ experiences of intimate partner violence. This may mean people in this community feel there is no help available, or worry that it may not be safe or okay to seek help from community services (e.g. Police, legal system, counselling). Supports for domestic violence are also often specifically geared toward women or men and this can mean those who identify as gender diverse struggle to know where to go for help.
- **Minority stress and previous experiences of trauma:**  
Those who identify as LGBTIQ+ are likely to have experienced ongoing discrimination or stigma which could mean abusive behaviours by a partner may feel normal or they may have a high tolerance for these behaviours. Shared experiences of trauma between partners may also mean that the victim is understanding toward their perpetrator (e.g. I know they do this because they were abused by their family) and therefore they do not seek help.



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IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE OUR CAMPUS COMMUNITIES ARE SAFE AND RESPECTFUL

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [GRIFFITH.EDU.AU/SAFE-CAMPUSES](https://griffith.edu.au/safe-campuses)

## **How you can seek support if you're experiencing intimate partner violence**

If this information causes you to be concerned about a relationship that you are in, there are services here to support you:

- If you are concerned for your immediate safety: please call the police on **000**. The Queensland Police Service has officers who are trained as Domestic Violence Liaison Officers and LGBTI Liaison Officers, and are able to assist when available.
- If you would like to talk to someone for support: The Counsellor, Violence Response & Prevention provides priority appointments for students affected by past or current violence. You can arrange a priority appointment by calling **5552 9600** Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm or by emailing [counsellor@griffith.edu.au](mailto:counsellor@griffith.edu.au). For more information please see [Counsellor \(Violence Response and Prevention\)](#) or for other options at Griffith, see the [Safe Campuses website](#).
- For Griffith staff, counselling is provided through Converge International. The service includes a LGBTI+ Helpline - specialist consultants providing support across issues specific to the LGBTIQ+ community including consultants who have lived experience and who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community. HDR Candidates can also access this service.  
More information is available via the [staff counselling webpage](#).
- Alternatively you can also call DV Connect 24 hours a day for support. Call **1800 811 811** if you identify as a woman, **1800 600 636** if you identify as man and if you are non-binary please call the service you feel most comfortable with and let them know your preferred pronouns.

## **How you can help a person you know**

You might be concerned about a friend or someone you know and be wondering how you can help them. It's on all of us to offer someone support if you are concerned they may be experiencing intimate partner violence.

- Find a private space to talk and let the person know that you are concerned for them.
- If they are not ready to talk, let them know that you are there to support them if they change their mind. If they do choose to talk with you, listen and tell them you

believe what they are telling you. Take their concerns seriously and ask what you can do to help them.

- If you believe they are in immediate danger, you can call the police on **000**.
- If it is not immediate, you may offer them options for counselling support such as the DV Connect number (**1800 811 811** or **1800 600 636**) or if they are a Griffith student they can call **5552 9600** to arrange a priority appointment with the Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention or access 24/7 support via the Griffith Mental Wellbeing Support Line on phone **1300 785 442** or text 0488 884 146.

## **Resources**

This information was summarised from the below sources. Please feel free to access them for further information:

[Say It Out Loud](#) - A website dedicated to information and support regarding violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships.

[DV Connect](#) - Offers counselling, practical support and information in Queensland.

[Griffith LGBTIQ+ inclusion](#) - General resources and support for LGBTIQ+ staff and students.

[Safe Campuses](#) - Information and resources for staff and students who have been affected by, or are assisting someone who has been affected by sexual assault, sexual harassment and other personal violence.

[Griffith domestic and family violence support](#) - A Griffith webpage with support and resources for people experiencing family and domestic violence.

[SASH Responder Network](#) - trained staff who can assist with information about the support and reporting options available at Griffith.

[MATE Bystander Program](#) - Online modules for the Griffith community.

[Recognise. Respond. Refer. \(staff\)](#) - Online module for staff.

[Recognise. Respond. Refer. \(students\)](#) - Online module for students.



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