

## LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANS RELATIONSHIPS

# Texas Council On FAMILY VIOLENCE

PO Box 161810, Austin, TX 78716  
 Tel.: (800) 525-1978  
 or TTY (888) 239-9035  
 Fax: (512) 794-1199  
[www.tcfv.org](http://www.tcfv.org)

### TEXAS LGBT RESOURCES

LAMBDA GLBT Community Services,  
 Anti-Violence Project  
 El Paso, TX (206) 350-GAYS(4297)  
[www.lambda.org](http://www.lambda.org)

Men's Resource Center of South Texas  
 Harlingen, TX (956) 425-6110  
[www.mrcofsouthtexas.org](http://www.mrcofsouthtexas.org)

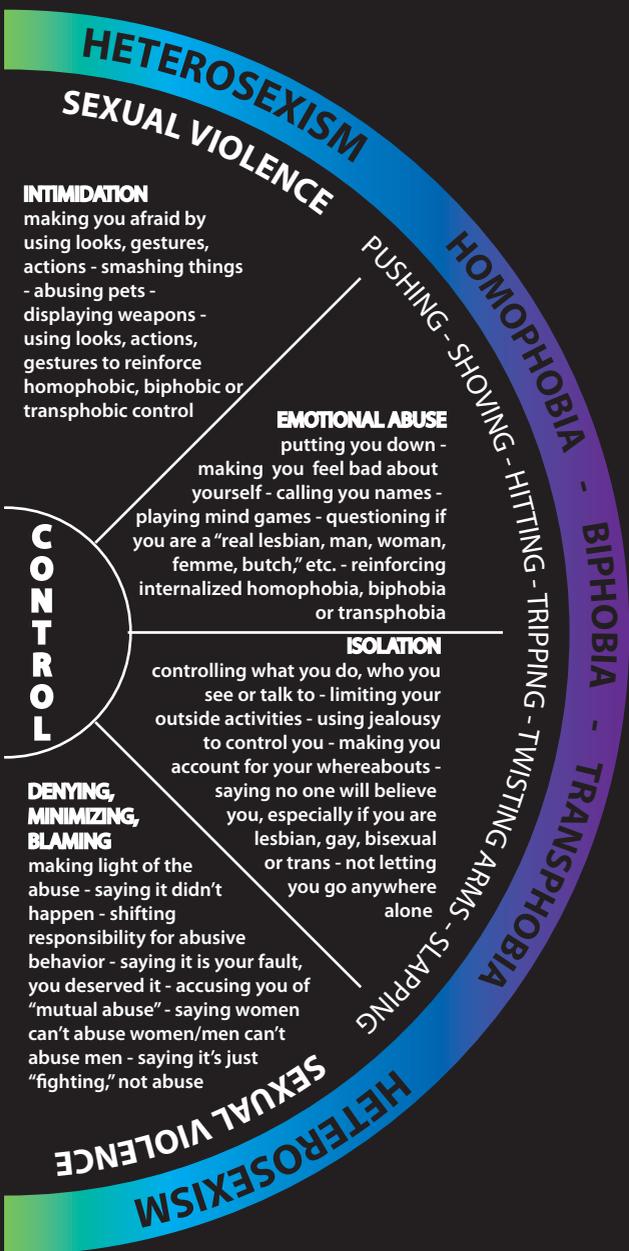
Montrose Counseling Center  
 Houston, TX (713) 529-0037  
[www.montrosecounselingcenter.org](http://www.montrosecounselingcenter.org)

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
 (800) 799-SAFE (7233)  
 TTY (800) 787-3224  
[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

Resource Center of Dallas  
 Dallas, TX (214) 528-0144  
[www.rcdallas.org](http://www.rcdallas.org)

Waterloo Counseling Center  
 Austin, TX (512) 444-9922  
[www.waterloocounseling.org](http://www.waterloocounseling.org)

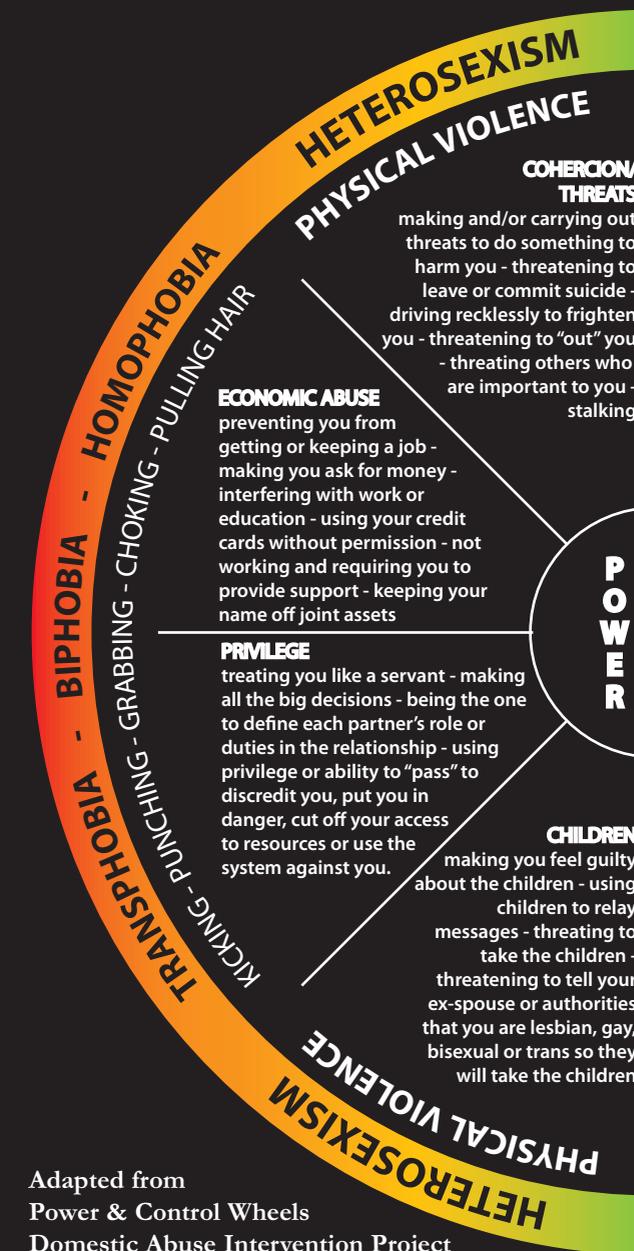
Women's Advocacy Project, program called Texas Advocacy Project provides free legal services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in the LGBT community  
 1-800-374-HOPE (4673)  
[www.women-law.org](http://www.women-law.org)



# FAMILY VIOLENCE

### INFORMATION AND RESOURCES: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Domestic Violence

## POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Adapted from  
 Power & Control Wheels  
 Domestic Abuse Intervention Project  
 206 West Fourth Street  
 Duluth, Minnesota 55806  
 Tel.: (218) 722-4134

## What is LGBT domestic violence?

Domestic violence or relationship abuse is a systematic pattern of intentional intimidation that is reinforced by violence or threat of violence for the purpose of gaining or maintaining power and control over one's partner.

### Domestic Abuse Myths and Facts:

**Myth:** Battering/abuse does not exist in same-sex relationships, in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities. It is believed to occur only in heterosexual relationships.

**Fact:** Domestic violence does exist among lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, and in other sexual minority communities. It is not a problem limited to heterosexual relationships. In the lesbian community, the extent and severity of the abuse is becoming increasingly evident. Despite fear and community denial, more and more lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people are speaking about battering and abuse in their relationships.

**Myth:** Domestic violence only affects certain groups of sexual minority people.

**Fact:** Violence and abuse are found in all parts of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities. No group regardless of race, class, ethnicity, age, ability, education, politics, religion or lifestyle is free from domestic violence. Being abusive is not determined by a man or woman's size, strength or economic status. LGBT people who batter or abuse can be friendly, physically un-intimidating, sociable and charming. LGBT people who are battered and abused can be strong, capable and dynamic.

**Myth:** In same-sex relationships, the problem is really fighting or "mutual battering," not domestic violence.

**Fact:** The issue in domestic violence is control. A survivor's needs are usually subordinated and she or he often changes behavior to accommodate or anticipate her/his batterer's demands.

This unequal power relationship distinguishes battering from fighting. In an abusive relationship, fighting back is self-defense, not "mutual battering."

**Myth:** Lesbian, bisexual, gay and trans survivors can leave abusive or violent relationships easily.

**Fact:** Battering relationships rarely are only violent or abusive. Love, caring and remorse are often part of the cyclical pattern of abuse. This can leave a survivor feeling confused and ambivalent about what she or he is experiencing. Emotional or economic dependency, shame or isolation can make leaving seem impossible.

**Myth:** Factors such as substance abuse, stress, childhood violence or provocation really cause battering and abuse.

**Fact:** A batterer chooses to be violent and is responsible for her/his behavior. Individuals and communities deny this responsibility. We want to find excuses. Alcohol and drugs do not cause domestic violence. Stopping substance abuse does not guarantee that the battering will stop. Most lesbian, bisexual, gay and trans people experience some kind of stress and many have experienced childhood violence, but there is no direct cause and effect relationship between these factors and domestic violence. There is no provocation or justification for domestic violence.

### Domestic violence isn't only a straight problem.

Domestic violence does exist in LGBT communities. Battering affects every race, class, color and religious segment of our communities.

*A healthy relationship involves respectful communication and behavior. Everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship.*



## You have choices.

### If you want to leave:

Many people find that ending the relationship is the best way to end the abuse. Leaving a relationship can be difficult, emotionally, financially and physically. If you decide to leave, there are resources, information and support available. Call your domestic violence program or the LGBT community center, counseling center or anti-violence project for help in safety planning and getting what you need to leave *safely*.

### If you stay:

People stay in relationships with violent or abusive partners because they want to work it out, hope things will get better, fear that leaving will increase the violence, or fear being "outed" or mistreated if they leave or go for help.

### If you are choosing to stay:

- You have a right to maintain connections outside of the relationship. Isolation makes abuse much worse.
- You have a right to take your instincts seriously. If you are not feeling safe, there is probably a reason. Do what you need to do for yourself.

### What can you do for a friend being abused?

- It is important that you not judge your friend because that would make it more difficult for your friend to approach you for support later.
- Ask your friend what kind of help or support would be useful.
- Keep what your friend tells you confidential. Do not confront the partner with information from your friend, unless your friend asks you to do so.
- Emphasize that your friend's choice of

whether or not to leave the relationship depends on many things that you may not understand, and try to respect your friend's decision either way.

- Help your friend identify options and resources. Call your local domestic violence program or LGBT counseling center, community center or anti-violence project and ask how they can help a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person who is being battered. Tell your friend about services or agencies that can help. The National Domestic Violence Hotline can connect you with resources in your area, call (800) 799-SAFE (7233), TTY (800) 787-3224.
- Offer your friend support and understanding in making these decisions.

### What can you do if a friend is abusing someone?

- Talk honestly to your friend about what you see happening.
- Do not confront your friend with information from the abused partner. This could be dangerous for the abused partner.
- Help your friend understand that abusive behavior is a choice. Change is the responsibility of the person choosing to behave abusively.
- Support your friend in getting help to change. Call your local domestic violence program or LGBT counseling center, community center or anti-violence project and ask how they can help a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person who is being abusive to a partner. Tell your friend about services or agencies that can help.
- If it is safe to do so, find out how you can help your friend's partner.

For more information, please visit the Texas Council on Family Violence web site at [www.tcfv.org](http://www.tcfv.org), click on Support > Caucus, Ally & Network Groups > The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Caucus.

