

## What You Should Do

- *Never* be provoked into retaliating with physical or verbal abuse yourself.
- *Always* talk to your doctor about your health and seek medical attention for any injuries. If you are seeing a mental health counselor, tell them about your domestic violence concerns. They may not ask. Many counselors believe it only happens to heterosexual women.
- *Always* keep a record of dates and times of incidents and keep copies of medical records and police reports. Take photographs of injuries. Keep these documents in a safe place.
- *Always* take legal advice.
- *Insist* that police record your injuries, take a report, and that it is recorded accurately.
- *Don't keep silent.* Seek out counseling for yourself, contact official domestic violence and victims advocates offices where available, tell a friend.
- *Recognize that it happens to others.* You are not alone. You may have to put on your "male hero hat" however, and make an effort to find others. You can even start your own support group with the help of a concerned mental health professional. Don't be afraid to ask for help from others. It is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength.
- *Find help.* The Stop Abuse For Everyone website [www.safe4all.org](http://www.safe4all.org) has a list of resources which may indicate what kinds of help are available in your area. Listings are frequently updated. *If there is a helping organization in your area that started their information on this brochure, you should contact them first.* The SAFE website also has an online support discussion group which you can join.
- *Plan for the worst.* Have a safe and secret place to go to, and have emergency money ready.
- **Don't make excuses for the abusers violence-get help and leave!**
- *Volunteer.* When you have become a survivor

of domestic violence, volunteer with the organization that gave you this brochure, of Stop Abuse For Everyone, and help others in similar situations.

- *Read more about it.* *Same Sex Domestic Violence: Strategies For Change*, Corwin Press (B. Leventhal, S. Lundy). *Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them*, Haworth Press (D. Island & P. Letellier). *Violence in Gay and Lesbian Domestic Partnerships*, Haworth Press (C. Renzetti, C. Milley). *Reclaiming Your Life: The Gay Man's Guide to Love, Self-Acceptance and Trust*, Alyson Publishers (R. Isensee). *Abused Men-The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence*, Greenwood/Praeger (P. Cook). Although it concentrates on heterosexual men, it does contain a self-help chapter, and could be useful to bi-men. Most books are available through a link via the SAFE website or order through your local bookstore.

The helping agency that gave you this brochure can be contacted here:



Stop Abuse For Everyone is a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization.  
 P.O. Box 95, Matin, CA 97062. [www.safe4all.org](http://www.safe4all.org)

Your tax-deductible charitable contribution to SAFE is needed and appreciated!

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## ARE YOU

### (Or Someone You Care About)



ARE YOU  
 GAY, BISEXUAL,  
 OR TRANSGENDERED  
 MALE VICTIM  
 OF INTIMATE PARTNER  
 VIOLENCE?

Yes, it *does* happen to gay, bi, and transgendered men! According to a study by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs\*\*, 15 to 20 percent of gay relationships experience severe domestic violence.

\*\*National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs 2001 annual report.

### What are the signs of domestic violence?

- Do you change your behavior because you are afraid that violence might result if you don't? Do you often have the feeling of "walking on eggshells?"
- Do you feel that no matter what you do, you can't do anything right? Does your partner often tell you that you are worthless, unattractive, that no one else would want you?
- Has your partner ever hurt or threatened to hurt you or your children?
- Does your partner abuse drugs or alcohol? Do they become out of control get extremely angry and then try to make up afterwards? Do you constantly worry about the next time they get high?
- Has your partner ever tried to keep you from getting medical help?
- Do they prevent you from sleeping at night? Are you worried about being attacked in your sleep?
- Has your partner ever deliberately destroyed or damaged something you value?
- Does your partner throw things at you or break objects during an argument?
- Is your partner extremely jealous? Does your intimate partner mostly accuse you of flirting with other people? Is it hard for you to maintain relationships with others because your intimate partner doesn't approve of them?
- Has your partner ever forced you to have sex or made you do things during sex that made you feel uncomfortable?

- Does your partner sometimes spend large sums of money and refuse to tell you why or what the money was spent on?
- Has your intimate partner ever kicked you in the testicles?
- Has your partner ever bit you, hit you with a hard object, scratched you, slapped you, hit you with their fist, thrown hard objects at you, or threatened you with a knife or gun?
- Has your partner threatened to 'out' you if you didn't do what they wanted?
- Has your partner told you that abuse is just part of the gay culture, part of B/D or S/M sex play, or part of being a man?
- Threatened to tell others that you are HIV positive or give out information against your will on your HIV status?
- Tell you that police or other authorities don't care and won't respond to a gay male complaint?

If any of the above has happened to you, you are experiencing domestic abuse. If several of the things above have been happening, you are in severe danger.

### How Gay Men Cope

- *Take on an "I can handle it" attitude.* Even if you have been hurt much worse physically playing sports or other physical activities, that is not the same as being physically attacked by your intimate partner. It hurts emotionally as well as physically. Continuing the pattern can result in depression, substance abuse, loss of confidence, and suicide. It can also result in death at the hands of your partner or by someone you trusted to protect you.
- *Men Don't Tell* - The actual title of a CBS TV movie about male victims of domestic violence. Keeping it secret and not confiding in a friend, relative or health-care professional is a common reaction of both male and female victims of domestic violence because it's embarrassing. Gay men, however, face a greater degree of disbelief and ridicule than do most women in this situation, which helps reinforce the silence. They may make

excuses for apparent injuries.

- *Hiding From it.* Men often escape from a bad home life that they are afraid of by spending extra time at work, staying in "their space" (garage/den) at home, or even sleeping in the car or at a friend's place.

### Why Gay Men Stay

- *Fear of failure* - Men have been told that "to be a man" they must be responsible, be a provider, and live up to their agreements. Gay men who live together often make agreements on household duties and sharing of finances. Leaving means breaking that agreement. The partner who needs to leave may be economically dependent on the abusive partner.
- *Protecting others* - The abusive partner may have children, and the other partner may stay in order to continue to act as a protector for the children from abuse.
- *Fear of Outing* - For gay men who have not revealed their sexual orientation to others, a common tactic of the abusive partner is to threaten to reveal their sexual orientation and thereby cause problems, such as loss of relationships or even employment.
- *Few Resources* - There are 24-hr. crisis lines and shelters available for female victims of domestic violence, but very few for gay men in the U.S., Canada, or Great Britain. Sometimes abused gay men call the advertised services but find there is no help available and are even treated rudely. Restraining orders for same-sex partners are not available. Victim's advocates are often not familiar with gay relationships. Few support groups exist, literature is limited or not available in many areas, and crisis lines do not exist even in established gay communities. Often, however, the crisis lines, shelters, police, and gay community organizations are very helpful.