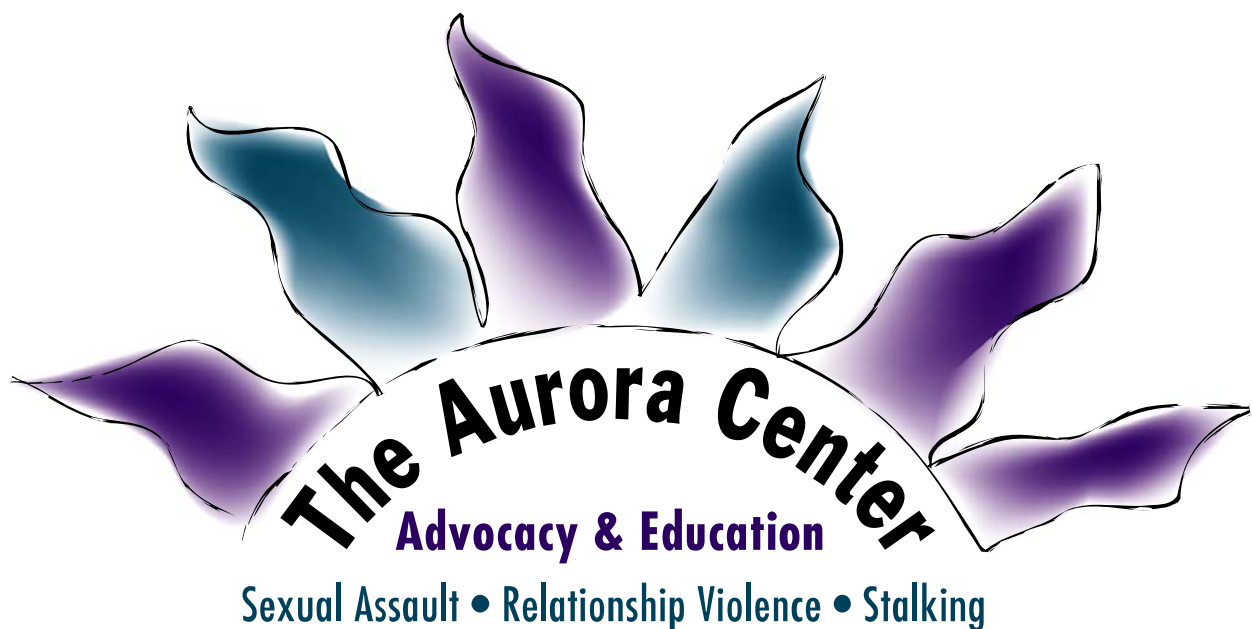


Same Sex Violence

Info Packet



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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Office for Student Affairs

24hr Crisis Line: (612) 626-9111

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Dear Reader,

This information packet was created for several reasons: First, we hope and believe that information and education will help survivors to reach a healthy recovery. Second, we hope that people concerned about a survivor can learn to be an excellent support person by understanding more about the issue affecting their loved one. And finally, we believe the information can be helpful to those reading it for educational purposes because it deals with an issue that is important to them.

If you are a survivor of violence, you may find some comfort in the following pages. You may also read some things that are upsetting. Please remember that The Aurora Center crisis line is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: 612-626-9111.

All of the statistics and facts in this packet are followed by their source. The information in this packet is updated on an annual basis, but please confirm any information contained herein if you are concerned about its source or its accuracy. This packet was created for informational purposes only and should not be taken as legal advice.

Readers will notice that we limit our use of the word “victim” when talking about a survivor. It is important for survivors to feel empowered and in control of their lives; labeling a survivor as a victim may cause a survivor to feel disempowered, and helpless. The term survivor implies that a person has lived through something traumatic by their own inner strength and endurance.

We hope that all readers of this information packet find it helpful and we welcome comments on its content sent to: aurora.center@umn.edu.

Sincerely,
The Aurora Center



Same-Sex Relationship Violence

What is it?

Relationship violence is a pattern of intentional intimidation for the purpose of gaining and then maintaining power and control over another. The abuse almost always escalates over time. This routine intimidation through abusive acts and/or words is not a gender issue but rather a power issue.

Sexism creates the opportunity for heterosexual men to abuse their partners; ageism creates the opportunity for adults to abuse children; and homophobia creates the opportunity for gays and lesbians to abuse their partners.

Facts About Same-Sex Relationship Violence

It does happen. Some gay men and lesbians abuse their partners.

Studies show that one-quarter to one-third of gay men and lesbians have been in a physically violent relationship with a same-sex partner. The incident rate for relationship violence for heterosexuals, gay men, and lesbians is the same.

The dynamics of same-sex relationship violence are the same as that for heterosexuals: abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological; most often the abuse occurs in a cyclic fashion; and the abused man or woman feels isolated, afraid, and usually convinced that she are at fault.

Mutual battering does not exist. However, in battering, the gay or lesbian survivor often fights back more than heterosexual women do. Support services often minimize lesbian/gay relationship violence. It is easy to fall into the trap that size has anything to do with battering. Many service providers are ignorant of the severity of same-sex battering. To acknowledge this abuse disrupts the myth of a "lesbian utopia" and that gay men are more enlightened than other men.

Using existing services, which are few for lesbians and almost non-existent for gay men, is tantamount to "coming out," a major life decision for a gay or lesbian survivors. Service providers must be especially sensitive to the ongoing struggles of gay men and lesbians.

Batterers often blackmail their victim into silence – "coming out" to one's parents or employer is sometimes seen as being more frightening than the abuse. Isolation for gay/lesbian survivors is intensified because their community is hesitant to admit that abuse occurs due to a fear of retaliation or showing a lack of community unity.

Continued...

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The following are statistics on same-sex relationship violence.

- The prevalence of domestic violence among gay and lesbian couples is approximately 25-33%.
Barnes, "It's Just a Quarrel," American Bar Association Journal (Feb. 1998).
- Each year, between 50,000 and 100,000 lesbian women and as many as 500,000 gay men are battered.
Murphy, Queer Justice: Equal Protection for Victims of Same-Sex Domestic Violence (1995).
- While same-sex battering mirrors heterosexual battering both in type and prevalence, its victims receive fewer protections.
Barnes, "It's Just a Quarrel," American Bar Association Journal (Feb. 1998).
- By 1994, there were over 1,500 shelters and safe houses for battered women, but many of the shelters routinely deny their services to victim/survivors of same-sex battering.
Murphy, Queer Justice: Equal Protection for Victims of Same-Sex Domestic Violence (1995).
- Same-sex abusers use a form of abuse similar to those of heterosexual sexual batterers, but she also have an additional weapon in the threat of "outing" their partner to family, friends, employers, or community.
Lundy, Abuse That Dare Not Speak Its Name: Assisting Victims of Gay Domestic Violence in Massachusetts, Winter (1993).
- Battering among lesbians crosses age, race, class, lifestyle, and socioeconomic lines.
Lobel, ed., Naming the Violence: Speaking Out About Lesbian Battering (1986).



Anti-Gay and Lesbian Violence

What is it?

Often referred to as hate or bias crimes, anti-gay and lesbian violence is violence that is committed based on the actual or perceived sexual orientation of the survivor. Gay men and lesbians in this society are verbally threatened and assaulted, beaten, murdered, and have their property destroyed simply because they are assumed to be gay by their attackers. Perpetrators are motivated by their hatred and fear of differences. Survivors are never responsible for violence perpetrated against them.

Facts About Hate Crimes

For many years, Minnesota has been among the leaders in the states reporting hate violence incidents to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. During 1992, 453 gay and lesbian Minnesotans reported being victimized by hate violence.

Of the gays and lesbians, 90% report having experienced at least one incident of verbal or physical attack within the past year because of their perceived sexual orientation. Twenty-two percent of Minnesota lesbians and gay men have been physically abused because of their sexual orientation, according to a 1987 Twin Cities study.

In 1991 and 1992, Minnesota lead the country in the number of anti-gay and gay-related murders. There were 7 murders of gay men in Minnesota in 1992. The U.S. Department of Justice believes that violence against gays and lesbians is the fastest growing form of hate violence in the country.

Hate crimes occur throughout Minnesota. Gay men and lesbians who live in rural Minnesota are less likely to report violence to police or anti-gay violence programs than their urban counterparts. Twenty-five percent of gays and lesbians report harassment by police, according to a Twin Cities study conducted in 1987.

Gay men are more likely to report physical assault, while lesbians more often report having experienced verbal threats, sexual assault, and vandalism.

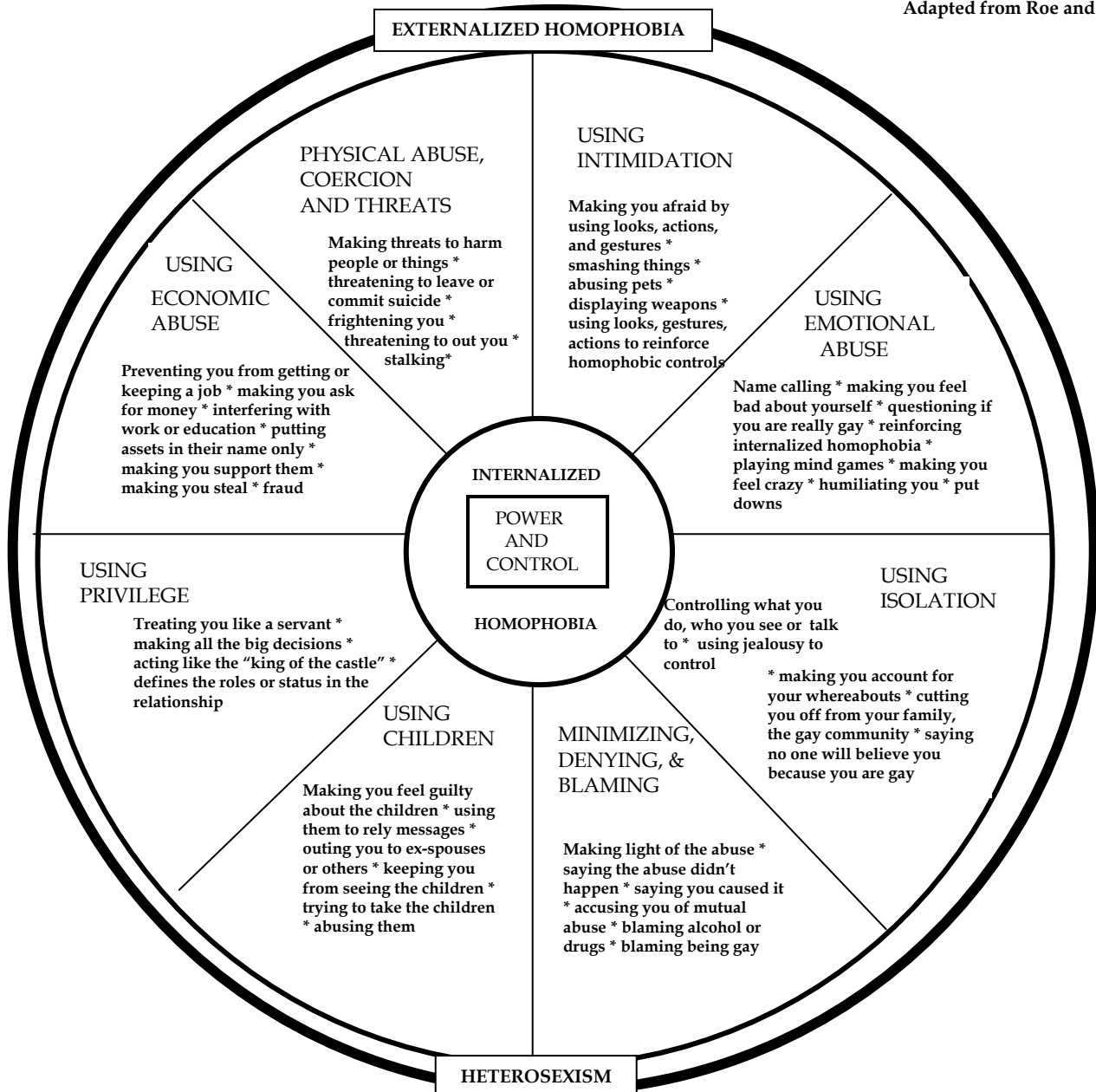
Gay and lesbian youth face some of the most serious repercussions of hatred against homosexuals. Gay and lesbian youth are 6 times as likely to attempt suicide as their heterosexual counterparts, and 30% of all teen suicides are gay teens, even though only 10% of the population is gay.

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Same-Sex Power and Control Wheel

Adapted from Roe and Jagodinsky



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