



Intersectionalities
in Domestic Violence

FDV in LGBTQI+ relationships: Gender relations and dynamics

Dr Carol Kaplanian (Women and Newborn Health Service)

Kedy Kristal (Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services)

Australian LGBTQI data

2016 Census:



- 46,796 Same Sex Couples (0.9% of all couples)
- In WA Same Sex couples are 0.7% of all couples
(VIC & NSW = 1%, ACT=1.4%)
- **2017 Marriage Postal Survey – YES: nationwide: 61.6%,
Every State/Territory YES,**
- **Majority YES vote in all electoral divisions in WA**
- **WA 63.7% (2nd highest of states after Victoria at 64.9%),**
- **Perth 71.5%, Forrest (Busselton) 63.8%**



Heteronormativity.

- **Heteronormativity** is the view that heterosexual relationships are the only natural, normal and legitimate expressions of sexuality and relationships.
- Assumes all people are heterosexual(sexuality) and cisgender.
- Our gender is usually attached to us at birth based on our sex.

Gender is socially constructed to dictate what we wear, what we do and what's expected of us.

- **Gender identity is independent of sex and sexuality.**
- **Heterosexuality is not normal, it's just common.**

What is FDV?

- An abuse of power
- Not an isolated event
- Ongoing and purposeful
- Used to intimidate and instil fear





Types of Domestic Violence

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual and Cultural abuse.
- Reproductive Coercion/control
- Non-Fatal Strangulation
- Coercive and controlling behaviours
- Pet Abuse.
- Stalking
- Technological Facilitated abuse.
- Forced Marriage/FGM/Honour based Killing
- Post separation violence
- Spousal and Family Homicide

Dynamics of Domestic & Family Violence.

- D&FV is not just a series of isolated incidents or a result of a momentary loss of control.
- D&FV is behaviour that results in *coercion and control* and that causes *fear* in the victims.
- D&FV is a process occurring over time and usually increasing in severity. Perpetrators of domestic and family violence *TAKE CONTROL* when they abuse.
- They are not out of control although alcohol/drug abuse will increase the risk of serious injuries



Why Does It Happen?



- The primary motive for domestic violence and sexual assault is to establish and maintain power and control over a partner.
- Violence is not about gender; it is about power and control, gender socialization, and family and relationship dynamics.



Family and domestic violence has become normalised through a heteronormative perspective. The notion of family and domestic violence within a same sex relationship is still very much an invisible concept.



International research findings by Rolle et al (2018) found that life-time prevalence of IPV in LGBTQI couples appeared to be similar to or higher than in heterosexual ones: 61.1% of bisexual women, 43.8% of lesbian women, 37.3% of bisexual men and 26% of homosexual men experienced IPV during their life, while 35% of heterosexual women and 29% of heterosexual men experienced IPV.



Large scale surveys such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey (2013) do not collect data on LGBTQI identity, nor do they collect data on FDV in same-sex relationships – that component is focused on male violence against women.



IPV in same-sex relationships occurs at the same rate as heterosexual relationships. In fact some research states that the rates could even be higher in same-sex partnerships.

The Australian Research Centre for Health and Sexuality (ARCHS) conducted a survey on 5,477 people and found significant levels of IPV:

- 41% of male-identifying respondents and 28% of female-identifying respondents had experiences same-sex physical violence.
- 25% of respondents have experienced sexual assault within a same-sex relationship.



Intersectionality and LGBTQI People

“Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.”

~Audre Lorde

(Homophobia and Education New York: Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1983).

How Oppression Looks for LGBTQI People



INTERPERSONAL

- Bias Attacks/Hate Violence
- Anti-LGBTQI Harassment/Discrimination
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Pick-Up Crimes
- Sexual Violence
- Profiling
- Family rejection

INTERNALIZED RESPONSE

- Having negative beliefs about oneself or one's identity based on personal, group, cultural, or institutional messages received



Issues and challenges that LGBTQI domestic violence victims/survivors may face

- ✎ Fear that the abuse will not be taken seriously because it is occurring within an LGBTQI relationship.
- ✎ Lack of acknowledgement and support from other LGBTQI individuals who may not be aware of the fact that DV in LGBTQI relationships occurs and is dangerous.
- ✎ Fear of re-victimization by law enforcement, criminal justice, and social service workers based on one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- ✎ Fear of being outed to friends, family, employers / employees.
- ✎ Fear that the abuser will convince people that they are the victim.



Oppression & Intersectionality: Context & Principles to Guide Our Work

- Race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, ability, age, and culture impact the way people experience violence
- Our own race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, ability, age, and cultural experiences influence how we do the work
- We are constantly learning and growing in this work



Specific issues for LGBTQI people.

- Threatening to out you
- Double discrimination
- Reinforcing internalised homophobia /transphobia
- Using being able to 'pass'
- LGBTQI community pressure not to disclose problems to public view.
- Violence is normal/minimised in Gender diverse relationships
- Hindering or forcing transitioning
- Isolating you from LGBTQI community
- Mutual Abuse
- Using " birth "mother/father status over child contact .



Barriers in accessing support:

- An inability by support services/practitioners to view IPV outside of a heterosexual framework
- An assumption that IPV is mutual in LGBTQI relationships
- Insensitivity to and/or lack of awareness of the specific needs/issues of the LGBTQI population
- Discrimination or fear of discrimination; particularly from police and the criminal justice system
- Stigma

Making services safe and welcoming for LGBTQI people.



- When feminists in the early 1970's started women's refuges, they created a safe space first, before they expected women and children to leave their homes.
- Organisations need to **"Come Out"**
- A first step in creating a safe space is for staff to know, understand and use inclusive language. Ask first then use the preferred pronoun.
- This in its self is challenging as the community of people that are not heteronormative and cis-gendered don't all agree on all the possible terminology.
- A first step is to discard the notion of binary genders i.e there is only female and male/feminine and masculine.
- **Staff training in using language which does not assume gender, gender roles, sexual preferences or that there is anything called 'normal'.**



Thank you..