

Lesbian & bisexual women stay with an abusive partner for many of the same reasons why people stay in any kind of unsatisfactory or unhealthy relationship; however, there may be some unique issues present.

Isolation

I feel like I am the only person this is happening to. There is a tendency to hush up reports of abuse in LGBT relationships, and for numerous reasons. Some members of the LGBT community are afraid of confirming negative stereotypes about LGBT people and relationships. Some are afraid to acknowledge that LGBT communities aren't free of abuse. The silence surrounding abusive relationships may leave a lesbian feeling alone.

Fear of Outing

I don't want to lose any relationships or my job by revealing my sexual orientation. For lesbians who have not yet revealed their sexual orientation, a common tactic of the abusive partner is to threaten to cause problems, such as loss of relationships or even employment, by outing them. She may also be afraid that knowledge of her sexual orientation might cause law enforcement officials to treat her and her situation with less respect and urgency.

Fear of economic or material loss

Lesbian and bisexual women who live together often make agreements on household duties and sharing of finances. Leaving means breaking the agreement, and possible loss of possessions and money. Statistics indicate that 57% of LGBT survivors of abuse wind up homeless when they leave their abuser.

Resources for Support

- Book: Lesbians Talk-Violent Relationships by Joelle Taylor
- Book: Violent Betrayal: Partner Abuse in Lesbian Relationships by Claire Rezetti
- Book: Same-Sex Domestic Violence: Strategies for Change Beth Leventhal and Sandra Lundy
- [Www.thenetworklared.org](http://www.thenetworklared.org)
- www.fenwayhealth.org The Violence Recovery Program provides counseling & support groups to LGBT victims of crime. They serve NH residents.

24 Hour Toll Free Hotline for NH:
1.800.854.3552

You are not alone.

You don't have to be in crisis to call us.

For the deaf and hard of hearing only
Call 711 and give them the number you wish to call
There is an option of being called back via TTY 24/7

Local Hotline Numbers

Portsmouth Hotline: 603.436.7924

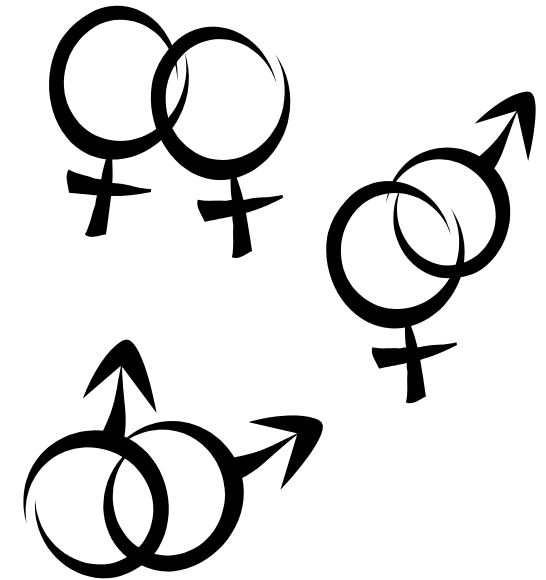
Rochester Hotline: 603.330.0214

Salem Hotline: 603.890.6392

Collect calls accepted

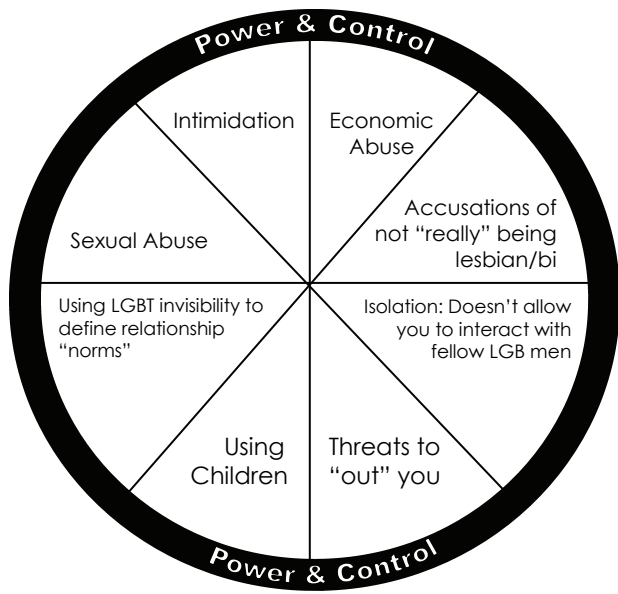
All services are free and confidential to survivors of domestic abuse and stalking, regardless of gender, age, health status (including HIV positive), physical, mental or emotional disability, socioeconomic status, race, national origin, immigration status or religious and political affiliation.

For Lesbian or Bisexual Female Survivors of Intimate Partner Abuse



a safe place

The mission of A Safe Place is to break the cycle of domestic abuse by providing crisis intervention, support services, education and advocacy to survivors, their families, and the community.



Signs of Abuse

- * Is your partner extremely jealous—accusing you of flirting with others or having affairs? Does your partner constantly question you about friendships with others, or prevent you from seeing them?
- * Has your partner used physical violence like slapping, biting, punching, strangling, or using/threatening to use objects or other weapons?
- * Has the abuse increased in frequency and intensity over time? Have the threats escalated in intensity as well?
- * Has your partner ever deliberately destroyed personal objects or items that have special sentimental value?
- * Do they deprive you of important basic needs like food, sleep, shelter, medication, and so on?
- * Has your partner ever forced you to have sex or forced degrading or uncomfortable sexual acts?

If any of the above has happened to you, you are experiencing domestic abuse. A Safe Place offers an array of support services, including safety planning.

What Can You Do?

Know that you are not alone, and that it isn't your fault. People from all walks of life are abused by the people who love them.

Take the abuse seriously. If something doesn't feel right, then it's probably not. Trust your gut instincts. Although a female partner may not be using physical tactics, the abuse doesn't have to be physical to be real and scary. Her threats to hurt you and other manipulative tactics are meant to control you, and abuse is never okay.

Talk to someone. Although it can feel embarrassing to ask for help, the abuse is not your fault. A Safe Place advocates can help you safety plan and understand your options. We won't tell you what to do; however, we will listen and help you decide what's right for you.

Keep a record. It's important to record dates and times of incidents and keep copies or medical and police records. Keep these documents in a safe place. It can be useful in any legal proceedings you may choose to pursue.

Make a safety plan. Advocates can help you with this. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Some things to keep in mind are:

- * Keep an extra set of keys hidden somewhere safe.
- * Identify the fastest way out of the house.
- * We can help provide shelter or other options to you if you decide to leave.
- * Contact A Safe Place for a 911 cell phone to store in your car or another safe location.

Why Do People Abuse??

Oftentimes individuals and society make excuses for why a person is abusive to their partners. In the end though, there really is no excuse for domestic abuse.

Some common excuses are:

- * **Substance abuse problems.** Alcohol and drugs don't cause abuse. A person chooses to abuse, and if they abuse while under the influence then they need to not drink or use. There are also people who never do drugs or drink alcohol that choose to abuse their partners.
- * **Anger management problems.** Inability to control anger means that a person unleashes their anger on their boss, their friends, and even total strangers. An abusive person doesn't usually behave abusively with everyone in their life.. They save that abuse for their partner.
- * **Abusive childhoods.** Abuse is a learned behavior that can be difficult to unlearn. Some children who grow up in abusive environments will be in abusive relationships as adults. However, not all abusers witnessed abuse as children, and not all children who witness abuse are abusive adults.
- * **Mental illness.** If someone has a mental illness that contributes to a aggressive behavior, it is their responsibility to get treatment and maintain their treatment. Keep in mind that most people who choose to abuse their partner don't have a mental illness.

Remember, abuse is the systematic pattern of abusive or coercive behaviors used by one person in a relationship to gain power and control over another person.

**24-hour hotline
1.800.854.3552**