Recognizing Domestic Violence in LGBTQ+ Relationships
What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence (DV) is a pattern of behaviors that aims at gaining and maintaining power and control over another person. Coercive Control is frequently present in these relationships as well. This is a pattern of oppressive behavior intended to control someone and strip away someone’s sense of self.

Domestic Violence tactics include verbal and emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, and physical abuse. Domestic Violence may also be referred to as Intimate Partner Violence or IPV.
How Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence looks in Queer relationships:

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse can come in the form of **constant criticism or humiliation**, verbal threats, **demeaning in front of others**, name-calling, yelling to intimidate, irrational blaming, **withholding affection, gas lighting, love bombing**, approval or appreciation as a punishment, **obsessive jealousy**, and accusations of unfaithfulness.

❖ **LGBTQ+ specific emotional abuse can include:**

- Blaming the abuse on a person’s queer identity.
- Denying abuse can exist in queer communities.
- Pressuring a someone to be “out” or to be “closeted”.
- Defining abusive behaviors as a normal part of queer relationships or family dynamics.
- Turning mutual friends or family members against a person.

**Financial Abuse**

Financial abuse can include controlling finances in the relationship, **denying access to money**, coercing someone to pay for all expenses, stealing or destroying a partner or family member’s property, or **taking someone else’s credit cards, cash, or other resources and benefits** someone is entitled to.

❖ **LGBTQ+ specific financial abuse can include:**

- Threatening to out a someone at work.
- Identity theft (easier when people are the same gender).
- Demanding pay for gender-affirming hormones or surgeries.
- Using gender roles as a way to determine who pays more.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is **any forced or coerced sexual act or behavior such as unwanted touching**, demeaning remarks about a person’s body or appearance, minimizing someone’s sexual needs, **berating a partner about their sexual history, refusing to comply with a request for safer sex**, coercing someone into sex with others, or purposefully and repeatedly crossing someone’s sexual boundaries.
LGBTQ+ specific sexual abuse can include:

- Using queer stereotypes to coerce someone into particular sex acts.
- Saying that women cannot rape or that men cannot be raped.
- Using gender roles to control how someone has sex.
- Using words for someone’s body parts that do not align with their gender identity.
- Forcing sex in exchange for necessities like food or housing.
- Convincing someone not to use sexual protection because “LGBTQ+ sex is safer.”

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the threat of harm or any forceful physical behavior that intentionally or accidentally causes bodily harm. Physical abuse can also include holding a person down or preventing them from leaving, locking someone out of the home, or keeping them from getting help or medical attention.

LGBTQ+ specific physical abuse can include:

- Targeting someone’s genitals or chest for physical violence.
- Not letting a person heal from gender-affirming surgeries.
- Denying someone access to hormones.
- Public displays of affection in dangerous (anti-LGBTQ+) areas.
- Threats of suicide by an abusive partner or family member.

Isolation

The tactic of isolation occurs when an abuser cuts off the survivor’s contact with other people. This makes the survivor more dependent on the abuser and more susceptible to the abuser’s worldview. Social isolation also prevents the survivor from seeking support from others.

LGBTQ+ specific isolation can include:

- Denying someone access to queer community supports and events.
- Causing dramatic scenes at queer events.
- Outing someone to their family, work, or religious group.
- Convincing someone they will be rejected by others for their queer identity.
- Using anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination to justify an “us against the world” mentality.
- Using bi/trans/homophobia as an excuse to isolate someone from others.

**Identity/cultural Abuse**

Identity abuse, sometimes referred to as cultural abuse, is using personal characteristics to demean, manipulate, and control someone. Some of these tactics overlap with other forms of abuse.

This category is comprised of oppressions including racism, sexism, classism, ageism, able-ism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

❖ **LGBTQ+ specific identity/cultural abuse can include:**

- Saying someone is “too much” or “not enough” of their queer identity.
- Denying someone’s gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Intentionally using the wrong pronouns or name for someone.
- Controlling how someone expresses their gender or sexual orientation.
- Defining what it means to be queer for someone else.
- Using anti-queer slurs or endorsing negative stereotypes.

Source:

National LGBT Health Education Center