

# Recognizing Domestic Violence in LGBTQ+ Relationships



[WillowCenterNY.org](http://WillowCenterNY.org)

# 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:**

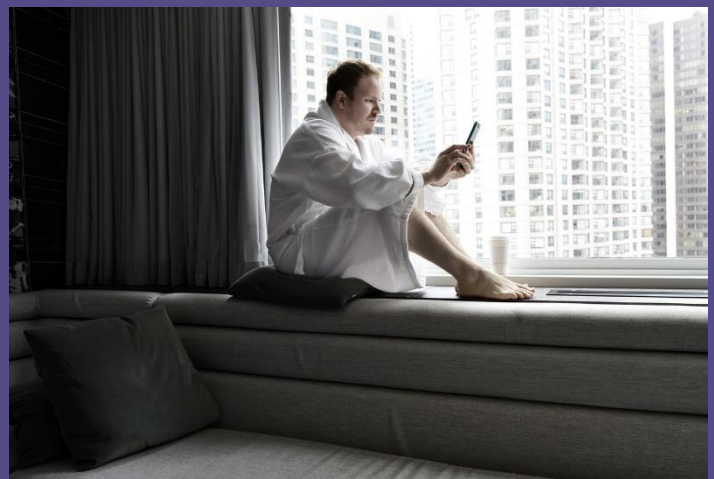
- Targeting someone's genitals or chest for physical violence.
- Not letting a person heal from gender-affirming surgeries.
- Denying someone access to hormones.
- Public displays of affection in dangerous (anti-LGBTQ+) areas.
- Threats of suicide by an abusive partner or family member.

## 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