

LGBT+ people's experience of DA

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There are many parallels between LGBT+ people's experiences of domestic abuse and that of their heterosexual peers - psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, forced marriage and honour-based violence.

In addition, LGBT+ people may also have their sexuality and gender identity used against them as a tactic for the abuser to keep the power and control in the relationship.

Many victims and survivors experience high levels of risk and complex needs. Support needs to be tailored, visible and accessible to prevent existing barriers for potential service users.

Key findings

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28% of LGBT+ victims have attempted suicide compared to 15% of victims who don't identify as LGBT+

LGBT+ victims are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed (**32% vs 14%**)

15% of LGBT+ victims have been abused by multiple perpetrators

54% of survivors living in rural areas at the time of abuse were more likely to report they did not know any support was available, with **61%** of survivors not seeking support from services following abuse.

Research by **Seetec on Domestic Abuse in LGBT Communities from 2020** highlights that perpetrators of domestic abuse are not only partners/ex-partners, but family members too.

Barriers to reporting

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Approximately 4% of reported domestic abuse cases in Norfolk occurred in same-sex relationships.

Some of the barriers to reporting include:

- Downplaying incidents of abuse
- Losing child contact
- Embarrassment or shame to admit this has happened
- Feeling there is no help available to them
- Fear of repercussions if they tell someone
- Do not wish to see the perpetrator punished
- The abuser threatens self-harm or suicide as a deterrent to reporting
- Anxiety of being believed
- A dislike or fear of police involvement

Issues faced by LGBT+ community

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- Intimidation and threats to disclose sexual orientation and gender identity with family/friends/workplace.
- Being made to feel ashamed of their sexual orientation.
- Limiting or controlling access to LGBT+ spaces.
- Using immigration law with threats of deportation.
- That no help or support is available to them, and they deserve/should expect abuse.
- Societal misconceptions of what constitutes domestic abuse, and they don't 'fit' that understanding.

Transgender specific abuse

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Transgender survivors are one of the most hidden groups of domestic abuse survivors. Many face specific forms of abuse related to their trans identity.

- Outing a person or revealing their gender history
- Using a person's 'deadname' or wrong pronouns
- Forcing them to perform a gender
- Coercing a person into not pursuing gender transition
- Ridiculing their body
- Assaulting medically altered body parts
- **Trans, non-binary and gender-diverse+ survivors reported high levels of concern about being mistreated by services or that services may not understand their identities**

What can I do as a professional?

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Use a trauma informed approach, create a safety plan and be professionally curious. Offer a referral into the NIDAS service.

All agencies in a position to identify domestic abuse should familiarise themselves with guidance, such as the Galop factsheet, on the unique aspects of LGBT+ domestic abuse and the Norfolk LGBT Project Booklets.

Practitioners should always seek to understand the unique identities and needs of the people they support when developing safety plans, such as historic family abuse.

Professionals should undertake specialist training to understand how domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour may look different for the LGBT+ community.

Further information

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- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 999 5428 / www.galop.org.uk
- **Learn more about Domestic Violence and Abuse and the LGBT+ community**
- **DARDR Simon**
- **NIDAS** have a dedicated LGBT+ support worker
- **Free To Be Safe Report /Guidance for multi-agency forums** - SafeLives
- **MARAC Toolkit for LGBT services**
- **Loving Me** – Safe house support for Trans and Non-Binary victim survivors
- **LGBTQ+ Project** – supporting Norfolk and Waveney
- **The Power and Control Wheel for LGBT+ Relationships**