

# How do I know if I'm being abused?

Has your partner...

- Threatened to hurt you, your children, pets, or themselves if you leave?
- Threatened to "out" you to family members or co-workers?
- Threatened to harm or take away your children? Threatened to "out" you to your ex-spouse or authorities so they will take the children?
- Kept you from seeing friends or family?
- Prevented you from seeking medical treatment, taken away hormones, binders or clothes?
- Monitored your phone calls or texts, read your email or mail?
- Belittled your identity?
- Humiliated you in front of your friends or co-workers?
- Used pronouns not preferred by you, or call you "it"?
- Hit, punched, grabbed, slapped, bit or kicked you?
- Forced you to do something sexual that you did not want to do?
- Told you you're not a "real" man or woman?
- Told you you're not a "real" lesbian or gay man?
- Broken your things or hurt your pets?
- Threatened you with a weapon?
- Taken your money, threatened to withdraw support if you don't do what they say?

*If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be in an abusive relationship. Help is available.*

**If you need help, please call your local domestic violence or sexual assault program.**



## Michigan Resources:

**Affirmations (Ferndale, MI)**, (248) 398-7105  
Helpline: 1-800-398-GAYS, [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

**Equality Michigan**, (313) 537-7000  
1-866-962-1147, [equalitymi.org](http://equalitymi.org)

**Transgender Michigan**, (517) 420-1544  
[www.transgendermichigan.org](http://www.transgendermichigan.org)

## Other Resources:

**National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)**,  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org), 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
TTY 1-800-787-3224.

**Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)**,  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org), 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

## Information provided by the Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning (LBGTIQ) & Allies Task Force

The LBGTIQ & Allies Task Force is a statewide collaboration of members of the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (MCADSV) who work to both promote better access and inclusive services for LBGTIQ survivors of domestic and sexual violence and provide a supportive working environment for LBGTIQ service providers.

**For more information about the LBGTIQ & Allies Task Force, please contact:**

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# Relationship Violence in LBGTIQ Communities

A Guide for Lesbian,  
Bisexual, Gay,  
Transgender,  
Intersex, Queer  
& Questioning Survivors  
of Relationship Violence.

## What is relationship violence?

Relationship violence or battering is a pattern of behavior where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs or conduct of a lover, friend or any other person close to them. It can include physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual and/or economic abuse.

## Who does domestic violence affect?

Relationship violence occurs in lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual, transgender, intersex and straight communities. These forms of violence cross all social, ethnic, racial and economic lines. An individual's size, strength, politics or personality does not determine whether a person could be abused or be an abuser.

## What if I am being abused?

- The abuse is not your fault.
- You are not alone.
- You can think of a safety plan.
- There are resources to call for help and support.
- You can think of a safe person to talk to for support.

## Power & Control

Along with many concerns a relationship violence survivor may experience, survivors from LBGTIQ communities face unique barriers.

### Coming Out

Fear that the abuser or self-disclosure of the abuse will "out" them. This is difficult and may be dangerous if people are not supportive or sensitive of LBGTIQ issues.

### Biphobic, Homophobic & Transphobic Responses

Others may minimize the experiences of LBGTIQ survivors or believe myths that they deserved or enjoyed the abuse. No one deserves or likes to be abused and abuse can happen to anyone.

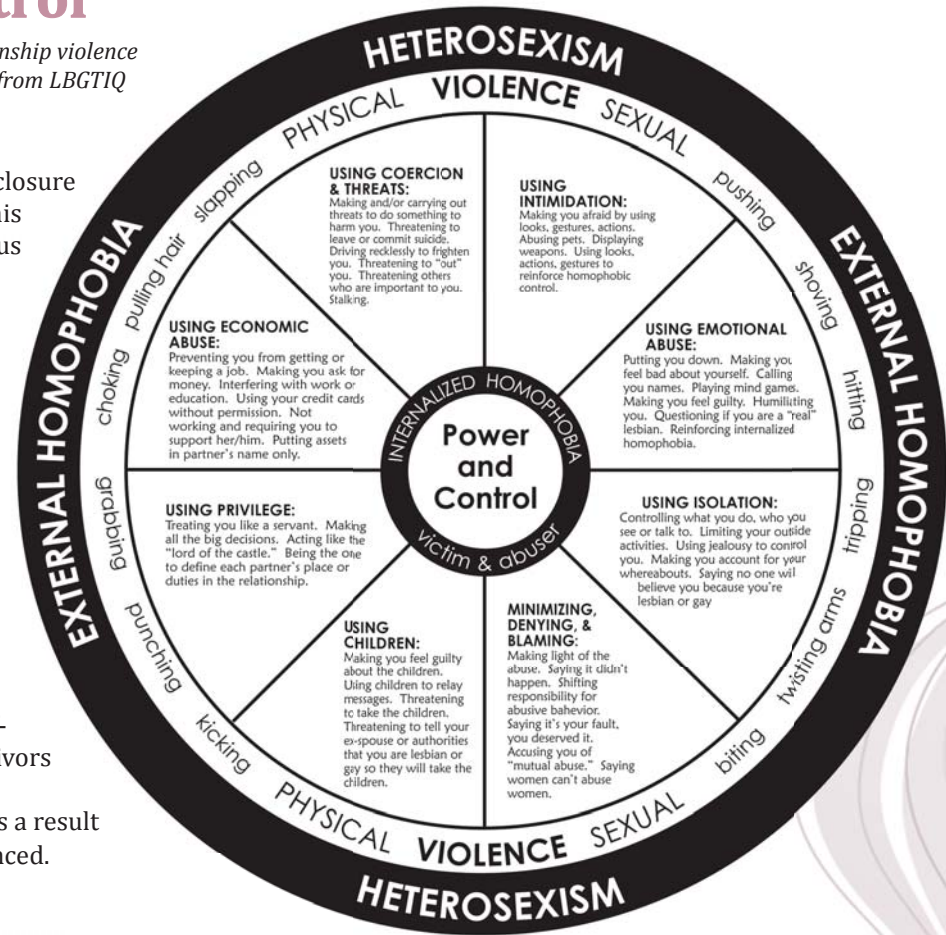
### Self Doubt

Many survivors experience self-blame and doubt. LBGTIQ survivors may also question their gender identity or sexual orientation as a result of the abuse they have experienced.

## Safety Planning

### If you are in the relationship:

- During an argument, try to get to a room with an exit & phone. Avoid the kitchen (weapons) and the bathroom (no exit).
- Make a list of safe people to call.
- Memorize all important numbers.
- Establish a code word or sign with family and friends so they know when to call for help.
- Think about what you will say to your partner if they become violent.
- Teach children who to call for help.
- Give your social security card and birth certificate to a safe person.



### If you have left the relationship:

- Change your phone number and screen calls.
- Document all contacts, messages, injuries or other incidents involving the abuser.
- Change locks if the abuser has a key.
- Avoid staying alone.
- Plan how to get away if confronted by the abuser.
- If you have to meet your partner, do it in a public place with friends or family.
- Vary your routine.
- Notify school or work contacts.