



Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUES

This publication contains information on domestic violence and on the resources available to victims of domestic violence. It does not contain legal advice; for legal advice on a specific situation, you must consult an attorney. Additional information is available for attorneys representing victims of domestic violence, and can be obtained by contacting GLAD.

Domestic violence is not limited to heterosexual relationships. Battering exists among those of every class, race, color and religion in the gay and lesbian communities. Domestic abuse, or battering, is a pattern of intentional intimidation for the purpose of gaining or maintaining power and control over another. Battering is not only physical; it can also be verbal, emotional, sexual and economic. Battering is not mutual or consensual. Victims do not provoke the abuse or enable the batterer. If you are in a battering relationship, you are not alone, and you can get help.

Domestic violence is very difficult, confusing and frightening. Help is available, and many survivors find it helpful to talk to others when exploring options. It is important to remember that you have a right to be safe, comfortable and have people in your life who do not repeatedly harm you in any way.

What You Can Do

If you are involved in an abusive relationship, you have choices. You can:

STAY - Gay men and lesbians, like heterosexuals, remain in abuse relationships for a variety of reasons -- such as economic reasons, fond feelings for the abuser, unfamiliarity with available services or reluctance to use them, a reluctance to identify the relationship as abusive, the belief that the abuse will stop, fear of being "outed," and fear of the abuser. If you choose to stay, information and support are available.

LEAVE - There are resources about how to leave and get support. Develop a safety plan to include support and safe housing from friends, family and others. Fears of retaliation from the abuser

should always be taken seriously. Get support and insure your safety before taking action.

TAKE LEGAL ACTION - Battering is a crime, and you do have legal recourse. You can obtain a temporary restraining order or "stay away order" from the court to stop the abuse and to prevent the abuser from contacting you. Restraining orders can be extended for up to a year at a time. If you need a lawyer, contact GLAD's Information Hotline. [Click here to find out how.](#)

GET HELP - Medical, psychological and legal professionals can help. GLAD has a list of some contacts. [Click here to request GLAD's informational packet on "Domestic Violence in Gay & Lesbian Relationships.](#)

The most important first step for anyone in an abusive situation is to get to safety and seek medical attention if you are injured.

Legal Protections

In Massachusetts, laws that attempt to protect heterosexual women from domestic violence apply equally to gay men and lesbians. Anyone who is threatened or attacked by someone with whom they had a "dating" relationship may apply for a temporary restraining order or a "stay away order" even if you do not live with the abuser. There are organizations that provide assistance and support in developing safety plans, (and in some situations, shelter), legal advocacy, as well as emotional support and support through the process of obtaining temporary restraining orders.

It is very important to document any abuse you are experiencing. Medical records, police reports and detailed chronologies all serve to strengthen your case, should you end up in court. Even if you are not certain that you wish to press charges, it is very important to document the abuse so that you will be prepared should you wish to press charges in the future. Always call 911 when you are assaulted or threatened with assault. Even if the police fail to respond, 911 is required to keep records of all calls and these records can be useful in demonstrating a pattern of abuse.

Anyone who fears abuse can apply for a temporary restraining order (TRO) by going to the district court house and completing an application with the clerk. Court personnel sometimes refer to these as 209A orders since 209A is the chapter of the General Laws providing for the right to get restraining orders. To get a TRO you do not need to see a judge. If you are seeking a restraining order during non-business hours, and the district court house is closed, you should go to your local police station and tell them you need an emergency order (a TRO). There is always a judge available somewhere in the state, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day to issue temporary restraining orders. The person seeking the

restraining order and the batterer must have at some time been in a “dating” relationship. A copy of the order will be served on the perpetrator and both parties will be summoned to court. At that time, you can apply for a longer term restraining order. The Violence Recovery Program at the Fenway Community Health Center can help you through this process.

Same-sex Domestic Violence Resources

Maine

Maine-Gay/Lesbian Phoneline	207-498-2088
SNAP-Survivors Network of those abused by Priests and Partners	207-774-5025

New Hampshire

New Hampshire-Gay Info Line	603-224-1686
New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	800-852-3388
Task Force Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (Plymouth, NH)	603-536-1659
Response to Sexual and Domestic Violence (Berlin, NH)	800-894-7888
Sexual Assault Support Services (Portsmouth, NH)	603-436-4107

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Gay/Lesbian Helpline (Mondays 7-10pm, Fridays 7-10pm)	401-751-3322
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Connecticut

Central Connecticut Abused Gay and Lesbian Support (Hartford, CT)	860-246-9149
Central Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Service (Middlesex, CT)	203-235-4444
CONNSACS, Conn. Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (E. Hartford, CT)	860-282-9881
Domestic Violence Crisis Center (Stamford, CT)	203-357-8162
Domestic Violence Program United Services (Dayville, CT)	860-774-8648
Domestic Violence Program United Services (Willimantic, CT)	860-456-9476
Domestic Violence Crisis Center (Norwalk, CT)	203-852-1980
Domestic Violence Services of Greater New Haven (New Haven, CT)	203-789-8104
Greater New Haven Sexual Assault Crisis Service (New Haven, CT)	203-874-1212
Hartford Interval House (Hartford, CT)	860-527-0550
Hartford Regional YWCA-Sexual Assault Crisis Service	860-522-6666
InfoLine (Rocky Hill, CT)	800-203-1234
Network Against Domestic Abuse (Enfield, CT)	860-347-3044
Statewide Connecticut Domestic Violence Hotline	888-774-2900
Susan B. Anthony Project (hotline for women in northwest CT)	860-482-7133

Vermont

Women Helping Battered Women (Burlington, VT)	802-658-1996
New Beginnings, Inc. (Springfield, VT)	800-228-7397
Women’s Crisis Center (Brattleboro, VT)	802-254-6954

Safespace for LGBT, Queer and Questioning Survivors

866-869-7341

Massachusetts

Massachusetts-The Violence Recovery Program:

800-834-3242

Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women

617-423-7233

Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project

617-497-7317

The Cambridge Women's Center

617-354-8807

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

617-492-RAPE

Battered Women's Hotline

617-661-7203

Transition House

617-661-7203

Elizabeth Stone House

617-522-3417

Mass. Office for Victim Assistance

617-727-5200

The Samaritans

617-247-0220

Independence House (Hyannis)

508-771-6507

REACH Beyond Domestic Violence (Waltham)

800-899-4000

Domestic Violence Program New Bedford

888-839-6636

(has sheltered men)

or 508-999-6636