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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 Legal InfoLine at 800-455-GLAD (4523).

GET HELP - Medical, psychological and legal professionals can help. GLAD has a list of some contacts.

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 (617.927.6250/800.834.3242) can help you through this process.

Same-Sex Domestic Violence Resources

Maine

Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence www.mcedv.org	207-941-1194
Sexual Assault Support Hotline www.mecasa.org	800-871-7741
Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women	888-743-5754
Maine Attorney General's Office—Civil Rights Unit	207-626-8800

For additional resources see GLAD's *Maine LGBT Overview* publication at http://www.glad.org/uploads/docs/publications/me-lgbt-overview.pdf

New Hampshire

Rainbow Resources of New Hampshire	800-750-2524
New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	866-644-3574
Sexuality, Anti-Violence & Gender Equity (SAGE) (Plymouth, NH)	603-535-2387
Response to Sexual and Domestic Violence (Berlin, NH)	800-277-5570
Sexual Assault Support Services (Portsmouth, NH)	888-747-7070
SAFE-NH	603-859-0859

For additional resources see Rainbow Resources of New Hampshire Lifeline at http://rainbowresources-nh.org/PDFs/Lifeline.pdf

Rhode Island

Victims of Crime Hotline	800-494-8100
Rhode Island Gay/Lesbian Helpline (MWF 7-10pm)	401-751-3322
Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Unit Attorney General's Office	401-274-4400
Women's Resource Center of South County	866-236-2474
Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence	800-494-8100

For additional resources see Rhode Island GLBT Helpline at http://www.glbthelpline.org/index.asp

Connecticut

Domestic Violence Crisis Center (Statewide Hotline)	888-774-2900
Spanish Sexual Assault Hotline	888-568-8332
Central Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Service (Middletown, CT)	860-344-1474
CONNSACS, Conn. Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (E. Hartford, CT)	888-999-5545
Domestic Violence Program United Services	860-456-9476 OR 860-774-8648
Domestic Violence Services of Greater New Haven (New Haven, CT)	203-789-8104
Greater New Haven Sexual Assault Crisis Service (New Haven, CT)	203-624-2273
Hartford Interval House (Hartford, CT)	860-527-0550
United Way InfoLine	800-203-1234
Susan B. Anthony Project (hotline for women in northwest CT)	860-482-7133
Connecticut Women's Education & Legal Fund	800-479-2949
Attorney General Civil Rights Unit	860-808-5318

Vermont

Women Helping Battered Women (Burlington, VT)	800-ABUSE95
New Beginnings, Inc. (Springfield, VT)	800-228-7395
Women's Crisis Center (Brattleboro, VT)	800-773-0689
Safespace for LGBT, Queer and Questioning Survivors	866-869-7341
Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault	800-228-7395

For additional resources see
http://www.vtnetwork.org//main.php//WhoWeAre/FindaMemberProgram

Massachusetts

Massachusetts-The Violence Recovery Program:	800-834-3242
Network LaRed	617-742-4911
LGBTQ Domestic Violence Project	800-832-1901
Jane Doe, Inc (Statewide Resources).	877-785-2020
The Cambridge Women's Center	617-354-8807
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center	800-841-8371
Transition House	617-661-7203
Elizabeth Stone House	617-522-3417
Mass. Office for Victim Assistance	617-727-5200
The Samaritans	877-870-4673
Independence House (Hyannis)	800-439-6507
REACH Beyond Domestic Violence (Waltham)	800-899-4000
The Women's Center New Bedford (has sheltered men)	888-839-6636
Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts	413-253-9887

For additional resources see http://www.janedoe.org/safety/safety_dv_shelters.htm

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