



A Refuge.
An Advocate.
A Strong Voice
Against Domestic
Violence.

Battering in Intimate Relationships

The abusive behaviors listed below are tactics that abusers may use to assert power over or control their partner. These behaviors can be present in any intimate relationship, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. The bolded points exemplify additional behaviors that individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, questioning or queer may encounter in abusive relationships.

Using Isolation

- controlling what you do, who you see and talk to, where you go, limiting your outside involvement
- using jealousy to justify actions
- sabotaging new relationships
- **not allowing you to be involved in gay/lesbian community**
- **using social marginalization to increase your isolation**

Using Emotional Abuse

- putting you down, calling you names, making you feel badly about yourself
- playing mind games, making you think you are crazy
- humiliating you in front of your friends
- **denying existence of the relationship to you or community**
- **imposing non-negotiated 'closeting,' 'outing' you, or threatening to 'out' you**
- **encouraging shame and self-hatred about being lesbian/gay**

Using Children

- using visitation (access) to harass you
- using children to relay messages, telling them bad things about you
- threatening to take children away
- making you feel badly about your parenting
- **threatening to 'out' you so you are at risk of losing children from previous heterosexual relationship**
- **denying you parental rights as co-parent**

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming

- making light of the abuse
- saying the abuse didn't happen
- saying you caused the abuse
- blaming stress for problem
- **calling abuse 'mutual,' which is further reinforced by heterosexist myths that women don't hurt each other or that "boys will be boys"**

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Physical Abuse

- hitting, slapping, punching, biting, kicking, pushing or harming you in any way
- confining, hiding or preventing you from leaving
- withholding/preventing you from getting physical care, food, or medication
- **it is a misconception that women cannot be physically violent, regardless of their size**

Using Social Status and Privilege

- reinforcing control over you by using privilege associated with gender, race, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, age, occupation, wealth, physical or developmental ability
- using institutions to reinforce power or privilege
- **using absence of legal rights (family, property, etc.) to reinforce power and control**
- **maintaining heterosexual pretense for sake of isolation and privileges**

Using Economic Abuse

- preventing you from getting or keeping a job
- taking your money
- making you ask for money or an allowance
- not allowing your participation in financial decision-making
- forcing you to work and taking your earnings
- **threatening to out you at work**
- **denying your contributions or rights to family assets**

Sexual Abuse

- any unwanted sexual activity
- sexual name-calling or accusations
- uninformed sexual activity, i.e. non-disclosure of STD/HIV status or refusal to practice safer sex
- forced pregnancy or termination of pregnancy
- **it is a misconception that women cannot be sexually violent or commit rape**