



## SEXUAL ASSAULT AND LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER/QUESTIONING, INTERSEX (LGBTQI) COMMUNITIES

### HOW ARE HOMOPHOBIA AND SEXUAL ASSAULT RELATED?

**Sexual assault can happen to anyone**, regardless of race, class, age, gender, appearance, or sexual orientation. While the LGBTQI community is at approximately the same risk as heterosexuals of being sexually assaulted by someone they know, homophobia puts LGBTQI people at a greater risk of being a victim of violence. A **hate crime** occurs when a perpetrator targets a victim because of his or her perceived membership in a certain group, such as (but not limited to) sexual orientation or gender identity. Perpetrators may use sexual violence "to punish" and humiliate someone for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Male perpetrators who think they can "change" a person's sexual orientation may also target lesbians and bisexual women.

### WHAT ARE THE FACTS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE LGBTQI COMMUNITY?

- Approximately 10% of hate crimes against gay men and lesbians include sexual assault. (*Comstock, Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men, 1991*)
- Transgender people are often targeted for hate violence based on their non-conformity with gender norms and/or their perceived sexual orientation. Hate crimes against transgender people tend to be particularly violent. For example, one expert estimates that transgender individuals living in America today have a 1 in 12 chance of being murdered. The average person has about a 1 in 18,000 chance of being murdered. (*Human Rights Campaign*)
- A 2008 report shows a substantial increase in reports of anti-LGBT hate violence in the Midwest and the West Coast. (*National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, Anti-LGBT Hate Violence Report*)

### ARE LGBTQI PEOPLE MORE LIKELY TO PERPETRATE SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

The damaging myth, that most perpetrators of sexual violence are LGBTQI, is rooted in homophobia. In the vast majority of sexual assaults, offenders are heterosexual men. Studies have also shown that a heterosexual adult is more likely than a homosexual adult to be a threat to children. (*Men Who Rape. Plenum Press*)

### ARE THERE ADDED FEARS AND BARRIERS FOR AN LGBTQI VICTIM?

- Because of prejudice, same-sex victims are less likely than opposite-sex victims to report the assault to the police or to seek support services.
- Fear of exposure to insensitive or homophobic responses from criminal justice and support services.
- Having to educate those they reach out to for assistance about issues specific to LGBTQI victims.
- Feelings of isolation that can be especially traumatic, because s/he may already feel isolated from the "mainstream."
- There may be a fear of being "outed" (having one's sexual orientation discussed or revealed without one's consent) if they approach their family, the courts, or the police.
- Having their experiences sensationalized.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, call us toll free at 1-877-37-CASA or visit our website ([www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org)) to find information on your local Rape Crisis Center.

