



FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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

Fact Sheet

What are the facts on sexual assault in the LGBTQI Community?

- Approximately 10% of hate crimes are against gay men and lesbians include sexual assault.¹
- 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.²
- A 2008 report shows a substantial increase in reports of anti-LGBT hate violence in the Midwest and the West Coast.³

What is the connection with homophobia and sexual assault?

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.

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

- 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.

Where can I learn more?

Colorado Anti-Violence Program (CAVP)
(p) 303.839.5204
www.coavp.org

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
(p) 212.714.1184
www.ncavp.org

References

1. *Comstock, Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men, 1991*
2. *Human Rights Campaign*
3. *National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, Anti-LGBT Hate Violence Report*
4. *Men Who Rape. Plenum Press*

For more information, please contact: For more information, please contact:

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