



**YORK ST JOHN**  
COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# **Violence & Abuse in Same-Sex Relationships:**

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**A Review of Literature**

A Report By:

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## Introduction

This report is a summary of research findings related to same-sex domestic abuse. The report was commissioned by Yorkshire MESMAC and written by the Social Inclusion and Diversity Research Group (SID) at York St John College. The purpose of this paper is to review the current available literature on violence in relationships and abuse within same-sex relationships. Recent preferences for reviewing academic literature include the systematic approach, which carries greater scientific reliability. However the authors felt that the methodologies employed by the various studies cited in this report were so varied, that a systematic review was not feasible. Therefore a classical review of literature was conducted. Although there is a considerable wealth of research on violence and abuse within same-sex relationships, much of it replicates previous researcher's findings. For that reason, findings that have been omitted from this report are those that are from replicated studies.

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## Violence and Abuse in Same-Sex Relationships

The body of research into violence in relationships has grown substantially over the past twenty years, however, until relatively recently, the majority of research focused primarily on the violence perpetrated within heterosexual relationships, with men viewed largely as perpetrators and women as victims. Research into violence and abuse within same-sex couples is therefore relatively new and, in terms of depth, relatively understudied.

As Island & Letellier (1991) argue, since lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) communities are only now beginning to acknowledge the problem of violence and abuse within same-sex relationships; ignorance continues to be widespread and outreach for LGB victims is scarce at best and non-existent in many areas. Consequently, an increase in research and education about violence and abuse in same-sex relationships is urgently needed as this continued lack of information can only perpetuate the myth that it does not exist.

### Definition of violence and abuse in relationships

Merrill and Wolfe (2000) defined violence in relationships as:

*A pattern of abusive behaviours occurring within the context of an intimate relationship whereby one party intimidates, coerces, restricts, and controls the other. In this context, 'abusive behaviour' refers to any of a variety of non-consensual behaviours which intentionally or recklessly inflict harm or potential harm or restricts freedom.*

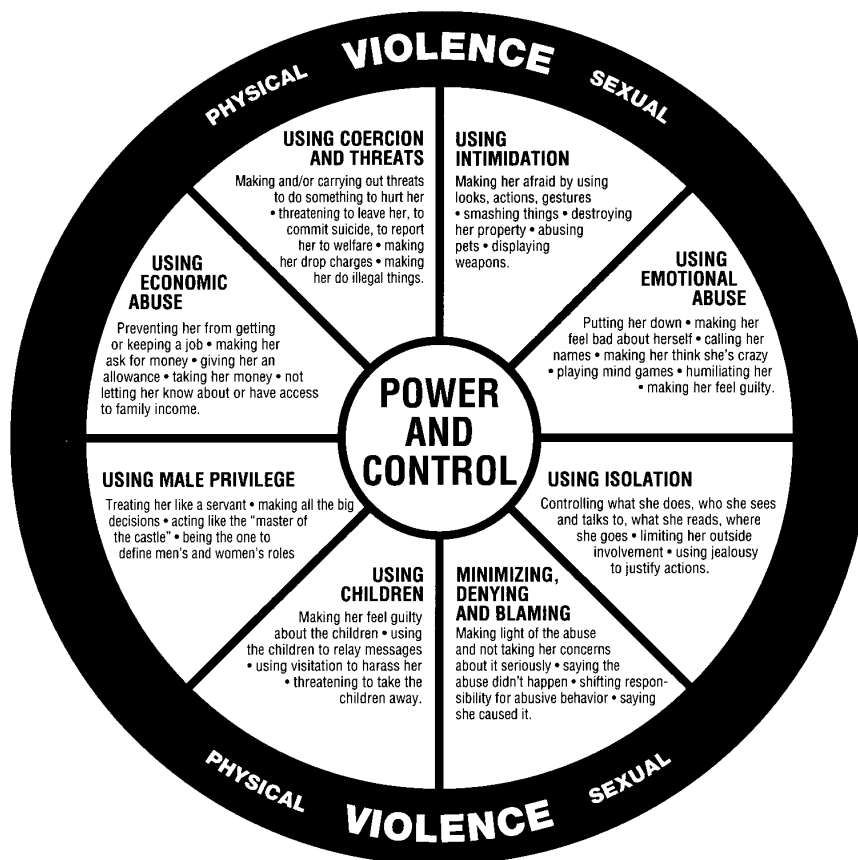
Comparing research on violence/abuse in relationships is a difficult task due to the differing definitions of violence and abuse. The Metropolitan Police define 'domestic abuse' as:

*Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender.*

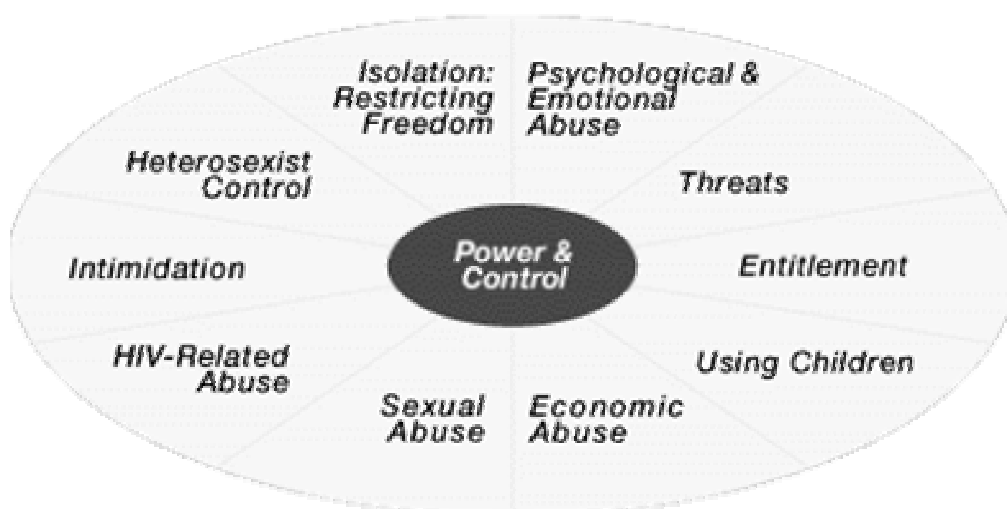
When defining domestic abuse it is important to acknowledge and identify the different forms it takes. Pitt (2000) has argued that violence in relationships is a pattern of behaviours used with the intention of gaining power and control over a partner which, in turn, causes the victim to feel fearful of that partner. Researchers have acknowledged that abuse can manifest itself in many forms.

As we noted above, traditionally literature on domestic abuse has focused on heterosexual relationships (i.e. abuse perpetrated by men against women). Such literature has sub-divided abusive behaviours into physical - commonly involving punching, kicking, slapping and pushing, and resulting in cuts, abrasions, bruises and burns - (Dobash and Dobash, 1984); emotional - behaviours inflicting psychological harm commonly including social isolation, verbal harassment and threats, extreme jealousy and possessiveness - (Follingstad, et al 1990); financial - economic dependency, withholding financial resources, preventing independent income - (Walker, 1979); and sexual - sexually intrusive behaviours occurring without consent - (Russell, 1990).

FIGURE 1: The Power and Control Wheel (Minnesota Program Development, 2003)



### Power and Control Wheel



**Physical Abuse: Slapping, Hitting, Shoving, Choking, Biting, Pushing, Punching, Beating, Kicking, Stabbing, Shooting, Killing**

The above diagram (Figure 1) and definitions (below) represent elements of power and control within lesbian and gay relationships (adapted from the Domestic Abuse intervention Project, 2003; and Farley, 1997).

**Physical Abuse:**

*Twisting arms; tripping; pushing; biting; beating, using a weapon against a partner; throwing partner down; punching; grabbing; kicking; pulling hair; burning; hitting; shoving; choking; slapping; abandoning partner in dangerous places; holding a partner down; preventing a partner from leaving; locking a partner in or out.*

**Coercion & Threats:**

*Threatening to physically harm partner or loved ones; stalk partner; destroy possessions; "out" partner at work, to family, associates, or government agencies; mutilate self or attempt suicide.*

**Intimidation:**

*Scaring partner with looks, yelling, gestures, body language; smashing or throwing things; destroying property; hurting pets; showing up uninvited/unannounced; writing threatening notes or letters; driving recklessly.*

**Emotional Abuse:**

*Verbally assaulting with insults, criticisms, blaming, name calling; punishing partner for making mistakes; having affairs; professing that partner is unattractive, unlovable, sexually inadequate; ignoring partner's feelings, thoughts, concerns, use of intimate knowledge to create vulnerability.*

**Isolation:**

*Controlling what partner does, who she/he sees and talks to, where she/he goes; making a partner choose between them and their loved ones; stalking exploiting the Us against Them relationship that being in "the closet" creates, causing an exaggerated sense of dependency in partner; emphasizing that the violence in relationships laws do not apply to 'us' and that no one will be available for help.*

**Sexual Abuse:**

*Rape, sex on demand, withholding, physically attacking the sexual parts of partner's body; forced monogamy or non-monogamy, involuntary prostitution, denying reproductive freedom; making partner feel bad about sexual history; refusing to practice safe sex; demeaning remarks about a partners body.*

**Using Children:**

*Emotionally and/or physically abusing shared or partner's children; using children as go betweens during conflicts or separations; using visitation as an opportunity to harass partner; "outing" partner to children against partner's will.*

**Economic Abuse:**

*Keeping partner from obtaining or holding a job; arranging to support partner and treating him/her as a servant; forcing partner to work; demanding partner's money; using partner's identity to get money or spend partner's money; controlling finances; jeopardising work; damaging property/equipment needed for work.*

**Entitlement:**

*Treating partner as inferior; using differences against partner: education, wealth, politics, class privilege or lack-of, physical ability, race, ethnicity, HIV status, or history of trauma; demanding that your needs always come first; interfering with partner's job, personal needs, family obligations, or sleep.*

### Intellectual Abuse:

*Lying to confuse, convincing partner he/she is crazy; telling false stories; telling partner they don't know what they are talking about; manipulating partner with words/ideas.*

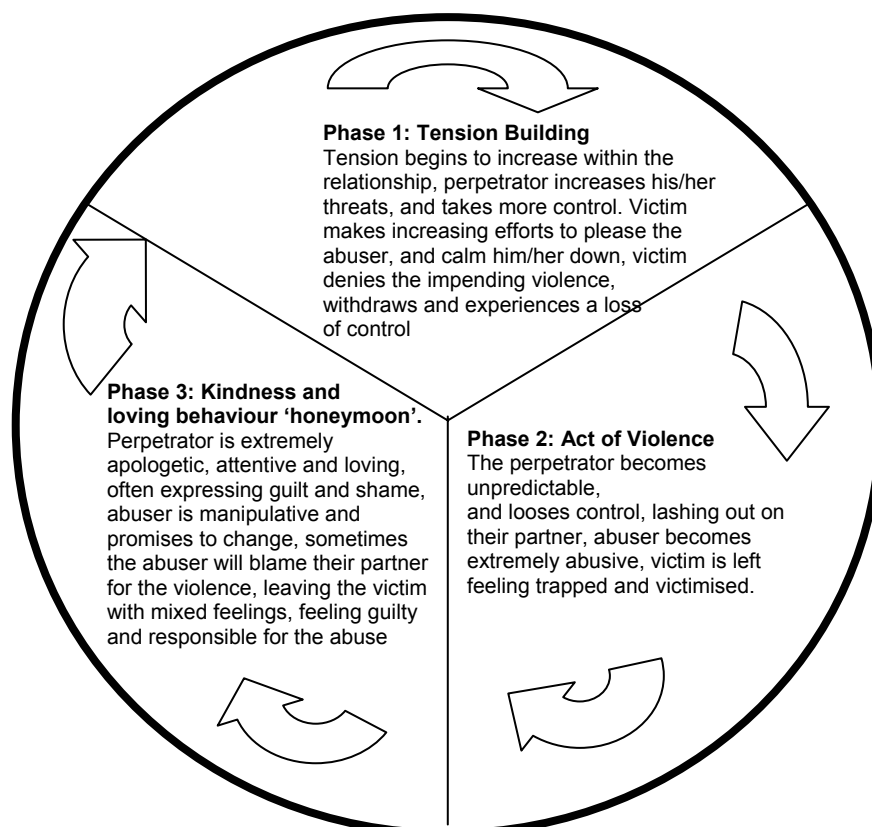
### Spiritual Abuse:

*Denial of spiritual expression, withholding love/unity, expressions of prejudice.*

### A cycle of violence

A number of researchers have argued that abuse in same-sex relationships follows a similar pattern to abuse in opposite-sex relationships (McClennen et al., 2002). Many researchers refer to the 'cycle of violence', which represents the way in which violence and abuse can develop and be maintained within a relationship. Research has suggested that within the cycle of violence, abuse increases in frequency and severity over time (McClennan et al., 2002), with abusive episodes interspersed with calm, loving and attentive periods. However the pattern can often become predictable for victims, so much so that it is often a source of tension even when an episode of abuse is not taking place (Chesley et al., 1998; see Figure 2)

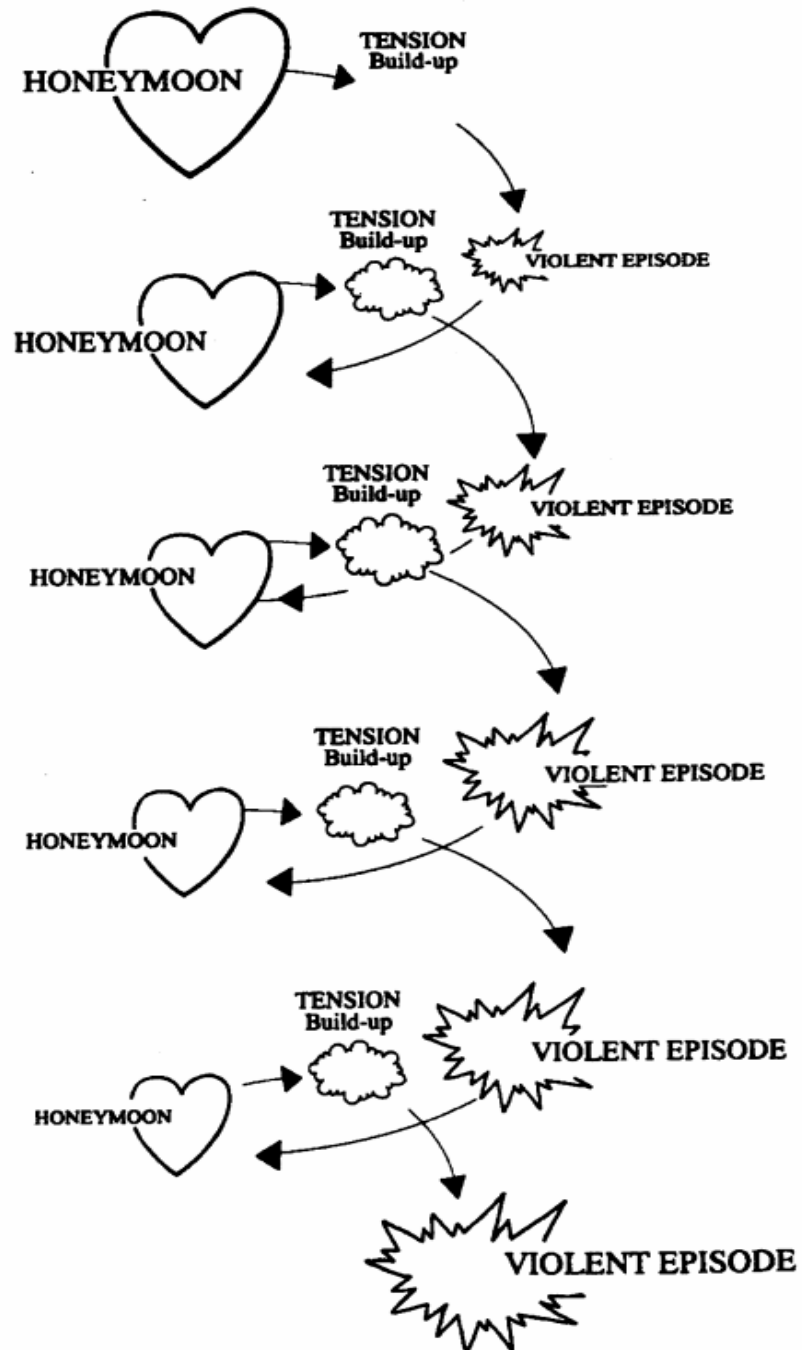
**FIGURE 2:** Cycle of Violence Based on Walker (1979)



In this model, after each incidence of abuse, both partners often believe that it will never happen again, although it often does. Some researchers have adapted the cycle of violence to show how the domestic abuse manifests itself over time (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: The Cycle of Violence in Linear Form

## The Cycle of Violence Over Time



From: Shirly Phillippe and Bonnie Hutchinson,  
Breaking the Pattern-How Alberta Communities Can Help  
Assaulted Women and Their Families.  
 Alberta Social Services and Community Health, 1985



Although the ‘cycle of abuse’ is often mentioned in the research literature, such a pattern is not always evident in abusive relationships. Often abusive incidents occur without warning signs or an evident build-up. There may also be instances where the perpetrator shows no remorse or there may be instances where calm follows such an occurrence, however neither model (Figures 2 and 3) take into account differences in the development of abusive relationships.

Lehman (1997) suggested that the cycle of violence develops slowly in the beginning of a relationship and periods of abuse are often followed by lengthy periods of tenderness, love and affection. Yet, as the relationship develops, these ‘honeymoon’ periods of love and affection grow shorter and less frequent as the intensity of the violence and abuse increases.

Marrujo & Kreger (1996) have suggested that lesbian and gay victims of domestic abuse are more likely than heterosexual victims to use physical violence as a defence against the abuse they are experiencing. In reviewing the literature, we found that the term ‘mutual battering’ is often mentioned. Currently, a debate exists between researchers as to whether this phenomenon truly exists. This concept – mutual battering - which was originally applied to abusive behaviours among heterosexual couples, substantiates the theory that both men and women use physical and emotional aggression to resolve conflict within their relationships. However, such aggression does not always occur simultaneously with an episode of ‘domestic’ violence or abuse and, as a result, the roles and status of the victim and perpetrator can become blurred or less well delineated (Marrujo & Kreger 1996). It is important when discussing ‘mutual battering’ (sometimes referred to as ‘mutual combat’) to clearly define the term. Mutual battery or combat has been described in terms of an individual who, following an episode of violence or abuse, uses physical aggression to prevent further injury (Marrujo & Kreger, 1996). Sometimes abusers may claim that they too are victims in what can become a ‘mutually abusive’ relationship. However research suggests that there is rarely a ‘mutually abusive’ relationship, and there is almost always a ‘primary abuser’ and a ‘primary victim’ (Lehman, 1997). Renzetti (1992) has argued that not all violent acts are the same, nor do they all constitute abuse. There is a difference between someone who uses violence in self-defence in order to protect themselves from further violence or abuse, and violence or abuse that is initiated without cause. However, it is important to acknowledge that although mutual battery occurs infrequently, power balances in relationships can shift and a perceived victim can in actual fact be or become a perpetrator.

### **Rates of abuse and violence in same-sex relationships**

Identifying a valid prevalence rate for abuse or violence in same-sex relationships is a difficult task due to the methodological differences in the various studies conducted to date. Current literature suggests that reports of the prevalence of violence or abuse within same-sex relationships fall anywhere between 15% and 87%. Full details of the publications reviewed can be found in *APPENDIX 1*.

Although Frieze (1980) reported that sexual violence occurs in 31% of lesbian relationships and Waterman et al. (1989) concluded that sexual violence occurs in 12% of gay relationships, several researchers suggest that violence in same-sex relationships occurs at approximately the same rate as abuse among heterosexual couples – between 25-50% (Pitt, 2000, Alexander 2002, Gunther & Jennings 1999, Wallace 1996). However, this belief may have led to an inaccurate view of the true prevalence of violence within same-sex relationships and particularly sexual violence. One reason for this is that researchers studying heterosexual violence or abuse have used a continuum of severity to measure degrees of sexual coercion relationships. Christopher (1988) used a two-dimension continuum of severity measuring tactics and outcomes. Tactics were ranked

with verbal and psychological coercion regarded as less severe than physical force. Outcomes can range from touching and kissing to full penetration. Individuals who have been forced to have penetrative sex are considered to have been victimised to a greater degree than those who have been verbally coerced into kissing (Waldner-Haugrud, 1995). It is important to note that although prevalence rates of sexual coercion have been reported, no such continuum of severity has been used in same-sex studies. Having said that one thing that most researchers agree upon is that domestic abuse has been identified as the third largest health risk to gay men after HIV/AIDS and substance use/abuse (Singer & Deschamps, 1994).

Turell (2000) conducted a survey of 499 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender men and women (aged 16-74 years). The study identified behaviours characteristic of emotional, physical and sexual abuse within both present and past same-sex relationships. Emotional abuse was reported by 83% of the sample; 9% reported physical violence in their current relationship, 32% in past relationships and 1% reported forced sex in their current relationship. Fifty three percent of those who disclosed 'domestic' abuse or violence reported being victims in two or more relationships. Fifty five percent of abusive relationships lasted two or more years and 25% lasted five or more years.

Data from previous studies investigating the prevalence rates of lesbian domestic abuse have varied greatly. For example, reported levels of physical and emotional abuse have ranged from 18% to 60% and 81% to 95% respectively (Loulan, 1987; Bologna et al, 1987; & Kelly & Warshafsky, 1987). Tuel and Russell (1998) sampled 23 lesbians and 17 female heterosexual survivors of violence in relationships using a self-report questionnaire containing the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1967) and the Index of Spouse Abuse Revised (Hudson & McIntosh, 1981). Heterosexual participants reported higher levels of both physical and non-physical (e.g. emotional) abuse, however no differences were found in reported levels of depression and self esteem between groups. There are, however, a number of possible explanations for the greater levels of abuse reported among the heterosexual sample. For example, male heterosexual abusers may victimise their partners more than lesbians. However Tuel and Russell noted that heterosexual participants reported that their relationships lasted significantly longer than lesbian relationships suggesting an escalation in abuse and violence with time (e.g. Renzetti, 1992). Notably, for both groups the severity of depression was found to be related to the degree of physical violence encountered. Similarly, self-esteem was related to levels of non-physical abuse. This is consistent with the findings of Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) who found that low self-esteem is associated with non-physical abuse. Clearly there are some similarities among heterosexual and lesbian victims of abuse or violence within relationships - especially in terms of the emotional response to different types of violence - however, the overall impact of abuse may be more significant for lesbians as a loss of trust in women challenges the popular belief that the lesbian or all women communities are safe havens (Tuel & Russell, 1998).

### **Dynamics of abusive relationships and characteristics of victims and perpetrators**

Studies focusing on abuse and violence within same-sex relationships have attempted to identify and describe the types of relationships in which violence may develop and the characteristics of typical perpetrators and victims. Niolon (2002) argued that a history of abuse is often an indicator of becoming involved in an abusive relationship, either as a perpetrator or as a victim, and he also suggested that a low level of self esteem be also be a particularly important indicator.

It has also been suggested that LGB victims of violence in relationships share similar risk profiles to battered heterosexual women. For example, low income, unemployment, a history of family violence, experiences of childhood sexual abuse, depression and heavy substance use (Greenwood et al, 2002).

Farley (1996) conducted a study examining the demographic profiles of 288 gay male and lesbian perpetrators of violence in relationships over a period of six years. His data showed that gay and lesbian abusers come from a variety of social backgrounds, cutting across economic class, education and occupation, and represent all ethnic groups. Ninety-four per cent had received mental health treatment in the past, and 38% had been hospitalised. Approximately one third of the men and women reported feeling suicidal and approximately 20% reported feeling 'homicidal'. Farley (1991) also found that a history of abuse was also a common factor among this sample.

Renzetti (1994) argued that the greater the abusers dependency and the greater the victims inclination for independence, the greater the frequency and variety of abusive acts. Abusers, whether lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual have been profiled as having negative self-concepts and low self-esteem which, in turn, leads to high dependency needs (Cruz & Firestone, 1998). Renzetti (1997) also argued that homophobia can be internalised to produce negative self-esteem, and can be used as a tool of abuse when an abuser threatens to 'out' or expose their partner's sexual orientation.

Abuse dynamics within a same-sex relationship can also be affected where one partner is HIV positive. Caring for a partner, living with the disease and fear of contraction have been used as excuses to perpetrate both violence in relationships and abuse. In turn, those with the disease have used emotional abuse in an attempt to persuade a partner to remain in a relationship even though it has broken down (Island & Letellier, 1991).

As noted by Miller et al. (2000), the physical strength differential is often reduced between same-sex couples, and especially among gay couples. Male victims of violence or abuse are not necessarily less masculine in appearance, mannerisms or physical strength (Renzetti, 1992). In addition, masculinity in gay men is not related to abuse (Kelly & Warshafsky, 1987). Furthermore, gay men who may be described as having feminine traits are often individuals who display high levels of self-esteem, competitiveness and dominance (Harry, 1984). Harry (1984) further asserts that most gay men are attracted to those who display a similar degree of masculinity or femininity.

Berger (1990) found that 45% of the gay couples in his study regarded financial or employment issues as the greatest source of conflict in their relationships. If one partner earns more money than the other, it can become a significant source of tension for the couple. Niolon (2002) argued that men in general are not accustomed or socialized into being able to accept being in a less powerful position. Harry (1989) argued that although it may not be common, the less powerful partner could conjure up thoughts and images of being 'kept'. Other external stressors can contribute to high tensions within same-sex partnerships. The "glass ceiling" effect in some occupations and not being entitled to pension, insurance and the other benefits associated with a partner's job has been found to contribute to the development of tension among lesbian and gay couples (Miller et al., 2000). This is further compounded by the fact that same-sex couples are not entitled to marry and are therefore not granted next of kin rights thus leading to an inability to conform to the social models associated with heterosexuality. Indeed, while the unequal division of tasks such as cleaning and shopping remains a constant within societal conceptions of heterosexual relationships; surprisingly, the equality that same-sex relationships can bring to the domestic situation may result in further tension through the inability of the outside world to cope with lifestyles that do not conform to some approximation of the perceived 'norm'. Nevertheless, same sex

couples do sometimes adopt the model of 'normality', especially if one of the partners is in a highly demanding occupation and the other is not (Miller et al., 2000).

In a study of same-sex relationships, Landolt and Dutton (1997) sampled 52 gay male couples using a self-report style questionnaire. The questionnaire included the Marital Power Scale (Coleman and Straus, 1986) measuring perceived power balances between couples. Forty percent of the sample reported at least one member of the couple instigating one or more violent acts in the past year. However, neither physical nor psychological rates of abuse were higher among couples whose power dynamics differed and this runs contrary to the findings of Coleman and Straus (1986) who, using the same scale, found higher rates of violence and abuse among heterosexual couples where one partner has greater power than the other.

Cruz and Peralta (2001) conducted in depth qualitative interviews using a purposive sample of 25 gay men who had experience with violence in relationships within a same-sex relationship. Ages ranged from 23 to 43 years (average age of 32 years) and the abusive relationships lasted from 10 months to 10 years. Victims reported high rates of alcohol consumption by their abusive partner, however alcohol, in itself, was not found to be an autonomous predictor of domestic abuse. Other factors such as childhood exposure to violence in relationships were reported alongside alcohol dependency. Although there does seem to be an association between alcohol dependency and the perpetration of violence and abuse, both would also seem to correlate with negative life events (e.g. abusive parenting).

Lie et al. (1991) noted that 50% of their sample of lesbian victims of violence and abuse in relationships had perpetrated violent acts against a partner in the past. While there were no qualitative explanations to elaborate the findings in this study, there are a number of potential reasons why these women also perpetrated acts of violence. For example, it may be plausible to believe that 50% of victims are in two-way violent relationships and therefore just as much to blame as their partner. They may also be lashing out defensively or as a reactionary action. They may also be pushed to their emotional limits in their relationships and decide to stand up for themselves. However, until there is further research to elaborate on these statistics the exact meaning of Lie et al.'s findings remains unclear.

### **Effects of violence and abuse in relationships**

The most frequently reported effects of sexual assault and abuse include depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, disassociation, sleep disorders, shame, guilt, self-mutilation, suicidal ideation and attempts, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), fear, displaced anger and sexual dysfunction (Sloan & Edmond, 1996). Reported prevalence rates of sexual violence in lesbian and gay relationships vary from study to study (see page 8).

### **Getting help**

There are a number of possible explanations relating to why victims of violence and abuse in same-sex relationships do not seek help and support. Pitt & Dolan-Soto (2001) argued that victims together with many of the organisations supporting victims of violent or abusive relationships might not be aware that violence and abuse occurs in same-sex relationships at approximately the same rate as in heterosexual relationships. As a result, victims may believe that it is only happening to them. Lesbian, gay and bisexual victims, like heterosexual victims, are often unwilling to report abuse because they fear retaliation from an abusive partner. However victims from same-sex relationships may also be anxious or concerned about reactions from professionals (including the Police) if they reported the abuse (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). In the United States, the National

Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP, 2002) argue that victims of violence or abuse in same-sex relationships are unlikely or unwilling to seek assistance from services such as battered women's shelters, law enforcement, or health centres and hospitals because of the perceived anti-lesbian/gay/bisexual prejudice that they believe pervades such services. Victims of violence in same-sex relationships may also have difficulty in reporting their abuse due to genderized view Society has about the nature of violence and aggression. The prevailing attitude in Society is that women are not as violent as men, and Letellier (1994) suggested that gay men may find it difficult to view themselves as victims as it is inconsistent with prescribed notions of masculinity. Niolon (2002) argued that contemporary society has failed to acknowledge that men can be victims of violence too, and women can be perpetrators.

If and when a victim of violence or abuse decides to seek help, s/he needs to know where s/he can go to obtain it. In 2001 at the Broken Rainbow Conference (held in the United Kingdom) delegates were told for the first time that lesbians regularly face homophobia in battered women's refuges, and that currently, again in the UK, there are only 18 bed spaces available for gay men (Broken Rainbow, 2002). The Conference also identified that there is currently no support provision for transgender or bisexual victims of violence or abuse in relationships. As a result, some researchers have argued that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities must take some responsibility for the current lack of support provision for victims of violence and abuse in the home. Delegates were told that although the community has become more visible in terms of addressing political and human rights issues, it barely acknowledges the existence of violence or abuse in same-sex relationships, and does not raise the issue with the heterosexual population. This is a view shared by Morrow & Hawxhurst (1989), who argued that many lesbians and 'lesbian-supporting' therapists hold idealized and often unrealistic pictures about the nature of lesbian relationships, which lead them to deny the existence of abuse among lesbian couples. Niolen (2002) further expanded on this point by suggesting that domestic abuse within a lesbian relationship goes against feminist philosophy (i.e. that a woman is capable of hitting or abusing another woman). Furthermore, gay and bisexual men appear to agree with a myth that a man can not be a victim of abuse. It has been suggested that this reluctance to acknowledge the existence of violence in relationships by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities may represent an unwillingness to acknowledge that same-sex relationships are not always perfect, and can go wrong (Niolon, 2002; Broken Rainbow, 2002). However this lack of acknowledgement can have a detrimental effect upon victims of abuse as Lehman (2002) points out:

*This silent denial by the community is detrimental as it perpetuates the abuse, suffocates potential funding and services and removes support, protection, validation and empowerment from the victim.*

### **Methodological Issues**

As we noted earlier in this report, many researchers have acknowledged the difficulties involved in studying violence and abuse in all relationships, both same-sex and opposite-sex. A direct comparison of prevalence rates of violence in relationships is often difficult to undertake due to the differing methodologies employed by each researcher or group of researchers. Burke & Follingstad (1999) argued that in order to conduct a reliable study on violence in relationships it is imperative that the term is clearly defined. There has been some controversy over whether behaviours such as threatening to punch someone constitute an act of physical violence or psychological abuse. Because different

authors define and record such behaviours in different ways, it is almost impossible to establish a valid prevalence.

In addition, Burke & Follingstad (1999) have argued that, in terms of gathering research data, it is necessary identify the victim and the perpetrator of the violence or abuse carefully in order to determine whether the data being collected is indicative of an abusive relationship or mutual battery. This could be done simply by asking participants to explain why they or their partner were violent or abusive. However, without this attempt at differentiation, acts of self-defence can only exaggerate prevalence rates.

Finally, Turell (2000) argued that there may be some methodological difficulties relating to the use of self reports as a means of measuring violence or abuse in same-sex relationships. Those individuals who remain in abusive relationships, or have been affected most severely by their experiences are perhaps less likely to participate or disclose fully for fear of their partner finding out. Consequently, those who do participate or have participated in many of the studies cited above may under-represent their experiences. As a result, Turell (2000) has suggested that retrospective reports may be a more useful method of gathering data (i.e. that there is a sufficient lapse in time between a victim leaving a violent or abusive relationship and her/his participation in the research project).

### **Conclusion**

Although there is an increasing body of research into violence and abuse in same-sex relationships, it remains incredibly difficult to determine an accurate prevalence rate due to the variety of methodological issues outlined above. However, researchers do seem to agree that, in nature and expression at least, violence and abuse in same-sex relationships follows a similar pattern to that found in heterosexual relationships, and that there remains a need for the development of appropriate services for victims of violence or abuse in same-sex relationships.

Based upon the data collected as part of this literature review, the authors have devised a questionnaire (see *APPENDIX II*) that attempts to address many of the methodological issues we have highlighted, including whether or not isolated reports of violence or abuse are a retaliatory or defence mechanism against sustained abuse by a same-sex partner.

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## APPENDIX I: Summary of Key Research Findings

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Findings/Results</i>
Diamond & Wilsnack (1978)	10 lesbians with alcohol problems	Self-report/ semi structured interviews	Drinking was related to an increase in physical and verbal aggression
Gwat-Young Lie & Gentlewarrior (1985)	1,109 lesbians		More than half had been abused by a female partner in their lifetimes.
Brand & Kidd (1986)	75 heterosexual and 55 lesbian women	Questionnaire	Frequency of aggression significantly higher amongst heterosexual women, found that 25% had been physically abused by a lesbian partner
Loulan (1987)	1566 lesbians	Self-report questionnaire	Prevalence of aggression was found to be significantly higher in heterosexual relationships than amongst lesbian couples.
Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council	900 lesbians and 1000 gay men in Minnesota	Survey	22% had been in a physically violent lesbian relationship, 17% of the gay men reported having been in a physically abusive relationship
Kelly & Warshafsky (1987)	98 lesbians and gay men	Survey	46% reported at least one incidence of physical aggression in their most recent relationship
Renzetti (1988)	100 battered lesbians,	Self-report questionnaire	Victims of abuse were extremely dependant upon their partner
Renzetti (1989)	100 battered lesbians	Questionnaire	74% reported 6 or more incidents of abusive incidents, with pushing and shoving being the most common forms.
Gardner (1989)	43 heterosexual, 43 lesbian, 39 gay male couples, recruited through advertising	Questionnaire	Those in violent relationships were more aggressive, hostile, distressed, alcohol consuming, and less satisfied with their relationships, than those who weren't.
Schilit <i>et al.</i> (1990)	104 lesbian	Questionnaire	Substance abuse was significantly related to being both a perpetrator of abuse and a victim.
Coleman (1990)	90 lesbian couples	Survey	46% experienced repeated acts of violence in their relationships
Elliott (1990)	The 1987 Lesbian battering intervention project in Minnesota		76% of lesbian participants had experienced some form of indirect threat of violence from a lesbian partner
Lie <i>et al.</i> (1991)	169 lesbians	Survey	76% of lesbians reported experiencing some form of violence in a lesbian relationship.
Lie & Gentlewarrior (1991)	1099 Lesbians	Questionnaire	Over 50% reported some form of abuse, most victims gained support from private therapy/counselling

Schilit <i>et al</i> (1991)	100 battered lesbians	Questionnaire	History of abuse by a male and/or family origins of violence correlated with both victimization and perpetration.
Island & Letellier (1991)	9.5 million gay men in the US		Estimated approximately 500,000 are victims of partner abuse each year
Schilit, Bush, Montagne & Reyes (1991)			26% reported abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) in a current relationship
Renzetti (1992)	100 lesbians	Questionnaire	Jealousy, imbalance of power, substance abuse, intergenerational abuse and dependency were all related to abuse.
Bryant & Demian (1994)	560 gay male, & 706 lesbian couples	Questionnaire	31% reported abuse, 16% reported verbal abuse, 11% of men and 7% of women reported physical abuse.
Bradford, Ryan & Rothblum (1994)	1,925 Lesbians	Questionnaire (National Lesbian Health Care Survey)	16% physically abused by adults, 19% of these reported abuse by another female.
Harms (1995)	393 gay and bisexual men	Questionnaire	26% reported using violence in their most recent relationship, and 25% reported being victim to it.
Chesley et al (1998)	189 lesbians	Survey	66% knew of lesbians who had experienced domestic abuse in their relationships, 37 of the 189 viewed themselves as being in an abusive relationship, and 20 reported having experienced some form of physical assault.
Cruz & Firestone (1998)	25 self-identify gay men	In depth interviews	1 person initially identified himself as a perpetrator and later as a victim, the other 24 all identified themselves as victims, although many suggested that they were capable of provoking violence, made no clear distinction between victim and perpetrator.
Merrill & Wolfe (2000)	52 gay men, recruited through programs that offered violence in relationships support services		87% reported severe recurrent physical abuse, 79% had suffered at least one injury. Over a third did not know where to seek help and support from.
Greenwood et al. (2002)	Probability sample of 2881 MSM	Telephone interviews.	34% reported psychological/symbolic battering, 22% physical battering, 5% sexual battering.
McClennan et al. (2002)	63 self identified victims of domestic abuse	Questionnaire	Most common form of abuse was being verbally threatened

## APPENDIX II: Questionnaire



The following questionnaire is part of a project commissioned by Yorkshire Mesmac, into the prevalence of violence and abuse among same-sex couples in Yorkshire. We are hoping to identify how many of you have experiences of domestic abuse and whether there is sufficient service provision in Yorkshire to help, advise and support individuals with such experiences.

The questionnaire is relatively short and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is split into two parts, the first part focuses on whether you are or have ever been in an abusive relationship, and the second part focuses on whether you have been abusive towards a partner. Some questions require you to simply tick boxes, whereas others require more detailed responses in the spaces provided. We understand that some questions may be difficult to answer, and we would like to stress that it is not our intention to offend or embarrass you, we would also like to emphasise that your privacy and confidentiality is maintained at all times, we do not ask your name or for any other information which we may be able to use to identify you. We do ask for the first part of your post code, however this is simply to make sure that you live in Yorkshire.

We would also like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, and if you would like any further information on the project please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely

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We have included some help line Numbers if you would like to talk to anyone about domestic abuse.

Men: 0208 644 9914

*An organisation which supports men who are experiencing domestic abuse.*

Women: 0870 5995443

*Refuge provides counselling and support for women experiencing abuse*

## Violence and Abuse in Same-Sex Relationships

**First Part of Your Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

1) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years

2) What Gender do you identify with?

Male

Female

3) How would you describe yourself? (Tick appropriate box)

<b>White</b>	UK <input type="checkbox"/>		Irish <input type="checkbox"/>		Other <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Black</b>	Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>		African <input type="checkbox"/>		UK <input type="checkbox"/>
	Somali <input type="checkbox"/>		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Asian</b>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>		Indian <input type="checkbox"/>		Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>
	Turkish <input type="checkbox"/>		Greek <input type="checkbox"/>		Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>
	Turkish Cypriot <input type="checkbox"/>		Greek Cypriot <input type="checkbox"/>		Asian other <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other</b>	please specify which _____				

4) How would you describe your social class? (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*(e.g. working, lower middle, middle, upper middle, upper)*

5) Are you currently at secondary School/ College or university?

Yes

No

6) What is your current occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

7) How would you describe your sexual orientation? \_\_\_\_\_

8) Are you currently in a Relationship?

Yes  If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

No

9) Have you ever been in an abusive relationship?

Yes, my current relationship

Yes, in one of my previous relationships

Yes, in a number of my past relationships  How many? \_\_\_\_\_

No, never

10) Are you afraid of your current partner?

Yes

No

11) Were you ever afraid of a previous partner?

Yes

No

12) If you suffered abuse in a previous relationship, how long did the relationship last for?

Less than a month

More than a month, less than six months

More than six months, less than a year

More than a year

13) Did the relationship end as a result of the abuse?

Yes

No

14) If you are currently in an abusive relationship can you explain the reasons why you do not leave you partner?

15) If you are currently in an abusive relationship, or have been in the past, how long was it before the relationship became abusive?

- Within the first month   
 After the first month, within the first six months   
 After the first six months, within a year   
 After a year   
 Other, please state \_\_\_\_\_

16) Have you ever told anyone about the abuse you are experiencing/ have experienced?

- Yes   
 No

If yes, who did you tell?

- |                            |                          |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Friend(s)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Domestic Violence Helpline | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of family           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support Group              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work Colleague             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Counsellor/therapist       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| GP                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Police                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Medical professional | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please state) _____ |                          |

17) If you have never told anyone about the abuse can you explain why not?

18) Did you ever suffer any form of abuse after the relationship ended?

- Yes   
 No

19) If yes, what types of abuse did you experience?

- None   
 Stalking   
 Abusive phone calls   
 Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



20) **Your experiences of abuse.** Below is a list of abusive behaviours, please read the list below and write in the relevant column the number of times you have experienced the abusive act, either in a current relationship or a previous relationship. If you have never experienced a particular act please leave the columns blank.

	In a current Relationship	In a previous Relationship
Hits you		
Punches you		
Throws objects at you		
Kicks you		
Pushes/ shoves you		
Slaps you		
Chokes you		
Threatens you with physical violence		
Hits you with objects		
Cut you with a sharp object		
Forces you to have sex against you will		
Forces you to have unsafe sex		
Threatened to give you HIV		
Criticises/ ridicules your sexual performance		
Told you that you would have nothing if the relationship ended		
Threatened to kill you if you left		
Threatened to commit suicide		
Criticises you		
Intimidates you		
Humiliates you		
Demeans you/ puts you down		
Swears as you		
Calls you name		
Insults you		
Accuses you of being unfaithful		
Blames you for his/her abusive behaviour		
Constantly checks up on you		
Tells you that no one else would want you		
Locks you in a room/ in the house		
Locks you out of the house		
Tries to stop you seeing/talking to friends and/or family		
Restricts you access to money/ finances		
Steals your money		
Gets you into debt		
Damages your property		
Smashes things in the house		
Breaks your things		
Threatens to out you to family/friends/work colleagues		
Other, Please state		

21) How frequently is/was your partner abusive towards you?

- Daily
- 2+ times a week
- Once a week
- 2+ times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

22) Do/did you ever become abusive in retaliation to your partners abuse?

Yes   
No

23) When your partner becomes/became abusive towards you, how do/did you react?

24) How does your partner react/behave after he/she has been abusive towards you?

Apologises	<input type="checkbox"/>	Becomes very loving and attentive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promises it will never happen again	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expresses guilt/shame/sorrow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promises to change	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blames you for the abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state) _____			

25) Have you ever received any injuries as a result of your partner's abuse?

Yes   
No

26) If yes, what injuries did you receive as a result of the abuse?

Scratches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty breathing/fainting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bruises	<input type="checkbox"/>	knocked unconscious	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nose/ Lip bleeds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black eye/ other facial bruising	<input type="checkbox"/>	Serious cuts/wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken Teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scars	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken arms/legs or ribs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contracted HIV	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken nose/ jaw/ cheekbone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contracted other STI	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burns			
Other Physical Injury, (please state): _____			

27) Did you ever receive medical treatment for any physical injury you may have received?

Yes  How many times? \_\_\_\_\_  
No

28) Did you inform the medical staff of the cause of your injuries?

Yes  Please go to question 29  
No  Please go to question 30

29) If yes, can you describe the reaction of the medical staff?

30) If no why not?

- |                                     |                          |                                   |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Felt ashamed/embarrassed            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Feared my partners reaction       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did not think they would understand | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did not think they would help me  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Feared a homophobic reaction        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Thought they would not believe me | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please state) _____          |                          |                                   |                          |

31) Did the police ever become involved as a result of your partners violence?

- Yes   
No

32) If yes, how did the police react to the situation?

33) Have you ever experienced any of the following problems as a result of your partner's abusive behaviour?

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forced to give up job       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forced to give up home      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lost contact with friends   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lost contact with family    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Became dependant on drugs   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Became dependant on alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please state) _____  |                          |

34) Have you ever accessed any support services/groups/help lines?

- Yes   
No

35) If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

36) If no, why not

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Do not believe that my situation is that serious | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Am not aware that such services exist            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do not know where these services are             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do not believe they would understand my problems | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fear my partner finding out                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fear a prejudiced reaction                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify) _____                     |                          |

37) Abuse you committed towards a partner, please read the list below, and write in one or both of the columns, the number of times you have committed this act towards a partner, either in a current relationship or in a previous relationship. If you have never committed a particular act, please leave the columns blank.

	<i>In a current Relationship</i>	<i>In a previous Relationship</i>
Hit him/her		
Punched him		
Thrown objects at him/ her		
Kicked him/her		
Pushed/ shoved him/her		
Slapped him/her		
Choked him/her		
Threatened him/her with physical violence		
Hit him/her with objects		
Cut him/her with a sharp object		
Forced him/her to have sex against their will		
Forced him/her to have unsafe sex		
Threatened to give him/her HIV		
Criticised/ ridiculed your partners sexual performance		
Told him/her that they would have nothing if the relationship ended		
Threatened to kill yourself if he/she left		
Threatened to commit suicide		
Criticised him/her		
Intimidated him/her		
Humiliated him/her		
Demean him/her/ puts him/her down		
Swear at him/her		
Call your partner names		
Insult your partner		
Accused him/her of being unfaithful		
Blame your partner for your abusive behaviour		
Constantly checking up on your partner		
Tell your partner that no one else would want him/her		
Lock your partner in a room/ in the house		
Lock your partner out of the house		
Try to stop your partner seeing/talking to friends and/or family		
Restrict your partners access to money/ finances		
Steal your partners money		
Get your partner into debt		
Damage your partners property		
Smash things in the house		
Break your partners things		
Threaten to out your partner to family/friends/work colleagues		
Other, Please state		

38) How frequently are/were you abusive towards your partner

- Daily
- 2+ times a week
- Once a week
- 2+ times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

39) Can you explain the reasons why you were/ are abusive towards your partner?

40) Can you describe the circumstances that cause you to be abusive towards your partner?

41) Do/did you drink before you are/were abusive?

Yes   
No

42) Do/did you use any drugs before you are/were abusive?

Yes   
No

43) Has your partner ever sustained any injuries as a result of your abusive behaviour

Yes   
No

44) If yes, what injuries did he/she receive as a result of the abuse?

Scratches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty breathing/fainting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bruises	<input type="checkbox"/>	knocked unconscious	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nose/ Lip bleeds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black eye/ other facial bruising	<input type="checkbox"/>	Serious cuts/wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken Teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scars	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken arms/legs or ribs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contracted HIV	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken nose/ jaw/ cheekbone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contracted other STD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burns	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other Physical Injury, (please state): _____			

45) Can you explain how you feel/ behave after you have been violent towards your partner

46) Have you ever experienced any of the following problems as a result of your abusive behaviour?

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forced to give up job       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forced to give up home      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lost contact with friends   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lost contact with family    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Became dependant on drugs   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Became dependant on alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have been arrested          | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

47) Have you ever talked to anyone about your abusive behaviour?

- Yes   
No

48) Who did you talk to?

- |                            |                          |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Friend(s)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Domestic Violence Helpline | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of family           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support Group              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work Colleague             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Counsellor/therapist       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| GP                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Police                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Medical professional | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please state) _____ |                          |

49) Have you ever sought any professional help for your abusive behaviour?

- Yes   
No

If yes, where did you go? \_\_\_\_\_

50) If no can you explain why? (Please tick all that apply)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Do not think they would understand my problems   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worry they will not be accepting of my sexuality | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do not know where to go                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worry they may judge me                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please state) _____                       |                          |

We have included a blank page, if you would like to make some additional comments about your experiences or issues raised in this questionnaire please use this space.

## About the Authors

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