



Still Feeling Invisible? Practical Steps for Your CCR to Respond to LGBTQ Needs

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify common experiences of LGBTQ victims/survivors of domestic and sexual assault
2. Determine what steps a local CCR team can take to improve their responses

How this webinar came about

1. Discussions with Aaron Eckhardt during and after BWJP's summer 2011 Systems Advocacy training
2. Aaron's experience of the training and how feedback can improve CCR members' personal/professional responses to LGBTQ cases
3. What's with the silent blankness?

Insiders and Outsiders

- “Insider” owns the knowledge, is the expert, sets the boundaries, establishes priorities, and manages the interaction.
 - It may describe people who work in the established battered women’s movement with a feminist analysis
- “Outsider” describes the challenger who may have a different story that is not being heard, or may not know or understand the topic.
 - An LGBTQ activist or advocate
 - Or someone who really doesn’t know or understand domestic violence

What's the experience of being an outsider?

What's the experience of the LGBTQ Outsider?

What's happening to the LGBTQ Outsider?

1. May be prepared to speak up about LGBTQ experiences several times
2. Calculates effects of speaking up, which may guide future approaches
3. May challenge more strongly, considering risk of alienation
4. May choose to be silent when speaking up seems counterproductive
5. Tired, disconnected, irritated, bored when experience feels under-valued

What's the experience of being an insider?

What's the experience of the DV Movement Insider?

What's the experience of the DV Movement Insiders?

1. Politely listens (perhaps without hearing), may try to accommodate
2. Tries to show they've done LGBTQ 101, and they care
3. Internally: "Haven't we done enough already?" Mental list of all the LGBTQ accommodations made previously
4. "We're all talking about DV, right? It can't be *that* different..."
5. Defines and limits the discussion
6. May try and align with LGBTQ spokesperson against own colleagues: "I get it, but my colleagues..." or "My sister's son is gay"

When are you the Insider? Outsider?

1. We're the ones who GET DV and the rest of the world doesn't (but thinks they do)
2. Community organizations vs government (We're NON-PROFIT - we emit light)
3. It feels good to present as the Outsider
4. We resist being seen as the Insider
5. Who you are meeting with shapes which side you might take
6. This can prevent you seeing and hearing others' experience

Controversies between DV & LGBTQ Movements

1. DV movement wants to maintain gender analysis
2. Some DV movement people see LGBTQ violence as a niche problem undeserving of an organized response
3. DV movement is more integrated with the justice system and government assistance - LGBTQ are often struggling to start local services
4. Some within DV movement are concerned that close alliances with LGBTQ groups could damage or weaken their collaboration with systems

Controversies between DV & LGBTQ Movements

5. Some doubt the ability of systems to respond effectively to domestic violence and sexual assault within LGBTQ communities
6. LGBTQ activists find the focus on women = victims, men = offenders doesn't fit their experience
7. LGBTQ agencies doubt the ability and will of DV agencies to respond effectively to their people
8. Some LGBTQ people and organizations see sexual assault and domestic violence as a "straight problem" or don't want the bad publicity

Controversies between DV & LGBTQ Movements

9. LGBTQ agencies are more under siege from parts of society who question their existence and moral standing
10. LGBTQ organizations often group domestic violence with sexual assault AND hate/bias crimes
11. LGBTQ agencies are more akin to sexual assault agencies because of the wider context of abuse
12. Some “mental health” approaches sidestep social and historical factors, excluding both DV and LGBTQ activists

How do CCRs LISTEN and ACT without defensiveness becoming a barrier?

1. Reflect on defensiveness we may feel
2. How and why do we justify that what we've done is "enough?"
3. Create a trust-building process between insiders and outsiders

How do CCRs LISTEN and ACT without defensiveness becoming a barrier?

4. Don't sell out a gendered analysis; articulate an inclusive, nuanced approach
5. Listen to a range of views and constantly re-evaluate the effects of intervention (esp. marginalized people)
6. Don't rely on the LGBTQ Outsider to always raise the problems – strategize and speak up!

Introducing Aaron's Work



BRAVO's Services for Survivors of Bias Crimes and Domestic Violence

■ **Survivor Support**

- Crisis Intervention
- Police Liaison Assistance
- Courtroom Advocacy
- Support Groups

■ **Documentation**

- Individual Incident Reports
- Annual Local and National Reports

■ **Education**

- Cultural Sensitivity Training
- Self-Defense Classes
- Technical Assistance to service providers

Some Definitions

- Sexual Identity or Sexual Orientation:
Refers to the direction of one's attraction
- Bisexual:
Refers to one who is attracted to people of any gender
- Transgender:
Refers to gender identity and/or gender expression
- Queer:
Used to talk about LGBTQ people in general

Heterosexism

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual (or should be) and that heterosexuality is the only 'normal', right, and moral way to be and that, therefore, anyone of a different sexual orientation is 'abnormal', wrong, and immoral.

Sexual Orientation

- Innate essence
- Person's intimate and affectional nature
- Not a “preference”
- Do the terms describe behavior? Intensity?
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual all describe sexual orientation

Gender Identity

- Person's own sense of how masculine or feminine he/she is
- Compare to gender expression
- Some find our pronouns inadequate (ze, hir)
- Transgender can include transsexuals, cross dressers, intersexed, M2F, F2M transsexuals
- Gender identity does not determine sexual orientation

Current Terms / Language

YES

Gay, lesbian, or bisexual

Sexual orientation

Gay culture or community

Trans, transgender,

Trans-identified Transgender woman,

Transgender man

NO

Homosexual

Sexual preference

Gay lifestyle or alternative lifestyle

Transvestite

A transgendered, transgendereds

You may hear language such as gender variant or gender non-conforming

Also, the terms transman and transwoman are acceptable

Bias Violence

- Seven adult horses and one foal died as a result of an arson fire at 874 West Richards Road in McConnellsville just after 11:30 p.m. on Sunday. Owner Brent Whitehouse said he woke to discover the barn engulfed in flames and immediately called 911, but it was too late.
- "I couldn't get the door open I could still hear the horses kicking and I tried as hard as I could to get them out and I just couldn't get them out in time."

Examples of Bias Violence



Bias Violence – Aaron's Story

- In 1993 Aaron had just “come out” as a gay man he was 16 at the time of the attack; he was riding his bike home from visiting with friends from school. During a warm April evening Aaron was approached by a group of high school students and while trying to flee they ran Aaron off the road into a parked car. Aaron suffered a major head trauma, broken facial and hand bones, 51 stitches, and significant blood loss resulting in weeks of recovery. If it had not been for the kindness of a passerby Aaron may well have not recovered so well.
- Today Aaron is an out and proud member of the gay community and has dedicated his life to Social work, more specifically Anti-Violence work.

Bias Violence – Aaron's Story



Barriers To Addressing LGBTQ Domestic Violence

- Social discrimination & persecution
- Homophobia & heterosexism
- Victims and offenders have an expectation of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia
- Lack of professional training/knowledge of LGBTQ population
- Distrust of authority or programs by LGBTQ individuals
- Poor access to programs and services for LGBTQ

Statistics and Reporting

- One in four LGBTQ people, same as the rate of DV for the general population
- “Mainstream” studies; prevalence ranging from 20% - 35%
- LGBTQ studies few and limited, but prevalence appears to be the same
- Statistics rarely captured by existing DV programs and criminal justice system
- BRAVO / NCAVP statistics and reporting

Lesbian/Bisexual Women & Domestic Violence

- 41% of women reported having been abused in at least one relationship with another woman. *J. Ristock (1994)*
- More than half of lesbians reported that they had been abused by a woman partner in their lifetime. *Gwat-Yong Lie and S. Gentlewarrier (1991)*

Gay/Bisexual Men & Domestic Violence

- DV rates comparable to that of heterosexual women
- 32% reported being victims of intimate partner violence
- More likely to report suffering serious health problems such as heart disease, hypertension, depression, and anxiety
- More likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse and unprotected sex

Study of urban gay & bisexual men, *Journal of Urban Health*, New York Academy of Medicine

Transgender and Intersex Individuals

- 50% reported rape or assault by a romantic partner
- Although only 62% of those individuals identified themselves as survivors of DV when asked

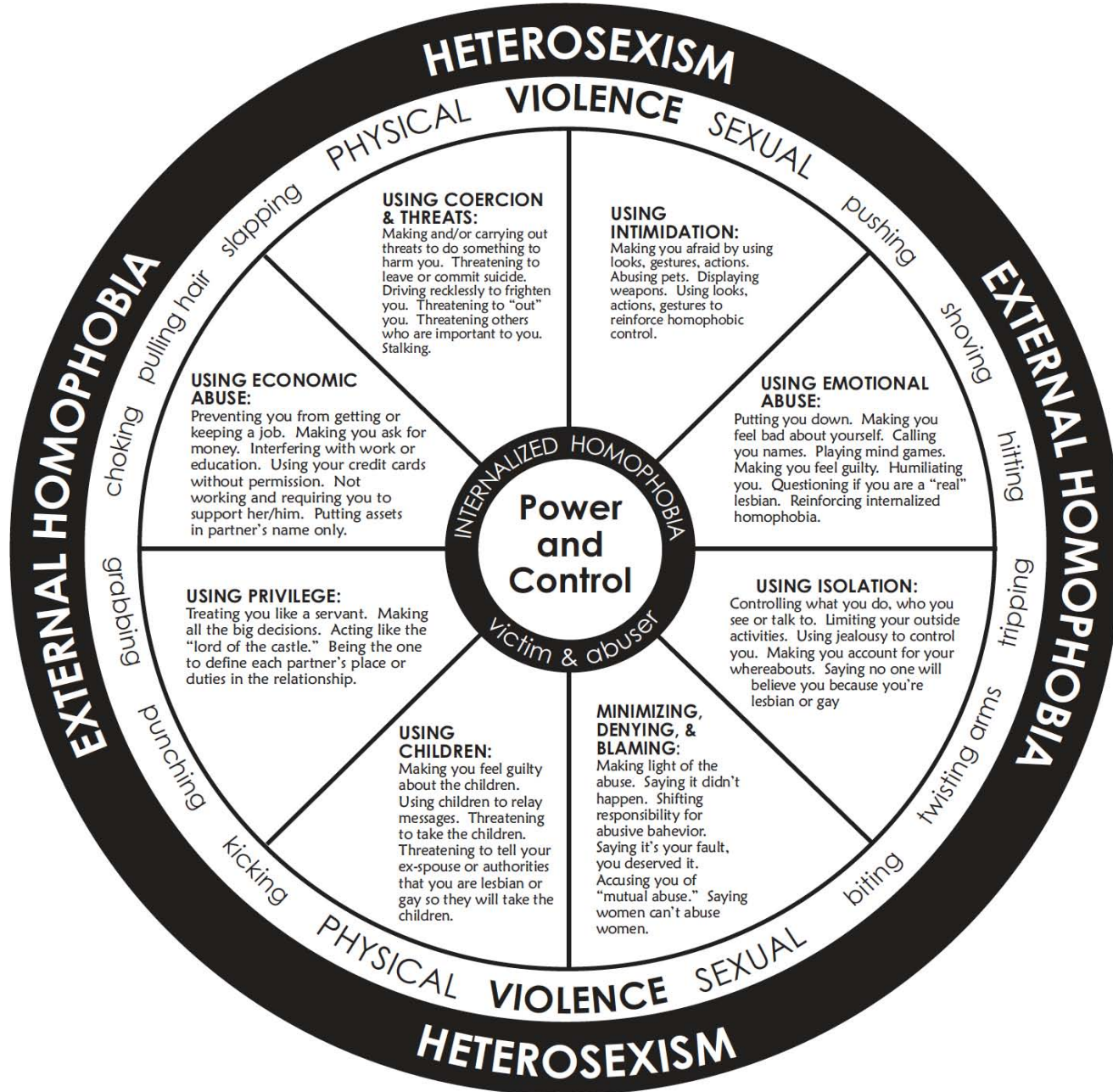
Source: The Survivor Project Survey, Portland, Oregon;
1998

“DV Movement” Ideas About Domestic Violence

- Why LGBTQ people may not see themselves in the “DV Movement” Domestic Violence definition
- “Violence Against Women” excludes LGBTQ people

LGBTQ-Specific Battering Behavior

- Outing or threats of outing to family, friends, employer, police, community, or in child custody disputes
- Reinforcing fears that no one will help the victim or that they “deserve” the abuse
- Justifying abuse with the notion that a partner is not “really” lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
- Telling the partner that abusive behavior is a normal part of LGBTQ relationships or that it can’t be DV because it is occurring between LGBTQ individuals
- Denying victim access to LGBTQ resources or events
- Portraying the violence as mutual or even consensual
- Depicting the abuse as part of sado-masochistic (S/M) activity (domestic violence is NOT consenting behavior)



Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Power and Control Wheel

www.theduluthmodel.org

Myths about LGBTQ Domestic Violence

- Who may be the batterer or victim
 - Butch/Femme
 - Race/Class assumptions
 - Body Size
- Mutual Battering
- More common in straight relationships
- It is easier for LGBTQ victims to leave

Context, Intent, Effect

- Look at *Context* to assess who is establishing systematic power and control
- Look at the *Intent* of its use (establishing control vs. regaining control over oneself)
- Look at the *Effect* of the behavior

Any behavior can be used by a person to survive abuse or used by a person to establish power over another.

The behavior itself is not the point

LGBTQ Survivors of Domestic Violence

- May not identify as LGBTQ
- May be vague when telling their story
- May have defended themselves and thus be confused about the battering
- May not appear dependent upon their partner
- May have very low self-esteem
- May claim to be battered, but are the batterer
- May be relieved when asked if perpetrator is of the same-sex

Barriers for Transgendered People

- Historic animosity between Trans community and law enforcement
- Myths of cross-dressing and legalities
- Reluctance to engaging with institutions or service providers
- Employment opportunities limited
- Medical and counseling needs very specific
- DV shelters inaccessible or unwelcoming
- Abuse may be barrier to successful transitioning

LGBTQ Inaccessible Programs

- Talk about husbands & boyfriends; only men as potential batterers
- Incomplete screening of women accessing services
- Non-discrimination policies do not include sexual & gender orientation
- Support same-sex battering myths
- LGBTQ employees are solely responsible for needs of LGBTQ people
- Requires “coming out” in order for LGBTQ people to receive services
- Suspicious of people whose story is outside usual paradigm
- Does not respect requirements of “Safe Space”
- Uses language like “Tolerate” “Alternative Lifestyles” “Homosexual”

Working Effectively With LGBTQ Survivors

- Make brochures, group curricula, and agency policies that specifically meet the needs of LGBTQ people
- Evaluate ways you may unintentionally impose special or different limitations on LGBTQ people
- Educate yourself and your agency about homophobia and LGBTQ communities
- Have Non-Discrimination policies and a “Bill of Rights” inclusive of LGBTQ people you work with
- Display pamphlets, posters, and magazines in your lobby that include or depict LGBTQ people (assess your agency accessibility)

Practical Steps for CCRs to Include Marginalized Experiences esp. LGBTQ

- Listen to a range of views and constantly re-evaluate the effects of intervention (esp. on marginalized people)
- Don't rely on the LGBTQ Outsider to always raise problems – strategize and speak up!
- Identify
 1. the violence,
 2. the features and characteristics of the violence,
 3. what difference do the features and characteristics make?
- Then intervene in a way that addresses features and characteristics (don't skip the third step!)



- Working with LGBTQ survivors
- Training professionals, providers, and educators
- Community/societal understanding and acceptance efforts
- Support and inclusion of LGBTQ individuals and families in prevention efforts
- Establishing linkages with existing LGBTQ organizations

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Resources

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Battered Women's Justice Project
(800) 903 0111 www.bwjp.org

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
www.theduluthmodel.org

Praxis International
www.praxisinternational.org

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence
Organization (BRAVO)
www.bravo-ohio.org

Institute on Domestic Violence in the
African American Community
www.dvinstitute.org

National Coalition of Anti-Violence
Programs (NCAVP)
www.avp.org/ncavp.htm

NW Network of Bisexual, Trans,
Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse
www.nwnetwork.org

Office on Violence Against Women
www.usdoj.gov/ovw