

LGBTQ Abusive Relationships



Everybody deserves a safe and healthy relationship. You may think same-sex couples cannot be in abusive relationships because they are the same gender. That's not true. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth experience dating abuse at the same rates and in similar ways as heterosexual couples do. In fact, one in three young people -- straight, gay and everyone in between -- experience some form of dating abuse.

Obstacles for LGBTQ Youth to Get Help

Many LGBTQ teens and 20-somethings believe that no one will help them because they are transgender or in a same-sex relationship. If you're LGBTQ, you may face additional obstacles when asking for help:

- **Shame or Embarrassment.** You may be struggling with your own internalized homophobia or shame about your sexual orientation or gender-identity. Your abusive partner may attempt to use this shame to exert power and control over you.
- **Fear of not Being Believed or Taken Seriously.** You may worry that if you report abuse, you will encounter common stereotypes like violence between LGBTQ partners is always mutual, abuse doesn't occur in lesbian relationships, only the physically bigger partner can be abusive or LGBTQ relationships are inherently unhealthy. Your partner may exploit this fear, trying to convince you that no one will take an LGBTQ victim seriously.
- **Fear of Retaliation, Harassment, Rejection or Bullying.** If you are not yet "out" to everyone, your abusive dating partner may threaten to tell your secret to people who will make your life more difficult once they know. You may also fear that seeking help will make you a target of public ridicule, retaliation, harassment or bullying. Your abusive partner may exploit these fears to isolate you and keep you in the relationship.
- **Less Legal Protection.** You may be unaware that you have legal options for protection -- including obtaining a restraining or protective order. Although laws vary from state to state, and some specifically restrict restraining orders to heterosexual couples, most states have gender-neutral laws that do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Learn about your state's laws at loveisrespect.org.

Regardless of these obstacles, you deserve to be safe and healthy. We can help. Visit loveisrespect.org to chat with a peer advocate for more information.

For more information, you can visit: www.loveisrespect.org

A white call-to-action box with a drop shadow. At the top, it says 'Connect NOW!' in orange. Below that is a green speech bubble icon with 'Live Chat @' inside. Underneath is the website 'www.loveisrespect.org'. At the bottom, there are two icons: a green speech bubble with 'loveis' and a green telephone icon. To the right of the telephone icon is the number '1-866-331-9474'. At the very bottom, in orange text, it says 'Discuss your options anonymously. Peer advocates are available 24/7.'

Repurposing is allowed and encouraged.

Please contact Break the Cycle or the National Dating Abuse Helpline for more information.