

# **LGBTQ Safe Relationships Handbook**

**A Resource Guide for  
Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence  
*and the people who support them***

**Second Edition - 2008**



835 North Street  
Boulder, CO 80304  
24-Hour Crisis and Information Line: 303-444-2424  
Outreach Center: 303-449-8623  
Tri-City Office: 303-673-9000  
[www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org)

# Table of Contents

## Acknowledgements

This project was funded in part by a grant from The Open Door Fund, serving the LGBT communities of Boulder County.

SPAN would also like to thank the staff at the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center at CU-Boulder, Colorado Anti-Violence Program, MESA, and Boulder Pride for their assistance and review. We are additionally grateful for the input of many individuals in the community who generously donated their time and expertise to this revision.

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Defining the Issue</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. You Have Options</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4. Legal System: Pros and Cons</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5. For Youth</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>6. For Trans Survivors</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>7. Being An Ally</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>8. Information for Service Providers</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>9. SPAN Services</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>10. Resources, Readings and Referrals</b>	<b>44</b>

# 1 Introduction

Intimate partner violence. Dating abuse. Domestic violence. When someone you love and trust abuses you, you can experience a range of emotions – from anger to hurt, bewilderment to fear. It can begin with heated words, coercion, a push or a slap. Quite often, this behavior escalates and can become a pattern of abusive behaviors. The isolation or shame you may feel, as well as a hostile political climate toward LGBTQ people, may keep you from realizing that abuse in relationships occurs in every part of our community, to LGBTQ people of every race, ethnicity, class, age, ability or disability, education level, and religion.

While LGBTQ domestic violence is becoming the focus of increasing research attention, it has thus far not been examined with anything near the thoroughness afforded to heterosexual domestic violence. As a result, estimates of the prevalence of LGBTQ domestic violence remain highly speculative and there is a complete lack of scientific research on domestic violence among transgender and intersex individuals. Although research is limited, studies suggest that the incident rate of violence in same-gender and gender-variant relationships is approximately the same as in heterosexual relationships, affecting about 25-35% of all couples, depending on the definition of domestic violence used<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this Handbook is to de-mystify the dynamics of abusive relationships based on gender identity. It is a resource guide for anyone who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and/or 'gender variant,' as well as for those who support, love and work with members of the LGBTQ communities. While not an exhaustive resource, the Handbook offers education about abuse within relationships, and highlights resources for victims, survivors, abusers, and those wishing to provide the best possible support to LGBTQ people impacted by violence.

If you are in an abusive relationship, this Handbook is a resource guide for you. You are not alone, and will hopefully find some concrete resources and support within these pages. This Handbook will not try to convince you to stay or leave, or imply that there is a 'right' answer. It is simply a source of information about safety, education and resources.

If you are an abuser and would like support in changing your abusive behaviors, you have choices. You may find that the information within this Handbook offers you a better understanding of your behaviors, and gives you the freedom to explore alternatives. You also deserve support, and will find resources in this guide.

If you are a friend or family member, victims who need support are most likely to turn to you. You may be a service provider, advocate, peace officer, lawyer or therapist who works with an LGBTQ survivor of relationship violence. You are all important people along the journey of safety, and you can play a pivotal role in supporting victims in making decisions that are best for them.

Many barriers make it difficult for LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence to access help and safety, and to make choices that are best for them. These include:

- fear of retribution by the abusive partner
- fear of losing community ties
- increased isolation
- feelings of responsibility for, guilt and shame about the violence
- lack of familiarity with available resources
- fear of being 'outed'
- lack of civil rights or being in partnerships that are legally recognized and protected

In addition to these barriers, LGBTQ survivors must also overcome obstacles created by transphobia, homophobia, and heterosexism. Concerns about police response (or lack of response), lack of accessible and affordable housing, social violence or the threat of violence, restrictive immigration policies, culturally incompetent counseling and support services, and scorn or disapproval from friends or family all make reaching out difficult.

The common thread is a gender identity and/or sexual orientation considered different from the dominant culture in which heterosexual relationships are considered the 'norm' ('heteronormative'). This difference from the norm creates the shared experience of homophobic oppression and the consequences of heterosexist privilege. Since relationship violence happens within the context of social oppression of members of LGBTQ communities, our work to support and advocate for safe relationships is both individual and community-based<sup>2</sup>.

## Explanation of Terms

**LGBTQ:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer. At this point in time, this abbreviation includes many who identify outside of heterosexual relationships. However, there is no single "LGBTQ Community." Individuals who identify in this constellation have very unique experiences, and may not share other identities, such as race, class, culture, language, spirituality or ethnicity. In fact, most LGBTQ people have multiple identities making it impossible to isolate the experience simply as "lesbian" or "queer," for example.

**Heterosexism:** an assumption that the only correct or 'normal' way to be is heterosexual; systemic oppression based on heterosexuality.

**Homophobia:** overt acts of discrimination and/or violence based on fear, hatred, or aversion to LGBTQ people, and to people who *appear* to blur or violate traditional gender roles.

**Sexual Orientation:** the affectional or loving attraction to another person. It can range from same-sex attraction only at one end of the continuum to opposite-sex attraction only at the other end.

**Transgender:** a gender identity, not a sexual orientation. Transgender (or

trans) has become an umbrella term for those who identify with a gender different from the stereotype assigned to the biology they were born with, or in some way transgress the limiting gender boundaries of the majority culture. Trans people may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual or other identity.

**Transphobia:** a fear or aversion to transgender people, or those who do not fit into societal gender norms. Expression of transphobia ranges from personal discomfort, to outright violence, to systematic institutional discrimination against those perceived to violate gender norms.

**Queer:** a word that was once and, in some places continues to be, used as an insult. However, many have reclaimed it and use the term as an umbrella for all lesbian, gay, bi and trans people as well as others who do not identify with LGBT but experience homophobia and related oppressions because of sexual orientation, reproductive anatomy, and/or gender expression.

This *Handbook* attempts to use non-gendered language, such as the singular “they” instead of “s/he.” We will also use “LGBTQ” and “queer” interchangeably, as well as “victim” and “survivor.” Language is an evolving tool. Advocates should take note that terms are changing all the time, and the best way to be certain is to ask the individuals in question how they wish to identify.

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN) is a human rights organization committed to ending violence against women, youth and children through support, advocacy, education and community organizing. The First Edition of this Handbook was published in 2002, and through the continued and generous support of the Open Door Fund, we are able to provide this Second Edition with updated and expanded resources. In writing the updates, however, we discovered that new information, stronger community collaborations, and more relevant and community-specific resources addressing violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender relationships are emerging quickly, so our hope is that all individuals can use this Handbook as a starting place for information, and can contact SPAN or other anti-violence programs for services, resources, additional information, and referrals that best meet your own unique needs.

This edition can also be downloaded for free from our website: [www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org).

#### **Sources for this Section:**

1. National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org)
2. Mary Allen and Ann Turner, Abuse in Later Life in LGBT Communities.

# 2 Defining the Issue

## Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) FACTS

IPV is as much a problem in same-gender and gender-variant relationships as in heterosexual relationships. Studies indicate that 30% of LGBTQ relationships struggle with intimate partner violence<sup>1</sup>.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reported 3,534 cases of abuse in gay, lesbian, and bisexual relationships in 2006. Demographically, the report found that most organizations receive about equal numbers of reports from gay male and lesbian victims of domestic violence. Reports from people of transgender experience typically hover around 5-10% of the total. Race or ethnic identity of victims was also documented in the report. Of the victims for whom race and ethnic information was known, white victims accounted for 43%, followed by Latino/a victims (27%) and African American victims (15%). Multi-racial identified victims accounted for 7%, Asian/Pacific Islanders accounted for 3%. Indigenous people, and those of Middle-Eastern descent accounted for 2% each<sup>2</sup>.

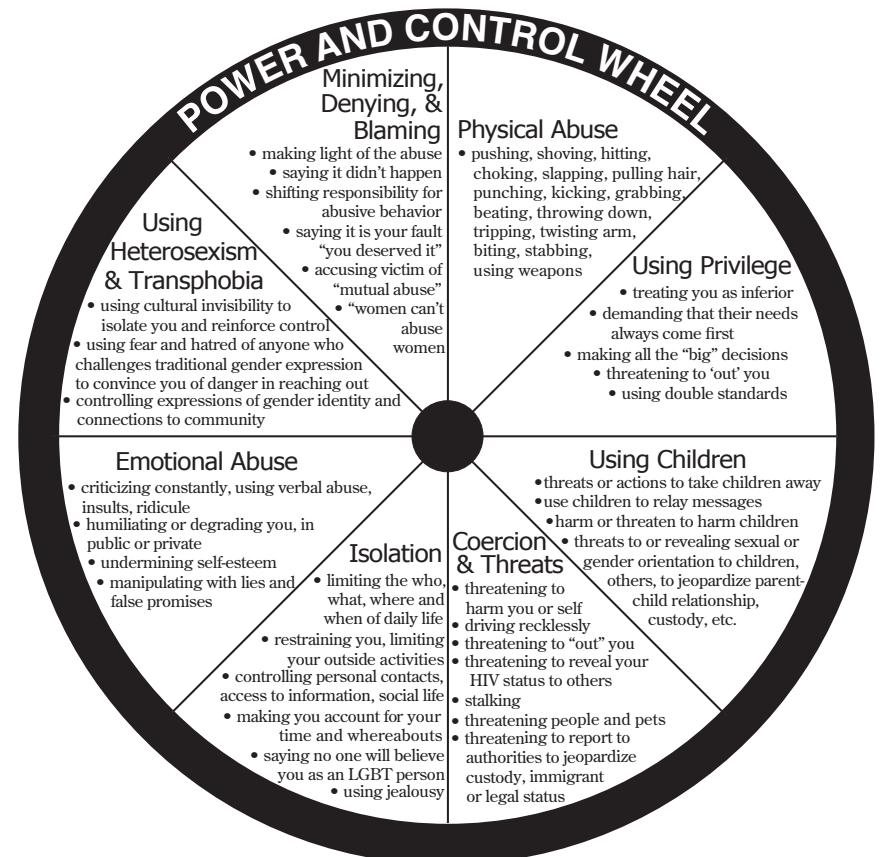
## What Makes It “Abuse”?

Abuse is defined as “any physical or psychological harm that is used to maintain power or control over another person with whom an intimate relationship is shared.” Domestic or intimate partner violence, family violence, same-gender battering and dating abuse are all forms of abuse, regardless of the legal status of the relationship.

Domestic violence includes an imbalance of power between partners. The question of “mutual abuse” generally arises when the role of “perpetrator” is unclear. This is especially common when both people are of the same gender. Battering is not mutual. Sometimes, those in a helping role may not take the time to believe that the abuse is happening and to ask questions that can help determine who, in fact, has the power and control in the relationship. It is important to consider coercive patterns of control, jealousy and ownership, denial, minimization, and entitlement within the relationship. Domestic violence occurs on a continuum of abuse. Actions range from those that might seem trivial (emotional control, pushing, pinching, yelling, name calling) to those that are clearly lethal (choking, cutting, threatening with a weapon). All acts on the continuum can escalate if intervention does not occur.

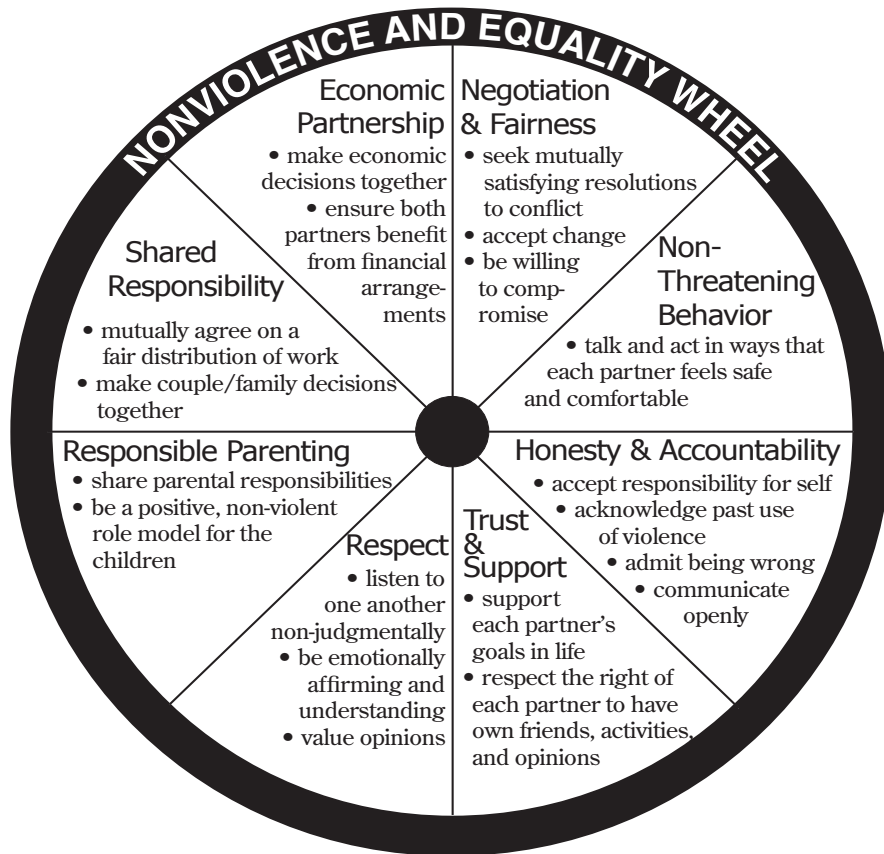
## Power and Control

The *Power and Control Wheel* highlights a few of the ways in which abuse can occur in a relationship<sup>3</sup>. While no relationship or person is perfect, and many people may recognize one or two of their own behaviors on this Wheel, what makes it ‘abusive’ is a pattern of behaviors: are these behaviors repetitive? Consistent? If you are experiencing any form of abuse, you are not alone. You can call the SPAN Crisis and Information Line at 303-444-2424, 24 hours a day, for confidential support.



## Nonviolence and Equality

Opposite of relationships based on power and control, safe relationships are based on shared power and equality. In these relationships, couples may argue, but there is an underlying sense of equity and fairness. The *Nonviolence and Equality Wheel* offers a positive model of relationship based on mutual trust and respect<sup>4</sup>.



## Cycles and Patterns

In some cases, violent relationships follow a clear “cycle” that may escalate over time. Violent or abusive relationships have three primary phases: Build Up, Blow Up, and Make Up. If you are experiencing intimate partner violence in your relationship, you may find that the following sequence of events looks familiar.

## Stage One: Build Up

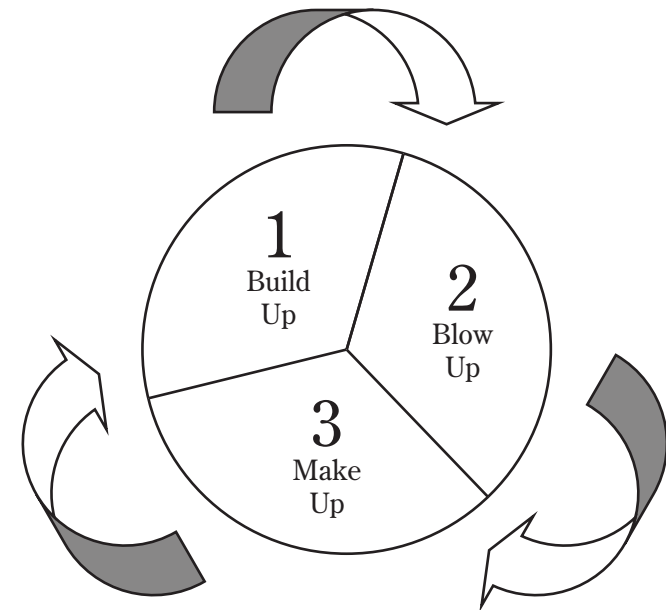
The first stage is when tension builds, almost palpably, and the abuser is very critical. The victim may be compliant, covering up for the abuser’s behavior and accepting full blame for many problems. The victim compromises to keep the abuser pacified. The abuser becomes increasingly jealous, threatening, possessive, controlling, and verbally, physically and psychologically abusive.

## Stage Two: Blow Up

The second stage is marked by an explosion, a battering episode. Tension increases rapidly as the abuser’s rage escalates to an explosive level. The “blow up” can include verbal, physical, and/or sexual assault. If the victim can no longer tolerate the terror, anxiety, or anger, they may trigger the incident to get it over with. Sometimes, an abuser will continue to hurt the victim even after they are severely injured. The victim may simply endure the abuse. This is also when it is most dangerous for the victim to leave the relationship, since the perpetrator may consider homicide or homicide/suicide during this stage.

## Stage Three: Make Up

During the third stage in the cycle, the abuser may try a variety of behaviors to encourage the victim to stay in the relationship, to “make up.” They might say, “You’re my only friend...Only you understand me...Don’t give up on me... It will never happen again.” The abuser often gives gifts, becomes very nice and apologetic, shows remorse, makes promises to change, or promises to go to counseling (without following through). The abuser may behave as if the “blow up” incident were no big deal or that it never happened at all. This sets the tone for continuing the relationship.



The cycle can then repeat, establishing a ‘pattern.’ As the cycle continues, it may increase in frequency as well as vary in the types of violence used.

## Questions To Consider If You Think You May Be In An Abusive Relationship

- Are you questioning your relationship?
- Are you afraid of your partner?
- Does your partner blame you or minimize your feelings?
- Do you feel ashamed of and responsible for your partner's behavior?
- Do you withhold opinions or strong feelings for fear of your partner's reaction?
- Does your partner ever force you to have sex?
- Does your partner control the money?
- Do you have to account for all of your time away from your partner?
- Does your partner get jealous when you spend time with your friends or family?
- Do you frequently try to please your partner only to find that your efforts go unnoticed?
- Does your partner restrain, hit, shove or kick you, or threaten to do so?
- Does your partner intimidate you?
- Does your partner destroy property, or threaten to do so?
- Does your partner threaten to "out" you to your employer, family or friends?
- Does your partner threaten to hurt your kids, people you care about, or your pets?

Trust your instincts about what is happening to you. How do you feel about your relationship? If you feel that you are being emotionally or physically abused, you are most likely right. Identifying as a victim of abuse does not mean that you are weak, a 'failure,' or responsible for the abuse. Support is available.

## Questions To Consider If You Think You May Be Abusive

- Do you use power and control in your relationship?
- Are you jealous and possessive?
- Do you have an explosive temper?
- Do you ridicule, criticize or insult your partner?
- Do you become violent when you drink and/or use drugs?
- Have you broken things in a state of anger?
- Have you pushed, hit, kicked, or otherwise injured your partner?
- Have you threatened to hurt or kill your partner?
- Have you forced, coerced or intimidated your partner into having sex?
- Have you threatened to kill yourself if your partner leaves?
- Have you threatened to damage/hurt things, people or pets that are important to your partner?
- Do you make your partner account to you for every moment they are away from you?

- Do you spy or make repeated phone calls to check up on your partner?
- Do you accuse your partner of cheating on you?
- Have you kept your partner from leaving the house, room or car?
- Have you used silence and ignoring as a way to manipulate your partner's emotions?
- Do you justify or blame your abusive behavior on stress, alcohol/drugs, people or situations?

Abuse and violence are learned behaviors. You may believe others cause the violence, but abusing your partner is your problem, that only you can change. Taking responsibility and admitting abusive behavior is the first step to change. Support is available.

## The Difference Between S&M and Sexual Violence

Sadism and Masochism (S&M) is a particular type of sexual activity which may involve play, fantasy, power, and pain. It is consensual, and both partners have agreed when to enter this activity and when to stop. Many people who enjoy S&M have safeguards, such as "safe words" and agreements, to quickly and effectively communicate to each other if there is discomfort with what is happening. If these agreements are not respected, the relationship may be abusive.

Battering, on the other hand, is a pattern of violent and/or coercive behavior that one person uses to maintain control over their partner. It is not limited to one setting, as is generally the case with S&M. It permeates throughout the entire relationship and it is not consensual.

It is possible for a woman to rape another woman, just as it is possible for a man to rape another man. It is important that all people involved are clear about what is consensual sexual play or S&M and what is non-consensual rape or sexual abuse.

If you are unsure, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you are engaging in sexual activities which are too painful or you do not enjoy?
- Do you feel forced or coerced into engaging in sexual acts?
- Is sexual activity used to control you or show you who is in control?
- Is sexual violence part of the relationship?
- Does sex sometimes follow physical battering or emotional abuse?
- Does your partner escalate or become angry when you try to talk about sex?
- Has your partner forced sex when you are upset or have said "no"?

If sexual abuse is happening in your relationship and you need someone to talk to for support, contact your local rape crisis center or call the SPAN 24-hour Crisis and Information Line: 303-444-2424. In Boulder County, Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA) provides support specifically to sexual assault victims through their 24-hour crisis hotline: 303-443-7300.

## Stalking

Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention, harassment, and contact<sup>5</sup>. It is a course of conduct that can include:

- Following or waiting for the victim
- Repeated unwanted, intrusive, and frightening communications from the perpetrator by phone, text messaging, mail, and/or e-mail
- Damaging the victim's property
- Making direct or indirect threats to harm the victim, the victim's children, relatives, friends, or pets
- Repeatedly sending the victim unwanted gifts
- Harassment through the Internet, known as cyber stalking, online stalking, or internet stalking
- Securing personal information about the victim by: accessing public records (land records, phone listings, and driver or voter registration), using Internet search services, hiring private investigators, contacting friends, family, work, or neighbors, going through victim's garbage, following the victim, etc.

If you believe someone is stalking you, document any and all stalking behaviors and notify the police, or call the SPAN hotline at 303-444-2424. A stalker can be someone you've been dating, a former partner, a friend, acquaintance, or a co-worker who is obsessed with you. Domestic violence stalkers are often the most violent. Stalking is against the law.

Steps you must take to document stalking behavior:

- Screen phone messages and save answering machine messages.
- Save all notes, e-mail, text messages, and gifts.
- Document dates, location and times of all encounters, including the length of encounter and how the encounter made you feel.
- Consider getting a Protection Order (See Chapter 4).
- Turn all evidence in to the police and report all continuing contacts.
- Tell other people what is happening.
- Create a safety plan (See Chapter 3).
- Do not contact the stalker. Any contact is good contact to a stalker.

For more resources, please refer to Chapters 9 and 10.

## Sources for this Section

1. Belge, Kathy. "Domestic Violence in Lesbian Relationships."
- 2 National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs: [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org).
- 3 Wheel developed by: Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. [www.Duluth-model.org](http://www.Duluth-model.org). 202 E. Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802. 218-722-2781. Wheel modified by Roe and Jagodinski, the NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, and SPAN.
- 4 Wheel developed by Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, modified by Roe and Jagodinski and SPAN.
- 5 Montana Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, 2007.



# 3 You Have Options

The journey to safety is often a process, not one single event. In an abusive relationship, you cannot control nor are you responsible for your partner's violence. Some survivors of abuse have found it helpful to evaluate what they can control. The list of options includes:

## *You can stay*

You could have several reasons for staying in your relationship, including fear of the abuser, feelings based on your initial love and commitment, reluctance to use services that may or may not be welcoming, and fear of the abuser "outing" (coming out for) you. Your reasons are valid, and you are in the best position to evaluate your own risks and safety. If you choose to stay with someone who is abusive to you, information and support is still available at SPAN and other organizations.

## *You can leave*

The decision to leave can be a difficult one. It may be helpful to create a safety plan that includes support, preparation and safe housing options from friends, family, and others. SPAN can help all individuals prepare to leave through safety planning, and offers services and referrals to other service providers.

## *You can get help*

There are resources available for survivors of LGBTQ interpersonal relationship violence, whether you stay or leave the abuser. 24-hour crisis intervention lines can provide emergency help, information, and support. Counseling programs can help you sort out your feelings and plan next-steps. This Handbook includes the telephone numbers for SPAN services and other resources available to LGBTQ abuse victims/survivors. Please see Chapters 9 and 10 for a list of resources.

## *You can take legal action*

You have legal options. The court can order the abuser to stop hurting you or your children through a Protection Order. You do not need a lawyer. SPAN provides free legal advocacy in Boulder and Broomfield Counties. For more information on the pros and cons of using the legal system, please see Chapter 4. To contact a SPAN Legal Advocate, call 303-444-2424.

## **Barriers to Leaving**

There are many reasons why LGBTQ individuals hesitate to leave an abusive situation. While some people will ask, "Why don't victims of abuse just leave?" others have a broader understanding of the barriers and complexity that can make such a decision so difficult.

Some barriers may include:

*Economic dependence on the abuser.* If you are financially dependant on the abuser, you may fear that terminating the relationship could result in loss of funds, an impact on credit scores, poverty or homelessness.

*Fear of being deported, or of the abuser being deported.* If you are an undocumented immigrant, you may fear that the abuser could threaten to report you to the immigration authorities. If your abusive partner is an undocumented immigrant, you may fear that they will be deported.

*Fear of being "outed" by the abuser.*

*Fear of being alone.* In some places, the "LGBTQ Community" is very small, and ending the relationship could mean losing contact with mutual friends. The abuser may use this threat of isolation as a tool to maintain power in the relationship. You may also fear that you will not be able to find another partner who can love you.

*Fear of reporting to the police.* Law enforcement officers sometimes do not have enough knowledge about how to identify the victim or the perpetrator in an LGBTQ relationship, and sometimes both parties, or just the victim, could be arrested.

*Pity.* Your partner convinces you to feel sorry for them, or worse, may threaten to commit suicide; these are forms of emotional manipulation.

*Denial, minimization, and the belief that the situation is not really so bad.*

*Love:* wanting to love and be loved. This is a natural desire, and a reasonable expectation in any committed partnership! Abusive partners can sometimes use the idea of love as a form of manipulation. This can lead to mixed messages, and confusion about what real love is when there is also abuse.

*Guilt.* You may believe that the problems in the relationship are your fault.

*Responsibility.* You may believe that it is up to you to make the relationship work and to end the abuse when, in fact, only the abuser can decide to stop using that behavior.

*Threats to identity.* You may feel that you need a partner in order to be complete. This can be especially strong if you are not "out" and believe that your partner is the only one in the world who understands you.

*Parenting.* You may fear losing custody, co-parenting privileges, or losing touch with the child(ren) that you were co-parenting.

*Lack of support* from others based on personal experiences of heterosexism, homophobia, or transphobia.

*Survival.* You may fear that your partner will follow you, harass and/or kill you. Trust your instincts on this, and seek out a supportive friend, family member or community resource to help you create a safety plan.

*Belief that your partner will change,* as they have promised. This could include the hope that things will change as soon as the partner doesn't have so much

stress, stops drinking or using drugs, gets a better job, makes more money, is understood, etc.

*Homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia:* fear that acknowledging the abuse will be used as “proof” that LGBTQ relationships are “dangerous” or “unhealthy.”

Every one of these potential obstacles to leaving is valid, and some may apply to you more than others. Creating a safety plan can help you address some of these challenges, while making your safety a top priority.

## Safety Planning

Safety plans are responses that address the risks that you have identified and prioritized. These may include strategies for staying or strategies for leaving, with personal protection as an aspect of each. Some of the suggestions below may be appropriate for you and others may not be at this time, due to economic restraints, the degree to which you are “out,” or obstacles that are unforeseen and beyond your control. An Advocate can offer support and assist you in assessing your options, your safety, and the lethality of the abuser. To speak to an Advocate, call the confidential 24-hour SPAN Crisis and Information Line, at 303-444-2424.

A Sample Safety Plan:

1. Tell someone about the abusive situation, if you can. Build a support network with family, friends, and associates, including bosses, neighbors, teachers, and colleagues. If you are not “out” and would like to speak to a SPAN Advocate about additional options, you can call 303-444-2424.
2. Keep a dated record of physical abuse, threats, stalking, and destruction of property. This includes anonymous and/or excessive phone calls, text messages, and e-mails. Document abusive phone calls and keep harassing messages on your answering machine. Photograph property damage. Keep any written material that is threatening or harassing.  
  
Write down the names of people who witness abusive incidents. If you’ve gone to the doctor or emergency room because of battering injuries, keep all records and take photographs of injuries. All this evidence, including police reports, can help you obtain protection through the legal system. Even if you choose not to report right away, your documentation can help you get protection from your abuser in the future. If you feel ready to report, you do not have to do this alone – an Advocate from SPAN can support you through the process
3. If possible, do not spend time alone with your partner. If you do plan to be alone with them, let someone else know of your whereabouts and when to expect to hear from or see you. If people are aware of your plans, they can check on your safety or call for help if you don’t call or return on time. This option can be difficult if you live with your partner, and may require more creative safety planning.
4. Vary your routine. If you are concerned about being followed or stalked, choose different routes, or leave at different times each day. If you are going out, tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back.

5. Go to the nearest public place if you believe you are being followed. Learn where the police stations are located. A good second choice is a fire station, if it is staffed 24 hours a day.
6. Keep an emergency bag hidden in a central location (garage, under the bed) with the following items included:
  - MONEY. Take all bank books and check books
  - Extra keys for the car, house, safety deposit box, P.O. box
  - A change of clothes for you and your children
  - Mass transit transportation schedules in the event that a car is not available
  - Motel numbers and locations at the end of a bus or train ride
  - Driver’s license, car registration, proof of insurance
  - Your and your children’s birth certificates, insurance policies
  - Your children’s school ID card, or other identification if they have it
  - Pictures, jewelry, or anything that has sentimental value for you
  - Address book: phone numbers and addresses of friends and relatives
  - Appointment book
  - Medical records and cards, school records
  - Social security cards (yours and your children’s), work permits,
  - Green card, passport
  - Medicaid card or other Social Services cards, if applicable
  - Medication, baby items (diapers, formula), some extra clothing
  - Medication for pets, pet food, and veterinarian information
7. Have a plan of escape:
  - Where can you go that is safe?
  - How much will it cost, if anything?
  - Can you get the children out of the house safely or do you need help
  - Remember to take your bag with all the items you need.
  - If you have a car, drive it to a friend’s house. Park away from the actual location. Ask someone to walk with you to your vehicle until you are safely away.
  - Call SPAN if you would like emergency, confidential shelter or other options: 303-444-2424. Emergency shelter is available to all lesbian and bisexual women and to transgender people.
  - Can pets stay with a friend or family member? If not, SPAN has a “Safe Pets” program, in collaboration with the Human Society of Boulder Valley. Call the 24-hour Crisis and Information Line for details.
  - Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.
  - Get a Civil Protection Order if you are afraid of your partner. SPAN offers a Protection Order Clinic Monday through Friday at the both the Boulder County Justice Center and the Broomfield Courthouse. Advocates cannot provide legal advice, but can explain the paperwork and the general process of filing for a civil protection order as well as offer support in the courtroom. For a list of clinic hours and to check the availability of the Court Advocates, call the SPAN Crisis and Information Line at 303-444-2424. You can also call this number for information on the free Legal Drop-In Clinic and a Immigrant Legal Clinic, both located at the SPAN Outreach Center in Boulder. For more information on the pros and cons of legal action, please see Chapter 4.

Information from a variety of sources, including Safety Planning With Battered Women: Complex Lives/Difficult Choices by Jill Davies, et.al. 1998, Sage Publications, Inc.

# 4 Legal System: Pros and Cons

## Your Rights as a Victim

Any intimate partner violence experienced in same-sex and gender-variant relationships qualifies under the state of Colorado's domestic violence laws, including current or former intimate partners. As a victim of a crime of intimate partner violence, you have certain rights regardless of your (or your partner's) gender or sexual orientation. You still have all of these rights even if you are not a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

You have the right to report abuse to the police. A report of intimate partner violence to the police, regardless of the victim's citizenship status, is mandated to result in the arrest of the abusive partner, if their actions have been in violation of Colorado state law. You have the right to file for victim's compensation and may be compensated for things not covered by insurance, such as medical expenses, mental health counseling, eyeglasses, lost wages, property damage, emergency shelter stays, and funeral costs for a deceased victim. Victims of abuse, whether reported to the police or not, have the right to seek Civil Protection Orders (formerly known as "restraining orders") and have those orders be enforced by their local police agencies and by any state police agency or tribal authority that a victim resides in. Federal law also mandates that these Protection Orders continue to be enforced even if you move to a different city or state. You can get a Protection Order at your county courthouse. SPAN runs Protection Order clinics and can provide legal advocacy at the Boulder and Broomfield courthouses. For more information on obtaining victim's compensation, Protection Orders and other legal resources, please see Chapter 10, or contact the SPAN Legal Advocacy program at 303-444-2424.

## Limitations of the Legal System

The state of Colorado does not allow for same-sex couples to legally marry and does not legally recognize civil unions or domestic partnerships. Some couples can live in a city where they can choose to register as domestic partners, others cannot. Some couples can get domestic partnership benefits through employers, some cannot. Some couples can afford to pay attorneys to draft "living together" agreements and other legally enforceable contracts, and some cannot. Some couples can find ways for both of them to biologically conceive children or to establish joint legal guardianship of their children, others cannot. There is no recourse under the state's domestic relations law for same-sex couples to divide property or custody of children. This exclusion of queer people from many of the afforded rights and options given to opposite-sex couples in the legal system is heterosexist, and prohibits the legal system from being the same resource to LGBTQ victims of intimate partner violence as it is to heterosexuals. Although you retain all of the rights listed in the first paragraph, you may want to bear in mind the limitations of the legal system.

Consider the pros and cons in reporting an incident of intimate partner violence to the police. This involves disclosing your experience of abuse and may result in hav-

ing to testify in front of your abuser at trial. If your abuser is not a legal permanent resident or U.S. citizen, there is the possibility they will be deported, especially if they are convicted of a crime. Whenever an arrest is made in a domestic violence crime, there is a mandatory no-contact order issued against your abusive partner, meaning they cannot have contact with you of any kind or they risk a new law violation and additional criminal sanctions. Not having contact with your abusive partner may be a desired outcome. On the other hand, a no-contact order may present problems in communicating about finances, a shared business, or in issues pertaining to the custody of your children. To some victims of abuse, these potential outcomes are not relevant to their experience of intimate partner violence; for others, these unintended consequences of accessing the legal system could ultimately cause more problems and even heighten danger of retaliation from an abuser. It is your decision whether or not to report to the police. You may want to consider how responsive your partner would be to criminal convictions and sentencing requirements, such as alcohol and drug monitoring and anger management classes.

There is the potentially added concern of having to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer for the first time or publicly, either in open court or in court documents. Reporting to the police means exposing yourself to officers with varying levels of competency on LGBTQ identities and relationships issues. If the police are unable to accurately discern who the perpetrator in the relationship is, it is possible that you could be arrested. This poses an additional risk to transgender individuals, who will be jailed according to their biological/legal sex, and not necessarily the gender with which they identify. Many LGBTQ survivors also fear reporting because of the history and perpetuation of police brutality and specifically sexual violence against the queer community; fears of racism or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, citizenship status; and potentially invasive questions, comments, or even derogatory slurs in interaction with legal system representatives.

For individuals who want protection from an abusive partner without having to contact the police, a Protection Order could help. When a victim gets a Protection Order, no criminal legal action will be taken against the abuser unless they violate the order. However, filing for a Protection Order does mean "coming out" through public records that can be accessed by anyone (employers, family, attorneys, etc.). Unless you have police records, pictures, copies of threatening messages etc., it may mean "outing" yourself to people you may need to serve as witnesses to the abuse. If you are the biological or legal guardian of your children, you can request that your children also be protected, at least temporarily through your Protection Order. If your current or former partner also is a biological or legal guardian to your children, temporary orders of parenting time may be established through your Protection Order case; but ultimately, a district court action would have to be filed to determine permanent orders pertaining to custody and parenting time arrangements for each of you. Again, for some people these issues are not of concern, but for others publicly claiming your gender identity or identifying as being in a same-sex relationship may expose you to loss of family support, scrutiny, or ostracizing by others in your community. It could also begin a court battle over custody of children, particularly if one parent was prohibited from claiming legal guardianship of the children.

The decision to access the legal system is yours to make. Many people benefit from police intervention in stopping an incident of abuse, thus sending a message to their abusive partner that intimate partner violence is a punishable offense. Others receive their desired protection from ongoing abuse by filing for a civil Protection Order. Ultimately, you know your partner and your situation better than a police officer or judge will, and your knowledge of your partner will be the best indicator as to what legal steps may be of benefit to you. It is just as important to know your rights under the law as it is to know what the legal systems limitations and potential ramifications may be. You deserve to be free from violence in your relationship and accessing the legal system may be a step toward greater safety. If you have any questions or concerns about the legal or judicial system, including any treatment you have received or may receive, you can contact SPAN at 303-444-2424.

For additional resources, please refer to Chapter 10.

# 5 For Youth

Dating abuse or intimate partner violence happens when one partner uses verbal, emotional, physical or sexual violence to get and maintain power and control over the other partner. It doesn't have to be physical to be abusive. Please see Chapter 2 for more information about how to identify dating abuse. If you are not in an abusive relationship but know someone who is, see Chapter 7 for information on how to support a friend.

In the 2006 report of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs concluded that rates of intimate partner violence are high among LGBTQ youth. Abuse by family of origin, caregivers and guardians is also a concern. Out of the 6,523 cases of LGBTQ intimate partner abuse reported, nearly 22 percent involved individuals 29 years or younger, and six percent involved people under age 22<sup>1</sup>. Another study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer identified youth found that 49 percent of the respondents reported feeling abused by a partner in a past relationship<sup>2</sup>.

There exists a wide and unique range of barriers—based on gender identity, sexual orientation, reproductive anatomy, age, class, immigration status, ability, race, etc.—for every victim of dating violence. We also recognize that these barriers influence whether and how victims choose to seek and, ultimately, find relevant support. At the same time, if you believe you are a victim of dating violence, know that you are not alone, nor are you, in any way, responsible for your partner's abusive behaviors. You deserve to be safe. If you're thinking about leaving the relationship or anticipate that the situation could escalate and become violent, the following questions may help you create a personalized safety plan:

*Who can I talk to about this? Are there any adults that I trust with this information? Is there a teacher, coach, nurse or school counselor who is trustworthy and supportive?*

Note: Certain professionals, such as teachers, counselors, and victim advocates, may be required by law to report certain incidences of violence that could put you in danger. If you choose to confide in someone, you have the right to ask them beforehand what they are mandated to report.

*Who can I call if I need to get a safe ride home?*

*How frequently is this abusive or stalking behavior happening?*

Even if you choose not to report right away, documenting the abuse may help you get protection from your partner through the legal and justice systems in the future. Such documentation can include records of abuse, threats, stalking behavior (including anonymous and/or excessive phone calls, text messages, and e-mails), destruction of property, harassing messages and documentation of injury.

If you wish to make a report, you do not have to do this alone – an Advocate from SPAN can support you through the process. An Advocate can also help you identify ways to gather these records, from taped messages to saved emails to your own dated journal of abusive behaviors. For more information, call the SPAN 24-hour crisis line number 303-444-2424.

*How can I vary my routines or change classes? Would I consider transferring to another school?*

*What code word will I use so that my friends and family know that I am asking for help?*

*How can my family and friends be the most supportive and helpful to me? Do I want them to challenge my partner directly? Do I want them to talk with some of my partner's friends? Is it best if they did nothing?*

*What local organizations address all forms of interpersonal violence, including dating violence, experienced by LGBTQ youth? (See Chapter 10) Would I be interested in joining organizing efforts for social justice?*

*What role do I want the 'bystander' to play in helping to create safety and accountability? How and to whom can I communicate my wants?*

*How do I say "no" or break up with my partner?*

Many people in abusive relationships still have feelings for the abusive partner. It may not be as easy as 'just walking away' – but it may be the safest option if the abuser is not willing to change or get help for their behavior.

*Is it possible for me to tell my parents that I need them to get a protection order for me? If so, how can I tell them?*

Teens under 18 years of age cannot obtain their own "Protection Order" (see chapter 4 for more information about protection orders).

For more resources, please see Chapter 10.

## Sources for this Section

1. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Domestic Violence in the United States in 2006: A Report of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
2. Tham, K., et al. "Queer Youth Relationship Violence." Community United Against Violence and Lavender Youth Recreation & Information Center, California State Department of Health Services, 2000.

## 6 For Trans Survivors

If you are a trans survivor of intimate partner violence, you may encounter challenges when seeking services such as shelter, counseling, or legal advocacy. However, many organizations that address gender-based violence are also working to resist all forms of violence and oppression, including discrimination against trans people. No matter what your gender identity or sexual orientation, you can always call the 24-hour SPAN hotline, at 303-444-2424, if you are in crisis or just want to talk to someone about your situation and options.

Although many organizations have made strides to offer more inclusive services, you may still find your options limited. The availability of services at many organizations will vary depending on how you identify, whether as a woman, man, trans woman, trans man, genderqueer, gender-variant, or none of the above. Given the historically gendered construction of the movement against domestic violence, most shelters and domestic violence organizations primarily, or exclusively, serve individuals who identify as women.

SPAN's approach includes a belief in client-defined advocacy, which means that SPAN respects the decisions of an individual to define their identity, their assessment of the situation, and their desired goals. As with other safehouses, we strive to provide resources and referrals for all survivors of intimate partner violence, including trans men. However, not all shelter programs offer fully inclusive services. If you are considering accessing domestic violence services or a safe shelter, there are critical questions to ask a service provider.

### Questions to Ask When Seeking Services

*Can I access services at an organization that serves women? Does the organization only serve biological females? What services will I have access to?*

SPAN offers a wide variety of services which are available to those who identify as women, as well as shelter for all transpeople. Other violence-prevention organizations and shelters also generally serve women, but some may not serve trans women who are in the process of transitioning. Trans men or other gender variant individuals can access certain services at SPAN and other organizations. These services include shelter, 24-hour phone counseling, outreach counseling, advocacy, and referrals. For more on SPAN services, see Chapter 9. For referrals to other organizations, see Chapter 10.

*Can I access shelter services at a women's shelter? Will the shelter turn me away because I'm trans?*

SPAN will provide shelter for any transperson who is experiencing intimate partner violence, including trans-identified women and men. If our shelter is full, a SPAN advocate will refer you to other shelters and assist

you in finding a safe place to stay. Many (but not all) women's shelters also serve trans women.

Trans men seeking shelter will unfortunately find this to be one of the biggest barriers in accessing services. While there are a variety of services, resources, and referrals that domestic violence organizations offer, safe shelter is one of the services that is primarily available to individuals that identify as female, although this may change in the future. While services may be available at local homeless shelters, these environments may or may not be intentionally safe for trans individuals. If you would like to talk to someone about your options, call the SPAN Crisis and Information Line at 303-444-2424.

*Is the shelter a trans-inclusive environment? Will I be "outed" to the other residents?*

The goal of SPAN is to be inclusive of all women and trans-identified people. SPAN is dedicated to providing a safe environment for women and children including lesbian, bisexual, women and transgender individuals. All potential shelter residents must agree to be respectful to other residents before coming into shelter. As a core shelter guidelines, this level of mutual respect is directly connected with safety for all residents. The shelter staff will never share a resident's personal information without a resident's consent and will provide the most appropriate accommodations based on your particular needs, comfort level and need for privacy.

*When I am seeking legal services, is there a possibility that my trans (or intersex) status, if previously hidden, will become known and expose me to more violence?*

SPAN is committed to working on behalf of trans-identified victims and survivors, and Advocates are available to assist you through the system. SPAN Advocates can work with you in the process of changing your name and social security number, if needed. They can also work with you in legal processes, including protection orders and court hearings, as well as with the medical community. It is possible that people can be "outed" as they go through the legal process, so careful consideration should be given before pursuing legal solutions. For additional information on the legal system, see Chapter 4.

### Sources for this Section:

"Transgender Inclusion Guide, A Primer by and for college students and student organizations." 2004. U.S. Student Association Foundation LGBT Student Empowerment Project.

Transgender Issues Leadership Training: [www.thinkagaintraining.com/tilt](http://www.thinkagaintraining.com/tilt)

# 7 Being an Ally

If you know someone who is in abusive relationship, it is important for you to understand that leaving is a process, not an event. Statistics show that victims who have been threatened by their abusers are in the greatest danger when they leave. Do not ask the victim, “Why don’t you just leave?” This question inherently holds the victim accountable for the abuse. Some of the many barriers that keep someone from leaving an abusive relationship are listed in Chapter 3. Instead of asking the victim why they don’t leave, a more appropriate question would be: “Why doesn’t the abuser stop the abusive behavior and get help?” When we start shifting the focus of responsibility for the abuse from the victim to the abuser, an end to violence is more possible.

## Being an Ally to LGBTQ People in Abusive Relationships

Friends and family are often the first people a survivor of intimate partner violence turns to for emotional, spiritual, and/or financial support. Being an ally means understanding that your loved one is in a very difficult situation with no easy answer to resolve their experience of abuse. For LGBTQ individuals, the fears and challenges of disclosing that they are in an abusive relationship can be compounded with fears of discrimination. For some people, telling someone that they are in an abusive relationship may also mean openly identifying as LGBTQ for the first time, which may not be an easy thing to do, regardless of how supportive they believe you to be. For others who have been open about their identity, sharing their experience of abuse still exposes them to historically gendered notions of what an abuser looks like or how an abuser acts, based on societal views that are heterosexist, transphobic, and dismissive or minimizing of the complexities of LGBTQ experiences.

As a family member or friend to a victim of intimate partner violence, you may not understand why the abuse is happening or why the couple stays together. Typically, an abusive person will try to isolate their partner from family and friends in order to have full control and cut the victim off from help and support. It is important to validate your friend or family member’s experience, listen without judgment, and help that person find the appropriate resources based upon their desired outcomes, not your own. Most importantly, try to maintain a caring and supportive attitude regardless of whether or not the person chooses to leave the relationship. Keep in mind you may be the only person that they have ever told about the abuse. Try not to focus on your desire for them to leave the relationship, or bring about the outcome that you think is best. Rather, listen to want they want, even if it is not what you want. This will increase your loved one’s sense of comfort with you, and also show them that they can confide in you in the future.

For friends and family members who identify as heterosexual and/or non-trans, it is important not to minimize the experience of violence being reported to you, and it is especially important not to minimize any fears of heterosexism, homophobia, and/or transphobia that the person may share with you. You may be able to em

pathize with an experience of discrimination that is shared with you. At the same time, homophobia and transphobia are not your direct lived experiences of oppression, so be careful not to over-identify with your own experiences or compare them to your loved one’s.

Heterosexism is a reality of the legal system and is ingrained among even the most well intentioned heterosexual service providers. The same can be said for transphobia, which is also deeply ingrained in a medical system that pathologizes “gender identity disorder.” Your loved one’s experience of intimate partner violence is interconnected to their experience of heterosexism and/or transphobia. Viewing violence and discrimination as two separate issues, or as hierarchical in any way, can negate aspects of that person’s life experience. All forms of oppression are barriers to finding safety and support, be it racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, or discrimination based on their citizenship status. The resources and protections available through the legal system and in the community will vary in their effectiveness in addressing each individual’s needs, depending not only on their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, but additionally on their citizenship status and how they racially or culturally identify. Recognizing this can help you to be an effective ally; failing to recognize this can ultimately hinder your ability to be helpful.

Being an ally against intimate partner violence goes hand in hand with being an ally against all forms of oppression. Stay humble and recognize that you don’t know everything, or have all the answers, but are willing to listen and trust that your loved one is the leader in their own life. These attitudes and actions will show your support and desire to be an ally.

## Being an Ally to all LGBTQ People

Some general guidelines for being an anti-heterosexist ally are listed below. These guidelines, which are not specific to survivors of intimate partner violence, were adapted by SPAN from the Gay Straight Alliance network. An Ally:

1. Knows that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people are the experts on their own experience.
2. Does not assign labels to LGBTQ people—instead, asks them how they identify.
3. Makes an effort to educate self with regard to LGBTQ issues and cultural experiences without expecting that someone from the LGBTQ community teach them.
4. Believes that it is in one’s own self-interest to be an ally: takes on heterosexism and homophobia as a problem because it is personally offensive, and in so doing, does not expect gratitude from LGBTQ people.
5. Challenges and changes language that reflects heterosexist assumptions.
6. Takes part in LGBTQ pride without needing to assert one’s own heterosexuality.
7. Uses heterosexual privilege as a straight ally to commit to action on LGBTQ is

sues and rights whenever and wherever. Writes letters to the editor, participates in marches/protests, lends support to LGBTQ groups at work and faith communities, etc.

8. Does not make assumptions about sexual orientation or gender identity, yet assumes there are LGBTQ people in all classes, sports, meetings, work, spiritualities, etc.
9. Does not assume that “feminine-acting men” and “masculine-acting women” are transgender or not heterosexual.
10. Brings up LGBTQ issues in conversations/discussions with family, friends, at work, and in one’s community.
11. Interrupts anti-LGBTQ jokes, comments or any other behaviors that make homophobia/heterosexism appear acceptable.
12. Speaks up against slurs and attacks on people who express their gender outside of societal expectations. Educates others about the continuum of gender expression.
13. Expects support from other allies.

## Being an Ally to Trans People<sup>1</sup>

In becoming an effective ally to trans survivors of intimate partner violence, it is helpful to have a basic understanding of some of the challenges trans people face every day. Being an ally means being willing to educate yourself.

Realize that transgender people experience daily overt and covert oppressions. The oppression of transgender people manifests itself not only during one-on-one interactions, but also in how our laws are written and organizations function.

Acknowledge that non-transgender identified individuals experience privilege, and because of that have a vested interest and bias to perpetuate transphobia. Even if we identify with trans individuals or even trans communities, we are afforded the privilege of moving through society without the systematic discrimination that transgender people constantly face. We must acknowledge that we are socialized to reject a transgender experience and world-view; otherwise our subconscious might undermine our efforts.

Do not question the validity of a transgender person’s experience. Often, privileged individuals question the extent of someone’s oppression, or whether it actually occurs or is only perceived. Recognize that this is a learned reaction; that the temptation to reject the notion of transphobia is an attempt to maintain our privilege.

An ally can never become an expert on transgender experiences. While we

can learn a lot, there is a difference between understanding issues and experiencing being trans. Unlearning years of socialization to oppress transgender people is a lifelong endeavor that is never complete, so it is important not to let yourself think that the work is done.

Transgender experience is varied and different. Transgender people have multiple facets to their identity. Just like other communities, trans people have a diverse array of experiences. Talking to transgender people or reading a book by a transgender author does not inform a person of the full breadth of transgender experience.

An ally is responsible for seeking out information. An ally should not wait for a transgender person to approach them for the sake of educating them. Allies have the responsibility to seek out information and the truth; do not say that you do not know where to begin. Information is out there. For a sampling of readings about transgender issues, refer to the “Trans Survivors” section of Chapter 10.

## Being an Ally to Queer Youth in Violent Relationships

For LGBTQ teens in abusive relationships, this “silent crime” is worsened by community, home, and/or school environments that may be unsupportive or even hostile in their heterosexism and homophobia. A 2004 survey by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that over 90% of students in public high schools reported hearing homophobic remarks from their peers; when faculty heard the remarks 37.4% intervened never and 45.5% intervened some of the time<sup>2</sup>. When others witness any form of violence, they are considered a “bystander” to the event. If you are a bystander to homophobic or transphobic words and actions, you have the opportunity to do something: intervene and address the abusive remark or behavior. Doing so is part of being an effective ally, and can contribute to a safer environment for everyone. The 2005 Boulder County Youth Risk Survey found that 13% of students were harassed because they were perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual<sup>3</sup>.

If you are approached by a young individual in an abusive relationship, your first instinct may be to contact the authorities. While this can often be helpful, the unfortunate truth is that relying solely on the criminal justice or legal system to address interpersonal violence does not always work for all relationships or all people. Although there are few official statistics on LGBTQ youth currently or formerly involved in the juvenile justice system, we know that queer youth from poor communities and communities of color are at a greater risk of being arrested and incarcerated. Because of heavy policing in these communities, LGBTQ youth of color and poor LGBTQ youth are more likely to be over-represented in the juvenile justice system<sup>4</sup>. These forms of discrimination may contribute to a victim’s reluctance to seek help from a heterosexist and racist system that not only opens the abusive partner to violence within the criminal justice or legal system, but may also criminalize and retraumatize the victim. Thus, in order to be an effective ally to young people, it is important that you listen to what they want before you decide what is best for them.



Sources for this Section:

“Transgender Inclusion Guide: A primer by and for college students and student organizations.” United States Student Association Foundation, LGBT Student Empowerment Project, 2004.

Kosciw, Joseph G. The 2003 National School Climate Survey: The School-Related Experiences of Our Nation’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth. GLSEN: The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2004.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Boulder County, 2005.

Mananzala, Rickke. Queer Youth and the Prison Industrial Complex: The Fight for Visibility as the Means to an End. The Fight For Reproductive Freedom: A Newsletter for Student and Community Activists. Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program at Hampshire College, Spring 2003.

# 8 Information for Service Providers

Before reading this chapter, please familiarize yourself with the previous chapter on how to be an ally. As a service provider whose clients include LGBTQ people, it is highly important that you also commit to serving as an ally, if you do not identify as LGBTQ. It is imperative that you recognize that, depending on how you personally identify, your own heterosexism, racism, classism, sexism, ableism, gender privilege, and other forms of unexamined privilege can lead to stereotypes and assumptions about LGBTQ clients. This can aggravate the oppression and abuse your clients are facing, even if your intention is not to be oppressive. Commit to unraveling these biases in yourself, and talk with other allies to gain support in this process.

Once you actively participate as an ally to your clients, you can better serve their individual needs. This chapter begins with some basic guidelines for service providers working with any survivor of intimate partner violence: first, why couples counseling is not recommended, and next, the “do’s and don’ts” of working with survivors. Later in this chapter, you will find information on working with LGBTQ survivors of domestic violence, followed by specific information on working with trans survivors and older survivors.

## Why We Don’t Recommend Couple’s Counseling

If you are a therapist or counselor, you may be approached by a couple seeking joint counseling. However, this is not recommended in abusive or violent relationships. Consider the risks that couple’s counseling can pose to a victim of intimate partner violence:

In couple’s counseling sessions, the abuser is likely to assert and maintain control over the victim. Abuse may never surface as the ‘presenting issue.’

Honesty may not be possible for a victim in a couple’s counseling session, since the abuser will strive to maintain power and control.

The safety of the victim may be at risk in a couple’s counseling situation.

To ensure safe and effective counseling, it is recommended that the victim and abuser receive individual counseling before attempting couple’s counseling. When the abuser can be fully accountable for their actions, real healing and change can begin within the partnership.

If you do find yourself working with both parties, keep these priorities in mind:

SAFETY for the victim.

ACCOUNTABILITY for the abuser.

RESTORATION of individuals and IF POSSIBLE, relationship, or MOURNING the loss of relationship

DO’s and DON’T’s When Working With Survivors of Relationship Violence:

DO believe victims. Their description of the abuse is probably just the tip of

the iceberg.

DO reassure them that they are not to blame, and that they do not deserve abusive or violent treatment.

DO offer referrals. See resources in Chapter 10 of this *Handbook*.

DO support and respect their choices. They may initially choose to return to the abuser. Trust that the victim has the most information about how to survive in the current situation.

DO NOT minimize the danger. You can serve as a reality check: “What you’ve told me leads me to be very concerned for your safety ...”

DO NOT tell them what to do. Give information and support.

DO NOT react with anger, disbelief or disgust to the disclosure. DO NOT react passively either. Express your concern that the abuser’s behavior is wrong and that the victim does not deserve it.

DO NOT hold the victim responsible in any way for the abuser’s behavior.

DO NOT recommend couple’s counseling or approach the partner for their “side of the story.” These actions will endanger the victim.

DO NOT recommend mediation or a “communications workshop.” These strategies will not address the root of the problem, the violence, until the perpetrator accepts full responsibility for their actions.

## Providing Services for LGBTQ Survivors of Relationship Violence

Most effective and helpful service providers have ongoing discussions about serving LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence, both among staff and with LGBTQ community partners and advisors. Many programs find that some of their fears regarding serving LGBTQ people are unfounded. For example, one program had many concerns about how the shelter residents would react when they first had a transgendered woman stay in their shelter. They found that the woman was accepted in the house with very little incident, and it was the staff that had the biggest problem. Ongoing staff discussion, training, and accountability regarding these issues is key to providing competent, inclusive services to LGBTQ individuals.

Begin by identifying the barriers within your program that may prevent LGBTQ victims of abuse from accessing services:

Identify LGBTQ programs, individual workers, and service providers within your network or others in your area that are LGBTQ-friendly. Work with them as you develop your services, handouts and informational packets for LGBTQ victims of abuse.

Are you including LGBTQ relationship violence information at all of your presentations? Describe the additional barriers for LGBTQ victims; include how homophobia and transphobia affect a victim's ability to seek services and heal from the abuse.

Educate yourself and co-workers on how relationship violence affects members of LGBTQ communities.

Be prepared to listen. Gaining the trust of LGBTQ victims is based more on your actions than your words and will take time, given the homophobia and transphobia in our society.

Use your language thoughtfully. Use pronouns identified by the victim when referring to either the abuser or the victim, and the same language the victim uses to identify their living situation.

Is your program able to serve transgender men? If not, why not? Find other programs in your area that may have crossed that perceived barrier. What made it work for them? Can you incorporate some of these ideas into your program?

Domestic and sexual abuse programs provide unique services to victims of abuse that are difficult to duplicate elsewhere. They often provide their services without additional expectations that victims report their abuse or involve the legal or social service systems in their healing process. This can be crucial for a LGBTQ victim of abuse to feel safe seeking services. LGBTQ communities can greatly benefit from the services of these programs. By educating ourselves and actively participating in ending relationship violence, heterosexism, homophobia, and all the other forms of oppression that support violence, all victims can receive the services they need to be safe, and to heal from abuse in their lives.

## **Providing Services for Trans Survivors of Relationship Violence**

Often, people do not recognize the multiple dimensions of an individual's identity. We often see ourselves in our totality, but rarely do we afford others the same consideration. This behavior is intensified when we enter into an identity-specific space, such as a woman's organization or a LGBTQ organization. In a woman-identified space, some individuals would only interact with a person on the basis of their perceived gender, not acknowledging their race, ethnicity, ability, immigrant status, class position, etc. as experiences which inform and influence the life of that individual. The fact that one transgender person is white and another is Latina/o will change how each experiences their gender identity. It is the multiplicity of our experiences that prevent us from being able to identify "the transgender experience," because there is no singular experience; it differs depending on whether a person is a person of color or white, working-class or wealthy, a person with a disability or able-bodied, documented and undocumented immigrant or citizen, etc.

Trans survivors of intimate partner violence often find it difficult to leave an abusive relationship for the same reasons as non-trans people. Many face additional barriers related to racism, sexism, economic power differentials, classism, ableism, etc. Some of the trans-specific barriers to leaving include:

- The impact of internalized shame and self-loathing
- Lack of a support network
- Abuser may threaten to disclose information about partner's gender identity
- Economic dependence on the abusive partner
- Service providers who are discriminatory and harmful to trans people
- Service providers who prohibit cross-gender persons from receiving services
- Fear of disclosure even if accepted into services
- Cuts of government financial assistance
- Fear of being denied access to surgery
- Fear of losing custody of children, or children's safety
- Fear that reporting to police would result in humiliation or public exposure

While trans identity is not the only important factor in relationship violence, a person's experience of being trans is relevant not only to their experience of violence in the relationship but also to their service needs. Being accepted into services does not guarantee a positive experience for a trans person. All aspects of identity should be considered in assessment and safety planning.

While it is true that trans individuals will find some organizations to be welcoming, others can be insensitive and unresponsive to their needs. Below are some guidelines for anti-violence service providers:

All staff and volunteers must be committed to working on behalf of trans survivors; examine your own transphobia.

Use inclusive forms and write clear policies.

Contact a trans-inclusive advocacy group and let them know you provide services and may ask for their assistance in a domestic violence situation (with permission from the client).

Establish training and consultation procedures for all staff. End discriminatory workplace practices.

If there are multiple providers serving the trans community, coordinate and provide outreach services, and publicly identify services for easier access for abused victims.

Create a mechanism to follow up on referrals to other agencies and to make changes to protocol as new barriers or problems are identified.

## **Guidelines for Respectful Service Provision**

1. Maintain confidentiality.
2. Use respectful language.

3. Respect boundaries.
4. Listen and believe their stories.
5. Support relationships of the trans survivor.
6. Reduce physical, language, financial, geographic, legal, and societal barriers.

## Providing Services for LGBTQ Survivors of Relationship Violence in Later Life

Domestic and sexual violence in later life in LGBTQ relationships has many similarities with domestic and sexual violence in later life in heterosexual and traditionally gendered relationships. One major difference is the impact of external and internalized homophobia and transphobia on same-gender and gender-variant relationships. Individuals who are now over 50 came of age during, or as adults lived through, the McCarthy era witch-hunts, ‘red baiting,’ and extreme police harassment. At that time, individuals were very aware of the importance of keeping their sexual orientation/gender identity hidden for fear of severe social consequences. It wasn’t until 1973 that homosexuality was removed as a psychological disorder from the DSM psychiatric manual. Transgenderism is still seen as a “gender identity disorder” by the psychiatric and medical establishment. The consequences of this oppression are very real in the hearts and minds of older LGBTQ people.

For these reasons, older LGBTQ individuals are likely to fear re-victimization through homophobia, transphobia, disbelief, rejection and degradation from institutions that have a history of exclusion, hostility and violence toward them. Many older LGBTQ people approach shelters, social service agencies, domestic and sexual violence service providers, police, and the courts with great caution. This fear of re-victimization is one that an abuser can exploit to maintain power and control. Therefore, providing services to LGBTQ survivors of abuse in later life requires extreme sensitivity to these individuals’ life and experiences. As a service provider, be aware of the barriers that are unique to this age group:

Fear of loneliness/losing community ties with often small LGBTQ communities; individuals may find themselves abused and exploited by new partners, lovers or “friends,” with nowhere to turn.

Ageism may become a factor for an abuser to exploit. “You’re senile,” “I’ll have you put in a nursing home,” “You’re old and ugly, who else but me will want you” are threats that may keep a victim from reaching out for assistance.

Fear of being outed, which an abuser can easily manipulate. Trans individuals may specifically fear being outed in a medical situation if forced to engage a new caretaker.

Increased isolation due to societal homophobia and/or transphobia can be used by the abuser to maintain power and control.

Financial concerns, including lack of civil remedies for shared property.

Fear that adult children may forbid contact with grandchildren.

Lack of emergency housing options, especially for gay, bisexual and/or transgender men.

Lack of family support due to family’s refusal to accept the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of individual.

Lack of civil rights, e.g. visiting partner in health care setting, making caretaking/death/dying decisions regarding life partner, etc.

Lack of emergency housing options for victims with physical or cognitive disabilities.

Victim may be caring for abuser, or abuser may be providing care to victim.

Fear of retaliation from abuser or other family members.

### Sources for this Section:

Adapted and reprinted from material written by the Faith Trust Institute, Seattle, WA.

Allen, Mary, and Ann Turner. Abuse in Later Life in LGBT Communities. National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL). This section adapted from the original material.

“Transgender Inclusion Guide, A Primer by and for college students and student organizations.” 2004. U.S. Student Association Foundation LGBT Student Empowerment Project.

Goldberg, Joshua Mira. Making the Transition: Providing services to trans survivors of violence and abuse. Revised 2006. For the Women/Trans Dialogue Planning Committee, the Justice Institute of BC, and the Trans Alliance Society.

White, Caroline, and Joshua Mira Goldberg. “Safety Assessment and Planning in Abusive Trans Relationships.” 2006. Aid to Safety Assessment and Planning (ASAP): For Women Who Experience Violence in Their Relationships, British Columbia Institute Against Family Violence.

Munson, Michael. “Practical Tips for Working with Transgender Survivors of Sexual Violence.”

# 9 SPAN Services

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN) is a human rights organization dedicated to ending violence against women, youth, and children through support, advocacy, education and community organizing. SPAN provides information, outreach counseling, and support to the LGBTQ community regarding relationship violence in same-gender and gender-variant relationships. All of our programs are available to all women, including lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women survivors of intimate partner violence. Our Emergency Shelter and Resource Center offers confidential shelter to all women and transgender people. Counseling services, emergency response, educational materials, and referrals are available to those who do not identify as women, including gay, bisexual, and transgender male survivors of intimate partner violence. All of SPAN's services are also available in Spanish. To access any of our services, call the 24-hour Crisis and Information Line: 303-444-2424. For more information, please visit our website, [www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org).

Although SPAN strives to provide services that are inclusive of all LGBTQ individuals, there are a limited number of resources we offer to men. There are resources in Denver that are tailored to LGBTQ individuals and communities, most notably the Colorado Anti-Violence Program (AVP), which has a 24-hour crisis hotline that can be reached at 303-852-5094, or toll-free at 888-557-4441. For more information on CAVP and other resources outside of the Boulder area, please refer to Chapter 10, or call the SPAN 24-hour hotline.

This chapter covers some of the services that SPAN provides to LGBTQ individuals. These services may also be available outside of the Boulder area through other private nonprofit organizations.

## Shelter Program

SPAN operates a confidential and emergency shelter and resource center for women and their children and transgender women and transgender men in abusive situations. The shelter has 27 beds, and residents may stay for up to six weeks. While at shelter, residents may receive individual and group counseling as well as food, emergency supplies and referrals to community resources. Other shelters outside of Boulder also provide these resources for lesbian and bisexual women, and many (though not all) provide shelter for trans people. A limited list of other area shelters can be found in Chapter 10; a comprehensive list is available by calling our Crisis and Information Line at 303-444-2424.

### *24-Hour Crisis and Information Line*

Advocates provide crisis counseling, outreach services, information and referrals for other services to all LGBTQ callers.

### *Counseling*

For adults, youth and children staying at the shelter, Counselors are available for individual and group support.

### *Spiritual Support Team (SST)*

A group of volunteer spiritual leaders, representing a variety of faiths, assist survivors of violence through individual support as they work through the spiritual concerns they are facing as a result of their abuse. SST members also work to increase awareness of intimate partner violence within their own congregations, denominations, and the religious community. Team members provide a weekly interfaith support group to residents at the Shelter and faith-specific counsel to victims upon request.

## Advocacy

The Advocacy Program oversees the agency's emergency response and legal advocacy services available to all members of the LGBTQ community. Many other shelters provide similar services.

### *Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART)*

SPAN DART Advocates provide immediate, in-person response at the scene of a battering incident, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At the request of a police officer or health care provider, DART Advocates contact and meet with victims, discuss available resources, and provide assistance and support.

### *Legal Advocacy*

Court Advocates staff a Protection Order Clinic at the Boulder and Broomfield courts Monday through Friday to assist LGBTQ victims with the process of obtaining temporary and permanent protection orders. They accompany clients to court hearings and advocate on their behalf during interactions with judicial officials in both Boulder and Broomfield Counties. They also offer a free Legal drop-in clinic each week. Please call for the latest schedule: 303-444-2424.

### *Immigrant Legal Advocacy*

The Legal Advocacy Program offers immigration legal clinics once a month. An immigration attorney is available to provide free, confidential consultation about immigration issues directly or indirectly related to abuse. A Spanish-bilingual SPAN Advocate is also available. For clinic schedule, please call 303-449-8623.

## Outreach Counseling

Short-term individual and group counseling for children, teen, and adult lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are available. All services are available on a sliding scale in Boulder, Lafayette, and Broomfield; no one is refused services for inability to pay. Women outside of the area, as well as gay, bisexual, and transgender men, may refer to the following chapter for referrals to outside resources.

### *Tri-City Outreach Program*

Based in Lafayette, our Outreach office serves Louisville, Lafayette, Superior and Broomfield. The Tri-City Program offers group and individual counseling services to lesbian, bisexual and transgender people of all ages and their children. We also provide public education, and crisis line services. Additionally, group-specific ser

vices are provided to Spanish-speaking women, older/senior battered women, and to migrant working families in eastern Boulder County and Longmont.

#### *Latina/o Outreach*

Spanish bilingual counselors provide individual and group counseling to the LGBTQ Latinas/Latinos in Boulder County, and work collaboratively with other agencies to provide culturally appropriate services in English and Spanish.

#### *Transitional Services*

The Transitional Services Program provides access to low-income housing and transitional support services. Counseling, skill building classes, and community resources are available to individuals as they move from crisis to self-sufficiency.

#### *Support Group for Women in Jail*

Because the majority of women in jail have been or are current victims of intimate partner violence, SPAN counselors provide weekly support to female inmates at the Boulder County Jail.

#### *Children's Program*

Counselors provide individual and group activities for children. They also provide parenting information, emphasizing non-violent disciplinary techniques, and facilitate parent-child communication.

## **Community Education and Training Program**

A significant amount of SPAN's social change efforts happen through community, volunteer, and school-based education, social justice/anti-oppression training, and K-12 violence prevention programs.

#### *School-Based Programs*

School programs on healthy relationships and dating violence are available to elementary, middle, and senior high schools. A complete Elementary School Curriculum, Choices and Change, educates K-8 grade students about healthy relationships, bully-prevention, and safety. The Peers Building Justice Peer Education Program is a collaborative effort between SPAN and MESA (Moving to End Sexual Assault). Students organize within their communities and educate their peers about dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender violence and gender justice.

#### *Educational Materials and Training*

SPAN has developed resources on preventing abuse and dealing with consequences which address the special needs of specific audiences: children, teens, parents, teachers, the faith community, workplace, and medical personnel. We also provide training and consultation on 'Building an Anti-Racist, Inclusive Organization' for organizational development. Other resources addressing intimate partner violence are available upon request.

#### *Volunteer Opportunities*

Volunteers from the community receive a comprehensive 42-hour training, based on a social justice framework as the means to ending relationship violence, in preparation for their work as Victim Advocates, Court Advocates, Shelter Volun

teers, Children's Volunteers, or Administrative Volunteers.

#### *Speaker's Bureau*

Staff and volunteers are available to speak to community groups, businesses and classrooms on subjects related to challenging oppression and ending intimate partner violence.

#### *Community Education and Discussion*

SPAN frequently hosts educational events and facilitated discussions for the community on a variety of topics related to challenging oppression and ending intimate partner violence.

## **Fund Development Program**

Like all nonprofit organizations, the services and programs at SPAN are funded by a variety of sources, including grants, foundations, individual donations and events. To make a donation or for a calendar of upcoming events, please visit our website at [www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org).

# 10 Resources, Readings and Referrals

The following resources are organized by the chapter with which they are associated. If you are concerned about your partner discovering that you have accessed certain resources, you can take actions to protect yourself. One option is to use a computer or phone that your partner does not have access to. Another option is to erase your internet browsing history and/or delete numbers from your phone's call log. It is nearly impossible to erase all traces of internet activity, but clearing the "history" file of your internet browser is one option. Basic instructions can be found by typing the words "delete browser history" into a search engine such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

### National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

National advocacy for local LGBTQ communities. Website also includes a full report on LGBTQ Domestic Violence (2007).  
(212) 714-1184  
[www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org)

### National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE (7233)  
[www.vawnet.org](http://www.vawnet.org)

## Chapters 2 & 3 – What is Relationship Violence? You Have Options

### Resources for Victims

#### Colorado Anti-Violence Program

Denver-based statewide organization dedicated to eliminating violence within and against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities in Colorado; provides direct client services including crisis intervention, information, and referrals for LGBT victims of violence 24 hours a day.  
24-hour crisis hotline: local 303-852-5094; toll-free 888-557-4441  
[www.coavp.org](http://www.coavp.org)  
Email: [info@coavp.org](mailto:info@coavp.org)  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 181085 Denver, CO 80218

#### Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN)

Services, shelter, advocacy and support to victims and survivors of relationship violence. Boulder and Broomfield counties.  
24-hour Crisis and Information Line: 303-444-2424  
[www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org)

#### Moving to End Sexual Assault

Provides support to sexual assault victims and addresses the societal conditions that contribute to sexual violence.  
24-hour Crisis Hotline: 303-443-7300  
[www.movingtoendsexualassault.org](http://www.movingtoendsexualassault.org)

#### Bias Incident Hotline

Support and advocacy for anyone who has experienced and/or witnessed a bias-related incident. City and County of Boulder.  
720-936-0555

### For Offenders/Abusers

#### AMEND of Denver County

Confidential treatment for female and male domestic violence offenders including those who are LGBTQI; individual counseling and groups.  
303-832-6363, x 15  
[www.amendinc.org](http://www.amendinc.org)  
Email: [pdl@amendinc.org](mailto:pdl@amendinc.org)

#### Boulder Men's Center

Certified treatment provider for men with anger issues, domestic violence issues and relationship conflicts including gay men. They do not serve court-ordered gay clients - referred elsewhere. They do not currently treat transgender men.  
303-444-8064  
Address: 1900 13th Street, Boulder 80302

#### Diane Israel, M.A., Boulder

Certified treatment provider specializing in perpetrators of domestic violence; work with LGBTQI offenders; individual and couples counseling; Body Image therapy; Dialectic behavior therapy; suicide prevention for all types of clients.  
720-244-7216  
Email: [ditonic@aol.com](mailto:ditonic@aol.com)

#### WEAVE - Women Exploring Alternatives to Violent Episodes, Boulder

Certified treatment provider for female offenders; also serves Spanish-speaking men  
303-444-8064, ext. 3.

### Websites

Stop Abuse for Everyone (SAFE) serves those who typically fall between the cracks of domestic violence services, including straight men, gays and lesbians, teens, and the elderly: [www.safe4all.org](http://www.safe4all.org).

## Chapter 3 – You Have Options

### Counseling and Groups for Victims

**Wings Foundation**

Therapist-facilitated support groups for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. In Boulder: women's group held each Monday, 7-9pm, call for intake eligibility and location. Call for information on start of men's group.  
 303-238-8660 or 1-800-373-8671  
[www.wingsfound.org](http://www.wingsfound.org)  
 Email: [wings@wingsfound.org](mailto:wings@wingsfound.org)  
 Address: 8725 W. 14th Ave., Ste 150, Lakewood, CO 80215

**AMEND of Denver County**

Free and confidential support groups and individual counseling for gay, bisexual, and transgender male victims of domestic violence.  
 303-832-6365

**Jamey Collins, Psychotherapist**

Specializes in LGBTQI issues, relationships and coming out, mainly with adults and late teens. Office in Denver.  
 303-641-6410

**Enhancing the Dance: Creating Conscious Relationships**

Julie Colwell, Ph.D.; Kathy Kucsan, Ph.D.  
 Relationship workshops offered to the LGBTQI community and allies; scholarships available.  
 Julie offers LGBTQI individual and couples counseling. The community is invited to advertise free in the e-newsletter.  
 303-440-5417  
[www.enhancingthedance.com](http://www.enhancingthedance.com)

**Q Counseling**

Peter Dileo, LPC or Rachel Loudon, LCSW  
 Licensed and "out" psychotherapists offer LGBTQI victims confidential individual and group therapy, couples counseling and medication management. Located in Central Denver.  
 303-705-2500

**Karen Raforth, Ph.D**

Specializes in lesbian individual and couples counseling; also bisexual, and gay issues  
 303-444-8655

**Rainbow Elders, Boulder County Aging Services Division**

Social support group for older LGBTQI. Contact for meeting location and times.  
 303-441-3583; Aging Services (for additional information) 303-441-3574  
 Fax: 303-441-4550  
[www.co.boulder.co.us/cs/ag/programs/glb.htm](http://www.co.boulder.co.us/cs/ag/programs/glb.htm)  
 Address: 3482 N. Broadway, Boulder 80304

**Glenda Russell, Ph.D.**

Areas of specialization include psychotherapy, supervision and consultation related

to most LGBTQ issues. She works with victims of domestic violence in any relationship. Work includes male or female perpetrators in same-sex relationships only.  
 303-447-9600  
 Email: [gmrussell5@hotmail.com](mailto:gmrussell5@hotmail.com)

**Survivors of Sexual Assault and Abuse**

Areas of specialization are sexual abuse and work with LBTQ community. Call for individual sessions and/or group availability.  
 Contact: Susan Nieman-Hayman, Psychotherapist  
 303-449-3942

Support, Resource Centers & Organizations (not specific to victims)**All Terrain Lesbians (ATL) Foundation**

A foundation which provides assistance to lesbians in need of financial help due to illness or other crisis.  
[www.atlfdoundation.org](http://www.atlfdoundation.org)  
 Email: [atl\\_events@earthlink.net](mailto:atl_events@earthlink.net)  
 Address: PO Box 740985, Arvada, CO 80006

**Boulder Pride**

Serving the LGBTQ and questioning communities in and around Boulder County.  
 303-499-5777  
[www.boulderpride.org](http://www.boulderpride.org)  
 Email: [info@boulderpride.org](mailto:info@boulderpride.org)  
 Address: 2132 14th Street, Boulder, CO 80302

**The Center - Denver**

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado.  
 303-733-7743; Helpline 303-282-9399  
[www.coloradoglb.org](http://www.coloradoglb.org)  
 Email: [info@coloradoglb.org](mailto:info@coloradoglb.org)  
 Address: 1050 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203

**City of Boulder Office of Human Rights**

In Boulder, the Office of Human Rights enforces the Human Rights Ordinance, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender variance, genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, and other characteristics.  
 303-441-3141  
[www.bouldercolorado.gov](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov), click on "City A-Z", then "H", then "Human Rights", then "Human Rights Ordinance"

**COLOR – Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights**

Offers services for Latina lesbians.  
 303-393-0382  
[www.colorlatina.org](http://www.colorlatina.org)  
 Email: [info@colorlatina.org](mailto:info@colorlatina.org)



### **El Futuro, A Program of ECCOS Family Center, Denver**

Supports Latino gay and bisexual men by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions that promote health, diversity, strength and pride in our community. Also provides services for monolingual Spanish speakers.

303-480-1920

[www.eccosfamilycenter.org/team.htm](http://www.eccosfamilycenter.org/team.htm)

Address: 655 Broadway, Ste. 150, Denver, CO 80203

### **Faith Trust Institute**

Offers a wide range of services and resources, including training, consultation and educational materials, to provide communities and advocates with the tools and knowledge they need to address the religious and cultural issues related to abuse.

206-634-1903; toll free 877-860-2255

[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

### **La Gente Unida, Denver**

Serves needs of LGBTQ Latinas and Latinos in Colorado, specifically the Denver area.

303-831-6086

Address: PO Box 11714, Denver 80211

### **Silver Lining: A Resource Guide for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Elder Community in Boulder County**

Lists safe and friendly resources for the elder LGBT community.

303-441-4550

[www.co.boulder.co.us/cs/ag/programs/glb.htm](http://www.co.boulder.co.us/cs/ag/programs/glb.htm)

### **Two Spirit Society of Denver**

A non-profit organization comprised of a dedicated group of GBLT Native Americans and their partners in the Denver area who are united by their struggle to restore Two Spirited people to their rightful place in the sacred circle.

[www.denvertwospirit.com](http://www.denvertwospirit.com)

Address: P.O. Box 18566, Denver, CO 80213

### Health Care

#### **Boulder County AIDS Project (BCAP)**

HIV, food bank, outreach services to LBBTQ community

303-444-6121

[www.BCAP.org](http://www.BCAP.org)

Address: 2118 14th St, Boulder 80302

#### **Boulder County Public Health HOAP Program (Health Outreach and Advocacy Program)**

Focus is to increase healthy behavior within the LGBTQI population in Boulder County.

303-678-6139

[www.bouldercountyhoap.org](http://www.bouldercountyhoap.org)

Address: 529 Coffman, Longmont 80501

### **Wardenburg Health Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder**

For CU students only. When making an appointment, request a Preferred Provider for LGBTQI students in each health clinic. No longer provides a specific LGBTQI clinic.

303-492-5432

[www.colorado.edu/healthcenter](http://www.colorado.edu/healthcenter)

### **Women's Health: Boulder Valley Women's Health Center**

Provides low-cost gynecological and medical care to lesbian and bisexual women.

Clinic 303-442-5160; Administration 303-440-9320

Fax: 303-440-8769

[www.bvwhc.org](http://www.bvwhc.org)

Email: [info@bvwhc.org](mailto:info@bvwhc.org)

Address: 2855 Valmont, Boulder, CO 80301

## **Chapter 4 – Legal System: Pros and Cons**

### Courts (Obtaining Civil Protection Orders)

#### **Boulder County Justice Center**

Address: 1777 6th Street (6th and Canyon), Boulder

SPAN offers a Protection Order Clinic Monday through Friday at the Justice Center. Advocates cannot provide legal advice, but can explain the paperwork and the general process of filing for a civil protection order as well as offer support in the court room. Please call the 24 hour Crisis and Information Line at 303-444-2424 to check the scheduled hours of advocates.

Hearings for Protection Orders are scheduled throughout the day from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

#### **Broomfield County Courthouse**

Address: 17 DesCombes Drive, Broomfield

Courthouse 720-887-2100; SPAN Court Advocate Office 720-887-2179

SPAN Protection Order Clinic offered Monday through Friday: 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm Monday-Thursday, and 11:00 am to noon on Fridays. Hearings are generally held everyday at 3:30 pm.

Protection order forms can also be obtained at the SPAN Outreach Center or online at

[www.courts.state.co.us](http://www.courts.state.co.us) in the "Self Help" section.

### Obtaining Victim's Compensation

#### **Boulder County District Attorney's Office**

303-682-6801

[www.boulderda.org](http://www.boulderda.org)

Outside of Boulder: In other counties, please contact your local District Attorney's office, or call SPAN at 303-444-2424 for a referral.

## Advocacy Organizations

### **Boulder County Aids Project (BCAP)**

Legal services for wills, power of attorney, criminal, family, discrimination, immigration, and benefits.  
303-444-6121 (English); 303-444-7181 (Español)

### **Colorado Anti-Violence Program**

Advocacy and referrals for the LGBTQ community in abusive relationships; report violent crimes or threatening experiences.  
Administration 303-839-5204; Crisis Line 303-852-5094; Toll-free 888-557-4441  
www.coavp.org  
Email: info@coavp.org  
Address: PO Box 181085, Denver, CO 80218

### **Colorado Legal Initiatives Project (CLIP)**

Legal Outreach Program through The Center in Denver; Defends and expands legal rights of LGBTQ and HIV positive persons.  
303-282-6524 or 303-282-5602  
www.glbtcOLORADO.org/legal  
Email: clip@glbtcOLORADO.org

### **Full Faith and Credit Project**

For information, resources and to report problems regarding the enforcement of civil protection orders outside the county or state in which the order was issued.  
1-800-256-5883

## Attorneys

### **Elizabeth Bryant Law Firm**

### **Constance Wood Law Firm**

Estate planning and probate (not court related) serving LGBTQ, non traditional (e.g. common law) and straight individuals and couples  
Constance Wood 303-329-9343; Elizabeth Bryant 303-398-4000  
Address: 1866 Vine St., Denver, 80206

### **Nora V. Kelly, P.C.**

Specializes in employment, wills, and estate planning.  
303-866-9868  
Fax: 303-866-0855  
Address: 1801 Broadway, Ste. 1204, Denver 80202

### **Law Office of Barbara A. Lavender**

Specializing in family law, same sex parents, and child custody issues.  
303-443-3326  
Address: 595 Canyon Blvd, Boulder

### **The Radman Law Firm, LLC**

Specializing in family law, same sex couple issues in child custody, estate planning dissolution, protection orders, and civil litigation.

303-830-2490

Address: 1763 Franklin St., Denver 80218

### **Winer and Ramsey**

Services include assistance with protection orders and handling civil sexual assault cases.  
303-938-6836  
Address: 885 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder

## **Chapter 5 – For Youth**

### **Attention Homes: The Broadway Youth Shelter and The Bridge**

Provides residential treatment, counseling, and educational services to LGBTQ homeless teens, ages 12-18 in Boulder County.  
303-447-1206  
Website: www.attentionhomes.org

### **Boulder Valley School District: Boulder Valley Safe Schools Coalition (BVSSC)**

The BVSSC is an advisory committee to the Superintendent, a coalition of community organizations and individuals working to promote a safe, put-down-free environment in Boulder Valley Schools, with particular concern for youth experiencing harassment for perceived or actual differences in gender identity/expression or sexual orientation.  
www.bouldersafeschools.org  
Email: bouldersafeschools@yahoo.com

### **Open and Affirming Sexual Orientation/gender identity Support (OASOS) at Boulder County Public Health Department**

Provides free and confidential health outreach, support, advocacy, and education for LGBT, questioning, and intersex youth ages 13-21. Staff also provides technical assistance and capacity building to schools and youth-serving organizations.  
Program Specialist: 303-678-6259; Public Health 303-441-1100  
www.co.bouldercountyhoap.org  
Address: 3450 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304

### **Rainbow Alley at The Center, Denver**

LGBTQI Youth Drop in Center, includes: Art, Coffee, Dances, Parties, Pool, and a Video Library (ages 12-21).  
303-831-0442  
Email: rainbowalley@coloradoglb.org  
Address: 1050 Broadway, Denver 80203

### **Urban Peak**

Denver center for homeless and runaway youth 14-24 years old  
Urban Peak 303-777-9198; The Spot 303-295-3700  
www.urbanpeak.org  
Email: info@urbanpeak.org; info@thespot.org

## Websites

Advocates for Youth – Champions efforts to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health: [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)

Ambiente Joven – Resources for GLBTQ youth, en Español: [www.ambientejoven.org](http://www.ambientejoven.org)

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, a leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools: [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

MySistahs, a website created by and for young women of color to provide information and offer support on sexual and reproductive health issues: [www.mysistahs.org](http://www.mysistahs.org)

YouthResource, a website by and for LGBTQ youth takes a holistic approach to sexual health and explores issues of concern to GLBTQ youth: [www.youthresource.com](http://www.youthresource.com)

## Campus Resources

### **Counseling Center, Naropa University**

Phone: 303-444-0202

[www.naropa.edu/campuslife/counselingcenter](http://www.naropa.edu/campuslife/counselingcenter)

### **Counseling and Psychological Services: A Community Action Center**

Free services available to CU students, staff, faculty. Also provides services in Spanish for monolingual Spanish speakers.

303-492-6766

[www.colorado.edu/sacs/counseling](http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/counseling)

Location: 134 Willard Hall, CU Boulder

### **Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center**

Free services available for CU students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Also provides services in Spanish for monolingual Spanish speakers.

303-492-1377

[www.colorado.edu/GLBTRC](http://www.colorado.edu/GLBTRC)

Email: [glbtrc@colorado.edu](mailto:glbtrc@colorado.edu)

Location: 227 Willard Hall, CU Boulder

### **Office of Victim Assistance**

Offers free confidential information, support and short term counseling to students, faculty and staff at CU and their significant others.

303-492-8855

[www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/victimassistance](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/victimassistance)

Email: [assist@colorado.edu](mailto:assist@colorado.edu)

Location: 217-219 Willard Hall, CU Boulder

### **Wardenburg Health Center**

Ask for a 'preferred provider' when making an appointment.

303-492-5432

[www.colorado.edu/healthcenter](http://www.colorado.edu/healthcenter)

### **Women's Resource Center**

Offers information and referrals, resource library, advocacy, peer groups, events, and a safe gathering place.

303-492-5713

[www.colorado.edu/WomensResourceCenter](http://www.colorado.edu/WomensResourceCenter)

Location: UMC Room 416, CU Boulder

## **Chapter 6 – For Trans Survivors**

### **Boulder Pride**

Programs include a Transgender Support Group which offers a safe, caring place to meet for transgender and gender queer identified persons living in Boulder County. Call for meeting dates and times.

303-499-5777

[www.boulderpride.org](http://www.boulderpride.org)

Address: 2132 14th Street, Boulder

### **Robyn Chauvin, MA – serving Boulder & Denver**

Counseling for LGBTQI victims of abuse. Specializes in transgender clients; body centered psychotherapy; guided imagery and music; spiritual counseling.

720-841-1836

### **Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center at CU**

Free services available for CU students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

303-492-1377

[www.colorado.edu/GLBTRC](http://www.colorado.edu/GLBTRC)

Email: [glbtrc@colorado.edu](mailto:glbtrc@colorado.edu)

### **Gender Identity Center of Colorado**

Private, non-profit organization of volunteers; provide gender identity resources, health care provider and therapist referrals for male and female transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, gender queer and non-traditional gender people as well as family members and friends. Call or check website for meeting times.

303-202-6466; leave a voice message and a volunteer will return your call

[www.gicofcolo.org](http://www.gicofcolo.org)

Email: [info@gicoofcolo.org](mailto:info@gicoofcolo.org)

Meeting Address: 3895 Upham St., Ste 040, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

### **Jayne L. Peta, MA Psychotherapist**

Specializing in: LGBTQI Adolescents & young adults; gender identity concerns; families and individuals who are experiencing a loved one "coming out" as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or other sexual or gender identities.

720-318-8018

[www.jaymepeta.com](http://www.jaymepeta.com)

## Websites

Children of Lesbians & Gays Everywhere & children of transgender persons: [www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org)

F to M Community: [www.ftmi.org](http://www.ftmi.org)

International Foundation for Gender Identity: [www.ifge.org](http://www.ifge.org)

Intersex Society of North America: [www.isna.org](http://www.isna.org)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Communities and Domestic Violence Information & Resources: [new.vawnet.org](http://new.vawnet.org)

National Center for Transgender Equality: [www.nctequality.org](http://www.nctequality.org)

Silvia Rivera Law Project - works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination or violence: [www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org)

Survivor Project - addresses the needs of trans and intersex survivors of domestic and sexual violence: [www.survivorproject.org](http://www.survivorproject.org)

Trans Alliance Society: [www.transalliance.org](http://www.transalliance.org)

TransKid Purple Rainbow Foundation - Resources and information for transgender children: [www.transkidspurplerrainbow.org](http://www.transkidspurplerrainbow.org)

Transgender Law & Policy Institute: [www.transgenderlaw.org](http://www.transgenderlaw.org)

Transyouth Family Advocates: [www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

The Transgender Sexual Violence Project: [www.forge-forward.org/transviolence](http://www.forge-forward.org/transviolence)

Vancouver Transgender Health Program resources: [www.vch.ca/transhealth](http://www.vch.ca/transhealth)

[tpocx@yahoo.com](mailto:tpocx@yahoo.com) to subscribe to a listserv exclusively for Transgender, Transsexual, Gender-Variant People of Color & their Families

## Books

Transgender Voices: Beyond Women and Men (2008), by Lori Girshick, PhD.

As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised A Girl (2001), by John Colapinto

Body Alchemy: Transsexual Portraits (1996), by Loren Cameron

Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America (2000), by Will Roscoe

Gender Outlaw (1995), and My Gender Workbook (1998) by Kate Bornstein

Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender (1997), by Rikki Ann Wilchins

Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism (2003), by Pat Califia

Stone Butch Blues (1994, 2004), Trans Liberation (1999), and Transgender Warriors (1997), by Les Feinberg

## **Chapter 7 – Being an Ally**

### Organizations

#### **PFLAG Boulder County (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)**

Support, education, and advocacy for LGBTQI families and friends. Monthly meetings.

303-444-8164

[www.pflagboulder.org](http://www.pflagboulder.org)

Meeting Location: First United Methodist Church, 1421 Spruce St., Boulder, CO 80302

#### **PFLAG Denver**

Support, education, and advocacy for LGBTQI families and friends. Call for meeting times.

Location: Montview Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia, Denver

Helpline (English) 303-333-0286; Helpline (Español) 303-231-6030; Office: 303-573-5861

[pflagdenver.org](http://pflagdenver.org)

Email: [info@pflagdenver.org](mailto:info@pflagdenver.org)

Address: PO Box 18901, Denver 80218

### Websites

Atticus Circle - a group dedicated to achieving equality for all parents and partners, regardless of sexual orientation: [www.atticuscircle.org](http://www.atticuscircle.org)

Colorado Queer Straight Alliance - an online network of LGBTQ and Straight Coloradans, creating community with integrity and standing together for what is right: [www.coqueerstraightalliance.ning.com](http://www.coqueerstraightalliance.ning.com)

Heterosexism Enquirer: an electronic magazine dedicated to challenging heterosexism in society's institutions, individuals, families and communities: [www.mun.ca/the](http://www.mun.ca/the)

National Organization of Parents, Families & Friends of LGBTQ people: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

Queer Zine Lit - challenges the status quo notion that we must assimilate to succeed. At the same time, QZL recognizes inevitable overlap between communities. The key is to examine what privilege we possess and discover ways we can become allies for each other: [www.queerzinelit.com](http://www.queerzinelit.com)

Straight Spouse Support Network, for heterosexual partners of LBGT people: [www.ssnetwk.org](http://www.ssnetwk.org)

### Informational Pamphlets

*Our Sons and our Daughters – Questions and answers for parents of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.* To receive a free copy of this pamphlet, call (303) 678-6164 or e-mail [mjohnson@co.boulder.co.us](mailto:mjohnson@co.boulder.co.us).

*Nuestras Hijas y Nuestros Hijos - Preguntas y respuestas para padres de gays, lesbianas y bisexuales.* Para recibir una copia gratis de este folleto llame gratis al (303) 678-6161 o envíe un correo electrónico a [mjohnson@co.boulder.co.us](mailto:mjohnson@co.boulder.co.us).

*Our Transsexual Sons and Daughters* - A publication of a network of fathers, mothers, relatives, and friends of transgender individuals. To receive a free copy of this pamphlet, call (303) 678-6164 or e-mail [mjohnson@co.boulder.co.us](mailto:mjohnson@co.boulder.co.us).

Lending Library Pamphlets available for checkout in Longmont; Boulder County Public Health Safe Zone Program  
Phone: 303-678-6139

## **Chapter 8 – Information for Service Providers**

For referrals to other service providers, please look throughout this chapter.

## **Chapter 9 – SPAN Services**

Visit our website for a comprehensive list of services: [www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org). Please call the SPAN Crisis and Information line for a complete list of Shelter Programs throughout the country: 303-444-2424.

Other domestic violence programs in the Denver Metro area:

**Arvada: Women In Crisis**  
303-420-672  
[www.thefamilytree.org](http://www.thefamilytree.org)

**Aurora: Gateway Battered Women’s Services**

303-343-1851  
[www.gatewayshelter.org](http://www.gatewayshelter.org)

**Boulder: Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence**  
303-444-2424  
[www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org)

**Commerce City: Alternatives to Family Violence**  
303-289-4441

**Denver: SafeHouse Denver**  
303-318-9959  
[www.safehouse-denver.org](http://www.safehouse-denver.org)

**Denver: Brandon Center**  
303-620-9190

**Fort Collins: Crossroads Safehouse**  
970-482-3502; Toll Free: 888-541-SAFE (7233)  
[www.crossroadssafehouse.org](http://www.crossroadssafehouse.org)

**Greeley: A Woman’s Place**  
970-356-4226

**Longmont: Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley**  
303-772-4422  
[www.safeshelterofstvrain.org](http://www.safeshelterofstvrain.org)

## **Chapter 10 – Additional Resources & Readings**

### Additional Websites

Audre Lorde Project: [www.alp.org](http://www.alp.org)

Community United Against Violence; multilingual: [www.cuav.org](http://www.cuav.org)

Immigration & LGBTQI Rights: [www.queersforeconomicjustice.org](http://www.queersforeconomicjustice.org)

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence: [www.incite-national.org](http://www.incite-national.org)

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs: [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org)

Stonewall ADR - alternative mediation, arbitration, dispute resolution firm geared, specifically, towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community: [www.stonewalladr.com](http://www.stonewalladr.com)

### Additional Reading

Woman to Woman Sexual Violence: Does She Call It Rape? (2002), by Lori Girshick, PhD.

Intimate Betrayal: Domestic Violence in Lesbian Relationships (2001), by Elyn Kaschak, Ed.

The Journey Out: A Guide For and About Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Teen (1995), by Rachel Pollack and Cheryl Schwartz.

Violent Betrayal: Partner Abuse in Lesbian Relationships (1992), by Claire Renzetti.

No More Secrets: Violence in Lesbian Relationships (2002) by Janice Ristock.



This Handbook is available for free.  
Please download, copy, and distribute.

For more information, please contact us:

24 Hour Crisis and Information Line: 303-444-2424  
SPAN Outreach Center: 303-449-8623  
SPAN Tri-City Office (serving Louisville, Lafayette  
and Broomfield):  
303-673-9000

[www.safehousealliance.org](http://www.safehousealliance.org)  
835 North Street, Boulder, CO 80304