

Appendix E

LGBTQI-Specific Information

Individuals identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI) face unique challenges that may require different responses than those needed by heterosexual individuals. Though the majority of DV victims are female, males in heterosexual *or* same-sex relationships may also be victimized. Domestic violence –patterns of coercive control by one partner over another – is estimated to occur in more than a quarter of same-sex relationships (New Hampshire Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence).

Here are some considerations when working with people who identify as LGBTQI.

- Children of same-sex couples have been shown to experience similar effects of DV exposure as do children of opposite-sex couples.
- State and federal protections vary for LGBTQI people, and local protections may exist (e.g., access to services). Male victims are even less likely than female victims in same-sex relationships to get the help needed. In Ohio, however, same-sex couples may be eligible for temporary or civil protection orders (Brigner, 2003).
- Batterers in same-sex relationships may threaten to “out” their partners as a control tactic. This can add to the isolation and fear victims may feel already.
- Victims of IPV in LGBTQI relationships may be especially reluctant to disclose their abuse for fear of losing the ability to see and parent their children. LGBTQI couples face unique custody issues. Batterers know this and often use it as a control tactic. Victims may also fear disclosing their orientation or identity due to bias against people in LGBTQI relationships.
- Assumptions about gender roles and physique may cloud first responders’ views of whether or not DV occurred (e.g., assuming two male “roommates” “fought”).

Some LGBTQI-relevant practice behaviors are listed below.

- Consider **behaviors** in their **context**, the **intent** behind those behaviors, and their resulting **effects**. Determine which partner is exhibiting fear or dread and which is exhibiting entitlement. (As in the *Safe and Together*TM critical components, thorough assessments of behaviors, patterns, and protective capacities are essential.)
- Use gender-neutral forms (e.g., “Gender: _____” vs. “Gender: Male or Female”).
- If possible, make office restrooms gender neutral.
- Make LGBTQI-specific Power and Control Wheels and literature available.
- Partner with LGBTQI organizations.