

Violence and Sexual Orientation

Heterosexism is the assumption that only heterosexual relationships are normal and should be privileged.

(Heterosexism, 2006)

When violence occurs within the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, attitudes often range from ‘who cares’ to ‘these relationships are generally unstable or unhealthy’.

(Abuse in Same Sex Relationships, 2008)

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Prevalence

Gay and lesbian individuals experience victimization at a rate 2.5 times higher than heterosexual individuals.

The rate of victimization for bisexual individuals is approximately 4 times higher than the rate of victimization for heterosexual individuals.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community is a serious issue. The problem, however, remains underreported.

Women

Women that commit violence against their female partner challenge the myth of women's inherent non-violence. The idea that a woman would abuse another woman, and that her partner would have anything to fear, is difficult for many people to understand.

Men

Recognizing men as victims of intimate partner violence is difficult for many due to heterosexist notions regarding masculinity. Same-sex partner violence in gay relationships is often dismissed and/or devalued as 'boys will be boys'.

Hate Crimes and Discrimination

Individuals targeted because of their sexual orientation were more likely than other groups to suffer violent crimes, including assault and uttering threats.

In 2006, approximately 98% of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation that were reported to police were committed against homosexual individuals. Of the hate crimes committed against homosexual individuals, approximately 55% were violent crimes and 35% were property crimes.

The majority of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation are committed by young males acting alone or in small groups.

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