

What to Say and Not to Say

- Start the conversation by saying **“I care about you”** or **“I am worried for your safety.”**
- **Point out specific behaviors** or incidents that concern you. For example, **“I saw your partner grab your arm very hard and march you across the room.”**
- **Don’t judge your friend or family member** or make blaming statements. Don’t say **“Why Don’t you just leave?”** or **“I would never let someone do that to me.”**
- **Don’t give advice.** Instead say **“What do you think you should do?”** or **“You are the one who knows your situation best.”**
- **Help your friend or family member identify options and resources.** Ask your friend what kind of support would be most helpful to them. Call your local domestic violence program to find out what services they offer to LGBTQ+ survivors.
- **Don’t tell others** what your friend or family member has told you unless you have permission.
- **Don’t confront your friend or family member’s partner** unless they ask you to do so, and don’t put yourself in danger. If you witness a person being assaulted, **dial 911.**
- **Taking a non-judgemental position** as a reliable resource is your best defense against the abuser’s efforts to separate your friend or family from your support.
- Your friend or family member may not be ready to leave the relationship. Say **“I will be here for you** even if I don’t understand all of your decisions. Continue to offer support and understanding for your friend or family member.
- **Don’t push printed materials** on your friend or family member, these can increase danger if found by the abusive partner.

We often keep silent because we don’t want to intrude on someone’s personal life, we fear we are wrong, or we don’t know what to say. Survivors often say they kept silent because nobody asked them about the abuse. If you are concerned about your friend or family member, don’t be afraid to start a conversation with them.

Who to Contact for Help

Although this brochure will get you on your way to becoming a supportive friend and family member, **it is not a substitute for talking with a domestic violence advocate.**

Talk to an advocate by calling
Georgia’s 24-Hour Statewide Hotline
1-800-33-HAVEN, 1-800-334-2836

Se habla español



- **Jewish Family and Career Services**
Individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, safety planning and referrals for survivors of intimate partner violence. 770-677-9322, www.jfcsatl.org/shalombayit
- **The Health Initiative** provides LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare resources, 404-688-2524, www.thehealthinitiative.org
- **LatinoLinQ** provides support services for LGBTQ+ individuals of Latin American descent of any sexual orientation and any gender identity. 678-744-5467, www.latinolinq.org



Georgia
Commission on
Family
Violence

Safe and Healthy Relationships



What to do if LGBTQ+ friends or family are experiencing intimate partner violence

What is Intimate Partner Violence and How Can I Recognize It?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as any behavior used to control another person through fear, humiliation, physical violence, sexual violence, and/or verbal and emotional abuse. IPV can happen to anyone regardless of ethnicity, race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, education, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

IPV can include

- Extreme jealousy or accusations of cheating,
- Threats to “out” an intimate partner, and questioning an intimate partner’s gender identity or sexuality,
- Referring to an intimate partner with the wrong pronouns,
- Forced sex or unwanted touching,
- Isolating an intimate partner from friends, family, and/or the LGBTQ+ community,
- Controlling the finances, and
- Threats to children, pets, family, and friends.

Does your friend or family member

- Turn down social invitations or miss work often?
- Seem more withdrawn or seem to have lost confidence?
- Become anxious or quiet around their partner?
- Have unexplained injuries or injuries inconsistent with their explanation?
- Receive a high number of calls or text messages from their partners? Does it seem as though they have to “check-in” with their partner?
- Seem sensitive about home life or hint about trouble at home?
- Have a partner who publicly degrades them or uses verbal putdowns?

Barriers to Leaving and Signs of Increased Danger

There are many barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, including

- Lack of support services sensitive to LGBTQ+ issues,
- Fear of being isolated from or “betraying” the LGBTQ+ community,
- Outside perception that the violence is mutual,
- Fear of not being believed by family, friends, or institutions,
- Lack of legal recognition of the relationship,
- Lack of economic resources, and
- Fear of being treated in a homophobic and/or transphobic manner by law enforcement, legal professionals, and advocates.

If your friend or family member tells you the following things are happening, encourage them to contact a domestic violence advocate to create a safety plan.

The abusive partner has

- Access to a weapon, especially a firearm,
- Threatened or attempted suicide,
- Increased severity of abusive behaviors,
- Attempted to strangle or threatened to kill your friend or family member, or
- Spied or stalked your friend or family member.

Your friend or family member is trying to end the relationship by

- Filing for a divorce or a temporary protective order,
- Moving out of the shared residence,
- Changing the locks or denying access to the home, or
- Talking to the abusive partner, friends, or family members about leaving the relationship.

Myths & Facts and Civil and Criminal Protections

Myth: Only heterosexual women are victims of IPV.

Fact: IPV is an issue of power and control. Anyone in the LGBTQ+ community can be a victim of IPV, including cis men, trans men and genderqueer individuals.

Myth: IPV is not as common in LGBTQ+ relationships as it is in heterosexual relationships.

Fact: Studies show that abuse is just as prevalent (25% -33%) in LGBTQ+ relationships.

Myth: The abuser in the relationship is always the bigger, more “masculine” or “butch” partner.

Fact: IPV is about power and control, not size or strength. There is no way to tell by looking at a couple who is abusing their partner.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) explicitly bars discrimination based on actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation- as well as race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability.

LGBTQ+ victims may also qualify for a Family Violence Temporary Protective Order and their abusive partner could face increased criminal penalties under Georgia’s Family Violence Act.

Contact a domestic violence advocate to learn about these protections and qualifications by calling **Georgia’s 24-Hour Statewide Hotline: 1-800-33-HAVEN, 1-800-334-2836**