

# LGBT DV

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## BEYOND THE WHEEL: Tactics of Abuse

**Isolation and OUTING**—when people are first coming out, *they are very vulnerable to abuse* - they may be losing friends and family, may be alienated from their cultural, ethnic, religious, familial community and institutions.

The isolation that most LGBT people face as a result of homophobia *is useful to a batterer* who is trying to isolate their partner. **Threatening to “out” a person (which could mean losing children, ostracism, job loss etc) is a powerful tool of control.**

**Using Vulnerabilities**—a batterer using their own vulnerabilities to obligate or coerce their partner into staying, caring for them, and/or prioritizing batterer’s needs. Using vulnerabilities often results in survivors being exploited (resources, time, attention) and undermines survivors’ attempts to negotiate boundaries or prioritize self.

**Using Children**—In many states, LGBT people are not allowed to be the legal parent of their children. Even in states where LGBT parent’s rights are protected, not all individuals have access to the systems to assert their legal rights. For a non-biological parent, the threat of having no contact with their children makes leaving an abusive relationship a complex to impossible choice.

**Using Small Communities**—Using friends/family and the small number of open and affirming community spaces to monitor a survivor & gather information, to ostracize or threaten to ostracize the survivor. **Please note:** safety planning cannot rely on the survivor never being in community space with the batterer. *Our communities are too small for this.* We must do **harm reduction** planning or survivors “drop out” of community to avoid batterer and risk further isolation.

**Leveraging Institutional Violence / Isolation**—law enforcement historically and currently have used violence against LGBT people. LGBT people have been targeted for violence in mental health institutions, by hate and bias attacks, and are denied basic civil rights such as the protections afforded through marriage. LGBT people also experience discrimination and oppression based on race, class, national origin, gender, gender identity etc. Many LGB people, and particularly transgender people, have experienced discrimination within the medical system. **These things are used by batterers to increase control.**

**Alcohol and Drug Abuse**—LBTG people have historically been forced to make community in “illegal” and marginalized spaces such as bars. We have higher rates of alcohol and drug use and abuse than in mainstream communities. Batterers leverage the ongoing consequences of ways that LBTG people’s lives have been historically criminalized AS WELL AS the realities of current drug use (and drug criminalization) when setting up/maintaining a system of power & control.

*Please see the “Think, Re-think” article in your packet for more discussion of these issues, stats, and a general frame of dv in lbtg relationships.*

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*“Beyond the Wheel” Bullet Points*

This handout developed by Connie Burk ©2005, updated by Kristin Tucker 2009  
for The NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse  
www.nwnetwork.org P.O. Box 20398 Seattle, WA 98102