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LGBT people experience Domestic Violence Too...

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PRESS RELEASE

Broken Rainbow UK LGBT Domestic Violence Service

Broken Rainbow UK welcomes the widening of the definition of Domestic Violence announced by the Government to include coercion and recognise 16 and 17 year olds.

We know from survivors just how devastating isolation, controlling behaviour such as constant put downs, and threats to 'out' someone can be. We also know that young people are more vulnerable, and at greater risk. The fact that 1 in 4 women are likely to experience domestic violence is unacceptable. LGBT people are no different in this respect, but recognising what is happening, naming, and reporting of domestic violence in these communities is less likely⁽¹⁾.

The Teenage Relationship Abuse Campaign led by the Home Office is certainly a step in the right direction, to educate how coercion can be used in an abusive relationship. As professionals, we need to build on this work and understand that coercion may be all the more powerful when used to undermine, threaten, control, and 'out' a young person who is also coping with homophobia, biphobia or transphobia and an identity as an LGBT person.

Because, LGBT people experience domestic violence too..

Young people coming to terms with their sexual orientation or gender identity, in a variety of relationships, including same sex relationships, have additional struggles; fear of being rejected by friends, family, assaulted by neighbours, siblings, parents, or extended family members. Many have no option but to leave an area, their family, and friends with whom they grew up. Some are victims of HBV, and forced into marriage because they are perceived, or come out, as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

A first relationship is a high risk factor. Add sexual orientation to this equation, and it's clear that awareness campaigns need to include same sex relationships and support young LGBT people. Whilst the image of a male perpetrator or bully, with a female victim is true, this should not be at the cost of undermining or excluding people whose experiences do not conform to the stereotype.

The impact of coercion and abuse is just as damaging in the relationships of LGBT people. But, they do not have safe refuge accommodation to escape; many are unable to name their experiences as domestic violence. The absence of publicity on same sex and LGBT domestic violence sadly reinforces that domestic violence in the LGBT community is invisible. It's time for same sex domestic violence to come out.

Editors Notes

If you, or someone you know is affected by domestic violence, get help through:

Broken rainbow National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline on 0300 999 5428, or
help@brokenrainbow.org.uk
www.brokenrainbow.org.uk
<http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/need-help>

(1) Comparing Domestic Abuse in Same Sex and Heterosexual Relationships Donovan & Hester (2006)

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk