

Lesbian Survivors

Does partner violence or sexual violence get blamed on you being lesbian?

Partner violence

Partner violence is when one partner uses any form of abusive behavior to get and maintain control over the other. Ongoing humiliation, threats, stalking by text, online or in person, outing, ridiculing someone's gender or sexuality, withholding medication or treatments, verbal abuse, controlling money and physical and sexual violence can all be part of partner violence.

Lesbian survivors of partner violence often find abusive behavior includes leveraging homophobia inside the relationship.

Does your partner.....

- Threaten to "out" you to your employer, friends, or family?
- Tell you that you're never going to find another woman who will love you?
- Isolate you from your family and friends?
- Say that what's happening is normal in relationships with women?
- Tell you no one will help you, because lesbians don't count?
- Say the abuse is your fault, or that it's mutual and you both do it?
- Criticise you for not being a "real" lesbian?
- Ridicule your body?
- Treat your ethnicity or cultural identity as exotic?
- Blame abuse on your mental health, disability, HIV status or substance use?

Partner violence may also include physical violence like hitting, kicking, pushing, punching. If you feel like your partner has power and control over your life in these or other ways, contact one of the helping organisations here.

Partner violence is illegal in New Zealand, for people of all genders and all sexualities. You have every right to be treated with respect and care in your relationships.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence can be perpetrated by, or against, anyone regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or ability. It can include rape, the threat of rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and sexual contact with force. It includes any sexual activity that someone does not, or cannot consent to.

Lesbian survivors may experience sexual violence from partners or casual hook-ups. They may also experience sexual violence from people targeting them because of their sexuality or gender identity. This might include someone:

- Pressuring you to do things you don't like by telling you this is what lesbians do, or not stopping when you ask
- Telling you women can't sexually abuse other women
- Telling you that you're repressed or frigid if you don't want to do something sexual
- Doing sexual things to you when you are drunk or out of it

Sexual activity without consent in New Zealand is illegal, no matter what your sexuality, gender or the sexuality or gender of the person who sexually harmed you. If you have had an unwanted sexual experience, you can ask for help, no matter how long ago it happened.