Supporting Queer and Trans Survivors

NAME: County of Santa Clara Virtual DV Conference
DATE: Oct 30th 11:30-1:30 PST
LOCATION: virtual
I. Introduction question
II. CUAV History & Services
III. Key Terminology
IV. Myths about IPV/DV in LGBTQI Relationships
V. Power and Control Wheel + Tactics of abuse
VI. DV Assessment tools
VII. Understanding Violence
VIII. Barriers to Accessing Services
IX. Key Principles for Supporting LGBTQI Survivors
X. Take-aways + Questions
What best describes your role in the community? (check one)
1. Community Member
2. Non profit service provider
3. Government staffer
4. Law enforcement
5. Other
Community United Against Violence (CUAV)

Mission: Founded in 1979, CUAV works to build the power of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) communities to transform violence and oppression. We support the healing and leadership of those impacted by abuse and mobilize our broader communities to replace cycles of trauma with cycles of safety and liberation. As part of the larger social justice movement, CUAV works to create truly safe communities where everyone can thrive.

Vision: CUAV envisions a safe, resilient world where everyone can thrive. We live in powerful communities organized around collective liberation, not abuse or exploitation. Violence and trauma become opportunities to practice individual and collective transformation. Every living thing is valued as a vital part of a larger whole.
Our services

Peer Counseling
- Short term 1 on 1 counseling
- Advocacy-based

Support Groups
- Take Care Tuesday
- Healing Through Art and Mindfulness
- Mindful Movement for POC Healing

Trainings
- Supporting Queer and Trans survivors
- Transgender 101
- Understanding Violence
- Arts-based healing for survivors

Leadership Development
- Survivors Advocating for Freedom Today (Saf-T)

Coalitions
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)
- San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium (DVC)
- Full Rights Empowerment and Equality – San Francisco (FREE SF)
- No New SF Jail Coalition
- CPEDV
- Our Trans Home
Sexual orientation: what genders someone is attracted to romantically and sexually

Gender identity: someone's internal sense of what gender they are

Gender expression: how someone presents their relationship to gender, including appearance, dress, and behavior. Someone’s gender expression at any given time may not align with their internal gender identity.

Cisgender: a term used for a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Lesbian: Gender specific term referring specifically to women who are attracted to other women.

Gay: Can be used as an informal way of referring to queer people, those attracted to people of the same gender. Also refers specifically to men who are attracted to other men.

Bisexual: Being attracted to people of two or more genders. For some the term is a parallel/alternative to homosexuality and heterosexuality, while for others the term expresses a blend of the two.

Pansexual: Being attracted to all or many genders

Queer: Formerly used as a slur to refer to gays and lesbians in an extremely derogatory way. Has now been reclaimed by the younger generation in the LGBT community, and new scholars of gender/sexuality, as a kind of anti-identity politics that breaks down the sexual binary by acknowledging the fluidity of sexuality. Used also as an umbrella term to encompass LGBTQ communities.

Transgender: a term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth

Transsexual: A person who has changed or wants to change their sex. MTF, FTM, post-op, pre-op, non-op (hormones and surgery also bring up issues of access – race/class)

Two-Spirit: A term for third gender people used in many, if not most, Native American and Canadian First Nations tribes. It is also a contemporary term used to identify Native American LGBT individuals. The term is used in rural and urban communities to describe the re-claiming of their traditional identity and roles.

Intersex: general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male

Gender non-conforming, genderqueer, non-binary: A term describing a person who does not conform to cultural and social expectations about gender.
Reflection question:

What are some of the myths you’ve heard about Domestic Violence in LGBTQI+ Relationships? (check all that apply)

1. Domestic Violence is not common in queer and trans communities.
2. It isn’t really violence when a same sex couple fights. It is just a “lover’s quarrel” between equals.
3. The person abusing will always be butch, bigger, stronger. The survivor will always be femme, smaller, weaker.
4. It is easier for queer and trans survivors of domestic violence to leave than it is for heterosexual counterparts who are married. If it were really that bad, they would just leave.
5. I haven’t heard of any
MYTHS

Myth #1 Domestic Violence is not common in queer and trans communities.
The Truth Is: Best estimates of domestic violence research and statistics show that queer and trans people experience abuse in relationships at a rate of 25 – 32% (basically the same percentage as in the heterosexual community). Given that at least 1 in 3 queer and trans people have experienced DV, we can assume that there will always be at least someone in our lives that has been affected by DV.

Myth #2 It isn’t really violence when a same sex couple fights. It is just a “lover’s quarrel” between equals.
The Truth Is: There is nothing equal or fair about domestic violence. In DV, one person maintains a pattern of power and control. Further, dismissing domestic violence as “just a lover’s quarrel” trivializes the violence and gives tacit consent for it to continue. Just because the two people are the same gender, does not make it a fight between “equals.” In addition, it is a myth that same-sex DV is “mutual”; DV survivors who fight back to defend themselves are not maintaining a pattern of power and control.
MYTHS Con’t

Myth #3 The person abusing will always be butch, bigger, stronger. The survivor will always be femme, smaller, weaker.
The Truth Is: Size, weight, butch, femme, or any other physical attribute or role is not an indicator of whether or not a person will abuse or not. A person who is 5’2” could maintain a pattern of power and control over someone who may be taller, heavier, stronger and presenting in the masculine spectrum. DV is not about single incidents of violence; therefore, it does not matter how any of the parties are perceived to be or look like.

Myth #4 It is easier for LGBTQI+ survivors of domestic violence to leave than it is for heterosexual counterparts who are married. If it were really that bad, they would just leave.
The Truth Is: Queer and Trans relationships can be as serious and committed as heterosexual couples or marriages. There is also a false assumption that leaving a relationship is the survivor’s ideal answer to the abuse. In any DV dynamic, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, leaving constitutes more isolation for the survivor and sometimes more danger than staying; leaving a partner who abuses also means leaving one’s home, family, friends, children and community. Social oppression (heterosexism, classism, ableism, ageism, etc) further increases isolation for survivors.
Power and control in LGBTQI Relationships

**Power & Control in Lesbian, Gay, Transgender & Bisexual Relationships**

- **Transphobia**
  - Using fear and hatred of anyone who challenges traditional gender expression, and/or who is transsexual, to convince partner of danger in reaching out to others.
  - Controlling expression of gender identity and connections to community.
  - Outing sexual identity.
  - Shaming.
  - Questioning status as a "real" lesbian or gay man, or bisexual.

- **Homo/Biphobia**
  - A part of heterosexism. Using awareness of fear and hatred of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals to convince partner of danger in reaching out to others.
  - Controlling expression of sexual identity and connections to community.
  - Outing sexual identity.
  - Shaming.
  - Questioning validity of one's gender.

- **Psychological & Emotional Abuse**
  - Criticizing constantly.
  - Using verbal abuse, insults and ridicule.
  - Undermining self-esteem.
  - Making a report to city, state or federal authorities that would jeopardize custody, economic situation, immigration or legal status.
  - Pushing, punching, beating, kicking, stabbing, shooting or killing.

- **Threats**
  - Making physical, emotional, economic or sexual threats.
  - Threatening to harm family or friends.
  - Threatening to make a report to city, state or federal authorities that would jeopardize custody, economic situation, immigration or legal status.

- **Physical Abuse**
  - Slapping, hitting, shoving, biting, choking.
  - Making a report to city, state or federal authorities that would jeopardize custody, economic situation, immigration or legal status.

- **Entitlement**
  - Treating partner as inferior; race, education, wealth, politics, class privilege or lack of, physical ability, and anti-Semitism.
  - Demanding that needs always come first.
  - Interfering with partner's job, personal needs and family obligations.

- **Using Children**

- **Isolation: Restricting Freedom**
  - Controlling personal social contacts, access to information and participation in groups or organizations.
  - Limiting the who, what, where and when of daily life.
  - Restraining movement, locking partner.

- **Heterosexism**
  - Perpetuating and utilizing invisibility of LGB relationships to define relationship norms.
  - Using heterosexual roles to normalize abuse and shame partner for same sex and bisexual desires.
  - Using cultural invisibility to isolate partner and reinforce control.
  - Limiting connection to community.

- **Community United Against Violence (CUAV)**
Power and control in LGBTQI Relationships

Intimidation
- Creating fear by using looks, actions, gestures and destroying personal items, mementos or photos. Breaking windows or furniture. Throwing or smashing objects. Trashing clothes, hurting or killing pets.

HIV-Related Abuse
- Threatening to reveal HIV status to others.
- Blaming partner for having HIV. Withholding medical or social services. Telling partner she or he is "dirty". Using illness to justify abuse.

Sexual Abuse
- Forcing sex.
- Forcing specific sex acts or sex with others. Physical assaults to "sexual" body areas. Refusing to practice safer sex. In S&M refusing to negotiate or not respecting contract/scene limits or safe words.

Economic Abuse
- Controlling economic resources and how they are used. Stealing money, credit cards or checks. Running up debt. Fostering total economic dependency. Using economic status to determine relationship roles/norms, including controlling purchase of clothes, food, etc.

Using Children
- Anti-Semitism. Demanding that needs always come before interfering with partner’s job, personal needs and family obligations.
- Threats or actions to take children away or have them removed. Using children to relay messages. Threats to or actual harm to children. Threats to or revealing of sexual or gender orientation to children or others to jeopardize their parent-child relationship, custody or relationships with family, friends, school or others.

Building Safer Communities for Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual and HIV-Affected New Yorkers
© 2000 New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
Tactics of abuse

- **Isolation and Outing**
  - Threatening to “out” a person is a powerful tool of control

- **Using Vulnerabilities**
  - Someone who uses abuse may coerce their partner to stay and care for them

- **Using Children**
  - Many states LGBTQI people are not allowed to be the legal parent of their children

- **Using Small Communities**
  - Small number of open & affirming community spaces to monitor or ostracize the survivor

- **Using Immigration Status**
  - Threats to call ICE

- **Leveraging Institutional Violence/Isolation**
  - State violence has historically been used against LGBTQ people
We want to get as complete a picture of someone’s life in order to support them to make a plan to meet all of their needs which could include DV support, mental health support, basic needs, legal advocacy, housing, etc.
Many people have the misconception that the larger, more masculine-looking or masculine identified partner is the batterer in same-sex abusive relationships. However, gender identity and presentation do not determine one’s behavioral patterns with regard to power, control and abuse.
Be cautious and self-aware about any stereotypes, biases, prejudices, or assumptions that you may bring to your work.

The focus should be on determining behavioral patterns and the feelings behind them, rather than on making determinations based on the individual’s appearance or identity.
DV Assessment Tips

- Movie not snapshot
- Talk with co-workers + others
- Check your assumptions
- Intuition, Body Language, and noticing how we feel
Understanding Violence

Values:
- Liberation
- Healing
- Transformation
- Mutual Safety
- Community
- Leadership
What are some barriers that queer and trans survivors may experience in accessing services? (check all that apply)

1. Turned away for services due to gender or sexual orientation
2. No lgbtqi+ specific programs/excluded from programs
3. Getting misgendered
4. Lack of knowledge of services that can meet their needs
5. All the above
Some barriers that queer and trans survivors face when accessing services

- Not having their gender / pronouns respected
- Being turned away from services because of their gender or sexual orientation
- Not feeling safe in a space
- Not knowing where to go to get their needs met
- Not having their relationship or themselves taken seriously
- Feeling judgment
- A lot of trans women, especially Black trans women, tend to be turned away at shelters (either it’s difficult to place them in a shelter or they can’t stay too long because they’re not built to support them)
- Non profit spaces are not built to support or culturally competent to support black trans women
- Lack of language justice (for survivors that speak languages besides Spanish)
- Survivors might not be believed
- DV isolation when the person using the violence uses the resource first
1. Respect pronouns and names

2. Survivors are experts of their lives and their safety

3. Acknowledge the rich diversity within the LGBTQI+ communities [i.e. sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression]

4. We cannot change anyone or their behavior
   a. We can only change ourselves and be responsible for our own behavior

5. Counter isolation through non-shaming

6. The abuser/survivor binary does not equal bad/good
   a. People are complex and we want to affirm all parts of survivors’ experiences while acknowledging that people who have been violent can change if they decide to change

7. Ask respectful questions

8. Notice your personal bias

9. Have a critical lens around the intersections of violence and gender

10. You cannot turn someone away for services because they are transgender*

11. Understand your own power and privilege to becoming a better ally!
What are some of your take-aways?
Thank you,
Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention and
the Domestic Violence Council !!!

You can Reach us at
GLORIA@CUAV.ORG OR KYLE@CUAV.ORG

Stay Connected with CUAV!
Website: www.cuav.org
Instagram: cuav_sf
Facebook: cuav.bayarea
Twitter: cuav

Community United Against Violence (CUAV)
427 South Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103