

Myths and Facts about Woman to Woman Battering

Myth: New Jersey lesbian and gay victims of partner abuse are not entitled to legal protections.

Fact: Since November of 1991 same sex partners have been covered under New Jersey's domestic violence law. If you and the abusive person are or have ever been household members, or have dated, you are entitled to legal protection by way of an order restraining the person from contacting you. Though not all victims choose to take legal action, it may be a good choice for some.

Myth: Women do not batter or abuse other women.

Fact: Lesbians do learn to use power over their partners. They use power psychologically, emotionally, sexually and physically.

Myth: Lesbians are more likely to equally participate in the violence.

Fact: Lesbians may physically defend themselves but this does not mean there is mutual battering in lesbian relationships.

Myth: The damage inflicted by a woman is less than that inflicted by male batterers because of their size.

Fact: Size is not necessarily a determinant of physical damage. Intense anger and rage can enable a smaller person to overwhelm a larger person, and the injuries can be serious.

Myth: Lesbian/bisexual victims of battering can easily leave abusive relationships.

Fact: There are many reasons why a battered lesbian remains in an abusive relationship, just as there are with battered heterosexual women. These reasons include: lack of support or belief by family, friends, counselors, and the lesbian community, and fear of threats or reprisal if she does leave.

Forms of Lesbian Battering

Lesbian battering takes many forms. Although physical violence or the threat of violence is usually present, battering can also consist primarily of emotional abuse. Forms of battering include, but are not limited to:

Physical Abuse - hitting, choking, slapping, burning, shoving, using a weapon, neglecting, locking up in a room.

Sexual Abuse - forcing sex or specific acts, assaulting "sexual parts," withholding sex, criticizing performance.

Psychological & Emotional Abuse - constantly criticizing, ridiculing, trying to humiliate or degrade, lying, undermining self-esteem, using homophobia to undermine.

Threats & Intimidation - threatening harm, threatening children, family or friends, threatening to make reports to authorities that would jeopardize relationships to children, immigration or legal status.

Economic Abuse - controlling resources, fostering dependency, stealing money, running up debts.

Isolation - controlling personal/social contacts, access to information and participation in groups or organizations.

Heterosexist Control - threatening to reveal gay identity to family, neighbors, employers, ex-spouses, or government authorities.

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- ▼ No one has the right to batter, control or abuse you.
 - ▼ You are not responsible for the violence or abuse.
 - ▼ Left unchecked, the battering will increase in frequency and severity over time.
 - ▼ You are not alone. There are many survivors of same sex battering.
 - ▼ Assess your physical and emotional safety. Plan a strategy in case you have to leave quickly.
 - ▼ Know your options, call the statewide Domestic Violence Hotline at:

1-800-572-7233

Domestic Violence Program Services

- ▼ Information
- ▼ Shelter
- ▼ Referral
- ▼ Support
- ▼ Option counseling
- ▼ Legal services
- ▼ Community education
- ▼ Training for professionals & volunteers on battering



Services are provided to any victim who is battered by a partner, ex-partner, family member or roommate.



All services are free & confidential.

We know how important your confidentiality is to you and it is strictly protected.

For information call the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women at 609-584-8107 or go to our website: www.njcbw.org.

Community Action to End Battering

- ▼ Realize that battering can occur in lesbian relationships.
- ▼ Dispel the myths about battering.
- ▼ Don't blame the victim. Hold batterers accountable.
- ▼ Believe and support any lesbian who shares a battering experience. Be patient. Do not try to make choices for them. Give them the Statewide Hotline number.
- ▼ Talk about battering with other lesbians. Help break the silence.
- ▼ Sponsor trainings on domestic violence in your community.
- ▼ Volunteer for a Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) to provide support and assistance to victims of domestic violence at local police municipalities.

In an Emergency
Call the Statewide
Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-572-7233

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*Are you concerned
about Your
Relationship?*



*New Jersey Coalition
for Battered Women*