

Intimate Partner Violence in the LGBTQ+ Community in North Carolina



Examining how the LGBTQ+ community is under-researched and under-served in North Carolina in regards to resources and attention on intimate partner and domestic violence.

UNC WomenNC
Capstone Group

Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence

Intimate partner violence, according to the CDC, is defined as aggression from either current or former romantic partners including physical, psychological, or sexual violence, and stalking (CDC 2022). IPV uniquely impacts the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ individuals experience intimate partner and domestic violence at comparable or increased rates as their straight cisgender peers, yet experience increased hardship in accessing informed care that is tailored to their identity (Valido et al., 2022).

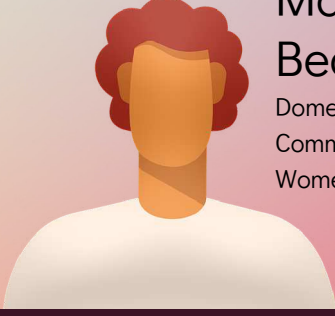


Our Project : + Problem Statement

WomenNC is particularly interested in conducting research to fill gaps in knowledge focused on LGBTQ+ women facing intimate partner violence to create a comprehensive body of research. While there are many statistics on intimate partner violence in America, there is a lack of in-depth research on LGBTQ+ women's experience with partner violence. The research on the topic is very minimal and does not connect women facing partner violence to resources for support. Without comprehensive research on gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ women in North Carolina, we lack the ability to create and spread awareness on available resources that will help alleviate gender-based violence or help women escape intimate partner violence. WomenNC is working to suggest policy recommendations based on research findings to spread awareness of gender-based violence and the resources available to LGBTQ+ women in North Carolina. WomenNC's research will help to uncover the current ways gender-based violence is being mitigated in order to establish resources for women impacted in North Carolina. By researching the effectiveness of current violence mitigation practices, this research will also help to establish new ways of mitigating violence that are more effective and will work to make these practices more accessible.

Initial Research	Literature Review	Interviews with Experts	Synthesizing Information	Collecting Evidence	Crafting Deliverables	Presenting Findings
------------------	-------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------	-----------------------	---------------------

"I think a lot of folks in our community (LGBTQ+) **don't recognize that what is happening to them is domestic violence**, like when a man hits a woman that he's married to, and changing that conception is something we're working on."



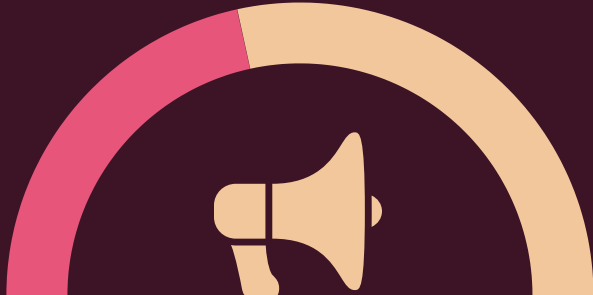
Mary Beth
Becker-Lauth
Domestic Violence
Community Educator at
Women's Advocates

Identity Abuse



A key finding identified in the literature review is the unique abuse experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals. Identity abuse is an abuse tactic that weaponizes a partner's identity. It can often look like threatening to expose someone's identity or preventing them from seeking or receiving identity affirming care (Woulfe and Goodman, 2020).

Key Findings



41% of women experience IPV in the US (CDC, 2022)
25-40.4% of lesbian women experience IPV in the U.S (Brown & Herman, 2015)
31.1-50% of transgender people experience IPV in the US (Brown & Herman, 2015)

LGBTQ+ women are not as likely to interact with institutions when facing GBV

States with 40 or more gun-control provisions had 56% fewer instances of female IPV and 58% lower rates of suicide-homicide intimate partner crime than states with fewer provisions (Sivaraman et al, 2019)

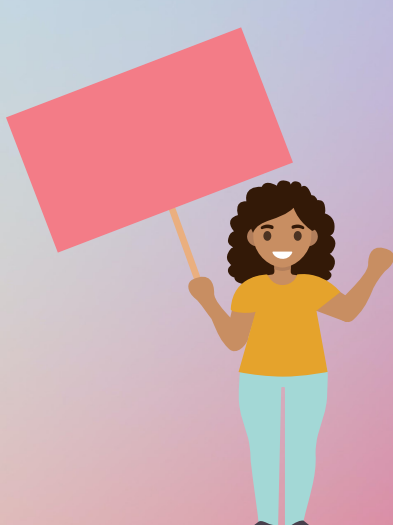
Policy Recommendations

Red Flag Gun Laws

Based on our research we encourage policy makers to support red flag gun laws. These laws allow for people who have been deemed a threat to themselves or others to be restrained from having access to firearms. North Carolina has S.L. 2003-410 (S919) which prohibits those with a Domestic Violence Protective Order from obtaining or having possession of a firearm (Bowling, 2006). This law, however, has loopholes which have real consequences and is not always strongly enforced. We recommend WomenNC advocate for a red flag gun law on the books to ensure that perpetrators of domestic violence do not have access to firearms. States with more firearm restrictions (and with stronger and more enforced ones too) have less IPV violence (Sivaraman et al., 2019).

Domestic Violence Shelters

LGBTQ+ women face more barriers to accessing care for IPV or domestic violence, and when they do seek care, they often experience difficulty finding identity affirming care. We recommend requiring that any shelters receiving state or federal funding have LGBTQ+ informed resources and LGBTQ+ training for their staff. This policy would specifically target and help queer women in NC, as they would be able to know which organizations are going to be sensitive and helpful with their specific needs.



Shelter Networks

Devise a network system that allows shelters to pool resources and information across the state. The network would allow shelters to refer incoming individuals to nearby resources or centers that better cater to their needs. While North Carolina has a statewide organization, North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, there is no statewide network that coordinates information or runs a hotline (Macy et al., 2010). A way to incorporate this into NC's policy is to include the network as a part of Gov. Cooper's recent executive order creating an Office of Violence Prevention (Exec Order No. 279, 2023). This could include and enforce a statewide network that better serves a community in need of targeted resources and assistance.

Next Steps: what WomenNC (and YOU) can do with this information

The information presented above and in accompanying documents is only the beginning of understanding violence and more specifically intimate partner and domestic violence among the LGBTQ+ community in North Carolina. This area of study is severely under-researched and to the detriment of a community that already faces systemic barriers to government resources. We recommend comprehensive additional research and advocacy to provide affirming care and consideration to LGBTQ+ women. We also created a survey for WomenNC to distribute to North Carolinians. This survey is based on our expert interviews and findings from our literature review, and is targeted at developing further knowledge on how IPV specifically affects LGBTQ+ women. The survey asks very specific questions based on identity and lived experiences, and is aimed at developing a more realistic view of how gender-based violence truly affects queer women.



References

Bowling, M., J., Clark, K. A., Espersen, C., & Moracco, K. E. (2006). Preventing firearms violence among victims of intimate partner violence: An evaluation of a new north carolina law National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Retrieved from <http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/preventing-firearms-violence-among-victims/docview/58767425/se-2>

Brown, T. & Herman, J. (2015). Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Abuse Among LGBT People, a Review of Existing Research. The Williams Institute, 1-32. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/IPV-Sexual-Abuse-Among-LBT-Nov-2015.pdf>

Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence. Violence Prevention Injury Center, CDC. 2022 (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>)

Macy, R. J., Giattina, M. C., Parish, S. L., & Crosby, C. (2010). Domestic violence and sexual assault services: Historical concerns and contemporary challenges. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(1), 3-32.

Sivaraman, J. J., Ranapurwala, S. I., Moracco, K. E., & Marshall, S. W. (2019). Association of State Firearm Legislation With Female Intimate Partner Homicide. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 56(1), 125–133. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2018.09.007>

Valido, A., Rivas-Koehl, M., Rivas-Koehl, D., Espelage, D. L., Lawrence, T. I., & Robinson, L. E. (2022). Latent class analysis of victimization patterns and associated protective factors among LGBTQ youth. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(16), 9953. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19169953>

Woulfe, J. M., & Goodman, L. A. (2020). Weaponized oppression: Identity abuse and mental health in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community. *Psychology of Violence*, 10, 100–109. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000251>