

Beyond Straight Talk: The Effect of Minority Stressors on Intimate Partner Violence in the Queer Community

by Rebecca F. Gray

According to a study done by the University of Toronto, 50% of gay men and 75% of lesbian women reported having suffered from some form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). This research focused on the prevalence of IPV in the Queer community and how gender stereotypes negatively affect both those who are victims of IPV and those who cause domestic abuse in relationships. Queer people face IPV rates that either match or surpass the IPV rates of heterosexual and cisgender women. The goal of my research is to encourage further studies that look into IPV rates for the Queer community and to educate people to break down harmful stereotypes that contribute to the silence of victims of domestic violence. Organizations such as the Coalition United Against Violence (CUAV), the National Domestic Violence Hotline, and the Human Rights Campaign all work towards giving Queer victims of IPV the resources that they need, but there needs to be more awareness around the issue so they can receive support and expand the services that they currently offer. My research centers around studies made within the last 20 years that focus on IPV rates in the LGBTQ+ community. I've built my argument off of the statistics and statements gathered in these studies. I've found that Queer people suffer from IPV at the same rate that cisgender and heterosexual women do. Transgender people are typically at a higher risk for domestic violence from their partners. Several issues contribute to these high IPV rates. There are also clear "minority stressors" that put Queer people under pressure because of the homophobia/transphobia that they face in their daily lives. These stressors put Queer people at a higher risk of becoming controlling and violent in their relationships, yet there is also a fear from Queer people about bringing awareness to this issue because they want to avoid any slander towards their community. Gender stereotypes also contribute to the silence of victims, since people assume that men cannot hurt other men and that women are incapable of being violent. Because of these stereotypes, victims that do come forward are often turned away from resources that could help them. Domestic violence is seen as an issue that white women face, so anyone that does not fit the mold of being a white, cisgender, and heterosexual woman is not seen as a real victim.