



Does your partner blame it on your bisexuality? ... it could be partner abuse.

If you or a friend has questions about your relationships, you can get support: **617-742-4911 (V)**
617-227-4911 (TTY)

Does your partner:

- get jealous of both men and women in your life?
- make fun of you for being bisexual?
- try to control how you dress or act?
- force you to choose between being straight or being gay?
- accuse you of cheating or flirting with others?
- use money or gifts to make you feel like you owe them something?
- prevent you from being out as bisexual?
- not respect your safeword?
- pressure you to have sex in ways that you don't want to?
- keep you from going to LGBTQ events?
- threaten to out you to family, friends or work?
- dismiss your bisexuality as a phase?

What is partner abuse?

A systematic pattern of behaviors where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs, and/or actions of their partner or someone they are dating or had an intimate relationship with.

Abuse is not about size, strength, or who is more masculine. Anyone of any gender can be abusive.

Abuse is not just about physical violence. It's about controlling the other person. Abusers can use emotional, economic, sexual, cultural and identity, and physical tactics to control their partners.

Abuse crosses all social, ethnic, racial, and economic lines. You can't tell if someone is abused or abusive by race, size, strength, economic level, gender expression, religion, politics, or personality.

Abuse is never mutual.

Although both partners may use violence, abusers do so to control their partners; a survivor may use violence in self-defense or to try to stop the abuse.

Abuse can happen regardless of the length of relationship or living situation. It doesn't matter if you live together or just started dating.

Abuse does not lessen; it tends to get worse over time. Couples counseling, anger management, alcoholics anonymous and communication workshops do not help abusers stop abusing and can be dangerous for the survivor.

Abusers may say:

- "I know I can't trust you alone with your friends because you'll sleep with anyone."
- "You aren't really part of the LGBTQ community."
- "If you leave me, I'll tell your boss that you are bi."
- "I know that all you bisexuals are just sluts."
- "You are just confused about your sexuality."
- "If you want to be with me, you have to be a lesbian."
- "Don't tell anyone that you've been with men before, that's disgusting."
- "I know you are going to leave me for a woman," or "I know you are going to leave me for a man."

Cycle of Abuse:

Hearts and Flowers- This is how the relationship starts. The abuser can be charming, charismatic, sincere, and sexy.

Tension Building- The abuser starts to use subtle controlling behaviors like guilt or blame (or other examples on the right). You might feel like you are walking on eggshells.

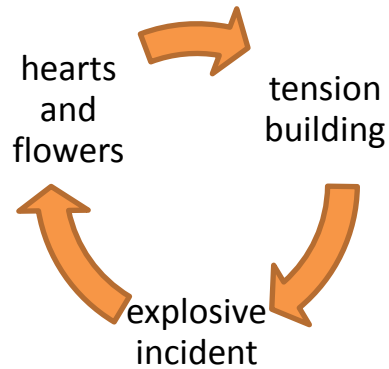
Survivors often become aware of their own behavior and try to do things to avoid conflict or “not get in trouble.”

Explosive- Your partner uses a tactic or multiple tactics of abuse to control you (see examples on the right). At this point you may be ready to leave or start questioning the relationship.

Hearts and Flowers- Your partner tries to prevent you from leaving by becoming the same person you fell in love with. They may do nice things for you, buy you flowers, take you out, etc. or just apologize for the abuse. Your partner may claim, “This will never happen again” or “I will get help” or blames the abuse on drugs, alcohol, or stress. Although the abuser seems to be acting nice, they are still trying to control their partner. You may feel relief that the explosive incident is over and that everything seems to be okay again but then the tension builds again...

The cycle is often repeated over and over again, more rapidly over time. If this sounds familiar to you, you can get support. The Network/La Red is an organization that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer survivors of partner abuse. Many of us are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender and survivors ourselves. We can help you talk through your concerns and connect you to services that may be helpful to you such as support groups, restraining orders, or confidential shelter.

You don't have to leave or even want to leave to get support.



Tactics of Abuse:

Emotional Abuse:

- Telling you that you are crazy
- Blaming everything on you
- Not letting you be alone with friends or family
- Controlling what you do

Sexual Abuse:

- Forcing you to have sex when you don't want to
- Forcing you to recount past sexual experiences
- Posting or sharing nude photos or videos without your permission
- Spreading sexual rumors about you

Cultural/ Identity Abuse:

- Using racism, classism, anti-semitism, ableism, homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia against you
- Threatening to out you
- Shaming you for being bisexual
- Isolating you from your community

Economic Abuse:

- Getting you fired from your job
- Controlling the money
- Running up credit cards in your name

Physical Abuse:

- Hitting, punching, or shoving
- Threatening to harm or kill you
- Taking away your wheelchair, crutches, or hearing aids