



# CALLING IT WHAT IT REALLY IS

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A Report into Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Gender  
Diverse, Intersex and Queer Experiences of Domestic and Family  
Violence

New South Wales, Australia  
2014



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**Further Information**

For further information on LGBTIQ domestic and family violence, recovering from a violent relationship or supporting a friend in an abusive relationship see [www.anothercloset.com.au](http://www.anothercloset.com.au)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was originally conceived as a follow up to a smaller survey entitled Fair's Fair, which was undertaken by the Same Sex Domestic Violence Interagency (SSDVI) in 2006. This Interagency is now known as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) Domestic Violence Interagency. Fair's Fair (SSDVI, 2006) was a paper-based snapshot survey and the first attempt by community-based researchers to capture data relating to experiences of domestic violence within lesbian and gay relationships in NSW.

Very little qualitative and quantitative research in the area of domestic and family violence in LGBTIQ relationships, including lesbians and gay men in same-gender relationships and bisexual, queer, transgender and intersex people in either same-gender or other-gender relationships has been undertaken in Australia or internationally. The LGBTIQ DV Interagency identified a need to understand more about the dynamics of abuse in LGBTIQ relationships.

A number of government and non-government partners collaborated on this project through the affiliation of the LGBTIQ DV Interagency. The group met over a period of six months to discuss key themes to explore with this research and the overall scope of the project. Participation by leading academics, researchers, mainstream domestic and family violence organisations, NSW Police Force, legal experts and a range of community organisations helped determine the most appropriate way to ask questions in order to capture meaningful data.

It is important to state from the outset that given the sample was self-selected, results can only be applied to the participants of this particular study and no conclusions about prevalence rates of domestic violence within the LGBTIQ population can be inferred. A series of demographic questions followed by specific sets of questions focused on:

- Forms and experiences of Domestic and Family Violence in current and previous relationships (same-gender relationships as well as other-gender relationships).
- Reasons for reporting or not reporting, and subsequent experiences with the NSW Police Force.
- The extent and types of formal and informal support accessed.

These questions were asked with the view that the findings could be used to inform service, practice and policy responses.

The study was conducted on a small budget and promoted with articles and advertisements in the LGBTIQ community press, through word-of-mouth, social media, and by using photocopied cards with a link to the online survey that were handed out at community events.

# KEY FINDINGS

813 valid responses were analysed. Respondents had to be 16 or over and live within NSW. Not all questions had to be answered and for some questions multiple responses were permissible.

Of this sample, gay participants accounted for 41.3%, lesbians made up 34.1% and those identified as bisexual, 10.8%. Participants reporting their sexual identity as 'queer', 'other' or 'not sure' (with pansexual being a prominent identity) made up 10.1%. Heterosexual or straight identified participants accounted for 3.7%.

Transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants accounted for 8.2% of all respondents. These participants were also asked a number of exclusive questions about specific types of abuse they may have experienced in their current relationship.

Overall, the report demonstrates that domestic and family violence is a very real and significant experience for many LGBTIQ people and that the impacts are wide and varied. The results are provided in thematic order and it is hoped that they will assist in continued resourcing, development and delivery of specialist LGBTIQ and mainstream services. These data should also provide an evidence base to advance a research and policy agenda and further build community awareness of the issue.

54.7% of all participants reported that they had previously been in one or more emotionally abusive relationship, while 34.8% reported that they had been abused sexually or physically by a previous partner.

The experience of past emotional, physical and sexual abuse was disproportionately higher for transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants, with 74.6% having experienced emotional abuse and 52.5% reporting experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse in a previous relationship.

Of people who experienced domestic violence in a current or previous relationship, 12.9% of participants (n = 80) had made a report to the NSW Police Force. Of those, 20% felt that the NSW Police Force had been extremely helpful, 46.3% reported that the police had been somewhat helpful, and 31.3% indicated that NSW Police Force had not been helpful at all.

Of the 54.7% of participants who reported experiencing abuse in a previous relationship, 63.2% of those indicated that they had experienced abuse in a same-gender relationship, and 44.3% in a heterosexual relationship.

66.8% of all participants indicated they were currently in a relationship.

## General results for participants in a current relationship:

- 41.8% of participants (n=215) reported verbal abuse on at least one occasion by their current partner.
- 25.8% (n=133) reported emotional abuse on one or more occasion by their current partner.
- 22.1% (n=113) reported experiencing physical aggression by their current partner at least once.
- 14.1% (n=72) reported being physically hurt by their current partner at least once.
- 14.1% (n=72) reported being stalked by their current partner on at least one occasion.
- 9.5% (n=49) reported that their current partner had been financially abusive at least once.
- 9.1% (n=46) reported that they had been pressured to engage in sexual behaviour they were not comfortable with.
- 4.0% (n=20) had been raped by their current partner one or more times.
- 12.8% of transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants reported that their gender diversity or intersex status had been used against them
- 11% (n=55) reported that their current partner had used sexuality as a means of control, or to put them down a few times or more.
- 18.4% (n=95) reported being socially isolated on at least one occasion by their current partner.
- Of the proportion of respondents with children, 62.5% (n=40) reported having children living with them while domestic violence or abuse was happening, and 26.6% (n=17) of those people reported that children witnessed the abuse.

# INTRODUCTION

In late 2011, the New South Wales LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer) Domestic Violence Interagency launched a survey to gather information about LGBTIQ people's experiences of domestic and family violence. The aim of this research was to gain insight into the varying forms of domestic and family violence that occur in LGBTIQ relationships. Further insights were sought into victims' experiences in seeking help from police, specialist and mainstream service providers, and informal sources of support.

The data from the survey was analysed by researchers from the University of New South Wales' Centre for Social Research in Health, under the guidance of Professor John de Wit. This report discusses the results of the survey, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the improvement of existing services, the provision of new services, and areas for further research. As previously discussed, no attempt was made in the research or in this report to identify the prevalence of domestic and family violence in the LGBTIQ community.

Despite growing awareness in academia, government and the wider community, the area of LGBTIQ DFV remains under-researched and underexposed, particularly in relation to transgender and intersex communities.

Defining domestic and family violence in LGBTIQ communities as 'same-sex domestic violence' conflates sexuality with gender identity and means that transgender, gender diverse and intersex people might miss education, prevention and early intervention approaches. A heterosexual or straight identity is not the opposite of, or mutually exclusive of being LGBTIQ as many transgender, gender diverse and intersex people can and do identify as heterosexual or straight.

The studies that have been conducted on gay and lesbian relationships, both within Australia and internationally, have generally concluded that domestic violence occurs at a rate comparable to that of men's intimate partner violence against women. For example, Fair's Fair (SSDVI, 2006) found that 48% of respondents had experienced some form of abuse in their current or previous relationship. In the United States, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

(National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2010) found that 44% of lesbian women and 26% of gay men had experienced physical forms of domestic violence. The studies conducted on the experiences of women in non-LGBTIQ domestic violence have produced similar results, with the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey in 2002-03 (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004) finding that 34% of women had experienced domestic violence during their lifetime.

An LGBTIQ person, like any other person, can be the victim of many forms of violence used by their partner to establish and maintain control over them, including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, social and economic abuse. However, LGBTIQ people may also experience unique forms of domestic violence targeted at their sexuality, gender identity or expression, or intersex status. For example, perpetrators may threaten to 'out' their partner, isolate them from the wider LGBTIQ community, ridicule their gender expression or intersex trait/s or prevent them from accessing gender affirming hormones or treatment for HIV and other chronic illnesses.

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## TERMINOLOGY

This report aims to use inclusive language that is respectful of the diverse ways in which a person may connect with their gender, sex, sexuality and relationships. To assist readers in understanding the terminology used in this report, short, non-exclusive definitions of key words are provided below. More information can be found in the National LGBTI Health Alliance's Inclusive Language Guide: Respecting People of Intersex, Trans and Gender Diverse Experience (2013).

**Bisexual:** A person who is emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to people of their own or another gender.

**Cisgender:** A person who experiences the gender they were assigned at birth to reflect their inner sense of self i.e. someone who is not transgender or gender diverse.

**Intersex:** An umbrella term used to describe people who have natural physical variations that differ from conventional ideas about 'female' or 'male' bodies. Intersex people may identify as a woman or man, or any other gender identity. Intersex is not a sexual orientation.

**Sexual diversity:** An inclusive term referring to people whose sexual identity (who they are romantically and/or sexually attracted to) does not necessarily fit within accepted categories such as heterosexual, gay or lesbian. It is important that sexual diversity is not confused with gender diversity or intersex. Gender diverse and intersex people might identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, or any other sexual identity.

**Sistergirl:** Used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe male-assigned people who live partly, or fully, as women. **Brotherboy** may be used to describe female-assigned people who live partly, or fully, as men.

**Transgender and Gender Diverse:** The term **Transgender** (or trans) is an umbrella term referring to people whose gender identity is different to what was assumed at birth. A transgender person may identify specifically as transgender or just male or female, or outside of these binaries. **Gender diverse** is also an umbrella term that acknowledges the many different ways people may identify their gender; examples include Non-Binary, Agender, Gender fluid and Genderqueer.

**Queer:** Used as an umbrella term encompassing people whose gender and/or sexual identity fits outside of the heteronormative paradigm.



# METHODOLOGY

In December 2011, the NSW LGBTIQ Relationships Survey was launched online. The survey asked participants for information on their general demographics; their intersex status and gender identity; their experiences of diverse forms of domestic violence in current and previous relationships; reporting to police; and the use of informal and formal sources of support. The survey predominantly aimed to collect quantitative data through the use of multiple choice questions, while providing for qualitative data to be obtained through participants explaining their answers, or providing more detail. See Appendix I: NSW LGBTIQ Relationships Survey for a copy of the survey questions.

The survey project scope was guided by a Steering Committee of the NSW LGBTIQ DV Interagency and convened by ACON's LGBTI Domestic Violence Project. Steering Committee members were involved in the initial design of the survey questions and provided feedback before their finalisation. The following agencies also assisted in the survey design:

- Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse
- City of Sydney
- OII (Organisation Intersex International) Australia
- The Gender Centre
- The Inner City Legal Centre, Safe Relationships Project
- NSW Police Force

The Steering Committee and the above agencies helped to improve the study's validity by ensuring that all questions were designed so the information obtained would match stated objectives. Further advice was provided on the appropriate wording of questions for transgender and gender diverse participants by the Gender Centre, and intersex participants by OII Australia.

## Recruitment

Survey participants were recruited through advertising in community newspapers, organisational newsletters, through social media such as Facebook and at community events. Eligibility to complete the survey was restricted to people living within NSW and aged 16 or over.

## Analysis and Limitations

A total of 813 valid surveys were collected. The data was analysed by researchers from the University of New South Wales' Centre for Social Research in Health, under the guidance of Professor John de Wit. The analysis presented within this report is primarily descriptive. However, where appropriate, differences between groups have been analysed with chi square statistical tests using a significance level of .05.

To enable comparison between groups, some participants with same-gender partners were reclassified as either gay or lesbian for the purposes of statistical comparison. There were too few participants indicating their sexual identity as 'queer', 'not sure' or 'other', to enable comparisons between these groups. Therefore, any comparisons between groups have been limited to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants.

The survey illuminates the experiences of transgender, gender diverse and intersex individuals in relation to domestic violence as much as possible; however, it is highly recommended that further specialised research be conducted.

Throughout this report, most responses to the questions are provided in numerical and percentage format. Please note, that where percentages have been provided they are rounded to one decimal point, however, for some questions there are low cell frequencies for some response options. Where cell numbers are small the proportions may not be reliable and caution should be used in interpreting that specific data.

As previously stated, as the sample was self-selected, the results can only be applied to the participants of this study and cannot be used to make assumptions about prevalence, when citing this report, please keep this in mind. A response rate for the survey cannot be calculated, as it is not possible to determine the number of people who viewed the advertisements and did not subsequently participate.



# SURVEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

### Gender Identity and Intersex status

Table 1a: Gender Identity and Intersex status					
Male n (%)	Female n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
306 (37.6)	453 (55.7)	11 (1.4)	15 (1.8)	21 (2.6)	20 (2.8)

Over half (55.7%) of the survey participants identified as female and 37.6% of participants identified as male. Fewer participants identified as intersex (1.4%) or as transgender/gender diverse (6.9%) with the most common response for participants not identifying as either transgender men or transgender women being ‘genderqueer’ (2%, n=16). Transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants made up 8.2% (n=67) of the survey sample.

It was possible for survey participants to select more than one gender identity or intersex status. The purpose of this was to recognise that participants may identify as male or female and also transgender or intersex. This is an important step forward in recognising the complexity of transgender identity and the intersex lived experience.

Examples of choosing more than one option:  
‘Genderqueer, biologically female, occasionally presenting as male’  
[Selected Male, Female and Other]

‘Fluid situational gender identity’

### Sexual Identity

Table 1b: Sexual Identity						
Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Queer n (%)	Not sure n (%)	Other n (%)	Heterosexual n (%)
336 (41.3)	277 (34.1)	88 (10.8)	21 (2.6)	20 (2.5)	41 (5.0)	30 (3.7)

A greater proportion of participants identified as gay (41.3%, n=336) than lesbian (34.1%, n=277), while 10.8% of survey participants reported they were bisexual. Participants who reported their sexual identity as ‘queer’ or ‘other’ (with pansexual being a prominent identity) made up 15.3% of the sample (n=130). 34 participants (4%) identified as heterosexual, or straight. It was possible for survey participants to select more than one sexual identity.

Three participants explicitly resisted categorising their sexual identity, instead preferring to answer ‘myself’ or ‘just me’. Six participants viewed their sexual identity as too complex to be captured by any of the provided labels. These responses make clear the difficulties inherent in and the potential superficiality of attempts to neatly capture the experiences of domestic violence amongst ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’ or ‘bisexual’ people.

Examples:  
‘Some days I feel I am bi-gendered, therefore I may feel like a gay man, or a straight man one day, and a dyke the next ... Everyday feels different.’

‘Neither heterosexual nor same sex. I am intersex and my partners were male’

## Age

805 participants responded to the question regarding age. Over half of all participants were aged less than 36 years (58.8%, n=473). Participants aged 56 years or over have been underrepresented in the sample (6.0%, n=48). This is likely in part the result of reliance on an online survey, as persons in older age brackets may experience greater barriers to internet access. Older people are also less likely to have been exposed to the advertisements for the survey on Facebook and other websites. As older LGBTIQ people may have distinctive experiences of domestic violence, it is recommended that future research be conducted that focuses on this population.

The proportion of participants identifying as bisexual was highest in the 16–25 age bracket (50.6%, n=44), declining to just 6.9% (n=23) of participants aged 36 or over.

Table 2: Age Group	
	All participants n (%)
16-25	220 (27.3)
26-35	253 (31.4)
36-45	168 (20.9)
46-55	116 (14.4)
56-65	45 (5.6)
66 - above	3 (0.3)
Total	805 (100)

## Aboriginality and Ethnic Background

Forty-two of the 813 participants (5.2%) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is higher than would be expected if the sample were representative of the total NSW population, as 2.2% of people in NSW identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the 2006 Census.

Research suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience elevated rates of domestic and family violence, a report by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2010) found that, in 2008, rates of reported victims of domestic violence were 6 times higher for Aboriginal females than non-Aboriginal females, and 4 times higher for Aboriginal males than non-Aboriginal males.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also face systemic barriers when seeking support from mainstream and specialist services (including criminal justice agencies), which suggest that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ, same-gender attracted, transgender, intersex, two spirit, sistergirl and brotherboy people may need specific and culturally safe approaches to address the issue appropriately. While this report does not address the experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants specifically, the historical marginalisation and discrimination of both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the LGBTIQ population make this an important area for future research.

The majority of participants (73.2%, n=595) were of an Anglo or Anglo-Australian ethnic background, and 86.7% of participants (n=705) reported speaking only English at home. The lower percentage of participants from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background (13.3%, n=108) may be partially due to the survey being exclusively in English. Research focusing on experiences of domestic and family violence amongst the LGBTIQ CALD population is recommended.

## Geographical Location

In the following data, some percentage calculations for tables that highlight specific answers from intersex, transgender or gender diverse participants have been excluded as percentages can be misleading when small numbers are reported.

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Other n (%)
Sydney	467 (61.1)	231 (72.2)	138 (52.9)	43 (53.1)	55 (53.9)
Central Coast	33 (4.3)	7 (2.2)	17 (6.5)	5 (6.2)	4 (3.9)
Hunter	59 (7.7)	18 (5.6)	19 (7.3)	12 (14.8)	10 (9.8)
Illawarra	41 (5.4)	15 (4.7)	12 (4.6)	6 (7.4)	8 (7.8)
NSW country	22 (2.9)	4 (1.2)	8 (3.1)	2 (2.5)	8 (7.8)
NSW north coast	70 (9.2)	24 (7.5)	36 (13.8)	5 (6.2)	5 (4.9)
Nepean/Blue Mountains	41 (5.4)	10 (3.1)	19 (7.3)	5 (6.2)	5 (4.9)
Canberra	31 (4.1)	11 (3.4)	12 (4.6)	3 (3.7)	5 (4.9)
Total	764 (100)	320 (100)	261 (100)	81 (100)	102 (100)

49 participants did not provide residential information, of the 764 participants shown above, 61 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as per Table 3b.

	All participants n	Intersex n	Transgender (identifying as male) n	Transgender (identifying as female) n	Gender Diverse n
Sydney	40	6	6	14	15
Central Coast	3	-	1	1	1
Hunter	5	-	3	2	
Illawarra	5	1	3	1	1
NSW country	1		1	-	
NSW north coast	2		-	2	-
Nepean/Blue Mountains		-	-	-	-
Canberra	5	2	-	-	3
Total	61	9	15	20	20

The majority of participants (61.1%, n = 467) lived in Sydney with almost three quarters of gay participants living in Sydney compared to just over half of all lesbian participants reporting they lived in Sydney. Lesbian participants were more likely than gay participants to live on the Central Coast, the NSW North Coast and in the Nepean/Blue Mountains area. Transgender women and other gender diverse people were more likely to live in Sydney than transgender men.

Of the participants who did not reside in Sydney, only 16 (2.0% of all participants) reported living more than 25 kilometres from the nearest town or city.

## Living Arrangements

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Other n (%)
Alone	134 (16.6)	61 (18.4)	37 (13.4)	12 (13.8)	24 (21.6)
With own children	33 (4.1)	4 (1.2)	14 (5.1)	8 (9.2)	7 (6.3)
With partner only	289 (35.8)	129 (38.9)	107 (38.6)	15 (17.2)	38 (34.2)
Partner and own children	50 (6.2)	7 (2.1)	28 (10.1)	6 (6.9)	9 (8.1)
Partner and their children	10 (1.2)	-	9 (3.2)	-	1 (0.9)
Parents or relatives	139 (17.2)	59 (17.8)	37 (13.4)	28 (32.2)	15 (13.5)
Housemates	116 (14.4)	52 (15.7)	38 (13.7)	14 (16.1)	12 (10.8)
Friends	36 (4.5)	20 (6.0)	7 (2.5)	4 (4.6)	5 (4.5)
Total	807 (100)	332 (100)	277 (100)	87 (100)	111 (100)

35.8% (n = 289) of all participants lived with a partner only. The remaining participants predominantly lived alone (16.6%), with parents or relatives (17.2%) or with housemates (14.4%). Bisexual participants were more likely to live with parents or relatives (32.2%) than with a partner only (17.2%) (Table 4a). Transgender, gender diverse and intersex people were also more likely to live alone (32.8%), or with a partner (28.1%).

Of the 807 participants who answered this question, 7.9% (n=64) identified themselves as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as shown in Table 4b.

	All participants n	Intersex n	Transgender (identifying as male) n	Transgender (identifying as female) n	Gender Diverse n
Alone	21	4	4	9	4
With own children	1	-	-	-	1
With partner only	18	2	5	5	6
Partner and own children	1	-	-	1	-
Partner and their children	-	-	-	-	-
Parents or relatives	8	2	2	2	2
Housemates	12	1	4	3	6
Friends	3	2	-	-	1
Total	64	11	15	20	20

## Children

**Table 5a: Children, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Other n (%)
Yes	182 (22.4)	34 (10.1)	86 (31.0)	23 (26.1)	39 (34.8)
No	631 (77.6)	302 (89.9)	191 (69.0)	65 (73.9)	73 (65.2)
Total	813 (100)	336 (100)	277 (100)	88 (100)	112 (100)

Of all the participants answering this question, 65 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 5b).

**Table 5b: Children, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All participants n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
Yes	11 (16.9)	-	2 (13.3)	6 (28.6)	3 (15.0)
No	54 (77.1)	11 (100.0)	13 (86.7)	15 (71.4)	17 (85.0)
Total	65 (100)	11 (100)	15 (100)	21 (100)	20 (100)

22.4% of all participants reported having children (biological or non-biological). Of the transgender and gender diverse respondents, transgender women were more likely to report having children (28.6%) and were also more likely to report not being in a current relationship (see below). The proportion of gay participants with children (10.1%) was significantly lower than that of the other participant groups. No intersex individuals reported having children.

## Relationships

**Table 6a: Current Relationship, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Other n (%)
Yes	543 (66.8)	220 (65.5)	208 (75.4)	49 (57.0)	66 (59.5)
No	266 (32.7)	116 (34.5)	68 (24.6)	37 (43.0)	45 (40.5)
Other	4 (0.5)	-	-	-	-
Total	813 (100)	336 (100)	276 (100)	86 (100)	111 (100)

Of the 813 participants answering the question on their current relationship status, 65 participants identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 6b).

**Table 6b: Current Relationship, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All participants n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
Yes	32 (49.2)	4 (36.4)	7 (46.7)	8 (38.1)	14 (70.0)
No	33 (50.8)	7 (63.6)	8 (53.3)	13 (61.9)	6 (30.0)
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total	65 (100)	11 (100)	15 (100)	21 (100)	20 (100)

66.8% (n=543) of all participants reported that they were currently in a relationship. This was defined as having a partner or spouse, or an intimate relationship, whether living together or separately. Lesbian and gender diverse participants were statistically significantly ( $p>0.01$ ) more likely to be in a relationship, while intersex and transgender men and women were less likely to be in a relationship.

Table 7a: Gender of Current Partner, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Other n (%)
Woman	278 (51.0)	29 (13.0)	209 (98.6)	20 (39.2)	20 (38.2)
Man	245 (45.0)	180 (83.3)	1 (0.5)	29 (56.9)	35 (51.5)
Other gender identity	22 (4.0)	8 (3.2)	5 (1.0)	2 (3.9)	7 (10.3)
Total	545 (100)	217 (100)	215 (100)	51 (100)	62 (100)

Of the 545 responses to the question about current partners, 32 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 7b).

Table 7b: Gender of Current Partner, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants n	Intersex n	Transgender (identifying as male) n	Transgender (identifying as female) n	Gender Diverse n (%)
Woman	21	2	5	6	9
Man	6	2	1	1	2
Other gender identity	5	1	1	1	2
Total	32	5	7	8	13

Of the participants in a current relationship, most of those who identified as lesbian reported having a woman as their partner (98.6%). Similarly, most of the participants that identified as gay reported having a male partner (83.3%). Of the 22 participants who reported that their partner's gender identity was not (ostensibly cisgender) male or female, just under half (n=10) were in a relationship with a transgender man, one respondent reported being in a relationship with a transgender woman. Other participants either specified that their partner was genderqueer (n=4), 'trans' or 'transgender' (n=2) or intersex (n=2).

In interpreting these results, it is important to note that they reflect the participant's own sexual identity, which may not always align with their partner's own conception of their gender identity (for example, a woman who identifies as a lesbian

may be in a relationship with a transgender man). Participants in a relationship with a transgender or intersex person may have also selected the binary gender their partner identifies with, not a transgender identity or intersex experience.

Transgender men and women, and gender diverse participants were more likely to be in a relationship with a woman than a man.

*"Prior to transition I was in what would be considered a same sex relationship with a female"*

In addition, some female participants with a female partner may identify as 'gay', and several participants who selected 'other' reported having multiple relationships.

Table 8a: Length of Current Relationship, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Less than 6 months	41 (7.9)	21 (10.1)	12 (6.0)	4 (8.2)	4 (6.2)
6-11 months	53 (10.2)	20 (9.7)	21 (10.6)	8 (16.3)	4 (6.2)
1 - 2 years	75 (14.5)	37 (17.9)	19 (9.5)	8 (16.3)	11 (17.2)
2 - 5 years	142 (27.4)	45 (21.7)	70 (35.2)	10 (20.4)	18 (28.1)
6 - 9 years	91 (17.6)	37 (17.9)	32 (16.1)	14 (28.6)	8 (12.5)
10 - 19 years	85 (16.4)	39 (18.8)	33 (16.6)	3 (6.1)	10 (15.6)
20 years +	31 (6.0)	8 (3.9)	12 (6.0)	2 (4.1)	9 (14.1)
Total	518 (100)	207 (100)	199 (100)	49 (100)	64 (100)

Of the 518 participants that answered the question about the length of current relationships 33 participants also identified as intersex, transgender, or gender diverse (see Table 8b).

	All participants n	Intersex n	Transgender (identifying as male) n	Transgender (identifying as female) n	Gender Diverse n
Less than 6 months	3	-	-	1	3
6-11 months	2	-	2	-	-
1 - 2 years	6	1	2	-	3
2 - 5 years	10	-	3	1	6
6 - 9 years	2	1	-	1	-
10 - 19 years	5	-	-	2	1
20 years +	5	2	-	3	-
Total	33	4	7	8	13

27.6% of all participants reported being in their current relationship for between two and five years, with lesbian-identifying participants constituting almost half of this group (49%). About four in every ten participants (39.9%) reported being in their current relationship for more than five years, while about one third (32.6%) had been in their relationship for less than two years.

## 3.2 EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Domestic and family violence in LGBTIQ relationships includes lesbians and gay men in same-gender relationships and bisexual, queer, transgender and intersex people in either same-gender or other-gender relationships. Although this survey's findings do not give any indication of the prevalence of domestic and family violence in the NSW LGBTIQ community, they do illustrate that abuse in an intimate partnership is a real and significant experience for many members of the NSW LGBTIQ community.

Domestic violence occurs when a person consciously tries to control, manipulate and dominate their partner (or ex-partner). It can involve a range of behaviours including; physical violence, sexual assault, emotional and verbal abuse, and social and financial control (Another Closet, 2009). There are also forms of domestic violence that are unique to LGBTIQ relationships.

This survey adopts a unique focus on participants' experiences of domestic violence in their current relationship, allowing for an appreciation of the types of abuse (if any) experienced by participants across a single relationship. As a result, most questions discussed in this section were only answered by participants who reported being in a relationship 66.8% (n=543) with the exception of four questions on past relationships.



### 3.2.1 FORMS OF ABUSE

The analysis of this section separates experiences of abuse by sexual identity followed by transgender and gender diverse identity, and intersex status. Specific questions asked of transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants are explored separately below.

#### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse involves violent actions inflicted by a person on their partner. It can include; hitting, kicking, pushing, slapping, strangling or burning the partner, and breaking possessions (Another Closet, 2009). This study found that although the majority of participants had never been physically abused by their current partner, a substantial minority had been a victim of physical abuse at least once.

**Table 9a: Physical Aggression by Partner, by Sexual Identity**

	Total	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	399 (77.9)	164 (78.5)	156 (78.4)	34 (72.3)	45 (77.6)
Once	45 (8.8)	18 (8.6)	17 (8.5)	6 (12.8)	4 (6.9)
A few times	60 (11.7)	24 (11.5)	23 (11.6)	6 (12.8)	7 (12.1)
Regularly	4 (0.8)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	1 (2.1)	1 (1.7)
Often	4 (0.8)	2 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	0	-
Total	512 (100)	209 (100)	199 (100)	47 (100)	57 (100)

Of the 512 survey participants who answered the question about physical aggression by partners, 30 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 9b).

**Table 9b: Physical Aggression by Partner, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	Total	Intersex n	Transgender (identifying as male) n	Transgender (identifying as female) n	Gender Diverse n
Never	25	2	6	6	12
Once	1	-	-	1	-
A few times	3	2	-	-	1
Regularly	1	-	-	1	-
Often	-	-	-	-	-
Total	30	4	6	8	13

Participants were asked whether their current partner had ever been 'physically aggressive' towards them, which was said to include behaviour such as kicking, slapping or throwing things at the participant. 22.1% of participants (n=113) reported experiencing 'physical aggression' by their current partner at least once or more. 1.6% of participants (n=8) in relationships reported experiencing physical aggression 'regularly' or 'often'.

**Table 10a: Partner Physically Hurt Participant, by Sexual Identity**

	Total	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	439 (85.9)	176 (84.6)	176 (88.9)	39 (83.0)	48 (82.8)
Once	42 (8.2)	20 (9.6)	15 (7.6)	4 (8.5)	3 (5.2)
A few times	21 (4.1)	10 (4.8)	3 (1.5)	3 (6.4)	5 (8.6)
Regularly	5 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	1 (2.1)	-
Often	4 (0.8)	-	2 (1.0)	-	2 (3.4)
Total	511	208	198	47	58

Of the 511 Survey participants answering this question, 30 also identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 10b).

	Total n	Intersex n	Transgender (identifying as male) n	Transgender (identifying as female) n	Gender Diverse n
Never	26	2	6	7	12
Once	2	2	-	-	-
A few times	1	-	-	-	1
Regularly	-	-	-	-	-
Often	1	-	-	1	-
Total	30	4	6	8	13

Participants were also asked whether their partner had ever ‘physically hurt’ them, for example by assaulting or strangling them, or causing any physical injury to them. 14.1% of participants (n=72) reported that their current partner had physically hurt them at least once or more. Of those who also identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse, 13.3% reported that their current partner had physically hurt them at least once (n=4).

### Medication and Treatment

Where an individual is living with a chronic illness, such as HIV, or another medical condition, threats to or the actual withholding of medication and/or treatment by their partner constitutes a type of physical abuse. Under-acknowledged, this is a serious form of domestic violence that can cause significant, ongoing physical and emotional harm.

In order to identify whether participants had experienced this type of abuse, the survey asked if their partner had ever threatened to, or actually limited their access to treatment for HIV, or medication for any other chronic illness. No participants reported that their partner had threatened to, or actually limited their access to treatment for HIV, and 2.3% of participants (n=11) reported that their partner had controlled their intake or threatened to or prevented them from taking their medication for a chronic illness.

*‘He would make me reliant on him to remember when to take it, or if I already had, or “look after” it for me, or interfere in me picking up a new script etc.’*

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs as a form of domestic violence when a perpetrator forces their partner to perform sexual acts that they do not want to. It can range from sexual assault (rape), to the exertion of pressure or coercion to engage in sex, unsafe sex, non-consensual BDSM and/or sex with other people (SSDVI, 2009).

Sexual abuse in relationships has traditionally been ignored both as a real experience and as a form of domestic violence, however advocacy and research have significantly increased levels of awareness of this issue. Importantly, a number of national and international studies have suggested that sexual violence occurs at a similar rate in LGBTIQ relationships as in non-LGBTIQ relationships (Fileborn, 2013). The results of the current survey suggest that sexual abuse in a relationship is relatively rare, although a highly serious event for those that have experienced sexual abuse .

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Never	458 (90.9)	181 (88.7)	191 (96.5)	36 (76.6)	50 (90.9)
Once	14 (2.8)	6 (2.9)	3 (1.5)	3 (6.4)	2 (3.6)
A few times	29 (5.8)	16 (7.8)	4 (2.0)	7 (14.9)	2 (3.6)
Regularly	3 (0.6)	1 (0.5)	-	1 (2.1)	1 (1.8)
Often	-	-	-	-	-
Total	504	204	198	47	55

504 Survey participants answered this question, with 29 also identifying as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as per the following table (Table 11b).

Table 11b: Pressured to Engage in Sexual Behaviour Not Comfortable With, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	26	4	5	7	11
Once	1	-	1	-	-
A few times	1	-	-	-	1
Regularly	1	-	-	1	-
Often	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29	4	6	8	12

When asked whether their partner has pressured them to engage in sexual behaviour they were not comfortable with, 9.1% of participants (n=46) reported that this had happened on at least one occasion. Sexual behaviour was defined in the question as including sexual acts and the reading, or watching of pornographic material. Participants who identified as gay and bisexual were statistically significantly ( $p<0.05$ ) more likely to report experiencing this form of domestic violence than all other participants. Those identifying as gay or bisexual and reporting this type of domestic violence constituted 13.5% of all gay and bisexual participants (n=34) answering this question.

The apparent relationship between gender and the exertion of sexual pressure may reflect several factors. In particular, discourses around masculinity and sexuality, which suggest that men (particularly gay men) are always interested in sex may cause some men to feel they have a 'right' to exert pressure on their partner to engage in sexual activities. These discourses may also prevent some men from speaking out when they feel coerced to engage in sexual activity, and cause them to blame themselves for their partner's abuse (Fileborn, 2013). This experience was stated by two gay male participants in their answers to the survey as shown below.

*'I'm not into sexual activities ... but I do end up performing them with him to keep him happy, but a few times when I haven't wanted to he's said if I don't then he can always go to someone who will, like he's threatening to leave me if I don't have sex frequently with him.'*

*'[He] complained that if I wanted to keep him then I need[ed] to have sex with him. [He] regularly will not leave me alone until we have sex.'*

Table 12a: Raped by Current Partner, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	482 (96.0)	196 (96.1)	191 (97.4)	42 (89.4)	53 (94.6)
Once	14 (2.8)	4 (2.0)	5 (2.6)	5 (10.6)	-
A few times	5 (1.0)	4 (2.0)	-	-	1 (1.8)
Regularly	1 (0.2)	-	-	-	1 (1.8)
Often	-	-	-	-	-
Total	502	204	196	47	55

Of the 502 Survey participants answering this question, 29 also identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as shown in the table below (Table 12b).

Table 12b: Raped by Current Partner, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	27	4	6	7	11
Once	1	-	-	-	1
A few times	-	-	-	-	-
Regularly	1	-	-	1	-
Often	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29	4	7	8	12

The majority of participants (96%) reported that they had never been raped by their current partner; defined as being forced to engage in sexual activity with their partner or someone else when they did not want to. Twenty participants, two of which identified as transgender or gender diverse (4.0%) reported being raped by their partner on at least one occasion or more, with six participants reporting that it had occurred more than once.

These results indicate a need for current theoretical understandings of sexual assault and where it occurs to take into account its presence in LGBTIQ relationships. They also have implications for the kinds of support offered by service providers, including sexual assault counselling.

*‘Has more often made me feel they were capable of non-consensually forcing themselves on me, rather than necessarily following through.’*

### Emotional and Verbal Abuse

Many acts of domestic and family violence are not physical or sexual. Emotional (or psychological) and verbal abuse involve behaviour used by one partner to make the other feel afraid or worthless. A perpetrator may insult their partner; yell at them; humiliate them in front of friends or family, or in public; threaten to harm them or their children, family or pets; threaten to self-harm or commit suicide; threaten to or actually tell others about their HIV or intersex status; or gender history (SSDVI, 2009).

The results of this survey show that a substantial proportion of participants had experienced emotional and/or verbal abuse in their current relationship, and that these forms of abuse were considerably more likely to have occurred than physical or sexual abuse.

Table 13a: Current Partner Emotionally Abusive, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	382 (74.2)	157 (74.8)	158 (79.4)	30 (63.8)	37 (63.8)
Once	22 (4.3)	9 (4.3)	6 (3.0)	3 (6.4)	4 (6.9)
A few times	91 (17.7)	38 (18.1)	29 (14.6)	10 (21.3)	14 (24.1)
Regularly	13 (2.5)	4 (1.9)	5 (2.5)	3 (6.4)	1 (1.7)
Often	7 (1.4)	2 (1.0)	1 (0.5)	1 (2.1)	2 (3.4)
Total	515	210	199	47	58

30 of the above 515 participants also identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as highlighted below (Table 13b).

Table 13b: Current Partner Emotionally Abusive, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	23	2	5	6	11
Once	-	-	-	-	-
A few times	5	2	1	1	1
Regularly	-	-	-	-	-
Often	2	-	-	1	1
Total	30	4	6	8	13

Participants were asked whether their current partner had been emotionally abusive, including threatening to ‘out’ them; insulting or humiliating them; using disrespectful names or language that hurt them; and threatening to hurt them, their family, children or pets. 25.8% of participants (n=133) reported that this had occurred on one occasion or more, with 23.3% of intersex, transgender and gender diverse participants (n=7) reporting that this behaviour had happened a few times or more.

Table 14a: Current Partner Verbally Abusive, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	299 (58.2)	118 (56.2)	128 (64.3)	22 (44.9)	31 (53.4)
Once	47 (9.1)	19 (9.0)	10 (5.0)	11 (23.4)	7 (12.1)
A few times	137 (26.7)	60 (28.6)	53 (26.6)	8 (17.0)	16 (27.6)
Regularly	20 (3.9)	10 (4.8)	4 (2.0)	4 (8.5)	2 (3.4)
Often	11 (2.1)	3 (1.4)	4 (2.0)	2 (4.3)	2 (3.4)
Total	514	210	199	47	58

514 survey participants answered this question, with 30 also identifying as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as per the following table (Table 14b).

Table 14b: Current Partner Verbally Abusive, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	Total	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	20	2	4	5	10
Once	2	-	-	1	1
A few times	6	2	2	1	1
Regularly	-	-	-	-	-
Often	2	-	-	1	1
Total	30	4	6	8	13

An even greater percentage of participants at 41.8% (n=215) reported experiencing verbal abuse from their current partner on at least one occasion, which was said to include yelling; cursing; verbal threats; intimidation; shouting; putting them down; calling them names; and making them feel worthless.

43.8% of gay, 37.5% of transgender women, 35.8% of lesbian, 28.6% of transgender men and 21.3% of gender diverse participants answering this question reported experiencing verbal abuse on at least one occasion.

Gay and bisexual participants were also more likely to have experienced both emotional and verbal abuse in a current relationship with 33.8% and 44.7% indicating this was the case respectively. These results challenge assumptions about the types of abuse perpetrated and the notion that males are less likely to engage in verbal or emotional abuse, and be more reliant on physical forms of abuse.

The results indicating that verbal and emotional abuse is more likely than physical and sexual abuse to have occurred in participants' current relationships may have several explanations. It may be that individuals are more likely to engage in these forms of abuse, possibly because they are perceived as 'less serious' than acts of physical or sexual violence, or be perceived as not constituting domestic violence at all. As the questions were concerned with participants' current relationships, it may also be possible that participants also have a greater tolerance for verbal and emotional abuse, and are therefore more likely to remain in relationships even if it occurs.

This highlights a need for greater recognition within the LGBTIQ community that emotional and verbal abuse are serious forms of domestic violence. This was noted by several participants.

Examples:

*'I think emotional violence needs to be spoken about and defined within our community and it needs to be clarified that it is unacceptable. So that both sides can be more aware of when it happens and perpetrators can see the signs of themselves doing it.'*

*'More education within the community would help. Especially that verbal abuse is still a form of abuse.'*

### Social and Financial Abuse

Individuals may also perpetrate domestic violence by controlling their partner's social life and finances. Financial abuse involves any behaviour by one partner to control the other's money against their will, including taking their money or controlling their income; refusing to give them money or making them account for everything they spend; threatening to withdraw financial support as a means of control; putting them in debt; taking out loans and buying things on credit using their name; and preventing them from working so they

become financially vulnerable or reliant on the abuser. Examples of social abuse include the abuser stopping their partner from seeing, or speaking to friends or family; abusing or fighting with their friends or family to keep them away; monitoring phone calls, text messages and bills; and locking them in the house (Another Closet, 2009).

In addition, due to the relatively small size and close-knit nature of most LGBTIQ communities, especially those in smaller cities and rural areas, an abuser may isolate their partner from the LGBTIQ community and prevent them from attending LGBTIQ events (Another Closet, 2009).

Support for this can be obtained from the present study, which found that while financial abuse was experienced by a small number of participants, social abuse was substantially more likely to have occurred.

**Table 17a: Partner Financially Abusive, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	465 (90.5)	191 (91.8)	184 (92.0)	42 (85.7)	48 (84.2)
Once	11 (2.1)	4 (1.9)	3 (1.5)	2 (4.1)	2 (3.5)
A few times	24 (4.7)	9 (4.3)	8 (4.0)	3 (6.1)	4 (7.0)
Regularly	9 (1.8)	2 (1.0)	4 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (3.4)
Often	5 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	1 (0.5)	1 (2.0)	1 (3.5)
Total	514 (100)	208 (100)	200 (100)	49 (100)	57 (100)

514 Survey participants answered this question, with 29 also identifying as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as per the following table.

**Table 17b: Partner Financially Abusive, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All participants	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	26	4	6	8	11
Once	-	-	-	-	-
A few times	1	-	-	-	1
Regularly	1	-	-	1	-
Often	1	-	-	1	-
Total	29	4	6	8	12

In relation to financial abuse, 9.5% of participants (n=49) reported that their partner had been financially abusive on one or more occasions. 15% of transgender women and gender diverse participants reported similar abuse.

**Table 18a: Partner Isolated Participant Socially, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	424 (81.9)	174 (82.9)	168 (83.6)	38 (77.6)	44 (75.9)
Once	19 (3.7)	7 (3.3)	9 (4.5)	2 (4.1)	1 (1.7)
A few times	58 (11.2)	23 (11.0)	20 (10.0)	6 (12.2)	9 (15.5)
Regularly	13 (2.5)	5 (2.4)	3 (1.5)	2 (4.1)	3 (5.2)
Often	4 (0.8)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	1 (2.0)	1 (1.7)
Total	518 (100)	210 (100)	201 (100)	49 (100)	58 (100)

Of the 518 survey participants, 30 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 18b).

Table 18b: Partner Isolated Participant Socially, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	26	3	6	6	12
Once	-	-	-	-	-
A few times	1	1	-	-	-
Regularly	1	-	-	1	-
Often	2	-	-	1	1
Total	30 (100)	4 (100)	6 (100)	8 (100)	13 (100)

In comparison, 18.4% of participants (n=95) reported that their partner had isolated them socially on at least one occasion, with 11.2% (n=58) reporting that this had happened ‘a few times’. Social isolation was said to include stopping them from seeing their friends or family or making them feel that their friends or family did not care for them or were not interested in them. The report indicates that this type of domestic violence causes survey participants to feel isolated and removed from sources of support from both within and outside of the LGBTIQ community.

Examples:

*‘Didn’t like my friends, feels threatened by them. Doesn’t like me going out on the scene because of the “dirty lesbians” out there etc. Doesn’t like me connecting with the gay community on any level, doesn’t understand why I want to do it.’*

*‘My partner isn’t very comfortable being involved in the LGBTIQ community so she often puts it down to make me feel guilty and avoid being involved myself.’*

*‘Socially controlling – humiliating me in front of others; abusing others who are being social and friendly to me.’*

## Stalking

Stalking is a form of domestic violence which involves behaviour used by one partner to intimidate or harass the other. This can include following them when they leave the house; constantly watching them or their house or workplace; cyber stalking (monitoring their movements online); and calling, texting or emailing them or their family, friends or work colleagues more often than is appropriate or when asked not to (Another Closet, 2009).

Table 19a: Stalked by Partner, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	438 (85.9)	175 (84.1)	181 (91.0)	36 (76.6)	46 (82.1)
Once	14 (2.7)	7 (3.4)	4 (2.0)	2 (4.3)	1 (1.8)
A few times	49 (9.6)	22 (10.6)	12 (6.0)	7 (14.9)	8 (14.3)
Regularly	6 (1.2)	2 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	1 (2.1)	1 (1.8)
Often	3 (0.6)	2 (1.0)	0	1 (2.1)	-
Total	510	208	199	47	56

Of the 510 responses for this survey, 30 specifically identified as intersex, transgender and gender diverse (see Table 19b).

Table 19b: Stalked by Partner, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
	n	n	n	n	n
Never	25	4	6	5	11
Once	1	-	-	-	1
A few times	3	-	-	3	-
Regularly	-	-	-	-	-
Often	1	-	-	-	1
Total	30	4	6	8	13



In this survey, 14.1% of participants (n=72) reported being stalked by their current partner on at least one occasion. A higher percentage of bisexual participants (23.4%) reported being stalked by their partner on at least one occasion compared to gay (15.9%) or lesbian (9%) participants. Due to the small number of transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants reporting the experience of being stalked, drawing any conclusions from this survey is difficult. However, it is worth noting that 3 transgender women but no transgender men reported being stalked (from sample sizes of 9 and 7 respectively).

### Domestic Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Queer Relationships

LGBTIQ people may experience unique forms of emotional and verbal abuse in relationships. Perpetrators of domestic violence may exploit homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism (the assumption that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' sexual identity) or cissexism (the assumption that the only 'normal' gender identity is cisgender) within their partner's family, social network(s) and/or wider community in order to control and harm their partner. Behaviours can include threatening to 'out' or actually 'outing' their partner to their friends, family, work colleagues, etc; telling their partner that the police, courts or support services will not believe them because they are in an LGBTIQ relationship and telling them that the abusive behaviour is normal within LGBTIQ relationships (Chan, 2005).

	All participants	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Others
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	447 (89.0)	179 (87.7)	182 (91.9)	40 (87.0)	46 (85.2)
Once	9 (1.8)	8 (3.9)	1 (0.5)	-	-
A few times	36 (7.2)	14 (6.9)	12 (6.1)	6 (13.0)	4 (7.4)
Regularly	6 (1.2)	1 (0.5)	2 (1.0)	-	3 (5.6)
Often	4 (0.8)	2 (1.0)	1 (0.5)	-	1 (1.9)
Total	502	204	198	46	54

Participants were asked whether their current partner had ever used their sexuality as a means of control or to put them down, including telling them to be more 'straight-acting', calling them names like 'faggot' or 'dyke' in a derogatory way, withholding affection, or trying to control the way they expressed their sexuality. 11% of participants reported experiencing this behaviour at least once in their current relationship, highlighting the reality of this unique type of abuse for a significant minority of participants.

### Domestic Violence and Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex People

As has already been discussed, very little is known about experiences of domestic violence amongst transgender, gender diverse and intersex people. This report indicates a need for further research to be conducted into this area.

Transgender, gender diverse and intersex people may experience a range of unique forms of domestic violence, wherein their partners use aspects of their gender identity, gender expression or intersex trait/s to control and hurt them. For example, an abusive partner may ridicule their partner by making negative comments about their gender identity, gender history, gender non-conformance, intersex status, or physical features.

An abusive partner may also exert pressure or force them to stop transition-related healthcare, such as hormone treatment and/or surgery, or conversely force them to begin a medical transition. They may force them to stop expressing their gender identity or identifying as intersex.

32 participants (49.2% of the transgender, gender diverse and intersex sample: and 3.9% of all participants in a relationship) indicated that they were currently in a relationship and were transgender, intersex, genderqueer, sistergirl/ brotherboy, androgynous, asexual, or gender diverse. These participants were asked a number of exclusive questions about specific types of abuse they may have experienced in their current relationship.

**Table 16: Abusive Behaviours Related to Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Intersex Status**

	Ridiculed gender identity n (%)	Ridiculed sex anatomy n (%)	Told to present as particular gender n (%)	Stopped from having gender treatment n (%)	Insistence to have gender treatment n (%)	Ceased to express gender identity through participant's words n (%)
Never	24 (82.8)	25 (86.2)	22 (78.6)	22 (88.0)	26 (92.9)	24 (92.3)
Once	1 (3.4)	3 (10.3)	1 (3.6)	1 (4.0)	-	-
A few times	3 (10.3)	1 (3.4)	3 (10.7)	2 (8.0)	1 (3.6)	2 (7.7)
Regularly	-	-	-	-	-	-
Often	1 (3.4)	-	2 (7.1)	-	1 (3.6)	-
Total	29	29	28	25	28	26
	Ceased to express intersex n (%)	Ridiculed or disrespected because of anatomical differences n (%)	Ridiculed parts of body n (%)	Insistence to act more binary male or female n (%)	Use of inappropriate or intimidating language when dress is not clearly male or female n (%)	Ridiculed or disrespected because of other identities such as genderqueer, sistrergirl n (%)
Never	14 (87.5)	22 (88.0)	23 (82.1)	25 (86.2)	24 (88.9)	25 (92.6)
Once	-	2 (8.0)	3 (10.7)	1 (3.4)	2 (7.4)	-
A few times	1 (6.3)	1 (4.0)	1 (3.6)	3 (10.3)	1 (3.7)	2 (7.4)
Regularly	-	-	1 (3.6)	-	-	-
Often	1 (6.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16	25	28	29	27	27

In interpreting the results, it should be noted that because many questions applied only to transgender, gender diverse or intersex participants, the number of responses varies. Responses to these questions have also been analysed based on each experience of abuse reported.

At a slightly higher rate when compared to the sexually diverse cohort, 12.8% of transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants reported experiences of abuse where elements of their gender diversity or intersex status were used as a means of control and abuse. This result highlights a significant minority who had experienced at least one such form of this abuse.

It is highly recommended that future research expand on the current study by focussing on transgender, gender diverse and intersex individuals' experiences of domestic violence and that this be undertaken in partnership with specific community organisations whose priority populations are transgender, gender diverse or intersex.

### 3.2.2 RELATED FACTORS

#### Continuation of Abuse

When asked whether any abuse experienced was ongoing, 57.1% (n=112) of survey participants reported that the abuse had stopped and that they were still with their current partner. Meanwhile, 37% (n=73) of survey participants reported that the abuse had not stopped and they were still with their partner. However, it is not possible from this survey data to draw any connection between the length of abuse and the length of participants' relationships. It is suggested that future research could be conducted to explore any correlation.

A number of factors may contribute to this latter finding, including some participants not recognising acts of abuse as domestic violence, fear of leaving the relationship and the potential consequences, a lack of knowledge on available support services, reluctance to report to police and a willingness to remain in a relationship despite ongoing abuse.

Participants who reported that the abuse had stopped provided many differing explanations, including that the act of abuse had been a 'one off' and that improvements in their partner's mental health had led to the end of the abuse.

Examples:

*'We love each other so much and now that my partner is getting her chronic depression treated things have improved significantly.'*

*'She only hit me twice, then I told her no more.'*

#### Witnesses

Domestic violence does not only affect the victimised partner, children are also impacted. Children may see or hear abuse, notice physical signs after the violence or witness the overall effects of domestic violence on the abused person. An abusive partner can also use children (and/or pets) as weapons of abuse, sometimes by trying to turn children against the other partner, or undermining their parenting role. Children can also be physically or emotionally abused by the abusive partner. All children who experience domestic violence are affected by it in some way, with the negative effects ranging from short term physical injuries, to long term emotional or psychological trauma (Another Closet, 2009).

**Table 20a: Children Living with Participant when Abuse Occurred, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Yes, they witnessed some abuse	17 (26.6)	4 (28.6)	5 (17.9)	2 (16.7)	6 (60.0)
Yes, but they did not witness abuse	23 (35.9)	-	12 (42.9)	8 (66.7)	3 (30.0)
No	24 (37.5)	10 (71.4)	11 (39.3)	2 (16.7)	1 (10.0)
Total	64 (100)	14	28	12	10

From the 64 Survey participants answering this question, 12 specifically identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (Table 20b).

**Table 20b: Children Living with Participant when Abuse Occurred, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All participants n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
Yes, they witnessed some abuse	2 (16.7)	-	-	1 (25.0)	1 (50.0)
Yes, but they did not witness abuse	2 (16.7)	-	-	2 (50.0)	-
No	8 (66.6)	2 (100)	8 (100)	1 (25.0)	1 (50.0)
Total	12	2	8	4	2

Of those participants with children, 62.5% (n=40) reported having children living with them while the domestic violence or abuse was happening. 26.6% (n=17) of those participants believed that their children had witnessed some of the abuse. The results suggest the need to ensure that both mainstream and specialist LGBTIQ service providers acknowledge the presence of, and offer support for, children of LGBTIQ relationships affected by domestic violence.

### 3.2.3 PAST RELATIONSHIPS

#### Domestic Violence in Past Relationships

Although this study focussed primarily on participants' current relationships, all participants were asked about their experience of domestic violence in any previous relationships (since the age of 15). This allowed for further insights into previous experiences of domestic violence in LGBTIQ relationships.

**Table 21a: Other than Current Relationship, Ever Been in Emotionally Abusive Relationship, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Yes	398 (54.7)	142 (46.7)	154 (61.1)	49 (59.0)	53 (59.6)
No	330 (45.3)	162 (53.3)	98 (38.9)	34 (41.0)	36 (40.4)
Total	728 (100)	304	252	83	89

Of the 728 total responses for this question, 59 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as shown in the next table (Table 21b).

**Table 21b: Other than Current Relationship, Ever Been in Emotionally Abusive Relationship, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All participants n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
Yes	44 (74.6)	7 (77.8)	11 (78.6)	12 (60.0)	16 (88.9)
No	15 (25.4)	2 (22.2)	3 (21.4)	8 (40.0)	2 (11.1)
Total	59	9	14	20	18

**Table 22a: Ever Been Abused Sexually or Physically by Previous Partner, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Yes	253 (34.8)	82 (27.1)	99 (39.4)	35 (42.2)	37 (41.6)
No	474 (65.2)	221 (72.9)	152 (60.6)	48 (57.8)	52 (58.4)
Total	726 (100)	303	251	83	89

Of the 726 total responses for this question, 59 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as shown in the next table (Table 22b).

**Table 22b: Ever Been Abused Sexually or Physically Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All participants n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
Yes	31 (52.5)	6 (66.7)	9 (64.3)	7 (35.0)	11 (61.1)
No	28 (47.5)	3 (33.3)	5 (35.7)	13 (65.0)	7 (38.9)
Total	59	9	14	20	18

54.7% (n=398) of all participants reported that they had previously been in one or more emotionally abusive relationship, while 34.8% (n=253) reported that they had been abused sexually and/or physically by a previous partner.

Overall the rates of abuse experienced by transgender, gender diverse and intersex participants in previous relationships was significantly higher. 74.6% of these participants (n=44) reported they had been in one or more emotionally abusive relationships, while 52.5% (n=31) reported being sexually or physically abused by a previous partner. In this sample, gender diverse participants (75%), transgender men (71.4%) and intersex participants (72.2%) were more likely to have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse in a previous relationship than any other group.

Gay identifying participants were significantly less likely to report having been in a previous emotionally, physically or sexually abusive relationship when compared to the other groups but, as previously stated, were statistically significantly more likely to have experienced emotional and/or verbal abuse in a current relationship. It could be possible that gay men are less likely to identify emotional and verbal abuse in a current relationship and are thus more likely to stay in that relationship. More research is required to draw any firm conclusions on this link.

Participants who reported being in previous abusive relationships were asked whether the relationship was heterosexual or same-sex. The options were not

mutually exclusive, so participants could select both heterosexual and same-sex options. It is important to note that the journey of social and/or medical transition for some transgender and gender diverse people can reflect a movement from (self-identified) same-gender relationships to heterosexual relationships and vice versa.

63.2% (n=160) of participants who had been abused by a previous partner were in a same-gender relationship, while 44.3% (n=112) had been in a heterosexual relationship.

10.7% (n=27) of participants reported being abused by previous partners in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

### **Experiences of Participants in Past Relationships**

Participants were asked to provide additional details on their experience of domestic violence in past relationships. The benefit of these qualitative statements is that they allow for a richer understanding of the complexity of domestic violence and its impact on individuals. For example, a number of participants reported the presence of multiple, compounding forms of abuse within their previous relationship(s).

Examples:

*'Before transitioning I was in a relationship with a cis male who emotionally and physically abused me for 11 years.'*

*'Last partner - controlled me to not contact friends, through jealousy and put-downs. Previous partner would not accept my transgender exploration and treated me as "less of a person" because of it. Resulted in suicide attempt.'*

*'[She] didn't let me sleep, would give me a really hard time about taking medication ... she would embarrass me in public with bizarre behaviour, ... self-harm, threaten me, send me awful texts, destroy my possessions.'*

*'I had a previous partner intermittently for about three years. He was financially and emotionally controlling, verbally abusive and occasionally physically violent.'*

*'My former partner used to threaten me with physical violence, would isolate me from my friends and would control our finances. He would also accuse me of having sex with other men pretty constantly which would then provide reasons for him to be checking up on me.'*

### **Sexual Abuse**

A small number of participants spoke about the pressure placed on them by their previous partner to engage in sexual behaviour they did not want to engage in, and their eventual engagement in the behaviour to avoid further conflict. All of these participants expressed being unsure about whether the behaviour amounted to domestic violence. This may be indicative of a lack of awareness surrounding what does and does not constitute domestic violence, particularly when it involves sexual coercion.

Examples:

*'On more than one occasion I had expressed disinterest in not wanting to partake in a sexual activity that I was usually okay with. On such occasions, the partner would be generally persistent assuming that I was simply playing hard to get by saying no or removing their hands etc. On occasions they continued the undesired behaviour despite my voicing of not wanting to, I would simply go quiet and allow them to so that I may avoid any conflict later.'*

*'It's hard to define, as many seem to accept this behaviour as normal, as I sometimes did. It was less about lack of consent and more about wheedling until I gave in and had sex I didn't want.'*

*'Ex-male partner abused me sexually when drunk. Ex-wife was physically abusive.'*

### **Emotional and Verbal Abuse**

Several participants reported a previous partner's engagement in repeated patterns of emotional abuse, usually in order to keep the participant in the relationship. Such abuse commonly involved verbal attacks on the participant's self-esteem.

Examples:

*'If I tried to break up or leave zie would tell me I'd be nothing without zir, no one else would ever want me or put up with me, and if that didn't work zie would threaten to kill zirself.'*

*'I believed he was trying to attack my self-esteem in order to make me feel like I couldn't do better than him. He did that by putting down my appearance almost every day.'*

*'He told me I was useless without him, incapable of living without him propping me up/organising things, that I had nowhere to go and he owned everything "we" had.'*

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Two participants reported not recognising that their partner's emotionally and verbally abusive behaviour was domestic violence until they were exposed to domestic violence materials and information.

Examples:

*'I didn't know what domestic violence was before and during that relationship and it was only when I read an article about domestic violence that had a relationship checklist in it that I realised that what was happening was domestic violence.'*

*'I didn't know it was abuse. I thought abuse was being hit. Then I read a queer antiviolenace ad with a personal story in it, in the queer press, that described my situation. I cut it out and kept it and then kept my eyes open.'*

### **Social Abuse**

As could be predicted from the high rate of social abuse in current relationships, many participants reported instances of social abuse by a previous partner in which their partner would limit their access to friends and family. Often, the effect of this was to establish the abuser's dominance over the survey participant, limiting their access to outside support whilst increasing their dependence on the abuser.

Examples:

*'My ex-partner ensured I was socially isolated, unable to speak to my family. Prevented me from spending time with my friends.'*

*'Continual anger/being upset in regards to my association with individuals of the opposite sex causing me to be careful about many of my social activities. Being angry even if I met certain male friends by accident.'*

In addition, a number of participants reported behaviour by their previous partner during, or after the relationship, that involved stalking and the monitoring of their movements. These activities were used to maintain control over the survey participant and continue the abuse after the relationship had ended.

Examples:

*'He would also accuse me of having sex with other men pretty constantly which would then provide reasons for him to be checking up on me, demanding to know where I was all the time and following me if I went somewhere without him.'*

*'After we broke up he kept track of me and where I was/my contact details, spread stories about me around our group of acquaintances and friends and sent me abusive emails/made abusive phone calls that meant I changed my number and email addresses.'*

*'After we broke up she stalked me outside my work, home and used a copied key to walk into the house uninvited.'*

Some participants reported experiences of domestic violence unique to LGBTIQ relationships, including issues around transitioning and intersex status, and threats to 'out' the participant to friends, family and work colleagues.

Examples:

*'My last partner was always threatening me about my medical transition plans, she felt that it was her right to tell me I should stop taking hormones if she decided "it wasn't working" for her.'*

*'Would blame me for making her hit me (I would actually apologise). Threaten to out me if I ever told anyone.'*



### 3.3 REPORTING TO POLICE

The law in NSW offers the same protection to LGBTIQ victims of domestic violence as it does to any other victim, including police protection and access to an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO). Despite this, many victims of domestic violence in LGBTIQ relationships may feel uncomfortable with, or even scared of, reporting abuse to the NSW Police Force. As a consequence, the reporting rate for domestic violence in LGBTIQ relationships is believed to be very low. For example, Leonard, W., Mitchell, A., Patel, S., and Fox, C. (2008) found that just over 14% of respondents who had experienced domestic violence in a same-sex relationship had reported the abuse to Victorian Police.

**Table 23a: Abuse Reported to NSW Police, by Sexual Identity**

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Yes, reported it to police	80 (12.9)	25 (10.0)	19 (8.7)	15 (20.3)	16 (20.8)
No, did not report to police	270 (43.5)	95 (307.8)	102 (46.8)	30 (40.5)	40 (51.9)
No, reported it to police in another state	13 (2.1)	6 (2.4)	4 (1.8)	2 (2.7)	1 (1.3)
Never experienced domestic or family violence	265 (42.7)	125 (49.8)	93 (42.7)	27 (36.5)	20 (26.0)
Total	620	251	218	74	77

From the above responses 52 identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse as per Table 23b below.

**Table 23b: Abuse Reported to NSW Police, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants**

	All n (%)	Intersex n (%)	Transgender (identifying as male) n (%)	Transgender (identifying as female) n (%)	Gender Diverse n (%)
Yes, reported it to police	12 (23.1)	3 (37.5)	5 (33.3)	-	4 (25.0)
No, did not report to police	24 (46.2)	3 (37.5)	6 (40.0)	9 (56.3)	7 (43.8)
No, reported it to police in another state	3 (4.6)	-	-	2 (12.5)	2 (12.5)
Never experienced domestic or family violence	13 (20.0)	2 (25)	3 (20.0)	5 (31.3)	3 (18.8)
Total	52	8	14	16	16

Participants were asked if they had reported domestic violence in their current or previous relationships to the NSW Police Force. 15% of survey participants overall indicated that they had reported their experience of domestic violence to either the NSW Police Force (12.9%), or police in another state (2.1%). Lesbian participants and transgender women were less likely than gay or bisexual participants to have reported abuse to police. Gender diverse participants were also less likely to report to police than all other participants.

Of the 12.9% of total survey participants who had reported their experience of domestic violence to NSW Police Force, 20% felt the police had been extremely helpful, 46.3% reported police had been somewhat helpful, and 31.3% indicated that the NSW Police Force had not been helpful at all, see Table 24 below.



Table 24: Were the NSW Police Force Helpful?		
	n	%
No, not at all	25	31.3
Yes, somewhat	37	46.3
Yes, extremely	16	20.0
No response	2	2.5
Total	80	100

When asked to provide more details, several participants indicated that the NSW Police Force appeared uninterested in the abuse, or did not believe the participant.

#### Examples:

*'besides the local police being old school in relation to trans people the abuse was emotional rather than physical and I was also in the beginning of a mental breakdown so the last thing i needed was some policeperson using incorrect pronouns and then more than likely ignoring the problem due to my gender status.'*

*'They made me feel like they weren't in the least bit interested in my safety.'*

*'The police had no idea on how to deal with same sex domestic violence and had negative views on same sex relationships.'*

However, others participants reported more positive experiences, stating that the NSW Police Force had responded appropriately and treated them with respect.

*'They were very respectful and supportive.'*

*'A lesbian liaison officer was available.'*

*'They came around and kicked the abuser out of the house- my then partner was very angry and threatened the chief of Police several times, but they kept their cool and got them out of my life. I've not had any trouble since.'*

#### Reasons for Not Reporting

In order to improve the rate at which LGBTIQ people report their experiences of domestic violence to the police, it is essential to identify and address the reasons why many individuals continue not to do so.

When participants who indicated that they did not report their experience of domestic violence to police (n=270) were asked to provide their reasons

for not reporting, several key themes emerged, including fear of police, concerns about being outed, and not being able to recognise the abuse.

Another strong theme that emerged from the answers to this question was that, for many participants abuse had to cross a high threshold of seriousness before it would be reported to police. A large number of respondents indicated that at the time of the incident(s) they did not feel that their partner's behaviour was serious, but upon reflection had realised that it was indeed abuse.

#### Examples:

*'Due to my inexperience at the time/general lack of understanding about domestic violence, I did not identify myself as a victim/survivor.'*

*'I honestly don't feel I was conscious of how significant the violence was until I had distanced myself from my ex-partner. Whilst I was in the relationship I was convinced that things would improve.'*

*'Really scared to do so, and felt like I was going to throw up.'*

Several participants indicated that they would not feel comfortable speaking to police and did not believe that police would treat their report with dignity. Some participants, particularly transgender, gender diverse and intersex respondents indicated that they did not expect that police would understand their situation. Participants also expressed concerns that making a report to police would mean that the domestic violence would become public knowledge.

#### Examples:

*'Why would I? I don't trust the police.'*

*'I didn't think that I would be believed, and I was ashamed that this could happen to me.'*

*'I wouldn't feel comfortable about talking to the police about it due to past experiences and them not taking it seriously.'*

*'Because I didn't see how they could help us, or me, at the time. It was a rural area, and I didn't want everyone knowing.'*

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A significant number of participants explained their decision not to make a report was due to a concern that their partner would get into trouble and/or be charged. For some participants, this was due to an ongoing emotional connection to their abusive partner, and a desire to support them. For others, it was the result of their financial dependence on their partner, or a concern that their partner's behaviour would escalate.

Examples:

*'I thought from time to time, that she was only behaving this way because she was experiencing emotional pain herself and that it was my responsibility, as a partner, to support her until she was in a better place.'*

*'Afraid to tell as I depended on them financially as well as relied on them for housing.'*

*'I was too scared to do so because he would have killed me if he had of found out.'*

The recurring theme for most survey participants in deciding not to report abuse to police was fear. This fear could be as a result of any one of the above factors, such as fear of not being believed or fear of retaliation, or a combination of several of these factors.

*'At the time I feared they wouldn't believe me, and that it was my fault I'd been abused. I was also afraid of aggravating the situation and making things worse.'*

### 3.4 SEEKING SUPPORT

For many reasons, it is often difficult for a person experiencing domestic violence to seek support, information or advice. For LGBTIQ people, barriers and deterrents to access support can be even greater in number and impact. This is partly attributable to widespread misconceptions surrounding domestic violence and specifically LGBTIQ domestic violence, the limited existence and promotion of specialist LGBTIQ services, and the ongoing discrimination and marginalisation of LGBTIQ communities.

The survey findings highlight the continuing difficulties LGBTIQ victims of domestic violence experience in seeking help. 31.3% (n=121) of participants who had experienced domestic violence reported that they had never sought support, information or advice in relation to the abuse. 50.7% (n=180) of participants had sought some form of support, information or advice only after the abuse had finished and 25.1% (n=94) reported seeking support, information or advice while the abuse was occurring.

### 3.4.1 BARRIERS TO SEEKING SUPPORT

#### Experiences of Fear and Shame

When asked about their reasons for not accessing support, survey participants reflected on the emotional and psychological effects of being in an abusive relationship. Many participants expressed feelings of fear around seeking help. Participants were afraid that speaking out about their partner's violence would cause them to lose friends within and outside of their local LGBTIQ community.

*'Ashamed and fearful [that I] would be ostracised by [the] local lesbian community. Didn't want to admit [I] was back in another abusive relationship- what was wrong with me.'*

Other fears preventing participants from getting support were related to interactions with the police, and the potential that the participant's partner would discover that they had talked to someone and consequently become more abusive.

Participants' feelings of fear were often accompanied by shame and embarrassment for being in a violent relationship. Many participants reported experiencing difficulties accepting that their partner was responsible for the violence, and instead blamed themselves.

Examples:

*'I was too scared to admit I was that weak. That's how I felt anyway. I didn't want my family to hate her ... and I didn't want to be judged.'*

*'I felt embarrassed that I was being treated like that. And I also still cared for my partner and didn't want my friends to gang up on them.'*

As these comments indicate, some participants had attempted to protect the perpetrator due to ongoing feelings of love and attachment. This required participants to keep abuse hidden and avoid sources of formal or informal support.

Other participants expressed concern that people they told about the abuse would not believe them, or even blame them. These fears were exacerbated when participants shared friends with the perpetrator. Feeling unable to speak up or be understood by friends left some participants feeling isolated.

*'[I was] afraid that people would not believe me or think that it was my fault.'*

The experience of isolation was also identified by participants who were not publically out about their sexuality, gender identity or intersex status at the time of the abuse. The need to keep their identity or lived body experience hidden increased feelings of shame for being in an abusive relationship, and further inhibited the ability of participants to seek support.

Examples:

*'I am not completely "out of the closet" yet and I felt ashamed and embarrassed at what people would think. I think sometimes it was my fault. I was afraid of being judged as usual.'*

*'I didn't seek help at all. At the time I was so ashamed of being gay and I thought I must have deserved it. I grew up in a very very homophobic family and community ... no way I was going to tell anybody.'*

#### Identifying Abuse and Support Services

It can be challenging for a person to recognise that they are in an abusive relationship. For LGBTIQ people, the challenge is heightened due to the dominant cisgender heterosexual discourse in domestic violence campaigns, publications and literature, and enduring ignorance towards domestic violence in relationships involving same-gender attracted, transgender, gender diverse and intersex people. The survey findings reflect this, with participants reporting struggles in identifying their experiences as domestic violence.

Examples:

*'I did not recognise it for what it really was until I was doing a survey on relationships a couple of years later and thought - hang on that is exactly what it was like for me.'*

*'I did not seek any [help] as I did not understand emotional abuse. It was not until I heard the NSW police discussing such things [that] I realised I had suffered it.'*

Several participants reported first identifying that they had been in an abusive relationship after the abuse had finished. As 50.7% (n=180) of participants sought support, information or advice only after the abuse had ended, being unable

to identify domestic violence appears to be a significant barrier to accessing support services.

Even where participants were able to recognise domestic violence, many expressed that they had been unaware of the existence of specialist services for LGBTIQ people. This largely resulted in survey participants indicating that they had felt unsupported, marginalised and powerless to escape domestic violence. Those who had accessed mainstream services often found these services had difficulties responding appropriately to their experience of domestic violence.

Examples:

*'I did not know where to go.'*

*'[I] had no clue where to turn and when I did find violence shelters and domestic help lines [I] was told sorry we don't do same gender stuff.'*

*'I never thought to. I didn't even consider that there were helpful services for lesbians.'*

*'I wasn't aware that there was other help at the time and felt very isolated, which I think contributed to me staying in the relationship.'*

*'I didn't receive support as I didn't know where to find it, and I wasn't looking for it due to the fear, shame, guilt etc.'*

### 3.4.2 INFORMAL SUPPORT

For many people experiencing domestic violence, friends, family or colleagues can be a valuable source of support. Speaking to these personal contacts may also serve to encourage a person to access formal support services.

Participants were most likely to seek informal support from their friendship networks, with 38.3% (n=136) reporting that they sought support from their LGBTIQ and/or non-LGBTIQ friends. 22.3% (n=79) reported seeking support from family members, while 9.6% (n=34) sought support from work colleagues.

The experiences participants had in attempting to obtain support from friends, family or colleagues varied greatly. Many participants expressed that speaking to these contacts had been positive and assisted them in leaving, or recovering from their abusive relationship.

Examples:

*'Friends made all the difference, standing by me both when I wasn't ready to end it and when I was finally ready.'*

*'[I] told my parents and they supported me through the escape process.'*

However, some participants had received negative responses from friends or family, who suggested to them that they had provoked their partner, or were exaggerating the incidents. These responses were likely to exacerbate feelings of isolation, and discourage participants from accessing other forms of assistance.

Examples:

*'I tried to speak to friends after the second partner hit me but the response was very discouraging. They seemed to support her and thought I must have said something very mean to set her off.'*

*'Neither I nor my friends whom I turned to for support really identified my abusive partner's behaviour as that.'*

The importance of informal support was emphasised by participants when asked what would have been helpful during their experience of domestic violence, with many expressing a desire for friends and family members to have listened to them and appreciated their experience. Where participants shared friends with the perpetrator, participants commented that these friends should have refused to ignore the signs of abuse and stood up for them in front of the perpetrator.

Examples:

*'Someone to talk to who understands, and takes me seriously, someone who would have been helping me out of a dangerous situation.'*

*'Friends not taking sides, not blaming, not avoiding helpful conversation, not disregarding abuse right in front of their eyes and telling me later.'*

### **Witnesses of Domestic Violence**

Due to their relationship with the victim, friends, family and work colleagues are often best placed to observe incidents of abuse or their aftermath. The degree of support a victim receives may be in large part determined by the responses of such witnesses, particularly where the victim is unable to recognise their partner's behaviour as abuse or is too scared to seek help.

Participants who indicated that they had experienced domestic violence in their current relationship were asked if anyone (other than children) had witnessed the abuse. 16.7% of participants reported that there had been at least one witness. The witness was most likely to be a friend, including a mutual friend of the relationship, although family members were also common witnesses.

The majority of participants whose friends had witnessed the abuse reported that these friends had been supportive and advised them to leave the relationship. For these participants, the support received from friends helped them feel less isolated and increased their strength.

Examples:

*'Friends knew what was going on – told me it wasn't OK and that I should tell her to leave.'*

*'Friends. They are no longer friends with this individual as they did not approve of her behaviour. They all told me to break up with her.'*

*'They commented that I must have the patience of a saint. They acknowledged to me that the behaviour was odd or strange. This was a great comfort to me as I was starting to worry that it was me. When I realised that others saw it as odd to it gave me the strength to deal with it.'*

However, a small number of participants reported that witnesses had ignored the abuse. These witnesses were most likely to be mutual friends of the relationship, or friends of the abusive partner. The consequence for survey participants where the witness ignored the abuse was an increase in both their sense of isolation and their reluctance to seek help.

*'A few of my partner's friends have but they ignored it and never mentioned it again.'*

### 3.4.3 FORMAL SUPPORT

Participants reported seeking support from a range of formal sources. The formal support sources/ services that participants indicated were the most helpful were health professionals, mainstream face-to-face counsellors, and other counsellors (e.g. private practitioners, school or religious counsellors). Accessing both specialist LGBTIQ domestic violence and general domestic violence websites were also popular means of obtaining information.

#### Knowledge of Support Services

	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Yes	396 (58.2)	168 (58.9)	155 (64.6)	31 (40.3)	42 (53.8)
No	284 (41.8)	117 (41.1)	85 (35.4)	16 (59.7)	36 (46.2)
Total	680	285	240	77	78

Of the 680, 56 further identified themselves as transgender, gender diverse or intersex (see Table 25b).

	All participants n (%)	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
Yes	30 (53.6)	3 (33.3)	8 (61.5)	9 (47.4)	11 (64.7)
No	26 (46.4)	6 (66.7)	5 (38.5)	10 (52.6)	6 (35.3)
Total	56	9	13	19	17

Participants were asked about their knowledge of the existence of specialist support services for LGBTIQ people experiencing domestic violence.

58.2% of overall survey participants reported that they knew that specialist support services existed. Lesbian participants (64.6%) and gender diverse participants (64.7%) were more likely than others to know of the existence of these services, while bisexual, transgender and intersex participants were least likely to be aware of them.

Although these findings show that a small majority of participants were aware of specialist support services, the finding that 41.8% were unaware clearly highlights that more work needs to be done to promote these services to all members of the LGBTIQ community.

#### Recommendations for Support Services

Several themes emerged from participants' responses to the question of what would have been helpful during their experience of domestic violence. They included funding for LGBTIQ specific services; crisis accommodation for gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer men, transgender and intersex women, and gender diverse people; access to services in rural, regional and remote areas; services for LGBTIQ people over 60 years; services, education and support for young people; accessible and affordable counselling; therapeutic/ support group sessions; safe spaces for pets; safe spaces in courts; enhanced service provision by Centrelink and Housing NSW; and prevention initiatives, education, intervention and services for the perpetrator.

#### Specialist LGBTIQ Services

In relation to formal sources of support, a significant number of participants indicated a need for more specialty services for LGBTIQ people experiencing domestic violence. It is integral that these services have the resourcing and capacity to respond to the varying and unique issues that can arise when domestic violence occurs in LGBTIQ relationships. Participants also suggested that existing services better promote themselves, reflecting on their discovery of many services only after their abusive relationship had ended.

It is particularly important for LGBTIQ services to ensure they have the cultural capacity to provide leadership, advocacy, support, intervention and education for people who sit outside of the historically dominant narrative of 'SSDV' or same-sex domestic violence. Discourse that perpetuates the myth that LGBTIQ domestic violence is interchangeable terminology with same-gender domestic violence further marginalises and isolates bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex and queer identities.



Examples:

*'Knowledge of where to find support, support groups of people in the same situation, LGBTIQ domestic violence shelter.'*

*'LGBTI carer who understood LGBTI issues as well as mental health issues.'*

### **Training for Mainstream Services**

Many respondents stated that they would be happy to access a mainstream service if it was respectful and open to working with LGBTIQ communities. This could be as simple as having culturally specific posters and pamphlets in a waiting room, participating in ACON's LGBTI Safe Place Program, hosting relevant information on a website, and building the capacity of the service workers through workplace training and development.

Examples:

*'It would be great to see more mainstream services work to better support the GLBTIQ community and deliver support around domestic violence.'*

*'Training for staff in mainstream services so that they are not homophobic; services that do not assume that all women escaping domestic violence are heterosexual and that all perpetrators are men.'*

### **Counselling**

The need for enhanced access to affordable or free, culturally safe counselling services was emphasised by a number of participants. Many counselling services have long waiting lists, and require a co-payment or upfront payment (which could later be refunded by Medicare). This can be particularly prohibitive as people experiencing or escaping domestic violence commonly experience financial stress, and perpetrators may also exercise financial control over their partner as a form of abuse.

Participants also indicated reluctance to access mainstream services due to a belief that counsellors would not understand their situation, and may even blame the victim's sexual diversity, gender diversity or intersex status for the abuse. This suggests the need for more specialist LGBTIQ counselling services, and possibly greater training for mainstream counsellors.

A 24-hour online counselling service was recurrently recommended by participants. Although there is QLife, Australia's national counselling and referral

service for LGBTIQ people, the phone contact hours are only 5:30 pm – 10:30 pm and it was launched after the survey was completed.

Examples:

*'More availability to LGBTIQ counsellors and mainstream services to recognise and offer support to male victims and all transgender victims.'*

*'Rebates to psychotherapy, more long term counselling subsidised.'*

*'Specialist LGBTIQ mental health workers who do home visits; crisis team and long term clinical psychology for LGBTIQ clients – sexuality too often pathologised and specific needs of clients are ignored.'*

*'Inclusive crisis accommodation for LGBTIQ, currently a lot of homophobia and fear for women accessing women's refuges, nothing exists for gay men or targets bisexual, transgender or intersex people.'*

*'Refuges that are more open to and supportive of LGBTIQ clients. Very few are openly accessible, particularly for transgender people and it's really not okay.'*

### **Services for men and crisis accommodation**

The LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency has been aware of the lack of services for men experiencing domestic violence since its inception in 2001. The Interagency was itself convened as a result of and response to gay men experiencing domestic violence increasingly presenting to the Darlinghurst Community Health Centre in the inner city of Sydney.

At the time, there was no appropriate crisis accommodation for gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer men escaping domestic violence. Unfortunately, several participants indicated that this is an issue which can still prevent victims from leaving an abusive relationship. Many male participants also indicated a need for greater promotion of and information on the services that are available for men.

Examples:

*'I think it's still really confusing to know what exactly is available for men. There might be services there but people aren't aware of them, or that they have the right to access them.'*



*'Support for men in same sex relationships.  
Limited support for them, very little options re  
accommodation services/refuges.'*  
*'Refuges for men More GLBT counselling services.'*

In addition, LGBTIQ people may fear or experience discrimination in attempting to access available crisis accommodation, even if these services believe that they are safe for LGBTIQ people (ACON's Anti-Violence Project, 2011). Participants also raised problems concerning escaping domestic violence with children and pets.

*'I wish someone had told me to take both of my kids. He asked me if he could take the youngest and I agreed. I regret that so much (he has never been violent towards them but he can be emotionally abusive.)'*

### **Education and advertising**

In addition to providing practical support, participants recommended that services disseminate information to the LGBTIQ community to increase awareness of the existence of domestic violence, especially within LGBTIQ relationships. It was felt that this would have enhanced the individual's ability to recognise domestic violence, and improved the responses they received from friends and family. The provision of information on domestic violence and healthy relationships to high schools was suggested to be particularly important.

Examples:

*'Community resources, written by the community for the community.'*

*'Information on same-sex violence. "So He Bashes You" and pamphlets are not helpful when the situation is "She bashes you, and the trans-masculinity that you're nursing has been stripped along with all your dignity". Having your differences pointed out at a time when you're vulnerable just makes it harder.'*

*'Education program at high school on healthy relationships and what is healthy and what is abusive.'*

*'Wider information distribution towards youth under 26 yrs, as well as better information to LGBTIQ youth groups that I attended and events/nightclubs.'*

*'The school curriculum needs to explore DV in a more holistic nature also, taking into consideration not only the GLBTIQ community, but also the many forms of DV.'*

Many participants also suggested that services needed to be better advertised, so that LGBTIQ people were aware of the existence of domestic violence in LGBTIQ relationships and the different avenues for support.

Examples:

*'More advertising of services available in mainstream sources of advertising eg local newspapers, community newsletters.'*

*'More advertising in lesbian/gay magazines that DV amongst the queer community exists too and comes in many forms and it is not acceptable.'*

*'Public awareness of services, because I don't know of any and I imagine not many people would either.'*

### **Services in rural and regional areas**

Survey participants living in rural and regional areas reported a strong preference for LGBTIQ specific support services in their closest city that they could visit in person (40%, n=183) or access by phone or email (27.5%, n=135). These options were greatly preferred over visiting local mainstream services (20%, n=64), or contacting them via phone or email (14.1%, n=64). Reports by survey participants on the lack of specialist services in rural and regional areas also confirm what we already know about the lack of available services for the LGBTIQ community outside of Sydney and key regional centres such as Lismore, Newcastle and Wollongong. This provides a strong argument for an increase in specialist LGBTIQ services in or near these areas, and further building the capacity of mainstream services in these locations to support LGBTIQ victims of domestic violence. It also further demonstrates the need for services to promote their phone and online counselling services in mainstream media, local rural media and on appropriate web sites.

Examples:

*'There might be services out there, but try living in a rural area.'*

*'Specialist LGBTIQ services locally in country areas and regional towns.'*

*'More regional services and support that currently don't exist for or use veiled discrimination to turn away gender diverse people.'*

### Services for Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex individuals

The LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency recognises that there is a danger that specialist LGBTIQ services target individuals in same-gender relationships and, as previously stated, can disregard the needs of transgender, gender diverse and intersex people. The need for specialist services not targeted just at gay and lesbian identifying individuals was raised by several participants.

Examples:

*‘More community focussed stuff, queer refuges, queer services that are more welcoming of people who aren’t gay/lesbian.’*

*‘Support groups for gender diverse people who have experienced domestic violence.’*

*‘We need services that better cater for trans people, people who can understand all the complexities of being trans and sexually assaulted, the existing ones know little about trans people and how they feel.’*

*‘Understanding of intersex, and of trans issues - they’re distinct but neither are well understood. Comprehensive inclusion of intersex in services for LGBTI communities.’*

### 3.4.4 COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LGBTIQ communities have the potential to be a key source of support for all LGBTIQ victims of domestic violence. In order for this potential to be met, there is a need for greater education and awareness in the community in relation to the existence and experience of domestic violence.

A common theme expressed by survey participants was that assistance from within LGBTIQ communities was essential since community members and peers have a better understanding of the unique aspects of domestic violence within LGBTIQ relationships.

Examples:

*‘I think it’s crucial we support each other. Without this we don’t have a hope in hell of ending it.’*

*‘Lesbians who experience abuse need support from lesbians.’*

*‘The community needs to be talking about this stuff more! We should be supporting each other!’*

#### Willingness to Provide Support

The findings of this survey indicate a great willingness amongst members of LGBTIQ communities to support other members who are experiencing domestic violence. When asked whether they would support an LGBTIQ friend who had experienced domestic violence, the large majority of participants responded that they would (85.8%, n=597) or would maybe do so (8.2%).

Table 26a: Willingness to Support LGBTIQ Friends Experiencing Domestic Violence, by Sexual Identity					
	All participants n (%)	Gay n (%)	Lesbian n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Others n (%)
Yes	597 (85.8)	251 (87.2)	214 (87.0)	70 (89.7)	62 (73.8)
No	42 (6.0)	20 (6.9)	10 (4.1)	2 (2.6)	10 (11.9)
Maybe	57 (8.2)	17 (5.9)	22 (8.9)	6 (7.7)	12 (14.3)
Total	696	288	246	78	84

58 survey participants who answered this question further identified as intersex, transgender or gender diverse (see Table 26b).

Table 26b: Willingness to Support LGBTIQ Friends Experiencing Domestic Violence, Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Participants					
	All participants (%)	Intersex	Transgender (identifying as male)	Transgender (identifying as female)	Gender Diverse
Yes	48 (82.8)	9 (100.0)	14 (86.7)	12 (63.2)	15 (83.3)
No	2 (3.4)	-	-	2 (10.5)	-
Maybe	10 (13.8)	-	-	5 (26.3)	3 (16.7)
Total	58	9	14	19	18

Many participants provided statements emphasising their willingness to support LGBTIQ friends, with a number indicating that they already do so.

Examples:

*'Already have and still do. I have been a volunteer support person to the community for over 25 years.'*

*'Definitely. There's not much support or understanding for LGBTIQ people experiencing domestic violence within the community and I would want them to know that they have someone to talk to about things and that someone does care.'*

*'I am aware of resources and networks to access if a friend is in need, as well as being there for them for when they are ready to acknowledge and do something to protect themselves from domestic violence and/or intimate partner abuse.'*

## Education

Participants who expressed reluctance to help largely reported that they felt they needed more knowledge, training and experience before assisting others. This further demonstrates the importance of providing education to the LGBTIQ community on how they can best engage in bystander intervention for friends who are experiencing domestic violence. This was also indicated by the number of participants who said they would assist friends by going with them to support services (82.5%, n=574) and/or contacting services for them (76.7%, n=534). It is integral that these individuals are equipped with knowledge about available specialist and mainstream service providers so they are able to provide the best possible information.

Examples:

*'Having not experienced any forms of domestic violence or intimate partner abuse personally and not having been close to anyone who has needed support for the above, I am not sure how easy it would be to actually provide support in this case.'*

*'Of course I would always support friends if they needed someone – but I just don't know if I am qualified or able to offer the kind of support that someone who has suffered domestic abuse would need.'*

Those survey participants who indicated a willingness to provide support also suggested ideas such as enhancing LGBTIQ communities' role in increasing knowledge of LGBTIQ domestic violence and in providing support.

Examples:

*'Group activities where I can meet people not belonging to any organisation to make new friends and get a support network of real friends.'*

*'I would like to see improved community awareness of domestic violence in same-sex relationships. There seems to be a stigma attached to talking about it.'*

*'More information to our community about domestic violence services. More information about what is and is not acceptable in relating to others. Where people can get help to head off problems in a relationship.'*

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# CONCLUSIONS

The experience of domestic and family violence is a reality for many members of LGBTIQ communities across New South Wales. However, these individuals are likely to experience substantial barriers in accessing informal and formal sources of support, including specialist LGBTIQ service providers.

The results of the survey indicate that a significant number of LGBTIQ participants had experienced one or more forms of domestic violence in a current and/or previous relationship. The most common forms of domestic violence reported by participants were verbal, emotional and social abuse, with a small number of participants experiencing physical, sexual, and/or financial abuse.

18.4% of participants reported that their partner had socially isolated them on at least one occasion and exclusion from LGBTIQ community, friends and/or family caused respondents to feel removed from sources of informal support and broader support networks.

Many participants expressed difficulties in recognising their current or former partner's behaviour as domestic violence, and called for greater education and promotion within LGBTIQ communities of the existence of domestic violence, particularly in its non-physical forms.

In addition to ways domestic violence manifests in non-LGBTIQ relationships, some participants were exposed to types of abuse unique to LGBTIQ relationships. These include the use of threats to 'out' the victim to their social networks; efforts to isolate the victim from the LGBTIQ community; and the exertion of pressure to stop victims expressing their identity or lived body experience as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex and/or queer.

This survey is one of very few that explore the transgender, gender diverse and intersex experience of domestic violence. It is hoped that future studies will build on the information gained in this survey. The results of this survey indicate that domestic violence is a very real issue effecting these specific populations, all of which have been largely excluded from community awareness campaigns.

The findings of the survey in relation to the reluctance of LGBTIQ individuals to report incidents of domestic violence to police, is consistent with previous research. Unsurprisingly, the majority of participants who had experienced domestic violence had not made a police report. The decision not to report was motivated by several factors, including fear of police, a concern that they would not be believed or treated with dignity, and a view that the abuse was not serious enough to report. This was particularly common amongst transgender, gender diverse and intersex respondents. These barriers to reporting need to be addressed with urgency by the NSW Police Force.

It was also found that significant barriers and deterrents to accessing support continue to be faced by members of the LGBTIQ community. In addition to a lack of awareness of specialist LGBTIQ services, barriers included financing issues and access to appropriate counselling; fear of the abuse escalating; expecting discrimination from service providers; and the unavailability of appropriate services (particularly in regional areas). Many participants, however, signified a desire to obtain important information from appropriate websites and gain support from informal support networks. These networks can and should be further strengthened.

Emotional and verbal abuse was the most common reported form of abuse in current relationships. Current and previous Australian domestic violence awareness campaigns have generally focused on examples of physical violence as domestic violence and this finding highlights a need for greater community awareness of emotional and verbal abuse including how to recognise it, its impact on relationship health and where to go for support.

Service providers and sector workers need to be aware of the unique context of domestic and family violence within LGBTIQ relationships, as 11% of respondents reported that their current partner had used sexuality as a means of control. 12.8% of transgender, gender diverse and intersex respondents reported their current partners used their gender identity, gender expression or intersex trait/s to put them down and as a means of control at least once.

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Community and chosen familial structures are particularly significant for LGBTIQ people, and inclusive, appropriate and culturally safe service delivery must reflect this unique cultural context.

In relation to the experience of families and children, 62.4% of survey respondents living with children reported that these children were living with them at the time of the abuse, 26.6% of these participants reported that children had witnessed the abuse.

Further education on inclusive language is necessary, and acknowledgement and understanding that LGBTIQ communities are not homogenous and particularly that people connecting as LGBTIQ may or may not be in a same-gender relationship. Services must ensure they use inclusive, appropriate and affirming language in order to welcome transgender, gender diverse and intersex people, and not marginalise them further.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey results the following recommendations have been made:

## 1. Education and prevention within LGBTIQ communities

- 1.1. Increased community awareness relating to the prevalence and dynamics of domestic violence in LGBTIQ relationships. Efforts should be focussed on non-physical forms of domestic violence, including verbal, emotional, psychological and social abuse.
- 1.2. Increased community education, prevention and early intervention approaches relating to LGBTIQ people who use violence in their relationships.
- 1.3. Increased awareness and dedicated research exploring the dynamics of sexual assault in LGBTIQ relationships and the use of sexual coercion, particularly within gay male communities.
- 1.4. Resourcing for community-driven, targeted campaigns to raise awareness of domestic and family violence in LGBTIQ relationships. This includes the development of appropriate media guides to assist in the reporting and social discourse of domestic and family violence in LGBTIQ relationships.
- 1.5. Resourcing for community-driven, primary prevention interventions to address violence in LGBTIQ relationships before it happens.
- 1.6. Research into best practice approaches to tackle the stigma associated with domestic and family violence victimisation and challenging the fear and shame that prevent some people seeking support.
- 1.7. Cross agency approaches to build safer, connected LGBTIQ communities that clearly name domestic and family violence and provide appropriate support to people affected by intimate partner violence.
- 1.8. Education and tools to equip supportive friends and family members with key messages and referral options that help them to engage as active bystanders in order to ease access into appropriate support services.

- 1.9. Inclusion of models of healthy LGBTIQ relationships in schools (such as the Love Bites Program).

- 1.10. Inclusion of homophobia and transphobia and their intersection with domestic and family violence in anti-bullying and anti-violence initiatives in schools.

## 2. Support Services

- 2.1. Better promotion of specialist LGBTIQ support services so that individuals affected by domestic and family violence can access the range of services they need. The promotion of services for gay men, transgender and intersex people affected by domestic and family violence is particularly needed.
- 2.2. Ongoing training and support for mainstream domestic and family violence services, the justice sector and the human service sector to enable LGBTIQ people affected by violence in their relationships to access culturally safe support in their chosen support service.
- 2.3. Enhanced availability of affordable or free, culturally safe, trauma-centred counselling.
- 2.4. Specific resourcing for the national QLife counselling service so that counsellors have specialised skills in trauma-centred approaches and can work with LGBTIQ people affected by domestic and family violence.
- 2.5. Safe crisis support options for gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer men, including accommodation options.
- 2.6. Ongoing partnership work with mainstream peak and state-wide women's domestic and family violence and sexual violence organisations to improve responses to lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer women affected by domestic and family violence.
- 2.7. Increased services based in or near rural and regional areas for LGBTIQ people and families affected by domestic and family violence.



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- 2.8. Resourcing for transgender and intersex community-based organisations to work in partnership with mainstream services to improve responses to the specific needs of transgender and intersex people affected by domestic and family violence.
  - 2.9. Develop further mainstream and specialist LGBTIQ service providers to better understand the needs of diverse LGBTIQ families.
  - 2.10 Increase funding to the Inner City Legal Centre's Safe Relationships Project (SRP). The SRP provides court support to victims of domestic violence. Increased capacity of the SRP will ensure better justice outcomes for LGBTIQ victims of domestic violence.
  - 2.11. Safe, culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are in a same-gender relationship, are transgender, two spirit, sistergirl, brotherboy or may or may not identify as LGBTIQ.
- 3. Further research to be undertaken**
- 3.1. Specialised research and consultation driven by transgender and intersex community-based organisations to build on this evidence base into the specific needs of transgender, gender diverse and intersex people affected by domestic and family violence.
  - 3.2. Research on the experiences of domestic, family and carer abuse for LGBTIQ people over 60 years. A particular focus of such research could be perpetrators' use of threats to withhold, or actual withholding of, medication and/or treatment for a chronic illness, such as HIV and other medical conditions, and economic abuse.
  - 3.3. Specific, sensitive and culturally safe research exploring the dynamics of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the impacts and intersections of homophobia, transphobia and discrimination within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
  - 3.4. Research on the experiences of the LGBTIQ culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations driven in partnership by community-based organisations.
  - 3.5. Inclusion of LGBTIQ people and families in the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS).
  - 3.6. Further research in partnership with youth peak bodies to determine the experiences of young LGBTIQ people in the family context and in early relationships.
  - 3.7. Partnership research between national researchers and community based organisations on specific aspects of LGBTIQ people's experiences of domestic, family and sexual violence including prevention, early intervention and the intersections of violence, discrimination and abuse in relationships.
  - 3.8. Meaningful and accurate inclusion of LGBTIQ relationships in national, randomised research into domestic and family violence prevalence. This means asking questions that engage the spectrum of identities and relationships that connect under the LGBTIQ banner.



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## **NSW Police Force**

- 1.11.** Consistent and meaningful inclusion of LGBTIQ awareness and sensitivity training for all DVLOs, GLLOs, general duties officers and senior officers who authorise police-initiated ADVOs.
- 1.12.** Continued promotion of the NSW Police Force's policies and practices relating to LGBTIQ people affected by domestic and family violence.
- 1.13.** A continuation of the work undertaken by the NSW Police Force and the LGBTIQ DV Interagency, promoting a clear message about reporting LGBTIQ domestic and family violence to police.
- 1.14.** In consultation with transgender and intersex populations, the development and adoption by the of NSW Police Force of statistical reporting policies and practices that specifically target these communities.
- 1.19.** Exploration of best practice approaches for supporting LGBTIQ people who may face barriers to reporting DFV to Police and accessing mainstream and specialist services.
- 1.20.** Inclusion of LGBTIQ people and families affected by domestic and family violence into the planned Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children.
- 1.21.** Partnerships between LGBTIQ community organisations and Our Watch, the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children to ensure that primary prevention strategies include LGBTIQ people and to explore potential work on specific prevention strategies and approaches within LGBTIQ communities.

## **Policy**

- 1.15.** A specific strategy in the NSW Government's It Stops Here response for LGBTIQ people and their families developed in consultation with relevant community organisations and reflecting the diversity of LGBTIQ communities.
- 1.16.** Development of specific policies relating to the experiences and appropriate justice system responses to LGBTIQ people in the NSW Government's Domestic Violence Justice Strategy, created through a process of ongoing consultation and work between community organisations and the NSW Department of Justice.
- 1.17.** An appropriate LGBTIQ community organisation advocate for any LGBTIQ person whose case is referred to a Safety Action Meeting in NSW.
- 1.18.** Specific training on the needs of LGBTIQ people and families affected by DFV for all services (government and non-government) and agencies participating in risk assessment and safety planning under the It Stops Here strategy.

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# APPENDIX I

## NSW LGBTIQ Relationships Survey

Welcome to the 2nd NSW survey of LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer) people and relationships.

### **What is it?**

At the 2006 Mardi Gras Fair Day, the Same Sex Domestic Violence Working Group ran the very first survey looking at domestic violence in same-sex relationships in NSW. It found that one in three people surveyed had experienced some kind of abuse in their current or previous relationship.

Six years on, the NSW LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency wants to build on this and get a better picture of intimate partner abuse in our relationships.

### **Who is it for?**

You must be over 16 and live in NSW to complete the survey. This is an online survey about issues specific to people of diverse gender, sex and/or sexuality in NSW.

### **How long will it take?**

The survey should take about 20 minutes. Most questions can be answered by selecting the appropriate answer, although there are some places where you can provide more information if you choose.

If you do give us more information and it is used in the final report, any details which might identify you or anyone else will be removed. The survey begins by asking about you and your life. It then asks you to think about your significant intimate relationships and any experiences with support services. Please try to answer these questions as honestly as possible.

### **Why should I do it?**

The information we gather from this survey will help community, health and other support services better understand and respond to the needs of people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender in NSW who are experiencing abuse in their relationships. We will publish the results on the LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency website [www.anothercloset.com.au](http://www.anothercloset.com.au) as well as on ACON's Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project webpage.

### **We will not**

- gather any personal or identifying information about you or your IP address.
- share your personal survey responses – only specifically authorised staff working on the project will have password access to the data during the process of compiling the results.
- contact you (unless you give us your email address at the end of the survey to be entered in the draw for \$100 voucher or you request a copy of the results once they have been compiled).

### **Safety concerns?**

Every page of this survey has an “exit the survey” button”. Should you wish to end the survey at any time before completion, you simply click that button. The survey will close. If you are concerned that someone might be monitoring your internet usage and you want more information about how to clear your browser, visit <http://www.anothercloset.com.au/how-to-keep-your-visit-to-this/>

### **Needing support?**

We recognise that some of the questions in this survey may be confronting. For more information about violence and abuse in LGBTIQ relationships and support options, visit the Another Closet website at [www.anothercloset.com.au](http://www.anothercloset.com.au)

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## START

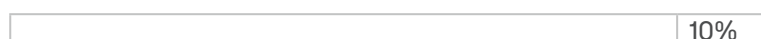
If you have read and understand the information on previous pages, please click “next” to begin the survey. In doing so, you are giving your consent for the researchers to use the data gathered from your responses to collate findings and make broad recommendations based on statistics and evidence.

### Are you over 16 and do you live in NSW?

☐ Yes

☐ No

## DISQUALIFICATION PAGE

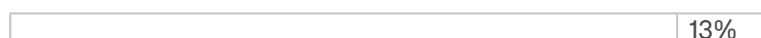


Thank you for your interest.

Unfortunately we can only collect survey responses from people who are over 16 and live in NSW.

If you are interested in the results of this survey please email [ssdv@acon.org.au](mailto:ssdv@acon.org.au) and we will send you a copy of the results when they are available.

## ABOUT YOU - SEX / GENDER



### Do you identify as...

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Intersex

☐ Transgender (identifying as male)

☐ Transgender (identifying as female)

☐ Other

I identify as...

---

## ABOUT YOU - SEXUALITY

	17%
--	-----

Do you identify as...

- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Other

I identify as...

## PARTICIPANT AGE GROUP

	20%
--	-----

Which age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 16 - 25
- ☐ 26 - 35
- ☐ 36 - 45
- ☐ 46 - 55
- ☐ 56 - 65
- ☐ 66 - 75
- ☐ 76 - 85
- ☐ 86 or over

## CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

	23%
--	-----

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander?

- ☐ Yes, Aboriginal
- ☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- ☐ Yes, both
- ☐ No

**With which ethnic background do you identify most strongly?**

< drop down menu

Other (please specify)

**Which language do you speak the most at home?**

**YOUR LIVING SITUATION**

27%

**1. Who do you live with? (Select all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I live alone   | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents or relatives       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partner        | <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate(s)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My children    | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend(s)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other children | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/> |

**Where do you live? Please name the city or town you live in, or the closest one to you.**

**If you do not live in a city or town: how far do you live from the nearest city or town stated in the previous question?**

- ☐ less than 5 km
- ☐ 5-10
- ☐ 10-25
- ☐ 25-50
- ☐ more than 50 km
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**CHILDREN?**

30%

---

**Do you have children (biological or non)?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN**

33%

**How old are they? (Put the number of children in that age bracket in each box)**

☐ 5 or under

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-15

☐ 16 or over

**Do they live with you?**

☐ Yes, they live with me all the time

☐ Yes, they live with me sometimes

☐ Some live with me and some do not

☐ No

☐ Other (please specify)

**ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**

37%

**Are you in a relationship now?**

**(By relationship we mean partner, spouse or other intimate relationship - you may live together or separately. If you have more than one relationship, tell us about the main one.)**

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other



---

## OTHER BEHAVIOURS

	47%
--	-----

**Has your partner used any other controlling behaviour towards you?**  
(Eg. Monitored your phone or internet access, threatened to stop you getting access to your children, denied you access to medical treatment or health care.)

--

**Anything you want to add?**

--

**Has your partner ever stalked you?**  
(Eg. followed you, sent you texts, emails, phonecalls or used social media to check up on you or harass you?)

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Often

**Has your partner ever been physically aggressive towards you?**  
(Eg. kicked, slapped or thrown things at you)

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Often

---

## PHYSICAL INJURIES



**Has your partner ever physically hurt you?**  
(Eg. assaulted, strangled or caused any physical injury to you.)

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Often

**Did you seek treatment for your injuries?**

- ☐ Yes - once
- ☐ Yes - more than once
- ☐ No, never

Anything else you want to tell us?

## HIV AND CHRONIC ILLNESS



**1. If you are HIV positive, has your partner ever threatened to or limited your access to treatment or medications?**

- ☐ Yes, threatened to
- ☐ Yes, my partner has made it hard, or prevented me from taking my medication
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not HIV+

---

**If you have any other chronic illness or require regular medication has your partner ever stopped you from taking your medication?**

- ☐ Yes, threatened to
- ☐ Yes, my partner has made it hard, or prevented me from taking my medication
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't have a chronic illness

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about medications

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

57%

If you want to talk to someone about sexual violence,  
call NSW Rape Crisis line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
1800 424 017

**Has your current partner ever pressured you to engage in sexual acts, to read or watch pornographic material or take part in sexual behaviour/acts that you weren't comfortable with?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Often

**Has your partner ever raped you? (Eg. forced you to engage in sexual activity with them or someone else when you did not want to do so)**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Often

---

Anything else you want to say?

**CONTROL OF YOUR EXPRESSION OF YOUR SEXUALITY**

60%

**Has your partner ever used your sexuality as a means of control or to put you down? (Eg - told you to be more straight-acting, called you names like “faggot” or “dyke” in a derogatory way, withheld affection or tried to control the way you expressed your sexuality.)**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Often

**Has your partner ever been abusive or controlled you in any other way?**

**FOR PEOPLE OF SEX, INTERSEX OR GENDER DIVERSITY**

63%

**Are you transgender, intersex, genderqueer, sistergirl/brotherboy, androgynous, asexual, gender or sex diverse?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Anything you want to say?

## GENDER AND SEX DIVERSITY QUESTIONS

67%

If you are transgender and want to speak to someone about what you have experienced you can contact the Transgender Anti-Violence Project on 1800 069 115 or visit <http://tavp.org.au>

Has your current partner ever...	Not applicable	Never	Once	A few times	Regularly	Often
Ridiculed, disrespected or made you feel ashamed of your gender identity? (Eg. used the wrong pronoun, made derogatory comments such as "you're a man in a dress", withheld affection or tried to control the way you express your identity)						
Ridiculed, disrespected or made you feel ashamed of your sex anatomy?						
Demanded that you present in a certain gender (eg clothing, appearance)?						
Stopped you from having treatment that you need to express your gender identity?						
Insisted that you have treatment so that you fit their or other perceptions/ expectations of being more clearly male or female?						
Stopped you from being able to express your gender identity through the words you choose to describe yourself (eg. the name and pronouns you use)?						
Stopped you from being able to express your intersex as a way of describing yourself?						
Ridiculed, disrespected or made you feel ashamed because you are anatomically different?						
Drew attention to or ridiculed parts of your body?						
Insisted you act more male or female because they think you appear to be neither?						
Used inappropriate pronouns or other intimidating language when you do not dress as clearly male /female?						
Ridiculed, disrespected or made you feel ashamed of other identities such as genderqueer, sistergirl/brotherboy, androgynous, asexual?						

---

**MORE DETAILS - IF THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU, CLICK NEXT**

	70%
--	-----

The following questions are about all forms of the abuse you have mentioned in the previous questions.

**How long has this been happening?**  
**(Please indicate the total duration of all types of abuse)**

☐ Less than 6 Months

☐ 6 months - 2 years

☐ 2 - 5 years

☐ 6 - 10 years

If longer, please tell us how many years

--

**Has it stopped now and if so, how long ago?**  
**(Please indicate when all of the types of abuse/violence stopped).**

☐ Yes, it has stopped and we are still together

☐ Yes, it has stopped and we are not still together

☐ No, it has stopped and we are still together

☐ No, it has stopped and we not still together

**3. Were children living with you when the abuse was occurring?**

☐ Yes, they witnessed some of the abuse

☐ Yes, but they did not witness the abuse

☐ No

Anything you want to say about children and the abuse?

--

---

**Did anyone else witness the abuse? If so please give details.**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**PAST RELATIONSHIPS/EXPERIENCES**

	73%
--	-----

**Apart from a current relationship, since the age of 15, have you ever been in an emotionally abusive relationship?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please give us more details if you feel comfortable to do so

**Was the relationship...?**

☐ Heterosexual

☐ Same-sex

**ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT PAST RELATIONSHIPS?**

	77%
--	-----

Please give us more information if you are comfortable to do so.



---

## SUPPORTING FRIENDS

	80%
--	-----

**Would you be willing to support a LGBTIQ friend who has experienced domestic violence or intimate partner abuse?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

**What sort of actions would you be willing to offer? (select as many as apply)**

- ☐ Emotional Support.
- ☐ Contact services or support systems for them.
- ☐ Offer to go with them to support services, appointments or court.
- ☐ Provide financial assistance if necessary.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Do you know that specialist support services exist for LGBTIQ people experiencing domestic or intimate partner violence?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**What services or supports would you advise an LGBTIQ friend experiencing domestic violence to**

--

**Are there any services you would like to be available to someone in an abusive relationship (or for friends or family supporting someone) that don't currently exist?**

--

---

Is there anything you would like to see changed or improved?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

### ACCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES



If you live rurally or regionally would you prefer to access specialist LGBTIQ services in the centre closest to you or would you be more likely to access local mainstream services within your community?

- ☐ Specialist LGBTIQ services in my closest city in person.
- ☐ Specialist LGBTIQ services in my closest city by phone/email.
- ☐ Local mainstream services in person.
- ☐ Local mainstream services by phone/email.
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about accessing support services?

---

## SEEKING HELP - THE POLICE



**If you have experienced abuse by a current or previous partner did you report it to the NSW Police?**

- ☐ Yes, I did report it to NSW police
- ☐ No, I did not report it to NSW police
- ☐ No, I reported it to police in another state
- ☐ I have never experienced domestic or family violence in my relationship

If you did not report it to NSW police, please tell us why.



**If you reported it to NSW police, what year was it reported?**

**If you reported it to NSW police, were they helpful?**

- ☐ No not at all
- ☐ Yes somewhat
- ☐ Yes extremely

Please give us more details

---

## SEEKING FORMAL AND INFORMAL SUPPORT

	93%
--	-----

**Did you seek support, information or advice from anyone, either when it happened or afterwards, in relation to the abuse in your current or previous relationship? (select as many as apply)**

- ☐ Yes when it happened
- ☐ Yes afterwards
- ☐ No

If no, why not? Is there anything you want to add?

--

**Where did you go to seek informal support? (Select as many as apply)**

- ☐ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ) friend/s
- ☐ Other friend/s
- ☐ Family member/s
- ☐ People I work with
- ☐ Neighbour/s
- ☐ Teacher

Other (please give more details)

--

**Where did you go to seek formal support and how helpful was it? (select as many as apply)**

	N/A	Never	Once	A few times	Regularly	Often
Social supports – religious or community group, youth service						
Specialist violence services – refuges, domestic violence services, sexual assault services						
LGBTIQ community services eg. The Gender Centre, Organisation Intersex International Australia (OI), ACON, Anti Violence Project, Twenty10, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) etc.						
Doctor, health professional, hospital etc.						
Mainstream face-to-face counsellor – eg. Relationships Australia.						
LGBTIQ face-to-face counsellor.						
Other counsellor – private practitioner, school or religious counsellor.						
Mainstream phone counselling – eg. Lifeline.						
Specialist phone counselling – eg. Domestic Violence Line, Men's Line, Sexual Assault helpline.						
LGBTIQ phone counselling – Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service						
Accommodation – Department of Housing, shelter, emergency accommodation etc.						
General legal services – Legal Aid, lawyer, etc.						
Specialist legal services – Safe Relationships Project, Inner City Legal Centre, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Aboriginal Legal Service etc						
LGBTIQ websites – ACON, Another Closet, Pink Sofa etc.						
Other websites						
Other (please specify)						

---

Is there anyone or anywhere else you went to for help?

What would have been more/most helpful to you at that time?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the support you received?

**ANYTHING ELSE?**

97%

Is there anything else you want to say about intimate partner abuse in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer relationships?

Please tell us how you found out about this study?

# APPENDIX II

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