



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) IN THE BLACK LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

IPV Rates among LGBTQ Survivors

Bisexual and lesbian women experience higher rates of physical violence, rape, and/or stalking¹ by an intimate partner, with about 61% and 44% respectively compared to 35% of heterosexual women (Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013).

Compared to 29% of heterosexual men, 37% of bisexual men and 26% of gay men have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner (Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013).

Transgender folks experience disproportionate rates of IPV² and with greater severity. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that 54% of transgender people had experienced IPV at some point in their lives (James et al., 2016). Compared to 18% of people in the U.S., 24% of transgender folks reported severe physical violence by an intimate partner (James et al., 2016).

Transgender women are more likely to experience violence and harassment by an intimate partner than survivors with other gender identities. Specifically, they found transgender women were 2x more likely to experience online harassment, 2.5x more likely to experience financial violence, and 2.5x more likely to be stalked by an intimate partner than non-transgender women (NCAVP, 2017).

¹ Stalking- is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim (CDC)



Rates and Severity of IPV in the Black Community

62% of LGBTQ IPV survivors are people of color. (NCAVP, n.d.)

Black LGBTQ survivors are nearly twice as likely to experience physical violence from an intimate partner compared to those who do not identify as Black and LGBTQ (APA, 2019).

Recent studies have found that over 70% of Black LGBTQ survivors reported experiencing physical violence from an intimate partner (NCAVP, n.d.)

Black LGBTQ survivors are injured at nearly 1.5x the rate of those who do not identify as Black and LGBTQ (APA, 2019).

² Intimate partner violence (IPV)- A pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners (Ujima website)



100% of the IPV related homicides of transgender and gender non-binary people in 2016 were people of color, a majority of whom were Black (NCAVP, 2017).

Black LGBTQ Youth Dating Violence

Black LGBTQ youth are at greater risk of experiencing physical and sexual dating violence, compared to non-LGBTQ white youth. According to a CDC study, 19% of Black LGBTQ youth have experienced physical dating violence compared to 6% of non-LGBTQ white youth and 14% of Black LGBTQ youth have experienced sexual dating violence³, compared to 8% of non-LGBTQ white youth (CDC, 2020).

Multiple Marginalized Identities and IPV

Black LGBTQ survivors have intersectional identities that have been historically marginalized, which may leave survivors vulnerable to polyvictimization (i.e., multiple or prolonged forms of traumatic victimizations; Sherman et al., 2020) and increases the risk for repeated victimizations throughout their lifetime (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007).

IPV is more deadly for LGBTQ people of color with an HIV positive status. In 2016, 60% of the LGBTQ and HIV affected victims of intimate partner homicides were people of color. Among the LGBTQ and HIV affected people of color, a majority (nearly 67%) of the homicide victims were Black (NCAVP, 2017).

³ Dating violence- occurs between two people in a close relationship and includes physical, sexual violence, emotional/psychological abuse, and stalking. It is a pattern of behaviors one person uses to gain and maintain power and control over their partner. It can occur in person or electronically and might occur between a current or former partner (Love is Respect-NDVH).

LGBTQ survivors in the Black community are more likely to experience economic hardship, typically leaving them without health insurance or paid leave benefits. Less access to economic resources increases reliance on intimate partners for survival and increases the risks of Black LGBTQ survivors (HRC, 2020b).

Racism, internalized homophobia, and discrimination has been found to increase the likelihood of IPV for Gay and Bisexual Men (Stephenson & Finneran, 2017).

Black same-sex couples have poverty rates more than 2x the rate of married different-sex couples (Badgett, Durso & Schneebaum, 2013).

LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ immigrants experience police violence at disproportionate rates compared to people who do not share those identities (NCAVP, 2017).

LGBTQ people of color are more likely to sustain injuries, require medical attention, experience harassment, or face anti-LGBTQ bias as a result of IPV (NCAVP, n.d.).





Barriers to Help-Seeking and Intervention

The intersection of marginalized identities can leave Black LGBTQ survivors vulnerable to sanctuary trauma. Sanctuary trauma results from seeking help in a setting with the expectation that the setting is safe and welcoming, however the setting is unsafe and the survivor experiences more trauma (Silver, 1986 as cited by Bloom, 2000).

Black LGBTQ survivors face formidable barriers to accessing resources for support in experiencing IPV. Systemic racism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia make it less likely for Black survivors to involve law enforcement or seek help from mainstream service providers for fear of bias, discrimination, and the possibility of state-sanctioned violence (NCAVP, 2017).

The Black LGBTQ Community Survey found that, during healthcare visits over the past three years, about 19% of Black LGBTQ folks experienced racial discrimination, 15% experienced sexual orientation discrimination, and 30% of transgender adults experienced gender identity-based discrimination (HRC, 2020a).



Black same-sex couples have poverty rates more than 2x the rate of married different-sex couples

(Badgett, Durso & Schneebaum, 2013).

A 2017 NCAVP study found that survivors with multiple marginalized identities, such as LGBTQ youth and people of color, were more likely to report fear about reporting IPV to the police or mainstream service providers based on the history of violence and discrimination toward their communities (NCAVP, 2017).

Black survivors and transgender people of color experience higher rates of threats and intimidation from abusive partners, police violence, physical violence, and/or transphobic abuse when reporting IPV to the police (NCAVP, n.d.)

There are very limited services available specifically for Black LGBTQ folks. Many domestic violence shelters operate with heteronormative beliefs that IPV exclusively impacts cisgender women who have been abused by cisgender men (NCAVP, 2017).



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This publication is supported by Grant No. 09EV0432 awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Family Violence Prevention and Services Administration. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.