INTRODUCTION

- GLBT populations vulnerable to marginalization and devaluation in society

  GLBT same-sex relationships fall within the category of intimate partnerships

  GLBT relationships constitute a nontraditional family with a legal status and protection that varies greatly from state to state

  - Gay marriage or same-sex marriage is extremely controversial
  - Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender partner abuse is difficult to reconcile due to societal preconceptions about a battered victim and relationship expectations
RACE/ETHNICITY OF GLBT CALLERS IN 2007

- African American 16%
- Asian/Pacific Islanders 5%
- Native American 3%
- Arab/Middle Easterners <1%
- White 46%
- Latina/o 29%

*The majority of callers who utilize the GLBT domestic violence hotline are white; yet diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds are also represented in the population* (Adapted from NCAVP, 2008)
STATISTICS

• Estimates suggest that 10 percent of the population is homosexual
• Approximately 300,000 same-sex couples and almost 1.2 million gay and lesbian adults registered in the 2000 U.S. Census
• The numbers represent a 300 percent increase
• As many as 5.7 million individuals from same-sex relationships report being either a victim or perpetrator of intimate partner abuse
DEFINITIONS

- **GLBT**—is an acronym for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (or trans) individuals. Sometimes written as LGBT.
  - GLBT used as a demographic category, similar to race/ethnicity, sex, disability. Used so that large numbers of people who have major characteristics in common, although they are certainly not “the same,” can be identified.

- **Lesbian**—Lesbian is a woman whose sexual orientation is to other women.

- **Gay male**—Gay male refers to a man whose sexual orientation is to other men.

- **Gay and homosexual**—Gay and homosexual are often used interchangeably to refer to either gay males or lesbian females.
  - Gay is a preferred term as it is associated with the acceptance of one’s status.
LESBIAN INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE

• One definition for describing lesbian intimate partner abuse defines it as a pattern of violent (or) coercive behaviors whereby a lesbian seeks to control the thoughts, beliefs, or conduct of (an) intimate partner or to punish the intimate for resisting the perpetrator’s control

• Definition is purposefully broad and encompasses any form of conduct that may be used by a bisexual or lesbian woman to control her partner

• Defining bisexual and lesbian women partner abuse differentiates it from heterosexual partner abuse and brings attention to the fact that partner abuse is experienced by the lesbian community
GAY MALE INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE

• Refers to any unwanted physical force, psychological abuse, or material or property damage inflicted by one man on another

• Persons in same-sex and transgender relationships define intimate partner abuse in ways similar to heterosexual abuses
PREVALENCE OF ABUSE

• Experts agree that GLBT relationship abuse is a serious problem in gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender relationships
• Recently recognized as a social issue
• Almost 1,000 new cases of domestic abuse support for victims were opened in New York City
• 1,000 one-time emergency assistance situations
• 23 to 29 percent of the reported cases involve lesbian victimization
• Abuse within same-sex partnerships is similar to the rate of heterosexual domestic abuse:
  • Approximately one in every four relationships
• California’s report of incidents puts the state in the forefront of reporting GLBT partner abuse
  • Account for 70 percent of the national total of domestic abuse incidents
GAY MALE SURVIVORS

• Intimate partner abuse is the third leading health problem facing gay men today, second to substance abuse and AIDS
• Additional problems for these victims are the silence about same sex battering and the risk of a homophobic response
• These factors contribute to the tendency for gay and bisexual men not to report intimate partner abuse
• Gay men and bisexual men are likely to deny or minimize the abuse that is perpetrated against them
• 15 percent of males who self-report being in a same sex relationship also report having been victimized by a male partner
Lesbian Survivors

- Recent reports document that intimate partner abuse does occur in lesbian relationships.
- Approximately one lesbian is abused every minute of every day in the United States.
- Emotional abuse has been documented as occurring in up to 90 percent of lesbian relationships.
- Estimates on sexual abuse within lesbian relationships have varied widely, from 7 to 50 percent.
- The epidemic of intimate partner violence in the lesbian community remains largely hidden.
- Women in lesbian relationships also suffer from physical and psychological abuse at the hands of their partners.
FORMS OF ABUSE

- Same-sex intimate partner abuse is similar to heterosexual abuse in many ways.
- The forms of intimate partner abuse are inclusive of physical, sexual, emotional, economic, and identity abuse.
- It should be noted that a one-time assault may be considered a criminal act; however, it would not be considered abuse unless it is ongoing as part of a pattern to control the victim.
- Some intimate partner violence is severe; victims report the use of weapons such as firearms, bottles, vehicles, rope, and the use of an attack dog.
THREE TYPES OF ABUSIVE LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS

• Situational battering,
• Chronic battering, and
• Emotional or psychological battering
SITUATIONAL BATTERING

• Abuse is experienced only once or twice as a result of a crisis situation. This type of abusive relationship was found to be extremely rare, occurring in 8 percent of the abusive lesbian relationships.

• Situational violence has alternatively been labeled “common couple violence” because of a belief that it was more common than other forms of couple violence.

• Often consisting of low-level violence from both parties, situational violence differs from other types because there is a lack of desire to control the partner.
CHRONIC BATTERING

- Chronic lesbian battering represents the category of violence that typically escalates in its severity over time.
- Chronic lesbian battering relationships are characterized by two or more occurrences of physical violence that demonstrate increasingly destructive behavior.
- This form of lesbian partner violence is consistent with heterosexual women battering.
EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL BATTERING

- Emotional or psychological battering consists of verbal or psychological abuse rather than physical violence.
- Though emotional or psychological abuse is typically a component seen in chronic battering, it does not constitute criminal behavior.
- Emotional and psychological abuses include:
  - verbal abuses such as calling of names, criticizing, playing mind games, humiliating the partner, and reinforcing internalized homophobia.
FORMS OF ABUSE

• Physical Abuse
• Sexual Abuse
• Emotional/Psychological Abuse
• Economic Abuse
• Identity Abuse
IDENTITY ABUSE

• Unique to same-sex partnerships is identity abuse, which consists of the threat of “outing” and exposure to homophobia

• Outing is the act of exposing someone as a homosexual

• Concealment of the identity is a frequent method of coping with anticipated rejection by society

• Telling family, boss, or neighbors about a victim’s identity may jeopardize individual personal relationships and sometimes the victim’s job

• Threatening to “out” someone is a manipulative form of emotional abuse; it can cause anxiety and increase the victim’s isolation
THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

• Feminist Approach
• Psychological Model
• Social-Psychological Model
• Internalized Homophobia
PERPETRATORS IN GAY MALE RELATIONSHIPS

- Although battering in gay relationships is a largely unexplored issue, intimate abuse is not a gender issue
- A psychological framework is advocated for battering treatment
- From the individual approach to domestic abuse treatment is the assumption that violent responses are learned by an individual during his or her ontogenetic development
- The habit of reacting to conflict with abuse is a behavior that must be controlled prior to engaging in couples counseling
PERPETRATORS IN LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS

- The feminist model of power and control is often used to describe the context of battering within a lesbian relationship
- The same elements of hierarchy, power, ownership, entitlement, and control exist in lesbian as in non-lesbian relationships
- They have few supportive peer relationships
- Young lesbians are at risk of being trapped in abusive relationships with no role models and no resources
- While many similarities exist between lesbian offenders and heterosexual perpetrators, differences also exist
CHARACTERISTICS OF VIOLENT GAY MALES

1. Gay batterers are those who are unclear on the concept of masculinity
2. They choose to abuse their lovers
3. Their abuse is criminal
4. The conduct is a learned dysfunctional behavior
CRIMINAL JUSTICE INTERVENTIONS

- Services such as law enforcement are either not accessible or perceived as not accessible.
- Victim advocates charge officers with the failure to meet the needs of intimate abuse victims.
- Lesbian victims of partner crime feared that they would not receive protection from the police and that calling would expose them to increased victimization.
- Police refused to take a complaint in 5 percent of cases that were reported.
- The victim was arrested in 1 percent of the cases; and, in 20 percent of the cases, no arrest was made.
- In 12 percent of the cases, a complaint was taken and the offender was arrested.
- A mere 5 to 7 percent of lesbian victims called the police.
• Domestic abuse statutes provide definitions that vary from state to state
• Stemming from the failure to define partner violence as including same-sex relationships, the victims in some states do not receive domestic violence protection
• This lack of legal protection is evidenced in both the civil and criminal courts
• Whether gay men and lesbian women are protected from intimate partner violence depends on the state definition of what constitutes a domestic partner