

It's A Question of Integrity

Increasingly, domestic violence services and conferences are saying we are inclusive of abused elders and Lesbian, Gay male, Bisexual and/or Transgendered (LGBT) domestic violence victims.

Male Victims

In these populations:

- Approximately 41% of abuse in later life victims are male.¹
- Approximately half of LGBT domestic violence victims are male.²

At this (2003 WCADV conference), domestic violence victims who are male were:

- Categorically excluded from survivor scholarships: "WCADV organizational members may request one full conference scholarship (special scholarship) for a battered/formerly battered *woman* who might not otherwise be able to attend." [emphasis added]
- Banned from a special resource room for survivors: "A staffed, private hotel room will be available as a comfort and safety room for battered/formerly battered *women*." [emphasis added]
- Specifically addressed only in LGBT workshops (5 of them). Contrast that with 22 workshops explicitly addressing women only as victims and three explicitly addressing men only as batterers. One non-LGBT workshop *may* have considered adult male victims (2E, billed as addressing "screening men" in health care settings).

Female Perpetrators

In addition, in elder abuse and LGBT domestic violence populations:

- Approximately 39% of perpetrators of abuse in later life are female.³
- By definition, nearly all perpetrators of *Lesbian* domestic violence are female.

Yet at this conference,

- *NO* workshops explicitly address holding female batterers "accountable."
- The only workshop that even contemplates female batterers said it would address "*whether* and how women use force in intimate relationships," [emphasis added] and suggested at least some research showing women can be violent "ignores the context of women's use of force." (Contemplate your reaction when you imagine those phrases substituting "men" and men's" instead of "women" and "women's.")

¹ National Center on Elder Abuse, "A Response to the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults: The 2000 Survey of State Adult Protective Services," circa 2003.

² Several studies have shown that Gay men are battered roughly at the same rate as heterosexual women. Given that at least half the "LGBT" population is male, logically approximately half of LGBT DV victims must be male.

³ National Center on Elder Abuse, "A Response to the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults: The 2000 Survey of State Adult Protective Services," circa 2003.

The people who organize a "space," event, or service are the people who have *power over* those who seek to access that space, event, or service.

Those who are permitted to enjoy that space, event, or service have *privilege over* those who are not permitted in.

Are you comfortable with how *you* are using your *power* and *privilege* with regard to adult victims of domestic violence who are male, transgender, and/or victimized by women?

Do you need to consider your *own* complicity in supporting systems that ignore and deny the reality of some domestic violence victims? ("Supporting systems" can be as simple as not challenging a status quo.)

Do we need to rewrite our names and missions to avoid giving false hope to and revictimizing victims we really do not want to serve?

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(These are from a commonly-cited power and control wheel specific to Lesbian, Gay Male, Bisexual and Transgender people and from a commonly-cited power and control wheel specific to older people.)

- ✧ Excluding or denying access to others
- ✧ Using power to insure secrecy about the abuse
- ✧ Creating alliances against change or support
- ✧ Controlling what the person does, who he or she talks to, where he or she goes
- ✧ Understanding but failing to follow...safety recommendations
- ✧ Telling the person how lucky he or she is to have their help
- ✧ Using looks, actions, gestures to reinforce...control
- ✧ Ridiculing difficulties, worries and/or fears
- ✧ Putting you down
- ✧ Making you feel bad about yourself
- ✧ Humiliating you
- ✧ Questioning if you are a "real" [person's identity]
- ✧ Saying no one will believe you because of [your identity]
- ✧ Making light of the abuse
- ✧ Saying the abuse didn't happen
- ✧ Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior
- ✧ Accusing you of "mutual abuse"
- ✧ Saying women don't abuse
- ✧ Being the one to define each partner's place or duties in the relationship
- ✧ Interfering with work or education

Some power and control tactics to consider

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