

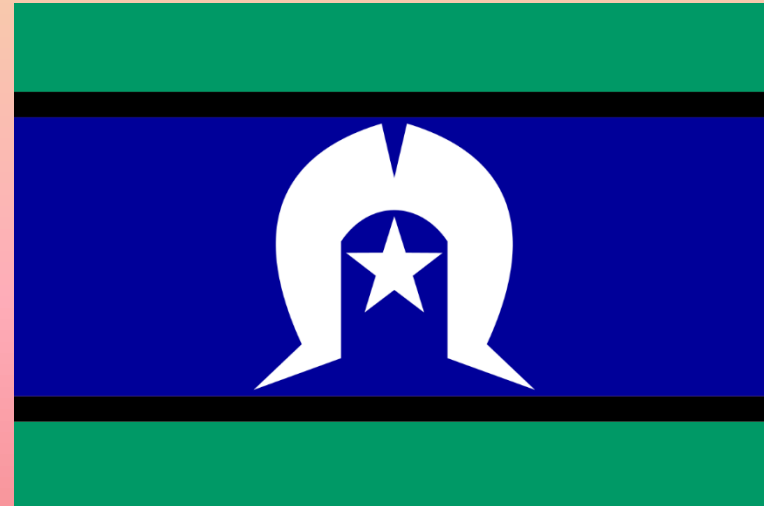
# Family and Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTIQ+ Relationships

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This presentation was developed on unceded Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung land.

I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

I extend that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today.



# FV, IPV and SA

This presentation will look at experiences of Family / Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault among LGBTIQ+ communities

Intimate partner violence refers to forms of violence (such as verbal, physical, sexual or psychological) that occur within the context of an intimate (a close, though not necessarily sexual) relationship, such as a marriage, a de facto partnership or other kinds of less formal relationships (OurWatch, 2014)

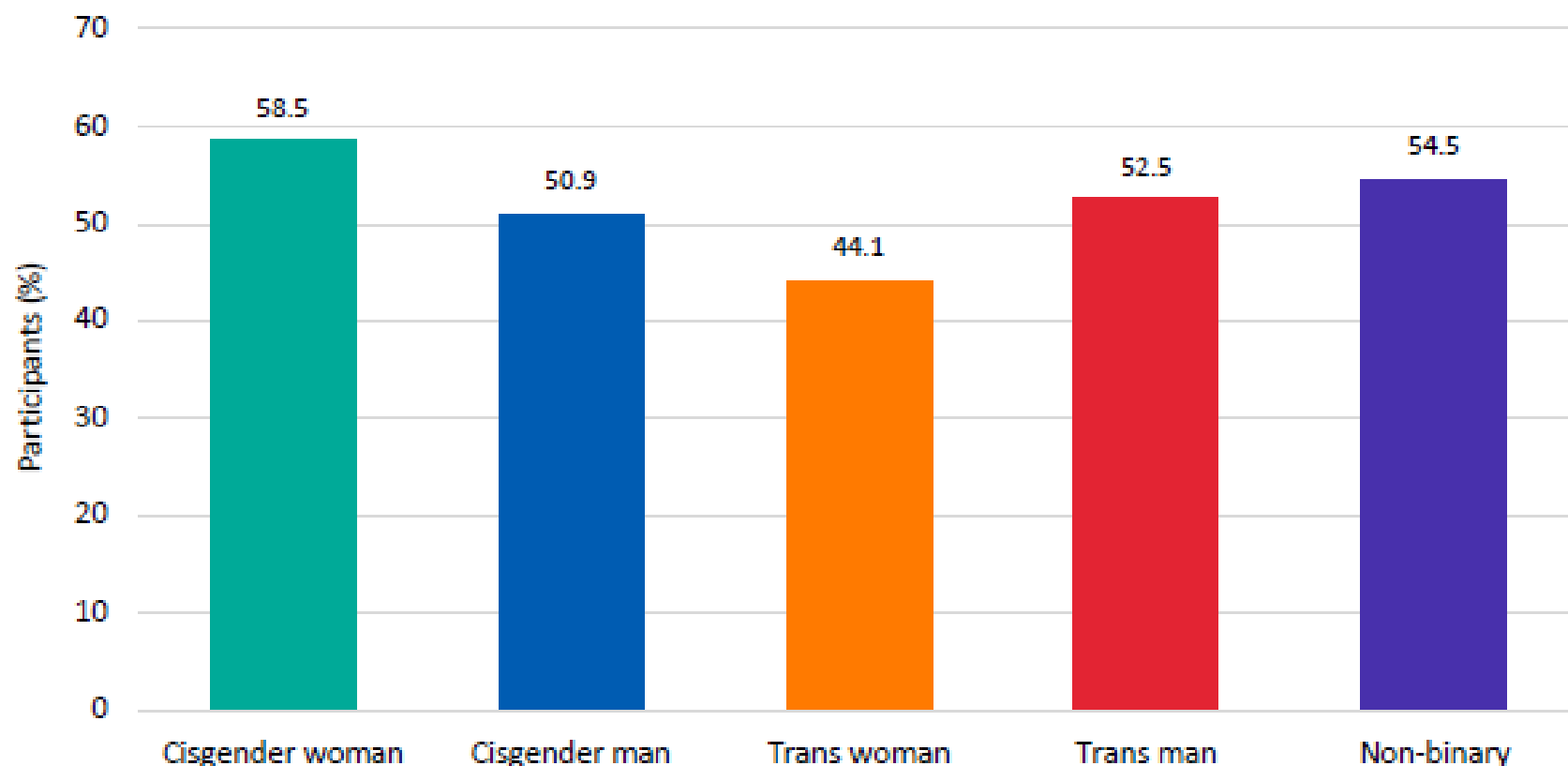
Family violence refers to forms of violence within a family, which may include immediate family, extended family or broader kinship networks. (Private Lives 3, 2020)

Sexual assault is any behavior that makes a person frightened, uncomfortable or threatened. It is sexual activity to which a person has not consented.

## 4.2 Current relationship status

Over half (54.4%; n = 3,715) of participants were in a committed romantic relationship/s, similar to the 55.3% in PL2. Of participants in a committed romantic relationship/s, seven in ten (67.5%; n = 2,505) reported cohabiting with their partner/s, closely resembling PL2 (71.7%).

Figure 2: In a relationship by gender (n = 6,777)



Almost six in ten cisgender women (58.5%; n = 1,725) reported currently being in a relationship/s, followed by non-binary participants (54.5%; n = 501), trans men (52.5%; n = 149), cisgender men (50.9%; n = 1,185) and trans women (44.1%; n = 132).

# Relationship Violence

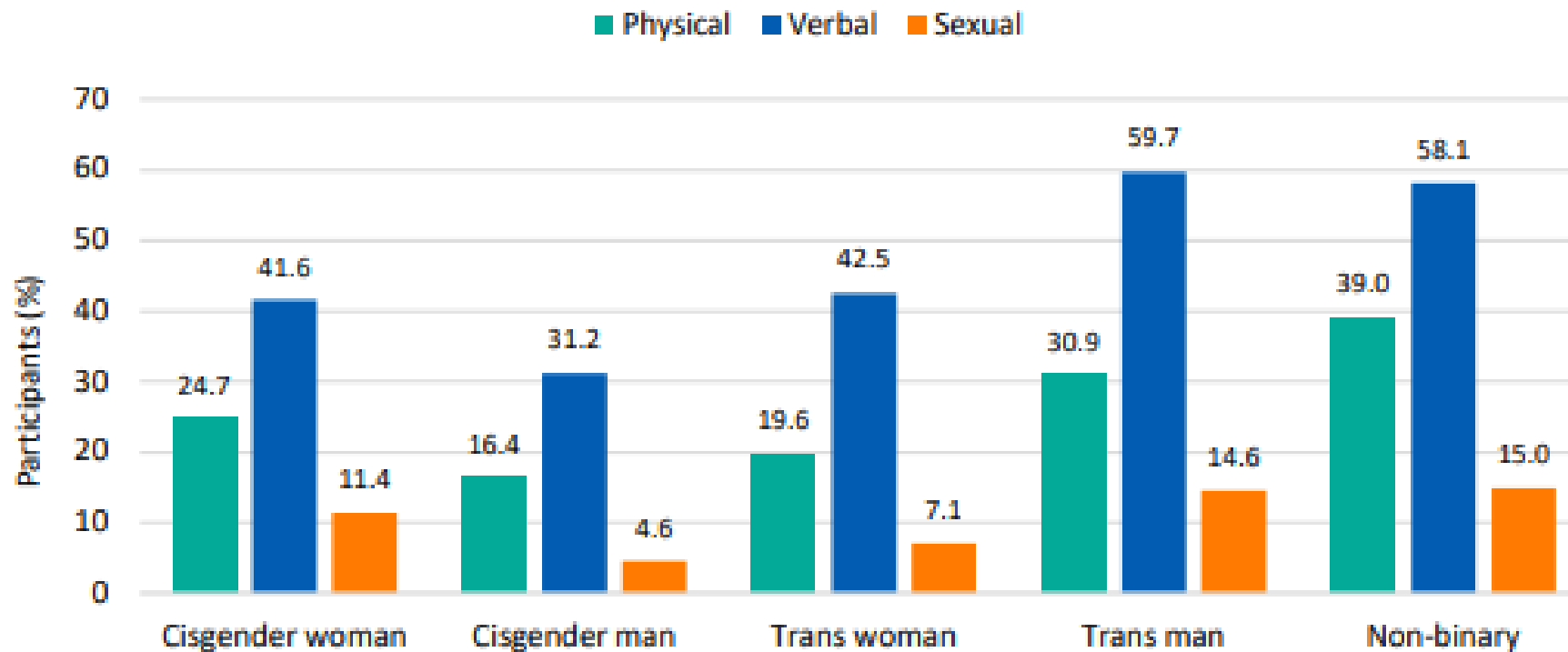
Table 31: Proportion of participants reporting ever being in an intimate relationship where they felt they were abused in some way by their partner/s (n = 6,820)

Intimate partner violence	Number	%
No	3,788	55.5
Yes, once	1,864	27.3
Yes, in more than one relationship	982	14.4
Don't know/not sure	186	2.7

- In a 2020 study, over half (54.4%) of LGBTIQ respondents reported they were currently in a 'committed romantic relationship'.
- More than 4 in 10 (41.7%) of participants reported ever having been in a relationship where they were abused in some way by their partner.
- Verbal abuse was the most common reported form of family violence, followed by LGBTIQ related abuse, emotional abuse, physical violence and sexual assault.
- **72% of respondents reported they did not report this abusive behavior to anyone**

# Violence from a family member, including family of origin

Figure 39: Proportion of participants ever experiencing physical, verbal and sexual violence from a family member, by gender (n = 6,146)



# Sexual Assault in LGBTIQ+ relationships

The most common perpetrators of sexual assault were former intimate partners, intimate partners, friends and casual encounters (hook ups).

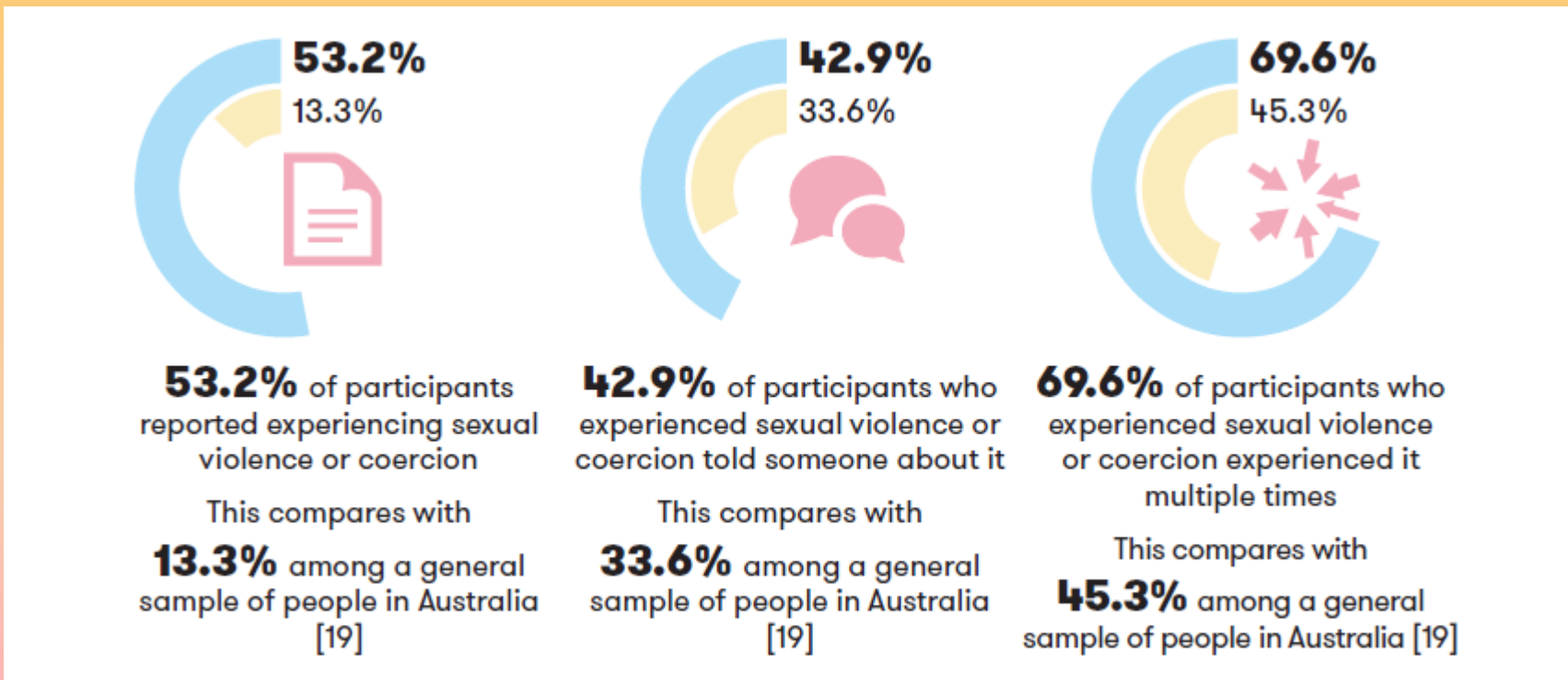
This is consistent with data concerning women's experiences of violence perpetrated by men:

*1 in 4 Australian women (23.0%) has experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner since age 15. (OurWatch)*

**Table 34: Relation of sexual assault perpetrator to participants (n = 3,309)**

Sexual assault perpetrator	Number	%
Former intimate partner	725	21.9
Intimate partner	641	19.4
Friend	642	19.4
Casual encounter (e.g., a hook-up)	632	19.1
Stranger	609	18.4
Another family member	135	4.1
Family-like relation	107	3.2
A co-worker or boss	93	2.8
Parent or guardian	90	2.7
Sibling	75	2.3
Someone in a professional setting	59	1.8
A sex work client	45	1.4
Someone else	184	5.6
Prefer not to say	62	1.9

# Sexual violence and coercion: TGD people



Excluding those who did not answer these questions, survey participants reported rates of sexual violence or coercion nearly four times higher than found in the general Australian public.



# Barriers for LGBTIQ+ people accessing support for FV/IPV and/or SA

## **Lack of inclusive health services for Trans and Gender Diverse people:**

- Of those who needed emergency care at some point, 41.3% did not attend the emergency department because they were TGD. (2019)
- Within a healthcare setting, 14.2% have been verbally harassed, 5.7% have experienced unwanted sexual contact and 2.3% have been physically attacked.
- Many TGD people report receiving insensitive sexual health care – 51% of participants in ATGD Sexual Health Survey Report (2019)
- Low confidence in existing FV and SA services capacity to appropriately support TGD people leads to low levels of reporting and support seeking.
- Sexual health and family violence services are highly heterogendered spaces, with little inclusion or support for analysis beyond cisgender and heterosexual relationship dynamics.
- Providers of services often make assumptions about TGD peoples bodies, relationships, genders and sexual partners.

# Barriers for LGBTIQ+ people accessing support for FV/IPV and/or SA

## **Lack of supportive responses for LGBTIQ people:**

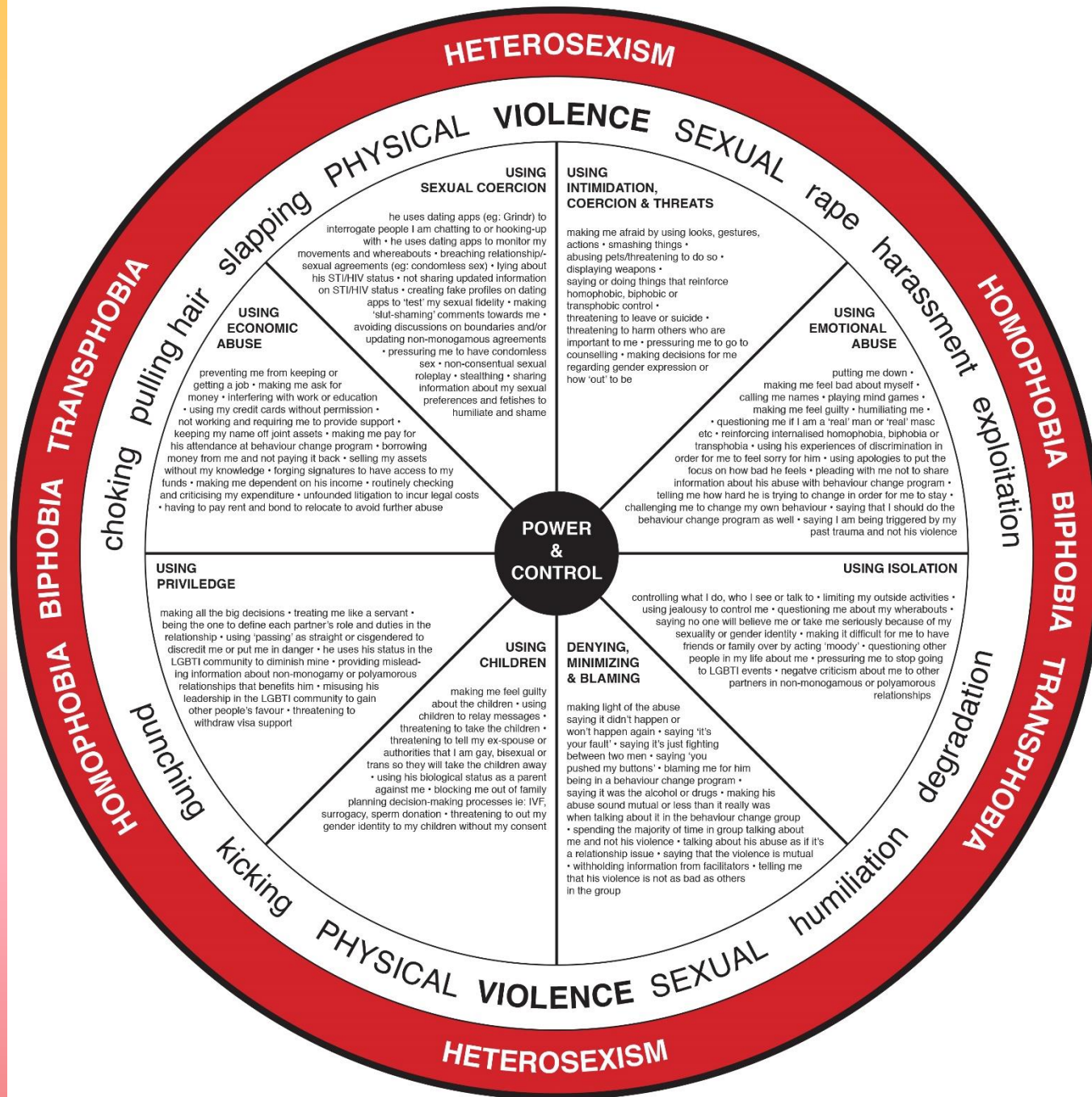
- Lack of confidence in LGBTIQ+ affirmative practice in mainstream FV services and sexual assault services.
- When people reported FV, IPV or SA, they found counselling services or psychologists most supportive, and police least supportive (including LGBT Liaison Officers). Only 4.4 % reported to police.
- There are currently no refuge services appropriate for GBT men fleeing family violence, and very few or inconsistent refuges for trans and non-binary people fleeing family violence.
- Women's services do not respond to FV presentations from LBQ women with same urgency and analysis of risk, and inconsistently address risk and safety screening for LBQ women.
- Women's services incorrectly gender trans women as men, thereby making them ineligible for women's refuges.
- Impacts of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on recognizing abusive behavior
- Limited understanding of FV, IPV and SA within the community and normalization of abusive behavior

# What does family and intimate partner violence look like for our communities?

The LGBTIQ Power and Control Wheel was developed in consultation with partners of gay men attending Thorne Harbour Health's Men's Behaviour Change program in 2017-2018.

The Power and Control Wheel is a tool used by Duluth Domestic Abuse Interventions Programs, the global best practice model for interventions into (heterosexual) men's family violence (against women and children).

This LGBTIQ Power and Control Wheel has been endorsed by the DAIP.



## POWER & CONTROL WHEEL

TACTICS USED BY GAY MEN WHO ATTENDED AN LGBTI MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM

DEVELOPED BY THORNE HARBOUR HEALTH LGBTI FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAM

ADAPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM DULUTH'S DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS' POWER & CONTROL WHEELS  
<https://clicktime.symantec.com/35eDffmZ4eeGXkhrJaMoaKx7Vc7u-wwwww.theduluthmodel.org>

## USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE

putting me down •

making me feel bad about myself •

calling me names • playing mind games •

making me feel guilty • humiliating me •

• questioning me if I am a 'real' man or 'real' masc

etc • reinforcing internalised homophobia, biphobia or

transphobia • using his experiences of discrimination in

order for me to feel sorry for him • using apologies to put the

focus on how bad he feels • pleading with me not to share

information about his abuse with behaviour change program •

telling me how hard he is trying to change in order for me to stay •

challenging me to change my own behaviour • saying that I should do the

behaviour change program as well • saying I am being triggered by my

past trauma and not his violence



## USING ISOLATION

controlling what I do, who I see or talk to • limiting my outside activities •  
using jealousy to control me • questioning me about my whereabouts •  
saying no one will believe me or take me seriously because of my  
sexuality or gender identity • making it difficult for me to have  
friends or family over by acting 'moody' • questioning other  
people in my life about me • pressuring me to stop going  
to LGBTI events • negative criticism about me to other  
partners in non-monogamous or polyamorous  
relationships

## **DENYING, MINIMIZING & BLAMING**

making light of the abuse  
saying it didn't happen or  
won't happen again • saying 'it's  
your fault' • saying it's just fighting  
between two men • saying 'you  
pushed my buttons' • blaming me for him  
being in a behaviour change program •  
saying it was the alcohol or drugs • making his  
abuse sound mutual or less than it really was  
when talking about it in the behaviour change group  
• spending the majority of time in group talking about  
me and not his violence • talking about his abuse as if it's  
a relationship issue • saying that the violence is mutual  
• withholding information from facilitators • telling me  
that his violence is not as bad as others  
in the group

## USING CHILDREN

making me feel guilty about the children • using children to relay messages • threatening to take the children • threatening to tell my ex-spouse or authorities that I am gay, bisexual or trans so they will take the children away • using his biological status as a parent against me • blocking me out of family planning decision-making processes ie: IVF, surrogacy, sperm donation • threatening to out my gender identity to my children without my consent



## USING PRIVILEGE

making all the big decisions • treating me like a servant •  
being the one to define each partner's role and duties in the  
relationship • using 'passing' as straight or cisgendered to  
discredit me or put me in danger • he uses his status in the  
LGBTI community to diminish mine • providing mislead-  
ing information about non-monogamy or polyamorous  
relationships that benefits him • misusing his  
leadership in the LGBTI community to gain  
other people's favour • threatening to  
withdraw visa support

## **USING ECONOMIC ABUSE**

preventing me from keeping or getting a job • making me ask for money • interfering with work or education

- using my credit cards without permission • not working and requiring me to provide support • keeping my name off joint assets • making me pay for his attendance at behaviour change program • borrowing money from me and not paying it back • selling my assets without my knowledge • forging signatures to have access to my funds • making me dependent on his income • routinely checking and criticising my expenditure • unfounded litigation to incur legal costs
- having to pay rent and bond to relocate to avoid further abuse

## USING SEXUAL COERCION

he uses dating apps (eg: Grindr) to interrogate people I am chatting to or hooking-up with • he uses dating apps to monitor my movements and whereabouts • breaching relationship/sexual agreements (eg: condomless sex) • lying about his STI/HIV status • not sharing updated information on STI/HIV status • creating fake profiles on dating apps to 'test' my sexual fidelity • making 'slut-shaming' comments towards me • avoiding discussions on boundaries and/or updating non-monogamous agreements • pressuring me to have condomless sex • non-consensual sexual roleplay • stealthing • sharing information about my sexual preferences and fetishes to humiliate and shame

## **USING INTIMIDATION, COERCION & THREATS**

making me afraid by using looks, gestures, actions • smashing things • abusing pets/threatening to do so • displaying weapons • saying or doing things that reinforce homophobic, biphobic or transphobic control • threatening to leave or suicide • threatening to harm others who are important to me • pressuring me to go to counselling • making decisions for me regarding gender expression or how 'out' to be

# What might be important when responding to a disclosure of family, intimate partner violence or sexual assault?

- Avoid making assumptions about people's relationships – LGBTIQ people have diverse relationship structures, including monogamous, open relationships, or hook ups
- Avoid making assumptions about the ways LGBTIQ+ people have sexual experiences – if necessary, ask appropriate, specific questions
- Particularly when supporting TGD people, mirror the language the person uses about their body and experiences – try to avoid using gendered language about body parts
- Don't interrogate – nobody likes to feel like they are on trial, particularly if someone has made them feel afraid of telling someone else, or question their reality
- Trauma-informed / trauma-sensitive practice
- Person-centred – there is no one size fits all approach to responding to impacts of FV, IPV and SA.

# What, and How, to ask?

- Is anyone making you afraid?
- How do decisions get made in your relationship? Who makes the decisions?
- What's it like when you disagree with them?
- Have you ever lost sleep or needed to stay awake because of an argument?
- Have they ever forced or coerced you into sexual acts, or having sex when you did not wish to do so?
- Have they ever controlled your day to day activities? Have they put you down?
- Have they hurt you?
- How afraid do you feel (scale of 1-5)?



# Recognise, Respond, Refer

- Name the harm
  - ‘From what you’ve told me, I am concerned for your safety’
  - ‘What you’ve described to me is abusive behavior’
- Acknowledge that they have told you
  - ‘Thank you for telling me. It would be good to speak about this again.’
- Discuss options and resources
  - What would you like me to do?
  - Have you spoken about this with anyone else? Is anyone else aware of what’s happening?
  - Have you heard of this agency / resource?
  - Would you like me to refer you to [INSERT RESOURCE] for support?
- Assess safety
  - How safe will you feel after leaving here today?

# Questions?

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