VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER WOMEN

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WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Violence based on sexuality and gender diversity:

- Individually experienced
- Collectively experienced
- Institutional / structural

Different forms are interconnected

Different identities affect rates of violence

Intersection of identities compound rates
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Meta-analysis of 65 studies that compare LGB and heterosexual groups re. experiences of violence*

- LGB individuals significantly more likely to be bullied, discriminated against, physically and sexually assaulted, verbally and emotionally abused, and threatened

- Occurs in variety of settings incl. school, family, workplace, public spaces, health care settings

THIS PRESENTATION WILL DRAW ON ARCSHS/GLHV RESEARCH

A Closer Look at Private Lives 2 (2015): Addressing the mental health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Australians


Survey of 5476 LGBTI Australians aged 16 to 92

Australian Study of Health and Relationships (Experiences of sexual coercion)
Representative sample of 20,000 people (2014, 2003) (with UNSW, Sydney Uni, Sussex Uni)

Writing Themselves In 3 (2012): The third national study on the sexual health and well-being of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people
Survey of 3134 young people (and WTI 1, 1998 & WTI 2, 2004)

Coming Forward: The underreporting of heterosexist violence and same sex partner violence in Victoria (2008)
Survey of 390 Victorians aged 14 to 65
History of violence and discrimination

- Criminality of sex and imprisonment (men), ‘offensive behaviour’ (men and women)
- Loss of family and social relationships
- Police bashings, raids and rape of lesbians
- Sanctioned community violence
- Women lost custody of their children
- Forced psychiatric treatment – aversion therapy, leucotomies
- Sacked from jobs, loss of housing
- Social stigma, harassment, violence
- Non-recognition of relationships (social, legal, financial, medical, inheritance)

www.glhv.org.au
Rates of violence and discrimination

• In Victoria, **one in seven** GLBT people reported living in fear of **heterosexist** violence*

• Nationally, 35% lesbians and 31% bisexual women had experienced **heterosexist** harassment or abuse in previous 12 months *(same proportion as gay/bi males)* ^

• Nationally **10%** of GLB Australians report that they have been refused employment or denied promotion because of their sexuality^^

National rates of violence and discrimination – Transgender

• **49%** of trans women and **55%** of trans men reported harassment or abuse in previous 12 months^

• **18%** of Trans females had experienced threats of physical violence, physical attack or assault without a weapon (punched, kicked, beaten) in previous 12 months**

• **35%** of Trans females had been refused employment or denied promotion because of their gender identity*

Experience of sexual coercion in Australia by sexuality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heterosexual</th>
<th>Lesbian/Gay</th>
<th>Bisexual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women (2003)</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women (2014)</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men (2014)</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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*Have you ever been forced or frightened by a male or female into doing something sexual that you didn’t want to do?


[www.glhv.org.au](http://www.glhv.org.au)
Sexual assault: In previous 12 months by sexuality and gender* (aged 16 to 89 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L/B FEMALES</th>
<th>G/B MALES</th>
<th>TRANS FEMALES</th>
<th>TRANS MALES</th>
<th>ALL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
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</tbody>
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*Private Lives 2 (2012)
Partner violence

• One third (32.7%) of LGBTI Australians have reported having been in a relationship where the partner was abusive (same sex or opposite sex partner)^

• One third of LGBT Victorians reported they had been in abusive same sex relationship:*  
  • 58% involved physical abuse/being hit;  
  • 78% psychological abuse

• Lesbians more likely to report same sex partner abuse than gay men (41% v 28%)*

Stalking

*Curtin University: “Perceptions and experiences of intrusive behaviour and stalking: Comparing LGBTIQ and heterosexual groups”*

- LGBTIQ individuals reported higher levels of experiencing such behaviours than heterosexual individuals

- Behaviours tended towards the more serious end of scale (e.g. verbal abuse, physical harm, forced sexual contact and threats)

*(Sheridan et al., 2015, submitted for publication)*
Family-related violence

24% of young people aged 12 to 21 had experienced homophobic abuse at home. Fathers more likely to physically assault their children (WTI3, 2012).

Father’s attack on daughter:

I got 3 broken ribs, a broken collar bone, a punctured lung, my jaw broken in 2 different places and 7 of my teeth got punched out when my father found out I was a homosexual (Sian, 19 years)

My father and stepmother believed I wouldn’t be gay if they knocked it out of me, quite literally used to slam my head against the wall, gave me a headache, but I’m still gay (Miriam, 19 years)

I got smashed by my Dad. I was forced to sleep on the streets. (Jess, 15 years)

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Compounding the risk and impact of violence

- HIV status
- Ethnicity or CALD background
- Religious affiliation
- Geographic location (rural, metro)
- Disability
- Age
LGBT & Disability (PL2, 2012)

In the last 12 months have you experienced any [form of abuse, harassment, violence] on the basis of your sexual identity or gender?

YES (Disability) 46%
YES (No disability) 33%

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Harassment and violence

In the last 12 months:

Threats of physical violence or physical assault without weapon (punched, kicked, beaten)
• 13% (disability) vs 8% (no disability)

Sexual assault
• 5% (disability) vs 2% (no disability)
Harassment and violence
Disability group vs no-disability group, PL2

In the last 12 months:

Twice the levels of **verbal or written abuse** (incl. hateful or obscene phone calls, emails, graffiti)

Higher levels of **harassment** (eg. being spat at)
(21% of disability group vs 14%)
CALD & religious backgrounds


Born overseas – 18.2%

Religious affiliation – 60% (ABS general population: 81%)

I have been bashed by a family member for shaming the family [...] Talks at family gatherings that being GLQ is due to corruption of the WEST. The Imam and sheikh claiming that the death penalty is the punishment for GLQ [Lesbian 30-34 years].

From: “We’re family too” : The effects of homophobia in Arabic-speaking communities in NSW (2011)
Young and CALD

• 18% CALD backgrounds

• Those from CALD backgrounds less likely to be out to parents and to get family support when did so.

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Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander peoples


2.3% ATSI

Little known about ATSI people who are LGBT.

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Cumulative effect of abuse, violence and discrimination

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Psychological distress (K10 scale)*

• LGBT Australians report higher levels of psychological distress than general population (mean of 19.6 v 14.5)
• Gender ID: Males report lowest levels and trans males and trans females the highest
• Sexual ID: Bisexual women highest (21.8), then bisexual men, lesbian women, gay men

*Closer look at PL2, 2015
Alcohol and Drug Use

• Licit and illicit drug use and alcohol use in the LGBT community two to four times higher than in the heterosexual population.*<

• Much higher rates of smoking among both gay men and lesbians, compared to heterosexual men and women – current and ever.*

*AIHW 2011; < A closer look PL2 2015:
Barriers to reporting any kind of violence /abuse and seeking help:

**Police**

- “Even if individual police are sympathetic the dominant culture is homophobic”*
- “Prejudice not just with the police...also amongst medical workers”*
- Fear – of ridicule, being outed to parents, having gender history made public* (*Coming forward, 2008)

**Mainstream services**

- Concealment of identity
- Exclusion
- Lack of appropriate services

Former senior constable reveals homophobic, sexist bullying in Victorian Police” (ABC 8/12/2015)
Challenging current gender focus

• Gender does not explain everything, nor does it explain nothing about violence against women

• But gender is insufficient to account for experiences of diverse groups
  • Eg. current gender-based framework of Family Violence discussions excludes and isolates LBT women and diminishes their experiences of violence
Key tasks

• Research
• Training across health, education, community sectors
• Inclusive practice guidelines
• Advice to Government on all things LGBTI
LGBTI-inclusive practice

▼ Human Services Standards (incl. family, youth, crisis accom, refuges, disability)

▼ Voluntary Guidelines
Well Proud (2009) - 2016

▼ National Accreditation
The Rainbow Tick

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