

## Same-Gender Battering

Same-gender domestic violence is hurtful and abusive behaviors used by one partner to control and have power over another partner. These behaviors can include threats, physical assault, forced sex, financial control, and emotional abuse, like name-calling. The victim may feel isolated and powerless. She may be convinced that the abuse is her fault, but no one, whether in a same-gender or heterosexual relationship, deserves to be abused.

- The prevalence of domestic violence among Lesbian couples is approximately 25-33%.
- Lesbians seeking help from existing heterosexual-centered services may risk “coming out,” to their colleagues, employer and family, all of whom may find same-gender relationships unacceptable.
- Same-gender abuse has the same dynamics as heterosexual abuse: physical, sexual, economic and psychological. Same-gender batterers have an additional weapon in the threat of “outing” their partner to family, friends, employers or community.
- Battering among Lesbians crosses age, race, class, and socioeconomic lines.
- While same-gender battering mirrors heterosexual battering both in type and prevalence, its victims receive fewer protections and have more obstacles to finding support and help, which further alienates them.
- Many battered Lesbians fight back to defend themselves - it is a myth that same-gender battering is mutual.
- An estimated 50,000 to 100,000 Lesbian women are battered each year.