

### VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**When violence occurs within the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, attitudes often range from 'who cares' to 'these relationships are generally unstable or unhealthy'.**

*(Abuse in Same Sex Relationships, 2008)*

#### Prevalence

- ❖ In 2004, gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals reported experiencing higher rates of violent victimization (sexual assault, robbery, and physical assault) than heterosexual individuals.
- ❖ Gay and lesbian individuals experience victimization at a rate 2.5 times higher than heterosexual individuals.
- ❖ The rate of victimization for bisexual individuals is approximately 4 times higher than the rate of victimization for heterosexual individuals.

#### Spousal Violence

- ❖ Domestic violence in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community is a serious issue. The problem, however, remains underreported.
- ❖ 2004 General Social Survey data indicate that gay and lesbian (15%) and bisexual (28%) individuals experience higher levels of spousal violence than heterosexual (7%) individuals.

#### Long Term Impacts of Sexual Violence

- ❖ Lesbian and bisexual women are often doubly traumatized by the impact of sexual violence due to the fact that they are oppressed both as women and as members of the gay community. Some of the long term social and psychological impacts include:
  - Feelings of fear, guilt, shame, denial, fear, self-blame, anger;
  - Fear of intimacy;
  - Lack of trust;
  - Low self-esteem;
  - Depression;
  - Eating difficulties;
  - Sleep problems;
  - Internal and external injuries.

## Discrimination

- ❖ According to the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, discriminatory behavior includes differential treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on their race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, mental or physical disability or pardoned conviction.
- ❖ 2004 General Social Survey data indicate that a greater proportion of gays and lesbians (44%) and bisexuals (41%) felt that they had experienced some form of discrimination in the past five years. In comparison, only 14% of heterosexual individuals believed that they had experienced some form of discrimination.
- ❖ Gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals were most likely to report this victimization as occurring in the workplace or when applying for a job or a promotion.

## Hate Crimes

- ❖ In 2006, approximately 9% of all hate crimes reported to the police were motivated by sexual orientation.
- ❖ Approximately 98% of these hate crimes were committed against homosexual individuals.
- ❖ Of the hate crimes committed against homosexual individuals, approximately 55% were violent crimes and 35% were property crimes.
- ❖ The most common type of violent crime reported by homosexual individuals was common assault.
- ❖ Hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation were more likely than other types of hate crimes to result in physical injury to victims. The vast majority of injuries were minor in nature - only about 1 in 10 incidents resulted in major physical injury to victims.
- ❖ The majority of hate crimes are committed by young males acting alone or in small groups.

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