



Domestic Abuse in Transgender Partnerships

www.norfolklgbtproject.org.uk

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Foreword

This resource highlights the importance of continuing to research domestic abuse in the Transgender community and the need for local, informed, compassionate service provision to best support transgender victims of domestic abuse.

We want to highlight the importance of Transgender individuals' inclusion in domestic violence services and draw attention to the issue as one that affects all types of partnerships, families and people.

We do not seek to define or limit transgender here as a rigid category, rather to ensure it is relevant to all who self-identify. The resource may also be helpful to those who are questioning their gender identity, or who feel less comfortable with this particular terminology, but who may still find themselves reflected here in experiences.

If you find this resource resonates with you, know that you are not alone and there are inclusive and supportive services here for you.

We think we know what domestic abuse is as it's often portrayed in the media as being physical in nature. But there are many other forms abuse can take – and importantly, physical abuse is also unlikely to be the first type of abuse displayed by an abuser. Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender identity.

What is dome

Domestic abuse can include the following, please note this list is not exhaustive:

Physical

This means any situation where you are made to feel physically unsafe and in danger. Physical violence committed against you by a partner or family member, physical restraint against your will as well as putting you in physical danger from others.

Sexual

Rape and sexual abuse, whether or not you are in a marriage, civil partnership or relationship is abuse and you are not to blame. This includes unwanted sexual contact which can also include an element of emotional abuse through claims that sex is inherent to your value as a person.

Verbal/Emotional

This is when someone uses words to slowly break down your sense of self, undermining your confidence, abilities or appearance. You may feel constantly on edge and judged rather than appreciated and respected.



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Psychological

Psychological abuse, which can include emotional abuse, happens when someone slowly causes your sense of reality or mental health to *gaslight you into thinking that your judgement is impaired. The abuser might encourage this line of thinking – that you are ‘crazy’ and unable to make sound decisions without them.

Financial/Economic

Controlling the household budget, creating situations where you have a poor credit rating and cannot be financially independent. Not allowing you to work or earn your own money, not allowing access to bank accounts and withholding financial assistance or independent finances, all creating a situation where you are financially unable to leave the relationship with independent means.

Cultural/Identity

This happens when someone uses a part of your identity against you as part of the abuse, such as not letting someone observe the dietary or dress customs of a particular religion or cultural background, using someone’s LGBT+ identity threatening to ‘out’ them against their will, the use of racial slurs or weaponizing aspects that are crucial to the victim’s sense of self and identity.

*Gaslighting is a form of abuse that causes someone to doubt their sanity or perceptions.

Transgender domestic abuse is a pattern of incidents or behaviour that can be characterised as controlling, coercive, threatening, humiliating, upsetting committed against someone who is Transgender by someone they share their home with.

What is transgender domestic abuse

As well as experiencing the same domestic abuse that cisgender peers do, transgender identities can also form a part of the pattern of domestic abuse, which is one of the reasons it's important to have separate information on it. Having your identity used against you can also explain why Transgender domestic abuse might be under-reported, as the threats can be very substantially impactful to the stability of victim's lives, especially if they are not 'out' or suffer from stigma attached to aspects of their identity.

Transgender related abuse can include:

- Threats to disclose your gender history to family, friends, workplaces, etc, against your will.
- Deliberately and repeatedly using the wrong pronoun and a person's deadname (previous name prior to transition) to invalidate their identity.
- Making you feel guilty about being transgender and using that shame against you – encouraging the idea there is something 'wrong' with you.
- Attempting to 'correct' your gender identity through: corrective rape, conversion therapy, other forms of attempts to force your identity to become contrary to what it is. Forcing you to wear clothing or to perform as a gender you are not comfortable with.
- Limiting or controlling the amount of time or your ability to meet other LGBT+ people, access LGBT+ spaces or resources.

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- Stopping access to hormones or medical treatments relating to transition.
- Use humiliating language, name-calling or hate-speech linked to your gender identity
- Ridiculing, or overly fetishizing your body or body parts
- The use of spousal denial of the application for a Gender Recognition Certificate to coerce and control
- Forced exposure of body parts or surgical scarring
- Exploiting internalised transphobia
- Denial of your gender identity

Sometimes the abuse is also characterised by its excuses, which can include:

- That the abuse is 'corrective' in some form and solving a 'problem'
- That the abuse is mutual, or two-way abuse with both parties 'as bad as the other'
- Justifying the abuse because you are 'pretending' to be Transgender
- That there really is something 'wrong' with you and they are 'helping'.

These are all things to look out for when supporting someone who might be suffering from domestic abuse, as well as considerations to think about in your own family life and relationships.

Why Transgender domestic abuse needs to be talked about?

Domestic abuse can occur in any relationship and the stereotypes that prevail (that abusers are only cisgender males and victims are cisgender females) can mean that individuals feel unable to access support that is not 'for' them – or delay getting help. It is widely recognised that LGBTQ+ people have historically had difficulty accessing services.

Percentage of individuals who reported experiencing domestic abuse from a partner in 2018 as a national average.



Transgender individuals are on average as twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as cisgender women, who are themselves as twice as likely than men to experience domestic abuse, based on reported national averages from 2018.²

Research shows that transgender individuals are disproportionately underrepresented among those accessing specialist domestic abuse services even though Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Harassment, Stalking and Jealous and Controlling Behaviour were reported as having occurred more frequently to these individuals in comparison with non-LGBT clients.

(Data compiled from Safe Lives, 2015).

Why is Transgender domestic abuse not being reported?

About 4% of reported domestic abuse cases in Norfolk occurred in LGBT+ relationships.³

Some of the most common reasons for not reporting domestic abuse are:⁴

- That the incidents are thought to be too trivial to be worth reporting (downplaying)
- That it's felt to be a private matter, embarrassment or shame
- A feeling that help isn't available or the feeling the police cannot assist
- A fear of further domestic abuse
- A lack of desire for the perpetrator to be punished,
- The abuser threatens self-harm or suicide as a deterrent to report
- Anxiety about not being believed or being sympathised with
- A dislike or fear of police involvement.

And then there are those additional factors that transgender people may be facing:

- A fear of being outed during reporting the incident/s
- Concerns about transphobia or their data privacy from services, maybe from prior poor experiences.
- They might believe what they have been told by an abuser – that people won't believe them as they are transgender.
- Previous trauma caused by challenging events, hate crime or bullying may compound the belief that the treatment they receive is normal for them.

LGBT+ victims reported much higher rates of complex needs compared to their heterosexual peers. LGBT+ victims and survivors are:

- Almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide (28% vs 15%)
- More than twice as likely to have self-harmed (32% vs 14%)
- More likely to experience mental health problems (51% vs 38%)

Safer Lives Report

³ DANA Norfolk 2016, p.30.

⁴ DANA Norfolk, 2016. According to CSEW Source: ONS 2016a. p.20.

What to do?

If you or someone you know has been affected by domestic abuse, you should make safety your first priority. Following an incident, you should:

- If you feel you, (or someone else) may be in immediate danger, you should call 999. The silent solution can be used on a landline or mobile if it is not safe for you to speak. When dialling 999, press 55 when connected to let the call handler know you cannot speak.
- Keep a diary where you log incidences of abuse – this can be used as evidence if you ever need it to. Apps can be useful, if it is safe to download these: Bright Sky or Hollie Guard can be used to keep a journal safely, as well as many other safety features.
- Reach out to a trusted family member, friend, or neighbour to be able to go there if things escalate at home or in an emergency.
- It is important to keep yourself digitally safe too. We know so many people who experience domestic abuse, have their digital devices monitored and other use of technology is used to keep you under surveillance. Please refer to the NIDAS website and ‘keeping safe’ page for advice how to keep your technology safe Keeping Safe – NIDAS (nidasnorfolk.co.uk)

- Emotional and psychological abuse are typically used before any other form of abuse. This means you are probably not sure if you are experiencing domestic abuse or not? To be able to speak with someone you trust, including a professional, can really help you to process this.
- In Norfolk, we are here to help. Norfolk LGBT+ and NIDAS are here to listen to you and provide you with all the options available to you.
- The options are yours, this is your journey, we will be with you every step of the way.

If you are considering leaving the person(s) causing you harm, please do talk with a NIDAS specialist. Leaving is the most dangerous time and the specialist will be able guide into leaving safely. (Please see Leaving Safely – NIDAS (nidasnorfolk.co.uk) for further details.

Remember you are not to blame for the abuse, and it is in no way your fault. We all deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Services you can access

We believe service provision should be inclusive, and that by accessing support you should not feel you are unable to express yourself fully, neither should you meet discomfort when already dealing with abuse. We want you to be able to access your local services to support your next steps.



Norfolk LGBT+ Project is a registered charity, providing support, information and advice to all age groups that is relevant to the health and wellbeing of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Norfolk and Waveney since 2007.

Email: info@norfolklgbtproject.org.uk

Phone: 01603 219299

Website: www.norfolklgbtproject.org.uk



NIDAS (Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service) is a domestic abuse support service for those assessed to be at high or medium risk of harm. NIDAS also offers dedicated support for Children and Young People, recovery programmes, coordinated multi-agency support, court support.

Email: referrals@nidasnorfolk.co.uk

Phone: 0300 561 0555

Text: 07860 063464

Website: nidasnorfolk.co.uk



Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care provide a free, confidential support service specifically designed to help victims and witnesses of crime.

Email: nsvictimcare@victimsupport.org.uk

Phone: 0300 303 3706

Website: www.nsvictimcare.org



NIDAS is the largest, county wide domestic abuse service and is delighted to work in partnership with Norfolk LGBT+ Project.

NIDAS understands the barriers access support and In response to this, NIDAS is providing Norfolk's first dedicated LGBT+ IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate), who is able to be by your side and help you every step of the way. The LGBT+ IDVA is reflective of the people they are offering support to. The service is free of charge and is confidential **

What support can NIDAS offer?

- 1:1 Support from your dedicated LGBT+ IDVA. They will support you emotionally, practically and coordinate other areas of support which you may need (ie, housing, financial advice, legal advice).
- Support for your children if they have been affected by what has happened to you? Your children (5-18) will have their own Family Worker.
- Recovery from abuse is essential and NIDAS will offer a choice of recovery programmes, to support you into long term positive outcomes.

NIDAS will support you, your needs, your journey – your freedom.

To access support from NIDAS LGBT+ IDVA, please contact either NIDAS

www.nidasnorfolk.co.uk

0300 561 0555

07860 063464 (text number)

or Norfolk LGBT+ Project who will contact NIDAS IDVA on your behalf.

***All of the above services are completely confidential – however, if there are immediate safety concerns, information will be passed on to relevant services as duty of care.*



No victim of domestic abuse should be without support, when they need it, no matter who they are or where they live in Norfolk.

NIDAS: The domestic abuse service here for you every step of the way. No matter where you are in Norfolk, we are here to help you.

Our aim is to listen to you,
to guide and be by your side.

You only have to tell us your story once.

Our service will support you, your needs,
your journey – your freedom.

NORFOLK
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SUPPORT INFORMATION ADVICE



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