

Computer Safety

What is cyber safety?

Cyber safety or Internet safety is protecting oneself from computer crime and reduce risk of security breaches to private and confidential information to the user.

By implementing or following cyber safety procedures you can prevent privacy invasion, impersonation, non-consensual intimate image sharing, harassment, stalking and more. Some steps you can take to protect yourself are:

- If you are searching for help, try to use a friend's or family's device or a computer from a library instead of your own. After finishing make sure you are deleting the browser history to erase your tracks.
- If possible, call a hotline instead of emailing or texting since those are not always confidential.
- If someone is monitoring you, it may not be safe to change your devices behaviors all of a sudden such as erasing your browser's history, consider to keep searching for unrelated topics as usual to prevent raising suspicions.
- Create safe passwords with certain degree of difficulty adding number and capital as well as lowercase letters. Make sure the password is not something that your abuser may easily guess.

Devices Safety

- Consider changing phones. One option is pay as you go phones since they do not require your name or address.
- Make sure your phone's passcode is not something significant in your life that can be easily guessed. If possible change it every now and then.
- Ask people who you've entrusted with your new phone number not to share it with others.
- Don't connect into unknown wifies or devices, if possible always carry your charger with you.
- Avoid using Airdrop to send documents or using your Personal Hotspot as using these may share personal information about you to others nearby.
- Clear your cache as it has likely saved your usernames and passwords.
- Many cell phones now have tracking features such as GPS that can give away your location in real-time. There are other applications that can be used for this, make sure to check for this and block your GPS tracker in case it is on or being shared with your abuser. Short video to lock GPS tracks on your Iphone (please be aware that both videos contain sound so if your abuser is near you make sure the volume of your device is in the lowest):
- [How To Block Apps From Tracking You On iPhone - YouTube](#)
- [How to Stop Someone From Tracking Your iPhone ? - YouTube](#)
- Additionally call, text and messaging histories are also easily retrieved; this includes applications such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Make sure you are deleting you calls, text and messaging histories.

Social Media Safety

- Avoid sharing your location and check the privacy settings to make sure it is not being shared.

- Change your passwords to something only you'd know especially if you suspect someone may have access to them.
- Change all your social media accounts to private.
- Make sure there is nothing identifiable in photos and posts (i.e. a storefront, phone number, street sign).
- Only accept people and followers that you know.
- Be mindful of what other people are posting about you. Consider asking friends/family to limit tagging you in posts.

General Safety Tips to have in mind:

Have a list of important numbers

Make a list with numbers of local police, emergency shelter, assaulted women's helpline, family members, and children's friends, and keep it accessible at all times. If having that information with you can put you in danger you can save them with another name that you will remember.

Emergency number

Make sure you have a charged cell phone with you at all times, and if possible pre-program it to 911. When calling always give as much information as you can regarding your location. If you can, hide an emergency bag with a friend or neighbor, including an extra set of keys.

Have copies of important documents

Take a photocopy of key documents and store them in a safe place away from the originals. Keep important documents, wallet, and keys with you or in a safe place at all times.

- Birth certificates, passports, immigration papers for all family members
- School and vaccination records
- Driver's license, insurance, and registration information
- Legal documents – marriage certificate, separation/divorce papers, custody & access information, court orders, restraining orders etc
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage information, line of credit, or bank loan information
- Bank books
- Address/telephone book

FAQ

Who can access these services?

Anyone experiencing any type of abuse. Anyone who is seeking to understand and heal from their experience of domestic, intimate partner, sexual violence and abuse or find support to rebuild their lives.

Are all the services free?

Yes, our services have no costs.

Do I have to make a Police Report?

Not if you are not ready. Services are offered voluntarily and it's up to the survivor to decide what services they would like to utilize.

If English is not my first language, can I still access the services?

Yes, we use interpreters to help us offer support.

Do you provide services to LGBTQ+ victims?

Yes, anyone who has been victimized or is a survivor of abuse is welcome to receive our services.

If I am undocumented, can I still receive services?

Yes, you can. We won't ask about your status nor will we refuse any services if you tell us you are undocumented. Our goal is to offer a place where survivors feel safe from abuse and are comfortable talking about their current situation. Everyone has a right to feel safe, regardless of status.

What happens with my information when I access your services?

All of the information you share with staff is kept confidential. This means that any information shared by a survivor with a staff member will be held in confidence and cannot be shared without your consent.

Limitations to Confidentiality: There are very few limits to confidentiality, but they include the reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect or intent to harm yourself or others.

General Information

What is Gender Based Violence?

It is any type of violence that hurts or takes advantage of someone by using power imbalance relationships that are rooted in gender inequality.

Who can experience GBV?

Anyone can experience gender-based violence no matter their background, identity, or circumstances. However, women, girls and gender-diverse people are at higher risk.

How can I recognize some signs of GBV?

Usually, it involves one person who has power and control over another. It can occur between people of any gender identity or sexual orientation.

Some signs to be aware of:

- Tries to control who you see, where you go, what you do
- Tries to slowly pull you away from your family and friends
- Constantly embarrassing, shaming you or putting you down
- Manipulates the situation to make you feel bad, blaming you for what's happening
- Acting in ways that scare you
- Taking your money or and/or refusing to give you money for expenses
- Threatens and/or intimidates you
- Tries to convince you not to work or attend school
- Jealousy and constant suspicion
- Throwing objects or hitting, slapping and/or pushing you

GBV can take many forms, such as:

- Intimate partner violence
- Family Violence
- Emotional\Psychological abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Stalking
- Human Trafficking

Strangulation (chocking)

Strangulation is a very dangerous form of abuse that occurs when someone blocks a person's breathing by putting pressure on their neck or chest. If you or someone you know has experienced strangulation or has had their breathing cut off in any way for any length of time, please go to a hospital emergency room right away and ask for a CTA exam, even if the strangulation occurred in the past.

Some common signs and symptoms are:

- losing consciousness or passing out
- memory loss or confusion, may not remember parts of assault or strangulation
- small red or purple dots on your face, scalp, eyes, ears, or nose (this is called petechiae)
- burst blood vessels in your eye
- changes in your voice and difficulty speaking, swallowing, or breathing
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- changes in your vision

However, injuries that you can see only show up 50% or HALF of the time. You also may feel fine, but it's very important that you see a doctor. Go to a hospital emergency room immediately and ask for a CTA exam if you have ever been choked or strangled.

Anytime someone makes it so you can't breathe, you are at risk of serious health consequences that last days, weeks, or even months. Strangulation is also so dangerous because of how quickly it can lead to death.

TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR STRANGULATION PREVENTION

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRANGULATION

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Based on: *Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence, Chapter 16, Intimate Partner Violence, Oxford University Press, Inc. 2009*

NEUROLOGICAL

- Loss of Memory
- Loss of consciousness
- Behavioral changes
- Loss of sensation
- Extremity weakness
- Difficulty speaking
- Fainting
- Urination
- Defecation
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Headaches

SCALP

- Petechiae
- Bald spots (from hair being pulled)
- Bump to the head (from blunt force trauma or falling to the ground)

EYES & EYELIDS

- Petechiae to eyeball
- Petechiae to eyelid
- Bloody red eyeball(s)
- Vision changes
- Droopy eyelid

EARS

- Ringing in ears
- Petechiae on earlobe(s)
- Bruising behind the ear
- Bleeding in the ear

FACE

- Petechiae (tiny red spots slightly red or floid)
- Scratch marks
- Facial drooping
- Swelling

MOUTH

- Bruising
- Swollen tongue
- Swollen lips
- Cuts/abrasions
- Internal Petechiae

CHEST

- Chest pain
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruising
- Abrasions

NECK

- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruising (thumb or fingers)
- Swelling
- Ligature Marks

VOICE & THROAT CHANGES

- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing
- Painful to swallow
- Clearing the throat
- Coughing
- Nausea
- Drooling
- Sore throat
- Stridor

BREATHING CHANGES

- Difficulty breathing
- Respiratory distress
- Unable to breathe

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ALLIANCE for HOPE INTERNATIONAL

How can I help someone who might be a victim?

If you see or hear an assault, call 911. The victim might present bruises or injuries, can become suddenly quiet and withdrawn, wear concealing clothes even in warm weather.

Keep in mind:

- Show support and avoid judgement
- Don't expect change over night, be patient and keep offering support
- Encourage them to seek for help
- Always talk in a safe space
- Express your concern for the person's safety
- Listen and believe what you hear
- Never underestimate the danger

Healthy relationship Wheel:



Intimate Partner Violence within the LGBTQ+ community

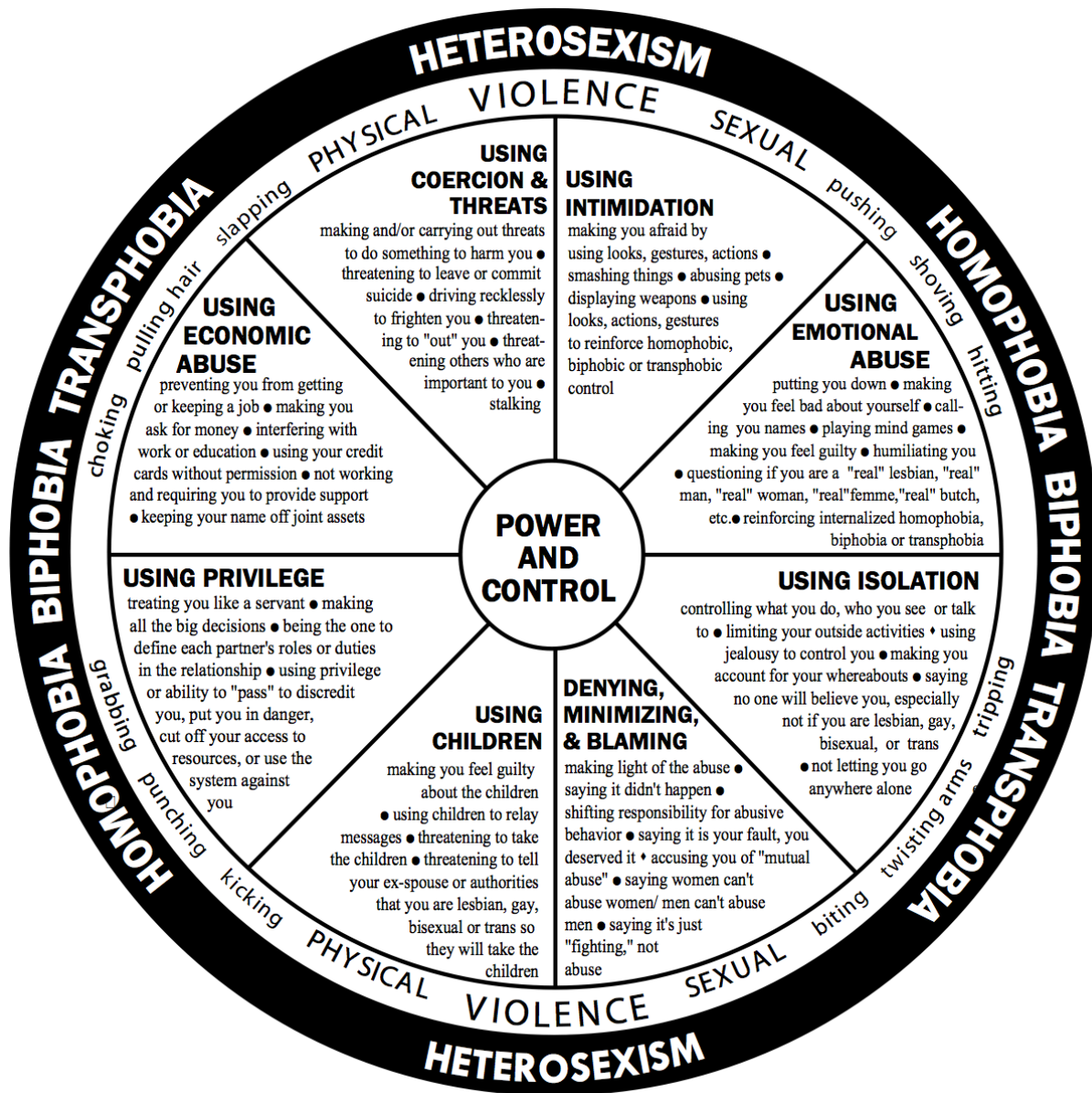
IPV, also known as domestic violence, can affect anyone regardless of their background. However, misogynist gender roles, racial/ethnic stereotypes and institutional discrimination, and economic insecurity, put certain segments of the population at greater risk, such as women, BIPOC people, those living in poverty, and younger adults. For LGBTQ+ people, these same social determinants compound with homophobic and transphobic stigma, creating even greater risk of IPV among the community.

This happens because abusers will often capitalize on existing social and economic vulnerabilities to wield control. For LGBTQ+ people, this often shows up by abusers weaponizing existing homophobic and transphobic systems of stigma, discrimination, and lack of education around LGBTQ+ people, to perpetuate their control.

A good way to think about this is the LGBTQ+ Power and Control Wheel, developed by Roe & Jagodinsky, and adapted from the Power and Control Wheels of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs. The wheel diagrams how abusers enact power and control through the techniques and actions listed in each segment (e.g., economic abuse, coercion and threats, intimidation, etc.), in order to instill fear, domination, and coercion in their partner, creating the scenarios for abuse (inner ring) to occur. Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism surround the wheel to indicate how these systems of hate and discrimination can be weaponized for every technique and action, and further create the scenarios where violence is more likely to occur

Abusers may take advantage of the threat of homophobia and transphobia LGBTQ+ folks face in their communities, and the impact it can play on social support and economic security. One of the ways these systems of stigma are leveraged by abusers against LGBTQ+ people is the “identity abuse,” or the threat of outing them to family, friends, or coworkers if they do not remain in abusive relationships, knowing—or threatening—that outing could cost them their job, housing, or systems of support. Abusers may also further weaponize the stigma faced by LGBTQ+ people by manipulating their partner into staying by claiming nobody else will love them—or they may capitalize on survivors already being isolated by family and social rejection of their sexual or gender identity, in order to further isolate their victims and continue their abuse.

At the Family Violence Project we welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community seeking for help. We offer a judgement free space where they can feel understood and supported.



Information taken from: Human Rights Campaign - [Understanding Intimate Partner Violence in the LGBTQ+ Community - Human Rights Campaign \(hrc.org\)](https://www.hrc.org/resources/factsheet/understanding-intimate-partner-violence-in-the-lgbtq-community)

IPV and people with disabilities

Research has consistently shown that people with disabilities are more at risk of being a victim of violence than people without disabilities (Conroy and Cotter 2017; Cotter 2018; Cotter and Savage 2019; Harpur and Douglas 2014; Olofsson et al. 2015; Perreault 2015; Perreault 2020a; Platt et al. 2017).

Having a disability may increase some women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence. For example, women with disabilities may experience an increased risk of isolation or an increased reliance on an intimate partner.

According to the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS), among people who had ever been in an intimate partnership, more than half (55%) of women with disabilities reported experiencing some form of IPV in their lifetime (since age 15), compared to 37% of women without disabilities (Table 1A). Psychological abuse was by far the most commonly reported type of IPV experienced by women with disabilities (53%), followed by physical assault (32%) and sexual assault (18%). These proportions were considerably higher than those for women without disabilities (36%, 17% and 7%, respectively).

Among LGBTQ2 women with disabilities, almost seven in ten (71%) reported that they had experienced some form of intimate partner violence since age 15. This was significantly higher than the proportion of women with disabilities who were not LGBTQ2 (54%) and the proportion of women without disabilities who were LGBTQ2 (59%).

At the Family Violence Project we understand the severity of these issues and how intersectionality plays a big part within victims suffering from any kind of abuse. We offer a judgement free space where you can feel understood and supported.

Information taken from: Statistics Canada - [Intimate partner violence: Experiences of women with disabilities in Canada, 2018 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/88-626-x/2018001/article/00001-eng.htm)