



Healthy LGBTQ* relationships

Learn the signs of an
unhealthy or abusive
relationship and
BREAK THE SILENCE.

***INFORMATION FOR
WOMEN IN SAME-SEX
RELATIONSHIPS***

LGBTQ*: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, and queer; the asterisk represents other minority gender identities and sexual orientations (Ex: questioning, intersex, pansexual, androgynous)

Signs of a **HEALTHY** Same-Sex Relationship

- feeling comfortable communicating and listening to one another
- negotiating and trying to find common ground during disagreements
- respecting each other's identity, including culture, race, age, class, spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, appearance, ability and health status (including HIV status)
- being out, or discussing and respecting each others' decisions about coming out
- valuing each other and treating one another respectfully
- staying connected with family and friends; not feeling threatened by each other's relationships; spending some time alone, and seeing this as being healthy
- talking about finances; making financial decisions together
- respecting boundaries about physical affection and sex; not pressuring a partner to do anything they don't want to do
- not using physical violence; speaking calmly and respectfully

Signs of an **UNHEALTHY** Same-Sex Relationship

- feeling uncomfortable being open; not caring about a partner's feelings and opinions
- not discussing problems or listening to each other's views
- not valuing aspects of a partner's identity
- feeling stressed and disagreeing often because of differences in how out partners are
- behaving inconsiderately toward one another
- spending nearly all of your time together, and little time with friends/family or alone
- not communicating about finances; resenting how money is being spent
- embarrassment communicating about sex; sometimes going along with things
- raising voices toward one another sometimes or making insensitive comments (but neither partner fears the other)

Signs of an **ABUSIVE** Same-Sex Relationship

- feeling afraid to be open with a partner; feeling afraid that a partner may use insults or become violent
- feeling afraid that disagreements will lead to anger and abuse
- insulting a partner's identity; threatening to deport them; threatening to disclose health conditions; not allowing a partner to get medical care; threatening to infect a partner with HIV (if a partner is HIV positive)
- threatening to out a partner to family, friends, co-workers, cultural community or spiritual community
- treating a partner disrespectfully (Ex: name calling, insults)
- behaving jealously or possessively (Ex: not allowing a partner to spend time alone or with family/friends; telling a partner where they can go; checking on them all the time)
- controlling the finances completely; taking a partner's money
- forcing a partner to have sex, or to do things they don't want to do
- yelling or screaming at a partner; using or threatening physical violence: (Ex: kicking, hitting, slapping, shoving, scratching or biting); hurting, or threatening to hurt people or animals a partner cares about; threatening to take the children or turn them against a partner; destroying a partner's belongings

People in abusive relationships often feel ashamed, depressed and worthless. Experiences of homophobia can add to these feelings. Low self-esteem and a lack of confidence make it more difficult to seek help.

Also, women in abusive, same-sex relationships may fear homophobic responses from those who could help them. For both women being abused and those who are abusive, this can affect how safe and comfortable they feel seeking help.

Unhealthy relationships may gradually become worse, and eventually abusive. If your same-sex relationship seems unhealthy, consider getting help from a counsellor, friend, family member, workshop or book.

If you know someone experiencing abuse and would like tips on how to talk to them, go to: manitoba.ca/stoptheviolence/know_someone

Relationship abuse happens in all segments of LGBTTQ* communities. It affects people of all ages, cultures, income levels, spiritualities, professions, abilities and regions of the province.

If You are Being ABUSED **in a Same-Sex Relationship**

You deserve a loving, healthy relationship.

If you are being abused within a same-sex relationship, help is available. Talk to someone you trust about what is happening. This can be a friend, family member, counsellor or a crisis line. Talking to someone can help you make healthy decisions about your relationship.

Creating a safety plan for yourself (and your children and animals) can help you stay safe in a crisis. For more information on safety planning, call the Domestic Violence Information/Crisis Line or see:

www.manitoba.ca/justice/domestic/protection/

If you are in crisis and identify as a **woman**, and need emergency shelter because of abuse within your relationship, call:

> 24/7: the toll free Domestic Violence Information/Crisis Line at **1-877-977-0007**, to be routed to the nearest family violence shelter

If You are Being ABUSIVE **in a Same-Sex Relationship**

Abuse is a choice. It is your responsibility to stop hurting your partner. Help is available to support you in ending your abusive behavior. Contact a counsellor or the services listed in this brochure for information about how to get counselling.

If necessary, leave the relationship to keep your partner and yourself safe.

MYTH: Many people assume that abuse can't happen between women in same-sex relationships, or that it only occurs in "butch" and "femme" relationships. They assume that the "butch" is always the aggressor in abusive relationships, or that they should be able to fight back if they are being abused.

REALITY: Most women in same-sex relationships do not assume explicitly butch-femme roles, and abuse in these relationships is not confined to gender roles. People who have been verbally and emotionally abused often feel **beaten down and can't fight back against physical abuse - even if they are bigger and stronger than their partner.**

Community Resources

Rainbow Resource Centre

170 Scott Street, Winnipeg
Phone: **204-474-0212, ext. 201**
www.rainbowresourcecentre.org

Manitoba's Domestic Violence Information/Crisis Line

24-hour, toll free: **1-877-977-0007**
TTY: **1-888-987-2829**
List of services: manitoba.ca/fs/fvpp/resources

Klinic Community Health Centre

24-hour crisis line: **204-786-8686** (in Winnipeg)
or toll free **1-888-322-3019**
Sexual assault crisis line: **204-786-8631** (in Winnipeg)
or toll free **1-888-292-7565**
TTY counselling: **204-784-4097**
www.klinic.mb.ca

LGBT* Program, Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) Brandon Office

Phone: **204-727-0417**
www.serc.mb.ca

Thank you to:

- Rainbow Resource Centre, Two-Spirited People of Manitoba, Aurora House and other community members who contributed to the development of these materials.
- The Alberta government for sharing their publication *Abuse in Same-Sex and LGBTQ* Relationships*.