

## Examples of tactics used against transgender victims

- Using pronouns not preferred by you or calling you “it”; saying you’re not a real man/woman.
- Calling you insulting names, ridiculing how your body looks and/or telling you how you should dress or wear makeup, etc.
- Denying access to medical treatment or hormones, or coercing you to pursue or not pursue physical changes (ie. hormones, surgery, hair removal).
- Controlling access to money for medical care, clothes, prosthetics, or other necessities.
- Hiding or destroying hormones, binders, prosthetics, clothes, identification.
- Touching or assaulting body parts (i.e. chest, genitals, hair) you don’t want touched, or calling them by terms they know you find offensive.
- Telling you they thought you liked “rough sex” or “this is how real men/women like sex”.
- Telling you: nobody will believe you because you are trans; no-one will ever love you and/or you would never find a better partner.
- Threatening to “out” you to your employer, financial aid worker, health care workers, immigration personnel, family and/or friends.
- Threatening to take the children or turn them against you.
- Forbidding you to talk to others about trans issues, including your need for support.

Contains information adapted from: *Transgender /SOFFA: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Resource Sheet* by Loree Cook-Daniels and michael munson of the FORGE Trans/SOFFA Sexual Violence Project; *No More Secrets: Violence in Lesbian Relationships (2002)* by Janice Ristock; & “Appendix C: Safety Assessment and Planning in Abusive Trans Relationships” by Caroline White & Joshua Mira Goldberg., *BCIAFV Aid to Safety Assessment and Planning*, 2005.

## Resources

### Trans Health Program

Free service for anyone living in BC; includes peer counselling & advocacy.

<http://www.vch.ca/transhealth/index.html>  
Phone/TTY/TDD: 1-866-999-1514 (toll-free)

### The Centre (LGTB community centre)

Information, referrals & support

1170 Bute St., Vancouver

Days: 604 684-5307

Evenings: 604 684-6869 or 1-800-566-1170

[www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com](http://www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com)

### Trans Alliance Society

<http://www.transalliancesociety.org>

### Transgender Support & Education Society

<http://www.transgender.org/transcend/>

### FORGE Trans/SOFFA Sexual Violence Project

<http://www.forge-forward.org/transviolence/>

### Survivor Project

<http://www.survivorproject.org/>

### For additional copies contact:

BCASVACP 604 633-2506 or

The Centre 604 684-5307, or visit websites:

[www.endingviolence.org](http://www.endingviolence.org),

[www.lgtbcentrevancouver.org](http://www.lgtbcentrevancouver.org)

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# Transgender People & Relationship Abuse

## Information & Resources

### Creating Strong & Safe LGBT Communities



BC Association of  
Specialized Victim  
Assistance &  
Counselling Programs



**THE CENTRE**  
A Community Centre Serving and  
Supporting Lesbian, Gay,  
Transgendered, Bisexual People  
and their Allies

There is little research about the prevalence and frequency of relationship abuse experienced by transgender/transsexual people. Anecdotal information and some research suggest that trans people may be more vulnerable to violence across their lifespan than the general population (White & Goldberg, 2005).

*The umbrella term transgender (abbreviated as trans) is used to describe a wide diversity of people whose identity or way of expressing themselves does not conform to current gender norms.*

Due to transphobia and its impact (violence, loss of employment, loss of loved ones), many trans people and their partners experience isolation and invisibility. This can create vulnerability to violence. Trans people who have been abused have significantly fewer services available to them, even in large cities.

## What is an abusive intimate relationship?

Abuse and battering are words that describe a pattern of behaviours used to intimidate, isolate, dominate and maintain power and control over someone.

It can feel confusing. In some cases, there may be an on-going pattern of abuse. In other cases, abuse may happen less often. Abuse may take many forms and can be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, spiritual, medical and/or financial. (See examples of tactics used against trans victims).

## What can I do if I think I'm being abused?

- ▶ Conflict and abuse can feel confusing when it's happening. Ask yourself: am I being physically, sexually or emotionally abused, controlled or threatened? Am I anxious and stressed about how my partner treats me? Do I feel isolated, afraid or hopeless? If you said yes to any of these, it's important to get some perspective about what's happening.
- ▶ Try to find at least one person you can talk to about what is going on – a friend, family member, or counsellor. This may give you perspective, and help you make decisions about what to do. Remember that the abuse is not your fault.
- ▶ Making the decision about staying or leaving may feel difficult. You may not want to leave or feel you can't. Or leaving the situation temporarily or permanently may be options. While deciding what to do, ask yourself what you can do to feel safer and have more options such as: connecting with others and reducing your isolation, increasing your financial independence, and setting stronger boundaries and limits with your partner.
- ▶ You might want to make a plan for leaving and work towards that over time doing some of the things suggested above.
- ▶ Create a safety plan to reduce the risks or harm. Think about what you (and your children) need to be as safe as possible – while in the relationship or if you leave.
- ▶ Put emergency money, keys and important documents (even if they have your pre-transition

name or gender) in a safe place (with a friend or neighbour) in case you need to leave quickly.

- ▶ If you decide to leave, find a place where you can feel safe and your partner will not find you (family/friend's home, shelter/transition house). Have a friend or service provider call a transition house/ shelter to see if they provide sensitive services to trans clients.
- ▶ Try to vary your routine so your partner won't find you. Because trans communities are small you may run into your partner at social events. If you end up in situations together try to set boundaries for yourself and look to friends and family for support.
- ▶ If you are in immediate danger, call the police. Remember, physical and sexual assault are against the law. You have legal rights to protection. If these rights are ignored by the police find an advocate to help get what you need.

## What can I do if I think I'm being abusive?

Ask yourself: am I threatening my partner? Am I trying to punish or blame my partner for my actions? Am I constantly lashing out at them? Do I feel in danger of hurting my partner or myself?

Answering yes to any of these means it's time to reflect on your behaviour, take responsibility and stop hurting your partner. Leave the situation or relationship if necessary to keep yourself and/or your partner safe. Call on friends, family and/or a counsellor to help you change your behaviours.