

# Intimate Partner Violence: What You Should Know and How the GSA Can Help

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has shown that the LGBTQ community can experience higher levels of intimate partner violence (IPV) than their heterosexual peers. According to the 2013 report from the CDC, approximately 10% of high school students reported experiences of physical or sexual dating violence.

## What does IPV look like?

IPV is known by many names, including domestic violence, family violence, abuse, and battering. While most people think IPV involves physical violence, it can also include forced sexual activity, financial exploitation, stalking, blackmail, coercion, isolation, harassment, and emotional abuse. The line between normal disagreements or tension between within a relationship and IPV may be subtle. If you feel afraid at home or when you are with your partner, there's a good chance you are experiencing IPV. Another sign of IPV is realizing that your partner has slowly managed to isolate you, separating you from your normal supports, activities, and friendships. A third possible sign of IPV is realizing that your partner has made you feel chronically ashamed of yourself or worthless.

## What does IPV look like for LGBTQ youth?

Abusive partners in LGBTQ relationships use all the same tactics to gain power and control as abusive partners in heterosexual relationships — physical, sexual or emotional abuse, financial control, isolation and more. In LGBTQ relationships, there can also be tactics that reinforce maintaining power and control.



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

Questions about this resource?  
Email [GSAs@iowasafeschools.org](mailto:GSAs@iowasafeschools.org)



## Some signs of IPV in an LGBTQ relationship can include:

- “Outing” or threatening to “out” a partner’s sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Saying that no one will help the victim because they identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or that for this reason, the partner “deserves” the abuse.
- Justifying the abuse with the notion that a partner is not “really” lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- Controlling support resources by manipulating friends and family supports and generating sympathy and trust in order to cut off these resources to the victim.
- Portraying the violence as mutual and even consensual, or as an expression of masculinity or some other “desirable” trait.

## How can my GSA help end IPV?

- Educate your school community on what intimate partner violence looks like. This can be done with posters, flyers, school assemblies, tabling at sporting events or during lunch, on rolling school announcements, or any other creative way the GSA can think of
- Use the cards and posters in the Pride Pack to raise awareness in your school and community. Here is the best way to use the cards:
  - Print them off and give two to every person you are distributing to. Studies show that if you give someone two cards, they are more likely to share one with a friend or family member who needs it.
    - Explain what’s on the back of the card: “on the back of the card, there are numbers and website that have more information, should you ever need support around your relationship
    - Go the extra mile: “Also, I can always connect you with someone over at (local IPV organization, Iowa Safe Schools, etc.) if you are interested in talking with someone.”
- Organize an event or action campaign around IPV Awareness Month (October). Get creative on how to get the word out about what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like, and how students can find support.



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