

**If you are a  
lesbian  
gay  
bisexual  
transsexual  
or transgender  
individual,  
this brochure  
may be for you.**

# Is this you?


- I have not come out in all the communities I am part of.
- I experience prejudice or discrimination because of my sexual orientation or gender identity.
- I find I can't do everything I used to because of age, disability, HIV, or AIDS.
- I see few people apart from my spouse.
- I came to Canada from another country for my own safety.
- I find it difficult to communicate in French or English.
- I am in a relationship with a transgender or transsexual person.
- I have romantic relationships with people of my own sex.
- I am lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- I am a transsexual or transgender person.



**In this brochure, the word “spouse” indicates any person with whom you have or have had an intimate and committed relationship.**

# Is this someone you know?

## **I stay with my spouse because:**

- 
- I love him/her.
  - He/she loves me.
  - I have no money and am afraid of ending up homeless.
  - I am afraid of being rejected by my community or family.
  - I'm afraid he/she will take revenge.
  - I'm afraid my spouse will tell people about my sexual orientation or gender identity.
  - I don't know where to go for help.
  - I'm afraid I won't be able to find anyone else.
  - I'm afraid I won't find anyone else who accepts my transsexuality.
  - I'm afraid to be left without help in my daily life.
  - I'm afraid to tell doctors, police officers, civil servants, or judges about my sexual orientation or gender identity.

# Do things like this happen to


## My spouse:

- Puts me down and humiliates me in public, says I'm crazy, or reprimands me.
- Makes fun of me, ridicules things that I say or do.
- Breaks or threatens to break objects I like.
- Threatens to tell people about my sexual orientation or transsexuality.
- Always wants to know where I am.
- Criticizes me all the time.
- Tells people things about me I want kept private.
- Disparages my work, friends, or family.
- Constantly phones me at work.
- Is constantly contacting me by phone, text, or email, or following me around even though we are no longer together.

**She said she'd tell my parents and kids that I was a lesbian. No matter what I did, she kept threatening and I would panic. She knew I'd rather die than have them know about my sexual orientation. She took advantage of that to keep me scared.**

**YES?**  
**These behaviours are all**  
**This brochure**

# you? Have you seen them happen to someone else?



**He said he accepted my transition. But he kept forcing me to have sexual relations that reminded me of my birth sex. It put me back in the role of a woman, even though I'm not a woman anymore.**

**examples of domestic violence.  
is for you.**

## **My spouse:**

- ✿ Shouts at me and insults me.
- ✿ Pushes, slaps, bites, pinches, kicks, or hits me, throws things at me, or is rough while helping me.
- ✿ Threatens to hurt or kill me.
- ✿ Threatens to hurt people I care about.
- ✿ Threatens to have my children taken away.
- ✿ Threatens to make me lose my job.
- ✿ Threatens to tell people that I haven't had an operation.
- ✿ Threatens to make me lose my place in the community.
- ✿ Controls my spending or spends all my money.
- ✿ Threatens to tell people that I'm HIV positive or have AIDS.
- ✿ Still always identify me with my former gender, calls me by my former name, or threatens to tell people about it.

# Domestic violence and insidiously undermines intimate


Your spouse repeatedly and constantly says and does things that hurt you.

His or her goal is to control you and have power over you.


To keep you from leaving, your spouse promises to change, but continues to humiliate you and be violent.

To control you, your spouse makes you doubt yourself and tries to confuse you by saying things are your fault or that you are violent.

To dominate you, your spouse is verbally and physically violent.



**It was open season on me every weekend. I tried to talk to a few people about it, but they didn't believe me. As if a woman could be that violent!**



**Domestic violence can occur in heterosexual or same-sex couples.**

**Domestic violence**  
**Time or love**

# starts gradually and committed relationships



**I was ashamed.  
I didn't dare talk about it  
with my friends or family.  
How would they believe I  
couldn't protect myself?  
A big tough guy like me!**

**doesn't stop by itself.  
won't stop it either.**

An abusive spouse looks like any other man or woman, may be respected in society, and may hold a responsible position.

Your friends and family may like him or her. An abusive spouse can seem like a very nice person.

Your spouse may not have mental health, alcohol, money, or work-related problems. And none of these problems is an excuse for violent behaviour.

Your spouse may be a man or woman, may come from anywhere in the world, and may practise any religion or none at all.

# Domestic violence

## beatings and

### **Psychological violence is less visible, but just as devastating.**

- Being repeatedly put down, called crazy, or ridiculed about your body or sexuality.
- Having your movements controlled.
- Being prevented from seeing your friends or loved ones.
- Having things revealed about you that you don't want people to know.

### **These are forms of domestic violence.**

Psychological violence destroys your self-esteem.  
You think you are the one to blame.

He said he loved me but instead of encouraging me, he constantly criticized the way I dressed and did my hair and makeup. He'd take any chance he could get to call me a worn-out old queen. He seemed so comfortable about who he was; so sure of himself. Eventually it had its effect. I became ashamed of who I was.

# is not just physical injury

**Economic violence is less well known,  
but just as humiliating.**

- Having to beg for money.
- Having your spending controlled, being forced to pay for everything, or having to hand over all your money.
- Not being able to choose the job you want.

**These are also forms of domestic violence.**

**Repeated spousal neglect might seem  
unintentional, but it isn't.**

- Continually having to wait to have urgent needs met.
- Not being given medication you need.

**These, too, are forms of domestic violence.**

**If you experience psychological  
or economic violence or are a  
victim of neglect, ask for help.**

**See the last page for  
organizations that help lesbian,  
gay, bisexual, transsexual, and  
transgender individuals who  
experience domestic violence.**

# Among all some are

- **Threats**  
Such as threats to harm or kill you.
- **Physical violence**  
Such as being bitten or hit.
- **Criminal negligence**  
Such as being deprived of medication that you need to survive, or food or care to the point where your life is at risk.
- **Sexual violence**  
Such as being forced to engage in sexual relations or unwanted sexual behaviour.
- **Harassment**  
Such as being constantly phoned or followed so that you fear for your safety.

- **Forcible confinement**  
Such as being locked in a room or prevented from leaving the house.

If you experience any of these forms of violence, you can call 911 to report it and get protection.

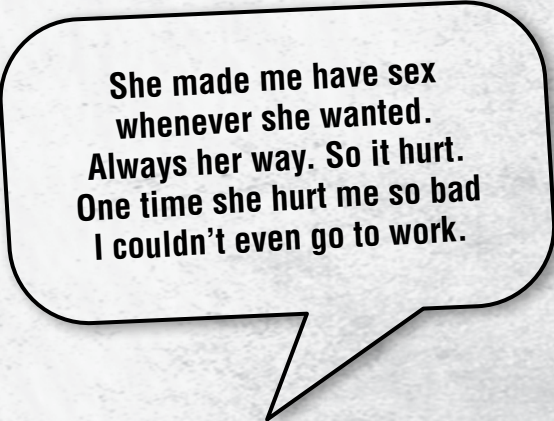
**You have a right  
to security and respect.**

**These rights are guaranteed by the  
Québec Charter of Human Rights and  
Freedoms, and the Canadian Charter  
of Rights and Freedoms.**

# forms of violence considered crimes

Over time, forms of violence may evolve and add to one another.

Over time, the frequency and severity of violence can increase.



**She made me have sex  
whenever she wanted.  
Always her way. So it hurt.  
One time she hurt me so bad  
I couldn't even go to work.**

# Here are some that might make you

- I want to stay alive.
- I can't face this alone anymore.
- It would be a relief just to talk to someone.
- I need respect.
- I need to be believed.
- I want my confidence and self-esteem back. I want to stop feeling guilty and ashamed.
- I want to find a way out and be independent again.
- I want to find out where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender people can get help.
- I want to find ways to protect myself, like arranging a signal to send to someone I trust to call 911 in an emergency.

**If your safety or the safety  
don't hesitate**

# of the reasons decide to seek help

These weren't just lovers' quarrels. I was so ashamed. I was so hurt, morally and physically. Our relationship was not equal at all. I had to use force just to protect myself. It had nothing to do with violence—it was self-defence. Plain and simple.

of your loved ones is **threatened**,  
to call 911.



**You don't have to feel guilty.**

**You have nothing to be ashamed of.**

**You don't have to keep quiet.**

**Your spouse is the one responsible for his/her violent behaviour.**

**Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender people go through the same thing.**

**Domestic violence is a serious problem that concerns everyone.**

**Don't face it alone.**

**No matter what your sexual orientation or gender identity, or whether people know about it or not, you can get help and support.**

**Talk to someone you trust.**

**Even if you confide in someone, you still have the right to make your own choices. You can choose whether to leave your spouse or stay with him or her.**

# Do you know a lesbian, gay, bisexual, who is experiencing domestic violence?

## Listen without judging

### **Believe what you hear**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender individuals may have trouble confiding in another person or revealing domestic violence for a number of reasons.

It takes a lot of courage to talk. The best way to help is to listen without judging and try to understand the obstacles the person is facing.

### **Be supportive**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender individuals are particularly vulnerable to social isolation. Due to their sexual orientation or gender identity and the discrimination they face, they have often lost contact with their families and may not have many people they can count on.

Be supportive and listen. Let the person know that confidential assistance is available. Show her or him this brochure for more information. Offer to go along to seek help if he or she wants.

# transsexual, or transgender person

## If he or she trusts you, you can help

### **Tell her it's not her fault. It's not his fault**

Due to moral or religious convictions against homosexuality and transsexuality, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual or transgender individuals may feel shame. This sentiment can drive some of them to hide the existence of their relationship and the violence taking place. Homosexuality and transsexuality are still considered to be against nature and related to the concept of sin. These biases reinforce the idea that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or transsexual individuals who lives in violence deserve punishment.

Tell the victim of domestic violence that his or her lesbianism, homosexuality, bisexuality or transsexuality does not justify violent behaviour. It is their spouses who are responsible for their violent acts.

## **Respect his or her choices and pace**

Domestic violence is devastating. The road to restoring self-confidence and taking back control of your life can be long.

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender individuals who experience domestic violence are apprehensive about revealing their sexual orientation or gender identity because they fear discrimination or other consequences.

Try to understand the person's experience and respect the choices he or she makes. You can steer him or her toward specialized resources that can help to better understand and clarify the situation. (See the last page of this brochure.)

## **Fight prejudice and invisibility**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender individuals who experience domestic violence are reluctant to talk about it because they have faced prejudice and discrimination, both from people and institutions. When they reveal the violence in their intimate relationship, they fear more negative reactions that can occur, even on the part of persons or organizations that are deemed to be competent.

The more isolated the victim, the more abusive his or her spouse can be. Be open, and above all, don't turn your back on them.

**Remember, domestic violence  
feeds on indifference...**



**RESOURCES**  
**CALL FROM ANYWHERE**  
**IN QUÉBEC**  
**24 HOURS A DAY,**  
**7 DAYS A WEEK**

**SOS domestic violence**  
**1-800-363-9010**

(calls from outside Montréal) (Voice and TTY)

**514-873-9010**

(in Montréal) (Voice and TTY)

**SOS domestic violence knows where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender individuals can find help.**

This free, confidential, and anonymous telephone service specializes in domestic violence. With one call, victims, their loved ones, and witnesses can **immediately** get information, counselling, and accommodation services.

**911 Emergency services**

For immediate assistance if you are in danger or are a witness to violence.

**911** (Voice) (TTY available in some regions)

**310-4141** (in municipalities where 911 is not available)

**\*4141** (for cell phone calls)

**Info-Santé**

For information and referrals, such as CLSCs and other health and social services centres (CSSSs)

**811** (Voice)

This brochure is available in French, English and Spanish. Please contact the Secrétariat à la condition féminine (SCF) at **418-643-9052**.

These brochures are also available on the SCF ([www.scf.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca)) and the Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal ([www.tcvcm.ca](http://www.tcvcm.ca)) websites in PDF or Word format in English, French or Spanish. They can be found on the SCF website under the Publications tab.

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- Conseil québécois des gais et lesbiennes ([www.cqgl.ca](http://www.cqgl.ca))
- Project 10 (<http://p10.qc.ca>)
- G.R.I.S. Groupe régional d'intervention sociale Chaudière-Appalaches ([www.grischap.qc.ca](http://www.grischap.qc.ca))
- AlterHeros (<http://www.altheros.com/?lang=en>).

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