

If You Are Being Abused by Your Partner:

- If you have been physically assaulted, seek medical attention or call 911.
- Talk to a LGBT domestic violence specialist immediately.
- Remind yourself that you are not responsible for your partner's abusive/violent behavior and that you have the right to a safe and healthy relationship.
- Remember that leaving an abusive partner without a safety plan, support and information about options is dangerous and can be life-threatening.
- Establish contacts with friends and family so you have a place to go in an emergency.
- Remember that couple counseling is usually not effective and can be dangerous.

If You Are Abusing Your Partner:

- Take responsibility and be accountable for your actions.
- See a LGBT domestic violence specialist immediately. Join a group for people who abuse their partners.
- Remember that apologies are only a temporary response and are not enough to stop the cycle of abuse.
- Recognize that physical and sexual assault are crimes. Assault is against the law and you can be charged and/or sentenced to time in jail.

If a Friend Is Being Abused:

- Educate yourself about domestic violence. Learn about the dynamics of partner abuse and available resources so that you don't inadvertently increase his/her risk.
- Don't insist that s/he leave her/his abusive partner. Leaving an abusive relationship without a realistic safety plan is dangerous and can be life-threatening.
- Do not recommend couple counseling.
- Reinforce that while many couples often have dysfunctional communication patterns, abusive behavior is never acceptable, that using abusive behavior is a choice that the abuser makes; and that it is the abuser's responsibility to change.
- Validate his/her feelings as well as their complexity
- Acknowledge the reality of the losses that s/he faces.

- Remind him/her that excessive jealousy, possessiveness, controlling and dominating behaviors and rage are not indicators of love.
- Challenge her/his denial about the seriousness of abuse as well as any misconceptions that s/he has about domestic violence (domestic violence is not a significant problem in the LGBT community; men are not commonly victims; women are never batterers; the abuse that women perpetrate is less severe than the abuse that is perpetrated by male batterers, etc.).
- Remember that your role is to be a friend rather than an expert or counselor.
- Encourage him/her to seek help and support from a LGBT domestic violence specialist or program.
- Take care of yourself. Don't do anything that puts yourself at risk. Don't intervene physically or threaten the abuser. If you witness your friend being assaulted, call 911 for help. If the abuser threatens you, secure a protective order and report any violations of the order. Seek support and assistance from a domestic violence specialist.

If a Friend is Abusing His/Her Partner:

- Let him/her know that violence and abuse is unacceptable and is often a crime. Abusers often believe that apologies will solve the problem. They do not.
- Tell him/her that abusive behavior is learned and can be unlearned.
- Be supportive and encourage her/him to seek immediate help. S/he must take responsibility for her/his behavior (s).
- Assist her/him in finding a batterers' intervention group or other community resources for abusers such as the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center's STOP Partner Abuse/Domestic Violence Program. S/he needs to understand the consequences of her/his violent behavior and s/he must stop abusing others. S/he may link issues such as drinking or drugs, a history of child abuse, or other stressors to his/her abusiveness. These are not excuses or causes of her/his violence but are issues that will need attention.
- Do not recommend couple counseling. It is potentially dangerous.
- Remain in contact with her/him and provide continued support for obtaining the help s/he needs and for stopping her/his abusive behaviors. The community may isolate the abuser and s/he may withdraw without seeking the help that s/he needs.
- Take care of yourself. Do not put yourself at risk. If you witness your friend assaulting his/her partner, do not attempt to physically intervene or threaten the abuser. Call 911 for help. Seek support and assistance from a domestic violence specialist.

PART 1. Preparing to be safe: Strategies for increasing your safety and your options for the future.

Follow your intuition about how to protect yourself until you are out of danger. You can always decide to do what your partner wants, temporarily, in order to avoid violence.

When you think your partner is becoming violent, try to avoid parts of your home where there is no outside exit, or there are many things he/she could use as a weapon – including the bathroom, garage, kitchen.

Practice how to get out of your house or apartment safely.

- Decide which doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes you would use to escape in a hurry.
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- Walk through each route, or go over it in your mind. Identify possible obstacles, such as darkness, things to trip over, locked exits, or weapons too close at hand. Correct the problem if you can, or look for another way out.

Keep money and car keys where you can grab them quickly.

Keep your cell phone with you at all times. Put 911 on speed dial.

Put money aside – even small amounts – that your partner doesn't know about. Open a bank account at a different bank from the one your partner uses. Have statements sent to a friend's address.

Apply for additional credit cards, even if the limit they will give you is low. Have bills sent to a friend's address so your partner won't know about the cards. (Don't give up if your first applications are denied; different credit card companies have different criteria.)

Take classes to increase your job skills, or look for a better-paying job to improve your financial situation.

Read one of the many books written to help victims survive and change their situation. There are several books specifically about LTBT domestic violence. Keep books at work or at a friend's house if necessary.

Learn what you can and can't expect from the police, the courts, social services, etc. Your local domestic violence program can give you information.

Safety Planning Guide

You can't control your partner's violence, but you can find ways to reduce the risk of harm to yourself and your children. This [Safety Planning Guide](#) will help you explore alternatives and prepare for emergencies. Safety planning begins with admitting to yourself that you are in danger – and will be in danger again in the future.

If you work on your safety plan when you are not in immediate danger, you can think more clearly and make better decisions. No matter what you are trying to do (avoid incidents, minimize harm to yourself and your children, escape temporarily, or leave permanently), you'll be more successful if you *plan* ahead, *prepare* to carry out your plan, and *rehearse* the steps you need to take.

There is no one-size-fits-all safety plan. Use the pieces of this guide that are relevant to your individual situation – no one knows better than you what you should or shouldn't do. Review your plan regularly and make changes as needed. Talk it over with people you trust.

Don't try to complete your safety plan all at once. Like any big task, it is best to break it into manageable bits. Identify specific things you can accomplish, decide what you need to do first, and tackle one thing at a time.

This Safety Planning Guide is designed as a worksheet, with spaces to fill in needed information, and check off what you have already done. Keep it where your partner won't find it or ask someone you trust to keep it for you. Even if it's not safe to write down your plan, it's still important to make one. Any thinking you do now will increase your ability to keep yourself and your children safe when you need to.

Local Toronto resources:

ACT: 416-340-2437

David Kelley Services LGBTQ Counselling: 416-595-9618, 355 Church Street

- * Specifically designated as a service provider for male survivors of sexual assault

- * Runs Partner Assault Response programming for court-mandated GBQT-identified men with domestic charges

Victim Services (Toronto Police): 416-808-7066

Toronto Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Care Centre: 416-808-7066, Women's College Hospital, 76 Grenville Street – Main Floor, Room #1305.

- *24/7 supports for men, women, and non-binary folks. Walk-in services available M – Fr 7:30 am to 11 pm and afterhours in local emergency departments.

PART 2. Mobilizing your support system.

Your support system includes family and friends who know what is happening to you and agree to help in some way. In order to fill in this page, you may need to ask various people for specific kinds of help. This will help you see that people will support you. Add a back-up person for very important items.

List individual people who agree to:

- Call the police if they hear noises coming from your house (near-by neighbors).
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Store your emergency escape bag and let you get it any time of day or night.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Let you and your children stay with them in an emergency, any time of day or night.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Take phone messages for you.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Lend you money.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Let you borrow their car.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Come and pick you up *if they can do so safely*.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Pick your children up. *Make sure the school or daycare center knows who is, and is NOT, authorized to pick them up. Give them pictures of those people.*
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Walk you to and from your car at work, or accompany you to work.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Receive mail for you at their address (especially bank and credit card statements).
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Take in your animals.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- Listen to you if you are feeling lonely or confused, or if you have left your partner and are considering returning.
Name: _____ Phone: _____

PART 3. Teaching your children safety skills

Talk to your children how to get out of the house and where to go in an emergency. The strategies you teach them will be different depending on the age of the child.

Practice these skills with them, especially with younger children; don't just tell them what to do. Break the skills down into steps, put the steps in the right order, and teach them one step at a time. (For instance, first they should learn their address, then learn how to call 911, then memorize a code word that tells them to call 911 immediately.) Review the steps periodically.

Children often repeat what they are told – don't give explanations that you don't want repeated to your partner. Some skills, such as knowing their address or being able to dial 911, can be presented as things every kid needs to know. For others, think out ahead of time what to say – and what NOT to say – to your children, and what to tell them to say if your partner asks them what they're doing. (For instance, instead of saying that you are practicing what to do when your partner gets angry, you can tell the children that you are practicing fire drills.)

Limit how many people younger children call for help; they may get confused if they have to go to different people.

Check off each skill or piece of information as your children have learned it:

- How to get out in an emergency (practice fire drills and escape plans)
- Your home address
- phone numbers: home, your work number, a supportive relative or friend (Who? _____)
- How to dial 911, use speed-dial
- A code word (a word you would not often say) or signal (something moved out of its normal place, a light turned on unnecessarily, etc.) that tells them to call for help or leave the house and go to a specific place:
 - Code word or signal: _____
 - Where they should go for help: _____(Also give the code word to family or friends so you can use it to let them know that you are coming, or that you need help.)
- A code word to tell them you're OK if you had to leave home. _____
- Who is allowed to pick them up at school or day care, and that they are not allowed to go with *anyone* else, no matter who. (Give a copy of the custody or protective orders and emergency numbers, to the caregiver or school.)

PART 4. Preparing to leave (temporarily or permanently)

Find a safe place to keep an emergency bag.

Check off each item as you put it in the emergency bag:

Extra keys: car, house, office, safety deposit box

Money: cash, checkbook, credit cards, ATM cards,
 bank account and credit card numbers

Clothing: yours, children's

Comfort toys for children, security blankets, stuffed animals
 Sentimental items, photos
 Medications: yours, children's

Copies of records and documents

<input type="checkbox"/> Order of Protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation papers	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Services ID
<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> Your will
<input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license	<input type="checkbox"/> Your partner's will
<input type="checkbox"/> Your birth certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Health care proxies
<input type="checkbox"/> Children's birth certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Power of attorney
<input type="checkbox"/> Your passport	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's school records
<input type="checkbox"/> Green cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's vaccination records
<input type="checkbox"/> Work permits	
<input type="checkbox"/> Children's passports	
<input type="checkbox"/> Health insurance or Medicaid ID cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Prescriptions
<input type="checkbox"/> Title to car (or lease contract)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Car registration	<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance information
<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance policies: <input type="checkbox"/> life <input type="checkbox"/> homeowners <input type="checkbox"/> health	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lease or deed <input type="checkbox"/> mortgage payment coupons	
<input type="checkbox"/> Address book with phone numbers for: domestic violence hotline, support people, doctors, dentists, child care providers, lawyer, insurance agent, pharmacy, etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Your safety plan	

If you can't get your partner to leave, check local laws governing how you must go about it.

- If your partner's name is on the lease or deed, you cannot simply lock them out or change the locks without getting an *exclusionary* Order of Protection or providing a legal notice of eviction.
- Even if the lease or deed is only in your name, if your partner has lived with you for a substantial period of time, they may have residency rights and it may be illegal for you to simply lock them out.

PART 5. If you and your partner have separated

If your partner has moved out, or you have, make your home as secure as possible. If money is a problem, do the ones that you think are most important first.

Free or low-cost security strategies:

- Tell supportive neighbors that your partner no longer lives with you, and ask them to call the police if they see your partner around your house.
- Keep all mail your partner sends to you – not just harassing or threatening letters, but friendly, loving, or begging ones as well.
- Let all calls go to voicemail. Do not delete any voicemail messages from your partner.
- Keep friendly messages as well as harassing ones.
- Get an unlisted phone number. Don't share it with anyone, even your credit card company or your bank.
- Put heavy screws into the side of window sashes so the window can only be opened a few inches.
- Check all doors and windows for security – including those in the basement, attic and garage.
- Ask your local police if they perform security checks for community residents.

Somewhat more expensive strategies:

- Change the locks on doors and windows if your partner has keys to your home.
- Install deadbolts, chains, window bars, or poles to wedge against doors.
- Buy rope ladders to use for escaping from second floor windows.

If money is not a problem, consider these ideas:

- Replace wooden doors with metal doors.
- Install outside lights, motion detectors, or an electronic security system.

PART 6. At work

- If you think you can do so without repercussions, tell your boss, security supervisor, or Employee Assistance Program about your situation.
- Give a photograph of your partner and a copy of your Order of Protection, if you have one, to security or the receptionist if there is one. Make sure they understand whether your partner is allowed to contact you, and if so, how.
- If you work near an open area or unmonitored entrance, ask to be moved to an area where you would be less accessible.
- Let all calls go to voicemail.
- Arrange to walk in and out of your workplace with other people.
- Ask for a parking place close to the entrance of your workplace.

Part 7. In public

- If your partner follows you around, some alternatives are:
- Go to a very public place (e.g., a convenience store, mall, or supermarket).
- Identify other places you can go for safety:
- Stay in the car and lean on the horn.
- Change your habits: avoid stores, banks, laundromats, recreational areas and other places where your partner would think to look for you. Find new places to do business.
- Make doctor, dentist or other appointments at times when you know your partner has to be somewhere else. If needed, consider changing to a different provider.

PART 8. Orders of Protection

You can get a civil Order of Protection from Family Court, or a criminal court Order of Protection if your partner has been arrested. Always keep it with you. If it gets lost or destroyed, ask the court that issued it to give you another copy.

Consider giving a copy of your Order of Protection to:

- Police departments in communities where you live, work, or visit friends and family.
 - Your employer
 - Your or your children's therapist, if any
 - Your children's school or day care center
 - Your attorney
 - Your domestic violence advocate
 - Other relevant people:
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If your partner violates the order, you can:

- Call the police and report the violation
- Call your attorney for advice
- Call your domestic violence advocate if you have problems getting it enforced.
- Report the violation to the court.

Part 9. Making progress.

Join a support group at the DV program or LGBT agency in order to build a support system, learn skills or get information. List other sources of this kind of help:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____

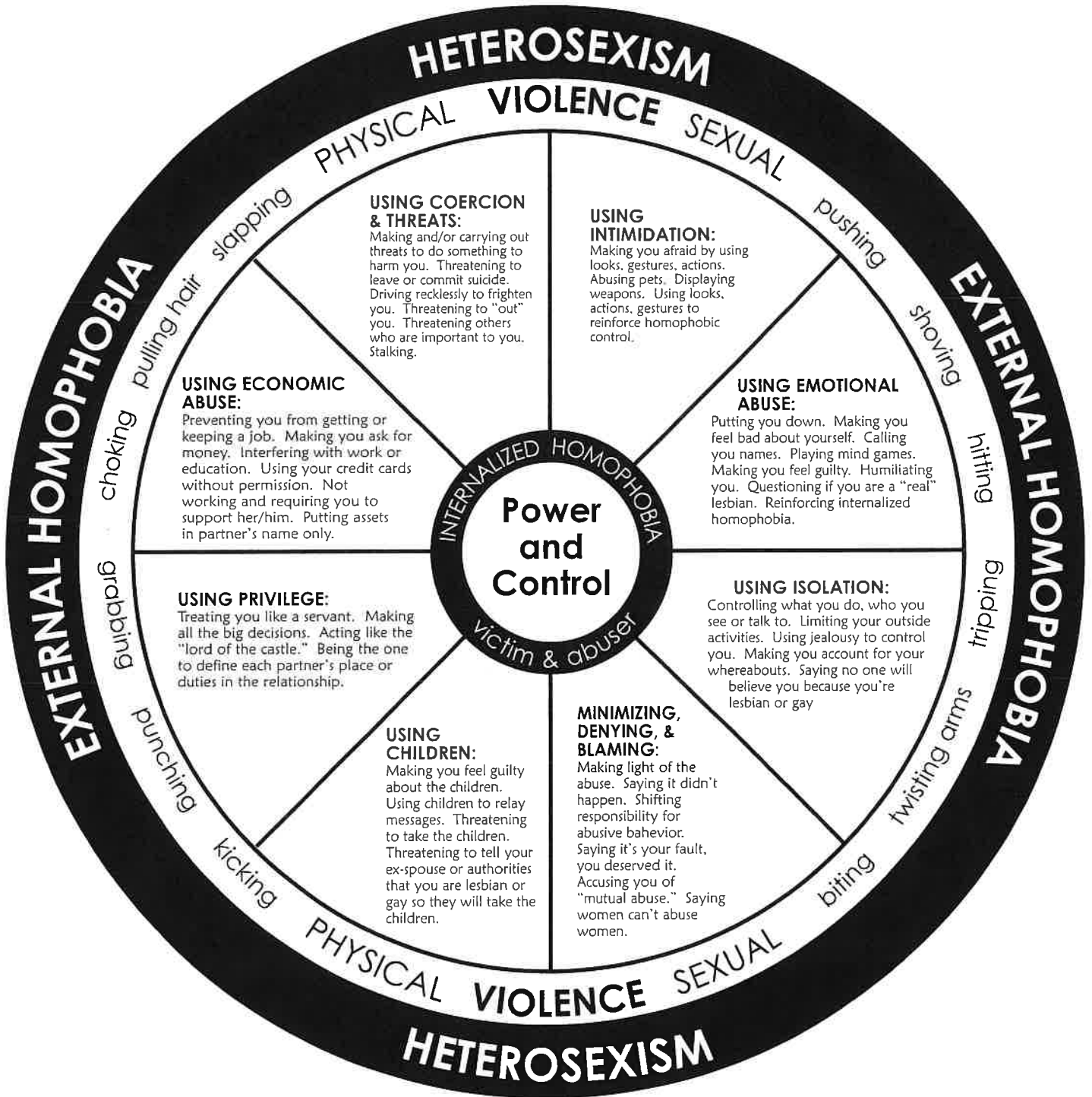
Work with a counselor or therapist who understands domestic violence and LGBT issues. A DV program or LGBT agency can recommend someone. If money is a problem, ask about sliding fee scales.

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____

List other things you can do to help yourself and your children feel stronger (ways to take good care of your body, nurture yourself emotionally, learn new skills, or have fun):

**You don't have to figure it all out on your own.
Domestic violence and LGBT service providers can help.**

LESBIAN/GAY POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



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202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802



NATIONAL CENTER
on Domestic and Sexual Violence
training • consulting • advocacy

4612 Shoal Creek Blvd. • Austin, Texas 78756
512.407.9020 (phone and fax) • www.ncdsv.org

APPENDIX 6: TACTICS OF LGBT ABUSERS
(‘V’ = the abused partner)

Trans Victim	Bisexual Victim	Teen Victim	HIV+ Victim	Bisexual Abuser	HIV+ Abuser	S&M Abuser	Parent Abuser
Assault post-op parts of body	Ridicule/discount V's bisexuality	Put down V's developing body	Withhold health care, help, meds, or \$ for care	Ridicule V's non-bisexuality	Falsely blame V for infection	Ignore safewords	Teach kids to abuse V
Withhold meds, hormones or \$ for transition	Threaten other partner(s)	Out V at school or to family	Threaten to abandon V without care	Pressure V to have sex with both genders	Assault V for wanting safer sex or drug works	Restrain V against their will	Use kids as spies or go-betweens.
Draw attention to scars or body parts that V is ashamed of	Label same-sex V's opposite-sex attraction as exploitative	Limit V's friends, activities, appearance	Threaten to out V as HIV+ to landlord, family, employer, INS	Transmit HIV/STD from other partners	Infect or reinfect V via unsafe sex, or dirty drug works	Give unclear signals about when scenes begin & end	Threaten to leave & deny partner access to kids.
Coercive medical tx to change V's body back	Exploit internalized biphobia: tell V to get off the fence	Turn friends against V	Use V's HIV status as excuse for abuse	Exploit value lesbian or gay partner puts on having a "straight partner	Try to convince others that they can't be abusive b/c they're sick	Not use safewords, but accuse V of violating limits	Frighten kids by injuring other parent
Out V as trans	Out V as bisexual	Jealousy & possessiveness	Exploit internalized AIDS-phobia	Frequent sexual abuse; forced sex with others	Use scenes to express anger and frustration	Physically or sexually abuse children.	Destroy kids' connection with other parent
Refuse to use V's preferred pronouns	Exploit V's low self-esteem	Exploit V's lesser access to cars & alcohol, freedom, or experience.	Threaten to charge V with attempted murder	Make V feel responsible for caretaking & guilty about wanting to leave	Pressure V into switching or not switching roles	Use kids' behavior or problems as an excuse for abuse	
Sexually abuse parts of body that V disowns	Exploit V's feelings from past abuse	Exploit V's lesser access to cars & alcohol, freedom, or experience.	Cruel remarks: You deserve to die. You're sick & disgusting.	Convince helpers to side with them	Force V to go beyond negotiated limits	Threaten to kill or kidnap kids.	
Harass V at work	Demand sexual acts that V is not ready for	Use stress of caregiving to excuse abuse	Isolate V from other potential caregivers	Refuse to contract	Threaten to out V to ex-spouse	Teach kids to act aggressively	
Exploit V's internalized transphobia.	Define abuse as normal.						
Control V's gender expression							