

2SLGBTQIA+ Intimate Partner Violence: Inclusive Support



Use inclusive language: Start conversations without the assumption of gender and sexual orientation.

Using gender neutral terms can help create inclusive spaces and invite more open dialogue. Example: use “partner/spouse” instead of “wife/husband”, “girlfriend/boyfriend”, and “she/he”.

Check bias: IPV exists in all types of relationships, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, and can present the same level of risk.

Self reflect on beliefs about IPV in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Remember it’s okay not to know. Keep an open mind, ask questions, and learn.

Validate: Many survivors fear that they may not be believed, taken seriously or blamed when disclosing IPV. This can be magnified for sexual and gender minorities due to fears of homo/bi/transphobic responses.

Remember that survivors may have to “out” themselves to disclose abuse. Use affirming language and being mindful of pronouns and identities. Responses could include: “I believe you”, “Thank you for sharing this with me, it takes a lot of courage”, and “I want to make sure you feel comfortable, what pronouns do you use?”

Meet the survivor where they’re at: Many people (regardless of gender identity and orientation) stay in an abusive relationship for a variety of reasons.

Reasons can include: fear; lack of resources; financial dependency; isolation; low self worth; hope that abuser will change; not recognizing the behaviour as abuse; shame; children; pets; pressure from friends/family/community. It’s important to acknowledge these complexities and listen to what the survivor needs to feel supported.

Offer to help develop a safety plan: Keep in mind that 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors can face barriers to accessing IPV specific supports.

Shelters, resource materials and counselling programs often reflect a hetero/cisnormative colonial framework, and it may not feel safe relying on the justice system due to history of systemic discrimination. Build on strengths of the survivor and draw on inclusive supports that may include 2SLGBTQIA+ specific services; cultural/spiritual affiliations and groups; and chosen family/friends.

Be a 2SLGBTQIA+ ally: Homo/bi/transphobia and other forms of discrimination can be significant barriers for survivors disclosing and receiving support for IPV.

Demonstrate you’re a safe professional/friend/family member/neighbour: engage in anti-oppressive learning opportunities; advocate for more inclusive policies and practices in your workplace/school; stand up against microaggressions and slurs; wear visible signs of support (rainbows, pride flags, pronoun pins); attend Pride and other events that celebrate diversity.

