

MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Statistics

- Between 2001 and 2005, on average 3.6% of nonfatal victimizations against males were committed by intimate partners, 4.6% were committed by other relatives, 34.3% by friends/acquaintances and 57.4% by strangers. *DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S. 12/2007.*
- Between 2001 and 2005, about 60% of nonfatal intimate partner victimization against males occurred at home, 9.5% near home and 10.2% at a friend or neighbor's home. *Ibid.*
- Weapons were present in 28% of nonfatal intimate partner violence against male victims. *Ibid.*

Overview of the Issue

- As statistics show, domestic violence is primarily a crime against women. Unfortunately, this can mean that male victims may not get the notice or help they need. Agencies and advocates of domestic violence that fight daily battles to secure rights and protections for abused women may necessarily need to maintain gender-specific resources to ensure client safety.
- Perpetrators of domestic violence against male victims include female and male intimate partners, as well as caregiver abuse for elder and/or disabled male victims.
- Male victims face added barriers of not being believed or being ridiculed when they try to report. The cultural belief that men should be strong and invulnerable influences our formal support systems, like the police, judicial and medical systems. These attitudes and resulting behavior often re-victimizes victims, especially if they are gay/bisexual/transgender.

What You Can Do

- Do not assume. Size or strength is not the determining factor for a victim or a perpetrator of abuse.
- Do not trivialize his abuse. Listen to a male victim without judgement or prejudice.
- Gay/bisexual/transgender communities fear being denigrated further if they admit their domestic violence issues. All communities need to support victim resources and address the issue through advocacy.

Impact on Victims

- With few physical resources and shelters available for men, friends and family can offer tangible support.
- Stereotyping of male victim-hood and the stigmas attached (*he must be queer, soft, weak, or a 'woman'*) increases the sense of shame and makes men more reluctant to report. Men may face disbelief and ridicule.
- Even as victims, men have a higher risk of losing custody, and thus may fear reporting.

Quotable

Domestic violence can affect anyone. It injures, demoralizes and devastates its victims whether they are female or male. Societal assumptions and prejudices about what constitutes manhood are largely responsible for male violence, but also impact how we see and respond to male victim-hood.