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Biases in the Macro-System and How They Affect Treatment of LGBT Domestic Violence Victims

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Introduction

• LGBT domestic violence is not openly spoken about
• Homophobic views of macro-system (counselors, physicians, shelters) keep LGBT victims from receiving proper treatment
• Without educating police officers and macro-system members, biases held against them LGBT victims will prevent the treatment necessary for recovery

Background

• Domestic violence in general did not become acknowledged as a situation requiring police intervention until the 1970s by the American Bar Association
• VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) passed in 1994 and then reinstated in 2000, 2005, and most recently in 2012
• VAWA does have sections meant to provide funding to protect LGBT victims of violence

Methods

• Examination of scholarship from mental health, public policy, and gender studies for evidence of bias in the professional community and if it affects LGBT victims of abuse
• Journals examined including, but not limited to, the Journal of Family Violence, and the Journal of Lesbian Studies

Results

• Help outside the LGBT community is not enough for these survivors to recover from their abuse.
• Resources from the general community including macro-system resources are often homophobic, making it difficult for victims to receive proper treatment equal to that of heterosexual victims.
• Stereotypes held of domestic violence victims lead to decreased concern for same-sex relationship abuse victims.
• Some characteristics specific to the LGBT community such as outing can make victims feel isolated and without hope, decreasing the chance that they will report the violence they experience.

Conclusions

• Sensitivity training must be given to not just police officers, but counselors and shelter employees as well.
• A focus on crisis hotline operator training in instances of LGBT domestic violence calls is vital since many victims reach out to somebody they do not know first.
• Training of mental health professionals regarding LGBT clients is vital for correct and unbiased treatment of violence victims.
• The LGBT community must step up to provide items that are necessary to recovery, but not completely available outside LGBT communities.

Graph:

Clients of New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project Who Filed Police Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Measured</th>
<th>Percentage of Clients that Filed Police Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Works Consulted


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