

## Campus Resources

MSU Sexual Assault Program  
14 Student Services Building  
24-hour crisis line:  
517.372.6666  
[www.endrape.msu.edu](http://www.endrape.msu.edu)

MSU LGBT Resource Center  
302 Student Services Building  
517.353.9520  
[www.lbgtc.msu.edu](http://www.lbgtc.msu.edu)



## Local Resources

Michigan Equality – [www.michiganequality.org](http://www.michiganequality.org)

The Triangle Foundation – [www.tri.org](http://www.tri.org)

Triangle Pride Public Action Committee – [www.pride-pac.org](http://www.pride-pac.org)

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan – [www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org)

## National Resources

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs  
[www.avp.org](http://www.avp.org), 212.714.1141 (24-hour crisis line)

RAINN: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org), 1.800.656.HOPE (24-hour crisis line)

The Survivor Project  
[www.survivorproject.org](http://www.survivorproject.org)

PFLAG: Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

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You are not alone.

Let's talk about it...

**Sexual Violence in the LGBT community**

Michigan State University  
Sexual Assault Program

# Sexual Violence in the LGBT Community

## What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is a broad term that encompasses a continuum of words and actions varying in degree from harassing comments of a sexual nature to sexual contact (including, but not limited to sexual penetration) when such contact is achieved:

- Without consent; or
- With the use of physical force, coercion, deception or threat; or,
- When the victim/survivor is mentally incapacitated or impaired, under the age of consent, physically helpless, asleep or unconscious.

Sexual violence includes rape, incest, child sexual assault, ritual abuse, stranger rape, acquaintance rape, partner/marital rape,

## What is same-sex sexual assault?

- Same-sex sexual assault may include (but is not limited to) forced vaginal, anal or oral penetration, forced touching, or any additional form of forced sexual activity.
- Same-sex sexual assault may occur on a date, between friends, partners or strangers.

A sexual assault is an attack not only on a person's body, but also on their dignity and emotional well-being. A sexual assault is NEVER the fault of the victim.

## Does sexual assault happen to LGBT people?

Sexual assaults happen to and are committed by, people of all sexual orientations.

Regrettably there is a lack of research on the prevalence of sexual violence in the LGBT community.

It is estimated that approximately 10% of hate crimes against members of the LGBT communities involve sexual assault. This figure may be higher, because individuals who were assaulted may be unsure if they were targeted because of their sexual orientation.

# LGBT community specifics

## Unique issues in the LGBT community...

- Survivors who are not "out" may find sharing and/or reporting the sexual assault difficult or impossible.
- Due to the lack of awareness of same-sex sexual assault the LGBT community may make silence appear the only option.
- If the survivor's community is small, the fear of others' skepticism and/or people "taking sides" may cause the survivor to keep silent.
- Guilt and self-blame (which are common symptoms of all survivors) may lead to questioning ones sexual identity and sexuality.
- One's own internalized homophobia may further complicate the complexities of sexual assault.
- Gay/bi male survivors may be apprehensive to report and fear being ignored and/or rejected as overly sensitive due to the stereotype that they are promiscuous and invited upon themselves.
- Lesbian/bi women survivors may face being ignored or having their claims discarded if their attacker is a female because women are not socially seen as sexual perpetrators.

## Common fears of LGBT survivors of sexual violence...

- Not being taken seriously or having their experience minimized.
- Having their experience sensationalized.
- Having to explain how the assault happened in more detail than one would ask a survivor of opposite-sex assault.
- Being treated in a homophobic manner by the police, hospital, rape crisis center and others.
- Being "outed."

## How can I help my friend or partner?

- Believe them
- Respect their need for confidentiality
- Be a good listener
- Avoid judgmental comments/jokes
- Respect their decision even if yours may be different

