



LGBTQIA+ Sexual and Relationship Violence

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, or asexual victims/survivors confront the same issues as any victim/survivor. They may also deal with issues and needs unique to their identity.

LGBTQIA+ Sexual Assault

Sexual assault against LGBTQIA+ people can include forced penetration, oral sex, or other unwanted sexual activity by use of a body part or other object. Victims/survivors experience the same emotional reactions and need the same support and intervention services as others who are not LGBTQIA+.

Differences from heterosexual people may manifest in that LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors may:

- be less likely to report sexual assault
- experience greater victim-blaming
- fear threats that someone will “out” them

LGBTQIA+ Relationship Violence

LGBTQIA+ individuals may experience physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and psychological abuse with their relationships. Abusers may use the LGBTQIA+ person’s sexual orientation or gender identity against them in various ways, such as:

- threatening to “out” them
- telling them that their orientation is invalid or not real
- normalizing the abuse or telling them that such abuse doesn’t exist in LGBTQIA+ relationships
- controlling access to limited community resources for LGBTQIA+

Barriers to Services

Due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors may face barriers to services.

- Experienced cultural stigma and shame about sexuality may silence some.
- Fears of being “outed” may contribute to not wanting to report the crime.
- Fears of “betraying” the gay community or of a loss of community may make reporting more difficult.
- Guilt and self-blame after sexual assault can cause people to question their experience, which can also cause LGBTQIA+ to question identities.
- Perceptions of or past experiences with law enforcement or service providers may make the decision to report or seek care difficult.
- Other members of the LGBTQIA+ community may not be supportive of survivors/victims and may want to “protect” the LGBTQIA+ community through ongoing myths about lack of relationship violence within LGBTQIA+ relationships.
- Bisexual and queer victims/survivors may face assumptions and stereotypes about sexual and dating practices.
- Trans and gender-nonconforming victims/survivors may face barriers to gendered services/resources.

Providing Support

Whether part of the LGBTQIA+ community or not, safe and empathetic space is important when addressing trauma after sexual or relationship violence. Ways to show support for LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors include:

- **Be aware.** Consider that the abuser may attempt to convince others of the myth that abuse does not happen in LGBTQIA+ relationships. The abuser may try to monopolize support services through manipulation of support systems, including friends and family by gaining their trust and sympathy to cut off resources for the victim/survivor.
- **Listen without judgment.** Sharing about a victimization is not easy. And when one does share, they don't just talk to anyone. So, create a safe space for them to talk openly without fear, shame, nor blame. Reflecting language, staying present, expressing care and concern are important toward an inclusive environment.
- **Respect autonomy.** Offer support, resources, and information while empowering the victim/survivor to make decisions about what is right for them.
- **Be patient.** The healing journey is not quick and easy. The gift of patience, without pressure or judgment is valuable along the healing path that often encompasses a roller coaster of progress, setbacks, and triumphs.
- **Be understanding.** Even if a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, it is still important to give space for everyone's journey that is unique to them.
- **Be available.** Let victims/survivors know you're there for them whenever to talk or just be with them. Healing doesn't happen on a schedule, so being available when needed is important.

Information adapted from Online Resource Center for Violence Against Women best practice recommendations for LGBTQ survivors; NSVRC SART Toolkit; The Trevor Project

Campus Resources

SRVC	479-575-4000
Advocacy email	survivor@uark.edu
Education programs email	respect@uark.edu
CAPS 24 HR Crisis Line	479-575-5276
(Counseling & Psychological Services)	
Pat Walker Health Center	479-575-4451
(University Health Services)	
U of A Cares	479-575-5004
University Police	479-575-2222
Title IX	479-575-7111
	titleIX@uark.edu
Student Accountability	479-575-5170
	judicial@uark.edu
Reports for Any Concern	report.uark.edu

In the event of an emergency, call 911

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Campus Resource Options

If you want to speak on campus with someone **confidentially** about sexual or relationship violence, you may do so with a victim advocate at the SRVC or a mental health counselor. Faculty and staff are required by university policy to report incidents of sexual or relationship violence to the Title IX coordinator for the University to investigate. An advocate is available through the SRVC and may be reached by emailing survivor@uark.edu or calling 479-575-4000.

For more information, visit srvc.uark.edu

Forensic Evidence Collection ("a Rape Kit") is available by appointment at the NWA Center for Sexual Assault, 1670 W. Sunset, Suite B, Springdale, AR 72762. Call 1-800-794-4175 to arrange for an appointment or contact the campus SRVC for assistance with this.