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What Police Can Do To Better Respond To LGBTQ* Victims Of Intimate Partner Violence

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Improving Police Response to LGBTQ* Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

Maya Falb '23 – (Sponsors: Dr. Nicole Overstreet & Gia Davis)



INTRODUCTION

- IPV in LGBTQ* communities is underreported to police despite there being similar or higher rates than heterosexual and cisgender individuals (Edwards, Sykaska, & Neal, 2015).
- This may be due to:
 - Legislation and systems historically excluding the LGBTQ* community (McClennen, 2005)
 - Police bias against LGBTQ* individuals (Mallory et al., 2015)
 - Distrust of police from LGBTQ* communities (Satuluri & Nadal, 2018)
- Policing needs to better support LGBTQ* victims of IPV because:
 - IPV can escalate and become more dangerous over time, especially when victims contact police (World Health Organization, 2012)
 - Police are often the gatekeepers to other victim support services (LaSala & Fedor, YEAR)

Research Question: What can police do to better respond to LGBTQ* victims of of abuse?

METHODS

- 20 articles were included in the initial review
- Articles were found on PsychINFO, PsychArticles, Google Scholar, and Academic Search Premier, as well as from references of related articles
- Keywords: *police, IPV, LGBTQ, abuse, domestic abuse, bias, police training*
- Articles used were within the scope of (1) Police response to LGBTQ* IPV, (2) LGBTQ* views of police, (3) Police biases of the LGBTQ* community.

RESULTS

Self-Study and Needs Assessment:

To assess the current relationship between LGBTQ* community and police and how police have been responding to LGBTQ* victims.



Training and Education:

When designing the training it should be a collaborative effort between the police department and the local LGBTQ* community.



Culture and Accountability:

Creating a culture where police officers hold each other accountable when they respond incorrectly to an LGBTQ* victim of IPV.



Police Improved Response to LGBTQ* Victims of IPV:

With better training and policies in place, LGBTQ* victims may feel more able to report abuse to the police and get support they need.

DISCUSSION

- Work needs to be done to better understand the barriers LGBTQ* victims experience when interacting with police, as well as actions that can be taken by police to improve their response.
- Difficult to assess police training and procedures, as they are not available to the public and vary from state to state
- Laws are often not unconditionally LGBTQ* inclusive or gender neutral
 - Difficult to assess how current IPV laws impact the LGBTQ* community
 - Leaves ambiguity in how police enforce laws
- How will the current wave of anti-transgender legislation occurring in the United States impact police response to LGBTQ* victims of IPV?
- Limitations encountered throughout the research process:
 - Age of literature available that was relevant
 - Limited research on police response to victims of IPV

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- IPV legislation needs to be explicitly gender neutral, allowing for true inclusion of LGBTQ* victims
- More transparency around the content, frequency, and evaluation of police training
- Require inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in police trainings and encourage collaboration between police and LGBTQ* community.

For questions or to see references, contact:

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