THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Senior Constable Ben Bjarnesen - 2016 Churchill Fellow

To enhance the Police response to LGBTI domestic violence

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Signed: Ben Bjarnesen Dated: 11 January 2018

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KEYWORDS: Police, LGBTI, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Domestic Violence, Domestic Abuse
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Executive Summary

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To enhance the Police response to LGBTI domestic violence

The aim of this project was to enhance police engagement with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities and LGBTI support services around domestic violence (DV). This project aimed to identify and develop improved methods of engaging with LGBTI communities and responding to DV incidents. Despite having police Liaison Officers who specialise in LGBTI issues, contemporary research indicates that the majority of LGBTI communities still avoid contacting Police even if they are victims of domestic violence or crimes.

During the period of September to November 2017, I attended seven police departments and fifteen community support organisations throughout the USA, Canada, UK and the Netherlands to gain an insight into issues surrounding DV in LGBTI communities and the strategies used to improve the way in which Police respond to the issue, develop connections with support agencies, and enable front line Police to have more meaningful and effective interactions with LGBTI communities. I interviewed a number of experts in this field and heard them speak of their concerns relating to the extent of DV in LGBTI communities, the underreporting of these experiences in these communities, and the impact that it is having on victims and families.

It was identified that people in LGBTI communities may not identify themselves as being in a DV relationship, as DV is most often seen as a problem of heterosexual relationships with men abusing women. LGBTI people are less likely to see themselves as experiencing abuse or being an abuser if they cannot identify with the portrayed characteristics of domestic violence within the public eye, and therefore do not believe that support is available to them. There is often a belief that they will not be taken seriously or believed by police, or will not be treated appropriately or respectfully.

My report and recommendations will provide an insight into DV in LGBTI communities, barriers to reporting, police strategies used to combat DV, and ways to enable members of LGBTI communities to confidently seek support from police or other community support agencies.

“Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence and anyone can be a perpetrator of domestic violence.”
Major Lessons Learnt

- The necessity of LGBTI liaison officers work in the community to gain the trust of the community
- The benefits of having a 24hr central point of contact for LGBTI Liaison Officers
- The necessity of internal LGBTI awareness training programs for recruits and officers
- The need to acknowledge that DV occurs in all relationships, not just heterosexual
- The potential for the expansion of LGBTI liaison officer roles
- The critical importance of continual engagement with LGBTI support organisations
- The benefits of Community Consultative Committees involving the community and police
- The need to record DV incidents occurring in LGBTI communities

Dissemination and Implementation

Dissemination of this report and its findings will be achieved in a number of ways:

- The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust website
- Forwarding through the chain of command to Queensland Police executive leadership team
- Direct dissemination to state domestic violence support agencies
- Direct dissemination to state LGBTI support organisations
- Direct dissemination to interstate LGBTI Liaison Officer Programs
- Queensland Police Bulletin
- Queensland Police Union of Employees Journal
- Interested media outlets

Acknowledgements

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This fellowship would not have been possible without the unfailing support of my two formal referees Doctor Ange Dwyer, Associate Professor in Police Studies and Emergency Management at the University of Tasmania and Inspector Corey Allen of the Queensland Police Service, Operational Training Services. I would also like to acknowledge Superintendent David Tucker for his continual support, mentorship, leadership and advice.

To my mother Jenny and my sisters Kirsty and Nicci for their love, support and constant encouragement they have given me every step of the way.

The fellowship experience would not be what it is without the people who gave their time and support throughout. With that in mind I would like to express my gratitude to the many police officers and support organisations’ personnel who took the time to meet with me whilst I was abroad.

I would like to thank my employer, the Queensland Police Service, for allowing me to undertake this research as part of my duties.
Terms and Definitions

Heteronormative - Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation.¹

Misgendering – Referring to someone (especially a transgender person) using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.²

Whilst around the world there are many different terms for domestic violence including “Domestic Abuse” and “Intimate Partner Violence,” for the purpose of consistency in this report, I will use the term “Domestic Violence” or “DV” in accordance with Queensland legislation which defines DV as: any behaviour by a person towards another person in a relevant relationship that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, economically abusive, threatening, coercive or in any way controls or dominates the second person and causes that person to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of someone else.

I acknowledge that the terms “victim” and “survivor” are commonly used in connection with literature relating to domestic violence. Throughout this report, I will refer to people as “victims” of domestic violence rather than “survivors” to be consistent with police departments’ documentation.

Background

Internationally it appears that the most common factor stopping LGBTI people from reporting DV and hate crimes to Police is historical events involving Police and LGBTI communities and previous negative interactions with Police. Another common theme identified by various studies and surveys of LGBTI communities is that people feared their sexuality or gender identity would be exposed to their family, friends or workplace if they were to make a report to Police. This mistrust of Police puts LGBTI people in a far greater danger of becoming victims of significant or protracted abuse or violence as it does not allow Police to engage with the victim and intervene in this cycle or provide support.

With LGBTI relationships suffering from significantly higher rates of DV (25-38%) when compared with heterosexual relationships, it is surprising to learn of the lack of support services available to LGBTI people. While prevalence differs widely within the literature, several investigations estimate that nearly 50% of all same-sex relationships involve some degree of DV.³ Lifetime prevalence of DV is significantly higher among bisexual women (61%) when compared to lesbian (43.8%) and heterosexual women (35%),⁴ and men in same-sex relationships are just as likely to experience DV as heterosexual women.⁵

Media campaigns, support services, and Police generally discuss and make policy about DV as a “heterosexual problem” with victims of DV being females and children. Whilst it is acknowledged that this group represents the vast majority of victims, it is clear that there are tens of thousands of LGBTI victims of DV who have inadequate support services, are not aware they are victims, or are too scared to seek support due to their sexuality or gender identity. The more equipped first response police are to engage, refer, and connect with LGBTI communities, the more effective that response may be.

¹ The Oxford Dictionary
² The Oxford Dictionary
³ Parry & O’Neal, 2015
⁴ Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013
⁵ Houston & McKirnan, 2007
United States of America

Metropolitan Police Department - Washington, District of Columbia (DC)

Lieutenant Brett Parson - Special Liaison Branch

Situated in the Capital of the USA, the Metropolitan Police Department is home to the Special Liaison Branch which is a full-time branch comprising of an LGBT Liaison Unit (LGBTLU), Asian Liaison Unit, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Liaison Unit, and Latino Liaison Unit. The duties of the LGBTLU include conducting public education campaigns on issues relating to hate crimes and public safety. They aim to gain the trust of LGBT communities and conduct investigations that lead to the solving of crimes within LGBT communities. They conduct patrol functions and respond to all incidents in the district when they are not tasked to LGBT related tasks.

When first response officers attend an incident and identify that the victim of a DV or crime is part of the LGBT community, reporting of the incident to the LGBTLU is mandatory. If officers from the LGBTLU are on-duty, they will respond to the incident, or if they are not on-duty they will respond to the victim within 24 hours. The nature of the case, its complexity and the ability of the first response officers attending will determine if the LGBTLU will take over the investigation or merely provide advice to the attending officers and community member (e.g.: what support services are available for LGBT community members etc). The LGBTLU also have a 24hr on-call officer to answer inquiries from the LGBT community and fellow officers alike.

In Washington DC, Police can contact offenders only with the consent of their defense lawyers, to ensure they have been treated professionally and respectfully and to refer them to the appropriate LGBT support agencies. The Officer in Charge of the Unit Lieutenant Brett Parsons is of the firm belief that to increase the confidence of LGBT communities and trust in Police, any Police officer who engages in behaviour that adversely affects the relationships with the community must be disciplined. Staff who report this behaviour should be supported and staff who observe bad behaviour and do not report it should also be disciplined.

When asked if having full-time LGBT Liaison Officers dedicated to LGBT investigations and community engagement is beneficial, Lt Parsons advised that if there is eight hours of work per day that can be done, then creating a position should be strongly supported.

Just because incidents involving LGBTI people aren’t being reported, it doesn’t mean that crimes and DV aren’t happening in that community, it could just mean that no one knows about them or victims aren’t confident in reporting them.

(Lt Brett Parson)

Lt Parson states that if LGBT Liaison officers are working effectively, it is highly likely that crime statistics may go up. The crime is always happening, but it is not until the community are confident in the police service that they will report the crimes and DV. Therefore, the more confidence LGBT communities have in the police and the LGBT program, the more reporting there will be of incidents resulting in higher crime statistics. In respect to domestic violence in Washington DC, the reporting rates in LGBT communities are unknown, but are estimated as being at the same rate as heterosexual DV which is 25-35% of relationships.
A major problem is that people in the LGBTI community don’t report incidents of DV or crimes as 75% of the community fear or don’t trust Police or fear being outed if they make a report.  

(Lt Brett Parson)

This lack of reporting, fear and mistrust of Police is one of the reasons the LGBTLU was created. Through constant exposure of the Unit to the community, they were able to gain the trust and confidence of the community and with more trust came more reporting. Lt Parsons says it is everyone’s responsibility to spread awareness of DV, as it is for any crime. No one particular agency is responsible or can make all the difference. It must be a joint effort.

The LGBTLU is marketed to the community using newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, outreach, online, festivals, merchandise and 24hr on-call telephone access. They are assisted by community support organisations who let the community know that it is safe to report matters to the Police. Police also attend events run by these agencies.

When reflecting on how the LGBTLU promotes itself to the community, Lt Parsons highlighted the importance of online updates on the department’s social media pages. These should include crime updates as well as event information so that the community can see that the LGBTLU officers are operational Police officers who can assist them in investigating crime and supporting victims of crime.

Police training starts at the Academy. Throughout all the training packages that recruits will learn in their time at the Academy (DV, traffic, etc), LGBT scenarios are included. By continually exposing the recruits to LGBT scenarios in their training, they get a consistent message that they may encounter an LGBT person at any time and are provided with appropriate ways to interact with them. Lt Parsons says “it’s not just one session that is over and done with and never thought about again.” Training outside of the academy includes training sessions at stations at briefing times, as well as online learning products. Training can also be tailored to specific areas that have issues.
Helen Hall - Certified Advanced Victim Specialist - Metropolitan Police Department

The Special Liaison Branch is also host to civilian staff, including Victim Specialists such as Helen Hall who investigates the needs of the victim, refers them to external agencies, and assists them with completing and lodging victims of crime applications. Police officers who take a report in relation to an offence against an LGBT person are required to report those offences not only to the LGBTLU, but also to the on-call advocacy program and provide them with victims of crime compensation information and in relation to the rights of victims.

Helen says that LGBT communities are afraid of reporting matters to the Police because there is a lack of trust, previous mistreatment, and a perception of bias. Some members of the community do not believe that police will be able to look past their sexuality or gender identity and see them as a victim. There is a perceived lack of compassion from officers, a belief that nothing will happen if they report the matter to police, and that no enforcement will take place.

To overcome this, police are encouraged to show compassion in their work, open up and see what’s really going on and not make assumptions. The LGBTLU is vital to ensure that this done and that the quality of reports and investigations are up to standard. Police and support organisations need to be more aware of what domestic violence looks like in the LGBT Community. The community also need to be educated on the issue.

Acting Lieutenant Jessica Hawkins - Metropolitan Police Department - LGBT Liaison Unit

Acting Lieutenant Hawkins and I attended a local community and support organisation “The DC Centre” and spoke with social worker Sam Goodwin. The LGBTLU has formed a working relationship with the DC Centre and refers victims to them for support. Goodwin advises that members of LGBT communities do not report domestic violence and crimes to the Police due to fear and distrust. There are many LGBTI people who are not out and fear being outed if they report a matter to the Police and do not want to speak to officers in the LGBT Liaison Unit as they do not want to be associated with anything LGBTI. Whist Goodwin states that it is hard to rebuild trust once it is broken, units like the LGBTLU help to rebuild the trust. To overcome barriers to reporting to Police, members of the community need to be familiar with the Police, and the Police need to provide a safe environment for the victims to report crimes and discuss their issues with support persons present, in places such as the DC Centre. Holding “get to know your Police” events can also assist the community in becoming familiar with the Police that serve them. It became evident that whilst both the Police and support agencies often work together, these relationships often rely on the people in those organisations at the time. These relationships can also be filtered through the perceptions of Police that people in these organisations have.

Officer Kelvin Garcia - Metropolitan Police Department - Special Liaison Branch

On my last day in DC, I was able to go out on patrol with Officer Garcia. We attended the HIPS Centre which is an organisation that aims to reduce harm in the community. They are partnered with health and legal services, the DC Rape Crisis Centre and the Harm Reduction Coalition. They run a drop-in centre, community health clinic, needle exchange program, sexual health clinic, counselling, care coordination, and referrals services. Police regularly drop-in to HIPS to build relationships with the staff and members of LGBTI communities, with the aim of building relationships and building trust and familiarity. Whilst on patrol with Officer Garcia, we were detailed to attend an incident in which a person entering their workplace was subjected to abuse and threats to kill homosexuals. Attending this incident gave me a firsthand view into how the LGBTLU respond to reported crimes. Prior to our arrival a first response crew had attended to a 911 (emergency) call. Once the first responders
identified the incident as a hate crime, the LGBTLU was contacted and requested to attend and take over the investigation. Through the investigation by the LGBTLU a number of criminal offences were identified, and detectives subsequently contacted. The LGBTLU briefed the detectives who took over the investigation of the matter. Unfortunately, my patrol with Officer Garcia was cut short due to operational matters requiring his immediate attention, but I was grateful to be able to see the work the unit does first hand.

New York Police Department (NYPD)

DV Unit and Community Affairs Branch

After clearing numerous security checkpoints that surpass any security arrangements that I’ve seen in a Police establishment before, I arrived at NYPD Headquarters where I met with Sergeant Frank Maiello (Chief of Department, DV Unit), Detective Denise Melendez (DV Unit), Sergeant Michelle Martindale (Community Affairs Branch) and Officer Aaron Ayala (Community Affairs Branch).

In New York City (herein, NYC), there were 280,212 domestic violence incidents in 2016 for a population of 8.538 million people. That is an astounding 768 DV incidents per day on average. In comparison, Queensland in 2016 had a population of 4.691 million and reported 87,100 DV incidents. When you account for the fact that on average, only one out of four DV incidents are being reported to Police, those figures have the potential to be a lot higher as community attitudes change, education on DV increases, and confidence in Police grows.

In my discussion with these officers they noted that in NYC, members of LGBTI communities are reluctant to report DV to Police because they fear being victimised and are scared of being outed. They fear that if they report incidents to Police, officers may then turn up to their workplace or home and start talking about the matter and out them to their work colleagues or family. LGBTI people also fear judgment from Police as policing is often believed to be a very heteronormative environment. LGBTI people may also feel intimidation related to walking into a Police station and telling someone at a front counter what has happened to them in a public place with other people around. This intimidation includes concerns about having to “out” themselves to a complete stranger in a policing environment with no idea of how that person will then react. Despite being a Police station, members of the community report they do not feel safe in that space. Men are taught from an early age that they cannot be victims. This message is reinforced in the contemporary media and marketing campaigns where women are always the victims and never men. Men therefore either do not identify themselves as a victim because they do not think they can be, or they are too embarrassed or humiliated about being a victim and are reluctant to report.

The more reports that Police receive at “entry level” or early on in the cycle of violence the more Police and community organisations are able to intervene before the violence escalates. (Sergeant Frank Maiello)

Police must gain the confidence of the LGBTI communities so that they are more willing to report incidents so that intervention can occur before the level of abuse and violence escalates. In terms of DV, NYPD have dedicated DV officers and detectives who conduct investigations and do home visits on a regular basis. This reassures the victim that Police care and shows the perpetrator that they are

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6 Crime Statistics in Focus Domestic and Family Violence: Domestic Violence Applications and Breaches 15/16
being watched. DV Officers refer victims to the Family Justice Centre which is a “one-stop shop” that has 36 organisations under the one roof including housing assistance, legal services, financial assistance, counselling and self-sufficiency services, all assisting victims of DV, elder abuse and sex trafficking. Two Police officers work in these centres and are not in uniform to make victims feel safer.

When it comes to DV in LGBTI communities, notifications are sent to the LGBT Unit to advise them of hate crimes. The NYPD also has good working relationships with LGBTI community centres and community organisations who contact Police if a victim has come to them in need of assistance.

To increase reporting of DV from LGBTI communities, Police need to continually engage with the community and support organisations, have a constant visibility, building trust and having an open dialogue. As a result, people will become more familiar with those Police officers and be more willing to talk to them. By forming working relationships with the community and support organisations, LGBTI people will be more willing to report as they do not have to play “officer lottery” at a station counter. If victims do not feel safe attending a Police station by themselves to report a crime or DV, they are given the opportunity for a LGBTI Liaison Officer meet them and escort them in or to go with them to see an investigator.

If it is not possible to have marketing campaigns, resources, or events dedicated to LGBTI communities, it is possible to have information about LGBT DV tagged on to these events such as national DV week. In the NYPD, police recruits receive 4.5 hours of LGBTI sensitivity training. It includes information on having LGBTI co-workers and bias training. Other training throughout the districts are done on a need by need basis. E.g.: homophobic comments, complaints etc. Every year, the NYC Comptroller releases an LGBTI resource guide listing organisations where LGBTI people can seek assistance. This type of online resource could be easily replicated at minimal expense in each state in Australia.

**Detective Denise MELENDEZ – NYPD DV Unit**

After running out of time the previous day, I returned to NYPD Headquarters again for the opportunity to speak to Detective MELENDEZ from the DV Unit one on one to gain an insight into her vast knowledge of DV in LGBTI communities.

In my discussion with Detective Melendez, she noted that DV in LGBTI communities is underreported and occurs often. Statistics are not recorded on Police systems if a DV has occurred in an LGBTI relationship as members of the community do not like these statistics about them being collected.

She also noted the significant role that drugs can play in domestic violence in LGBTI communities, especially in gay men. Not being “out” can also play a significant role in DV as it can cause stress in the relationship, if one partner is out and one is not, threats of outing to family/friends can occur. If people are not out, there is significant stress caused by not feeling accepted by the community and in their workplace. LGBTI people can also have stressors of being out at work and may also encounter issues with family when it comes to their relationships and the religion and beliefs of their families.

LGBTI people do not report DV to Police because they feel embarrassed or scared. They fear that Police will judge them and fear the possibility of being reprimanded or being outed at work through reporting a DV incident. In New York City, many workplaces require their staff to disclose if they have a protection order, in order to enable the employer to better protect them from the perpetrator. To increase reporting, Police need to continue with outreach to the community and talk to all young people about LGBTI relationships, not just LGBTI young people. This will highlight the many different relationships and in turn help people to be less-judgemental, therefore allowing members of LGBTI communities to feel more accepted and less-ashamed of their relationship and more willing to report...
incidents of DV. Police should hold outreach events along with community organisations in which victims/survivors can speak to Police and community support organisations about DV and their experiences. LGBTI Liaison Officers should also use social media and have online presence to have a greater reach. LGBTI Police Officers and LGBT Liaison Officers also need to speak with other Police about LGBTI DV.

In NYC when a Police officer attends a DV incident the initial report is sent on to the DV Unit for follow-up, necessary investigations and home visits. The DV Unit can then refer the victim to specialist support services specific to LGBTI communities.

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**What does a victim of domestic violence look like?**

*Detective Denise Melendez*

Specific Police officers are required to deal with LGBTI communities due to the fear of Police and the underreporting of DV and crimes. More resources are required to let the community know that Police are available and here to help them.

Every recruit entering the Police department should undergo training by LGBTI officers about how to respond to LGBTI communities. Police need to be aware of all forms of DV and are responsible for keeping the whole community safe.

It is the responsibility of both the community and the Police to start conversations about DV in LGBTI communities. Support organisations can assist greatly in getting people help in DV relationships before the violence escalates to a point where Police are required to intervene.

**NYC Office of the Mayor**

Along with officers from the NYPD DV Unit and Community Affairs Branch, I attended the New York City Family Justice Centre and met with Jennifer DeCarli, the Assistant Commissioner for Family Justice Centre Operations. The New York City Family Justice Centres are walk-in centres for victims of DV, elder abuse, and sex trafficking. 36 agencies are located under the one roof and are free and to all victims. These services include police, housing assistance, legal services, financial assistance, counselling and self-sufficiency services (i.e. services that allow victims to achieve economic independence in the areas of employment and career advancement, adult education and vocational training, financial empowerment, and business development). On arrival at the centre, client specialists will determine what services a victim needs. They then set up a meeting for the victim with a case manager who assists the victim to access services at the Centre.

Referrals for the centre are received from the NYPD, community organisations and hospitals who will refer clients to them after admission to hospital. By 2018 there will be two counsellors located in each Police station around NYC, with one specifically for Domestic violence. These counsellors will review all DV files and contact victims via phone and follow up.
Anti-Violence Project (AVP) – New York City

The Anti-Violence Project (herein AVP) provides free assistance to LGBTI people across NYC through a 24 hour hotline, counselling, support groups, legal representation and advocacy services. They help survivors of violence and allies become advocates for safety through participation in community education and outreach, development of organising campaigns, and the creation and support of city, state and national coalitions to address LGBTI violence. I met with Suzy Salamy the Senior Manager of Clinical and Advocacy Program, Darlene Torres the Co-Director of Client Services and Teal Inzunza, Coordinator of the Economic Empowerment Program from AVP.

Historically, police do not have the best relationships with members of LGBTI communities, although relationships have improved significantly since the historic lows of the Stonewall riots. These negative relationships are worse when it comes low socioeconomic areas and some ethnicities. Police and these communities’ relationships have suffered in the past due to these groups either being targeted or being perceived to be targeted resulting in a lack of trust in Police organisations.

In NYC there are mandatory arrest laws that relate to DV incidents which can sometime lead to victims not wanting to report incidents of DV. Some LGBTI victims have reported being arrested instead of the perpetrator, sometimes due to the fact Police will assume that the bigger or more masculine partner must be the perpetrator, and the smaller or more feminine partner must be the victim. There is also a reluctance to report as they believe there is a history of Police not separating the perpetrator and victim when they attend an incident. The AVP also reports that there is a history of Police misgendering transgender people and as a result they fear and mistrust Police. Every interaction that Police have with a victim needs to be a positive one.

Only a consistent and professional response to matters involving the LGBTI community will build trust between the community and Police. (Suzy Salamy)

To increase reporting of DV by LGBTI communities, Police need to be trained in LGBTI awareness and dynamics in LGBTI relationships. Training at the Police academy is a good place to start. The AVP found that if a civilian from a support organisation presented training to Police officers, the officers had been known to make homophobic or transphobic jokes or make inappropriate comments during the session. Support organisations have found that if they present training alongside a Police officer, there is more respect shown for the civilian presenter.

Another way to increase reporting was for members of support agencies to attend Police stations with victims to act as a support person while their report is taken and introduce the victim to investigating Police if those Police and support agency relationships have already been established. In some cases Police also attend the offices of support organisations to take reports from victims, as the victim can then have a social worker present as a support person and also be in a non-judgmental environment where they feel safe.

Every year, the AVP supply hundreds of thousands of condoms to members of the LGBTI community through their sexual health program. In each packet of condoms, they supply a card outlining information about LGBT domestic violence, getting this out to people who wouldn’t necessarily seek out the information. The booklet outlines details on what intimate partner violence (DV) is, what it

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2 AVP Strategic Plan
looks like, what the signs are that you may be in a DV relationship, safety planning, where to get support, and information about protection orders.

Both police and support agencies have the responsibility to respond to DV and repair relationships. Some members of the community are even scared to deal with organisations that have relationships with police, as they believe police will find out information and use it to assist in prosecutions of other offences.

*Good news travels fast, bad news travels faster. (Suzy Salamy)*

There are a number of factors that negatively impact upon LGBTI relationships. The first is that LGBTI people generally do not have, or have not grown up around, any LGBTI relationships or role models. They can also suffer from internalised homophobia which can affect their relationships. Further to this, as same sex marriage is not legal in some countries, this can further undermine their relationships and cause further stress.

The group reiterates that LGBTI relationships can also be impacted by "Toxic masculinity", which is described as the expectation that men are strong, and that showing emotion is incompatible with being strong and that men cannot be a victim of abuse, or that talking about it is shameful. As a result, they feel too embarrassed to report the violence to Police or to seek assistance.

*The image of a DV victim is always portrayed as a white female victim. Change that image to show the different faces of DV. Different ethnicities, sexes and sexualities.*

*(Darlene Torres)*

Throughout an abusive relationship, the victim is told they are stupid, that they are to blame for the perpetrators behaviour, and that anything bad that happens is their fault. They face internal struggles and find it hard to put themselves out there when they are constantly put down, and are therefore hesitant to report in case they are again invalidated by Police. It is hard for a victim to find confidence when they are constantly in a relationship based on power and control and receiving constant messages of being worthless. This leads them to question if the perpetrator is right or not. They may also hold a belief that if they go to the Police that there is a chance that Police will reaffirm what the perpetrator has been saying. One member of the New York City LGBTI community stated that they would rather continue in a DV relationship and get stabbed than report the violence to Police.

**Gay Officers Action League (GOAL) - New York City**

As well as supporting LGBTI law enforcement officers, GOAL aims to educate and provide sensitivity training for non-LGBTI law enforcement officers on providing services to LGBTI communities. They promote a positive relationship between the law enforcement community and LGBTI communities through a variety of community services and educational forums, with an emphasis on the principles of justice, equity, and equality within the area of law enforcement. I met with the President of GOAL, William Shepherd, who reinforced the need for members of LGBTI communities to be treated with courtesy, professionalism, and respect, and outlined the training that police recruits receive on LGBTI awareness, including specific scenarios of DV in an LGBTI relationship.

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8 Wikipedia
9 GOAL Mission Statement
Canada

Ottawa Police Service

After hearing of the Ottawa Police Liaison Committee for the LGBTI Communities I travelled to Ottawa and met with Inspector John McGetrick (Frontline Operations), Staff Sergeant John Ferguson (Partner Assault Section), David Snoddy (Director of Community Development), and Constable Lila Shibley, (Diversity & Race Relations). We were able to exchange ideas and learn of each organisation’s approaches to domestic violence in LGBTI communities. It is recognised that reporting of DV in LGBTI communities in Ottawa has increased. However, it has not been established whether this is due to good relationships with Police and the willingness of victims to report violence, or if there is an increase in DV in LGBTI communities when compared with the heterosexual community. A 2014 Canadian study revealed that Gay, Lesbian and bisexual people were twice as likely as heterosexuals to report having been the victim of spousal violence during the previous five years.\textsuperscript{10}

When a DV incident occurs in Ottawa, a social worker in the Partner Assault Section reviews all cases and follows up with victims and assists them with referrals and safety planning. Investigating Police can contact Diversity & Race Relations who are able to advise officers on which agency to refer clients to for specific LGBTI issues.

\textit{The first contact Police have with a victim in a DV incident needs to be correct, otherwise they might not get a second chance. (Inspector John McGetrick)}

Members of LGBTI communities might not report DV as they are unaware of what defines a DV relationship. This is largely due to the fact there is a lack of education and awareness around DV and social attitudes that can sustain these behaviours in relationships. Myths and stereotypes about LGBTI relationships may make it more difficult for victims of DV to come forward to service providers, including the Police.

There are offensive, untrue assumptions such as: women do not hurt each other; gay men sleep around a lot; bisexual partners are non-monogamous; women fighting are just having a “cat fight”; gay men are “sissies”; and transgender women are not really women. Anyone holding and acting upon these incorrect assumptions contributes to an environment of hostility towards LGBTI people experiencing DV. For instance, if a Police officer arrives at a home where there is domestic violence, but the officer does not recognise it as such, it may be reported as a mutual fight. The partner being abused will then fail to receive the necessary information and services on how to get out of the abusive relationship.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{People who identify as gay or lesbian are more than twice as likely as heterosexuals to report having experienced spousal violence}\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014
\textsuperscript{11} Melissa L. Luhtanen - Domestic Violence in Same-Sex Relationships
\textsuperscript{12} Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2009
Recruits at the Police College receive a full day in diversity training. Part of this training includes a session on LGBTI awareness. During this day, they also complete training on their unconscious bias.

Ottawa Police have seen a success in multiple reporting options for instances of DV. This includes community organisations and Police being subject to a memorandum of understanding, allowing community organisations to capture preliminary information and share it with police, who in turn complete investigations.

Ottawa Police have also seen success in forming a Police Liaison Committee for LGBTI communities which comprises of Police, community and support organisations, and community members. The committee holds meetings where the community is able to raise issues allowing an open dialogue and Police can then respond to specific issues, address the media, modify policy, and encourage re-training in certain areas as required.

Sharing information on incidents is a central component of the mandate of the Liaison Committee. Incident reports provide useful information that can contribute to preventing incidents from taking place by making both the Police and community aware of potential problems or safety concerns. It is an opportunity for both the Police and community to engage in proactive and preventative work. For the communities, the Liaison Committee helps in building trust in the Police. Through the Liaison meetings, the communities have direct access to Police officers and can raise issues with them. It is an effective mechanism. LGBTI communities are able to voice their concerns directly and usually get an immediate response to their queries. If Police officers do not act in certain cases, the community can ask them why.\footnote{Redefining public safety: police-citizens committees in Ottawa and Montreal, By Ann-Marie Field, Ph.D.}

\textbf{Toronto Police Service}

Toronto Police Service comprises of around 5200 officers servicing a population of 2.8 million. After being met by the departments full time LGBTI Liaison Officer Constable Danielle Bottineau, we travelled to the Toronto Police College and spoke with Sergeant Stuart Blower and Detective Constable Aimee Lukings about the college and training that their recruits receive. Whilst at the Police college, recruits are trained in DV and Sexual assault investigations. As part of this course, recruits are taught what language to use with LGBTI communities and how they should never make assumptions about things such as sexuality and gender identity. DV training at the college also includes an LGBTI scenario.
Without LGBT awareness training, officers can be expected to make mistakes or misgender people. When they have received training, there are no excuses if this occurs.

(Constable Danielle Bottineau)

Toronto Police Service has a LGBTI consultative committee. Representatives from the Domestic Violence training section of the Toronto Police Service attend these meetings and seek input from the community on what they believe Police need to cover in the training course.

In my discussion with Sergeant Blower he stated that in most training courses in Toronto, facilitators do not feel comfortable using LGBTI terms and language and therefore it is not spoken about. For this reason, LGBTI Officers and guest speakers present on courses at the college, which makes it more personal and ensures the best quality content is delivered.

As part of their recruit training, the LGBTI Liaison Officer provides a document to all recruits with a list of agencies that are able to assist members of LGBTI communities.

Community relationships with Police impact reporting of DV and crimes by LGBTI people. Members of LGBTI communities have been known to base their negative expectation of Police off stories or experiences of others, rather than their own lived experience. Through the LGBTI Consultative Committee, Police are able to tell members of the community about specific LGBTI training Police receive and Police policies and procedures. The community members that are on the committee then pass this information on to members of the community, dispelling myths and explaining policy and procedures to people, so they know what to expect when they contact Police and why Police do certain things. Local police can also form informal community consultation committees that meet once per month with community organisations and members of the community to discuss issues in a more informal environment.

Egale - Canada Human Rights Trust - Toronto

Egale advocates for the rights of LGBTI people in Canada and aims to improve their lives and enhance the response to LGBTI issues. Egale inform public policy, inspire cultural change, and promote human rights and inclusion through research, education, and community engagement. Together with Constable Bottineau, I had the opportunity to meet with the Executive Director of Egale, Helen Kennedy.
Kennedy noted that Police can be trained by non-government organisations (NGO) and can, in turn, educate in schools and in the workplace, which are at times hard for NGO’s to gain access to for training in the LGBTI area. NGO’s are not only able to train Police on LGBTI awareness, but also educate the community on what training Police have received, what they can expect from Police when reporting matters, and what Police can do for them. When this community education occurred, reporting rates went up as LGBTI people knew police had LGBTI awareness training and also what the investigation process would entail. A lack of reporting to NGO’s that have associations with Police are sometimes due to confidentiality concerns. Egale have also seen the benefits of having Police Chiefs as allies of LGBTI communities as it has created change and acceptance for all officers at the rank of Chief and below.

**Police having a visible identifier as being trained in LGBTI awareness, being a LGBTI Liaison officer or an ally can make members of the LGBTI community feel more accepted and more willing to report crimes and incidents of DV to Police.**

*(Constable Danielle Bottineau)*

During our discussions, it was highlighted that DV support services under-recognise people outside of heterosexual relationships. As a result, LGBTI people are often not reporting sexual violence or DV, and are facing discrimination and further trauma by doing so.

**Family Services Toronto**

Carlos Rivas, Manager  
Tina Horan, Counsellor and Partner Contact Worker  
Bradley Garrison, Group Facilitator  
Michael Hazelton, Counsellor  
James Myslik, Counsellor  
Tyson Herzog, Student counsellor

Local figures in Toronto indicate that one in three, to one in four LGBTI relationships experience DV and as in other cities, LGBTI people are hesitant to contact Police due historical incidents involving LGBTI communities and Police.

Toronto is a city which the population comprises of approximately fifty percent immigrants. These immigrants have the same expectation of Police in Toronto as they do of Police in their countries of origin, which in a lot of cases are known to be overtly homophobic and corrupt. Despite in recent years Police having more positive interactions with LGBTI communities, it is believed that the community is more likely to remember negative events than the positive events.

In cities such as Toronto with a high immigrant population, there is a significant amount of non-reporting of DV incidents due to perpetrators using the victim’s immigration or visa status as a method of control. In some cases, the victim has "come out" (i.e. disclosed sexuality or gender variance) to family and friends in their home country on arrival in Canada. If they were to have their spousal visa cancelled and be returned to their home country, they could potentially face prosecution or be disowned or abused by their family on their return, therefore making them hesitant to report abuse.

People in same-sex relationships, particularly men, are not identifying that they are in an abusive relationship. The perpetrator is unaware that what they are doing constitutes abuse, and nor is the
victim. The simple fact is that people are not aware of what abuse looks like in a same-sex relationship.

Victims of DV find it embarrassing to report abuse when in a same sex relationship, as they do not fit the "stereotype" of what a victim looks like (e.g. physically smaller partner being the perpetrator and physically bigger partner being the victim). LGBTI people believe that Police will have a "boys will be boys" mentality when it comes to same-sex domestic violence and will have a perception that same sex couples are equal and therefore cannot be victims. There is a belief that Police will be confused as to who is the perpetrator and therefore people are hesitant to report. Some members of LGBTI communities are also aware that there are no specific support agencies for male victims of DV, and they therefore do not report the abuse knowing that they may not be properly supported.

Some victims are led to believe by the perpetrator that calling the Police on them is a form of abuse in itself as it can potentially result in a person being incarcerated. This in turn prevents the victim from reporting as they do not want to be the abuser, or get their partner (the perpetrator) in trouble by police, or subject their partner to potentially homophobic or abusive behaviour of Police.

During our group discussion, Mr Garrison advised that during the same-sex marriage campaign in Canada, LGBTI people felt compelled to defend their relationships and to "prove" that they were equal to their heterosexual counterparts. As a result, when they become aware they are in an abusive relationship, they can be less willing to report the abuse as they do not want to give opponents to marriage equality the opportunity to say that they were "right" and that LGBT relationships are inferior to heterosexual relationships. LGBTI people are sometimes ashamed of their own relationship. They do not want to talk to a "straight male" Police officer due to the perception of homophobia in the Police force and believe they will be judged by straight officers. As a result, they believe it is easier for them to deal with the abuse on their own rather than report it.

There is a belief that Police have no understanding of DV in the LGBT community. (Bradley Garrison)

Some members of LGBTI communities engage in different types of drug use. The fact that drugs have been used in the home, or are being stored in the home, or one or both persons are suffering from the effects of drug use can also prevent victims from reporting abuse as they fear Police action being taken if police were to attend the residence.

To increase reporting in LGBTI communities, Police need to undertake specific training in LGBTI DV and awareness. The group highlighted the importance of having an open dialogue between the Police, support agencies, and the community. It was made clear that police need a consistent approach in responding to DV and crime in LGBTI communities as this is far more beneficial than the isolated actions of individuals. Police need to be accountable and transparent with the community. More support agencies need to be identified that deal with LGBTI relationships in crisis.

Ben Bjarnesen – 2016 Churchill Fellow

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The 519 – Toronto

The 519 is dedicated to responding to the needs of LGBTI communities and provide services such as counselling, parenting resources, coming out groups, trans programming, and senior’s support. They provide consulting and workshop services, conduct research, and conduct public engagement campaigns.

Lisa Gore Duplessis, the Director of Programs and Community Services, says that for LGBTI people to be able to report violence, they need to feel safe and not feel like they need to be ashamed. This can be achieved by having LGBTI liaison officers or LGBTI aware police officers meeting the victim in a safe space, like a community support service. LGBTI communities have a distrust for Police and do not believe they will be taken seriously if they were to make a report to Police. Of all the people that attend The 519 to report domestic violence, only 40% go on to report the violence to Police, whilst the other 60% want assistance from a community support agency, or want to talk about the abuse to someone, but not report it to Police. Anecdotally, Police are perceived to have an untimely response to non-emergency matters, which also effects people’s willingness to report.

Members of the LGBTI community don't identify what they are going through as abuse. (Lisa Gore Duplessis)

Members of LGBTI communities not only have a mistrust of Police but have no confidence in the justice system. They fear re-victimisation (e.g: the victim being forced to move out of their shared home if a DV order is made). Reporting to Police holds a possibility of “outing” through the Police investigation or court process and therefore is another difficulty. LGBTI immigrants fear being forced to move out of their shared home or having their visas revoked and then having to return to their home country. Threats to do this by a perpetrator can also be used as a way to control the victim. For members of LGBTI communities, the stresses of applying for a DV order and having to go to court can sometimes outweigh the benefits of having an order.

Police need to repair relationships with the community. People need to feel assured that they will be taken seriously and that they will be respected by Police. Victims need to feel safe, not be blamed, and not be shamed. They need to be assured they will not be misgendered and Police will use correct pronouns. Victims need to believe that Police will listen to them and that their complaint will be taken seriously, and through reporting abuse, there will be a result. Gore Duplessis says that Police need to have the equivalent of a doctor’s bedside manner and need to be more approachable if they want members of the community to trust them.

Local liaison Committees have seen positive results in many different areas. Support organisations can volunteer to help Police with reoffenders who are not being deterred by the court system. Police advise the support organisations of incidents and they can then can provide assistance to the victim and perpetrator.

To educate the community, police and support organisations need to do outreach work. They need to attend pubs and clubs, and have discussions with members of the community, engaging with those people who would not normally seek out services.
Being the provider of a needle kit exchange service and sexual health supplies, staff at The 519 have a unique opportunity to have conversations with people about relationships and violence and provide DV resources with these kits. This allows them to educate those who would not necessarily seek out services.

It is important to have online and social media campaigns, and posts specific to LGBTI communities from the police. This promotes acceptance, educates the community about what DV can look like in LGBTI communities and assists in breaking down the barriers associated with reporting to the police.

Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence - Guelph

Doctor Myrna Dawson
Professor & Canada Research Chair in Public Policy in Criminal Justice - University of Guelph.
Director - Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence.
Co-Director - Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative.

Dr Dawson made it clear that victims are not recognising what they are experiencing as abuse or as being a matter that is reportable to Police. Many are scared of being outed or scared of how they will be treated in the justice system. There is a fear of stigmatisation in the criminal system as a victim of DV in a same-sex relationship and as well, a perception that Police are masculine and homophobic. LGBTI people are not seeking out services, as many agencies do not advertise that they service LGBTI communities. Alternatively, if people do seek support they are more likely to go to support agencies who are not equipped to deal with LGBTI DV. Service providers need to be educated to advertise that they are LGBTI aware and that they are willing to work with LGBTI communities. Whilst some LGBTI people may not feel as safe in a non-designated LGBTI support service, others who fear "outing" may feel more comfortable attending a service that services both heterosexual and LGBTI clients.

You can’t decide on how to help people without asking them what can be done to help. (Dr Myrna Dawson)

A common initiative seen throughout Canada has been the implementation and effectiveness of community consultative committees. All sectors dealing with LGBTI communities need to come together and work on the issue. The attitudes around DV in LGBTI communities need to change. Through these committees, good relationships with the media can result in positive media stories. This will assist in changing attitudes. Media need to be proactive with the Police and include references in articles for specific places LGBTI people can get support. There needs to be campaigns for prevention and education of the broader community as well.

Specific marketing to reach LGBTI communities is required. Suggestions include establishing an LGBTI Police social media pages focusing on both the prevention and response to violence and crimes in LGBTI communities. It also has the ability to reach people who do not normally access services and people located in rural and remote areas. Specific information and resources on DV in LGBTI
relationships needs to be added to Police department websites.

Professor Dawson says that having an education package in schools for general awareness of LGBTI issues will assist in confirming the validity of LGBTI relationships later down the track. Police officers need to undertake LGBTI awareness training and then behavioural changes need to be monitored in officers after training has been received.

**Organisations need to move past the "box ticking" stage and actually take action and make change. (Dr Myrna Dawson)**

During my discussion with Dr Dawson she noted that collecting statistics on LGBTI relationships can be both positive and negative. By collecting statistics, some may believe that there is something wrong with LGBTI communities and that they have a specific problem with DV in their relationships. In contrast, by identifying higher rates of DV in LGBTI communities, and therefore identifying a higher need for support, this issue can be more effectively responded to. Based on statistics, areas with higher incidents of DV can be responded to appropriately. Without statistics like these, there is no way of knowing about these issues.

DV in LGBTI communities could be higher due to higher rates of substance abuse, mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety, stigmatisation, and isolation. These could all contribute to DV and make it become more prevalent. Further, people suffering from a mental health condition or substance abuse are less likely to reach out for support, and therefore the abuse in the relationship worsens.

**United Kingdom**

**Equality Network – Edinburgh, Scotland**

Hannah Pearson - Policy Coordinator

A recent Scottish Hate Crime report indicated that 71% of hate crimes are not reported to Police. The Equality Network commenced training LGBTI Police Liaison Officer 18 months ago, and in that time there has been a 2% recorded increase in satisfaction with Police responses to offences committed against LGBTI people. Training of police has the potential to reduce complaints against Police and the potential to build trust in the community. The transgender community in particular have reported incidents of Police misgendering them despite having the correct information. LGBTI awareness training would ensure that incidents like this do not continue to happen.

In Scotland many LGBTI people do not report DV to Police is because they are not aware that what they are experiencing constitutes a crime or domestic abuse. They fear being "outed" through the court process and the potential length of the process can be off-putting. Pearson says LGBTI communities need to be included in female anti-violence campaigns as the message currently being portrayed is that only heterosexual women can be a victim of domestic violence.

LGBTI people may have a fear of facing stigma, and in some cases may be anticipating a bad experience from Police when it comes to reporting. There is a significant stress when it comes to making the decision of reporting vs not reporting. Victims have already experienced a traumatic event and they are not willing to go through another one by reporting and going through the criminal justice system.
The Equality Network recommends that for LGBTI people to be more willing to report DV, LGBTI Police officers and LGBTI liaison officers should have a greater visibility. There should be more LGBTI liaison officers, and more LGBTI awareness training across the force. LGBTI Reference Groups have also been identified as an important tool that Police can use build trust and foster good working relationships in LGBTI communities. Support services should also be encouraged to advertise that they are LGBTI friendly and their staff have a better understanding of LGBTI issues.

**Police Scotland**

Detective Constable Ross Fulton-Boyd  
Police Constable James Baxendale - Domestic Abuse Coordination Unit  
Chief Inspector Gill Boulton - LGBT Allies Coordinator  
Detective Inspector Andrew Ritchie - Head of Detective Training

**Police Scotland Domestic Abuse Coordination Unit – Glasgow, Scotland**

Police Scotland use the term “domestic abuse” rather than domestic violence to emphasise the point that domestic abuse is more than just violence. Underreporting of DV is due to historical incidents between Police and members of LGBTI communities and the service that was received. Due to this history, there is a belief that Police will not take the matters reported to them seriously or complete investigations.

Police Scotland policy documents are made public on the internet so that people can view the definitions of domestic violence and what they can expect from Police if they report violence. Transparency of this nature gives the community more trust in Police and a better understanding of police procedures.

Third party reporting was introduced in Scotland in 2008. Computers were set up in places, such as housing and health services, which allowed victims to go and seek support and report DV without the perpetrator being aware. Reporting sites are listed on the Police Scotland website, allowing victims to make excuses to go and “see the doctor,” but actually go to a third party reporting site to report abuse. Staff in these locations were also provided training on how to assist people wanting to make a report. Logistically, it was found to be hard to train and retrain these staff over an extended period of time. Third party reporting is being rolled back now. With the use of smartphones and availability of computers, it is not being utilised and it is not cost/time effective to continue to train staff when the system is not being used.

Online reporting was also introduced 2008. Reports go directly to the Domestic Abuse Coordination Unit and are then forwarded to the local Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU) for investigation. In 2016, there were a total of 320 online reports. In just over 9 months in 2017, there had been 302 reports. Whilst the data quality can sometimes not be of the same standard as if a support worker was assisting the victim, the benefits of online reporting far outweigh the few minor hurdles that may be encountered. The ability for members of LGBTI communities to report violence online, without having to face the fear of telling their story to Police officers, allows Police to appropriately respond.
to the violence earlier and prior to it escalating any further.

Police Scotland take a proactive response to DV. Officers from the DAIU attend the addresses of the partners of high risk DV perpetrators to see if they want to report DV or would like referrals to other agencies. This assures the potential victim that Police are looking out for them, gives them the opportunity to report, and lets the perpetrators know that Police are watching them. Officers from DAIU also complete safety planning with victims of DV and notify victims when the perpetrator is released from Police custody.

In 2015, the Disclosure scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland was implemented. Upon application, information can be disclosed to the applicant (a partner or family member etc) about their partner having been previously recorded as being involved in DV or other offences involving violence. The applications are processed within 45 days. If a disclosure is made, the victim then is able to make an educated decision about the relationship that they are in. This acts as a DV prevention tool. There have been 2000 applications within two years. There were disclosures made to the applicant in 40% of those applications. In the remaining 60%, there was no disclosures made or no previous incidents to report. No new legislation was introduced for the implementation of the scheme, with Police Scotland working through the Charter of Victims’ Rights and current data related legislation.

Police Scotland Ally Network – Kincardine, Scotland

Chief Inspector Gill Boulton - LGBT Allies Coordinator

Whilst not directly related to DV, LGBT Allies are an integral part of any organisation wishing to build trust and establish good relationships and trust with LGBT communities. The Police Scotland Ally Network allows for officers and staff to self-nominate to be an ally. Information packs on being an ally are provided to these officers or staff and they have access to further support areas. They aim to turn their allies into activists/champions, promoting acceptance and diversity in the police force and the community. Allies can be identified in a number of different ways, including pins which can be worn on the daily uniform, email signature blocks, posters of allies put up in their respective buildings, and a list of allies published online. The Ally Network also hold a stall in large areas, like Police Headquarters and the Police College, promoting the network and seeking new members. The LGBT Ally Network also meets with all recruits before they leave the academy. Both the Gay Police Association and Chief Inspector Boulton have their own Facebook accounts to promote the network and Police being inclusive and accepting of LGBT people.
LGBT Youth Scotland - Glasgow, Scotland

Janice Stevenson - Development Officer and Domestic Abuse Support Worker

Despite one in five DV victims in Scotland being male, there are minimal support services for men. There is a massive voice for violence against women, but with violence against men not having as big of a voice, people either are not aware or do not focus on the issue, therefore presenting a big gap in services for men. In general, LGBTI people do not access services. As a result, the Domestic Abuse Project was funded by the Scottish Government to make existing services more accessible to LGBTI people.

Stevenson says that LGBTI people are not reporting violence because they are not recognising their experience as abuse. DV campaigns and advertisements are all advertised as a man abusing a woman. There is a general lack of recognition of domestic abuse in LGBTI communities. LGBTI people cannot learn what a normal or positive LGBTI relationship looks like due to a lack of role models and the lack of education around LGBTI relationships. Even if they do recognise they are being abused, they fear having to go to court, and the prospect of encountering journalists or seeing the perpetrator again. Victims are unaware of the provisions that the court can make for their safety in the court room and unaware of things such as video evidence.

Through Stevenson’s extensive work with LGBTI communities, she has found that LGBTI people in Scotland are reluctant to report incidents to Police largely due to the historical relationships between the Police and LGBTI communities. In small communities especially, news of one bad incident travels quickly and gives a bad reputation to Police. For some members of LGBTI communities, there is also the fear of being outed through the Police and court process. LGBTI people do not want to “come out” or identify themselves as being LGBTI to Police or support services unless they are sure they will be recognised and acknowledged. There is a fear of discrimination from Police or support services if there is no specific advertising advising that their organisation is a safe place for LGBTI people. Some believe that stress of reporting abuse is greater than the abuse itself. In Scotland, there has been evidence of an increase in LGBTI people reporting violence and seeking services once the service has advertised that they are LGBTI inclusive.

Many LGBTI people have experienced a life of mistreatment, including from their family, teachers, and services that are meant to support them. As a result, they hold a belief that Police will be the
same. Their expectations of support services are not high as they are based on their previous experience with other services.

LGBT Youth Scotland recommends that Police should implement the following methods to increase reporting of DV by LGBTI communities:

- Introduce third party reporting or online reporting
- Explain the process of reporting so there is no fear of the unknown
- Train Police in LGBTI fundamentals, including specifics on DV, and share with the community what knowledge Police have learned as a result of this training
- Train Police to recognise what an LGBTI relationship might look like
- Ensure that Police and support services have inclusive policies
- Gain assistance from support organisations and the community in developing policy
- Record sexuality and gender variance so that you know who the community is that you are servicing
- Share information between Police and support agencies on high risk offenders so that the agencies can work together
- Train court staff, frontline staff, and prosecutions in LGBTI DV
- Build on invaluable relationships between Police and community organisations.
- Hold DV forums
- Do not focus all DV campaigns, resources, and support on women
- Increase visibility of the issue as there is currently no visibility at all
  - Mark commemorative days
  - Promote them on social media
  - Put non-heteronormative stories in the media

It was also noted that if a woman attends a hospital or doctor with injuries consistent with physical violence, they are asked questions relating to DV and referred to support services. If a male presents with the same injuries, it is assumed that he has just been in a fight and that the injuries are not related to DV. For this reason, medical staff and hospital social workers should also be trained in LGBTI DV and how to report these matters to Police and support services.

**GALOP & Stonewall Housing – London, England**

Peter Kelley - Services Manager (GALOP)
Jasna Magic - LGBT domestic violence research and policy officer (GALOP)
Michael Nastari – Director of Services (Stonewall Housing)

GALOP is responsible for running the national LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline. In 2016, there were 1471 calls received, with two thirds of all clients being gay or bisexual men. Despite this, the majority of mainstream DV victim agencies will only work with women, even though some research indicates that 25-38% of all LGBTI people have experienced DV.

GALOP identify LGBTI friendly organisations regionally who do support work in DV. They then create an online map of these services so that people can locate their nearest service online so that they can access this information no matter where they are.

Currently, there is only recognition of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships and no recognition of domestic violence in relationships involving LGBTI people. Victims are not recognising what is happening to them as abuse. They believe that perpetrators have to be men and victims have to be women, or that it cannot be DV because the victim may be physically bigger than their partner.
for instance.

There is a belief in LGBTI communities that if they report a crime or DV to Police, they will judged, not be taken seriously or believed, and that Police will have difficulty in determining who the perpetrator is. There is a fear of having to explain themselves or their relationships to Police, and a fear of being outed through the reporting process.

Similar to Toronto, London has a high population of immigrants. This results in a higher proportion of DV not commonly seen in Australia where there are threats of breaking up the relationship and deportation of the victim made by the perpetrator. GALOP also states that there is a lack of reporting in LGBTI communities’ due to low expectations of LGBTI relationships and that some do not want to leave the relationship because they have nowhere else to go.

In an effort to increase reporting rates in London, GALOP advocacy service will:

- Arrange a one on one meeting with victims and Police
- Go with victims to a Police station to report and assist them
- Advocate for services
- Assist with complaints where necessary
- Go to court with victims
- Get DV and support agencies together and talk about responses to DV, and encourage more partnerships and engagement
- Convene training around LGBTI awareness

The group concurred that despite having LGBTI Police liaison officers, these officers do not have dedicated time set aside to do their role and advocate to the community. To perform this role effectively, dedicated time must be allocated for all LGBTI Police liaison officers to work with LGBTI communities.

**Engaging with LGBTI Liaison officers can be a postcode lottery as to how good the officer is that you get. (Michael Nastari)**

For Police to gain the trust of the community and make them feel comfortable in reporting violence and abuse, Police should undergo training and awareness of what LGBT DV looks like and what language to use. They need to work in partnership with support organisations building trust with the community and doing things such as outreach and joint DV campaigns.

There needs to be consistency in the service provided to the community. If on their first interaction with Police a victim is not treated properly or with respect, then they will not engage with Police again. This also forms one of the arguments as to why LGBTI Liaison officers should be a full time role, not just a volunteer role done in addition to the other duties of police officers.
LGBTI relationships need to be recorded on Police databases so that Police can respond more appropriately to the issue. Independent advisory groups have also been a positive influence where Police, support agencies, and community members can talk about intelligence and current issues in the community, and the way in which they can respond to them.

The benefits of having dedicated LGBTI Police social media pages were discussed. This would allow Police to target their audience more efficiently and appropriately giving a greater reach and being more effective. Information about LGBTI DV should also be included on Police and support organisation websites, not just DV in heterosexual relationships.

GALOP and Stonewall Housing also participate in Multi-agency risk assessments. During these meetings, information is shared on high risk DV cases between police, health, child protection, housing services, DV support services, and other specialists from the sector. Representatives discuss options for increasing safety of the victim and turn these options into a coordinated action plan.

**Metropolitan Police Department – London, England**

Police Constable Tatjana Arsoba  
Deputy London Regional Lead – National LGBT Police Network  
Training / Recruitment Officer – Metropolitan Police Service LGBT Network

Studies in the UK have indicated that an LGBTI person is at a higher risk of experiencing DV in their first relationship, as they have no knowledge of what an abusive relationship looks like. It has also been shown that whilst males are more likely to report DV initially, they are less likely to proceed with a complaint to Police. On the other hand, females are less likely to report DV, but are more likely to proceed with a complaint. To respond appropriately to DV in LGBTI communities, first you need to know at what rate and where it is occurring. To achieve this, Police must record LGBTI DV relationships on Police databases.

The Metropolitan Police use local and international incidents involving LGBTI communities for public awareness, crime prevention, and engagement. They ensure they are a visible presence and can be identifiable as an LGBTI Liaison officer or ally. One way of achieving this is through adding rainbow stripes to their uniform epaulettes. As well as having a visible presence out on the street, Metropolitan Police LGBTI Liaison Officers also have a dedicated LGBTI Police social media account to promote the Police service, the work that they are doing, and what they are achieving.

Training conducted by the Metropolitan Police includes LGBTI Liaison Officers attending stations around the city and facilitating LGBTI awareness training sessions, as well as LGBTI awareness being included in diversity sessions for Police recruits at the academy.

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*It has been found significantly beneficial to have victims present a lecture to Police during their training sessions, with feedback from officers indicating they are the most influential speakers during the training. (PC Tatjana Arsoba)*
Whilst there is training being completed on LGBTI issues, there are inconsistencies across boroughs (districts) without a centralised training program. LGBTI Liaison Officers also facilitate LGBTI awareness and DV training to government departments, courts, and prosecutions.

To allow members of LGBTI communities to feel empowered and safe in reporting matters to the Police, PC Arsoba suggests a number of methods. These include allowing members of the community to report DV through third party reporting such as GALOP. Support organisations such as GALOP can then contact an LGBTI Liaison officer to arrange a time and place to report. By taking out the necessity for the victim to make the initial contact with Police, reporting to Police is more likely to occur. Police should also allow victims the ability to request a specific gender of Police officer to report to where available. They also suggested forming an independent advisory group attended by LGBTI police liaison officers and other community support and government agencies. LGBTI police liaison officers need to attend as many community meetings, groups, and forums as possible that relate to LGBTI communities. Through attending these meetings, the community can build trust in the police service and see police as being more transparent.

**Stonewall – London, England**

Joey Knock - Client Account Executive

Stonewall is the UK’s LGBT equality charity and are internationally renowned for some of their campaigns, including the “Some people are gay, get over it” campaign. They have previously released guides to specifically help police support LGBTI people in their interactions with them, such as “Protecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people – a practical guide for police forces.” Whilst Stonewall do not provide direct support services to the community, they are heavily involved with a number of the organisations that do. These organisations include a number of the police services in the UK. They have identified that when it comes to LGBTI people reporting DV or crimes to Police, even things such as inclusion in the workplace can lead to more reporting.

*Seeing Police in pride parades assists in raising the perception of Police in the LGBT community. (Mr Joey Knock)*

As seen in all other jurisdictions, it has been identified that a major reason for LGBTI people being unwilling to report DV or crimes to police is they believe nothing will happen if they do report it. People also need to be educated on what can and cannot be reported.
The Netherlands

Roze in Blauw (RiB) - Netherlands Police - Amsterdam

Lieutenant Marja Lust

Roze in Blauw translates to “Pink in Blue.” Their aim is to increase the reporting to police from members of LGBTI communities and lowering the threshold to do so. They work with LGBTI support agencies and strengthen relationships with the community through visible community engagement. RiB also support their colleagues in dealing with LGBTI issues. RiB function on a three pillar system of visibility, availability, and continuity.

In order for RiB to maintain consistency in availability, they operate a 24hr contact number with four of their LGBTI police liaison officers being on-call 24hrs a day for one week each per month. On average, they receive 2-3 calls per day from members of the public and from Police officers seeking advice. RiB have eight police officers who monitor occurrences involving members of LGBTI communities and follow up where necessary with referrals to support agencies and advice. Officers can refer victims to RiB, who can in turn refer the victim to an appropriate support agency. There is no mandatory reporting for officers to report LGBTI matters to RiB, but many still do. In any case, incidents that are not directly reported are located by RiB officers in their weekly review of LGBTI related occurrences. A civilian volunteer of the group then contacts victims and offers them referrals to support agencies and any further information that is required. To allow for this follow up to occur, it is essential that LGBTI relationships are recorded in DV occurrences so they can be responded to appropriately.

When compared to their heterosexual counterparts, there is an identified under-reporting of DV and crimes committed against LGBTI communities. Lt Lust believes that DV in LGBT communities is a double taboo. This refers to a combination of the taboo of being in a relationship where DV is experienced, and the taboo of being gay. Lt Lust states that research has shown that heterosexual women on average experience 33 incidents of abuse prior to reporting it to Police. The rate for LGBTI communities is believed to be substantially higher due to the reluctance to report to Police.

Members of LGBTI communities do not recognise that they are in a DV relationship, as DV is always advertised as a “straight” or heterosexual problem. In the Netherlands, all groups are normally addressed in advertising (children, elderly, different races, etc), but not LGBTI communities. There is a belief in society that same sex couples are “equal” and therefore it is just a mutual fight. LGBTI DV is not on the radar of the community and people are unaware of what it looks like. RiB have identified a number of approaches for police to take in an effort to increase reporting of DV and crimes against LGBTI communities. They include:

- Implementation of a 24hr contact number. The on-call officer is then able to refer the person to a LGBTI liaison officer on duty or appropriate officer at a local station
- Organise events for Police and support organisations and have a victim make a speech talking about their experience
- LGBTI police liaison officers and allies need to have visible identifiers on their uniforms
- LGBTI police liaison officer flyers in every police building in the state
• Train police in LGBTI awareness and DV at the academy
• Train support organisations in the dynamics of LGBTI relationships
• Enhance the marketing of the LGBTI liaison officer program, including advertisements in LGBTI resources, having posters on rotating billboards around pride week, having beer coasters with contact details in pubs, etc.
• LGBTI liaison officers should attend meetings, events, and seminars. RiB meet with community organisations every six weeks to discuss community issues
• LGBTI police liaison officers need to be physically and outwardly present

Through the promotion of RiB, investigators have learned that social networks of victims in LGBTI communities are more likely to talk to an LGBTI liaison officer and provide them with valuable information that they may not willing to discuss with a non-LGBTI officer.

According to statistics detailing crimes committed against LGBTI people, the Netherlands is a dangerous place for an LGBTI person. In reality, it only appears this way as their LGBTI police liaison officers are so visible, accessible, and well known in the community that the community are more willing and comfortable reporting crimes to them.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in relation to the findings and information presented throughout this report. Each recommendation can be considered independently or seen as a series of recommendations for an organisation. These recommendations have been created based on what has worked in the range of organisations I visited during my Fellowship.

Connection
• Establish consultative committees to encourage community interaction with Police, to enhance confidence in Police, and to provide a forum for discussion on relevant issues
• Educate police recruits in LGBTI awareness and DV related issues at the Police Academy
• Engage with existing DV support agencies to determine if their service is inclusive of LGBTI communities, if staff have undergone training specific to LGBTI needs, and to encourage them to advertise inclusivity so that members of LGBTI communities are more willing to engage with their service
• Involve police, DV support services, survivors, and advocates at all levels in developing legislation, policy, procedures, and training
• A positive police response to each incident makes a real difference to lives, to the LGBTI communities in general, and generates public confidence in Police. The ability of people to seek out and develop relationship building opportunities is an essential strategy

Commitment
• Establish a dedicated 24hr contact number for both members of LGBTI communities and police officers to reach an LGBTI police liaison officer
• Investigate the feasibility of establishing a full-time position dedicated to:
  o Building relationships in LGBTI communities and fostering new ones with support agencies
  o Monitoring offences committed against members of LBGTI communities and referring victims to appropriate agencies and assisting investigators
  o Monitoring DV incidents occurring in LGBTI communities, refer involved parties to appropriate support agencies, and assist investigators
  o Conducting LGBTI awareness training for recruits in conjunction with other community support services
  o Coordinating LGBTI Liaison Officers and resources
• Allow LGBTI police liaison officers dedicated time to engage with LGBTI support agencies, building new working relationships and enhancing existing ones, work on community engagement and outreach, and follow-up with LGBTI victims of crime and DV
• Work more collaboratively with LGBTI community organisations to ensure that police have the skills necessary to support LGBTI people who have experienced DV
• Develop a statewide LGBTI resource list to be disseminated to all police officers and to be added in the internal website allowing access to all officers (i.e. Queensland Police Op Store)
• Develop an Aide Memoire on suggested questions that can be asked to assist in a DV investigation and extra specific questions for members of LGBTI communities
• Introduce a DV disclosure scheme where Police can consider sharing information with a potential victim about the abusive or violent history of their partner or potential partner. A scheme of this nature can prevent domestic violence by allowing people the ability to ask about the background of their partner and enabling them to make an informed decision on whether or not to continue the relationship. Schemes of this nature are already in place in the United Kingdom and Scottish Police departments and are showing great success
• Make LGBTI police policy documents available to the general public on the police website so that the definitions of domestic violence and what the expected outcomes are if DV is reported can be understood

Training
• Introduce LGBTI awareness training for all recruits and Police officers. There was evidence of specific training of this nature in all jurisdictions. Where training cannot be provided to all officers, certain organisational units may be trained based on need
• Include LGBTI scenarios in different training packages for recruits, officers, and detective training (for example, in relation to traffic stops, DV, and mental health incidents)
• There are simple and cost-effective strategies, training, and support that can be delivered in remote, isolated areas (for example: online learning products)

Reporting
• Introduce online reporting for private DV order applications and non-urgent DV breaches. This takes away the requirement for the victim to attend a Police station, which for many LGBTI people can be a traumatic experience due to previous dealings with Police, or due to the perceived institutionalised homophobia associated with police departments
• Record LGBTI relationships where DV has already occurred on police databases so that statistics can be tracked and issues can be responded to accordingly
• Introduce mandatory notifications of LGBTI DV incidents to LGBTI Police District Coordinators for follow up with specific LGBTI support services
• Nominate a number of LGBTI police liaison officers to monitor all LGBTI DV and offences committed against LGBTI people
• Mandated follow up by LGBTI police liaison officers in all crimes/DV’s involving an LGBTI victim

Visibility
• Add LGBTI DV information and specific LGBTI support services to Queensland Police Service website
• Establish LGBTI Police Liaison Officer social media pages allowing police to show members of the community the work that they are doing, advise LGBTI people about events occurring where they can speak with police liaison officers, and supporting officers to build trust and confidence among LGBTI people in the police service
• Display the LGBTI Liaison officer phone number in every station around the state and advertise in
local media, social media, and police websites

- Introduce visible identifiers of LGBTI police liaison officers and allies. This would allow members of LGBTI communities, Police officers, and other police staff who are part of LGBTI communities to identify officers who they can wholeheartedly trust and confide in without any fear due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Queensland Police Service to become part of the Workplace Equality Index and obtain Rainbow Tick accreditation. By doing this, workplaces can actively demonstrate their commitment to LGBTI equality, to their staff, service users, and LGBTI people
- DV support agencies should advertise that they are inclusive of LGBTI people. Despite being inclusive of LGBTI people, without that fact being advertised the LGBTI people are less likely to access their services

Marketing

- The image of a DV victim is normally portrayed as a white female victim. Change that image to show the different, diverse faces of DV. Different ethnicities, genders, and sexualities must be incorporated into state and federal advertising campaigns
- Create an awareness campaign or publication that highlights the issues of DV in LGBTI communities, including how police investigate it, reporting options, and support that is available

Conclusion

Internationally, police services as well as support agencies, deploy a variety of techniques and strategies to address DV in LGBTI communities. Each of these services has their particular strengths and challenges as explored throughout this report. In looking across services, there are lessons from each which can be applied in a Queensland context to continue to improve what the Police offer to LGBTI communities and to increase the support and confidence LGBTI communities have in the Queensland Police Service.

It was identified that members of LGBTI communities may not recognise that they are in an abusive relationship, as DV is most often seen as a problem of heterosexual relationships. LGBTI people are less likely to see themselves as experiencing abuse or being an abuser if they cannot identify with the portrayed characteristics of domestic violence within the public eye, and therefore do not believe that support is available to them. With the common belief that they will not be taken seriously or believed by Police or will not be treated properly or respectfully, Police need to continually engage with the community and support organisations, have a constant visibility, building trust and have an open dialogue. Police must gain the confidence of LGBTI communities so that they are more willing to report incidents so that intervention can occur before the level of abuse or violence escalates.

I believe that adopting the recommendations in relation to the findings presented in this report will push the Queensland Police Service into the future of best practice support for LGBTI people to become national leaders around the issue.