

Intersex Survivors

Does partner violence or sexual violence get blamed on your sex characteristics?

Partner violence

Partner violence is when one partner uses any form of abusive behavior to get and maintain control over the other. Ongoing humiliation, threats, stalking by text, online or in person, outing, ridiculing someone's body, gender or sexuality, withholding medication or treatments, verbal abuse, controlling money and physical and sexual violence can all be part of partner violence.

Intersex survivors of partner violence often find abusive behavior includes leveraging body policing and interphobia inside the relationship.

Does your partner.....

- Threaten to "out" you to your employer, friends, or family?
- Isolate you from your family and friends?
- Call you "it" or other pronouns not preferred by you?
- Make fun of your body, including any surgery you may have had?
- Sabotage your healthcare, or coerce you into treatment you don't want?
- Tell you no one will love you because you are different?
- Tell you you're not a 'real' man/woman?
- Tell you that you will never find a better partner?
- Hide or throw away medication or hormones you take?
- Treat your ethnicity or cultural identity as exotic?
- Blame abuse on your mental health, disability, HIV status or substance use?

Partner violence may also include physical violence like hitting, kicking, pushing, punching. If you feel like your partner has power and control over your life in these or other ways, contact one of the helping organisations here.

Partner violence is illegal in New Zealand, including for people with diverse sex characteristics. You have every right to be treated with respect and care in your relationships.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence can be perpetrated by, or against, anyone regardless of their age, sex characteristics, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or ability. It can include rape, the threat of rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and sexual contact with force. It includes any sexual activity that someone does not, or cannot consent to. Surgeries to 'normalise' bodies without informed consent are sometimes described as medicalized rape by intersex advocates, because they may cause long lasting shame, distress, pain and trauma.

Intersex survivors may experience sexual violence from partners or casual hook-ups. They may also experience sexual violence from people targeting them because of their sex characteristics. This might include someone:

- Touching parts of your body you don't want touched, or using terms about your body you hate
- Coercing you to do things you don't like by telling you "that's how 'real' men/women have sex"
- Describing sexual fantasies which dehumanise or harm you
- Telling you no one else will want to have sex with you
- Doing sexual things to you when you are drunk or out of it

Sexual activity without consent in New Zealand is illegal, including for people with diverse sex characteristics, no matter what your sexuality, gender or the sexuality or gender of the person who sexually harmed you. If you have had an unwanted sexual experience, you can ask for help, no matter how long ago it happened.