

Sexual Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Persons

Introduction

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people experience sexual violence at higher rates than heterosexual people. Rates of sexual violence and experiences differ across lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations, making it important to avoid treating all LGB people as having the same experiences.¹

For some LGB people, stigma, discrimination, and negative attitudes related to sexual orientation may contribute to increased vulnerability to violence or affect how their experiences are recognized and addressed.² These experiences can intersect with homophobia, biphobia, family rejection, and discrimination in housing, employment, health care, and interactions with law enforcement, creating increased vulnerability to violence and additional barriers to safety, reporting, and accessing support.³ Additionally, LGB people of color and others affected by intersecting forms of marginalization often face higher rates of violence and discrimination. Understanding these differences can help provide a clearer picture of how sexual violence affects LGB communities and support more effective prevention and response efforts.

Statistics⁴

- LGB people who have experienced contact sexual violence, which includes rape, being forced to penetrate someone else (males only), sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual contact:
 - Contact sexual violence often begins at a young age:
 - **More than 3 in 4 (75.4%)** bisexual female victims first experienced contact sexual violence before age 18.
 - **About 1 in 3 (33.5%)** bisexual male victims first experienced contact sexual violence before age 18.
 - **About 3 in 5 (60.9%)** lesbian female victims first experienced contact sexual violence before age 18.
 - **About 2 in 5 (40.1%)** gay male victims first experienced contact sexual violence before age 18.
 - **Nearly 4 in 5 (79.3%)** bisexual women have experienced contact sexual violence in their lifetime.
 - **More than half (56%)** of bisexual men have experienced contact sexual violence in their lifetime.
 - **About 3 in 5 (59.9%)** lesbian women have experienced contact sexual violence in their lifetime.
 - **About 3 in 5 (59.8%)** gay men have experienced contact sexual violence in their lifetime.
 - **More than half** of non-Hispanic White LGB adults across each reported sexual identity group experienced contact sexual violence in their lifetime, including **78.3%** of bisexual women, **54.0%** of bisexual men, **58.6%** of lesbian women, and **61.2%** of gay men.
 - **More than half** of perpetrators of contact sexual violence against LGB victims were acquaintances, including **71.3%** of perpetrators reported by bisexual female victims, **65.4%** by bisexual male victims, **67.4%** by lesbian victims, and **52.1%** by gay male victims.

¹ Chen, Jieru, Mikel L. Walters, Leah K. Gilbert, and Nimesh Patel, "Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence by Sexual Orientation, United States" (January 2020). *Psychology of Violence*, 10(1), 110–119. Retrieved July 28, 2026, from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7020247/>

² Benner, Jennifer and Jennifer Grove, "New NISVS Data on Sexual Violence and Sexual Identity: Key Findings and Prevention Recommendations" (October 10, 2023). National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Retrieved July 28, 2026, from https://www.nsvrc.org/blog_post/new-nisvs-data-sexual-violence-and-sexual-identity-key-findings-and-prevention/

³ Casey, Logan S., Sari L. Reisner, Mary G. Findling, et al., "Discrimination in the United States: Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Americans" (October 28, 2019). *Health Services Research*, 54(S2), 1454–1466. Retrieved July 31, 2026, from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6864400/>

⁴ Chen, Jieru, Srijana Khatiwada, May S. Chen, Sharon G. Smith, Ruth W. Leemis, Norah W. Friar, Kathleen C. Basile, and Marcie-jo Kresnow, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) 2016/2017: Report on Victimization by Sexual Identity* (October 2023). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved July 28, 2026, from <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/98137>

- Prevalence of LGB people who have experienced rape:
 - **Nearly half (45.2%)** of bisexual women have experienced rape in their lifetime.
 - **More than 1 in 4 (28.4)** lesbian women have experienced rape in their lifetime.
 - **About 1 in 4 (24.4%)** gay men have experienced rape in their lifetime.
- Prevalence of bisexual and gay men who have been forced to penetrate another person:
 - **About 1 in 5 (22.6%)** bisexual men have been made to penetrate someone else during their lifetime.
 - **About 1 in 4 (24.7%)** gay men have been made to penetrate someone else during their lifetime.
- Prevalence of LGB people who have been sexually coerced:
 - **Nearly half (47.2%)** of bisexual women have experienced sexual coercion in their lifetime.
 - **More than 1 in 4 (28.2%)** bisexual men have experienced sexual coercion in their lifetime.
 - **More than 1 in 5 (22.9%)** lesbian women have experienced sexual coercion in their lifetime.
 - **More than 1 in 4 (26.0%)** gay men have experienced sexual coercion in their lifetime.
- Prevalence of LGB people who have experienced intimate partner violence:
 - **More than two-thirds (69.3%)** of bisexual women have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
 - **Nearly half (46.1%)** of bisexual men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
 - **More than half (56.3%)** of lesbian women have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
 - **Nearly half (47.7%)** of gay men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- Prevalence of LGB people who have been stalked:
 - **More than half (54.2%)** of bisexual women have experienced stalking in their lifetime.
 - **About 1 in 4 (25.9%)** bisexual men have experienced stalking in their lifetime.
 - **More than 1 in 3 (35.0%)** lesbian women have experienced stalking in their lifetime.
 - **More than 1 in 4 (27.3%)** gay men have experienced stalking in their lifetime.

For survivor resources, please visit:

mcasa.org/survivors/culturally-responsive-services