



**Healthy + Unhealthy**

***Intimate  
Relationships***

**in Two-Spirit, Nonbinary  
and Trans Communities**

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# TRANSFORMED



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— A partnership between: —



**METRAC**  
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## ***Relationships in Two-Spirit, Nonbinary, and Trans Communities***

Relationships and dating can be just as complicated as transitioning or coming out.



Whether you are casually dating, hooking up, in a short-term/long-term relationship, or marriage you may find yourself struggling with self-acceptance and finding a partner(s) who will love and appreciate you as you are.

TRANSITIONING

DISCLOSURE

AND

ACCEPTANCE

can make it hard to find and  
maintain healthy, loving  
relationships.



## ***Gender and Violence***

You might experience violence because of someone else's understanding of what your gender "should be", or how you express or don't express your gender.

Two-Spirit, nonbinary, trans people inflicting violence on each other is lateral violence. It can be hard to deal with because it can come from people who have faced similar kinds of abuse/discrimination.

## ***Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Two-Spirit, Nonbinary, and Trans Communities***

IPV is violence/abuse that occurs against a current or past intimate partner. Abuse is when a person(s) uses behaviours to gain power and control over another person and to cause harm.

IPV can be experienced in relationships between people of the same or different genders and in relationships with two or more people involved.



VIOLENCE  
IS  
NEVER  
OK

Trans women are at greater risk of experiencing IPV due to **transmisogyny**.

Black trans women are at particularly high risk because of transmisogyny and anti-Black racism.

Race, ethnicity, age, disability, Deafness, geographic location, immigration status, and access to financial resources can cause further isolation and vulnerability.



**4** out of **5**

**Two-Spirit, nonbinary and trans  
people have experienced abuse  
in their lifetime**

**Anyone can  
experience abuse and  
abuse is never okay.**

***It is never  
your fault  
if you have  
experienced  
abuse.***

# ***Know the Signs: What IPV Can Look Like***

You could experience IPV without even knowing it if you aren't sure of the signs of IPV. Knowing the signs can make it easier to reach out for support if you are experiencing abuse.



# ***Gender identity abuse***

Unfair treatment, harm, and/or abuse of someone due to their gender identity.



**Gender policing:** trying to “correct” your appearance or behaviour, comparing you to cis people, telling you that your gender identity is not “real”

**Misgendering:** not using correct pronouns, refusing to use your chosen gender identity, enforcing a label on you

**Body shaming:** mocking or criticizing your body shape/size

**Outing:** revealing information about your sexual/gender identity or HIV status without your permission

**Fetishism:** being fetishized for your body, reduced to a physical aspect of yourself while other parts of you are ignored, your gender identity or transition being seen as something to be influenced by a partner's preferences or comfort

## ***Emotional abuse***

Use of words or actions to threaten, harm, control, isolate or take away another person's sense of self-worth.



**Put-downs:** insulting or constantly criticizing you

**Denial:** not acknowledging your reality and lived experience

**Neglect:** withholding previously agreed upon affection

**Manipulation:** indirect tactics to control you such as implicit threats, withholding information or a partner threatening to harm themselves if you leave them or get help

**Gaslighting:** making you question your truth/reality by manipulating you through psychological means

**Stalking:** unwanted, repeated surveillance, actions, or communication to scare or harass, in person or online

**Extortion/coercion/threatening:** demanding something from you in exchange for not harming you





**Isolating:** keeping you away from your support systems, making it difficult to speak up or defend yourself, not allowing you to leave your home/communicate with others

**Silencing:** preventing you from speaking up/out, using social hierarchy to invalidate your experience of violence

# ***Physical abuse***

Any intentional act or threat to cause physical injury or harm to another individual or animal.



**Threats, attempts and actions** to physically harm you/a pet/service animal/ another loved one

**Throwing** objects, not allowing you to leave a space

**Neglecting** to provide physical/medical needs

**Breaking** your assistive device

# ***Sexual abuse***

**Any sexual activity  
without consent.**



**Being forced** to have sex or engage in sexual activities that you don't want to

**Manipulating** you to have sex or participate in sexual activities that you don't want to

**Fetishism** (see gender identity abuse)

## ***Financial abuse***

A form of abuse where one person takes control of another person's finances, property or other resources for their own benefit.



**Withholding or controlling access** to financial resources by using you or your personal possessions to make money without your consent

**Lying or withholding information** about finances and holding money as a threat against you

# ***Cyber abuse***

The use of the internet or any tech/electronic means to harass, threaten, bully or maliciously embarrass.



**Sharing** private photos/videos without your permission

**Stalking:** Unwanted, repeated surveillance, actions, or communication to scare or harass through tech or online

**Doxxing:** Releasing private information to the public such as your address, phone number, work location, or information about your family or friends



## ***Dealing with Violence***

Experiencing violence is traumatic and can have serious impacts on all aspects of your life.



You might be looking for strategies to cope. Experiencing abuse can lead to anxiety, depression, isolation, loneliness. Many people turn to substance use.

It is important to have conversations with people you trust about the coping strategies you are using and what additional supports might be helpful.



# ***Finding Support***

It can be hard and scary to access supports and services.



Accessing support might already feel hard due to your gender identity, sexual orientation, race, financial status, immigration status, mental health, Deafness, disabilities and other identities you hold.

Support is out there and can help you manage the difficulties and decisions that you are facing.

It is important to think about what informal (trusted friends or family) and formal supports (organizations, institutions) that would feel safe for you to access.



***YOU ARE NOT ALONE  
IN THE BARRIERS  
YOU FACE***

**Some organizations that provide support to Two-Spirit, nonbinary and trans people:**

**Trans Lifeline**

**[www.translifeline.org](http://www.translifeline.org)**

1-877-330-6366

**LGBT Youth Line**

**<https://www.youthline.ca>**

Call: 1-800-268-9688

Text: 647-694-4275

**2-Spirited People of the  
1st Nations**

**[www.2spirits.com](http://www.2spirits.com)**

416-944-9300

**The 519**  
**[www.the519.org](http://www.the519.org)**  
416-392-6874

**Sherbourne Health Centre**  
**<https://sherbourne.on.ca>**  
Mental Health: 416-324-4100  
Medical: 416-324-4180

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For a full listing of organizations  
that can offer support please see  
our other resource:

**[End the Silence on  
Intimate Partner Violence](#)**



## ***Green Flags and Healthy Relationships***





**Red flags** is a term used to describe abusive patterns to look out for in relationships.

**Green flags** is a term used to identify healthy relationship patterns and qualities you may want to integrate into your relationships or discuss with your partner(s).



Healthy relationships look different for everyone and can be influenced by family and friends, the media, culture, the environment around you or the resources you are able to access. However, only you get to decide what is healthy or not.

## ***Green flags can include:***

-  Respecting gender identity by using chosen names or pronouns
-  Respecting boundaries, discussing how you want to receive affection
-  Maintaining independence outside of the relationship (spending time with other people)
-  Respecting your choices, not pressuring you into doing something you don't want to do



- Listening attentively, providing validation
- Supporting you during hard times and celebrating with you during good times
- Having fun, looking forward to things, being excited about the relationship



- 🚩 Making room for growth, change and new things
- 🚩 Not blaming you for things out of your control/things not related to you
- 🚩 Discussing differences and your past in order to understand each other
- 🚩 Wanting to learn how to support your gender identity or sexual orientation and your choices on when/who to disclose that to



**Visit the TransFormed Project  
website at:**

**[https://www.metrac.org/what-  
we-do/transformed-project](https://www.metrac.org/what-we-do/transformed-project)**  
**to view our other resources:**

**[The TransFormed  
Glossary of Terms](#)**

**[End the Silence on  
Intimate Partner Violence](#)**



**METRAC**  
ACTION ON VIOLENCE

METRAC is a community not-for-profit organization that works to prevent violence against women, youth, children, Two-Spirit, nonbinary, and trans people.

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***YOU DESERVE  
SAFETY &  
AFFIRMING SUPPORTS***