

*GLBTQ*  
***Safe Relationship***  
***Handbook***

A Guide for Survivors of  
Interpersonal Violence



*Envisioning a Future  
Without Violence*

***Boulder County Safehouse***  
***July 2002***

# Acknowledgements

Boulder County Safehouse would like to thank the following people for helping to make this handbook possible:

Bruce Smail, Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center at CU  
Catherine Guerrero, Community Activist  
Dede DePercin and Carter Klenk, Colorado Anti-Violence Project  
Diana Yandell, Boulder Pride

We would also like to thank the following Boulder County Safehouse staff contributors for their hard work, commitment and vision in putting this *Handbook* together.

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This project was funded in part by The Open Door Fund serving the GLBT communities of Boulder County.

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# Introduction **1**

No matter what you call it, relationship violence is a common crime. It can begin with heated words, a push or a slap. Quite often, this behavior escalates and can become a pattern of abuse.

If you are in an abusive relationship, this *Handbook* is, first and foremost, a resource guide for you. We want to assure you that *you are not alone* and will hopefully provide you with some concrete resources and support. We will not try to sway you to leave, or to imply that you should do anything that you do not want to do. The theme of this *Handbook* is safety, with some education and resources sprinkled in. We support you on your journey.

You may have picked up this *Handbook* because you are an abuser, and you would like support in ending your behavior. *You have choices*, and while this *Handbook* is primarily for survivors of violence, you may find that understanding your behavior gives you the freedom to change it. You also deserve support, and will find resources in this guide.

You may be a peace officer, lawyer, social worker, therapist, GLBTQ advocate, family member, or friend who knows and loves a GLBTQ survivor of relationship violence. Use this *Handbook* as a reference to provide quality support and referrals. *You are an important person* along the journey to safety, and you can play a pivotal role in supporting a victim to make decisions that are best for her/him.

The facts about GLBTQ relationship violence speak for themselves. Research suggests that the incident rate of battering in same-sex relationships and heterosexual relationships is approximately the same.<sup>1</sup> The fact that only 1% of domestic violence arrests in Boulder County involve same-

sex relationships<sup>2</sup> leads us to believe that a significant number of victims of same-sex relationship violence go silent, unprotected and unserved.

Many of the same barriers confronting survivors of heterosexual relationship violence also make it difficult for GLBTQ survivors to access help and safety. These include:

- fear of retribution by the abusive partner
- feelings of guilt and shame about the violence
- lack of familiarity with available resources and legal avenues for protection.

In addition to these barriers, GLBTQ survivors must also overcome obstacles created by homophobia and heterosexism. Concerns about police response, lack of accessible and affordable GLBTQ-friendly counseling and support services, and scorn or disapproval from friends or family make reaching out difficult.

The staff at Boulder County Safehouse hopes that this *Handbook* will be a resource to you and will support peace and safety for all gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer and questioning folk in our community. Together we create a community that supports victims, challenges oppression, and demands an end to intimate partner violence.

<sup>1</sup>Renzetti, Claire, *Violent Betrayal: Partner Abuse in Lesbian Relationships*, 1992

<sup>2</sup>Boulder County Domestic Abuse Prevention Project, 2001

# What is Relationship Violence?

# 2

## Relationship Violence FACTS

Relationship violence is as much a problem in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender relationships as in heterosexual relationships.<sup>3</sup>

A 10-year, 10-city study found that 25-33% of same-sex relationships involve abuse.<sup>4</sup>

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reported 3,327 cases of abuse in gay, lesbian, and bisexual relationships in 1997. The number of reports made by men was 52 percent and reports by women were 48 percent.

According to the Minnesota State University Women's Center, 67% of today's homeless youth are gay or lesbian teens who have come out to their families and have been kicked out of their homes.

## What Makes It "Abuse"?

What is relationship violence? Domestic or intimate partner violence, family violence, same-sex battering and dating abuse all reflect *any physical or psychological harm that is used to maintain power or control over another person with whom an intimate relationship is shared*, regardless of their legal status.

Domestic violence includes an imbalance of power between partners – one person abuses power and control over the other. The question of “mutual abuse” generally arises when the role of ‘perpetrator’ is unclear. This is especially common when both people are of the same gender. Often, we don't take the time to ask questions that can help us determine who, in fact,

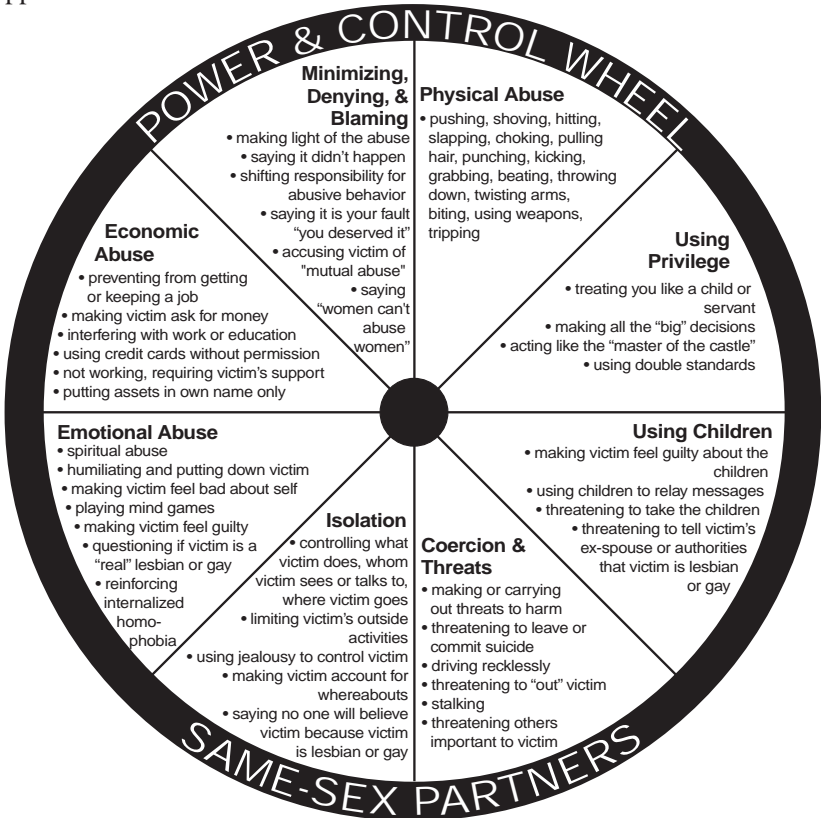
<sup>3</sup>Renzetti, 1992

<sup>4</sup>National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects, 1998

has the power and control in the relationship. It is important to consider coercive patterns of control, jealousy and ownership, denial, minimization, and entitlement within the relationship. To call an abusive situation “mutual” runs the risk of minimizing the battering, re-victimizing the victim, and placing the perpetrator above accountability for the abuse.

Domestic violence occurs on a continuum of abuse. Actions range from those we tend to trivialize (pushing, pinching, yelling, name calling) to those that are clearly lethal (choking, cutting, threatening with a gun). All acts on the continuum can escalate if intervention does not occur.

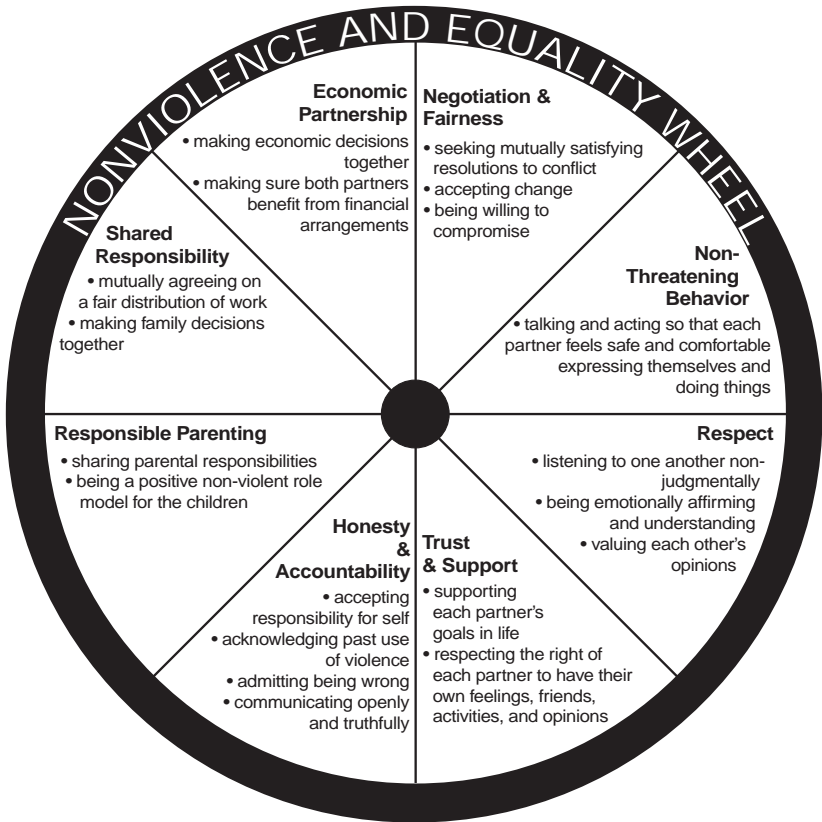
The Power and Control Wheel demonstrates some, but not all, forms of abuse. If you are experiencing any form of abuse found here, you are not alone. You can call the Safehouse crisis line 24 hours a day for confidential support: 303-444-2424.



Source: Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, and Roe and Jagodinski.

# Equality and Freedom

Safe relationships are based on shared power and equality. While no relationship is perfect, the “Nonviolence and Equality Wheel” offers a positive model of relationship based on mutual trust and respect.



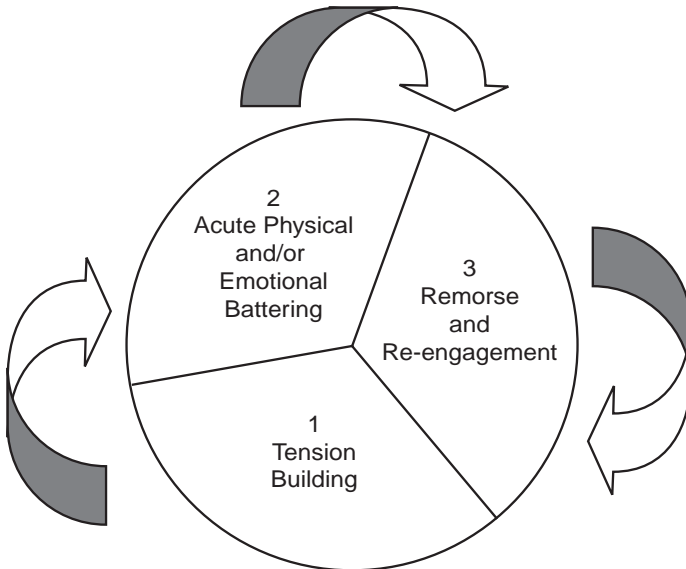
Source: Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, and Roe and Jagodinski.

# Cycles and Patterns

In some cases, violent relationships follow a discernible “cycle” that may escalate over time. It has three primary phases where the

- 1) *tension builds*, then
- 2) *an acute incident occurs*, and
- 3) *a period of re-engagement* follows.

The acute episode could be anything that breaks the tension, from intense name-calling or public humiliation to severe physical battering. Your relationship may not follow this exact pattern, but it may be helpful to know whether a pattern of behavior is actually occurring. *Know that you are not responsible for the abuser’s behavior.* Detecting a cycle can simply assure you that you are not alone, and may assist you in your safety planning (described on page 14 of this *Handbook*). People who experience this or a similar cycle of violence note that it may continue to develop throughout the relationship, and gradually speed up while becoming more and more violent. If this pattern does fit the abuser’s behavior, it is important to know that the danger to the victim does not end with breaking up, apologies, or promises.



## **Phase 1: Tension Builds**

Victim may be nurturing and compliant. May cover up for abuser's behavior, accept full blame for many problems, compromise and manipulate to keep batterer non-violent. Abuser becomes increasingly jealous, and verbally or physically abusive.

## **Phase 2: Acute Physical and/or Emotional Battering**

Tension increases rapidly. Abuser's rage escalates. Abuse can happen to mind, body, and/or spirit. If the victim can no longer tolerate own terror, anxiety or anger, she/he may trigger the event to get it over with. Abuser may abuse victim even after victim is severely injured. The victim may simply endure the abuse or disassociate from body.

## **Phase 3: Remorse and Re-Engagement**

Abuser will try a variety of behaviors to encourage the victim to re-engage in the relationship, or get "hooked in." Examples of these hooks include: telling the victim "You're my only friend. Only you understand me;" giving gifts; saying "Don't give up on me;" behaving as if what occurred is only a minor incident; promising to go into counseling but never following through with it; promising the victim everything they ever asked for. Both welcome this stage. The abuser may be loving and kind, may beg for forgiveness and promise to change. The abuser convinces the victim and everyone else of these intentions. The victim wants to and may believe this. At the same time, the abuser believes the victim has been taught a lesson.

## **Questions To Ask Yourself**

### **For Victims**

#### **Are you questioning your relationship?**

- Are you afraid of your partner?
- Does s/he blame you or minimize your feelings?
- Do you feel ashamed of and responsible for your partner's behavior?

- Do you withhold opinions or strong feelings for fear of your partner's reaction?
- Does your partner ever force you to have sex?
- Does your partner control the money?
- Do you have to account for all of your time away from your partner?
- Does your partner get jealous when you spend time with your friends or family?
- Do you frequently try to please your partner only to find that your efforts go unnoticed?
- Does your partner restrain, hit, shove or kick you, or threaten to do so?
- Does your partner intimidate you?
- Does she/he destroy property, or threaten to do so?
- Does she/he threaten to "out" you to your employer, family or friends?
- Does she/he threaten to hurt your kids, people you care about, or your pets?

Trust your instincts about what is happening to you. How do you feel about your relationship? If you feel that you are being emotionally or physically abused, you are most likely right. Identifying as a victim of abuse does not in any way mean that you are responsible for the abuse. Support is available!

## **For Abusers**

### **Do you use power and control in your relationship?**

- Are you jealous and possessive?
- Do you have an explosive temper?
- Do you ridicule, criticize or insult your partner?
- Do you become violent when you drink and/or use drugs?
- Have you broken things in a state of anger?
- Have you pushed, hit, kicked, or otherwise injured your partner?
- Have you threatened to hurt or kill your partner?

- Have you forced, coerced or intimidated your partner into having sex?
- Have you threatened to kill yourself if your partner leaves?
- Have you threatened to damage/hurt things, people or pets that are important to your partner?
- Do you make your partner account to you for every moment they are away from you?
- Do you spy or make repeated phone calls to check up on your partner?
- Do you accuse your partner of cheating on you?
- Have you kept your partner from leaving the house, room or car?
- Have you used silence and ignoring as a way to manipulate your partner's emotions?
- Do you justify or blame your abusive behavior on stress, alcohol/drugs, other people or situations?

Abuse and violence are learned behaviors. You may believe that others cause the violence, but it is **your** problem that only **you** can change. Taking responsibility and admitting abusive behavior is the first step to change. Support is available! (See "Additional Resources," p. 33.)

## The Difference Between S&M (Sadism and Masochism) and Sexual Violence

S&M is a particular type of sexual activity which may involve play, fantasy, power and pain. It should always have limits and boundaries, but more importantly, it is consensual. This means that BOTH partners have agreed when to enter this activity and when to stop.

Battering, on the other hand, is a pattern of violent and/or coercive behavior that one person uses to maintain control over his or her partner. It is not limited to one setting, as is generally the case with S&M. It permeates throughout the entire relationship and it is not consensual. No one agrees to be abused.

It is possible for a woman to rape another woman just as it is possible for a man to rape another man. It is important to be clear about what is consensual sexual play or S&M and what is non-consensual rape or sexual abuse.

If you are unsure, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you are engaging in sexual activities which are too painful or you do not enjoy?
- Do you feel forced or coerced into engaging in sexual acts?
- Is sexual activity used to control you or show you who is in control?
- Is sexual violence part of the domestic violence?
- Does sex sometimes follow physical battering or emotional abuse?
- Does your partner escalate or become angry when you try to talk about sex?
- Has your partner forced her/himself upon you when you are upset or have said “no”?

If sexual abuse is happening in your relationship and you need someone to talk to for support, contact your local rape crisis center or call the Safehouse 24-hour hotline: 303-444-2424.

## A Word on Stalking

If you believe someone is stalking you, document any and all stalking behaviors and notify the police. A stalker can be someone you’ve been dating, an ex-girlfriend/boyfriend, a friend, acquaintance or a co-worker who is obsessed with you. Domestic violence stalkers are often the most violent. Stalking is against the law!

C.R.S. 18-9-111 states:

(4)b A person commits Stalking if directly, or indirectly through another person, such person knowingly:

(I) Makes a credible threat to another person and, in connection with such threat, repeatedly follows, approaches, contacts or places under surveillance that person.

Steps you must take in order to document stalking behavior:

- Screen phone messages and save answering machine tapes
- Save all notes, e-mail, and gifts
- Document dates, location and times of all encounters, including the length of encounter and how the encounter made you feel
- Consider getting a restraining order
- Turn all evidence in to the police and report all continuing contacts
- Tell other people what is happening
- Create a safety plan
- Do not contact the stalker. Any contact is good contact to a stalker.

For stalking information web sites:

- [www.sanctuary-stopviolence.org/stalking](http://www.sanctuary-stopviolence.org/stalking)  
includes logs for victims, handbook, and court orders
- [www.antistalking.com](http://www.antistalking.com)
- [www.stalkingassistance.com](http://www.stalkingassistance.com)
- [www.ncvc.org/law/issues/stalking](http://www.ncvc.org/law/issues/stalking)

# 3

## You Have Options

The journey to safety is often a process, not one single event. In an abusive relationship, *you cannot control nor are you responsible for your partner's violence*. Some survivors of abuse have found it helpful to evaluate what they can control. The following is a short list:

### **You can stay**

GLBTQ individuals have many reasons for staying in violent or abusive relationships, including fear of or feelings for the abuser, reluctance to use inappropriate services, and fear of the abuser coming out for them. If you choose to stay, information and support are still available.

### **You can leave**

The decision to leave can be a difficult one. It may be helpful to create a safety plan that includes support and safe housing from friends, family, and others (see page 14 of this *Handbook*). Boulder County Safehouse provides confidential emergency shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, support groups, and transitional support for battered lesbians and trans-folk and their children, and can provide referrals to such services for abused men.

### **You can get help**

There are resources available for victims/survivors of GLBTQ relationship violence, whether they stay or leave their abuser. 24-hour crisis intervention lines can provide emergency help, information, and support. Counseling programs can help you sort out your feelings. This *Handbook* includes the telephone numbers for Boulder County Safehouse services and other resources available to GLBTQ domestic abuse victims/survivors.

## You can take legal action

Battering is a crime. You have legal options. The court can order the abuser to stop hurting you or your children through a Restraining Order. You do not need a lawyer, but Safehouse can provide free legal advocacy in Boulder and Broomfield Counties (see “Legal Resources” on page 36).

## Barriers to Leaving

There are many reasons why GLBTQ individuals hesitate to leave an abusive situation. While some people will ask, “Why don’t victims of abuse just leave?”, others have a broader understanding of the barriers and complexity that can make such a decision so very difficult. Some barriers include:

- Economic dependence
- Fear of being “outed”
- Fear of being alone
- Pity: partner convinces individual to feel sorry for him/her
- Fear that partner will commit suicide
- Denial and minimization: belief that it’s really not so bad and other people have it worse
- Love: to love and be loved whether “romantic,” “sexual/passionate,” “nurturing,” “addictive” or “unhealthy.” Abuser uses the idea of love as a way to re-engage and manipulate. Victim may be confused about what healthy love is when there is also abuse.
- Commitment to the relationship “for better or worse”
- Guilt: belief that the problems in the relationship are her/his own fault
- Responsibility: belief that it is up to her/him to make the relationship work
- Shame and humiliation
- Isolation: from supportive friends, family, spiritual/education/GLBTQ communities etc.
- Identity: feeling that she/he needs partner in order to be complete.

This can be especially strong if individual is not “out” and believes that partner is the only one in the world who understands her/him.

- Parenting: losing co-parent or losing touch with child(ren) that she/he was co-parenting
- Unfounded optimism: belief that things will get better, despite evidence to the contrary
- Internalization of abuser’s beliefs/ excuses: belief that she/he is responsible for the abuse... “If only I was a better partner/lover/etc.”
- Lack of support from others: based on personal experiences of heterosexism
- Survival: fear that partner will follow her/him and kill her/him
- Fear of not being able to find someone who can be so “wonderful” at times, even though the bad times usually outweigh the good
- Hope that things will change as soon as partner stops drinking/drugging, gets a better job, makes more money, doesn’t have so much stress, is understood, etc.
- Homophobia and Heterosexism: fear that acknowledging the abuse will be used as “proof” that GLBTQ relationships are “dangerous” or “unhealthy.”

Leaving an abuser is a process, not an event. Additionally, statistics show that victims who have been threatened by their abusers are in the greatest danger when they leave. The question “Why don’t you just leave?” inherently holds the victim accountable for the abuse. A more appropriate question is: “*Why doesn’t the abuser stop the abusive behavior and get help?*” When we start shifting the focus of responsibility for the abuse from the victim to the abuser, an end to violence is more possible.

## Safety Planning

Safety plans are responses that address the risks that you have personally identified and prioritized. These may include strategies for staying or strategies for leaving, with personal protection as an aspect of each. Some of the suggestions below may be appropriate for you and others may not be at this time, due to economic restraints, the degree to which you are ‘out’,

or obstacles that are unforeseen and beyond your control. A Safehouse advocate can assist you in assessing your options, your safety, and the lethality of the abuser.

1. **Tell someone** about the abusive situation, if you can. Build a support network with family, friends, and associates, including bosses, neighbors, and colleagues. If you have a job, talk to your boss about the problems you are having, and make arrangements to divert phone calls from the person abusing you. If you are not 'out,' you can call the confidential 24-hour Safehouse Crisis Line: 303-444-2424. An advocate can help you assess your best options and offer support.
2. **Keep a dated record** of physical abuse, threats, stalking, and destruction of property. Document abusive phone calls and keep harassing messages on your answering machine. Photograph property damage. Keep any written material that is threatening or harassing. Write down the names of people who witness abusive incidents. If you've gone to the doctor or emergency room because of battering injuries, keep all records and take photographs of injuries. All this evidence, including police reports, can help you obtain protection through the legal system. Even if you choose not to report in the short-run, your documentation can help you get protection from your boyfriend or girlfriend in the future. If you feel ready to report, you do not have to do this alone – an advocate from Safehouse can support you through the process.
3. **If possible, do not meet, go anywhere or spend time alone with your abuser.** If you do plan to be alone with her/him, let someone else know of your whereabouts and when to expect you home. If people are aware of your plans, they can check on your safety or call for help if you don't call or return on time.
4. **Vary your routine.** Choose different routes, or leave at different times each day. If you are going out, tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back.
5. **Go to the nearest public place** if you believe you are being fol-

lowed. Learn where the police stations are located. A good second choice is a fire station, if it is staffed 24 hours a day.

6. **Keep an emergency bag** hidden in a central location (garage, under the bed) with the following items included:
  - MONEY. Take all bank books and check books
  - Extra keys for the car, house
  - A change of clothes for yourself and your children
  - Mass transit transportation schedules in the event that a car is not available
  - Motel numbers and locations at the end of a bus or train ride
  - Driver's license, car registration, proof of insurance
  - Your and your children's birth certificates, insurance policies
  - Pictures, jewelry, or anything that has sentimental value for you
  - Address book: phone numbers and addresses of friends and relatives
  - Appointment book
  - Medical records and cards, school records
  - Social security cards (yours and your children's), work permits, green card, passport (for non-US citizens), welfare identification
  - Medication, baby items (diapers, formula), some extra clothing
7. Have a Plan of Escape:
  - Where can you go that is SAFE?
  - How much will it cost, if anything?
  - Can you get the children out of the house safely or do you need help?
  - Remember to take your bag with all the items you need.
  - If you have a car, drive it to a friend's house. Park away from the actual location. Ask someone to walk with you to your vehicle until you are safely away.
  - Call Safehouse if you would like emergency, confidential shelter or other options: 303-444-2424.

- ❑ Call the Police if possible: 911. They must protect you.
- 8. **Get a Restraining Order** if you are afraid of your partner. The Boulder County Safehouse operates a Restraining Order Clinic at the Boulder County Justice Center on 6th and Canyon in Boulder, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and at the Broomfield Courthouse on 17 Descombes from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (call for days). A Safehouse Court Advocate will be available to assist you.
- 9. **“Block” information that is accessible to the general public**, including your driver’s license, license plates, phone number and voter registration. This prevents anyone from getting your address and other personal information. For Boulder County residents, the driver’s license bureau is located on 28th and Iris in the Albertson’s shopping plaza. Voter registration is located at 33rd and Arapahoe, second floor, across the street from the police department. It costs a total of \$15.00 (\$5.00 for each) to have access to information – license, plates, and registration – blocked. In order to keep your address off the voter registration list, you must vote by mail (absentee ballot) or you can vote early.

Information from a variety of sources, including Safety Planning with Battered Women: Complex Lives/Difficult Choices by Jill Davies, ©1998 by Sage Publications, Inc.

# 4

## Legal Resources

Working with the legal system is not always easy, particularly for people from the GLBTQ community. Documentation and police involvement are often essential in helping a victim stay safe and send a message to the abuser that domestic violence is a punishable crime. A restraining order can be a very useful and powerful document that has kept many victims safe from further abuse. While it is important to protect yourself to the full extent of the law, it may come with some compromises you will need to consider.

Getting a restraining order means “coming out” through public records that can be accessed by anyone (employers, family, attorneys, etc.). Unless you have police records, pictures, copies of threatening messages etc., it may mean “outing” yourself to people you may need to serve as witnesses to the abuse.

Getting a permanent restraining order means going to court and facing your abuser. In this case consider having family, friends or a Safehouse legal advocate go with you for support.

If the judicial system in your area is not sensitive or informed about GLBTQ issues, they may not appropriately respond to your needs or provide you the assistance you deserve. If you are concerned about the treatment you have or may experience through the justice system, contact the Safehouse Legal Advocacy Program, 303-444-2424.

### What is a Civil Restraining Order, and how do I obtain one?

A Restraining Order is ordered by a judge who has obtained the paper work by the victim (known as the plaintiff) restraining a party from the vic-

tim/plaintiff, possibly the children, their address, work, school or any other place requested by the plaintiff and granted by the judge. The plaintiff carries this order with them at all times and it is a clear order for the police to arrest if there has been a violation. Same-sex relationships qualify under the domestic violence restraining order law (C.R.S. 13-14-102) because they involve violence between intimate partners. Most restraining order packets are available from the court clerk and should contain a fee waiver form in case you are unable to pay some of the filing/service fee. You do not need a lawyer in order to obtain a Restraining Order but you may feel more comfortable having an attorney present, particularly if you have children (to work out visitation rights or parenting issues) or other legal concerns. A permanent restraining order is “permanent” and enforceable across state lines.

**Note** – You must first obtain a “Temporary Restraining Order” (TRO), wait for it to be served by the sheriff in your county (or in the county where your abuser lives/works), and return to court at an appointed date for the “Permanent Restraining Order” (PRO) hearing where your abuser has the right to be present and respond to your allegations.

A Boulder County Safehouse Court Advocate can help you with the paper work at the Restraining Order Clinic Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Boulder Justice Center, located at 6th and Canyon. Advocacy is also available at the Broomfield courthouse, 17 Descombes Drive, from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (call for days).

## What is a “Mutual Restraining Order” and why is this a problem?

A “Mutual Order” is when the Restraining Order restrains both parties from contacting one another via work, phone, or third party. This order presents two problems: it gives the impression that both parties are equally guilty of the abuse; and the victim may find her/himself in a domestic violence registry (*Twice Abused: Same-Sex Domestic Violence and the Law*, Evan Fray-Witzer, p.25).

# What is a “No-Contact” Order?

**(As a condition of bond or sentence in a criminal case)**

A condition of “no-contact” as part of a defendant’s bond may, and most likely will, be ordered by the judge on a violent crime arrest. The “no contact” order is in effect for the ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CRIMINAL CASE or until the victim requests that it be removed, and then it is only removed on the approval of the District Attorney and the judge handling the case. It is a common fallacy that the “no-contact” will automatically be removed at the first appearance in court or after 30 days. This is not true. The “no-contact” can be removed only when the victim comes into the District Attorney’s office and fills out a request to remove the condition of “no-contact”. If the defendant violates the “no-contact” order, call the police immediately and report the violation. You can also document alleged violations of the “no-contact” (keep letters and e-mail messages, and use the \*57 option to trace phone calls).

A “no-contact” is ordered by the court in a criminal case and *is often not as quickly enforced* as a PRO or TRO. It is more often subject to interpretation when issues such as residence, distance, and children arise. Once a “no-contact” is part of a resolution to a case, the police do not have the authority to arrest on a violation of the “no-contact” unless the District Attorney files a motion with the courts.

## Know Your Rights

- Colorado has no laws designating marriage as purely heterosexual, or making same-sex relationships or behavior illegal in any way.
- Same-sex relationships qualify under the domestic violence law.
- A lawyer is not needed to obtain a Restraining Order.
- Unless you have a “Living Together Agreement” two parties who have purchased property together, mixed funds in a common bank account etc., have no recourse under the domestic relations law. You may in this case, decide to take your circumstances to civil court.
- If you have been a victim of a crime, sustained physical and/or mental injury and have a police report, you can apply for Victim’s

Compensation. Applications are available from your District Attorney's office, local Safehouse, law enforcement agency, mental health worker etc., and must be submitted within one year of the date of the crime. The Victim's Compensation Fund generally covers things not covered by insurance such as: medical expenses, mental health counseling, eyeglasses, lost wages, property damage, and funeral benefits for a deceased victim.

# 5

## Just for Youth

Dating abuse happens when one partner uses verbal, emotional, physical or sexual violence to get and maintain power and control over the other partner. *It doesn't have to be physical to be abusive.* For GLBTQ teens in abusive relationships, this “silent crime” is worsened by a school environment that is often unsupportive and even hostile in its heterosexism and homophobia. A 1997 survey by the Colorado Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teacher’s Network found that 97% of students in public high schools reported hearing homophobic remarks from their peers on a regular basis, and 80% of gay and lesbian youth reported severe social isolation.

If you believe that you are a victim of dating violence, know that you are not alone, nor are you, in any way, responsible for your partner’s violence. You deserve to be safe. The following questions can help you create a personalized safety plan.

- Who can I talk to about this? Are there any adults that I trust with this information? Is there a teacher, coach, nurse or school counselor who is safe and supportive?
- Who can I call if I need to get a safe ride home?
- How frequently is this abusive or stalking behavior happening?\*
- How can I vary my routines, change classes or transfer to another school?
- What code-word will I use so that my friends and family know that I am calling for help?
- How do I say “no” or break up with my girlfriend/boyfriend?
- Teens under 18 years old cannot get their own “Restraining Order”. So, how can I tell my parents that I need them to get one for me?

\* Even if you choose not to report in the short-run, records of abuse,

threats, stalking behavior (anonymous phone calls, e-mail notes and messages, following), destruction of property, harassing messages and documentation of injury can all help you get protection from your boyfriend or girlfriend through the legal and justice systems in the future. If you feel ready to report, you do not have to do this alone – an advocate from Safehouse can support you through the process. You can call the Safehouse crisis line number 303-444-2424 at any time and speak to a crisis line counselor.

# 6 Transgendered Survivors: Challenges & Options

The Boulder County Safehouse philosophy includes a belief in woman-defined advocacy, which means that Safehouse respects the decisions of a woman to define herself and her goals. The Safehouse mission to serve women is inclusive of all women, as defined by survivors themselves.

The Gender, Violence, and Resource Access Survey of trans and intersex individuals found 50% of respondents had been raped or assaulted by an intimate partner ([www.survivorproject.org](http://www.survivorproject.org)). Transgendered, transsexual, and intersex survivors of domestic violence often face additional challenges when they seek help.

As a transgendered survivor, you may be asking yourself:

*Can I access shelter services at a women's shelter? Will the shelter turn me away because I'm transgendered?*

Safehouse will provide shelter for any self-defined woman who is experiencing domestic violence. If the Safehouse shelter is full, an advocate will call other shelters that serve transgendered females and find a safe place for you to stay.

*Will the shelter be a safe environment? Will I be "outed" to the other residents?*

The shelter staff will take recommendations and guidance from the transgendered resident as to whether or not to tell/educate or provide information to other shelter residents regarding acceptance, differences, tolerance, oppression and heterosexism.

*When I am seeking legal services, is there a possibility that my transgender or intersex status, if previously hidden, will become known and expose me to more violence?*

Boulder County Safehouse advocates can work with transgendered survivors in the process of legally changing gender status, name and social security number (if needed). Safehouse advocates can also work with survivors in legal processes, including restraining orders and court hearings.

While it is true that transgendered individuals as well as others from the GLBTQ community will find some organizations to be welcoming, others can be insensitive and unresponsive to their needs. Through education and advocacy, Safehouse can assist you in finding the services that you need.

# 7

## Being An Ally

Family and friends are often the first people a survivor of domestic violence turns to for emotional, spiritual and financial support. Being an ally means understanding that a person in an abusive relationship is in a very difficult situation. You may not understand why the abuse is happening or why the couple stays together. Typically, an abusive person will try to isolate their partner from family and friends in order to have full control and cut him/her off from help and support. It is important to validate that person's experience, listen without judgment and help that person find the appropriate resources. Most importantly, do the best that you can to maintain your caring and support regardless of whether or not the person chooses to leave the relationship. You may be the only person she/he has ever told about the abuse.

- Believe them and be non-judgmental. Telling you about the abuse could be an enormous act of courage.
- Keep the information confidential.
- Understand that leaving a relationship is difficult and that she/he might not decide to pursue this course of action. Reassure your friend of your continued support.
- Offer your friend housing.
- Assure your friend that she/he neither deserves nor is responsible for the violence.
- Let your friend know that she/he is not alone.
- Share the information in this *Handbook*, go over the checklists of questions.
- Be willing to seek out referrals that would help her/him at this time. Encourage individual or group counseling.

Portions of this section are from the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, Minneapolis.

# Important Information for Service Providers 8

## Couple's Counseling: Beneficial or Dangerous?

If you are a service provider working with couples, consider the risks (emotional and physical) that couple's counseling can pose to a victim of domestic violence.

- The safety of the victim and the therapist may be at risk in a couple's counseling situation, if the abuser is confronted about the abuse, is unwilling to take responsibility for their behavior and escalates or becomes violent.
- In a couple's counseling session, the victim may minimize the abuse or may not feel safe to speak. During the session, the abuser is likely to assert and maintain control over the victim.
- Often, an abuser is very skilled at manipulating situations in order to make the victim feel responsible for the abuse. Couple's counseling may be used by the abuser to re-victimize the victim and reinforce the abuser's control.
- You may be the only person an isolated victim has been able or allowed to speak to. You may be the only one that can give them support or validation about the abuse.
- The victim may need your help getting out of an abuse situation and will need your help to create a safety plan.
- Many victims who are being abused emotionally and verbally may not identify themselves as battered women/men. A victim or abuser may initially call you for couple's counseling without identifying the domestic violence. It is important for you to assess the power and control issues in the relationship and determine whether or not it is safe to meet them for couple's work.

- How do you assess power and control in a relationship? Hopefully, this *Handbook* will help you to develop questions about accountability, respect, honesty and support, the way conflict is addressed, and patterns of behavior (i.e. cycle of violence).

In order to ensure safety and effective counseling, it is recommended that the victim and abuser receive individual counseling before attempting couple's counseling. Safehouse offers short term individual counseling sessions to GLBTQ victims and group counseling to female victims on a sliding scale basis. Counseling resources for abusers can be found in the "Additional Resources" chapter of this *Handbook*.

# 9 Boulder County Safehouse Services

The mission of Boulder County Safehouse is to provide safe shelter, support, and advocacy for battered women and their children, and to end domestic violence through education and social change. The Safehouse “Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Safe Relationship Outreach Project” provides information, outreach counseling, and support to the GLBTQ community regarding same-sex relationship violence, and works to ensure appropriate justice system response. All of the following programs are available to lesbian and bisexual women and transgendered male to female (M2F) survivors of domestic violence. Counseling services, emergency response, and referrals are available to gay and bisexual men and transgendered female to male (F2M) survivors of domestic violence.

## Shelter Program

Safehouse operates an emergency shelter for women (lesbian, bisexual, transgendered M2F) and their children leaving abusive situations. Safehouse can shelter up to 17 people at one time, and residents may stay for up to six weeks. While at shelter, women and children receive individual and group counseling as well as food, emergency supplies and referrals to community resources. For access to the shelter program, call the crisis hotline: 303-444-2424.

**24-Hour Crisis Hotline.** Counselors and trained volunteers provide crisis counseling, outreach services, information and referrals for other services to all GLBTQ callers.

**Counseling.** Counselors are available, for both women and children staying at the shelter, around the clock for one-on-one and group support.

# Advocacy

The Advocacy Program oversees the agency's emergency response and victim/legal advocacy services available to all members of the GLBTQ community.

**Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART).** Safehouse DART Advocates provide immediate, in-person response at the scene of a battering incident, 24 hours a day. At the request of a police officer or health care provider, DART Advocates contact and meet with victims, discuss available resources, and provide assistance and support.

**Legal Advocacy.** Court Advocates staff a Restraining Order Clinic at the Justice Center Monday through Friday to assist GLBTQ victims with the process of obtaining temporary and permanent orders. They accompany clients to court hearings and advocate on their behalf during interactions with judicial officials in both Boulder and Broomfield.

**Court Watch.** Court Watch is a community-based program designed to evaluate and respond to the performance of the Boulder County Justice System in the area of domestic violence.

## Outreach Counseling

Short-term individual counseling (for all GLBTQ victims) and group counseling (for children, teens and adult lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women) are available for survivors of violence in various stages of recovery. All services are available on a sliding scale in Boulder, Lafayette, Broomfield and Nederland.

**Tri-City Outreach Program.** Based in Lafayette, our outreach office serves Louisville, Lafayette, Superior and Broomfield. The Tri-City Program offers group (to lesbians, bisexual and transgender women) and individual counseling (to all GLBTQ adult victims and children), public education, and crisis line services. Additionally, group-specific services are provided to Spanish-speaking women, older/senior battered women, and to migrant working families in eastern Boulder County and Longmont.

**Latino Outreach.** Bi-lingual counselors provide individual counseling and community assistance to the GLBTQ latina/latino population in Boulder County, and work collaboratively with other agencies to provide culturally appropriate services.

**Transitional Services Program.** The Transitional Services Program provides access to low-income housing and transitional support services to all GLBTQ victims and children. Counseling, skill building classes and community resources are available to individuals as they move from crisis to self-sufficiency.

**Support Group for Women in Jail.** Counselors provide weekly support to female inmates at the Boulder County Jail. We have found that the majority of women in jail have been or are current victims of domestic violence.

**Children's Program.** Counselors and trained volunteers provide individual and group activities for children. They also provide parenting information, emphasizing non-violent disciplinary techniques, and facilitate parent-child communication.

## Education Program

The Safehouse Education Program focuses on social change through community, volunteer, and school-based education, and early intervention and prevention efforts.

**School-Based Programs.** School programs on healthy relationships and dating violence are available to elementary, middle and senior high schools. A complete Elementary School Curriculum educates young people about violence and safety. The Peer Education Program is a collaborative effort between Safehouse and MESA in which students educate their peers about dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and domestic violence.

**Educational Materials and Training.** Safehouse has developed resources on preventing abuse and dealing with consequences which address the special needs of specific audiences: children, teens, parents, teachers, the faith community, workplace, and medical personnel. We have also created training on Ethical Communication and Anti-Racism for organizational develop-

ment. Videos and other resources addressing domestic violence are available upon request.

**Volunteer Opportunities.** Volunteers from the Boulder County community receive a comprehensive 50-Hour Paraprofessional Training in preparation for their work as Victim Advocates, Court Advocates, Shelter Volunteers or Children's Volunteers.

**Speaker's Bureau.** Staff and volunteers are available to speak to community groups, businesses and classrooms on subjects related to domestic violence.

The monthly **Social Justice Seminar Series** is an educational forum for the Boulder County community on a variety of topics related to intimate partner violence.

Safehouse sponsors an **Annual Conference** each October in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The conference provides in-depth information on critical domestic violence issues.

The **Spiritual Support Team (SST)** is a group of volunteer spiritual leaders representing a variety of faiths. The SST assists survivors of violence as they work through the spiritual concerns they are facing as a result of their abuse. SST members also work to increase awareness of domestic violence within their own congregations, denominations, and the religious community. Team members receive training and provide a weekly support group to residents at the Shelter.

# 10 Additional Resources for GLBTQ Victims and Survivors

## University of Colorado and Naropa University Campus Resources:

### **Counseling and Psychological Services: A Multicultural Center**

Free services available to CU students, staff, faculty

Contact: Jan Johnson, Steven Medina, or available counselor

Phone: 303-492-6766

Website: [www.colorado.edu/sacs/counseling](http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/counseling)

### **GLBT Health Clinic: Wardenburg Health Center**

Team of health-care providers offering "safe zones" and specialized services to GLBT students, faculty, and staff at CU

Phone: 303-492-5432

Website: [www.colorado.edu/wardenburg/GLBT](http://www.colorado.edu/wardenburg/GLBT)

### **Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center**

Free services available for CU students, staff, faculty, and alumni

Contact: Bruce Smail, Virginia Visconti or available peer counselor

Phone: 303-492-1377

Email: [glbtrc@colorado.edu](mailto:glbtrc@colorado.edu)

Website: [www.colorado.edu/GLBTRC](http://www.colorado.edu/GLBTRC)

### **QI (Queers of the Institute): Naropa University**

Contact: Priscilla Inkpen

Phone: 303-546-3570

email: [inkpenp@naropa.edu](mailto:inkpenp@naropa.edu)

### **Victim Assistance: CU-Boulder**

Phone: 303-492-8855

Website: [www.colorado.edu/police/victim.html](http://www.colorado.edu/police/victim.html)

### **Women's Resource Center**

Offers information and referrals, resource library, advocacy, peer groups, events, and a safe gathering place

Phone: 303-492-5713

Website: [www.colorado.edu/WomensResourceCenter](http://www.colorado.edu/WomensResourceCenter)

## **Counseling Services:**

### **Boulder Gender Support Group**

M2F and F2M

Phone: 303-541-0775

### **GLBT Relationship Workshops**

Boulder County

Contact: Julie Colwell

Phone: 303-449-5417

Website: [www.enhancingthedance.com](http://www.enhancingthedance.com)

### **Julie Colwell, Ph.D.**

Specializes in lesbian, bisexual, and gay issues

Phone: 303-449-5417

### **Kim Oswald, M.A.**

Works with transgendered and transsexual people

Phone: 303-541-0775

### **Karen Raforth, Ph.D.**

Specializes in lesbian, bisexual, and gay issues

Phone: 303-444-8655

### **Kevin S. West NCC, LPC**

Dealing with domestic violence and anger management issues

Phone: 303-641-5151

### **Q Counseling (GLBTQ Victims)**

Individual counseling for GLBTQ survivors of domestic violence

Contact: Peter Dileo, LPC or Rachel Loudon, LCSW

Phone: 303-705-2500

## Support Groups for Victims:

### **Alcoholics Anonymous for GLBT People (Boulder)**

Support and assistance for GLBT recovering alcoholics

For a schedule of meetings, call BCAP:

Phone: 303-444-6121

### **Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse—Wings Foundation**

Therapist-facilitated support groups for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse

Contact: Christine Allison, Program Director

Phone: 303-238-8660 or 1-800-373-8671

Website: [www.wingsfound.org](http://www.wingsfound.org)

### **Survivors of Sexual Assault and Abuse**

Free lesbian survivor's group

Phone: 303-449-3942

### **AMEND of Denver County (Gay Victims)**

Support groups for gay male victims of domestic violence

Contact: Carol Doing 303-832-6365 ext. 11 or Ryan Kennedy, LPC 303-399-9988

### **Denver Safehouse (Lesbian, Bi Victims)**

Support groups and individual counseling for lesbian victims of domestic violence

Contact: Judy Carrier

Phone: 303-302-6125 or 303-318-9989

## Treatment for Offenders:

### **Counseling Services (Lesbian Offenders)**

Treatment for lesbian offenders of domestic violence

Contact: Tina Busey, MA

90 Madison Street, #304, Denver

Phone: 303-321-6452

### **Amend of Denver County (Gay, Bi, Trans Offenders)**

Treatment for domestic violence offenders

Contact: Peter Dileo

Phone: 303-832-6365

## Health Care:

### **Boulder Valley Women’s Health Center**

Provides low-cost health care to lesbian and bisexual women

Phone: 303-442-5160

Website: [www.bvwhc.org](http://www.bvwhc.org)

### **GLBT Health Clinic: Wardenburg Health Center**

Team of health-care providers offering “safe zones” and specialized services to GLBT students, faculty, and staff at CU

Phone: 303-492-5432

Website: [www.colorado.edu/wardenburg/GLBT](http://www.colorado.edu/wardenburg/GLBT)

### **Boulder County AIDS Project**

2118 14th St, Boulder

Phone: 303-444-6121

Website: [www.BCAP.org](http://www.BCAP.org)

## Legal Resources:

### **Colorado Legal Initiative Project (CLIP)**

Legal defense fund for GLBT communities in the Rocky Mountain region

Phone: 303-282-6524 or 303-282-5602

### **The Center, Legal Referral Hotline**

Phone: 303-733-7743

## **Attorneys**

### **Gonsor & Bryant, P.C.**

Contact: Diane Redman

600 Grant St. Ste 505, Denver

Phone: 303-894-0400

### **Law Office of Barbara A. Lavender**

Specializing in Family Law, same sex parents and child custody issues

Contact: Barbara Lavender

Contact: George Johnson for restraining orders

595 Canyon Blvd, Boulder

Phone: 303-443-3326

**Liz Mathews, Attorney at Law**

2356 S. Broadway, Denver

Phone: 303-715-9465

**Nora V. Kelly, P.C.**

1776 Lincoln St., Ste 1014 Denver

Phone: 303-866-9868 fax: 303-866-0855

**Winer and Ramsey**

Assist with restraining orders, represent those charged with domestic violence and handle civil sexual assault cases

Contact: Jeanne Winer

885 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder

Phone: 303-938-6836

## Resource Centers:

**Colorado Anti-Violence Program**

Denver-based statewide organization

Office phone: 303-839-5204 hotline: 303-852-5049 or 1-888-557-4441

Website: [www.coavp.org](http://www.coavp.org)

**Gender Identity Center**

Contact: Jessie Shafer

Address: 1455 Ammons Street #100, Lakewood

Phone: 303-202-6466 helpline: 303-898-7771

Email: [gicofcolo@aol.com](mailto:gicofcolo@aol.com)

Website: [www.gicofcolo.org](http://www.gicofcolo.org)

**The Center**

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado

Address: 1050 Broadway, Denver

Phone: 303-733-7743 helpline: 303-282-9399

Website: [www.coloradoglb.org](http://www.coloradoglb.org)

## **Boulder Pride**

Serving the GLBTQ Communities in and around Boulder County

Contact: Diana Yandell

Phone: 303-499-5777

Email: [Diana@boulderpride.org](mailto:Diana@boulderpride.org)

Website: [www.boulderpride.org](http://www.boulderpride.org)

## **Youth Services:**

### **Attention Homes (Boulder)**

Provides shelter and educational services to GLBTQ homeless teens

Phone: 303-447-1206

### **Colorado Anti-Violence Program – Youth-Based Initiative**

Partnering with POWER, Denver's youth organizing group, and area Gay-Straight Alliances to make Colorado schools safe for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities; tracks incidents of anti-LGBT violence that occur in school-based settings.

24-hour crisis line: 303-852-5094, or 1-888-557-4441

Website: [www.coavp.org](http://www.coavp.org)

### **Open and Affirming Sexual Orientation Support (OASOS) (Boulder)**

Provides confidential support, advocacy, and education for LGBT and questioning youth under 21. Staff also provides technical assistance and capacity building to schools and youth-serving organizations.

Phone: 303-678-6139

Website: [www.co.boulder.co.us/health/oasos.htm](http://www.co.boulder.co.us/health/oasos.htm)

### **Rainbow Alley**

GLBTQ Youth Drop in Center, includes: Art, Coffee, Dances, Parties, Pool and a Video Library

Phone: 303-831-0442

### **Urban Peak**

Denver center for homeless and runaway youth 15-21 years old

Contact: Allison Hoffman

Phone: 303-777-9198

Website: [www.urbanpeak.org](http://www.urbanpeak.org)

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