

# Embracing Inclusivity & Intersectionality: Prevention Programming and Survivor Support for LGBTQ+ Men & Boys of Faith

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**Ayana Wallace Viewx & Ariella Neckritz**



The National Center on Violence Against  
Women in the Black Community



# Opening Question For Attendees

- Name
- Pronouns
- Opening Question: Why is it important to talk about identity and experience with the communities you serve when working with men and boys of faith? Especially when addressing gender-based violence within faith communities?

# Learning Objectives

- Define and explore intersectionality in the context of faith and identity.
- Define key LGBTQ+ terms and concepts.
- Analyze power and privilege and examine power and control dynamics within LGBTQ+ dating and domestic violence situations
- Share best practices for developing prevention programs and campaigns responsive to LGBTQ+ individuals in faith-based communities
- Understand the concept of coming out and the challenges and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals of faith.
- Explore resources for serving and supporting LGBTQ+ survivors and LGBTQ+ people of faith

# About Ayana



- Ayana Wallace Vieux (she/her) is the Training and Technical Assistance Manager with Ujima Inc., The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community. Ujima is a nationally designated, culturally-specific resource center focused on Black women and girls and the Black community.
  - Ayana's background is in Women's and Gender Studies, with a specific focus on intersectional and IPV violence within communities of color. She has extensively studied the theory and implications of privilege, oppression, and intersectionality and strives to highlight the experiences of the marginalized and/or underrepresented.
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- Ayana's career began as a client case coordinator providing direct services and support to victim-survivors who sought emergency shelter. She has been instrumental in the national implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program—Maryland Model (LAP) and has served as the lead trainer for the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, the state coalition.
  - Ayana has worked for over a decade in the IPV field providing both direct service to survivors and technical assistance to advocates, law enforcement, community-based partners, and faith communities.

# About Ariella



- Ariella Neckritz (they/she) is the Director of Youth Programs at The Representation Project which aims to fight sexism and harmful stereotypes through films, education, research, and social activism.
- Previously for six and a half years they worked at Jewish Women International as the Director of Violence Prevention and Training. They were a lead trainer, curriculum writer, and workshop facilitator working with college campuses, Jewish community centers, youth groups, and domestic & sexual violence service providers.
- In college they were the President of George Washington University Students Against Sexual Assault, a peer education, activist, and survivor support organization.
- They received their Bachelor of Arts degree from George Washington University in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Human Services and Social Justice
- They got involved with the Representation Project as a high school student activist and are featured in the documentary film Miss Representation.

# Workshop Agreements

- Active Listening
- Be Present: Silence that Internal Chatter
- Be Open
- Push Through Your Growing Edge
- Respectfully Challenge Each Other
- Lean In, Lean Out
- Continue to Have These Conversation

# INTERSECTIONALITY OF FAITH & LGBTQ+ IDENTITIES



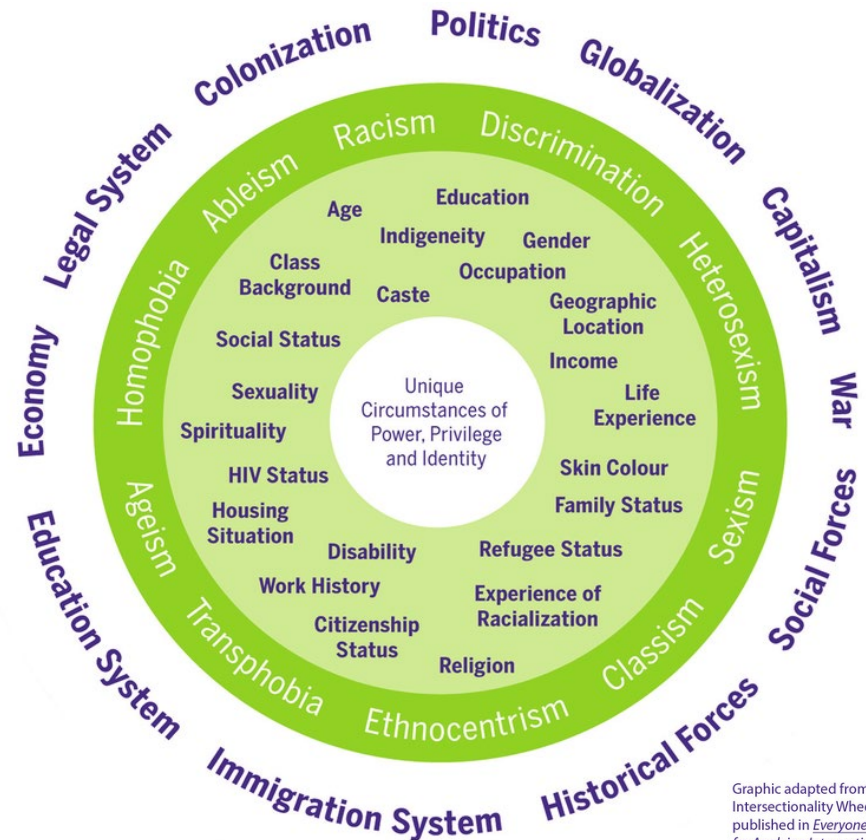
**“If you don’t have a lens that’s been trained to look at how **various forms of discrimination come together**, you’re unlikely to develop a set of policies that will be as **inclusive** as they need to be.”**

- Kimberlé Crenshaw



# What is Intersectionality?

- A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is a framework designed to explore the **dynamics between identities** (race, class, gender, sexuality) and connected systems of oppression (patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism,).



# Intersectional Identities and Experience



## Share In The Chat or Unmute:

How does learning about **intersectionality** affect the way you understand **marginalization** experienced by men and boys of faith?

How does **faith, gender, and sexuality** impact the lived experience of men and boys?

# Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Individuals of Faith

- Rejection or condemnation from religious communities and leaders
- Internalized religious guilt or shame regarding LGBTQ+ identity
- Difficulty reconciling one's sexual orientation or gender identity with religious beliefs
- Lack of LGBTQ+-affirming religious resources or support groups
- Fear of losing community or support networks within religious communities if one's LGBTQ+ identity is disclosed
- Limited access to LGBTQ+-inclusive religious spaces or ceremonies (e.g., weddings, funerals)
- Religious teachings or doctrines that perpetuate stigma or discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals

# LGBTQ+ TERMS



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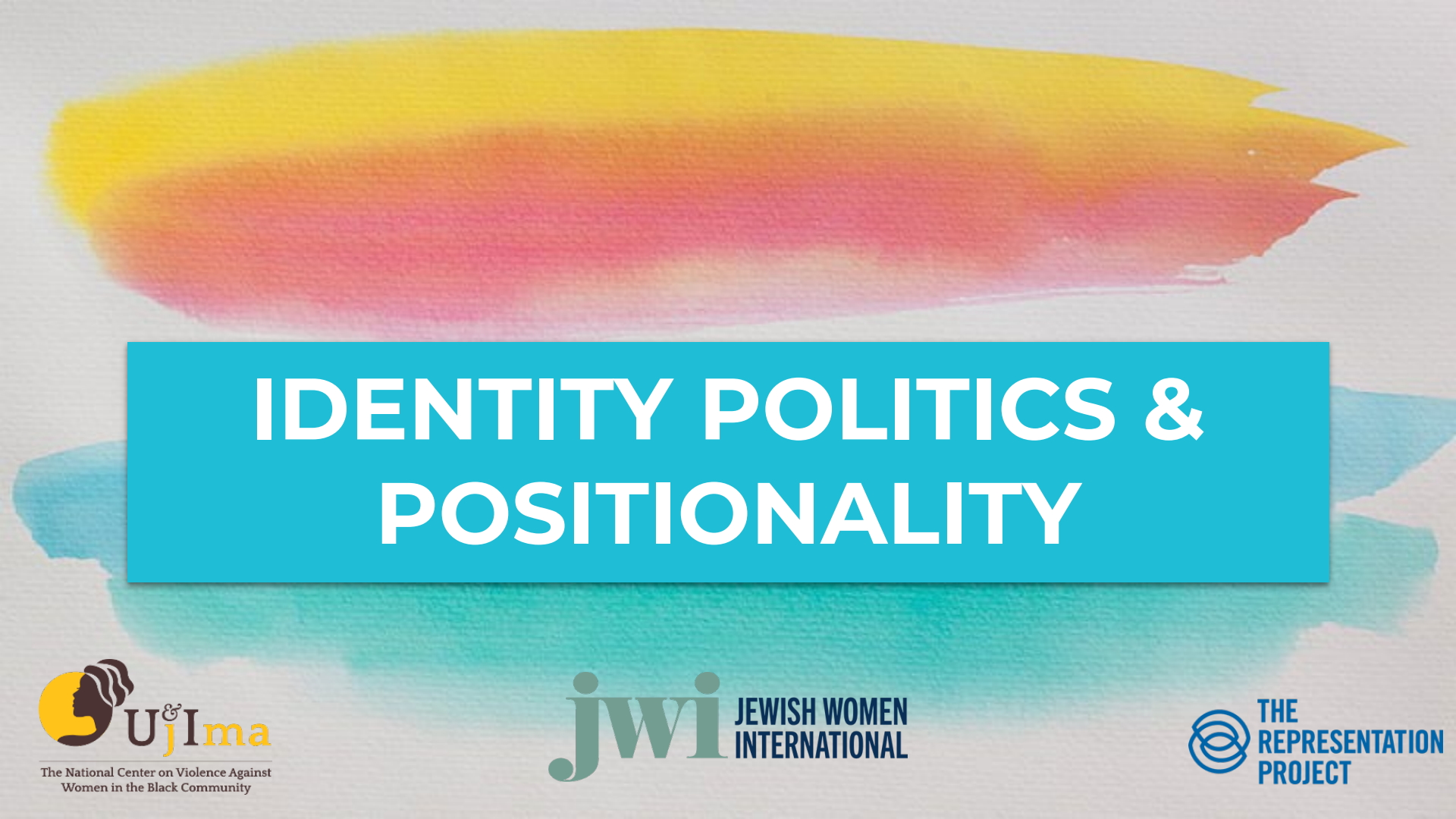


# Terms

- **LGBTQ:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Who you're attracted to romantically or sexually.
- **Gender Identity:** How you feel and identify in terms of gender.
- **Gay:** A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Also refers to a man who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other men.
- **Lesbian:** A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.
- **Bisexual:** Attracted to more than one gender.
- **Pansexual:** Attracted to people regardless of gender.
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the sex they were assigned at birth or does not conform to gender stereotypes.

# Terms

- **Nonbinary:** Gender identity outside of male or female binary.
- **Queer:** Umbrella term for LGBTQ+ identities. It can refer to people who don't conform to mainstream cultural norms around gender and/or sexuality. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ community (especially within communities of color).
- **Homophobia:** Bias against LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Transphobia:** Bias against transgender individuals.
- **Heteronormativity:** Assumption heterosexuality is the norm.
- **Heterosexism:** Discrimination against non-heterosexual individuals.



# IDENTITY POLITICS & POSITIONALITY

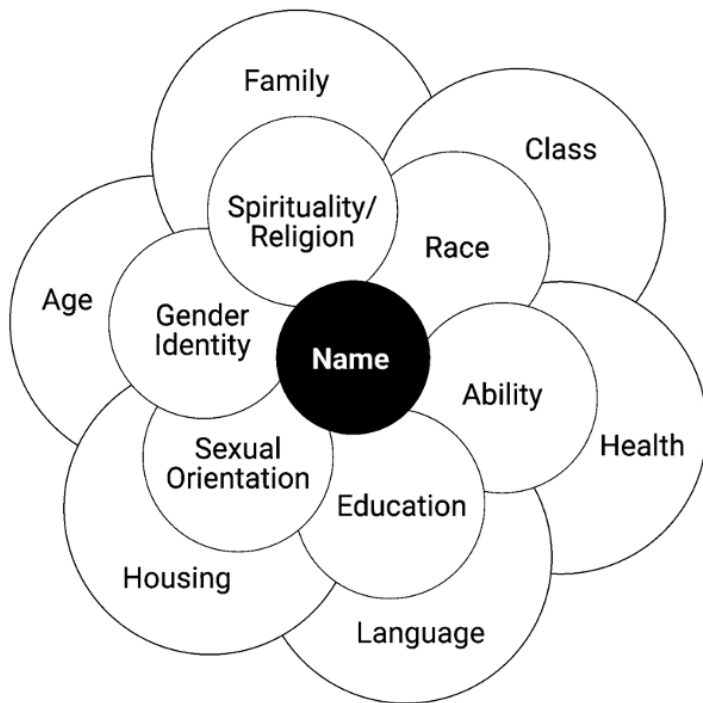


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# Power Mapping Exercise



The Power Flower is a visual exercise designed to help us reflect on the identities we hold and how it connects to power and privilege.

Fill in your own flower, identifying different aspects of your own identity in a number of categories.

# NAVIGATING/EXPRESSING/ LIVING LGBTQ+ IDENTITY IN FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES



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# Coming Out

Coming out is when a person first tells someone/others about their orientation and/or gender identity.

- **Every Coming Out Experience is Unique:** Each coming out journey is different due to various factors like culture, religion, personal circumstances and identities.
- **Coming Out is a Process, Not a One-Time Event:** Coming out is not a single moment but rather an ongoing process that may involve multiple disclosures to different people over time.
- **It's Not Just About Disclosure:** Coming out involves more than just disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity. It can also involve a process of self-acceptance, identity exploration, and finding a sense of belonging within LGBTQ+ communities and faith communities.
- **Not Everyone Experiences a Coming Out Moment:** Some individuals may never come out due to fear of lack of acceptance within their faith community or safety concerns, especially in environments where discrimination, harassment, or violence is prevalent, while others are involuntarily outed.





Clip from JWI's Documentary "As A Jewish Man"





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# Video Debrief

- What insights did you gain from watching these videos and hearing the **fears LGBTQ+ men of faith had** about **coming out** and how their loved ones or faith communities would react?
- What did you learn about the **impact of how people reacted to LGBTQ+ men of faith coming out**? How can your organization or program **create a supportive and affirming environment** for LGBTQ+ men of faith who are considering coming out?

# Homophobia in Faith Spaces





# Faith & Homophobia

How can religion be used as a “cover or conduit for hate” of LGBTQ+ people like Pastor Mike of First Corinthian Baptist Church shares?

How can religion also be a conduit of love, acceptance, and inclusivity?



# POWER DYNAMICS IMPACTING LGBTQ+ PEOPLE OF FAITH



**“Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups.”**

-Patricia Hill Collins

# Understanding Power and Privilege

- **What is Power?** The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.
- **What is Privilege?** It is a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group. Privilege can be both earned and unearned.

**Remember:** Although we go into gender-based violence work with the best of intentions, we still operate from a place of privilege and power when working with survivors. We are still operating within a world that

**You cannot exert power and expect to empower.**

# Understanding the Intersection of Power, Privilege, and Homophobia

- **Structural Power Dynamics:** Society's power structures favor some groups over others, perpetuating homophobia. Heterosexual individuals hold societal power, while LGBTQ+ individuals face discrimination.
- **Cultural and Religious Norms and Values:** Many cultures and faiths uphold heteronormative beliefs, considering heterosexuality the norm and homosexuality abnormal or a sin. Those who conform to these norms hold social power, reinforcing homophobia.
- **Intersectionality:** LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those from marginalized racial or ethnic groups, face compounded discrimination.

# Understanding the Intersection of Power, Privilege, and Homophobia

- **Systemic Oppression:** Systemic structures and institutions uphold heterosexist norms, discriminating against LGBTQ+ individuals. This systemic oppression reinforces privilege for those who conform to heteronormativity.
- **Impact on LGBTQ+ Communities:** Homophobia extends beyond personal experiences, affecting LGBTQ+ communities' access to rights, healthcare, employment, and safety.



# Extra Barriers LGBTQ+ Survivors May Face

## **Institutional Biases and Legal Challenges:**

- Lack of representation of LGBTQ+ men & boys of faith
- Lack of resources that are faith or culturally relevant
- Fear of people correlating abuse with LGBTQ+ or faith identity
- Barriers to legal recourse as legal systems may not adequately protect LGBTQ+ people/survivors
- Employment and housing discrimination
- Implicit bias within service provision
- Challenges in accessing shelters or support services due to LGBTQ+ identity especially for transgender people

# Extra Barriers LGBTQ+ Survivors May Face

## **Cultural and Social Challenges:**

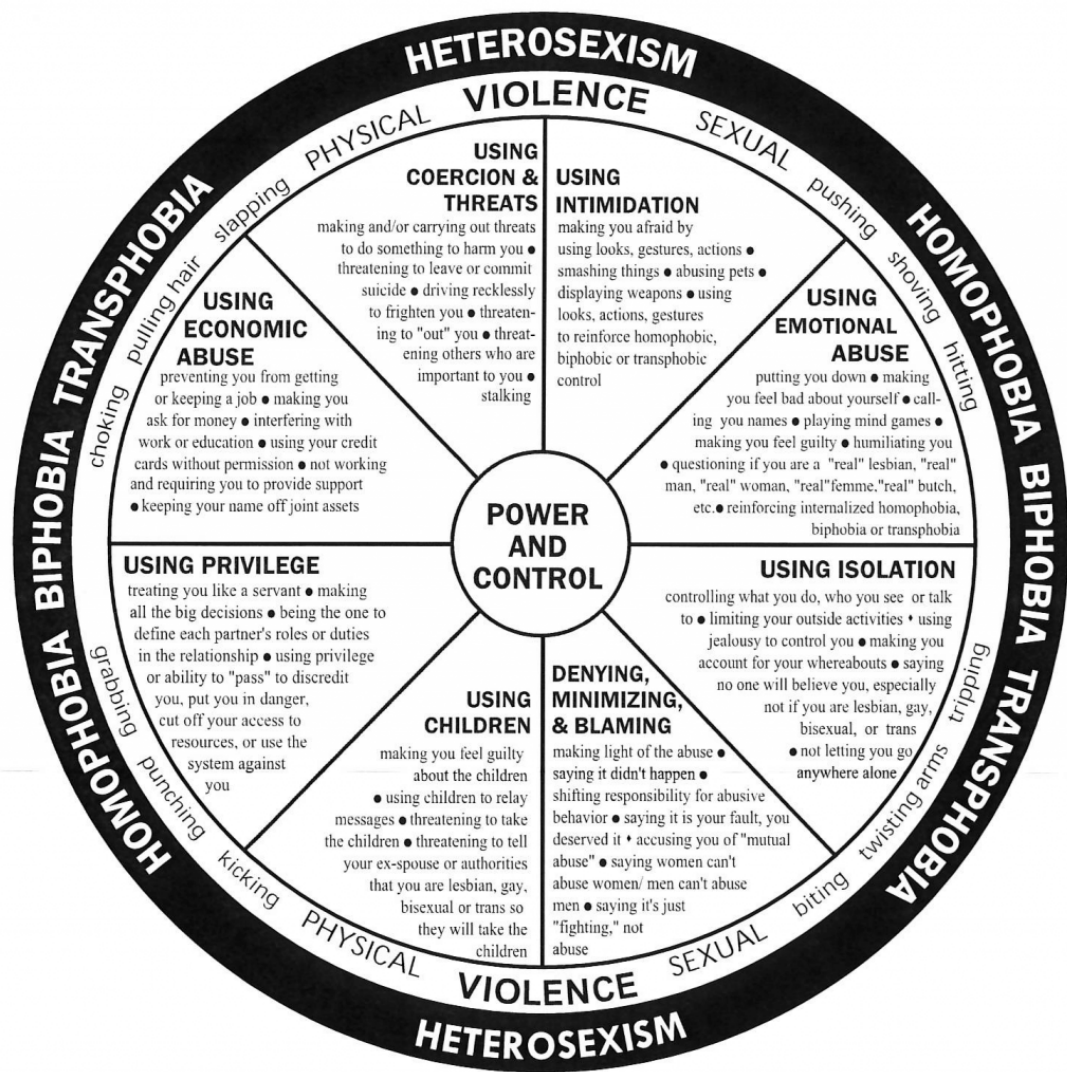
- Cultural Stigma & Violence
- The pressure of representing the LGBTQ+ faith community
- Lack of family support
- Minimizing and acceptance of violence by the community
- Stereotyping

## **Healthcare and Financial Barriers:**

- Increased vulnerabilities
- Reliance on partner's health insurance for gender-affirming care
- Police/service providers believe abuse is mutual



# Power and Control Within LGBTQ+ Relationships



# Identity Abuse

**The use of one's identity to demean, manipulate or control one's partner.**

- Examples:
  - Questioning whether partner is a “real” lesbian, man, woman, etc
  - Using negative stereotypes (ex: accusing partner of cheating or being likely to cheat because they are bisexual)
  - Making partner feel bad about their gender expression
  - Ridiculing partner's identity
  - Normalizing violence in LGBTQ relationships (Ex: “All guys fight”)
  - Using partner's identity in order to manipulate them into thinking no one else will love them

# Unique Dynamics of Dating Abuse in LGBTQ+ Relationships

- **Threats of Outing:** Perpetrators may threaten to reveal the victim's LGBTQ+ identity without consent, exploiting societal stigma to exert control.
- **Identity Denial:** Perpetrators undermine the victim's LGBTQ+ identity, dismissing their experiences and erasing their sense of self.
- **Misgendering and Deadnaming:** Perpetrators intentionally use incorrect gender pronouns or old names, disregarding the victim's gender identity and causing harm.
- **Control of LGBTQ+ Spaces:** Perpetrators restrict the victim's access to LGBTQ+ communities or same-gender friendships, isolating them from support networks.
- **Exploiting Internalized Stigma:** Perpetrators manipulate the victim's internalized homophobia or transphobia for control.

# Unique Dynamics of Dating Abuse in LGBTQ+ Relationships

- **Weaponizing HIV Status or PrEP Use:** Perpetrators use the victim's HIV status or PrEP use as a tool for coercion or manipulation.
- **Cultural or Religious Rejection:** Victims may face threats of rejection from cultural or religious communities due to their LGBTQ+ relationship.
- **Limiting Access to Gender Affirming Care:** Perpetrators may controlling what gender affirming procedures their partner can/can't or should/shouldn't have.
- **Using LGBTQ+ Relationship Experience to Justify Abuse:** Perpetrators may justify abusive behavior by claiming superiority or expertise in LGBTQ+ relationships, using their perceived knowledge to manipulate or control their partner.
- **Limited Access to Support:** Victims may struggle to access LGBTQ+ affirming resources, further isolating them in abusive situations.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR PREVENTION & LGBTQ+ SURVIVOR SUPPORT

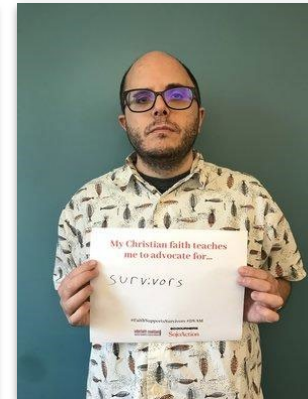
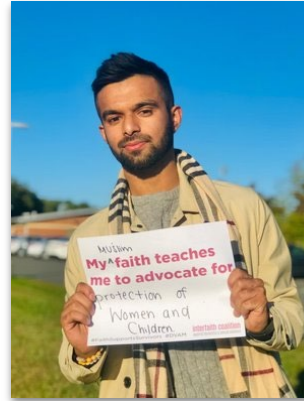


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# Campaigns

- Make campaigns customizable for people to share about their unique identities and faiths.
- Ask religious leaders and community leaders to participate.
- Keep messaging simple and accessible.



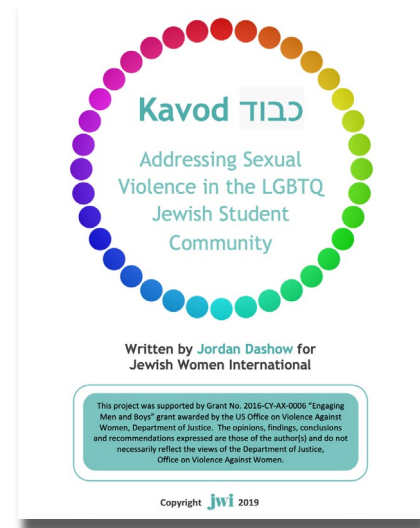
Images from JWI's "[My faith teaches me to advocate for...](#)" DVAM 2019 campaign through the Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

# Campaigns

- Ask for ideas and input from LGBTQ+ men and boys of faith.
- Try to keep messaging positive, showcasing what we want to see. For example, showcasing allyship or healthy LGBTQ+ relationships within faith communities.
- Create your own images or videos if your unable to find stock content that reflects the communities you serve or aim to reach.
- Use campaigns to build bridges, cultivate connections, and engage new leaders.

# Curriculum + Prevention Efforts

- Speak to LGBTQ+ men and boys of faith and LGBTQ+ survivors prior to grant proposal submissions to determine what what are the most pressing issues and what resources are needed.
- Hire and collaborate with LGBTQ+ people of faith and LGBTQ+ survivors of faith to develop resources for their community. Their deep understanding and lived experience helps to create impactful, authentic, and culturally competent programs.
- Don't be afraid to create programs for specific faiths addressing specific forms of violence. There is great value and need for curriculum that is focused and community specific.





# Curriculum + Prevention Efforts

- Hire LGBTQ+ people of faith and LGBTQ+ survivors of faith to facilitate programs.
- Lift up the values and beliefs of the community that align with inclusion, respect, and violence prevention.
- Include faith specific texts, quotes, songs, language, prayers, rituals, and media.
- Try to customize programming and images to align with the religious norms of your audience.
  - Example: A consent activity for an Orthodox Jewish community was changed to not include scenarios with premarital sexual physical contact to align with community/religious norms.

# Curriculum + Prevention Efforts

- Create programs that can be incorporated into religious holidays or cultural events.
- Make events open to LGBTQ+ and allies so attendance does not out individuals as LGBTQ+.
- Consider how patriarchy and religion intersect when creating prevention programming for men and boys of faith.
- Include media that centers the stories and experiences of LGBTQ+ men and boys of faith and LGBTQ+ survivors of faith.
- Include pronouns in your email signature and with introductions during prevention programs.

# Centering Lived Experiences

- You cannot accurately do this work without centering the experiences and voices of LGBTQ+ survivors, both in community and within faith institutions.
- To devalue LGBTQ+ survivor experiences in any form, especially when doing gender-based violence work means causing another layer of harm, trauma, and is a reassertion of power dynamics that exist on a societal level.

## **We must ask ourselves:**

- Who benefits when certain voices are silenced?
- Can you really serve a community without understanding the realities of that community?

# Best Practices when working with LGBTQ+ survivors of faith

- **Believe and Validate Their Experiences:** Many LGBTQ+ individuals of faith face skepticism or disbelief when disclosing. It's crucial to believe survivors and validate their experiences without judgment.
- **Be Mindful of Language:** Pay attention to the language that you are using. Make sure you ask about pronouns and do not assume gender, sexual identity, or faith identity.
- **Act With Compassion:** Show Empathy! Tone matters here too!
- **Prioritize Consent:** Informed consent is vital.
- **Community Connections:** Build bridges with the community and trusted individuals in the community.
- **Safety Planning:** Address unique safety concerns, including fears of outing, in safety plans for LGBTQ+ survivors of faith

# Best Practices when working with LGBTQ+ survivors of faith

- **Understand Unique Barriers to Reporting:** LGBTQ+ survivors of faith may face barriers to reporting abuse, such as fear of discrimination, faith community retaliation or shunning, lack of understanding from law enforcement or service providers, and concerns about outing themselves. Respect their decisions regarding reporting.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about LGBTQ+ identities, faith identities, terminology, and specific community issues. Learn how DV, SA, stalking and trafficking affect the LGBTQ+ faith community.
- **Ask Questions:** Move past assumptions and ask meaningful questions.
- **Affirming Support Services:** Ensure support services are LGBTQ+ affirming, faith affirming, and culturally nuanced.
- **Advocate for Inclusion:** Advocate for policies and practices that support LGBTQ+ survivors or faith. Train staff on LGBTQ+ cultural competency and faith competency.
- **Self-Care:** Take care of yourself!

# Ways to be an Ally to LGBTQ+ Men & Boys of Faith

- **Educate Yourself:** Take the time to learn about the experiences, struggles, and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals within religious contexts.
- **Listen and Amplify Their Voices:** Provide a platform for LGBTQ+ men and boys of faith to share their stories and experiences.
- **Respect Religious Beliefs:** Recognize that LGBTQ+ individuals can have diverse religious beliefs and spiritual practices. Respect their faith traditions and support their spiritual journey.



# Ways to be an Ally to LGBTQ+ Men & Boys of Faith

- **Challenge Discrimination and Prejudice:** Speak up against homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination within religious spaces. Challenge harmful stereotypes and misconceptions about LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Support LGBTQ+ Rights:** Advocate for LGBTQ+ rights within both religious communities and society at large.
- **Use Inclusive Language:** Use inclusive language that respects all gender identities



# Resources For Serving & Supporting LGBTQ+ Survivors

## **National LGBTQ Institute on IPV**

- The Institute offers state-of-the-art training and technical assistance to provide culturally relevant, survivor-centered LGBTQ IPV intervention and prevention services
- <https://lgbtqipvoinstitute.org/>

## **FORGE (For Ourselves: Reworking Gender Expression)**

- FORGE reduces the impact of trauma on trans/non-binary survivors and communities by empowering service providers, advocating for systems reform, and connecting survivors to healing possibilities.
- <https://forge-forward.org/>

## **The Northwest Network**

- Northwest Network has served thousands of queer & trans survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, domestic violence, hate violence, stalking and harassment. They support queer & trans survivors in reconnecting to their self-determination through advocacy-based counseling and community education.
- <https://www.nwnetwork.org/>

## **New York City Anti-Violence Project**

- AVP is the nation's largest organization supporting survivors of violence who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer, or live with HIV.
- <https://avp.org/>

## **LGBT National Hotline**

- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) National Help Center provides vital peer support, community connections, and resource information through helplines and online chatrooms.
- <https://lgbthotline.org/>

## **VAWnet's Supporting LGBTQ Survivors Resource Collection**

- Contains resources for improving services for LGBTQ survivors. Included in this section are resources for advocates, organizations, community members, and policymakers.
- <https://vawnet.org/sc/improving-services-lgbtq-individuals>



# Faith Focused Resources

## Human Rights Campaign Faith Resources

- The resources intended to help LGBTQ+ people, their families, friends and allies, find powerful and transformative spaces to learn more about the intersection of their faith and LGBTQ+ issues.
- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-resources>

## PFLAG

- Faith In Our Families Publication: <https://pflag.org/resource/faith-in-our-families/>
  - Discovering that a loved one is LGBTQ+ can pose new questions about your faith and may prompt you to re-evaluate beliefs that you previously took for granted. By using personal experiences from families of faith as well as faith leaders from a broad variety of traditions, this publication, updated in 2021, provides examples for reconciling your faith with the knowledge that a loved one is LGBTQ+, and broad resources to help you on the path.
- PFLAG National Faith Resources: <https://pflag.org/resource/pflag-national-faith-resources/>

## Family Acceptance Project

- A research-based, culturally grounded approach to help ethnically, racially and religiously diverse families learn to support their LGBTQ children.
- Faith-Based Resources: <https://lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org/faith-based-resources/>
  - Resources provide lists of affirming congregations across the U.S., and others provide access to fellowship, religious services, educational resources and spiritual guidance.

## Transfaith

- Trans Faith is a national non-profit led by transgender people working to support transgender spiritual/cultural workers and their leadership in community.
- <https://www.transfaith.info/>

## Strong Family Alliance

- Strong Family Alliance is a non-profit organization focused on supporting parents of children in the LGBTQ+ community.
- Faith-Based Organizations List: <https://www.strongfamilyalliance.org/hopeful-voices/faith-based-organizations/>

## Queer Theology Podcast

- The longest running podcast for and by LGBTQ Christians, people of faith and spiritual seekers.
- <https://www.queertheology.com/>

# CLOSING



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# Reflection

- Closing Question: How will you apply what you learned to your work?  
How can you better serve LGBTQ+ men and boys of faith in your community?



# Questions



# THANK YOU!

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