the way services for abuse victims are advertised also sends a pretty clear message, adding that there aren't many men's hot lines.

"What does it mean when there are only women's crisis lines or women's shelters?" Cook asks. "In recent years, more and more shelters both nationally and locally extended their services to lesbians.... But gay and straight men are often left out in the cold."

Back in the late '90s while trying to understand his situation, Rubick began making contact, especially through his Web page, with people whose abuse experiences differed from the dominant model. Eventually his site grew into an nonprofit organization. Initially focused on heterosexual male victims of violence, SAFE soon extended its outreach to the queer community.

Rubick emphasizes that the organization does not minimize violence against women. Streitfeld says SAFE supports helping everyone escape domestic violence. Their message is a simple one: acknowledging that anyone can be the victim of domestic violence—including gay men, lesbians and straight men—and aiming to provide information about and develop recognition of the problem.

In fact, in the view of SAFE's directors, its approach has been not to minimize such violence against women but to take a complementary approach—that is, to examine and educate the public and treatment professionals about underserved populations such as straight men who are "hidden" victims and queers who are "silent" victims.

What are some of SAFE's messages about domestic violence in the sexual minorities community? Cook talks about special issues unique to nonstraights. He notes that gay men often take an approach similar to heterosexual men: "I can cope." "Men don't tell."

Child rearing can be a huge issue in the queer community, especially with lesbian couples, where one partner might be a biological or adoptive parent who can threaten to use her legal or biological status to deny access to kids in the relationship or psychologically blackmail them to obtain greater power and control.

Outing is another concern because of legal disenfranchisement and social stigma. Closeted partners might be threatened by "out" lovers or those with little to lose with exposure to their families and employers, jeopardizing their positions in their communities.

Lack of social service resources, especially outside large cities with significant queer communities and outreach services, and prevailing heterosexist attitudes make many reluctant to seek out treatment or legal recourse to protect themselves physically, emotionally, even sexually. How does a woman explain that her female partner is screaming at her and beating her on a daily basis to a churchgoing, heterosexual matron in a small town that has not a single community-identified gay resource?

Sexual abuse in unconventional forms of sexual expression—for example, fantasy, bondage and S/M games—that might be more prevalent in some quarters of the queer community might be rationalized by the abuser as being OK when they, in fact, are causing significant mental or even physical damage to his or her partner.

> *"In recent years, more and more shelters both nationally and locally extended their services to lesbians.... But gay and straight men are often left out in the cold."*
>
> —Phil Cook

SAFE points out that the signs of domestic violence are the same regardless of one's gender identity, orientation or sexual practices. Being forced to "walk on eggshells," having a partner who makes you feel constantly unloved and inadequate, verbal or physical intimidation, use of alcohol or drugs to manipulate you, destroying or threatening to destroy your property, and actual violence are all indications of abuse.

If your partner violates your personal boundaries on a consistent basis, exhibits chronic jealousy and attempts to control your activities, uses sexual coercion and violence, or makes important decisions and spends your money without your consent, you need to recognize these signs and take action. You probably should seek help or, if change is not possible, get out before the control tactics and potential for violence escalate. JO

For more information about STOP ABUSE FOR EVERYONE *visit www.safe4all.org.*

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A few other queer-friendly domestic violence services are available in the Pacific Northwest:

- **Bradley-Angle House:** Provides emergency shelter for female-identified domestic violence survivors; a support group for women battered by women; and individual advocacy for queer youth of all genders who have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Free and confidential. 503-232-7805 or www.bradleyangle.org.
- **Clackamas Women's Services:** Offers shelter, support and resource referral to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Lesbian, bi and trans friendly. TTD, relay calls and collect calls accepted. 503-654-2288 or www.clackamaswomensservices.org.
- **Volunteers of America Oregon's Family Center Outreach Office:** Offers support groups and drop-in services to women and children who are survivors of domestic violence. Families only. 503-771-5503 or www.voaor.org/service/children.html.
- **Portland Women's Crisis Line:** Offers services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, including a 24-hour crisis hot line with interpretation services for non-English speakers; advocacy for those filing restraining orders in Multnomah County; support groups for survivors of violence, rape, sexual assault and childhood abuse. Free and confidential. 503-235-5333, 888-235-5333 or www.pwcl.org.
- **Survivor Project:** Addresses the needs of intersex and trans survivors of domestic and sexual violence through caring action, education and expanding access to resources. 503-288-3191 or www.survivorproject.org.
- **The Northwest Network:** Sponsors support groups, safety planning, individual counseling, legal advocacy and community organizing for folks of all genders. Kink-friendly, with a site explaining the difference between S/M and abuse. 206-568-7777 or www.nwnetwork.org.

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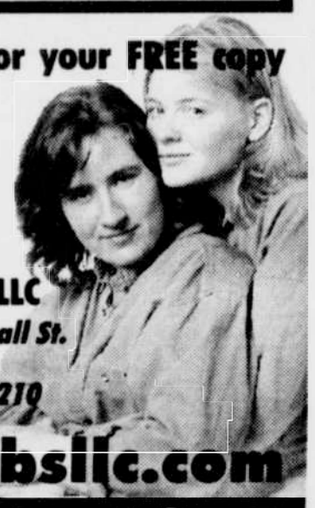

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