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Researching Intimate Partner Violence Across Gender and Sexuality

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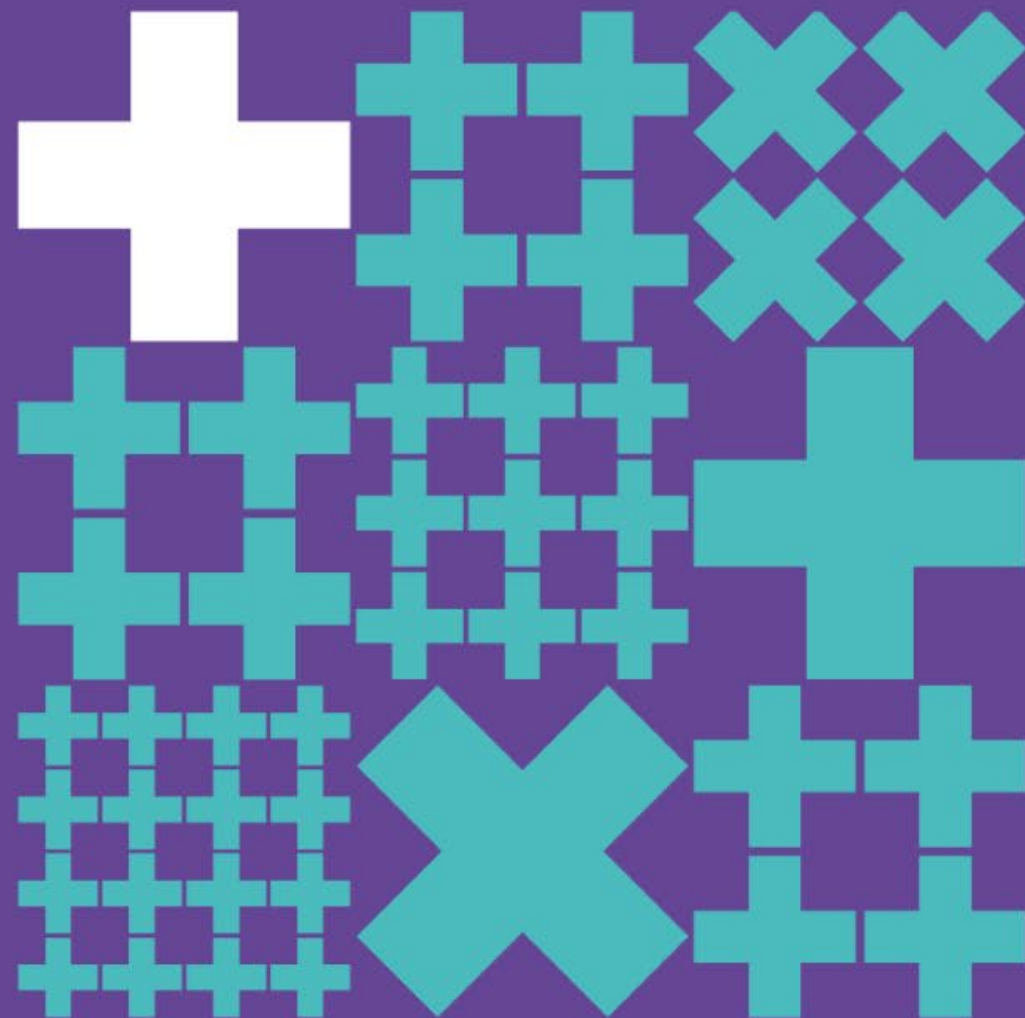
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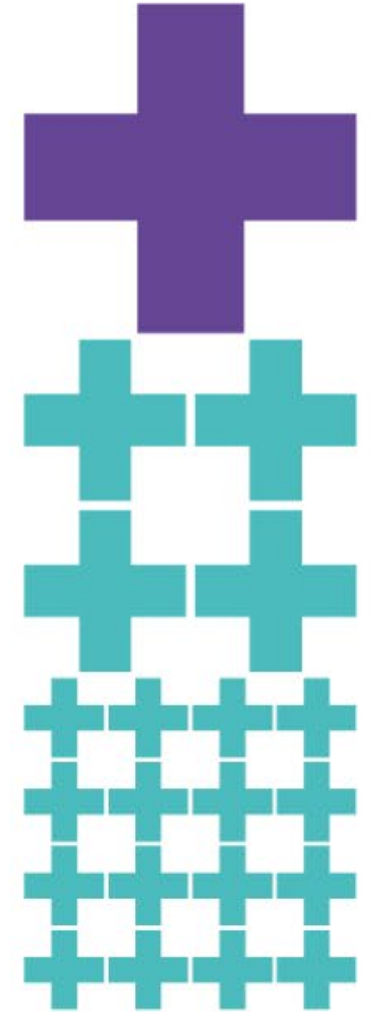
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Aims of the Session

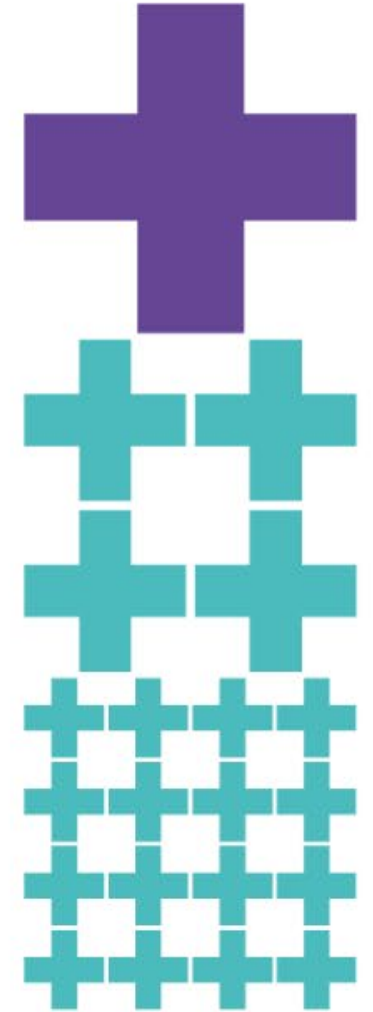
- Overview of the research project
- Discuss findings of studies which have examined intimate partner violence survivors who are LGBTQ+
- Future directions



My PhD

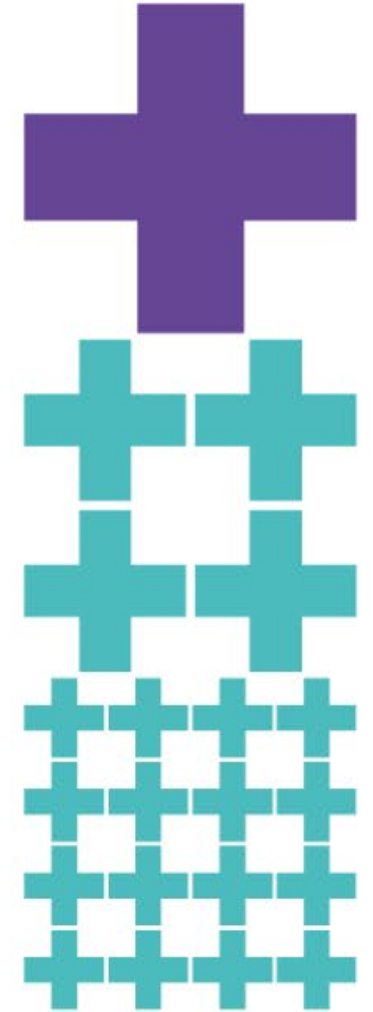
Aims to investigate the experiences of IPV survivors across gender and sexuality. Four stages are:

- **Study One:** Systematic literature review of what literature is out there on IPV victimisation
- **Study Two:** Qualitative study looking in-depth at the experiences of survivors
- **Study Three:** Mixed methods survey study on conflict and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships
- **Study Four:** Deliberative Inquiry involving support services and victims, to find a solution to the current issues around support



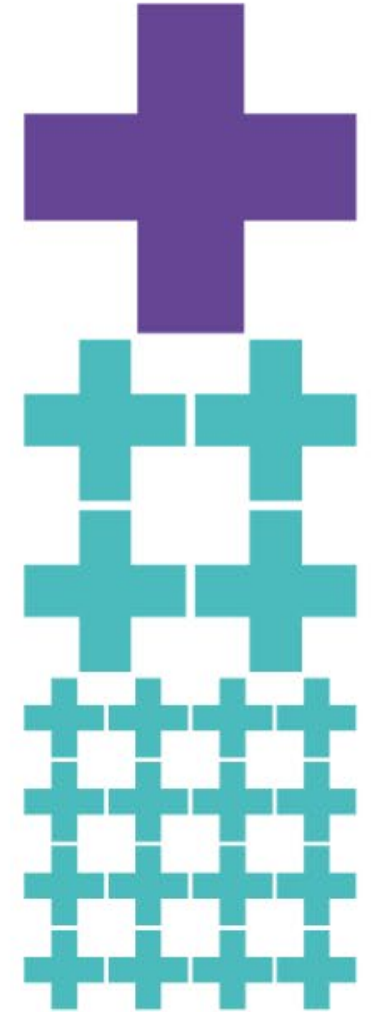
Background

- Victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) can experience multiple types of abuse: physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and financial (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017)
- Traditionally IPV has been thought to only occur within the framework of a male perpetrator and a female victim (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson & Daly, 1992)
- As research moves forward it is now acknowledged that IPV happens outside of this framework



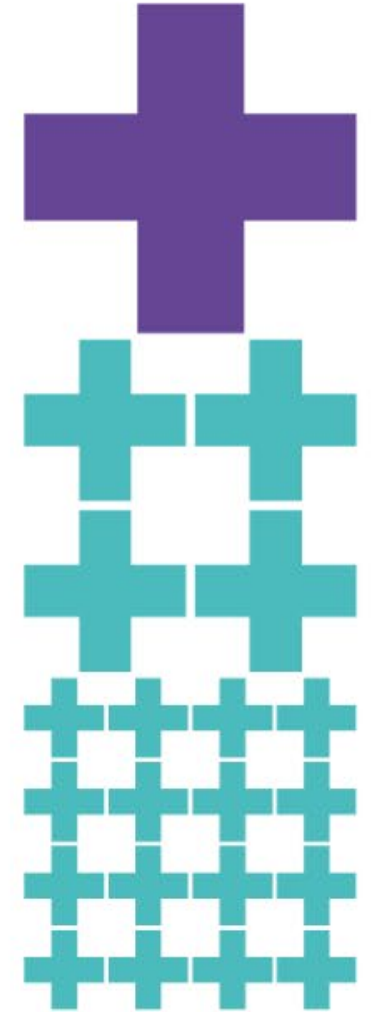
Background

- Evidence has been found for:
 - Women perpetrating IPV in opposite-sex relationships (e.g. Carney et al., 2007)
 - IPV within same-sex relationships (e.g. Carvalho et al., 2011)
 - IPV in relationships where the victim is transgender (e.g. The Scottish Trans Alliance, 2010).
- The LGBTQ+ community is severely underrepresented in IPV research (Morin, 2014)



Prevalence Rates in LGBTQ+ Relationships

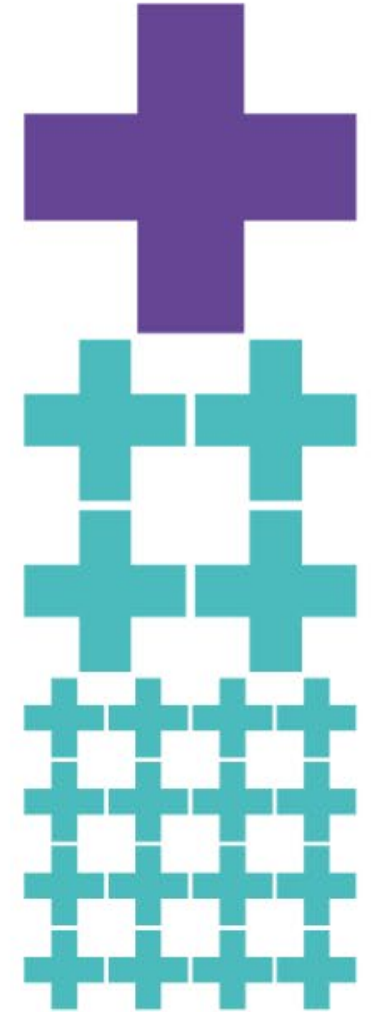
- Can range from 25% and 50% in gay and lesbian relationships (Carvalho et al., 2011)
- Lifetime prevalence of IPV victimisation for transgender people has been found to be between 31.3% and 50% (Brown & Herman, 2015)
- Very few statistics about any sexual and gender minority groups outside of L, G and T (e.g. bisexual; tend to be amalgamated into “LGBT” studies)
- The statistics indicate that IPV is just as common if not more so within LGBTQ+ relationships, and yet the cases of IPV within these relationships are under-reported



Systematic Literature Review

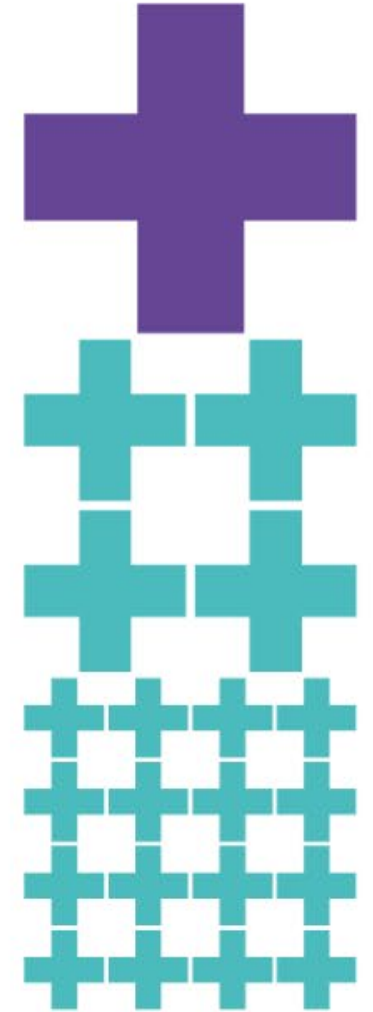
[Laskey, P., Bates, E. A. & Taylor, J. C. \(2019\). A Systematic Literature Review of Intimate Partner Violence Victimization: An Inclusive Review Across Gender and Sexuality. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 47, 1-11 doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2019.02.014](#)

- Reviewed 100 articles on IPV victimisation (2006-2016)
- The findings of the review revealed significant gaps in the current literature on IPV victims:
 - Majority of articles reviewed were conducted with female victims in opposite-sex relationships (70%)
 - When same-sex relationships are included in sample, they seem to be a token gesture
 - Only transgender specific paper was about transgender perpetrators
 - T seem to be “lumped together” with LGB – can’t see unique experiences for anyone



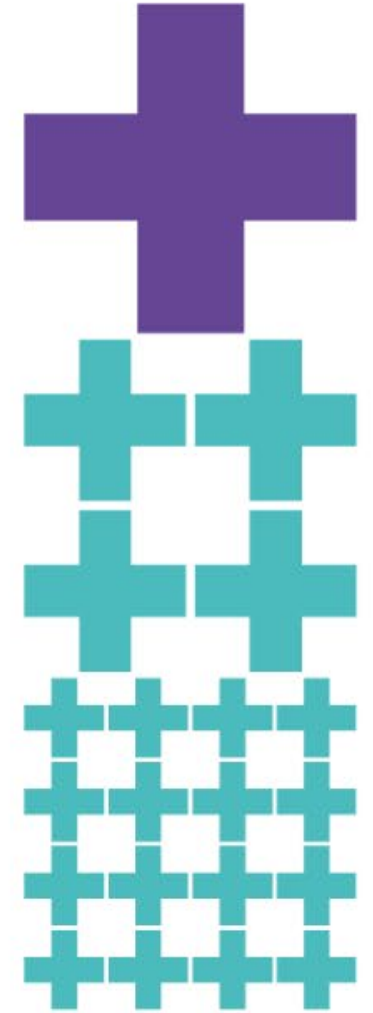
Systematic Literature Review

Sample	Number of articles	% of articles
Women in opposite sex relationships only	70	70%
Men in opposite sex relationships only	4	4%
Opposite sex couples only	3	3%
Women and men in opposite sex relationships	12	12%
Women and men in both opposite and same sex relationships	2	2%
LGBTQ+	3	3%
Sexual minority women and men	1	1%
Sexual minority women only	2	2%
Sexual minority men only	3	3%



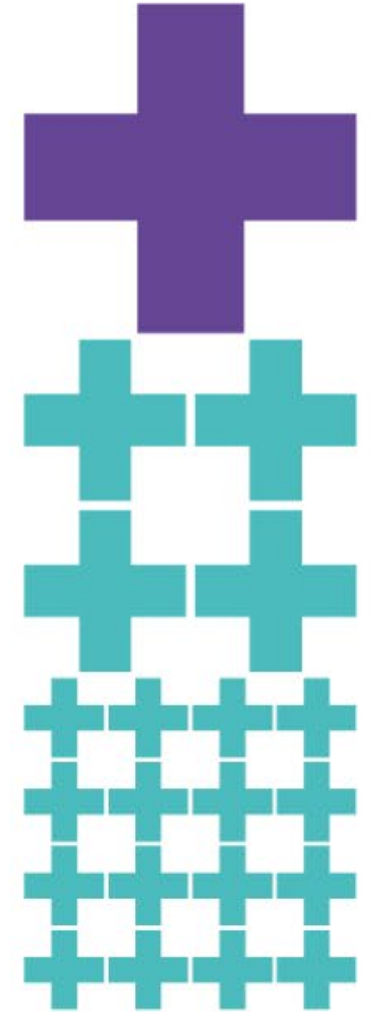
Characteristics of Abuse in LGBTQ+ Relationships

- People in LGBTQ+ relationships can experience the same types of abuse as those in non-LGBTQ+ relationships, but some experiences are unique to the LGBTQ+ community
- A commonly used abuse tactic in LGBTQ+ relationships is “outing” (e.g. Brown, 2011; Halpern et al., 2004)
- Abuse in LGBTQ+ relationships tends to target the sexual orientation or gender identity of the victim



Interview-Based Study

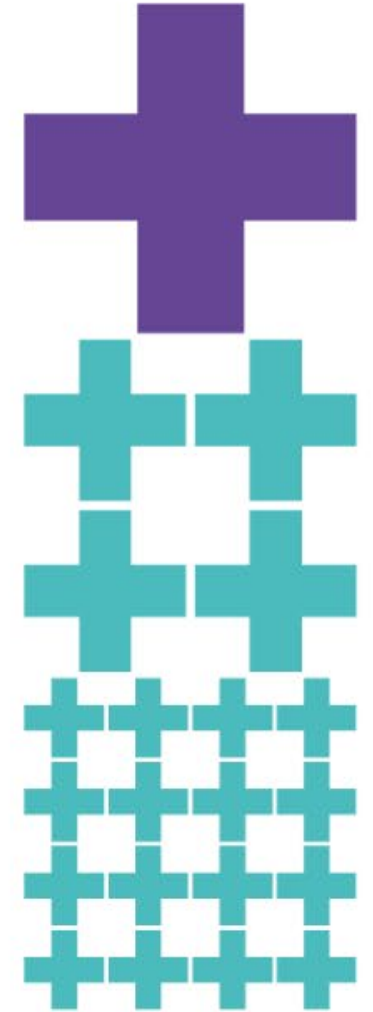
- Semi-structured interviews with people who have experienced IPV victimisation in a previous relationship
 - Over 18
 - Live in UK
 - Relationship must have ended at least 6 months ago – for their safety, and mine
- Interviewed 15 participants face-to-face
- 6 participated through an anonymous online survey/interview
- 9 out of 21 were LGBTQ+
- Analysis:
 - Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) –in-depth exploration of the themes across participants, but also unique experiences



Preliminary Findings

LGBTQ+ survivors experienced abuse that other survivor groups experienced:

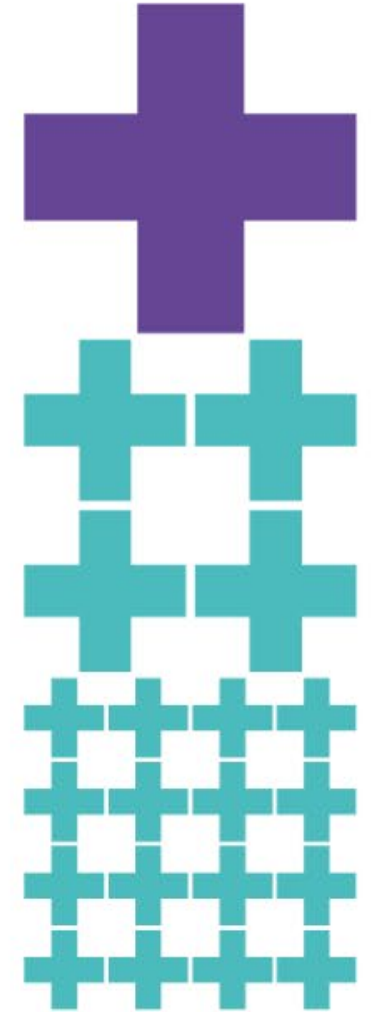
- “I was trying to leave the room because I was so upset and she wouldn’t let me out of the room so she pushed me to the floor” (*Trans man in relationship with a woman*)
- “By the last 2 years I really didn’t know who I was anymore cos all I was doing was constantly trying to...make the relationship work, you know since she started seeing this other person” (*Woman in SS relationship*)
- “People who knew him thought he was wonderful, they didn't see the ugliness he showed in his relationship with me” (*Man in SS relationship*)



Preliminary Findings

LGBTQ+ survivors experienced abuse that other survivor groups experienced:

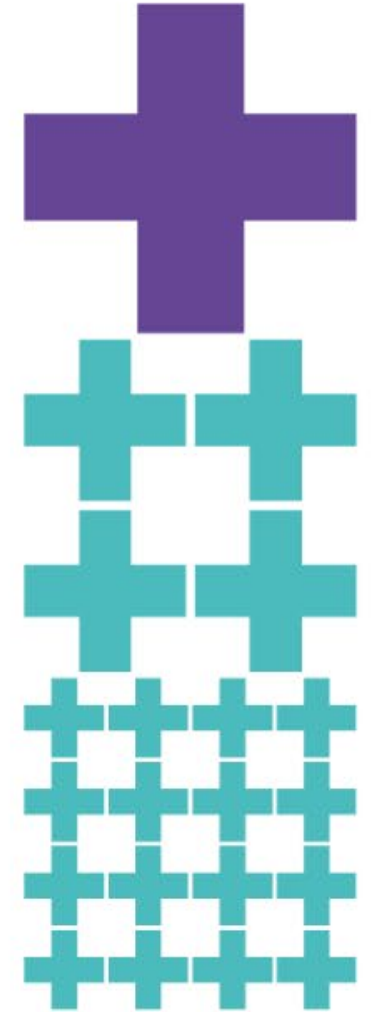
- “Do you know it wasn’t even arguments, she was very controlling, I was always walking on eggshells and I always felt that I had to do everything right, but at the same time I was never really sure what that right thing was” (*Woman in SS relationship*)
- “I was isolated from my family, I had limited resources to get my own place and friends weren't in a position to assist me” (*Man in SS relationship*)



Preliminary Findings

LGBTQ+ survivors also experienced unique types of abuse that other survivor groups tend not to:

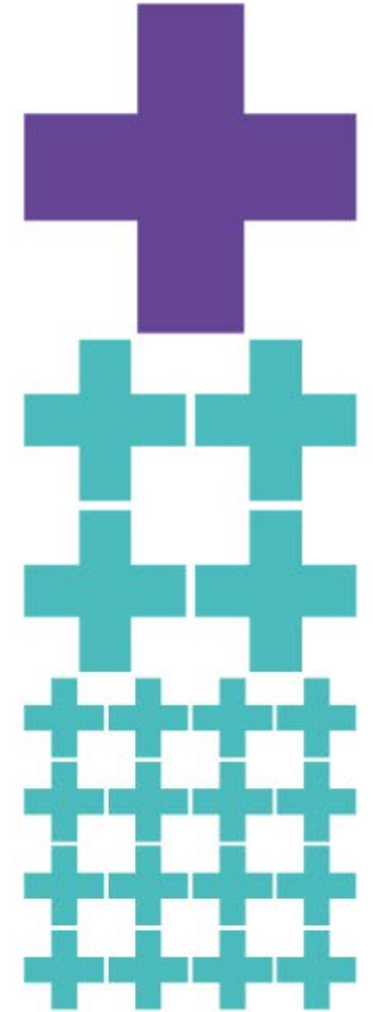
- “...I’d said to her...I think I might be trans and she just said to me but you’re not a man I married a woman you’ll never be a man...I’d try and tell her that I’m still the same person and she’d say things like...she’s a lesbian and she wants to be with a woman and stuff like that which was gutting cos after I left she ended up with a man...” (*Trans man in relationship with woman*)
- “You think of domestic violence and...it is something that you just think of as being heterosexual and a man doing it to a woman...when you say domestic violence that’s what the majority of people, me included, bring up” (*Woman in SS relationship*)
- “I kind of identified as bisexual when I went into the relationship and she made it very very clear that I wasn’t allowed to, that I was lesbian, because she was...my sexuality was completely denied and when I came out of it I kind of had a bit of an identity crisis” (*Woman in SS relationship*)



Preliminary Findings

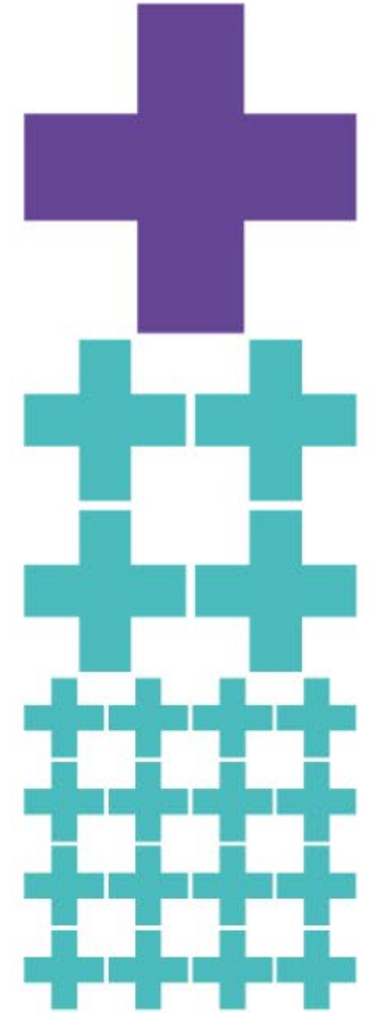
LGBTQ+ survivors also experienced unique types of abuse that other survivor groups tend not to:

- “I mistakenly thought that I could escape intimate partner abuse by having relationships with women rather than men - I learned from this relationship that women can be just as abusive...” (*Woman in SS relationship*)
- When she found out I was dressing, I was called a freak (*Trans woman in relationship with a woman*)
- My partner was HIV + and his previous long term partner had sadly died of the condition....the amount of time I was made to feel guilty and worthless due to his situation was ridiculous (*Man in SS relationship*)



Preliminary Findings

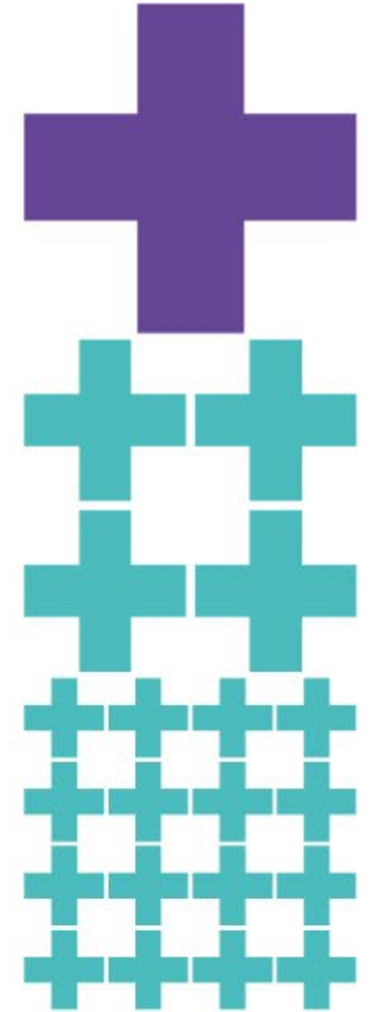
- Psychological abuse and controlling behaviours were more common than physical abuse
- The long-term effect of being a survivor of IPV was highlighted
- Perpetrators use the vulnerabilities of their partner – rather than gender or sexuality being a driver for abuse



Current Study

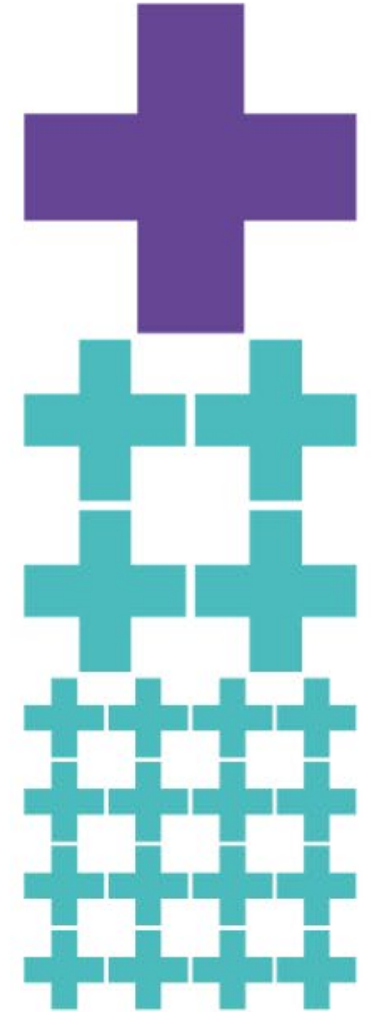
Mixed methods survey study on conflict and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships

- Measuring prevalence of different abusive behaviours across all victim/survivor groups
- Currently have 18 participants, 3 of which identify as LGBTQ+
- Issues with recruiting participants from the LGBTQ+ community across both studies
 - Any advice or insight greatly appreciated!



Future directions...

- Final PhD study:
 - Issue has been identified that there are barriers to accessing support for LGBTQ+ victims/survivors (Laskey & Bolam, 2019) and other victim/survivor groups
 - Deliberative inquiry will bring together support providers and victims/survivors to talk through how this issue could be resolved
 - The research project as a whole will hopefully highlight the experiences of LGBTQ+ victim/survivors of IPV, demonstrate that abuse can happen in any relationship regardless of gender or sexuality.

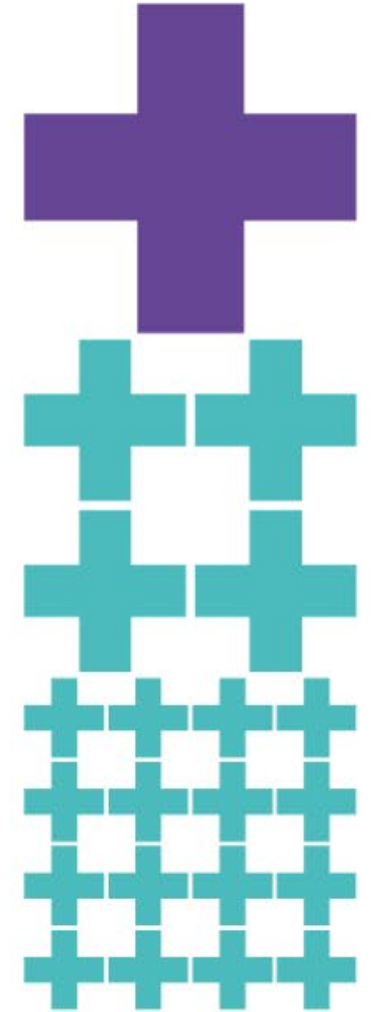


Questions?

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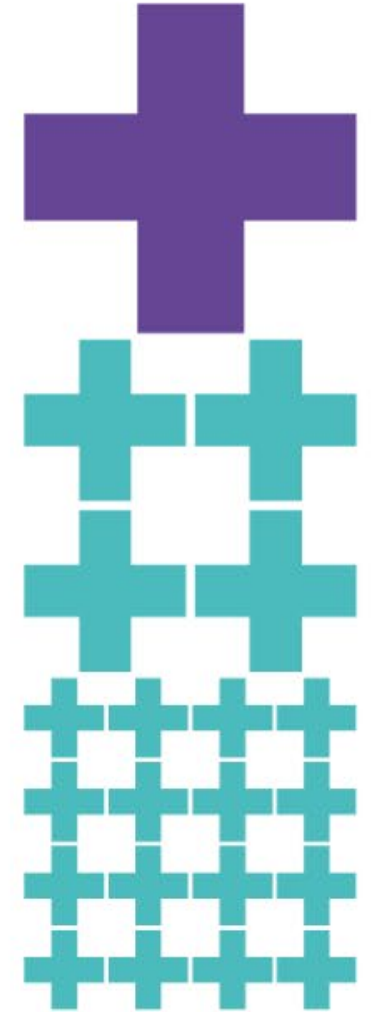
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