What resources are available for LGBT people who have been victims of sexual violence?

At HARVARD:
Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
340 Holyoke Center
1350 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA  02138
24-Hour Hotline: (617) 495-9100
24-hour assistance, including information and support for students who have experienced any kind of sexual assault or relationship violence, accompaniment for reporting or to medical care at UHS / Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital (for medical evidence collection), information and support for friends, blockmates, and partners of survivors. Also available: educational workshops on sexual violence and related topics. Workshops are facilitated by professionals and tailored to the specific needs and interests of the audience.

Community Resources:
Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project (GMDVP)
A grassroots, non-profit organization providing community education and direct services for clients. GMDVP offers shelter, guidance, and resources to allow gay, bisexual, and transgender men in crisis to remove themselves from violent situations and relationships.
gmdvp.org
PMB 131, 955 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139
Office: (617) 354-6056
Crisis Line: 1 (800) 832-1901

The Fenway Community Health Center
High quality medical and mental health care to Boston's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, and to those who live and work in the area. A nationally recognized leader in HIV care and research.
fenwayhealth.org
7 Haviland Street
Boston, MA 02115
617-267-0900
Toll-Free: (888) 242-0900

The Network/ La Red
Free services for battered lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender folks, including a Hotline, Safe Home program, Advocacy program, and Organizing/Outreach program.
thenetworklared.org
P.O. Box 6011 Boston, MA 02114
Office: (617) 695-0877
Hotline: (617) 423-SAFE (7233) v/tty

REFERENCES
What is sexual violence?

The term “sexual violence” includes rape, incest, child sexual assault, ritual abuse, stranger rape, date/acquaintance rape, partner/marital rape, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism. Sexual assault also includes situations in which a person may be drunk, high, unconscious, or has a disability and cannot consent to sexual activity. Survivors of sexual violence are forced, coerced and/or manipulated to participate in unwanted sexual activity. Survivors do not cause their assaults and are not to blame. Perpetrators are fully responsible for their actions.

What is rape? What is sexual assault?

While many people use the terms “rape” and “sexual assault” interchangeably, Harvard College makes a distinction between the two terms:

- The Harvard College definition of rape, which mirrors the Massachusetts state definition, is “any sexual intercourse that takes place against a person's will or that is accompanied by physical coercion or the threat of bodily injury. Rape may also include intercourse with a person who is incapable of expressing unwillingness or is prevented from resisting, as a result of conditions including, but not limited to, those caused by the intake of alcohol and other drugs. Rape includes not only unwilling or forced vaginal intercourse, but also the sexual penetration of any bodily orifice with a body part or object.”

- Harvard College defines sexual assault as "any unwanted touching or fondling of a sexual nature that is accompanied by physical force or threat of bodily injury."

Does sexual violence happen to LGBT people?

Sexual assault can happen to anyone regardless of their race, class, age, appearance, or sexual orientation. Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people are subject to the same spectrum of sexual violence as the general population. In general, situations of sexual assault that involve LGBT people are very similar to those that heterosexuals experience. According to research, LGBT people are at approximately the same risk as heterosexuals of being sexually assaulted by someone they know.

- 52% of participants in a study of sexual coercion in Gay/Lesbian relationships reported at least one incident of sexual assault/coercion. 5

- Gay men reported 1.6 incidents per person on average; in comparison the 1.2 incidents per person reported by lesbians. 5

Are LGBT people more likely to be perpetrators of sexual violence than heterosexuals?

No. As part of the oppression that LGBT people have faced for their sexual orientation and/or gender identification, their sexual activities have sometimes been criminalized. In some areas of the U.S. they still are. LGBT people are often identified as outsiders, and sexual deviates, and are scapegoated as perpetrators of sexual violence. However, in the vast majority of sexual assaults, perpetrators are heterosexual men. 4 Another common myth about LGBT people is that they are child molesters. This is also untrue; in fact several studies of sexual-abuse perpetrators concluded that heterosexual adults are more likely to be a threat to children than homosexual adults are. 1,2,3 The research points to there being no significant relationship between a homosexual lifestyle and child molestation. There appears to be practically no reportage of sexual molestation of girls by lesbian adults, and the adult male who sexually molests young boys is not likely to be homosexual.1,2,3 Further, a 1994 study found that a child’s risk of being molested by a relative’s heterosexual partner is 100 times greater than by someone who is identified as homosexual. 3

Are LGBT people more likely than heterosexuals to be sexually assaulted by a stranger?

Homophobia in our culture puts LGBT people at greater risk for sexual assault by strangers. It is common for perpetrators to use sexual violence as a way to punish and humiliate someone for being LGBT. A common example of this is when individuals who think they can "change" a person's sexual orientation specifically target lesbians and bisexual women for sexual assault.

What are some common fears of LGBT survivors?

- Fear of being forced to ‘come out’ if they approach their family, the courts, or the police to report their sexual assault.

- Feel that they are betraying an LGBT community, which is already under attack, by ‘accusing’ another LGBT person of sexual assault.

- Feel that they are exposing their assailant to a homophobic criminal justice system if they pursue a legal solution.

- Feel that they have nowhere to turn for help and fear hostile responses from the police, courts, service providers, and therapists, because of homophobia and anti-LGBT bias.