

3 Family violence among LGBTQIA+ youth

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Introduction

This chapter examines experiences of family violence among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus—additional sexual and gender diverse (LGBTQIA+) youth. Our discussion draws on previous research in the field, as well as findings from our own research, including qualitative interviews we conducted with LGBTQIA+ youth, most of whom have experienced family violence. To illustrate these experiences, direct quotations have been integrated from past participants throughout the chapter. We begin by discussing family violence against LGBTQIA+ youth more broadly, then explore how it manifests in the context of tourism as an illustrative example. Finally, we consider contributing factors, the consequences of such violence, and the supports that can mitigate its impact on LGBTQIA+ youth.

What is family violence?

“Growing up as a kid, there was physical abuse, emotional abuse, religious abuse, psychological abuse, verbal abuse from parents...and I was enduring that for many, many ongoing years throughout my early childhood developmental stages, throughout my teenage years, and throughout early adulthood onwards. So, it’s basically the story of my life.” (Youth Participant, 26 years old)

Youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ experience alarmingly high rates of family violence (Amos et al., 2023; McGeough & Sterzing, 2018). Violence is often equated with physical abuse; however, family violence includes any abusive behaviour exhibited by a family member—which can be physical, sexual, financial, and/or emotional and psychological abuse, as well as control, neglect, or mistreatment (Government of Canada, 2024). This also differs from family conflict, which encompasses lower-level, nonviolent patterns of