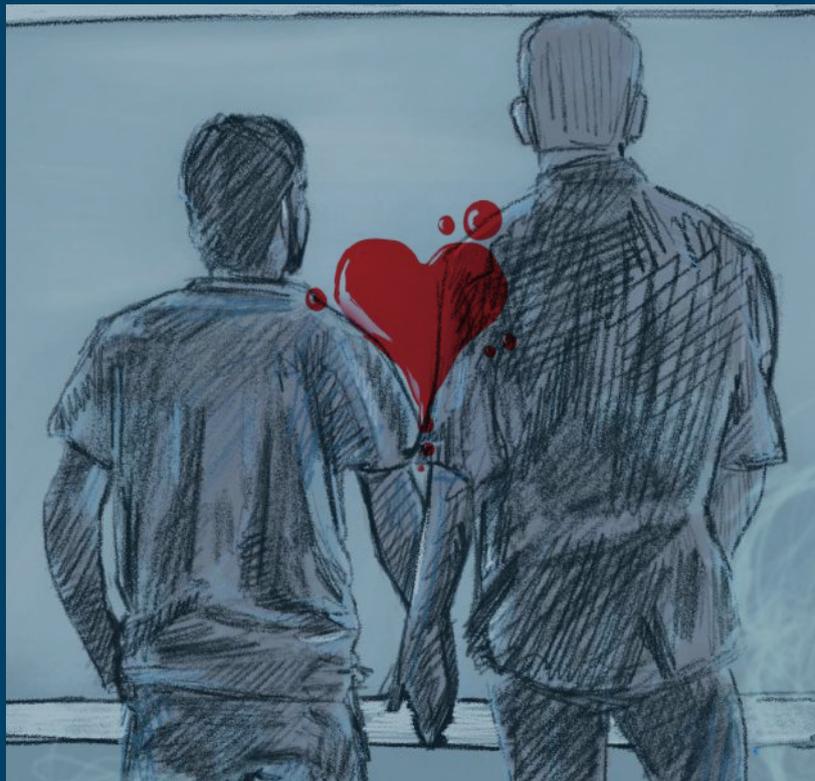


ABUSE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME



Edited by Dr Steven Maxwell

Preface

This illustrated monologue book aims to shed light on the reality of domestic abuse within same-sex male relationships. We often think of domestic abuse as something that only happens between a man and a woman, but the truth is that it can happen to anyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

This book tells the invisible societal story of the gay male journey through an abusive relationship with an intimate male partner. The monologues highlight the key narratives of the relationship, from the early days of happiness to the depths of despair and the struggle to survive. The narration is based on multiple real experiences and is not the story of one individual.

We hope that this book will help to raise awareness of domestic abuse within the LGBTQ+ community and for service providers. We hope it will encourage those who may be experiencing abuse to seek help or be better supported by services. It is essential to recognize that abuse is not love, and no one deserves to be treated in a violent or controlling manner.

We would like to thank the brave individuals who shared their stories for the research, fellow researchers/partners for developing the evidence and creative artists who helped to bring those stories to life. We hope that this book will serve as a powerful reminder that we all deserve love, respect, and safety in our relationships.

Dr Steven Maxwell

This book is based on the study: Maxwell, S., O'Brien, R., & Stenhouse, R. (2022) Men who have been subject to IPV in same-sex relationships.

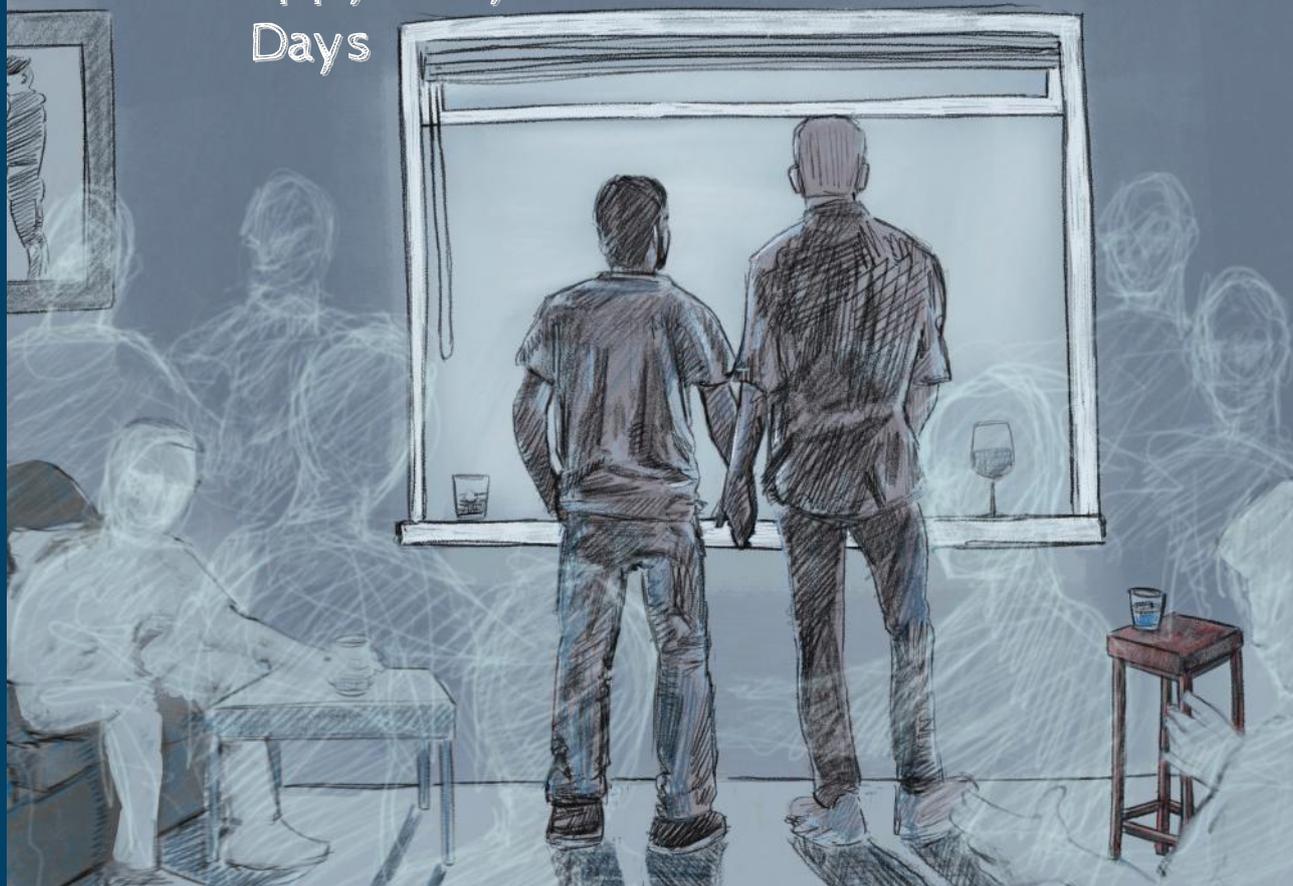
Research Report:

https://www.waverleycare.org/application/files/9916/7655/9428/GBM_RR_summary.pdf

**Notice: This book contains depictions of varying types
of intimate partner violence.**

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The Happy Early Days



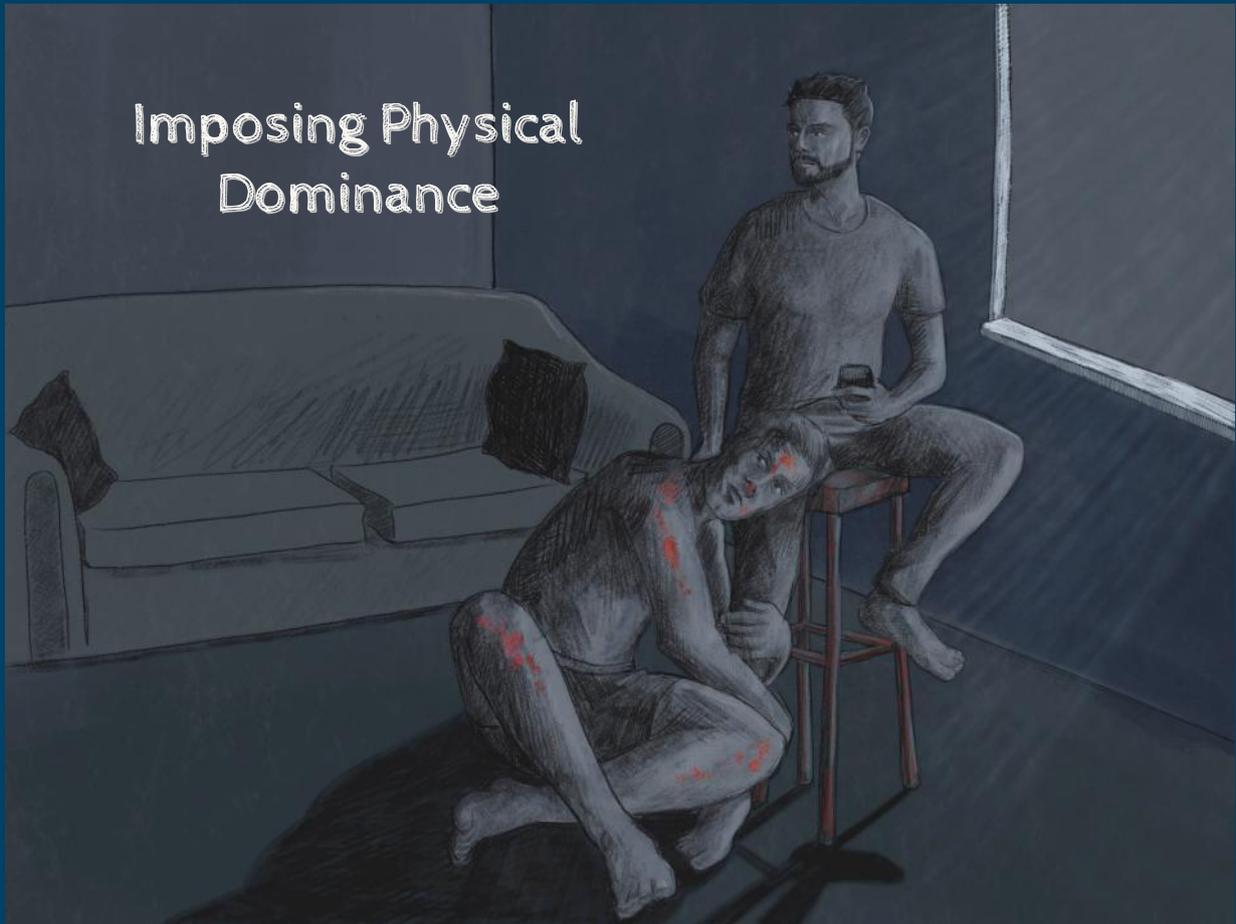
“I felt looked after, cherished, even. Who wouldn’t want that? Be part of a couple, someone looking out for me. He rocked my world, and I liked his friends too. You know, I could get used to not feeling alone and unloved! Even the way he tutted at my shirts was cute. Wanting me to look good and making an impression. It’s nice when someone you’re really into wants what’s best for you both.”

Taking Control



“He said he’d organise my life to make it better for ‘us’. Starting with clothes, he told me I didn’t know how to wear trousers. Then he started ‘organising’ my friends, checked all my messages, saying he wanted to stop bad influences. He’d text me at the gym - 10... .20 times until I answered. We started spending most of our time together. The way he chipped away was kind of hot and well - he was doing it because he loved me.”

Imposing Physical Dominance

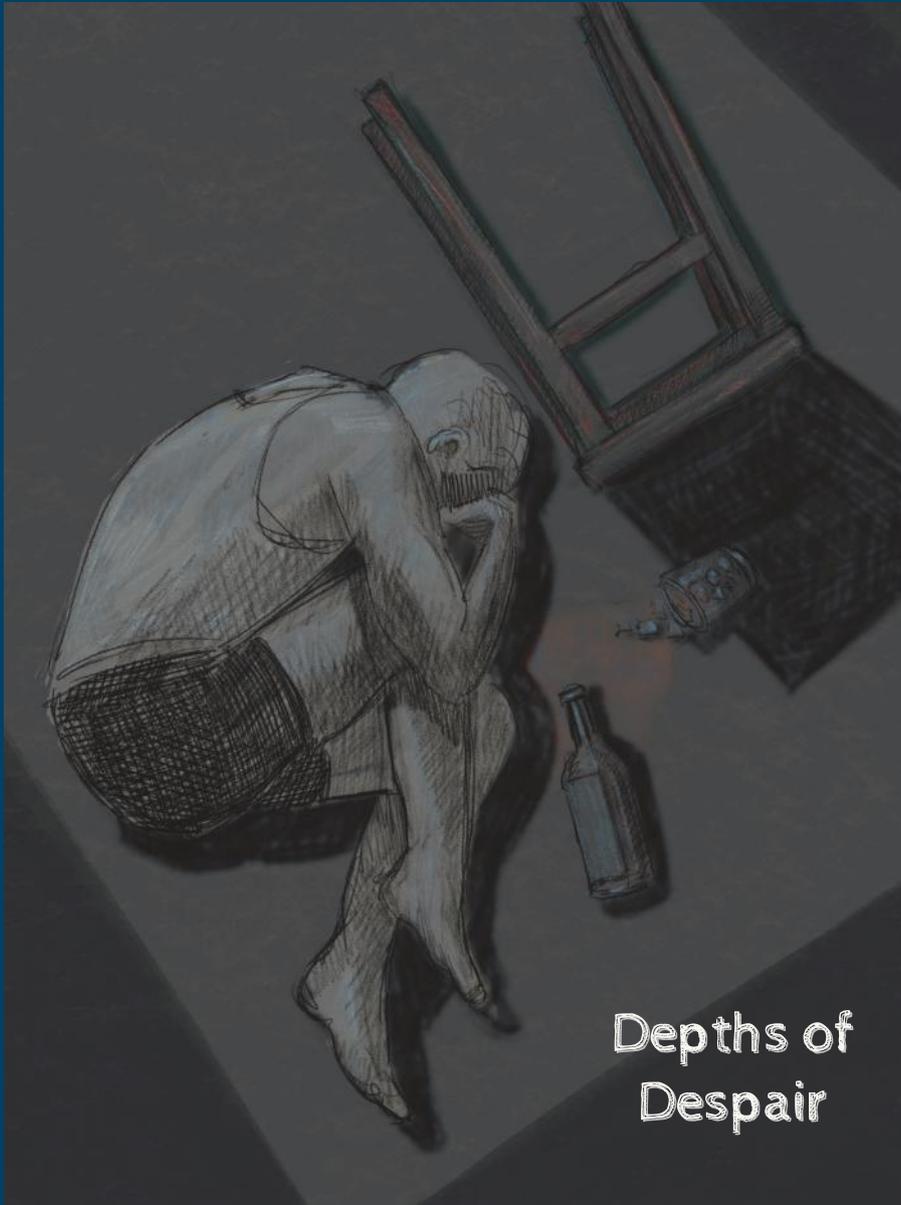


“I couldn’t believe how a guy who only came up to my chest started to make me shrivel up and cower. He cared, so it was my fault he felt bad. Me earning more made him feel inferior and I told myself that’s why he hit me. I didn’t want to antagonise him, this guy I so wanted to be with, and well, just loved. We were learning about passion and forgiveness together, who doesn’t go through rough patches? After all, it was only a few bruises.”



Giving Up All
Consent

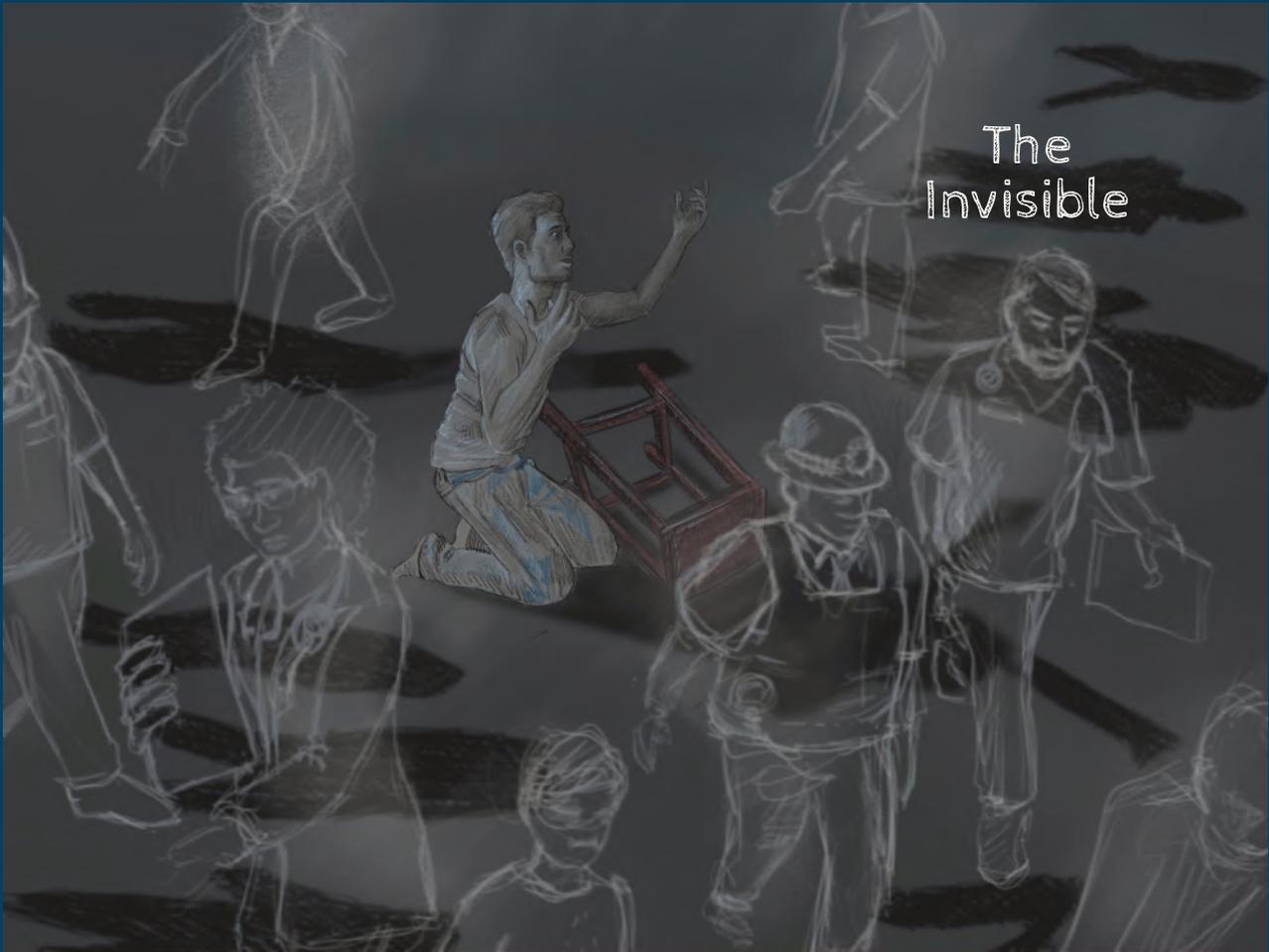
“One night I got back late from work. He was frosty, so I said I missed him, and we both kissed. Then... I don't know. I'm a bit awkward, I like him to lead. It went from touching, to probing, to me feeling him hurt me and pin me down. I don't know, no asking, I wasn't sure what was happening. After that, it's how things were every time. I just... gave in. Saying no wasn't worth the hassle it would cause later. Just get it over with, and after all, it was his right?”



Depths of
Despair

“It got to a point, I felt I was just meat to him, even though I was twice his size. Some days I couldn’t even get out of the flat, never mind go to work. Thinking about it, him and my life gave me panic attacks. So, I started drinking and he liked a drink too, which made things so much messier. I say that like it’s Ok, the truth is, I don’t know how to think or feel. Life I mean, you know, all I feel is... hopeless... this feeling of I don’t know, dread! What is the point anymore?”

The Invisible



“I got used to the force,
being hit, the confusion.
One night he was uncontrollable,
and we had police at the
front door. I guess neighbours
called with all the noise.
It felt like the police dismissed
it - “Just two guys having
rough and tumble, boys
will be boys!”. Later at
hospital I saw myself in a
mirror and realised how
bad I looked. When I finally
got to see a doctor, they
just wanted to patch me
up and didn’t even ask
about the fight. I just wanted
to scream out, help!”

Queer Helping
Hand



“After being at hospital, I thought it best to see the GP. There was a new one, I saw he had a rainbow lanyard and thought Ok. He looked through my notes and asked me different questions, things I had never been asked or thought about. He used the words ‘domestic abuse’ and ‘victim’, I thought me a six foot plus man! Victim, really, how did it not click. I felt like people normally made assumptions, but he saw who ‘I’ was. I just broke down, the relief”



Living as
a Survivor

“I really didn’t think it could happen to me, a gay man. Am I weak, am I a man? I thought domestic abuse was something that only happened to women. It took a while, but eventually I got the help and moved away. He still tried to contact me, so I changed my number. I feel a lot safer now, but it doesn’t make those pictures and sounds in my head go away. I know it’s a long road ahead, but every week I make some progress and one day, maybe I will feel like my old self.”

Surviving Shame: A Gay Man's Journey

I sat in the shower all night, trying to drown the shame.
Shamed for how he touched me, shamed to say no.
Not quite a victim, and not quite a man.
My identity pressures me into a box I don't fit.
The colour has drained from my life; the rainbow no longer mine.
I didn't want to have sex, I didn't want to be touched.
But I didn't want to be alone, so I stayed, for fake love.
No-one expected it to happen to me.
Too effeminate to be straight, too masculine to be raped,
Simply invisible in this heteronormative space.
I 'allowed it to happen', made excuse after excuse.
It became normal, mundane, to submit and give in.
I didn't know it was wrong, that it didn't have to happen.
There was no-one to look up to, no role models like me.
I was socially distanced from everyone but him.
He said it is my fault he didn't love me anymore.
His voice in my head still loud to this day.
But I won't let him hold the power over me anymore.
I can find myself again and live authentically.
Once a victim, now a survivor. Gay and Proud.

Thank you for engaging with this book. We very much hope it has been informative and insightful. 1 in 3 gay men can experience intimate partner violence and we hope this resource has helped shine a light on the fact that anybody can be a victim, regardless of sexuality. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact Dr

Steven Maxwell on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/steven-maxwell-572534242/>

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