Oppression at the societal level can affect the dynamics of abuse. In the case of domestic violence, GLBT victims may experience increased shame, fear, and isolation as a result of homophobia and other forms of prejudice. Below are just a few examples of how oppressive myths may affect individuals who experience domestic violence. This is not an exhaustive list, but it may provide a starting point for discussion.

**Homophobia/Heterosexism**

**Oppressive Myth**
- Homosexuality is a perversion.
- Domestic violence = men abusing women
- Homosexuality is shameful
- GLBT relationships won’t last
- Monogamy is heterosexual
- Invisibility of homosexuality
- Homosexuality is immoral
- God hates homosexuals
- Homosexuality violates religious teachings
- “They’re child molesters.”
- Homosexuals haven’t had good hetero sex
- Homosexuality is a phase

**Feelings of Oppressed Group**
- Desire to be perceived as “normal.”
- Denial within community and without
- Need to be closeted at work
- Fear that lasting relationships are rare
- Pressure to reject monogamy
- Few models of healthy relationships
- Internalized feelings of immorality
- Rejection of religion
- Disconnection from spirituality
- Afraid of losing children
- Desire to show sexuality as positive
- Anger that relationships aren’t taken seriously

**Impact on Survivor**
- Afraid to make community look bad
- Feeling isolated and alone
- Disclosing abuse means coming out
- Desire to prove that relationship can last
- Denial of anger at infidelity
- Hard to recognize abuse
- Shame, “I deserve this”
- No guidance from religious leaders
- Hopelessness, no sense of purpose
- Children used as a tool of abuse
- Fear of disclosing abuse
- Feelings of mourning the relationship are minimized

**Sexism**

**Oppressive Myth**
- Men are strong
- Weak men are sissies
- Men don’t cry
- Men don’t need help
- Men are naturally more violent
- Men can take care of themselves
- Men dominate women
- Women are weak
- Women are caring
- Women are submissive
- Women are nurturing

**Feelings of Oppressed Group**
- Fear of being perceived as weak
- Shame at “feminine qualities”
- Afraid to be vulnerable
- Desire to be strong
- Violence is normalized
- Shame when unwilling/unable to fight back
- Shame at victimization
- Difficult to trust men
- Denial that women can abuse
- Easier to trust women

**Impact on Survivor**
- Afraid to disclose abuse
- Told to “take it like a man.”
- Afraid to reach out for help
- Ashamed of abuse
- Afraid to say, “This is wrong.”
- Fear of not being believed
- Afraid of being called a “woman”
- Afraid to be alone
- Shock at abuse by woman
- Afraid of not being believed
- Shock at violence in women