



Transgender Rates of Violence

VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS' FACT SHEET #6

OCTOBER 2012

www.forge-forward.org
PO Box 1272, Milwaukee, WI 53201
AskFORGE@forge-forward.org

Although greater attention is being given to research and data collection of transgender people in general, quantitative and qualitative data is still sparse, especially related to violence by or against transgender or gender non-conforming individuals. It is critical to keep in mind that data -- any data that might exist -- is based on the collection of individual peoples' lives and experiences.

When providing services to a transgender/gender non conforming survivor or loved one, they will care far less about what prevalence percentages you know and far more about how you sensitively and competently interact with them.

Limitation of studies

Research data can be easily skewed or misleading based on a number of factors, such as sample size, data collection methods, incomplete data, or misinterpretation of results. Frequently, studies are small and conducted via snowball samples (one participant refers their friends); bar, support group, or clinic samples (where individuals from one particular place are sampled); or internet samples, which study only the individuals reached by whichever listservs, websites, or social media the researchers are aware of. All of these types of studies will miss large numbers of people and may produce data that is very skewed by the demographics of those who were sampled. In almost every case, this type of data gathering eliminates those who live in rural areas and those who do not tend to frequent places focused on transgender identity.

A primary non-academic source of data comes from anti-violence programs (AVP) who report to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. Although this data is often very detailed, it only includes those individuals who reach out to an AVP, if they even have an AVP in their geographic area. (See resource #2)

Nearly every type of violence is under-reported. People from marginalized communities are even less likely to report violence than those who have access to and knowledge of services. Nearly all trans survivors have substantial fears of being re-victimized by the individuals and agencies who are supposed to offer help and support.



*"I look for competence
and compassion.
I don't want to be a number."
—trans survivor
(FORGE 2011 survey)*

Fear of (re)victimization by helping professionals

These fears are supported by data, as well as spread from one person to the next within the trans community.

*"I need to be believed."
—trans survivor
(FORGE 2011 survey)*

LAW ENFORCEMENT	HEALTH CARE	SCHOOLS
22-38% of trans people have been harassed by police, with upwards of 15% experiencing physical abuse and 7% being sexually assaulted by law enforcement.	Trans people have also experienced violence at the hands of health care professionals: 26% experiencing physical assault and 10% living through sexual assault.	Even in schools, where we hope students can seek solace and support from teachers, 78% of gender non-conforming youth reported "significant abuse at school" —31% of the youth noted the abuse was from teachers. (See resource #1)



The above data is primarily from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) and confirms rates reported by smaller samples. One drawback of the NTDS is that all the questions were written to determine how much violence and discrimination respondents faced because of their transgender identity or gender non-conformity. Therefore, the figures above represent only anti-trans violence and does not include violence experienced by transgender people that was motivated by other causes. This discrepancy becomes particularly noticeable when the NTDS asked about domestic violence. The NTDS reported that 19% of respondents had experienced family violence "because of their transgender identity or gender non-conformity," whereas most researchers have found the rate of domestic violence—25%—is the same across all genders, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Some research has even found slightly higher rates within LGBT populations.

REMINDER

Data can be very useful in helping guide programming, educational efforts, and outreach. Data can qualitatively and quantitatively capture the lived experiences of violence, abuse, and trauma trans people and loved ones experience. However, how you treat and interact with trans survivors and loved ones is far more important than your statistical knowledge.

Multiple studies indicate that over 50% of transgender people have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives. This rate is nearly double (1 in 3 girls) or triple (1 in 6 boys) the commonly reported rates of sexual abuse.

Resources

To learn more about rates of violence against transgender, gender non-conforming people and loved ones, we recommend three resources that offer rich collections of data:

1. The "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey" report, conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The full report, break-out population reports, and videos are available at <http://endtransdiscrimination.org/> (This research is one of the best available. It was disseminated to a list of more than 800 active transgender organizations and 150 listservs, and was augmented by in-person recruiters. Its final sample size of 6400 respondents is far larger than every previous study that looked at violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people.)
2. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs produces two annual reports: one focused on intimate partner violence and one on anti-LGBTQ+ hate violence. These reports are available at <http://www.avp.org/ncavp.htm>
3. Archived FORGE webinars. Each of the monthly webinars FORGE produces is laden with ample data to support each subject. All webinars are recorded and freely available online at <http://forge-forward.org/trainings-events/recorded-webinars/>