The Intersections of Sex Work and Violence

Loree Cook-Daniels & Michael Munson

11/29/12

What we can offer you

- Training and technical assistance
- Support for transgender survivors
- 1-on-1 support
- Listservs
- Webinars
- Referrals
- Training
- Publications
- Writing to Heal

Welcome & Housekeeping

- Take care of yourself
- This webinar may contain sexually explicit language

Agenda

- Data / Framework
- Interview with Claudine O'Leary
- Resources
- Questions

Data Sources

- National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) -- Injustice at Every Turn
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) -- Annual Hate Crime Report
- FORGE -- Multiple surveys

Thank you - OVW

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“The police would just say we got what we deserved or, worse, for some of the African-American trans women in our area, arrest them for prostitution.”

Prevalence: Gender Vector

“Those respondents who said they were physically assaulted at school due to gender identity/expression were twice as likely (32% compared to 14% of those who had not been assaulted in school) to have done sex work and other work in the underground economy and were 50% more likely to be incarcerated.”
Webinar: Intersection of Sexwork and Violence
November 29, 2012

**Left School (K-12)**

- Expelled due to bias: 6%
- Left school (due to harassment): 15%

**Survival needs - within 48 hours**

- 100%

**Education and sex work**

- No high school diploma: 33%
- College graduate: 7%
- Graduate school: 6%

**Poverty & Unemployment**

- 2x Unemployment
- 4x <$10,000
**Webinar: Intersection of Sexwork and Violence**

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**Identification**

- All ID and records changed: 21%
- None of ID or records changed: 33%
- Not updated driver’s licence/ID card: 41%

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**Fired or not hired**

- Fired for being trans/GNC: 26%
- Fired, not hired, denied promotion: 47%

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**Hostile work environment**

- Denied bathroom use: 14%
- Asked inappropriate questions: 41%

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**QUOTE**

“One assault was in an Emergency Room at a hospital, by a female doctor who I believe was angered by my appearance (I looked male and my hospital bracelet/chart said ‘female.’).”

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**QUOTE**

“I prostitute myself at age 55 because even though I’m a post-op and passable, no one passes 100% of the time. NO ONE. Job discrimination is bad because you’re stuck w/fellow employees 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week. That much harassment is bad for one’s mental health.”
Suicide Attempts

- General population: 1.60%
- All trans people: 41%
- Trans sex workers: 60%

Rates of HIV

- General population: 0.60%
- All trans: 2.60%
- Trans / sex work: 15.32%

Chanel Larkin
May 7, 2010

Claudine O’Leary

St. James Infirmary

Resources

www.stjamesinfirmary.org

Occupational Health & Safety Handbook
Bad Date Sheets
- In many cities (e.g. Milwaukee, WI)
  http://www.mkebaddatesheet.blogspot.com/

Young Women's Empowerment Project
- Bad Encounter Line
  http://ywepchicago.wordpress.com/

Video/Report: Condoms as evidence
- Stop police from using condoms as evidence of prostitution:
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajxFEnenxN8&list=PLF1E29F715F114C19&index=6&feature=plpp_video
- The report:
  http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/07/19/sex-workers-risk-0

Video: Sex workers – Condom use
- Sex work and advocates talk about condom use
  http://vimeo.com/49649959

Video: Prostitution Free Zone
- Confronting all kinds of police abuse makes it more possible to report crimes (this includes addressing individual police abusing their power as well as "prostitution free zones")
  http://vimeo.com/4652102
Questions? – Thank you!

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What might be included under the broad "sex work" umbrella?

10-15% = Street based


Survival Sex = access to...
- Food
- Shelter
- Safety
- Transportation
- Health Care
What about human trafficking?

Legal / Illegal
Indirect / Support roles

Where are trans communities involved in sex work?

Everywhere!
Alongside non-trans workers
Specific areas with other trans workers
Fetishized

Violence doesn't just occur between people in the sex trade and their clients. Who might commit violence against trans sex workers?

Clients
Police
Managers/promoters/pimps
Intimate partners
Bio and chosen family
Community members
Can you talk about some of the challenges with labels and definitions?

ASK!
“What term do you feel most comfortable with?”
One label doesn’t fit everyone.

What can advocates and providers do to help trans clients feel less (or no) judgment from helping professionals?

Clients often presume providers will be judgmental.
Be proactive to let clients know you are open and without judgment.

Intake forms
Ask about sex work?
Pros: Opens up conversation
Cons: Could put client at risk

How can providers make information about sex work relevant when it is, and put it aside when it isn’t?
Focus on the client’s needs.

Affirm and Acknowledge.

How can providers help victims receive services, instead of the system charging them with crimes and re-victimizing them?

System focus: reporting

- Recognize risk of potential arrest (of client)
- Legal advocacy
- Lawyer representation

Not Reporting

- Support clients who do not want to report
- Find creative ways for clients to receive services

Can you talk a little more about the specific intersections, complexities and complications around trans communities and sex work?

- Historically: only profession where trans people can be open and be their full self
- Reality: Even with current laws, discrimination still occurs
Minimal barriers

- No application
- No identification
- No references
- No phone or address

= access to $

Affirms Identity

- Accepted
- People pay
- Sexually desired

= Empowering and affirming

What do trans and non-trans people have in common with regard to sex work?

1. Criminalization
2. Condoms used as evidence

What are some opportunities for sex worker specific advocacy with trans clients?

“Assisting people in any positive change as they define it.”
Hold systems and people accountable

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What are some resources where people can find out more information about trans communities and sex work?

Sex Workers Outreach Project

St. James Infirmary

www.stjamesinfirmary.org

HIPS

www.hips.org

Harm Reduction Coalition

www.harmreduction.org
When we focus on the most vulnerable, everyone benefits

Claudine O’Leary
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