Violence and Trauma in the Lives of Transgender Older Adults

Welcome & Housekeeping
- Take care of yourself
- Power Points
- Archived Recording
- Interacting

Navigation tool: Questions

What FORGE can offer you
- Training and technical assistance
- 1-on-1 support
- Webinars
- Training
- Publications
- Support for transgender survivors
- Listservs
- Referrals
- Writing to Heal
- Espavo Project

Thank you

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Who’s Who

- Michael Munson
- Loree Cook-Daniels

Agenda

- What is trauma?
- Data
- Health implications
- Accessing services/support
- Resilience
- Resources

What is Trauma?

Raise your hand if you have witnessed or experienced...

- Transphobia (or homo/bi-phobia)
- Ageism
- Hate crimes based on gender identity and/or sexual orientation
- Elder abuse
- Minority stress
- Public referenda

Trauma – Defined – DSM V

“...The person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, as follows: (one required)
- Direct exposure.
- Witnessing in person.
- Indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma...”
- Professional first responders
Trauma Timing (1)

- Childhood
  - May affect personality, emotional development
  - May affect ability to successfully have relationships
- Adulthood
  - Consequences may be managed or “worked through” and seem to disappear

Trauma Timing (2)

- Elderhood
  - May be new trauma
  - May be old trauma that’s had symptoms for decades
  - May be old trauma that unexpectedly re-emerges

Key elements of trauma

- Fear
- Lack of control & helplessness
- Sense of being alone
- Disruption of beliefs about life/other people – results in questions about the meaning of life
- Physical reaction: fight, flight, or freeze
- Disruption in/distortion of memory

Data Sources

- Injustice at Every Turn (2011, n=6,400+)
- Caring and Aging with Pride (2011, n=2,560)
- FORGE sexual violence survey (2005, n=265)
- FORGE elder abuse survey (2007, n=56)
- FORGE sexuality survey (2007, n=1,055)
- FORGE Barriers to SV Services (2011, n=1,005)
- CDC ACE Study (1995-7, n> 17,000)
Polyvictimization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All ages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hate-motivated</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPV</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating violence</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult SA</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>64%</td>
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</tbody>
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Physical Assault in School

- Age 55+: 10-20%
- Under 55: 23%

Sexual Assault

- 50-66% of those over 50 experienced SA or DV

Sexual Assault – Workplace

- 3% Age 55+
- 6% Under 55
  - “because of your gender identity”
  - aging respondents were “new transitioners”

Domestic Violence (general)

- 25-33%

FORGE SV Barriers (2011) www.forge-forward.org

FORGE Sexuality Survey www.forge-forward.org

Injustice at Every Turn (2011) www.forge-forward.org
Domestic Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring and Aging with Pride</th>
<th>Injustice at Every Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGB (non-trans) 7%</td>
<td>Under 55 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans 16%</td>
<td>Age 55+ 13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical Assault - Public

- Age 50+ 3%
- Under 50 8%

Veterans

- All respondents 20%
- Age 55-64 40%
- Age 65+ 54%

Elder Abuse

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Self-neglect
- Financial exploitation
- Abandonment
- Health care discrimination
- Housing discrimination

65% emotional or psychological abuse more than once

27% Self-neglect

FORGE Elder Abuse Survey (2007)
Elder abuse (2)

- Trans’ peoples definitions may differ from mainstream’s/legal
- Abandonment
- Public bathroom access

I am presently living alone to eliminate “in home” abuse. However, that increases my medical risk and also eats up all the money needed for medication and medical care. It’s a lose-lose situation as of this moment.

Poll

- What percentage of transgender midlife and older adults who were sexually assaulted believe that transphobia was a motive?
  - 13%
  - 34%
  - 55%

Motive?

Believe transphobia was a motive

- 75% Midlife-elder abuse and prejudice victims
- 55% Sexual violence survivors

Hate-Motivated Crimes

“...can inflict psychological damage far greater than other types of violence as a result of assaulting the victim’s identity as well as his or her person or property.... the psychological toll of violence based on sexual orientation [and gender identity] is significant. In fact, recovery from bias-based violence takes much longer than recovery from random violence.”
Health Implications

Childhood trauma = ↑ Health Risks
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Drug use
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Ischemic heart disease (IHD)
- Liver disease
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- Health-related quality of life
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Fetal death
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Smoking
- Ischemic heart disease (IHD)
- Liver disease
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- Health-related quality of life
- Risk for intimate partner violence

ACE Study (CDC)
Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Trans elder health conditions

Suicide Attempts

Age 65+
16%

Age 55-64
33%

All respondents
41%

- high correlation of depression/suicidal thoughts and trauma

Injustice at Every Turn (2011)
Trauma Re-emergence

- Studies indicate 13% to > 50% of PTSD cases worsen or develop symptoms for the first time in mid- to later-life

Trauma Re-emergence Triggers

- Events involving loss of control or power
  - Admission to a hospital or nursing home
  - Becoming disabled
  - Illness of partner
  - Natural disaster

- Events involving loneliness
  - Loss of a partner
  - Children moving out

Are We Misdiagnosing Trauma Re-emergence?

- Are higher rates of elder depression really trauma re-emergence?
- Is higher rate of male elder suicides related to high number of veterans in that age group?
- Is “dementia” sometimes trauma re-emergence?
Transgender elders (65+) are _____ likely to be refused health care than younger transgender individuals:
- More likely
- Less likely
- Just as (same rates)

POLL

MH Care Against Will

Refused Health Care

Assaults by Professionals

I have decided not to have any life-extending surgery because of past mistreatment by nurses at [the Veterans Administration hospital]

QUOTE

FORGE Elder Abuse (2007)
Violence Against Women Paradigm

- Presumption: women = victims, men = perpetrators
- Erases trans survivors
- Survivors who do not fit the paradigm question if their experience is valid

Documentation

- "Incongruent" identification
  - Used to deny services
  - Trans person may fear being outed
- Cost may be a barrier to change
  - Not always possible (e.g. birth certificate)

Poverty <200%

- 41% ID does not match gender
- 48%

Cultural insensitivity

- Lack of training
  - Culturally incompetent services
    - Intentional or unintentional
- Intrusive questions
- Unequal services / discrimination
Maslow’s hierarchy

- Access to basic resources
  - Food, Shelter, Education, Work
- Basic needs may be a priority above healing
- Cost of service can be prohibitive

1. Still Alive

- History of adversity & challenge
- Developed coping strategies

2. History of help-seeking

- Therapy (SOC+)
- Physicians (hormones+)
- Support groups

3. More time

- Volunteering – helping others
- Developing new interests

4. Prioritizing what’s important

- Clearer values
- Conscious choices
- Shift focus from trauma to creating meaning
5. Neuroplasticity

- Brain keeps growing
- Healing is possible at any age
- Exercise and healthy diet

Monthly Webinars

Helping victim service providers better serve transgender and gender non-conforming clients/survivors

FORGE publications - website

Technical assistance
National Resource Center on LGBT Aging

www.lgbtagingcenter.org

ElderTG / TAN Listservs

forge-forward.org/aging/listservs/

Thank you!

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Questions ? ?