A Trust-Building Intervention to Help Address Critical HIV Outcomes

Justice Unites our Trans Women and Police Officers Toward Health TOGETHER

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Background & Objective

- HIV-related inequities continue to affect Latinx communities, especially Latina transgender women (LTGW).
- LTGW experience high levels of violence, stigma, and discrimination, which may lead to increased HIV risk behaviors.
- In the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, among the respondents identifying as Latino/a,
  - 48% reported being sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime
  - 12% reported being sexually assaulted in the past year.
  - 59% said they would feel somewhat or very uncomfortable asking the police for help.
- Not seeking or receiving support after trauma exacerbates the negative physical and mental health outcomes, as well as HIV care continuum outcomes.
- The goal of the present study is to develop an intervention, the first to address the need, as identified by LTGW for LTGW, to increase trust between law enforcement and LTGW.
Methods

- Community-Based Participatory Research
- Qualitative interviews with LTGW and law enforcement stakeholders (from the LAPD)
- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Preliminary intervention approach based on qualitative results will be presented at a one-day structured community workshop with the LTGW and LAPD participants to develop the intervention
"I have lost trust; I feel like they’re not going to help. They don’t arrive on time and I feel discriminated because they see that I am transgender. And they see we’re not all the same... a lot of police officers think that a lot of transgenders are on drugs and crazy, and they’re the worst ...and not all of them [transgender women] are the same. I am a transgender woman that isn’t a prostitute, I have a clean record, I like to work and study, I treat people with respect, but I don’t feel safe if I call the police because I feel like they won’t help me because of my identity and gender. I don’t have trust anymore... the experiences that I have had, I feel sad about them. But I would like for all police departments to take into account all cases because the harm that is done is so big that we are the victims of violence and discrimination... both them [police officers] and the aggressors who attack us and give us psychological harm."

• "We don’t know what we don’t know in law enforcement.. We need to take steps to bring light to the problem (s).” (LAPD Officer)
• "We need to know what the community needs from us...” (LAPD officer)
• "We need to build trust... get to know each other.” (LAPD officer)
Preliminary Results

- Topics to include in law enforcement training
  - Respect
  - Empathy
  - Safety
  - Profiling

- Resources
  - Legal services
  - Basic needs (e.g., housing, job known to hire LTGW)
  - Mental health and substance use
  - Reporting hate crimes
  - HIV prevention & treatment (PrEP and PEP)
  - Formal systems offering support to LTGW found to be doing sex work (e.g., sex work diversion program)
    (“police officers can’t do it all alone, community organizations and law enforcement can support court referrals…”)

- Positive interactions between LTGW + LAPD
  - Create spaces where trust can be built
    - LAPD present at transgender focused community meetings and events
    - LTGW volunteering at police stations
    - LTGW participating in officer trainings (testimonials)
Discussion

- Safe spaces to build trust and mutual empathy
  - Direct
    - LAPD + LGBTQ Safety
    - Community forums/meetings
    - LAPD town halls
    - Training program (e.g., LTGW presenting at officer trainings)
  - Indirect
    - Testimonials about each other’s daily lives and experiences with each other
      - Using videos
      - Police ride-alongs and simulation exercises

- Law enforcement to respond to the needs of LTGW appropriately (upholding respect and demonstrating empathy) and connecting them to the help they (may) need
  - Officers to use referral card
  - Connect LTGW to local supportive resources (known to be LGBT friendly, if available)
Future Directions

- Information from the qualitative interviews and the feedback/evaluation forms from the one-day structured community workshop will be used to draft an intervention protocol for pilot testing (R21).
  - Continue involving community and stakeholders in research
  - Include other law enforcement departments
Questions/Comments

Thank You!

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