

Risks of Severe Assault and Intimate Partner Homicide among Transgender and Gender Diverse Intimate Partner Violence Survivors: Preliminary Findings from Community Listening Sessions

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant public health problem that affects 1 in 3 cisgender women and 1 in 4 cisgender men in the United States. However, transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people are 1.7 times more likely to experience IPV than cisgender peers. Despite evidence suggesting that Black TGD people are murdered more often than TGD peers of other races and ethnicities, little evidence exists detailing severe IPV and intimate partner homicide (IPH) among TGD. TGD survivors of violence face cisnormativity and anti-transgender stigma when engaging health, legal, and social services, which can hinder the help-seeking process. This study focuses on unique aspects of severe IPV and IPH among TGD people, with the goal of learning how best to respond to TGD IPV in inclusive and comprehensive ways.

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Methods:

Data Collection:

- Investigators held community listening sessions to learn about severe IPV and IPH among TGD people. Inclusion criteria: have current or previous exposure to IPV; gender identity is different from that normatively associated with their assigned sex; 18 years or over.
- Two separate community listening sessions were held – one for transgender women and gender diverse people assigned male at birth (n=7) and one for transgender men and gender diverse people assigned female at birth (n=6).

Analysis:

- Thematic content analysis of transcripts, using descriptive inductive coding, was used to identify predictors of severe assault and homicide by intimate partners.

Findings:

Themes	IPV Survivors' Quotes
Complex social and structural vulnerability (e.g., financial instability, citizenship status, mental illness, sex work engagement)	"...deportation for me, has always been like a major component of that power dynamic with the people that have eventually become abusive towards me"
Pervasive family and community violence and increased weapon use by partners	"Coming from the streets, I was 'TTG:' 'trained to go.' I was strong, I never felt... or cried when it was over [after my partner stabbed me multiple times in my sleep]... it was do or die. Another time... when I went to open the door he [a different man] had the gun like this [pointed in my face] now that was the moment that I was scared."
Self-defense– escalation – retaliation	"He didn't know I had a knife...he hit me one time... and I always carry a pocket knife... so when he came back he didn't even know I was stabbing him the whole time he was hitting on me... By the time he got to the building [to grab his gun] he was already leaking...the boys I grew up with...went and got me a pistol and said...'you goin' shoot him'...they was trying to protect me."
Gender disclosure and relationship stigma	"we heard a BOOM [gunshot] and then we come downstairs and... she [was] shot in her head and the door was wide open...I know he shot her because he didn't know her 'T' [he didn't know that she was a transgender woman]." "...some men kill and a lot of girls got killed for that..."
Use of physical violence in public	"..on the drive... she just kept being very aggressive... And then eventually, she punched me, like, straight on the face while I was driving.."

Discussion

These initial findings suggest that for TGD people, additional safety planning considerations should be made, such as reducing social and structural vulnerability, using risk assessment tools to help survivors recognize severe violence despite the pervasive nature of violence, and building alternative strategies for self-defense besides weapons-based self-defense and creating safety plans to protect from retaliation in the short term following the incident.