Queer Youth Victims of Crime: Problems in Trauma Informed Care

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Queer Youth experience complex trauma

- Homophobic and gender-based bullying in school
- Dating violence that heterosexism makes invisible
- Physical assaults, emotional abuse, neglect by parents or caregivers at home to enforce gender & sexual norms
- Gender enforcement violence (corrective rape, murder of trans people) by intimate or unknown perpetrators
- Physical & sexual violence in carceral detention
- Survival sex, commercial sexual exploitation and sexual trafficking of out of home youth
- Attempted and successful suicide attempts (own or close members of support system)

- Many queer youth experience more than one of these kinds of violence, creating Complex Trauma
Trauma Informed Care Models

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS: QUEER YOUTH

- Evidence based trauma informed care models largely based on research about adults
- Few studies on trauma informed intervention control for sexual orientation or gender identity

SAMPLE TRAUMA INFORMED CARE MODELS

- Critical Time Intervention
- DoJ supported Law Enforcement Interventions
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Interpersonal Psychotherapy
INTERVENTION GOALS & STRUCTURE

- Strengthen long-term ties to services, family & friends
- Provide emotional and practical support during the critical time of transition back to the community
- Three phases: intensive home visit case work; monitoring and adjusting supports; transfer of care through achieving long-term goals

LIMITATIONS AS APPLIED TO QUEER YOUTH

- Family, friends, community institutions are often originators of trauma; absence of queer adult community support
- Few queer youth and young adult competent supports exist
- Pervasive anti-LGBT employment and housing discrimination are significant barriers to independence
Questions in Trauma Informed Law Enforcement Interventions

- **Safety**: Can our proposed intervention provide safety from both continued criminal victimization and gender/sexuality based violence?

- **Trustworthiness**: Are we visible as knowledgeable and trustworthy allies to queer youth and young adults?

- **Choice**: Where do we offer and acknowledge a young victim's choices? What “crosses the line” at which point we find it hard to support a victim’s choices?

- **Collaboration**: Are we rescuing or “taking care” of queer teen victims, or working with them for self-determination?

- **Empowerment**: How do we work with youth who are managing their traumatic injury by not seeing themselves as victims?
INTERVENTION GOALS & STRUCTURE

- Goal of CBT is to change patterns of thinking or behavior using:
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Exposure therapy
  - Thought stopping
  - Breathing techniques

LIMITATIONS AS APPLIED TO QUEER YOUTH

- Beliefs about boundaries, support systems and interpersonal trust are mediated both by past traumatic experience and by current systemic oppression.
- Clinicians need highly specialized skills, e.g. exposure therapy techniques appropriate for sex trafficking victims used in online pornography.
- May not be appropriate modality for complex trauma survivors with dissociative disorders.
INTERVENTION GOALS & STRUCTURE

- Goal: Help clients improve their mood by improving interpersonal relationships
- Strong evidence basis for treatment of major depressive disorder, the most common diagnosis among survivors of trafficking

LIMITATIONS AS APPLIED TO QUEER YOUTH

- Long term therapies benefit adults: Queer youth are coming out at increasingly younger ages.
- Queer youth more likely to face peer victimization when they come out in interpersonal relationships
- Domain where change is needed may be school and community-based programs, and changes in law and social practice, rather than interpersonal relationships.
Bibliography

Conference materials will include a selection of these articles
Queer Youth and School-to-Prison Pipeline

- “Disproportionality and Disparities among Sexual Minority Youth in Custody”
  Link: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-017-0632-5

- “Our Juvenile Justice System is Failing LGBTQ Youth”
  Link: https://rewire.news/article/2016/09/14/juvenile-justice-system-failing-lgbtq-youth/

- “The Unfair Criminalization of Gay and Transgender Youth”

- “LGBT Youth in Juvenile Justice: Three Fixes the System Needs”
  Link: http://www.act4jj.org/blog/567

- Unjust: How the Broken Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems Fail LGBTQ Youth”
  Link: http://www.lgbtmap.org/file/lgbt-criminal-justice-youth.pdf
  Summary: http://fusion.net/why-are-there-so-many-queer-and-trans-kids-in-the-crimi-1793861341
• **The Disparate Involvement of LGBT and Gender Non-Conforming Youth in the Juvenile and Criminal Justice System**

• **“Solitary Confinement of Juveniles Disproportionately Affects LGBTQ Youth”**

• **“LGBTQ Youths in the Juvenile Justice System”**

• **“Juvenile detention centers struggle with transgender inmates”**
  Link: [http://bigstory.ap.org/article/97663a6fa6aa4b16b4bbe0e0c439ebff/juvenile-detention-centers-struggle-transgender-inmates](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/97663a6fa6aa4b16b4bbe0e0c439ebff/juvenile-detention-centers-struggle-transgender-inmates)

• **“Transgender CT teen writes court of her living conditions in prison”**

• **“Dropout, Push-Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline”**

• **“Reported suicide by transgender boy housed in girls unit at Long Creek prompts demand for review”**
Queer Youth Sexual Exploitation

- “Sex Trafficking and LGBTQ Youth”
  - Link: https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/LGBTQ-Sex-Trafficking.pdf
- “Sex Trafficking of LGBT Individuals: A Call for Service Provision, Research, and Action”
  - Link: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4204396/
- “Five Facts About the LGBT Child Trafficking Crisis”
  - Link: https://www.covenanthouse.org/fight-lgbt-child-trafficking
  - Brief Infographic summary, short and to the point
- “Sex Trafficking of LGBT Youth”
  - Link: http://www.humantraffickingsearch.net/wp1/sex-trafficking-of-lgbt-youth
- “LGBT survivors of human trafficking share their stories to shed a light on a brutal practice”
- “New Report Highlights Survival Sex Among LGBTQ Youth”