

# COMMUNITY TRANS-FORMATION

## A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO INFORMING TRANSGENDER STIGMA REDUCTION

### How does the transgender community think we can reduce stigma and transphobia in King County, WA?

#### BACKGROUND

Stigma, transphobia, and discrimination towards the transgender population contribute to serious public health problems including increased rates of STIs and HIV, chronic homelessness, lack of employment, assault, suicide, and substance abuse.<sup>1</sup>

In the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 63% of respondents reported experiencing at least one serious act of discrimination, such as job loss or eviction, and 53% of respondents reported being verbally disrespected or harassed in public places.<sup>2</sup>

Mistreatment at the hands of “helping” professionals and government officials also leads to the postponement of medical care due to the discrimination and lack of transgender competency of medical providers.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

While there are transgender support groups and advocacy organizations in the Seattle and King County area, the voices of transgender individuals are often unheard in spaces of decision-making. This study utilizes a community-based approach to ensure that transgender individuals guide effort to combat stigma and discrimination.

#### METHODS

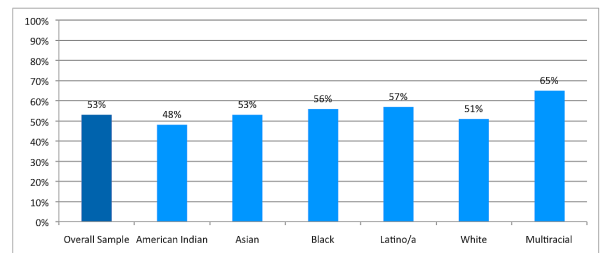
Using a grounded theory approach, open-ended interview questions explored:

- 1) Supportive and unsupportive factors within different social networks**
- 2) Messaging and interventions that may be effective in reducing stigma and transphobia in King County**
- 3) Experiences of stigma and transphobia**

Data Analysis Included:

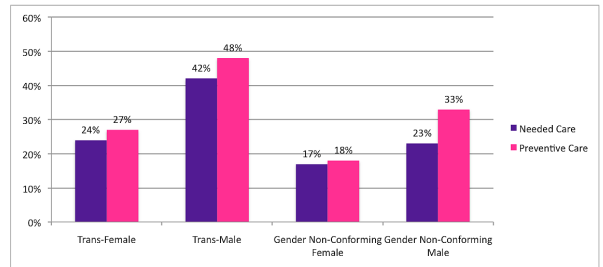
Open coding of interviews by 4 independent coders, a master codebook of 24 codes was developed, interviews were coded and organized using ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software, ATLAS.ti Code Cooccurrence and Quotations by Code output functions used to organize results

VERBAL HARASSMENT/DISRESPECT IN PUBLIC PLACES BY RACE



Source: National Transgender Discrimination Survey

MEDICAL CARE POSTPONEMENT DUE TO DISCRIMINATION BY PROVIDERS



Source: National Transgender Discrimination Survey

#### PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Characteristics	% of participants (n)	Characteristics	% of participants (n)
<b>Age (years)</b>	N=10	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	
Range, Mean	23-71, 37.8	Bisexual	20 (2)
18-24	10 (1)	Queer	60 (6)
25-29	20 (2)	Heterosexual	10 (1)
30-39	30 (3)	Asexual	10 (1)
40-49	20 (2)	<b>Health Insurance</b>	
>50	20 (2)	Yes	100 (10)
<b>Race</b>		<b>Education</b>	
American Indian or Alaska Native	20 (2)	Some college/AA degree/Technical school	40 (4)
Asian	40 (4)	Undergraduate college degree (BS/BA)	20 (2)
Black or African American	10 (1)	Some graduate school	20 (2)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10 (1)	Master's degree	20 (2)
White	50 (5)	<b>Income in Last 12 Months</b>	
Multiracial	30 (3)	A job	60 (6)
<b>Gender Identity</b>		Unemployment	10 (1)
Trans* female	40 (4)	Welfare, food stamps, AFDC, GA	20 (2)
Gender queer	20 (2)	Disability, SSI	10 (1)
Gender variant/gender non-conforming	20 (2)	Spouse or partner	10 (1)
Female	10 (1)	Allimony or child support	10 (1)
Male	20 (2)	Student loans	20 (2)
Self-identity	10 (1)	<b>Financial Hardship in Last 3 Months</b>	
<b>Sex Assigned at Birth</b>		Never	80 (8)
Male	40 (4)	Fairly often	10 (1)
Female	60 (6)	Very often	10 (1)

# FINDINGS

Across participants, four distinct themes emerged regarding stigma and transphobia reduction within and towards the transgender community.



## TRANSGENDER IDENTITY

“Well, I think reminding people that transgender experiences can be formulated at such a young age and it’s not a phase necessarily. Or if it is a phase, that’s something that we could actually explore and support because most people who support gender expression do not end up being transgender individuals, you know. But in doing that, it alleviates this gender segregation or gender policing.”

## TRANSGENDER ACCEPTANCE

“If you wanna identify as a lizard, go for it. If you're like, 'the only way that I can go to school is if I identify as Quasimodo' then I'm like, 'do it!' you know. And then eventually that kid will get to a point where they're an adult and they're not like in a relationship saying 'I'm sorry, I can't love you because of X, Y, Z and I have all of these insecurities because I was stunted from the very beginning and no one ever told me I was good enough.'”

## TRANSGENDER INCLUSIVITY

“I would love to see, you know, especially around health messaging and stuff of trans folks being included. How crazy would it be if there was just a billboard with a trans person on it? Maybe it would not even be about HIV for once. You know it could be about diabetes, right? Like it would be nice if we were included.”

## TRANSGENDER ALLYSHIP

“I think [an intervention] has to include cis [sex assigned at birth concordant with current gender identity] allies and it has to include trans people and it has to demonstrate on both sides that cis allies have to demonstrate humility and they have to demonstrate that they are there to be supportive and to listen and that no matter how angry or bitter or hurt someone is toward them, they're not going to take it personally, they're not going to get defensive they're not going to engage in the power struggle.”

# IMPLICATIONS

Community-wide stigma reduction interventions proposed by transgender people are urgently needed in order to alleviate the adverse health outcomes of minority stress and discrimination.

Transgender individuals propose messaging and interventions to reduce stigma and transphobia in King County with education and allyship through:

- 1. Gender education with children and school-aged kids, in addition to community-wide efforts.**
- 2. Messaging centered in allowing people to be who they want to be, and trusting the decisions of people and their gender identities.**
- 3. Building a model of allyship between transgender and cisgender people to tackle stigma as a united community**

## SOURCES CITED

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