

March 5, 2015

Already in this past few months of this year, an unconscionable and seemingly growing number of transwomen, especially trans women of color, have been murdered in the U.S., a fact that is deeply – and rightfully – upsetting to our community.

Circumstance behind a number of these murders seem to be rooted in domestic or intimate partner violence. At least half of these women were killed by their partners or family members. That means they were likely not victims of a random anti-trans hate crime. We must acknowledge that transgender people face domestic and/or intimate violence, and here are tools and resources folks should be aware of.

Acknowledging the existence of domestic and intimate partner violence for transgender people is important in addressing aspects of the latest upsurge in violence. We as individuals and as a community can learn about family and intimate partner violence, and take action to help ourselves and each other get out of violent relationships – *before* they turn fatal.

These days we know much more about domestic violence in trans lives and have *many* more resources available to us for helping end it.

One immediate action you can take is sharing this link on your social media – it contains all of the following resources: **Ending Trans Domestic Violence** (<http://forge-forward.org/2015/03/ending-trans-domestic-violence-murders>)

If you are in an unsafe relationship or know someone else who is, immediate help and resources are available:

- Safety planning. If you or someone you know is in a violent or abusive relationship, safety planning is a must, even if you (or the victim) choose to remain in the relationship. FORGE has developed a trans-specific safety planning tool that you can use on your own, or help a friend with. It's available at <http://forge-forward.org/wp-content/docs/safety-planning-tool.pdf>.
- Emergency shelter and services. If you or someone you know is in an unsafe relationship and needs help getting out, you can find out what help is available near you by calling the appropriate national, 24/7 hotline:
 - The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (1-800-787-3224 TTY)
 - Live chat (limited hours): <http://www.thehotline.org/what-is-live-chat/>
 - RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Note that if the agency you want to access is funded at least in part by the federal government, by law it cannot discriminate against an individual based on their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. You can find out more at <http://transequality.org/know-your-rights/survivors-violence>

- Anti-violence programs. The U.S. has more than 40 LGBTQ anti-violence organizations that provide a range of support services (advocacy, accompaniment to the police and/or health care providers,

referrals, etc.) to LGBTQ victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and hate violence. Most are very trans-savvy. A list of LGBTQ anti-violence organizations and the type of crimes they focus on is available at

http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp_member_affiliate_june2014.pdf

Everyone can take routine measures to increase their safety:

- Safer Dating Tips. Just like automatically putting on your seat belt when you get in the car, if you date people you do not know well, you can routinely engage in some simple protective practices. A trans-specific set of safer dating tips is available at <http://forge-forward.org/wp-content/docs/Safe-Dating-Tips-FINAL.pdf>
- Collaborative problem solving strategies. Like everyone else, trans people are seldom taught conflict resolution skills, which can help keep conflicts from escalating into violence. In addition to talking about trans-specific power and control tactics that may be unique to relationships that include one or more trans people, this FORGE training webinar also uses a hypothetical couple facing transition to give examples of positive, collaborative problem-solving strategies: <http://forge-forward.org/event/power-and-control-tactics/>

Everyone can increase service providers' ability to respectfully help trans survivors:

Anyone can contact domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in their community to help those agencies become more trans-savvy and connected to the trans community (if they aren't already). These resources may help agencies increase their knowledge about working with trans clients and survivors:

- Webinars. Does your local domestic violence shelter and rape crisis center know that they can access free training 24/7 on how to better serve transgender survivors? FORGE's online archive contains more than three dozen webinars specifically for providers on how to respectfully and effectively work with trans survivors: <http://forge-forward.org/trainings-events/recorded-webinars/>
- Legal requirements. Do your local providers know their legal requirements about serving trans survivors?
 - If they are funded under the Violence Against Women Act, the guidelines they need to follow are at <http://ojp.gov/about/ocr/pdfs/vawafaqs.pdf>
 - If they are funded by the Family Violence Protection and Services Act, they have assured the government that they have written policies prohibiting harassment based on sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity, and that all staff members have been trained to prevent and respond to harassment or bullying in all forms.
 - The Department of Housing and Urban Development recently released new guidelines for homeless shelters. Read more at <http://transequality.org/blog/win-hud-tells-homeless-shelters-to-respect-self-identified-gender>
- Local service providers. You can help develop positive relationships between your local trans community and domestic violence and sexual assault service providers by arranging for educational

forums and organizing supply drives to ensure these agencies have trans-specific supplies like wigs and binders. To locate your local service providers, contact the appropriate national, 24/7 hotline:

- Domestic violence: 1-800-799-7233 (1-800-787-3224 TTY)
 - Live chat (limited hours): <http://www.thehotline.org/what-is-live-chat/>
- Sexual assault: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Everyone can help create a safer environment for trans people:

- “Let’s Talk about Domestic Violence in the Transgender Community” has simple steps everyone can take to help reduce the conditions in which domestic violence flourishes, such as: avoiding stereotypes, reaching out to those who are isolated, listening, and not using trans-excluding terms such as “Violence Against Women.” The article is available at <http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/03/domestic-violence-trans-community/>
- The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs’ “Community Action Toolkit for Addressing Intimate Partner Violence Against Transgender People” includes a number of ideas and tools: http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp_trans_ipvtoolkit.pdf

Everyone can learn more:

- FORGE is the nation’s leading trans organization working on anti-violence issues. You can sign up to be notified when we put out new training or resource materials by signing up on our website (www.forge-forward.org) or by following us on
 - Facebook. (<https://www.facebook.com/FORGE.trans>)
 - Twitter. (<https://twitter.com/FORGEforward>)
 - Instagram (http://instagram.com/forge_forward/)
- National Center for Transgender Equality's anti-violence resource page:
 - <http://www.transequality.org/issues/anti-violence>
- Several of the resources listed above give more background information on how domestic violence affects the transgender community, including:
 - <http://forge-forward.org/wp-content/docs/safety-planning-tool.pdf>
 - http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp_trans_ipvtoolkit.pdf
 - <http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/03/domestic-violence-trans-community/>

We cannot prevent all violence that may be directed our way, but we can take steps to lower the chances we are harmed by the people we live with or date. Learn what you can do, and teach others. We can make a difference.