Adapting Programs for Non-treatment Seeking, High-risk Transgender Women

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Background

• Many transwomen live under marginal socioeconomic condition such as low income, high unemployment, low educational attainment, unstable housing \(^1,^2\)
• In the past decade an HIV prevalence rate ranging from 13% to 52% among transwomen has been reported in CA \(^3-^8\)
• There a significant associations between being HIV positive and exchange sex \(^9-^12\)
• Transwomen report substance use as a means of escaping or coping with: \(^5,^13-^16\)
  - Life stressors
  - Sex work
  - Discrimination and transphobia
  - Gender Transition
• High rates of injection risks are associated with street drugs and hormones misuse (pumping parties, silicone, etc.) to enhance one’s gender presentation) \(^3,^7,^14\)
Methods

Substance Use Data
• Data collected from July 11, 2000 through April 30, 2010
• Duplicates and those who did not identify as a transgender woman were deleted from database
• 34,272 Total Encounters (New & Repeat)
  ➔ Less 25,961 Non-Transgender Women = 8,311
  ➔ Less 5,469 Duplicate Encounters = 2,842
• N = 2,842 Unique Transgender Women
• All statistics carried out using Stata (v10SE)

Adapting Programs
• Formative Stage
• Implementation Stage
### Sociodemographic Characteristics (N=2,842)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>1,990</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American/black</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian/white</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other/Multiethnic</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Status</td>
<td>HIV-</td>
<td>2,307</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIV+</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DK/Refused</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>LL: 14, UL: 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Identity</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>2,448</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance</td>
<td>N or Mean</td>
<td>% or (SD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Used</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>(7.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Used</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Used</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(8.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injected Methamphetamine</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Injected</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>(10.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine (Powder)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Used</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>(7.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine (Rock/Crack)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Used</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>(6.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hormones (Non-Prescribed)</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Used</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injected Hormones</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Days Injected</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>(5.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Injection Practices in the Previous 30 Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior and N</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inject ANY Substance (n = 1,396)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Needles w/ Bleach (n = 342)</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Needle Exchange (n = 342)</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Needle After Someone (n = 342)</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Substance Use in the Previous 30 Days by 6 Month Cohorts, 2000-2010 (N=2,842)
Adapting Programs for Non-treatment Seeking, High-risk Transgender Women
What is the harm in Harm Reduction?

The overall objective of our prevention programs is to reduce the harm that can result from drug use by preventing HIV infection and managing the physical, psychological and psychosocial manifestations of drug use without the requirement of abstinence or recovery. Success is evaluated by any change in behavior that reduces physical, psychological or psychosocial harm to our participants, their loved ones, and/or their community.
The TransAction Program

A program especially for you.
All transgender women welcome!

★ Transitional Life Skills
★ Health and Wellness Information
★ Support Groups
★ Discussion Groups
★ One-On-One Sessions

Food Served

Come and discuss issues that affect you and your community!

Where: 1419 N. La Brea Ave.
When: Monday through Friday
4:30 pm - 7:00 pm

For more information call: (323) 463-1601

Friends Community Center
A Division of Friends Research Institute, Inc.
Program Design

- **Target Population**
  Self-identified male-to-female transwomen

- **Geographic Region**
  Hollywood, West Hollywood, Downtown

- **Outreach Intervention Sites**
  street corners, bus stops, parks, cruising areas, bars, clubs, expensive hotels, coffee houses, parking lots, fast food stands, mini markets, boutiques, nail shops
Intervention Model

• **Gifts are given to develop trust and aid with immediate needs**
lotion, perfume, nail polish, comb and brush, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrush, lip balm, sunscreen, make-up, candy

• **Contacts are made to establish relationships**
1-5 minutes, including greeting, outreach worker identification, risk reduction supplies (condoms, bleach, dental dam) and referrals to HIV-related services, drug treatment, medical social and mental health services, needle exchange programs, food and shelter; contacts are successive and unlimited

• **Encounters are made to introduce risk reduction strategies**
5-60 minutes, includes greeting, OW identification, HIV risk assessment, assessment of other needs, HIV knowledge assessment, risk reduction supplies, direct linked referral(s); encounters are successive and unlimited

• **Direct-linked referrals are made to assist immediate and long-term needs**
staff transport participant to referred agency; if not interested in immediate service referrals are given in writing with name, address, phone number and name of contact person
TransAction: The Conceptual Framework

**Behavioral Theories**
- Motivational Interviewing
  - Motivation
  - Ambivalence
  - Resistance
- Social Support Theory
  - Informational Support
  - Emotional Support
  - Instrumental Support

**Behavioral Outcomes**
- ↓ Sex Work
- ↑ Condom use w/ Exchange Partners
- ↑ Condom use w/ Non-exchange Partners
- ↓ High-risk Sex Behaviors
- ↓ Sex while “high”
- ↓ Non-injection Drug Use
- ↓ Injection Drug Use
- ↓ Injection Non-prescribed Hormones
- ↓ Sharing Needles/Works
- ↑ Needle Cleaning
- ↑ Needle Exchange Program

**Intervention**
- Outreach
- GDI
  - Skills Building
  - Gender Transitional Life Skills
  - Open Discussion Support
- IDI

**Behavioral Theories**
- Behavioral Outcomes
Adapting Specific Interventions

G.U.Y.S.

• Skills Building Groups
  Emotions, Depression and Substance Use
  Entering the Workforce or Continuing Your Education
  Finding Solutions
  Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Viral vs. Bacterial
  Self-esteem and Homophobia
  Sex and Drugs
  Sexual Risks

• Art Exploration Groups

TransAction

• Skills Building Groups
  Changing Your Name and Gender
  Entering the Workforce or Continuing Your Education
  Gender Transition Options
  HIV and Other STIs
  Safer Sex Work, Safer Dating
  Self-esteem and Transphobis
  Violence Against Transgenders

• Transitional Life Skills
Safer Sex Work Strategies

- Working the Streets
  - Do not work the streets alone, always have a friend with you
- Working the Ads
  - Before you answer the phone, have a list of questions ready
- Working the Bars
  - Look for older men, they’re usually easiest

Developing a Personal Safer Sex Work Plan

“I am going to create a standard set of assessment questions to ask when answering the Ads. If I don’t like their answers, I won’t set up the date.”

“When working the boulevard, I am only going to stand in areas that are well lit, and I’m going to take a friend out with me.”
Harm Reduction from Theory to Practice: Hormone Therapy

Discuss Hormone Misuse among Transwomen

• Medically-prescribed Hormones versus Self-prescribed Hormones

• The Pros and Cons of Each

• Free or Low-cost Hormone Therapy

Resources, Resources, Resources!
Adapting *Safety Counts* for High-risk Transgender Women: *TranSafety Counts*
TranSafety Counts is a program at Friends Community Center that works with transgender women to reduce their risk of getting infected with or transmitting HIV and/or hepatitis.

TranSafety Counts is open to all transgender women, who might be at risk of getting infected with or transmitting HIV and/or hepatitis.

TranSafety Counts offers both one-on-one and group sessions in a warm and supportive setting. In the groups, participants learn about their risk of getting infected and/or transmitting HIV and hepatitis. Participants learn ways to protect themselves and the people they care about.

TranSafety Counts offers two group sessions and one-on-one counseling. There is also a monthly social event for participants and their guest. For those interested, we offer risk counseling services and HIV testing.

“Education is power. I found out that education is power and it can keep me on the right path.” – Terri

CALL 323-463-1601
For More Information About TranSafety Counts

“TranSafety Counts helped me with good problem solving” – Carly

All participants will work closely with a counselor to set and meet personal goals.
Objectives of *TranSafety Counts*

- Introduce methods of reducing HIV and viral hepatitis risk to drug users.
- Assist participants in receiving counseling and testing for HIV and hepatitis.
- Motivate and help participants choose and commit to specific behavioral goals in an effort to reduce their risk of becoming infected with or transmitting HIV and hepatitis.
- Assist participants in defining concrete steps toward achieving their personal risk reduction goals.
- Provide social support and problem solving in individual as well as group settings to assist participants in achieving their risk reduction goals.
TranSafety Counts Program Design

The core elements of *Safety Counts* take place over four months.
## Adapting *Safety Counts* for Transgender Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility:</th>
<th><em>Safety Counts</em> for Drug Users</th>
<th>Tran<em>Safety Counts</em> for Transgender Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Active drug user</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Active substance user (including alcohol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active substance user (including alcohol)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hormone misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hormone misuse</td>
<td></td>
<td>• High-risk sexual behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Open to transgender women at any stage of their gender transition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Reduction Goals:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Decreasing unprotected anal and vaginal sex</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Decreasing the number of exchange sex partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting into drug treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting into alcohol/drug treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using a new needle for every drug injection</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Using a new needle for every drug or hormone injection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce drug use</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduce hormone misuse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Non Hot Topic&quot; Example:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stop smoking</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stop compulsive shopping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Event Entertainment:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stages of Change spoof skit</td>
<td></td>
<td>• “Stranded on a Desert Island”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Condom use skit</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant Awards Ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Professor game</td>
<td></td>
<td>• “Fashion Runway”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• STI Dating Game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Safety Co
Icebreakers

• Each group session starts with an icebreaker so that participants have an opportunity to introduce themselves and become comfortable with the other group members.

**Safety Counts for Drug Users**

• Funniest Story: Participants tell the group their “funniest thing” story

• Toilet Paper Game: Participants tear off squares of toilet paper from a roll and tell the group that number of things about themselves

**TranSafety Counts for Transgender Women**

• The Name Game: Participants share how they chose their name

• What’s in Your Purse?: Participants select an item from their purse and share the personal significance of that item
Goal-related Risk-reduction Activities

• During social events, all *TranSafety Counts* group members and their guests participate in an activity that addresses some aspect of the risk behavior change process.

  **Safety Counts** for Drug Users
  - Participants share a social support story
  - Participants discuss triggering events

  **TranSafety Counts** for Transgender Women
  - Safety Counts Jeopardy: Each column is a topic related to *Safety Counts*, e.g., HIV, hepatitis, STIs, Stages of Change, and questions increase in value
  - STI Dating Game
    Participants “date” an STI
Program-related Entertainment Activities

• Each social event opens with an activity designed to be entertaining and light-hearted, while strengthening their commitment with the TranSafety Counts program.

Safety Counts for Drug Users

• Mock Skit: Participants make fun of some aspect of the Safety Counts intervention

• The Professor: Staff wear oversized glasses and incorrectly answer risk-reduction questions

TranSafety Counts for Transgender Women

• Fashion Runway: Participants drape a mannequin and turn donated swatches into clothing that represents some aspect of being a transgender woman

• A Life Map and/or Collage of the Future: Using old magazines and art supplies participants graphically express their life (these can be done together or as two separate activities)
Video-recorded Risk-reduction Success Stories

- During each group session, participants watch a videotaped risk reduction success story.

**Safety Counts for Drug Users**
- 2 written stories or DVDs are developed at program implementation and used throughout

**TranSafety Counts for Transgender Women**
- Each participant who completes the intervention and maintains her risk reduction goal will have the opportunity to video record her story for use in future groups, thus the stories will change and be ongoing throughout the implementation. She will also be given a copy of the DVD, which she can upload on YouTube!

- Video recordings take place during the Post-program Risk Reduction Interview
References


Thanks to:

• **ALL** the staff at Friends Community Center including:
  - Angelina Alamilla, Counselor/Outreach Worker
  - Prue Mendiola, Counselor/Outreach Worker
  - April Saravia, HIV Outreach Educator
  - Storm Salazar, HIV Outreach Educator

• Our Local Advisory Board
For more information, please contact:

Cathy Reback
or
members of the
TransAction
or
TranSafety Counts
teams
@ 323-463-1601