

Carey Gibbons

CRSI Scholar: Cohort 2

Youth and Young Adult Outreach Worker

Northeast Ohio Coalition to End Homelessness

NEOCH

My CRSI Research

A QUALITATIVE LOOK AT THE HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE OF TRANS WOMEN IN CLEVELAND:

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND GAPS IN SERVICE AS EXPERIENCED BY TRANS WOMEN SEEKING HEALTH CARE AMONG VARIOUS CUYAHOGA COUNTY HEALTH CLINICS?



Center for Reducing Health Disparities
2500 MetroHealth Drive - R213
Cleveland, Ohio 44109-1998
Phone: 216-778-8484 / Fax: 216-778-8401
ReduceDisparity.org



Poster Presentation

What are the barriers to access and gaps in service from the perspective of Trans women seeking health care among various Cuyahoga county health clinics?

Community Research
CRSI
Scholars Initiative

Gibbons, Carey; Sehgal, Ashwini, MD; Dolata, Jacqueline, MBA; Pike, Earl, BA

Case Center for Reducing Health Disparities and The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland



BACKGROUND

Health disparities among the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community are vast and include mental illness, high prevalence of STI's, HIV, high rates of tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse. Specifically, the Transgender (Trans) population faces a higher rate of disparities compared to other LGBT groups. The LGBT Community Center provides programming to support these disparities including educational programs, STI screenings, mental health counseling, as well as social and emotional support groups. Many Trans specific support groups exist, but have historically lacked in covering the process of accessing healthcare systems. A better understanding of the service gaps in healthcare, issues affecting wellness and safety, and the overall experience for Trans women may help the LGBT Center to strategically provide support for this population as they engage with various health care systems in Cuyahoga County.

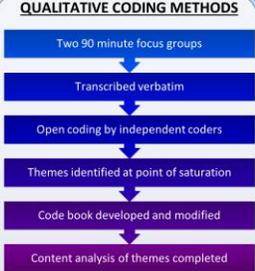


STUDY DESIGN & METHODS

This was a descriptive exploratory study examining the health care experiences of Trans women in Cuyahoga County. Participants were recruited through advertising materials via the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland. The study involved a total of 10 focus group participants who were male-to-female transgender and 18 years or older. This study utilized two 90 minute focus groups, one consisting of African American Trans women and one of Caucasian Trans women.

A focus group interview guide was developed based on both pre-existing literature of trans health issues as well as insight from the LGBT Center's "Trans Family Group" facilitator. The focus group covered topics such as interactions with health clinic staff and physicians, use of gender pronoun and name, and respectful treatment. Participants also discussed topics that included risky behaviors and their overall sense of safety. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and split up between two independent coders. Themes were developed utilizing the classic method of content analysis. A coding manual with definitions was developed and updated as necessary until the point of saturation.

QUALITATIVE CODING METHODS



Sample Questions from Interview Guide

- If you could suggest one thing to improve healthcare and social services for transgender people in your community, what would it be?
- Was there ever a time where delayed or did not seek medical treatment at all due to fear of discrimination and/or harassment? Explain.
- Have you or have you know someone who has received hormones not prescribed by a doctor?



RESULTS

10 descriptive themes were identified through the open coding process. These themes were attributed to either the Caucasian group, the African American group, or both. Results from the focus groups showed that the White transgender women had more positive themes regarding interactions with the traditional health care system. The themes in the focus group including African American/Black trans women indicated more frequent negative experiences with the traditional health care setting. This often led to less engagement and more use of street market to acquire necessary gender affirmation care.

THEME LIST		
Positive experience with receiving care	Use of the black market	Doctors/staff willing to acknowledge mistakes
Healthy behaviors	Negative experiences when receiving care	Mis-labeling when it comes to gender
Positive feelings about oneself	Negative feelings about oneself	Violence/safety concerns
Wanting focus to be on health/rather than "Trans-status"		



DISCUSSION

Limitations

A limited time frame affected recruitment, and therefore we were unable to reach the desired 6-8 participants in the Caucasian focus group. The overall positive feelings by the three individuals from that group are most likely not the experience of all white Trans women. Also, the women in the Caucasian group tended to be of middle-upper middle class background which may indicate that some experiences are due to socioeconomic status vs. race.

Implications

- Discussing health care related issues with Trans women in a systematic way has increased awareness of issues that still remain, even after many of the cultural competency efforts at various local hospitals and clinics.
- There is a need to increase the understanding of the lack of biological family support that overwhelmingly exists in the African American Trans women community.
- This project is the first step in a proposed project around transgender advocacy. It would include a "SPEAK UP" card to be developed by the LGBT Center as a means of supporting transgender patients in starting a dialogue with health care staff about important health care topics, their safety, and trans-related issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

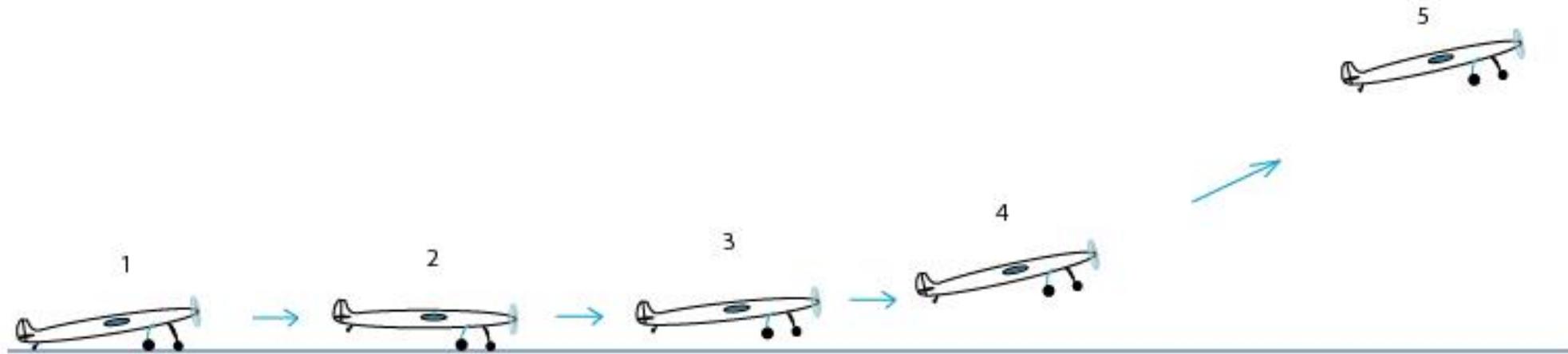
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CONTACT

Carey Gibbons
cgibbons@lgbtcleveland.org
Community Research Scholar, Case Center for Reducing Health Disparities
Community Relations Coordinator, The LGBT Community Center

Where Did CRSI Take Me?



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Who is NEOCH

- The mission of neoch is to organize and empower homeless and at-risk men, women and children to break the cycle of poverty through public education, advocacy and the creation of nurturing environments.
- NEOCH has developed its vision by actively listening to, mobilizing, and working with those currently experiencing homelessness
- We are a small but mighty staff of 8



Who I am Serving

The youth identify as:

- 14-24 yo
- LGBTQ+
- Aged out of foster care
- Pregnant or have a child
- Human Trafficking

Thank you
for your
time.

Any questions?

