Social Context and Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence Among Transgender Women in Baltimore City

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Among transgender communities in Baltimore City, **violence prevention is a community priority**

Few studies have addressed this issue with sufficient depth.

There are no evidence-based interventions developed to address violence against transgender women.

82% of transgender women report any lifetime GBV victimization  
(Baseline data from the LITE Study, 2019)
Main Objective
Adapt myPlan for transgender women

Secondary Objective
Contribute to the small but growing body of research on transgender women’s experiences of IPV
myPlan is an evidence-based tool accessible online and via downloadable app to assist people to identify and make safety decisions about an abusive relationship, or to help friends and family support someone who may be experiencing abuse.
Effectiveness tested in two trials with women

Reduced decisional conflict (clarity on priorities and values), thus better able to make safety decisions

Increased use of safety strategies found to be helpful for safety and well-being

More likely to safely leave the relationship

For college students 18-24

- Reduced reproductive coercion
- Reduced suicidality
- Increased preparedness to make decisions about safety
- Increased preparedness to help a friend in an unsafe relationship

Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
NICHD, R01 HD076881
NIMH, R01MH085641
myPlan Sections

LEARN

Myths, Healthy relationships

ASSESS

Red flags, Danger assessment,
Priority setting

SAFETY PLAN

 MODULE: information is tailored to the user’s answers in each section
Participants recruited from The LITE Study, Baltimore City site

All participants had reported lifetime physical, sexual, and/or psychological IPV in quantitative survey.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Feedback on myPlan, experiences of IPV, access to services

Thematic analysis approach
### Participant Demographics

N = 15, Age 21-61 (Mdn 33)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Identity</strong></td>
<td>Woman, Female, &amp;/or Transgender &amp;/or Transgender Woman</td>
<td>13 (87)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonbinary Identity</td>
<td>2 (13)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>10 (67)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3 (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>2 (13)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Non-hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>14 (93)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>1 (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HIV Status</strong></td>
<td>HIV Positive</td>
<td>11 (73)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIV Negative</td>
<td>4 (27)</td>
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Results Overview

Myths & Social Narratives
- “It’s a joke”
- “Really a man”
- “It’s deserved”

Red Flags & Danger
- Misgendering
- “Down low”
- Secret relationship

Resources & Safety Plan
- Inclusive resources
- Basic needs

Structural Issues
- Police & law enforcement
- Structural supports
- Overall social climate
“Most of them say, ‘Well, that’s a man anyway. They should know how to fight.’”

“Some people think that we ask for it. Like… ‘You want to be a woman? That's how women get treated’.”

“’You're a trans woman and you're dating a straight man and he's keeping your secret.’ It’s deserved-- Not deserved but like, ‘Okay, well, that's just the name of the game’.”
Red Flags & Danger Assessment

“I started noticing that when he couldn't get his way I would be misgendered.”

“If he is someone who is not comfortable with the fact that he dates trans women, that’s a big danger definitely, a major red flag.”

“She was murdered because [her boyfriend] figured people finding out that he was dating a trans woman... it was too much of a risk of anybody finding out.”
“You’re misgendered and you’re told no, you can’t get any services because you’re not a woman.”

“The needs of, I would say more so African-American trans women in Baltimore are really at the bottom of the totem pole.”

“Most of the resource centers I guess are concentrated on stopping the spread of STDs... There's no assistance for them as a human being who needs food, who needs shelter, you put them through the wringer for that.”
“A transwoman can call a cop and tell them I'm being abused, I'm being assaulted... and the cop could care less... Now, let the police be called that it's the transgender out here beating up, bashing up, destroying, they'll be there to lock us up in 2.5 seconds.”

“People already see us as a joke. They're not going to help”

“There many who early on in their transition were thrown out of their parents' homes... You don't have food, you don't have shelter, you don't have basic human needs.”
“Sometimes the physical abuse and the emotional abuse it is what it is, but they’re also symptoms of other vulnerabilities in that individual's life... not having a way to care for yourself individually, not having resources, not having somewhere to go, it’s hard to leave an abusive situation where you have nowhere to go.”
Conclusions

Broader structural supports and comprehensive services are needed to prevent violence against transgender women.

myPlan is one of the first evidence-based IPV interventions adapted for transgender women.
THANK YOU to our participants, and to the myPlan & LITE Study teams
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