

Elevating the Voices of Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Housing

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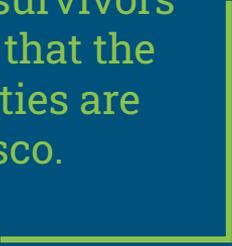
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The Women's Foundation California's Solís Policy Institute (SPI) focuses on shaping just policies that will positively impact the lives of non-binary and genderqueer people, cisgender and transgender women, and transgender men in California.



The Trauma Services & Prevention team focuses on the specific needs of homeless and marginally-housed survivors of gender-based violence (GBV); working to ensure that the voices of survivors in underrepresented communities are heard regarding housing issues in San Francisco.



SHARP's FOCUS

ADVOCACY

- Receive complaints from survivors concerning the ways city agencies have responded or failed to respond to incidents of sexual assault.
- Advocate for survivors navigating city agencies to resolve the complaints regarding the mishandling of sexual assault allegations.

POLICY

- Build survivor-led community coalitions to recommend new meaningful policies that provide support and resources for survivors of sexual harassment and assault within and without the criminal legal system.
- Work with existing city response systems to address sexual harassment and assault incidents with dignity, safety and professionalism.

PREVENTION

- Collaborate with community partners to engage in public education and culture shifting towards a San Francisco without sexual violence.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.

Examples of Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

- Visual, Verbal (including hate speech), and Physical harassment
- Sexual violence
- Psychological violence
- Socio-economic violence

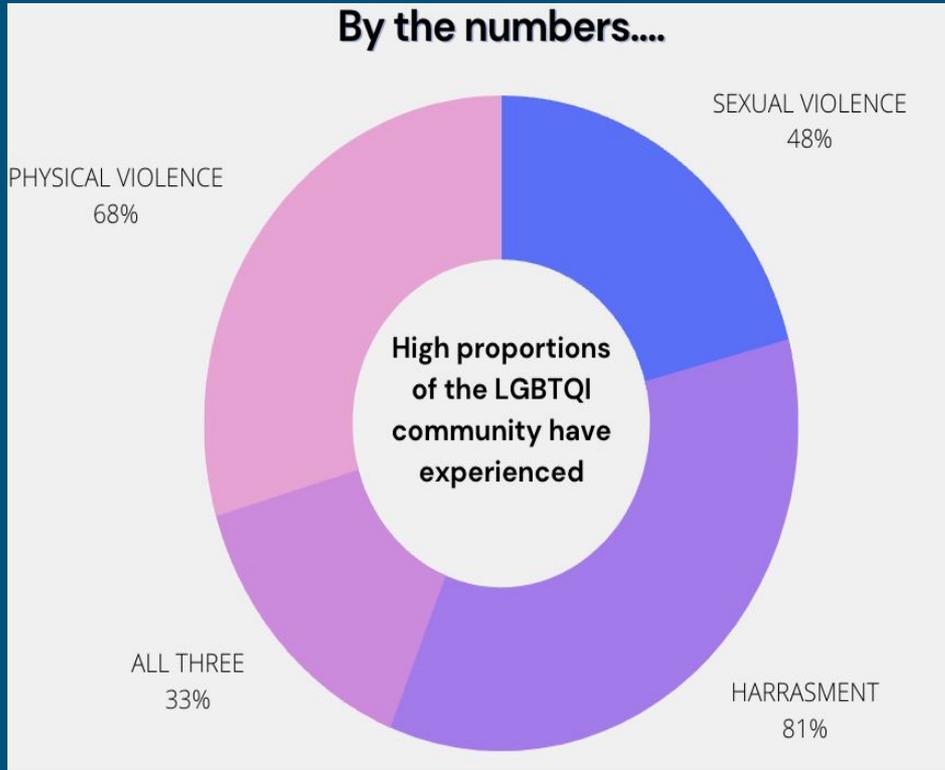


Factors increasing LGBTQI person's risk for gender-based violence include:

- Being transgender
- Being a person of color
- Having a disability
- Earning a lower income
- Being formerly homeless
- Having lived in foster care
- Being formerly incarcerated
- Intersections of these identities and characteristics compound the risk of violence.



By the Numbers



According to the **San Francisco's 2015 LGBTQI Violence Prevention Needs Assessment**, if you are part of the LGBTQI community, you are:

- 68% more likely to experience physical violence
- 48% more likely to experience sexual violence
- 81% more likely to experience harassment
- 33% more likely to experience all three of them

Background: Gender-Based Violence in SF Impacting Housing



WHAT WE ARE SEEING AT SHARP

- Survivors of GBV asking for emergency housing transfers for safety reasons and being unable to get one
- The need for more specific training of staff at HSH maintained housing
- Complaints of unsafe conditions in shelters
- Not enough shelters
- Sexual harassment of people living on the street by city employees

While gender-based violence can affect anyone, one of the most impacted communities include Black and brown transgender people

Background Con't: Trans Experiences & Perspectives

According to **Our Trans Homes SF**, trans people in San Francisco are 18 times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population. The City of San Francisco also estimates that there are roughly 400 transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) experiences homelessness at any given time.

Earlier this year, Mayor Breed announced a plan to end trans homeless by 2027. Therefore, the adoption of sound strategies and approaches to get there in just five short years is needed now more than ever. However, ***how can HSH support a community that it does not include in its decision-making process? How can it effectively tackle an issue without including the voices of individuals who are actually affected by the issue?***

Representation in Decision-making Process

There are certain individuals whose personal and unique circumstances have led to homelessness - most of which are defined by gender identity, sexual orientation, and family dynamics. The City does plenty of work surrounding domestic violence, but not enough surrounding sexual violence and how it impacts the ability to attain housing.

San Francisco's current approach to combating homelessness excludes the voices of survivors of GBV. In doing so, it is approaching a broad issue with generalizations of what causes homelessness for certain individuals. Thus, the strategies developed fall short of considering a holistic understanding of how discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, violence at home, and sexual assault and harassment foster a housing-insecure population.

Where is the representation for a survivor population that continues to be overlooked in the decision-making process?

Our Ask of the Local Homeless Coordinating Board

- Talk about gender-based violence frequently - include this topic in your regular conversations when making decisions
- Appoint a survivor of gender-based violence, who is also a person of trans experience, to the LHCB
- Create a committee within the LHCB to address the needs of houseless survivors of gender-based violence
 - Conduct a needs assessment or specifically about survivors of gender-based violence and housing
 - Review the services and housing assistance offered to survivors to ensure it is trauma informed
 - Remember that healing from gender-based violence can take years or even be life-long and will impact someone's housing needs years after the traumatic event

Continuing the Conversation & Next Steps

- Do members of the LHCB have suggestions on who we should present to next to bring them into the conversation of GBV survivor representation in decision-making processes?
- What other governing bodies need to be included in this conversation?

Thank you for your time!

Q&A