



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

Meridian Howes, Andrea Wirtz, Erin Cooney, Amber  
Clough, Rachael Turner, Sari Reisner, Nancy Glass



JOHNS HOPKINS  
SCHOOL of NURSING

# Background

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



**Johns Hopkins University  
School of Nursing**

NICHD, R01 HD076881

NIMH, R01MH085641

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

# myPlan Sections

## LEARN

Myths, Healthy relationships

## ASSESS

Red flags, Danger assessment,  
Priority setting

## SAFETY PLAN

✧ *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)

Characteristics	Demographics	N (%)
Gender Identity	Woman, Female, &/or Transgender Woman	13 (87)
	Nonbinary Identity	2 (13)
Race	African American	10 (67)
	White	3 (20)
	Multi-racial	2 (13)
Ethnicity	Non-hispanic or Latinx	14 (93)
	Hispanic or Latinx	1 (7)
HIV Status	HIV Positive	11 (73)
	HIV Negative	4 (27)

# 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

## Myths & Social Narratives

*“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.”*

## Resources & Safety Plan

*“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.”*

## Structural Issues

*“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.”*

# Discussion

Trans-specific red flags

Lack of resources creating  
vulnerability

Social stigma supporting  
structural violence

Importance of self-love  
and community support

*“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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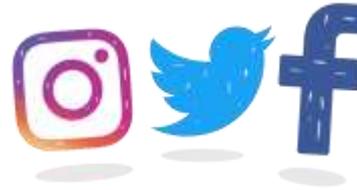


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