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Sustaining Communities through Transformative Justice

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Sustaining Communities through Transformative Justice

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11/16/22
How did I come to this work?
Zemiology (study of social harms)

“...A discipline that seeks to unearth harmful structures, policies, decisions and practices, evidences the impacts that they have and thus generates sustainable and radical changes so that they may be mitigated or eradicated” (Hillyard, p. xv, 2021)”
### Societal/Community Solutions to Interpersonal Harm

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Option</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ignore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punishment/incapacitate the person doing harm</td>
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<td>Rehabilitate the person doing harm</td>
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<td>Restorative Justice</td>
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Ignoring/Dealt with individually

- Harm is not recognized/legitimate
- Often there is not a system to address the harms we experience
- Existing systems do not do a great job addressing harm
- Prevent individuals from being harmed by systems where they seek help
Incarcipation (incarceration)

- Can have temporary positive impact for some individuals
- Concentrated in certain neighborhoods
- Coercive mobility (Clear et al., 2003)
  - People being removed from communities destabilizes them
  - People returning to those same communities place high burden on them
Punishment/Incarceration

Thought to deter harm through specific and general deterrence

Research shows little to no effect on future crime and potentially increases crime (Yasrebi-de Kom, 2021)

Vast potential for harming an individually physically and psychologically

Highly focused on perpetrator
Rehabilitation

- Often coupled with punishment/punishment is threatened if someone doesn’t follow-through
- Poorly funded
- Still unclear what to treat and can be limited by the risk environment
- Highly focused on the perpetrator
Restorative Justice

- Centers the focus on relational harm
- Expands the focus from just the perpetrator to multiple victims including the community
- Looks to restore but not transform existing relationships/situations
Community

“A group of people in relationships based on common experience, identity, geography, values, beliefs and/or politics (Generation 5, p. 2, 2007)
Transformative Justice

Transformative Justice (TJ) is a political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence and/or engaging in harm reduction to lessen the violence. TJ can be thought of as a way of “making things right,” getting in “right relation,” or creating justice together (Mingus, n.d., para 1)
History of TJ

- Emerged through the activism of women of color anti-violence activists
- Build upon concepts of restorative justice but adds a focus on addressing structural oppression
- Focus on community accountability (Kim, 2018)
Principles of TJ (from Generation 5)

- Liberation
- Shifting power
- Accountability
- Safety
- Collective Action
- Respect cultural difference/guard against cultural relativism
- Sustainability
Why does TJ require sustainability

Creating change at both individual and community level requires long-term commitment.

Requires human, financial, emotional, political and financial resources.
Why do sustainable communities need transformative justice?
Related UN Sustainability Goals

1) No poverty
2) No hunger
3) Good health and well-being
4) Quality education
5) Gender equality
6) Clean water and sanitation
7) Affordable and clean energy
8) Decent work and economic growth
9) Industry innovation and infrastructure
10) Reduced inequalities
11) Sustainable cities and communities
12) Responsible consumption and production
13) Climate action
14) Life below water
15) Life on land
16) Peace justice and strong institutions
What might this look like?
Philly Stands Up/Philly’s Pissed

- Transformative Justice collectives who served Philadelphia queer and/or radical and/or punk communities
- Focused on sexual assault: one group for perpetrators and another for survivors
- Philly Stands Up generally used a 3 step process
  - Person accepts that they have caused harm
  - Person works to recognize patterns of harm
  - Create strategies for undoing patterns (www.phillystandsup.com)
Muay Thai

• Form of kickboxing that involves punching, kicks, knees and elbows
• Culture of greenlighting
• Largely male dominated—more so in leadership
• Many women involved date or marry others in the gym, including coaches
How we dealt with emotionally and physically abusive gym owner, professional fighter and official

• Women connected to provide support to one another
• Focus on creating safe spaces in other gyms
• Spoke out on social media about experiences—both those who experienced and their allies
• Men attempted to reach out and address perpetrator
• Contacted sanctioning bodies to stop him from reffing and judging until behavior changed
• Worked on Gender Equity Commission to increase number of non-cismen who are officials
• Started discussions around Green lighting
Social Work

- When someone engages in harm, we often think about potentially removing them from the profession
  - Hard to do
    - Biggest impact on people with marginalized identities
    - Does not get at potential causes of harm
- What might a transformative justice solution look like for the perpetrator, the victims, the community?
  - How do we address not only the incident, but also the underlying systemic factors that allowed the incident to occur
For folks who've been following along w the harassment at #APM2022. Here's some #s:

It's based on what was reported on Twitter. These are unduplicated #.

11 women shared publicly or privately (w/ me via DM) that they were contacted and/or harassed by the same male assist prof.
In the face of the devastation and urgency caused by violence in our lives, it can be difficult to do the work in ways that are sustainable. However, we believe the work itself can sustain us if we build support through collective action—with the vision of immediate safety and transformation over time (Generation 5, p. 31, 2007).


