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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?**

Harm



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

Ignore

Punishment/incapacitate the person doing harm

Rehabilitate the person doing harm

Restorative Justice

Transformative Justice

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

Incapacitation (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
- 10) Reduced inequalities
- 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



Dr. Michelle FK
@mfktherapy



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.

5:10 PM · Nov 15, 2022 · Twitter Web App

43 Retweets 9 Quote Tweets 222 Likes



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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).

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