

# Expanding Mental Health Services for Transgender People

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## Goals of the Transgender Life Care (TLC) project

- To expand mental health services to both MTF (male-to-female) and FTM (female-to-male) transgender people with multiple problems.
- To build service networks among the coalitions.
- To provide transgender sensitive and culturally competent outreach in the targeted community.

## TLC Provides

- Individual counseling with a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- Free weekly mental health support groups for MTF and FTM trans people (in English and in Spanish)
- Services provided by sensitive, knowledgeable, and trained transgender health professionals, including a psychiatrist
- Collaborating Agencies:
  - Castro-Mission Health Center
  - Community Mental Health Services
  - SF Department of Public Health
  - CAPS/HSPC

## Quantitative Surveys

- Conducted at time of enrollment.
- Provided information about demographics, service needs, sexual risk behaviors, drug use, mood, and quality of life.
- Follow up surveys were conducted with 39 participants (32 MTF, 7 FTM).

## Results

### Demographics and HIV Status

	MTF (N=76) N (%)	FTM (N=21) N (%)	Total (N=97) N (%)	p*
<b>Age</b>				
18-30	15 (19.7)	7 (33.3)	22 (22.7)	.06
31-40	19 (25)	9 (42.9)	28 (28.9)	
41-65	38 (50)	5 (23.8)	43 (44.3)	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
African American	6 (7.9)	3 (14.3)	9 (9.3)	.02
Latino(a)	31 (40.8)	1 (4.8)	32 (33)	
API	8 (10.5)	1 (4.8)	9 (9.3)	
White	22 (28.9)	14 (66.7)	36 (37.1)	
Native American	2 (2.6)	0 (0)	2 (2.1)	
Multiracial	7 (9.2)	2 (9.5)	9 (9.3)	
<b>HIV Status</b>				
Positive	19 (28.8)	0 (0)	19 (22.4)	.03
Negative	45 (68.2)	18 (94.7)	63 (74.1)	
Unknown/Refused	2 (3)	1 (5.3)	3 (3.5)	

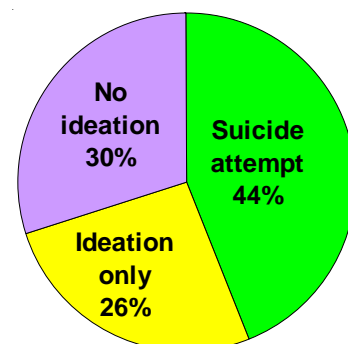
### Socioeconomic Variables

	MTF N (%)	FTM N (%)	Total N (%)	p*
<b>Highest Education Level</b>				
Less than high school	22 (28.9)	1 (4.8)	23 (23.7)	.00
High school/Tech/GED	20 (26.3)	2 (9.5)	22 (22.7)	
Some college	19 (25)	8 (38.1)	27 (27.8)	
College and above	6 (7.9)	7 (33.3)	13 (13.4)	
<b>Income in Past 30 Days</b>				
\$0-499	28 (36.8)	6 (28.6)	34 (35.1)	.72
\$500-999	25 (32.9)	6 (28.6)	31 (32)	
\$1000-1999	8 (10.5)	3 (14.3)	11 (11.3)	
\$2000+	6 (7.9)	3 (14.3)	9 (9.3)	
<b>Housing Situation (past 6 mos)</b>				
Permanent housing	31 (40.8)	15 (71.4)	46 (47.4)	.02
Temporary housing	26 (34.2)	2 (9.5)	28 (28.9)	
Homeless (shelter, street)	10 (13.2)	1 (4.8)	11 (11.3)	

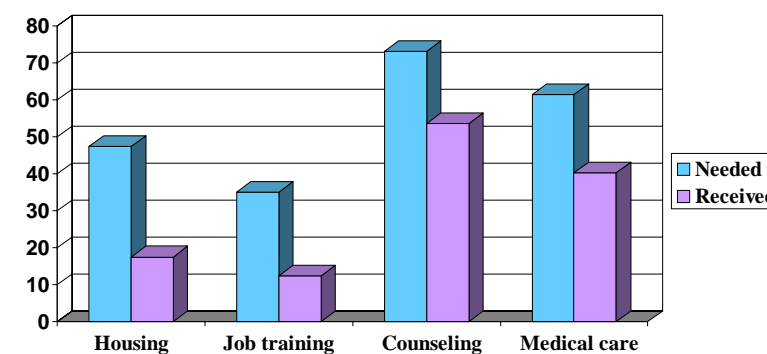
\* p-values are associated with Pearson Chi-Square tests with df=2\* (R-1). R is number of categories for each variable.

### Suicide

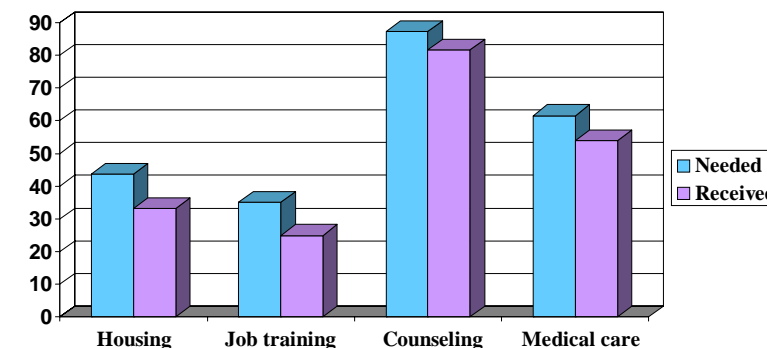
"Suicidal thoughts are just something I live with everyday...always in the back of my mind as a way out of the struggle."



### Service needs assessment (services needed and received in past 6 months)



### Service needs follow-up (services needed and received in past 6 months, after receiving services at TLC)



## Qualitative Interviews

- Conducted with a representative sample of 22 participants (15 MTF, 7 FTM)
- Goals were:
  - to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences in the TLC program
  - to assess participants' satisfaction with the services they received
  - to allow participants to discuss in their own words what additional needs they would like to have addressed by future services.

## Satisfaction with Services:

### Individual counseling

"It was such a relief to have a therapist who knows about transgender stuff...I didn't have to teach her."

Participants reported that:

- they were very satisfied with services received.
- having a therapist who was very knowledgeable and sensitive to TG issues was unique and invaluable.
- the therapist was able to connect them successfully to additional services.

### Support groups

"The support group made me stronger. I was able to talk about things I could never talk about with anyone."

- Participants were very appreciative of the supportive, transgender safe space.
- Support groups gave them an opportunity to make connections with their community and provided emotional support.
- Suggestions for the future included providing different groups for different needs (i.e. different stages of transition or recovery).

## Conclusions

- TLC is having a profound effect on promoting transgender health by providing needed comprehensive services as well as increasing access to multiple social and health services.
- Participant expressed their satisfaction with the TLC program in general.
- Participants reported improved quality of life and sense of empowerment.
- However, the demand for additional services remains high.

## Recommendations

- Expanded mental health services for transgender people should include a peer-led component to address social support needs.
- Transgender clients often face multiple problems, so assistance should be provided in accessing basic resources (i.e., shelter, job training, health care).