

Community Responses to Sexualized Violence

By Nia Daidis (ndaids@oblerlin.edu) and Wren Leader (wren.leader@gmail.com)

Our Assumptions:

- Systems of oppression (racism, classism, heterosexism, cissexism, ableism, xenophobia, etc.) exist.
- These systems influence the ways people experience sexual violence, and the resources they have access to in recovering from it.
- The state's responses to sexual violence (policing and prisons) often cause more harm than they prevent.
- we can build the skills we need to confront sexual violence and transform our communities.

Some Definitions (courtesy of us):

Other people might have different definitions than us, and that's fine. For the purpose of this workshop, here's what we mean when we say these words.

- Sexual violence: any and all acts of gender/or sex-based harassment or stalking, and all forms of sexual assault and domestic violence.
- Abuse: a pattern of behavior in which one person creates and/or exploits a power dynamic in order to control another's actions. This can be any combination of economic, sexual, financial, physical, cultural, emotional, and psychological that silence, belittle, shame, and subjugate a person. These behaviors are possible in people of all identities, though they may be experienced differently due to those identities.
- Transformative Justice: a flexible, community-based model for responding to sexual violence, developed primarily by women of color over the past 20 years. This framework assumes that everybody in the community has a responsibility to respond to violence, not just the people involved and "experts." It also is based on the concept that mere punishment does not equate justice, as is assumed in our current criminal justice system.

Language when discussing violence:

- "person who experienced harm"/"a person who has caused harm" instead of "perpetrator" "survivor" "victim" → harm is not a binary, it is not just something evil people do. Let's look honestly at violence. Demonizing makes it hard for community accountability to happen.
 - We're not trying to police people's language around this--if someone that's experienced harm wants to call the person that did it a rapist and/or an abuser, that's valid and accurate.
 - We're not trying to downplay the effects of violence, just to complicate the narrative.

- It's also important to allow people to define their own experience. Some people experience harm and do not want to label it "abuse," and others take issue with being called "survivors." It is important to respect the ways in which different people categorize themselves and their experiences.

Additional Resources

Books:

- The Revolution Starts at Home, by INCITE (there's also a complimentary zine online!)
- The Color of Violence, by INCITE

Orgs:

- Philly's Pissed/Philly Stands Up
- Philly Survivor Support Collective
- Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective
- INCITE
- Communities Against Rape and Abuse
- Creative Interventions (they have an awesome toolkit!)
- Generation Five
- STOP Violence Every Day (audio stories to use as learning tools)

And many more!

Zines:

- The Revolution Starts at Home by INCITE
- Thoughts about Community Support around Intimate Violence
- A Portrait of Praxis, by Philly Stands Up
- A Stand Up Start Up, by Philly Stands Up

And many more!