

UCLA

Thinking Gender Papers

Title

Why Black and Brown Birds Can't Fly: The Impacts of the Trauma to Prison Pipeline on Queer and Transgender People of Color

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5229c4ds>

Journal

Thinking Gender Papers, 2019

Author

Saif, Samar

Publication Date

2019

Intersections with the Trauma to Prison Pipeline

Other aspects of a person's identity also impact their susceptibility to incarceration and to experiencing forms of trauma. A person's race, class, disabilities, sexuality, and gender are significant factors.



Mental and Physical Trauma

Trauma does not only have impacts on the mind but can also have impacts on the body as well. Trauma can cause mental disorders such as PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, aggression, and future victimization. Also, trauma causes an increase in stress hormones. These hormones also increase cholesterol and blood pressure and put a person at risk for Type 2 diabetes, arthritis, and gastrointestinal disease, among other lifelong medical conditions. (teenhealthcare.org)

School to Prison Pipeline for Disabled and POC Youth


The trauma to prison pipeline and school to prison pipeline intersect especially for youth of color and youth with disabilities. They are met with heavy punishments to subjective and minor infractions in school. Many of the behaviors that are punished can be signs that the person is acting in ways informed by trauma. (allianceinaction.org)

Sexual Abuse in Prisons

"Sexual abuse by prison guards is translated into hypersexuality of women prisoners. The notion that female "deviance" always has a sexual dimension persists in the contemporary era, and this intersection of criminality and sexuality continues to be racialized" -Angela Davis

LGBTQ+/ Gender-Non-Conforming Individuals

13 to 15% of youth who encounter the juvenile justice system are LGBTQ+ or GNC. 40% of girls in the juvenile justice system are LGBTQ+/GNC. (NCCD) Gender non-conforming children are up to 6 times likelier to be sexually abused. (American Academy of Pediatrics)



“Women, especially poor Black women, carry the brunt of America’s racism. When we end up on the journey of the trauma-to-prison pipeline, we are cloaked in shame. This shame is reinforced by our society when our truths go ignored and our stories untold.” -Taylor Nuevelle

Resources in Los Angeles

- **Solidarity House of the South/Casa Solidaria del Sur:**
4163 S Central Ave Los Angeles, California 90011
A people of color closed space that offers events such as Womxn of Color Healing Circles, Sound Healing-Relaxation Retreat, Street Survival, Self-Defense Classes, and Meditation and Yoga.
- **Peace Over Violence:**
(213) 955-9090
1015 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200 Los Angeles, CA 90017
An organization working to end all forms of sexual, intimate, and interpersonal violence. They offer programs such as Emergency Hotlines, a 24-Hour Hotline, Legal Services, Individual Counseling, Support Groups, and Deaf, Disabled and Elder Services.
- **East LA Women's Center:**
(323) 526-5819
1431 South Atlantic Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90022
A center supporting women, children, and families impacted by trauma and violence with an emphasis on Latinx communities. Their programs and services include Sexual Assault, Rape and Battering Program, Domestic Violence Services, Mental Health and Therapeutic Parenting Programs, HIV/AIDS Prevention Services, Testing & Therapeutic Services for HIV+ Women.
- **Critical Resistance:**
(510) 444-0484
1137 E. Redondo Blvd. Inglewood, CA 90302
Organization dedicated to ending the prison industrial complex through education, creating resources for abolition, and projects highlighting the voices of those who were incarcerated or currently are.
- **Downtown Women's Center:**
(213) 680-0600
442 San Pedro St, Los Angeles, CA 90013
Center focusing on women who are homeless or formerly homeless. They have many programs including a Trauma Recovery Center and Women's Health Clinic as well as shelter, sanitation, and meals available.
- **Amanecer Community Counseling Service:**
(213) 481-7464
1200 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 200 Los Angeles, CA 90017
A counseling service providing mental health programs in Central and Downtown Los Angeles for low-income, working, poor, homeless children, adults and families. They have services such as School based programs including caseworkers and therapists in LA Unified Schools, programs supporting people who have experienced domestic violence, and adult services such as the Prevention and Early Intervention Program.
- **Youth Justice Coalition:**
(323) 235-4243
1137 E Redondo Blvd, Inglewood, CA 90302
The Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) is working to build a youth, family, and formerly and currently incarcerated people's movement to challenge America's addiction to incarceration and race, gender and class discrimination in Los Angeles County's, California's and the nation's juvenile and criminal injustice systems.



Dignity and Power Now

3655 S Grand Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90007

DPN offers a multitude of resources supporting those who are impacted by the prison industrial complex, specifically focusing on Black and Brown communities. They offer programs such as:

- Wellness Clinics and Freedom Harvests with various modalities including acupuncture, energy healing and reiki, yoga, Wellness Kits, and other art centered activities
- Community meetings for women and families impacted by incarceration
- Personal acupuncture and therapy appointments for people experiencing trauma related to incarceration and police violence, including sexual violence
- Natural medicine targeting different forms of healing for the body and mind

Trauma Recovery Healing Modalities



Trauma Recovery Therapy: Through either collective or one on one therapy, using forms of therapy such as art and talk

Body Work: Meditation, Yoga, Reiki, Sound Bowl Healing, Acupuncture, Ear Seeds, Massage, Energy Healing

Transformative Justice: healing for survivors, accountability for those who caused harm, peer support (Generation5)



Getting Involved: Organizing and getting involved in community work. Building community and fighting toward liberation

Art: Creating art forms to memorialize survivors and heal from trauma including altar making, candles

Earth Work: Mutual relationship with the Earth to ground, balance, and heal yourself. Supports wellbeing and mindfulness