

Notable Cases of Transphobia:

Brandon Teena

(b. Dec. 12, 1978, d. Dec. 31, 1993)

Location: Nebraska

Brandon (photo below) was a Female to Male transgender man who was murdered by two men who had previously raped him. When he reported the sexual assault to the local police, the men (who Brandon had once considered his friends) found Brandon and murdered him before the charges could be laid. The two men are serving life sentences for the murder, one is on death row.

Brandon's story has since been made into several documentaries and a feature film titled "Boys Don't Cry". It won an Academy Award for Best Actress. Brandon Teena has since become an iconic symbol of the aftermath of transgender violence. His death brought much needed attention to the issue of transphobia and need for change.



Tyra Hunter (b. 1970, d. Aug. 7, 1994)

Location: Washington D.C.

Tyra (photo below) was a Male to Female transgender woman who was denied medical attention after being the passenger in a car accident. The emergency medical personnel and the hospital did not provide adequate care, as a result Tyra died. Tyra's mother filed a wrongful death suit against the hospital and won the case, receiving damages for the death of her daughter.



Gwen Araujo

(b. Feb. 24, 1985, d. Oct. 4, 2002)

Location: California

Gwen (photo below) was a Male to Female transgender woman who was murdered by four men who she had been friends with. Gwen did not communicate to these men that she was still biologically male. She had physical relationships with all of them. Upon discovering that Gwen was biologically male, the men became enraged and murdered her. Two of the men plead no contest to voluntary manslaughter and the other two were convicted of second degree murder. The judge concluded that no hate crime had been committed.



Other Resources

www.gendertalk.com

www.transgendercare.com

<http://directory.google.ca/alpha/Top/Society/Transgendered/Activism/>

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Transphobia:



What is it?

Who is a target?

What can be done?



WHAT IS THE DEAL WITH TRANSPHOBIA?

Definitions

Transgendered used as an umbrella term to describe cross dressing men, transsexuals, intersexes, and even drag queens and kings. The term is meant to describe anyone who challenges traditional notions of gender and gender roles.

Transphobia the discrimination of transsexual and/or transgender people.

Trans-bashing the practice of victimizing a person because they are transgender/transsexual. Unlike gay-bashing, this type of violence is associated with the individual's gender identity instead of their Sexuality.

The Breakdown

Like homophobia, transphobia can be described using Blumenfeld's study (1992), stating homophobia (transphobia) functions on four distinct levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural.

Personal level: associated with an individual's belief system.

Interpersonal level: associated with an individual's expectations of others around them.

Institutional level: associated with laws, government policies, religious and educational organizations.

Cultural level: associated with the social cognition and concept of gender which pre-exists in society.

Discrimination from Outside

There have always been issues with the larger, heterosexual community with regards to

homophobia. Certain individuals, Organizations and religious groups view transgender persons as different, confused or even as a threat. Unlike homophobia, transphobia is associated with gender identity; individuals who discriminate against transgender persons tend to have very ridged concepts of gender: male and female with no room for anyone in between. Many transgender persons fit in between these two categories, and experience a long process to transition from one gender to the other. Transgender activists work very hard with members of the straight community who are supportive and accepting. Their work has made headway to challenge transphobia in the larger public.

Discrimination from Within

It must be said that some people within the LGBT community are uncomfortable with transgender individuals. Evidence of this can be noted when Male to Female transgender women are denied access to women-only spaces. The same can be said for Female to Male transgender men. Certain people within the community feel that transgender individuals belong in their own category, apart from Gay men and Lesbian women. However, this is not limited to transgender persons, those who identify as bisexual, queer and questioning can also be left out of the Gay and Lesbian community. However, others within the community feel it is important for everyone to stick together, instead of placing people in different categories based on sexuality. There are many who are very accepting of transgender individuals, and believe they are a vital part of the LGBT community.

Performing Gender

On occasion, drag Queens and kings find themselves the targets of transphobia. This stems from the fact that to perform drag is to challenge gender rolls. Traditional forms of gender are challenged when we see someone of the opposite gender performing the other (ex. a man performing as a woman). Though the person who is performing may not consider themselves transgender, they are engaging in gender bending. Certain individuals from within the LGBT community and outside of it do not register the difference between a person who is in transition and a person who is performing drag. This view is another way which transphobia is manifested.

What You Can Do to Battle Transphobia

The best and simplest way to fight transphobia is to refuse to be a part of it. Do not resign yourself to the stereotypes, and learn more about what it means to be transgender. There are many people out in the world who are in transition, and they deserve to have respect and dignity. Transphobia, just the same as homophobia, is a negative influence in our society. To challenge it is to defeat it. Say "NO" to transphobia, and encourage others to learn more about it.

Transgender Remembrance Day

On November 20, every year people in cities and towns across Canada and the United States gather for a moment of silence in remembrance of transgender people who have been murdered due to transphobia and prejudice.