Data Science Capstone:
Creating a Resource for Transgender Incarcerated Individuals

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1   Introduction

Transgender incarcerated individuals face alarmingly high rates of sexual assault—over five times more likely to be victimized by facility staff and more than nine times as likely to be assaulted by other incarcerated people compared to the general population [1]. When examining the intersection of transgender identity and incarceration, two already extremely vulnerable populations, we find a group that is subject to violence and often ignored. There are few organizations that support incarcerated individuals, and even fewer that respect transgender folks, but one of them is Critical Resistance. Critical Resistance is a California-based prison-abolition organization that connects incarcerated people with resources and advocates for their rights through community organizing. For my data science capstone, I will assist them in creating a digital toolbox for transgender incarcerated individuals to more easily access reliable resources and gender-affirming organizations.

2   Importance

[2] [3]

3   Goals

This project will be two-fold: collecting the information on organizations and then creating the digital toolbox. For the first goal of gathering data on various Californian organizations that support incarcerated people, I need to find information such as location, services provided, intake process, etc. Since Critical Resistance already has LGBTQ+ specific organizations, my aim is to find general non-profits assisting incarcerated people and find out if they are gender-affirming. Since most of the organizations do not have this information on their website, I will need to call these organizations and ask them directly. My second goal originates from the lack of accessible databases of resources. Most resources for incarcerated individuals provide only a sentence or two on the organization or is a spreadsheet with rows of information. My hope is to create a free, searchable database where volunteers of Critical Resistance or family members of incarcerated individuals can easily find the most helpful organizations.

4   Ethics

This project will affect the lives of real people, so ethics is an important aspect for me to consider. Although I will not conduct experiments on people, I will provide a resource to marginalized members of the community. It is important to keep the needs of incarcerated transgender individuals at the forefront of this study. Even though the research process is tedious, I have to collect the most

updated information about each organization and the resources they provide in order to create the most effective resource. Additionally, since every organization is not explicit about whether or not they are gender affirming, I will have to contact each organization by phone call. It is crucial for the research process to be meticulous and intentional to prevent any event in which someone does not receive gender affirming care or is refused services because of transphobia.

5   Process

6   Final Product

References

[1] S. E. James, J. L. Herman, S. Rankin, M. Keisling, L. Mottet, and M. Anafi. The report of the 2015 u.s. transgender survey, 2016.

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[3] J. Lydon, K. Carrington, H. Low, R. Miller, and M. Yazdy. Coming out of concrete closets: A report on black & pink's national lgbtq prisoner survey, 2015.