

Hearts On A Wire



In this issue:

- About Hearts On a Wire 2
- Letter Hearts on a Wire 2
- TGV Imprisonment in PA Report3
- thinking about silicone? 4
- Reentry Resource and Information ... 6
- Contribute to the Next Issue 7
- Subscription info 7

♥ support incarcerated and detained trans and gender variant people ♥

♥ build community through bars ♥

♥ organize for justice ♥

Hearts On A Wire

We are trans and gender variant people building a movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and an end to policing and imprisoning our communities.

We meet in Philadelphia at

The Trans-health Information Project:

21 South 12th Street, 10th Floor

Thursdays from 4-6

tokens provided
heartsonawire@gmail.com



THIS EDITION'S CONTRIBUTORS:

Brakie
Anonymous
Adrian Lowe
Barrett Marshall
Pascal Emmer
Miss Major

Cover art: Brakie

Copy editors:
Devin-Therese Trego
Che Gossett
Barrett Marshall

Layout: Adrian Lowe

Letter from the Hearts on a Wire collective

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that this newsletter is coming to you later than we anticipated. We at Hearts on a Wire want to let you know that our newsletter is still very important to us and we hope it is helpful to you. Unfortunately, we have had some hard times in our group. Hearts on a Wire has seen members be re-incarcerated, relapse, struggle with unstable housing, face serious medical difficulties, and lose family members since we sent you the last newsletter. Our group is working hard to support members on the outside and continue to support our friends and community members who are locked up.

In spite of our difficulties, Hearts on a Wire remains fully committed to standing with you in solidarity. We have been working hard to release our report on the experiences of trans and gender variant people who have been incarcerated (see page 3). We will continue to create this newsletter. We could not have done either of those things without your contributions. Hearts on a Wire is inspired by and grateful for your writing, artwork, and other communications.

Hearts on a Wire is dedicated to stopping the mass incarceration of our communities and abolishing the prison system. Our primary goal is to continue to build relationships that are supportive and uplifting to our incarcerated community members. Please continue to be in touch and let us know how we can meet those goals.

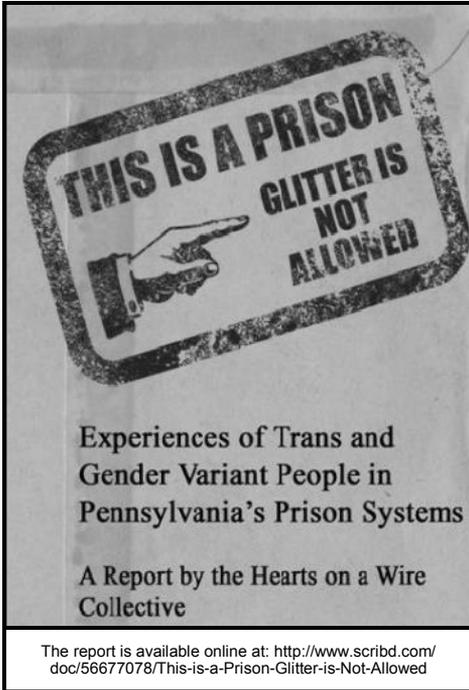
Sincerely,

Hearts on a Wire

New Report on trans/gender variant imprisonment in PA

Remember the survey some of us participated in a few years ago? We finally finished the report of the results!

We have paper copies of the report available for free for people who are currently locked up in Pennsylvania. Please write us to let us know if you want a copy!!!



Here is the Press Release:

The Hearts on a Wire Collective is excited to announce the release of a new report, *"This is a Prison, Glitter is Not Allowed,"* documenting the experiences of incarcerated trans and gender variant (T/GV) people in Pennsylvania. The result of a 4-year, community-based participatory research process, this report includes storytelling and statistical data to highlight the multiple ways mass imprisonment affects T/GV people as well as to recognize our creative strategies for resilience and transformative change.

Since 2007, Hearts on a Wire has been building a movement to address the policing and imprisonment of our trans and gender variant communities across Pennsylvania. Hearts on a Wire is a collective of trans and gender variant people inside and outside of Pennsylvania prisons. Hearts on a Wire, with the participation of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated transgender and gender variant individuals and help from prison activists and public health researchers, designed and implemented a survey to bridge the gap between our anecdotal knowledge of our communities' experiences in Pennsylvania's prison systems and the need for documentation of those experiences. With the aim of centering in our organizing the voices of the T/GV people most impacted by mass incarceration, the survey also asked participants to identify the changes they would like to see and strategies for implementing those changes. Hearts on a Wire views this participatory research process and its inside/outside organizing as intertwined processes. We hope the report informs community-led campaigns to address the harms of imprisonment on T/GV lives. This survey was the first study of its kind in the US.

thinking about silicone?

By Adrian Lowe, with substantial input from Miss Major Griffin-Gracy*

The practice of getting injected with loose silicone [“sil”] is common in many trans communities, especially among trans women of color on the East coast. The method was developed in South Asia in the 1950’s. Sex workers could make more money if their bodies appealed to the tastes of American GIs for large breasts. For many trans women coming home after a prison bid, “getting body” is high on the priority list of things to obtain in reentry. This is completely understandable after an extended period confined in an environment where both access to transition and respect for gender identity are limited or non-existent.

How it works

Silicone is a thick sticky liquid that becomes a solid. You might think that the silicone is what gives a person body, but actually the silicone is a foreign substance that the body reacts to by trying to isolate it with scar tissue. So what actually gives body is scar tissue forming around little bubbles of silicone.

things to consider:

Regulation

Silicone injection is not legal – therefore it is unregulated.

That means there is no state control over the qualifications of the practitioner, the quality of the work, the grade of the silicone, or the sanitary conditions.

Cost, Accessibility, Speed

Silicone injections are cheap compared to collagen injections and cosmetic surgery. In some communities sil is more accessible than other cosmetic procedures because there are fewer gate-keeping steps (like needing a therapist to sign off before surgery). Additionally, the results from loose silicone injections are immediate, giving people the body/face they want quicker than hormones (the effects of estrogen are not noticeable for months, and breast development may take several years).

Risks

Recently in Philadelphia there was a lot of media attention because a young woman died after getting loose silicone injections in her butt. It is unclear whether she was injected with medical grade silicone. Horror stories circulate about providers injecting people with industrial grade silicone from a hardware or auto parts store. Because it is an underground industry, it is up to the consumer to make sure that what is being used is medical grade silicone.

Even medical grade silicone can be dangerous. Sil sometimes causes an allergic reaction that can be fatal.

There may be long term effects. No one has studied the long term effects of loose sil. There have been studies of the effects of silicone breast implants leaking or bursting, which introduces loose silicone into the body. On the one hand, those studies didn’t find any long term effects. On the other hand, the implants and loose sil were removed as soon as they were discovered, so it doesn’t really give good information about the long term effects of sil that has been left in the body.

This is an injection with a massive needle. All the usual risks associated with injections apply here – risk of bacterial infections, and if needles are reused, risk of transmission of viruses like HIV and Hepatitis C. Again, it is up to the consumer to make sure the syringes are brand new.

unlike the needles used for drugs or hormones, there is no way to effectively clean a needle that has been used for silicone

If you decide to get sil injections:

- Choose someone whose work you have seen on other people.
- Choose a provider who has a good reputation in your community.
- Pay attention to how long ago the work was done – does it still look good a year later? 2 years? 5 years? 10 years?
- Choose someone who has never had a patient die.

Recommended: Do a small test shot and wait a few weeks to make sure you are not allergic.

Before-care

Because silicone injections change your shape and stretch your skin, it is important to have your skin be as moisturized and pliable as possible.

- Moisturize the area where you are going to get work done with elasticin lotion, cocoa butter, vitamin e or aloe.
- Drinking lots of water increases skin health and elasticity.

Aftercare

- Generally, do things which promote healing and health. Eat well. Drink liquids. Get enough rest. Avoid stress. And so on.
- Many practitioners recommend taking warm baths and massaging the affected areas to keep the silicone from clumping together while scar tissue is forming

Seek immediate medical attention at the first sign of itchiness, dizziness, or difficulty breathing. This could be a symptom of a potentially fatal allergic reaction.

- For at least the first week, you need to keep the area where the silicone was injected relatively still. For this reason it is recommended that you sleep in garments that hold shape and stay off the work (if you had work done on your rear, sleep on your front) There should be enough scar tissue after 2 weeks to hold sil in place.
- Don't get work done in more than one area at a time.

Long term considerations

- If you inject hormones, you should not inject them into an area where you have had silicone injections. Hormones need to go into muscle, not scar tissue, to be effective.
- Mammograms can't see through silicone, so special care is required to detect breast cancer.

questions to ask a provider:

Does the practitioner use new syringes?

Does the practitioner use medical grade silicone?

How was the practitioner trained?

How long has this provider been in practice?

Has the practitioner ever had a patient with serious complications?

*Miss Major Griffin-Gracy is the Executive Director of the Trans, Gender-variant Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP). The mission of the TGIJP is to challenge and end the human rights abuses committed against transgender, gender variant/ genderqueer, and intersex (TGI) people in California prisons and beyond.

342 9th Street, Suite 202B
San Francisco, CA 94103

Reentry Resource and Information

Recently, Hearts on a Wire received a request from a woman re-entering in Pittsburgh who wants to begin taking hormones when she is released. We are based in Philadelphia so we didn't know much about getting access to hormones on the other side of the state. After some research we came up with a couple of starting places for our friend. We wanted to make this information available to everyone...



Persad Center
5150 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
Phone: (412) 441-9786/(800) 873-7723
www.persadcenter.org

Persad Center is an organization that works with people who are LGBT and/or HIV positive. They offer counseling and other services and should have referrals to medical professionals who can help you with transition in the Pittsburgh area.

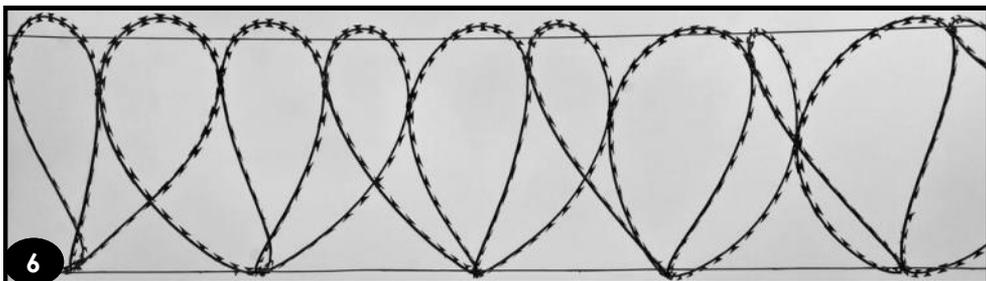
You may also want to contact the librarians at Philadelphia FIGHT. These individuals are often able to do research on different topics to assist with re-entry. Their contact information is:



The AIDS Library
1233 Locust Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 985-4492
www.aidslibrary.org

Know about a resource you think others should know about?

Write an article giving us your information.



We want to hear from you!

This newsletter depends on your submissions for content. We welcome your:

- Artwork (black and white)
- Letters responding to this edition
- Articles (on any topic)
- Poetry
- Commissary recipes
- Ideas for articles
- ¡Contribuciones en español son muy muy bienvenidos!
- We are looking for help translating articles into Spanish. If you are bilingual and would like to help with this project, please write to us!
- We are looking for a legal correspondent on the inside. We would send you research for you to write articles. Interested? Please write to us so we can get you started!

Thank you!!!

If you contribute something, make sure you tell us:

1. Exactly how you want to be credited [anonymous, your legal name & ID number, the name you use, a nickname, etc.]
2. Whether it's OK to say the facility you are/were in

Send to:
Hearts on a Wire
PO Box 36831
Philadelphia, PA 19107

subscribe!

If you would like **Hearts On a Wire** mailed to you, write to us and let us know. Subscriptions are **FREE** for incarcerated and detained people in any PA facility.

Hearts on a Wire

PO Box 36831

Philadelphia, PA 19107
