

HONORING OUR
COMPLEXITIES

FORGE FORWARD 2007 CONFERENCE

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN - MARCH 29-APRIL 1, 2007

PO BOX 1272, MILWAUKEE, WI 53201
CONFERENCE@FORGE-FORWARD.ORG 414-559-2123

Email Subject: Four FORGE Forward 2007 Conference Intensives Announced

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFORMATION: FORGE FORWARD 2007 Conference
PO Box 1272
Milwaukee, WI 53201
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August 1, 2006

HIV prevention and negotiating safer sex; building anti-racist coalitions; fostering a genderqueer dialogue; and training mental health professionals to work with transgender clients are four of the topics that will receive full-day attention at the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference and Intensives taking place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on March 29-April 1, 2007.

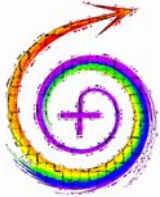
Selected specifically because of the topics' compelling importance to the transgender community and the reputations of their trainers/facilitators for providing high-quality, thought-provoking workshop experiences, the four Intensives are expected to draw not only those who will go on to attend the whole conference, but also professionals and other SOFFAs (Significant Others, Friends, Family, and Allies) who want to devote just one day to a specific work or personal interest.

These Intensives will take place on Thursday, March 29, 2007 and Friday, March 30, 2007 before the Conference's opening night plenary on Friday. Most of the Intensives have an attendance cap to ensure there is ample time to address individual participants' questions and needs, so early registration is highly recommended. The fee for a full Intensive is \$115 (before September 30), but heavy discounts are available for those attending more than one Intensive and/or the whole conference. Scholarships will also be available to low-income attendees. For more information on the conference or to register, go to www.forge-forward.org/conference, email conference@forge-forward.org, or call 414-559-2123.

Further information on the Intensives topics and presenters follows.

==> **HIV Prevention and Safer Sex for FTMs+ and Mental Health Providers** (Thursday, March 29)

This Intensive has it all: presentations of the latest data on HIV and trans people; paired, small, and whole group discussions about hot topics like negotiating sex and empowering community members; safer sex demonstrations; individual worksheets; and even a fishbowl exercise in which FTMs+ and mental health providers will discuss the best ways to incorporate HIV prevention into mental health practices. This Intensive is designed not only provide answers to the risk and safety questions trans people have about HIV, sex, and needles, but also to empower individuals to take better control of their health and wellbeing _and_ help build the community supports we need to keep all of us healthy and safe.



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Five highly-experienced, Wisconsin-based HIV experts and trainers will share responsibility for keeping this Intensive lively and relevant: Diverse & Resilient founder Gary Hollander, Ph.D., and Diverse & Resilient Director of Adult Services Brenda Coley; Molly Herrmann, Community Planning Coordinator for the Wisconsin AIDS/HIV program; Laura Gutnecht, transgender HIV trainer; and Hector Torres, Ph.D., a former Fellow with the Center for AIDS Intervention Resource.

==> Building Multi-Racial, Multi-Gender, Anti-Racist, Anti-Capitalist Trans Organizations, Coalitions and Movements (Friday, March 30)

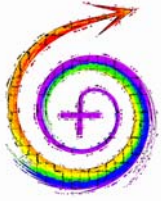
Through structured, interactive activities, Intensive participants will explore several interrelated themes:

- 1) How is racism often built into the structures of social justice movements, and how do we build structures for gender liberation work that have a deep commitment and lived practice of anti-racism?
- 2) How do we bridge cultural and community conversations between transwomen's communities, transmasculine communities, and SOFFAs to find common ground, address common misunderstandings, and move past hierarchizing our experiences of oppression?
- 3) How do we build organizations that focus on the needs of the most vulnerable people in our communities: prisoners, immigrants, poor people, youth, people of color?
- 4) How do different kinds of work such as law and policy reform, base-building organizing, media and public education work, and fundraising fit together in social movements? How can we prioritize these and work together?
- 5) What key issues in gender oppression are going under-addressed in current US trans activism? How can we change that context?
- 6) How do we envision the world we want to live in, rather than just reacting to constant attacks on our communities?
- 7) How do we connect gender liberation work with important social movements against racism, for immigrant rights, for workers' rights, against imperialism, and for women's liberation?

This Intensive will be conducted by staff of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), an innovative legal collective in New York City focused on justice for transgender, intersex, and gender non-conforming people. SRLP is founded on the understanding that gender self-determination is inextricably intertwined with racial, social and economic justice. Therefore, SRLP seeks to increase the political voice and visibility of low-income people of color who are transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming, and improve access to respectful and affirming social, health, and legal services. SRLP believes that in order to create meaningful political participation and leadership, people must have access to basic means of survival and safety from violence.

==> Beyond the Binary: Language, Longing, and Legitimacy (Friday, March 30)

This Intensive will use interactive dialogue, small and large group discussion, and experiential reflective exercises to engage members of the gender community who feel they don't "fit in." In the "language" part of the Intensive, participants will have the opportunity to explore the ways in which language both oppresses and liberates different aspects of personal identity, identify and share the language they prefer, and support each other in claiming that language. In the "longing" section, participants will put words to their longings and begin empowering themselves to achieve what they want. In "legitimacy," attendees will share stories about the varied ways in which we search for legitimacy, affirming not only the hurt and pain that comes with not finding it, but also the stories of success. The day will end with a synthesizing exercise to enable participants to walk away with more language, less longing, and a feeling of legitimacy that they can then transfer back to their day-to-day lives.



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Both presenters, Shane Whalley and Heather Davies, are Texas therapists and activists. Shane has lived between the boxes for over 10 years and finds freedom in making space for himself and others. Heather travels a different path around gender. She has a fluidity that means on any given day people who come in contact with her might find her flowing and more feminine or buttoned down and more masculine.

==> Understanding the Transgender Experience (From Letters to Surgery and Beyond): 101 for Providers (Friday, March 30)

Have you been thinking about working with transgender clients but don't know where to start? Then this Intensive is perfect for you. Designed especially for mental health professionals (who have specific roles to play in many transgender journeys), this 101 will also provide excellent groundwork for other types of professionals and even family and community members who are new to transgender issues. With a specific emphasis on the diversities present within the Female-to-Male (FTM) side of the transgender spectrum, the Intensive's training objectives include: 1) Helping participants understand the therapist's role in the decision-making process surrounding gender identity issues; 2) Presenting a more holistic, developmental perspective on trans identity in general than is available through the current medical model; 3) Explaining the historic paradigm of transition, including historical information about the development of the Standards of Care, and why this paradigm does not well serve the needs of transgender individuals; and 4) Providing information about the wide range of possibilities on the gender continuum.

Nationally-known FTM therapist and trainer Reid Vanderburgh makes up half of this Intensive's facilitator team. He holds an MA in Counseling Psychology and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with a private practice in Oregon. Approximately 90% of his clients are trans-identified in some way. Co-presenter Lore M. Dickey has completed the first year of his Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program at the University of North Dakota, and recently completed a study on the effectiveness of support groups for the FTM community.

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The FORGE Forward 2007 Conference's philosophy is inclusion-focused. We value individuality, diversity, and complexity -- believing that together, all of us make a stronger, more supportive and vibrant community.

For more information, contact
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