LETTER FROM SIROW STEERING COMMITTEE

On behalf of SIROW, we condemn the Supreme Court’s June 24, 2022 decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, undoing 50 years of precedent and stripping millions of their reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. The predicted consequences of this decision will be detrimental and far reaching, and its lasting ramifications revealed over the next weeks, months, and years.

We stand in solidarity with all who are affected both directly and indirectly by this dangerous ruling. As a provider of community-based participatory research, evaluation, and programming for more than four decades, with a mission to uplift diverse groups, SIROW knows that those we serve will be disproportionately affected by this ruling. These include any person who can get pregnant – cisgender women, transgender men, nonbinary and gender non-conforming folks – as well as their partners and families, their medical providers, and even more specifically, Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, immigrants, young people, people living in rural America, and those who are economically disadvantaged.

Research suggests that Arizona will be one of the states most impacted by the ruling. A 2019 analysis, updated in 2021, found that over 1.3 million Arizona women would be affected. The average distance to an abortion clinic would increase from 17 miles to 247, and the rate of abortion would drop by 40.3%.

Abortion will not be eliminated, it will only become harder to access, with undue hardship and risks. Beyond abortion, other reproductive care such as miscarriage management and infertility treatment will also be compromised – just an example of the numerous poorly-considered effects of this decision. And with the explicit call by Justice Thomas to revisit other rulings, hard-earned civil liberties, LGBTQ+ rights and others are likely also in jeopardy.

In this tumultuous time, SIROW remains steadfast in its commitment to uplifting marginalized communities and fighting for social justice. We will continue to contribute to positive social changes at individual, familial, and structural levels by challenging the status quo, facilitating the voices of those who experience disparity, working with diverse groups, and seeking innovative methods to improve conditions and context. If this work was important before, it is nothing short of vital now.

In solidarity,

SIROW Steering Committee – originally published July 2022
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends & Colleagues:

During the 2022-2023 year, SIROW continued to work diligently with their partners to develop, conduct, and disseminate collaborative outreach, education, intervention, and research projects to diverse groups. This annual newsletter highlights just some of the important efforts of SIROW researchers and collaborators. Here is a summary of the articles contained in this newsletter. You can skip down to each article by clicking on the article title.

Some of SIROW’s existing projects aim to address challenges experienced by youth. For example, in the article entitled SIROW Spectrum’s Summer Recap, Amy Lucero discusses Spectrum’s in-person summer camps for youth 13-24 years old who identify as LGBTQ+ or a straight ally. In his article, Youth Care, Zach Simmons discusses how the Youth Care project team works to address youth homelessness. In her article, The Ongoing Need for Change in Arizona Career & Technical Education, Tyler Le Peau discusses Project CHANGE that addresses roots of underlying gender inequities in the U.S. by encouraging enrollment in gender non-traditional career and technical education (CTE) programs throughout Arizona.

Jill Williams discusses how WISE Works to Better Understand STEM Disparities. She discusses an analysis of enrollment, retention, and graduation of students at the University of Arizona who are in STEM fields of study, such as engineering. Findings can be used to increase the diversity of people pursuing careers in STEM fields.

Workforce development is the main focus of the project Courtney Waters discusses in her article LGBTQ+ Equity Project Expanded Training Opportunities for Service Providers. The project seeks to improve LGBTQ+ cultural responsiveness among housing and other community service providers in Tucson and Southern Arizona.

SIROW continues its work improving public health and well-being in our community through numerous projects such as the one discussed in Beth Meyerson’s article Improving Access to Medication for Opioid Use Disorder in Arizona and Beyond! This article discusses work conducted to help improve access to medications for opioid use disorder. Read Corrie Brinley’s article, Everyone Counts: 2023 Pima County Street Count, to learn about SIROW’s work assessing the extent of homelessness in Pima County. These data are used to support requests for HUD funding to address homelessness. In his article, Addressing Mental Illness and Homelessness in Pima County, George Lopez discusses the success that the Health, Home, Hope project has had getting people stably housed. Finally, Monica Davis discusses SIROW’s continuing work aimed at reducing risk for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV in her article, New Dawn Warrior Women Sexual Health Education.

Please check out the list of SIROW Publications and SIROW’s webpage
For lists of publications, reports, and presentations showcasing findings of and lessons learned from SIROW projects.

Please visit our webpage if you are interested in learning more about current and completed SIROW projects and opportunities to get involved.

Thank you to all of our community partners and program participants who have supported and worked with SIROW! Your contributions are invaluable.

Jo Korchmaros, Ph.D. & Claudia Powell, M.Ed.
SIROW SPECTRUM’S SUMMER RECAP
by Amy Lucero – originally published August 2022

As we gear up for the Back-to-School season, we would like to look back and highlight Spectrum’s in-person summer camps. Spectrum is a wellness program for youth ages 13-24, with a focus on those who identify as LGBTQ+. Located at the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation’s (SAAF) Thornhill Lopez Center on 4th (526 N 4th Ave.), youth attended week-long interactive summer camps in June and July.

A word from our collaborator at SAAF describes how it felt to teach and learn with our youth over the summer, “It is so meaningful to help youth create a safe space where they can be themselves unapologetically” – Maizie Dunlap.

Each day started with a welcome and breakfast, and the day then progressed into a lesson about anatomy, healthy relationships, and STIs. Each lesson was accompanied by a fun and interactive activity for the youth.

The week allowed youth to get to know each other and discuss important topics with the Spectrum teaching team and support staff.

Some quotes from youth are as follows:

- “I had fun plus I got the opportunity to help my anxiety and talk more”
- “I think you all did well explaining the topics on hand! Thanks so much.”
- “I learned a lot more about STIs!”
- “I absolutely adored the participants and instructors here :) I’ll definitely be coming back”.

“I loved that we created an opportunity not only for youth to learn but also to come together and build relationships with one another.”

– SIROW Health Educator, Monica Davis

The Spectrum program also involves an evaluation component where youth are invited to complete surveys and meet at baseline and once more 6-months post summer camp. Spectrum enrolled 18 youth and provided 2 in-person HIV tests, 2 take-home HIV tests, and 6 mental health referrals during camp.

To learn more about Spectrum, be sure to follow them on Instagram spectrum_program and check out their website https://spectrumtucson.org/ for more information.
LGBTQ+ EQUITY PROJECT EXPANDED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

by Courtney Waters – originally published November 2022

As GLAAD.org explains, "The week before Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on November 20, people and organizations around the country participate in Transgender Awareness Week to help raise the visibility of transgender people and address issues members of the community face." You can go to GLAAD.org to find out more information about TDOR. Related to TDOR, read below to see SIROW’S expanded training opportunities for service providers related to providing affirming care to people who identify as LGBTQ+.

In 2019, Pima County was selected as a community to receive technical assistance and prevent and end homelessness for LGBTQ+ youth and youth of color through the Away Home America Grand Challenge. As an expansion of its work with the City of Tucson’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program and the Away Home American Grand Challenge, SIROW is leading the LGBTQ+ Equity Project. The project seeks to improve LGBTQ+ cultural responsiveness among housing and other community service providers in Tucson and Southern Arizona by offering a comprehensive on-demand training series.

Pre-recorded training modules, created by the SIROW LGBTQ+ Equity Project team, include topics such as queer history, social justice and intersectionality, LGBTQ+ 101, trans and nonbinary identities, fair housing, coming out and allyship, solidarity and confronting bias, and best practices for LGBTQ+ inclusion. The training series is accompanied by an interactive workbook that includes reflection questions, scenarios, and resources. The modules are live and are available to members of the Tucson-Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness via their online training center, accessible here. Those who complete the training series via the learning center earn a certificate. People who are not members of the Tucson-Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness can access the training via the University of Arizona here. However, we do not provide a certificate.

While the modules promote equity through individual-level training, SIROW’s LGBTQ+ Equity Project also encourages organizational-level change by providing a LGBTQ+ Inclusion Best Practices Checklist. The checklist allows organizations to examine their own practices and identify areas for improvement in serving LGBTQ+ clients and community members. Organizations wishing to delve further into addressing the best practices can request consultation through the capacity-building branch of SIROW’s Lighthouse Project.

SIROW is proud to contribute to LGBTQ+ Equity in Tucson through these resources. For more information contact Claudia Powell, claudiap@arizona.edu.
EVERYONE COUNTS: 2023 PIMA COUNTY STREET COUNT

By Corrie Brinley – originally published December 2022

Each year in January, SIROW works in partnership with the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) to conduct the annual Point-in-Time count (PIT), better known as the Everyone Counts! Pima County Street Count. Everyone Counts is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single day in January.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (CoC), like TPCH, conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered, as well as sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Everyone Counts aims to accurately assess the extent of homelessness in the Pima County community.

In order to achieve this lofty endeavor, SIROW calls together experienced members of various community-based organizations and 300+ community volunteers who work as interviewers to administer the Everyone Counts survey. Teams are assigned a sector of Pima County to survey and interview people who slept outside the night before. Those who are interviewed are thanked with a gift card for their time.

The data collected provides an evidence base for applying for HUD funding, as completion of the PIT count is a requirement for all communities that receive HUD funding. Data is also shared with various local agencies that work directly with housing, shelters, and other resources for people experiencing homelessness in an effort to better understand who in our community is experiencing homelessness and what service gaps exist in community systems.

SIROW needs volunteer support to make sure all people experiencing homelessness are counted! If you will be in Pima County, Arizona this January, please consider volunteering. Also, please share the Everyone Counts! Pima County Street Count registration link for volunteering with friends, family and colleagues who will be in Pima County at that time. This year, the count will take place on the morning of Wednesday, January 25, 2023.


Questions? Contact us: everyonecounts@tpch.net
SIROW’s Youth Care is a program that works with homeless youth ages 14-24 in Pima County to help navigate the often-complex network of supportive services that are already in place. When addressing youth homelessness, there are three main steps to becoming housed.

**Step one:** Become identified by a service provider and enroll into a program that helps youth advocate themselves and their needs.

**Step two:** Work with the team to obtain and complete all the necessary documentation required for a housing program. Connect with pertinent local resources which provide continuous support until the youth are able to support themselves.

**Step three:** Get accepted into a housing program and/or becoming financially stable enough to afford housing.

The Youth Care team is a collaboration between Our Family Services and partners directly with the City of Tucson, Tucson Pima Collaboration to end Homelessness (TPCH), and the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) to achieve our joint mission of ending youth homelessness. Together, we work with youth to quickly move through these steps as efficiently as possible.

When Youth Care team members meet with a Youth Care participant, we learn more about their individual goals and help create a plan to help the youth achieve their goals. These goals often include, obtaining identification documentation, applying for government benefits, networking with job training programs, acquiring healthcare referrals, gaining assistance with legal issues, enrolling in continuing education programs, entering sustainable housing programs, achieving financial stability, and so many more.

Ultimately, many people are not afforded the opportunities and privileges of being given a second chance or having a support network. Youth Care is there to provide these supports and second chances to youth who need it the most, regardless of their past.

If you know someone in Pima County who could benefit from the services of Youth Care, please reach out to Zachary Simmons at (740) 844-3065
IMPROVING ACCESS TO MEDICATION FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER IN ARIZONA AND BEYOND!

By Beth Meyerson – originally published February 2023

In April 2021, SIROW faculty Drs. Beth Meyerson, Keith Bentele, and Brenda Granillo received funding from the Vitalyst Health Foundation and the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) to help solve an important problem: Access to medication for opioid use disorder. Such medications, also known as “MAT” or “MOUD” but commonly including methadone, buprenorphine, suboxone, etc.; are the ‘gold standard’ treatments for opioid use disorder because they are safe and effective and have many other health benefits such as life stabilization and reduction of mortality.

MAT has historically been highly regulated and similar to regulation in the prison system. People on MAT are highly surveilled compared with patients on the same medication for pain management. The majority of methadone patients must show up in person at the clinic daily to take their medications. This kind of life disruption is what the SIROW team wants to change.

A window of opportunity opened during the pandemic because the federal government loosened key restrictions on MAT access to protect patients from COVID exposure while assuring MAT access. The funded study led by Dr. Meyerson measures the impact of federal policy flexibility on MAT access. Field interviews with 200 people on MAT during COVID in Arizona, a survey of 1000 Arizona MAT providers, and conversations with Tribal governments and the InterTribal Council of Arizona conducted by the study team will inform recommendations for policy and systems change.

“Our work is a prime example of a community-based action research project because it was generated in the community among our harm reduction partners (Southwest Recovery Alliance and Sonoran Prevention Works) and is driven by a statewide advocacy board (DPRAB: Drug Policy Research and Advocacy Board) comprised of MAT providers and people with lived experience,” said Dr. Meyerson. These organizations are funded for this work (along with SIROW) and people with lived drug misuse experience are advising the project and are being trained and paid to conduct the field interviews.

“The ‘action’ part of this project is the development of community-based civic engagement to translate the study findings into federal and state policy and practice changes through the DPRAB,” said Dr. Meyerson. “This is what the work of SIROW is all about.”

For more information, contact Beth Meyerson at bmeyerson@arizona.edu.
WISE WORKS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND STEM DISPARITIES

By Jill Williams – originally published March 2023

In early 2021, SIROW’s Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program received funding from the UA Office of Societal Impact and the Technology and Research Initiative Fund to conduct an intersectional analysis of STEM student outcomes at the University of Arizona. This intersectional analysis assessed the degree to which sex, under-represented minority status, first-generation status, and Pell-eligibility status affect the entry, persistence, and success of STEM students at the University of Arizona. We used Pell eligibility status as an indicator of household income as Pell Grants are awarded to students based on financial need. This project provided an opportunity to better understand the local STEM landscape at the University of Arizona (UArizona), while also working to create a common system for assessing disparities in outcomes.

The WISE team analyzed over 40,000 UArizona student records from between 2014-2020 in order to determine baseline differences in entry, persistence, and graduation rates for female, under-represented minority, first-generation, and Pell eligible students in STEM fields. We then conducted statistical analyses to assess the degree to which membership in any of these four social groups influenced the likelihood of particular STEM education outcomes, including persisting in STEM and graduating with a STEM degree.

The results of our analyses indicate statistically significant disparities in some STEM student outcomes across intersectional groups and offer a more fine-tuned understanding of the degree to which sex, under-represented minority status, first generation status, and Pell-eligibility status shape the likelihood that students will enter, persist, or succeed in STEM fields at UArizona. For example, our research shows that a Pell-eligible, first-generation, under-represented minority female who enters UArizona as a STEM major has a 57% likelihood of graduating with a STEM degree, whereas a non-under-represented minority, non-first generation, non-Pell eligible male student has an 81% likelihood of graduating with a STEM degree. This finding points to the continued importance of working to address disparities in STEM education outcomes in a way that attends to the various factors, including and beyond sex and gender-identity, that shape student experiences in STEM fields.

This type of intersectional analysis is critical for increasing knowledge of our local institutional context, informing targeted programming capable of addressing disparities, and providing baseline data from which to measure success. As we work with partners from across the institution to increase access to STEM careers and foster workforce development in critical fields, this report will help guide this work.

To read the full report https://wise.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/STEM%20OUTCOMES%20REPORT_Final.pdf
For more information, contact Jill Williams at jillmwilliams@arizona.edu or the new WISE Director, Stephanie Murphy at sumurphy@arizona.edu
THE ONGOING NEED FOR CHANGE IN ARIZONA CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

By Tyler LePeau - originally published April 2023

The goals of University of Arizona’s SIROW’s Project CHANGE (Career, Harassment, and Non-Gender Traditional Education) are clear:

(1) to increase gender nontraditional Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment and

(2) to promote safe and healthy Arizona schools.

Giving all students equal opportunities to pursue and thrive in the careers they are passionate about helps create a diverse and talented workforce and prevent workplace biases. Young women who are interested in CTE in the STEM fields stand to benefit as STEM careers for women can help narrow the gender pay gap. Typically, a STEM worker earns two-thirds more than those employed in other fields, according to the Pew Research Center.

Data from the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network shows that, in the 2018-2019 school year, Arizona had more students enrolled in nontraditional CTE classes than in previous years. However, there is still a need for gender nontraditional enrollment progress, particularly in certain CTE classes where the gender disparities are evident.

The figure below indicates gender disparities in Arizona CTE enrollment in secondary schools. Although only 22 male students enrolled in Human Services compared to 513 female students, the number of male students enrolled in Human Services increased from zero enrolled in 2008-2009. Enrollment for Science & Technology CTE for female students was low in 2018-2019—only 230 females enrolled compared to 1,034 males. However, female enrollment in this area improved considerably from an enrollment of 15 female students in 2008-2009. Not all Arizona CTE fields reveal such disparities in enrollment based on gender, yet the need for continuing Project CHANGE services to address existing disparities is evident.
During Project CHANGE presentations, students learn about the gender pay gap and how to think outside the gender box when it comes to their future opportunities in CTE classes and careers. They learn about preventing and addressing sexual harassment and cyberbullying—issues that may come up for students pursuing nontraditional careers.

Educators participating in Project CHANGE workshops learn about: (1) the issues nontraditional students face; (2) how to incorporate strategies for recruitment and retention of nontraditional students in their classrooms; and (3) best practices for promoting classroom environments that protect students from experiencing sexual harassment and cyberbullying. These issues are especially salient in the age of social media and online classroom environments where more online interaction between students is occurring than ever before.

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the SIROW Project CHANGE team facilitated 54 presentations to 1,348 students on gender and nontraditional careers, sexual harassment and cyberbullying. Staff also presented five workshops to 150 educators. The SIROW Project CHANGE team is on track to reach even more students and educators during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The team will continue to provide successful strategies for increasing interest in nontraditional CTE and career pathways.

For more information, contact Corrie Brinley at cbrinley@arizona.edu.
Mental Illness Awareness Month occurs annually in October, it gives us the opportunity to reflect on how mental illness impacts our homeless communities. The Health, Home, Hope project (H3) has gathered data from individuals experiencing homelessness in the Tucson community for the last four years.

El Rio Health Center leads H3 and provides mental and physical healthcare to project participants. For H3, El Rio partners with Old Pueblo Community Services to assist with housing. SIROW is the H3 project evaluator examining the needs of our community members in order to guide project activities as well as examining the impact of H3.

Findings of the H3 evaluation suggest that mental illness substantially contributes to homelessness. H3 evaluation findings suggest that untreated mental illness prevents individuals from maintaining stable housing and employment. In some cases, individuals self-medicating with illicit substances also impedes housing stability. Through the study, we have found that once individuals have been housed, their use of illicit drugs decreases and they are willing to participate in mental health services.

The H3 project is housing, on average, 10 individuals a month. In some cases, H3 houses families. As shown in the figure, the program participant success rate of clients getting housed within the six-month window is illustrated by a substantial reduction in the number of nights program participants have experienced homelessness during the past 30 days from baseline, or program intake, to 6 months post-baseline. On average at baseline, participants experienced 24.3 nights homeless in the past 30 days. At 6 months post-baseline, they experienced only 5.7 nights homeless on average. El Rio continues to provide wrap around services to address mental illness to ensure their housing stability.

This project, which is supported by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), has been successful in a multitude of ways due to the hard work of the participating agencies and their relentless will to help others in need. The understanding that mental illness is a contributing factor to obtaining and maintaining stable housing gives us the opportunity to work with each client and support them throughout the process.

For more information, please contact Claudia Powell, claudiap@arizona.edu.
In October 2022, The Haven, in partnership with SIROW and Pima County Health Department (PCHD), was awarded a three-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement New Dawn Warrior Women (NDWW). The overall purpose of NDWW is to enhance and expand access to affirming culturally tailored substance use disorder and co-occurring disorder treatment, harm reduction, and recovery support services for under-resourced Indigenous and Hispanic women in Arizona.

One of the recovery support services is the delivery of the women-centered, culturally tailored SIROW Sexual Health and Relationship Education intervention (SIROW-SHE). SIROW-SHE was adapted for NDWW by a collaboration of The Haven staff and previous SIROW-SHE participants.

The SIROW-SHE intervention includes six 2-hour long curriculum group sessions delivered weekly and a monthly testing opportunity for sexually transmitted infections (STI) by PCHD. The intervention is implemented at The Haven for their residential treatment clients. The topic sessions include: 1) Notions of Self and Sexuality; 2) Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy & Physiology; 3) Sexually Transmitted Infections; 4) Safer Sex Protection Methods; 5) Sex, Substance Use & Trauma; and 6) Recovery, Resiliency & Empowerment. Over 60 women have already received education sessions and 18 have received STI testing.

The initial intervention sessions integrated Indigenous ceremonial practices, including smudging and song, prior to commencing the session. These practices were also incorporated during the last session of the series. The response from participants regarding the education and the cultural practices has been overwhelmingly positive.

At the end of every session, participants are given the opportunity to ask anonymous questions which are addressed during the following session; however, some participants leave comments instead of asking questions. Below are some of the shared comments:

“Without this class I won’t have realized who I was and how many other people are like me #neverbeenalone”
“Your class has taught me more in one session than I have ever learned in school or any other class!”
“I just wanted to tell you how greatly I appreciate your knowledge and expertise. Thank you.”

As part of the evaluation of the intervention, a pre- and post-test are administered, in the post-test participants are asked about the inclusion of cultural practices in the curriculum. Thus far, 80% reported that they strongly agree that the cultural practices positively impacted their learning.

Future plans for NDWW include expanding the implementation of SIROW-SHE to women participating in The Haven’s intensive outpatient program. For more information about NDWW SIROW-SHE intervention, please contact Monica Davis at midavis@arizona.edu


Our Mission

Develop, conduct, and disseminate collaborative outreach, education, intervention, and research projects of importance to diverse groups.

Our Goals

- Engage in collaborative feminist research on topics pertinent to the lives of girls, women, and families;
- Develop and conduct outreach, education, service, research, and trainings with regard to mental and physical health, sexuality, legal matters, education, workforce, equity, diversity, and other issues;
- Address social inequalities and group-based disparities;
- Examine and support women’s contribution to literature, the arts, and Southwest heritage;
- Advocate for women and families by linking researchers with community organizations and policymakers;
- Identify, illuminate, and disseminate research on girls, women, families, and gender differences.

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