KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER

NASPA

**Research Summary
& Compilation
White Paper
Spring 2016**

CONTENTS

The White Paper is a resource provided by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Knowledge Community (KC) of NASPA in fulfillment of its mission to provide avenues for the personal and professional growth of its members, increase awareness and acceptance of GLBT professionals and students, and promote understanding of GLBT professional and student needs within the field of higher education and student affairs administration.

The KC produces White Papers, which are compilations of current and cutting-edge research summaries and briefs. The goal of the White Paper is to share knowledge and information about issues related to the status of the GLBT community in higher education that will prompt discussion, further research and showcase scholarship being conducted by students and professionals in the field. Higher education and student affairs professionals can consider these recent findings/results when tailoring programmatic and pedagogical efforts on their campus. All scholars, researchers and professionals are welcome to submit summaries or briefs about their scholarship to the White Paper; membership in NASPA is not a prerequisite.

The White Paper is meant to be a space that spurs innovation, further research, and experimentation. Although contributions are welcome from all who wish to submit, space is limited and we reserve the right to hold pieces for publication in future editions of the White Paper or other GLBT KC research publication venues (blog, website, newsletter, etc.). The Core Member(s) for Research & White Paper make all editorial decisions, including acceptance, feedback on content and placement in a particular publication, in consultation with an editorial board consisting of GLBT KC volunteer members.

Our editorial board is drawn from our primary audience: student affairs administrators and practitioners. The White Paper has been used previously as a forum to offer a summary or preview of an article that has been submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed or refereed journal but it does not qualify as a reputable trade or scholarly journal.

For more information about the submission guidelines, contact the KC leadership at glbtkc@gmail.com

Suggested APA Style Citation:
Barbour, C. (2014). The lived experiences of gay and lesbian college athletes. *National Association of Student Personnel Administrators GLBT Knowledge Community White Paper*. Spring. 7-10.

NASPA | KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER

University of Denver Q & A: A Model of Safe Zone Training for Multicultural Excellence Offices

Nick Ota-Wang | University of Colorado Colorado Springs | Nick.Ota-Wang@uccs.edu

Introduction

This summary of a larger capstone paper examines the Queer & Ally training program and network at the University of Denver, administered by the Center for Multicultural Excellence (CME), offering insights to consider for effective safe zone programming.

The Center for Multicultural Excellence (CME) at the University of Denver (DU)/Colorado Seminary offers programs and services to support students. One office, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Ally (LGBTIQ&A) provides students support services and a Queer & Ally (Q&A) training program and network. Similar to Safe Zone or Safe Space programs (Finkel, Storassli, Bandele, & Shafefer, 2003); the Q&A program provides LGBTIQ&A individuals with resources including teaching ways to speak with a staff, faculty, or fellow students about their own sexual or gender identity. LGBTIQ Allies also learn how to better support their LGBTIQ friends.

At DU, the Safe Zone Program has evolved over time. Created in 2000 at the Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP) as the DU Queer and Ally Commission (QAC), (Q&A Training Program/Network, n.d.) was the student training for diversity issues. In 2007, the QAC developed a new identity and curriculum with its move to CME. (Q&A Training Program/Network, n.d.). In 2007, based upon a campus-wide Queer and Ally Commission report, the QAC was expanded, renamed the Queer & Ally (Q&A) Training Network, and relocated to CME.

University campuses can be a lonely, uncomfortable, or even hostile place for LGBTIQ&A students because of the bigoted attitudes and misperceptions by their peers about who they are and are not and their acceptability (Eliason, 1997). Safe Zone Programs are designed to increase awareness, knowledge of, sensitivity to, and issues facing marginalized community members (Finkel, et al., 2003) with a focus on the specific and unique needs of the LGBTIQ&A community (Safe Zone, 2010). By focusing on inclusiveness and education, university-based Safe Zone Programs provide a safe place for advocacy, skill building, and partnerships for LGBTIQ&A student, faculty, and staff members (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008).

Poynter and Tubbs (2008) report that Safe Zone Programs share a common goal of "improving the campus climate, increasing awareness, enhancing conversations around LGBT issues, providing safe space, and providing skills to members to confront homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, or heterosexism" (p. 122-123). For many Safe Zone Programs, improving campus climates have been accomplished by focusing on developing Ally training programs. According to Evans (2002), educating and training Allies of and for the LGBTIQ&A communities about LGBTIQ&A issues can empower community members, especially those less empowered to know who are safe.

The Q&A Program supports the Association of American Colleges and Universities elements of inclusive excellence:

1. A focus on student intellectual and social development
2. Purposeful development and utilization of resources to enhance student learning.
3. Attention to the cultural differences learners brings to the educational experience.
4. A welcoming community that engages all of its diversity in the service of student and organizational learning (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005)

CME's programs and trainings are aimed to increase diversity awareness. Although not required for members of the university community, many trainings are taught as course requirements or experienced by those of voluntarily sign up for trainings.

Missing pieces from the Safe Zone Programs and Q&A Program literature are a theoretical model, program guidelines, and consistency between university programs. However, because these programs are responsive to local needs, Safe Zone Programs are not or should not be "cookie cutter" programs, but programs that should share general principles. Guidelines based on a theoretical model should be developed so universities who wish to establish a Safe Zone or similar programs can have benefit from existing program's experiences.

University campuses can be a lonely, uncomfortable, or even hostile place for LGBTIQ&A students because of the bigoted attitudes and misperceptions by their peers about who they are and are not. Safe Zone Programs are designed to increase awareness, knowledge of, sensitivity to, and issues facing LGBTIQ&A and other marginalized community members (Finkel, et al., 2003; Safe Zone, n.d., NYU's Ally Program, n.d.). Unlike many diversity programs offered on university campuses, Safe Zone Programs focus on the specific and unique needs of the LGBTIQ&A community (Safe Zone, n.d.). According to Poynter and Tubbs (2008), Safe Zone Programs should have a common goal of "improving the campus climate, increasing awareness, enhancing conversations around LGBT issues, providing safe space, and providing skills to members to confront homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, or heterosexism" (p. 122-123). By focusing on inclusiveness, Safe Zone programs have provided, a safe place for advocacy, skill building, and partnerships for LGBTQI&A student, faculty, and staff members (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008).

The traditional Safe Zone symbol is an upside down pink triangle in the middle of a green circle (Safe Zone, n.d.). Historically, the pink triangle was used in Nazi Germany to identify individuals (mostly men) who were or presumed to be gay or bisexual (Safe Zone NYU's Ally Program, n.d.). The green circle symbolizes welcome (Finkel, et al., 2003). The pink triangle and the green circle together symbolize a LGBTIQ&A safe haven.

Safe Zone Programs are based on inclusion, education, and partnerships between the LGBTQIA professional staff and the university community and emphasizes skills building about the "how to" conversation with potential anti-gay individuals (Poynter, 2007). When creating a Safe Zone Program, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has developed Safe Zone Program guidelines that include defining the terms when describing the program or the people, creating a clear mission statement, and knowing how supportive the university administration will be (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.).

Unfortunately, the Q&A Program is typical of many Safe Zone Programs in that it is atheoretical and has not benefitted from a program assessment. Nevertheless, the question remains of why do Allies advocate for the LGBTIQ community? To address this question, LBGT Ally Identity Theory (Vernaglia, 2000) provides a useful theoretical anchor for higher education and the DU Q&A Program.

Based on the Safe Zone Program, the Q&A program is designed for members and Allies of LGBTIQ to examine their LGBTIQ knowledge and biases and develop skills for dialogues with non-supportive LGBTIQ individuals. Unfortunately, common to Safe Zone Programs nationwide is an absence of theory when developing the program and according to Poynter and Tubbs (2008), "a lack of comprehensive information from others about how to implement, coordinate, facilitate training, and assess these programs. As a result, these programs can still be based on little shared knowledge or experience" (p. 123).

The Q&A Program at DU is an example of how a Safe Zone Program can be developed to meet the needs of a campus community. Having individuals trained through the Q&A Program is not only a benefit to the university but also helps the larger Denver community have individuals who are

knowledgeable about the LGBTIQ&A community. The current network (including network alumni) also helps community members with the work of furthering LGBTIQ inclusion.

Safe Zone Programs play an important role in helping make higher education a supportive place for LGBTIQ&A individuals. Recommendations about future directions for research and assessment and personal reflections will support the importance of Safe Zone programs.

LGBTIQ&A students on college campuses need additional support, and encouragement. One way to build a strong and safe community for LGBTIQ&A students is through Safe Zone Training. At DU. the Q&A Program has been an essential to help educate the community about what being LGBTIQ&A means providing a safe space for friends, strangers and Allies to become better informed about LGBTIQ issues.

References

About the Safe Zone Training (n.d.). *The meaning of the safe zone symbol.* Retrieved from: http://www.uwyo.edu/union/safezone/safezone-symbol.html

Alvarez, D., & Schneider, J. (2008). One college campus's need for a safe zone: a case study. *Journal of Gender Studies, 17*(1), 71-74. doi: 10.1080/0-9589230701838461

Ballard, S. L., Bartle, E., & Masequesmay. (2008). Finding queer allies: The impact of ally training and safe zone stickers on campus climate. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED517219

Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development. 41*(1), 3-18

Cawthon, T. & Guthrie, V. (2011). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students. In Cuyjet, M.J., Howard-Hamilton, M.F., & Cooper D.L. (Eds), Multiculturalism on campus: theory, models, and practices for understanding diversity and creating inclusion. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Colorado Anti-Violence Program (n.d.), *LGBTQ Terms and Definitions*, Retrieved from: http://cavp.omfound.org/sites/default/files/Terms%20and%20Definitions_1.pdf

D'Augelli, A. R. (1989). Lesbians' and gay men's experiences of discrimination and harassment in University Community. *American Journal of Community Psychology. 17*(3), 317-321.

DiStefano, T.M., Croteau, J.M., Anderson, M.Z., Kampa-Kokesch, S., & Bullard, M.A. (2000). Experiences of being heterosexual allies to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people: A Qualitative exploration. *Journal of College Counseling.* (3). 131-141.

Eichler, M. A. (2011). Joining the family: Experiences of being and becoming ally activists for LGBTQ people. *Journal of Transformative Education*, *8,* 89-102. (89). doi:10.1177/1541344611406904

Eliason, M. J. (1997). The prevalence and nature of biphobia in heterosexual undergraduate students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior. 26*(3), 317-236.

Evans, N. J. (2002). The impact of an LGBT Safe Zone Project on Campus Climate. *Journal of College Student Development.* 43 (4), pp. 522-538.

Evans, N.J., & Wall, V.A. (Eds) (1991). Beyond tolerance: gays, lesbians, and bisexuals on campus. Lanham, MD. American College Personnel Association.

Fingerhut, A. W. (2011). Straight allies: What predicts heterosexuals' alliance with the LGBT Community? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *41*(9) 2230 – 2248.

Finkel, M. J., Storaasli, R. D., Bandele, A., & Schaefer, V. (2003). Diversity training in graduate school: An exploratory evaluation of the safe zone project. *Professional Psychology Research and Practice,* 34 (5). 555-561. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.34.5.555

Gender Equality Resource Center, (n.d.), *Definitions of terms,.* Retrieved from: http://www.geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definition_of_terms

Getz, C & Kirkley, E.A. (2003). Identity development models: One size fits all? Heterosexual identity development and the search for "allies" in higher education. Paper presented at the 84th meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Human Rights Campaign (n.d.). *Establishing an allies/safe zone program,* Retrieved from http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/establishing-an-allies-safe-zone-program

Ji. P. (2008). Being a heterosexual ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community: Reflections and development. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy* 11 (3-4). 173-185. doi:10.1300/J236v11n03_10

Ji, P., & Fujimoto, K. (2013). Measuring heterosexual LGBT ally development: A Rasch Analysis. *Journal of Homosexuality 60*(12) 1695-1725. doi: 10.1080/00918369.834211

Jones, S.R. (2009). Constructing identities at the intersections: An autoethnoographic exploration of multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student* Development. *50*(3). 287-304. doi: 10.1353/csd.0.0070

Poynter, K. J. (2007). What are safe zones? In Baez, J., Howd, J., Pepper, R., & the staff of princeton review. The gay and lesbian guide to college life. A comprehensive resource for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and their allies. 165-168. New York, NY: The Princeton Review

Poynter, K. J., & Tubbs, N. J. (2007). Safe zones: Creating LGBT safe space ally programs. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 5*(1). 121-132. doi:10.1300/J524v05n01_10

Poynter, K. J., & Washington, J. (2005). Multiple identities: Creating community on campus for LGBT students. *New Directions for Student Serivces. 111.*pp. 41-47 doi:10.1002/ss.172

Q&A Training/Network (n.d.). *LGBTIQA Program & Services, Center for Multicultural Excellence at the University of Denver,* Retrieved from: http://www.du.edu/cme/programs-services/lgbtiqa/qna.html

Safe Zone NYU's Ally Program (n.d.) *NYU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Student Center*, Retrieved from: http://www.nyu.edu/life/student-life/student-diversity/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-queer-student-center/safezone.html.

Safe Zone. (n.d.), *North Dakota State University Safe Zone,* Retrieved from: http://www.ndsu.edu/safezone

Spencer, K.G. (2006). Mentorship and LGBT students: A key to professional growth: In APAGS resource guide for LGBT students in psychology. 37-39. Washington D.C.: the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students

Talburt, S., & Steinbert, S. S. (Eds.). (2000). Thinking queer: Sexuality, culture, and education. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Tetreault, P.A., Feete, R., Meidlinger, P.C., & Hope, D., (2013). Perceptions of campus climate by sexual minorities. *Journal of Homosexuality 60*(7) pp. 947-964. doi:10.1080/00918369.2013.774874

Vaccaro, A. (2012). Campus microclimates for LBGT faculty, staff, and students: An exploration of intersections of social identity and campus roles. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 49*(4). 429-446.

Vernaglia, E.R. (2000). Parents as straight allies: A qualitative study of the experiences of heterosexual parents in the gay rights movement. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: the Sciences & Engineering, 61,* 110.

Williams, D. A., Berger, J. B., & McClendon, S. A. (2005). *Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Modern LGBT Students: Navigating Issues of Well-Being in Higher Education

Liz Avery, Samantha Harwood, Brad Jones, Sarah B. Potter & Michelle Boettcher, Ph.D |
Clemson University | eavery@clemson.edu, skharwo@clemson.edu, djones1@clemson.edu,
spotter@clemson.edu, mboettc@clemson.edu

Introduction

Higher education professionals must consider the specific needs, challenges, and nuances of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students in order to adapt to the current campus environments to meet the needs of diverse collegiate populations. LGBT students are gaining visibility on college campuses. Their adjustment to and well being as a part of campus life are important areas to examine in order to better understand this population of students. For the purposes of this study, well-being is defined as the state in which "mind, body, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community" (Witmore & Sweeney, 1998, p. 43-44). This study will focus specifically on the five "higher order dimensions" of wellness and well-being as defined by Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney (2004): creative self, coping self, social self, essential self, and physical self.

The well-being of LGBT students is an emerging topic in higher education; however, there is still a gap in helping these students to better transition to, feel safe, and feel welcomed on their campuses as Weiler (2003) wrote, "A school's climate is a significant determinant of whether an environment is healthy and conducive to learning" (p. 2). While the literature states that LGBT students have a growing voice on college campuses, there is still a long way to go.

> While some colleges and universities acknowledge the presence of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB)—or sexual minority—students on their campuses, few institutions gather and maintain data on the numbers or needs of sexual minority students. As a result, many sexual minority students in higher education tend to be invisible; therefore, their presence and experiences are known only anecdotally… (Sanlo, 2005, p. 97)

With this in mind, we propose a study on how modern LGBT students navigate issues of well-being in a higher education setting through a qualitative research process. The setting for this study is a public, land-grant, research institution in the Southeast. To conduct this study, we will interview several students who identify as members of the LGBT community. As researchers, we understand and acknowledge that this acronym does not represent all sexual and gender identities, and therefore for this study we are choosing to use it as an umbrella term for all who may fall under this identity to be consistent with current scholarly literature.

Literature Review

Experiences of LGBT students on college campuses have received little scholarly attention compared to other diverse student groups, rendering them a less visible student population. Some universities record the numbers of LGBT students in their demographic information but few maintain documentation of the needs and individual experiences of those students (Sanlo, 2005). Many key scholars have explored issues of campus climate through the lens of race (Garvey, 2015; Herek, 1993). While the experiences of students with underrepresented racial identities differ greatly, campus can feel unsafe in many of the same ways for racially underrepresented and LGBT students. Anecdotal accounts of their experiences far outweigh peer-reviewed scholarly evidence, and several gaps exist in understanding the holistic experience of the LGBT college student (Bilodeau & Renn,

2005; Sanlo, 2005). There is evidence, however, that suggests strongly that LGBT students face unique challenges that supplement those seen among their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts (di Bartolo, 2013; Rankin, 2005; Renn, 2004; Sanlo, 2005). We plan to explore these challenges and the impact they have on the well-being of LGBT students by examining the holistic college experiences of our participants.

Several models describe the process through which LGBT students develop their sexual identity (Cass, 1979, 1984; D'Augelli, 1994; Fassinger, 1996). These models serve as the theoretical framework on which much research surrounding LGBT students is founded, but there are limitations to these theories. These theories focus on gay and lesbian experiences, often leaving out other sexual and gender identities. LGBT populations and gender non-conforming populations tend to be lumped together (di Bartolo, 2013) though their experiences differ greatly (Renn, 2004, 2007; Weiler, 2003). Negative issues related to well-being may delay disclosure of LGBT student identities or prohibit them from ever coming out at all (di Bartolo, 2013; Renn, 2004; Weiler, 2003). Overall, LGBT student well being can impact sexual identity formation (di Bartolo, 2013; Sanlo, 2005). Our exploration is limited to students who have progressed enough in their identity development to be out and involved with the campus GSA, but through their stories we can delve into their well being and development in the context of this campus.

Specific elements of campus climate that pose challenges to LGBT student well-being and include a variety of risks. LGBT students are likely to experience heterosexist and homophobic harassment on campus, particularly if they are out (di Bartolo, 2013; Rankin, 2005; Renn, 2004; Sanlo, 2005). Due to harassment by peers, LGBT students may develop feelings of non-inclusion or wrongdoing. In addition, many endure problems with academic engagement and campus engagement because of an overall feeling that they don't belong on campus, which creates the risk of non-retention (D'Augelli, 1992; Nunn & Bolt, 2015; Woodford & Koolick, 2015). Research also finds that a lack of healthcare available to this population creates higher vulnerability to mental and physical health risks (Platzer, 1999; Sanlo, 2005). We plan to engage with participants about risks they have or have not experienced to explore the effects those risks have had on their well being.

In addition to physical safety, LGBT students face a lack of support elsewhere on campus. LGBT students may not have their voices heard or their concerns acknowledged in a welcoming educational environment on campuses without the allocation of specific services and resource centers (Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002). Without these resources, LGBT students' ability to find peers, faculty, and staff who may openly support them can be difficult. Because that hinders social integration and institutional satisfaction (Woodford & Kulick, 2015; Renn, 2010), we plan to explore the negative impact on well being that results from a lack of resources.

Sanlo (2005) described resiliency as a combination of coping techniques and psychological well being. Students who identify within the LGBT community face struggles unique to their experiences that impact their ability to successfully navigate difficulties in college (di Bartolo, 2013; Rankin, 2005; Renn, 2004; Sanlo, 2005). The number of LGBT students who remain on campus and graduate with a degree is lower than non-LGBT students (Nunn & Bolt; 2015; Renn, 2010; Sanlo, 2005). Researchers have, however, determined that there are external factors that impact resiliency positively such as involvement in student organizations and leadership opportunities (Renn, 2008, Stevens, 2004). As we explore the experiences of our participants we will examine the ways that involvement enhances resiliency and impacts overall well being.

Research Design

The primary question for our research is: How do LGBT students navigate issues of well-being in higher education? In order to answer this question, we will be sending out a survey to the listserv for a gay/straight alliance as well as a LGBT counseling support group at a land-grant

institution in the Southeast. We are sending this demographic survey to find self-selected, volunteers to participate in our study. From this survey, we will choose four individuals to participate in the interview process. These interviews will be conducted with two of the researchers present. Voice recorders will be used to document the interview.

      For this study, we will be taking a constructivist worldview. According to Creswell (2002), this approach looks to the individual's' meaning-making of the world. "These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than narrow meanings" (Creswell, 2002, p. 8). As constructivist researchers, we will seek to understand the individual's' experiences and interactions around their LGBT identity. In order to conduct our study with a constructivist worldview, we will use a semi-structured interview format, asking the participants open-ended questions to allow the participants to explore their experiences and make meaning of them. The questions used will encourage the sharing of individual narratives.

      We will be using several contacts on the institution's campus as resources including the social justice coordinator, a campus task force on LGBT issues, a graduate student working with the LGBT community on campus, and campus counseling staff. All of these individuals have worked with the LGBT community on campus and are experts on these students. The graduate student working with the LGBT population on campus is also the advisor for the gay/straight alliance and can be a liaison between the researchers and the student group. Another campus resource we will be talking with is the LGBT taskforce. This group will give us perspective on the progress that the campus has made and future plans for increasing LGBT inclusion.

References

Bilodeau, B., & Renn, K. (2005). Analysis of LGBT identity development models and implications for practice. *New Directions for Student Services, 1*(111), 25-39. doi: 10.1002/ss.171.

Cass, V. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of Homosexuality, 4*(3), 219-235.

Creswell, J. (2002). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

D'Augelli, A. (1992). Lesbian and gay male undergraduates' experiences of harassment and fear on campus. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 7*(3), 383-395. doi: 10.1177/088626092007003007.

Evans, N., Forney, D., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Garvey, J. C., Taylor, J. L., & Rankin, S. (2015). An examination of campus climate for LGBTQ community college students. *Community College Journal Of Research & Practice, 39*(6), 527-541. doi:10.1080/10668926.2013.861374

Fassinger, R. (1998) Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity and student development theory. In R.L. Sanlo (Ed.), *Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students: A handbook for faculty and administrators (13-22).* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Hattie, J., Myers, J., & Sweeney, T. (2004) A factor structure of wellness: Theory, assessment, analysis, and practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 82*(3) 354-364. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2004.tb00321.x

Herek, G. (1993). Documenting prejudice against lesbians and gay men on campus. *Journal of Homosexuality, 25*(4) 15-30. doi: 10.1300/J082v25n04_02.

Hershberger, S., & D'Augelli, A. (1995). The impact of victimization on the mental health and suicidality of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths. *Developmental Psychology, 31*(1) 65-74. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.31.1.65.

Nunn, L. M., & Bolt, S. C. (2015). Wearing a rainbow bumper sticker: Experiential learning on homophobia, heteronormativity, and heterosexual privilege. *Journal Of LGBT Youth, 12*(3), 276-301. doi:10.1080/19361653.2015.1045963

Rankin, S. R. (2005). Campus climates for sexual minorities. *New Directions for Student Services, 2005*(111), 17-23.

Renn, K., & Bilodeau, B. (2008). Queer student leaders: An exploratory case study of identity development and LGBT student involvement at a Midwestern research university. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 2*(4), 49-71.

Renn, K. (2007). LGBT student leaders and queer activists: Identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identified college student leaders and activists. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(3), 311-330.

Renn, K. (2010). LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher, 39*(2), 132-141. doi: 10.3102/0013189X10362579.

Stevens, R. (2004). Understanding gay identity development within the college environment. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(2), 185-206.

Sanlo, R. (2005). Lesbian, gay and bisexual college students: Risk, resiliency and retention. *Journal of College Student Retention, 6*(1) 97-110. doi: 10.2190/FH61-VE7V-HHCX-0PUR.

Sanlo, R., Rankin, S. & Schoenberg, S. (2002). *Our place on campus: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender services and programs in higher education.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Weiler, E. (2003). Making school safe for sexual minority students. *Principal Leadership Magazine, 4*(4), 10-13.

Witmer, J. M., & Sweeney, T. J. (1998). Toward wellness: The goal of counseling. In T. J. Sweeney (Ed.), *Adlerian counseling: A practitioner's approach.* Philadelphia, PA: Accelerated Development, Taylor & Francis Group.

Woodford, M., & Kulick, A. (2015). Academic and social integration on campus among sexual minority students: The impacts of psychological and experiential campus climate. *American Journal Of Community Psychology, 55*(1/2), 13-24.

Perceived Burdensomeness, Thwarted Belongingness, and Acquired Capability: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Students' Suicidal Ideation and Behaviors

Rachel Ploskonka | Purdue University | rploskon@purdue.edu

Introduction

This brief summarizes and introduces a study being conducted to investigate suicide behaviors and ideation among LGB college students. Research has suggested that LGB college students are likely to experience unique interpersonal risk factors because of the hostility, harassment, and even physical violence they experience (Oswalt & Wyatt, 2011). Researchers and theorists posit that these additional interpersonal risk factors, combined with negotiating the typical transitional challenges faced by college students (e.g., adapting to the academic workload), may explain LGB college students' heightened rates of suicidal ideation and behaviors (Drum et al., 2009).

Although no specific theory exists regarding LGB college students' suicidal ideation and behaviors, Joiner's (2005) interpersonal psychological theory of suicide seems to offer a fitting framework for conceptualizing suicidal ideation and behaviors in LGB college students because LGB college students often experience interpersonal risk factors that could contribute to their heightened suicidal risk (Haas et al., 2011; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Joiner (2005) highlighted three factors – perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability – as being the underlying causes of suicide within the general population. Joiner's (2005) theory has been applied and affirmed through research with various populations, including college students (Lamis, Malone, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Ellis, 2010; Van Orden et al., 2008b). However, relatively little research exists regarding the relationship between suicidal ideation and behavior in LGB college students using Joiner's theory.

With regard to Joiner's (2005) factors, perceived burdensomeness could be related to LGB college students' suicidal ideation because perceived burdensomeness may be associated with experiences of interpersonal, institutional, and societal discrimination as well as negative interactions with others (Silva, Chu, Monahan, & Joiner, 2014). Specifically, LGB college students' exposure to discrimination and negative interpersonal interactions could result in self-hatred and feelings of being a liability to others (Haas et al., 2011; Silva et al., 2014). Limited research has seemingly affirmed the relationship between perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation in LGB individuals wherein significant positive correlations were found between suicide-related thoughts and perceived burdensomeness for LGB adults (Cramer, Stroud, Fraser, & Graham, 2014; Hill & Petit, 2012).

Thwarted belongingness, which is often assessed by measuring individuals' social connectedness and social support, has also been preliminarily associated with suicidal ideation in LGB college students (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden et al., 2010). Thwarted belongingness may be uniquely experienced by LGB college students because their sexual orientation may impose an invisible barrier in developing intimate interpersonal relationships with others, which could lead to social isolation (D'Augelli, 1994). Research on LGB college students suggests a link between social support and mental health issues often associated with suicide, such as depressive symptoms, wherein a lack of social support is positively correlated with depressive symptoms (Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010; Shilo & Savaya, 2012). Furthermore, LGB college students have four primary interpersonal connections, which are to their family, peers, academic institution, and sexual orientation community (Darling, McWey, Howard, & Olmstead, 2007; Drum et al., 2009). Research findings indicate that these four unique spheres of belongingness are significantly associated with

LGB college students' mental health (Haas et al., 2011; Shilo & Savaya, 2012; Ueno, Gayman, Wright, & Quantz, 2009).

Acquired capability, which is Joiner's (2005) third factor, may be heightened for LGB college students because LGB individuals are more likely to be victims of traumatic events, including physical and sexual assault, because of antigay hate crimes (Balsam, Rothblum, & Beauchaine, 2005; Ryan et al., 2010). These experiences could result in an elevated pain tolerance, and consequently heightened acquired capability. The limited research on acquired capability and suicidal behaviors in LGB individuals suggests that acquired capability is significantly associated with suicide attempts (Ploderl, Sellmeier, Fartacek, Pichler, Fartacek, & Kralovec, 2014).

Significance and Application to Practice

First, because perceived burdensomeness is likely associated with experiences of discrimination as well as negative interactions with others, university staff should make intentional efforts at individual and institutional levels to reduce, and ideally eliminate, discrimination as well as make active efforts to ensure that individual interactions with LGB college students are affirming and supportive. Furthermore, LGB college students experiencing thwarted belongingness across multiple or all spheres of belongingness (i.e., family, peer, academic institution, sexual orientation community) may be at greater risk for suicidal ideation than those who experience a lack of belongingness within one sphere. Thus, individuals working with LGB college students should consider incorporating strategies that facilitate their development of connections with individuals within one or more of the spheres of belongingness. Finally, because acquired capability uniquely links to suicidal behavior, a difference may exist between LGB college students who simply experience suicidal ideation and LGB college students who choose to act on their suicidal thoughts. Thus, LGB college students who are exhibiting suicidal behaviors may need additional, specialized support services beyond LGB college students who are experiencing suicidal ideation but not engaging in suicidal behaviors. My active research project seeks to explore these issues.

References

Balsam, K. F., Rothblum, E. D., & Beauchaine, T. P. (2005). Victimization over the life span: a comparison of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual siblings. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 73, 477-487. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.73.3.477

Cramer, R. J., Stroud, C. H., Fraser, T., & Graham, J. (2014). A trait interpersonal analysis of suicide proneness among lesbian, gay, and bisexual community members. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 44, 601-615. doi:10.1111/sltb.12092

Darling, C. A., McWey, L. M., Howard, S. N., & Olmstead, S. B. (2007). College student stress: the influence of interpersonal relationships on sense of coherence. Stress and Health, 23, 215-229. doi:10.1002/smi.1139

D'Augelli, A. R. (1994). Identity development and sexual orientation: Toward a model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development. In E. J. Trickett, R. J. Watts, & D. Birman (Eds.), Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context (pp. 312-333). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Drum, D. J., Brownson, C., Denmark, A. B., & Smith, S. E. (2009). New data on the nature of suicidal crises in college students: Shifting the paradigm. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 40, 213–222. doi:10.1037/a0014465

Frost, D. M. & Meyer, I. H. (2012). Measuring community connectedness among diverse sexual minority populations. Journal of Sex Research, 49, 36-49. doi:10.1080/00224499.2011.565427

Haas, A. P., Eliason, M., Mays, V. M., Mathy, R. M., Cochran, S. D., D'Augelli, A. R., … Clayton, P. J. (2011). Suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations:

Review and recommendations. Journal of Homosexuality, 58, 10-51. doi:10.1080/00918369.2011.534038

Hill, R. M., & Pettit, J. W. (2012). Suicidal ideation and sexual orientation in college students: The roles of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and perceived rejection due to sexual orientation. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 42, 567-579. doi:10.1111/j.1943-278X.2012.00113.x

Hunt, J., & Eisenberg, D. (2010). Mental health problems and help-seeking behavior among college students. Journal of Adolescent Health, 46, 3-10. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.08.008

Joiner, T.E. (2005). Why people die by suicide. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

King, M., Semlyen, J., Tai, S. S., Killaspy, H., Osborn, D., Popelyuk, D., Nazareth, I. (2008). A systematic review of mental disorder, suicide, and deliberate self harm in lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. BMC Psychiatry, 8, 70. doi:10.1186/1471-244X-8-70

Kline, R. B. (2011). Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (3rd edition). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Lamis, D. A., Malone, P. S., Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J., & Ellis, T. E. (2010). Body investment, depression, and alcohol use as risk factors for suicide proneness in college students. Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention, 31, 118-127. doi:10.1027/0227-5910/a000012

Oswalt, S. B., & Wyatt, T. J. (2011). Sexual orientation and differences in mental health, stress, and academic performance in a national sample of U.S. college students. Journal of Homosexuality, 58, 1255-1280. doi:10.1080/00918369.2011.605738

Pittman, L. D., & Richmond, A. (2007). Academic and psychological functioning in late adolescence: The importance of school belonging. The Journal of Experimental Education, 75, 270-290. doi:10.3200/JEXE.75.4.270-292

Ploderl, M., Sellmeier, M., Fartacek, C., Pichler, E. M., Fartacek, R., & Kralovec, K. (2014). Explaining the suicide risk of sexual minority individuals by contrasting the minority stress model with suicide models. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 43, 1559-1570. doi:10.1007/s10508 014 0268 4

Rudd, M. D. (1989). The prevalence of suicidal ideation among college students. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 19, 173-183. doi:10.1111/j.1943-278X.1989.tb01031.x

Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R. M., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 23, 205–213. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x

Shilo, G., & Savaya, R. (2012). Mental health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and young adults: Differential effects of age, gender, religiosity, and sexual orientation. Journal of Research on Adolescence, 22, 310-325. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2011.00772.x

Silva, C., Chu, C., Monahan, K. R., & Joiner, T. E. (2014). Suicide risk among sexual minority college students: A mediated moderation model of sex and perceived burdensomeness. Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 2, 22-33. doi:10.1037/sgd0000086

Slaten, C. D., Thomas, R., & Baskin, T. W. (2008, March). A Measurement of Adolescent Belongingness: Counseling Psychology Perspective. Poster session presented at the International Counseling Psychology Conference, Chicago, IL.

Ueno, K., Gayman, M. D., Wright, E. R., & Quantz, S. D. (2009). Friends' sexual orientation, relational quality, and mental health among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Personal Relationships, 16, 659-670. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.2009.01245.x

Van Orden, K. A., Cukrowicz, K. C., Witte, T. K., & Joiner, T. E. (2012). Thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness: Construct validity and psychometric properties of the

Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire. Psychological Assessment, 24, 197-215. doi:10.1037/a0025358

Van Orden, K. A.,Witte, T. K., Cukrowicz, K. C., Braithwaite, S., Selby, E. A., & Joiner, T. E. (2010). The interpersonal theory of suicide. Psychological Review, 117, 575-600. doi:10.1037/a0018697

Van Orden, K. A., Witte, T. K., Gordon, K. H., Bender, T. W., & Joiner, T. E., Jr. (2008a). Suicidal desire and the capability for suicide: Tests of the interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior among adults. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 76, 72-83. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.76.1.72

Van Orden, K. A., Witte, T. K., James, L. M., Castro, Y., Gordon, K. H., Braithwaite, S. R., Joiner, T. E., Jr. (2008b). Suicidal ideation in college students varies across semesters: The mediating role of belongingness. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 38, 427-435. doi:10.1521/suli.2008.38.4.427

Williams D. R., Yu, Y., & Anderson, N. B. (1997). Racial differences in physical and mental health: Socioeconomic status, stress, and discrimination. Journal of Health Psychology, 2, 335-351. doi:10.1177/135910539700200305