THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON LGBTQ YOUTH AND STRATEGIES FOR
PREVENTION

by

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This paper is a review of the literature on LGBTQ bullying and preventive

strategies. The reader will find the historical background, rationale, reviews of

peer-reviewed quantitative and qualitative studies, and implications concerning

the topic. Themes emerged from the findings of the peer-reviewed studies, which

include: 1. The severity of the bullying of LGBTQ youth depended on school

climate, location, and race, ethnicity, gender atypicality, and citizenship status, 2.

Bullying may have caused / increased depression, suicidality, drug use, rates of

unsafe sex, alcohol use, tobacco use, and bullying may also have caused

students to skip school, withdraw from social events, and perform poorly

academically, and 3. Students suggested that a better school climate, supportive

teachers and staff, and safe spaces can decrease bullying of LGBTQ students.

Within this paper is information that teachers, as active members of the

community, can use to become advocates of LGBTQ youth.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

One might argue that the purpose of the American K-12 school system is to facilitate the growth of future active citizens. The adults of tomorrow's world need skills to work well with diverse groups of people. The population of our country is becoming more diverse with each passing day. When members of a community neglect a specific group, they prevent the possibility or maintenance of a healthy, happy, productive community. Our communities need children who will grow into accepting, empathetic adults who will care about all people. LGBTQ students often suffer bullying in middle and high school. Middle and high school teachers can promote acceptance of LGBTQ students and community members through curriculum and advocacy efforts.

Most, if not all, students in middle school or high school share a classroom with another student who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ). These LGBTQ students may experience significant problems as a result of being bullied or harassed. Even heterosexual and cisgender allies of these students may experience problems as a result of being bullied. According to GLSEN's 2009 school climate survey, nearly three-quarters of LGBT students heard homophobic or sexist remarks often or frequently at school, nearly nine out of 10 students heard the word "gay" used in a negative way often or frequently at school, and nearly two-thirds of students heard homophobic remarks from school personnel (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, and

Bartkiewicz, 2010). Sexual orientation and gender expression were the most common reasons LGBT students suffered harassment or assault at school (Kosciw, et al., 2010).

Nearly 90% of these students reported being verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientations, nearly two-thirds reported being verbally harassed because of their gender expressions, four in 10 students reported being physically harassed at school because of their sexual orientations, nearly one in five students reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientations, and the vast majority of students reported relational aggression (Kosciw et al., 2010). These studies show that many students suffer in schools—schools which should be a place to learn, play, and socialize—because of prejudice. As a result, many people carry their wounds from their school years for the rest of their lives. Wounded children become wounded adults—adults who may not be able to be successful in life or achieve their dreams as a result of being bullied in school.

It is a fact that many LGBTQ youth suffer bullying, but what are the effects of such bullying, and knowing these effects, what are strategies for prevention? According to research, LGB and sexually-questioning youth were more likely to report high levels of bullying, homophobic victimization, and various negative outcomes than their heterosexual classmates (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). Questioning students reported the most bullying, the most homophobic victimization, the most drug use, the most feelings of depression and suicidality,

and more truancy than either heterosexual or LGB students (Birkett et al., 2009).

A positive school climate may moderate the effects of bullying for LGBTQ youth.

As part of a positive school climate, teachers may wish to incorporate

strategies for prevention of bullying. One such strategy that might be of interest

to teachers includes educating students so they can know how to avoid bullying

or to be allies. Teachers might want to consider teaching students how to

empathize with others different from themselves. Inaction by teachers allows the

hatred and oppression of LGBTQ people to continue. Once students become

adults, they will live in communities with diverse populations and they will work

with diverse groups of people. These students and future adults cannot avoid

interaction with people different from themselves, and the ability to not only

tolerate, but to accept others as valued members of the community is necessary

to becoming active citizens.

Rationale

Since it is important for our nation's children to become active citizens in

their communities and since active citizens interact with and value people

different from themselves, something must be done to incite change. Those with

the ability to do so must educate everyone about the harmful effects of bullying

on LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ students suffer bullying and harassment in our nation's

schools. According to the 2009 GLSEN school climate survey, six in 10 LGBT

students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientations,

four in 10 reported feeling unsafe at school because of how they expressed their

genders, and more than a quarter of students missed classes or entire days of

school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (Kowsic et al., 2010). Since

many may not be openly LGBT out of fear, the numbers may be even higher, and

many may not feel safe reporting their experiences.

Not only do these students experience difficulty because of missed days

of school, but both bullies and their victims are also at risk for mental illness.

Bullies may experience victimization themselves, and 30% to 40% of bullies have

shown some level of depression (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001). Also, as

adults, bullies may be more likely to engage in criminal activity. In one study, it

was found that "the probability of offending up to 11 years later was much higher

for school bullies than for non-involved students" (Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, &

Lober, 2011). In another study by Farrington and Ttofi (2009), bullies tended to

express low empathy, low school attainment, hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and

attention deficit disorder, while victims tended to suffer from low self-esteem and

low school attainment. Victims also tended to be lonely, unpopular, rejected, and

friendless (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

Victims of bullying may develop mental illnesses that impair learning, such

as tic disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, eating disorders, anxiety,

depression, and sleep disorders. When victims continually experience a lack of

safety, those experiences can trigger responses from the older, "emotional" parts

of the brain, which include the amygdala, or fear center (Zull, 2002). Fearful

students cannot focus and, therefore, cannot learn (S. Walton, personal

communication, 2011). Students who cannot learn cannot gain access to many opportunities in life. Victims of bullying may experience difficulty progressing from one grade to the next. The mental illnesses they may develop as a result of being bullied may further hamper their progress. Researchers found that sexual minority youths report more emotional and behavioral difficulties than heterosexual adolescents (Williams, Connolly, Peplar, & Craig, 2005). LGBTQ students who fear for their safety may drop out of school or may graduate with low grade point averages. These students may have trouble finding or holding jobs as adults. They may suffer from a lower quality of life, and may actually live shorter lives as a result of their hardships.

Adults and students can prevent such futures during class time. Teachers may take initiatives to eliminate bullying in their classrooms by raising awareness and increasing school-wide support. They can create safe learning and retreat spaces. Teachers can weave acceptance and diversity into everyday lesson plans, which may provoke empathetic responses in students prone to bullying others. These empathetic responses may encourage students to change their behavior. Teachers may promote awareness of LGBTQ issues and bullying among parents, faculty, and staff by including parent volunteers in the classroom, organizing school-wide and community-wide events, and including families and community in lessons. As a result of teacher, staff, and parent advocacy, schools might include sexual orientation and gender identity in school anti-bullying policies, despite the efforts of the Religious Right to prohibit such policies.

According to Macgillivray (2008), the Christian Right opposes the inclusion of sexual orientation in school antidiscrimination policies, proposing that the schools are legitimizing and promoting homosexuality. Macgillivray (2008) stated that the Christian Right claims that school policies dealing with harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation violate "parental rights and the First Amendment." The Christian Right also argues that school antidiscrimination policies based on sexual orientation and gender identity give LGBTQ students "special rights" (Macgillivray, 2008). Teachers and advocates can create counterarguments: One simple argument is that antidiscrimination does not equal promotion, while another is that safety from harassment and discrimination is not a "special right." Because of such opposition as the Christian Right, teachers need to acquire hard facts and data to back up their claims when advocating for LGBTQ students. The reader can find such data within this text.

Historical Background

Opposition to the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in school antidiscrimination policies did not start with the modern Christian Right. Homophobia and transphobia contain complex histories, but for the purposes of this paper, we can begin by looking at the Puritans. The Puritans came to New England in the early 1600's, because they believed that England was becoming the biblical city of Sodom, and they concluded that homosexuality was the reason for Sodom's destruction (Fone, 2000). The Puritans abided by strict rules against "sodomy," and when they caught 5 boys engaging in a "foul," nameless act

onboard a ship to New England, they sent the boys back to England to meet their

punishment, which may have been death (Fone, 2000). One can hypothesize,

based on the religious zealotry and homophobic attitudes of the Puritans, that in

the small, religious schools of the time, bullying based on perceived

homosexuality or gender-nonconformity existed, though no research was

conducted during this time.

In 1897, F. L. Burk wrote the first significant journal article that addressed

bullying among children in schools (Koo, 2007). However, after that, researchers

left the issue alone until the 1970's, when a Norwegian researcher named Dan

Olweus explored the issue of bullying. When Olweus began to study this area, he

did not include bullying behaviors such as facial expressions, rumor spreading,

and verbal threats. As researchers' study of the subject of bullying progressed,

the definition of what is considered bullying expanded to include more indirect

forms. Along with the change in definition, the studies gradually changed to not

only focus on the causes of bullying, but on prevention of bullying in schools

(Koo, 2007).

Even though the origins of bullying may be unclear, and even though one

can find little research on the subject dated before the 1970's, one can see the

effects of bullying on any television, or read about victims in the news. After

enduring peer victimization, several LGBTQ students took their own lives in

2010. Every year LGBTQ students commit suicide. When this paper was written,

the most recent student suicide victim, Phillip Parker, took his life after enduring

the bullying of his peers in January of 2012. Communities that wish to end these

youth suicides must learn and understand the issues surrounding homophobia,

transphobia, and bullying. They must master and understand the language used

to talk about this issue.

In the next section, the reader will find the definitions of common terms.

These terms include the contents of the acronym "LGBTQ," "homophobia,"

"transphobia," "bullying," and "oppression." The ability to use these common

terms and understand them is the first step to becoming an advocate for LGBTQ

students.

Definitions

This text covers LGBTQ bullying and strategies for prevention. LGBTQ is

an acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning."

"Lesbian" and "gay" usually refer to individuals who are homosexuals, homo-

romantic, or in same-sex relationships. "Lesbian" is usually used to talk about

women who are homosexual, homo-romantic, or in same-sex relationships.

"Gay" is usually used to talk about men who are homosexual, homo-romantic, or

in same-sex relationships, but the term "gay" can be an overall term for all

individuals, regardless of sex, who are homosexual, homo-romantic, or in same-

sex relationships. "Bisexual" usually refers to individuals who have sexual

attraction or romantic feelings for either sex—male or female. "Trans*" is a term

that encompasses people who are transgender, transsexual, or both.

"Transgender" is an umbrella term for any individual who does not conform to

their culture's gender roles. Those who challenge their culture's gender roles may identify as transgender. One might think of gender as man/boy, woman/girl, or anything between or outside of this binary. Sex is male, female, or anything between or outside of this binary. Since the term has fallen out of favor, transsexual is another term that is encompassed by the terms "trans*" or "transgender." Transsexual describes those individuals who identify as something other than the sex they were assigned at birth. Such individuals may take the labels of MtF/M2F or FtM/F2M for "male to female" and "female to male," though many feel these labels are inaccurate and outdated. Trans man and trans woman or simply man and woman are preferred. Some individuals identify as something other than the male-female binary, such as both and/or neither.

The term "queer," which has been reclaimed as a positive term by the LGBTQ community, describes those individuals who are not heteronormative, exclusively heterosexual, or those who do not adhere to the gender/sex binary. "Questioning" describes those individuals who are exploring or questioning their gender and/or sexual identities.

The term "homophobia" describes negative feelings, attitudes, and actions towards people who are or who are perceived to be homosexuals. "Transphobia" describes negative feelings, attitudes, and actions towards people who are or who are perceived to be trans*.

Bullying contains many different meanings to different individuals, but Farrington, a Professor of Psychological Criminology at Cambridge University,

defines bullying in this way, "Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful one" (Farrington, 1993). Retired philosophy professor of Michigan State University, Marilyn Frye (1983), defines oppression in this way:

> The root of the word "oppression" is the element "press." The press of the crowd; pressed into military service; to press a pair of pants; printing press; press the button. Presses are used to mold things or flatten them or reduce them in bulk, sometimes to reduce them by squeezing out the gases or liquids in them. Something pressed is something caught between or among forces and barriers which are so related to each other that jointly they restrain, restrict or prevent the thing's motion or mobility. Mold. Immobilize. Reduce. (p. 2)

Because bullying is the repeated oppression of a less powerful person by a more powerful one, and because the aim of oppression is to reduce the humanity of the oppressed, bullying is, by definition, a dehumanizing act.

Limitations

In order to reduce bullying, one must first research and understand the issues. The research presented here is limited to 30 studies with relevance to middle and high school students, though some studies are retrospective, so the participants may not be of middle or high school age. Most of these studies examined the effects of bullying and victimization of LGBTQ students, but some of these studies focused on bullying and responses to bullying by all students.

One study concerned advocacy for LGBTQ youth, so the participants are

potential LGBTQ youth allies. Researchers conducted most of the studies in the

United States, but conducted some in Canada, the UK, or Sweden. Included

within this analysis are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies.

Statement of Purpose

This paper intends to critically analyze literature on LGBTQ bullying, its

effects on students, and strategies for prevention. The results of this critical

analysis of research can be used by teachers to advocate for LGBTQ students.

Teachers may then be better able to argue for the use of LGBTQ history,

literature, and issues during lessons, despite censorship efforts. This will help

put teachers in positions/give teachers the tools to potentially diminish or end

bullying in their schools and to aid and support LGBTQ students.

Summary

Bullying and victimization of LGBTQ students present real problems in all

of our nation's schools. Bullying has existed for centuries. Students who bully

may be at risk for becoming criminal offenders later in life. Bullies may also suffer

from depression. LGBTQ students who are victims of bullying may be at risk for

developing illnesses such as anxiety and sleep disorders. The effects of bullying

may create problems that cause life-long suffering for the victims. This does not

have to be the case, because teachers can make a difference for students by

advocating for inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQ students in the school

environment and community.

In the next chapter, the reader will find a critical review of the studies concerning these topics. Teachers who wish to advocate for LGBTQ students may find the research useful.

CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter one discussed the need to create a more accepting space for

LGBTQ students in schools. This need is important because many LGBTQ

students are bullied in classrooms, hallways, and on school grounds. "Bullying is

repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a

more powerful one" (Farrington, 1993). According to literature on the subject,

bullying may lead to mental disorders and suicidal tendencies for the victim.

Victims may feel the effects of being bullied for their entire lifetimes. Chapter

one also discussed the history of bullying and included some speculation about

the history of homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. It also presented

the effects of bullying on several LGBTQ teens in recent years.

Chapter two reviews the research about LGBTQ bullying, its effects, and

possible preventive methods. This chapter is organized into three main sections:

the causes of LGBTQ bullying, the effects of LGBTQ bullying, and strategies for

the prevention of LGBTQ bullying. Thirty peer-reviewed studies are divided into

these three chapters. Each of these studies is analyzed and summarized. The

literature is reviewed to examine how bullying affects LGBTQ students and how

teachers, school staff, and the community can prevent such bullying.

Content Analysis

Section I: Variables that Contribute to the Bullying of LGBTQ Youth

In this section, advocates for LGBTQ youth will find variables worth

considering when advocating. All LGBTQ youth are at risk for bullying and

victimization; however, many LGBTQ youth face particularly hostile school

climates, and the likelihood that they will be victimized may be increased due to

their race, gender, or immigrant status. The first study in this section is by Kosciw,

Greytak, and Diaz (2009). This study examines the demographic and ecological

factors contributing to hostile school climate for LGBT youth. The second and last

study in this section is by Daley, Solomon, Newman, and Mishna (2008). This study

examines the intersectionalities in the bullying of LGBT youth.

To examine how locational, community-level, and school district-level

variables relate to indicators of hostile school climate for LGBT youth, Kosciw et

al. (2009) conducted a quantitative survey involving 5,420 LGBT youth. The

researchers found that LGBT youth in rural communities and communities with

lower adult educational attainment may face particularly hostile school climates.

Kosciw et al. (2009) hypothesized that an adolescent's experiences in

school and the school environment itself may be influenced by larger contexts of

community and geographic area. To test this hypothesis, Kosciw et al. (2009)

conducted a quantitative study on 5,420 LGBT youth of varying gender

identities, sexual orientations, races and ethnicities, and school types (public,

religious, private non-religious). The researchers also obtained locational

characteristics. These included region (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West)

and locale (urban, suburban, and rural). The researchers asked participants

about the frequency of experiencing victimization based on sexual orientation or

gender expression in the past school year. They assessed victimization and

biased language through a survey made of Likert-type questionnaires, which researchers made available online.

When asked about hearing the word "gay" in a derogatory manner, youth from communities with a higher percentage of college graduates (β -.10, p < .001) and with higher poverty levels (β -.07, p < .001) were less likely to report hearing these remarks. Concerning homophobic remarks, such as "faggot" and "dyke," Kosciw, et al (2009) found the regional dummy variable "West" was significant (β -.09, p<.001), and locale also accounted for a significant amount of variance in remarks. Youth in urban areas were significantly less likely (β -.05, p<.01) to report hearing homophobic remarks such as "fag" or "dyke" than youth in rural areas. Communities with higher percentages of college-educated adults were negatively related (β -.05, p<.01) to victimization based on sexual orientation, and communities with district-level poverty were positively related (β -.04, p<.05) to victimization based on sexual orientation. In regards to sexual orientation and gender expression, youth in urban areas were significantly less likely (β -.05, p<.01) to experience victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression. Significant regional differences were not found.

This study employed focused observation, such as being well-organized and having clearly defined variables. The researchers obtained information from a large sample size, and no obvious threats to internal validity were found, except for the selection: 65.5% of the sample population was White, and could therefore affect the results. Strengths of this study include external validity—

findings were consistent with prior research on age-related differences in peer

victimization in the general youth population (Nansel et al., 2011; Smyser &

Reis, 2002; Unnever & Cornell, 2004). The

finding that LGBT youth in communities with a higher proportion of

college graduates experienced less hostile school climates is consistent with

existing research (Moore & Ovadia, 2006; Ohlander et al., 2005). A limitation of

this study includes the generalizability of the findings. The survey was intended

for youth who identified as LGBT, so youth who engaged in same-sex activity or

who experienced same-sex attractions but did not identify as LGBT were not

included. All subjects were connected in some way to the LGBT community.

Another issue to consider with this study is that no mention of Cronbach's alpha

was made. The reliability of the Likert-style questionnaires use to assess biased

remarks and victimization may be questioned.

In conclusion, Kosciw et al. (2009) recommended that school districts

include questions about students' sexual orientation and gender identity as part

of regularly administered district-wide surveys on bullying and school climate to

examine potential variations between and within individual schools and to find

out which school characteristics are related to school climate for LGBT youth.

The researchers also recommend that future research should examine the

school experiences within the various subgroups of LGBT youth (Kosciw et al.,

2009).

As Kosciw et al. (2009) mentioned, other factors may increase the

likelihood of being victimized, or the bullying of such youth may take a different form based on the individual differences. To examine the intersectionalities in the bullying of LGBT youth, Daley, Solomon, Newman, and Mishna (2008) conducted face-to-face interviews involving nine key respondents. They found that gender, race, and newcomer/citizenship status emerged as key factors that contributed to differential experiences of bullying among LGBT youth.

The participants of this study included nine key informant respondents. Four were male, four were female, and one was transgender. Three of the respondents self-identified as lesbian, four as gay, and two did not self-identify based on sexual orientation. Six of the respondents identified as White, one as South Asian, and two as Middle Eastern. The informants ranged in age from 25 to 44 years, and were experienced in providing services to LGBT youth ranging from 12 to 29 years. The informants worked in a variety of education and social service settings.

The researchers conducted face-to-face, 90 minute interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. They focused their interview questions on the key informants' ideas, opinions, and knowledge regarding LGBT bullying, possible factors in addition to sexual orientation that might contribute to the peer victimization, and possible differences in the ways LGBT youth are victimized.

According to the key informants, gender non-conforming LGBT youth were more likely to suffer bullying, though gender non-conforming females were more accepted than gender non-conforming males. The informants also responded

that there are two ways that sexual orientation and race or ethnicity intersect to

influence the bullying experiences of LGBT youth: First, queer youth are not

always certain whether they have been targeted because of their race or sexual

orientation/gender identity, and second, queer youth of color may insist that

bullying was motivated by racism because of internalized homophobia. Many

youth may also have to choose between their sexual identity and their cultural

identity (Daley et al., 2008). One key informant stated that there was no word for

"lesbian" or "gay" in their culture. Racial/ethnic minorities and sexual

minorities/transgender youth often have to choose between race or

sexuality/gender identity. Some races are seen as heterosexualized, while

sexuality may be seen as race-less, or homosexuality may be seen as a White-

only experience (Daley et al., 2008). For example, an informant responded that

straight Black peer bullies of Black queer youth may insist that Black people are

not queer. Some informants said that queer youth of color from newcomer or

immigrant families may be particularly reluctant to seek family support. In

addition, transgender newcomer youth are less able to hide their gender

identities in the ways LGB newcomer youth can hide their sexual identities (Daley

et al., 2008). All key informants said that bullying for queer youth of color has a

"lot stronger repercussions than it does for a lesbian or gay white, middle class

person" (Daley et al., 2008). Concerning the multiple, simultaneous oppressions

of some queer youth, one key informant described these oppressions using

Maya Angelou's analogy of a bird's cage: "Any one wire doesn't contain the bird;

it's the grouping of multiple wires together that create the cage" (Daley et al.,

2008) This quote represents what many key informants meant when talking

about the experiences of queer youth of color.

Strengths of this study include the fact that the authors used the key

informants' own words. Despite many of the informants being LGBT, most were

not youth but were service providers and youth advocates. The researchers used

purposive sampling (Singleton & Straits, 2004) to identify individuals representing

diverse roles and settings, and to identify individuals with expertise on LGBT

youth. They reviewed the transcriptions of the interviews with these key

informants line-by-line. One should keep mind, however, that the informants

provided the information from their observations working with the LGBT youth.

Researchers did not obtain information from the bullied LGBT youth themselves.

The researchers did not include member-checking, but they did extensively

review the transcripts, which were digitally recorded and transcribed. The

researchers described the methods for coding: They uploaded transcripts into N-

VIVO and tagged codes to associated segments of text, then the investigators

reviewed text corresponding to each of the first-level codes. Using focused

coding and a constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss,

1967), the researchers further refined and organized first-level codes into

categories. However, the generalizability of the results is questionable, since

much remains to be known about the youth served by the informants, such as

diversity of the youth and specific manifestations of bullying.

In conclusion, the researchers implied that bullying interventions should be shaped around the multiple factors that may influence the bullying. The bullying these youth face may be a result of the intersections between sexual orientation, gender, race/ethnicity, and newcomer/citizenship status (Daley et al., 2008).

When youth have multiple minority statuses, they may have increased risk of being bullied for being LGBTQ. A cause of this increased risk is prejudice that some students may harbor against other minorities. Students who harbor prejudice against any minorities may be more likely to insult and verbally abuse LGBTQ students. To examine if biased language use is associated with bullying and dominance, irrespective of sexual prejudice, Poteat and DiGiovanni (2010) conducted a quantitative study on 290 high school students. They found that sexual prejudice was associated with biased language use among boys only, and biased language use was associated with bullying regardless of sexual prejudice; however, for girls, this association between biased language and bullying was dependent on sexual prejudice. The association between dominance behavior and biased language was moderated by sexual prejudice among boys but not among girls. Girls engaged less in all behaviors (biased language, bullying, and dominance) than boys.

The participants were between 12 and 19 years of age (M = 15.51 years, SD = 1.55) and attended a small high school in the Midwest (n = 290, 142 males, 145 females, three not reported) and were evenly distributed across grade levels. Most students identified as White (55.9%), followed by Asian American (25.2%),

biracial (7.9%), other (4.5%), Latino (2.8%), African American (2.1%), Native

American (0.7%), and three non-identifying students.

The participants took a survey containing various items. The Bullying

scale (nine items, Espelage & Holt, 2001) assessed self-reported bullying

behavior in the last 30 days. The reliability coefficient for that study was α=.92.

Three items assessed general dominance-promoting behavior among friends in

the last 30 days. The reliability coefficient for that study was α=.79. The Agent

subscale of the Homophobic Content Agent Target scale (five items, Poteat &

Espelage, 2005) assessed sexual orientation biased language use in the last

week. The reliability coefficient for that study was α=.90. The Attitudes toward

Lesbians and Gay Men scale (20 items, Herek, 1988) assessed sexual prejudice

toward lesbians and gay men. The reliability coefficient for that study was α=.97.

The researchers conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

to test for gender and racial group differences (between two groups: white and

racial minority) on four measures of bullying, dominance behavior, biased

language use, and sexual prejudice, and found significant differences on account

of gender ($p < .001$), but the interaction was not significant. Follow-up ANOVAs

displayed significant gender differences among all four measures: bullying ($F_{[1,}$

$_{274]} = 27.79$, $p < .001$), dominance behavior ($F_{[1, 274]} = 17.11$, $p < .001$),

biased language ($F_{[1, 274]} = 56.18$, $p < .001$), and sexual prejudice ($F_{[1, 274]} =$

49.76, $p < .001$).

The researchers conducted separate MANOVA tests for grade differences

on the four measures, which was significant (F [6, 835] = 2.60, p = .001). Follow-up ANOVAs indicated differences on three of the measures: bullying (F [4, 276] = 5.37, p < .001), biased language (F [4, 276] = 5.99, p < .001), and dominance behavior (F [4, 276] = 3.76, p < .01). Grade differences were not significant for sexual prejudice.

Finally, the researchers tested whether students reported differences in their frequency of biased language use toward those whom they perceived to be lesbian or gay compared to those whom they did not perceive to be gay or lesbian. Results indicated that students reported more frequent use of this language toward students they did not perceive to be gay or lesbian (F [1, 288] = 31.40, p < .001).

Bullying behavior was associated with dominance behavior and biased language for boys and girls (rs = .24 through .74, ps < .01). The association between bullying and biased language was stronger for boys than girls (Fisher's Z = 5.84, p < .01). For boys, sexual prejudice was significantly correlated with biased language use (r = .29, p < .05). Also for boys, sexual prejudice was associated with dominance behavior (r = .24, p < .01).

The researchers conducted hierarchical regression analyses for boys and girls to test whether sexual prejudice moderated the associations between biased language use and bullying and between biased language use and dominance behavior. There was a significant moderating effect for girls (β = .27, p < .05), but not for boys. The association between bullying and biased language use was

partially dependent on sexual prejudice attitudes among girls. The association between dominance behavior and biased language use was partially dependent on sexual prejudice attitudes among boys.

Strengths of this study include the reliability coefficient for the various scales and subscales used. The reliability coefficient for the scale assessing self-reported bullying behavior was α=.92. The reliability coefficient for the items assessing general dominance-promoting behavior among friends was α=.79. The subscale assessing sexual orientation biased language use in the last week had a reliability coefficient of α =.90. The scale assessing sexual prejudice toward lesbians and gay men had a reliability coefficient of α =.97. The researchers included p-values for the results, which showed transparency in the significance of the results; however, the generalizability of the findings is in question, and multi-informant data may provide stronger support for the results. The sample size for this study was not large (n = 290), and limited to a small, Midwestern school. Finally, the study lacked clarity.

In conclusion, Poteat and DiGiovanni (2010) emphasized the importance of recognizing how social issues are interrelated when it comes to bullying, prejudice, and intergroup relations among diverse student populations. They asserted that understanding the nuanced connections and interrelations could contribute to more comprehensive and effective programs that may promote safe and welcoming schools for all students (Poteat & DiGiovanni, 2010).

Section II: Effects of Bullying on LGBTQ youth

In the last section, the studies explored how location, multiple minority

statuses and newcomer status, and prejudice influence potential bullies and victims. In this section, advocates for LGBTQ youth will find peer-reviewed studies that measure the effects of bullying on the well-being of LGBTQ youth. Bullying can take many forms: sexual, verbal, and physical. The effects can range from mild stress to attempted suicide and worse. Much of this bullying takes place in middle and high schools.

To examine LGBT youth experiences with school violence in public high schools, Grossman et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative study involving focus groups as the units of analyses on 25 LGBT youth who attended public high schools. They found that victimization led youth to escape stressors by distancing themselves from school.

The participants attended public high schools. The researchers recruited them from an after-school program of a community-based organization serving sexual minority youth in New York City. These youth participated in focus groups to talk about their experiences in school. The focus groups consisted of 2 groups of lesbian and bisexual females (n = 6 each), two groups of gay and bisexual males (n = 8, n = 6), and one group of male-to-female transgender youth (n = 5).

The researchers used focus groups as the units of analyses. They held the focus groups on five days during March and April of 2006. Researchers conducted each focus group for one and one-half to two hours, during which the youth described and discussed their experiences and feelings related to verbal and physical attacks in school. The time period also allowed the youth to

recommend and discuss ways that interpersonal verbal and physical violence in schools may be prevented.

The researchers transcribed the audiotapes and analyzed the data using the techniques of grounded theory as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Using open coding procedures, each author independently established themes. The researchers checked the collected themes to ensure trustworthiness of the coding and the emergent themes.

Findings included two core themes: a lack of community and lack of empowerment with a concurrent lack of a sense of human agency. The youth had no sense of being part of the school community, and as a result, no sense of empowerment or influence that comes from belonging to a community inclusive of sexual minority students.

Some youth felt they had to remove themselves from situations in which they felt unsafe. Due to bullying, one youth had to transfer schools, another isolated himself from his peers, while another avoided places he considered unsafe, such as the gym. One MTF (male to female) girl, Aiya, was verbally harassed, hit, and thrown in the trash while walking home from school on her fourteenth birthday. As a result of the bullying she experienced, she stayed home from school for a year and attempted suicide. Another student, Snake, was stabbed with a pair of scissors during his 8th grade year. He was stabbed in the back and in the leg, and he overheard the people who assaulted him saying, "Faggot! We hope you die" (Grossman et al., 2009). Snake did not return to

school for 3 months. For these youth, school itself was unsafe, and as a result, they stayed home.

The youth communicated that heterosexual youth used their perceived and actual sense of power over sexual minority youth to deal out consequences for violating society's heterosexual norms and gender role expectations. LGBT youth said that heterosexual youth primarily used name-calling, hate speech, harassment, and sometimes physical violence. The youth also said that a lack of human agency led them to not report the incidents of violence.

The gay or bisexual youth who were not "out" or those MTF youth who were very feminine could prevent verbal and physical attacks based on their gender expression. Youth who were not obviously gay or bisexual, and MTF youth who passed as female could avoid the prejudice that goes along with being gay, bisexual, and MTF, because their would-be bullies assumed them to be heterosexual.

Concerning participants' recommendations for prevention, youth in all five focus groups suggested the formation of Gay Straight Alliances, indicating that GSAs provided opportunities for some LGBT youth to obtain allies and to feel supported. The youth indicated that GSAs served broader functions such as educating students, teachers, and school staff who are not LGBT people or their allies.

Three of the focus groups (2 males and 1 female) said that GSAs are not as strong as the LGBT youth would like them to be. The girls' group said the

GSAs would not be helpful because they are not "integration groups" where heterosexual boys and girls would come to understand what being lesbian, gay, and bisexual is really about. The boys' groups concluded that such groups would isolate them even more and make them more publicly vulnerable. As an alternative, these three groups talked about formal educational processes and rules against defaming LGBT people. They suggested LGBT organizations and speakers should be brought to the schools to educate heterosexual students. They also suggested school trips to organizations designed to help LGBT people.

All the focus groups agreed that there was a need for educating teachers, guidance counselors, and security guards so that they do not think it is "[morally] wrong to be LGBT."

The two female and transgender focus groups talked about the need for the school to provide them with positive role models and mentors.

Some participants gave examples of supportive actions the schools can take to educate parents about becoming more understanding, accepting, and supportive of LGBT youth. One participant suggested that schools provide meetings to educate parents about LGBT youth.

Strengths of this study include credibility of the study due to the transparency of methods used: The researchers analyzed the data of the transcribed audiotapes using the techniques of grounded theory as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990); they also used open coding procedures to establish themes, and then checked the collected themes with one another to ensure

trustworthiness of the coding and the emergent themes. Findings of this study

were also buttressed by findings in the 2005 GLSEN school climate report, and

also by findings in the 2002 report from the NEA Task Force on Sexual

Orientation. Kosciw and Cullen (2001) found that more than 80% of the LGBT

youth surveyed reported verbal harassment during the past 12 months because

of sexual orientation, with half saying the harassment happened frequently or

often. There is triangulation—the researchers obtained information from three

different groups. The findings also seem transferrable to similar groups in similar

settings. An outside party could also confirm the results. Despite these strengths,

there was no member-checking, and FTM transgender youth were not included.

The study was also limited to select youth from one specific area: 25 youth from

New York City. These participants were gay and bisexual boys and girls and

MTF youth. Another point to consider is that the researchers and participants

assumed the bullies were all heterosexual and did not consider the possibility of

bullying due to internalized homophobia. One must consider, despite

weaknesses, that the findings of this study did provide suggestions for ways to

make schools safer places for LGBT youth.

  In conclusion, Grossman et al. (2009) suggested that schooling is one of

the cultural institutions designed to socialize youth to "fit" into the community, and

in fulfilling this role, many school personnel become gatekeepers of the status

quo, which includes fostering heterosexuality and gender "appropriate"

expression. The authors went on to suggest that educational policies are needed

to ensure that schools foster the inherent worth of each student. As the reader

can see from the results of the previous article, bullying can have detrimental

effects on LGBTQ youth, so much that youth may stay home from school and

even contemplate and attempt suicide, such as in the case of Aiya. The mental

health and physical safety of all students should be protected.

Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, and Sanchez (2011) hypothesized that

mental health issues may be linked to the alienation and victimization LGBTQ

youth face. The long-term implications of LGBT school victimization for young

adult adjustment were examined by Russell, Ryan, et al. (2011), who conducted

a survey on 245 LGBT young adults and found that LGBT school victimization is

strongly linked to young adult mental health problems and risks for STDs and

HIV.

The subjects of this study were 245 California-based LGBT young adults

between the ages of 21 and 25 years. Of these participants, 46.5% identified as

male, 44.9% as female, and 8.6% as transgender. 51.4% were Latino and 46.8%

were White, non-Latino.

The researchers used the young adult survey from the Family Acceptance

Project, which was given to 245 subjects between the ages of 21 and 25. A 10-

item retrospective scale assessed school victimization due to actual or perceived

LGBT identity between the ages of 13 and 19 years. The researchers used a 20-

item version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D)

(α = .94) to measure levels of depression in youth. One item measured suicidal

ideation in young adulthood, and another measured suicide attempts. The

researchers measured life satisfaction through an 8-item scale. Two measures

assessed heavy drinking and problems due to substance use and abuse. The

researchers assessed sexual risk with two measures. They also collected

information on sociodemographic characteristics such as sex, gender identity,

sexual orientation, ethnicity, immigrant status, and family-of-origin socioeconomic

status (SES). The researchers measured SES with open-ended responses to

one question.

The researchers used the expectation maximization algorithm in PRELIS,

a component of LISREL 8.80, to impute missing data (total < 5%), and they used

analysis of covariance to examine group differences between victimization levels

and experience of long-term health risk outcomes. The researchers used multiple

regression analyses to examine the effect of LGBT school victimization on young

adult outcomes while controlling for sociodemographic characteristics. They also

used logistic regression analyses for dichotomous outcomes.

Russell, Ryan, et al. (2011) found that there were no statistically

significant differences in LGBT school victimization based on immigrant status,

ethnicity, or SES. They also found that females reported less LGBT victimization

when compared with males and transgender young adults (MTF and FTM) (F [2,

224] = 18.73, p < .001). Participants who identified as queer reported more

LGBT-related victimization when compared with participants who identified as

gay, lesbian, and bisexual (F [2, 224] = 8.33, p < .001). Depression was higher

and self-esteem was lower for immigrants and persons from low SES (socio-

economic status) families. Family SES was also associated with life satisfaction

and self-esteem. Elevated levels of depression and suicidal ideation among

males can be explained by their high rates of LGBT school victimization. LGBT-

related school victimization is strongly linked to young adult mental health,

adjustment outcomes (lower self-esteem, life satisfaction, and social integration)

and risk for STDs and HIV, while there is no strong association with substance

use or abuse.

Strengths of this study include external validity. The findings can be

generalized to LGBT youth in the United States. Strengths also include the

excellent internal reliability score (α = .91) for the 10-item retrospective scale that

assessed school victimization due to perceived LGBT status. The measure for

young adult depression had an internal reliability score of α = .94. The measure

for social integration had good internal reliability (α = .85), and the 8-item scale

that measured life satisfaction had an internal reliability score of (α = .75). The

significance of LGBT victimization mediating the association between gender and

young adult depression was $p < .01$, and the significance of LGBT victimization

fully mediating an association between high victimization and high suicidal

ideation for LGBT males was $p < .001$. A few weaknesses and limitations include

the facts that the study was retrospective, the sample was not representative of

the population, and lack of ethnic diversity in subjects (ethnicity consisted of

Latino or non-Latino White). Also, the researchers found that female youth

reported less LGBT victimization; however, these youth may experience more victimization based on their sex as a result of being LGBT. As a result, victims might believe their experiences result from being female, rather than from being lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

The findings suggest that even modest reductions in LGBT school victimization would result in significant long-term health gains for LGBT students who experience the most victimization in middle and high school. Russell, Ryan, et al. (2011) found dramatically elevated levels of suicide attempts, risk of HIV infection and STD diagnoses, and depression, which provide a clear public health rationale for implementing safe school programs to prevent bias-related and anti-LGBT bullying.

Bullying not only has physical effects on the well-being of LGBTQ youth, but it can also produce severe emotional distress among LGBT youth. Indicators of emotional distress among LGBT youth include depressive symptomatology, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. To determine the prevalence of these indicators, Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, and Azrael (2009) took into consideration the role which sexual identity-based maltreatment plays in the association between LGBT status and emotional distress. The researchers also considered the extent to which LGBT youth perceived that they had been discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation, and whether this perceived discrimination explains the association between LGBT status and emotional distress. The researchers, Almeida et al. (2009), conducted a quantitative study on 1,032 students from 18

schools in the Boston School District and found that LGBT youth scored

significantly higher on the scale of depressive symptomatology. They were also

more likely than heterosexual, non-transgender youth to report suicidal ideation

and self-harm.

For this investigation, the researchers collected data from the 2006 *Boston*

Youth Survey (BYS), a biennial survey of 9th to 12th graders in selected Boston

Public Schools. 10% of the participants identified as LGBT, 58% were female,

45% were Black, 35% were Hispanic, and 14% were White. The participants

ranged in age from 13 to 19 years.

Almeida et al. (2009) aimed to estimate the prevalence of indicators of

emotional distress among LGBT youth, including depressive symptomatology,

self-harm, and suicidal ideation. They also addressed perceptions of sexual

identity-based maltreatment, and whether it plays a role in the association

between LGBT status and emotional distress, and the extent to which LBGT

youth perceived that they had been discriminated against on the basis of sexual

orientation. The researchers used the Modified Depression Scale (Dahlberg et

al., 2005) with an internal consistency score of α ≥ .74 to assess depressive

symptomatology within the past 30 days. The study measured two other

indicators of emotional distress. The researchers asked students about suicidal

ideation and acts of self-harm in the 12 months before taking the survey. They

also measured sexual orientation and demographic characteristics.

Results indicated that females were significantly ($p < .0001$) more likely

than males to report a minority sexual orientation (13.3% vs. 5.3%), there were

no statistically significant sex differences in transgender status, there was little

variation in sexual orientation by age, and there were slight differences by race

and/or ethnicity. White youth were most likely to report having a minority sexual

orientation (16.2%), followed by Hispanic/Latinos (9.3%), other races (9%), and

Black youth (8.5%) (p = .07).

Concerning indicators of emotional distress, the depressive

symptomatology score for girls was significantly higher than the score for boys

(M = 14.3, SD = 3.9; F statistic = 69.3, p < .0001). There were no major

differences in depressive symptomatology according to either age or

race/ethnicity.

Less than one-tenth of the sample reported engaging in self-harm or

experiencing suicidal ideation in the year preceding the survey. Of the

participants reporting suicidal ideation, girls had significantly higher rates than

boys (11% vs. 5.2%) (p = .0014). There were non-significant differences in self-

harm by sex, and there was little difference in suicidal ideation and self-harm by

race/ethnicity and age.

In this study, LGBT youth displayed more emotional distress than

heterosexual, non-transgender youth. LGBT males displayed significantly higher

prevalence rates for suicidal ideation (29.2% of LGBT males vs. 3.7%

heterosexual, non-transgender males) and self-harm (41.7%, 10 out of 24), while

LGBT youth in general had higher depressive symptomatology scores than

heterosexual, non-transgender youth.

Concerning perceived discrimination, sexual minority youth were significantly more likely than heterosexual youth to report perceived discrimination (33.7% vs. 4.3%, $p < .0001$), and a larger percentage of transgender youth reported discrimination than non-transgender youth (18.8% vs. 6.4%). LGBT youth reported increased prevalence of perceived discrimination compared to heterosexual, non-transgender youth (31.3% vs. 3.7%, $p < .0001$). Among the LGBT youth, more males reported discrimination (50%) than LGBT females (25.3%).

Youth who reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of minority sexual orientation were significantly more likely to experience self-harm than those who did not report similar discrimination (25% vs. 6.3%). They also experienced more suicidal ideation (23.9% vs. 7.4%). These youth also had significantly higher mean scores on the depressive symptomatology scale ($M = 15.6$, $SD = 4.3$ vs. $M = 13.3$, $SD = 3.9$).

Results indicated that in the absence of perceived sexual orientation-based discrimination, LGBT males and females had levels of depressive symptomatology similar to their heterosexual, non-transgender peers. In the face of discrimination, however, LGBT males have higher levels of depressive symptomatology compared to heterosexual, non-transgender youth, and LGBT females have slightly lower levels of depressive symptomatology relative to LGBT males.

Strengths of this study include external validity. The participants were only selected from the Boston area; however, due to the relatively large sample size, the diversity of the participants, and the universality of their experiences, the findings can be generalized to LGBT youth in the United States. Other strengths include the high internal consistency of the measure used to assess depressive symptomatology, and the highly significant p-values of many of the results. About 10% of the youth in the sample identified as LGBT, a percentage similar to other youth samples (Austin et al., 2004, 2008; Savin-Williams and Ream, 2007). Also, findings of this study are consistent with previous research. Findings similar to prior studies included: LGBT youth were more likely than their heterosexual, non-transgender peers to have emotional distress as demonstrated by higher levels of depressive symptoms and a greater likelihood of reporting self-harm and suicidal ideation (Garofalo et al., 1999; Lock & Steiner, 1999; Russell & Joyner, 2001). A finding that more LGBT males experienced discrimination (50%) than females (25%) is consistent with community-based studies of LGBT youth (D'Augelli, 2002; D'Augelli et al., 2002, 2006). A possible weakness is that nearly one-third (382 of 1,215) of the Boston Youth Survey participants were not included in the analysis because they did not respond to items about sex, sexual orientation, transgendered status, depressive symptomatology, self-harm, or suicidal ideation, though it is unclear how the answers from these youth would have changed the results of the study.

In conclusion, results showed that there were associations between LGBT

status and depressive symptomatology, self-harm, and suicidal ideation, and there were associations between LGBT status and perceived discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Considering these results, Almeida et al. (2009) suggested that teachers should create safe and supportive environments to ensure the emotional and mental well-being of these students.

The Effects of Bullying on Sexual Minority Youth. Studies in this section will focus on the effects of bullying on sexual minority youth. The above studies focused on the effects of bullying on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth, and found significant associations between LGBT victimization and mental health. A variable that may mediate mental and emotional health of LGBQ (sexual minority) youth is community adjustment. Due to others' social taboos, prejudice, preconceptions, and fears, LGBQ youth may have trouble adjusting to their communities.

To examine the link between sexual orientation and adjustment in a community, Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig (2005) conducted a study on 97 sexual minority high school students. They found that sexual minority youth reported more sexual harassment, more bullying, less closeness with their mothers, and less companionship with their best friends.

The researchers selected the participants from a larger project involving 1,598 adolescents from five high schools in a large south-central Canadian city. The researchers asked the adolescents to describe their sexual orientation as heterosexual, gay male, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning. A total of 97

adolescents indicated they were gay male, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (45

boys, 52 girls; 6% of participants in the overall project). Eight adolescents (seven

males, one female) identified as gay or lesbian, while 36 (14 males, 22 females)

identified as bisexual, and 53 (24 males, 29 females) identified as questioning. In

addition to the 97 LGBQ adolescents, 97 heterosexual adolescents were

randomly selected to create a matched comparison sample. A total of 194

adolescents ranging from 14 to 19 years with a mean age of 16.05 participated in

this study.

Williams et al. (2005) hypothesized that sexual minority adolescents

experience more adjustment difficulties, victimization experiences, and less

social support resources than heterosexual adolescents. They also hypothesized

that questioning adolescents have similar psychosocial, victimization, and social

support difficulties as gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents. Another hypothesis

included the possibility that victimization and social support mediate the link

between sexual minority orientation and psychosocial difficulties. Finally, the

researchers hypothesized that victimization mediates the relationship between

social support and psychosocial adjustment, specifically among sexual minority

youth.

Williams et al. (2005) used the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al.,

1996), with an internal consistency score of α = .92, to assess symptoms of

depression. The researchers utilized the Youth Self-Report (Achenbach &

Edelbrock, 1991), with an internal consistency score of α = .88, to measure

externalizing symptoms. They used Likert-type scale questionnaires to assess

the frequency of bullying. The researchers created a sexual harassment scale

(with an internal consistency score of α = .82) based on the American

Association of University Women's Sexual Harassment scale (AAUW, 1993;

McMaster et al., 2002) to measure frequency of sexual harassment. The

researchers adapted five items from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979),

with an internal consistency score of α = .82, to assess experiences of physical

victimization. They created a Relationship Closeness scale based on the

Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987),

with an internal consistency score of α = .70 and .77, to measure each

participants' closeness to their best friend and mother respectively. The

researchers used the Companionship subscale of the Network of Relationships

Inventory (NRI; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992), with an internal consistency score

of α = .93 and .89, to measure each participants' companionship with their best

friend and mother respectively. Finally, the participants completed the Peer

Relationships Questionnaire (Connolly & Konarski, 1994) to identify 10 teenage

peers whom they perceived to constitute their social networks.

Williams et al. (2005) found that sexual minority youths in the community

report more emotional and behavioral difficulties than heterosexual adolescents.

Using the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al., 1996) score and the Youth

Self Report (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1991) score as dependent variables, the

researchers analyzed depression and externalizing symptoms, which yielded

significant multivariate effects for sexual orientation (F [1, 193] = 6.51, p < .01)

and gender (F [1, 193] = 4.55, p < .05). The between subject tests (between

sexual minority adolescents and heterosexual adolescents) of the individual

variables demonstrated a significant effect of sexual orientation on the BDI score

(F [1, 193] = 8.94, p < .01) and on the externalizing score (F [1, 193] = 7.77, p <

.01). Heterosexual youth did not have depression and externalizing scores that

were as high as the scores of sexual minority youth.

The results of examining different victimization experiences between the

two groups (sexual minority and heterosexual youth) were significant with

regards to the effect of sexual orientation on bullying (F [1, 193] = 6.72, P < .05)

and on peer sexual harassment (F [1, 193] = 5.97, p < .05). Sexual minority

youth reported significantly more bullying and sexual harassment than

heterosexual youth.

The researchers found that the results were significant concerning the

effect of sexual orientation (F [1, 193] = 2.18, p < .05) and gender (F [1, 193] =

5.21, p < .001) on social support. Tests between subjects revealed significant

effects of sexual orientation on closeness with the mother (F [1, 193] = 7.33, p <

.01) and companionship with the best friend (F [1, 193] = 7.31, p < .01). Sexual

minority adolescents experienced less closeness with their mothers and less

companionship with their friends compared to heterosexual adolescents.

Concerning whether sexually-questioning youth experienced similar or

different adjustment (F [1, 96] = .63, ns), victimization (F [1, 96] = .68, ns), and

social support experiences (F [1, 96] = 1.63, ns) than sexual-minority youth,

results suggested that there are no significant differences between the two

groups.

Results showed the mediational effect of social support on sexual minority

youth for externalizing (Sobel test = 2.50, p < .05) and depressive symptoms

(Sobel test = 2.20, p < .05). A significant predictor of externalizing and

depressive symptoms is sexual orientation. The results supported the

mediational effect of victimization experiences on externalizing symptoms (Sobel

test = 2.33, p < .05). However, the mediational effect is only at a level

approaching significance for depressive symptoms (Sobel test = 1.65, p < .10).

Finally, results supported the mediational effect of victimization experiences for

externalizing symptoms (Sobel test = -2.47, p < .05); however, results did not

support the mediational effect of victimization experiences for depressive

symptoms (Sobel test = -1.32, ns).

Strengths of this study include selection of participants that does not seem

to be biased. Concerning the selection, all participants were chosen from a larger

project, and they did not differ significantly from the larger, whole group sample in

regards to age, grade, gender (sex), and demographic variables. Since this was

a static group comparison, the researchers also included heterosexual

adolescents for comparison, which is something many other studies do not do.

Concerning transparency, the methods and statistics were clear. This study also

had acceptable internal consistency for the measures used. The results were

consistent with previous research concerning the increased risk of problematic

peer environments reported by sexual minority youths (Garofalo et al., 1998;

Herek et al., 1999). A weakness was the small sample size of the two groups (n

= 97). The reader must also consider the generalizability of the study, which was

conducted in Canada. The results might be less generalizable to the United

States, because of cultural and social differences. In other words, sexual

minorities in Canada may not face the same amount of biased treatment as they

would in the United States.

In conclusion, compared to their heterosexual peers, sexual minority youth

reported more sexual harassment, more bullying, more emotional and behavioral

difficulties, less social support, less closeness with their mothers, and less

companionship with their best friends. Sexually-questioning youth also reported

similar adjustment difficulties, victimization experiences, and perceived social

support as their LGB peers. Teachers might want to take these experiences into

consideration when teaching sexual minority and sexually-questioning students,

since these negative experiences affect learning. Sexual harassment, bullying,

emotional and behavioral difficulties, less social support, less closeness with their

mothers, and less companionship with their best friends may result in sexual

minority youth having poor mental health, trauma, and high levels of stress.

D'Augelli, Pilkington, and Hershberger (2002) examined the mental health

impacts of victimization on LGB youth. The researchers administered an extensive

questionnaire to 350 LGB youth aged 21 and younger. They found that bullies

more often victimized youth, especially male youth, who were more open in high school about their sexual orientation and who had a history of more gender atypical behavior. Their traumatic stress reactions were associated with having experienced more verbal abuse in high school.

The researchers obtained participants from 28 youth groups in the United States and eight groups from Canada. They also included a youth group in New Zealand that responded. In addition to these, 20 college or university LGB student organizations from the United States (15) and Canada (five) took part in the study. The final sample consisted of 350 youths, 56% of which were male. 83% of males identified as gay, 64% of females identified as lesbian. 16% of males and 24% of females identified as bisexual. The average age was 19.2, with the range of ages being from 14 to 21. About 78% were White, 8% were of African descent, 3% were Puerto Rican, 4% were Asian, 1% were Amerindian, and 5% identified as other. 26% lived in major metropolitan areas, 17% lived in small cities, 30% in medium towns or suburbs, 14% lived in small towns, and 12% lived in rural areas. 17% were in high school, 59% were in college, and 22% were not in school.

The researchers administered an extensive questionnaire completed in group sessions under adult supervision. They asked the participants to identify their current sexual orientations, and they asked a number of questions about the development of the participants' sexual orientations. Items assessed identifiability as LGB during high school years. The participants also completed a measure of

gender atypicality—the Boyhood Gender Conformity Scale (Hockingberry &

Billingham, 1987). Researchers assessed two types of sexual orientation

victimization: vicarious SOV and direct SOV. They also asked two questions

concerning fears of direct SOV at school. The researchers used several

indicators of mental health problems: They utilized the Brief Symptom Inventory

(BSI; Derogatis, 1993) and the Trauma Symptom Checklist—40 (TSC—40;

Briere & Runtz, 1989), a 40-item measure of posttraumatic stress symptoms.

Researchers also assessed alcohol and drug use, as well as information

about youths' current suicidal thoughts and past suicide attempts. Finally,

researchers evaluated current feelings about their sexual orientation using the

Revised Homosexuality Attitude Inventory (RHAI; Shidlo, 1994), a measure of

internalized homophobia.

Findings suggested that youth first became aware of their same-sex

attractions at 10-11 years, with males becoming aware significantly earlier (M =

10.0, SD = 3.5, p<.001) and also self-labeling significantly earlier (M = 11.1, SD =

4.0, p<.001). Few youth were completely open in high school (13%), and 46%

were completely "closeted." 63% percent of boys reported childhood gender

atypicality, and 73% of girls reported childhood gender atypicality.

Many youth were aware of instances of other LGB youths' victimization in

high school. More incidents were observed in which gay or bisexual males were

victimized than lesbian or bisexual females: verbal abuse (males: M = 1.7, SD =

1.2; females: M = 1.4, SD = .9; t(349) = 5.20, p < .001), threatened with violence

(males: M = 1.5, SD = 1.0; females: M = 1.2, SD = .6; t (349) = 6.0, p < .001),

assaulted (males: M = 1.2, SD = .7; females: M = 1.1, SD = .4; t (349) = 3.73, p <

.001), and shunned by others (males: M = 1.5, SD = 1.1; females: M = 1.3, SD =

.9; t (349) = 4.47, p < .01).

Concerning percentages of victims of three or more incidents, verbal

attacks affected 18% of males and 9% of females. Threats of violence affected

11% of males and 4% of females. Property damage affected 6% of males and

3% of females. Objects were thrown at 5% of males and 3% of females. 6% of

males and 3% of females were chased or followed. Bullies punched, kicked, or

beat 5% of males and 1% of females. 3% of males and 1% of females were spat

upon. Bullies hit or wounded 1% of males and 1% of females with a weapon. 1%

males and 1% females were victims of sexual attack. Finally, others shunned

14% of males and 8% of females.

More than half of participants (59%) experienced verbal abuse in high

school, 24% were threatened with violence, 11% had objects thrown at them,

11% had been physically attacked, 2% were threatened with weapons, 5% were

sexually assaulted, and 20% had been threatened with the disclosure of their

sexual orientation. 54% experienced three or more instances of verbal abuse in

high school. On all three SOV scores (verbal, physical, and total), males were

victimized more than females (verbal SOV, t [314] = 4.38, p < .001; physical

SOV, t [317] = 2.70, p < .01; total SOV, t [318] = 4.47, p < .001). Openness in

high school (t = 2.90, p < .01) and gender atypicality (t = 2.23, p < .05)

contributed significantly to verbal SOV.

Over a quarter (27%) reported being very or extremely afraid of verbal harassment at school, while 16% reported some fear. Significantly more males reported being very or extremely afraid of verbal abuse (34% of males vs. 20% of females).

Significant differences existed between male and female youths on the mental health indicators. Females demonstrated more trauma symptoms on the Anxiety, Depression, Sexual Abuse Trauma, and Sleep Disturbances subscales.

In regards to drug use, there were no major differences between sexes. 54% of the entire sample smoked cigarettes, 76% used alcohol, 39% used marijuana, 4% used cocaine, 1% used crack, 5% used uppers, 4% sniffed drugs, 8% used downers, and 14% used hallucinogens.

Concerning lifetime suicidal thinking, 42% of males and 25% of females said they had sometimes or often thought of suicide. 48% said their suicidal thinking was related to their sexual orientation. One-third of participants acknowledged a past suicide attempt.

Participants had low overall negative views of their own sexual orientation. 90% agreed with the statement, "I am glad to be lgb" (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002).

High school students showed more evidence of mental health problems than college students. A MANOVA comparing the two groups on BSI scores was significant, $F (9, 155) = 39.11$, $p < .001$, and a MANOVA of TSC scores was also

significant, F (6, 167) = 6.21, p < .001.

Strengths of this study include the internal reliability of several tests used: The Cronbach's alpha on scores for LGB identifiability and gender atypicality were .77 for males and .91 for females. The scores for sexual orientation victimization ranged from .72 to .88, and for the Global Severity Index the score was .93. For youths' current feelings about their sexual orientation, the Cronbach's alpha score was .81. The alphas for the 40-item measure of posttraumatic stress symptoms ranged from .65 to .78, and the alpha was .92 for the total score. Another strength is that the researchers obtained participants from many areas, and there was an almost equal number of males and females. However, the sample population was not very ethnically diverse, and the researchers did not include the variable for socioeconomic status. Also, considering that this paper focuses on middle and high school students, it is a concern that 59% of participants were in college, while 22% were not in school at all. Finally, the researchers did not consider the differences in the ways that boys and girls are raised. In the culture of the United States, girls are generally raised to think that mistreatment is normal and to not speak up about it, while boys are generally raised to feel entitled to good treatment and to be vocal about mistreatment. Therefore, girls might not report as much mistreatment, which may skew the results.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that there are considerable risks for victimization of LGB youth in high school settings, especially male LGB youth.

The authors claim that the results show associations between past victimization based on sexual orientation in high school and current mental health problems. D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger (2002) suggest that school personnel respond appropriately to verbal and physical abuse of LGB students.

As the previous studies suggested, the abuse these students face influences their mental, emotional, and physical well-being, especially among gay and bisexual male youth. The study by D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger (2002) found that over 75% of LGB youth used alcohol, over 50% used tobacco, and over 14% used hallucinogens. In the next study, Rivers and Noret (2008) analyzed data related to tobacco, alcohol, drug use, and other health concerns in same-sex- and opposite-sex-attracted youth.

Rivers and Noret (2008) analyzed data relating to tobacco and alcohol use, drug use, health risk behaviors, concerns, sources of social support, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, suicide ideation, loneliness, and mental concentration of 53 same-sex- and 53 opposite-sex-attracted youth. They found that same-sex-attracted students reported more drinking when alone and more worry about being lesbian or gay. These students were more likely to seek support from a member of school staff than their opposite-sex-attracted peers. Same-sex-attracted youth scored higher on a hostility subscale, and they were more likely to report feeling lonely.

The researchers collected data as part of a large-scale investigation of adolescent health and well-being in the United Kingdom in 2003. A random

sample of students from grades equivalent to 7th through 9th was drawn from 14

schools in the north of England. Students (36 males, 17 females; age: M = 13.85

years, SD = 1.36) who reported being attracted solely or primarily to members of

the same sex on a measure of current sexual attraction were compared to a

reference group of 53 students (36 males and 17 females, age: M = 13.81, SD =

1.24) who reported being solely or primarily attracted to members of the

opposite sex on the same measure and who were matched as close as possible

on 6 additional criteria. 94% of same-sex-attracted youth and 90% of opposite-

sex-attracted youth were White.

Rivers and Noret (2008) had four key questions: Are students who report

same-sex attraction any more likely to engage in health risk behaviors than

youth who report opposite-sex attraction? In terms of worries and concerns, do

students who are attracted to the same sex differ from students attracted to the

opposite sex? Do youth who are attracted to the same sex have similar levels of

support from family and friends as youth attracted to the opposite sex? Do youth

attracted to the same sex have poorer mental health and well-being than youth

attracted to the opposite sex, and if so, why?

The researchers administered a 15-item anti-bullying inventory adapted

from the English version of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire, which assessed

various forms of victimization. They derived a measure of the severity of bullying

by adding the different types of bullying experienced by students and multiplying

the total by frequency per week and the number of locations where bullying was

reported (α=.80). The researchers computed comparable scores for self-reports of bullying others (α=.72) and witnessing bullying (α=.74). They measured psychological well-being using four subscales drawn from the 53-item Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogratis, 1994): interpersonal sensitivity (4 items; α=.86), depression (6 items; α=.86), anxiety (6 items; α=.80), and hostility (5 items; α=.84). The researchers also adapted items (relating to exposure to alcohol and drugs) from questions drawn from the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, n.d.). They included items relating to exposure to various health risk behaviors in the study. Students' individual concerns and worries were assessed using 17 items. Students were provided with a list of 18 individuals who represented family members, peers, and school faculty members or staff. Concerning social support, the researchers asked in whom the students could confide.

Rivers and Noret (2008) found that youth attracted to the same sex reported consuming approximately 1.2 units of alcohol (SD = 2.44) over the preceding 7 days. Youth attracted to the opposite sex consumed 2.5 units (SD = 7.28), though data was missing for one of these students. They found significant differences between the groups in terms of frequency with which students consumed alcohol (p =.01).

Significantly more students attracted to members of the same sex were found to drink alone once or twice when compared to peers attracted to the opposite sex (p =.01).

Considering the items used to assess concerns and worries, the researchers found significant differences on only one item out of seventeen: concerns about being lesbian or gay (p=.001).

Concerning items used to assess sources of social support, youth attracted to the same sex were more likely than youth attracted to the opposite sex to confide in school nurses for social support (p=.05). Both of the groups rated parents, teachers, and siblings highly as people in whom they would confide.

For items that assessed psychological well-being, youth attracted to the same sex did not differ significantly when compared to their heterosexual peers in terms of interpersonal sensitivity, depression, and anxiety, but were found to score significantly higher in terms of hostility (F[1, 102]= 4.04, p = .0121), though data was missing for three participants. The researchers analyzed items drawn from the BSI (Brief Symptom Inventory [Derogratis, 1994]) that provided indices of thoughts of ending life, loneliness, poor concentration, and frustration (urges to break and smash things), and punishment for sins. Youth attracted to the same sex scored significantly higher in terms of feeling lonely (F [1, 99] = 6.61, p =.001) when compared to youth attracted to the opposite sex, though data was missing for five students. The other comparison results were not significant.

This is a static group comparison study. Concerning selection, a strength is the closeness with which the researchers matched the same-sex-attracted youth and opposite-sex-attracted youth. They used multiple matching criteria to

match the same-sex- and opposite-sex-attracted youth who took part in the

study; however, there were more same-sex-attracted youth who were White

(94%) than there were White opposite-sex-attracted youth (90%). There were

significantly more males (n = 37) than females (n = 17). There were also small

differences between the two groups concerning percentages of other

races/ethnicities, family and home life, whether they had a boyfriend or girlfriend,

and exposure to bullying. The students were selected from the same area. A

weakness is the sample population, which was not large. There was also subject

attrition, and some of the data was missing for some students. Strengths of this

study include the Cronbach's alpha scores for the measure of the severity of

bullying (α =.80), self-reports of bullying others (α =.72), witnessing bullying (α

=.74), interpersonal sensitivity (4 items; α =.86), depression (6 items; α =.86),

anxiety (6 items; α =.80), and hostility (5 items; α =.84). P-values above .05 were

included for many of the results, which shows the significance of the results and

also aids in transparency. However, the internal reliability of the social support

measure was not strong (KR-20 = .50). Also, concerning the data for exposure

to drugs and alcohol, the researchers do not specify if the units of alcohol were

consumed per student or as a group. The reader might also want to consider the

fact that subjects were selected from the U.K., and results may not be very

generalizable to the United States due to cultural differences.

In conclusion, Rivers and Noret (2008) found little evidence of unusual

interpersonal sensitivity, depression, or anxiety among primarily same-sex-

attracted students, but evidence of increased loneliness and hostility toward others. There was incidence of more same-sex-attracted students drinking while alone, which can be a response to bullying, and can have negative long term health consequences.

Not only does the type of bullying affect the well-being of the victim, but the frequency at which the victim is bullied should also be taken into consideration. Gruber and Fineran (2008) conducted a study on 522 middle and high school students to examine the frequency of bullying and sexual harassment in middle and high school, and the differences in sexual orientation in regard to this frequency. They also sought to determine whether bullying or sexual harassment has greater adverse health effects on certain groups, and if so, which groups. They achieved this through a survey that included questions on bullying and sexual harassment and health outcomes, and they found that GLBQ students experienced more bullying and sexual harassment and had poorer health outcomes than their heterosexual peers.

The researchers drew data for this study from American (U. S.) students at middle and high schools in a suburban New England community. The final sample consisted of 154 girls and 142 boys in middle school (grades 7 to 9) and 70 girls and 156 boys in high school (grades 10 to 12). Non-white participants represented 11% of middle school and 15% of high school students.

Gender and sexual orientation were dichotomous variables coded 0 and

1. The latter value was assigned to girls or to self-identified sexual minorities (gay, lesbian, bisexual) as well as questioning students. The researchers used 10 survey items developed by Espelage and Holt (2001) and 14 items from the AAUW survey (2001) to measure bullying and sexual harassment, respectively. They measured self-esteem through four items (α=.90), mental health through six items (α=.81), physical health through 12 items (α=.83), and an impact of events scale (trauma symptoms) based on eight items (α=.91). The researchers chose two control variables for the regression analyses that focused on either social, family, school, or academic life: Stressful Life Events Scale for Adolescents (SLESA: Newcomb et al., 1981) and School Stress (Bowen & Richman, 1995).

Gruber and Fineran (2008) found that 52% of students had experienced bullying during the current school year while approximately 34% were sexually harassed. There were no significant gender differences in this regard: Boys experienced slightly more bullying than girls (53% vs. 51%), and girls experienced harassment slightly more often than boys (36% vs. 34%). The researchers found large differences for sexual orientation: GLBQ students experienced more bullying (79% vs. 50%) and sexual harassment (71% vs. 32%). GLBQ students were also bullied more often than they were harassed (79% vs. 71%) but this difference was not statistically significant.

Concerning the impact of bullying, GLBQ students exhibited poorer health outcomes than their heterosexual peers, except when it came to

substance abuse. Then researchers needed to determine the impact of bullying and sexual harassment individually on each health outcome through t-tests and regression analyses which included Life Events and School Stress as control variables. The analyses revealed significant relationships between health outcomes and both bullying and sexual harassment, which had large effects on physical health (b = .296) and trauma symptoms (b = .269). The effects of bullying and harassment were smaller on self-esteem (b = .148) and substance abuse (b = .135).

The final step the researchers conducted was comparing the predictive strength of bullying and sexual harassment simultaneously on each health outcome. They entered bullying and sexual harassment together into each regression equation using the control variables that were described earlier. Of the significant results, the researchers found that among GLBQ students, sexual harassment predicts mental health (b = .393), physical health (b = .606), trauma symptoms (b = .403), and substance abuse (b = .372).

Strengths included high internal reliability score for bullying (α=.89), sexual harassment (α=.92), self-esteem (α=.90), mental health (α=.81), physical health (α=.83), and impact of events scale (trauma symptoms) (α=.91). P-values were also included for the results; however, the sample for this study consisted of mostly white students from one school district, and there were only a small number of sexual minority students included. The results would only be generalizable to areas of the United States with students of similar

demographics. The statistics of the results were not always transparent, and the number of GLBQ students involved in this study was not made clear, but did show up in a table within the journal article. The number of GLBQ students was 46, as opposed to the 470 heterosexual students. For a static group comparison study, the groups were dramatically unmatched. Also, the analysis assumed the adverse health effects were the result of victimization, rather than the possibility that the participants were victimized because of their health or other reasons. There are other variables that could account for the adverse health effects, which were not taken into consideration.

In conclusion, the findings of Gruber and Fineran (2008) suggest that GLBQ students experienced more bullying and sexual harassment, and they had poorer health outcomes than their heterosexual peers. All groups in the study were more affected by sexual harassment than by bullying, and as a result of this finding, the authors argue that decreasing and eliminating sexual harassment in schools is an important step toward making schools a safe space for all students, but especially for sexual minority youth.

The Effects of Bullying on Gender Non-Conforming Youth. The last section addressed the effects of bullying on sexual minority youth. This section addresses peer-reviewed studies that investigate the effects of bullying on gender non-conforming youth. These youth may face bullying and its adverse effects based on their gender identity or gender presentation, and they may also be bullied as a result of real or perceived homosexuality.

To determine the relationships among childhood gender atypicality,
lifetime sexual orientation victimization, and current mental health, D'Augelli,
Grossman, and Starks (2006) conducted a quantitative study on 528 LGB youth
and found that current mental health symptoms were strongly related to past
reports of gender atypicality, and youth that exhibited gender atypicality received
more physical attacks during their lifetimes. The effects are not limited to mental
health, but impacted physical health as well.

The sample consisted of 528 youth from New York City and surrounding
suburbs, most of whom attended community-based organization programs. 52%
were males and 48% were females. The mean age for participants was 17.03.

The researchers drew data from the first panel of an ongoing two-year
longitudinal study of the role of victimization related to sexual orientation on the
mental health of LGB youth. They interviewed youth aged 15 to 19 three times
during a two-year period, and the assessment procedure consisted of an
interview on a broad range of topics (sexual orientation development, childhood
gender atypicality, sexual orientation victimization, and mental health indicators)
related to challenges faced by LGB youth. The completion of a battery of
standard measures assessed aspects of resilience and mental health.

D'Augelli, Grossman, and Starks (2006) found that about three-fourths
(77% of males and 72% of females) said they felt different from other youth when
they were growing up. They first experienced this difference sometime between
ages 3 to 18. When asked if someone else had told them they were different as

they were growing up, significantly more males (60%) than females (52%) said

this had happened (p < .05). Both male and female youth disclosed their sexual

orientation to another person for the first time at about age 15: about 60% had

told their mothers about their sexual orientation, and about 27% had told their

fathers.

66% of the females were called tomboys while they were growing up, and

58% of the males were called sissies, a significant difference (p < .05). The age

at which this first occurred was about 8 years. 43% reported that parents

considered the youth tomboys or sissies. Males perceived significantly more

negative responses to their gender atypicality from parents: mothers (p < .01)

and fathers (p < .01). 13% of females' mothers were reported to be very positive

about their daughter's gender atypicality, but only 2% of males' mothers were

very positive. Over half (56%) of the males indicated that their mothers reacted

negatively; however, only 36% of females' mothers reacted negatively. Fathers of

10% of gender non-conforming females reacted positively about the gender non-

conformity, while only 2% of fathers of gender non-conforming males reacted

positively. Most (80%) of gender non-conforming males' fathers were reportedly

negative, contrasted to 24% of gender non-conforming females' fathers. Nearly

one-third (30%) of youth were considered gender atypical by parents

30% of the participants reported parental efforts to discourage gender

nonconforming behavior, though their discouragements did not differ by

participants' gender, with 53% being told to change their behavior, 12% being

punished or restricted in their activities, and 8% being sent to counseling.

In general, three-fourths (78%) of participants reported verbal SOV (sexual orientation victimization), 11% reported physical SOV, and 9% reported sexual SOV. All three types of victimization began, on average, at or around age 13. Males reported significantly more SOV of all types: verbal (87% vs. 69% [p < .01]), physical (15% vs. 7% [p < .01]), and sexual (14% vs. 5% [p < .01]). 72% of verbal SOV took place at school, 13% in public settings, and 10% at home. 56% of physical SOV took place at school, 25% in public settings, and 9% at home. 34% of sexual SOV took place at home and 13% in public settings.

D'Augelli, Grossman, and Starks (2006) found a significant association between gender non-conformity and both sexual orientation victimization and mental health problem indicators. Others, including parents, called the youth who felt different sissies or tomboys, and parents also discouraged these youth from being gender non-conforming. These youth experienced significantly more lifetime verbal and physical SOV than those who were not called sissies, tomboys, or discouraged from being gender non-conforming. Current mental health symptoms were strongly related to past reports of gender atypicality. Gender atypicality was associated with significantly more symptoms on both the BSI (The Brief Symptom Inventory) and the TSC (Trauma Symptom Checklist). Males who were called sissies experienced more TSC symptoms than other males, but females who were called tomboys did not differ in TSC scores from other females.

Of the 517 youth for whom data were available, 48 of these youth met the

DISC (the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders) criteria for diagnosis of PTSD in the last year. Three times the

numbers of females (38) than males had a PTSD diagnosis (10) (p < .001).

The researchers found more cases of PTSD among those who were

gender atypical in childhood than among those who were not. PTSD was

associated with increased lifetime physical and sexual SOV. Based on these

findings, youth who are gender atypical in childhood and who are victimized may

have elevated mental health and trauma symptoms, and some may have PTSD.

Strengths of this study include Cronbach's alpha score of .94 for the

Trauma Symptom Checklist (Derogatis, 1993), inclusion of p-values for the

results, and the sample population was ethnically and socioeconomically diverse.

However, as the authors point out, youth were drawn from one geographical area

and may not be representative of all LGB youth, and the convenience samples

such as those used in this study might engage youth who are more distressed

(Savin-Williams, 2003). Therefore, the generalizability of this study is in question.

The interviews were given 3 different times during a 2 year period, so

maturational changes, as well as other variables may have influenced responses.

Many of the questions were retrospective, so responses could be exaggerated,

minimalized, or remembered incorrectly. The authors also suggest that the

elevated trauma symptoms and PTSD found here might not be found in LGB

youth who do not attend centers for LGB youth, are not as open about their

sexual orientation, or were not as gender atypical in childhood, and it is also possible that youth with elevated trauma symptoms might retrospectively consider themselves more gender atypical in childhood (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006). Finally, the percentages included for sexual SOV location were 34% at home and 13% in public settings. The researchers did not provide a percentage for at-school sexual SOV.

D'Augelli, Grossman, and Starks (2006) proposed that the findings of this study indicate the importance of acceptance of early gender expression in the developmental experiences and current adjustment of LGB youth. Many subjects of the study perceived that others, including parents, viewed them as gender atypical, and many responses to their gender atypicality were negative. Considering this, teachers may want to take action to foster an environment that is inclusive and accepting of gender atypical students.

According to the previous study, gender non-conforming youth receive more physical attacks in a lifetime. As a result of these attacks, the self-esteem and academic achievement of gender non-conforming youth may be impacted. Substance use and unsafe sexual practices may also result from the bullying and abuse of which these youth are victims.

Wyss (2004) conducted one study that examined the impact of violence on the self-esteem, academic achievement, substance use, and sexual lives of gender non-conforming youth. Wyss performed face-to-face interviews with five participants and questionnaires were emailed to 19 participants. She found that

11 participants had been physically attacked, six survived sexual assault or rape in high school, and three mentioned being suicidal; as a result, each youth in the study developed strategies for dealing with the hatred they confronted.

Wyss (2004) used the theoretical framework of "doing gender." "Doing gender," the author states, is something that is achieved when interacting with others—gender attribution is done by the people interpreting it, rather than the people displaying it.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with five participants who had to meet these criteria: They went to school in the USA, were born no later than 1965, and were out as trans or genderqueer to at least one other person during high school. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the data, and the option of reviewing and critiquing the transcription was given to the participant.

Wyss (2004) found that 11 informants from the total sample were shoved, pushed, smacked, punched, and/or kicked by others in school. Four informants talked about being threatened, and six of the informants reported surviving sexual assault or rape in high school. Many of the youth reported that the violence and the fear of violence made them feel worthless, and some participants mentioned being suicidal. As a result of their struggles and suffering, each youth in this study developed strategies for dealing with the hatred that they confronted. Some predicted and prevented attacks, while others resorted to fighting back when assaulted. A few of youth responded to violence by attempting to go back into the closet. These participants who did attempt to go

back into the closet were likely to internalize the violence and turn it on themselves. Other participants responded to the violence that they encountered and endured by engaging in unsafe sex.

Concerning incidents of violence, one participant, Taylor, described an attack by a wrestler and two other boys at a party:

> I had these three guys that didn't like me and I'm not totally sure why they didn't. But I think a lot of it had to do with my gender expression and my sexuality and just basically who I was. […T]hey beat my ass on my [fifteenth] birthday [with a leather belt…T]he guy I was with […] just sat back and watched while they did this to me. […I]t was just like, 'Okay, this is our chance to get Taylor.' [….] I cried and screamed and they still laughed and did it. And ya' know, like I was on my back with my legs [curled up to my face…]. But you'd know without [me] tellin' you, you know where else it [the belt] hit me. (Wyss, 2004, p. 716)

Concerning the subsection of sexual violence, one participant, Crystal, was raped, "twice. Once by a girl who drugged me, and I'm not sure why she did it. The second time was by a guy who said that I was a monster, and that I had better enjoy what he was doing to me, because it was the only way anyone would ever touch me…that one took me a while to get over" (Wyss, 2004). Taylor's experience became a public event:

> When I was fourteen, this guy who was my eighth grade best friend's brother [raped me….T]hat was a bad experience 'cause it happened […]

at a club above this party. And I was drunk. And I had been tellin' him,

'No,' for like a year before that. […W]hile it was happening, somebody

opened the door and started laughing and then, then told the whole party.

And so I got up and I cried and I left […]. (Wyss, 2004, p. 718)

For the subsection on the impact of violence on the trans and

genderqueer self, a participant, Jeremy explains, "I just walked around the world

really, really afraid […], jus' feelin' like, 'Someone's gonna kill me." Alluvion,

another participant, stated hir feelings, "…like I deserved all of it because I wasn't

normal, like I was sick, bad, wrong, diseased…" (Wyss, 2004)

Concerning the section on reactions to violence, Taylor explained, "I

pretended like I was really powerful and like I would, ya' know, kick somebody's

ass if I had to." Alluvion "hid during lunch and recess," and Jeremy "would work

out in the weight room a lot and got real strong" (Wyss, 2004).

For the subsection on doing retaliation, Jeremy, Katie, Kyle, and Taylor all

reported cursing their harassers. Some resorted to threats, as Jeremy described:

I used to threaten like the other people on the wrestling team. I was like, 'If

you don't stop harassing me and my friends, I am gonna' tell everyone on

your wrestling team that I beat the shit out of you when you were twelve

years old and that's gonna' be embarrassing because I'm a girl.' (Wyss,

2004, p. 722)

A few participants said they fought back physically, such as Katie when

she defended herself against someone by kicking them, "in the shins w/my [with

my] boots." Jeremy said, "I was a fighter…I would throw somethin' at them…Or throw a punch" (Wyss, 2004)

Concerning the subsection on coping mechanisms, Jeremy "didn't wanna' be a complainer," and Taylor felt like they "had to deal with this on my own." Many of the participants tried to conform to gender roles, Falon explained, "I had to try to be male as hard as I could," and Crystal "tried getting myself interested in sports and physical activities" (Wyss, 2004).

Given the qualitative research design, a strength of this study is trustworthiness—the researcher used the actual words of the participants in the findings. Wyss also clearly stated her theoretical positioning. The results (transcriptions) were reviewed by the interviewees before publishing. Weaknesses are the racial homogeneity of the participants and possibly the retrospective nature of the study. Also, the researcher only selected five participants for this study, so the results may not be generalizable to other gender-nonconforming youth.

According to the author, the incidents discussed in this study highlight the need for comprehensive, age-appropriate sensitivity training of all educational staff and students in the USA, and the author also called for visibility of gender-variant people's lives in classrooms and school libraries (Wyss, 2004). Finally, the author was in favor of suicide prevention and anti-bullying programs in schools that deal with the issues faced by LGBTQ young people (Wyss, 2004).

Section III: Strategies to Prevent Bullying of LGBTQ Youth

School Climate and Social Support. As we have seen from the previous studies, bullying can have detrimental effects on LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth. Bullying might result in mental illnesses and even suicide for the victims (Almeida et al., 2009; D'Augelli, Grossman, and Starks, 2006; D'Augelli, Pilkington, and Hershberger, 2002; Grossman et al., 2009; Williams et al., 2005; Wyss, 2004). Bullying might also affect the self-esteem and academic achievement of the victims (Grossman et al., 2009; Wyss, 2002). One way to prevent bullying is to create spaces where there are supportive individuals and where bullying is not allowed. Family support can also go a long way in helping LGBTQ individuals cope with bullying.

Supportive family members and a positive school climate can protect LGBTQ youth from mental health issues and drug use. In a study examining the moderating effects of homophobic bullying and school climate on negative outcomes, Birkett, Espelage, and Koenig (2008) conducted a study on 7,376 7th and 8th grade students and found that a positive school climate and a lack of homophobic victimization moderated the differences among sexual orientation status and outcomes.

Participants of this study included 7,376 7th and 8th grade youth from a large Midwestern county. 72.7% were White, 7.7% Biracial, 6.9% Black, 2% Hmong, 3.7%

Hispanic, 3.2% Asian (not Hmong), and 2.2% reported "other." 50.7% identified as female, and 49.3% identified as male. The participants included

5,379 heterosexual youth, 329 questioning youth, and 749 LGB youth. 49.7%

resided in a large city, 21.8% resided in a town or village, and 9.8% resided

in the country. The researchers administered the survey to all students who

chose to participate and attended school on the day of the survey.

Birkett et al. (2008) used the 2005 Dane county middle school survey

to assess sexual orientation. The researchers assessed bullying victimization

through the victimization subscale of the University of Illinois Aggression

Scales, and homophobic teasing was assessed with one item. They assessed

positive school climate with an eight-item scale, and drug use,

depression/suicidality, and truancy were also assessed. The researchers

calculated MANOVAs in order to examine differences across the three sexual

orientation groups, and these were followed by ANOVAs.

According to the findings, males and females did differ across the three

sexual orientation groups (LGB) X^2(2, n = 6,667) = 38.24, p < .001). 13.8% of

males identified as LGB, while only 9.5% of females identified as LGB. Males

were slightly more likely to identify as questioning at 5.8% versus 4.5% of

females. This finding is supported by previous literature, which found that

males self-identify earlier than females (D'Augelli et al., 2008).

Students also differed by race across the three sexual orientation

groups X^2(14, n = 6,667) = 80.42, p < .001). Only 10.9% of White youth

identified as LGB, but 17.1% of Blacks, 15.4% of Native Americans, 14.8% of

Hispanics, 13.3% of Multi-racial, 11.3% of Hmong, and 12.1% of Asian (non-

Hmong) identified as LGB. 4.1% of White youth identified as questioning,

while 9.4% of Blacks, 13.8% of Native Americans, 7.8% of Hispanics, 5% of

Multi-racial, 9% of Hmong, and 8.2% of Asian (non-Hmong) identified as

questioning their sexual orientation.

In order to examine differences among LGB youth, the researchers

calculated MANOVAs and significant overall multivariate effects were

followed by ANOVAs. Tukey's post hoc comparisons followed significant

ANOVAs.

Concerning homophobic teasing and general peer victimization, all

three groups significantly differed from each other. Sexually-questioning

students reported the most teasing, followed by LGB students, and

heterosexual students reported the least amount of teasing (Straight [n =

5,379], M = .28, SD = .75; Questioning [n = 329], M = 1.16, SD = 1.51; LGB

[n = 749], M = .45, SD = 1.03; ANOVA [F = 179.21, p < .01, η^2 = .05]).

Questioning students reported significantly greater victimization than either

LGB or heterosexual students (Straight [n = 5,379], M = .61, SD = .88;

Questioning [n = 329], M = 1.29, SD = 1.35; LGB [n = 749], M = .64, SD =

.98; ANOVA [F = 84.41, p < .01, η^2 = .03]).

Birkett et al. (2008) found that sexually questioning students reported

significantly more depression/suicidal feelings, greater alcohol/marijuana use,

and more truancy than the other two groups (Straight [n = 5,379], M = .49, SD

= .63; Questioning [n = 329], M = 1.06, SD = 1.00; LGB [n = 749], M = .52,

SD = .71; ANOVA [F = 116.63, p < .01, η² = .04]). Additionally, LGB students

reported more alcohol/marijuana use (Straight [n = 5,379], M = .10, SD = .34;

Questioning [n = 329], M = .64, SD = 1.26; LGB [n = 749], M = .20, SD = ..68;

ANOVA [F = 206.66, p < .01, η² = ..06]) and more truancy than heterosexual

students (Straight [n = 5,379], M = ..28, SD = ..75; Questioning [n = 329], M =

1.18, SD = 1.52; LGB [n = 749], M = ..45, SD = .1.03; ANOVA [F = 182.70, p

< .01, η² = .05]).. Questioning students reported the lowest levels of positive

school climate in comparison to the LGB and heterosexual students (Straight

[n = 5,379], M = .1.98, SD = ..78; Questioning [n = 329], M = 1.70, SD = .80;

LGB [n = 749], M = .1.92, SD = .56; ANOVA [F = 23.81, p < .001, η² = .01]).

Concerning homophobic teasing and positive school climate as

moderators between sexual orientation status and outcomes, results

indicated that positive school climate buffered the association between sexual

orientation status and high levels of depression and suicidal feelings. Results

also indicated that positive school climate moderated the differences among

sexual orientation status and high levels of alcohol/marijuana use. Finally, the

researchers found that positive school climate might buffer the association

between sexual orientation status and truancy.

These results suggest that school and home environments are able to

protect LGB and questioning students. Teachers, as advocates of LGB youth,

can educate administrators, parents, and students about the importance of

positive social and emotional climate in schools and homes for LGB youth.

Given the research design of this study, a static group comparison, the groups (heterosexual, questioning, and LGB) could have been better matched. Strengths of the study include the scores of Cronbach's alpha for the measures used—all were between .78 and .93, except for the two items used to assess depressive and suicidal feelings, which were α = .64. The results were significant with p-values of $p < .01$ and $p < .001$. The findings for the first measure on sex differences and identifying as LGB were supported by previous research. This study confirms previous research that has shown that social and institutional support are important for maintaining well-being in sexual minority youth (D'Augelli, 2002, 2003; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). This study also found that sexual minority youth were more likely than heterosexual youth to report high levels of depressive and suicidal feelings and alcohol and marijuana use, which confirms previous research that found LGB youth report higher prevalence of depression (D'Augelli, 2002; D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Rivers, 2001), suicide (D'Augelli, 2002; Elliot & Kilpatrick, 1994), and drug use (Orenstein, 2001; Rosario, Hunter, & Gwadz, 1997). However, the researchers for the current study relied on individual perceptions of school climate and homophobic teasing, and there is a lack of multilevel analysis. There were also significantly more heterosexual youth studied (5,379) than questioning (329) or LGB (749). The sample population was limited to a Midwestern county, and the participants were from 7th and 8th grade only. The results

might not be generalizable to high school students or to students outside the Midwestern United States.

In conclusion, Birkett et al. (2008) stated that this study highlights the significance of school environment for all students, in particular LGB and sexually-questioning students. The researchers claimed that the most important lesson to be taken from the study is that schools have a responsibility to consider the needs of their sexual minority students, and that a more positive school environment where homophobic teasing is not tolerated is an important intervention that can improve the psychological outcomes for all students, not just those who are LGB or questioning.

Positive school environments and prevention of homophobic bullying may increase the safety of schools for LGBTQ youth. Effective strategies must be implemented to achieve safety in schools. Through studying students' perceptions of safety, Toomey, McGuire, and Russell (2011) examined the role of school strategies in promoting safety for gender non-conforming peers in high school. They studied 1,415 students from 28 high schools. The researchers found that, when schools included LGBTQ issues in the curriculum and had a GSA, students perceived their schools as safe for gender nonconforming male peers.

The researchers included participants who were middle and high school students in California. The majority were female (59.79%). 38.51% were male, and 1.70% were transgender. Included were LGBQ students

(19.08%) and their heterosexual, straight allies. Concerning race/ethnicity, 23.96% identified as Latino/a, 19.65% as Asian, non-Latino/a, 4.10% as Black, non-Latino/a, 15.83% as other or multiple races/ethnicities, and 3.60% reported no race/ethnicity. Participants were in 6th through 12th grade (M = 10.48, SD 1.34) and ranged in age from 11 to 19 years (M = 16.04, SD = 1.44).

The researchers aimed to assess students' perceptions of the school climate's safety level for gender nonconformity, and to examine how the visibility of safe school strategies may challenge heteronormativity and be associated with greater perceptions of safety for peers. The researchers based the study on data from the *Preventing School Harassment* (PSH) *Survey* (O'Shaughnessey et al., 2004). They developed two survey questions that assessed perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming peers at school. The researchers included *California Healthy Kids Survey* in the PSH survey, along with two additional items to measure perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming peers. To measure school violence, researchers used eight items to ask the participants about their personal experiences of violence at school. The researchers also asked participants questions that assessed school policies—if they knew where to go for information and support, if there was inclusion of LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum at school, whether or not the school had a GSA or related student-led club, and whether teachers intervene in harassment. Finally,

the researchers created school-level measures for each of the five school strategies, then they calculated the average for each strategy reported by the students within each school.

In their analyses of the data from these surveys, the authors used multilevel regression models to predict perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming peers, based on individual-level sociodemographic characteristics, experience of violence at school, personal experience of harassment or bullying due to gender nonconformity, and the five safe school strategies. The researchers aimed to distinguish variability within each school (versus between schools) in the associations among safe school strategies and perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming peers.

Over half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their schools were safe for "guys who aren't as masculine as other guys" (66.51%) and "girls that [sic] aren't as feminine as other girls" (75.40%) (Toomey, et al., 2011). Among LGBQ students the percentages that agreed or strongly agreed were: masculine, 51.85%; feminine, 67.04%. Straight youth perceived their schools as safer for gender nonconforming students: masculine, 69.96%; feminine, 77.38%. The differences were significant at the mean-level—LGBQ youth reported less safety for gender nonconforming male peers (t[df = 1413] = 5.32, p < .001; LGBQ = 2.52; Straight = 2.79) and female peers (t[df = 1413] = 2.17, p < .05; LGBQ =

2.80; Straight = 2.90).

Youth who were in higher grades, bisexual, Latino/a, and who had experienced violence at school reported lower perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming male peers. Transgender youth reported higher perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming male peers. Youth who were in higher grades, who had experienced violence at school, and who had been harassed or bullied for gender nonconformity reported lower perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming female peers. At the individual level, these same youth reported three of five safe school strategies that were predictive of higher levels of perceptions of safety for gender nonconforming male peers. These were utilization of LGBT-inclusive curriculum, access to information about LGBT issues and support, and teacher intervention in sexual orientation-based or gender nonconformity-based harassment. Students also reported more perceived safety for gender nonconforming males if they attended schools in which higher proportions of students reported LGBT-inclusive curriculum and the presence of a GSA. In schools where proportionally more students reported harassment policies that included specific attention to sexual orientation, students reported less perceived safety for male and female gender nonconforming peers.

LGBQ transgender students reported the most harassment/bullying due to gender non-conformity at 84.21%. 66.67% of transgender students

reported harassment/bullying due to gender nonconformity, and 31.74% of

LBQ female students reported harassment/bullying due to gender

nonconformity. 15.84% of GBQ males reported harassment/bullying due to

gender nonconformity.

This study is interesting, but the authors did not include Cronbach's

alpha (internal consistency) for the measures used, except for the

questions about school violence from the California Healthy Kids Survey (α

= .80). The sample was mostly female, and only 20.78% of the participants

were LGBTQ. As a result of surveying mostly heterosexual participants,

the findings may be skewed since non-LGBTQ youth have different

experiences and may not be aware of the school climate. The youth may

be homophobic or bullies themselves, and as a result, may provide biased

answers. The researchers did not take variables such as these into

consideration. The researchers pointed out that no indicator of individual

students' own level of gender nonconformity was available, and the

researchers admitted that their results are only suggestive. The study is

limited to middle and high school students in California, and the results

may not be generalizable to other areas of the United States. Another

weakness is that the study is poorly written. Sentences are not concise

and crucial information is omitted. However, a strength of the study is the

findings, backed by previous research (Szalacha, 2003), which include

perceived school safety for gender nonconforming male students when

LGBTQ issues are included in the curriculum, when information related to LGBTQ issues is accessible, and when teachers intervene in sexual orientation- and gender non-conformity-based harassment.

In conclusion, Toomey et al. (2011) claimed that the findings suggest that when school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel implement safe schools policies and practices, they need to be intentionally inclusive to the needs of gender nonconforming students. Their findings also suggested that the inclusion of LGBTQ-related information at schools is linked to school safety for gender nonconforming students and all students.

The previous study found that teacher and staff intervention created perceptions of a more positive school environment. In the next study, the researchers also discovered similar findings in regards to school intervention.

McGuire, Anderson, Toomey, and Russell (2010) conducted two mixed-method investigations on the contextual and interpersonal risk and protective factors associated with feelings of safety and well-being for transgender youth. They found that school harassment due to transgender identity was pervasive, and that this harassment was negatively associated with feelings of safety.

For this study, transgender youth were examined in two contexts: First using survey data collected at middle and high schools, and second with focus groups conducted in community centers which provided support groups for transgender youth. The first study used data from the Preventing School

Harassment (PSH) survey, and the researchers limited the analytic sample to

2,260 6th to 12th grade respondents (34% identified as lesbian, bisexual, gay, or

queer; 68 were transgender, queer, or questioning) in California schools.

For the second study, the participants were 36 ethnically diverse

transgender youth. The researchers collected data for this study collaboratively

with four community resource centers that provide services to LGBT youth in

Western United States cities. The agencies recruited persons for one group per

center, and the focus groups started with a series of questions about LGBT youth

community centers and how they could best support transgender youth. The

researchers asked other questions specific to school climate. They asked

participants to describe their school climates with a focus on safety for gender

non-conforming youth. The researchers asked the youth if they were "out" at

school, and what difference that made to their experiences. Finally, they asked

these youth to make recommendations to improve school safety for transgender

youth.

Results of the first study indicated that negative comments based on

gender presentation were common for participants: 60% of the full sample and

82% of transgender students reported hearing negative comments based on

gender presentation from other students "sometimes or often" (students make

negative comments: transgender, 3.29; non-transgender, 2.90; significance,

t[2258] = -3.08, p < .01; teachers make negative comments: transgender, 1.98;

non-transgender, 1.46; significance, t[59.48][a] = -3.74, p < .001). Also, the

researchers found that teacher or staff intervention was uncommon: 45% of

students in the full sample and only 25% of transgender students report teacher

intervention (teachers stop comments: transgender, 1.98; non-transgender, 2.36;

significance, $t[2258] = 2.80$, $p < .01$). Transgender youth were more likely to hear

negative comments by school personnel (31% said sometimes or often) than to

hear school personnel stop other youth from making negative comments (25%

said sometimes or often).

The researchers examined associations between risk and protective

factors and perceived safety. The authors were particularly interested in the

associations between protective school factors and perceived safety once other

risk and protective factors were taken into account. They found that school

protective factors were significant predictors of safety on step 1, consistent with

the bivariate correlation, but became non-significant as soon as negative

comments and connections to adults were added into the model. Additionally,

negative comments from school personnel were non-significant when

connections to adults were included in the model. School strategies became

indirectly associated with transgender students' feelings of safety via connections

to adults.

Concerning the findings for the second study, participants nearly

universally agreed that schools could be unsafe places for transgender and

gender non-conforming youth. Reports of physical violence were common, and

participants described gender non-conforming youth as being "pushed around,"

"getting the crap beat out of them," and "getting their asses kicked" (McGuire et al., 2010). Across the focus groups, the researchers verified students' experiences with school personnel with the students themselves: Some students reported harassment or apathy from teachers and administrators, as in the case of one participant who described the situation: "I actually had a teacher who wouldn't let me do a lot of stuff because [of being] queer" (McGuire et al., 2010). Another participant stated, "I had to have my momma come up there, and had to have my momma talk to her [the teacher] because she really had something against me" (McGuire et al., 2010). Other students found important allies among the adults at school. One participant described how the instructional supervisor helped them, "The instructional supervisor was cool with it, so,…I just sort of did my own thing. …I got in some trouble for changing in the closet, because they'd always be like, 'Where are you going, the locker room is here'" (McGuire et al., 2010).

Many of the participants seemed to believe that the presence of GSAs improved school climate, while several participants said they wanted more queer-oriented activity time—time when they can "go out and play sports without the straight people bothering them" (McGuire et al., 2010). Finally, in all groups there were some youth who had separated themselves from traditional schooling environments by attending charter schools or opting for a general equivalency diploma (GED). These youth generally attributed these transitions to concerns about safety or difficulty fitting into traditional schools.

A strength for the first study is transparency: Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) of .87 for the assessment of interpersonal protective factors and the inclusion of p-values improved transparency. The overall sample size was large (2,260), but the sample size of gender non-conforming youth was small (68). The second study includes participant quotes, which makes it trustworthy, and the researchers verified students' experiences with the students themselves. There was little diversity as most of the participants of this study identified as FTM. However, there was ethnic diversity. The results might not be applicable to all individuals identifying as transgender.

The researchers' findings were consistent with other studies. The finding that the harassment of transgender youth was pervasive in schools, with about 80% of transgender survey participants hearing negative comments "sometimes or often," is consistent with findings by Sausa (2005), Kosciw et al. (2008), and Graytak et al. (2009). The physical and psychological distress that was found is consistent with studies of school safety for LGB youth (Russell et al., 2001). The importance of GSAs for queer youth has been found in other studies (Goodenow et al., 2006). Findings from studies of sexual minority youth have shown that teacher intervention to stop harassment/bullying was associated with greater feelings of safety for all students (Russell and McGuire, 2008). In some cases, participants reported in this study, as in other studies (Sausa, 2005; Kosciw et al., 2008; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006), that school personnel actually contributed to the harassment of transgender students. The findings in this study

of the value of school interventions for transgender youth are consistent with

prior studies of school interventions for LGB youth (Russell & McGuire, 2008;

Ryan & Rivers, 2003). Consistent with past research concerning same-sex

attracted youth and academic well-being (Russell et al., 2001), the researchers

specifically documented the value for transgender youth of attachment to adults

at school. The researchers also found that being attached to an adult at school

was associated with feelings of safety.

Finally, a major strength of this article is the way the findings of both the

qualitative and quantitative studies converge on a primary message: School

environments are generally unsafe for transgender youth, and school efforts to

promote safe environments can help the matter (McGuire et al., 2010). The value

of trusting adult relationships was also supported in both studies.

According to the authors, the findings suggest opportunities to create

positive change in schools (McGuire et al., 2010). They propose that

administrative policies which invite the establishment and maintenance of LGBT

support groups and training convey a message of acceptance and diversity. This

sets a tone for sensitivity training for teachers and peers within the school setting

in order to make schools a safer place for LGBTQ students.

Schools can be places of safety for all students. To create safe schools,

however, strategies need to be implemented. Such strategies may take the form

of programs, such as Out for Equity, which is evaluated in the next article.

Programs, such as Out for Equity (OFE), may help create safe

environments for LGBTQ youth. To examine the progress made as a result of the

Out for Equity (OFE) program, Horowitz and Hansen (2006) conducted a climate

assessment which was completed by 30 staff members and randomly selected

students at each of the St. Paul, MN high schools that took part in the OFE

program. The researchers found that even though there was no change in the

student use of homophobic speech, students were significantly more likely to

report that students and staff talked about LGBT issues in the classrooms,

seemed more comfortable talking about LGBT issues, and were perceived to

encourage and respect LGBT support groups more after the year of intervention.

The researchers included a minimum of 30 staff members who filled out a

rubric that resulted in which schools would be chosen for the study. Randomly

selected students from the three chosen schools participated in the school

climate survey. In October 2001, the researchers selected random participants,

who completed 767 surveys, and in May 2002, the researchers selected different

participants at random. These participants completed 894 surveys.

Horowitz and Hansen (2008) assessed these components of school

climate: attitudes, harassment, inclusivity, resources, curriculum, staff

development, and extracurricular activities. The researchers used these

components to establish a series of climate assessment rubrics of which there

were three: one for general climate, one for extra-curricular activities, and one for

curricular activities. The general climate rubric included four subcategories:

attitudes, visibility, harassment, and outreach. The extra-curricular rubric also

included four subcategories: GSAs, assemblies, social events, and parent/family

education. The final rubric, curricular activities, included four subcategories,

which were community, books/materials, curriculum, and staff development. The

rubrics containing these components were filled out by staff members. The

researchers then chose three high schools that had the most similar profiles.

Students from these high schools filled out school climate surveys.

For this part of the study, the researchers adapted a 10-item Likert-style

scale from a GLSEN school climate survey. Items assessed through this survey

include: frequency of homophobic speech, teacher and student intervention when

such speech occurred, exposure to LGBT related lessons, resources and

discussions about LGBT issues, the comfort level and respect of students and

staff toward LGBT people and groups, and the perceived feelings of safety by

LGBT students.

Responses indicated that even though there was no change in the student

use of homophobic speech, as a result of the OFE program, students were

significantly more likely to report that students and staff talked about LGBT

issues in the classrooms, seemed more comfortable talking about LGBT issues,

and were perceived to encourage and respect LGBT support groups more after

the year of intervention. Students also felt more comfortable attending a LGBT

support group or GSA while also showing significantly more encouragement and

respect toward LGBT support groups and clubs. The findings suggest that the

survey respondents perceived that LGBT students were more likely to feel safe

after the interventions.

Following the intervention programs in 2002, survey responses indicated that teachers intervened more often when homophobic language was used, students became more likely to be able to find answers to questions about LGBT issues at their school, students reported teachers talking more about and seeming more comfortable with LGBT issues in the classroom, and sexual-minority support groups and clubs became more likely to be encouraged and respected by students and staff. School climate in all three schools showed a positive trend toward healthier environments.

A strength of this study is the school climate measure, which produced results similar to those found in national studies. The researchers, however, did not list which national studies. Another possible strength is the random selection of participants and the fact that adults involved in the school community were included. These adults have a different perspective concerning school climate. They may observe things that students do not. Transparency in this study is questionable. The statistics are not readily available to the reader—only p-values are given. The authors do more telling than showing, and do not go into much detail about how the program works. The researchers did not include a control group, and there may be variables not taken into account. Also, the demographics for the St. Paul school district are provided, but the researchers do not provide demographics for each school in the study. Since the researchers conducted the study within three St. Paul high schools, the results may not be

very generalizable to other schools and areas.

Horowitz and Hansen's (2008) study included a Design and

Implementation team, who observed emerging themes relating to the role of

teachers, the need for resources, and general school climate as it relates to

LGBT issues. Teachers indicated that they believed school staff has the power to

maintain a safe and respectful atmosphere for LGBT people and issues.

Teachers also indicated a need for more information on addressing homophobia

and LGBT issues, and at the same time acknowledged that it was difficult to get

many colleagues to integrate LGBT issues into their lessons. In short, teachers

need more information and education on addressing homophobia and LGBT

issues so they can become better allies by way of creating and maintaining safe,

respectful environments in the school for LGBT students.

Another program that has shown some success is the Safe Schools

Program (SSP) for gay and lesbian students. To examine students' perceptions

of the sexual diversity climate (SDC) in MA secondary schools, Szalacha (2003)

conducted a mixed- methods evaluation of the Safe Schools Program (SSP) for

Gay and Lesbian Students involving students, faculty, and administration

members in secondary schools. She found there were statistically significant

positive differences in SDC where one or more of the SSP recommendations

were implemented.

Szalacha (2003) conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the Safe

Schools Program (SSP) for Gay and Lesbian students for the Massachusetts

Department of education. During the first year of this evaluation, the author took

a survey of the health coordinators across the state. She then held interviews

and focus groups with faculty and students, and the first year also involved the

piloting of questionnaires to be used with students and with professional staff.

For the second and third years after that, the author recruited participants, which

were 1,646 students of 33 schools, for focus groups and individual interviews.

During this time, Szalacha (2003) administered questionnaires.

The student survey contained 43 questions in four areas of inquiry: level of

knowledge regarding official school policy regarding the harassment and

discrimination of gay and lesbian individuals, assessment of the school's sexual

diversity climate in various dimensions, assessment of the GSA or lack of such,

and a measure of the individual student's behavioral comfort level with gay and

lesbian issues.

The author measured schools' sexual diversity climate (SDC) using one

scale. The measure drew upon many existing instruments and incorporated

items developed specifically for the current study. The questions included items

about the curriculum, attitudinal items, and behavioral items.

Students responded to a five-item scale measuring behavioral comfort

level with LGB individuals. The students' behavioral comfort level was

moderately positively correlated with their overall assessment of the SDC ($r =$

$.39$, $p < .0001$). An additional item measured students' ratings of the school

climate for gay and lesbian students. This item was strongly positively correlated

with scores on the SDC (r = .58, p < .0001), which further supported the scale's internal validity.

Significant differences in perception of school SDC based on sex existed (t = 6.8, p < .001) and GPA (F [3, 1618] = 9.29, p < .001). Males appraised school SDC less positively than females, and academically successful students rated their school's SDC more positively than less successful students.

Students in schools with GSAs indicated that the GSA had a "somewhat" positive effect (m = 3.11, SD = 1.0, on a five-point Likert scale [1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree]) and these students disagreed that the group was only for LGBQ students (m = 2.3, SD = 1.2). One-third (36.4%) of students in schools without a GSA thought that their school did not need such an organization. 75% of students in schools without a GSA reported hearing homophobic slurs every day in student areas, in contrast to the 57% of students in schools with GSAs.

The behavioral comfort level of boys (m = 2.86, SD = 1.2) was almost a full point lower than the behavioral comfort level of girls (M = 3.79, SD = 1.0, t = 16.3, p < .0001).

Overall, 55% of students thought the amount of time spent addressing gay and lesbian issues in their schools was "Just right." 31% responded "Too little, we need more," and 14% responded "Too much, we need less." Sexual minority students composed 63% of the students who responded "Too little, we need more." 57% of heterosexual students responded with "Just right" (X^2[2] = 54.5, p

< .001) (Szalacha, 2003).

Szalacha (2003) investigated whether student perceptions of sexual diversity climate differ across schools based on the Safe Schools Program. She found that these analyses of Massachusetts secondary schools' sexual diversity climate provide credible evidence that, on average, students in schools that have implemented even one of the recommendations of the Safe Schools Program (develop school policies protecting gay and lesbian students from harassment, violence, and discrimination; offer training to school personnel in crisis and suicide intervention; support the establishment of school-based support groups for gay, lesbian, and heterosexual students [Gay-Straight Alliances]; and provide school-based counseling for family members of gay and lesbian students) believe that their school is a safer, less sexually-prejudiced environment than schools without any aspect of the Safe Schools Program. Szalacha (2003) found that the sexual diversity climate was better when a Gay-Straight Alliance was adopted than when no aspect of the SSP was adopted and only professional training was implemented. The mean sexual diversity climate was 14% higher for schools which adopted all three aspects of the SSP than those which adopted no aspects of the SSP. Across all the models, the presence of a Gay-Straight Alliance is most strongly associated with positive sexual diversity climates, especially among male students' perceptions.

Strengths of this study include the fact that the results support the theory that school climate is alterable, which is also supported by the findings of Gondor

(1994) and Wynne (1980). Another possible strength is the number of schools

used, which would make the results more generalizable. However, only 113

students identified as sexual minorities, and 1,510 students identified as

heterosexual. Results may differ with different groups of students, so the findings

may not be very generalizable to the experiences of all sexual minority youth.

Another possible weakness of this study is that the author does not explain the

reasoning behind her methods in detail. There is no mention of the survey of

health coordinators under the heading titled "Data Collection Procedures."

Finally, the author states that the establishment of a GSA is more difficult

to pursue, and conservative parents worry about the "positive image of

homosexuals" that GSAs provide (Szalacha, 2003). Despite this, the author

states that both administrators and educators can create and enforce an

atmosphere of tolerance and respect for sexual minority persons through

addressing verbal harassment immediately and forcefully, by personally using

accurate knowledge about sexual minority issues, and by actually addressing

hidden heteronormativity in the curriculum and school activities (Szalacha, 2003).

By doing so, the author goes on to say that an atmosphere more conducive to

creating a student group would be established (Szalacha, 2003).

The findings of the previous study (Szalacha, 2003) showed that GSAs

may greatly improve school climate and safety. Yet another program that may

help create a safe school environment is a Safe Schools Summit. To determine

the discrimination and harassment experiences of LGBT youth attending a Safe

Schools Summit, how these young people respond to discrimination and

harassment, how they plan to respond in the future, and what effect attendance

at a Safe Schools Summit has on the participants, Craig, Tucker, and Wagner

(2008) conducted a mixed-methods study involving LGBT youth. They found that

participants felt more empowered and able to help their schools become a safer

space for LGBT students after the Summit.

The researchers recruited participants through an announcement during

the conference plenary and the placement of the survey in the packet of Summit

materials. They were informed that the researchers were interested in their

experiences with discrimination, their motivations for Summit attendance, and

their reactions to the Summit. Seven standardized questions were created to

elicit respondents' opinions about the Summit. The questions contained 5-point

Likert scales ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The bulk of

the survey, however, consisted of open-ended questions about the Summit and

respondents' experiences with victimization. The first author quantitatively

analyzed Likert scale responses and the second author checked the responses

prior to discussing findings. The researchers analyzed all responses to open-

ended questions with grounded theory techniques. Out of a possible 50, 24

completed surveys were returned.

Responses from these 24 completed surveys included some information

on demographics. 74% of participants were between 15 and 18 years old.

Participants' gender identity was evenly split between female and male, and

other responses included genderqueer and androgynous. 40% identified as gay,

24% as lesbian, 16% as straight, 12% as bisexual, and 8% as queer. Half of the

respondents were white, 25% were black, 16% were multiracial, and 8% were

Latino/a. 64% were enrolled in high school, 13% were in college, and 8% had

dropped out of high school. 75% reported that they were "out" to everyone they

knew.

Concerning the qualitative part of the study, four questions guided the

research: What have been the discrimination and harassment experiences of

LGBT youth attending a Safe Schools Summit, how did these young people

respond to such discrimination and harassment, how do they plan to respond in

the future, and what effect does attendance at a Safe Schools Summit have on

the participants?

The researchers, as participant-observers, attended workshops and spent

time with Summit attendees during lunch and between sessions. One researcher

facilitated a workshop. By observing and interacting with attendees, researchers

were able to confirm the accuracy of the survey responses.

All respondents had either witnessed or been the victims of school-based

harassment themselves. Victimization included two types: physical attacks and

verbal harassment. The researchers reported that verbal harassment was

described as particularly disturbing by participants.

Many respondents stated that they did nothing when witnessing or

experiencing violence. Their inaction was due to an overall sense of

powerlessness and fear.

Participants attempted to avoid victimization in a variety of ways. One participant claimed they became a recluse in order to aid in hiding their sexual orientation, while another honed their "own skills of defensive wit, sarcasm, and cynicism" (Craig, Tucker, & Wagner, 2008).

The opportunity to share stories with peers composed a particularly poignant experience of the Summit. The Summit also enabled the participants to clarify their own expectations of how schools should function to protect students. It gave them a chance to determine exactly what their role could be in bringing about such a change. The skill-building workshops at the Summit provided the participants with particular tools to enact their goals. Following discussion of Summit effects, most of the respondents planned to confront the violence directly in the future by initiating a dialogue defending the victim.

Students stated that their primary motivation for attendance at the Summit was to "make schools safer" (Craig, Tucker, & Wagner, 2008). They also said that their Summit experiences enabled them to work toward that goal.

Participants' evaluation of the Summit effects included: 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they learned new information and met new safe school advocates. 96% of participants said they will return to their communities to do Safe Schools work. 95% said they are better equipped to help make schools safer, while 94% reported that they gained knowledge about safe schools legislation. 92% of participants said the Summit met their personal goals

and that they felt more empowered. Finally, 86% said they experienced

increased community connection.

Strengths for this study include high inter-rater reliability (97%). The

researchers also employed peer-checking and member-checking. All reviewers

confirmed the quality of the study and accuracy of the findings. The study has an

element of trustworthiness, because the researchers included the participants'

own words. The researchers also achieved data triangulation by comparing

quantitative and qualitative data and by observing participants. Another strength

is the diversity of the study, which included many identities and sexualities.

Participants were relatively ethnically diverse, with 25% identifying as Black, 16%

as multiracial, and 8% as Latino/a. The researchers also included participants

who had dropped out of high school. This added multiple viewpoints and

experiences. As a result, the findings are more generalizable to different groups

of LGBT youth. However, the researchers included only 24 participants. The

study would have been stronger with more participants. Only those youth who

had the means and desire to attend the conference were included in the study.

This limits the findings.

In conclusion, participants felt more empowered and able to help their

schools become a safer space for LGBT students after the Summit. The authors

suggested that participation in the Summit could be viewed as a protective factor

and as a developmental milestone for some, because it shows that these

participants achieved comfort with their minority status (Craig, Tucker, & Wagner,

2008).

The Safe Schools Summit and other programs discussed in this paper

may also help non-LGBTQ youth become allies, which can increase the safety of

a school. To determine what is needed to help students become confident allies

of LGBT persons, Ji, du Bois, and Finnessy (2009) conducted a qualitative study

involving 11 full-time students who were enrolled in an LGBT ally course at the

honors college of the University of Illinois at Chicago. The researchers found that

an analysis of participants' reactions suggested that initially, students perceived

themselves as lacking credibility to be allies, but after interacting with LGBT

communities, students gained the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they needed to

be confident in supporting and advocating for LGBT persons.

The participants included full-time students enrolled in the honors college

of the University of Illinois at Chicago. They chose the LGBT ally course from a

list of honors courses to fulfill an academic requirement. Nine identified as

heterosexual females, one identified as a heterosexual male, and one identified

as a lesbian female. Nine were Caucasian and two were Asian. All were between

the ages of 19 and 21. Qualitative data were collected from the 11 students'

papers. The researchers used a qualitative approach that began with a set

conceptual framework (LGBT ally identity development theory). They uncovered

participants' experiences and perspectives within that framework. The

researchers entered students' reaction papers into the NVivo qualitative analysis

software program, version seven. The sentences took the form of qualitative

units, and these units were transformed into clusters of meanings, which the researchers analyzed to make a textural description of the experience of participating in an LGBT ally training course (Cresswell, 1998). They developed coding themes which reflected how the participants experienced the course. The researchers then evaluated the themes to determine their internal consistency, logic, and clarity, and to judge how well the data were captured. One author reviewed the themes, and the researchers decided on final coding decisions and final themes in the results section by consensus.

Several themes emerged in the findings. An initial theme was an issue of questioned credibility. Students perceived themselves as inadequate to be allies because they did not possess what they thought to be the necessary or proper knowledge and skills. Incongruence composed another theme. Students thought their actions were incongruent with, or were not reflective of, their pro-LGBT attitudes. The next theme had to do with fear associated with coming out as allies. Students realized that, like LGBT persons, they too struggled with their own "coming-out" process. They were afraid to come out as LGBT allies because they might be rejected or their peers might think that they were LGBT or question their intentions. Another theme concerned lack of interpersonal support. Students found it difficult to identify as LGBT allies when their own family and friends did not provide support. When family and friends made homophobic or transphobic comments, the students felt they could not come out as LGBT allies. The next theme concerned the inability to have conversations about LGBT issues. They

said that they rarely, if at all, had sophisticated or extended conversations about

LGBT issues with LGBT and heterosexual persons. As a result, students had

questions about LGBT issues, but they had no opportunity to address them.

Another theme had to do with lack of knowledge. Students felt they lacked basic

knowledge about LGBT issues, and as a result, this prevented them from

seeking further knowledge. Another theme had to do with knowledge, attitudes,

and skills, which students wanted in order to become effective allies. The final

theme had to do with the students' hopes in becoming LGBT allies. Students

expressed hope that they could explore this issue and become confident allies.

Findings suggested that all of the components of multicultural counseling

theory—knowledge, attitudes, and skills—interacted to build the ability of

students to act as LGBT supporters and allies.

Strengths of this qualitative study, which was based on participant

narratives, were that the findings were consistent with past reports of how

heterosexual persons become allies. The quotes of the participants were also

used in the study, which adds trustworthiness to the findings. However, there

were weaknesses: The claims of the researchers did not always match the

quotes of the participants. For example, the researchers claimed that lack of

knowledge of LGBT issues prevented the participants from taking the first steps

to gain that knowledge, but the quote from the participant did not back up this

assertion. The researchers could have been speaking generally about what they

observed, but they provided no proof. This weakens the credibility of the study.

Another weakness was the lack of diversity of participants. The researchers

selected only 11, mostly female, college-aged adults. These adults voluntarily

took the LGBT-ally honors class, so the findings might not be generalizable to

participants with different demographics. Despite these weaknesses, due to the

style of the study, findings may be applicable to middle and high school allies,

because the experiences being analyzed were relatively universal. Something to

consider is the fact that Ji et al. (2009) admitted that investigator bias could have

affected the results. The reason for this is that the main author of this study

instructed the LGBT-ally class and analyzed the student narratives. Because of

this, the other two authors performed independent reliability checks on the

themes to verify their presence.

Ji et al. (2009) stated in conclusion that heterosexual persons have many

ways to determine what it means to be an ally and many ideas about how they

can become effective allies. It is the researchers' hope that more academic

courses will be offered to give heterosexuals the chance to do that.

Allies can be a much needed form of social support for LGBT youth. To

examine the types of social support available to LGBT youth in high school,

Munoz- Plaza, Quinn, and Rounds (2002) conducted a qualitative study

consisting of face-to-face interviews with 12 participants who identified as LGBT.

They found that the participants relied on peers and non-family members for the

most support.

Twelve lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults between the ages of 18

and 21 years participated in the study. The transgender youth recruited for the

study did not choose to participate. Of the 12 participants, nine were Caucasian,

two were African-American males, and one was an Asian-American male. Of the

seven females, three identified as lesbian, three identified as bisexual, and one

as undecided, and of the five males, four identified as gay and one identified as

bisexual. These participants met with the principal investigator in a confidential

setting to take part in a recorded interview which was approximately one and a

half hours long. Munoz-Plaza et al. (2002) developed a standardized interview

guide that consisted of a series of open-ended questions about the types of

social support available to participants during high school (instrumental,

appraisal, emotional, and informational), along with the people who provided

such support. After the researchers completed the transcriptions, they content-

analyzed the data for emerging patterns and themes (Patton, 1990). The

researchers then used cross-case analysis to group the participants' answers by

topic area. They then coded and labeled groups in order to create an index of

themes from the transcripts. After the researchers analyzed the data, they

processed it using NUID*IST, which is a qualitative data processing software

program.

    The participants found non-family members, which included peers and

non-family adults, to be more supportive than family members. They perceived

heterosexual and LGBT-identified friends and non-family adults as providing

emotional and instrumental support; however, they perceived limitations to the

emotional support they received from heterosexual peers to whom they disclosed their orientations. Peers and adults who also identified as LGBT provided valuable informational and appraisal support. However, most participants chose not to disclose their orientations to their parents during high school, so participants described parents as offering minimal support of any type. The participants cited close friends as the members of their network on whom they could rely most for emotional support.

When researchers asked a gay male participant about the people at school with whom he would talk about something personal, he stated, "It would never have been a teacher…it would have been a friend" (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). A bisexual woman said she could talk to one of her closest friends about "Pretty much anything...not my sexual orientation at that point at all." Another gay male said, "Very few friends could I talk very candidly with about the details of my sexual relationships" (Munoz- Plaza et al., 2002).

LGBT-identified peers and adults provided valuable informational and appraisal support; for example, one lesbian woman talked about how an LGBT-identified friend at her school was a role model: "…[she's] just an amazing person…she was like someone who I went to a lot" (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). A bisexual woman talked about how an LGBT-identified peer provided her with information and advice: "…she was definitely an inspiration and also like a really good person to talk to with my own questions and stuff like that" (Munoz- Plaza et al., 2002).

One participant, who shared her sexuality with a parent directly, described her mother's reaction:

…She was one of those people that like was very—like as long as it wasn't anybody connected to her, she was very pro LGBT…till I came out to her and then she flipped, you know, like she was a Baptist minister or something, you know…the first time I told her that I thought I was a lesbian she told me to un-think it. (Munoz- Plaza et al., 2002, p. 56)

Another major theme throughout participants' responses included their emerging identity during high school and the interplay between sexual identity development and social support. Growing up, many of the participants felt a sense that they were different in some way from their peers. One gay male said, "I always knew that the way I felt about guys or opposite sex or whatever, was always different from my friends" (Munoz- Plaza et al., 2002).

When each participant became aware of their sexuality, they often relayed a sense of confusion about what they were feeling. A lesbian woman said, "It was like we were both sort of in this process of like not really knowing what was going on, but knowing we weren't straight" (Munoz- Plaza et al., 2002).

Concerning sexual identity, a theme of fluid sexuality was present, and when it came to disclosing their sexualities to friends, family, and teachers, the most reported barrier was fear of losing support from friends and fear of unfair treatment by teachers. Some said they were afraid of being thought of as a sexual predator by their friends. Participants expressed that their fear was fueled

by the negative messages they received about homosexuality in the school

environment. One gay male spoke about how witnessing the treatment of openly

gay peers influenced him:

> The people who were out, I kind of envied them because I was thinking it
>
> would be so much easier if I was just out, but then hearing what the other
>
> people would say about them behind their back made me not want to
>
> come out. (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002, p. 57)

A lesbian woman described being crushed by the response from a teacher

she had greatly admired:

> And there was this incredible history teacher…and he had been so
>
> important to me…But his response was just horrible. And I expected him
>
> to be completely supportive…I had to deal with this man who was like
>
> pretty hostile to the whole idea, who had been—like who I revered…He
>
> just completely…rejected me, like rejected the fact that I was a
>
> lesbian…He said that he like, one, didn't believe that I was a lesbian, that I
>
> really need to think carefully—like I love this whole thing, like you really
>
> need to think carefully. Like you haven't, you know!" (Munoz- Plaza et al.,
>
> 2002, p. 60)

A strength of this study is that the findings are congruent with the three

main categories (Martin & Hetrick, 1988) used to describe the social isolation of

LGBT youth: cognitive, social, and emotional. Another strength is the fact that the

actual words of participants are used. However, weaknesses include the number

of participants, which was 12 people who identified as LGB. The people who

identified as transgender did not participate in the study. The participants were

homogeneous, so data sources were not from many perspectives. The study was

retrospective, so participants may have remembered wrong, or they could have

exaggerated the experiences. They also may have forgotten many experiences.

The researchers did not describe their theoretical positioning. It is also unknown

whether member-checking was performed. Finally, the findings may not be very

transferable to different settings and students, since researchers included only 12

relatively homogenous participants.

Munoz-Plaza et al. (2002) stated that findings from this study highlight

significant gaps in the social support available to participants from peers, school

personnel, and family. The researchers claimed that schools can no longer

ignore the presence of adolescents and young adults who identify as LGBTQ,

and that teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, and other

education professionals are in a unique position to assist young adults who are

questioning their sexuality (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002).

Allies within schools may help make them places of safety, but parents

may also have a strong buffering effect on the consequences of the bullying

experienced by their children. Alternatively, a lack of parental support may leave

students more vulnerable. To examine the buffering influences of positive

parental relations and positive school climate on mental health outcomes for high

school students who are questioning their sexual orientation, Espelage, Aragon,

Birkett, and Koenig (2008) conducted a study of 13,921 high school students

through a survey that included questions about their school experiences. They

found that a positive school climate and parental support protected LGB and

questioning students against depression and drug use.

Eighteen different high schools from a Midwestern county contributed

13,921 high school students for the study. The researchers used data from the

2000 Dane County Youth Survey (Koenig et al., 2005) to develop measures. They

subjected data from this survey to exploratory factor analyses (EFA), and then

calculated the scales for the 2005 data portrayed in this journal article.

The researchers measured parental factors, parental communication, and

parental support. They also measured school climate. Dependent measures

included alcohol and drug use, depressive and suicidal feelings, sexual

orientation, homophobic teasing, and general victimization.

The researchers found that sexually-questioning students reported more

teasing (Heterosexual [N = 11,924]: M = 0.20, SD = 0.66; Questioning [N = 932]:

M = 0.84, SD = 1.33; LGB [N = 1065]: M = 0.57, SD = 1.13; ANOVA: F = 375.94,

$p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .05$) and general victimization (Heterosexual: M = 0.45, SD = 0.75;

Questioning: M = 0.95, SD = 1.18; LGB: M = 0.57, SD = 0.90; ANOVA: F =

166.54, $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .03$) than heterosexual and LGB students. LGB students also

reported significantly more homophobic teasing than heterosexual students, and

questioning students reported significantly more use of alcohol/marijuana in

comparison to the heterosexual students (Heterosexual: M = 0.80, SD = 0.97;

Questioning: M = 1.36, SD = 1.51; LGB: M = 1.00, SD = 1.16; ANOVA: F = 138.82, p < .01; η^2 = .02). Sexually-questioning students reported significantly less support from their parents in comparison to both heterosexual and LGB students (Heterosexual: M = 3.31, SD = 0.65; Questioning: M = 2.83, SD = 0.93; LGB: M = 3.14, SD = 0.80; ANOVA: F = 231.73, p < .01; η^2 = .03). Results also indicated that the effect of homophobic teasing on depression and suicidal feelings was greater for sexually-questioning youth and LGB students than for heterosexual students (Heterosexual: M = 0.63, SD = 0.67; Questioning: M = 1.07, SD = 0.95; LGB: M = 0.77, SD = 0.82; ANOVA: F = 176.48, p < .01; η^2 = .03).

The effect of homophobic teasing on alcohol and marijuana use was greater for sexually-questioning youth and LGB students than for heterosexual students. Sexually-questioning youth reported the highest level of marijuana and alcohol use. Positive school climate was greatest for all students who did not experience homophobic teasing; however, sexually-questioning students who experienced homophobic teasing at the greatest frequency reported their school climate as less positive in comparison to LGB and heterosexual students who experienced homophobic teasing at the same frequency.

For alcohol/marijuana use, the two-way interaction between homophobic teasing and parental support was significant with a small effect. Students with the highest frequency of homophobic teasing experiences and with low parental support reported the highest levels of alcohol/marijuana use.

Concerning the moderating effect of school climate, a slightly different pattern emerged than did for parental support: Students with the highest frequency of homophobic teasing who perceived the lowest positive school climate reported the highest depression/suicidal feelings and alcohol/marijuana use.

In short, the researchers found that sexual minority youth were more likely to report high levels of depression/suicidal feelings and alcohol/marijuana use. Questioning students reported more teasing, greater drug use, more depression and suicidal feelings than either heterosexual or LGB students. These students who experienced homophobic teasing were also more likely than LGB students to use drugs and rate their school climate as negative. Positive school climate and parental support, however, protected LGB and questioning students against depression and drug use.

Strengths include transparency of the data—statistics and p-values are included. Also, there was a large number of participants. The findings are also supported by previous literature: Sexual minority youth were more likely to report high levels of depression/suicidal feelings (Depression: D'Augelli, 2002; D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Rivers, 2001; Suicide: D'Augelli, 2002, Elliot & Kilpatrick, 1994) and drug use (Orenstein, 2001; Rosario, Hunter, & Gwadz, 1997). Weaknesses include small effect sizes. The makeup of questioning adolescents in the study may be heterogeneous, as participants had the option to describe themselves as sometimes, a lot, or always worried about being LGB.

Weaknesses also include the use of one-item scales, which might have

influenced the validity of the data. Also, it is plausible that some participants may

have misunderstood the questions in the study. The sample size was large, but

the participants were selected from only one county, so findings may not be very

generalizable to other areas of the United States. However, many of the students'

experiences were somewhat universal.

In conclusion, Espelage et al. (2008) stated that the study highlighted the

important role which social environment plays in protecting children and

adolescents from negative psychological and behavioral outcomes. Through this

study, the researchers found that both positive school and home environments

are able to protect LGBQ students. The findings in this study are particularly

informative for school professionals wishing to advocate for LGBQ students.

Supportive family members, allies, and a positive school climate can

change the lives of LGBTQ youth for the better. To examine the relational

connections and disconnections in LGBTQ youths' lives, Sadowski, Chow, and

Scanlon (2009) conducted open-ended interviews with participants from LGBTQ

youth support groups. They found that participants identified family members with

whom they could discuss LGBTQ issues openly, GSA alliances and community-

based support groups, and LGBTQ school personnel as important to their well-

being.

The researchers attended several meetings of an urban community-based

support group for LGBTQ youth. One researcher attended a meeting of another

LGBTQ youth support group in a rural part of the same state. Thirty youth

between 15 and 22 years agreed to complete the preliminary questionnaires after

an explanation on the nature of the study, which was about relationships with

school, family, peers, and self.

Twenty of the 30 youth agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were

open-ended and lasted about 60 minutes. The researchers chose the Listening

Guide qualitative research method for conducting and analyzing the interviews,

because it is specifically designed to attend to issues of voice and to explore a

participant's experience of relationships, multiple layers of awareness about the

relationships, and the central relational paradox. The researchers included three

case studies in their research article, which came from a collection of twenty

interviews. The three case studies illustrate key themes found across all

interviews. The theoretical framework of the study was relational connection and

disconnection.

The researchers found that relationships in the family domain were central

to the case study participants. The three youth's stories illustrate the power

family relationships have to be sources of emotional strength and distress.

Lindsey, a participant, mentioned her parents first when asked to name the most

important relationships in her life and described her relationship with her mother

in positive terms: "I have a really close relationship with my mom…my mom is

like my best friend, and I talk to her about everything…my mom is my support

and she's always been there for me, which I appreciate" (Sadowski et al., 2009).

Lindsey explained that her relationship with her mother is as strong as it is because of her mother's immediate acceptance at the time she came out to her as gay. However Lindsey suffered verbal abuse and anti-gay abuse from her step-father and older sister, respectively: "Yeah, he was calling me, like, a dyke and carpet muncher and just like, even before anyone knew, like, anything…So I was afraid to, like, come out to my parents because of that" (Sadowski et al., 2009). Concerning her sister, Kelly, Lindsey explained:

> …all her friends on the bus…They'd pick up rocks and throw them at me and call me a dyke and, like, they'd pull my hair and try to trip me and stuff. Kelly would just laugh with them…She was like, 'Yeah, I call her a fag. She hates it.' It was horrible. (Sadowski et al., 2009, p. 180)

Peer relationships in these stories fell along a continuum from strong relational connection to extreme relational disconnection. For two of the three case study participants, institutional factors at school might have influenced their abilities to make relational connections there. One of the participants cited the GSA for relational connections, while two of the participants found key relational connections in their community-based LGBTQ youth groups.

Ashton, a participant, was not able to experience many genuine relational connections with peers or teachers at his high school: "People knew I was gay, and I was ignored for it" (Sadowski et al., 2009). Ashton also described a pattern of denial and neglect with regard to LGBTQ issues among the adults at his school: "…my school never had…a safe space. It was just never talked about"

(Sadowski et al., 2009). Overall, however, Ashton placed a high value on

relationships and the ways in which they can enrich his life as a young, gay man:

"I like how people can make one another happy, and become happy from that.

It's—I don't know. But I like just having someone to be with…" (Sadowski et al.,

2009)

Another participant, Ruth, found her strongest source of support in her

school's guidance counselor, who was a lesbian: "But she wasn't out. So it was

kind of hard to understand, like—and that was probably one of the reasons that

kept me in the closet throughout high school" (Sadowski et al., 2009).

Relationships with family were central to the three case study participants.

The participants' stories showed how family may be a source of emotional

strength or emotional distress. The youth also formed relational bonds with

significant non-parent adults, such as therapists, guidance counselors, and GSA

advisors. Peer relationships for the three case study participants ranged from

extreme relational connection to extreme relational disconnection. One of the

three participants developed an affirming and validating connection with peers in

her high school GSA and community-based support group. Lindsey stated that

the GSA, her ability to be out in school, the presence of LGBTQ teachers and

staff, her freedom to write about LGBTQ issues in English, and her acceptance in

carpentry shop as factors that made her school a safe and affirming environment.

Ashton, on the other hand, was discouraged from starting a GSA and there was

little or no mention of LGBTQ issues in school courses. While Ruth did not feel

safe enough to come out at school, she found support in a community-based group.

Strengths of this study include the use of the participants' own words and a clearly defined theoretical positioning, which adds to trustworthiness of the results. Weaknesses include few case studies and no member-checking, which calls the study's credibility into question. The researchers obtained 20 interviews with participants, but chose to only include three case study participants. The researchers did not include data from many different perspectives. Since the researchers were Harvard graduate students, one can assume that the interviewees were from Cambridge, Massachusetts and the surrounding area. This is never stated in the research article, but one thing is certain: The youth were from an urban area. The results may not be transferable to youth in rural areas or other areas of the United States. However, some of the experiences of the youth may be universal. The researchers do not explicitly state whether they recorded or transcribed all or any of the interviews in completion, so confirmability is in question.

In conclusion, Sadowski et al. (2009) stated that the case studies illustrate the power of relational connection and the distress caused by relational disconnection in the lives of three LGBTQ youth. They also stated that, at the educational level, taking care of students' relational needs means making schools into places where LGBTQ youth can speak their minds, open up their hearts, and be themselves. For many youth, a GSA was an essential aspect of

such a school environment (Sadowski et al., 2009).

Besides creating GSAs in schools, there are other ways of improving school climate. Murdock and Bolch (2005) examined the relationships between school climate and school adjustment among LGB high school students and the moderating influence of social support on those relationships by conducting a quantitative study on 101 self-identified LGB high school students. They found that social support from family and close friends does not buffer the effects of the school environment on any of the adjustment variables; however, another finding suggested that it matters when the effects of negative school environment and poor support are combined.

Participants were 101 self-identified LGBT youth. Students were actively enrolled in an area high school, completed school, or dropped out no more than six months prior to participation. Of these youth, 34 were female, 64 were male and three were transgender. Seventy-two were White, 15 were Black, seven were Hispanic, and one was Asian, while 66 identified as gay/lesbian/queer, 32 as bisexual, and one person each identified as bicurious and other. 83% of the youth were currently in middle or high school, with 94% attending public schools.

Researchers hypothesized that variation in LGB youths' achievement, belonging, and disruptive behavior can be explained by the perceived school climate. They also hypothesized that support from parents or friends could moderate the effects of school environment on school adjustment. Students completed surveys to assess three aspects of the school climate (school

inclusion/exclusion of LGB people, personal victimization in school for being

LGB, and social support from teachers) as well as social support from family and

close friends. Criterion variables were GPA, school belonging, and discipline

problems. The researchers selected measurement tools to assess three major

constructs: School environment for LGB youth, social support, and school

adjustment. Participants responded to the items concerning school environment

for LGB youth on a five-point Likert-type scale with a range from 0=never to

4=very often.

The researchers assessed personal victimization by asking students about

the frequency with which they had experienced eight different forms of school

victimization during the past year due to their sexual orientation. Response

options ranged from "insults" to "being harmed with a gun or knife," and were on

a five-point scale ranging from 1=0 times to 5=7 or more times. Researchers

averaged the responses to form a personal victimization score for being LGB (α

= .93).

The researchers utilized the Social Support Scale for Children and

Adolescents (Harter, 1985) to assess perceived social support from teachers,

parents, and a close friend. They developed a 24-item measure for this

assessment. Reliability coefficients were adequate (teacher, α = .87; family, α =

.89; close friend, α = .80).

The researchers assessed school discipline problems using five items

which asked students about the frequency with which they had five discipline

incidents, ranging from being sent to the principal's office through expulsion in the past year. Response options ranged from a low of zero to a high of four or more times. The researchers computed final scores by averaging across the items (α = .84).

The researchers adapted five items which assessed school belonging from Goodenow's measure of Psychological Sense of School Belonging (PSSB, Goodenow, 1993). Students responded to statements such as "I feel like a real part of my school" and "I feel like I do not matter in my school" using a five-point Likert type scale. The researchers computed total scores by averaging across items, with higher scores reflecting more belonging (α = .87).

The researchers asked students to self-report their current school achievement using a five-point scale ranging from 5 ("Mostly As") to 1 ("Mostly Fs"). They also asked participants to report their achievement in middle school using the same scale, so there could be an estimate of prior achievement to use as a control variable.

Murdock and Bolch (2005) found that prior school achievement was a predictor for current school achievement (F [1, 99] + 42.08, p < .01), but prior school achievement was not a significant predictor of school belonging (R^2 = .015, F [1, 99] = 1.51, p = .223). Higher levels of school exclusion and lower levels of teacher support were related to decreased feelings of belonging. Students' levels of personal victimization for being LGB in addition to their middle school GPA were significant predictors of reported discipline problems.

Concerning social support as a buffer of school effects, the results did not affirm the hypothesis that support from parents or friends moderates the effects of school environment on school adjustment. When the researchers used person-centered analyses techniques, they found that it is the combined effect of negative school environments and poor support that matters. Most LGB youth were "ok," and only 14 adolescents were in the "highly vulnerable" group. Results suggested that it is combined personal experiences that affect academic success.

Strengths of this survey study include high internal reliability scores for: personal victimization score for being LGB (α = .93), perceived social support from teachers (α = .87), family (α = .89), and a close friend (α = .80), school discipline problems (α = .84), and school belonging (α = .87). However, according to the researchers, because of the methods used to find youth for the study, the participants were probably more connected to a network of LGB people than many other teens, and obtaining participants from a less urban area with fewer resources and support might reveal a much larger group of youth who could be described as "highly vulnerable." The exclusive reliance on self-identified LGB youth and on the reported experiences of LGB youth were also limitations (Murdock & Bolch, 2005). However, some of the experiences of these youth may be universally applicable to all LGB youth.

Murdock and Bolch (2005) concluded that the findings highlight the importance of teacher support and a positive school climate in facilitating feelings

of school belonging for LGB youth. They go on to say that it is important that both counselors and teachers actively advocate for LGB individuals (Murdock & Bolch, 2005). Results indicate the need to create safe, positive school climates.

Concerning the results of the studies in this section, positive school climate, which includes social support and teacher/staff intervention, and supportive parents may buffer the effects of bullying in LGBTQ victims. Children spend much of their lives at school, and they are in school during years which are critical to their development. There can be little doubt that creating safe spaces in schools and creating a more positive school climate can increase the well-being of LGBTQ youth.

GSAs and student-run clubs for LGBTQ students. Gay-straight alliances and student-run clubs might help prevent the bullying and victimization of LGBTQ students. The ability for an LGBTQ student to belong to a GSA or similar student-run clubs may result in a more positive school experience for that person.

To determine whether GSAs were related to a positive school experience and positive mental health incomes for LGBT youth, Heck, Flentje, and Cochran (2011) conducted surveys using a sample of 145 LGBT youth recruited from college and university organizations for LGBT students. They discovered that youth who had attended a high school with a GSA reported significantly more favorable outcomes related to school experiences, alcohol use, and psychological distress.

The researchers recruited 145 LGBT youth, between the ages of 18 and 20, from college and university organizations for LGBT students. They administered the Outness Inventory (OI; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000) to measure how open participants were about their sexual orientation with various individuals. The participants also completed two items that assessed the climate for LGBT youth in their high schools and communities.

The researchers assessed at-school victimization using nine questions taken from the Olweus' Bullying and Victimization Scale (Olweus, 1994). Concerning the assessment for at-school victimization, they included an additional item which assessed hearing homophobic jokes and comments. They revised the 10 items so they could be answered retrospectively. The researchers used the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT; Saunders, Aasland, Babor, de la Fuente, & Grant, 1993) to measure problematic alcohol use, and they used the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, Ball, & Ranieri, 1996) to assess depressive symptoms. The Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, 1993), with Cronbach alphas ranging from .70 to .95, assessed how often over the past week participants experienced general psychological distress in relation to specific problems. The researchers used the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, Short Form (CTQ-Short Form; Bernstein et al., 2003) to assess childhood abuse, and this measure has demonstrated internal consistency coefficients ranging from .80 to .95. They measured high school belonging with four items from Rostosky,

Owens, Zimmerman, and Riggle, (2003).

The researchers calculated seven ANCOVAs to examine their

hypotheses, which was:

…LGBT youth who have attended a high school with a GSA (GSA+) will

report significantly more school belonging and less at-school

victimization, problematic alcohol use, depression, and general

psychological distress when they are compared to LGBT peers who

attended a high school without a GSA (GSA-). Furthermore, it is

predicted that these significant differences will exist while controlling for

abuse (including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse) during

childhood, and other important demographic or environmental factors

that might distinguish GSA+ and GSA- youth (Heck et al., 2011, p.

164).

They used the presence or absence of a GSA as an independent

variable. The researchers entered childhood abuse scores as a covariate. Chi-

square analyses were also performed on the preexisting differences found

between GSA+ and GSA- groups. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each

measure corresponding to a dependent variable: .672 (Victimization), .770

(AUDIT), .815 (school belonging), .920 (BDI-II), and >960 (BSI).

Regarding school belonging and at-school victimization: GSA+ youth

reported significantly higher ratings of school belonging compared to GSA-

youth when controlling for the effects of the four covariates (F [1, 137] = 9.04,

p = .003; Entire sample: Mean = 19.59, SD = 4.67; GSA+ youth: Mean =

20.92, SD = 4.01; GSA- youth: Mean = 17.98, SD = 4.91). Community climate

was a significant (F = 10.77, p = .001) predictor of school belonging, while

population and sexual orientation, were not significant at the p <.05 level. The

researchers observed a trend toward statistical significance for childhood

abuse.

When assessing problematic alcohol use, researchers found that GSA+

youth reported more favorable outcomes related to alcohol use behaviors.

GSA+ youth revealed significantly lower (F [1, 135] = 16.93, p < .001) total

AUDIT scores compared to GSA- youth (Entire sample: Mean = 5.20, SD =

4.57; GSA+ youth: Mean = 3.94, SD = 3.47; GSA- youth: Mean = 6.72, SD =

5.26).

When measuring depression and general psychological distress, the

researchers found that GSA+ youth had more positive outcomes when

compared to GSA- youth (BDI-II: Entire sample – Mean = 12.79, SD = 11.21;

GSA+ youth – Mean = 10.79, SD = 10.19; GSA- youth – Mean = 15.18, SD =

11.97; BSI: Entire sample – Mean = 38.52, SD = 33.14; GSA+ youth -- Mean =

32.25, SD = 28.34; GSA- youth – Mean = 45.68, SD = 36.83). Childhood

abuse (p = .004) and sexual orientation (p = .017) were significant predictors

of total BSI scores.

Strengths for this study include external validity: GSA+ youth report

more school belonging and less at-school victimization because of their sexual

orientation when compared to GSA- youth. These findings are consistent with the findings of Goodenow et. al. (2006); Kosciw and Diaz (2006); Szalacha (2003), and Walls et al. (2010). The results of the study were transparent, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability scores for the measures used were mostly between .7 and .9, however the alpha for the test for victimization was only .672. The sample size for this study was also relatively small (n=145). Another fact to consider is that they study was retrospective, and the memories of the participants may not be entirely accurate.

In conclusion, Heck et al. (2011) stated that, as GSAs appear to be a source of protection for LGBT youth, future research with this population must be guided to better maximize this protectiveness. They also said that, simultaneously, researchers must advance theories that seek to explain why LGBT youth are an at-risk population. The researchers also argued for the collaboration of students, teachers, administrators, and school psychologists, so that programs (such as GSAs) which encourage education, awareness, prevention, and intervention in an integrative manner will be developed and implemented to produce positive change in the lives of all youth (Heck et al., 2011).

GSAs may play different roles in schools. To determine the roles GSAs play in schools, Griffin, Lee, Waugh, and Beyer (2003) conducted a qualitative study involving superintendents, guidance counselors, teachers, parents, students, and community members at 22 schools. They found that GSAs play

one of four (or any combination of the four) main roles in schools, including counseling and support of LGBT students, safe space for LGBT students and friends, education and awareness in school, and a broader effort to raise education and awareness in school.

To find out what roles GSAs play in schools, Griffin et al. (2003) conducted interviews with principals and GSA advisors, as well as other staff who worked at 22 high schools which participated in the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program. The researchers transcribed and coded these interviews using a guide. They developed the guide based on initial readings of all interviews. The research team met weekly to discuss data collection, code identification, and analysis of data. Based on this analysis, they developed a profile for each school, as well as the identification of cross-school themes.

The researchers found that GSAs play one of 4 or any combination of the 4 main roles in schools. The four main roles include: counseling and support of LGBT students, providing safe spaces for LGBT students and friends, acting as primary vehicles for education and awareness in school, and acting as parts of broader efforts to educate and raise awareness in school (Griffin et al., 2003).

Two school GSAs in the study played a counseling and support role. Staff members in one school reported that LGBT issues were not addressed and that LGBT staff members did not feel safe identifying themselves. Students from that school, who participated in the GSA, believed that the school climate was too hostile for an openly identified student club that focused on LGBT issues, and,

instead, the students formed a group that dealt with sexual orientation without

calling attention to themselves, choosing the name ESP (Educate, Support,

Protect). The other school of the two had a GSA that was organized as an

underground group. The school principal asked the adjustment counselor to be

the advisor, and she believed that her therapist role influenced the tone of the

very small group. For both schools GSA activities were not public.

In this study, six of the school GSAs functioned as "safe" spaces. GSAs

serving as "safe" spaces were visible through public address announcements

and posters in hallways. These clubs did not usually include events for the school

community or for students who were not GSA affiliated, but instead included

events such as watching videos, eating pizza, having guest speakers at

meetings, or discussing school safety. GSA members also attended LGBT-

related events outside of school, such as Youth Pride March, the state GLSEN

conference, annual bike trips, and sleepovers in the gym for events such wall-

climbing, volleyball, soccer, and meals. Adults in these schools considered the

GSA's visible presence an important statement of inclusion and support for

students in need.

In schools where the GSA was the primary vehicle for raising awareness,

providing education, and increasing visibility of LGBT issues in the school, the

GSA was a recognized student club with regular meetings. Activities were social,

educational, and/or political in nature. These clubs were visible and participated

in visible activities within the school. A club at one school made efforts to add

LGBT content to the school library and provided after-school videos on LGBT-

related topics for the general student body and faculty.

Some GSAs were part of broader school efforts for raising awareness and

providing education to make school safe for LGBT students in school. These

GSAs were highly visible within the school. Of the 22 schools, five GSAs adopted

this role. One school's GSA had a Safe Schools Committee which adopted a

statement of support for the legal rights of LGBT students in the student

handbook. Another school formed a Safe Schools Task Force consisting of staff,

parents, and students.

The findings of this study are interesting. However, the researchers

included few quotes from the participants. They were not transparent in their

methods, stating that the research team "employed qualitative methods that

included interviews, observations, and questionnaires" (Griffin et al., 2003). The

researchers did not give details about the interviews and questionnaires that

were used. They also did explain GSA activities in detail. For example, the

researchers stated that one school formed a Safe Schools Task Force, but they

did not explain the activities of that group. There was no member-checking with

the participants. The participants were from 22 schools in Massachusetts, so the

findings may not be very generalizable to other areas of the United States.

Despite these weaknesses, this study is useful in exploring the different roles that

GSAs can play within schools.

In conclusion, according to Griffin et al. (2003), GSAs play one or a

combination of four main roles, including counseling and support, safe space, education and awareness within the school, and acting as part of a broader effort to educate and raise awareness. The authors state, however, that for schools to become places where social justice values are lived through school policy and individual behavior, safety and tolerance are minimal goals (Griffin et al., 2003).

GSAs may provide counseling and support, safe space, education, and be part of broader efforts to raise awareness, but considering what students themselves have to say about GSAs is important. Lee (2002) studied the impact of belonging to a GSA. She conducted a qualitative investigation on the lives of seven students through focus group interviews conducted over a two-year time period and found that these alliances positively impacted academic performance, school, social, and family relationships, comfort level with sexual orientation, development of strategies to handle assumptions of heterosexuality, sense of physical safety, increased perceived ability to contribute to security, and enhanced sense of belonging to school community.

Participants were seven students who attended a culturally diverse urban high school in Salt Lake City, Utah. These students were members of the first high school gay/ straight affiance in the state. The two males and five females were from 15 to 18 years in age. All of the participants were Caucasian, middle class students who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and or straight, and all of the participants were "out" to their parents, since they were required to have parental permission to participate.

The researcher used qualitative methods to examine the effect that a participant's involvement in a GSA had on his or her academic performance, school and personal relationships, comfort level with being "out", sense of physical safety, perceived contribution to society, sense of belonging to their school community, and strategies for dealing with society's assumptions of heterosexuality. A triangulation method was used for data collection. This method included individual and focus group interviews, document collection of academic records and media reports, and the researcher's personal reflections. The researcher elected to have a third party conduct, record and transcribe all interviews.

For the research question to do with academic performance, findings suggested that participants believed that their academic performance improved due to their involvement in the Alliance. During the interviews, students stated that their academic achievement had improved during the period they were associated with the Alliance, although the data (grade records) did not support such beliefs. On the basis of these findings, "perceived improvement" on the students' parts led to overall increased academic achievement. Academic achievement, however, meant more to the students than just "getting good grades." Several students reported that their attendance of school had improved as a result of their involvement in the Alliance. Keysha, a participant, felt "more inclined" to go to school because she would get to see her new friends in the Alliance. She expressed a greater desire to attend school, while Emily, who had

come back to high school after dropping out, voiced how much harder she was trying. Kelli and Erin both believed that they took school work more seriously and put forth more effort after the formation of the Alliance, with Kelli beginning to think about furthering her education and believing that the Alliance was "making [her] work harder in school" (Lee, 2002).

Concerning the research question to do with school and personal relationships, participants answered that they believed that their involvement in the Alliance positively affected relationships with school administrators, teachers, family, and peers. Erin had to say this about her newly gained sense of self:

I feel more willing to identify with a diversity of people at school. Now I feel rooted in who Iam. I can go talk to other people. I don't need to wimp out. I don't need to be part of this vast subculture. I can go talk to someone who is blonde, blue-eyed, Mormon, and wears dresses. Before (the Alliance) I usually felt there was a barrier between us. Now I am more secure with myself and have social identification. (Lee, 2002, p. 8)

Jacob, another participant, had this to say:

This year, early on, I decided that I was going to come to school and not talk to anyone; not see anyone; just go to school. It had been awful before when I didn't do that. And then, someone said there was going to be a meeting in Camille's room for organizing a GSA and I went to it. I came out feeling like 'I can do this!' (see and talk to people). I was really happy! (Lee, 2002, p.8)

For the question to do with comfort level with being "out," the participants answered that they became more comfortable with being known as LGB or as a heterosexual ally through their involvement in the Alliance. Jacob explained his process of becoming comfortable with being "out":

I spent most of my time trying to pass as a heterosexual because everyone already assumed that I was gay. I was trying to get people to think of me differently. I've lived with that all my life. Now I don't have to do that. I can just be myself now in school instead of trying to lie and hide. It hurts so much inside trying to be someone you're not. I'm really happy that I don't have to lie anymore about who I am. (Lee, 2002, p. 9)

Other students spoke of being "empowered," and "confident," and they spoke of experiencing feelings of "freedom" through being "out."

Concerning sense of physical safety, students answered that they felt safer and believed they were harassed less due to their involvement in the Alliance. A study by Treadway and Yoakham (1992) also suggests that GSAs in schools create safer environments for gay and lesbian students. Erin had this to say about feeling safer:

I feel safer. People kind of jump when they see us right after they have said something incredibly homophobic. So I'm sure they are a lot more intimidated by the idea of actually hurting us. But I personally feel a lot less scared, because of the group. Because we have numbers now. Because we are seen and because we are visible. (Lee, 2002, p. 12)

Jacob also talked about a decrease in verbal harassment after the formation of the Alliance, and as a result, felt much more comfortable in his classes.

For the question to do with perceived contribution to society, students answered that they gained a new sense that they could "make a difference" or contribute positively to society through their involvement with the Alliance. Nate, a participant, stated:

I have always sort of wondered what I am going to do with my life, am I going to make my mark? I know that I have. I am satisfied now. If I can make another one...great. But if this is it...it's just fine. (Lee, 2002, p. 13)

Another participant, Sonja, recognized that the GSA had already made a difference in the lives of several students:

Just being organized and actually going out there and doing something...it feels good. Just to be able to make a difference. It feels so amazing. I mean we have already made a difference. We convinced two dropouts to come back to school. (Lee, 2002, p. 13)

Students answered that their involvement with the Alliance gave them a "sense of belonging to" and "identification with" the school, concerning the question to do with school belonging. Jacob and Keysha spoke out publicly in regard to their new found sense of belonging. Keysha shared her feelings from the Statehouse steps in Boston, Massachusetts at the 1997 Boston Gay/Straight Youth Pride Day: "Being a member of this group motivates me to come to school

because I no longer feel out of place. I think being a member of any club gives a

teen a sense of belonging" (Lee, 2002). While Jacob made his feelings very clear

when speaking to the media about the Salt Lake School District club ban and

student walkout in 1996:

> To me, taking our clubs from us is like putting a gun in our hands and
>
> waiting for us to pull the trigger. How many times do we have to walk out
>
> of our schools before we are heard? In high school our community clubs
>
> give us a feeling of belonging. We need to take a stand and get our clubs
>
> back. (Lee, 2002, p. 15)

Finally, concerning the question to do with handling society's assumptions

of heterosexuality, students were not able to identify specific strategies they used

for handling heterosexist assumptions.

Strengths of this study include the methods used for data collection, such

as the triangulation method that was used for data collection that included

individual and focus group interviews, document collection of academic records

and media reports, and the researcher's personal reflections. The results for

some of the questions were also supported by previous research, so the

dependability of the findings is strong. Results by Sears (1991) and Hetrick, et al.

(1988) suggest that students report that their schoolwork is negatively affected by

conflicts around their sexual orientation. The invisibility of LGBT youth precludes

a positive, honest relationship with their heterosexual teachers, families, and

peers in discussing friends, sexuality, and relationships (Hetrick & Martin, cited in

Telljohann & Price, 1993; Hunter & Schaecher, 1978). Researchers, Treadway and Yoakham (1992), suggest that GSA's in schools create safer environments for gay and lesbian students. Weaknesses, however, include the lack of diversity of the participants, the small size of the sample, and the specific time period in which the study was conducted limited this research study (The study was done over two years, so the significance of the participants' involvement in the GSA over time is unknown). There was no member-checking, so the results lack credibility.

In conclusion, Lee (2002) suggested that the GSA empowered the students and also helped them gain stronger identities. Lee went on to suggest that educational policy makers must look beyond the statistics of gay youth and recognize the positive impact that belonging to a GSA can have on students.

Youth activists, such as GSA members, empower themselves and those around them. In an effort to bring the voice of youth activists into the discussion on empowerment, in the context of their efforts in a movement for social justice, Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, and Laub (2009) conducted focus group interviews on 15 youth leaders of GSAs from different regions of California. They found that when personal empowerment, relational empowerment, and strategic empowerment are experienced in combination, GSA leaders have the potential for individual and collective empowerment as agents of social change in school.

The participants were student leaders of high school GSAs, and most were presidents and/or founders of their GSAs. The researchers conducted focus

group interviews, each including five participants for a total of 15 participants.

They did this in late 2001 and early 2002 in three California communities. The

researchers did not ask participants to disclose their sexual orientations, though

some did identify themselves as LGBT during interviews. Half of the participants

were White, three were Latino/a, three were Black, and one was Asian American.

The researchers tape-recorded the conversations and then transcribed

them. In analyzing this data, principles of the grounded theory approach were

used, which included a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively-

derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). They

coded transcripts by identifying the prevalent and meaningful themes that

emerged. The researchers compared the consistency of the coding, and then

they adjusted the coding scheme according to the consensus opinion of all three

coders. Finally, they recorded the data.

GSA leaders experienced empowerment as "having and using" knowledge

and other resources. The participants described GSA leadership and

participation as providing the knowledge they needed to more effectively

organize for justice. One participant explained:

It's knowing what you're talking about. It's having the resources and

having the information around you and saying, I have this and you can't

tell me that I can't start the club because I have AB537 and the Federal

Legal Access Act behind me…They thought maybe you wouldn't know

what you're talking about, and it's this powerful feeling when you can say,

"I know what I'm talking about." (Russell et al., 2009, pp. 896-897)

Another participant described the empowerment that comes with knowledge as related to respecting the differing opinions of others:

It's all about education, and I think empowerment is like being able to be open minded and accepting of like everyone, and still being able to like understand people for who they are, and like respect them, even though you don't really agree with them (Russell et al., 2009, p. 897).

Others described a personal sense or feeling of empowerment as an effect of belonging to a GSA. Such feelings often were expressed in terms of feeling good about oneself, and others identified the GSA as providing a context in which they felt they could be themselves. Personal empowerment often led to empathy for others who are isolated, and personal empowerment also produced the feeling that an individual can make a difference for others. One member explained:

Empowerment to me is when you feel like you have a voice and you feel like you make a difference. Even though you are just one person. When you feel heard and you feel respected, that shows you how much you can make a difference, even if you are just one person, you know, you can influence so many people just by what you say, about how you act, or how you treat other people (Russell et al., 2009, p. 897).

According to other participants, commitment to the GSA ultimately provided a greater sense of personal control and accomplishment to promote

change, which is characterized as empowering:

> I feel empowerment is being able to influence people and either, verbally
>
> or having experience to be able to let people know what's going on, how
>
> to fix things, getting a lot of people involved in your cause, and making
>
> things better. (Russell et al., 2009, p. 898)

The participants described another component which promoted the goals

of liberation in terms of relational or interpersonal empowerment. For these

youth, group membership referred to the feelings of empowerment the GSA

leaders gained by being part of a larger community. Being a member of that

group provided the social support necessary to pursue liberation. One participant

discussed the support gained from GSA membership:

> I've never, ever felt guilty for what I'm doing. …but it's, it does get hard as
>
> far as everybody else is against you it seems like and it's like, don't you
>
> see this? So it's good to have a group to be with. I do feel really
>
> empowered and good about GSA (Russell et al., 2009, p. 898).

For other participants, empowerment came from connections to others

and the solidarity they felt as being part of a group, because the group provided

shared understanding and broke feelings of solitude. Other participants felt

empowered through empowering others.

Concerning interactions across dimensions of empowerment, personal

and relational empowerment was often interconnected. A recurrent pattern that

included the description of personal empowerment which happens through

affirmation of oneself was closely tied to being a member of the group. One youth

explained, "Empowerment to me is standing up for your beliefs and getting other

people to stand up with you…" (Russell et al., 2009)

Strengths for this study were the use of the students' own words and

transparency of the methods and theoretical framework used (grounded theory).

Since the researchers used the grounded theory framework, which requires

researchers to follow a rigorous process, the reliability and validity of the results

may be strong. The participants were 15 youth from three California

communities, so the results may not be very generalizable to other areas of the

United States. The fact that there were only 15 participants is also a weakness.

The researchers did not include member-checking of the data, which weakens

the credibility of the results. However, some of the experiences expressed by

participants may be universal.

In conclusion, Russell et al. (2009) found that GSA leaders felt a sense of

empowerment as agents of social change in schools. The researchers believed

the study offered insight about the notion of youth empowerment from the

perspectives and experiences of youth activists in GSAs. They argued that these

youths' understandings of empowerment may be relevant for youth in other

contexts or programs which aim to bring about social change (Russell et al.,

2009).

Considering the articles examined in this section, the findings suggest that

GSAs can provide many benefits to LGBTQ students, such as creating safe

spaces, empowering students, providing support and counseling, educating, and raising awareness in the school and community. GSAs are only one part of the solution, however.

Students responses and suggestions. Students have their own ideas about how to prevent bullying and make schools safer. Many students feel motivated to take action to stop bullying when they encounter or experience it, and many students feel the need to support LGBTQ youth who are victims of bullying.

To examine sexual minority youth perspectives on how to support GLBT youth in challenging social environments during critical stages of their development, Davis, Saltzburg, and Locke (2009) used a Concept Mapping method for this cross-sectional needs-based study. The researchers conducted the study on 33 GLBT youth served by two GLBTQ-focused youth centers. They found that the suggestions by the youth focused on increasing social support, better school climate, community recognition of worth, elimination of institutional discrimination, family acceptance, community resources, GLBT youth- specific safe environments, gay-straight community partnerships, GLBT peer support and generational interaction, acceptance of gender identity and expression, educating the community, visibility in the media, and better access to relevant health care.

Thirty-three GLBT youth from two youth centers, one of which was located in Massachusetts and one in Ohio were the participants in this study. The

average age of participants was 18 and 19, and the mode participant age was 16

and 18 (OH and MA participants respectively). 24% identified their race as Black,

African American, or Biracial. 76% identified as White, 39% identified as lesbian,

21% as gay, 21% as bisexual, and 18% as other. Within the "other" category, 6%

identified as transgender and GLB, 18% additionally identified as pansexual,

faerie, and/or asexual, and 6% wrote comments that did not specify their

identities.

Concept Mapping constituted the primary data collection method for this

study, which uses a qualitative research design employing modified focus groups

to produce quantitative results. This study followed the six stages typically

advanced by Concept Systems (Kane & Trochim, 2007). The first stage included

preparation, which meant planning and designing the study in collaboration with

the center's executive directors. Idea Generation, the second stage, began the

standard data collection process whereby participants brainstorm responses to a

leading statement focused around a particular concept. Youth were then asked to

respond to the focus statement: Something GLBT youth need from their

communities to feel supported is _____. The third stage included structuring

Ideas: Youth individually sorted all the statements into conceptually meaningful

piles. Then they completed two Likert-type scales rating each statement on how

important the idea was for meeting their emotional or psychological needs and

social needs as GLBT youth. The fourth stage was Concept Mapping Analysis.

Individual youth produced maps depicting conceptual similarities and differences

among individual and clustered statements. Stage five, interpretation, involved

sharing and mapping results with youth.

Concerning the results, 14 primary themes emerged, 12 of which reflect

ideas generated by both communities. For the theme "School climate and culture

issues, school curriculum, school-based resources," MA youth generated the

majority of original statements comprising themes related to school curriculum

and school-based resources, such as including GLBT literature in school

curricula and displaying safety signs for GLBT youth in schools. Both

communities of youth described ideas related to school climate and culture, such

as implementing sanctions for discrimination. MA youth rated all three school-

related themes more important for meeting their emotional needs than their

social needs. OH youth rated all three themes more important for meeting their

social needs.

For the theme "Community recognition of worth," six combined statement

groupings and 20 original community statements came together to comprise an

overall theme reflecting youths' desire for the community to recognize their worth

as GLBT youth. Some ideas included a need for a more open-minded community

and normalization of GLBT identities. Both groups found ideas in this theme

equally important for meeting their emotional needs.

Concerning the theme "Eliminate institutional discrimination," youth

originally generated 11 statements which were combined into four ideas to reflect

needs for communities to eliminate institutional discrimination in employment,

healthcare, housing and general legislation. Ohio youth generated more ideas

concerned with general equal opportunity for people who are GLBT, while

Massachusetts youth generated more ideas concerned with healthcare and

housing.

For the theme "Family acceptance," only youth in MA generated

statements related to the overall theme of family acceptance. Family acceptance

fell into two categories: parental acceptance of GLBT youth and sibling support.

Concerning the theme, "Community resources for GLBT youth and

families," needing someone to talk to was the most important idea across groups

for meeting youths' emotional needs.

For the theme "GLBT youth-specific safe environments," youth in both

communities expressed needs related to having safe environments specifically

available to them as GLBT youth. Youth identified types of environments from

access to facilities where youth can safely discuss and "come out" with their

sexual identity to facilities where they may temporarily reside if they find

themselves homeless are identified.

Concerning "Gay-straight community partnerships," one theme emerged

related to the need to develop more straight-gay partnerships in the community

to support GLBT youth. The youth perceived a need for more heterosexual allies.

For the theme, "GLBT peer support and GLBT generational interaction,"

two related overall themes describe youths' desire for increased opportunities for

interaction and support within the GLBT community. Ohio youth indicated a need

for increased peer support, while Massachusetts youth indicated a need for

interaction among generations of people who are GLBT. Both youth indicated a

need for GLBT role models.

For the theme "Gender identity and expression," issues related to gender

identity and expression permeated across both youth communities. Youth

indicated a need for community resources specific to people who are

transgender, and they indicated a need to reject transgender identities as

pathological.

Concerning the theme, "Educating the community and GLBT in the

media," youth in both communities identified a need for communities to be better

educated about GLBT issues. Youth identified a need for better educated health

and mental health professionals. Youth also identified accurate media portrayal

and positive images of people who are GLBT as important.

For the theme "Psychological and physical safety," issues of safety ran

through the ideas generated across both groups of youth.

Concerning the theme "Community impact and emotional well-being," the

perception of not being valued and the effects of social stigmatization were

poignantly reflected throughout the statements comprising the combined groups

theme, Community recognition and worth.

Concerning the theme "Access to relevant mental health and health care,"

combined statement ideas across primary themes in this study indicated youths'

perceived importance for the availability and access to mental health and health

related services.

Strengths of this study include transparency of the method: The data gathering procedures were detailed and clear. Findings that Massachusetts youth desire to be accepted but have lower expectations of support from religious communities is in line with the findings of Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, and Hecker (2001), though this was not one of the major findings. Buchanan, et al. (2001) discussed the complex impact of religion on the mental heatlh of sexual minorities. Also in line with findings that youth feel access to mental health and health related services is important is Ryan's (2003) review of the literature related to LGBT youth, which discusses the lack of relevant health and mental health related material and human resources available in communities. However, the majority (39%) of participants identified as lesbian, so the findings might be skewed toward what supports are desired by students identified as lesbian, rather than what supports are desired by the 18% who identified as "other."

In conclusion, Davis et al. (2009) found that the suggestions by the youth concerned increasing social support, better school climate, community recognition of worth, elimination of institutional discrimination, family acceptance, an increase in community resources, GLBT youth- specific safe environments, gay-straight community partnerships, GLBT peer support and GLBT generational interaction, gender identity and expression, educating the community and GLBT in the media, and better access to relevant health care. The authors also suggested that future efforts should include developing and evaluating the

community responses suggested by the youth in this study.

Students can do much to support and prevent bullying, but adults also have the responsibility to act, which is what students suggest in the next article that is examined. To examine what interventions adolescents at ages 13 and 16 consider effective in order to stop the bullying of a student, Frisén and Holmqvist (2010) conducted a study on 13-year-old boys and girls and 16-year-old boys and girls and found that students' suggestions differed according to age, sex, and victimization experienced, but one of the most common suggestions at both ages was for adults to have serious talks with the students involved.

This study was part of an ongoing prospective questionnaire study which was designed to investigate bullying and body image among Swedish children and adolescents. Participants's underwent the first wave (T1), and then suggestions were reviewed at ages 13 and 16. At the time of the first examination, there were 474 girls and 403 boys, and at the time of the second examination, there were 429 girls and 332 boys. The study was carried out on three occasions separated by a three-year interval:

The first wave (T1) was conducted in 2000, and consisted of 960 children from Göteborg, Sweden, the second wave (T2) was performed in 2003, with 877 of the 960 children, and in 2006, the third wave (T3) was performed, with 761 of the original 960 children. The mean age of the participants at T2 was 13.58 and at T3 was 16.18.

The researchers obtained adolescents' suggestions for how to stop

bullying with this question: "Which aspects do you find important in order to stop the bullying of a student?" This question was followed by a blank space of approximately one-third of a page, on which the participants were able to freely describe their thoughts on this aspect. Experiences of bullying were measured using a self-report measure called the Victimization Index (Rigby, 1999), which is a single item measure that asks children to indicate how often they have been bullied at school during the current year. The response options were: every day (1), most days (2), one or two days a week (3), about once a week (4), less than once a week (5), and never (6). The researchers divided frequencies into those who had been victims of bullying (no matter how frequently) (1) and those who had not (0).

The students' answers to the question were coded into eight categories: The first category was comprised of serious talks with the bully and/or the victim (Olweus, 1993). The second category concerned involvement of parents (Olweus, 1993). The third category was action by school staff (Rigby, 1996). The fourth category encompassed action by other students (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1996; Salmivalli, 1999; Smith et al., 2003). The fifth category concerned improvement of victims' coping strategies (Sharp and Cowie, 1994; Smith et al., 2001). The sixth category involved improvement of the bully's empathy for the victim (Pikas, 1989). The seventh category comprised separation of the bully from the victim (Olweus, 1993), and the eighth category entailed preventative anti-bullying strategies (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1996; Roland & Galloway, 2002;

Smith et al., 2003).

The researchers found that 24.7% and 20.9% (at 13 and 16 years,
respectively) of suggestions fell under the category of "Serious talks with the
students involved." An example of an answer is, "Adults have to take the initiative
to talk to everyone involved and try to solve the problem. They shouldn't focus on
finding someone to blame, but try to find a solution that works for everyone."

At 13 and 16 years, 15.6% and 13.7% of suggestions fell under
"Involvement of parents." Examples of answers for this category are, "I think it's
important to let the parents of the bully know what he/she is doing," and "that the
parents are contacted. It's the only thing threatening enough for the bully" (Frisén
& Holmqvist, 2010).

At 13 and 16 years, 12.8% and 21.6% of suggestions fell under "Action by
school staff." An example of an answer is, "That the teachers don't tolerate it
during class!!! They aren't doing anything to stop it!!!" (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010)

At 13 and 16 years, 13.8% and 16.4% of answers fell under "Action by
other students." An example of an answer is, "Someone needs to stand up for
the victim. It doesn't necessarily have to be an adult, it could be a classmate, a
student at school or just someone who happens to be passing by. In fact, I think
it's more effective if someone your own age tells the bully to stop than if an adult
does" (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010).

At 13 and 16 years, 24.1% and 18.9% of suggestions fell under
"Improvement of victims' coping strategies." An example of a suggestion

includes:

I don't think adults can help much. It's more up to the victim. If the victim

stood up for him- or herself and wasn't pushed down, it could stop. People say

that violence doesn't solve any problems, but when it comes to bullying, I think

it's the only way. To show that you're not afraid" (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010, p.

126).

At 13 and 16 years, 8.7% and 14.3% of answers fell under "Improvement

of the bully's empathy for the victim." An example of an answer is, "That the

bullies understand that they are destroying the victim's life. They have to

understand how bad the victim feels" (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010).

At 13 and 16 years, 7.8% and 13.8% of suggestions fell under "Separation

of the bully from the victim." An example of a suggestion is, "Move the bullies! Or

expel them. Meeting one of your tormentors every day is no fun even if the

bullying (at least the visible part) has stopped" (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010).

Finally, at 13 and 16 years, 4.7% and 15.6% of answers fell under

"Preventative anti-bullying strategies." An example of an answer is, "Teach and

spread propaganda against everything that has to do with bullying and start

doing so already in first grade. Kids need to understand what's right and wrong at

an early age" (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010).

At age 13, 6.2% answered "I don't know" to the question, and 6.6% gave

no answer. At age 16, 4.6% answered "I don't know," and 6.4% gave no answer.

Only 73.5% of answers at age 13 could be fitted into one of the categories listed

above, and only 72.8% of answers at age 16 could be fitted into one of the

categories.

The proportion of participants who reported having been bullied during the

current year at age 13 was 15.5% and at age 16 was 3.2%. Victims of bullying

included fewer categories than non-victims at age 13 (M: victims = 0.93, SD =

0.80; M: non-victims = 1.16, SD = 0.87; t[198.577] = 3.09, p < 0.01) and at age

16 (M: victims = 0.71, SD = 0.69; M: non-victims = 1.38, SD = 1.03; t[26.519] =

4.62, p < 0.01). Victims at age 13 were more likely than non-victims to include

"improvement of the bully's empathy for the victim"(X^2 [1, n = 874] = 4.18, p <

0.05).

Strengths of the study include the actual words of some of the

participants. The answers to the question were written down by the participants,

so there was no need for member-checking. Weaknesses include the fact that

only 73.5% of the answers at 13 years and 72.8% of the answers at 16 years

could be fitted into the categories for student suggestions. Subject attrition did

occur, and the number of participants decreased over time. Any time the number

of participants is decreased, the results may be affected, but it is difficult to say

how much subject attrition has affected the results. Also, the demographics of the

participants are not transparent. The reader cannot know if the participants were

from urban or rural communities, or what percentage of the participants may

have been racial/ethnic minorities.

In conclusion, Frisén and Holmqvist (2010) suggested that the results of

the study showed that some suggestions were more prevalent than others, which were serious talks with the students involved and improvement of the victims' coping strategies. The researchers went on to suggest that adolescents have a very close view of the bullying problem and may, for that reason, have valuable experience of the outcome of different approaches to counter the problem.

Youth have many strategies they use when dealing with bullies. To examine the ways in which children respond to bullying and their evaluations of the effectiveness of various strategies in reducing bullying, Craig, Pepler, and Blais (2007) conducted a study on 1,852 children and youth. They found that participants were motivated to do something to stop bullying. Their motivation included a need to exert control and be assertive, and their emotional reactions to bullying. A significant number of participants responded that they did nothing to stop bullying. They also found that the longer the bullying had been going on, the more students perceived their own strategies as less effective to stop it.

For this study, data was analyzed from 1,852 Canadian respondents under the age of 20, ranging from 4-year-olds to 19-year-olds. Sixty-six respondents were four to eight years, 1,209 were nine to 13 years old, 452 were 14 to 16 years old, and 125 were 17 to 19 years old. 35% of participants were boys, and 63% were girls.

In order to examine the ways in which children respond to bullying and their evaluations of the effectiveness of various strategies in reducing bullying problems, the researchers collected data through a survey that was available

online at the bullying.org website. This survey featured six questions concerning

demographics, and six questions about the nature of bullying and the child's

response to bullying. The first question asked how they were bullied, the second

asked when the bullying took place, the third asked how long the bullying went

on, the fourth asked who the bully was, the fifth asked what made the victim

decide that they had to deal with the bullying, and the sixth asked what the victim

did in response and how well it worked.

After the researchers conducted chi-square analyses to examine

differences between the sexes, they found that boys were significantly more

likely to report being victimized (44% of boys versus 32% of girls, $p < .01$).

Significantly more boys reported being bullied in the last week than girls (40% of

boys versus 28% of girls, $p < .01$), and approximately the same percentage of

boys and girls (23%) reported that they had been bullied for several years.

Both boys and girls were more likely to report being bullied by someone

their own gender and age. Girls were more likely to indicate being bullied by

someone they would call a friend than were boys (30% of girls versus 20% of

boys, $p < .01$).

Boys and girls cited escalation of bullying, emotional reactions, and

assertiveness most frequently as motivation for responding to bullying. Girls were

more likely to cite these motivations than boys ($p < .01$).

Concerning strategies used to respond to bullying, many participants

indicated not having done anything about the bullying they experienced (20%),

while a comparable number tried only one strategy. Boys were more likely to endorse none or one strategy than girls ($p < .01$), while girls were more likely to endorse three to six strategies ($p < .01$). Almost half tried to ignore the bullying, which was the most frequently endorsed strategy. As the age of participants increased, so did reports for both boys and girls of strategy effectiveness when using aggression ($p < .01$). As closeness of the relationship with the bullying individual increased, victims were less likely to do anything to stop the bullying ($p < .01$). They were also less likely to use aggression with someone they didn't know ($p < .01$).

The researchers gave participants a list of 12 strategies that they may have used to deal with bullying, and asked them to indicate which of the strategies they had attempted. Participants rated the effectiveness of strategies they had used on a scale of one to three, with one indicating it did not work at all and three indicating that it worked really well. The researchers found that girls were more likely to indicate that telling school staff was effective ($p < .01$), while boys identified verbal and physical aggression, humor, revenge, distracting the bully, and ignoring the bully as being more effective ($p < .01$).

The researchers found that the longer the child was bullied, the more strategies they adopted (less than one week: M = 2.5; less than one month: M = 2.5; for all term: M = 3.2; for one year: M = 3.7). The child's effectiveness ratings decreased with the length of time they reported having been bullied (less than one week: M = 2.2; over one year: M = 1.6).

One strength of this study is the significance of the results; however, there

is a lack of transparency. The methods section is not detailed. The actual quotes

from the participants in answer to the questions the researchers asked are not

included. P-values are included, but other statistical information is not. Also, the

reader may want to consider the results concerning use and effectiveness of the

various strategies: The researchers created the list of strategies, instead of

asking the students to explain their own ways of dealing with bullies. However,

because the researchers used an on-line questionnaire, this may have resulted

in a more diverse selection of participants. All participants were from Canada, so

the results may not be very generalizable to the United States.

In conclusion, Craig, Pepler, and Blaise (2007) recommended that all

adults interacting with children and youth be aware of the signs of bullying,

respond to children and youth when they report bullying experiences, and

support children and youth who are victimized during and after an incident. They

also recommended that adults provide children and youth with effective

strategies, and to support young people in developing the knowledge to

recognize healthy relationships (Craig, Pepler, & Blaise, 2007).

To summarize the findings of the studies in this section, students

suggested that adults should have serious talks with bullies and victims and work

on increasing social support, better school climate, community recognition of

worth, elimination of institutional discrimination, family acceptance, and

increasing community resources. Concerned adults can also help by creating

GLBT youth- specific safe environments, gay-straight community partnerships,

opportunities for GLBT peer support and GLBT generational interaction,

education for the community and GLBT in the media, and better access to

relevant health care. Involving parents and adults may weaken the impact and

lessen the frequency of bullying.

This chapter summarized and critiqued studies that examined variables

which contribute to the bullying of LGBTQ youth, the effects of bullying on

LGBTQ youth and gender non-conforming youth, strategies to prevent bullying of

LGBTQ youth, and student responses and suggestions. In the next chapter, this

paper will be concluded with a summary of findings, classroom implications, and

suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

Introduction

In chapter one, the rationale for this paper was set, which is that bullying of LGBTQ youth has detrimental effects on their well-being, and such bullying can leave life-long scars. Much of this bullying takes place in schools, and because of this, teachers are in positions where they can be advocates for these youth. Teachers have the power to change the lives of these students through advocacy.

In chapter two, the author examined 30 peer-reviewed journal articles. The findings of these journal articles point to school climate as a determiner of safety for LGBTQ youth. Teachers, staff, students, and community members have the power to make schools places that value all students, and places where all students can engage in learning within a safe and comfortable environment.

In this chapter, the reader will find a summary of the strengths and findings of each article, classroom implications, and suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

Section one concerned variables that contribute to the bullying of LGBTQ youth. In the first study, the researchers found less victimization based on sexual orientation and less instances of using "gay" in a derogatory manner in communities with higher percentages of college educated adults and college graduates (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009). Another finding from the same study

included less instances of homophobic remarks and victimization based on

gender expression and sexual orientation in urban areas (Kosciw et al., 2009). In

the second study, researchers found that gender non-conforming youth are more

likely to be bullied, and queer youth with multiple minority statuses may

experience simultaneous oppressions. These oppressions may be based on their

status as queer, as a racial/ethnic minority, and/or as a minority based on

citizenship status (Daley, Solomon, Newman, & Mishna, 2008). Finally, many

LGBTQ students experience bullying in the form of biased, homophobic

language, as was found in the Kosciw et al. (2009) study. A variable which

contributes to the bullying of LGBTQ youth is whether bullies hold homophobic or

transphobic attitudes. Poteat and DiGiovanni (2010) identified several ways in

which sexual prejudice determined the strength with which biased language was

associated with bullying and dominance behavior.

  The methodology of these studies was transparent; however, the sample

of participants for the Kosciw et al. (2009) study, which examined the

demographic and ecological factors contributing to hostile school climate for LGBT

youth, was White, so results may not be generalizable to areas or communities

where the majority of members are ethnic or racial minorities. For the Daley et al.

(2008) study, which examined the intersectionalities in the bullying of LGBTQ

youth, the participants were key informants, so the information is second-hand

and not quotes from the actual LGBTQ youth themselves. The reader has to rely

on the perceptions of the informants, however biased, unbiased, or exaggerated

they may be, and the reporting of the researchers, which may or may not be fully accurate. Finally, for the Poteat and DiGiovanni study (2010), the participants were mostly White, and were from one small high school in the Midwest, so results may not be generalizable to areas or communities with different demographics.

The Kosciw et al. (2009) study found that urban areas and areas with a high percentage of college graduates and college educated adults may be less homophobic, and therefore, safer environments for LGBTQ youth. The Daley et al. (2008) study found that LGBTQ youth who are hesitant to "come out" in their communities due to homophobic attitudes and behaviors may be more likely to be bullied, as one insecurity heightens another. Community and the values of that community may greatly affect the likelihood or absence of bullying victimization of LGBTQ youth based on what percentage of the community holds homophobic or transphobic attitudes.

Findings from the section concerning the effects of bullying on LGBTQ youth and gender non-conforming youth included: LGBTQ youth and gender non-conforming youth experienced more emotional distress, worry, and anxiety (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2008) suicidal ideation (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Grossman et al., 2009; Wyss, 2004), depression (Almeida et al., 2009; Williams, Connolly, Peplar, & Craig, 2005), PTSD (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006), and poorer health outcomes than their heterosexual, non-transgender peers (Gruber & Fineran,

2008). Queer-identified youth experienced the most victimization (Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2011), and LGBTQ youth who experienced victimization in public schools avoided school, isolated themselves from their peers, stayed home, and even attempted suicide (Grossman et al., 2009; Wyss, 2002). Such victimization was found to be linked to mental health, adjustment outcomes, and risk for STDs and HIV (Russell, Ryan, et al., 2011).

Trends included common findings concerning the effects of bullying on LGBTQ youth. Many of the findings were also supported by previous research, most notably the Almeida et al. (2009) study and the Williams et al. (2005) study. For the qualitative studies, the researchers formed focus groups and conducted face-to-face interviews, and quotes from the participants were portrayed in the journal articles. However, the participants of the Grossman et al. (2009) study did not choose to review the transcripts, and the Wyss (2004) study was retrospective (as were a few quantitative studies in this section: D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks [2006] and Russell, Ryan, et al. [2011]), so the reader must rely on the ability of the participants to recall their experiences accurately. Many of the quantitative studies were transparent in their methods, but the statistics and data for the Gruber and Fineran (2008) study were not always transparent. All of the quantitative studies had excellent to acceptable internal reliability scores for some, if not all, measures used. Many also included p-values to show the significance of the results. Concerning weaknesses, a trend is the lack of racial/ethnic diversity of the participants.

In the section concerning strategies to prevent bullying of LGBTQ youth,

the findings on school climate and social support revealed that questioning

students most often rate school climate the lowest (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig,

2009). Making schools safe spaces through information, support, including

LGBTQ issues in the curriculum, and starting GSAs (McGuire, Anderson,

Toomey, & Russell, 2010 ; Toomey, McGuire, & Russell, 2011) is important,

since the combination of positive school environment and positive social support

is what matters (Murdock & Bolch, 2005) and may protect LGBTQ students

against depression and drug use (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008).

Factors at school influenced LGBTQ youths' abilities to make relational

connections there. GSAs, which were associated with positive sexual diversity

climate (Szalacha, 2003), and community-based youth groups enabled LGBTQ

youth to make relational connections (Sadowski, Chow, & Scanlon, 2009).

Concerning social support, LGBTQ youth received the most support from close

friends, and also informational and appraisal support from peers and adults who

identified as LGBTQ, while receiving the least support from heterosexual peers

(Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). Non-LGBTQ peers may not provide

support because they may feel they lack the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to

be effective allies (Ji, Du Bois, & Finnessy, 2009). The knowledge, attitudes, and

skills needed could be obtained through programs such as the Safe Schools

Summit. The Safe Schools Summit and Out for Equity programs enabled

participants to work toward making schools safer and resulted in a positive trend

for school climate, respectively (Craig, Tucker, & Wagner, 2008; Horowitz &

Hansen, 2008).

Strengths of these studies include the fact that most of them had at least

some findings that were backed by previous research. A few were also

transparent in their methods, such as the Espelage et al. (2008), McGuire et al.

(2010), and Szalacha (2003) studies. Many of the quantitative studies had

excellent alpha scores for their measures, which increases the internal validity of

the studies. Many of the qualitative studies included quotes from participants,

which increases the trustworthiness of the findings. The Craig, Tucker, and

Wagner (2008) study included member-checking, which increases the credibility

of the results. Weaknesses for many of the studies include the sampling: Most

lacked diversity in the sample of participants.

A major trend of this section is the effect of school climate on

LGBTQ youth. Most studies found that increased safety in schools would

positively affect LGBTQ students, even protecting them from depression and

drug use (Espelage et al., 2008). Some results pointed to reasons why schools

may not be safe, such as non-LGBTQ students' lack of knowledge, skills, and

attitudes to be effective allies (Ji et al., 2009). Empowering these students would

create a solution that leads to other solutions, in that these non-LGBTQ allies

could advocate for their LGBTQ peers, making schools safer for those students.

Findings from the subsection concerning GSAs and student-run clubs as

part of effective strategies for prevention of the bullying of LGBTQ youth include:

GSAs serve four main purposes in schools, which are counseling support,

providing safe spaces, promoting education and awareness, and incorporating

broader efforts to raise awareness in schools (Griffin, Lee, Waugh, & Beyer,

2003). As a result of providing these, GSAs may increase school belonging

(Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011; Lee, 2002), provide more favorable outcomes

when it comes to alcohol use behaviors, provide more positive outcomes when it

comes to psychological distress (Heck et al., 2011), improve academic

performance, increase feelings of safety, increase feeling able to contribute to

society (Lee, 2002), improve personal relationships (Lee, 2002; Russell, Muraco,

Subramaniam, and Laub, 2009), and empower LGBTQ youth. Empowerment

meant helping LGBTQ youth feel good about themselves, giving youth a sense of

personal control and accomplishment, providing a sense of solidarity, providing

empathy for others who are isolated, providing connections to others, and

providing knowledge about LGBTQ issues (Russell, Muraco, et al., 2009).

Half of these studies, Heck et al. (2011) and Lee (2002), had findings that

were supported by previous research. The Heck et al. (2011) study, had

excellent internal reliability scores for the measures used, but the sample size

was small and the study was retrospective. For the Lee (2002) study, there was a

lack of diversity of participants, and the sample size was small. The Heck et al.

(2011) and Russell, Muraco, et al. (2009) studies presented transparent

descriptions of the methods used; however, the Griffin et al. (2003) study barely

presented anything at all about the methods used. For both the Lee (2002) and

the Russell, Muraco, et al. (2009) studies, member-checking was not employed.

Trends include findings that GSAs provide support for LGBTQ students (Lee, 2002; Griffin et al., 2003; Russell, Muraco, et al., 2009), that GSAs may improve personal relationships (Lee, 2002; Rusell, Muraco, et al., 2009), and that GSAs may increase school belonging (Heck et al., 2011; Lee, 2002).

Findings from the subsection concerning student responses and suggestions include creating a safer school climate through incorporating LGBTQ issues in curriculum and creating safe spaces, implementing sanctions for discrimination (Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009), having talks with those involved in bullying or having someone available for students to talk to (Davis et al., 2009; Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010), involving parents of bullies and victims, encouraging allies in the form of peers and school staff to take action when bullying is witnessed, increasing bullies' empathy for victims, separating the bully from the victim, and implementing anti-bullying prevention strategies (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010). Craig, Peplar, and Blaise (2007) found that students did nothing to stop bullying, and it was found that the longer the bullying had been going on, the less effective students perceived their own strategies to stop it. Ignoring the bully was the most common strategy used.

The study by Davis et al. (2009) was transparent in the methods used, but the Craig, Peplar, and Blaise (2007) study was not transparent—the methods section was not detailed. The demographics of the participants of the Frisén and Holmqvist (2010) study were also not transparent, though the researchers did

include the actual words of participants, which added to the trustworthiness of the results. However, the Craig et al. (2007) study did not include the actual quotes of participants. The Davis et al. (2008) findings were backed by previous research, but the sampling was not representative of the population, as the majority of participants identified as lesbian (out of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other). Finally, during the Frisén and Holmqvist (2010) study, subject attrition did occur, and the number of participants decreased over time. Any time the number of participants is decreased, the results may be affected, but it is difficult to say how much subject attrition has affected the results.

Trends in this section include open communication as an effective strategy. Talks with parents of bullies and victims, talks with victims, and talks with bullies were all suggested by students as effective strategies to deal with and prevent bullying.

As noted in this section, the effects of bullying on LGBTQ youth and gender non-conforming youth can cause emotional distress, worry, and anxiety (Almeida et al., 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2008) suicidal ideation (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Grossman et al., 2009; Wyss, 2004), depression (Almeida et al., 2009; Williams et al., 2005), PTSD (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006), and poorer health outcomes than their heterosexual, non-transgender peers (Gruber & Fineran, 2008). Students who suffer from emotional or physical trauma or who develop mental illnesses as a result of bullying may have poorer chances of succeeding in school. Students who are

bullied may transfer schools or stay at home (Grossman et al., 2009; Wyss,

2002). As a result, bullying of LGBTQ youth has serious classroom implications,

which will be discussed in the next section.

Classroom Implications

Considering the findings in the previous studies, teachers may want

to take into account the multiple factors that may influence bullying, as described

in the Daley et al. (2008) study. Students who are racial and/or ethnic minorities

and/or who are newcomers to the United States and LGBTQ may face multiple,

simultaneous oppressions, which may decrease their chances for academic

success and social acceptance. Poteat and DiGiovanni (2010) asserted that

understanding the nuanced connections and interrelations could contribute to

more comprehensive and effective programs that promote safe and welcoming

schools for all students.

Grossman et al. (2009) stated that many school personnel become

gatekeepers of the status quo, which includes fostering heterosexuality and

gender "appropriate" expression. The results of the Wyss (2004) study

highlighted the need for comprehensive, age-appropriate sensitivity training of all

educational staff and students in the USA, and the author called for visibility of

gender-variant people's lives in classrooms and school libraries. As community

leaders, teachers might want to check their biases and reflect on how they can

encourage students to be their authentic selves, regardless of who they are.

Non-LGBTQ students may also encourage their peers to be their authentic

selves if teachers and staff model the behavior. Almeida et al. (2009) suggested

that teachers should create safe and supportive environments to ensure the

emotional and mental well-being of LGBTQ students. Actions, such as

encouraging peers to be supportive and modeling the desired behaviors, might

change a school environment for the better, which could lead to reductions in

LGBTQ school victimization, and that may result in significant long-term health

gains (Russell, Ryan, et al., 2011), since findings by most of these studies point

to associations between LGBTQ status and perceived discrimination.

      According to Horowitz and Hansen (2008), teachers indicated that they

believed school staff has the power to maintain a safe and respectful atmosphere

for LGBT people and issues, and they indicated a need for more information

about addressing homophobia and LGBT issues, and at the same time

acknowledged that it was difficult to get many colleagues to integrate LGBT

issues into their lessons. If teachers do, in fact, believe they have the power to

make a difference for students, which is why most people choose to become

teachers, then it is their duty to work together to come up with ways to make

schools safe spaces for all to learn. Luckily for teachers, this paper presents

some suggestions that may help make school environments more LGBTQ-

friendly. Szalacha (2003) suggested that both administrators and educators can

create and enforce an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for sexual minority

persons by addressing verbal harassment immediately and forcefully, personally

using accurate knowledge about sexual minority issues, and actually addressing

hidden heteronormativity in the curriculum and school activities.

One way teachers can improve the environment of a school for students

who are LGBTQ is by advocating for student-run clubs and GSAs. Lee (2002)

suggested that educational policy makers must look beyond the statistics of gay

youth and recognize the positive impact that belonging to a GSA can have on

students. GSAs may also help students feel empowered as agents of social

change within schools (Russell, Muraco, et al., 2009).

Teachers should include gender non-conforming students when

advocating for acceptance, respect, safe spaces, and inclusive curriculum, as

suggested by Toomey et al. (2011) when they stated that school personnel who

implement safe schools policies and practices need to be intentionally inclusive

to the needs of gender nonconforming students.

If teachers and peers find it difficult to advocate for LGBTQ students and

gender non-conforming students because of their values, then they can take part

in sensitivity trainings, as suggested by McGuire et al. (2010). Teachers can also

include activities and lessons to help youth who are non-LGBTQ to become

better allies, as suggested by Ji et al. (2009).

Concerning strategies to prevent bullying, Frisén and Holmqvist (2010)

suggested that adolescents have a very close view of the bullying problem and

may, for that reason, have valuable experience on the outcome of different

approaches to counter the problem. Teachers, administration, and school staff

can open communication with parents, bullies, and victims to better understand what is going on and what can be done.

In conclusion, it is the duty of teachers to make sure every student has equal opportunity to succeed and to have safe, enjoyable school experiences. Since teachers cannot always know if there are LGBTQ students in the classroom, due to the fact that some students choose to not be open about their gender identities or sexual orientations, teachers should advocate regardless of the makeup of the classroom. Encouraging students who are non-LGBTQ to become allies can greatly impact the safety of the school environment. If teachers witness bullying, or if students tell teachers they or someone they know is being bullied, teachers should listen to what the students have to say, keep communication open, and get administration and parents involved. The students are usually the ones who know best about the situation, so it is important to listen. Hopefully, through listening, advocating for student-run clubs and GSAs, including LGBTQ issues and history in curriculum, creating safe spaces, and encouraging others to advocate for students identifying as LGBTQ, teachers can make a difference for all students in the classroom.

Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research include examining which strategies are most effective for teachers in particular, and which strategies are available and effective for teachers who work in poor, rural areas (which have been found to be

generally less tolerant and accepting of LGBTQ youth and advocates [Kosciw et al., 2009]). Few studies concerning this specific situation exist.

Another area that is in need of further research concerns the experiences of trans* students in schools, and what strategies they suggest for the prevention of bullying. There are not many studies that cover the experiences of trans* students. Of special interest would be studies concerned with the bullying of trans* students by LGBQ youth and what strategies for prevention might be effective.

In my opinion, there is a need for more qualitative research concerning strategies for prevention. The voices of real people within the school environment need to be heard. They are the ones who deal with bullies, bullying, and unsafe environments, and they are the ones advocating, bullying, or being victimized, as the case may be. They have the real life experiences to explain situations in ways that may give insight into how to prevent such bullying.

Another question that should be addressed is how to encourage teachers and peers to be allies. Many do not believe advocacy is needed, and some believe it is downright wrong. More research needs to be performed to discover how to encourage such people to advocate for LGBTQ youth.

More research concerning strategies for prevention needs to be done. It is known that bullying has negative effects on youth. Solutions are needed from teachers, students, and peers living in different situations and from a variety of socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, LGBTQ youth experience bullying in our nation's schools. These youth suffer mental, physical, and emotional harm as a result. Their grades and social lives also suffer. There are many strategies that have the potential to decrease such bullying. There are strategies for victims of bullying, for teachers and staff, and for other students. Adopting just one strategy will help, but it will not fix the problem. More research needs to be done concerning strategies for prevention, so that advocates can be inspired to try strategies that may work for their specific communities and circumstances. The bullies, the school environment, and even the larger community need to change in order for LGBTQ students to be safe, supported, and empowered.

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