Gay and Greek: Supporting LGBQ Fraternity and Sorority Members

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/ldlong/32/
Gay and Greek

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Slides available at works.bepress.com/ldlong
# Outline

- Why is Sexual Identity Development Important?
  - *D'Augelli's Model of LGB Development*
- Background
- Our Research
- Implications
- Application to Practice
- Resources
- Closing Thoughts
Learning Outcomes

As a result of this program, participants will be able to:

• Describe trends in the research on LGBQ fraternity and sorority members
• Explain the importance of creating safe and inclusive environments in fraternities and sororities
• Identify resources for supporting LGBQ+A fraternity and sorority members
• List strategies for creating a more inclusive environment on their campus or within their organization
D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development *(Evans et al., 2010)*

D'Augelli identified six interactive processes involved in lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity development *(Evans, et al., 2010)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exiting Heterosexual Identity:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition that one’s feelings/attractions are not heterosexual</td>
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</table>

Developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status:
Determining for oneself the unique meaning being gay, lesbian, or bisexual will have on one’s life

Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity:
Creating a support network of people who know and accept one’s sexual orientation
# D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development (Evans et al., 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring:</strong></td>
<td>Disclosing one's identity to parents and redefining after such disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status:</strong></td>
<td>Is a more complex process than achieving an intimate heterosexual relationship because of the relative invisibility of lesbian and gay couples in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community:</strong></td>
<td>Making varying degrees of commitment to social and political action</td>
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Background

“In many ways, we study the underrepresented populations in higher education because of our own unique experiences in higher education”

(Carter & Hurtado, 2007, p. 26)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Background</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fraternal organizations reinforce and exaggerate traditional views of masculinity and femininity (DeSantis, 2007; Syrett, 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeSantis found some organizations would reject a potential member if chapter members believed the person “talked like a girl, dressed like a fag, associated with feminine men, walked like a queer, avoided fights or conflicts, or was unathletic” (p. 55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case, Hesp, Eberly (2005):
- GLB members joined to make friends, have fun, have a support group
- Over 70% described their chapter as homophobic or heterosexist
- The perceived need to hide part of their identity prevented them from forming closer relationships
- Researchers believed GLB members might serve in leadership roles at a higher rate – not tested
# Background

Trump & Wallace (2006):
Studied the coping strategies of 5 gay fraternity men

- Avoidance
- Passing
- Assimilation
- Fusing
**Background**

Leftin (2009):  
Factors that **support** the coming out process

- Enhance their relationships within their organization
- To be true to themselves
- Maintain an out identity
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Leftin (2009):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Factors that <strong>hinder</strong> the coming out process</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Fear of retaliation
- Fear of altering the nature of relationships, low prioritization
- Having a sexual identity that was not yet fully developed
Background

“What about the experience of LBQ sorority members?”
Research Question

Do LGBQ fraternity and sorority members experience different gains than their heterosexual peers?
**Research Approach**

56 institutions, 13651 participants

**Fraternity Sample:**
- Limited to 36 institutions where at least 2 identified as GBQ
- Sampled 286 participants from GBQ and H groups
- 20% freshmen, 25% sophomores, 28% juniors, 27% seniors
- 79% identified as White/Caucasian

**Sorority Sample:**
- Limited to 27 institutions where at least 2 identified as LBQ
- Sampled 112 participants from LBQ and H groups
- 21% freshmen, 24% sophomores, 27% juniors, 28% seniors
- 78% identified as White/Caucasian
## Research Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Sense of Belonging</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Diverse Interactions</td>
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<td>o Interpersonal Relationship Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Interpersonal Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Leadership Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Personal Development Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Healthy Behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Self-Worth</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Intrapersonal Competence</td>
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## Research Approach

- **Alcohol Use**
  - Frequency
  - Binge Drinking

- **Leadership Experience**
  - Served as a Chapter Officer

- **Satisfaction**
  - Overall Satisfaction
  - Anticipated Alumni/ae Involvement
## Applications for Practice

- Establish safe and inclusive social environments
- Educate members about responsible alcohol use
- Use supportive language
- Educate members about masculinity and femininity
- Facilitate a needs assessment
- Add identity development to the membership education curriculum
- Provide trainings or encourage members to attend LGBQ programs/activities
- Encourage sexually diverse members to seek out additional support/resources
## Resources

- Your campus LGBT Resource Center
- Women's Resource Center
- Campus Counseling Center
- Lambda 10 Project: *Fraternity & Sorority LGBT-Friendly Climate Self Test*
- Campuspride.org
- Raproject.org
Learning Outcomes Revisited

As a result of this program, participants will be able to:

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Closing Thoughts
### Additional Readings

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<tr>
<th><strong>Inside Greek U:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Fraternities, Sororities, and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige</em></td>
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<th><strong>Brotherhood:</strong></th>
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<td><em>Gay Life in College Fraternities</em></td>
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<th><strong>Secret Sisters:</strong></th>
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<td><em>Stories of being Lesbian and Bisexual in a College Sorority</em></td>
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<th><strong>Student Development in College:</strong></th>
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<td><em>Theory, Research and Practice</em></td>
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