Our Many Hues:

Supporting LGBTQ+ Students Through Mentorship, Identity Development

and Community Engagement in College

by

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ABSTRACT

The college years are crucial to formation and integration of lifelong psychosocial, personal and cognitive identities, and the identity development needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+ or gender and/or sexual minority) students are unique, particularly in the context of student development and support. How universities meet these needs can critically impact success and retention of these students. However, studies indicate when the academic and co-curricular environment does not foster development of healthy LGBTQ+ identities, these students experience myriad challenges compounded by identity discord and minority stress. Cumulatively, these factors contribute to non-persistence of over 30% of LGBTQ+ university students. This research study examines the ways positive LGBTQ+ identity development, cultural capital accrual and community engagement through a structured mentoring program fosters resilience and buffers the experience of minority stress and associated negative outcomes for these students. In doing so, the study addresses the following research questions: *what does the process of LGBTQ+ identity construction look like for gender- and sexual-minority students, including students from non-dominant cultural backgrounds for whom LGBTQ+ identity is one of multiple competing identities, and how does mentorship affect the perceived identities of these students? How does participation in an LGBTQ+ mentoring program affect participants' perceptions of development of resilience-building capacity?*

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Pat, Neil and Pea, the students who bravely shared their voices, stories and lives with me through this project. It's been an honor to be a part of your journeys.

It's dedicated to Leslie, whose lifelong work for the LGBTQ+ community is an inspiration. Your belief in this program – and in me – was humbling. Thank you for sharing your stories, experience, knowledge and encouragement; you've been a mentor and inspiration, and this community is poorer for your absence.

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LOCAL AND LARGER CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Introduction: Pivotal Time for a Vulnerable Population

The needs of sexual and gender minority students (lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, questioning, and intersex, collectively referred to as LBGTQ+) in higher

education have been the focus of increasing scrutiny in the past decade. With growing

LGBTQ+ community representation in the public sphere, many universities are taking

measures to better serve these students. However, this population's psychosocial support

needs are unique, and supporting these students poses practical and philosophical

challenges.

The importance of balancing students' academic needs with their social and

emotional growth – and the significance of one to the other – is hardly a breakthrough.

Chickering articulated the importance of integrating the emotional development,

interpersonal competencies, and identity of students with their academic development in

the 1960s. In the time since, student development theorists from Tinto to Yosso have

expanded this argument, noting students from underrepresented or minoritized student

populations in particular face uphill battles persisting within institutions in which they are

cultural outsiders. When students are engaged in their university communities through

clubs and organizations, residential experiences, and other sociocultural outlets in a

holistic development of the intellectual and interpersonal, they persist through graduation

more successfully and with greater academic performance (Chickering & Reisser, 1993;

MacAllister, Ahmendani, Harold & Cramer, 2009). When space is made to recognize

their own identities and cultures in the learning enterprise, students are more likely to thrive (Yosso, 2005). As one of the nation's largest public universities, Arizona State University (ASU) offers an inclusive, opportunity-rich educational experience, providing a comprehensive array of student services and extracurricular opportunities. As is the case for many of its peer institutions, however, fully understanding the needs of its gender and sexual minority student population remains a challenge.

To meet the needs of a large, diverse student body, this institution has adopted a student-driven, staff-supported engagement model. While an increasing number of institutions operate a 'one stop shop' for LGBTQ+ students through LGBTQ+ community centers responsible for both programming and support resources, ASU has strategically moved away from this model. Instead, ASU's student engagement personnel work with student organizational leadership to determine and advance programming priorities through its Student and Cultural Engagement/International Student Engagement (SCE/ISE) office. SCE/ISE works with the Rainbow Coalition, the institution's LGBTQ+ student governing body, to support the programming goals of LGBTQ+ student clubs and organizations and advance institutional policy changes on behest of that community. Theoretically, this ensures student agency in the development of the university co-curricular experience.

What this model does not provide, though, is a dedicated space for all LGBTQ+ students at the institution. What of students who are questioning or struggling with their identities in isolation, to whom advocacy- or leadership-minded organizations require a degree of identity disclosure with which they are not yet comfortable? The college transition is a time of identity renegotiation in which identities shaped and developed

since childhood are honed, reinforced, and refined. For students whose LGBTQ+ identities emerged and were shaped within supportive and inclusive environments, ASU's programmatic enterprises offer opportunities to further explore those identities. As common as positive stories of early identity acceptance at home and in supportive secondary educational settings are becoming in some parts of the country – particularly within socially progressive coastal urban and suburban centers – this idyllic coming-out tableau is not the experience of all LGBTQ+ students. This is especially the case for students whose home cultures do not have the confluence of sociodemographic determinants –religion, education, visibility of LGBTQ+ communities, or cultural components – that lend toward a positive community perception of LGBTQ+ communities. As an institution with a diverse, multicultural student body, it is important that ASU's resilience- and community-building efforts toward its sexual and gender minority students reflect an approach inclusive of and sensitive toward the needs of these students.

For gender and sexual minority students from less accepting backgrounds and families who have nonetheless developed a strong sense of LGBTQ+ identity salience and affinity, the college transition presents an opportunity to explore and embrace their role within a larger LGBTQ+ community; connecting to clubs, organizations, and programming is a welcome growth opportunity. For others, though, it can be overwhelming. Students struggling to accept or understand their LGBTQ+ identities or whose backgrounds are particularly predisposed toward cultural homonegativity – including many of the institution's international student populations – lack the sociocultural currency and identity affinity to easily navigate disclosure and become

involved in the abovementioned programs. Missing the safe and affirming space a physical LGBTQ+ center on campus provides, they are left to navigate these perilous currents on their own.

LGBTQ+ engagement initiatives provide opportunities in community-building, civic activism and student leadership, but these activities appeal to (and are led by) students with more advanced LGBTQ+ identities. In a student-driven engagement model, programming is driven by the most vocal or visible student communities – and this inherently excludes students whose backgrounds have given them less privilege and ease in navigating their LGBTQ+ identities. For these students, clinical counseling or support groups are available through the institution, of course. These resources help students willing to seek out 'help' in reconciling their identities; after a time, they may even be comfortable enough to join in larger institutional programming initiatives. However, for many – especially those raised to believe their sexual and/or gender identities are 'something wrong' with them, psychologically – receiving counseling or seeking help still retains a stigma, and until or unless they reach a moment of crisis, they persist to struggle silently and in isolation. Meanwhile, both their academic and interpersonal identities suffer (Tinto, 1993).

A growing body of LGBTQ+ identity development research (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Dziengel, 2015; Fine, 2016; Halpin & Allen, 2004; Ivory, 2012; Levy, 2009; Mulcahy, Dalton, Kolbert & Crothers, 2016; Russell & Horne, 2009; Sanlo, 2004/2005) indicate that support throughout the identity-development process – not just at its initial and culminating phases – is essential. Providing a structured development experience throughout the identity development process, from initial recognition through acceptance

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and into engagement with a larger LGBTQ+ community, is necessary for identity salience, the acquisition of LGBTQ+ cultural capital, resilience against minority stress, and academic persistence. Providing support throughout the identity navigation process is the domain of an LGBTQ+ resource center for many universities; for students at ASU, lacking this structural resource, other identity support and enrichment opportunities must be created.

Local context

The university's approach to student service and development is unique, equally informed by its size and demographic make-up and by institutional leadership values. ASU is one of the largest public universities in the United States, with an on-campus student population between its four campuses of approximately 73,000 (enrolled by major) and an annual incoming class size of over 11,000 (ASU, 2019). Its population is diverse, both in origin and sociocultural background. Over 66% of ASU's students are from Arizona, with significant populations from California, Texas, and Colorado, while approximately 14% are international in origin (ASU, 2019). Roughly mirroring the demographic landscape of its larger environment, 54% of the university's students identify as Caucasian; 39% identify as non-Caucasian or mixed-race (non-international), and Hispanic/Latino students comprise the institution's largest minority demographic at 24% (2019). Male student slightly outnumber female students at both undergraduate (47.8% female, 52.2% male) and graduate (46.9% female, 53.1% male) levels. Although the institution has made efforts in recent years to diversify its student population, historically marginalized student populations continue struggling for representation.

Currently, ASU does not have a means of tracking the size of its sexual and/or gender minority student populations.

ASU has four campus locations throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area, and each retain their own distinct cultures informed both by their academic focuses and physical locations. The Tempe and Downtown Phoenix campuses, housed in the metropolitan area's most culturally and socially diverse areas, are home to the largest and most diverse student populations, with over 50,000 and 11,000 students, respectively (ASU, 2019). Situated geographically in the most socially progressive parts of the metropolitan area, students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a rich array of cultural experiences and a more progressive environment; not only does Tempe have thriving ethnic and religious communities, but it has been named one of the West coast's most LGBTQ+ friendly tourist destinations. Downtown Phoenix boasts a variety of cultural and civic opportunities and is home to the institution's community- and civic-oriented degree programs, including its nursing, healthy innovation, and public policy and community solutions programs Additionally, Downtown Phoenix is home to the Melrose District, the metropolitan area's de-facto LGBTQ+ community. The West and Polytechnic campuses, meanwhile, are located in more conservative areas (Glendale and Mesa, respectively); interdisciplinary programs at the 4,500 student West campus draw heavily on local commuter and community college populations, while the 5,000 students at the Polytechnic campus, with its large applied engineering programs, skew more heavily male and international in demographic than the institution's other campuses (ASU, 2019).

A microcosm of diversity. Over the past decade, ASU has made consistent efforts toward greater diversification. Under the leadership of its president, the institution brands itself as a model for a 'New American University', pioneering an increased focus on interdisciplinality, applied research, and creating an enhanced "knowledge-producing enterprise" responsible to both its local and global constituencies (ASU, 2019-a). Employing nearly 17,000 faculty and staff (ASU, 2019), ASU boasts a robust student service platform. ASU's student services and engagement division provides a comprehensive array of non-academic services and programming creating an inclusive, opportunity-rich social learning environment (ASU, 2019-a). The institution provides resources and support through nineteen service platforms that include health and wellness, student life, programming and development, advocacy and leadership.

Diversity and inclusion initiatives are housed out of three places within ASU. Programming and awareness initiatives, including its SafeZone LGBTQ+ awareness and training program, the Rainbow Coalition LGBTQ+, and Student and Cultural Engagement/International Student Engagement (SCE/ISE), report to the Dean of Students Office as a part of the larger Educational Opportunities and Student Services (EOSS) division. Faculty and staff training and responsibilities, including Title IX compliance and equal opportunity compliance, are handled out of the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Finally, academic affairs and awareness initiatives are overseen by the office of the Vice Provost for Inclusion and Community Engagement (ICE), which in turn oversees the university's Committee for the Status of Women (CSW), Committee for Campus Inclusion (CCI) and various culture- and race-based faculty and staff service-based associations. These committees are tasked with raising the visibility of diversity and

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inclusion efforts campus-wide through professional development workshops and diversity programming.

Under this strategy, all departments contribute resources toward the well-being of all students; faculty working with LGBTQ+ students are often first-line advocates for their students, working with appropriate units or teams within EOSS to provide a chain of resources. Within SCE/ISE, the university's housing or health services, for instance, key staff train specifically in areas pertaining to LGBTQ+ students. These various units and committees often work in conjunction in supporting student-driven initiatives; for instance, the university's LGBTQ+ resource website is maintained by SCE/ISE in conjunction with CCI and the Rainbow Coalition.

ASU LGBTQ+ Campus Climate Survey, 2017. A recent (n=51) survey of LGBTQ+ undergraduate and graduate students at ASU (Reeves-Blurton, 2017) found that ASU provides a reasonably safe space for LGBTQ+ students. When asked whether ASU administration, policies and campus initiatives supported the LGBTQ+ student community, 73% of respondents indicated they 'somewhat agree' or 'agree,' and 60% 'somewhat agree,' 'agree,' or 'strongly agree' that faculty provide safe, supportive environments in the classroom, lab, and advising/learning spaces. Over 90% of respondents 'somewhat agree,' 'agree', or 'strongly agree' that ASU's staff and resource offices provide a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students, and 80% 'somewhat agree,' 'agree,' or 'strongly agree' that overall, the institution provides a generally safe space for its sexual and gender minority students.

The survey also highlighted a gap, though. Of respondents, 92% indicated it is important to be connected to an LGBTQ+ community for social support, resources and

personal development, and 81% find LGBTQ+ community connection valuable for support in coming out and/or navigating an LGBTQ+ identity. All survey participants strongly value non-sexual relationships with other LGBTQ+ students and community members. However, under 70% currently have these strong social networks, on campus or elsewhere. Only 30% of respondents 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that LGBTQ+ student clubs and organizations have helped them better understand and navigate personal identities (34% somewhat agreed), and just 43% can identify a mentor or role model to whom they can look for support on LGBTQ+ identity development or interpersonal issues (Reeves-Blurton, 2017). It's important to note that in an effort to reach the widest range of LGBTQ+ students at the institution, and not just those affiliated with LGBTQ+ clubs or organizations – and therefore more comfortable or advanced in their LGBTQ+ identities – the survey was specifically administered through an academic community rather than through EOSS channels more likely to reach students already participating in organized LGBTQ+ programming.

This study builds upon an earlier, limited study (n=12) in which 90% of respondents deemed having a personal support network as 'important' or 'very important' to them, but only 50% have found support networks through university-affiliated organizations. Of respondents, 75% specifically desired social networking with a larger ASU LGBTQ+ community; 25% desired support in coming out, 33% were in search of role models or mentors to aid in navigating relationship or identity issues, and 50% wanted greater academic support specific to their LGBTQ+ identities (Reeves-Blurton, 2016). These surveys indicate more comprehensive, strategic efforts are needed. See Appendix A for 2017 ASU Campus Climate Survey.

Larger context: LGBTQ+ student needs and support

Though ASU's commitment to its LGBTQ+ student community through the student-led, staff-supported programming model has resulted in creation of opportunities for its most socially engaged students, the 2016 and 2017 surveys highlight the problematic nature of the institution's lack of broader-scale resources and support for these students. Multiple studies demonstrate measurable correlation between student persistence and success and student institutional affinity, self-efficacy, and community engagement (McAllister, et. al., 2009; Russell & Horne, 2009; Sanlo, 2004/2005). The college years play a critical role in the formation of adult identities, and the unique issues that LGBTQ+ students face call for specific psychosocial support (Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; McAllister, et. al., 2009). Gender and sexual minority students face more issues and at a higher rate than their non-LBGTQ+ peers, specifically experiencing higher rates of pervasive mental problems, self-esteem issues, physical and emotional victimization and family issues (Eldahan, Pachankis, Rendina, Ventuneac, Grov & Parsons, 2016). These challenges not only leave enduring psychosocial scars and hamper individual growth and development (Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Ceglarek & Ward, 2016), but have higher associated risk comorbidities such as substance use, sexual violence perpetration, sexual health risk and suicidality (Eldahan, et. al., 2016; Jones & Raghavan, 2012). These experiences collectively correlate to academic failure and non-matriculation of LGBTQ+ students (Agnelli, 2009; Kapadia, Halkiti & Barton, 2014; Przedworkski, VanKim, Eisenberg, McAlpine, Lust & Laska, 2015).

Historic Support of LGBTQ+ Student Populations

The challenges ASU experiences in serving its LGBTQ+ student population are a part of a larger issue in higher education and society. Research into the support of gender and sexual minority students in postsecondary education is still relatively young. In the late 1990s, campus climate surveys reached widespread adoption as a means of assessing the current state of and need for institutional support for LGBTQ+ students (Renn, 2010), and these early surveys indicated college environments and policies were at best ignorant of the challenges of LGBTQ+ students and at worst outright hostile (Hershberger & D'Augelli,1995; Zubernis & Snyder, 2007). As recently as 2008, only 150 out of over 4,000 public four-year institutions in the United States offered an LGBTQ+ resource center or office (Renn, 2010). As of 2016, only 197 institutions with at least one dedicated 50% time employee were registered with the Consortium of Higher Education LGBTQ+ Resource Professionals (2016).

Challenges to LGBTQ+ Service in the University Environment

Part of the issue is the invisibility of this population, both figuratively and statistically. There are LGBTQ+ students who are comfortable being visible, participating in campus LGBTQ+ programming and assuming student leadership roles within the student governments or organizations, being a part of campus LGBTQ+ advisory or policy boards, or conducting public LGBTQ+ scholarship within the institution. These students are going to self-select into the opportunities universities offer, they will benefit from them, and they will advance institutional culture and knowledge in serving students like them. However, for every LGBTQ+ student confident in their identity, bravely being the visible representatives of a marginalized community, there are others who struggle

mightily with personal acceptance of their identities. Fearing discovery, particularly by peers and family members, these students hide any overt signs of their sexuality or gender identity – or deny these identities to themselves outright – masking themselves through displays of exaggerated hetero/cisnormativism such as hypergendered or homophobic/transphobic behavior, or, more frequently, withdraw from social interaction with their peers. Living invisibly and voicelessly at the margins of the institutional culture, these are the students most at risk for nonpersistence, in need of support as they begin the process of reconciling an LGBTQ+ identity.

Even when LGBTQ+ students are visible and active within their campus communities, institutions can find it difficult to tailor programming to both student need and scale. Although there are an increasing number of students identifying as LGBTQ+ on university campuses nationwide – and particularly in more liberal, progressive regions – few institutions have an apparatus in place to make quantifiable assessments of their success in meeting the needs of these students (Agnelli, 2009; Renn, 2010). Unlike race, gender or ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity are not demographic categories regularly captured upon enrollment, and most universities do not know how many sexual or gender minority students are on their campuses. Though data suggests between 6% and 13% of college- or near-college students nationally identify as LGBTQ+, both the number and percentage of students at any given institution remains unrecorded. As universities become increasingly data-driven, these students will remain underserved, underrepresented and statistically invisible until quantifiable numbers and success metrics exist.

A Call for Access at ASU

While statistically, although LGBTQ+ students will always remain a minority population within the institution, it's important that it not remain an underserved or underrepresented one. Even that classification – *minority* student population – does a disservice to this student population. If national self-reporting trends are accurate, and between 6% and 13% of ASU's student population is a sexual and/or gender minority, these students still represent a not-insignificant body of 6,000-13,000 students. ASU currently serves roughly 12,000 international students and has an average incoming class of just above 10,000 – and boasts substantial programming and resources in aiding the successful transition to and retention within the institution (ASU, 2019). In order to fully realize its institutional vision of inclusion and to ensure the success of this vulnerable student population, robust, strategic, and cohesive efforts not only to provide for the support of LGBTQ+ students, but to show measurable outcomes of efforts in creating greater affinity, persistence and success among this student population are direly needed. Given the documented challenges gender and sexual minority students face, creating supportive and empowering environments is both an ethical and business imperative. Paradoxically, while universities strive to broaden institutional appeal and demographic composition, this is often accomplished by streamlining resources – something necessitated by economies of scale. ASU has implemented many initiatives benefitting LGBTQ+ students: gender-inclusive housing, SafeZone workshops, gender-neutral restrooms, programming around diversity and inclusion in and out of the classroom, and, most recently, a student-published faculty guide for working with transgender students.

These initiatives ensure ASU provides a safer, more inclusive environment for its sexual and gender minority students – but they are not enough. To allow these students to reach their academic and personal potentials, strategic efforts to more strongly engage and support the university's LGBTQ+ students throughout their identity development and coming out processes – not just specific phases of it – are essential.

Personal investment

The issue of LGBTQ+ student development and success is personal to me. During my own undergraduate and graduate experiences, the visibility of quality programming and LGBTQ+ specific resources were essential to my psychosocial development. My journey toward recognizing and embracing an LGBTQ+ identity was a convoluted one, and significant parts of it are echoed by current ASU students who, twenty years later, have told their stories as a part of this research project. I attended a small, rural institution for my undergraduate degree in the late 1990s, before LGBTQ+ programming initiatives, inclusion efforts, and visibility were well established on college campuses. The university had no resources dedicated to gender or sexual minority students, at least that I was aware of. I remember a residential campus climate that was relatively homophobic, and had no visible LGBTQ+ community. With no resources I felt comfortable turning to, I did what many LGBTQ+ youth, both in literature from myriad studies across the nation as well as this current study, did – I suppressed any impulses to explore my sexual identity and manufactured a heterosexual identity that was increasingly dissonant to my natural identity. In my entire undergraduate career, I knew three LGBTQ+ people. One was a faculty member. Two were students in my residence hall. One of those students was the

subject of homophobic taunting by peers; the other expressed aggressive and unwanted sexual attention toward me culminating in physical violence and forced me deeper into my closet.

The transition to a large, culturally diverse institution for my graduate studies was revelatory. The visibility of an LGBTQ+ community let me confront my sociocultural expectations and identity, while university resources dedicated to LGBTQ+ identity and community provided the resources to make a radical identity shift. Even with that support, coming out in my mid-twenties and shedding the psychosocial baggage of having so long suppressed and feared an identity was a difficult transition. Recognizing, accepting and embracing my sexual identity was only a small, easy step in a longer journey. Overcoming the prejudices and fears imprinted by those early college experiences, the subsequent 'second adolescence' of learning and accruing the cultural competencies to enter an LGBTQ+ community, entering into romantic and sexual relationships, and redefining relationships with family, friends, and an ex-wife was a consuming process that nearly derailed my academic career. Without the resource of a vibrant and supportive LGBTQ+ community, it likely would have done so.

As a student affairs professional, I am a passionate advocate for my university's LGBTQ+ community. I've experienced firsthand the potential both for damage in a lack of institutional support for gender and sexual minority college students and for the myriad benefits of a strong LGBTQ+ engagement model. As a member of the leadership teams of ASU's Committee for Campus Inclusion and its new LGBTQ+ Faculty/Staff Association, I have worked with ASU's gender and sexual minority communities to create and raise the visibility of programming, resources and opportunities to facilitate

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stronger, more successful experiences for the university's LGBTQ+ students. My

personal story, or some derivation of it, is still entirely too common within higher

education. The narratives of loneliness, confusion, and adversity that were common

tropes among the interviews collected for this project are saddening and frustrating. At

the same time, counternarratives of personal growth, resilience and success among these

same students fill me with inspiration and pride in what these students and the institution

can accomplish. It's my hope that in taking the pulse of the resource and community-

development needs of these students and creating structures to mitigate the challenges

faced by them as they navigate their identities and sociocultural ecosystems, this

institution can help create a different storyline for a new generation of LGBTQ+ students.

Research proposal and research questions

A common theme has emerged in researching and developing ways to better

connect LGBTQ+ students to ASU and support their psychosocial needs: although ASU

promotes and creates cultural enrichment and student leadership opportunities for its

LGBTQ+ students, it does too little to foster connection for those most in need of support

or to create a sense of safe space and community. LGBTQ+ students look to the

university's faculty, staff and administration to create and sustain a space in which they

can grow and flourish as a community, and ASU's lack of an LGBTQ+ center or resource

hub is viewed at best as a missed opportunity and at worst a disservice by many of the

LGBTQ+ students, both undergraduate and graduate, I've interacted with in the various

phases of this research study. While appreciative of the programming offered through

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SCE/ISE and the support they received from faculty, staff, and the general university community, there is a pervasive sense that more can and should be done.

This study aims to develop, implement and evaluate an LGBTQ+ student mentoring program providing psychosocial support and resilience development and promoting both LGBTQ+ individual and community identity development and affinity. The following research questions will frame and drive data collection and analysis:

(RQ1): *What does the process of LGBTQ+ identity construction look like for gender- and sexual-minority students, including students from non-dominant cultural backgrounds for whom LGBTQ+ identity is one of multiple competing identities, and how does mentorship influence the perceived identities of these students?*

(RQ2): *How does participation in an LGBTQ+ mentoring program influence participants' perceptions of development of resilience-building capacity?*

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Brave New World: Pioneering a Field

With a recent national spotlight on LGBTQ+ rights, studies into the needs of

sexual- and gender-minority students in higher education have surged. With nationwide

conversations around same-sex marriage and protections spreading a ripple of hope

amongst both LGBTQ+ citizens and allies alike, recognition of the LGBTQ+ community

appeared on the ascent. However, amidst these victories for this community have been

trials, too – most recently controversial legislation to limit the adoptive rights of same-sex

couples and rescindment of the right of transgendered citizens to serve in the military.

Given the turbulent sociopolitical climate in which the LGBTQ+ community is

embroiled, research and advocacy into both the psychosocial support and academic

success of sexual and gender minority students are particularly relevant. The myriad

challenges facing this population have been well documented, but explanatory theory and

solutions-based scholarship have been limited.

Before 1995, most research dedicated to LGBTQ+ populations addressed

psychosocial and identity development or were clinical or behavioral assessments

focusing on diagnostic and treatment protocols from a psychological, deficit-based lens

rather than an asset-focused sociological one. Few addressed sexual minority students

and their inclusion and success in higher education; gender minority populations – not

only transgender students, but gender-nonconforming and nonbinary students too – were

practically ignored. In the past decade, LGBTQ+ scholarship has grown, building upon

pioneering LGBTQ+ identity development research by Cass (1979) on the psychosocial processes and needs of gender- and (later) sexual-minority youth. D'Augelli (1995) and McCarn and Fassinger (1996), in particular, incorporated gender and sexual minority identity development into a larger framework for university student success. Recent research has sought to understand LGBTQ+ student success through the lenses of identity theory, minority stress, and the connection between cultural capital and resilience. Coupled with the strides in representation and equality within the university and larger public sphere, the mechanisms needed to support this population are increasingly understood.

Reviewing past research on the cultural milieu in which LGBTQ+ support arose and on early identity development theory is instrumental to understanding the barriers remaining to this population. The connection between discrimination, victimization and the physical and psychological challenges facing these students paint a vivid image of why they remain at risk of failure within a university environment. Finally, recent scholarship on resilience factors and student development theory associated with known LGBTQ+ student stressors suggests strategic and specific next steps in aiding the support and success of these students at Arizona State University.

Historic Barriers to LGBTQ+ Social Adaptation and Success: Mental Health, Victimization, Marginalization

Discrimination and Victimization

Gender and sexual minority youth have disproportionately experienced discrimination and victimization directly related to their LGBTQ+ status. In a study

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spanning the mid-1990s and encompassing several hundred sexual minority youth from fourteen metropolitan areas, researchers discovered these students to be among the most vulnerable within the university setting (Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995). Over 40% of study participants reported experiencing physical, emotional or verbal abuse due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and the stress of these experiences led to substantive and often long-lasting mental health issues (1995).

More recently, Williams, Connolly, Pepler and Craig (2005) found peer victimization to have a stronger impact on depression and externalized comorbid symptoms (substance abuse, sexual risk behaviors, intimate partner violence victimization) than even internalized homonegativity or identity distress. Edwards and Sylaska (2013;), Williams, Connolly, Pepler and Craig (2005) and others have found that upward of 70% of LGBTQ+ college students have experienced direct physical or verbal assault specifically motivated by their sexual orientation or gender expression, while Rankin (2005) discovered that over 50% were 'closeted' in an effort to avoid anti-LGBTQ+ aggression. In Rankin's study, 20% of participants feared for their physical safety, and nearly 30% indicated discomfort with their campus environments.

Depression and Mental Health

As early as the 1980s and 1990s, multiple studies have found incidents of suicidality in LGBTQ+ youth aged 18-24 significantly higher than those of heterosexual peers (Gibson, 1989; Harry, 1989). Upwards of 30% of completed suicides among youth aged 15-21 were gender or sexual minority youth, and Gibson and Harry speculated between 30% to 35% of all LGBTQ+ youth of the era had attempted suicide (Gibson, 1989; Savin-Williams, 1994). Meanwhile, Hatzenbuehler, Corbin and Fromme (2011),

Maggs, Steinman and Zucker (2001), and Russell and Joyner (2001) found gender and sexual minority youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide as their peers. Goldbach (2017) and Mashal, et. al., (2011) revealed that LGBTQ+ youth are three times more likely to report a history of suicidal thought and five times more likely to have attempted suicide than their heterosexual peers. Eisenberg and Resnick (2006) note 48% of LGBTQ+ youth considering suicide indicated a correlation to their gender or sexual identity. As far back as 1994, Savin-Williams issued the bold and startling revelation that suicide is the leading cause of death among sexual-minority youth.

Literature spanning the 2000s by Edwards and Sylaska (2013), Eldahan et.al. (2016), Hefner and Eisenberg (2009) and Sanlo (2004/2005) suggests gender and sexual minority college students remain not only are at higher risk of developing mental health problems, but experience more acute levels of psychological distress than other student populations. Ceglarek argues that these students report overall worse mental health and "higher levels of loneliness, anxiety, depressive symptoms, hostility, and sensitivity in comparison with their heterosexual peers" (2016, p. 206). Eldahan et. al. (2016) and Sanlo (2004/2005) specifically cite mood, eating/body image, low self-esteem, feelings of alienation, isolation and invisibility, and anxiety disorders as mental health challenges endemic to this population. Savin-Williams (1994), a late-twentieth-century developmental psychologist specializing in LGBTQ+ populations, noted these students face greater difficulty in emotional and behavioral adjustment difficulties than their peers, an observations reiterated by Williams, et. al. (2005) a decade later.

More disturbingly, Edwards and Sylaska (2013) revealed that these statistics have a well-documented correlation to significant, lasting, and debilitating behavioral

comorbidity, a claim echoed by Eldahan, et. al., (2016), Livingston, Christianson and Cochran (2016), and Woodword and Kulick (2015). Although LGBTQ+ students face disproportionate rates of poor mental health, significant knowledge gaps exist in the psychological literature, and the full extent of effects remains undocumented, as pointed out by Przedworski, et. al., (2015), Rankin (2005), and Woodford and Kulick (2015). In a study of 34,000 students at 40 institutions, LGBTQ+ students reported issues ranging from depression and anxiety to post-traumatic stress, social phobia, and self-image problems stemming from internalized homophobia. In one study, Przedworkski, et. al. (2015) note that one third and one fifth of college-age women and men, respectively, reported these barriers. Studies by Rosario, et. al., (2014), Hatzenbuehler (2009), Zubernis and Snyder (2007), and Woodford and Kulick (2015) have all found self-destructive behaviors such as substance abuse and failed relationships to be common and linked to gender or sexual minority status and associated stressors.

Alcohol and Drug Use/abuse

LGBTQ+ youth also experience high substance use rates compared to their peers. Data presented by Talley, et. al. (2016) suggests college-going gender/sexual minority youth with better resolved LGBTQ+ identities show greater resilience and have lower alcohol and drug use than their gender or sexual minority peers or students with lesser-resolved identities. However, reports by Adams, Knopf and Park (2014) and Livingston, Christianson and Cochran (2016) indicate that despite this, overall use of alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs and substances remains substantially higher than those among other college student demographics. Mashal, et. al. (2008) found gender and sexual minority youth are 190% more likely to disclose a history of substance use or abuse than

their peers, while Talley, et. al. (2016) found alcohol use rates among bisexual and gender-minority students were particularly high – perhaps an indicator of the unique challenges faced by these populations in finding commonality even within the larger gay and lesbian communities. Mereish, et. al., (2017), correlate lifetime tobacco use in LGBTQ+ students to homophobic bullying, concluding that permissive social norms and maladaptive coping processes to external and internal LGBTQ+ related stressors were responsible for these statistics. In other words, with gender and sexual minority youth more likely to witness substance use within their peer groups as a means of coping with LGBTQ+ related micro- and macroaggressions and challenges, they, accordingly, turn to these strategies. According to studies by Eldahan, et. al. (2016) and Lewis, et. al. (2012), this subsequently increases the incidence of other risk factors, including unsafe sexual practices and perpetuation of/victimization by same-sex partner violence.

Intimate Partner Violence Victimization

Research indicates that the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students do not only come from outside their communities. As D'Augelli (1992), Edwards and Sylaska (2013), Jones and Raghavan (2012) and Porter and Williams (2011) have all noted, sexual and gender minority college students experience higher rates of physical, sexual, and psychological partner violence victimization than their peers, in part due to the higher rates of alcohol and substance use noted above. According to both Edwards and Sylaska (2013) and Jones and Raghavan (2012), over 40% of LGBTQ+ college students have reported dating violence perpetrated against them within the past year. In a recent study into identity-related psychological trauma, Edwards and Sylaska (2013), suggest correlations exist between same-sex intimate partner violence and identity-based

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stressors, with internalized homonegativity/homophobia being the "most salient" stress

correlate (p. 1728).

Theoretical Perspectives: LGBTQ+ Identity Development, Minority Stress, Cultural Capital and LGBTQ+ Community Support Resilience

Persisting challenges facing gender and sexual minority students are attributed to

three primary factors: lack of a salient LGBTQ+ identity and stunted interpersonal

development; minority stress compounded by identity confusion; and lack of personal

resilience.

Identity Salience and Discord

Although a full examination of identity development is far beyond the scope of

this present study, some conceptual understanding of identity and its centrality to self-

concept are crucial to understanding the challenges faced by gender and sexual minority

communities. One of identity theory's earliest proponents, George Herbert Mead, posited

that identity is based on "symbolic interactionism" and that taking a "situated identity

perspective" is essential to navigating a complex social life (Mead, 1934, qtd. in Stryker

& Burke, 2000). According to Mead's formulation of identity, society shapes the

individual, and therefore social behavior. Building on this work, Stryker and Burke

(2000) define identity as the "parts of a self composed of the meanings that persona

attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary

societies" (p. 284). They elaborate:

> society is seen as a mosaic of relatively durable patterned interactions and
> relationships, differentiated yet organized, embedded in an array of groups,
> organizations, communities, and institutions, and intersected by crosscutting
> boundaries of class, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, and other variables. (p. 285-
> 86)

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Identity is thus a person's internalized role expectations, and it is primary to individual sense-making of the world. A tenet of identity theory is that as the individual encounters and processes various social interactions, a shifting of roles and associated expectations occurs until such time that a salient or dominant identity emerges. At this time, identity stability across time and situations may occur (Stryker & Burke, 2000). In terms of LGBTQ+ identity development specifically, Hu and Wang (2013) note that "an individual's sexual identity is constructed by negotiating the self with the specific social and cultural contexts within which they reside" (p. 669).

For the purposes of this study, the concept of internalized role expectation as a function of external influences that is most important. In a pioneering early study, Hershberger and D'Augelli (1995) argued the college-going years to be among the most crucial to gender and sexual minority students in establishing identity and are particularly critical to formation and integration of lifelong psychosocial, personal and cognitive identities, findings later reaffirmed by Bilodeau and Renn (2005), Kapadia, et. al., (2014), Woodford and Kulick (2015), and Sanlo (2005). On entering the university, students instinctively seek relationships within peer groups or student organizations reinforcing or providing affinity with their emerging salient identities and associated beliefs (Serpe & Stryker, 1987). Burke (1987 and 1991) notes that this shared meaning informs beliefs, attitudes, and self-expectation, and comparison of their own beliefs and values to a perceived identity standard sets the tone for students' interactions and behavior. For LGBTQ+ students, this can be a perilous time: upon entering a heteronormative environment in which their developing identities do not align with those of their peers,

students navigating gender and/or sexual minority status experience cognitive dissonance, relational mis-match and identity discord (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Burke & Stets). As students experience this discord, many internalize feelings of difference through internalized heterosexism and homophobia, attempting to conceal their increasingly divergent identities and normalizing the developmental trajectories of their peers at the expense of their own.

As research by Bauermeister, et. al. (2010) and Bos, et. al. (2008) has discovered, students who attempt appropriation of heteronormative or 'straight-acting' identities as a means of minority identity concealment (colloquially called 'passing') often fail to develop a healthy LGBTQ+ identity and positive self-concept. Research by Zubernis and Snyder (2007) and Przedworkski, et. al. (2015) confirms that persisting in an identity-confused state results in loneliness and alienation, leaving these students vulnerable to minority stress and more impacted by challenging life events. Woodford and Kulick (2015) note that if unable to reconcile their sexual or gender identities, these students ultimately experience poorer academic success and higher incidents of non-persistence, confirming earlier studies by Tinto (1993) and Silverschanz, et. al., (2008).

LGBTQ+ Identity Models

Over the decades, social scientists have worked to understand the identity developmental pathways for sexual and gender minority populations. Since the 1970's three models in particular have attracted attention and remain most prevalent in student development: Cass's Gay and Lesbian Sexual Identity Formation model, McCarn and Fassinger's Lesbian Sexual Identity Formation model, and D'Augelli's LGBT Life Span Identity model.

A pioneer in LGBTQ+ studies whose publication of the first model of homosexual identity formation became the standard framework from which subsequent models have either developed or diverged, Cass originally identified six unique developmental stages of homosexual development. Originally created to explain the developmental trajectories of lesbian women, Cass's framework has since been adapted to larger LGBTQ+ populations. As Degges-White, Rice, and Myers (2000) note, it is a classic text in LGBTQ+ identity for its comprehension and sophistication. As Bilodeau and Renn (2005) note, Cass explained the emotional development issues often seen in gay and lesbian youth as a result of identity ambiguity, arguing that an initial rejection of a homosexual identity is a challenge to identity salience all sexual minority youth must resolve. In proposing a phase-based Gay and Lesbian Sexual Identity Formation model (1979, 1996), she was the first to link LGBTQ+ identity to a developmental process (Gervacio, 2012). Presenting six distinct linear stages of progressive homosexual identity acquisition and normalization (identity confusion, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride and synthesis), Cass articulates the centrality of "the interaction process that occurs between individuals and their environments" to the emergence of a salient sexual-minority identity (1979, p. 219). Central to Cass's framework is the assumption of identity discord and that sexual-minority individuals view themselves initially from the perspective of the identity standard: that they are "*supposed* to be heterosexual…understand that heterosexuality is desirable and acceptable and homosexuality is stigmatized and has minority status" (1996, p. 222). For a full description of Cass's Lesbian and Gay Sexual Identity Formation model, see Appendix B.

More recently, D'Augelli (1994, 1995) and McCarn and Fassinger (1996, 1998) proposed that rather than developmental stages, LGBTQ+ identity consists of milestones attained at various stages of identity development (Gervacio, 2012). These phases need not follow a sequential order. Both D'Augelli and McCarn and Fassinger's models were better suited to more integrative approaches to sexual orientation/identity and gender identity/expression than Cass's (Anderson-Martinez & Vianden, 2014; Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Levy, 2009). Newer phase models also better account for the individual and cultural differences experienced by LGBTQ+ students from non-Western societies, according to Hu and Wang (2013), making it easier to capture the unique individual experiences related to LGBTQ+ identification. While McCarn and Fassinger initially created their model to explain lesbian identity development, they later found empirical support that the model applied to gay and bisexual populations as well (Gervacio, 2012). D'Augelli's model, initially applied to lesbian, gay and bisexual populations, was later adapted to include gender-minority (transgender and gender-nonbinary) populations (Bilodeau, 2008). McCarn, Fassinger and D'Augelli also expanded Cass's research by placing gender- and sexual-minority development in context of prevalent student identity theory (Bilodeau, 2008; Gervacio, 2012), and most specifically Chickering's Theory of Student Identity Development (see Appendix C).

While Cass identifies the (heteronormative) social environment as a challenge to sexual minority students in attaining identity salience, Anderson-Martin and Vianden (2014), Bilodeau and Renn (2005), and Levy (2009) note that both the McCarn-Fassinger and D'Augelli models acknowledge the importance of social environments and group affinity in development of sexual minority identities. The McCarn-Fassinger's Lesbian

Sexual Identity Formation model articulates four phases (awareness, exploration, deepening/commitment, internalization/synthesis) to describe separate but parallel pathways of individual and social identity development formation (2012), indicating that both individual and interpersonal identity development may occur either separately or in tandem. For a full description of the McCarn-Fassinger's Lesbian Sexual Identity Formation model, see Appendix D.

Like McCarn and Fassinger's work, D'Augelli's LGBT Life Span Identity model goes a step further than the Mc-Carn-Fassinger, proposing a synthesis of individual and social identity formation. He argues both are equally essential in adopting an LGBTQ+ identity, and one cannot occur without equal development of the other. In his framework, D'Augelli identified six developmental stages: exiting heterosexuality; developing a personal LGB identity; developing a social LGB social identity; becoming an LGB offspring; developing and LGB intimacy status; and entering an LGB community (1995). As Anderson-Martin (2014), Bilodeau and Renn (2005) note, aside from including social interaction and structures in the development of an LGB identity, D'Augelli's model is noteworthy in describing the six areas of psychosocial development as not only non-sequential, but simultaneous and overlapping. Stevens (2004) adds that D'Augelli's model demonstrates the importance of developmental elasticity, explaining that each person's journey to self-acceptance is uniquely informed by both environmental factors and individual differences. As Dziengel (2015) and Levy (2009) note, regression or identity foreclosure (the inability to attain a salient LGBTQ+ identity) can still occur, but the reasons for these regressions are framed more clearly in terms of sociocultural context, expectation and an ecological systems view of the person in his or her

environment than in either the Cass or McCarn-Fassinger models. Because of this nuance, and because it its alignment specifically with student development theory, D'Augelli's model is among the most useful within the university context. For a full description of D'Augelli's LGBT Life Span Identity model, see Appendix E.

Minority Stress

Despite their divergent approaches, the identity models of Cass, McCarn and Fassinger, and D'Augelli share one common element: that a lack of development or identity foreclosure can have catastrophic effects on the psychological development of LGBTQ+ individuals. What these models do not explain, though, is the connection between identity foreclosure and the mental health problems and related contributing factors such as sexual risk-taking, substance abuse, and partner violence perpetration/victimization that disproportionately burden gender and sexual minority individuals. Minority stress theory, first articulated by Meyer (2003), suggests environmental circumstances and minority status are connected. As Goldbach, et. al. (2017) note, everyday challenges may be magnified by the unique stressors, such as discrimination, microaggressions and victimization, faced by minority groups. Over the past decade, a significant body of research by Edwards and Sylaska (2013), Eldahan, et. al. (2016), Goldbach and Gibbs (2017), Livingston, Christianson and Cochran (2017), Mereish, et. al. (2017) and others identifies minority stress as the most likely explanatory model for the collective "unique and chronic psychosocial stressors" that affect and contribute to the negative mental health and behavioral outcomes of gender and sexual minority youth.

In a thirty-day study of gay and bisexual men, Eldahan, et. al., (2016) found minority stress-related triggers predicted higher rates of negative affect emotions (fear, sadness) and anxiety. Lewis, et. al. (2012) suggest minority stress is a primary cause of gender and sexual minority risk-taking behaviors, including substance use/abuse, and subsequently increases risk for perpetration/victimization of intimate partner violence and unsafe sexual practices. According to Gibbs and Rice (2016) and Goldbach and Gibbs (2017), minority stress experienced during the formative adolescence and the early adult years, while sexual and gender identities are becoming salient and identity development is a central task (Erikson, 1968), can have effects on mental health that endure well into adulthood.

Supporting LGBTQ+ Students in Higher Education: Resilience, Cultural Capital, and Community Support

Resilience

While lack of identity salience and minority stress can have deleterious effects on gender and sexual minority college students, fostering resilience through development of cultural identity capital can provide buffering factors and mitigate associated negative health and behavioral outcomes: in other words, LGBTQ+ students with stronger resilience factors (self-efficacy, positive self-concept, and a sense of connection to their LGBTQ+ community) are less likely to be affected by environmental stressors (Huang and Lin, 2013). In recent years, resilience theory has been increasingly used to explore the challenges and outcomes of underrepresented minority populations (see Sanlo, 2004 and Nicolazzo, 2016), and is a powerful lens through which to examine the challenges and successes of gender and sexual minority students.

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Defined as the "positive capacity of people to cope with stress and adversity" by Huang and Lin (2013), resilience "allow[s] a person to retain emotional health and achieve goals in the face of adversity" (Huang & Lin, 2013; Schoon, 2006; Ungar, 2008). Huang and Lin's assessment of resilience supports previous scholarship by Schoon (2006) and Ungar (2008), asserting that individuals with greater resilience are more capable of responding actively and positively to life situations, stress and trauma.

In multiple studies involving LGBTQ+ populations and minority stress, resilience has demonstrably mitigated stressors. Livingston, Christianson and Cochran (2016) discovered a causal link between resiliency-based conditioning, minority stress and alcohol use/abuse rates among LGBTQ+ youth; in this study students who exhibited stronger resiliency-adjacent personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeability) were less likely to use/abuse alcohol. In a study simulating the effects of protective factors such as increased social interaction and the influence of positive LGBTQ+ role models, Eisenberg and Resnick (2006) discovered that the addition of these factors to a suicide-prediction model decreased expected suicide ideation and attempts by nearly 6% or 12,000 deaths by suicide annually. Meanwhile, research by Hefner and Eisenberg (2009), Huang and Lin (2013), Ward Struthers, Perry, and Menec (2000) all attribute a lack of resilience to poor mental health, higher comorbid/maladaptive behavior rates, and, therefore, among college-going populations, greater risk of academic failure.

Over the past decade, studies by Hatzenbuehler (2011), Buameister, et. al. (2008), and Peplau and Fingerhut (2007) have specifically identified social support, LGBTQ+ relationship-building, and development of interpersonal ties as critical to resilience-

building and as primary protective factors against minority stress. Meanwhile, Hefner and

Eisenberg (2009), Woodford and Kulick (2015) and Sanlo (2004/2005) have established

that bolstering social support provides psychosocial coping resources in short-circuiting

the development of mental health problems and replacing maladaptive coping measures

such as substance use/abuse among minority-population college students. Specifically,

note Hefter and Eisenberg (2009), strong social connection and support positively affect

self-esteem, self-efficacy, and buffer against socioenvironmental stresses. Nicolazzo

(2016) notes that on university campuses and other traditionally hetero- and cis-

normative spaces, establishment of 'kinship networks' (Nicolazzo, 2016) allows gender

and sexual minority students to create spaces and communities in which to build and

reinforce their own identities. Eldahan, et. al., note:

> [T]hey [minority stressors] are interrupted (moderated) by (a) the presence of
> coping and social supports including group solidarity, enhanced in-group identity,
> and affirming communities; and (b) the characteristics of the minority identity,
> which include how prominent and important the minority identity is to the
> participant. (2016, p. 38)

Finally, research by Woodford and Kulick (2015) and Reed, et. al. (2010) suggests causal

links between community network support, perception of campus climate and substance

use among LGBTQ+ college students, while Talley, et. al. (2016) discovered that

students demonstrating higher group affinity are less likely to use/abuse substances in

order to mitigate minority stress.

Social Connection and Cultural Capital

Building on earlier studies examining the connection between minority stress,

identity and resilience, Ceglarek and Ward (2016), and Masten, Herbers and Reed (2009)

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claim that connection to a larger LGBTQ+ community is integral to the development of resilience and essential to the development of a salient LGBTQ+ identity, while Slootmaeckers and Lievens (2014) found that cultural capital can specifically mitigate experience of homonegativity in LGBTQ+ populations. Resilience, identity salience and cultural capital, in turn, are instrumental to the success of gender and sexual minority students. However, as early as the 1990s, studies by Savin-Williams (1990) and D'Augelli) demonstrated that many LGBTQ+ youth, including college students, have either insufficient or unstable support networks.

Lack of community belonging, affinity and connection has historically been a problem facing gender and sexual minority populations. Cass (1979/1996), Gervacio (2012), and McCarn and Fassinger (1996) note that particularly during the adolescent years when lifelong identities are being negotiated, gender and sexual minority youth face confusion as they grapple with an emerging identity outside their peers' norm. The 'coming out' process, through which sexual and gender minority students discover their true identities, is marked by turmoil, conflict and reevaluation, as well as comparison against their peers and long-held personal, familial and societal assumptions. This process culminates in either nonacceptance (Cass's identity foreclosure) or acceptance, identity synthesis, and entrance into a larger LGBTQ+ community. More recently, Ceglarek and Ward (2016) have noted that during this period, the creation of alternate social interactions and community allow for identity exploration, acculturation into an LGBTQ+ community, and identity affirmation and support.

Hershberger and D'Augelli (1994, 1995) determined strong support networks and self-acceptance were the strongest variables in moderating and mediating the effect of

victimization on LGBTQ+ individuals insofar as mental health and suicidality. Subsequent studies by Kapadia, et. al. (2014), MacAllister, et. al. (2009), Pryor (2015), Sheran and Arnold (2012), Woodford and Kulick (2015) and Tinto (1993) have demonstrably correlated greater self-efficacy among college-age LGBTQ+ students with better success in navigating barriers among students with strong social support networks. This demonstrates the importance of peer groups, campus climate, and faculty interaction in identity development and college success and the role of mentorship and significant-other support and affinity-building in the fostering and development of a positive LGBTQ+ identity. Tinto (1993) identified social isolation as a primary cause of student retention problems, while Sanlo (2004/2005, p. 97) noted that students lacking peer kinship and exposed to an unsupportive environment and/or harassment "are unable to focus on either academic or co-curricular learning."

More explicitly, Woodford and Kulick (2015) and Silverschanz, et. al. (2008) discovered that for gender and sexual minority students lacking resilience-bolstering communities and social support, minority stressors (and specifically bullying, perceived heterosexist/homonegative campus environments, verbal harassment, and family issues) correlate to increased chances of academic failure and non-matriculation. Chickering & Reisser (1993) argue navigating identity can come at the expense of other important developmental milestones for LGBTQ+ students; Fine (2016) noted students navigating a gender or sexual minority identity without resilience-bolstering mechanisms often have to choose between navigating that identity or navigating an academic career, but rarely succeed at both simultaneously. Fine (2016) notes that in one study, over 50% of LGB participants left their university at least temporarily, with two-thirds citing lack of

familial or peer support or a hostile campus environment as their primary reason for non-completion. In another, Sanlo (2004/2005) notes that 31% left for at least one semester or transferred to another institution, and 33% dropped out completely, citing campus harassment as a primary reason. These rates are corroborated in studies by Rankin, et. al. (2010) and Woodford and Kulick (2014), who note that 30% of respondents reported campus climate problems made them reconsider their enrollment at their institutions.

LGBTQ+ Student Identity and Mentorship

With these issues rooted in the students' psychosocial development, universities can mitigate these challenges by providing proper support and community building, as demonstrated initially by Tinto (1993) and more recently by MacAllister, et. al. (2009), Pryor (2015), Woodford and Kulick (2015), and others. If alienation is a significant factor in LGBTQ+ student failure, student success can be greatly improved by involvement within a familiar community offering role modeling and psychosocial support.

An increasing number of studies, including those of Kim and Sax (2009), Silverschanz, et. al. (2008), and Hurtado, et. al. (2008), demonstrate that robust faculty, staff, and peer group interaction are essential to the resilience and persistence of minority student groups. These dynamics positively correlate to social acceptance, academic engagement, and buffering against both external homonegativity (anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs, attitudes and judgments) and internalized homophobia (emotional response or distress). On the other hand, Dziengel (2015) notes, students missing these supports fail to develop the robust psychological toolkits and salient LGBTQ+ identities not only required for

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university persistence, but may develop psychosocial developmental issues that will continue manifesting into adulthood if unaddressed during these formative years.

MacAllister, et. al. (2009), Russell and Horne (2009) and Sheran and Arnold (2012) identify mentorship as specifically beneficial to sexual and gender minority students, as they benefit from the role modeling and common meaning-making of community-building, ultimately demonstrating increased academic persistence and success. The earliest studies on LGBTQ+ student mentorship appear in the late 1990s, when Lark and Croteau (1998) published faculty guidelines for mentoring LGBTQ+ doctoral students.

Even these guidelines, though, were established to aid non-LGBTQ+ faculty in relating to and mentoring LGBTQ+ students. During this era, Lark and Croteau note that many gender and sexual minority faculty and staff were reluctant to disclose their own identities and take active roles in the LGBTQ+ student community for fear of institutional reprisal. While the programs were designed to create safe spaces for disclosure and discussion for students, a lack of mentors who, as part of the LGBTQ+ community, shared a common identity and cultural framework as the students, limited the success of these early programs. As Renn (2010) notes, these programs precluded genuine community-building; while mentors could sympathize with the challenges many LGBTQ+ students face in their environments, they could not empathize because they did not have experiences directly correlating to the unique challenges common to the LGBTQ+ experience. As MacAllister, et. al. (2009) and Miller (2015) have discussed, mentee satisfaction is greater with mentors whom they perceive greater homophily (greater similarity; i.e., members of the LGBTQ+ community). In studies of programs

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where both mentor and mentee shared a sexual or gender identity, students were more likely to remain engaged with both the mentorship program and the institution.

Ultimately, mentoring programs to increase LGBTQ+ student connection, group affinity and identity development hold promise in transforming the way universities interact with – and retain – gender and sexual minority students. As MacAllister, et. al., and Russell and Horne (2009) observe, this has not always been possible. It's only in recent years, with the increased visibility of LGBTQ+ role models on college campuses due to changing sociocultural norms, that new opportunities for multi-generational gender and sexual minority mentoring has become possible. Within Western societies and the American university system specifically, views on the LGBTQ+ community have begun shifting in a positive direction in the past decade. With an increasing number of states (and, in the case of ASU, institutions even without larger state mandate) protecting LGBTQ+ community members against workplace and employment discrimination (Freedom For All Americans, 2019),faculty and staff are increasingly comfortable coming out and less stigmatized in the university environment, and students therefore have more visible role models within the institution – and are persisting and thriving to a greater extent than ever before. Sheran and Arnold (2012) note that sexual and gender minority students engaged in mentoring with LGBTQ+ mentors, whether they be other students, faculty or staff, report lower levels and occurrences of anxiety and depression, more positive relationships with their universities, and increased academic persistence. Stevens (2004) and Vaccaro (2012) correlate these changes to increased self-acceptance and assumption of more positive LGBTQ+ identities associated with the shared lived identities of these students and their newly-expanded community networks. Woodford

and Kulick (2015) argue that programs increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ individuals, offering safe spaces and opportunities to address heterosexism, homonegativity and homophobia, and positive measures for coping with minority stress correlate to greater social integration and increased educational success and persistence outcomes for the students involved with them.

Summary: Theoretical Perspectives in Context

Although the past decades have seen momentum in sexual and gender minority advocacy, work remains in making universities truly productive and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ students. When considered in tandem with intersecting racial, socio-economic, gender and spiritual identities, Kapadia, et. al. (2014), Silverschanz, et. al., and Woodford and Kulick (2015) note that gender and sexual minority college students continue to face more educational attainment challenges than any other student group. Among the most pressing barriers are identity-related emotional challenges and emotional and physical obstacles related to developing and maintaining LGBTQ+ identities in traditionally cis- and heteronormative campus environments. Within the umbrella of sexual and gender minority populations, both research and anecdotal data indicate that transgender, gender-nonconforming/nonbinary, and bisexual student populations continue to encounter significant challenges (Bilodeau, 2008; Mashal, et. al., Pryor, 2015; Talley, 2016).

In combination with more recent scholarship by Bilodeau (2005, 2008), Renn (2005, 2010), Sanlo (2005) and Vaccaro (2009) on how identity, educational investment and attainment connect, the foundational identity development frameworks of D'Augelli

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(1995) and McCarn and Fassinger (1996) provide a theoretical lens through which to examine the psychosocial development and retention issues unique to LGBTQ+ student populations. Pioneering LGBTQ+ mentoring efforts by Lark and Croteau (1998), MacAllister, et. al. (2009); Russell and Horne (2009), and Sheran and Arnold (2012) established a preliminary baseline linking LGBTQ+ mentoring with a de-escalation of the psychosocial development issues that historically derailed the academic persistence and success of this student population. They laid the groundwork to develop programs further harnessing the collective experience of LGBTQ+ role models within the university to build supportive communities in which these students may continue to explore and develop their psychosexual identities in tandem with, rather than at the expense of, their academic ones.

More specifically, a case can be made that the mechanisms of LGBTQ+ identity development are now more fully understood. Although significant progress has been made in campus climate and LGBTQ+ acceptance, the developmental hurdles these students face are not alleviated. Safer spaces have been carved out for LGBTQ+ students to navigate and integrate their identities in; the next step, institutionally, is tailoring structures supporting these students' psychosocial needs and facilitating healthy identity development. Programs offering LGBTQ+ specific counseling, mentoring, and community/leadership development are an essential next step; helping them navigate the development of identity and cultural competency removes barriers remaining between these students and their success.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND INNOVATION

Our Many Hues: An Inclusive LGBTQ+ Community Model

The HUES LGBTQ+ mentoring program was developed to provide psychosocial

support and foster identity development and community engagement for gender and

sexual minority students at Arizona State University. The title of the HUES program is a

nod to both the traditional LGB rainbow flag and the multiple sexual and gender minority

communities, many of which have adopted their own variation of this flag to represent

their own distinct identities (see Appendix B). In developing the HUES program, it was

important to acknowledge the broader cultural LGBTQ+ cultural and historical

significance represented by the rainbow flag and, at the same time, honor the identities of

all the LGBTQ+ community's comprised populations; the LGBTQ+ community includes

people of various spiritual, ethnic and racial populations that span socioeconomic and

cultural demographics. This community is non-monolithic and culturally amorphic, yet a

common denominator is found in the challenges to identity navigation across the

spectrum. Universally, LGBTQ+ people are united by the common experience of

growing up as cultural minorities. Whereas most cultures are a byproduct of and are

shaped by the interpersonal and familial capital of its comprised members, no such

capital exists save for what is collectively created within the LGBTQ+ community: there

is no growing up knowing how to be gay. The rainbow flag and its permutations are

symbols of pride and hope for the LGBTQ+ community, and seemed a fitting inspiration

for a program fostering the spirit of LGBTQ+ resilience and cultural legacy in a new generation of students.

The HUES pilot launched for the 2017-2018 academic year; with data collection taking place in the fall semester of the 2018-2019 academic year. Serving students from all socioeconomic brackets, geographical regions, races and ethnicities, ASU's population provides a robust sampling, but its size presents challenges in serving smaller populations like its LGBTQ+ community. The logistical issues of providing and creating awareness and connection to resources requires innovation and effort, presenting an opportunity to explore a new service delivery model to these students.

Program Innovation and Rationale

ASU's primary LGBTQ+ student support apparatus is limited to three broad areas: general health support resources; academic/curricular programming; and student engagement, agency-creating, and leadership. The out@asu LGBTQ+ resource website provides a comprehensive directory of services and resources for ASU's LGBTQ+ community.

Support Resources

In addition to a staff of clinical counselors trained to therapeutically support LGBTQ+ students, ASU's Counseling Services offers LGBTQ+ support through its 'LGBTQ+ Power Hour', a weekly group counseling program that is open to all members of the ASU LGBTQ+ student community (ASU, 2019-c). ASU Health Services provides support to members of the LGBTQ+ community as part of its comprehensive portfolio of medical services to the broader student community, including access to primary care

providers for STI testing and treatment, Pre and Post Exposure Prophylaxix (PEP/PrEP)

for reduction of HIV risk, comprehensive gynecological and men's health services, and

medical care and hormonal transition services for transgender persons (ASU, 2019-d).

Academic/curricular programming. ASU's College of Integrative Sciences and

Arts (CISA) and Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions (CPSCS)

partner to offer an LGBT Certificate program, an undergraduate program examining the

"experiences, history, culture, and contemporary issues related to LGBT people,"

offering members of the ASU academic community "the opportunity to prepare students

for diversity and participatory democracy and advance social knowledge about issues

related to LGBT communities" (ASU, 2019-e). At the graduate level, the School for

Social Transformation (SST) offers a graduate certificate in Sexuality and Gender

Studies, a flexible, interdisciplinary program that allows students to "gain theoretical and

analytical tools to examine gender and sexual formations," examine how "social issues

and state institutions impact and are impacted by sexuality as a social norm," and allows

students to "further investigate sexualities in relation to sexual stratification, reproductive

rights and justice, sexual health and justice, carceral genders and sexualities, sex work,

the state and legal system, and transnational and diasporadic formations" (ASU, 2019-f).

Student engagement. Under the advisement of the Office for Student and

Cultural Engagement/International Student Engagement (SCE/ISE), the Rainbow

Coalition is an identity-based student governing body with the mission of improving

campus climate and organizing resources, services and support for the university's

LGBTQ+ student community. The Rainbow Coalition supports ASU's LGBTQ+ student

clubs and organizations, eight of which are currently active across the institution's four campus locations at the undergraduate and graduate levels (ASU, 2019-g).

In addition to the Rainbow Coalition and its associated student organizations, structured LGBTQ+ student engagement is provided through Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL). Gamma Rho Lambda, the nation's first multicultural lesbian sorority, operates a chapter at ASU that is "inclusive of cisgender women, trans women, trans men, and gender-variant people of all sexualities and racial identities" (Gamma Rho Lambda, 2019). ASU also housed the founding chapter of Sigma Phi Beta, a national LGBTQ+ fraternity first chartered in 2003 (ASU, 2019-h). Other Greek communities, including Epsilon Sigma Alpha, foster leadership and community across diverse populations, including the LGBTQ+ community (Epsilon Sigma Alpha, 2019).

While ASU's commitment to rich curricular opportunities and student support resources is admirable, this model does not sufficiently address the needs of its full LGBTQ+ community. The peer support resources offered by Counseling Services undoubtedly benefits students discovering and reconciling an LGBTQ+ identity or navigating associated issues (disclosure or 'coming out' to self and others, internal homophobia and dealing with external heterosexism/normalizing of cisgender and heterosexual privilege). Meanwhile, the institution's current student-led engagement model, led by the Rainbow Coalition, student clubs/organizations, and Greek community – with their emphasis on student leadership, advocacy and community empowerment – provides social and cultural enrichment opportunities and community support favored by students with more salient LGBTQ+ identities. HUES bridges the two ends of the LGBTQ+ identity development spectrum. By allowing participants to navigate emerging

sexual orientations and/or gender identities outside a clinical setting, it normalizes the process, engages with students' developing identities and fosters community engagement and accrual of LGBTQ+ cultural capital.

Programming facilitating this transition from initial identity exploration to community immersion is needed at ASU. In a series of LGBTQ+ needs assessment surveys (total n= 66) (Reeves-Blurton, 2016 and 2017), students currently involved in LGBTQ+ student community engagement tend toward strongly integrated and salient LGBTQ+ identity. Students struggling to reconcile LGBTQ+ identities and/or practice identity concealment (are 'closeted') are more likely to seek counseling or informal advising but are less engaged in LGBTQ+ community development programming. This is the space HUES inhabits. HUES provides a forum for participants to challenge heteronormative assumptions and build resiliency, LGBTQ+ cultural capital, and social support networks, ultimately attaining the identity affinity and salience needed to enter the wider LGBTQ+ community.

A primary innovation of HUES, aside from its unique positioning to foster and develop LGBTQ+ identity and cultural competencies, is its multi-modal structure. HUES is scaffolded to provide engagement aligned with the various phases of LGBTQ+ student identity development articulated by D'Augelli, Bilodeau and others. The program offers one-to-one and community engagement, letting participants engage in ways pertinent to development of identity salience regardless of their current level. One-to-one mentoring provides a hand-off from Counseling Services to students ready to explore LGBTQ+ individuality, while group programming – workshops, panel discussions and community dialogues – allow development of networks, further creation of LGBTQ+ cultural capital,

and ease entry into LGBTQ+ community membership. Having achieved greater identity

salience, participants may then be ready to explore social advocacy, community

development and leadership within the existing LGBTQ+ student community.

Setting

HUES is housed in and operated under ASU's Graduate College as a part of its

Graduate College Mentoring Network (GCMN). The GCMN provides administrative

support and resources for several mentoring initiatives targeting the psychosocial support,

community engagement, and affinity-based academic and professional development of

the university's graduate student population. Although HUES was initially developed as a

platform for gender or sexual minority graduate students providing mentoring for

undergraduates, initial research cycles indicated need at both the graduate and

undergraduate level for LGBTQ+ affinity-based mentoring. Both undergraduate and

graduate students surveyed also overwhelmingly preferred faculty/staff mentors with

significant LGBTQ+ life experience. Therefore, with the consent of Graduate College

leadership, HUES was expanded into its current model, with faculty and staff serving as

mentors to both undergraduate and graduate students.

The HUES program was specifically designed to bridge the various LGBTQ+

communities at ASU, and its development and implementation could not have been

possible without support from various sectors of this community. ASU's LGBTQ+

Faculty and Staff Association has played a prominent role from the onset of the program,

with association members volunteering both as HUES mentors and participating in

HUES programming efforts, serving as discussion facilitators and panelists. ASU's

student engagement community also played an instrumental role in the HUES launch; the leadership teams of the Rainbow Coalition and LGBTQ+ clubs and organizations were instrumental in spreading initial awareness of HUES programming and served as informal focus groups in the development of workshop and discussion group topics. Both ASU Counseling Services and the Sun Devil Support Network, the institution's sexual violence prevention team, assisted in development of community engagement programming for HUES, and recruitment materials for HUES mentorship and programming were distributed through Counseling Services' LGBTQ+ facilitated support group. However, because of the confidential nature of Counseling Services' mandate, there was no direct recruitment through this channel.

Timeline

Initial research and data collection began in October 2016 with the launch of an LGBTQ+ student needs assessment survey and follow-up interviews. This survey was accessed via a web link embedded in a letter of explanation and consent distributed via the social media channels of the Rainbow Coalition. Twelve responses were recorded, and two participants agreed to follow-up interviews. See Appendix F for needs assessment survey. The findings of this preliminary work informed the development and release of a second, more robust LGBTQ+ campus climate and LGBTQ+ cultural capital inventory survey, launched in September 2017. To capture a broader subset of ASU's LGBTQ+ student population than the previous survey, two additional distribution channels were utilized:

1. the social media channel for inQUEERy, "an interdisciplinary collaborative that aims to enhance the field of study related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression" (inQUEERy, 2019) and a joint initiative of ASU's Counseling Psychology and School of Social Work and Counseling;

2. and the weekly faculty, staff, and student email bulletin for Barrett, the Honors College.

A total of 55 graduate and undergraduate ASU students responded to this Qualtrics-based survey. See Appendix A for complete campus climate and LGBTQ+ cultural capital inventory survey.

The HUES pilot launched in August 2017. An initial cohort was matched after signing interest forms at a recruitment table at Rainbow Welcome, the university's LGBTQ+ student information fair and welcome mixer, and at an informational session held during the first week of classes and advertised to all interested LGBTQ+ faculty, staff and students through the university's event calendar. From the initial applicant pool, four students were matched with three mentors; additional mentoring partnerships were matched over the course of the academic year. During both semesters, students met with mentors, established mentoring goals and met in one-to-one sessions; in the spring semester, one-to-one mentoring sessions continued, and mentors encouraged their mentees to attend the HUES program's first community engagement program, a workshop around communities of practice and inclusive group culture. Though not an attendance success, this workshop allowed for greater fine-tuning of programming for the subsequent year. Recruitment continued over summer, with new mentors and mentees

matched and one-to-one mentoring commencing in August and monthly community

engagement programming launching in September.

Participants

HUES mentees (referred to simply as 'participants' from this point forward) are

ASU undergraduate and graduate students identifying as a part of the gender and sexual

minority communities. Because the LGBTQ+ community is comprised of individuals

navigating myriad intersecting cultural identities, and therefore issues of intersectionality

often become issues of friction within LGBTQ+ identity navigation (Poynter &

Washington, 2005; Spivey-Mooring, 2014), HUES mentors are selected based on their

mentoring application statements to ensure participants of all races, ethnicities,

socioeconomic status, first-generation status, and other markers of privilege or access (or

lack thereof) are made to feel welcome, included, and their perspectives acknowledged

and validated. Furthermore, mentors were specifically vetted and selected for

participation based upon previous work in LGBTQ+ mentoring, education, advocacy, or

community engagement and understanding of cultural power dynamics/intersectionality

in regards to the LGBTQ+ experience. Though each mentoring pair determines their own

specific mentorship goals driven by the participant's needs, HUES community

engagement programming is designed to facilitate LGBTQ+ identity development and

resilience, provide psychosocial support, and foster LGBTQ+ community engagement for

participants regardless of their current level of LGBTQ+ identity or acculturation.

Recruitment for HUES took place through social media channels and word-of-mouth

through the following established communities: the ASU Rainbow Coalition and its

associated student organizations; the ASU LGBT Studies Certificate program; the Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA); Barrett, the Honors College and the Barrett LGBTQ+ student organization; the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' Women and Gender Studies program, School for Social Transformation (SST), School for Human Evolution and Social Change (SHESC), and the Department of Counseling Psychology and School of Social Work and Counseling's inQUEERy gender- and sexual-minority research program; the Graduate College's Interdisciplinary Research Colloquium (IRC); ASU Counseling Services; and ASU Housing's residential staff.

These areas provide critical support and engagement or programming to LGBTQ+ students at various points in their identity navigation. ASU Counseling Services and ASU Housing residential staff are often initial engagement points for students questioning or struggling to navigate an emerging LGBTQ+ identity. The LGBTQ+-related academic programs attract students who have or are identifying or building identities as members of the LGBTQ+ community, while student organizations attract students seeking greater community-building, advocacy, and leadership opportunities. To foster initial buy-in and support, ongoing informational meetings with student organization leadership and academic or resource unit administrators, teams and faculty occurred in advance of the 2018-2019 academic year. Though targeted recruitment has been limited, word-of-mouth recruitment and the HUES program's increasing visibility within the university community has spurred growth. HUES was highlighted by the *State Press*, the university's student-run online newspaper, in October of 2018, then again in both the Graduate College's newsletter and an article that trended quickly on *ASU Now*, the institution's news hub, after being nominated for and receiving the Committee for

Campus Inclusion's Catalyst Award, an annual recognition of ASU faculty, staff, students and initiatives promoting inclusion and catalyzing transformation within the institution in November of 2018. Going into the spring semester of its first full year of operation, the HUES participant pool has grown to twenty-one undergraduate and graduate students.

Mentors

HUES mentors are gender and/or sexual minority ASU faculty, staff and graduate students. One graduate student participant in the pilot program returned as a mentor for 2018-2019; as the program matures, the participant-to-mentor pipeline will be increasingly critical to the program's sustainability, and participants with at least one year of HUES experience will be invited to apply as mentors. Mentors for the initial pilot program were recruited from the ASU LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Association, the Committee for Campus Inclusion, and attendance at HUES informational sessions upon demonstration of an understanding not only of the LGBTQ+ experience, but of the ways LGBTQ+ identity interact with and are complicated by intersecting and often competing identities (i.e. spiritual beliefs, cultural worldviews, and socioeconomic status or education level). Announcement of the program launch in the Graduate College's quarterly e-newsletter yielded additional applications for the 2018-2019 full program launch in August 2018, and subsequent press around the program's Catalyst Award win spurred subsequent interest through the fall semester. Until further mentor recruitment can take place, the HUES program is currently operating at capacity, with all twenty-one mentors currently matched. Mentor candidates are admitted into the mentor pool upon

submission and screening of the mentoring application. See Appendix G for sample mentor application.

Researcher Role

The development and launch of HUES has been made possible by my role as program manager of professional development and mentoring initiatives within the ASU Graduate College, where a bulk of my responsibilities include oversight of the Graduate College's two identity-based mentoring communities and development of best practices, trainings, an annual faculty mentoring excellence award program, and workshops. Each of these initiatives fall under my duties in supporting creation of a broader institutional mentoring climate supporting the needs of graduate students university-wide.

Though supporting the psychosocial support and identity development of the university's LGBTQ+ student community is a passion of mine and the reason I've created the HUES program, my role with HUES is limited to an administrative one. All program content, from mentor and participant recruitment to creation of mentor training materials, mentoring agreements, participation guidelines and development of monthly community engagement programming, are my responsibility, as is participant tracking and program assessment. Aside from welcoming mentors and participants to the program, brokering the initial mentoring matches, conducting monthly check-ins with each mentor and offering myself as an ongoing resource to both mentors and participants, my involvement with HUES is strictly behind the scenes.

Because I am member of the LGBTQ+ campus community and therefore share a cultural identity and values with participants in the research study, but my interactions with the study participants are limited, I am strictly what Creswell (2015) terms a participant/observer. The notable exception to this role, of course, is in my interactions with the three study participants who have consented to participate in the monthly interviews that comprise the qualitative data collection component of this mixed-methods study. During the three months in which interviews took place, I was in frequent communication with these three participants, both for the logistics of coordinating interviews and conducting member checks and in order to establish a relationship of trust and familiarity between myself and those participants in the hopes of facilitating more authentic and data-rich interactions during interviews. Over the course of the data collection period, I became an informal secondary mentor and developed friendships with two of these participants, who came to view me more as a peer due to our shared LGBTQ+ and graduate student statuses, and we're continued to meet periodically just to check in – with them as interested in the progress of my research as I have become in their continued persistence and success both within HUES and their academic and professional lives. While the HUES program began as a professional passion of mine, my interactions with these participants throughout the past months have fueled an even stronger personal commitment to the success and longevity of this program.

Data Collection Inventory

Table 1 (below) outlines the data collection instruments used in assessment of the HUES LGBTQ+ mentoring program indicating at which period of program the instrument was administered, the corresponding timeframe, and the type of data collected. An asterisk (*) denotes data collection specifically utilized by the research study.

Table 1. Data Collection Inventory

Instrument	Phase	Time of Year	Data Type
Participant application	Program Intake	Aug 2018	Quant/Qual
Mentoring Agreement	Program Intake	Aug 2018	Qualitative
Personal resilience assessment*	Program Intake	Aug 2018	Quantitative
Interview*	Ongoing	Aug-Dec 2018	Qualitative
Personal resilience assessment*	Semester End	Dec 2018	Quantitative
Mentorship assessment survey	Semester End	Dec 2018	Qualitative

Description of Data Collection Instruments

Participant Application

Upon program entry, all participants completed an application. Including prospective participant age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation/gender identity, and a mentoring need statement, as well as mentor preferences, this profile (1) aids in mentor matching and (2) provides meaningful demographic statistics to ensure appropriate representation within the program. See Appendix H for participant application form.

Mentoring Agreement

All incoming participants are required to complete this form with their mentor at their first meeting. This form outlines the mentoring expectations of participants and serves as a contract between mentor and participant, ensuring that both mentor and participant understand the commitment expected by the other. It also ensures participants understand the expectations of the program more generally, including the expectation to meet with their mentor at least twice per month and for no less than 30 minutes per session. See Appendix I for mentoring agreement.

Personal Resilience Assessment

Adapted from the Modified Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MMSPSS) (Brandon-Friedman & Kim, 2016), the assessment measures LGBTQ+ students' perceived levels of social support in four domains: family, friendships, LGBTQ+ mentors/role models and LGBTQ+ student organizations. HUES participants assessed sixteen statements on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Very Strongly Disagree; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Mildly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 5=Mildly Agree; 6=Strongly Agree; 7=Very Strongly Agree). This assessment is conducted both upon program entry and at the conclusion of each semester. See Appendix J for personal resilience assessment.

Community Engagement Programming

In addition to one-to-one mentoring sessions, participants will be encouraged to attend monthly community engagement events. These events are workshops and panel

discussions designed to examine elements of the LGBTQ+ experience and challenges, bolster a sense of community and normalcy, and provide participants with the tools to identify, understand, and build resilience. While attendance by HUES participants is optional, attendance numbers at these events will be utilized in assessment of the impact and reach of the HUES programming, and participants are encouraged to discuss insights from these programs in their mentoring conversations.

Interviews

Three HUES program participants were asked to participate in monthly interviews (at the end of September, October, and November) to share and discuss their mentoring experiences, identity breakthroughs, and challenges, for a total of three interviews per participant. Each interview lasted approximately 60-70 minutes, and was audiorecorded and later transcribed. In accordance with grounded theory (Saldana, 2016), emergent themes from each round of interviews influenced lines of questioning in subsequent sessions. Interviews included both scripted questions allowing for standardization across interviews and ensuring all participants addressed the same general topic areas, and unscripted follow-up questions that prompted deeper elaboration upon participants' answers and allowed tailoring of the interviews to address each participants' experiences. Questions centered generally around issues of identity salience, resilience-building, LGBTQ+ cultural capital accrual/efficacy, and community engagement. First interviews asked participants to recount their own personal histories, particularly as relevant to the formation of their LGBTQ+ identities. Final interviews took a more holistic,

retrospective tone and asked participants to reflect upon the larger experience and lessons learned by participation in the HUES program.

Procedures

Data collection for the HUES study consisted of three primary components: quantitative pre- and post-intervention personal resilience assessments for all HUES participants and the transcribed interviews throughout the semester of three selected participants. Initial data collection commenced in August of 2018 as participants began completing the pre-intervention personal resilience assessments upon program entry. Participants who had been a part of the 2017-2018 pilot, in which no inventory was required, were also asked to complete it at this time. Meanwhile, the three participants selected to take part in interviews were scheduled for interviews beginning at the end of September, with a second interview in late October and a final one in the first week of December. At the conclusion of the fall semester, all HUES participants were asked to complete the post-intervention personal resilience assessment. A brief programmatic timeline follows:

Table 2. Research Study Timeframe and Milestones

Timeframe	Study Milestone
April-July	Mentor recruitment
July-August	Mentor selection and training
July-August	Participant recruitment
Mid August	Mentor/participant matching
Mid August	1-1 mentoring begins
Mid August	Personal resilience assessment (pre-assessment)
September	Community engagement events begin

September-November	Monthly interviews
Early December	Personal resilience assessment (post-assessment)

Recruitment and Matching

Mentor recruitment and training occurred in summer. Mentors were provided training in best mentoring practices and provided resources in administration of the personal resilience assessment; although an overview of student development theory was provided in context of the mentor's anticipated role and additional resources were suggested, in-depth theoretical training was not provided. Participant recruitment occurred simultaneously to mentor recruitment and training, with initial matching completed by mid-August. However, HUES mentor and participant applications continued to be accepted on an ongoing basis, with matches made as new participants request mentors.

To join HUES, prospective mentors and participants completed mentor/mentee application profiles. These profiles included basic demographic data (sexual/gender identity and orientation, age), academic information (academic level and year, general area of study for students, academic or career area for faculty and staff), and matching preferences (age range, gender/sexual orientation preference, academic area). Mentor profiles included short narratives explaining their motivations in becoming a mentor, their previous mentoring experience, and a brief personal statement. On their applications, participants were asked to share the reasons they were seeking mentorship and what their general mentorship goals were. These applications, submitted through a Google form, populated into mentor and mentee applicant matching spreadsheets. Upon applying, the HUES program manager invited prospective mentors and participants to a

short interview to discuss the goals and expectations of the program and research project, as well as to help the program manager determine the strongest mentoring match.

Upon completion of participant intake interviews, most participants were matched with a mentor within one week. Mentor and mentee were then electronically introduced and provided with the next steps in finalizing their mentoring relationship. At this time, mentor and mentee received tips and best practices for initiating and maintaining a mentoring relationship (Appendix K), a copy of the mentoring agreement and mentoring goals worksheets (Appendix L), and mentees were provided with information to access and complete the personal resilience inventory. For sample program introduction emails, see Appendices M and N. Mentor and participant were asked to meet within one week's time, have an initial meeting, complete the mentoring goals worksheet, and sign and return the mentoring contract. This meeting is a 'trial' session; if either mentor or participant feels the match is not an appropriate fit to their mentoring goals, they may decline the match, and the program manager would reach out to initiate a new mentoring match. However, they are cautioned that they may only be rematched once per semester. If both mentor and participant agree that the match is a strong one, they then complete the mentoring goals worksheet and sign and return the mentoring contract to the program manager. Once completed, the mentoring agreement and personal resilience assessment are filed with the program manager.

One-to-one Mentoring and Community Engagement Events

Initial meetings are dedicated to one-to-one mentoring, providing a minimally-structured mentoring environment in which meetings are driven by goals articulated in the mentoring agreement and insights derived from the personal resilience assessment.

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One-to-one, relatively unstructured meetings foster connection and trust between mentor

and participant and facilitate exploration of individual identity, goal-setting and resource

needs.

Mentors and participant are encouraged to supplement one-on-one meetings with

community-building and identity-development opportunities. These community

engagement programs (themed mentor-facilitated discussions on identity, shared

challenges in LGBTQ+ identity navigation, panel discussions on LGBTQ+ issues with

members of LGBTQ+ Faculty/Staff Association, Counseling Services, university

wellness initiatives and other community partners) are critical to advancing identity

salience and are offered monthly throughout the academic year. These sessions encourage

broader conversations around LGBTQ+ cultural competencies, facilitating deeper

exploration of LGBTQ+ identity and community through such topics as understanding

identity intersections and intersectionality, the politics of LGBTQ+ identity and

community-building, and resilience. For the 2018-2019 HUES program schedule, see

Appendix O.

Data Analysis

This study follows a participatory action research (PAR) paradigm. Problem- and

solution-driven, it blurs the boundaries of researcher and participant and necessitates a

constant interaction between researcher and participant. As Mertler and Charles (2011)

state:

> [A]ction research deals with your problems, not someone else's. [It] is very
> timely; it can start now—or whenever you are ready—and provides immediate
> results…action research provides educators with opportunities to better
> understand, and therefore improve, their educational practices. [A]s a process,

action research can also promote the building of stronger relationships among colleagues with whom we work. Finally, and possibly most importantly, action research provides educators with alternative ways of viewing and approaching educational questions and problems with new ways of examining our own educational practices (pp. 339-340)

Due to its PAR framework, the study relies upon the voluntary participation of HUES students not only through structured interviews, but in participation in the meaning-making of the data gleaned. With a purpose of creating, implementing, and evaluating programming designed to bring about tangible outcomes that are "meaningful and have immediate and direct application" (Mertler, 2014, p. 4), a PAR approach is the most effective way of ensuring student buy-in and enthusiasm for the project. A PAR framework in which interview participants are allowed to review not only the interview transcripts but also the researcher's insights from those transcripts (through examination of code books and, in this case, advanced review of human interest news articles submitted to various university outlets promoting the early findings of the research) ensures that the participant voice is always at the forefront of the research findings.

The HUES project employed a sequential, qualitative – quantitative mixed methods approach. The nine personal interviews were the driving heart of the research, providing a rich examination of the lives and both individual and shared experiences of participants. Because this study is nonexperimental and exploratory, and little research has been conducted on the connections between LGBTQ+ identity and cultural development, resiliency and college persistence/success, a grounded theory approach in which qualitative data is transcribed, then coded and analyzed to discover emergent themes and similarities/dissimilarities in experiences between participants is most appropriate. Qualitative data determined axial coding categories, determined lines of

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inquiry for subsequent interviews, and corroborated emerging themes. Meanwhile, quantitative primary source data (personal resilience assessment pre- and post-intervention) provided a measurable baseline for all students' levels of social support around their LGBTQ+ identities – not just those of the interview participants – at the beginning and end of the research study. Upon comparison at the end of the study, this quantitative data confirmed the emergent themes from the qualitative data could be generalized to the larger HUES participant population, and while the specific experiences and stories of the interview participants were unique, their experiences were mirrored by the larger group (Ivanova, 2015, p. 158).

Theoretical sampling and a constant-comparative method allowed data collected throughout the study to expose and clarify patterns and themes, while coding qualitative data at each stage of collection allowed emerging themes to direct further lines of inquiry until saturation had been reached (Charmaz, 2006). An inductive coding approach allowed "extensive and varied raw text data" from interview transcripts to be condensed into a brief summary to "establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings" and "develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 1). HyperResearch electronic coding software was used to "store, manage and reconfigure data for analytical reflection" (Saldana, 2016, p. 22), rendering the maintenance of a separate codebook unnecessary.

Coding Strategies for Qualitative Data

Interviews were analyzed consistent to grounded theory, as suited to concurrent evaluation of multiple data types and sources (Saldana, 2016). Initial descriptive open coding and concurrent jotting/memoing allowed exploration of perceptions, values, and

experiences, "providing ideas for analytical consideration while the study progresses" (p. 17). As interview participants' stories unfolded, constant-comparative examination allowed identification of phenomena, local concepts, principles, or process features across participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), informing further data collection through increasingly focused/intentional rounds of subsequent inquiry.

As data was examined and the collective participant experiences compared, conceptualized and categorized (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), axial coding for emergent similarities or differences took place. This is a vital step in understanding the properties and dimensions of coding categories, how they interact and relate to each other, and in constructing a working theory, (Saldana, 2016). Initial categorical sorting was driven by the six constructs of D'Augelli's LGBTQ+ identity development model – i.e. 'entering an LGBTQ+ community', 'becoming an LGBTQ+ offspring – and themes related to resilience. This facilitated the emergence of meta-meaning between individual/collective narratives and drove substantive code development; identification of themes and trends; exploration of categories, subcategories and the way they correlated to one another; and began a process of reducing and sorting of codes into larger conceptual categories for theory development (Saldana, 2016). "When the major categories are compared," notes Saldana (2016, p. 11), "you begin to transcend the 'reality' of your data and progress toward the thematic, conceptual, and theoretical."

Emergent substantive codes were examined to identify theoretical codes, conceptualizing "how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into theory (Glaser, 1978, p. 55). Finally, theoretical coding across all interview transcripts facilitated a weaving together of the various substantive codes and a

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beautiful "fractured story" (Glaser, 1978, p.72) "into an organized whole theory" (Glaser, 1978 p. 74).

Data validation. Theoretical sampling is considered more robust than other forms of sampling, as it produces codes and themes in quantifiable instances for corroboration by other researchers, is analytically induced, and provides a structure to data collection and analysis processes missing in other qualitative sampling methods, (Dudovskiy, 2018). The constant comparison between individual interview session transcripts and triangulation to pre- and post-test personal resilient assessment data ensured emergent themes were valid and reflective of participants' experiences, as reinforced in monthly interviews. Sharing axial and emerging theoretical codes with interview participants throughout the process as a form of member check further validated data.

Coding timelines for qualitative data

As grounded theory approach calls for constant comparison of theory-driving data, data collection and analysis was iterative and simultaneous, with ongoing data collection, as illustrated in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Data Collection Protocol Implementation

Instrument	Frequency	Sample	Number
Personal resilience assessment	Pre/post intervention	All	2x
Participant interviews	Monthly	Purposeful sampling	3x/month

Assessment of Qualitative Data

The first round of research interviews at the end of September provided emergent "first impressions" (Saldana, 2016, p.17), informing lines of deeper inquiry at the end of November and December. Interviews were conducted and recorded with three

participants per month, transcribed, open and axial coded to provide an analytical

framework from which to approach guiding questions for the next round of interviews.

The richer description provided in subsequent interviews either confirmed/corroborated

or rejected emerging impressions from previous interviews and spurred development of

subsequent axial codes. These codes focused on identification and analysis of potential

resilience factors and their potential correlations to identity development, program

affiliation/community engagement and institutional persistence. As they emerged,

thematic codes were member-checked with interview participants. Finally, reconciliation

with data from the personal resilience assessment pre-and post-tests allowed qualitative

data to be triangulated to inform a robust final theory.

Assessment of quantitative data

      In addition to monthly interviews with three HUES program participants, data

was collected by way of the pre- and post-participation scores on the HUES personal

resilience inventory, completed in August and December by all HUES mentees. In this

self-assessment, participants rated their level of agreement to sixteen statements

categorized into four themes: perceived level of support from an LGBTQ+ mentor or role

model, family, peers or friends, and an LGBTQ+ group or community. Statements were

assessed on a seven-point scale ('1' = Very Strongly Disagree, '4' = Neutral, and '7' =

Very Strongly Agree). 11 participants completed and submitted the pre-intervention

assessment; five submitted the post-intervention assessment.

      The personal resilience assessment pre- and post-intervention median scores and

standard deviations were organized and analyzed via SPSS 24. Because differing

numbers of participants completed the pre-intervention assessment and post-inventory

assessment, nonparametric t-testing (Wilcoxon signed-rank testing) was utilized to determine statistical significance of differences in mean values across pre/post scores. Median values from the four constructs and Likert-scaled statements of the personal resilience assessment pre- and post-tests provided a baseline for comparison/triangulation against qualitative data drawn from interviews, adding context and meaning.

Once the HUES study launched, data from all participant profiles and mentoring expectation forms were reviewed and evaluated to create a participant demographic snapshot (age, sexual identity, gender identity, academic level). The open-ended application statement portions of the participant profile and goals/objectives from the mentoring expectation form were thematically coded and composited to capture (1) the general reasons participants have joined the program and (2) specific goals and objectives in joining an LGBTQ+ mentoring program.

Summary of Data Analysis

Table 4 (below) lists all data collection protocols, corresponding data types and place in the mixed methods qualitative-quantitative sequence. Personal interviews, with their focus on experiences and perceptions during and post-intervention, correspond to RQ#1 ("*What does the process of LGBTQ+ identity construction look like for gender- and sexual-minority students, including students from non-dominant cultural backgrounds for whom LGBTQ+ identity is one of multiple competing identities, and how does mentorship influence the perceived identities of these students?* "). HUES participant profiles, mentoring agreements, and pre- and post-intervention personal resilience assessments and align with RQ#2 ("*How does participation in an LGBTQ+ mentoring program influence participants' perceptions of development of resilience-*

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building capacity?") and provide data regarding participants' needs and reasons for

entering the HUES program. Mentoring agreement (participant development plan) also

provides data addressing RQ#2 ("*How does participation in an LGBTQ+ mentoring*

program influence participants' perceptions of development of resilience-building

capacity?).

Table 4. Data and Corresponding Research Question(s)

Instrument	Data Type	Research Question
Interview	Qualitative	RQ1
Personal resilience assessment	Quantitative	RQ2

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Participant Introductions

A total of nine interviews were conducted with three HUES participants throughout September, October and November, culminating in over twelve hours and ninety pages of transcribed data. Over the course of these months, a rich, complex metanarrative of challenges and success emerged. Participants' history of engagement with HUES varied, ranging from less than one semester to over a full year. All were graduate students, and time at ASU and in Arizona ranged from one year to over three years. All joined HUES in order to gain greater support in navigating their sexual and/or gender identities (particularly around the coming out process) and to find membership within a larger LGBTQ+ community.

It is important to note that two interview participants were international students originally from China; and that their explorations of LGBTQ+ cultural competency, personal identity and community membership were shaped by the values and norms of these identities. While there is an emerging body of research literature focused around LGBTQ+ acceptance in non-Western societies where non-heterosexual identities are stigmatized or severely marginalized, including China (see Cao, Wang & Gao, 2010; Hu & Wang, 2013; Xie & Peng, 2018), it remains small. The inclusion of these students in the HUES research study afforded an opportunity to examine the confluence of personal and cultural identity in the negotiation and management of an LGBTQ+ identity. It is important to recognize that their experiences, while wholly similar to those of the third

(domestic) student, demonstrate the importance of ingrained sociocultural attitudes in LGBTQ+ identity construction.

Participant 1: Pat

The first interview participant, who chose to go by the name of Pat for the purposes of this study, identifies as female-bodied but gender-nonbinary, and for the purposes of this study will be identified by their preferred *they/them/their* pronouns. They are 23 years of age, Caucasian, and currently enrolled in a master's degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies, though they originally came to ASU for an advanced degree in Mathematics before changing programs. The newest HUES recruit of the three interview participants, Pat joined HUES August 2018, and had only been matched and working with their mentor for two weeks at the time of the first interview. A female-identifying queer graduate student at ASU whose research interests involve the use of art in creation of therapeutic safe spaces for identity exploration and development, Pat's mentor, at 27, has been involved with both the university and larger local communities for over five years, and is currently in a long-term relationship with a gender-conforming partner. Through her relationship experience and her more extensive involvement with and knowledge of the local queer communities, she is both a sounding board for Pat as they explore their identity and interpersonal relationships and a much-needed connection to the queer community Pat has sought since arriving in Arizona.

Coming out as gender nonbinary is the latest development in Pat's protracted journey of identity discovery. Pat describes their sexual identity as evolving, having first experienced a same-sex relationship and subsequently identifying as bisexual in high school. Through college, they identified sexually as a lesbian before settling on

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queer/asexual/nonromantic. Of the three interview participants, Pat's journey most reflects the nuances and complicated trajectories of sexual and gender identity navigation.

Participant 2: Neil

The second interview participant, who uses the pseudonym of Neil, is a cisgender gay male, age 28. Neil is originally from China, where he grew up in a remote rural province before moving to Shanghai for college and the United States for graduate school. Neil's traditional rural background, where education around LGBTQ+ issues lags behind that found in more progressive Chinese urban hubs and traditional, collectivist socialist values and Confucian-inspired filial piety still have a strong societal hold (Cao, Wang, & Gao, 2010; Hu & Wang, 2013), strongly shaped his earliest navigation of his LGBTQ+ identity. He has been in the United States since 2011, starting doctoral programs at small research institutions in New York state and Boston. Two years ago, he followed his research advisor to ASU, where he completed his doctoral degree in Computer Science in December. Taking part in HUES since its pilot in Fall 2017, Neil and his mentor, an instructor with eight years' experience at ASU, have had the longest-running match in the program. Although Neil and his mentor come from very different cultural backgrounds, they bonded quickly over key similarities, being the same age and both coming from deeply conservative environments. Like Neil, his mentor struggled for a long time to accept and reconcile his sexuality; having graduated from high school and college early, he excelled academically but struggled socially, never feeling he fit in. Now secure in his identity as a gay male and happily partnered, Neil's mentor has been a strong role model and positive influence in Neil's life.

Participant 3: Pea

The third interview participant for the HUES study is a cisgender lesbian female, age 25, and a doctoral student in Biological and Health Systems Engineering. For the purpose of this study, she selected the pseudonym of Pea. After completing her undergraduate coursework in China, she received her Master's degree at a large New England public university before coming to ASU for doctorate coursework. Pea joined HUES at the end of Spring 2018, and had been paired and meeting with her mentor for four months at the time of her first interview for this research project. Like Neil, Pea's Chinese culture heavily influenced the development of her LGBTQ+ identity, and she continues working to reconcile her personal identity with the cultural expectations of her heritage. Her mentor, age 30, is a new faculty member at ASU; although he is able to guide her in matters of academic career navigation, their mentorship is primarily aligned toward navigation of Pea's LGBTQ+ identity, and their relationship is more one of peers than a traditional faculty-student dynamic. As a gay male in Engineering, he implicitly understands both the difficulties that LGBTQ+ students often experience in Pea's traditionally very heterocentric academic environment and the challenges in maintaining a work-life balance in the advanced STEM fields. He has been an asset to her not only in navigating the academic challenges of her chosen area of study, but provided encouragement and support in navigating its social currents, too. Relatively new to Arizona, Pea's mentor is active in both university and local LGBTQ+ communities, and is instrumental in pushing Pea to develop her own LGBTQ+ social networks outside the university.

<center>**Personal Identity History**</center>

While all joined HUES in search of greater LGBTQ+ community engagement, these three students varied in their level of identity development, expression, and comfort. Coming into the HUES program, Pat specifically sought greater connection with an LGBTQ+ community, having lost a significant support system in leaving their previous institution and feeling disconnected, socially, in their new one. Neil sought mentorship for help navigating his sexual identity and disclosure within his familial, social and academic networks, particularly given his additional cultural minority status as a Chinese student navigating American cultural norms and expectations. Secondary motivations for him were entry into an LGBTQ+ community and learning to navigate intimate relationships as a member of that community. Pea, while comfortable with her sexuality and having found acceptance with her peers within her academic program, joined HUES seeking support in integrating her social, academic and sexual identity group memberships and establishing greater connection within an LGBTQ+ community. Although more integrated than Neil into an American cultural paradigm, Pea, too, recognized that her Chinese social conventions were sometimes a barrier to feeling as if she fit in.

Personal History: Pat's Story

Having first identified their non-heterosexual identity in high school, Pat had the greatest degree of sexual and gender identity development of the three research study participants coming into the HUES program. Due to largely positive initial coming-out experiences, Pat demonstrated an advanced level of self-acceptance, but navigating a new social environment at ASU has presented new challenges specifically around identity

disclosure. They noted during their first interview: "I think I'm mostly pretty good with who I am and where I am. My problem is just in expressing that to others so they know who I am, too." Previous to arriving at ASU and subsequently joining HUES, Pat had been out for a number of years. Of their initial disclosure, they say:

> The very first time I ever tried to, like, come out or anything was in high school, when I came out to a few friends as bisexual. I was like 'okay, this is a thing that I'm going to say now'…I mean, getting there was a little weird. So like I realized I had a crush on a girl and I was thinking of asking her to prom. So I told two or three people and they were like 'oh yeah, cool, whatever,' and so the first time [coming out] was like, 'eh, whatever.' Not a big deal.

The social acceptance they found in coming out reaffirmed Pat's own early acceptance of their identities. "It didn't freak me out," they said,

> I think I always expected it. Even as a kid, I didn't know the words for it but I was like 'I wouldn't mind dating girls.' Like…I wouldn't mind hanging out with girls the way girls are supposed to like hanging out with boys. So it was never weird, because I always suspected I liked girls.

"When I was really little," they laughed, "I thought I was a boy." Although they grew up in a fairly conservative part of Virginia, Pat did not face discrimination in their community when they began opening up about their sexual orientation. Nonetheless, although Pat found acceptance of their emerging identity, finding peers or community members who understood the complexities of their identity was initially challenging:

> Most of the people I knew were white and straight and cisgender and didn't know anything about LGBTQ stuff and were like 'I mean, I don't know anything about it, but if someone I knew was [gay], I guess I'd be fine with it. And then when they [friends or members of the community] knew, they were like 'Oh my god, let's be friends!' So a lot of people were like that.

While the decision to initially come out was relatively easy, Pat acknowledges that their early identity development was hampered by the lack of a strong LGBTQ+ community. While the decision to come out as bisexual, then lesbian, was something experiential,

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navigating their emerging gender identity was a more philosophical process that, at the time, seemed overwhelming. Though they were not entirely comfortable with their female gender, a lack of general education around alternative genders meant Pat did not have the words to express what they were internalizing at the time.

It wasn't until they were in college that Pat found that community. In high school, they declared 'I am this'—in college, they began to explore what it meant to be 'this,' exploring how gender and sexuality interplayed and eventually revisiting the sense of gender confusion they experienced during their early childhood. Pat attended a small liberal arts college with a high percentage of LGBTQ+ students, and that proved to be a milestone in their identity development. "Over half the population that attended that school is some sort of queer. Everyone that goes there ends up gay," they laughed.

> It was a very diverse community. There were all sorts of identities and we were all pretty cool with everything. Everyone was just 'yeah, that's great' and we'll just keep on going being ourselves. There were so many people we could talk to about all sorts of things. They were like 'you don't actually have to have a box. It's helpful for other people if you do, but that doesn't really matter.'

In that environment, Pat flourished. "[When I came out as bisexual] that was before I knew how many boxes there were, so I [had] said 'I'll choose the bisexual box for now,'" they recounted.

> But then in undergrad there was so much more to learn…it was a very different environment from where I grew up, so I learned about a lot of different identities and started playing around with other ones. That's when I first started questioning gender identities and realized there were sexual identities beyond gay, straight, and bisexual, and started trying to figure out which ones might work for me.

Although not socially outgoing, Pat quickly found themself immersed in the school's queer community, where discussions of sexuality and gender identity were the norm. Where previously Pat did not have the queer social currency to describe their emerging

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identities, Pat clearly remembered the moment they first consciously began exploring the notion of gender in college:

> I was hanging out with a friend and [they] had been working on gender-queer transitioning. I was like 'oh, hey! You're right, and these are things that apply to me, too.' I had words for it now. It was between second and third sexuality and I was like 'you know, I don't like being a girl, I've never been comfortable with being a girl.' Like I said, when I was really little I thought I was a boy, but the idea of being a boy was never right for me…so the idea of gender never felt right. And then one day, I realized 'oh, there are words for that.'

As they continued exploring gender representation, Pat started dating a genderqueer peer. "That was when I started [really] thinking about other gender identities," they said. "And I was also taking a gender theory class, so it was all very aligned, happening at the same time." The convergence of their personal and academic lives, both studying and experimenting with gender and sexuality, were a liberating period during which Pat fully came into their own identity for the first time. Everything "clicked" into place.

It's only more recently that Pat's LGBTQ+ self-concept has wavered. Relocating to Arizona for graduate school, Pat found themself isolated in a largely cisnormative culture for the first time since leaving for college five year previously. New to the institution and currently in an online degree program, Pat has a very limited LGBTQ+ network. "I came to grad school last fall," they explained. "I was struggling being in [an academic] program that I didn't really enjoy, so I was looking for something to connect to the school." The transition was difficult, and shortly before entering HUES, Pat left their original academic program:

> I came in and didn't know anyone and didn't have any friends, and everybody else knew everyone [in their small department]. I was looking for anything to find someone to connect to, because that was hard. Everybody else in my classes was a dude and I'm like, 'I'm already in the minority by being female-bodied', and that would just make it [a sense of isolation] more pronounced.

After looking for a degree program that aligned with their career interests but provided a social environment they felt would be more inclusive, Pat settled into their current area of study. This academic program has a more diverse cohort, but it came with its own compromises: although Pat feels a greater affinity and alignment in social causes with their current peers, being in an online program means Pat still does not get the opportunity to engage socially in person with classmates. "I don't hang out a lot," they laughed:

> I feel like I could be friends with a lot of the people in my classes now, but I've only met a couple of them. Most of the people in my classes are in other states, so it's hard to find people you both get along with and that you can also hang out with in person.

Describing themself as shy and socially timid, Pat explains that at their previous institution, the existence of a robust LGBTQ+ community made finding commonality easy, even if they were not particularly outgoing. "The reason I made so many friends in undergrad was because I had two [LGBTQ+] friends and they had [LGBTQ+] friends," Pat explained. At ASU, Pat has difficulty in seeking out these communities. They live nearly twenty miles from campus, and as is the case for many graduate students, the university is not the social hub for Pat that it was at their undergraduate institution, where they lived on campus. Living in a socially conservative suburb, detached from the more liberal social environment of a college campus, Pat has to make a greater effort to connect socially. "The only queer people I know are my mentor and like two other people. I met one of them on Tinder and the other one is their fiancée," they noted. Because of their significantly reduced contact with a larger LGBTQ+ community, Pat finds themself compartmentalizing their identities. While their sexual and gender

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identities were a commonality and core component of relationships they formed at their

undergraduate institution, they now tend to hide what had once been a significant

component of their salient identity:

> So I think they [their social, sexual and gender identities] were a lot more [integrated] when I was an undergrad…they were one thing. But when I came here they became a lot more separated, because there's like other stuff going on. Like, I have to adult and part of adulting is having a job, and here is a place you can be discriminated against because of queer identity factors. It's more compartmentalized now.

To help finance their education, Pat recently took a job as a high school mathematics

teacher. Though they enjoy their work and feel their immediate coworkers and

administration "are cool", Pat avoids socializing with their fellow teachers for fear in

becoming friends, their identity would eventually come up – something they can legally

be fired for in Arizona.

Adding to Pat's struggles is a new relationship that has challenged their

previously existing sexuality and gender identity. For the first time since declaring

themself a lesbian in college, Pat is dating a male – and this has been a source of anxiety

and identity confusion:

> Because every time you think you know all the boxes [of sexuality and gender expression], you find out there's more you didn't know about. When I started to date a guy [in graduate school], it was very difficult internally. Like 'what am I doing? Do I even like this person?' All of this stuff…it's like still sort of weird sometimes. It was very weird because I was like 'I don't know if I can do this.' I don't like boys. It was this person, it was weird and trying to reconcile the phrase 'I don't like boys' with liking this person who happens to be a boy…that was and still is very difficult and confusing.

Without an existing LGBTQ+ social network, Pat has trouble finding a community with

whom to process this latest wrinkle in their identity at ASU.

As cisgender, heterosexual male, Pat's partner is unable to provide the support or identity navigation resources that Pat needs – or even understand the fundamental identity confusion their relationship causes for Pat. Although Pat's partner knows they identify as queer and nonbinary, "he has different relationship experiences from mine, so he doesn't understand all the nuances of dating someone queer" Pat says:

> I'm still working on how to express some of these things, so with my partner it's been a challenge trying to figure out how to explain it in a way that's understood and making sure it all comes through clearly. Sometimes, I feel like we're making progress, but there are times there's still that lack of understanding that comes from never having dated a queer person.

Pat's partner's lack of familiarity with and ability to fully embrace and support their identity is challenging both in terms of Pat's identity self-concept and their relationship. "I think he tries," they explain, "but he struggles a lot with the language of it because I use they/them pronouns and there's a lot of those times where he's never had to use that before." As a result, Pat faces frequent, though unintentional, microaggressions from both their partner and mutual friends:

> There was one really weird experience I had [recently]. We went to the state fair and met up with one of [their partner's] coworkers there, and like because he [their partner] doesn't know how to talk about it, he just defaults back to what he'd been like in past relationships…so he was married before, so he was used to talking about 'the wife' and he'd go to say that and be like 'oh, no, we're not married'. And like, insert 'girl' instead of 'wife'.

Being unsure how to navigate the dynamics of their sexuality and gender identity in terms of the relationship, Pat compartmentalizes their identities when they are with their partner. For instance, though the two of them have discussed Pat's nonbinary identity and what it means in terms of their relationship dynamic, Pat worries that he does not understand their identity beyond a superficial level. From his perspective, the relationship

is largely a heteronormative one save for the use of different gender pronouns, and sexuality and gender roles are largely fixed. For Pat, though, the interplay between sexuality and gender identity – and specifically the gendered expression of sexuality – are far more nuanced.

Being female-bodied and in a relationship with a cisgender, straight male constantly problematizes coming out to new people, too. When the two of them are together, people automatically assume them to be a cisgender, heterosexual couple. "I keep thinking that I should [explain their relationship dynamic], and then not doing it…" Pat explains. Pat expresses frustration at having to correct assumptions or 'teach' people what it means to be nonbinary or explain their relationship dynamics; this limits the degree that they want to share the personal details of their life with others. This is a sharp contrast to their undergraduate years, when the nuances of identity and sexuality were significantly easier to explain; here, they find few people understand their gender identity. Being the only nonbinary person in the room at any given time burdens Pat with a sense of responsibility:

> It's like 'do I really want to explain why I want these pronouns or what this person means if this person doesn't know [about nonbinary genders]?' On the one hand, yes, I can tell you about my experiences of this, but there are other experiences and I know you're capable of using the internet…it's just like…weird…that all of the responsibility has to fall on one person [to educate others].

Most of the people Pat comes out to now are people who "already know things about" being nonbinary, they say.

> People I come out to will just be 'hey, just checking in on you. Are these still the pronouns you are using? Where are your identities at right now?' And it's easiest to just go 'well, here's my identity update' or I'll meet someone who knows

something [about gender expression] and they'll be like 'hey, what are your pronouns?' and I'll be 'I'm this'.

The prevailing conservative sociopolitical values of the area are a constant factor in Pat's life and decisions to come out, too. Attending an institution with such a strongly LGBTQ+ friendly culture meant Pat never feared coming out to people. Since moving to Arizona, though, they are far more reluctant to disclose their identity:

> I'll be like 'I don't know enough about them to know where they'll fall on the spectrum of reactions'. Like if I tell this person 'hey, these are my pronouns,' will they be 'hey, okay,' or will they be like 'why, blah, blah, blah?' So a lot of the concerns are around figuring out where they fall on that, how much they would know.

The decision to come out now carries far greater consequence, they say. "It's a bit overwhelming," they explain.

Personal History: Neil's Story

Of the three participants in the research study, Neil demonstrated the least integrated LGBTQ+ identity when he first joined the HUES project. Growing up in rural China with little exposure to an LGBTQ+ community or culture, Neil had difficulty reconciling his sexual identity with Chinese societal expectation or the traditional views of masculinity associated with his culture (see Slootmaeckers & Lievens, 2014). He accepts his sexual orientation, but still has trouble embracing it. He has had a particularly difficult time coming to terms with what being gay means in terms of his larger identity, and struggles to let go of heteronormative attitudes and pervasive stereotypes about gay men and the LGBTQ+ community common to his cultural upbringing. Without acculturation into a larger LGBTQ+ group identity, he distanced himself from what he considered "feminine" gay culture or behavior. Up until recently, he took pride in not

fitting gay stereotypes. In his first interview, he said he did not want his sexual

orientation to define his identity:

> None of my culture or values are different [from heterosexual peers]. In fact, when I told some of my closest male friends, they were quite surprised. They never expected me to be gay because I am like them…because my actions, my behavior is very like my friends [heteronormative]. I think gays can be more like the straight people.

Only out to one family member back in China, Neil's exposure to other gay men was

largely limited to online chatrooms, forums, and dating apps – something that coming to

the United State for graduate study did not change. When he joined HUES, Neil had only

come out to several of his closest friends.

Though he is learning to embrace his sexual identity and expresses an eagerness

to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community, Neil's formative years were frustrating;

whereas in Western society, between 6% and 10% of society identity as LGBTQ+, that

rate is estimated to be closer to 2% to 4% in China (Cao, Wang & Gao, 2010). A lack of

LGBTQ+ peers, in combination with a societal historical predisposition to marginalizing

or ignoring LGBTQ+ issues (Hu & Wang, 2013), meant that he had nobody with whom

to share his feelings of difference and confusion. "Back home, in middle school or high

school," he recounts,

> What confused me was that I liked or loved the girl who was sitting next to me in seventh grade, but after that I never loved a girl again. I also knew I loved to look at very handsome boys in high school…but we were in a very small town and [I didn't] have access to that [exposure to LGBTQ+ communities]. It was a frustrating thing. Because I liked a girl but then suddenly I had no interest in girls. [I wondered] why did I suddenly have an interest in boys, in guys? That's very frustrating: why? What happened to me? To these are the question marks in my head. They're still in my head.

In traditional Chinese culture, he explains:

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People didn't really talk about that…it's like the elephant in the room. They must know that men love men, but they never talk about it…the majority of people [in China] won't take it seriously or don't want to acknowledge it. That's what I would say is a violence from the majority.

Neil experienced acute distress, wondering why he couldn't be more like his peers.

You feel so isolated, right, in terms of identity. You feel you are the outsider...you are so different from others. You wonder if there is something wrong with you, you must have some questions of this nature [without anyone to verify you are not alone in your identity]. You don't dare to ask others, right? You don't dare.

Even now, talking about the isolation and confusion he felt growing up different is a difficult and emotional topic for Neil, and his recollection of the time – and of the Chinese culture of which this was a product – is tinged with resentment.

Like Pat, Neil first found opportunities to explore his identity in college. For college, he moved to Shanghai, one of China's largest and most metropolitan centers. "After getting to college, I started looking for people like me," he explained. But even though Shanghai is relatively cosmopolitan, he still found few openly or visibly gay peers:

I got to know some other gay people, but I think they are also very closed [closeted]. They do not want to be open to their straight friends. Not many people come out in China.

Coming out to his heterosexual peers to process his orientation and identity was out of the question, so he turned to the internet, where he finally began finding the resources and connection he was looking for:

I was mainly looking for resources online. I would search 'gay' or something like that, and read those articles about gays. Doing that, you know there are also a group of people who look like you and are like you. You discover that there is a forum out there and that people – gay people – are looking for friends, and something like that. So you just chat with them.

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Even then, Neil didn't meet up with other gay men in public or come out to peers. "I [didn't] want others to find out that I'm a gay," he explained. "That I'm different from them." Even among his closest friends (generally other Chinese students, even once in the United States), his sexuality was a subject he was unwilling to discuss. As a result, Neil became accustomed to maintaining strict boundaries between his personal and academic identities. "I still feel like my professional identity is more central than my gay identity," he noted in an early interview. "I think we are more defined by the contributions that we have done, and that is more relevant to life than [a] gay identity."

It wasn't until arriving at ASU that Neil started slowly coming out to peers. The loneliness of not having anyone to confide in was becoming problematic for him, as it was increasing difficult to maintain his compartmentalized identities. A landmark moment for Neil was the day he finally found the courage – bolstered by frustration – to a friend:

> The first time, the very first time was a female student in my lab. I was super nervous, even shaking. I didn't know how to tell her. I [had fallen] in love with a straight guy and could not focus on my work. He sits very close to my office, and I got interrupted and just can't focus [anymore]. I [was] struggling, and really wanted to talk. I felt safe talking to her.

When she reassured him that he had her support, then surprised Neil by confiding her own bisexuality, he felt encouraged to open up to other close friends. Eventually, he even confessed his feelings to the friend he had developed romantic feelings for. Looking back, Neil refers to this as a monumental milestone: "I decided to do something. So I told him, first of all, that I am gay, and that I like him and that I know there is no way we can be together." In another surprise, his disclosure was met with empathy, not rejection: "he told me a personal story of telling another girl that he liked the girl and she rejected him,"

Neil marveled. In reassuring Neil that his friendship wasn't going to be rejected, his labmate showed a level of support Neil did not anticipate.

The encouragement Neil received from his peers upon coming out kindled a new determination to embrace his sexuality. Shortly thereafter, he joined HUES and began opening up about his sexuality to more of his closest peers. "I'm becoming more and more open-minded about this," he explained during his first interview. "So if my close friends ask me about my [relationship] status and if I am looking for a girl, I tell them 'no, I'm looking for boys.'" Finding that his predominantly Chinese peer group accepted and normalized his identity was revelatory:

> All of them don't act very surprised [or concerned]. First of all, they are of my age, so they are getting more exposure to gay culture and community, and they can understand me and show me their support, actually.

Though less concerned about the reactions he'll receive now, Neil remains cautious about whom he comes out to.

Personal History: Pea's story

Like Neil, Pea grew up in China, coming to the United State for graduate school just three years ago. She joined HUES to learn to better navigate entry and acculturation into an LGBTQ+ community. Pea displayed significant integration of her sexual and interpersonal and academic identities when she joined HUES, having come out to both peers and friends starting in college. Though she still had not disclosed her orientation to faculty or advisors up through her first graduate degree, she came out immediately to her faculty advisor upon arriving at ASU.

Although growing up as a sexual minority in rural China was a hardship, Pea harbors none of the cultural resentment Neil demonstrates, shrugging off the difficulty

now and noting "I think that's society and just how the environment is." Whereas Neil did not explore his sexuality until leaving home for college, Pea embraced her sexuality much earlier, initiating a romantic relationship with a peer in high school. Like Pat, she says she first realized she was different from other girls at a young age – specifically, the third grade: "I can't remember, exactly [what made her realize her sexuality]," she laughed. "But I've been gay ever since….always gay!" At that age, she says, the full societal and familial implications of her identity didn't occur to her. "It was like 'oh, okay,'" she recalled. "I think I was too young to realize the significance."

Although she accepted and began exploring her sexuality at an early age, Pea's journey was far from easy. Knowing she was gay and *being* gay were two different scenarios, she observed. "In high school, when my teachers and other people were about to find out, it was a scene," she recalls. Facing the same cultural barriers to same-sex relationships as Neil, she did not disclose her identity or attractions to others.

> I was pretty comfortable [with her identity]. I think I began to realize through middle school to high school [that others might be hostile toward her due to her sexual identity]. Even then I wasn't threatened by it because it covers up pretty well and I wasn't in a relationship…so I was like 'I am safe.' But then I got into a relationship [and became more cautious]. I might not always have been comfortable thinking how people would treat me [if] they know, or how they treat lesbian and gay people. I [wasn't] comfortable with that. Two days ago, there was this news story that a high school teacher that was openly gay was kicked out [of his job] for his orientation, so it's still pretty dreadful.

Pea was the only interview participant in the study to note an explicitly homophobic environment growing up. She has particularly vivid memories of one homophobic teacher in high school:

> High school was a nightmare. Every class had a sort of [head] teacher in charge. [He was] pretty hostile against being gay, and I could feel that from him…I'm

still not happy about that, I'm still pretty mad, because I don't feel like I was
respected.

Although he never singled out Pea directly, she found out many years later from former

classmates that he did in fact make derogatory assumptions about her sexuality, spreading

rumors about her orientation even years later. His comments about the LGBTQ+

community continue to haunt Pea, as does the possibility of hearsay about her sexuality

reaching her family in the small community, where social interdependence is a byproduct

of China's collectivist national mindset and where common knowledge of her LGBTQ+

identity could bring family dishonor.

Although Pea embraced her identity, her first relationship was a tentative, often

confusing period, being the first same-sex romantic relationship for both girls. Not having

an LGBTQ+ support network made navigating it especially challenging. "It was about a

year and a half," she recalls. Being in the closet, she had nobody to turn to for

relationship advice:

> I [didn't] know what's going on. I hadn't quite figured out what to look for in a
> relationship, and I probably pressured the girl too much…we fought a lot. I didn't
> know how to communicate my needs. That's how everything went wrong…we
> had a lot of fights and arguments about small things, and I got pretty emotional
> and couldn't control my anger and just started shutting her out.

Had she the resources, support, or strong role modeling in navigating the relationship,

Pea says, that relationship might have turned out differently. "I thought relationships

would be like the [heterosexual] relationships on TV and in the novels," she recalled. "It

wasn't like that. It [was] hard work."

The period wasn't only difficult because of the end of the relationship, but also

because for the first time, she felt her secret was threatened:

I think everyone could tell I wasn't happy at the time. There's a breakup and it's so hard to hide the emotions…when people saw the emotional breakdown, they began to suspect because it's not like what happens when you're just close friends. I was crying a lot, and didn't have the appetite to eat, and I couldn't focus on my studies. It was probably one of the toughest times I've had.

Compounding Pea's challenge was the loss of important friendships and support when she did come out subsequent to the end of the relationship. Finding it impossible to deal with the emotional burden of the breakup on her own, she confided in a friend she felt safe sharing with. This didn't go the way she hoped, though:

The hardest part for me was because I was having a hard time and needed to find someone to talk [to] about it. I went to my best friend at the time, who I hadn't come out to…but she pulled back. So that was hard for me, struggling in both the relationship and the friendship.

Though her friendship eventually recovered and Pea still sees her friend, who is also studying in the US now, the experience left her unnerved.

Like Neil, Pea moved away from her small community after high school. Unlike Neil, though, she found an environment in which LGBTQ+ identities were not so suppressed. "People started talking about [LGBTQ+ subjects]," she said, and the greater visibility and acknowledgement of the LGBTQ+ community bolstered her own sense of support. "I still wasn't out, but people suspected. And someone would just ask me straight, and that straightforwardedness made me feel it was okay to talk about." Though still tentative about disclosure, she started finding the confidence to come out to those in her social circle: "For those who didn't approach me [asking if she was gay], I wasn't voluntarily telling them…but for the people that I told, I got support." This, she said, "was nicer…more liberating."

Two incidents during college were particularly affirming and instrumental to

Pea's developing confidence in disclosing her sexual orientation. The first of these

incidents occurred during her first year:

> I was in a long-distance relationship and I was talking to my girlfriend a lot on the phone in the hallways in the dorm. And then my classmate just from across the hallway came over [one time] and she was like 'hey, was that your girlfriend?' And she seemed completely accepting and okay. That was a huge relief of 'oh, I can talk to you about it.' I was a little intimidated at the time and I played it cool like 'naw, it's just a friend,' but later on I was like…I came out to her less than a week later.

After this, Pea started coming out to other friends. Additionally, disclosure resulted in an

unexpected bonus: not only was she accepted when she came out to her classmate, but it

strengthened her friendship with the girl and, in doing so, helped her find a broader

support network: "I hung out with them [the girl and her friends] a lot more than I hung

out with anyone else, and they became my closest friends throughout college." After

keeping her sexuality a closely-guarded secret for so long, Pea was finally able to be

completely herself among her friends.

Pea's second revelatory moment occurred several years later, when she was

befriended by an openly gay visitor to her university and had her first glimpse of a larger

LGBTQ+ community:

> I met this American guy who was gay. He helped me come to terms a lot understanding what life would be like [living as an out lesbian in the larger community], and he was also the one who gave me the idea that I should probably check out America, come over here.

Though she had a supportive social circle, this was Pea's first opportunity to learn about

the perspectives and experiences of not only other LGBTQ+ peers, but their families and

the broader social dynamics of a LGBTQ+ community she had only tangentially been a part of up to this point:

> He's also married, so to see someone who had been through all that stuff [was impactful]. And then his sister, who was the visiting scholar, is lesbian and her son is gay, and so we talked about how she accepted it. And she cried when we talked about it, so it was definitely hard for her at the time, and I'm seeing what an emotional process it could be, yet how it could turn out to be good.

In befriending the visiting Americans, Pea, who had always been the minority in her largely heterosexual social circle, began to understand the value of being part of an LGBTQ+ community. Knowing opportunities to do so were still rare in China, she considered following the visiting scholar's advice and considered relocating to the United States for the next stage of her life. Though her decision to study in the US was not solely based on the opportunity to experience life in a more open, accepting society, she admits "it's a huge factor."

Once in the United States, Pea felt able to embrace her identity more openly. Attending a major East Coast public university for her Master's degree, Pea met LGBTQ+ peers. One peer in particular, a lesbian woman from Australia, was particularly impactful. With this friend's guidance, Pea gained confidence in navigating the dynamics of LGBTQ+ communities and relationships – two key areas she recognized were growth opportunities for her. While she had long had the support of her primarily straight peers, this was the first time Pea met a fellow lesbian her own age who had overcome many of the social obstacles and fears she'd been dealing with. This peer's success in overcoming these obstacles was empowering and affirming, and her stories resonated with Pea:

> I could talk to her about things with her….I was afraid to ask girls out to date, and I think at the time I really wanted to date this girl really bad but didn't know how,

so I came to her for advice. [One time] we were talking at a bar and she pointed out 'you need to be confident in yourself.'

Having a confidante who could understand what she was going through was a breakthrough:

> She [her Australian lesbian friend] said that when she was in Australia she met this Indian guy who was really shy. He grew out of it, and now they're best friends. Her mentioning that…something just hit me, like a hope. She sort of believed in me at the time. I didn't believe in myself, and she made me realize it.

Pea's friendship with the Australian lesbian not only assisted her entry into a larger LGBTQ+ community, but encouraged her to come out to more peers, including her larger departmental cohort:

> She…man, one time…one time I came to her for sexual advice, and she broadcasted it to the whole cohort. She was so proud of herself, saying 'hey, she came to me for sexual advice!' and I was like 'um, what?'"

Though initially wary of how her peers would react, the incident quickly cemented support from their peers around Pea's identity. Although some knew she was gay at that point, she made a point of never broadcasting her identity for fear that though accepting of her sexuality, her peers might not be comfortable knowing the more intimate details of her life – likely a byproduct of the same cultural aversion to discussing sexual and gender identity noted by Neil. After that disclosure, though, she realized she was really just one of the group, and her romantic life was as much fair conversational game as anyone else's. Not only were her peers accepting, but they started actively playing matchmaker, trying to help Pea "hook up" with other lesbian girls they knew. "That was a huge step for me," she laughs. "I'll admit it."

Even now, though, Pea occasionally struggles with components of her identity. Though she is open about her identity to those she is closest in her academic and social

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circles, including the close-knit Chinese student community she is a part of, she still experiences uncertainty around disclosure. These days, she says, she is "not consciously hiding it, but I'm not necessarily showing it. But with people I'm close to I'm pretty open." More critically, though, although she is more comfortable disclosing her identity to others, she still struggles to connect with other members of the LGBTQ+ community, women particularly:

> I don't think I've figured out my full identity yet. It's not just the gay part. Even though I project [myself as] fairly confident, I don't feel confident all the time. There might be something deep down I haven't figured out. I don't know how to interact with people in the [lesbian] community…dating culture can be super confusing.

Pre-mentorship: Nondisclosure, Anxiety and Isolation from Family

Over the course of the nine interviews, a dominant emergent theme was the direct correlation between level of disclosure and intimacy of familial relationships. While each participant has attempted to come out to family members, perceived non-acceptance by those family members has curbed further attempts to disclose. Disclosure to their families (and particularly parents) is important to all three research participants, and continued nondisclosure is a significant stressor to each of them. However, none feel they can currently navigate those conversations. One participant, Pat, acknowledges that differences in sexual or gender identity are accepted, if not understood or embraced, within both their community and their family. However, their family's lack of comprehension and inability to appreciate the significance of gender and sexuality to Pat's larger identity leaves Pat hesitant to share their live with their parents more fully. For both Neal and Pea, homosexuality is still very much a cultural taboo, and each feels that disclosure carries too many risks to the reputations of their families; at the same time,

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the longstanding Chinese cultural value of filial piety has instilled in each of them a keen

aversion to dishonoring or disappointing their families. As a result, all have strategically

distanced themselves from their families, straining these relationships and causing

considerable distress to themselves in the process.

Nondisclosure, Anxiety, and Isolation: Pat's Story

For Pat, the primary challenge in coming out involves the complications of both

sexual orientation and gender identity. Although their parents were accepting when Pat

disclosed their sexual orientation in high school, it bothered Pat at the time that compared

to the robust conversations coming out triggered among their college friends, their

admission was taken nonchalantly by their parents.

"I didn't come out to my parents until I had my first queer relationship." They

continued:

> I was like 'I'm gay'. I figured it would be easier for them to understand the end
> rather than anything in between [the self-discovery process]. They both were like
> 'that's fine, whatever.' I was like 'no, you don't understand. You need to educate
> yourselves. So I tried to give them resources.

Though supportive, their parents did not provide the sense of validation Pat yearned for;

content to accept Pat's sexuality without expressing a need to understand it more or

"educate" themselves, Pat found them increasingly difficult to relate to; though

superficially accepting of Pat's sexuality, Pat sensed that it was just something they

didn't want to talk about. Pat's relationship with their father is strained by what Pat

attributes to a fundamental lack of empathy and an inability to comprehend the

significance Pat's identity plays in their life. "He likes Trump," they explain:

> I used to be really close to my dad, and then the 2016 election happened, so it's
> [the relationship] been a little more strained…he doesn't equate like, things that

are in his personal life, he doesn't know how to translate that to the outside world. So in his mind he probably thinks it's okay to be supportive of me and like rude to others [LGBTQ+ individuals]. I don't think the empathy thing quite equates to the outside.

To some degree, Pat has reconciled with their mother and currently has a stronger relationship, though Pat does not characterize it as close. Pat still does not offer information on their life freely: "[These days] I don't tell them things unless they ask. Like my mom maybe once a year will ask if I'm dating anyone and I'll be like 'yeah, I've been seeing this person for nine months' and she'll be like 'oh.'"

Because of what they perceived as their parents' lack of empathy and connection, both when they initially disclosed their sexual orientation and currently, Pat is hesitant to disclose their gender identity to them. They know it may come up in the future, but it isn't a conversation they look forward to: "It'll…be interesting," Pat explains. A further barrier to identity disclosure is the general lack of understanding within society around alternate genders or genderqueer individuals, like Pat, who identify as neither male nor female. This barrier is further magnified by their current relationship. Currently dating a cisgender male, Pat fears that the appearance of being in a heteronormative relationship will 'undo' any development of understanding their parents might have of their identity:

> Because I'm dating a guy now, that's confusing to my mom, and I still haven't told my dad…he has a very conservative viewpoint on a lot of things, so that could be difficult. It's like people always expect you to pick a thing and that's the thing you're going to be for the rest of your life.

Pat has never been able to have a frank discussion about sexuality and identity in broader terms with their parents, and fears disclosure of their relationship with a cisgender male now would present a setback to the future conversations they know they'll need to have around gender identity.

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Pat, who suffers extreme anxiety and depressive symptoms that become magnified by stressors such as confrontation or family interactions, now actively avoids all situations in which they might have to acknowledge their current relationship status, to the point of keeping their now year-long relationship a secret. "I know I'm going to my sister's wedding next year," they stated, "but I don't know if I'm taking the person I'm with now or anybody at all." This reluctance to discuss their sexual and gender identities makes family holidays particularly stressful:

> They don't know that [their boyfriend] and I are dating, only that we are living in a house together, so [the Thanksgiving holiday] will be interesting. [Relationship status] is gonna come up. I'm bringing him with me because I don't want to go alone, so it's gonna be interesting…it's going to be fun.

Nondisclosure, Anxiety, and Isolation: Neil's Story

Discomfort in navigating identity has resulted in strategic distancing from family for Neil, too. Neil, who started to realize he was attracted to other boys in his classes in middle school and high school, told his mother he was gay after going to college in Shanghai and then starting graduate school in the United States, where exposure to visible LGBTQ+ communities allowed him to begin coming to terms with and understanding his identity. "I just told her," he said. "I told my mother that I love boys." Immediately, though, she had attempted to minimize his disclosure:

> She thinks it's just my heavy load of study [distracting him from spending time with and dating women], and tells me I should just try being with girls. The thing about my mother, she still loves me. She didn't get very angry or get very outrageous or anything…[but] she would never bring it up after we talked about it.

Although this initial reaction was not as bad as he'd feared it might be, subsequent conversations have left Neil more uncertain about coming out to other family members.

Optimistic when he first came out to his mother, he is now concerned about the impact

his sexual identity could have on his family:

> Even when I [try to] talk to my mom about me being gay, it [ends up being] about
> how I expected others to look at us. And I really feel a conflict there. I really
> want…I don't want to hide, but on the other hand, I don't want my parents to be
> hurt by the gossip.

In China – and particularly in the rural province where Neil's family lives – having a gay

son is still a source of social shame, as noted elsewhere by Hu and Wang (2013), and this

weighs heavily on his mother. "She says 'what do you want us to do?'" he continued,

explaining:

> Her concern was more like if the relatives or other people know that I'm
> gay…they feel it's a shame and it's a small town, so if one person knows, then
> other people know, and people [would] just gossip about this…and she cannot
> bear with this type of gossip.

Fear of ill-treatment of his family keeps Neil disclosing his identity with other family

members or close friends back in China. It's his responsibility, he says, to "protect" them

from the shame his being gay would bring to the family and the notoriety it would bring

them in their small community. He is adamant that he cannot come out to his father,

saying "he has a heart condition, so I cannot tell him," and Neil fears the stress of the

social ostracism his family might face would be too much a burden given his father's

delicate health. Neil elaborates:

> I don't want them to be discriminated against by their friends…most of my
> relatives are not very well educated [in regards to social issues], so they are not
> really exposed to this LGBTQ thing, so that's one of my concerns.

Having come to the United States seven years ago, Neil has only returned to China and

seen his family three times. Chief among his reasons for remaining in the United States is

the stress and anxiety that the prospect of returning home triggers, and the associated fear

that he might inadvertently jeopardize his parents' reputations and standing among their family. "The problem with Chinese culture," he explains, is why he stays away:

> There is a lot of family time. People will ask me why I don't find a girl when I go back to China, [and] my parents and relatives ask why I am still single. I cannot tell them the real reason for that. That's always a struggle for me…I don't think it's fair to tell others about my real thinking.

His family, not knowing why he won't come home, still ask him to return frequently, particularly around traditional holidays; coming up with excuses, such as being busy with his studies, feels disingenuous to Neil, and he hates what he views as necessary deception. With the upcoming Chinese New Year, for instance, he knows that if he returns home, there will be a very large family gathering:

> [A]ll kinds of relatives [come] together. So there will be a lot of awkward questions. Like 'why are you still single?'. And if you are not single they will ask when you will get married. And if you are married they will ask when you will have kids. When you have a first kid they will ask when you will have the next kid. They keep asking those sorts of questions. It's a lot of pressure, actually…I try to ignore them. I just don't answer. I don't know why, but they don't really respect the personal [boundaries], they keep asking you. It's one thing I don't like [about going home].

Increasingly, Neal finds navigating Chinese cultural norms frustrating. The easiest solution for Neil is to remain in the US, where he can complete his studies, build a career, and not have to worry about his father's health or his mother's concerns about relatives learning he is gay.

Nondisclosure, Anxiety, and Isolation: Pea's Story

Like both Pat and Neil, Pea attempted to come out to her family, but received an initial reaction less encouraging than she'd hoped for. This has discouraged her from subsequent attempts. The first time she broached the subject with her father was shortly before leaving for graduate school in the United States, and the outcome of that

conversation left a lasting impact on Pea. "I tried to talk to my dad about it once, because I feel like he's the more liberal one in the family," she explained:

> And when he was driving me to the airport, I said 'Dad, can I talk to you about something?' And I was like 'I don't think I've ever liked a boy before.' I think that was pretty subtle but I saw him kind of frozen for a second. And then he was like 'maybe you just haven't met the right one yet'. That was what he said.

This attempt at disclosure resonated with her: "He froze. And I can't ever remember a time that he froze. So I was like 'I'm not ready for this talk yet' and maybe they're not, either."

As in Neil's case, the initial conversation around her sexuality was the only one she has had, as her father has never brought the matter back up, and she now fears disappointing him. Like Neil, she also bears the heavy emotional burden of filial piety and responsibility to her family. Until very recently, Pea's mother was the caregiver for her grandparents, who "weren't in good shape." Pea felt she had too many "things on her mind" to be distracted by her daughter's disclosure.

After her father's response, Pea also worries about what might happen when she tells the rest of her family she is a lesbian:

> I think my mom will keep crying for weeks or months, maybe. It will be pretty hard on them. On the one hand, their expectations fall apart, and [also, on the other], they have all this social pressure on them because their daughter is still not getting married, possibly a lesbian, all the rumors that way…

As much as she fears disappointing her parents, maintaining her secret is problematic, too. "It's a small town," she says. Even though she has been gone for some time now, she knows there is still speculation amongst her previous schoolmates and teachers about her sexuality, as a peer recently confirmed to her. "That's also a reason I would want to talk to my parents as soon as I can," she says, "because I don't want them to hear elsewhere."

She knows her parents are concerned for her wellbeing, and is conflicted over whether

coming out or maintaining her secret will ultimately cause them more pain. "I don't know

how to phrase it, how to alleviate some of their concerns, how to cope with it." Normally

upbeat, the subject saddens Pea, and she becomes introspective. Like Neal, the idea of

deceiving her family is deeply distasteful and shameful to Pea:

> Thinking about it is kind of hard…I just don't know where to start…how to
> bring it up to them. Because I've been lying for a while now. I don't know how
> they will take it. At first [the challenge] will be the gayness, and then it'll be me
> lying. I don't…yeah. Then they might want to send me [away].

Although she yearns to tell them she is gay, and knows the betrayal felt by her parents

will only grow the longer she maintains her secret, she doesn't know how to come out at

this point. The burden of indecision wears on her:

> It's definitely something I want to solve. It's something on the back of my mind
> [all the time], but I don't know how [to come out]. I don't know how to plant the
> seed, because I've never been the diplomatic type, or someone who really knows
> how to comfort my parents. It's actually a huge conflict to their beliefs and
> values.

Her studies and career plans give her an excuse to postpone conversations around

her long-term life plans, but her advancing age and associated cultural expectations – in

traditional Chinese society, marriage is still viewed as a "mandatory duty" with

"important social implications", according to Hu and Wang (2013) – are still a major

source of this anxiety. "I'm nearly thirty, and I can't do this after I turn thirty. The age of

getting married [in China] is definitely getting older, but it's still an expectation to get

married." Though she laughs about the pressure her family places on her to 'settle down',

she then turns serious. The idea of coming out to her family is "pretty hard," she said,

because it's just conservative and all the expectations are that I find a guy. That's my mom's frame, I would say…she definitely lives on that. Every time I call her, that's something she will bring up, probably once a week.

Because of the emotional difficulty of these conversations, Pea finds herself dreading the weekly phone calls with her mother. "I like…I'll just be like 'I know, mom, I'll try harder," she says when her mother asks if she's met someone or is dating. "I [won't really] acknowledge it. I'll find excuses like 'I'm too busy and I couldn't find someone who fits, which is true, but also not true."

Like Neil, Pea fears that she may never be comfortable returning to China after the acceptance and exposure to LGBTQ+ community she has found in the United States. Although she has not decided whether to return to China or remain in the US after completing her degree, a significant factor in her decision to leave China was the freedom she would find from familial and social pressure. Here, though she still worries about her family finding out she is gay, the fear that they will find out on terms not her own are lessened. "That [the fear of being involuntarily outed] was the hard part…hardest part," she says of her high school and college years. "I was living close to family, and family was going to find out. [So] after high school I moved to a different city." Moving away for college alleviated the anxiety. "It wasn't an imminent issue anymore," she explained. When it came time for graduate school, the freedom to further explore her identity without worrying about her family finding out about her sexuality from others "was a huge factor".

Like Neil, her fears of how society would treat her family were another factor that led Pea to develop not only a physical distance from her family, but an emotional one, too. Returning to China, where she would face more constant questions from family and

acquaintances about her life, she "would feel more constrained, insecure, and probably

hide it more," she noted:

> Being gay is something I have embraced. Being comfortable in the workplace, being open about or not holding back about my sexual orientation at work [is something I want]. I'd definitely more open to staying here than going back. It seems things will be tougher going home.

Having had the opportunity to develop healthy relationships within her community and

build a positive self-concept for herself as a lesbian have become important to Pea,

something her time in the US has only reaffirmed.

Pre-mentorship: Identity, Nondisclosure and Social Isolation

A second recurrent theme among all three research study participants is the

impact their sexual orientation or gender identities have had in their social lives.

Specifically, all three note that significant insecurities around disclosure or nondisclosure

of these identities and 'otherness' have hampered development of friendships and close

relationships with their peers, both intentionally and otherwise.

Identity, Nondisclosure, and Social Isolation: Pat's Story

For Pat, a perennial challenge is a lack of understanding of gender identities

among the general public. In their case, the general anxieties of coming out are

compounded by the necessity of explaining their identities. This is particularly when they

themselves are still grappling with the shifting intersections of their gender and sexual

identities, Pat explained:

> It's a challenge, because there are these neat little boxes [in which we define ourselves], and I don't fit in any of them. So trying to find the right words to describe [myself] has been kind of a challenge sometimes. I guess it's still something I'm coming to terms with.

Whereas sexual orientation is a subject of less frequent confusion in society, many people are still mis-educated regarding gender expression. The burden of explaining the nuances of their identities is a source of frustration for Pat, both on personal and larger scales. "There's like…do I really want to explain why I want these pronouns or what this means if this person doesn't know?" they mused:

> On the one hand, yes…I can tell you about my experience of this, but there are other experiences and I know you're capable of using the internet…so I'm sure you could also find information about it there.

A specific challenge for Pat is explaining the amorphic nature of their identities. Although they categorize their gender identity as nonbinary or genderqueer, their sexual identity is more fluid and nuanced, they explained:

> I do aromantic and I also do asexual phases. Asexual is like when you're not interested in sex, period. Aromantic is when you're not interested in romantic relationships…for me, sometimes these phases are at the same time and sometimes they're different.

These phases can last months or even years for Pat, and, contrary to common perception, are not necessarily related. Because of the fluid nature of their sexual and gender identities, Pat is quick to point out that their queer identity might be very different from another person's. The sense of social responsibility that attends coming out – particularly as part of such a misunderstood community – is a crucial source of anxiety for Pat: "It's just weird," they explained, "that all of the responsibility of educating people has to fall on one person. Like, you could know someone else and they have a completely different perspective on the whole thing."

Living in a society in which gender roles and expectations are largely established and any deviations can be seen as threatening, Pat confesses that since leaving the

relative safety of their highly-educated, progressive undergraduate institution, they fear

people's reactions should they learn of their identity. Already a naturally anxious person,

this fear around disclosure creates a self-imposed barrier toward interacting socially.

Introverted and shy, confrontation makes Pat uncomfortable:

> I don't like making other people uncomfortable. I know a lot of the reason is because female-bodied people in our society are trained to be quiet and not impose themselves upon others, so that's part of it. I've always been a very shy person aside of that, as well, so when someone else gets uncomfortable [for instance, upon learning of their identities], it automatically makes me uncomfortable. So like if I'm uncomfortable with this [hiding their identity] but I'm more uncomfortable with them being made uncomfortable talking about it, I have to weigh which is more uncomfortable for me.

Because of these challenges, Pat struggles to weigh the importance of disclosure against

their need for authenticity among their peers and acquaintances. "One of the hardest parts

for me in building relationships of any kind," they explain, "is figuring out where you can

settle with the person." In every social interaction, Pat wonders how much a person needs

to know about them:

> I'm just not a social person. The reason I made so many friends in undergrad was because I had two friends and they had friends. If you have like two friends who know you they introduce you in the way they know you, whereas when you meet people individually you wonder if this is a person you will want to share all these details with.

Though their gender identity is an integral component of their larger identity, Pat finds it

much more difficult at ASU to share this than at their undergraduate institution, where a

large and diverse LGBTQ+ community meant that Pat's gender identity did not require

lengthy explanation. But being female-bodied, Pat is regularly misgendered now that they

have left that institution, placing them into the situation of either correcting others or

letting the misgendering pass unnoticed: "Being misgendered is agitating to me. Society

has all these assumptions [based on gender], right…so they're putting me in a box with all these other things instead of learning who I am." These interactions are a near-constant occurrence for Pat:

> I feel like generally, people don't perceive my queerness on the level that I do. They're like 'that's a person with short hair'. No, they're probably like 'that's a girl with short hair' and that's like a thing…short hair no longer means you're gay. So it's not like super perceptible, so there's been no need to put up facades. I'm not the kind of person who just walks into a room and everybody knows.

The problem is that Pat wants people to know their gender identity and to properly gender them: "How would a guy like to be called a girl?", they ask. While being misgendered is frustrating and embarrassing, having to correct others' assumptions are equally emotionally stressful:

> With friends, it's like 'do they really need to know?' Obviously it would be good if friends at least knew pronouns, but it's really weird figuring out when the right time to do that [disclose their gender identity] is…so [of] the friends I have [here], I don't think I've come out to that many at all. And outwardly since I'm dating a guy they just think 'average person', so that's…troublesome…but I don't know how to do it now, because it's been [nearly] a year.

While nondisclosure results in constant misgendering, Pat struggles to address the issue, and this is only exacerbated over time. "Sometimes I get anxious when I think about the fact that a big chunk of my friends here don't know anything about me," they explain:

> It would be nice if everyone that I hung out with referred to me by the right [they/them] pronouns, but I don't know how much they know. With people who don't know about my gender identity, I feel like I should say something, but I'm not good at speaking up.

This inability to speak up, compounded by the frustration of misgendering, has had a heavy toll on Pat's ability to develop friendships. Although their reasons for doing so are not based on fear of discovery (as are those of Neil and Pea), Pat carefully compartmentalizes their life:

So for me it's kind of weird. I post about being queer in like [social media], so people that I don't know and will never meet know. But for people that I do know, if they aren't going to ask about it, I'm like 'why should I bother with telling them?'

Pat has extreme difficulty making friends, and has constructed an elaborate construct in which only the closest of acquaintances learn about their identities:

It's like when someone gets from third-tier friendship to second-tier friendship, I'm like 'is this person going to get to first-tier friendship and am I going to have to reassess the relationship?' and be like if I think someone is going to make it to first tier, I have to tell them this. Because I'm not going to have people in first tier who don't know this about me…Third tier is like acquaintances. Second tier is like when you start to become friends, and first tier is the people you are close friends with.

Only Pat's closest acquaintances, the 'first tier' friends, are those they are comfortable disclosing their identity to, though they openly acknowledge the irony that nondisclosure is a frequent barrier to friends 'moving up' the ladder of friendship.

Even when they had a greater sense of community as an undergraduate, Pat acknowledges that their identities were an 'otherness,' allowing them to remain aloof from peers. Recounting the story of the development of one friendship, Pat recalled:

[They] are one of those humans who decides that they're going to be your friend and then inserts themself into your life. So at first it is like 'why is this weird person stalking me?' And then it's like 'oh, we have things in common.' And they keep pushing their way in and you're like 'oh, alright.' Then we worked on a project and it was like 'okay, we have a lot in common' and so by that point it was like we have a lot in common, they're a pretty cool person, and I'm gonna go ahead and do this thing [and come out to them].

At a fundamental level, Pat is somewhat suspicious of the intentions of others, and has difficulty recognizing the value others place in relationships with them: "[They] are just a very weird person who likes weird people." Pat experiences such anxiety over disclosure

that they actively avoid telling others about their identities, even knowing doing so

precludes the possibility of closer friendships:

> Because if they don't care about my life, why should I bother, like, telling them things? I mean, if I'm not going to interact with someone a lot, I'm not going to tell them, because it's ultimately not going to affect either of us because we're not going to see each other.

Not having a community in which they feel comfortable disclosing their identities and

being their authentic self has deeply impacted Pat's sense of identity. Whereas during

college, Pat had the social and cultural capital to navigate identity more seamlessly, their

isolation at ASU has directly impacted not only their ability to process their identities, but

has resulted in a lack of confidence to do so:

> A little while back I saw someone crossing the street and they were wearing a t-shirt that said 'hello! My pronouns are they/them' and [I was like] 'that is the kind of confidence I want to have.' A lot of the struggle comes from how many people really need to know this about me. I just want to be more comfortable. More authentic…so I don't have to worry about my pronouns.

A major goal, they say, is simply to find a community "where it's not weird to be queer."

Identity, Nondisclosure, and Social Isolation: Neil's Story

One of Neil's greatest fears is that others will discover that he is gay and react

poorly. While Pat yearned for connection to a larger LGBTQ+ community and is

uncomfortable navigating cis- and heteronormative environments, Neil's anxiety over

disclosure actively kept him from seeking connection to other gay men; not entirely

comfortable within a heteronormative environment, the prospect of navigating an

LGBTQ+ one makes him equally uneasy.

Neil only began coming out to peers while pursuing his doctoral degree. Fear of

losing friendships not only caused him to compartmentalize his social life, but led him to

actively minimize the importance of his sexual identity. Maintaining a stark contrast between his sexual orientation and sexual expression, he eventually came to understand and accept his same-sex attraction but adamantly did not allow it to define him – a form of internalized homophobia common among gay men from cultures with clearly-defined constructs of masculinity and femininity (Slootmaeckers & Lievens, 2014). With orientation and expression at odds, his sexual identity was stunted. Shunning other gay men in public, he cultivated an outwardly heteronormative life. Although he "still enjoyed hanging out with straight friends," though, those relationships were constantly overshadowed by fear of discovery: "I feared their reaction," he explained, "because I don't know how they would react to me being gay. It's kind of an uncertainty that brings a fear."

Even after coming to the US, Neil's most salient identity has been his Chinese heritage, and the majority of his closest peers have been other male Chinese students. Although younger, more Westernized Chinese demographic groups – including the urban and highly educated – trend toward greater acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities (Cao, Wang & Gao, 2010; Xie & Peng, 2018), Neil's more traditional upbringing led him to automatically kept others at arm's length, assuming they would be homophobic and not accepting of his being gay. For this reason, he suppressed his LGBTQ+ identity. He avoided meaningful interactions or relationships within the gay community, and was often dismissive of it. Because his knowledge of gay culture and society were limited to these tentative forays, he developed a limited perspective of what it meant to be part of an LGBTQ+ community shaped largely by stereotype and what he saw portrayed in the popular media:

One thing I was very wary of is…[gay culture]. Drag [culture]…what is drag? Why are people dressed as women? I don't understand why they have to do this. And also in some chat groups [that he has visited], some [gay men] like to call each other like sister or something like that. That is something I [still] don't quite understand. We're gay men, but we're still men…so why do we call each other sisters? It's weird. I accept that, but I am not like that. That's the way they like to be.

Still, he acknowledged that his lack of disclosure and disinterest in joining larger

LGBTQ+ communities were challenges:

It's really hard, right? You have no one to share [with]. You sometimes really feel desperate. You feel so lonely, so it's a lot of emotion to take…it's really hard, but you still have to go through that process.

Even now, having become more comfortable not only engaging with a larger LGBTQ+

community and coming out as gay to peers, he remains very selective in who he tells. "Of

the group I have told," he explained,

I know them well. I have known them for more than two years. So other junior labmates that just came here less than one year ago, I don't know them well, so I don't tell them. My identity is a very personal thing. Very personal to me…and I only want to share my personal things to my close friends.

Identity, Nondisclosure, and Social Isolation: Pea's Story

Pea's LGBTQ+ identity and issues around disclosure have resulted in difficulties

navigating interpersonal relationships with straight peers for Pea as well, though to a

lesser extent than for Pat and Neil.

Specifically, she is cautious initiating friendships with straight women –

something she explicitly connects to both lingering discomfort in her LGBTQ+ identity

and difficulties navigating her international identity. Not confident in her ability to pick

up the subtle cues in body language, vocal cadence and interaction that often allow

members of the LGBTQ+ community to recognize one another – something colloquially

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referred to as 'having gaydar' – she has trouble determining whether peers might be part of the LGBTQ+ community. "I think my gaydar is broken," she laughs. "In China it worked, but here it doesn't work unless I see someone who looks like me, a tomboy".

Because there's no sexual attraction on her part, and therefore is no ambiguity to their relationships, most of Pea's friends are straight men. Uncertain of how to approach them (or how to tell if they might be attracted to her), she tends to be timid of other lesbians, and she fears inadvertently making straight women uncomfortable should they find out she's gay:

> I will still make friends with them [women], but it's more effort than with guys for sure. I usually feel awkward hanging out with straight girls because boundaries…it just makes things easier [to avoid female friends]. I feel like I'm more cautious about it.

A constant concern is that straight women will misconstrue her intentions and friendship. She fears that if a female acquaintance finds out she is gay, they will interpret any affection she demonstrates as romantic or sexual attraction. "I think maybe girls are prone to that," she says:

> I feel like it. And body-language-wise, because Asian culture is more about touching, and I grew up in a culture where I am comfortable doing that, I find myself refraining from doing that [platonic physical contact] with girls. But with guys who know my sexuality it isn't a problem.

Pea also worries both about developing physical or romantic attractions to straight female friends or running the risk of straight women questioning her intent in befriending them. "With straight women, it will be like…I need to keep my emotions in check, that type of thing," she says. "If the straight girl has a partner, a boyfriend, I will be more self-conscious when I'm with them both, trying to keep my distance [out of perceived respect]."

Just as it is for Pat, Pea's sexual identity and her fear of making others uncomfortable has been a challenge. Whereas Neil trades on a heteroconforming appearance as 'just one of the guys' and passes as straight, Pea – with her short, traditionally masculine hairstyle and gender presentation – feels her sexuality is much more visible. Her self-described tomboy look provides Pea cultural currency in identifying and being identified by other lesbians, a form of visual shorthand in coming out: if she sees another girl who looks similar to her, she feels they are more likely to be gay and she, in turn, feels more comfortable being around them: "I think the easiest is for some lesbian girl to look like me," she says. While her identity expression provides social currency among other lesbians, though, it's something she is not entirely comfortable with in other situations:

> [it's] been something that's been bothering me for a while. I guess I'm just not comfortable with physical appearance [and identity expression]. I get mistaken for a boy or a man too often, and that is getting really uncomfortable. People who look like this should be a man, not a girl. That's something…that's a barrier. I feel different. That's, uh…hard. And then when people mistake me for a man, I have a tendency to apologize for it. I don't know what the hell's wrong with me that I feel like I need to apologize. I feel like I shouldn't [fear potentially making others uncomfortable], maybe that's something I can prevent from happening.

While she embraces both her sexual orientation and expression, it makes her self-conscious in more heteronormative environments.

> So the prime example is sometimes when I go through an airport, through TSA, sometimes a guy will just start patting on me…that's just not comfortable. And then there's just…just like when I went to the gym [for the first time], trying to get a locker, and a girl [at the service desk] was like 'there's the men's locker room [over there], just find a place. That's just so very awkward, I have to tell her stuff and then she gets uncomfortable and I get uncomfortable as well. Somehow I feel sorry but I shouldn't feel sorry about it.

She is uncomfortable in certain physical environments, and finds herself avoiding spaces where she feels her sexuality might not be as tolerated – even if these are spaces that are important to her. For instance, although she is an avid basketball players, the student recreation center – and specifically the locker room – is a distinctly uncomfortable place:

> My mindset is I will still worry about what people will think. I feel awkward sometimes, mostly, like you know with interactions with people. For example, when I go to the gym I go to the locker room and I feel a little uncomfortable making eye contact and stuff so I just look down [and don't engage with others].

When these are spaces that might otherwise affirm commonality (in this case, a physical recreation space), Pea's awareness of her own perceived difference limits her potential for interaction.

Post-mentorship: Role Modeling and Community Connection

Over the four-month data collection period, all three research study participants expressed greater interest in connecting with an LGBTQ+ community as a direct result of their mentoring relationships, though they demonstrated varying degrees of actual community connection. Another significant emergent theme was a growing sense of civic responsibility to the LGBTQ+ community or need to 'pay it forward'. Two participants (Neil and Pea) cited their mentoring relationships as instrumental in kindling this interest, crediting their mentors as strong role models whose visibility and compassion for other members of the LGBTQ+ community inspired them to become stronger advocates for their own community. Only one (Pat) did not demonstrate an increased sense of disclosure, visibility or advocacy as a responsibility toward the LGBTQ+ community.

Role Modeling and Community Connection: Pat's Story

Having worked with their mentor for the shortest period of time, Pat demonstrated the least positive correlation between mentorship and community engagement. However, the challenges Pat faced in community entry – primarily a perceived lack of opportunity and a generalized social anxiety – were unique barriers not expressly cited by Neil or Pea.

For Pat, LGBTQ+ community engagement is a significant key not only in navigating their ongoing identity development, but in finding a sense of community belonging while at ASU. The extreme anxiety they experience in cis- and heteronormative environments makes finding an LGBTQ+ community important to Pat as a safe space in which they do not have to worry about being confronted around their identities. "I like to have a lot of varied queer type friends," they say:

> It's just easier to relate to someone who has a similar experience as a baseline. It's always really nice, like, to realize I can walk into a room and not worry about having to tell people this thing about myself because they're all going to relate in some way or another, even if they're a different queer identity than me.

Community is about more than just that safe space or commonality, though. As they continue discovering their identities, Pat craves the learning opportunities the diversity of LGBTQ+ communities represent: it gives them "the opportunity to say 'this is what it's like to be queer to me. What's it like to be queer to you?'" they explain. Especially as Pat continues navigating both gender and sexual identities and the ways they intersect with and complicate one another, they crave the experience and perspectives of other LGBTQ+ peers as they figure out how these pieces of identity fit together. Pat's current social network is largely limited to a small group of cisgender, heterosexual males from their former academic department – friends of their partner, who is still in that program.

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Within this group, Pat doesn't feel comfortable having conversations around identity, and in fact has not come out to them. Finding a stronger queer community would give them the opportunity "to learn about how other things – other identity pieces – affect other people I might not otherwise get a chance to learn."

Exposure to the multitude of queer identities helps Pat reaffirm their own identities and provides a grounding experience, as the recent shift required in their own mindset in entering a relationship with a heterosexual, cisgender male has caused a degree of identity shift and uncertainty for them. Queer community also provides an emotional balm of sorts to Pat, who feels the validity of their identities is constantly under question in the largely cis- and heteronormative world Pat currently inhabits. Reflecting on the solace their former LGBTQ+ community provided during college, they note:

> There are so many things and it's easier to just be queer rather than figuring out which sexuality or which gender you have to identify with, so everyone's just queer. I'm this in-between [person] and that's just great, so it [the need for LGBTQ+ community] is a very real thing.

Pat's mentor, who is extensively involved in the local LGBTQ+ community, has played an integral role in Pat's gradual reentry into an LGBTQ+ community. "It's really cool to have a link on campus," they say. "Like, I didn't know any queer people [here] before." With their mentor's own network of gender-queer friends and contacts in the university and general communities, Pat is optimistic they might find the support and affinity they are looking for. "It's nice to know there are more of us out there," they say.

Although Pat acknowledges they have not taken their mentor up on as many opportunities to socialize in the community as they feel they should, this is partly due to

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Pat's hectic courseload and schedule during the past semester: in addition to taking a credit overload in an attempt to complete their degree within the next year, they are working full-time, and time is increasingly a rare commodity. Despite these challenges, though, Pat is optimistic about the rekindling of their re-connection to the LGBTQ+ community, and has attended both community events (slam poetry readings) and political activities (LGBTQ+ rights rallies at the State Capitol, campaigning for the Arizona Democrats prior to the 2018 midterm elections). Pat has always found advocacy and volunteerism important, but since leaving her previous community, has not participated in community initiatives. "Volunteering is something I'd like to do more," they say, "but something I have a hard time getting involved in. Usually it's because I don't have anybody to go with…I don't like going places alone." Pat's mentor has gently pushed them to become more engaged locally and on campus, pointing out events they might be interested in and including Pat in their own plans. "Every week," Pat notes, "she's like 'hey, this thing is happening. Do you want to go?'" Building a stronger queer network is an ongoing goal of Pat's involvement in HUES, and they've attended several LGBTQ+ community workshops over the course of the semester, both alone and with their mentor, in the hopes of forming the network connections they need to take a more active role in their community.

Role Modeling and Community Connection: Neil's Story

Neil's primary motivation in joining a mentoring program was to find a sense of community connection with other LGBTQ+ individuals. "I always feel I am alone in this community," he says. Naturally an introvert, socializing has always been difficult. "I've just never liked to meet or know other people," he noted. Beyond that, though, his

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reticence was rooted in insecurity. "I would say I didn't have the courage. Partly because I didn't have the time, but also because I didn't have the courage to meet other gay people and make those connections." Dedicating himself to his studies was a means of compartmentalizing his identities; by focusing singularly on his research, he rationalized his lack of initiative in developing relationships within the LGBTQ+ community as "not having the time". As he has slowly come out to peers and become more comfortable in his identity, though, Neil has acknowledged that it's time to invest more in his own interpersonal development:

> I think when we get more mature and get more knowledge you get that moment where you want to know really who you are and what's going on. I think before I tried to stay away from this, from thinking about these things. Now I think is the time to really think about it and address this. One of the things is just getting into the community and knowing more people like me. I also want my own happiness. I want a soulmate I can live or share my life with.

Once afraid to explore his sexuality, his experiences with his mentor – as well as the positive reactions he's had from the few peers he has come out to – has shifted his perspective. Before, he said:

> You have a lot of concerns, right? About what others, what your family think about you, right? You have pressures from others thinking about you…now I want to start from inside. I don't care what others think; I want my own happiness. I want to care for myself, to love for myself.

Of the three research participants, Neil had the most difficulty accepting his sexuality, with his cultural upbringing a major factor in his reluctance to embrace or actively explore it. Feeling he was an "outsider, so different from others" and having nobody to process his developing identity with was incredibly isolating, leaving Neil feeling alienated from his peers. He exhibited signs of generalized homophobia and homonegativity, characterizing other gay men as "feminine" and "weird," and was

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adamant in appropriating heteronormative values. Even after joining the HUES

mentoring program, he questioned the need for LGBTQ+ specific communities. "The

only difference is the gender that we love," he said. "Everything else can be pretty much

the same, right? We have the same achievements and goals."

His time in HUES has shifted his perspective, though. Once reluctant to seek

LGBTQ+ community membership, Neil now recognizes that his emotional fulfillment in

life depends on his embracing his LGBTQ+ identity and engaging more proactively with

his community. He yearns for a greater connection than the ephemeral, superficial

relationships fostered through social media and dating apps that were his only connection

to other LGBTQ+ men for a long time. "They sometimes led to meaningful connections,"

he now notes of the online forums, chatrooms, and dating apps he once used, "but mostly

not."

Working with his mentor and attending LGBTQ+ community events, including

HUES programming, has given Neil a greater appreciation for and affinity with this

community. Reflecting on his earlier reticence to interact with other gay men, he admits

his reluctance was based on fear and preconceptions. "I think most people," he says, "are

not accepting of this [community] or are fearful because they have very little knowledge

about it." He speaks of the stereotypes he once held of other gay men, shaped largely by

popular culture: "I think some people have certain stereotypes about gay people, think

they are sassy or feminine or something like that." Working with his mentor has allowed

Neil to redefine and normalize the gay experience. Outside their weekly meetings and

check-ins, Neil has even socialized with his mentor, meeting his mentor's partner and

friends. Interacting with a broader gay community, he says, has been educational:

It turns out that my ideas were not right, we are also a very diverse group of people. So if you learn more about this community, you realize they are not abnormal. Then you feel more receptive to these types of things…you can get to know more about this community, get to know these people so you feel you know them more, they are not foreign to you. And then naturally you are more willing to go there. They're not monsters, right? They're just like you.

Realizing that other gay men are no different than him has not only bolstered Neil's affinity to the community, but made him more comfortable with his own identity. "I feel more used to it as I see it more," he says. "Like 'hmmm…[that's] not a big deal." As he gains affinity in his identity as a gay male, he finds navigating disclosure to be less a challenge and is more open with his peers:

After I came out to some labmates, my friends told me that almost all of my labmates know I'm gay now. They do not treat me any differently, so I think that's encouraging to me. If they ask me, I tell them…I just tell them.

Liberated by this revelation, he isn't anxious over the potential reaction of peers or colleagues to his disclosure. If others are hostile or uncomfortable, he says, he now shrugs it off, knowing he has the support of his larger peer group. "I think the best way to deal with those things [negative statements or homophobic peers or colleagues] is actually to ignore them," he says. "Do you care about those unrelated people's words to you? You should only care about those who are close to you."

Once having viewed larger LGBTQ+ culture as largely irrelevant to his identity and life's goals, Neil is now eager to explore it further:

It's like you find a new continent or something like that. It's like you find a new area, something you've never known before. It's a weird feeling, right? It's not frustrating [anymore]…it's like you want to dig more. You want to know more, and talk to more people. So…it's exciting!

Although his classmates and labmates remain his primary peer group and source of psychosocial support, his perspectives have shifted, allowing his sexual identity to

become more salient as he becomes more embedded in the LGBTQ+ community. "I still feel like my professional identity is more central than my gay identity," he explains, but "going forward, I think I should tell my colleagues that I am gay." He identifies this as a significant turning point, and looks forward to an academic and professional life that better integrates his personal identity.

At the same time, Neil increasingly finds himself reliant upon his LGBTQ+ peers, not his straight ones, for guidance and support. As he begins to explore dating and further connection with the LGBTQ+ community, Neil notes that even though his heterosexual peers are supportive, "you don't always know if it's the right topic to talk to them about. Even now that I have come out to them, sometimes [I] still feel weird to tell them about these things." Mentorship has provided him not only the additional resources he needs, but helped him recognize the importance of peers that share LGBTQ+ social and cultural perspectives.

As he prepares to finish his degree, Neil looks forward to further developing his LGBTQ+ community. He has accepted a job offer that will take him to the extremely LGBTQ+ friendly San Francisco area upon graduation. San Francisco's liberal, gay-friendly reputation was a primary reason he accepted this offer over others, noting "a specific category [I] want to engage in now is a gay community."

Beyond providing Neil with support in developing his identity, mentorship has been a source of inspiration. "He and his boyfriend really share their life," he says of his mentor. "That's really an example for me…that it could also happen for me, right, and that someday I could also have that sort of life." For a long time, Neil feared his personal values and goals (importance of family, a long-term relationship and career success) were

at odds with what he saw within the LGBTQ+ community. Long-term, caring

relationships and "meaningful connections" were something Neil craved, but not seeing

healthy examples of these among the limited LGBTQ+ networks he'd known, he feared

the value he placed on these relationships put him at odds within the LGBTQ+

community. "Before then," he notes, "I did not have any gay friends who maintained

long true relationships. You know [it seems] most people in the community have very

short relationships" or one-off sexual encounters, and "that's something I don't like."

Seeing his mentor's interactions with his own partner, though, gives Neil hope: "I see

their interactions and they are a very sweet, nice couple." Interacting with them, he says,

"you feel someday you will also be like that. They influence me because they can have a

very long-term relationship and [I] feel like I can also do that." This makes him "feel

hopeful."

This normalization of gay relationships helped break down barriers to community

entry for Neil. Whereas Neil previously maintained clear separations between his

LGBTQ+ identity and other elements of his life, he envisions a future in which they are

merged. Asked what upcoming goals or milestones might be next, he declared:

> Of course getting married, having kids. And two families together and [we] get to
> know eachothers' families…and almost all the people around you – or all the
> people in the world! – know that you are gay!

Currently still timid about holding hands or displaying affection in public, Neil notes that

his reservations in doing so – safety, primarily – are overridden by a need to be visible:

"going forward, one day I want to do that in public, like you can show love to your

partner in front of everyone else." Asked what he needs to do to get to that point, Neil

becomes contemplative: "I think it's how do we get there, right? It's not about you, you also need to raise awareness of other people."

The sense of LGBTQ+ community connection has made a rich impact for Neil. Conversations with his mentor and a slowly growing LGBTQ+ network has made him realize that "the process gets better." Although he does not view himself ready to be a visible role model to other members of the LGBTQ+ community yet, he recognizes the importance of doing so – eventually: "maybe in the future," he says, once he feels he has more to offer. "Like Tim Cook [Apple CEO]," he explains:

> Why did he decide to come out now? I think maybe earlier he was more [private], right, very protective of his personal things. Now, he thinks as the CEO of a big tech company he has more responsibility to act as an examples to others, right? I think that's a push for him. Right now, I don't have that big push for me.

His recent experiences – beginning a relationship and attending diversity and inclusion workshops and programming with his mentor – have caused him to start considering what that future might look like: "more broadly now," he says, "I think about equality. In general…marriage equality, racial equality. I've [been] inspired by things like that." And although he isn't ready to take on advocacy and larger-scale LGBTQ+ community issues yet, Neil wants to help peers facing the struggles and challenges he has navigated in coming to terms with his own identity. "Going forward," he explains, "if someone has gone through a similar experience as me or needs my experience or guidance, I am more willing to guide him or her." Providing that type of support or mentorship "is really important," he says, and he would advise any peers struggling with identity issues to seek mentorship: "there's a huge group out there that you should connect with," he says. "You're an outlier, but if you're more involved, you'll struggle less."

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Mentorship, Role Modeling and Community Connection: Pea's Story

Prior to her time in the HUES program, it did not occur to Pea to seek out larger

LGBTQ+ groups or campus organizations. Though she was part of multiple communities

at her previous institution – a small Chinese student community, the cohort of her

academic program – her only LGBTQ+ community membership was one cohort member

and other "lesbian friends she's found now and then." Because her last institution was in

a small private college town "and there weren't a lot of things to do" outside the

university, it had never occurred to her that "there are communities like this." Navigating

her identity on her own and compartmentalizing her LGBTQ+ identity from the rest of

her social life has "also been a habit," she says: "I've always been alone."

Pea has found the greatest degree of support in her identity from peers and her

larger community of the research study participants, both previous to and during her time

at ASU. Early positive interactions were elemental to her sense of identity comfort: "I

was driving down here with my ex-girlfriend from Pennsylvania. My advisor texted me

and said 'are you free? Let's go for drinks, let me introduce you to the lab.'" Not wanting

to leave her then-girlfriend alone and encouraged by the sense of comraderie within the

program she saw when first interviewing to the program, Pea decided to disclose her

relationship to her advisor. "I never told any of my advisors or people I worked with

before," she explained. "I contemplated a lot…and my advisor always projected to me as

being a very open person. So I texted and said 'my girlfriend is with me…can she

come?'" When her advisor answered in the affirmative, Pea "was so happy that day! I

was a little nervous, but she was cool with it, her husband was cool with it, and other

people in the lab…it has definitely made a difference."

Since beginning to come out, Pea has found both acceptance and support academically and socially, and this has cemented her affinity to her academic program. Currently single, her peers have helped her navigate a dating life. At her previous institution, upon coming out to friends in her department, she recalls:

> I wanted to date this American girl…and that was difficult. I mean, because I don't know what to expect, I don't know the rules [of American dating culture]. So I've been asking them, and they've been giving me tips…it's funny.

Not only did her peers take her coming out in stride, but actively encouraged her to pursue the relationship:

> They even tried to set me up with [the girl]. We went out to a bar and she is working in the same office but a different department. The really close friends in the office came, and the girl came. Then people started dancing and this [other] girl grabbed my hand and put it on her hip and we started dancing. Subtle, it was really subtle, but it's funny.

Like Neil, Pea's social network has always been primarily straight but inclusive, and she was somewhat hesitant to engage with a larger LGBTQ+ community upon her entrance into HUES. "I'll be frank with you," she said: "I am a timid person, so I tend not to be in the circle." Having few LGBTQ+ friends and navigating the challenges inherent in coming from a more traditional, reserved Chinese culture, she was intimidated by what she saw of LGBTQ+ culture: "the people from the community that I have seen are the really extroverted ones…their lifestyles are not the lifestyle I would want to live." With her outsider perspective, she felt that her perception of the LGBTQ+ culture "was more what a straight person would see the LGBTQ+ community as being." Specifically, she saw the partygoers. "I was like 'where did all the quiet gays go?'" she laughed. "Because I thought every gay or lesbian was like that I thought 'oh man, I don't want to live my life that way.'"

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Mentorship has allowed Pea to see another dynamic of the LGBTQ+ community, something she recognizes as making "a lot of good impact on my life." The first time she met with her mentor, she says, "he was like 'you need to go and socialize.'" With his encouragement, she began exploring opportunities within the LGBTQ+ community, finding an LGBTQ+ Toastmaster club in the heart of the city's LGBTQ+ neighborhood. "So I went there," she said, "and it's been amazing." Meeting LGBTQ+ people whose interests were more aligned with her own challenged the preconceptions and limitations she, like Neil, had assumed came with being part of an LGBTQ+ community. "Everybody's super friendly…and responsible," she noted. "They have initiatives and their own stuff. They're all family-oriented…that just attests to my [own] values." Through the lens of this community, Pea has gained a new perspective on what it means to be gay:

> My mentor there, she's a lesbian and has a son who is twenty-one years now, and that is just a great example…there are gay men, a pair of them just got married. I don't know a lot of gay people, honestly, so it's great seeing who they are and that they can be really confident being gays and lesbians. And they can be achieved, quite a bit…that's amazing.

For the first time, Pea no longer feels like an outsider among her fellow LGBTQ+ peers. "It makes things a lot easier, it shows that being gay and out is doable, and that feels excellent. It helped me visualize a life," she noted. "So it's got me feeling really hopeful. Excited."

Pea now considers a future she previously hadn't contemplated, normalizing what had previously been an isolating identity experience. Specifically, she realizes she doesn't have to forsake tradition values, such as family. "She's happy," she says of her Toastmasters mentor:

> Her relationship with her wife is great, it's healthy. And her relationship with her son…she talks about him all the time, she seems…normal. And that is pretty cool. Now I know what I saw [before] is not what I want, but I also know that what I saw [before] is not what the community is.

Mentorship has also provided a feeling of familial support that Pea has not experienced since leaving China, and that hiding her identity keeps her from experiencing with her own parents: "It's something I haven't quite had since I moved here. I feel like that would be exaggerating, but I feel like I have a family here." This makes her "a lot happier, definitely more content."

The sense of community affinity Pea has developed through her mentorship helps her better understand her own need for connection within this community as she continues navigating interpersonal relationships in the context of her sexual identity. "It's easier now," she says of navigating interpersonal relationships. Whereas she's always been cautious in befriending straight women, the anxiety and challenges she felt in those relationships vanishes among LGBTQ+ peers: "it's easier to navigate a relationship with a lesbian woman because there's more to talk about," she says, "and we have the same perspective." As she finds commonality among her LGBTQ+ community, "I feel more connected to it," she explains, and she wants to be more involved.

The encouragement and role modeling she has seen in her mentors has shifted her perspective on coming out to her family, too. "I want to take steps toward coming out now," she said during her last interview. Seeing the relationships her mentors have with their families has both empowered her and helped her realize the distance her nondisclosure has resulted in with her own family. Once concerned that coming out would create barriers between herself and her family, Pea recognizes that disclosure

could actually result in a stronger relationship with her family. Learning how her mentor and other members of her new support community navigated disclosure and relationships with their families has provided a new, more empathetic perspective for Pea. "One thing that I realized," she said, "was that my parents are actually helpless in this process." A significant concern in coming out, she explained, was that her parents would worry about her wellbeing and future; now, she realizes that the best way to minimize that concern is to allow them to see the life she has and continues to build for herself. "I don't know what's the best way to do it," she said, "but I think it's to just start opening up to my parents more, not so much on my identity yet, but more on every other aspect of my life so they're engaged." Because she has kept so much from them – acknowledging that she doesn't share when she is struggling, although they can often tell something is bothering her – she hopes that rekindling a relationship and being open and honest about all elements of her life means that when she does come out, they will be able to see that she is thriving, that "they know I'll be fine and that sort of stuff." Although Pea attributed her earlier reluctance to disclose her identity as means of protecting her family, she now thinks differently:

> I [was] more self-ish-thinking. I've been caring about myself most of the time, and me coming out apparently in my culture isn't only about me, it's about them and how they handle it, so I need to shift that [her reasons for remaining in the closet], I feel like.

"I had an 'a-ha' moment," she continues. "I should make my mom and dad feel more safe" by making a conscious effort to include them more in her life. Whereas previously she deferred coming out because she wasn't ready to face her parents' potential

disappointment, now she sees coming out as a responsibility to her family: "I can't

remember the exact moment," she reflects.

> Maybe there's something in my subconscious that when we talk about it in these interviews and when I talk to my mentors about it, it all sort of comes together. It feels like it's getting to be time. And I think that I realized they need me. Over the summer my grandma passed away and I saw my mother just break down, and that also sort of made me realize family…and I haven't given too much thought to that before. I'm constantly reflecting on the value of family now.

In allowing her to reconcile her need for authenticity and her sense of filial piety,

mentorship has provided Pea with a newfound ability to bridge the intersections of her

Chinese and LGBTQ+ identities.

As she completes her first year working with her mentor, Pea is grateful for the

impact mentorship has had not only in entering her new LGBTQ+ community, but in

inspiring her to reconnect with her family, merging old and new identities and values she

had previously considered incompatible with one another:

> I have nothing but positive experiences with all my mentors. They've been a huge…they make me more affirming about my values. It's such a great thing to care about people, the genuine care I get from them.

Previously hesitant to integrate her academic and personal lives, she now embraces the

challenges of navigating the intersections of her identities: "I want to be more fearless. I

realize I don't have to make the effort to merge them anymore." Reflecting on her

shifting perspectives, and her general happiness, she is optimistic: "I've made some

progress, maybe more than halfway, but not quite fully comfortable yet? I would say

more than halfway." Whereas previously, Pea feared coming out to others, now that fear

has receded, although she remains shy:

With strangers I am still not really comfortable showing who I am, but I am more comfortable walking into the restroom or lockerroom [for instance] now. And in other aspects, if I want to approach [someone] because I like them or think we could be friends, I'm still not very comfortable reaching out.

She's still learning, though, and is gaining confidence.

More significantly, though, her mentoring experience has inspired her to want to help others navigate their own journeys. As a community outsider, she found inspiration in her mentors and the community members she met, and "that's something I want to be," she says: "if anything, it makes me want to be an even better person being a lesbian." While Pea once considered disclosure a personal decision, she now recognizes the need for greater visibility within the LGBTQ+ community. Disclosure and visibility are important in a greater community context, she notes:

I feel like if I introduce herself as gay, it will help others. If they're also having an issue with their identity, not necessarily being LGBTQ+, but any aspect…if someone has a difficulty accepting any part of their own identity, whatever that is, I will say things like that [coming out to them] to establish trust.

In her own interpersonal relationships, Pea now views disclosure and authenticity as important and necessary to creating stronger friendships. "I feel like if I'm telling them, it's not yet a small thing [to come out]. It's still a big deal to a lot of the people I interact with." In trusting others with this detail of her personal life, she says, she is more trustworthy. Trusting others and coming out has become easier, too: "I don't feel like I'm hiding it subconsciously anymore," she explains. "It'll be whatever comes, it comes…it feels more natural to me now. I still feel a little bit nervous before I decide to tell them, but its better."

Like Neil, she also wants to become more involved in the larger LGBTQ+ community. Many of the new connections she has met through her LGBTQ+

Toastmasters group, for instance, are involved in community advocacy, advocacy, and social outreach. Although she hasn't had the chance to do so yet, she says "that's the next step for me. I want to get involved." Reflecting on her overall journey, she notes "Man, I've come a long way!"

Post-mentorship: Resilience and Institutional Engagement

For all three research participants, mentorship has resulted in increased resilience. For Pat, resilience has been increased in the navigation of their interpersonal relationships. In the cases of Neil and Pea, though, that resilience has manifested in not only greater affinity to and navigation of their LGBTQ+ communities, but increased connection to their academic communities as well.

Resilience and Institutional Engagement: Pat's Story

For Pat, the semester they have spent working with their mentor has been the most useful, so far, in finding the tools to reflect upon and internally navigate the complexity of their own identities. "We're figuring out identity stuff, so it's been really useful finding where you don't need words to describe things about you…figuring things out. It's certainly helped me be more comfortable with myself," they observed at the end of the semester. "Having those discussions, processing identity, has helped me express things I haven't known how to express before."

Being paired with a mentor who not only identifies as genderqueer and sexually fluid, but also studies human sexuality and gender, has provided Pat with the philosophical and theoretical grounding to explain how they experience gender and sexuality. "She has a lot more experience with more knowledgy stuff about it," they explain. In the past, Pat and their peers explored gender and sexuality experientially from

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their own perspectives. "It's interesting seeing it from both perspectives," they say.

Having been in relationships with nonbinary and genderqueer individuals, Pat's mentor

brings a nuanced approach to identity, blending the academic and the experiential. For

Pat, the level of understanding their mentor brings to their conversations is refreshing:

"it's a bit exciting," they say, "and a relief."

Although only working with their mentor for a short period, Pat has made

headway in reconciling their identities. "Something I was talking about with my mentor

is that her partner [who identifies as genderqueer, neither male nor female]," they said in

their final interview. "Whenever they [their mentor's partner] were touched in certain

ways, it would make them feel like they were being forcibly gendered," they noted,

explaining that to a nonbinary person, whose identity is predicated specifically not

identifying with either male nor female genders, such physical reminders of gender can

constitute an imposed identity threat. Long unsure of how to process their frequent

asexual and aromantic phases, Pat says: "I'd never thought about it before, but it made a

lot of sense. As of now I'm just a person who doesn't like to be touched." Digging more

deeply into the connection between their discomfort with physical intimate touch and

their gender identity, they explain, "would really change the dynamic of things" and

helps them navigate their current relationship, where physical intimacy is often a

challenge.

Pat has already implemented some of the strategies from their mentoring sessions.

They feel their relationship with their partner, now approaching its first full year, is

finally advancing. Although Pat believes their partner still doesn't understand their

identity very much, they better understand their partner's heteronormative, cisgender

perspectives thanks to feedback from their mentor: "She [Pat's mentor] is a lot like my

partner in some ways, and I'm a lot like her partner in some ways," they laughed, "so it's

like getting some perspective on things her partner and I do from the perspective of the

other partner." Aside from normalizing their experience, tactics they and their mentor

have discussed have aided communication between Pat and their partner. At the very

least, Pat says, they can better understand and appreciate their partner's perspectives on

the relationship, gender and sexuality.

This has allowed Pat to recognize their own newfound resilience: "all the back

and forth" in processing identity and communication strategies has been a significant

growth opportunity. Their identities, a source of frustration at times in the relationship, is

now something Pat views as an asset of their individuality: "the bounceback from being

straight-up gay for the past four years to someone who is the opposite now," has made

Pat more appreciative of the diversity of the human experience.

Learning to be comfortable with change has been a breakthrough for Pat in other

spheres of life as well. While long-term planning and the ambiguity of the future have

been a source of extreme anxiety for Pat in the past, they are slowly learning to embrace

change. "Just the idea that I don't have to be one thing forever," they say, is empowering.

"It's like people always expect you to pick a thing and that's the thing you're going to be

for the rest of your life," they explain. "You do that with your identity, your career…it's

like knowing there's things you can change, you don't have to be this forever, is really

cool." Embracing and better understanding the intersections of their identities has been liberating to them: "I don't have to be whatever boxes I was in the past…I don't have to be them now, and I don't have to be them in the future."

Resilience and Institutional Engagement: Neil's Story

Of the three interview participants, Neil has demonstrated the greatest degree of growth in terms of overall identity development and LGBTQ+ community engagement. Though initially an undeveloped LGBTQ+ identity, the three semesters he has worked with his mentor have allowed the two to form a strong connection. He has learned "to accept [his] identity from within," noting:

> You start with yourself. And then kind of gradually you will care less or not feel that much about what others' reactions will be. And if they don't like you, then let it be. I'm more toward that kind of attitude right now.

Of the time spent with his mentor, he explains: "you are influenced or impacted without knowing it. We didn't have any specific goals every time we met after the first semester, but we just chat very casually." Neil spends a fair amount of time with his mentor outside their regular mentoring sessions, joining his mentor and his mentor's partner socially and for community events or activities, and these opportunities to learn more about the larger LGBTQ+ community were impactful: "Seeing his interactions with his gay friends and his partner influenced me in an implicit way," he noted.

Although at the time he reconciled his disinterest in building an LGBTQ+ support community as a matter of time or lack of commonality, Neil now acknowledges that it was fear of discovery – informed by his own cultural influences – that kept him from approaching others. He "didn't want others to find out that I'm a gay, that I'm different from them," he reflected. Through mentorship, he has realized that being gay doesn't

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represent a conflict with his other identities or values, and he feels much more courageous. Seeing role models with strong LGBTQ+ community values, such as his mentor and mentor's partner, have validated his identity. "You should not pay too much attention to how others think about you," he stated in his final interview. "You should really be yourself…why should I worry so much about others? Why shouldn't I be myself?"

In embracing his own sexual identity and part within the LGBTQ+ community, Neil has found improvement in other realms of his life. He feels "more positive, more focused on other things, like my work, dreams, what I contribute. I'm more focused and less worried about other things." With his degree completion and new career presenting a fresh start, he is excited to begin a new career at a firm he feels is inclusive and supportive of the LGBTQ+ community, looking forward to being in an environment where he does not need to separate his professional and interpersonal identities.

During his final interview, Neil had a breakthrough to share: his first romantic relationship. Though he and his new potential boyfriend initially met through a gay dating app, they quickly found that they were looking for a more meaningful relationship:

> [I]n the beginning we didn't feel really into each other [sexually], just casually chatted and had dinner together or something like that. And then, I invited him to travel with me for three days over Thanksgiving break. And after we came back, I started thinking 'hmm, maybe I do like this guy' and he felt the same way!

His newfound confidence to explore this relationship has been revelatory for Neil: "It feels wonderful, [I feel] very happy," he says. "I think it shapes my future in a positive way. I feel more confident." Navigating this relationship represents a new chapter in his self-development, and whereas he previously expressed reservation about integrating his

personal and academic/professional identities, he is inspired to seek greater balance in his life:

> This kind of feeling is very foreign to me, because I told you I have never been in this kind of relationship before. So I am now trying to learn how to interact with him and how to manage my time and invest some time in this relationship.

Although he is realistic regarding the challenges ahead of them – his boyfriend is a current exchange student and has another year of study at ASU, then may return home to China or pursue a graduate degree elsewhere, while Neil is moving to California upon completing his degree shortly – Neil is focused, for now, on exploring what the relationship has to offer.

Resilience and Institutional Engagement: Pea's Story

Mentorship has had a demonstrable academic impact on Pea. As a Chinese lesbian female, Pea has always felt herself to be a minority within her STEM discipline. Her mentor, as a young faculty member from a similar academic background, has provided invaluable assistance to Pea not only in navigating her LGBTQ+ identity, but in understanding American academic culture and career pathways, too. When she joined the HUES program, she "was trying to get into the rhythm of [her] academic work." The mentoring partnership "just fits so well," she says,

> and it is so exciting to know I can have someone who is a member of the community as well as a professor, and we can talk about it all. He'll give me advise on how to proceed with academic and professional development things, for example, like how to revise a manuscript that's been returned and how to see things through the perspectives of faculty and advisors.

Having had negative experiences with a faculty advisor at her previous institution who questioned her research and was critical of Pea's career plans, Pea came to her current department optimistic but plagued by academic insecurities. Her mentor has helped her

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regain confidence in her academic abilities, and she explains "we're both in engineering. He's been through the whole process, been a grad student, been a postdoc, all that stuff." As a fellow minority and recognizing the often heterocentric academic culture of their field, Pea's mentor helped her navigate her new environment. Foremost among the lessons she's learned from him is to "just pace myself and trust the process," she says, and to recognize that in her academic field, research setbacks occur regularly. "I just need to be more affirmative," she says, "and let them go. He thinks of problems as opportunities…that's a huge difference for me." As a lesbian, Pea often felt enormous pressure to succeed academically, feeling she needed to "prove herself" capable of succeeding and worrying that any perceived failures in her work would appear reflective of her minority status as an LGBTQ+ woman. "I attribute it to a better identity or a firmer identity in myself," she says of her resilience:

> I don't necessarily feel embarrassed or get uncomfortable. I think one of the things is that I [would] get anxious about something and make small things bigger in my head. I'm working on it. My mentor told me 'you tend to overthink, and you just need to stop thinking so much.' I used to think of problems as setbacks, something I couldn't solve. But now I'll think of this as another opportunity.

Pea has flourished interpersonally since working with her mentor as well, something she attributes to the specific mentoring goals she and her mentor established early on. After two semesters of mentorship, her academic and sexual identities are "beginning to merge pretty well," and she says her general outlook is "significantly better from the beginning of her mentorship." She credits this not only to the investment of her mentor and her newfound community within the LGBTQ+ Toastmasters organization, but to the support she has found within her academic department:

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> With my advisor and her husband, it's okay. With my labmates, it's okay. And people in the office don't really care about me being a lesbian. I have learned to reach out and ask for help when I need it, and my HUES mentor did a really fabulous job of being there when I had questions either about identity or academics. The people I met here made it really easy for me.

For the first time, Pea "doesn't have to make the effort" to maintain separate academic and interpersonal identities anymore, and that gives her the emotional energy to pursue both more vigorously.

Having a support system and multiple positive role models has increased Pea's comfort with her sexuality, too: "I'm more comfortable in my identity [overall]," she says. She specifically attributes this to the influence of her mentors and the individuals she has met through her new LGBTQ+ community connections. "They are accepting of who we are, and they are aspirational. And they just basically show me that something can be done. And they live a happy life," she notes. "[I think] 'that could be me!'" Like Neil's, Pea's mentor is in a long-term relationship, and was the first gay male she has met to have done so:

> He introduced me to his partner, now, and seeing him and seeing them as normal people and thriving [is aspirational]. It helps me come to terms with it, thinking like I can do it [negotiate relationships in the long term].

Her mentor's transparency within his own life and how he navigates identity and disclosure has had an impact, too. "Seeing him, for example, how comfortable he is" has inspired Pea to worry less about what others will think of her identity, and has provided her a template for her own coming-out process: "The way [my mentor] tackles this problem is like 'if people ask me I'll just say it, and I'll do what I have to do'. It's a nice approach."

Previously somewhat reserved and closed off to people she didn't know closely, mentorship has allowed Pea to recognize the value in interpersonal relationships to a degree she had previously not considered. Always cautious of expressing too much interest in the personal lives of others, she has learned to be less aloof. "Caring" about others is specifically a newfound skill she has developed: "Like, to be confident [in showing] that I care about something [or someone]. I wasn't really comfortable doing that before…I felt like I was being nosy if I did that." Working on boundary issues, both her own and what she perceives to be others', has "made a huge difference" in her relationships. "I'm grateful for it every day," she says.

Finally, mentorship and the communities she has become involved in as a result have had a direct impact on Pea's career trajectory, too, in following her passions and not allowing what she had previously considered a detriment – her LGBTQ+ identity – to become an asset. Although she always has had a passion for athletics, Pea previously worried that such a traditionally heterocentric career pathway might not be the right choice for her. Greater exposure, though, has given her a new confidence:

> At the beginning of the semester, I was trying to decide if I want to stay in academia or go into industry, and I'm more likely now to go into the industry to do like…I'll do whatever it takes to get a job related to basketball…that's my mindset now.

Always interested in basketball, Pea had thought of it as a men's sport, and one that might not be accepting of the LGBTQ+ community. Recently, though, Pea has started following professional women's basketball, a sport that is strongly pro-LGBTQ+, and has found inspiration in the players of the local team: "Those women [in the WNBA] seem so cool," she says.

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Like Neil, the fulfillment that mentorship has created in her life, allowing her to embrace her place in a new community, has translated directly into increased academic persistence and success. Whereas she previously struggled with loneliness and maintaining a healthy work-life balance, the communities and relationships mentorship has opened up for her have allowed Pea to find a new balance in her life. While nights and weekends were once her least-favorite times, "now it's probably my favorite time." She is more engaged in her academic work, once her sole focus, as well: "I can feel happy while still doing it [studying and research]. That's just a huge change, and I'm so grateful for it. Having more confidence [in all aspects of life] helped. I just realized…I am able to enjoy time by myself [now] but when I still need friends to talk to, I can have them."

Overall, she attributes this newfound balance, happiness, and resilience to the lessons she has learned from her mentors. "One thing that keeps coming up," she explains, "is values. I know the importance of my values now." Now that she has an LGBTQ+ community in which she can find others with similar values, she says, she's not so alone, and that makes all the difference in every aspect of her life. "Having a clear identity and values are linked," she continues. "They help me recognize what I want to aspire to in myself."

Post-mentorship: Resilience and Perceived Social Support

Woven together, the collective experiences of Pat, Neil and Pea tell a compelling, powerful tale of challenge, adversity, and – encouragingly – resilience. To see how the stories of these three students are fit into the narrative of the university's larger LGBTQ+

community, data was collected from the pre- and post-intervention personal resilience inventories of mentees in the HUES mentoring program. Comparing these data points against the emergent qualitative tapestry allowed for data triangulation and drove development of a final theory set consistent with a grounded theory approach.

To determine if mentorship bolstered LGBTQ+ identity affinity and resilience among the broader HUES community, a nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted using SPSS 24 and Microsoft Excel to test the following null hypothesis:

H_0 *There is no difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention median*

values across four constructs measuring presence of resilience factors.

Eight undergraduate and graduate student HUES mentees completed the pre-intervention assessment as a requirement of program onboarding. All participants were asked to complete the assessment again in December, but only five submitted responses. Pre- and post-intervention median values were approximately symmetrical in distribution, as assessed by a histogram with a superimposed normal curve.

Examined as a whole, the data revealed a statistically significant median value increase in participants' ability to identify and perceive support from a mentor or role model, family, peers or friends, and an LGBTQ+ community or group ($z = -3.362$, $p = .001$) within a 95% confidence interval ($\alpha = 0.05$), allowing the null hypothesis to be rejected. However, due to the small sample (n = 16) and limited number of data points, no statistical significance could be reported when examining the individual constructs, though data within three constructs (mentor/role model ($z = -1.826$, $p = .068$); family ($z = -1.841$, $p = .066$); LGBTQ+ community ($z = -1.826$, $p = .068$) approached significance. Of these constructs, only the category of friends/peers ($z = -.770$, $p = .465$) failed to

approach significance within a 95% confidence interval ($\alpha = 0.05$).

While it is disappointing that statistical analysis could not verify statistical significance across all constructs, these results are neither discouraging nor unexpected. Examining the median pre- and post-intervention scores and corresponding standard deviations allow inference of a more nuanced story from these data points; while not statistically based, they reconcile with the larger qualitative data.

Support from LGBTQ+ Mentor or Role Model

In this section of the personal resilience inventory, participants evaluated the support they receive from mentors or role models related to LGBTQ+ identity or issues. Comparison of pre- and post-intervention median scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Perceived Support from An LGBTQ+ Mentor or Role Model

	Pre-test median	Post-test median	Standard deviation pre/post	Median difference
Median and standard deviation across category	**3.29**	**6.35**	**1.40/0.55**	**2.57**
There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is around when I am in need.	2.88	6.20	1.62/0.40	3.32
There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model with whom I can share joys and sorrow.	2.88	6.40	1.27/0.49	3.52
I have an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is a real source of comfort to me.	4.25	6.40	1.64/0.80	2.15
There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model in my life who cares about my feelings.	3.13	6.40	1.05/0.49	3.27

In pre-intervention self-assessment, the median value construct-wide was 3.29. Participants generally did not assess themselves to have strong levels of mentor support or role modeling around navigation of LGBTQ+ identities or issues. The lowest pre-intervention scores (for 'there is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is around when I am in need' and 'there is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model with whom I can share joys or sorrows') of 2.88 median values indicate most participants disagreed with these statements. The highest median score in this category (4.25) was in assessment of the statement 'I have an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is a real source of comfort to me'.

In post-intervention self-assessment, the median score construct-wide rose was 6.35. Participants agreed strongly with these statements. The greatest change between pre- and post-intervention median values, demonstrating a 3.25 positive shift, was associated with the statement 'There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model with whom I can share joys and sorrow'. Not only do median scores rise in the post-intervention assessment, but standard deviations shrink, confirming a tighter spread of data points among participants. For a distribution breakdown numerically in pre- and post-intervention assessment, see Table 6:

Table 6: Personal Resilience Assessment, Pre/Post-Intervention Responses by Score

Category: Support from LGBTQ+ Mentor or Role Model	VSD	SD	MD	N	MA	SA	VSA
There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is around when I am in need.	3/0	0/0	2/0	1/0	2/0	0/4	0/1
There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model with whom I can share joys and sorrow.	1/0	3/0	1/0	2/0	1/0	0/3	0/2

I have an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is a real source of comfort to me.	1/0	0/0	1/0	2/0	3/1	0/1	1/3
There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model in my life who cares about my feelings.	1/0	0/0	5/0	1/0	1/0	0/3	0/2

Support from Family

Comparison of pre- and post-intervention median values are presented in Table 7:

Table 7: Perceived Support from Family

	Pre-test median	Post-test median	Standard deviation pre/post	Median difference
Median and standard deviation across category	**3.00**	**4.25**	**1.55/1.85**	**1.25**
My family really tries to help me.	3.13	4.40	1.62/1.5	1.27
I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	3.50	4.00	1.41/2.0	0.50
I can talk about my problems with my family.	2.25	4.20	1.92/1.94	1.95
My family is willing to help me make decisions.	3.13	4.40	1.27/1.96	1.27

In pre-intervention self-assessment, the median score construct-wide was 3.00. Participants generally were in slight disagreement with statements indicating strong levels of family support around navigation of LGBTQ+ identities or issues. The lowest pre-intervention median score (for 'I can talk about my problems with my family') of 2.25 indicates most participants disagreed with this statement. The highest median score

of 3.50 (for 'I can get the emotional help and support I need from my family') indicates most participants only slightly disagreed with or were neutral on the statement.

In post-intervention self-assessment, the median score construct-wide rose to 4.25. Generally, participants were neutral or only slightly agreed with these statements. The greatest shift between pre-and post-intervention (for 'I can talk about my problems with my family') was a 1.95 jump to 4.40; participants now felt more positive than neutral about the statement. While median scores rose modestly in the post-intervention assessment, standard deviations grew as well. This indicates a broader spread of scores, showing that among participants, results in terms of familial support were mixed. For a distribution breakdown numerically in pre- and post-intervention assessment, see Table 8:

Table 8: Personal Resilience Assessment, Pre/Post-Intervention Responses by Score

Category: Support from Family	VSD	SD	MD	N	MA	SA	VSA
My family really tries to help me.	2/0	0/0	4/2	0/1	1/1	1/0	0/1
I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	1/1	1/0	1/1	4/1	0/1	1/0	0/1
I can talk about my problems with my family.	4/1	2/0	1/0	0/2	0/1	0/0	1/1
My family is willing to help me make decisions.	2/1	0/0	1/0	5/1	0/2	0/0	0/1

Support from Friends

In this category, participants evaluated their level of support received related to LGBTQ+ identity or issues from friends or peers. Comparison of pre- and post-intervention median values and standard deviations are presented in Table 9:

Table 9: Perceived Support from Friends

	Pre-test median	Post-test median	Standard deviation pre/post	Median difference
Median values across category	**5.91**	**6.25**	**1.22/0.58**	**0.34**
My friends really try to help me.	5.88	5.80	1.17/0.75	*-0.02*
I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	6.38	6.20	0.99/0.75	*-0.18*
I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	5.38	6.80	2.0/0.40	1.42
I can talk about my problems with my friends.	6.00	6.20	0.71/0.40	0.02

In pre-intervention assessments, a median value of 5.91 construct-wide indicates participants generally assessed the support from their friends or peer group as strong. The highest median value (6.38) was for the statement 'I can count on my friends when things go wrong.' The lowest value (5.38) indicates participants only slightly agreed they could depend on friends in moments of sorrow or joy.

In post-intervention assessments, the median value construct-wide was 6.25. Participants agreed to being supported navigating LGBTQ+ identities or issues with their friends or peers. The highest median value (6.80) corresponded to the statement 'I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows'; this also represented the greatest net change in this category. In two areas ('my friends really try to help me' and 'I can

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count on my friends when things go wrong'), post-intervention mean values decreased slightly (5.80 and 6.20, respectively). As in the category of mentor or role model, post-intervention standard deviations decreased significantly, indicating a tighter range of scores and greater consistency of experience between participants. For a distribution breakdown numerically in pre- and post-intervention assessment, see Table 10:

Table 10: Personal Resilience Assessment, Pre/Post-Intervention Responses by Score

Category: Support from Friends	VSD	SD	DM	N	MA	SA	VSA
My friends really try to help me.	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/0	0/2	2/2	5/1
I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/0	0/1	2/2	5/2
I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	0/0	2/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/1	3/4
I can talk about my problems with my friends.	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/0	4/4	2/1

Support from an LGBTQ+ Community

In this category participants evaluated their level of support received from an LGBTQ+ community or group (social group, student organization, etc.) related to LGBTQ+ identity or issues. Comparison of pre- and post-intervention median values and standard deviations are presented in Table 11:

Table 11: Perceived Support from an LGBTQ+ Community

	Pre-test median	Post-test median	Standard deviation pre/post	Median difference
Median and standard deviation across category	3.63	5.15	1.83/1.09	1.52

My LGBTQ+ campus group is a place where I can meet other LGBTQ+ people.	3.88	5.20	1.62/0.98	1.32
My LGBTQ+ campus group provides a group of people with whom I can be myself.	4.13	5.00	1.96/1.10	0.87
I feel supported when I am with the members of my LGBTQ+ campus group.	3.25	5.40	1.98/1.02	2.15
My LGBTQ+ campus group provides a place where I can openly express my feelings	3.25	5.00	1.79/1.26	1.75

In pre-intervention assessments, the median score construct-wide was 3.63. Participants were neutral or denied having strong support among an LGBTQ+ community or group. The highest median score (4.13), indicating neutrality at best, corresponded to the statement 'My LGBTQ+ campus group provides a group of people with whom I can be myself'. Overall, participants' pre-test assessments demonstrated an apathy or slight dissociation from positive connections to an LGBTQ+ community.

The post-intervention median score (5.15), indicated participants slightly agreed they could rely upon LGBTQ+ communities or groups in discussing or navigating issues related to their LGBTQ+ identities. A median score of 5.40 corresponded to the statement 'I feel supported when I am with the members of my LGBTQ+ campus group' represented the greatest net change in this category. While not as significantly as in other categories, post-intervention standard deviations decreased, indicating slightly greater consistency of experience between participants. For a distribution breakdown numerically in pre- and post-intervention assessment, see Table 12:

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Table 12: Personal Resilience Assessment, Pre/Post-Intervention Responses by Score

Category: Support from an LGBTQ+ Community or Group	VSD	SD	MA	N	MA	SA	VSA
My LGBTQ+ group is a place where I can meet other LGBTQ+ people.	1/0	1/0	0/0	4/1	0/3	2/0	0/1
My LGBTQ+ group provides a group of people with whom I can be myself.	1/0	1/0	0/0	4/2	0/2	0/0	2/1
I feel supported when I am with the members of my LGBTQ+ group.	3/0	0/0	0/0	4/1	0/2	0/1	1/1
My LGBTQ+ group provides a place where I can openly express my feelings.	1/0	3/0	0/0	3/3	0/0	0/1	1/1

Summary of Findings

The HUES LGBTQ+ Mentoring Project was launched to determine if structured

mentorship and engagement with an LGBTQ+ community could provide students at ASU

struggling with their sexual and/or gender identities with the cultural capital and

emotional support to increase resilience, bolster identity affinity and salience, and

mitigate the effects of minority stress that frequently derail their academic persistence. In

summarizing the findings of this study, it is useful to return to the two original research

questions.

Mentoring, LGBTQ+ Identity Construction and Navigation

This study was developed in part to determine what the process of LGBTQ+ identity construction looks like for gender and sexual minority students experience at the institution, and how mentorship affects the perceived identities of these students.

For interview participants, lack of LGBTQ+ cultural and social capital was the primary barrier to construction and navigation of strong LGBTQ+ identities. This was fostered by identity- and disclosure-related anxiety, social isolation, loneliness and a perception of otherness and alienation that was, at various points, nearly socially incapacitating and precluded formation of the community membership and social bonds necessary to development of LGBTQ+ cultural and capital and both community and identity affinity. All three struggled with disclosure, concealing their sexual and gender identities, compartmentalizing their lives, and isolating themselves from peers and family. Alienated and lonely, Neil grew to resent his sexuality exhibiting internalized homophobia, negative identity self-concept, and low cultural LGBTQ+ cultural affinity lasting into adulthood.

It is also clear that negotiating identities – and more specifically, the stress of concealing them or managing disclosure – has impacted these students' academic trajectories, too. While all three interviewees characterized themselves as academically gifted and driven, fear of disclosure isolated them from peers and their academic departments. Social isolation, a sense of not belonging, and having nobody to share frustrations and personal struggles with took a toll on all three. Neil started and stopped out of graduate school three times before completing his degree, while Pat changed degree programs and career pathways entirely to find a community they felt they

belonged in. These experiences are a stark contrast to Pea, who found immediate acceptance upon coming out to peers and faculty, which significantly bolstered her departmental affinity and reduced the stress and anxiety she'd experienced at a previous institution.

Mentorship and LGBTQ+ Cultural Capital, Resilience, and Identity

A second component of this study was to determine how participation in an LGBTQ+ mentoring program effects the perceptions of participants in terms of their development of LGBTQ+ cultural capital and resilience, and how accrual of these aid participants in the adoption of a healthy, salient LGBTQ+ identity.

Qualitative data indicates mentorship positively affected participants in these areas, and that length of engagement with a mentor is a significant factor in these outcomes. Mentorship and the acculturation into larger LGBTQ+ communities allowed all three interviewees to accrue valuable cultural capital to varying degrees. New to the program, Pat demonstrated the least growth in terms of cultural capital, resilience, and identity salience. Research indicates mentorship follows a four-stage development cycle of initiation, cultivation, maturation and independence (see Appendix P). The initiation stage, while often the shortest, is also the most crucial, and is the period in which mentor and mentee bond, establishing the rapport and trust necessary for a successful mentoring relationship. Naturally timid, Pat's initiation phase was longer than those of Neal and Pea, who bonded with their mentors fairly quickly. Still, in determining the language and tools they needed to understand (and allow others to understand) their identities, identifying and articulating specific identity-related anxiety triggers, and focusing on development of coping strategies to mitigate that anxiety, Pat was able to steps to begin

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engaging more confidently within their communities and begin making breakthroughs in navigating the interplay between their gender and sexual identities.

Meanwhile, with their longer HUES affiliation, Neil and Pea exhibited greater development of LGBTQ+ cultural capital, resilience and identity salience. Moving into the final stages of a mentoring relationship – maturation and independence, characterized by growing mentee agency and a realignment as equal peers as the mentor facilitates the mentee's entrance into a larger community – Neil had developed a robust LGBTQ+ self-concept at exit from the program and was far less reticence in embracing his sexual orientation as a component of his larger salient identity. Armed with increased LGBTQ+ social and cultural capital, he had the confidence to explore deeper interpersonal and romantic relationships than previously possible. Pea, having established a strong rapport with her mentor, was moving quickly from the cultivation to maturation stages of mentorship; with a deep, trusting bond formed with her mentor, the goals developed early in her mentorship were paying rich dividends insofar as acculturation, entrance into larger community networks, and resilience development.

Data Triangulation

The emergent metanarrative of these interviews provides a rich, vibrant and sometimes heartrending – but often heartening and moving – account of these students' shared experiences. While less richly hued and personally compelling, comparisons of quantitative data from pre- and post-intervention personal resilience assessments substantiate the general themes running throughout the interviews.

Presence of mentors or LGBTQ+ role models. Of the four relationship categories represented on the personal resilience assessment, it is hardly surprising, given

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the overwhelmingly positive interactions described in interviews, that the presence of mentor figures/LGBTQ+ role models improved the dramatically upon participation in the HUES program across participants, eclipsing even the support participants felt they received from peers or friends. Nor is it surprising that, prior to program participation, HUES students rated the presence of an LGBTQ+ mentor or role model as something conspicuously absent in their lives. Navigation of unfamiliar, even threatening territory without the guidance of someone with shared lived experience was a refrain throughout all interviews.

Family dynamics and relationships. Quantitative data suggests an increased confidence in navigating relationships with families is a commonality shared among all HUES participants. While both pre- and post-intervention scores in this section were the lowest in the personal resilience inventory, a positive median value shift on post-inventory assessments in participants' assessment of their abilities to share problems and concerns with their families post-engagement with LGBTQ+ mentorship directly bears out the testimony of interview participants. Like the improved outlooks shared by Pea and Neal (and to a lesser degree Pat), there is reason to believe these can be attributed to encouragement, inspiration, confidence-building and a sense of identity affinity and pride instilled by mentorship. It is also noteworthy that just as HUES participants evaluated family relationships as the least robust among the relationship categories assessed, those were the relationships interview participants struggled with the most. That Neil and Pea's relationships with their parents shifted as they came to embrace Western notions of individualism – demonstrated by their determination to place their own happiness on equal footing with their need to respect their parents – indicates that mentorship and

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development of LGBTQ+ cultural affinity allowed them to successfully navigate their cultural and sexual identities in a way that allowed their LGBTQ+ identities to achieve greater salience.

Support from friends and peers. With participants in the HUES program actually reporting marginally lower connectivity to and support from friends and peers on the post-intervention assessment, the values in this category initially seem counterintuitive. However, as participants in the research study became embedded in new LGBTQ+ communities and increasingly viewed their mentors as sources of guidance and support, their reliance upon existing networks – academic cohorts and peer groups – diminished. Interviews were completed before post-intervention data was collected, so there was no opportunity to address the phenomenon directly with research study participants, but it stands to reason that as participants become engaged within LGBTQ+ communities, the shared experience of the LGBTQ+ networks provide a 'safer space' to seek the emotional support they previously went to peers for. It's reasonable to assume participants' perceptions of the levels of support from their friends diminished in contrast to that they received through mentorship and engagement with LGBTQ+ communities.

Further credence that mentoring fundamentally shifts the group memberships and relationships for participants can be deduced from post-intervention evaluation of the level to which participants reported they can share joys and sorrows with peers and friends, which did increase over pre-intervention scores. Across interviews, increased openness, transparency, and willingness to engage with peers – coupled with less social inhibition in doing so – was an emergent effect of mentorship.

Connection and affinity to LGBTQ+ communities. Due to the demographics of the research interview group – specifically, the fact that two were international students, one a student new to their academic program, the institution and the state, and all three graduate students – the results of the pre- and post-intervention personal resilient assessments verified the lack of LGBTQ+ community engagement among interviewees was not isolated. Pre-intervention data indicated HUES participants did not specifically seek LGBTQ+ communities or see these communities as integral to their identity development, exploration or psychosocial support; this aligned with the experiences of two interviewees, including one (Neal) who actively avoided public interaction with LGBTQ+ communities. Just as the prospect of increased community connection became a salient goal for interviewees over the course of their mentorship, all attributing positive change in their ability to navigate their sexual and/or gender identities, acceptance of their identities, and increased comfort in disclosing these identities to non-LGBTQ+ peers with the inspiration, support, and guidance they found through LGBTQ+ community membership, so did participants completing the post-inventory assessment indicate an increased affinity for these communities.

Both quantitative and qualitative data support the theory that increased LGBTQ+ acculturation and mentoring support have bolstered the general resilience of program participants. In this study, participants' post-intervention scores showed measurable positive change in terms of emotional support, guidance and freedom of expression/ability to be open across a range of interpersonal domains (friends, family and communities). In personal interviews, participants not were able to identify specific ways

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and situations in which they had become more resilient, but were able to specifically identify the ways in which they mindfully maintain and build upon that resilience.

Emergent Theories

Ultimately, though the HUES study encapsulates just a small fraction of the collective experience of LGBTQ+ students at Arizona State University and further study is certainly needed, some generalized theories can be drawn from this project.

First, participation in an LGBTQ+ mentoring program, in which both mentor and mentee share the similar experience of being a sexual or gender minority and have faced similar challenges, is an effective means of helping students develop the LGBTQ+ cultural capital and resilience to develop a healthy, salient LGBTQ+ identity characterized by positive self-concept, an asset-based developmental mindset, and robust identity affinity. These effects are cumulative and gradual; mentorship is a long-term relationship by both mentor and mentee in which trust, rapport, and authenticity must be established and reinforced in order for the mentee to most fully benefit from the relationship.

Secondly, although advances have been made in terms of LGBTQ+ acceptance and representation, both on a national scale and institutionally, these students continue facing significant barriers in constructing and navigating robust, resilient LGBTQ+ identities, particularly if they are simultaneously balancing the pressures exerted by conflicting cultural identities, as in the cases of Neil and Pea. Primary barriers include anxiety over disclosure and compartmentalization of personal and community identities that result in social isolation, community disconnect, and alienation exacerbated by

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withdrawal from families, peers, and other support structures. Secondary barriers include identity non-affinity and misperceptions about LGBTQ+ people that preclude entrance into larger LGBTQ+ communities where shared experience and community support are critical in mitigating the effects of minority stress. Collectively, these challenges are an impediment to LGBTQ+ students' academic persistence and achievement.

From the accumulated stories of HUES participants, it becomes clear that mentorship specifically within the context of LGBTQ+ identity development and acculturation plays a key role in helping students navigate the hurdles of achieving identity salience. For each participant, regardless of family background or culture, identity construction pre-mentorship was a period characterized by angst, frustration, and isolation. Through mentorship specifically around the navigation of LGBTQ+ identities and community exploration, each gained comfort in disclosing their identities and de-compartmentalizing their interpersonal and sexual or gender identities, gained valuable community connections and support, gained the social currency to navigate LGBTQ+ communities, and found greater satisfaction in life generally. Furthermore, interpersonal mentorship fosters and reaffirms participants' senses of belonging within the university and its communities, increases their confidence in their own abilities to overcome obstacles, and encourages them to 'dream big' and envision their own place in the world.

Mentorship provides a gateway to larger LGBTQ+ community membership and affinity, which are absolutely imperative to overcoming negative identity-related self-concept, accrual of LGBTQ+ cultural competencies, and navigation of students' multiple (academic, social, and personal) identities. Community membership not only offers LGBTQ+ students support in developing robust salient identities and resilience against

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minority stressors, but is critical in maintaining resiliency. The presence of a stable

LGBTQ+ community is a grounding influence as individuals progress through the

ongoing work of achieving identity synthesis, and losing community support, once

fostered, can lead to identity foreclosure or disruption. Finally, mentorship and

development of LGBTQ+ identity and community affinity foster civic responsibility and

greater urgency to 'pay it forward' in helping others navigate their emerging identities

and the challenges therein. Mentorship thus becomes a pipeline elevating both the mentee

and the larger community, with mentees becoming more interested in or engaged with

issues around social justice or community activism.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Implications of Research Findings

As both the personal interviews and the quantitative data of this study suggest, mentorship plays a key role in mitigating the challenges that LGBTQ+ students face at this institution. The role modeling and community development mentorship facilitates can offer rich rewards for participants in mentoring programs and lead to stronger institutional engagement and academic persistence and success. Just as significantly, though, the emergent metanarrative offers some substantial data regarding the mentoring process.

The Importance of Support at all Levels

Considerable institutional focus, both here and nationwide, focuses on creating dynamic, supportive and inclusive co-curricular environments at the undergraduate level, particularly for incoming first-year students, with first-year on-campus living requirements, mandatory freshman seminars on adapting to college life or study skills, and other programming designed to ease the college transition. This study highlights the importance of institutional social affinity and community engagement for LGBTQ+ students not only at the undergraduate level and through the initial LGBTQ+ identity discovery and navigational processes, but also throughout students' time at these institutions. Graduate and transfer students, for instance, may never live on campus and be immersed in the larger campus culture, and therefore be unaware of opportunities and resources. Many LGBTQ+ students, if given the option, may opt to live off-campus for fear of roommate difficulties or other interpersonal conflict.

Furthermore, this nation's higher education system is rapidly improving its understanding and serving of the co-curricular needs of LGBTQ+ students. LGBTQ+ support clubs and centers becoming increasingly common both within the K12 system and at colleges and universities nationwide, and universities must be ready to provide structured support allowing an uninterrupted service pipeline. For undergraduate students entering this institution from a high school with a robust gay-straight alliance or graduate students coming from an undergraduate institution with a highly visible LGBTQ+ or multicultural community center or resources, the transition to an institution lacking these can be a crippling experience.

Mentoring as a Sustained Relationship and the Importance of Peer Dynamics

As discussed briefly elsewhere, participant interviews presented a compelling argument that in order to be effective, mentorship must be sustained and intentionally developed; whereas coaching or teaching may be transactional, mentorship is a long-term relationship requiring the establishment of trust. In interviews, it was readily apparent that mentorship is not a quick-fix solution to the challenges facing these students, but a relationship that must be established and nurtured by both mentor and mentee in order for its full effects to be seen. Additionally, though one participant (Pea) benefitted from the academic guidance her mentor could provide as a faculty member in a field adjacent to her own, the relationships of all three participants to their mentors, regardless of their mentor's institutional affiliation and background, was that of a peer within the LGBTQ+ community. Though the guidance of their mentors influenced their interactions with their departmental advisors or academic mentors, the mentoring relationships explored in this study informed, rather than superceded, the relationships each had within their academic

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programs, reaffirming the importance of strong LGBTQ+ peer groups in strengthening the connections and affinity these students develop for the larger institution.

The Role of Cultural Expectation in LGBTQ+ Identity Development

The nuanced influences of larger cultural paradigms in informing LGBTQ+ identity also played a crucial factor in this study. Though not initially a primary area of focus, over the course of the study it became apparent that although all three interview participants faced common challenges in the development and navigation of emerging LGBTQ+ identities, the manifestation and impact of these challenges was influenced by larger cultural contexts.

For instance, while each struggled with the stress of coming out to family members and expressed significant anxiety around disclosure, the cause of anxiety for Neil and Pea was centered around the impact their sexual identities would have on their families insofar as the social stigma their coming out would have on their families' relationships and social standing within their larger communities. Their disclosural motivation was a matter of family responsibility, with both subjugating their individual identities in order to protect their families from the judgment of their communities. Meanwhile, Pat's perceptions of their family's acceptance and understanding of their identities was influenced in part by the American sociopolitical landscape; a significant component of their reluctance to engage with and disclose their identities to their family was their parents' political affiliations. At several points in their interview sessions, Pat identified the 2016 presidential election as a turning point in their relationship with family members and the cause of a significant rift.

Cultural norming came up several times throughout interviews with Neil and Pea and indicated an awareness of cultural upbringing and difference in the development of an LGBTQ+ identity. This was most significantly displayed through Neil's growing disenfranchisement with Chinese culture and his assertion that the reluctance within Chinese society to discuss matters of sexuality was a "violence from the majority" and his questioning of whether the coming-out story depicted in the 2018 film *Love, Simon* was representative of the American LGBTQ+ experience. Cultural norms were also addressed in Pea's admission that American cultural conventions around familiarity and physical displays of platonic affection remained a challenge for her, her confession that "she has no gaydar" when it comes to American women, and her acknowledgement that lack of understanding around American dating and social conventions made her more nervous about dating American women than other Chinese women.

The family-centric focus of Neil and Pea's concern can likely be explained by the collectivist nature of Chinese society, while Pat's more self-focused concern reflects the dominant individualist nature of American society. These findings indicate that the larger role of cultural norms and dimensions in group identity development, as explored further by Hofestede (2001) and Brewer and Venaik (2011), plays a significant role in the development of an LGBTQ+ identity. In the case of these students, negotiating cultural landscapes (both its social and political dimensions) occurred simultaneously with and was integral to navigation of their LGBTQ+ identities. It demonstrates that although the LGBTQ+ experience – and the minority stress it engenders – has universal constants, nuances of are inextricably tied to the formation of larger cultural identities.

Disclosure and LGBTQ+ Identity: A Critical Measure

Finally, the study indicates that the role of disclosure and decision-making processes behind it plays a more significant and ongoing role in LGBTQ+ identity development than previously believed, particularly in its importance to the mitigation of minority stress and development of identity salience. Whereas previous LGBTQ+ identity models focus on relationship milestones or community membership as barometers of LGBTQ+ identity salience, and treat attaining comfort in identity disclosure as a hallmark of specific stages/phases of development, interviews over the course of this study indicate disclosure and the motivations behind disclosure or nondisclosure are sufficiently critical to LGBTQ+ identity development to merit continued study.

Our Many Hues: Collective Narrative, Shared Experience, and a Call to Action

A defining tenet of this institution's charter is that it seeks to be measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed (ASU, 2019). As an institution, its community – faculty, staff and students – take pride in and are inspired by this guiding principle. It carries an implicit underlying assumption that students of all backgrounds, abilities, cultures, values and beliefs should and can find their own space to thrive. This university has built its identity on this and invests substantially in the holistic student experience, both in the classroom and in the larger campus community, with the belief that an immersive, engaging university experience benefits its students, its communities, and society.

However, the university defines success numerically – through the number of students it attracts and enrolls, through persistence and graduation rates, through grade-

point averages, student research output, and student career placement and trajectories. Its administration defines success in the number of opportunities provided its students for personal and academic enrichment, for community development, and in the way it fosters opportunities for students to grow into leaders, innovators, and community members. Offering a place for all students to become anything they want or need to be gives them agency. This is the philosophy underlying its student-driven, staff supported engagement model; the university's role as an institution is to provide the space and the resources to support the student experience, not determine it. By the numbers, the university is succeeding at its mission – the institution has been on an upward trajectory for well over a decade, breaking enrollment and graduation records, eclipsing other institutions in research spending and climbing national rankings. By all numeric accounts, ASU is doing a good job.

What the numbers can't tell us, though, are the experiences of the university's students. That's why the stories collected and pieced together here are so important. Their stories have been at the heart of every step in the development of the HUES LGBTQ+ mentoring program. They guided me though the initial needs assessments and interviews, when I first realized the extent to which greater community connection was needed in order for these students to reach their potential. They made me realize that mentorship might provide that connection, and they shaped the development, assessment, and continual improvement to the program.

Setting out to examine how this institution was serving its LGBTQ+ students, I was startled by early revelations. I spoke with a student leader, engaged and committed to advocacy for the LGBTQ+ student community and an outstanding future public servant

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who had only stumbled upon student engagement opportunities after three years at the institution. I wondered how much more impactful they could have been on their community had they connected earlier. I empathized with a graduating student who first came out at fourteen but confessed to loneliness, lack of connection and cluelessness in approaching – no less dating – people he was interested. His lack of rudimentary LGBTQ+ cultural currency surprised me, given the degree to which he otherwise had accepted and integrated his LGBTQ+ identity. As a passionate student affairs professional and a believer in the importance of the college experience in forming one's lifelong identities and social competencies, I grieved for a student who felt so marginalized and uncomfortable within the university environment that he avoided campus entirely, eventually attempting to complete his degree online through another institution. Originally scheduled to graduate over a year ago, he still hasn't.

Listening to the stories of these research participants, learning about their backgrounds, concerns and stresses, and their challenges and triumphs was at once bittersweet and encouraging. I recalled my own years of uncertainty, distress, and the overwhelming struggle to find a place I fit, and wondered why, after all these years – decades, actually – LGBTQ+ students still had to struggle with the same challenges. For how inclusive this university professes to be, and for all the data demonstrating the importance of engagement for this vulnerable student population, the fact that more hasn't been done was frustrating.

At the same time, these sessions proved cathartic. When Neil likened his excitement in first realizing there was a larger, supportive community of gay men out there to "finding a new continent," I understood precisely what he meant. When he

announced, in his final interview, that he had met someone and they had started dating, I couldn't have been prouder of him for overcoming his fear of embracing his community, realizing that "they are not monsters…but are just like you [him]." When Pat, who broke down in tears frequently in our first meeting, started smiling and bringing home-baked cookies to interviews, I was thrilled to see their growing comfort within what they increasingly saw as a safe space. And when Pea described her first interaction with her own new LGBTQ+ network, saying it gave her hope, "helped [her] visualize a life," and made her feel like she finally had a family here, I couldn't come up with the words to describe my happiness. When she texted me a month after the study concluded, saying she'd gone home to China and come out to her family, I actually choked up a bit.

These stories are about success. These stories are not the isolated experiences of a handful of LGBTQ+ students at this institution. They are the shared cultural experience of all in the LGBTQ+ community. These stories deserve to be heard, and this university has an obligation under its charter to hear them and respond.

Currently ASU does not have a dedicated space for its LGBTQ+ students – a place explicitly created where LGBTQ+ students can go knowing they will not face bias, confrontation, or conflict around their identities, and where they feel comfortable examining these identities. This is what early needs assessments indicate, what interviews say, and this is what their stories illustrate. The institution has a mandate to create inclusive, intersectional spaces where students of all identities and cultures may explore their commonality. It has removed community siloes and encourages students to critically examine and navigate the confluences of their myriad identities, encouraging all students to explore and better understand their place in a larger society. In doing so, it strives to

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create a culture where all students, regardless of personal history, background, or identity may find commonality. This is the space Student and Cultural Engagement/International Student Engagement and its cultural identity-based coalitions exist in. These are safe spaces, but they are also brave spaces. These are spaces where students can explore what it means to be black, or gay, or an indigenous person within the context of a larger community – but not a place to significantly explore what it means to be black, gay, or indigenous in the first place. Though the matter seems one of nuance or semantics, it's not insignificant. Before students can bravely explore what it means to navigate their cultural, political and social landscapes from the intersections of their various identities, they must have a space to become comfortable inhabiting those individual identities. Before they can integrate an identity into the larger schema of their interpersonal make-up, they must understand what it is to inhabit that identity.

The model ASU ascribes to assumes students enter the institution with a salient identity: international students bring the traditions and currencies of their native cultures; students of minority ethnic or religious backgrounds arrive with the rich capital afforded them by their backgrounds. For these students, navigating and thriving in ASU's community entails finding the dovetails between their culture of origin and the institution's. Many but not all LGBTQ+ students are in an altogether unique situation upon entrance to the university, though, as an LGBTQ+ identity is arrived *at* rather than *with*. As in the case of Pat, Neil and Pea, these students come into an LGBTQ+ identity *tabula rasa* and must simultaneously explore what it means to be part of a sexual or gender minority community and a part of their larger community. The attrition rates of LGBTQ+ college students nationwide – as discussed elsewhere by Nicolazzo and others,

and borne out by the challenges faced by Pat, Neil and Pea – bear testament to the difficulty of threading together an understanding of one's own personal identity and at the same time finding a place in the larger university community.

This is why a visible space dedicated to the LGBTQ+ community is important. ASU promotes and provides both safe and brave spaces for its sexual and gender minority students, but further efforts institution-wide must be made to create a *comfortable* space for these students, too. Precedent exists within ASU: considerable resources are invested in providing incoming first-year students, international students, veteran students, students with disabilities and even transfer and graduate students with the space and resources to explore what it means to be a minority student in the context of their new environment. These resources give these students a space to explore what it means what it means to be a minority – a college student, a veteran, a differently abled person, someone from a different culture or society – while simultaneously finding the cultural and material resources to thrive at the university both within that cultural context and within the larger context of 'student' alongside a community of peers and faculty or staff who have 'been there' and implicitly understand the challenges of navigating that transition.

For students with well-developed, salient LGBTQ+ identities who have found the support and resources to develop the cultural currency to be – first and foremost – a member of an LGBTQ+ community, the student-driven programming and resources provided by SCE/ISE and the Rainbow Coalition are enough. For the Pats, Neils, and Peas of the university, though – students struggling to reconcile a fundamental core component of their personal identity – providing visible, accessible support resources and

a sense of community are important. This is vitally important to their development. Students ask for these spaces at the institution; mentorship and the community development entailed can provide students the resilience-building capacity to create their own spaces to grown and flourish in their personal identities – the stories of its students indicate this.

The university's leadership tells students the institution is an inclusive environment, a space for all students, and that it does not need a specific one for LGBTQ+ students. But unless they are specifically involved in its LGBTQ+ student organizations or leadership, students do not feel they have access to it. This institution needs to provide them the resources and agency to create that space safely and feel like they have community. That is where mentorship comes in. ASU prides itself on offering a student-driven, staff-supported engagement model. Mentoring at its heart is student-driven. It is staff- or faculty- or peer-responsive. It caters to the demographic-specific community identity and resilience development of these students not to isolate them from the larger university community or to eschew inclusion, but as a means of entrance to that larger inclusive community.

The HUES program is a good starting point. Its mentors are committed and impactful; a proud moment for me was when they recently were nominated for and received the Committee for Campus Inclusion's Catalyst Award for igniting and creating transformation within the institution. With the proper support, HUES has the potential to positively impact the experiences of many more students, touching the lives of faculty and staff and creating a stronger, multigenerational LGBTQ+ community within the institution. It has the potential to become the entry point into a larger institutional culture

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for LGBTQ+ students, a cultural nursery where gender and sexual minority students can feel supported in exploring and coming to understand what it means to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, asexual or queer.

<div align="center">**Program Sustainability**</div>

To reach its full potential and ensure its sustainability, HUES needs to be implemented at a higher institutional level. Relocating HUES – housing it under the Vice Provost for Inclusion and Community Engagement or the Dean of Students Office, for instance – would offer it the institutional support and wider visibility needed to thrive, grow and support the needs of ASU's broader LGBTQ+ student community.

Current Limitations

While yielding rich qualitative data, the HUES study is only a starting point in more fully understanding the complex needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ students at this institution. This current study had several significant limitations, with sample size and demographic and study duration being the most notable; by expanding HUES into a university-wide enterprise, there is an opportunity to develop a testbed for continued LGBTQ+ student engagement research. Addressing the following areas will not only yield richer and more comprehensive data, but will improve upon the fidelity of the study.

Sample size. Though the qualitative component of this study was designed to include the case studies of just three students as a matter of manageability, the initial research concept called for a significantly larger quantitative data set of minimally 25 students completing both the pre- and post-intervention personal resilience assessment. Due to staffing resources within HUES' home unit, recruitment challenges limited the

number of students entering the program. Though program membership continued to grow throughout the semester, data from participants joining the program and completing the pre-intervention personal resilience inventory more than a month after program launch was not included in pre/post comparisons. In order to ensure broader representation of both student demographic and experience, future study (as well as the continued viability of the HUES program) require a significantly larger participant population. Grounded in an action research paradigm, HUES is a social laboratory. The three years' work with ASU's LGBTQ+ student community resulting in the mentoring program has scratched the surface of the institution's LGBTQ+ student experience; moving forward, it is important to plumb the depths. Expanding HUES into a broader initiative would not only allow wider impact among ASU's estimated 6,000 to 12,000 LGBTQ+ students, but would ensure the program's simultaneous evolution with their needs.

Sample demographic. A majority of early HUES participants, including those completing the pre-intervention personal resilience assessment in August, were graduate students, and their experience with the university may differ from undergraduates, who typically live on campus for their first year of study and are thus more likely to be connected to the campus community. Although some representation was achieved across the sexual and gender identity spectrum, multiple communities (FtM and MtF transgender, asexual, bisexual male) were not represented in the larger HUES population. Additionally, in such a small sample size, communities may not have been represented proportionally. For instance, preliminary research conducted through a sample of 55 LGBTQ+ undergraduate students indicated 75% identified as bisexual or sexually fluid,

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while only two HUES members at launch identified as such. Nor were any members of the program involved in the Rainbow Coalition or other LGBTQ+ student communities on campus. Finally, the experiences of two research study participants of international origin, while rich in information, may not be representative either of the institution's domestic student population or of students from other international communities. As discussed elsewhere, evidence exists that the LGBTQ+ experience, though sharing common challenges, is not universal, with specific sociopolitical dimensions unique to participants' cultures of origin influencing their perceptions and navigation of an LGBTQ+ identity. A larger population size in future studies would allow not only for greater representation across the LGBTQ+ spectrum, but of how an LGBTQ+ identity is developed and navigated in conjunction with multiple identities (ethnicities, cultural and religious backgrounds).

Study duration. All pre-intervention quantitative data came from participants entering HUES in August; all post-intervention quantitative data was collected in December. Because a majority of HUES participants entered the program mid-semester, only pre-intervention personal resilient assessment data could be used for them in this current study, as post-intervention data would be skewed by shorter mentoring participation times. Both current mentoring research and the experiences of the three interview participants suggest the benefits of mentorship are cumulative; therefore, tracking and study of post-intervention quantitative data and qualitative interviews in any subsequent research into mentoring efficacy and outcomes should be conducted longitudinally at program entrance, the one-year, and two-year marks.

Recommendations for Ongoing Study

While the HUES study focuses on the experiences and challenges LGBTQ+ students have faced in developing and navigating their emerging identities and established a generalized connection between LGBTQ+ peer mentorship and increased ability to accrue cultural competencies and reinforce identity affinity, the specific mechanisms and impact of mentorship in contributing to these changes should be more comprehensively measured. Pre- and post-intervention administration of the personal resilience assessment suggested a correlation between mentorship and perceived support from family and peers and the influence of role models and an LGBTQ+ community around resilience development in creating and managing an LGBTQ+ identity; further examination of the mentoring relationships developed in the program may provide additional insight on the specific elements of and approaches to mentorship that most impacted development of these resilience factors. Further study should specifically include the perspectives of both mentees and their mentors to examine the dynamics of these relationships; although interviews with mentors about experiences working with their students were intentionally not addressed in this study in order to center this research on the disclosure and experience of participants, interviews with mentoring pairs, focus groups consisting of mentors and/or mentees, and collection of mentoring logs from mentors may further illuminate the ways in which mentorship affected mentee's personal identity development and resilience. Additionally, further qualitative research in the form of continued interviews with a new group of participants from a broader or different demographic range (undergraduate students, students currently involved in LGBTQ+ communities and with varying levels of LGBTQ+ identity salience,

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students representing different places on the LGBTQ+ continuum, and students with other national, religious, or cultural backgrounds) will be useful in determining which perceptions, experiences and challenges exposed in this study can be generalized to a broader LGBTQ+ community and which may be demographically or situationally unique.

Recommendations for Program Development

To ensure the HUES program more broadly addresses the influence of the multiple identities and related experiences students bring into the institution, further programming around the situating of their LGBTQ+ identities within the context of larger intercultural perspectives and challenges should be developed. While current programming explores the development of LGBTQ+ specific cultural capital as a means of developing identity resilience, explorations of intersectionality – the power dynamics inherent to students' multiple identities and their intersections – will allow students to more fully frame their LGBTQ+ identities within larger cultural narratives and lead to greater agency-creation. Not only will this foster greater holistic identity development and resilience for program participants, but it will provide greater, more generalized data regarding the LGBTQ+ student experience both at this institution and on a larger scale.

Additionally, as the HUES program grows, it will be important to create a more comprehensive, robust mentor training. While the initial cohort of mentors was selected based on the level of experience mentors in working with LGBTQ+ populations specific to community engagement or previous mentoring experience, a central key to the sustainability of HUES is the creation of a mentoring pipeline, with mentees in the program returning as mentors to incoming participants. While the experience and

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perspectives these would-be mentors have gained through their own participation in the program will prove valuable in working with their own mentees, specific training around student and identity development theory, intercultural competencies, and agency-creation – in addition to the mechanics of mentorship, intentional conversations, and goal-setting – will be vital to the success of their own mentees.

Changing the Narrative: Further Recommendations

Should an LGBTQ+ mentorship program be adopted elsewhere within the institution, the HUES program provides a promising template for resilience- and identity-based mentorship. However, with the right support, it also has the potential to become something much larger and capable of sustained, university-wide impact: an initiative connecting student, staff and faculty LGBTQ+ communities at this institution, offering mentorship, community engagement programming, and social networking opportunities for the continuing psychosocial and identity development support of all of us. ASU's LGBTQ+ community is a small one even within this large university. In numerous conversations I've had with students, faculty, staff and administration over the course of the past three years, a recurrent source of frustration from all parties is how fractured and isolated we remain. Using HUES as a community platform holds the potential to bridge these disparate groups – offering LGBTQ+ faculty and staff the opportunity to make a broader, tangible impact, providing a sense of belonging and affinity for students and creating a robust environment that truly fosters the inclusivity that this institution idealizes. In leveraging the LGBTQ+ community's collective lived experience, resources, and passion, ASU can leverage the voices of these faculty, staff and students to help its students create a new narrative: one of hope, inspiration, resilience and success.

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APPENDIX A
2016 ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY

Dear Member of the ASU Student Community:

The Committee for Campus Inclusion (CCI) is committed to the academic and non-academic success of all students at Arizona State University (ASU). We work closely in conjunction with the Rainbow Coalition and Office of Student and Cultural Engagement. We are currently conducting a study to determine what unique needs the LGBTQ+ student population at ASU have in association with student success, what obstacles LGBTQ+ students perceive as barriers in their success at ASU, and what resources LGBTQ+ students would like to see a greater focus or emphasis on at ASU.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in an interview about your experiences as part of the LGBTQ+ community at ASU. We expect the interview will take about 30-45 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have been recruited for participation through your association with ASU's Rainbow Coalition or membership in an LGBTQ+ student club or organization.

The long-term goal of this study is to provide baseline student data and best practice guidelines for development of a new peer-to-peer and group mentoring program for LGBTQ+ students at ASU. Our LGBTQ+ students are unique in their specific psychosocial and non-academic needs at the university, and we sincerely hope you will help us positively redefine ASU's relationship with its LGBTQ+ student population.

Any responses you provide will be kept confidential, and all contact information and correspondence will be maintained only in secure electronic files on authentication-protected university servers. Results of this study may be used in reports, presentations or publications, but participants will only be identified by pseudonym. Audio transcripts and/or a written summary of the interview will be available to you upon request. Due to the sensitive nature of some questions regarding your experiences as a part of the LGBTQ+ community, some topics or questions in this survey may be emotionally uncomfortable to some participants. If you become uncomfortable with the interview at any point, you retain the right to decline to answer any questions or discontinue the interview.

By clicking on this link and submitting the brief participant screening survey, you are stating you are aware of all terms and potential risks associated with participation in this research and consent to participate, and that you are at least 18 years of age. If selected, you will be contacted by a member of our research team within 48 hours.

Thank you,

Zachary Reeves-Blurton and Danah Henriksen, Ph.D., Co-Investigators

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team—Zachary Reeves-Blurton at Zachary.Blurton@asu.edu or Danah Henriksen at Danah.Henriksen@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480)965-6788.

Preliminary Interview: LGBTQ+ students, campus climate, and resources at Arizona State University

1. How do you identify yourself?
    a. Gay male
    b. Lesbian female
    c. Bisexual male
    d. Bisexual female
    e. Asexual male
    f. Asexual female
    g. Transgender male (FTM)
    h. Transgender female (MTF)
    i. Genderqueer
    j. Other

2. What is your academic level at ASU? (check all that apply)
    a. First-year undergraduate
    b. Second-year undergraduate
    c. Third-year undergraduate
    d. Fourth+ year undergraduate
    e. International
    f. Transfer
    g. First-year master's
    h. Returning master's
    i. First-year doctoral
    j. Returning doctoral

3. How well supported, in your opinion, is the LGBTQ+ student community at ASU?
    a. Very well supported
    b. Adequately supported
    c. Neither supported nor unsupported
    d. Inadequately supported
    e. Very poorly supported

4. Do you feel that 'safe spaces' are available on campus to members of the LGBTQ+ student community?
    a. ASU provides a very safe environment to LGBTQ+ students
    b. ASU provides a reasonably safe environment to LGBTQ+ students
    c. ASU does not adequately provide a safe environment to LGBTQ+ students
    d. ASU does not provide a safe environment to LGBTQ+ students at all
    e. Unsure

5. How important are 'safe spaces' in which to interact with other LGBTQ+ students to you?
   a. Very important
   b. Important
   c. Neither important nor unimportant
   d. Fairly unimportant
   e. Not important at all

6. How strong is your personal support network in regards to talking about LGBTQ+ issues?
   a. I have a very strong support system
   b. I have a moderately strong support system
   c. I have neither a strong nor weak support system
   d. I have a fairly weak support system
   e. I have no support system

7. How important is a personal support network in regards to LGBTQ+ issues to you?
   a. Very important
   b. Moderately important
   c. Neither important nor unimportant
   d. Fairly unimportant
   e. Not important at all

8. How 'out' are you?
   a. I am out to everybody
   b. I am out to friends and family
   c. I am out to only certain friends and family
   d. I am out to very few people
   e. I am not out at all
   f. Prefer not to answer

9. If you are not out or are only out to some, what factors keep you from coming out more?
   a. Fear of social stigma or ostracism
   b. Family pressure/fear of disappointment
   c. Fear of physical danger
   d. I do not believe it is important for others to know my sexual orientation/gender identity
   e. Lack of support network
   f. Prefer not to answer

10. If you are not currently out or are only out to some, would you come out if you were supported in the process?

a. Yes, definitely
b. Yes, most likely
c. I do not know
d. No, most likely not
e. No, definitely not

11. Do you attend LGBTQ+ club or organization events?
a. Yes
b. No
c. I would, but do not know how to get involved
d. I do not, and am not interested in being involved

12. Do you specifically seek out other LGBTQ+ students or community members for social (non-sexual) interaction?
a. Often – many of my friends and acquaintances are LGBTQ+
b. Sometimes – some of my friends and acquaintances are LGBTQ+
c. I neither seek out nor avoid members of the LGBTQ+ community
d. Rarely – I have few LGBTQ+ friends or acquaintances
e. Never – I do not have LGBTQ+ friends or acquaintances

13. How important are non-sexual relationships with other members of the LGBTQ+ community to you?
a. Very important
b. Moderately important
c. Neither important nor unimportant
d. Fairly unimportant
e. Not important at all

14. Do you have a mentor/s within the LGBTQ+ community?
a. Yes
b. No

15. If 'yes' to number 14 above, how important is this relationship in your life?
a. Very important – my mentor has shaped my LGBTQ+ identity greatly and is a strong role model
b. Moderately important – my mentor has shaped my LGBTQ+ identity somewhat and is a role model
c. Neither important nor unimportant – my role model/mentor has had a negligible impact on my LGBTQ+ identity or is not a strong role model
d. Unimportant – my mentor has not had an impact on my LGBTQ+ identity or is not a strong role model

16. If 'yes' to number 14 above, how often do you go to your role model/mentor for advice related to LGBTQ+ issues?
a. Often

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b. Sometimes
c. Rarely
d. Never

17. If 'no' to number 14 above, why not?
   a. I have a strong support network
   b. I do not know how to find an LGBTQ+ mentor
   c. I do not want to disclose my sexual orientation/gender identity
   d. I do not feel the need for an LGBTQ mentor

18. If an LGBTQ+ mentoring program were available on campus, how likely would you be to participate in it?
   a. Very likely
   b. Likely
   c. Neither likely nor unlikely
   d. Unlikely
   e. Very unlikely

19. If you were to take part in an LGBTQ+ mentoring program, you would find it most useful for your mentor to be:
   a. An undergraduate student
   b. A graduate student
   c. Faculty/staff

20. If an LGBTQ+
21. + mentoring program were available on campus, would you be more likely to participate in it as a mentor, a mentee (protégé), or both?
   a. Mentor
   b. Mentee
   c. Both

22. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community and ASU student, what qualities/roles would you look for in a mentor?
   a. Social networking with other LGBTQ+ students
   b. Support in coming out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community
   c. Support in navigating relationships within the LGBTQ+ community
   d. Academic support as an LGBTQ+ student
   e. Other (please explain)

23. As a member of the LGBTQ+ student community at ASU, what are some of the most important concerns to you? In what ways can ASU best support you as an LGBTQ+ individual? (please explain)

24. If you would like to be a part of this continued study or have questions about this survey, please provide an email address by which we may contact you: _____

Thank you for completing this survey! Your time and consideration are a valuable contribution toward our efforts to create a stronger, more vibrant LGBTQ+ student community at ASU.

APPENDIX B
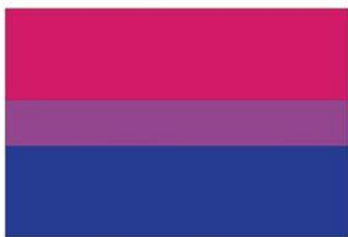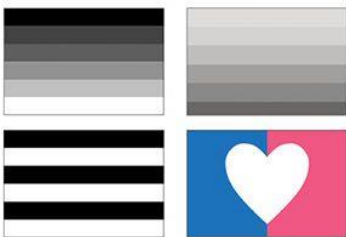FLAGS REPRESENTING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

Gay Pride

Leather Pride
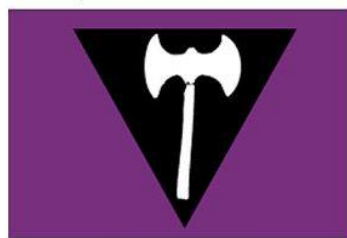
Bear Pride

Bisexual Pride

Straight Pride

Lipstick Lesbian Pride

Fat Fetish Pride
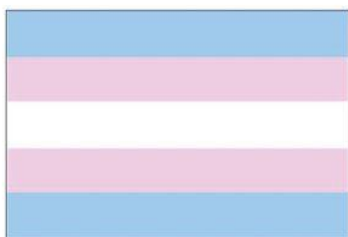
Straight Allies

Lesbian Pride

Asexual Pride

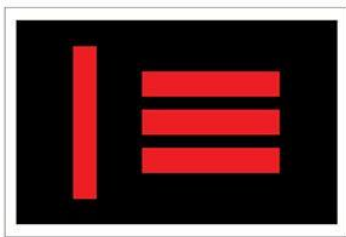Pansexual Pride

Polyamorous Pride

Transgender Pride

Intersex Pride

Genderqueer Pride

Rubber Pride

Master/Slave Pride

Feather (Drag) Pride

APPENDIX C
LGBTQ+ IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Vivian Cass's Homosexual Identity Model (1979)

Coming out is a life – long process of exploring one's sexual orientation and gay/lesbian identity and sharing it with family, friends, co-workers and the world. It is one of the most significant developmental processes in the lives of LGBT people. Coming out is about recognizing, accepting, expressing and sharing ones' sexual orientation with oneself and others.

Stage 1: Identity Confusion
This is the "Who am I?" stage associated with the feeling that one is different from peers, accompanied by a growing sense of personal alienation. The person begins to be conscious of same-sex feelings or behaviors and to label them as such. It is rare at this stage for the person to disclose inner turmoil to others.

Stage 2: Identity Comparison
This is the rationalization or bargaining stage where the person thinks, "I may be a homosexual, but then again I may be bisexual," "Maybe this is just temporary," or, "My feelings of attraction are simply for just one other person of my own sex and this is a special case." There is a heightened sense of not belonging anywhere with the corresponding feeling that "I am the only one in the world like this."

Stage 3: Identity Tolerance
In this "I probably am" stage, the person begins to contact other lgbt people to counteract feelings of isolation and alienation, but merely tolerates rather than fully accepts a gay or lesbian identity. The feeling of not belonging with heterosexuals becomes stronger.

Positive contacts can have the effect of making other gay and lesbian people appear more significant and more positive to the person at this stage, leading to a more favorable sense of self and a greater commitment to a homosexual self-identity.

Stage 4: "Identity Acceptance"
There is continued and increased contact with other gay and/or lesbian people in this stage, where friendships start to form. The individual thus evaluates other lesbian and gay people more positively and accepts rather than merely tolerates a lesbian or gay self-image. The earlier questions of "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" have been answered.

Coping strategies for handling incongruity at this stage include continuing to pass as heterosexual, and limiting contacts with heterosexuals who threaten to increase incongruity (e.g. some family members and/or peers). The person can also selectively disclose a homosexual identity to significant heterosexuals.

Stage 5: "Identity Pride"
This is the "These are my people" stage where the individual develops an awareness of

the enormous incongruity that exists between the person's increasingly positive concept of self as lesbian or gay and an awareness of society's rejection of this orientation. The person feels anger at heterosexuals and devalues many of their institutions (e.g. marriage, gender-role structures, etc.) The person discloses her or his identity to more and more people and wishes to be immersed in the gay or lesbian subculture consuming its literature, art, and other forms of culture. For some at this stage, the combination of anger and pride energizes the person into action against perceived homophobia producing an "activist."

Stage 6: "Identity Synthesis"
The intense anger at heterosexuals – the "them and us" attitude that may be evident in stage 5 – softens at this stage to reflect a recognition that some heterosexuals are supportive and can be trusted. However, those who are not supportive are further devalued. There remains some anger at the ways that lesbians and gays are treated in this society, but this is less intense. The person retains a deep sense of pride but now comes to perceive less of a dichotomy between the heterosexual and gay and lesbian communities. A lesbian or gay identity becomes an integral and integrated aspect of the individual's complete personality structure.

Adapted from Ritter, K. Y. & Terndrup, A. (2002). *Handbook of affirmative psychotherapy with lesbians and gay men*. New York: Guilford Press.

McCarn and Fassinger's Gay and Lesbian Development Model (1996)

In the McCarn-Fassinger model, the individual identity and group membership phases of identity acquisition are separate processes, but each includes the same four steps:

Stage 1: "Awareness"
The individual begins to acknowledge people with different sexual orientations.

Stage 2: "Exploration"
The individual begins to explore relationship with the homosexual community.

Stage 3: "Deepening/Commitment"
The individual begins to accept a homosexual identity and recognizes the negative feedback this acceptance will garner from others.

Stage 4: "Internalization"
The individual begins to understand their identity in the context of being a minority within a dominant culture.

Adapted from McCarn, S. R., & Fassinger, R. E. (1996). Revisioning sexual minority identity formation: A new model of lesbian identity and its implications for counseling and research. *The Counseling Psychologist, 24*, 508-534.

D'Augelli's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Life Span Development Model (1994)

In D'Augelli's lifespan model, identity formation depends on three interrelated variables: personal actions and subjectivities (An individual's self-concept in relation to his or her sexual behaviors, feelings and thoughts), interactive intimacies (an individual's inner circle's response and interactions with partners), and sociohistoric connections (Society's view, demographics of residence, and beliefs). The identity development process itself takes into account all three of these, and consists of six phases. Unlike previous models, these phases are not sequential, nor do they necessarily occur one at a time.

Phase 1: "Exiting heterosexual identity"
The individual begins acknowledging their feelings and thoughts are not heterosexual in nature.

Phase 2: "Developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status"
The individual provides his or her own definition of what being homosexual means.

Phase 3: "Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity"
The individual begins reconciling their homosexual identity as it pertains to peer groups and social norms.

Phase 4: "Becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring"
The individual is able to successfully attempt to communicate his or her homosexual identity with parents/guardians and accept/deal with the consequences.

Phase 5: "Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status"
The individual begins their journey to a meaningful, intimate relationship, using peer groups and social connections as necessary to facilitating the meeting process.

Phase 6: "Entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community"
The individual begins to recognize the common injustices and triumphs of their community and begins fostering broader LGB community connections.

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

APPENDIX D
CHICKERING'S STUDENT DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The Seven Vectors of Student Development:

Developing Competence – intellectual & interpersonal competence, physical & manual skills

Managing Emotions – recognize & accept emotions and appropriately express and control them

Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence – increase emotional freedom

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships -- develop intercultural & interpersonal tolerance, appreciate differences; create healthy, intimate relationships

Establishing Identity – (Uses the vectors before it) Acknowledge differences in identity development based on gender, ethnic background & sexual orientation

Developing Purpose – develop career goals, make commitments to personal interests & activities, establish strong interpersonal commitments

Developing Integrity – humanize & personalize values & develop congruence

APPENDIX E
2017 ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY LGBTQ+ NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Dear Member of the ASU Student Community:

As part of a doctoral project out of the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) and Graduate College (GC), we are conducting a study on the needs and experiences of LGBT+ students at ASU, what obstacles LGBT+ students perceive as barriers in their student success, and what resources LGBT+ students would like to see a greater focus on.

We are asking for participation of any LGBT+ ASU students in a brief survey about experiences as part of this community. The survey should take five minutes or less, and results will help us improve the ASU experience for all LGBT+ students. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. No contact information will be recorded upon submission unless otherwise requested by respondent.

The goal of this study is to provide student data for development of peer-to-peer and group mentoring programs for LGBT+ ASU students.

Participation in this survey is strictly confidential. Results of this study may be used in reports, presentations or publications, but participants will only be identified only as one of the respondents and with no identifying markers. Respondents may decline to answer any questions they may be uncomfortable disclosing, but are encouraged to complete the entire survey.

By clicking on this survey link and submitting the survey, you are stating your consent to participate and that you are at least 18 years of age.

Thank you,

Zachary Reeves-Blurton, Margarita Pivavorova, Ph.D. and Danah Henriksen, Ph.D., Co-Investigators

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team —Zachary Reeves-Blurton at Zachary.Blurton@asu.edu, Margarita Pivovarova at Margarita.Pivovarova@asu.edu, or Danah Henriksen at Danah.Henriksen@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480)965-6788.

PART I: Demographic information

1. How do you define your sexual orientation?
   a. Gay
   b. Lesbian

      c. Bisexual
      d. Asexual/Nonromantic
      e. Heterosexual

2. How do you define your gender identity?
      a. Cisgender Male
      b. Cisgender Female
      c. Transgender Male
      d. Transgender Female
      e. Nonbinary/Queer
3. What is your academic level at ASU? (check all that apply)
      a. First-year undergraduate student
      b. Second-third year undergraduate student
      c. Fourth+ year undergraduate student
      d. International or transfer student
      e. First-year graduate student/postdoctoral scholar
      f. Continuing graduate student/postdoctoral scholar

PART II: Institutional Support Assessment. *Please indicate your level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) with the following statements regarding the climate of support/awareness around LGBTQ+ student needs at ASU. Please read questions carefully before answering.*

4. The LGBTQ+ student community at ASU is well-supported by ASU administration, policies, and campus initiatives.
5. Faculty at ASU provide a safe, supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students in the classroom. Lab, and advising/learning spaces.
6. Faculty at ASU demonstrate an understanding of LGBTQ+ needs.
7. Staff and resource offices at ASU provide a safe environment for LGBTQ+ students.
8. Staff and resource offices at ASU provide a supporting environment for LGBTQ+ students.
9. Staff and resource personnel at ASU demonstrate an awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ student needs.
10. In general, ASU provides a 'safe space' environment for its LGBTQ+ community.

PART III: Values Assessment. *Please indicate your level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) with the following statements regarding your own values and needs as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Please read questions carefully before answering.*

11. It is important to me to be in an environment that respects, supports and nurtures my LGBTQ+ identity.

12. It is important to me to be connected to a strong LGBTQ+ community for *social* support, resources, and personal development.
13. It is important to me to be connected to a strong LGBTQ+ community for *emotional* support, resources, and personal development.
14. Participation in student clubs, leadership opportunities, organizations, and campus events are important to me.
15. My sexual orientation/gender identity is an important component of my larger identity.
16. It is important to me to be able to disclose/express my sexual orientation/gender identity at will without fear of harassment or discrimination.
17. It is important to me that others recognize and respect my sexual orientation/gender identity as a component of my larger identity.
18. I value non-sexual relationships with other LGBTQ+ students or community members.

PART IV: Identity Disclosure Assessment. *Please indicate your level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) with the following statements regarding your comfort level and practice regarding identity disclosure or 'outness'. Please read questions carefully before answering.*

19. I am completely 'out' in all situations.
20. I feel comfortable and supported being 'out' on campus, in the classroom, and in university-sponsored events and activities.
21. I find it necessary to role-flex (present as stereotypically heteronormative or hide my sexual orientation or gender identity) in non-academic situations and environments (i.e. the gym, events on campus, residence halls) on campus for fear of rejection, harassment or discrimination.
22. Non-disclosure of my sexual orientation or gender identity or fear of participation in social groups or activities regularly has a negative impact on my self-esteem, confidence, and/or interpersonal experiences.

PART V: Identity and Community Support. *Please indicate your level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) with the following statements regarding your campus resource eneds and the importance you place on LGBTQ+ community involvement.*

23. I currently have a strong social support network in which I feel comfortable navigating and discussing LGBTQ+ identity and issues.
24. I specifically seek out other LGBTQ+ students and community members for social/nonsexual interaction and engagement.
25. Participation in LGBTQ+ clubs/student organizations, activities and interaction with the LGBTQ+ community has helped me better understand and navigate my personal identity.

26. LGBTQ+ mentors or role models have greatly facilitated my entry or comfort level in joining the larger LGBTQ+ community at ASU.
27. I find it valuable to seek out LGBTQ+ community connections for support in developing interpersonal and/or romantic relationship skills or confidence.

APPENDIX F
HUES MENTOR APPLICATION

The HUES LGBT+ mentoring program is a peer-to-peer and near-to-peer mentoring program available to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and genderqueer students at Arizona State University. To become a member of the HUES mentoring pool, please fill in complete application and submit. A HUES staff member will contact you with next steps and identify potential mentoring matches for you.

Applicant demographic information: Tell us who you are and how to reach you. We need to have your contact information on file in order to match you with a mentee. *We do NOT share this information on your mentoring profile.*

Your full legal name (Last, First, MI):

Your preferred name:

Your 10-Digit ASU Affiliate ID:

Your primary email address:

Your primary phone number:

May we text you HUES-related reminders at the phone number above? (y/n)

Demographic information: The HUES mentoring program is designed to bolster LGBT+ community engagement and provide critical identity-development opportunities through both individual and small-group mentorship. Please tell us a little more about yourself here. *We use this information to create your mentoring profile.*

Your age:

Do you have an age preference for your mentee?

- o Around same age
- o 10-20 years of my age
- o Any

Your gender:

- o Female
- o Genderqueer
- o Male
- o Nonbinary
- o Transgender
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Your preferred gender pronouns:

- o She/her/hers
- o He/him/his
- o They/them/their
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Do you have a gender preference for your mentee?

- o Female
- o Genderqueer
- o Male
- o Nonbinary
- o Transgender
- o Any

Which best describes your sexual orientation?

- o Bisexual
- o Gay or lesbian
- o Heterosexual
- o Pansexual
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Do you prefer a mentee of a particular sexual orientation or gender expression?

- o Bisexual female
- o Bisexual male
- o Gay
- o Genderqueer/genderfluid
- o Lesbian
- o Transgender MtF
- o Transgender FtM
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Additional information: Tell us more about yourself. This will help mentees select the best choice of mentor for their needs. *We use this information to create your mentoring profile.*

Your ASU affiliation:

- o Undergraduate student
- o Graduate student or post-doctoral scholar
- o Faculty or staff

How long have you been part of the ASU community?
- o One year or less
- o One to two years
- o Two to five years
- o Five years or more

Do you have a preference for the academic level of your mentee? Indicate all that apply:
- o First-year undergraduate student
- o Second to third year undergraduate student
- o Fourth to fifth year undergraduate student
- o Master's student
- o Doctoral student
- o Post-doctoral scholar
- o International student
- o Nontraditional-age student
- o Any

What is your academic or career area?
- o Arts and Sciences
- o Business
- o Design and the Arts
- o Education
- o Engineering
- o Future of Innovation in Society
- o Global Management
- o Journalism
- o Law
- o Nursing and Health Innovations/Solutions
- o Public Service and Community Solutions
- o Sustainability
- o University student services

If 'University student services' above, please tell us what you do:

Do you have a preference regarding academic area of your mentee?

- o Same academic area
- o Different academic area
- o Either/any
- o Other:

If 'Other' above, please explain:

What is your campus affiliation?
- o Downtown Phoenix campus
- o Polytechnic campus
- o Tempe campus
- o Thunderbird campus
- o West campus

Do you have previous experience working with the LGBTQ+ community?
- o Yes
- o No

If 'Yes' above, please explain:

Do you have previous mentoring experience?

- o Yes
- o No

If 'Yes' above, please explain:

Mentor matching: Tell potential mentees a bit more about what/who you are looking for in a mentee and what/who you are as a mentor. *We use this information to create your mentoring profile.*

Please tell us why you would like to be a HUES mentor. This might address issues of cultural engagement and identity, community connection, or any other consideration of importance to you. This is your mentoring statement, and it will help potential mentees in their mentor selection process.

Please tell us what makes you a strong mentor candidate for the HUES program:

How much time can you commit to working with your mentee?

- o Up to 30-60 minutes per week
- o Up to 60-90 minutes per week
- o Up to 90 minutes or more per week

Thank you! We will be in touch with you soon!

APPENDIX G
HUES PARTICIPANT APPLICATION

The HUES LGBT+ mentoring program is a peer-to-peer and near-to-peer mentoring program available to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and genderqueer students at Arizona State University. To join HUES and apply for a mentor, please fill in complete application and submit. A HUES staff member will contact you with next steps and identify potential mentoring matches for you.

Applicant demographic information. Tell us who you are and how to reach you. We need to have your contact information on file in order to match you with a mentor! *Information provided here is used only for matching -- your name and contact information may be shared with potential mentoring matches. All other information remains confidential.*

Your full legal name (Last, First, MI):

Your preferred name:

Your 10-Digit ASU affiliate ID:

Your primary email address:

Your primary phone number:

May we text you HUES-related reminders at the phone number above?

Some demographic information. The HUES mentoring program is designed to bolster LGBT+ community engagement and provide critical identity-development opportunities through both individual and small-group mentorship. Please tell us a little more about yourself here.

Your age:

Do you have an age preference for your mentor?

- o Around my same age
- o 1-20 years of my age
- o Any

Your gender:

- o Female
- o Genderqueer
- o Male
- o Nonbinary
- o Transgender
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Your preferred gender pronouns:

- o She/her/hers
- o He/him/his
- o They/them/their
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Do you have a gender preference for your mentor?

- o Female
- o Genderqueer
- o Male
- o Nonbinary
- o Transgender
- o Any

Which best describes your sexual orientation?

- o Bisexual
- o Gay or lesbian
- o Heterosexual
- o Pansexual
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Do you prefer a mentee of a particular sexual orientation or gender expression?

- o Bisexual female
- o Bisexual male
- o Gay
- o Genderqueer/genderfluid
- o Lesbian
- o Transgender MtF
- o Transgender FtM
- o Other

If 'Other' above, please explain:

Additional information: Tell us more about yourself. This will help us match you with a mentor.

Your academic level:

- o First-year undergraduate student
- o Second-year undergraduate student
- o Third-year undergraduate student
- o Fourth-plus-year undergraduate student
- o First year Master's student
- o Continuing Master's student
- o First-year doctoral student
- o Continuing doctoral student
- o Other

How long have you been part of the ASU community?

- o One year or less
- o One to two years
- o Two to five years
- o Five years or more

Do you have a preference for the academic level of your mentor? Indicate all that apply:

- o Second to third year undergraduate student
- o Fourth to fifth year undergraduate student
- o Graduate student or post-doctoral scholar
- o International student
- o Nontraditional-age student
- o University faculty
- o University staff
- o Any

What is your academic or career area?

- o Arts and Sciences
- o Business
- o Design and the Arts
- o Education
- o Engineering
- o Future of Innovation in Society
- o Global Management
- o Journalism
- o Law
- o Nursing and Health Innovations/Solutions
- o Public Service and Community Solutions
- o Sustainability
- o University student services

Do you have a preference regarding academic area of your mentee?

- o Same academic area
- o Different academic area

     o Either/any
     o Other:

If 'Other' above, please explain:

What is your campus affiliation?
- Downtown Phoenix campus
- Polytechnic campus
- Tempe campus
- Thunderbird campus
- West campus

Mentor matching: Tell us a bit more about what/who you are looking for in a mentor.

Please tell us why you would like to be in the HUES program. This might address issues of cultural engagement and identity, community connection, or any other consideration of importance to you.

Please tell us what you are most specifically looking for in a mentor.

How much time can you commit to working with your mentor?
- Up to 30-60 minutes per week
- Up to 60-90 minutes per week
- Up to 90 minutes or more per week

Thank you! We will be in touch with you soon to begin the matching process!

APPENDIX H
HUES MENTORING AGREEMENT

Graduate College **Mentoring Network**
HUES LGBTQ+ mentoring program
Student Development Plan & Mentoring Agreement

ASU Graduate College
Arizona State University

PART I: STUDENT/MENTEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The HUES LGBT+ mentoring program bolsters community engagement, increase representation and provide identity-development and engagement opportunities to ASU's LGBT+ communities, allowing students to discuss identity, seek out peers with shared identities and cultures, and explore the intersections of identity, community, and belonging.

This form should be filled out front and back, signed by both mentor and mentee during first meeting, and turned in to INTERDISCIPLINARY BUILDING B, Suite 285, Attention of Program Manager, Mentoring Initiatives or scanned to GradMentor@asu.edu.

The following are the primary mentoring goals of our relationship:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We agree to assess the progress of our mentoring relationship on the following date: ___/___/_____, as well as at the end of each semester. At that time, we may enter into a new mentoring agreement if mutually agreed. If we decide to end the partnership prior to the scheduled conclusion, we will do so with appropriate closure by notifying HUES Program Manager.

In order to meet our mentoring goals, we agree to meet (select one):
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Bi-weekly

Each meeting will last approximately (select one):
- ☐ 30 minutes
- ☐ 30 – 60 minutes (recommended)

An integral part of mentoring is developing our social networks. In order to meet our mentoring goals, we agree to attend the following to augment our one-on-one meetings (select one):
- ☐ Attend 1-2 Graduate College Mentoring Network (GCMN) social events per semester
- ☐ Attend 3+ Graduate College Mentoring Network (GCMN) social events per semester

An integral part of mentoring is fostering professional development. In order to meet our mentoring goals, we agree to attend the following to augment our one-on-one meetings (select one):
- ☐ Attend 1-2 ASU or GCMN-sponsored Professional Development opportunities per semester
- ☐ Attend 3+ ASU or GCMN-sponsored Professional Development opportunities per semester

Beyond the first semester of mentoring, mentor and mentee are invited to join small-group discussion meetings to gain exposure to larger support networks and further engage in issues of identity, culture, and academia. To meet our mentoring goals, we will attend the following:
- ☐ Attend 3-4 GCMN-facilitated small-group discussion meetings
- ☐ Attend 5-6 GCMN-facilitated small-group discussion meetings

PART II: MENTORING AGREEMENT

Because successful mentoring relationships necessarily involve a certain degree of self-disclosure and trust, we agree to the following expectations regarding openness, honestly, confidentiality, boundaries, etc.:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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As participants in the HUES mentoring program, we have read the Program Expectations form and agree to adhere to the following expectations (each check beside each statement to agree):

☐ ☐   Both mentor and mentee will maintain enrollment and good academic standing in their academic programs as defined by ASU.

☐ ☐   Mentor/mentee will notify Graduate College of any interruptions in enrollment or concerns about academic standing.

☐ ☐   We will meet minimally twice per month during the academic year.

☐ ☐   We will attend at least one HUES social mixer together per semester.

☐ ☐   We will attend at least one professional development opportunity together per semester.

☐ ☐   We each agree to notify HUES staff if we have difficulty contacting our mentor/mentee.

☐ ☐   We each will review the ASU Student Code of Conduct at https: www.asu.edu/srr/code and university FERPA requirements at https://students.asu.edu/policies/ferpa.

☐ ☐   We will adhere to the following guidelines in scheduling meetings:
1. Meet in public places (i.e. on-campus locations, coffee shops, restaurants)
2. Note that meetings in private residences are strongly discouraged

By signing, we understand what is expected of us as voluntary HUES participants. This document serves as our contract for participation. *Any changes to this contract or its terms will be reported to the Graduate College in writing (delivered to INTERDISCIPLINARY B 285 or emailed to GradMentor@asu.edu).*

_____   _____

___/___/_____
        Mentee name (printed)   **Mentee name (signed)**

Date

_____   _____

___/___/_____
        Mentor name (printed)   **Mentor name (signed)**

Date

PART III: MODEL AND INFORMATION RELEASE

I grant permission to the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), on behalf of Arizona State University (ASU) and its agents or employees, to copyright and publish all or any part of photographs and/or motion picture and/or voice recordings and/or written/spoken statements taken of me during SHADES events and for use in university publications, including printed, moving, audio and electronic, all exhibitions, public displays, publications, commercial art, and advertising purposes in any media without limitation or reservation. I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs/motion pictures/voice recordings/written/spoken statements or printed or electronic matter that may be used in conjunction with them now or in the future, whether that use is known to be or unknown, and I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising from or related to the use of the photographs/motion pictures/voice recordings/written/spoken statements.

I hereby agree to release, defend, and hold harmless ABOR, on behalf of ASU and its agents or employees, including any firm publishing and/or distributing the finished product in whole or in part, whether on paper, in motion pictures, or via electronic media, from and against any claims, damages or liability arising from or related to the use of the photographs/motion pictures/voice recordings/written/spoken statements, including but not limited to any misuse, distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in taking, processing, reduction or production of the finished product, its publication or distribution. It is the discretion of Arizona State University to decide whether to use the image.

I am 18 years of age or older, and I am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below, and I fully understand the contents, meaning and impact of this release. I understand that I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release by submitting those questions in writing before signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

MENTOR ☐   **Agree**   **Disagree**   **Signature:** _____   **Date:** ___/___/_____

MENTEE ☐   **Agree**   **Disagree**   **Signature:** _____   **Date:** ___/___/_____

APPENDIX I
PERSONAL RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

HUES ASU LGBTQ+ Personal Resilience Assessment Survey

All participants in the HUES ASU LGBTQ+ Mentoring Project are asked to take a personal resilience assessment survey. This survey measures participants' perceived levels of social support in four areas (family, mentors/role models, friends and peers, campus organizations/clubs) as related to your LGBTQ+ identity. Research indicates resilience and perceived levels of support are instrumental to the development of strong identities and the ability to overcome challenges and obstacles, particularly for members of minority communities.

The survey will be administered both at entry into the HUES program and upon conclusion of every semester. At the conclusion of this study, data will be compiled to measure (1) individual resilience development/change for each HUES participant and (2) aggregate resilience development/change across all program participants.

All data collected will be stored on an encrypted university web server; personal identifiers will be used to match each participant's pre- and post-project scores for study purposes, but HUES program participation and participant scores and identities will remain confidential. Data from this survey may be published for research purposes, but no personally identifiable information will be shared.

We are interested in how you feel about the following statements. Read each statement carefully. Indicate how you feel about each statement as it relates to your sexual or gender minority identity.

Mark '1' if you Very Strongly Disagree
Mark '2' if you Strongly Disagree
Mark '3' if you Mildly Disagree
Mark '4' if you are Neutral
Mark '5' if you Mildly Agree
Mark '6' if you Strongly Agree
Mark '7' if you Very Strongly Agree

There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is around when I am in need.*

There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model with whom I can share joys and sorrows.*

My family really tries to help me.

I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.

I have an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model who is a real source of comfort to me.*

My friends really try to help me.

I can count on my friends when things go wrong.

I can talk about my problems with my family.

 I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.

There is an LGBTQ+ mentor/role model in my life who cares about my feelings.*

My family is willing to help me make decisions.

I can talk about my problems with my friends.

My LGBTTQ+ campus group is a place where I can meet other LGBTQ+ people.*

My LGBTQ+ campus group provides a group of people with whom I can be myself.*

I feel supported when I am with the members of my LGBTQ+ campus group.*

My LGBTQ+ campus group provides a place where I can openly express my feelings.*

Indicates a prompt developed for this study

APPENDIX J
SAMPLE MENTOR PROFILE SHEET

Mentor Profile

Mentor ID: **HUES-2017-001**   Status: **Available/Active**

Demographics

Age: **30-40 year**   ASU Affiliation: **Staff, Doctoral 2nd year**

Gender Identity: **M**   Career Area: **Student Services**

Sexual Orientation: **Gay**   Academic area: **Education**

Race/Ethnicity: **Asian-American**   Focus: **Leadership/engagement**

Mentoring Preferences

- ✓ Prefer matching to gay/bisexual male, no age preference
- ✓ Undergraduate or graduate-level, no academic area preference
- ✓ Prefer matching Tempe or Downtown campus, up to 30-60 minutes weekly/biweekly

Mentoring Statement

As an Asian-American member of the LGBTQ+ community, I am committed to diversity and inclusion both within our university and in our larger communities and am interested in the identities and intersectionalities we navigate in our lives. I am currently a second-year doctoral student in the MLFTC Educational Leadership and Innovation program, where I am developing and piloting an LGBTQ+ mentoring program at ASU. As a full-time employee at ASU for the past eight years, I am not only familiar with the various resources and needs of students, but am invested in helping empower students to make their university experience a more positive one.

Every member of our community has a different coming-out experience, but many of us go through that process with too little support from those who have 'been there'. When I was coming out, I was fortunate to have a community of support at my university, and I hope that the HUES program allows me to give that same positive experience to other students.

ASU Graduate Student Mentoring Network, 2017; Updated 10/19/2017

APPENDIX K
HUES LGBTQ+ MENTORING GOALS WORKSHEET

OUTCOMES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. The personal goals you set in your mentoring agreement or mentee development plan will depend on the focus (proficiency-, affinity-, or identity-based) and the type (one-to-one or small-group, peer-to-peer or faculty) of the mentoring program you are participating in.

Once you have determined the type of mentoring program best suits your needs, the program **outcomes** and **objectives** will drive your goals. For example, in a peer-to-peer identity-based mentoring program such as the SHADES cross-cultural graduate mentoring program or HUES LGBT+ mentoring program, specific outcomes may be development, navigation or support of cultural identities. The goals you and your mentor set should be reflective of the outcomes the mentoring program's structure is designed to support.

The *Mentoring Agreement* and *Student/Mentee Development Plan* are documents designed to assist you and your mentor in expectation- and goal-setting. For each goal you set, you and your mentor should also develop an action plan for achieving them. Goals should be a stretch, inspiring work toward them through the cultivation of new experiences and skills and reflection upon them, but they should also be focused enough that they are achievable.

Goals may be personal, academic or professional. They may also be a combination of these. They may also change over time. For some mentoring pairs, setting goals will help establish the tone of the mentoring relationship; for others, time spent relationship-building will help facilitate the process of setting goals. As you and your mentor develop goals, use the SMART goal model, in which your goal statements are:

Specific: make your goal statements concrete and action-oriented. What, specifically, are you trying to accomplish? Be clear, concise, and use action verbs (for example: develop, improve, create, discover).

Measurable: make sure you can tell when the goal has been achieved. How will you track and measure your progress? How will you define success?

Achievable: the goal should require work, but be attainable within the scope of your mentoring framework and timeline. Can you break down your goals into milestones to achieve in one semester? Two semesters?

Realistic: make sure that your goal is achievable within the time constraints and commitments of both mentee, mentor, and the parameters of the mentoring program and approach.

Timely: when developing your goals, consider setting both 'milestones' – the longer-term goals and 'inch-pebbles' or shorter-term goals. For both, there should be a specific timeframe you and your mentor identify by which to have achieved this goal.

Remember, meeting your goals does not mean you've completed the purpose of your mentorship, but for each goal you've mastered, you're one step closer to meeting your overall mentoring objectives. Goals may be flexible and they may shift in priority. As you achieve goals, you may discover new ones that bring you even closer to your overall mentoring objective. By setting up a SMART framework and timelines for critically evaluating your goal-setting and attainment periodically with your mentor, the two of you will be able to continually move you toward your larger mentoring objective(s).

Graduate College Mentoring Network
Mentoring Goals Worksheet

ASU Graduate College
Arizona State University

INSTRUCTIONS. To help define the goals and objectives of your mentoring partnership, create at least three goals and corresponding action steps. You can come up with the goals on your own, but working with your mentor to define your action steps is an excellent way to start off your mentoring relationship. Remember to set ambitious but achievable goals – you can always adjust and add/modify goals as you go!

Example:
Goal 1: Develop a personal resource and support network of faculty, staff and peers by the end of my first semester at ASU.
Action Steps:
1. *Identify and meet with 2-3 faculty or staff members outside my classes to discuss and receive feedback on my academic, personal and/or career interests*
2. *Attend at least three personal/cultural development opportunities per semester (workshops, presentations, panel discussions aligned with my interests/identity)*
3. *Attend at least two social events or join a club or organization that supports my identity of goals*

Goal 1:

Action Steps:
1.

2.

3.

Goal 2:

Action Steps:
1.

2.

3.

Goal 3:

Action Steps:
1.

2.

3.

® ASU Graduate Student Mentoring Network, 2017; Updated 7/27/2017

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APPENDIX L
HUES MENTORING BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS

Motivating. Empowering. Networking.
Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

Mentoring 101: the mentor's role

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. By focusing on specific skillsets, you can foster an intentional, goal-driven mentoring relationship. Follow these strategies for more productive mentoring sessions.

Follow these six practices to be a highly effective mentor:

1. **Provide guidance, but allow your mentee to solve the problem.** In sharing experiences, talking through situations, and suggesting courses of actions, guide your mentee toward their goals. For personal growth to occur, though, your mentee ultimately must be the one to solve the problem – so know when to let them take the lead.

2. **Offer relevant self-disclosure or experience, but always let your mentees needs drive the conversation.** Share advice through constructive self-disclosure to facilitate problem-solving without 'telling' your mentee what to do. Keep experiences shared relevant, offering alternate perspectives for consideration.

3. **Mentor the whole person: attend and respond to both content and feelings.** Address and respond to both the content of your mentee's problem and the feelings or emotional state triggered by or behind the problem. Addressing both problem and context allows your mentee to develop the tools to tackle similar problems in the future.

4. **Listen actively and question constructively.** Empathy is important, but your role is to guide and gently challenges your mentee to constructively face obstacles, not to commiserate. Listen actively and ask constructive questions to help maintain productivity and focus on your mentee's goals, not problems.

5. **Ask open-ended questions.** Use "what", "when", "how" and "who" questions to challenge your mentee to think more critically about matters under discussion and spur deeper conversation. Questions requiring a "yes" or "no" answer do not drive conversations forward, and "why" questions can come across as value-laden or implying criticism.

6. **Recognize your limitations and refer to and use available resources.** As the mentor/mentee relationship develops, issues mentees want to address may move from the general and impersonal to more personal or complex. As a mentor, know your limits; a critical mentor role is knowing when/how to introduce mentee to broader resources.

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

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ASU Graduate College
Arizona State University

Motivating. Empowering. Networking. Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

Mentoring 101: the mentor's role

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. To be a strong mentor and lead intentional conversations with your mentee, you must take on many roles: teacher, consultant, sounding board, confidante, role model, devil's advocate, or coach.

Do:

Be a motivator. Guide, express belief and confidence in your mentee's abilities, and encourage them to try new things.

Be a resource. Helps your mentee navigate academic, professional, or sociocultural environments, introducing them to new people, places, ideas.

Be a supporter. Encourage open dialogue, listening to the needs of mentee and acting as a sounding board as they process ideas and concepts.

Be a coach. Help your mentee develop the skills needed to achieve, realistic and meaningful goals.

Don't:

Be a tutor. Provide general guidance from your own experience, but do not help your mentee in a particular class or subject.

Be a passive listener. Listen to and supports your mentee, but listen actively and provide constructive feedback.

Be an academic advisor. You may help clarify your mentee's educational goals or connect them to disciplinary culture, but academic consultancy is not your primary role.

Be a counselor. Share perspectives and advice from your own experience, but never provide clinical recommendations (or diagnoses!) to your mentee.

Consider:

Think about how mentors have influenced your life or academic career. Consider how the dynamic of that relationship shifted as you advanced toward your mentoring goals, and how your mentor's role changed with your evolving mentoring needs.

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

Motivating. Empowering. Networking. Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

Mentoring 101: Confidentiality

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. To have a successful mentoring relationship, you must develop a dynamic of trust with your and establish a 'safe/brave' zone where your mentee feels confident sharing thoughts, feelings, or concerns without fear of recrimination, judgment or repercussion. In order for a mentoring relationship to thrive, there must be mutual understanding between mentor and mentee that conversations remain protected and confidential.

Do not share the following information:

Mentee names and personally identifiable information. This includes any protected status (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation/gender identity, age or ability status.

Personal information. Do not share university ID, telephone or email contact details, social security number, or family information.

Specific details of meetings. General topics (i.e. 'educational process questions', 'career aspirations') may be shared as needed; specific details or student concerns may not be.

Consider:

In addition to respecting the privacy or confidentiality of your mentee, consider that educational information is protected as well. Make sure to review the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** (FERPA): https://students.asu.edu/policies/ferpa

Important note on confidentiality:

There are specific instances where information cannot be kept confidential. Under federal law, you may be **mandatory reporters** when it comes to issues falling under the purview of Title IX.

Over: Duty to report

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**Motivating. Empowering. Networking.
Training. Orienting. Role modeling.**

Mentoring 101: Duty to report

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. There are times when conversations with your mentee cannot or should not be kept confidential. Under ASU policy, faculty and staff (including students on teaching appointments) are **mandatory reporters** when faced with potential **Title IX** incidents. You should also report issues requiring escalation, including illegal activity, conduct violations, and student endangerment.

Report or escalate the following:

- Clinical depression
- Harm to others
- Participation in unlawful activities
- Self-harm
- Serious neuroses
- Substance abuse problems
- Sexual harassment or violence
- Violation of student conduct policy

ASU Resources for mentors and mentees:

- ASU Police | 965-3456 (non-emergency line)
  cfo.asu.edu/police
- Counseling Services | 480-965-6146
  eoss.asu.edu/counseling
- EMPACT Crisis Line | 480-921-1006
  lafrontera-empact.org
- Health Services | 480-965-3349
  eoss.asu.edu/health
- Student Advocacy | 480-965-6547
  eoss.asu.edu/srr/studentadvocacyandassistance

Policy support and information:

- ASU Title IX Statement
  asu.edu.edu/titleIX
- ASU Nondiscrimination Policies
  asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd401.html
- ASU Student Code of Conduct
  eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

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Motivating. Empowering. Networking. Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

Mentoring 101: Initiating Mentoring Relationships

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. The first weeks are the most critical in a mentoring relationship. During this introductory period, you and your mentee will get to know one another, set and define goals and general topics of exploration, and build the foundations for a deeper relationship. Your initial meeting should both serve as an introduction and a chance to get to know each other a bit better, as well as a goal-setting opportunity.

In your first session:

Share information about yourself. Talk about your interests, passions and hobbies, what inspired you to become a mentor, your identities and how they shape your worldview, and what you most look forward to in the mentoring partnership.

Ask about your mentee's goals and expectations. You and your mentee will fine-tune mentoring goals and expectations further on, but let your mentee share their thoughts on what mentoring can offer them, what they want to achieve, and how you can best support them.

Take the initiative. Especially in the first meetings, your mentee might be quiet, hesitant, or unsure of how to engage. Gently steer the conversation, asking questions to engage your mentee and learn more about who they are.

Get organized:

Know (and manage) expectations. Many mentoring programs have general **program expectations**. Review these with your mentee to help you determine how best to meet their mentoring goals within the framework of the program.

Be goal-oriented. As you and your mentee discuss desired mentoring outcomes, use (or create) **mentoring goals worksheet** to solidify and prioritize outcomes.

Sign a mentoring agreement. Once you have discussed program expectations with your mentee, defined mentoring goals and established the logistics of your mentorship, record these details in a **mentoring agreement** or mentee development plan. Periodically review and assess the progress of your mentorship, adjusting as necessary.

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

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Motivating. Empowering. Networking. Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

Mentoring 101: Goalsetting

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. Goalsetting is one of the most important elements of a new mentoring relationship, and it is important for you and your mentee to set goals at the beginning of the relationship. Goals can be simple or complex, but driven by the desired outcomes or objectives of the mentoring relationship or program.

Goals may be personal, academic or professional (or a combination). They may change over time or shift in priority. As goals are achieved, new ones may arise that bring you and your mentee even closer to meeting their overall mentoring objective.

Use a SMART framework to establish mentoring goals:

S **Specific.** Make goals concrete, action-oriented. Be clear, concise, and use action verbs (i.e. develop, improve, create)

M **Measurable.** Make sure you can tell when the goal is achieved. Have a plan for tracking progress and defining success.

A **Achievable.** Create goals that require work, but are attainable within the scope of mentoring framework and timeline.

R **Realistic.** Create goals that are plausible and fall within the skillsets of you and your mentee to attain.

T **Timely.** Set both long-term goals and shorter-term goals. Identify specific timeframes for these.

Create mentoring goals based on the focus (or focuses) of the mentorship:

i Goals in proficiency-based mentorships often focus on **skill attainment or performance.**

i Goals in **affinity-based** mentorships often focus on **knowledge acquisition or acculturation.**

i Goals in **identity-based** mentorships often focus on **resiliency** or development of cultural and interpersonal competencies.

* Re-assess goals periodically, as they sometimes change or shift priority. As this occurs, examine why this has happened and how new goals may emerge that better meet your mentee's long-term needs.

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

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Motivating. Empowering. Networking. Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

Mentoring 101: Creating a mentoring agreement

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. If your mentoring program does not provide one, start your mentoring relationship by creating a mentoring agreement. This is a contract providing a written record of mentoring goals and plan for implementation between you and your mentee, and provides a general framework for the relationship.

Elements to include in a mentoring agreement:

1. Overview of goals. Address the primary goals of the mentorship as discussed and mutually agreed upon.

2. Duration of mentorship. Decide how long the formal mentorship will last. Within an educational setting, mentorships often follow a semester- or academic-year based cycle.

3. Frequency of meetings. Determine how often you and your mentee will meet. Depending on the mentoring goals, you might meet as frequently as once per week, but no less than once per month.

4. Meeting specifics. Agree to a general meeting type (in person, phone) and session length. In-person, 60-minute sessions are recommended initially; shorter sessions may preclude adequate engagement of topics.

5. Additional commitments. Mentor and mentee may agree to attend supplemental programs (workshops, seminars, social events) aligned with mentoring goals.

6. General expectations. Address common expectations including parameters for confidentiality, privacy (i.e. limits to text messages or phone calls past a reasonable hour, etc.), meeting venues (i.e. on-campus vs. off-campus, public venues, etc.), and conduct expectations.

Visit the Graduate College Mentoring Network to see sample mentoring agreements: https://graduate.asu.edu//mentoring.

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

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The Mentoring Connection: Peer Mentoring

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. Graduate school is designed to challenge and expose students to multiple perspectives. Grad school represents a paradigm shift for many new students acclimating to new programs, departments, and communities. Achieving work-life balance, developing and maintaining relationships are stressors that can become barriers to academic success.

Fortunately, these challenges can be navigated through mentoring relationships. In broad national studies, mentoring has been identified as one of the most effective ways of bolstering graduate student success and persistence.

What is peer mentoring?

In peer mentoring, a more experienced student provides **guidance** and **support** to a new or less experienced student. While the type of support provided is determined by the mentor and mentee depending on the mentee's needs (and many mentors fill multiple roles!), the general role of the mentor is as a **resource**.

Peer mentors may be more advanced students within an academic discipline or more experienced in a subject area; peer mentoring is a process-based system in which a mentor passes on knowledge, best practices, or advice. Peer mentoring models lend themselves well to supporting any or all of the following mentoring objectives:

Peer mentoring goals

* Training and orienting
* Role modeling
* Emotional support
* Community-building

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

Benefits of peer mentoring:

* Increased institutional connection, academic performance, and development of interpersonal competencies.

* Increased graduate student success and persistence.

* Confidence-inspiring, skill-building, and affinity-creating.

Matching tips:

* When possible, mentees should 'interview' 3-4 potential mentors. Both mentor and mentee should determine whether a potential mentoring relationship is a good fit.

* Mentor/mentee social functions can be a fun, social way to allow potential mentors and mentees to meet and chat with potential matches.

* Mentorship relationships in which mentor/mentee choice is taken into account have higher success rates than those matched based on matrix- or profile-based matching.

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The Mentoring Connection: Choosing a mentoring program

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. The Graduate College information on mentoring opportunities and resources, best practices and strategies to foster successful mentoring programs and relationships, and opportunities to recognize outstanding mentors and mentoring initiatives within Arizona State University.

Mentoring structures:

There are **four common types** of mentoring programs. While they may share common goals or outcomes, the variation in structure or teaching mode may appeal to students in different ways.

* **One-on-one mentoring:** the simplest mentoring structure. One-on-one mentoring has the **most direct involvement** between mentor and mentee, emphasizes fostering personal relationships and requires high degrees of **trust** and **disclosure**; effective in exploring individual development, whether personal, academic, or professional.

* **Small-group mentoring:** consists of one mentor and a small group of mentees who meet as a group; focus is group exploration of issues or topics. It can also be used effectively to provide training or orientation to multiple new faculty or students simultaneously, and facilitates team-building and group affinity.

* **Peer mentoring:** both mentor and mentee are of the same group (student-to-student, faculty-to-faculty) in which the mentor is more advanced in skill or experience and can provide guidance.

* **Faculty mentoring:** a professional relationship in which there is a hierarchical distance between mentor and mentee and in which the faculty member assists the mentee through academic guidance or professional development.

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

Choosing a type of program:

Various mentoring structures offer different benefits: **training and orientation** to a subject/field, professional/personal **role modeling**, or emotional/ psychosocial **support** and **community-building**. Different types of structures may be better aligned to facilitate specific desired outcomes.

Many successful mentoring programs employ a multi-tiered model, combining one-on-one and small-group mentoring.

Questions to consider

? How do I learn best? Socially in groups or individually?

? What is the mentoring program designed to do?

? Would I benefit from participating in multiple mentoring programs with different structures and outcomes?

Resources

* **Peer mentoring:** Peer mentoring models such as the Graduate College's SHADES cross-cultural mentoring program and HUES LGBTQ+ peer mentoring program lend themselves to exploration of affinities or identities, social development or community involvement.

* **Faculty mentoring:** see the Graduate College Graduate Faculty Search page (https://graduate.asu.edu/graduate-faculty) for more information on faculty mentoring.

Motivating. Empowering. Networking. Training. Orienting. Role modeling.

The Mentoring Connection: Choosing a mentoring program

The Graduate College Mentoring Network promotes the development of robust mentoring outcomes through examination of mentoring best practices, mentoring impact, and the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. With the wide variety of mentoring programs available, determining the best program to fit your needs can take effort. Finding the right mentoring program is a proven means of increasing the institutional affinity, academic performance, development of interpersonal competencies, and retention of students at the graduate level. Particularly for first-generation students and students from other underrepresented populations, mentoring is an excellent way to become more engaged with your department, college or community.

As you consider types of mentoring programs, ask yourself what you want to get out of the program:

- ? **Am I looking for emotional or social support?**
- ? **Am I interested in connecting with people who share my interests?**
- ? **Am I looking to enhance specific skillsets or knowledge?**
- ? **Am I interested in exploring or fostering a part of my identity?**

Types of mentoring:

Mentoring programs are often aligned around one of three areas. Which program best meets your needs will be determined by the focus and outcomes you are looking for. Three common themes in mentoring programs include the following:

* **Proficiency-based mentoring:** these are organized around academic interest or aptitudes, with outcomes focused on *academic development* or *improvement*.

* **Affinity-based mentoring:** sometimes called interest-based mentoring, these allow participants to become more closely involved with or learn about a particular community and focus on *social interaction and interpersonal development*.

* **Identity-based mentoring:** most frequently employed as a means of providing *interpersonal connection* and *identity development or exploration* among members of underrepresented communities (for instance, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation/gender identity), the most immediate goal outcomes for these are *social support* and *connection*.

Questions to consider

As you consider what form of mentoring structure and program are right for you, consider the following:

- ? What kind of relationships do I want to develop through this program?

- ? Can my mentor help me reach my stated goals?

- ? Do I have clearly defined goals and expectations of my mentoring relationship?

- ? Have I clearly articulated these goals and expectations with my prospective mentor?

- ? Are my goals in alignment with the stated objectives of the mentoring program?

More info: graduate.asu.edu/mentoring

APPENDIX M
HUES MENTEE WELCOME EMAIL

Hi ███,

Thank you for your interest in participating in HUES this coming semester — after communicating with both you and your prospective mentor, I'm excited about this match and think she will be able to meet your mentoring needs well. The prospective mentor I have in mind for you is ████████ (copied here); I encourage you to reach out this coming week to set up an initial meeting.

Once the two of you have met and discussed mentoring goals, please complete the HUES mentoring agreement and ensure one of you gets it returned to me (you'll each have a copy, too). Within the next 24 hours, please expect to see another email from me. This is the 'official' HUES introduction email, and contains important information that includes the mentoring contract, basic program expectations, and further information about setting mentoring goals, and other important preliminary paperwork.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know! I really look forward to seeing you and ████ work together!

Best Regards,

Zachary Reeves-Blurton
Program Manager, Mentoring Initiatives & Professional Development Engagement
Graduate College
Arizona State University
p: 480-965-5990
email: zachary.blurton@asu.edu

APPENDIX N
MENTOR/MENTEE INTRODUCTION EMAIL

Hi ▉▉▉ and ▉▉▉,

Welcome to the HUES ASU LGBTQ+ mentoring program! I'm excited to have you aboard this semester.

Please read this email closely, as this serves as your introduction to HUES. Attached to this email are the following documents:

1. The HUES Mentoring Expectations form
2. A HUES Mentoring Agreement
3. A HUES Mentoring Goals worksheet
4. The Fall 2018-Spring 2019 HUES community engagement program schedule
5. HUES LGBTQ+ Personal Resilience Assessment description form
6. The Graduate College's GradConnect mentoring best practice tip sheets

Mentee next steps: now that you have been matched and introduced, it is up to you to arrange your first meeting. I am asking all new mentees to complete the **HUES LGBTQ+ Personal Resilience Assessment Survey** here. This should take no more than a few minutes, but please consider your answers. More information about this survey and why/how we use it are included in the attached Resilience Assessment document.

A quick note on your HUES Participant Identifier: an important part of the HUES program is the creation of brave spaces for honest and intentional discussion and community engagement. At the same time, we respect the privacy of all participants. To that end, rather than your name, you'll notice that you are prompted to create a Participant Identifier for the Personal Resilience Assessment Survey. Only you will know this identifier. To keep things simple and easy to remember, your identifier/username should be a six-digit combo: the FIRST three letters of your mother's name followed by the LAST three numbers of your phone number.

Mentor next steps: because most HUES mentors have previous mentoring experience and mentoring is a highly personalized process, HUES does not provide a structured mentor training. The attached materials are provided for your use as needed; if you have specific questions or concerns about initiating or maintaining your mentoring relationship at any point, please feel free to chat with me at any time – I have several mentoring resources that I can share.

For your first meeting: the two of you should review and sign a copy of the **HUES Mentoring Agreement**, then turn in the signed agreement to me, with each of you receiving a copy for your own record. During this first session, you should also discuss your mentoring needs and goals; the attached **Mentoring Goals Worksheet** might help you determine these.

Once the two of you have met, please touch base with me to let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback. This mentoring program is new, and it's quite important to me that we be able to provide the best support to our participants and mentors that we can. I look forward to your participation!

Best Regards,

Zachary Reeves-Blurton
Program Manager, Mentoring Initiatives & Professional Development Engagement
Graduate College
Arizona State University
p: 480-965-5990
email: zachary.blurton@asu.edu

APPENDIX O
HUES FALL 2018/SPRING 2019 PROGRAMMING

FALL 2018 Program Schedule

HUES ASU LGBTQ+ Identity Project
Community Enrichment Programs

SEPTEMBER 6 4:30 p.m.

Resilience-Building for Personal and Academic Success

Resilience, or the ability to overcome or cope with life's challenges or stressors, is a critical component of both academic and personal success. Students from underrepresented communities (first-generation students, students of color, and LGBTQ+ students) face unique challenges. Join us to learn about resilience-building techniques and how to overcome obstacles in the path of your success. Memorial Union Coconino (Room 246)
Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352569

SEPTEMBER 27 4:30 p.m.

LGBTQ+ Voices: Resilience in Action with Leslie Smith

Leslie Smith is a filmmaker, novelist, activist and graduate student who was at the epicenter of the AIDS crisis in the 1990s and watched as the epidemic shook the LGBTQ+ community. Join HUES as Leslie speaks about growing up in a very different era for LGBTQ+ individuals, lessons he's learned, and how resilience can be a powerful force within the LGBTQ+ community. Memorial Union Coconino (Room 246).
Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352556

OCTOBER 11 4:30 p.m.

LGBTQ+ Voices: Coming-out Stories

October 11 is **National Coming Out Day**. Join HUES and the LGBTQ+ Faculty & Staff Association as student, faculty and staff panelists discuss their individual journeys toward disclosure, their experiences and processes in coming out, and how these experiences have shaped their lives. Memorial Union Coconino (Room 246).
Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352557

November 8 4:30 p.m.

LGBTQ+ Voices: Healthy Relationships and the LGBTQ+ Community

Join us as the Sun Devil Support Network leads a conversation about relationships, communication, boundaries, sexual violence and the LGBTQ+ community. Sun Devil Fitness Complex, Well Devil Suite Multipurpose Room. Register:
https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352561

ASU Graduate College
Arizona State University
graduate.asu.edu

For more information
Email Zachary Reeves-Blurton at:
Zachary.Blurton@asu.edu

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HUES ASU LGBTQ+ Identity Project
Community Enrichment Programs

JANUARY 15 4:30 p.m.

Building Social Capital and Support Networks

As we start off a new semester, join the GradConnect mentoring initiative as panelists from the HUES LGBTQ+ mentoring project and minority graduate student organizations discuss how social capital and support networks help them navigate their interpersonal and academic identities. Memorial Union La Paz (Room 242). Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352545

FEBRUARY 5 4:30 p.m.

Communities of Practice and Group Affinity

Join the GradConnect mentoring initiative as we discuss the importance of individual and community identity, culture and affinity in navigating educational, interpersonal and career spaces. Memorial Union La Paz (Room 242).
Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352548

MARCH 28 4:30 p.m.

LGBTQ+ Voices: Out@Work

Join HUES, the LGBTQ+ Faculty & Staff Association and the ASU Devil's Pride alumni group as panelists share their perceptions, challenges, opportunities and advice as they speak about navigating the workplace and professional relationships as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Memorial Union La Paz (Room 242).
Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352549

APRIL 11 4:30 p.m.

LGBTQ+ Voices: The Meaning of Pride

As we celebrate ASU Pride, join HUES mentors and the LGBTQ+ Faculty & Staff Association as panelists reflect on the meaning of the Pride season, what LGBTQ+ community means, and how as a community we can address the ongoing challenges that face us. Memorial Union Coconino (Room 246).
Register: https://www.eiseverywhere.com/352550

ASU Graduate College
Arizona State University
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For more information
Email Zachary Reeves-Blurton at:
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APPENDIX P
MENTORING LIFE CYCLE MODEL

Graduate College Professional Development Initiatives
MENTORING | ENGAGEMENT | COMMUNITY

Life Cycle of a Mentoring Relationship

Mentorship is a relationship marked by growth, development and change, and can be broken down into four stages. In the **initiation phase**, mentor and mentee bond, establish rapport and trust, and define their mutual expectations and goals. During this stage, it is important that mentor and mentee are transparent and communicative, and that mentoring goals and expectations be discussed. The initiation stage is brief, but sets the framework for the remainder of the mentoring relationship.

In the **cultivation stage**, mentor and mentee strengthen and enrich the developing relationship. Rapport and trust are reinforced through action on the parts of both mentor and mentee. As expectations become clarified and established, mentor and mentee intentionally execute plans to accomplish the goals. During this stage, the mentor provides advice and guidance, supporting the mentee as the mentee takes action to move towards established goals.

During the **maturation stage**, mentor and mentee develop an interpersonal synergy as the mentee gradually develops independence and agency as they meet mentoring goals. As goals are met, mentee and mentee may evaluate the outcomes of the mentoring partnership, establishing new goals or concluding the formal mentorship.

Independence and redefinition is the final stage in the mentoring cycle. At this time, mentor and mentee develop a new relationship as colleagues or equal peers, with the mentor facilitating the mentee's entrance into new communities of practice or identity. During this stage, which may continue indefinitely upon accomplishment of mentoring goals, both mentor and mentee may take on new mentees, connecting and expanding their mentoring networks.

The **GradConnect Mentoring Network** provides resources and support to mentors and mentees throughout the mentoring relationship cycle, from **initiation** through **cultivation**, **maturation** and **independence and redefinition**.

4-stage mentoring cycle adapted from *American Psychological Association, Boise State University Shared Mentoring Program, and Plymouth University. Adapted by Z. Reeves-Blurton, Arizona State University, February 2019.
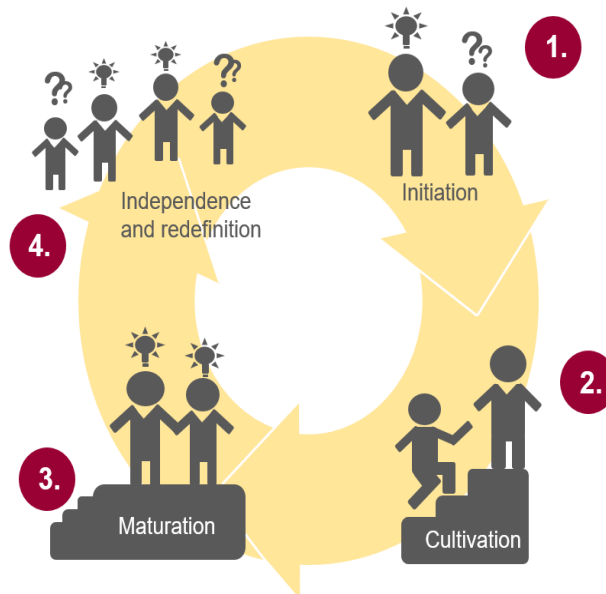
APPENDIX Q
HUES LGBTQ+ MENTORING EXPECTATIONS

HUES LGBTQ+ Mentoring Expectations

The HUES LGBTQ+ mentoring program is designed to bolster community engagement and provide identity-development and engagement opportunities to ASU's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQ+) communities. HUES is open to any LGBTQ+ ASU student. One-to-one peer mentoring and a reflective community blog project, augmented by personal development and social engagement programming, offers a platform for students to embrace and discuss the roles of identity in the university and society, seek out peers with shared identities and cultures, and explore the intersections of identity, expression, community, and belonging within the contexts of both ASU and the larger world.

Participant Eligibility. Any current or incoming ASU student is eligible to apply to the HUES program.

Mentor matching. Mentors in the HUES program are LGBTQ+ faculty, staff, and previous-year HUES mentees. All mentors and mentees have been asked to provide information on their personal backgrounds, mentoring needs or interests, and program expectations. Matches are made based on these criteria. HUES hopes that the mentoring process is a rewarding and enriching experience for both mentors and mentees, and that both parties are comfortable with the match that has been provided. Upon completion of the first mentoring meeting, in the event that either the mentor or mentee do not feel comfortable with their match, the HUES program will offer a re-match.

Structure. The HUES program follows a fall-spring academic calendar, with new mentor/mentee matches assigned beginning in August and structured programming ending in April; though applicants may be matched any time during the semester, any applications received after April 1 will be held until the following August.

One-to-one mentoring. Participants are expected to meet with their mentor at least once per month. In the first meeting, mentor and mentee will establish goals for the semester and complete a mentoring agreement. Subsequent meetings will be determined by mentor and mentee, using the goals determined in the mentoring agreement to drive conversation.

LGBTQ+ personal resilience inventory. Upon entry to the program, all mentees are required to complete the LGBTQ+ personal resilience inventory. This brief survey is designed to measure participants' own perceived levels of community and personal support in relation to their LGBTQ+ identity, and is administered at program intake and exit. While individual records are confidential, data collected from these assessments will drive subsequent HUES programming.

Community enrichment programming. Enrichment programs are designed to facilitate further examination and conversation around themes of LGBTQ+ community and cultural capital, navigation of identity and environment, and common experiences that define the LGBTQ+ community. Participants are expected to attend at least two community enrichment programs per semester.

Potential trigger warning. Due to the nature of mentoring conversations around identity development, engagement and support, some participants may experience some emotional distress or triggering in recalling and reflecting upon unpleasant or frustrating experiences.

Though challenging subjects may be a component of mentoring sessions, if agreed upon mutually by mentor and mentee, mentors are not trained psychologists, and mentoring sessions must not be used as informal counseling sessions. The following resources are available to students in need of counseling services:

ASU Counseling Services (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
      Downtown Phoenix: 602-496-1155
      Polytechnic: 480-727-1255
      Tempe: 480-965-6146
      West: 602-543-8125

EMPACT 24-hour ASU-dedicated crisis hotline (after-hours/weekends)
      480-921-1006

Arizona State University LGBTQ+ Resources Website
      eoss.asu.edu/out