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Learning From Voices of Diverse Youth: School-based Practices to Promote Positive Psychosocial Functioning of LGBTQ High School Students

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Learning From Voices of Diverse Youth: School-based Practices to Promote Positive

Psychosocial Functioning of LGBTQ High School Students

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify school-based practices that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth endorse as ways for high schools to provide social, emotional, and academic support to LGBTQ youth. A diverse sample of LGBTQ high school students ($N = 18$) from one large urban school district in a southeastern state participated in individual semi-structured interviews and/or small group brainstorming sessions. Eleven individual interviews were conducted to gather detailed accounts of a) supportive behaviors and policies that youth had experienced in their schools, as well as b) supportive behaviors and policies that were suggested as desired supports that had not actually been experienced. Participants' sentiments were coded based on the source of support (i.e., teachers, school mental health providers, administrators, policies, resources), nature of support (i.e., proactive, reactive), and social context of the support (i.e., impacting single students through one-on-one setting, impacting more than one student or groups of students). Three brainstorming sessions that included a total of 13 students were conducted to gather additional ideas from youth on ways for schools and school staff to provide support. Frequency counts of individual interview data indicated that teachers provided more experienced and desired supports than any other school-based source of support. Of the desired supports that participants had not actually experienced, Proactive Supports Impacting Groups were the most frequently described Support Type for teachers, school mental health providers, and administrators. Content Themes emerged within Support Types (e.g., Proactive Support

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Impacting Individuals, Reactive Support Impacting Groups) capture sentiments that were shared across multiple participants' responses. Data from interviews and brainstorming sessions were also analyzed together through a constant-comparative reduction process, resulting in 162 Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies corresponding to 8 Big Ideas of school-based supports for LGBTQ high school students: (1) *Using Respectful Language and Interactions with Students;* (2) *Providing Comfort, Assistance, and Advice Matched to Student Needs;* (3) *Facilitating Connections with Community Supports;* (4) *Providing LGBTQ-Related Materials and Information;* (5) *Allowing and Supporting School-Based GSA and Pride Activities;* (6) *Addressing Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Related Issues;* (7) *Implementing Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students;* and (8) *Implementing Policies that Respectfully Account for Students' Diversity.*) Pragmatic implications for teachers, school mental health providers, and administrators are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, otherwise referred to as sexual minority youth, experience an elevated prevalence of psychosocial and academic problems in comparison to heterosexual peers. These problems include mental health concerns like depression, substance abuse, and suicidality (e.g., D'Augelli, 2002; Button, O'Connell, & Gealt, 2012; Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006) as well as lower academic achievement, school attendance, and school attachment (e.g., Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Pearson, Muller, & Wilkinson, 2007). Examination of the factors related to such increased psychosocial concerns reveals several contextual risk factors are at play. That is, it appears that environmental variables are more implicated in the elevated risk for psychosocial problems rather than simply having same-sex attractions or a variant gender expression. Various aspects of school social contexts in particular appear to serve as significant contributing factors to the elevated risk of psychosocial maladjustment among LGBTQ youth. A better understanding for how schools can alter their practices to create school contexts that promote positive psychosocial functioning is needed in order to adequately address the disparity between LGBTQ youth and heterosexual youth.

Within schools, LGBTQ youth face alarmingly high rates of victimization based on their sexual orientation and/or gender expression (e.g., D'Augelli, Pilkington, &

Hersberger, 2002; Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009; Kosciw et al., 2012). Approximately

eight out of ten LGBTQ youth indicate they have been verbally harassed, four out of ten

indicate they have been physically harassed, and two out of ten indicate they have been

physically assaulted within the past year (Kosciw et al., 2012). LGBTQ students who

present as more gender atypical (i.e., those who behave or think in ways that are more

generally associated with the opposite sex) or who are more open about their sexual

orientation identity tend to be victimized the most (e.g., D'Augelli, Grossman, Starks,

2006; Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2012; Waldo,

Hesson, McInnis, & D'Augelli, 1998).   School-based experiences of harassment,

bullying, and other forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity

have consistently been associated with heightened levels of mental health problems

among LGBTQ youth (D'Augelli et al., 2002; Friedman et al., 2006; Waldo, Hesson-

McInnis, & D'Augelli, 1998; Williams et al., 2005). Beyond mental health concerns,

there is consistent evidence to suggest that large numbers of LGBTQ youth feel unsafe in

their schools and avoid that feeling by missing several days of school per month (Kosciw,

Diaz, & Greytak, 2008, Kosciw et al., 2012). Large numbers of heterosexual students in

secondary schools report they would prefer not to attend schools with gay or lesbian

youth and believe that they would not remain friends with peers if they learned those

peers were gay or lesbian (Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). More than a third of

LGBTQ youth report that LGBTQ acceptance within their schools is low (Kosciw et al.,

2012). Meanwhile, for students with same-sex attractions, low social acceptance from

peers is not only associated with higher levels of depression and lower self-esteem but

also lower academic achievement (Bos, Sandort, Druyn, & Hakvoort, 2008).

School contexts extend beyond peer relations. The relations between students and school staff appear to take on an important role in the psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth. Many LGBTQ youth do not feel supported by school staff. For example, three out of five LGBTQ students who experience victimization within schools believe school staff would not adequately respond if they were to report the harassment behaviors (Kosciw et al., 2012). LGBTQ students who do not believe they can share problems with school staff are significantly more likely to be threatened with violence or injured in school, and to attempt suicide multiple times (Goodenow et al., 2006). Some evidence suggests student-teacher relationships may be the greatest predictor of school troubles (i.e., interpersonal problems with peers, difficulty paying attention, and not completing homework) out of a host of other social, peer, family, sexual attraction, and demographic variables (Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001). The fact that perceptions of school staff account for such significant variability in psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth underscores that school staff can be an important leverage point for improving psychosocial outcomes for LGBTQ youth.

Despite significant evidence documenting the need for improved supports and services for LGBTQ youth in schools, more research is needed on what LGBTQ youth perceive school staff can do to lead to positive outcomes. In a comprehensive review of school-based supports for LGBTQ youth, Hansen (2007) underscored the limited range of research that has investigated the effectiveness of suggested practices and policies. School policies to protect LGBTQ youth, providing psychosocial support for LGBTQ youth, conducting staff trainings on LGBTQ issues, incorporating LGBTQ issues into the curriculum, and creating Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) were highlighted as

recommendations. The limited research on these types of supports, however, has not fully explored implementation effectiveness. One study helped highlight more specific behaviors that GSA advisers do in order to help advocate for and support LGBTQ youth in their schools, but these educators' understanding of what is helpful to youth may not necessarily match what is most effective or what youth feel is most helpful (Graybill et al., 2007). For example, GSA advisers described many behaviors that were in reaction to incidents of discrimination rather than behaviors that were more proactive in demonstrating support to LGBTQ youth. However, proactive support behaviors may be even more critical to supporting LGBTQ youth, as quantitative data has indicated the importance of student-teacher relationships and teacher support to psychosocial functioning (e.g., Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001) and qualitative data has suggested that proactive behaviors influence LGBTQ youth's level of comfort with school staff (Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). Explicitly exploring what LGBTQ youth identify as the ways to effectively support their social, emotional, and academic needs can add specificity to understanding how improvements could be implemented.

In light of the limited data on the effectiveness of specific school-based practices and policies designed to support LGBTQ youth and the limited input that LGBTQ youth themselves have contributed to insights about the perceived effectiveness of school-based supports, an exploration with youth participants was undertaken to help fill this gap in the literature. Research methods designed to access youth voices to better inform how school staff can demonstrate support for students were selected to help generate pragmatic implications for school-based practice, similar to how these methods have produced such findings by other researchers. For example, Suldo, Friedrich, White, Farmer, Minch, and

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Michalowski (2009) concluded that middle school students' perceptions of social support from teachers accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in these students' subjective well-being. Through focus group interviews with a general population of youth, Suldo and colleagues identified specific teacher behaviors that convey high levels of support in an effort learn how to better promote students' subjective well-being. The approach resulted in numerous concrete strategies for supporting youth. The findings also offered social validity to these strategies of support, since youth who are recipients of teacher support were able to identify the means of support that they perceive are important. While it was not that study's intent to explore perspectives of LGBTQ youth, views from students of diverse sexual orientations were not knowingly assessed. Two emergent themes dealt with equity issues (i.e., treating students similarly; punishing in a fair manner) yet these were two of the least commonly mentioned themes in their study. Using a similar strategy of seeking out youth perspectives from LGBTQ youth in particular helps to explore how those categories of teacher behaviors may be more salient for them, considering the population's more common encounters with discrimination. An exploratory approach to data collection also allows for other salient themes of school-based supports to emerge from youth responses that otherwise may not be indicated in the research literature or in professional practice.

Two notable recent studies have elicited the voices of LGBTQ youth through Concept Mapping procedures (Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009; Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2010). LGBTQ youth were asked broadly about how communities could support their emotional and social needs, resulting in a relatively small proportion of strategies that focused specifically on school contexts, with others that focused on broader

community contexts. Further exploration from the voices of a diverse population of LGBTQ youth that specifically solicits the school-based practices they regard to be within school contexts could facilitate building socially validated practices for school staff to implement.

Purpose of the Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to identify educator behaviors and school policies that LGBTQ youth participants endorse as strategies that promote positive psychosocial functioning for the population of LGBTQ youth. The study also sought to explore which of those school based practices were perceived as most effective.   The study further aimed to distinguish (a) what LGBTQ youth had encountered in schools that they believed was helpful to them or other LGBTQ youth in terms of supporting them socially, emotionally, or academically and (b) what LGBTQ youth have not encountered in schools but propose as desired supports. Through a multi-phase mixed-method research design, the study sought to provide both in-depth information regarding how supportive strategies could be implemented within schools as well as provide a comprehensive framework of recommended practices and policies.

Research Questions

The specific research questions that guided this research were:

1.	What policies and educator behaviors have LGBTQ youth experienced in their high schools that they perceive serve to promote positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?

2.	What policies and educator behaviors have LGBTQ youth not experienced in their high schools but suggest would serve to promote positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?

3.	Which policies and educator behaviors identified by LGBTQ youth are perceived as the most important to implement in schools in order to promote positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?

4.	How frequently do LGBTQ youth perceive the policies and educator behaviors that promote positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth occur in their high schools?

5.	Of the policies and educator behaviors that LGBTQ youth have experienced within their schools, how helpful do LGBTQ youth perceive those things have been in promoting positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?

Definition of Key Terms

Sexual minority youth is an umbrella term used to reference youth with diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities. Sexual minority orientations tend to fall into categories of gay or lesbian (i.e. attraction to the same gender), bisexual (i.e., attraction to both genders), or questioning (i.e., not sure of one's sexual orientation), whereas the sexual majority orientation is heterosexual (i.e., attraction to the opposite gender).   While those are the most common, other identity terms are used by individuals who would be considered sexual minorities, such as pansexual (i.e., attraction towards all gender identities). Regardless of sexual orientation, youth whose gender identities transgress established gender categories or boundaries are referred to as transgender, and these youth are also considered to fall within the umbrella term sexual minority (Sears, 2005).

Another umbrella term that is often used interchangeably with the term sexual minority youth is LGBTQ youth, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. In this document, "LGBTQ youth" is the standard term used to encompass this diverse population of youth.

Psychosocial functioning also serves as an umbrella term that encompasses a number of factors relevant to an individual's overall social, emotional, and academic well-being. Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) defined psychosocial functioning to include social-emotional functioning and school functioning. Indicators of social-emotional functioning include emotional distress, subjective well-being, and quality of peer relationships. Indicators of school functioning include motivation to learn, academic achievement, and in-school conduct.

School-based practices that promote positive psychosocial functioning include the educator behaviors and policies that support students' social, emotional, and/or academic needs in school. School-based practices could be preventive (e.g., showing that staff care about youth, making youth feel comfortable) or responsive (e.g., providing consequences to perpetrators of harassment, talking to students about a problem) in supporting these needs. For the purpose of this study, school-based practices can be delivered by a range of individuals who work in schools, including teachers (i.e., traditional teachers, instructional assistants, special education teachers, and anyone else that providing small or large group instruction in schools), school-based mental health (SBMH) providers (i.e., guidance counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers) and administrators (i.e., principals, assistant principals).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, otherwise referred to as sexual minority youth, represent a population of students whose psychosocial needs within school systems may not always be met to the same extent as heterosexual youth. This chapter begins with an introduction to this population of youth, by providing characteristics that define this population as well as describing some of the unique stressors and developmental experiences these youth tend to encounter. A case for why special attention to this diverse group of youth is needed is advanced by highlighting population-based research indicating heightened levels of psychosocial problems among LGBTQ youth in comparison to heterosexual youth. Next, a discussion follows regarding recent research that has begun to identify key school social context variables that are associated with LGBTQ youth's psychosocial functioning. Subsequently, a review of school-based practices that have been either implemented or suggested for implementation to help meet the psychosocial needs of LGBTQ youth follows. Limitations to the current set of school-based practices described in the literature are underscored to demonstrate the need to further explore what LGBTQ youth themselves would identify as important school-based practices to promote their population's positive psychosocial functioning.

LGBTQ Youth: A Diverse Group

The term LGBTQ youth encompasses several subgroups of youth, primarily those with diverse sexual orientations and/or gender expressions. Sexual orientation most simply refers to an individual's enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction toward males, females, or both males and females (Just the Facts Coalition, 2008). Sexual orientations tend to fall into categories of heterosexual (i.e., attraction to the opposite sex), gay or lesbian (i.e., attraction to the same sex), bisexual (i.e., attraction to both sexes), or questioning (i.e., not sure of one's sexual orientation identity), with the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) identities falling under the umbrella of sexual minorities. Recent theory and research also highlights, however, that sexual orientation among youth is a complex and multidimensional construct including factors of identity, attraction, and behavior (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001; Igartua, Thombs, Burgos, & Montoro, 2009). For example, a youth could engage in same-sex sexual behavior but hold a heterosexual identity.

Another subgroup encompassed by the term LGBTQ youth are individuals who identify as transgender (T). Youth whose gender expression or self-identification transgresses established gender categories or boundaries are considered transgender (Sears, 2005). Namely, these youth express or present with a gender identity that differs from their birth sex for all or a significant portion of their daily lives. Elze (2005) commented on the dearth of literature on transgender youth, recommending the need for much more research focused on this specific population. The terms LGBTQ youth and sexual minority youth are inclusive and essentially interchangeable terms. Researchers, however, vary widely in the ways in which they measure and represent sexual orientation

and gender identity constructs and populations (e.g., some studies include lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth only [LGB], only include those who self-identify as a sexual minority and therefore do not include questioning youth [LGBT], some measure sexual attraction only and therefore do not use identity labels). For this reason within the following review of literature, either the term LGBTQ youth is used when broadly referring to the entire population or more specific acronyms are used to represent which groups were specifically included in each study. Of note, however, is that of the few studies that include research on transgender youth, most tend to have them only minimally represented in combination with much larger proportions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or questioning youth.

Estimates of Prevalence of LGBQ Youth within School Populations

A national survey found 14% of school-based mental health professionals (i.e., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses) did not believe there were youth in their high schools who self-identify as LGBQ, and 27% did not believe there were youth in their high schools who identified as heterosexual but had engaged in same-sex sexual behavior (Sawyer, Porter, Lehman, Anderson, & Anderson, 2006). Numerous challenges to gaining accurate prevalence rates of youth with diverse sexual orientations have been documented (e.g., Russell, 2006). Nonetheless, data show that LGBQ youth are indeed present within schools.

In an Add Health (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health) study, in which 12,000 youth from grades 7 through 12 were initially interviewed, 5.3% of girls and 7.1% of boys reported either same- or both-sex romantic attraction, with lower rates of youth (2.2% for girls, 1.4% for boys) reporting having had same- or both-sex romantic

relationships (Russell, 2006). Data collected from the Delaware High School Youth Risk

Behavior Survey through the random sampling of ninth through twelfth grade classrooms

(*N* = 6636 participants) indicated that 5.3% of the sample identified as LGBQ (i.e., 1.1%

gay/lesbian, 3.1% bisexual, 1.1% questioning; Button, O'Connell & Gealt, 2012)

Russell (2006) hypothesizes that finding from his and other studies are

underestimates of the actual prevalence of youth with diverse sexual orientations based in

part on methodological limitations (e.g., unwillingness to acknowledge or self-report

same-sex attractions). Higher rates have been found when the three dimensions of sexual

orientation (i.e.., attraction, behavior, and identity) have been assessed. In a sample of

1,951 Montreal high school students, approximately 1 in 10 adolescents (*n*=237) reported

non-heterosexual identity, attraction, and/or behavior (Igartua, Thombs, Burgos, &

Montoro, 2009). Reinforcing the importance of attending to multidimensional aspects of

sexual orientation, 13% of this "non-exclusively-heterosexual" subgroup endorsed items

indicating they previously engaged in same-sex sexual behavior but identified as

heterosexual, and 40% who reported an attraction to the same gender or both genders

identified as heterosexual. The authors attributed these differences in part to a hypothesis

that nonheterosexual identity development occurs over time and can occur in different

sequences. For instance, youth may begin recognizing attractions to the same sex but not

be at a stage in which they integrate that attraction into a gay or lesbian self-identity.

Unique Stressors and Developmental Milestones Associated with LGBTQ Youth

It has been almost four decades since the American Psychological Association

(APA) resolved and officially pronounced that "homosexuality per se implies no

impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities"

and insisted that mental health professionals "take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations" (Conger, 1975, p. 633). Despite this proclamation, stigma associated with non-heterosexual orientations still permeates through society (e.g., Haldeman, 2002). Heterosexism is a means through which non-heterosexual behaviors, identities, relationships, and communities are stigmatized (Herek, 1995). Heterosexism is a systematic process of privileging heterosexual orientation over non-heterosexual orientation through an underlying assumption that heterosexuality, along with its associated power and privilege, are normal and ideal (Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009). Heterosexism in the context of school settings, for instance, can be observed as the tolerance of harassment against LGBTQ students. At more systemic levels, heterosexism can be seen within federal legislation, in which sexual orientation and gender expression are absent from the protected classes in student non-discrimination laws.

Similar to other classes of minorities based on race, gender, or disability status, youth who are sexual minorities are susceptible to experiencing unique stressors connected to their minority status (DiPlacido, 1998). Gay-related stress has been conceptualized as a multidimensional "stigmatization of being, or being perceived to be, GLB within a society in which homosexuality is negatively sanctioned" (Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, & Gwadz, 2002, p. 967). This includes negative attitudes toward homosexuality from external sources, internal discomfort with homosexuality, and gay-related stressful events. Negative attitudes toward homosexuality geared towards youth who are, or perceived to be, LGBQ can take many forms such as violence, verbal abuse, and rejection. Internal discomfort with homosexuality, often referred to as internalized

homophobia or internalized homonegativity, is the other dimension of stressors. Internalized homophobia encompasses any negative attitudes towards one's own homosexuality as well as towards others' homosexuality (Ross & Rosser, 1996). Internalized homophobia could manifest as negative thoughts or beliefs about publicly identifying as being a sexual minority, perceptions of stigma associated with being a sexual minority, social discomfort with other sexual minority individuals, and moral or religious intolerance of being a sexual minority. Specific gay-related stressful events may include increased arguments about one's sexual orientation with parents, family members, or close friends; losing a friend because of one's sexual orientation; getting in trouble with teachers, peers, or authority figures over one's sexual orientation; and being assaulted because of one's sexual orientation (Rosario et al., 2002).

A key experience for LGBTQ youth that can be related to unique stress is sexual identity development and the related process of coming out, or self-disclosing one's sexual orientation. Important milestones for individuals with homosexual or bisexual orientations in the coming out process include being aware of attractions to others of the same sex; having consensual sex; thinking of oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual; telling other people about one's sexual orientation; and telling one's mother and father about one's sexual orientation (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). The timing of these milestones is variable; however, recent evidence suggests the age at which individuals are self-identifying their sexual orientation is getting younger and there is at least a significant proportion of LGBTQ youth who self-identify during adolescence (e.g., Floyd & Bakeman, 2006; Glover, Galliher, & Lamere, 2009; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2008; Saltzburg, 2004). For instance, D'Augelli (2002) found the average age at which

youth first became aware of same-sex attractions to be around 10 years old, with self-identification occurring around 15 years old and first self-disclosure occurring around age 17.

Many sexual minority individuals across the sexual identity development spectrum may choose to not disclose their sexual orientation as a way to conceal the stigma associated with homosexuality or bisexuality. A comprehensive model of the psychological implications of concealing a stigma shows that such efforts could lead to increases in cognitive preoccupations, vigilance, and suspiciousness; negative changes in affect including anxiety, depression, hostility, demoralization, guilt and shame; and changes in behaviors relating to heightened impression management, social avoidance and isolation, increased importance of feedback, and impaired close relationship functioning (Pachankis, 2007). LGB individuals appear to be self-disclosing their identities at earlier ages in recent years when compared to older historical cohorts of LGB individuals, however even among a sample of individuals who self-identified by about 16 years old, their first self-disclosure occurred an average of about two years after self-identification (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). While it is difficult to ascertain the true proportion of self-identified LGB youth who decide not to disclose their stigmatized identity, such findings indicate this is a relevant issue during LGB adolescent development.

Taken together, these sexual identity development experiences along with heterosexism, stigma, and internalized homophobia begin to provide a context for understanding the unique challenges LGBTQ youth may encounter during adolescence. These factors set the backdrop for how adolescent development may differ for LGBTQ

youth. A cohesive examination into how LGBTQ youth are functioning in terms of several social, emotional and academic domains follows, and this includes comparisons to heterosexual youth as well as an exploration of the specific factors connected to types of psychosocial functioning for LGBTQ youth in particular.

Adolescent Lives in School Contexts

While there are many ecological contexts that impact lives of adolescents, school is a primary context for all youth in industrialized nations. Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) suggest that the complexity of adolescent lives should be understood by not just attending to the youth's psychosocial functioning, but also taking the youth's school social contexts into account. They describe that many aspects of school social context relate to an individual's psychosocial functioning because these contexts provide instructional, interpersonal, and organizational processes that help (or hinder) adolescents' school and social-emotional needs. Importantly, these authors also suggest a broad definition of psychosocial functioning that encompasses more than traditional presence or absence of psychopathology. An adolescent's psychosocial functioning encompasses an individual's social-emotional functioning which can be assessed by psychological indicators, such as emotional distress and subjective well-being, and by behavioral indicators, such as the quality of peer relationships. Psychosocial functioning also encompasses school functioning, which can be assessed by psychological indicators, such as motivation to learn, and behavioral indicators, such as achievement and in-school conduct.   With this framework, an examination into the lives of LGBTQ youth can be more complete. Research on psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth is first presented, and then factors of school social contexts are explored.

Social-Emotional Functioning: LGBTQ Youth in Comparison to Heterosexual Youth

A large proportion of literature on LGBTQ youth has examined social-emotional functioning, and one of the most highly researched domains in particular has been suicidality among LGBTQ youth. Methodological issues complicate research on suicidality among LGBTQ youth (e.g., unwillingness to disclose sexual orientation, biased sampling, LGBTQ status of youth who complete suicide may be unknown) and limit the conclusiveness of any single study. However, critical reviews of this literature support the finding that GLB youth experience suicide attempts and ideation at higher rates than their heterosexual peers (McDaniel, Purcell, & D'Augelli, 2001; Russell, 2003).

Population-based research has continued to demonstrate elevated suicidality. For instance, data from the 2004 Minnesota Student Survey provided information on 21,927 sexually active youth, of whom 10.3% (*n*=2255) reported having same-gender sexual experiences (Eisenberg & Resnick, 2006). The odds of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts for this GLB subgroup (identified only through behavior, not identity or attraction) were significantly greater (1.60 – 2.63) than the non-GLB subgroup, after controlling for other demographic factors (i.e., grade level, race, family structure). Further, the predicted probability of suicide attempts was 24.4% for GLB males and 39.6% for GLB females, compared to 13.7% for non-GLB males and 23.1% for non-GLB females. Data from the 1999 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS) offered information on suicide attempts of 3,435 high school students, of whom 17% (*n*=202) were classified as GLB (identified through items on self-

identification and same-gender sexual experience; (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). Among the GLB subgroup, 28.5% reported making any suicide attempts within the past year, 18.5% reported making two or more attempts with the past year, and 17.8% reported a suicide attempt with the past year that resulted in injury, compared to rates of 6.9%, 3.2% and 3.4% among the non-GLB group, respectively. Moreover, district-wide data using the Dane County Youth Survey (Koenig, Espelage, & Biendseil, 2005) provided information on 13,921 high school students from a Midwestern county, of whom 7.7% (*n*=1,065) indicated a GLB identity and 6.7% (*n*=932) indicated they were confused about their sexual orientation (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008). While GLB students did not significantly differ from non-GLB students on a combined scale of depressive and suicidal feelings, students who reported a degree of confusion over their sexual orientation were more likely to endorse these symptoms.

Aside from suicidality, LGBTQ youth appear to have group mean differences on several other indicators of mental health in comparison to their heterosexual peers. In terms of overall well-being as assessed through a composite of several positive and negative psychological functioning indicators (i.e., measures of depression, social anxiety, daily hassles, self-esteem, and optimism), data from 3,876 students from a southern Ontario school district demonstrated significantly lower levels of psychological functioning among LGBTQ youth, with large effect sizes (.67 - .71; Busseri, Willoughby, Chalmers, & Bogaert, 2006). In a different study with youth randomly sampled from northern England, 53 students with same-sex attractions were compared to 53 matched students with opposite-sex attractions only (Rivers & Noret, 2008). These sexual minority youth only differed negatively on a subscale assessing hostility; no significant

differences emerged on measures of interpersonal sensitivity, depression, or anxiety. The lower sample size and measurement limitations (i.e., use of Bonferroni adjustments lowered alpha levels) may have influenced the lack of statistical significance, or perhaps different contextual variables associated with northern England may help account for these results. Other studies using school or community-based sampling procedures of North American youth have found elevated levels of specific mental health problems among groups of LGBTQ youth in comparison to heterosexual youth, including indicators of depression (Pearson, Muller, & Wilkinson, 2007; Poteat, Aragon, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009), substance use (Botempo & D'Augelli, 2002; Button, O'Connell, & Gealt, 2012; Marshall, Friedman, Stall, Thompson, 2009), anxiety (Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2008), and high-risk behaviors or conduct problems (Busseri, Willoughby, Chalmers, & Bogaert, 2008).

School Functioning: LGBTQ Youth in Comparison to Heterosexual Youth

Less research in general has explored the various aspects of school functioning among LGBTQ youth. However, recent research has provided some indications of LGBTQ youth's school functioning in comparison to that of their heterosexual peers. In terms of an overall academic orientation (measured by indicators of typical grades; educational aspirations; planfulness, frequency of feeling bored at school; perceived importance of doing well at school), Busseri, Willoughby, Chalmers, and Bogaert (2006) found youth with attractions to both sexes to be most at risk, with significantly lower academic orientation scores (effect size = .54) compared to youth with exclusively opposite-sex attractions. Youth with exclusively same-sex attractions, however, did not significantly differ from either group. Such results suggest youth with bisexual

orientations or those questioning their sexual orientation are the subgroups who may be most at risk in terms of sexual orientation. Hypotheses explaining this heightened risk often suggest that youth with attractions to both sexes experience social rejection or less support from both homosexual and heterosexual individuals (e.g., Galiher, Rostosky, & Hughes, 2004). Such results also emphasize a cautionary message explicated in recent research that greater attention to within group diversity is necessary to more accurately understand the needs of LGBTQ youth (Poteat, Aragon, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009).

In terms of academic achievement, the average GPA of LGBTQ youth often is found to be lower than that of heterosexual youth (Pearson, Muller, Wilkinson, 2007; Rostosky, Owens, Zimmerman, & Riggle, 2003; Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001), though variability exists. For instance, within a Dutch sample there were no significant differences between groups (youth with same-sex versus opposite sex attractions) in terms of grades (Bos, Sandort, de Druyn, & Hakvoort, 2008). In addition, group differences in GPA have also been mixed in terms of sexual attraction and gender. When controlling for background characteristics, Pearson and colleagues (2007) found no differences between boys with same-sex attractions and boys with opposite-sex attractions, yet girls with same-sex attractions had lower GPAs than girls with opposite-sex attractions.   In Russell and colleagues' analysis of the Add Health dataset, same-sex attracted youth did not differ from opposite-sex youth, but bisexual youth had significantly lower GPAs, once again pointing to increased risk for youth with both-sex attractions.

In terms of in-school behavior, LGBTQ youth may be at increased risk for low attendance rates. The proportion of GLB youth reporting to have missed school in the

last month may be five times greater than that of heterosexual youth (Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998). Based on a more recent sample of 8,584 LGBT students between the ages of 13 to 21, similar results found 32% reporting to have missed at least one day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe at school (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012), compared to 4.5% of the general population that reported missing at least one day for that reason (GLSEN & Hariss Interactive, 2005). Rates specific to transgender youth ($N = 295$) show even greater absenteeism, with 46% reporting to have missed at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009). Furthermore, 11% of this transgender youth sample reported missing school at least 6 or more times in the past month.

Another study of in-school behavior asked students the extent of problems they had in terms of getting along with other students, paying attention in school, and completing homework. Students with both-sex attractions reported higher levels of these school problems than those with opposite-sex attraction (Russell et al., 2001). Similar to other findings by Russell and colleagues, there were no significant differences in school problems for the students with same-sex attractions.

With respect to psychological indicators related to school functioning, LGBTQ youth often report feeling less school belongingness or school attachment than heterosexual peers (Bos et al., 2008; Pearson et al., 2007; Rostosky et al., 2003). Some data indicates that sexual minority males do not experience lower school belongingness than heterosexual peers (Russell et al., 2001), while female sexual minority youth are at the greatest risk for low school belongingness (Galliher, Rostosky, & Hughes, 2004).

Pearson and colleagues (2007) also examined indicators of teacher attachment and school engagement, both of which evidenced lower group mean scores for students with same-sex attractions compared to students with opposite-sex attractions.

School Social Contexts for LGBTQ Youth

The previous sections highlighted that population-based studies often demonstrate elevated negative outcomes in terms of mean differences for LGBTQ youth, particularly for youth who are bisexual or questioning. However, in line with criticisms on the over emphasis of an "at-risk" status within research on LGBTQ youth (Russell, 2005; Savin-Williams, 2005), these negative outcomes do not stand alone without other related factors and should not be interpreted to view LGBTQ youth as psychosocially deficient. Just as Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) emphasized the need to study adolescents' psychosocial functioning in tandem with adolescents' school social contexts, recent work in the field of LGBTQ youth studies has called for an increased recognition and understanding of the influence of contextual factors. Horn, Kosciw, and Russell (2009) urged the field to take greater notice of the social contexts encountered by LGBTQ youth that impact the "persistent inequalities in health behavior, mental health, and long-term psychosocial adjustment of LGBT youth and adults" (p. 863).

The following sections describe school social contexts for LGBTQ youth in comparison to heterosexual youth. Specifically, student interpersonal relations and support from school staff are reviewed. Following descriptions of each, findings regarding the relationships between psychosocial functioning and the contextual risk and protective factors are discussed.

Status of Student Interpersonal Relations

One of the most commonly assessed aspects of LGBTQ youth's perceptions of school climate include student interpersonal relations, particularly regarding issues of bullying, harassment, abuse, and/or victimization. Such negative peer interactions appear to be occurring at high rates. In one study of LGB youth ($N = 350$) who were recruited through social and recreational groups for LGB youth to report on school-based victimization, 59% experienced verbal abuse, 24% experienced threats of violence, and 11% had objects thrown at them, though males experienced these incidents at higher rates than females (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002). Youth who were more gender atypical (i.e., greater frequency of behaving or thinking in a way that is generally associated with the opposite sex), who were more open about being GLB, and who were more open at earlier ages were more likely to be verbally abused. Gender atypicality and "outness" has been repeatedly linked to greater likelihood of victimization (e.g., D'Augelli, Grossman, Starks, 2006; Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2012; Waldo, Hesson, McInnis, & D'Augelli, 1998).

From 1999 to 2011, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has collected data every two years from samples of LGBT youth to assess the state of school climates as perceived by LGBT youth (Kosciw et al., 2012). In their most recent 2011 sample of 8,584 middle and high school LGBT youth, 82% reported being verbally harassed (e.g., being called names or verbally threatened), 38% reported being physically harassed (e.g., being pushed or shoved), and 18% reported being physically assaulted (e.g., being punched, kicked, or injured from a weapon) at school within the past year based on sexual orientation. In comparison to GLSEN's previous biennial data

collections, this most recent 2011 data collection indicated the first statistically

significant decrease in reported. Nevertheless, the most recent rates of victimization

based on sexual orientation are alarmingly high. When comparing victimization across

LGBTQ and heterosexual youth, evidence indicates significantly greater rates of

victimized LGBTQ youth than heterosexual youth, according to a recent random sample

of high school students (N=6636) from Delaware after controlling for gender, age, and

race (Button et al., 2012).

Other insights into negative peer interpersonal relations aside from direct receipt

of harassment have also been measured. Awareness of other LGBT students receiving

direct verbal or physical attacks also appears to be high, as D'Augelli and colleagues

(2002) found a third of LGB youth participants knew of other LGB youth who were

verbally insulted and a fifth knew of other LGB youth who were threatened with

violence. In terms of biased or homophobic language used within schools by peers, 85%

of LGBT students reported hearing the word "gay" in negative connotations (e.g., "that's

so gay") often or frequently and 71% reported hearing derogatory homophobic words

(e.g., "dyke," "faggot") often or frequently (Kosciw et al., 2012).   Even among a sample

of LGB youth who reported a variety of available support from school personnel, half of

participants reported seeing anti-gay graffiti in their schools (Elze, 2003a). Analysis of

contextual factors indicates that rural schools and areas with lower adult educational

attainment have more hostile climates (i.e., homophobic language and victimization),

while district size and students to school personnel ratios had little relation to student

hostility levels (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009).

Negative attitudes regarding LGBTQ peers may also manifest in more subtle behaviors. With over 36,000 youth respondents from two school based samples of students from grades 7 through 12, 17% (grade 12) to 38% (grade 7) of male students reported to agree or strongly agree that they would never remain friends with a peer if they learned the peer were gay or lesbian (Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). Female students were somewhat more tolerant, ranging from 5% (grade 12) to 24% (grade 7). Perhaps even more telling, however, was that 29.8% (Grade 12) to 54.2% (Grade 7) of boys (and 10.0% [Grade 11] to 35.0% [Grade 7]of girls) reported to agree or strongly agree that they would prefer to attend a school that did not have gay or lesbian students. LGBTQ youth perceptions of peer attitudes appear to be fairly aligned to these results as 37% indicated the general level of LGBT acceptance at their schools to be "not at all" or "not very" accepting (Kosciw et al., 2012).

More recent research has provided some new insights into indicators of positive interpersonal relations, namely various indicators of peer social support. Regarding LGBTQ youths' support seeking behaviors, students from England who were attracted to the same-sex did not significantly differ from those attracted to the opposite sex in endorsing peers as persons with whom they would turn to in order to confide in with personal concerns or troubles (Rivers & Noret, 2008). Among a host of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental variables assessed within a large school-based sample of youth from Ontario, friendship quality (i.e., attachment to friends; as well as quality of companionship, support, security, closeness, and conflict with one's best friend) was the only construct that did not differ between any of the sexual attraction groups (Busseri et al., 2006; 2008). In terms of LGBQ youth compared to heterosexual youth from the large

random sample in Deleware, both reported similar rates of social support and encouragement from friends (Button et al., 2012). Somewhat contrasting, LGBQ students from a different Canadian sample reported lower levels of companionship (i.e., time spent together doing enjoyable activities) with their best friends than heterosexual students, yet the groups did not differ in terms of closeness and trust with their best friends and size of their friendship networks (Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005). Further, GLB youth recruited through GLB youth community organizations in Indianapolis, Indiana reported having similar frequency of contact, degree of emotional closeness, and degree of hassles with their GLB friends as their heterosexual friends (Ueno, Gayman, Wright, & Quantz, 2009). However, GLB friends were rated higher than heterosexual friends in terms of supporting their sexual orientation. Juxtaposed to data on victimization, it appears that while LGBTQ youth may be more likely to encounter negative interpersonal experiences than heterosexual youth, at least some dimensions of the positive interpersonal experiences they encounter may not be negatively affected.

Relationship between Student Interpersonal Relations and Psychosocial Functioning

Hershberger and D'Augelli (1995) conducted the first known study to explore the link between victimization and student outcomes. They found that heterosexist victimization explained a large proportion of variance (16%) in the mental health problems experienced by a sample of GLB youth from urban areas. Their model was then explored with an additional rural sample to test generalizability of these findings (Waldo, Hesson-McInnis, & D'Augelli, 1998). Rather than a direct effect on mental health problems, victimization had a negative direct effect on self-esteem, which

mediated an indirect effect on elevated overall mental health problems (i.e., overall measure of somatization, obsession-compulsion, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism) and suicidality. Since this seminal research, forms of peer victimization have repeatedly been connected to heightened risk for various mental health problems among LGBTQ youth, such as suicidality, externalizing symptoms, depression, low self-esteem, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and overall psychological distress (e.g., D'Augelli et al., 2002; Friedman et al., 2006; Kosciw et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2005). Among youth with same-sex attractions, Bos and colleagues (2008) found that lower social acceptance among peers was associated with lower grade point averages, in addition to higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem.

The specific type of harassment that is based on sexual orientation and gender expression may be particularly damaging for LGBTQ youth. Recognizing that homophobic teasing occurs towards heterosexual as well as LGBTQ youth, Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, and Koenig (2008) compared mental health problems in relation to experiences of homophobic teasing for LGBQ and heterosexual youth. Results evidenced homophobic teasing to have a greater effect on the depression/suicidal feelings and substance use of high school LGBQ students than of heterosexual students.

Level of homophobic teasing (i.e., 'never teased,' 'sometimes teased,' 'often teased') was also explored as a moderator in middle school students (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). The relationships between sexual orientation and student truancy, depression/suicidal feelings, and substance use were all moderated by the experience of teasing, such that LGBTQ students who experienced frequent homophobic teasing

reported greater negative outcomes than heterosexual students who experienced similar levels of homophobic teasing. These effects help provide evidence that it is not one's sexual orientation that leads to heightened psychosocial risk, but it is the contextual experiences (e.g., extent of peer teasing) that are related to these heightened risks.   For instance, LGB students who were not teased based on sexual orientation and heterosexual students who were not teased reported nearly the same levels of depression and suicidal feelings, alcohol and marijuana use, and truancy (Birkett et al., 2009).

The extent to which peer support may influence the effect of peer victimization is unclear. In exploring factors related to victimization, social support (i.e., number of friends and quality of relationship with best friend and mother) and psychosocial outcomes were examined within a sample of LGBQ youth, and results indicated that experiences of victimization mediated the relationship between social support and externalizing problem behaviors but did not mediate the relationship between social support and depression (Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005). When combined support from both close friends and family was employed as the moderator, social support did not influence the relationship between the effects of negative school environment to LGB youth's grades, sense of school belongingness, or school discipline problems (Murdock & Bolch, 2005). Further, the presence or absence of peer support did not significantly relate to suicidality among gay male youth who reported being bullied (Friedman et al., 2006). Thus, social support from friends may not be the pathway by which negative psychosocial outcomes are associated with victimization.

School Staff Support for LGBTQ Youth

Peer relations do not exist in a vacuum within a school, as school staff are an important component to how peers may interact. In terms of supportive staff in schools, 95% of LGBTQ youth report believing they have at least one school staff member who is supportive of LGBTQ students; however, that number drops to 55% for LGBTQ youth believing they have six or more supportive school staff (Kosciw et al., 2012). Approximately one-third of LGBTQ youth from Kosciw's study viewed their administrators as "somewhat" or "very" supportive of LGBTQ students. Kosciw and colleagues also gather information on comfort in talking with various school staff about LGBT issues. They found that 55% of participants would be comfortable talking with school mental health providers (SMHPs) about LGBT issues and 50% were comfortable talking with teachers. In terms of other staff (administrators, school nurses, librarians, coaches, school resource officers), 21 to 28% of LGBTQ youth were comfortable speaking to one of those staff members at their schools.

In terms of actual help-seeking behaviors, rather than just perceptions of support and comfort, Elze (2003a) found that more than half of a sample of 136 GLB youth from northern New England sought help about sexuality issues from school staff. School counselors and social workers were contacted at the highest rates (42%), closely followed by teachers (37%), while school nurses, coaches, and principals were endorsed at much lower rates. Most of these youth rated the staff members who they turned to for help to indeed be helpful. More recent findings from Kosciw and colleagues (2012) indicated contrasting results, where 60% of LGBT youth reported speaking with teachers about LGBT issues during the past year, compared to 33% who spoke to SMHPs, and 6 to 10%

for all other types of school personnel. Regional differences or time effects could potentially explain such differences in reported student-teacher interactions and warrant further exploration.

When referenced to heterosexual populations, however, evidence has suggested significantly fewer LGB youth identify school staff members whom they are comfortable talking to about a problem than heterosexual youth (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). Females who are questioning their sexuality or bisexual may perceive the least support. When differences between gender and sexual orientation groups were examined, and various demographic factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, parental education level) controlled for, female students with attractions to both sexes reported significantly lower positive feelings about their relationships with teachers compared to female students with attractions to the opposite sex (Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001). Female students with attractions to the same sex did not differ from either subgroup.

Indicators of teacher support often yield an overall subjective judgment rather than determine what specifically teachers are doing to support or build positive relationships with LGBTQ youth. Few data exist regarding specific supportive actions that staff can engage in to support LGBTQ youth, and such available data suggest that staff may not be sufficiently able or willing to curb the victimization that results in heightened levels of psychosocial problems in LGBTQ youth. When asked about help-seeking behaviors following victimization experiences in schools, 60% of LGBTQ students did not report their personally experienced incident of harassment or assault because they expected little to no response would be given by staff or expected matters would become worse (Kosciw et al., 2012). These judgments may have some

justification, as 37% of students who informed school staff about their victimization reported that no subsequent action was taken by school staff.   In terms of showing support by integrating positive representations of LGBTQ-related topics in classes, Kosciw's study also found that only 17% of LGBTQ participants experienced that type of supportive practice.

Relationship of School Staff Support to Psychosocial Functioning

Some evidence indicates that teacher support can serve as an important factor associated with positive outcomes, while a lack of such support is associated with worse psychosocial outcomes. One troubling finding pertinent to student safety is that LGBTQ students who do not believe they can share their problems with a school staff member may be nearly two-thirds more likely to be threatened with violence or injured in school, and to attempt suicide multiple times in the past year (Goodenow et al., 2006). In terms of school functioning, Russell and colleagues (2001) found sexual minority boys and girls who reported less positive feelings about their student-teacher relationships (i.e., got along with teachers, believed students were treated fairly by teachers, and believed his/her teachers cared about him/her) were more likely to report experiencing school troubles (i.e., interpersonal problems with peers, difficulty paying attention, and not completing homework) than those boys with more positive feelings. In this study, teacher support was the greatest predictor of school troubles out of a host of other social, peer, family, sexual attraction, and demographic variables that were assessed.

In terms of various psychosocial functioning indicators, Kosciw and colleagues (2012) found significant differences between LGBTQ youth who had no supportive staff and those who had six or more supportive staff. Participants who perceived greater

numbers of supportive staff were found to have significantly fewer absences due to safety concerns, greater sense of school belonging, higher post-secondary educational aspirations ($d = .01$), and higher GPAs ($d = .01$). Similar findings were found among students who reported higher rated of staff interrupting homophobic remarks, with higher frequencies significantly relating to fewer absences due to safety concerns. Other researchers have also found connections between teacher support and school functioning variables. For instance, Murdock and Bolch (2005) had also previously found perceptions of greater teacher support positively related to LGBTQ youth's sense of school belongingness.

Some researchers have indicated that sexual minority girls may benefit more from teacher support in terms of academic outcomes. Based on data from two large nationally representative data sets, sexual minority girls who reported more positive feelings about their student-teacher relationships were found to have higher grade point averages, greater odds of choosing to take challenging courses (i.e., chemistry and two years of foreign language), and lower odds of failing a course (Pearson et al., 2007). For sexual minority boys, greater positive feelings about teachers were significantly associated with higher grade point averages but not associated with differences in courses taken or courses failed.

Overall, the high levels of negative peer interactions demonstrate that schools are not particularly safe environments for LGBTQ youth. The negative peer social contexts appear in relation to a range of attitudes and behaviors among students, from students holding preferences of attending schools where gay and lesbian students are not enrolled to students engaging in elevated rates of physical and verbal harassment. LGBTQ

students' perceptions also indicate that school staff often do not effectively respond to incidents of homophobic harassment.   The negative experiences of peer victimization within LGBTQ youth populations have been consistently linked to negative psychosocial functioning. Despite their heightened level of negative experiences, there is some data to suggest LGBTQ youth have similar levels of friendship quality as heterosexual youth. The impact that positive peer relations have on psychosocial outcomes however is not clear, with some data indicating that social support from friends does not significantly relate to improved psychosocial functioning for students experiencing victimization. The role of school staff, however, may be particularly important for LGBTQ youth. Teacher support was shown as a better predictor of school troubles than other social, peer, and family support, was linked to decreased likelihood of victimization and suicide attempts, and associated with greater school belongingness and achievement. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of how adults in schools can demonstrate support to LGBTQ youth in schools may be the critical step towards improving psychosocial outcomes of LGBTQ youth.

Given the many studies reviewed indicating higher levels of psychosocial maladjustment among LGBTQ youth and the relationship of psychosocial maladjustment to school context, there is clearly a need to provide services within schools to better promote positive well-being and prevent psychosocial problems within this population. Research on school context variables indicate that the interactions and relations that LGBTQ youth have with peers and school staff are significantly related to various dimensions of their psychosocial functioning. Implications from these findings suggest that improving the conditions of these contextual variables could improve LGBTQ

youth's functioning. These implications have resulted in a number of suggested school-based practices geared towards improving school climates for LGBTQ youth; however, it has been noted that most of these supportive practices and interventions have not yet been implemented with empirical evaluations to examine their effectiveness (Hansen, 2007). With limited evaluative data, there is greater difficulty to advocate for specific changes to occur in schools. The suggested practices are also not largely informed or validated by LGBTQ youth. Thus, in the absence of evaluation data on mental health promotion and psychopathology prevention, preliminary research such as qualitative data on school-based practices that are valued by youth could add validity to their use and supportive evidence of their perceived effectiveness. The following sections discuss the types of recommended practices that have been enumerated, along with existing qualitative and quantitative data supporting their effectiveness.   In Hansen's (2007) review of school-based supports for LGBTQ youth that explored research on theory, applied investigations, and widespread implementation, three primary domains of school supports were identified: school policies, gay/straight alliances, and staff development and behavior. These three primary domains are discussed in more detail.

School Policies Protecting LGBTQ Youth

Hansen's (2007) review found that the establishment of school policies forbidding harassment against LGBTQ youth was nearly a universally recommended suggestion for improving the social contexts for LGBTQ youth and stopping homophobic harassment. Kosciw and colleagues' (2012) have continued to demonstrate this finding that comprehensive school policies addressing harassment and assault are imperative to students' sense of safety. They also highlight a distinction between comprehensive anti-

bullying/anti-harassment policies and 'generic' policies. Comprehensive policies were described to include explicit protections based on a full range of personal characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, and they also explicated the different forms of harassment that were not to be tolerated. Generic policies were described to include none of this more specific language. About 38% of LGBTQ youth in Kosciw and colleagues' study reported knowing their school had a generic policy, while comprehensive school policies appear to be even less common. Only 7% of the sample reported their school to have a comprehensive policy with explicit protections for both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (another 12% reported a comprehensive policy, but with only protections for either sexual orientation only or gender identity/expression only). Nevertheless, comprehensive policies appeared to be related to more positive school social contexts. Namely, the students in the schools with comprehensive anti-harassment policies heard homophobic remarks less often, experienced harassment at lower levels, witnessed more school staff intervening when homophobic language was used, and were more likely report incidents of harassment than students in schools without policies or with only generic policies.

While recognizing the widespread support for anti-harassment policies, Hansen (2007) also highlighted that a policy alone may not be a sufficient intervention to impact changes in student behavior. Specifically, the American Association of University Women (2001) found that while more students (in grades 8 through 11) reported being more aware of anti-harassment policies than a previous cohort of students who were surveyed seven years earlier, the levels of reported harassment had not significantly decreased. The safer school contexts that were associated with comprehensive policies in

the findings from Kosciw and colleagues (2012) may be an artifact of differences in the behaviors and attitudes of school staff where comprehensive policies are in place, rather than an artifact of the existence of the written policy. Exploration into how school staff enforce or publicize such comprehensive policies could bring greater insight into how school social contexts could be improved for LGBTQ youth.

Gay-Straight Alliances

While policies may have an impact on school social contexts for LGBTQ youth, Hansen (2007) also identified that LGBTQ youth can sometimes provide the intervention associated with improved student outcomes through the formation of gay-straight alliances (GSAs). A GSA is a student-run organization that welcomes students of all sexual orientations and is generally geared towards supporting LGBTQ students and allied heterosexual students, as well as reducing prejudice, discrimination, and harassment in schools, and improving school climate (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). Important to note is that GSAs can vary from serving primarily as a safe and supportive social environments to serving more as a student-driven activist organization involved in activities like placing posters combating heterosexism, hosting LGBT friendly proms, organizing a "Day of Silence" activity to recognize the silence often associated with LGBTQ issues and youth, carrying out trainings about LGBTQ youth issues, or surveying a school's LGBTQ climate (Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009). Hansen noted that allowing and supporting GSAs in schools was the most researched type of school-based support at the time of her review, with the strongest results indicating positive results, and the research base has continued to build in the most recent years.

In a seminal study where data was collected from a random sample of 33 schools statewide in Massachusetts (where recent Safe Schools Program legislation had been developed to improve safety in schools for LGBTQ youth), schools that had GSAs (N =18) were associated with several higher positive findings compared to schools without GSAs (N =15); Szalacha, 2003). Specifically, more students were able to identify school personnel who were perceived to be supportive of LGBTQ students, fewer students heard homophobic language on a daily basis, and students reported greater comfort in referring friends dealing with sexuality questioning issues to talk with a counselor. The same dataset was later analyzed to find that schools with GSAs were more likely to have LGBTQ students experience less dating violence, less in-school victimization, less skipping school due to fear, and reduced suicide attempts (Goodenow et al., 2006).

Most recently, the presence of GSAs in schools have been further shown to relate to several positive academic outcomes and perceptions of school safety. Based on a convenience sample of 293 LGBTQ youth ranging in age from 13 to 22, the school dropout rate was significantly lower in schools with a GSA versus those without a GSA (5% versus 11%), and student grade point averages were also higher in those schools (Walls, Kane, & Wisneski, 2009). Of those students currently in school ($N = 207$), there were no significant differences in levels of victimization across schools with or without GSAs, but when there was not a GSA, more LGBTQ student participants reported feeling unsafe in schools and fewer participants reported being aware of a safe school personnel member. Therefore, while negative peer interactions were at similar levels, the positive aspects associated with having a GSA may have buffered student's subjective perceptions of the safety of their school environment.

Several other recent studies provide similar findings to confirm that positive psychosocial outcomes that are associated with the presence of GSAs (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012; Walls, Freedenthal, & Wisneski, 2008). An important limitation with all studies that compared schools based on the presence or absence of a GSA are a number of uncontrolled or unaccounted variables. One such variable is the between group differences that exist across GSAs, as it was earlier indicated that some GSAs take on significant educational and activist activities while others are more limited to providing social support. There may be particular factors driving the effect of the significant differences that appear across studies. For example, the types of school personnel behaviors that helped allow a GSA to be formed and supported or those that changed afterwards as a result of having a GSA present in a school might account in small or large part for differences across schools. Therefore, there is still considerable additional research needed to better identify the factors associated with the presence of GSAs in contributing to improved school social contexts and psychosocial outcomes in students.

Staff Development and Behavior

Training that gives school staff knowledge about LGBTQ youth may be important for changing their attitudes and behaviors to be more supportive of LGBTQ youth, but there is currently a significant dearth of available research that empirically supports this claim. Hansen (2007) identified that no extant research evaluated the implementation of professional development to school staff relating to LGBTQ youth in applied school settings. A few notable research studies have since augmented that literature, to provide preliminary evidence supporting the impact of professional development. First, there is some evidence that even a brief, yet content-specific professional development training

may lead to changes in school personnel's comfort with working with LGBTQ youth. Suldo, Loker, Friedrich, Sundman, Cunningham, Saari, and Schatzberg (2010) developed and distributed a suicide prevention, assessment, and intervention manual along with a corresponding 4-hour professional development in-service training for school psychologists in a large school district. Their manual and in-service training included a subsection devoted to considerations when working to prevent suicidality in LGBTQ youth. The school psychologists' level of confidence in working with LGBTQ youth relevant to suicide prevention increased significantly from baseline to immediately after the in-service training, and this increase was maintained when assessed at nine-month follow-up. Confidence in feeling prepared to work with LGBTQ youth was only measured with a single Likert-style response item (1 *not at all prepared* to 5 *extremely prepared)* and actual behavior change was not measured; nevertheless, this data offers evidence that brief professional development on issues pertinent to working with LGBTQ youth in a content-specific domain (i.e., suicide prevention) can lead to an enduring change in professional confidence.

A different brief two hour training that focused specifically on supporting LGBTQ youth in schools was evaluated by Greytak, Kosciw, and Boesen (2013). This training was part of a mandatory in-service requirement for a large urban school district in the northeastern United States and focused "on the educators' role in addressing anti-LGBTQ bullying, harassment, name-calling, and remarks" (p. 91). Based on pre- and post- self-report assessments, resulted indicated that the training increased levels of perceived competence among teachers and school mental health providers (but not administrators) in intervening during incidents of bullying/harassment based on sexual

orientation and based on gender expression. Teachers and administrators (but not school mental health providers) showed increases in perceived confidence in promoting an inclusive environment "so that all students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students feel safe, respected, and nurtured," in beliefs about the importance of intervening when students use homophobic language, and in empathy towards LGBTQ students also were found for teachers and administrators. Similar to Suldo et al. (2010), behavior change was not measured in this study but further evidence of professional development's effects on professional confidence for working with LGBTQ youth was provided.

A much more in-depth training specific to LGBTQ youth was also recently evaluated and offered evidence to support that trainings can lead to changes in awareness, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors among school personnel (Greytak & Kosciw, 2010). New York City's Department of Education *Respect for All* training was developed in collaboration with GLSEN and four other non-profit organizations as a means to educate school personnel regarding how to create safer schools following mandated comprehensive bullying and harassment district policy. More specifically, the program was designed to build capacity of school personnel to develop inclusive schools, build capacity of school personnel to serve as a resource for LGBTQ students and other school personnel facing LGBTQ issues, increase interventions following anti-LGBTQ behaviors, and decrease harmful language and/or practices. To meet these goals, training was targeted to directly impact school personnel participants' awareness, knowledge and beliefs concerning LGBTQ youth issues in order to subsequently result in behavioral change among school personnel. The training was therefore aimed to "increase

participants' awareness of prevalence of anti-LGBTQ behaviors in school; self-awareness regarding own behaviors and professional practices; knowledge of LGBTQ-related terminology; empathy for LGBTQ students; understanding of the importance of intervening in anti-LGBTQ remarks; knowledge of and access to LGBTQ-related resources; and self-efficacy related to the desired behavior" (p. 3). The behaviors that were hypothesized to change as a result of direct training on those areas included increases in (a) intervention following anti-LGBTQ behaviors, (b) engagement in school-based efforts to create safer school contexts, and (c) communication with students and staff about LGBTQ issues, as well as a decrease in personal use of harmful language.

The evaluation of the Respect for All training included assessment at immediately prior to the training (Time 1), six weeks post training (Time 2), and six months post training (Time 3), with a total sample of 813 school personnel participants (Greytak & Kosciw, 2010). Nearly half of participants were teachers, and almost a third were school counselors or social workers (remaining personnel were administrators, other positions, or not reported). Most indicators assessing the targeted awareness, knowledge, and belief areas resulted in statistically significant increases from Time 1 to Time 2, but fewer of those gains were maintained at Time 3. Specifically, there were maintained gains in participants knowledge of LGBTQ terminology, knowledge in where to find LGBTQ-related resources, and beliefs that intervening in anti-LGBTQ remarks is important. There were statistically significant increases at each time point for how frequently LGBTQ-related materials were sought out in the past year and for total percentage of participants who ever sought out LGBTQ-related information in the past year. Improvements at Time 2 that fell back to baseline levels at Time 3 include empathy for

LGBTQ students and self-awareness related to professional practice. Self-efficacy in intervening against anti-LGBTQ remarks reduced significantly below baseline levels despite showing gains at Time 2. Overall, increases in LGBTQ-related knowledge appeared to be more easily maintained than changes in variables relating to personnel awareness and beliefs regarding LGBTQ youth and related-practice. The greater improvement in knowledge in contrast to comfort and personal awareness in professional practices related to LGBTQ youth issues may reflect the current status of the field; less evidence-based knowledge is available regarding specific professional practices than information and resources about or for LGBTQ youth.

In terms of changes in self-reported behaviors, there appeared to be stable increases in the LGBTQ-related communication in which participants engaged (Greytak & Kosciw, 2010). Specifically, school personnel participants maintained gains at Time 3 in the frequency of discussing LGBTQ-related issues with other school personnel. Approximately 9% more school personnel reported talking to at least one student about an LGBTQ issue from Time 1 to Time 2, and the number of students that personnel talked to about LGBTQ issues in the past month increased across each time point. Engagement in efforts to create safer schools, such as through including LGBTQ-related information in curricula and supporting a GSA, increased at Time 2 and was maintained at Time 3. The average rating for engagement, however, fell between the anchors of 'not active, but have considered becoming active' and 'somewhat active,' serving somewhat more as an indicator of behavioral intention rather than true engagement. The frequency of intervention in anti-LGBTQ remarks in the past month increased at Time 1, but that gain was not maintained. Finally, the reported personal use of anti-LGBTQ language by

school personnel did not significantly change over time, but this was related to a floor effect since baseline levels for this type of behavior was already low at Time 1. Observations or student perceptions of behavioral change could help validate these changes in self-reported behaviors and perceptions. Also, the quality or effectiveness of their behavioral changes was not assessed in terms of changes in student outcomes or student perceptions of school climate. The data from this evaluation is a strong step forward to indicate that training can have positive short-term and long-term effects, but more is still needed to be gleaned in order to determine what educator behaviors lead to the most beneficial outcomes for students.

One means of learning more about the school-based practices that are endorsed as helpful to students is to turn to more exploratory types of research. Qualitative methods have helped bring greater insight into a number of content-specific behaviors that school personnel believe support the needs of LGBTQ youth. Nevertheless, few qualitative studies have explicitly focused on identifying school-based practices that support the psychosocial needs of LGBTQ youth. The following section explores the most relevant studies in greater depth in order to highlight the types of school-behaviors that individuals in schools indicate to be supportive practices and to highlight areas where more exploration is still needed.

Qualitative Support for Effective School-based Support Strategies

  Educator perspectives. In order to highlight the voices of supportive school staff in the applied school settings, Graybill, Varjas, Meyers, and Watson (2009) interviewed 22 Gay-Straight Alliance faculty advisers from 10 states across the country to determine specific practices they reported using in advocating for LGBTQ students at

their schools. Semi-structured interview methodology was used, with questions and

probes that explored incidents of LGBTQ-related issues and situations in the advisers'

schools and their responses to such incidents (e.g. Have you witnessed orientation-based

harassment in your school? If so, how do you respond? What suggestions would you give

to adults who wanted to advocate for LGBT youth in their schools but who did not know

how;" p. 573). The researchers used inductive analysis procedures following principles

of grounded theory, which resulted in three primary domains of advocacy strategies,

including responses to students, responses to school personnel, and recommendations for

other school personnel. Because of the in-depth and exploratory approach of the study, a

number of specific strategies emerged within each domain, and are discussed in detail in

the subsequent paragraphs.

In terms of responding to students, a number of different strategies emerged from

the interview data describing the ways advisers responded to incidents in which students

used the phrase "that's so gay" in a pejorative manner (Graybill et al., 2009). These

strategies may be particularly important, considering the use of 'that's so gay' or other

expressions that use 'gay' in a negative way has been reported to occur often or

frequently at school by 85% of LGBTQ youth (Kosciw et al., 2012). Specifically, some

advisers described making a personalized statement to the offending student, stating that

the statement is personally offensive to the adviser or a friend who identifies as LGBTQ.

Other adviser responses to this language included either using sarcasm or providing a

reprimand to the offending student. The most frequently described strategy, however,

was to use the offending instance as a teaching moment and educate the student as to why

saying 'that's so gay' is offensive.

Also previously reported to occur frequently or often by nearly three-quarters of LGBTQ youth is the use of homophobic language (e.g., "dyke" or "faggot"; Kosciw et al., 2012), and the advisers described using both proactive and reactive responses to such homophobic comments (Graybill et al., 2009). Proactive responses were less commonly mentioned by advisers, but included making statements to students before specific discriminatory comments were made such at as the outset of class by saying that students were expected to treat each other with respect and not use hate speech, whether it be racist, sexist or homophobic. Reactive responses were more commonly reported, and often included issuing disciplinary consequences, such as detention. Data on the adviser's perceived effectiveness of both responses to students saying 'that's so gay' and responses to other homophobic comments was not explored in the study. Inquiring with LGBTQ youth about the types of strategies that are viewed as most important in responding to anti-gay language would be helpful in improving the effectiveness of school personnel's efforts to building more positive school's social contexts.

The last area of responses to students related to times in which students came to advisers to share personal information, such as wanting to discuss issues related to parental conflicts, attractions to peers, questioning their sexual identity, and depressed and suicidal thoughts and feelings (Graybill et al., 2009). Somewhat of a continuum of strategies to respond to these situations emerged. In some responses advisers described processing with the student their concerns, while some advisers expressed discomfort with discussing personal issues and chose not to discuss issues with students based on fears of professional repercussions or belief that some topics were inappropriate to discuss if the student had not shared the information with his or her parent. Other

responses included referring the student to someone else when they felt uncomfortable in discussing the matter with the student or when they believed the situation was better suited to be discussed with a school mental health professional. Such referrals emphasize the important role that school mental health professionals are perceived to have in supporting the needs of LGBTQ youth.   LGBTQ youth previously have been found to have a greater desire to talk with a community-based mental health professional about issues related to health, substance use, friends, and personal life when compared to heterosexual youth (Ciro, Surko, Bhandarkar, Helgott, Peake, & Epstein, 2005). It could be hypothesized that this increased desire to talk to community mental health professionals is a consequence of their needs not being met within schools; thus, meeting this desire to discuss personal issues may be particularly important for schools to better support LGBTQ youths' psychosocial needs.

In addition to providing support through direct actions with students, advisers also often described responding to school personnel in a variety of ways to help support the interests of LGBTQ youth (Graybill et al., 2009). Advisers reported being consulted with by teachers who had concerns about the well-being of students questioning their sexual orientation.   They described situations in which school personnel would consult with them primarily when worried about the students' safety in relation to potential consequences relating to a student's perceived or identified sexual orientation. In these cases, the theme that emerged was that advisers believed school personnel should consult with school mental health professionals when there was concern over mental health or physical safety and would refer the inquiring individual to the school psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, or nurse.

Another emergent theme demonstrated that advisers responded to inquiries about students' sexual orientations, where school personnel would often want to engage in gossip to find out about a student's sexual orientation (Graybill et al., 2009). Advisers described disengaging from such conversations, believing that it was important not to discuss or disclose a students' sexual orientation to a colleague whether or not the student was personally known to be LGBTQ or heterosexual. The fact that no advisers reported disclosing a students' sexual orientation to fellow school personnel may highlight that this practice is deemed particularly important to supporting the interests of LGBTQ youth.

In response to situations in which school personnel would ask about ways they should respond to student-to-student homophobic discrimination, the themes that emerged were to recommend delivering disciplinary actions equivalent to other typical offenses, to report offending students to administrators, and to tell school mental health professionals that the victim of harassment may benefit from some assistance (Graybill et al., 2009). The advisers also recommended school personnel treat public displays of affection in an equivalent manner regardless of the students' sexual orientation. These type of responses indicate school personnel perceive equity in consequences to be particularly relevant to supporting the needs of LGBTQ youth.

The advisers also described a number of strategies they believed would be helpful for other school personnel to engage in to advocate for LGBTQ students (Graybill et al., 2009). These included strategies that the advisers had either used themselves or had not used because of perceived barriers. Some themes that emerged in their statements reflected recommendations related to increasing knowledge. More specifically, there

were recommendations (1) to increase personal awareness of one's biases, thoughts, feelings and personal boundaries about sexual orientation, (2) to learn more about LGBTQ issues as they relate to school, community, and legal matters as a means in part to increase credibility in the eyes of those who resist making changes, and (3) to increase knowledge about school, state, and federal policies and legislation in order to clearly understand one's individual rights, legal resources, and legal boundaries while engaging in efforts to advocate for LGBTQ youth. Similar to this theme of drawing upon legal resources to assist in efforts to advocate for LGBTQ youth, another theme was to draw upon community resources, including local and national organizations such as GLSEN and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). In terms of more behaviorally descriptive types of recommendations, one recommendation that emerged was to not be confrontational or argumentative when trying to discuss LGBTQ issues or create positive changes for those students. Instead, it appeared to be important to take an educating approach when discussing such issues. Finally, the last recommendation was to work on increasing the visibility of LGBTQ-related issues. To do so, specific strategies identified included displaying LGBTQ-related materials within their classrooms (e.g., rainbow flags, pictures of same-sex partners); infusing LGBTQ issues into course content of multiple subjects (e.g., literature, history, biology, health); and providing professional development on LGBTQ-related issues.

Overall, Graybill et al. (2009) noted that most of the strategies reported by the advisers were reactive as opposed to proactive. The interview questions were described to have potentially contributed to that overall finding, in that a majority of questions asked the advisers to discuss their reactions to various LGBTQ-related situations

occurring in their schools. A suggestion for future research was to learn more about proactive strategies that school personnel could use rather than focusing on reactive strategies. Identifying and including more preventative approaches to demonstrating support for LGBTQ youth could potentially increase the effectiveness of school-based efforts to promote the psychosocial functioning of these students. Similar to critiques from researchers that literature on LGBTQ youth is often deficit-based in terms of identifying psychosocial problems, a related problem is that there is often a greater emphasis on intervention rather than on prevention, or even further, positive youth development and mental health promotion.

Student perspectives. A few qualitative studies have been conducted directly with youth participants to help highlight their first-hand perspectives as to how they view their school-based experiences and as to what school-based supports they believe have been or would be helpful. The dearth of qualitative research with LGBTQ youth may be due in part to research barriers. For instance, university institutional review boards have prohibited research with youth participants who are unable to safely obtain parental consent (Elze, 2003b). The many LGBTQ youth participants who have not disclosed their sexual orientation may be inaccessible for research studies at such universities. Retrospective qualitative research studies with LGBTQ adults would be an alternative option, but some have argued that the potential loss of detail over time makes non-retrospective studies more advantageous (Varjas, Mahan, Meyers, Birckbichler, Lopp, & Dew, 2006). Conducting research with general youth populations, and not assessing LGBTQ status, is another alternative if the desire is to learn in general the types of school-based behaviors that students describe as supportive. Given the absence of

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extensive data from LGBTQ youth regarding their views on supportive practices from school-based personnel, a brief review of the most germane retrospective and general population qualitative studies that provide insight into school-based supports follows.

Regarding retrospective studies with LGBTQ youth, Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, and Rounds (2002) conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 12 undergraduate students from public universities between the ages of 18 and 21. The participants were 75% Caucasian. Seven participants were female, five participants were male, and none were transgender. Seven participants identified as either gay or lesbian, four identified as bisexual, and one identified as undecided. A primary aim of the investigation was to explore the types of school-based social supports that were available to the participants during their high school, while also exploring how those supports related to supporting their identity development. Therefore, much of the results were presented with this more narrow focus of social support as a means to influencing identity development, rather than general social, emotional, or even academic functioning. The authors' theoretical lens for social support was couched in the four dimensional model described by House (1981) that includes emotional support (e.g., love, caring, listening), appraisal support (e.g., positive feedback, admiration), instrumental support (e.g., tangible resources or aid), and informational support (e.g., advice, suggestions). Data from the interviews were then analyzed using a deductive process of content and cross-case analysis.

Results indicated that the youth found non-family members to be most supportive, including peers and 'non-family adults' who were heterosexual and sexual minorities. The study indicated that they more specifically provided emotional and instrumental support. Unfortunately, it was not always clear to whom 'non-family adults' referred,

resulting in some inconclusiveness about the perceptions of school-based adults

providing support.   When school-based adults (namely teachers, counselors, coaches,

and administrators) were explicitly identified in one section of the results, they were

described as actively maintaining heterosexist norms and contributing to internal and

external struggles with their sexual identity development. Several respondents

emphasized during their interviews that they were afraid to self-disclose to others,

including teachers, expressing concern about potentially losing support or being treated

unfairly by other teachers.   Much of the results focused on social influences relating to

respondent's reluctance to self-disclose their sexual identity to others, and stated only a

small number disclosed to school personnel (no frequency counts however were

provided). An indirect implication of these results is that if school-based adults somehow

made students less afraid of experiencing potential consequences for openly identifying

as LGB, they may have felt more supported.

A few insights were learned about specific teacher-based attitudes and practices

that could improve students' level of comfort. For instance, one student felt comfortable

self-disclosing to teachers when she knew her teacher to be a 'feminist,' as the beliefs

related to that mentality led her to assume the teacher would be more understanding

(Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). Another student described coming out through a literature

writing assignment, indicating the having flexible assignments where students are

encouraged to relate material to themselves may be one means of supporting LGBTQ

youth's desire to express personal information.

Another finding was that peers and adults who identified as LGBTQ offered the

respondents informational and appraisal support that was valued by the LGBTQ youth.

This suggests that offering opportunities for LGBTQ youth to have positive social interactions with other sexual minorities (such as through participation in a GSA), or conversely, getting heterosexual peers and adults to deliver more informational and appraisal types of support would improve school social contexts for LGBTQ youth. The benefits of having an openly LGBTQ-identified teacher has been suggested in other retrospective qualitative research as well, to include making LGB students describe feeling more comfortable about themselves as well as express appreciation for their teacher's influence in helping to improve tolerance and acceptance of the gay community among others in the school by his being open about his sexual orientation (Macgillivray, 2008).

Another key finding by Munoz-Plaza and colleagues' (2002) was that the youth expressed a need for multiple resources when they were asked about the types of services and support they would have valued. Unfortunately, data was not clearly provided about specific resources they may have mentioned in the study's results section. Much more specific exploration into what school-based supports have been or would be most helpful as perceived by LGBTQ youth can advance this area of inquiry further towards socially validated and evidence-supported applied practices.

In examining types of school-based practices that would be perceived as supportive, expanding one's view to include literature that is not directly assessing LGBTQ youths' perspectives can offer important insights. While there are specific considerations that should be made for LGBTQ youth in comparison to heterosexual youth, it is likely that there are universal mental health promotion and positive educational practices that are well-received by all students, that cut across diversity

considerations. Practices that have been identified within general populations of youth may be very similar to those that would be identified among LGBTQ youth, and the practices that differ might lead to important implications for further research or exploration. For instance, Suldo, Friedrich, White, Farmer, Minch, and Michalowski (2009) recognized the need to attend to the ways in which teachers can support the mental health of students, as teachers offer one important means through which universal mental health promotion can be delivered to all students. Specifically, Suldo and colleagues conducted eight focus group sessions with a total of 50 seventh and eighth grade students to identify specific actions and comments that teachers do or say to make the students feel supported or not supported.

Suldo and colleagues (2009) used grounded theory analysis procedures and yielded an explicit framework for how teachers may be able to demonstrate high levels of social support, as well as how they may be able to avoid conveying low levels of social support. In particular, emergent themes regarding teacher behaviors that conveyed high levels of social support included expressing interest in student wellness, taking actions to improve students' moods, giving students what they want (i.e., providing fun activities, giving tangible rewards), being sensitive and responsive to the entire class's understanding of academic material, showing interest in an individual student's progress, using diverse teaching strategies, providing evaluative feedback on student performance, helping students improve their grades, ensuring a manageable academic workload, treating students similarly, punishing in a fair manner, and creating an environment in which questions are encouraged. Within each theme were two to six subcodes with more specifically described behaviors. For example, within the theme of "treating students

similarly", a subcode was that a teacher "equally distributes positive reinforcement, such as teacher attention and treats" (p. 76). In terms of behaviors that conveyed low levels of social support, emergent themes included "conveys disinterest in student wellness; contributes to students' negative moods and poor emotional states; sets firm expectations, rules, and discipline procedures; insufficient interest in, and assistance with, students academic progress; reliance on single mode of instruction; does not help improve grades; assigns an overwhelming workload; treats students in a biased manner; punishes in an incorrect manner; creates an environment in which questions are discouraged" (p. 78 – 79).

Suldo et al. (2009) did not collect any information to assess student's sexual orientation, so it is unknown whether LGBTQ youth would differ in the types of teacher behaviors they perceive as conveying social support. While sexual orientation and gender expression were not specifically identified, the authors did suggest extending this line of research with samples of youth with different types of diversity characteristics. One characteristic that was explored were gender differences. This was carried out by comparing weighted frequency counts at which male and female students mentioned the coded teacher behaviors, and differences did emerge. Female students more frequently described behaviors relating to teachers trying to improve their moods and emotional states as being supportive, and they more frequently described behaviors relating to teachers appearing disinterested or not concerned as being unsupportive. In contrast, male students more frequently described behaviors relating to receiving access to pleasurable activities, being given manageable academic workloads, helping students improve their grades, and encouraging students to ask questions in class. It is possible

that sexual orientation may have a moderating effect on the types of behaviors that are viewed as most supportive, similar to the way in which gender appeared to have a moderating effect. A teacher interested in conveying support to her male students, for instance, may be more inclined to focus on providing achievement-related supports based on the results of this study; however, it may be that sexual minority males would prefer more interpersonal-related supports. A similar study on LGBTQ youth's perceptions of supportive teacher behaviors would help extend this line of research and identify consistencies and discrepancies between a sample of LGBTQ youth and a sample from the general population.

In contrast to Suldo et al.'s (2009) research, most often qualitative studies with youth participants tend to focus on youth experiences of their school environment, with less focus specifically exploring their perceptions of behaviors, attitudes, or policies of school-based personnel as they relate to meeting their psychosocial needs. One such study by Varjas et al. (2006) involved in depth interviews with 16 LGB youth (ages 15 to 18 years; *M*= 16.88) who were recruited through local school GSAs and LGBTQ-related community organizations in the Atlanta area. All interviews were audio-recorded and followed a semi-structured format lasting between one and two hours. The investigation primarily attempted to explore LGBTQ youths' school experiences related to school climate, bullying, perceptions of bully and victim characteristics, and perceptions of consequences following aggression.

Insights relating to LGB students' beliefs about helpful practices primarily concerned the importance of proactive strategies. For instance, students valued that some teachers displayed stickers indicating safe places (Varjas et al., 2006). Also, one student

identified that "the way [teachers] talked in class on different issues" (p.59) served as a means for her to know who she could approach and feel supported by, while another student appreciated her counselor being very direct (i.e., "we always talked very bluntly", p.60) and having asked if she was gay to help her open up. Unfortunately, there were many reports that school counselors were perceived as unsupportive, by both previous experiences and preconceived conceptions about how helpful they might be. Some reported concerns about counselors breaking confidentiality and sharing disclosed information with parents or others in the school. Other participants described that they felt counselors lacked knowledge about LGBTQ issues to be helpful or appeared to be too busy with other workload duties. Strategies to change those perceptions and somehow assuaging fears about breaches of confidentiality would appear to be important for increasing the likelihood that counselors or other mental health professionals would be sought out as a safe resource by LGBTQ youth. Counselors in this study were not mentioned to be one of the school personnel who displayed safe place stickers, but perhaps since this was perceived positively for teachers, this would also be perceived highly if practiced by counselors as well.

Concept Mapping to Assess LGBTQ Youth's Perspectives

Davis, Saltzburg, and Locke (2009; 2010) recently recognized the limited literature that has been informed by LGBTQ youth themselves regarding social-emotional supports and set out to augment that gap in the literature. More specifically, Davis and colleagues aimed to better understand youths' beliefs about ways in which community support systems could support the emotional and social needs of LGBTQ youth. Therefore, the focus was not specifically on how schools could support LGBTQ

youth, though schools were included in the broad definition of community support.

Rather than traditional qualitative data collection methods, data for their studies were

gathered using Concept Mapping procedures from youth who attended LGBTQ-focused

community youth groups. Concept Mapping (Trochim, 1989) involves a process of

having participants brainstorm ideas about a particular topic, individually sort those ideas

into related groupings, and finally rate importance of the ideas on a scale. To represent

the aggregated results of individual sort data (i.e., the organized groupings of ideas from

each participant), the information is analyzed with statistical software to conduct

multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis.

Davis et al. (2010) conducted the Concept Mapping procedures with 20 youth,

ages 14 to 23 (mean age was 18), who were recruited from an LGBTQ-focused youth

center located in a Midwestern metropolitan area. The primary phases of data collection

were conducted during a 2-hour morning session and a 2 hour afternoon session, with an

extended lunch break in between at the LGBTQ youth center. During the morning

brainstorming session, the participants were asked to respond to a focus statement, which

read, "Something GLBT youth need from their communities to feel supported is ___?"

(p. 9). The youth participants generated a total of 58 unique statements. In the second

afternoon sorting and rating session, participants first received a set of cards, where each

card had one of the brainstormed statements. Participants were instructed to sort the

statement cards into conceptually meaningful piles and then label each pile based on its

contents. Participants were then asked to rate each statement on a scale ranging from 1

(not important) to 7 (extremely important) to indicate the degree to which each idea was

important in terms of meeting their (1) social needs and (2) emotional or psychological

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needs as a LGBTQ youth. The individual sort data was then analyzed using multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis to demonstrate how the group conceptualized the ideas. After sharing the preliminary results of these analyses with the youth participants to make certain the interpretation of data was contextually valid, a five-cluster map solution was determined.

The five clusters represented the ways in which the youth believed communities could support the needs of LGBTQ youth and were labeled Educating the Public, Policies, Community Support and Involvement, Individual Responsibilities, and LGBTQ Acceptance and Individuality (Davis et al., 2010). The Policies cluster was rated the most important for meeting both social and emotional/psychological needs (5.77 and 6.01, respectively), and related to policies at the school level and larger governmental levels. Some statements in this cluster (as well as the other clusters) were relatively specific (e.g., "more LGBT literature easily accessible," "to have dress codes that are not gender specific", "repercussions for teachers and administrators who discriminate," p. 27), while others were more broad (e.g., "for schools to be more open-minded and accepting," "the ability to be honest," "equal opportunity," p. 27).   Additionally, while several of the statements in the Policies cluster (as well as other clusters) related specifically to school context, many others were not specific to schools. Therefore, while a number of ideas were generated that identify LGBTQ youths needs, there is still a demand for greater specificity as to what school staff in particular can do in the eyes of LGBTQ youth to improve the social contexts of schools and promote their positive psychosocial functioning.

The second most important cluster for meeting emotional/psychological needs (i.e., rated 5.54) was LGBTQ Acceptance and Individuality (also rated third most important for social needs with a rating of 5.89). Statements in this cluster emphasized the need to be affirmed and validated as important members of communities (Davis et al., 2010). Many statements depicted broad desires for less stigma, marginalization, and heterosexism (e.g., "to not be demonized," "to have people realize that we are all flesh and blood," "normalization of LGBT sexuality"), and this cluster was the only one to separately address transgender issues from general LGBTQ issues (e.g., "to not marginalize trans individuals," "for transgendered people to not be viewed as having a disease"). Obtaining further examples of how youth would recognize if attitudes changed to match these needs could help determine the specific behaviors that school personnel could demonstrate to show they are accepting of LGBTQ identities and individuality.

The next most important cluster in terms of meeting emotional/psychological needs was Individual Responsibilities (i.e., rated 5.18; rated 5.97 on social importance), and these reflected ideas concerning specific actions that individuals should take in order to support the GLBT youth community. These included garnering support from peers, outreach to other GLBT youth and relationship building with heterosexual youth allies, networking to share resources, establishing safe shelters. Additionally, having adults serving as positive role models and media portraying positive portrayals of LGBTQ individuals were other identified needs.

While still rated as important on both scales, Educating the Public and Community Support and Involvement were the two least important clusters with nearly the equal ratings to each other. Educating the Public was rated 4.53 and 5.56 on

emotional importance and social importance, respectively, and Community Support and Involvement were rated 4.99 and 5.61 on those respective scales. Statements in the Educating the Public cluster were sometimes specific to school settings (i.e., "training for teachers and administrators," and "better sex education in the schools"), while several of the other statements were more general but could be fulfilled within schools. These needs included a desire for "more GLBT scholarships," "[dedicating] time to recognizing and publicizing gay history," "more educational resources," "publicly [recognizing] the accomplishments of GLBT people," and "campaigning for GLBT people" (p. 27). The Community Support and Involvement cluster did not have statements specific to schools. Again, several statements of needs could be fulfilled within schools (e.g., "more resources for transgendered people," "to have someone to talk to who will give us attention," "safe environment that promotes acceptance"), but there were many that were specific to being fulfilled within other community settings (e.g., "GSAs that are community-based," "more centers focused on GLBT youth," "better sex education in the community," "for there to be more gay-owned businesses").

One of the limitations to this study was the fact that the findings are not generalizable to the entire LGBTQ youth population. The sample was reflective of the youth who participated at the youth center and was therefore useful in the center's efforts to develop future service plans. Similar concept mapping procedures were also conducted at another youth center in Massachusetts and the brainstormed statements from both sites of data collection were analyzed for the purposes of another related study (Davis et al., 2009). The replication in procedures with the Massachusetts sample helps to build a case for some of the generalizability in the findings. Using the same focus

statement (i.e., "Something GLBT youth need from their communities to feel supported is ___?") at both sites, participants shared 22 common statement ideas across the two samples, while 21 statement ideas were unique to the Massachusetts sample and 18 were unique to the Ohio sample. In the secondary analysis of the brainstormed ideas from both samples, 14 primary themes emerged, of which three were specific to schools. These school related themes included identified that youth believed school curriculum, school-based resources, and school climate issues were important to supporting their social and emotional/psychological needs. Five of the 10 statement ideas that fell within these three school related themes were based on common statements across samples, and included training for school personnel, sanctions for discrimination occurring in schools, school personnel standing up for LGBTQ youth, improved sex education in schools, LGBTQ resource literature available in schools. The other statement ideas relating specifically to schools that were unique to just one sight included having open-minded and accepting schools, more LGBTQ literature in the school curriculum, safe place signs in schools, presence of GSAs, and "speak outs" (i.e., an informal yet structured exhibition geared to allow community views to be expressed; Sarkissian, Bunjamin-Mau, Cook, Walsh, & Vajda, 2009).

Many of the other statements ideas as well as themes from Davis et. al. (2009) were more broadly stated, being potentially applicable to school settings but also to other community settings. For the purposes of transforming school-based practices to better promote psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth, greater focus on ways that schools can support psychosocial needs of LGBTQ youth would be helpful for delineating which ideas are specifically applicable to schools. Additionally, many of the ideas that were

generated were conceptualized at a more abstract level rather than operational behavior level. Asking for specific actions that school personnel can take could help identify behaviors that could more easily be translated into implementation. Additionally, pairing short succinct statements that are generated through brainstorming sessions with more in depth and rich descriptions gathered through interviews could help build greater context and explanation for why certain behaviors are viewed as important.

Conclusion

A number of school-based supports have been identified with varying levels of research evidencing their importance for LGBTQ youth. Comprehensive anti-bullying policies that include language inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression logically makes sense as being a means of promoting the safety of LGBTQ students and it has been positively related to lower levels of harassment. What is not clear from research on such policies is how these policies could best be communicated and enforced in schools. If students are not made aware of policy protections or do not observe these policies being enforced, they may have less of an effect. GSAs or similar clubs appear to also have positive relations with improved school social contexts and psychosocial outcomes. The beneficial factors associated with a school having a GSA are likely complex and variable, as GSAs operate differently across schools and may lead to changes in other school-based supports. The study by Graybill et al. (2009) offered results depicting what GSA advisers believe are important advocacy behaviors supporting LGBTQ students, and this data indicates that GSA advisers may engage in behaviors that help account for the more positive outcomes associated with GSA presence in schools. It

would be beneficial to learn if LGBTQ students report similar behaviors as ways in which school staff can support them.

Staff development has been identified as a means to improve school supports for LGBTQ youth. Only recently have there been studies indicating that such trainings actually lead to long term changes in competence for working with LGBTQ students. School staff knowledge relating to LGBTQ youth appeared to be more amenable to change in the evaluation of the Respect for All training when compared to school staff practices and behaviors (Kosciw & Diaz, 2010). Building the research and knowledge base regarding how to effectively support LGBTQ youth in schools could lead to the development of more pragmatic recommendations for training and to greater subsequent changes in school staff practices.

The current state of research on youth's perspectives regarding what is most helpful for psychosocial support within schools appears to be somewhat limited. Suldo et al. (2009) derived a number of specific supportive teacher behaviors when they conducted focus groups with youth; however, the degree to which those behaviors are equally perceived as helpful by heterosexual and LGBTQ youth is unknown since the sexual orientation and gender identity diversity was not reported. The behaviors that were identified in Suldo's study, however, tended to be more proactive rather than reactive or intervention-oriented (e.g., expressing interest in student wellness, showing interest in an individual student's progress, treating students similarly, punishing in a fair manner, creating an environment in which questions are encouraged). This idea of proactive support was indicated somewhat in the findings from the Munoz-Plaza and colleagues (2002) study, in which students described that particular attitudes and

practices increased student's level of comfort for self-disclosing their sexual orientation. Their findings on LGBTQ youth's perceptions of school support, however, were limited by the fact that there was a narrow focus on how teacher support was related to identity development. It is important to consider LGBTQ youth's range of developmental functioning, not just their sexual identity development.

The Concept Mapping studies by Davis, Saltzburg, and Locke (2009; 2010) expanded the focus to examining ways LGBTQ youth believed they could be supported in their social and emotional functioning. Their findings highlighted how the establishment of inclusive and equitable policies was viewed as the most important type of support in the eyes of LGBTQ youth participants. The LGBTQ youth participants identified a large number of supports believed to be important to supporting their social and emotional needs during the Concept Mapping procedures, yet many of the ideas they generated were not specific to school-based practices or were stated in general terms that would be difficult to generalize. The nature of the Concept Mapping brainstorming procedures also leads to the ability to generate wide-ranging list of suggestions, but they are only briefly stated. Some of the ideas generated (e.g., "equal opportunity," "more educational resources") provided general ideas without much context or details to depict how they would be carried out in practice. Additionally, there was no mention of supporting LGBTQ youth's academic or school functioning needs in these or other known studies which have explored the viewpoints of LGBTQ youth.

This study sought to address the limitations of the current literature base concerning school-based practices that promote positive psychosocial functioning among LGBTQ youth. To do so, the study explored LGBTQ high school students' points of

view regarding the types of supports that they deem to be effective in supporting their psychosocial functioning. A combination of in-depth individual interviews and Concept Mapping procedures were designed for data collection in order to provide findings that would be comprehensive in scope as well as thorough in rich contextual detail. Rather than emphasizing how school staff can respond to incidents of homophobic bias or discrimination, which occurred in Graybill and colleagues' (2009) study with GSA advisers, the study expanded the focus to explore both proactive and reactive means of supporting LGBTQ youth in schools. By limiting the setting of support delivery to just schools, rather than general communities as was done in Davis, Saltzburg, and Locke (2009; 2010), this study aimed to garner more recommendations relevant and applicable to individuals working specifically in school-based settings. Additionally, the study utilized a more comprehensive model of psychosocial functioning that includes the domain of school functioning in addition to social and emotional functioning, which is clearly a critical concern of schools. By addressing the gaps in the literature in this manner, the study aimed to advance the research-based knowledge concerning supportive school-based practices for LGBTQ youth and provide pragmatic recommendations to school-based practitioners who hold interests in promoting positive outcomes for this population.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study identified school-based practices that LGBTQ youth endorse as
strategies and policies to promote their psychosocial functioning. This study also sought
to determine which of those school-based practices were perceived as the most critical for
schools to implement. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to
accomplish the goals of this study. The chapter begins with a description of the overall
research design that was selected to best meet the aims of this exploratory study. This is
followed by a description of the data collection procedures that were conducted,
including a description of the sample of participants. Finally, the last part of the chapter
describes the data analysis procedures used to analyze the data.

Research Design Overview

A multi-method data collection and mixed-method data analysis were selected to
fit the exploratory nature of the investigation and to capture the perspectives from the
targeted population, LGBTQ youth. This approach is appropriate because there is a
dearth of information about specific school-based practices aimed at improving school
contexts for LGBTQ youth that has been directly informed by the youth of this
population. Deriving data explicitly from student perspectives was chosen to bring
particular insight, specificity, and social validity to understanding what is deemed most
helpful for LGBTQ students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

The study began with a document review of information from the school district where participant recruitment took place in order to describe the context of the school system with respect to current activities and policies relating to LGBTQ youth. This preliminary data collection was followed by two primary data collection procedures with the student participants—individual semi-structured interviews and group-based Concept Mapping procedures. Interviews with individual LGBTQ students were geared towards gathering in-depth information about what participants believed were, or would be, positive school-based strategies that promote their psychosocial functioning. In this way, experiences of support as well as desired support could be identified. To supplement information gathered through individual interviews on ways that schools promote psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth, small group brainstorming sessions were also conducted using procedures consistent with Concept Mapping methodology. Data from both qualitative methodologies were then combined to produce a comprehensive and detailed list of educator behaviors and policies supportive of LGBTQ youth. This list was intended for use in a final stage of Concept Mapping data collection, in which participants were asked to (a) independently rate and rank order the educator behaviors and policies in terms of importance, helpfulness, and frequency of occurrence, as well as (b) sort the items into meaningful overarching clusters of supportive school-based practices.

The combination of data collection methods and analysis procedures were designed to facilitate both the development of an overall depiction of what a sample of LGBTQ youth endorse as school-based supports and the provision of implications for specific changes to school-based practices that could be viewed as important for LGBTQ

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youth. The qualitative data from individual interviews served to provide information for exploring in depth the experiences and ideas that LGBTQ youth have regarding helpful educator behaviors and policies. Interview data also added context to the reasons why such behaviors and policies are viewed as helpful and important. Less depth could be gathered on any one particular idea that was put forth during the small group brainstorming, but those procedures allowed for the benefits of thinking as a group to add further diversity to the ideas generated. The sorting and rating procedures were designed to provide a visual representation of findings, consensus on ways that educator behaviors and policies are viewed by youth, and quantify results regarding perceptions of importance, frequency of occurrence, and helpfulness.

Participants

   Target population. The population of LGBTQ youth encompasses a large degree of heterogeneity.   Many youth may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning, yet there are still others who have same-sex attractions but do not identify with a particular sexual orientation. Critiques of research regarding LGBTQ issues call for increased representation of such individuals as well as the often overlooked youth who are transgender (Elze, 2005). Beyond addressing diversity regarding sexual orientation and gender expression, research with LGBTQ youth also must incorporate other dimensions of diversity (e.g., ethnicity, SES) into sampling considerations to be more representative of possible variation and consistencies within the population.   Since the aim of this study is to identify practices and policies endorsed by LGBTQ youth, it is critical to not overlook and consequently further marginalize voices of this population by not including

such dimensions of diversity. Attempts were made to include a diverse sample through sampling using a number of settings and methods.

Inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria for this study required that youth endorse having a (a) diverse sexual orientation identity (i.e., LGB), (b) degree of same-sex attraction (e.g., physically, spiritually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to the same-sex or both sexes), and/or (c) a variant gender identity (i.e., identifies as a gender different from their birth sex). Participants also were required to have been enrolled in high school for at least 6 months and not to have completed or dropped out of school more than 6 months prior to participation. The high school that participants attended had to be within the same large urban school district located in a southeastern state in which the study was conducted.

School system setting and contextual factors related to LGBTQ populations. Participants in this study attended schools within one large school district in the southeast of the United States. This district includes schools within mostly urban and suburban communities. A review of publically available records were reviewed for evidence of existing supportive policies and resources for this population. While the Principal Investigator (PI; author of this dissertation) was familiar with practices involved in the district from previous professional experiences with the district, a school mental health provider who was employed by the district and a GSA sponsor was also consulted regarding LGBTQ related resources provided in the district. The school board policies include a non-discrimination and equal opportunity clause that enumerates sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics for school district employees. Therefore, this policy serves to protect LGBTQ employees from being discriminated

against (along with protections for other characteristics such as race, color, religion, sex, age, etc.). While this policy was articulated in the policy documents retrieved online, the enumerated policy was not found within the current teacher contract documents or on the school district's website. In fact, the non-discrimination clause listed on the pages of the school district's main website is different than that which is listed in its policy manual. This more publically viewable statement only enumerates two-thirds of the characteristics listed in the official policy, and sexual orientation and gender identity are two of the characteristics that are left out of the website version of the statement.

In terms of student policies, the school board's policy on non-discriminatory admission of students only enumerates race, sex, national origin, marital status, handicap, and religion. The school board's statement on prohibition of harassment by students also enumerates similar characteristics but again does not include sexual orientation or gender identity. The school district has a separate seven-page anti-bullying and harassment policy document that is applicable to all schools, available online through various links, and is part of the mandated state anti-bullying legislation. This district policy defines bullying and harassment, and it describes procedures for such things as reporting, investigation, consequences, and counseling referrals. This policy does not enumerate categories of demographic characteristics. Examples used to describe types of bullying include the mention of sexual, religious, and racial harassment, but not harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

In terms of resources available, there is some evidence of specific efforts designed to meet the needs of LGBTQ youth. For instance, guidance counselor department heads from each high school in the district received GLSEN Safe Space Kits (i.e., a resource

guide with information on how to support the needs of LGBTQ youth) during a staff department meeting from their supervisor. Trainings on suicide prevention and risk-assessment provided to school mental health providers (i.e., social workers, school psychologists) were reported to have included case examples, of which one was of an LGBTQ student, as a means of addressing issues specific to the LGBTQ youth population. Email posts available to school psychology staff have included questions and information related to how to serve LGBTQ students. The district's bullying prevention website includes links to resources from other organizations, and within two of those resources are links to resources specific to LGBTQ issues.   Websites for several of the high schools in the district list student clubs, and several of those schools indicated that Gay-Straight Alliances were one of the many clubs available at the school. While individual schools may have sought out trainings independently, specific professional development trainings related to LGBTQ youth for teachers do not appear to have been offered through the school district.

In summary, the school district offers some specific protections related to sexual orientation and gender identity in its policies, but these are not consistently communicated or applied specifically to students. Some resources and content have been provided to student services personnel, and GSAs are present in at least some high schools in the district.

Sampling procedures and considerations. The PI contacted recruitment site gatekeepers and told them about the intent of the study (see Appendix A for mail/phone scripts) in order to gain their support in facilitating participant recruitment and permitting data collection to occur at their site. In return for support from partnering sites, the PI

offered to present results and implications from the study after completion with interested stakeholders, including youth participants and staff members through group presentations and/or written reports. In total, three sites agreed to support recruitment and data collection.

A local LGBTQ community center and agency that provides services (e.g., weekly youth group meetings, individual counseling, HIV prevention) for LGBTQ youth served as the primary recruitment site for the study. This community center is located in a central location relative to the large surrounding school district described above. The PI discussed the details of the study with the center's Director of Behavioral Health, who then agreed to allow recruitment efforts and data collection to take place at this site. A majority (72%) of participants for this study were recruited through this community center.

A secondary recruitment location was the aforementioned large urban school district. Approval to conduct research through the schools was obtained from the district's assessment and accountability office. Gay Straight Alliance (GSA; school-based student-run clubs addressing LGBTQ issues) faculty advisors were contacted as initial gatekeepers for two school sites known to have active GSAs. These gatekeepers expressed interest in participation. The PI then made attempts to contact the schools' principals. One of the principals expressed interest in participating. After discussing details and logistics of the study, the principal agreed to allow recruitment and data collection to occur during Club Day meeting times with the school's GSA. Twenty-eight percent of the study's participants were recruited through this school's GSA.

A third recruitment site was identified as well after the interview and brainstorming sessions were completed so that an additional recruitment source would be available for the next set of data collections. No participants, however, were obtained through this setting. This additional site was a local chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). PFLAG holds biweekly support group meetings that address LGBTQ issues; however, the focus is not specifically targeted towards youth but more so friends and family of LGBTQ individuals. The president of the chapter was contacted, and he agreed to allow recruitment and data collection to occur during their PFLAG meetings. During the three meetings in April and May 2013 in which the PI provided recruitment information, only a small number of total individuals in attendance could have met inclusion criteria. These individuals did not follow up with the PI to express interest in participation.

After receiving approval to conduct the research study through the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the PI attended meetings at each organization (i.e., youth group meetings at the local LGBTQ community center, GSA meeting in the school, and PFLAG meeting) to share the recruitment flyer (see Appendix B), verbal information about the study, and consent/assent documents (Appendix C, D, and E). The PI shared the information at the beginning or end of these meetings and had opportunities to answer questions and assent and consent information. All participants under 18 were required to have parental consent (see Appendix E) to participate as well as provide and sign their own informed assent (see Appendix C). All participants 18 or older were required to provide informed consent (see Appendix D) to participate. Informed consent or assent information was provided to participants by the PI at

recruitment sites, and consent and assent documents were sent home with interested participants for their further review and time to consider participation. Signed parental consent forms were brought to scheduled data collection sites along with informed assent or informed consent, and the information was reviewed again to further ensure participants understood components of the study and their participation. Appointments for all but one of data collection sessions were scheduled to occur at the respective sites in which they were recruited (one individual interview was held at the PI's affiliated university campus based on the participant's preference).

Participant sample. A total of 18 youth who met inclusion criteria completed one or two of the data collection methods that yielded usable data. There were 11 youth who participated in the individual interviews, and 13 youth who participated in the brainstorming sessions (i.e., six youth participated in both procedures). A summary of the participant sample's self-reported demographic features for interview participants, brainstorming session participants, and the total participant sample are presented in Table 1. Table 2 provides demographic variables and a pseudonym for each participant in the interviews. These participants are listed in the order in which they were interviewed.

Participants ($N = 18$) were an average of 17.17 years old ($SD = 1.25$ years) and were from 12 different schools within the district. Just over a third of total participants represented racial and/or ethnic minorities (i.e., $N = 1$ Black, Non-Hispanic Origin, $N = 2$ Black, Hispanic Origin, $N = 4$ White, Hispanic Origin); none of the participants were of Asian, Native American, or Pacific Islander backgrounds. A slight majority (55%) self-reported that they were not eligible to receive free-or-reduced price lunch during the past 6 months.

All individual interview participants were recruited through the local LGBTQ community center, with the exception of three students who also attended the high school in which recruitment efforts took place. The majority of the interview data collection meetings were held at the community center after school hours, immediately prior to youth group meetings. Five participants for the first brainstorming session were recruited through the high school's GSA, and that session was held during one of their school's monthly Club Day meeting periods, which occurred during the school day. Five youth recruited through the local LGBTQ community center participated in the second brainstorming session, which was held at that site. Three more youth from that that center participated in the third brainstorming session, also held at that site. The 9 participants for the rating, ranking, and sorting session were recruited through the community center, and that session was held during the youth group's meeting time. However, due to task completion difficulties (described in further detail at the end of his chapter), this final phase of the study was discontinued. Demographic data for these participants was not obtained for this last group.

Procedures

      Document review of district policies and procedures relevant to supporting LGBTQ youth. To ensure that all relevant documents were located and accessed for review, the PI consulted with a school mental health provider (SMHP) who was knowledgeable of LGBTQ issues and served as a GSA sponsor in her school. Documents reviewed at the beginning of data collection (November 2011) and end of data collection (May 2013) included district bullying policies and procedures, school board policies,

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants by Data Collection Type/Stage

Characteristic	Percentages of Participants		
	Eleven Individual Interviews (N =11)	*Three Brainstorming Sessions (N=13)*	*Interviews and Brainstorming (N=18)*
Age			
15	9%	23%	17%
16	9%	8%	6%
17	36%	23%	33%
18	45%	31%	33%
19	0%	15%	11%
Race/Ethnicity			
White, Non-Hispanic Origin	64%	69%	61%
White, Hispanic Origin	27%	8%	22%
Black, Non-Hispanic Origin	0%	8%	6%
Black, Hispanic Origin	9%	15%	11%
Free-or-Reduced Price Lunch Status			
Eligible	45%	38%	45%
Not Eligible	55%	62%	55%
Gender Identity			
Male	45%	54%	50%
Female	36%	31%	33%
Transgender Male (Female to Male)	18%	8%	11%
Transgender Female (Male to Female)	0%	8%	6%
Sexual Orientation Identity			
Gay/Lesbian	73%	62%	61%
Bisexual	9%	15%	17%
Straight	9%	8%	6%
Pansexual	9%	0%	6%
Not sure (Questioning)	0%	15%	11%
Romantic or Sexual Attractions (during lifetime)			
Females only	27%	23%	28%
Males only	36%	38%	28%
Females and Males	36%	31%	33%
Never been interested in someone	0%	8%	6%
Sexual Intimacy (e.g., kissing, sexual activity; during lifetime)			
Females	36%	31%	33%
Males	36%	53%	44%
Females and Males	18%	8%	11%
Never been intimate with anyone	9%	8%	6%

Table 2

Interview Participants' Demographic Characteristics and Pseudonyms

ID	Name[a]	School[b]	Age	Gender Identity[c]			Sexual Orientation Identity[d]					Attractions[e]		Intimacy[f]			Race/Ethnicity[g]		
				F	M	T	L	G	B	P	S	F	M	F	M	N/A	W	WH	BH
I-01	Amy	ZHS	17	X			X					X				X	X		
I-02	Brad[2]	YHS	18		X			X					X		X		X		
I-03	Carla	XHS	17	X					X			X	X	X				X	
I-04	Dakota	WHS	17			X	X					X			X		X		
I-05	Ellis	VHS	18		X					X		X	X	X		X	X		
I-06	Francisco	UHS	18		X			X					X		X			X	
I-07	Gale[1]	THS	16	X			X					X	X	X	X		X		
I-08	Henry[1]	THS	17		X			X					X		X				X
I-09	Ian[1]	THS	18		X			X					X		X		X		
I-10	Jake[3]	SHS	15			X					X	X	X	X			X		
I-11	Kate[2]	RHS	18	X			X					X			X		X		

[a]Pseudonym; [b]High School Pseudonym; [c]Gender Identity groups include Female (F), Male (M), and Transgender Male (T); [d]Sexual Orientation Identity includes Lesbian (L); Gay (G); Bisexual (B); Pansexual (P); and Straight (S); [e]Attractions during lifetime towards Females (F), Males (M), Never been attracted to someone (N/A); [f]Intimacy during lifetime with Females (F), Males (M), and No One (N/A); [g]Race/Ethnicity groups include White, Non-Hispanic (W); White, Hispanic (WH), and Black, Hispanic (BH); [e]Age includes 17 years or younger (≤17) and 18 years (18) [1]Participated in Brainstoming Session Group 1; [2]Participated in Brainstoming Session Group 2; [1]Participated in Brainstoming Session Group 3;

employee contracts, school district websites, and verbal information shared during consultation with the SMHP contact person.

Individual interviews. The 11 interviews were conducted between November 2011 and May 2012. Participants completed a brief demographic form (Appendix F) in order to gather self-reported information about participants' age, ethnicity, eligibility for free-or-reduced lunch, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Based on recent literature suggesting the importance of measuring sexual orientation through more than a single item, the demographic form adapted three questions used by Igartua and colleagues (2009) to assess multiple dimensions of sexual orientation. Aspects of sexual orientation were assessed in terms of self-identification (*Which of the following best describes you? Heterosexual (i.e., Straight), Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, or Not Sure;* p. 603*), attraction ("During your life, to whom have you been attracted to or had fantasies about, either romantically or sexually? Females, Males, Females and males, or I have never been romantically or sexually interested in someone",* p. 603), and behavior (*During your life, who have you been sexually intimate (e.g., kissing, sexual activity) with? Females, Males, Females and males, or I have not been sexually intimate (e.g., kissing, sexual activity) with anyone."* p. 603). Following methodology used within (GLSEN) national surveys that included assessment of transgender youth, participants were asked to select which gender identity terms (i.e., *Male, Female, Transgender, Transgender Female-to-Male, Transgender Male-to-Female, Other)* best applied to them. Participants' names were not attached to any data collection products (e.g., demographic form, de-identified transcripts), and unique code numbers were used to link data obtained from the demographic form to the interview.

Following collection of the informed assent (and parent consent, when applicable) and the demographic form, the semi-structured interviews were conducted at the LGBTQ community center (except for one interview conducted at University of South Florida). A protocol was developed by the PI (see Appendix G) based on the research questions and objectives of the study. After reviewing the aims of the study with the participant, the interview began with a broad question about the youth's experiences in school. The questions asked participants about what schools have done to provide social, emotional, and/or school support to LGBTQ youth. Follow-up questions and probes were used to elicit descriptions of (a) specific teacher behaviors; (b) availability, actions, and attitudes of school-based mental health providers; (c) school policies and administrative actions; and (d) anything else relevant to school climate that conveyed support for this population. Once participants could not identify any more experiences of support, they were then asked to describe supports they would have liked to see occur in their schools that did not actually happen. This questioning was used to help distinguish experienced supports versus desired supports that the student had not experienced.

In many cases, participants shared non-examples of support during the interviews. The aim of this study was not to identify negative educator behaviors; however, following those instances, the PI took time to acknowledge and validate students' experiences of discomfort, harm, or lack of support. Then, in order to further elicit suggestions for desired educator behaviors, the PI probed for what the participant would have liked to see happen instead as a replacement to the negative educator behaviors students described. A pilot interview was conducted with a university student who identified as a gay male. This pilot interview lasted approximately 40 minutes. The

overall format and flow of the interview effectively elicited a range of ideas from the

participant about existing supports as well as desired supports. This participant provided

positive feedback regarding the PI's interview questions and style. One suggestion for an

additional probe was provided as feedback, which involved asking about how LGBTQ

friendly the participant's school was in comparison to others.   This question was

discussed as a means to stretch participants to think of other desired practices that could

be occurring in other settings in order to be more supportive. This question was

incorporated as a supplemental probe during the study interviews in cases to attempt to

elicit further descriptions of desired supports. This question was not used with

participants who clearly were not satisfied with existing levels of support at their school.

Durations of interviews were recorded following the delivery of the opening

question, resulting in interviews lasting 26 to 49 minutes (M = 37 min., SD = 7.62 min.).

At the conclusion of all interviews, a debriefing period was provided to give participants

an opportunity to express any concerns or questions. Participants either expressed no

concerns or questions or provided positive feedback about enjoying the opportunity to

share their experiences and thoughts. All participants received a Wal-Mart gift card

worth $10 for their participation at the conclusion of their interview participation.

All interviews were audio-recorded and sent to a transcription service. After the

completion of transcription, the PI reviewed each transcript for accuracy and made

necessary edits. A review of one randomly selected sample transcription evidenced

approximately 1 semantic error (e.g., wrong word used) per 100 words of text.   Data

were de-identified by replacing the names of people and places with pseudonyms. The

transcribed and de-identified interviews were stored electronically on the PI's password

protected computer, and documents were password encrypted as well. To facilitate data

management, a hermeneutic unit (HU) was created for use with ATLAS.ti software, and

de-identified interview transcripts were uploaded and assigned to that HU.

Data analysis followed procedures similar to that of the qualitative studies cited

earlier in the literature review. Specifically, Vargas and colleagues (2009) utilized a

deductive-inductive analysis procedure using strategies consistent with Nastasi (1999),

LeCompte and Schensul (1999), and Miles and Huberman (1994). This process included

preparing coders, developing an initial coding scheme, refining the coding scheme as

analysis proceeds, establishing inter-rater agreement, interpreting data, and comparing

constructs. Analysis began at the interview itself, as the PI took brief field notes

immediately following each interview to capture initial thoughts and information that

emerged from the interview. Research Assistant A, a doctoral student from the PI's

school psychology program, served as a second coder so that independent coding and

consensus building could be conducted. The PI provided Research Assistant A with the

second chapter (i.e., literature review) of this dissertation to read to increase her

familiarity with LGBTQ youth issues.

The PI and Research Assistant A began reading through a selection of interviews

in June 2012 and wrote notes and memos regarding interpretations of quotes related to

the supportive practices described in the data. Based on initial readings as well as

knowledge of empirical and theoretical literature, the coders worked together to develop

and define an initial coding scheme. Specifically, a codebook was created that provided

definitions for each code in order to operationalize the process. The coders then selected

an interview at random to independently code. Once completed, the coders shared their

coding with each other to build consensus and refine the coding framework. An abbreviated version of the codebook is presented in Table 3.

A supplementary codebook was developed as well to further articulate examples and non-examples of codes. Table 4 represents a sample of the content contained in this supplementary codebook for the Teacher Proactive Support Impacting Groups code. These were developed for each of the four subdomain code groups for teachers, SMHPs, and administrators. The distinctions between proactive and reactive, as well impacting groups and impacting individuals, were emphasized based on the literature review and types of responses shared during interviews. The literature review pointed to the need for further exploration into practices that are preventative or responsive to problems for LGBTQ youth. Additionally, emphasis in the literature related to creating positive social contexts or environments at school; however, not all types of supports occur at a level that impact school environments as a whole. Codes were therefore created to distinguish whether a support could have an impact on more than one person at a time (i.e., *impacting groups*) or whether the support was more isolated and delivered through a one-on-one basis (i.e., *impacting individuals*).

During the coding process, the coders compared results in an effort to establish interrater reliability. Interrater reliability was calculated based on initial agreement before the two raters discussed their codes to work towards consensus with any discrepancies. All agreements and disagreements were recorded at the start of these checks, and the process was also geared towards building agreement on the codes and making changes to the codebook when necessary to further clarify the codes. The process involved raters comparing their independently coded texts and assigning points for agreements and

Table 3

Abbreviated Codebook

Primary Code Terms

Sources of Support	Definitions
Teacher Support (TS)	Traditional teachers, instructional assistants, special education teachers, coaches, or anyone that provides academic instruction
School Mental Health Providers Support (SMHPSS)	Guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers
Administrators Support (AS)	Principals, assistant principals, district administrators or supervisors
Policies	Formal or informal rules or expectations at the school or classroom level, and the ways they are implemented and made known to students
Resources	Materials or personnel that provide support that are not teachers, SMHPs, administrators, or policies
Staff Subdomain Codes	
Proactive Support (P)	Actions, statements, or other behaviors that are conducted not in response to an immediate problem situation (e.g., victimization, emotional problems, discipline issues) Proactive behaviors may be intended to or have the effect of creating positive relationships or school/classroom climate, promoting pro-social behaviors, communicating sense of support, respect, or encouragement, etc.
Reactive Support (R)	Actions, statements or other behaviors that are conducted in response to a particular problem situation with the intent to resolve or ameliorate the situation. These behaviors could include things such as responding to instances of bullying/harassment, providing counseling support after a crisis or related to an identified problem, connecting students to resources that assist with a referral concern, etc.
Staff Sub-Subdomain Codes	
Impacting Individuals (-Indv)	Support that is directed towards a single student within a one-on-one setting, outside of a broader youth social context
Impacting Groups (-Group)	Support that is directed towards more than one individual or directed towards an individual within a group setting so that others are also able to observe (and potentially benefit from) the support behavior. Includes actions addressing social conflict (e.g., bullying) with more than one party involved
Policy Subdomain Codes	
Impacting Bullying, Harassment, and/or Discrimination	any policies related to reducing or responding to incidents of bullying, harassment, or other aggressive or anti-social behaviors, particularly if unfairly applied to LGBTQ youth
Impacting Bathroom or Locker Room Use	any policies related to the bathrooms or locker rooms that students use
Modification Codes	
Desired Supports Not Experienced (0)	Participants were asked to describe supportive behaviors and policies that they did not experience but that they thought would be important.
Non-Example (NE)	Participants often volunteered non-examples of support or descriptions of educator behaviors or policies that made themselves or other LGBTQ students feel uncomfortable or harmed
Most Helpful (MH)	Behaviors/ policies specifically identified as being "most helpful" type of support by participants in response to interviewers probing questions

Table 4

Sample Supplementary Codebook of Examples and Non-Examples

Code Teacher Proactive Support Impacting Groups (TSP-Group)	Examples
Examples of TSP-Group	▪ A teacher mentioned sexual orientation in a positive context while teaching ▪ A teacher included LGBTQ related content in his instruction and lessons ▪ A teacher served as the advisor for the GSA club ▪ A teacher announced at the beginning of the year that if anyone ever had a problem, they should feel free to come talk to her about it ▪ A teacher displayed safe space stickers in her classroom for others to see it and know that she is accepting and knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues
Examples of Desired TSP-Group	▪ The participant wishes her teachers would speak to the class at the beginning of the year and say that they will treat everyone fairly, no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. ▪ The participant would like to see more teachers use inclusive language when talking in front of others
Non-Examples of TSP-Group	▪ A teacher made a public statement about how he preferred things back in his day when you would *NOT* see boys kissing boys or girls going out with girls ▪ Teachers avoid getting to know their students on a personal level so they don't have to help them out later on when a problem arises
Examples NOT to be coded TSP-Group (there is a more appropriate code for each)	▪ A teacher tries to help students resolve a peer conflict that is currently causing problems for a small group of students ▪ A teacher lets a student know on an individual basis that the student could talk to her if there ever was a problem or concern ▪ After a student says something offensive, a teacher tells the student in front of the class that it is wrong to use that kind of language and to not do it again

subtracting points for disagreement, all while building consensus on a final version of accepted coded text. Each code that the raters mutually agreed upon as accurately applied to a segment of text through consensus building was worth two points. When both raters independently identified a segment of text with the same code, then they earned two out of two points for that accepted code. When one rater independently identified a segment of text with a code but the other rater missed that code, then they

earned one out of two points for that accepted code. If neither person originally identified a segment of text with a code but through their discussions they realized that code was appropriate and accepted, then they earned zero out of two points. In some cases, there were codes that raters originally included, but through consensus building, they believed the codes were not appropriate and were not accepted into the final version of coded text. When both raters initially coded a segment of text the same way but decided not to accept it, then two points were subtracted. When only one rater initially coded a segment of text that was not accepted, then one point was subtracted. At the end of this process for an interview script, the total number of points earned was divided by two times the total number of accepted codes in order to calculate an overall interrater reliability percentage that was reflective of instances of agreements and disagreements with the final version of coded text. The independent coding and consensus building, was used for each interview.

In addition to this coding process, the PI wrote a short summary statement as a "memo" within Atlas T.I. to assist with thematic analysis of the content for each coded quote. These memo statements were written to be more concise than the original quotes yet also to preserve as much of the original wording and sentiment from participants as possible so that the youth's voice could be retained. These statements also were written in order to be shorter and more concise than the original quotes so that they would be of similar length and consistency to the brief statements generated during brainstorming sessions. To ensure the sentiments from the original quote were appropriately captured and worded within the memo statement, each quote and corresponding memo statement was independently reviewed by Research Assistant B, the PI's co-major professor. An

output file from Atlas T.I. for each coded set of data was generated to include the original quoted text with the corresponding set of data. These files were provided to Research Assistant B, who made note of any statement that appeared to need additional clarification or revision to better capture the original participants' intended sentiment. The PI and Research Assistant B then met to discuss these notes and come to consensus for each. These documents with original quotes, initial memos, feedback, and revisions were saved electronically as an element of the reduction analysis audit trail to add methodological rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Since the memo statements represented each of the unique sentiments, the PI used Atlas TI network viewer and memo manager to facilitate inductive thematic analysis within each Support Type. Similarities across sentiments that were expressed by multiple (i.e., three or more) participants emerged as the Content Themes within the various Support Types. Quotes from these Content Themes, contrasted with unique sentiments that were only expressed by one or two participants, are highlighted in Chapter 4 to help demonstrate trustworthiness of the analysis.

Two additional steps were used to provide quantified information about each of the coded Support Types (e.g., Experienced Teacher Proactive Support Impacting Groups, Experienced Teacher Proactive Support Impacting Individuals, Desired Teacher Proactive Support Impacting Groups, etc.). Frequency counts of uniquely expressed sentiments were totaled to determine how often each Support Type was expressed during the interviews. As an indicator of intensity, percentages of participants who expressed sentiments for each Support Type were also calculated. Indicators of intensity are also noted for Content Themes.

Concept Mapping: Brainstorming. The three brainstorming sessions occurred between April and June of 2012. Participants first provided assent and consent, then completed the same brief demographic form administered to those youth who took part in the interviews. Youth who participated in individual interviews were eligible to participate in the brainstorming sessions. Because the nature of Concept Mapping is group based, recruiting through a group such as an established GSA or community group was intended to increase the comfort level of participants, as the individuals were already used to discussing LGBTQ related issues together and had developed a level of group rapport that would facilitate participation in this group task. Additionally, the task involved with brainstorming ideas about school-based supports is closely aligned with activities that these groups might engage in during their typical group meetings; therefore, the involvement of the researcher was intended to be less intrusive and potentially serve as an empowering process for the group and its members.

Data collection followed the first component of Concept Mapping procedures (Trochim, 1989), in which participants worked as a small group to brainstorm ideas about a particular topic. The second component of Concept Mapping involves sorting those ideas into related groupings and rating the ideas on various scales (e.g., importance). The results of the full Concept Mapping process produce a visual map illustrating the brainstormed ideas, the relationship between ideas, and the ratings of those ideas. Concept Mapping allows for all participants' voices to be heard equally since each participant contributes to the brainstorming and each participants' sorting and ranking contributes to the resulting visual map.

The small group brainstorming sessions began with an overview of the data collection process and the defining of key terms (i.e., social needs, emotional needs, and school needs; LGBTQ students). A PowerPoint was used to provide the overview to participants (see Appendix H). The participants were then given the brainstorming prompt, "One way that schools and school staff can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is…" Participants were asked first to think about their responses and write their initial thoughts down on index cards. After being given approximately three minutes to think and write, participants were then asked to share their thoughts verbally as a group. The facilitator encouraged participation from all members of the group while being sensitive to not make any participant feel pressured to share verbally. The PI typed their statements as they were shared, using a projector to share this information with the participants live, during the brainstorming session. Following strategies described by Davis et al. (2010), students were given the opportunity during the session to revise their statements after they had been typed/displayed. They also were given the opportunity to provide the researcher with their written statements on index cards for those who were hesitant to share publicly. A total of 39 sentiments were expressed on index cards that were collected. After cross-checking these sentiments with the statements that were typed during the live sessions, it was determined that all sentiments were freely expressed during the sessions. At the conclusion of each brainstorming session, participants received a Wal-Mart gift card worth $10.00 for their participation.

Overview of Analyses: Constant-Comparison Reduction Analysis of Combined Data Sets

Once the final brainstorming session had been conducted, brainstormed statements that been typed from each of the three brainstorming sessions were compiled along with the compiled memo statements from the individual interviews. A data reduction process involving constant-comparative analysis procedures was used similar to the reduction process that Davis et al. (2009) used to reduce their concept mapping brainstorming session data. Memo statements from the individual interviews and statements from brainstorming sessions were read and re-read to identify overlapping sentiments that could be combined, or reduced, into a single statement. Initially, reduction of memo statements for the interview data occurred within sources of support (i.e., analysis of teacher data, then analysis of SMHP data, etc.), while brainstorm statements were simply reduced across the 3 sessions for overlap across sessions.

The PI and Research Assistant B conducted this reduction process and worked towards building 100% consensus. Each unique statement was assigned a letter or number code for sorting purposes (i.e., letter/number codes did not have a semantic relationship to the data). When a statement was recognized to have overlapping meaning with a previously reviewed statement, it was assigned the same letter/number code that was used for that previously reviewed statement. If the statement was unique, it was assigned a new letter/number code. These letter/number codes were re-assigned as necessary in this constant-comparative process. Discussions between the PI and Research Assistant B involved articulating the similarities or differences between the sentiments of each statement being considered for reduction. Coding in this manner provided small

groupings of data that were alike to one another and that would be reduced into a single statement of a Specific Educator Behavior/Policy.

Once each statement for a group of data (i.e., teacher behaviors, SMHP behaviors) was coded in this manner, the PI took the lead in revising the language of memo statements that were assigned the same code to produce a new reduced statement. These reduced statements were then revisited by the PI and Research Assistant B to ensure they were worded appropriately and accurately reflected the original sentiments of the memo statements. For example, "teachers use their authority to control the classroom environment and make sure that everybody is respectful within the classroom" was a reduced statement revised from two memo statements that had overlapping sentiments: (a) "teachers use their authority to say what students can and can't do (e.g., "you need to respect other people")" and (b) "teachers control the classroom environment and make sure that everybody is respectful within the classroom." Because these statements were conceptually similar, the statements were reduced with efforts to incorporate the language from both statements. An example of two memo statements that were somewhat similar yet were considered to be unique and therefore not selected to be reduced were "schools make announcements about community supports for LGBTQ students" and "schools play supportive LGBTQ-related videos and music (e.g., Born This Way) or messages (e.g., "If you're gay, you're okay. If you're bi, it's all right. If you're straight, that's great.") on the morning show or announcements." While both statements include the idea of communicating messages to students through announcements, the content of those messages were different enough to remain separate (i.e., messages about community

supports for LGBTQ individuals versus messages that communicate affirmation of LGBTQ identities).

Reduced statements from interview data (i.e., grouped by teachers, SMHPs, administrators, policies, and resources) and brainstormed sessions were then analyzed together for additional reduction across data collection sources. That is, the separation by sources of support was not maintained at this stage in analysis so that similar support across sources (e.g., teachers and SMHPs) could be reduced to single statements where appropriate. The same constant-comparative methodology was used for this combined analysis, and the reduction process occurred until statements could only be combined by either losing original unique sentiments or including compound statements of unique sentiments.

In addition to identifying a list of unique statements of Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies, this constant-comparison reduction process also served to identify overarching clusters of similar sentiments that were not deduced from an a priori framework (like that which was used when coding individual interviews). The overarching clusters emerged to represent Big Ideas of the main approaches that high schools can undergo to provide support for LGBTQ youth's psychosocial functioning.

Concept Mapping: Rating, ranking, sorting. The second phase of the Concept Mapping data collection was attempted in May 2013. The complete list of reduced statements derived from the 11 interviews and three brainstorming sessions served as the items developed for use in the rating, ranking, and sorting session. While this session ideally would include the same individuals from the first brainstorming sessions or the individual interview to fully represent their input from start to finish, new participants

who were not present during these sessions were also targeted for recruitment and inclusion based on pragmatic factors (e.g., participants no longer attended the community youth group meeting or were no longer high school students). This second method of data collection in the Concept Mapping process began with an overview of the data collection process, definition of key terms (e.g., social needs, emotional needs, and school needs; LGBTQ students), and directions for how to complete session tasks. A PowerPoint also was used in providing this overview (see Appendix I). For the rating and ranking, a paper-pencil survey format of data collection was used (see Appendix J). Participants were asked three rating questions per item. The first was question asked, "How important is it for this to happen in schools in order to help LGBTQ students socially, emotionally, or academically?" This item was rated on a scale of 1 to 7 (i.e., 1 = not at all important, 2 = a little important, 3 = somewhat important, 4 = important, 5 = quite important, 6 = very important, 7 = extremely important). Next, participants were asked "How often has this happened at your school over the past year?" Responses were also on a 1 to 7 scale (i.e., 1 = never happens, 2 = rarely happens, 3 = occasionally happens, 4 = sometimes happens, 5 = often happens, 6 = usually happens, 7 = always happens). To determine youth's perceptions about the effectiveness of the supports that they had seen occur in their schools, participants were asked, "How helpful was this in providing social, emotional, or academic support to you or other LGBTQ students at your school?" Participants had the option of rating Not Applicable (N/A) for those items that they had not experienced. Otherwise, if they had experienced the support described in the item at least rarely, they were to rate the item on a scale of 1 to 7 (i.e., 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = a little helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = helpful, 5 = quite helpful, 6 = very helpful, 7 =

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extremely helpful). After each of the rating scale sections were completed, participants were asked to rank order their perceptions of the "top 5" ideas in terms of most important, frequently occurring, and helpful strategies, respectively.

The other step in this data collection stage involved individually sorting the items into clustered groups that make sense to the participants and naming each cluster. A computer software method was to be used for this component (i.e., Concept Systems Global Software). Each participant was to be logged on by the PI with a de-identified and confidential username and password. The participants then were to be tasked with categorizing the brainstormed ideas by dragging and dropping the statements into piles on the screen. They also were to be asked to name each pile and then click save to keep record of their responses. Upon completion of the sorting and rating process, the participants were to receive a Wal-Mart gift card worth $10.00 for their participation.

Barriers arose during the data collection for this rating, ranking, and sorting procedure. The group session was held during the LGBTQ community center's youth group meeting and began with the rating component. As the PI was reading the items aloud to participants to help maintain pacing and ensure comprehension, observations of participant behavior indicated the task appeared to be overly cognitively demanding (e.g., participants stated the task was too long, participants circled items quicker than reasonably expected to accurately respond, participants' engaged in off-task verbal behaviors with peers, participants asked for items and directions to be read multiple times). Based on the observations of the group's behaviors, the PI modified the procedure such that participants were directed to complete the survey independently when they could potentially employ greater level of focus, as well as take breaks (i.e.,

complete the survey over multiple time periods). Follow up visits to the youth group to collect survey data resulted in no usable data. Survey data was either only partially completed, not returned at all, or completed with responses indicating erroneous responses (i.e., multiple ratings circled for a single item, visual "Christmas tree"-like patterns in data, impossible responses such as high ratings of helpfulness for items marked as never occurring). Due to the participants' unanticipated challenges with meeting the cognitive and attentional demands of the task, and their general resistance to completing a survey that was much lengthier than the PI originally planned, this phase of the data collection was deemed unrealistic. After consultation with the doctoral committee, this final stage of Concept Mapping was discontinued.

Before data collection commenced (and was discontinued as aforementioned), the PI had developed a plan for handling data collected from the Concept Mapping procedures (i.e., individually sorted and rated statements from all group participants across groups). Specifically, data was to have been entered into Concept Systems Software V. 4 for data analysis to carry out multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis. Each statement becomes a point on a visually depicted map, and statements that were sorted together similarly by more participants result in points being closer together on the map. By taking the X-Y multidimensional scaling coordinate values for each point, the point maps are partitioned into clusters of points reflecting the overall manner in which participants sort the statements. The average ratings of importance, frequency, and effectiveness from the participants would have been applied to resulting visual concept maps. A visual framework of practices suggested by LGBTQ youth would result in delineated categories of practices viewed as supportive for LGBTQ

youth with ratings indicating which practices are most important for reaching this goal, as well as which practices have occurred in their schools most frequently, and which practices that are occurring in their schools have been perceived as most effective. These results also could then be analyzed for potential differences or similarities among participants based on demographic variables (e.g., with respect to free-or-reduced lunch status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity), similar to what was carried out by Davis et al. (2009). A pattern match analysis indicates the level of consistency (indicated by Pearson's r) across groups with regard to their average ratings. Comparisons are also depicted through graphs of the pattern matches to illustrate the consistencies and inconsistencies between groups. Graphs of pattern matches have lines representing each statement that connect to rating scales for two groups being compared. The lines look like rungs of a ladder, where the straighter lines have more agreement (e.g., women rate a statement 5.2, and men rate a statement 5.3) while the more slanted lines have less agreement (e.g., women rate a statement 5.2, men rate a statement 2.8). Even though these steps did not come to fruition in the current study due to excessive task demands on youth participants, they are reported herein for transparency of the PI's initial research plan (similar to the reasons for reporting the barriers incurred in the data collection process) and to facilitate future research efforts.

Table 5 provides a summary of the specific data sources that were originally intended to explore each research question. Given the aforementioned challenges in data collection for the final stage of Concept Mapping, only data from the "Compiled brainstorm ideas list" from the far right column was ultimately available for analysis.

Table 5

Research Questions and Corresponding Data Sources

Research Question	Interview Protocol Questions	Concept Mapping Procedures
1. What policies and educator behaviors have LGBTQ youth encountered in their high schools that they believe serve to promote positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?	Initial question and follow-up questions 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, & 17	Compiled brainstorm ideas list, Concept Map (sorting)
2. What policies and educator behaviors have LGBTQ youth not encountered in their high schools but propose would be helpful in promoting positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?	Follow-up questions 4, 7, 13, 14, & 16	Frequency ratings and rankings
3. Which policies and educator behaviors identified by LGBTQ youth are perceived as the most important to implement in schools in order to promote positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?	Data throughout responses that address perceptions of importance; descriptions of what they would like to see occur in schools	Importance ratings and rankings
4. How frequently do LGBTQ youth believe the policies and educator behaviors promoting positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth occur in their high schools?	Data throughout responses that address perceptions of frequency; implications based on repeated sentiments	Frequency ratings and rankings
5. Of the policies and educator behaviors that LGBTQ youth have observed within their schools, how helpful do LGBTQ youth believe those things have been in promoting positive psychosocial functioning of LGBTQ youth?	Follow-up questions 3, 6, & 12	Helpfulness ratings and rankings

Ethical Considerations

The current study received approval by the University of South Florida's IRB prior to recruitment and data collection (see Appendix K). During application process, the informed assent/consent procedures were modified from the original proposal. Aligned with recommendations from Elze (2003b), the PI's original intent was to avoid violating participants' privacy through a waiver of informed consent from parents along with the use of participant advocates to ensure participants fully understood their decisions to assent. This reasoning and procedure was not viewed to meet standards for a waiver of parental consent. All participants under 18 were therefore subject to traditional informed assent and parental consent procedures. While this ensured safety for participants who felt comfortable discussing an LGBTQ related study with their parents, it excluded others who met inclusion criteria that wanted to participate in the study since they were not "out" to their parents or their LGBTQ status was contentious with their parents. To maintain safety of those who participated, the PI emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. When participants were observed to struggle with task completion with the rating data collection, the session was discontinued and participants were given the option to attempt completing the ratings at home with the possibility of lower cognitive demands. During all data collection sessions, the PI was prepared to provide information for follow up with the community center's resources if participants were to demonstrate a need for this. No adverse events of this nature occurred.

In terms of confidentiality, all transcribed-data was de-identified to keep identities private and confidential. Audio-recorded files, transcribed interviews, and data collected from Concept Mapping sessions were stored electronically on the PI's password

protected computer, and electronic file also were password encrypted. Hard copy data (e.g., demographic questionnaires, rating and sorting record sheets) were stored in a locked cabinet in the PI's home office.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter summarizes the results that emerged from the analysis of qualitative data gathered from interviews and group brainstorming sessions. The first section provides information gleaned from the individual interviews of the 11 LGBTQ high school student participants. It is organized according to the coding framework described in Chapter 3, with information on coded Support Types for five sources of school support. Experienced and Desired Supports are discussed first for Teachers. School mental health provider (SMHP) supports are discussed next, followed by administrator supports. Educator behaviors from each of these sources are organized by Support Type (i.e., Proactive Supports Impacting Groups, Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals, Reactive Supports Impacting Groups, and Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals). The last sections of interview results discuss Experienced and Desired support from the remaining two sources of support: school policies and school resources. Content Themes that emerged from the responses of multiple (i.e., three or more) participants within each set of coded content are described, as are unique sentiments that were described by one or two participants. Quotes from participants illustrate the themes and unique sentiments, and tables are presented to summarize frequency counts of coded data and primary content themes for teachers, SMHPs, and administrators.   Any quotes containing names of places or individuals have been de-identified with pseudonyms.

Following these findings are results from the brainstorming sessions. A list of statements is provided that represents the unique statements identified through this process. The findings from the analysis of brainstormed statements in conjunction with interview data are then presented, with a table that lists the Big Ideas of high school supports identified by LGBTQ youth that emerged as well as all of the Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies that were identified. Items that were explicitly indicated in individual interview data as being "Most Helpful" are highlighted with asterisks.

Experienced Support from Teachers

When asked about support from high schools, there were more experiences of support from teachers described than experiences of support from SMHPs, administrators, or policies. In total, the 11 participants offered 113 sentiments about supportive teacher behaviors experienced in their schools.

Table 6 provides a summary of the Content Themes that emerged within experienced, as well as desired, teacher Support Types. The table also reports the total number of sentiments expressed for each experienced and desired Support Type, and the percentage of participants that expressed a sentiment that was coded as that Support Type. Sentiments expressed by only one or two participants are not listed as Content Themes but are mentioned with the body of text that follows.

Proactive Support Impacting Groups. Of the different experienced Support Types described, participants mentioned Proactive Supports Impacting Groups more than two times that of the number of other teacher Support Types. Eight participants (73%) mentioned sentiments that were coded as Proactive Supports Impacting Groups, with a

Table 6

Participant Sentiments Describing Teacher Supports

Support Types		Unique Sentiments	Percent of Participants	Content Themes Present across Three or More Participants
Proactive Support Impacting Groups	Experienced Support	57	73%	Served as a Gay-Straight Alliance sponsor Supported the Gay-Straight Alliance and its activities Demonstrated open-mindedness and willingness to support all students Verbally or nonverbally indicated specific LGBTQ youth acceptance and inclusiveness Included LGBTQ issues or information in course content Treated LGBTQ students similar to any other student
	Desired Support	30	91%	Verbally and nonverbally indicate specific LGBTQ acceptance and inclusiveness Include LGBTQ issues or information in course content Use proactive classroom management Support the GSA and its activities
Proactive Support Impacting Individuals	Experienced Support	20	64%	Communicated and demonstrated availability to talk with individual students Made polite comments or conversations about student interests or identity
	Desired Support	4	18%	
Reactive Support Impacting Groups	Experienced Support	23	91%	Interrupted offensive language and aggressive behaviors
	Desired Support	10	55%	Interrupt offensive language and aggressive behaviors Provide punishments after interrupting offensive language and aggressive behaviors
Reactive Support Impacting Individuals	Experienced Support	13	45%	Offered individualized encouragement, comfort, or advice to students dealing with a problem Helped meet basic needs for at-risk students
	Desired Support	0	0%	

Note. Support Types that do not have Content Themes listed had zero Content Themes that emerged

total of 57 sentiments. Analysis across participant responses revealed six themes that cut across several participants' described experiences of this Support Type.

Two of the Content Themes within the responses coded as Proactive Support Impacting Groups related to the teacher's role with GSAs. The first of these two themes was that teachers *served as a GSA sponsors*. Six of the participants (55%) mentioned having a teacher who served as their GSA sponsor. While GSAs are student-run clubs, they require a teacher who is willing and able to be the sponsor for it to run in a school. A couple of students mentioned how it was a struggle to get a teacher to be the club sponsor. One went on to describe recognition of the additional time and support that her teacher ended up providing when he became the GSA sponsor:

> We did ask this teacher, Mr. James, if he would do it before and he said, "I'm sorry but I've already got three clubs." But he did finally agree to do it when we told him "Please. We are out in the cold." So we meet in his room every Tuesday and he extends his personal time to help us. And it's -- as the president, I mostly facilitated the meetings, but he was always there or he would make sure his room was there for us. (Kate)

Beyond those basic responsibilities of being a GSA sponsor, some students described how their sponsors went above and beyond expectations. Three of the participants (27%) from two different schools described that their GSA sponsor helped to organize larger gatherings with other schools' GSAs. Ian stated, "…the sponsor from Davis High School had a GSA barbeque over at the city park, and we had our GSA and hers." He went on to describe the get together: "We'll just do out of school cookouts…kids get to hang out and have fun, and we'll think of events. Like we talked about going to [a gay pride parade]."

The second of the GSAs themes that emerged from responses provided by six of the 11 participants (55%) was that teachers (including but not limited to GSA sponsors) showed respect and support for the GSA and its activities. Five of those six participants (83%) discussed examples of how teachers supported the GSA's student-led Day of Silence activity. "Last year for Day of Silence," Amy explained, "we had stickers that we were giving out, and we had a lot leftover, and we were offering it to teachers, but one of our teachers actually volunteered to wear one himself and put it in his classroom. So that was good." Two students described how their GSA sponsors helped advocate on behalf of the GSA to help get the Day of Silence approved by administrators:

>…why is this AP suddenly being like, "Oh! It's going to be distracting, you know, for the class because they're like -- they're either not going to participate," but then [our GSA sponsor] came…"They're being silent. They're not making any noise. How is it distracting?" You know, because we're not like running around with like flames or something. I mean like, "Ahh!" You know? (Gale)

Similar examples were described outside the context of the specific Day of Silence event as well. For instance, one participant (Ian) described how his GSA sponsor helped to prepare her students in advocating for GSA activities and coping with instances of disapproval. He shared that the sponsor said to ask approval from administration "expecting a 'No,' so that you're already prepared" and also added, "If they say 'Yes,' you can throw a field day.[i.e., be really excited]" One of the participants (Amy) described how teachers showed general support of the GSA throughout the year by doing such things as buying and wearing GSA t-shirts and just generally participating in the GSA activities. Another form of support that both Amy and Kate mentioned was having

teachers who provided support to GSA sponsor. When students at Kate's school were looking for sponsors of their GSA, she described the following:

> A lot of teachers didn't want to sponsor us. I don't think it was because they were discriminating, but more because they have a lot on their plates because I know teachers work really hard. A lot of teachers would say, "I'm sorry, I can't do it because I have this and this, but you can go to this person." So they would try to help even if they couldn't do it themselves.

Amy described how her GSA sponsor had difficulty getting t-shirts made and how other teachers ended up helping the sponsor by sharing good companies to contact who would be willing to make t-shirts for the GSA.

Another theme that emerged with the Proactive Support Impacting Groups was that teachers *communicated open-mindedness and willingness to support all students*. Four participants (36%) shared experiences that represented this theme. The ideas of communicating open-mindedness appeared to serve as a signal for some students that the teacher would be willing to provide support for all students, including LGBTQ students. Half of these participants specifically talked about how their teachers' decisions to discuss changing points of view over periods of history were an indicator that they would be a supportive teacher for LGBTQ students. For instance, Amy shared, "if we're comparing this time period to a previous time period and they bring it up, like if it's something that now is controversial, but might not be in the future, you know, that's a symbol that they're sort of -- they're open-minded." Both participants stated that the discussion did not have to be specifically about LGBTQ issues, but just the demonstration of open-mindedness about points of view was a good signal for them.

Jake felt more supported by a teacher who simply made class fun with the activities, style, and personality they used to teach class. Jake also described an activity that was open-ended and afforded the student the opportunity to self-disclose his LGBTQ status early on in the year:

> And the first thing that she did was she gave us this paper, and it was like a 'get to know your student' type of paper. And it was like your name, your nick names, what you like to be called, tell me something about yourself, what do you like to do, what you like about math. You know, stuff like that, you know, simple 'get to know your kids' sheet. And I -- my parents had to write on the back something that they thought that Ms. Jameson should know about me and then sign it. And whenever it put "what I like to be called," I put "male pronouns" and "Jake." And so, and then my mom wrote my son is transgender and being called by the proper pronoun and stuff is incredibly helpful to this thing called dysphoria, and just, you know, explained it a little bit and my teacher the next day was just like, 'Oh, well, that's really awesome to know about you. I am glad that you told me. Like I would have never wanted to overstep a boundary or hurt your feelings or anything like that." And I was like 'thank you so much'…And since then I've done like every piece of work that I can from her.

Participants also shared experiences of their teachers being more publically explicit in their open-mindedness to support all students. For example, Ian described his GSA sponsor made explicit statements of support, saying that "she'll just make it known that 'if you need something I'm here, if you need help or something I'm here. We don't tolerate the bullying or anything in here and you know this is a safe space for students to

be'." One other way that this theme manifested in participants' responses was in their descriptions of teacher giving general proactive advice to students. Kate, who described many positive experiences with her teachers and few anti-LGBTQ incidents in her school, shared the following:

We haven't run into a whole lot of issues compared to I guess what a lot of people have. I can't say that I've had a whole lot of teachers go out of their way to prevent things. Nor were there huge incidents…a lot of my teachers really make sure that we know stuff about deadlines, useful life advice, I guess. We have my math teacher, always makes – "Okay you have this [assignment] due this week, and don't forget [students in psychology class] have this [assignment]"and he will give us [advice] like, "Hey, don't live in apartments in college because if you do and people take drugs at parties that people throw at your apartment then you can get arrested." Just things like that.

Another Content Theme that was evident across participant responses for Proactive Supports Impacting Groups related to teachers *verbally and non-verbally indicating specific LGBTQ youth acceptance and inclusiveness*. For instance, Ian captured the sentiment of this theme as "just making it known that you're welcome there and you can be yourself," with four participants (36%) sharing responses that represented this theme of explicit LGBTQ youth acceptance and inclusion. Two of the ideas that were mentioned had to do with establishing this acceptance early on when students first begin a new class, similar to how the more open ended "get to know you papers" were used at the beginning of the year to set the tone more generally. Ian discussed a physical display of LGBTQ acceptance through the posting of posters and stickers:

Well at Davis High, there was a few teachers that had actually like a Pride flag in

the room because their son was gay or their daughter was lesbian. They had a

Pride flag in their room. So right, that right there kind of like just stood out.

Williams had, well, they are now putting up the Safe Space stickers all over the

rooms and stuff like that for students.

Another experience involved teachers making purposeful verbal statements of

inclusiveness early in the year:

…in the beginning of the year when teachers always introduce themselves, they

talk about their life and things like that. Some of my teachers and I think they do

it -- sometimes purposely…some of them they point out that they might have had

like a gay aunt or uncle or they have the gay son or just something like that, just

to show -- you know, at the end of the whole entire thing, -- like oh, "I've already

been through all of this and I won't take any crap about bullying about this or

talking about this." So they're like ahead of time. (Henry)

Another experience of support centered on not using assumed gender identities, where

teachers used general terms instead to avoid showing favoritism and allow students to

make their own interpretations. Also relating specifically to gender identity, Jake

described many aspects of how teachers used his preferred gender pronouns and name.

This participant contrasted this support with many instances of being referred to with

pronouns matched to his biological female sex and legal name, and described the impact

using preferred names and pronouns had on his academic success:

I had this teacher--her name is Ms. Jane Jameson, and full name because I love

her. She has -- I feel like she's shown me respect by calling me "Jake" and "he"

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and "him" and, you know, proper pronouns and all that stuff. And with that it kind

of gives me—makes me want to give her the respect of working harder in her

class, I guess. So I feel like the respect given makes me want to work

academically harder and she is my geometry teacher and currently I am excelling

in her class, better than I ever really have academically…So I don't know,

because hearing my birth name too, every time I hear it, it's like giving like--

slapped across the face every single time. Same thing with being called the

wrong pronoun, so that's like, you know, hit below the belt every time, so…

Similar, but distinct, sentiments that came up among two participants was for teachers to

include LGBTQ issues or information in the content of the course. While this action

serves to indicate LGBTQ youth acceptance and inclusion, the educational component of

this theme differentiates it from the previous theme. Kate had several examples of

inclusive curriculum, from one teacher who was "not super inclusive" but would include

small LGBTQ facts occasionally, to a teacher who allowed the participant to create and

share transgender inclusiveness presentations in class. She explained:

…I read ahead and noticed that there was a transgender character [in the novel we

were reading], and so I approached [my teacher] and said, "Would it be okay if I

did a presentation for the class just to help them on their essays and get their terms

straight?" And she was absolutely supportive. She said, "If you want to do a

PowerPoint, that's great. If you'd like to have it by this day, we can do that. And

actually if you can come into my other classes and teach them; that would be

really great."

One additional theme was evident in several participants' responses and involved *treating LGBTQ students similar to any other student*. In most cases this sentiment was coded as a Proactive Support Impacting Groups; however, some quotes that lacked specificity may have also been applicable to treating LGBTQ students equally when reacting to a problem and thus could be considered Reactive Support Impacting Groups. "I guess, just, most of the teachers treat everyone equally," is one example that was shared by Amy, who went to also say the teachers were "not going to hate on someone on something that's definitely not school related." More concrete demonstration of this theme was also shared in the ways staff actually interacted, or did not interact, with LGBTQ students:

> …So if there's like a gay couple, like, walking down the hallway, and like this teacher like doesn't even like -- they don't, like, take a second look or they don't even bother to flint, like you know, look over and just be like, you know like, "What is that?" You know? Like, if I pass by a teacher and see them not even care about, like, this gay couple, you know, then I can tell usually that, you know, they're going to be, like, really cool. Like, down to earth, and not really be a homophobe. (Gale)

There were nuances within this content theme as well. One student, Amy, discussed how teachers viewed LGBTQ students as one other type of student group in their building, saying "it's like one clique or another clique, it doesn't really make a difference in their eyes as long as [they are] not doing anything to get them in trouble." Another student, Ellis, discussed being treated equally, but in a way that reflected false assumptions of sameness:

I mean they didn't judge you, I guess. They treated you like everybody else, so at least that was supportive. But it was more like a "don't ask, don't tell" sort of deal…Like the teacher didn't flat out ask you like, "Are you gay or something?" She just – she assumed everybody was the same, and issued the same respect towards everyone. So I guess that was supportive, in a way.

Proactive Support Impacting Individuals. In terms of Proactive Support Impacting Individuals, seven of the eleven participants (63%) described experiences that were coded into this category. These participants shared 20 sentiments that were assigned this code. Two themes emerged across participants' sentiments in this category of teacher support. Four participants shared experiences that represent the first theme of *communicating and demonstrating availability to talk with students individually*. For instance, Brad discussed how his teachers would always let him know that he could come to them with questions and that they actually followed through with it when he did have questions. He shared:

> One of the questions I had, I don't remember what the specific question was, but it was in between periods and [my teacher] actually closed her door, waited for the hall to clear, and then we could speak freely, albeit only for a temporary time, but she stopped and took the time to actually do that. And most of the time, it's after school or via email, but she has always had an answer and always been helpful.

Other participants shared examples of what their teachers said to them prior to any specific problem came up. For example, Gale that her teachers told her individually, "If you need any help, you can ask. You can ask me." Another participant, Henry, described

how a teacher overheard his conversation with a different teacher in which he was mentioning that he was gay. He said the teacher came over and said to him, "if you ever have a problem with anybody inside the school about you being gay, I have your back…You can talk to me any time that you want, we can go to guidance anytime that you want." Henry described his response to her, in which he told the teacher, "I really appreciate you coming up to me and taking out your time and talking to me about it."

The second Content Theme of Proactive Support Impacting Individuals emerged from experiences described by three of the participants (27%), which involved having *teachers make polite comments or conversations with students about their interests or identity*. For example, one of these participants discussed how her teachers would politely talk with her about her involvement with the school's GSA:

> I had a sheet where I had to get all my teachers to sign it with my clubs and
> things, and when they saw that I was President of the club, they were just asking
> questions very politely about it. (Amy)

Another student discussed how he was surprised by one of his teachers whom he had previously thought to be homophobic. Jake shared that this teacher ended up providing positive comments about his gender expression. He explained that this teacher returned from maternity leave after he had already transitioned from identifying as female to now identifying as male. He said, "I had all my hair cut off and was wearing boy clothes and now she is just kind of like 'Hey, son, you're cool.' And I'm like 'Okay, I should cut my hair off sooner'."

Several other individualized experiences of proactive support were described by different participants that did not overlap with other participants' experiences. These

experiences included a teacher giving a participant equality stickers, a teacher buying a GSA t-shirt from a student, a teacher advocating to an administrator for a transgender-friendly bathroom policy for a student, a teacher allowing a student to choose LGBTQ related topics for classroom assignments, a teacher helping out with transportation for a student so that he could attend a community LGBTQ youth group, a teacher treating a student as an equal, and a teacher providing individualized help without judgment when it was known that the student was gay.

Reactive Support Impacting Groups. Of the four Support Types that were coded for teachers, Reactive Support Impacting Groups was the Support Type mentioned by the most participants. Ten (91%) of participants' responses included sentiments that were coded as this teacher Support Type, totaling 23 sentiments for this code. One primary Content Theme emerged within these experiences, which was *interrupting offensive language and aggressive behaviors*. Two-thirds of the sentiments for this code reflected this theme, with nine participants expressing this particular theme; however, there was variability in terms of how these actions were perceived and carried out.

Some of the participants described verbal and nonverbal interruptions of offensive language as being very helpful. For example, Henry shared about how his teacher's "whole look on her face would just change" when she heard someone say "Oh, that's gay" in a negative way. That teacher also told a student "I don't ever want to hear you ever saying that word ever in my class, ever again" after using the Spanish word *pato* as an offensive slur for gay people. Henry explained how those actions from his teachers affected him, saying "…it makes me feel more happy that I have more teachers like that. Like a smile would come on my face and every time I see those teachers I probably like

smile." Another appreciative participant, Ian, described how his teacher stood up to a staff member and said something to her about her offensive behavior (i.e., telling a student "you're probably gay because you have that feminine voice"). The participant explained the impact of that action:

> …it always made the students feel good, that knowing that there was some type of adult actually doing something for a student, because if the student stands up to the teacher, the first thing that's going happen, you're going to get written up whether you're right or wrong because the teacher runs the classroom, the student's don't.

Some students, however, did not share the same positive feelings about how helpful it was for a teacher to verbally interrupt offensive language, and they implied that some teachers did not really mean what they were saying. For instance, Ellis shared that after a student called a peer a *fag,* "the teacher was just like, 'Don't say that,' and that was it." A similar sentiment was shared by Francisco who explained that his teachers would interrupt students from saying "stereotypical terms;" however, he went on to say that they "scold students for using those words, but that's about it." A couple students indicated that teachers rush in to stop physical aggression, but this was contrasted with what appeared to be a less firm response to verbal aggression. For instance, Amy said, "Whenever there is a skirmish, every teacher is sort of required to step in and do something about it. So no matter what it's about, it's usually taken care of." When discussing verbal harassment, she imitated the teacher's response in a somewhat sluggish sounding manner, "Don't use words like that. Those are offensive words. You shouldn't say that in class." Only one participant indicated that a teacher (a GSA sponsor) provided

consequences to students for using offensive language aside from verbally interrupting, as mentioned by all other participants. Ian said described how she would usually "give one or two warnings, and if the person still doesn't you know follow it, he will be removed."

Other uniquely expressed experiences also were coded as Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. Two participants discussed teachers assisting them with a bullying incident that was not directly witnessed by the teacher. For example, Jake talked about "bawling [his] eyes out" in class because of a student who was "constantly mentioning [his] female anatomy," and the teacher took action to help get the situation addressed by administration:

> …[my teacher] was like, "this kid needs to go. He can't be bullying at school."
> Like, "Oh!" You know, helping me out. And yeah, so that was very helpful.
> Even though I don't particularly like [that teacher] all that much, that was a very
> defining moment, sort of.

Another unique experience described by a participant as occurring to other LGBTQ students involved having a teacher apologize for a misunderstanding that had occurred. Ian described that a gay couple felt like their teacher was discriminating against them when she separated them from sitting next to each other in class. When she found out they were upset with her about this and revoking the Safe Space sticker that she displayed in her classroom, Ian described how the teacher pulled the student aside to talk:

> …she actually apologized to both the students and said "that's not what I meant
> and if I had actually meant it that way I would understand why you're doing this."

So, but she actually-- she took it upon herself to actually be the better person and

talk to the students.

Dakota shared another experience in which the teacher was responsive to a problem that

occurred the previous year. He discussed how people "were making a big deal" about

this participant wanting to wear a tux to prom. The participant discussed how the

situation became different during the current year thanks to one teacher who was "Head

of the Prom Committee and so…that kind of played a role." The last sentiment, which

also was coded as a Reactive Support Impacting Groups, related to how teachers

responded to student public displays of affection (PDA). Amy said, "teachers are more

willing to get on a heterosexual couple's case for making out in the hallways than a

homosexual one."

      Reactive Support Impacting Individuals. Five participants (45%) described

experiences that fell into this code with a total of 13 unique sentiments expressed. One

theme cut across each of the five participants' experiences, and that was that teachers

offered *individualized encouragement, comfort, or advice to students who were dealing*

with a problem. This support often occurred outside of regular class time. For example,

Carla shared:

      Like after school hours, [my teacher will] like sit with me and talk with me and

      tell me that it doesn't matter who I like or what sex I like, that there is no reason I

      should get mad because of what other people say.

Henry discussed how a teacher who was also the GSA sponsor would "take the time out

of her time to talk" with any student who had problems feeling "uncomfortable around

school or just any type of problems that we have towards us as being LGBTQ period."

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He explained his appreciation for having a teacher who was able to offer that type of support, saying that "some kids may not feel as comfortable going to the guidance counselors because they don't know their counselors as much." Some participants shared examples of the verbal support that teachers had provided to them, such as, "You just keep your head up…don't get down and out by these things that your dad may say to you," (Henry) and "…try not to let it bother you too much. It will just go away, you know, it's not much of an issue" (Ian). Another participant shared that her teacher provided this support in a short written note when the participant was upset in class:

> …well, I got kind of in an argument with one of the students in my class and there was one time when I wanted a pass to the bathroom, so I could just you know get out there and cool down, take a walk, whatever. And my teacher wrote on the back of the pass that -- like he agreed with me that like what the student was talking about was like wrong and that I should – and that he hopes I feel better, you know…when I flipped over the pass and I got into the bathroom, I was like "Oh my God, that is so nice,"…when I saw that, I felt like…I could connect with him and actually talk to him now instead of, you know, being a little bit distant…(Gale)

Other than just verbal support, students also shared that teachers offered advice and support to resolve the problems. For example, Ian mentioned that his teacher offered him advice about who would be best to talk to about a bullying concern. Henry, on the other hand, discussed how his teachers would started "taking action" if he ever shared a problem, such as that he skipped that teacher's class to avoid getting beat up by someone for being gay. He described that the teacher met with him after school, providing

tutoring to go over what he missed in class, and allowing him to "talk about the issues" while also making up the work.

Outside of communicating encouragement and advice for problems, some other unique experiences of Reactive Support Impacting Individuals also were shared that involved more direct support outside of school-based issues. Three participants discussed having some significant problems at home that were impacting daily living and functioning (e.g., at-risk for becoming homeless). This content theme involved *helping to meet basic needs of at-risk students*. For instance, Gale explained her struggles and her teacher's responsive actions to provide such support:

> I was going through like kind of a hard time and I needed like food and water and stuff. So [my teacher] would help me out with that kind of stuff and like give me a ride home or pick me up to take me to school if I needed a ride. So that was really good. And like, it's kind of because of her that I started to go to, like, the counseling that I-- before I didn't really have transportation to get there.

Desired Support from Teachers

In terms of the desired support from teachers that participants had not personally experienced in their schools, a total of 44 sentiments were provided by participants.

Proactive Support Impacting Groups. Ninety-one percent of participants described teacher behaviors that were coded as Proactive Supports Impacting Groups, totaling 30 sentiments overall for this code. This Support Type was much more represented in participants' responses than the other. Within this Support Type, the most widely represented theme that emerged was for teachers to *verbally and nonverbally indicate specific LGBTQ acceptance or inclusiveness*. Seven participants (63%) shared

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sentiments that represented this theme. Some of the ideas expressed were for teachers to demonstrate what Gale described as an 'it's not a big deal' mentality towards LGBTQ couples. The way participants described these indicators of acceptance actually involved teachers displaying an absence of nonverbal behaviors. For instance, Gale went on to describe this teacher mentality in response to simple situations that would occur when students are "being" themselves:

> …if teachers like go in with that mentality that…it's okay to be, you know, I guess, gay in front of them, and it's okay to mention out loud that you're gay or talk about like your boyfriend and girlfriend, whatever, or you know, your sexuality. That it's not a problem. Like, you're not breaking some taboo…

Other students described wanting their teachers to explicitly make inclusive statements or comments in class. For instance, Henry wanted his teacher to stop making comments that always assumed heterosexuality (e.g., "Oh boy, if you're looking for that girl out there") and instead be inclusive of the possibility that students may be gay (e.g., "Oh boy, if you're looking for that girl out there…or even that boy out there") . Another participant discussed how his teacher made homophobic jokes in class and how he would prefer him to instead make inclusive statements:

> …my chemistry class, we were like, I think were like balancing equations or whatever…he said something about like 'homogeneous' or whatever, and he was like, "Yeah, we don't do that in [this city]" and like started laughing, or whatever…With the two of the same things at chemistry class, I mean, he didn't have to say like, "Oh! we don't do that," but [instead say] "Oh! That's okay." (Dakota)

Other behaviors that participants expressed wanting to see their teachers provide were to displays visual signs of LGBTQ inclusiveness. Gale discussed having teachers display rainbow or safe space stickers "on their doors and even in the classrooms and on like a teacher's desk." Dakota also talked about having posters, but with important LGBTQ individuals similar to how schools have posters representing "great people" of Black and Hispanic racial/ethnic backgrounds:

…they could have like, create like gay somebodies, like, to show them that, like, gay people aren't like inferior, you know. Like, it's okay to do what you want. You don't have to let that stop you because there is like greater people out there who are like you…

Ellis described wanting his teachers to use student's preferred gender pronouns and preferred names in class, as well as use index cards to ask student's preferred name at the beginning of a course semester.

Another related, yet distinct content theme that emerged from four participants (36%) was to *include LGBTQ issues or information in course content*. Participants expressed a range of how this could be provided. Some students suggested small inclusion, such as Ian, who suggested providing "gay couples or even like the gay friend or something LGBTQ. I mean include them into the assignments instead of it always being, you know, straight couple this and straight couple that." Dakota shared how reading about an LGBTQ themed book could make a difference:

I mean, it wouldn't hurt to read a – like when we do like, read like a class novel, it probably wouldn't hurt to like, read a gay one. I mean they do have like – we read like sex and rape. Why can't we read, like, a gay novel… if I was in a class and a

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teacher was to like, "Oh, as a class we're going to read about a gay book," I'd feel

like they are not, like, close minded to the subject. Like, it would make you feel, I

guess, better.

The most involved suggestion came from Francisco who mentioned having an

instructional course on "homosexuality" in order to help stop people from "being

ignorant about it and stereotyping." He went on to describe the course as being an

"introduction of homosexuality throughout history, transgender, all of that good stuff."

After explaining how one of her teachers did not permit her to choose a topic about gay

rights in a foreign county, Kate summarized her frustrations and desires regarding having

LGBTQ issues included in class:

> …I don't think that LGBT issues should be treated as controversial issues. It
>
> shouldn't be looked at, "Well let's not talk about it because some people don't like
>
> it." It should be, well they're just sucky people and they can shut up. So less -- I
>
> mean I felt a little bit censored just in that way. But, and I mean he was the only
>
> teacher to really do that but just coming to the realization that we can't just throw
>
> it in the closet, to use a bad pun, and act like it doesn't exist because some people
>
> are comfortable with it.

Another theme that emerged from three of the participants' responses was that of

wanting teachers to *use proactive classroom management skills*. Participants did not use

those terms, but the strategies proposed involved teaching and establishing expectations

for respectful behavior, as well as engaging and empowering students to have a voice

within class. For instance, Amy wanted to see her teachers do "little lessons about being

nice to people" recalling how teachers did something like this in younger grades about

being "nice to people of difference races." The addition to this thought was to include issues about sexuality along with it and to have activities where students would learn "what it's like to be discriminated against or bullied, so we can get in their shoes." Henry discussed how "a fight always ends up breaking out" whenever there is a big controversy being talked about in the lunchroom or hallways. To prevent such fights from occurring, he discussed having teachers facilitate discussions in their classrooms:

> …if we can -- let's say 'bring' our drama inside…I understand the saying, "leave your drama out there," but if we brought it [from] outside and a teacher could actually sit down and listen, because there's been times where I remember my teacher in seventh grade used to do debates. And surprisingly, we never ever, ever, ever had problems. Every single last kid in that class throughout school, you never heard of two kids that were inside in that class fighting each other. Those debates helped a lot.

Other ideas proposed by three participants (27%) represented another theme about *supporting the GSA and its activities*. For instance, one participant discussed how she would like to see her teachers support the Day of Silence activity:

> …a lot of teachers are not very supportive of that because it's like, "You come here to learn. I need you to talk to me." If they could be more willing to accommodate, you know, if the kid has a notepad or something and you know just have them write that day and not call them out specifically because they know that they're doing it. (Amy)

Another example of the way that teachers could help the GSA was to host additional activities outside of the GSA's "45 minutes once a month" on club day meeting:

Something like, even if a teacher holds a movie night for whatever or just

something that you need to get the students together and have them associate,

know that they're welcome, and they can be comfortable and stuff like that…(Ian)

Another idea related to supporting "out" LGBTQ staff. One perspective on this

theme expressed by Dakota was to have teachers "set the example" by being supportive

of LGBTQ teachers, stating that "they should let them feel okay, that it's okay for them

to be out, you know." The other perspective that was expressed by Francisco was for

LGBTQ teachers to be more open about their identity. He said, "I think the students

would feel for more open, simply because their teachers can be open about it and their

teachers are a source of authority."

Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals. In terms of participants describing

a desire for teachers to provide Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals, only four

sentiments were expressed by two of the participants (18%). Two of these sentiments

were similar, describing how it would be nice to be able to speak openly on a one-on-one

basis with a teacher. One of these participants, Ellis, expressed how LGBTQ issues for

most people is a "closed issue" in which "they don't really want to bring it up and they

don't want you to bring it up," so he wanted more teachers to be open to discussing

LGBTQ issues. The other participant, Brad, wanted to be able to get tips or advice from

teachers after building up courage for "coming out" to them, so he similarly did not want

his sexual orientation to be a closed issue.

The other ideas that were coded as Proactive Support Impacting Individuals also

came from Brad. These suggestions involved not putting a "spotlight" on someone who a

teacher knows to be gay and involved providing individual reminders to a student to attend and participate in an upcoming GSA social activity.

Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. The second most frequent form of desired teacher support that was described was Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. Six participants (55%) mentioned 10 sentiments that reflected this form of desired teacher supports. Two content themes emerged within this Support Type, including *interrupting bullying or offensive language with verbal comments* as well as *providing punishment in addition to interrupting bullying or offensive language*. Three of these participants expressed wanting to see teachers step in and at least say or yell something to stop the behaviors:

> …if they see somebody bullying us for like loving another -- like loving another girl, or a guy loving another guy…they should at least try to go in and tell them, "Look, that's not right. They are not judging you for being straight, so don't judge them for being what they are." Like at least try to support us in some type of way, not just look and just walk away. (Carla)

Gale was another participant who contrasted what occurred in her school to what she desired, saying that she wanted to see her teachers react more strongly to the bullying situations. She expressed that when teachers see someone calling another student a "faggot," teachers should "slam their fists" and say "No…Seriously quit it because you are being stupid, and at this school we don't have stupid kids. Okay?"

Gale also went on to suggest wanting more discipline, including punishments, as did three other participants. For instance:

…if a student is being called a Fag or a Queer or a Dyke, I'd like teachers to step in and not just scold the student for saying all that, I want them to at least get a referral. [Not giving a referral] will let the students know that it's okay, to say it, because there is no real consequence to it, and they will just say, "Oh! I was just joking around" or something stupid. (Francisco)

A different participant highlighted a stark contrast between how bullying was addressed in his school for LGBTQ students, and how he simply wanted bullies to be punished:

...two years ago, there was a transgendered – it was a boy like being a girl or whatever, and – like, he was bullied everyday and the school made him leave. They said he was causing a problem. So, I feel like they should do the opposite of that, if that makes sense…I mean they don't have to necessarily like be sent away, but I mean, I think they should be punished for it. (Dakota)

Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. No ideas of desired supports were generated that could be coded as Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals.

Experiences of Support from SMHPs

Nine participants (82%) described one or more experiences in which SMHPs provided support to them or to other LGBTQ students at the school. In total, 27 sentiments were expressed that described experiences of SMHP supports in participants' high schools.

Table 7 provides a summary of the content themes that emerged within the experienced, as well as desired forms, of SMHP support. The table also reports the total number of sentiments expressed for each form of SMHP support, and the percentage of participants who expressed a sentiment that was coded as that form of SMHP support.

Table 7

Participant Sentiments Describing SMHP Supports

		Unique Sentiments	Percent of Participants	Content Themes Present across Three or More Participants
Proactive Support Impacting Groups	Experienced Support	9	36%	Displayed visual material to indicate supportive stance towards LGBTQ youth Serve as a GSA sponsor
	Desired Support	22	82%	Display and share information about anti-bullying and/or LGBTQ issues Be involved with the school's GSA Build awareness about who the SMHPs are and how they can help students Be available and able to deal with issues LGBTQ students encounter
Proactive Support Impacting Individuals	Experienced Support	6	36%	
	Desired Support	3	18%	
Reactive Support Impacting Groups	Experienced Support	0	0%	
	Desired Support	2	18%	
Reactive Support Impacting Individuals	Experienced Support	12	64%	Provide critical assistance and resources to address at-risk needs Provide time and safe space for students to discuss their problems
	Desired Support	0	0%	

Note. Support Types that do not have Content Themes listed had zero Content Themes that emerged

Proactive Supports Impacting Groups. In terms of experiences that related to providing Proactive Supports Impacting Groups, nine sentiments were expressed by four participants (36%). Two content themes emerged across participants sentiments. One theme was that SMHPs *display and share information about anti-bullying and/or LGBTQ issues*. One of these participants described how that visual display caught his attention and how that would help LGBTQ students' level of comfort:

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…[the social worker] even has this poster on her wall, but I don't know what the pyramid is for, but it has the gay flag…that said say you don't have to feel uncomfortable about talking about anything here, and you just know, like specifically, when you see certain things you know that it's for a certain reason. And I just knew…that's for gay people who feel uncomfortable. (Henry)

The other visual display described by Amy was in the form of stickers. She stated that her school psychologist and social worker were "obviously" supportive because they had "one of those Safe Space stickers" on their office window and because they gave one of those stickers to the GSA sponsor who displayed it in his own classroom.

The other support that was indicated by participants who attended the same high school was that their SMHPs were going to take over as sponsors for the GSA. Ian was excited about this as he described their increased involvement to support the GSA and its members. He stated, "We just got new a social worker and a new counselor in. I love them. They're really cool, because they're actually taking over the GSA next year."

Other experiences of SMHP Proactive Supports Impacting Groups were not discussed by more than one participant. Nevertheless, these supports included helping students build interview skills and assist them with setting up job interviews (Carla), and included providing the same amount of help to LGBTQ students as other students "even though sometimes they may have their [own] beliefs" (Henry).

Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals. In terms of experiences that related to providing proactive support at the individual level, four participants (36%) shared how SMHPs helped in that manner. This type of support included how SMHPs respectfully interacted with students at the individual level:

...he doesn't treat me like that one gay kid…I can talk about like my ex-girlfriend and they don't really, you know like you know, back up or anything, or be like "oh, you're gay?" And like, I can tell, like, their facial expressions, if it doesn't change or falter or anything, it makes me feel a lot more comfortable, and like safe, and like they are not judging me. (Gale)

Two students discussed feeling supported by their SMHPs based on how they would answer either general questions or help plan to prevent or avoid future problems. Brad explained "I grew up in the south and the nearest gay person to me was like 9 miles away so I don't really have much information on any of this new stuff that I'm experiencing and just the general information that I've been able to get from people, it's been very helpful." An SMHP working with Henry was not only supporting him through past and current family problems, but proactively planning for the future. Henry shared, "we're already like planning for next year, where just in case something happens." Another unique proactive support at the individual level was reported by Kate who shared, "The guidance counselor, well, she wrote me a recommendation for college and I believe she wrote on there that I was President of GSA and didn't say, 'Oh, you are in gay things. I'm going to mess everything up for you'."

Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. No participants mentioned experiences that were coded as Reactive Support Impacting Groups. One participant mentioned a reactive form of support, however, it was unclear during the coding process whether this support was delivered to groups or individuals. Nevertheless, helping LGBTQ students not commit suicide was viewed as one of the most important forms of support for one student:

…a lot of people think of suicide, no matter who we are, it could be LGBTQ or just regular, straight people. All of us think of, well of us, at certain time we all think of suicide, so there are a couple of times when we need to talk to somebody and they support us and like trying not to do – commit suicide. So like, they'll talk to us, they really wouldn't have a problem with LGBTQ because they'll think of it and just be like well they're the same as us. So there's no reason they should commit suicide because there's not a problem going on with any of them." (Carla)

Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. The most frequently described experiences of support from SMHPs were those that were coded Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. Seven of the participants (63%) described experiencing this type of support from SMHPs. Together, they mentioned 12 experiences that fell into this form of support. Analysis of these experiences showed two general themes across participants. First, three participants who disclosed previously experiencing significant problems outside of school (e.g., family conflict, homelessness) mentioned how SMHPs *provided critical assistance and resources to address their needs*. One participant described:

I literally would have been, like, living on the streets, if I had not gone to [the social worker] and asked for help…with, like, a place to live and, like, necessities. Like, you know, just like basics that you need. Essentials. (Gale)

Brad, who had a poor relationship with his father and who had gotten in trouble with the police, shared:

When I had to go to court…my dad wouldn't take me. [My social worker] went, she didn't go to the house but she called my dad and she was like "okay, well you know if you just sign this paper, I will get permission from them" and she drove

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me all the way from school, she signed me out of the school. She put her work behind her and she drove all the way out by like Smith High School…just for me to go to the court date to do the hearing and everything.

A second theme within Reactive Support Impacting Individuals was from the experiences of three participants who described their SMHPs *providing the time and safe space for them to discuss their problems*. Ellis stated how he would go to his guidance counselor when having a bad day and get help: "He let me vent, I guess, and get it all out, so I could return to class with a better attitude. You know, and not sit there and judge you or anything." Another participant had observed her school's SMHPs providing similar support, but noted that they would find students who appeared to be upset. She described:

> whenever they see one of us that are sad, even for, like, we're not even near them, or they're just walking by, or we're in a classroom, and they see us that we're not feeling right, they'll walk into the classroom and pull us out of class and talk to us…and make sure that we're fine or if something's going on to talk to them.
> (Carla)

The participants' discussion of this support indicated an appreciation for SMHPs taking the time to talk and make the individual feel like a priority. Brad discussed how his social worker did this as well:

> …she helped me a lot and I went there during lunch, we talked about me being gay and all my problems for a good hour. I didn't – Lunch is fifth period, and I got in my class like seventh period, like, she took out all of her time. People came

to the door and they knock the door and in the middle of us talking, she told them

either wait right there or to go back to class and things like that.

Desired Support from SMHPs

Ten of the 11 participants (91%) described one or more suggestions for desired

SMHP support that they had not experienced at school. The two participants who could

not recall any instances of experienced SMHP support were able to generate three to four

unique suggestions for desired SMHP supports. In total, participants expressed 30

sentiments of suggested SMHP supports to occur in high schools.

  Proactive Supports Impacting Groups. Nine participants (82%) described

SMHP behaviors that were coded as Proactive Support Impacting Groups of students,

making this the most frequently described form of desired support behaviors that were

not experienced in their schools. Twenty-two suggestions were generated, which

evidenced four content themes across participants' responses. One theme that came

across in six (55%) of participants' responses related to publically *displaying and sharing*

information about anti-bullying and/or LGBTQ issues. Four participant (36%) suggested

teachers put up flyers, posters, or stickers with LGBTQ or GSA related information.

Comparisons were made to how this is done for other minority groups and can be helpful

for LGBTQ students:

  I feel like the rest of the guidance counselors could be more like the one who

  helped us out. Maybe they could…like, for like Hispanic kids or like blacks kids

  they, like, print out like flyers, like, if there's going to be something like big for

  them or whatever. Like, maybe they can, like, print out like when there is, like,

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youth group here [at the community center], like, they could have like flyers in

the guidance office and stuff…(Gale)

Two other students discussed more verbal ways of sharing LGBTQ and anti-bullying

efforts to the student body. One idea from Amy was for SMHPs to make announcements

that would serve as reminders for everyone, where they would say something like "don't

be a jerk to people, no matter who they are." Another related idea from Francisco was

for SMHPs to go more in depth by speaking at a school-wide assembly. He said they

would go over that "harassing an LGBQ - LGBTQ student is - even if you think you're

joking about it, it is a form of bullying." This student went on to say that addressing

LGBTQ harassment "is a serious thing because there have been – I know about a lot of

homosexual students who have committed suicide because of bullying for their sexual

preference. And it's really sad."

Displaying flyers about LGBTQ issues also related to another theme within the

desired Proactive Support Impacting Groups. This second theme of desired support was

for SMHPs to *be involved with the GSA*. Putting up flyers or making announcements

about GSA fundraisers or events was one way that two participants suggested SMHPs

have involvement with the GSA. Ian described how SMHPs could communicate with

students that there are places for everyone to go where they can be with people like

themselves, referencing the GSA as one place for LGBTQ students. The most common

form of involvement suggested by four students was to show up to a GSA or LGBTQ

group meeting to introduce themselves, share information, and/or facilitate group

discussion. One of those students did not have a GSA at her school, but described how

she would like to have an LGBTQ group with a guidance counselor to help lead

discussions because it would help them emotionally:

> ...there would be more emotions, like people put out what's been going on with
>
> them. How they feel about other people judging them. How—because sometimes
>
> there's guys, they say that - sometimes there's gay guys that say it's nasty for a
>
> girl to be gay. Sometimes there's gay girls that say it's nasty for a guy to be gay.
>
> So, in that group, all understand each other, will support each other, and like
>
> physically and emotionally tell each other what's been going on with our lives.
>
> (Carla)

The idea of showing up to a GSA meeting to help make their presence and

resources known to LGBTQ students related to a third theme for desired SMHP Proactive

Supports Impacting Groups. This third theme centered on *building awareness about who*

SMHPs were and how they can help. A few participants explicitly expressed not

knowing much about the SMHPs in their school (e.g., "To be honest, I don't think most

kids in our schools even know we have that office,"; Amy, and "I imagine we have a

school psychologist. I don't know if they exist. I cannot provide evidence of that,"; Kate,

and "for a while I didn't even know we have people like that at school, I just thought they

were someone that worked in the office" , Ian). Five participants (45%) provided ideas

specifically related to building awareness of SMHP staff and services. Beyond going to

LGBTQ students in particular through the GSA meetings as described earlier,

participants also described using assemblies and the morning show as a means for

communicating their message. For instance, Ian described, "every year, in the beginning

of the year they have the school assemblies and like they should get up there and say,

'Well hey, I am the counselor, and if you want to talk to me you can do this'." Another participant articulated that SMHPs need to do a better job advertising to students that they are welcomed to talk with them about various issues, including issues related to their sexuality:

> …if the students were more aware that they can actually go and talk to them openly about their sexuality and, I think like, need any advice, or something like that. Like if they, I guess, advertise it more that it is a safe place to go and talk to them, instead of like -- instead of a student being unsure where to go for help and just like wandering around being like "Oh, gosh," you know. Be like, "No. I can go to the guidance counselor or something, and talk to them." (Gale)

For Gale, displaying the rainbow or safe space stickers was framed as a means to advertise as well.

The fourth theme that emerged dealt with the suggestion for SMHPs to *be available and able to deal with issues LGBTQ students were facing*. The participants expressed wanting LGBTQ students to have someone who was knowledgeable in addressing their concerns and who would be there for them when they needed it. One participant articulated the need for specialized training in this way:

> I feel that every school should have an LGBTQ counselor, like someone educated specifically in that and how to help with that, or at least that guidance counselors or something, there should be one of those seminars on how to treat gay people. Like, you know, like LGBTQ people like, someone comes to you saying this, you got to treat them like this. This is what's proper, this is what's ignorant, you

know…Someone who is trained to deal with that type of pain, because it's not

like heterosexual cis-gender problems. Like, it's different. (Jake)

The other component of this was to have SMHPs be available to provide their support

when it was needed. "All the time I always had to wait like two or three hours to go see

the guidance counselor," Ian explained and then suggested, "there should be someone

that you can go to, get it done, taken care of, and talk to that person. Or if you need to

talk to them more, then schedule it during the day." Kate shared that being available was

the most important way SMHPs could provide support to students: "I've tried to schedule

appointments with them, so they can come and talk at our [GSA] meetings and we've

never been able to find them or run into them at the right time, so making themselves

available is probably the most important thing for anybody, who needs them."

Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals. Only a few other suggestions (by

18% of participants) were made for SMHPs at the at the Proactive Support Impacting

Individuals level. Suggestions involved ways to make a student feel more comfortable

and willing to talk with his or her SMHP. For example, Amy stated that it would be

helpful if the SMHP expressed to an individual student that the SMHP would be there for

him or her (e.g., saying to a student that "they can always come here whenever they need

to, if they need a pass out of class, because they are feeling bad, they can come"). Other

suggestions were to say things like, "You're safe," and "There's nothing wrong with

you" in order to put students more at ease, and to share a Safe Space Kit resource guide

with a student "so they can actually go over it and see what the schools are doing, and if

they needed that type of resource because maybe they don't know what…resources they

offer." More generally, and not clearly specified to just group or individual level of

support, was Jake's suggestion for SMHPs to "sit there and be a mature adult like you keep claiming you are, and let us talk, you know?" Jake also somewhat jokingly expressed that having a couch could also make students more comfortable talking with their SMHPs.

Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. At the group level of support, few sentiments described reactive supports; these were voiced by 18% of participants. Two participants mentioned wanting SMHPs to take more of a role in assisting with harassment issues, with one mentioning sexual harassment (Ian) and the other with bullying (Jake). One participant mentioned an additional reactive form of support, however, it was unclear during the coding process whether this support was intended to be delivered to groups or individuals. This participant, Francisco, who claimed to be unfamiliar with what school psychologists do, offered a general suggestion that school psychologists should provide counseling to anyone who needed it.

Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. No participants expressed a desire for SMHP behaviors that were coded as Reactive Support Impacting Individuals

Experiences of Support from Administrators

Eight of the eleven participants (73%) described one or more experiences in which administrators provided support to them or to other LGBTQ students at the school. There were greater proportions of non-examples of support shared for administrators than for SMHPs or teachers, as Amy shared, "I can really name more faults than positives for this particular group." Nevertheless, 22 sentiments were expressed that described experiences of administrator supports in participants' high schools.

Table 8 provides a summary of the Content Themes that emerged within the experienced, as well as desired forms, of administrator support. The table also reports the total number of sentiments expressed for each form of administrator support, and the percentage of participants who expressed a sentiment that was coded as that form of administrator support.

Table 8

Participant Sentiments Describing Administrator Supports

		Unique Sentiments	Percent of Participants	Content Themes Present across Three or More Participants
Proactive Support Impacting Groups	Experienced Support	12	64%	Allow the school to have a GSA Approve and support GSA activities
	Desired Support	8	45%	Fully approve and support GSA activities
Proactive Support Impacting Individuals	Experienced Support	3	27%	Verbally or nonverbally indicate specific LGBTQ acceptance and inclusiveness
	Desired Support	3	27%	
Reactive Support Impacting Groups	Experienced Support	5	45%	Interrupt and respond to incidents of bullying or aggression
	Desired Support	6	36%	Provide consequences for bullying incidents
Reactive Support Impacting Individuals	Experienced Support	2	18%	
	Desired Support	2	18%	

Note. Support Types that do not have Content Themes listed had zero Content Themes that emerged

Proactive Support Impacting Groups. The most common type of support described was in the form of Proactive Support Impacting Groups. Seven participants (63%) mentioned having this type of support at their schools, providing 12 different sentiments. Several of their comments related to their administrators *allowing the school*

to have a GSA and to them *approving or supporting GSA activities*. For instance, one

participant shared,

> …when like the principal approves of like even just having a GSA at school, that
>
> really shows that they are supportive of it. Because if they are like 'oh, this school
>
> doesn't need a GSA' you know, that's really, I mean, you don't want that. (Gale)

Other students noted appreciation of this as well, but in the context of how approving the

GSA was a recent action and step in the right direction for them (e.g., Amy said "I mean,

they eventually allowed the club to be opened and for members to be a part of it").

The other content theme of Proactive Support Impacting Groups was not just

allowing the GSA to exist, but rather administrators approved and supported their

activities. Five participants (45%) discussed ways in which their administrators offered

this support, which included approving the GSA to make and share a quilt for World

AIDS Day, to put up GSA posters that advertised events and meetings, and to allow the

GSA to have a table at the lunch room to promote No Name Calling Week. Some

students expressed how their approval was not consistent and would have liked to have

more consistent approval. For instance, Ian was frustrated as he shared, "Holding the No

Name Calling Week table in the lunchroom was the only thing they've said yes to…Even

though it was -- I was happy they said yes. I was still pissed that that is the only thing that

they said yes about." Gale described how her principal's support of the GSA Day of

Silence event made a significant difference to her and other LGBTQ students:

> [The administrator's support] feels like you really have somebody that's got our
>
> back. Like we really have like -- they're like our spine, you know. They're
>
> holding us up because I guess most kids, we can't like you know, go on like,

"Hey you guys. Day of Silence." Like you know, it's not going to be as effective as if -- you know we really have the administrators behind us, like, being like "hey everyone, this is a really important cause." Like, "Everyone in the student body should be aware of this," you know. And you know, yeah. Like it makes us, all the gay kids at school, you know, it makes us feel like we can really, you know, be out with it and be able to, you know -- be able to, you know, support the cause for it. And not, I guess, not be condemned in class if we don't say anything.

Proactive Support Impacting Individuals. Only a few experiences of individualized support from administrators were described from three participants (27%), and the sentiments that were expressed did not overlap in theme across participants. For Proactive Support Impacting Individuals, experiences included having an administrator helping to provide or find answers to an Brad's questions, trying to convince a peer student not to withdraw from school to attend elsewhere (described by Ian), and giving permission to Jake to use the bathroom matched to the his gender identity.

Reactive Support Impacting Groups. The second most common type of support mentioned by participants about administrators was in the form of Reactive Support Impacting Groups. Of the five participants (45%) who described administrators providing this Support Type, each described administrators *interrupting and responding to incidents of bullying or aggression*. Three participants emphasized the way in which administrators viewed LGBTQ individuals equally when responding to incidents of aggression or bullying (e.g., Amy said "they regard bullying of [LGBT students] like of

any other kind of bullying). Ian contrasted the ways in which two administrators responded differently to the same incident of physical aggression:

"With that student it ended up getting physical one time…the Principal let it slide, and he said 'Boys will boys. That's fine,' and the resource officer didn't do anything either…I went to [my GSA sponsor] and she said go to this [assistant] principal, and he ended up writing him up for it…So yeah, and he went to [the principal] and said 'Hey next time, you should probably look at this again'."

Reactive Support Impacting Individuals. Only two experiences were coded as Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. Jake described how his administrator provided some support in addressing issues related to him being bullied, by getting in touch with the participants mother and discussing the situation. Amy described how his administrator helped to calm down individuals who would come in crying or emotionally upset.

Desired Support from Administrators

Eight of the 11 participants (73%) described one or more suggestions for desired administrator support that they had not experienced at school.   Two of the participants who could not recall any experiences of administrator support were able to suggest one to two unique suggestions for desired administrator supports. The third participant who could not generate ideas about desired administrator behaviors was also one of the participants who could not identify actual experiences of administrator support. Nevertheless, the participants as a whole suggested 19 sentiments of desired administrator supports.

Proactive Support Impacting Groups. When participants were asked to describe administrator support that they had not experienced firsthand, the Support Type that was mentioned the most and by the most participants was Proactive Support Impacting Groups. Five participants (45%) provided eight suggested administrator actions that fell into this category. The major content theme within this type of support revolved around administrators *fully approving and supporting GSA activities*. Students expressed wanting GSAs to be supported in a way that was equal to that of other student clubs. For example, Amy wanted her administrators to approve GSA ideas and activities:

> I don't think we'd come up with anything that's unreasonable, we just want to do things and have announcements; some big posters and—like anybody else… If they could help us, like, allow us to do things—I mean we're not just going to be crazy about it. We just want to make a fundraiser, or support something, or be able to participate in the school and not be like our own little section, in the middle of nowhere, that isn't part of the big student body or like the big picture.

One other sentiment that related to supporting GSAs, but was more general to all clubs, was expressed by this student as well. Amy described wanting administrators to make the *"paperwork less obnoxious"* and "communicate more clearly" in relation to club activities and getting approval for clubs.

Other variations on the theme were expressed by two other students. Ian mentioned that other school clubs get to go on the morning show, appear in the yearbook, and go on field trips, and he wanted his administrators to approve the GSA to do those things as well. Gale spoke specifically about having assistant principals show support of

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the Day of Silence event. She shared how that support would increase the event's effectiveness:

…if we have like the AP behind us -- you know our teachers are not going to question us or be like "you need to talk, take that, like,"-- you know, some people wear duct tape-- like "take the duct tape off of your face and speak up." You know and just totally like disregard or disrespect like the whole, you know, Day of Silence.

Two other ideas coded as Proactive Supports Impacting Groups related to ways of publically communicating acceptance. One student described an example of how administrators could communicate overt acceptance by using inclusive language when talking with students:

I'd like for some teachers and administrators to stop saying, "oh, boy, if you're looking for that girl out there" just say, maybe, "or even that boy out there" or something like that. And to have it not be as a joke, but to be serious. Because I hear that a lot, and then like -- my teachers would be like, "oh, guys, you know sometimes when you see that girl out there…" And I'm like, "Uh, no. I don't know that experience." (Henry)

A more subtle way of communicating acceptance in front of others was also shared, which actually was described as the absence of saying something when seeing gay couples in schools. She stated,

"if they see, like, a gay couple holding hands walking down the hallway, like, they're not going to be, like you know, 'stop guys, stop holding hands'… Just, I

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guess, just to be supportive of it, and not really be bothered by it, and not say anything about it." (Gale)

One other general recommendation that was made about administrators providing more proactive support for LGBTQ students was mentioned by another student. Francisco shared, "I would just like them to be more aware of the subject instead of pretending it's not there."

Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals. Only a handful of suggestions for support took form at an individualized level. Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals that were suggested included Jake's administrator working out a bathroom policy that would remain intact at all times (i.e., "it'd be a lot more comfortable just, you know, boys bathroom all the time) and included administrators displaying a more positive demeanor when interacting with individual students (i.e., "students go in there…to talk to you [i.e., administrators] and confide in you. The last thing you want them to feel is like 'Oh! Great, now I get to go through this crap again,' you know").

Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. Four participants (36%) suggested administrator behaviors that were coded as Reactive Supports Impacting Groups. Three of these four participants' suggestions related particularly to how administrators should respond to bullying behaviors. After describing a situation of ongoing harassment, Jake expressed one fundamental desire for his administrators: "…bullying needs to be taken care of, especially once a parent knows and says that it needs to be taken care of. Like 'my kid is petrified to walk through the hallways by himself like,' you know." Two other students described examples of how administrators could go about taking care of bullying incidents. Gale explicitly described how having administrators stop people from saying

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homophobic slurs or saying "that's so gay" would more broadly create a supportive school environment:

> …I want them to be like, "Hey, don't say that," or like, you know, sit them down or even like given them a referral for it because that's ridiculous. Like, that's not okay. And it – like, every time somebody doesn't say something about it, it like reinforces them to say it more. Like, if their friends, like, laugh at it, or if they like agree with it, you know, like get a slap on the back, and yeah, "let's just say it again because there is no one being offended by it, so what's the big deal?" And like, there are-- and like it makes me feel bad because there are kids out there who are afraid to speak up and say something. And like the teachers and APs, if they said something for them, you know, I think it would be a lot more supportive and a lot better atmosphere in school.

The other desired practice that reflected a Reactive Support Impacting Groups related to administrators responding to the exclusion of the GSA. Kate shared how her school's GSA actually won a competition at a school wide fundraiser event, but a different club's picture was posted in the yearbook. "Things like that that are really unfair shouldn't be allowed to happen," she explained, and went on to state "someone should have kept track of it."

Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. The Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals that were mentioned by two participants (18%) both had to do with valuing the individual student's point of view. Henry wanted his perspective to be heard by the administrator after having been in a fight, particularly about how being gay related to fight:

I remember I'd get in a fight with them and I'd always end up in the office and they'd be like, 'Oh, well, why are you in the office right now'… I remember one time I said that I was gay from the beginning. I was like, 'well, I'm gay' and this [administrator] was going on like, 'Wait, wait, why does gay matter in this?' And I'm like, "It has everything to do with what just happened." And then they're like, "Okay, well, let's not talk about something that's unnecessary'…No matter what it is, no matter what it could be, even if it sounds like it's unnecessary or even if they don't like hearing about certain things, if you're put in a school, you have to be willing to hear about everything...

Carla emphasized the desire for administrators to help teachers have more empathy for an LGBTQ student. She described how this type of support would be particularly helpful:

…I will go to my Principal and say 'Oh! This isn't right. She should treat us equally because we are the same people.' If I see him go to her and talk to her and she like sees it through her eyes and he puts it through her eyes, that if she was that way, how would she feel? And she actually goes over my work and gives me my right grade and understands what I've been going through, then that would be a nice way to show support too.

The only other administrative supports suggested by two participants were more general in nature and related to treating LGBTQ students equally to others and with general care. Carla described this as "understanding us, not judging us or treating us differently, just treat us the same," while the Francisco shared, "just take action and actually care."

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Experienced Support from Policies

Most participants did not spontaneously describe experiences with supportive policies on their own. When participants were specifically asked about policies that were supportive of LGBTQ students, several students struggled at first to describe anything. Initial responses from 6 participants either explicitly said that there were no policies that were supportive or that they could not think of anything. For example, Gale responded by asking, "Like, is it bad that I can't think of any?"

The majority of responses that did indicate some level of support through policies related to those that addressed bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination. Four participants (36%) described that their school had general no-bullying policies in place in their school or classroom. While none of those students described a policy that enumerated sexual orientation or gender identity as a protected class, Kate described a student manual that she thought had an articulated statement about discrimination:

> I think I did look up - I think it says that you can't discriminate. Or that you can't
> -- that teachers can't discriminate based on sexual orientation? I don't remember
> specifically. I don't remember if it mentions gender identity. But I think it did
> attempt to address it.

Part of the vagueness in knowing about the policies in place seemed to be related to participant's statements on how bullying policies were enforced and publicized to students. Not satisfied with policies at his school, Ellis described how he became aware of the existing policies that enforced physical aggression more so than verbal harassment:

> Well, I guess I became aware of the policy that is in place because I just hear
> people judging other people and calling them names and not wanting them around

them just because of something they can't control, and nothing's done. But then

when somebody gets in a fight, it's a whole mess and everybody is freaking out

and you get detention or something. So that's the current policy.

Francisco saw the school's anti-bullying rule enforced by "just teacher scolding," and he

believed that it was "terrible" that he never saw students get a referral for their actions.

Ian appreciated bullying and harassment rules being enforced by his GSA sponsor during

GSA meetings, but did not express experiencing the same enforcement outside of this

setting. While most students indicated frustration with existing levels of policy supports

and enforcement, Amy appeared to be empathetic towards the difficulty of enforcing

such policies:

…whenever someone says something mean in class, all the teachers are required

to say, "Don't say that. Be quiet, it's not your business." …they just say "don't

be a jerk" and it happens because it's hard to like always know what's going on

because you'll be in the lunch room and you have thousands of kids in the lunch

room and you know, it's all white noise. You can't really tell what's going on all

the time. But they don't condone it. I mean the student manual says that they

don't condone it and if it's something really serious, then they will act on it

whether it's a criminal charge or suspension from the school or something.

Other means for finding out about school policies included beginning of the year

assemblies and class periods in which the general rules were reviewed. Two students

also described media being used to bring awareness. For instance, Henry talked about

how teachers bring media into their discussions:

…some of them are a bit more young, so they listen to more of young music, and we talk about things that go on with artists and I think one of my teachers brought [Lady Gaga's Born This Way campaign] up. We talked about Lady Gaga and then we talked about the things that we have in school that are similar.

This same participant also mentioned how one of his classes required students to read the school newspaper, which served as a vehicle for communicating information about various school policies and occasionally LGBTQ related information when it was included in the newspaper.

The only other type of policy described was one related to bathroom policies. Jake was the only one to describe this type of supportive policy existing at a school. He described that his school worked out a policy for him to be able to use the boys bathroom in most cases, but not always:

My Principal…gave me permission to use the boys bathroom, but he's kind of sketchy about it, you know. And I mean, like I thank him very much for trying to keep me safe, but on days that—like, I have a certain teacher that won't let me use the boys room, or I get in trouble or something, he'll make me use the women faculty bathroom, and I really know he's just looking out for me trying to keep me safe and stuff, but I'd feel like it'd be a lot more comfortable just you know boys bathroom all the time, but it's really awesome that he let me use the boys bathroom and that's been like greatly helpful and like not having to walk into the girls room, like talking to someone and then they be like, "hey, him, him?" Not knowing walking into the girls room. Like that--it's awkward. You know what I mean?

Desired Support from Policies

Of the types of supportive policies participants cited as wanting to see in their schools, the majority of ideas related to having bullying, harassment, and/or anti-discrimination policies put in place, enforced, and brought to the attention of students more effectively. Seven participants (63%) brought about ideas relating to these themes. A couple of the students mentioned plainly that they wanted either a no-bullying policy or a policy in which sexuality characteristics were protected, just as race characteristics were protected (i.e., Francisco shared, "Like sexuality is just as important as race, because it's also like who we are. Like I can't stop being who I am, so why should I be reprimanded for it…I know we also have a no-racism like policy. I think there should be some equivalent to that for us.").

Many of the ideas that were brought up by participants had to do more with how to enforce such a policy and make students aware of anti-bullying policies. Gale, for instance, discussed the importance of anti-bullying campaign efforts and how posters that are used should go beyond a simple "Don't bully" message in order to be effective:

> I want to see like some creative [posters], like, that will catch people's eyes and
> be like -- something that will like shock kids, but not like traumatize them, you
> know…It's like the posters for the year book sales are way, like you know, better
> like graphics or whatever or ability to catch people's eyes. So I want to see more
> of, I guess, like better campaigning for that, better awareness for that, and I want
> to see-- I just want to see a lot more kids, like, not being afraid to stand up for
> themselves or stand up for other people that are getting bullied, and to like, I
> guess, condemn the people that are you know being butt faces.

Francisco emphasized that school assemblies were the means for raising awareness about bullying policies and that homophobic bullying should be specifically addressed: "…harassing an LGBTQ student is , even if you think you're joking about it, it is a form of bullying." Another school-wide awareness building suggestion that was suggested by a couple participants underscored the idea of having more frequent discussions about bullying and how to behave appropriately. To accomplish this, Henry provided a pragmatic suggestion for creatively fitting this into the school day:

> There's time where there will be testing; say there's like testing for sophomores and freshmen. Seniors and juniors, they stay inside their home room for 30 minutes at a time. And they always put something on the morning show, but they always just put something more like music or what's going around on -- what's going on the school campus. But homeroom teachers, they would just be like, 'okay, well, this is what's today' and they just go and they sit down. I think that they should have like just something that they would just talk about for five minutes out of the thing; 'oh, this is a new policy on anti-bullying,' and not just include gay people, but include everything, like, when you're talking, 'don't talk about his race, don't talk about her being overweight,' and things like that.

Amy echoed the idea of having more frequent opportunities to discuss bullying-related behaviors, but her suggestion emphasized starting those conversations at an earlier age before high school in order to really have an impact on how people treat each other.

Some of the desired supports related to effectively enforcing the bullying policies. Three students emphasized that actions be required to take place after a bullying incident is witnessed. Ellis stated, "I wish everybody would just get in trouble and be on equal

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grounds" as opposed to people getting away with calling students names and judging

them for being gay. He went on to explain why having bullies get punished would make

a difference:

> I guess school's supposed to be a place where you do feel comfortable because
> some people don't always have the comfort of their homes, and school's a way to
> get away. And when you're feeling hated on at school for something, it's not a
> good feeling and it makes you not want to go. I think we'd feel supported.

A different participant specified that teachers need to be required to say something when

they see bullying occur:

> Like it should be basic common sense that you don't call somebody a name or
> like make fun of them for being gay, and you know just -- there should be policies
> for teachers that are like, if they hear somebody getting really made fun of for
> being gay, you have to say something about it. You know, yeah. And this is all
> going like, digressing or whatever, but like I will hear it in the hallways. Like I
> will be walking to class, you know, and I'll hear a kid be like, "Oh, you gay or
> something?" you know like, or like call or accuse somebody of being gay like it's
> something bad. And I really want that to stop because like when they are acting
> like being gay is a bad thing, it makes me kind of feel bad. I don't like -- like
> "Am I a bad person for really, like you know, being who I am?" Like, it's the
> same thing with being racist, "Ooh, you're black!" Like that's ridiculous. It's like
> you are born that way, you can't change it and like it's not like you're being black
> to get attention or anything you know…So I want to see that changed, because I
> hear it like every day. I can't stand it sometimes. (Gale)

In terms of other policy suggestions, there were two students who discussed policies related to bathroom use at school. Jake had experienced some support with being able to use bathrooms matched to his gender identity, but it was not always consistent. The policy he wanted to see put in place was to have the policy always in effect (i.e., "I'd feel like it'd be a lot more comfortable just you know boys bathroom all the time"). Jake later articulated how a medical note documenting one's transgender status should be accepted and used to inform these decisions, "If you got a note from the therapist stating that this kid is transgendered, then I feel like you should be able to use the proper everything [bathrooms, locker rooms]." Ellis, who did not identify as transgender, also brought up the suggestion that some students should be able to have alternative bathroom policies. He shared

> …I can understand why they wouldn't want transgender students using, like, the bathroom that they're not supposed to be in, because it would make other kids uncomfortable, but I think maybe they can have like an alternative bathroom, so we didn't feel – so everybody got their way…I think that they should have bathroom policies, even for like a lesbian or something, because the girls can tease other girls and lock them in the bathroom. So maybe like an alternative bathroom, for even them.

Other suggested policies from Jake included having permission to use locker rooms matched to his gender identity, having permission to play on the boys' sports team, and enforcing rules about public displays of affection equally no matter the sexual orientation of the students. Some additional ideas expressed by different students included having the school recognize Pride History Month, give students voice in how

things are run at school, and have a dress code that allows for "women to dress like men and men to dress like women."

Experienced Support from Resources

A small number of additional school resources were identified by five participants (45%). Two participants discussed how administrator and guidance secretaries were supportive to them. Ian shared that the administrator's secretary would help share information about getting GSA related activities approved, or provide supportive statements when the activity was denied by the administrator, such as saying "I'm sorry. I really wanted you guys do this. I'm really proud that you guys were doing this. I think it's a really good idea but I have to say no for the sake of my job." Brad shared that the guidance secretary was supportive by having friendly interactions with him, and answering questions about how to meet and interact with new people.

Other identified resources were each brought up by different individuals. These included Kate's description of having "lots of books in the library that prominently feature gay people," Henry's description of a school newspaper that occasionally included LGBTQ-related content such as a story about a "gay man [getting] shot because it's a hate crime," and Gale's description of an established program that was well-publicized in the school that offers food and necessities for anyone in need (not-specifically for LGBTQ youth).

Desired Support from Resources

Four participants (36%) identified eight additional school resources that they believed would be supportive to LGBTQ students. An overall theme that emerged across these desired resources were to *have sources of LGBTQ information*, with some intended

for LGBTQ students and some intended for broader audiences. Participants shared that it would be helpful for LGBTQ students to have access to "books about coping in school," Safe Space Kits, and posters and flyers with information from community groups that serve LGBTQ populations. Jake had difficulty identifying exactly what the source of information would look like, but knew that it would be desirable. He shared that he wanted some sort of "outlet that you can go to that's not exactly a person, that you can read or learn about what you're going through in your head. Because I would have come out a lot quicker, if I knew what I was."

Two participants shared suggestions for desired resources that would be intended for broader audiences, as a means of educating the rest of school population. Jake, who wanted information for him to explore, also suggested that a school-wide seminar be held with guest speakers that would address LGBTQ issues. He explained that it should be for every student to attend, as some people would not seek the information out on their own:

> I feel like every school should try and get like a speaker of some sort to tell you what you're going through, you know, because it took some Barbara Walters show to know what I was, and if I would have seen that like five years earlier my life would have been made a lot easier.

Francisco's suggestions were put forth as ideas to reduce stereotyping and to build awareness and open-mindedness. He suggested that the school offer an instructional course on LGBTQ issues and that the school have a designated Pride Month to bring attention to LGBTQ issues.

As a whole, the analysis of themes and sentiments within each of the coded data sets provide detailed accounts of how five sources of school supports (i.e., teachers,

SMHPs, administrators, policies, resources) can help promote positive social, emotional, and academic functioning of LGBTQ youth, as perceived by eleven youth who shared their thoughts individually with the PI. The next section provides results from small group brainstorming sessions, in which participants shared brief statements to complete the brainstorming prompt statement, "One way that schools and school staff can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is…" This methodology provided less detailed accounts than individual interviews; however, it provided the opportunity for participants to build upon the ideas of others as a group and help ensure a comprehensive range of educator behaviors and policies were identified.

Brainstormed Statements of Educator Behaviors and Policies

During the three brainstorming sessions, participants generated 125 statements in response to the prompt, "One way that schools and school staff, can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is." Through constant-comparative analysis, statements that closely related sentiments within or across brainstorming sessions were identified in order to remove any redundantly expressed ideas. For example, three statements relating to guidance counselors being trained in LGBTQ issues (i.e., "staff training is given for guidance counselors to help LGBT students," "there should be a designated counselor that is education in LGBTQ issues," "counselors should be given a seminar or type of workshop/sensitivity training") were reduced to the following single statement: "counselors are given workshop trainings in order to be educated in how to help LGBTQ students." As a result of this process, the 125 original brainstorming statements were reduced to 93 statements. This initial reduction of brainstormed statements is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Reduced List of Brainstormed Statements Generated from Small Group Sessions

1. schools support and allow a GSA for students at the school where they can talk about LGBTQ issues in an anonymous setting
2. school staff put their own views behind them and show respect to everyone, including LGBTQ students
3. teachers do not assume that everyone is heterosexual when talking with students (e.g., when they use examples of relationships, they use LGBT people as well and do not assume everyone will be in a heterosexual relationship)
4. start treating homosexual couples like actual couples
5. schools allow same-sex couples to go to dances together and get "couples" tickets
6. counselors are given workshop trainings in order to be educated in how to help LGBTQ students
7. schools allow and include LGBTQ relevant information and material in the curriculum (e.g., students read a book in English class that has LGBTQ characters)
8. schools allow LGBTQ books, videos, and materials in libraries
9. teachers are tolerant, open, and accepting of LGBT individuals
10. teachers have gay or rainbow flag posters or safe space stickers in their classrooms and around campus
11. if an LGBT related poster has been ripped up, teachers give a referral, detention or some type of consequence to the person who did it
12. keep religion outside of school to help keep students not feeling unwanted
13. schools provide training to the whole school staff about ways to handle LGBT issues
14. teachers "tell their own life stories" to show support or give support to LGBTQ students (e.g., "I have a gay son" or "I have a lesbian aunt" or "my best friend for 12 years is gay")
15. teachers use the name and pronouns (i.e., he, she) that the student prefers
16. make sure that transgender students are able to use the correct/preferred bathroom
17. for transgender students or those who have problems feeling safe in bathrooms, schools have an alternative unisex restroom or allow those students to use the nurse's, teacher's, or other "gay-friendly" bathroom
18. schools hire more LGBT teachers
19. teachers do not allow students to use derogatory words, taking the use of LGBTQ slurs just as seriously as other slurs (e.g., racial slurs)
20. teachers have more LGBT friendly assignments in classrooms
21. teachers have gay related material in history class

Table 9 (continued)

22. teachers do not include gay issues in class materials that have a derogatory context
23. teachers don't make things awkward in the classroom about gay issues
24. if a student asks about gay sex in class, the teacher should say that's inappropriate and rude to say in class
25. teachers should step in if a student is questioning another student and making that student feel uncomfortable about their sexuality
26. school staff should stop allowing kids to treat LGBT couples like dirt (e.g., saying "that's so nasty to kiss that girl")
27. schools fire teachers that are homophobic
28. teachers have the same rules related to public displays of affection (PDA) for straight couples and same-sex couples
29. staff should not point out things in an offensive way (e.g., "leave your boyfriend alone, and sit over there")
30. let transgender students run for homecoming or prom king or queen
31. have LGBTQ friendly administrators because they are ones that approve things (e.g., "allowing Day of Silence posters")
32. make more announcements for GSA meetings or events on afterschool announcements, similar to how sports are announced
33. the school should be notified about Day of Silence event and not force kids into talking
34. teachers should respect the Day of Silence and students' choice to not talk
35. staff should share reasons for the Day of Silence
36. schools show support videos or words on the morning show
37. make a list of different teachers that students can go to in order to talk and share with students
38. put a GSA logo on the morning show and their message (e.g., "if you're gay its okay, if you're bi its alright, and if your straight then that's great")
39. have more support for guys to be on the cheerleading team or other ways to degenerderize/integrate sports
40. stop putting stereotypes on certain genders in class (e.g., guys being masculine, having deep voices)
41. staff can support a field trip down to a pride parade
42. allow GSA members to fundraise on their own to support field trips to pride parade
43. schools have a pride day or pride parade that is recognized by the school
44. have a GSA float for pep rallies
45. have PFLAG meetings at schools as a support for friends, parents, and teachers
46. have GSA meetings frequently (e.g., once a week, twice a month)

Table 9 (continued)

47. enforce club participation so that students are not just getting out of class to be in a club (e.g., revoke their club day pass)
48. GSA advisor make sure there are elected officers
49. schools have a way of getting in touch with groups or programs that help LGBTQ students
50. make announcements for community supports for LGBTQ students
51. have LGBTQ speakers come in during an afterschool or weekend activity
52. have organizations sponsor the GSA
53. have more motivational speakers that have been through a lot of difficult times related to being gay or are older gay couples
54. provide examples of older gay married couples
55. GSA should be involved in Relay for Life or other fundraisers
56. provide pamphlets with LGBTQ related information in guidance
57. schools should be more open minded about LGBTQ related field trips and events
58. students are allowed to do petitions or have a say in their school if they don't like a situation or policy
59. have an LGBTQ board or peer counselors
60. play Born this Way, gay-related music, or LGBTQ artist's music on morning show or announcements similar to how other songs are played
61. show things like "gay penguins" to demonstrate that being gay is not a choice
62. teachers can be open with being able to help students who ask for help (e.g., say to that student see me after class, I can help)
63. administration immediately stops a bullying incident by other students or by administrators
64. teach available research about orientation in science or psychology classes
65. recognize that not all couples are heterosexual, in terms of things like senior notables
66. teachers try to be less judgmental and more understanding by thinking about what it's like to walk in our shoes
67. don't gossip or bad mouth LGBT people behind their back or in general
68. background check teachers or survey them so that you do not hire someone who is racist, homophobic, etc.
69. students get a referral or other discipline when they bully, harass, and/or use words like "fag" or "dyke"
70. on over night field trips, do not strictly enforce gender separated room assignment
71. if you don't have anything nice to say about LGBT, then don't say anything at all
72. don't treat homosexuality like it's a controversial subject (e.g., don't put it "in the closet" and be open in talking about it)
73. don't treat homosexuality as if it is a transferrable illness

Table 9 (continued)

74. add to staff questionnaires questions such as "if an LGBT student comes with a problem, how would you respond to it or help that student"

75. college counselors or guidance counselors should look for LGBT scholarships and communicate this with GSA advisors and/or students

76. make sure that policies are up to date so that students can't discriminate against other student based on their sexual orientation or gender identity

77. have a dress code that fits all students, not just straight students, in terms of symbols (e.g., rainbows) on t-shirts or actual clothing (e.g., don't say that boys can't wear skirts)

78. students are allowed the freedom of expression to wear clothing that expresses Pride (e.g., Born this Way bracelet) or wear clothing that is different from the norm

79. allow students to use the gym locker rooms that fit their gender identity

80. if you know a student is gay, don't point it out in front of everyone

81. don't assume anyone is gay because of their mannerisms or dress

82. never tell any student "it's just a phase"

83. don't out students to parents (they may be out at school and not at home); don't share at teacher-parent conferences

84. for PE there should be an option to change privately

85. make sure to include gender expression along with sexual orientation in everything (don't leave it out)

86. physical and sexual harassment should be taken more seriously

87. regardless of orientation or gender expression, teachers do not ask about student's genitalia, sexual experience, or other invasive questions

88. sex education includes information about same-sex couples and information about same-sex safe sex to prevent STDs

89. sex education should say statements that are less sexist and more open-minded

90. give away cupcakes that are made with rainbows that say "you are welcome"

91. at the beginning of the year establish basic classroom rules that are supportive of LGBTQ students

92. by supporting LGBTQ students socially and emotionally, that will by itself positively impact LGBTQ youth's academics

93. teachers should understand that LGBTQ youth issues should be taken seriously and things like gender identity can be a very important thing to them (clear up misconceptions)

Combined Results from Individual Interview and Brainstorming Session Data

Through an initial reduction analysis of the coded interview data, the original 157

memo statements (reflecting participants' unique sentiments) for teachers were revised to

83 reduced statements, 54 memo statements for SMHPs were revised to 32 reduced

statements, 41 memo statements for administrators were revised to 28 reduced

statements, 46 memo statements for policies were revised to 36 reduced statements, and

14 memo statements for resources were revised to 10 reduced statements. Memo

statements were not all revised into reduced statement through this process, as some

remained unique from all others with no overlap in sentiments across the available

statements. For instance, one such memo statement (i.e., "teachers pass out index cards

during the first few classes of the year asking students what name they prefer and write

that preferred name next to the attendance sheet") based on Ellis' quote was unique from

all others and was therefore not reduced in combination with other memo statements. As

many as 11 memo statements were combined to 1 reduced statement, yet the average

reduced statement was the result of 1.98 memo statements for teachers ($SD = 1.91$), 1.84

memo statements for SMHPs ($SD = 1.44$), 1.75 memo statements for administrators (SD

$= 1.78$), 1.28 memo statements for policies ($SD = .57$), and 1.40 memo statements for

resources ($SD = .84$). This therefore resulted in 189 reduced statements that were then

analyzed in conjunction with the 93 brainstormed statements generated during the three

small group brainstorming sessions, for a total of 282 statements. The same constant-

comparative reduction procedures were used to reduce these 282 statements. During this

wave of analysis, the types of support providers (e.g., teacher, administrator, SMHP)

were no longer separated from each other. That is, if teachers provided a specific form of

support (e.g., displayed safe space posters in their classrooms) that was similar to that

provided by SMHPs (e.g., displayed safe space sticker in their offices), the sentiments

were collapsed and new summary statement was written (e.g., school staff display safe

space stickers or posters in their classrooms or offices). As a result, the 282 statements

were reduced to 187 statements. An additional round of this analysis was conducted to

ensure all similarities across sentiments were appropriately noted and reduced. This

resulted in a final list of 162 statements representing Specific Educator

Behaviors/Policies Demonstrating Support for LGBTQ High School Students.

While conducting this constant-comparative analysis, eight Big Ideas emerged

amongst the Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies that represented primary forms of high

school supports for LGBTQ students.   The Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies that

comprised each of these eight Big Ideas are presented in Table 10. An additional

annotation is also provided to indicate which Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies that

were identified within individual interviews as being one or more of their most helpful

ideas or experiences generated. Only two Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies were

identified as being 'most helpful' by more than one participant. These two Specific

Educator Behaviors/Policies involved having a no-bullying policy in the school and

having staff show support to the GSA. The only Big Idea that did not have at least one

Specific Educator Behavior/Policy identified as 'most helpful' for a participant was

Address Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Issues.

Each Big Idea was comprised of unique sentiments that were expressed within 50% to

100% of the 14 data collection sessions (i.e., the 11 interviews and three brainstorm

sessions). The Big Idea that was expressed across every interview and brainstorm session

Table 10

Big Ideas and Specific Educator Behaviors/Polices Demonstrating Support for LGBTQ High School Students

A. Allow and Support the GSA and Pride Activities

1. teachers and SMHPs participate with and support the school's GSA and its members (e.g., post flyer outside their door for a GSA event, attend GSA meeting or event, help sponsor find a company to get GSA t-shirts made, buy GSA t-shirts)**
2. one or more school staff (i.e., teachers, school mental health providers) serve as GSA sponsors*
3. SMHPs make sure that there is a place for all students and provide guidance regarding places where students can go to be with people like themselves*
4. schools have a pride month, pride day, or pride parade (at a pep rally or afterschool) that is recognized by the school*
5. schools allow GSA members to fundraise on their own to support approved field trips and events (e.g., a trip down to a Pride parade)
6. administrators support, approve, and allow their school to have a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and have GSA activities (e.g., allows GSA to make announcement and put up posters, supports them having pictures in the yearbook)
7. schools support the Day of Silence and other LGBT-related events (i.e., staff make announcements, share reasons for the Day of Silence, and do not force students to talk)
8. schools have GSA meetings frequently (e.g., once a week, twice a month)
9. schools have organizations that sponsor the GSA
10. teachers help coordinate GSA events, LGBT related activities, and/or get-together events with other school's GSAs
11. schools have an LGBTQ board or peer counselors
12. GSA sponsors enforce GSA club participation rules so that students are not just getting out of class to be in the club and are not allowed to bully or misbehave (e.g., revoke their club pass)
13. GSA sponsors make sure there are elected officers
14. rather than the GSA sponsor running everything, the sponsor asks questions like, "What would you do about this?" and has the students run the club
15. rather than having vague parental permission forms for GSA events, clearly write on the form that it is a GSA event
16. teachers provide individual students with reminders and encouragement (e.g., "This is coming up. We got to go. It's going to be fun") to participate in GSA or other social activities

Table 10 (continued)

17. schools have a teacher who helps advocate for getting GSA activities or materials approved by administration

18. a GSA sponsor prepares students to expect that they will get a "No" when asking permission for something from administration so that if administration says "Yes," they will be more excited

19. administrators do not tolerate the deliberate exclusion of the GSA or LGBTQ students (e.g., would not let people keep the GSA out of the yearbook)

20. administrators communicate more clearly and make paperwork less obnoxious in relation to club (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliance) activities

21. guidance counselors write a letter of recommendation for a student applying to college and include information about his/her leadership role in GSA

22. college counselors or guidance counselors look for LGBT scholarships and communicate this with GSA advisors and/or students

B. Facilitate Connections with Community Supports

1. to allow a student to be less dependent on parents, the social worker provides information about resources and programs to a student who wants to have options for life after graduating or in case problems get worse with their home situation*

2. when a student is in need, the social worker helps to provide necessities for the student and other smaller items (e.g., chocolates)*

3. schools have a way of getting in touch with groups or programs that help LGBTQ students

4. schools make announcements about community supports for LGBTQ students

5. schools provide materials (e.g., pamphlets, books, posters) with LGBTQ related information and community groups in guidance

6. schools have motivational LGBTQ speakers come in during an afterschool, weekend, or whole school seminar activity

7. schools include other community clubs into the schools [e.g., have Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) meetings at schools as a support for friends, parents, and teachers]

8. schools have a program that will provide students who are in need with things like food, clothes, or other necessities, and the program is well known to students because of posters being up around the school and on the school website

9. when a student has significant problems outside of school (e.g., with family, police, homelessness), school staff find resources to provide special support to assist (e.g., help provide transportation to community organizations and agencies, find and deliver basic necessities, offer shelter)

Table 10 (continued)

C. Provide LGBTQ-Related Materials and Information

1. school staff share and/or post "Safe Space" stickers, gay rainbow flag posters, anti-bullying posters, or other LGBT-related materials in classrooms, offices, and around campus*
2. schools have a school newspaper that students are required to read during a class period, which serves as a way to get students reading about school policies and articles about LGBT people or issues (e.g. gay man gets shot in hate crime)*
3. teachers allow and include LGBTQ relevant information, material, and assignments in the curriculum (e.g., a book in English class that has LGBTQ characters; choice to pick LGBT issues as topics for assignments; gay related material in history class)*
4. teachers include facts, information, or books about LGBT people in a positive, or at least neutral light, rather than in a derogatory context
5. schools provide examples of older gay married couples
6. schools show things like "gay penguins" to demonstrate that being gay is not a choice
7. no one complains that the school allows LGBTQ books, videos, and materials in its library
8. sex education includes information about same-sex couples and information about same-sex safe sex to prevent STDs
9. schools teach available research about sexual orientation or LGBT course information so people don't have to continue being ignorant about it or stereotypin
10. schools play supportive LGBTQ-related videos and music (e.g., Born This Way) or messages (e.g., "If you're gay, you're okay. If you're bi, it's all right. If you're straight, that's great.") on the morning show or announcements
11. if an LGBT related poster has been ripped up, teachers give a referral, detention or some type of consequence to the person who did it
12. schools have Safe Space Kits (i.e., resource with guidelines and information for creating safe spaces in schools) that school mental health providers share with a student they are meeting with to let him or her know of available resources and know that the school follow guidelines from the kit
13. school mental health providers (e.g., psychologist, social worker) provide Safe Space stickers to staff who want them

Table 10 (continued)

D. Use Respectful Language and Interactions with Students

1. rather than making offensive jokes in class (e.g., when talking about a term "homogeneous" in chemistry class, the teacher makes a "homo" joke), teachers say supportive comments (e.g., when talking about "homogeneous", the teacher says "It's okay to be homo")*

2. teachers use students' preferred gender pronouns (e.g., "he" or "she") and preferred name in class, and will correct students who use the wrong pronouns/name for a transgender student*

3. teachers show that LGBT students are welcomed to be themselves by keeping an "it's not a big deal" mentality (e.g., not taking a second look when walking by a gay couple in the hallway, not having a problem with students mentioning out loud that they are gay or acting "gay" in front of them)*

4. regardless of their own views and beliefs, school staff are open, tolerant, accepting, and respectful towards everyone, including LGBTQ individuals*

5. teachers assume everybody is the same and issue the same respect towards everyone

6. teachers try to be less judgmental and more understanding by thinking about what it's like to walk in our shoes

7. teachers view LGBT kids that hang out together just as regular kids, similar to other kids who hang out together in different cliques

8. teachers recognize that not all couples are heterosexual and they do not assume everyone is heterosexual when talking with students (e.g., when talking about relationships, they include examples of gay couples)

9. teachers keep religion outside of school to help keep students from feeling unwanted

10. when a student says something like "back then, if a man and a man lay together, then you know they should be put to death," the teacher will respond by saying that people were also stoned to death for disobeying their parents and asks "have you ever disobeyed your mother?"

11. teachers show that they are open-minded by leading in depth discussions about different points of view (e.g., discussing how an issue was controversial in medieval times but not in modern times)

12. teachers "tell their own life stories" to show support or give support to LGBTQ students (e.g., "I have a gay son" or "I have a lesbian aunt" or "my best friend for 12 years is gay")

13. teachers pass out index cards during the first few classes of the year asking students what name they prefer and write that preferred name next to the attendance sheet

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Table 10 (continued)

14. for introductions, teachers have students complete a "get to know you" paper (e.g., what is your name and any nick name; what do you like to do, what do you like about the class, etc.) and have parents write something that they think the teacher should know about their child

15. teachers don't treat homosexuality like it's a controversial subject or make things awkward in the classroom when talking about gay issues (e.g., teachers don't put it "in the closet" and are open in talking about it)

16. staff do not point out things in an offensive way (e.g., saying to a gay couple, "leave your boyfriend alone, and sit over there")

17. teachers stop putting stereotypes on certain genders in class (e.g., guys being masculine, having deep voices)

18. sex education includes statements that are less sexist and more open-minded

19. if a student in class says, "oh, that's gay," the teacher's whole look on her face changes to show disapproval

20. rather than directly saying "I'm supportive of you," teachers show support in more incognito ways so that they are not forcing students to talk about anything

21. when talking with a student, teachers ask about that student's personal interests rather than what may be general interests of other students at the school (e.g., "do you like to go shopping?" versus "you like to go fishing or mudding?")

22. if teachers know a student is gay, they don't point it out in front of others (e.g., in class, during parent-teacher conference) or put the spotlight on that student in a way that makes the student feel out of place

23. if there is a misunderstanding that makes students feel like they were being discriminated against (e.g., the teacher separates a gay couple from sitting next to each), the teacher pulls them aside to apologize for the misunderstanding and explain her actions (e.g., saying that she separated them to make sure they paid more attention in class)

24. teachers don't assume anyone is gay because of their mannerisms or dress

25. teachers never tell any student "it's just a phase"

26. when an LGBT student brings up something about his or her same-gender boyfriend/girlfriend, school mental health providers keep good eye contact and do not change their facial expressions, back up, or say something like, "Oh. You're gay?"

27. if a student "comes out" during class, the teacher gives massive applause and kudos to the student

28. after learning about a student's LGBT identity or noticing a change in the person's gender expression, a teacher says something supportive (e.g., "Hey, you're cool," "That's really awesome to know about you. I am glad that you told me.")

Table 10 (continued)

29. schools make sure that people understand that love is love, that it doesn't matter what sex they are, and that there is no reason people should be judged for this as long as they are happy

30. teachers treat all the students in the school as if they're a part of a family together

31. teachers do not gossip or bad mouth LGBT people, taking on the idea that "if you don't have anything nice to say about LGBT, then don't say anything at all"

32. schools don't treat homosexuality as if it is a transferrable illness

33. regardless of orientation or gender expression, teachers do not ask about student's genitalia, sexual experience, or other invasive questions

34. teachers treat their LGBT student as an equal

35. schools give away cupcakes that are made with rainbows that say "you are welcome"

36. teachers politely ask questions about a student's involvement in GSA if it comes up in conversation

E. Provide Comfort, Assistance, and Advice Matched to Student Needs

1. school mental health providers help to keep students from committing suicide*

2. school mental health providers are available talk with students when they need them or when they are having a bad day*

3. teachers express to all of their students and are open about being able to help students in and outside of class (e.g., saying "see me after class, I can help" or "you can talk to me anytime that you want, we can go to guidance, or anything like that")*

4. teachers let a student eat lunch in their classroom and talk

5. when a student has a problem (e.g., bullying, family conflict, dating, LGBT identity issues), teachers and school mental health providers take time to listen, comfort, and talk with the student about the problems (e.g., "Don't get down and out by these things" "Try not to let it bother you too much")

6. when a student shares that he/she missed class to avoid getting beat up, the teacher takes action (e.g., explains what the student can do, reviews the work that was missed, offers tutoring, allows an opportunity to talk about issues)

7. when a student gets upset from an argument with another student and gets a pass to the bathroom to cool down, the teacher writes a note to the student on the pass to comfort the student (e.g., "Hope you feel better")

8. when providing help to a student, the teacher leaves the student with some responsibilities so that the student will be ready to do it on his/her own when the time comes

9. school secretaries talk with students and provide assistance when possible (e.g., give suggestions about public places where students can be themselves, help students with paperwork and getting GSA activities approved)

10. teachers give useful life advice (e.g., reminders to think about deadlines)

Table 10 (continued)

11. after a student 'comes out', the teacher gives the student tips, stays after school to talk, or helps with other specific needs if needed

12. teachers openly talk about LGBT issues with students when they are one-on-one with a student

13. administrators interact well with all types of people by joking around and by getting answers for students whenever they have meaningful question

14. when a student goes to an administrator with problems, the administrator works to calm down the student

15. when a student is wanting to withdraw from school, administrators sit down and try to convince the student to stay

16. when a student talks to an administrator about being threatened and terrified by another student, the administrator calls the victim's parent to share and discuss what is going on

17. school mental health providers support students in helping them find a job (e.g., set up job interviews, talk to students and interviewers about students getting jobs)

18. school mental health providers give answers to a student's questions about things like general health, ways to meet people, how to broaden one's group of friends, LGBT issues, etc.

19. when school mental health providers see a student who is sad, they pull the student aside to make sure the student is okay or will talk to the student if there is something going on

20. when a student shares that they are having a problem with a particular teacher, the guidance counselor talks to that teacher about the problem (e.g., "You really shouldn't be doing this,") and will move the student to a different class if the teacher still does not make changes

21. when other people come to the door while a student is talking through problems with his/her school mental health provider, the other people are told to either wait until they are finished talking or go back to class

22. a school mental health provider leads a group for LGBT students to help them talk to each other, gain allies, and understand their emotions and each other better

23. school mental health providers say things to make students feel more at ease (e.g., "You're safe," "Nothing's going to happen to you," "There's nothing wrong with you," "We'll try to help you")

24. rather than helping LGBT students in class last, teachers provide help to students in the order that they asked for help so that they receive help equally to other students

25. school mental health providers speak to groups of students (e.g., at school assemblies, club meetings, morning show) to introduce themselves and let students know that they provide a safe place for them to talk or get help

26. schools make students aware that they can go to their guidance counselors to talk about problems other than just those related to classes and graduating

Table 10 (continued)

F. Address Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Issues

1. school staff are provided trainings about ways to handle LGBTQ issues and help LGBTQ students
2. administrators are aware of LGBTQ issues and LGBTQ students in need of support, rather than pretending they are not there
3. schools hire more LGBT teachers
4. teachers who are LGBT are open about it instead of hidden
5. straight teachers set the example by being supportive of the LGBT teachers at the school and letting those teachers know that it's okay for them to be 'out' at school
6. schools background check teachers or survey them so that they do not hire someone who is racist, homophobic, etc., and fire teachers who are
7. schools add items to staff questionnaires, such as "if an LGBT student comes with a problem, how would you respond to it or help that student"
8. schools make a list of different teachers that students can go to in order to talk and this list is shared with students
9. administrators act as though they love their job when talking with a student, rather than appearing like they are thinking, "Oh great, now I get to go through this crap"
10. teachers have fun with students during class
11. students are allowed to do petitions or have a say or voice in how schools are being run

G. Implement Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students

1. schools have an anti-bullying policy in which teachers are required to take action (e.g., must say something, break up fights, give suspensions, or press charges) if they see or hear bullying (e.g., making fun of someone for being gay)**
2. teachers and administrators enforce policies by scolding students who break them (e.g., they step in to stop bullying/harassment and yell something, like "Quit it," or "They're not judging you for being straight, so don't judge them for being gay")*
3. if a student disrespectfully asks about gay sex in class, the teacher says that's inappropriate and rude to say in class
4. Teachers step in if a student is questioning another student and making that student feel uncomfortable about their sexuality
5. teachers do not allow students to treat LGBT couples like dirt or use derogatory words, taking the use of LGBTQ slurs just as seriously as other slurs (e.g., racial slurs)

Table 10 (continued)

6. the school's no bullying policy is enforced by having students get a referral or other discipline when they bully, harass, and/or use words like "fag," "dyke," or "that's so gay"
7. when a student brings a complaint or concern about a teacher not treating her equally, the administrator talks to the teacher about it and helps the teacher to see things through the student's eyes
8. teachers establish basic classroom rules that are supportive of LGBTQ students (e.g., "be kind and courteous to students," "we don't tolerate bullying," "this is a safe space for students to be," "treat people how you should be treated")
9. after a student reports being bullied, school mental health providers at least bring the student down to be talked to, and when appropriate, the bully is given consequences for what they have done
10. after seeing a student crying from being harassed, a teacher walks the student down to the office and helps out, saying things like, "The bullying kid needs to go. He can't be bullying at school"
11. after hearing another staff member make offensive comments in front of students (e.g., "you know they're just fags") or about a student (e.g., you're probably gay because you have that feminine voice"), a teacher stands up to that staff member and says something (e.g., "you can't say that if you're going to work in this type of school")
12. when a student shares with a teacher about a problem being bullied, the teacher helps the student with how to report the incident and actually get somewhere with it (e.g., points student to the best administrator to talk to about it)
13. if an LGBTQ student makes a school staff member aware of a problem, that staff member shares the information with other staff members who may be able to help solve the problem.
14. when a gay and straight student get into a fight, the administrator gives punishments to both students (since they both caused the drama)
15. when an incident of aggression or harassment was ignored or not handled well by a certain administrator, another administrator will talk to him or her afterwards to make suggestions (e.g., "Hey next time, you should probably look at this again") about how to better deal with those types of incidents
16. when talking with students after a fight, administrators listen to every single detail that the student wants to share even if it sounds unnecessary or if they don't like hearing about certain things (e.g., the student mentions that being gay is part of the reason for why conflict happened)
17. teachers allow students to bring their "drama" into class for five minutes to talk about it and debate their issues in order to prevent fights from breaking out at lunch or in the hallways

Table 10 (continued)

18. schools hold an assembly at the beginning of the year in which staff go over the school rules (e.g., dress codes, cell phones, bullying) and what students need to do for the year

19. teachers talk about national campaigns (e.g., Lady Gaga's Born This Way campaign) and then talk about things (e.g., anti-bullying policies) that exist within the school that are similar

20. on an on-going basis, schools utilize down time (e.g., while some grades/classes are testing, or during the morning show), to give students quick (e.g., 5 minute) talks about anti-bullying that mention not talking bad about a person's sexual orientation, race, weight, etc.

21. schools have a general no-bullying policy

22. school mental health providers make announcements as reminders about how to treat each other (e.g., "Don't be a jerk to people, no matter who they are")

23. teachers work to show students that it's okay to be supportive and kind to people who are different (e.g., lead lessons on being nice to people of different races or sexualities, do an activity on what it is like to be discriminated against)

24. teachers use their authority to control the classroom environment and make sure that everybody is respectful within the classroom

25. schools hold an assembly to discuss bullying that includes discussion that harassing or joking about LGBTQ students is a form of bullying

26. schools talk about anti-bullying issues more often and include discussion about bullying based on sexual orientation, race, physical characteristics, etc.

27. the school's anti-bullying campaigns focus around the message of "Do not bully" rather than "Don't get bullied"

28. student manuals of rules are reviewed during homeroom and students are required to read the entire manual with their parents and return it signed

29. physical and sexual harassment is taken seriously (e.g., school mental health providers are trained to handle situations involving sexual harassment, make it easier for victims to talk about what happened, provide punishments)

30. teachers and administrators will support a student who is telling others not to say "that's so gay"

H. Implement School Policies that Respectfully Account for Student Diversity

1. schools make sure that transgender students are able to use the correct/preferred bathroom that is matched to their gender identity*

2. for transgender students or those who have problems feeling safe in bathrooms, schools have an alternative unisex restroom or allow those students to use the nurse's, teacher's, or other "gay-friendly" bathroom

Table 10 (continued)

3. schools allow students to use the gym locker rooms that match their gender identity
4. for PE, there is an option to change privately
5. on overnight field trips, schools do not strictly enforce gender separated room assignment
6. schools allow same-sex couples to go to dances together and get "couples" tickets
7. schools let transgender students run for homecoming or prom king or queen
8. school policy allows transgender students to be on sports teams that match their gender identity (e.g., transgender male can play on male teams)
9. schools have support for guys being on the cheerleading team or other ways to degenerderize/integrate sports
10. school dress code fits all students, not just straight students (e.g., freedom of expression, can wear Pride symbols, women can dress like men and women can dress like men, anyone can wear a tux to prom)
11. teachers have the same rules related to public displays of affection (PDA) for straight couples and same-sex couples and enforce the rules equally
12. school policies deal with the whole student body in general, where every student is a student and do not say anything specific about certain groups of students
13. schools make sure that their policies are up to date so that students can't discriminate against other students based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, etc.
14. schools make sure to include gender expression along with sexual orientation in everything (don't leave it out)

* = Identified as "most helpful by an individual interview participant

was to *Implement Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students.*

The least represented Big Ideas were expressed across half of data collection sessions,

and these Big Ideas were to *Facilitate Connections with Community Supports* and

Address Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Issues. Table

11 further delineates this data collection representation for each of the eight Big Ideas and

indicates the specific sources that contributed sentiments for each big idea.

Table 11

Representation from Data Sources within Each Big Idea

Big Ideas	Representation across Data Collections	Interview Participants*											Brainstorm Sessions		
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	1	2	3
A. Allow and Support the GSA and Pride Activities	79%	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
B. Facilitate Connections with Community Supports	50%				X	X		X	X	X	X		X		
C. Provide LGBTQ-Related Materials and Information	71%	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
D. Use Respectful Language and Interactions with Students	93%	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E. Provide Comfort, Assistance, and Advice Matched to Student Needs	86%	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
F. Address Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Issues	50%				X		X			X	X		X	X	X
G. Implement Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students	100%	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H. Implement School Policies that Respectfully Account for Student Diversity	71%	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X

*Interview Participants included Amy (A), Brad (B), Carla (C), Dakota (D), Ellis (E), Francisco (F), Gale (G), Henry (H), Ian (I), Jake (J), and Kate (K)

Summary

Eleven individual interviews garnered detailed accounts of (a) supportive behaviors and policies that youth had experienced in their schools, as well as (b) supportive behaviors and policies that were suggested as desired supports that had not actually been experienced. Frequency counts of individual interview data indicated that teachers provided more experienced and desired supports than any other school-based source of support. Of the desired supports that participants had not actually experienced, Proactive Supports Impacting Groups were the most frequently described Support Type for teachers, school mental health providers, and administrators. Frequency counts of individual interview data indicated that teachers provided more experienced and desired supports than any other school-based source of support. Proactive Supports Impacting Groups were also the most frequently described experienced Support Type for teachers and administrators, while Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals was the most frequently described experienced Support Type for SMHPs. Data from interviews and brainstorming sessions were also analyzed together through a constant-comparative reduction process, resulting in 162 Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies corresponding to 8 Big Ideas of school-based supports for LGBTQ high school students: (1) *Using Respectful Language and Interactions with Students;* (2) *Providing Comfort, Assistance, and Advice Matched to Student Needs;* (3) *Facilitating Connections with Community Supports;* (4) *Providing LGBTQ-Related Materials and Information;* (5) *Allowing and Supporting School-Based GSA and Pride Activities;* (6) *Addressing Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Related Issues;* (7) *Implementing*

Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students; and (8)

Implementing Policies that Respectfully Account for Students' Diversity.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The current study identified educator behaviors and policies that LGBTQ youth identified as supportive to their psychosocial needs. The school-based supports were described by youth based on both their actual experiences of receiving support and their ideas for how schools could operate better in terms of meeting the needs of LGBTQ youth.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the Big Ideas that emerged from the study's results, which is then followed by discussion of primary Content Themes related to the primary sources of school-based support: teachers, school-based mental health providers, administrators, and policies. Particular attention is given to similarities and differences between participants' experiences of support and ideas for support that had not been experienced. Implications for each source of support are highlighted. This is followed by additional integration of results with extant literature specific to LGBTQ youth (any extant literature based on general populations of youth will be duly noted). Implications for future research and limitations of the current study are then articulated. An overall summary of the current study concludes this dissertation.

Summary of Results: Big Ideas

A sample of youth representing diverse sexual orientations and gender identities provided information through interview and brainstorming sessions that resulted in

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several Big Ideas on the actions that high school staff should provide in order to socially, emotionally, and academically support LGBTQ youth. The main behaviors that youth consistently described as the ways to demonstrate support involved *Using Respectful Language and Interactions with Students; Providing Comfort, Assistance, and Advice Matched to Student Needs; Facilitating Connections with Community Supports; Providing LGBTQ-Related Materials and Information; Allowing and Supporting School-Based GSA and Pride Activities; Addressing Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Related Issues; Implementing Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students;* and *Implementing Policies that Respectfully Account for Students' Diversity.*

Within each of the aforementioned Big Ideas that emerged, a range of 9 to 36 specific educator behaviors/policies illustrate how each form of support could be enacted within schools. These 162 unique statements were identified through the combination of individual interview data and lists of statements from small group brainstorming sessions. The use of these two components for data collections helped account for both the broad range of school-based supports that were identified, as well as a high level of detail to articulate how those supports could manifest in actual school settings.

These Big Ideas emphasize several different considerations for school staff interested in communicating support with the LGBTQ populations they serve. Some of the Big Ideas (i.e., *Using Respectful Language and Interactions with Students; Providing Comfort, Assistance, and Advice Matched to Student Needs)* particularly addressed the ways for staff to relate with individual students and groups of students. The importance of using sensitive, appropriate language and interacting genuinely with students was

evidenced by the fact that this Big Idea had the greatest number of unique behaviors associated with it. Participants of this study indicated a broad range of how such behaviors could look, from one-on-one interactions in which teachers simply ask polite questions about a student's GSA involvement, to more public displays of LGBTQ affirmation in which teachers correct students in class who use the non-preferred gender pronoun for a transgender classmate.

Two Big Ideas (i.e., *Implementing Policies that Address Bullying and Harassment of LGBTQ Students,* and *Implementing Policies that Respectfully Account for Students' Diversity*) revolved around ways to help implement supportive school policies. The experiences and suggestions generated by youth underscored the importance of enforcing policies with disciplinary consequences when rules designed to prevent bullying and offensive language were broken, as well as more proactive means for building awareness about schools policies, particularly as they related to bullying and harassment. Creative and pragmatic ways to do this were discussed, such as having preventive debates in class to avoid fights from occurring in the hallways, making reminder announcements about how to positively treat one another, and building anti-bullying campaigns that focus around the message of not bullying rather than how to avoid getting bullied.

Another two Big Ideas (i.e., *Facilitating Connections with Community Supports* and *Providing LGBTQ-Related Materials and Information*) related to facilitating the delivery of information and support to students. Participants wanted visual displays to help indicate inclusiveness and safety for LGBTQ youth as well as to learn about specific LGBTQ related content in the contexts of regular course work, sex education, libraries, and resources, to increase adequate representation of diverse orientations in mainstream

materials. They also wanted school staff to be able to provide information specifically about available community resources that support LGBTQ youth and to facilitate the connections with resources.   Ways to provide those connections included having materials on hand that could be shared with interested students, as well as making announcements or having speakers share out to the whole student body to build awareness. Helping to meet basic needs (e.g., shelter, transportation, clothing, and food) also emerged as an important component on connecting students with community resources that were not necessarily specific to LGBTQ resources.

Two Big Ideas (i.e., *Allowing and Supporting School-Based GSA and Pride Activities* and *Addressing Professional Development, Human Resources, and School Culture Related Issues*) focused more so on ways in which schools could support infrastructures pieces related to maintaining safe and respectful environments for LGBTQ students. For these Big Ideas, the actions served to help maintain student-led GSA activities and communicate that their activities are welcomed by the school. The professional issues related to ways that schools could help sustain a staff who would be supportive of LGBTQ youth.

Summary of Results: Content Themes from Coded Individual Interviews

Data drawn specifically from individual interviews were coded based on how the supports were delivered to students in order to help draw conclusions about the types of supports provided by different school-based sources. Informed in part by directions for future research articulated in previous research on supportive school-based practices for LGBTQ youth (Greybill et al., 2009), a coding framework was developed for the current study that distinguished reactive (i.e., conducted in response to a particular problem

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situation, intended to resolve or ameliorate a specific situation) from proactive (i.e., not conducted in response to a particular problem) supports. The type of delivery was also distinguished between support behaviors that impact single individuals and those that have a more broad social impact on groups of students (i.e., two or more individuals).

Analysis of coded data indicate that Proactive Supports Impacting Groups were the types of support expressed much more frequently than others. That is, participants described supports that were not in response to problem situations, but rather could proactively prevent problems from occurring. Further, these supports had impacts on more than one student at a time, providing an increased likelihood for changing the broader social context of the school rather than the more isolated delivery of individualized supports.

Overall, the most frequently mentioned type of support that was experienced and desired were teacher's Proactive Supports Impacting Groups. Participants described teachers demonstrating this type of support in their schools through various ways, including serving as Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) sponsors, supporting GSAs and their activities, demonstrating open-mindedness and willingness to support all students, verbally and nonverbally indicating specific LGBTQ youth acceptances and inclusiveness, including LGBTQ issues or information in course content, and including LGBTQ students similar to any other student. When considering only administrators, the most frequently experienced support also was proactive support that impacted groups, and this type of support for them primarily involved allowing GSAs to exist and approving and supporting GSA activities. In terms of SMHPs, Proactive Supports Impacting Groups was a close second most frequently mentioned type of support

experienced (next to reactive support impacting individuals). While numerous other types of support were identified and expressed as important, these results indicate that the most prevalent forms of support that LGBTQ youth identify as being supportive take a proactive approach and are not isolated to impacting single individuals. Rather, participants identified approaches that have broader impacts on the school social context and serve to prevent problems from occurring based on the proactive nature.

Supportive Teacher Behaviors Experienced and Desired by LGBTQ Students

The LGBTQ youth participants in the current study identified a significantly greater number and variety of experiences in which teachers provided support compared to that in which administrators, SMHPs, policies, or resources provided support. This also was true for the supports that were identified as not actually being experienced but being desired, suggesting that teachers are the likely primary conduit for day-to-day educational practices likely to positive impact LGBTQ students.

Youth participants identified many more ways for teachers to proactively support students than reactively support students, particularly in ways that would impact whole groups of students.   This was true for both the supports that participants had actually experienced in their high schools and the supports that they had not experienced but wanted to see occur in their schools.   In fact, there were nearly three times the number of participant responses coded as Proactive Support Impacting Groups compared to any other of the forms of teacher support. The wide array of proactive behaviors that were identified by youth participants contrasts the findings from Greybill and colleagues' (2009) exploratory study in which a majority of educator behaviors identified by GSA advisors were reactive in nature (e.g., how to respond to problem situations). Previous

qualitative data from youth had suggested that proactive behaviors influence LGBTQ youth's level of comfort with school staff (Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). The proclivity of this study's participants to identify so many more proactive supports helps provides some evidence of the value placed on those types of behaviors. In Suldo and colleagues' (2009) study with a general population of youth, students also brainstormed a greater number of proactive types of teacher behaviors that conveyed support in comparison to reactive, indicating similarity between LGBTQ youth and a general youth population.

Several content themes specific to teachers emerged from both the experienced and the desired Proactive Supports Impacting Groups. One of these common content themes was for teachers to support the GSA and its activities. While previous research has shown significant positive relationship between psychosocial outcomes the presence of GSAs (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012; Walls, Freedenthal, & Wisneski, 2008), less was known as to how to best support an existing GSA to maintain their positive influence. Participants from this study detailed the ways in which teachers supported the GSA and its activities, including by wearing stickers or t-shirts for a GSA event, advocating for the approval of GSA events with administration, and providing support to the GSA sponsor. A main difference between experienced support and desired support for this theme was that participants wanted increased amounts of GSA support (e.g., greater number of teachers respecting the GSA events, host more GSA activities). Another difference was that teachers serving as a GSA sponsor only came about as an experienced support theme and not a desired support theme. For those participants who did not have a GSA at their school or a GSA sponsor, the detail about needing a sponsor for the GSA may not be

perceived as a compelling need. For those who had a GSA and a GSA sponsor, however, that individual and their role were highly regarded by participants as supports for LGBTQ students.

Another common theme across experienced and desired Proactive Supports Impacting Groups for teachers was to verbally or nonverbally indicate specific LGBTQ youth acceptance and inclusiveness. Previous qualitative research (Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002) indicated a need for school-based adults to make students less reluctant about self-disclosing one's LGBTQ identity, and this theme of explicitly indicating inclusiveness addresses how that could be communicated to students.   Participants identified how some of their teachers displayed rainbow pride flags posted in their rooms, discussed having gay friends or family, appropriately used transgender students' preferred gender pronouns and names, and did not make assumptions about identities in the examples used in class. Some similar descriptions came through in participants' suggestions for desired supports (e.g., using appropriate pronouns). Rather than just wanting more of what was already in place, as was the case with the GSA support, the identified desired supports often represented replacement behaviors. For instance, one of the participants wanted his teacher to find ways to slip in statements about his acceptance of LGBT people rather than continue the current practice of slipping in homophobic jokes.

A related theme of implicitly demonstrating open-mindedness towards LGBTQ youth and indicating a general willingness to support all students emerged as a theme within experienced support, but not desired support. This theme expanded further on an experience indicated in Varjas and colleagues' (2006) study in which an LGBTQ participant described "the way [teachers] talked in class on different issues" (p.59)

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serving as a means to communicate her willingness to be supportive.   Showing open-mindedness about how points of view change across history and having open-ended assignments that allow for students to self-disclose appear to be more subtle ways of communicating open-mindedness.   Interestingly, since this theme did not emerge as a theme for the desired supports, it may be that LGBTQ youth prefer more explicit statements of LGBTQ inclusiveness and acceptance.   Further exploration is needed to gain a better understanding of youth's perceptions and the impact of subtle versus more explicit indication of LGBTQ acceptance.

Including LGBTQ issues or information in course content emerged as a content theme across both experienced and desired Proactive Supports Impacting Groups from teachers. Participants who expressed desiring inclusive course content varied in what they wanted, from simple inclusion of LGBT people within examples used in assignments to an entire course on LGBTQ issues to reduce stereotyping. There was also a range within participants' actual experiences of this support, from having occasional LGBTQ facts included to allowing a student to research and present on transgender issues to multiple periods of the teacher's English class. This range of ways in which teachers could include LGBTQ information into courses expanded upon that which was presented in Davis et al.'s (2009) findings from LGBTQ youth participants, who mentioned having LGBTQ history and literature in school classes and better sex education in schools. While interview participants in the current study did not bring up sex education, suggestions related to improved sex education were identified during brainstorming sessions (i.e., "sex education includes information about same-sex couples and information about same-sex safe sex to prevent STDs").

Other differences in themes between experienced and desired supports also existed. Treating LGBTQ students similar to any other student was evidenced as a theme in experienced support, while using proactive classroom management and supporting "out" LGBTQ teachers was evidenced as a theme in desired supports. This reflects somewhat different approaches, with the experienced support involving blanket neutrality towards all students, and the desired support involving additional layering of support to ensure safety and model LGBTQ acceptance.

While many teacher behaviors described were proactive in nature, almost all participants described behaviors that were reactive in nature, primarily addressing incidents of bullying, aggression, or the use of offensive language. The content theme of interrupting offensive language and aggressive behavior emerged across experienced and desired supports. While some participants were pleased with the way their teachers effectively interrupted offensive and aggressive behaviors, others described teacher behaviors that were not as effective or that only interrupted physical aggression and not verbal. Descriptions of desired supports involved more consistent interruption of verbal harassment and offensive language, yet the key difference between desired and experienced support was the second content theme of providing punishments after interrupting those behaviors. These desired supports align with much of what was identified by the GSA advisors in Graybill et al.'s (2009) study, except that youth expressed wanting stronger responses (i.e., emphatic scolding, punishments) more than other strategies such as using sarcasm and talking through the situation as a teachable moment. The ideas expressed by participants in the current study more clearly wanted

harassment to be addressed in a public manner in which the perpetrator is punished and others know that consequences will be carried out if they harass others.

Communicating and demonstrating availability to talk with individual students as well as making polite comments about student interests or identity were themes that emerged for experienced Proactive Supports Impacting Individuals. Far fewer sentiments were expressed for desired supports compared to experienced supports at this individual level of proactive support. In terms of Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals, almost half of the participants experienced this form of support through their teachers helping to meet basic needs or through teachers providing individualized encouragement, comfort, or advice about a particular problem. Unlike the supports impacting groups in which participants embellished upon experiences of support (or lack thereof) to describe more ideal behaviors they would like to see, no other ideas were generated for desired Reactive Supports Impacting Individuals. These observations, and the actual descriptions, indicate that participants who had individualized support from teachers were particularly satisfied with those supports.

Implications for teachers. This study's results indicate that LGBTQ youth participants are particularly attuned to various means in which teachers have and should provide support related to their psychosocial needs. The higher frequency of teacher representation among the sources of potential school supports may be related to evidence from previous research (i.e., Murdock & Bolch, 2005; Pearson et al., 2007; Russell et al., 2001) indicating significant positive relationships of LGBTQ students' psychosocial functioning with student-teacher relationships and teacher support. Taken together, this study continues to build upon the research base that emphasizes the key role teachers play

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in promoting positive outcomes for youth. The benefit of this study to teachers is that specificity has been added to the types of support that are most frequently recognized as desirable by LGBTQ youth.

A teacher could use these finding to strategically improve his or her instructional practices to increase the likelihood that LGBTQ students feel supported. Many of these changes could occur within the first week of school to establish positive classroom climates that are welcoming to LGBTQ youth. Results suggest teachers should intentionally indicate through verbal or nonverbal means that they are accepting of LGBTQ youth, such as by displaying a rainbow or Safe Space poster in their classroom, passing out index cards or "get to know you papers" to provide opportunities for self-disclosure, and setting up classroom expectations for behavior that include treating everyone with respect and not tolerating bullying behaviors. In terms of course content, teachers could strategically plan to find opportunities to make their curriculum more inclusive and reflective of the diversity in their student body. Participants indicated that even the occasional small facts about LGBTQ people or the inclusion of examples that utilize same-sex couples are perceived as supportive. Teachers could extend this further by identifying books that feature LGBTQ characters or including research information about sexual orientation to increase exposure to LGBTQ information and reduce stereotyping amongst students. Findings also suggest that teachers should consistently interrupt and provide punishments to students who bully, harass, or use offensive language during the school year. Engaging in these types of activities can impact groups of students in more than one way. That is, the immediate action can impact LGBTQ students (e.g., LGBTQ students learn about other LGBTQ characters or research that

affirm their identities; stop being harassed) but also can impact other students (e.g., general population students have increased exposure to LGBTQ information which may lead to decreased stereotyping; receive punishments for harassing students that may decrease the likelihood of them continuing to engage in anti-social behaviors).

At a more individualized level, teacher may want to make sure to express a willingness and availability to provide support at a one-on-one level, and to initiate informal conversations about students' interests or ways that they express their identity. If students are experiencing difficulties, the current study's results suggest that pulling students aside to offer individualized messages of comfort or advice can be particularly appreciated. While these individualized efforts that would impact a single student were discussed by several participants, the majority of participants focused more on teacher behaviors that impact peer social contexts. Therefore, if teachers were trying to identify where to start in terms of changing their behaviors to be more supportive, then these results point more to those supports that impact groups of students.

For teachers who feel uncomfortable with LGBTQ issues or have objections about people expressing diverse sexual orientations or gender identities, this study's results provide reasons to support LGBTQ youth beyond simply providing social and emotional support. Teachers are ultimately responsible for the education of their students and are being held more accountable for academic outcomes of all their students. This study's results speak to the impact that psychosocial supports from teachers have on student's academic engagement and performance. For instance, after just communicating a small affirmation of a student's transgender identity, a participant said that led him to do "every piece of work that [he could] from her." Therefore, if not for reasons to

support the overall wellness of LGBTQ individuals, then specific support for LGBTQ youth may be necessary for purposes of facilitating class-wide learning gains and educational attainment. These results align with previous research on LGBTQ youth that evidenced the positive relationship between perceived teacher support and school belongingness (Murdock & Bolch, 2005), and positive student-teacher relationships with higher grade point averages (Pearson et al., 2007).

Supportive SMHP Behaviors Experienced and Desired by LGBTQ Students

The most commonly reported form of support from school mental health providers (guidance counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers; SMHP) that participants experienced involved Reactive Support Impacting Individuals, which directly contrasts what was found for teacher support in which Reactive Support Impacting Individuals was the least represented type of support. Interestingly, while this was the most represented type of support that was experienced, no participants expressed this type of support as behaviors that were desired but had not been experienced in the schools. This difference between experienced and desired support may indicate that participants were particularly satisfied with SMHPs individualized supports that were provided in reaction to problem situations, as there were not any ideas about ways to improve these types of supports.

These Reactive Support Impacting Individuals that SMHPs provided also speak to their unique role and training within schools. Participants deeply appreciated the opportunity to have someone that dedicated their time to help them work through problem situations and to do so in a safe space in which they could feel comfortable. Several participants described experiencing significant difficulties that SMHPs provided

much needed assistance with, from helping a student work through issues with juvenile justice to connecting students at risk for becoming homeless with community resources. This type of support from SMHPs involved providing critical assistance and resource to address various at-risk needs and involved providing both time and safe space for students who were discussing their problems.

Unlike the cases for teacher and administrators supports, Proactive Support Impacting Groups was not the described as the most frequently experienced support for SMHPs; however, there was indication that there was a among a majority of participants to see more emphasis placed in providing this type of support. There were more than twice the number desired Proactive Supports Impacting Groups identified compared to experienced Proactive Supports Impacting Groups. Additionally, Proactive Supports Impacting Groups for SMHPs was the most prevalent type of desired support, indicating that this type of support is an area of particular need from the youths' perspective. In particular, participants wanted to see SMHPs build more awareness amongst students about the fact they exist within the school and about their responsibilities in providing support services to students, to be more involved with the GSA, to be more available and able to deal with LGBTQ issues encountered by students, and to display and share information about anti-bullying and/or LGBTQ issues. Although some students reported experiences in which SMHPs displayed materials that indicated they were supportive of LGBTQ youth, the overall sense from the data was that SMHPs need to do a better of job of reaching out to students and letting them know that the they can serve as an important source of support to them. Some of the participants expressed having very little knowledge or interaction with their SMHPs.

Implications for SMHPs. A rather basic but prerequisite implication for SMHPs stems from the idea that LGBTQ youth participants did not always know school psychologists or social workers existed and wanted to see more effort put forth by them to make themselves known to all students and to LGBTQ students in particular, for instance by becoming involved in GSAs. Concrete recommendations, such as making announcements on morning shows and speaking at GSA meetings, are relatively easy to implement action steps that would to help demonstrate support to LGBTQ high school students. While school psychologists or other SMHPs who did respond to problem situations were perceived as helpful, the broader impact of this is limited, particularly if school psychologists do not present themselves as being available and able to provide such services for LGBTQ students.

Much of school psychologists' work involves indirect service, so there are implications for their role in consultation with other school staff. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP; 2011) asserts that all youth must have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from educational and mental health services within schools regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Consulting with educators would help fulfill many of NASP's suggestions for school psychologists related to providing education and advocacy concerning LGBTQ student issues. The majority of recommendations put forth in NASP's position statement were not tied directly to research-based evidence. This study provides some social validation and further specification to the ways in which school psychologists can meet the psychosocial needs of LGBTQ youth. The results offer a framework of options for supporting LGBTQ youth in their schools in ways that students perceive as beneficial.

For instance, if engaged in consultation regarding a LGBTQ student who is encountering academic and behavioral difficulties, conceptualizing the case in an ecological framework that takes into account school support variables might help identify instructional or intervention action plans. Rather than looking at student disengagement being caused by learner variables (e.g., lack of motivation), school psychologists could help explore alterable environmental variables (e.g., use of the student's preferred gender pronouns,use of inclusive statements as opposed to homophobic jokes) that would lead consultation in a very different direction. When advocating for educator behaviors that take into account LGBTQ-related issues, school psychologists can enhance their efforts by utilizing quotes as evidence informed by research for why specific behaviors and policies would be perceived as supportive by students.

Supportive Administrator Behaviors Experienced and Desired by LGBTQ Students

Once again, the greatest number of sentiments expressed by participants for administrator behaviors was in the form of Proactive Supports Impacting Groups. What differed, however, was that there was more even representation of experienced compared to desired supports expressed for supportive administrator behaviors than for teachers and SMHPs. Unlike the differences between experienced support and desired support for SMHPs, the desired administrator supports reflected more of a dissatisfaction with current experiences than just an absence of awareness, which was the case for SMHPs. For example, while a common content theme that emerged for both experienced and desired Proactive Supports Impacting Groups was to approve and support GSA activities, this type of support was experienced as being provided reluctantly or rarely when it actually occurred. To provide better support to LGBTQ youth, participants wanted this

type of support to occur more frequently and more genuinely. Interestingly, credit was given to administrators who did actually allow a GSA to exist at their school and represented a content theme for experienced support. As articulated in a letter issued by the US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in 2011, the federal Equal Access Act of 1984 "requires public schools to afford equal treatment to all noncurricular student organizations, including GSAs and other groups that focus on issues related to LGBT students, sexual orientation, or gender identity." This again speaks to the idea from Hansen (2007) that simply having a policy makes a difference, as youth participants in this study believed that it was up to the discretion of the administrators to approve or disapprove the existence of a GSA.

Similarity in content themes for Reactive Support Impacting Groups also existed that related to addressing bullying and aggression. Again, the difference between experienced and desired support was primarily related to not being satisfied with a current lack of supportive experiences. This relates to previously reported data that about a third of reported bullying incidents do not received follow up actions that effectively address the issue (Kosciw et al., 2012).

Implications for administrators. A clear implication for administrators that want to support LGBTQ youth's psychosocial functioning is to fully approve and convey support for the school's GSA. As a school-building leader, approving activities that relate to LGBTQ issues can send a broad message of acceptance and inclusion. By approving the GSA to conduct a fundraiser, display posters, make announcements on the morning show, or participate in school wide activities like the Day of Silence, LGBTQ

issues are able to have increased visibility which could increase students' perceptions of being welcomed and belonging to the school.

Several professional development and human resources recommendations that emerged as one of the Big Ideas expressed by participants are directly impacted by decisions that administrators make. In order to help spread awareness of the ways in which staff can support this LGBTQ youth, administrators could approve GSAs, SMHPs, or community groups to present and provide trainings to faculty. The results also suggest that consideration of prospective and current employees could include how they would interact with LGBTQ youth to promote their psychosocial functioning, with homophobic actions being cause for not hiring or for firing staff.

Supportive Policies Experienced and Desired by LGBTQ Students

Themes that emerged among participants' descriptions of existing and desired policies related to the presence of those policies, the awareness of those policies, and the implementation and enforcement of the policies. Many participants had difficulty identifying policies that were in place that offered support to LGBTQ students, but some offered a vague description that there was a "no-bullying" policy. Compared to the seven page anti-bullying policy that the school district actually has, this type of description indicated a lack of awareness. This lack of awareness was evidenced further by participants' descriptions in which they shared observations of limited enforcement of anti-bullying and harassment rules at their schools. Some students who felt like there was not an anti-bullying policy in place expressed wanting such a policy as well as wanting specific protections for LGBTQ students, similar to protections for people of color. More suggestions were provided regarding how to improve the marketing and

enforcement of anti-bullying policies, such as having assemblies, class lessons and discussions, and more consistent and mandatory enforcement of the policies.

The suggestions that were previously reported by GSA advisors (Graybill et al., 2009) of ensuring equity in the use of punishments across harassment behaviors and the need to report such incidents to administration aligned with suggestions provided by LGBTQ youth participants from this study. Hansen (2007) highlighted that having a policy or even having public awareness of anti-harassment policies may not necessarily produce behavioral change to improve harassment conditions. The lack of awareness and the observations of bullying and harassment not being addressed as described by the participants concur with the sentiment that just having a policy is insufficient. The current state of bullying policy awareness and enforcement also may contribute to the previously reported results that only about two-fifths of LGBTQ students report incidents when they have been victimized (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012).

Only two interview participants desired policies that related to bathrooms use, one of whom identified as transgender male. While that student discussed some experiences of support from his school in terms of working out bathroom policies in which he could use the bathroom matched to his gender identity, he wanted the policy to be applied at all times and broadened to include locker room use as well. Issues related to bathroom policies have not been discussed in much of extant research. While youth participants in Davis and colleagues' Concept Mapping research generated ideas about bathrooms, there was no mention of policies for locker rooms, which was suggested in this study. The transgender participant discussed enjoying sports and felt strongly that locker room policies needed to be accommodating to his gender identity. This study's inclusion of

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behaviors particularly important to transgender and gender non-conforming participants is something that does not always get addressed in LGBTQ research.

Contributions to the Literature

Previous studies that explored perceptions of LGBTQ youth with regard to community or school-based supports focused on meeting students' social and emotional needs, but they did not explore perceptions of supports in reference to improving school functioning (e.g., Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009; 2010; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). Nevertheless, evidence suggests that student-teacher relationships may be the greatest predictor of school troubles (i.e., interpersonal problems with peers, difficulty paying attention, and not completing homework; Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001) among LGBTQ populations. When describing supports that participants received or would like to receive in school, LGBTQ youth in this study were asked to consider their academic needs in addition to their social and emotional needs. Some participants in the current study shared instances of teacher support that caused them to work harder academically or increase their engagement. These descriptions align with previous findings evidencing the positive relationship between perceived teacher support and school belongingness (Kosciw et al., 2012; Murdock & Bolch, 2005), and positive student-teacher relationships with higher grade point averages (Pearson et al. 2007).

The Big Ideas as well as the particular content themes represented within experienced and desired forms of support from teachers, SMHPs, and administrators, align relatively well and expand upon Hansen's (2007) primary domains of school supports of (a) GSAs, (b) policies, and (c) staff development and behavior. The themes also aligned with the behavioral indicator "engagement in school-based efforts to create

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safer school contexts" that was assessed as an outcome measures in Greytak and

Kosciw's (2010) evaluation of *Respect for All* staff development training. This alignment

is important, as these results from youth perspective serve to socially validate the

practices that have been put forth previously were not necessarily informed from the

recipients of those practices. Davis and colleagues' (2009) Concept Mapping study on

community supports for LGBTQ youth had identified three themes specifically tied to

schools contexts, and the nine of the ten statement ideas associated with those themes

(i.e., training for school personnel, sanctions for discrimination occurring in schools,

school personnel standing up for LGBTQ youth, improved sex education, LGBTQ

resource literature in schools, open-minded and accepting schools, more LGBTQ

literature in the school curriculum, safe place signs in schools, and presence of GSAs)

were also identified within the current study. Furthermore, the results from the current

study provided a broader scope and more detailed listing of specific educator behaviors

and policies than what has previously been presented when only one method of data

collection (i.e., interviews or small group brainstorming sessions) was used with LGBTQ

youth participants (Davis et al., 2009; 2010; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002;

Varjas et al., 2006).

This study also brings more specificity to the school context and how specific

sources of school-based support can engage in actions that would likely be perceived as

helpful by LGBTQ youth. Many ideas generated in the current study were similar to

those brainstormed by LGBTQ youth in Davis et al.'s (2009) study on community

support; however, the current results provided information that was specific to school

contexts and more operationalized in terms of how the supports would be delivered in

that context. For instance, in Davis and colleagues' study, youth identified "more GLBT scholarships" as an area for support, but this short statement did not provide context as to whether participants wanted more scholarships to be offered through the community or to have more awareness about existing scholarships. In the current study, the same idea about LGBTQ scholarships was replicated but with additional detail about how the idea would be carried out within schools: "college counselors or guidance counselors look for LGBT scholarships and communicate this with GSA advisors and/or students."   The individual interview data provided in conjunction with the brainstormed sessions allowed for the generation of detailed examples and descriptions. For instance, while ideas from Davis et al.'s study was "to have relationships validated," individual interviews from the current study provided greater detail and examples as to how youth conceptualized these supports would look when provided by school staff (e.g., not taking second looks at same-sex couples walking in the hallways, using gay couples as examples in course assignments, letting students talk about their boyfriends or girlfriends in front of them, apologizing to a same-sex couple after the couple misperceived the teacher's actions to be discriminatory).

Limitations of the Current Study

A number of factors are recognized as limitations to the current study, and should be considered in tempering conclusions from the study's results. First, participants of the study were recruited using non-random, convenience sampling procedures. The individuals who self-select to participate may have offered responses that could be systematically different to those who did not choose to participate. For example, the primary recruitment site was a community center that provides youth group and

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individual therapeutic services to LGBTQ youth. The individuals involved with this center may have encountered greater levels of supports than individuals who are not involved with such a group or services.

Second, as with most exploratory qualitative research or any investigation of populations with relatively low base rates, the generalizability of this study's results are also limited by a small sample size. Since the 18 participants came from 12 different schools, it is particularly important to note that one student's perception of a school's practices are not viewed as representative for that entire school. Nevertheless, many of the results from this sample were similar to those found in various other studies, which strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings. Future research can build upon the results of the current study to examine the replicability of the results with other, ideally larger, samples of LGBTQ youth.

Third, parental consent was required for youth under 18 to participate in this study, which essentially skewed the representativeness of the sample to those youth who were 'out' to their parents. Youth who have not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identities to their parents may be less comfortable with their identity, feel less supported, or feel more vulnerable than youth who openly identify as LGBTQ. Research indicates that youth who are less 'out' tend to be victimized less in school (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012). Their perceptions may have differed on issues related to harassment policies or on issues related to school staff communication with parents, which was an issue largely not addressed within this sample of participants. Additionally, it is unknown whether any of the educator behaviors or policies identified by this sample would be contraindicated for students who are not out to their parents, since their

perceptions were not explored. The demographic questionnaire did not include any questions related to whom participants had self-disclosed, so it is also unknown whether 18 year old youth who did not need parental consent to participate were 'out' to their parents or not.

Fourth, the results from this study were limited to the level of insight and perceptions from youth participants. Their responses are based on either retrospective recollections of school-based practices that they perceived to be supportive of their psychosocial needs or on their ability to generate ideas for how school staff could more effectively support those needs. The combination of individual interviews and group meetings was designed in part to help elicit greater number and quality of school-based practices, as different formats could help youth generate ideas better depending on their preferences or comfort levels. Nevertheless, the student participants identified numerous strategies with significant detail and examples. Additional types of data collection (e.g., observations, self-report scales) could help to triangulate the findings. Students' perceptions of effective educator behaviors and policies could differ from actual correlations between the educator behaviors and psychosocial functioning.

Finally, this study is limited by its inability to conduct the final planned stage of the project, specifically the complete Concept Mapping procedures. Many more educator behaviors and policies were identified than originally anticipated. Additionally, while the interview data that was merged with brainstorming session data added great detail to help operationalize supports, the additional detail significantly increased the level of cognitive demands that were required for rating each item on three different scales and sorting into clusters of similar behaviors. These factors served as barriers to the completion of this

final stage of the original method, but directions for future research could be used to continue to develop this line of research. Although youth ratings of the most preferred forms of educator support were not obtained, the rigorous procedures used by the PI and research assistants to reduce the data to Content Themes and Big Ideas did help serve the purpose of the sorting task that was not completed.

Directions for Future Research

The current study generated a concrete list of recommended educator practices, which could form the items used in future research (Concept Mapping or surveys) to more fully explore the frequency and utility of school-based supports for LGBTQ students. If the items are used in the context of Concept Mapping, modifications to the original plan for the rating, ranking, and sorting procedures could be made in order to decrease the cognitive demands of the task yet still obtain important information to contribute to researchers and practitioners. For instance, participants could be asked to only respond to one rating scale. For the purposes of informing research and practice, selecting the *Importance* scale would likely be most prudent. Results from this scale could give further direction as to which types of supports should be given priority for future correlation or experimental research, or for prioritized implementation in schools. A different modification to the original plan for future research could be to reduce the number of items by targeting only certain types of support. For instance, if the focus of the research questions were narrowed to learning specifically about SMHP behaviors, a much smaller number of items would remain. This would in effect reduce the cognitive demands of the task and provide a more narrowed focus pertinent to SMHPs. Completing the rating, ranking, and sorting task for with a significantly smaller list of

statements may be more manageable. A third approach could be to attempt to continue the reduction analysis process further. This approach, however, would necessarily lose specificity of the content, which was a relative strength of the approach that was undertaken for this study.

With regard to using the items in future survey research, schools interested in gathering needs assessment information as part of action research may be most interested in utilizing frequency scales for the items of the Specific Educator Behaviors/Policies with their students or staff. School staff could self-assess their perceptions on the frequency that they themselves engage in these activities or that they believe the school as a whole engages in the activities. On the other hand, the items could be given to students to rate just the frequency of occurrence for the items. One step further would be to compare the ratings of staff and students to determine whether there are disconnects between staff and student perceptions. For instance, teachers may perceive that they communicate willingness to support all students very frequently whereas students may perceive teachers to communicate this rarely. Any of these options could provide schools with baseline data from which they could then use to inform problem-solving and to progress monitor subsequent action plans aimed at increasing support to LGBTQ youth.

Beyond making modifications to the originally planned research, future research could employ a directed content analysis approach (e.g., Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to further refine, confirm, and strengthen the research findings derived from the current study. Literature pertaining to educator behaviors and policies could be analyzed in a systematic fashion involving similar coding procedures from the current study but applied to a larger selection of literature. White papers, position statements, and model

policies from various professional organizations and advocacy groups could be included as well as articles from peer-reviewed journals.

The current study's participants did not identify as many supports from other school staff as they did for teachers, but there were nevertheless many administrator and SMHP supports identified. While some studies have explored the relationship between teacher support and student-teacher relationships with psychosocial functioning, this line of research has not been similarly explored for administrator or SMHP supports. The results from this study implicate that such a relationship may exist and should be explored. Including measures that are related to administrator, SMHPs, and teacher support when assessing LGBTQ psychosocial functioning could help further distinguish the unique variance that each contribute to student psychosocial functioning.

Conclusions

Consistent findings have evidenced heightened levels of psychosocial risk for LGBTQ youth compared to heterosexual populations (e.g., Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Kosciw et al., 2012) and several school-based contextual factors, such as peer and student-teacher relations, are linked to these negative outcomes (e.g., Bos, Sandort, Druyn, & Hakvoort, 2008; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005). With 5 to 10% of today's high school youth report having diverse sexual orientations (Button et al., 2012; Igartua, Thombs, Burgos, & Montoro, 2009; Russell, 2006), schools must work to improve school contexts for this currently vulnerable population.

Evidence is emerging to indicate correlations between positive school-based practices and reduced risk levels (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012), yet more detailed specificity in terms of a range of school-based behaviors and policies that are viewed as supportive

by LGBTQ youth was needed. The current study has put forth a framework of Big Ideas that represent socially validated school-based practices identified as positive supports by LGBTQ youth. The range of specific behavior and policies provide educators with a springboard for implementing change or sustaining positive practices within their schools. The comprehensive list of educator behavior and polices also provide fodder to future research in the field. The youth from this study have contributed their insight on experienced and desired support, so it is now up to educators and researchers to utilize these diverse voices in moving forward to improve school climates, and ultimately, psychosocial functioning for LGBTQ students.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER (OR PHONE SCRIPT) TO RECRUITMENT SITES

Department of Psychological and Social Foundations
College of Education
University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Avenue
EDU 106
Tampa, Florida 33612

Attn: (Site Coordinator/Contact)
Subject: Proposal to Recruit Youth to Participate the "School-Based Supports for LGBTQ Youth" Project

Dear _____,

My name is Troy Loker, and I am a doctoral candidate in the school psychology program at the University of South Florida. I am leading a dissertation research study, along with my dissertation committee (Shannon Suldo, Ph.D., Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ph.D., Mario Hernandez, Ph. D., and Sharon Hodges, Ph.D.) that is seeking to identify school-based practices that promote positive social, emotional, and academic functioning of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. This study involves individually interviewing LGBTQ youth about the ways in which schools have supported LGBTQ students in the past, as well as about ways in which they would like to see schools provide support to LGBTQ students in the future. Another component of the study involves two group meetings with LGBTQ students, where they will be asked to (a) brainstorm as a group ways in which schools can support LGBTQ youth, (b) individually sort those brainstormed ideas into categories of similar types of supports, and (c) individually rate the importance, frequency, and helpfulness of those ideas.

This is a very important and needed line of research, which is supported by graduate student research grants from both the National Association of School Psychologists and the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students. I am writing to you with hopes that I could recruit LGBTQ youth through your site to participate in an individual interview and/or group meetings for this research. At the conclusion of my research, I would be excited to share my findings with your site in order to increase knowledge about ways LGBTQ youth in the local area believe schools can support their well-being.

Recruitment
With your permission, we would like to **provide you with flyers** describing this study for you **to make available to LGBTQ high school age youth**. You could either post single flyers in visible locations on the wall, lay out a pile of flyers in accessible locations for youth to pick up, or privately share information from the flyer to youth who have disclosed their LGBTQ status to you and who might be interested in participating. **Eligible participants are LGBTQ youth** who are either **currently enrolled in high school or** who were **enrolled in high school within the past 6 months.**

Informed Assent & Consent

Youth will be provided the full details of the study in order to allow them the opportunity to make a well-informed decision to volunteer as a participant in this study. If students believe that talking with their parent(s)/guardian(s) about this study would lead to problems in their relationship with their parent(s)/guardian(s), then they will not be required to obtain parental consent. Parental permission to participate will be requested of students who have parent(s)/guardian(s) who know about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and who believe problems will not arise based on their participation in this project. A ***participant advocate either from your organization* or *from another location will be present*** in order to help ensure the student's decision to participate is well-informed and voluntary.

Data Collection Process

Once consent is obtained, a student participant will be given a brief demographic background questionnaire. Participants in the individual interviews will be asked to describe what school staff did to make themselves or other LGBTQ students feel socially, emotionally, and/or academically supported and why those actions were helpful. Participants will also be asked to think of and describe other ways that school staff could be helpful in supporting the well-being of LGBTQ students. A skilled researcher will conduct the **individual interview with the participant for approximately 30 to 60 minutes**.

Participants in the group meetings will join approximately 10 other participants during two sessions. In Group Session 1, students will respond to the following prompt in a round robin process to give each participant an equal opportunity to contribute: "One way that schools, including teachers, school mental health professionals, and other school staff, can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is…" **Group Session 1 will last approximately 60 minutes.** In Group Session 2, students will receive a printed list of the ideas generated from Session 1, and be asked to independently rate each of the ideas in terms of their importance, the frequency that they occur in schools, and the helpfulness of those supports when implemented. They will also be asked to independently sort the ideas into categories of similar supports. **Group Session 2 will last approximately 60 minutes.** No data will be individually linked to any identifying information of the student participants in order to protect the confidentiality of their participation.

Resources Requested

We estimate that the level of effort required from your staff to assist with the data collection described above would be fairly minimal. The specific assistance needed would include **helping to identify individuals to interview** for the study as specified above (e.g., posting recruitment materials, sharing recruitment information with individuals who have self-disclosed LGBTQ status). Additionally, it would be helpful if an individual(s) from your organization could **serve as a youth advocate and assist in reviewing informed consent/assent** with those individuals who express interest in participation. We also request to be able to schedule interviews at a time and place at your location that would be convenient for your organization to facilitate.

Benefits of Participation

The study is focused on identifying school-based supports that may promote positive outcomes for LGBTQ youth. **Participants may feel pleased that their answers could help schools be more supportive of LGBTQ students in the future**, which in turn could help lead to better social, emotional, and academic outcomes for

LGBTQ individuals. If your site were interested in receiving a summary or presentation of research findings and implications on ways to support LGBTQ youth, the results from this study could also be helpful for your specific organization in any efforts undertaken to improve school-based supports for LGBTQ youth and reduce risk for negative outcomes (e.g., chronic victimization, depression, suicide).

Student participants will also receive a small monetary reward in appreciation of their participation. Specifically, **participants will be given a $10 gift card for each session of participation.**

Final Thoughts

We hope you will consider allowing us to work with your organization for this important and timely study, which we anticipate will provide much needed and influential guidance to schools interested in meeting the needs of all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, or gender identity. **Please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Troy Loker, by phone (813-???-????) or e-mail (tloker@usf.edu)** with any questions that you might have. We thank you for your consideration.

Troy Loker, M.A. Principal Investigator
Shannon Suldo, Ph. D., Faculty Advisor
Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT FLYER

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Research Study:
School Supports for LGBTQ Students

The purpose of this research study is to identify ways that schools, including teachers, mental health professionals, and administrators, can support the social, emotional, and academic well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students.

Who can take part in this study?

*Any current **high school student** (or anyone who attended high school in the past 6 months) who is **questioning** or unsure of their sexual orientation or gender identity, or who identifies as **lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender***

What will you need to do in the study?

*Choose from 3 opportunities to participate: **1)**Take part in **a 30 to 60 minute** interview where you will be asked about ways that schools have previously, or should in the future, support LGBTQ youth **2)** take part in a group session lasting about **60 minutes** where you will brainstorm as a small group the ways that schools can provide support to LGBTQ students, **and/or 3)** take part in a group session lasting about **60 minutes** where you will rate the importance and frequency of those ideas as well as sort those ideas into categories of similar types of supports*

How might you benefit from taking part in this study?

*Your answers may **help schools understand the ways to support LGBTQ students** to be safe, successful, and happy in schools. You may feel pleased that your participation could lead to the better well-being of LGBTQ students like yourself.*

What risks come with taking part in this study?

*Talking about sexual orientation and gender identity issues **may be difficult and emotional.** Because of the nature of this study, only LGBTQ participants will be present and consequently other participants will be aware that you identify as LGBTQ. However, your participation will be kept confidential from individuals outside of the participant group.*

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study?

*You will get a gift card worth **$10 for your participation** for each session (up to $30 for 3 sessions) of participation.*

Who do you contact for more information or learn how to take part in this study?

*Please contact the **principal investigator, Troy Loker, Ed.S.**, by phone at 813-598-6706. Troy Loker is a school psychology doctoral student at the University of South Florida. This study is part of his dissertation research project.*

APPENDIX C

INFORMED ASSENT

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Assent to Participate in Research
Information for Persons under the Age of 18 Who Are Being Asked To Take Part in Research

IRB Study # Pro00001335

Title of study: School Supports for LGBTQ Students

Why am I being asked to take part in this research?
You are being asked to take part in a research study about ways that schools, including teachers, administrators, and other staff, can support the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) high school students. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a current high school student (or were a high school student within the past 6 months) who either identifies as LGBTQ, is attracted to people of the same gender, and/or has had sexual relations with a person(s) of the same gender. If you take part in this study, you will be one of approximately 30 to 40 people in this study.

Who is doing this study?
The person in charge of this study is Troy Loker, M.A., of the University of South Florida. Troy Loker is being guided in this research by Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ph. D., and Shannon Suldo, Ph.D. Sim Yin Tan, a doctoral graduate student from the USF School Psychology Program, is also a research team member who may assist with data analysis. This study was not initiated by your school. While school personnel and school facilities may have assisted in carrying out the study, your school is under no obligation to change school practices or policies based on the recommendations of the study's results.

What is the purpose of this study?
By doing this study, we hope to learn what LGBTQ students believe are ways that schools can help LGBTQ students be happy and successful in their social, emotional, and academic lives. We hope to learn about what you have seen schools do to be helpful to LGBTQ students and we hope to learn about ways that you would like to see schools be helpful to LGBTQ students.

What will you be asked to do?
There are three parts of this study that you can choose to take part in: 1) an *Individual Interview* taking place over 1 session, 2) *Group Session #1* involving brainstorming, and 3) *Group Session #2* involving the sorting and rating of brainstormed ideas. You may participate in

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any session, however, if you participate in a Group Session, it is strongly encouraged to participate in both Group Session #1 and #2.

Before you participate in any part of this study, you will first be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that asks about your background information, including information about your age, race and ethnicity, free- or reduced-lunch status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

If you participate in the **Individual Interview**, you will be asked to think about times when adults at your high school helped you or other LGBTQ students to feel supported in terms of your social, emotional, or academic needs. You will be asked to describe what school staff did to make you or other LGBTQ students feel supported and why their actions were helpful. You will also be asked to think of and describe other ways that school staff LGBTQ could be helpful towards LGBTQ students. You will also be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that asks about your background information, including information about your age, race and ethnicity, free- or reduced-lunch status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

In order to accurately record the information shared by participants, your interview will be audio-recorded. All audio-recorded interviews will be sent to a professional transcription service to be transcribed into written text. Typed data will be de-identified to keep your identity private and confidential. Audio-recorded files and the transcribed interviews will be stored electronically on the Principal Investigator's password protected computer, and each electronic file also will be password encrypted. Five years after the study is completed, the electronic files will be permanently deleted/destroyed.

If you participate in the **Group Meeting #1—Brainstorming Session**, you will be asked to attend a session lasting approximately 60 minutes. During Group Meeting #1, you will be asked to think of ways high school staff can help LGBTQ students to feel supported in terms of meeting their social, emotional, and academic needs. You will be participating with a group of about 10 other LGBTQ high school students, and you will take turns sharing ideas to brainstorm all the different ways that school staff can support LGBTQ students. If you feel uncomfortable sharing an idea to the group, you will be given an opportunity to write down your ideas and turn them in at the end of the session.

If you participate in **Group Meeting #2—Rating and Sorting Session,** you will be asked to attend a session lasting approximately 60 minutes. During Group Meeting #2, each participant will be given a list of all the brainstormed idea statements, and you will be asked to rate each statement on a series of scales. Each participant will be given a set of cards, where each card will have one brainstormed idea statement printed on it. You will individually sort those cards into piles of similar idea statements in way that makes sense to you, and then you will give each of your piles a name that represents the overall ideas in that pile. Rating and sorting tasks may be conducted through traditional pencil-and-paper/hard copy methods as described above, or through a web-based interface on the computer (via Concept Systems Global Software). In this case, participants would still meet face-to-face with the researcher but would complete rating

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and sorting tasks on the computer under a confidential and de-identified username assigned to the participant.

Where is the study going to take place?

The study will be take place either at your school, at the University of South Florida's College of Education, or at another LGBTQ-friendly community location where recruitment for the study took place. For the *Individual Interview*, you will be asked to choose the site that is most convenient for you. For the *Group Meetings*, you will be asked to participate at your school or another LGBTQ-friendly community location.

How long will the study last?

For the *Individual Interview*, you will be asked to participate in one session for approximately 30 to 60 minutes. For the *Group Meetings*, you are encouraged to participate in two sessions, but it is not required. Both *Group Meetings* will last approximately 60 minutes.

What things might happen that are not pleasant?

Although we have made every effort to try and make sure this doesn't happen, you may find some questions we ask you may upset you. If so, we will tell you about some people who may be able to help you deal with these feelings.

Will something good happen if I take part in this study?

We cannot promise you that anything good will happen if you decide to take part in this study. However, you may feel pleased that your answers could help schools in the future be more supportive of LGBTQ students. The results from this study also could lead to better social, emotional, and/or academic outcomes for LGBTQ individuals.

What other choices do I have if I do not participate?

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

Do I have to take part in this study?

You can choose to talk with your parents or anyone else that you trust about taking part in this study. If you do not want to take part in the study, that is your decision. You should take part in this study because you really want to volunteer.

If I don't want to take part in this study, what will happen?

If you do not want to be in the study, nothing else will happen.

Will I receive any rewards for taking part in this study?

For each part of the study that you take part in (i.e. Individual Interview, Group Meeting #1, or Group Meeting #2), you will receive a gift card worth $10 for each session. If you should have to quit before a study session is finished, you will still receive the full gift card worth $10 for that session. A total of $30 could be earned for participation in all three sessions.

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Who will see the information about me?

Your answers will be combined with answers from other participants in the study so that no one seeing information from the study will know who you are. The only people who will see your personal answers will be the principal investigator, Troy Loker, members of his dissertation committee (Shannon Suldo, Linda Raffaele Mendez, Mario Hernandez, and Sharron Hodges) and research team member, Sim Yin Tan. Your name will not be linked to the responses that these USF researchers will see.

Can I change my mind and quit?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to change your mind later. No one will think badly of you if you decide to quit. Also, the people who are running this study may need for you to stop. If this happens, they will tell you why.

What if I have questions?

You can ask questions about this study at any time. You can talk with adults that you trust about this study. You can talk with the Principal Investigator, Troy Loker (Phone #: _813-598-6706_) who is asking you to volunteer. If you think of other questions later, you can ask them.

Assent to Participate

I understand what the person running this study is asking me to do. I have thought about this and agree to take part in this study.

If there is availability to participate, I agree to take part in the following parts of the study:
- ☐ Individual Interview
- ☐ Group Meeting #1—Brainstorming Session
- ☐ Group Meeting #2—Rating and Sorting Session

_____   _____
Name of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____   _____
Name of person providing information to subject   Date

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she

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understands:

- What the study is about.

- What procedures/interventions/investigational drugs or devices will be used.

- What the potential benefits might be.

- What the known risks might be.

I also certify that he or she does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research. This person speaks the language that was used to explain this research.

This person reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her. This person does not have a medical/psychological problem that would compromise comprehension and therefore makes it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give informed consent. This person is not taking drugs that may cloud their judgment or make it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give informed consent.

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

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APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FOR STUDENTS 18 AND OLDER

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Consent to Participate in Research
Information for Persons Age of 18 or Older Who Are Being Asked To Take Part in Research

IRB Study # Pro00001335

Title of study: School Supports for LGBTQ Students

Why am I being asked to take part in this research?

You are being asked to take part in a research study about ways that schools, including teachers, administrators, and other staff, can support the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) high school students. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a current high school student (or were a high school student within the past 6 months) who either identifies as LGBTQ, is attracted to people of the same gender, and/or has had sexual relations with a person(s) of the same gender. If you take part in this study, you will be one of approximately 30 to 40 people in this study.

Who is doing this study?

The person in charge of this study is Troy Loker, M.A., of the University of South Florida. Troy Loker is being guided in this research by Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ph. D., and Shannon Suldo, Ph.D. Sim Yin Tan, a doctoral graduate student from the USF School Psychology Program, is also a research team member who may assist with data analysis. This study was not initiated by your school. While school personnel and school facilities may have assisted in carrying out the study, your school is under no obligation to change school practices or policies based on the recommendations of this study's results.

What is the purpose of this study?

By doing this study, we hope to learn what LGBTQ students believe are ways that schools can help LGBTQ students be happy and successful in their social, emotional, and academic lives. We hope to learn about what you have seen schools do to be helpful to LGBTQ students and we hope to learn about ways that you would like to see schools be helpful to LGBTQ students.

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What will you be asked to do?

There are three parts of this study that you can choose to take part in: 1) an *Individual Interview* taking place over 1 session, 2) *Group Session #1* involving brainstorming, and 3) *Group Session #2* involving the sorting and rating of brainstormed ideas. You may participate in any session, however, if you participate in a Group Session, it is strongly encouraged to participate in both Group Session #1 and #2.

Before you participate in any part of this study, you will first be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that asks about your background information, including information about your age, race and ethnicity, free- or reduced-lunch status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

If you participate in the *Individual Interview*, you will be asked to think about times when adults at your high school helped you or other LGBTQ students to feel supported in terms of your social, emotional, or academic needs. You will be asked to describe what school staff did to make you or other LGBTQ students feel supported and why their actions were helpful. You will also be asked to think of and describe other ways that school staff LGBTQ could be helpful towards LGBTQ students. You will also be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that asks about your background information, including information about your age, race and ethnicity, free- or reduced-lunch status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

In order to accurately record the information shared by participants, your interview will be audio-recorded. All audio-recorded interviews will be sent to a professional transcription service to be transcribed into written text. Typed data will be de-identified to keep your identity private and confidential. Audio-recorded files and the transcribed interviews will be stored electronically on the Principal Investigator's password protected computer, and each electronic file also will be password encrypted. Five years after the study is completed, the electronic files will be permanently deleted/destroyed.

If you participate in the *Group Meeting #1—Brainstorming Session*, you will be asked to attend a session lasting approximately 60 minutes. During Group Meeting #1, you will be asked to think of ways high school staff can help LGBTQ students to feel supported in terms of meeting their social, emotional, and academic needs. You will be participating with a group of about 10 other LGBTQ high school students, and you will take turns sharing ideas to brainstorm all the different ways that school staff can support LGBTQ students. If you feel uncomfortable sharing an idea to the group, you will be given an opportunity to write down your ideas and turn them in at the end of the session.

If you participate in *Group Meeting #2—Rating and Sorting Session,* you will be asked to attend a session lasting approximately 60 minutes. During Group Meeting #2, each participant will be given a list of all the brainstormed idea statements, and you will be asked to rate each statement on a series of scales. Each participant will be given a set of cards, where each card will have one brainstormed idea statement printed on it. You will individually sort those cards into piles of similar idea statements in way that makes sense to you, and then you will give each

of your piles a name that represents the overall ideas in that pile. Rating and sorting tasks may be conducted through traditional pencil-and-paper/hard copy methods as described above, or through a web-based interface on the computer (via Concept Systems Global Software). In this case, participants would still meet face-to-face with the researcher but would complete rating and sorting tasks on the computer under a confidential and de-identified username assigned to the participant.

Where is the study going to take place?

The study will be take place either at your school, at the University of South Florida's College of Education, or at another LGBTQ-friendly community location where recruitment for the study took place. For the *Individual Interview,* you will be asked to choose the site that is most convenient for you. For the *Group Meetings,* you will be asked to participate at your school or another LGBTQ-friendly community location.

How long will the study last?

For the *Individual Interview,* you will be asked to participate in one session for approximately 30 to 60 minutes. For the *Group Meetings,* you are encouraged to participate in two sessions, but it is not required. Both *Group Meetings* will last approximately 60 minutes.

What things might happen that are not pleasant?

Although we have made every effort to try and make sure this doesn't happen, you may find some questions we ask you may upset you. If so, we will tell you about some people who may be able to help you deal with these feelings.

Will something good happen if I take part in this study?

We cannot promise you that anything good will happen if you decide to take part in this study. However, you may feel pleased that your answers could help schools in the future be more supportive of LGBTQ students. The results from this study also could lead to better social, emotional, and/or academic outcomes for LGBTQ individuals.

What other choices do I have if I do not participate?

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

Do I have to take part in this study?

You can choose to talk with your parents or anyone else that you trust about taking part in this study. If you do not want to take part in the study, that is your decision. You should take part in this study because you really want to volunteer.

If I don't want to take part in this study, what will happen?

If you do not want to be in the study, nothing else will happen.

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Will I receive any rewards for taking part in this study?

For each part of the study that you take part in (i.e. Individual Interview, Group Meeting #1, or Group Meeting #2), you will receive a gift card worth $10 for each session. If you should have to quit before a study session is finished, you will still receive the full gift card worth $10 for that session. A total of $30 could be earned for participation in all three sessions.

Who will see the information about me?

Your answers will be combined with answers from other participants in the study so that no one seeing information from the study will know who you are. The only people who will see your personal answers will be the principal investigator, Troy Loker, members of his dissertation committee (Shannon Suldo, Linda Raffaele Mendez, Mario Hernandez, and Sharron Hodges) and research team member, Sim Yin Tan, who may assist with data analysis. Your name will not be linked to the responses that these USF researchers will see.

Can I change my mind and quit?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to change your mind later. No one will think badly of you if you decide to quit. Also, the people who are running this study may need for you to stop. If this happens, they will tell you why.

What if I have questions?

You can ask questions about this study at any time. You can talk with adults that you trust about this study. You can talk with the Principal Investigator, Troy Loker ((Phone #: _813-598-6706)_ who is asking you to volunteer. If you think of other questions later, you can ask them.

Consent to Participate

I understand what the person running this study is asking me to do. I have thought about this and agree to take part in this study. If there is availability to participate, I agree to take part in the following parts of the study:

☐ Individual Interview
☐ Group Meeting #1—Brainstorming Session
☐ Group Meeting #2—Sorting and Rating Session

_____   _____
Name of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____   _____
Name of person providing information to subject   Date

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Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands:

- What the study is about.
- What procedures/interventions/investigational drugs or devices will be used.
- What the potential benefits might be.
- What the known risks might be.

I also certify that he or she does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research. This person speaks the language that was used to explain this research.

This person reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her. This person does not have a medical/ psychological problem that would compromise comprehension and therefore makes it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give informed consent. This person is not taking drugs that may cloud their judgment or make it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give informed consent.

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

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APPENDIX E

INFORMED PARENTAL CONSENT

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Parental Permission to Participate in Research

Information for parents to consider before allowing their child to take part in this research study

IRB Study # Pro00001335

The following information is being presented to help you/your child decide whether or not your child wants to be a part of a research study. Please read carefully. Anything you do not understand, ask the investigator.

We are asking you to allow your child to take part in a research study that is called:

School Supports for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Students

The person who is in charge of this research study is Troy Loker, Ed.S.. This person is called the Principal Investigator. Shannon Suldo, Ph.D. and Linda Raffaele Mendez, Ph.D are faculty advisers also involved in this research study. Sharon Hodges, Ph.D. and Mario Hernandez, Ph.D. are also on his dissertation committee. Sim Yin Tan, a doctoral graduate student from the USF School Psychology Program, is also a research team member who may assist with data analysis.

This research is being paid for in part by the National Association of School Psychologists and the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students.

Note: This study was not initiated by your child's school. While school personnel and school facilities may have assisted in carrying out the study, your school is under no obligation to change school practices or policies based on the recommendations of the study's results.

Should your child take part in this study?

This form tells you about this research study. You can decide if you want your child to take part in it. This form explains:

- Why this study is being done.
- What will happen during this study and what your child will need to do.
- Whether there is any chance your child might experience potential benefits from being in the study.
- The risks of having problems because your child is in this study.

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Before you decide:

- Read this form.
- Have a friend or family member read it.
- Talk about this study with the person in charge of the study or the person explaining the study. You can have someone with you when you talk about the study.
- Talk it over with someone you trust.
- Find out what the study is about.
- You may have questions this form does not answer. You do not have to guess at things you don't understand. If you have questions, ask the person in charge of the study or study staff as you go along. Ask them to explain things in a way you can understand.
- Take your time to think about it.

It is up to you. If you choose to let your child be in the study, then you should sign this form. If you do not want your child to take part in this study, you should not sign the form.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this study is to find out what students believe are good ways for school to support them socially, emotionally, and academically. More specifically, this research aims to find out what lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) students believe are ways that schools can help LGBTQ students be happy and successful in their social, emotional, and academic lives. We hope to learn about what your child has seen schools do to be helpful to LGBTQ students and we hope to learn about ways that your child would like to see schools be helpful to LGBTQ students. This information will be gathered by doing individual interviews and group meetings with students who identify as LGBTQ or who have expressed they may not have strictly heterosexual attractions or identities.

Why is your child being asked to take part?

We are asking your child to take part in this research study because your child is a high school student (or was a high school student in the past 6 months) who indicated that he or she either identifies as LGBTQ, or has expressed they may not have strictly heterosexual attractions, behaviors, and/or identities. If your child takes part in this study, your child will be one of about 30 to 40 people in this study.

What will happen during this study?

There are three parts of this study that your child can choose to take part in: 1) an *Individual Interview*, 2) *Group Session #1* involving brainstorming, and 3*) Group Session #2* involving the sorting and rating of brainstormed ideas. Your child may participate in any session, however, if your child participates in a Group Session, it is strongly encouraged to participate in both Group Session #1 and #2. Before your child participates in any of these three activities, your child will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that asks about your child's background information, including information about his or her age, race and ethnicity, free- or reduced-lunch status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

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If your child takes part in the *Individual Interview,* your child will be interviewed and asked to think about times when adults at his or her high school helped your child or other LGBTQ students to feel supported in terms of their social, emotional, or academic needs. Your child will then be asked to describe what school staff did to make your child or other LGBTQ students feel supported and why their actions were helpful. Your child will also be asked to think of and describe other ways that school staff could be helpful in supporting LGBTQ students at school.

In order to accurately record the information shared by participants, the interview with your child will be audio-recorded. All audio-recorded interviews will be sent to a professional transcription service to be transcribed into written text. Typed data will be de-identified to keep your child's identity confidential. Audio-recorded files and the transcribed interviews will be stored electronically on the Principal Investigator's password protected computer, and each electronic file also will be password encrypted. Five years after the study is completed, the electronic files will be permanently deleted/destroyed.

If your child participates in the *Group Meeting #1—Brainstorming Session,* your child will be asked to attend a sessions lasting approximately 60 minutes. During Group Meeting #1, your child will be asked to think of ways that high school staff can help LGBTQ students to feel supported in terms of meeting their social, emotional, and academic needs. Your child will be participating with a group of about 10 other LGBTQ high school students and will be asked to take turns sharing ideas to brainstorm all the different ways that school staff can support LGBTQ students. If your child feels uncomfortable sharing an idea to the group, your child will be given an opportunity to write down his/her ideas and turn them in at the end of the session.

If your child participates in *Group Meeting #2—Rating and Sorting Session,* your child will be asked to attend a session lasting approximately 60 minutes. During Group Meeting #2, your child will be given a list of all the brainstormed idea statements and will be asked to rate each statement on a series of scales. Each participant will also be given a set of cards, where each card will have one brainstormed idea statement printed on it. Your child will be asked to individually sort those cards into piles of similar idea statements in way that makes sense to him/her, and then your child will give each of the piles a name that represents the overall ideas in that pile. Rating and sorting tasks may be conducted through traditional pencil-and-paper/hard copy methods as described above, or through a web-based interface on the computer (via Concept Systems Global Software). In this case, participants would still meet face-to-face with the researcher but would complete rating and sorting tasks on the computer under a confidential and de-identified username assigned to the participant.

Where is the study going to take place?

The study will be take place either at your child's school, at the University of South Florida's College of Education, or at another LGBTQ-friendly community location where recruitment for the study took place. For the *Individual Interview,* your child will be asked to choose the site that will be most convenient. For the *Group Meetings,* your child will be asked to participate at a school or an LGBTQ-friendly community location where recruitment took place as determined by the researcher.

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How long will the study last?

For the *Individual Interview,* your child will be asked to asked to participate in one session for approximately 30 to 60 minutes. For the *Group Meetings,* your child is encouraged to participate in two sessions, but it is not required. Both *Group Meetings* will last approximately 60 minutes.

How many other people will take part?

A total of about 30 to 40 people will take part in this study, either in the Individual Interviews or in the Group Meetings. People may take part in this study from several locations (e.g., schools, community centers) in the local area.

What other choices do you have if you decide not to let your child to take part?

If you decide not to let your child take part in this study, that is okay.

Will your child be paid for taking part in this study?

We will pay your child for the time he/she volunteers while being in this study. Your child will receive a gift card worth $10 for each session of participation. A total of $30 could be earned for participation in all three sessions.

What will it cost you to let your child take part in this study?

It will not cost you anything to let your child take part in the study.

What are the potential benefits to your child if you let him / her take part in this?

We cannot promise you that anything good will happen if your child takes part in this study. However, your child may feel pleased that his or her answers could help schools in the future be more supportive of LGBTQ students. The results from this study also could lead to better social, emotional, and/or academic outcomes for LGBTQ individuals.

What are the risks if your child takes part in this study?

Although we have made every effort to try and make sure this doesn't happen, you may find some questions we ask you may upset your child. If so, we will tell you and your child about some people who may be able to help you with these feelings. If you notice your child has any problem related to this research, please call the person in charge of this study (Troy Loker; Phone #: *813-598-6706).*

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What will we do to keep your child's study records private?

There are federal laws that say we must keep your child's study records private. We will keep the records of this study private by using password protected computers and files to manage electronic data.

We will keep the records of this study confidential by replacing your child's name or other identifiable names with pseudonyms (i.e., fake names).

However, certain people may need to see your child's study records. By law, anyone who looks at your child's records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

> Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your child's records. These include the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the staff that work for the IRB. Individuals who work for USF that provide other kinds of oversight to research studies may also need to look at your child's records.

> Other individuals who may look at your child's records include: agencies of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office for Human Research Protections. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your child's rights and safety.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your child's name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who your child is.

What happens if you decide not to let your child take part in this study?

You should only let your child take part in this study if both of you want to. You or child should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study to please the study investigator or the research staff.

If you decide not to let your child take part:

Your child will not be in trouble or lose any rights he/she would normally have. You child will still get the same services he/she would normally have.

You can decide after signing this informed consent document that you no longer want your child to take part in this study. We will keep you informed of any new developments which might affect your willingness to allow your child to continue to participate in the study. However, you can decide you want your child to stop taking part in the study for any reason at any time. If you decide you want your child to stop taking part in the study, tell the study staff as soon as you can.

Even if you want your child to stay in the study, there may be reasons we will need to take him/her out of it. Your child may be taken out of this study if:

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We find out it is not safe for your child to stay in the study. For example, your child becomes emotionally upset during the *Individual Interview* or *Group Meetings*. Your child is not coming for the study visits when scheduled.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Troy Loker at 813-598-6706.

If you have questions about your child's rights, general questions, complaints, or issues as a person taking part in this study, call the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance of the University of South Florida at 813-974-5638.

If your child experiences an adverse event or unanticipated problem call Troy Loker at 813-598-6706.

If you have questions about your rights as a person taking part in this research study you may contact the Florida Department of Health Institutional Review Board (DOH IRB) at (866) 433-2775 (toll free in Florida) or 850-245-4585.

Consent for Child to Participate in this Research Study

It is up to you to decide whether you want your child to take part in this study. If you want your child to take part, please read the statements below and sign the form if the statements are true.

I freely give my consent to let my child take part in this study. Specifically, I am giving my consent for my child to take part in the following parts of the study:

- ☐ Individual Interview
- ☐ Group Meeting #1—Brainstorming Session
- ☐ Group Meeting #2—Rating and Sorting Session

I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to let my child take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____   _____
Signature of Parent of Child Taking Part in Study   Date

_____
Printed Name of Parent of Child Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she

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understands:
- What the study is about.
- What procedures/interventions/investigational drugs or devices will be used.
- What the potential benefits might be.
- What the known risks might be.

I also certify that he or she does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research. This person speaks the language that was used to explain this research.

This person reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her. This person does not have a medical/psychological problem that would compromise comprehension and therefore makes it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give informed consent. This person is not taking drugs that may cloud their judgment or make it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give informed consent.

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND FORM

Demographic Background Information

<div align="right">

Participant Code Number __ __ _ __
Today's Date: ___/___/___

</div>

1. How old are you?

   _____ Years Old

2. Which best describes your Hispanic origin?
   a) Hispanic or Latino
   b) Not Hispanic or Latino

3. Which best describes your race (select one or more races for which you self-identify)?
   a) American Indian or Alaska Native
   b) Asian
   c) Black or African American
   d) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   e) White
   f) Other:_____

4. In the past six months, have you received, or been eligible to receive, free- or reduced-price lunch at school?
   a) Yes
   b) No

5. What school do you currently attend (or if you are not currently enrolled in school, what school did you most recently attend)?

   _____

6. Which of the following best describes your gender identity?
    a) Male
    b) Female
    c) Transgender
    d) Transgender Female-to-Male (Trans Male),
    e) Transgender Male-to-Female (Trans Female)
    f) Other: _____

7. Which of the following best describes you?
    a) Straight (Heterosexual)
    b) Gay or Lesbian (Homosexual)
    c) Bisexual
    d) Not Sure
    e) Other:_____

8. During your life, to whom have you been attracted to or had fantasies about, either romantically or sexually?
    a) Females
    b) Males
    c) Females and Males
    d) I have never been romantically or sexually interested in someone

9. During your life, who have you been sexually intimate (e.g., kissing, sexual activity) with?
    a) Females
    b) Males
    c) Females and Males
    d) I have not been sexually intimate (e.g., kissing, sexual activity) with anyone

APPENDIX G

INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

<u>Introduction:</u>

Thank you again for talking with me today. As I told you earlier while going over informed assent/consent, we are here today because I am interested in finding out what schools can do to help support the social, emotional, and academic well-being of LGBTQ students. In other words, I am wanting to learn about what adults at your schools have done, or should do, to help you avoid or overcome problems, as well as help you to be happy, respected, and successful. Sometimes schools do not do the best job in supporting students, but I hope to find out what schools have done well or what you think schools could do in order to better support LGBTQ students.

Please remember that you are a volunteer. All your answers are going to be kept confidential, however, an outside transcription service will be used to type our audio-recorded interview into written text. Therefore, to help further ensure you remain anonymous, I would like to caution you to please not use real names. Also, remember that you can choose at any time not to answer a question or to stop the interview altogether.

<u>Key Terms:</u>

Let's first go over some key terms so we know we're on the same page. When I say LGBTQ, I am referring to sexual minorities who include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, as well as those who are questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. I know that some youth do not like labels like those or might identify their sexual orientation or gender identity in a different way, but I

am using the term LGBTQ as way to represent anyone who would not describe themselves as being a strictly heterosexual male or female.

Another term I will be using is "support". When I ask about supports at school or ways in which students feel supported, I am interested in the ways in which school staff give assistance or help to students, make students feel comfortable, show that they care about their students, and provide opportunities for students to be successful. Support can be shown through a person's actions, such as what they say or what they do.

The type of support might be social support, emotional support, or academic support. Social support includes actions that improve the way students get along with other people and feel connected to other people. Emotional support includes actions that make students feel better about themselves, help students better understand and deal with their emotions, and help students feel happier. Academic support includes actions that make students feel encouraged and assisted in their efforts to learn and do their school work.

Before I move on to the interview which should last about 30 to 60 minutes, what questions do you have about those terms or about this study?

Okay, let me start by asking you to…

QUESTIONS

Initial Question: Please tell me about the ways that adults in your high school have acted in order to make you or other LGBTQ students feel socially, emotionally, or academically supported?

Teacher Support: Okay. I am going to ask some more specific questions about ways in which your teachers support you. When I say teachers, I want you to think of traditional teachers, instructional assistants, special education teachers, and anyone else that provides small or large group instruction.

1. Tell me about some times in which you felt like a teacher at your school was being supportive of you or other LGBTQ students?

    a. What about their actions made you or other LGBTQ students feel supported?

    b. What characteristics or actions signal you to think that a teacher will be supportive of you or other LGBTQ students?

    c. What are some things that teachers have done in class to support you or other LGBTQ students?

    d. What are some things that teachers have done outside of class to support you or other LGBTQ students?

2. Sometimes teachers might have acted in ways to make you feel like they were trying to support you or other LGBTQ students after a problem occurred in order to react to a situation. Other times teachers might have done something before there ever was a problem in order to be supportive to you or other LGBTQ students. Please tell me about some other the times when teachers were supportive either before a problem happened or after a problem happened.

3. Of the ways that teachers have provided you or other LGBTQ students with support, which do you think have been the most helpful?

4. What do you wish teachers would do to support you or other LGBTQ students that they have not done?

School Mental Health Providers: Now I am going to ask more specific questions about ways in which school mental health providers provide (SMHP) support. When I say SMHP, this term includes all the student services staff members, such as guidance counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers.

5. Tell me about some times in which you felt like a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or school nurse was supportive of you or other LGBTQ students?

   a. What about their actions made you or other LGBTQ students feel supported?

   b. What characteristics or actions signal you to think that a SMHP will be supportive of you or other LGBTQ students?

   c. What are some things that SMHP have done to make you or other LGBTQ students feel more comfortable in talking with them or asking for help?

6. Of the ways that student services staff have provided you or other LGBTQ students with support, which do you think have been the most helpful?

7. What do you wish student services staff would do to support you or other LGBTQ students that they have not done?

8. What school-wide policies are you aware of that have supported you or LGBTQ students in school?

    a. What was done to make you become aware of those policies?

    b. What about those school policies made you or other LGBTQ students feel like the school was being supportive?

9. What classroom policies are you aware of that have supported you or other LGBTQ students in your classes?

    a. What was done to make you become aware of those policies?

    b. What about those school policies made you or other LGBTQ students feel like the school was being supportive?

10. How have those been policies been enforced to help show that your school is supportive of LGBTQ students?

11. What have administrators, like your principal or assistant principals, done to help show that they are supporting the social, emotional, or academic needs of you or other LGBTQ students?

12. Of the ways that school policies or administrators have provided you or other LGBTQ students with support, which do you think have been the most helpful?

13. What school policies do you wish were in place to help support you or other LGBTQ students?

14. What do you wish administrators would do to help support you or other LGBTQ students?

<u>Other</u>

15. What else has made you or other LGBTQ students feel more comfortable or supported in school?

    a. What are some other resources in your school that you or other LGBTQ students turn to?

16. What else do you wish your school would have in order to make you or other LGBTQ students feel more comfortable or supported in school?

    a. What are some resources you wish your school had that you or other LGBTQ students could turn to?

17. What have I not asked about that you think is an important way for schools to support you or other LGBTQ students

APPENDIX H

PRESENTATION PROTOCOL FOR BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Group Meeting #1: Brainstorming Session

Today, we will...

- Go over the purpose of today's group meeting
- Review key terms/vocabulary
- Preview what today's group brainstorming process will look like and how this information will be used our next meeting
- Start the brainstorming!

What is the purpose of today's Group Brainstorming meeting?

- To take part in a volunteer research study that could help build better information for ways to help LGBTQ high school students
- To brainstorm all the ways that school could help LGBTQ students have positive social, emotional, and academic outcomes
- To give LGBTQ high school students the opportunity to share their voice

What key terms/vocabulary do I need to know?

- LGBTQ Youth—
  - The term for sexual minorities that refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, as well as youth who are questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression
  - An umbrella term used to describe individuals who have diverse sexual orientations or gender identities
  - Anyone who would not describe themselves as being a strictly heterosexual male or female

What key terms/vocabulary do I need to know?

- Supports in School—
  - Anything that makes students feel safe and comfortable, feel that they are cared about, and feel that they are given opportunities to be successful
    - Can happen after there is a problem OR before a problem ever arises
  - **Social support**—anything that improves the way students get along with other people and feel connected to other people
  - **Emotional support**—anything that makes students feel better about themselves, help students better understand and deal with their emotions, and help students feel happier.
  - **Academic support**—anything that makes students feel encouraged or assisted in their efforts to learn and do their school work.

What key terms/vocabulary do I need to know?

- School Staff—
  - Teachers,
  - Teacher's aides
  - Guidance counselors
  - School nurses
  - School psychologists
  - School social workers
  - Administrators (e.g., Principal, Assistant Principal)
  - School resource officer

What are the steps to today's Group Brainstorming?

⊙ Today, you will:
  › Be shown a question that will ask you to respond with ways in which schools and school staff can best support LGBTQ students
  › Be asked to first think silently and write down the ideas that you can brainstorm on your own
  › Be asked to then share ideas with the group. These ideas will be typed and projected to make sure we correctly record your ideas
  › Be given the chance to share any ideas you don't feel comfortable sharing with the group onto index cards to be turned in at the end of the session

What are we expected to do?

⊙ Participants
  › Communicate any and all ideas related to the question
  › Do not edit, except to clarify or edit your own ideas
  › Be respectful of everyone's ideas
  › Give everyone the chance to participate
  › No criticizing or attacking
⊙ Facilitators
  › Get everyone involved in sharing, or writing
  › Keep everyone on task
  › Type all ideas and display them in order to make sure they are correctly recorded
  › Ensure the topic is fully considered

What happens to the brainstormed ideas?

⊙ Your brainstormed ideas will be combined with brainstormed ideas from other groups of LGBTQ youth from different schools
⊙ The combined list of brainstormed ideas will be used during Session 2
  › Participants in Session 2 will rate how important and helpful the brainstormed ideas are for LGBTQ students, and how frequently they occur in your school
  › Participants in Session 2 will sort the ideas into groups of similar ideas to see how they all relate to each other in the eyes of students

What happens after this is all finished?

⊙ Responses from students in all groups such as this one will be combined
⊙ Results will be shared with your school's GSA and members of your school staff
  › *Your name will not be tied to any results and will be kept confidential*
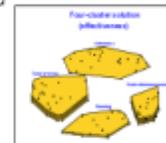
Question

⊙ Please complete the following statement:

  One way that schools and school staff, can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is...

⊙ Think silently and write down ideas for 5 minutes. Then, we will take turns sharing out ideas as a group.

APPENDIX I

PRESENTATION PROTOCOL FOR RATING AND SORTING SESSION

Group Meeting #2
Rating and Sorting Session

Protocol Version 2 -- 6/25/12

Today, we will...

- Go over the purpose of today's group meeting
- Review key terms/vocabulary
- Preview what today's rating activity will look like and the way questions will be worded
- Preview what today's sorting activity will look like
- Start the activities:
  1. Rating
  2. Sorting

What is the purpose of today's Rating and Sorting meeting?

- To take part in a volunteer research study that could help build better information for ways to help LGBTQ high school students
- To better understand your thoughts about the things that schools can do to help LGBTQ students have positive social, emotional, and academic outcomes
  - Which things would be most important to actually happen in schools?
  - Which things already take place in schools often?
  - Which things when carried out in schools have been the most helpful?
  - How do all the things that schools could do to help LGBTQ students relate to each other?
- To give high school students the opportunity to share their input

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What key terms/vocabulary do I need to know?

- LGBTQ Youth—
  - The term for sexual minorities that refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, as well as youth who are questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression
  - An umbrella term used to describe individuals who have diverse sexual orientations or gender identities
  - Anyone who would not describe themselves as being a strictly heterosexual male or female

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What key terms/vocabulary do I need to know?

- Supports in School—
  - Anything that makes students feel safe and comfortable, feel that they are cared about, and feel that they are given opportunities to be successful
    - Can happen after there is a problem OR before a problem ever arises
  - **Social support**—anything that improves the way students get along with other people and feel connected to other people
  - **Emotional support**—anything that makes students feel better about themselves, help students better understand and deal with their emotions, and help students feel happier
  - **Academic support**—anything that makes students feel encouraged or assisted in their efforts to learn and do their school work

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What key terms/vocabulary do I need to know?

- Brainstormed Ideas:
  - Before this meeting, groups of LGBTQ students brainstormed answers to the question:
    One way that schools and school staff, can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is...
  - Answers from the groups have been combined and the full list is described as the "Brainstormed Ideas List"
  - Each of the items from the Brainstormed Ideas List will be looked at during today's activities

What are the steps to today's Rating activity?

⊙ Today, you will:
> On a scale of 1 to 7, rate how important and helpful the Brainstormed Ideas are for LGBTQ students, and how frequently they occur in your school
> Choose and rank your top 5 most important, most helpful, and most frequently occuring of the brainstormed ideas

Examples:

Not At All Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

On the scale of 1 to 7, how important is it for this to happen in schools in order to help LGBTQ students socially, emotionally, or academically?

a. Have pizza on the menu at lunch:　　1 2 3 4 5 6 7
b. Have pizza parties for good behavior:　1 2 3 4 5 6 7
c. Have pizza eating contests:　　　　　1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Examples:

Never Happened	Rarely Happened	Occasionally Happened	Sometimes Happened	Often Happened	Usually Happened	Always Happened
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

On a scale of 1 to 7, how often has this happened at your school over the past year?

a. Have pizza on the menu at lunch:　　1 2 3 4 5 6 7
b. Have pizza parties for good behavior:　1 2 3 4 5 6 7
c. Have pizza eating contests:　　　　　1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Examples:

Not At All Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Helpful	Quite Helpful	Very Helpful	Extremely Helpful
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

On the scale of 1 to 7, how helpful was this in providing social, emotional, or academic support to you or other LGBTQ students at your school?

a. Have pizza on the menu at lunch:　　1 2 3 4 5 6 7
b. Have pizza parties for good behavior:　1 2 3 4 5 6 7
c. Have pizza eating contests:　　　　　1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Examples

On the scale of 1 to 7, how important is it for this to happen in schools in order to help LGBTQ students socially, emotionally, or academically?

a. Have pizza on the menu at lunch:　　1 2 ③ 4 5 6 7
b. Have pizza parties for good behavior:　1 2 3 4 5 6 ⑦
c. Have pizza eating contests:　　　　　1 ② 3 4 5 6 7
.
.
z. Have caring teachers:　　　　　　　1 2 3 4 5 6 ⑦

Now that you have rated each idea, please rank order the Top 5 most important things to have happened in schools in order to help LGBTQ students socially, emotionally, or academically.
Most Important:　　Z
2nd Most Important:　H
3rd Most Important:　B
4th Most Important:　K
5th Most Important :　F

Examples

On the scale of 1 to 7, how often has this happened at your school over the past year?

a. Have pizza on the menu at lunch:　　1 2 3 4 5 6 ⑦
b. Have pizza parties for good behavior:　1 ② 3 4 5 6 7
c. Have pizza eating contests:　　　　　① 2 3 4 5 6 7
.
.
z. Have caring teachers:　　　　　　　1 2 3 4 5 ⑥ 7

Now that you have rated each idea, please rank order the Top 5 things that happened most often in your school.
Most Often:　　A
2nd Most Often:　K
3rd Most Often:　Z
4th Most Often:　G
5th Most Often:　M

Examples

On the scale of 1 to 7, how _helpful_ was this in providing social, emotional, or academic support to you or other LGBTQ students at your school?

a. Have pizza on the menu at lunch: ①2 3 4 5 6 7
b. Have pizza parties for good behavior: 1 2 3 4 5 6⑦
c. Have pizza eating contests: 1 2 3 4 5⑥7

-
-
-

z. Have caring teachers: 1 2 3 4 5 6⑦

Now that you have rated each idea, please rank order the Top 5 _most helpful_ things that happened in your school for you or other LGBTQ students:

Most Helpful: Z
2ⁿᵈ Most Helpful   B
3ʳᵈ Most Helpful: M
4ᵗʰ Most Helpful: K
5ᵗʰ Most Helpful: F

Sorting

- After you finish the rating activity, please let the facilitator know in order to get materials for the Sorting activity
- What is the Sorting activity?
  - You will receive a list of all the brainstormed ideas (same ideas that you just rated and ranked)
  - You will sort each idea into groups that you believe are related to each other.
  - Name each group based on how the ideas relate to each other

Steps to Sorting

- **You will categorize the statements, according to your view of their meaning or theme.**
- Sort each statement into piles in a way that makes sense to you.
- First, read through the statements in the Unsorted Statements column to the left.
- Next, sort each statement into a pile you create. Group the statements for how **similar in meaning or theme** they are to one another.
- Give each pile a name that describes its theme or contents.
- When you have finished sorting, double check your piles to make sure each statement is where you want it to be

Steps to Sorting

- **Do NOT**
  - create piles according to priority, or value, such as 'Important', or 'Hard To Do.'
  - create piles such as 'Miscellaneous' or "Other" that group together dissimilar statements. Put a statement alone in its own pile if it is unrelated to all the other statements. Make sure every statement is put somewhere.
  - Do not leave any statements in the Unsorted Statements column.
- About 5 to 20 piles will likely work well to organize this number of statements.
- Click save to record your work

What happens after this is all finished?

- Everyone's rating, ranking, and sorting data will be combined
- Results may be shared with your school's GSA, your community organization, and/or staff at your school/community organization
  - Your name will not be tied to any results and will be kept confidential

Question???

Ready to begin?

Your facilitator will set up the sorting and rating program for you to begin. Remember to please feel free to ask questions to facilitators if questions come up while you are working independently.

APPENDIX J

RATING AND RANKING PAPER/PENCIL SURVEY

In this packet are a number of items that were brainstormed by LGBTQ youth that complete following statement:

One way that schools and school staff can help support the social, emotional, and academic needs of LGBTQ students is...

DIRECTIONS: For each statement, please answer the following three questions using the 1 to 7 scale provided.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
On the scale of 1 to 7, how **important** is it for this to happen in schools in order to help LGBTQ students socially, emotionally, or academically?		Not at All Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
On a scale of 1 to 7, how **often has this happened** at your school over the past year?		Never Happened	Rarely Happened	Occasionally Happened	Sometimes Happened	Often Happened	Usually Happened	Always Happened
On the scale of 1 to 7, how **helpful** was this in providing social, emotional, or academic support to you or other LGBTQ students at your school?	N/A Not Applicable (Never Happened)	Not at All Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Helpful	Quite Helpful	Very Helpful	Extremely Helpful

On a separate page, after you are finished, you will select your top 5 most *important*, most *often* occurring, and most *helpful* items (a total of 15 statements). Your answers are based on your experiences and thoughts. To help identify these as you go, you may circle the item where it says Top Ranked.

1. teachers do not gossip or bad mouth LGBTQ people, taking on the idea that "if you don't have anything nice to say about LGBTQ, then don't say anything at all"	How **important** is it? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **often it happened**? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **helpful** was it? N/A 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
2. administrators act as though they love their job when talking with a student, rather than appearing like they are thinking, "Oh great, now I get to go through this crap"	How **important** is it? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **often it happened**? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **helpful** was it? N/A 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
3. schools make students aware that they can go to their guidance counselors to talk about problems other than just those related to classes and graduating	How **important** is it? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **often it happened**? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **helpful** was it? N/A 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
4. teachers allow and include LGBTQ-relevant information, material, and assignments in the curriculum (e.g., a book in English class that has LGBTQ characters; the choice to pick LGBTQ issues as topics for assignments; gay-related material in history class)	How **important** is it? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **often it happened**? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **helpful** was it? N/A 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
5. when a student says something like "back then, if a man and a man lay together, then you know they should be put to death," the teacher will respond by saying that people were also stoned to death for disobeying their parents and asks "have you ever disobeyed your mother?"	How **important** is it? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **often it happened**? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked How **helpful** was it? N/A 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. teachers politely ask questions about a student's involvement in their GSA if it comes up in conversation	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
7. on overnight field trips, schools do not strictly enforce gender separated room assignment	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
8. the school's no bullying policy is enforced by having students get a referral or other discipline when they bully, harass, and/or use words like "fag," "dyke," or "that's so gay"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
9. straight teachers set the example by being supportive of the LGBTQ teachers at the school and by letting those teachers know that it's okay for them to be 'out' at school	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
10. teachers show that they are open-minded by leading in depth discussions about different points of view (e.g., discussing how an issue was controversial in medieval times but not in modern times)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
11. administrators do not tolerate the deliberate exclusion of the GSA or LGBTQ students (e.g., would not let people keep the GSA out of the yearbook)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
12. sex education includes information about same-sex couples and information about same-sex safe sex to prevent STDs	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
13. after a student reports being bullied, school mental health providers at least bring the student down to be talked to, and when appropriate, the bully is given consequences for what they have done	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
14. school mental health providers make announcements as reminders about how to treat each other (e.g., "Don't be a jerk to people, no matter who they are")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
15. school staff share and/or post "Safe Space" stickers, gay rainbow flag posters, anti-bullying posters, or other LGBTQ-related materials in classrooms, offices, and around campus	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
16. schools support the Day of Silence and other LGBTQ-related events (i.e., make announcements, share reasons for the Day of Silence and do not force students to talk, allow information tables to be set up at lunch)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

17. teachers don't assume anyone is gay because of their mannerisms or dress	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
18. when talking with students after a fight, administrators listen to every single detail that the student wants to share even if it sounds unnecessary or if they don't like hearing about certain things (e.g., the student mentions that being gay is part of the reason for why the conflict happened)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
19. teachers try to be less judgmental and more understanding by thinking about what it's like to walk in our shoes	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
20. schools have support for guys being on the cheerleading team or other ways to degenerderize/integrate sports	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
21. teachers never tell any student "it's just a phase"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
22. teachers have fun with students during class	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
23. schools have a school newspaper that students are required to read during a class period, which serves as a way to get students reading about school policies and articles about LGBTQ people or issues (e.g. gay man gets shot in hate crime)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
24. rather than the GSA sponsor running everything, the sponsor asks questions like, "What would you do about this?" and has the students run the club	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
25. school mental health providers help to keep students from committing suicide	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
26. after seeing a student crying from being harassed, a teacher walks the student down to the office and helps out, saying things like, "The bullying kid needs to go. He can't be bullying at school"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
27. teachers treat all the students in the school as if they're a part of a family together	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often it happened*?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

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28. schools have a general no-bullying policy	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
29. staff do not point out things in an offensive way (e.g., saying to a gay couple, "leave your boyfriend alone, and sit over there!)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
30. teachers allow students to bring their "drama" into class for five minutes to talk about it and debate their issues in order to prevent fights from breaking out at lunch or in the hallways	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
31. schools teach available research about sexual orientation or LGBTQ course information so people don't have to continue being ignorant about it or stereotyping	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
32. schools hold an assembly to discuss bullying that includes discussion that harassing or joking about LGBTQ students is a form of bullying	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
33. when school mental health providers see a student who is sad, they pull the student aside to make sure the student is okay or will talk to the student if there is something going on	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
34. physical and sexual harassment is taken more seriously (e.g., school mental health providers are trained to handle situations involving sexual harassment, make it easier for victims to talk about what happened, provide punishments)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
35. when a student is in need, the social worker helps to find and provide necessities for the student and other smaller items (e.g., chocolates)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
36. teachers treat an LGBTQ student as an equal	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
37. schools play supportive LGBTQ-related videos and music (e.g., Born This Way) or messages (e.g., "If you're gay, you're okay. If you're bi, it's all right. If you're straight, that's great.") on the morning show or announcements	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
38. schools include other community clubs into the schools [e.g., Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) meetings are held at schools as a support for friends, parents, and teachers]	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

39. teachers use students' preferred gender pronouns (e.g., "he" or "she") and preferred name in class, and will correct students who use the wrong pronouns/name for a transgender student	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
40. a GSA sponsor prepares students to expect that they will get a "No" when asking permission for something from administration so that if administration says "Yes," they will be more excited	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
41. teachers pass out index cards during the first few classes of the year asking students what name they prefer and write that preferred name next to the attendance sheet	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
42. to allow a student to be less dependent on parents, the social worker provides information about resources and programs to a student who wants to have options for life after graduating or in case problems get worse with their home situation	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
43. when a student shares with a teacher about a problem being bullied, the teacher helps the student with how to report the incident and actually get somewhere with it (e.g., points the student to the best administrator to talk to about it)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
44. the school's anti-bullying campaigns focus around the message of "Do not bully" rather than "Don't get bullied"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
45. if an LGBTQ related poster has been ripped up, teachers give a referral, detention or some type of consequence to the person who did it	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
46. rather than making offensive jokes in class (e.g., when talking about a term "homogeneous" in chemistry class, the teacher makes a "homo" joke), teachers say supportive comments (e.g., when talking about "homogeneous", the teacher says "It's okay to be homo")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
47. enforce GSA club participation rules so that students are not just getting out of class to be in the club and are not allowed to bully or misbehave (e.g., revoke their club pass)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
48. teachers use their authority to control the classroom environment and make sure that everybody is respectful within the classroom	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
49. teachers recognize that not all couples are heterosexual and they do not assume everyone is heterosexual when talking with students (e.g., when talking about relationships, they include examples of gay couples)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

50. schools let transgender students run for homecoming/prom king or queen	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
51. for introductions, teachers have students complete a "get to know you" paper (e.g., what is your name and any nick name; what do you like to do, what do you like about the class, etc.) and have parents write something that they think the teacher should know about their child	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
52. if an LGBTQ student makes a school staff member aware of a problem, that staff member shares the information with other staff members who may be able to help solve the problem	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
53. teachers step in if a student is questioning another student and making that student feel uncomfortable about their sexuality	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
54. schools add items to staff questionnaires, such as "if an LGBTQ student comes with a problem, how would you respond to it or help that student"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
55. when other people come to the door while a student is talking through problems with his/her school mental health provider, the other people are told to either wait until they are finished talking or go back to class	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
56. schools make sure that transgender students are able to use the correct/preferred bathroom that is matched to their gender identity	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
57. teachers let a student eat lunch in their classroom and talk	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
58. when talking with a student, teachers ask about that student's personal interests rather than what may be general interests of other students at the school (e.g., "do you like to go shopping?" versus "you like to go fishing or mudding?")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
59. sex education includes statements that are less sexist and more open-minded	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
60. schools background check teachers or survey them so that they do not hire someone who is racist, homophobic, etc., and fire teachers who are	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

61. for transgender students or those who have problems feeling safe in bathrooms, schools have an alternative unisex restroom or allow those students to use the nurse's, teacher's, or other 'gay-friendly' bathroom	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
62. when a student goes to an administrator with problems, the administrator works to calm down the student	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
63. guidance counselors write a letter of recommendation for a student applying to college and include information about his/her leadership role in GSA	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
64. school staff are provided trainings about ways to handle LGBTQ issues and help LGBTQ students	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
65. teachers include facts, information, or books about LGBTQ people in a positive, or at least neutral light, rather than in a derogatory context	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
66. on an on-going basis, schools utilize down time (like when some grades/classes are testing or during the morning show), to give students quick (e.g., 5 minute) talks about anti-bullying that mention not talking bad about a person's sexual orientation, race, weight, etc.	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
67. teachers who are LGBTQ are open about it instead of hidden	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
68. when a student has a problem (e.g., bullying, family conflict, dating, LGBTQ identity issues), teachers and school mental health providers take time to listen, comfort, and talk with the student about the problems (e.g., "Don't get down and out by these things," "try not to let it bother you too much")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
69. if there is a misunderstanding that makes students feel like they were being discriminated against (e.g., the teacher separates a gay couple from sitting next to each), the teacher pulls them aside to apologize for the misunderstanding and explain her actions (e.g., saying that she separated them to make sure they paid more attention in class)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
70. teachers establish basic classroom rules that are supportive of LGBTQ students (e.g., "be kind and courteous to students," "we don't tolerate bullying," "this is a safe space for students to be," "treat people how you should be treated")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

71. schools allow same-sex couples to go to dances together and get "couples" tickets	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
72. administrators support, approve, and allow their school to have a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and have GSA activities (e.g., allows GSA to make announcement and put up posters, supports them having pictures in the yearbook)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
73. school policy allows transgender students to be on sports teams that match their gender identity (e.g., transgender male can play on male teams)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
74. school mental health providers are available to talk with students when they need them or when they are having a bad day	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
75. schools have a teacher who helps advocate for getting GSA activities or materials approved by administration	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
76. when a student brings a complaint or concern about a teacher not treating her equally, the administrator talks to the teacher about it and helps the teacher to see things through the student's eyes	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
77. teachers and administrators enforce policies by scolding students who break them (e.g., they step in to stop bullying/harassment and yell something, like "Quit it," or "They're not judging you for being straight, so don't judge them for being gay")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
78. teachers provide individual students with reminders and encouragement (e.g., "This is coming up. We got to go. It's going to be fun") to participate in GSA or other social activities	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
79. schools make a list of different teachers that students can go to in order to talk, and this list is shared with students 80.	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
81. teachers assume everybody is the same and issue the same respect towards everyone	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
82. administrators are aware of LGBTQ issues and LGBTQ students in need of support, rather than pretending they are not there	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

83. teachers have the same rules related to public displays of affection (PDA) for straight couples and same-sex couples, and they enforce the rules equally	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
84. if teachers know a student is gay, they don't point it out in front of others (e.g., in class, during parent-teacher conference) or put the spotlight on that student in a way that makes the student feel out of place	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
85. teachers "tell their own life stories" to show support or give support to LGBTQ students (e.g., "I have a gay son" or "I have a lesbian aunt" or "my best friend for 12 years is gay")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
86. teachers view LGBTQ kids that hang out together just as regular kids, similar to other kids who hang out together in different cliques	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
87. schools talk about anti-bullying issues more often and include discussion about bullying based on sexual orientation, race, physical characteristics, etc.	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
88. teachers do not allow students to treat LGBTQ couples like dirt or use derogatory words, taking the use of LGBTQ slurs just as seriously as other slurs (e.g., racial slurs)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
89. school mental health providers make sure that there is a place for all students and provide guidance regarding places where students can go to be with people like themselves	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
90. for PE, there is an option to change privately	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
91. school mental health providers say things to make students feel more at ease (e.g., "You're safe," "Nothing's going to happen to you," "There's nothing wrong with you," "We'll try to help you")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
92. when an LGBTQ student brings up something about his or her same-gender boyfriend/girlfriend, school mental health providers keep good eye contact and do not change their facial expressions, back up, or say something like, "Oh. You're gay?"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
93. when an incident of aggression or harassment was ignored or not handled well by a certain administrator, another administrator will talk to him or her afterwards to make suggestions about how to better deal with those types of incident (e.g., "Hey next time, you should probably look at this again")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

94. teachers don't treat homosexuality like it's a controversial subject or make things awkward in the classroom when talking about gay issues (e.g., teachers don't put LGBTQ issues "in the closet" and are open in talking about it)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
95. when a student talks to an administrator about being threatened and terrified by another student, the administrator calls the victim's parent to share and discuss what is going on	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
96. schools give away cupcakes that are made with rainbows that say "you are welcome"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
97. schools have organizations that sponsor the GSA	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
98. schools have a program that will provide students who are in need with things like food, clothes, or other necessities, and the program is well known to students because of posters being up around the school and on the school website	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
99. teachers express to all of their students and are open about being able to help students in and outside of class (e.g., saying "see me after class, I can help" or "you can talk to me anytime that you want, we can go to guidance, or anything like that")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
100. no one complains that the school allows LGBTQ books, videos, and materials in its library	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
101. teachers give useful life advice (e.g., reminders to think about deadlines)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
102. rather than helping LGBTQ students in class last, teachers provide help to students in the order that they asked for help so that they provide their help equally	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
103. schools have GSA meetings frequently (e.g., once a week, twice a month)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
104. rather than directly saying "I'm supportive of you," teachers show support in more incognito ways so that they are not forcing students to talk about anything	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

105. teachers and administrators will support a student who is telling others not to say "that's so gay"	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
106. schools make sure that their policies are up to date so that students can't discriminate against other students based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, etc.	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
107. after hearing another staff member make offensive comments in front of students (e.g., "you know they're just fags") or about a student (e.g., "you're probably gay because you have that feminine voice"), a teacher stands up to that staff member and says something (e.g., "you can't say that if you're going to work in this type of school")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
108. schools don't treat homosexuality as if it is a transferrable illness	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
109. GSA advisors make sure there are elected officers	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
110. schools make sure to include gender expression along with sexual orientation in everything (don't leave it out)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
111. schools have an LGBTQ board or peer counselors	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
112. schools have Safe Space Kits (i.e., resource with guidelines and information for creating safe spaces in schools) that school mental health providers share with a student they are meeting with to let him or her know of available resources and know that that the school follows guidelines from the kit	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
113. schools have a pride month, pride day, or pride parade (e.g., at a pep rally or afterschool) that is recognized by the school	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
114. schools allow GSA members to fundraise on their own to support approved field trips and events (e.g., take a trip down to a Pride parade)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
115. students are allowed to do petitions or have a say or voice in how schools are being run	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

116. school mental health providers hold a school-wide assembly on bullying and how harassing an LGBTQ student, even if students think they are joking about it, is a form of bullying	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
117. teachers talk about national campaigns (e.g., Lady Gaga's Born This Way campaign) and then talk about things that exist within the school that are similar (e.g., anti-bullying policies)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
118. school mental health providers provide Safe Space stickers to staff who want them	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
119. when a gay and straight student get into a fight, the administrator gives punishments to both students (since they both caused the 'drama')	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
120. when a student has significant problems outside of school (e.g., with family, police, homelessness), school staff find resources and provide special support to assist (e.g., help provide transportation to community organizations and agencies, find and deliver basic necessities, offer shelter)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
121. rather than having vague parental permission forms for GSA events, clearly write on the form that it is a GSA event	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
122. school mental health providers speak to groups of students (e.g., at school assemblies, club meetings, morning show) to introduce themselves and let students know that they provide a safe place for them to talk or get help	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
123. when a student shares that they are having a problem with a particular teacher, the guidance counselor talks to that teacher about the problem (e.g., "You really shouldn't be doing this,") and will move the student to a different class if the teacher still does not make changes	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
124. schools show things like "gay penguins" to demonstrate that being gay is not a choice	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
125. teachers work to show students that it's okay to be supportive and kind to people who are different (e.g., lead lessons on being nice to people of different races or sexualities, do an activity on what it is like to be discriminated against)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
126. schools hold an assembly at the beginning of the year in which staff go over the school rules (e.g., dress codes, cell phones, bullying) and what students need to do for the year	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

127. after a student 'comes out', the teacher gives the student tips, stays after school to talk, or helps with other specific needs if needed	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
128. if a student "comes out" during class, the teacher gives massive applause and kudos to the student	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
129. teachers treat homosexual couples like actual couples (e.g., they have an "it's not a big deal" mentality when a gay couple walks by, rather than saying to them "Stop holding hands" or taking a second look)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
130. after learning about a student's LGBTQ identity or noticing a change in the person's gender expression, a teacher says something supportive (e.g., "Hey, you are cool,""That's really awesome to know about you. I am glad that you told me.")	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
131. teachers stop putting stereotypes on certain genders in class (e.g., guys being masculine and having deep voices)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
132. when providing help to a student, the teacher leaves the student with some responsibilities so that the student will be ready to do it on his/her own when the time comes	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
133. one or more school staff (i.e., teachers, school mental health providers) serve as GSA sponsors	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
134. if a student in class says, "oh, that's gay," the teacher's whole look on her face changes to show disapproval	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
135. administrators communicate more clearly and make paperwork less obnoxious in relation to club (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliance) activities	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
136. when a student shares that he/she missed class to avoid getting beat up, the teacher takes action (e.g., explains what the student can do, reviews the work that was missed, offers tutoring, allows an opportunity to talk about issues)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
137. teachers help coordinate GSA events, LGBTQ related activities, and/or get-together events with other school's GSAs	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

138. when a student is wanting to withdraw from school, administrators sit down and try to convince the student to stay	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
139. schools provide examples of older gay married couples	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
140. teachers and school mental health providers participate with and support the school's GSA and its members (e.g., post flyers outside their door for a GSA event, attend a GSA meeting or event, help the GSA sponsor find a company to get GSA t-shirts made, buy GSA t-shirts)	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
141. school mental health providers give answers to a student's questions about things like general health, ways to meet people, how to broaden one's group of friends, LGBTQ issues, etc.	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
142. schools make sure that people understand that love is love, that it doesn't matter what sex they are, and that there is no reason people should be judged for this as long as they are happy	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
143. schools have an anti-bullying policy in which teachers are required to take action (e.g., must say something, break up fights, give suspensions, or press charges) if they see or hear bullying (e.g., making fun of someone for being gay)	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
144. regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression, teachers do not ask about student's genitalia, sexual experience, or other invasive questions	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
145. schools allow students to use the gym locker rooms that match their gender identity	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
146. student manuals of rules are reviewed during homeroom and students are required to read the entire manual with their parents and return it signed	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
147. college counselors or guidance counselors should look for LGBTQ scholarships and communicate this with GSA advisors and/or students	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
148. regardless of their own views and beliefs, school staff are open, tolerant, accepting, and respectful towards everyone, including LGBTQ individuals	How *important* is it?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Top Ranked

149. school policies deal with the whole student body in general, where every student is a student and do not say anything specific about certain groups of students	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
150. schools provide materials (e.g., pamphlets, books, posters) with LGBTQ related information and community groups in guidance	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
151. schools have a way of getting in touch with groups or programs that help LGBTQ students	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
152. teachers openly talk about LGBTQ issues with students when they are one-on-one with a student	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
153. schools hire more LGBTQ teachers	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
154. school secretaries talk with students and provide assistance when possible (e.g., give suggestions about public places where students can be themselves, help students with paperwork and getting GSA activities approved)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
155. schools make announcements about community supports for LGBTQ students	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
156. school dress code fits all students, not just straight students (e.g., freedom of expression, can wear Pride symbols, women can dress like men and women can dress like men, anyone can wear a tux to prom)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
157. school mental health providers support students in helping them find a job (e.g., set up job interviews, talk to students and interviewers about students getting jobs)	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
158. administrators interact well with all types of people by joking around and by getting answers for students whenever they have meaningful question	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
159. schools have motivational LGBTQ speakers come in during an afterschool, weekend, or whole school seminar activity	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

160. if a student asks about gay sex in class, the teacher says that's inappropriate and rude to say in class	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
161. a school mental health provider leads a group for LGBTQ students to help them talk to each other, to gain allies, and to understand their emotions and each other better	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
162. teachers keep religion outside of school to help keep students from feeling unwanted	How *important* is it?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *often* it happened?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked
	How *helpful* was it?	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Top Ranked

APPENDIX K

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

October 11, 2011

Troy Loker
Psychological and Social Foundations

RE: **Full Board Approval** for Initial Review
    IRB#: Pro00001335
    Title: Learning from voices of diverse youth: School-based practices and policies to promote positive psychosocial outcomes for LGBTQ high school students
    Study Approval Period: 9/23/2011 to 9/23/2012

Dear Mr. Loker,

On 9/23/2011 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below. Please note that your approval for this study will expire on 9/23/2012.

Approved Items:
Protocol Document(s):

Dissertation Proposal   9/6/2011 4:20 PM   0.04

Consent/Assent Document(s)

Informed Assent.pdf   10/11/2011 1:52 PM 0.01
Informed Consent for persons 18 and older.pdf 10/11/2011 1:52 PM 0.01
Parental Consent.pdf   10/11/2011 1:52 PM 0.01

Please note, if applicable, the **informed consent/assent documents are valid during the period indicated by the official, IRB-Approval stamp located on the form.**   You are to use only the watermarked/stamped consent forms found under the "Attachment Tab" in the recruitment of participants. As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, PhD, Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Cc: Anna Davis, USF IRB Professional Staff