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Parental Support of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth Following Disclosure: A Longitudinal, Cohort-Sequential Study

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PARENTAL SUPPORT OF LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL YOUTH FOLLOWING DISCLOSURE: A LONGITUDINAL, COHORT-SEQUENTIAL STUDY

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Parent support is believed to be important for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, particularly in the context of parental acceptance in response to youth disclosure of their sexual identity. While preliminary research has examined the importance of parental acceptance at the time of disclosure using retrospective reports, few studies have examined if and how parental acceptance changes over time since disclosure, and no study has assessed paired youth and parent perspectives on parental acceptance. Furthermore, there is a limited understanding of the ways that family interaction patterns influence parent reactions to youth disclosure. The present study aimed to understand parental acceptance via youth and parent perspectives, both at the initial time of disclosure and across time, and the link between family dynamics and parental acceptance. One hundred and sixty lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, ages 14-24, and 71 of their parents, were asked about perceived parental reactions in response to youth disclosure of their sexual minority status. Family interaction patterns were also assessed. A cohort-sequential latent growth model revealed no change in parental acceptance, via youth report, over time following disclosure. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that high control and disorganized family interaction patterns were distinct forms of unbalanced family interaction patterns, and further analyses indicated that balanced

dynamics were linked with increased parental acceptance, high control dynamics were inconsistently associated with less parental acceptance, and disorganized family interaction patterns were not related to parental acceptance. Results of this study provide important information about parental reactions to youth disclosure of LGB status, and identify family interaction patterns as an important influence of parental acceptance.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Parental support is a fundamental building block for youth adjustment (e.g., Holahan, Valentiner, & Moos, 1994; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). Parental support has been defined as parental behaviors directed towards the child, such as praising, encouraging, and giving affection, which express to the youth that he/she is loved and valued (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2006). The need for parental support does not end after childhood, but rather, parental support continues to be associated with adaptive functioning during adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Helsen, Vollebergh, & Meeus, 2000; House et al., 1988). For example, parental support has been shown to positively relate to youth autonomy (Levitt, Silver, & Santos, 2007), adolescent-parent relationship satisfaction (Levitt et al., 2007), physical activity (Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000), reduced alcohol use (Ryan, Jorb, & Lubman, 2010), and psychological well-being (Holahan et al., 1994). In contrast, a lack of parental support has been associated with maladjustment, including aggression and substance abuse (Barber & Rollins, 1990).

Parental support is likely to be particularly important for youth well-being during times of stress or vulnerability (Auerbach, Bigda-Peyton, Eberhart, Webb, & Ho, 2011). Research on sexual minority youth is only in its nascent stages, but a growing body of evidence indicates that these youth may be particularly in need of parental support. Sexual minority youth are challenged to acknowledge within themselves, and then to disclose to others, a sexual identity that remains stigmatized in society (Savin-Williams, 2001). Not surprisingly, therefore, for sexual minority youth, disclosure of their sexual

orientation, especially to their parents, often is an anxiety provoking experience (Rosario, Rotheram-Borus, & Reid, 1996; Savin-Williams, 2001).

Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) youth do not always feel that they will be able to predict how their parents will respond to their disclosures (Savin-Williams, 2001). Existing evidence points to great variability in parental responses (Beeler & DiProva, 1999; D'Aguelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998; Floyd, Stein, Harter, Allison, & Nye, 1999). While the research in this area is limited, extant data indicate that parental acceptance tend to vary according to several demographic factors, including age, ethnicity, and gender. Younger parents tend to be more accepting than older parents (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2008; Savin-Williams, 1990), ethnic majority parents are likely to be more accepting than ethnic minority parents (Morales, 1989), and mothers are inclined to be more accepting than fathers (Ben-Ari, 1995; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington., 1998; Maguen, Floyd, Bakeman, & Armistead, 2002). Using youth report, D'Augelli and colleagues (1998) found that 42% of fathers and 19% of mothers rejected or were intolerant of their child at the time of initial disclosure. Fortunately, complete estrangement from the family appears to be the exception, rather than the rule, occurring only in approximately 5% of cases (Beeler & DiProva, 1999; Potoczniak, Crosbie-Burnett, & Saltzburg, 2009; Robinson, Walters, & Skeen, 1989). Important limitations of virtually all of these studies to date, however, are their retrospective nature and their near exclusive reliance on youth report; parents are rarely included.

Greater parental acceptance of sexual orientation is associated with better adjustment in youth. Consistent with data on parental support in general, parental

acceptance reported by sexual minority youth positively relates to their health outcomes (Bouris, Guilamo-Ramos, Pickard, Shiu, Loosier, et al., 2010; Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010), psychological well-being (D'Amico & Julien, 2012; Floyd, Stein, Harter, Allison, & Nye, 1999), and less confusion in sexual orientation identity (D'Amico & Julien, 2012; Floyd et al., 1999). Alternatively, a lack of parental acceptance, as reported retrospectively on the time of disclosure, has been found to be associated with maladjustment, risky sexual behavior, increased substance use, violence and victimization, and suicidality (Bouris et al., 2010; Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). These data, thus far, have exclusively come from retrospective youth accounts. In order to fully understand the role of parental acceptance when youth "come out," research will need to include both parent and youth reports, with data collected around the time of disclosure, not only several years in retrospect. Other areas that are not well understood in the coming out process are how parental acceptance evolves over time, and what factors predict parental acceptance. The current study seeks to fill some of these gaps in the literature.

Family Adaptation over Time to Youth Disclosure

As noted above, youth disclosure of their sexual orientation to their parents is one of the most stressful developmental milestones encountered by LGB youth (Savin-Williams, 2001; Willoughby, Malik, & Lindahl, 2006). Beeler and DiProva (1999) have argued that parents are also exposed to considerable stress when their LGB children come out, though this topic has received limited direct empirical study. Family stress theory, although not specifically designed to address the concerns of LGB individuals and their families, may help explain how parents may adapt to their child coming out (Hill, 1949;

McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Willoughby, Doty, & Malik, 2008). Family stress theory focuses on how families adapt to different kinds of stressors. Families adapt and adjust over time, and this process often involves revisions of family rules and patterns of interaction (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). Youth disclosure of being LGB can be considered a stressor that requires families to begin the process of re-defining family roles and identities to include a sexual minority individual (Crosbie-Burnett, Foster, Murray, & Bowen, 1996).

Despite recognition from family stress theory that adaptation is an ongoing and evolving process (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982; McKenry & Price, 2000), surprisingly little is known about how parental acceptance might change over time, though retrospective data offer some hints. Several retrospective studies indicate that level of parental support fluctuates over time in adolescent and young adult populations (Cornwell, 2003; Derkman, Engels, Kuntsche, van der Vorst, & Scholte, 2011). Beals and Peplau (2006) asked 144 gay and lesbian young adults to retrospectively report on their relationship quality and acceptance from those in their personal social network, including parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and mentors, before disclosure and currently. Data indicated that relationship quality improved in 25%, declined in 25%, and remained the same in 50% of cases. Ben-Ari (1995) asked 32 lesbian and gay adults (average age = 32), as well as an unrelated sample of 27 parents with a lesbian or gay child, to retrospectively report on parental reactions to disclosure at one-week, one-month, and six-months post-disclosure, as well as currently. They found that the majority of the respondents perceived that parental acceptance improved over time. Cramer and Roach (1988) asked 93 adult gay males to retrospectively report on

their relationships with their parents prior to coming out, immediately after coming out, and presently. Consistent with other studies, results showed that gay males perceived that their relationships with parents improved over time. Given that there are significant methodological concerns with asking participants to simultaneously report on multiple historical time points, the above results should be interpreted with caution. To date, no research has examined the specific trajectory of parental reactions over time, including timing of improvement in parental acceptance of youths' sexual orientation (Merighi & Grimes, 2000). Still, these preliminary studies suggest that parents' first reactions are rarely their permanent responses (Beals & Peplau, 2006; Beeler & DiProva, 1999; D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2005).

Only a single longitudinal study could be found that tracked LGB youth's perception of family support over time (D'Augelli, Grossman, Stark, & Sinclair, 2010) and none that tracked changes in parental report. D'Augelli and his colleagues followed 196 ethnically diverse LGB youth, initially aged 15-19, for two years. At the beginning of the study, some of the participants were out to their parents and while others were not. Youth reported on their parents' current knowledge of their sexual orientation and their current perceptions of general (non-sexuality-specific) family support at three time-points. Youth who were out prior to the study reported more general family support than youth who came out during the study. All youth, including those who never came out, reported that overall family support increased over time during the course of the study. This study did not, however, directly assess parental acceptance of their child's sexual orientation. This is an important omission, as sexuality-specific support may be more salient for LGB youth than general support (Doty, Willoughby, Lindahl, & Malik, 2010).

Another significant limitation of this study is the omission of any information regarding timing of disclosure. Without an assessment of how long youth have been out, conclusions about changes in family support from time of disclosure until the time of assessment cannot be drawn. In other words, if disclosure is the stressful event that prompts change in family support, without considering how long youth have been out to their parents, it is very difficult to deduce how support is changing over time following disclosure. Additionally, this study is limited by its focus on general family support. The present study aims to build on this initial research by examining the development of parental acceptance prospectively over time, following disclosure of youth sexual minority status.

Family Systems Resources as Predictors of Parental Acceptance

The literature to date, though limited by methodological shortcomings, suggests that there is wide variability in initial levels of parental acceptance, but that parental reactions tend to become more positive over time. In addition to attempting to more precisely measure changes in parental acceptance longitudinally, the present study also seeks to understand how family factors might affect acceptance, both at the time of disclosure and over time. In the broader family stress literature, the presence of family resources has been identified as especially important in helping family members adjust to stressful events (Boss & Thorne, 1989; Hobfoll & Spielberger, 1992; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Olson & McCubbin, 1982). Resources within this model are defined multiple ways and may include tangibles such as finances. More often, however, family resources are conceptualized as interactional processes that reflect psychologically well-functioning family relationships (McCubbin et al., 1996).

Although family stress theory does not emphasize any particular family process, two key elements of family functioning that appear to be especially important resources for families coping with a stressor are family cohesion and family adaptability. Optimally, family systems theory suggests that families should find a "cohesive" and "flexible" structure that allows the family to remain close while at the same time allowing for accommodation to change (Cox & Paley, 1997). Cohesion and adaptability were originally conceptualized to operate on a curvilinear trajectory such as that too much or too little of either family process was discouraged (Olson, 2000). Most empirical studies, however, have found cohesion and adaptability to be linearly related to outcome variables of interest (Anderson & Gavazzi, 1990; Cluff, Hicks, & Madsen, 1994) and thinking about these constructs has evolved over time.

One of the more influential systemic models of family functioning is the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (Olson, 2011). In the Circumplex Model, cohesion is defined as the emotional bonding that exists among family members, while adaptability is characterized by the quality and expression of leadership and relationship rules and negotiation. The Circumplex Model, in its current form, revises early thinking about family processes in two important ways. First, in line with recent empirical studies, it hypothesizes cohesion and adaptability/flexibility, referred to as "balanced" family functioning, to be linearly related to individual functioning, and second, it expands the number of important family processes to include not only cohesion and adaptability, but also dimensions of maladaptive functioning, referred to as unbalanced family functioning.

There are four specific interaction patterns within the unbalanced category: enmeshed, rigid, disengaged, and chaotic (Olson, 2008; Olson, 2011). Enmeshed functioning reflects families who are excessively involved in each other's lives. Families who have difficulty adjusting to change rate high on rigidity. Disengaged functioning describes families who have little unity and emotional attachment. Finally, those families who experience chaos are highly inconsistent in their routines and relationship patterns.

According to this theory, families who report high levels of balanced interactions are likely to report low levels of unbalanced interactions, although it is possible that families may engage in both types of interactions. Balanced interactions are thought to reflect patterns of appropriate levels of cohesion and adaptability, reflecting strong family level resources to successfully adapt to family stressors by flexibly negotiating within the typical family relationships while maintaining interpersonal closeness. In support of the Circumplex Model, empirical studies also show balanced functioning patterns to be associated with better adjustment, including lower internalizing and externalizing symptoms in children (e.g. Johnson, Cowan, & Cowan, 1999; Kerig, 1995; Richmond & Stocker, 2006) and greater family satisfaction and family health and competence, and less family pathology (Olson, 2011). In contrast, unbalanced family interaction patterns are thought to reflect extreme levels of family involvement and either a limited ability to adapt to change or a lack of structure to stabilize the family when stress occurs. Families with unbalanced patterns may have absent or inappropriately rigid interpersonal boundaries or a lack of rules to negotiate change. Research indicates that unbalanced dynamics are related to less family satisfaction and family health and competence, and

greater family pathology (Olson, 2011), as well as lower family quality and higher family stress (Craddock, 2001).

Originally, the Circumplex Model theoretically proposed the existence of four different types of unbalanced patterns, including: Rigidly Enmeshed (which combines rigid and enmeshed patterns), Chaotic Disengaged (which combines the chaotic and disengaged patterns), Chaotic Enmeshed (which combines the chaotic and enmeshed patterns), and Rigidly Disengaged (which combines the rigid and disengaged patterns). Empirical data, however, have only found support for the first two groups.

Franklin, Streeter, and Springer (2001) identified a large correlation between disengaged and chaotic dimensions (r = .60), suggesting that these family processes are not entirely independent such that families who are highly disengaged are also highly chaotic. Olson (2011) replicated this finding and also found a similar relation between disengaged and chaotic dimensions in a pediatric oncology sample (Marsac & Alderfer, 2011). Preliminary data also suggest that the enmeshed and rigid interaction patterns are significantly linked with each other, such that correlations between these two dimensions are larger than correlations with the disengaged and chaotic interaction patterns (Franklin et al., 2001; Marsac & Alderfer, 2011). Small and often insignificant correlations are found between rigid and disengaged dimensions, and also between chaotic and enmeshed dimensions (Franklin et al., 2001; Marsac & Alderfer, 2011; Olson, 2011). In addition, correlations between rigid and disengaged dimensions, and also between chaotic and enmeshed dimensions, tend to be small and insignificant. Early evidence also suggests that these types of family dynamics differentially relate to youth adjustment, such that families of externalizing children tend to have a disorganized interaction pattern, while

families of children with internalizing symptoms are more likely to have a high control interaction pattern (Barber & Buehler, 1996; Davies, Cummings, & Winter, 2004; Dreman & Ronen-Eliav, 1997; Kerig, 1995; Minuchin, Rosman, & Baker, 1978).

Although there is some initial, correlational data to support the Rigidly Enmeshed and Chaotically Disengaged groupings, to date, no factor analytic studies exist to provide more rigorous statistical support for these groups and this is one of the aims of the present study. For the present study, the Rigidly Enmeshed and Chaotically Disengaged interaction patterns were renamed high control & disorganized as these latter labels were thought to more accurately and more parsimoniously represent the family dynamics contained within each grouping. High control patterns reflect family interaction patterns that are overly involved, controlling, and strictly adherent to rules. These families experience extreme emotional closeness with rigid external boundaries (Olson, 2000; Olson & Gorall, 2003). Characteristics of high control patterns have a longstanding history of being described in the literature. Specifically, Minuchin (1974) referred to these families as those with diffused boundaries between family members and such closeness that autonomy is impossible. Similarly, Bowen (1978) described such "stuck-togetherness" as an undifferential family ego mass. High control patterns, although named differently across different research labs, also have been identified in empirical studies of triadic family interactions (Jacobvitz, Hazen, Curran, & Hitchens, 2004) and typologies of family functioning (Davies et al., 2004; Sturge-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2010).

Given the excessively involved and inflexible nature of families primarily characterized by this pattern, it is expected that they may have intense, rigid, or anxious

reactions to change until the family system has re-adjusted to the new situation. In the context of LGB youth disclosure, high control families may be upset by the disclosure and may feel ill-equipped to handle such news. Consequently, initial parental reactions may be negative while parents struggle to adapt the family rules and routines to include an LGB individual. With time to process and slowly adjust to the disclosure, given the overall high level of closeness among family members, parents in high control families may be able to re-define family expectations and interaction patterns in a way that they may provide increased acceptance to their child over time. Thus, in the presence of high control patterns, initial parental reactions are expected to lack acceptance, but after sufficient time to adjust, parental acceptance is expected.

Quite the opposite of high control patterns, disorganized patterns are disengaged and chaotic, reflecting interpersonally distant interactions and dysregulated or absent rules to organize the family system. Minuchin (1974) also described these families as dysfunctional, citing the inappropriate individual boundaries and a lack of loyalty to the family unit. Disorganized patterns also have been identified in typologies of family functioning (Davies, Cummings, & Winter, 2004; Sturge-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2010) and empirical studies of triadic family interactions (Jacobvitz et al., 2004). As disorganized are emotionally distant and disengaged, change may be only minimally disruptive to the family interaction patterns, as "typical" may be poorly defined to begin with. Consequently, when an LGB youth discloses to a family primarily characterized by disorganized interaction patterns, it is possible that the youth may face limited reaction, indifference, and thus neither significant acceptance nor rejection.

Relatively few studies of family system functioning exist for LGB youth and none that specifically examine balanced, rigidly enmeshed, and disengaged chaotic family interaction types. Heatherington and Lavner (2008), however, propose that whole-family dynamics serve as important resources for families in shaping their responses to LGB youth disclosure. Preliminary empirical evidence offers support for this idea. Using a retrospective design and youth report, Willoughby and colleagues (2006) found family cohesion and adaptability to be associated with less negative initial parental responses for young adult gay males. Additionally, Reeves and colleagues (2010) asked family members of LGBT individuals, including parents, siblings, and other extended family, to report on family cohesion and adaptability, and found increased cohesion and adaptability to be associated with more LGBT support in response to youth disclosure. Both of these studies, however, are limited in their measurement of family functioning in that they both were restricted to measures of cohesion and adaptability and did not include unbalanced family functioning dimensions. These studies also focused on initial responses to disclosure and did not examine how family resources are related to acceptance over time. Still, they provide important initial support that balanced interaction patterns are related to increased parental acceptance, following LGB youth disclosure to their families.

Although there is growing theoretical and empirical support for differentiating balanced family interactions patterns (cohesive, adaptive) from different types of unbalanced family interactions, including high control (enmeshed, rigid) and disorganized (disengaged, chaotic) interaction patterns, for predicting youth functioning (Barber & Buehler, 1996; Davies et al., 2004; Dreman & Ronen-Eliav, 1997; Kerig, 1995; Minuchin, Rosman, & Baker, 1978), as yet, few studies have examined

implications for handling family stress (Willoughby et al., 2006; Reeves et al., 2010). In the present study, based on prior findings (Willoughby et al., 2006; Reeves et al., 2010), it is expected that balanced family interaction patterns will be associated with greater parental acceptance for LGB youth upon disclosure to their parents. Hypotheses about unbalanced family interactions are more tentative and exploratory given the dearth of pre-existing literature. It is expected, however, that high control patterns will be associated with lower initial parental acceptance due to difficulty adapting to stress and change, and it is expected that disorganized patterns will be unrelated to parental acceptance, due to the chaotic and disjointed nature of the family interactions and a lack of interpersonal closeness.

Study Aims and Hypotheses

A primary aim of this study was to measure change in parental acceptance following youth disclosure of sexual minority status. This longitudinal study is unique in that it included both youth and parents. The study sought to understand how parental acceptance evolves over time and how family systems processes, such as balanced, high control, and disorganized, affect parental acceptance. The following specific aims were pursued.

Specific Aim 1

The first aim of the study was to examine trajectories of parental acceptance following initial disclosure, using a cohort-sequential design, using youth and parent report. The present study sought to understand how youth perception and parent perception of parental acceptance change in relation to one another.

A. It was hypothesized that parental acceptance will increase over time.

B. The growth of youth report of parental acceptance was expected to parallel the growth of parent report of parental acceptance.

Specific Aim 2

The second aim of the study was to test whether, in addition to balanced patterns, high control and disorganized family interaction patterns are distinct forms of unbalanced patterns.

A. It was hypothesized that three types of family interaction patterns will be empirically supported: balanced, high control, and disorganized.

B. Balanced, high control, and disorganized patterns were expected to occur for both youth and parent report. Therefore, it was expected that, compared to separate sets of factors for youth and parent report, one set of factors representing family patterns from both youth and parent perspectives would best characterize these interaction dynamics.

Specific Aim 3

The third aim of the study was to determine whether family interaction patterns are related to initial level of parental acceptance to youth disclosure. Each specific hypothesis related to this aim was tested twice, once for youth report and once for parent report.

A. It was hypothesized that balanced family interaction patterns (cohesion, adaptability) would be associated with higher levels of parental acceptance at time of disclosure.

B. It was hypothesized that high control family interaction patterns (enmeshment, rigidity) would be associated with less parental acceptance, at the time of disclosure

C. It was hypothesized that disorganized family interaction patterns (disengagement, chaos) would be unrelated to parental acceptance.

Specific Aim 4

Finally, the study aimed to evaluate the impact of balanced, high control and disorganized family interaction patterns on the growth of parental acceptance over the course of long-term adaptation. Again, each hypothesis was tested twice, once for youth report and once for parent report.

A. It was hypothesized that initial balanced family interaction patterns would predict faster initial growth in perceptions of parental acceptance following disclosure.

B. It was hypothesized that initial high control family interaction patterns would predict slower initial growth in parental acceptance.

C. It was hypothesized that initial disorganized family interaction patterns would be unrelated to growth in parental acceptance.

For each of the above hypotheses that are tested using a conditional latent growth model, age, gender, and ethnicity were included as covariates.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Participants

One hundred and sixty LGB adolescents and young adults participated in the current study. Youth ranged in age from 14 to 24. Self-identified sexual orientations of participants included gay (49.4%), lesbian (31.3%), and bisexual (19.4%). 55.6% of the youth sample was male. Participants represented a diverse range of ethnicities, including White: Non-Hispanic (39.9%), White: Hispanic (38.6%), and Black (21.5%), reflecting the surrounding community. Years of education for the youth ranged from completing 7th grade to completing graduate school. All youth in the study had disclosed their sexual orientation to at least one parent. At the initial assessment, time since first disclosure to anyone ranged from .17 to 11 years (M = 3.22, SD = 2.45). Participants' average age, in years, at first disclosure was 15.00 (SD = 2.52) and at initial disclosure to a parent was 16.29 (SD = 2.67).

Seventy-one of the youth also had a biological parent participate in the study. Parents ranged in age from 32 to 63 (M = 47.76, SD = 6.85). 80% of the parents who participated were mothers. 93.2% of the parents identified as heterosexual, with 2.7% identifying as gay and 4.1% identifying as lesbian. Ethnic composition of the parent sample was White: Non-Hispanic (42.7%), White: Hispanic (32.0%), and Black (25.3%). Parent years of education ranged from completing 8th grade to completing graduate school. Only 51% of parents reported their annual income, with an average income of $59,765.47 (SD = $47,340.56).

Procedure

Institutional Review Board approval of the study was secured. As part of a larger longitudinal study on the peer and family relationships of LGB young people, participants were recruited via fliers in the community. Additionally, directors of community and university-based LGB organizations in South Florida were contacted, informed about the nature of the study, and asked if research personnel could visit groups during organized meetings to discuss the study with group members. After permission was obtained, research staff visited meetings to disseminate project advertisements. Interested participants were instructed to contact research staff by phone or e-mail. Participants were required to be out to at least one parent in order to participate. Youth were invited to ask their one of their parents to participate in the study as well, although this was not required. Data collection took place at 4 time points, once every 6 months across a 2-year time period. Youth under 18 were required to get parental consent in order to participate at each time point. Consent was obtained for youth over 18 and for participating parents at each time point. All participants completing the study protocol were offered four free counseling sessions with clinically trained project staff. Youth and parents were each compensated $50 for study participation at each time point. Participants who completed all four time points were compensated an additional $50 each.

Youth and participating parents partook in the study in-person, by mail, or online. In-person participants came to a laboratory setting for a session that lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours. Although part of a larger research project, only the procedures relevant to the current study are described here. Youth completed several questionnaires in English,

while parents were given the option to complete questionnaires in English or Spanish, with bilingual research assistants present as needed. Youth and parents were separated to complete the questionnaires, in order to protect privacy. Subjects who participated by mail were sent study packets. Subjects who participated online received secure log-in information to access the study questionnaires. For those who participated by mail or online, study staff members were available by phone and e-mail to answer any questions. Subjects were re-contacted 6, 12, and 18 months after their initial visit, to complete follow-up visits. Youth and parents who participated in follow-up visits completed the same questionnaires as during the initial visit.

Measures

Demographic Information. To collect relevant demographic information, youth and parent participants were asked to complete a background information questionnaire. This questionnaire assessed age, education, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and time since youth disclosed sexual minority status to a parent.

Family Functioning. Current family functioning was measured using youth and parent report on the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES-IV; Olson, 2008). The FACES-IV contains six subscales: Cohesion, Adaptability, Enmeshment, Rigidity, Disengagement, and Chaos. Each scale includes 7 items, for a total of 42 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Subscale scores are sums, ranging from 7 to 35. Items include "Family members feel very close to each other (Cohesion)", "My family is able to adjust to change when necessary (Adaptability)", "Family members are too dependent on each other (Enmeshed)", "Our family has a rule for almost every possible situation (Rigidity)",

"Family members are on their own when there is a problem to be solved (Disengaged)", and "We never seem to get organized in our family (Chaos)". Adequate internal consistency for all scales has been previously demonstrated (Cohesion α = .89; Adaptability α = .84; Enmeshment α = .77; Rigidity α = .82; Disengagement α = .87; Chaos α = .86; Olson, 2011), and was established in the current study (Youth: Cohesion α = .89; Adaptability α = .81; Enmeshment α = .70; Rigidity α = .71; Disengagement α = .79; Chaos α = .82; Parent: Cohesion α = .86; Adaptability α = .68; Enmeshment α = .74; Rigidity α = .74; Disengagement α = .80; Chaos α = .76). Internal consistency was also examined for separately parents who completed study measures in Spanish, and was variable across scales (Cohesion α = .59; Adaptability α = .85; Enmeshment α = .51; Rigidity α = .51; Disengagement α = .38; Chaos α = .18). A Confirmatory Factor Analysis will be conducted to evaluate whether these six scales reflect underlying interaction patterns. Specifically, a two-factor model, indicating balanced and Imbalanced family functioning dynamics, and a three-factor model, indicating balanced, high control, and Disorganized family functioning dynamics, will be examined. Factors will initially be examined separately for youth and parent-reports, and will be combined to create latents indicated by both youth and parent-reports if warranted.

Parental Reactions. The Perceived Parental Reactions Scale (PPRS) was used to assess parental acceptance (Willoughby et al., 2006). The scale consists of 32 items and was completed by both youth and their parents. Items include "I support my child/ My parent supports me" and "I say he/she is no longer my son/daughter/ My parent says I am no longer his/her child." Each participant completed the PPRS at each measurement occasion, based on current acceptance at the time of assessment. Items were rated on a 5-

point Likert scale, indicating agreement or disagreement. A single summary score was computed by summing all individual items; several item scores were reverse coded prior to being summed. Higher summary scores indicate more parental acceptance. Adequate reliability has been demonstrated in the current study (Youth: assessment 1 α = .97; assessment 2 α = .97; assessment 3 α = .97; assessment 4 α = .92; Parent: assessment 1 α = .94; assessment 2 α = .90; assessment 3 α = .93; assessment 4 α = .92) and the previous literature (α = .95-.97; Willoughby et al., 2006). Internal reliability was examined separately for parents who completed measures in Spanish, and was found to be adequate (assessment 1 α = .70; assessment 2 α = .72; assessment 3 α = .87; assessment 4 α = .90).

Data Analyses

In order to examine the study hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. Full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation, as implemented through Mplus computer software (Muthén & Muthén, 2010), was used to estimate all models, assuming that missing data were missing at random. The chi-square goodness of fit index, comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1981) was used to evaluate model fit.

The first aim of the study was to examine trajectories of parental acceptance following initial disclosure, using a cohort-sequential design, using youth and parent report, and to understand how youth perception and parent perception of parental acceptance change in relation to one another. For Aim 1, an unconditional latent growth model (LGM) was used in this study to model the intercept and slope of parental acceptance following youth disclosure of their sexual orientation. LGM offers numerous

advantages over traditional methods (i.e. repeated-measures ANOVA) for assessing change, including that it takes both factor means and variances into account, can handle missing data, and allows considerably more adaptability in studying measurement change (i.e. accommodation of measurement error, representation of various growth patterns, and modeling predictors of growth trajectory parameters (Fan, 2003). LGMs are also able to test both linear and nonlinear growth functions (Duncan, Duncan, Strycker, & Chaumeton, 2007) and can incorporate accelerated or cohort-sequential designs (Duncan et al., 2007). One of the major advantages of using an LGM framework to model longitudinal data is the ability to examine the effects of predictors on model parameter estimates (Lawrence & Hancock, 1998).

The analyses in this study incorporate a cohort-sequential specification, combining information on parental acceptance from 6 cohorts, each of which have been out to parents a different length of time. A cohort-sequential design, originally proposed by Bell (1953), provides a way to link adjacent segments of limited longitudinal data from different cohorts to determine the existence of a growth curve. This method helps overcome the obstacles of collecting longitudinal data, including time constraints, concerns about attrition, and cost of multiple assessments. The cohort-sequential design requires limited repeated measurements of independent cohorts, such that cohorts have some, but not all, temporally overlapping measurements. Each cohort contributed a different section to the overall curve.

To maximize data collected and minimize sparseness of data, year-long intervals were used. Specifically, the first cohort represented youth who, at the initial assessment, were out to a parent for 1 year or less (n =38), the second cohort represented youth who

were out between 1-2 years at the initial assessment (n = 18), the third cohort represented those out 2-3 years at the initial assessment (n = 30), the forth cohort represented youth out 3-4 years at the initial assessment (n = 23), the fifth cohort represented those out 4-5 years at the initial assessment (n = 13), and the final cohort represented those out 5-6 years at the initial assessment (n = 16). Those youth who were out longer than 6 years (ranging from out 6.5 years to 11 years) at the initial assessment were removed from the analysis, due to the small number of participants (n = 16) spread over a wide time range.

As multiple cohorts contribute to each assessment interval, the total number of measurements per assessment interval ranged from 38 to 60. Specifically, 38 youth were assessed when out to a parent for 1 year or less, all from the first cohort, 48 youth were assessed when out to a parent between 1-2 years, from the first and second cohorts, 55 youth were assessed when out to a parent between 2-3 years, from the first, second, and third cohorts, 60 youth were assessed when out to a parent between 3-4 years, from the second, third, and fourth cohorts, 45 youth were assessed between 4-5 years, from the third, fourth, and fifth cohorts, and 41 youth were assessed between 5-6 years, from the fourth, fifth, and sixth cohorts. As youth were assessed every six months, the assessments of youth who completed questionnaires more than once within a year-long window were averaged. Each youth may have had up to 3 assessments, once averaged scores are considered. The same intervals were used for parent perceptions of parental acceptance. Because of overlap in assessments, it was possible to test the hypothesis that a common trajectory existed for parental acceptance from early disclosure (less than 1 year) to 6 years post-disclosure.

Each cohort had the same pattern of missingness; this missingness was not designed in the original data collection. However, study participants fell at random across time since disclosure cohorts, and time since disclosure was found to be normally distributed in the sample. Thus missingness is ignorable since it meets the assumption that the data are missing at random (MAR; Little & Schenker, 1995). Because each cohort represented a different pattern of missingness in the overall curve, it was possible to build the complete curve using information from all cohorts simultaneously. The same model was assumed in each cohort, which allowed tests of convergence across cohorts and the opportunity to specify a common growth trajectory (Miyazaki & Raudenbush, 2000). The cohort-sequential model served as a proxy for a true longitudinal model (Duncan, Duncan, & Hops, 1996).

The second aim of this study was to test whether, in addition to balanced patterns, high control and disorganized family interaction patterns are distinct forms of unbalanced patterns. For Specific Aim 2, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to examine the measurement model of family functioning patterns. Specifically, CFA is used to explore the relationships between a set of observed variables and a continuous latent variable (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Two-factor (balanced and unbalanced) and three-factor models (balanced, high control, and disorganized) were compared.

The third aim of this study was to examine the link between family interaction patterns (balanced, high control, disorganized) and initial parental acceptance, and the fourth aim was to examine the link between family interaction patterns and growth in parental acceptance over time. These aims were meant to be assessed with a conditional LGM. The initial unconditional no-growth LGM conducted for Specific Aim 1 was

expanded to a conditional model through the inclusion of exogenous variables that were presumed to account for the estimates of the intercept. For the present study, family interaction patterns and demographic covariates were specified to predict the level of parental acceptance.

Linear regression was also used to further examine the relationship between family interaction patterns and parental acceptance. Specifically, factor scores were created to represent balanced, high control, and disorganized interaction patterns by summing all scales that load on each factor, as determined in Specific Aim 2. Parental acceptance at the initial measurement occasion was regressed on balanced, high control, and disorganized family interaction patterns, as well as demographic covariates.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics for variables of interest are presented in Table 1. Skewness and kurtosis statistics indicated no significant violations of normality. Correlations between all study variables are presented in Table 2. Of note are the moderately large correlations between cohesion and flexible functioning ($r = .77$), disengaged and chaotic functioning ($r = .58$), and enmeshed and rigid functioning ($r = .42$). It is also notable that parent age does not correlate significantly with youth or parent perceptions of parental acceptance, inconsistent with existing research (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2008; Savin-Williams, 1990). Additionally, four univariate ANOVAs were conducted to examine the relationship between parent gender and parent ethnicity with youth and parent perceptions of parental acceptance. With regard to parent ethnicity, results indicated that parental acceptance differed by ethnic group, $F(2, 66) = 5.14$, $p < .01$, such that Caucasian parents were more accepting than Hispanic ($p < .01$) parents, per youth report. African-American parents did not significantly differ from Caucasian or Hispanic parents on parental acceptance. Per parent report of parental acceptance, parental acceptance differed by ethnic group, $F(2, 69) = 13.28$, $p < .001$, such that Caucasian parents were more accepting than Hispanic ($p < .001$) and African-American parents ($p < .001$). With regard to parent gender, results indicated that youth perceptions of parental acceptance did not differ by gender, $F(1, 67) = .71$, $p = .401$. However, parent perceptions of parental acceptance did significantly differ by gender, $F(1,70) = 5.04$, $p < .05$, such that mothers were more accepting than fathers. Based on these preliminary analyses that indicate significant differences in parental acceptance across ethnic groups

and gender, parent ethnicity and gender will be retained as covariates in all future analyses. Although parent age was found to be unrelated to parental acceptance in this sample, it was retained as a covariate, as prior research indicates differences on these dimensions (Ben-Ari, 1995; D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2008; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Maguen et al., 2002; Savin-Williams, 1990).

Table 3 presents the total percent missingness, which combines attrition with those who were missing due to cohort sequence for the cohort sequential design. Although MAR cannot be formally established (Enders, 2006), mean differences between complete and incomplete cases were examined to help identify auxiliary variables, which can help improve the estimation of model parameters (Enders, 2008). To examine the relationship between missingness and time since disclosure, dummy codes were created for each year-long interval where participants with data were coded as a 1 and those without data were coded as a 0. An ANOVA was run to examine whether missingness for each time interval differed on time since disclosure. Results indicated that missingness differed by time since disclosure ($F(1, 159)= 3.13$, $p <.001$), such that data were missing systematically based on time since disclosure. Specifically, youth who had more time since disclosure were less likely to have missing data. Time since disclosure was therefore included in all analyses of parental acceptance as an auxiliary variable.

Specific Aim 1

The first aim of the study was to examine trajectories of parental acceptance following initial disclosure, using a cohort-sequential design, using youth and parent report. The present study also sought to understand how youth perception and parent

perception of parental acceptance change in relation to one another. It was hypothesized that parental acceptance would increase over time.

Youth. Initially, the trajectories for each participant were plotted. Plots of intraindividual change of youth-report of parental acceptance over time since disclosure are pictured in Figure 1a. Additionally, a plot of mean levels of parental acceptance at each time since disclosure is pictured for youth-report in Figure 2a. Plots were examined to determine the shape of the trajectory of parental acceptance by youth report. Youth showed variability in the mean levels of parental acceptance over time. While youth increase from initial reports to 6-years post disclosure, the increase is small compared to the scale of the measure. A Wald test was conducted to assess the significance of the increase from initial disclosure to 6-years post disclosure per youth report; results indicated that the mean level of parental acceptance does not increase from initial disclosure to 6-years post disclosure, $\omega(1) = .36$, $p = .55$.

To formally assess the hypothesis that parental acceptance changes over time, three unconditional LGMs with no covariates were estimated to investigate the trajectory of youth-reported parental acceptance. First, a baseline model representative of no change in parental acceptance over time was assessed. A no growth model was specified, where an overall latent variable, representing the level of parental acceptance, and variance estimate in the factor were specified, but no growth latent variable was specified. The factor loadings of the latent were constrained at 1. The residual variances of each assessment were constrained to be equal across time. This model fit the data, χ^2 (17) = 17.50, p = .42, CFI = .996, RMSEA = .015, SRMR = .278. The intercept mean (M = 12.38, $p < .001$) and variance (Var = 6.13, $p < .001$) were significant, indicating that the

overall level of parental acceptance varied across participants, such that some participants reported more parental acceptance than others.

Next, a model that assessed linear increases in parental acceptance over time was examined. A linear model was specified by an intercept and a slope, representing the amount of linear change in parental acceptance. Again, the factor loadings of the intercept were constrained at 1, and the factor loadings of the slope were constrained to be equal to the number of year-long intervals between each time point in order to represent a linear slope (i.e., linear slope: 0, .1, .2, .3, .4, .5). This model fit the data, χ^2 (14) = 11.96, p = .61, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .170. Again, the intercept mean (M = 12.45, $p < .001$) and variance (Var = 10.30, $p < .001$) were significant, suggesting that levels of parental acceptance at the time of disclosure significantly vary across participants, such that some participants reported more parental acceptance than others at the time of initial disclosure. Both the slope mean (M = -.28, p = .780) and variance (Var = 9.88, p = .635) were not significant, indicating that there is no significant linear change across time. Thus, the more parsimonious model, the baseline no growth model, was retained, and it was concluded that parental acceptance does not increase in a linear manner.

To test whether parental acceptance changes in a nonlinear fashion, a latent basis model (McArdle & Bell, 2000) was also specified. This model permitted the data to define change in parental acceptance over time, with minimal constraints on the factor loadings. The first factor loading for the slope was set to 0 and the final factor loading was set to .5, with all other coefficients unspecified. This model fit the data well, χ^2 (10) = 7.40, p = .69, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .155. Again, the intercept mean (M

= 12.37, $p < .001$) and variance (*Var* = 8.72, $p < .001$) were significant, indicating that levels of parental acceptance at the time of disclosure significantly vary across participants, such that some participants reported more parental acceptance than others at the time of initial disclosure. Both the slope mean (M = -.004, p = .996) and variance (*Var* = 24.37, p = .145) were not significant, indicating that there is no significant nonlinear change across time. Thus, the more parsimonious model, the no growth model, was retained (see Figure 5) and it was concluded that parental acceptance does not change in a nonlinear manner. In conclusion, the results of the three LGMs described above provide evidence that there is no change in parental acceptance over time since disclosure. This result is inconsistent with study hypotheses about change over time.

Parent. As part of the first aim, it also was hypothesized that the growth of youth report of parental acceptance would parallel the growth of parent report of parental acceptance. Initially, the trajectories for each parent participant were plotted. Plots of intraindividual change of parent-report of parental acceptance over time are pictured in Figure 1b. Additionally, a plot of mean levels of parental acceptance at each time since disclosure is pictured for parent-report in Figure 2b. Plots were examined to determine the shape of the trajectory of parental acceptance by parent report. Parents showed variability in the mean levels of parental acceptance over time. A Wald test of parameter estimates was conducted to assess the difference from initial disclosure to 6-years post disclosure per parent report; results indicated that the mean level of parental acceptance does not increase from initial disclosure to 6-years post disclosure, $\omega(1) = .17$, $p = .68$.

To formally assess the hypothesis that parental acceptance per parent report changes over time, three unconditional LGMs with no covariates were estimated to

investigate the trajectory of parent-reported parental acceptance. First, a baseline model representative of no change in parental acceptance over time was assessed. A no growth model was specified, where an overall latent variable, representing the level of parental acceptance, and variance estimate in the factor were specified, but no growth latent variable was specified. The factor loadings of the latent were constrained at 1. The residual variances of each assessment were constrained to be equal across time. This model demonstrated poor fit to the data, χ^2 (18) = 74.97, p < .001, CFI = .42, RMSEA = .194, SRMR = .446. The intercept mean (M = 6.48, p < .001) and variance (Var = 2.18, p < .001) were significant, indicating that the overall level of parental acceptance varied across participants, such that some participants reported more parental acceptance than others.

Next, a model that assessed linear increases in parental acceptance over time was examined. A linear model was specified by an intercept and a slope, representing the amount of linear change in parental acceptance. Again, the factor loadings of the intercept were constrained at 1, and the factor loadings of the slope were constrained to be equal to the number of year-long intervals between each time point in order to represent a linear slope (i.e., linear slope: 0, .1, .2, .3, .4, .5). All residual errors of the factors were specified to be equal, except for the final time point. This model demonstrated poor fit to the data, χ^2 (14) = 47.17, p < .001, CFI = .66, RMSEA = .168, SRMR = .349. The intercept mean (M = 6.985, p < .001) and variance (Var = 6.133, p < .001) were significant, suggesting that levels of parental acceptance at the time of disclosure significantly vary across participants, such that some participants reported more parental acceptance than others at the time of initial disclosure. The slope mean (M

= -2.461, $p < .05$) and variance (*Var* = 47.213, $p < .001$) were significant, indicating that there is significant linear change across time. However, because the model indicated poor fit to the data, the no growth model was retained.

To test whether parental acceptance changes in a nonlinear fashion, a latent basis model (McArdle & Bell, 2000) was also specified. This model permitted the data to define change in parental acceptance over time, with minimal constraints on the factor loadings. The first factor loading for the slope was set to 0 and the final factor loading was set to .5, with all other coefficients unspecified. All residual errors of the factors were specified to be equal, except for the final time point. This model fit the data well, χ^2 (10) = 12.95, p = .23, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .059, SRMR = .334. Again, the intercept mean (*M* = 6.822, $p < .001$) and variance (*Var* = 3.823, $p < .001$) were significant, indicating that levels of parental acceptance at the time of disclosure significantly vary across participants, such that some participants reported more parental acceptance than others at the time of initial disclosure. However, both the slope mean (*M* = *-.328*, p = .71) and variance (*Var* = .58, p = .84) were not significant, indicating that there is not significant nonlinear change across time. Thus, the no growth model, was retained.

The present study was unable to examine parallels in growth across youth and parent perceptions of parental acceptance. However, differences between youth and parent perceptions of parental acceptance at each assessment interval were examined. Six Wald tests of parameter estimates were conducted to assess mean differences in youth and parent-report at each time of assessment. No differences were identified in assessments at year 1, $\omega(1) = .79$, p = .37, year 2, $\omega(1) = .25$, p = .62, year 3, $\omega(1) = 1.17$, p

= .28, year 4, $\omega(1) = 2.72$, $p = .10$, year 5, $\omega(1) = 1.65$, $p = .20$, and year 6, $\omega(1) = .02$, $p = .90$.

Specific Aim 2

The second aim of the study was to test whether, in addition to balanced patterns, high control and disorganized family interaction patterns could be identified as distinct forms of unbalanced family interaction patterns.

Youth. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to examine the measurement model of family interaction patterns. A model was specified to examine youth-report of family interaction patterns based on current functioning at the Time 1 assessment (n = 157). For youth-report only, the model specified three latent factors, reflecting balanced family interaction patterns, as indicated by cohesion and adaptability, high control family interaction patterns, as indicated by enmeshment and rigidity, and disorganized family interaction patterns, as indicated by disengagement and chaos. First, the model was run while allowing each latent factor to freely correlate with all other factors, representative of a 3-factor model, as hypothesized. The model indicated poor fit to the data, $\chi^2 (9) = 38.00$, $p < .001$, CFI = .923, RMSEA = .143, SRMR = .049. To improve model fit, a correlation was specified between the cohesion and disengagement residuals, as identified in the bivariate correlations of the preliminary analyses (see Table 2). The model fit the data well, $\chi^2 (8) = 9.80$, $p = .28$, CFI = .995, RMSEA = .038, SRMR = .035.

Next, to test a two-factor model, reflecting a balanced latent variable, as indicated by cohesion and adaptability, and an Imbalanced latent variable, as indicated by enmeshment, rigidity, disengagement, and chaos, the model was run with the correlation

between the high control and disorganized family interaction factors set equal to one. Additionally, the correlation of high control with balanced was set equal to the correlation of disorganized with balanced, in order to represent that high control and disorganized factors were treated as one factor and not allowed to uniquely correlate with the balanced factor. The correlation between cohesion and disengagement indicators was retained. The model indicated poor fit to the data, χ^2 (10) = 63.77, p < .001, CFI = .856, RMSEA = .185, SRMR = .120.

As the first and second model are considered nested, a Chi-Square Difference test was conducted to evaluate which model provides better fit. As the three-factor model offered better model fit statistics, the Chi-Square Difference test was used to provide additional support to retain the three-factor model. The χ^2 difference between the two models was statistically significant, $\Delta \chi^2$ (2) = 53.97, $p < .001$, indicating that there was a significant difference between the three-factor and two-factor models, such that the three-factor model provided better fit to the data. Thus, the three-factor solution was retained (see Figure 4); specifically, balanced, high control, and disorganized family interaction patterns were present in the youth sample. All standardized factor loadings were greater than .59.

Parent. The same patterns of family dynamics, specifically balanced, high control, and disorganized patterns, were expected to occur for both youth and parent report. The above CFA procedure was repeated for parent-report only (n = 73) to determine whether the same factor structure of family functioning patterns existed via parent perceptions. A model was specified to examine parent-report of family interaction patterns based on current functioning at the Time 1 assessment. For parent-report only,

the model specified three latent factors, reflecting balanced family interaction patterns, as indicated by cohesion and adaptability, high control family interaction patterns, as indicated by enmeshment and rigidity, and disorganized family interaction patterns, as indicated by disengagement and chaos. First, the model was run while allowing each latent factor to freely correlate with all other factors. The model indicated poor fit to the data, χ^2 (11) = 30.02, p < .001, CFI = .889, RMSEA = .154, SRMR = .118.

Next, to test a two-factor model, reflecting a balanced latent variable, as indicated by cohesion and adaptability, and an Imbalanced latent variable, as indicated by enmeshment, rigidity, disengagement, and chaos, the model was run with the correlation between the high control and disorganized family interaction factors set equal to one. Additionally, the correlation of high control with balanced was set equal to the correlation of disorganized with balanced, in order to represent that high control and disorganized factors were treated as one factor and not allowed to uniquely correlate with the balanced factor. The model indicated poor fit to the data, χ^2 (13) = 80.86, p < .001, CFI = .60, RMSEA = .267, SRMR = .279.

Since both the first and second models indicated poor fit to the data, a Chi-Square Difference test was not conducted to evaluate which model provides better fit. As hypothesized, further analyses will use a three-factor model. However, it is noted that the confirmatory factor analysis did not support these findings. Due to sample size limitations, these results may be considered preliminary, and should be re-examined in future samples.

Specific Aim 3

The third aim of the study was to determine whether family interactional patterns were related to initial level of parental acceptance to youth disclosure. It was hypothesized that balanced family interaction patterns (cohesion, adaptability) would be associated with higher levels of parental acceptance at time of disclosure, while high control family interaction patterns (enmeshment, rigidity) would be associated with less parental acceptance, at the time of disclosure. Also, it was hypothesized that disorganized family interaction patterns (disengagement, chaos) would be unrelated to parental acceptance. Each hypothesis was tested twice, once for youth report and once for parent report.

Youth. Previous analyses (Specific Aim 1) revealed that participants varied in their overall levels of parental acceptance following disclosure. To examine predictors of the individual variability in the overall levels of parental acceptance following disclosure, a linear regression was conducted, where all variables were entered simultaneously. Parental acceptance at the first measurement occasion, controlling for time since disclosure to a parent, parent age, gender, and ethnicity, was regressed on balanced, high control, and disorganized family interaction pattern factor scores, which were created by summing the scales that comprise each factor. Results indicate that the model fit the data well, $R^2 = .38$, $F(8, 53) = 4.11$, $p < .001$. Balanced family functioning was found to be significantly related to greater parental acceptance $b = .82$, $t(53) = 2.50$, $p < .05$. However, high control interaction patterns, $b = -.42$, $t(53) = -1.16$, $p = .25$, and disorganized interaction patterns, $b = -.33$, $t(53) = .89$, $p = .38$, were unrelated to parental acceptance. Youth with Hispanic parents were found to report significantly less parental

acceptance than youth with Caucasian parents, b = -20.662, t(53) = -2.83, p < .01. No differences were found for youth with African-American parents, or based on parent age or gender.

Parent. The impact of parent report of family interaction patterns was also assessed on overall levels of parental acceptance. A linear regression was conducted, where all variables were entered simultaneously, to examine this relationship. Parent perception of parental acceptance at the first measurement occasion, controlling for time since disclosure to a parent, age, ethnicity, and gender, was regressed on balanced, high control, and disorganized family interaction pattern factor scores (parent-report), which were created by summing the scales that comprise each factor. Results indicate that the model fit the data well, $R^2 = .48$, $F(8, 61) = 6.89$, $p < .001$. Trends were found for balanced family functioning, b = .59, t(61) = 1.97, p = .05, to be significantly related to greater parental acceptance, and high control interaction patterns, b = -.74, t(61) = -1.95, p = .056, to be related to less parental acceptance. Disorganized interaction patterns, b = -.27, t(61) = -.80, p = .43, were unrelated to parental acceptance. Hispanic parents, b = -18.68, t(61) = -3.36, p < .001, and African-American parents, b = -17.61, t(61) = -2.78, p < .01, were found to report significantly less parental acceptance than Caucasian parents. Mothers reported more parental acceptance than fathers, b = 15.99, t(61) = 2.85, p < .01. Parent age did not significantly relate to parental acceptance.

Specific Aim 4

Finally, the study aimed to evaluate the impact of balanced, high control and disorganized family interaction patterns on the growth of parental acceptance over the course of long-term adaptation. It was hypothesized that initial balanced family

interaction patterns would predict faster initial growth in perceptions of parental acceptance following disclosure, while it was hypothesized that initial high control family interaction patterns would predict slower initial growth in parental acceptance. It was also hypothesized that initial disorganized family interaction patterns would be unrelated to growth in parental acceptance. It was intended that each hypothesis would be tested twice, once for youth report and one for parent report.

As no growth in parental acceptance per youth report was identified, the above hypotheses, to examine the influence of family interaction patterns on growth in parental acceptance, could not be tested. Due to the limited sample of parents, an LGM of parental acceptance per parent report was not conducted, and thus, the influence of family interaction patterns on growth in parental acceptance was not tested.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

One of the most significant and especially stressful developmental milestones that LGB youth encounter is the disclosure of their sexual minority status to their parents (Rosario, Rotheram-Borus, & Reid, 1996; Savin-Williams, 2001). Parent reactions to youth disclosure have been found to vary widely, ranging from acceptance to rejection (Beeler & DiProva, 1999; D'Augelli et al., 1998; Floyd et al., 1999). Most previous studies of parental acceptance have largely been examined retrospectively at the initial time of disclosure (Beals & Peplau, 2006; Ben-Ari, 1995; Cramer & Roach, 1998). The current study is among the first to examine how parental acceptance evolves over time, and a cohort-sequential LGM procedure was employed. The LGM suggests that youth perception of parental acceptance does not significantly change over time following disclosure. Yet, significant variability in initial reactions to disclosure was identified, and this study provides initial evidence that family interaction patterns are important predictors of youth's perception of parent's initial reactions.

Trajectory of Parental Acceptance

Surprisingly, youth perception of parental acceptance was not found to change over time following disclosure to a parent. This finding is contradictory to all prior studies that assessed change in parental acceptance or support, retrospectively (Beals & Peplau, 2006; Ben-Ari, 1995; Cramer & Roach, 1988) or longitudinally (D'Augelli et al., 2010). As the prior research has been limited by assessment shortcomings, it is difficult to determine the magnitude of change previously reported. It is possible that youth may retrospectively perceive change, when in real-time, they do not experience parental acceptance significantly differently over time. As the first cohort used in the present

study combined youth who had been out to a parent anytime up to 1 year, it is also possible that initial parental reactions change very quickly, in less than 1 year, and that initial change is not captured in the current study.

Upon visual examination of Figure 2, it appears that there may be subtle change over time by youth report, despite some early variability. The present study may have been underpowered to detect a small degree of change. However, if it is only minimal change that occurs, the clinical significance of such change may be called into question (Pintea, 2010). Pintea (2010) defines clinical significance by improvement in quality of life, improvement in symptom level, and transition from dysfunctional to functional. Although largely discussed in the intervention literature, the concept of clinical significance may also be relevant to any change over time, and in this case, adaption to a family stressor.

When the change reported in prior studies is closely examined, minimal, although statistically significant, increases in mean levels of parental acceptance are found. For instance, Ben-Ari (1995) reported that, for a sample of gay and lesbian adults (age M = 32.7, SD = 6.5) who had been out to a parent 8.4 years, on average, retrospective reports of parental acceptance increased from a mean of 2.17 (SD = .84) at initial disclosure to a mean of 3.21 (SD = .70) at the time of assessment. The meaning of these values is not defined in the study, nor is the possible range of values reported. Similarly, Beals and Peplau (2006), based on retrospective recall, reported an increase in parental acceptance from initial disclosure (M = 4.8, SD = 1.5) to the measurement occasion (M = 5.5, SD = 1.3) on a 7-point scale. However, the length of time between initial disclosure and the measurement occasion was not specified. Cramer and Roach (1988) also reported an

increase in parental acceptance from initial disclosure to the measurement occasion, but did not report means or the effect size of that change. In a longitudinal study tracking family support over time, analyses revealed a significant increase in family support, but did not identify length of time since disclosure or effect size of the change (D'Augelli et al., 2010). Although all studies reviewed above provide information about statistical significance, none of them provide the details necessary to determine/calculate clinical significance. The inability to establish clinical significance is a significant limitation in this literature, and future research must consider clinically meaningful change with regard to parental acceptance.

There is also the potential that there are multiple trajectories of change over time. Specifically, youth may perceive little change from parents who are initially supportive. Alternatively, there may be parents who initially show little parental acceptance, but evolve over time to become more accepting, and youth perceive this change. Additionally, some parents may never be able to provide acceptance to their LGB youth, and also would not change over time, maintaining low levels of parental acceptance as perceived by youth. Cramer and Roach (1988) offer some initial evidence that there are multiple trajectories, as they reported that while approximately two-thirds of their sample of gay adult males reported improvement in parental acceptance over time, one-third of their sample reported no change in their parental relationships. The present study was underpowered to examine multiple trajectories, and the combination of all possibilities may have resulted in muddled findings, representing no change.

Still, study findings offer important information about early reactions to youth disclosure. Specifically, parent ethnicity is influential of initial parental acceptance, such

that youth of both Hispanic and African-American parents perceive lower levels of parental acceptance than youth of Caucasian parents. This finding is consistent previous studies that found ethnic majority parents tend to more accepting than ethnic minority parents (Morales, 1989). As different ethnic groups often have different normative beliefs and social taboos, these ethnic differences in parental acceptance may reflect larger societal beliefs within each ethnic community (Savin-Williams, 1999). Furthermore, the gay movement is more public in Caucasian culture, compared to ethnic minority cultures (Monteiro & Fuqua, 1993/1994), and exposure can normalize experiences for those who are undecided on an issue (Galdi, Gawronski, Arcuri, & Friese, 2012). Targeting publicity of the gay movement in ethnic minority populations is a potential avenue for increasing exposure, and subsequently acceptance, of sexual minorities.

The Influence of Family Systems Resources on Initial Parental Acceptance

Data supported the second hypothesis that three factors, including balanced, high control, and disorganized patterns of functioning, would best represent family interaction dynamics. Although the Circumplex Model proposes specific patterns of unbalanced interactions, empirical data are limited. A couple of initial studies, however, do suggest that high control and disorganized family interaction patterns are among the most prevalent of unbalanced interaction types (Franklin, Streeter, & Springer, 2001; Olson, 2011). The present study provides a more rigorous test than was previously done and identifies high control and disorganized interaction pattern subtypes of unbalanced functioning. This finding offers a nuanced understanding of unbalanced dynamics, such that family dynamics may be disrupted by high control patterns, with excessively

controlling, involved, and rigid functioning, as well as disorganized patterns, with dysregulated or nonexistent rules and interpersonal distance. It is noteworthy that high control patterns are not significantly correlated to disorganized family interactions, despite both being forms of unbalanced dynamics. This highlights the distinct nature of these two patterns of functioning in this sample. This finding is not entirely surprising, as adolescents and parents have been found to disagree about family functioning in prior research (Jessop, 1981).

The balanced, high control, and disorganized family interaction patterns differentially predicted initial parent reactions to youth disclosure of their sexual minority status, providing additional support that it is important to distinguish between types of unbalanced functioning. For both youth and parent perceptions, balanced family functioning was associated with increased parental acceptance, consistent with study hypotheses. This finding highlights the importance of balanced interaction patterns as protective against low parental acceptance; if families can negotiate and navigate other types of family stressors by flexibly adapting to change, while maintaining appropriate interpersonal closeness, they can also likely support and accept youth who disclose sexual minority status. The fact that balanced family functioning is a non-sexuality-specific dimension is important; there is no mention of sexuality in the assessment of balanced family patterns. Still, balanced family patterns are related to parental acceptance.. This result may serve to foster optimism about family reactions; specifically, if a youth perceives their family to function well, with close relationships and flexibility, that youth may feel more reassured that their parents will support their sexual identity.

As predicted, disorganized family interaction patterns and parental acceptance were unrelated (across both youth and parent perceptions). When family dynamics are scattered and disordered and lacking in interpersonal closeness or "typical" reaction patterns in response to change, there may be no "usual" structure to disrupt. Therefore, families may not show significant reactions to change, possibly in part due to a lack of interaction among family members. Although disorganized interaction patterns may be associated with dysfunction in other domains (Davies, Cummings, & Winter, 2004; Sturge-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2010), this dynamic does not seem to be a risk factor for a lack of parental acceptance. In other words, knowing that family interaction patterns tend to be disorganized and disconnected tells us nothing about how parents will respond to youth disclosure of a sexual minority orientation.

With regard to high control family interaction patterns, findings were mixed. In many analyses, high control dynamics were related to reduced parental acceptance, though not in all cases, especially when covariates were included. Limited power may have contributed to variable findings. Further research is needed with a sample size adequate to investigate interactions between high control and ethnicity in relation to parental acceptance.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study offers a clear contribution to the literature on parental acceptance in LGB adolescents and young adults, it remains subject to several limitations. First, the generalizability of study findings is limited. Efforts were made to include a diverse sample through the use of multiple recruitment strategies. Nevertheless, the majority of study participants, similar to previous studies, were recruited through community

organizations that serve sexual minority youth. Youth involved in such organizations may not be representative of the larger LGB population who are not involved in community or university-based organizations, such that these youth may be more comfortable with their sexual orientation and may have had greater parental acceptance (Meyer & Colten, 1999). Additionally, youth involved in the study were only included if they identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Thus, any sexual minority youth who do not identify with LGB labels, but do experience attractions to members of the same-sex, may not be represented by the study sample. However, the study excels in variation among participants in age, ethnicity, and time since disclosure to a parent. Still, the inclusion of a significant number of youth who are not involved in LGB organization or self-identified as LGB, while challenging to recruit, may offer different information about parental acceptance.

Another limitation is that all youth included in the present study were required to be out to at least one parent at the time of initial participation. Conclusions drawn in the current study may not apply to those youth who are not out to a parent. Future research would benefit from following youth who are not out to a parent initially, in order to assess change from before to after disclosure.

A final limitation is with regard to sample size. Due to the nature of the cohort-sequential design, there was a high percent of youth missing data used in these analyses. Consequently, the analyses were likely underpowered to detect change, especially with a small effect size (Raudenbush & Feng, 2001). Furthermore, the sample size was inadequate to conduct growth mixture modeling (GMM), to assess the presence of multiple trajectories of parental acceptance following youth disclosure. Additionally,

although this study benefited from the participation of 71 parent-child dyads, and is one of the first studies to include independent assessments of LGB youth and their parents, we did not have the statistical power to assess change over time via parent perceptions of parental acceptance using an LGM. The participation of a larger sample of parents would provide the opportunity to compare youth and parent perceptions of parental acceptance, initially and over time. An increased number of participants, as well as an increased diversity of participants, might present more information about parental acceptance across families.

Research and Clinical Implications

Results of the current investigation may have important research and clinical implications for LGB youth and their families. Although change in parental acceptance over time following disclosure was expected, results indicated that there was no change from initial parental acceptance. In light of the results indicating no growth and the contradiction with prior reports of change (Beals & Peplau, 2006; Ben-Ari, 1995; Cramer & Roach, 1989; D'Augelli et al., 2010), the importance of understanding the magnitude of change and defining its' clinical significance is highlighted. The omission of effect sizes and consideration of clinically meaningful change previously are critical gaps in the literature, and research would greatly benefit assessing clinical significance in future studies.

Still, study results underscore important clinical implications for parental acceptance at the time of initial disclosure. Specifically, LGB youth and families may benefit from family-centered interventions that aims to increase balanced family interaction patterns and decrease high control family interaction patterns. This is

valuable in that it may increase parental acceptance in a non-sexuality-specific and thus noncontroversial manner, providing a safe avenue for everyone to participate. Given the implications of parental acceptance for youth, such that data links parental acceptance with better youth physical and mental health (Bouris et al., 2010; Floyd et al., 1999; Ryan et al., 2010), it is important to intervene with families and help support acceptance at the time of initial disclosure.

Youth may also benefit from interventions that focus on barriers to obtaining acceptance. For those families who are unable to offer acceptance, high control family interaction patterns may be an important warning sign to identify. In these cases, youth may benefit from withholding disclosure from parents until balanced family interaction patterns are restored, and should be encouraged to seek alternate sources of acceptance and support from peers and extended family. LGB youth are likely to benefit from policies, programs, and treatments that increase their ability to improve balanced family interaction patterns and access parental acceptance.

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Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics: Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Study Variables at Time 1
(N = 160 youth, 75 parents)

Variables	Mean	SD	Range	%
Youth Age	19.46	2.68	14-26	
Youth Ethnicity (H/C/A)				39/40/21
Youth Gender (M/F)				56/44
Youth Sexual Orientation (G/L/B)				49/31/20
Parent Age	47.76	6.85	32-63	
Parent Ethnicity (H/C/A)				43/25/32
Parent Gender (M/F)				20/80
Parent Sexual Orientation (Het/G/L)				93/3/4
Y-PPRS Current	125.96	30.95	32-151	
P-PPRS Current	125.85	20.80	44-135	
Y-Cohesion	24.36	7.04	7-35	
Y-Flexible	21.11	6.17	7-34	
Y-Disengaged	19.78	5.92	7-35	
Y-Chaotic	17.95	6.22	7-29	
Y-Enmeshed	14.81	4.70	7-31	
Y-Rigid	18.50	5.20	7-35	
P-Cohesion	27.53	5.86	10-35	
P-Flexible	24.52	4.85	11-34	
P-Disengaged	16.15	5.58	7-31	
P-Chaotic	15.01	4.94	7-30	
P-Enmeshed	14.48	4.92	8-31	
P-Rigid	19.60	4.69	7-27	

Note. H = Hispanic. C = Caucasian. A = African-American. M = Male. F = Female. G = Gay. L = Lesiban. B = Bisexual. Het = Heterosexual. PPRS = Perceived Parental Reaction Scale. Y = Youth-Report. P = Parent-Report

Table 2. *Correlations Between Study Variables at Time 1 (N = 160 youth, 75 parents)*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.	Youth Age	-														
2.	Parent age	.230**	-													
3.	Y-PPRS Current	-.159	-.114	-												
4.	P-PPRS Current	-.011	-.213	.601***	-											
5.	Y-Cohesion	.144*	.177	-.350***	-.320*	-										
6.	Y-Flexible	.134*	-.010	-.225**	-.146	.770***	-									
7.	Y-Disengaged	-.185**	.082	.372***	.304**	-.682***	-.470***	-								
8.	Y-Enmeshed	-.035	-.001	.212*	.107	.158*	.138	.004	-							
9.	Y-Rigid	-.049	-.021	.263**	.170	.180**	.233**	.011	.422***	-						
10.	Y-Chaotic	-.223**	-.133	.283**	.052	-.533***	-.545***	.581***	.073	-.115	-					
11.	P-Cohesion	-.074	.074	-.156	-.378***	.560***	.445**	-.436***	.058	.117	-.181	-				
12.	P-Flexible	.075	.012	.049	-.243*	.382***	.448***	-.297*	.031	.304	-.280	.739***	-			
13.	P-Disengaged	.061	.040	.117	.173*	-.514***	-.397*	.617***	-.115	-.178	.352	-.581***	-.410**	-		
14.	P- Enmeshed	-.016	-.353**	.188	.313***	-.173	.042	.192	.165	.079	.101	-.101	.079	.425***	-	
15.	P- Rigid	-.093	-.321**	.237	.046	.082	.258	-.100	.039	.432**	-.111	.213	.409**	.030	.484***	-
16.	P- Chaotic	.151	.029	.135	.187*	-.412**	-.387**	.371**	-.079	-.232	.340*	-.557***	-.438***	.617***	.356**	-.077

Note. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001.

Table 3.

Data Missingness

Time since Disclosure	% Missing due to Attrition	% Missing Overall
.5 year	7.0	
1 year	14.0	77.8
1.5 years	23.3	
2 years	28.0	71.9
2.5 years	23.4	
3 years	20.8	67.8
3.5 years	24.0	
4 years	20.8	64.9
4.5 years	28.3	
5 years	25.0	73.7
5.5 years	22.9	
6 years	13.8	76.0

Table 4
Slope Factor Loadings for Latent Basis Growth Model of Parental Acceptance per Parent-Report

	Parameters	Standardized Factor Loadings
Parent-Report		
	Cohort 1	.00
	Cohort 2	-.07
	Cohort 3	.12
	Cohort **4**	.25
	Cohort 5	.26
	Cohort 6	.50

Table 5
Measurement Model for 6-Factor Youth and Parent CFA (N=160)

	Parameters	Standardized Factor Loadings
Youth-Report		
	Balanced	
	Cohesion	.87***
	Adaptability	.89***
	High Control	
	Rigidity	.69***
	Enmeshment	61.***
	Disorganized	
	Disengagement	.76***
	Chaos	.79***
Parent-Report		
	Balanced	
	Cohesion	.85***
	Adaptability	.78***
	High Control	
	Rigidity	.71***
	Enmeshment	.76***
	Disorganized	
	Disengagement	.83***
	Chaos	.75***

Note. ***p ≤ .001.

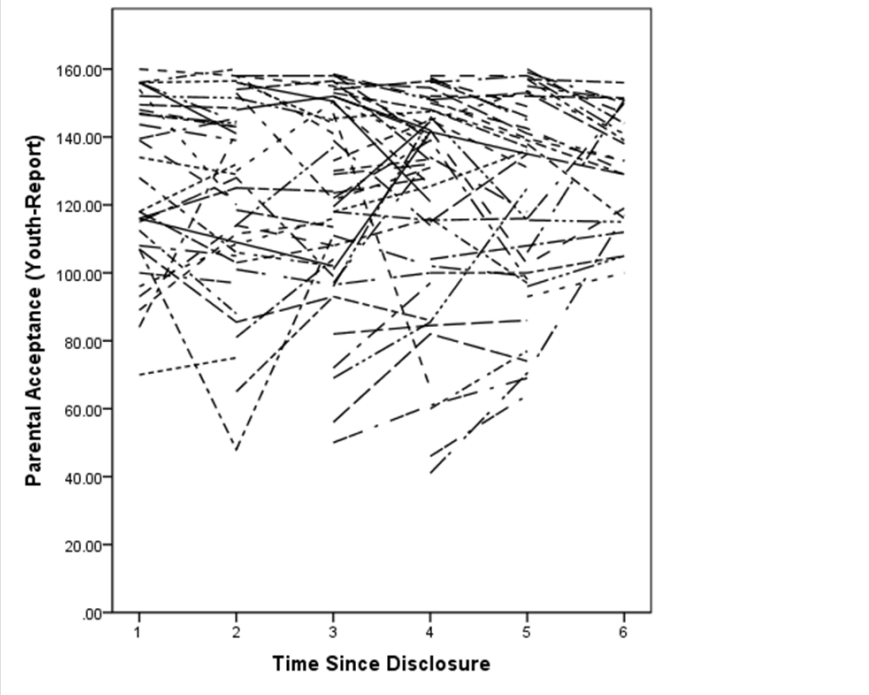


Figure 1a. Plots of Intraindividual Change in Parental Acceptance (Youth-Report).

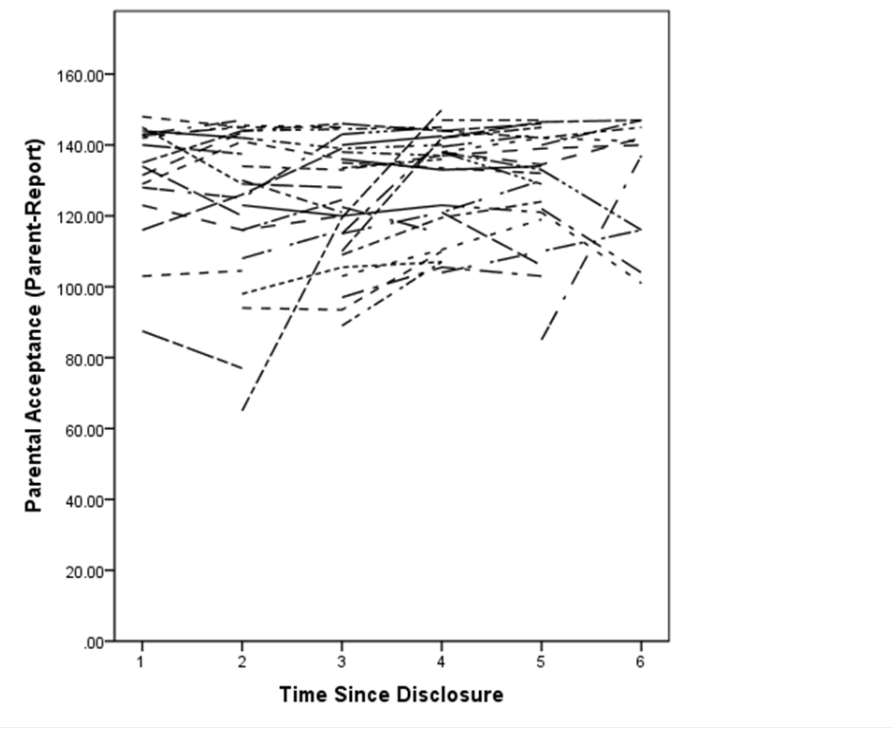
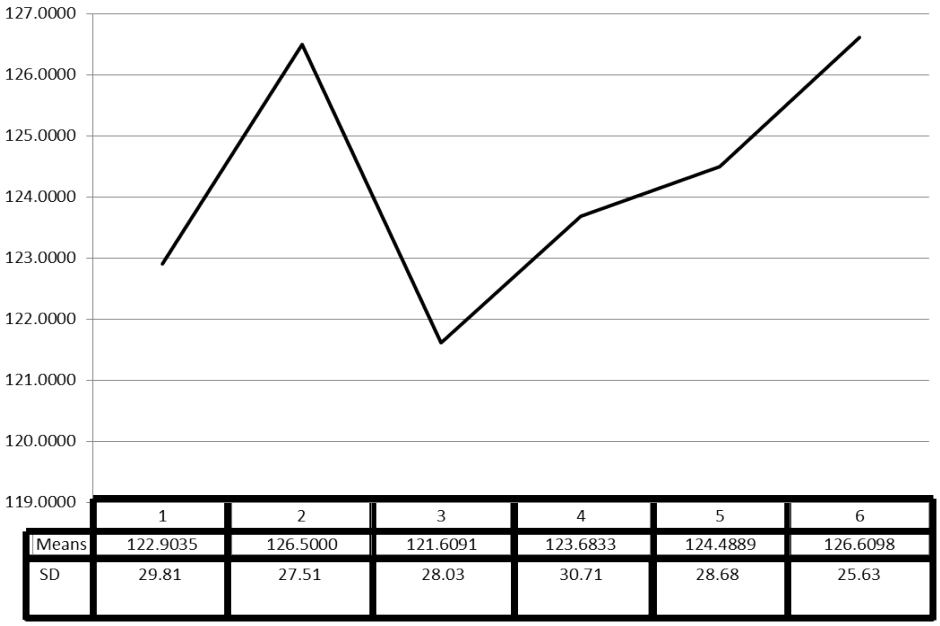
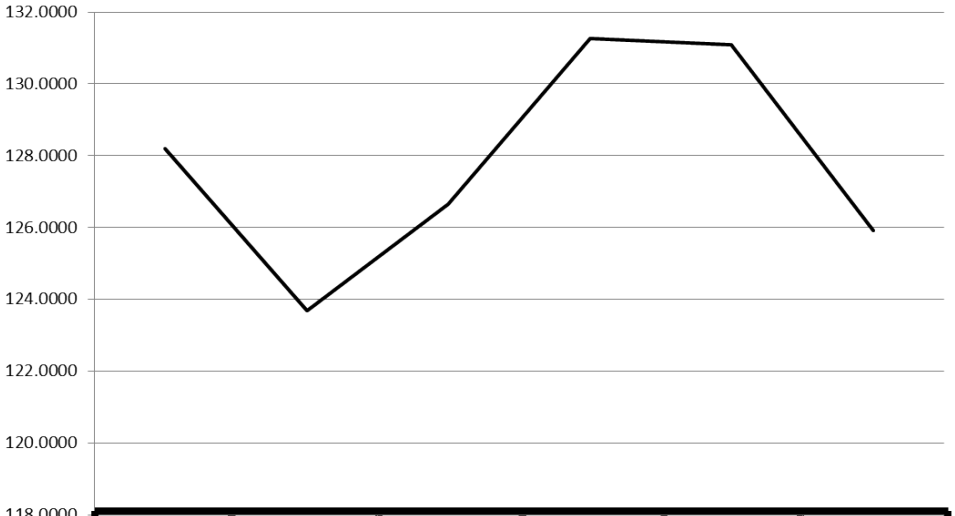


Figure 1b. Plots of Intraindividual Change in Parental Acceptance (Parent-Report).



	1	2	3	4	5	6
Means	122.9035	126.5000	121.6091	123.6833	124.4889	126.6098
SD	29.81	27.51	28.03	30.71	28.68	25.63

Figure 2a. Plots of Mean Change in Parental Acceptance (Youth-Report).



	1	2	3	4	5	6
Means	128.2083	123.6875	126.6429	131.2647	131.0962	125.9091
SD	16.49	22.96	16.52	14.08	15.26	20.05

Figure 2b. Plots of Mean Change in Parental Acceptance (Parent-Report).

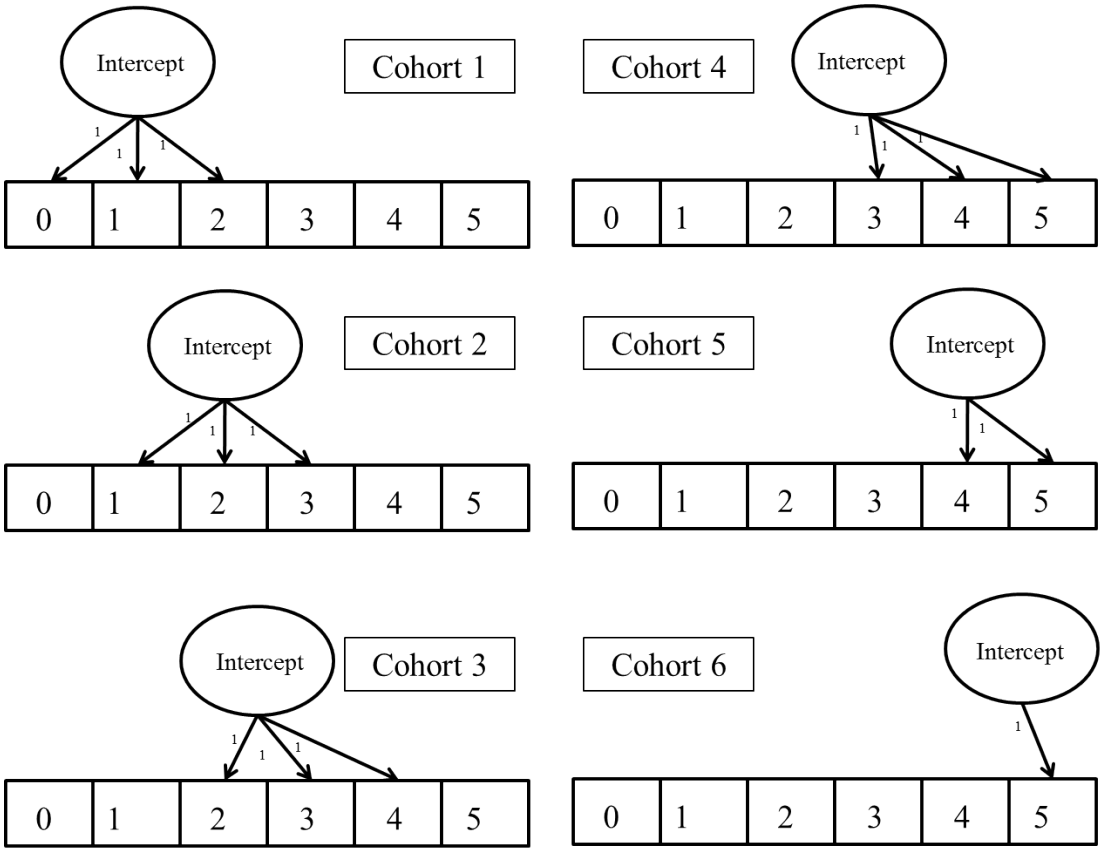
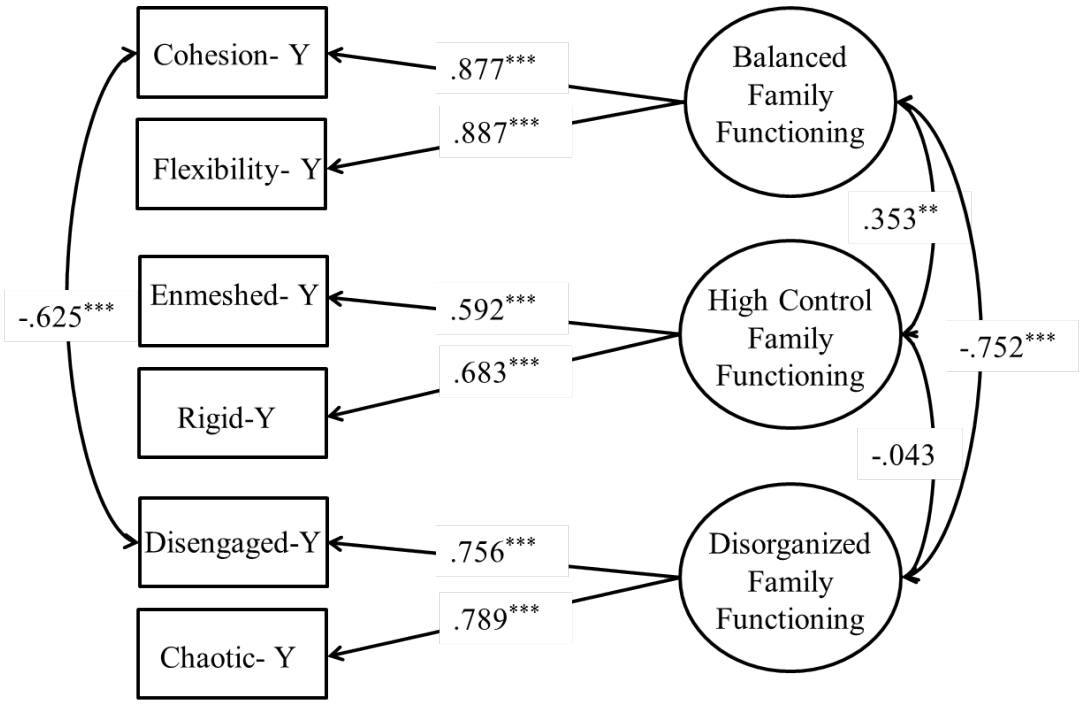
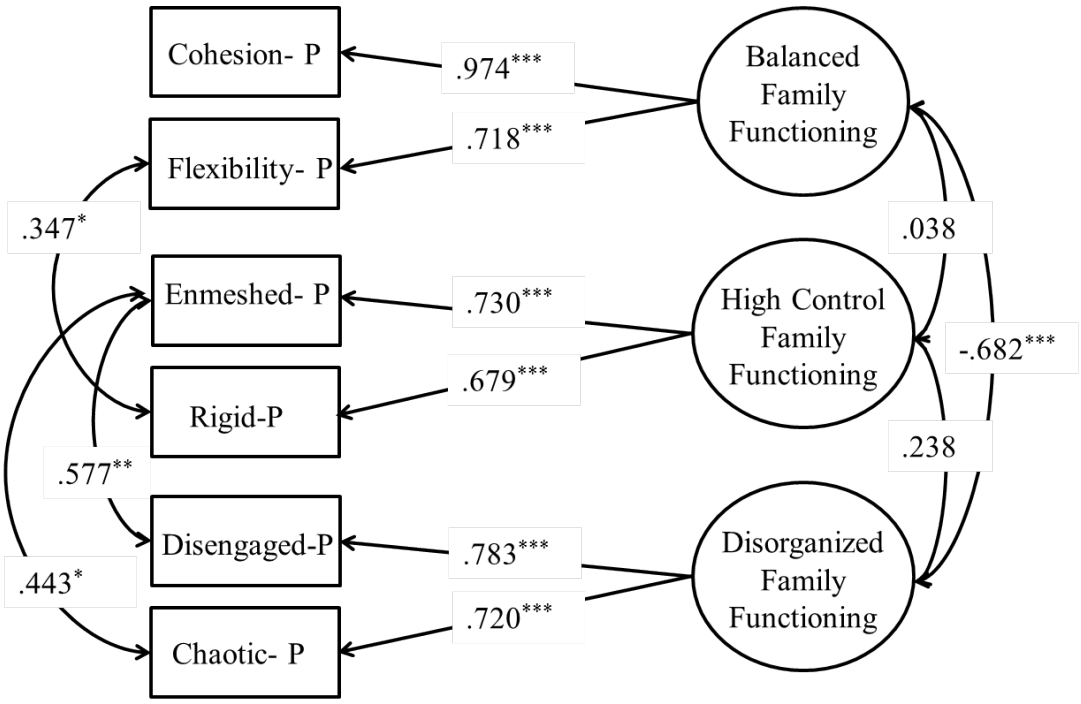


Figure 3. Representation of the cohort-sequential no growth model



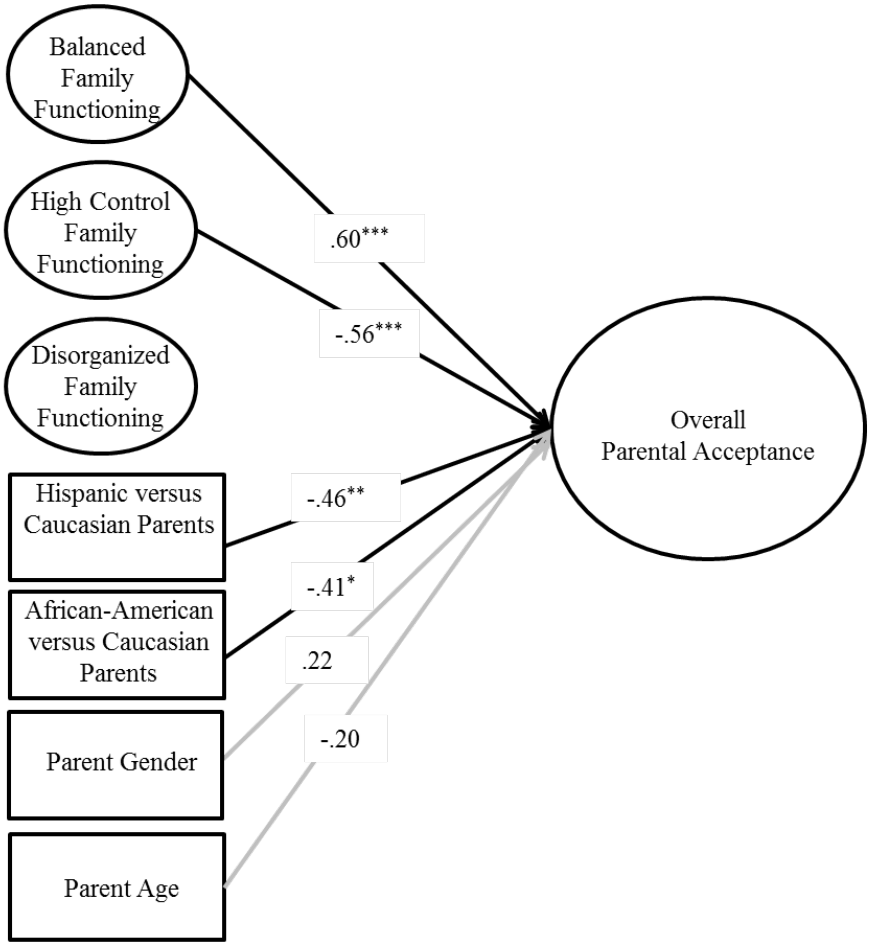
X^2 (8) = 9.799, p = .279, CFI = .995, RMSEA = .038, SRMR = .035 Y = Youth-Report

Figure 4. Measurement Model of the Family Interaction Patterns: Youth Perceptions. $^{**}p \leq .01$. $^{***}p \leq .001$.



X^2 (7) = 11.774, p = .108, CFI = .972, RMSEA = .097, SRMR = .080 P = Parent-Report

Figure 5. Measurement Model of Family Interaction Patterns: Parent Perceptions.
*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001. +p ≤ .10



$X^2(66) = 103.80$, $p = .00$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .060, SRMR = .138 Y = Youth-Report

Figure 6. Depiction of the effects (standardized betas) of the significant covariates on the LGM parental acceptance intercept (indicators and covariances not pictured).
$^{*}p \leq .05$. $^{**}p \leq .01$. $^{***}p \leq .001$. $^{+}p \leq .10$

Appendix A

Perceived Parental Reaction Scale

(Willoughby, Malik, & Lindahl, 2006)

Current PPRS - Adolescent Version

INSTRUCTIONS: List below the parents you have come out to. If a parent is participating with you in Project COPES, list this parent as **Parent #1**:

Parent #1: **MOTHER** **FATHER** **OTHER:** _____

Parent #2: **MOTHER** **FATHER** **OTHER:** _____

Think about each parent separately when filling out this questionnaire.

Think about how **your parents CURRENTLY feel about your sexuality** as you respond to the following questions. Read the following statements and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling a number. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. These are your opinions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

When thinking about how my parent currently feels about my sexuality, he/she:

	Parent #1	Parent #2
1. supports me	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. is worried about what his/her friends and other parents think of him/her	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. has the attitude that homosexual people should not work with children	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. is concerned about what the family thinks of him/her	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. is proud of me	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. believes that marriage between homosexual individuals is unacceptable	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. is concerned about the potential that he/she won't get grandchildren from me	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. realizes that I am still 'me', even though I am gay/lesbian/bisexual	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. believes that homosexuality is immoral	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10. thinks it is great	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11. has problems seeing two homosexual people together in public	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. is concerned about having to answer other peoples' questions about my sexuality	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. has currently kicked me out of the house	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. doesn't believe me	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. yells and/or screams	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

	Parent #1	Parent #2
16. prays to God, asking Him to turn me straight	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. blames himself/herself	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. calls me derogatory names, like 'faggot' or 'queer'	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. pretends that I am not gay/lesbian/bisexual	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. is angry at the fact I am gay/lesbian/bisexual	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. wants me not to tell anyone else	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. cries tears of sadness	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. says I am no longer his/her child	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. tells me it is just a phase	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
25. is mad at someone he/she thought has 'turned me gay/lesbian/bisexual'	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
26. wants me to see a psychologist who can 'make me straight'	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
27. is afraid of being judged by relatives and friends	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
28. withholds financial support	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
29. brings up evidence to show that I must not be gay/lesbian/bisexual, such as "You had a girlfriend/boyfriend, you can't be gay/lesbian/bi."	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
30. is mad at me for doing this to him/her	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
31. wants me not to be gay/lesbian/bisexual	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
32. is ashamed of my homosexuality/bisexuality	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES-IV)

(Olson, 2008)

FACES IV Questionnaire

Directions: *Circle the **number** corresponding to your response next to each statement.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Undecided	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree

1. Family members are involved in each others' lives.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems.	1	2	3	4	5
3. We get along better with people outside our family than inside.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. We spend too much time together.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There are strict consequences for breaking the rules in our family.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. We never seem to get organized in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Family members feel very close to each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8. Parents equally share leadership in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Family members seem to avoid contact with each other when at home.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10. Family members feel pressured to spend most free time together.	1	2	3	4	5
11. There are clear consequences when a family member does something wrong.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12. It is hard to know who the leader is in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Family members are supportive of each other during difficult times.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14. Discipline is fair in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Family members know very little about the friends of other family members.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16. Family members are too dependent on each other.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Our family has a rule for almost every possible situation.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18. Things do not get done in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Family members consult other family members on important decisions.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20. My family is able to adjust to change when necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Family members are on their own when there is a problem to be solved.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

FACES IV Questionnaire

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Undecided	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree

22. Family members have little need for friends outside the family.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Our family is highly organized.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
24. It is unclear who is responsible for things (chores, activities) in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Family members like to spend some of their free time with each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
26. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Our family seldom does things together.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28. We feel too connected to each other.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Our family becomes frustrated when there is a change in our plans or routines.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
30. There is no leadership in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Although family members have individual interests, they still participate in family activities.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
32. We have clear rules and roles in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Family members seldom depend on each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
34. We resent family members doing things outside the family.	1	2	3	4	5
35. It is important to follow the rules in our family.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
36. Our family has a hard time keeping track of who does various household tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Our family has a good balance of separateness and closeness.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
38. When problems arise, we compromise.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Family members mainly operate independently.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
40. Family members feel guilty if they want to spend time away from the family.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Once a decision is made, it is very difficult to modify that decision.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
42. Our family feels hectic and disorganized.	1	2	3	4	5

FACES IV Questionnaire

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Undecided	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree

43. Family members are satisfied with how they communicate with each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
44. Family members are very good listeners.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Family members express affection to each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
46. Family members are able to ask each other for what they want.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Family members can calmly discuss problems with each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
48. Family members discuss their ideas and beliefs with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
49. When family members ask questions of each other, they get honest answers.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
50. Family members try to understand each other's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
51. When angry, family members seldom say negative things about each other.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
52. Family members express their true feelings to each other.	1	2	3	4	5