

# Non-Heterosexual Identity Development

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University Health Services



# Road Map

- Attraction, Behavior, Identity
- Sex vs. Gender
- Coming Out
- Model of Homosexuality Identity Formation (Cass)
- Pros and Cons of Cass' Model
- Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development (D'Augelli's Lifespan Approach)
- Recent Research
- Health Concerns

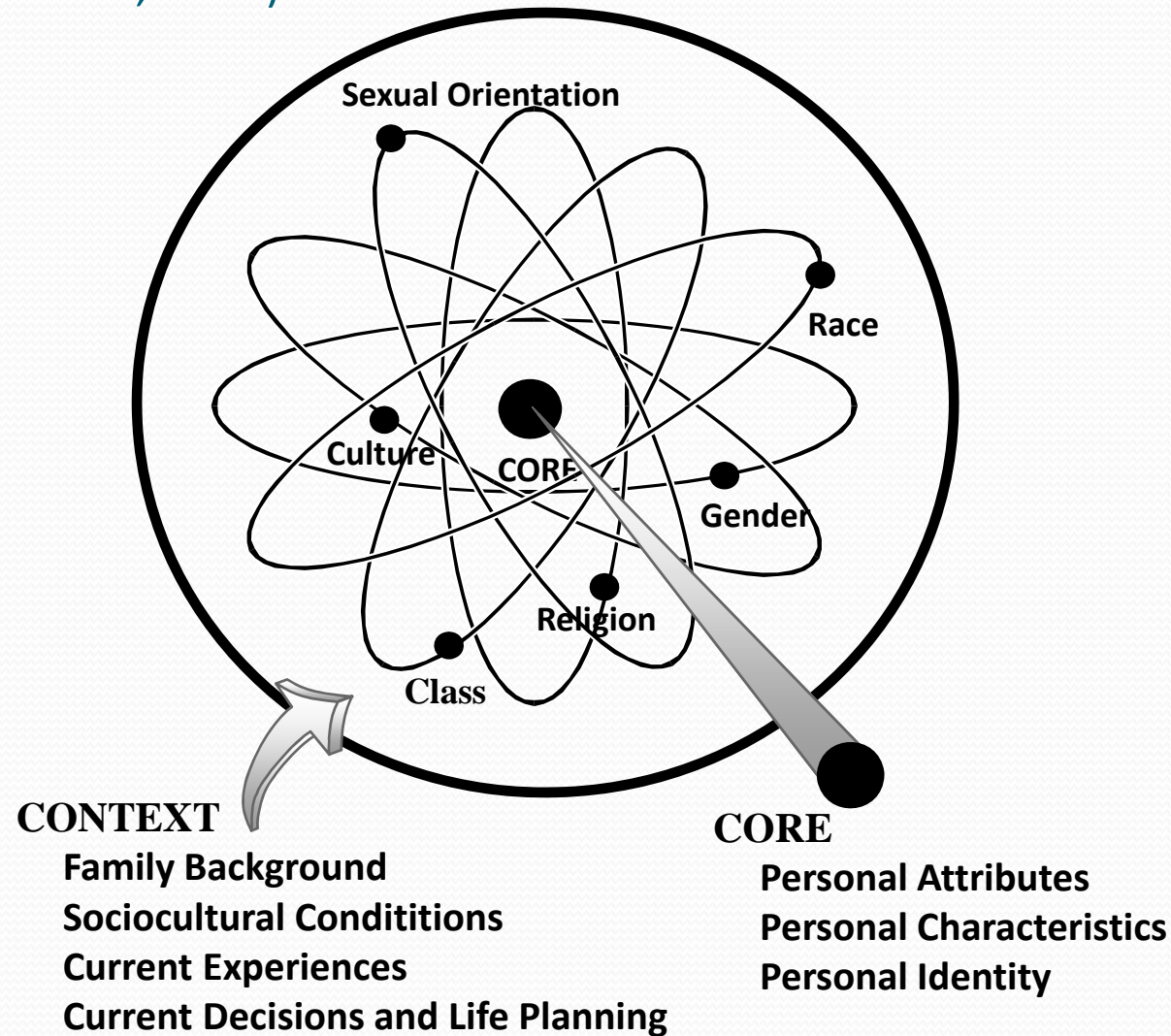
Thanks to Kat Sinclair and Annie Pezalla for sharing some of the information regarding coming out and Cass.



*“Your identity is your single most important possession. It defines everything about you. It contains your entire life.” – Dan Arsenault*

# Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

(Jones & McEwen, 2000)



# What is sex?

## Male

**Penis**

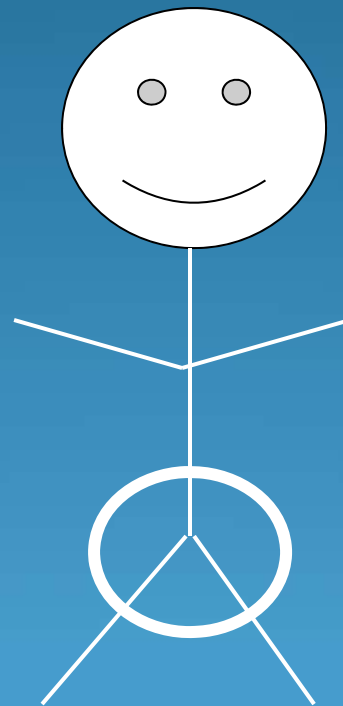
**Testes**

**XY Chromosomes**

**Testosterone**

**Prostate**

**Facial/Chest Hair**



## Female

**Vagina**

**Ovaries**

**XX Chromosomes**

**Estrogen**

**Uterus/F.T.**

**Breasts**

▼ **Sex refers to a person based on anatomical or visible physiology**

# What are gender roles?

## Men

Have short hair

Are tough

Have sex with women

Like trucks

Wear ties

Provide for women

Are assholes



## Women

Have longer hair

Are dainty

Have sex with men

Like dolls

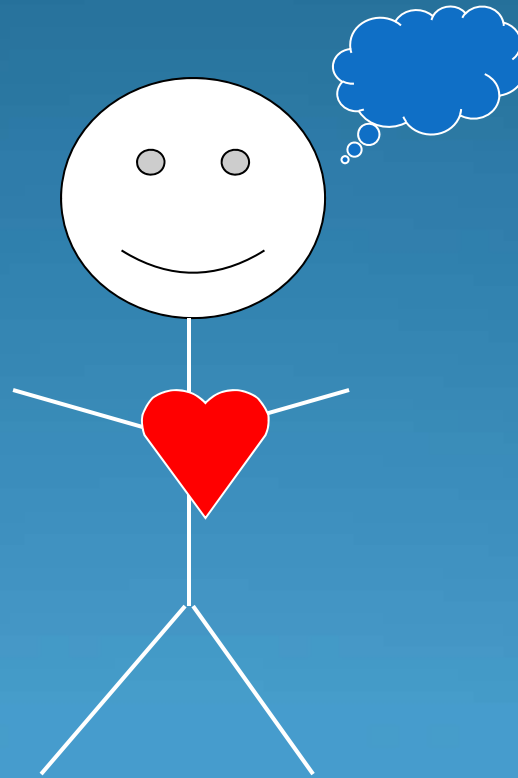
Wear dresses

Serve men

Are bitches

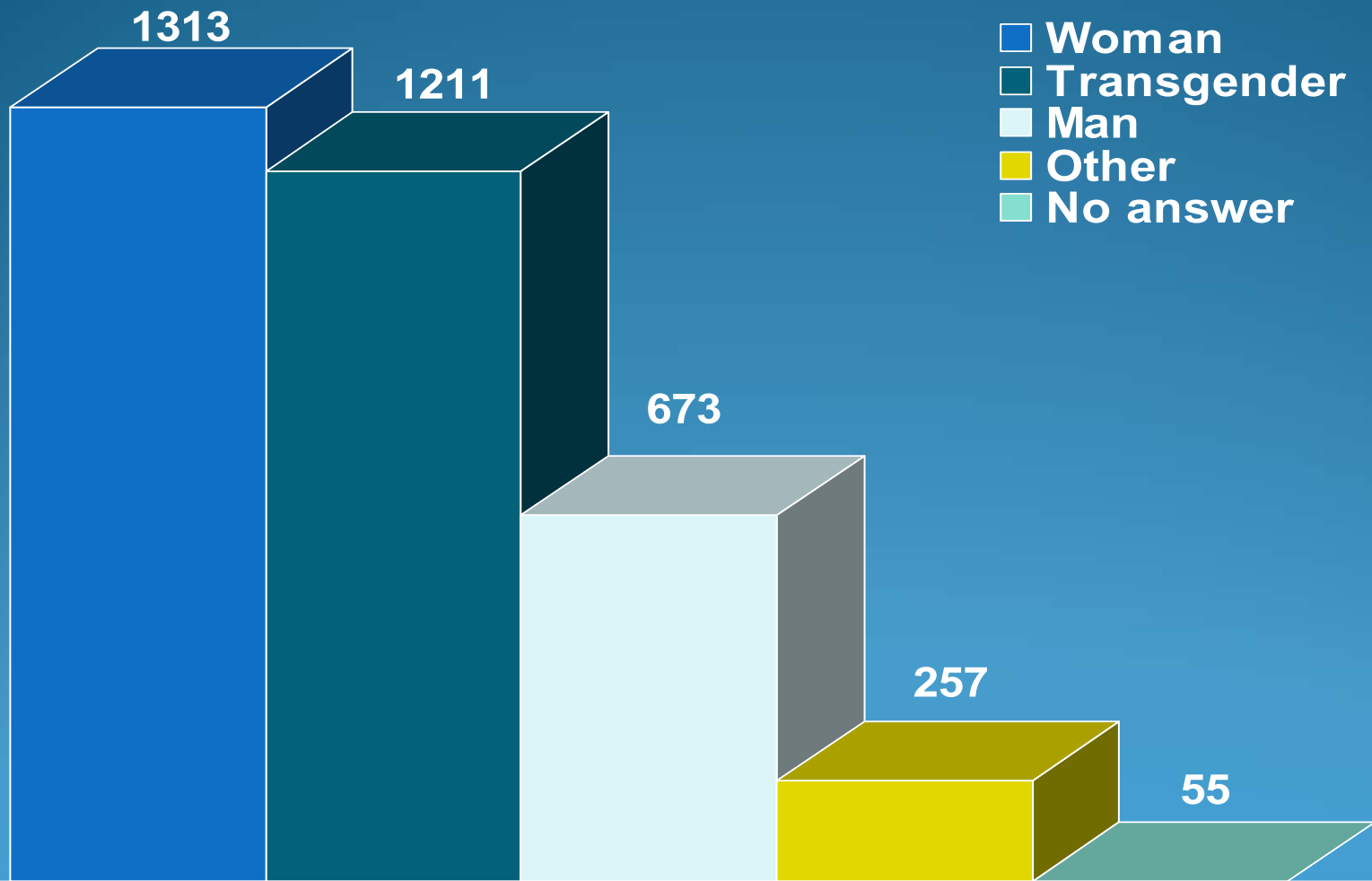
▼ A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes or denies value to qualities of masculinity and femininity in relation to biology.

# What is gender identity?



▼ **One's sense of self as masculine or feminine**

# How do trans people define their gender identity?



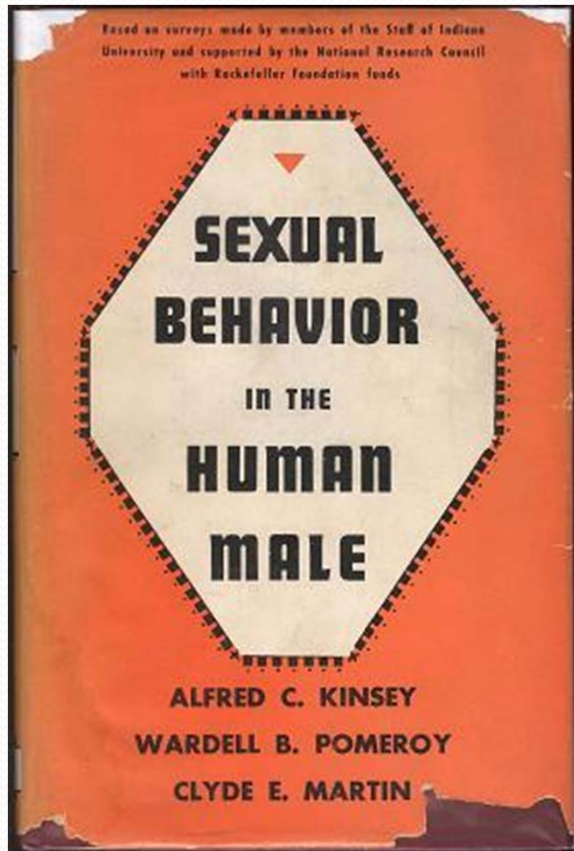



$$A+B = I$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \bullet \text{ Sexual} & + & \bullet \text{ Sexual} \\ \bullet \text{ Attraction} & & \bullet \text{ Behavior} \\ \text{Age 11} & & \text{Age 15-16} \end{array} =$$

$$\begin{array}{c} \bullet \text{ Sexual} \\ \bullet \text{ Identity} \\ \text{Age 18} \end{array}$$

- How people identify themselves based on their sexual attractions and behaviors.



“Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discrete categories... The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects.”

– Alfred Kinsey



# Kinsey Scale

## Rating Description

- 0 Exclusively heterosexual
- 1 Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual
- 2 Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual
- 3 Equally heterosexual and homosexual
- 4 Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual
- 5 Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual
- 6 Exclusively homosexual

# Meaning of “coming out” & “closet” adopted by LGB community

- Coming out:
  - Debutants
  - Social scene
  - Disclosure
- Closet:
  - Used to represent darkness & hiding experienced before disclosing one’s sexual orientation.





# Why come out?

## ● Risks

- Becoming visible by coming out likely increases the chances of becoming the victim of prejudice, discrimination, or violence (Bohan, 1996; Otis & Skinner, 1996; Radkowsky & Siegel, 1997; Wills & Crawford, 2000).
- Those who come out to others...
  - Experience more physical and verbal abuse (Cato & Canetto, 2003);
  - Experience more depression and low self-esteem (DAugelli, et al, 2002);
  - Are more prone to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (McDaniel, 2001);
  - Report missing at least one entire day of high school in the past month because they felt unsafe (Anthanasēs & Larrabee, 2003).



# Why come out?

- **Benefits**

- Counteracts the shame of hiding
- Improves self-esteem from being oneself in relation to others
- Improves social relationships
- Changes society's attitudes

# Cass' Model of Homosexual Identity Formation (1979)

*“Identity...*

CONFUSION”  
COMPARISON”  
TOLERANCE”  
ACCEPTANCE”  
PRIDE”  
SYNTHESIS”



# CONFUSION

“Could I be gay?”

“I know I’m not supposed to be gay”

“I’m attracted to guys, but it’s probably just a phase.”



# COMPARISON

“Maybe this doesn’t apply to me.”

“What does it mean to be gay?”

“How is being gay different from how I am now?”

“Maybe I can live as a heterosexual for the rest of my life, but just mess around.”

# TOLERANCE

“I really think I might be gay, but I don’t know much about what that means.”

“Let’s test what it’s like to be gay.”

“I’m going to hang out with gay people, but not tell anyone who’s not gay about it.”

# ACCEPTANCE

“I am gay.”

“I have to be comfortable in my own skin.”

“It’s worse for me to try to be straight than to be gay.”

“This isn’t a choice.”

“I will be ok.”

# PRIDE

“I’ve told those close to me, now I have to let people know!”

“I’m different than straight people and I have a lot of value.”

“I’m angry that I’m treated as a lesser citizen. My identity is not a choice; no one chooses to be oppressed. Yet my government won’t protect me because of who I fall in love with.”

# SYNTHESIS

“Being gay is just a part of me.”

“I recognize I am part of a marginalized group and am working for equality for all oppressed people.”



# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*Darnell admits to himself that he's is gay, but has not come out to most of his friends and family. He secretly visits a gay bar many miles away from his home, hoping that no one will see or recognize him.*

# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*Yun spends much of her time organizing protests for LGBT rights. She prefers to socialize only with LGBT people because heterosexuals seem too closed-minded and judgmental. Yun wants everyone to know about her sexual orientation and talks about her female partner with anyone who will listen.*



# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*Eric is still angry at the heterosexism he sees around him, but his anger has decreased in intensity. He has both LGB and heterosexual friends, and although he often talks about sexuality and other issues surrounding sexual orientation, his primary concern is getting into graduate school.*





# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*Jacinta and her boyfriend decide to “spice up” their sex life by including another woman in their sexual activities.*

# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*Alice is a first-year student and has been dating the same guy since her sophomore year of high school. Recently she met Claire, a sophomore in one of her classes. She feels an intense connection with Claire, but has never made any sexual advances toward her, although she thinks about it. She convinces herself that it will go away.*

# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*George knows he's sexually attracted to men, but he always had very "masculine" interests. He sees these interests as incompatible with being gay and identifies as heterosexual to others. He has a profile on manhunt that reads "str8 acting college jock in search of discrete fun."*

# Cass' Model and College Students

## *Identity*

CONFUSION

COMPARISON

TOLERANCE

ACCEPTANCE

PRIDE

SYNTHESIS

*Andy is feeling positive about his sexual orientation and has come out to many of his friends at school. He is going home for Thanksgiving and plans to have a talk with his family.*



# Pros and Cons of Cass' Model

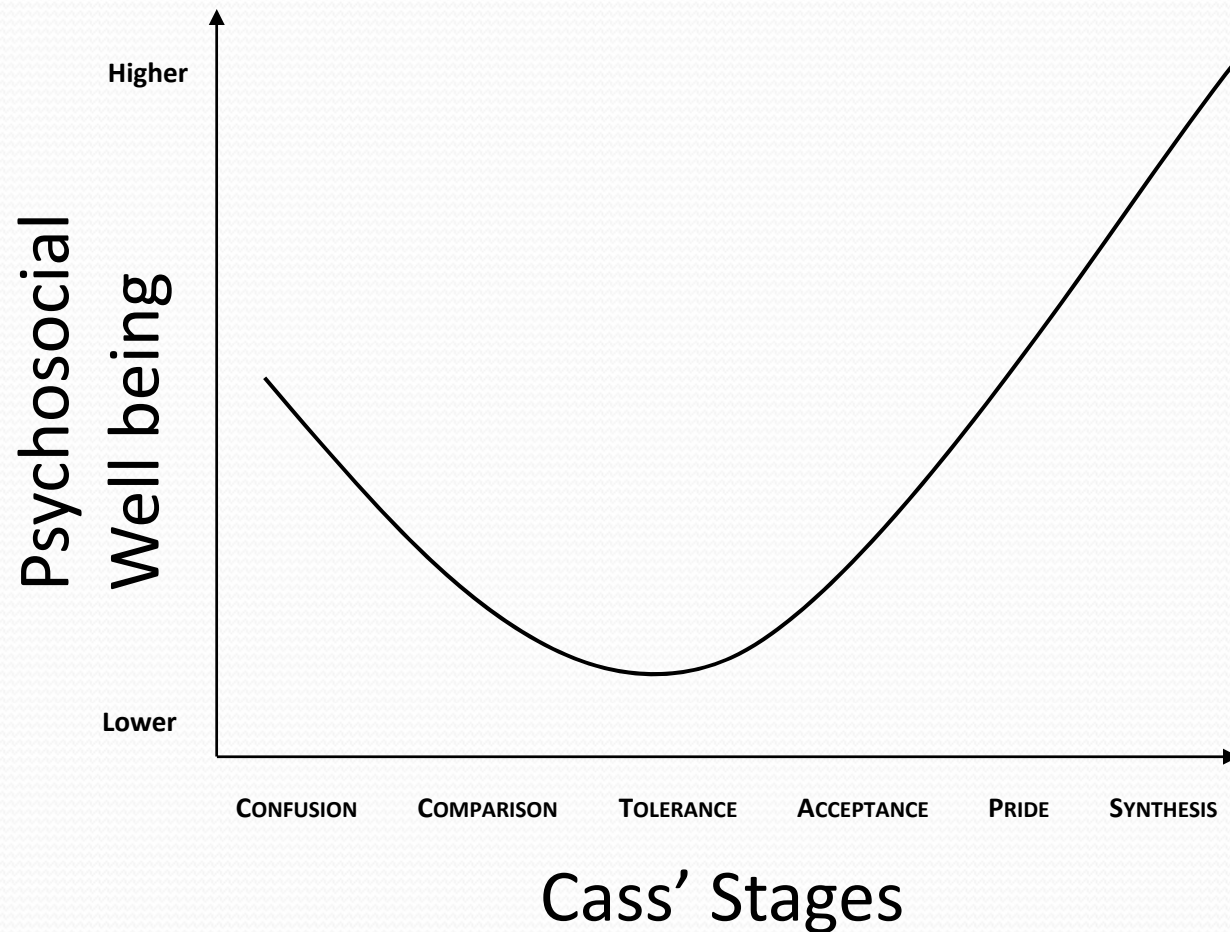
## How is this helpful?

- To understand a general process
- Identify common patterns
- Provides a common language
- Operationalizes an abstract concept

## What's wrong with it?

- Doesn't account for individual experiences
- Neglects cohort effects
- Fails to acknowledge context
- Assumption that more advanced stages are better
- Emphasizes a public declaration of sexuality

# Changes in Psychosocial Well-Being During Stages of Gay Identity Development (Halpin & Allen, 2004).



# D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development

- Develop a personal lgb identity
- Exit heterosexual identity
- Develop a lgb social identity
- Become a lgb offspring
- Develop a lgb intimacy status
- Enter a lgb community

# Recent Findings Related to LGBQ College Students (Carpenter, 2009)

- Compared to heterosexual students...
  - Gay men have higher GPAs.
  - Gay men were more likely to report receiving social support from faculty or administrators.
  - Gay men placed more importance on being involved in their learning.
  - Bisexual females were less satisfied with their education.
  - Bisexual females spend less time on academic work.



# Recent Findings Related to LGBQ College Students (Gonyea & Moore, 2007)

- Compared to heterosexual students...
  - LGBT students were about twice as likely to major in the humanities.
  - LGBT students were about half as likely to be a member of a social fraternity or sorority.
  - LGBT students are more likely to interact with faculty members.
  - Level of disclosure of sexual identity influences active and collaborative learning.



# Health Concerns for Gay Men and Lesbians

- [Top 10 Things Gay Men Should Discuss with Their Health Care Provider](#)
- [Top 10 Things Lesbians Should Discuss with Their Health Care Provider](#)



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