

LGBT YOUTH ONLINE AND IN PERSON: IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL  
SUPPORT, AND EXTRACURRICULAR AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION  
IN A POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

By

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## ABSTRACT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth are historically an under-studied subpopulation of youth. Over the past decade, however, the subpopulation has garnered increased attention from scholars of education and youth development, primarily with regard to how experiences of stigma and victimization negatively influence school and family life. During this same time period, the transformative paradigm of *positive youth development* (PYD), which focuses on the positive or adaptive factors that support a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood (Durlak, 1998), has become increasingly prominent. Despite the potential value of this approach in offering a fuller picture of youth development inclusive of risk as well as positive supports, its application to LGBT youth thus far remains limited.

A parallel growth in literature has attended to how new, Internet-based technologies affect adolescent development models, and how they may be especially useful for some socially marginalized groups. These new media, when viewed through a PYD framework, have the potential to re-energize civic participation and help create a more just society, particularly if they support development and assist in overcoming experiences of marginalization. This dissertation applies the PYD model to LGBT youth and examines a) the factors that influence access to PYD resources; b) how LGBT-related experiences of marginalization influence access to and use of positive resources and well-being; and c) whether LGBT-specific and Internet-based additions to the PYD framework facilitate well-being. Results show that online and LGBT-specific spaces and resources—including resources related to LGBT identity development, social support, and participation in extracurricular and civic activities—can contribute to well-being and thus, expand existing understandings of PYD for LGBT youth.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past 60 years, discourse on adolescent development has shifted from a focus on crises, deficits, and risk factors, to the positive, protective factors of development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). Rooted in a diverse set of disciplines—among them biology, psychology, sociology, developmental psychology, and community psychology (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005)—this transformative, systems-oriented paradigm has been termed *positive youth development* (PYD). Rather than focusing solely on risks (e.g., impoverished communities, schools, and families; and negative peer influences) for major negative outcomes (e.g., behavior and academic problems, poor physical health, and substance abuse), PYD scholars have brought greater attention to prevention and the positive factors that support a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood (Durlak, 1998).

Early research employing the PYD framework tended to view youth homogeneously. More recent PYD research has begun to recognize diversity within the youth population (e.g., African American male gang members in Taylor et al., 2005) and acknowledge that the multiple forms of stress experienced by persons with (multiple) socially marginalizing characteristics may make PYD components at times less impactful, but ultimately, more necessary to achieving at least a modest level of well-being. Despite greater research attention to some youth subpopulations, less attention has been directed toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, whose sexual minority status and/or nonconforming gender expression often expose them to stigma and experiences of victimization. Given their potentially greater levels of

risk factors, such as victimization and family rejection, increased focus on the factors that support positive outcomes among LGBT youth is urgently needed.

Other gaps in the PYD literature are evident as well. With the steady erosion of public spaces for gathering, particularly for youth (due to such trends as suburbanization, curfew legislation, and loitering laws), and a general decline of civic participation (Putnam, 1995), the Internet has opened up new possibilities for interaction and exchange (boyd, 2008), and perhaps new opportunities for PYD. Flanagan and Sherrod (1998) express a greater need for a PYD orientation given global development: a more connected and interdependent citizenry due to advances in the Internet and other communication technologies; dwindling economic opportunities and growing income disparities; and social disintegration. These resources, if viewed through a PYD lens, could help re-energize political participation and help create a more just society. Online spaces can serve as third places—neutral grounds that reduce social barriers, or "the core settings of informal public life" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 16)—for youth who lack physical public spaces for socialization, whether due to personal characteristics, inadequate peer networks, or limited opportunities to engage in broader social issues, perhaps due to experiences of marginalization. This dissertation applies the PYD model to LGBT youth and examines a) the individual and contextual factors that influence access to PYD resources; b) how LGBT-related experiences of marginalization influence access to and use of positive resources and well-being; and c) whether LGBT-specific and Internet-based additions to the PYD framework—including resources related to LGBT identity development, social support, and participation in extracurricular and civic activities—facilitate positive outcomes.

## Positive Youth Development in a Socio-Ecological Framework

Numerous scholars have attempted to enumerate adaptive factors for youth development. For instance, Durlak (1998) identifies community social norms, quality schools, positive peer relationships, supportive families, personal skills and self-efficacy, and social support (at multiple levels and from multiple sources) as protective factors. Benson and colleagues (2003a; 2003b; 2007) offer a framework for developmental assets including: support (from family, other adults, neighbors, and peers); empowerment (i.e., opportunities for youth), boundaries and expectations (in families, schools, neighborhoods, and peer groups), constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values (including caring, equality, responsibility, and restraint), social competencies, and positive identity (including self-esteem, sense of purpose, and self-efficacy). In a comprehensive review of the literature, Catalano and colleagues (2004) identify the following desired PYD outcomes: bonding, resilience, competence (social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral), self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, self-identity, belief in the future, positive behavior, prosocial involvement, and prosocial norms. It is Lerner and colleagues' (2004; 2005b) five C's, however, which identify components of PYD most succinctly and which are referenced most frequently in PYD literature: *Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring and Compassion*, plus a commonly-included sixth component of *Community* (Little, 1993; Yates & Youniss, 1998). These five (or six) C's are described in Table 1.1 and serve as the PYD framework used in this dissertation.

Core PYD components are theorized to result in the attainment of *thriving* and *flow* throughout the life course (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Scales & Benson, 2004), which enable individuals to adapt to challenges in particular contexts. They are also envisioned to facilitate a more just

society by allowing youth to see themselves as part of larger wholes, thus contributing to cooperation and reciprocity (Lerner, 2004). Consequently, healthy development involves healthy well-being within oneself, but also in ways that extend to relationships among families, peers, and communities (Lerner, Bornstein, & Smith, 2003).

Table 1.1.  
*Lerner's Five C's of Positive Youth Development*

Five C's	Definition
Competence	Abilities and actions in social, academic, cognitive, and vocational domains
Confidence	Self-worth and self-efficacy
Connection	Positive, bidirectional relationships with individuals and institutions
Character	Respect for and observation of cultural norms; Personal integrity
Caring and Compassion	Sympathy and empathy for others
Community*	Taking a personal role in social change but recognizing a larger social context

Based on Little (1993); Lerner (2004); Lerner, Bornstein, and Smith (2003); Lerner et al. (2005a); Roth & Brooks-Gunn (2003).

\*This commonly included sixth C is based on Little (1993); Lerner, Dowling, and Anderson (2003); Yates and Youniss (1998).

Numerous studies suggest that these outcomes can be facilitated by intentional scaffolding and well-designed, community-based programs (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Lerner et al., 2005a; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a; 2003b). Using such developmental assets as support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time, Scales, Benson, Leffert, and Blyth (2000) explained a substantial portion of the variance in *thriving* (i.e., evidence of positive development)—indicated by such outcomes as school success, physical health, helping others, valuing diversity, and overcoming adversity. In addition, programs that emphasize adult-youth mentoring and supportive relationships between youth and others in the community may be especially beneficial (Damon, 1990; 1997; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998). As youth detach

from their parents during adolescence (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004), these relationships may provide otherwise absent support.

Although PYD has diverse roots, the influence of developmental psychology and child and adolescent development cannot be overlooked. The PYD concept of *thriving*, for instance, emphasizes the individual-context relationship as essential to well-being. Erikson's (1959) stage model includes the development of *fidelity* during adolescence and *intimacy* during young adulthood, which emphasize the importance of a sense of self (or, fidelity to self-identity) and interdependence and connection to others in well-being. Together, they pave the way to adulthood, or the stage of *generativity*, in which persons develop an understanding of purpose that involves families and larger social systems (Erikson, 1959).

Other developmental scholarship frames components of PYD as well. The concept of *Confidence*, for instance, involves a coherent self-identity that promotes self-esteem and self-efficacy. Lerner, Dowling, and Anderson (2003) argue that a fundamental, core identity compels awareness of larger responsibilities and commitment to social well-being. A coherent self-identity, necessary to civic responsibility and behaviors, was also thought to support self-esteem by Erikson (1959). Marcia (1966, 1999) identified two major factors necessary to accomplish optimal identity development, including *crisis/exploration*, i.e., examining opportunities in life and considering one's self in relation to those opportunities; and *commitment*, i.e., allegiance to one's identity, life goals, and values.

The PYD concept of *Connection* is influenced by developmental literature as well. Scholars of adolescent social networks highlight the shift in time spent with families to time spent with peers (Brown, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; DuBois, Felner, Brand, Adan, & Evans, 1992; Glick & Rose, 2011). Adolescents develop peer networks of individuals who

provide understanding and support to one another in times of need (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Peer networks also undergo a transformation during adolescence to become more adult-like in appearance: the formation of small *cliques* mirrors and builds the foundation for families, and larger *crowds* reflect social groupings and institutions that shape broader cultural behaviors (Dunphy, 1963); both pave the way for the formation of ties based around sexual pairings (Cottrell, 1996; Dunphy, 1963).

In addition, *Community*, or civic responsibility, is informed by developmental literature on moral reasoning and political participation. Piaget's (1983; 1987) theorized formal operational stage, begun in early adolescence, involves the development of abstract thinking, which facilitates an interest and belief in politics and ethics (Torney-Purta, 1990). During adolescence, Kohlberg's (1969; 1976; 1984) moral reasoning stages 3 (a focus on individual responsibility) and 4 (the beginning of obligation to others and to society) become increasingly prominent, eventually leading to a social contract orientation in adulthood. Adelson and colleagues (1969; 1986) have also suggested a shift in political reasoning during adolescence, whereby concerns become more abstract and contextual, and less authoritarian and dependent on specific experiences. Adolescents also become more involved in helping others, and experiences such as volunteering challenge their understanding of social problems (Yates & Youniss, 1998).

These concepts and components of PYD reflect and fit naturally within a socio-ecological framework (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007), which emphasize an individual's existence in context and situated within multiple, interacting levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, Rappaport, 1977). At the center of socio-ecological models lies the individual, who is embedded in a *microsystem* (such as the family, neighborhood, school, and peers), whose elements interact with one another in a *mesosystem*. These systems are further enmeshed in an *exosystem* that

affects an individual's immediate environment (such as parents' cultural upbringing), as well as in *macrosystems* (such as social, cultural, political, and economic institutions). Thus, although factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation are often thought of as demographic variables measured in individuals, they are embedded in much more complex and powerful systems and institutions. Reflecting this framework, LGBT youth are situated in families that may or may not be supportive of them, peer networks that may or may not include other LGBT people, schools that may or may not have LGBT-related resources, and communities that may or may not be supportive of LGBT people, all of which are affected by local, state, and national laws and global perceptions of LGBT people.

### **LGBT Positive Youth Development**

Common PYD goals are envisioned to apply to youth collectively; however, specific sub-populations may have additional or more concentrated needs as well (Granger, 2002). In fact, a uniform PYD framework for marginalized youth may work to maintain dominant social and political institutions if it is not accompanied by efforts to promote a greater critical consciousness and engagement with similar individuals (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Thus, LGBT youth, whose LGBT identity is commonly accompanied by social stigma and experiences such as LGBT-targeted victimization or biased language, may have a more concentrated need for some components of PYD than others (Russell & Van Campen, 2011), and in ways that are specific to the LGBT population. Their access to general PYD resources may be affected by their experiences as LGBT individuals as well.

The dominant image of LGBT youth is of a group at risk, particularly to suicide, substance abuse problems, and risky sexual behavior (Talbert, 2004). A positive developmental model is theorized to be useful for LGBT youth as with youth in general. However, research of

LGBT youth historically has neglected the principles and application of a PYD framework. More recently, scholars have begun to examine positive factors that might support positive development in LGBT youth, including parental support (Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010), peer and school support (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Higa et al., 2012), affirmative school clubs such as GSAs (Russell, Muraco, Subramanian, & Laub, 2009; Toomey & Russell, 2011), and involvement in the LGBT community (Higa et al., 2012).

These efforts have begun to shed light on the applicability of a holistic PYD framework to LGBT youth, including components that might be more relevant to LGBT youth, as well as those that might be in tension with the experiences of LGBT youth. For instance, typical measures of *Character* stress respect for societal and cultural norms and adherence to correct or moral behaviors; given that societal norms commonly stigmatize LGBT identities and people (Morrow, 2004), an LGBT-inclusive understanding of *Character* would need to explicitly reject norms that subjugate the LGBT population, or be amended to emphasize adherence only to cultural and societal norms that value and respect all people. Similarly, the commonly understood component of *Caring and Compassion*—or expressing sympathy and empathy for others—may be at odds with the experiences of LGBT youth, who are often the subject of discrimination, victimization, and lack of compassion from other people. In addition, the component of *Competence* emphasizes perceived ability in social, academic, cognitive, and vocational domains; understanding of academic competence among LGBT youth must acknowledge factors that impede academic success, such as bullying, and an understanding of cognitive competence must consider how identifying as LGBT shapes one's thought processes in and out of school. Thus, there is need for greater attention to PYD within the LGBT population and how such a framework might need to be adjusted or augmented within this population.

Responding to scholarship on LGBT youth that positions them either as “at risk” or “resilient”, Horn, Kosciw, and Russell (2009) suggest the need for greater understanding of social contexts occupied by LGBT youth, such as those involving religion and work. Some scholarship has begun to address this need (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). For years, studies of LGBT populations relied predominantly on urban, White, gay male samples (Meezan & Martin, 2003; Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004). Recent work by Gray (2009a; 2009b), deCoste (2011), Kayzak (2010), Palmer and colleagues (2013) and others has sought to understand differences in experience in rural locales, for instance. McCready (2010) has explored the importance of space in dictating the identities and self-presentation of racial/ethnic minority gay male and gender non-conforming youth. Hatzenbuehler (2011) has documented how the supportiveness of the local context mediates the relationship between victimization and suicidality among LGBT youth. And in proposing a model of LGBT leadership, Fassinger, Shullman, and Stevenson (2010) stress that the enactment of sexual orientation and gender expression depend on the situation/context (i.e., the LGBT or non-LGBT composition of a space), and therefore different configurations of and experiences of stigma. Thus, there is growing recognition that not all LGBT youth experiences are the same, and that these experiences differ by individual and contextual factors (Harper & Schneider, 2003) as well as experiences of marginalization. Accordingly, any PYD framework inclusive of LGBT youth must attend to subgroup differences within the LGBT population and recognize that positive supports occur in the context of substantial marginalization for many LGBT youth.

In addition to *Character, Caring and Compassion*, and *Competence*, other components of PYD require examination with specific attention to LGBT youth as well and will be examined more closely in this dissertation. One key aspect of adolescent development is the formation of

self-identity (see Erikson, 1968; Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002), which is captured in Lerner's concept of *Confidence*. Many theories of sexual identity development point to the integration of one's sexual identity into a holistic identity as an indicator of successful development (Brown & Rounsley, 1996; D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998; Devor, 2004; Diamond, 1998; Floyd & Stein, 2002; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Grossman, D'Augelli, & Salter, 2006; Lev, 2004; Maguen, Floyd, Bakeman, & Armistead, 2002; Morgan & Stevens, 2008; Ramsey, 1996; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2008, 2010; Rotheram-Borus & Fernandez, 1995; Rotheram-Borus & Langabeer, 2001; Russell & Van Campen, 2011; Ryan & Futterman, 1997); others have recognized the importance of a coherent and embraced gender identity for gender non-conforming youth as well (Clemans, DeRose, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Grossman et al., 2006). Thus, some components of PYD, such as the development of a positive self-identity or self-worth (Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005b), may be especially relevant to some population subgroups. For LGBT youth, achieving *Confidence* or a positive self-identity in general may only be possible if LGBT self-identity is first achieved.

Inherent in many PYD models is the recognition that persons exist in relationships to others. Social support is commonly recognized as function of these relationships. In Lerner and colleagues' concept of (2004; 2005b) *Connection*, social support serves an important function in personal well-being. Although it influences well-being directly (Barrera, 1986; Hall & Wellman, 1984; House, 1981), its buffering potential may further support well-being in times of distress or for persons who experience substantial physical or emotional trauma (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Persons who have access to and are satisfied with social support from friends, family members, and acquaintances are better able to cope with negative life events.

Social support is also differentially associated with major life transitions. The transition in adolescence from childhood to young adulthood is marked by a change in sources of support. As youth begin to assert more independence, their support networks are increasingly composed of friends and peers, rather than primarily of family members (Glick & Rose, 2011; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). These relationships with peers aid in the process of identity formation, a desired outcome of PYD, perhaps particularly for socially marginalized persons (Yates & Youniss, 1998). The process of coming to terms with one's sexuality has historically been associated with fears, whether anticipated or actualized, of a loss of friends, family, and other sources of support (Anhalt & Morris, 2004; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Diamond & Lucas, 2004). However, Doty and colleagues' (2009; 2010) research on LGB<sup>1</sup> youth finds that support from confidants who understand one's sexuality, and support from other LGB people specifically, is associated with greater satisfaction with one's social support. Thus, models of PYD inclusive of LGBT youth must acknowledge the complexity of social networks and support among LGBT youth.

Finally, models of PYD frequently stress the importance of engagement in one's school and community. Such activity is reflected in the concept of *Community*, which Lerner and colleagues (2004; 2005b) describe as taking a personal role in social change and realizing the greater social context. In addition, local engagement has been found to be associated with a range of other positive outcomes, including academic (grades and school belonging), psychological (self-worth, resilience, distress), and positive peer influence outcomes, which themselves reflect common PYD concepts of *Competence*, *Confidence*, and *Connection* (Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b; Lerner, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005b). LGB youth

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<sup>1</sup> The more inclusive designation "LGBT" is used whenever possible and appropriate. However, much of the scholarship that claims relevance to the "LGBT" population is inaccurate, because it is not inclusive of issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (i.e., relevant to all four of the groups enumerated in the acronym "LGBT"). Thus, when discussing the findings from particular studies, I make caution to refer only to the groups included in the study; hence, at times I refer to "LGB" or "lesbian and gay" youth, rather than to "LGBT youth."

may participate less frequently in school- and community-based clubs than non-LGB youth (Toomey & Russell, 2012). Despite lower rates of participation, some research suggests that socially marginalized youth may benefit equally, or perhaps to an even greater extent, from school and civic participation than more advantaged youth (e.g., Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Thus, venues that expand opportunities for participation may be especially helpful for some population groups, including LGBT youth.

Together, this review suggests that, although common PYD frameworks may be applicable to youth in general, certain components of these models may be more salient than others (i.e., identity, support, novel opportunities to be involved and/or advocate for change) with respect to specific population subgroups, including those who experience social marginalization. In addition, an understanding of these components may need to be adjusted according to the specific population in question: for LGBT youth, models should recognize the importance of LGBT identity in a holistic identity; of support from LGBT people specifically in feeling understood and well-being; and of being able to be civically engaged, in spite of or because of one's LGBT identity, and in LGBT-specific as well as general activities.

### **Internet and LGBT Positive Youth Development**

As new technologies have expanded access to information and persons, scholars have begun to inquire whether these technologies might facilitate positive life outcomes. Although early accounts of the Internet referenced its potential to permit presentations of self unanchored to “real” or offline (i.e., in-person) presentations, researchers increasingly recognize the inseparability of online and offline lives (Rice, Katz, Acord, Dasgupta, & David, 2004). People typically spend time online not to create multiple, distinct lives, but rather to enhance the lives they lead offline and the overall quality of their lives (see Bainbridge, 2007; Ellison, Steinfield,

& Lampe, 2007; Katz & Aspden, 1997; Parks & Roberts, 1998; Wellman & Gulia, 1999). Rainie and Wellman (2012) prescribe tips for thriving online (see Scales et al., 2000, for *thriving* as a goal of PYD), including solidifying existing relationships, developing new meaningful ties, and strategically presenting one's identities.

The Internet has been shown to be particularly appealing to persons marginalized from physical spaces by some physical or social characteristic (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Ybarra & Suman, 2006). Often marginalized from public spaces by friends and family members as well as general public discourse; and disadvantaged by such factors as age, sexual orientation and/or gender expression, LGBT youth often must seek resources from other sources. LGB persons were among the earliest adopters of first-generation social networking sites (Haag & Chang, 1997; Hammack & Cohler, 2011), and some studies of youth blogs have found a higher proportion of gay male users than would be expected from most estimates of their representation in the general population (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005).

Horn and colleagues' (2009) call for a greater understanding of social contexts occupied by LGBT youth could be extended to online contexts as well, and in ways that incorporate a PYD framework. For persons marginalized from physical spaces, online spaces may offer resources that are unavailable in person, and hence allow substantial improvements in physical health and psychosocial well-being. For instance, LGB youth often lack access to fundamental information on non-heterosexual sexual development and sexual identity (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Hillier, Mitchell, & Ybarra, 2012; Ingraham, 2002; Irvine, 2003; Morrow, 2004; Wilson, 2000b), and transgender and other gender identity topics may be even less addressed in schools, given that teachers may have little professional development on these topics (GLSEN and Harris Interactive, 2008). In addition, LGBT youth may lack access to other LGBT people or non-

LGBT people who understand their experiences (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Grossman & Kerner, 1998; Mercier & Berger, 1989). Finally, LGBT youth may be inhibited from meaningful participation in their schools and communities because of experiences of victimization (Toomey & Russell, 2011) or by formal or informal policies and practices that judge LGBT issues to be inappropriate for the school context and for civic discourse (Kosciw et al., 2012). For LGBT youth who face these difficulties, online spaces and resources may offer opportunities for PYD that are not available in person. As such, online spaces and resources might be expected to play a greater role in PYD for LGBT youth than for other youth. In addition, the utilization of online resources by LGBT youth might result in desired positive outcomes, including better psychosocial well-being and better performance in other areas of life (e.g., in school).

Nevertheless, online spaces may also carry dangers and risks for youth in general and for LGBT youth specifically. For instance, the Internet may expose LGBT youth to negative influences on self-acceptance, such as reparative (i.e., ex-gay) therapies (Pascoe, 2011). In addition, LGBT youth experience higher rates of bullying online (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Human Rights Campaign, 2012; Robinson & Espelage, 2011), which is associated with negative psychological outcomes (Blumenfeld & Cooper, 2010; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell, Ybarra, & Finkelhor, 2007; Pascoe, 2011; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). As online spaces are increasingly integrated into offline lives, all of these possibilities—both positive and negative—warrant more focused attention.

### **A Proposed Model of LGBT-Inclusive Online and In-Person Positive Youth Development**

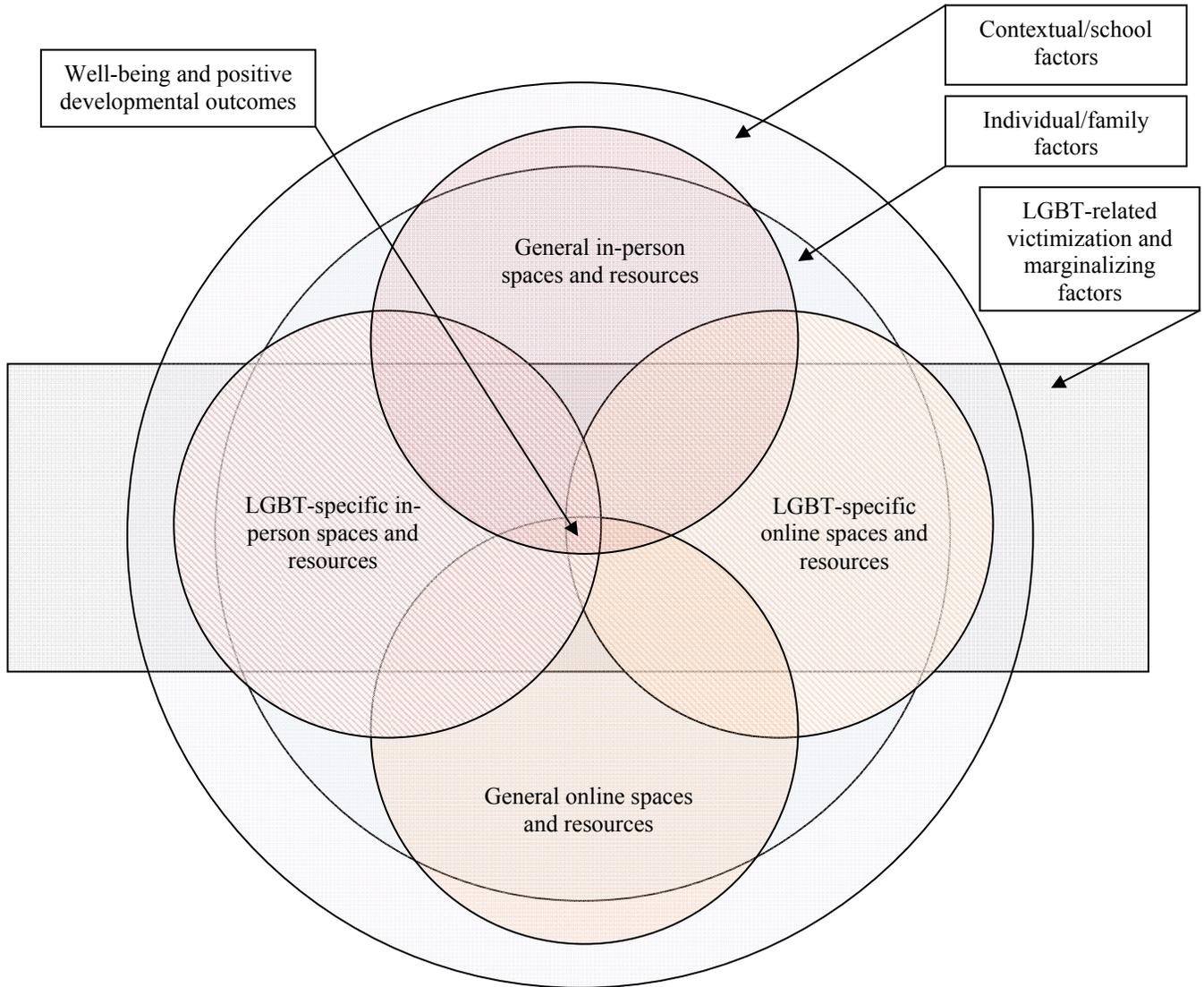
The discussion thus far highlights three fundamental needs for applying the PYD framework to LGBT youth: a) an understanding of how different individual and contextual factors influence access to and use of PYD resources, b) an understanding of how identifying as

LGBT , including accompanying experiences of marginalization, influences access to and use of PYD resources, and c) the inclusion of LGBT-specific and online spaces and resources in PYD models—including those related to LGBT identity development, social support, and participation in extracurricular and civic activities. Demonstrating the complication of imagining PYD in online spaces and for LGBT youth is the realization that some of the factors that limit access to resources in person—such as the salience of sexual orientation and gender roles in suppressing non-normative behavior—appear to serve as the basis for behavior in online spaces, including exploring identity, seeking social support, and developing civic skills and voice. Although growing evidence indicates the enthusiastic adoption of new technologies by groups often considered marginalized, (e.g., Smith, 2011; Zickuhr & Smith, 2012), less is known about their specific intentions in doing so and whether such use results in the same outcomes as their complementary processes do offline. Accordingly, research is needed on the processes and utility of online spaces for identity development, social support, and political expression for LGBT youth; whether they result in well-being and other positive outcomes; and eventually, whether they can be transformed into more structured, intentional programs for LGBT youth and marginalized youth more generally.

Figure 1.1 offers a conceptual model for LGBT-inclusive PYD that reflects a socio-ecological understanding of well-being. Characteristics at both the individual/family and contextual/school levels are depicted as influencing developmental processes and outcomes. In addition, these factors influence access to and use of online and in-person resources, which are interdependent and theorized to promote positive outcomes, including psychosocial well-being and academic success. The model also recognizes that identifying as LGBT often results in marginalizing experiences, such as victimization related to sexual orientation or gender

expression, for many LGBT youth (D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Hershberger, Pilkington, & D’Augelli, 1997; Kosciw et al., 2012). These experiences negatively influence well-being directly as well as indirectly through potentially reduced access to resources. Accordingly, LGBT youth may be discouraged from utilizing common PYD supports, and instead may feel more comfortable in LGBT-specific and online spaces, which may nonetheless promote well-being.

Figure 1.1.  
*Conceptual Model of the Utility of Online and In-Person Spaces and Resources in PYD for LGBT Youth*



This dissertation specifically examines online and in-person resources related to LGBT identity development, social support, and extracurricular and civic participation, which are reflected in Lerner and colleagues' (2004; 2005b) PYD components of *Confidence*, *Connection*, and *Community*. Although other PYD components could just as easily—and should—be studied, these three components may be especially salient to the LGBT youth population for the reasons discussed above. The variables (i.e., individual and contextual factors, experiences of victimization and marginalization, spaces and resources that promote PYD, and positive outcomes) examined in Chapters 2-4 are detailed in Table 1.2, and the relationships between variables examined in each chapter are depicted in Table 1.3.

### **Research Context and Questions**

The following three chapters contribute to the literatures on LGBT youth experiences, positive youth development, and the potential benefits of Internet and communications technology (ICT) for youth and the general population. They encourage a more critical inspection of the PYD framework and thereby compel a consideration of how the framework might function differently for youth with different individual characteristics and in different contexts. In this case, they examine LGBT-inclusive facets of PYD, including LGBT identity development, social support from other LGBT people or persons who understand the LGBT youth, and extracurricular and civic participation in LGBT-specific forms of participation, and whether they contribute to well-being. They also encourage a greater adoption of a PYD framework within scholarship on LGBT youth by mapping current concepts in the literature of LGBT youth onto a larger theoretical framework, and by acknowledging how LGBT-specific victimization may influence access to and use of PYD resources. Finally, they examine whether uses of online spaces and resources contribute to PYD, again applying concepts present in the

Internet studies literature to a PYD paradigm. Although research with LGBT youth is becoming more prevalent, and although evidence suggests that LGBT persons were some of the earliest adopters of the Internet and associated technologies (Haag & Chang, 1997; Hammack & Cohler, 2012), little of this literature has employed a PYD framework. Greater adoption of this framework could encourage a more holistic research agenda involving LGBT youth.

Chapter 2 responds to a dearth of literature on LGBT identity development by answering the following questions:

1. In what ways do LGBT youth use the Internet for LGBT identity development?
2. Does the use of online spaces for LGBT identity development vary by individual and contextual factors?
3. Do online spaces offer resources for LGBT identity development particularly among youth who are less comfortable being out in person?

Although LGBT identity development models have sought to incorporate a greater diversity of experiences over the past decade, quantitative and mixed-methods studies examining LGBT identity development across media are limited. Some qualitative evidence suggests that factors related to locale manifest in differences in LGBT identity disclosure (Gray, 2009b). Other literature indicates delayed disclosure among racial and ethnic minorities (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Morrow, 2004; Rosario, Scrimshaw, & Hunter, 2004; Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). Chapter 2 incorporates quantitative and qualitative data to study how individual and contextual factors shape use of online space and resources for LGBT identity development. Given the potential difficulties experienced by LGBT youth, Chapter 2 also examines whether online spaces serve as resources for youth who are less comfortable being out in person.

Table 1.2.  
*Description of Variables used in Quantitative Analyses (N=1,931)*

Variable Name	Operationalization	Values	Mean/%	SD
<b><i>Individual and Contextual Factors</i></b>				
<i>Gender identity</i>	What is your gender? Your gender is how you feel inside.  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Female (Ref.) (selected only female as gender)	43.1	
		Male (selected only male)	35.5	
		Transgender (selected transgender, male-to-female, and/or female-to-male)	9.6	
		Other (selected both male and female) (e.g., genderqueer, androgynous).	11.8	
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>	What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself? If you consider yourself of a mixed racial background, with which group do you most closely identify?  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	White (Ref.)	66.1	
		Black or African American	5.1	
		Asian or Pacific Islander	3.9	
		Hispanic/Latino	14.9	
		Other (Native American/Alaska Native, mixed race but not primarily White, Black, Asian, or Hispanic; other race).	9.9	
<i>Age (Years)</i>	How old are you?	Range: 13 to 18	16.2	1.4
<i>Evangelical Christian</i>	Would you consider yourself to be a born-again or evangelical Christian?	1 = Yes 0 = No	7. 92.9	
<i>Family income</i>	Would you say your family's income is lower than, similar to, or higher than the average family's income?  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Higher Income (Ref.)	17.8	
		Medium Income Lower Income	57.1 25.1	
<i>Parents' education</i>	What is your mother's highest education? What is your father's highest education?  Responses were dichotomized if one or both parents/guardians had completed college.	1 = College degree or more	53.88	
		0 = Completed only some college or less	46.12	
<i>School locale</i>	Where is your current or most recent school located?  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Urban/city area (Ref.)	33.5	
		Suburban area or area next to a city	34.0	
		Rural/small town area.	27.5	

<i>School type</i>	What kind of school were you in during the past school year?	Public school (Ref.) Private/parochial school Homeschooled	89.4 8.4 2.2
	Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)		
<i>Time spent online</i>	Composite measure of the total number of hours respondents spent online per day via computers at school, work, or home, as well as via cell phones or portable or stationary video game consoles.	1 = 0-1 hours 2 = 1-2 hours 3 = 2-4 hours 4 = 4-7 hours 5 = more than 7 hours	7.9 9.1 23.3 40.2 19.4
<b>Victimization/Marginalization</b>			
<i>Victimization in person</i>	How frequently have you experienced bullying in person in the past 12 months while at school, home, or other places you hang out?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	32.8 32.5 16.1 11.5 7.1
<i>Victimization online</i>	How frequently have you experienced bullying online in the past 12 months while at school, home, or other places you hang out?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	51.9 28.2 11.8 6.0 2.0
<i>Victimization due to sexual orientation</i>	How often in the past 12 months have others bullied, sexually harassed, or said or done something to hurt you because of your perceived or actual sexual orientation?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	28.1 30.7 17.8 11.9 11.5
<i>Victimization due to gender expression</i>	How often in the past 12 months have others bullied, sexually harassed, or said or done something to hurt you because of how you express your gender (or how traditionally “masculine” or “feminine” you are)?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	48.8 24.5 11.7 8.5 6.5
<b>PYD Components</b>			
<b>Confidence – Identity</b>			
<i>Searching for sexuality information online</i>	In the past 12 months, have you used the Internet to search for information on sexuality or sexual attraction for yourself?	1 = Yes 0 = No	72.5 37.5

<i>Initial disclosure of LGBT identity online</i>	Who is the first person that you told you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning?	1 = First came out to a friend online 0 = First came out to someone other than a friend online	9.2 90.8
	Options included a friend their age they know in person, a parent or guardian, a brother or sister, an adult they know in person (e.g., a teacher or neighbor), a friend their age they know only online, an adult they know only online, or someone else.		
<i>Greater outness online</i>	Youth who were not yet out were coded as missing. Responses were dichotomized.		
	Where are you “out” more? Online, offline, or the same in both places?	1 = More out online 0 = Out equally in both places or more out in person	25.6 74.4
<i>Out to friends in person</i>	Responses were dichotomized.		
	How many of your friends your age whom you know in person know about your LGBT identity?	1 = Out to at least one friend in person 0 = Not out to any friends in person	93.7 6.3
<i>Out to friends online</i>	Responses were dichotomized if at least one friend knew about the youth’s LGBT identity.		
	How many of your friends your age whom you know only online know about your LGBT identity?	1 = Out to at least one friend online 0 = Not out to any friends online	84.6 15.4
<i>Out to parents</i>	Responses were dichotomized if at least one friend knew about the youth’s LGBT identity.		
	How many of your parents or guardians know about your LGBT identity?	1 = Out to at least one parent/guardian in person 0 = Not out to parents/guardians	51.4 48.6
	Responses were dichotomized if at least one parent/guardian knew about the youth’s LGBT identity.		

**Connection - Social Support**

<i>Positive in-person social support</i>	Measured using a modified version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. <sup>a</sup> 4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .925$ .	1 = Positive in-person social support	87.0
		0 = Neutral or negative in-person social support	13.0
Responses were dichotomized to indicate positive in-person support.			
<i>Positive online social support</i>	Measured using a modified version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. <sup>a</sup> 4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .939$ .	1 = Positive online social support	49.2
		0 = Neutral, negative, or absent online social support	50.8
Responses were dichotomized to indicate positive online support.			
<i>In-person LGBT contact</i>	Do you know another student at school who is LGBT?	1 = Yes	81.9
		0 = No	18.1
<i>Online LGBT contact</i>	In the past 12 months, have you used the Internet to talk or connect with other LGBT people?	1 = Yes	77.9
		0 = No	22.1
Responses were dichotomized.			

**Community – Extracurricular & Civic Participation**

<i>Volunteering</i>	In the past 12 months, how often did you volunteer or do unpaid community service?	1 = never	20.9
		2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months	36.6
		3 = once or a few times a month	26.8
		4 = once or a few times a week	13.1
		5 = everyday or almost every day	2.6
<i>Organization-Based Extracurricular Participation</i>	During the 2009-2010 school year, how many different after-school programs or activities did you take part in that were run or organized by someone other than your school (such as the Boys and Girls Club)?	1 = 0 activities/programs	46.6
		2 = 1	28.8
		3 = 2	14.5
		4 = 3	5.3
		5 = 4	2.4
		6 = 7	0.9
		7 = 6 or more activities/programs	1.5

<i>School-Based Extracurricular Participation</i>	During the 2009-2010 school year, how many different after-school programs or activities did you take part in that were run or organized by your school (including sports)?	1 = 0 activities/programs	21.5
		2 = 1	22.0
		3 = 2	23.7
		4 = 3	13.5
		5 = 4	9.1
		6 = 7	4.0
		7 = 6 or more activities/programs	6.2
<i>GSA Participation</i>	How many meetings of your school's GSA did you attend in the past school year?	0 = No access	58.3
		1 = Access	41.7
		1 = never	26.6
		2 = 1-5 times	20.6
		3 = 6-10 times	14.7
		4 = 11-20 times	17.8
<i>LGBT Community Group Participation</i>	In the past 12 months, how often did you attend a program or group for LGBTQ people outside your school?	5 = 21 times or more in the past year	20.4
		1 = never	38.1
		2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months	61.9
		3 = once or a few times a month	55.6
		4 = once or a few times a week	22.2
<i>Online Civic Participation</i>	Respondents were asked how often in the past year they had used the Internet to: 1) participate in or recruit people for a gathering, like a demonstration or protest to support an issue or cause; 2) support or get the word out about an issue or cause; 3) take part in an online community that supports an issue or cause; and 4) write a blog post or make comments on another blog or article about an issue or cause. 4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .810$ .	5 = everyday or almost every day	11.4
		1 = never	14.4
		2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months	35.9
		3 = once or a few times a month	31.5
		4 = once or a few times a week	15.2
<i>Text-Based Civic Participation</i>	Respondents were asked how often in the past year they had used text messages to: 1) participate in or recruit people for a gathering, like a demonstration or protest to support an issue or cause; or 2) support or get the word out about an issue or cause. 2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .841$ .	5 = everyday or almost every day	2.9
		1 = never	48.8
		2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months	26.9
		3 = once or a few times a month	15.4
		4 = once or a few times a week	5.9

<b>Well-Being</b>				
<i>GPA</i> (grade point average)	Do you make mostly A's, mostly A's and B's, mostly B's, etc?  Responses were converted to a GPA scale.	4.0 = mostly A's 3.5 = mostly A's and B's 3.0 = mostly B's 2.5 = mostly B's and C's 2.0 = mostly C's 1.5 = mostly C's and D's 1.0 = mostly D's 0.5 = mostly D's and lower	3.26	0.73
<i>Self-esteem</i>	Measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale <sup>b</sup> . 10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .921$ .	Range: 1 to 5	3.28	1.01
<i>Depression</i>	Measured using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale <sup>c</sup> (CES-D). 2x the sum of 10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .923$ .	Range: 0 to 60	25.18	16.59

<sup>a</sup> Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley (1988)

<sup>b</sup> Rosenberg (1989)

<sup>c</sup> Adapted from CES-D (Eaton, Muntaner, Smith, Tien, & Ybarra 2004). The original version of the CES-D scale (Radloff, 1977) contained 20 4-point items (the first four response options listed above) which are summed, for scores ranging from 0 to 60. Eaton et al. (2004) added a 5<sup>th</sup> response option (*nearly every day for two weeks*), which, for purposes here is recoded (and as recommended by Eaton et al., 2004) to make it comparable to the original version. Since the shorter version of the scale used in this survey contained only 10 items, scores were doubled, but featured the same dimensions/symptoms as the original scale, again to align the total possible score to that of the original version. Studies have often used a cut-off of 16 to indicate depressive symptoms (Radloff, 1977; Eaton & Kessler, 1981; Eaton et al., 2004). Others have used higher cutoff scores to align with estimates of depression in the population (e.g., cutoff of 28 in Radloff, 1991, to reflect symptomology in 5% of the sample and population).

Table 1.3.  
*Independent and Dependent Variables Used in Analysis*

Dependent Variables:	Chapter 2: LGBT Identity Development			Chapter 3: Social Support		Chapter 4: Extracurricular and Civic Participation					
	PYD: <i>Confidence</i>			Well-Being		PYD: <i>Connection</i>			Well-Being		
	Searching for Sexuality Information Online	Initial Disclosure of LGBT Identity Online	Greater Outness Online	Self-Esteem	Depression	General In-person (Volunteering, Organization-Based, & School-Based)	LGBT-Specific (GSA & Comm. Group)	Internet-Based (Online & Text-based)	GPA	Self-Esteem	Depression
<i>Individual &amp; Contextual</i>											
Gender Identity	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Race/Ethnicity	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
Age	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Evangelical Christ.	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
Family Income	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
Parents' Education	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
School Locale	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
School Type	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
Time Spent Online	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Victimization/Marginalization</i>											
Victimization IP				x	x						
Victimization ON				x	x						
Victimization due to SO						x	x	x			
Victimization due to GE						x	x	x			
<i>PYD Components</i>											
<i>Confidence</i>											
Out to Friends IP				x	x	x	x	x			
Out to Parents	x										
<i>Connection</i>											
General Social Support											
Positive IP Social Support				x	x						
Positive ON Social Support				x	x						
LGBT-Specific Contact											
IP LGBT Contact				x	x						
ON LGBT Contact				x	x						
<i>Community</i>											
Traditional Forms											
Volunteering									x	x	x
Org.-based Extracurr. Part.									x	x	x
SB Extracurr. Part.									x	x	x
LGBT-Specific											
GSA Participation									x	x	x
LGBT Community Group									x	x	x
Internet-Based Part.											
Online Civic Part.						x			x	x	x
Text-based Civic Part.						x			x	x	x

*Abbreviations:* GE = Gender Expression; IP = In-person; ON = Online; SO = Sexual Orientation; SS = Social Support AS = After-school Att. = Attendance; Extracurr. = Extracurricular; Org. = Organization; Part. = Participation.

Chapter 3 seeks to address gaps in the literature regarding the relationships among online and in-person social support, and online and in-person victimization by answering the following questions:

1. Do online experiences and resources contribute to well-being beyond those located in person?
  - a. Do online outness and victimization affect well-being among LGBT youth distinct from their roles in person?
  - b. Do online forms of social support provide direct benefits to well-being among LGBT youth, beyond those observed in person?
2. Do online and in-person forms of social support buffer the effects of online and in-person victimization, in addition to their possible direct benefits to well-being?

The relationships among in-person victimization, in-person social support, and psychological well-being are firmly established in the literature: social support appears both to compensate for and buffer the negative effects of victimization on well-being (Espelage et al., 2008; Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001). Moreover, recent literature has observed a negative relationship between online victimization and well-being (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell, Ybarra, & Finkelhor, 2007). Although a large body of research suggests that LGBT youth do make greater use of online spaces for social support than non-LGBT youth (e.g., Calvert, 2002; Curtis, 1997; Drushel, 2010; Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Kendall, 2002), no research to date has examined the relative utility of online support in the presence of in-person support from LGBT or non-LGBT sources, and in the presence of online and in-person forms of victimization.

Chapter 4 addresses a lack of literature on extracurricular and civic participation among LGBT youth by answering the following questions:

1. Are LGBT-related experiences of marginalization, such as victimization and lack of openness about being LGBT, differentially associated with rates of participation in general in-person, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based extracurricular and civic activities?
2. Are general, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based forms of extracurricular and civic participation associated with positive outcomes, including academic achievement and psychosocial well-being for LGBT youth?
3. Do experiences of victimization moderate the potential positive effects of participation in extracurricular and civic activities on well-being and academic achievement?
4. Is Internet-based civic participation associated with in-person civic participation (i.e., volunteering)?

Almost no research has examined patterns of school, community, and political participation among LGBT youth, whether online or in person, and how experiences of marginalization influence rates of participation in different types of activities. The few studies that do exist tend to be qualitative and/or focus exclusively on participation in GSAs and other LGBT-focused clubs (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012; Lee, 2002; Mayo, 2004; Russell et al., 2009). In one quantitative study, Toomey and Russell (2012) examined predictors of school-based club participation, but not community/civic participation, and only among LGB youth. Moreover, few studies have examined the relationship between traditional and Internet-based participation for any population group, especially among youth in the US, or of academic or psychosocial benefits of participation among LGBT youth.

Together, Chapters 2-4 examine how experiences of marginalization, including both online and in-person victimization, affect access to resources in person and online. They demonstrate how these experiences may affect well-being, but also how positive supports may counteract these experiences and promote positive outcomes. Resources related to LGBT identity development, social support, and extracurricular and civic participation all have the potential to contribute to well-being, whether in person or online. Furthermore, among LGBT youth, LGBT-specific resources may promote well-being beyond resources more commonly understood to promote positive development. Together, these new understandings of PYD among LGBT youth promise to shed light on additional pathways through which well-being among LGBT youth might be supported.

### **Methods**

This dissertation relies on two existing sources of data, one a quantitative survey with multiple-choice answers, and the second a series of qualitative focus group transcripts, to examine the questions posed. Both datasets were accessed with permission from Michele Ybarra, Ph.D., of Internet Solutions for Kids; and Joseph G. Kosciw, Ph.D., of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), who served as the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator on the research project, respectively.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups were conducted as part of the *Teen Health & Technology* project funded by the NIH. Three focus groups were conducted online: two with lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and pansexual youth (referred to here as LGB, since the group did not include transgender or gender con-conforming youth) (n=18, n=15); and a third group with non-LGB youth (n=26). Only the LGB groups are used for this dissertation. The primary aim of the LGB-specific focus groups was to identify the major benefits and major threats to being online for

LGB youth. The primary aim of the non-LGB group was to serve as a comparison between online experiences and exposures for non-LGB and LGB youth.

Participants for the LGB focus groups (N=33) were recruited through studentorganizing.org, which is GLSEN's website for youth across the U.S. An email was sent out to the listserv explaining the purpose of the focus groups and providing contact information for those who were interested in learning more about the study. The contact email and phone number connected youth to staff at Harris Interactive, who explained the study and provided login information for those who chose to participate. In order to expand the recruitment list and representation of diverse experiences, potential participants were asked to refer any friends they thought might also want to participate, since snowball methods have been used successfully elsewhere to expand and diversify hard-to-reach samples (see Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Watters and Biernacki, 1989). These friends were provided with a toll-free number to contact Harris Interactive Inc. if they were interested. Characteristics of LGB focus group participants are included in Table 1.4.

An initial draft of the focus group protocol was created following three content 'blocks': 1) history of use and current use; 2) use of the Internet for sexuality and friendships; and 3) risks and strategies for safety and activism. Topics were developed in accordance with existing literature on youth's use of the Internet. The protocol was then revised iteratively by the research team until it was appropriate for the target population and study aims. It was then piloted and revised accordingly.

All focus groups were conducted online via a bulletin board style format in May, 2009. Bulletin board-style focus groups occur over time and are highly interactive. The groups interacted over a three-day time period. Participants agreed to come into the site 2-3 times per

day at any time convenient to them, where they responded to the moderator's questions and the comments of other study participants. Because the platform for gathering these data was an online discussion focus group, not all participants answered all of the questions, although most did. The research team could login daily to read messages that were posted, as well as view the history of a dialogue chain, and send private messages to the moderator for follow-up with respondents. The two LGB focus groups resulted in 227 single-spaced pages of transcripts, with size 12 Times New Roman font, which are used for further analysis in this dissertation. The full focus group protocol is found in Appendix I; responses relevant to and used in Chapter 2 comprised approximately 40 pages of the full transcript.

All focus groups were conducted under the approval of Chesapeake and University of New Hampshire Institutional Review Boards. It is possible that obtaining consent from a parent may inadvertently reveal to parents a young person's LGBT identity. Furthermore, due to the sensitive questions about being LGBT, it is possible that in answering these questions while monitored by an adult, a young person may be put in harm's way. As such, a waiver of parental consent was obtained for all focus group participants to prevent inadvertent disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board determined the data to be exempt from the review process.

The platform Harris Interactive Inc. uses for online research requires usernames and passwords to login, creating a secure environment. To protect the identity of participants, first names were displayed on screen in order to further ensure that the participants could not identify one another. Participants were instructed against posting any personal information, such as email addresses and last names on the screen. A moderator closely monitored the boards and removed any personally identifying information posted by participants.

Table 1.4.  
*Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants (N=33)*

	% / Mean
Sexual Orientation (%)	
Gay/Lesbian	97
Bisexual/Pansexual	27
Queer, Questioning, Other	6
Gender Identity (%)	
Female	52
Male	48
Race (%)	
White	67
African American or Black	3
Hispanic or Latino/a	18
Other	12
Age (mean)	16.7
Grade (%)	
10 <sup>th</sup>	21
11 <sup>th</sup>	42
12 <sup>th</sup>	36
Parents' Education (%)	
High School or Less	27
Some College/Associate's Degree	21
Completed College	33
Graduate Degree	18
School Locale (%)	
Urban	30
Suburban	42
Small Town/Rural	27
School Type (%)	
Public	94
Private/Parochial/Religious	6

**Survey.** Survey data come from the *Teen Health & Technology* study conducted by Harris Interactive Inc. on behalf of Internet Solutions for Kids and funded by the National Institutes of Health. The study was conducted between August, 2010 and January, 2011. A sample of 5,907 U.S. 13-18 year olds were surveyed online, though only the LGBT subsample (N=1,960) is used for this chapter. The sample was constructed via two parts: an LGBT subsample (n=195 respondents) identified through a nationally representative, stratified sample of youth recruited through the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel via an invitation to

participate in a survey about online experiences, and 2) an oversample of LGBT youth obtained through referrals from GLSEN (n=1,765 respondents) via targeted online advertisements and emails sent through its distribution list. Invitations for the HPOL panel were emailed to a stratified sample of U.S. residents among four groups: 1) 13 to 18 year olds, 2) Adults with a 13 to 17 year old in their household, 3) Adults with a child under 18 in their household, and 4) A general population of adults. In the cases where parents or other adults received the email invitation, the invitation noted that the survey was intended for a 13 to 18 year old in the household and asked the adult to forward the survey link to the teen.

The HPOL panel has been recruited through hundreds of sources using diverse recruitment methods in order to minimize selection bias, including: co-registration offers on partner websites, targeted emails sent by online partners to their audience, graphical and text banner placements on partner websites, refer-a-friend programs, client supplied sample opt-ins, trade show presentations, targeted postal mail invitations, TV advertisements, and telephone recruitment of targeted populations. Harris panels have been shown to approximate the US youth population in prior studies (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010; Kloos, Collins, Weller, & Weller, 2007; Beautrais, 2000). Due to the interest in examining the online experiences of LGBT youth, an oversample of LGBT teenagers was surveyed through a public (non-password protected) link. GLSEN recruited respondents through the following two methods: 1) emails sent to its distribution list, and 2) publicizing the survey through an ad on Facebook. Although the oversample of LGBT youth was not obtained through random methods, it utilized strategies that have previously been shown to assemble a diverse sample of youth, i.e., through emails and targeted advertisements to specific subsets of LGBT

youth (i.e., of a certain race/ethnicity or gender identity) (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004; Kosciw et al., 2012; Kryzan, 2000; Riggle, Rostosky, & Reedy, 2005).

In order to increase the accuracy of the data, Harris implemented a variety of measures to detect fraudulent respondents, including: examining length of time for respondent to take the survey, cookie detection, straight-lining, incomplete responses at open-ended questions, and illogical responses. All HPOL respondents were initially weighted to known demographics of 13 to 18 year-olds based on the 2009 Current Population Survey (including on biological sex, school location, and U.S. region). Next, LGBT youth recruited through the oversample (i.e., via GLSEN referrals) were weighted to the LGBT youth recruited through the HPOL panel; such weighting is used to statistically minimize the issue of non-randomness, to align samples so that they can be combined into one dataset, and to allow data to behave as if they are nationally representative (Kann et al., 2011; Lenhart et al., 2010a; 2010b).

The survey instrument (Appendix II) was reviewed and approved by the Chesapeake Institutional Review Board (IRB), the University of New Hampshire IRB, and the GLSEN IRB. A waiver of parental consent was granted to protect youth who would be potentially placed in harm's way if their LGBT identity was unintentionally disclosed to their caregivers. The Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board determined the data to be exempt from the review process.

## CHAPTER II

### LGBT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT ONLINE AND IN PERSON

#### **Introduction**

Much research has explored the social stigma and victimization experienced by many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, a risk which is elevated if they are open about being LGBT (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). Such experiences contribute to social marginalization for many LGBT youth and result in worse well-being and quality of life. Less research has focused on, conversely, the potential positive supports present in LGBT youth's lives. Although positive youth development (PYD) frameworks have become prevalent in the past two decades (Benson, 2003a, 2003b; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sema, 2007; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Durlak, 1998), their applications to LGBT youth are thus far limited.

Lerner and colleagues' (2004; 2005b) concept of *Confidence*, which can be understood to refer to a clear, positive, coherent/whole sense of self or self-identity, including self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy (Benson; 2003a, 2003b; Catalano et al., 2004), serves as one common feature of PYD models. Together with other components of PYD, a positive self-identity is thought to promote well-being throughout life (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Scales & Benson, 2004). The concept is informed by work in developmental psychology: Marcia (1966, 1999) asserted that optimal identity development requires *crisis/exploration*, i.e., considering one's self in relation to life's opportunities; and

*commitment*, i.e., allegiance to one's identity, goals, and values. A core identity is also thought to support healthy relationships with others (Erikson, 1968).

For LGBT youth, many of whom experience stigma or other forms of marginalization when they identify as LGBT, developing a positive self-identity may be challenging. Nevertheless, public acknowledgement of one's LGBT identity is associated with positive life outcomes (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003; Kosciw et al., 2012). Thus, for LGBT youth, the PYD concept of *Confidence* may be particularly important, but can be fully understood only if it is attentive to a positive LGBT identity as part of a larger self-identity. Due to potential risks in being open about being LGBT or in accessing resources, many LGBT youth make use of other avenues for development. The proliferation of online spaces and resources—forums, chat programs, social media platforms, virtual worlds, and other computer- and Internet-mediated technologies (Rheingold, 2000)—offer new opportunities for engaging youth and promoting positive youth development, including for LGBT-specific needs. This chapter draws from these literatures to understand the importance of online and in-person spaces and resources for LGBT identity development, including the factors associated with resource use. In doing so, it encourages a model of PYD more inclusive of and relevant to the LGBT youth population.

### **Youth Identity Development and LGBT Identity Development**

Gender identity and sexual identity, which typically develop during adolescence, serve as important facets of global self-identity (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). For LGBT youth, the importance of these identities to a positive self-identity may be more significant, because they are often the target of stigmatization. Unfortunately, issues specific to LGBT youth have been largely neglected in the PYD paradigm, which continues to situate their experiences outside the norm and, consequently, LGBT youth as eternally “at risk”.

One of the difficulties faced by LGBT youth is that they often lack relevant information on gender, sexuality, and sexual identity development (Daley & MacDonnell, 2011; Morrow, 2004). Abstinence-only policies, which often prohibit the discussion of sexuality, remain prevalent (Ott & Santelli, 2007; Heitel Yakush, 2007), despite attempts to terminate their funding (Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2012). Even when school curricula include information on sexuality, they often fail to provide LGBT-inclusive information or competently address sexual orientation and gender identity topics (GLSEN and Harris Interactive, 2008).

Models of adolescent development commonly stress the importance of attaining a sense of self, which in turn can support attraction, intimacy, and relationships with others (Erikson, 1968). Marcia (1980) emphasized that “identity formation involves, “at a bare minimum, [...] commitment to sexual orientation” (p. 110), demonstrating the centrality of sexual identity to overall self-identity. Models of sexual identity development specifically for LGB<sup>2</sup> youth have changed from linear stage models (e.g., Cass, 1979; Troiden, 1979) to more fluid, complex, and context-dependent models over several decades (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Diamond, 1998; Rosario Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2006). Nevertheless, many models of development contain common hallmarks: awareness of LGB orientation; confusion about one’s feelings relative to social norms; labeling oneself as LGB; disclosing LGB identity to other people, typically first to other LGB people, then to close friends, other peers, adults, and finally to family members; and in some models, becoming more involved in communities of LGB individuals (D’Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998; Diamond, 1998; Doty, Malik, & Lindahl, 2012; Floyd & Stein, 2002; Maguen, Floyd, Bakeman, & Armistead, 2002; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2008,

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<sup>2</sup> The more inclusive designation “LGBT” is used whenever possible and appropriate. However, much of the scholarship that claims relevance to the “LGBT” population is inaccurate, because it is not inclusive of issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (i.e., relevant to all four of the groups enumerated in the acronym “LGBT”). Thus, when discussing the findings from particular studies, I make caution to refer only to the groups included in the study; hence, at times I refer to “LGB” or “lesbian and gay” youth, rather than to “LGBT youth.”

2010; Rotheram-Borus & Langabeer, 2001; Ryan & Futterman, 1997; Russell & Van Campen, 2011). Although less research has examined this process within transgender and gender nonconforming youth (Harcourt, 2006), most models of transgender and nonconforming gender identity development include labeling oneself and disclosure of this identity to others as key stages of development (Brown & Rounsley, 1996; Devor, 2004; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Grossman, D'Augelli, & Salter, 2006; Lev, 2004; Morgan & Stevens, 2008; Ramsey, 1996). Although sexual identity and gender identity are not equivalent, youth who identify as LGB or T share many common experiences, and thus, scholars often speak of a larger LGBT identity (e.g., Renn & Bilodeau, 2005) while recognizing that experiences of development may differ depending on whether one identifies as L, G, B, or T, or even within these groups.

Harter (1990; 1998) suggests that for youth in general, the use of labels during identity development helps adolescents view different facets of themselves as part of a coherent whole. Coming out, or publicly labeling oneself as LGBT, is associated with improved psychosocial health (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012); however, the process is also accompanied by substantial stressors, including bullying, which can contribute to poor academic achievement and suicidality (Craig & Smith, 2011; Grossman & Kerner, 1998; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Mercier & Berger, 1989; Meyer, 2003; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005), a risk that is increased when youth are targeted specifically for being LGBT (Kosciw et al., 2012; Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, & Koenig, 2012; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card, & Russell, 2010).

Because of these possible negative consequences, LGBT youth may be reluctant to disclose their LGBT identities. D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) found in their sample of LGB youth that although participants understood their sexual difference around age 10, they did not

disclose this information to anyone until the age of 16, on average. Even though the average age of coming out is thought to have declined over the past several decades (Drasin et al., 2008), a several-year gap still exists between realization of same-sex/gender sexual attraction and its public acknowledgment or expression (Ryan & Diaz, 2005). LGBT youth commonly fear losing support from friends and their parents because of their sexual orientation (Anhalt & Morris, 2004; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998; Diamond & Lucas, 2004). The lack of support networks may discourage youth from being out (Shilo & Savaya, 2011), which may, in turn, prompt psychological distress, poor academic behavior, and dangerous sexual behaviors (Carragher & Rivers, 2002; DiPlacido, 1998; Meyer, 2003; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002; Potoczniak, Aldea, & DeBlare, 2007; Wright & Berry, 2006). Thus, perceived or actual reactions to LGBT identity disclosure can result in considerable harm to LGBT youth, and many youth may benefit from alternative avenues for LGBT identity development.

### **Intersecting Identities and LGBT Development**

Departures from linear/stage models of LGBT identity development have developed with the realization that identity development is affected by a number of individual and contextual factors (Saewyc, 2011; see also Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Among LGBT persons, multiple minority identities may dictate LGBT identity development. For instance, LGBT youth of color navigate LGBT identities differently depending on the particulars of a given context, especially if that space is normalized to exclude LGBT self-expression. Racial/ethnic minority persons may be more prone than White LGBT people to be out in some spaces but not others (Chung & Katayama, 1998; McCready, 2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2010; Morrow, 2004; Ryan, 2002; Singh, 2012), or to delay LGBT identity disclosure and maintain fewer connections to an LGB

community (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Mustanski, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011; Rosario, Scrimshaw, & Hunter, 2004). Latino LGB youth may also experience greater family rejection and be at greater risk for mental health problems, substance abuse, and sexual risk than White LGB youth (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009).

Patterns of LGBT identity development have also been found to differ by gender. Perhaps because a challenged masculinity may be more feared among males than a loss of femininity among females (see Connell, 1996, on the salience of masculinity in educational settings; or Rich, 1980, on the importance of heterosexuality in the maintenance of male privilege), lesbian and bisexual girls may more freely engage in more gender-nonconforming presentation than gay and bisexual boys (D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993). Females may also alternate more frequently between bisexual and lesbian identities than males between bisexual and gay identities (Diamond, 1998, 2008; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2000). When LGBT people experience stigma for being LGBT, the response may be triggered more strongly by non-normative gender expression than by sexual orientation (Waldo, Hesson-McInnis, & D-Augelli, 1998), as presentations of gender are more easily identified as non-normative than sexual practices, which are typically less visible. The pressure to conform to gender norms, and the accompanying desire to avoid potential victimization, may discourage some youth from publicly disclosing their LGBT identities. LGBT youth who are more gender nonconforming, on the other hand, have been found to disclose earlier and more broadly than LGBT youth whose gender presentation is more normative (D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Remafedi, Farrow, & Deisher, 1991).

Other factors may affect the process of LGBT identity development as well. Fear of parental reaction may be heightened in more socially conservative, traditional, and/or religious families (Mercier & Berger, 1989; Newman & Muzzonigro, 1993; Rowatt, LaBouff, Johnson,

Froese, & Tsang 2009). Even well-intentioned support from parents may be unhelpful if it is heteronormative in nature (Pearson & Wilkinson, 2013) or is not supportive specifically around LGBT issues (Bregman, Malik, Page, Makynen, & Lindahl, 2013). In addition, adults with lower educational attainment and lower SES status exhibit less favorable attitudes toward LGBT issues (Loftus, 2001; Rowatt et al., 2009).

Contextual factors likely influence the process of LGBT identity development as well. Schools of all types often fail to address LGBT issues in the curriculum (Fine & McClelland, 2005; Ingraham, 2000; Irvine, 2002; Morrow, 2004; Wilson, 2000b) and censor LGBT-related information on school computers (Holt, 2011; Kosciw et al., 2012). LGBT students in many public schools lack reliable and relevant sexual health information (Landry, Singh, & Darroch, 2000). Private religious schools may be less bound to district/state requirements and thus more inclined to teach abstinence and neglect LGBT topics in accordance with religious ideals. Non-religious private schools also may be less burdened by curriculum requirements and thus freer to teach about sexuality (Kosciw et al., 2012). Little is known about LGBT youth who are homeschooled, but a lack of tangible peer networks and resources may also result in a lack of access to relevant information or support from peers who understand them.

In addition, geography may affect the process of LGBT identity development. LGBT individuals are less likely to be “out” in contexts where they do not feel accepted (Kosciw et al., 2012; Legate, Ryan, & Weinstein, 2012). Negative attitudes about homosexuality may be more prevalent in some small town and rural areas of the country (Dillon & Savage, 2006; Lindhorst, 1997; Swank, Frost, & Fahs, 2012). In addition, the resources that do exist in rural areas may be unhelpful if they are unknown, are difficult to access, or if persons are not out or comfortable using such resources (Mercier & Berger, 1989; Oswald & Culton, 2003; Swank et al., 2012;

Whittier, 1997). Schools in rural areas may also be less likely to provide information on LGBT sexualities than those in other areas (deCoste, 2011; Poole & Gause, 2011).

### **Potential for LGBT Identity Development Online**

It is no longer possible to speak of adolescent development without recognizing the role of media and technology in adolescents' lives. As of 2009, 95% youth aged 14 to 17 used the Internet at least occasionally (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Recent scholarship suggests that the Internet may promote positive outcomes among youth, especially in helping them build social competence, connect with others, and access information about health and other topics (Guan & Subrahmanyam, 2009; Harvey et al., 2008; Schmitt, Dayanim, & Matthias, 2008). The Internet may offer particular benefits to some populations. For LGBT youth, online spaces may offer novel opportunities for identity expression and exploration (Gross, 2004; Haag & Chang, 1997; Magee, Bigelow, DeHaan, & Mustanski, 2012; Pascoe, 2011) and encourage them to come out at earlier ages (Drasin et al., 2008; Quart, 2008). Although gaps in Internet access favor groups already privileged by gender, race, and SES (Hargittai, 2008), the Internet has nonetheless expanded the range of resources available to persons marginalized in other ways by these characteristics (Rainie & Wellman, 2012; Wallace, 1999). In a study of participants in an online community, Ling and colleagues (2005) found that respondents who were more anxious and lonely in person said they were better able to express themselves online (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002). Adams and Stevenson (2004) suggest that the use of technology for social purposes is dependent on one's life stage (i.e., age), as well as on one's stage of development (i.e., relative needs to achieve healthy development). Thus, persons who need alternative avenues for LGBT identity development may be more apt to use the technology for exploration purposes than persons of the same age who have fewer developmental needs relating

to their LGBT identity. In interviews with LGBT 16-24 year olds, DeHaan, Kuper, Magee, Bigelow, and Mustanski (2012) found that the Internet might be a useful resource for persons who are not yet out and who find it easier to communicate online.

Use of the Internet for LGBT identity development purposes may also be related to the individual and contextual factors that affect LGBT identity development. In a small study of teenage blogs, Huffaker and Calvert (2005) found that 17% of bloggers identified as LGB, with most (83%) of those being male. Given that users typically presented their online selves as continuations of their public personae, the Internet may be a place conducive to LGBT identity exploration particularly for males (see also Hillier & Harrison, 2007). Gray (2009b) has also written about transgender youth who maintain blogs to document their gender transitions. Given the lack of non-normative gender content in sexual education and health curricula, transgender and gender nonconforming youth may benefit from expanded information online as well.

Contextual factors may also play a role in the utilization of LGBT-related online resources. Several qualitative studies suggest that LGBT youth in rural spaces may rely on the Internet for LGBT-related needs to a greater extent than youth in urban or suburban areas (Gray, 2009a, 2009b; Kazzyak, 2010). Given the absence of discourse on sexuality in some rural contexts, LGBT youth may go online to learn about sexual attraction and to learn about others' coming out experiences (Gray, 2009a). Annes and Redlin (2012) suggest that coming out online may be a way for gay men to maintain their rural identity without moving to "the big city".

### **Study Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore the individual and contextual factors—such as gender, race, and the social environment—that are associated with LGBT identity development in person and online, and whether online spaces might offer alternatives to LGBT identity

development in person. In turn, this study will provide greater insight into the PYD concept of self-identity, or *Confidence*, by examining the LGBT-specific component of LGBT identity development. A model for the potential utility of online spaces and resources in LGBT identity development is depicted in Figure 2.1. The dependent variables used in this analysis are relevant in different ways to LGBT identity development—information seeking, initial disclosure, and general outness. Many LGBT youth lack access to LGBT-related information, which may impede development. Disclosure is typically seen as a fundamental component of healthy LGBT identity development, and overall outness may reflect one’s comfort with identifying as LGBT. The model also reflects that people do not have separate selves, but that they reveal different facets of self for different audiences online and in person (D’Augelli, et al., 1998; Drasin et al., 2008; Grossman & D’Augelli, 2006; Rainie & Wellman, 2012; Ryan & Futterman, 1997). Thus, identity-related behavior online may reflect in-person challenges to progression in identity development, as well that alternative pathways of development are being utilized.

In particular, this chapter seeks to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways do LGBT youth use the Internet for LGBT identity development?
2. Does the use of online spaces for LGBT identity development vary by individual and contextual factors?
3. Do online spaces offer resources for LGBT identity development particularly among youth who are less comfortable being out in person?

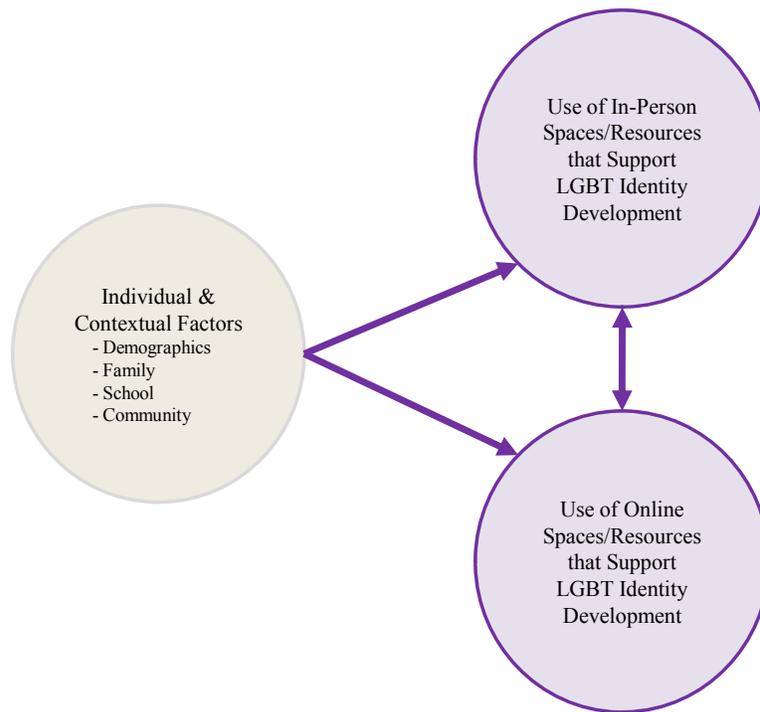
### **Methods**

This study uses focus group and survey data collected as part of the *Teen Health & Technology* study by Harris Interactive Inc. on behalf of Internet Solutions for Kids, the University of New Hampshire, and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN),

and funded by the National Institutes of Health. Data were accessed with permission from Michele Ybarra, Ph.D., of Internet Solutions for Kids; and Joseph G. Kosciw, Ph.D., of GLSEN, who served as the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator on the research project. The project was approved by the Chesapeake Institutional Review Board (IRB), the University of New Hampshire IRB, and the GLSEN RERC, with use granted by the Vanderbilt University IRB.

Figure 2.1.

*Theoretical Model of the Utility of Online Spaces and Resources in LGBT Identity Development*



### Focus Group

**Sample.** Two focus groups (n=18, n=15) were conducted online in May, 2009, with sexual minority (e.g., LGB) youth to inform the development of the survey instrument discussed below. Participants were recruited with the help of the GLSEN student listserv. An email was

sent out to the listserv explaining that the purpose of the focus group was to understand the experiences of LGB youth online, with contact information for those who were interested in learning more about the study. Volunteers were asked to refer other friends who might be interested in the study; snowball methods have been used successfully elsewhere to expand and diversify hard-to-reach samples (see Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Watters & Biernacki, 1989).

It is possible that obtaining consent from a parent may inadvertently reveal to parents a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, due to the sensitive questions about sexuality, it is possible that in answering these questions while monitored by an adult, a young person may be put in harm's way. As such, a waiver of parental consent was obtained for all LGB focus group participants to prevent inadvertent disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Participants were instructed against posting any personal information during the focus groups, a rule which was enforced closely by the moderator.

**Data collection.** All focus groups were conducted online via a bulletin board style format. Participants agreed to come to the site 2-3 times per day over a three-day time period at times convenient to them, where they responded to the moderator's questions and the comments of other study participants. As is typical for focus groups, not all participants answered all of the questions, although most did. The research team was able to view the dialogue chain and send private messages to the moderator for follow-up with respondents. The focus groups resulted in 227 pages of transcripts, 40 of which are relevant to the questions in this chapter.

**Measures.** The focus group protocol is included in Appendix I. Questions relevant to this study asked about searching for sexuality information online, help in the coming out process online, and comfort being out online and in person, as well as about general uses of the Internet.

## Survey

**Sample.** This chapter also relies on a secondary analysis of survey data collected between August, 2010 and January, 2011. The sample was constructed via two parts: an LGBT subsample (n=195 respondents) identified through a nationally representative, stratified sample of youth recruited through the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel to participate in a survey about their online experiences, and 2) an oversample of LGBT youth obtained through referrals from GLSEN (n=1,765 respondents) via targeted online advertisements and emails with the survey link sent through its distribution list. The oversample of LGBT youth was recruited due to the interest in examining specifically the online experiences of LGBT youth. All HPOL respondents were initially weighted to known demographics of 13 to 18 year-olds based on the 2009 Current Population Survey (including on biological sex, school location, and U.S. region). Next, LGBT youth recruited through the oversample were weighted to the LGBT youth recruited through the HPOL panel; such weighting is used to statistically minimize the issue of non-randomness, to align samples so that they can be combined into one dataset, and to allow data to behave as if they are nationally representative (Kann et al., 2011; Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010; Lenhart et al., 2010b). After it was determined that the demographic weighting alone did not bring GLSEN and HPOL LGBT youth into alignment, a propensity weight was created to adjust for behavioral and attitudinal differences between the two groups so that GLSEN and HPOL LGBT subsamples each account for 50% of the combined LGBT population sample (see Terhanian & Bremer, 2000). The total LGBT sample includes 1,960 respondents.

**Data collection.** All surveys were conducted online. Youth who were eligible and who assented to participate were sent to the first question of the survey. At any time during the survey, participants could stop and save the survey and return to it at a later time. It was

emphasized to the participant that this option could be utilized if they no longer felt that the space in which the survey was being completed was private. The mean survey length for participants who completed the survey was 34 minutes.

**Measures.** This study examines markers of LGBT identity development online and in person and the individual and contextual factors associated with them. Table 2.1 describes each of the variables used in analysis in detail. Individual and contextual factors include such variables as *Gender identity*, *Race/ethnicity*, *School locale*, and *School type*.

*Out to parents and friends in person*, measures of LGBT identity development in person, serve as independent variables to answer Question 3. A lack of outness may indicate more developmental needs around LGBT identity development and/or a lack of people with whom one feels comfortable identifying as LGBT in person.

The dependent variables capture components of PYD related to LGBT identity development and include *Searching for sexuality information online*; *Initial LGBT identity disclosure online*; and *Greater outness online*, with being more out online coded as 1, and being more out in person or equally out in both places coded as 0. Medium of initial disclosure is theorized to be important because youth typically disclose first to those with whom they feel most comfortable; initial disclosure online may indicate a lack of support in person.

### **Analysis**

**Qualitative.** Established theories about the benefits and risks of youth experiences online—and ideas about differences among LGBT youth—drove the construction of the original focus group protocol. An initial reading of the transcripts identified responses that were in some way related to LGBT identity development, which are analyzed in this study. Because comments made by youth were similar across both focus groups, they are considered collectively here.

A constant comparative method was employed for analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In addition to the primary coder/author of this chapter, another graduate student served as a co-rater. Each rater coded the transcripts, first using structural coding to identify responses relating to reasons for and factors associated with LGBT identity-related behaviors online, including information seeking and identity disclosure. After this initial round of coding, the coders met to discuss general themes that arose in the coding. At this point they discussed coding categories and consolidated codes, and then re-coded the transcripts using the uniform coding categories. Inter-rater reliability, which was calculated after the second round of coding, ranged from .83 to 1.0, with an average kappa of .92 (SD = .06). Emergent themes are presented in Appendix IV, with representative quotes reported in the results to provide richer understanding of quantitative findings.

**Quantitative.** Multivariate models were used to explore the factors that predict use of the Internet for LGBT identity development. Hierarchical logistic regression with robust standard errors was used to predict *Searching for sexuality information online*, *Initial LGBT identity disclosure online*, and *Greater outness online* (Question 2). Regressions included individual (step 1) and contextual factors (step 2) to examine both proximal and distal factors influencing online resource use for LGBT identity development.

In order to examine whether online spaces offer an alternative to youth who are less out in person, and who may feel less comfortable accessing such information in person (Question 3), *Out to parents* and *Out to friends in person* were entered as step 3 (Model 2) in the analysis of *Searching for sexuality information online*. *Initial LGBT identity disclosure online* was entered as step 3 (Model 2) in the regression of *Greater outness online* to investigate whether online spaces continue to serve as resources for youth who were initially less out in person.

Table 2.1.  
*Description of Variables used in Quantitative Analyses (N=1,896)*

Variable Name	Operationalization	Values	Mean/%	SD
<b><i>Individual and Contextual Factors</i></b>				
<i>Gender identity</i>	What is your gender? Your gender is how you feel inside.  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Female (Ref.) (selected only female as gender) Male (selected only male) Transgender (selected transgender, male-to-female, and/or female-to-male) Other (selected both male and female) (e.g., genderqueer, androgynous).	43.1 35.5 9.6 11.8	
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>	What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself? If you consider yourself of a mixed racial background, with which group do you most closely identify?  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	White (Ref.) Black or African American Asian or Pacific Islander Hispanic/Latino Other (Native American/Alaska Native, mixed race but not primarily White, Black, Asian, or Hispanic; other race).	66.1 5.1 3.9 14.9 9.9	
<i>Age (Years)</i>	How old are you?	Range: 13 to 18	16.17	1.43
<i>Evangelical Christian</i>	Would you consider yourself to be a born-again or evangelical Christian?	1 = Yes 0 = No	7.1 92.9	
<i>Family income</i>	Would you say your family's income is lower than, similar to, or higher than the average family's income?  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Higher Income (Ref.) Medium Income Lower Income	17.8 57.1 25.1	
<i>Parents' education</i>	What is your mother's highest education? What is your father's highest education?  Responses were dichotomized if one or both parents/guardians had completed college.	1 = College degree or more 0 = Completed only some college or less	53.9 46.1	
<i>Time spent online</i>	Composite measure of the total number of hours respondents spent online per day via computers at school, work, or home, as well as via cell phones or portable or stationary video game consoles.	1 = 0-1 hours 2 = 1-2 hours 3 = 2-4 hours 4 = 4-7 hours 5 = more than 7 hours	7.9 9.1 23.3 40.2 19.4	

<i>School locale</i>	Where is your current or most recent school located?	Urban/city area (Ref.)	33.5
		Suburban area or area next to a city	34.0
	Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Rural/small town area.	27.5
<i>School type</i>	What kind of school were you in during the past school year?	Public school (Ref.)	89.4
		Private/parochial school	8.4
		Homeschooled	2.2
	Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)		

### ***PYD Components – LGBT Identity***

<i>Searching for sexuality information online</i>	In the past 12 months, have you used the Internet to search for information on sexuality or sexual attraction for yourself?	1 = Yes	72.5
		0 = No	37.5
<i>Initial disclosure of LGBT identity online</i>	Who is the first person that you told you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning?	1 = First came out to a friend online	10.3
		0 = First came out to someone other than a friend online	89.7
	Options included a friend their age they know in person, a parent or guardian, a brother or sister, an adult they know in person (e.g., a teacher or neighbor), a friend their age they know only online, an adult they know only online, or someone else.		
	Youth who were not yet out were coded as missing. Responses were dichotomized.		
<i>Greater outness online</i>	Where are you “out” more? Online, offline, or the same in both places?	1 = More out online	25.6
		0 = Out equally in both places or more out in person	74.4
	Responses were dichotomized.		
<i>Out to parents</i>	How many of your parents or guardians know about your LGBT identity?	1 = Out to at least one parent/guardian in person	51.4
		0 = Not out to parents/guardians	48.6
	Responses were dichotomized if at least one parent/guardian knew about the youth’s LGBT identity.		
<i>Out to friends in person</i>	How many of your friends your age whom you know in person know about your LGBT identity?	1 = Out to at least one friend in person	93.7
		0 = Not out to any friends in person	6.3
	Responses were dichotomized if at least one friend knew about the youth’s LGBT identity.		

Table 2.2.  
*Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants (N=33)*

	% / Mean
Sexual Orientation (%)	
Gay/Lesbian	67
Bisexual/Pansexual	27
Queer, Questioning, Other	6
Gender Identity (%)	
Female	52
Male	48
Race (%)	
White	67
African American or Black	3
Hispanic or Latino/a	18
Other	12
Age (mean)	16.7
Grade (%)	
10 <sup>th</sup>	21
11 <sup>th</sup>	42
12 <sup>th</sup>	36
Parents' Education (%)	
High School or Less	27
Some College/Associate's Degree	21
Completed College	33
Graduate Degree	18
School Locale (%)	
Urban	30
Suburban	42
Small Town/Rural	27
School Type (%)	
Public	94
Private/Parochial/Religious	6

## Results

Demographic characteristics of survey participants and focus group respondents are presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, respectively. The survey sample was slightly more female (43.1%) than male (35.5%); 9.6% of respondents identified as transgender and 11.8% as another gender. Respondents were relatively evenly spread across urban (33.5%), suburban (39.0%), and small town or rural areas (27.5%). Most students attended public schools (89.4%), though 8.4% attended private or religious schools and 2.2% were homeschooled. Focus group participants were evenly split between females (52%) and males (48%). Most (67%) identified as gay or lesbian, with another 27% identifying as bisexual and 6% as queer, questioning, or another sexual orientation. Participants were spread across urban (30%), suburban (42%), and rural locales (27%).

### **Question 1: In What Ways do LGBT Youth Use the Internet for LGBT Identity**

#### **Development?**

Use of the Internet for LGBT identity development-related purposes was widespread among survey participants and focus group participants. Analysis of focus group data provides a richer description of the online behaviors associated with LGBT identity development.

**Quantitative analysis.** Univariate survey analysis indicates that nearly three-quarters (72.5%) of youth had searched for information on sexuality or sexual attraction online in the past year. Approximately one in ten (10.3%) respondents said they first came out to a friend or adult online. In addition 25.6% of youth who were out said they were more out online, and 74.4% said they were more out in person or equally out in both places (see Table 2.1).

**Qualitative analysis.** Examples from focus group participants give a fuller picture of the use of the Internet for LGBT-related purposes. Several participants described the importance of

the Internet in accessing *information on puberty, sexual development, and sexual attraction*, due to a wealth of information not available elsewhere:

I realized my sexual attraction when for the first time in my life I actually had a crush on someone and that person was a girl. However, to make sure I knew my own feelings I did look it up online and tried to get a more clear picture of what was actually happening. [...] I also used porn as a way to determine my sexuality. ‘What was I more attracted to?’ In the end, that was the most telling. (Caucasian, Pansexual, Rural, Female, 17)

In addition, a few participants had used the Internet to find information on local LGBT resources that could promote healthy LGBT identity development, such as their local PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) chapter or community youth group:

The internet actually has helped me; it helped me to find a PFLAG chapter in my area, which I attended, and now, I am going to join a Gay Youth Group held by the same people as the PFLAG meeting. It feels good to /know/ for a fact that there are people out there who are like me who I can talk to in person. (Caucasian, Gay, Suburban, Male, 16)

Participants also used information online to decide whether and how to come out, such as by reading coming out stories and seeking advice on how to come out. Asked about how LGB teens use the Internet differently from non-LGB youth, one participant responded:

Some people may be questioning and so might look for resources to figure out what is going on. Some teens may want to come out and need advice on how to do it without getting the most negative response from their parents. (Asian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 17)

In addition to accessing information related to sexuality or sexual attraction, a few participants indicated that the *initial disclosure of their LGBT identity* had taken place online, perhaps as a way to practice coming out in person, and to gauge reactions to their doing so:

I was out online completely except to people who I also knew irl [in real life] for months before I actually came out. I sorta used coming out online as practice. (Caucasian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 16)

Participants often volunteered information about their relative levels of outness in response to a general question about the connection between their online and in-person identities, which was not worded specifically about being LGBT:

Online I’m more out there but offline I’m more closed. I wouldn’t say I have another identity online just more out. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)

These responses revealed that LGBT youth weigh multiple factors in considering whether to come out online and/or in person; they suggest not necessarily the maintenance of multiple identities, but rather that the disclosure of LGBT identity often occurs not en masse, but gradually, and dependent on both the recipient and the medium.

**Question 2: Does the Use of Online Spaces for LGBT Identity Development Vary by Individual and Contextual Factors?**

**Quantitative analysis.** Use of online spaces for purposes related to LGBT identity development differed by individual and contextual factors, most commonly by gender, age, parental income, school type, and locale. For instance, searching for information on sexuality or sexual attraction online differed substantially by gender and school type (see Model 1 in Table 2.3). Cisgender<sup>3</sup> gay and bisexual males, transgender youth, and youth with other gender identities were more likely than cisgender lesbian and bisexual females to have searched for information on sexuality or sexual attraction online. Students in private and/or religious schools were also more likely to have searched for information online.

Initial disclosure of LGBT identity online (Table 2.4), and greater outness online (Model 1 in Table 2.5), also varied by individual and contextual factors. Cisgender males were more than twice as likely as females to have come out online. In addition, lower income youth were more likely than higher income youth to have first disclosed their LGBT identity online, and rural LGBT youth more likely to have done so than urban youth. Youth who spent more time online were more likely to have initially disclosed online as well. Results also indicated that males and transgender youth were more likely to be more out online than females, and younger youth were more likely to be more out online than older respondents. Homeschooled youth were more than

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<sup>3</sup> The term “cisgender” refers to a person whose gender identity is aligned with their sex assigned at birth (e.g., someone who is not transgender).

four times as likely to say they were more out online than public school youth, and rural youth twice as likely as youth in urban areas.

**Qualitative analysis.** Participants referenced relatively few *individual* and *contextual reasons* for online identity development-related behaviors. The most prevalent factor mentioned was age, corroborating findings from the survey analysis. Some respondents who were now more out in person said that they had originally maintained different identities online and in person; others indicated referencing online resources to a greater extent when they were younger.

I used to look up information concerning sexuality through Google, but now that I am older, more secure, and more knowledgeable I don't have to. (Caucasian, Suburban, Queer, Female, 18)

Uses of the Internet for these purposes was reported widely by both male and female focus group participants, with no discernible differences between them. Nevertheless, one male participant discussed how he experienced difficulty being out to non-GB males in person because he anticipated a negative reaction from them:

I find that it's easier to discuss my sexuality online than in real life. In real life, I generally share that information with girls or other Gay or Bi guys. For whatever reason, I've always been scared to tell straight guys. Online, the people that generally migrate to my profile seem to be gay or bi (something about me? I dunno, lol) and I have no issue. (Caucasian, Suburban, Bisexual, Male, 16)

Family factors were also acknowledged as reasons for using online spaces or resources, with some participants mentioning a lack of outness to parents, and others their parents' avoidance of the topic, perhaps due to reasons related to religion, education, or parenting style.

I frequently looked up information on puberty, because my parents never really talked to me about it. It would have been awkward for me if we had, so we really... didn't. I found out a lot of information at that time, mainly just stuff about what was going on in my body. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)

In addition, a few participants felt that the Internet provided a supportive place to understand their identities in relation to other identities, such as those related to religion or race/ethnicity:

Through a facebook group I started talking to a woman who was about 26 and gay and she had the same type of religious background and she literally changed my life with the advice she gave me. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 16)

Several youth also mentioned school factors as reasons for online resource use. Many said that their schools blocked LGBT-related web content or did not cover such topics in the curriculum.

When I was at school and I was trying to do a report on the sexual revolution. I tried to look up some info on the more sexual side of it and the schools filter blocked out of course so some info to me has been limited by the schools. A lot of health topics are well covered by the schools but they don't seem to teach you a lot about sexual health except in health class. But they only cover that topic for a short while. (Caucasian, Urban, Bisexual, Male, 16)

Others identified a welcoming school as a reason to be more out in person:

I'm out everywhere. In the past couple of years I never hid the fact that I was GLBT. I'm really involved with GSAs and local GLBT organizations so I never really found a reason why to hide my sexuality. Plus, my school is really liberal and open-minded so I never had an issue with anyone. (Hispanic, Suburban, Bisexual, Male, 17)

Finally, several participants indicated that they preferred online resources because they did not feel comfortable being out in their communities.

I feel a little more comfortable online, I suppose, because I don't have to worry about people ridiculing me for who I am. I am feminine, and I am afraid to let it /all/ out because I live in a Hick town in Alabama, and there are some horrible rednecks around here. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)

Many also remarked that their communities lacked supportive peers or other LGBT people:

### **Question 3: Do Online Spaces Offer Resources for LGBT Identity Development**

#### **Particularly among Youth who are Less Comfortable Being Out in Person?**

**Quantitative analysis.** Results from the quantitative analyses suggest that online resources serve as alternatives to youth who are not out in person (see Model 2 in Tables 2.3 and 2.5). Youth who were not out to their parents were considerably more likely to have searched for sexuality information online compare to youth who were out. In addition, initial disclosure online was associated with greater outness online in general, suggesting that the Internet continues to serve as a resource for youth who initially feel more comfortable being out online.

**Qualitative analysis.** Participants revealed several reasons why they felt more comfortable using the Internet for LGBT identity-related purposes than doing so in person. Many

participants anticipated negative reactions from persons online. Several respondents said that it was *safer to be out online* than in person, regardless of how out they were in person.

I am more open [online]. I don't have to hide. I can be who I am without fear. I am more adamant about liking girls than I am around my offline friends. I feel like I can say things that I can't offline. [...]. I pretend to be all hetero offline and online I am free to be me. (Caucasian, Rural, Lesbian, Female, 16)

Some participants mentioned using the Internet for LGBT-related purposes specifically because they were *not out in person*. Use of the Internet enabled them to learn about LGBT health topics and connect to the LGBT community without outing themselves in person:

It's easier, or at least for me it was, to find out information online than putting myself out there to a friend when I wasn't ready. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 17)

Due to a fear of being out or negative reactions in person, the Internet afforded participants the ability to pursue their LGBT identities with *anonymity*:

I tend to feel more comfortable being myself online, because if I say "I'm gay." and [you're] mean, I can just go over to the little \*block\* button. Real life [in person] isn't that easy, say the wrong thing, and you can't really click the back space button. (Hispanic, Urban, Gay, Male, 16)

However, some respondents also described how anonymity could be disadvantageous, allowing others to say disparaging things about LGBT people without the sanctions that might otherwise accompany such behavior. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that they could usually block such behavior once it occurred.

Many participants said they felt *more supported online*. Although social support was acknowledged as a benefit of being online in general, many participants valued support from others online because they felt their LGBT identities were more accepted there. Sometimes support was valued specifically because it was from other LGBT people, to whom respondents may have had less access to in person:

Many years ago I was contacted by a bisexual boy who was two years older than myself. He saw in a profile that I identified as bisexual then, and we became good friends. At around that time, he began to cross-dress and we are still good friends today. I was a source of support for him when he was going through that transition. (Caucasian, Suburban, Pansexual, Female, 18)

Several participants also noted that they could *express themselves more effectively online*, sometimes due to the availability of information and tools online:

I don't really have any way to say it [come out]. I just do it, and I do it when it comes up. That is pretty different than offline. Offline, I take my time and plan it out carefully. I like to do it through writing, because I feel more comfortable in that medium. (Caucasian, Rural, Gay, Male, 18)

Nevertheless, some participants indicated that they did not use the Internet for LGBT identity-related purposes, or that they preferred in-person spaces for these purposes. This sentiment usually reflected a preference for more *intimate in-person interactions* that allowed them to gauge people's reactions or feel a shared bond when communicating (Walther & Parks, 2002), including nonverbal social cues:

The worst thing is that do some of these people really know me for me? Or do they just know me because we talk sometimes? I don't think there's a connection between us or that bond you create in person. (17, Urban, Male)

Relatedly, some participants felt that they could more naturally or effectively *express themselves in person*, which could explain their greater feelings of intimacy in person:

I actually think I'm more out in person, because of the way I look and speak and walk etc. Unless it comes up I don't say it, because people usually know, I don't try and hide it. In person I don't really have to come out because most people know just looking at me. (Hispanic, Urban, Lesbian, Female, 18)

The greater control of expression in person also arose in unexpected different ways. Although some respondents mentioned that they could be more out online because their parents did not surveil their presence there, others suggested that in-person spaces granted them more control in how others perceived them, perhaps especially if they were closely monitored online:

I'm probably more open offline. I'm not really sure why. I guess I never know who from my family could find stuff online, whereas words are easier to deny. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 16)

This statement parallels DeHaan and colleagues' (2012) finding that some LGBT emergent adults conceal their LGBT identities online due to concerns about family members' finding out.

Table 2.3.  
*Logistic Regression Predicting Searching for Sexuality Information Online (Standardized OR shown) (N=1,896)*

Variable (referent)	Wald $\chi^2$	Model 1 OR	Model 2 OR	95% CI	
Step 1 <i>Individual Factors</i>	$\chi^2(13, 1882) = 30.22^{**}$				
Gender identity (female)					
Male		2.17***	2.36***	1.51	3.69
Transgender		2.71**	2.95***	1.53	5.66
Other gender		2.44*	2.36*	1.16	4.80
Race/ethnicity (White)					
Black		0.88	0.95	0.46	1.99
Hispanic		1.17	1.15	0.67	1.99
Asian		1.63	1.60	0.59	4.30
Other race		0.92	0.87	0.49	1.54
Age		1.00	0.99	0.88	1.12
Evangelical Christian		0.82	0.90	0.45	1.80
Family income (high)					
Lower income		0.93	0.96	0.48	1.89
Medium income		0.96	0.97	0.54	1.76
Parents college educ.		1.25	1.26	0.84	1.90
Time spent online		1.16 <sup>†</sup>	1.17 <sup>†</sup>	1.00	1.37
Step 2 <i>Contextual Factors</i>	$\chi^2(4, 1878) = 5.31$				
School locale (urban)					
Rural school		0.88	0.86	0.53	1.39
Suburban school		1.05	0.99	0.62	1.58
School type (public)					
Private School		1.99*	1.94 <sup>†</sup>	0.97	3.87
Homeschool		1.59	1.84	0.61	5.51
Step 3 <i>LGBT Identity</i>	$\chi^2(2, 1878) = 7.37^*$				
Out to friends in person			1.68	0.87	3.26
Out to parents			0.60*	0.41	0.89

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 2.4.  
*Logistic Regression Predicting Initial Disclosure of LGBT Identity Online (Standardized OR shown) (N=1,864)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable (referent)	Wald $\chi^2$	OR	95% CI	
Step 1 <i>Individual Factors</i>	$\chi^2(13, 1850) = 24.72^*$			
Gender identity (female)				
Male		2.29**	1.25	4.21
Transgender		1.10	0.41	2.94
Other gender		1.04	0.38	2.82
Race/ethnicity (White)				
Black		0.91	0.25	3.34
Hispanic		0.73	0.30	1.80
Asian		1.57	0.45	5.44
Other race		1.86	0.75	4.63
Age		0.89	0.73	1.09
Evangelical Christian		0.60	0.14	2.59
Family income (high)				
Lower income		2.70*	1.02	7.17
Medium income		1.92	0.82	4.47
Parents college educ.		1.19	0.64	2.22
Time spent online		1.30*	1.05	1.62
Step 2 <i>Contextual Factors</i>	$\chi^2(4, 1846) = 8.15^\dagger$			
School locale (urban)				
Rural school		2.26*	1.05	4.87
Suburban school		1.09	0.49	2.45
School type (public)				
Private School		1.45	0.57	3.65
Homeschool		1.74	0.42	7.23

<sup>a</sup> Omits respondents who are not yet out to anyone

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2.5.  
*Logistic Regression Predicting Greater Outness Online (Base = Out More Offline or Out Equally in Both Places) (Standardized OR shown) (N=1,864)<sup>a</sup>*

Variable (referent)	Wald $\chi^2$	Model 1	Model 2	95% CI	
		OR	OR		
Step 1 <i>Individual Factors</i>	$\chi^2(13, 1850) = 14.95$				
Gender identity (female)					
Male		1.59 <sup>†</sup>	1.28	0.78	2.10
Transgender		1.85 <sup>†</sup>	1.95 <sup>†</sup>	0.95	3.99
Other gender		0.96	0.95	0.50	1.78
Race/ethnicity (White)					
Black		1.77	2.03 <sup>†</sup>	0.91	4.51
Hispanic		1.12	1.23	0.71	2.12
Asian		0.97	0.79	0.34	1.84
Other race		1.40	1.14	0.54	2.40
Age		0.86 <sup>*</sup>	0.88 <sup>†</sup>	0.77	1.00
Evangelical Christian		0.60	0.65	0.34	1.25
Family income (high)					
Lower income		1.45	1.12	0.54	2.31
Medium income		1.04	0.85	0.44	1.63
Parents college educ.		0.80	0.72	0.47	1.11
Time spent online		1.06	0.98	0.82	1.16
Step 2 <i>Contextual Factors</i>	$\chi^2(4, 1846) = 13.83^{**}$				
School locale (urban)					
Rural school		1.71 <sup>*</sup>	1.41	0.82	2.43
Suburban school		1.05	1.03	0.61	1.74
School type (public)					
Private School		1.17	1.03	0.45	2.37
Homeschool		4.45 <sup>**</sup>	4.25 <sup>*</sup>	1.40	12.94
Step 3 <i>Disclosure</i>	$\chi^2(1, 1845) = 66.10^{***}$				
Initial disclosure online			10.95 <sup>***</sup>	6.15	19.50

<sup>a</sup> Omits respondents who are not yet out to anyone

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , <sup>\*</sup> $p < .05$ , <sup>\*\*</sup> $p < .01$ , <sup>\*\*\*</sup> $p < .001$

## Discussion and Conclusion

These qualitative and quantitative findings expand the understanding of LGBT identity development among youth and suggest the importance of online resources for some LGBT youth. They also extend recent research indicating use of the Internet for intrapersonal reasons among LGBT young adults (aged 16-24): to learn about sexual health and to learn about in-person sexual health resources (DeHaan et al., 2012; Magee et al., 2012). Youth who were not out to parents were more likely to have searched for information online, supporting existing literature that LGBT youth may most fear reactions from parents about identity disclosure (D'Augelli et al., 1998). In addition, youth who had initially disclosed their LGBT identity online were more likely to say they were more out online than in person, indicating that youth who are initially more comfortable online may continue to rely on online spaces to explore their LGBT identities. Qualitative findings also suggest that online spaces may be preferred by some LGBT youth due to safety reasons, or better self-expression.

Use of online spaces and resources for LGBT identity-related purposes varied by individual and contextual characteristics, including by age, gender, family income, and context. Patterns of use emerged in ways that suggest that online resources may help compensate for barriers to development. LGBT youth from lower income families were more likely to have first disclosed their LGBT identity online, which may reflect the tendency of lower income families to be more traditional in their beliefs about LGBT issues than higher income families (Rowatt et al., 2009; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2012). The greater use of Internet for LGBT identity development by males is in sync with Magee and colleagues' (2012) interviews with emergent LGBT adults, and reinforces literature on the importance of developing and maintaining masculinity during adolescence; males are more commonly rebuffed for

transgressions around gender expression than females [e.g., “tomboy” may be perceived less punitively than “sissy” (Kosciw et al., 2012)]. It may also be that females have less concern around sexual risk/STIs than males (see Magee et al., 2012). Transgender youth were also more likely to have used the Internet to search for information on sexuality and to be more out online than in person, reflecting research suggesting that gender identity issues are often neglected in schools, and non-normative gender expression heavily stigmatized (Kosciw et al., 2012).

In addition, younger youth were more likely to say they were more out online than in person. Although this finding could be attributed both to developmental as well as generational differences, since this study contains a relatively narrow age range, it is unlikely that the finding reflects a generational shift in Internet use. Rather, this finding was reinforced by focus group themes of online spaces as safe places to explore LGBT identity, particularly early on in the process, as well as qualitative research identifying in online spaces the opportunity to try on LGBT identities before disclosing them in person (McKenna & Bargh, 1998).

These analyses also highlight the difficulty in accessing LGBT-related sexuality and sexual attraction information in some contexts. Youth in private schools were more likely to have searched for information online than youth in public schools, perhaps due to more restrictive curricula in religious private schools. In addition, homeschooled students were much more likely to be out online than in person, perhaps because they have fewer in-person friends without the peer networks that naturally form in school settings, or because homeschooling might require them to spend more time online than youth in public or private schools. This finding may also reflect the prominence of conservative ideology among homeschool families (Bielick, 2008; Ray, 1999) and an understandable reluctance among homeschooled youth to be out in person. Findings also give credence to existing qualitative literature of the importance of

online resources for LGBT youth in rural areas, who were more likely to have come out online and be more out online than in person, compared to youth in suburban and urban areas.

Nonetheless, other prominent themes in research on LGBT identity development did not surface here. Neither religion nor race/ethnicity was a major predictor of LGBT identity-related behaviors in quantitative analysis. They were also rarely mentioned in the focus groups, nor were there discernible differences in use along these characteristics. One might have expected youth with evangelical backgrounds to utilize online resources, given that religious beliefs are central to beliefs about sexuality (e.g., Rowatt et al., 2009). One might also have expected racial/ethnic minority youth to have relied more on online resources than White youth, given differing community attitudes toward LGBT issues among some communities of color (Chung & Katayama, 1998; Glick & Golden, 2010). One possible explanation for the finding may lie in the construction of the sample; despite efforts to obtain a diverse sample, the sample was considerably less Black than is observed for the general youth population. In addition, it may be that the salience of LGBT identity to youth today may be overstated, and that existing models of LGBT identity development stressing the importance of identity and disclosure require reexamination, perhaps for some LGBT subgroups more than others. Collectively, however, this study provides evidence that online spaces do offer alternative avenues for LGBT identity development for many LGBT youth, but that the LGBT population cannot be considered monolithically.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations are apparent with this study. This study is representative only of LGBT youth who have access to the Internet. The non-random nature and online methods used to assemble the sample could bias the findings of the study. For instance, youth in rural areas or

schools without access to the Internet may have even greater need of additional resources, as other research suggests that LGBT youth in rural and urban areas may rely on school computers to a larger extent than suburban youth due to less access to the Internet via home computers (GLSEN, CiPHR, & University of New Hampshire, 2013). Nevertheless, online methods have been demonstrated to achieve representativeness for broader populations (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004), and many steps were taken to ensure diversity within the sample here. The oversample of LGBT survey participants was weighted to the participants drawn from the nationally representative panel of youth. In addition, numerous large studies to date of LGBT populations have relied on online methods (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012; Kryzan, 2000; Riggle, Rostosky, & Reedy, 2005). These methods may actually be more inclusive overall of the LGBT population, since traditional methods may bias samples toward persons who are more comfortable identifying as LGBT in person and potentially have less need for the online resources examined here (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003).

It is also difficult to interpret the effects for private schools in the quantitative analyses, since the variable used here does not distinguish between independent private and religious private schools. The literature suggests that independent and religious private schools and their students may be markedly different from one another, and this difference was potentially obscured here due to the language used in the original survey item. Similarly, a more robust variable for religion would have helped discern differential patterns of development based on religion. In addition, the study asks only about searching sexuality information online and largely neglects information seeking related to gender identity. Although transgender and non-cisgender youth have sexual identities just as LGB cisgender youth, many of them may identify as heterosexual. Thus, it is primarily their gender identities, not their sexual identities, which

contribute to experiences as part of the larger population of LGBT youth, and which may produce additional needs for information or support.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Future research should continue to explore some of the findings from quantitative analysis and related themes that arose in focus groups. For instance, future work may wish to examine more nuanced understandings of locale, including not just urbanicity, but also the presence of community resources supportive of LGBT people. More intentionally assessing parental behaviors and beliefs may also provide better understanding of the findings observed here regarding parental education levels and income.

In addition, longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term trajectories of youth who initially rely more on online spaces for development, and to discern how such an orientation might be related to well-being. Such youth may have different long-term outcomes if they continue to rely more on online than in-person spaces to express than LGBT identities; alternatively, use of online spaces and resources could serve a temporary function and decrease in importance after adolescence.

Additional research is also needed to explore not just global LGBT identities, but also independent sexual and gender identities. Although LGB and T individuals share many common experiences, non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality elicit and provoke a range of different reactions and experiences, depending on the context. Transgender and gender nonconforming youth may experience a particular lack of information or support, and thus, may have needs around gender identity that are quite different from those experienced by cisgender LGB youth. Thus, uses of online spaces and resources may differ substantially for gender identity compared to sexual identity, depending on the particular LGBT subpopulation.

## CHAPTER III

ONLINE AND IN-PERSON SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ITS UTILITY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL  
WELL-BEING AMONG LGBT YOUTH**Introduction**

Much research has explored the social stigma and victimization experienced by many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, a risk which is elevated if they are open about being LGBT (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). Such experiences contribute to feelings of marginalization for many LGBT youth and result in worse well-being and quality of life. Less research has focused on, conversely, the potential positive supports present in LGBT youth's lives. Although positive youth development (PYD) frameworks have become prevalent in the past two decades (Benson, 2003a, 2003b; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sema, 2007; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Durlak, 1998), their applications to LGBT youth are thus far lacking.

Lerner and colleagues' (2004; 2005b) concept of *Connection*, which includes elements of social support, serves as one common feature of PYD models. Together with other components of PYD, strong social support is thought to promote well-being throughout life (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Scales & Benson, 2004). The concept is informed by work in developmental psychology. Dunphy's (1963) research on peer networks noted their transformation during adolescence to become more adult-like: the formation of small *cliques* mirrors and builds the foundation for families, and larger

*crowds* reflect social groupings and institutions that shape broader cultural behaviors; both pave the way for the formation of ties based around sexual pairings (Cottrell, 1996; Dunphy, 1963). Peer networks help one feel understood and provide support in times of need (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Youniss & Smollar, 1985), and youth with greater levels of social support emerge from adolescence with better psychosocial well-being, including increased self-worth, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and life satisfaction; and lower depression (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Dubois et al., 2002; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Vieno et al., 2007).

For LGBT youth, many of whom experience stress due to being LGBT, support from others may be even more paramount to well-being than for youth in general. Social support, when available, has been found to mitigate some of these negative experiences, and positive connections to other LGBT people may be associated with most optimal outcomes (Doty, Willoughby, Lindahl, & Malik, 2010). Unfortunately, many LGBT youth are not able to access the support they need from others and may rely on online spaces—forums, chat programs, social media platforms, virtual worlds, and other computer- and Internet-mediated technologies (Rheingold, 2000)—for support. This chapter draws from these bodies of literature and examines the potential contributions of online and in-person outness, victimization, and support (from other LGBT people and people in general) to psychosocial well-being. In doing so, it encourages a model of PYD more inclusive of and relevant to the LGBT youth population.

### **Youth Social Support**

Social support is recognized as a function of social relationships (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988) and is constituted by emotional (empathy, socializing, trust); instrumental/tangible (finances, services); informational (advice, suggestions); and appraisal

(feedback and affirmation) components (House, 1981). Although they often occur in tandem and are thus difficult to isolate, it is emotional support which is perhaps most commonly imagined when the term *social support* is invoked, and perceived social support rather than enacted social support which is most commonly operationalized in research (Barrera, 1986; Cohen, 1992; Seidman, Shrout, & Bolger, 2006). This tendency to study perceived support may reflect: 1) a social constructionist view that recognizes perception as a functional equivalent of reality; 2) that perceived support is more consistently associated with positive outcomes than enacted support, which may occur in times of greater distress and be associated with more negative outcomes (Barrera, 1986; Cohen, 1986; Heaney & Israel, 2008; Seidman et al., 2006); or 3) that perceived social support is simply easier to assess than enacted social support.

Social support has been linked to numerous positive life outcomes: satisfaction with social support during adolescence is generally associated with fewer depressive symptoms and with desired PYD outcomes such as positive self-identity, self-esteem, physical and mental health, and later life success (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). In addition, perceived support during times of stress contributes indirectly to well-being by buffering and compensating for the negative effects of that stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, 1981). Thus, social support may be most important in the presence of life stressors or transitions (Cobb, 1976; Heaney & Israel, 2008; House et al., 1988).

The relative importance of different sources of support changes during adolescence. Whereas parental support is associated with reduced emotional problems, its levels relative to friend support nonetheless decline during adolescence (Glick & Rose, 2011; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Helsen, Vollebergh, & Meeus, 2000). Parents remain important sources of instrumental support (i.e., help, information), but peers increasingly provide emotional or

expressive support. Peer support in the school context has been linked to academic performance and self-esteem, and with lower distress and anxiety over time (Demaray, Malecki, Rueger, Brown, & Summers, 2009; DuBois, Felner, Brand, Adan, & Evans, 1992; Grills-Taquechel, Norton, & Ollendick, 2010; Juvonen, Espinoza, & Knifsend, 2012; Liem & Martin, 2011).

**LGBT youth social support.** LGBT youth's non-normative sexuality and/or gender expression may contribute to minority stress if it is accompanied by experiences of prejudice, anticipation of such occurrences, and internalized homophobia (Meyer, 2003), and this stress is associated with decreased psychosocial well-being. LGBT youth are at higher risk than non-LGBT youth for victimization, depression, isolation, loneliness, hopelessness, poor academic performance, and suicidality (Craig & Smith, 2011; Grossman & Kerner, 1998; Harris Interactive and GLSEN, 2005; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Mercier & Berger, 1989; Safren & Heimberg, 1999; Sullivan & Woodarski, 2002; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig 2005). LGBT youth who are more severely victimized are at even greater risk for depression, suicidal ideation and attempts (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Burton, Marshal, Chisolm, Sucato, & Friedman, 2013; Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Hershberger, Pilkington, & D'Augelli, 1997), particularly if the victimization targets an LGBT identity (Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, & Koenig, 2012; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card, & Russell, 2010). Although being open about being LGBT is associated with better well-being, including higher self-esteem and lower depression, it is also associated with higher rates of victimization (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2012).

Higher levels of peer and parental support can compensate for and potentially buffer against these negative life experiences (Craig & Smith, 2011; Espelage et al., 2008; Friedman,

Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001), though LGBT youth may have less support from parents than youth overall and be more reluctant to report harassment if it stems from their sexuality than from other causes (Rivers, 2000). As a result, LGBT youth may locate a disproportionate share of their social support in friends (Anderson, 1998; Grossman & Kerner, 1998; Mercier & Berger, 1989), although LGB<sup>4</sup> youth also frequently report a loss of friends for being open about their sexual orientation (Anhalt & Morris, 2004; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Diamond & Lucas, 2004). Thus, some LGBT youth may refrain from being open about their LGBT identity thus fail to receive the support they need.

The composition of peer support systems appears to affect psychosocial well-being and quality of life among LGBT youth. For instance, LGB youth report less social support and lower overall satisfaction with their social support than non-LGB youth (Safren & Heimberg, 1999; Williams et al., 2005), a difference which may in part be attributable to experiences of victimization from peers, as well as to the process of identity development, if not being out precludes support regarding LGBT issues. Whereas LGBT support networks tend to include non-LGBT peers, LGBT friends are judged to be more supportive than non-LGBT friends, and thus, LGBT youth support networks tend to include at least one other LGBT young person (Anderson, 1998; Doty, 2009; Doty et al., 2010; Mercier & Berger, 1989; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). Higher levels of support from people who understand LGBT issues, in turn, may diminish psychological distress (Doty, 2009; Doty et al., 2010) and boost self-esteem (Anderson, 1998; Vincke & Van Heeringen, 2002).

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<sup>4</sup> The more inclusive designation “LGBT” is used whenever possible and appropriate. However, much of the scholarship that claims relevance to the “LGBT” population is inaccurate, because it is not inclusive of issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (i.e., relevant to all four of the groups enumerated in the acronym “LGBT”). Thus, when discussing the findings from particular studies, I make caution to refer only to the groups included in the study; hence, at times I refer to “LGB” or “lesbian and gay” youth, rather than to “LGBT youth.”

Individual and contextual factors may influence LGBT youth's experiences in different ways, including instances of victimization and opportunities for support (Hong, Espelage, & Kral, 2011; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009). Social support is dependent on such factors as the provider, receiver, context, type of support, and developmental needs/status (House, 1981; House et al., 1988). Despite the apparent value of support from other LGBT youth, many LGBT youth find it difficult to establish connections to other LGBT youth and obtain the support they need (Grossman & Kerner, 1998; Mercier & Berger, 1989). For such youth, alternative venues for support may be especially appealing and beneficial.

### **Potential Benefits of Online Support**

Although Internet access remains dictated by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, SES, and living context, and thus may not be equally accessible by all persons (Hargittai, 2008), the Internet may offer an alternative space and “new materials” (Turkle, 2011, p. 158) for relationship formation and identity exploration (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Gross, Juvonen, & Gable, 2002; Turkle, 1997; Ybarra & Suman, 2006). In providing spaces for being open about one's identity, the Internet can provide the basis for authentic social support. Goffman (1959) asserts that repeated presentations in a given space not only help one negotiate identity, but also form the basis of relationships. Over time, sharing online (Olivero & Lunt, 2004; Walther & Parks, 2002) may first be associated with self-expression and identity exploration, and then become the basis for social connections (Livingstone, 2008). A large body of research has found evidence of quality emotional and informational support online—including its use in providing encouraging, sympathetic, and advice-based messages (Baym, Zhang, & Lin, 2004; Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005; Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007; Parks & Roberts, 1998; Rainie & Wellman, 2012; Tichon & Shapiro, 2003). Although one comprehensive review of

formal, online, health-related peer support groups found that they were not consistently related to decreases in depression and/or increases in social support (Eysenbach, Powell, Englesakis, Rizo, & Stern, 2004), much of the value of online social support may lie in its informal nature, and its ready availability in times of need (Hlebec, Manfreda, & Vehovar, 2006).

**LGBT youth Internet use.** Youth adoption of social networking sites has been especially prevalent and rapid (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Although online and in-person networks tend to overlap for youth, and online spaces are used primarily to connect with in-person friends (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Ellison et al., 2007; Gross, 2004), a substantial minority of adolescents and young adults have used social networking sites to connect with people whom they have never met face to face (Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, & Smallwood, 2006; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008). Whereas youth who have well-developed social networks may utilize social networking sites primarily to reinforce their in-person connections, youth with more tenuous in-person networks may use the Internet to expand their networks and avoid being alone (boyd, 2008; Gross et al., 2002; Rainie & Wellman, 2012).

This potential for new relationships may be particularly appealing to socially marginalized youth, as it may connect them with support beyond what is available through their communities, schools, and families (e.g., boyd & Ellison, 2008; Chak & Leung, 2004; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001; Gross et al., 2002; Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Mehra, Merkel, & Peterson Bishop, 2004; Mesch, 2001; Whitlock, Powers, & Eckenrode, 2006; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2003; Wright & Bell, 2003; Ybarra & Suman, 2006). Whereas identifying as LGBT may detrimentally affect some in-person social networks and result in harassment, it may serve as the basis for social connections online (Calvert, 2002; Curtis, 1997; Drushel, 2010; Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Holt, 2011; Kendall, 2002; Turkle, 1997). The ability to

locate other LGBT youth online, perhaps for the first time (Baams, Jonas, Utz, Bos, & van der Vuurst, 2011; Cooper & Dzara, 2010; Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Hillier, Mitchell, & Ybarra, 2012; Mehra et al., 2004; Mustanski, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011; Tichon & Shapiro, 2003), may lead to a “demarginalization” of sexual or gender identity (Maczewski, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 1998), and hence result in decreased loneliness and improved psychological health.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Internet may also expose LGBT youth to potentially harmful communities, practices, and narratives. Internet use may result in greater exposure to homophobic messages and to potential negative influences on self-acceptance, such as reparative therapies (Pascoe, 2011). Cyberbullying—bullying through email, instant messaging, text messages, and social networking sites—has also been found to result in negative psychological outcomes (Blumenfeld & Cooper, 2010; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell, Ybarra, & Finkelhor, 2007; Pascoe, 2011; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009) and target LGBT youth at greater rates than non-LGBT youth (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Human Rights Campaign, 2012; Robinson & Espelage, 2011). Such behavior may even lead to more harmful outcomes online than would be observed in person, as these experiences may go unnoticed and thus unaccompanied by the intervention that might occur with in-person bullying.

In addition, factors that influence access to traditional resources may also affect access to resources online. A digital divide among different racial/ethnic groups remains (e.g., Hargittai, 2008; Prieger & Hu, 2008), and has also been found among youth (Pascoe, 2011) and men who have sex with men (MSM), with young White MSM more likely to use the Internet than Black and Hispanic MSM (Mustanski, Lyons, & Garcia, 2011). In addition, the lack of Internet and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure in rural areas of the country may restrict access to the Internet and related resources among LGBT youth (Gray, 2009b; Pascoe, 2011).

**Study Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to extend the literature on PYD, social support, and victimization among LGBT youth. PYD models have often ignored the importance of support from other LGBT people as well as the potential for online forms of support, and this chapter attempts to address these gaps. Thus, this chapter acknowledges the contributions of multiple modes of victimization, outness, and support to well-being. In addition to direct, or compensatory, contributions of social support to well-being, this chapter examines possible buffering effects of social support on experiences of victimization.

In particular, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Do online experiences and resources contribute to well-being beyond those located in person?
  - a. Do online outness and victimization affect well-being among LGBT youth distinct from their roles in person?
  - b. Do online forms of social support provide direct benefits to well-being among LGBT youth, beyond those observed in person?
2. Do online and in-person forms of social support buffer the effects of online and in-person victimization, in addition to their possible direct benefits to well-being?

**Methods**

This study uses survey data collected as part of the *Teen Health & Technology* study by Harris Interactive Inc. on behalf of Internet Solutions for Kids, the University of New Hampshire, and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and funded by the National Institutes of Health. The dataset was accessed with permission from Michele Ybarra, Ph.D., of Internet Solutions for Kids; and Joseph G. Kosciw, Ph.D., of GLSEN, who served as

the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator on the research project, respectively. The project was approved by the Chesapeake Institutional Review Board (IRB), the University of New Hampshire IRB, and the GLSEN RERC, with approval from the Vanderbilt University IRB.

### **Sample**

The sample was constructed via two parts: an LGBT subsample (n=195 respondents) identified through a nationally representative, stratified sample of youth recruited through the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel to participate in a survey about their online experiences, and 2) an oversample of LGBT youth obtained through referrals from GLSEN (n=1,765 respondents) via targeted online advertisements and emails with the survey link sent through its distribution list. The oversample of LGBT youth was recruited due to the interest in examining specifically the online experiences of LGBT youth. A dichotomous variable is used to control for the sample source in this study rather than the weighting process described in the introduction to the dissertation, as SEM software packages are not yet capable of adjusting fit indices for weighting (see Asparouhov & Muthen, 2006; Valluzzi, Larson, & Miller, 2003).

### **Data Collection**

All surveys were conducted online. Youth who were eligible and who assented to participate were sent to the first question of the survey. At any time during the survey, participants could stop and save the survey and return to it at a later time. It was emphasized to the participant that this option could be utilized if they no longer felt that the space in which the survey was being completed was private. The mean survey length for participants who completed the survey was 34 minutes.

## Measures

This study examines the contribution of several dimensions of victimization, outness, and support to well-being, noting that they can be multimodal (occurring online as well as in person). Social support can also be general in form or come from LGBT people specifically. Table 3.1 describes each of the variables used in analysis in detail. Control variables include *Gender identity*, *Age*, *Time spent online*, and *Sample source*.

*Outness to friends in person* and *Outness to friends online* are included in the model, because outness has been shown to relate to increased victimization but also to more positive well-being (D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 1998; Kosciw et al., 2012); it may also be associated with increased satisfaction with social support and with the ability to discuss LGBT issues, as indicated above. Respondents who were missing data for *Outness to friends online* (11.4% of the sample) because they did not report knowing other friends exclusively online were substituted with their outness in-person; such persons were slightly more out in person, on average, than youth who did have friends whom they knew only online.

Several forms of social support, an integral component of PYD, are used in this analysis. *Positive in-person social support* reflects one's perception that in-person friends provide support that is positive or useful, and is measured with a modified version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988); the scale includes four items (e.g., "I can talk about my problems with friends I first met in person") and has high internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .925$ ). Responses were dichotomized, such that respondents who said, on average, that their friends provided positive support were coded as having positive support. A parallel 4-item measure of *Positive online social support* was dichotomized similarly and also has high internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha =$

.939). Respondents who perceived friends they knew only online to be good at providing support were coded as 1; respondents who perceived poor online support, or who did not have online-only friends and thus did not receive the potential compensatory benefits of online-only support, were coded as 0. A dummy variable was used to control for whether respondents had any online-only friends. Complementary measures of LGBT-specific social support (e.g., perceived quality of support from LGBT persons) were not available in the dataset; thus, measures of LGBT-specific contact are different from the general support variables and reflect the possible availability of support (through connections to other LGBT people) rather than perceived quality. *In-person LGBT contact* is measured by asking respondents whether they know an LGBT peer at their school, and *Online LGBT contact* is determined by asking respondents whether they have used the Internet in the past year to connect with other LGBT people.

Finally, indicators of well-being serve as outcome variables, including *Self-esteem* and *Depression*. Self-esteem was measured using the 10-item Rosenberg (1989) Self-Esteem Scale, which has high internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .921$ ). Depression was measured using a modified 10-item version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (Eaton, Muntaner, Smith, Tien, & Ybarra, 2004), which also has high internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .923$ ). The original CES-D scale (Radloff, 1977) contained 20 4-point items which, when summed, produced scores ranging from 0 to 60. A modified version of the scale (Eaton et al., 2004) added a fifth response option (*nearly every day for two weeks*), which is recoded here to generate a range comparable to the original version. Since the version of the scale used in this survey contained only 10 items, but featured the same dimensions/symptoms as the original scale, scores were doubled, again to align the total possible score to that of the original version.

Table 3.1.  
*Description of Variables used in Quantitative Analyses (N=1,944)*

Variable Name	Operationalization	Values	Mean/%	SD
<b>Control Variables</b>				
<i>Gender identity</i>	What is your gender? Your gender is how you feel inside.  Categorical (1=possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Female (Ref.) (selected only female as gender) Male (selected only male) Transgender (selected transgender, male-to-female, and/or female-to-male) Other (selected both male and female) (e.g., genderqueer, androgynous).	43.1 35.5 9.6 11.8	
<i>Age (Years)</i>	How old are you?	Range: 13 to 18	16.17	1.43
<i>Time spent online</i>	Composite measure of the total number of hours respondents spent online per day via computers at school, work, or home, as well as via cell phones or portable or stationary video game consoles.	1 = 0-1 hours 2 = 1-2 hours 3 = 2-4 hours 4 = 4-7 hours 5 = more than 7 hours	7.9 9.1 23.3 40.2 19.4	
<i>Sample source</i>	(What is the source of the sample?)	1 = GLSEN 0 = HPOL	90.0 10.0	
<b>Victimization</b>				
<i>Victimization in person</i>	How frequently have you experienced bullying in person in the past 12 months while at school, home, or other places you hang out?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	32.8 32.5 16.1 11.5 7.1	
<i>Victimization online</i>	How frequently have you experienced bullying online in the past 12 months while at school, home, or other places you hang out?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	51.9 28.2 11.8 6.0 2.0	
<b>PYD Components</b>				
<b>Confidence - Identity</b>				

<i>Outness to friends in person</i>	How many of your friends your age whom you know person know about your LGBT identity?	1 = None of them 2 = Only a few of them 3 = A fair amount of them 4 = Most of them 5 = All of them	6.3 24.0 18.6 21.1 30.0
<i>Outness to friends online</i>	How many of your friends your age whom you know only online know about your LGBT identity?	1 = None of them 2 = Only a few of them 3 = A fair amount of them 4 = Most of them 5 = All of them	15.6 18.4 15.7 18.4 31.9
<b>Connection – Social Support</b>			
<i>Positive in-person social support</i>	Measured using a modified version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. <sup>a</sup> 4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .925$ .	1 = Positive in-person social support 0 = Neutral or negative in-person social support	87.0 13.0
	Responses were dichotomized to indicate positive in-person support.		
<i>Positive online social support</i>	Measured using a modified version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. <sup>a</sup> 4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .939$ .	1 = Positive online social support 0 = Neutral, negative, or absent online social support	49.2 50.8
	Responses were dichotomized to indicate positive online support.		
<i>In-person LGBT contact</i>	Do you know another student at school who is LGBT?	1 = Yes 0 = No	81.9 18.1
<i>Online LGBT contact</i>	In the past 12 months, have you used the Internet to talk or connect with other LGBT people?	1 = Yes 0 = No	77.9 22.1
<b>Well-Being</b>			
<i>Self-esteem</i>	Measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale <sup>b</sup> . 10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .921$ .	Range: 1 to 5	3.28 1.01
<i>Depression</i>	Measured using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale <sup>c</sup> (CES-D). 2x the sum of 10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .923$ .	Range: 0 to 60	25.19 16.59

<sup>a</sup> Zimet et al. (1988)<sup>b</sup> Rosenberg (1989).<sup>c</sup> Adapted from CES-D (Eaton et al., 2004).

## Analysis

Univariate information for each of the variables used in analysis is presented in Table 3.1. To examine the contribution of outness, victimization, and support to well-being (Question 1), this chapter uses a structural equation model (see Figure 3.1), which can also be classified as a path analysis here, as the model contains only structural, and not measurement, components. The model includes separate online and in-person measures of victimization, outness, and support. Social support is also theorized to be beneficial in general, as well as through contact with other LGBT people specifically. Age, gender, amount of time spent online, and sample source were included as covariates and linked to all other variables using causal paths.

In addition, hierarchical OLS regression with robust standard errors is used to examine the possible buffering effects of social support on well-being (Question 2). *Depression* and *Self-esteem* served as the dependent variables (see Table 3.2). The independent variables were centered and entered in the following steps for each dependent variable: controls used in the SEM and baseline independent variables, including *Outness to friends in person* and *online*, *Victimization in person* and *online*, *Positive online social support* and *Online LGBT contact*, and *Positive in-person social support* and *In-person LGBT contact* (step 1); interaction terms among both online forms of support/contact and both modes of victimization (step 2; four interaction terms); and four additional interaction terms among both in-person forms of support/contact and both modes of victimization (step 3). The eight interaction terms permit an assessment of whether different forms of support are differentially useful to different severities and modes of victimization. They were entered in separate steps to assess whether possible buffering effects of online support persist even in the presence of possible buffering effects of in-person support.

## Results

Descriptive information for variables used in analysis is included in Table 3.1, including variable names, operationalizations, possible values, and central tendencies. The sample was slightly more female (43.1%) than male (35.5%); 9.6% of respondents identified as transgender and 11.8% as some other gender. Participants reported an average age of 16.17 years and spent about 4-6 hours online per day. Most youth reported being out to at least “a fair amount” of their friends in person (69.7%) and online (66.0%). One third of respondents had been bullied at least once per month in person (34.8%), although fewer said they had been bullied at least once per month online (19.8%). More respondents reported receiving positive support in person (87.0%) than online (49.2%). Eight in ten (81.9%) students knew another LGBT peer in person, and 77.9% had used the Internet to connect with other LGBT people in the past 12 months; 69.3% of LGBT youth who did not have access to LGBT peers had used the Internet in the past year to connect with other LGBT people (Appendix III). Respondents reported a mean self-esteem score of 3.28 (i.e., moderate levels of self-esteem) and depression score of 25.19, above the cutoff of 16 used in many studies to indicate depressive symptomology (Radloff, 1977; Eaton & Kessler, 1981; Eaton et al., 2004), but below that in other studies (Radloff, 1991).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the fully specified model testing both the direct and mediated paths among the four types of social support/contact, two modes of victimization, two modes of outness, and two indicators of well-being. Not shown are the paths to all variables from covariates—age, gender, time spent online, and sample source were included as controls, with correlations among them. In addition, the model includes correlations among the four types of support and the two outness variables. Correlations are depicted among variables for clarity of illustration, but technically occur between error terms and thus indicate covariance. Standardized

coefficients significant at the  $p < .05$  level are indicated with solid lines, and coefficients significant only at the .10 level are indicated in parentheses; non-significant path coefficients are represented with a dashed line. Control variables are included in the model but not illustrated in the figure for purposes of clarity. Standard measures of practical fit indicate good model fit: the comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.99, and the root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA) was .04. Although a significant chi-square test [ $\chi^2(df = 10, n = 1,950) = 44.144, p < .001$ ] can indicate model misspecification, the model has a good fit given that the other fit indices are within acceptable ranges (i.e.,  $RMSEA < .06$ ;  $CFI > .95$ . See Hu & Bentler, 2005; Kline, 2005) and given the chi-square test's sensitivity to large sample sizes.

**Question 1a: Do online outness and victimization affect well-being among LGBT youth distinct from their roles in person?**

The model indicates that both modes of victimization had negative associations with well-being. Of note, online victimization had a negative relationship with self-esteem ( $\beta = -.15, p < .001$ ) and depression ( $\beta = .14, p < .001$ ) in addition to the negative contribution to well-being of in-person victimization. Outness in person had a marginally significant positive relationship with self-esteem ( $\beta = .05, p < .07$ ) but was also associated with increased victimization in person ( $\beta = .05, p < .05$ ), resulting in a net neutral or weak positive relationship with self-esteem ( $r = .04$ ). Outness online was associated with increased victimization online ( $\beta = .05, p < .05$ ), but not with improved self-esteem ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ) or lower depression ( $\beta = -.02, p > .05$ ).

The observed associations between different modes of the same constructs provide further evidence of the independent and unique contributions of online and in-person outness and victimization. Outness online was only moderately correlated with outness in person ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ), suggesting that online spaces may provide spaces to be out for some youth who are not out

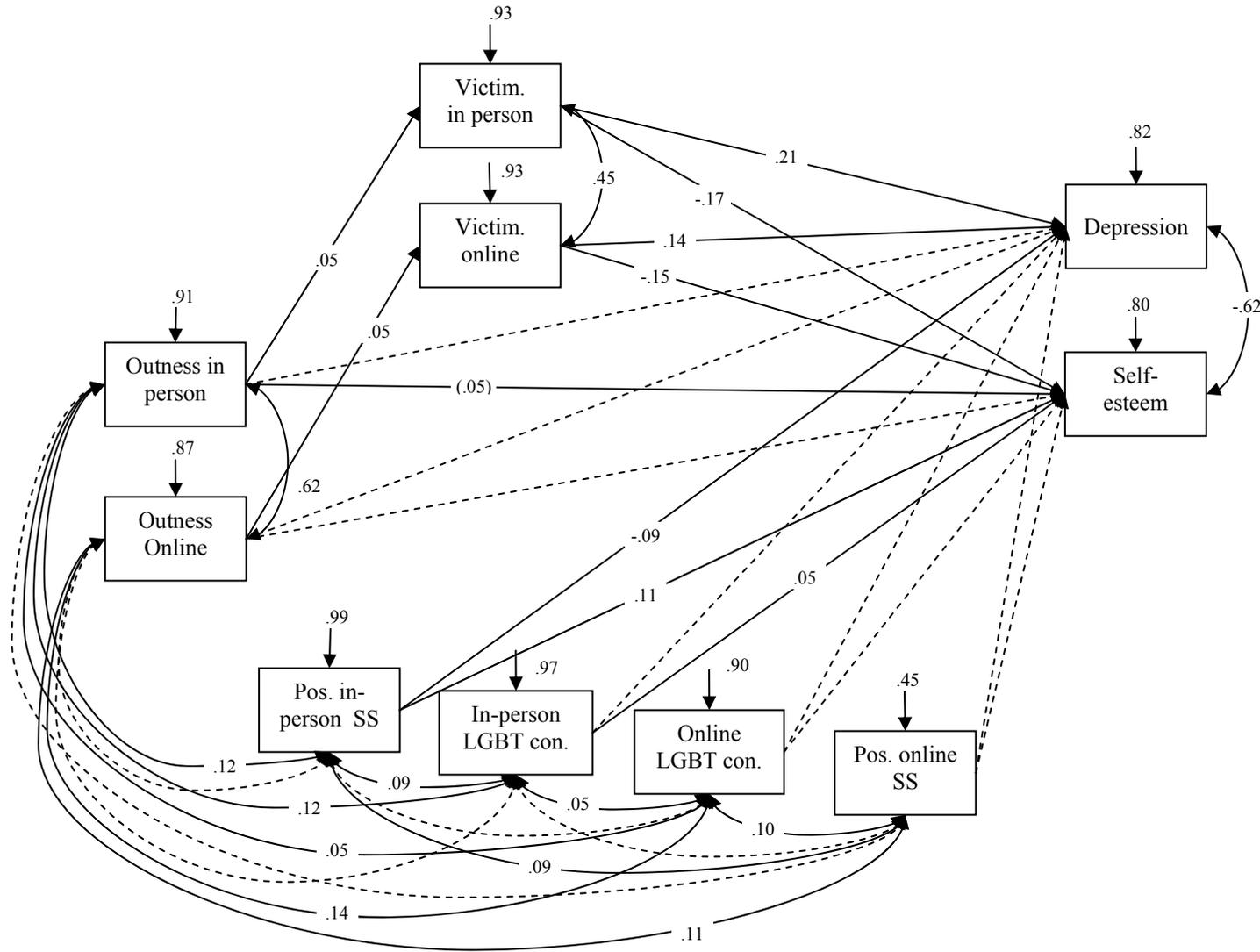
in person, as suggested in Chapter 2. In addition, victimization online and in person were only moderately correlated with one another ( $r = .45, p < .001$ ), suggesting that they are distinct phenomena and contribute independently to well-being.

**Question 1b: Do online forms of social support provide direct benefits to well-being among LGBT youth, beyond those observed in person?**

Different types and modes of social support were differentially related to well-being, but in ways suggesting that online forms of support did not provide overall benefits to well-being. Positive in-person social support was strongly and consistently associated with improved well-being (depression:  $\beta = -.09, p < .001$ ; self-esteem:  $\beta = .11, p < .001$ ), and contact with LGBT people in person was associated with enhanced self-esteem ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ). Neither type of online support demonstrated a significant relationship with well-being, however.

Correlations among support variables also reveal information about the potential benefit of online spaces to well-being. Knowing an LGBT peer was significantly and positively associated with positive in-person support ( $r = .09, p < .001$ ) and talking with an LGBT person online ( $r = .05, p < .05$ ), but only weakly in magnitude, suggesting that there might be a range of circumstances under which one might refer to online resources—not strictly to bolster existing relationships, nor always to initiate new ones. Nevertheless, two thirds of youth who did know another LGBT peer had talked with an LGBT person online in the past month (see Appendix III), suggesting that online spaces may help connect LGBT youth to other LGBT youth if they lack such opportunities in person. Positive online support was also significantly, but weakly in magnitude, associated with speaking with an LGBT person online ( $r = .10, p < .001$ ), suggesting that the perception of one's support as positive is not fully explained by whether one has LGBT peers.

Figure 3.1  
*Structural Equation Model (SEM) of Multimodal Victimization, Outness, and Social Support on Well-being among LGBT Youth*



Note: Includes controls referenced in text. Solid lines represent significant paths, dotted lines non-significant paths, and parentheses marginally significant paths.

**Question 2: Do online and in-person forms of social support buffer the effects of online and in-person victimization, in addition to their possible direct benefits to well-being?**

Two hierarchical linear regressions were employed to examine whether forms of in-person and online support have buffering effects for youth with higher levels of in-person or online victimization. In-person general support and contact with LGBT peers were found to provide direct benefits to well-being in Question 1b, but it is possible that their contribution to well-being differs by mode or severity of victimization. Similarly, although the findings in Question 1b suggested that online social support (general and LGBT-specific) was unrelated to well-being, it is possible that online support and contact with LGBT people provide differential benefits to well-being depending on the characteristics of victimization. As indicated in Table 3.2, social support variables collectively appeared to have little buffering effect on victimization. However, buffering effects were observed for online social support: for higher levels of online victimization, positive online support was associated with lower increases in depression and decreases in self-esteem (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3). Moreover, these effects were sustained even when possible buffering effects of in-person support were included in the analysis. Thus, it appears that positive online support does buffer higher levels of online victimization.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study indicates that an understanding of the lives of LGBT youth must acknowledge online as well as in-person experiences, and that online spaces offer opportunities as well as possible negative experiences in the process of adolescent development for LGBT youth. Victimization in person and online each demonstrated a substantial negative contribution to well-being, confirming prior evidence elsewhere of the negative and independent contribution of online victimization to well-being (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell, Ybarra, & Finkelhor, 2007;

Pascoe, 2011). Of note, the strengths of the in-person and online victimization paths on well-being outcomes were relatively similar. A limited amount of research has linked outness with increased victimization, but also well-being (Kosciw et al., 2012). This chapter extends this research and finds that, just as in-person outness is associated with increased in-person victimization, so, too, is online outness associated with increased online victimization.

Unfortunately, it appears that online outness does not compensate for these detrimental effects of increased victimization by providing benefits to well-being above those found for in-person outness: whereas outness in person was marginally associated with benefits to well-being, outness online was not related to well-being. Thus, on balance, online outness and victimization appear to result only in additional negative effects for LGBT youth, above and beyond in-person victimization.

In addition, the findings point to the need to examine both in-person and online forms of support in greater depth. Contrary to some optimism about the potential benefits of, and possible extension of online spaces to in-person spaces, this study reveals that the benefits of online support may be limited: online support demonstrated no net contribution to well-being after accounting for the effects of in-person support (see Figure 3.1). Conversely, positive in-person support and knowing LGBT peers demonstrated strong and consistent relationships with well-being. Thus, the findings reinforce existing knowledge about the importance of in-person support observed for the general population and among LGBT people, which has been found to provide direct benefits to well-being and potentially compensate for the negative effects of online and in-person victimization (Craig & Smith, 2011; Espelage et al., 2008; Friedman et al., 2006; Prinstein et al., 2001).

Table 3.2.

*OLS Regression Predicting Self-Esteem and Depression with Online and In-Person Social Support (with standardized  $\beta$ 's) (N=1,944)*

Variable (referent)	Self-Esteem						Depression					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
<i>Step 1 Baseline Variables</i>	.092		.092		.092		.101		.101		.94	
	F(8, 1935) = 27.99***		F(8, 1935) = 27.99***		F(8, 1935) = 27.99***		F(8, 1935) = 27.56***		F(8, 1935) = 27.56***		F(8, 1935) = 25.93***	
Outness to friends in person	.051 <sup>†</sup>	.027	.048 <sup>†</sup>	.027	.048 <sup>†</sup>	.027	.017	.028	.019	.028	.012	.027
Outness to friends online	-.008	.028	-.005	.028	-.005	.028	-.018	.029	-.020	.029	-.020	.029
Victimization in person	-.169***	.025	-.184**	.059	-.154 <sup>†</sup>	.091	.207***	.026	.199***	.056	.178 <sup>†</sup>	.096
Victimization online	-.150***	.024	-.163**	.057	-.142 <sup>†</sup>	.083	.136***	.024	.183***	.057	.166 <sup>†</sup>	.095
Positive in-person social support	.108***	.020	.110***	.020	.111***	.021	-.087***	.023	-.089***	.023	-.088***	.023
In-person LGBT contact	.055**	.021	.055**	.021	.054*	.021	-.027	.022	-.028	.022	-.026	.023
Positive online social support	.003	.030	-.005	.031	-.006	.031	-.031	.032	.025	.032	-.024	.032
Online LGBT contact	.028	.023	.028	.023	.028	.023	-.003	.024	-.005	.024	-.005	.023
<i>Step 2 Interactions: Online SS</i>			.005		.005				.003		.003	
			F(4, 1931) = 2.71*		F(4, 1931) = 2.71*				F(4, 1931) = 1.68 <sup>†</sup>		F(4, 1931) = 1.68 <sup>†</sup>	
Pos. online SS X IP victim.			.030	.036	.027	.037			-.033	.038	-.032	.038
Online LGBT con. X IP victim.			-.005	.054	-.001	.064			.034	.055	.032	.055
Pos. online SS X Online victim.			.083*	.036	.086*	.037			-.061*	.037	-.062 <sup>†</sup>	.037
Online LGBT con. X ON victim.			-.056	.052	-.059	.053			.000	.044	.000	.000
<i>Step 3 Interactions: In-person SS</i>					.001						.000	
					F(4, 1927) = .32						F(4, 1927) = .14	
Pos. in-person SS X IP victim.					.015	.059					-.005	.065
IP LGBT contact X IP victim.					-.052	.058					.031	.060
Pos. in-person SS X ON victim.					-.029	.053					.007	.061
IP LGBT contact X ON victim.					.008	.058					.012	.057

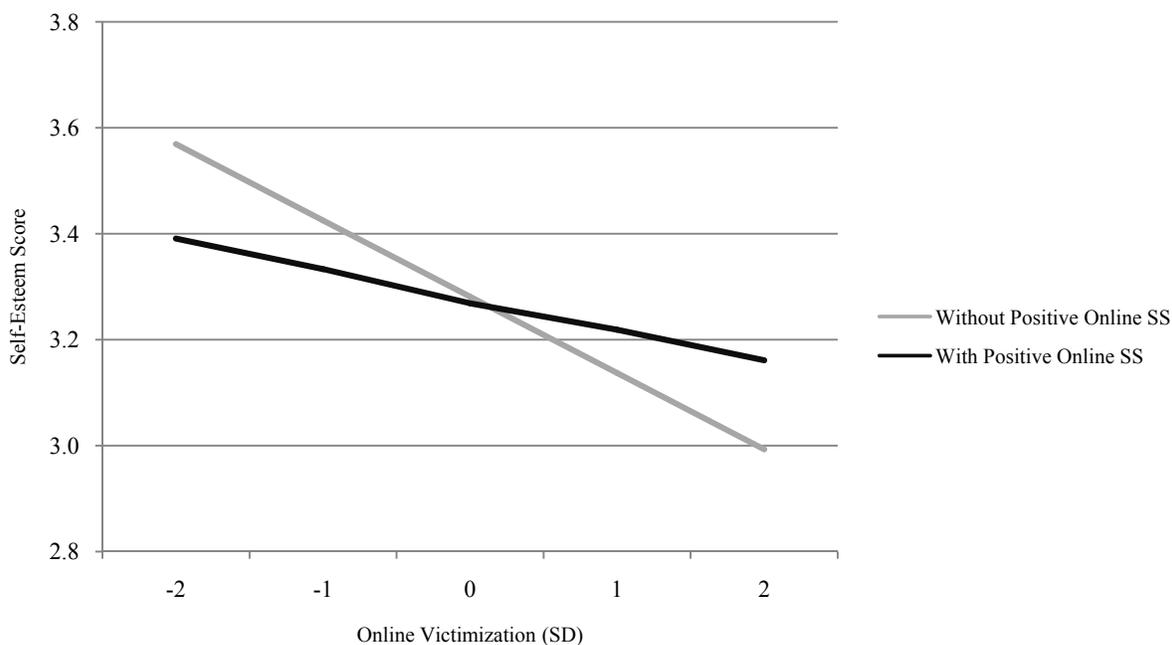
Note: Control variables are included in the regression but not depicted here.

IP = in person; ON = online; SS = social support ; con. = contact; victim. = victimization

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

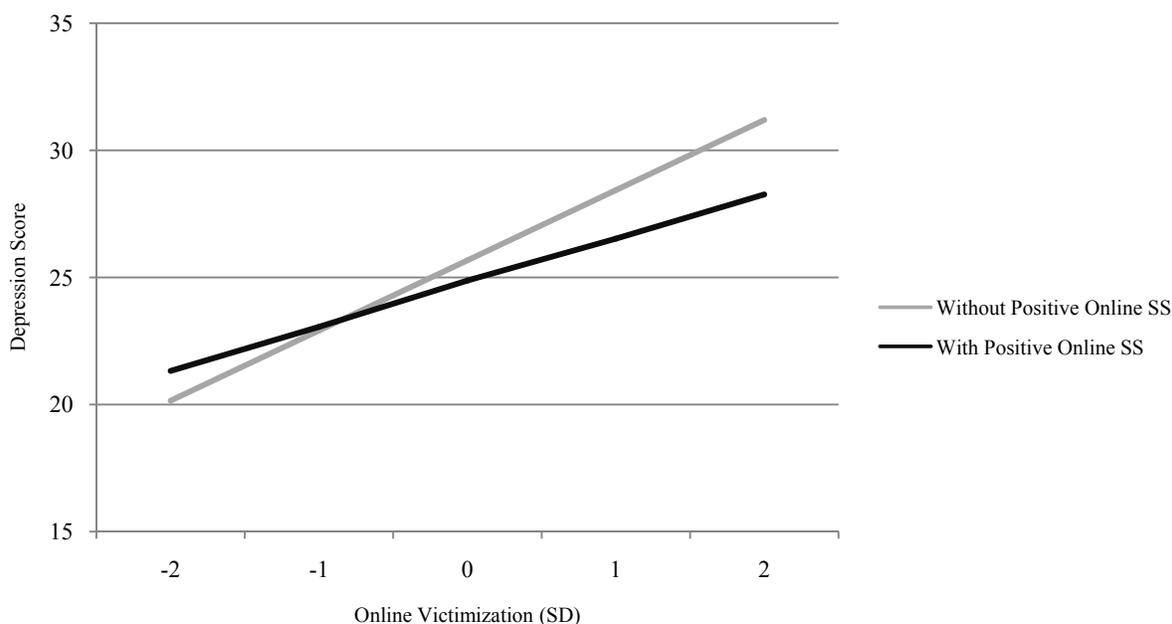
In addition, this study highlights the importance of expanding traditional understandings of PYD to include LGBT-specific components, such as support from LGBT people specifically, which has been linked previously with benefits to well-being (Anderson, 1998; Doty, 2009; Doty et al., 2010; Vincke & Van Heeringen, 2002), but not within an expanded PYD paradigm that recognizes both risk and positive supports among LGBT youth. Nonetheless, these findings also potentially temper enthusiasm of some research suggesting that the Internet may help LGBT youth connect to others online (Baams et al., 2011; Cooper & Dzara, 2010; Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Mustanski, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011), as connections to other LGBT people online did not provide a benefit when in-person LGBT contact was also considered.

Figure 3.2.  
*Self-Esteem by Online Victimization and Positive Online Social Support*



Note: Outness, in-person victimization, positive in-person social support, and LGBT contact fixed at mean values.

Figure 3.3.  
*Depression by Online Victimization and Positive Online Social Support*



Note: Outness, in-person victimization, positive in-person social support, and LGBT contact fixed at mean values.

The forms of support examined here generally did not provide much evidence of a buffering effect on victimization. Although this finding is somewhat inconsistent with previous studies of support among youth (see Prinstein et al., 2001), other recent studies of LGB youth specifically have produced a similar lack of evidence of buffering support in the presence of victimization (Craig & Smith, 2011; Friedman et al., 2006; Mustanski, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011). Thus, it may be that the potential buffering effects of support are limited among LGBT youth, and/or that they are less successful at buffering victimization compared to other life stressors. In addition, the lack of observed buffering effects may reflect variability in measurement across studies; even within research of perceived social support, dimensions of support can reflect quality, quantity, frequency of contact, or other factors. Only presence and quality of support were assessed here.

Nevertheless, despite the lack of buffering evidence for most types of support examined in this study, and the overall lack of direct benefits of online forms of support, it appears that online support may be useful in some circumstances—specifically, when LGBT youth experience higher levels of online victimization. Youth with positive online social support exhibited smaller declines in self-esteem when they experienced higher online victimization compared to youth without positive online support (see interaction terms in Table 3.2). A similar relationship was observed for depression, though the interaction term was dropped to marginal significance in Model 3. The alternative understanding of this finding is that online support may not be associated with higher self-esteem or lower depression for youth with lower levels of victimization (see Figure 3.2), a finding which should be explored in future research.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations are apparent with this study. First, the measures of social support used in this analysis are not equivalent to one another. Positive in-person and online social support reflect the perceived quality or utility of social support in general, whereas LGBT-specific forms of support reflect the possibility of support through contact with other LGBT people either online or in school. The presence of other LGBT peers in school may also reflect the overall school climate for LGBT youth, beyond providing their role in providing opportunities for social support. In addition, some of the social support variables used here were dichotomized in order to make them more comparable to one another both within and across type, and because not all youth reported utilizing online support. This transformation resulted in less variability than found in their original forms, and thus, may also have reduced their predictive power, which may help explain the lack of significant findings for online LGBT support.

In addition, this study is representative only of LGBT youth who have access to the Internet. The non-random nature and online methods used to assemble the sample could bias the findings of the study. For instance, youth in areas or schools without access to the Internet may have even greater need of additional resources, and their exclusion from the survey may have muted possible benefits of online resources. Nevertheless, online methods have been demonstrated to achieve representativeness for broader populations (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004), and many steps were taken to ensure diversity within the sample here. In addition, numerous large studies to date of LGBT populations have relied on online methods (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012; Kryzan, 2000; Riggle, Rostosky, & Reedy, 2005). These methods may actually be more inclusive overall of the LGBT population, since traditional methods may bias samples toward persons who are more comfortable identifying as LGBT and potentially have less need for the alternative resources examined here (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003). In addition, the current limitations of SEM prevent use of the same weighting techniques used in Chapters 2 and 4 of this dissertation, which may make this sample less comparable to the sample used in those chapters, and more or less representative of the LGBT youth population in general. Nonetheless, the findings from this chapter are not alarmingly discordant with prior literature on these topics.

Another limitation is that the data were cross-sectional, which introduced an assumption in the SEM that variables were static over time. This assumption may be less tenable for some predictors, such as victimization and self-esteem, than for others, which may have resulted in over- or underestimated paths among predictors and outcomes. Similarly, the paths are assumed to flow in the direction in which they are depicted. This chapter, as with SEM in general, offers a plausible explanation of the relations observed among the data. However, alternative and

sometimes equivalent models are possible (Kline, 2005; Lee & Hershberger, 1990; MacCallum & Austin, 2000). It is possible, for instance, that the causal paths examined in this study actually flow in the reverse direction; however, these potential equivalent models are generally less theoretically plausible. Although it is plausible that students with high levels of self-esteem (and/or low levels of depression) would be more likely to report positive experiences—experience less victimization and evaluate social support more positively, it is less plausible that such factors would influence their assessment of outness, the presence of other LGBT people, or having talked with them.

### **Implication for Future Research**

Further research is needed to examine why online social support appeared to have an overall neutral relationship with well-being, even after controlling for factors such as amount of time spent online, particularly as prior studies have found beneficial effects for such support. The results in this study suggest that online support may contribute to well-being only for youth with higher levels of online victimization. In addition, this study examined different types of support in the context of one another. It may be possible that online support is more or less beneficial depending on the characteristics not just of victimization, but also of relative levels of and satisfaction with other support, including from people in person. Qualitative research may be a useful starting point for examining differences within the subgroup of LGBT youth who rely at least partially on online spaces for support, and why such support may not be beneficial to LGBT youth as a whole. In addition, future research might examine whether support from other LGBT individuals online is beneficial in certain situations or for persons with certain characteristics or experiences.

Future research must also be more intentional, as well as more expansive, with the types of support it examines. The measures of LGBT-specific support used in this study are limited in scope to contact with other LGBT people, rather than perceived quality of support. Researchers may find it useful to measure multiple dimensions of support, including availability, quantity, and quality, as well multiple modes of support (e.g., online versus offline) more complementarily. They should also measure these constructs generally as well as from specific sources, such as from other LGBT people, depending on the population in question. In addition, research across disciplines will likely soon be challenged by the ever-narrowing distinction between online and in person, and thus may need to imagine previously unexplored dimensions of support.

Finally, longitudinal data on the experiences of LGBT youth are needed to more assuredly assess the role of victimization, outness, and social support on well-being and to examine the potential benefits of different forms of social support. As no such data are currently available, this analysis provides a useful foundation for research on multimodal victimization, outness, and social support among LGBT youth.

## CHAPTER IV

EXTRACURRICULAR AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION ONLINE AND IN PERSON AMONG  
LGBT YOUTH**Introduction**

Much research has explored the social stigma and victimization experienced by many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, a risk which is elevated if youth are open about being LGBT (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). Such experiences contribute to feelings of marginalization for many LGBT youth and result in worse well-being and quality of life. Less research has focused on, conversely, the potential positive supports present in LGBT youth's lives. Although positive youth development (PYD) frameworks have become prevalent in the past two decades (Benson, 2003a, 2003b; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sema, 2007; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Durlak, 1998), their applications to LGBT youth thus far remain limited.

Despite their absence in the literature on LGBT youth, PYD frameworks may prove instrumental in more fully understanding LGBT adolescent development. One common component of PYD models is engagement in extracurricular and civic activities. Lerner and colleagues (2004; 2005b; Little, 1993; Yates & Youniss, 1998) refer collectively to such activities as *Community*, which, together with other components of PYD, is thought to promote well-being and sustained civic participation throughout life (Benson et al., 2007; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998; Glanville, 1999; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Scales & Benson, 2004; Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2007). References to adolescent civic

participation have a strong foundation in research on adolescent cognitive development, moral reasoning and political participation. Piaget's (1983; 1987) theorized formal operational stage, for example, starting in early adolescence, involves the development of abstract thinking, which facilitates an interest and belief in politics and ethics (Torney-Purta, 1990). Kohlberg's (1969; 1976; 1984) moral reasoning stages 3 (a focus on individual responsibility) and 4 (the beginning of obligation to others and to society) become increasingly prominent during adolescence. In addition, Adelson and colleagues (1969; 1986) have suggested a shift in political reasoning during adolescence, whereby concerns become more abstract and contextual, and less authoritarian and dependent on specific experiences. Adolescents also become more involved in volunteering and similar types of engagement, which in turn presents opportunities to challenge their understanding of social problems (Yates & Youniss, 1998).

For LGBT youth, many of whom face substantial threats to well-being, opportunities for participation may be more paramount to well-being than for youth in general. Unfortunately, many LGBT youth may be discouraged from participating in extracurricular and civic activities due to LGBT-related victimization or harassment. Thus, for many LGBT youth, alternative spaces and resources for participation may be necessary. Use of online spaces and resources—forums, chat programs, social media platforms, virtual worlds, and other computer- and Internet-mediated technologies (Rheingold, 2000)—is prevalent among LGBT youth (Haag & Chang, 1997; Hammack & Cohler, 2011) and subsequently, might promote participation and well-being among LGBT youth. In addition, spaces specifically designated as safe for LGBT people (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliances, or GSAs) may promote positive outcomes, perhaps especially for youth who lack other opportunities for participation. Because LGBT youth often experience forms of marginalization, it is important to understand the potential role of positive supports in their lives.

Nonetheless, it is also important to acknowledge that negative experiences may affect well-being directly as well as indirectly through lower access to and use of positive avenues for development, including extracurricular and civic activities. Thus, this chapter examines whether experiences of marginalization among LGBT youth are differentially associated with participation in general, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based forms of extracurricular and civic participation; whether these forms of participation are associated with desired PYD outcomes among LGBT youth; whether the potential benefits of participation are moderated by experiences of victimization; and whether Internet-based forms of participation are associated with elevated levels of in-person civic participation.

### **Youth Extracurricular and Civic Participation**

Civic participation is frequently identified as a desired component or outcome of positive youth development and is encapsulated in Lerner and colleagues' (2004; 2005b) and Yates and Youniss's (1998) models as *Community* (Benson, 2003a; 2003b; Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005b; Little, 1993; Yates & Youniss, 1998). Although scholars frequently lament a decline in civic participation in the U.S. (Putnam, 1995), youth development scholars continue to emphasize the importance of extracurricular and civic participation in developmental outcomes. As youth progress through adolescence, their identities become increasingly shaped by their activities and peer groups. Adolescents who are most civically active during high school and who have friends who participate are most likely to continue to be engaged as they get older (Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2005; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012). In addition, participation in school-based clubs and organized sports has been found to be associated with numerous positive developmental outcomes, including academic achievement, school belonging, psychosocial well-being (self-worth, resilience, distress), and positive peer influence outcomes (Fredricks & Eccles,

2006b). Civic (i.e, community) participation during adolescence has also been found to be associated with better academic achievement and enhanced civic outcomes, including civic efficacy (the belief that one can exercise one's rights), civic knowledge (Schmidt et al., 2007), and civic participation later in life (Benson et al., 2007; Flanagan, 2004; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Metz & Youniss, 2003; Zaff, Malanchuk, & Eccles, 2008).

**Factors associated with and effects of extracurricular and civic participation among youth.** Literature on the rates and benefits of civic participation among socially marginalized youth is sparse. The literature that has examined demographic differences among groups indicates greater rates of participation overall among less marginalized youth along lines of race/ethnicity and social class. White and Asian American youth participate more in extracurricular and civic activities than African American and Latino students. In addition, students who have more educated parents, are from families with a higher SES, and attend private schools tend to report higher rates of participation (Flanagan, 2004; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; McIntosh, Metz, & Youniss, 2005; Pedersen & Seidman, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2007). Although these patterns have not been universally consistent (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Pedersen & Seidman, 2005), they indicate that socially marginalized youth may be discouraged from meaningful civic participation even very early in life (Balsano, 2005), perhaps due to a lack of relevant opportunities for participation, the need to focus on more proximal stressors from the environment, or to stressful environments that might suppress trust in and connectedness to others (Balsano, 2005; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Kenny & Gallagher, 2003).

Despite potentially lower rates of participation, studies generally find benefits to extracurricular and civic participation and positive outcomes among socially marginalized youth (Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2012). Extracurricular and civic participation may promote well-

being among socially marginalized youth by way of intentional learning and leadership experiences and social support that is otherwise lacking (Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005). In addition, peer networks that form through participation in extracurricular and civic activities may encourage prosocial relationships (Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; Mahoney, 2000). Participation in extracurricular or community-based programs has been associated with disproportionate increases in feeling good about oneself and confidence about being able to achieve one's goals among youth living in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), and been found to buffer against negative school and social outcomes, including early dropout and criminal behavior, among high-risk groups (Mahoney, 2000).

Other research has found that the obstacles faced by especially marginalized youth may make overcoming negative factors difficult, even with participation in extracurricular and civic activities. Although Fredricks and Eccles (2008) found that 8<sup>th</sup> grade sports participation was positively associated with prosocial peers in 11<sup>th</sup> grade more strongly for lower SES youth than higher SES youth, lower SES youth did not experience a disproportionate increase in other desired outcomes. Schmidt and colleagues (2012) have found in a study of youth that the strongest positive effects for participation in volunteering were not for youth who were most or least likely to participate, but those who were moderately likely to participate. Thus, youth who are highly likely to participate may have other avenues for positive development, and those who are least likely to participate may face such difficult life circumstances or experience such marginalization that participation is not able to overcome their negative effects. Barber and colleagues (2005) suggest that the composition of peer groups may further explain why participation in an extracurricular activity is not always associated with other positive outcomes.

They argue that participation among low-resource groups might be associated with risk factors, such as less prosocial behaviors and stressors, that counteract potential positive outcomes. Still, even if participation does not buffer youth who are most at risk of negative outcomes, it may offset a substantial amount of the negative effects of such risk factors (Schmidt et al., 2012).

**Extracurricular and civic participation among LGBT youth.** Literature on extracurricular and civic participation among LGBT youth has primarily focused on participation in school clubs supportive of gender and sexuality (i.e., GSAs and similar clubs) and LGBT community groups (Henning-Stout, James, & Macintosh, 2000). Attending schools with GSAs, and participation in GSAs and LGBT-related community organizations, have been found to be associated with positive outcomes, including academic performance and psychosocial well-being (Fischer, 2011; Henning-Stout et al., 2000; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Lee, 2002; Mayo, 2004; Russell, Muraco, Subramanian, & Laub, 2009). LGBT-specific clubs also offer LGBT youth an opportunity to connect to LGBT communities (Russell, 2002), and participation in them may be associated with broader civic participation and civic skills (Diaz & Kosciw, 2012; Mayo, 2004; 2011), although Toomey and Russell (2011) failed to find a link between GSA participation and future civic engagement (i.e., plans to vote).

Limited research has examined participation among LGBT youth in other extracurricular and civic activities. Toomey and Russell (2012) examined predictors of school-based club participation, for instance, but not community/civic participation; furthermore, they examined these forms only among same-sex attracted youth, and not those who identify as LGBT. LGBT youth commonly report that they feel disconnected from school (Galliher, Rostosky, & Hughes, 2004; Kosciw et al., 2012) and less belonging to their school than non-LGBT youth (Robinson & Espelage, 2011), which may discourage them from participating in extracurricular activities

(Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Osterman, 2000). Same sex-attracted students participate less in school- or community-run sports teams (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Toomey & Russell, 2012) and school-based clubs (e.g., debate team, science club) (Toomey & Russell, 2012) than opposite sex-attracted students. Furthermore, LGBT youth often experience victimization for being open about being LGBT (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2012), which may indirectly discourage their involvement in school activities through lower school belonging, as well as directly through the desire to avoid possible instances of victimization (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010). Such experiences may also attenuate the possible benefits of participation in general. In addition, LGBT youth who are not out may be hindered in their ability to participate fully and feel good about themselves: evidence suggests that LGBT who are not out at school feel less connected to their school community than youth who are out (Kosciw et al., 2012), and thus may also be less likely to participate in extracurricular activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005, 2006a; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Thus, not being out may be considered an additional form of marginalization prompted by social stigma around identifying as LGBT. Nevertheless, limited evidence suggests that school-based participation is associated with higher GPAs for same sex-attracted male students (Toomey & Russell, 2012). The presence of a GSA might also buffer the negative effect of victimization on future civic aspirations (i.e., plans to vote) (Toomey & Russell, 2011).

### **Internet Use and Online Participation among Youth**

With the erosion of public spaces for gathering, particularly for youth (due to such trends as suburbanization, curfew legislation, and loitering laws), as well as other barriers to participation (e.g., lack of resources, stigmatization), the Internet has opened up new possibilities for interaction and civic participation (boyd, 2008). Flanagan and Sherrod (1998) argued at the

turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that these new forms of communication could create a more just society if embedded in intentional PYD programming, and some research suggests that Internet-based participation may be increasing among youth even as traditional forms of civic participation are on the decline (Park, 2012). Online spaces have in some ways become “third places”—neutral grounds that reduce social barriers, or “the core settings of informal public life”(Oldenburg, 1999, p. 16)—for youth who lack public spaces for socialization and participation (Abbott, 1998; Krueger, 2002; Park, 2012). In an ethnography on youth Internet use, Maczewski (2002) discovered that youth successfully circumvented barriers to participation by taking advantage of nontraditional spaces for self-expression, and by obscuring their actual age. Some teenagers have even described the process of joining a social networking site as equipping them with power (Turkle, 2011).

Numerous scholars have envisioned how online spaces might fundamentally alter political discourse and processes in the United States by permitting the presence of typically excluded voices and issues (Agre, 2002; Albrecht, 2006; Bimber, 1998; Krueger, 2002; Stanley & Weare, 2004). Although some scholars have dismissed Internet-based political activity as a passive form of participation (e.g., Abrahamson, Arterton, & Orren, 1998; Ward & Vedel, 2006), others have noted its facilitation of expanded participation among more diverse groups of people (Park, 2012; Stanley & Weare, 2004). Resources traditionally predictive of civic participation (including income and participation in organizational activities) have been found to be weaker or non-predictors of Internet-based participation (including communication with a campaign, visiting a candidate website, posting a political link online); moreover, lower income may be associated with increased civic participation online (Krueger, 2002). The Internet may also provide a space for greater participation from other excluded voices, such as LGBT youth

(GLSEN, CiPHR, & University of New Hampshire, 2013; Gray, 2009b; Park, 2012; Russell, 2002), a possibility which remains under-explored in the research literature.

**Potential benefits of Internet-based participation.** Traditional forms of participation have a strong evidence base for supporting positive outcomes among youth, including academic, psychosocial well-being, and participation throughout life, as indicated above. Less is known about the possible benefits of Internet-based forms of participation. It may be that such forms complement in-person forms of participation, or, alternatively, that they detract from them. Scholarship is mixed regarding the relationship between time spent online and civic participation in person: some research has found that time spent online is associated with reduced traditional political participation (Nie & Erbring, 2002), although other research has found no negative effect of online behavior on traditional participation (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Quintelier & Vissers, 2008; Shah, Schmierbach, Hawkins, Espino, & Donovan, 2002). The evidence is also mixed, though more positive overall, regarding the relationship between online and in-person forms of participation (de Zúñiga et al., 2010; Skoric, Ying, & Ng, 2009). Research on youth in Belgium and Sweden has found activities such as forwarding political emails and following the news online to be associated with higher rates of traditional participation (e.g., donating money, attending political events, contacting a politician) (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008; Ostman, 2012). Communication with others online (e.g., participation in online chats and discussion forums) and via mobile phone has also been found to be associated with online and in-person, passive and active political participation in a variety of contexts (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Campbell & Kwak, 2011; Skoric, Ying, & Ng, 2009). Studies examining connections between Internet-based and traditional participation among youth in the U.S. are thus far lacking.

## Study Purpose

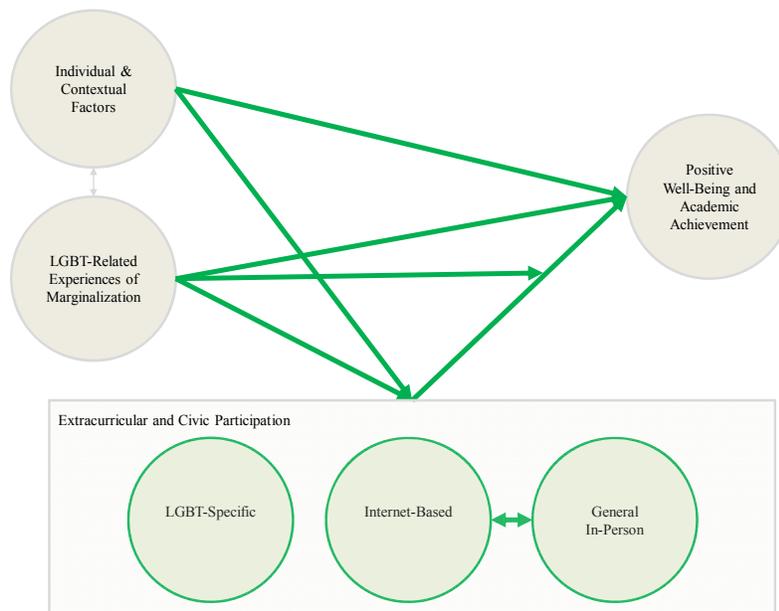
The purpose of this study is to better understand how experiences of marginalization influence participation among LGBT youth in general, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based activities, and whether such participation is associated with academic and psychosocial benefits. A model for more intentionally examining the experiences of LGBT youth within a PYD framework is offered in Figure 4.1. Because scholars have identified the Internet as possible venue for political voice among marginalized populations, noted the utility of LGBT-specific venues for LGBT youth, but also recognized that experiences of marginalization are common for many LGBT youth; this study examines whether outness and victimization are differentially related to general in-person, LGBT-specific in-person, and Internet-based participation. In addition, this model explores the possible unique and independent contributions of these forms of participation to psychosocial well-being and academic achievement, since little research heretofore has examined these activities in the context of one another, and whether their possible benefits are moderated by experiences of marginalization (i.e., victimization). Finally, the model acknowledges the possibility of Internet-based forms of participation in promoting in-person civic participation (i.e., volunteering) among LGBT youth.

Specifically, this manuscript addresses the following questions:

1. Are LGBT-related experiences of marginalization, such as victimization and lack of openness about being LGBT, differentially associated with rates of participation in general in-person, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based extracurricular and civic activities?

2. Are general, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based forms of extracurricular and civic participation associated with positive outcomes, including academic achievement and psychosocial well-being for LGBT youth?
3. Do experiences of victimization moderate the potential positive effects of participation in extracurricular and civic activities on well-being and academic achievement?
4. Is Internet-based civic participation associated with in-person civic participation (i.e., volunteering)?

Figure 4.1.  
*Theoretical Model of Internet-Based, LGBT-Specific, and General Participation in Well-Being among LGBT Youth*



## Methods

This study uses survey data collected as part of the *Teen Health & Technology* study by Harris Interactive Inc. on behalf of Internet Solutions for Kids, the University of New

Hampshire, and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and funded by the National Institutes of Health. The dataset was accessed with permission from Michele Ybarra, Ph.D., of Internet Solutions for Kids; and Joseph G. Kosciw, Ph.D., of GLSEN, who served as the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator on the research project, respectively. The project was approved by the Chesapeake Institutional Review Board (IRB), the University of New Hampshire IRB, and the GLSEN RERC, with approval from the Vanderbilt University IRB.

### **Sample**

The sample was constructed via two parts: an LGBT subsample (n=195 respondents) identified through a nationally representative, stratified sample of youth recruited through the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel to participate in a survey about their online experiences, and 2) an oversample of LGBT youth obtained through referrals from GLSEN (n=1,765 respondents) via targeted online advertisements and emails with the survey link sent through its distribution list. The oversample of LGBT youth was recruited due to the interest in examining specifically the online experiences of LGBT youth. All HPOL respondents were initially weighted to known demographics of 13 to 18 year-olds based on the 2009 Current Population Survey (including on biological sex, school location, and U.S. region). Next, LGBT youth recruited through the oversample (i.a., via GLSEN referrals) were weighted to the LGBT youth recruited through the HPOL panel; such weighting is used to statistically minimize the issue of non-randomness, to align samples so that they can be combined into one dataset, and to allow data to behave as if they are nationally representative (Kann et al., 2011; Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). After it was determined that the demographic weighting alone did not bring GLSEN and HPOL LGBT youth into alignment, a propensity weight was created to adjust for behavioral and attitudinal differences

between the two groups so that GLSEN and HPOL LGBT subsamples each account for 50% of the combined LGBT population sample (see Terhanian & Bremer, 2000). The total LGBT sample includes 1,960 respondents.

### **Data Collection**

All surveys were conducted online. Youth who were eligible and who assented to participate were sent to the first question of the survey. At any time during the survey, participants could stop and save the survey and return to it at a later time. It was emphasized to the participant that this option could be utilized if they no longer felt that the space in which the survey was being completed was private. The mean survey length for participants who completed the survey was 34 minutes.

### **Measures**

Table 4.1 describes each of the variables used in analysis in detail, including individual and contextual factors. *Victimization due to sexual orientation* and *Victimization due to gender expression*, which are commonly experienced by LGBT youth, were measured by separate Likert-type questions. *Out to friends* reflects LGBT identity development in person and may indicate lower levels of LGBT-related marginalization; LGBT youth who are not out, on the other hand, may feel as though they are less accepted in school and community contexts.

Several forms of extracurricular and civic participation are used in this analysis, both as independent and as dependent variables. These measures include *School-based extracurricular participation*, *Organization-based extracurricular participation*, and *Volunteering*; and *GSA* and *LGBT community group access and participation*. Respondents who were missing values on LGBT-specific forms of participation due to non-access to these programs were coded as non-attendance, as non-attendance would preclude compensatory or direct benefits of this form of

participation; access to these forms of participation was included as a control so that these respondents would not be penalized in analysis, however. In addition, Internet-based participation includes two measures: *Online civic participation* was measured using a 4-item, Likert-type scale gauging frequency of participation in various online political activities (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .810$ ); *Text-based civic participation* was measured using a 2-item, Likert-type scale gauging frequency of participation in various political activities via text message (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .841$ ).

Finally, this study uses *Grade point average (GPA)*, *Self-esteem*, and *Depression* as additional dependent variables. GPA was measured by asking respondents whether they made mostly A's, mostly A's and B's, and so on, which was converted into a 4.0 scale. Self-esteem was measured using the 10-item Rosenberg (1989) Self-Esteem Scale and has high internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .921$ ). Depression was measured using the 10-item Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (Eaton, Muntaner, Smith, Tien, & Ybarra, 2004) and also has high internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .923$ ). The original CES-D scale (Radloff, 1977) contained 20 4-point items which, when summed, produced scores ranging from 0 to 60. A modified version of the scale (Eaton et al., 2004) added a fifth response option (*nearly every day for two weeks*), which is recoded here to generate a range comparable to the original version. Since the version of the scale used in this survey contained only ten items, but featured the same dimensions/symptoms as the original scale, scores were doubled, again to align the total possible score to that of the original version.

## **Analysis**

Univariate information for each of the variables used in analysis is presented in Table 4.1. Multivariate models were used to explore the factors that predict various forms of participation,

as well as the relationships among these forms of participation and positive outcomes. This study used a series of hierarchical regressions, all using robust standard errors. OLS regression was used to predict rates of general (*Volunteering, Organization-based extracurricular participation, and School-based extracurricular participation*), LGBT-specific (*GSA participation and LGBT community group participation*), and Internet-based (*Online and Text-based civic participation*) extracurricular and civic participation (Question 1). For each type of participation, individual and contextual factors were entered in step 1 as controls, and *Out to friends* and *Victimization due to sexual orientation and gender expression* as step 2.

This study also used a series of hierarchical OLS regressions to examine whether each form of participation was associated with well-being, including *GPA, Self-esteem, and Depression* (Question 2). In Model 1 for each dependent variable, individual and contextual factors were entered as controls. Model 2 is like Model 1, but also entered Internet-based participation (*Online and Text-based civic participation*). Model 3 is like Model 1, but also entered LGBT-specific participation (*GSA participation and LGBT community group participation*). Model 4 is like Model 1, but also entered general forms of participation (*Volunteering, Organization-based extracurricular participation, and School-based extracurricular participation*). Model 5 included individual and contextual factors and all forms of participation. This process permitted an estimation of the independent contribution of each form of participation to well-being and whether its effects were sustained in the full model. Model 6, which included victimization in step 1 as a baseline and interaction terms between victimization and types of participation in step 5, permitted an assessment of whether benefits of participation are moderated by experiences of victimization (Question 3).

Table 4.1.  
*Description of Variables used in Quantitative Analyses (N=1,910)*

Variable Name	Operationalization	Values	Mean/%	SD
<b><i>Individual and Contextual Factors</i></b>				
<i>Gender identity</i>	What is your gender? Your gender is how you feel inside.  Categorical (1 = possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Female (Ref.) (selected only female as gender) Male (selected only male) Transgender (selected transgender, male-to-female, and/or female-to-male) Other (selected both male and female) (e.g., genderqueer, androgynous).	43.1 35.5 9.6 11.8	
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>	What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself? If you consider yourself of a mixed racial background, with which group do you most closely identify?  Categorical (1= possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	White (Ref.) Black or African American Asian or Pacific Islander Hispanic/Latino Other (Native American/Alaska Native, mixed race but not primarily White, Black, Asian, or Hispanic; other race).	66.1 5.1 3.9 14.9 9.9	
<i>Age (Years)</i>	How old are you?	Range: 13 to 18	16.17	1.43
<i>Evangelical Christian</i>	Would you consider yourself to be a born-again or evangelical Christian?	1 = Yes 0 = No	7.1 92.9	
<i>Family income</i>	Would you say your family's income is lower than, similar to, or higher than the average family's income?  Categorical (1= possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Higher Income (Ref.) Medium Income Lower Income	17.8 57.1 25.1	
<i>Parents' education</i>	What is your mother's highest education? What is your father's highest education?  Responses were dichotomized if one or both parents/guardians had completed college.	1 = College degree or more 0 = Completed only some college or less	53.9 46.1	
<i>School locale</i>	Where is your current or most recent school located?  Categorical (1 = possessing trait; 0 = lacking)	Urban/city area (Ref.) Suburban area or area next to a city Rural/small town area.	33.5 34.0 27.5	

<i>School type</i>	What kind of school were you in during the past school year?	Public school (Ref.) Private/parochial school Homeschooled	89.4 8.4 2.2
<i>Time spent online</i>	Composite measure of the total number of hours respondents spent online per day via computers at school, work, or home, as well as via cell phones or portable or stationary video game consoles.	Categorical (1 = possessing trait; 0 = lacking) 1 = 0-1 hours 2 = 1-2 hours 3 = 2-4 hours 4 = 4-7 hours 5 = more than 7 hours	7.9 9.1 23.3 40.2 19.4
<b>Victimization</b>			
<i>Victimization due to sexual orientation</i>	How often in the past 12 months have others bullied, sexually harassed, or said or done something to hurt you because of your perceived or actual sexual orientation?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	28.1 30.7 17.8 11.9 11.5
<i>Victimization due to gender expression</i>	How often in the past 12 months have others bullied, sexually harassed, or said or done something to hurt you because of how you express your gender (or how traditionally “masculine” or “feminine” you are)?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	48.8 24.5 11.7 8.5 6.5
<b>PYD Components</b>			
<b>Confidence - Identity</b>			
<i>Out to friends in person</i>	How many of your friends your age whom you know in person know about your LGBT identity?	1 = Out to at least one friend in person 0 = Not out to any friends in person	93.7 6.3
	Responses were dichotomized if at least one friend knew about the youth’s LGBT identity.		
<b>Community – Extracurricular &amp; Civic Participation</b>			
<i>Volunteering</i>	In the past 12 months, how often did you volunteer or do unpaid community service?	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	20.9 36.6 26.8 13.1 2.6

<i>Organization-Based Extracurricular Participation</i>	During the 2009-2010 school year, how many different after-school programs or activities did you take part in that were run or organized by someone other than your school (such as the Boys and Girls Club)?	1 = 0 activities/programs	46.6
		2 = 1	28.8
		3 = 2	14.5
		4 = 3	5.3
		5 = 4	2.4
		6 = 7	0.9
		7 = 6 or more activities/programs	1.5
<i>School-Based Extracurricular Participation</i>	During the 2009-2010 school year, how many different after-school programs or activities did you take part in that were run or organized by your school (including sports)?	1 = 0 activities/programs	21.5
		2 = 1	22.0
		3 = 2	23.7
		4 = 3	13.5
		5 = 4	9.1
		6 = 7	4.0
		7 = 6 or more activities/programs	6.2
<i>GSA Participation</i>	How many meetings of your school's GSA did you attend in the past school year?	0 = No access	58.3
		1 = Access	41.7
		1 = never	26.6
		2 = 1-5 times	20.6
		3 = 6-10 times	14.7
		4 = 11-20 times	17.8
<i>LGBT Community Group Participation</i>	In the past 12 months, how often did you attend a program or group for LGBTQ people outside your school?	5 = 21 times or more in the past year	20.4
		0 = No access	38.1
		1 = Access	61.9
		1 = never	55.6
		2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months	22.2
		3 = once or a few times a month	11.4
<i>Online Civic Participation</i>	Respondents were asked how often in the past year they had used the Internet to: 1) participate in or recruit people for a gathering, like a demonstration or protest to support an issue or cause; 2) support or get the word out about an issue or cause; 3) take part in an online community that supports an issue or cause; and 4) write a blog post or make comments on another blog or article about an issue or cause. 4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .810$ .	4 = once or a few times a week	10.3
		5 = everyday or almost every day	0.5
		1 = never	14.4
		2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months	35.9
		3 = once or a few times a month	31.5
		4 = once or a few times a week	15.2

<i>Text-Based Civic Participation</i>	Respondents were asked how often in the past year they had used text messages to: 1) participate in or recruit people for a gathering, like a demonstration or protest to support an issue or cause; or 2) support or get the word out about an issue or cause. 2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .841$ .	1 = never 2 = once or a few times in the past 12 months 3 = once or a few times a month 4 = once or a few times a week 5 = everyday or almost every day	48.8 26.9 15.4 5.9 3.1	
<b>Well-Being</b>				
<i>GPA (grade point average)</i>	Do you make mostly A's, mostly A's and B's, mostly B's, etc?  Responses were converted to a GPA scale.	4.0 = mostly A's 3.5 = mostly A's and B's 3.0 = mostly B's 2.5 = mostly B's and C's 2.0 = mostly C's 1.5 = mostly C's and D's 1.0 = mostly D's 0.5 = mostly D's and lower	3.26	0.73
<i>Self-esteem</i>	Measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale <sup>a</sup> . 10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .921$ .	Range: 1 to 5	3.28	1.01
<i>Depression</i>	Measured using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale <sup>b</sup> (CES-D). 2x the sum of 10 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .923$ .	Range: 0 to 60	25.19	16.59

<sup>a</sup> Rosenberg (1989).

<sup>b</sup> Adapted from CES-D (Eaton et al., 2004).

Finally, this study used hierarchical OLS regression with robust standard errors to examine whether Internet-based forms of participation predict volunteering (Question 4), the closest parallel to the civic participation behaviors measured in online and text forms. Model 1 included individual and contextual factors as controls (step 1) and text-based participation (step 2). Model 2 included individual and contextual factors as controls (step 1) and online participation (step 2). Model 3, the full model, included all individual and contextual variables and both forms of Internet-based participation.

### Results

Descriptive information for individual and contextual factors; experiences of victimization; outness to friends; components of PYD; and well-being is included in Table 4.1. The table includes variable names, operationalizations, possible values, and central tendencies. The sample was slightly more female (43.1%) than male (35.5%); 9.6% of respondents identified as transgender and 11.8% as another gender. Respondents were relatively evenly spread across urban (33.5%), suburban (39.0%), and small town or rural areas (27.5%). Most students attended public schools (89.4%), though 8.4% attended private or religious schools and 2.2% were homeschooled.

The average respondent reported being bullied due to their sexual orientation once or a few times per month ( $M=2.48$ ), but less victimization due to their gender expression ( $M=1.99$ , equivalent to a few times a year). Nine in ten youth (93.7%) youth reported being out to their friends in person. Youth reported moderate to high rates of general, in-person participation. The average respondent reported volunteering around once per week ( $M=2.40$ ) and participating in at least one organization-based extracurricular activity ( $M$  score=1.97) and a couple of school-based activities ( $M$  score=3.04) during the previous year. Respondents participated around once

per month in GSA meetings when GSAs were available ( $M=2.77$ , or around 6-10 times per year) and a few times per year in LGBT community programs/groups ( $M=1.78$ ). In addition, respondents participated in online civic activities around once per month ( $M=2.58$ ) and text-based civic activities once or a few times per year ( $M=2.00$ ). Respondents reported an average GPA of 3.26, self-esteem score of 3.28 (reflecting moderate levels of self-esteem), and depression score of 25.19, above the cutoff of 16 used in many studies to indicate depressive symptomology (Radloff, 1977; Eaton & Kessler, 1981; Eaton et al., 2004), but below that used in other studies of youth (Radloff, 1991).

**Question 1: Are LGBT-related experiences of marginalization, such as victimization and lack of openness about being LGBT, differentially associated with rates of participation in general in-person, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based extracurricular and civic activities?**

**General in-person activities.** As indicated in Table 4.2, marginalization was differentially related to general, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based forms of participation. Experiences of marginalization explained 1.1%-4.2% of the variance in general in-person activities. More victimized youth participated more frequently in general activities that occurred outside the school context, such as and volunteering and organization-based extracurricular activities. Rates of participation in general activities were also related to individual and contextual factors, perhaps in ways related to experiences of marginalization. Youth from lower income families participated less in organization-based extracurricular activities, and youth whose parents' did not have college degrees participated less frequently in all three general in-person activities. Transgender youth exhibited lower rates of extracurricular school-based participation than females and males, and older youth participated more in volunteering and school-based activities.

**LGBT-specific activities.** Experiences of marginalization explained between 4.4% and 9.4% of the variance in LGBT-specific activities. Youth who were more frequently victimized participated more frequently in many of the activities that might occur outside of what are understood to be more traditional or general opportunities in school, including in GSAs, which are school-based but specifically intended to be safe for LGBT students. Youth who were not out participated in LGBT-specific activities much less frequently than youth who were already out. In addition, several individual and contextual factors were predictive of participation in ways that suggest that LGBT-specific venues offer participation opportunities for LGBT youth marginalized by other characteristics. In contrast to patterns for general in-person activities, parents' education and family income were not associated with LGBT-specific forms of participation. Transgender youth also reported higher rates of LGBT community group participation.

**Internet-based activities.** Experiences of marginalization explained 5.5%-11.2% of the variance in Internet-based activities. Youth who were more frequently victimized participated at much higher rates online and via text message, again suggesting their potential utility for more marginalized youth. In contrast to patterns for general in-person activities, parents' education and family income were not associated with Internet-based forms of participation. Rural students and homeschool students participated more frequently in online activities, and younger students more frequently in text-based activities. Nonetheless, youth who were not out participated in online activities much less frequently than youth who were already out.

Table 4.2.

*OLS Regression Predicting General, LGBT-Specific, and Internet-Based Participation (Standardized  $\beta$ 's shown)*

Variable (referent)	Online participation		Text participation		Volunteering		Organization-based Extracurricular Participation		School-Based Extracurricular Participation		GSA Participation		LGBT Community Group Participation	
	Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
Step 1 <i>Individual Factors</i>	.091 F(17, 1892) = 4.50***		.046 F(17, 1892) = 1.91*		.071 F(17, 1892) = 2.99***		.081 F(17, 1892) = 4.36***		.097 F(17, 1892) = 8.88***		.074 F(17, 783) = 2.40**		.122 F(17, 1165) = 5.10***	
Gender identity (female)														
Male	-.046	.040	-.052	.045	-.040	.045	-.031	.042	.027	.043	-.157**	.050	-.040	.042
Transgender	.005	.036	-.059	.040	-.105*	.042	-.054	.039	-.104**	.033	.041	.053	.163***	.050
Other gender	-.014	.034	-.068 <sup>†</sup>	.036	.012	.043	-.038	.025	-.052 <sup>†</sup>	.032	.005	.040	.031	.063
Race/ethnicity (White)														
Black	-.029	.041	.013	.055	.044	.052	.023	.058	-.026	.052	-.022	.069	-.024	.055
Hispanic	-.001	.032	.052	.045	-.055	.044	-.050	.037	-.095**	.035	-.039	.053	-.112*	.046
Asian	.017	.028	.010	.030	.033	.033	.091	.060	.076 <sup>†</sup>	.046	.001	.028	.083*	.041
Other race	-.012	.037	.050	.043	.020	.040	.063	.041	.001	.033	.027	.041	.026	.045
Age	-.063	.041	-.085*	.042	.177***	.042	-.013	.045	.105**	.039	.047	.056	.110**	.040
Evangelical Christian	.014	.040	-.003	.063	.052	.055	.123*	.057	.093*	.045	.060	.048	-.036	.045
Family income (high)														
Lower income	.018	.059	.039	.057	.022	.068	-.176**	.058	-.004	.062	-.112	.104	.033	.069
Medium income	-.019	.055	.042	.049	-.055	.062	-.104 <sup>†</sup>	.054	-.072	.058	-.066	.096	-.005	.061
Parents college educ.	.024	.038	-.007	.039	.086*	.040	.110**	.042	.140***	.041	.013	.060	-.004	.043
Time spent online	.173***	.039	.119**	.044	.001	.045	.038	.040	-.014	.044	-.004	.054	.046	.040
School locale (suburban)														
Rural school	.118**	.041	.088 <sup>†</sup>	.052	.052	.046	.015	.040	.058	.043	.018	.055	-.011	.044
Urban school	.062	.039	.059	.051	.002	.055	.049	.045	.016	.042	.020	.055	.078	.048
School type (public)														
Private School	.084**	.031	.055	.042	.100*	.043	.089**	.030	.041	.029	.077 <sup>†</sup>	.042	.032	.038
Homeschool	.109**	.035	-.002	.038	-.056	.044	.044	.055	-.141***	.018	-.004	.006	-.080***	.020
Step 2 <i>Outness &amp; Victimization</i>	.111 F(3, 1889) = 29.74***		.052 F(3, 1889) = 9.45***		.042 F(3, 1889) = 6.27***		.019 F(3, 1889) = 3.51*		.011 F(3, 1889) = 2.99*		.094 F(3, 780) = 20.14***		.044 F(3, 1162) = 15.03***	
Victimization due to SO	.285***	.052	.230***	.055	.140**	.054	-.002	.058	.073	.062	.227**	.072	.037	.065
Victimization due to GE	.035	.051	-.006	.056	.095 <sup>†</sup>	.057	.128*	.056	.043	.059	.029	.075	.122 <sup>†</sup>	.068
Out to Friends in person	.117**	.039	.051	.053	-.082	.052	-.087	.061	-.053	.041	.160***	.045	.151***	.027

Note: SO = Sexual orientation; GE = Gender expression

<sup>†</sup>p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

**Question 2: Are general, LGBT-specific, and Internet-based forms of extracurricular and civic participation associated with positive outcomes, including academic achievement and psychosocial well-being for LGBT youth?**

**General in-person activities.** Types of participation were differentially associated with indicators of academic achievement and psychosocial well-being. Overall, general in-person participation explained the largest portion of variance in positive outcomes (see Models 4 and 5 in Tables 4.3-4.5), explaining 5.6% of the variance in GPAs, 1.2% in depression, and 0.8% in self-esteem. Extracurricular school-based participation was associated with higher GPAs and self-esteem, and trended toward a relationship with lower depression. Volunteering was associated with higher GPAs but not with psychosocial outcomes, and organization-based extracurricular participation was not associated with well-being outcomes.

**LGBT-specific activities.** Participation in LGBT-specific activities also explained a significant portion of variance in positive outcomes (see Models 3 and 5 in Tables 4.3-4.5), explaining 1.2% of the variance in depression and 1.2% in self-esteem. LGBT program access was associated with higher self-esteem, and GSA access and LGBT program access trended toward a significant relationship with lower depression.

**Internet-based activities.** Online participation was not associated with well-being outcomes overall (see Models 2 and 5 in Tables 4.3-4.5).

**Other factors.** Individual and contextual factors were associated with GPA and psychosocial well-being largely in ways reflecting social privilege: higher income was associated with better psychosocial well-being, and parental education levels with academic achievement. Males reported better psychosocial well-being than females, and transgender youth reported worse well-being. In addition, Asian and Black respondents reported higher GPAs.

Table 4.3.

*OLS Regression Predicting GPA with General, LGBT-Specific, and Internet-Based Participation (Standardized  $\beta$ 's shown)*

Variable (referent)	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$	
	$\beta$	SE										
Step 1 <i>Controls</i>	.072 F(17, 1888) = 4.19***		.084 F(19, 1886) = 4.36***									
Gender identity (female)												
Male	.011	.041	.011	.042	.015	.042	-.002	.040	-.003	.039	.022	.039
Transgender	-.069	.049	-.072	.049	-.067	.049	-.050	.050	-.044	.051	-.018	.051
Other gender	-.010	.025	-.012	.025	-.008	.026	-.006	.025	-.005	.026	.015	.028
Race/ethnicity (White)												
Black	.078 <sup>†</sup>	.042	.080 <sup>†</sup>	.042	.077 <sup>†</sup>	.041	.081 <sup>†</sup>	.043	.077 <sup>†</sup>	.042	.090*	.037
Hispanic	-.047	.046	-.045	.046	-.048	.046	-.026	.045	-.028	.045	-.022	.045
Asian	.112***	.026	.113***	.027	.114***	.027	.099***	.024	.098***	.025	.085**	.025
Other race	-.026	.037	-.024	.038	-.024	.037	-.024	.037	-.020	.038	-.014	.038
Age	-.053	.040	-.052	.041	-.048	.040	-.087*	.039	-.081*	.040	-.099*	.039
Evangelical Christian	-.042	.040	-.043	.041	-.045	.040	-.058	.040	-.066	.042	-.044	.040
Family income (high)												
Lower income	-.007	.059	-.007	.062	-.005	.058	-.026	.056	-.021	.055	-.016	.056
Medium income	-.106*	.053	-.103 <sup>†</sup>	.052	-.106*	.054	-.095*	.047	-.094*	.048	-.093 <sup>†</sup>	.049
Parents college educ.	.119**	.038	.117**	.037	.119**	.038	.087*	.035	.088*	.035	.091**	.034
Time spent online	-.067	.044	-.074 <sup>†</sup>	.044	-.064	.044	-.068	.042	-.058	.043	-.046	.040
School locale (suburban)												
Rural school	.055	.044	.051	.044	.049	.044	.032	.042	.025	.042	.019	.042
Urban school	-.013	.045	-.014	.046	-.012	.046	-.015	.044	-.011	.044	-.021	.042
School type (public)												
Private School	.075*	.034	.074*	.034	.073*	.033	.067 <sup>†</sup>	.036	.063 <sup>†</sup>	.036	.049	.033
Homeschool	.063*	.026	.059*	.025	.063*	.027	.102***	.027	.096***	.027	.088***	.027
Victimization due to SO											-.177***	.052
Victimization due to GE											-.014	.051
Step 2 <i>Internet-Based Part.</i>			.002 F(2, 1886) = .57						.002 F(2, 1886) = .57		.006 F(2, 1884) = 1.94	
Online participation			.050	.047					.011	.046	.064	.045
Text-based participation			-.029	.047					-.043	.048	-.025	.047
Step 3 <i>LGBT-Specific Part.</i>					.002 F(4, 1884) = .34				.002 F(4, 1882) = .31		.003 F(4, 1880) = .50	
GSA access					-.021	.050			-.023	.046	-.054	.044
GSA attendance					.033	.037			-.011	.034	.005	.033
LGBT program access					-.022	.042			-.010	.040	-.019	.037
LGBT program attendance					-.018	.041			-.052	.041	-.035	.038

Step 4 <i>General Part.</i>	.053		.056		.059	
	F(3, 1885) = 18.87***		F(3, 1879) = 21.07***		F(3, 1887) = 21.68***	
Volunteering	.076 <sup>†</sup>	.041	.091*	.042	.093*	.041
Org.-based extracurr. part.	-.067 <sup>†</sup>	.038	-.061 <sup>†</sup>	.037	-.068*	.033
School-based extracurr. part	.227***	.034	.238***	.035	.252***	.034
Step 5 <i>Interactions</i>					.019	
					F(14, 1863) = 1.14	
Online part. X Victim. SO					-.035	.056
Online part. X Victim. GE					.067	.054
Text part. X Victim. SO					.081	.059
Text part. X Victim. GE					.040	.055
GSA attend. X Victim. SO					-.025	.042
GSA attend. X Victim. GE					-.004	.039
LGBT program X Victim. SO					.042	.068
LGBT program X Victim. GE					-.043	.068
Volunteering X Victim. SO					-.099	.061
Volunteering X Victim. GE					.030	.061
Org.-based part. X Victim. SO					-.003	.036
Org.-based part. X Victim. GE					-.026	.038
School-based part. X Victim. SO					.024	.048
School-based part. X Victim. GE					.040	.049

Note: SO = Sexual orientation; GE = Gender expression

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4.4.

*OLS Regression Predicting Depression with General, LGBT-Specific, and Internet-Based Participation (Standardized  $\beta$ 's shown)*

Variable (referent)	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
Step 1 <i>Controls</i>	.136 F(17, 1888) = 5.04***		.136 F(17, 1888) = 5.04***		.136 F(17, 1888) = 5.04***		.136 F(17, 1888) = 5.04***		.136 F(17, 1888) = 5.04***		.190 F(19, 1886) = 6.68***	
Gender identity (female)												
Male	-.182***	.043	-.182***	.043	-.174***	.042	-.180***	.042	-.171***	.041	-.204***	.041
Transgender	.074	.053	.070	.051	.059	.053	.073	.052	.057	.051	.004	.055
Other gender	.051	.040	.049	.039	.048	.038	.046	.038	.045	.036	.021	.035
Race/ethnicity (White)												
Black	.002	.044	.005	.046	-.004	.045	-.006	.049	-.009	.046	-.010	.042
Hispanic	.102*	.051	.103*	.050	.107*	.051	.106*	.049	.107*	.049	.098*	.049
Asian	.072*	.031	.075*	.030	.074*	.032	.066*	.031	.073*	.031	.089**	.032
Other race	.051	.033	.049	.032	.049	.034	.045	.032	.045	.032	.047	.034
Age	-.092*	.046	-.081 <sup>†</sup>	.045	-.077 <sup>†</sup>	.046	-.099*	.046	-.067	.046	-.045	.045
Evangelical Christian	-.062	.046	-.062	.046	-.065	.049	-.073	.044	-.075	.047	-.078	.048
Family income (high)												
Lower income	.170**	.060	.161**	.059	.169**	.058	.180**	.058	.172**	.056	.167**	.055
Medium income	.023	.049	.023	.050	.017	.048	.033	.050	.024	.049	.035	.049
Parents college educ.	.015	.041	.011	.040	.025	.041	.008	.041	.018	.040	.009	.037
Time spent online	.168***	.048	.138**	.047	.174***	.048	.160***	.047	.146**	.047	.139**	.044
School locale (suburban)												
Rural school	-.075	.046	-.094*	.046	-.099*	.046	-.082 <sup>†</sup>	.046	-.121**	.045	-.129**	.044
Urban school	-.028	.047	-.035	.047	-.036	.046	-.033	.045	-.043	.045	-.044	.044
School type (public)												
Private School	-.016	.039	-.022	.040	-.027	.039	-.028	.041	-.041	.040	-.016	.039
Homeschool	-.024	.045	-.034	.045	-.029	.044	-.032	.046	-.048	.045	-.038	.047
Victimization due to SO											.084	.054
Victimization due to GE											.153**	.055
Step 2 <i>Internet-Based Part.</i>			.014 F(2, 1886) = 4.70**						.014 F(2, 1886) = 4.70**		.003 F(2, 1884) = 1.06	
Online participation			.102*	.046					.091 <sup>†</sup>	.047	.046	.046
Text-based participation			.036	.049					.022	.049	.012	.048
Step 3 <i>LGBT-Specific Part.</i>					.012 F(4, 1884) = 2.26 <sup>†</sup>				.012 F(4, 1882) = 2.20 <sup>†</sup>		.008 F(4, 1880) = 1.78	
GSA access					-.082 <sup>†</sup>	.048			-.076 <sup>†</sup>	.046	-.043	.047
GSA attendance					.004	.036			.003	.037	-.016	.038
LGBT program access					-.076 <sup>†</sup>	.044			-.083 <sup>†</sup>	.043	-.071 <sup>†</sup>	.041
LGBT program attendance					.058	.036			.028	.036	.003	.035

Step 4 <i>General Part.</i>	.017		.012		.009		
	F(3, 1885) = 3.90**		F(3, 1879) = 2.47 <sup>†</sup>		F(3, 1877) = 1.78		
Volunteering	.101*	.045	.080 <sup>†</sup>	.046	.068	.043	
Org.-based extracurr. part.	.080 <sup>†</sup>	.045	.071	.049	.063	.047	
School-based extracurr. part	-.073 <sup>†</sup>	.044	-.079 <sup>†</sup>	.044	-.075 <sup>†</sup>	.043	
Step 5 Interactions						.008	
						F(14, 1863) = .53	
Online part. X Victim. SO						.018	.055
Online part. X Victim. GE						-.021	.055
Text part. X Victim. SO						.056	.063
Text part. X Victim. GE						-.055	.057
GSA attend. X Victim. SO						.025	.050
GSA attend. X Victim. GE						-.039	.049
LGBT program X Victim. SO						-.001	.051
LGBT program X Victim. GE						.041	.056
Volunteering X Victim. SO						.029	.065
Volunteering X Victim. GE						-.005	.057
Org.-based part. X Victim. SO						.013	.057
Org.-based part. X Victim. GE						-.046	.045
School-based part. X Victim. SO						-.044	.076
School-based part. X Victim. GE						.089	.060

Note: SO = Sexual orientation; GE = Gender expression

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4.5.

*OLS Regression Predicting Self-Esteem with General, LGBT-Specific, and Internet-Based Participation (Standardized  $\beta$ 's shown)*

Variable (referent)	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
Step 1 <i>Controls</i>	.121 F(17, 1888) = 4.75***		.121 F(17, 1888) = 4.75***		.121 F(17, 1888) = 4.75***		.121 F(17, 1888) = 4.75***		.121 F(17, 1888) = 4.75***		.158 F(19, 1886) = 5.70***	
Gender identity (female)												
Male	.226***	.043	.225***	.043	.216***	.042	.223***	.043	.212***	.043	.234***	.042
Transgender	-.051	.042	-.047	.041	-.039	.045	-.049	.042	-.035	.044	.004	.047
Other gender	-.061	.042	-.058	.041	-.061	.042	-.056	.041	-.054	.040	-.036	.036
Race/ethnicity (White)												
Black	.001	.039	-.002	.036	.008	.040	.007	.039	.010	.040	.020	.037
Hispanic	-.040	.050	-.042	.051	-.044	.050	-.040	.049	-.042	.049	-.030	.048
Asian	-.038	.024	-.040 <sup>†</sup>	.023	-.041 <sup>†</sup>	.023	-.039	.024	-.045 <sup>†</sup>	.023	-.062*	.025
Other race	-.021	.036	-.021	.036	-.022	.037	-.019	.036	-.022	.036	-.019	.037
Age	.073	.045	.067	.044	.056	.046	.078 <sup>†</sup>	.046	.052	.046	.034	.045
Evangelical Christian	.047	.053	.047	.053	.051	.055	.048	.051	.052	.053	.059	.050
Family income (high)												
Lower income	-.156*	.066	-.152*	.065	-.155*	.063	-.157*	.065	-.153*	.063	-.135*	.060
Medium income	-.055	.061	-.058	.061	-.048	.059	-.058	.061	-.051	.060	-.059	.058
Parents college educ.	.023	.040	.027	.039	.014	.038	.022	.040	.014	.038	.034	.036
Time spent online	-.141**	.046	-.122**	.046	-.150***	.046	-.136**	.046	-.130**	.046	-.131**	.042
School locale (suburban)												
Rural school	.019	.045	.031	.046	.044	.045	.022	.045	.057	.045	.074 <sup>†</sup>	.044
Urban school	-.026	.045	-.021	.046	-.020	.045	-.025	.044	-.017	.045	-.021	.044
School type (public)												
Private School	.042	.032	.045	.032	.052	.032	.047	.032	.059 <sup>†</sup>	.033	.034	.031
Homeschool	-.017	.051	-.009	.050	-.014	.051	-.010	.049	.002	.047	-.005	.046
Victimization due to SO											-.123*	.052
Victimization due to GE											-.090 <sup>†</sup>	.053
Step 2 <i>Internet-Based Part.</i>			.006 F(2, 1886) = 1.97						.006 F(2, 1886) = 1.97*		.001 F(2, 1884) = .20	
Online participation			-.083 <sup>†</sup>	.046					-.081 <sup>†</sup>	.047	-.037	.044
Text-based participation			.002	.042					.009	.045	.031	.045
Step 3 <i>LGBT-Specific Part.</i>					.012 F(4, 1884) = 2.00 <sup>†</sup>				.012 F(4, 1882) = 2.18 <sup>†</sup>		.009 F(4, 1880) = 2.03 <sup>†</sup>	
GSA access					.070	.050			.068	.049	.038	.050
GSA attendance					-.011	.037			-.014	.038	.005	.038
LGBT program access					.091*	.044			.095*	.043	.084*	.040
LGBT program attendance					-.038	.037			-.022	.037	.000	.000

Step 4 <i>General Part.</i>	.009		.008		.007	
	F(3, 1885) = 2.49 <sup>†</sup>		F(3, 1879) = 2.04		F(3, 1877) = 1.73	
Volunteering	-.083*	.040	-.072 <sup>†</sup>	.041	-.061	.040
Org.-based extracurr. part.	-.024	.043	-.020	.045	-.017	.044
School-based extracurr. part	.078 <sup>†</sup>	.043	.085*	.043	.082*	.041
Step 5 Interactions	.029					
	F(14, 1863) = 1.36					
Online part. X Victim. SO	-.061 .052					
Online part. X Victim. GE	.096 <sup>†</sup> .050					
Text part. X Victim. SO	-.036 .057					
Text part. X Victim. GE	.077 .048					
GSA attend. X Victim. SO	.030 .042					
GSA attend. X Victim. GE	.001 .054					
LGBT program X Victim. SO	-.023 .051					
LGBT program X Victim. GE	-.044 .050					
Volunteering X Victim. SO	.029 .053					
Volunteering X Victim. GE	-.064 .048					
Org.-based part. X Victim. SO	.060 .063					
Org.-based part. X Victim. GE	-.056 .053					
School-based part. X Victim. SO	-.113* .047					
School-based part. X Victim. GE	.049 .045					

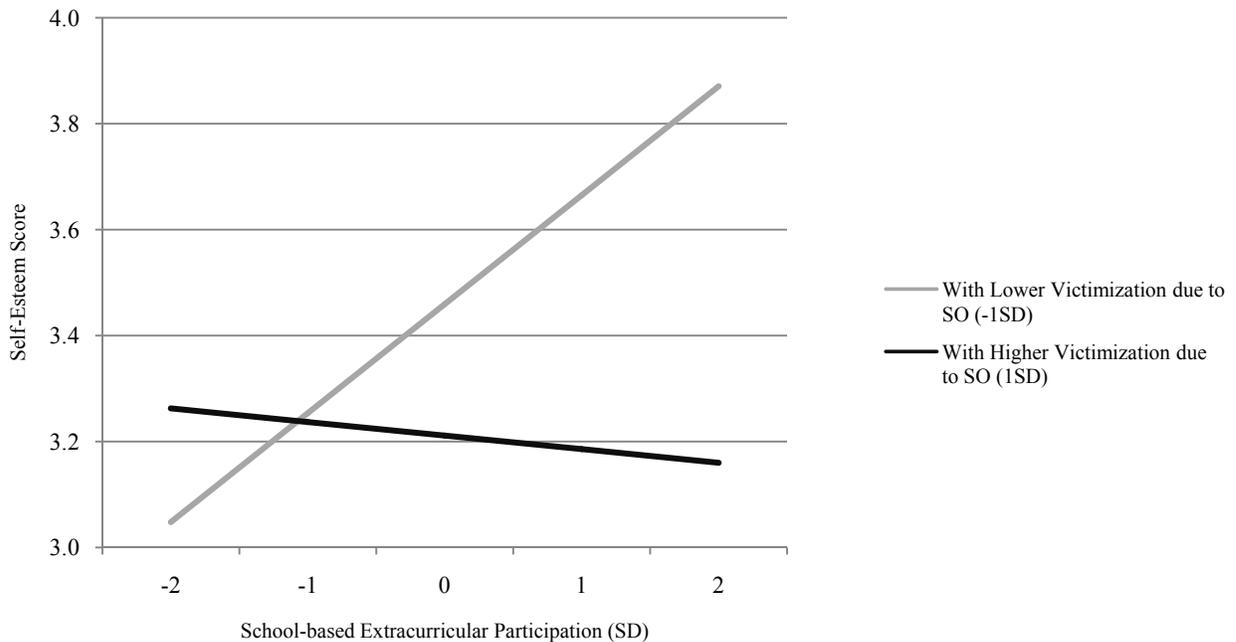
Note: SO = Sexual orientation; GE = Gender expression

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Question 3: Do experiences of victimization moderate the potential positive effects of participation in extracurricular and civic activities on well-being and academic achievement?**

The potential benefits of participation to academic achievement and well-being (see Question 2) were largely unaffected by experiences of marginalization (Model 6 in Tables 4.3-4.5). For none of the three outcomes did the set of interaction terms explain a significant portion of the variance (see Model 6 in Tables 4.2-4.5). Thus, the potential benefits of participation were relatively consistent across severities of victimization. Nonetheless, one interaction term suggests that the benefits of school-based participation may be moderated by experiences of victimization due to sexual orientation (see Figure 4.2), a possibility which should be examined in future research given the overall lack of moderating effects observed here.

Figure 4.2.  
*Self-Esteem by School-Based Extracurricular Participation and Victimization due to Sexual Orientation*



**Question 4: Is Internet-based civic participation associated with in-person civic participation (i.e., volunteering)?**

Online and text-based participation were independently predictive of volunteering. As a set, they explained a substantial portion (8.9%) of the variance in volunteering behavior. Online participation appeared to contribute more strongly to volunteering, as the strength of the  $\beta$  for text-based participation declined substantially when online participation was also include in the model (see Models 2 and 3 in Table 4.6).

Table 4.6.  
*OLS Regression Predicting Volunteering (Standardized  $\beta$ 's shown)*

Variable (referent)	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$		Adj. $\Delta R^2$	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
<b>Step 1 Individual &amp; Contextual Factors.</b>						
	.078		.078		.078	
	F(17, 1900) = 3.14***		F(17, 1900) = 3.14***		F(17, 1900) = 3.14***	
Gender identity (female)						
Male	.015	.045	.016	.047	.016	.045
Transgender	-.059	.037	-.039	.039	-.051	.038
Other gender	.026	.039	.043	.040	.034	.039
Race/ethnicity (White)						
Black	.054	.052	.041	.056	.050	.055
Hispanic	-.053	.046	-.067	.046	-.060	.045
Asian	.046	.035	.045	.036	.048	.036
Other race	.017	.037	.004	.041	.009	.038
Age	.179***	.044	.180***	.045	.187***	.044
Evangelical Christian	.059	.059	.064	.057	.062	.058
Family income (high)						
Lower income	.039	.064	.033	.067	.030	.063
Medium income	-.051	.053	-.072	.058	-.061	.054
Parents college educ.	.078 <sup>†</sup>	.041	.090*	.042	.081*	.040
Time spent online	-.023	.040	.001	.036	-.031	.040
School locale (suburban)						
Rural school	.050	.045	.062	.045	.043	.045
Urban school	-.003	.044	-.001	.057	-.007	.047
School type (public)						
Private School	.058	.046	.064	.047	.057	.047
Homeschool	-.084*	.041	-.054	.047	-.075 <sup>†</sup>	.043
<b>Step 2 Internet-Based Part.</b>						
	.073		.059		.089	
	F(1, 1899) = 50.59***		F(1, 1899) = 25.95***		F(2, 1898) = 26.57***	
Online participation	.284***	.040			.209***	.047
Text-based participation			.249***	.049	.150**	.058

<sup>†</sup>p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that an examination of participation among youth requires attention both to type of activity, as well as to experiences of marginalization. Youth who were more highly victimized because of their sexual orientation or gender expression participated much more frequently online, via text-message, or in GSAs than youth who were less victimized, perhaps because they viewed these spaces as safer. Of note, all of these spaces are found either outside of school, or in special contexts in school specifically designated as safe for LGBT students. Thus, more marginalized LGBT youth may find these spaces safer for participation than general school-based activities. Nonetheless, the constraints of the data here make possible an alternative interpretation that LGBT youth were more highly victimized in these activities precisely because they participated in them. Although scholarship cited in this chapter provides evidence that experiences of marginalization can suppress participation, future research should examine alternative explanations for relationships observed among LGBT youth, as suggested here. In addition, LGBT youth who were not out participated less frequently in GSAs and LGBT community groups, suggesting that they may fail to serve as a resource for some LGBT youth who may experience LGBT-related stigma.

Experiences of marginalization may be related to participation among LGBT youth in other ways as well. Transgender youth participated less frequently than cisgender<sup>5</sup> youth in school-based activities, which may reflect a less hospitable school context for transgender students (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009), but more frequently in LGBT community groups and equally often in Internet-based activities. The findings for rural and homeschooled youth further suggest that a lack of public outlets for participation may encourage online activity: such youth

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<sup>5</sup> The term “cisgender” refers to a person whose gender identity is aligned with their sex assigned at birth (e.g., someone who is not transgender).

participated more frequently online and via text message (see Smith, 1997; Yarbrough, 2004). In addition, those with lower SES status, as indicated by their families' income and parents' education, participated less in organization-based activities than youth from more advantaged households, but equally in Internet-based and LGBT-specific forms of participation. Younger youth participated less frequently in volunteering and school-based activities, but more frequently in text-based activities. These findings stand in contrast to Toomey & Russell (2012), who found school club participation to be largely unassociated with parental education, age, locale, or school type. They suggest that some LGBT youth may experience additional forms of marginalization, and thus have less access to the potential benefits of participation.

Several of these factors were associated with well-being and academic outcomes in patterns that have been observed in the general population, with benefits for higher income (Samaan, 2000) and identifying as male rather than female (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999; Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994) or transgender (Clements-Nolle, Marx, Guzman, & Katz, 2001) among this LGBT sample. The possible benefits to academic achievement of identifying as Asian are well document in the literature (e.g., Kao, 1995). The benefit for Black ethnicity here may reflect the protective potential of ethnic identity (Samaan, 2000). Further research is needed to explore the intersection of race/ethnicity and LGBT identity; limited research suggests that ethnic identity may play a protective factor in sexual health among ethnic minority GB male adolescents, but has not explored academic outcomes (Harper, 2007; O'Donnell, Agronick, San Doval, Duran, Myint-U, & Stueve, 2002).

The results are varied regarding the benefits of participation to psychosocial well-being and academic achievement. LGBT youth with higher levels of school-based extracurricular participation demonstrated higher academic performance and psychosocial well-being, and those

who volunteered more frequently reported higher academic achievement. These results align with research on the benefits of participation among other socially marginalized groups (Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Schmidt et al., 2012). Nonetheless, despite these benefits overall, LGBT youth who experienced higher levels of victimization targeting their sexual orientation may benefit less strongly from school-based participation. Considering that a sizeable number of youth in this study experienced higher levels of victimization, this finding suggests need for continued efforts to provide access to safe school spaces for all students. In addition, organization-based extracurricular and volunteer activities were unrelated to additional benefits to psychosocial well-being.

This chapter also supports the need for an expanded model of extracurricular and civic participation among LGBT youth. Access to an LGBT program was associated with improved self-esteem and trended toward a relationship with lower depression, as did access to a GSA. Rates of participation in LGBT-specific programs did not provide further benefits to well-being, however, a finding which may partially be explained by other school or community factors. In other words, access to these programs may also reflect the presence of positive attitudes of LGBT people in a school or community, which may prove vital to supporting a GSA or community group (Walls, Kane, & Wisnecki, 2010). Because not all schools have GSAs, it may be misleading to speak of participation in them universally. Students in schools without GSAs might be expected to benefit from them were they to exist; those in schools with them may have less need for them due to the very reason that they exist. This study is also the first to examine participation in LGBT-specific activities in the context of other school-based and organization-based extracurricular and volunteer activities. The failure to find significant psychosocial benefits for attendance in LGBT-specific activities may stem from different participation profiles

among youth, or from the possibility that the measures used here may fail to capture facets of LGBT-specific participation that prove beneficial to LGBT youth.

Finally, the results encourage a more holistic view of participation among youth by examining the possible benefits of Internet-based participation. Although such participation was not related directly to academic achievement and well-being, online participation trended toward buffering the negative effects of victimization on self-esteem, a result which should be explored in future research. Perhaps more importantly, Internet-based participation was positively associated with volunteering, indicating that Internet-based participation may not remain siloed, but rather may be associated with broader participation. Of note, volunteer behavior in adolescence has been found to predict civic participation throughout life (Wilson, 2000a; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). In this study, Internet-based forms of participation were more prevalent at younger ages, and volunteering at older ages, which may suggest a pathway from Internet-based participation to in-person participation. Thus, although online and text-based activities were not predictive of psychosocial well-being or academic performance overall, their connections to volunteering indicate that they may promote civic behavior throughout life and thus, their effects on well-being may be long-lasting. This possibility should be explored in future research, including longitudinal work that may help confirm the directionality of the relationships suggested here.

### **Limitations**

One weakness lies arises due to the single-item measurement of marginalization and participation variables. Variance inflation factors indicated that victimization due to sexual orientation and gender expression could be treated as separate independent variables, and this method was preferred given that the hypothetical victimization scale reliability was only

moderate in strength. In addition, aside from online and text-based participation, all participation variables consisted of single-item measures. Although the forms of participation are grouped under larger conceptual categories in the discussion (i.e., Internet-based, LGBT-specific, and general), they were not combined into scales in order to understand differences within each category. Thus, results should be interpreted cautiously as variables are not comprehensive assessments of each form of participation. Future research should employ more robust and stable measures of participation.

In addition, the types of LGBT-specific activities examined here may fail to capture the components that elsewhere have been observed to promote well-being. The LGBT-specific measures in this study capture basic availability and frequency of attendance. Some research suggests that leadership in these activities may be associated with the most optimal outcomes (Russell et al., 2009). In addition, the nature of the activities within these groups may explain the potential impact they have on students (Mayo, 2004; 2011). For instance, clubs in some schools may function primarily to provide a safe space for LGBT students in the school context; other clubs may be able to take a more proactive role and pursue social action, which might be associated with different outcomes for participants compared to clubs with less opportunities for student leadership or action (Griffin, Lee, Waugh, & Beyer, 2004). To that point, the need for *LGBT-specific* might prove less vital than the need for *LGBT-affirming*. Other organizations that provide these opportunities—whether they are marked as LGBT-specific are not—might similarly promote positive outcomes among LGBT youth.

Another weakness in this study is that the online and in-person forms of civic participation examined here are not perfect complements of one another. The online activities measured here are more directly political than the measure for volunteering behavior (i.e., the

survey asked about online information gathering and organizing events, but not about in-person versions of the same activities) and may reflect awareness of and engagement in broader and more abstract civic issues. Volunteering, on the other hand, refers to more local civic engagement and may be more concrete in nature (see Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Stout, 2007; Lenzi Vieno, Pastore, & Santinello, 2012). As such, Internet-based participation and in-person volunteering may be expected to contribute differently to well-being, and the misalignment here may explain the lack of findings for online participation as much as the distinction between online and in-person spaces and activities. Nonetheless, previous studies examining connections between online and in-person civic behavior have employed dissimilar measures in recognition of an imperfect translation between online and in-person activities (e.g., Bakker & deVreese, 2011). In that light, the observed relationship between volunteering and Internet-based participation is in line with prior literature. In addition, this study failed to distinguish between general and LGBT-specific Internet-based forms of participation, preventing a more nuanced analysis here between LGBT-specific online and in-person participation.

An additional concern lies in the relationship between LGBT-specific forms of participation (i.e., GSA participation and LGBT community groups) and the more general forms of volunteer and extracurricular participation examined here. This study did not examine the degree to which LGBT-related activities constituted the totality of LGBT students' extracurricular participation. Variance inflation factors indicated that the general and LGBT-specific forms of participation could be considered together in statistical analysis, however, and future research should explore participation profiles among LGBT youth, as described below.

Finally, this study can be said to be representative only of LGBT youth who have access to the Internet. This study intentionally examines relationships between online and in-person

participation, and the benefits of each when both are considered together. In that not all youth have access to the Internet, the findings regarding in-person forms of participation may not be said to represent all LGBT youth; in other words, findings such as the negative effect for SES may be stronger or weaker among the broader population. This possibility may also help explain why patterns generally observed elsewhere—such as between GSA participation and positive outcomes—may not be observed here, particularly if those resources tend to benefit the most marginalized youth, i.e., those who would not be represented in this study because of such social disadvantage that even computer access is limited. Nevertheless, online methods have been demonstrated to achieve representativeness for broader populations (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004), and many steps were taken to ensure diversity within the sample here. The oversample of LGBT survey participants was weighted to the participants drawn from the nationally representative panel of youth. In addition, numerous large studies to date of LGBT populations have relied on online methods (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2012; Kryzan, 2000; Riggle, Rostosky, & Reedy, 2005). These methods may actually be more inclusive overall of the LGBT population, as traditional methods may bias samples toward persons who are more comfortable identifying as LGBT and potentially have less need for the additional opportunities examined here (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003).

### **Implications for Future Research**

Future research is needed to explore qualitatively some of the themes observed here. For instance, it remains unclear why GSA participation was not statistically related to well-being. It may be possible that such participation is helpful for youth in certain situations or with certain characteristics not examined here. Youth who had no access to them may have benefited from participation in them, were they to exist. In addition, and as noted above, the nature of activities

within LGBT-specific and other venues might be differentially promotive of positive outcomes, depending at least in part on the opportunities they provide to students to develop positive self-identity and self-efficacy. An additional gap in the literature concerns how the composition of LGBT adolescent peer groups influences opportunities for and rates of participation, since these factors may help explain whether and to what degree participation is beneficial.

Although online participation was not associated overall with well-being for youth in this study, it signaled a possible buffering relationship with self-esteem. Future research is needed to examine whether this trend is observed in other samples of LGBT and general population youth, given the large number of interactions tested here. In addition, future research should employ more similar complements of online and in person behavior, and research of LGBT youth should distinguish between LGBT- and non-LGBT forms of participation online, since they could be differentially associated with well-being. One obvious need for research is the assessment of participation profiles including the various forms of participation here. It may be possible that certain forms of participation—such as LGBT-specific or online participation—provide benefits to LGBT youth who do not participate through more general avenues. Finally, longitudinal research is needed for multiple reasons. First, it will help address some of the lingering questions regarding directionality observed in this study, specifically those between victimization and participation, and those between online and in-person participation. Such research will enable the assessment of long-term trajectories and well-being for youth who utilize online spaces for participation, particularly as online participation was associated with volunteer activities, and as such, may promote civic involvement throughout life.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE

#### **Toward a Better Understanding of PYD for LGBT Youth**

This dissertation provides an expanded understanding of LGBT youth development and the application of the PYD framework to a socially marginalized population. Its findings contribute to a PYD model more inclusive of LGBT youth by illustrating the importance of LGBT-related experiences, spaces, and resources to well-being. It also sheds light on how online spaces and resources offer supports to well-being beyond those typically included in models of PYD, perhaps particularly for marginalized populations. Collectively, Chapters 2-4 provide evidence of the conceptual model presented in Chapter 1, suggesting that not only are online and in-person supports related to one another, but they are also related to and determined by both individual and contextual factors. Perhaps more importantly, they independently and collectively contribute to positive development among LGBT youth. Integrated findings from Chapters 2-4 are presented below.

**Individual and contextual factors, as well as experiences of LGBT-related marginalization, influence access to supportive resources and spaces and overall well-being.**

LGBT youth in this study demonstrated varying access to and use of online and in-person resources, depending on differences in their individual and contextual characteristics and experiences of marginalization. Many of these differences within the LGBT youth population reflect differences in need or concerns related to being LGBT. For instance, gay and bisexual male youth, for whom expectations of masculinity may be especially salient or rigid, were more

likely to use the Internet to search for information online on sexuality or sexual attraction than lesbian and bisexual females, for whom gender norms may be interpreted as less rigid. Compared to females, gay and bisexual males were also more likely to have first disclosed their LGBT identities online. Individuals who identify as transgender or another gender were also more likely to have searched for information online, perhaps because of a relative lack of information in person (Chapter 2). Transgender youth also participated more frequently in LGBT community groups, perhaps because they perceived these spaces to be more welcoming, and less frequently in volunteering and school-based extracurricular activities, perhaps because these spaces were perceived as less than welcoming (Chapter 4).

Other individual and contextual factors appeared to influence the use of online spaces and resources, perhaps due to restrictions about being LGBT in person. LGBT youth in rural areas were more likely to have initially disclosed their LGBT identities online and were also more likely to say they were more out online than in person, compared to youth in other areas of the country (Chapter 2). Such findings reflect potential hostility toward LGBT people and issues observed in some rural areas of the country. Rural LGBT youth also participated more frequently in civic activities online than youth in other areas of the country, perhaps because participation was perceived as safer online than in person. Youth who were homeschooled also participated more frequently online, perhaps because of a lack of opportunities for school-based extracurricular participation (Chapter 4).

In addition, age appeared to play a significant role in resource access and use both online and in person. Specifically, younger youth appeared to rely much more heavily on online resources than older youth. Younger youth were more likely to use online resources to learn about sexuality or sexual health, and to say that they were out more online than in person

(Chapter 2). They also used the Internet to engage civically more frequently than older youth. Older youth, on the other hand, participated more frequently in in-person civic and extracurricular activities (Chapter 4). Thus, for LGBT youth, online spaces may serve as important supports particularly at earlier ages, when youth may be beginning to identify as LGBT, and as a gateway to resources in person.

Experiences of being LGBT shaped access to and use of resources in ways that extended beyond demographic characteristics. Experiences of, or perhaps the expectation of, being marginalized were also associated with varying access to and use of online and in-person resources. Because some LGBT youth are reluctant to identify themselves as LGBT in person, Internet-based resources may serve as alternative resources and avenues for development. For instance, youth who were not out in person were more likely to search for information on sexuality and sexual health online, compared to youth who were out in person. Many focus group respondents also said that they relied on online spaces and resources for LGBT identity development because they were fearful of judgment from others if they were to openly identify as LGBT (Chapter 2). In addition, many LGBT youth in this study reported substantial amounts of victimization online and in person, including that targeting their sexual orientation or gender expression specifically. Such youth participated in civic activities online much more frequently than youth who were less victimized (Chapter 4). They also participated more frequently in venues for participation (e.g., in volunteer activities) that were not situated in the school, or places in the school specifically designed to be safe for LGBT students (e.g., GSAs).

Nonetheless, although online and LGBT-specific spaces and resources may be interpreted as safer, or serve as additional opportunities for participation, it is important to note that experiences of marginalization were associated not only with lower access to or use of more

general PYD resources, but also with worse well-being. Youth who were more frequently victimized, either in person or online, exhibited substantially worse well-being than youth who experienced less frequent victimization (Chapters 3-4). Although being open about being LGBT trended toward a relationship with better well-being, it also resulted in significantly higher levels of victimization (Chapter 3). In addition, although school-based participation was beneficial overall, its positive effects were greatly diminished if they were accompanied by higher levels of victimization (Chapter 4).

**Access to and use of online and in-person resources and spaces are interdependent.**

This dissertation indicates clear links between online and in-person resources in ways that suggest that online and spaces expand opportunities for a potentially marginalized subpopulation of youth. As indicated above, a lack of safe opportunities for LGBT identity development in person may prompt reliance on online spaces and resources to learn about and embrace being LGBT. Many youth who felt uncomfortable identifying as LGBT in person felt more comfortable doing so online (Chapter 2).

In addition, forms of online and in-person support were often significantly related to one another, though only weakly in magnitude. For instance, online and in-person contact with other LGBT people demonstrated a weak correlation with one another, as did positive online and in-person social support (Chapter 3). Thus, overall, one was more likely to have positive support online if one also had positive support in person. Yet, the weak magnitude of the relationship suggests that this pattern did not hold for many youth, and that youth with less support in person may have been able to access otherwise lacking support online.

Finally, forms of in-person and online civic participation were related to one another. Although many scholars bemoan the rise of online forms of participation and are skeptical of

their benefits, this study finds that online participation is associated with a higher frequency of volunteer activities in person (Chapter 4). Thus, far from contributing to the decline of civic engagement, online civic participation may even promote similar engagement in person.

**LGBT-specific resources and spaces contribute to positive outcomes among LGBT youth and thus, expand current understandings of PYD.**

This dissertation also indicates that LGBT-specific resources contribute to an expanded model of PYD inclusive of LGBT youth. Many youth in this study indicated the importance of access to LGBT-related information in learning about their LGBT identities. Such information, they said, was either blocked or otherwise not discussed at school, and thus, many turned to online resources to access relevant information (Chapter 2). Accordingly, models of positive youth development must acknowledge the importance of a positive LGBT identity in global self-identity, and seek to promote access to resources that support a positive LGBT identity.

Contact with LGBT peers in person was also associated with better well-being (Chapter 3). Although youth who knew LGBT peers in school were more likely to rate their in-person support as positive, the contribution of contact with LGBT peers to well-being persisted even after accounting for the perceived quality of support in general. Thus, models of PYD relevant to LGBT youth must recognize the unique value of support from other LGBT people.

In addition, access to and use of LGBT-specific opportunities for extracurricular engagement were associated with different experiences among LGBT youth (Chapter 4). Those who were more victimized because of their sexual orientation or gender expression exhibited higher rates of participation in LGBT-specific activities, perhaps because they perceived them to be safer than school-based venues, as suggested above. Nevertheless, youth who were not out

participated in GSAs and LGBT community groups much less frequently than youth who were out, suggesting need to make these spaces even safer for LGBT youth.

It is also important to note that access to LGBT community groups was associated with better-well-being for LGBT youth in this study, regardless of whether or not they participated in them; similar trends were found for GSAs. Such constructs likely tap into the relative supportiveness of an LGBT student's school or community. Thus, a PYD framework inclusive of LGBT youth must acknowledge the importance of LGBT-supportive venues and resources, perhaps especially for youth who feel less comfortable participating in other school-based venues. In addition, such a framework must not discount the important contribution of larger institutional structures to the social environment for LGBT people.

**Online spaces and resources can contribute to well-being among LGBT youth as well, encouraging a fuller understanding of PYD.**

Many youth spoke of the importance of online resources in accessing information on sexuality and sexual health, particularly if such information was not available in their schools, or if they were less comfortable identifying as LGBT in person (Chapter 2). In addition, youth who experienced greater levels of victimization were more likely to participate in online civic activities than less victimized youth (Chapter 4). For youth who experience greater levels of victimization online, positive support specifically from other people online may buffer the negative effects of victimization and promote well-being (Chapter 3). In addition, engagement in online political activities may help buffer the negative effects of victimization on self-esteem, perhaps because such spaces provide an outlet for expression that is otherwise unavailable (Chapter 4), though this finding should be explored further given the number of interactions

examined. Thus, for many LGBT youth, online resources may serve an important function in providing access to needed information, resources, support, and opportunities for expression.

Nevertheless, despite early optimism about the immense potential of online resources, and their apparent utility for youth who feel uncomfortable or are socially marginalized in some way, it appears that there is some need to soften expectations about the benefits of online resources. Overall, online resources were not associated with better well-being. Neither general online support nor contact with other LGBT people online was associated with net improvements to self-esteem or depression (Chapter 3). In addition, neither text-based nor online civic activity was associated with academic achievement, depression, or self-esteem overall (Chapter 4). Thus, online resources and spaces should not be regarded as the solution to all challenges experienced by youth, whether they are related to emergent and changing social patterns or engagement in broader society. Rather, they may serve as a necessary and protective outlet only for some youth, perhaps those who are most marginalized and have few other alternative resources. Nonetheless, they are unlikely to serve as a replacement for in-person resources, which consistently demonstrated the most positive contributions to well-being among LGBT youth in this study. Clearly, more research is warranted in this area.

Together, these findings provide a framework for an expanded understanding of PYD among LGBT youth. Any PYD framework must acknowledge differences in its application with respect to individual and contextual characteristics. For LGBT youth specifically, experiences of LGBT-related marginalization may further influence access to and utility of positive supports to well-being. Accordingly, it may be paramount to explore additional possible resources that contribute to well-being for populations such as LGBT youth. Online spaces and resources, as well as those that are LGBT-specific, may complement those found in person as well as

contribute directly to well-being. Thus, a PYD framework for LGBT youth must acknowledge that identifying as LGBT may result in greater risks to well-being in the form of LGBT-related victimization or stigma, but may be accompanied by additional opportunities for supportive resources as well, whether from online or LGBT-inclusive spaces.

### **Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research**

#### **Implications for Policy**

This dissertation indicates continued needs for policy and advocacy work affecting LGBT youth. LGBT youth reported high levels of victimization online and in person: one third of respondents were bullied at least monthly in person, and one in five at least once per month online. Both forms of victimization were associated with lower well-being. Accordingly, scholars and policymakers have a continued responsibility to translate research findings into more intentional programs to make schools and other spaces safer for LGBT youth.

This study also demonstrates substantial benefits of general, in-person resources for well-being among LGBT youth, suggesting that access to these resources should be increased. Although experiences of victimization were unrelated to school-based extracurricular participation overall (Chapter 4), it may be the case that some youth who experience more victimization feel less welcome in these activities, and thus do not experience the potential benefits of participation. For instance, two in five LGBT students said they had been bullied at least once per month due to their sexual orientation, and three in ten due to their gender expression. Of note, youth who experienced greater victimization targeting their sexual orientation benefited much less from school-based extracurricular participation than youth who experienced lower levels of victimization (Chapter 4), a finding which should be explored in future research given the number of interactions tested here. Increased efforts protect students on

the basis of gender and sexual orientation and to intervene in bullying may help ensure that the possible benefits of participation extend to all youth. In addition, many youth suggested that factors at school, such as blocked access to LGBT-related information, prevented them from learning about LGBT issues. School curricula and resources should be broadened to include information relevant to LGBT youth, to ensure that they have access to the resources necessary to develop a strong LGBT identity and thus, a positive self-identity overall. Finally, LGBT-specific supports, such as GSAs and LGBT community groups, were associated with better well-being among LGBT youth (Chapter 4). Such resources may contribute to a more hospitable climate for LGBT youth, and advocates should support efforts to establish these resources in more places across the country.

### **Implications for Practice**

This dissertation also suggests implications for practitioners working with LGBT youth. Support personnel must become more aware of online as well as in-person components of youth's lives. Many LGBT youth experienced victimization online, which contributed negatively to well-being even beyond victimization experienced in person (Chapter 2). Thus, school support personnel need to be aware of the potential for bullying and its negative effects even after the school day ends, including in online spaces, and to be ready and equipped to address these experiences.

This dissertation also provides a better understanding of online and in-person resources that may support positive development and help practitioners more intentionally meet the needs of LGBT youth. Given that many LGBT youth turn to online spaces for LGBT identity development, social support, and civic participation, personnel may encourage use of online spaces as positive outlets for some LGBT youth. These resources may be especially helpful for

younger LGBT youth, who may initially feel less comfortable identifying as LGBT. LGBT youth who lack relevant information on sexuality or sexual health have access to much more information online, which may help promote the development of a positive LGBT identity (Chapter 2). Practitioners may also encourage some LGBT youth to connect with other LGBT youth online. Findings show that support from people online might help buffer the negative effects of online victimization (Chapter 3), and thus, practitioners may encourage LGBT youth connect to others online if they are experiencing elevated rates of victimization online. Although relying exclusively on online spaces might do little to challenge the social marginalization and negative experiences often found in person, youth-serving personnel should nonetheless recognize the potential utility of online spaces for some LGBT youth, and how Internet-based resources might be integrated into LGBT youth's existing resource networks. In addition, these personnel may find it helpful to refer some youth to online spaces to express themselves politically, perhaps especially younger youth or those who experience greater levels of victimization (Chapter 4). Such venues may provide opportunities for participation and outlets for expression that are less available in person.

Nevertheless, practitioners should exercise caution against referring LGBT youth to online spaces and resources exclusively, as their benefits may not extend universally to the LGBT youth population. Although online support was associated with better well-being for youth who experienced higher levels of victimization online, benefits of general online support and contact with other LGBT- people online were not observed more broadly (Chapter 3). If online support is beneficial for this subgroup of LGBT youth, then a more systematic effort to develop programmatic intervention for some youth may be needed, above and beyond the efforts of individual practitioners across the country. Perhaps more important than such efforts is the

continued need to grant broader access to existing in-person resources. The consistent benefits of in-person resources indicate not necessarily a need to create alternative resources online, but rather the need to continue to strive to make in-person resources more accessible to all youth. Such an effort will likely require a broadly implemented program to better educate the youth population, and even adults, around LGBT issues and LGBT-specific needs.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Finally, future research is needed to continue to explore the themes and findings that arose in this dissertation. The findings suggest a particular need for qualitative research. Of note, online spaces and resources were generally found to be supportive of well-being only in specific circumstances or for a specific subset of the LGBT youth population. For instance, only youth with higher levels of online victimization experienced benefits to well-being from online social support (Chapter 3). In addition, youth with higher levels of victimization participated more frequently online than less victimized youth, and such participation may have buffered the negative effect of victimization on self-esteem (Chapter 4). Thus, future qualitative research should further examine the contexts in which LGBT youth utilize online and traditional resources, as well as the particular and different qualities of these resources. Research should aim to identify the qualities that make them appealing to, and more useful to, some youth, beyond the potential reasons identified here. For instance, researchers should identify the circumstances under which in-person and online forms of social support are relied upon, and why they may be more or less beneficial in some instances than others. This need may be especially important for LGBT youth, who may be more accustomed to compartmentalizing different parts of their lives due to LGBT-related stigma, and for whom differences in resource access and use may be most apparent between online and in-person spaces.

Research is also needed to examine the long-term trajectories of youth who rely on in-person and online, and LGBT-specific and general, resources. For instance, longitudinal research is needed to reveal whether youth who initially disclose their LGBT identities online experience different life outcomes compared to those who initially disclose in person, particularly as youth who initially disclosed online were more likely to say that they continued to be more out online than in person (Chapter 2). Thus, research is needed to assess whether online spaces serve an important function throughout life for such youth, or whether their importance lies primarily during adolescence, after which youth who disclose online and in person look more similar to one another. One might expect that online disclosure helps youth come out earlier, and thus, may promote well-being over the life course. Conversely, if disclosure remains more prominent online than in person for such people even after adolescence, one might expect initial disclosure online to be associated with more internalized stigma and, thus, worse well-being over the life course. Further research could help discern these possible developmental trends associated with greater identity exploration and expression online.

In addition, longitudinal research is needed to explore the effects of civic engagement online and in person. This dissertation reveals high rates of participation both online and in person among LGBT youth (Chapter 4). Younger LGBT youth participated more frequently online than older LGBT youth. Although it is possible that this effect reflects generational differences, it seems more likely that online spaces serve as important outlets for political voice for younger youth, given the narrow age range of this study. Perhaps more importantly, online participation was associated with in-person civic participation in the form of volunteering. A longitudinal examination of civic engagement would help determine whether online participation results in sustained civic engagement throughout life, including participation in the electoral

process. Such an understanding is crucial given the centrality of the Internet and related technologies to current and future generations of youth, whose lives can be understood only with the inclusion of digital forms of communication and expression. Undertaking this kind of research will also contribute toward a more inclusive and representative model of PYD for contemporary youth, including LGBT youth and others who experience social marginalization.

Future research designs should strive toward collecting population-based samples of LGBT youth. Although this dissertation weighted LGBT youth to the general population of youth, and weighted the LGBT oversample equally with the LGBT sample acquired via the larger sample of youth, it is yet unknown whether the composition of LGBT youth mirrors the general composition of youth, and thus, whether the oversample of LGBT youth in this study is more or less representative of LGBT youth than the smaller LGBT sample obtained through the broader sampling frame. For instance, the survey sample used in this study has smaller concentrations of Black and Hispanic youth than is observed for the general youth population. It is difficult to know whether this sample composition reflects lower LGBT identification among youth of color overall; failure to reach LGBT youth of color to participate in the study; or whether the constructs used to recruit the sample, namely self-identification as LGBT, hold more salience with some groups than others, and thus unknowingly bias the sample. Existing research suggests that LGBT people of color may disclose LGBT identities later in life than White LGBT people. Meanwhile, previous large studies of LGBT youth have also generated samples of LGBT youth comparable to the one used here. In addition to concerns regarding racial and ethnic diversity, use of population-based studies in the future will also help avoid the potential weaknesses of Internet-based samples, which run the risk of excluding sub-groups from the LGBT population, such as those without reliable access to the Internet. Nevertheless, this risk is

narrowing as fewer and fewer people lack Internet connections altogether (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010), and many steps were taken to make this sample as diverse and representative as possible.

Finally, the results observed here suggest remaining gaps of the PYD framework in need of examination, such as *Competence*, *Character*, and *Caring and Compassion*, as well as a possible need for the reexamination of the PYD framework for LGBT youth altogether. The lack of buffering effects observed here are congruent with other studies of LGBT youth, indicating that the general PYD framework may transfer incompletely to LGBT youth, and that a modified paradigm may be necessary. Of particular import may be the role of outness; it may contribute to well-being not just directly, but also indirectly, both through increased victimization, as well as through access to and use of resources. Thus, the types of positive supports available to youth, and their potential value to well-being, may be substantially different for youth who are out compared to those who are not. In addition, although noted as a possibility here, future research should examine how these frameworks may function differently for youth with different LGB or T identities. It is likely that experiences of outness about being LGB or T differently affect LGBT youth, and thus, may challenge the practice of considering LGBT youth collectively. As research of LGBT youth continues to expand in scope, there is ample room for the development of new theories of development for LGBT youth which may capture their experiences more successfully and holistically.

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## APPENDIX I

### Focus Group Protocol

The topic of our conversation is how you use the internet.

So, to begin with, think back to when you first started using the internet. Tell me about when you first went online.

- How old were you?
- Where were you?
- Did someone help you? Who?
- What did you think of it at the time?

How has the internet changed since you first went online?

- What is different about your internet use from when you first went online?
- How do you use the internet differently now compared to 2 years ago?

What does “going online” mean to you?

- What are all the ways and devices you use to go online (such as computers, cell phones, gaming systems)? When do you use each of these devices to go online? How do you choose which device to use when you go online How has your use of all these devices changed over the past couple years?
- How much of your online time is spent using a computer vs. something else? Please be specific.

How often are you online now?

- When are you mostly online?

- Where do you usually use the internet?

When you go online are you usually alone in the room/space or with other people?

- Do you go to different sites depending on whether you are alone or with other people?

Why?

- Is privacy important to you when you are online? Why? Which computer or device that you have online access through gives you most privacy?

What do you usually do online? What do you enjoy doing most online?

- Do you find that you have enough time online to do what you want to do?

Do your parents have rules about when and how long you can be on the internet?

- Are your rules about your online time different depending on how you go on the internet - for example, using your phone is not restricted but using your desktop/laptop is?

Do you think the rules about internet use are important? Why/Why not?

- Have your rules changed as you have gotten older? How?
- Do the rules ever stop you from getting the info you need?
- What about internet rules at other places (like at school or a friend's house)? Are they the same as your rules at home?
- And most importantly, do you ever find you need to 'get around' these rules? Tell me about any time you had to get around the rules.
- Think about how you usually get online - and which computer you use. Is there software on that computer that limits the time you spend or what you can do online blocking or filtering software? If so, please tell me about it.

How do you decide how much or what personal information you share online?

- What information is OK to share online? What about photos or videos? How do you share these photos and videos?
- Do you share different types of personal information depending on who has access? For example, what type of information is OK to share in an email/IM vs. on your Facebook profile? What information will you share depending on who has access?

Do you have friends that are exclusively online friends (friends you only talk to online)?

- Do you receive more support from people your age you see in person or those you only know online?
- Do you receive more support from adults you see in person or those you only know online?

Do you behave differently with your online only friends than your other friends? In what ways?

- Are some things easier to do and say online than offline or vice versa? Why?

How, if at all, does your personality (i.e. how you express yourself and how you portray yourself) differ online vs. offline?

- Do you ever pretend to be someone you're not when you're online? If so, tell me about it.

Where do you feel more comfortable being yourself? Online or offline? Why?

Are you more "out" or open about being LGB online or offline? Why?

- How do you come out to people online and how do you decide when to do that? How is it different (or not different) than coming out offline/in person?

What is your favorite website? Why do you like that site?

- What do you do on that site?
- What are your friends' favorite sites?

Let's talk specifically about health information you look up online (such as sexual health, depression, diseases, etc.)

- What kind of health info do you look for online? What is most valuable to you? How helpful is it to you to look up health information online?
- Do you usually find the health information you were hoping to find? Has there ever been a time when you weren't able to find the information you were looking for? If so, what were you looking for that you couldn't find?
- What are the health topics that are addressed well online? How do you know what health information you can trust?

What are the main social networking sites that you use? Are there differences between the sites in regard to:

- The other people who use them?
- What you use the sites for?
- What you are allowed to do?
- Compared to last year, how has your use of social networking sites changed? For example, are you updating your profile more often? Are you using the same sites as you did a year ago?

How do you connect with your friends using technology - e-mail, texting, IM, social networking sites, anything else....? Make a full list of all the ways you connect with your friends.

- What's the best way to connect with your friends? Do you use different technologies depending on what you want to talk about?
- Where do you go online to connect with new people?

- How do you decide which of those methods to use to communicate with friends? For example, Are there certain times of day you use one method? Are there friends you use one way with, and another with another friend? Thanks!
- Is texting an online activity to you? Why or why not?

Have you used webcams online? How often do you use it?

- Who do you communicate with using a webcam?
- Do you stream your webcam? Do you upload video from webcam?

Let's talk about dating and relationships online.

- Do you know of people your age who have found a boyfriend or girlfriend online? Tell me the story...

What advice would you give about meeting people online?

- What do you think are the “do’s and don’ts” about getting to know someone online?
- To be friends?
- For a romantic relationship?
- For a sexual relationship?

Tell me about the difference between romantic relationships online versus in-person. Are there differences between online romantic relationships vs. in-person relationships? What are they?

- Are the types of people you meet online for a romantic relationship the same as you would meet in-person?

Sometimes people get to know someone online and then meet in-person/offline. Have you or any of your friends met someone online that you then met offline?

- Why did you or your friend decide to meet this person offline?
- Did you or your friend speak to them on the phone before meeting in person?

- Did you or your friend meet this person online with the intention of meeting them offline, or did it just happen?
- Can you tell me what happened? How did you feel? Do you or does your friend still see the person?
- Are there certain sites or types of sites that people are more likely to be able to use to meet people offline? What are they? Do people your age use them?

Now let's switch gears a bit. Do you think different types of people use the internet differently?

- Do you think 13-15 year olds use the internet differently from older teens? Please give some examples.
- Do you think girls and boys use the internet differently? Please give some examples.
- What are some sites that you think are more for boys your age? What are some sites that you think are more for girls your age?
- Do you know of sites that are only for girls or only for boys?

Do you think people your age who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) use the internet differently from other people your age? How do they use it differently?

- In what ways does (or can) the internet help you and other LGB's your age?
- Please tell me all about your thoughts behind your answer...

Do you use the internet to get LGB-specific information, for example about sexuality, health, legal issues, etc.? If so, can you please tell me all about your answer: Where you go, which sites, what kind of information you look for... All the details.

- How does this information help you?
- If yes, do you usually go to sites for information or to find people to talk with?

Have you used the internet to understand your feelings of sexual attraction?

- How did you use the internet for this? Did you tell people and chat or just read and look at things? How was it helpful for you? How was it unhelpful for you?

Have you ever felt unsafe or uncomfortable when you are online? Have your friends ever told you about feeling unsafe online? How safe do you feel when you are online? How does that compare with how safe you feel offline?

- Please tell me all about any experience you may have had or heard about.

Is there anything you do to keep yourself safe online? If so, what do you do... or not do? If not... why not?

- What advice would you give to someone about how to be safe online?
- Please be as detailed as possible.

Do you think the internet is equally safe for LGB teens and non-LGB teens? Why or why not?

- Have you or a friend ever been contacted by someone online that you don't know because you (or they) are LGB? What was it about? Why did they contact you? How did they know you were LGB?

Have you or an LGB friend ever been harassed or bullied online for being LGB?

- What happened?
- Was it from someone you knew or from a complete stranger?
- How did you feel about it?

Have you seen things online that disturbed you?

- What were they? What did you do about it?

Have you or a friend ever been propositioned for sex online by an adult.

- How did you feel? How did they find you?
- If not, is that something you ever think or worry about? Why or why not?

Are there things that you have done online that you regret?

- What wouldn't you do again that you have done before online?

Now think about the internet as a tool for activism. Have you used the internet for activism – to make positive changes in your community and beyond?

- If yes, please tell me about your experiences.
- If no, tell me your thoughts on why you have not used it that way? Would you like to?
- In your opinion, how effective is the internet as a tool for activism?

Have you used the internet to look for a community of people who are like you or share similar interests?

- Have you found communities like that online?
- Please tell me all about your experiences.

In what ways has the internet increased your sense of connection with people offline?

- In what ways has the internet interfered with your sense of connection to people offline?
- Please be specific, and give examples.

What is the best thing about the internet for you?

- What is the worst thing about the internet for you?

How would your life change if you didn't have internet access?

- Would it be better or worse?
- What would you do without the internet?

As you may have guessed, I am not a teen. :) What have I forgotten to ask you about being a teen and using the internet? What do you think I REALLY need to know to completely understand your feelings about the internet?

- What do you think are some of the biggest benefits teens get from the internet?

- What are some of the biggest drawbacks?

## APPENDIX II

### Survey Instrument

#### **HARRIS INTERACTIVE**

**J37008**

**Title for landing page:** Internet, Health and You

**Number of Response Equivalents (REs):** Average length is 200 REs

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#### **SUBJECTS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

INTRODUCTION

PERMISSION

#### CONTEXT: SCHOOL AND FAMILY LIFE

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

CONTEXT: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

CONTEXT: SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

CONTEXT: PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS / FAMILY CONFLICT

#### INTERNET BENEFITS

BENEFITS: SOCIAL SUPPORT

BENEFITS: POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

BENEFITS: HEALTH INFORMATION

#### VICTIMIZATION

CONTEXT: PERSONAL SAFETY

THREATS: VICTIMIZATION

BENEFITS: EXPLORATION OF SEXUAL ATTRACTION

THREATS: SEXUAL RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR / OFFLINE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR (CONTEXT)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTIFICATION

#### CONTEXT: MENTAL HEALTH

CONTEXT: DEPRESSION

CONTEXT: SUBSTANCE USE

CONTEXT: SELF ESTEEM

INTERNET USE

IRB

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**LANDING PAGE TEXT FOR GLSEN RESPONDENTS ONLY:**

**“Internet, Health, and You” Survey**

- If you are [starting the survey for the first time](#), please click on the “Next” button below.
- If you are [re-entering the survey](#), please do the following:
  - o In the text box, type in the unique ID number that you were given when you stopped doing the survey
  - o Click the “Next” button below.
- Unique ID number if re-entering: [INSERT TEXT BOX]

**[DISPLAY AS HYPERLINK] [Forgot your password?](#)**

**IF ABOVE LINK IS CLICKED, DISPLAY POP-UP WINDOW THAT SAYS:** Thank you for your interest in completing this survey. Unfortunately, to protect your privacy, we are unable to provide you with the password that will allow you to re-enter your survey. If you chose, you may start the survey again from the beginning.

**SECTION 600: SAMPLE PRELOAD AND SCREENING QUESTIONS**

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: PLEASE COORDINATE WITH THE SAMPLE PROGRAMMER ABOUT THE PROCESSING OF ANY PRELOADED VARIABLES INDICATED IN THIS SECTION.]

**[STANDARD SAMPLE VARIABLE FOR ALL SURVEYS DO NOT CHANGE CODE LIST]**

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q75** PRELOAD – SAMPLE SUPPLIER (QV7/ICW Field 23)

- 1 HPOL
- 998 General Client Sample [GLSEN sample]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q5** PRELOAD – INCENTIVE ID (QV8/ICW Field 25)

[NUMERIC 5 DIGIT]  
 [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q23** HIDDEN QUESTION – DETERMINE CODE FROM Q5

- 1 HPOL
- 2 Harris/Decima Panel

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q698** Survey Completed Cookie detection

- 0 No cookie present
- 1 Cookie present

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q2017** HIDDEN QUESTION PRELOAD – SAMPLE SOURCE (QV9)

- 1 13-18 year old general HPOL sample
- 2 HPOL parents of 13-17 year olds
- 3 GLSEN sample
- 4 HPOL parents not targeted by age
- 5 HPOL gen pop adults

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q148** INITIAL SURVEY MODE

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: CAPTURE INITIAL MODE OF SURVEY]

- 1 WEB
- 2 CATI-COW

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q149** FINAL SURVEY MODE

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: CAPTURE CURRENT/FINAL MODE OF SURVEY]

- 1 WEB
- 2 CATI-COW

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q258** Welcome! First, we would like to ask a few questions about you. What country do you currently live in?

[PROGRAMMER: DISPLAY CODE 244 (USA) FIRST THEN DISPLAY ALL OTHER CODES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]  
 [DISPLAY RESPONSES IN TWO COLUMNS GOING DOWN.]  
 [NON-MANDATORY RESPONSE]

14	Australia
15	Austria
24	Belgium
42	Canada
60	Denmark
76	France
85	Germany
89	Greece
123	Italy
286	Ireland (Republic of Ireland)
168	Netherlands
171	New Zealand
179	Norway
190	Portugal
215	Spain
223	Sweden
224	Switzerland
244	United States of America
266	England
267	Scotland
268	Wales
285	Northern Ireland
996	Other country

[PN: If no response is entered, please show the following error message once: **We did not receive your answer for this question. You do not need to answer any question you do not want to. A valid answer to this question is required in order to take part in this survey. Please enter your response or click the forward arrow below to continue.**

If a respondent clicks the forward arrow after the error message appears and there is still no response for the question, please direct them to the end page]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q670** How old are you?

/\_/\_/ years old [Range: 0-99. NON-MANDATORY]

[PN: If no response is entered, please show the following error message once: **We did not receive your answer for this question. You do not need to answer any question you do not want to. A valid answer to this question is required in order to take part in this survey. Please enter your response or click the forward arrow below to continue.**

If a respondent clicks the forward arrow after the error message appears and there is still no response for the question, please direct them to the end page]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q280** [HIDDEN QUESTION – HOLD FINAL AGE BASED ON Q670 FOR SURVEY LOGIC AND/OR QUOTAS]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q675** What grade were you in on April 1, 2010?

[SINGLE RESPONSE. NON-MANDATORY]

- 1 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or below
- 2 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 3 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- 4 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- 5 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- 6 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- 7 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- 8 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- 9 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- 10 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- 11 I was attending a trade/vocational school
- 12 I was attending college
- 13 I was not in school

[PN: If no response is entered, please show the following error message once: **We did not receive your answer for this question. You do not need to answer any question you do not want to. A valid answer to this question is required in order to take part in this survey. Please enter your response or click the forward arrow below to continue.**]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS IN TRADE/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OR NOT IN SCHOOL (Q675/11,13)**

**Q677** What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- 1 Less than high school
- 2 Completed some high school
- 3 Completed high school
- 4 Completed some college
- 70 Completed junior college (Associate (AA) degree)
- 5 Completed college (BA or BS degree)
- 6 Completed some graduate school
- 7 Completed graduate school (for example, MA, PhD, MD, etc)
- 8 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL US RESPONDENTS (Q264/244)**

**Q474** Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin, such as Latin American, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

- 1 Yes, of Hispanic origin
- 2 No, not of Hispanic origin
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL US OR CANADIAN RESPONDENTS (Q264/244 OR 42)**

**Q480** Do you consider yourself...?

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: IF U.S. (Q264/244) PRESENT CODES 1-4,8,5,6,94.]

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: IF CANADIAN (Q264/42) PRESENT CODES 1,2,9-17,5,6,94.]

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: DISPLAY IN ONE COLUMN.]

[DISPLAY CODES 5, 6, AND 94 IN ORDER AS LAST THREE CATEGORIES.]

- 1 White
- 2 Black
- 3 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 4 Native American or Alaskan Native
- 5 Mixed Race [ANCHOR]
- 6 Some other race [ANCHOR]
- 7 Hispanic
- 8 African American
- 9 First Nation/Native Canadian
- 10 South Asian
- 12 Chinese
- 13 Korean
- 14 Japanese
- 15 Other Southeast Asian
- 16 Filipino
- 17 Arab/West Asian
- 94 Do not want to answer

**BASE: OTHER RACE**

**Q482** What other race do you consider yourself?

[NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX]

**BASE: U.S. RESIDENT AND MIXED RACIAL BACKGROUND**

**Q484** You said that you consider yourself of a mixed racial background. Which of the following racial groups do you most closely identify? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: IF U.S. (Q264/244) PRESENT CODES 1-4,8,6,94.]

- 1 White
- 2 Black
- 3 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 4 Native American or Alaskan native
- 5 Mixed Race
- 6 Some other race
- 7 Hispanic
- 8 African American
- 9 First Nation/Native Canadian
- 10 South Asian
- 12 Chinese
- 13 Korean
- 14 Japanese
- 15 Other Southeast Asian
- 16 Filipino
- 17 Arab/West Asian
- 94 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR][EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: ETHNICITY IS TO BE ASKED AND HAVE ETHNIC CODES**

**Q485** [HIDDEN COMPUTE QUESTION]

[IF ANSWERED HISPANIC (Q474/1) ANSWER TO Q485 IS CODE 7, OTHERWISE Q485=Q480.]

- 1 White
- 2 Black
- 3 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 4 Native American or Alaskan native
- 5 Mixed racial background
- 6 Other race
- 7 Hispanic
- 8 African American
- 9 First Nation/Native Canadian
- 10 South Asian
- 12 Chinese
- 13 Korean
- 14 Japanese
- 15 Other Southeast Asian
- 16 Filipino
- 17 Arab/West Asian
- 94 Do not want to answer

[PN: SHOW THE FOLLOWING 2 QUESTIONS ON THE SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q2019** What is your biological [sex](#)?

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q2020** What is your [gender](#)? Your gender is how you feel inside and can be the same or different than the answer you gave above. Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Other, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX]
- 5 Do not want to answer

PN: ADD AS A HYPERLINK AFTER THESE TWO QUESTIONS (similar to what we do at Q474 about race/ethnicity): Why are we asking about both sex and gender?

SHOW FOLLOWING TEXT IN SMALL POP-UP WINDOW IF ABOVE LINK IS CLICKED:

- [Biological sex](#) is determined by our chromosomes, our hormones and reproductive organs. Typically, we are assigned the sex of male or female at birth.
- [Gender](#) refers to cultural values (roles, behaviors, activities and attributes) that a society associates with males and females. Gender also refers to how one defines oneself. For many people, there isn't a difference between these terms, but for some people, their gender is different from their biological sex.

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q2018** [HIDDEN QUESTION TO DETERMINE SEX QUOTAS]

Get code 1 if Q2019/1  
 Get code 2 if Q2019/2  
 If code Q2019/3, randomly assign code 1 or 2

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q2021** [HIDDEN QUESTION TO DETERMINE BASE OF Q2025]

Get code 1 if: Q2019/1 and (Q2020/2,4 and Q2020/NE 3); OR  
 Q2019/2 and (Q2020/1,4 and Q2020/NE 3); OR  
 Q2019/3 and Q2020/NE 3

All others, get code 2

- 1 Ask Q2025
- 2 Do not ask Q2025

**BASE: GENDER AND SEX QUESTION DIFFERENT AND NOT TRANSGENDER (Q2021/1)**

**Q2025** Are you of transgender experience?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Do not know
- 4. Do not want to answer

[PN: DO NOT DISABLE BACK BUTTON. ALLOW RESPONDENT TO RETURN TO PREVIOUS SCREEN]

**BASE: GLSEN SAMPLE (Q75/998)**

**Q2905** How did you first find out about this survey?

- 1 I received an email directly from GLSEN
- 2 I saw a link or a pop-up on the GLSEN website
- 3 I saw an ad on Facebook
- 4 Through another organization (I received an email or saw something on a website or blog)
- 5 Through a friend
- 6 Some other way

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q2026** [HIDDEN QUESTION TO DETERMINE BASE OF LGBTQ QUESTIONS]

Get code 1 if: Q2020/3 OR Q2025/1

All others, get code 2

- 1 Ask LGBT follow-ups
- 2 Only ask LGBT follow-ups if L, G, B or Q

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q650** [HIDDEN QUESTION TO DETERMINE INITIAL QUALIFICATION]

Qualified if:

- Age 13-18 (Q280/13-18)
- Live in the U.S. (Q264/244)
- Grade 5 or higher (Q675/3-13) and responded to Q675 (Q675 NE BLANK)

1 Initially qualified [GET IF ALL 3 CONDITIONS ABOVE ARE MET]

2 Not initially qualified [ALL OTHERS]

[PN: IF NOT INITIALLY QUALIFIED, JUMP TO Q318 AND ANSWER Q326, Q444, Q446, Q440, Q710, Q815, Q2505]

<b>SECTION 600: PERMISSION</b>
--------------------------------

**BASE: INITIALLY QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q650/1)****Q600**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: THE INTERNET, HEALTH, AND YOUPURPOSE OF THE ASSENT FORM: TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE SURVEYPURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOUNG PEOPLE USE AND EXPERIENCE THE ONLINE WORLDGROUP CONDUCTING DATA COLLECTION: HARRIS INTERACTIVE

You are one of about 4,200 young people who we have asked to take the “Internet, Health, and You” survey. This research study will help us learn how young people are using the Internet to connect with other people and learn new information. We want to ask about your experiences online - good and bad - as well as your experiences and things you do offline. This page explains this research study. Please read it carefully.

The survey will take you about 25 minutes to finish. It is important that you fill out the survey by yourself. You need to be in a place that is private and where you feel safe. No one should be able to see your answers. No one should tell you what your answers should be.

Your answers are important. They help us learn the good and bad things that youth are experiencing online.

Taking this survey will not help or hurt you. Some questions might make you upset or feel uncomfortable. You should know that the survey asks you about things you may have seen or done that might be hard to talk about including sexual things you may have seen, talked about with others, or done yourself. There also are questions about bullying, using cigarettes and alcohol, and depression.

**You do not have to answer any question you do not want to for any reason.**

We will not share your answers with your parents or anyone else outside of the research team. Your answers will be kept in a safe place.

If you have questions about the study, please contact:

- Dr. Michele Ybarra at 1-877-302-6858 or [Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org](mailto:Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org).

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or if you feel that you have been harmed in any way by taking part in this study, please contact:

- By mail:

Study Subject Adviser  
Chesapeake Research Review, Inc.  
7063 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 110  
Columbia, MD 21046

- or call collect: (410) 884-2900
- or by email: [adviser@irbinfo.com](mailto:adviser@irbinfo.com)

Please reference the following number when contacting the Study Subject Adviser: Pro00001793

If you feel very sad or upset after taking this survey, please talk to someone. You can call the National Mental Health Information Center at: 1-800-789-2647 for more information.

You can choose to be in the study or you can choose not to be in the study at any time. It will not hurt you if you choose not to be in the study.

Now, please print out this page with the contact information or write down the contact information.

By selecting “Yes” below, you agree to have your survey answers used for research.

If you choose not to take the survey, we have just a few more questions for you.

Would you like to take this survey?

- 1 Yes, I want to take the survey.
- 2 No, I do not want to take the survey.

**BASE: DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE (Q600/2)**

**Q605** We thank you for your time and respect your decision not to participate in the survey. To help us design future surveys, please tell us why you decided not to take the survey.

[LARGE NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX]

[PN: ADD ERROR/WARNING MESSAGE IF TEXT BOX IS LEFT BLANK: “We did not receive your answer for this question. Please enter your response, or click the forward arrow below to continue.” AFTER ONE ERROR MESSAGE/WARNING, ALLOW RESPONDENT TO CONTINUE]

[PN: IF DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE, ASK WEIGHTING DEMOS (Q318, Q326, Q444, Q446, Q440 THEN SEND TO END PAGE)]

**BASE: INITIALLY QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q650/1)**

**Q610** [HIDDEN QUESTION TO DETERMINE FINAL QUALIFICATION]

- 1 Fully qualified [YES TO ASSENT (Q600/1)]
- 2 Not fully qualified [NO TO ASSENT (Q600/2)]

**BASE: ALL INITIALLY QUALIFIED AND ASSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q610/1 AND Q75/1)**

**Q613** RESPONDENT QUALIFICATION STATUS AND QUOTA QUESTION (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)

- 1 HPOL Total Qualified (Q75/1) [QUOTA=3500]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q613/1)**

**Q614** QUOTA CHECK QUESTION (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)

- 1 Quota cell met
- 2 Quota cell not met
- 3 Quota cell not found

**BASE: ALL INITIALLY QUALIFIED AND ASSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q610/1)****Q611** RESPONDENT QUALIFICATION STATUS AND QUOTA QUESTION (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)

- 1 Client Sample (GLSEN) Total Qualified (Q75/998) [QUOTA=9999]
- 2 HPOL 13-14 Year Old Male – White/Other (Q75/1 AND Q280/13-14 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/NE 2,7,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 3 HPOL 13-14 Year Old Male – Black (Q75/1 AND Q280/13-14 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/2,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 4 HPOL 13-14 Year Old Male – Hispanic (Q75/1 AND Q280/13-14 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/7) [QUOTA=9999]
- 5 HPOL 13-14 Year Old Female – White/Other (Q75/1 AND Q280/13-14 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/ NE 2,7,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 6 HPOL 13-14 Year Old Female – Black (Q75/1 AND Q280/13-14 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/2,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 7 HPOL 13-14 Year Old Female – Hispanic (Q75/1 AND Q280/13-14 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/7) [QUOTA=9999]
- 8 HPOL 15-16 Year Old Male – White/Other (Q75/1 AND Q280/15-16 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/ NE 2,7,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 9 HPOL 15-16 Year Old Male – Black (Q75/1 AND Q280/15-16 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/2,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 10 HPOL 15-16 Year Old Male – Hispanic (Q75/1 AND Q280/15-16 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/7) [QUOTA=9999]
- 11 HPOL 15-16 Year Old Female – White/Other (Q75/1 AND Q280/15-16 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/ NE 2,7,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 12 HPOL 15-16 Year Old Female – Black (Q75/1 AND Q280/15-16 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/2,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 13 HPOL 15-16 Year Old Female – Hispanic (Q75/1 AND Q280/15-16 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/7) [QUOTA=9999]
- 14 HPOL 17-18 Year Old Male – White/Other (Q75/1 AND Q280/17-18 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/ NE 2,7,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 15 HPOL 17-18 Year Old Male – Black (Q75/1 AND Q280/17-18 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/2,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 16 HPOL 17-18 Year Old Male – Hispanic (Q75/1 AND Q280/17-18 AND Q2018/1 AND Q485/7) [QUOTA=9999]
- 17 HPOL 17-18 Year Old Female – White/Other (Q75/1 AND Q280/17-18 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/ NE 2,7,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 18 HPOL 17-18 Year Old Female – Black (Q75/1 AND Q280/17-18 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/2,8) [QUOTA=9999]
- 19 HPOL 17-18 Year Old Female – Hispanic (Q75/1 AND Q280/17-18 AND Q2018/2 AND Q485/7) [QUOTA=9999]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q611/1-19)****Q612** QUOTA CHECK QUESTION (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)

- 1 Quota cell met
- 2 Quota cell not met
- 3 Quota cell not found

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

- Q98** END OF SCREENER DISPOSITION STATUS OF RESPONDENT  
[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]
- 29 OVER QUOTA (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 41 SCREENER REFUSAL #1 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 42 SCREENER REFUSAL #2 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 43 SCREENER REFUSAL #3 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 44 SCREENER REFUSAL #4 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 45 SCREENER REFUSAL #5 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 61 NOT QUALIFIED #1 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 62 NOT QUALIFIED #2 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 63 NOT QUALIFIED #3 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 64 NOT QUALIFIED #4 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 65 NOT QUALIFIED #5 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 66 NOT QUALIFIED #6 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 67 NOT QUALIFIED #7 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 68 NOT QUALIFIED #8 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 69 NOT QUALIFIED #9 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 70 NOT QUALIFIED #10 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
  - 999 SCREENER COMPLETE (INSERT DEFINITION THAT MATCHES Q99/1 BELOW)

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

- Q99** SCREENER QUALIFICATION IDENTIFICATION QUESTION (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)
- 1 SCREENER QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS, QUOTA OPEN (Q614/2 OR 3 AND Q612/2 OR 3)
  - 2 PARTIALLY SCREENER QUALIFIED, QUOTA OPEN
  - 3 SCREENER QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS, QUOTA CLOSED (Q614/1 OR Q612/1)
  - 4 PARTIALLY SCREENER QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS, QUOTA CLOSED
  - 5 OVERALL QUOTA CLOSED
  - 6 NOT SCREENER QUALIFIED [ALL OTHERS]

**BASE: HPOL RESPONDENTS (Q75/1)**

- Q77** HIPOINTS VALUE (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: GET 77/2 FOR QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1 AND Q2017/1)]

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: GET Q77/1 FOR ALL OTHER DIRECT TEEN RESPONDENTS (THOSE WHO DON'T QUALIFY OR DON'T CONSENT (Q2017/1 AND (Q650/2 OR Q600/2).]

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: TEEN RECRUITS THROUGH PARENTS (Q2017/2,4,5) DO NOT QUALIFY FOR HIPOINTS; GET Q77/3]

- 1 30
- 2 100
- 3 0

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q615** It is very important that you take the survey in a place where you have privacy. We want to make sure that you feel comfortable to answer the questions honestly. Are you in a space that you feel is private right now?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q620** Are you somewhere you feel comfortable answering questions honestly?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q625** [IF NO TO EITHER OF THE PREVIOUS 2 QUESTIONS (Q615/2 OR Q620/2)INSERT: It is important that you take the survey somewhere private where you can answer the questions honestly. If now is not a good time to take the survey, you can select the 'Resume Later' button and follow the instructions below.]

To start, please click on the FORWARD ARROW button below.

If you need to take a break during the survey, please do the following:

- 1 Select the “Resume Later” button at the bottom of your screen.
- 2 [IF HPOL: When you are ready to start the survey, open the email invitation you received from HPOL, and click on the survey link. [IF GLSEN: After you select the “Resume Later” button, a special password and instructions for completing the survey at a later time will appear on the screen. [RN: SEE END OF SURVEY FOR RESUME DISPLAY PAGE]

[PN: DISABLE THE BACK BUTTON]

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q701** [INSERT TIME DATE STAMP]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q318** [ALL RESPONDENTS EXCEPT NON-CONSENTING RESPONDENTS (NE Q600/2), SHOW: Great. Let's begin. First, in what state or territory do you currently live?]

[ALL NON-CONSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q600/2), SHOW: In what state or territory do you currently live?]

[DISPLAY STANDARD US STATE LIST]  
 [DISPLAY IN 3 COLUMNS GOING DOWN]  
 9999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q326** What is your zip code?

[ALLOW 10 DIGITS OR ALPHA NUMERIC CODE]  
 [MANDATORY]  
 999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1) OR ALL NON-QUALIFIED HPOL RESPONDENTS UNDER 18 (Q75/1 AND Q99/NE 1 AND Q280/8-17) OR ALL HPOL NON-CONSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q600/2)**

**Q444** Next are some general questions about you and your family.

To the best of your knowledge, what is the highest level of education your mother completed or the highest degree she received?

- [PROGRAMMER NOTE: DISPLAY IN ONE COLUMN GOING DOWN]
- 1 Less than high school
  - 2 Completed some high school
  - 3 Completed high school
  - 4 Completed some college
  - 70 Associate degree
  - 5 Completed college
  - 6 Completed some graduate school
  - 7 Completed graduate school
  - 97 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99,1); ALL NON-QUALIFIED HPOL RESPONDENTS UNDER 18 (Q75/1 AND Q99/NE 1 AND Q280/8-17); ALL HPOL NON-CONSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q600/2)**

**Q446** To the best of your knowledge, what is the highest level of education your father completed or the highest degree he received?

- [PROGRAMMER NOTE: DISPLAY IN ONE COLUMN GOING DOWN]
- 1 Less than high school
  - 2 Completed some high school
  - 3 Completed high school
  - 4 Completed some college
  - 70 Associate degree

- 5 Completed college
- 6 Completed some graduate school
- 7 Completed graduate school
- 97 Do not want to answer

**BASE: PARENTAL EDUCATION IS TO BE PRESENTED AND U.S. RESIDENT AND AGE 17 OR YOUNGER**

**Q449** [HIDDEN QUESTION TO COMBINE AND HOLD HIGHEST PARENT EDUCATION CODE FOR WEIGHTING]

[PN: GET HIGHEST CODE FROM Q444 AND Q446]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1); ALL NON-QUALIFIED HPOL RESPONDENTS UNDER 18 (Q75/1 AND Q99/NE 1 AND Q280/8-17); ALL NON-CONSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q600/2)**

**Q440** Is your current (or most recent) school located...?

- 1 In an urban or city area
- 2 In a suburban area next to a city
- 3 In a small town or rural area
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2712** How would you describe your family's income?

- 1 Lower than the average family
- 2 Similar to the average family
- 3 Higher than the average family
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1345** Would you call yourself a born-again or evangelical Christian?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

<b>SECTION 700: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (CONTEXT)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS IN SCHOOL (Q99/1 AND Q675/NE 13)**

**Q700** Now we have some questions about school and activities you do.

What kind of school were you in during the 2009-2010 school year?

- 1 Public
- 2 Private or parochial/religious
- 3 I was homeschooled
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS, BUT EXCLUDE IF NON-CONSENTING (Q600/2) (SOFT EXIT QUESTION)**

**Q710** What kinds of grades do you get in school?

[RESULTS LABEL: Percent indicating their grades in school]

- 1 Mostly A's
- 2 Mostly A's and B's
- 3 Mostly B's
- 4 Mostly B's and C's
- 5 Mostly C's
- 6 Mostly C's and D's
- 7 Mostly D's
- 8 Mostly D's and lower
- 9 My school does not give out grades
- 10 I am not in school [PN: DISPLAY ONLY IF NON-QUALIFIED RESPONDENT (Q99/NE 1) OR IF Q675/13]
- 11 Do not want to answer

<b>SECTION 800: SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (CONTEXT)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS IN SCHOOL (Q99/1 AND Q675/NE 13)**

**Q805** During the 2009-2010 school year, how many different after-school programs or activities did you take part in that were...?

[GRID]

**Q806**

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | 0                     |
| 2 | 1                     |
| 3 | 2                     |
| 4 | 3                     |
| 5 | 4                     |
| 6 | 5                     |
| 7 | 6 or more             |
| 8 | Do not want to answer |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Run or organized by <u>your school</u> (such as a sports team, club, or the band)   |
| 2 | Run or organized by someone <u>other than your school</u> (such as the Boys and Girls Club, youth group at a place of worship, or dance or music lessons) |

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS IN SCHOOL (Q99/1 AND Q675/NE 13)**

**Q820** Did the school that you attended during the 2009-2010 school year have a Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) or another type of club that focuses on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) issues?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Yes   |
| 2 | No  |
| 3 | Not sure what this is                                     |
| 4 | I know what this is, but do not know if my school had one |
| 5 | Do not want to answer                                     |

**BASE: HAS A GSA (Q820/1)**

**Q825** How many meetings of this club or Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) meetings did you attend during the 2009-2010 school year? If you are unsure, your best guess is fine.

If none, enter '0'.

/\_/\_/\_/ meetings [RANGE: 0-99]

999  Do not want to answer**BASE: HAS NOT ATTENDED ANY MEETINGS (Q825/0)**

**Q830** What is the main reason why you did not go to a Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) meeting or a meeting of another type of club that focuses on LGBTQ issues during the 2009-2010 school year?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | I was not interested in the group  |
| 2 | I was worried about what my friends would think if they knew I went to a meeting |
| 3 | They meet at a time that I could not attend                                      |
| 4 | My parents would not let me attend   |
| 5 | Some other reason, please specify: [INSERT NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX]               |
| 6 | Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]   |

<b>SECTION 900: POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT (BENEFITS)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q905** Sometimes people use technology to talk about or show their social and political beliefs. In the [past 12 months](#), how often have you used the [Internet](#)...?

[GRID]

**Q906**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 To participate in or recruit people for a gathering, like a demonstration or protest to support an issue or cause
- 2 To support or get the word out about an issue or cause
- 3 To take part in an online community that supports an issue or cause
- 4 To write a blog post or make comments on another blog or article about an issue or cause
- 5 In some other way to express your social or political beliefs [ANCHOR]

**BASE: USES THE INTERNET FOR SOME OTHER WAY (Q905/5 AND Q906/1-4)**

**Q910** In what other ways do you use the Internet to express your social or political beliefs?

[INSERT LARGE TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q915** In the [past 12 months](#), how often have you used [text messaging](#)...?

[GRID]

**Q916**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month

- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 To participate in or recruit people for a gathering, like a demonstration or protest to support an issue or cause
- 2 To support or get the word out about an issue or cause
- 3 In some other way to express your social or political beliefs [ANCHOR]

**BASE: USES TEXT MESSAGING IN SOME OTHER WAY (Q915/3 AND Q916/1-4)**

**Q911** In what other ways do you use text messaging to express your social or political beliefs?

[INSERT LARGE TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS, BUT EXCLUDE IF NON-CONSENTING (Q600/2) (SOFT EXIT QUESTION)**

**Q815** In the [past 12 months](#), how often did you volunteer or do unpaid community service?

[RESULTS LABEL: Percent indicating volunteer frequency in past year]

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

<b>SECTION 1000: PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS (CONTEXT)</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1005** Next, we have some questions about your relationship with your parents or guardians.

Please think about the parent or guardian in your home who knows the most about you. In the past 12 months, how well would you say you and this person got along? Would you say...?

- 1 Very badly
- 2 Somewhat badly
- 3 Neither badly nor well
- 4 Somewhat well
- 5 Very well
- 6 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1010** Again, please think about the parent or guardian in your home who knows the most about you. In the past 12 months, how often would you say this person...?

[GRID]

**Q1011**

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 All of the time
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Yelled at you
- 2 Took away your privileges
- 3 Spanked or slapped you

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1015** How much do you feel that this parent or guardian trusts you?

- 1 Distrusts me a lot
- 2 Distrusts me a little
- 3 Neither trusts nor distrusts me
- 4 Trusts me a little
- 5 Trusts me a lot
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1025** Again, please think about the parent or guardian in your home who knows the most about you. If you were in trouble or sad, how likely would you be to talk about it with this person?

- 1 Not at all likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Likely

- 4 Very likely
- 5 Extremely likely
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1020** In the past 12 months, how often would you say your parent or guardian who knows the most about you...?

[GRID]

**Q1021**

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 All of the time
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE, BUT HOLD PUNCHES 1 AND 2 TOGETHER, AND HOLD PUNCHES 3 AND 4 TOGETHER]

- 1 Knows where you are when you are not at home
- 2 Knows who you are with when you are not at home
- 3 Knows who you talk to online
- 4 Knows the websites you go to when you are online
- 5 Knows who you text message with

<b>SECTION 1100: SOCIAL SUPPORT ONLINE (BENEFITS) AND OFFLINE (CONTEXT)</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1110** Switching topics, overall, how safe do you feel when you are...?

[GRID]

**Q1111**

- 1 Extremely unsafe
- 2 Somewhat unsafe
- 3 Neither safe nor unsafe
- 4 Somewhat safe
- 5 Extremely safe
- 6 Do not want to answer
- 7 This does not apply to me

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 At school
- 2 Online [DISABLE Q1111/7 FOR THIS ATTRIBUTE]
- 3 On the way to and from school
- 4 At work
- 5 At a place of worship, such as a church, synagogue, or mosque
- 6 At home [DISABLE Q1111/7 FOR THIS ATTRIBUTE]

[PN: IF Q1110/2 AND Q1111/7 OR Q1110/6 AND Q1111/7 IS SELECTED, PLEASE DISPLAY FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: Please review your response, this is not a valid selection.]

**BASE: DO NOT FEEL EXTREMELY SAFE AT SCHOOL (Q1110/1 AND Q1111/1-4)**

**Q1113** Please think about the time you spent at school during the 2009-2010 school year. Which, if any, of the following made you feel unsafe when you were at school? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 My sexual orientation (being attracted to males, females or both) or what people think my sexual orientation is
- 2 My gender (because I am a boy, girl, or transgender)
- 3 How I express my gender (how traditionally “masculine” or “feminine” I am in my appearance or how I act)
- 4 My race or ethnicity or because people think I am a certain race or ethnicity
- 5 My disability or because people think I am disabled
- 6 My religion or because people think I am a certain religion
- 7 The way I look or my body size
- 8 I felt unsafe for some other reason, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] ANCHOR
- 9 I did not feel unsafe at school ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE
- 10 Do not want to answer ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1115** Now we would like to ask you a few questions about your friends.

Please read each of the following statements carefully. Thinking about your friends who you first met **in-person** (not online), please indicate how you feel about each statement.

[GRID]

**Q1116**

- 1 Very strongly disagree
- 2 Strongly disagree
- 3 Mildly disagree
- 4 Neutral
- 5 Mildly agree
- 6 Strongly agree
- 7 Very strongly agree
- 8 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 I can talk about my problems with these friends
- 2 I can share my happy and sad moments with these friends
- 3 I can count on these friends when things go wrong
- 4 These friends really try to help me

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1150** Do you have any friends who you first met **online** (such as through a social networking site or chat room)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAS ONLINE FRIENDS (Q1150/1)**

**Q1135** Now, please think only about your friends first met **online**. Again, please read each statement carefully. Indicate how you feel about each statement.

[GRID]

**Q1136**

- 1 Very strongly disagree
- 2 Strongly disagree
- 3 Mildly disagree
- 4 Neutral
- 5 Mildly agree
- 6 Strongly agree
- 7 Very strongly agree
- 8 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 I can talk about my problems with these friends
- 2 I can share my happy and sad moments with these friends
- 3 I can count on these friends when things go wrong
- 4 These friends really try to help me

[PN: SHOW Q1120 AND Q1125 ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1120** Now, please think about all of your close friends. “Close” friends are ones that you can tell your biggest secrets to or will help you if you have a problem.

How many close friends do you have whom you first met **in-person** or “**offline**” (such as at school, at a party, playing sports)?

/\_\_/\_/ friends [RANGE: 0-99]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAS ONLINE FRIENDS (Q1150/1)**

**Q1125** How many close friends do you have whom you first met **online**?

/\_\_/\_/ friends [RANGE: 0-99]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAVE AT LEAST ONE CLOSE ONLINE FRIEND (Q1125/1+)**

**Q1130** How many of your close friends who you first met **online** have you then met **in-person**?

/\_\_/\_/ friends [RANGE: 0-RESPONSE AT Q1125]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAS ONLINE FRIENDS (Q1150/1)**

**Q1140** How do your friends who you first met **online** compare with your friends you first met **in-person** or “**offline**”? Overall, which friends are ...?

[GRID]

**Q1141**

[ROTATE 1,2]

- 1 Friends I first met **online**
- 2 Friends I first met **offline**
- 3 There is no difference between them
- 4 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Better at listening when you have a problem
- 2 Less judgmental
- 3 Better at letting you express who you ‘really’ are
- 4 Better at understanding you

<b>SECTION 1200: HEALTH INFORMATION ONLINE (BENEFITS)</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1215** Switching gears now, in the [past 12 months](#), how often have you searched [online](#) for health or medical information for yourself (not for other people you know)?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1220** In the [past 12 months](#), have you searched for any of the following topics [online](#) for yourself? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Sexuality or sexual attraction
- 2 How to have sex or sexual positions
- 3 HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases
- 4 Condoms or other types of birth control
- 5 Fitness or weight issues
- 6 Drugs or alcohol
- 7 Violence or abuse
- 8 Medications or their side-effects
- 9 Depression, suicide, or anxiety
- 10 Something else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX][ANCHOR]
- 11 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

[PN: ROTATE ORDER OF Q1225/Q1240, Q1230/Q1245 AND Q1235/Q1250. RANDOMIZE THE RESPONSES, BUT IF A RESPONDENT SEES MORE THAN ONE QUESTION SET (AN EXAMPLE OF ONE SET WOULD BE Q1240/1225), KEEP ORDER OF THE RESPONSES THE SAME FOR THE OTHER SETS]

[PN: SHOW Q1225 AND Q1240 ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAS LOOKED FOR SEXUALITY INFO ONLINE (Q1220/1)**

**Q1240** In the [past 12 months](#), which of the following are reasons you went [online](#) to look for information on [sexuality or sexual attraction](#)? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Some people do not know about my sexual feelings or sexual orientation and they might find out if I asked them my question
- 2 Privacy is important to me. I did not want anyone to know what I was searching for
- 3 I was curious and wanted to learn more about the issue
- 4 I was embarrassed to ask someone or admit I did not know
- 5 I do not know anyone offline who could answer my specific questions
- 6 Some other reason, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: HAS LOOKED FOR SEXUALITY INFO ONLINE (Q1220/1)**

**Q1225** What did you do with the information on [sexuality or sexual attraction](#) that you found [online](#)? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Talked with a friend my age about what I found
- 2 Talked with an online counselor about what I found
- 3 Talked with a parent or other adult I know about what I found
- 4 Visited a doctor or clinic because of what I found
- 5 Changed what I was doing because of what I found (started, stopped or did something differently)
- 6 I used this information in some other way, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 I did nothing with this information [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]
- 8 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

[PN: SHOW Q1230 AND Q1245 ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAS LOOKED FOR STD INFO ONLINE (Q1220/3)**

**Q1245** In the [past 12 months](#), which of the following are reasons you went [online](#) to look for information on [HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases](#)? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Some people do not know about my sexual feelings or sexual orientation and they might find out if I asked them my question
- 2 Privacy is important to me. I did not want anyone to know what I was searching for
- 3 I was curious and wanted to learn more about the issue
- 4 I was embarrassed to ask someone or admit I did not know
- 5 I do not know anyone offline who could answer my specific questions
- 6 Some other reason, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: HAS LOOKED FOR STD INFO ONLINE (Q1220/3)**

**Q1230** What did you do with the information on HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases that you found online? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Talked with a friend my age about what I found
- 2 Talked with an online counselor about what I found
- 3 Talked with a parent or other adult I know about what I found
- 4 Visited a doctor or clinic because of what I found
- 5 Changed what I was doing because of what I found (started, stopped or did something differently)
- 6 I used this information in some other way, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX]  
[ANCHOR]
- 7 I did nothing with this information [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]
- 8 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

[PN: SHOW Q1235 AND Q1250 ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAS LOOKED FOR CONDOMS/BIRTH CONTROL INFO ONLINE (Q1220/4)**

**Q1250** In the past 12 months, which of the following are reasons you went online to look for information on condoms or other types of birth control? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 2 Privacy is important to me. I did not want anyone to know what I was searching for
- 3 I was curious and wanted to learn more about the issue
- 4 I was embarrassed to ask someone or admit I did not know
- 5 I do not know anyone offline who could answer my specific questions
- 6 Some other reason, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: HAS LOOKED FOR CONDOMS/BIRTH CONTROL INFO ONLINE (Q1220/4)**

**Q1235** What did you do with the information on condoms or other types of birth control that you found online? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Talked with a friend my age about what I found
- 2 Talked with an online counselor about what I found
- 3 Talked with a parent or other adult I know about what I found
- 4 Visited a doctor or clinic because of what I found
- 5 Changed what I was doing because of what I found (started, stopped or did something differently)
- 6 I used this information in some other way, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX]  
[ANCHOR]
- 7 I did nothing with this information [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]
- 8 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

<b>SECTION 1300: VICTIMIZATION (THREATS): BULLYING</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1305** Now we have some questions for you about bullying and harassment. Remember, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to.

Bullying and harassment can happen anywhere, like at school, at home, or other places you hang out.

In the **past 12 months**, how often were you bullied or harassed by someone about your age...?

[GRID]

**Q1306**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 In-person
- 2 By phone call (on a cell phone or landline)
- 3 By text message
- 4 Online
- 5 Some other way [ANCHOR]

**BASE: BULLIED OR HARASSED IN SOME OTHER WAY (Q1305/5 AND Q1306/1-4)**

**Q1307** In the **past 12 months**, in what other ways were you bullied or harassed?

[INSERT TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: BULLIED IN PERSON IN PAST YEAR (Q1305/1 AND Q1306/1-4)**

**Q1370** You said you've been bullied or harassed in-person. In the **past 12 months**, where have you been bullied or harassed in-person? Please select **all** that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: BULLIED BY TEXT MESSAGE IN PAST YEAR (Q1305/3 AND Q1306/1-4)**

**Q1375** You said you've been bullied or harassed by text message. In the [past 12 months](#), where were you physically when you were bullied or harassed by text message? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: BULLIED ONLINE IN PAST YEAR (Q1305/4 AND Q1306/1-4)**

**Q1380** You said you've been bullied or harassed online. In the **past 12 months**, where were you physically when you were bullied or harassed online? Please select **all** that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1315** In the **past 12 months**, how often have others about your age bullied or harassed you by...?

*These are things that happen in-person, on the phone, online, or by text message.*

[GRID]

**Q1316**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Hitting, kicking, pushing, or shoving you
- 2 Making threatening or aggressive comments to you
- 3 Calling you mean names
- 4 Making fun of you or teasing you in a nasty way
- 5 Leaving you out or not letting you into a group because they were mad at you or were trying to make you upset
- 6 Spreading rumors about you, whether they were true or not
- 7 Bullying or harassing you in some other way [ANCHOR]

**BASE: BULLIED IN SOME OTHER WAY AT LEAST ONCE IN PAST YEAR (Q1315/7 AND Q1316/1-4)**

**Q1310** In the **past 12 months**, in what other ways were you bullied or harassed?

[INSERT TEXT BOX][NON-MANDATORY]

[PN: SHOW THE FOLLOWING 3 QUESTIONS ON THE SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: BULLIED IN PAST YEAR (Q1306/1-4 OR Q1316/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1311** Thinking just about the **past 12 months**, were you ever bullied or harassed by someone who had more power or strength than you? This could be because the person was bigger than you, had more friends, was more popular, or had more power than you in another way.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: BULLIED IN PAST YEAR (Q1306/1-4 OR Q1316/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1312** When you were bullied or harassed in the past year, was it done repeatedly, so that it happened again and again?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: BULLIED IN PAST YEAR (Q1306/1-4 OR Q1316/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1313** How long did the bullying and harassment go on for?

- 1 One day
- 2 2 days to less than 1 week
- 3 1 week to less than 2 weeks
- 4 2 weeks to less than a month
- 5 A month or longer
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: BULLIED IN PAST YEAR (Q1306/1-4 OR Q1316/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1320** How much has being bullied or harassed interfered with...?

[GRID]

**Q1321**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Not very much
- 3 Somewhat
- 4 A lot
- 5 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 [IF Q675/13 DISPLAY: Your work or other responsibilities; ALL OTHERS DISPLAY: Your school work]
- 2 Your relationships with friends
- 3 Your relationships with family members

**BASE: BULLIED IN PAST YEAR (Q1306/1-4 OR Q1316/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1335** Think about the time you were bullied or harassed that you remember the most. How did you feel when it happened?

- 1 Not at all upset
- 2 Somewhat upset
- 3 Upset
- 4 Very upset
- 5 Extremely upset
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1360** How much do you agree with the following statements?

[GRID]

**Q1361**

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Somewhat disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Somewhat agree
- 5 Strongly agree
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Being harassed or bullied is just a part of life for someone like me
- 2 There are people in my life who can protect me from being harassed or bullied in the future

## SECTION 1400: VICTIMIZATION (THREATS): SEXUAL SOLICITATION / HARASSMENT

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1405** Next we have a few questions about sexual harassment. We say that sexual harassment includes:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Unwanted requests for sexual favors
- Someone saying something or doing something sexual when you do not want them to

Sexual harassment can happen anywhere, like at school, at home, or other places you hang out.

In the [past 12 months](#), how often have you been sexually harassed..?

[GRID]

**Q1406**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 In-person
- 2 By phone call (on a cell phone or landline)
- 3 By text message
- 4 Online
- 5 Some other way [ANCHOR]

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED IN SOME OTHER WAY (Q1405/5 AND Q1406/1-4)**

**Q1407** In what other ways have you been sexually harassed in the [past 12 months](#)?

[INSERT TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED IN PERSON IN PAST YEAR (Q1405/1 AND Q1406/1-4)**

**Q1470** You said you've been sexually harassed in-person. In the **past 12 months**, where have you been sexually harassed in-person? Please select **all** that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED BY TEXT MESSAGE IN PAST YEAR (Q1405/3 AND Q1406/1-4)**

**Q1475** You said you've been sexually harassed by text message. In the **past 12 months**, where were you physically when you were sexually harassed by text message? Please select **all** that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED ONLINE IN PAST YEAR (Q1405/4 AND Q1406/1-4)**

**Q1480** You said you've been sexually harassed online. In the past 12 months, where were you physically when you were sexually harassed online? Please select all that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1415** In the past 12 months, how often have you been sexually harassed in the following ways?

*Remember that these things can happen anywhere, including in-person, online, and by text messaging. As a reminder, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to.*

[GRID]

**Q1416**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Someone spread sexual rumors or wrote sexual messages about me in a public place such as the bathroom walls, in locker rooms, etc.
- 2 Someone touched, grabbed, or pinched me or grabbed my clothing in a sexual way when I did not want them to
- 3 Someone intentionally brushed up against me in a sexual way when I did not want them to
- 4 Someone blocked my way or cornered me in a sexual way when I did not want them to
- 5 Someone made sexual or obscene comments that I did not want to hear
- 6 Someone showed or sent me sexual or obscene messages or pictures when I did not want to see them
- 7 Someone asked me for sexual information about myself when I did not want to tell them (really personal questions, like sexual things I have done or what my body looks like)
- 8 Someone asked me to do something sexual when I did not want to
- 9 I was sexually harassed in some other way [ANCHOR]

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED / SOLICITED IN SOME OTHER WAY (Q1415/9 AND Q1416/1-4)**

**Q1410** In what other ways have you been sexually harassed in the past 12 months?

[INSERT TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED IN PAST YEAR (Q1406/1-4 OR Q1416/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1417** Thinking about the places where you were sexually harassed in the **past 12 months**, do any of these places now feel scary, unfriendly or uncomfortable?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED IN PAST YEAR (Q1406/1-4 OR Q1416/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1420** We have a few more questions for you about your experiences with sexual harassment. Remember, your answers are private and very important to us. You may skip any question that you do not want to answer.

How much has being sexually harassed interfered with...?

[GRID]

**Q1421**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Not very much
- 3 Somewhat
- 4 A lot
- 5 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 [IF Q675/13 DISPLAY: Your work or other responsibilities; ALL OTHERS DISPLAY: Your school work]
- 2 Your relationships with friends
- 3 Your relationships with family members

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED IN PAST YEAR (Q1406/1-4 OR Q1416/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1435** Think about the time you were sexually harassed that you remember the most. How did you feel when it happened?

- 1 Not at all upset
- 2 Somewhat upset
- 3 Upset
- 4 Very upset
- 5 Extremely upset
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: SEXUALLY HARASSED IN PAST YEAR (Q1406/1-4 OR Q1416/1-4 FOR ANY)**

**Q1419** In the past 12 months, have you been sexually harassed by an adult? We mean someone you knew or thought was 18 years of age or older.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**SECTION 1500: VICTIMIZATION (THREATS): BULLYING & HARASSMENT BECAUSE YOU ARE “DIFFERENT” (REASONS WHY)**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1505** We have one final question about things people may have done to you to make you feel bad.

As a reminder, these things can happen anywhere including in-person, online, and by text messaging. They can happen at school, at home, or other places you hang out.

In the **past 12 months**, how often have others bullied, sexually harassed, or said or done something to you to hurt you because...?

[GRID]

**Q1506**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Every day or almost every day             |
| 2 | Once or a few times a week                |
| 3 | Once or a few times a month               |
| 4 | Once or a few times in the past 12 months |
| 5 | Never in the past 12 months               |
| 6 | Does not apply to me                      |
| 7 | Do not want to answer                     |

[RANDOMIZE]

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | You are gay, lesbian or bisexual or people think you are gay, lesbian, or bisexual                                     |
| 2 | Of your gender (because you are a boy, girl, or transgender)   |
| 3 | Of how you express your gender (how traditionally “masculine” or “feminine” you are in your appearance or how you act) |
| 4 | Of your race or ethnicity or because people think you are a certain race or ethnicity                                  |
| 5 | Of your disability or because people think you are disabled  |
| 6 | Of your religion or because people think you are a certain religion  |
| 7 | Of the way you look or your body size  |
| 8 | People thought you were "different" in some other way [ANCHOR]   |

**BASE: HARASSED FOR SOME OTHER REASON IN PAST YEAR (Q1505/8 AND Q1506/1-4)**

**Q1510** For what other reason(s) were you bullied, sexually harassed, or otherwise had your feeling hurt in the past 12 months?

[INSERT TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: HARASSED AT LEAST A FEW TIMES IN PAST YEAR BECAUSE OF SEXUALITY OR GENDER EXPRESSION (Q1505/1 OR 3 AND Q1506/1-4)**

**Q1515** [HIDDEN QUESTION FOR TEXT INSERTION]

GET CODE 1 IF (Q1505/1 AND Q1506/1-4) AND (Q1505/3 AND Q1506/5-7)

GET CODE 2 IF (Q1505/1 AND Q1506/5-7) AND (Q1505/3 AND Q1506/1-4)

GET CODE 2 IF (Q1505/1 AND Q1506/1-4) AND (Q1505/3 AND Q1506/1-4)

- 1 you are gay, lesbian or bisexual or because people think you are
- 2 of how you express your gender
- 3 of how your express your gender and because you are gay, lesbian or bisexual or because people think you are

**BASE: HARASSED AT LEAST A FEW TIMES IN PAST YEAR BECAUSE OF SEXUALITY OR GENDER EXPRESSION (Q1505/1 OR 3 AND Q1506/1-4)**

**Q1520** Thinking just about the [past 12 months](#), in which of the following ways have you been bullied, sexually harassed, or otherwise had your feelings hurt because [INSERT Q1515 TEXT]? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 In-person
- 2 By phone call (on a cell phone or landline)
- 3 By text message
- 4 Online
- 5 Some other way, please specify: [NON MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 6 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: HARASSED IN PERSON BECAUSE OF SEXUALITY OR GENDER EXPRESSION IN PAST YEAR (Q1520/1)**

**Q1570** You said you been bullied, sexually harassed, or otherwise had your feelings hurt in-person because [INSERT Q1515 TEXT].

In the [past 12 months](#), where has this happened to you in-person? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: HARASSED BY TEXT MESSAGE BECAUSE OF SEXUALITY OR GENDER EXPRESSION IN PAST YEAR (Q1520/3)**

**Q1575** You said you been bullied, sexually harassed, or otherwise had your feelings hurt by text message because [INSERT Q1515 TEXT].

In the [past 12 months](#), where were you physically when this happened to you by text message? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

**BASE: HARASSED ONLINE BECAUSE OF SEXUALITY OR GENDER EXPRESSION IN PAST YEAR (Q1520/4)**

**Q1580** You said you been bullied, sexually harassed, or otherwise had your feelings hurt online because [INSERT Q1515 TEXT].

In the past 12 months, where were you physically when this happened to you online? Please select all that apply.

[RANDOMIZE]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 At school
- 2 At home
- 3 On the way to or from school
- 4 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

<b>SECTION 1600: EXPLORATION OF SEXUAL ATTRACTION (BENEFITS)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1605** You are more than half-way done! Thanks for sharing your experiences and opinions so far.

Now we have some questions for you on another topic. Tell us how, if at all, you have used the Internet to learn what you find sexually attractive or to learn about your sexuality.

[LARGE TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

[PN: ADD ERROR/WARNING MESSAGE IF TEXT BOX IS LEFT BLANK: “We did not receive your answer for this question. Please enter your response, or click the forward arrow below to continue.” AFTER ONE ERROR MESSAGE/WARNING, ALLOW RESPONDENT TO CONTINUE]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1610** In the **past 12 months**, how often have you looked at pornographic or x-rated materials (where the main topic was sex)?

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: LOOKED AT PORNOGRAPHIC OR X-RATED MATERIAL (Q1610/1-4)**

**Q1611** In the **past 12 months**, where have you looked at pornographic or x-rated materials (where the main topic was sex)? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Online (including watching online movies)
- 2 On a cell phone, such as a picture text message
- 3 On television or in movies (not including those on the Internet)
- 4 In magazines
- 5 Somewhere else, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 6 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: LOOKED AT PORNOGRAPHIC OR X-RATED MATERIAL (Q1610/1-4)**

**Q1615** Which of the following describe why you looked at pornographic or x-rated materials? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 I wanted to understand the type of people I am attracted to
- 2 I wanted to learn how to have sex (such as learn sexual positions)
- 3 I wanted to feel sexually excited
- 4 I wanted to learn what body parts I find most sexually exciting
- 5 For some other reason, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 6 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

<b>SECTION 1700: RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL RISK TAKING BEHAVIOR ONLINE (RISK)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1705** The next questions are about your experiences with dating, romance, and sex.

In the **past 12 months** how many romantic relationships have you had with someone you would call a boyfriend or a girlfriend? If none, please enter '0'.

/\_/\_/\_/ people [RANGE: 0-99]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 0 AT Q1705)**

**Q1708** Are you currently in a romantic relationship with someone you would call a boyfriend or girlfriend?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

[PN: SHOW NEXT 4 QUESTIONS ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAD BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 0 AT Q1705)**

**Q1710** Next are some questions about your [IF Q1708/1 DISPLAY 'current'; IF Q1708/2,3 DISPLAY 'most recent'] boyfriend or girlfriend. If you are not sure about any of the answers, your best guess is fine.

Is your [IF Q1708/1 DISPLAY 'current'; IF Q1708/2,3 DISPLAY 'most recent'] boyfriend or girlfriend older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 0 AT Q1705)**

**Q1715** And is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 0 AT Q1705)**

**Q1720** [IF Q1708/1 DISPLAY: How long have you been in a relationship with this person? If you have been in the relationship for less than one month, please enter '0' in both boxes below.]

[IF Q1708/2,3 DISPLAY: How long did your relationship with this person last?] If the relationship lasted less than one month, please enter '0' in both boxes below.]

/\_/\_/\_/ years [RANGE: 0-respondent's current age at Q280] /\_/\_/\_/ months [RANGE: 0-11]  
999  Do not want to answer

[PN: BOTH NUMERIC TEXT BOXES SHOULD BE MANDATORY]

[PN: IF RESPONDENT ENTERS IN 12+ MONTHS, PRESENT FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: “Please enter 12 months or more as 1 year.” ]

[PN: IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT FILL OUT BOTH BOXES, PRESENT FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: Please enter a response in both the “years” and “months” boxes below. For example, if you have been in a relationship for 6 months, please enter “0” for years and “6” for months.]

**BASE: HAD BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 0 AT Q1705)**

**Q1725** Where did you meet this person?

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 At school
- 2 Online
- 3 At the mall
- 4 At a program or activity outside of school
- 5 At a place of worship, such as a church, synagogue, mosque, etc.
- 6 Some other way or place, please specify: [INSERT NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: BOY/GIRLFRIEND OLDER OR YOUNGER (Q1710/1 OR 2)**

**Q1740** How much [IF Q1710/1 DISPLAY ‘older’; IF Q1710/2 DISPLAY ‘younger’] is this person? Your best guess is fine.

/\_\_/\_/ years [RANGE: 0-99]  
 999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: MET BOY/GIRLFRIEND ONLINE (Q1725/2)**

**Q1735** You said you met your [IF Q1708/1 DISPLAY ‘current’; IF Q1708/2,3 DISPLAY ‘most recent’] [IF Q1715/1 DISPLAY ‘boyfriend’; IF Q1715/2 DISPLAY ‘girlfriend’; IF Q1715/3,4 DISPLAY ‘boyfriend or girlfriend’] **online**. Did you ever meet [IF Q1715/1 DISPLAY ‘him’; IF Q1715/2 DISPLAY ‘her’; IF Q1715 3,4 DISPLAY ‘him or her’] **in-person** for a date after the romantic relationship started?

[PN: IF RESPONDENT IS Q1715/1,3 OR Q1715/2,3, PUT PRIORITY FOR INSERT BASED ON Q1715/3,4

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

[PN: SHOW NEXT 4 QUESTIONS ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAD 2 + BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 1 AT Q1705)**

**Q1745** You said you had more than 1 relationship in the past 12 months. We would like to ask some questions about your second most recent boyfriend or girlfriend. If you are not sure about any of the answers, your best guess is fine.

Thinking about your second most recent romantic relationship, is this person older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD 2 + BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 1 AT Q1705)**

**Q1750** And is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD 2 + BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 1 AT Q1705)**

**Q1755** How long did your relationship with this person last? If the relationship lasted less than one month, please enter '0' in both boxes below.

/\_\_/\_/ years [RANGE: 0-respondent's current age at Q280] /\_\_/\_/ months [RANGE: 0-11]  
9999  Do not want to answer

[PN: BOTH NUMERIC TEXT BOXES SHOULD BE MANDATORY]

[PN: IF RESPONDENT ENTERS IN 12+ MONTHS, PRESENT FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: "Please enter 12 months or more as 1 year."]

[PN: IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT FILL OUT BOTH BOXES, PRESENT FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: Please enter a response in both the "years" and "months" boxes below. For example, if you have been in a relationship for 6 months, please enter "0" for years and "6" for months.]

**BASE: HAD 2 + BOY/GIRLFRIEND (MORE THAN 1 AT Q1705)**

**Q1760** Where did you meet this person?

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 At school
- 2 Online
- 3 At the mall
- 4 At a program or activity outside of school
- 5 At a place of worship, such as a church, synagogue, mosque, etc.
- 6 Some other way or place, please specify: [INSERT NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: 2<sup>nd</sup> BOY/GIRLFRIEND OLDER OR YOUNGER (Q1745/1 OR 2)**

**Q1775** How much [IF Q1745/1 DISPLAY 'older'; IF Q1745/2 DISPLAY younger] is this person?

/\_\_/\_/ years [RANGE: 0-99]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: MET 2<sup>nd</sup> BOY/GIRLFRIEND ONLINE (Q1760/2)**

**Q1770** You said you met your second most recent [IF Q1750/1 DISPLAY 'boyfriend'; IF Q1750/2 DISPLAY 'girlfriend'; IF Q1750/3,4 DISPLAY 'boyfriend or girlfriend'] **online**. Did you ever meet [IF Q1750/1 DISPLAY 'him'; IF Q1750/2 DISPLAY 'her'; IF Q1750/3,4 DISPLAY 'him or her'] **in-person** for a date?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD MORE THAN 2 BOY/GIRLFRIENDS (Q1705/3+) AND DID NOT MEET 1<sup>ST</sup> OR 2<sup>ND</sup> PERSON ONLINE (Q1725/NE 2 AND Q1760/NE 2)**

**Q1780** Now, please think about all of the romantic relationships you had in the **past 12 months** with someone you would call a boyfriend or girlfriend. How many of these romantic relationships were with someone you met **online**? If none, please enter "0".

/\_\_/\_/ relationships [RANGE: 0-number of relationships in Q1705]

999  Do not want to answer

[PN: SHOW NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: ANSWERED MORE THAN “0” AT Q1780 (Q1780/1+)**

**Q1785** Now we would like to ask some questions about your most recent boyfriend or girlfriend that you met [online](#). If you are not sure about any of the answers, your best guess is fine.

Thinking about the most recent romantic relationship you had with someone you met [online](#), is this person older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ANSWERED MORE THAN “0” AT Q1780**

**Q1790** And, is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ANSWERED MORE THAN “0” AT Q1780**

**Q1795** How long did your relationship with this person last? If the relationship lasted less than one month, please enter ‘0’ in both boxes below.

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/ years [RANGE: 0-respondent’s current age at Q280] / \_\_\_/\_\_\_/ months [RANGE: 0-11]  
9999  Do not want to answer

[PN: BOTH NUMERIC TEXT BOXES SHOULD BE MANDATORY]

[PN: IF RESPONDENT ENTERS IN 12+ MONTHS, PRESENT FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: “**Please enter 12 months or more as 1 year.**” ]

[PN: IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT FILL OUT BOTH BOXES, PRESENT FOLLOWING ERROR MESSAGE: **Please enter a response in both the “years” and “months” boxes below. For example, if you have been in a relationship for 6 months, please enter “0” for years and “6” for months.**]

**BASE: ONLINE BOY/GIRLFRIEND OLDER OR YOUNGER (Q1785/1 OR 2)**

**Q1805** How much [IF Q1785/1 DISPLAY ‘older’; IF Q1785/2 DISPLAY ‘younger’] is this person?

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/ years [RANGE: 0-99]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: ANSWERED MORE THAN “0” AT Q1780**

**Q1800** Thinking about the most recent romantic relationship you had with someone you met [online](#), did you ever meet this person [in-person](#) for a date after the romantic relationship started?

- 1 Yes

- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD AT LEAST 1 RELATIONSHIP WHERE MET ONLINE AND 1 RELATIONSHIP WHERE MET OFFLINE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (Q1725/2 OR Q1760/2 OR MORE THAN "0" AT Q1780 AND Q1725/NE 2, NE 7 OR Q1760/NE 2, NE 7)**

**Q1810** We would like you to compare the romantic relationships you had with people you met **online** to those with people you met **offline**. Which romantic relationships...?

[GRID]

**Q1811**

[ROTATE 1,2]

- 1 Romantic relationships with people you meet **online**
- 2 Romantic relationships with people you meet **offline**
- 3 There is no difference between them
- 4 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Are more emotionally close
- 2 Are more sexually exciting
- 3 Are more honest
- 4 Are more likely to be a long lasting relationship
- 5 Make you more comfortable with yourself and who you are

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1815** In the **past 12 months**, how often have you done each of the following? We are talking about times when you wanted to do these things.

*Please keep in mind that these things can happen anywhere including in-person, on the Internet, and on cell phones or text messaging.*

[GRID]

**Q1816**

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

[SINGLE RESPONSE ACROSS ROWS]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Flirted with someone
- 2 Had a sexual conversation with someone (such as phone sex)
- 3 Sent or showed someone sexual pictures of yourself where you were nude or nearly nude

**BASE: HAD A SEXUAL CONVERSATION (Q1815/2 AND Q1816/1-4)**

**Q1820** You said that you had sexual conversations with someone (such as phone sex). In the past 12 months, how did these sexual conversations take place?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 In-person
- 2 By phone call (on a cell phone or landline)
- 3 By text message
- 4 Online
- 5 In some other way, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX][ANCHOR]
- 6 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

[PN: SHOW NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAD A SEXUAL CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE ONLINE (Q1820/4)**

**Q1825** Now we would like to ask some questions about the person with whom you most recently had an [online](#) sexual conversation. If you are not sure about any of the answers, your best guess is fine.

Is the person you most recently had an [online](#) sexual conversation with older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Not sure
- 5 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD A SEXUAL CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE ONLINE (Q1820/4)**

**Q1830** Is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD A SEXUAL CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE ONLINE (Q1820/4)**

**Q1835** Do you know this person [offline](#)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAD A SEXUAL CONVERSATION ONLINE AND PARTNER WAS OLDER OR YOUNGER THAN THEM (Q1825/1 OR 2)**

**Q1840** How much [IF Q1825/1 DISPLAY 'older'; IF Q1825/2 DISPLAY 'younger'] is this person?

/\_/\_/\_/ years [RANGE: 0-99]  
999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAS SENT OR SHOWN SEXUAL PICTURES (Q1815/3 AND Q1816/1-4)**

**Q1845** You said that you sent or showed someone sexual pictures of yourself where you were nude or nearly nude. In the [past 12 months](#), how have you shared sexual pictures of yourself with someone else?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 In-person
- 2 By text message

3 Online

4 In some other way, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX][ANCHOR]

5 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, EXCLUSIVE]

[PN: SHOW NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: HAVE SENT PICTURES ONLINE (Q1845/3)**

**Q1850** Now we would like to ask some questions about the person you most recently sent or showed sexual pictures of yourself to [online](#). If you are not sure about any of the answers, your best guess is fine.

Is the person you most recently sent or showed sexual pictures of yourself to [online](#) older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Not sure
- 5 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAVE SENT PICTURES ONLINE (Q1845/3)**

**Q1855** Is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: HAVE SENT PICTURES ONLINE (Q1845/3)**

**Q1860** Do you know this person [offline](#)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: PARTNER WAS OLDER OR YOUNGER (Q1850/1 OR 2)**

**Q1865** How much [IF Q1850/1 DISPLAY 'older'; IF Q1850/2 DISPLAY 'younger'] is this person?

/\_\_/\_/ years [RANGE: 0-99]  
 999  Do not want to answer

<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR OFFLINE (CONTEXT)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1870** You are about three-quarters of the way through the survey! Your participation through the whole survey is very important for the success of this research. Thanks for keeping with it!

In the **past 12 months**, have you kissed or been kissed by someone romantically when you wanted to?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1875** In the **past 12 months**, have you touched someone else's body or has someone touched your body in a sexual way when you wanted to (such as touching your/their breasts, butt, or between the legs)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

[DISPLAY NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON SAME PAGE]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1880** Now we would like to ask you some questions about sex. When you are answering the next few questions, please think only about the things you did when you wanted to – meaning you were not forced.

In this section, you will see some explicit sexual words. We know that some of these questions may be uncomfortable to answer. Remember, your answers are private and very important to us. You may skip any question that you do not want to answer.

Have you **ever** had oral sex (we mean stimulating the vagina or penis with the mouth or tongue) when you wanted to?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1890** Have you **ever** had sex with another person that involved a finger or sex toy going into the vagina or anus when you wanted to?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1901** Have you [ever](#), when you wanted to, had sex where a penis went into a vagina?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q1902** Have you **ever**, when you wanted to...?

[GRID]

**Q1903**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not apply to me
- 4 Do not want to answer

- 1 Had sex where someone's penis went into your anus
- 2 Had sex where your penis went into someone's anus

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL/ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION (Q1880/1, Q1890/1, Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, OR Q1902/2 AND Q1903/1)**

**Q1911** Thinking just about the times you wanted to, how old were you when you first...? If you are unsure of the answer, your best guess is fine.

[DISPLAY IF Q1880/1]

Had oral sex /\_\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-Current age. NON-MANDATORY]

[DISPLAY IF Q1890/1]

Had sex where someone's finger or a sex toy went into a vagina or anus  
 /\_\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-Current age. NON-MANDATORY]

[DISPLAY IF Q1901/1]

Had sex where a person's penis went into a vagina  
 /\_\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-Current age. NON-MANDATORY]

[DISPLAY IF 1902/1 AND Q1903/1]

Had sex where someone's penis went into your anus  
 /\_\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-Current age. NON-MANDATORY]

[DISPLAY IF 1902/2 AND Q1903/1]

Had sex where your penis went into someone's anus  
 /\_\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-Current age. NON-MANDATORY]

999  Do not want to answer [INCLUDE FOR EACH NUMERIC BOX]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL/ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION (Q1880/1, Q1890/1, Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, OR Q1902/2 AND Q1903/1)**

**Q1915** Again, thinking about the times when you wanted to: how many people have you **ever** had any type of sex with? By sex we mean oral sex or sex where a penis, finger, or sex toy goes into the vagina or anus. If you are unsure of the answer, your best guess is fine.

/\_\_/\_/ people [RANGE: 1-900]

999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL/ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION (Q1880/1, Q1890/1, Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, OR Q1902/2 AND Q1903/1 AND Q1915 > 0)**

**Q1916** How many people have you had any type of sex with in the past 12 months when you wanted to? By sex we mean oral sex or sex where a penis, finger, or sex toy goes into the vagina or anus. If you are unsure of the answer, your best guess is fine.

/\_\_/\_/ people [RANGE: 0-RESPONSE AT Q1915]  
999  Do not want to answer

[DISPLAY NEXT 4 QUESTIONS ON SAME PAGE]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+)**

**Q1920** Please think about the most recent person with whom you had any kind of sex when you wanted to. Remember, by sex we mean oral sex or sex where a penis, finger or sex toy goes into the vagina or anus. If you are not sure about any of the answers, your best guess is fine.

Is the person you most recently had any type of sex with older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+)**

**Q1925** And, is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+)**

**Q1930** Where did you meet this person?

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 At school
- 2 Online
- 3 At the mall
- 4 At a program or activity outside of school
- 5 At a place of worship, such as a church, synagogue, mosque, etc.
- 6 Some other way or place, please specify: [INSERT NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+)**

**Q1931** Is this person someone you would consider a boyfriend or girlfriend?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

[DISPLAY NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON SAME PAGE]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+)**

**Q1932** Again, thinking about the most recent person with whom you had any kind of sex when you wanted to, has this person ever tested positive for a sexually transmitted disease (STD), including HIV?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Not sure
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, OR ANAL SEX WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+). EXCLUDE IF Q1880, Q1901, Q1902/1 AND Q1902/2 ALL NE 1**

**Q1933** Before the first time you ever had sex with this person, did you talk about using condoms or some other type of protection against STDs, like dental dams?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+)**

**Q1934** Did you have sex with anyone else while you were in a sexual relationship with this person?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH AT LEAST 1 PARTNER (Q1915/1+) AND 2 OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ARE TRUE: Q1880/1, Q1890/1, Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, Q1902/2 Q1903/1**

**Q1935** Thinking of the most recent person you had any type of sex with, which of the following have you ever done with [IF Q1925/1, INSERT: him; IF Q1925/2, INSERT: her; if Q1925/3,4, INSERT: him or her]?

[DISPLAY Q1935/1 IF HAD ORAL SEX (Q1880/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/2 IF HAD OTHER PENETRATION (Q1890/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/3 IF HAD VAGINAL SEX (Q1901/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/4 IF RECEIVED ANAL SEX (Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/5 IF GAVE ANAL SEX (Q1902/2 Q1903/1).]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]  
 [DO NOT RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Given or received oral sex
- 2 Had sex where a finger or a sex toy went into a vagina or anus
- 3 Had sex where a penis went into a vagina
- 4 Had sex where their penis went into my anus
- 5 Had sex where my penis went into their anus
- 6 Do not want to answer [DISPLAY FOR ALL]

[DISPLAY NEXT 4 QUESTIONS ON SAME PAGE]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+)**

**Q1945** Now, think about the **second most recent person** with whom you had any kind of sex. As a reminder, by sex we mean oral sex or sex where a penis, finger or sex toy goes into the vagina or anus.

Is this person older, younger or about the same age as you?

- 1 Older
- 2 Younger
- 3 Same age (within 12 months of your age)
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+)**

**Q1950** And is this person...?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE. ALLOW 1,3 AND 2,3 TO BE SELECTED. NO OTHER COMBINATIONS OF RESPONSES ALLOWED]

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Transgender
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+)**

**Q1955** Where did you meet this person?

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 At school
- 2 Online
- 3 At the mall
- 4 At a program or activity outside of school
- 5 At a place of worship, such as a church, synagogue, mosque, etc.
- 6 Some other way or place, please specify: [INSERT NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 7 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+)**

**Q1960** Is this person someone you would consider a boyfriend or girlfriend?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

[DISPLAY NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON SAME PAGE]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+)**

**Q1965** Again, thinking about the second most recent person, with whom you had any kind of sex, has this person ever tested positive for a sexually transmitted disease (STD), including HIV?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Not sure
- 4 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, OR ANAL SEX WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+) EXCLUDE IF Q1880, Q1901, AND Q1903 ALL NE 1**

**Q1970** Before the first time you ever had sex with this person, did you talk about using condoms or some other type of protection against STDs, like dental dams?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+)**

**Q1975** Did you have sex with anyone else while you were in a sexual relationship with this person?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD ORAL, VAGINAL, ANAL SEX OR PENETRATION WITH 2+ PARTNERS (Q1915/2+) AND 2 OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ARE TRUE: Q1880/1, Q1890/1, Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, Q1902/2 Q1903/1**

**Q1980** Thinking of the second most recent person you had any type of sex with, which of the following have you ever done with [IF Q1950/1, INSERT: him; IF Q1950/2, INSERT: her; if Q1950/3,4, INSERT: him or her]?

[DISPLAY Q1935/1 IF HAD ORAL SEX (Q1880/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/2 IF HAD OTHER PENETRATION (Q1890/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/3 IF HAD VAGINAL SEX (Q1901/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/4 IF RECEIVED ANAL SEX (Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1).  
 DISPLAY Q1935/5 IF GAVE ANAL SEX (Q1902/2 Q1903/1).]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]  
 [DO NOT RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Given or received oral sex
- 2 Had sex where a finger, or a sex toy went into a vagina or anus
- 3 Had sex where a penis went into a vagina
- 4 Had sex where their penis went into my anus
- 5 Had sex where my penis went into their anus
- 6 Do not want to answer [DISPLAY FOR ALL]

[PN: DISPLAY THE NEXT 3 QUESTIONS ON THE SAME SCREEN]

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE EVER HAD VAGINAL OR ANAL SEX (Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, OR Q1902/2 AND Q1903/1) AND 1+ PARTNER IN PAST 12 MONTHS (Q1916/1+)**

**Q1990** Finally, before moving to the next set of questions, how many times have you had sex where a penis went into a vagina or anus in the past 90 days (3 months)? If you are not sure, your best guess is fine.

/ \_\_ / \_\_ / times [RANGE: 0-1000]

9999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE EVER HAD VAGINAL OR ANAL SEX (Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, OR Q1902/2 AND Q1903/1) AND 1+ PARTNER IN PAST 12 MONTHS (Q1916/1+)**

**Q1995** How many times have you used a condom in the past 90 days (3 months) when you have had sex where a penis went into a vagina or anus? Again, your best guess is fine.

/ \_\_ / \_\_ / times [RANGE: 0-1000]

9999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD VAGINAL OR ANAL SEX (Q1901/1, Q1902/1 AND Q1903/1, OR Q1902/2 AND Q1903/1)**

**Q1996** [IF Q1990 IS NOT DISPLAYED, INSTEAD OF “Generally” INSERT “Finally, before moving to the next set of questions, generally] Generally, when you have sex where a penis goes into a vagina or anus, how often do you use a condom?

- 1 None of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Half of the time
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 All of the time
- 6 Do not want to answer

<b>SECTION 2000: SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>
---

[PN: SHOW NEXT 2 QUESTIONS ON SAME SCREEN AND ROTATE ORDER]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2005** Have you ever had a romantic attraction to a female?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2010** Have you ever had a romantic attraction to a male?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2015** Below is a list of terms that people often use to describe their sexuality or sexual orientation. How would you describe your sexuality or sexual orientation? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Gay
- 2 Lesbian
- 3 Bisexual
- 4 Straight/heterosexual
- 5 Questioning
- 6 Queer
- 7 Other, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 8 Not sure [PN: DO NOT MAKE EXCLUSIVE]
- 9 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2013** Do you know anyone [IF Q2015/1,2,3 OR Q2020/3 OR Q2025/1, INSERT "else"] who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 01 | Yes, a family member   |   |
| 04 | Yes, a close personal friend   |   |
| 06 | Yes, another student at school [PN: SUPPRESS IF NOT IN SCHOOL LAST YEAR (Q675/13)] |   |
| 07 | Yes, a friend or acquaintance [DISPLAY ONLY IF Q675/NE 13: (not at school)]        |   |
| 08 | Yes, another person not listed above   |   |
| 09 | No   | E |
| 97 | Not sure   | E |
| 96 | Do not want to answer  | E |

**BASE: LGBTQ (Q2015/1-3,5,6 OR Q2026/1)**

**Q2028** In the **past 12 months**, how often did you attend a program or group for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning) people [DISPLAY IF Q675/NE 13: outside of your school]?

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 I do not know of a program or group for LGBTQ people [DISPLAY IF Q675/NE 13: outside my school]
- 7 Do not want to answer

**BASE: LGBTQ (Q2015/1-3,5,6 OR Q2026/1)**

**Q2030** In the **past 12 months**, how often have you used the Internet to talk or connect with other LGBTQ people?

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 Once or a few times a week
- 3 Once or a few times a month
- 4 Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- 5 Never in the past 12 months
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: LGBTQ (Q2015/1-3,5,6 OR Q2026/1)**

**Q2035** Thinking about each of the following groups of people, which of the following best describes how many of them know that you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning?

[GRID]

**Q2036**

- 1 None of them
- 2 Only a few of them
- 3 A fair amount of them
- 4 Most of them
- 5 All of them
- 6 This does not apply to me
- 7 Do not want to answer

[RANDOMIZE][HOLD 1 AND 2, 3 AND 4, 5 AND 6 TOGETHER]

- 1 Friends about my own age that I know **in-person**
- 2 Friends about my own age that I know **only online**
- 3 My brothers or sisters
- 4 My parents or guardians
- 5 Adults I know **in-person**, like teachers or neighbors
- 6 Adults I know only **online**

**BASE: OUT AT LEAST TO A FEW PEOPLE IN ANY GROUP (Q2036/2-5 FOR ANY)**

**Q2040** Who was the first person that you told you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning?

[RANDOMIZE, BUT HOLD SAME ORDER AS IN Q2036][HOLD 1 AND 2, 3 AND 4, 5 AND 6 TOGETHER]

- 1 A friend about my age I know only [online](#)
- 2 A friend about my age I know [in-person](#)
- 3 A parent or guardian
- 4 A brother or a sister
- 5 An adult I know [in-person](#), like a teacher or neighbor
- 6 An adult I know only [online](#)
- 7 Someone else, please specify: [NON MANDATORY TEXT BOX, ANCHOR]
- 8 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR]

**BASE: OUT AT LEAST TO A FEW PEOPLE IN ANY GROUP (Q2036/2-5 FOR ANY)**

**Q2045** Where are you “out” more?

By “out,” we mean that other people know that you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning.

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Online
- 2 Offline
- 3 It is the same/there is no difference [ANCHOR, E]
- 4 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, E]

**BASE: LGBTQ (Q2015/1-3,5,6 OR Q2026/1)**

**Q2050** Has anyone ever “outed” you when you did not want them to (someone told other people that you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, when you did not want them to)? Please select [all](#) that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

[ROTATE 1 AND 2 ONLY]

- 1 Yes, this has happened to me [online](#)
- 2 Yes, this has happened to me [offline](#)
- 3 No, this has never happened to me [ANCHOR, E]
- 4 Do not want to answer [ANCHOR, E]

<b>SECTION 2100: DEPRESSION (CONTEXT)</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2105** Now we would like to change topics.

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved recently. How often have you felt this way?

*Please note the choices here are different than some of the questions you saw earlier.*

[GRID]

**Q2106**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Not at all or less than 1 day in the last week |
| 2 | 1-2 days in the last week                      |
| 3 | 3-4 days in the last week                      |
| 4 | 5-7 days in the last week                      |
| 5 | Nearly every day for 2 weeks                   |
| 6 | Do not want to answer                          |

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | My appetite was poor                      |
| 2  | My sleep was restless                     |
| 3  | I felt sad                                |
| 4  | I felt like a bad person                  |
| 5  | I lost interest in my usual activities    |
| 6  | I felt like I was moving too slowly       |
| 7  | I wished I were dead                      |
| 8  | I was tired all the time                  |
| 9  | I could not focus on the important things |
| 10 | I felt irritable                          |

**BASE: REPORT ANY SYMPTOM AT LEAST ONCE IN PAST WEEK (Q2106/2-5)**

**Q2110** [HIDDEN QUESTION]

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | this problem [PN: SELECT IF ONLY ONE ITEM FROM Q2105/1-10 SELECTED AND Q2106/2-5]                               |
| 2 | these problems [PN: SELECT IF MORE THAN ONE ITEM FROM Q2105/1-10 SELECTED AND Q2106/2-5 FOR MORE THAN ONE ITEM] |

**BASE: REPORT ANY SYMPTOM AT LEAST ONCE IN PAST WEEK (Q2106/2-5)**

**Q2115** How much [PN: DISPLAY Q2110/1: has this problem; PN: DISPLAY Q2110/2: have these problems] interfered with...?

[GRID]

**Q2116**

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Not at all            |
| 2 | Not very much         |
| 3 | Somewhat              |
| 4 | A lot                 |
| 5 | Do not want to answer |

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 [IF Q675/13 DISPLAY: Your work or other responsibilities; ALL OTHERS DISPLAY: Your school work]
- 2 Your relationships with friends
- 3 Your relationships with family members

<b>SECTION 2200: SUBSTANCE USE (CONTEXT)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)****Q2205** In the [past 12 months](#), how often have you ...?

[GRID]

**Q2206**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Every day or almost every day             |
| 2 | Once or a few times a week                |
| 3 | Once or a few times a month               |
| 4 | Once or a few times in the past 12 months |
| 5 | Never in the past 12 months               |
| 6 | Do not want to answer                     |

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- Had a drink of [alcohol](#), like beer, wine, or vodka, other than a few sips
- Smoked a [cigarette](#), even just a puff
- Smoked [marijuana](#) (sometimes called pot)
- Used an [inhalant](#) like whippets, glue, and paints
- Used [prescriptions drugs](#) (such as Oxycontin, Vicodin, Adderall) to get high
- Used [hormones](#) including steroids that were not prescribed for you
- Used any [other kind of drug](#), like speed, heroin or cocaine [ANCHOR]

[RN: YRBS QUESTION]

**BASE: CHILD RESPONDENTS WHO DRANK ALCOHOL (Q2205/1 is Q2206/1-4)****Q2210** How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips? If you are not sure, your best guess is fine.

/\_/\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-current age]  
 999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: CHILD RESPONDENTS WHO DRANK ALCOHOL (Q2205/1 is Q2206/1-4)****Q2225** During the [past 30 days](#), on how many days have you had a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips? If you are not sure, your best guess is fine.

/\_/\_/\_/ days [RANGE: 0 – 30]  
 999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: CHILD RESPONDENTS WHO DRANK ALCOHOL MORE THAN ONCE IN THE PAST 30 DAYS (Q2225 is 1 or more)****Q2215** During the [past 30 days](#), on how many of those days did you have [5 or more](#) drinks of alcohol in a row? If you are not sure, your best guess is fine.

/\_/\_/\_/ days [RANGE: 0 – 30]

999  Do not want to answer

**BASE: CHILD RESPONDENTS WHO HAD A CIGARETTE (Q2205/2 is Q2206/1-4)**

**Q2217** During the **past 30 days**, on how many days did you smoke a cigarette, even just a puff? If you are not sure, your best guess is fine.

/\_\_/\_/ days [RANGE: 0 – 30]

999  Do not want to answer

[RN: YRBS QUESTION]

**BASE: CHILD RESPONDENTS WHO SMOKED MARIJUANA (Q2205/3 is Q2206/1-4)**

**Q2220** How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time? If you are not sure, your best guess is fine.

/\_\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0 – CURRENT AGE]

999  Do not want to answer

<b>SECTION 2300: SELF ESTEEM (CONTEXT)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2305** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

[GRID]

**Q2306**

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Somewhat disagree
- 3 Neither disagree nor agree
- 4 Somewhat agree
- 5 Strongly agree
- 6 Do not want to answer

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 On the whole, I am satisfied with myself
- 2 At times, I think I am no good at all
- 3 I feel that I have a number of good qualities
- 4 I am able to do things as well as most other people
- 5 I feel I do not have much to be proud of
- 6 I certainly feel useless at times
- 7 I feel that I am a person of worth, at least of equal worth to others
- 8 I wish I could have more respect for myself
- 9 All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure
- 10 I take a positive attitude toward myself

**SECTION 2400: INTERNET USE****BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)****Q2405** Now we have some questions about your activities **online**.On a **typical day**, how much time do you go **online** with...?**[GRID] Q2406**

- 1 I have this, but I do not use it to go online
- 2 1 minute to 30 minutes
- 3 More than 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 4 More than 1 hour to 3 hours
- 5 More than 3 hours to 5 hours
- 6 More than 5 hours
- 7 I do not have this
- 8 Do not want to answer

**[RANDOMIZE]**

- 1 A computer at home
- 2 A cell phone
- 3 A computer at school [PN: SUPPRESS IF NOT IN SCHOOL (Q675/13)]
- 4 A video game console (e.g., Wii, Xbox 360, Playstation 3)
- 5 A portable gaming device (e.g., GameBoy Advance, PSP)
- 6 A computer at work

<b>SECTION 2500: PERSONAL SAFETY (THREATS)</b>
--

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS, BUT EXCLUDE IF NON-CONSENTING (Q600/2) (SOFT EXIT QUESTION)**

**Q2505** Do you have your own rules for things you can or cannot do [online](#)? These are rules you make up to keep yourself safe [online](#). For example: "I do not post any pictures."

[RESULTS LABEL: Percent indicating they have rules for things they do and do not do online]

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Do not want to answer

**BASE: QUALIFIED RESPONDENT AND HAS PERSONAL RULES (Q99/1 AND Q2505/1)**

**Q2510** What are your top three rules for [online](#) safety?

- 1. [TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]
- 2. [TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]
- 3. [TEXT BOX] [NON-MANDATORY]

**BASE: QUALIFIED RESPONDENT AND HAS PERSONAL RULES (Q99/1 AND Q2505/1)**

**Q2515** Thinking about the [past 12 months](#), how often have you followed your [online](#) safety rules?

- 1 None of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Half of the time
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 All of the time
- 6 Do not want to answer

**SECTION 2800 IRB**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2560**

Great. You are almost done! Just a few more questions.

How old are you?

/\_/\_/\_/ years old [RANGE: 0-99. NON-MANDATORY]

[PN: If no response is entered, please show the following error message once: **We did not receive your answer for this question. Please enter your response or click the forward arrow below to continue.**]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2730** Where are you doing this survey right now?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 In my bedroom
- 2 In a common room at my home, like the living room or family room
- 3 In a private room at my home, like my parent's home office
- 4 At school
- 5 At a friend's or relative's home
- 6 At a library
- 7 Another location, please specify: [NON-MANDATORY TEXT BOX] [ANCHOR]
- 9 Do not want to answer

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2750** Have there been other people in the room while you were doing this survey? Please select **all** that apply.

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- 1 Yes, other people were in the room who were near the computer and could see the screen if they wanted to
- 2 Yes, other people were in the room, but were away from the computer
- 3 No, I have been alone [E]
- 4 Do not want to answer [E]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2800** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Q2801 [GRID]**

1	2	3	4	5	9
Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat nor disagree	Neither agree agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly want to answer
					Do not

[RANDOMIZE]

- 1 I answered the questions honestly
- 2 It is important to ask teens questions like these
- 3 There were some questions that I did not really understand
- 4 I feel my participation in this survey was valuable

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2825.** Overall, how did the survey questions make you feel?

[REVERSE SCALE]

- 1 Extremely upset
- 2 Very upset
- 3 Upset
- 4 Somewhat upset
- 5 Not at all upset
- 6 Do not want to answer

**BASE: FOUND QUESTIONS UPSETTING (Q2825/1-4)**

**Q2830** You mentioned that some questions in the survey were upsetting. What was upsetting? Your responses will help us create better questions and surveys in the future.

[NON-MANDATORY LARGE TEXT BOX]

[PN: PLEASE SHOW ERROR MESSAGE IF LEFT BLANK: “We did not receive your answer for this question. Please enter your response, or click the forward arrow below to continue.” AFTER ONE WARNING, ALLOW RESPONDENT TO CONTINUE]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4020** [INSERT TIME DATE STAMP]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q2890**

[IF HIGH DEPRESSION SCORE OR RESPONDENT WAS UPSET ((Q2105/1 AND Q2106/5) OR (Q2106/4-5 FOR 5 OR MORE ATTRIBUTES AT Q2105) OR (Q2825/1-3)), DISPLAY THE FOLLOWING:

[DISPLAY IF HIGH DEPRESSION SCORE – WISH WERE DEAD (Q2105/7 and Q2106/5):

Your answers show that you might recently have been thinking about hurting yourself. You should schedule an appointment and talk about these feeling with a health professional as soon as you can.]

[DISPLAY IF HIGH DEPRESSION SCORE – FIVE SYMPTOMS PLUS (Q2106/4-5 FOR 5 OR MORE ATTRIBUTES AT Q2105. DO NOT SHOW THIS TEXT IF TEXT ABOVE IS DISPLAYED (IF Q2105/7 AND Q2106/5):

Your answers indicate that depression is a serious problem for you. It is important that you seek an appointment with a health professional to talk about it with them as soon as you can. A lot of people get depressed and there are good treatments for it.]

[DISPLAY IF RESPONDENT WAS UPSET (Q2825/1-3): You said that some of the questions in this survey upset you. We want you to know that your answers help us understand things that teens are doing so that we can help them live more healthy lives.]

If you have questions about this study, please contact:

- Dr. Michele Ybarra at 1-877-302-6858, ext 801 or [Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org](mailto:Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org).

If you want to talk to someone about how you're feeling, you can:

- Call the Trevor Project Hotline, which provides help for LGBTQ teens (1-800-4-U-TREVOR) or **visit them online at <http://thetrevorproject.org>**.
- Call the National Mental Health Information Center for help finding a mental health professional in your area. Call toll-free at: 1-800-789-2647 or visit them online at <http://www.mentalhealth.org/>. The phone call and information is free.

If you are in serious distress right now (or at any time), such as thinking about hurting yourself, we urge you to contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

[PN:EXTRA LINE INTENTIONAL]

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your time. Your answers are important. They help us learn the good and bad things that youth are experiencing online.

Thank you again for taking this survey.]

[DISPLAY IF RESPONDENT NOT UPSET/HIGH DEPRESSION SCORE (Q2105/7 AND Q2106/NE 5 AND Q2106/NE 4-5 FOR 5 OR MORE ATTRIBUTES AT Q2105 AND Q2525/NE 1-3): You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your time. Your answers are important. They help us learn the good and bad things that youth are experiencing online.

If you have questions about this study, please contact:

- Dr. Michele Ybarra at 1-877-302-6858, ext 801 or [Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org](mailto:Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org).

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Thank you again for taking this survey.]

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

<b>Q59</b>	STATUS OF RESPONDENT (LABELS ALSO USED IN ICW SAMPLE DISPOSITION REPORTS)
29	OVER QUOTA (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
41	SCREENER REFUSAL #1 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
42	SCREENER REFUSAL #2 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
43	SCREENER REFUSAL #3 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
44	SCREENER REFUSAL #4 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
45	SCREENER REFUSAL #5 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
61	NOT QUALIFIED #1 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
62	NOT QUALIFIED #2 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
63	NOT QUALIFIED #3 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
64	NOT QUALIFIED #4 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
65	NOT QUALIFIED #5 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
66	NOT QUALIFIED #6 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
67	NOT QUALIFIED #7 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
68	NOT QUALIFIED #8 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
69	NOT QUALIFIED #9 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
70	NOT QUALIFIED #10 (INSERT DEFINITION AS QXXX/RESPONSE CHOICE)
999	COMPLETE (INSERT DEFINITION THAT MATCHES Q60/1 BELOW)

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

<b>Q60</b>	STATUS OF RESPONDENT (DOES NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN)
1	QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS, QUOTA OPEN
2	PARTIALLY QUALIFIED, QUOTA OPEN
3	QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS, QUOTA CLOSED
4	PARTIALLY QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS, QUOTA CLOSED
5	OVERALL QUOTA CLOSED
6	NOT QUALIFIED

[PN: PLEASE DISPLAY Q4230-4236 ON A HIDDEN TEST SCREEN. SURVEY PROGRAMMERS CONTACT LISA HARMAN FOR HELP. DATA PROCESSING PROGRAMMERS CONTACT CRAIG BAUER]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4230** LENGTH OF INTERVIEW (LOI) COMPUTE

CALCULATE THE LOI AS TIME TAKEN FOR THE ENTIRE SURVEY (Q258 TO END OF SURVEY) – Q119 –Q112

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4231** LENGTH OF INTERVIEW (LOI) TEST

IF LOI (Q4230) IS LESS THAN 8 MINUTES (480 SECONDS) GET CODE 1 OTHERWISE GET CODE 2

- 1 FAILED
- 2 OK

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4232** ILLOGICAL CHOICE CHECK

IF Q670 DOES NOT EQUAL Q2560, GET CODE 1  
IF Q670 EQUALS Q2560, GET CODE 2

- 1 FAILED
- 2 OK

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4233** STRAIGHT LINING CHECK

GET CODE 1 IF THE RESPONDENT STRAIGHT LINED AT Q2305 OTHERWISE GET CODE 2

- 1 FAILED
- 2 OK

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4234** INCOMPLETE RESPONSE AT OPEN END CHECK

GET CODE 1 IF 3 CHARACTERS OR LESS PROVIDED AT Q1605 OTHERWISE GET CODE 2

- 1 FAILED
- 2 OK

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4235** COOKIE CHECK

GET CODE 1 IF COOKIE PRESENT (Q698/1)  
GET CODE 2 IF NO COOKIE PRESENT (Q698/0)

- 1 FAILED
- 2 OK

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q99/1)**

**Q4236** COUNT OF NUMBER OF CHECKS FAILED

COUNT NUMBER OF 'FAILED' (CODE 1) RESPONSES AT Q4231-4235 AND RECORD RESPONSE OF 0-5

0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**RESUME PAGE TEXT FOR GLSEN RECRUITS (Q75/998 AND Q99/1)**

Thanks for participating in The Internet, Health and You Survey! Your answers are very important to us and we hope that you will continue the survey later on.

The special password below was created just for you. [To protect your privacy we do not have access to this password.](#) We cannot email the password to you if you lose it.

Please **email yourself, print out, or write down** the survey link and password below. You will only be able to pick up where you left off if you enter the password below, so it is very important that you record this information.

Survey link: XXX

Password: XXX

When you are ready to return to the survey, click on or copy and paste the survey link into your browser and you will be prompted to type in your password. After you enter your unique password, you will be able to continue taking the survey at the question you left off.

Thanks again for your participation!

**BASE: ELIGIBLE AND DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE (Q600/2)**

**Q3000** Your answers will help us see how those who want to do the survey may be different from those who do not want to do the survey. Can we use your answers for this purpose?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**END PAGE FOR NON-CONSENTING RESPONDENTS (Q600/2)**

Thank you for your time.

**END PAGE FOR CONSENTING AND NON-QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q600/NE 2)**

Thank you for your interest in this survey.

To review selected results from the survey in which you just participated, please click here:

SHOW INSTANT RESULTS LINK

For the next 30 days, you can view updated results by using this link. To do so, copy and paste this link into a document for your future reference.

### APPENDIX III

#### Relationship between Online and In-Person LGBT Contact

	Does not have contact with LGBT people online (Row percentage)	Does have contact with LGBT people online (Row percentage)	Total n (Row percentage)
Does not have contact with LGBT people in person (Row percentage)	109 (30.70%)	246 (69.30%)	355 (100%)
Does have contact with LGBT people in person (Row percentage)	325 (20.26%)	1,279 (79.74%)	1,604 (100%)
Total n (Row percentage)	434 (22.15%)	1,525 (77.85%)	1,959 (100%)

Test of significance:  $\chi^2=18.38$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\Phi=.10$ .

## APPENDIX IV

### Emergent Themes from Focus Groups

Use of the Internet for LGBT Identity Development	Representative Quotations	Cohen's Kappa
<b>Access information</b>		
Puberty/sexuality/sexual attraction	<p>If it wasn't for the internet, I probably wouldn't know that other people were pansexual or felt the same way that I do about this whole affair. I basically stumbled upon it one day, I thought I was bisexual but I wasn't happy with the term, and somewhere I found a listing of all different sexuality terms and pansexuality was on there. I kind of went "That's exactly how I feel." (Caucasian, Suburban, Pansexual, Female, 18)</p> <p>I realized my sexual attraction when for the first time in my life I actually had a crush on someone and that person was a girl. However, to make sure I knew my own feelings I did look it up online and tried to get a more clear picture of what was actually happening. [...] I also used porn as a way to determine my sexuality. 'What was I more attracted to?' In the end, that was the most telling. (Caucasian, Rural, Lesbian, Female, 17)</p> <p>I mostly just read about info that helped me understand more. To me it was helpful but not as helpful as the support my friends gave me. I also used porn as way to help me too. I just kinda wanted to look up some porn to see what I liked and when I was watching it I realized to myself that I thought that both guys and girls were sexually attractive. (Caucasian, Urban, Bisexual, Male, 16)</p>	.95
Connect to in-person resources	<p>The internet actually has helped me; it helped me to find a PFLAG chapter in my area, which I attended, and now, I am going to join a Gay Youth Group held by the same people as the PFLAG meeting. It feels good to /know/ for a fact that there are people out there who are like me who I can talk to in person. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)</p>	.93
Coming out	<p>My life would be worse without the Internet. First off, I would have never found out about PFLAG. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)</p> <p>Some people may be questioning and so might look for resources to figure out what is going on. Some teens may want to come out and need advice on how to do it without getting the most negative response from their parents. (Asian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 17)</p>	.83

<b>Disclosure of LGBT identity</b>	<p>The only things I've done is read peoples coming out stories on some websites to see how it was for them and if I should do it. (Pacific Islander, Urban, Bisexual, Male, 17)</p> <p>I was out online completely except to people who I also knew irl [in real life] for months before I actually came out. I sorta used coming out online as practice. (Caucasian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 16)</p> <p>I tossed the idea out online, to see reactions. Then I actually came out in person after seeing some reactions to the hypothetical question. (Caucasian, Rural, Queer, Female, 15)</p> <p>Online I'm more out there but offline I'm more closed. I wouldn't say I have another identity online just more out. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)</p> <p>I am the same. Because I type or say what is on my mind I don't "come out". From when they meet me I think they assume I am gay and if they ask I just say "yes". If it is online it will say on my networking page that I am gay. I don't flaunt it but it is out there. (Hispanic, Rural, Gay, Male, 17)</p> <p>I'm completely out to my online-only friends on Livejournal, but I'm not out in internet environments that also have people I know in real life in them. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 17)</p>	.97
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<b>Individual, Family, and Contextual Characteristics Associated with Internet Use for LGBT Identity Development</b>	<b>Representative Quotations</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<p>I used to look up information concerning sexuality through Google, but now that I am older, more secure, and more knowledgeable I don't have to. (Caucasian, Suburban, Queer, Female, 18)</p> <p>I kind of figured my sexuality out on my own and mostly offline, but seeing attractive women online also solidified things for me and helped me realize that I'm a lesbian. I chatted a little when I was younger with others of my age who were also questioning, and it was really helpful to give me support and to share stories with. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)</p> <p>It doesn't apply as much now cause I'm like 90% out, but I used to talk almost exclusively about being gay online because I was too freaked out to talk about it in person. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 16)</p>	.87
<b>Gender</b>	<p>I find that it's easier to discuss my sexuality online than in real life. In real life, I generally share that information with girls or other Gay or Bi guys. For whatever reason, I've always been scared to tell straight guys. Online, the people that generally migrate to my profile seem to be gay or bi (something about me? I dunno, lol) and I have no issue. (Caucasian, Suburban, Bisexual, Male, 16)</p>	1.00
<b>Family</b>	<p>I frequently looked up information on puberty, because my parents never really talked to me about it. It would</p>	.94

	have been awkward for me if we had, so we really... didn't. I found out a lot of information at that time, mainly just stuff about what was going on in my body. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)	
<b>School</b>	When I was at school and I was trying to do a report on the sexual revolution. I tried to look up some info on the more sexual side of it and the schools filter blocked out of course so some info to me has been limited by the schools. A lot of health topics are well covered by the schools but they don't seem to teach you a lot about sexual health except in health class. But they only cover that topic for a short while. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 18)	.91
	At school... the blocker they use filters certain words, so I can't see any LGBT sites, or if I have to learn about Breast Cancer, or Sexually Transmitted Diseases for Health or something...I'm short on luck. (Caucasian, Rural, Queer. Female, 15)	
	I'm out everywhere. In the past couple of years I never hid the fact that I was GLBT. I'm really involved with GSAs and local GLBT organizations so I never really found a reason why to hide my sexuality. Plus, my school is really liberal and open-minded so I never had an issue with anyone. (Hispanic, Suburban, Bisexual, Male, 17)	
<b>Locale</b>	I feel a little more comfortable online, I suppose, because I don't have to worry about people ridiculing me for who I am. I am feminine, and I am afraid to let it /all/ out because I live in a Hick town in Alabama, and there are some horrible rednecks around here. (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)	1.00
	I live in a very rural area and it is not really accepted here. Like you could get beaten up or harassed for a long time just for saying something to anyone about it. (Caucasian, Rural, Lesbian, Female, 16)	
<b>Other demographic factors</b>	I'm partial to www.racialicious.com because it focuses a lot on minority statuses like race, gender, and sexuality. It's great. Very compelling topics especially for me because I am in the minority for all three defining factors. (Asian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 17)	1.00
	Through a facebook group I started talking to a woman who was about 26 and gay and she had the same type of religious background and she literally changed my life with the advice she gave me. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 16)	

<b>Reasons/Factors Associated with Internet Use for LGBT Identity Development</b>	<b>Representative Quotations</b>	
<b>Safety online/Fear of reaction or judgment in person</b>	I am more open [online]. I don't have to hide. I can be who I am without fear. I am more adamant about liking girls than I am around my offline friends. I feel like I can say things that I can't offline. [...]. I pretend to be all hetero offline and online I am free to be me. (Caucasian, Rural, Lesbian, Female, 16)	.84
	LGB kids who aren't out irl [in real life] tend to seek help and show their identity more online, though. In that way, the internet helps LGBs my age. It feels safer being out online. Nobody can physically injure you	

	through the computer. (Caucasian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 16)	
<b>Not out in person</b>	It's easier, or at least for me it was, to find out information online than putting myself out there to a friend when I wasn't ready. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 17)	.93
	The internet is basically the best resource in the world for gay (or otherwise identifying) teens. You can find anything and no one has to know you're gay! (Caucasian, Urban, Lesbian, Female, 16)	
	It has helped me connect to the large LGBT community even though I am still in the closet. For example I have joined the HRC and Equality California and I have read many stories which make me feel more connected to the LGBT community than I could ever do in person while I'm in the closet. (Caucasian, Urban, Gay, Male, 16)	
<b>Anonymity</b>	In chatrooms, you're a faceless entity. You can hide. There is no one in front of you to expose who you really are and there is virtually no way of knowing what you really are like. (Asian, Suburban, Bisexual, Female, 17)	.93
	I tend to feel more comfortable being myself online, because if I say "I'm gay." and [you're] mean, I can just go over to the little *block* button. Real life [in person] isn't that easy, say the wrong thing, and you can't really click the back space button. (Hispanic, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)	
<b>More supported online</b>	I am more open online because there are other people who [are] LGB, and we understand each other. Offline I'm only out to friends not to family so it's easier online for that reason. (Caucasian, Rural, Queer, Female, 15)	.88
	I don't really know anyone who is LGBT my age since I'm still in the closet. The internet has, however, let me see that there are other people who are LGBT out there who feel the way I do and make me not as afraid. (Caucasian, Urban, Gay, Male, 16)	
	I asked people when I played video games [...] if this or that was normal. Of course some teased about it and others took it more seriously and helped me through some tough times. Those are the people I considered my friends online. I'm glad they were there cause I would have just made many mistakes in my life. (Pacific Islander, Urban, Bisexual, Male, 17)	
	Many years ago I was contacted by a bisexual boy who was two years older than myself. He saw in a profile that I identified as bisexual then, and we became good friends. At around that time, he began to cross-dress and we are still good friends today. I was a source of support for him when he was going through that transition. (Caucasian, Suburban, Pansexual, Female, 18)	
	After a few experiences in middle school, nothing sexual or anything, just getting thoughts...I started to think I might be gay/bi and so I went onto an online advice community for teens. They had a section for GLBT Concerns and I started posting there, and over time it helped me a lot to come out to everyone I know in 8th grade. And then I became a staff member on that same site! (Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)	

**Control over expression** I may actually be more expressive online just because that's where I show all my different sides online because people have access to blogs, my art, my personal interests, music interests. So people are able to see more of who I am. I would not say I have another identity online, just a more expressed one. (Asian/Middle Eastern, Urban, Lesbian, Female, 18) .87

When I'm online, I can send people definitions, or explain about sex chromosomes and all that in a different way. And when people ask "Well, why not identify as bisexual, then" I explain about different genetic abnormalities, some very good friends of mine who are trans- or cross- gender, and it feels easier. Maybe just because online there are more people who are familiar with pansexuality? I'm not sure why. But it is easier to send articles and resources online to back myself up, than to try and remember all of that in person. (Caucasian, Suburban, Pansexual, Female, 18)

I don't really have any way to say it. I just do it, and I do it when it comes up. That is pretty different than offline. Offline, I take my time and plan it out carefully. I like to do it through writing, because I feel more comfortable in that medium. (Caucasian, Rural, Gay, Male, 18)

<b>Reasons/Factors Associated with Non-Internet Use for LGBT Identity Development</b>	<b>Representative Quotations</b>	
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<b>Intimacy</b>	I really don't come out to people online anymore... I used to just tell them "I'm gay" or let them guess, but I don't see a point in coming out online. Coming out offline, I feel great, exhilarated, ecstatic. I feel like I can be closer with that person because they know that I am gay and they know I am not a "threat" to their masculinity. (16, Caucasian, Suburban, Gay, Male, 16)	.84
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The worst thing is that do some of these people really know me for me? Or do they just know me because we talk sometimes? I don't think there's a connection between us or that bond you create in person. (17, Urban, Male)

<b>Control over expression</b>	I feel more comfortable being myself offline because I find it easier to show individuality in person, rather than online. (Hispanic, Suburban, Bisexual, Male, 17)	.93
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I actually think I'm more out in person, because of the way I look and speak and walk etc. Unless it comes up I don't say it, because people usually know, I don't try and hide it. In person I don't really have to come out because most people know just looking at me. (Hispanic, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 18)

I'm probably more open offline. I'm not really sure why. I guess I never know who from my family could find stuff online, whereas words are easier to deny. (Caucasian, Suburban, Lesbian, Female, 16)