

* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses may be available by contacting CIPHR for further information.



Online and Offline Bullying and Social Support: Predictors of Mental Well-Being for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth

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About GLSEN

GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

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About GLSEN Research

GLSEN Research supports the organization's mission by conducting original research on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in K-12 education and evaluating GLSEN programs and initiatives.

The Department also assists chapter and student leaders and other safe school advocates in conducting local research and evaluation to document, promote and improve local efforts.



LGBT Youth: Challenges & Supports

- Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth experience high levels of bullying and harassment.¹
- Victimization is related to several negative outcomes, including worse mental health for this population.²
- Social support, including LGBT-specific supports, are related to better outcomes.³

Sources: ¹ Kosciw et al., 2010 ² D'Augelli et al., 2002; Gruber & Fineran, 2008; Russell & Joyner, 2001 ³ Szalacha, 2003; Ueno, 2005

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LGBT Youth Online: Risks & Benefits

- Possible risks: Cyberbullying not uncommon for LGBT youth.⁴
- Possible benefits: Internet may serve protective function for LGBT youth - they may seek out support they may be lacking in offline lives.⁵

Sources: ⁴ Blumenfeld & Cooper, 2010; Kosciw et al., 2010 ⁵ Baams et al., 2011; Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Paradis, 2010

LGBT Youth Online: Risks & Benefits

- Little information about associated outcomes of LGBT youth's experiences online.
- Research on general population of adolescents found online harassment predicted depressive symptoms.⁶
- Studies among general population of older youth have found that connecting with people online → increased perceived social support, higher self-esteem, lower depression.⁷

Sources: ⁶ Ybarra, 2004 ⁷ Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Shaw & Grant, 2002

Hypotheses

- H1: Bullying (offline and online) related to poorer well-being
- H2: Online social support (general and LGBT-specific) related to greater well-being, above and beyond offline supports
- H3: Offline social support (general and LGBT-specific) related to greater well-being

Sample

- LGBT subsample from Teen Health & Technology Survey, restricted for analyses (N= 1,651)

Sample Demographics			
	%		%
Gender		Race/Ethnicity	
Male non-transgender	37.3	White	66.2
Female non-transgender	41.1	Hispanic	14.6
Transgender	9.9	Mixed Racial background	7.5
Other gender identity	11.7	African American/Black	3.9
		Asian or Pacific Islander	4.0
Sexual Orientation		Native American or Alaskan Native	2.0
Gay/lesbian	63.1	Other race	1.8
Bisexual	33.2		
Other sexual orientation	3.7	Mean age: 16.15	

MEASURES - IVs

Bullying

Frequency of being bullied in past 12 months
(0 = Never, 1 = Once or a Few Times, 2 = More than a Few Times)

- Offline
- Online

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MEASURES - IVs

Online

General Social Support

- Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): modified, specific to online friends
 - 4 items, Likert-type scale (1 = Very Strongly Agree . . . 7 = Very Strongly Disagree)
 - Example: "These friends really try to help me."
 - Note: mean substitution for respondents with no online friends and in analyses, control for whether have online friends or not

LGBT-Specific Support

- Frequency of using Internet to talk or connect with other LGBT people
(1 = Never in the Past 12 Months . . . 5 = Every Day or Almost Every Day)

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MEASURES - IVs

Offline

General Social Support

- Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): modified, specific to offline friends

LGBT-Specific Support

- Participation in LGBT-related student club, e.g., Gay-Straight Alliance
(0 = Don't Attend/Don't Have One, 1 = Attend)
Controlling for having a GSA
- Participation in LGBT community youth group
(0 = Don't Attend/Don't Have One, 1 = Attend)
Controlling for having a Group

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MEASURES - DVs

DepressionCenter for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D):
Modified

- 10 items, (1 = Not at all or less than 1 day in last week . . . 5 = Nearly every day for 2 weeks)
- Example: "I lost interest in my usual activities"

Self-Esteem

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

- 10 items, Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree)
- Example: "I feel that I have a lot of good qualities."

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Ordinary Least Squares Hierarchical Regression:

The contribution of bullying, online supports, and offline supports to mental well-being

DVs: Depression, Self-Esteem

Step 1: Control variables (Internet Use, Demographics)

Step 2: Bullying

- Offline
- Online

Step 3: Online Support

- General
- LGBT-Specific

Step 4: Offline Support

- General
- LGBT-Specific

Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Depression on Bullying, Online, and Offline Supports

	Depression		
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	100***		
	F(12,1592) = 15.905		
Time Spent Online at Home		.121***	.024
Have Online Friend		.087**	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		.231***	.030
Transgender ^a		.278***	.029
Other Gender ^a		.126***	.025
Bisexual ^a		-.095**	.028
Other Sexual Orientation ^a		-.157***	.027
Age		.012	.025
Offline Outness		-.036	.030
Online Outness		.007	.032
Having a GSA		.008	.032
Having an LGBT Community Grp		.005	.026
Step 2: Bullying	.053***		
	F(14,1590) = 21.727		
In-Person Bullying		.245***	.028
Online Bullying		.036	.027
Step 3: Online Supports	.009***		
	F(16,1588) = 20.352		
General Support		-.043	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.077**	.027
Step 4: Offline Supports	.006**		
	F(17,1633) = 18.040		
General Support		-.078**	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.068*	.034
Participation in GSA		-.012	.028
Participation in Comm Grp		-.012	.028

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

	Depression		
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	100***		
	F(12,1592) = 15.905		
Time Spent Online at Home		.121***	.024
Have Online Friend		.087**	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		.231***	.030
Transgender ^a		.278***	.029
Other Gender ^a		.126***	.025
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Other Sexual Orientation ^a		-.157***	.027
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Offline Outness		-.036	.030
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Step 2: Bullying	.053***		
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LGBT-Specific Support		-.068*	.034
Participation in GSA		-.012	.028
Participation in Comm Grp		-.012	.028

Bullying → Higher levels of depression

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

	Depression		
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	100***		
	F(12,1592) = 15.905		
Time Spent Online at Home		.121***	.024
Have Online Friend		.087**	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		.231***	.030
Transgender ^a		.278***	.029
Other Gender ^a		.126***	.025
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Step 2: Bullying	.053***		
	F(14,1590) = 21.727		
In-Person Bullying		.245***	.028
Online Bullying		.036	.027
Step 3: Online Supports	.009***		
	F(16,1588) = 20.352		
General Support		-.043	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.077**	.027
Step 4: Offline Supports	.006**		
	F(17,1633) = 18.040		
General Support		-.078**	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.068*	.034
Participation in GSA		-.012	.028
Participation in Comm Grp		-.012	.028

Online supports → Lower levels of depression

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

Depression			
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	1.00***		
	F(12,1592) = 15.905		
Time Spent Online at Home		.121***	.024
Have Online Friend		.087***	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		.231***	.030
Transgender ^b		.278***	.029
Other Gender ^c		.126***	.025
Bisexual ^d		-.095***	.028
Other Sexual Orientation ^e		-.157***	.027
Age		.012	.025
Offline Outness		-.036	.030
Online Outness		.007	.032
Having a GSA		.008	.032
Having an LGBT Community Grp		.005	.026
Step 2: Bullying	.653***		
	F(14,1590) = 21.727		
In-Person Bullying		.245***	.028
Online Bullying		.036	.027
Step 3: Online Supports	.009***		
	F(16,1588) = 20.352		
General Support		-.043	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.077***	.027
Step 4: Offline Supports	.006***		
	F(17,1633) = 18.040		
General Support		-.076***	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.068**	.034
Participation in GSA		-.068**	.034
Participation in Comm Grp		-.012	.028

Offline supports → Lower levels of depression

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Self-Esteem on Bullying, Online, and Offline Supports

Self-Esteem			
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	0.95***		
	F(12,1592) = 14.976		
Time Spent Online at Home		-.133***	.024
Have Online Friend		.011	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		-.269***	.030
Transgender ^b		-.226***	.029
Other Gender ^c		-.152***	.025
Bisexual ^d		.081**	.028
Other Sexual Orientation ^e		.065*	.027
Age		-.052*	.025
Offline Outness		.068*	.028
Online Outness		-.034	.032
Having a GSA		-.002	.032
Having an LGBT Community Grp		.028	.026
Step 2: Bullying	.054***		
	F(14,1590) = 21.138		
In-Person Bullying		-.200***	.028
Online Bullying		-.101***	.027
Step 3: Online Supports	.006**		
	F(16,1588) = 19.380		
General Support		.023	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		.070**	.027
Step 4: Offline Supports	.007**		
	F(17,1633) = 17.372		
General Support		.089***	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.067*	.034
Participation in GSA		-.067*	.034
Participation in Comm Grp		-.008	.028

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

Self-Esteem			
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	0.95***		
	F(12,1592) = 14.976		
Time Spent Online at Home		-.133***	.024
Have Online Friend		.011	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		-.269***	.030
Transgender ^b		-.226***	.029
Other Gender ^c		-.152***	.025
Bisexual ^d		.081**	.028
Other Sexual Orientation ^e		.065*	.027
Age		-.052*	.025
Offline Outness		.068*	.028
Online Outness		-.034	.032
Having a GSA		-.002	.032
Having an LGBT Community Grp		.028	.026
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	F(14,1590) = 21.138		
In-Person Bullying		-.200***	.028
Online Bullying		-.101***	.027
Step 3: Online Supports	.006**		
	F(16,1588) = 19.380		
General Support		.023	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		.070**	.027
Step 4: Offline Supports	.007**		
	F(17,1633) = 17.372		
General Support		.089***	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.067*	.034
Participation in GSA		-.067*	.034
Participation in Comm Grp		-.008	.028

Bullying → Lower self-esteem

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Self-Esteem on Bullying, Online, and Offline Supports

Self-Esteem			
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	0.95***		
	F(12,1592) = 14.976		
Time Spent Online at Home		-.133***	.024
Have Online Friend		.011	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		-.269***	.030
Transgender ^b		-.226***	.029
Other Gender ^c		-.152***	.025
Bisexual ^d		.081**	.028
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	F(17,1633) = 17.372		
General Support		.089***	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		-.067*	.034
Participation in GSA		-.067*	.034
Participation in Comm Grp		-.008	.028

Online supports → Greater self-esteem

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

	Self Esteem		
	ΔAdj R ²	B	SE _B
Step 1: Control Variables	.85***		
	F(12, 1592) = 14.976		
Time Spent Online at Home		-.133***	.024
Have Online Friend		.011	.025
Female (non-transgender) ^a		-.269***	.030
Transgender ^a		-.226***	.029
Other Gender ^a		-.152***	.025
Bisexual ^b		.081**	.028
Other Sexual Orientation ^b		.065*	.027
Age		-.052*	.025
Offline Outness		.066*	.028
Online Outness		-.034	.032
Having a GSA		-.002	.032
Having an LGBT Community Grp		.028	.028
Step 2: Bullying	.054***		
	F(14, 1590) = 21.138		
In-Person Bullying		-.200***	.028
Online Bullying		-.101***	.027
Step 3: Online Supports	.008**		
	F(16, 1588) = 19.380		
General Support		.023	.024
LGBT-Specific Support		.070**	.027
Step 4: Offline Supports	.007**		
	F(17, 1633) = 17.372		
General Support		-.090***	.024
LGBT-Specific Support			
Participation in GSA		-.067*	.034
Participation in Comm Grp		-.008	.028

Offline supports →
Greater self-esteem

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; ^aReference Group = Male (non-transgender), ^bReference Group = Gay/Lesbian

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Summary of Findings

- Bullying related to poorer well-being
 - Both offline and online related to self-esteem
 - Only offline related to depression
- Online supports related to better well-being, above and beyond offline supports.
 - LGBT-specific related, but general online support not related
- Offline supports related to better well-being.
 - Both general supports and GSA participation related

Limitations

- Cross-sectional data
- Can only generalize to LGBT youth who identify as such on a survey
- Measures of LGBT-specific support may be limited
- General/LGBT-specific measures of support are not parallel measures of support

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Conclusion & Implications

- Both offline and online bullying are related to worse mental well-being for LGBT youth.
- Bullying prevention should address online bullying, evaluation research should assess effectiveness of existing bullying prevention programs in preventing online bullying.
- Different types of supports (general and LGBT-specific) may function differently offline and online.

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Conclusion & Implications

- Online supports can play an important role in promoting well-being among LGBT youth. Fostering online connections between LGBT youth can serve an important function.
- In-person general social support appears to be helpful for LGBT youth, efforts should be made to increase quality of peer relationships.
- Increasing access to student-led clubs addressing LGBT issues can be a key step toward improving LGBT youth's well-being.

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Future Research

- What accounts for differences in functions of online/offline and general/LGBT-specific supports? Why is offline general social support related to positive well-being, but not online?
- Does social support moderate the relationship between bullying and mental well-being for LGBT youth?
- Does online support matter for more isolated groups of LGBT youth (e.g., rural youth, youth who are not out)?

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Future Research

- How are online and offline bullying related to one another, and how might this relationship change the utility of online and offline support?
- What are functions and benefits of community groups for LGBT youth?
- What is the role of online and offline supports for other outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, risk behaviors)?

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