

LGBTQ YOUTH: AN EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE COMING OUT PROCESS  
AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

by

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Abstract

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This study explored the relationship between coming out and spiritual intelligence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. An online survey that utilized the Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ) and the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI) was used to investigate this relationship. Spiritual intelligence is a relatively new concept in the social work field as a method of healing and growing. This can, however, play a potentially important role in empowering LGBTQ youth to overcome negative experiences associated with the coming out process. The results of this study indicate no significant relationship between the GIQ and SISRI. There are, however, several significant findings among demographic variables and the two questionnaires. The most intriguing outcomes were the significant differences in SISRI among religious backgrounds, current affiliations, and religious involvement. Future research is needed to investigate the complexities of spiritual intelligence among LGBTQ youth.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
List of Illustrations.....	viii
List of Tables .....	ix
Chapter 1 Prologue- A Personal Story.....	1
Chapter 2 Introduction.....	3
2.1 Benefits to the Social Service Providers .....	4
Chapter 3 Literature Review.....	5
3.1 Definition of Terms .....	5
3.2 Sexual Orientation Development Theory .....	7
3.2.1 HIF Stages.....	8
3.2.2. Critiques of HIF .....	10
3.3 Spiritual Intelligence Theory.....	12
3.3.1 King’s Theory of Spiritual Intelligence .....	13
3.3.2. Earlier Theorists .....	15
3.3.3 Conclusion .....	19
3.4 Coming Out Experience .....	19
3.5 LGBTQ and Adversity .....	21
3.5.1 Depression and Mental Health .....	22
3.5.2 Bullying .....	23
3.5.3 Drugs and Alcohol .....	24
3.5.4 Homelessness .....	25
3.6 LGBTQ Spirituality and Religion .....	26
3.7 Protective Factors and the Importance of Spiritual Intelligence.....	28
Chapter 4 Methods.....	29

4.1 Participants .....	29
4.2 Recruitment.....	30
4.3 Measures .....	32
4.3.1 Descriptive Data .....	32
4.4 Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ) .....	33
4.5 Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory.....	34
4.6 Open-Response Question .....	35
Chapter 5 Procedures .....	36
5.1 Instructions to Youth .....	36
5.2 How and When Informed Consent Gathered.....	36
5.3 Debriefing.....	36
Chapter 6 Results.....	37
6.1 Descriptive Statistics .....	37
6.2 GIQ.....	38
6.2.1 Age .....	39
6.2.2 Sexual Orientation .....	44
6.2.3 Religious Background and Current Religious Affiliation .....	44
6.2.4 Out to Family and Friends .....	45
6.2.5 Years Out to Self, Friends and Family .....	45
6.3 SISRI .....	46
6.3.1 Sexual Orientation .....	46
6.3.2 Religious Background.....	46
6.3.3 Current Religious Affiliation .....	50
6.3.4 Attend Religious Gatherings.....	51
6.3.5 Spiritual Level .....	52
6.3.6 Continuous-Level Variables.....	53

6.4 GIQ and SISRI .....	55
Chapter 7 Discussion .....	61
7.1 Results Discussion .....	61
7.1.1 GIQ .....	61
7.1.2 SISRI .....	64
7.1.3 GIQ and SISRI.....	67
7.2 Limitations .....	68
7.3 Implications for Policy and Practice .....	71
7.4 Implications for Research.....	72
7.5 Summary.....	74
Appendix A Dimensions Used to Describe Stages of Homosexual Identity Formation By Vivienne Cass .....	75
Appendix B Facebook Page Screenshot .....	79
Appendix C Twitter Page Screenshot .....	81
Appendix D Recruitment Text: Survey Announcements for Websites.....	83
Appendix E LGBTQ Youth Survey .....	88
Appendix F Figure 6.1 GIQ and Sexual Orientation .....	99
Appendix G Figure 6.2 GIQ and Current Religious Affiliation .....	101
Appendix H Figure 6.3 GIQ And Out to Friends .....	103
Appendix I Figure 6.4 SISRI and Attending Religious Gatherings.....	105
Appendix J Figure 6.5 Mean SISRI Across GIQ Stages.....	107
Appendix K Internal Review Board Approval .....	109
Appendix L Internal Review Board Minor Modification .....	112
References .....	115
Biographical Information.....	119

## List of Illustrations

Figure	Page
6.1 GIQ and Sexual Orientation .....	99
6.2 GIQ and Current Religious Affiliation .....	101
6.3 GIQ and Out to Friends. ....	103
6.4 SISRI and Attending Religious Gatherings. ....	105
6.5 Mean SISRI across GIQ Stages. ....	107



## List of Tables

Table	Page
4.1 Descriptive Data.....	32
6.1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample.....	40
6.2 Frequency of Sexual Orientation by Gender .....	42
6.3 Select Demographics by Years Out.....	43
6.4 Mean Differences in Age by GIQ Stages .....	44
6.5 Years Out by GIQ.....	47
6.6 Cross Tabulation of GIQ and Variables .....	48
6.7 Correlation between SISRI and Continuous-Level Demographic Variables.....	55
6.8 Mean Differences in SISRI by GIQ Stages .....	56
6.9 Mean Differences in SISRI and Subscales by Demographic Variables .....	57
6.10 Mean Differences in SISRI Subscales by GIQ Stages .....	60

## Chapter 1

### Prologue- A Personal Story

Growing up as a lesbian non-Christian in Texas was not easy. I attended public schools through high school then immediately left for North Carolina to a small private Quaker college tucked away in the small city of Greensboro. There was a little bubble of hippie queers within the college who embraced all varieties of gender expressions and sexual orientations. It was here within the Quaker teachings and weekly Buddhist meditation groups that I began to comb through my spiritual beliefs.

I grew up in a Unitarian Universalist church that challenged my spiritual development by *not* providing me with a set of answers to satiate my desire to find life's meaning and explore my curiosity of religions. My home and church life was open to this exploration and gave me a path to explore by not defining one for me. This was in stark contrast to my school setting and popular media. This dissonance was stressful at times when I was face-to-face with peers who questioned my soul's salvation. It was this path, however, that created the chain of events that followed in my college years.

I began exploring Buddhism in the academic world, which opened my eyes to the amazing phenomena of human existence. I traveled through India, Bhutan, and Tibet and was faced with living breathing Buddhism in practice. Here my childhood belief that all religions are similar at the core was validated. I returned to the states no more Buddhist than Quaker or Unitarian. I was filled, now, with the passion to look at life through the lenses provided by these religions.

As for the development of my sexual orientation, I cannot say that the experience could be separated from my spiritual development. As I gained more intelligence in my spiritual self, I grew into my true sexual orientation. I say true orientation because I struggled for years flipping back and forth from the identity of a

bisexual and a lesbian. As my spiritual path developed, I became continuously more comfortable with my whole self.

I was inspired to explore the relationship between spiritual intelligence and sexual orientation development because of this connection I experienced through my own development. This relationship can be tumultuous for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) persons when faced with religions that conflict with their true self. It is important to explore how this relationship impacts LGBTQ development.

## Chapter 2

### Introduction

The LGBTQ community is widely diverse and accounts for a percentage of every culture, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, political and religious affiliations, and etcetera. This study sought to explore the relationship between the identity development process (i.e. coming out) and levels of spiritual intelligence in LGBTQ youth. There are studies that support that spiritual intelligence leads to more positive life outcomes like less engagement in drugs, alcohol, risky sexual behaviors, and an increase in academic performance (Lerner, Roser & Phelps, 2008; Smith & Home, 2008; Tan, 2008). Few, though, have examined this relationship solely among LGBTQ youth (Williams, 2004; Johnston & Stewart, 2011). High rates of victimization in LGBTQ youth lead to depression, substance abuse, suicide and other self-destructive behaviors (McDermott, Roen & Scourfield, 2008; Russell, et al., 2011; Marshal, et al., 2008; Lui & Mustanski, 2012). The coming out process, in particular, can be a stressful experience for these youth (Lui & Mustanski). Due to the vulnerable status of this population, it is critical to explore how to decrease negative life stressors.

Despite the potential protective effects of spirituality, it has been under-explored, perhaps because the majority of LGBTQ youth face religious discrimination (Schuck & Liddle, 2001; HRC, 2012). Spirituality is a protective factor that can positively influence a youth's life. This protective factor can be cultivated through introspection and without dependence on factors outside of their control. In a school setting, for example, having a Gay Straight Alliance is a protective factor that influences positive outcomes for LGBTQ youth (Heck, Flentje & Cochran, 2011); however, this may be a moot factor for youth who attend schools without supportive networks. The current study, aims to address this gap in literature by focusing on spirituality rather than other external protective factors. The

research question is whether or not there is a significant relationship among sexual identity development stages and spiritual intelligence levels. The hypothesis of this study is whether a greater spiritual intelligence was significantly related to a more advanced stage of coming out.

## 2.1 Benefits to the Social Service Providers

Creating research for service providers is an important endeavor as many programs and services are unable to meet the unique needs of the LGBTQ population. For example, many drop in shelters are not set up for nonheterosexual individuals and can create stressful or even harmful situations for the LGBTQ people (Yu, 2010). The more research generated to explain and explore the LGBTQ youth experience, the more able providers will be to serve them appropriately. Providing supportive methods of spiritual enrichment within social service programs could be a positive influence for youth who are in the primary coming out stages.

In a national survey conducted in 2012, more than 10,000 youth described themselves as LGBTQ (HRC, 2012). Thus, this is a substantial minority population in the United States. As stated in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, social workers should seek to “to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability” (p. 1). In order to competently work with LGBTQ youth, social workers and other service providers would benefit from more research examining spirituality as a protective factor.

## Chapter 3

### Literature Review

#### 3.1 Definition of Terms

When defining the LGBTQ community, it is necessary to first define gender identity. *Gender identity* is based on how an individual expresses his/her gender personally and socially (Tate, 2012). This means that a person who feels she or he is a woman would have a gender identity as female. Tate emphasizes the importance of understanding that it matters more how an individual feels on the inside than what other people are interpreting on the outside.

*Lesbians* are females who are sexually attracted to other females; *gay* is defined as males who are sexually attracted to other males; *bisexual* individuals are sexually attracted to both males and females (Tate, 2012).

*Transgender* is a complicated umbrella term that represents a variety of categories. Transgender is “inclusive of all people who transgress current conceptualizations of binary sex and gender” (Davidson, 2007, p. 67). *Transsexuals* fall under this umbrella, which means individuals who feel that they were born into the wrong biological sex. Therefore, their gender identities are different from their biological sex.

*Genderqueers* also fall under the transgender family. Genderqueers are individuals who redefine themselves outside of male or female identity, not entirely one or the other gender (Tate, 2012).

The final “Q” in this acronym stands for *Questioning*. Questioning is an important component of this study due to its transitory nature. Questioning is part of the coming out process when individuals consider their sexual orientation and gender expression (Poteat, Aragon, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). Many children and youth experience this

stage as they are realizing their LGBTQ identity and may linger here for any length of time.

*Coming out* is short for “coming out of the closet,” which is a phrase coined to describe the process in which an individual realizes that she or he is not heterosexual, and begins to explore their sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2012). This exploration for many people means talking to close friends and family about their sexual orientation. One author poetically describes the process as “an act of courage, and an act of love; it means relinquishing out self-protection, casting off the illusion of “security,” and allowing ourselves to be who we are, regardless of what anyone else says or thinks we should be or do” (De la Huerta, 1999, p. 158). Coming out takes time and introspection, often providing individuals with liberating experiences even in the face of scrutiny.

*Spirituality* and *religiosity* are two terms used in this study, which are vital to disassociate and define clearly. For the purpose of this study, *religion* is defined as “the social institution developed to nourish, manage, or control how persons explore spirit” (Lerner, Roeser & Phelps, 2008, p. viii). The reason this definition will be used is because it clearly states that religion is referring to the institution of belief systems, whereas spirituality is not institutional. *Religiosity* is a “set of behaviours (social or private, including rituals), values, and attitudes that are based on previously established religious doctrine (including stories and symbols) and institutionalized organization” (King, 2008, p. 54). *Spirituality* is defined as “an unbounded set of personal drives, behaviours, experiences, values, and attitudes which are based on a quest for existential understanding, meaning, purpose, and transcendence” (King, p. 54).

*Spiritual intelligence* is defined as “a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent

aspects of one's existence, leading to such outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent self, and mastery of spiritual states" (King, 2008, p. 56).

It is important to understand these terms as one enters into the Literature Review. The LGBTQ community can be misread if professionals and communities do not understand the intricacies of each LGBTQ individual. These definitions will guide the discussion about spirituality and the gay identity development process.

### 3.2 Sexual Orientation Development Theory

The first theoretical framework applied in this study is the theory of sexual orientation development. The most widely referenced theorist on the development of sexual orientation is Viviane Cass. Cass is a Clinical Psychologist who obtained a Bachelor and Master of Psychology and a Ph.D. in Philosophy in 1986 (Cass, 2012). In 1979, Cass published the theoretical model, Homosexual Identity Formation (HIF), in which she established six identifiable stages that each non-heterosexual person experiences during the coming out process. In doing so, Cass revolutionized how many researchers understand this process. Other researchers during this time focused less on the process of sexual identity formation and more on identifying the various categories of identity. This important delineation separates HIF from other homosexual sexual identity theories presented during this time and since.

HIF is based on the interpersonal congruency theory meaning that "movement from one stage of homosexual identity formation to another is motivated by the incongruency that exists in a person's environment, the result of assigning homosexual meaning to a person's own feelings, thoughts, or behavior" and that changes in development "occur when a person attempts to resolve the inconsistency between perception of self and others" (Cass, 1979, p. 220). Secord and Backman (1961)



presented this theory emphasizing that an individual's behavior may change depending on the social situation, and that an individual's behavior is always connected to the behaviors of others. HIF theory assumes that identity is formed through a developmental process. The "locus for stability of, and change in, behavior lies in the interaction process that occurs between individuals and their environment" (Cass, p. 219).

Cass constructed the HIF from her work with male and female homosexuals over a period of several years. After constructing sixteen dimensions believed to classify the identity formation, Cass (1984) tested the HIF model on 109 males and 69 females through the Stage Allocation Measure and Homosexual Identity Questionnaire. See Appendix A for a detailed table of the sixteen dimensions. The Stage Allocation Measure allowed the participants to self-identify the stage that most reflected their current identity after reading seven descriptive paragraphs. The Homosexual Identity Questionnaire was a 210-item survey that posed questions to score individuals into a stage. This gave Cass the ability to compare the two scores and see with which stages the participants identified. The results reflected that participants followed her predicted stages in the order she hypothesized. Cass also found that the Stage descriptions correlated to the survey responses.

### *3.2.1 HIF Stages*

The six stages of gay identity development are: (1) Identity Confusion, (2) Identity Comparison, (3) Identity Tolerance, (4) Identity Acceptance, (5) Identity Pride, and (6) Identity Synthesis. In any of these stages an individual may experience Identity Foreclosure, when she or he chooses to stay in one stage or stop evaluating their identity altogether.

Identity confusion describes the stage of uncertainty when a person tries to learn more about his or her sexuality but is still uncomfortable with the idea of being

homosexual (Cass). Identity Comparison is when individuals move into a slightly more accepting view of their sexuality where they may feel a level of self-acceptance, yet do not condone homosexual behaviors. Identity Tolerance occurs when people begin to seek out other homosexuals and build a sense of community. At this stage they cannot yet accept who they are, rather they are tolerating the possible. They may also begin to disclose their sexuality to other homosexuals.

In the final three stages of HIF, the person accepts and integrates the LGBTQ identity into his or her life. Identity Acceptance transpires when an individual is able to accept his or her sexuality, interacts with more people with the same identity, and rejects those who are hateful toward their culture. At this stage the individual may begin to selectively come out to heterosexuals. Identity Pride is marked by a growing sense of pride in who one is, along with a growing anger for homophobia. If the individual receives too many negative reactions to coming out, he/she may not be able to move into the next stage; rather he/she may experience Identity Foreclosure. Identity Synthesis occurs when the person is able to see heterosexuality as a positive identity in others. The anger for heterosexuality is relieved and the individual is no longer constrained by his/her gay identity.

Individuals begin and complete the process at different ages and some may never fully complete the process. There is no universal timeframe for how long it takes to develop one's gay identity or an estimated start age at which LGBTQ individuals begin the process; however, it commonly occurs in adolescence (Cox, Dewale, van Houtte & Vincke, 2011). In a recent empirical study, a relationship was found between age and identity development (Halpin & Allen, 2008) using the Gay Identity Questionnaire (QIQ), which measures each stage suggested by Cass, on 425 males whose age ranged from 12 to 64 years ( $M=29.2$ ). The average age for individuals in Stage 1 was 25.62 ( $n=13$ ),

whereas the average age for Stage 6 was 31.12 (n=163). Cass (1979) also notes that age is a critical component of the development process, as older individuals may be more able to cope with moving through the identity stages. Brady and Busse (1994) found that as LGBTQ individuals advanced through the HIF stages, they reported higher levels of acceptance and happiness with their identity.

Brady and Busse (1994) also discovered that differences within the first three stages and within the last three stages were minimal; therefore, they recommended using only two stages rather than six. In a later study; however, Halpin and Allen (2008) found that the two middle stages of HIF were correlated with more distress than the two earlier and two later stages. It may be that the two middle stages are important, because they signify the experience of moving from self-discovery of identity to disclosure of identity to others (i.e., the coming out process). Cass (1984), herself, acknowledged that the first two stages and final two stages had only slight differences, suggesting that one could look at the development in four stages instead of six. She warns though that this finding is possibly due to her scoring being inefficient at measuring the differences between the stage groups. She therefore emphasizes the six-stage theory.

### 3.2.2. Critiques of HIF

Degges-White, Rice and Meyers (2000) argue that the original model was based too heavily on the perspectives of gay men and therefore is unable to be equally applied to lesbians. They interviewed twelve lesbians and found some limiting support that this model could apply to the lesbian population. They also found, however, that some lesbians skipped over stages completely or experienced the stages in non-sequential order, making it difficult to use Cass's model as *designed*.

Levine (1997) also found discrepancies when using the HIF with 102 lesbians. Levine discovered that lesbians who identified with Stage 5 were significantly younger

than those in Stages 4 and 6. While Levine saw higher self-esteem and sense of basic identity in participants in Stage 6 compared to Stage 5, and higher well-adjusted levels in Stage 6 compared to Stage 4, it may be due to age-related experiences and not the level of identity development. While the participants could be categorized, the linear model that Cass proposed may not be accurately measuring the lesbian experience.

Kaufman and Johnson (2004) argued that Cass's model implies that if an individual were to stop moving through the stages or stop reevaluating their identity all together, that this is a sign of an inability to cope. They suggest that this view may not be applicable to today's society. Some may skip around stages, stay in an early stage, or abandon reevaluation all together, and this may be an adaptable trait depending on the individual. For example, if a lesbian is selectively out to her community, this is considered Identity Acceptance (Stage 4). She could, however, be a fully functioning happy adult and share qualities with those in Identity Synthesis (Stage 6). Kaufman and Johnson pondered if selective disclosure would be a negative trait in today's society and therefore suggested that the HIF model may not take a full picture of the LGBTQ experience today.

There is, however, a critical part of the framework that is overlooked in this argument. Cass (1979) states that each individual has a private and public identity, acknowledging that there are some who may act differently depending on their environment. As one moves through the stages of HIF, the public and private identity become more uniform, until Identity Synthesis when the identities are nearly indistinguishable (Cass). From this theoretical framework, Cass would argue that a person who is selectively out, depending on private or public settings, has foreclosed his or her identity prior to completing the process. This reflects how her model rests within the interpersonal congruency theory wherein "the individual strives to achieve and to maintain congruency" (Backman & Secord, 1962, p. 322). Cass would argue that the

lesbian who is selectively out has not reached congruency between her public and private identity. In essence, this development model is important to formulate the completely cohesive homosexual identity (Cass).

There will undoubtedly be different perspectives on what a developmental process looks like for the LGBTQ population, which is even more greatly complicated when looking across the varied genders, cultures, ages, etc. This is why Cass (1979) offers HIF as a guide, with clear expectations that myriad situations and personal differences will impact each individual's identity development. Cass's linear perspective has yet to be reformulated in the eyes of Kaufman and Johnson's critique of HIF and with the little empirical research on a new form of development, many continue to utilize the HIF model. For the purpose of this research, the HIF model is essential to determining if there are clear patterns to the stage with which most LGBTQ youth identify.

### 3.3 Spiritual Intelligence Theory

The second theoretical framework utilized in this investigation is the theory of spiritual intelligence. Human intelligence has been theorized upon across the centuries. In the early 1900s, theorist began to create methods through which to measure intelligence (King, 2008), and measures such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales have been used to measure intelligence for decades (King; Terman, 1916).

The conversation of *spiritual* intelligence began more recently. King's (2008) theory of intelligence and measurement for spiritual intelligence is used in this study. Prior to King, only two theorists developed scales on which to measure this intelligence (King). Nasel (2004) created the Spiritual Intelligence Scale (SIS) a seventeen-item scale in his doctoral dissertation and Amram and Dryer (2007) constructed the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) an 83-item scale and a self-report form with twenty-two subscales. Nasel focused on measuring spiritual intelligence in Christian, New Age, and

popular individualistic spirituality, or those who take separate paths to fit their spiritual interests, participants in hopes to validate the SIS.

Amram and Dryer (2007) argue that the SIS is limited as it only reflects on Christian, New Age and popular individualistic spirituality perspectives, and also leaves out important properties of spiritual intelligence, like how an individual may be able to problem solve through prayer or meditation. The ISIS was constructed to more fully incorporate a variety of spiritual intelligence aspects (Amram & Dryer). After Amram (2007) conducted a grounded theory assessment of spiritual intelligence, five main scales (Meaning, Consciousness, Grace, Transcendence, and Truth) and twenty-two subscales (Beauty, Discernment, Egolessness, Equanimity, Freedom, Gratitude, Higher-self, Holism, Immanence, Inner-wholeness, Intuition, Joy, Mindfulness, Openness, Practice, Presence, Purpose, Relatedness, Sacredness, Service, Synthesis, and Trust) were identified. King (2008) argues that the Amram's theory focuses more on *living spiritually* and less on the cognitive functions of intelligence, which is King's principal theme.

### 3.3.1 King's Theory of Spiritual Intelligence

King's (2008) theory of spiritual intelligences lies in the foundation that it is a set of mental abilities used to analyze the fundamental questions of life, meaning, self, and spiritual states. King (2010) is a researcher who obtained his Masters of Science in Applications of Modeling in the Natural and Social Sciences from Trent University in 2008, and was a Ph.D. candidate at the University of British Columbia in 2012. King (2008) created a comprehensive 84-item survey, which he tested with over 600 undergraduate students. King reduced the instrument to 24-items after finding some to be extraneous or redundant. These survey items derived from four subcategories. These were crafted by fusing previous research from those before him with his central point theme of cognitive functions: Critical Existential Thinking (CET), Personal Meaning

Production (PMP), Transcendental Awareness (TA), and Conscious State Expansion (CSE) (King, 2008).

CET “is the capacity to critically contemplate the nature of existence, reality, the universe, space, time, death, and other existential or metaphysical issues,” or more basically when an individual thinks about his or her existence (King, 2008, p. 57). It is within this capacity that the fundamental questions of life are posed. King emphasizes that it is not merely enough to ask questions about existence; an individual has to deeply explore these questions.

King defines PMP as “the ability to construct personal meaning and purpose in all physical and mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master a life purpose” (p. 61). PMP capacity involves taking critical thinking and incorporating meaning or purpose into deeply explored ideas about life and existence. TA is defined as “the capacity to identify transcendent dimensions of the self (e.g., a transpersonal or transcendent self), of others, and of the physical world (e.g., non-materialism, holism) during the normal, waking state of consciousness, accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to one’s self and to the physical” (King, p. 61). King emphasizes that transcendent refers to that which goes beyond normal experience. An example of this experience is when an individual feels connected to another person in a way that *transcends* or goes beyond the physical experience.

The final capacity that King utilizes is Conscious State Expansion. CSE is “the ability to enter and exit higher/spiritual states of consciousness (e.g. pure consciousness, cosmic consciousness, unity, oneness) at one’s own discretion (as in deep contemplation, meditation, prayer, etc.)” (p. 72). When an individual is able to move into a deep meditative level of consciousness, and then return to a *normal* state of consciousness, one would have a high level of CSE.

### *3.3.2. Earlier Theorists*

King (2008) states that spiritual intelligence develops over the life span, which is similar to the well-known theorists, Fowler and Piaget, who proposed that spiritual development begins in early childhood. There is, however, a gap in literature that investigates this development in minors; most research focuses on middle aged or later life individuals (King).

#### *Fowler*

Fowler (1981) created six stages of faith development, suggesting that individuals begin to contemplate meaning of life, faith, and religion early in the development process. Although King argues that there is little empirical evidence to support Fowler's stages today, it is important to note the theories behind developing the spiritual self across the lifespan. Fowler's stages are: Intuitive-Projective Faith, Mythical-Literal Faith, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, Individuative-Reflective Faith, Conjunctive Faith, and Universal Faith. Fowler suggests that youth move into the third stage of faith development, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, in early adolescence. Fowler argues that many youth experience religious changes during this stage because of their "religious hunger is for a God who knows, accepts and confirms the self deeply, and who serves as an infinite guarantor of the self with its forming myth of personal identity and faith" (p. 153). This third stage can also be a final stage for many adults. Individuals in this stage do not reflect on their belief systems, only internalize the literal beliefs presented to them.

Those who move beyond this stage into Individuative-Reflective Faith generally do so after experiencing conflict within their faith system. Fowler also mentions that those who move into this stage may experience a sense of loss as old symbols or value sets may become meaningless. It is suggested that this transition, if it happens, tends to occur in the 30s or 40s; although, if there is a conflict this transition may occur sooner. Fowler



suggests that the later in life this transition occurs the more disruption it may have on the individual's life. This transition tends to force the individual to take her or his belief system through an analytic cycle, which can be a stressful process and occur over a period of years. Fowler notes that the fifth stage, Conjunctive Faith, is difficult to reach before mid-life.

Fowler's theory of faith development is mentioned to provide richer context to the changes theorized during the adolescent development. Fowler greatly incorporates the development theory presented by Piaget on Formal Operational Thinking, which, he argued, coincides with the Synthetic-Conventional Stage. This stage can lead to utopian like thinking because youth are able to imagine ideal states without the regulation of rational thought processes.

#### *Piaget*

Piaget (1966) portrays an image of the adolescent as one who "thinks beyond the present and forms theories about everything, delighting especially in considerations of that which is not" (p. 148). In the *Formal Operational Stage*, an adolescent focuses on the "*real versus the possible*" while forming theories about the world around her or him (Flavell, 1963). These theories range from an interpersonal level to the world far beyond their experience. This new complex thinking is theorized to start around eleven years to fifteen years of age (Piaget); although after further study, some find this occurs later in the teenage years (Maier, 1978; Berk, 2012). This new ability to think abstractly is why many theorists believe that youth make great leaps in their ability to think about the spiritual world, as Fowler said, without being constrained by rationality.

#### *Erikson*

Erik Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development describes the adolescent stage as one in which youth are constantly experimenting with who they are

and forming their identity. He calls this stage *Identify versus Role Confusion*. This stage emphasizes the adolescent search for meaning by asking essential life questions such as: Who am I? (Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn, & Hammer, 2009).

This period of self-exploration can be met with conflict or resolve (Berk, 2012). If youth are able to positively define who they are, the conflict is resolved. However, if the exploration is met with trauma and rejection, role confusion is left unresolved (Berk, 2012). It is rational to assume that many LGBTQ youth face this stage with great confusion. If youth are out to themselves and close friends, they may be able to relieve this stress of identity development. However, if the coming out process is met with rejection, this theory suggests that their identity development would suffer greatly.

#### *Gardner*

King's main argument is that Spiritual Intelligence is a measurable mental capacity that fits the criteria created by Howard Gardner (2006) when he developed the theory of multiple intelligences in the early 1970s. After studying a variety of cases, he crafted the criteria, which all intelligences must fit into in order to be satisfactory. There are currently eight intelligences, which he has identified: musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and naturalistic intelligence. All intelligences follow Gardner's eight criteria: The intelligence must have 1) a location in the brain from where the intelligence is originating; 2) evolutionary examples of the intelligence over time with expert examples in the end; 3) a set structure of operations; 4) the ability to be converted into a symbol system; 5) transitions through the lifespan and human evolution; 6) the occurrence of exceptional individuals in society, e.g. savants; 7) examples of being reinforced by psychological tests; e.g. talking while playing

basketball versus talking while listening to music with lyrics; and 8) the support psychometric testing.

King asserts that the model he presents aligns with the rules Gardner created to evaluate intelligences. King provides the following arguments:

“(1) It involves a set of interrelated mental capacities, as opposed to preferred ways of behaving, which are distinct from other mental abilities and manifest to varying degrees across the human population; (2) it appears to develop over the lifespan, emerging in childhood and adolescence and, in many cases, continuing into old age; (3) it clearly facilitates adaptation and problem solving, not only in specific contexts (e.g., the existential crisis) but in a diverse number of stressful situations; (4) it both involves and contributes to abstract-reasoning, aiding in decision making, judgments, appraisals, and planning; (5) although limited, it has demonstrated potential biological foundations in the brain; (6) it has further displayed a high evolutionary plausibility, likely playing a critical role in the recent history of our species; and (7) the current model of spiritual intelligence assembles capacities for which cognition and mental computation are theoretically paramount” (pp. 117-118).

Gardner, however, does not support including spiritual intelligence as a new intelligence. Before moving into Gardner’s arguments for why spiritual intelligence is excluded from his theory, it needs to be recognized that both theorists are grounded in different definitions of this intelligence. Whereas King affirms that spiritual intelligence is a *set of mental abilities* related to spirituality, Gardner focuses on spiritual intelligence in terms of *feelings*. King claims that this “spontaneous and inconsistent” decision to focus on feelings makes Gardner see his criteria as unsuitable for this intelligence (p. 40).

Gardner's first argument is that he does not believe an intelligence should be confused with the spiritual phenomenon that individuals experience. An example of this is when an individual experiences feelings of awe or transcendent euphoria during a spiritual experience like meditation or listening to moving music. King (2008) reiterates that spiritual intelligence is distinctive from phenomenon and contends that it is a set of abilities, not feelings or unexplainable occurrences.

The second argument Gardner makes is that for many people "spirituality is indissociable from a belief in religion and God generally, or even from allegiance to a particular faith or sec" (p. 20). King (2008) argues that it is Gardner, not others, who is unable to differentiate religion from spirituality. It can be argued that both statements are correct. King also asserts that he is not trying to standardize a definition of spirituality, simply to create a model that measures human capacities connected to spirituality. While Gardner and King come to different conclusions about the addition of spiritual intelligence in the multiple intelligence theory, their divergent definitions are tied to this divergence.

### *3.3.3 Conclusion*

King (2008) provided a four-part model that incorporates the ideas of theorists across the development of the spiritual intelligence theory. King concludes that his theory "suggests that the spiritual condition of humankind is not entirely irrational; that underlying human spirituality, there exists a set of adaptive, cognitive capacities unique from other manifestations of human intelligence; and that these capacities constitute a spiritual intelligence" (p. 212). It is because of King's comprehensive review of past theorist and scales that his model will be used for the purpose of this study.

### 3.4 Coming Out Experience

Coming out of the closet is a crucial step in identity development (Bond, Hefner & Drogos, 2009). Not all LGBTQ people come out in adolescence, but those who do face a

variety of vulnerable factors previously discussed (homelessness, bullying, substance abuse, etc.). Grov, Bimbi, Nanín, and Parsons (2006) find youth are coming out at earlier ages, potentially due to the decrease in stigma; therefore, aligning with their heterosexual peers' development. There are racial and ethnic differences among LGBTQ people who come out to their parents. African Americans, as well as male Asian/Pacific Islander are least likely to be out whereas Caucasians are the most likely to be out (Grov, et al.). Grov, et al. also reports that females developed their identity at later ages than males.

The experience that one has upon coming out has a great influence on future outcomes. Cox, et al. (2011) reveal that lesbian, gay and bisexual youth who have positive coming out experiences with close family and friends and positive environmental experiences, like being able integrate into the larger LGBTQ community, feel a sense of personal growth from the coming-out process. Those who do not have a supportive environment report high levels of stress and are more likely to report high levels of psychological distress (Rosario, Schrimshaw & Hunter, 2011).

Similarly, McDermott, Roen, and Scourfield (2008) report that LGBTQ youth understand their sexual identity as a normal development. Intrinsically they do not feel abnormal; the distress that LGBTQ youth face, in actuality, occurs when their feelings of normalcy are thrust against the heteronormative perspective. Upon analyzing their environment, they either incorporate or reject the homophobic values. The level of stress they experience, McDermott, et al. argue, hinges on the two different stances: 1) an individual who is proud and copes with homophobia; and 2) an ashamed individual who is distressed by homophobia. They argue that being proud can serve as a powerful resilience to the stresses of coming out.

Lasser and Tharinger (2003) further discuss the complex coping and monitoring strategies that youth process through as they are weighing the pros and cons of coming

out. Youth evaluate their environment's level of acceptance, often internalizing the perspectives, and manage their self-expression on their evaluations. Youth also take considerable cautions in judging whom they reveal their sexual orientation to, as they have to be cautious of the repercussions of their disclosure (Lasser & Tharinger). These researchers emphasize the importance of evaluating the youth within their context and how important the environment is on a youth's ability to develop his or her sexual identity.

### 3.5 LGBTQ and Adversity

Adolescence is a noteworthy developmental stage in the life cycle (Berk, 2012; King, 2008; Piaget, 1966) regardless of sexual orientation, but research shows that LGBTQ youth are particularly vulnerable in contemporary society (Human Rights Campaign (HRC), 2012; Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2011). The transformations happening in the adolescent body, dramatically impact the brain and emotional development of a youth. LGBTQ youth experience the same developmental milestones as any other adolescent. Due to the stress of exploring one's identity and being faced with potential rejection from peers, family, and community, however, many LGBTQ youth experience hardships beyond their non-LGBTQ peers (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; HRC, 2012).

A contemporary study captured the experience of the largest number of LGBTQ youth ever surveyed across the United States. The HRC (2012) examined more than 10,000 youth from ages 13 to 17 and confirmed that the majority of LGBTQ youth have negative experiences related to their sexual orientation. Numerous prior smaller studies found similar statistics (McDermott, et al., 2008; Russell, et al., 2011; Marshal, et al., 2008). The magnitude of this new study, however, consolidates and accentuates an array of concerns. LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk for depression, suicide, substance abuse, and bullying. These experiences are discussed at length below.

### *3.5.1 Depression and Mental Health*

LGBTQ youth reported high levels of depression (HRC, 2012; Russell et al., 2011). The HRC study (2012) found that only 37% of the LGBTQ youth reported being happy, as opposed to nearly twice as many non-LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ youth reported that their primary concern in everyday life is fear of non-accepting family members, whereas non-LGBTQ youth report being most concerned with grades and classes (HRC). In addition, Russell, et al. (2011) found that LGBTQ youth who reported high levels of victimization experienced more clinical depression and more serious suicide attempts than LGBTQ youth who reported lesser levels of victimization.

Depression is a major concern that can lead many LGBTQ youth to attempt and some to commit suicide (Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), 2008). Several studies reported that LGBTQ youth are more at risk for suicidal ideation and attempts due to the stressful life events and victimization they experience (Crain-Gully, 2011; Lui & Mustanski, 2012; Mustanski, Garofalo & Emerson, 2010; Russell, et al., 2011; SPRC). There are complications, however, to investigating empirical statistics on the percentage of suicide among the LGBTQ community, namely that there could be uncounted LGBTQ persons who commit suicide prior to coming out of the closet (SPRC). The SPRC, however, stated “the higher number of suicide attempts, as well as the seriousness of attempts among LGB youth, make it probable that this group of youth has a higher rate of suicide deaths than their heterosexual counterparts” (p. 19).

McDermott, et al. (2008) investigated how shame influences into how often youth will seek help. In the face of homophobic experiences, youth tend to rely on their own resourcefulness and avoid seeking help. They see reaching out as a shameful endeavor. When the stress of mediating homophobic experiences overwhelmed youths’ ability to cope, some researchers found that these youth were more likely to commit suicide in the

face of their sense of shame (Fullagar, 2003; McDermott, et al.). Suicide becomes “the fantasy of laying to rest tumultuous emotions or affective forces generated through a relation to self that is governed by particular expectations about identity” (Fullagar, p. 289). Mediating these feelings of shame become a powerful aspect to a youth’s outcome.

Victimization is highly correlated to self-harm and suicidal ideation (Lui & Mustanski, 2012; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card, & Russell, 2010). Toomey et al. also found that victimization occurred significantly more often in males than in females and notes “homophobic school victimization continues into the young adult years and affects quality of life and capacity to enjoy life” (p.1586). Hatzenbuehler (2011) discovered that a positive social environment is highly related to lower suicide attempts. Many researchers reinforce this aspect of how a positive social environment can have dramatic impacts on today’s LGBTQ youth (Fullagar, 2003; HRC, 2012; Toomey, et al., 2010).

### *3.5.2 Bullying*

Bullying is a stressor for LGBTQ youth, not only while in school but also in the community. While 75% of LGBTQ youth report that their peers do not have a problem with their identity, the vast majority still reports being bullied while at school (HRC, 2012). The HRC found that LGBTQ youth were in fact twice as likely to be verbally harassed, physically harassed, and excluded by their peers. This is an interesting discovery because one may assume that the high rates of bullying would mean LGBTQ youth do not feel accepted at school, but interestingly, though, the HRC study also found that school was the second most accepting environment. The LGBTQ youth reported close peer relationships (HRC). Suggesting that school is both a threatening and comforting place. Schools with Gay Straight Alliances play a strong role in reducing school bullying and victimization (Heck, Flentje & Cochran, 2011).



Birkett, Espelage & Koenig (2009) found a dramatic increase in depression and suicidal feelings, drug and alcohol use, and truancy in youth who reported high levels of school bullying. Being victimized in school and in the community is not limited to verbal harassment, but can extend into physical violence (Pilkington & D'Augelli, 1995). LGBTQ youth are at a disproportionate disservice, as they must process through these experiences at school instead of benefitting from a learning environment (Petrovic, 2000).

The bullying occurring in the community can range from random encounters with strangers to being fearful of disclosing sexual orientation in the workplace (Pilkington & D'Augelli, 1995). Pilkington & D'Augelli, however, found that there were less reports of victimization in the work place than in the broader community. This may be due to people masking their sexual orientation in these environments, and therefore lead to less victimization.

### *3.5.3 Drugs and Alcohol*

LGBTQ youth report using drugs and alcohol at double the rate of their heterosexual peers (McLaughlin, 2012; Marshal, et al., 2008; HRC, 2012). LGBTQ youth detail how they use substances to deal with feelings of shame and internalized homophobia (McDermott, et al., 2008). Also, LGBTQ are more likely than their heterosexual peers to misuse prescription drugs at an earlier age (Kecojevic et al., 2012).

In a meta-analysis, Marshal, et al. (2008) states, "the odds of substance use for LGB youth were 190% higher than for heterosexual youth and substantially higher within some subpopulations of LGB youth (i.e., 340% higher for bisexual youth, 400% higher for females)" (p. 553). In fact several studies found that lesbians and bisexual females have a much higher rate of alcohol usage than heterosexual males and females, and gay and bisexual men (Ziyadeh, et al., 2007; Corliss, et al., 2010). This is interesting considering

Toomey, et al. (2010) found that males are more likely than females to experience victimization.

Herrick, Matthews and Garofalo (2010) report that lesbian and bisexual female participants have a higher prevalence of monthly binge drinking than females in a national study. Notably, weekly binge drinking is reported in one out of every five lesbian participants. Also, lesbian and bisexual women use drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and ecstasy above the national rate.

#### *3.5.4 Homelessness*

Many youth face family and societal rejection upon coming out, which can leave some youth facing life stressors like homelessness (Ray, 2006). The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force conducted a study to investigate the growing LGBTQ homeless youth population in the U.S (Ray). They estimate that 20 to 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ, which is greatly disproportionate to the percentage of LGBTQ in the general population (3-5%). They state that 50% of the youth had negative reactions from their family when they came out and 26% of them were kicked out of their homes (Ray). Experiencing homelessness at an early age creates many negative developmental problems (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler & Cauce, 2006), as well as dramatically increase the potential to experience rape, drug abuse, assault, and other serious trauma (Ray, 2006). In fact, heterosexual and LGBTQ homeless youth who report low levels of social support are eight times more likely to get involved with survival sex, which is having sex for drugs, money, food, and/or shelter (Ennett, Bailey & Federman, 1999).

Homeless LGBTQ face a number of risks related to their sexual orientation. Walls, Hancock & Wisneski (2007) report that homeless LGBTQ youth are at a drastically higher risk than their non-LGBTQ homeless counterparts for attempted suicide, physical abuse by a significant other, and verbal and physical abuse by family members. These

findings expressed the critical message that “homeless sexual minority youth are at increased risk for negative life experiences over the already heightened risk that all sexual minority youth face” (Walls, et al., p.195).

Coates and McKenzie-Mohr (2010) find that youth who escape the violence they encounter at home and in school by running away report fewer experiences of being bullied on the streets. They are, however, then faced with a variety of different traumatic experiences once they reach the streets. Coates and McKenzie-Mohr emphasize that LGBTQ youth experience trauma prior to and concurrent with homelessness, as well as the importance of addressing these experiences promptly. Bender, Ferguson, Thompson, Komlo and Pollio (2010) reveal a strong correlation between trauma and alcohol addiction in homeless youth, which may lead to prolonged homelessness.

### 3.6 LGBTQ Spirituality and Religion

Spirituality plays an important role in LGBTQ identity development (Tan, 2008). As previously discussed youth experience many changes during adolescent and young adult years. King notes that during this stage researchers “see an expansion of all spiritual capacities, resulting in part from identity formation and the emergence of abstract reasoning” (p. 97). The LGBTQ community can benefit from spiritual nourishment due to the stressful life events they experience (Tan).

Religion and spirituality are interwoven concepts (Tan, 2008). Religious communities can aid a person in developing spiritual intelligence (Tan; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Research supports that being connected to a spiritual or religious community can have a negative or positive effect depending on the individual’s sense of social support (Yakushko, 2005). Many LGBTQ youth miss out on the opportunity to develop their spiritual selves in a larger, religious community as a high percentage report no current religious affiliations (Rostosky, Danner & Riggle, 2008). LGBTQ youth are considerably

less likely to attend church services and to be a part of a youth group than non-LGBTQ youth (HRC, 2012). Those who do may “outwardly participate in their religious organizations, yet inwardly be involved in a sometimes powerful struggle to reconcile their religious beliefs with their emerging sexual identity” (Barret & Barzan, 1996, p. 17).

Although, if the youth feel their religion is affirming to their identity youth groups and church communities can increase protective factors as the youth are coming out (Lerner, Roeser & Phelps, 2008). For example, Smith & Home (2008) found that LGBTQ persons who were part of a Judeo-Christian religious community experienced more conflict during their coming out process than those in more LGBTQ-affirming religious communities. Vaughan (2002) notes that “when spiritual beliefs foster denial and projection and contribute to fear and conflict, they can be destructive and seriously problematic” (p. 26). Perhaps due to the perceived discrimination against LGBTQ population within religious institutions, there is relatively little research on spirituality among LGBTQ youth.

Rostosky, et al. (2008) investigate the impact of religiosity and alcohol use in LGBTQ youth. Religiosity is found to decrease in LGBTQ youth from adolescence to young adulthood. Heterosexual youth report religiosity as a protective factor against alcohol use; however, LGBTQ youth do not experience this positive relationship. When comparing similarities across heterosexuals and homosexuals, bisexual and lesbian women report religiosity more closely related to that of heterosexuals and gay men, and less like their heterosexual female counterparts. Hence, their study supports that heterosexual women and lesbians are not as closely related in religiosity as gay men and heterosexual men are.

### 3.7 Protective Factors and the Importance of Spiritual Intelligence

Several researchers found that people with higher spiritual intelligence are more capable of adapting to stressful life situations (Vaughan, 2002; Noble, 2001). Hosseini, Elias, Krauss and Aishah (2010) note that this intelligence can be improved through training and is vital to the adolescent development. Vaughan (2005) indicates that spiritual intelligence “begins with cultivating authenticity and self-awareness and develops with practice to a concern for all beings” (p.28). Nurturing this intelligence may be a crucial step for youth suffering distress during the coming out process.

To review, the protective factors mentioned in the literature review reflect that family support (Shilo & Savaya, 2011), supportive school environment (Birkett, Espelage & Koenig, 2009), including Gay Straight Alliances (Heck, et al., 2011), and a positive coming out experience (Cox, et al., 2011) all lead to more positive outcomes for LGBTQ youth. These factors, however, are all external and for many youth, out of their control. Taking steps to develop their spiritual intelligence could provide them with a controllable process through which to build a strong internal protective factor against the stresses experienced while developing a LGBTQ identity. This research focuses on the relationship between sexual identity development and spiritual intelligence. The following sections reveal the methods used to investigate whether a more advanced stage of sexual identity development had a significant relationship to higher levels of spiritual intelligence.

## Chapter 4

### Methods

#### 4.1 Participants

This study surveyed LGBTQ youth who visited LGBTQ community websites (Queerattitude.com, Askchad.org, and Youthline.ca), as well as Twitter.com, Facebook.com, Reddit.com and Tubmlr.com. See screen images for the Facebook and Twitter pages on Appendix B and C. The age range for participation in this study is between the ages of 15-25 years old. After considering the reading level of the survey, participants under 15 years of ages were not recruited to participate. Individuals over the age of 25 years were also not asked to participate.

Geiger & Castellino (2011) discussed how researchers can differ widely in their definitions of young adults. Research includes participants as old as 40 or younger than ten years old in their population of *young adults*. Weinberger, Elvegag and Giedd (2005) find that the brain of the adolescent continues change through the early twenties. Furthermore, due to the membership age guidelines created by the LGBTQ community websites utilized in this study, participants over the age of 25 will be excluded from the analysis.

The youth also self identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or other. To control for this, the participants were asked to validate their identity in the consent page as well as in the descriptive data section. There were also several validity questions embedded in the survey. This was not a random sample of participants, simply because it was imperative to obtain as many youth responses from those who visited the aforementioned websites in a limited amount of research time. The sample, therefore, was based on LGBTQ youth who saw the advertisement, linked over to the survey, and completed the questionnaire. Table 4.1 details the demographics of the participants.

Results from fifteen participants were excluded from analyses, as they did not fall into the age range defined previously. Forty-eight participants entered the survey, consented, and then left all responses blank, and were subsequently removed from the analysis. Only three individuals read through the consent page, did not consent, and were immediately exited from the survey. In responding to how old the participants were when they realized they were LGBTQ and/or came out to friends or family, some responded with statements like, “about 13,” “14-15,” and “14 and 15.” The younger ages were included as the research is trying to capture the first experiences.

#### 4.2 Recruitment

After receiving approval from the University of Texas at Arlington’s Internal Review Board (see Appendix K & L), the researcher began to gather information from LGBTQ youth. A survey, created on SurveyMonkey.com, was posted through a link on a variety of LGBTQ community websites, chat rooms, and forums (i.e. Queerattitude.com, Askchad.org, and Youthline.ca, Reddit.com and Tumblr.com), as well as a designated Facebook page and Twitter account. SurveyMonkey.com is a user friendly, web-based site used to create surveys. All survey responses were anonymous.

The manner in which the website announcements were made differed depending on the site. Since people continuously post on Twitter, the researcher posted one announcement per day. On the LGBTQ websites, QueerAttitude, AskChad, and Youthline, only one post was made in the three-week period of the study for two reasons. First, there was less traffic within the sites and youth would be able to see the announcement for several weeks. Second, the site managers either preferred that the researcher only post one announcement or they did not respond to the researcher’s request to post a second announcement. The researcher was diligent to follow the rules of the websites and gain permission from site managers prior to accessing their

webpage. Facebook and Tumblr also only required one main announcement and one follow up reminder. The website Reddit was recommended by the focus group as a popular site. The researcher posted one main announcement and followed up with weekly reminders. See Appendix D for announcement text.

It was important to reach out to subjects through the Internet for several reasons. First, the internet provides youth with an anonymous way to explore one's sexual orientation, gender expression, practice same-sex communication, relationship building, and learn about LGBTQ lifestyles (Bond, Hefner & Drogos, 2009; Dehaan, Kuper, Magee, Bigelow & Mustanski, 2012; Hiller & Harrison, 2007; Munt, Bassett, & O'Riordan, 2002). As previously discussed in the literature review, many LGBTQ youth face hardships at home, in school, and in the community. The Internet provides youth with anonymity to explore their sexual orientation, their sexual identities, and different aspects of their personalities (Dehaan, et al., 2012; Munt, et al., 2002). Youth can communicate with other LGBTQ youth all around the world, share their experiences through blogs, anonymous journals, and chat rooms.

The HRC (2012) study revealed that 88% of the LGBTQ youth reported learning positive messages about the LGBTQ culture from the Internet. Bond, et al. (2009) found that LGBTQ youth use the Internet as a primary source of information to learn about the LGBTQ community and the coming out process. Youth who use the Internet during the coming out process are less likely to communicate openly with their family about their sexual orientations (Bond, et al., 2009).

The Internet opens a door to communicate anonymously with other LGBTQ people. LGBTQ youth reported they are more likely to be honest about who they are in the online environment than in everyday situations (HRC). Furthermore, using the Internet allowed the researcher to gather information from youth across a multitude of



backgrounds and experiences. Finally, due to the minority status of this group and vulnerability that comes with identifying as LGBTQ in public, the youth may perceive this as a safe method of communication.

### 4.3 Measures

#### 4.3.1 Descriptive Data

Table 4.1 Descriptive Data

Variable	Definition	Response Categories
Age	Self-reported years old	_____ (Fill in option)
Race/Ethnicity	The ethnic background of the participant.	African American Asian Caucasian Hispanic Other
National Origin	The country in which the participant was born.	United States Other
Are you currently living in the United States?		Yes/No
Gender Identification	The gender the participant identifies as, regardless of biological sex.	Female Male Intersex Transsexual Male to Female Transsexual Female to Male Other
Sexual Orientation	The participant's sexual orientation.	Heterosexual Homosexual Bisexual Other
Religious Background	The religious affiliation of the participant.	Buddhism Christianity Islam Judaism None Other
How often do you attend religious gatherings?	Religious gathering include activities like: youth group activities, attending church or temple services, bible study, etc.	More than once a week About once a week About once or twice a month About once or twice a year Never
Do you consider yourself a spiritual person?		Very spiritual Spiritual Somewhat spiritual Not at all spiritual
How old were you when		_____ (Fill in option)

you realized that you were gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning?		
Have you come out to your friends?		Yes/No
If yes, how old were you when you came out to your friends?		_____ (Fill in option)
Have you come out to your family?		Yes/No
If yes, how old were you when you came out to your family?		_____ (Fill in option)
Where did you first learn about this survey?		Queerattitude.com Reddit.com Askchad.org Youthline.ca Twitter Facebook Tumblr.com Other

#### 4.4 Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ)

The GIQ (Brady & Busse, 1994) examines the development of sexual orientation. This measure was tested by Brady and Busse to specifically measure gay men and where they were in the coming out stages conceptualized by Cass (1979). Even though this measure was originally tested on Caucasian gay men, numerous studies have used this scale in other LGBTQ populations, including lesbians (Peterson & Gerrity, 2008; Bernstein, 1997) and LGBTQ adults (Crain-Gully, 2011). Thus, the researcher is confident the measure assesses additional alternative sexual identities (lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning).

The GIQ contains 45 True/False questions ( $\alpha=0.66$ ). There are seven questions that score for each level of the HIF development, and when a participant answers “true,” for a question, they accrue one point for that stage. Whichever stage the participant scores the most points in, is the stage with which they will be labeled, thus the results are

categorical. Brady (2011) suggests that if they tie scores for two stages, they will be assigned to both. The results of this study, however, revealed that many youth fell in two or more categories. Therefore the highest of the stages was accepted. To review the stages, Stage 1 is Identity Confusion ( $\alpha=0.73$ ) and Stage 2 is Identity Comparison ( $\alpha=0.70$ ); Stage 3 is Identity Tolerance ( $\alpha=0.75$ ) and Stage 4 is Identity Acceptance ( $\alpha=0.73$ ); Stage 5 is Identity Pride ( $\alpha=0.48$ ), and Stage 6 is Identity Synthesis ( $\alpha=0.84$ ).

There are three of the 45-questions that check for validity that the respondent is in fact gay. The questions are: "I have feelings that I would label as homosexual," "I have thoughts I would label as homosexual," and "I engage in sexual behavior I would label as homosexual" (Brady, 2011, p. 407). If the participants fail to validate, by answering "True," to at least one of these questions, their data will not be used for this study.

#### 4.5 Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory

The SISRI measures levels of spiritual intelligence, which, as defined earlier, is "a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence" (King, 2008, p. 56). The SISRI ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) breaks down into four subcategories: Critical Existential Thinking ( $\alpha=0.82$ ), Personal Meaning Production ( $\alpha=0.82$ ), Transcendental Awareness ( $\alpha=0.88$ ), and Conscious State Expansion ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) (King, 2008).

Critical Existential Thinking (CET) is explored in questions 1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21 and can gather a total of 28 points. Personal Meaning Production (PMP) is investigated in questions 7, 11, 15, 19, and 23 and can score a total of 20 points. Transcendental Awareness (TA) is questioned in items 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 20, and 22 and can gather a total of 28 points. Conscious State Expansion (CSE) is explored in questions 4, 8, 12, 16, and 24 and can total up to 20 points.

The survey asks participants to answer the questions that most accurately describe them through a 5-point Likert scale. A higher total score suggests a higher level of spiritual intelligence. When broken into sections, a participant may score higher in one area than another, suggesting they are more advanced in a particular level of spiritual intelligence.

#### 4.6 Open-Response Question

The final section of the survey included a space for open response comments. The instructions on this page read, "In the space provided below, please comment on any thoughts or concerns that arose during this survey. This section is optional and provides the researcher with a deeper understanding of your experiences and beliefs regarding spirituality and the coming out process. If you do not wish to write comments, please press "Submit" to complete the survey." These questions are not reviewed for the purpose of this study. The responses will add depth to a future study that incorporates the unique perspectives of the LGBTQ youth.

## Chapter 5

### Procedures

#### 5.1 Instructions to Youth

Youth who participate enter the survey from an announcement on the site they are visiting. All announcements contain a link that takes the participants to SurveyMonkey.com to complete the survey. The site guides them through the four stages of the survey: Informed Consent/Assent Form, Descriptive Data, Scales, and Open-ended response. See Appendix E for the full survey.

#### 5.2 How and When Informed Consent Gathered

Before the youth were able to begin the survey, they were prompted to read and consent or assent (for those under 18 years) to an online informed consent form. Only those who consent or assent were able to advance to the survey. Those that decline to consent/assent were exited from the survey. Taylor (2008) argued that enforcing parental consent with LGBTQ youth could be a risk to their well-being and counterproductive to research advancements for the LGBTQ community. The researcher was unable to gather parental consent not only because of the limitations set by conducting an online survey but also to protect the confidentiality of the youth's sexual orientation. In addition, no identifying information was gathered to maintain the anonymity of the respondents.

#### 5.3 Debriefing

LGBTQ youth were informed on the consent/assent page as well as at the end of the survey that they could contact the researcher, the UTA IRB office, and a variety of LGBTQ crisis hotlines if they had any questions or experienced any stress as a result of participating in the survey. Because the survey was self-administered, providing them with national hotline call numbers allowed the youth to seek assistance if they needed support.

## Chapter 6

### Results

#### 6.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 540 participants completed the survey online during a three-week period. The mean age of the participants was 18 years old ( $SD=2.82$ ), and males made up 70% (377) of the sample. Caucasian youth dominated the population at 79% (297), and the majority (68.5, 369) of respondents reported their national origin as the United States. Seventy percent (373) of youth entered the survey through Reddit.com. Only 16% (86) entered through AskChad.org, with even fewer through other websites.

Gay sexual orientation (288) made up the majority of the sample. There were 58 lesbian participants, 118 bisexuals, 27 questioning, five heterosexuals, and 43 youth who chose other. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that gay youth ( $M=5.40$ ,  $SD=3.18$ ) were out to themselves significantly more years than bisexual ( $M=4.03$ ,  $SD=3.32$ ) and other youth ( $M=4.39$ ,  $SD=3.08$ ) ( $F(3, 495)=5.29$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). See Table 6.3 for more details.

A total of five heterosexual respondents took the survey, despite the fact that it was designed for LGBTQ youth. Thus, it was useful to investigate these individuals' gender in order to assess if they had at one point identified as homosexual. Gender and sexual orientation were cross-tabulated to explore this (see Table 6.2). There were 17 transgender participants, four of whom identified as heterosexual. Additionally, five females identified as gay.

The majority of youth reported growing up with a Christian religious background (62.8, 336), but 65% (350) currently identified with no religious affiliation. A cross-tabulation revealed a significant relationship between these religious variables ( $\chi^2(25, N=534)=971.38$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). There was also a significant relationship between the how

many years the youth were out to their family and religious background ( $F(2,233)=6.45$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and current religious affiliation ( $F(2,233)=4.58$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Youth with a Christian background ( $M=1.65$ ,  $SD=1.75$ ) were out significantly less years than youth with other ( $M=2.94$ ,  $SD=2.62$ ) and no religious affiliations ( $M=2.33$ ,  $SD=2.29$ ). Youth who currently identify as Christian ( $M=1.68$ ,  $SD=1.85$ ) and youth with no religious affiliation ( $M=1.87$ ,  $SD=1.86$ ) were out to their families significantly fewer years than youth who currently identify as other ( $M=2.90$ ,  $SD=1.87$ ). See Table 6.3 for more details.

Fifty-three percent (287) of this sample reported that they never attend religious gatherings and 56% (299) identified as not at all spiritual. An ANOVA revealed a significant difference in how many years the youth were out to friends and self-identified spiritual level ( $F(3,382)=3.41$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Not at all spiritual youth ( $M=2.74$ ,  $SD=3.51$ ), spiritual youth ( $M=2.27$ ,  $SD=4.30$ ), and somewhat spiritual youth ( $M=2.65$ ,  $SD=3.47$ ) were out to their friends significantly fewer years than very spiritual youth ( $M=5.56$ ,  $SD=5.53$ ).

The average age that respondents realized they were LGBTQ was about 13 years old ( $SD=2.65$ ). The majority (79.2, 419) of youth were out to their friends, but not out to their families (48.9, 257). An independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference between the years that youth were out to friends and gender ( $t(358)=7.64$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Females were out to their friends an average 3.73 years ( $SD=4.67$ ) whereas males were out to their friends for 2.61 years ( $SD=2.61$ ). There were no significant relationships between gender and years out to self and family. See Table 6.1 for more demographic details.

## 6.2 GIQ

The demographic variables were compared to the GIQ using ANOVA and Chi-Square tests. Significant findings were found when assessing the relationship between

GIQ and age, sexual orientation, current religious affiliation, if the participants were out to family and friends, and how many years the youth were out to self and friends. All other descriptive variables held no significance.

#### 6.2.1 Age

An ANOVA was calculated to uncover differences between age and GIQ. Findings reflected that mean age differed significantly across GIQ stages ( $F(5,398)=3.77$ ,  $p<0.005$ ). Age accounted for 4.5% of the variance in GIQ. Post-hoc analyses showed that in Stage 1 ( $M=17.2$ ,  $SD=2.05$ ) participants were significantly younger than those in Stage 3 ( $M=18.47$ ,  $SD=3.13$ ) and Stage 4 ( $M=18.72$ ,  $SD=3.1$ ).

Youth in Stage 2 ( $M=17.69$ ,  $SD=2.37$ ) were significantly younger than those in Stage 4. Youth in Stage 3 were significantly older than youth in Stages 5 ( $M=17.33$ ,  $SD=2.55$ ) and 6 ( $M=17.48$ ,  $SD=2.4$ ). Stage 4 participants were significantly older than those in Stage 5 and 6. See Table 6.4.



Table 6.1

<i>Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=540)</i>		
Variable	% (#)/M (s.d.)	% (#) Missing
Age ( <i>n</i> = 522)	18 (2.82)	3.3 (18)
Race/Ethnicity ( <i>n</i> =539)		0.2 (1)
African American	3.7 (20)	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2 (1)	
Asian	5 (27)	
Caucasian	78.8 (297)	
Hispanic	6.7 (36)	
Other	5.6 (30)	
National Origin ( <i>n</i> =539)		0.2 (1)
Canada	8.2 (44)	
United States	68.5 (369)	
Other	23.4 (126)	
Country Currently Residing ( <i>n</i> =538)		0.4 (2)
Canada	8.2 (44)	
United States	70.6 (380)	
Other	21.2 (114)	
Age ( <i>n</i> = 522)	18 (2.82)	3.3 (18)
Gender Identification ( <i>n</i> =539)		0.2 (1)
Female	23.2 (125)	
Male	69.9 (377)	
Intersex	0.2 (1)	
Transsexual Male to Female	2.2 (12)	
Transsexual Female to Male	0.9 (5)	
Undecided	1.1 (6)	
Other	2.4 (13)	
Sexual Orientation ( <i>n</i> =539)		0.2 (1)
Heterosexual	0.9 (5)	
Lesbian	10.8 (58)	
Gay	53.4 (288)	
Bisexual	21.9 (118)	
Questioning	5 (27)	
Other	8 (43)	

Table 6.1- Continued

*Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=540)*

Variable	% (#)/M (s.d.)	% (#) Missing
<b>Religious Background (n=535)</b>		<b>0.9 (5)</b>
Buddhism	0.2 (1)	
Christianity	62.8 (336)	
Islam	0.6 (3)	
Judaism	3.6 (19)	
None	24.3 (130)	
Other	8.6 (46)	
<b>Current Religious Affiliation (n=535)</b>		<b>0.9 (5)</b>
Buddhism	1.5 (8)	
Christianity	19.3 (103)	
Islam	0.6 (3)	
Judaism	2.1 (11)	
None	65.4 (350)	
Other	11.2 (60)	
<b>Attend Religious Gatherings (n=534)</b>		<b>1.1 (6)</b>
More than once a week	3.4 (18)	
About once a week	9 (48)	
About once or twice a month	10.3 (55)	
About once or twice a year	23.6 (126)	
Never	53.7 (287)	
<b>Spiritual Person (n=535)</b>		<b>0.9 (5)</b>
Very spiritual	4.9 (26)	
Somewhat spiritual	28.8 (154)	
Spiritual	10.5 (56)	
Not at all spiritual	55.9 (299)	
<b>Age Realize LGBTQ (n=517)</b>		<b>4.3 (23)</b>
Total	13.05 (2.65)	
Lesbian	13.8 (2.71)	
Gay	12.75 (2.5)	
Bisexual	13.42 (2.63)	
Questioning	13.83 (2.79)	
Other	12.85 (3.05)	

Table 6.1- Continued

*Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=540)*

Variable	% (#)/M (s.d.)	% (#) Missing
Yes Out to Friends ( <i>n</i> =529)	79.2 (419)	2 (11)
Age Out to friends ( <i>n</i> =400)	15.42 (3.68)	25.9 (140)
Yes Out to Family ( <i>n</i> =526)	48.9 (257)	2.6 (14)
Age Out to family ( <i>n</i> =244)	16.86 (2.72)	54.8 (296)
Entered Survey Through ( <i>n</i> =527)		2.4 (13)
Queerattitude.com	0.4 (2)	
Askchad.org	16.3 (86)	
Youthline.ca	1.3 (7)	
Twitter	2.8 (15)	
Facebook	6.5 (34)	
Tumblr.com	0 (0)	
Reddit	70.8 (373)	
Other	1.9 (10)	

Table 6.2

*Frequency of Sexual Orientation by Gender*

Gender	Sexual Orientation						Total
	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Heterosexual	Questioning	Other	
	% (#)						
Female	86.2 (50)	1.7 (5)	34.7 (41)	0 (0)	33.3 (9)	46.5 (20)	23.2 (135)
Male	0 (0)	97.9 (281)	55.9 (66)	20 (1)	59.3 (16)	27.9 (12)	69.9 (376)
Intersex	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.2 (1)
Transgender M/F	7 (3)	0 (0)	2.5 (3)	60 (3)	3.7 (1)	7 (3)	2.2 (12)
Transgender F/M	2.3 (1)	0 (0)	1.7 (2)	20 (1)	3.7 (1)	2.1 (1)	0.9 (5)
Undecided	7 (3)	0 (0)	1.7 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (3)	1.1 (6)
Other	6.9 (4)	0.3 (1)	3.4 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9.3 (4)	2.4 (13)
Total	100 (58)	100 (287)	100 (118)	100 (5)	100 (27)	100 (43)	100 (538)

Table 6.3

*Select Demographics by Years Out*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Out to Self (N=360)</i>		<i>Out to Friends (N=360)</i>		<i>Out to Family (N=235)</i>	
	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
		0.01		7.64**		3.82
Female	4.54		3.73		2.50	
Male	4.99		2.61		1.87	
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	<i>Out to Self (N=498)</i>		<i>Out to Friends (N=386)</i>		<i>Out to Family (N=235)</i>	
	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
		5.29***		0.43		1.45
Lesbian	4.79		3.28		2.68	
Gay	5.40		2.74		2.00	
Bisexual	4.03		2.68		2.03	
Other	4.39		3.18		1.63	
<i>Religious Background</i>	<i>Out to Self (N=398)</i>		<i>Out to Friends (N=385)</i>		<i>Out to Family (N=235)</i>	
	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
		0.43		1.80		6.45**
Christian	4.81		2.63		1.65	
Other	5.19		3.74		2.94	
None	5.00		2.93		2.33	
<i>Current Religious Affiliation</i>	<i>Out to Self (N=398)</i>		<i>Out to Friends (N=386)</i>		<i>Out to Family (N=235)</i>	
	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
		1.16		2.21		4.58*
Christian	4.56		2.66		1.68	
Other	5.31		4.28		2.90	
None	4.92		3.46		2.00	
<i>Spiritual Level</i>	<i>Out to Self (N=398)</i>		<i>Out to Friends (N=385)</i>		<i>Out to Family (N=235)</i>	
	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
		2.43		3.41**		2.34
Not at all Spiritual	4.88		2.74		1.86	
Spiritual	4.77		2.68		2.13	
Somewhat Spiritual	4.76		2.65		1.94	
Very Spiritual	6.73		5.56		3.33	

Table 6.4

<i>Mean Differences in Age by GIQ Stages (N=418)</i>			
	<i>% (#)</i>	<i>Mean Age</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>GIQ Stage</i>			3.77**
Stage 1	12 (50)	17.20	
Stage 2	22 (92)	17.69	
Stage 3	18.7 (78)	18.47	
Stage 4	21.5 (90)	18.73	
Stage 5	10.3 (43)	17.33	
Stage 6	15.6 (65)	17.93	

\*\* $p < 0.01$

### 6.2.2 Sexual Orientation

The relationship between GIQ and sexual orientation was assessed using a Chi-square, and results showed a significant difference in GIQ stage by sexual orientation ( $\chi^2(15, N=417)=56.05, p < 0.001$ ). Lesbian participants scored more often in Stage 3 (24.1, 13) and 4 (24.1, 13), gay participants in Stage 2 (30.2, 70), and bisexuals (22.5, 28) and others (27.5, 14) in Stage 6. See Table 6.6 and Appendix F for Figure 6.1 for more details.

### 6.2.3 Religious Background and Current Religious Affiliation

There were no significant differences among religious backgrounds and GIQ stages. The relationship between current religious affiliation and GIQ revealed a significant difference ( $\chi^2(10, N=416)=20.37, p < 0.05$ ). Christian participants tended to score in Stage 6 (28.9, 24) more often than other religious affiliations (14.3, 10) and also those who have no religious affiliation (11.8, 31). Other affiliations scored more often in Stage 2 (28.6, 20), and participants with no affiliation scored more often in the middle

stages, most frequently in Stage 4 (25.1, 66). See more details in Appendix G for Figure 6.2.

#### 6.2.4 Out to Family and Friends

Differences in GIQ stages between those who had come out to their family were highly significant ( $\chi^2(5, N=416)=87.22, p<0.001$ ). Those who were out to their families scored most frequently in Stage 4, and moderately in Stages 2 and 3. Those who were not out to their families scored less dramatically across the Stages. Stage 2 and 6 were tied with 25.5% of the participants.

The majority of this sample was out to friends. When comparing this variable to GIQ stages, there was a highly significant finding ( $\chi^2(5, N=417)=108.90, p<0.001$ ). Those who were out to their friends scored more often in Stages 2 (24.4, 82), Stage 3 (21.7, 73), and Stage 4 (25.9, 87). Participants who were not out to their friends scored in mainly in Stage 6 (49.4, 40). See Table 6.6 for more details and Appendix H for Figure 6.3.

#### 6.2.5 Years Out to Self, Friends and Family

ANOVA tests revealed significant relationships among how many years the youth were out to self ( $F(5,392)=5.92, p<0.001$ ) and friends ( $F(5,304)=3.50, p<0.01$ ) and the GIQ stages. There was not a significant relationship among how many years youth were out to family and GIQ stages ( $F(5,186)=0.66, p>0.05$ ). Youth in Stage 1 ( $M=4.22, SD=2.62$ ) were out to themselves fewer years than those in Stages 3 ( $M=5.32, SD=3.12$ ) and 4 ( $M=6.00, SD=3.29$ ). Youth in Stage 2 ( $M=4.90, SD=2.94$ ) were out fewer years than those in Stage 4 and significantly more years than those in Stage 5 ( $M=3.52, SD=2.44$ ). Youth in Stage 3 and 4 were out to themselves significantly more years than those in Stage 6 ( $M=4.02, SD=3.01$ ). Youth in Stage 1 ( $M=1.79, SD=1.93$ ), 2 ( $M=2.18, SD=2.64$ ) and 5 ( $M=1.85, SD=2.11$ ) were out to their friends for significantly fewer years than those in Stage 3 ( $M=4.25, SD=5.54$ ). See Table 6.5 for more details.

### 6.3 SISRI

Differences in mean SISRI across demographic variables were assessed using ANOVAs and correlations. The relationship between the demographic variables and the SISRI subscales were also examined separately. The SISRI revealed several significant relationships across the demographic variables. Sexual orientation, religious background, current religious affiliation, how often participants attended religious gatherings, how spiritual the participants identified themselves all revealed significant relationships. How old the participants were when they realized they were LGBTQ uncovered a negatively significant relationship to SISRI mean scores.

#### *6.3.1 Sexual Orientation*

An ANOVA was calculated to compare mean differences in SISRI across sexual orientation. There was no significant difference among the groups ( $F(5,339)=1.88$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). There was, however, a significant difference found in subscale CET ( $F(5,339)=3.03$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Sexual orientation accounted for 4.3% of the difference in CET scores. Heterosexuals ( $M=8.75$ ,  $SD=11.59$ ) scored lower than all other categories of orientation. See Table 6.7 for more details.

#### *6.3.2 Religious Background*

An ANOVA was calculated to examine mean differences in religious background on SISRI ( $F(4,339)=2.49$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Religious background accounted for 2.9% of

Table 6.5

<i>Years Out by GIQ Stages</i>			
<i>Out to Self (N=398)</i>			
<i>GIQ Stage</i>	<i>% (#)</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
			5.92***
Stage 1	12.3 (49)	4.22	
Stage 2	21.9 (87)	4.90	
Stage 3	18.8 (75)	5.32	
Stage 4	20.9 (83)	6.00	
Stage 5	10.6 (42)	3.52	
Stage 6	15.6 (62)	4.02	
<i>Out to Friends (N=310)</i>			
<i>GIQ Stage</i>	<i>% (#)</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
			3.5***
Stage 1	12.3 (38)	1.79	
Stage 2	24.5 (76)	2.19	
Stage 3	22.3 (69)	4.25	
Stage 4	25.5 (79)	3.25	
Stage 5	8.4 (26)	1.85	
Stage 6	7.1 (22)	3.64	
<i>Out to Family (N=192)</i>			
<i>GIQ Stage</i>	<i>% (#)</i>	<i>Mean Years</i>	<i>F</i>
			0.66
Stage 1	8.9 (17)	1.47	
Stage 2	17.7 (34)	1.88	
Stage 3	19.8 (38)	2.11	
Stage 4	38.5 (74)	2.26	
Stage 5	9.4 (18)	2.00	
Stage 6	5.7 (11)	1.36	



Table 6.6

<i>Cross tabulation of GIQ and Variables</i>							
	<i>% (#)</i>						
<i>Gender</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	$\chi^2$ (df=30)
Female	15.1 (16)	13.2 (14)	24.5 (26)	21.7 (23)	11.3 (12)	14.2 (15)	37.94
Male	10.5 (30)	26.6 (76)	17.1 (49)	21.3 (61)	9.4 (27)	15 (43)	
Intersex	0 (0)	100 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	
Transgender M/F	12.5 (1)	12.5 (1)	12.5 (1)	25 (2)	25 (2)	12.5 (1)	
Transgender F/M	40 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	20 (1)	20 (1)	20 (1)	
Undecided	0 (0)	0 (0)	66.7 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	33.3 (1)	
Other	12.5 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (2)	12.5 (1)	50 (4)	
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Lesbian	14.8 (8)	22.2 (12)	24.1 (13)	24.1 (13)	5.6 (3)	9.3 (5)	56.05***
Gay	8.2 (19)	30.2 (70)	19 (44)	23.7 (55)	6.9 (16)	12.1 (28)	
Bisexual	20 (16)	5 (4)	17.5 (14)	13.8 (11)	21.2 (17)	22.5 (18)	
Other	13.7 (7)	11.8 (6)	13.7 (7)	19.6 (10)	13.7 (7)	27.5 (14)	
<i>Religious Background</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	$\chi^2$ (df=10)
Christian	11.8 (31)	21.4 (56)	19.8 (52)	20.6 (54)	10.7 (28)	15.6 (41)	3.01
Other	12.5 (7)	17.9 (10)	14.3 (8)	25 (14)	12.5 (14)	17.9 (10)	
None	12.2 (12)	24.5 (24)	18.4 (18)	22.4 (22)	8.2 (8)	14.3 (14)	

Table 6.6- Continued

<i>Cross tabulation of GIQ and Variables</i>							
% (#)							
<i>Current Religious Affiliation</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	$\chi^2$ (df=10)
Christian	13.3 (11)	18.1 (15)	14.5 (12)	14.5 (12)	10.8 (9)	28.9 (24)	20.37*
Other	14.3 (10)	28.6 (20)	17.1 (12)	17.1 (12)	8.6 (6)	14.3 (10)	
None	11 (29)	20.9 (55)	20.5 (54)	25.1 (66)	10.6 (28)	11.8 (31)	
<i>Out to Family</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	$\chi^2$ (df=5)
Yes	9.4 (20)	18.4 (39)	18.4 (39)	38.2 (81)	9.4 (20)	6.1 (13)	87.22***
No	14.7 (30)	25.5 (52)	19.1 (39)	3.9 (8)	11.3 (23)	25.5 (52)	
<i>Out to Friends</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	$\chi^2$ (df=5)
Yes	12.2 (41)	24.4 (82)	21.7 (73)	25.9 (87)	8.3 (28)	7.4 (25)	108.90***
No	11.1 (9)	11.1 (9)	11.1 (9)	3.7 (3)	18.5 (15)	49.4 (40)	

the variance in SISRI. Due to small cell counts, however, LSD post hoc test were unable to be computed. Categories Christian, Other, and None were therefore created. There was a significant difference among the groups ( $F(2,344)=5.47, p<0.01$ ). Religious background then accounted for 3.1% of the variance in SISRI. LSD post hoc analyses indicated that Christians ( $M=54.49, SD=18.09$ ) and Other affiliations ( $M=54.64, SD=17.88$ ) scored significantly higher on SISRI scores than participants who indicated no religious background (None) ( $M=46.64, SD=22.40$ ).

Mean differences in SISRI subscales across religious background were also observed. There was a significant difference in groups for CET, ( $F(2,341)=3.2, p<0.05$ ). Religious background accounted for 1.8% of the variance in CET. LSD post hoc analysis indicated that Christians ( $M=19.02, SD=5.63$ ) scored significantly higher than those who reported their religious background as None ( $M=17.16, SD=6.79$ ).

Subscale PMP, ( $F(2,336)=8.53, p<0.001$ ), reflects a similar relationship. Religious background accounted for 4.8% of the variance in PMP. Christians ( $M=10.93, SD=4.45$ ) scored higher than the None respondents ( $M=8.63, SD=4.98$ ). There was also a significant difference in participants who were other than Christian (Other) ( $M=11.10, SD= 3.8$ ) and the None participants ( $M=8.63, SD=4.98$ ). In the subscale TA, ( $F(2,341)=3.05, p<0.05$ ), Christians ( $M=16.51, SD=6.51$ ) scored higher than the None group ( $M=14.53, SD=7.71$ ). Religious background accounted for 19% of the variance seen in TA. See Table 6.7 for more information on religious background and current affiliation.

### *6.3.3 Current Religious Affiliation*

A one-way ANOVA was calculated to compare mean differences in SISRI scores among current religious affiliation categories. There was a significant difference among the groups, ( $F(5,338)=4.91, p<0.001$ ). Religious affiliation accounted for 6.8% of the

variance in SISRI. LSD post hoc could not be run due to small cell size. An alternative variable was created to account for small cell sizes: Christian, Other, None (no affiliation). The revised current affiliations accounted for 4.7% of the variance in SISRI, 4.4% in PMP, 5.2% in TA, and 3.6% in CSE. In SISRI ( $F(2,341)=8.46, p<0.001$ ), Christians ( $M=58.25, SD=14.55$ ) and Other affiliations ( $M=58.43, SD=18.75$ ) scored significantly high scores than the None participants ( $M=49.42, SD=20.43$ ).

In PMP ( $F(2,336)=7.8, p<0.001$ ), Christians ( $M=11.95, SD=4.2$ ) and Others ( $M=11.27, SD=3.95$ ) scored higher than None ( $M=9.66, SD=4.74$ ). Similarly, in TA ( $F(2,341)=9.35, p<0.001$ ), Christians ( $M=18.19, SD=4.8$ ) and Others ( $M=18.18, SD=6.4$ ) scored significantly higher than None ( $M=14.92, SD=7.2$ ). In CSE ( $F(2,341)=6.31, p<0.01$ ), Christians ( $M=9.2, SD=5.21$ ) and Others ( $M=9.07, SD=5.56$ ) also scored higher than None ( $M=6.88, SD=5.77$ ). See Table 6.7 for more details.

#### 6.3.4 Attend Religious Gatherings

A one-way ANOVA found significant differences with the frequency of attending religious gatherings and SISRI ( $F(4,338)=5.49, p<0.001$ ). Attendance accounted for 6.1% of the variance in SISRI. LSD post hoc analyses indicated that participants who attended religious gatherings about once a week ( $M=59.62, SD=16.40$ ), about once or twice a month ( $M=60.54, SD=17.52$ ), and once or twice a year ( $M=55.63, SD=16.95$ ); these all scored significantly higher than those who never attend gatherings ( $M=48.29, SD=21.19$ ). See Figure 6.7 for more details.

Significant findings were also found in three of the four subscales: PMP ( $F(4,333)=3.99, p<0.01$ ), TA ( $F(4,338)=5.34, p<0.001$ ), and CSE ( $F(4,338)=4.71, p<0.001$ ). Attendance accounted for 4.6% of the variance in PMP, 5.9% in TA, and 5.3% in TA. Participants who attended religious gatherings about once a week ( $M=11.74, SD=4.9$ ), about once or twice a month ( $M=12.08, SD=4.34$ ), and about once or twice a

year ( $M=10.84$ ,  $SD=3.79$ ), all scored significantly higher PMP than participants who never attended gatherings ( $M=9.5$ ,  $SD=4.89$ ).

Participants who never attended gatherings ( $M=14.55$ ,  $SD=7.45$ ) scored significantly lower on the TA than participants who attended religious gatherings about once a week ( $M=18.419$ ,  $SD=5.54$ ), about once or twice a month ( $M=18.35$ ,  $SD=5.9$ ), or about once or twice a year ( $M=17.51$ ,  $SD=5.92$ ).

The same relationship was seen across the CSE subscale. Participants who attended religious gatherings about once a week ( $M=9.8$ ,  $SD=5.64$ ), about once or twice a month ( $M=9.97$ ,  $SD=5.20$ ), and about once or twice a year ( $M=8.21$ ,  $SD=5.55$ ), all scored significantly greater CSE scores than participants who never attended gatherings ( $M=6.55$ ,  $SD=5.83$ ).

#### 6.3.5 Spiritual Level

An ANOVA was used to examine the level of self-reported Spiritual Level and SISRI scores. There was a highly significant difference among the groups, ( $F(3,341)=21.7$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Spiritual level accounted for 16% of the variance in SISRI. LSD post hoc analyses indicated that participants who identified as not at all spiritual ( $M=45.96$ ,  $SD=20.47$ ) had a significantly lower SISRI score than participants who identified as spiritual ( $M=58.2$ ,  $SD=14.53$ ), somewhat spiritual ( $M=59.53$ ,  $SD=14.02$ ), and very spiritual participants ( $M=71.74$ ,  $SD=16.82$ ). Spiritual participants ( $M=58.2$ ,  $SD=14.534$ ) scored significantly lower than participants who were very spiritual ( $M=71.74$ ,  $SD=16.82$ ). Somewhat spiritual youth ( $M=59.53$ ,  $SD=14.02$ ) scored significantly lower SISRI than very spiritual youth ( $M=71.74$ ,  $SD=16.82$ ). Very spiritual individuals, therefore, scored higher on the SISRI than any other level of spirituality among the group.

Significant differences were also found among all four subscales: CET ( $F(3,341)=9.76, p<0.001$ ); PMP ( $F(3,336)=12.3, p<0.001$ ); TA ( $F(3,341)=22.2, p<0.001$ ); and CSE ( $F(3,341)=14.06, p<0.001$ ). Spiritual level accounted for 7.9% of the variance in CET, 9.9% in PMP, and 16% in TA and 11% in CSE. Participants who reported being not at all spiritual ( $M=17.17, SD=6.54$ ) scored significantly lower on the CET subscale than spiritual ( $M=19.24, SD=5.03$ ), somewhat spiritual ( $M=20.28, SD=5.02$ ), and very spiritual ( $M=22.84, SD=4.75$ ) participants. Spiritual participants and somewhat spiritual participants scored higher than not at all spiritual individuals, and lower than very spiritual individuals.

Participants who self-identified as not at all spiritual ( $M=9.25, SD=4.78$ ) scored significantly lower on the PMP subscale than any other participants at any other level of self-identified spirituality. Spiritual individuals ( $M=11.41, SD=4.39$ ) scored significantly lower PMP scores than very spiritual participants ( $M=14.74, SD=4.29$ ).

Not at all spiritual participants ( $M=13.68, SD=7.28$ ) showed significantly lower TA scores across all categories. Spiritual youth ( $M=18.61, SD=4.881$ ) scored significantly lower TA than very spiritual participants ( $M=22.05, SD=5.07$ ). Very spiritual participants scored significantly more than somewhat spiritual individuals ( $M=10.7, SD=3.78$ ) and spiritual participants ( $M=18.61, SD=4.88$ ).

Participants who identified as not at all spiritual ( $M=6.06, SD=5.74$ ) have significantly lower CSE scores across all other spiritual levels. Those who are spiritual ( $M=8.93, SD=4.91$ ) also scored significantly lower than very spiritual youth ( $M=12.11, SD=6.14$ ). See Table 6.7 for more details.

#### 6.3.6 Continuous-Level Variables

The relationship between SISRI and the four continuous-level variables, Age, Age youth realized they were LGBTQ, and Age came out to friends and family, were

computed with Pearson Correlations. How many years the youth were out to themselves, friends and family was also computed. There was no significant finding among age and SISRI. There was negative correlation between the SISRI and the age youth realized they were LGBTQ ( $r=-0.13$ ,  $n=340$ ,  $p=0.018$ ), meaning that younger youth tended to score high on the SISRI. There was no correlation found between SISRI and how many years the youth were out to themselves ( $r=0.08$ ,  $n=346$ ,  $p=0.169$ ).

Two subscales of the SISRI revealed correlations to age youth realized their identity. The subscale CET was highly correlated ( $r=-0.14$ ,  $n=340$ ,  $p=0.009$ ), and CSE was slightly correlated ( $r=-0.113$ ,  $n=340$ ,  $p=0.037$ ). This means the majority of the correlation found within the total SISRI score was primarily due to the CET scores. There was a significant correlation between PMP scores and how many years the youth were out to themselves ( $r=0.11$ ,  $n=341$ ,  $p=0.05$ ). See Table 6.7 below for more details.

A correlation was computed to examine the relationship between SISRI scores and the age at which participants came out to their friends, and the relationship was not statistically significant ( $r=-0.103$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Within the subscale TA, however, a significant correlation was identified. The age at which individuals came out to their friends was significantly correlated to TA ( $r=-0.132$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). There were no significant findings among how many years the youth were out to friends and SISRI ( $r=0.07$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and subscales (CET,  $r=0.04$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; PMP,  $r=0.10$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; TA,  $r=0.10$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; CSE,  $r=-0.01$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

Table 6.7

*Correlation between SISRI and Continuous-Level Demographic Variables*

	SISRI	CET	PMP	TA	CSE
Age	-0.04	-0.09	0.1	-0.03	-0.08
Age Realize LGBTQ	-0.13*	-0.14**	-0.04	-0.1	-0.11*
Age Out to Friends	-0.1	-0.12	-0.03	-0.13*	-0.04
Age Out to Family	-0.1	-0.16*	0.02	-0.05	-0.12
Years Out to Self	0.08	0.05	0.11*	0.06	0.03
Years Out to Friends	0.07	0.04	0.1	0.1	-0.01
Years Out to Family	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.01	-1.03

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

A correlation was computed to examine the relationship between SISRI scores and the age at which participants came out to their family and found no significant relationship ( $r = -0.097$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Within the subscale CET ( $r = -0.158$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), however, there was a significant relationship. There were no significant findings among how many years the youth were out to family and SISRI ( $r = 0.02$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and subscales (CET,  $r = 0.01$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; PMP,  $r = 0.08$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; TA,  $r = 0.01$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; CSE,  $r = -0.03$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

#### 6.4 GIQ and SISRI

An ANOVA was computed to compare SISRI scores among youth in different stages of coming out: Stage 1 ( $M = 54.59$ ,  $SD = 21.46$ ), Stage 2 ( $M = 53.99$ ,  $SD = 18.0$ ), Stage 3 ( $M = 50.71$ ,  $SD = 17.95$ ), Stage 4 ( $M = 52.74$ ,  $SD = 20.09$ ), Stage 5 ( $M = 56.97$ ,  $SD = 20.34$ ), and Stage 6 ( $M = 50.19$ ,  $SD = 20.06$ ). There was not a significant difference among the groups ( $F(5,336) = 0.809$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ). See Figure 6.7 for more details.

The SISRI subscales were also computed to assess whether there were significant differences among scales and GIQ. There were no significant findings: CET ( $F(5,336) = 1.0$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ); PMP ( $F(5,326) = 0.368$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ); TA



( $F(5,336)=0.765$ ,  $p>0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.01$ ); CSE ( $F(5,336)=1.47$ ,  $p>0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.02$ ). See

Table 6.8 for more details.

Table 6.8

*Mean Differences in SISRI by GIQ Stages*

SISRI ( $N=342$ )			
	% (#)	Mean Score	<i>F</i>
GIQ Stage			0.81
Stage 1	12 (41)	54.59	
Stage 2	21.6 (74)	53.99	
Stage 3	19.9 (68)	50.71	
Stage 4	20.5 (70)	52.74	
Stage 5	10.8 (37)	56.97	
Stage 6	15.2 (52)	50.19	

Table 6.9

*Mean Differences in SISRI and Subscales by Demographic Variables (N=540)*

	<i>SISRI</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>CET</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>PMP</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>CSE</i>	<i>F</i>
Ethnicity		1.89		1.15		1.43		1.32		2.32*
American Indian or Alaskan Native	65		28		12		18		7	
Asian/Pacific Islander	63		19.55		12.91		19.18		11.36	
African American	66.5		21.38		13.25		20.75		11.13	
Hispanic American	54.59		18.86		10.66		16.14		8.93	
Caucasian	51.41		18.35		10.18		15.81		7.25	
Other	55.88		17.75		10.29		16.53		9	
<i>National Origin</i>		4.05*		1.91		8.37***		1.91		2.65
United States	54.61		19.02		11.04		16.58		8.15	
Canada	48.9		18.09		9.68		15.05		6.09	
Other	47.96		17.54		8.71		15.01		6.81	
<i>Country Reside</i>		3.65*		1.53		6.86***		2.08		2.02
United States	54.47		19		10.97		16.58		8.1	
Canada	52.08		18.46		10.13		16.17		7.33	
Other	47.69		17.63		8.77		14.78		6.63	

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

Note. <sup>a</sup> Number of responses per variable fluctuated due to missing data.

Table 6.9- Continued

*Mean Differences in SISRI and Subscales by Demographic Variables (N=540)*

	<i>SISRI</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>CET</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>PMP</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>CSE</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Gender</i>		1.68		1.53		0.91		2.21		1.59
Female	53.74		17.99		10.46		17.06		8.45	
Male	51.89		18.79		10.39		15.56		7.29	
Transgender M/F	45.14		17.29		8.57		13.43		5.86	
Transgender F/M	79.33		26		15.33		25		13	
Undecided	63.67		23		10		19		11.67	
Other	55.25		17.75		10.25		18.37		8.88	
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>		1.88		3.03*		1.71		1.14		1.31
Lesbian	52.94		17.55		10.25		16.94		8.41	
Gay	52.11		18.61		10.59		15.81		7.22	
Bisexual	53.79		18.99		10.15		16.52		8.13	
Heterosexual	24.75		8.75		4		9.25		2.75	
Questioning	56.59		20.35		10.94		16.94		9	
Other	53.71		20		10.26		15.63		8.25	
<i>Religious Background</i>		5.47**		3.20*		8.53***		3.05*		2.52
Christian	54.49		19.02		10.93		16.52		8.13	
Other	54.63		19.2		11.1		16.95		7.65	
None	46.64		17.16		8.63		14.53		6.51	

\*p< 0.05, \*\*p< 0.01, \*\*\*p< 0.001.

Table 6.9- Continued

Mean Differences in SISRI and Subscales by Demographic Variables (N=540)										
	<i>SISRI</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>CET</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>PMP</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>CSE</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Current Affiliation</i>		8.46***		2.43		7.80***		9.35***		6.31**
Christian	58.25		18.91		11.95		18.18		9.2	
Other	58.43		20.11		11.27		18.17		9.07	
None	49.42		18.14		9.66		14.92		6.88	
<i>Attending Religious Gatherings</i>		5.49***		2.32		3.99**		5.34***		4.71**
More than once a week	51.27		16.87		11.33		15.6		7.47	
About once a week	59.62		19.68		11.74		18.41		9.79	
About once or twice a month	60.54		20.46		12.08		18.35		9.97	
About once or twice a year	55.63		19.2		10.84		17.51		8.21	
Never	48.29		17.85		9.5		14.55		7.67	
<i>Spiritual Level</i>		21.70***		9.76***		12.30***		22.20***		14.06***
Not at all Spiritual	45.96		17.17		9.25		13.68		6.06	
Spiritual	58.2		19.24		11.41		18.61		8.93	
Somewhat Spiritual	59.53		20.28		11.29		18.59		9.48	
Very Spiritual	71.74		22.84		14.74		22.05		12.11	

\*p< 0.05, \*\*p< 0.01, \*\*\*p< 0.001.

Note. <sup>a</sup> Number of responses per variable fluctuated due to missing data.

Table 6.10

*Mean Differences SISRI Subscales by GIQ Stages*

GIQ Stage	CET (N=342)		
	% (#)	Mean Score	F
GIQ Stage			1.00
Stage 1	12 (41)	19.29	
Stage 2	21.6 (74)	18.86	
Stage 3	19.9 (68)	18.38	
Stage 4	20.5 (70)	18.74	
Stage 5	10.8 (37)	19.86	
Stage 6	15.2 (52)	17.25	
GIQ Stage	PMP (N=338)		
	% (#)	Mean Score	F
GIQ Stage			0.37
Stage 1	11.5 (39)	10.13	
Stage 2	21.9 (74)	10.41	
Stage 3	20.1 (68)	10.54	
Stage 4	20.7 (70)	10.46	
Stage 5	10.9 (37)	11.27	
Stage 6	14.8 (50)	10.02	
GIQ Stage	TA (N=342)		
	% (#)	Mean Score	F
GIQ Stage			0.77
Stage 1	12 (41)	16.59	
Stage 2	21.6 (74)	16.69	
Stage 3	19.9 (68)	15.44	
Stage 4	20.5 (70)	10.06	
Stage 5	10.8 (37)	17.49	
Stage 6	15.2 (52)	15.19	
GIQ Stage	CSE (N=342)		
	% (#)	Mean Score	F
GIQ Stage			1.47
Stage 1	12 (41)	9.07	
Stage 2	21.6 (74)	8.03	
Stage 3	19.9 (68)	6.34	
Stage 4	20.5 (70)	7.49	
Stage 5	10.8 (37)	8.35	
Stage 6	15.2 (52)	8.12	

## Chapter 7

### Discussion

#### 7.1 Results Discussion

For many youth, being LGBTQ is a risk factor for experiencing adversity. This population struggles more than non-LGBTQ youth with depression, suicide ideation and attempts, bullying, and family rejection, particularly during the coming out process. While research shows that religiosity can be a protective factor to reduce substance abuse in heterosexual youth, religiosity does not effect LGBTQ youth in the same manner (Rostosky, et al., 2007). LGBTQ youth's use of drugs did not decrease when their religiosity increased. Rostosky, et al.'s study is an important example of how LGBTQ youth interact differently with religiosity than their non-LGBTQ peers. As discussed in the literature review, religiosity is a component of spiritual intelligence. Past studies that exposed how LGBTQ youth react differently to spiritual components inspired the present study to investigate if the coming out process is an influential factor among spiritual intelligence scores.

##### *7.1.1 GIQ*

The most important finding among GIQ stages and the demographic data was how GIQ stages differed among current religious affiliations. The majority of youth in this study report having a Christian background but currently having no religious affiliation. Youth who identified as Christians appear more often in Stage 6 compared to no religiously affiliated youth who scored more in Stage 4. Stage 2 was led by youth who identify as having an affiliation other than Christian, including Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and other religions not identified. This finding suggests that Christian youth are further along in their coming out process than any other religious category; however, only a minority of the sample identified as currently Christian. Furthermore, those who are

currently Christian were out to their families for significantly fewer years than other and no religiously affiliated youth. To look at this relationship further, a larger population of other religious affiliations and those not currently affiliated should be investigated.

Smith and Homes (2008) suggest that Judeo-Christian religions foster more conflict than other identity-affirming religions. When looking at the volume of youth who transitioned from a Christian background to no current religious affiliation, the results indeed support this assessment. This transition may also imply that the youth who experienced conflict with Christianity and have since left the church.

This assessment is engaging as it suggests that youth who have a Christian background and still currently identify as Christian have significantly higher scores. Future studies could explore the factors involved in this outcome. Is this significance found in LGBTQ welcoming churches and/or less tolerant Christian churches? Is it more important that a youth's family or friends are supportive or that the church is welcoming? Components aforementioned may be deciding factors on whether or not youth leave the Christian faith.

When looking at other religious affiliations, the average stage development was lower than those who affiliate with no religion. It will be important to look into this further in future studies as the size of population in this study was small. There may be noteworthy differences among affirming religions and non-affirming religions that this sample population was unable to capture outside of Christianity.

Another finding is that age plays an important role in GIQ stages. Cass (1984) made the premise that older individuals are able to cope with the conflicts of identity formation and move through the requisite stages. The results of this most recent study, however, demonstrate that older youth score more often in Stages 3 and 4, and younger youth score in Stages 1-2, and Stages 5-6. This finding, on one hand, suggests that age

may not differ significantly in identity development as originally theorized, on the other it may reveal a different scenario. Erikson's development theory suggests that adolescence is marked by a period of developing one's sense of identity (Weiten, et al., 2009). This study may have simply captured a glimpse of what each youth experienced on the day they entered the survey. Erikson's theory suggests these youth may answer these questions differently on a different day as they are exploring who they are and trying on different personalities and identities.

Significant differences are also noted among sexual orientation and GIQ stages. Gay youth tend to score earlier stages of coming out than lesbians, bisexuals, and other orientations. The demographics revealed that this sample of gay youth were also aware of their sexuality for more years than bisexuals and other orientation. Bisexuals and other orientations score more frequently in Stage 6. A future study could look into why gay youth who have been aware of their sexual orientation for more than five years identify more in earlier stages of development.

There are also significant differences among youth who are out to family and friends. Those youth who are out to their family score most frequently in Stage 4 whereas those who are not out to their family score most frequently in Stages 2 and 6. This implies that youth who are more open to their families share a similar stage development. Participants who were not out to their family tend to be dispersed through the development stages. This could also suggest that being out to family does not have a relationship to stage development. Interestingly, youth who are not out to their friends fall more often into Stage 6, whereas those who are out to their friends fell more in the middle stages, primarily in Stage 4. The diversity of these data suggests that more research is needed to explore the impact of openness to friends and family on identity development.



Another component that may factor into this relationship of being open with family was discussed in Bond, et al, (2009). Bond, et al. found Internet use to be a mediating factor in how open youth are about their sexual orientation with their families. If youth used the Internet to learn more about their orientation, and focused less on communicating this curiosity with their families, they were less likely to disclose their orientation. Future studies may find that the use of Internet to explore sexual orientation may not only impact family openness but also the GIQ development.

#### *7.1.2 SISRI*

The most significant finding among SISRI scores is how religious background and religious affiliation correlates to SISRI mean scores. Youth, who have no religious background and those who identify as having “other” backgrounds, score lower on SISRI than youth with a Christian upbringing. Upon looking more in depth at the subscales, only CET revealed a similarly statistically significant relationship.

Christians and those with other religious backgrounds score higher than those with no religious background on the PMP scale. This may indicate that youth with no previous religious structure are less likely to engage in critical thinking about meaning and purpose of life questions. Furthermore, the TA scale indicates that Christians score slightly higher than those with no religious background. One could postulate that Christian youth are more likely to seek meaning within their religious structure, making TA a more likely experience among this group. Another possibility is that LGBTQ youth may undergo a critical evaluation of their religion if it opposed their sexual orientation. This assessment may provide them with a different level of spiritual understanding than those without the religious structure. It will be important, however, to explore these relationships further before making conclusions about this finding.

There are significant differences among current religious affiliation, SISRI, and three subscales. Current Christian youth score significantly higher on the SISRI, PMP, TA, and CSE than those with no current affiliation. This indicates that Christians may have more protective factors due to their religious structure than those without religion. The factors like prayer and community bonds should be investigated in future studies.

This finding about Christianity supports the notion that youth who currently identify as Christian have higher levels of spiritual intelligence than those in other religions. Undoubtedly more research is needed to validate and investigate this further. The significance of this finding may be due to the sample size, as Christianity made up a majority of religious affiliations. If more studies validate this finding, it will be important to investigate if youth feel that their Christian church is affirming of their identity, if they are open about their identity at church, if they feel conflict or resolve with the Christian teachings that support or do not support the LGBTQ identity, and so on. Future studies should also measure spiritual intelligence among different Christian denominations and also other religions. Investigations may reveal that particular religions increase SISRI more than others or even that any religion may increase spiritual intelligence.

#### *Sexual Orientation*

There are no significant differences found among sexual orientation groups and SISRI. The CET subscale, however, reveals a significant difference between heterosexual participants and lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, and other (non-identified orientation) youth. All groups score significantly higher than the heterosexual participants. This study was advertised for LGBTQ participants, however five heterosexual respondents participated. Part of this was explained after examining the gender of these participants. Four participants identified themselves as transgender and one as male. Some transgender individuals may identify only within their self-

identified gender and therefore not label themselves as transgender but as male or female. Future studies should reach out to the transgender community for two reasons. First, there is a substantial difference in CET scores than other orientations. This could imply that transgender people struggle more with spiritual intelligence than do other populations. Secondly, due to the small sample size, these results may not be reflective of the larger transgender community. It does, however, imply that more information is needed to assess this group.

#### *Attending Religious Gatherings*

The frequency with which youth attend religious gatherings is significantly related to SISRI scores and three subscales. Youth who are more active in religious gatherings score significantly higher in SISRI than those who never attend gatherings. This may indicate that more community religious involvement positively relates to spiritual intelligence development. Youth who attend gatherings weekly, monthly, and even just a few times a year all score higher PMP scores than those who never attend gatherings. This same relationship was also found in the CSE and TA scores. Future studies should explore why even infrequent religious participation correlates to an increase in spiritual intelligence.

#### *Spiritual Level*

The survey revealed significant mean differences in SISRI and the subscales across self-identified levels of spirituality. It is important to recognize that this variable is difficult to extract definitive conclusions from, as spirituality is not defined in the survey. That being said, youth who identify as not at all spiritual score lower on the SISRI and all subscales than any other self-identified spiritual level. Very spiritual individuals scored highest SISRI. This may indicate that self-identified spirituality level is consistent with spiritual intelligence scores. Interestingly, very spiritual youth were also out to their

friends for significantly more years than other spiritual levels. Future studies should investigate the influence of being open about one's sexual orientation to friends on spiritual level, in addition to how youth define spirituality. It is possible that youth may equate spirituality with religiosity, as religious background, current affiliation, and attendance reflect a similar relationship to SISRI.

#### *Continuous Age Variables*

Continuous age variables provide further insight into the SISRI among this sample population. Youth who were young when they realized they were LGBTQ scored significantly higher SISRI than those who realized their identity at an older age. This may indicate that early-developed youth have a higher capacity for spiritual intelligence. There may be important factors within this finding to explore in future studies. For example, what promotes early identity realization? What are differences among those who always knew they were LGBTQ and those who realized their identity at 19 years old?

Another finding revealed no significant differences in SISRI by how old youth were when they come out to family and friends. So while the age of self-realization may be a critical factor, the age youth came out to others may not increase or decrease spiritual intelligence. When exploring the variable of how many years the youth were out to self, friends and family, so significant relationships were found. An important factor to explore in the future concerns the reactions of family and friends. SISRI may be different among youth who felt acceptance than those who experienced rejection.

#### *7.1.3 GIQ and SISRI*

The null hypothesis is accepted after finding no significant differences between the SISRI and GIQ stages. This finding suggests that the relationship between coming out and spiritual intelligence is more complex than originally theorized. While there are differences between SISRI and religious variables (religious background, self-identified

spiritual level, etc.), only one religious variable is different across GIQ stages (current religious background). Variables significant across GIQ are related to coming out issues: sexual orientation, whether or not youth are out to friends and family, and so on. This does, however, suggest that both scales uphold validity with what they are intended to measure.

There may be several reasons why this study did not find a significant relationship between GIQ and SISRI. First, the sample is not representative of a diverse population. This study captures the perspectives from Caucasian, gay males who were once Christian but are now not affiliated with a religion, and who report low levels of spirituality. Future studies that are more diverse may uncover a different relationship. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the sheer complexity of the coming out experience may not be adequately captured in this study. For example, understanding why youth move from a Christian background to no current affiliation may provide an extensive amount of information. If a participant realizes he is LGBTQ and is a part of a welcoming church, how that experience impacts him may be a greater indicator of spiritual intelligence than his GIQ stage. If an LGBTQ youth is part of a less welcoming church, he may feel rejected or reject the religion. That experience may also be more influential to spiritual intelligence than the GIQ stage. The complexity of these relationships warrants future investigation.

## 7.2 Limitations

Beyond the demographics of the participants, there are several limitations to this study. Internet research necessitates giving away a certain level of control. Koo & Skinner (2005) report that it can be difficult to get young adults to respond and fill out online surveys. To overcome the disadvantage of not being able to control sample size, the survey was posted to various LGBTQ community websites as well as several popular

media sites to disseminate the survey as widely as possible. The more links posted, the more likely that there would be enough responses.

Another limitation of online research is not being able to control for who completes the survey. Although it was directly advertised for “LGBTQ youth between ages 15-25,” there was no guarantee that those outside of these criteria would not complete the survey. The advantages, however, of gathering data from LGBTQ youth across the United States and other countries, while protecting their anonymity, outweighs the risks of false responses. Furthermore, LGBTQ youth report that they are more likely to accurately represent themselves than non-LGBTQ youth online (HRC, 2012). The researcher, therefore, assumed that the responses truly represent the participants’ experiences.

Outside the limitations of online research, there are additional limitations in the measures the researcher chose to investigate this population. The GIQ measures sexual orientation development. Since this study included transgender youth, there were important factors to consider when analyzing the data. In the transgender category, there may be youth who do not identify as homosexual. For example, there may be a transgender male-to-female who strongly believes that she was born in the wrong body. If she is attracted to males, she considers herself to be heterosexual. If she is attracted to females, she considers herself a lesbian. In order to accurately analyze the data, it is critical to pay close attention to GIQ validity questions to reveal those who still identify as heterosexual even though they are part of the LGBTQ community. The descriptive data found four heterosexual identifying as transgender youth. Despite this complication, it is important to include the transgender data in this study to learn more about their spiritual intelligence.

Furthermore, this study includes bisexual youth. Few studies have used the GIQ scale on bisexual individuals. This may be due to the nature of the GIQ as it defines bisexuality as part of the homosexual development, not an identity on its own. For example, the first question of the survey, which measures for Stage 2 (Identity Comparison), states, "I probably am sexually attracted equally to men and women" (Brady & Busse, 1994).

There are two areas of caution when examining bisexual participants. First, it is important not to assume that bisexuality is a passing phase. Bisexuality is a recognized sexual orientation; therefore, it may not be captured adequately via the GIQ. Secondly, this research attempts to be sensitive to bisexual persons because they feel not only discriminated against by the majority culture but also within the LGBTQ community (Ross, Dobinson, & Eady, 2010). Taking these two points into consideration, the researcher evaluated bisexual identifying youth not solely on their GIQ scores. If a youth self-identified as bisexual, the researcher ran analyses to compare descriptive data against spirituality scores. These analyses were conducted for each of the sexual orientations to help bring as complete a picture as possible of the sample population.

Another limitation concerns the definition of spirituality. In his study, King (2008) informed his readers that he was not creating a new definition of spirituality. The SISRI measures LGBTQ youth's spiritual capabilities *not* how they define spirituality. A level of assumption is therefore made about what spirituality is throughout this survey. There are countless definitions and points of view that reflect the complexities of spirituality. Future studies should combine this quantitative survey with a qualitative counterpart, in order to capture the unique perspectives of participants' definitions of spirituality.

### 7.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

Policies play a critical role in creating a supportive community for LGBTQ youth. Since the 1990s hundreds of new and amended anti-bullying policies have been implemented across 46 of the states in the United States (Stuart-Cassel, Bell & Springer, 2011). Forty-five states require schools to incorporate these policies into their schools and curricula (Stuart-Cassel, Bell & Springer). Countrywide movements such as this lead to safer environments for many minority students. There are, however, limitations to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or gender expression. In 2012, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) reported that only five states have anti-discrimination laws to protect people from sexual orientation discrimination. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia have anti-discrimination policies to protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender expression *and* gender identity (NGLTF). While the majority of the U.S. supports anti-bullying laws, many states have not stepped forward to enforce anti-LGBTQ discrimination policies.

Conducting research into the lasting effects of bullying on children and youth influenced stronger policies. In this same fashion, including perspectives of LGBTQ youth can provide valuable insights for public understanding. The LGBTQ youth population is made up of unique individuals that may not flourish within programs that may help non-LGBTQ youth. It is imperative that new research focuses not only on how these youth differ from their peers but also what enables them to thrive in the face of adversity.

The results from this study provide insights into the variables among LGBTQ groups that are significantly different among spiritual intelligence scores. Although GIQ stage does not reveal significant differences among SISRI scores, several demographic variables do, such as religious background and self-identified spiritual level. The findings ultimately indicate that spiritual intelligence differs greatly based on religious exposure. If



future studies validate these exploratory findings, the religious community may greatly benefit from developing inclusive policies for LGBTQ parishioners. Taking a step to embrace this community through inclusive policies may increase trust among LGBTQ people.

While this is simply a correlational study, it provides powerful insights into the relationship between religion and spiritual intelligence. It is important to obtain a comprehensive overview of an identified problem prior to delving into program design and implementation (Kettner, Moroney & Martin, 2008). If additional research supports this study's findings, there are new opportunities for religious communities to aid in nurturing LGBTQ youth's spiritual intelligence. For example, creating programs that address the four subcategories of spiritual intelligence (critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion) may positively impact a youth's future. There may also be opportunities for schools and families to explore methods of increasing spiritual intelligence. Future research is needed to explore and define these methods. It is possible that research into the causal relationships between spiritual intelligence and religious factors may reveal future program methods.

#### 7.4 Implications for Research

As mentioned in the discussion chapter, there are many future studies needed to further explore the findings of this study. Looking further into GIQ and SISRI may reveal more relationships, increase evidence based practice, and new protective policies. Another crucial component to explore in the future is how the relationship of being involved in a religious community influences SISRI scores along with mental health scales. For example, further research may find that youth who are involved in a religious community have high SISRI scores but low levels of self-esteem and/or high levels of

depression. Exploring this factor may provide a more in-depth view of SISRI in conjunction with mental health issues in the LGBTQ youth community.

Future studies should also aim to incorporate the perspectives of different religions. This research did not target religious institutions and as a consequence, different religions were not equally represented. While that was appropriate for this study, the findings indicate that religion may be a critical factor to explore further. It may also be meaningful to explore spiritual intelligence against affirming and intolerant religions. Even if perceived tolerance is dependent on individual perspectives, this variable may interplay with spiritual intelligence in a critical manner.

It is also important to explore alternative methods for measuring the coming out experience of bisexuals and transgender individuals. Bisexuals may not be adequately measured via the GIQ as it makes assumptions about bisexuality being a transitory phase in the coming out process. Many transgender individuals are heterosexual and therefore do not transition through the coming out process. It is obvious, however, that each transgender individual moves through a variety of stages to fully realize his or her gender expression and identity. Future studies should explore the transitions that transgender individuals experience and if there are any correlations to their respective SISRI scores. Although heterosexual transgender youth make up only a small portion of the study, they score the lowest SISRI across genders. It will be critical to explore the implications of this in the future.

The GIQ may need to be adjusted or completely revamped in order to adequately capture today's youth. This scale uses words such as *homosexual* and *heterosexual*, which can limit the relevance of the scale to lesbian and gay people. Terms like *queer* or *LGBTQ* may allow participants to more accurately describe their GIQ stage. Addressing

the terminology of this scale may enable it to be more widely applied to other sexual orientations in this population.

Taking this study to the next step and examining the causal relationships between the correlations found may also provide further insights into the development of spiritual intelligence. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of GIQ and SISRI may reveal information not captured in this study. Factors previously discussed, like whether or not youth felt accepted in their religious community, may cause an interesting interaction with GIQ and SISRI scores.

### 7.5 Summary

Investigating the complexities of spiritual intelligence within a diverse minority presents a variety of complications and insights. Involvement in a religious group is related positively to SISRI for LGBTQ youth in this sample, which provides intriguing insight for future research in this community. Additional research is necessary to explore these findings further. The limitations of this study's demographics make it difficult to suggest the outcomes are applicable to other groups. While several demographic variables, like religious background, were significantly correlated to spiritual intelligence, sexual identity development was not a significant factor. LGBTQ youth face many hardships on their journey through the coming out experience and, ultimately, self-acceptance. This study provides researchers with opportunities to explore specific factors in order to increase positive youth development through spiritual intelligence.

Appendix A

Dimensions Used to Describe Stages of Homosexual Identity Formation

By Vivienne Cass

<i>Dimensions Used to Describe Stages of Homosexual Identity Formation (Cass, 1984)</i>			
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>	<b>Affective</b>
<b>1. Commitment</b>	Degree that individual accepts a homosexual and/or heterosexual self-image.		Feelings about accepting a homosexual self-image.
	Degree of confusion about own self-image regarding sexual orientation.		
	Degree of acceptance of other's view of self as a homosexual or a heterosexual.		
	Clarity of perception of homosexual meaning of behavior and self-image.		
<b>2. Disclosure</b>	Degree of wanting to disclose homosexual behavior/self-image to homosexual/heterosexual others.	Degree of disclosure of homosexual behavior/self-image to homosexual/heterosexual others.	Feeling about disclosing homosexual behavior/self-image to homosexual/heterosexual others
	Types of homosexual/heterosexual others that the individual would like to disclose to.	Types of homosexual/heterosexual others that the individual discloses to.	
	Perceived elements of relationships between self and others that lead to desire to disclose.	Elements of relationship between self and others leading to disclosure.	
<b>3. Generality</b>	Degree that a homosexual/heterosexual self-image is seen as being a part of self.	Degree that homosexual and/or heterosexual behavior occurs when possible situation arises.	
	The way the individual imagines others perceive the generality of their homosexual self-image.		
<b>4. Identity evaluation</b>	Degree of acceptance for self of negative stereotypes of homosexuals.		Evaluation of homosexual and/or heterosexual self-image/behavior.
			Evaluation of others' view of homosexual/heterosexual self-image/behavior.
<b>5. Group identification</b>	Sense of belonging felt with homosexuals and/or heterosexual groups.		Degree of pride felt towards homosexual as a whole.
	Degree that individual perceives self as similar to homosexual/heterosexuals.		

	Degree that homosexual/heterosexual groups are seen to meet own needs.		
<b>6. Social interaction</b>	Perceived quality of interaction with homosexuals and/or heterosexual.	Frequency of social contacts with homosexuals/heterosexuals.	Degree of satisfaction with interaction with homosexuals and/or heterosexuals.
		Types of settings in which social contacts with homosexuals/heterosexuals take place.	
<b>7. Alienation</b>	Degree that individual feels different from others, a stranger to self.		Degree that individual likes feeling different from others.
<b>8. Inconsistency</b>	Degree that individual's perception of self, behavior, and other's view of self are inconsistent with regard to sexual orientation.		Degree of discomfort felt about inconsistency between self, behavior, and other's view of self as pertains to homosexuality.
<b>9. Sexual orientation activity</b>	Degree that individual desires increased/decreased frequency of homosexual erotic, emotional, and sexual activity.	Frequency with which homosexual erotic, emotional, and sexual activity are engaged in.	Degree of enjoyment felt from homosexual erotic, emotional, and sexual activity.
<b>10. Acculturation</b>		Forms of homosexual subcultural activities engaged in.	Degree of comfort felt in participating in homosexual subcultural activities.
<b>11. Deference to others</b>	Degree of importance attached to opinions of homosexuals/heterosexuals.		
	Types of homosexuals/heterosexuals perceived as important.		
<b>12. Dichotomization</b>	Degree that homosexuals and heterosexuals perceived as two separate and distinct groups.		
<b>13. Personal control</b>	Amount of influence that a homosexual identity is seen to have on a day-to-day living and on future prospects.		
	Degree that a homosexual identity is seen to interfere with running of life		
<b>14. Strategies</b>	Degree that individual wants to continue using strategies outlined in model.	Degree that strategies outlined in model are adopted.	

		Ease with which strategies used.	
<b>15. Personal satisfaction</b>	Degree that individual is satisfied with current life.		
	Degree that individual wants to change current life.		
	Degree that life is perceived as settled and stable.		
<b>16. Professional contact</b>	Degree that individual wants to see professional for help regarding homosexual behavior/self-image.	Whether is seeing or has seen professional for help regarding homosexual behavior/self-image.	
	Reasons for seeing/wanting to see professional.		

(Cass, 1984, pp. 148-150)

Appendix B  
Facebook Page Screenshot



facebook  Kris Hohn Voice Home

You are posting, commenting, and liking as **Lgbtq Youth Study** — Change to Kris Hohn

**Admin Panel** Edit Page Build Audience Help Show Create Page

**Lgbtq Youth Study**

21 likes · 3 talking about this

Add a Cover

Liked

Community  
I am a graduate student at UTA School of Social Work. I am conducting a study to educate social service professionals about the needs of LGBTQ youth. A survey for LGBTQ youth between the ages 15-25 is now open for participants!

21

Photos Likes

See Your Ad Here

<http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms/>  
<http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms/>

Advertise Your Page

Now  
October  
Launched

Highlights

Status Photo / Video Event, Milestone +

Write something...

15 Friends  
Like Lgbtq Youth Study

+6

Appendix C  
Twitter Page Screenshot



# LGBTQYouthStudy

@KrisGradStudent

I am a graduate student at UT Arlington School of Social Work. I am conducting a study to educate social service professionals about the needs of LGBTQ youth.  
Texas

Edit your profile

35 TWEETS

1,255 FOLLOWING

380 FOLLOWERS

## Tweets

Following

Followers

Favorites

Lists

## Similar to you



**Jumper Maybach™** @JumperMayba...  
Jumper Maybach™, Pop Artist Painte...  
Promoted · Follow



**Ashley Stevens** @XenaFan2006  
\*Activist \*College Student(major-Com...  
Follow



**Gay Straight Talk** @GayStraightTalk  
Bridging the GREAT DIVIDE between ...  
Follow

## Tweets



**LGBTQYouthStudy** @KrisGradStudent 9 Nov  
Please participate in this LGBTQ study to help future youth. LGBTQ ages 15-25 only. [surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_...](http://surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_...)  
Expand



**LGBTQYouthStudy** @KrisGradStudent 8 Nov  
Your participation counts! A survey for LGBTQ between 15-25. [surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_...](http://surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_...)  
Expand



**LGBTQYouthStudy** @KrisGradStudent 6 Nov  
Please participate in this LGBTQ study to help future youth. LGBTQ ages 15-25 only. [surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_...](http://surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_...)  
Expand



**LGBTQYouthStudy** @KrisGradStudent 1 Nov  
Your participation counts! A survey for LGBTQ between 15-25. [surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_...](http://surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_...)  
Expand



**LGBTQYouthStudy** @KrisGradStudent 30 Oct

Appendix D

Recruitment Text: Survey Announcements for Websites

LGBTQ Youth:

An Exploration of the Relationship between the Coming Out Process and Spiritual  
Intelligence  
**Recruitment**

Kris Hohn

University of Texas at Arlington

10/09/12

**AskChad.org:**

Announcement Text

The statement below will be posted once by the Website Manager of AskChad.org to their website.

“Attention LGBTQ youth! If you are between the ages of 15-25, please participate in this study about the coming out process by taking this 20-minute online survey. I am exploring the relationship between spirituality and the coming out process. Your responses are valuable and may help other LGBTQ youth in the future. Your responses will be anonymously collected, and no identifiable information is being collected for research purposes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at:

HohnResearch@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation and support!

Click on the link below to go to the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)

\*Please take a moment to review the privacy statements for this website at

<http://www.askchad.org/privacy-policy>”

**Facebook:**

Opening Announcement and Weekly Reminder Text

The statement below will be posted on a weekly basis on the LGBTQ Youth Study Facebook page created by primary researcher.

“Attention LGBTQ youth! If you are between the ages of 15-25, please participate in this study about the coming out process by taking this 20-minute online survey. I am exploring the relationship between spirituality and the coming out process. Your responses are valuable and may help other LGBTQ youth in the future. Your responses

will be anonymously collected, and no identifiable information is being collected for research purposes. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at: HohnResearch@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation and support!

Click on the link below to go to the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)

\*Please take a moment to review the privacy statements for this website at <http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms/>"

**QueerAttitude.com:**

Opening Announcement and Weekly Reminder Text

The statement below will be posted on a weekly basis on the QueerAttitude.com website by the primary researcher.

“Attention LGBTQ youth! If you are between the ages of 15-25, please participate in this study about the coming out process by taking this 20-minute online survey. I am exploring the relationship between spirituality and the coming out process. Your responses are valuable and may help other LGBTQ youth in the future. Your responses will be anonymously collected, and no identifiable information is being collected for research purposes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at:

HohnResearch@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation and support!

Click on the link below to go to the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)

\*Please take a moment to review the privacy statements for this website at <http://www.queerattitude.com/privacy/>"

**Reddit.com and Tumblr.com:**

Opening Announcement and Weekly Reminder Text

The statement below will be posted on a weekly basis on the Reddit.com and Tumblr.com page created by the primary researcher.

“Attention LGBTQ youth! If you are between the ages of 15-25, please participate in this study about the coming out process by taking this 20-minute online survey. I am

exploring the relationship between spirituality and the coming out process. Your responses are valuable and may help other LGBTQ youth in the future. Your responses will be anonymously collected, and no identifiable information is being collected for research purposes. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at: HohnResearch@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation and support!

Click on the link below to go to the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)

**Twitter.com:**

Opening Announcement and Daily Reminder Text

Twitter Text Limit is 140 or less.

“LGBTQ Youth Survey! Ages 15-25 only. Responses are anonymous and confidential.

Follow link to survey: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

“LGBTQ Youth Survey for ages 15-25. Follow link to survey!

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

“Only a few days left to participate in LGBTQ youth survey ages 15-25 only.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

“Looking for more LGBTQ youth participants in survey ages 15-25. Only a few days left to participate [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

“Are you LGBTQ between 15-25? Please participate in this survey to help provide

stronger services for future youth [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

“Please participate in this LGBTQ study to help future youth. LGBTQ ages 15-25 only.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

“Your participation counts! A survey for LGBTQ between 15-25.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)”

**Youth Line:**

Opening Announcement and Weekly Reminder Text

The statement below will be posted on a weekly basis on the YouthLine.ca website by the primary researcher.

“Attention LGBTQ youth! If you are between the ages of 15-25, please participate in this study about the coming out process by taking this 20-minute online survey. I am exploring the relationship between spirituality and the coming out process. Your responses are valuable and may help other LGBTQ youth in the future. Your responses will be anonymously collected, and no identifiable information is being collected for research purposes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at:

HohnResearch@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation and support!

Click on the link below to go to the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ\\_Youth\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTQ_Youth_Study)

\*Please take a moment to review the privacy statements for this website at [http://www.youthline.ca/privacy\\_and\\_terms\\_of\\_use.php](http://www.youthline.ca/privacy_and_terms_of_use.php)”



Appendix E  
LGBTQ Youth Survey

## **LGBTQ Youth Survey**

### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

Kris Hohn, School of Social Work, Kristen.Hohn@mavs.uta.edu, University of Texas at Arlington

### **FACULTY ADVISOR**

Courtney Cronley, PhD, School of Social Work, Assistant Professor, Cronley@uta.edu, University of Texas at Arlington

### **TITLE OF PROJECT**

LGBTQ Youth: An Exploration of the Relationship between the Coming Out Process and Spiritual Intelligence

### **INTRODUCTION**

You are being asked to participate in a research study about the coming out process and spiritual intelligence. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinuing your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please email the researcher if there is anything you do not understand.

### **PURPOSE**

The specific purposes of this research study are as follows:

To explore the relationship between coming out and spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence means how aware a person is about their spiritual beliefs.

To educate social service professionals about the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.

### **DURATION**

Participation in this study will last approximately 20 minutes.

### **NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS**

The number of anticipated participants in this research study is 2,500.

### **PROCEDURES**

The procedure, which will involve you as a research participant, include:

-Reading and responding to survey questions.

-The survey includes demographic information that cannot be linked back to you personally.

-The survey also includes two tools of measurement: the Gay Identity Questionnaire and the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory.

-There are a total of 88 questions.

### **POSSIBLE BENEFITS**

There is no direct benefit to participating in this research; however, LGBTQ youth may benefit from the information gathered from this research that is used to educate social service professionals.

### **POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

There are no perceived risks or discomforts for participating in this research study. Should you experience any discomfort please inform the researcher, you have the right to quit any study procedures at any time at no consequence. You also can skip over questions you prefer not to answer and may return to them before completing the survey.

### **COMPENSATION**

No compensation will be offered for participation in this study.

### **ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES**

There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. However, you can elect not to participate in the study or quit at any time at no consequence.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in the survey or quit at any time at no consequence.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. This study will not collect identifiable information such as first and last names, screen names, email addresses, or mailing addresses.

All non-identifiable information collected from this study will be stored at the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; your responses are anonymous.

Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA Institutional Review Board (IRB), and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records.

Your survey data will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above. The IRB at UTA has reviewed and approved this study and the information within this consent form. If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, the University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law.

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS**

Questions about this research study may be directed to Kris Hohn at [Kristen.Hohn@mavs.uta.edu](mailto:Kristen.Hohn@mavs.uta.edu) or Courtney Cronley at [Cronley@uta.edu](mailto:Cronley@uta.edu). Any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant or a research-related injury may be directed to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services at 817-272-2105 or [regulatoryservices@uta.edu](mailto:regulatoryservices@uta.edu).

**1. CONSENT/ASSENT MINORS**

**By selecting the “I Consent/Assent” option below, you confirm that you have read this document. You have been informed about this study’s purpose, procedures, and possible benefits and risks. You have been given the opportunity to email questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can email other questions at any time.**

**By consenting to participate you are affirming that you are a LGBTQ person between the ages of 18-25. By assenting to participate you are affirming that you are a LGBTQ person between the ages of 15-17.**

**You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By selecting “I Consent/Assent,” you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation by exiting the survey at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.**

- I Consent/Assent
- I Do Not Consent/Exit Survey

**Demographic Questions**

**2. What is your age? (in years)**

**3. Which race/ethnicity best describes you?**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic American
- White / Caucasian
- Other (please specify)

---

**4. What is your national origin?**

- United States
- Canada
- Other (please specify)

---

**5. What country do you reside in?**

- United States
- Canada
- Other (please specify)

---

**6. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male
- Intersex
- Transgender Male to Female
- Transgender Female to Male
- Undecided
- Other (please specify)

---

**7. What is your sexual orientation?**

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Heterosexual
- Questioning
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. What is your religious background? E.g. the religious group in which you grew up or were taught by your family.**

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism
- None
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. What religious group do you currently identify with or belong to?**

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism
- None
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_



**10. How often do you attend religious gatherings? Religious gatherings include activities such as: youth group activities, attending church or temple services, bible study, etc.**

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- About once or twice a month
- About once or twice a year
- Never

**11. To what extent are you a spiritual person?**

- Very spiritual
- Somewhat spiritual
- Spiritual
- Not spiritual at all

**12. How old were you when you realized you were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning?**

**13. Have you come out to your friends?**

- Yes
- No

**14. If yes, how old were you when you came out to your friends?**

**15. Have you come out to your family?**

- Yes
- No

**16. If yes, how old were you when you came out to your family?**

**17. Where did you first learn about this survey?**

- QueerAttitude.com
- AskChad.com
- YouthLine.ca
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Other (please specify)

**Gay Identity Questionnaire**

Please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary, you can choose to leave the survey at any time, and do not have to respond to questions you do not want to answer. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

**18. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time. A statement is selected as true if the entire statement is true, otherwise it is selected as false.**

	True	False
I probably am sexually attracted equally to men and women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I live a homosexual lifestyle at home, while at work/school I do not want others to know about my lifestyle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My homosexuality is a valid private identity, that I do not want made public.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have feelings I would label as homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have little desire to be around most heterosexuals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I doubt that I am a homosexual, but still am confused about who I am sexually.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**19. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
I do not want most heterosexuals to know that I am definitely homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very proud to be gay and make it known to everyone around me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't have much contact with heterosexuals and can't say that I miss it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I generally feel comfortable being the only gay person in a group of heterosexuals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm probably homosexual, even though I maintain a heterosexual image in both my personal and public life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have disclosed to 1 or 2 people (very few) that I have homosexual feelings, although I'm not sure I'm homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**20. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
I am not as angry about treatment of gays because even though I've told everyone about my gayness, they have responded well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am definitely homosexual but I do not share that knowledge with most people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind if homosexuals know that I have homosexual thoughts and feelings, but I don't want others to know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More than likely I'm homosexual, although I'm not positive about it yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't act like most homosexuals do, so I doubt that I'm homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm probably homosexual, but I'm not sure yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**21. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
I am openly gay and fully integrated into heterosexual society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't think that I'm homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't feel as if I am heterosexual or homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have thoughts I would label as homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't want people to know that I may be homosexual, although I'm not sure if I am homosexual or not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I may be homosexual and I am upset at the thought of it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**22. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
The topic of homosexuality does not relate to me personally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently confront people about their irrational, homophobic (fear of homosexuality) feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting in touch with homosexuals is something I feel I need to do, even though I'm not sure I want to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have homosexual thoughts and feelings but I doubt that I'm homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I dread having to deal with the fact that I may be homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud and open with everyone about being gay, but it isn't the major focus of my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**23. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
I probably am heterosexual or non-sexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am experimenting with my same-sex, because I don't know what my sexual preference is.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel accepted by my homosexual friends and acquaintances, even though I'm not sure I'm homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently express to others, anger over heterosexuals' oppression of me and other gays.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have not told most of the people at work that I am definitely homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I accept but would not say I am proud of the fact that I am definitely homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**24. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
I cannot imagine sharing my homosexual feelings with anyone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most heterosexuals are not credible sources of help for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am openly gay around heterosexuals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I engage in sexual behavior I would label as homosexual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not about to stay hidden as gay for anyone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**25. Please read each of the following statements carefully and then select whether you feel the statements are True or False for you at this point in time.**

	True	False
I tolerate rather than accept my homosexual thoughts and feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My heterosexual friends, family, and associates think of me as a person who happens to be gay, rather than as a gay person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even though I am definitely homosexual, I have not told my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am openly gay with everyone, but it doesn't make me feel all that different from heterosexuals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory

**26. The following statements are designed to measure various behaviours, thought processes, and mental characteristics. Read each statement carefully and choose which one of the five possible responses best reflects you by selecting the corresponding number. If you are not sure, or if a statement does not seem to apply to you, choose the answer that seems the best. Please answer honestly and make responses based on how you actually are rather than how you would like to be. The five possible responses are:**

**Not at all true of me | Not very true of me | Somewhat true of me | Very true of me | Completely true of me**

**For each item, select the one response that most accurately describes you.**

	Not true at all of me	Not very true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true of me	Completely true of me
I have often questioned or pondered the nature of reality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize aspects of myself that are deeper than my physical body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have spent time contemplating the purpose or reason for my existence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to enter higher states of consciousness or awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to deeply contemplate what happens after death.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**27. For each item, select the one response that most accurately describes you.**

	Not true	Not very true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true of me	Completely true of me
It is difficult for me to sense anything other than the physical and material.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ability to find meaning and purpose in life helps me adapt to stressful situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can control when I enter higher states of consciousness or awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have developed my own theories about such things as life, death, reality, and existence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of a deeper connection between myself and other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**28. For each item, select the one response that most accurately describes you.**

	Not true at all of me	Not very true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true of me	Completely true of me
I am able to define a purpose or reason for my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to move freely between levels of consciousness or awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently contemplate the meaning of events in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I define myself by my deeper, non-physical self.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I experience a failure, I am still able to find meaning in it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

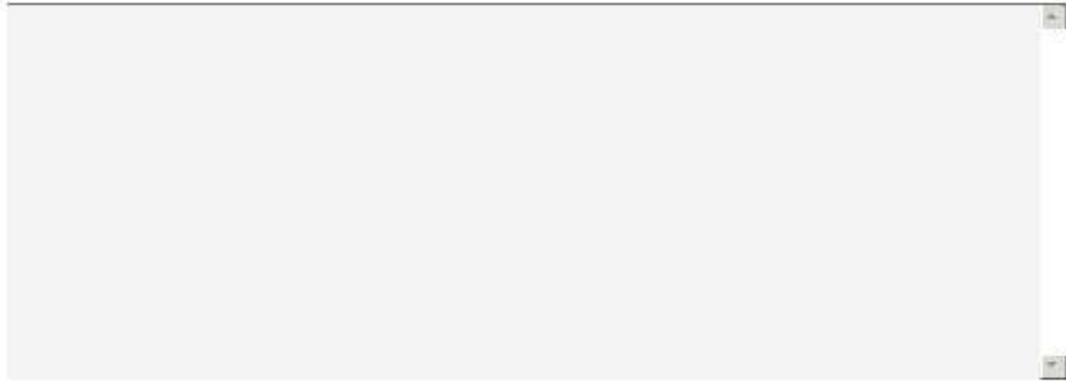
**29. For each item, select the one response that most accurately describes you.**

	Not true at all of me	Not very true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true of me	Completely true of me
I often see issues and choices more clearly while in higher states of consciousness/awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have often contemplated the relationship between human beings and the rest of the universe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am highly aware of the nonmaterial aspects of life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to make decisions according to my purpose in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize qualities in people which are more meaningful than their body, personality, or emotions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**30. For each item, select the one response that most accurately describes you.**

	Not true at all of me	Not very true of me	Somewhat true of me	Very true of me	Completely true of me
I have deeply contemplated whether or not there is some greater power or force (e.g., god, goddess, divine being, higher energy, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognizing the nonmaterial aspects of life helps me feel centered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have developed my own techniques for entering higher states of consciousness or awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**31. In the space provided below, please comment on any thoughts or concerns that arose during this survey. This section is optional and provides the researcher with a deeper understanding of your experiences and beliefs regarding spirituality and the coming out process. If you do not wish to write comments, please press "Submit" to complete the survey.**



**You have completed this survey!**

Thank you for participating in this survey.

If you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact, the researcher, Kris Hohn at [Kristen.Hohn@mavs.uta.edu](mailto:Kristen.Hohn@mavs.uta.edu). You may also contact the Office of Research Administration: Regulatory Services at 817-272-2105 or [regulatoryservices@uta.edu](mailto:regulatoryservices@uta.edu).

If you are in need of a LGBTQ crisis hotline please contact any of the following hotlines or dial 9-1-1.

The Trevor Hotline: 1-866-488-7386

The Gay and Lesbian National Hotline: 1-888-843-4564

Free Directory Assistance: 4-1-1

Appendix F

Figure 6.1

GIQ and Sexual Orientation

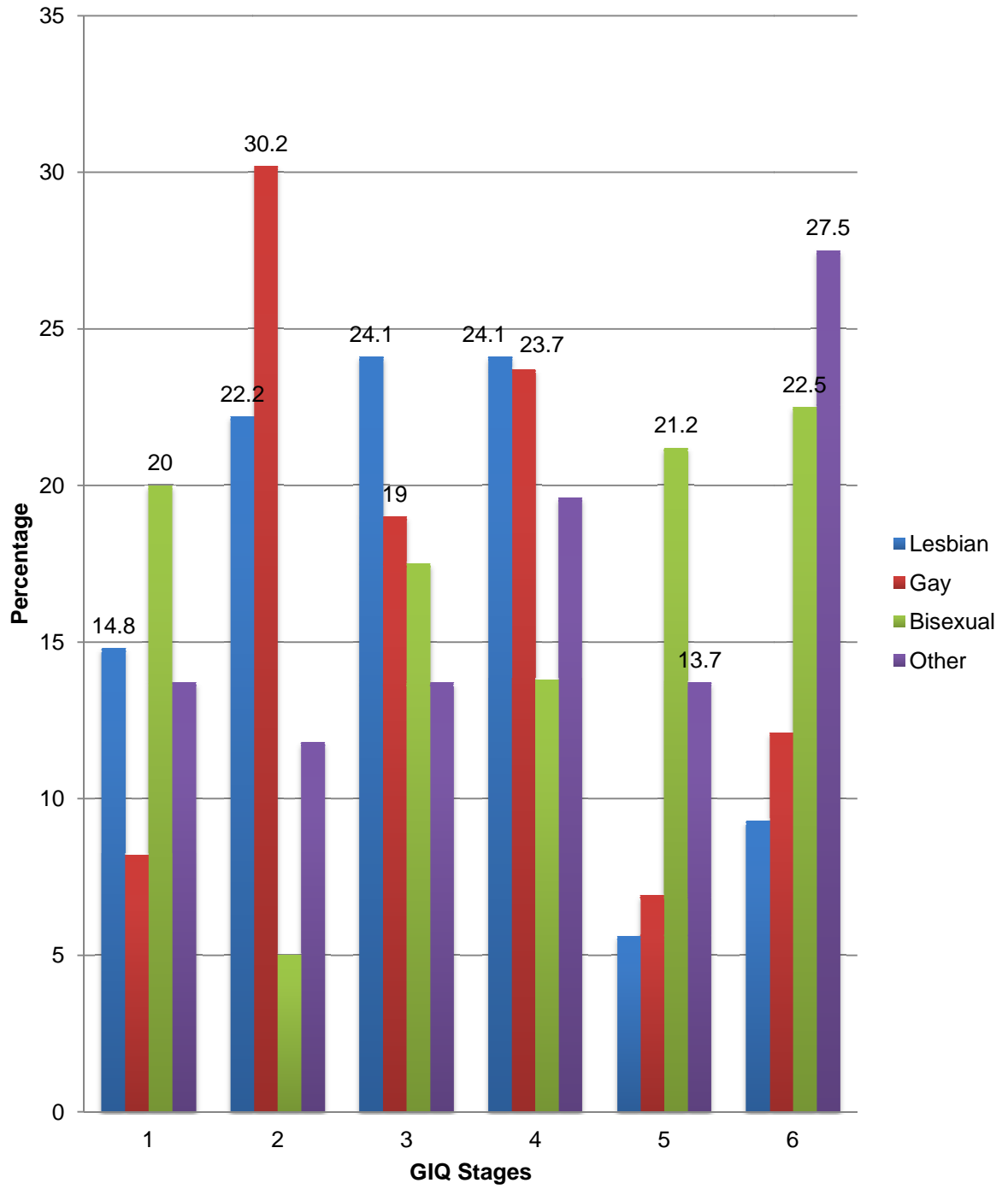


Figure 6.1 GIQ and Sexual Orientation

Appendix G

Figure 6.2

GIQ and Current Religious Affiliation

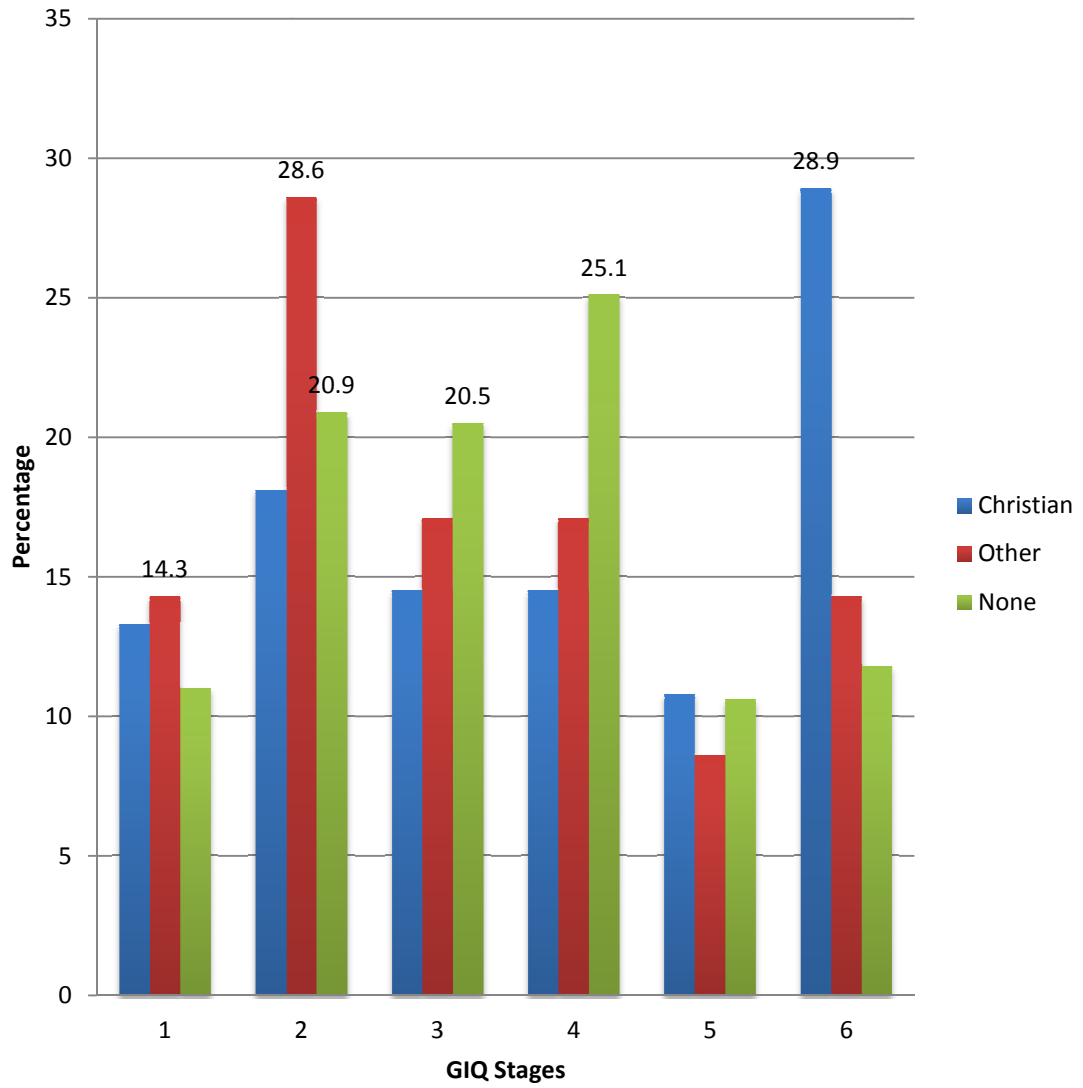


Figure 6.2 GIQ and Current Religious Affiliation

Appendix H

Figure 6.3

GIQ And Out to Friends



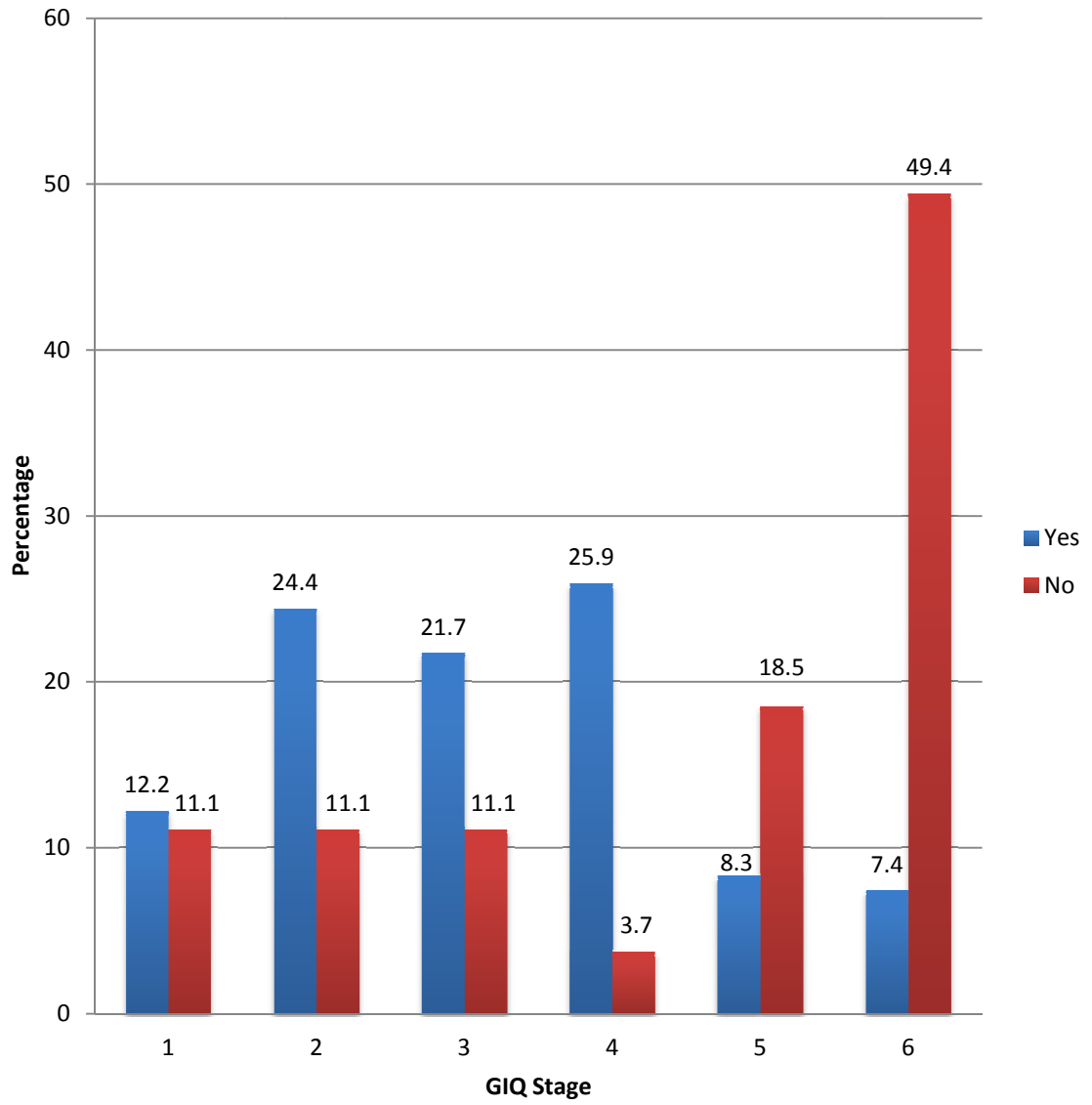


Figure 6.3 GIQ and Out to Friends

Appendix I

Figure 6.4

SISRI and Attending Religious Gatherings

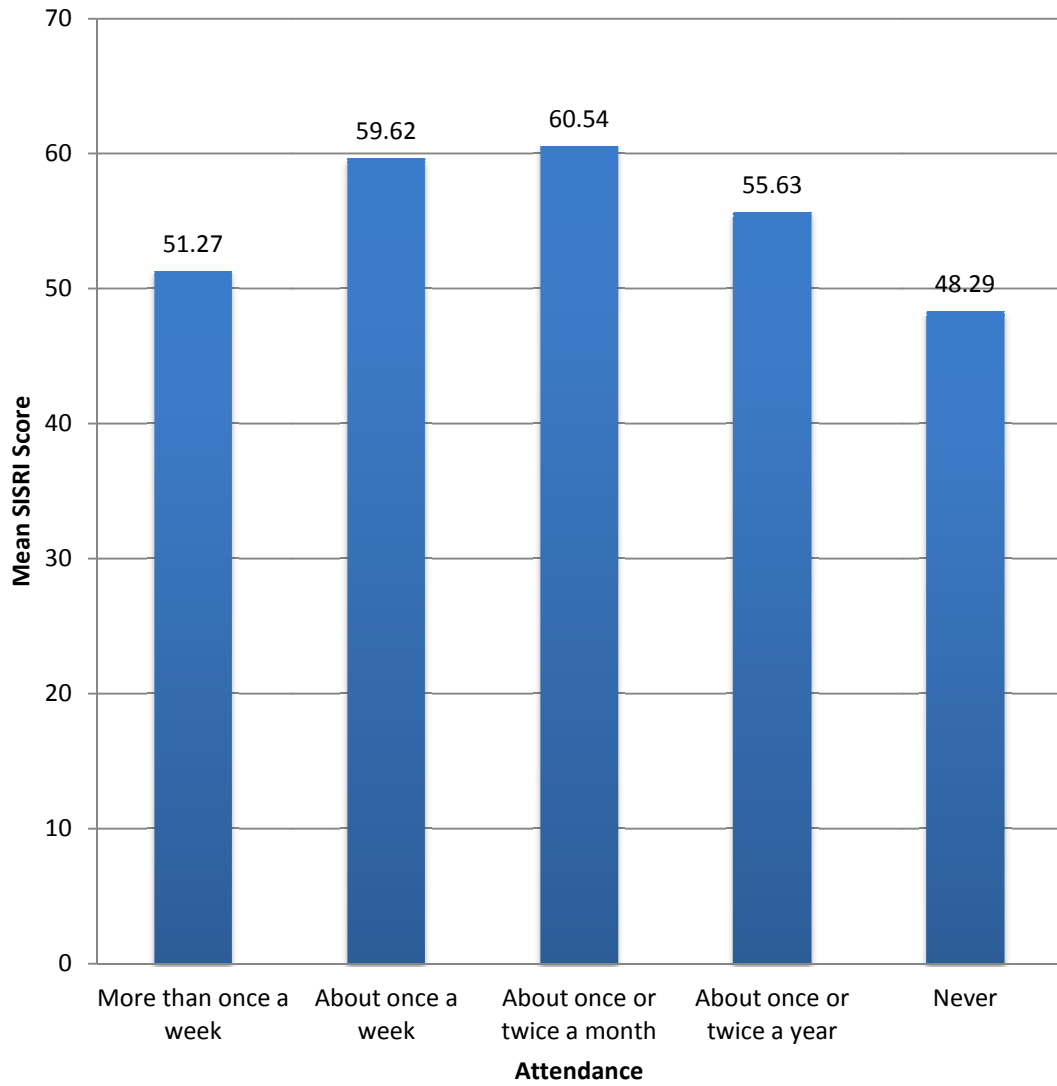


Figure 6.4 SISRI and Attending Religious Gatherings

Appendix J

Figure 6.5

Mean SISRI Across GIQ Stages

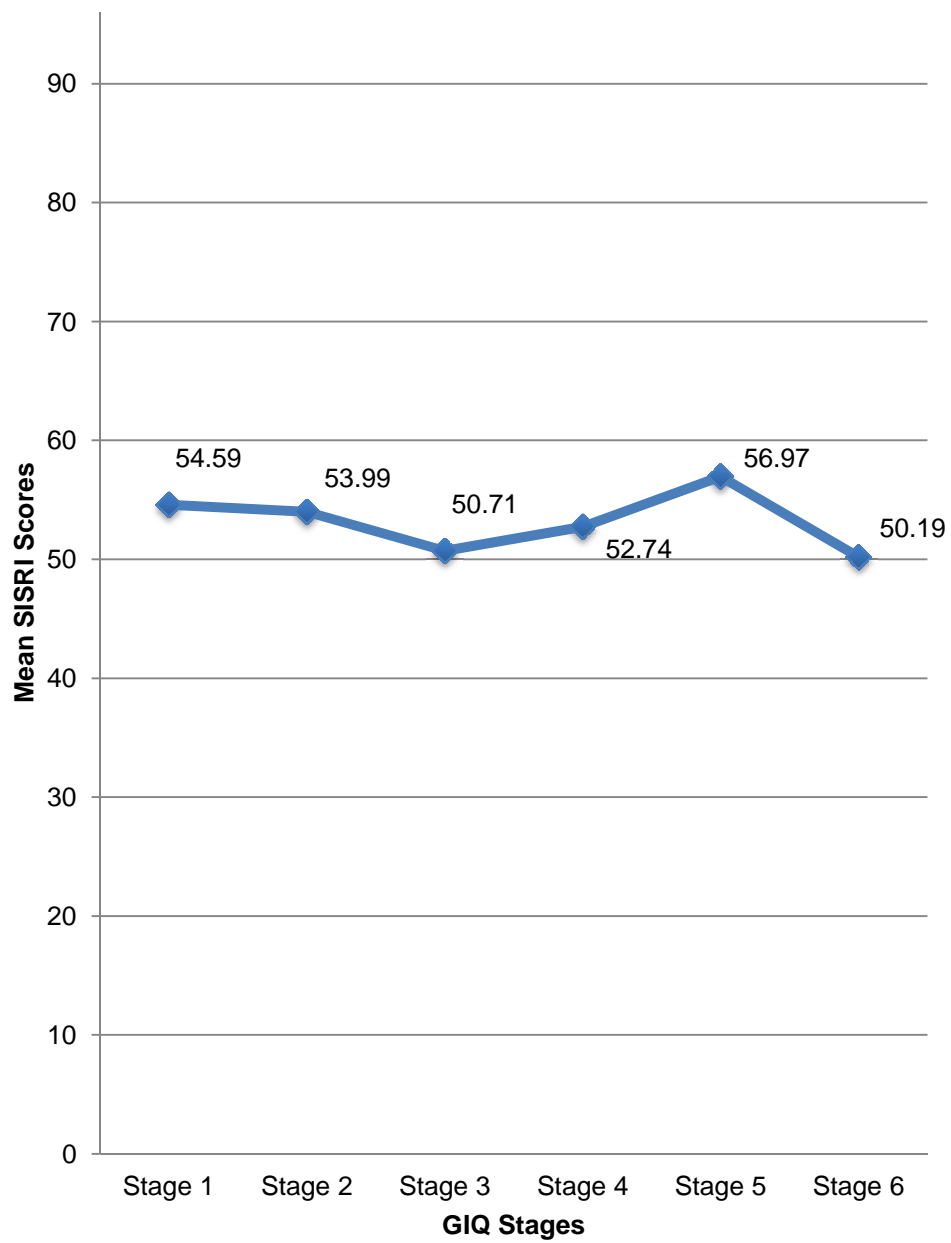


Figure 6.6 Mean SISRI across GIQ Stages

Appendix K  
Internal Review Board Approval



October 10, 2012

Kristen Hohn  
Dr. Courtney m Cronley  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
School of Social Work  
Box 19129

**FULL BOARD APPROVAL OF HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH**

Office of Research  
Administration  
Box 19188  
202 E. Border St., Suite 214  
Arlington, Texas  
76019-0188  
T 817.272.3723  
F 817.272.1111

**IRB No.:** 2012-0780  
**Title:** *LGBTQ Youth: An Exploration of the Relationship between the Coming Out Process and Spiritual Intelligence .*

**Approval Date:** October 09, 2012

**Expiration Date:** October 09, 2013

**Approved number of participants:** **250** (Do not exceed without prior IRB approval)

The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the above-referenced study by majority vote during the Full Board meeting held in October 09, 2012. IRB approval for the research shall continue until October 09, 2013.

<http://www.uta.edu/research>  
[Expertise at UT Arlington](http://www.uta.edu/expertise)  
<http://www.uta.edu/expertise>

**APPROVED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:**

This protocol has been approved for enrollment of a maximum of **250** participants and is not to exceed this number. If additional data are needed, the researcher must submit a modification request to increase the number of approved participants **before** the additional data are collected. Exceeding the number of approved participants is considered an issue of non-compliance and will result in the destruction of the data collected beyond the approval number and will be subject to deliberation set forth by the IRB.

**WAIVER/ALTERATION OF INFORMED CONSENT:**

The above referenced study also qualifies for a waiver of the requirement to obtain documentation of written Informed Consent under the federal guidelines for the protection of human subjects as referenced at Title 45 CFR 46.117 (c). An IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds that:

1. That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject should be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the the subject's wishes must govern.

AND/OR

2. Pursuant to §46.117(c)(2), the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

**MODIFICATION TO AN APPROVED PROTOCOL:**

Pursuant to Title 45 CFR 46.103(b)(4)(iii), investigators are required to, "promptly report to the IRB any proposed changes in the research activity, and to ensure that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, are **not initiated without prior IRB review and approval** except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject." Modifications include but are not limited to: Changes in protocol personnel, number of approved participants, and/or updates to the protocol procedures or instruments and must be submitted via the electronic submission system. Failure to obtain

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approval for modifications is considered an issue of non-compliance and will be subject to review and deliberation by the IRB which could result in the suspension/termination of the protocol.

**ANNUAL CONTINUING REVIEW:**

In order for the research to continue beyond the first year, a Continuing Review must be completed via the online submission system within 30 days preceding the date of expiration indicated above. A reminder notice will be forwarded to the attention of the Principal Investigator (PI) 30 days prior to the expiration date. Continuing review of the protocol serves as a progress report and provides the researcher with an opportunity to make updates to the originally approved protocol. Failure to obtain approval for a continuing review will result in automatic *expiration of the protocol* all activities involving human subjects must cease immediately. The research will not be allowed to commence by any protocol personnel until a new protocol has been submitted, reviewed, and approved by the IRB. Per federal regulations and UTA's Federalwide Assurance (FWA), there are no exceptions and no extensions of approval granted by the IRB. The continuation of study procedures after the expiration of a protocol is considered to be an issue of non-compliance and a violation of federal regulations. Such violations could result in termination of external and University funding and/or disciplinary action.

**ADVERSE EVENTS:**

The principal investigator is required to report local adverse (unanticipated) events to The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services within 24 hours of the occurrence or upon acknowledgement of the occurrence.

**TRAINING**

All investigators and key personnel identified in the protocol must have filed a Conflict of Interest Disclosure and have documented *Human Subjects Protection (HSP)* or other approved training in the protection of human subjects on file with this office prior to protocol submission. HSP training certificates are valid for 2 years from completion date.

**COLLABORATION:**

If applicable, approval by the appropriate authority at a collaborating facility is required prior to subject enrollment. If the collaborating facility is *engaged in the research*, an OHRP approved Federalwide Assurance (FWA) may be required for the facility (prior to their participation in research-related activities). To determine whether the collaborating facility is engaged in research, go to: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/assurance/engage.htm>

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:**

The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services appreciates your continuing commitment to the protection of human research subjects. Should you have questions or require further assistance, please contact Robin Dickey by calling 817-272-9329.

Sincerely,



Maria Martinez-Cosio, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
UT Arlington IRB Chair



Appendix L

Internal Review Board Minor Modification



October 24, 2012

**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TEXAS  
AT ARLINGTON**

Kristen Hohn  
Dr. Courtney m Cronley  
School of Social Work  
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Administration  
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76019-0188

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<http://www.uta.edu/research>

[Expertise at UT Arlington](http://www.uta.edu/expertise)

<http://www.uta.edu/expertise>

**IRB No.:** 2012-0780.1  
**RE:** Minor Modification Approval Letter

**Title:** *LGBTQ Youth: An Exploration of the Relationship between the Coming Out Process and Spiritual Intelligence*

The UT Arlington Institutional Review Board (UTA IRB) Chair (or designee) reviewed and approved the modification(s) to this protocol on **October 23, 2012** in accordance with Title 45 CFR 46.110(b)(2).

Therefore, you are authorized to conduct your research. The modification(s), indicated below, was/were deemed minor and appropriate for expedited review.

- Modification request is to represent an increased number of participants from 250 to 2,500. consent form has been updated to reflect this change.

Pursuant to Title 45 CFR 46.103(b)(4)(iii), investigators are required to, “promptly report to the IRB **any** proposed changes in the research activity, and ensure that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, **are not initiated without IRB review and approval** except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject.”

The modification approval will additionally be presented to the convened board on November 13, 2012 for full IRB acknowledgment [45 CFR 46.110(c)]. All investigators and key personnel identified in the protocol must have documented Human Subjects Protection (HSP) training, *CITI* Training, or other approved training on file with the UT Arlington Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services.

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The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration appreciates your continuing commitment to the protection of human research subjects. Should you have questions or require further assistance, please contact Robin Dickey at [robind@uta.edu](mailto:robind@uta.edu) or you may contact the Office of Regulatory Services at 817-272-3723.

Sincerely,

Judy R.  
Wilson,  
Ph.D.

Digitally signed by Judy R.  
Wilson, Ph.D.  
DN: cn=Judy R. Wilson, Ph.D.,  
o=University of Texas at  
Arlington, ou=Vice-Chair IRB,  
email=jrwilson@uta.edu, c=US  
Date: 2012.11.09 11:21:31 -0600

Judy R. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
UT Arlington IRB Vice-Chair.

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### Biographical Information

Kris Hohn obtained her Masters of Science in Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington in December of 2012. Her research interest includes LGBTQ youth development, policies, and program development. She earned her Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and Art in 2007, with a minor in Religious Studies. She completed two thesis studies during her undergraduate career. One included a study on the impact of art on the development of self-esteem in college-aged students, and the other was a dynamic sculpture exhibit that incorporated the influence of spirituality on developing artistic expression. Hohn plans to continue research on spirituality and artistic expression in the LGBTQ field in a PhD program in the years to come.