

**STANDARDS OF CARE FOR RESEARCH WITH PARTICIPANTS WHO IDENTIFY AS
LGBTQ+**

**Catherine Griffith, Ph.D.
University of Massachusetts Amherst**

**Whitney Akers, M.S.
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

**Franco Dispenza, Ph.D.
Georgia State University**

**Melissa Luke, Ph.D.
Syracuse University**

**Laura B. Farmer, Ph.D.
Virginia Tech**

**Joshua C. Watson, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi**

**R. J. Davis, Ph.D.
Lamar University**

**Kristopher M. Goodrich, Ph.D.
The University of New Mexico**

**External Reviewers:
Deanna Cor, Ph.D.
Rafe McCullough, Ph.D.
Stacey Reicherzer, Ph.D.**

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STANDARDS OF CARE FOR RESEARCH WITH PARTICIPANTS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

The following Standards of Care have been developed to support the continued development of research with individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus individuals whose orientations differ from those who identify as heterosexual and cisgender (LGBTQ+). The guidelines presented are conceived as a working document that reflect the current state and body of knowledge that can inform and provide reference for counseling research, and can be used in the preparation and training of future researchers. The standards outlined in this document will continue to evolve as does research, LGBTQ+ communities, and the sociopolitical climate.

I. PRIMER: Research on Counseling and Counseling Related Practices

- A. In this document, we will utilize the term affectional orientation to describe the experiences of persons who come from communities that are diverse in terms of sexual, relational, affectional, and romantic attraction.
- B. Researchers and scholars engage in research and scholarly activities that affirm affectional orientation and gender diversity in counseling and counseling related practices.
- C. Researchers and scholars recognize sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE; e.g. “conversion therapy” and so-called “reparative therapy”) as a source of violence, trauma, and harm will not engage in research and/or scholarly activities that promote change or conversion efforts of affectional orientation or gender identity in counseling and counseling related practices. Researchers and scholars understand that these approaches are unethical even if requested by potential clients, institutions, funding sources, and third party consumers of counseling services.
- D. Researchers and scholars will not accept financial support for research and scholarly activities that promote SOCE, and condemn present and future studies condoning SOCE as an appropriate or ethical intervention.
- E. Researchers and scholars maintain awareness of leading professional associations’ specific position statements against SOCE due to ample research findings on the significant harm such approaches have on clients’ well-being in addition to their ineffectiveness. These associations include, but are not limited to, the *American Counseling Association*, the *American School Counselor Association*, the *American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy*, the *American Psychological Association*, and the *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

II. TERMINOLOGY

- A. When conducting research with participants who identify as LGBTQ+, researchers and scholars use and maintain awareness of appropriate, inclusive, and current terminologies in an effort to respect, honor, and affirm participants’ identities and language. Researchers will be self-reflective and socially conscious when determining how terminology will be informed and used.
- B. Researchers and scholars understand the role of language in historical oppression, discrimination, and pathologization within the fields of counseling and mental health, and remain aware of the power implicit in the researcher role (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013; American Counseling Association, 2010).
- C. Prior to contact with participants, researchers and scholars utilize person first terminology (e.g., “participants who identify as _____” rather than “LGBTQ+ participants”); however, after contact researchers follow the lead of a participant's preferred language.
- D. Researchers and scholars, when possible, allow participants to self-define their identities and select appropriate terminology (Green & dickey, 2007) in an effort to:
 1. Minimize inaccurate or incorrect assumptions about a participant’s identity or appropriate terminology,

2. Facilitate participant ability to self-determine the language describing their identities, relationship statuses, and pronouns used (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013),
 3. Honor the unique meanings and power certain terminology or language might hold for participants (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013).
- E. Researchers and scholars honor individual participants' choice of self-referential language while also recognizing the constant evolution of language (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013). Researchers and scholars recognize the importance of using the most culturally-relevant and currently available terminology when referring to LGBTQ+ populations:
1. The term *homosexual* is outdated and linked to a history of pathologization. Many people within LGBTQ+ communities do not use this term. Instead, using the terms *gay*, *bisexual*, *lesbian*, *queer* may more accurately reflect the shift of the counseling field away from pathologizing ideologies.
 2. The terms *transgendered* and *transgenders* are incorrect and inappropriate to use. Instead, when referring to people who are trans or communities in plural terms, the terms *transgender people*, *transmen*, *transwomen*, *trans folks* (all when appropriate) avoid dehumanization and conflation of diverse identities within trans communities.
 3. The term *LGBTs* is inappropriate and incorrect to use as it dehumanizes and conflates diverse identities. Instead, we suggest terminology such as *people who identify as LGBT* or *LGBT communities*.
 4. The term *LGBTQ+ community* implies that all LGBTQ+ experiences and communities are the same. Instead, using the term *LGBTQ+ communities* honors the diversity within different communities and experiences of these communities (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013).
 5. The term *hermaphrodite* is commonly viewed as an outdated and pejorative term. However, some people within Intersex communities continue to use the term as opposed to adopting the terminology of *Intersex*.
 6. Researchers and scholars refrain from conflating the identities of transgender and gender expansive participants and recognize that participants who identify as gender expansive, gender non-conforming and/or gender non-binary may not identify as transgender, as they may have very different expressions of gender and lived experiences. The language the participant uses to describe themselves should be honored.
- F. Researchers and scholars recognize the importance of using the most accurate terminology to honor participants' intersectional social identities:
1. Researchers and scholars contemplate and acknowledge ways in which intersectional identities of participants may be pertinent to research. Researchers and scholars educate themselves and recognize the complexity of participant identities, impact of intersecting experiences of oppression, and the manner in which the researcher's own intersectional identity shapes power dynamics within the researcher/participant relationship.
 2. Researchers and scholars understand the manner in which racial and/or ethnic identity might impact the words a participant uses to label their sexual, relational, affectional, romantic attraction, and/or gender identity/expression. Potential terminology might include, but not be limited to: Two-Spirit, Hijra, men who have sex with men (MSM), woman-loving woman, or same-gender loving (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013; American Counseling Association, 2010).
 3. Researchers and scholars maintain awareness of the evolution of language and terminology, as well as the many ways in which a preconceived meaning of a sexual/affectional orientation identity category may shift based on adherence to or existing outside of the sex and gender binary (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013; American Counseling Association, 2010). Potential terminology might include, but not be limited to: gender expansive, genderqueer, gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, queer, pansexual, omnisexual, demisexual, or asexual.
 4. Researchers and scholars refrain from using terminology that conflates gender identity and sexual/affectional/romantic orientation (American Counseling Association, 2010). For

instance, when asking participants to identify sexual/affectional/romantic orientation, "transgender" should not be provided as a pre-selected option as that is instead a marker for gender identity.

- G. Researchers and scholars assume multiplicity of identities and experiences of those identities through recognizing that there are many ways to experience and embody an identity (Barker et al., 2012; Bettinger, 2010, Green & dickey, 2007). For example, researchers and scholars:
1. Refrain from writing about "the lesbian," "the bisexual," "the transgender," as this language:
 - a) dehumanizes the person who identifies in this way; b) assumes that there is one way of being this identity or one lived experience of the identity; and c) lacks consideration of intersectional identities and how they inform one's unique, lived experience (Barker et al., 2012; Green & dickey, 2007).
 2. Refrain from assuming that a participant can only identify as one identity. For example, a participant who identifies as transgender might also identify as queer or heterosexual, a participant who identifies as intersex might or might not identify as transgender, and a participant who identifies as bisexual might also identify as genderqueer or gender non-binary (Barker et al., 2012; Green & dickey, 2007).
 3. Refrain from also assuming that a participant does identify as more than one identity or be a member of more than one identified group (Barker et al., 2012).
 4. Refrain from assuming participant pronouns. Refer to participants by their name and pronoun use as indicated by participant. Researchers make initial efforts to inquire about participant pronoun use.
- H. Researchers and scholars recognize that Western-language and ideologies for affectional orientation and gender identity may not apply in terms of research done in non-Western contexts.
- I. Researchers and scholars critically explore personal biases when engaging with terminology choices in research and work to use identity-affirming language in all phases of research and publication of research (Green & dickey, 2007).
- J. Researchers and scholars respect language use of participants by employing language mirroring that used by participants in regard to expression of identity throughout all stages of research. Researchers and scholars should not attempt to merge participant identities under what the researcher might assume to be inclusive umbrella terminology (e.g., if a participant describes themselves as gender queer or gender fluid, do not place them under the category of "trans" unless they state this identity), or add language to elaborate on a participant's description of self (e.g., if a participant describes themselves as "bi," do not add "sexual" to the end if the participant did not do so.)
- K. Researchers and scholars remain cognizant of diverse family compositions and structures beyond the nuclear family unit or couples. Researchers and scholars remain open to a broad definition of family and units of support, respecting participant language and experience with regard to these relationships.
- L. Researchers and scholars refer to the *ALGBTIC Competencies for Counseling LGBQQIA Individuals* when conducting research with participants who identify as LGBTQ+ (ALGBTIC LGBQQIA Taskforce, 2013) and the *American Counseling Association Competencies for Counseling with Transgender Clients* when conducting research with Transgender participants (American Counseling Association, 2010). These competencies serve as a foundation for exploring relevant terminology, though researchers recognize the need to review recent changes in the use of terminology.

III. REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

- A. Researchers and scholars maintain awareness that some important keywords and thesaurus/subject terms that aid in the search of scholarly materials are antiquated terms (e.g., homosexual).
- B. Researchers and scholars recognize when researcher/author positionality creates bias when reviewing literature and avoid promoting use of antiquated terminology, practices, or clinical frameworks.
- C. Researchers and scholars acknowledge that integration and review of past literature is limited to the knowledge and previous state of standards at the time of prior publications.
- D. Researchers and scholars consider and evaluate the difference between rigorous studies conducted by neutral parties and potentially biased studies conducted for anti-LGBTQ+ propaganda purposes.

- E. Researchers and scholars critically review past research within the historical and sociopolitical context in which it was written and analyze resulting limitations and gaps in light of contemporary research. This also includes remaining cognizant of how a study's funding sources may alter validity and applicability.

IV. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- A. Researchers and scholars ask LGBTQ+ affirming and responsible research questions that avoid historical trends of pathologizing and othering LGBTQ+ communities.
- B. Researchers and scholars refrain from posing research questions that ask about the “origins” of LGBTQ+ identity, and recognize that conversely the “origins” of heterosexuality or cisgender identity goes unquestioned. Research questions around “the awareness of” an LGBTQ+ identity are more appropriate.
- C. Researchers and scholars take an affirmative position in their approach to research and the development of research questions, recognizing that these minimal standards apply to all sound research, but all LGBTQ+ research studies should have an affirmative intent.
- D. Researchers and scholars operate from a sound theoretical foundation in conceptualizing the overall research study and specific research questions.
- E. Researchers and scholars remain aware that measurement of affectional orientation specifically has been fraught with controversies, even through the means of self-report, physiological, non self-report, and indirect behavioral measures (refer to Bailey et al., 2015 for further discussion on this topic).
- F. Researchers and scholars recognize that cultural and sociopolitical contextual confounds interfere with external validity across contexts, especially internationally. Researchers will remain aware that their attempts to operationalize participant identity may conflict with the ways participants actually identify.
- G. Researchers and scholars remain aware of the potential limitation that in some cultural contexts, the phrasing of research questions can present a challenge in terms of external validity (e.g., in countries where same-sex behavior is illegal, participants may not refer to their behaviors or identities in terms of Western terminologies or may report possessing a heterosexual or cisgender identity out of fear and need for safety).
- H. Researchers and scholars remain aware of the differences between gender identity and gender expression as well as those between affectional, romantic, and sexual orientation, and ensure that research questions reflect these specificities, when necessary.
- I. Researchers and scholars remain mindful of the potential impact research questions and the phrasing of research questions can have on the lives of participants in their unique sociopolitical and cultural contexts.

V. RESEARCH DESIGN

- A. Researchers and scholars critically consider the advantages and disadvantages of various research designs and methodologies that could be used when studying LGBTQ+ issues and vulnerable populations who possess LGBTQ+ identities, and will consider research designs and methodologies that affirm such identities.
- B. To the best of one's abilities, researchers and scholars include individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ as consultants, collaborators, research team members, research advisory boards, and principal investigators when designing and implementing research that focuses on LGBTQ+ populations.
- C. Researchers and scholars reflectively evaluate their sociocultural positioning (e.g., insider or outsider to communities; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) when researching LGBTQ+ issues, regardless of which research design is utilized. Researchers and scholars are cognizant of their power and privilege during the research process, the implications that their work will have within LGBTQ+ communities and the implications that the research will have within communities at large. It is also necessary to maintain awareness of positionality and consistently examine oneself as the researcher and the research relationship throughout interactions with participants (e.g., a man who identifies as gay and cisgender or a woman who identifies as lesbian and cisgender also consider their “outsider” status in the area of transgender research, even though they may be united under the umbrella of LGBTQ). Researchers

and scholars document their positionality throughout their research process, and when possible, in publications and presentations.

- D. Researchers and scholars recognize the importance of selecting appropriate spaces in which to conduct research when outness is a consideration for potential participants. For example, researchers and scholars respect participant variation in levels of outness and respond by giving participants options for meeting spaces such as spaces defined by LGBTQ+ identities and communities (i.e., a LGBTQ+ center) or spaces that are more neutral and do not have a connection with the LGBTQ+ communities or identities (i.e., a conference room, a clinic). Also, researchers and scholars remain aware of potential historical experiences of pathologization and offer spaces that are separate from mental health spaces. When in doubt, researchers and scholars ask, listen, and honor feedback regarding spatial needs of participants.
- E. Researchers and scholars remain aware of differential treatment of LGBTQ+ communities and recognize the distinction between causation and identity development models and purposefully frame research with LGBTQ+ communities from the perspective of identity development models. Within this framework, researchers and scholars utilize research to challenge political agendas in which causation is sought.
- F. Qualitative research designs more popularly used in the study of LGBTQ+ issues include, but are not limited to: thematic analysis, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, photovoice, consensual qualitative research, discourse analysis, and participatory action research. Researchers and scholars carefully examine the credibility and trustworthiness of data and analysis with participants who identify as LGBTQ+, as well as that of qualitative procedures utilized in study design.
- G. Quantitative research designs more popularly used in the study of LGBTQ+ issues include, but are not limited to: cross sectional, longitudinal, survey, single-subject case study, experimental/randomized controlled trials (between groups and within subjects design) and quasi-experimental. Researchers and scholars carefully examine the validity and applicability of quantitative instruments with participants who identify as LGBTQ+, as well as the internal and external validity of quantitative procedures.
- H. Mixed-method research designs more popularly used in the study of LGBTQ+ issues include, but are not limited to: convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, embedded design, transformative, and multiphase designs. Using mixed methods research should attend to some of the methodology issues and concerns expressed in quantitative and qualitative methodologies when conducting this work.
- I. Researchers and scholars consider both the strengths and limitations associated with accessing large scale data that include LGBTQ+ populations. If employing secondary data analysis, researchers and scholars discuss limitations of the data, as well as any potential threats to validity or generalizability to diverse LGBTQ+ populations.

VI. IDENTIFYING TARGET POPULATION

- A. Researchers and scholars remain aware of the tendency to include trans populations in descriptions of the research without actually including trans individuals within a sample (e.g., using LGBT to refer to participant sample when only LGB people are present). Researchers and scholars are cautioned against this inaccuracy in future research, to better represent their studies to the research public.
- B. Researchers and scholars remain aware of the tendency to include gender non-conforming and/or gender non-binary populations in descriptions of the research without including a substantial or significant amount of gender non-conforming and/or gender non-binary participants in the sample (e.g., Using LGBTQ to refer to participant sample when only LGB people are present).
- C. Researchers and scholars remain aware of the tendency to include bisexual populations in descriptions of the research without actually including bisexual individuals in the sample (e.g., Using LGB to refer to participant sample when only LG people are present).
- D. Researchers and scholars refrain from contributing to bisexual erasure and bisexual invisibility. Researchers and scholars intentionally refuse to conduct research or disseminate study results with the implicit or explicit goal of questioning the existence and validity of bisexual identity.

- E. Researchers and scholars recognize that Western-language and ideologies for sexuality and gender identity may not apply in terms of research done in non-Western contexts.

VII. SAMPLING

- A. Researchers and scholars understand the manner in which stigma, discrimination, and oppression historically and currently limit participant access to visibility and thus limit researcher access to LGBTQ+ samples diverse in intersectional identities and experiences.
- B. Researchers and scholars continuously employ innovative and respectful sampling strategies to increase representation of diverse individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, and generalizability and transferability of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research studies, respectively. Researchers and scholars attempt to engage in broad sampling to avoid drawing generalizations from a limited and homogenous sample (Singh & Shelton, 2011). Recognition of the demographic diversity within LGBTQ+ communities and individuals requires researcher to acknowledge if a sample is heavily composed of one subgroup and avoid generalizations from the study results.
- C. Researchers and scholars recognize the overuse of participants who are predominantly white, from the United States, of high socioeconomic status, and of higher degrees of education in current research samples (Singh & Shelton, 2011).
- D. Researchers and scholars recognize the trend of participants in research being more out and open about their affectional orientation and/or gender identity (Jordan & Deluty, 2000; Knoble & Linville, 2012), and work to include less-out participants in samples, respecting degree of outness and taking precautions to avoid outing a participant (e.g., anonymous data collection methods, member checking to identify any breaches in confidentiality).
- E. Researchers and scholars provide detailed demographic information describing the participant sample so as to explicitly state transferability or generalizability of qualitative and quantitative research studies, respectively (Singh & Shelton, 2011).
- F. Researchers and scholars work to include people of color who identify as LGBTQ+ in research samples to better understand counseling needs and experiences within these communities (Singh & Shelton, 2011).
- G. Researchers and scholars increase focus on transgender and bisexual participants and communities as well as transgender and bisexual participants and communities of color (and other often invisible individuals and communities), as much previous research is over-representative of the experiences of lesbian women and gay men (Singh & Shelton, 2011). Additionally, researchers and scholars work to include participants with diverse gender identities (Green & Dickey, 2007), including gender non-binary and gender non-conforming participants.
- H. Researchers and scholars note the difficulties of accessing “hidden” populations and will use sampling strategies that enable researchers to reach a more diverse sample that has not yet been included in much research with LGBTQ+ populations. Researchers and scholars also maintain a critical awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies. Researchers and scholars remain aware of the following sampling strategies to help mitigate this issue:
 - 1. Probability sampling not limited to communities with a higher proportion of LGBTQ+ membership (e.g., “gay neighborhoods”) may allow the researcher to reach a sample diverse in social and geographic location as well as degree of outness (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).
 - 2. Researchers and scholars recognize that community-based sampling is only representative of LGBTQ+ populations who are involved in these community venues. Researchers and scholars discuss the implications of this type of sampling as well as potential bias based on the types of venues used (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).
 - 3. Time-space sampling can be used to control the over-reliance on convenient sampling sites and oversampling from certain venues at certain times by broadening the reach of venues used by a diverse array of potential participants (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).
 - 4. Respondent-driven sampling relies on participant involvement in social networks and the use of primary and secondary incentives to broaden the reach of recruitment into more hidden or

difficult to reach samples, rewarding a primary level of participants for recruiting a secondary level of participants that meet the inclusion criteria of the study (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).

5. Web-based sampling might have the potential to reach participants in rural and international locations and of diverse social locations. However, researchers and scholars acknowledge that the use of web-based sampling assumes participants have access to computers, the internet, and thus, a degree of class privilege (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).
 6. Researchers and scholars understand that reliance on sampling methods such as snowball sampling often recruits homogenous samples and lacks diversity in race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, level of education, etc. Researchers and scholars work to incorporate sampling methods that reach a more diverse sample, such as utilization of the internet or public spaces diverse in location (i.e., different cities, areas designated for tourism, commercial, business purposes) for posting or handing out recruitment information (Bettinger, 2010; McCormack, 2014).
- I. Researchers and scholars avoid conflating the principle of sample size with sample representativeness of the population, recognizing that a sample large in number may still be homogenous and unrepresentative of larger LGBTQ+ communities (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).
 - J. Researchers and scholars select a sample with an adequate number of participants within the studied subgroups sufficient to merit sound analysis (Meyer & Wilson, 2009).
 - K. When conducting research with queer youth, researchers and scholars acknowledge limitations in how the IRB requirement of parental permission drastically impacts one's sample as compared to a sample of adults where parental support is not needed. Additionally, researchers and scholars recognize that a sample in which parental permission is required may contain participants who experience varying levels of parental support.
 - L. In addition to a focus on recruitment, researchers and scholars maintain awareness of the impact of systemic barriers on attrition and consider strategies and incentives to prevent attrition in research with LGBTQ+ populations.
 - M. Researchers and scholars make efforts to utilize literature as a reference when determining what constitutes a representative sample for the population they are studying (Butching, 2008). Data collection for LGBTQ+ communities challenges standard paradigms for data collection, but researchers will remain aware and up to date on validated methods for small population research and intentionally utilize these methods.

VIII. RECRUITMENT

- A. Researchers and scholars consider appropriate methods for inviting individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ to participate in a study, given safety issues around unintentional outing.
- B. Researchers and scholars refrain from intruding on private or safe spaces when recruiting participants for a study (e.g., do not go to a support group as a way to recruit participants without prior permission, as this could be invasive and transform a safe space by breaking group norms or expectations for anonymity or confidentiality).
- C. When engaging in snowball sampling, researchers and scholars include a caveat about the risks of outing a person if the email or research information is seen/opened by someone other than the intended recipient.
- D. Researchers and scholars discuss the potential consequences of requesting parent/guardian consent to participate in a study when recruiting participants under the age of 18, if the participant is not already out to their family.

IX. MEASUREMENT AND INSTRUMENTATION

- A. Researchers and scholars take reasonable steps to select appropriate measures for use in research. Researchers and scholars seek the most fitting instrument for the participant population, comprehensively modify measures when needed, and thoroughly describe the process of instrument selection.

1. Researchers and scholars attempt to locate instruments that have been validated within LGBTQ+ communities and prioritize their use. Researchers are cognizant of which members of LGBTQ+ communities were sampled in the validation of a potential instrument.
2. When using an instrument not normed on LGBTQ+ populations, researchers and scholars make an effort to provide some validation of the measure and describe how the researcher ensured the measure to be adequate for use in the population.
3. When using an instrument not normed on LGBTQ+ populations, researchers and scholars review the use of the instrument and detail the appropriateness and limitations of this choice after its use
4. Researchers consider instrument development and validation when no appropriate instrument exists.

Researchers and scholars recognize that relying only on one method of measurement may fail to incorporate romantic or emotional intimacy as indicators of identity, reflecting a male-centric bias in identity measurement (Savin-Williams, 2016). Many researchers also fail to posit identity on a continuum, eliminating room for expression of identity fluidity (Savin-Williams, 2016).

B. Researchers and scholars create demographic forms/surveys that capture the complexity of participants' identities.

1. Researchers and scholars recognize that "other boxes" are "othering," and use alternative language such as "please describe" or "please note how you identify" as a preferred alternative.
2. When possible, researchers and scholars use demographic designs that allow participants to "fill in the blank" for identifying information (as opposed to using boxes that adhere to categorical and binary structures) as a recognition that researchers may not provide the language needed for a participant to adequately describe their sexuality or gender.
3. Researchers and scholars refrain from presenting demographic forms that rely on binary structures of gender or sexuality. Researchers will also recognize that even the use of categorical scales in sex and gender items relies on a binary structure.
4. Researchers and scholars include sexual-affectual and gender identity as routine demographic markers for all research.
5. Researchers and scholars intentionally differentiate between gender identity and sex assigned at birth when gathering data on demographic forms and will not conflate the two conceptually.
6. Researchers and scholars recognize that some married same-sex couples express distaste for heteronormative terms (e.g., husband, wife), and therefore may use different terminology to describe their partner. Terminology used may also be based on perceived level of threat of the context. Therefore, "spouse" may be most flexible term for demographic forms specifically for married partners (Bates & DeMaio, 2010).
7. Researchers and scholars include survey response options that capture categories of identity, attraction, and behavior as distinct categories; these are asked separately from marital status and cohabitation. These steps also help with issues around cultural equivalence.
8. When conducting research with adolescent participants, researchers and scholars maintain awareness that measures of affectional or romantic attraction are often more accurate than measures asking about sexual attraction or partners (with the exception of studies specifically focused on sexual health and sexual risks), potentially because a proportion of younger adolescents may not have experienced sexual attractions at their stage of development.
9. Researchers and scholars mindfully refrain from placing questions regarding LGBTQ+ identity next to questions about sexual abuse, as doing so contributes to pathologization of sexual orientation any may yield higher non-response rates.

X. DATA COLLECTION

A. Researchers and scholars take steps to enhance the privacy of the survey environment in order to encourage accuracy of responses to sensitive questions

- B. Researchers and scholars recognize the impact of stigma associated with specific identity labels on response rates. Stigma may contribute to a reduction in overall response rates or an increase in false responses (Badgett & Goldberg, 2009). Researchers and scholars recognize that these issues may be important to state as potential limitations within a study.
- C. Researchers and scholars take every reasonable step to collect accurate data. Researchers and scholars protect participants and honor participant voices by engaging in member-checking and participant consultation when possible in order to ensure accuracy.

XI. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

- A. Whenever possible, researchers and scholars disaggregate their analysis of outcomes by demographic subgroups that are meaningful to the context of interpreting the findings of the study.
- B. Researchers and scholars reflect on whether study findings may reflect implicit cultural bias or stereotypes, and whether there may be alternative explanations for the phenomena observed.
- C. Researchers and scholars consider the implications their findings may have on the communities to which the participants belong, and whether findings perpetuate structural inequalities, cultural bias, or harmful stereotypes.
- D. Whenever possible, researchers and scholars provide additional context to their findings in order to avoid perpetuating structural inequalities, cultural bias, or harmful stereotypes.

XII. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

- A. Within informed consent documents, researchers and scholars clearly explain the risk of being outed due to participating in research.
- B. Researchers and scholars always inform participants about the potential of being outed in studies where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (e.g., focus groups and group counseling research). Researchers and scholars provide information that allows participants to weigh the risks and benefits of participation in the study as well as potential outcomes of the study with regard to outness. Informed consent will include this consideration and motivate participants to fully examine possibilities and potential for personal impact.
- C. When involving the use of artifacts such as photographs in studies, researchers and scholars note that through the use of photographs participants assume greater risk associated with living in marginalized communities where increased visibility potentially compromises safety and could lead to reactive harm by others. To decrease this risk, researchers and scholars encourage participants to prioritize safety and comfort considerations in regard to themselves, friends, families, and their communities. In addition, researchers and scholars address the possibility of outing one's self or others through the use of photographic images and discuss parameters of respect and confidentiality.
- D. Researchers and scholars recognize unique considerations regarding outness in work with youth (e.g., whether they are out to their families, and how recruitment or participation might out them when parent/guardian signatures are required).

XIII. POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

- A. Researchers and scholars consider how intersectionality may be applicable to the research, and recognize that a single study cannot effectively address the complexity of intersecting identities.
- B. Researchers and scholars avoid presenting research studies as representative of different communities without having representation of these communities in the actual sample. When participants from these communities are sought but not included, researchers will note the absence of participants from these communities as a limitation.
- C. Researchers and scholars acknowledge that the field of counseling will continue to grow and change and thus recognize that studies reflect past and present knowledge, but not future knowledge.
- D. Researchers and scholars recognize the potential impact of power and oppression in all stages of the research process as well as findings of the study.

XIV. DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE

- A. Researchers and scholars refrain from presenting LGBTQ+ communities in a pathologizing manner when disseminating research findings.
- B. Researchers and scholars recognize past harm and violence carried out by researchers and research agendas that lacked consideration of the potential for exploitation due to participants identifying as part of a marginalized and vulnerable population. Therefore, researchers and scholars take great care to ensure dissemination of data is not exploitive or harmful to participants.
- C. Researchers and scholars take reasonable steps to give participants the option to access findings or a research summary of the findings from the research study prior to publishing and peer review.
- D. When preparing findings for dissemination, researchers and scholars ensure that findings are not laden with assumptions and generalizations. Researchers and scholars assume multiplicity in lived experience. For example, people who identify as trans may experience this identity in a multitude of ways. Researchers and scholars do not assume that all transwomen share lived experiences nor that the experiences of transwomen or transmen exist on a binary and opposite plane. Nor will researchers assume that a transperson must/will identify as a man or woman.
- E. Researchers and scholars refrain from writing about their research and the populations included as if readers will not be able to identify similarly to the participants in the study. Researchers and scholars assume that readers will potentially be members of LGBTQ+ communities.

XV. POST-STUDY SUPPORT/RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS

- A. Researchers and scholars maintain awareness of the potential for research abuse that can occur when researchers enter into a participant's life, open potential wounds in the process of data collection, and exit without provision of follow-up care or resources. Researchers and scholars exercise heightened care and ensure availability of follow-up support resources when working with vulnerable participants within LGBTQ+ communities (e.g., survivors of intimate partner violence who identify as LGBTQ+).
- B. Researchers and scholars regard aftercare for participants as a critical and ethical component of research and take responsibility for making available appropriate resources and ensuring access to any needed support.
- C. Researchers and scholars consider offering a reflective/reflection space after the study for participants in which participants can process any emotional needs or reactions to the study and receive additional support.

XVI. POST-STUDY SUPPORT/RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS

- A. Throughout the course of a research study, researchers and scholars routinely check in on levels of vicarious trauma/compassion fatigue and utilize peers, supervisors, and counselors to cope with any research-related stress/distress.
- B. Researchers and scholars recognize the potential for vicarious trauma/compassion fatigue within their research and seek appropriate support to avoid allowing vicarious trauma/compassion fatigue to cause unintentional harm to the researcher or participants.
- C. Researchers and scholars provide reflective spaces for themselves, research assistants, and the larger research team in which the team can process any reactions to the research and access needed support.
- D. Researchers and scholars recognize that they may encounter bigoted slurs and opinions, and thus experience challenge in maintaining their awareness as an observant researcher. Researchers and scholars utilize self-care resources to cope with any fear, discomfort, anger, or trauma initiated by these instances. In addition, researchers and scholars intentionally access support resources to aid in resisting the urge to intervene, correct, or advocate while in the researcher role.

XVII. ONGOING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- A. It is often assumed that researchers and scholars who elect to conduct research with people who identify as LGBTQ+ and their associated experiences are inherently informed about the populations under study, and that they possess well-developed cultural competence. That said, cultural competence is not static, and scholars must engage in reflective practices (Barker et al., 2012) and cultural humility

as part of their research process and consider how their identity, and other cultural, religious, worldview factors may intersect with and influence the research.

- B. When applicable, researchers and scholars highlight opportunities for recognizing individual and community strengths and positive subjective experiences within their studies (e.g., resilience, hopefulness, gratitude, etc.), as the majority of past research with LGBTQ+ communities has been centered through a pathological or deficits-based lens (Lyte, Vaughn, Rodriguez, & Shmerler, 2014; Phillips, 2014; Vaughn & Rodriguez, 2014).
- C. Researchers and scholars seek ongoing professional development as the field of counseling is continuously evolving as are best practices and research standards for work with LGBTQ+ populations.

XVIII. ADVOCACY & INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

- A. Researchers and scholars consider how their research is an act of social justice and/or advocacy in line with the ACA Code of Ethics.
- B. Researchers and scholars recognize the social responsibility that accompanies conducting research with marginalized populations.
- C. Researchers and scholars recognize their role in bringing marginalized groups into the research dialogue (Kidd, 2005) and aim to produce social change and improve the quality of life in oppressed and exploited communities (Creswell et al., 2007).