Family Focus on . . .

Cultural Sea Change and Families

Parenting and Protecting: Advocating Microprotections Through Loving And Supporting Black Parent–Child Relationships

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An important component of the parenting journey is to protect children from the ills of the world. For some groups of parents, this issue is more salient; specifically, I am referring to parents of Black children. (Like Cornel West, I use *Black*, as opposed to *African American*, in the spirit of capturing the unique historical experience faced by people of African descent, whose ancestors were enslaved and brought to the land we now identify as the United States of America.) Because they are embedded in a society (i.e., America) that has a long history of not fully recognizing their humanity, Black parents have had to be more vigilant in their parenting, as a means to protect their children from such a harsh world.

Socialization of Black bodies, through harsh treatment, has long been embedded in multiple levels of American context (e.g., personal, social, institutional, cultural). Historically, the belief has been that the proper method to socialize Black people consisted of harsh treatment as a mechanism to ensure compliance. Historian Wilma King notes in *Stolen Childhoods* that parents of Black children in the antebellum South had to teach their children not only how to be children but also how to be slaves, or good slaves. This parental process was critical for ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, the safety of their children (e.g., protection from the whip of a harsh slave master or overseer). During Reconstruction, public lynching, as a way to produce fear and compliance,

was the order of the day. In Jim Crow America, harsh treatment from law enforcement and/or vigilante groups was the tool of choice for the socialization and control of Black bodies. Regarding contemporary times, Michelle Alexander argued that the new Jim Crow is mass incarceration, and continued contentious (sometimes lethal) interactions with law enforcement. This pattern of behaviors and beliefs regarding how to socialize Black people has been evident not only in segments of society that one may see as obviously biased toward Black people but also in segments that seemingly are there to protect and advocate for Black children and families.

Many social scientists, several of whom would say they are empathic to the positive development of Black children, have also suggested that harsh or stern treatment is an appropriate parental strategy to socialize Black children. Also, many Black parents, at some level, buy into this belief system, evidenced by the high rate of corporal punishment use among parents of Black children. In addition, even the widespread public support of this belief system is evident (albeit somewhat anecdotal) by the revering of the

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microprotections

"Baltimore mom," who publicly attacked her son for his taking part in protests against police malpractice (i.e., improper, unethical, illegal, or negligent treatment or activity by a public official). Other segments of Black communities have bought into this belief and practice as well. This is evidenced by the high concentration of Black-on-Black violence that plagues many American urban centers.

Unfortunately, this racial empathy gap (i.e., where the dominant group fails to see or acknowledge the pain and plight of the minority group) has led to a situation in which Black children are susceptible to continued doses of "harsh" treatment and conditions both in the home and outside the home.

It is my belief that the realties faced by Black families during slavery is far more devastating and harsher than realities faced by Black families of today; however, racism is still firmly entrenched in contemporary American society (e.g., judicial sentencing disparity, wealth disparity, mass incarceration, police malpractice in communities of color, predatory lending, etc.). One of the more crippling forms of individual racism faced by Black families comes in the form of *microaggressions*, or what Derald Sue and his colleagues (2007) defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (p. 271). This form of racism may be more crippling because it often goes unnoticed by the perpetrator (or even the target) and can even be misconstrued by perpetrators as well intended. So, a common question many parents of Black children grapple with is how to socialize the positive development of their children in contexts that are saturated with these microaggressions.

Social scientists have long suggested that parents of Black children enact harsher, or "no nonsense" forms of parenting behaviors to protect their children, with some even suggesting that such parenting is actually beneficial for the psychosocial adjustment of those children. With that said, one cannot examine parenting behaviors in isolation of the broader societal structures and multiple levels of context in which these families are embedded. The developmental course of Black children is embedded not only in that parent–child context but also in the school, peer, community, cultural, and sociohistorical contexts where microaggressions are prevalent. In my estimation, the emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physiologically taxing effects of enduring such negative experiences (i.e., microaggressions) at these multiple levels of context over time should not be met by the parent–child context with additional negative experiences (i.e., harsh/stern parenting); instead, the Black parent–child context should be one that buffers against such experiences. I term these buffers *microprotections*, or small daily caring, supportive, and loving behaviors (as interpreted by the child) enacted by parents of Black children to counteract the debilitating microaggressions Black children are sure to face, through the life course, across the other multiple levels of context, whether unknowingly or knowingly.

> In a world where a deficit in positive relationships seems to be the order of the day, it is imperative to advocate for the Black parent–child context to be one that saturates Black children with love and support via microprotections.

The Black parent–child context can serve as a foundation in helping Black children successfully navigate the hidden hand of racism that creates a seemingly insurmountable barrier for so many children. This relationship, when positive, provides an emotional bank on which Black children can rely while trying to survive and thrive in a social context where microaggressions chip away at their psychosocial well-being. This parenting approach creates a balance that can help these children thrive in their environment. In a world where a deficit in positive relationships seems to be the order of the day, it is imperative to advocate for the Black parent–child context to be one that saturates Black children with love and support via microprotections.

Reflecting on the theme of this issue, I call for a "cultural sea of change" within the Black parent–child context. I have little faith that a large-scale movement will occur to drastically alter the racial empathy gap; thus, a grassroots approach may be more appropriate. Saturate the Black parent–child context with microprotections. More specifically, I call for family life educators to see and empathize with the pain of Black children and youth, and to advocate for more microprotections, and less harsh parenting, as mechanisms to buffer against the many waves of microaggressions and weight of the racial empathy gap they will encounter as they move through the life course.

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The Definition of Family Is Changing, and It Matters to Our Work

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On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) made a historical decision in the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges,* ruling that state laws prohibiting same-sex marriage are unconstitutional. This decision, which has implications for the work we do in the field of family development, is not the first time that the definition of marriage has changed, nor is it the first change that took a long time (this movement in the U.S. began in earnest several decades ago). Many people once considered interracial and interfaith marriage unthinkable, and interracial marriage was once illegal in a number of states. Public opinion on same-sex marriage has seen decades of slow progress, with majority approval in the U.S. reached only within the past 5 years. For context, we include data from a Gallup poll on public opinion from 1996–2014:

By changing who can marry whom, *Obergefell v. Hodges* expands the definition of what can be considered a family and thus extends the benefits of legally recognized marriage to sexual and gender minority (SGM) couples. Frequently cited benefits of a legally recognized union include tax status, health insurance, health care directives, and property rights. In addition to these commonly cited advantages, the SCOTUS decision means SGM families will receive benefits regarding legal relationships to children, including adoption, caregiver rights, interstate migration, and divorce and separation. Let's look at some of these issues and their implications in more detail.

Adoption

What nationwide same-sex marriage will mean for adoption by SGM couples is still being debated, and the expansion of adoption rights to same-sex married couples in all states may take time. In some states, the same-sex partner or spouse of a biological parent was allowed to adopt a child born in the union. This was an expensive and invasive procedure called *second parent adoption*. It afforded legal protections to both parents and ensured they were both recognized as legal parents, important factors that affect the child's well-being, especially in school situations, medical emergencies,

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Do you think marriages between same-sex couples should or should not be recognized by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages?

■ % Should be valid   ☐ % Should not be valid

| | '96 | '97 | '98 | '99 | '00 | '01 | '02 | '03 | '04 | '05 | '06 | '07 | '08 | '09 | '10 | '11 | '12 | '13 | '14 |
Should not be valid: 68, 62, 55, 59, 56, 53, 56, 57, 53, 53, 50, 54, 55
Should be valid: 27, 35, 42, 37, 42, 46, 40, 40, 44, 45, 48, 43, 42

Note: Trend shown for polls in which same-sex marriage question followed questions on gay/lesbian rights and relations. 1996-2005 wording' "Do you think marriages between homosexuals ..."   GALLUP

and financial matters. However, these rights were often questioned or lost when parents crossed state lines, and they were not available in many states.

Presumption of Parentage

There is a long-established legal and statutory principle of the presumption of parentage for both parents when a married couple has a child. In other words, a married man is presumed to be the biological parent of the children his wife bears, unless there is a specific challenge such as a known other biological father. With same-sex marriage the same presumption of parentage should be given to SGM couples. With an extension of the presumption of parentage, in many cases it
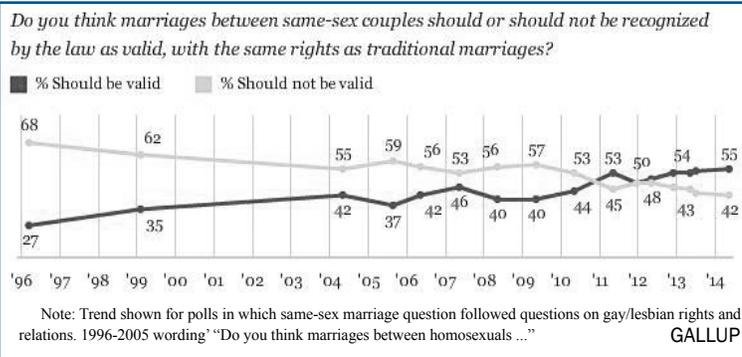
should be no longer necessary for nonbiological parents to "adopt" children born within the marital union. Policies for SGM couples who want to jointly adopt children, or support foster children, vary substantially between states but will likely converge toward equality in the coming years, following principles such as the presumption of parentage.

Caregiving Rights

Before the recent SCOTUS ruling, in SGM families the nonbiological (or nonadoptive) parent had fewer caregiving rights, unless he or she had engaged in a second-parent adoption, or came from a state with an existing presumption of parentage or other extension of caregiving rights to a person acting *in loco parentis*. Thus, persons in a same-sex union in some states, who fully acted and lived in families as parents to children of the family, could have no legal caregiving rights at all and have no ability to even seek such rights under state law.

With the nationwide extension of the right to marry, SGM families should find that they have the same rights under state law as heterosexual married couples, with regard to children born to the marital union, adopted children, and stepchildren. This extension of legal rights is both mundane and profound—ranging from seeking medical care, enrolling a child in school, taking a child through airport security, and the host of activities for which a child needs a legal caregiver. This expansion of caregiving rights not only

the definition continued from page F3

affects family members' interactions with the outside world, but it also influences interactions within the family system, as it is more settled that both persons acting as parents in the family are treated as parents by the world outside the family.

Migration and Relocation

The SCOTUS ruling is expected to have an impact on SGM families' migration and relocation patterns. Before the ruling, many SGM persons were more likely to migrate to cities and states with relatively more protections. Changes in attitudes toward SGM individuals have occurred faster in states where communities of SGM persons are relatively more affluent, educated, and White (e.g., coastal cities and the Northeast) than other

relationship—that divorced and separated heterosexual parents already had. With the SCOTUS ruling, divorcing and separating SGM parents have the right to custody determinations as well as to support from family law programs that help families through this difficult process.

Direct Implications for Practice

Although it's important for researchers, evaluators, and practitioners in family science to understand policy changes emanating from the SCOTUS ruling, our focus must be on how those policy changes influence our work. As we consider this expansion in the definition of *family*, we in NCFR have a timely opportunity to expand our capabilities to include (or further include)

to be more inclusive to a broad range of diverse populations.

On the Horizon

When a child is born, a family redefines itself in order to include this new member. Before *Obergefell v. Hodges*, SGM parents faced the same challenges as heterosexual parents in redefining themselves and adapting to new roles and rules after the birth of a child. However, SGM parents faced additional challenges, even in states that had already extended marriage equality to SGM parents, because of a lack of recognition of marital and parental status in all states and, in some instances, under federal law. Now SGM parents have recognition of their status in all 50 states, and under federal law, and thus now have a legal equal status for the tasks of parenting.

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regions of the U.S., where SGM persons report less social privilege (Eckholm, 2015). The ruling erases differences between states with respect to marriage, which could act to slow the interstate migration of SGM families. On the other hand, long-held prejudices against LGBT persons may continue to drive some SGM families to move to states perceived as more friendly—so some migration *between* states may continue.

The ruling also might play a role in changing migration patterns of SGM families *within* states. Small towns and rural areas traditionally have been less accepting of same-sex couples, and SGM families have migrated to, or been unwilling to leave, larger cities. However, changing attitudes based on new marriage laws might help SGM families feel more willing to live in less populated areas.

Divorce and Separation

One often-overlooked right of legally recognized marriage is the right to divorce or separate with the help of the legal system. In many cases before the SCOTUS ruling, SGM parents who no longer wanted to live together did not always have recourse under state family law systems to assert rights regarding their children—in general, children with whom they had no settled legal

SGM families in our work. Like so many other issues in research, this one begins with a discussion of assumptions.

Assumptions in Practice, Research and Program Design

One important way we can adapt is in our processes of data collection. Consider the following examples:

- When sending a survey to program participants about family life, if we assume a respondent is (or was) part of a heterosexual couple, we miss an opportunity to identify SGM families and find out their specific needs.
- When we ask questions about gender and provide only "male" and "female" as possible responses, we miss the opportunity to learn about those whose gender identity does not fit within a binary system.
- When we assume someone is heterosexual, we miss the opportunity to capture the intricacies of his or her identity. For example, although a woman says she is married to a man, she may not identify as straight.

These are just a few examples of situations that call for changes in research and practice in order to better serve SGM families and thus open our learning and programming

Although marriage equality has been a major advance in the rights of SGM persons to live in families and raise children, SGM individuals still face challenges in other areas of life. Housing and employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is still permitted in some states. Social and health disparities, such as higher rates of poverty, suicide, homelessness, and mental health problems, continue to exist in SGM persons, as do higher rates of HIV among male and transgender SGM persons. Rates of violent acts against SGM persons continue to be higher than those against many other disadvantaged groups. Transgender persons in particular are among the most likely to be murdered individuals worldwide, including in the U.S.

The SCOTUS ruling opens new doors to SGM parents as they incorporate their new legal statuses into the joys and struggles of raising children and provides hope that the other forms of social inequity against SGM persons will continue to be mitigated.

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How Far Will the Shore of U.S. Marital and Divorce Law Shift?

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Summer 2015 proved to be a landmark season for same-sex couples wishing to marry. Although the protracted test case encompassed many turns, *Obergefell v. Hodges* ended with a 5–4 Supreme Court ruling followed by days of celebration around the base of the courthouse steps. The epilogue of this story continues to be written: Same-sex marriage rates are currently outpacing population growth, while at the same time news reports are illustrating community-level struggles with compliance. As our nation adjusts and moves forward from this particular landmark, however, some experts are already wondering out loud about *next* steps. "How now" will family law evolve?

Prior to examining questions of where the shoreline of our changing sea might move, a review of its historical morphing is worth our consideration. Establishing a historical perspective of how marriage and divorce law has been shaped throughout the last 1.5 centuries in the U.S. will provide a helpful context toward then understanding how subject matter rules, public policy, and complementary statutes might evolve through our next progressive court decisions. When considering these trends, two themes will become evident:

1. Statutory construction is a pristine reflection of the *challenges* defined by our society as well as the *solutions* created to solve those challenges, and

2. Trends comprise a muddled reflection of minutiae-level activity, showcasing just how creative policymakers can be when it comes to promulgating or preventing marital or divorce behaviors.

These wide-ranging minutiae can be found in contemporary public awareness-building or policy-creation campaigns, financial policy development, implementation of rules or regulations related to starting or ending marriages, and even the way we think about collecting marital or divorce-related data. Before illustrating the minutia, we will first begin with broader constructs in the shape of a timeline.

1800–1899

Although much of what our family law looks like today was shaped by English Common Law and then developed further in the Colonial Period, distinct themes emerged for a natural "starting point" related during the 1800s in the form of three phenomena. First, the state of Mississippi passed a bill in 1839 for the "protection and preservation of rights and property of married women," which granted married women the right to own property in their name, instead of being owned exclusively by their husbands. This was a landmark piece of legislation that set the tone for a plethora of women's suffrage developments. Second, the "first amendment to the Constitution on the subject of federal control of marriage was introduced in the House on Dec. 11, 1871, in the 42nd Congress, by Mr. King of Missouri." Thus, the beginning of some semblance of uniformity was now being discussed in the nation's capital about where the federal government should rest on particular decisions that would trump states' rights to adapt to their individual family law needs.

The third phenomenon was one of multiple marriages and multiple partners. This struggle for how to define the number of people involved in a marital relationship can be shown through a movement to strike down "the twin relics of barbarism (slavery and polygamy)," as stated in the 1856 Republican Party platform. Laws at the state and federal level took action to settle this moral "numbers" issue as demonstrated in the Poland Act of 1874; the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act of 1874; and the Edmunds Act of 1882, buoyed by the stance of the Mormon church to officially renounce polygamy through their 1890 Manifesto. Therefore, if the question of bigamy and polygamy wasn't settled within this century, a social construct had at least been established: A marriage only had room for two people.

Historically, the Union had been restored, states were beginning to develop their own courts and landmark decisions, and a social

shift in marriage and divorce law aptly entitled, "From Yoke Mates to Soul Mates" documented by marital historian Stephanie Coontz, was taking place across the country. The emergence of "the individual" as well as redefining "the

Kelly Roberts

couple" within both the marital and divorcing relationships awakened the country with progressive, regressive, and constantly changing thought about what marriage should be. Also, our legislators were writing those beliefs into the annals of American history, one state, federal, or even local statute at a time.

1900–1999

The turn of the century brought a tidal wave of attitudes and social involvement into the likes of marriage and divorce. What activity may have begun slowly as the states developed across the West was now in full force with the entrance of an international women's suffrage movement; the emergence of sexuality into the public forum, setting a new standard for relationships; and the social scrutiny of whether or not marriage could manage all that was expected of it. 1900 was a landmark year, with all ratified states at that point in time upholding laws granting married women the "right to own property in their own name."

After this sweeping precedent, other laws followed, asserting individual freedoms and eroding previous discriminatory statutes, such as (1) women first acquiring their husband's nationality upon any marriage after 1907, then gaining the right to citizenship independent of their husband's much later, in 1933; (2) couples in various states being prohibited from using artificial contraception, then having that law overturned nationally by the Supreme Count in 1965; and (3) starting out the century with interracial

marriages being a contraband arrangement, to finally seeing that fall by the wayside during the 1948 *Perez v. Sharp* case, tried in front of the Supreme Court. Also of note is that the Mormons were evidently fighting a continuous battle with their various populations across the country because, once again, they officially renounced polygamy through a second Manifesto in 1904.

The latter half of the century ushered a divorce discussion into our nation's context. For example, "the first no-fault divorce law [was] adopted in California in 1969." Interestingly, the last state to adopt a no-fault divorce law was New York, and this action was not completed until 2010. Other developments included the introduction of more individual rights and assertions of freedoms within the marital relationship. These were manifested by married women being allowed to acquire credit in their name, and "all 50 states . . . revised laws to include marital rape" as a crime.

Some of the larger landmark decisions during the last half of the 20th century, however, included a broad-based and tumultuous discussion about "who" was allowed to be included in the "two people only" marital relationship defined in the previous century. States began jockeying for position over the topic of same-sex marriage, with Maryland becoming the first "state in the U.S. to define marriage as 'between a man and a woman' in statute." Several states began to amend their marriage statutes or constitutions, and in 1996 "President Bill Clinton [signed] the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law," which removed the "recognition of both same-sex marriage and polygamy" and "remove[d] any requirement that states recognize such marriages entered into within other jurisdictions." In essence, the pendulum of individual rights and freedoms for women and Blacks had begun to swing back toward limitations again when marriage and divorce became focused on same-sex couples.

2000–Present
Although we are just slightly past one decade into the 21st century, activists on both sides of the political spectrum have made this portion of the century about same-sex marriage, mentioned in the introductory paragraph. Other refinements, however, have also taken place. For example, as late as the year 2000, Alabama became the last state to remove a ban on interracial marriage in its state constitution. Also, polygamy continued to be propitiated in five pieces of legislation covering 2000–2009. In fact, by 2008, 29 states outlawed the combination of same-sex marriages and polygamy through their constitutions. Therefore, it might be safe to assume that although the same-sex marital debate might have been (or might still be) the contemporary struggle of our current times, polygamy legislation is the subculture marital issue still being resolved.

Social Engineering
Accompanying the statutory or regulatory changes across our history have been numerous tweaks, nudges, or even pushes created by policymakers. One more recent

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example can be found in a 2002 document published by the Lewin Group entitled "State Policies to Promote Marriage: Final Report." While turning the pages of this compendium, the reader will find cash incentives for marriages, discounts on marriage licenses in exchange for proof of premarital counseling, and other ways the U.S. has highlighted what is deemed important about marriage, divorce, and the sometimes resulting outcome of a family. Indeed, states are right now thinking through new challenges or issues and how to structure new questions coming through the pipeline.

So, what are these new questions? And how much further will our shoreline shift? Some of these questions were raised as soon as the *Obergefell* case was settled. Chief Justice John Roberts mentioned in his dissent that changing the definition of marriage provides "equal force to the claim of a fundamental right to plural marriage." Also, since summer of 2015 several news outlets have highlighted a case out of Montana as the one that may bring this plural marriage question back to the Supreme Court. In other words, the Chief Justice will have predicted his own caseload.

These next steps, however, regardless of whether they encompass the ongoing question of bigamy our nation has attempted to answer since the mid-1800s, or whether they begin to bring clarity to "who and how" a family can be legally formed, are essential for the family science world to ponder. If a marriage isn't "two," then will "more than two" be a marriage? And, if so, how many more than two? Also, if there many more than two in some types of marital structures, at what point does the "marriage" part cease and the "cooperative group with similar goals" begin? Furthermore, if we have intimately involved cooperative groups, married to their worldview ideals as much as each other, then, has our shoreline given way to a river of momentum that may rush too quickly to be fully considered? Indeed, our family scientists are working on definitions of alternate family forms, ways to research and analyze nontraditional family data, and grapple with a shoreline that won't stay put as we speak. Given all these questions, and certainly many more related to areas of connection, one answer is certain: Family scientists will no doubt be provided a full career of challenging new areas to investigate.

Malcom Forbes once said, "It is so much easier to suggest solutions when you don't know too much about the problem." If, as stated earlier, statutory construction is a pristine reflection of the challenges defined by our society as well as the solutions created to solve those challenges, then it seems we most certainly have a menu of challenges. But at the very least, with our colleagues across the country, and those who are invested in taking the time to learn a great deal about marital or divorce-related challenges, then our solutions will be found: through our careful investigation, our citizenry of dialogue and potentially, once again, in the marbled-columned halls of the U.S. Supreme Court. ◼

Mixed Methods and the Military

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One day, in a conversation with an older veteran, I (the first author) got into a bit of a disagreement about the presence of LGBT individuals in the military. He claimed that women and "gays" did not serve until the rules changed. I personally knew veterans who identified as gay or lesbian and many women who served long before the "rules changed," but he seemed to keep repeating himself. He kept reiterating policies of the military to me. Intrigued, I quickly enlisted the help of a colleague, and my coauthor on this article, Mary Oglesby, to do a little exploratory study to uncover the facts. After all, we are researchers, and we had worked with military personnel before, so this could be interesting. We decided we would ask both quantitative and qualitative questions, allowing the service members or veterans to elaborate on their answers, to tell us their stories. We conducted a small exploratory study of veterans asking them about the presence, treatment, and effects of serving with or as a woman or an LGBT member. The faces of the military are changing—at least, that is the given headline—but having known many women/LGBT veterans personally, I knew that they have always served—silently, on the sidelines, keeping in line with the policies of the military. But this article is not about our questions or even our statistical results. It is about a strange contradiction we found in the data.

To start off, here is a brief overview of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that was signed into law in 1993 under the Clinton Administration. The policy theoretically lifted a ban on homosexual service that had been instituted during WWII. Military officials feared that the mere presence of homosexuals in the armed forces would undermine morale. However, the policy did little to change the behavior of commanders. In 2010, the Pentagon completed a study of how the repeal would affect armed forces' military readiness and concluded that there was a low risk to armed forces' abilities and effectiveness.

Women have also always served in the military in some form or another. Currently,

the Coast Guard has the highest percentage of and number of occupations open to women, whereas the Marine Corps and the Army have the lowest percentage of positions/occupations open to women. Before 2001, American servicewomen had largely been kept out of ground combat. The recent January 2013 decision, which lifted the ban on women in combat, came after increased pressure on the Pentagon from servicewomen and activists to acknowledge the reality that many women in the military already face combat on the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With that said, the findings from our exploratory study (n = 25) were consistently inconsistent responses. Let me explain it this way: When we asked if the military member/veteran had served with women or LGBT individuals, some checked the box marked "no" but then would go on to tell us about how once "that guy" was discharged he was discovered to be homosexual. Or they would describe the homophobic slurs that were used constantly to harass male members who were perceived as more "feminine" or suspected of being gay. Their quantitative data and their qualitative stories did not always match. Service members and

Julia Bernard   **Mary Oglesby**

participants were able to tell us more about their *true* experience. So, why was the information we obtained almost contradictory? We suspect that veterans and military personnel are obligated to present standard answers for certain questions; they are fantastic at reciting policy, until you ask them to tell you a story. And what veteran can't tell you a good story about his or her military service? In light of the women who passed Army Ranger School recently, it is an opportune time to discuss how scholars approach research with military personnel. The policies of the military are changing, and so are the roles service members play. One of our questions asked how respondents felt about women being allowed

> Regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed with the policies that were in place, women and LGBT individuals had earned the respect of the veterans and military personnel whom we interviewed.

veterans were very good at describing the rules—that these service members were not allowed to serve with them—and they were very good at following these rules at face value, but when we asked them what they thought, what they felt, and what they had seen or experienced, they got a chance to tell us a much richer story about the respect and admiration they had for the individuals with whom they had served.

In additional, we found that quantitative questions were answered one way, but when we allowed service members to elaborate in a textbox, by asking qualitative questions, most

in combat zones. Many felt that if women were qualified and met the same requirements as men, then they should be allowed to serve in those capacities; however, it was many participants' experience that women were often not going to be treated the same way when it came to the work that needed to be done in those combat zones. One participant noted the following:

> I feel as if it is going to force more men into these harder jobs like lugging around large ammunition cans and large weapons with no hope for rotation because the

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few women in combat will be limited to less physical roles. It would make it hard to give these already stressed out and fatigued men a break.

He was not alone. Another made the following observation:

I think that emotionally and socially the hurdles or obstacles could be overcome and the armed forces and our society would be better for it, but I'm not as confident that a female could adequately (in numbers of individuals) be able to overcome the physical necessities of the job to warrant the investment in facilities etc. to serve them.

This is a very, "Yes, but . . ." type of answer. Having this qualitative data helped us understand why some service members may have reservations about incorporating women, even though, when one looks at military fitness tests, there is little difference between the qualifications for men and women, with an exception being the Marines. Also, the Marines have fewer positions open to women. By the numbers, our participants were all for having women serve in combat zones; practically and anecdotally, however, they questioned whether it would be a worthwhile endeavor.

So, why are we telling you all of this? After all, family researchers have long known that qualitative data enrich our work. We want to encourage the use of feminist methodology with everyone, even in the most masculine of environments, even with those who have been trained to answer our questions in a certain way. Let their voices be heard. Let them elaborate on what they really want to say in response to a question. Look at the intricacies of how their answers compare to how they have answered Likert scale questions or dichotomous yes/no questions. Veterans and service members deserve the right to be heard. As a matter of fact, one of the criticisms of our participants is that they really could tell us more, but we asked them to "briefly describe their experience" and they felt compelled to stop and keep it short (a mistake we do not plan to ever make again). Asking a former or current military member to keep it brief will definitely limit what he or she says because, again, their training is to get to the point in clear and concise ways.

We knew this, and yet we fell into the trap of survey design protocol. We have even been part of research teams who interviewed military personnel, families, and individuals face to face, recorded those interviews, had them transcribed, and analyzed the dialogue. But we made some mistakes in designing our study anyway. Don't let the small nature of your study, or the large nature of your study, truncate the voices of the participants. Ask them a question and then let them tell you a little more about their answer. Even if you do this with just a comment box at the end, a place to be able to tell you their story or explain a response could change the way that you analyze that response.

The most obvious theme of our study was that women and LGBT individuals did indeed serve with our veterans despite the policies in place like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," but their sex/sexuality/gender was not openly discussed. Women and LGBT service members were seen as equals by their counterparts, if they pulled their weight. It was also evident from the data that although verbal disrespect of service members was common practice, so was building a respect for their resiliency. There was an acknowledgment that they were often not given promotions over their male or heterosexual counterparts. One of the most interesting parts of our study was the fact that the service members and veterans stressed, over and over, the respect that they had for their fellow service members.

Regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed with the policies that were in place, women and LGBT individuals had earned the respect of the veterans and military personnel whom we interviewed. As the roles within the military change, we want to be respectful of how we approach those who serve. We want to know not just their attitudes about a topic but also to understand *why* they have that attitude or feeling. If we just look at our quantitative data, we would

have missed the respect. We would have missed legitimate concerns about treatment, fairness, and safety in discussion about these topics. It is important to remember that service members hail from geographically diverse locations and, as a result, support networks that are more diverse. We have more National Guard and reserve personnel serving in combat settings, along with changes in the role of women within the military and combat. Deployments are more frequent, and families are separated for longer periods of time. All of these should change how we should view the military and the personnel who serve. This is not your great-grandfather's, or even your grandfather's, military. Our research should be full explorations of the changing landscape. ∎

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Teaching Family Diversity: Working With Foreign-Born Instructors

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In an increasingly precarious sociopolitical climate—from Ferguson to San Bernardino—race, culture, and ethnicity are taking on new meanings at the office water fountain and across corporate boardrooms and higher education classrooms. This is an especially poignant situation in classrooms where instructors are charged with the task of teaching family diversity and fostering a climate of inclusiveness. As international faculty, we (the authors) find ourselves in a quandary, compelled to examine the meanings of the terms to us, given that we have been largely shielded from the negative influences because of our upbringing in a fairly homogeneous island nation—largely Christian, Black, and West Indian.

As instructors of diversity courses, we have been forced to reflect on our own stereotypes regarding race, ethnicity, and culture. Although we anticipated some challenges given the nature of the topics that are covered, we could not envision how personally challenging the process would be until we were faced with teaching our first diversity course. We also found the teaching experience to be personally rewarding. As a racial/ethnic minority and international instructor, the first author struggled with some of the content and became keenly aware that the majority of her students were Caucasian. Furthermore, she was not always comfortable discussing topics such as White privilege and immigration. Fortunately, she had a great mentor who allowed her to observe the same course; this served as an invaluable resource. In addition, the first author reached out to other instructors of diversity courses in the field of human and social sciences to learn from them. Her curiosity led her to seek approval to conduct research in which she interviewed instructors on effective ways to teach about diversity issues and discover some best practices for teaching a diversity course. She was particularly interested in what other foreign-born instructors had to say about their experiences. The result was a collection of narratives from

graduate student instructors (both foreign born and native born; Frederick, 2010). Finding literature related to teaching strategies is not difficult; however, we know less about the affective responses of foreign-born instructors as they approach the teaching of diversity courses. In this report we share some of the themes that emerged from narratives from two foreign-born instructors at a large Texas university, because these best describe our own experiences. The following are five selected themes: (1) avoidance, (2) credibility of the other, (3) apprenticeship mentoring, (4) teaching diversity efficacy, and (5) rewarding experience.

> As instructors of diversity courses, we have been forced to reflect on our own stereotypes regarding race, ethnicity, and culture.

1. Avoidance. Foreign-born instructors of diversity courses tend to avoid confrontation and project a neutral self to their students by taking a middle ground on controversial topics because of fear of being offensive or of evoking negative emotions within students. It is important that their students do not view them as biased for or against any ethnic or cultural group. For example, one instructor shared the following:

> I avoid directly teaching them, or telling them what is right, what is wrong about culture and race relations. So, I let them talk instead of me kind of telling them what is right and what is wrong. Kind of avoid direct confrontation.

Another shared her approach:

> If I feel like I might annoy my students by making my points, I would just make it like a question and a discussion, and you know, or in-class activity. I kind of ask the students to tell me what they think how they feel it . . . and then maybe present

Helyne Frederick   **Catherine Polydore**

some of the ideas to the class. Let them think about whether it is right or wrong. I take the middle ground.

2. Credibility of the other. Foreign-born instructors believe their experience living in and identifying with a foreign country/minority culture may cause students to question their credibility as a diversity instructor:

> If I am American, but have a lot of international experience that would be much better for teaching that course, because people can trust me, for example a student might think "Oh, you don't know that. You know nothing about my society, how could you criticize our society?"

Another appeals to her students:

> Maybe you will feel like I'm not the right person to talk about [diversity issues], but I do have something to tell you, so why not just try me? Just try to listen to me. If I'm wrong, correct me, but if I'm right . . . what if I'm right?

3. Apprenticeship mentoring. Foreign-born instructors indicated that observing mentors negotiate similar processes, participating in training programs, and teaching practica were beneficial to increasing their success. For example, one instructor recounted:

> Before I taught the class I sat down and watched a professor teach the diversity class. I took note about where she started,

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how she started, how she interacted with students. I learned from that.

And another shared the following:

Whenever there were some problems [in the class/in preparation] my mentor always said "If you have any problem, talk to me." And she did a presentation for me in talking about capitalism and family studies.

4. Teaching diversity efficacy. Instructors used forms of proxy control to teach about diversity. These tools became the teacher, moving beyond simply supporting the lesson. For example, one instructor explained how she does this:

For difficult topics, I tend to show a video instead . . . sometimes I try to find a video to really illustrate [difficult topics] to them, and honestly I tell them, "Well I don't have experience on this topic at all and apologize (forgive me), you know, I can't relate so well to the topic."

5. Rewarding experience. Despite the challenges that instructors faced, they reported feeling happy when students expressed the need to know more or showed signs that they were more tolerant of or receptive to diverse groups:

Most of the reactions are positive . . . because they [students] feel excited to learn about different things. They feel like I bring a unique experience to the class. They are more tolerant and often want to know more about other cultures after taking the diversity course.

In general, the instructors reported challenges and rewards associated with teaching a diversity course. Participants all wished that they had more activities that they could draw from to enhance delivery and class interaction.

Recommendations for Preparing Foreign-Born Instructors

For international instructors to achieve the success in teaching diversity courses that are comparable to their domestic counterparts, they must receive support that acknowledges their unique backgrounds. Training on the content, no doubt, is important, but also these instructors must feel sufficiently comfortable teaching controversial topic so their students' learning is not compromised. Any training model should incorporate opportunities for instructors to debrief or talk

about classroom experiences within their departments or across departments. The following are eight suggestions to help prepare and support international instructors.

1. **Training and resources for international instructors**. Departments and instructors must invest in resources such as videos, textbooks, documentaries, and other materials related to family diversity. Teaching manuals or a collection of helpful activities, suggestions, and seminal readings on the common areas on family diversity can be collected and shared with instructors. Graduate student instructors in particular should take a practicum in the course or a class on diversity prior to teaching. Because some foreign-born instructors may struggle with language and cultural knowledge, training to meet the individual's needs may be necessary.

2. **Carefully selected mentors.** Departments should select mentors who are both knowledgeable about and sensitive to issues facing international instructors and individuals from diverse cultures. These mentors must be willing to take the extra time to provide the needed support. This can be achieved through an intentional adaptation of the mentor–(cognitive) apprenticeship model (Dennen & Burner, 2007).

3. **Reflective teaching.** Foreign-born instructors should be encouraged to be reflective practitioners (Brookfield, 1995). International instructors bring their own beliefs and experiences to their teaching that may be incongruent with those of the majority culture. In addition, they may become introduced to negative stereotypes about their cultural group through media and personal experiences, leading to feelings of discomfort. Therefore, it is critical that instructors are provided with the tools to effectively filter these experiences, so that the integrity of the course/lesson is not compromised. Instructors should be encouraged to reflect on their cultural backgrounds and how those backgrounds might influence their teaching. Through reflection, the practitioner can use a variety of experiences, images, and strategies to reframe any misconceptions and improve their teaching diversity efficacy.

4. **Facilitating debriefing.** International instructors should have opportunities

for debriefing after classes during which difficult topics have been discussed. They should be encouraged to share their experiences with others who may have had similar backgrounds. This can be facilitated through the use of journaling, private blogs, or discussion boards. An experienced instructor should serve as the moderator. Debriefing can also take place with professional learning communities (DuFour, 2004) where instructors can support each other during the semester.

5. **Creating a safe classroom environment.** To create a safe environment, instructors should establish a code of conduct for the class, establish clear rules for discussion, and model to students acceptable ways to voice disagreement and present their viewpoint without being offensive.

6. **Collaboration.** Collaboration across campus offices and departments (international office, cultural centers, etc.) may also help build support for instructors as well as foster a climate of inclusion and acceptance. Discussions of diversity issues should not be limited to the course but rather should be embedded, as appropriate, across curricula, courses, and departments. International students should see that departments and campuses are actively engaged in creating an inclusive and safe campus for all its constituents.

7. **Manageable class size.** Administrators, department leaders, and instructors should discuss and restrict the class sizes to a manageable number as indicated by instructors who have the experience teaching the course. Smaller classes allows for more discussion and more interactions among students and with the instructor.

8. **Diversity awareness and knowledge.** International instructors' identity development should be nurtured as they assimilate within their communities and understand themselves within the broader sociocultural context prior to teaching. It is critical for them to understand and be aware of the subliminal misrepresentation of racial/ethnic minority membership, sexuality, and gender (Fleras & Kunz, 2001). As the American families become increasingly diverse, family sciences curricula must

Emerging Adulthood and Cancer: Families Confronting and Communicating About a Young Member's Disease and Recovery

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When an adolescent or young adult (AYA) receives a cancer diagnosis, family life changes forever. Family members confront multiple tasks, both emotional and practical, that involve them communicating with insiders and outsiders about this new challenge. The patient's transition to adulthood becomes confounded by unpredictable dependence and loss; family members find themselves managing multiple tasks and personal anxiety. AYAs undergoing cancer treatments and follow-up care confront significant developmental and communication challenges that also affect their families and differ from those confronting childhood or young adult cancer.

Although the emerging-adulthood literature commonly addresses mental health issues, Schulenberg and Zarrett (2006) reported that physical health issues do not receive similar attention.

The AYA Developmental Stage

The concept of an adolescent life stage first appeared in Erik Erickson's book *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, published in 1968. Adolescence has been characterized as a time of testing boundaries and exploring new self-definitions and been described as a time of "exploration" and "upheaval." Traditionally, major developmental tasks of adolescence involved establishing gender roles, loosening family bonds, and strengthening peer ties. In the 1990s psychologist Jeffrey J. Arnett challenged this model arguing for a stage: called *Emerging Adulthood*. His proposal, widely adopted by developmental scholars, suggested creating a stage that recognizes older AYAs who remain psychologically and financially dependent on their families of origin. Today this recognition has affected the approach to cancer treatments for AYAs as they attempt to manage changes in their cognitive, emotional, physical, and social capacities while confronting a major illness.

Kathleen Galvin

Background

During the first two thirds of the 20th century, a large majority of Americans in their late teens and early 20s finished school, joined the labor force, left home, married, and started their own families. The ties between adolescents and their parents changed significantly in the last third of the 20th century. This period witnessed the rise of "helicopter parents," so named because they hover over their children, remaining highly involved in their lives well into adulthood.

Today, as increasing numbers of male and female high school graduates enroll in community or 4-year colleges, often followed by professional or graduate study, familial dependence can continue indefinitely. According to Parker (2012), at least 3 in 10 young adults live with a parent after college; a large percentage of returnees report being satisfied with this arrangement. The age at first marriage and the number of cohabiting couples has been rising steadily as continuing education and career demands dominate young adults' lives. Contemporary parents provide more financial support to their grown children than did their parents, reflecting significantly stronger parent–child interdependence. Today, many young adults cohabit before they marry; the majority of younger adults, ages 20–24, view unmarried couples living together as acceptable. Many young adults remain single well into their late 20s or mid-30s.

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ensure that students are trained to face a multicultural society. Lack of knowledge and uncertainty can prevent instructors from adequately addressing diversity in the classroom.

In sum, foreign-born instructors contribute significantly to family sciences courses; however, they should be adequately prepared to teach family diversity. The recommendations described in this article can apply to any instructor. However, in our opinion, additional support may be needed.   ■

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Arnett's (2000, 2011) proposed Emerging Adulthood stage encompasses later adolescence through the early 30s and is based on five key characteristics of contemporary young adults: (1) instability, (2) identity exploration, (3) self-focused, (4) feeling in-between, and (5) considering possibilities. Arnett stressed the significant behavioral differences that characterize this age group compared to those of a similar age in past generations. More women earn advanced degrees and remain in the workplace for decades. The age at first marriage has risen significantly, and professional /graduate education has become more commonplace for both genders. For most AYAs, a long-term commitment appears unrealistic and/or undesirable at this life stage.

In an examination of the issues and tasks discussed by parents and their offspring during this new developmental stage, Carlson (2014) identified the following four significant areas: (1) work–life balance, (2) academic concerns, (3) social and relational concerns, (4) financial constraints/concerns, and (5) current job or future career. Yet these issues do not include major health concerns, much less the possibility of confronting a cancer diagnosis.

Although the emerging-adulthood literature commonly addresses mental health issues, Schulenberg and Zarrett (2006) reported that physical health issues do not receive similar attention. Until recently, few AYA cancer patients, or their parents, anticipated jointly managing the young adult's life-threatening illness, over a significant time period. Yet when AYAs confront a cancer diagnosis, members of their families of origin frequently assume major caretaking tasks. Although this has been an under-studied area, in 2006 the Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology Progress Review Group authored *Closing the Gap: Research and Care Imperatives for Adolescents and Young Adults With Cancer*, a document that foregrounded AYA issues. During the past decade a wave of new research has explored the experiences of AYA patients and their family members. Researchers have addressed multiple issues, including unique challenges related to communication, personal supports, and mediated supports.

Unique Challenges

Newly diagnosed AYA patients confront the challenge of living in a world that few peers share. Frequently these patients wish to socialize with their peers by trying to appear physically unaffected. In their study of AYAs everyday life, Lam, Cohen and Roter (2013) found that adolescent patients desire to avoid isolation; some struggle with interacting with peers who have changed their social perception of them, managing conversations and questions about their physical condition, struggling with the physical effects of the disease, gaining the right to participate in medical discussions, and talking about cancer with other survivors and family members. Often these issues become ongoing topics of family discussion. In addition, researchers have found that many affected teenagers enact coping strategies such as joking about the cancer and seeking a peer support community.

Family support issues. Few families are prepared to manage their young offspring's cancer treatments and struggles. Parental overprotectiveness tends to generate conflict, distress, and communication challenges. Some parents request that the medical team limit information conveyed to the AYA patient; certain parents find themselves unable to hold an honest conversation about death as their child battles life-threatening cancer. In some cases, medical providers face ethical challenges when parents request that they do not tell their offspring the seriousness of their condition (Howk and Wasilewski, 2011).

Most family studies of AYAs involve two-parent households. Research reveals that mothers appear to take on the greatest responsibility. Although a few studies have addressed medical decision making in single-parent families and stepfamilies when a child confronts cancer, one study revealed that when children in stepfamilies confront cancer, recently divorced/separated parents find it difficult to manage decision making and caregiving, particularly when a new partner of one parent was the perceived cause of the marital dissolution (Kelly & Ganong, 2011). Given the current diversity of family forms, more research needs to examine coping strategies enacted in different family structures, such as single-parent, adoptive, grandparent-headed households and stepfamilies.

Technology and communication. AYAs confronting a recent cancer diagnosis often report their need to find supports beyond family members and close friends. Studies of these patients reveal the importance of online peer interactions as young cancer survivors cope with cancer-related uncertainty. Recently Donovan (2014) and colleagues examined the patterns of social support subjects identified in response to their expressions of uncertainty in an online AYA community. They found that 82% of messages responding to another community member's uncertainty provided informational support, whereas 67% of messages contained multiple types of support including emotional and esteem support.

Another recent national study, conducted by Kent and colleagues (2013), identified two major communication tasks that confront affected teens: (1) talking about cancer and (2) meeting peer survivors. The researchers queried 523 teens and young adults affected by multiple types of cancer, ages 15–39 at the time of diagnosis, who were 6 to 14 months past their diagnosis. Of this group, 25% reported a need to talk about their cancer experiences with family and friends, and 43% reported a desire to meet other survivors. Those who identified these needs tended to be individuals with high symptom burdens (multiple difficult side effects), circumstances that led to greater isolation and limited easy contact and conversation with peers. Participants at higher socioeconomic levels identified a greater need for online support groups. The authors concluded that social information needs are high for those with higher symptom burden and/or lower quality of care as well as those in their 20s (as opposed to adolescents) and Hispanics. In essence, technology reduces AYAs' isolation.

Frequently newly diagnosed young patients and family members seek out the American Childhood Cancer Organization (http://hcco. org), which provides information as well as web links to AYA web resources. Many turn to websites, such as Planet Cancer (http://www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/young-adults/), in order to join a community and gain access to interpersonal support, survivor stories, and other resources. Others find interactional support through Facebook

Conceptualizing the Transformative Sibling Process: Toward a Framework for Understanding Alternative Coparenting Relationships in Diverse Family Systems

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Family configurations continue to evolve in the context of cultural *sea change*—notable shifts that bring about transformations of striking cultural change—and have resulted in dynamic sibling coparenting alliances and arrangements in diverse family systems. Transformative sibling coparenting relationships emerge as a result of experiences with lifelong interdependent relationships between sibling family members. The 2010 U.S. census findings underscore research on contemporary families showing a demographic shift away from nuclear parenting configurations and toward a growth in coparenting outside traditional two-parent, married, coresidential arrangements, as unmarried and/or unromantically involved parents and other adults form relationships to care for children.

Coparenting, according to James McHale, Jason Baker, and Liss Radunovich's article, "When People Parent Together: Let's Talk About Parenting," can refer to how parents and other adults raising a child work together. Coparenting configurations can include extended kinship and friend networks of biologically and nonbiologically allied individuals who assume a significant shared responsibility for a child's care and upbringing, such as married couples working together in parenting children, divorced parents, people who have a child together but never married, or any two or more people who are working together to raise a child. One extended family–embedded coparenting arrangement is among single parents and their own parents. However, another extended family coparenting configuration is often overlooked: the sibling coparenting relationship.

Sibling coparenting relationships, which often form in times of need, may be distinct from other coparenting relationships because of the intense bonds in the sibling interdependent relationship that are forged over lifelong mutual experiences with change and adversity. What is transformative about these relationships stems from the bonds forged between siblings that may lead to transformations in sibling alliances and family configurations when activated in the context of childrearing. Thus, the transformative sibling concept provides a novel perspective that conceptualizes the process by which the protective function of the interdependent sibling bond emerges from sibling caregiving behavior in development and is adaptive throughout life. As families continue to change, the transformative sibling framework can further current scholarship and intervention efforts concerned with building on interdependencies in families,

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or Stupid Cancer (http://www.stupidcancer.org) support groups. Websites such as Cancer and Careers (http://www.cancerandcareers.org) provide support for workplace challenges, such as addressing the issues in the workplace. In the future, technological supports will become increasingly central to both patients and family members of young cancer survivors. At this point, more family-oriented researchers need to address the most effective interpersonal and mediated communication supports for AYAs and their family members. ∎

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strengthening relationships of individuals, and promoting a specific kind of child-rearing arrangement that preserves kinship ties and supports positive child development.

Understanding the Sibling Bond

Characteristic to the human experience is the capacity to successfully adapt through daily changes and overcome adversity and transitions occurring throughout the life course. Social relationships are a universal transactional mechanism that influences successful development. A quality relationship with one's parent and mutual sibling influences are key protective factors that help mitigate risk and contribute to individual well-being. Because the sibling relationship is oftentimes the longest relationship that any individual will experience, early experiences and the influence of transitions throughout subsequent years have the potential to transform sibling relationships by forging enduring bonds that may take on different forms or functions depending on family need. Research by Vasey and Vander-Laan (2008) revealed that sibling relationship bonds serve an important biological function that have individual and family effects that transcend context and adversity. Understanding the protective function of sibling relationship bonds, and how adult siblings (as providers of necessary care and support) can aid individuals and families, is an understudied yet important topic.

Transformative siblings as a construct is aligned with earlier research by Lerner (2011) and Elder (1998) that describes an alternative coparenting sibling alliance and arrangement, one by which unique family dynamics (e.g., culture, values, norms) influence sibling adaptations in taking on different roles or functions within the family system. These dynamic adaptations in the sibling role are observed in situations of family need requiring efforts to maintain family organization and functioning, such as during elder care, immigration, child maltreatment, and childrearing, to mention a few. The transformative sibling process therefore is characterized by linked lives, suggesting that circumstances in one adult sibling's life would have implications for the life of the other sibling and that an adult sibling's challenges would affect the other sibling's psychological and relational well-being. Also,

as transformative sibling processes involve sibling biological connections, strategic alliances and arrangements serve a functional purpose, given that assuming the child-rearing role of their sibling's children would allow siblings to increase reproductive and family success. As a result, transformative siblings function in the family system as an important mechanism to increase social and human capital (or assets) throughout time and in diverse contexts.

Coparenting in Adulthood

Research conducted by McHale and colleagues posits that a central function of adulthood is childrearing; specifically, the successful collaborative process of parenting of young children by two adult caregiving figures, and explains the process of *coparenting* as an "enterprise" by two or more adults who care and rear children for whom they have mutual responsibility, suggesting that coparenting involves more responsibility, commitment, and extended involvement than less intense and sustained social support for parents and children, babysitting, money for

> Sibling coparenting relationships, which often form in times of need, may be distinct from other coparenting relationships because of the intense bonds in the sibling interdependent relationship that are forged over lifelong mutual experiences with change and adversity.

a paying a bill, a shoulder to cry on, etc.). In addition, sibling coparenting is a type of what Sarah Blaffer Hrdy describes in her book *Mothers and Others* as *alloparenting*, a system of parenting in which individuals other than the actual parents act in a parental role to protect children and promote survival and development. Contemporary research by Gonzalez, Jones, and Parent (2014) shows that coparents do not necessarily have to be biologically related individuals within a marriage, and a growing amount of research is being conducted with single-mother extended family network dyads.

Coparents can include members of the child's extended family (i.e., grandparents),

divorced or foster parents, and nontraditional caregivers. A growing body of research identifies alternative adults or family members who assist with child care responsibilities based on context. For example, an early study by Kupenda (1997) elucidated the nontraditional notion of coparenting by single African Americans in which two friends, two sisters, two brothers, a sister and a brother, and so on, could jointly coparent a child. However, few studies have taken into account these specific processes of adult dyads that include siblings, which often provides support for African American, Latino, and other cultures in which extended kin networks are characteristic, as well as in contexts of single-mother–led families and among the disadvantaged that influence child-rearing success and family system well-being.

Sibling Relationship Effects

The sibling relationship is the longest and one of the most impactful relationships across the life span. Sibling care behaviors and interactions early in development can develop into salient attitudes, norms, and beliefs about the role an individual plays in the care of his or her siblings, which can have long-term implications for sibling care alliances and arrangements. For example, siblings grow up involved in reciprocal helping relationships and child care and can be a source of emotional and social support in coping and dealing with change, and they can further experiment with these behaviors through play. Updegraff and colleagues found that the normative process of familism values and practices underlies adolescent sibling relationships and influences sibling relationship quality. Research by Volling and Blandon (2005) has shown that sibling relationships, especially those of high quality (i.e., warm, nurturing, and close), support children's development of social competence, their ability to resolve conflict, and their social and emotional understanding, which may describe important enduring sibling care alliances and arrangement behaviors throughout life in times of transition.

Parental Leave in the U.S.: International Outlier Riding a New Wave Among Cross-Currents

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In recent years we have witnessed an exponential wave of research and advocacy, which has brought the issue of paid parental and family leave up to the highest levels of proximate policymaking in the U.S. Most notably, on Labor Day 2015, President Barack Obama reiterated a presidential memorandum pressing Congress for legislation to allow government employees 6 weeks of paid sick leave on the birth or adoption of a child, plus 6 additional weeks of paid parental leave. Social commentary to progress the issue was exemplified by Danielle Kurtzleben's article published on July 15, 2015, for National Public Radio entitled *Lots of Other Countries Mandate Paid Leave: Why Not the U.S.?* Kurtzleben declared that paid family leave policy was now a top issue for the two front-running Democratic Party presidential candidate nominees. Hillary Clinton's campaign video

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released on Mothers' Day proposed a new paid Family and Medical Leave Act, backed up by the populist declaration that "strong mothers build strong nations." In essence, these and similar efforts have recast paid parental and family leave in the U.S. as a citizenship and nation-building issue.

This new way of thinking about the social politics of paid parental leave was pioneered across international and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development family policy debates by Columbia University scholar Sheila B. Kamerman in a

comparative study with Peter Moss entitled "The Politics of Parental Leave Policies" (2009). Advanced East Asian, Western, and Eastern European capitalist nations now offer paid leave, on the birth of a child, as the starting point for redesigning their modern social care infrastructures. In essence, parental leave is now widely understood to be a necessary part of the "tool-kit for running a modern state." Comparative scholarship and policymaking on parental leave was greatly advanced by the establishment in 2004 of the International Network on Leave Policies and Research, which publishes annual reviews to exchange information about leave policies and cross-national analysis of leave policies. Margaret O'Brien (2009), a leading member of this network, used a soccer mom (or dad)–type analogy to sort modern nations into a descending order of league tables, with the first group of countries located in the "premier league" because they provided nontransferable father quotas, or paid "daddy months." Iceland was considered to be at the top of the premier league countries because in the year 2000 it introduced a total of 9 months leave organized into three distinct parts, with the first 3 months reserved for mothers, the second 3 months reserved for fathers, and the third 3 months to be transferred between couple members as they chose. Sweden provided an alternative gold standard among countries in the premier league, which also included Finland and Norway alongside the more recently promoted Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia. The English-speaking nations of Australia, Ireland, and the UK tended to be located in the lower third division and, all on its own, in Division 4, was the U.S.

A major cross-current contributing to the outlier location of the U.S. is American
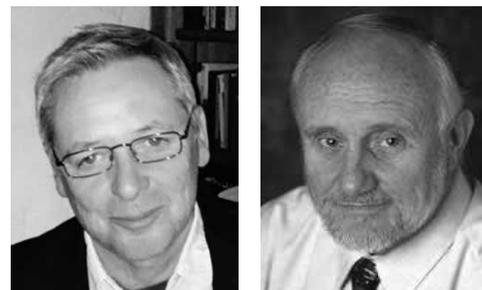
exceptionalism, characterized by political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset and specifically associated with stalled status of parental leave by legal scholar Saul Levmore (2007). Cross-currents include an emphasis on individualism and equal opportunity within a more business-friendly environment. Change is highly unlikely because parents have been deterred from taking paid family leave because of legal precedents, which tended to uphold substantial workplace hostility. Employer hostility was voiced on September 10, 2007, when Randel Johnson, the Vice President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, declared that the American business community would wage "all-out war" against any extension of paid parental and family leave legislation. Wisconsin governor and recent presidential candidate Scott Walker announced his opposition on the basis that advocates for paid parental were on the side of "big government union bosses," whereas he was on the "side of the people." This type of conservative rhetoric, and in particular Johnsen's statement, was seized upon by the economics scholar Nancy Folbre in a *New York Times* article pithily titled "The Business of Paid Family Leave" (January 27, 2014). Folbre countered that all employers, including "card-carrying capitalists," should support paid parental leave, and the benefits of social insurance generally, because both "women and men" will always face a high probability of choosing to "take time off

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from paid employment" to care their children or aging parents.

The Folbre article highlights two very important concepts for international social policy debates about parental leave. The first, and very controversial, concept of *decommodification* was popularized by Gosta Esping-Andersen in his seminal volume of political economy, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990). Esping-Andersen suggested that a minimal definition of decommodification "must entail that citizens can freely, and without potential loss of job, income or general welfare, opt out of work when they themselves consider it necessary" (p. 23). Employees in Nordic countries, such as Sweden, and in central European countries, such as Germany, have gained

high levels of decommodification through alliance building between the working and middle classes, whereas employees in English-speaking countries such as the UK, Ireland, and the U.S. still struggle with lower levels of decommodification. The second important concept raised in the Folbre article was the concept of *social insurance*, which flourished internationally during the course of the 20th century to cover employees throughout the Western world and, later, in East Asia in the form of pensions, unemployment benefits, and health insurance.

Rush documented the social policy brainwave of introducing social insurance schemes to reimburse working parents to stay at home and raise children in *Between Two Worlds of Father Politics: USA or Sweden?* (2015). Paid parental leave first introduced in 1974 by Sweden was followed up in the mid-1990s by the introduction of nontransferable father quotas, or "daddy months," to encourage gender equality through increased father involvement. The "invention" by Sweden of social insurance schemes to cover parental leave was an advanced form of gender equal decommodification, which went on to flourish in Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Slovenia, Germany, and Portugal and shape the 1983 and 2009 European Union Parental Leave Directives. The introduction of paid parental leave schemes in traditionally conservative countries such as Germany, Japan, Portugal, and Spain led multiple researchers

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Conger and colleagues explained that sibling relationships undergo transformations, as individuals enter novel roles in adulthood and adjust their lives toward peers and romantic interests and establish autonomy. In adulthood siblings are involved in a formative process of transition in which they create their own offspring and family units, which then changes the nuclear family of origin to accommodate these new relationships. Because of the sibling bond, despite the formation of separate offspring and family units, siblings have been found to remain interdependent in adulthood, oftentimes calling on each other in times of need. However, few studies have examined these moments of transition and role transformation among sibling relationships during adulthood. Furthermore, much research on sibling interactions finds that when siblings establish their own lives, it isn't unusual for a gap in their relationship to surface during the early and middle years of adulthood; what brings siblings back together is the need to provide care to their elderly parents. Information regarding sibling interactions in caring for their aging parents (the older generation) can serve to inform the often-overlooked processes of caring for the youngest of generations.

Future Directions

There is a gap in our understanding regarding the individual meanings (salient attribu-

tions) of sibling interdependencies among diverse family systems, cultural–contextual influences, and a potential for transformations of alliances and arrangements in roles and goals within the sibling relationship during adulthood that are based on early experiences and lifelong adaptations to change and adversity in moments of transition. We need future scholarship to examine these sibling coparenting relationships to (a) explicate a sibling coparenting mechanism of committed and organized child-rearing support, (b) design a self-report measure to examine siblings' salient attitudes of sibling interdependencies in development, and (c) conduct open-ended interviews of sibling interdependencies throughout life. In addition, there is a need for potential studies that draw on Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model as independent measures of Person, Process, Context, and Time to acquire longitudinal data about siblings' experiences with transitions, change, and adversity that influence transformative processes in sibling relationships in three age-graded time points (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) of the life span. A longitudinal, prospective study is best suited to capture these dynamic relationship processes as they unfold across development and in response to family and individual transitions.

With a large and growing share of contemporary families forming outside the nuclear

family of origin, interventions based on transformative sibling coparenting configurations can support the development of a sustained and positive kinship coparenting alliance between adult siblings who have strong bonds and an enduring relationship. Decades of research by Minuchin (1974–2007) explain that positive coparenting alliances are formed between adults during infancy and early childhood, and families derive substantial benefit from these reciprocal helping arrangements. Scholars and practitioners may use the transformative sibling framework in situations when challenges in childrearing, family change, and adversity surface particularly in diverse family systems that are headed by low-socioeconomic status, unmarried parents and those who are cohabitating and living apart. Specifically, practitioners may consider and target siblings as potential coparents in contexts of child maltreatment when kinship ties represent an explicit asset toward family unification. Policymakers may consider in their funding and definitions of family the need to support diverse family system configurations that are headed by committed and sustained transformative adult sibling alliances and arrangements. A focus on kinship will remain the primary focus of intervention and provide much consideration for future science and practice. ∎

Suicide Risk and Protective Factors in the Family for LGBTQ Adults and Adolescents

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In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the second leading cause of death for 10- to 24-year-old youth was suicide and that sexual and gender minority youth were four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. *Sexual minority* refers to sexual orientation identities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and others, whereas *gender minority* refers to transgender or gender queer. Since the emergence of the sexual and gender minority identities, researchers have conducted studies that looked at the combined community of identities lumping all populations together into acronyms like *LGBTQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) and as well as research studies with assumptions of equivalent need or experience. Although this process allowed for a proliferation of ideas and information around issues of sexual and gender identity, the lumping process minimized information around intersecting identities (e.g., transgender, African American) and assumed that all minority stress was the same across identities and social locations. However, leading researchers and theorists are advocating for the differentiation of individual identities. In this spirit, this article looks at recent research that presents a both a combined view and a disentangled view of sexual minority populations, issues of minority stress, and suicidality. We will also look at commonalities and identify ways families (and professionals who work with families) offer protective relationships from suicide for LGBTQ youth and adults.

Minority Stress Theory for Sexual Minority Youth

In 1981, Brooks first explored the concept of minority stress in relation to sexual minorities. Minority stress theory offers possible insights into the health disparities experienced by sexual minority youth. According to minority stress theory, health disparities are the consequence of psychological distress caused by implicit and explicit societal, community, and familial prejudice,

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harassment, violence, and the "norming" of minority populations. Psychological distress may compound and contribute to suicidality when multiple minority identities exist (e.g., African American and trans-female). However, Hayes, Chun-Kennedy, Edens, and Lock (2011) purported that multiple minority statuses might actually be a protective factor from psychological distress because of the resilience one develops from an already-"invisible" population status. Sexual minority populations are subject to

> Sexual minority populations are subject to institutionalized heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia when seeking jobs, housing, education, and even health care.

institutionalized heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia when seeking jobs, housing, education, and even health care. Within organizations that seek to support sexual minority individuals, homonormativity and the preferential treatment of White, gay cis-male ideals over those of transgender and people of color can leave some individuals without a foundation of support. These types of discrimination are systemic forms of rejection that happen interpersonally, in families, and structurally, in social organizations.

Suicide Risk and Resilience for Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

In a recent review of the literature on suicidality for LGBTQ persons, Marshall et al.

(2011) established that LGBTQ suicidality follows similar patterns to suicidality as in the general public. Past suicide attempts, a history of severe depression, and level of hopelessness were related to future suicide attempts. Marshall et al. found that bisexual youth were five times more likely to have a history of suicidality than heterosexual youth. As compared to lesbian and gay individuals, the increase in bisexual individuals' psychological issues (including depression and anxiety) and suicidality may occur because of no clear sense of belonging to any one group. Bisexual individuals may not feel welcomed into a group of heterosexual individuals or a group of lesbian or gay individuals. A lack of clear belonging may increase feelings of being on the "outside" of both groups, exacerbating potential risk factors for suicidality.

In addition, gender nonconformity is emerging as a significant risk factor for LGBTQ suicidality. Gender nonconformity describes individuals who identify with and present a gender that is not congruent with their biologically determined sex and can occur across any sexual orientation. Rieger and Savin-Williams (2012) established that both childhood and adolescent gender

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to question whether politics still mattered and in particular whether social democracy, together with organized women's movements, remained the key drivers of employment-oriented family policies in Western, Eastern European, and East Asian democracies. The *Between Two Worlds* model illustrated that the introduction of parental leave schemes was always politically contested and that organized women's movements were at the forefront of shaping legislation to ensure gender equality through the provision of nontransferable paid father quotas. In essence, the varied outcomes of these cross-currents have been a growing international polarization between children growing up in "parental-leave-poor" countries and children growing up in "paid-parental-leave-rich" countries and that the public health benefits of paid parental leave included longer periods of sustained breastfeeding and a wider public sense of responsibility for the care of children.

New wave efforts to move the U.S. to a paid-parental leave country have included the National Partnership for Women and Families (NPWF). NPWF pioneered advocacy for change in the U.S. through the launch of national campaigns to highlight state-by-state variations in social policies to support families with young children. The NPWF campaigns heralded the publication of a report called *Expecting Better: A State-by-State Analysis of Laws That Help New Parents* (2012), followed quickly by another report called *Dads Expect Better: Top States for New Dads* (2012). Only 14 states (and the District of Columbia) had laws in place to support parents working in the private sector on the arrival of a new baby, which expanded with federal Family and Medical Leave Act support for fathers and mothers. A further 18 states complied adequately with the federal minimum. The *Dads Expect Better* report concluded that social policies to support parental leave for American families "lagged behind those of other countries" and declared that the U.S. could not wait any longer for public policies that honor new parents and their children because, in their own words, "America's families can't afford to wait. The time for action is now" (2012, p. 10). The state-by-

state analysis by the NPWF was augmented by a positive assessment of *Paid Family Leave in California* by Eileen Applebaum and Ruth Milkman (2013), which recast the rollout of similar paid family leave legislation to other states in the U.S. as an "unfinished business." In addition to beneficial outcomes for low-income families, multiple studies have highlighted the beneficial public health outcomes of parental leave. These include a major study by Jody Heymann and Kristen McNeill (2013) for the UCLA World Policy Analysis Centre entitled "Changing Children's Chances," which illustrated that 10 weeks paid leave for new mothers was associated with a 9%–10% drop in infant mortality and under-5 mortality rates. Indeed, the latest research data emerging from countries with individualized or nontransferable paid parental leave (for both mother and fathers) show that it improves family health and well-being and encourages parents to consider having larger families. Further paid parental leave has been associated with lessening the gap between women's expectations of father involvement and actual fathering practices, thereby promoting more egalitarian parent–child relationships in families and

more egalitarian adult-gender relationships in families and labor markets, according to Seward and Rush (in press).

Democratic Party politicians, nongovernmental organizations, and the epistemic community of scholars in the U.S., aware of social science research data on the beneficial outcomes associated with paid parental and family leave, are generating a massive wave for cultural change, but cross-currents of resistance remain. Universal paid leave might not to be expected in the U.S. any time soon, but it is being seriously revisited. As Bob Dylan once famously sang, "The times they are a changing," or at least the U.S. seems to be readying itself for a cultural sea change on paid parental leave and family leave policies. Interestingly, and in conclusion, the case of the U.S. illustrates two very important findings for international analysis of comparative family policy and comparative social policy research. The first finding is that the introduction of social insurance to cover paid parental leave in the U.S. is a highly contested political issue, which leads to the second finding: that that politics still matter to reshaping employment-oriented family policies to support citizenship and modern social care infrastructures. ∎

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nonconformity was negatively related to both subjective well-being and psychological well-being for both genders. In an 11-year longitudinal review, Roberts et al. (2011) found that higher levels of gender nonconformity was a strong predictor of physical and emotional abuse of children and adolescents inside the home and at school, especially for male children. Incidences of bullying or abuse increased risk for depressive symptoms related to suicidality.

Legate, Ryan, and Weinsten (2012) looked at the process of coming out, or disclosing sexual orientation to others, in predominantly White lesbians, gay, and bisexual individuals. These researchers found that lesbians were the most "out" group and received the most support for being autonomous individuals, while the bisexual men and women were the least "out" group. However, out-ness is not necessarily related to receiving support and acceptance for a person's sexual or gender identity for racial and ethnic minorities and for those from highly religious families. Multiple risk factors exist for suicidality in LGBTQ populations, including family rejection, substance use, depression, gender nonconformity, and other psychiatric ailments. Additionally, Russel et al. (2011) found that school victimization was related to higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation.

Compounded sexual and racial minority statuses. Individuals who fall in to multiple minority statuses (e.g., gay, Latino male) are subject to the societal discrimination and prejudice associated with each minority status and likely in a more complex way given the rejection (or acceptance) that could come for both inside and outside their racial community. Balsam et al. (2015) found that African American, Latina, and Asian sexual minority women were less "out" than White sexual minority women. For racial and ethnic minority persons, coming out might be a liability in the greater cultural community, and not coming out may act as a buffer to additional societal prejudice. Balsam et al. (2015) also found that African American women in this study reported more socio-economic disadvantage and homelessness than White, Asian, or Latina counterparts. Despite the increased reported stressors, these African American sexual minority women reported similar attitudes toward

their status as a sexual minority and involvement in an LGBTQ community as White counterparts, indicating resilience in the face of increased stressors. Multiple minority statuses do not simply add up to a more negative life experience but instead interact in a complex manner of additional stressors supplemented by additional strengths and sources of resilience.

Resilience and effective intervention. Several protective factors seem to reduce major health risks. Parents and significant caregivers play a crucial role in adolescents' well-being and health. In 2010, Neeham and Austin found that perceived family support of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults positively affected mental health, including depression, substance use, and suicidality. Likewise, Ryan et al. (2010)

found that family acceptance in adolescence predicted improved self-esteem, social support, and the general health status for LGBTQ young adults.

Gibbs and Goldbach (2015) found that for sexual and gender minority young adults from religious upbringings, experiencing unresolved conflict, enduring parental anti-homosexual religious beliefs, and leaving one's religion of origin because of conflict were associated with suicidal ideation. Having parents with anti-homosexual religious beliefs significantly correlates with an increase in internalized homophobia (e.g., the directing of external negative social attitudes toward the self; Meyer & Dean, 1998). A higher rate of internalized homophobia is associated with a higher incidence of recent and chronic suicidal thoughts (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015), increased negative global self-concept, and

poorer psychological well-being and health (e.g., Meyer & Dean, 1998; Rowen & Malcolm, 2002). In regard to familial religiosity, White American sexual minority individuals who experienced affirming faith-based practices reported a greater degree of psychological well-being compared to those exposed to religiosity that rejects sexual minority persons (Lease, Horne, & Noffsinger-Frazier, 2005). Those with affirming faith experiences had reduced levels of depression and internalized homophobia (Gattis, Woodford, & Han, 2012). These findings support the positive impact of countering negative societal messages with affirming social messages (Lease et al., 2005).

Family acceptance also seems to be an important protective factor for increasing psychological well-being and reducing the risk of suicidality in LGBTQ youth. Individual family members can have varying and nuanced views and responses to a sexual minority family member. Multiple researchers have shown that family and parental rejection in adolescence is a primary predictor for poor health outcomes for sexual minority individuals (e.g., Ryan et al., 2009 & 2010). Fortunately, family acceptance is malleable and can be increased with the help of professionals, such as family therapists and family life educators. Family therapists can work with parents to increase empathy for the child by highlighting existing family strengths and challenging unhelpful interactional patterns of the parent and child. One helpful resource for family therapists and other professionals is the Family Acceptance Project (http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/). The Family Acceptance Project works to build research-driven interventions for use by family therapists, social workers, and family medicine that increase family support and eliminate the risk of suicide for LGBTQ youth.

Concluding Thoughts
Minority stress theory allows us to better understand the complex circumstances contributing to LGBTQ suicidality. By continuing to separate risk and protective factors of different sexual and gender minority statuses in future research we can form a clearer picture of how to effectively intervene and prevent suicidal behavior in these population. It is overly simplistic to say that certain

Painting All Muslims With a Broad Brush: The Need for Perspective, a Larger Frame, and a Kinder Heart

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"I can't stand it, I simply can't!" Deniz, 16, grumbles to her family. She touches the shoulder of her father, Davud, gives a kiss to her little sister, Suzan, who is playing with Legos, tumbles herself onto the couch with her school bag on her lap, and starts to cry. Exchanging gazes in a couple of seconds, the family members stay silent, until Leyla, her mother, asks Deniz about what was going on.

After a few seconds of hesitation, Deniz tells them that when coming back from school to home, the students heard the news on the radio about the ISIS attacks. In response, some people started to talk nastily about Islam and Muslims, and a couple of her friends tried to silent them. "I am sick of this ISIS thing, okay?!" yells Deniz. "I am sick of feeling on the knife's edge when there is news on ISIS. I am sick of my friends trying to protect me! I have nothing to do with any terrorist group. That is insane!"

"Insane," repeats Suzan, while putting a Lego onto another. At the age of 3, she is enthusiastic about repeating each and every word she heard. Davud takes a deep breath, stands up from his armchair and walks slowly towards Deniz and hugs her. He says "We can do nothing other than stay strong, and prove ourselves by showing who we are, what we do."

This article is about the members of this family. It is about Denizes, Leylas, Davuds, and Suzans. It is about the Muslims who feel on the knife's edge, when they hear anything about the groups people associate with Islam. It is about those who yell, cry, or freeze when these events occur; people whom their loved ones try to protect, and about those who just repeat whatever they hear without knowing the meanings and intentions behind these messages.

Microaggressions Against Muslim Families
The story above is one example of the microaggressions Muslim families face. Ac-

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cording to Pierce's work in 1970, microaggressions are "subtle nonverbal exchanges, put-downs, demeaning implications, and other subtle insults against minorities." Poussaint described the experience of microaggressions as "death by a thousand nicks," which at first seem harmless, but imagine the aggregate pain from a thousand paper cuts (Williams, 2002). These metaphorical nicks are not so harmless after all. Misinformed generalizations about any group perpetuate these microaggressions.

One way to counter this day-to-day discrimination is to explore alternative narratives that challenge the dominant, reductionist narratives, in particular narratives that reinforce the stereotype of Muslims as violent outsiders. In this article, our objectives are to portray the lived experiences of ordinary Muslims families, challenge biases by understanding the role of media and exposure, and help readers gain a better understanding of core Islamic principles. We hope to connect the stories of ordinary Muslims like Deniz, Davud, Leyla, and Suzan with the larger contexts of media and discrimination.

Discrimination and Hate Crimes
The 2015 Economist/YouGov Poll shows that 73% of the people surveyed believe Muslims face, at minimum, a fair amount of discrimination. Although many people

acknowledge anti-Muslimism, more than half also report their belief that Islam is more likely to encourage violence than other religions. The portrayal of Islam as threatening promotes negative attitudes toward Muslims, in ways that harm the lives of Muslims and their families.

Recently, a 14-year-old Muslim high school student was arrested for bringing a homemade clock to school that school officials mistakenly thought to be a bomb. Imagine his experience, a young Sudanese American, treated like a hostile foreigner. In the same year, a flight attendant refused to give an unopened can of soda to a Muslim woman, stating that the customer could use it as a weapon, while serving an unopened can of beer to another passenger.

According to the Council on American–Islamic Relations in 2006, hate crimes motivated by Islamophobia have significantly increased in the U.S. Anti-Muslim crimes accounted for 13% of religiously motivated hate crimes in 2013, second only to anti-Semitic crimes. At its worst peak, anti-Muslim hate crimes increased tenfold in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks. Since then, reported anti-Muslim hate crimes have decreased but remain five times higher than the rate before the attacks. Yet some gun ranges enforce

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a "Muslim-free" policy even though most illegal shootings in the U.S. are enacted by non-Muslims.

In summer of 2015, many residents of Farmersville, TX, protested against the construction of an Islamic cemetery, seeing the cemetery as a threat rather than an expression of religious freedom. Some residents stated in a town hall panel that they did not consider Islam a religion. There were death threats and threats to vandalize the cemetery. Although the residents directed their hostile opposition to the construction of the cemetery, fear and misinformation about Islam likely contributed to these negative prejudices. Some may interpret these events under the light of current ISIS attacks in the West. We, however, see them with a broader lens.

Even as we prepare this paper, a graffiti message threatening to kill Muslims was recently found in a dormitory bathroom at our university. In response, President Sands of Virginia Tech organized solidarity and af-

firmed the community's support for Muslim students, faculty, and staff, declaring, "A threat against one of us is a threat to us all." We, as students, remember the vigil held on-campus not too long ago that honored the lives of three Muslim students who were victims of the Chapel Hill shooting in

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spring of 2015, an emotional experience as we stood in the fading shadows of the 2007 shooting that devastated yet strengthened the Virginia Tech community.

Exposure, Media, and Power
Lack of exposure to and interpersonal connection with Muslim communities may

contribute to a depersonalized view of Muslims. The Pew Research Center's 2009 survey showed that people with the highest levels of familiarity with Islam perceive their religion as more similar to Islam (27%) compared to those with low familiarity (7%). Furthermore, 60% of respondents who were most familiar to Islam perceived Muslims favorably, compared to less than 40% of respondents who were less familiar.

People who do not often interact with Muslims access most of their experiences through news and social media, where Muslims are often portrayed as unlikable and even dangerous people. Few ordinary Muslims make the daily news. Yeganeh's 2014 analysis of national media and political Islam concluded that Muslims are shown in monolithic images, in which radical extremists become the "norm" while ordinary Muslims leading ordinary lives are invisible from the media. Presidential candidate

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sexual identities or gender nonconformity directly contribute to suicidality; instead, it is the social environment, discrimination, and rejection directed at the individual that can increase risk factors of suicidal ideations and behaviors.

Specific protective factors, such as family acceptance, can mediate suicidality, whereas other environmental factors, such as family religiosity and multiple minority statuses, can be a source of strength or challenge, depending on the individual circumstance. Because family acceptance is not a fixed process families can work toward creating a supportive and accepting environment to increase family cohesion and general well-being of sexual or gender minority members of the family. Family therapists, social workers, and medical professionals are in the position to effectively intervene in struggling families by identifying issues; making appropriate referrals; and, when possible, increasing family cohesion and communication related to acceptance, thereby reducing the risk for LGBTQ suicidality. ∎

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Donald Trump's call to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. is but one example of painting Muslims with a broad brush.

Because the news media show only selective reports in which only the extremist terrorist groups and/or people are shown as the representatives of Muslim culture, even Syrian refugee families—who are risking their lives in the process of leaving their home country, rather than accepting a higher possibility of death under a terrorist attack—are sometimes accused of being terrorists. And hosting countries, facing a sea of refugees, are unfairly expected by many to carry the mission of stopping terrorist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Besides the selectivism of news, which inadvertently creates, versus reflects, meanings in society sensationalism, the process of hyping up shock and emotions around events is also a common occurrence in news reporting and journalism. After the recent Paris attacks, many people were criticized for coloring their social media profiles with the colors of Paris flags while at the same time ignoring the horrific and ongoing terroristic attacks happening in predominantly Muslim countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and so on.

Mainstream news media are embedded in the context of a power structure. Scholars argue that these narratives frame a dominant discourse that reflects Western policy interests in the Middle East and is primarily working on the basis of creating and keeping an "us-versus-them" dichotomy (McAlister, 2005). People living in the West are becoming desensitized to the wars and terrorist attacks happening in other parts of the world and, through the frame the media provide, are becoming paranoid.

Overall, as the scholar van Dijk's writings on media and power argue, news media may well be the most powerful way racism and bias spread. By taking events out of context and presenting them with a lack of appropriate balance, the consumers of information are forced to make ethical sense out of events when they see only the loudest, brightest, most "newsworthy," events. They are not exposed to the exceptions; to the subtler colors; the moderate sounds; the distant realities; to the noble, or even average, Muslims who

do not make the news cycle; to those who shelter their refugee brothers and sisters, or those who simply want to live in peace, far away of both terrorism and judgment.

Although it's not the responsibility of Muslims to defend their religion or apologize for terrorist attacks unconnected to them, some Muslims choose to form groups such as the Free Muslims Coalition or the Muslims Against Terrorism, which unite people against terrorism and provide balanced Muslim perspectives in Western media. With the goal of raising $50,000, the group Muslims United for San Bernardino formed to help the families of victims of the San Bernardino shooting. By mid-December 2015, they had collected more than $170,000 for the families' immediate needs and funeral expenses. These groups take formal, public stances against terrorism that fit with Islamic beliefs of justice, kindness, and peace, and challenge those who associate Islamic beliefs with extremism.

What Islam Is Really About

According to Islamic tradition, *Quran*, meaning "recitation" was revealed between 609 and 632 CE. Since then it is regarded as the "last restatement" revealed because the original forms of the prior revelations had been lost. This keeps the source as it is a significant principle in Islamic tradition. In most primarily Muslim countries, like Turkey, the Quran is being read in its original language, and the rituals are being practiced thanks to interpretive texts and hadith books. Because most of the people do not know the original language in which the Quran was revealed, being able to understand what the Quran says directly requires a special education.

Although Islam is a religion, it is also considered a way of life that teaches people how to live together peacefully. According to Ali, Liu, and Humedian's 2004 article, the word *Islam* literally stems from the root "s-l-m," and the word *salaam*, which means

peace and safety. These words also indicate the "submission" or "surrender" of oneself to Allah, being obedient to his commands, embarking on a safe and secure path that leads to salvation, and promising a sense of trust to everyone and everything, while also denoting the fact that the person surrendering will not inflict any harm on others, be it physical or verbal:

But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief (Quran, 28: 77).

The basis of Islam is *iman*, meaning faith. The fruits of Islam are *ihsan* (blessings), which refers to acting or living as if seeing God, and *ikhlas* (sincerity), which is doing everything only for the sake of Allah. There are two main denominations in Islam: Sunni and Shia. According to the principles of the Sunni sect, the doctrine of Islam consists of five pillars: (a) believing that Allah is the only God and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, (b) engaging in daily prayers, (c) fasting during Ramadan, (d) engaging in charity, and (e) going on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The doctrine of Islam (principles of the Shia sect) is also based on five principles:

1. Monotheism, or *Tawhid* the unity of Allah, his divine existence, and the submission of the self to him;

2. Justice, the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, fairness, and equity, along with the punishment of the breach of said ethics;

3. Prophethood, belief in the prophets, including the biblical prophets but end with Muhammad as Allah's final prophet;

4. Leadership, a divine institution which succeeded the institution of Prophethood. Its appointees (imams) are divinely appointed; and finally,

5. Last Judgment, belief in the resurrection that is the Day of Judgment.

Islam is the fastest growing, second largest religion in the world, with 1 billion Muslims. Six to 8 million Muslims live in the U.S., according to Ali and colleagues.

Muslim families may face concerns, questions, and contradictions regarding who they are, how they can be good Muslim true to the loving spirit of Allah, and what they can do in the face of wrong-headed extremists who say that they act in the name of Islam. Muslim families, in Western countries and across the world, may question the acts of Muslim extremists when they read sayings in the Quran such as, "If you kill one human unjustly then you have killed all mankind" (5: 32), and this:

But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief. (Quran, 28: 77)

Justice, the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, fairness, and equity, is one of the pillars of Islam. Therefore, how do extremists define justice? If prophet Mohamad said "Like whatever you like for yourself for others as well." then what do these extremists like for themselves? The basis of Islam is faith, and the fruits of Islam are blessings and sincerity. Therefore, what is the basis of these extremists' Islam? We see Muslim extremists as both wrong-headed and danger-ous, just as all hateful extremists are (including those who hate or fear all Muslims) are wrong-headed and dangerous.

Recommendations

We believe it's important to question information that is sensationalizing, generalizing, or divisive because, as we have discussed, this is common in the media. It's also important to diversify one's news sources. Listen to a different radio station, or explore another newspaper. Then examine the context of everything you read and listen for a broader perspective. Explore what Islam is to Muslims. Fear drives people away from talking and understanding one another, yet it's often understanding that dissipates this fear. Finally, keep in mind that people do not need to have the same religion, spirituality, or belief systems to share the same values. In many ways, Muslim families are no different than other families. By facilitating understanding the influence of the media, the Islamic beliefs of ordinary Muslims, and the discrimination against their families, we hope to open minds and open hearts. ■

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