

Intersectionality and identity salience in support seeking strategies of Sexual Gender Minority (SGM) parents following divorce

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Goal

To understand the experience of SGM families going through separation or divorce in order to ensure that resource materials promote inclusion of SGM families and provide links to any additional resources that may be necessary for SGM families and those who are connected to them.

Background

Research on SGM divorce

Method - Analyses

Content coding- family interactions, legal interactions, and social support

Axial coding - of social support

coders specialized in program resource development,

develop a working conceptual model of support seeking.

In discussion of social support- people started with who they were- identity salience

Results

- Intersectional Identities: religious, ethnic, social
- Salience varies over time
- More salient identities hold stronger influence in parenting
- Support seeking based on similar identity salience
- Most salient identity, content of identity and who needs support (Eg.: parent, divorcing parent, child)

Intersectional Identities

Interviewer: How does being gay as a Hmong person affect your relationship to the Hmong community?

Participant: I think, I don't know, I mean, *since I came out*, ever since I came out, there is Shades of Yellow, that's still a... it's still kind of a new group too, when we have our yearly Hmong new year, we don't have our own booth, because I think **there's still a lot of fear in retaliating against... and so, as far as the Hmong community... I mean, it's still difficult**, so I mean, a lot of people still don't talk about it, so...

Salience varies over time

Interviewer: How long did you stay with the father's group?

Participant: I would guess probably eight or nine years – *'til my daughters got older*. It's kind of like *I needed that support* for a while and then **I did it as a way to help other people coming out too** and it was still good for me. But **once my daughters were adults it just didn't feel like the right way for me to spend time anymore**. It's like it's time for other people to take care of that. But those are two groups that were very helpful for me in my life.

More salient identities hold stronger influence in parenting

I had to be home when my kids were there for the most part. It made it difficult to date. From a priority standpoint when my kids had something I had to be there so half of my life social life was just children...

Support seeking based on similar identity salience

I came to it because the faith that I was raised in. I mean **as a kid we were pretty active in our church** and had some pretty significant – I don't know what I'm trying to say. *My faith that I grew up in was used against me when I came out to my family.* I left the church for a long time and **wasn't active in any sort of faith tradition, actually really had adverse reactions** to most even remotely similar experiences that I had as an adult. My current church they're just open and accepting. **There are a lot of families that look like mine.**

Interviewer: Okay. Who was in your support system through this separation process?

Interviewee: Well, I had a therapist. I have my lawyer. I didn't have a ton - I mean, there was a group, in other words a transgender therapy group I was in, which was sort of a support system but nobody was really in the same sort of situation that I was. There were a few friends at work. It was funny. My best friend at work, I kind of lost her, but some other people who I hadn't thought would be-

Most salient identity, content of identity and who needs support (Eg.: parent, divorcing parent, child)

We're members of a church. When I say 'we' I mean my ex-partner is a member there and our two kids. My current partner and her kids are not, so that part of the family is a member of the church. I came to it because the faith that I was raised in. I mean as a kid we were pretty active in our church and had some pretty significant – I don't know what I'm trying to say. My faith that I grew up in was used against me when I came out to my family.

I left the church for a long time and wasn't active in any sort of faith tradition, actually really had adverse reactions to most even remotely similar experiences that I had as an adult. My current church they're just open and accepting. There are a lot of families that look like mine.

Speaker 1: It's a good place for your kids to be.

Speaker 2: Yes. They have a religious education program. When the kids get older they do a section on sexual. I can't remember what it's called.

Speaker 3: Our whole lives

Speaker 2: Yes. And they talk about sexuality and it's very inclusive. It just feels like a very welcoming place to be so I think that it's supportive of our family.

First Prong: Inclusion in materials

It's the law -

Visual Representation

How will new romantic relationships affect your children?



On page 53 of the self-care section, you find some things to consider before pursuing romantic relationships. A new romantic relationship in your or the other parent's life could eventually become another person in your children's support network. It all depends on how the new relationship, as well as support and communication about the situation, is handled.

If you embark on a new romantic relationship, remember:

- ✓ A new relationship in the life of one – or both – parents may require your children to give up their fantasy of your original family getting back together again.
- ✓ Your children may be threatened by a new relationship because they believe they will have to share their parent's time with another person, thus creating another loss.
- ✓ A new relationship may undermine the security they are used to.

Clarify Equal Protections

Second Prong: Identity Focused Supports

Identity Salience Assessment

Seeking Support in Salient identity

Community Education

For SGM family members

For broader community

