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Influence of personal identities on substance problems and sexual risk behavior in LGBT adolescents and young adults

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Background

- Substance use and sexual risk behaviors are disproportionately high in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) adolescents and young adults.
- The mechanisms underlying the high prevalence of substance use and sexual risk behaviors in this population remain unclear.

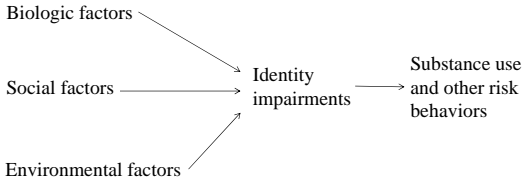
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Who we think we are powerfully influences our behavior

Self-schemas: cognitive products of identity development

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Central hypothesis



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Extension to lesbian/gay/bisexual adolescents and young adults

- Sexual identity in LGB adolescents an added burden?
- Sexual identity more fluid in women than men

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Purpose

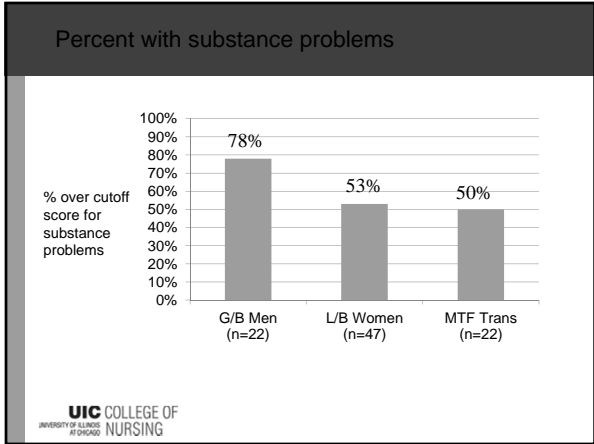
- To examine relationships among the total collection of positive and negative personal identities, presence of a personal identity as a 'drinker,' four dimensions of sexual identity development, substance-related problem behaviors and sexual risk behavior and in LGBT adolescents and young adults.

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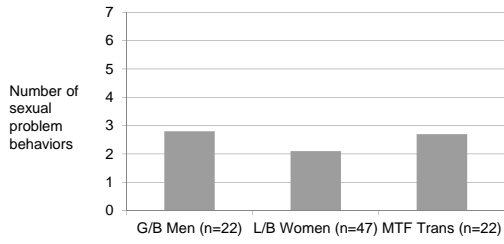
Sample characteristics (N=109)

	Men (n=40)	Women (n=47)	MTF Trans (n=22)
Age	21.7	20.4	21.1
Race			
White	15%	57%	14%
Black	75%	32%	77%
Other	8%	11%	
Sex. Orient.			
Hetero	--	--	27%
Mostly het	0%	34%	5%
Bisexual	20%	23%	23%
Mostly G/L	25%	11%	9%
G/L	48%	19%	5%
Quest	0%	0%	5%
Curious	0%	4%	0%
No labels	8%	9%	23%

- Measures and Procedure**
- **Open-ended cardsort**
 - # positive and # negative personal identities
 - **CASI**
 - Demographics
 - Personal identity as a drinker
 - Sexual identity dimensions (MoSIEC)
 - Uncertainty
 - Exploration
 - Commitment
 - Integration
 - Substance problems (CRAFTT)
 - Sexual risk behavior (ARBA)
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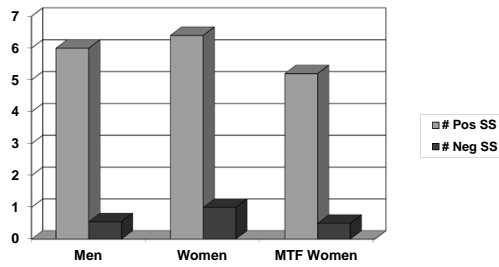


Sexual risk behaviors



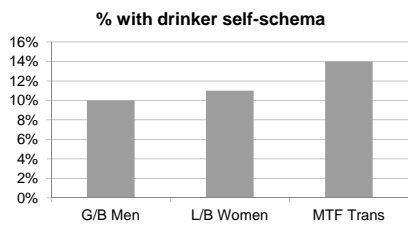
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Positive and Negative Self-Schemas by Group



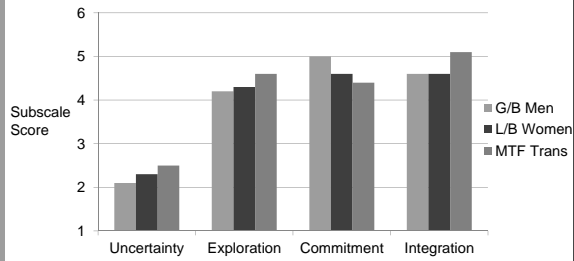
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Presence of drinker self-schema



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Dimensions of sexual identity development



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Bivariate Correlations with Substance Problems

	# Positive schemas	# Negative schemas	Drinker schema	Uncertainty	Exploration	Commitment	Integration
Whole Sample	-.07	.08	.45	.05	.06	-.03	-.13
Men	.03	.10	.31	.06	.27	.14	.14
Women	-.19	.00	.52	.13	.07	-.25	-.32
MTF Trans	-.02	.41	.50	.00	-.29	.14	-.16

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Bivariate Correlations with Sexual Risk Behavior

	# Positive schemas	# Negative schemas	Drinker schema	Uncertainty	Exploration	Commitment	Integration
Whole Sample	-.12	.20	.40	.13	.12	.09	-.11
Men	-.06	.32	.54	.16	.22	.14	.07
Women	-.25	.27	.30	.16	.18	.06	-.24
MTF Trans	.01	.03	.41	.10	-.24	-.03	-.19

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Summary of findings for substance problems

- For gay/bisexual men: **identity as a drinker** and **exploration** was associated with high levels of substance problems.
- For lesbian/bisexual women: **identity as a drinker** was associated with high levels of substance problems, and **commitment** to and **integration** of sexual orientation into their overall set of identities was associated with fewer substance problems.
- For MTF transgender women: many **negative identities** and an **identity as a drinker** was associated with high levels of substance problems. **Exploration** was associated with fewer substance problems.

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Summary of findings for sexual risk behaviors

- For gay/bisexual men: many **negative identities**, **identity as a drinker** and **exploration** was associated with high levels of sexual risk behavior.
- For lesbian/bisexual women: few **positive identities**, many **negative identities**, an **identity as a drinker** was associated with high levels of sexual risk behaviors, and **integration** of sexual orientation into their overall set of identities was associated with fewer sexual risk behaviors.
- For MTF transgender women: an **identity as a drinker** was associated with high levels of sexual risk behaviors. **Exploration** was associated with fewer sexual risk behaviors.

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Limitations

- Cross-sectional data
- Small sample of transgender
- This sample not high in uncertainty due to recruitment site

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Conclusions and Implications

- Modifying or preventing development of drinker self-schema may reduce substance problems and sexual risk behaviors in LGB young men and women
- Fostering healthy integration of sexual orientation into one's overall set of identities may be protective against substance use problems for young sexual minority women.
- Longitudinal data needed to determine causal direction of findings

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Funding

- UIC Chancellor's Committee on the Status of LGBT Issues
- Lesbian Health Fund

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