

Moving Away From a Risk Paradigm to Study Rural Communities Among LGBTQ+ Youth: Promotion of a Strengths Perspective in Research, Practice, and Policy

Megan S. Pacey

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) youth are growing up in a society that stigmatizes and marginalizes their sexual and/or gender identities. Stigma and marginalization have deleterious effects on LGBTQ+ youth including higher rates of depression, suicidality, anxiety, stress, and substance use and lower rates of self-reported physical health (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Burton, Marshall, Shisolm, Sucato, & Friedman, 2013; Day, Fish, Perez-Brumer, Hatzembuehler, & Russell, 2017; Fish, Schulenberg, & Russell, 2019; Mereish & Poteat, 2015; Pacey, Fish, Thomas, & Goffnett, 2019; Pacey, Goffnett, & Gandy-Guedes, 2017; Pollit, Mallory, & Fish, 2018; Tucker et al., 2016; Woodford, Pacey, Kulick, & Hong, 2015). This research has been important in establishing that LGBTQ+ youth are not inherently more likely to experience poorer outcomes than heterosexual and cisgender youth; rather, their risks are situated within oppressive systems and societies. A predominant focus on risk, however, fails to account for the individual strengths and resilience of youth. Additionally, given the association between stigmatizing environments and well-being, it is important to examine the social environments in which LGBTQ+ youth are situated.

One important and understudied social environment that LGBTQ+ youth traverse is their geographic community. The community may act in ways that enable stigma and marginalization or promote well-being and resilience. For example, communities may include hostile attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people, which may lead to increased stress (see Woodford et al., 2015). Alternatively, communities may sup-

port SGM youth by providing access to SGM-affirming resources and positive social climates. Additionally, the community encompasses many of the youth's other social contexts, such as family, school, church, and/or work. One key distinction between the communities in which LGBTQ+ youth live is size. Research on community size has primarily examined the differences between LGBTQ+ youth's experiences growing up in rural versus urban communities or compared the experiences between LGBTQ+ and heterosexual or cisgender youth living in rural communities.

Like the research on LGBTQ+ youth themselves, the majority of research on rural communities as they pertain to LGBTQ+ youth is situated within a risk paradigm. The positioning of rural communities as inherently risky and hostile toward LGBTQ+ youth fails to provide opportunities to identify a community's strengths and opportunities to support the resilience of LGBTQ+ youth. Additionally, it limits our ability as researchers to make recommendations that community leaders may hear and apply in order to reduce risk and promote resilience for LGBTQ+ youth; recommendations that engage with the strengths of communities rather than focus on their deficits. It also frequently compares rural communities to urban communities, positioning urban as the "norm" to which rural communities are compared. Gray (2009) advocated for viewing rural communities as different from, but not inferior to, urban communities, a perspective that aligns well with social work.

Given the importance of the rural community context for LGBTQ+ youth and the predominant focus on community risk, it is essential for researchers to consider the ways in which the strengths perspective might provide a unique and important framework through which to research rural communities. In the past ten years, an increase in research on LGBTQ+ youth has utilized a strengths perspective, or examined factors such as resiliency and positive youth development; however, the strengths perspective has rarely been applied to the rural communities in which many LGBTQ+ youth are growing up. The strengths perspective offers researchers opportunities to examine rural communities holistically, focusing on risks in the contexts of strengths and opportunities and exploring ways to promote both well-being and risk reduction for LGBTQ+ youth.

This chapter serves as a call to action for scholars engaged in research with LGBTQ+ youth to consider rural communities from a strengths perspective. Focusing on strengths does not negate the recognition of risks within rural communities; rather, it allows for a comprehensive examination of the factors within rural communities that may promote well-being and reduce risks and offers opportunities for strengths-based practice recommendations. The following sections include an overview of the strengths perspective, a summary and critique of the research surrounding rural communities and LGBTQ+ youth, and recommendations for future research situated within a strengths perspective.

STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE

Within clinical social work practice, the strengths perspective emerged out of a need to move away from the pathology-focused nature of social work. A strengths perspective provides tools for social workers to engage with individuals with a focus on resilience, personal and community resources, and strengths, rather than focus solely on their risks or problems (Saleeby, 1996). Although initially developed as a practice approach, the strengths perspective has been utilized within community-based practice, education, and research (Saleeby, 1996). Utilizing the strengths perspective in a community context requires identifying the ways in which a community is supporting its members and opportunities to promote resilience and reduce risk. Saleeby (1996) identified supportive communities broadly as nurturing the strengths of community members, providing opportunities for residents to impact their community, and creating supportive networks. Research within a strengths perspective does not fail to acknowledge challenges or risks; rather it frames them within individual strengths and the ways in which communities can cultivate resilience.

The strengths perspective aligns closely with research on LGBTQ+ youth that aims to reduce risks such as stigma, victimization, and the pathologization of LGBTQ+ youth (Hulko & Hovanes, 2017). A decade ago, scholars called for research on LGBTQ+ youth to move away from a focus on risk and focus “on understanding the ways in which (LGBTQ+) youth negotiate their development within various social contexts” (Horn, Kosciw, & Russell, 2009, p. 863). Although research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth has included a greater focus on resilience, positive development, and strengths, research on their social context, particularly rural communities, remains risk-focused.

LGBTQ+ YOUTH AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Community size is often conceptualized as urban versus rural, creating a dichotomous divide between towns with populations less than 50,000, for example, and any larger town. This distinction may not account for the varying experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in small college towns or mid-size cities separate from major metropolitan areas yet classified as urban due to population sizes larger than traditionally rural communities. Therefore, some research has explored LGBTQ+ youth’s community experiences across a continuum of community size (see Pacey, 2016). Regardless of measurement, rural communities are often situated as risky settings for LGBTQ+ youth (Gray, 2017).

RURAL COMMUNITIES AND RISK

The dominant narrative surrounding rural communities is that they are inherently hostile toward LGBTQ+ youth (Gray, 2007; Kazyak, 2011; Oswald & Culton, 2003; Wienke & Hill, 2013). Some research supports this narrative. Historically, scholars identified how LGBTQ+ people in rural communities experienced high rates of

isolation (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Cody & Welch, 1997; D'Augelli & Hart, 1987) and challenges accessing supportive resources (Cody & Welch, 1997). Although the climate toward LGBTQ+ people has shifted during the past two decades, primarily for gay and lesbian, White, middle-upper class individuals, research on LGBTQ+ people living in rural communities suggest continued challenges and risks. For example, rural LGBTQ+ adults report greater anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment, discrimination, and violence than urban LGBTQ+ adults (Swank, Fahs, & Frost, 2013). Additionally, in one study, rural teachers reported negative attitudes toward sexual minority students (O'Connell, Atlas, Saunders, & Philbrick, 2010).

Currently, research on rural communities and LGBTQ+ youth includes studies of community climate, victimization, and health outcomes. Community climate is defined as the level of support or hostility toward LGBTQ+ people in a community (Oswald, Cuthbertson, Lazarevic, & Goldberg, 2010) and very few studies on community climate have explicitly included LGBTQ+ samples in rural communities. One study found that LGBTQ+ rural youth experience more hostile social climates at school (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009) than urban LGBTQ+ youth. A mixed-method study utilizing surveys and interviews with transgender youth revealed conflicting findings (Paceley, Okrey-Anderson, & Heumann, 2017b). On the survey, rural participants were significantly more likely to rate their community as hostile than youth in small or large urban communities; however, qualitative interviews revealed very little difference in the way youth in rural and small urban communities described the climate. All youth in rural and small urban communities identified their community as including the presence of both support and hostility. One qualitative study explored LGBTQ+ youth's perceptions of their rural or small urban communities in Canada (Hulko & Hovanes, 2018). Some youth identified conservative ideologies as predominant in small towns and indicated they planned to move away when they could. These findings coupled with the findings using adult samples suggests that rural communities may be perceived as more hostile by LGBTQ+ youth, yet further research is needed to explore these complexities.

Victimization and mental or physical health have also been studied within the rural context. Rural LGBTQ+ youth report more acts of physical and non-physical victimization based on their sexuality or gender than urban LGBTQ+ youth (Paceley et al., 2017a). Given what we know about the association between stigma, victimization, and health disparities (Meyer, 2015), it is not surprising, therefore, that studies comparing the experiences of rural and urban LGBTQ+ youth have also found negative well-being outcomes for rural LGBTQ+ youth. For example, rurality is associated with greater suicidal behavior among sexual minority boys and greater substance use by sexual minority girls when compared with urban sexual minority youth (Poon & Saewyc, 2009). Alternatively, Paceley et al. (2019) included community climate in a model comparing health outcomes among rural and urban LGBTQ+ youth and found that community size was not related to physical and mental health outcomes. Perceived climate, however, was associated with mental health such that LGBTQ+ youth in communities they perceived as hostile or tolerant reported greater anxiety

and depression than youth who lived in communities they perceived as supportive. Although community size should not be discounted as important to the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth, particularly given that rural youth are more likely to report hostile climates than urban youth (O'Connell et al., 2010; Pacey et al., 2018; Swank et al., 2013), these findings do suggest that community climate may be important to consider alongside community size. This has important implications for social work practice and research; community climate is a factor in communities that may be able to shift to be more positive, whereas we cannot change the size of a community.

Some scholars have examined comparisons between youth with and without marginalized sexualities and genders living in rural communities, rather than comparing them to urban cities. For example, Cohn & Leake (2012) found that rural sexual minority youth reported greater distress than urban sexual minority youth. Ballard, Jameson, & Martz (2017) examined differences in risk factors between rural sexual minority youth and rural heterosexual youth. They found that rural sexual minority youth had significantly higher suicide risks, drug use, sexual risk-taking behavior, and experiences of victimization and violence at school.

In sum, these findings suggest that LGBTQ+ youth in rural communities do face added risks including hostile community climates, increased victimization and discrimination, and poor mental and physical health outcomes. However, there are limitations to this collection of research. In general, there are a small number of studies exploring the rural community context for LGBTQ+ youth and even fewer exploring the specific community-level factors that affect youth's health and well-being. If indeed, rural LGBTQ+ youth are more at risk of victimization, depression, and suicide because of more hostile climates, it will be useful to identify the ways in which the community enables or mitigates these experiences. Additionally, much of the research has compared urban and rural communities, situating urban as the norm to which rural is compared. This creates a narrative that assumes that LGBTQ+ youth aim to escape rural life as soon as they are able and move to urban spaces assumed to be accepting (Weston, 1995).

RURAL COMMUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

Contrary to this common narrative is research and scholarship that disrupt the notion of the "hostile rural community". This research focuses less on identifying risk and more on exploring the lived experiences of rural LGBTQ+ people. This collection of research provides a more nuanced context of rural communities, focusing on both challenges and opportunities for resilience. Strengths-based studies among rural LGBTQ+ adults highlight the positive aspects of living in rural communities and challenge the concept that rural residents are "worse off". For example, Kazyak (2011) interviewed gay and lesbian adults about growing up or living in rural communities. Participants challenged the idea that rurality was associated with hostility and that rural LGBTQ+ people aim to "flee immediately and move to a big city" (p.

8). They identified positive aspects of living in small towns, such as how their neighbors cared more about their individual character than their sexuality. Character was often assessed as having strong ties to the community or being perceived as a good person. Oswald and Culton (2003) surveyed LGBTQ adults in a rural Midwestern state and asked them to qualitatively identify the “best” and “worst” thing about living in their geographic region. Participants described their family and friends, the rural quality of life, the local LGBTQ community, and personal self-acceptance as the best things. They described being accepted by those close to them, having the ability to enjoy a higher standard of living without city stress, being intolerant (versus hostile) communities, and accessing LGBTQ+ groups and organizations. Consistent with the strengths perspective, Oswald and Culton examined strengths alongside challenges. Participants described challenges within the local LGBTQ+ community, homophobia, and lack of civil rights as the worst things. They discussed the LGBTQ+ community as small and invisible and LGBTQ+ resources as inaccessible or nonexistent, residents as anti-LGBTQ+, and lacking statewide protections based on sexuality and gender.

Other research on rural LGBTQ+ adults also challenges the idea that LGBTQ+ people are isolated from others. Several studies have found LGBTQ+ adults report close connections to other LGBTQ+ people in their rural communities (Cody & Welch, 1997; Leedy & Connolly, 2008; Oswald & Culton, 2003). Some research even complicates the idea that rural communities are associated with poorer health for LGBTQ+ people. Wienke and Hill (2013) measured differences between rural gays and lesbians and urban gays and lesbians on multiple measures including happiness and health. They found that rural participants reported greater happiness and health than urban participants.

Research on LGBTQ+ youth in rural communities that are situated within a strengths perspective differs from risk-focused research by engaging with the complexity of rural communities and youth’s experiences within them, rather than identifying the ways in which they differ from urban communities. One seminal study explored the lived experiences and identity development processes of LGBTQ+ youth living in rural Appalachia (Gray, 2007). Through ethnographic methods and prolonged engagement with youth, Gray disrupted the narrative that rural communities were isolating spaces where LGBTQ+ youth were unsafe to be open about their identity. She argued that rural communities were different from urban communities and deserved attention to their entire context. Her findings revealed how rural LGBTQ+ youth are resilient and develop their own pathways to well-being and positive identity development that are different from, but not inferior to, urban LGBTQ+ youth. For example, some youth described using the internet to connect with similarly situated peers while others met up at a local Walmart to participate in drag shows.

Dahl, Scott, and Peace (2015) interviewed seven youth growing up in rural Appalachia to understand their coming out and identity development experiences within the rural context. Their questions were open-ended and analyses revealed themes

that endorsed challenges to living in a rural community as well as strengths and resilience. For example, challenges to living in a rural community as an LGBTQ+ youth included the religious nature of the community and the anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment associated with it, as well as navigating relationships with friends and family due to a general lack of acceptance toward people with diverse sexualities and genders. Consistent with other research, participants also indicated a lack of LGBTQ+ resources and support. Alternatively, youth in this study indicated they had positive experiences coming out to some friends and family, both in person and over the internet. The internet provided options for support, networking, and resources that may have been absent in the physical community. Additionally, youth described the sense of resilience and accomplishment they felt at overcoming challenges and accepting and affirming their own identities.

Other research examines factors within the community that can support rural LGBTQ+ youth. For example, Pacey (2016) interviewed LGBTQ+ youth in rural and small urban communities to identify their needs for support and resources. This provided an opportunity to engage with potential challenges and community strengths simultaneously. Participants indicated they needed help in reducing the isolation they felt, broad social acceptance and visibility, emotional support and safety, and assistance with LGBTQ+ identity development. Analyses from the same study revealed the factors that LGBTQ+ youth in rural and small urban communities identified as making their communities supportive (Pacey, Thomas, Toole & Pavicic, 2018). Youth described four areas of support: supportive people, LGBTQ+ visibility, LGBTQ+ resources and education, and LGBTQ+-inclusive policies. Identifying the needs of youth and their perceptions of what factors promote support in the community provides important ways to recommend community interventions that build on the existing strengths and resources in a community. Some studies have also included a focus on protective factors within a broader study also assessing risk and challenges in rural communities. Cohn and Hastings (2010) found that for rural lesbian youth, having supportive families, large amounts of social support, supportive teachers, and access to Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) at school enhanced their resilience as rural sexual minorities. Additionally, Cohn and Leake (2012) found that among rural sexual minority youth only, high levels of belonging at family and school were associated with lower rates of distress.

Finally, two articles discussed strengths-based community interventions to promote resilience and well-being for LGBTQ+ youth in rural communities. Snively (2008) encouraged the use of youth-adult collaborations to promote the growth of community-based supportive programs for LGBTQ+ youth in rural communities taking the approach that attempting to address problems would be less successful than attempting to promote positive development and strengthen existing protective factors for LGBTQ+ youth. They described the historical development of such a program and the positive benefits on the local rural communities. Hall, Witkemper, Rodgers, Waters, and Smith (2017) used photovoice to engage in a community intervention in a rural community in Southeastern state. LGBTQ+ youth took pictures

to illustrate the issues they faced as LGBTQ+ youth. Adults attended the exhibit of photographs and then completed a survey about their experiences. The majority of the rural adult residents described feeling positive about the project and 81% said the photographs had inspired them to engage in more advocacy and LGBTQ+-affirming behavior.

This literature on LGBTQ+ youth in rural communities highlights the benefits of situating such research within a strengths perspective. The findings indicate that rural communities are much more complex spaces than the existing risk-based literature would suggest. Table 1 displays the key findings from both risk-focused and strengths-focused research.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

This summary of the literature suggests that rural communities are more than simply hostile spaces occupied by LGBTQ+ youth. Research also clearly illustrates the potential strengths and opportunities for resilience within rural communities. A predominant focus on risk fails to account for the ways in which rural communities may be supporting LGBTQ+ youth. Additionally, comparing rural communities to urban communities with the goal of understanding differences in risk simultaneously sets up a false dichotomy that ignores the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in small urban communities and situates urban as the “norm” to which rural communities should aspire to be. As Gray (2007) indicated, rural communities must be studied as separate and different from, but not inferior to, urban communities. The urban/rural dichotomy and identification of risk differences does not prove useful when attempting to consider how to make rural communities safer and more accepting for LGBTQ+ youth.

The strengths perspective provides a promising framework through which to conduct research on rural communities and LGBTQ+ youth. Attending to strengths alongside challenges provides an opportunity to understand rural communities holistically. For example, understanding the mechanisms within rural communities that result in challenges for LGBTQ+ youth may also help us identify mechanisms within the community that can alleviate or mitigate these risks. Simply understanding the risks compared to urban youth provides little information about potential interventions given that urban-based interventions may not translate to a smaller community (e.g. a rural community may not have resources to support the development of an LGBTQ+ community-based organization).

Given the ways in which LGBTQ+ youth’s sexualities and genders are marginalized in society, it is also important to attend to the role of oppression and power when situating research within the strengths perspective. Guo and Tsui (2010) argue that while the strengths perspective is important in identifying sources of resilience and strengths within individuals, it may lack attention to the role of oppression and power within society and their effect on individuals experiencing marginalization.

They argue that social workers must go beyond promoting attention to individual strengths and support individuals experiencing oppression and marginalization in “resisting and even subverting power relations” (p. 238). They reiterate Saleebey’s (2006) sentiment that social workers should focus on strengths rather than problems, yet note that “strength...is not only found in resilience; it is also evident in resistance and strategies for survival despite adversity” (Guo & Tsui, 2010, p. 239). This suggests that in utilizing the strengths perspective in research on LGBTQ+ youth’s rural communities, researchers must also consider the role of power and oppression and the ways in which youth are navigating these contexts within their communities. Additionally, studies on how LGBTQ+ youth are resisting oppressive systems and working within their communities can highlight both LGBTQ+ individual resilience and potential prevention or intervention strategies for use in rural communities.

Considering the ways in which to incorporate the strengths perspective with research on rural communities and LGBTQ+ youth is essential, but not simple. Researchers may identify ways to ask questions that assess resilience, strengths, and challenges within the same study to create a more holistic picture of LGBTQ+ youth’s experiences in rural communities. Additionally, mixed-method studies may provide opportunities to ask similar questions in different ways to more fully explore the community context (e.g. Pacey et al). It will be important for research examining rural communities to also include measures of community climate, given the important ways in which they intersect. Although rural communities cannot be turned into larger communities (and we wouldn’t want to!), the local climate has the potential to shift to provide increased support for LGBTQ+ youth.

The strengths perspective has a rich history in social work and has important potential when applied to community-based research on LGBTQ+ youth. Recognizing, identifying, and understanding the strengths of rural communities provides opportunities to meet communities where they are in supporting and affirming LGBTQ+ youth, another important social work value. We need more in-depth and thorough research to understand both the challenges and strengths of rural communities in order to truly promote the well-being and resilience of LGBTQ+ youth.

REFERENCES

- Almeida, J., Johnson, R. M., Corliss, H. L., Molnar, B. E., & Azrael, D. (2009). Emotional distress among LGBT youth: The influence of perceived discrimination based on sexual orientation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*(7), 1001–1014.
- Ballard, M. E., Jameson, J. P., & Martz, D. M. (2017). Sexuality identity and risk behaviors among adolescents in rural Appalachia. *Journal of Rural Mental Health, 41*(1), 17-29.
- Bell, D. & Valentine, G. (1995). Queer country: Rural lesbian and gay lives. *Journal of Rural Studies, 11*(2), 113-122.
- Burton, C. M., Marshal, M. P., Chisolm, D. J., Sucato, G. S., & Friedman, M. S. (2013). Sexual minority-related victimization as a mediator of mental health disparities in sexual minority youth: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 42*, 394-402.
- Cohn, T. J. & Hastings, S. L. (2010). Resilience among rural lesbian youth. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 14*, 71-79.
- Cohn, T. J. & Leake, V. S. (2012). Affective distress among adolescents who endorse same-sex sexual attraction: Urban versus rural differences and the role of protective factors. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 16*, 291-305.
- D'Augelli, A. R. & Hart, M. M. (1987). Gay women, men, and families in rural settings: Toward the development of helping communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 15*, 79-93.
- Dahl, A., Scott, R. K., & Peace, Z. (2015). Trials and triumph: Lesbian and gay young adults raised in a rural context. *Social Sciences, 4*, 925-933.
- Day, J. K., Fish, J. N., Perez-Brumer, A., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., & Russell, S. T. (2017). Transgender substance use disparities: Results from a population-based sample. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 61*, 729-735.
- Fish, J. N., Schulenberg, J. E., & Russell, S. T. (2019). Sexual minority youth report high-intensity binge drinking: The critical role of school victimization. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 64*, 186-193.
- Gray, M. L. (2007). From websites to Wal-Mart: Youth, identity work, and the queering of boundary publics in small town, USA. *American Studies, 48*(2), 49-59. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40644068>
- Hall, W. J., Witkemper, K. D., Rodgers, G. K., Waters, E. M., and Smith, M. R. (2017). Activating adult allies from a rural community on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer student issues in school using photovoice. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services, 30*, 49-63.
- Horn, S. S., Kosciw, J. G., & Russell, S. T. (2009). Special issue introduction: Research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: Studying lives in context. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*, 863-866.
- Hulko, W. & Hovanes, J. (2017). Intersectionality in the lives of LGBTQ youth: Identifying as LGBTQ and finding community in small cities and rural towns. *Journal of Homosexuality, 65*(4), 427-455.
- Kazyak, E. (2011). Disrupting cultural selves: Constructing gay and lesbian identities in rural locales. *Qualitative Sociology, 34*, 561-581.

- Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., & Diaz, E. M. (2009). Who, what, where, when, and why: Demographic and ecological factors contributing to hostile school climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 38*, 976-988.
- Leedy, G. & Connolly, C. (2008). Out in the Cowboy State. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 19*, 17-34.
- Mereish, E. H., & Poteat, V. P. (2015). A relational model of sexual minority mental and physical health: The negative effects of shame on relationships, loneliness, and health. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 62*, 425-437.
- Meyer, I. H. (2015). Resilience in the study of minority stress and health of sexual and gender minorities. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 2*, 209-213.
- O'Connell, L. M, Atlas, J. G., Saunders, A. L., & Philbrick, R. (2010). Perceptions of rural school staff regarding sexual minority students. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 7*, 293-309.
- Oswald, R. F. & Culton, L. (2003). Under the rainbow: Rural gay life and its relevance for family providers. *Family Relations, 52*, 72-79.
- Paceley, M. S. (2016). Gender and sexual minority youth in nonmetropolitan communities: Individual- and community-level needs for support. *Families in Society, 97*, 77-85.
- Paceley, M. S., Fish, J. N., Thomas, M. M. C., & Goffnett, J. (2019). The impact of community size, community climate, and victimization, on the physical and mental health of SGM youth. *Youth & Society*, Advanced online publication.
- Paceley, M. S., Goffnett, J., & Gandy-Guedes, M. (2017a). Impact of victimization, community climate, and community size on the mental health of sexual and gender minority youth. *Journal of Community Psychology, 45*, 658-671.
- Paceley, M. S., Okrey-Anderson, S., & Heumann, M. (2017b). Transgender youth in small towns: Perceptions of community size, climate, and support. *Journal of Youth Studies, 20*, 822-840.
- Paceley, M. S., Thomas, M. M. C., Toole, J., & Pavicic, E. (2018). "If rainbows were everywhere": Nonmetropolitan SGM youth identify factors that make communities supportive. *Journal of Community Practice, 26*, 429-445.
- Pollitt, A. M., Mallory, A. B., & Fish, J. N. (2018). Homophobic bullying and sexual minority youth alcohol use: Does sex and race/ethnicity matter? *LGBT Health, 5*, 412-420.
- Poon, C. S., & Saewyc, E. M. (2009). Out yonder: Sexual-minority adolescents in rural communities in British Columbia. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*, 118-124.
- Saleebey, D. (1996). The strengths perspective in social work practice: Extensions and cautions. *Social Work, 41*(3), 296-305.
- Snively, C. A. (2008). Building community-based alliances between GLBTQQA youth and adults in rural settings. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 16*, 99-112.
- Swank, E., Fahs, B., & Frost, D. M. (2013). Region, social identities, and disclosure practices as predictors of heterosexist discrimination against sexual minorities in the United States. *Sociological Inquiry, 83*, 238-258.

- Tucker, J. S., Ewing, B. A., Espelage, D. L., Green Jr, H. D., De La Haye, K., & Pollard, M. S. (2016). Longitudinal associations of homophobic name-calling victimization with psychological distress and alcohol use during adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 59*, 110-115.
- Wienke, C. & Hill, G. J. (2013). Does place of residence matter: Rural-urban differences and the wellbeing of gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*, 1256-1279.
- Woodford, M. R., Pacey, M. S., Kulick, A., & Hong, J. S. (2015). The LGBTQ social climate matters: Policies, protests, and placards and psychological well-being among LGBTQ emerging adults. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 27*, 116-141.