

EXAMINING GAY WHITE AND GAY LATINO MEN'S  
REACTIONS TOWARD NONVERBAL DISCLOSURE

By

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## Abstract

Nonverbal disclosure is the act of disclosing one's sexual orientation to others by using nonverbal actions and behaviors, rather than overt declaration. Contrary to assumptions that overt "coming out" predicts well-being in gay men, this does not seem to be true of gay Latino men, for whom nonverbal disclosure appears to be an acceptable alternative "coming out" strategy (Villicana, Delucio, & Biernat, 2016). Yet research has not explored how gay individuals perceive nonverbal disclosure as a coming out strategy that others might practice. In three studies, I examine how gay White and gay Latino men react to information suggesting that other gay men practice nonverbal (as opposed to verbal) disclosure. Across three studies, gay White men (Studies 1-3) and gay Latino men (Studies 2 & 3) were exposed to results of a (bogus) national survey, which indicated that the majority of gay men within the U.S. practice nonverbal or verbal disclosure. Then, participants were given the opportunity to report their reactions toward the information they read. Gay White male participants reported more negative reactions when reading that other gay men practice nonverbal than verbal disclosure (Studies 1-3), whereas gay Latino men reacted similarly to the information of both disclosure strategies (Studies 2 & 3). Moreover, gay White men reacted negatively to nonverbal disclosure in part because nonverbal disclosure is perceived as less authentic. Perceiving other gay men who practiced nonverbal disclosure as less authentic was enough to make gay White men uncertain about their own gay identity (Studies 3). These findings add to the emerging literature on intersections of ethnic and gay identity and suggest that gay Latino men not only practice nonverbal disclosure, but also perceive it to be as acceptable a strategy as verbal disclosure, whereas gay White men do not.

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## Examining Gay White and Gay Latino Men's Reactions toward Nonverbal Disclosure

Disclosing one's sexual orientation—"coming out"—is an important and critical component of sexual identity<sup>1</sup> development and maintenance. As such, research within psychology has examined the various intrapersonal and interpersonal consequences of coming out as a gay/lesbian individual to others (e.g., Beals, Peplau, & Gable, 2009; Herek, 1996; Savin-Williams, 1989; Sedlovskaya, Purdie-Vaughns, Eibach, LaFrance, Romero-Canyas, & Camp, 2013). However, most of the literature examining coming out has operationalized the construct as verbal disclosure—openly and *verbally* expressing one's sexual identity to others (see Holtzen, Kenny, & Mahalik, 1995; Morh & Fassinger, 2000)—and has assumed that this strategy functions the same for all gay/lesbian individuals.

Indeed, verbal disclosure of one's sexual identity has been shown to be associated with a variety of positive outcomes. Some benefits include increased self-esteem and self-worth (Savin-Williams, 1989), increased perceived social support (Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1992), and better psychological and physical well-being (e.g., Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, & Visscher, 1996; Herek, 1996). However, other research (though limited) has suggested that nonverbal disclosure—expressing one's sexual identity to others by using *nonverbal* actions and behaviors—may also be an acceptable alternative disclosure strategy to verbal disclosure for some gay men (Decena, 2008, 2011; Villicana, Delucio, & Biernat, 2016). Whereas emerging research has examined how nonverbal disclosure affects (or not) gay men's well-being and

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term "sexual identity" to be consistent with models of identity development among gay men and lesbians. When I use the term sexual identity in the text, I am referring to both gay and lesbian identities, given that most models of identity development suggest the processes are similar between gay men and lesbians. Some research suggests that lesbian identity development is different from gay identity development (e.g., McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), but other research maintains sexual identity development is similar for both gay men and lesbians (e.g., Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, & Braun, 2006).

mental health, research has yet to explore how gay men perceive and react to nonverbal disclosure as an alternative disclosure strategy that other gay men might practice.

I use the terms nonverbal and verbal disclosure to specifically refer to how gay individuals express their sexual identity to others. That is, gay individuals might communicate to others that they are a sexual minority by using a verbal strategy (i.e., saying to others a variant of “I am gay”) or by using a nonverbal strategy (e.g., holding hands with a same-sex “friend” in front of others). Thus, the specific information that one is gay is expressed/conveyed verbally or nonverbally. What I am referring to as “nonverbal” could potentially include some verbal components (e.g., mention of “my partner”), but key to this nonverbal disclosure category is that it does not involve the explicit verbal statement that, “I am gay.” Other potential terms to describe these two disclosure strategies might be: direct/indirect communication (Searle, 1969), explicit/implicit communication (Yus, 1999), or low/high context communication (Hall, 1976). For ease of presentation and interpretation, I maintain the use of nonverbal and verbal disclosure (as it relates to coming out as a sexual minority). It is possible that, with more research on and understanding of nonverbal disclosure, the distinction between verbal and nonverbal disclosure may better be described in accordance with one of the styles of communication listed above.

The current research examines how gay White and gay Latino men<sup>2</sup> perceive and react to information suggesting that other gay men practice nonverbal disclosure (as opposed to verbal disclosure). I focus on gay White and gay Latino men in this work to be consistent with past research that has thus far only explored nonverbal disclosure among gay White and gay Latino men. However, I acknowledge that research on nonverbal disclosure must incorporate other

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<sup>2</sup> I refer to the Latino group as “gay Latino men” throughout this paper. Spanish has gendered nouns, where nouns ending with the suffix “-o” indicates masculinity and nouns ending with the suffix “-a” indicates femininity. In addition, the term “Latinos” can refer to a group of men or a group of men and women. Although the context in which “Latino(s)” is used in the text would suggest a reference to men, I use “gay Latino men” to be specific and to be conscious of potentially gendered/sexist language.

ethnic and gender groups in order to develop a broader perspective on nonverbal disclosure as a coming out strategy. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of sexual identity development, detail the distinction between verbal and nonverbal disclosure as well as the consequences associated with each strategy, and describe the disclosure norms within the gay (male) community. I then report three studies that examined gay White and gay Latino men's reactions toward nonverbal disclosure as well as potential reasons for group differences in reactions. I end with implications and future directions of research on nonverbal disclosure.

### **Sexual Identity Development and Disclosure**

Several models of sexual identity development exist in the literature, and each describes the process by which gay men and lesbians develop and maintain a healthy gay/lesbian identity (e.g., Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Cox & Gallois, 1996; Rosario, Hunter, Maguen, Gwadz, & Smith, 2001; Troiden, 1989; but see McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). Each model has unique insights into the sexual identity development process, yet all models describe two general dimensions of the process: identity formation and identity integration.

The identity formation dimension consists of a phase of “questioning and confrontation,” where individuals become aware of their same-sex desires. This awareness often comes with feelings of confusion and comparison, in which individuals become aware of their “deviant” desires for same-sex persons and compare these desires to those of their heterosexual counterparts. As time progresses, individuals question and engage with their emerging sexual identity. A general milestone that a gay/lesbian individual reaches at the latter stage of the identity formation phase is reduced internalized homonegativity.

The identity integration dimension consists of a phase of “internalization,” in which individuals explore different aspects of being gay/lesbian (e.g., participating in gay/lesbian

community groups, attending gay/lesbian bars or clubs, seeking out other gay- or lesbian-identified individuals for support) and begin to accept various aspects associated with their sexual orientation and emerging sexual identity.

In this phase of identity integration, individuals disclose their sexual identity to others; acknowledging their new identity and internalizing this identity into their self-concept (e.g., Reynolds & Hanjorgiris, 2000). Through this disclosure process (i.e., coming out), gays/lesbians no longer simply tolerate their difference internally, but outwardly express their comfort with their identity. Some suggest, then, that level of disclosure is indicative of the extent to which a gay/lesbian person has positively adjusted to their sexual identity (e.g., Dube & Savin-Williams, 1999). There are varying degrees of coming out (e.g., disclosing only to other self-identified gay/lesbian persons, disclosing to select heterosexuals, or disclosing to larger audiences) (Herek, 2003), yet research maintains that disclosing one's sexual identity is optimal for a fully realized gay/lesbian identity that is integrated into one's self-concept.

#### **Positive Outcomes associated with (Verbal) Disclosure**

Researchers have demonstrated that disclosing one's sexual identity results in positive outcomes. Disclosure in these cases is defined as, or assumed to be, a verbal strategy of coming out to others. Examples of positive outcomes as a result of verbal disclosure include an increase in self-esteem and self-worth (Savin-Williams, 1989), perceived social support (Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1992) and psychological well-being (Herek, 1996). Much research has also examined the consequences of concealing one's sexual identity. For example, Herek (1996) describes the notion that active concealment—not expressing your sexual identity to others, in any form (including nonverbal disclosure)—hinders the development and maintenance of interpersonal

relationships, reduces closeness with family and friends, and increases negative affect associated with actively deceiving others.

Research also suggests that concealment leads to lowered self-esteem as well as increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Beals et al., 2009; D'Augelli, 1991; Frable, Platt, & Hoey, 1998; Jordan & Deluty, 1998; Larson & Chastain, 1990; Pachankis, 2007; Sedlovskaya et al., 2013). For example, Beals and colleagues (2009) asked gay and lesbian participants to keep a diary for a 2-week period during which participants recorded whether they (verbally) disclosed or concealed their sexual identity at various times throughout the day. In addition, each night, participants completed questionnaires that assessed different aspects of their well-being. In general, the authors found that participants reported less well-being on days when they actively concealed their sexual identities.

As another example, Sedlovskaya et al. (2013) conducted a series of studies that investigated the discrepancy between public and private selves that may result from concealing stigmatized identities. These authors suggest that gay men (participants were only gay men) who are “out” in their private life but not in their public life are actively concealing their stigmatized identities, and that this discrepancy, termed “public-private schematization,” predicts a variety of negative outcomes. For example, Sedlovskaya and colleagues found that gay men who were not out in their public space exhibited greater accessibility of the distinction between their public and private self-schemas, which, in turn, predicted heightened perceived social stress and depressive symptoms. Collectively, the research described above demonstrates that concealing one’s sexual identity is associated with negative psychological well-being, and (indirectly) supports the notion that gay/lesbian individuals should express their sexual identity to others by using a verbal disclosure coming out strategy.

Whereas coming out may solidify a person's sexual identity into their sense of self, it may come with a price. Research on the coming out process acknowledges the fact that to disclose one's sexual identity in a context in which the social norm is heterosexuality is to broadcast an identity that is stigmatized (Herek & Capitano, 1996). This heightens the possibility of experiencing anti-gay stigmatization. Behavioral manifestations of stigmatization may include ostracism and rejection (Herek, 2007; Vincke & Bolton, 1994) as well as harassment, abuse, and violent victimization (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999). Despite these negative consequences, much research maintains that verbal disclosure will lead to beneficial intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes.

### **Verbal Disclosure as a White Construction**

The psychological research on sexual identity neglects the fact that sexual identity may not be perceived or experienced in the same way across ethnic groups. Indeed, scholars suggest that sexual identity development models, and empirical work with sexual minorities broadly, have been developed within a White, male, middle-class framework and that sexual identity among ethnic minorities is based on different cultural principles relative to those experienced by Whites (Almaguer, 1993; Barnard, 1999; Diamond, 2005; Greene, 1994; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). These scholars argue that gay/lesbian people of color do not negotiate their sexual identity (and, thus, the coming out process) in the same way as gay/lesbian Whites (e.g., Rust, 2003). This does not imply that ethnic minorities deny homosexuality, but rather that sexual identity formation for ethnic minorities is affected by or filtered through cultural and structural factors that are distinct from the experiences of gay/lesbian Whites in the United States (Almaguer, 1993; Rust, 2003; Somerville, 2000).

Two primary factors influence the coming out process among Latinas/os in ways that differ from Whites. The first factor is that sexual minority Latinas/os have multiple stigmatized identities. They already experience stigmatization associated with their ethnic minority status (e.g., Akerlund & Cheung, 2000) and are marked as ethnic “Others” in the U.S. Coming out through verbal disclosure would not only declare to the world another identity for which to experience stigmatization, but may feel to a Latina/o person like they are intentionally distancing themselves from their ethnic community, which might serve as an invaluable source of support (Dube & Savin-Williams, 1999; Rust, 2003).

The second factor that influences the coming out process among Latinas/os is the cultural values of familism and respect. Familism is defined as the social structure in which the needs and values of the family are perceived as more important than those of any individual family member. Within this social structure, family networks are primary sources of emotional and economic support (Guarnero, 2007; Vega, 1990). Respect—a value of the (Latina/o) family—is defined as respecting the family in a way that minimizes conflict and maintains harmony (Marin & Marin, 1991). These cultural factors may prevent lesbian/gay Latinas/os from verbally disclosing their sexual identity in an effort to maintain family harmony, which is a sign of respect to the family (e.g., Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2004; Wah-Shan, 2001).

Given these cultural factors, verbal disclosure among lesbian/gay Latinas/os may not produce the positive outcomes discussed in the research literature. Instead, verbal disclosure among lesbian/gay Latinas/os may be perceived as disrespectful, as an act of rejecting one’s ethnic identity, and/or as putting one’s own needs over others’ needs, all of which would negatively influence the individual. Given the potential for cultural factors to affect the coming out process, lesbian/gay Latinas/os may need to develop alternative strategies for coming out.

### Nonverbal Disclosure as an Alternative Coming Out Strategy

Lesbian/gay Latinas/os may not practice verbal disclosure as a coming out strategy, but this does not suggest that they remain closeted. Research has demonstrated that Latinas/os have lower levels of verbal disclosure of sexual identity than Whites; however, both groups have similar levels of *comfort* with others knowing their sexual identity (e.g., Moradi et al., 2010; Rosario et al., 2004). Therefore, Latinas/os may not engage in as much verbal disclosure as others, yet they are equally comfortable with others knowing their sexual identity.

An alternative disclosure strategy to verbal disclosure has been highlighted in qualitative research among gay Puerto Rican and gay Dominican men (Decena, 2011; Guzman, 2006). Guzman (2006) interviewed Puerto Rican gay men in New York City about their gay identities and found that these men did not necessarily verbally disclose their gay identity to family and friends, but instead would often come out to family and friends nonverbally and behaviorally (e.g., by bringing a same-sex partner to family functions). Decena (2008, 2011) reported similar findings from interviews with gay Dominican men in New York City. He termed this phenomenon “tacit subjectivity” (what I will refer to as nonverbal disclosure), which refers to the idea that one’s sexual orientation is known to others but not verbally disclosed or discussed.<sup>3</sup>

Nonverbal disclosure can take multiple forms, and individuals may use different nonverbal strategies depending on context and comfort level. Examples of nonverbal disclosure may include bringing gay friends over to the family home, bringing same-sex partners to family events, engaging in public displays of affection with same-sex individuals (e.g., hand-holding), and/or supporting gay-related causes (e.g., same-sex marriage); all of which are done without explicit, verbal disclosure or discussion of one’s sexual identity. Decena (2011) emphasizes that

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<sup>3</sup> Tacit subjectivity takes its name from the Spanish linguistic concept of *el sujeto tacito* (the tacit subject) where the subject of a sentence is known through the conjugation of the accompanying verb but is not explicitly stated.

while those who practice nonverbal disclosure may not subscribe to the dominant disclosure narrative, they are not concealing their identities and still maintain positive self-concepts. Thus, nonverbal disclosure can be considered its own unique coming out strategy that diverges from the mainstream narrative of verbal disclosure. Decena (2011) further notes that should others (e.g., family members) bring explicit attention to someone's sexual identity, those individuals, and not the gay person, would be characterized as disrespectful (i.e., lack of respect).

Villicana et al. (2016) provided quantitative support for the idea that verbal disclosure does not contribute to positive well-being among gay Latino men. In two studies, the authors found that increased verbal disclosure predicted positive well-being among gay White men, and this relationship was mediated by perceived authenticity: Increased verbal disclosure predicted increased perceptions of authenticity, which predicted positive well-being. Yet, verbal disclosure was not related to perceived authenticity or well-being among gay Latino men. In addition, Villicana, Delucio, and Biernat (2017) replicated the abovementioned patterns using mental health (depression and anxiety scores) as outcomes. Thus, verbal and nonverbal disclosure strategies may be equally acceptable strategies for gay Latino (but not gay White) men.

In sum, emerging research suggests that not all groups of gay individuals endorse or practice the mainstream operationalization of coming out (i.e., verbal disclosure), and questions the idea that verbal outness is a requirement for positive well-being.

### **(Non)Verbal Disclosure as the Coming Out Norm—for Whom?**

Every social group has norms that influence the attitudes and behaviors of their group members. A norm has two components, the injunctive component and the descriptive component; the former being what people *should do* and the latter being what people *actually do* (Cialdini, 1990, 1991). Take, for example, the norm for disclosing one's sexual identity to others. The

above review suggests that, in general, the norm for coming out is verbal disclosure. The injunctive component of this norm is that individuals *should* strive to or practice verbal disclosure as a coming out strategy. The descriptive component of this norm is that individuals *are indeed* practicing verbal disclosure.

Unfortunately, because of the long-held assumption that to come out is to verbally disclose one's sexual identity to others, there is no direct evidence (to my knowledge) supporting the injunctive or descriptive verbal disclosure norm. Of course, this lack of direct evidence does not suggest that people do not perceive there to be an injunctive and descriptive verbal disclosure norm. Research in psychology that examines sexual identity development and coming out typically defines "outness" as verbal disclosure (e.g., Morh & Fassinger, 2000). In addition, equating coming out as verbal disclosure is evident in cultural directives such as "national coming out day," a day meant to celebrate non-heterosexual identity and celebrate living a true and open life (Human Rights Campaign, National Coming Out Day section). Thus, I would argue that there is an injunctive verbal disclosure norm.

There are data suggesting that a majority of gay and lesbian adults within the U.S. are "out," but these data do not speak directly to the descriptive verbal disclosure norm. For example, a survey conducted by the PEW Research Center in 2013 asked self-identified gay men and lesbians to indicate how many of the important people in their lives "*are aware* that [they] are gay/lesbian..." (emphasis added). In this nationally representative sample, 73.6% of gay men and 78% of lesbians indicated that all/most of the important people in their lives were aware of their sexual identity, with 26.4% of gay men and 21.3% of lesbians reporting that some, only a few, or none of the people in their life were aware of their sexual identity (.7% of lesbians in the survey refused to answer). "Awareness" can include both verbal and nonverbal disclosure

strategies. Thus, one might conclude that others *knowing* one's orientation is a goal for gay men and lesbians, but these data do not speak to *how* disclosure is practiced.

One factor to consider when evaluating national surveys (e.g., the PEW survey mentioned above) is the ethnic make-up of the broader gay community. In general, gay/lesbian Whites are the majority within the broader gay community, where gay White men are typically considered the majority group over lesbian White women. Indeed, in several national surveys self-identified gay/lesbian Whites were the majority of respondents in the surveys (69% in the 2013 National Health Interview Survey [NHIS], and 60% in the 2014 Gallup Daily Tracking Survey [GDTS]). Gay/lesbian Latinas/os were represented to a lesser degree (13% in the 2013 NHIS and 20% in the 2014 GDTS). When it is possible to see responses split by respondents' ethnicity *and* sex in a national survey, gay White men were the majority of respondents (62.96% were gay White men and 22.22% were lesbian White women in the 2012 General Social Survey [GSS], and 43.70% were gay White men and 31.70% were lesbian White women in the 2013 PEW survey). Again, there were fewer Latina/o respondents, more of them gay Latino men (29.62% in the 2012 GSS and 7.55% in the 2013 PEW survey) than lesbian Latina women (0% in the 2012 GSS and 4.30% in the 2013 PEW survey).

The purpose of detailing who is represented in national surveys is to show that, if one were to assume that there is a descriptive verbal disclosure norm among gays/lesbians, the descriptive verbal disclosure norm mostly describes gay and lesbian Whites—and mainly gay White men. It is certainly plausible that a descriptive verbal disclosure norm exists within the overall gay community, regardless of one's ethnicity. In fact, Villicana et al. (2016) did not find mean differences in overall verbal disclosure as a function of ethnicity. However, there are no

direct tests (to my knowledge) of whether or not subgroups within the gay community have different descriptive norms regarding coming out.

Whereas there may not be direct evidence to suggest a (non)verbal descriptive disclosure norm exists among subgroups of gays and lesbians, the literature does suggest that gay and lesbian people of color within the U.S. might practice alternative disclosure strategies to verbal disclosure, and that unlike the case for gay White men, degree of verbal disclosure does not predict well-being and mental health outcomes in gay Latino men (Villicana et al., 2016, 2017). However, research has yet to examine the *reactions* people have to learning that others might practice nonverbal disclosure. While research on who may or may not practice nonverbal disclosure is limited, it is important to begin examining how people perceive nonverbal disclosure given there are sexual minorities in the U.S. that are practicing nonverbal disclosure as a coming out strategy.

### **Overview of the Research**

The research reported here explores how gay White and gay Latino men react to and perceive nonverbal disclosure. I focus on these two groups of men because past research has demonstrated that the verbal disclosure practices and implications documented for gay White men may not apply as readily to gay Latino men.

In the current research, I examine affective reactions to normative information—the degree to which people report negative versus positive responses to information about nonverbal (compared to verbal) disclosure. Beyond affect, I was also interested in people's thoughts and beliefs about nonverbal disclosure. For example, perceivers may think nonverbal disclosure is less healthy than verbal disclosure, or that practicing nonverbal disclosure damages the image of the gay community. More details about specific measures and items are described below, but I

considered both affective reactions to and broader perceptions of nonverbal disclosure to gain a full picture of how gay men view verbal and nonverbal outness strategies.

In general, I predicted the gay White men (but not gay Latino men) would react more negatively to information about nonverbal disclosure than information about verbal disclosure. This prediction follows from research on norms, which suggests that people react more negatively to counter-normative than normative information (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). That is, group members are predominantly concerned with whether ingroup members' adhere to or violate the norms of the group. Because I argue that there is an injunctive verbal disclosure norm, gay White men should perceive nonverbal disclosure as counter-normative and evaluate the disclosure norm more negatively than the normative verbal disclosure norm.

This prediction is also consistent with the “black sheep” effect, the tendency to evaluate ingroup members—fellow gay men, in this case—who are considered “unfavorable” particularly negatively (especially on a dimension unique to the group, such as not practicing the preferred verbal disclosure strategy), even compared to comparable outgroup members (Marques & Paez, 1994). Although I am not examining reactions toward the individual *gay men* who disclose nonverbally, the same pattern may emerge when considering norm violations by the gay male ingroup as a whole. Gay White male participants will perceive nonverbal disclosure as an unfavorable behavior that does not align with the norms of the gay male social group, and will respond negatively to it.

The black sheep effect can be understood using the subjective group dynamics model, which posits that groups are concerned with positive ingroup distinctiveness (intergroup context) as well as support for ingroup norms (intragroup context) (Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Henson, 2000; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998). These two contexts lead ingroup

members to generally evaluate their own group more positively than outgroups (to promote positive ingroup distinctiveness), but also to identify and punish ingroup members who deviate from the norms of the group (to uphold the group's norms and promote group cohesion). This model suggests that, gay White male participants—more so than gay Latino male participants—will view nonverbal disclosure as norm-violating and will respond negatively to it.

The subjective group dynamics model allows for another plausible prediction. Not only will gay White men react negatively to nonverbal disclosure, but also they will react most negatively if fellow gay White men are described as practicing the counter-normative nonverbal disclosure norm. What is crucial within the subjective group dynamics model is the comparison one is making when providing judgments of others. When the context is intergroup, the ingroup (e.g., gay men) is preferred over the outgroup (e.g., straight men). However, when the context is *intragroup*, ingroup members who are perceived as upholding ingroup norms (e.g., gay men who practice verbal disclosure) are preferred over ingroup members who are practicing counter-normative or deviant behavior (e.g., gay men who practice nonverbal disclosure). But for the current work, *who* is included in the ingroup is unclear. For example, gay White men may perceive all gays regardless of ethnicity to be the ingroup. However, it may be the case that only other gay White men will be considered the ingroup. Thus, the specific target group may matter, such that the difference in reactions to verbal versus nonverbal disclosure information will only emerge (or will emerge more strongly) when the target group described is fellow gay White men as opposed to gay Latino men.

In Study 1, I examine reactions to nonverbal versus verbal disclosure among gay White men only. I predicted that gay White men would react more negatively to the nonverbal than verbal disclosure norm, and that this would occur regardless of the ethnicity of the gay men

practicing the disclosure strategy. However, I also considered the prediction that negative reactions to nonverbal versus verbal disclosure would only emerge when the group described as practicing the strategy was other gay White men.

I tested similar predictions in Study 2, where I included gay Latino male participants and compared the reactions that gay White and gay Latino men have to nonverbal versus verbal disclosure. In Study 3, I examine three potential mediators that might account for the relationship between nonverbal disclosure and negative reactions. I reserve discussion of the details of Studies 2 and 3 until after a full report of Study 1.

### **Study 1**

The primary goal of Study 1 was to examine how gay White men react to information suggesting that other gay men practice nonverbal disclosure (versus verbal disclosure) as a coming out strategy. I chose to focus on gay White men's reactions because 1) they are more likely to practice *verbal* disclosure as a coming out strategy, 2) they are the majority group within the gay community, and 3) because of this majority status, they are likely to have the greatest influence on how the broader gay social group reacts to and treats gays who practice nonverbal disclosure.

To examine gay White men's reactions toward nonverbal disclosure information, I asked gay White male participants to read (bogus) information suggesting that other gay men practice verbal or nonverbal disclosure. In addition, participants read the disclosure norm information of gay men, gay White men, or gay Latino men in order to examine whether the source of the information (i.e., the target group about which participants read) matters.

### **Method**

**Participants.** I used G\*Power (Faul, Erdeider, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) to conduct an a priori power analysis to determine the needed sample size for this study. Analysis set at a smaller-than-medium effect size, alpha of .05, and power of .80 yielded a sample size of 244. I used Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and TurkPrime to recruit participants. MTurk and TurkPrime are online tools to for recruiting "workers" for a variety of tasks, including surveys and studies, and have been shown to produce reliable data comparable to traditional methods (e.g., Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Litman, Robinson, & Abberbock, 2017). A total of 258 gay White men were recruited and paid \$1.00 for their time. Participants' age ranged from 18–58 years ( $M = 28.62$ ,  $SD = 6.96$ ,  $Mdn = 27.5$ ). Most participants (98.1%) were U.S. citizens. Four participants indicated they were permanent residents, and one response was missing.

Recruitment efforts specifically indicated that gay White men were sought, but I also included an "honesty prompt" as described in Villicana et al. (2016, endnote 2) to maximize the number of recruited MTurk workers who self-identified as a gay White man. Specifically, after completing the online study, participants were reminded that the researchers had specifically sought out gay White male respondents, "because it is difficult to receive responses from men of various ethnic and sexual identities" (see Appendix A for full wording). Participants were asked to indicate their gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation a second time, with the understanding that they would still receive payment even if they did not identify with the identities that the survey link attempted to recruit. Based on the responses from the second demographics questionnaire, 42 participants were removed because they indicated they were not gay, not White, or both. The reported sample size indicated above reflects the removal of these participants.

**Procedure and measures.** Participants first completed a demographics questionnaire that assessed gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The demographics questionnaire was

presented at the outset of the study to make those social categories salient. These items, and the full set of materials, appear in Appendix A.

***Coming out norm and target group manipulations.*** Next, participants were presented with “data and information about the typical ‘coming out’ norms” for gay men. Participants were led to believe that the data were taken from a national survey of gay men, in which responses to two statements relevant to “coming out” status were gathered.

In the supposed national survey, the first statement read, “I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay” and the second statement read, “All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it.” Respondents had supposedly indicated the extent to which they agreed to both statements on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Gay White male participants in the *verbal norm* condition saw data associated with the two statements. Participants read that 53% of gay men agreed with the first statement but 25.11% disagreed with it, and that 32.4% of gay men agreed with the second statement though 53% disagreed with it (see Appendix A for the complete wording). The interpretation of the data was provided to participants and read; “Collectively, the data suggest that the norm for gay men about coming out is actually to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others.” Those in the *nonverbal norm* condition instead saw data that indicated that 32.4% of gay men agreed to the first statement but 53% disagreed with it, whereas 58.88% of gay men agreed to the second statement but 25.11% did not. The interpretation of the data that participants saw in the nonverbal norm condition read; “Collectively, the data suggest that the norm for gay men about coming out is actually to *not* actively tell other people about

being gay and to *not* openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay.”

Target group (those who completed the “national survey”) was manipulated by simply modifying “gay men.” Thus, participants read about the norms of gay men, gay White men, or gay Latino men, creating a 2 (Norm: Verbal, Nonverbal) X 3 (Target Group: Gay men, Gay White men, Gay Latino men) between-subjects factorial design.

***Reactions to the coming out norm.*** Participants then completed a set of measures to assess their reactions to the normative information about coming out to which they were exposed. The first measure was a modified version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Participants read through a list of 7 positive and 11 negative emotion words and were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt each reaction regarding the coming out norm information. They read the stem “I am \_\_\_\_\_ the data and information regarding the coming out norms for (gay, gay White, or gay Latino) men,” and the reactions included *interested in*, *distressed by*, *ashamed of*, etc. All responses were made on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Two scores were computed, one for positive affect ( $\alpha = .87$ ) and one for negative affect ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

Participants were then presented with a series of six additional questions to assess perceptions of the coming out norm information. All items were answered on 6-point rating scales, with endpoints labeled as indicated below.

The first item assessed how participants thought “other gay White men like [themselves]” would react to the coming out norm they read. Participants indicated their response on a scale ranging from *very positively* to *very negatively*. Next, participants were asked to indicate their agreement that the coming out norm data from (gay, gay White, or gay Latino) men “should be

disseminated to the greater gay community within the United States.” Participants indicated their response on a scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. To assess normative fit to expectations, participants next indicated how closely the data they read about “corresponded or matched with their own sense of coming out norms in the (gay, gay White, gay Latino) male community.” Responses were marked on a scale ranging from *completely does not correspond* to *completely corresponds*.

Participants were then asked to indicate the extent to which they thought the coming out patterns they learned about “reflected a healthy approach to coming out” on a scale ranging from *completely unhealthy* to *completely healthy*. Finally, participants were asked to indicate how well they felt the coming out data they read about “reflected on the (gay, gay White, or gay Latino) male community,” and “reflected on the broader gay community.” Both items were assessed on a scale ranging from *extremely unwell* to *extremely well*.

## Results

Means and standard deviations on all dependent variables, by condition, appear in Table 1. Each variable was analyzed using a 2 (Norm: Nonverbal, Verbal) X 3 (Target Group: gay men, gay White men, gay Latino men) between-subjects ANOVA.<sup>4</sup>

**Negativity of reactions.** ANOVAs on the positive and negative affect scores produced only a disclosure norm main effect. Participants reacted more positively to the verbal ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) than nonverbal norm ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ),  $F(1, 252) = 18.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .54$ , and participants reacted more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) than verbal norm ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ),  $F(1, 252) = 14.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .48$ . No other effects emerged,  $F_s < 2.08$ ,  $p_s > .12$ .

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<sup>4</sup> I was not interested in mean differences on the combination of all dependent variables (i.e., a linear combination of the measured dependent variables as “a cohesive set”), but rather as distinct outcomes, and, thus, used ANOVA.

**Perceptions.** I next conducted ANOVAs for the additional perception items. A norm main effect emerged for the item that assessed how participants thought similar others would react,  $F(1, 251) = 34.02, p < .001$ . Participants reported that similar others would react more negatively to the nonverbal norm ( $M = 3.48, SD = 1.05$ ) than the verbal norm ( $M = 2.74, SD = .96$ ),  $d = .74$  (all other effects,  $F_s < 1, p_s > .38$ ).

Both of the items that assessed how well participants thought (non)verbal disclosure reflected on the gay community were strongly correlated,  $r(257) = .71, p < .001$ . Thus, I averaged the scores on both items to create one index. Participants reported that the nonverbal disclosure norm reflected more negatively on the gay community ( $M = 3.81, SD = 1.06$ ) than the verbal disclosure norm ( $M = 4.31, SD = .98$ ),  $F(1, 251) = 14.97, p < .001, d = .49$ . No other effects were significant ( $F_s < 1.32, p_s > .70$ ).

There was also a norm main effect on perceived healthiness: Participants thought coming out nonverbally was less healthy than coming out verbally. However, this main effect was qualified by a marginal Norm X Target Group interaction,  $F(1, 250) = 2.86, p = .059, \eta^2_{partial} = .02$  (see Table 1). When examining effects of target group within the nonverbal and verbal conditions, no theoretically meaningful effects emerged,  $p_s > .06^5$ . Moreover, participants did not perceive a difference in healthiness between nonverbal and verbal disclosure when the target group was gay men  $F(1, 250) = 2.87, p = .09$ , but participants did perceive that verbal disclosure was healthier than nonverbal disclosure when the target group was fellow gay White men,  $F(1, 250) = 25.46, p < .001$ , and gay Latino men  $F(1, 250) = 7.83, p = .006$ . Whereas participants indicated coming out verbally was healthier than coming out nonverbally in each of the three target group conditions, the mean difference was larger when the target group was gay White

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<sup>5</sup> I am not interpreting one marginal comparison at  $p = .064$  given the omnibus interaction effect was also marginal, and I did not make specific predictions regarding the “perceived healthiness” item.

men ( $d = 1.08$ ) than when the target group was gay Latino men ( $d = .58$ ),  $z = 1.466$ ,  $p = .071$ , or gay men ( $d = .39$ ),  $z = 2.105$ ,  $p = .018$ . No other main effects or interactions emerged,  $ps > .12$ . Thus, there was no effect of the manipulations on the extent to which participants thought the results of the survey matched their own expectations ( $F_s < 2.08$ ,  $ps > .12$ ), or should be disseminated to others ( $F_s < 1$ ,  $p > .47$ ).

## **Discussion**

The primary purpose of Study 1 was to examine how gay White men react to information suggesting that coming out norms favor verbal versus nonverbal disclosure. Overall, the results suggest that gay White men react negatively when learning that other gay men disclose their sexual orientation nonverbally as opposed to verbally, and this effect emerged regardless of target group. In addition, participants' own reactions coincided with their assumptions about similar others' reactions as well as their assumptions of how the disclosure norms reflect on the gay community.

Gay White men perceived nonverbal disclosure to be less healthy than verbal disclosure, and this pattern emerged regardless of target group. There is some evidence that the difference in perceptions of healthiness between nonverbal and verbal disclosure was largest when fellow gay White men were the target group. However, it is unclear why target group would emerge as a meaningful factor in judgments of healthiness but not in initial reactions. I assessed perceived healthiness again in Study 2 to test whether or not these patterns replicated.

No effects emerged for the item assessing the extent to which participants thought the results of the "survey" matched their own expectations. I expected a norm main effect to emerge, such that nonverbal disclosure corresponded less with participants' own sense of coming out norms for other gay men than verbal disclosure. An examination of the means suggests that

participants thought nonverbal disclosure corresponded more with their own sense of coming out norms for gay Latino men (versus gay men and gay White men), whereas participants thought verbal disclosure corresponded more with their own sense of coming out norms for gay men and gay White men (versus gay Latino men). However, these patterns were weak, and no interaction emerged. I assessed perceived match to normative expectations again in Study 2, along with the addition of manipulation checks (see below), to further examine how well the normative information was interpreted.

In general, participants agreed that the coming out norm information should be disseminated to the gay community, regardless of target group and norm (i.e., the overall grand mean corresponds to “somewhat agree” on the 6-point scale). I did not have strong theoretical reasons for any effects to emerge on this item. The literature reviewed in the introduction would suggest that participants should want information about nonverbal disclosure (i.e., a counter-norm) to be withheld. However, it may be the case that participants perceived the information to become available regardless of their level of agreement given that the data (supposedly) came from a national survey.

One limitation of this study is that participants included only gay White men. I made this recruitment choice because gay White men are the majority in the gay community and are most likely to influence how nonverbal disclosure is perceived. However, gay men of color (especially gay Latino men) are more likely to be aware of nonverbal disclosure as a potential coming out strategy and may respond differently than gay White men. That is, participant ethnicity may be a more critical factor than target group ethnicity in driving perceptions. In Study 2, I recruited both gay White and gay Latino male participants to examine whether or not both groups react more negatively to the nonverbal norm than verbal norm information.

Finally, I mistakenly failed to include manipulation checks to assess whether or not participants understood the norm and target group to which they were randomly assigned. It is possible that the effects reported above may have been stronger had I been able to directly determine that the information had been perceived as intended. Manipulation checks were added to the following two studies.

### **Study 2**

Study 2 was designed to explore potential differences in reactions to verbal versus nonverbal disclosure between gay White and gay Latino men. I chose to recruit gay Latino men in addition to gay White men because research has shown that gay Latino men practice both nonverbal and verbal disclosure strategies without hindering their well-being (e.g., Decena, 2011; Villicana et al., 2016).

I predicted that in contrast to gay White men's negative response to nonverbal disclosure norms, gay Latino men would *not* react differently to the nonverbal and verbal norm. It is also plausible that because they regard both disclosure strategies as legitimate, null effects of target group ethnicity may also emerge. However, an alternative prediction is that gay Latino men may react similarly to both disclosure norms when the target group (source of the norm information) is other gay Latino men (ingroup members), but react more negatively to the nonverbal than verbal norm when the target group is gay White men. Such a pattern could emerge either because gay Latino men react consistently with the norms of the gay White outgroup, or because they perceive gay White men who engage in nonverbal disclosure as appropriating their group's strategy, perhaps threatening their group's distinctiveness (Brown & Abrams, 1986; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). I also predicted a replication of the

Study 1 findings; that gay White men would react more negatively to the nonverbal than verbal disclosure norm.

I made three changes to the overall design for Study 2. First, as indicated above, I recruited gay White and gay Latino men to compare reactions toward the disclosure norms between the two groups of gay men. Second, I deleted the “gay men” target group condition so as to be able to focus on the clear ingroup/outgroup comparisons. Third, I added two manipulation check items.

## **Method**

**Participants.** I conducted an a priori power analysis using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the needed sample size for this study. Analysis set at a small effect size ( $f = .14$ , based on effect sizes from Study 1), alpha of .05, and power of .80 yielded a sample size of 387. I again used MTurk and TurkPrime and recruited 390 gay White and gay Latino male participants. However, 32 participants failed the manipulation checks (described below). The final sample size was 358 gay White ( $N = 181$ ) and gay Latino ( $N = 177$ ) men. Participants' age ranged from 18–71 years ( $M = 29.09$ ,  $SD = 7.62$ ,  $Mdn = 28$ ). Among gay White men, age ranged from 19-71 years ( $M = 30.12$ ,  $SD = 8.48$ ,  $Mdn = 28$ ). Among gay Latino men, age ranged from 18-58 years ( $M = 28.04$ ,  $SD = 6.50$ ,  $Mdn = 27$ ). Five gay Latino male participants and one gay White male participant indicated they were permanent residents. All other participants were U.S. citizens. I again used the honesty prompt procedure and noted that 77 participants did not self-identify as a gay White or gay Latino man. The sample sizes indicated above reflect the removal of these participants.

**Procedure and measures.** The procedure for this study was similar to that of Study 1. Participants first completed a demographics questionnaire in order to make salient participants'

gender, ethnic, and sexual identities at the beginning of the study. These items and the full set of materials appear in Appendix B.

***Coming out norm and target manipulations.*** Next, participants read the same coming out norm information from Study 1, which indicated either that respondents from a national survey tended to be verbally or nonverbally “out.” In this study, the “gay men” target group condition was removed, such that participants read about the verbal or nonverbal coming out norms of either gay White or gay Latino men.

***Reactions to and perceptions about the coming out norm.*** Participants went on to answer the PANAS and the same perception items as described in Study 1 (positive affect  $\alpha = .86$ , negative affect  $\alpha = .92$ ).

***Manipulation checks.*** At the end of the study, participants were presented with six different groups (e.g., gay men, gay Latino men, gay Asian men) and asked to indicate which group had been the focus of the coming out information they had learned. To assess recall of the coming out norm, participants were given four choices and asked to indicate which norm described the information they read. The four choices were: 1) to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others, 2) to *not* actively tell other people about being gay and to *not* openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay, 3) to selectively tell other people about being gay, depending on how close they are and how important they are to the person, or 4) to tell all family members but not work friends or less important friends/acquaintances. Eleven participants failed the target group check (7 in the gay Latino and 4 in the gay White condition), and 21 failed the norm check (9 in the verbal and 12 in the nonverbal condition). Those participants were deleted, leaving the final sample of 358.

## Results

Means and standard deviations on all dependent variables appear in Table 2. Each outcome was analyzed using a 2 (Participant Ethnicity: Latino, White) X 2 (Target Group: gay Latino men, gay White men) X 2 (Norm: Nonverbal, Verbal) between-subjects ANOVA.

**Negativity of reactions.** A norm main effect and a Norm X Participant Ethnicity interaction emerged on positive affect scores and on negative affect scores. No other theoretically meaningful effects emerged.<sup>6</sup> Because the patterns were similar for both positive and negative affect, I combined the positive and negative affect scores to form an overall PANAS index where higher numbers mean more negativity ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

A norm main effect emerged on overall PANAS scores, such that participants reacted more negatively toward the nonverbal norm information ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) than the verbal norm information ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = .78$ ),  $F(1, 350) = 38.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .66$ . However, the norm main effect was qualified by a Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction,  $F(1, 350) = 14.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_{partial} = .04$ . No other main effects or interactions were significant,  $F_s < 1$ ,  $p_s > .39$ .

I examined simple effects to probe the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction. As Figure 1 shows, gay Latino male participants reacted similarly to the nonverbal ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) and verbal ( $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) coming out norm information,  $F(1, 350) = 3.04$ ,  $p = .08$ ,  $d = .25$ , whereas gay White male participants reacted more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) than the verbal ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) coming out norm information,  $F(1, 350) = 50.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.08$ . Furthermore, gay White male participants reacted more negatively to the nonverbal disclosure norm than gay Latino male participants,  $F(1, 350) = 6.99$ ,  $p = .009$ ,  $d = -.40$ ,

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<sup>6</sup> There was a significant Participant Ethnicity X Target Group interaction,  $F(1, 350) = 5.43$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2_{partial} = .01$ . However, this interaction was not meaningful without involvement of the critical manipulation, the verbal v. nonverbal coming out norm. Therefore, the interaction was not probed.

but gay Latino male participants reacted more negatively to the verbal disclosure norm than gay White male participants,  $F(1, 350) = 7.12, p = .008, d = .39$ .

**Perceptions.** A norm main effect emerged for the item that assessed how participants thought similar others would react, such that participants perceived similar others would react more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.27, SD = 1.09$ ) than verbal ( $M = 2.70, SD = 1.01$ ) norm information,  $F(1, 350) = 26.05, p < .001, d = .54$ . The main effect was qualified by a Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction,  $F(1, 350) = 7.39, p = .007, \eta^2_{partial} = .02$  (see Figure 2). Gay White male participants reported that similar others would react more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.34, SD = 1.04$ ) than verbal ( $M = 2.48, SD = .91$ ) coming out norm,  $F(1, 350) = 31.03, p < .001, d = .88$ . However, gay Latino male participants reported that similar others would react the same to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.20, SD = 1.14$ ) and verbal ( $M = 2.94, SD = 1.07$ ) coming out norms,  $F(1, 350) = 2.81, p = .095, d = .24$ . Moreover, gay White and gay Latino male participants thought similar others would react similarly to the nonverbal disclosure norm,  $F < 1, d = .13$ , whereas gay Latino male participants thought similar others would react more negatively to the verbal disclosure norm than did gay White male participants,  $F(1, 350) = 8.52, p = .004, d = -.46$ . Thus, participants' own reactions and their assumptions about similar others' reactions generally coincided. No other main effects or interactions emerged,  $F_s < 2.10, p_s > .14$

A norm main effect also emerged for perceived healthiness of the coming out norm, such that participants thought coming out nonverbally was less healthy ( $M = 3.50, SD = 1.26$ ) than coming out verbally ( $M = 4.40, SD = 1.02$ ),  $F(1, 348) = 53.99, p < .001, d = -.79$ . No other main effects or interactions emerged,  $F_s < 3.24, p_s > .07$ ; both Latino and White gay men perceived the nonverbal norm as less healthy.

A norm main effect also emerged on the index assessing how well the norm was perceived to reflect on the gay community (both “reflect” items were correlated,  $r[354] = .65, p < .001$ ). Participants thought coming out nonverbally reflected less well on the gay community ( $M = 3.86, SD = 1.07$ ) than coming out verbally ( $M = 4.36, SD = .89$ ),  $F(1, 350) = 24.86, p < .001, d = .51$ . This effect was qualified by a Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction,  $F(1, 350) = 6.04, p = .015, \eta^2_{partial} = .02$ . As Figure 3 indicates, gay White male participants thought nonverbal disclosure reflected worse on the gay community ( $M = 3.71, SD = 1.04$ ) than verbal disclosure ( $M = 4.46, SD = .84$ ),  $F(1, 350) = 27.98, p < .001, d = -.73$ , whereas gay Latino male participants did not show this pattern,  $M_{Nonverbal} = 4.00, SD_{Nonverbal} = 1.07$  and  $M_{Verbal} = 4.25, SD_{Verbal} = .94, F(1, 350) = 3.18, p = .075, d = -.24$ . In addition, gay White male participants thought nonverbal disclosure reflected worse on the gay community than did gay Latino male participants,  $F(1, 350) = 4.54, p = .034, d = -.27$ , whereas gay White and gay Latino male participants did not differ within the verbal disclosure condition,  $F(1, 350) = 1.82, p = .178$ . No other theoretically meaningful effects emerged,  $F_s < 1.55, p_s > .22$ .<sup>7</sup>

Similar to Study 1, no effects emerged for the “dissemination” and “match” items, all  $F_s < 3.05, p_s > .08$ .

## Discussion

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine whether gay Latino men react to nonverbal and verbal disclosure norms in a similar fashion as gay White men. I predicted and found that it was only gay White men, but not gay Latino men, who reacted negatively to nonverbal relative to verbal disclosure norms. As in Study 1, gay White men had more negative emotional responses to nonverbal norms and perceived them to reflect less well on the gay community than verbal

<sup>7</sup> There was also a significant Participant Ethnicity X Target Group interaction,  $F(1, 350) = 6.63, p = .01, \eta^2_{partial} = .02$ . However, this interaction was not meaningful without involvement of the critical manipulation, the verbal v. nonverbal coming out norm. Therefore, the interaction was not probed.

norms. In addition, gay White men assumed that “similar others” would have the same negative response. These patterns did not emerge among gay Latino male participants, who responded similarly to verbal and nonverbal norms.

The reactions and perceptions of gay Latino male participants were most likely not influenced by the disclosure norms because gay Latino men perceive both disclosure strategies as equally acceptable. However, gay White male participants were influenced by the disclosure norms because verbal disclosure is typically perceived as the only legitimate disclosure strategy (see Dindia, 1998; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993), especially within the gay White community.

Even though gay Latino men may view nonverbal and verbal disclosure as equally acceptable strategies to disclose their sexual orientation, it is odd that only a norm main effect emerged for perceived “healthiness” of the norm. Regardless of own and target group ethnicity, participants perceived nonverbal disclosure to be less healthy than verbal disclosure. These findings suggest that even gay Latino men, who are more familiar with the nonverbal coming out strategy, still assume that nonverbal disclosure is less healthy. This belief may be broadly accepted, but it is refuted by recent findings that gay Latino men who nonverbally disclose are equally happy and health as gay Latino men who verbally disclose (e.g., Villicana et al., 2016; Villicana et al., 2017). It is also possible that gay Latino men recognize the lack of connection between outness strategy and health, but nonetheless reported the broader cultural belief. Future research might further investigate the basis of these healthiness perceptions.

This study also included a target group manipulation—the source of the normative outness information was either gay Latino or gay White men—but, as in Study 1, this factor did not emerge as a main effect or in interactions with normative information. Thus, across both

studies, the results suggest that participant ethnicity may be more critical than target group ethnicity for how gay men respond to verbal versus nonverbal coming out norms.

Both studies indicate that gay White men react more negatively to nonverbal than verbal disclosure norms, but that gay Latino men do not. What remains is to determine the reasons for this difference. An obvious explanation is that verbal disclosure is the norm among gay White men, and the negative response is a straightforward reaction to deviance (Blake & Davis, 1964; Brauer & Chekroun, 2005; Schachter, 1951). Beyond this account, however, is the question of what specific reactions occur when gay White men learn about nonverbal disclosure. I explore three potential mediators in Study 3 to understand why gay White men (but not gay Latino men) react negatively to the nonverbal disclosure norm information.

### **Study 3**

I had two main goals for Study 3. The first goal was to replicate the Norm X Participant Ethnicity effect on participant reactions found in Study 2. Because target group had no meaningful effect in both Studies 1 and 2, I dropped the target group manipulation in Study 3 and focused on the Norm X Participant Ethnicity effect. The second goal was to explore three mediators that might explain why gay White men react negatively to the nonverbal disclosure norm information. The three mediators that I chose to examine were perceived (in)authenticity (of those practicing nonverbal disclosure), self-concept clarity (as it relates participants' gay identity), and perceived ostracism. I expand on each mediator below.

#### **Perceived Authenticity**

Authenticity is defined as the extent to which one is expressing one's "true self;" expressing one's core values and characteristics without interference from external forces or pressures (see Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008).

Research using this construct typically focuses on how an individual's self-reported authenticity is associated with various outcomes. For example, self-perceived authenticity predicts better psychological well-being, higher life satisfaction, and more positive relationships, among others (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). In the current study, I focused on perceptions of *others'* authenticity; the degree to which gay respondents perceived gay men who practice (non)verbal disclosure as acting or living authentically as (i.e., in accordance with being) a gay man.

I predicted that gay White men react negatively to the nonverbal outness strategy because they perceive gay men who practice nonverbal disclosure as being less authentic than gay men who practice verbal disclosure. Perceiving someone or something as inauthentic is associated with attributions of dishonesty, untrustworthiness, and low credibility (e.g., Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Wickham, 2013). Moreover, the literature on self-disclosure and liking suggests that people like more those who disclose (especially intimate information) at a higher level than those who disclose at a lower level (see Collins & Miller, 1994, for a review). Gay White men may consider nonverbal disclosure as a strategy that prevents the free expression of one's true identity, which in turn predicts negative reactions to the nonverbal normative information.

For gay Latino men, however, the same process should not hold, as nonverbal outness may be perceived an equally authentic expression of one's sexual identity as verbal outness. Indeed, Villicana et al. (2016) found that level of verbal disclosure did not influence gay Latino men's own perception of authenticity. Whereas the latter finding was on participants' own authenticity, I predicted a similar pattern for gay Latino men's perceptions of others' authenticity.

### **Self-Concept Clarity**

The second mediator I explored was self-concept clarity. Self-concept clarity is the degree to which beliefs and perceptions about the self are clearly defined, internally consistent,

and stable (Campbell, Trapnell, Heine, Katz, Lavallee, & Lehman, 1996). I was particularly interested in people's self-concept clarity as it relates to their gay identity. Thus, self-concept clarity in the current study is defined as the extent to which beliefs and perceptions about the self as a gay person are clearly defined, internally consistent, and stable.

I predicted that gay White men react more negatively to the nonverbal than verbal disclosure norm because learning about nonverbal disclosure decreases (at least temporarily) self-concept clarity. Coming out is commonly identified as *the* monumental moment for a sexual minority, and this process is typically viewed as a verbal strategy—at least among gay Whites. Therefore, learning that other gay men practice a disclosure strategy that is inconsistent with the perceived normative verbal strategy may call other aspects of being gay into question, reducing clarity. This decrease in clarity, then, may predict more negative reactions to the nonverbal disclosure information.

I did not expect gay Latino men to report different levels of self-concept clarity as a function of the disclosure norm. For gay Latino men, practicing nonverbal or verbal disclosure are seen as two equally appropriate disclosure strategies. Thus, both disclosure strategies fit with a clearly defined, internally consistent, and stable sense of self among gay Latino men.

### **Perceived Ostracism**

The final mediator I explored was perceived ostracism, the extent to which an individual feels ignored or excluded by one or more persons (Williams & Nida, 2011). As Williams (1997, 2007) describes, the feeling of being ignored threatens one or more individual needs (i.e., belonging, self-esteem, control, meaningful existence) and increases negative affect (e.g., sadness and anger). In addition, research on ostracism suggests that experiencing ostracism leads to negative feelings and emotions toward those responsible for the ostracism and/or others in

general (see Williams, 2009, for a review). Therefore, I predicted that gay White men react more negatively to nonverbal than verbal norm information because learning about nonverbal disclosure increases perceived ostracism (the majority of other gay men practice a disclosure strategy that *I* do not practice, and that makes me feel *ignored* and *excluded*). To remedy the feelings of being ignored, gay White men may respond negatively toward the persons or, in this case, the idea of nonverbal disclosure that is responsible for the ostracism.

Once again, the mediational pattern for ostracism should not emerge among gay Latino men. Whereas ostracism should predict negative affect among gay Latino men, neither nonverbal nor verbal disclosure should influence perceived ostracism. Given that past research has suggested that gay Latino men can practice both disclosure strategies (Decena, 2011; Villicana et al., 2016, 2017), gay Latino male participants will not feel ignored or excluded when learning that other gay men practice nonverbal disclosure.

## **Method**

**Participants.** Because I dropped the target group variable in this study, I used the Norm X Participant Ethnicity interaction effect size from the previous study to conduct an a priori power analysis to determine adequate sample size. Setting the analysis with an effect size of  $f = .204$ , alpha at .05, and power at .80 yielded a sample size of 191. In addition, I plotted a range of sample size values at different estimates of power to accommodate a buffer for those who might fail the manipulation checks and to accommodate the extra planned mediational analyses. Changing the power analysis to reflect an estimate of power at .90 yielded a sample size of 254.

I used Mturk and TurkPrime and recruited 297 gay Latino and gay White men. Seventeen participants failed the manipulation checks, leaving the final sample size was 280 gay Latino ( $N = 132$ ) and gay White ( $N = 148$ ) men. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 69 years ( $M = 29.81$ ,

$SD = 8.41$ ,  $Mdn = 27.5$ ). Among gay White men, age ranged from 18-61 years ( $M = 30.59$ ,  $SD = 8.53$ ,  $Mdn = 29$ ). Among gay Latino men, age ranged from 19-69 years ( $M = 28.93$ ,  $SD = 8.21$ ,  $Mdn = 26.5$ ). Two gay Latino male participants and one gay White male participant indicated that they were permanent residents. All other participants were U.S. citizens. The honesty prompt procedure indicated that 34 participants did not identify as a gay Latino or gay White man. The sample sizes indicated above reflect the removal of these participants.

**Procedure and measures.** The procedure was generally the same as that of Study 2. Participants first completed a brief demographics questionnaire and then were randomly assigned to read about the nonverbal or verbal coming out norms of “gay men.” I dropped the target group variable (whether participants read about gay White or gay Latino men’s coming out norms) given that target group did not meaningfully influence the outcome variables in the prior studies. Thus, the design for this study is a 2 (Participant Ethnicity: Latino, White) X 2 (Norm: Verbal, Nonverbal) between-subjects factorial. All materials appear in Appendix C.

**Reactions to and perceptions about the coming out norm.** Participants then completed the modified PANAS as described in Study 1 (positive affect  $\alpha = .85$ , negative affect  $\alpha = .94$ ). Participants also completed three of the additional perceptions items from Studies 1 and 2: similar others’ reaction to the normative information, perceived healthiness of the outness norm, and the positivity with which the norm reflected on the broader gay community. The other items failed to produce effects in the previous two studies and were deleted to reduce questionnaire length (as mediator items were added as described below).

**Perceived Authenticity.** I used a modified version of a perceived authenticity measure from Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, and Ilardi (1997). The scale consists of 5 items. Instead of measuring participants’ own authenticity, I modified the items to measure the degree to which

participants thought the target group was living authentically as gay men (e.g., the original item “This aspect of myself is meaningful and valuable to me” was modified to “I think being gay is meaningful and valuable to them”). In addition, participants were told to think about the coming out norm information they read about—to think “...about the gay men whose data you read about today”—when indicating their responses. All items were assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Two items were reverse-coded so that higher numbers indicated more perceived authenticity.

The five item scale had poor reliability ( $\alpha = .44$ ), and examination of the correlation matrix indicated that only items 1 and 2 were highly correlated,  $r(280) = .76, p < .001$ .<sup>8</sup> Therefore, I averaged the scores on both items and created an index of perceived authenticity.

***Self-concept clarity.*** Participants next completed a modified version of the 7-item self-concept clarity scale (Campbell et al., 1996). I modified each item to measure the extent to which participants had a clear idea of the meaning of their own gay identity (or being gay). For example, the initial item “My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another” was changed to “My beliefs about being gay often conflict with one another.” Participants were asked to think about *their own* experiences and indicate their response as each item relates to *them* (not about the information they read). The modified measure was assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Five items were reverse-scored so that higher numbers indicated more self-concept clarity ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

***Perceived Ostracism.*** To measure perceived ostracism, I used a modified version of Williams’ (2001) Threatened Needs Scale. The scale includes 12 items answered on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Participants were not asked to

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<sup>8</sup> Item 4 also correlated with Items 1 and 2, but only modestly ( $r_s = .28$  and  $.32$ , respectively). Given the relatively low correlations (as opposed to the correlation of  $.76$  between Items 1 and 2), I decided to only include Items 1 and 2 in the authenticity index.

think about the disclosure information they read, but to answer as they felt, overall. Example items are, “I feel rejected”, “I feel disconnected”, and “I feel like an outsider”. Five of the items were reverse-scored so that higher numbers indicated more perceived ostracism ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

**Manipulation checks.** Finally, participants answered the norm recall manipulation check from Studies 2. The second manipulation check was dropped given that target group was not a variable in the current study. Seventeen participants failed the norm recall manipulation check and were deleted, leaving the final sample of 280.

## Results

Means and standard deviations by condition for all measures appear in Table 3. All outcome measures were analyzed using a 2 (Participant Ethnicity: Latino, White) X 2 (Norm: Nonverbal, Verbal) between-subjects ANOVA.

**Negativity of reactions.** I averaged the positive affect and negative affect scores into one PANAS index in order to be consistent with the previous experiment and because the patterns for both outcomes were similar.<sup>9</sup> PANAS scores were again affected by the norm main effect,  $F(1, 276) = 14.36, p < .001, d = .46$ , such that participants reacted more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.12, SD = .70$ ) than verbal ( $M = 2.79, SD = .72$ ) coming out norm. Additionally, gay Latino men reacted more negatively overall ( $M = 3.06, SD = .71$ ) than gay White men ( $M = 2.85, SD = .73$ ),  $F(1, 276) = 6.03, p = .015, d = .29$ . However, these main effects were qualified by the expected Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction,  $F(1, 276) = 4.55, p = .034, \eta^2_{partial} = .02$ .

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<sup>9</sup> The norm main effect ( $F[1, 276] = 6.91, p = .009, \eta^2_{partial} = .02$ ) and the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction ( $F[1, 276] = 7.76, p = .006, \eta^2_{partial} = .03$ ) emerged for the positive affect outcome, whereas the norm main effect emerged for the negative affect outcome ( $F[1, 276] = 7.10, p = .008, \eta^2_{partial} = .025$ ) but not the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction ( $F[1, 276] = .53, p = .47$ ). However, when testing the critical comparisons, results indicated that gay White men reacted more negatively to the nonverbal than verbal norm,  $F(1, 276) = 6.11, p = .014$ , whereas gay Latino men reacted similarly to both disclosure norms,  $F(1, 276) = 1.78, p = .184$ . Thus, I combined the scores from both affect subscales into one PANAS index.

I conducted simple effects tests to probe the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction (see Figure 4). Consistent with Study 2, gay White male participants reacted more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) than verbal ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) coming out norm,  $F(1, 276) = 18.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .73$ , and no difference between norm conditions emerged among gay Latino male participants,  $M_{Nonverbal} = 3.13$ ,  $SD_{Nonverbal} = .72$  and  $M_{Verbal} = 3.00$ ,  $SD_{Verbal} = .69$ ,  $F(1, 276) = 1.30$ ,  $p = .256$ ,  $d = .18$ . In addition, when considering nonverbal disclosure, no differences in reactions between gay Latino and gay White men emerged,  $F < 1$ ,  $p = .823$ , but gay Latino men reacted more negatively to verbal disclosure than gay White men,  $F(1, 276) = 11.00$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = .56$ .

**Perceptions.** A main effect of norm condition emerged on the item assessing how “similar others” would react to the normative information,  $F(1, 276) = 23.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .59$ . Participants thought similar others would react more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) than verbal ( $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = .92$ ) coming out norm information. This main effect was qualified by a marginally significant Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction,  $F(1, 276) = 3.17$ ,  $p = .076$ ,  $\eta^2_{partial} = .01$ . Because I made specific predictions for this measure, I continued to examine the simple effects (see Table 3). When considering nonverbal disclosure, no differences emerged between gay White and gay Latino male participants,  $F < 1$ ,  $p = .322$ . There was a similar null effect when considering verbal disclosure,  $F(1, 276) = 2.36$ ,  $p = .125$ . In addition, both gay White and gay Latino male participants thought similar others would react more negatively to the nonverbal ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .91$  and  $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ , respectively) than the verbal ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = .87$  and  $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = .96$ , respectively) coming out norm information,  $F(1, 276) = 23.01$ ,  $p < .001$ , and,  $F(1, 276) = 4.34$ ,  $p = .038$ . However, the difference between

norm conditions was substantially larger among gay White male participants ( $d = .84$ ) than gay Latino male participants ( $d = .33$ ),  $z = 2.02$ ,  $p = .022$ .

For perceived healthiness, the norm main effect was again significant. Participants thought nonverbal disclosure was less healthy ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) than verbal disclosure ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = .98$ ),  $F(1, 276) = 14.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.46$ . In Study 2, the interaction with participant ethnicity was nonsignificant; in this study, it reached marginal significance,  $F(1, 276) = 3.16$ ,  $p = .076$ . I continued to probe the interaction by conducting simple effects tests. As Table 3 shows, gay White male participants considered nonverbal disclosure less healthy ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) than verbal disclosure ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ),  $F(1, 276) = 16.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.67$ , but gay Latino male participants thought nonverbal ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ) and verbal ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) disclosure strategies were equally healthy,  $F(1, 276) = 1.92$ ,  $p = .167$ ,  $d = -.24$ . When considering nonverbal or verbal disclosure, no differences in perceived healthiness between gay Latino and gay White men emerged,  $F(1, 276) = 1.58$ ,  $p = .21$  for both comparisons (both sets of inferential statistics were essentially identical).

Participants also thought nonverbal disclosure reflected worse on the broader gay community ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) than verbal disclosure ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = .94$ ),  $F(1, 276) = 9.74$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $d = -.39$ , but this effect was qualified by the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction,  $F(1, 276) = 4.46$ ,  $p = .036$ ,  $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .02$  (see Table 3). Nonverbal disclosure was perceived to reflect more negatively on the broader gay community ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) than verbal disclosure ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = .88$ ) among gay White male participants,  $F(1, 276) = 14.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.64$ , but not among gay Latino male participants,  $M_{\text{Nonverbal}} = 3.92$ ,  $SD_{\text{Nonverbal}} = 1.08$  and  $M_{\text{Verbal}} = 4.04$ ,  $SD_{\text{Verbal}} = .98$ ,  $F(1, 276) = .48$ ,  $p = .488$ ,  $d = -.12$ . The simple effect of ethnicity

was not significant in either the nonverbal or verbal disclosure conditions,  $F(1, 275) = 1.57, p = .212$ , and  $F(1, 275) = 3.05, p = .082$ , respectively.

**Moderated mediation via all three mediators.** A key goal of this research was to examine mediators of the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction on participants' affective reaction toward the coming out norms (the primary dependent variable). To test for moderated mediation, I first analyzed the Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction on the three proposed mediators using ANOVAs (see Table 3 for all means and standard deviations). Then, I used PROCESS macros designed by Hayes (2013), in which 5000 bootstrapped samples are generated. Model 8 from Hayes (2013) was used (see Figure 5 for a conceptual diagram).

***Perceived Authenticity as a mediator.*** The Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction was not significant by conventional standards,  $F(1, 276) = 2.36, p = .126$ . However, there was an effect of norm on perceived authenticity among gay White male participants but not gay Latino male participants. Among gay White male participants, those who nonverbally disclosed were perceived as living less authentically as gay men ( $M = 4.80, SD = 1.42$ ) than those who verbally disclosed ( $M = 5.26, SD = 1.26$ ),  $F(1, 276) = 4.65, p = .032, d = -.34$ . Among gay Latino male participants, there was no difference in perceived authenticity for those gay men who disclosed nonverbally ( $M = 3.70, SD = 1.12$ ) versus verbally ( $M = 3.70, SD = 1.12$ ),  $F < 1, p = .94$ .

There was no support for a moderated mediation model using perceived authenticity as a mediator (index of moderated mediation = .10,  $SE = .07$ , 95% CI [-.02, .25]). However, there was a significant conditional indirect effect of norm on reactions via perceived authenticity among gay White male participants (indirect effect = -.10,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI [-.20, -.01]), but not among gay Latino male participants (indirect effect = .004,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI [-.09, .10]).

Overall, the findings suggest that among gay White male participants, learning that gay men tend to nonverbally disclose predicts lower perceptions of authenticity compared to learning about verbal disclosure norms, and lower perceived authenticity predicts more negative affective reactions,  $b = -.15$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $t(276) = -5.40$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-.21, -.10]. Importantly, these patterns do not emerge among gay Latino male participants. Gay White male participants reacted more negatively to the nonverbal than verbal disclosure norm information to the extent that they considered others who practice nonverbal disclosure as living inauthentically. Among gay Latino male participants, whether other gay men disclose nonverbally or verbally did not influence perceived authenticity or reactions to the disclosure norms. See Figure 6 for an illustration of this mediation pattern for gay White and gay Latino men separately.

***Self-concept clarity as a mediator.*** There were no effects of norm, participant ethnicity, or their interaction on self-concept clarity,  $F_s < 1.78$ ,  $p_s > .18$ . In addition, there was no evidence of mediation or moderated mediation of the norm  $\rightarrow$  negative affect relationship via self-concept clarity (index of moderated mediation =  $-.06$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% CI [-.19, .06]). The conditional indirect effect of norm on reactions via self-concept clarity was not significant for either gay White and gay Latino men, *indirect effect* =  $.03$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% CI [-.06, .12] and *indirect effect* =  $-.03$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI [-.13, .06], respectively. Self-concept clarity did have an effect on affective reactions,  $b = -.21$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $t(275) = -6.88$ ,  $p < .001$ , such that decreased self-concept clarity predicted increased negative reactions, but clarity was unaffected by the norm manipulation and played no mediating role.

***Perceived ostracism as a mediator.*** There were no effects of norm, participant ethnicity, or their interaction on perceived ostracism,  $F_s < 1$ ,  $p > .50$ . Moreover, there was no evidence to support mediation or moderated mediation via perceived ostracism (index of moderated

mediation =  $-.05$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% CI  $[-.20, .10]$ ). The conditional indirect effect of norm on reactions via perceived ostracism was not significant for gay White men or gay Latino men, *indirect effect* =  $.003$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95%  $[-.10, .11]$  and *indirect effect* =  $-.05$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95%  $[-.16, .06]$ , respectively. Perceived ostracism did predict more negative reactions,  $b = .29$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $t(275) = 8.63$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[.22, .35]$ , but played no mediating role.

**Supplemental analysis.** Of the three tested mediators (perceived authenticity, self-concept clarity, and ostracism), the first was “other-focused” (participants’ thoughts about other gay men’s authenticity), whereas the latter two mediators were “self-focused” (participants’ thoughts about their own self-concept clarity and their own perceived ostracism from the group). This led to a question of whether one of the self-focused mediators played a role in a serial mediation, whereby disclosure norm influenced perceived authenticity (of the gay male targets), which in turn influenced a second mediator (self-concept clarity and/or feelings of ostracism) that then influenced participant reactions. See Table 3 for correlations among these three variables.

I tested two serial mediation models (split by participant ethnicity) to examine whether self-concept clarity or perceived ostracism was influenced by perceived authenticity. I used Model 6 in PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) with 5000 bootstrapped samples. For each model, I tested for serial mediation using data only from gay White male participants, and then I tested the same serial mediation using data only from gay Latino male participants.

***Serial mediation using self-concept clarity.*** There was support for an indirect effect of norm on affective reactions via perceived authenticity and, in turn, self-concept clarity among gay White male participants, *indirect effect* =  $-.02$ ,  $SE = .01$ , 95% CI  $[-.06, -.003]$ . Perceiving others as less authentically gay (due to practicing nonverbal disclosure) decreased self-concept

clarity,  $b = .27$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $t(145) = 3.58$ ,  $p < .001$ . 95% CI [.12, .42], which increased negative reactions toward the nonverbal coming out strategy,  $b = -.15$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $t(144) = -3.61$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-.23, -.07]. The model was not significant when the position of the mediators was switched (i.e., having self-concept clarity as the first mediator and perceived authenticity as the second mediator), *indirect effect* = .005,  $SE = .009$ , 95% CI [-.009, .03].

Next, I conducted the same analysis using the data only from gay Latino male participants. The indirect effect of norm on reactions through perceived authenticity, then self-concept clarity, was not significant, *indirect effect* = .001,  $SE = .01$ , 95% CI [-.02, .03]. Switching the position of the mediators did not alter this null finding, *indirect effect* = -.01,  $SE = .02$ , 95% CI [-.05, .02]. Figure 7 displays the serial mediation model for the two ethnic groups.

***Serial mediation using perceived ostracism.*** There was no support for serial mediation involving feelings of ostracism among gay White male participants, *indirect effect* = -.005,  $SE = .01$ , 95% CI [-.03, .008]. Perceiving others as less authentically gay (due to practicing nonverbal disclosure) had no effect on perceived ostracism,  $t < 1$ ,  $p = .86$ .

There was also no support for serial mediation among gay Latino male participants, *indirect effect* = .002,  $SE = .02$ , 95% CI [-.04, .05], but perceiving other gay men as living more authentically (not as a function of disclosure) predicted lower feelings of ostracism,  $b = -.38$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t(129) = -5.53$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-.51, -.24].

## **Discussion**

Study 3 was designed to replicate the interaction between norm and participant ethnicity on affective reactions that emerged in Study 2, and to examine potential mediators of this effect. Because few effects involving target group emerged in Studies 1 or 2, I focused on the general target group of “gay men” as the source of normative information. The three mediators

considered were perceived authenticity (of those practicing verbal or nonverbal disclosure), self-concept clarity (of one's own gay identity), and feelings of ostracism.

I found that gay White men reacted more negatively when learning that other gay men practice nonverbal than verbal disclosure, and that this relationship was mediated by perceived authenticity. That is, gay White men reported that those who practice nonverbal disclosure live a less authentic (gay) life than those who practice verbal disclosure, and the more they had this perception, the more negatively gay White men felt about the purported survey results. The supplemental analysis suggested that self-concept clarity, though not supported as a primary mediator in the moderated mediation model, did play a role via serial mediation. Gay White men perceived others who practice nonverbal disclosure as living a less authentic life (*they* practice a different, potentially counter-normative disclosure strategy, so *they* must not be expressing their true selves), and this perception reduced self-concept clarity (this makes *me* uncertain about my own gay identity), which led to negative reactions to the normative information.

Perceived ostracism did not function as a mediator, perhaps because of the timing of measurement. Williams (2007) describes a “temporal examination of responses to ostracism” (p. 431) in which the experience of ostracism is followed by a reflexive stage and a reflection stage. In the reflexive stage, immediately following ostracism, an individual spontaneously and unfavorably responds to the ostracism, “unmitigated by situational or individual difference factors” (p. 431). In the reflective stage, an individual assesses the situation as well as the source of the ostracism. It is in this reflective stage that individuals become aware of any threatened needs and attempt to reduce the threat. In the current study, participants were exposed to the disclosure norm information at the beginning of the study, in which nonverbal disclosure might be considered an ostracism event. However, perceived ostracism was not assessed until the end

(after perceived authenticity and self-concept clarity). In cross-sectional studies such as this one, it is best to assess perceived ostracism during or immediately following the event, that is, during the reflexive stage (in this case, immediately after the normative information). Because I assessed feelings of ostracism later in the study, perhaps during the reflective phase, I may not have appropriately captured this construct. Thus, it is difficult to conclude whether or not perceived ostracism is an important factor in gay White men's negative reactions to nonverbal disclosure.

Study 3 also suggests that gay White men 1) perceive similar others to react more negatively to nonverbal disclosure than verbal disclosure, 2) consider nonverbal disclosure as a less healthy strategy than verbal disclosure, and 3) think that practicing nonverbal disclosure reflects worse on the gay community than does practicing verbal disclosure. These patterns did not emerge (or emerged to a substantially lesser degree) among gay Latino men. These findings demonstrate that information regarding nonverbal disclosure troubles those who strictly strive to practice the normative disclosure strategy (i.e., gay White men), but not those who consider alternative strategies to be equally normative (i.e., gay Latino men).

The mediational evidence is correlational in nature, so a concrete causal account cannot be made. Whereas I manipulated the disclosure norm information at the beginning of the study, the mediators were not assessed until after reactions were assessed (reactions being the primary dependent variable). More work is needed to fully understand the mediational processes described above. These studies should include both immediate measurement of the proposed mediators as well as direct manipulations of the mediators prior to measuring reactions to normative information.

## General Discussion

Three studies examined gay White and gay Latino men's reactions to information suggesting that other gay men practice nonverbal versus verbal disclosure as a coming out strategy. Although researchers have begun to examine whether or not nonverbal disclosure can be a healthy, alternative disclosure strategy for various groups, research had not yet examined how people within the gay community react to such information. The current research demonstrates that gay White men react negatively to information that suggests other gay men practice nonverbal disclosure, and that this occurs in part because nonverbal outness is perceived as less authentic. Upon learning that other gay men willingly practice nonverbal disclosure, gay White men perceive them as less authentic. This may be enough to make gay White men uncertain about their own gay identity, and to respond negatively in turn. Consistent with my predictions, these patterns did not emerge among gay Latino men.

The findings support emerging research that challenges the notion that there is one way to "come out." Much of the psychological literature on sexual identity development and coming out processes define (or assume) that disclosing one's sexual orientation to others must be a verbal act. However, *nonverbal* disclosure can be an equally acceptable and innocuous disclosure strategy that some groups might or actively do practice. The current findings support this idea, in that reading about gay men who practice nonverbal or verbal disclosure did not influence gay Latino men's reactions to and perceptions of the nonverbal disclosure information. Collectively, the (albeit limited) research thus far on nonverbal disclosure suggests that gay Latino men (and, I would predict Latinas/os, more generally) are not only aware of nonverbal disclosure as a coming out strategy but consider both nonverbal and verbal disclosure strategies as equally acceptable forms of coming out. This conclusion, then, directly challenges the assumptions made

in sexual identity and coming out models, and supports the notion that verbal disclosure may be a critical component for sexual identity development for certain groups of sexual minorities, but not all.

The findings also support research on voice and silence. For example, Fivush (2010) describes a distinction between *being silenced* versus *being silent*. Being silenced is understood as being imposed upon, and is associated with a loss of power and a loss of self. However, being silent is understood as having a shared understanding that does not need to be voiced, and this conceptualization of silence is a form of power with no negative impact on the self. These two conceptualizations of silence can be mapped onto the current findings. Gay White men perceive nonverbal disclosure as *being silenced* because the stifling of the (verbal) expression of their sexual orientation is perceived to be imposed and associated with a loss of self (“They are not being allowed to express an important part of themselves.”). However, gay Latino men perceive nonverbal disclosure as *being silent* because the (nonverbal) expression of their sexual orientation is perceived to be a form of “freedom;” freedom to assume shared knowledge (“They already disclosed nonverbally, so there is no need to speak, explain, or justify their sexual orientation to others”) (see Simpson & Lewis, 2005). In this sense, silence is not being imposed but rather silence is a consequence of others already knowing.

I found very few effects of target group—whether the gay men demonstrating a normative pattern of coming out were White or Latino—on perceptions of and reactions to the coming out norm. Target group influenced perceptions of healthiness in Study 1, and target group interacted with participant ethnicity on reactions in Study 2. It is possible that in the context of Studies 1 and 2, where target group ethnicity was manipulated, gay identity simply carried more weight. In this sense, all gay men (regardless of ethnicity) were considered ingroup

members who should follow the perceived norms of the group. However, I suggest that the nature of these perceived group norms differed for gay White and gay Latino men. Both groups of gay men may perceive there to be a verbal disclosure norm within the ingroup, but the extent to which this norm is perceived to be relevant and important to the group may vary between groups (e.g., Marques & Paez, 1994). Gay White men perceive verbal disclosure to be highly relevant and important to the group, whereas gay Latino men may not (or to a lesser degree). This differing level of perceived relevance and importance of the verbal disclosure norm might be a factor as to why participant ethnicity played a more crucial role than target group ethnicity.

### **Implications**

Tolerance and acceptance of those who identify as gay (and “non-heterosexual,” more broadly) has ebbed and flowed over the years. There is no doubt that people are more tolerant of sexual minorities now than they were 50-60 years ago. However, suggesting and maintaining the idea that there is one way to be gay and one way to disclose this identity to others seems to contradict the goal of acceptance. The current research adds to the literature that attempts to recognize and validate alternative forms and/or strategies of sexual identity disclosure.

Not recognizing different approaches to sexual identity disclosure can have negative consequences for the individual as well as the group. For example, refuting nonverbal disclosure as a legitimate disclosure strategy may force individuals to verbally disclose, which may lead to 1) strained interpersonal relationships, 2) stress relating to identity conflict, and 3) overall negative well-being and mental health. Subgroup relations within the gay community may also be harmed when others fail to recognize or validate nonverbal disclosure as a legitimate strategy. For example, I have demonstrated that gay White men (the majority group in the gay community) negatively perceive nonverbal disclosure as a coming out strategy. If the majority group within

the gay community does not validate nonverbal disclosure, those who practice nonverbal disclosure will not feel they belong to the group and may distance themselves from the group or, more extremely, from the gay identity. In addition, the more that information about nonverbal disclosure is disseminated to the gay community, the more tense relations may become between those who do and do not practice nonverbal disclosure. This could weaken solidarity and cohesion within the broader gay group. Still, more knowledge about nonverbal disclosure could change the norms within the gay community, reducing this tension.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

I have thus far focused the differences between gay White and gay Latino men. More research is needed to not only understand how nonverbal disclosure is experienced and perceived among other gay men of color, but to also understand how their straight male counterparts perceive nonverbal disclosure. I have some data to suggest gay Black men also can/do practice nonverbal disclosure without harm to their well-being (Villicana, Boye-Doe, & Biernat, 2017), and additional data suggesting that straight Latino men think nonverbal and verbal disclosure are equally healthy, whereas straight White men do not (Villicana et al., 2017). However, more work is needed to understand how gay and straight individuals perceive nonverbal disclosure as well as how those perceptions influence real-world outcomes such as collective action and policy support.

Future research needs to explore nonverbal disclosure among different ethnic groups of gay men, but also to explore boundary conditions within ethnic groups. For example, I have argued that nonverbal disclosure is perceived to be an acceptable alternative form of disclosure among gay Latino men. However, there may be certain situations or conditions in which nonverbal disclosure may be perceived negatively among gay Latino men. For example, if a gay

Latino men practice verbal disclosure in some situations but nonverbal disclosure in others, this “switching” may negatively influence perceptions of nonverbal disclosure (e.g., perhaps nonverbal disclosure becomes viewed as “closeted: once it is known a person does verbally disclose to certain others). In addition, I did not measure participants’ own levels of outness in the current set of studies. Future work might assess whether or not (or to what extent) participant outness influences the patterns reported above. Doing so would allow for a better understanding of what is considered counter-normative and threatening.

There are certainly other variables that may influence the practice of and perceptions of nonverbal disclosure. One example may be religious identification. Many religious faiths consider homosexuality to be a sin and negatively perceive sexual minorities. It is plausible that religious identification moderates the practice of (non)verbal disclosure among sexual minorities. However, a more critical factor may be the religious identification of family members and close friends. Developing a sexual identity around close others who are highly religious may compel gay/lesbian individuals to practice alternative disclosure strategies (e.g., Lease & Shulman, 2003). Research examining the effect of religious identification on disclosure among sexual minorities, however, typically considers anything other than verbal disclosure as “being closeted.” Therefore, more research is needed to understand how religion affects nonverbal disclosure practices. In addition, I have focused on gay Latino men, but “Latino” is a general term that includes people from different countries of origin (e.g., Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Argentina, Cuba). Thus, it is important for future research to investigate whether country of origin influences perceptions of nonverbal disclosure.

Lastly, research on nonverbal disclosure has focused on the experiences of gay men, but additional research is needed on how gay women or lesbians understand and experience

nonverbal disclosure. It is possible that patterns among gay women will mimic those of their male counterparts. Yet, it may be that the process by which gay women understand and practice nonverbal disclosure is completely different because of the unique gender role expectations and gender stereotypes that accompany female sexuality.

### **Conclusion**

The current research provides more support for the critique of the coming out process; that gay identity development and coming out have been constructed within a White, male framework and that gay people of color understand gay identity and coming out in different ways than Whites. Previous published work has established that some gay men (thus far, gay Latino men) can practice nonverbal or verbal disclosure without any negative consequences to their well-being. The current work adds to the literature and suggests that gay Latino men not only practice nonverbal disclosure but perceive it to be an equally acceptable disclosure strategy to verbal disclosure; they react similarly to information about nonverbal and verbal disclosure, they consider both disclosure strategies as equally healthy (with the exception of Study 2), and they perceive both disclosure strategies to reflect equally well on the gay community. Gay White men, however, *do* negatively perceive nonverbal disclosure. It is important to understand how different groups perceive nonverbal disclosure and why these differences emerge as we move to a broader understanding of the coming out process. It will be important for future work to examine how information about nonverbal disclosure can be disseminated to the gay community in a way that reduces hostility and increases acceptance of the diverse ways of being “out.”

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Table 1. Means and standard deviations for all outcome variables in Study 1 split by condition.

Dependent Variable	Disclosure Norm Condition and Target Group Described as Displaying the Normative Pattern					
	Nonverbal Disclosure			Verbal Disclosure		
	Gay Men	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men	Gay Men	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men
PANAS – Positive	3.51 (1.03)	3.33 (.96)	3.59 (1.06)	4.04 (.81)	4.17 (1.13)	3.80 (.92)
PANAS – Negative	2.74 (.94)	3.03 (.94)	2.97 (1.09)	2.48 (.99)	2.25 (1.05)	2.56 (1.12)
Similar Others' Reaction	3.62 (.96)	3.45 (1.11)	3.49 (1.10)	4.11 (.87)	4.32 (1.03)	4.34 (.99)
Dissemination	4.24 (.96)	4.16 (1.04)	4.13 (.95)	4.27 (1.21)	4.45 (1.17)	4.10 (1.14)
Match/Believability	3.76 (.96)	3.93 (1.15)	4.21 (1.09)	4.18 (.90)	4.14 (1.23)	3.98 (1.01)
Healthiness	3.69 (1.24)	3.30 (1.25)	3.51 (1.48)	4.14 (1.06)	4.64 (1.24)	4.29 (1.19)
Reflect Well - Specific	3.73 (1.18)	3.75 (1.20)	3.92 (1.24)	4.25 (.99)	4.52 (1.11)	4.12 (1.14)
Reflect Well - Broad	3.78 (1.11)	3.91 (.98)	3.79 (1.24)	4.34 (.83)	4.34 (1.12)	4.29 (1.19)

*Note.* Standard deviations are in parentheses. Subscripts to denote significant differences are not included because the target group variable did not meaningfully interact with disclosure norm.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for all outcome variables in Study 2 split by condition.

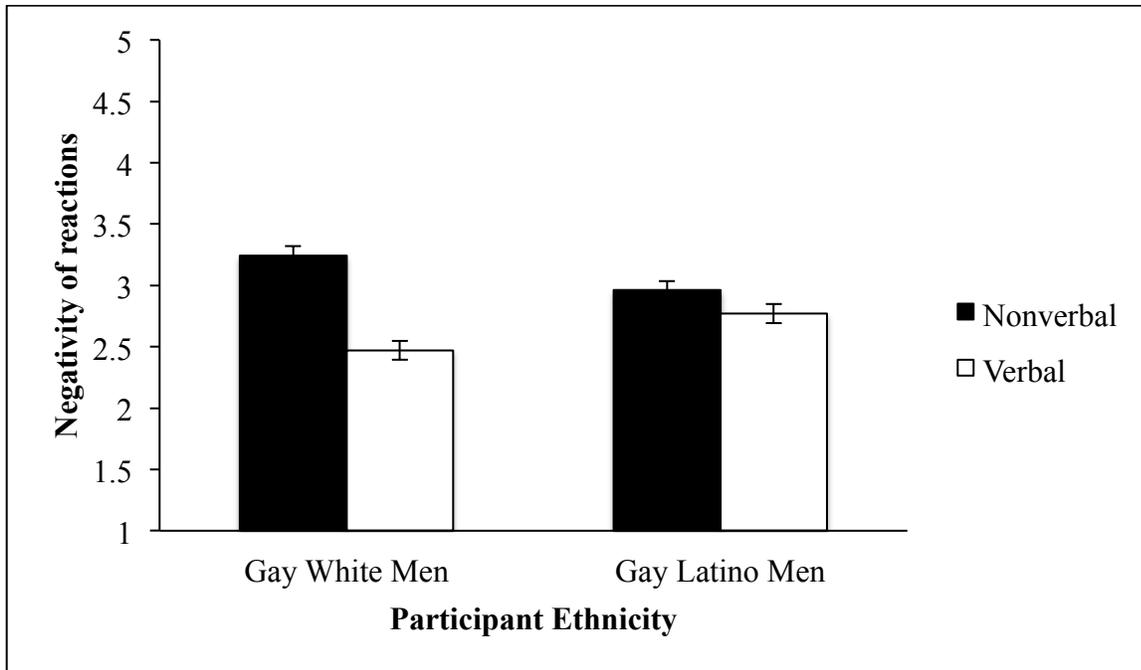
Dependent Variable	Disclosure Norm Condition and Target Group Described as Displaying the Normative Pattern					
	Nonverbal Disclosure			Verbal Disclosure		
	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men	Gay White Male Participants	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men	Gay Latino Men
PANAS – Positive	3.60 (.92)	3.21 (.85)	4.22 (1.20)	4.12 (1.01)		
PANAS – Negative	3.10 (1.01)	2.94 (.94)	2.26 (1.00)	2.22 (1.12)		
Similar Others' Reaction	3.23 (1.15)	3.45 (.92)	2.44 (.87)	2.51 (.95)		
Dissemination	3.96 (1.02)	4.05 (1.15)	4.33 (1.07)	4.30 (1.02)		
Match/Believability	4.28 (1.21)	3.83 (1.15)	4.18 (1.07)	4.13 (.95)		
Healthiness	3.64 (1.19)	3.21 (1.07)	4.58 (.81)	4.38 (1.03)		
Reflect Well - Specific	4.13 (1.10)	3.50 (1.15)	4.58 (.89)	4.40 (.89)		
Reflect Well - Broad	3.85 (1.21)	3.31 (1.11)	4.44 (.81)	4.43 (.99)		
			Gay Latino Male Participants			
PANAS – Positive	3.58 (.98)	3.82 (.86)	3.65 (1.02)	3.89 (1.05)		
PANAS – Negative	2.78 (1.01)	2.69 (.89)	2.42 (1.01)	2.51 (.98)		
Similar Others' Reaction	3.06 (1.10)	3.34 (1.17)	2.96 (1.09)	2.92 (1.05)		
Dissemination	4.02 (1.21)	4.19 (1.23)	3.87 (1.26)	4.13 (1.07)		
Match/Believability	3.98 (1.02)	4.19 (1.26)	3.91 (1.23)	4.03 (1.42)		
Healthiness	3.60 (1.42)	3.52 (1.33)	4.30 (.98)	4.21 (1.25)		
Reflect Well - Specific	4.04 (1.13)	4.06 (1.15)	4.23 (.94)	4.37 (1.00)		
Reflect Well - Broad	3.76 (1.23)	4.15 (1.27)	4.11 (1.16)	4.34 (1.07)		

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses. Subscripts to denote significant differences are not included because the target group variable did not meaningfully interact with disclosure norm and/or participant ethnicity.

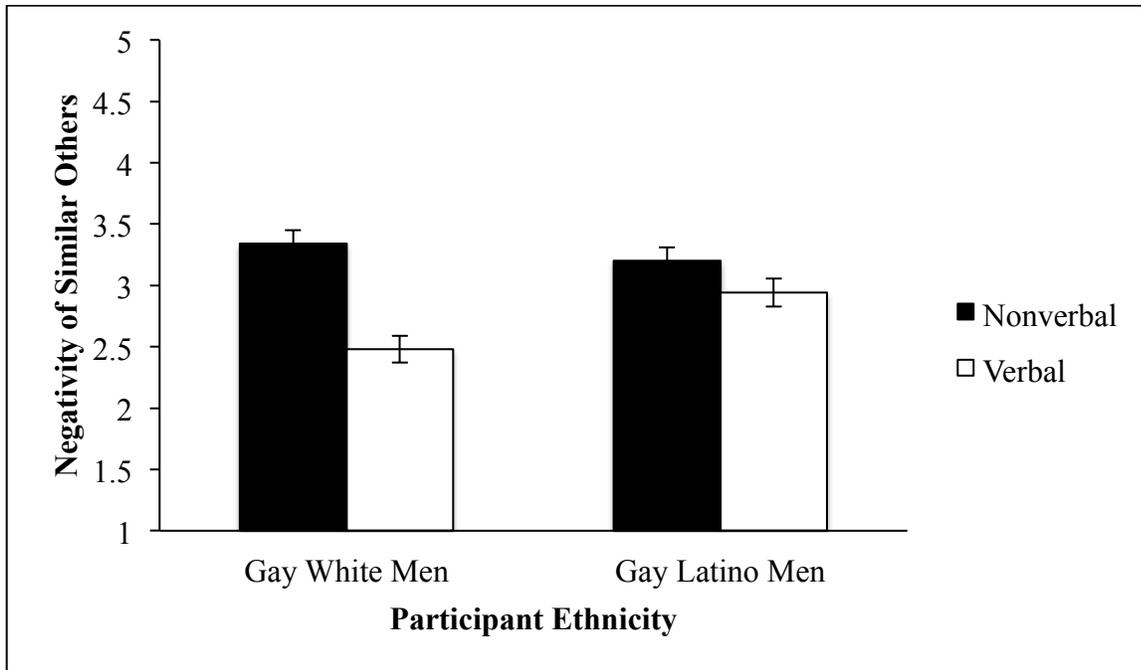
Table 3. Means and standard deviations for the outcome variables in Study 3 split by condition and correlations among mediators.

Dependent Variable	Disclosure Norm Condition						Correlations		
	Nonverbal Disclosure			Verbal Disclosure					
	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men	Gay White Men	Gay Latino Men	1.	2.	3.
PANAS – Positive	3.32 (.88) <sub>a</sub>	3.70 (.99) <sub>b</sub>	3.93 (.92) <sub>bc</sub>	3.69 (1.01) <sub>b</sub>					
PANAS – Negative	2.74 (1.05) <sub>a</sub>	3.03 (1.04) <sub>a</sub>	2.33 (.93) <sub>b</sub>	2.80 (1.06) <sub>a</sub>					
Similar Others' Reaction	3.46 (.91) <sub>a</sub>	3.30 (1.07) <sub>a</sub>	2.71 (.87) <sub>b</sub>	2.96 (.96) <sub>b</sub>					
Healthiness	3.52 (1.17) <sub>a</sub>	3.76 (1.30) <sub>a</sub>	4.26 (1.03) <sub>b</sub>	4.03 (.91) <sub>ab</sub>					
Reflect Well	3.70 (1.12) <sub>a</sub>	3.92 (1.08) <sub>a</sub>	4.34 (.88) <sub>b</sub>	4.04 (.98) <sub>ab</sub>					
Mediator						Grand Mean	1.	2.	3.
1. Perceived Authenticity	4.80 (1.42) <sub>a</sub>	4.86 (1.16) <sub>a</sub>	5.26 (1.26) <sub>b</sub>	4.85 (1.36) <sub>ac</sub>		4.95 (1.31)	--		
2. Self-Concept Clarity	5.04 (1.18) <sub>a</sub>	4.70 (1.31) <sub>a</sub>	4.91 (1.36) <sub>a</sub>	4.84 (1.16) <sub>a</sub>		4.88 (1.26)	.31**	--	
3. Perceived Ostracism	3.19 (1.13) <sub>a</sub>	3.39 (1.18) <sub>a</sub>	3.20 (1.16) <sub>a</sub>	3.22 (1.02) <sub>a</sub>		3.25 (1.12)	-.23**	-.55**	--

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses. Subscripts that differ within a row indicate significant mean differences at  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$



*Figure 1.* Study 2: The Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction on affective reactions. Error bars are standard errors.



*Figure 2.* Study 2: The Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction on negativity of similar others. Error bars are standard errors.

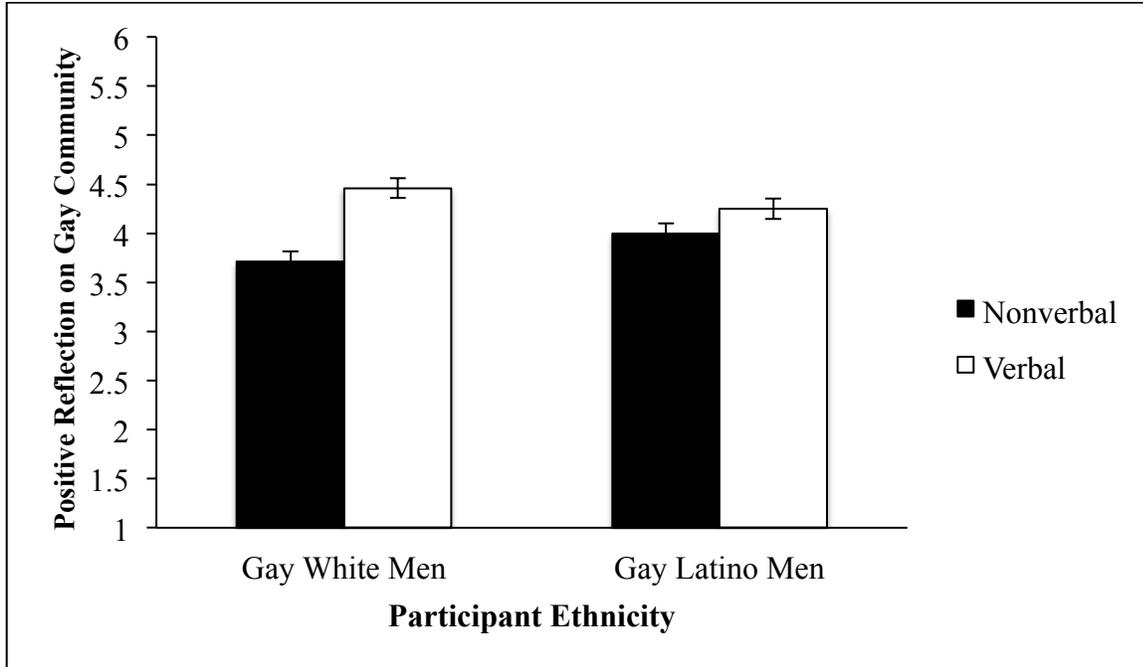
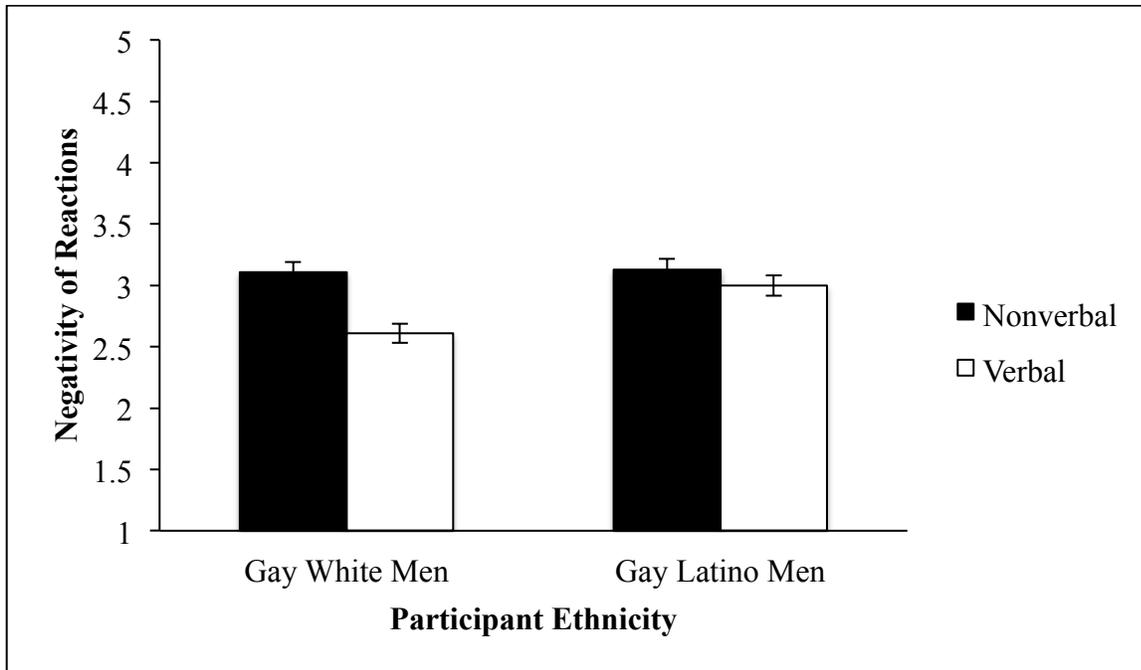
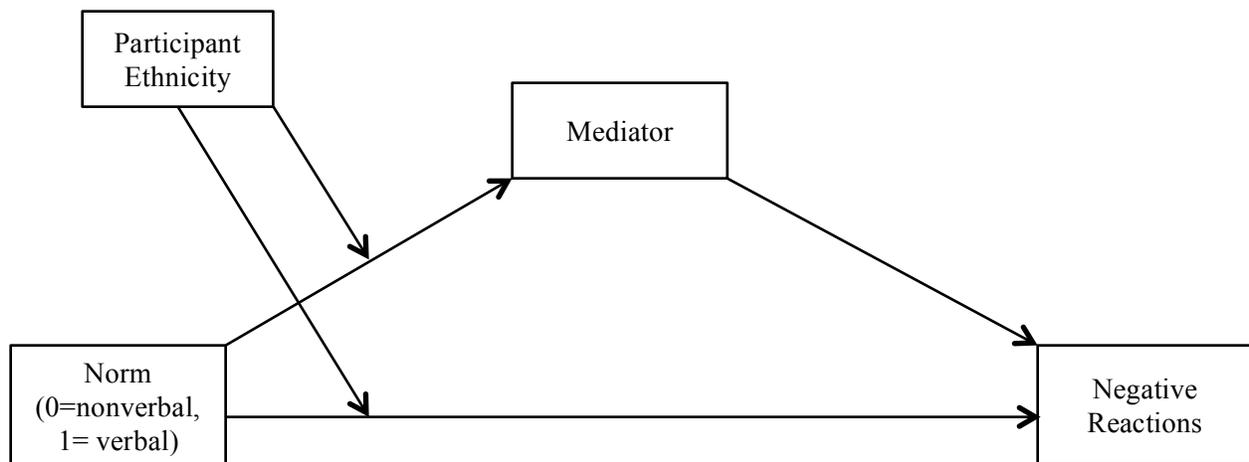


Figure 3. Study 2: The Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction on perceptions of how the disclosure norm reflects on the gay community. Error bars are standard errors.

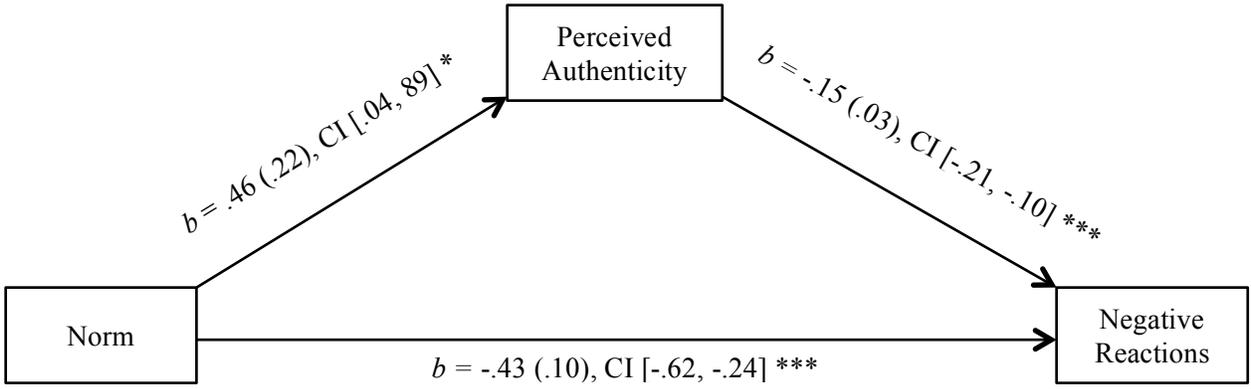


*Figure 4.* Study 3: The Participant Ethnicity X Norm interaction on affective reactions. Errors bars are standard errors.

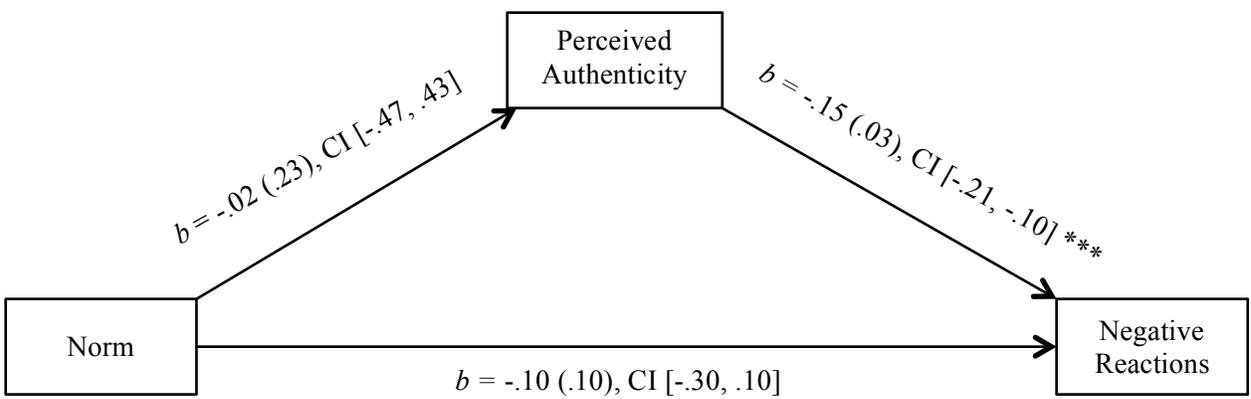


*Figure 5.* Study 3: A conceptual diagram of moderated mediation using Model 8 in PROCESS (Hayes, 2013).

**Gay White Male Participants**



**Gay Latino Male Participants**



*Figure 6.* Study 3: Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between normative condition and affective reactions for gay White male but not gay Latino male participants.

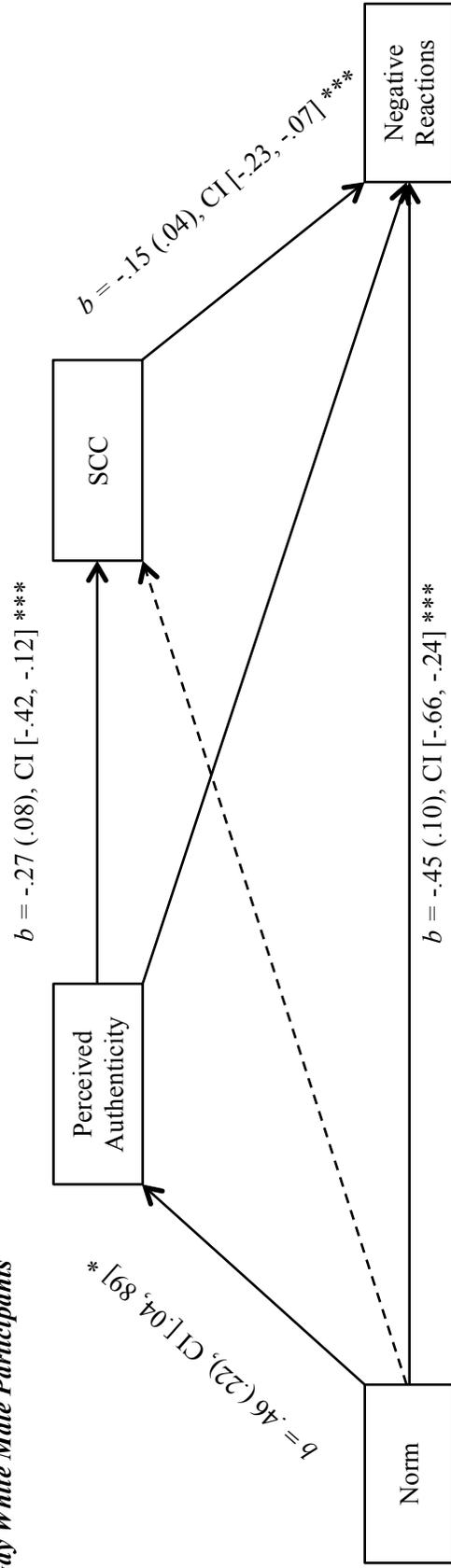
Notes:

Norm is coded as 0 = Nonverbal condition, 1 = Verbal condition. All coefficients represent unstandardized regression coefficients. Standard errors and 95% CIs are reported.

The norm on reactions direct effect of norm on negative reactions shown in the figure takes into account the effect of perceived authenticity on reactions (i.e., the c prime pathway). Only the indirect effect in the gay White male model was significant (refer to the main text).

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Gay White Male Participants**



**Gay Latino Male Participants**

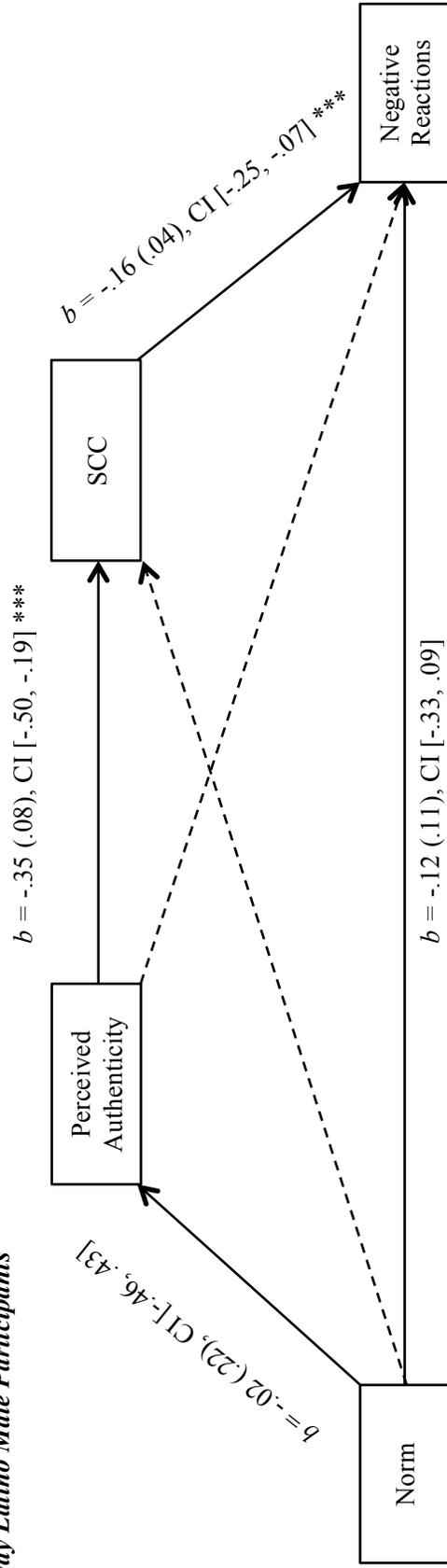


Figure 7. Study 3: Serial mediation of the norm → negative reactions effect via perceived authenticity and self-concept clarity.

Notes: Norm is coded as 0 = Nonverbal condition, 1 = Verbal condition. SCC= self-concept clarity. All coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. Standard errors and 95% CIs are reported. The norm → negative reactions effect controls for perceived authenticity and self-concept clarity on reactions (i.e., the c prime pathway). Dashed lines are non-significant relationships. Only the indirect effect in the gay White male model was significant (refer to the main text). \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Appendix A  
Full set of materials for Study 1

**Demographics Questionnaire**

Gender:

- Male  
 Female  
 Transgender  
 Genderqueer  
 Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident Status:

- U.S. Citizen  
 Permanent Resident  
 Foreign Exchange Student  
 Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the box that *best* describes your ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native  
 Asian or Pacific Islander  
 Black, not of Hispanic Origin  
 Latino/Hispanic  
 White, not of Hispanic Origin  
 Multi-ethnic  
 Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight  
 Gay  
 Bisexual  
 Pansexual  
 Questioning  
 Straight but who has sex with men  
 Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your FIRST language (i.e., the language you speak most fluently)?

\_\_\_\_\_

If English is not your first language, how long have you been speaking English?

- Less than 1 year  
 1-4 years  
 5-10 years  
 11-15 years  
 More than 15 years

## Coming out norm and target group manipulation materials

### ALL:

In the following screens, we will show you some data and information about the typical "coming out" norms for [target group]. That is, to what extent and how do [target group] "come out" to others about their gay identity? The data were taken from a national survey that was only comprised of [target group], who responded to two statements. You will see those two statements and short descriptions of what the data indicate. After you consider the information, we will ask you some questions regarding your thoughts and feelings about it.

<page break>

### Nonverbal condition:

#### STATEMENT 1.

This first part represents results from previous [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] have actively told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the [target group] have not.

<page break>

#### STATEMENT 2.

This second part represents results from the same [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The result were as follows:

58.88% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 25.11% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

<page break>

Below are the two sets of data that you just saw. Under the two sets of data is more information about the data and the interpretation of the data as a whole.

#### STATEMENT 1.

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The results were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] have actively told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the [target group] have not.

#### STATEMENT 2.

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The result were as follows:

58.88% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 25.11% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Above are the two sets of data you just saw.

If we interpret the data as a whole, the data suggests that the norm for [target group] about coming out is actually to not actively tell other people about being gay and to not openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay.

**Verbal Condition:**

## STATEMENT 1.

This first part represents results from previous [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results were as follows:

25.11% of the [target group] have not told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the [target group] have.

## STATEMENT 2.

This second part represents results from the same [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The result were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 53% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Below are the two sets of data that you just saw. Under the two sets of data is more information about the data and the interpretation of the data as a whole.

## STATEMENT 1.

**"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."**

The results were as follows:

25.11% of the [target group] have not told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the gay men have.

## STATEMENT 2.

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The result were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 53% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Above are the same sets of data you just saw.

If we interpret the data as a whole, the data suggests that the norm for [target group] about coming out is actually to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others.

## PANAS

For the following section, we are interested in your feelings toward and reactions about the data and information that you just read.

For each feeling on the left, please insert it in the sentence below and indicate your response on the 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) scale provided.

“I am \_\_\_\_\_ the data and information that I read about the coming out norms for [target group].”

1. Interested in
2. Distressed by
3. Excited about
4. Upset by
5. Guilty about
6. Scared by
7. Angry about
8. Enthusiastic about
9. Proud of
10. Irritated by
11. Ashamed of
12. Inspired by
13. Nervous about
14. Attentive to
15. Afraid about
16. Happy about
17. Confused about
18. Skeptical of



## End/Honesty Prompt/Demographics 2

That concludes the study! Next, we will ask you a few more questions about you. Then, you will learn more information regarding the study and will be given information about the completion code to enter on the Mechanical Turk website to ensure payment.

<page break>

When using Mechanical Turk to collect data, it is relatively difficult to get data from different ethnic and sexuality groups. This link tried to recruit those who identify as **gay White men**. We realize some participants may mistakenly complete this study but not identify as a **gay White man**. In the space below, please indicate your gender, ethnic identity, and sexual orientation. **You will still get paid if you do not identify as a gay White man;** this is just to ensure our data are as accurate as possible.

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the box that *best* describes your ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Latino/Hispanic
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Multi-ethnic
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Questioning
- Straight but who has sex with men
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

### More Information about the Study

Past research on gay identity formation suggests that gay men need to “come out” in order to fully integrate a gay identity into their self-concept and foster a positive gay identity. However, in a previous set of studies, we found that strong gay identification leads to more coming out for gay White men but not for gay Latino men. Actually, gay Latino men tended to report “tacit outness”, a phenomenon where people may know they are gay but they do not verbally and intentionally come out; their sexual orientation is not disclosed or discussed, as typical coming out messages suggest all non-heterosexuals should do. Thus, it seems that coming out might mean different things to different ethnic groups. The study you participated in today focused on understanding gay White men’s reactions toward different coming out norms; the typical coming out norm versus a “tacit” coming out norm.

For this study, all participants first completed a brief demographic questionnaire and then an outness inventory, which assessed the extent to which you are out and verbally discuss it with various people. Afterward, all participants saw two graphs that represented a coming out norm. Some participants saw data that suggested the coming out norm was to disclose one’s gay identity to others and openly talk about it. This can be considered the “out” norm. Other participants instead saw data that suggested the coming out norm was to not intentionally verbally disclose one’s gay identity to others; that people might know one is gay, but one typically does not disclose or talk about being gay. This can be considered the “tacit” norm.

Within both coming out norm conditions, we varied the source of the data. So, people in both the “out” norm and “tacit” norm conditions were told that the data came from either 1) gay men, 2) gay White men, or 3) gay Latino men. We varied the source of the data to examine whether the source (gay men, gay White men, or gay Latino men) influences reactions to the “tacit” norm information.

We predicted that all reactions toward the “out” norm would be neutral or positive no matter the source. The mainstream message (in research and media) is similar to the “out” norm condition information. In addition, though, we predicted that reactions toward the “tacit” norm would be negative. However, we were interested in whether reactions would be most negative if the source of the “tacit” norm was gay White men or gay Latino men. On one hand, reactions might be most negative if the source of the tacit norm message was gay White men because it would directly challenge the typical understanding of how gay (White) individuals should come out; gay Whites being the majority group within the gay community. On the other hand, reactions might be most negative if the source of the tacit norm message was gay Latino men because the tacit norm message might be threatening, especially because it’s coming from an ethnic group that is a minority within the broader gay community.

Please understand that the information (the data to the responses you saw) that you went over were completely made up. We created these data and graphs in order to make the information believable. Whereas there is poll data elsewhere that suggests the “out” coming out norm is a norm within the gay community, there is not data that suggests a “tacit” coming out norm. However, there are new studies showing being tacit is an alternative coming out strategy, so far, at least, for gay Latinos. Again, though, the data we showed you was completely bogus.

As noted earlier, all data will be aggregated – we will examine average judgments. It's only by looking at the aggregated data that we can detect any patterns. Your responses will not be individually identifiable in any way.

Thank you so much for your participation!

**Appendix B**  
Full set of materials for Study 2

**Demographics Questionnaire**

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident Status:

- U.S. Citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Foreign Exchange Student
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the box that *best* describes your ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Latino/Hispanic
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Multi-ethnic
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Questioning
- Straight but who has sex with men
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your FIRST language (i.e., the language you speak most fluently)?

\_\_\_\_\_

If English is not your first language, how long have you been speaking English?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years

## Coming out norm and target group manipulation materials

### ALL:

In the following screens, we will show you some data and information about the typical "coming out" norms for [target group]. That is, to what extent and how do [target group] "come out" to others about their gay identity? The data were taken from a national survey that was only comprised of [target group], who responded to two statements. You will see those two statements and short descriptions of what the data indicate. After you consider the information, we will ask you some questions regarding your thoughts and feelings about it.

<page break>

### Nonverbal condition:

#### STATEMENT 1.

This first part represents results from previous [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] have actively told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the [target group] have not.

<page break>

#### STATEMENT 2.

This second part represents results from the same [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The result were as follows:

58.88% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 25.11% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

<page break>

Below are the two sets of data that you just saw. Under the two sets of data is more information about the data and the interpretation of the data as a whole.

#### STATEMENT 1.

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The results were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] have actively told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the [target group] have not.

#### STATEMENT 2.

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The result were as follows:

58.88% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 25.11% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Above are the two sets of data you just saw.

If we interpret the data as a whole, the data suggests that the norm for [target group] about coming out is actually to not actively tell other people about being gay and to not openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay.

**Verbal Condition:**

## STATEMENT 1.

This first part represents results from previous [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results were as follows:

25.11% of the [target group] have not told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the [target group] have.

## STATEMENT 2.

This second part represents results from the same [target group] participants who responded to the following statement:

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The previous [target group] participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The result were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 53% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Below are the two sets of data that you just saw. Under the two sets of data is more information about the data and the interpretation of the data as a whole.

## STATEMENT 1.

**"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."**

The results were as follows:

25.11% of the [target group] have not told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the gay men have.

## STATEMENT 2.

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The result were as follows:

32.4% of the [target group] reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 53% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Above are the same sets of data you just saw.

If we interpret the data as a whole, the data suggests that the norm for [target group] about coming out is actually to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others.

## PANAS

For the following section, we are interested in your feelings toward and reactions about the data and information that you just read.

For each feeling on the left, please insert it in the sentence below and indicate your response on the 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) scale provided.

“I am \_\_\_\_\_ the data and information that I read about the coming out norms for [target group].”

1. Interested in
2. Distressed by
3. Excited about
4. Upset by
5. Guilty about
6. Scared by
7. Angry about
8. Enthusiastic about
9. Proud of
10. Irritated by
11. Ashamed of
12. Inspired by
13. Nervous about
14. Attentive to
15. Afraid about
16. Happy about
17. Confused about
18. Skeptical of



### Manipulation Checks

You were previously shown some data and information concerning the coming out norms about who?

- Gay men
- Gay White men
- Gay Latino men
- Gay Black men
- Gay Asian men
- Lesbians

Which of the following coming out norms describes the data that you previously reviewed?

- to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others
- to *not* actively tell other people about being gay and to *not* openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay
- to selectively tell other people about being gay, depending on how close they are and how important they are to the person
- to tell all family members but not work friends or less important friends/acquaintances.

## End/Honesty Prompt/Demographics 2

That concludes the study! Next, we will ask you a few more questions about you. Then, you will learn more information regarding the study and will be given information about the completion code to enter on the Mechanical Turk website to ensure payment.

<page break>

When using Mechanical Turk to collect data, it is relatively difficult to get data from different ethnic and sexuality groups. This link tried to recruit those who identify as **gay [White/Latino] men**. We realize some participants may mistakenly complete this study but not identify as a **gay [White/Latino]man**. In the space below, please indicate your gender, ethnic identity, and sexual orientation. **You will still get paid if you do not identify as a gay [White/Latino] man;** this is just to ensure our data are as accurate as possible.

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the box that *best* describes your ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Latino/Hispanic
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Multi-ethnic
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Questioning
- Straight but who has sex with men
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **More Information on the Study**

Past research on gay identity formation suggests that gay men need to verbally "come out" in order to fully integrate a gay identity into their self-concept and foster a positive gay identity. However, in a previous set of studies, we found that strong gay identification leads to more verbal disclosure for gay White men but not for gay Latino men. Actually, gay Latino men tended to report "tacit outness", a phenomenon where people may know they are gay but they do not verbally disclose their sexual orientation; their sexual orientation is not verbally disclosed or discussed, as typical coming out messages suggest all non-heterosexuals should do. Thus, it seems that coming out might mean different things to different ethnic groups. The study you participated in today focused on understanding gay White and gay Latino men's reactions toward different coming out norms; the typical coming out norm versus a "tacit" coming out norm.

For this study, all participants first completed a brief demographic questionnaire and then an outness inventory, which assessed the extent to which you are out and verbally discuss it with various people. Afterward, all participants saw two sets of that represented a coming out norm. Some participants saw data that suggested the coming out norm was to disclose one's gay identity to others and openly talk about it. This can be considered the "out" norm. Other participants instead saw data that suggested the coming out norm was to not intentionally verbally disclose one's gay identity to others; that people might know one is gay, but one typically does not disclose or talk about being gay. This can be considered the "tacit" norm.

Within both coming out norm conditions, we varied the source of the data. So, people in both the "out" norm and "tacit" norm conditions were told that the data came from either gay White men or gay Latino men. We varied the source of the data to examine whether the source (gay White men or gay Latino men) influences reactions to the "tacit" norm information.

Please understand that the information (the data to the responses you saw) that you went over were completely made up. We created these data in order to make the information believable. Whereas there is poll data elsewhere that suggests the "out" coming out norm is a norm within the gay community, there is not data that suggests a "tacit" coming out norm. However, there are new studies showing being tacit is an alternative coming out strategy, so far, at least, for gay Latinos. Again, though, the data we showed you was completely bogus.

As noted earlier, all data will be aggregated – we will examine average judgments. It's only by looking at the aggregated data that we can detect any patterns. Your responses will not be individually identifiable in any way.

Thank you so much for your participation! Please answer the question immediately below this. On the following page will be information about payment.

**Appendix C**  
Full set of materials for Study 3

**Demographics Questionnaire**

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident Status:

- U.S. Citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Foreign Exchange Student
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the box that *best* describes your ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Latino/Hispanic
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Multi-ethnic
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Questioning
- Straight but who has sex with men
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your FIRST language (i.e., the language you speak most fluently)?

\_\_\_\_\_

If English is not your first language, how long have you been speaking English?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years

## Coming out norm and target group manipulation materials

### ALL:

In the following screens, we will show you some data and information about the typical "coming out" norms for gay men. That is, to what extent and how do gay men "come out" to others about their gay identity? The data were taken from a national survey that was only comprised of gay men, who responded to two statements. You will see those two statements and short descriptions of what the data indicate. After you consider the information, we will ask you some questions regarding your thoughts and feelings about it.

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### Nonverbal condition:

#### STATEMENT 1.

This first part represents results from previous gay male participants who responded to the following statement:

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The previous gay male participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results were as follows:

32.4% of the gay men have actively told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the gay men have not.

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#### STATEMENT 2.

This second part represents results from the same gay male participants who responded to the following statement:

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The previous gay male participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The result were as follows:

58.88% of the gay men reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 25.11% of the gay men reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

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Below are the two sets of data that you just saw. Under the two sets of data is more information about the data and the interpretation of the data as a whole.

#### STATEMENT 1.

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The results were as follows:

32.4% of the gay men have actively told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the gay men have not.

#### STATEMENT 2.

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The result were as follows:

58.88% of the gay men reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 25.11% of the gay men reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Above are the two sets of data you just saw.

If we interpret the data as a whole, the data suggests that the norm for gay men about coming out is actually to not actively tell other people about being gay and to not openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay.

**Verbal Condition:**

## STATEMENT 1.

This first part represents results from previous gay male participants who responded to the following statement:

"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."

The previous gay male participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results were as follows:

25.11% of the gay men have not told most of the people in their life that they are gay. However, 53% of the gay men have.

## STATEMENT 2.

This second part represents results from the same gay male participants who responded to the following statement:

"All/Most of the important people in my life probably know I am gay, but I have not actively told them and we do not talk about it."

The previous gay male participants responded to the statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The result were as follows:

32.4% of the gay men reported that even though others probably know they are gay, they do not actively tell people and they do not talk about being gay with others, whereas 53% of the [target group] reported that they do tell others and they do talk about being gay.

Below are the two sets of data that you just saw. Under the two sets of data is more information about the data and the interpretation of the data as a whole.

## STATEMENT 1.

**"I have actively told all/most of the important people in my life that I am gay."**

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Above are the same sets of data you just saw.

If we interpret the data as a whole, the data suggests that the norm for gay men about coming out is actually to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others.

**PANAS**

For the following section, we are interested in your feelings toward and reactions about the data and information that you just read.

For each feeling on the left, please insert it in the sentence below and indicate your response on the 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) scale provided.

“I am \_\_\_\_\_ the data and information that I read about the coming out norms for gay men.”

1. Interested in
2. Distressed by
3. Excited about
4. Upset by
5. Guilty about
6. Scared by
7. Angry about
8. Enthusiastic about
9. Proud of
10. Irritated by
11. Ashamed of
12. Inspired by
13. Nervous about
14. Attentive to
15. Afraid about
16. Happy about
17. Confused about
18. Skeptical of



### Perceived Authenticity

Now that you have read some information about the coming out norms of gay men from the national survey, we would like you to respond to the items below. Importantly, we are interested in how you perceive the gay men whose data you just read about, *not* your personal experiences. We know this may be difficult with limited information, but please respond as best as you can.

1. I think they experience being gay as an authentic part of who they are.
2. I think being gay is meaningful and valuable to them.
3. I think they have freely chosen to be gay.
4. I think they are gay because they think they have to be.
5. I think they feel tense and pressured because of their gay identity.

1  
Strongly  
Disagree

2

3

4

5

6

7

Strongly  
Agree

### Self-Concept Clarity

Please read each item below and indicate how much you disagree or agree with each statement.

1. My beliefs about being gay often conflict with one another.
2. On one day, I might have one opinion of myself being gay and on another day, I might have a different opinion.
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what being gay really means.
4. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my gay identity.
5. My beliefs about being gay seem to change very frequently.
6. If I were asked to describe what my gay identity means, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.
7. In general, I have a clear sense of what being gay means.

1  
Strongly  
Disagree

2

3

4

5

6

7

Strongly  
Agree

### Perceived Ostracism

Please read each item below and indicate the degree to which you disagree or agree.

1. I feel rejected.
2. I feel like an outsider.
3. I feel good about myself.
4. I feel disconnected.
5. I feel liked.
6. I feel invisible.
7. I feel meaningless.
8. My self-esteem is high.
9. I feel powerful.
10. I feel non-existent.
11. I feel superior.
12. I feel excluded.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

### Manipulation Check

Which of the following coming out norms describes the data that you previously reviewed?

- to actively tell other people about being gay and to openly talk about being gay with others
- to *not* actively tell other people about being gay and to *not* openly talk about being gay with others, even though other people might know that they are gay
- to selectively tell other people about being gay, depending on how close they are and how important they are to the person
- to tell all family members but not work friends or less important friends/acquaintances.

## End/Honesty Prompt/Demographics 2

That concludes the study! Next, we will ask you a few more questions about you. Then, you will learn more information regarding the study and will be given information about the completion code to enter on the Mechanical Turk website to ensure payment.

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When using Mechanical Turk to collect data, it is relatively difficult to get data from different ethnic and sexuality groups. This link tried to recruit those who identify as **gay [White/Latino] men**. We realize some participants may mistakenly complete this study but not identify as a **gay [White/Latino]man**. In the space below, please indicate your gender, ethnic identity, and sexual orientation. **You will still get paid if you do not identify as a gay [White/Latino] man;** this is just to ensure our data are as accurate as possible.

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the box that *best* describes your ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Latino/Hispanic
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Multi-ethnic
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Questioning
- Straight but who has sex with men
- Something not listed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **More Information on the Study**

Past research on gay identity formation suggests that gay men need to verbally "come out" in order to fully integrate a gay identity into their self-concept and foster a positive gay identity. However, in a previous set of studies, we found that strong gay identification leads to more verbal disclosure for gay White men but not for gay Latino men. Actually, gay Latino men tended to report "tacit outness", a phenomenon where people may know they are gay but they do not verbally disclose their sexual orientation; their sexual orientation is not verbally disclosed or discussed, as typical coming out messages suggest all non-heterosexuals should do. Thus, it seems that coming out might mean different things to different ethnic groups. The study you participated in today focused on understanding gay White and gay Latino men's reactions toward different coming out norms; the typical coming out norm versus a "tacit" coming out norm.

For this study, all participants first completed a brief demographic questionnaire and then an outness inventory, which assessed the extent to which you are out and verbally discuss it with various people. Afterward, all participants saw two sets of that represented a coming out norm. Some participants saw data that suggested the coming out norm was to disclose one's gay identity to others and openly talk about it. This can be considered the "out" norm. Other participants instead saw data that suggested the coming out norm was to not intentionally verbally disclose one's gay identity to others; that people might know one is gay, but one typically does not disclose or talk about being gay. This can be considered the "tacit" norm.

Please understand that the information (the data to the responses you saw) that you went over were completely made up. We created these data in order to make the information believable. Whereas there is poll data elsewhere that suggests the "out" coming out norm is a norm within the gay community, there is not data that suggests a "tacit" coming out norm. However, there are new studies showing being tacit is an alternative coming out strategy, so far, at least, for gay Latinos. Again, though, the data we showed you was completely bogus.

As noted earlier, all data will be aggregated – we will examine average judgments. It's only by looking at the aggregated data that we can detect any patterns. Your responses will not be individually identifiable in any way.

Thank you so much for your participation! Please answer the question immediately below this. On the following page will be information about payment.