

Literature Review of LGBTQ+ College Student Mental Health Needs and Services Utilization

Introduction

- LGBTQ+ college students are at greater risk of experiencing minority stress due to hostile and heterosexist campus climates (Effrig et al., 2014; McAleavey et al. 2011).
- This context combined with lower social support from peers, and at the institutional level, contribute to higher rates of anxiety, depression, PTSD, substance abuse, mental health related academic impairment, suicide, and burnout (Hood, et al., 2018 ; Wolf, et al., 2016).
- Despite greater utilization of mental health services, LGBTQ+ students report greater unmet needs from on campus services (Dunbar, et al., 2017).

Aims

- To conduct a literature review to understand the mental health needs and utilization patterns of LGBTQ+ college students
- To identify recommendations to support LGBTQ+ college students

Method

Search Strategy

- Databases: PsychINFO, ERIC, Google Scholar
- Terms: "Mental Health", "College Students", "Lesbian", "Transgender", "Sexual Minority", "Gay", "Bisexual", "College Counseling", "Barriers", "Utilization", "Access" and "LGBTQ+"
- Period: From 2009 to present
- Inclusion Criteria: Peer-reviewed, English, US based, related to research aims

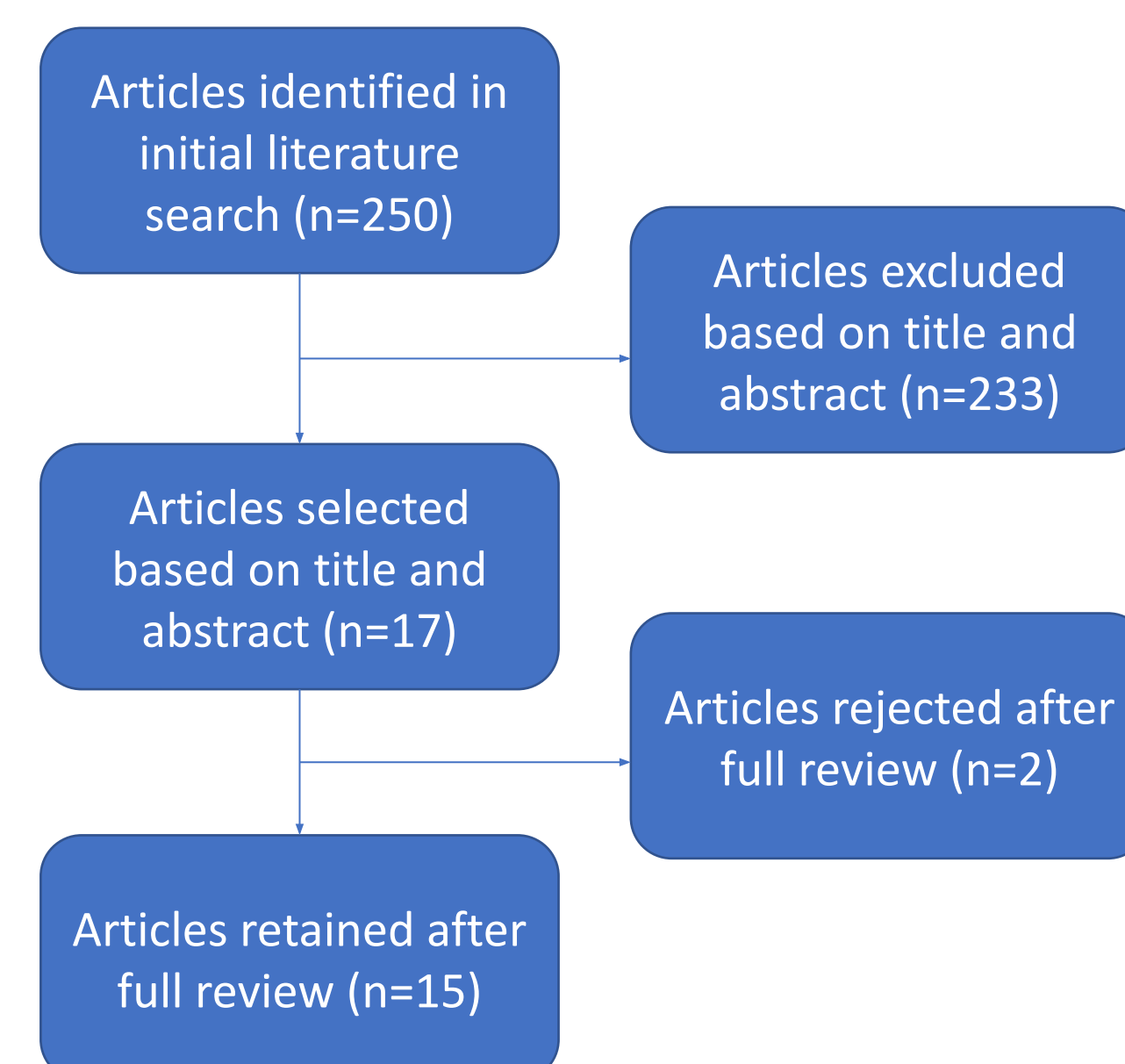


Figure 1. Flowchart of Study Selection Process

Results

→ Selected Characteristics of Studies:

- ◆ Recruited national samples (n = 7)
- ◆ Used qualitative Designs (n = 2)
- ◆ Examined counseling websites (n = 2)

→ LGBTQ+ Utilization:

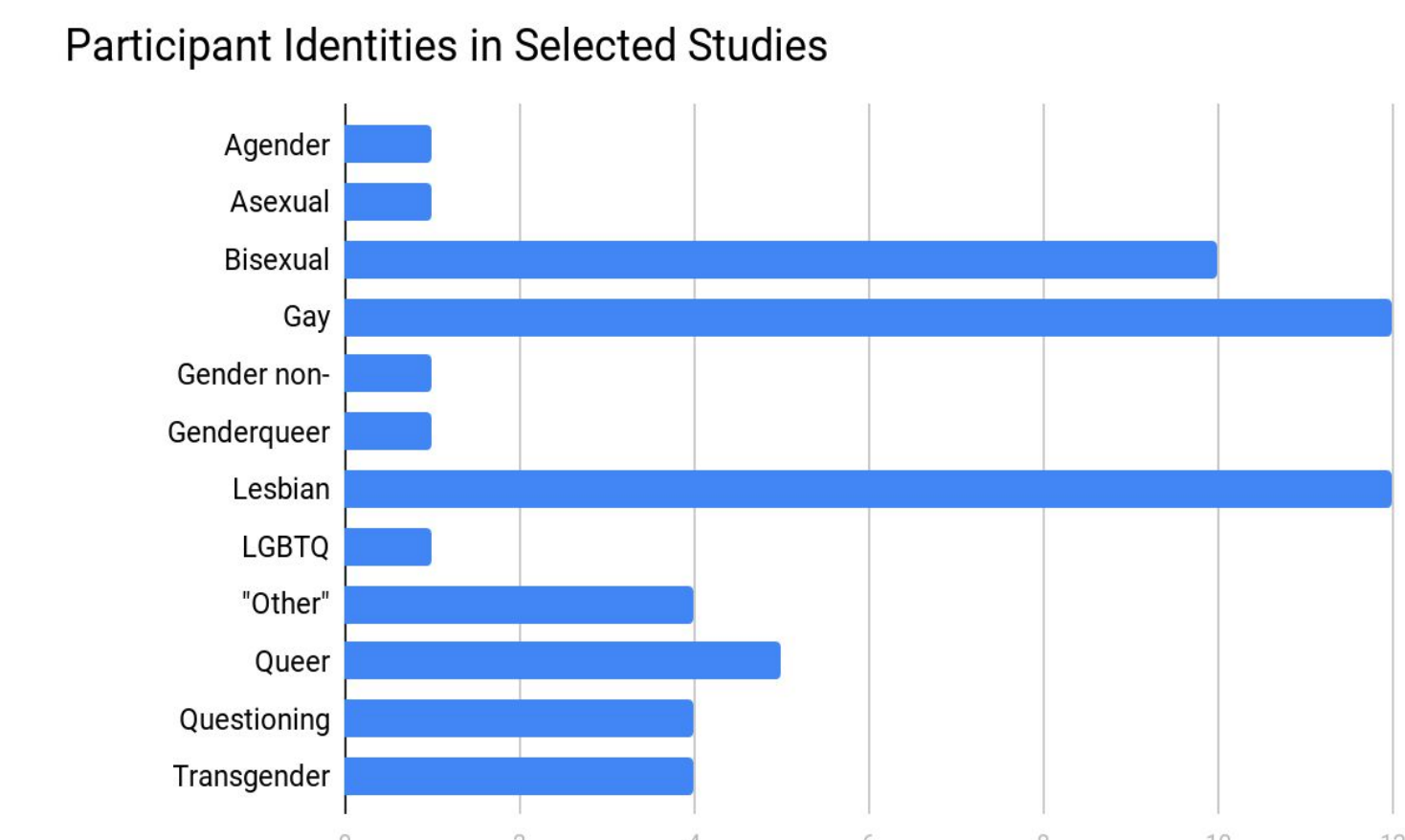
- ◆ Use off-campus services at a higher rate than heterosexual peers
- ◆ Higher reported unmet needs from on campus services

→ Access & Barriers Reported in the Literature:

- ◆ Limited awareness of LGBTQ+ specific resources
- ◆ Fear of discrimination from mental health counselors

→ Recommendations

- ◆ Outreach to LGBTQ+ students to inform them of available services.
- ◆ Train counselors on unique LGBTQ+ needs and remove barriers.
- ◆ Train the community on LGBTQ+ specific social support issues including: (1) how to safely broaden social support, (2) form healthy boundaries, (3) engage in healthy participation in activism to avoid burnout & (4) productively process experiences of discrimination.
- ◆ At the institutional-level, (1) incorporate LGBTQ+ material into curricula, (2) improve retention rates, and (3) respond appropriately to experiences of discrimination.



Discussion

- Counseling centers are encouraged to examine the match between services offered and the actual needs of LGBTQ+ students.
- Future research that examines counseling center websites as a means of advertising LGBTQ+ affirming services is recommended.

Limitations

- Research on LGBTQ+ college students and mental health services is scarce.

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