The
Trans Youth
Health Experiences
Study:
Recruitment,
Representation,
and Centering Youth Voices
in Research
about their Lives

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Cisnormativity = Discourse
Cisnormativity

- Represents the dominant framework for understanding sex/gender binary
- Grounded in historical privileging and naturalization of cisgender bodies & psychic experiences
- Has changed throughout history as ideas about sex & gender has changed
Cisnormativity

WHAT DOES BEING A GIRL MEAN TO YOU?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN WHEN YOU SAY YOU'RE A GIRL?

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
Adolescents and adults who identify as transgender have high rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide.\textsuperscript{13-20} Evidence suggests that an identity of TGD has an increased prevalence among individuals with autism spectrum disorder, but this association is not yet well understood.\textsuperscript{21,22} In 1 retrospective cohort study, 56% of youth who identified as transgender reported previous suicidal ideation, and 31% reported a previous suicide attempt, compared with 22% of those who did not identify as TGD.\textsuperscript{23} Some youth who identify as TGD also experience gender dysphoria, which is a specific diagnosis given to those who experience distress over their gender and/or family relationships, school performance, or other aspects of their life as a consequence of the
Background

- Participants already engaged in care in existing gender clinics; issue of consent
- Overwhelmingly White
- Rely on parent report and/or participants 18+
- Limited inclusion/lack of representation of trans youth
What are the experiences of transgender youth navigating healthcare?

**AIM #1**

**Discourse Analysis**

Analyze the discursive framing of contemporary transgender youth in the extant literature
AIM #2

Describe the narratives of healthcare access among transgender youth

AIM #3

Understand the role that consent plays in regulating access to care for transgender youth
Discourse Analysis

- Arises from linguistic studies, literary criticism, and semiotic performative theories of language
- Explores language as a form of action
- Seeks to understand how people & institutions use language to create & enact identities & activities
- Concerned with power relations
- Issues prominent in DA research include gender issues, issues of racism, media discourses, etc.
Discourse Analysis

Constructing the gendered body? A critical discourse analysis of gender equality schemes in the health sector in England

Sarah Payne
University of Bristol, UK

“A Are You Beginning to See A Pattern Here?”
Family and Medical Discourses Shape the Story of Black Infant Mortality

Elaine R. Cleeton

Metaphors of Distress: Photo-Elicitation Enhances a Discourse Analysis of Parents’ Accounts

Ira Kantrowitz-Gordon¹ and Roxanne Vandermause²

Organ donation agency: A discourse analysis of correspondence between donor and organ recipient families

Dariusz Galasiński¹ and Magi Squè²
Critical Trans Theory

- Is a critical social theory e.g. feminist, critical race, disability studies, etc.
- Interdisciplinarity; concerned w/ material conditions & representation practices

  - How do representational practices impact everyday lives of trans people?
  - How are embodied differences transformed into social hierarchies?
  - What is the relationship of discourse to regulation of gender as a social category?

- Trans people = experts of their own experience
Community Based Participatory Research

- Focused on issues of equity & empowerment
- Knowledge generation & data arise from within communities
- Re-envisioning of young people...

Young people = expert co-creators of knowledge

- Engages youth & their expertise in research conducted about them
• Issue of disclosure/safety

• May be better informed than parents about their health needs

• Represent a vulnerable segment of the larger population of trans youth

• Previously used in research w/ queer youth & research related to HIV/STI testing & services

• Added option of youth advocate during consent & during/after interviews

50% of youth participated without their parents.
• Only recruited outside "clinical samples"
• Outing myself in recruitment materials
• Issue of dominant discourse in strategy & materials

Gender Diversity
Gay City
Lambert House
Facebook
Instagram
Ingersoll
Camp Ten Trees
UW Rainbow Grads
GLSEN

Public Libraries
Youthcare
Friends of Youth
45th Street Clinic
Alphabet Alliance of Color
Entre Hermanos
Garfield Teen Life Center
Oasis Youth Center
The Rainbow Center
Stonewall Youth
Are you or your child between the ages of 6 & 17 years old?
Interested in participating in a research study about your experiences
navigating the healthcare system?

Trans Youth Health Experiences Study

You might be a good fit for this study if...
✓ You or your child are between the ages of 6 and 17 years old
✓ You identify as transgender or non-binary
✓ You are the parent or guardian of a trans or non-binary youth
✓ You live in King County, WA

If you decide to take part in this study, you will...
✓ Participate in a one to two hour interview and answer brief survey questions
✓ Receive a $25 gift card to thank you for your time
✓ Be invited to inform how this study's data is analyzed & shared with healthcare providers

To take part in this study or to learn more
contact Alic Shook at
415.265.6575 or shooka@uw.edu

About the researcher:
Alic Shook, BSN, RN is a pediatric emergency medicine nurse and a doctoral student in the School of Nursing at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is a transgender author and activist, works with healthcare systems to create more inclusive environments for transgender and non-binary youth, and provides training on gender diversity.
trans youth health experiences study

Participate in an interview about your experiences seeking healthcare & receive a $25 gift card

shooka@uw.edu
415.265.6575

Are you between the ages of 13 and 17?
Identify as trans and/or non-binary?
Have something to say about your experiences with healthcare?

Participation involves a one time interview
& you receive a $25 gift card.
Interviews take place anywhere you are comfortable &
where we can ensure your privacy.
You *do not* need parental permission to consent to participation.

For more info contact:
shooka@uw.edu
415.265.6575

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER:
Alic Shook is a trans nurse & health researcher. He is a PhD candidate in the School of Nursing at the University of Washington.
TRANS YOUTH YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

The Trans Youth Health Experiences Study is seeking participants between the ages of 13 & 17

Share your thoughts about your experiences accessing healthcare & receive a $25 gift card

CONTACT US
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Presence of Youth Advocate

7/14 participated without parental permission.
3/7 chose to have youth advocate present.

1/7 youth advocate for consent process only.
2/7 youth advocate for consent process & interviews.

Interview Locations

9 interviewed at home
2 lived independent of parents
2 community spaces for queer & trans youth
2 private spaces on UW campuses
1 public library
He was very happy to give a recommendation
but he wanted to ask
All sorts of questions
before he did that.
Discursive interviews focus on understanding how identity informs healthcare encounters.

Both interviewer/interviewee engage in dialogue.

Interviewer probes for intertextual meaning.

Youth advocate as active participant.

Invite youth to comment on interview process.
• Multiple, overlapping, iterative steps

• Continuous feedback between analysis & data collection

What is discourse doing in the context of the healthcare encounter?

What narratives about trans embodiment does it produce, normalize, pathologize, or disregard?

How do participants make use of the dominant discourse, engage with it, or decide to disregard it entirely?

How do issues of age, autonomy, and authority of knowledge show up for youth in seeking health services & interventions?
Analyst examines own place in the discourse(s)

*Centrality of member-checking

- 2 trans youth participant-researchers
- 2 trans/queer grad student researchers
- 1 faculty mentor
Research & Practice Implications

- Improve delivery of care models
- Increase access to care
- Improve quality of healthcare encounters across multiple sectors of health service provision
- Inform policy development, particularly related to consent for minors
- Inform what questions get asked in research about trans people & trans-therapeutics
Research & Practice
Implications

Over the summer, my mom found my binder. I don't know if she even figured out what it was. But she definitely got rid of it and didn't mention it to me.
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