

Direct and Moderating Effects of Sexual Minority Identity Dimensions on Mental Health

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Sexual minorities experience minority stress, which is associated with mental health disparities. However, specific dimensions of identity may buffer against these disparities. While research in other stigmatized populations has found evidence for direct and moderating effects of identity on mental health, limited research has examined these dimensions in sexual minorities. We explored the potential direct and moderating effects of identity dimensions with regards to sexual stigma and mental health. Findings from 209 lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals revealed higher centrality of sexual orientation identity and more positive private regard predicted lower psychological distress and more positive private regard predicted higher self-esteem. Additionally, centrality moderated the effect of public stigma, such that those who reported higher centrality did not report decrements to self-esteem in the face of public stigma to the extent of those with low centrality. Findings suggest centrality and private regard contribute to the psychological well-being of sexual minorities. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2021 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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