THESIS

OUTCOMES FOR TRANS STUDENTS LIVING IN OPEN HOUSING

Submitted by

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School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2017

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ABSTRACT

OUTCOMES FOR TRANS STUDENTS LIVING IN OPEN HOUSING

Trans students have significantly varied campus climate experiences compared to cisgender heterosexual peers (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012). This study focuses on the function of Open Housing, a gender non-specific housing option for trans individuals, on perceived outcomes. Residents of open housing participated in a brief demographic and satisfaction survey (N=10), and an interview regarding community outcomes (N=3). The participants were coded into LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ to determine identity-specific results. The data revealed a high population of first-generation students, transfer students, non-traditional students, and students with disabilities. Free response survey answers and interviews described five key themes including: (1) Community, (2) Relation to Others – interpersonal skill building and multicultural awareness, (3) Environment, (4) Self Development – identity awareness and positive self-regard, and (5) Authenticity. Responses indicate a lack of choice for trans students in choosing safety and validation of living in this Residential Learning Community, over other residential options. Participants demonstrated significant positive interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes, and subsequent protective factors, from living in the community, although causal or within-group analysis continues to be an opportunity for future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Campus climates for colleges encompass all aspects of the student experience from their perceptions of community, and supportive factors influencing their attrition. Campus climate is defined as, "the current attitudes, behaviors and standards of faculty, staff, administrators, and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential" (Berkeley, 2015, para. 1). Considering these interpersonal and physical environments influence much of student life, it may also greatly influence identity saliency and identity-related experiences. An assessment on 91 trans students' engagement, educational outcomes, and perceptions described, "significant differences were found between transgender students and their peers' perceptions of campus climate" (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012, p. 732). The ability of campus climates to discern strikingly different collegiate experiences between students based on identity demonstrates the subtle, yet influential, nature of these factors.

Unwelcoming campus climates may have an impact on retention and persistence for trans student populations. According to a study, 38% of trans students have sincerely considered leaving higher education due to discrimination, violence, or harassment (Blumenfeld, Frazer, Rankin, & Weber, 2010). Although trans students' attrition is anecdotally known to be strikingly lower than the average rate, tracking has yet to be done within a higher education setting (Mancini, 2011). The National Survey of Student Engagement, otherwise known as NSSE, is a common assessment tool used across public and private institutions of higher education. The NSSE has just now begun including gender and sexual minorities in the survey as of 2016, which colleges may opt in to include for their campus (NSSE, 2017). No long-term data on sexuality and gender minorities exists, including perceptions of learning with peers, experiences with

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faculty, academic challenge, and the campus environment within higher education (Colorado State University, 2017; NSSE, 2017). The lack of LGBTQ+ research for students in colleges exists across campuses, among resources, and between populations alike. There has yet to be adequate data regarding the numbers of trans faculty, students, and staff on campuses creating difficulty in LGBTQ+ resource centers finding a pulse of the populations that they must accommodate for services, funding, staffing, and support (Catalano, 2015). Understanding the needs, gaps in retention, and causes of experiencing different campus climates is pertinent to disseminating resolutions to improve collegiate experiences for trans students.

Trans individuals have varied experiences from their cisgender peers including coming out to themselves and their friends and families; reassessing their relationship to their physical body and gender expression; finding LGBTQ+ community; and navigating cissexism interpersonally and structurally (Refer to Appendix A for operationalized definitions). Trans students often encounter these experiences in the midst of their collegiate experience through the increased freedom to explore their own story and identity (Vaughan & Waehler, 2010). Although climate of inclusion and awareness of LGBTQ+ identities varies based on geographic area and institution, research suggests the overall dissonance with identity and dominant culture persists, including experiences of discrimination (Adams 2015; Dentato, 2012; Fine, 2012). These identity-specific experiences, in conjunction with transition to adulthood, has the potential to significantly impact student life including experience of peer-peer interactions, faculty-student relationships, access to resources, and campus-wide inclusion (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012.

Factors Impacting Campus Climate for Trans Students

Academic Experience

Trans students' interpersonal exchanges within an academic setting have the ability to confound support and academic outcomes in the classroom. Based on a qualitative study conducted with 30 trans students at a large public university, there were consistent findings of trans students being misgendered in the classroom and professors using the wrong name from the university roster before the student was able to establish their actual name (Refer to Appendix A) (Pryor, 2015). These interactions often occur on the first day of class and have the potential to "out" students in front of their peers (Refer to Appendix A). Additionally, outing trans students may compromise their livelihood, support system, safety, and economic stability (Human Rights Campaign, 2017). Although the causal implications are widely understudied, these experiences may cause stress, exacerbate mental health issues, set students apart from their peers, alienate them from the professor, or deter them from attending class entirely (Pryor, 2015). These are instances of well intentioned cissexism compromises the educational experience of trans students.

Gender-minority students receive a varied classroom experience compared to their cisgender peers, which greatly impacts their education. A qualitative study, describes personal accounts of these implications from a transgender student, "…as we are called upon...feeling self-conscious, we might offer a mediocre response. Or we might stop raising our hands in class, and our class-participation grade would suffer" (Adams, 2015, p. 1). These varied interactions may be correlated to differences in academic success and educational outcomes. Research conducted at 101 institutions on student leadership found trans students have significantly less educational gains, demonstrated lower complex cognitive skills, and decreased perceptions of

safety in the classroom - an impact related to campus climate (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012). This alarming difference in collegiate performance has yet to be examined, and researchers caution linking this to ability or intelligence. This may demonstrate a lack of self-confidence in critical thinking skills while among cisgender peers (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012). This suggests a need for additional supportive resources to address barriers to academic success for gender minority students.

Interpersonal Relationships with Peers

Other barriers for trans students within higher education include transphobia and cissexism within peer-to-peer interactions (Refer to Appendix A). A qualitative study of 24 trans youth between the ages of 14 and 21 found that 83% experienced physical harassment, and 75% did not feel safe at school (Sausa, 2005). Cisgender peers using the wrong pronouns, misgendering, and receiving looks of disgust in passing, affects the feeling of safety on campus (Schmalz, 2015). Trans students' campus climate experience reflected social stressors due to the gender-norming pressures, lack of respect among peers, challenges with societal norms (Manning, Pring, & Glider, 2012). Although these are a result of microactions, the impact is severe. One trans participant expressed "[other students] recoiled, and I couldn't thrive or be as successful in that environment as I wanted to be" (Schmalz, 2015).

Trans students report serving in the educator role for their peers and institution, and the resulting subsequent intrapersonal impacts. According to a qualitative study with trans students, participants reported having the role of educating and correcting their peers about their own identity, the gender binary, damaging trans stereotypes, and negative interactions on campus (Mintz, 2012). This experience for gender minorities occurred within employment settings; one student described being invited to trainings for Resident Assistants to teach them how to deal

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with trans residents and to educate residence life professional staff best policies and practices (Catalano, 2015). Being used as an example for best practices instead of hiring an outside expert exposes the student to exploitation and the potential to give incomplete limited advice based on one lived experience (Catalano, 2015). This study reported practitioners not taking responsibility for their own learning and utilizing trans students for recurring departmental training indicating a lack of developing internal training modules to facilitate ongoing learning for cisgender heterosexual staff members (Catalano, 2015).

Trans students being forced into the role to always educate sexual and gender majority peers contributes to distress trans individuals experience. Adams (2015) describes, "…most transgender students experience some level of "minority stress" — chronic stress resulting from interpersonal oppression, prejudice, and discrimination…" (p. 1). Minority stress is a conflicting association between minority and dominant values resulting in dissonance for marginalized individuals regarding experiences within social environments (Dentato, 2012). The presence of lasting and chronic stress on trans students within social settings further negatively impacts their psychological and physical well-being. This stress and cultural dissonance may contribute to further disconnection from class, faculty, and peers, and encourage isolation of trans students.

Trans Inclusive Campus Resources

Access to equitable trans inclusive resources also proves to remain a pervasive issue on college campuses. In surveying 75 trans students regarding campus climates, McKinney (2005) reported a general lack of LGBTQ+ offices on campuses, programming regarding trans issues, inclusive health care resources, and support groups. A 2012 study found fewer than 150 LGBTQ+ offices among over 2,000 higher education institutions within the United States (Fine, 2012). These student services facilitate development and integration for LGBTQ+ students

within particularly hostile campus climates. The structure and presence of LGBTQ+ services is significantly impacted by geographical region and institution type. Institutions within liberally minded political and social climates, and large public institutions had more supportive resources for gender and sexual minorities. Conversely, institutions in more conservative areas curtailed the creation of LGBTQ+ inclusive spaces (Fine, 2012). Fostering trans inclusion within resources and practitioners' skills are important in serving LGBTQ+ populations.

Lack of culturally competent resources was exhibited structurally and interpersonally. McKinney (2005) found trans college students tend to be reluctant in accessing counseling services due to hearing from peers that clinicians were unknowledgeable about LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. This study revealed a severe lack of trans inclusive resources on college campuses, which prompts a need for improvement in systems of support within higher education (McKinney, 2005). According to a qualitative study on 25 transmen attending colleges in New England, there was a challenge of inconsistent, "application of inclusive practices and unclear policies such as name or gender change on documents" (Catalano, 2015, p. 421). The failure of structural support in institutions caused stressors for transmen in their college experience (Catalano, 2015). Additionally, research demonstrates a lack of trans-centered organizations and visibility to gather trans students together outside of LGB organizations. Trans students and issues are often conflated with the LGBTQ+ umbrella, which simultaneously creates community as it overshadows trans students within a focus on primarily heterosexism, sexual orientation, and homophobia (Catalano, 2015).

A major challenge for trans students includes finding accessible restrooms and safe spaces on campus. Trans students expressed consistent distress in finding gender-inclusive bathrooms that were safe for use, and students needing to map out their route to an accessible

restroom caused difficulties in maintaining attention in class (Schmalz, 2015). Due to the lack of accessible restrooms, Herman (2013) found 54% of trans respondents suffered from dehydration, urinary tract infections, and kidney infections as a result of avoiding using public restrooms. Physical safety is a primary concern for trans students, this study found 70% of respondents experienced being denied access, verbally harassed, or physically assaulted in public restrooms (Herman, 2013). Additionally, students conveyed feeling unsafe on campus due to the gender-inclusive spaces being unmonitored or unpopulated, and being unable to express their gender due to concerns of safety (Schmalz, 2015). According to Catalano's study on transmen, the most referenced challenge on campus was the lack of a place to live that felt safe, and of availability of gender-inclusive or gender- neutral restrooms (2015). Safety for trans students is an ever-present concern on college campuses. Based on the 2016 national NSSE data, gender minority students disagreed with statements of feeling safety and belonging on campus more than twice as often than their cisgender peers (NSSE, 2017). Nearly 50% of respondents who identified with 'another gender identity' reported not feeling valued by the institution and not feeling like part of the campus community, opposed to roughly 25% of men and women who felt similarly (NSSE, 2017). Campus ecology of facilities, access, and visibility all have an influence on trans students' perception of daily safety and ability to concentrate within classrooms, which are privileges cisgender individuals take for granted (Wilson, 2016). This is a simple need that has major implications of well-being, safety, and ability to be authentic.

Risk Factors and Impacts on Trans Students

Based on the subversive treatment and systematic challenges for trans students, there are grave widespread public health implications. A study on LGBTQ+ youth found immediate and long-term impacts of victimization including self-harm, suicidal ideation, and negative affect

from experiencing bullying in school, although the extent of this impact is not fully understood (Effrig, Bleschke, & Locke, 2011; Rivers, 2001). A study conducted among 66 nation-wide counseling centers on college campuses regarding mental health found trans students were twice as likely to engage in self-harm behavior and three times more likely to attempt suicide than their cisgender peers (Effrig, Bleschke, & Locke, 2011). A study on 290 transgender participants within an educational setting found the impact of gender-based victimization resulted in 28.5% of respondents having a history of suicide attempt. Of those who have history of attempt, 32.5% had made one attempt, 28.6% had two attempts, and 39% had three or more attempts (Goldblum, Testa, Pflum, Hendricks, Bradford, Bongar, & Roberts, Michael, 2012).

Trans individuals also experience economic and housing insecurities. Based on national statics, of the 1.6 million homeless youth approximately 40% are gender or sexual minorities (National Center of Transgender Equality, 2017). This disparity exists due to continued discrimination of trans individuals and familial rejection. One in ten trans individuals has been evicted from their homes due to their gender identity, and one in five trans individuals have been discriminated when seeking housing (National Center of Transgender Equality, 2017). The widespread persistence of trans homelessness prompts a need for more secure housing in higher education.

Additionally, LGBTQ+ individuals show heightened drug and alcohol use, attributed to normalized use in the community and identity stressors, a risk factor on college campuses (Balsam, Molina, & Lehavot, 2013; Manning, Pring, & Glider, 2012). Transwomen show increased alcohol (44%), marijuana (20%), and illicit drug use (26.7%) (Balsam, Molina, & Lehavot, 2013). Studies show transmen inject substances at least once in their lifetime (4-21%). Research demonstrates psychedelics and stimulants as the most frequent illicit substance use in

trans populations (Balsam, Molina, & Lehavot, 2013). These substance abuse issues in

LGBTQ+ populations are related to minority stress, victimization, comorbid mental health

issues, and homelessness, among other factors (Balsam, Molina, & Lehavot, 2013). These risk

factors may be intervened through applying protective and supportive factors demonstrated in

LGBTQ+ literature.

Protective Factors for Trans Students

Although trans students experience significantly varied campus climates and diminished

educational experiences, there are influential supportive factors in the face of pervasive

cissexism and transphobia. Interventions that resulted in large reductions and complete

reductions in suicidal ideation among trans individuals include increased social support,

diminished transphobia, completing necessary hormonal therapy and surgeries, parental support

for gender identity, and having personal identification documents changed to their preferred

gender (Bauer, Scheim, Pyne, Travers, & Hammond, 2015). Other protective factors include the

use of social media and online exploration on LGBTQ+ identity development and connection.

Interviews with 32 LGBTQ+ youth found online platforms and anonymity in the internet

supported learning about sexual health resources, finding romantic partners and friendships,

connecting with LGBTQ+ centered events and services they would otherwise be unable to find

(Bigelow & Mustanski, 2013). This shows the benefit in cyber communities and online

connections in cultivating safe space for relationships, community, and identity exploration for

LGBTQ people. Higher education settings provide opportunities for this interpersonal and

structural support in policy, programming, and forming connections.

Coming out to oneself and others are found to have a positive impact on growth and

personal development. A study on 418 gay and lesbian adults found that the stress experienced

from coming out often transforms into opportunities of interpersonal and intrapersonal growth. Participants demonstrated individualistic growth related to self-perception, including personal sexual minority identity, biopsychosocial well being, and authenticity/honesty (Vaughan & Waehler, 2010). Collectivist growth included, "positive perceptions of others and in self-relation to others: more LGBT-affirming views, a sense of belonging, and a collective LG identity" (Vaughan & Waehler, p. 101). This research demonstrates two benefits in coming out: improvements on how they perceive LGBTQ+ peers and their relationships, and improvements on how they perceive themselves. Another benefit was found in individuals confronting heterosexism to build a positive minority identity with individual gains in, "… social skills and social comfort, a stronger personal identity, and improvements in existing romantic relationships…" (Vaughan & Waehler, 2010, p. 101). Although this study demonstrates the impact of coming out and stresses associated with sexual minority experience, there are parallels of relatable and even overlapping experience for gender minorities in being authentic in their identities.

Lastly, LGBTQ+ individuals participating in a collective community are shown to have positive impacts. Twenty-nine LGBTQ+ youth of color were assessed in a qualitative study including interviews, concept mapping, and an ecological analysis to gather data on the youth's meaning of the group space, their relational interactions, and each member's psychological experience of the space (Gamarel, Walker, Rivera, & Golub, 2014). The themes found within the data analysis include the youth generating their own "homespace" in the center, and building a sense of "we". LGBTQ+ participants were able to expand on their identities, to internalize safety cues, to find a sense of pride and empowerment, and perceived a sense of a collective identity with the group (Gamarel, Walker, Rivera, & Golub, 2014). This demonstrated a

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collective protective factor, and intra/interpersonal development from connecting with other

LGBTQ+ peers in a shared space.

Educational Alliance in Student Affairs

There are substantial opportunities for student affairs and universities' supportive

resources to foster increased attrition and connection among trans students. Dugan, Kusel, and

Simounet (2012) found "…transgender students' rates of participation in educationally

meaningful experiences (e.g., research with a faculty member, internships, community service,

living-learning programs)… did not vary from those reported by nontransgender [peers]" (p.

732). Although there are increased negative implications associated with cisgenderism within

college classrooms, trans students are remaining engaged within co-curricular experiences

outside of the classroom. This engagement provides advantageous positions for practitioners in

supporting trans students through their collegiate experience.

As opportunities of identity-alienation arise in classrooms, educators have the ability to

create alliances of support with trans students. A qualitative study of gender-minority students

found when professors diligently responded to and addressed issues of inclusion of trans

students; the individual's trust and respect for the instructor were strengthened (Pryor, 2015).

The difference in engagement or disengagement depended on professors responding with action

or inaction, or affirmations or dissent, which influenced students' participation and feeling of

inclusion (Pryor, 2015). A study of transmen found participants sought out one at least one ally

in the educational setting to better weather interpersonal hardships. Participants defined this

differently including a place of support, one person who will always "have their back", networks

of people who understand trans identity, and a space for students to talk about their identity

(Catalano, 2015). Microactions have the potential to create a significant impact on the success,

mental well-being, and the academic alliance between students and professors. In fact, one study demonstrates how insignificant the change may be for it to make a larger impact on the LGBTQ+ community. Trans students expressed low thresholds for institutional responses that felt supportive to them, including support that was implicitly problematic or exploitive (Catalano, 2015). Some of these experiences include recognizing trans students' experiences, even though institutions do nothing to address the cause of these issues (Catalano, 2015). Institutions have the ability to make a profound impact trans students' perception of campus climate, retention, and academic persistence, even through seemingly minute efforts.

Open Housing

The Open Housing community was proposed as a Residential Learning Community at Colorado State University with existing data regarding the needs and interest of students (Housing and Dining Services, 2017). A survey conducted at Colorado State University in March 2010 by the Residence Hall Association sampled 1,785 participants in the residence halls through an online survey. The data shows 68% of respondents agreed this housing option would foster an inclusive community, and 18% disagreed with the statement. Of the respondents, 607 indicated they would be more likely to return to campus if Open Housing was an option. Lastly, researchers gathered demographic data to show 91% of respondents identified as heterosexual showing this community as a benefit for those outside of the LGBTQ community as well (RHA, 2010) (Refer to Appendix E). Existing literature outside of this institution demonstrates a need for this community at other colleges.

The Yale College Council at Yale University (2013) conducted a study to assess the need for expanding a community of gender-neutral housing. A survey was sent out the 2012 - 2013 academic year to all students, and of the 500 respondents, 72% of freshmen and 60% of

sophomores support expanding gender-neutral housing options for sophomores. Additionally, 69% of respondents would be interested in living in gender open housing options. Researchers gathered qualitative and quantitative data on current outcomes of students living in this community; 93% of respondents indicated that gender-neutral housing has positively impacted their residential experience, and 1% respondents disagreed (Yale College Council, 2013). This survey was emailed out to students who self-selected responses. It is unclear the statistical analysis, the survey questions, and demographic data that was extrapolated in this study. This was the only assessment found in the literature review regarding gender open housing; there is much need for additional research in this area.

Open Housing at Colorado State University

Open Housing is a Residential Learning Community (RLC) in Residence Life, which consists of a floor within Summit Hall of 21 room assignments, which are devoid of gender restrictions or separation based on gender. This RLC has been in existence for three academic years since Fall 2013, and was a politicized decision amid a conservative local community. The PRIDE Resource Center and Residence Life advocated on behalf of this need to create the community. According to the program proposal, this floor serves diverse students including gender non-conforming students, LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, international students, and students with mental health concerns (Housing and Dining, 2017) (Refer to Appendix B). Students of any gender are able to live with each other in a community that celebrates inclusion and openness of identity. The philosophy of Open Housing is to support Colorado State University's non-discrimination policy, to support the Residence Life Mission, and to support particular strategic goals for the university (Housing and Dining, 2017; RHA, 2010).

To be placed in Open Housing students must complete a supplementary application upon applying for a housing assignment in Residence Life. A review process ensues by the Assistant Director of Residence Life for Academic Initiatives and the Residence Director to determine if the student's need align with the purpose of the community, through indicating a specific purpose for wanting to live in a gender open assignment. If students are selected, they are notified assigned to a room within the community. Students who are seeking to be part of the community mid-year must meet with the Residence Director and Assistant Residence Director of Summit Hall to decide if the student's values would positively benefit the community. This program selects residents on a case-by-case basis depending on their needs of accommodation. Due to the political discourse regarding this program and the brevity of its existence, this program does not have any developmental objectives or structure beyond the application process.

CHAPTER 2

Method

Research Questions

This community came into existence during a turbulent political era regarding LGBTQ+ identities. In the process of creating this program, the administrative leadership at Colorado State University balanced the need of gender-open housing and the controversial nature of supporting LGBTQ+ students within a locally conservative community. The community proposal passed after embedding transgender students' needs with other less-controversial stakeholders in the program proposal, including international students and students with disabilities (personal communication, S. Portillos, January, 2017). The program was initiated through the need for housing accommodations for transgender and gender non-conforming students; now it exists as open housing for anyone who may justify the need for a gender open housing option. As a result, this assessment aimed to identify the demographics of the population utilizing Open Housing, and the community outcomes for students. Understanding the population served, and developmental objectives may prompt intentional programming regarding gender and sexual minorities, or a collaborative relationship between Open Housing and the PRIDE Resource Center. The research questions included:

1. What percentage of students living in Open Housing identifies within the target populations: LGBTQ+, students with disabilities, and international students?

2. What learning, developmental, and community outcomes do residents gain through living in Open Housing?

Targeted Stakeholders

The program stakeholders who are affected by the assessment include Open Housing residents, future students eligible for the community, the Resident Assistant, Summit Residence Hall, and the PRIDE Resource Center. Due to the growing need to support students with diverse identities amid a changing campus and political climate, there is exigent demand for gender-open housing. Justifying the need and outcomes of this program will further validate the need for Open Housing and ensure the continuation in the future.

The evaluation stakeholders, who may use the results of this evaluation, include Residence Life personnel, the Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives, the PRIDE Resource Center, and other higher education institutions that have interest in developing this community. In understanding the impact of Open Housing the residents and Colorado State University community, Housing and Dining may inform future development of the program. Lastly, understanding demographics of the community will provide insight into the accessibility and visibility of the program to determine how staff may engage in developing the floor while managing the political implications.

Assessment Framework

Epistemologically, the researcher has a personal relationship with the LGBTQ+ community at Colorado State University, which increased understanding of these identities to better structure an inclusive assessment (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). This method exposed the assessment to evaluator bias, which created limitations in the evaluation. However, the researcher did not have personal closeness with the individual participants and their relationship to their LGBTQ+ identity. Ontologically, the affirmative impact of Open Housing is co-constructed by the participants and the evaluator, which was justified through gathering students'

qualitative stories and extrapolating the quantitative data (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). From an

axiological perspective, this evaluation closely aligns with the constructivist paradigm, which

emphasizes multiple socially constructed realities and utilizes mixed methods to record these

variations (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). This methodology is further explained in the following

sections.

Participants

The conceptual population for this assessment included all LGBTQ+ identified residents

currently living in the Open Housing community; however, since the floor is open to any student

interested in not having gender-specific housing, the operational population included any

resident currently living in the community (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). This included students

who self-selected this housing option and who were selected based on the need to live in a space

void of gender restrictions, regardless of identifying with the target populations of LGBTQ+

identity, international student, or having a disability. Seventeen students living in the hall were

asked to take this survey, and ten residents completed the survey.

Measures

The residents were sent a link via email to anonymously complete the survey, which did

not track student identification or email. The 10-question survey asked key university markers

including the student's year classification in higher education, and identity as a resident student,

out-of-state student, transfer student, first-generation student, international student, or undeclared

student. Students were asked their gender, sexuality, and if they identify as having a physical or

mental disability (Refer to appendix B). The survey solicited responding to Likert agreement

scales to statements indicating ability to express their identities authentically, their ability to

transition, being valued in their identities and beliefs, and recommending the community as a

result of living in Open Housing. The measure did not allow for any neutral fixed response; students were forced to choose a spectrum of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The survey had a free response question for residents to identify three outcomes they have gained from living in the community (Refer to appendix B). The survey concluded students having the option to opt into being contacted to participate in an interview.

The interview included six open-ended questions that the researcher asked of those participants who chose to be contacted. The questions were constructed based on the survey data to gather further information regarding the inclusivity of living in the community, and educational outcomes regarding self and others. Additionally, the researcher asked the "magic wand" question to determine their perspective of an ideal community, and if they would recommend the community to their peers. The interview questions included:

1. What are your salient identities? What are your pronouns?

2. How has the Open Housing community created an inclusive living environment for you with your identities?

3. What have you learned about diversity and identity through living in this community?

4. What have you learned about yourself through living in this community?

5. If you could imagine a community wholly supportive of your identities and experiences, what would it look or feel like?

6. Would you recommend Open Housing to your peers? Why or why not?

Methods

This assessment was a descriptive mixed-methods sequential design, meaning the results of the survey informed subsequent interview questions (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). A survey assessed program outcomes, community satisfaction, and demographic data. The survey was a

mixed-methods design and utilized Likert scale, and free response measures on the self-perceived program outcomes. This assessment did not invoke causal interpretations due a lack of control group or equivalent group being included. This study assessed correlational associations between participating in Open Housing and program outcomes. Interview questions were developed based on the survey data, which gauged participants' self-determined development and learning as a result of participating in the community.

Survey data was collected through qualitative and quantitative measures via *Campus Labs Baseline*. Participants' emails were retrieved from the Assistant Director of Academic Initiatives who maintains all Housing and Dining applications for Residential Learning Communities. Before sending out the assessment link, the researcher introduced herself during a floor meeting to explain the purpose of the study and to develop trust within the community. Based on the epistemological framework, the participants having trusted the researcher was imperative when assessing sensitive information about sexuality, gender, and identity-related experiences. Students who gave email information upon concluding the survey were individually contacted regarding their interest in participating in an interview. Participants met individually with the researcher and interviews were audio recorded using *Evernote* while the researcher recorded notes (Evernote, 2017). Following the interview, the audio recordings were transcribed to supplement the existing notes.

Data Analysis

The survey data was exported to *Excel* and identities of the participants remained anonymous to the researcher except emails from those who consented to being contacted. The survey responses were cross-referenced with gender, sexuality, disability status, and international student status. The number of LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ students were identified through

coding participants as a gender minority (transgender or gender-non conforming), sexual minority (LGBQ+), gender majority (cisgender), sexual majority (heterosexual), or a combination of minority and majority status (i.e. heterosexual transman). Any participant who was coded as a gender or sexual minority was tagged as LGBTQ+; all others were tagged as non-LGBTQ+; participants who chose not to disclose their identities were tagged as 'Unknown' (Table 2). Survey responses were categorized based on LGBTQ+, non-LGBTQ+, or unknown status.

The survey free responses were open coded to assess initial themes and axial codes were developed that captured 6 key themes: self, relation to others, environment, community, authenticity, and other (Table 3). The qualitative survey data was grouped based on axial coding; each statement was aligned into the respective themed categories. These categories were used to code the transcribed interviews, which were color-coded and evaluated based on common words between the tagged statements. All qualitative data was coded for frequency, magnitude, and structure. The qualitative data was selectively coded to centralize two themes, which factored in individual responses, frequency, and relationship of themes (Table 3).

Limitations

Due to the limited number of scholarly sources regarding trans experiences within higher education, some research within the literature review is from non-peer reviewed sources. Although some research are non-scholarly, all are credible and respected sources. The lack of available peer-review sources shows the true extent of the lack of research conducted within this population, within open housing, and the need of further research regarding trans experiences within higher education. There is a lack of recent qualitative accounts of microaggressions and discrimination that trans students experience within classrooms, with staff, and among peers,

especially current studies to speak to the shifting societal perceptions of LGBTQ+ people. There is a lack of current research based on the social and health implications of trans people post-2016 election, and the impact of the aggressive anti-LGBTQ+ legislation from the current administration. Many of these present experiences are found within blogs, newspaper publications, and other non-peer reviewed sources. Additionally, many past studies on LGBTQ+ individuals lack respect for the participants' identities and holistic experience as trans, particularly since transgender was regarded as a mental illness in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders until 2013 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Many studies lack within-group qualitative and quantitative analysis of trans experiences, and conflate experiences of all LGBTQ+ individuals within research (Savin-Williams, 2001). This limits the correlative and causal outcomes in research as the identity groups are under-defined by researchers. As safety is a concern for trans individuals regarding outness, accessing an often hidden community poses limitations for research. Researchers studying trans experiences often recruit participants based on concerns and issues, not trans identity development or experience (Savin-Williams, 2001). This may skew results more negatively, since trans students who are not struggling or students who do not need Open Housing may not be included within data. As trans students gain more access to resources, language, and voice, there are many opportunities to address these gaps in research.

Limitations regarding the methodology include a lack of qualitative data from gathering three interviews of the ten surveyed, and a lack of quantitative data. The data collected has threat to external validity in the lack of generalizability of this data to other populations and institutions. Based on the lack of control or comparison group the researcher will be unable to draw causal claims from the data. Additionally, threats to internal validity include the

researcher's personal bias in supporting Open Housing within residence life, being an internal evaluator to the program, and the being personally involvement in the local LGBTQ+ community. However, this relationship allows the researcher to have increased trust and accessibility to the population. No other researchers were involved in coding the data and determining themes, including outside stakeholders in coding the qualitative data and evaluating the relevancy of survey and focus group questions. The researcher interviewed, transcribed, and coded the interviews alone, which are limitation in both in the methodology and analysis. Additionally, the interview contained a leading question, including Question 3 (Refer to Appendix D). This may have lead participants to discuss positives of living in a community and deterred from negative feedback. Lastly, since the survey is self-reported demographics and satisfaction, students may not be wholly honest on these measures or their feelings regarding the community may change over time.

CHAPTER 3

Results

Quantitative Data

Upon surveying the participants of Open Housing on their experiences within the

community, it was found that many outcomes aligned with the initial intent of the community.

All 17 residents living in Open Housing were sent a link to the survey on Campus Labs, in which

10 completed the assessment. The response rate was 59%, a high response rate, increasing the

internal validity of the assessment. The survey shows diversity in class-status and other

university designations including 40% identified as first generation students, 20% as non-

traditional students, 20% as transfer students, and 20% as out-of-state students (Refer to Table

1). None of the respondents reported identifying as an international student population, a key

target group in the initial program proposal for Open Housing.

Table 1: Student University Markers

Variable	Number of Respondents
Resident Student	7
Out-of-State	2
Transfer	2
First-Generation	4
International	0
Non-Traditional	2
$N = 10$	

A variety of identity markers were used to categorize and determine the population

utilizing the learning community. The options were coded between three options: cisgender

(Male, Female), transgender (Transgender, Gender Queer, Agender, and Other), and 'prefer not

to answer'. This was to determine the percent of gender minority respondents compared to

cisgender residents. The demographic results revealed 3% male, 3% female, and 4% transgender (Refer to Figure 1). Sexuality was coded into sexuality majority (Heterosexual), sexuality minorities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Pansexual, Asexual, and Other), and 'prefer not to answer'. The results showed 30% identified as sexual majority, 60% identified as sexual minorities, and 10% preferred not to answer the question (Refer to Figure 1). The survey gathered data regarding self-identified physical or mental disability status with 20% identifying with having a disability, 60% not having a disability, and 20% preferring not to answer (Refer to Figure 2). These demographic variables demonstrate that the program is serving the target communities, those with LGBTQ+ identities and those with mental or physical disabilities.
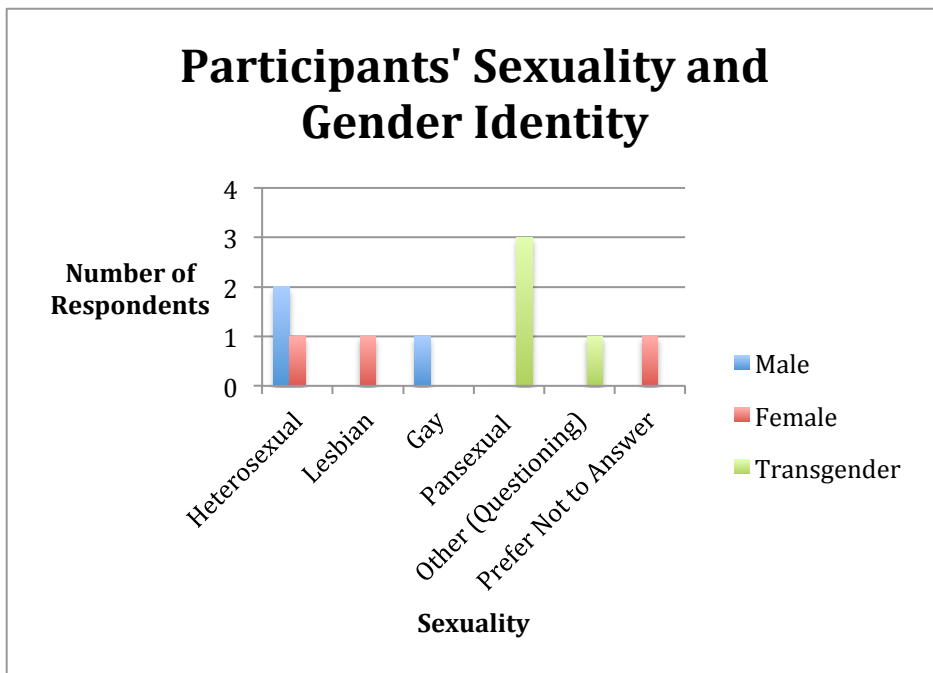

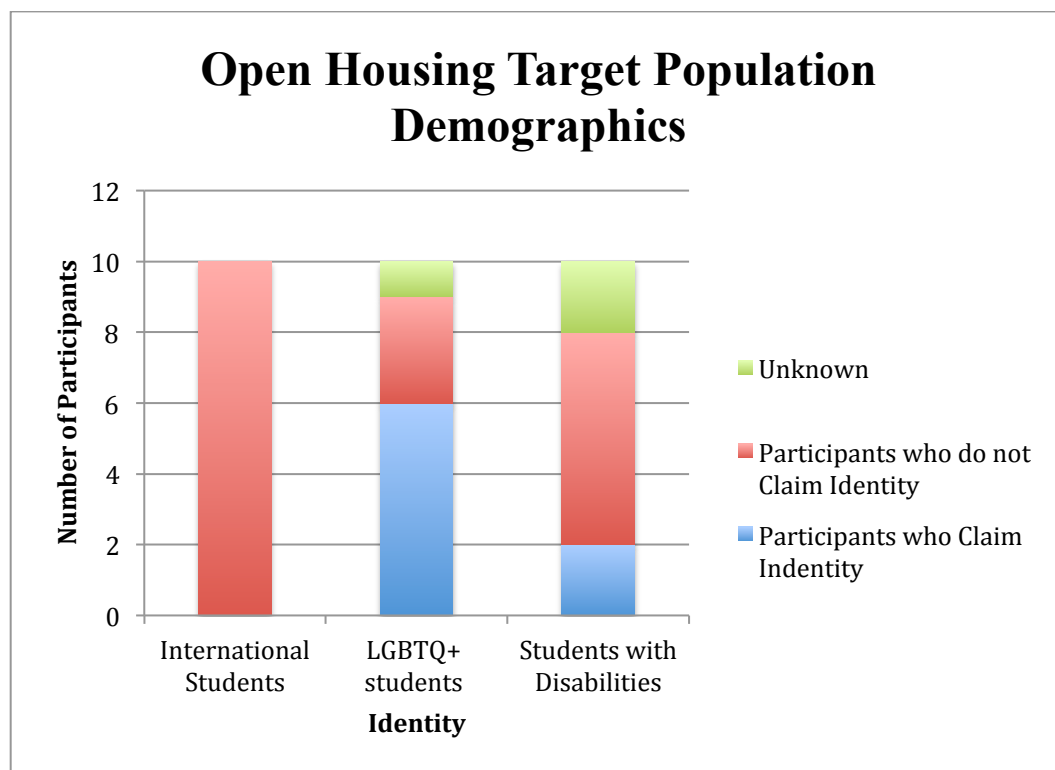**Figure 1: Participants' Sexuality and Gender Identity**

Open Housing Target Population Demographics

Figure 2: Open Housing Target Population Demographics

The survey gathered participants' perception of the Open Housing community based on a Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, and Strongly Agree). Participants responded to a series of statements according to their experience in the community. The respondents' gender and sexuality identities were coded as LGBTQ+ identified, non-LGBTQ+ identified, or unknown status through cross-referencing sexuality and gender identity responses. For example, the two students who responded with identifying as male and heterosexual were coded as non-LGBTQ+ since both identities have social dominance (Refer to Figure 1 and 2, and Table 2). The student who identified as male and as gay was coded as LGBTQ+ since the responded holds a minoritized sexuality and a socially dominant gender identity, which still codes the student as a member of the LGBTQ+ identity. The only student who was coded as 'unknown' reported as 'prefer not to respond' in the sexuality measure, and identified female in the gender measure (Table 2; Figure 2). Since it is

unclear why the student decided not to disclose their sexuality, they were not included in either

LGBTQ+ or non-LGBTQ+ marker. The Likert scale responses were categorized into LGBTQ+,

non-LGBTQ+ identity, and 'unknown' markers to disseminate the data.

Table 2: Sexuality and Gender Identity Markers
N=10

	Gender			Coded Designations		
Sexuality	Male	Female	Transgender	LGBTQ+	Non-LGBTQ+	Unknown
Heterosexual	2	1	0	0	3	0
Lesbian	0	1	0	1	0	0
Gay	1	0	0	1	0	0
Pansexual	0	0	3	3	0	0
Other*	0	0	1	1	0	0
Prefer Not to Answer	0	1	0	0	0	1

*Responded who marked 'Other' in sexuality measure specified 'No idea' in the open field. This
was coded as 'questioning sexuality' and coded as LGBTQ+

According to the statement, "I am able to express my identities more authentically within

Open Housing community", 70% of students strongly agreed with the statement and 30%

moderately agreed (Figure 3). In response to the statement, "The Open Housing Community has

helped me transition to college", 50% of participants strongly agreed, 10% moderately agreed,

and 40% slightly agreed (Figure 4). Survey responses to the statement, "My identities and

beliefs are valued by the community in Open Housing", indicate 60% strongly agreed, 20%

moderately agreed, and 20% slightly agreed (Figure 5). In response to the statement, "I would

recommend living in Open Housing to my Peers", 60% strongly agreed, 20% moderately agreed,

10% slightly disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed (Figure 6). This measure had more apparent

LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ differences in the survey response; the participant who strongly

disagreed is non-LGBTQ+ identified, and the participant who slightly disagreed was coded as

'unknown'. All LGBTQ+ identified participants moderately agreed or strongly agreed with the

statement. All other measures did not have significant identity response differences, yet were

included in Tables 3 – 6.

I am able to express my identities more authentically within the Open Housing community

Figure 3

The Open Housing community has helped me transition to college

Figure 4

My identities and beliefs are valued by the community in Open Housing

Figure 5

I would recommend living in Open Housing to my peers
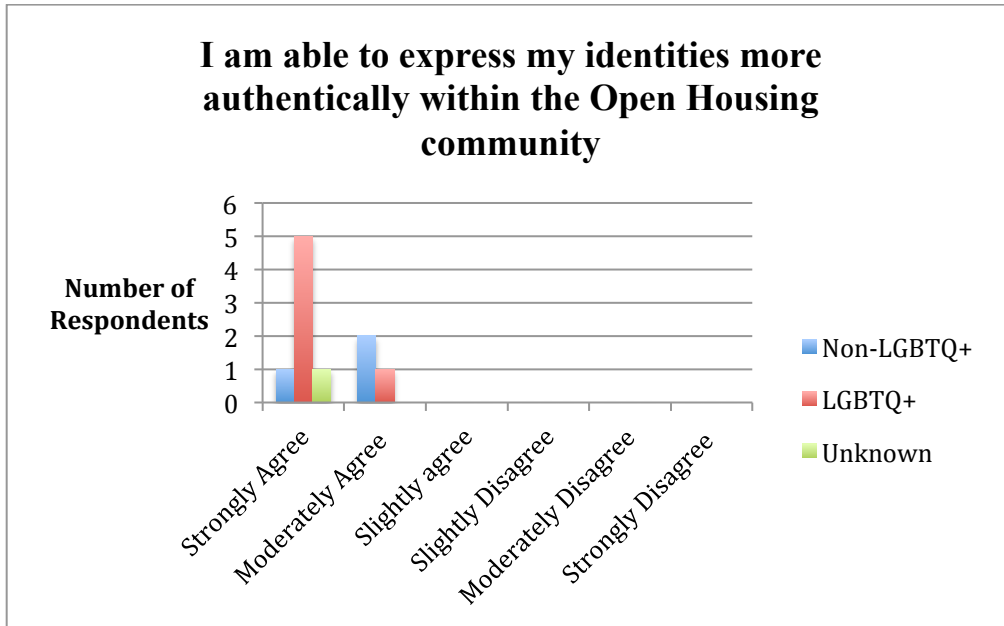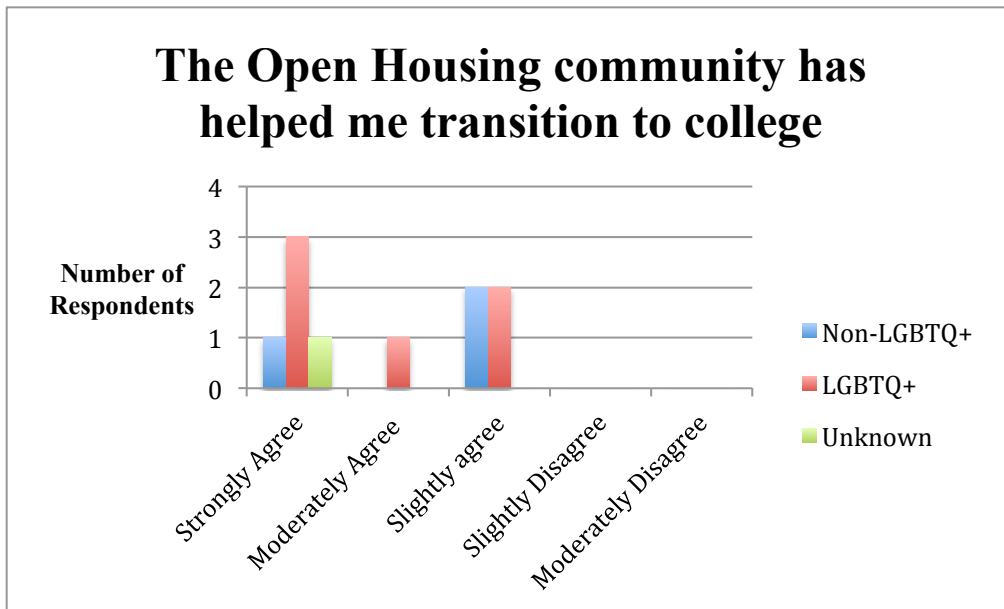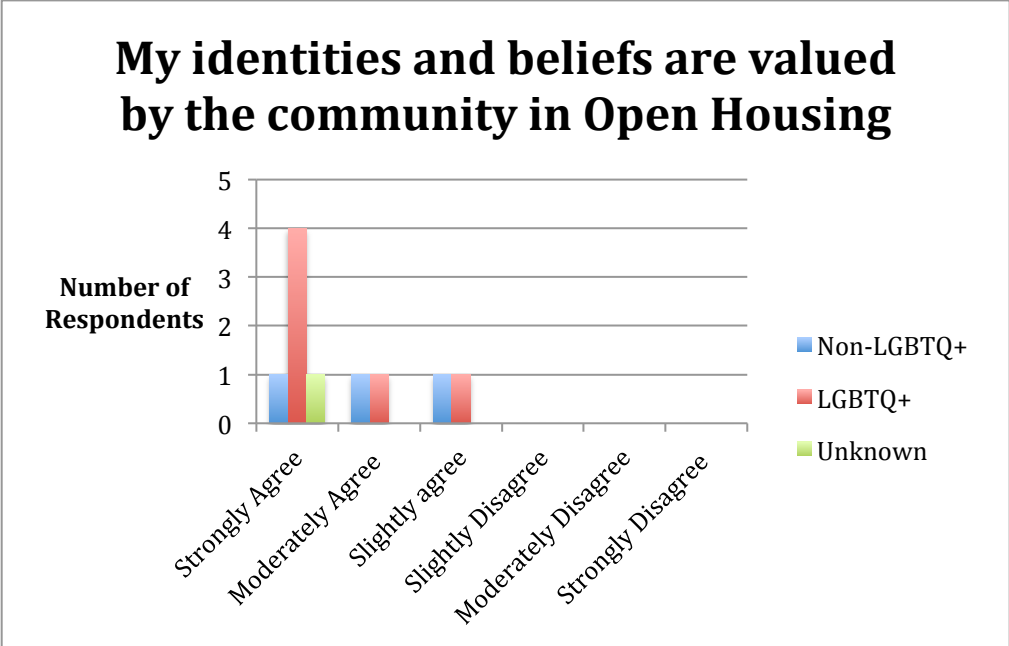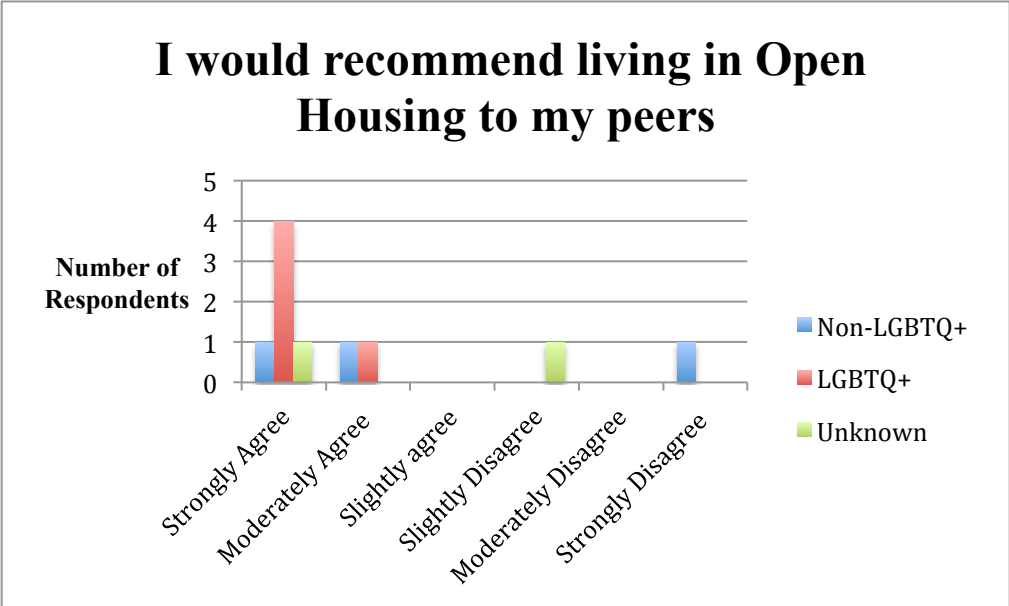
Figure 6

Qualitative Data

Based on the data collected in the survey on the open response measure, and the individual interviews with participants, several themes were extrapolated for outcomes of living in Open Housing. The free response measure of the survey asked, "What are three outcomes you have gained from living in this learning community?" This elicited 29 written responses, 3 of these responses were "N/A" and rendered unable to be coded. The participants interviewed are all current residents of the Open Housing community and are current students at Colorado State University. One of the interviewees is the Resident Assistant (RA) of the floor, and the other two are not student staff for Housing and Dining. *Student 1* uses she/her/hers pronouns, self identifies as a person of color, is lesbian, and is a junior studying communications. She is the current RA of Open Housing and previously resided as the RA in a non-residential learning community in conventional gendered housing in Summit Hall. *Student 2* is a transfer student with an Associates degree, uses he/him/his pronouns, and identifies as Bigender and Polyamorous. He is a German and Political Science Major, and his first year living in Open Housing. *Student 3* is a first year student, white, from Colorado, and uses he/him/his pronouns. He identifies as transmale, demisexual, and pansexual. Based on the interviews and surveys, the data was coded into six themes: (1) Community, (2) Relation to Others – interpersonal skill building and multicultural awareness, (3) Environment, (4) Self Development – identity awareness and positive self-regard, (5) Authenticity, (6) Other – data that did not apply to any of the previous categories. All six themes are explained in the next sections in order of frequency of occurrence throughout the transcripts. The meaning of Open Housing is represented through frequency of the themes and qualitative data of students' individual voices.

Community

        Community was the most prevalent and discussed theme among participants within the survey and the interviews. In the free response measure of the survey, the community themes had a frequency of 34.48% of responses (Table 3). Community was expressed in the interviews and surveys through coding statements according to words such as: home, community, belonging, in-group, shared, together, share, and friend. Some of the statements from the survey include (Appendix D):

        "A friend group that respects me"

        "Friends that I know will always support me"

        "A sense of belonging"

        "Community and connection to residents"

        "I have learned that college is a struggle for everyone at first, and struggling together

        makes it easier to bear."

The interview transcripts may be found in Appendix D, some of the statements include:

Student 1

        "Most of the residents in the community are on the [LGBTQ+] spectrum, which helps to

        have a community where a lot of people share that identity and are open to talking about

        it"

        "My first year I was not in Open Housing and it [LGBTQ+ identity] was something you

        didn't bring up until you really started getting to know people. And this year it was the

        first thing we talked about. When last year residents would be confused when I brought it

        up. It makes us a lot closer having a shared identity"

Student 2

"One of the biggest things living in this community is that we accept each other for who we are."

"We get to be part of an in-group and make in-group jokes – it's a coping mechanism – it taught me about how important an in-group is"

Student 3

"I was never worried about how my peers saw me [in Open Housing], everyone is on the same page and even people who are not queer or trans are friendly."

Relation to Others: Interpersonal Skill Building

A development of interpersonal skills was a theme reflected primarily in the interview transcripts. The interpersonal skill building was coded based on concepts associated with building relationships with others including: conversations, express, discussions, together, help, and boundaries. Some of the statements include (Appendix D):

Student 1

"I have had different conversations this year that I never had last year. Certain conflicts that came up this year that are unique – the Open Housing residents are very aware on how to express their emotions"

"I learned about what I am comfortable with talking about and also being able to reach out and seek advice on having conversations and talking about my own identities"

[In response to Question 5 of the interview (Appendix C)] "It would be open and mature, like it is now – diverse in identities and discussions can be had – constructive discussions – we could learn from conversations – acknowledging that identities are very fluid"

Student 2

"We all still fight a lot – living together has taught us to work together with our different

personalities – has been really beneficial"

"It places an emphasis on consent. Everything that goes on is consensual; we are aware

of needing boundaries"

Student 3

"I learned that one of the issues with Open Housing that it attracts a lot of people with

anxiety issues or people with bigger challenges. I have learned that I cannot help all of

them and be friends with all of them"

Relation to Others: Multicultural Awareness

Participants demonstrated an appreciation, awareness, and development of multicultural

skills and identities outside of their own in relation to others. There were 2 of the 29 responses

from the survey that demonstrated this theme, which were identified through coding: other,

diversity, and opinions (Table 3). Some of the statements from the free response measure

include (Appendix D):

"I have gained better understanding of people and their opinions regarding gender

identity and sexuality."

"Learning about other people's identities"

"A beautiful representation of the diversity in my school, and world."

Multicultural awareness and skills was reflected in the interview transcripts through the same

coding of the survey data. Some of the responses include (Appendix D):

Student 1:

"I have learned about how to have conversations around diversity and certain identities in respect to coexisting in spaces"

"[Currently] residents are very aware of the pronouns they are using around people. Everyone has their pronouns and we know that they change, they are educated and aware of how these identities are on the [LGBTQ] spectrum – its something they are actively trying to work on – not sloughing it off like other people"

Student 2

"Most of us are used to being the token trans kid and token gay kid. Open Housing allows us to learn about other types of diversity, like disability, study habits, race, privilege – it comes up a lot."

"In high school there were only 3 to 4 of us as token gay kids; being here I realized that there are other people that will support you [who do not share your same identity]"

Environment: Safety and Transition

Of the themes, environment was the most prevalent in cumulative frequency between the qualitative and quantitative methodology. The themes were coded through presence of physical, mental, or emotional safety, academics, and transition. These were coded through: safety, safe, worry, out (in reference to visibility LGBTQ+ identities), and physical spaces (i.e. bathrooms). Environment composed 17.24% of the free response portion of the survey (Table 3). Some of the statements from the free response measure include (Appendix D):

"As a transgender person I feel most safe surrounded by queers and other trans individuals. Open housing has given me that."

"Ability to focus on classes rather than worry about my home life, per say. Because I don't have to worry about my roommate finding out I'm trans or how he would react, etc, I'm able to move my focus to classes. Which is why I'm here in the first place - to learn."

The interview transcripts may be found in Appendix D, some of the statements include:

Student 2

"I couldn't imagine living anywhere else; my family still calls me my dead name and my wrong pronouns"

"It's not okay for me to be out in all of my classes. A guy in my German class that said it is abnormal to be gay, so having that one home is important. Everyone has my back"

"Whenever I am in a situation with people I do not know I do not ever tell them my pronouns. I let them assume until they are known to be safe, because you never know what can happen"

"I did not consider applying to anywhere else [colleges] because I had to be in Open Housing for my mental health. I cannot shower with a bunch of other girls - that feels weird and wrong - sharing a bathroom what goes into that with people who assume that you are cisgender or straight."

Student 3

"One of my biggest worries is safety, not everyone is up on being trans friendly. I want my roommate, suitemate, and whole hall to know. As a first year student it took a lot of that worry out of it"

[In response to Question 6 of the interview (Appendix C)] "Yes because of the safety issue. I do not even think about it because of open housing never have to worry about people being homophobic or transphobic"

Self Development: Identity and Positive Self Regard

Self-development of identity was a prominent theme within the interview transcripts, although it was not reflected in the survey data. Self-development of positive self-regard was reflected in both the survey, composing of 13.79% of the free response measure (Table 3). Some of the statements include (Appendix D):

"I am more confident in my position in the world.

"Validation for myself"

"Pride and authentic expression of my identities"

Survey transcripts were coded through tagging "self" and extrapolating statements aligning with positive self-regard, development of identity, or both (Appendix D):

Student 1

"The Open Housing residents are very aware on how to express their emotions and they have gone through hardships of not being able to express their identities so it makes them self aware. I have learned about having conversations about [yourself] in your identities and [how to] acknowledge our differences."

"Being able to process my own identities within difference spaces – including my family and sister – [being] aware of resources available to me – resources in my community and life – being proud and aware of my identities"

Student 3

"It is a surprising amount of maturity you have to have to live in Open Housing"

Authenticity

This theme was separated from the self-development of identity and safety due to the presence of both of these respective themes in coding of authenticity. Three of the 29 survey

responses and four statements of the transcripts reflected this theme (Table 3). Authenticity was coded through tagging: authentic, freedom, and 'be you'. Some of the statements from the free response measure include (Appendix D):

"Being able to live my life authentically with people recognizing my gender"

"…authentic expression of my identities"

The interview transcripts may be found in Appendix D, some of the statements include:

Student 1

"You can identify one way one day and wake up another day and identify another way. You can really be who you want to be"

Student 2

"Open housing has taught me its okay to be you 24/7"

"Living in a place who respects my name and pronouns – it's so freeing. It's like so freeing to be able to be yourself with the people around you; everyone respects everyone at that base level."

[In response to Question 5 of the interview (Appendix C)] "It would be a lot like Open Housing, we would be able to be open everywhere and not have to hide"

Other Statements: Lack of Choice

A final category was included to honor statements interviewees disclosed that did not fall within the main themes. A key concept demonstrated through the transcripts was the lack of choice through needing to honor their LGBTQ+ identity.

Student 2

"I want it to be a floor in every hall because what if someone wanted to be in key

community and want to be in an open housing. You are forced to choose academics over

your gender identity"

"I would have liked to be in Honors because people are more academically focused or

international housing, but I needed to be in Open Housing. UNC [University of Northern

Colorado] does not have Open Housing and I wanted to go there because I want to be a

teacher"

Student 3

"I do not think you should be limited to living with people of the same gender. I do not

think that anyone should be limited to open housing. Some might want to join Key or

another learning community, but they have to join Open Housing"

Another participant vocalized his opinion in regards to recommending others to Open Housing:

Student 3

"I do not think it would be healthy for everyone – good for freshmen but maybe

not for upperclassmen."

Table 3: Frequency of Themes: Coding

Themes	Coding Words	Frequency in Survey	Frequency in Interview	Total
Community	Home, community, belonging, in-group, shared, together, share, friend	10	10	20
Self-Development	Self	4	7	11
Relation to Others	Other, diversity, opinions, conversations, express, discussions, together, help, and boundaries	4	14	18
Environment	Safety, safe, worry, out, physical spaces	5	10	15
Authenticity	Authentic, freedom, and be you	4	3	7
Other	N/A	3	3	3

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

Historically, trans populations have been systematically excluded, dismissed, and overtly punished for their genders and expression. As higher education institutions shift to become more inclusive of marginalized identities, and as United States feuds over trans-inclusive policies, trans students have become more included in the conversation. Much of the pervasive and despairing issues that impact trans students persist within a higher education setting, which prompts reactive and proactive resolutions to better support trans students. Colorado State University is providing an immense opportunity for trans students to have a stable and inclusive living space; however, the subsequent impacts on interpersonal development, perceptions of safety, and protective factors is widely unknown. This study serves to define key themes of LGBTQ+ students' experiences in Open Housing and to define the populations utilizing this resource.

Based on the survey data, the Open Housing floor serves more than LGBTQ+ identified students. The floor is serving first-generation students (40%) compared to the overall institutional population (26%); transfer student population (20%) in comparison to the campus population (30%); and out of state students (20%) compared to the institutional population (32%) (Freshman Profile; 2016; NSSE, 2016; Transfer, 2017). There is a nearly double population of first generation students living in Open Housing compared to the campus population, which is supporting the Colorado State University Commitment to Colorado to increase access to higher education for low-income and first generation students. This suggests this community is serving an intersection of marginalized identities, a strength to the overall impact of the RLC. The floor also serves a considerable amount of transfer students and non-traditional students, which may

be due to the increase of trans students enrolling at nontraditional ages (Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2013). Adult learners are in need of different forms of support in creating connectedness to campus and transitioning in an environment catered to students who are emerging into adulthood. There is a possibility of interest convergence between supporting housing space to the community and supporting the university's vision through providing additional support to first generation students, transfer students, and non-traditional students.

The population of the floor reflected the intended population of LGBTQ+ students (60%), and students with disabilities (20%); however, there was no presence of an international population. Perhaps this floor has not been accessible to international students or marketed effectively towards them. It appears the floor is serving LGBTQ+ as a target population, even though a gender open option is available to all who have a need, not just trans students. This may indicate a stronger relationship between gender minority resources, such as LGBTQ+ services and programming, and campus specific resources. Although the community is not marketed to explicitly serve the transgender population, LGBTQ+ students are still utilizing this as a resource. Additionally, a stronger alliance between disability services and this community may better provide space for students who require an aide or support person living with them. Continuing to assess the population of this floor will determine the function and need it serves students, as well as the accessibility of this floor to target populations.

The results in the quantitative data demonstrated that students have a general satisfaction of the community including being able to express identities more authentically, being supported in transition, and perceiving their identities and beliefs being valued. The majority (80%) of respondents agreed with the statement of recommending Open Housing to their peers, while a percentage (20%) did not. This prompts more assessment to understand where this discrepancy

lies, and what conditions or identities present on the floor best create the intended community for all of those who participate.

The qualitative data reflected five principle themes: (1) Community, (2) Relation to Others – interpersonal skill building and multicultural awareness, (3) Environment, (4) Self Development - identity awareness and positive self-regard, and (5) Authenticity, including (6) Other. The community theme aligned with previous literature of a LGBTQ+ space creating a sense of "we", a home space, and a sense of a collective identity (Gamarel, Walker, Rivera, & Golub, 2014). Participants expressed having a community of share identities, being able to make in-group jokes to cope, and a sense of support and belonging. One anonymous response in the survey said, "…struggling together makes it easier to bear." Students are identifying a collective struggle in this hall, and speak of the space as a "community" rather than a "floor". Having a network of people who understand their identity or who will support and empathize with them, has positive protective outcomes such as improvements to mental well being and persistence in education (Catalano, 2015). Additionally, enduring minority stress of coming out is shown to have positive outcomes of creating a collectivist identity among LGBTQ+ individuals (Dentato, 2012; Vaughan & Waehler, 2010). According to the literature, this space serves as a tool to enhance the collectivist LGBTQ+ mindset, while having intrapersonal benefits of coming out and being authentic to one's own identity. Facilitating a home space and community among LGBTQ+ individuals has vast possibility of serving as protective factors for students with statistically despairing health issues and low attrition. Perhaps a stronger relationship with LGBTQ+ student services or an intentional referral process to this floor may better provide access to this support for historically at-risk students.

Themes of forming trust, community, and building bridges were also seen between LGBTQ+ individuals and their cisgender heterosexual peers. This may serve as a supportive factor within a college where staff, faculty and students tend to be within dominant identity categories. Student 3 expressed, "I was never worried about how my peers saw me [in Open Housing], everyone is on the same page and even people who are not queer or trans are friendly." Considering LGBTQ+ individuals will continue managing the effects of discrimination and minority stress, it is pertinent they form allies with out-group members as it is shown to allow trans students to better thrive in educational settings (Catalano, 2015). Perhaps creating a homogenous community of LGBTQ+ or strictly trans students is not the most productive way to form relationships and to build sustainable trust within a cissexist and heterosexist society. The data shows that having even accidental heterosexual couples or out-group members is serving a positive function in building bridges between differences. Creating inclusive communities of dominant and subordinated identities may increase understanding from a privilege lenses and increase trust from a marginalized lenses. Although, the data is clear in identifying that Open Housing students are still experiencing harassment and discrimination on campus. *Student 2* expressed marginalization from peers and family, "…my family still calls me my dead name [birth name] and my wrong pronouns...It's not okay for me to be out in all of my classes. A guy in my German class that said it is abnormal to be gay". This aligns with overwhelming literature of the continued discrimination that trans students endure. Providing this safe home space is a significant tool to facilitate a support group and stable living option.

Participants described themes of interpersonal skill building, the process of improving positive perceptions of others, developing social skills, and developing LGBTQ+ affirming views (Vaughan & Waehler, 2010). Having the floor as a safe space to explore and to celebrate

identities that are typically viewed as social delinquents could positively impact students'
relationships with others. Students expressed forming boundaries, being able to express their
emotions, reaching out to seek advice, and working together. A notable qualitative point was
Student 2 talking about the emphasis of a consent culture within the floor. Not only does the
community allow interpersonal skill building, it provides a space for students to discuss consent
– an outcome that aligns with the institutional goal through the 'It's on Us' campaign (WGAC,
2017), to address campus sexual assaults. Providing mixed gender or gender open housing may
be correlated to better interpersonal skills between genders, an area of future research.

The community space resulted in students gaining better understanding about other
identities and about their own identities. Students expressed learning about others including their
race, pronouns, gender, and disability; students reported learning about themselves including
increasing their confidence, being able to process their identities, and being more self-aware.
These results align with previous literature of positive outcomes of creating space for LGBTQ+
community, and having a supportive space to be out about LGBTQ+ identities (Gamarel,
Walker, Rivera, & Golub, 2014; Vaughan & Waehler, 2010). This personal growth is an
immense strength for the floor that is presently apparent without any additional programming
from Residence Life or the Residence Assistant.

There is a strong relationship between identity exploration and relationship building
through providing this comfort and safety. This may affect students' ability to internalize safety
cues in dominant spaces, another area of future research (Gamarel, Walker, Rivera, & Golub,
2014). Participants expressed threats of identity invalidation and microaggressions outside of the
hall and the benefit in having a safe home space to come back to. This increased social support
and having a space without transphobia present in dominant culture is a protective factor for

reducing self-harm and suicidal ideation (Bauer, Scheim, Pyne, Travers, & Hammond, 2015).

Students are not only developing their own identity, but they are learning valuable relationship

building skills. This has the potential for being translated into the classroom setting, where

students had reportedly lower educational outcomes (Dugan, Kusel, Simounet, 2012). Education

is inherently a vulnerable process of making mistakes, incorporating oneself into the material,

and reaching out for help. If classrooms are made to be inclusive and open so trans students

could show up authentically, their outcomes could drastically improve. It is important to

recognize the function of safe space for LGBTQ+ students to be able to persist, and to reduce

pervasive health risks.

The last prominent theme in the research was authenticity among Open Housing

participants. This space may better assist students' ability to be out or come out as LGBTQ+,

which leads to a stronger personal identity, a positive minority identity (Gamarel, Walker,

Rivera, & Golub, 2014). Students demonstrated this through conveying the feeling of being free

on the floor, and being able to show up as oneself. *Student 1* expressed being able to adapt to the

fluidity of their identity, "You can identify one way one day and wake up another day and

identify another way". This is a significant outcome in the community, a place where students

can explore their identities, try on different labels, and be respected by their peers in the process.

An unexpected theme reflected through the interviews was the perceived lack of choice

in having Open Housing. This was surprising considering the option of Open Housing is

intended to give trans students more choice in selecting housing. All three interviewees

discussed wanting to attend other schools or to participate in other Residential Learning

Communities, but felt forced to choose their gender identity over their academics. If non-binary

students are forced in an unsafe roommate situation or forced into situations that invalidate their

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through the housing assignment of living in Residential Learning Community, these students will have to make a difficult compromise. This also shows that hiring trans students for live-in student staff positions on all other floors is inherently inaccessible and discriminatory, because they are not an option for trans students. Students will have to front the minority stress of sharing a private bathroom or a communal bathroom with students of the same sex assigned at birth, but no the gender they identify with. Although trans individuals are not protected at a federal level, state laws protecting this population could expose the university to litigation. Additionally, intersex students are completely excluded from the conversation all together. As trans and gender non-conforming students gain federal and state protections, they may be able to advocate for increased access to these spaces and having the choice of other communities outside of Open Housing.

Implications

Higher education practitioners have the positional advantage in supporting trans students through utilizing reactive and preventative measures to improve campus climates. Since trans individuals participate in co-curricular experiences at the same rate as their cisgender heterosexual peers such as residential learning communities, programming, internships, and research, practitioners have opportunity to engage these students (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012). University personnel may have significant impacts through microactions such as opening up the conversation regarding gender minority identities, using correct pronouns, asking for student's names instead of referring to the roster, and using small gestures to validate their identities (Bauer, Scheim, Pyne, Travers, & Hammond, 2015; Manning, Pring, & Glider, 2012; Schmalz, 2015). The threshold for supporting trans students is reportedly low, so educators have the ability to create an educational alliance through addressing transphobia and cissexism

between peers and colleagues (Catalano, 2015; Pryor, 2015). Making an effort to reach out and offer support to trans students or to connect them to campus resources may better retain them (Fine, 2012; McKinney, 2005). Fostering personal connections with gender-minorities may prevent alienation from classroom engagement and encourage continued investment within academics. Educators may curb trans students' low attrition and difference in gaining learning outcomes through validating students' concerns, pronouns, proper names, and issues with peer cissexism in class, thus solidifying an educator to peer alliance (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012; Pryor, 2015). Facilitating education on LGBTQ+ identities among students and colleagues will alleviate stress associated with gender-minorities educating others on their own identities (Catalano, 2015; Mintz, 2012). Creating intentional LGBTQ+ programming in residence halls and academic spaces may improve promotion of ally-ship and awareness. Additionally, practitioners may support trans students through advocating for inclusive policies and structures such as gender-inclusive restrooms, including LGBTQ+ identities on assessments and applications, and revising language in policy. This study prompts practitioners to continue to advocate for open housing, creating a more direct relationship between this community and LGBTQ+ student services, and providing nuanced applicable information to residents, such as gender marker change information, institution-specific roster change information, disability services, adult learner services, and health insurance information. Continuing to advocate for Open Housing provides equitable facilities including gender-inclusive restrooms in a populated area, inclusive and safe roommate options, a more stable living environment, and a home space to recuperate from the dominant culture, which may significantly improve trans students' perception of campus climate.

Future Research

There are many avenues of research within an Open Housing setting on trans individuals due to the significant lack of LGBTQ+ research across disciplines, and the newness of these communities within universities. The most visible area of future research is trans students' perceived accessibility and safety in living within other Residential Learning Communities or other floors besides Open Housing. Understanding this gap in knowledge would better shine a light on the opportunity of choice, or lack thereof, trans students have within residential settings. Exploring more components of the conditions that make a floor safe for trans students (programming, visibility, addressing transphobia, etc.) may better replicate these outcomes across Residence Life and instill these themes within residential curriculum. Data reveals that the floor is safe, yet it is unknown what exactly makes this floor safe.

There is an extensive gap in research regarding within-group analysis on LGBTQ+ experience, or gender minorities within the trans umbrella (Appendix A). Most studies examine between-group of LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+, or transgender and cisgender. Much is unknown about the protective factors or identity differences within the transgender population and the relationship to persistence, minority stress, and exposure to risk. A transwoman has a much different societal experience with her identity than a transman has, or a passing trans individual versus a non-binary individual. There is much more depth and complexity within this population that has yet to be explored.

Engaging in qualitative research from interviews and concept mapping may provide more descriptive data regarding students' community building, interpersonal skills, relationship building, intrapersonal development, and identity awareness (Gamarel, Walker, & Golub, 2014). The themes could be expanded to determine correlations and causations from living in the

community, which would require a control group of trans students not living in Open Housing. There is a vast potential to explore trans and LGBQ+ identity development within a LGBTQ+ setting versus a mixed identity space, to explore benefits and challenges to this. Incorporating queer theory, LGB+ identity development, and gender identity development theories within future research may better inform these processes. Another aspect of future research includes longitudinal impacts of living in Open Housing such as academic persistence, impact on GPA, involvement on campus, mental health, suicidal ideation, alcohol and drug use, and minority stress. There is a breadth of literature on the pervasive public health concerns and risk factors plaguing this community; however, little research exists on protective factors. This assessment shows the department is fulfilling a need, and positively impacting students' self-perceived belonging, community, development, authenticity, and multicultural awareness. Continuing to conduct qualitative and phenomenological studies to determine factors that produce such results will benefit the entire body of literature.

Conclusion

Trans students have significantly varied experiences in college, which may impact perceptions of campus climate through faculty interactions, peer relationships, and campus-wide inclusion or exclusion, which transform academic success and risk factors in retention. Open Housing has provided a safe space for trans students to live, to explore their identities, to be authentic, to create community, and to build relationships with others. The data demonstrates overwhelmingly positive outcomes for students, which may improve campus climate for trans students. This is one of the many points of contact student affairs has with trans students to create an educational alliance, and to improve campus climate. Continuing to assess this community for outcomes and population demographics will provide longitudinal insight on the

needs Open Housing meets for students. Additionally, there may be room for improvement in developing and maintaining a culture of inclusion. Assessment is the major resolution for change to track retention, monitor LGBTQ+ discrimination, and to determine protective factors. If truly trans inclusive campus climates are to be shaped, higher education professionals must consistently assess and respond to issues of inclusion within and outside the classroom.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Definitions

LGBTQ+

Denotes the inclusion of all gender and sexual minorities including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer. The "+" means all other sexual and gender minority identities that are not explicitly stated in the acronym. Note the acronym does not include "ally" (TSER, 2017).

Trans/Transgender

Trans is an umbrella term for those whose sex assigned at birth differs from their gender identity and denotes the inclusion of all gender identities outside of the gender binary of man or woman. These include, but are not limited to, transmasculine, transfeminine, transman, transwoman, genderqueer, non-binary, androgynous, and gender non-conforming, otherwise known as gender minorities (GLAAD, 2011; Jones, 2013).

Cisgender

Individuals whose sex assigned at birth align with their perceived gender, otherwise known as the gender majority (GLAAD, 2011).

Queer

Queer is a multifaceted word that is used to mean different things to different people. It is an umbrella term encompassing those attracted to many genders; those who do not fit into cultural norms of gender, sexuality, and gender expression; non-heterosexuals; a politically charged identity of resisting dominant culture's ideas of normal, celebrating the margins and in transgression, and reveling in difference (UUA, 2017).

Coming out

Coming out describes the ongoing and life long process of a queer or trans individual disclosing their identity of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and all other gender/sexuality minority identities (LGBTQ+) to themselves or others around them (AVERT, 2014).

Cissexism

Cissexism is the condition of normalizing or naturalizing cisgenderism, or the cisgender identity, and degrading trans as unnatural or abnormal. Cissexism includes any experience that excludes the trans identity from language, systems, and resources; exclusion is widespread and inherently socialized (Ferguson, 2014).

Transphobia

Systematic violence against trans people, associated with attitudes of discomfort, distrust, fear, and distain for trans people (TSER, 2017).

Misgendering

Misgendering refers to someone with pronouns that do not reflect their own personal gender pronouns; this could include addressing a transman as "she" instead of "he" or a genderqueer person as "she" or "he" instead of "they" or "ze" (Oxford Dictionary, 2015).

Gender Expression/Presentation

"The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. (typically referred to as masculine or feminine). Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth" (TSER, 2017, para 5)

"Outed" or "Outing"

This refers to non-consensually exposing an LGBTQ+ person's sexual or gender identity, which can have serious repercussions on their employment, safety, familial support, and economic stability (Human Rights Campaign, 2017).

Allyship

"Behaviors that seek to challenge oppression, make privilege visible, and attempt to empower those targeted by oppression" (Catalano, 2015, p. 429).

Colorado State University Open Housing (OH) in Summit Hall

What is open housing?

Open Housing allows CSU students to share a suite-style living space regardless of a students' sex or gender. It provides rooming options for a variety of students: those who feel uncomfortable rooming with members of the same sex, supporting transgender, transitioning, and gender non-conforming students in their process of discovering their gender identity/expression, accommodating cultural living expectations, and students who don't want sex or gender to be a primary factor in choosing a roommate. **Open housing is not intended for romantic couples.** However, in respecting the privacy of our students, we do not require disclosure of reason for roommate requests.

Is it only for a particular community?

Open Housing is available to all interested students willing and able to adhere to the OH community commitments. It is intended to be a welcoming, safe, and inclusive space living environment regardless of a student's' sex, sexual orientation, or perceived gender identity. Through OH, students will be able to take part in a community that understands the importance of understanding and providing a safe and welcoming place for students of all genders.

Why is it important to offer open housing?

There are some students for whom traditional, same-sex room assignments are not ideal or appropriate. The Residence Life department at CSU believes it is important to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of students, today and tomorrow, in creating a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment. Open Housing helps to create an environment that acknowledges, appreciates, and respects the diversity of the CSU student body by providing options in finding roommates that are truly compatible.

Who can live in Open Housing?

All CSU students living in the residence halls are eligible for this living option. That includes first-year and transfer students. Interested students will have a conversation with a Residence Life professional staff member to determine if this housing option is the best for that student.

How are roommates chosen?

Roommates are mutually-selected and are not assigned. All parties must be willing partners. Students are able to request a roommate of any sex or gender. The living space is designated for the academic year.

Can students be randomly assigned to a roommate of the opposite sex?

No. Students must opt into any roommate arrangement as willing partners.

Are bathrooms gender -neutral too?

Yes. Summit features suite style rooms comprised of either one single and one double room sharing a bathroom or two double rooms sharing a bathroom.

Colorado State University
Housing & Dining Services
Residence Life

Open Housing Application

Student Information

Student Name:	
CSUID:	
Cell Phone:	
Requested Roommate Name (if applicable):	
Roommate CSUID:	Roommate Cell Phone:

Instructions & Information

Please complete the following information to describe your interest in Open Housing in Summit Hall. Attach on a separate sheet if needed. The details you provide will be helpful to determine your compatibility with the Open Housing Community.

Assignments to Open Housing will continue as long as space is available; space is not guaranteed.

Submit this application to the Residence Director of Summit Hall & the Open Housing Community and Teresa Metzger, Assistant Director of Residence Life electronically at ResidenceLife@ColoState.Edu or you can submit a printed copy to the Residence Life Office at the Palmer Center. Printed applications can be submitted in-person or mailed via United States Postal Service to the following address:

Residence Life
8032 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80523

If you have questions feel free to call the Residence Life Office at 970.491.4719

Why are you interested in living in the Open Housing Community?

Description (max 250 words**):**

What does living in the Open Housing Community offer you that other campus housing may not?

Description (max 250 words**):**

What contributions do you believe you can offer to support a positive experience for all residents of the Open Housing Community?

Description (max 250 words**):**

STAFF USE ONLY	
Date Received:	**App Complete, Y/N:**
Notes:	
Decision: ☐ Accepted ☐ Wait List ☐ Declined	

(Housing and Dining, 2017)

Appendix C: Open Housing Survey

1. What year are you at Colorado State University?
First year
Second year
Third year
Fourth year
Fifth year or more

2. Please check any of the following phrases that you would use to describe yourself:
Resident student
Out-of-state student
Transfer student
First-generation student
International student
Non-traditional student
Undeclared student

3. What is your gender?
Male
Female
Transgender
Gender Queer
Agender
Other _____
Prefer not to answer

4. What is your sexuality?
Heterosexual
Lesbian
Gay
Bisexual
Queer
Pansexual
Asexual
Other _____
Prefer not to answer

5. Do you identify as having a mental or physical disability?
Yes
No
Prefer not to answer

6. I am able to express my identities more authentically within the Open Housing community.
Strongly Agree
Moderately Agree

Slightly Agree
Slightly Disagree
Moderately Disagree
Strongly Disagree

7. The Open Housing community has helped me transition to college.
Strongly Agree
Moderately Agree
Slightly Agree
Slightly Disagree
Moderately Disagree
Strongly Disagree

8. My identities and beliefs are valued in by the community in Open Housing.
Strongly Agree
Moderately Agree
Slightly Agree
Slightly Disagree
Moderately Disagree
Strongly Disagree

9. I would recommend living in Open Housing to my peers.
Strongly Agree
Moderately Agree
Slightly Agree
Slightly Disagree
Moderately Disagree
Strongly Disagree

10. What are three outcomes you have gained from living in this learning community?

Open Housing Interview Questions
1. What are your salient identities? What are your pronouns?
2. How has the Open Housing community created an inclusive living environment for you with your identities?
3. What have you learned about diversity and identity through living in this community?
4. What have you learned about yourself through living in this community?
5. If you could imagine a community wholly supportive of your identities and experiences, what would it look or feel like?
6. Would you recommend Open Housing to your peers? Why or why not?

Appendix D: Qualitative Data

Survey Themes:
29 total responses; N=10

Community – 10

      1 - A friend group that respects me

      1 - A sense of belonging

      1 - Community and connection to residents

      1 - friends that I know will always support me

      1 - I have learned that college is a struggle for everyone at first, and struggling together makes it easier to bear.

      1 - I understand that most people are understanding and supportive.

      1 - Made friends more easily

      1 - new really close friends

      1 - Sense of community. Because it is a smaller hall, there's a stronger sense of community within it.

      1 - I have made some good friends.

Self Development - 4

Positive Self Regard

      1 - Confidence

      1 - I am more confident in my position in the world.

      1 - Validation for myself

      1 - Pride and authentic expression of my identities

Relation to Others - 4

Interpersonal Skills

      1 - I have learned that if you give respect to others, they will likely respect you.

Multicultural Awareness

      1 - I have gained better understanding of people and their opinions regarding gender identity and sexuality.

      1 - learning about other people's identities

      1 - A beautiful representation of the diversity in my school, and world.

Environment: Safety and Transition - 5

      1- Sense of safety. As a transgender person I feel most safe surrounded by queers and other trans individuals. Open housing has given me that.

      1 - Comfort

      1 - Ability to focus on classes rather than worry about my home life, per say. Because I dont have to worry about my roommate finding out I'm trans or how he would react, etc, I'm able to move my focus to classes. Which is why I'm here in the first place - to learn.

      1 - Been able to balance my responsibilities more easily due to a laid back environment.

      1 - My transition to CSU has been a lot more enjoyable than in a traditional dorm setting

Authenticity - 3
        1 - Being able to live my life authentically with people recognizing my gender
        1 - Pride and authentic expression of my identities (repeated in two separate)
        1- Freedom to express myself

Other - 3
        1 – N/A
        1 – N/A
        1 – N/A

Interview Transcript Themes:
46 tags; N=3

COMMUNITY - Community – 10

SELF Development - Positive Self Regard/awareness – 7

OTHERS/LEARNING- Multicultural interpersonal Skills/Awareness – 14

ENVIRONMENT - Safety and transition (physical/mental/Emotional) – 10

Authenticity - 4

Other - 3

Interview Transcripts

Student 1:
1. She, her, hers; Person of Color and Lesbian
2. Most of the residents in the community are on the [LGBTQ+] spectrum, which helps to have a community where a lot of people share that identity and are open to talking about it. My first year I was not in open housing and it was something you didn't bring up until you really started getting to know people. And this year it was the first thing we talked about. When last year residents would be confused when I brought it up. It makes us a lot closer having a shared identity.
3. I have learned about how to have conversations around diversity and certain identities in respect to coexisting in spaces. I have had different conversations this year that I never had last year. Certain conflicts that came up this year that are unique – the Open Housing residents are very aware on how to express their emotions and they have gone through hardships of not being able to express their identities so it makes them self aware. I have learned about having conversations about [yourself] in your identities and [how to] acknowledge our differences.
4. I learned about what I am comfortable with talking about and also being able to reach out and seek advice on having conversations and talking about my own identities. Being able to process my own identities within difference spaces – including my family and sister – aware of resources available to me – resources in my community and life – being proud

and aware of my identities
5. It would be open and mature, like it is now – diverse in identities and discussions can be had – constructive discussions – we could learn from conversations – acknowledging that identities are very fluid – you can identify one way one day and wake up another day and identify another way. You can really be who you want to be. [Currently] residents are very aware of the pronouns they are using around people. Everyone has their pronouns and we know that they change, they are educated and aware of how these identities are on the [LGBTQ] spectrum – its something they are actively trying to work on – not sloughing it off like other people.
6. Yes.

Student 2:
1. He, him, his; Bigender, Polyamorous
2. I couldn't imagine living anywhere else; my family still calls me my dead name and my wrong pronouns; Living in a place who respects my name and pronouns – it's so freeing. It's like so freeing to be able to be yourself with the people around you; everyone respects everyone at that base level. I couldn't imagine going into another floor having to introduce myself to them. I want it to be a floor in every hall because what if someone wanted to be in key community and want to be in an open housing. You are forced to choose academics over your gender identity.
3. One of the biggest things living in this community is that we accept each other for who we are. We all still fight a lot – living together has taught us to work together with our different personalities – has been really beneficial. Most of us are used to being the token trans kid and token gay kid. Open Housing allows us to learn about other types of diversity, like disability, study habits, race, privilege – it comes up a lot. We get to be part of an in-group and make in-group jokes – it's a coping mechanism – it taught me about how important an in-group is. I am going to use the pride resource center to be me after this year is over. Open housing has taught me its okay to be you 24/7. Its not okay for me to be out in all of my classes. A guy in my German class that said it is abnormal to be gay, so having that one home is important. Everyone has my back.
4. I have learned that I do not have to be around people 24/7. Being with people who are like who I am can be very draining; we are all coming with baggage and we deal with baggage differently. In high school there were only 3 to 4 of us as token gay kids; being here I realized that there are other people that will support you [who do not share your same identity].
5. It would be a lot like Open Housing, we would be able to be open everywhere and not have to hide. Whenever I am in a situation with people I do not know I do not ever tell them my pronouns. I let them assume until they are known to be safe, because you never know what can happen [being harmed or harassed].
6. I did not consider applying to anywhere else [other colleges] because I had to be in Open Housing for my mental health.**** I cannot shower with a bunch of other girls - that feels weird and wrong - sharing a bathroom what goes into that with people who assume that you are cisgender or straight. Would have liked to be in Honors because people are more academically focused or international housing, but I needed to be in Open Housing. UNC does not have Open Housing and I wanted to go there because I want to be a teacher.

7. Yes. Open housing should just be a thing because we are all adults. It places an emphasis on consent. Everything that goes on is consensual; we are aware of needing boundaries.

Student 3:

This participant is a first year student, white, and from Colorado. This is his first year living in Open Housing, and elaborated on his experiences in the community when asked:

1. He, him, his; transmale, demisexual, pansexual
2. One of my biggest worries is safety, not everyone is up on being trans friendly. I want my roommate, suitemate, and whole hall to know. As a first year student it took a lot of that worry out of it. I was never worried about how my peers saw me, everyone is on the same page and even people who are not queer are trans friendly.
3. There's a lot more than cut and dry identities, and it is a lot more prevalent than people think.
4. I learned that one of the issues with Open Housing that it attracts a lot of people with anxiety issues or people with bigger challenges. I have learned that I cannot help all of them and be friends with all of them. It is a surprising amount of maturity you have to have to live in Open Housing; while everyone is facing similar issues because we are queer you have to draw a line.
5. It ideally would not look any different. All communities should be supportive of each other. It would look like people that don't care how you identify. Not a group of queer people but people who do not care either way. It is nice to have an actively supportive community.
6. I would want it to be campus wide on an application basis. I do not think you should be limited to living with people of the same gender. I do not think that anyone should be limited to open housing. Some might want to join Key or another learning community, but they have to join Open Housing.
7. Yes and no. Yes because of the safety issue. I do not even think about it because of open housing never have to worry about people being homophobic or transphobic. I do not think it would be healthy for everyone – good for freshmen but maybe not for upperclassmen.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Appendix E: Open Housing Proposal</h1>

Overview
Open Housing is a proposal that supports the CSU non-discrimination policy and supports the needs of ALL the students who live in the CSU residence halls. As the student population at CSU grows and becomes more diverse with increasing numbers of international students, disabled students, students with mental health concerns, and LGBTQ students, Open Housing is critical. Open Housing is a mutually agreed-upon roommate assignments process that is devoid of gender. All roommate assignments will be between two CSU students in a suite-style residence hall to allow for more private bathrooms and single as well as double rooms.
To date, Housing & Dining Services has been granting Open Housing on a case-by-case basis when students specifically requested accommodation. This proposal is to make Open Housing more accessible and available to students who need it by offering it as a housing option in the Housing Guide and on our website (www.housing.colostate.edu).

Examples of potential open housing assignments:
- Disabled student rooming with a student attendant of the opposite sex
- Female international student living with a male student guardian (i.e. brother, cousin, uncle)
- Transgendered student requesting a roommate based on comfort and support rather than biological gender (i.e. friend or ally)
- Depressed/anxious student requesting a non-binary gender roommate for support
- Siblings, cousins, and childhood friends of varying gender identities (i.e. male/female siblings or twins)

Just as we discourage best friends from high school living together, we will discourage couples from living together in open housing for similar reasons.

Open Housing supports CSU's non-discrimination policy:
> Colorado State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

Open Housing supports the Residence Life Mission Statement:
> To create safe and inclusive learning communities that support, challenge, and inspire all students to be ethical leaders and citizens in a diverse society.

Open Housing supports CSU's Strategic Goals:
CSU has nine values that support operating practices, of these 6 are specifically related to Open Housing.
- Promote CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY
- Promote FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
- Demonstrate INCLUSIVENESS and DIVERSITY
- Encourage and reward INNOVATION
- Act with INTEGRITY and MUTUAL RESPECT
- Provide OPPORTUNITY and ACCESS

The University has 5 strategic planning areas. The relation of Open Housing and specific strategic planning areas, goals, and strategies, is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Open Housing Relations to Specific Strategic Planning Areas, Goals, and Strategies		
Strategic Area	**Goal**	**Strategies**
Teaching and Learning	Goal 5: Assuring Undergraduate Access, Diversity and Internationalization	5.1, 5.2
	Goal 7: Active and Experiential Learning Opportunities for Undergraduates	7.2 (g) & (f)
	Goal 8: Student Success Outcomes- Undergraduate Retention and Graduation	8.1
Diversity	Goal 37: Environment	37.1, 37.7, 38.8

Student Support for Open Housing:

A survey conducted in March 2010 by the Residence Halls Association sampled 1,785 respondents who lived in the residence halls.

- 67.84% of respondents responded that a gender-neutral hosing option would foster a more welcoming and inclusive community, with only 18.6% disagreeing with that statement (Question 6).
- 91.04% of respondents identified as "straight," representing that Open Housing is a broad, student-body rights issue. This is not just an option to improve community standards for LGBTQ students. 670 students said that they would choose Open Housing as an option on campus (Question 7).
- 607 residents said that they would be more likely to return to campus if Open Housing were offered (Question 5). Open Housing would be offered for the first time in Fall 2013 as one of many strategies to increase the returning student population on campus.

Similar/peer institutions with similar/comparable process:

- University of Colorado
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of Utah
- Oregon State University
- University of Oregon
- University of Michigan
- Michigan State University
- Northern Arizona University