

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly — March 2015

Victimization Experiences of LGBTQ Youth in Minnesota

Editor's Note: The CYFC Community-engaged Scholars Program is a four-year, multi-disciplinary, cohort-based program offering a learning community and funding for community-engaged research. It is intended to build scholars' capacity for community-engaged scholarship, benefit communities, contribute to our knowledge about educational and health disparities, and catalyze institutional support for CES. *CYFC Monthly* will feature one of the 2014-2017 scholars periodically through this year. In this issue, we feature Colleen Fisher and Lynette Renner, Associate Professors in the University of Minnesota School of Social Work.

Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) demonstrate significant disparities in health, mental health, and education compared to their heterosexual and gender-conforming counterparts. LGBTQ youth experience significantly higher rates of violence and victimization across multiple social contexts, including physical abuse and verbal harassment in their families of origin;¹⁻³ physical, psychological, sexual and cyber-dating violence;⁴ and physical violence and harassment by peers in schools.⁵⁻⁶ A growing body of research points to the stigma, hostility, and violence toward their sexual- or gender-minority identities as likely causes of educational and health disparities among LGBTQ youth.⁷⁻¹⁰

Although the relationship between different types of victimization experiences and education and health disparities is gaining recognition in the research literature, overall understanding of bullying and victimization among LGBTQ youth remains extremely limited. Several critical gaps exist. First, little is known about the polyvictimization or cumulative abuse experiences of LGBTQ youth. Second, far less is known about how these young people interpret the victimization they experience or how they attempt to cope with the victimization or prevent future occurrence. Third, the question of what precipitates incidents of victimization has remained relatively unexplored in the research literature. Finally, little information exists about the resources and services available and needed to support LGBT youth — or more important, what specific ideas LGBTQ youth have about the interventions needed to address victimization.

Our Scholars Program project, titled “Victimization Experiences of LGBTQ Youth in Minnesota: Uncovering Youth-directed Pathways to Intervention” represents a first step toward addressing some of these critical gaps. The overarching goals of our project are to (1) assess LGBTQ youths’ experiences with victimization in their families, schools, and online, (2) identify events that precipitate victimization, (3) examine the coping strategies youth have used to deal with victimization, and (4) solicit youths’ recommendations for how to prevent victimization in each setting (home, school, and online). With our community partners, we will leverage findings from this study to raise public awareness of the prevalence of LGBTQ youth victimization in Minnesota and its potential impact on educational and health outcomes. Ultimately, we aim to develop a community-grounded, youth-directed intervention to address victimization and help alleviate the substantial health and education disparities among LGBTQ adolescents in Minnesota and beyond.

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About the Authors

Colleen Fisher, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the University's School of Social Work. She completed her Ph.D. in social work at Washington University in St. Louis before joining the University faculty. Her scholarship focuses broadly on social determinants of health and well-being among vulnerable adolescent and adult populations, while her research with LGBTQ youth specifically examines the risk and protective factors associated with health disparities and development of youth-driven interventions.

Lynette M. Renner, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the University's School of Social Work. She completed her Ph.D. in social welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her scholarship is focused on the influence of polyvictimization on mental health, behavioral, and academic outcomes among children and adolescents, as well as mental health and parenting outcomes among women. She also is interested in documenting effective help-seeking strategies for individuals and families who experience interpersonal victimization.

Consortium News

Website Highlights 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Learners' Project

Visit the new 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Learners' website dedicated to CYFC's partnership and project with Bruce Vento Elementary School in Saint Paul, MN. Read about the project, get the latest news, see calming room designs, and learn about school garden progress. Resources related to the project and information about the partnership are also available on the new [website](#).

University of Minnesota College of Design Features Bruce Vento Partnership on Blog

Read about the Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Learners project from the perspective of the [University of Minnesota College of Design](#) students.

Creating Trauma-Sensitive Practices, Organizations and Communities: Building on our Experience

Sponsors: University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH)

Date: April 28, 2015

Cost: \$190-359

Location: Duluth, MN

Join CYFC for the next event in the Research to Practice Series at the MACMH Annual Conference. Many professionals are creating trauma-sensitive practices in their work with clients, students, organizations and communities. They have varied approaches to this work, and they offer a great deal of expertise applying what they know in different settings and with different populations.

Engage with other professionals in structured conversations during this daylong training. Presenters will share their own best practices and facilitate conversations in order to capture the expertise in the room and move the entire group forward in trauma-sensitive work. Conversations will be shared with participants following the training, and we will explore opportunities for creating a trauma-sensitive learning community. Learn more and register [here](#).

CYFC Videos Examine Historical Trauma

What is historical trauma? How do people and communities experience historical trauma? And most important, how can reconnecting to cultural practices help families and communities heal?

CYFC has produced a powerful three part video series featuring researchers who study historical trauma and practitioners who use cultural healing practices to foster recovery in people affected by historical trauma. Total running time for these videos is approximately 15 minutes. For more information, also read the October 2010 edition of the [Children's Mental Health eReview](#) on historical trauma and cultural healing. View the videos [here](#).

Trauma's Impact on Children

Sponsors: University of Minnesota Extension, University Of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center in partnership with the University's Center for Neurobehavioral Development, Institute for Translational Research in Children's Mental Health, and Children, Youth & Family Consortium.

Date: April 24, 2015

Cost: \$30

Location: Lamberton, MN

At this workshop, [Kathleen Thomas, Ph.D.](#), and [Abigail Gewirtz, Ph.D.](#), will focus on the trauma resulting from childhood experiences — including abuse, neglect, witnessing violence, and having family members

who are incarcerated. Participants will learn about the impact of traumatic events like these on brain development, ways to identify childhood behaviors associated with these experiences, and interventions and resources in order to better serve children and families dealing with trauma. Click here for more information and to register. [no longer active]

University & Community Announcements

Webinar Focuses on Money Management During a Family Transition

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development

Date: March 24, 2015

Cost: \$10; free for authorized providers of Parents Forever™ and Family Development Staff by contacting [Kate Welshons](#).

A certificate of completion will be available after the event.

Location: Online

In this webinar, Sharon Powell and Jennifer Garbow, University of Minnesota Extension educators, will provide an overview about money management for families experiencing transition because of divorce or separation. Participants will examine the evolution of family finances before, during, and after a family transition; identify ways families in transition can protect themselves financially; and discuss common financial pitfalls parents may experience following divorce or separation. Students will complete a final individual or group project of their choosing. Learn more and register here [no longer active].

Social and Emotional Learning: From Understanding to Action (Youth Work Regional Forum)

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development

Date: April 23, 2015

Cost: \$30

Location: Moorhead, MN

At this youth work regional forum, participants will learn about Minnesota's initiative to build broader understanding of social and emotional learning factors in youth development — their importance, and ways they can be assessed. Presentations will include information on the [Ways of Being](#) model and how to apply it to academic and professional work. Keynote speakers include [Dale Blyth, Ph.D.](#), and [Kate Walker, Ph.D.](#). Register here.

Intentional Practices to Support Social and Emotional Learning

Authors: Dale Blyth, Ph.D., Brandi Olson, and Kate Walker, Ph.D.

This Extension Youth Development Issue Brief aims to help youth program practitioners become intentional about the strategies they use to support social and emotional learning in young people. Social and emotional skills are important tools for navigating life and can be predictors of other youth outcomes, such as academic achievement and work readiness. The brief is one of a series designed to help people understand, connect [to], and champion social and emotional learning [for youth] in a variety of settings and from a variety of perspectives. Read the paper [here](#).

Using and Adapting Evidence-Based Interventions to Help Children and Families

Sponsor: Ambit Network

Date: April 29, 2015

Cost: Free

Location: Minneapolis, MN

Join your colleagues at the Ambit Network Annual Traumatic Stress Conference. Speakers will include [Judith Cohen, M.D.](#), Medical Director of the Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents at Allegheny Hospital in Pittsburgh, PA, as well as Minnesota-based experts [Abigail Gewitz, Ph.D.](#), BraVada Garrett Akinsanya, Ph.D., [Sue Abderholden, M.P.H.](#), and [Chris Bray, Ph.D.](#). Register [here](#).

Job Opportunities

Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome — Multiple Openings [no longer active]

[University of Minnesota Extension — Carver-Scott County Family Resiliency Extension Educator](#)

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