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LGBTQIA+JOY AND THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY

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Social Sciences & Humanities Poster Presentation*

Abstract: Research about LGBTQIA+ individuals is often focused on negative experiences correlated with identity. Many studies document higher rates of bullying, harassment, and assault among LGBTQIA+ people; however, there is a noticeable gap in the research that focuses on positive aspects of the community. This study analyzes how LGBTQIA+ individuals experience and think about joy, specifically, what provides them joy within the LGBTQIA+ community. Data was collected through qualitative interviews both in person and via zoom (N = 8). Common themes included seeking out like-minded others and those with similar identities. Participants commonly reported that when they were in spaces where their identities were represented and visible, they felt safer and better able to express themselves authentically. Additionally, a lack of ability to connect with similar identities could lead to negative consequences such as stereotypes or ostracization. This study will further discuss the impacts of identity on LGBTQIA+ joy and the importance of representation within the community.

Faculty Mentor: *Jennifer Pearson*