

Family Therapy Practices for Families with Sexual Minority Youth

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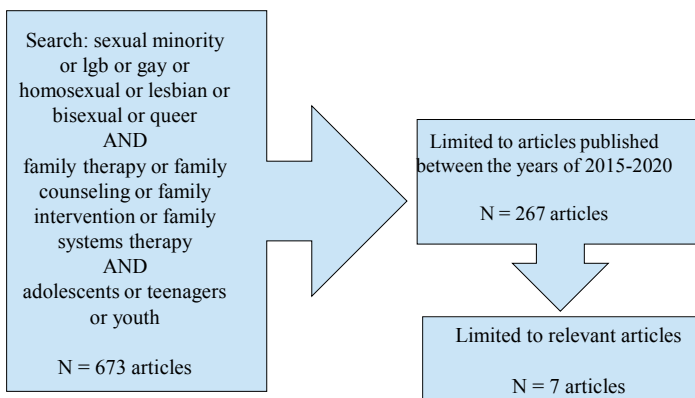
INTRODUCTION

- Over 10 million people in the United States identify as a sexual minority.
- In 2014, Eva N. Woodward reviewed fifteen research articles that addressed issues concerning family therapy practices with sexual minority youth in her own review.
- Woodward (2014) found when a youth discloses that they are a sexual minority, therapy focused on training the family on better communication skills and developing new family norms works well.
- Woodward's review provided guidance for therapeutic practice; however, this review lacks important new findings published in the last 6 years.
- The current study builds on Woodward's (2014) work by examining research on family therapy for sexual minority youths and their families published in the last 6 years.

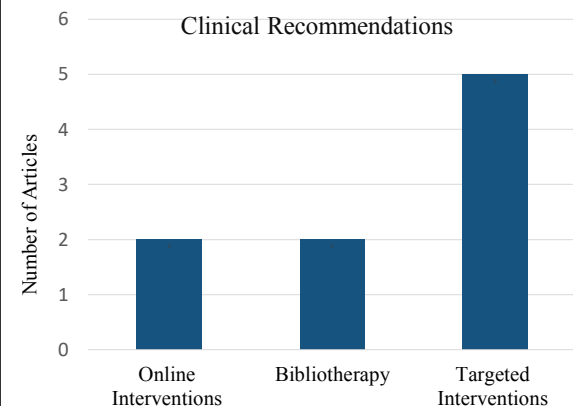
METHOD

Procedures and Measures

The current study analyzed seven peer reviewed studies published after 2015 from the database PsycInfo.



RESULTS



RESULTS

Citation	Sample of Interest	Main Issues	Suggestions
D'Amico et al., 2015	LGB youth and their parents	The researchers focused on measuring four youth outcomes – fear of disclosure of one's sexuality, negative attitudes towards homosexuality, psychological distress, and suicidal ideation.	Mental health professionals can use these findings to create more targeted interventions that focus on redefining parental expectations for their youth, as well as decreasing the desire for the youth to change their sexuality.
Goodman & Israel, 2020	Parents or guardians of sexual minorities between the ages of 13 and 18	The study tested to see if the PRISMS intervention made a positive behavioral development for parents with sexual minority youth.	With more testing, the PRISMS intervention has the potential to be used by therapists working with families with LGB youth.
Grafsky et al., 2018	Youth between ages of 14 and 21 years old that self-identify as non-heterosexual	Examines discourse between LGB youth and their families, including extended members of the families.	Emphasizes the importance of supportive family members – rather it be parents, aunts and uncles, or grandparents.
Huebner et al., 2019	Parents of sexual minority youth	The study looked for correlations between parental acceptance and other factors such as race/ethnicity and age of the child's coming out.	Race, ethnicity, and age of the sexual minority youth can influence how much difficulty a parent has with accepting the child's sexuality.
Quidley-Rodriguez & Gattamorta, 2019	Latinx sexual minorities between the ages of 18 and 28	Latinx sexual minority youths face different challenges than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, and therefore family therapists must take into consideration culture when providing guidance for these clients.	Facilitators of interventions should provide books, websites, and groups that provide accurate information about sexuality and sexual health to both sexual minority youth and their parents.
Roe, 2017	Self-identified sexual minority teenagers	Coming out is viewed as important for sexual minority youths, however, the youth's situation may prevent them from coming out to their family.	The author of this study suggests that family therapists use narrative family therapy for families who are unaccepting of a child's sexuality.
Watson et al., 2019	Adolescents in high school of varying sexualities	Family connectedness in families with sexual minority youth is lower than in families with heterosexual-identifying youth.	Interventions specifically focused on familial support, especially with paternal support, is beneficial for LGB youth.

DISCUSSION

- The current review confirmed conclusions drawn by Woodward (2014) suggesting treatment options for families with sexual minority youth were bibliotherapy, online interventions, and targeted interventions focused on parental support.
- Importantly, the current review extended Woodward's (2014) work to consider family race and it was determined that special considerations are needed for Latinx families.
- Given these findings, future research should consider other family context factors such as age, socioeconomic status, and gender of sexual minority youth and how these factors affect parental acceptance.

IMPLICATIONS

- Family therapists should integrate targeted interventions, including online interventions and bibliotherapy, into their practice while working with families with sexual minority youth.
- There must be a focus on parental acceptance of the child's sexuality, rather than trying to change the child's sexual orientation or behavior.

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References

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Highlights

- Targeted interventions and bibliotherapy are major tools used in family therapy for families with sexual minority youth.
- Current research suggests that clinicians use different recommendations for coming out for racial and ethnic minorities experiencing same-sex attraction.
- Family therapy is positive tool for both the parents and the sexual minority youth, in that it provides the parents with valuable tools for family connectedness and the youth with access to mental health resources that can aid in preventing suicide in this vulnerable population.