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Working with Heterosexual Allies on Campus: A Qualitative Exploration of Experiences Among LGBT Campus Resource Center Directors

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WORKING WITH HETEROSEXUAL ALLIES ON CAMPUS: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF EXPERIENCES AMONG LGBT CAMPUS RESOURCE CENTER DIRECTORS

by

Melissa A. Bullard

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WORKING WITH HETEROSEXUAL ALLIES ON CAMPUS: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF EXPERIENCES AMONG LGBT CAMPUS RESOURCE CENTER DIRECTORS

Melissa A. Bullard, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2004

The scholarly literature has just recently begun to address the role that heterosexual allies can play in responding to the unique needs and challenges facing LGBT people. As Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Campus Resource Centers are expanding in number and scope on college and university campuses across the United States, heterosexual allies have increased opportunities to support and advocate for LGBT people. Yet very little is known about what heterosexual allies do, or how their presence and actions impact LGBT people. The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the experiences that LGBT individuals have with heterosexual allies.

Initial and follow-up phone interviews were conducted with seven directors of LGBT Campus Centers who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Interview questions were designed to elicit detailed descriptions regarding directors’ experiences working with student, faculty, staff, and administrator allies on campus. A phenomenological approach to data analysis was conducted in order to identify the common elements of LGBT directors’ experiences with allies.

Four key contributions emerged. First, findings reveal a broad range of ally activities, including examples of participation in LGBT Center organizations or...
programs, responding appropriately to LGBT concerns, and taking proactive steps to advocate for LGBT people. Second, directors illustrate the significant impact of allies, underscoring the positive benefits of allies to LGBT as well as heterosexual members of campus communities. Third, directors describe having experiences with allies at different levels of development. Finally, directors note common challenges in regard to working with allies.

Results regarding the activities of allies are compatible with the ally roles of support, education, and advocacy proposed by Broido (2000). Since very little is known about LGBT Campus Centers and the directors of these centers, the current findings contribute greatly by offering descriptive data about the experiences of directors as they interact with allies. Additionally, results enhance our understanding of ally development, and highlight the potential usefulness for structuring interventions that are appropriate to allies at various developmental stages. Finally, findings suggest direct implications for enhancing ally training and development programs.
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Melissa A. Bullard
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CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attention focused toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues on college and university campuses during the past 15 years has increased remarkably. In a review of LGB issues in the student affairs literature, Lark (1998) found that empirical articles of the experiences of LGB people on campus began to emerge in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Since then, increasing numbers of publications have emerged regarding LGB and T issues on campus. In 1991, the book, *Beyond tolerance: Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals on campus*, marked a major step in increasing awareness of LGB identity, issues for LGB persons of color, and LGB issues in residence halls, sororities, and student organizations (Evans & Wall, 1991). A publication edited by the same authors about a decade later, *Toward acceptance: Sexual orientation issues on campus*, reviewed progress regarding sexual orientation on campus and introduced issues related to transgender students (Wall & Evans, 2000). A comprehensive handbook for working with LGBT college students (Sanlo, 1998) is another substantial resource, which brings together literature for faculty and administrators to assist LGBT students within educational institutions.

In recent years, campus programs and services for LGBT people have been initiated and expanded tremendously. One prime example of this growth is an increase of LGBT Campus Resource Centers on college and university campuses. The establishment of the first two LGBT Centers dates back to the 1970's, and a few LGBT Centers opened during the 1980's (Beemyn, 2002), yet the majority of LGBT Centers were established during the 1990's (Sanlo, 2000). In fact, in the 1990's, over 50 colleges and universities
began a LGBT Resource Center with at least one half-time paid professional (Beemyn, 2002). Literature regarding LGBT Campus Resource Centers has just begun to emerge. In 2001, a qualitative study of the establishment experiences of eight LGBT Resource Centers revealed some common themes among established LGBT Centers (Ritchie & Banning, 2001). An edited book published in 2002, *Our place on campus: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Services and Programs in Higher Education*, is the first published resource and guide to assist individuals establishing and operating LGBT Campus Resource Centers (Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002).

Campus programs, services, and centers devoted to LGBT concerns are growing in number and scope across the United States. One significant aspect of the growth in LGBT initiatives on campus is the involvement and participation of heterosexual allies. In the early 1990’s, scholarly works began to reference the role that heterosexual members of campus communities can play to improve the experiences of LGBT people on campus (Evans & Levine, 1990; Lark, 1998) and to provide suggestions for ways in which heterosexuals can actively participate to help meet the needs of LGBT people on campus (Broido, 2000; Sanlo, 2000; Washington & Evans, 1991). Scholars and professional organizations are beginning to acknowledge heterosexual allies as critical players in positively impacting the educational climate for LGBT individuals. The National Consortium of LGBT Resources in Higher Education (2003) asserts, “Student affairs professionals, administrators, and faculty only recently have begun to recognize the potential the development of heterosexual allies has for making the culture of a college or university campus more tolerant towards gay, lesbian, and transgender (GLBT) students.” The mission statements of the American College Personnel Association Standing Committee for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Awareness (2003) and the NASPA Network on GLBT Issues (2003) include recognition and support of “allies” in their formal statements.
Although more and more heterosexual allies are joining their LGBT peers and colleagues to increase awareness of the needs and concerns of LGBT people (Evans & Wall, 2000), extremely little is known about what allies do, and how their presence and actions on campus impact LGBT people on campus. Currently, there are only three empirical investigations of heterosexual allies (DiStefano, Croteau, Anderson, Kampa-Kokesch, & Bullard, 2000; Poynter & Burnett, 2001; Vernaglia, 2000), and one empirical study investigating how a formal campus program of allies impact LGBT people and the campus environment (Evans, 2002).

The role of heterosexual allies in promoting safe, affirming campus climates for LGBT people is one unique aspect of sexual orientation issues on campus. In the introduction to Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender college students: A handbook for faculty and administrators, Sanlo (1998) states, “I make the wishful assumption that most who read this handbook will be heterosexual administrators, faculty, and Student Affairs professionals who are exploring methods by which to make proactive changes” (p. xvii). Yet there is a paucity of literature about heterosexual allies, and there is a marked absence of literature about LGB individuals’ experiences with heterosexual allies on campus. The current study aims to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the experiences that LGB professionals have with heterosexual allies on campus. Directors of LGBT Resource Centers are a fruitful population to sample, as they very often identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Sanlo, 2000) and are likely to have professional contacts and interactions with heterosexual allies on campus through Safe Programs (Sanlo et al., 2002), LGBT speakers panels (Lucksted, 1998), advisory committees on LGBT issues (Evans & Wall, 2000; Beemyn, 2002), LGBT student organizations (Mallory, 1998; Ward, 1998), mentoring of LGBT students (Kraig, 1998), or LGBT support (Holahan & Gibson, 1994) or counseling groups (Perez, DeBord, & Brock, 2000).
The broad goal of this study is to learn about the experiences that a sample of LGB directors of LGBT Resource Centers have with heterosexual allies on campus. In considering the goal of this study, two main areas of literature provide relevant contextual information. The first main area summarizes the literature regarding LGBT resources and services on campus. The second main area of literature relevant to this study summarizes the literature about heterosexual allies.

Overview of LGBT Resources and Services on Campus

Descriptive and empirical literature regarding LGBT resources and services is just beginning to emerge. LGBT Resource Centers are one key aspect of this area of literature as the number of LGBT Resource Centers is growing "rapidly" (Sanlo et al., 2002, p. 13). However this shift is not matched in terms of an increase in literature on LGBT Centers (Beemyn, 2002). There is one edited book devoted to the topic of LGBT offices, services, and programs in higher education (Sanlo et al., 2002). The majority of chapters in this book were written collaboratively by the editors based on their experiences creating and implementing LGBT Resource Centers. There are just two empirical works about LGBT Resource Centers (Beemyn, 2002; Ritchie & Banning, 2001). Only two works provide information about the Directors of LGBT Resource Centers, including a description of this position (Sanlo et al., 2002) and an empirical study of 23 Directors (Sanlo, 2000). A second area of literature related to LGBT programs and services has to do with heterosexual allies. A variety of LGBT programs in which heterosexual individuals typically participate are Safe Programs, advisory committees on LGBT concerns, LGBT student organization advising, LGBT Speaker Panels, support and counseling groups for LGBT students, LGBT programming, and faculty or staff mentoring for LGBT students. LGBT Resource Centers and Center Directors will be described first, followed by a summary of programs in which heterosexual allies participate to support LGBT people.
**LGBT Campus Resource Centers**

College or university LGBT Resource Centers are often umbrella organizations that fund, organize, and promote various LGBT initiatives on campus. "The existence of an LGBT resource center with appropriate staff to serve the needs of the LGBT population on campus is one sign of acceptance of LGBT people as an important constituency on campus" (Evans & Wall, 2000, p. 391). Although the University of Michigan created the first LGBT center in 1971 and the University of Pennsylvania's center began in 1982, the majority of LGBT centers were created in the mid and late 1990's (Beemyn, 2002). Currently, LGBT Resource Centers exist in almost half of the states and the District of Columbia (Beemyn, 2002), with greater concentrations in the Midwest, West, and Northeast. The activities of LGBT Resource Centers are numerous and varied. Services available at most LGBT Resource Centers include information and referral, crisis intervention, therapy and support groups, student organization advising, community service, mentoring, and communications (Sanlo et al., 2002). Additional programs commonly offered through LGBT Resource Centers are Safe Programs (Sanlo et al., 2002), LGBT speakers panels (Croteau & Kusek, 1992; Lucksted, 1998), and advisory committees on LGBT issues (Evans & Wall, 2000; Beemyn, 2002).

The names of LGBT Resource Centers vary, although most centers use Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender Campus Resource Center (Sanlo, 2000). Beemyn's (2002) study of 54 Resource Centers indicates that 46 of these centers include “transgender” in their name, and 6 use inclusive language such as “Stonewall,” “Pride,” or “Queer.” Notably, every LGBT Resource Center created in the past 5 years includes “transgender” in its name. As the inclusion or addition of “transgender” to the names of Resource Centers is a prevalent trend, the commonly used acronym LGBT will be used to refer to LGB and LGBT Resource Centers in this paper.

A few researchers have investigated how LGBT Resource Centers begin (Beemyn, 2002; Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo et al., 2002). Ritchie and Banning found
two patterns regarding the creation of LGBT Resource Centers. The first pattern was that the emergence of a task force and subsequent assessment of campus climate initiated the creation of the LGBT Resource Center. The second pattern involved the development of LGBT Centers as a reaction to one or more incidents of harassment or discrimination against LGBT students. These two patterns was also documented in Beemyn’s study, although campus climate survey research and hate crimes were noted as secondary factors to the establishment of LGBT Resource Centers. The leading factors for the creation of the 54 centers in Beemyn’s study were student initiative, committee recommendation, and involvement of faculty or staff. Finally, Sanlo et al. identified three reasons for the creation of LGBT Resource Offices, based on their “review of the histories of current LGBT Resource Centers.” The most frequently cited reason for establishing a LGBT Resource Center was administration response to homophobic harassment. The next most frequently cited reason was administrative response to faculty, staff, and/or student demand for a safe place and educational organization regarding LGB issues. The least frequent reason for establishing a LGBT Resource Center was the administration’s recognition that the creation of a LGBT Resource Center is a critical component to foster diversity and promote a safe campus climate.

The constituencies of LGBT Resource Centers are also addressed in the research. Respondents to Ritchie and Banning’s (2001) investigation reported that the constituents of their LGBT Resource Centers are students, faculty, staff, and community members, and that they offer services for each of these groups. As for the inclusion of heterosexual allies, Beemyn’s (2002) study found 4 LGBT Resource Centers that include “allies” in their names. Also, none of the LGBT Resource Centers in Beemyn’s study reported that they only served LGBT people. A full 95% of these offices reported that they provide outreach to primarily heterosexual groups. While early Resource Centers tended to focus exclusively on sexual identity issues, increasing numbers of Resource Centers have broadened their goals and missions to include transgender individuals and issues. As
noted earlier, all Resource Centers established in the last 5 years are transgender inclusive in name and mission; of 54 Resource Centers sampled, 46 have LGBT in their name, and 6 more use inclusive language like “queer” or “pride” (Beemyn).

The source and amount of funding for LGBT Resource Center operating budgets vary greatly. Commonly, LGBT Resource Centers receive money from their institution’s general budget. All 8 of the Resource Centers in Ritchie and Banning’s (2001) study and the majority of Resource Centers in Beemyn’s (2002) study received funding from their institutions general budget. Fundraising was a frequently mentioned activity by offices in Ritchie and Banning’s study. Student fees provide some income for over 25% of the LGBT Resource Centers in Beemyn’s investigation, while a small number of offices reported obtaining donations from alumni or grants.

Many LGBT Resource Centers are affiliated through The National Consortium of Directors of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Resources in Higher Education, which officially began in 1997 (Sanlo et al., 2002). In fact, Beemyn (2002) asserts that the Consortium assisted in the development of many existing LGBT Resource Centers. Sanlo et al. state, “The consortium provides a forum for LGBT professionals in higher education to address the challenges facing LGBT students, faculty, and staff on university and college campuses” (pp. 11-12). According to Beemyn, the Consortium provides support and advice for members, seeks to improve campus climate for LGBT people, and advocates for the creation of new LGBT Resource Centers. The National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education (2003) offers a comprehensive website, and supports both an e-mail list and listserv for members to assist in the attainment of these goals.

Directors of LGBT Resource Centers

Although directors of LGBT Resource Centers have been active nationally presenting workshops about the administration of LGBT services for LGBT students,
there are very few works in the literature about LGBT Resource Center directors (Sanlo, 2000). The book, *Our place on campus: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Services and Programs in Higher Education* includes an example of a LGBT Resource Center Director position and devotes a chapter with case examples to illustrate key considerations for hiring LGBT Resource Center directors (Sanlo et al., 2002). Sanlo’s investigation of 23 LGBT Resource Center directors is the only empirical work to date about directors of LGBT Resource Centers.

The position description for a LGBT Resource Center Director provided by Sanlo et al. (2002) states, “The Director plans, directs, and implements campus student affairs programs to, for, and about the LGBT campus community. Specific programmatic responsibilities include functional areas such as outreach, recruitment, and retention; campus and university relations; advising; crisis counseling; and training and education of the campus community related to LGBT issues. The Director also provides support to the LGBT Studies program and sits on the program’s Faculty Advisory Committee” (p. 209). This description identifies directors’ broad areas of responsibility as service and programming, institutional liaison and support activities, and management and administration duties, then breaks down each category into specific tasks. Although the position description of director will vary across institutions based on the scope of each particular LGBT Resource Center, this position description is a comprehensive example of the range of activities organized and coordinated by LGBT Resource Center directors.

Sanlo (2000) investigated 23 LGBT Resource Center directors about their backgrounds, qualifications, salaries, and motivations for conducting LGBT work. Respondents to this survey emphasized the importance of qualities including experience, knowledge, and understanding of LGBT issues and people, resourceful programming skills, and commitment to leadership and advocacy. According to the position description provided by Sanlo et al. (2002), it is preferred for directors to hold an advanced degree in educational leadership, counseling, social psychology, or a related field. Indeed, in
Sanlo's investigation of directors, 11 held doctoral degrees and 12 held master's degrees in higher education administration, college student personnel, educational leadership, psychology, or counseling. Directors in Sanlo's survey were also asked what motivated them to engage in LGBT Resource Center work. As LGBT Resource Centers did not exist when these directors were college students, the directors stated that they were motivated toward this work to "...help make students' lives and college experiences better than their own" (p. 492). Respondents also noted that they were motivated to lead LGBT Resource Centers on campuses to offer students "...safe places and understanding people to whom they can turn..." (p. 492). Many directors noted the important connection between LGBT students having support and their academic success.

*Safe Programs*

Safe Programs, often called Safe Zone, Safe Space, Safe Harbor, or Safe on Campus, are educational interventions on college or university campuses in which members publicly identify as allies to LGBT people by placing a "Safe Marker" on their office door or living space (Poynter, 2002). Safe Programs provide a formal way for allies to publicly express their support and appreciation of LGBT persons, and to promote feelings of safety and comfort among LGB students, faculty, and staff (Evans & Wall, 2000). The main goals of Safe Programs are to increase visibility of LGBT people and their issues on campus and to promote safe and supportive campus environments for LGBT people. The first Safe Program was implemented in 1992 at Ball State University (The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association and National Coalition for LGBT Health, 2001). Safe Programs have been adopted by over a hundred colleges and universities in the past decade (National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education, 2003). Safe Programs may be especially helpful on campuses that lack LGBT Campus Resource Centers, "out" faculty, official recognition for LGBT people, or services for LGBT students (Hothem & Keene, 1998; Sanlo et al., 2002).
Safe Programs are particularly relevant to this study because they are specifically designed to involve heterosexual members of the university community. Although LGBT people do commonly volunteer to become Safe Members and to post Safe Markers, the primary focus of Safe Program membership is to involve heterosexuals in serving as allies to LGBT people on campus. Also, Safe Programs frequently incorporate an educational component for members. Through group training sessions or written materials provided by the Safe Program, heterosexual members receive information and suggestions about how to be an effective ally.

Most information about Safe Programs is found on the world wide web (Evans, 2002). Lists of Safe Programs with links to Safe Program web-sites are available through the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education (Tubbs & Barnett, 2003), Purdue University’s Ally Organization (Ally Association, 2003), and Texas A& M University’s Department of Student Life (Allies Committee, 2003). In addition, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (2003) has a web-site that outlines steps for creating a Safe “Allies” Program including developing a mission statement, developing a logo, training members, and providing a resource packet. Since there is fairly little in the published literature about Safe Programs, I conducted an informal review of the listed and linked Safe Programs from the three web-sites noted above. My review of Safe Program websites involved identifying the range of ways in which Safe Programs provide visibility of their programs, investigating the prevalence and length of Safe Program training, and reviewing the content of Safe Program resource manuals.

The universal element of Safe Programs is the display of Safe Markers that provide visible signs of support for LGBT people and issues (Poynter, 2002). Faculty, staff, and students who post a Safe Marker indicate that they are welcoming persons who can provide accurate information and support to LGBT people (Sanlo et al. 2002). Based on my informal review, the most popular Safe Markers are signs or stickers, although buttons, pins, window clings, key chains, or web-site badges have also been created and
distributed. Each institution creates its own Safe Marker, with specific wording appropriate for its campus. Typically, widely recognized LGBT symbols such as the upside down pink triangle or the rainbow pride flag are pictured or incorporated into Safe Markers. Over 90 examples of actual Safe Program logos are available on-line through the Safe Zone for All web-site (Safe Zone Consortium, 2003).

A training session or sessions is required by many Safe Programs in order to receive a Safe Marker for display (Sanlo et al., 2002). My informal review of Safe Program web-sites indicates that the length of training ranges from one hour to an entire day, although most training sessions last between two and three hours. Provision of a training session as part of Safe Program membership is highly recommended by Sanlo et al. who note that training increases the likelihood of members to be able to assist LGBT individuals, and decreases the likelihood that individuals participate for "disturbing" motivations, to be "cool," or to voice hateful beliefs about LGBT issues and people.

Resource manuals are another educational tool to provide Safe members with information and resources. Resource manuals may be provided at a training session, or offered in lieu of a formal training session. For example, Safe Zone at Eastern Illinois University (2003) offers an on-line reference packet to all who sign up to be a Safe Zone member, and Bridgewater State College (2003) offers a Safe Zone booklet through a variety of campus offices. The Duke University SAFE on Campus (2003) and the University of Georgia Safe Space Resource Guide (2003) are extensive manuals available on-line. The content of resource manuals typically includes a mission statement, terms and definitions, qualities of allies, developmental issues of LGBT and heterosexual individuals, coming out, homophobia and heterosexism, suggestions for being an ally, information about the Christian Bible and homosexuality, resources, and referral information.

In addition to participating as ally members of Safe Programs, heterosexuals can be involved in the creation, maintenance, or expansion of the Safe Program itself. For
example, Safe Programs require knowledgeable people to facilitate training sessions (Sanlo et al., 2002); heterosexuals with knowledge, expertise and experience with LGBT people and issues can start new Safe Programs, facilitate training sessions, and provide additional training or workshops for members.

There is an absence of empirical research about Safe Program training in peer-reviewed journals, although an assessment of Duke’s SAFE on Campus (2003) training is available to the public on-line. Respondents who attended training sessions for this program reported that they would be able to apply what they had learned through the training. These Safe Program members also shared that they gained greater knowledge through the training and were encouraged to become better allies. Participants rated the coming out panel, LGBT identity development portion, Ally development portion, and video scenarios as the most helpful aspects of the program. Suggestions offered were to address authority issues on campus, LGBT demographics, additional resources, and to cover information in greater depth.

Research on the impact of Safe Programs is limited to an ethnographic evaluation of the Iowa State University Safe Program (Evans, 2002). This study investigated the extent to which the Iowa State University Safe Program contributed to a more welcoming and supportive environment for LGBT individuals. Multiple methods of data collection were used including interviews of 42 individuals, documentation of the location and prevalence of Safe Markers, analysis of artifacts such as Safe Program proposals, newspaper articles, letters to the editor, e-mail messages to the LGBT student organization, electronic responses by volunteers who were not interviewed, comments phoned, written, or e-mailed to the researchers, and formal and informal reports about the project. In particular, LGBT students, LGBT staff and faculty, and heterosexual Safe Program members were asked about the types of interactions that resulted from posting the Safe Markers, the effect of the program, and concerns about the program. Overall, Evans and her co-researchers stated that they were, “...moved to tears by the stories we
heard about the significant impact that Safe Zone stickers had on the lives of LGBT students, faculty, staff, and their allies" (p. 536), and concluded that the project created a positive change on the campus culture.

Interestingly, many heterosexual Safe members reported that they did not have any direct interactions as a result of posting a sticker. However in a few cases, these individuals stated that having a Safe Marker posted led to LGBT individuals opening up to them about their lives as LGBT, LGBT people asking questions, or LGBT people requesting resource materials. Some LGBT students reported that they had initiated conversations about their sexual orientation because they saw a Safe Marker. The researchers believed that some heterosexuals, especially if they had not been approached by an LGBT individual upon posting a sign, downplayed the impact of the Safe Program on LGBT people noting, “Very few of our heterosexual respondents had any idea how powerfully LGBT individuals were affected...” (p. 537). However, some heterosexuals were aware of the personal impact of the Safe Program. Some heterosexuals who posted Safe Markers reported, “more honest interactions and a deeper level of communication” (p. 533). Also, heterosexual participants reported that the program increased their awareness about LGBT issues, inspired them to learn more about LGBT issues, provided an opportunity to make a public statement about their values and beliefs, and provided a tangible way to help others. The researchers noted that the services and programs of the LGBT student organization “increased significantly after the initiation of the Safe Zone project” (Evans, 2002, p. 529). Finally, some negative exchanges were reported as a result of posting the Safe Marker including staff conflicts about posting a sticker in a shared space and negative remarks or jokes made by students (of unidentified sexual orientations) about other students who post the sticker. Also, both heterosexual and LGBT students reported that some posted Safe Markers had been torn or defaced.

Effects on the Safe Program on the campus climate were described, including increased visibility, increased support, changed image, and changed attitudes. All
respondents perceived the project as increasing the visibility for LGBT people and issues. Interviewees noted that debates about the Safe Program in student government and in the student newspaper helped to address misunderstandings and further educational efforts surrounding LGBT issues. Interviewees also stated that support for LGBT people increased due to more discussion and communication about LGBT concerns. Faculty and staff of all sexual orientations reported their belief that the Safe Program was helping to change the university's conservative image. While some heterosexual students felt that the Safe Program contributed to attitude change on campus, other heterosexual students were less sure that changes on campus were a direct result of the project.

The LGBT student organization staff believed the Safe Program to have "significantly contributed to increased educational opportunities on campus" (p. 530). Effects of the Safe Program reported by LGBT students were overwhelmingly positive in that respondents noted feeling safer, more comfortable, and more affirmed on campus. These students cited that the display of Safe Markers led to honest interactions and communication with other students. Several gay male students expressed that the Safe Program validated their own efforts to improve the campus environment for LGBT people. In terms of negative effects reported by LGBT students, several reported having their Safe Markers defaced, and some reported being harassed for posting a Safe Marker. Similar to reports from LGBT students, LGBT faculty and staff reported feeling more secure on campus as a result of the Safe Program. LGBT faculty and staff also remarked that their opinions of others shifted due to whether or not another person posted the Safe Marker (i.e., liking others more for their display, or liking people less for not displaying a sticker). Finally, LGBT faculty and staff reported increased networking opportunities as a result of feeling safer to communicate and collaborate with others who displayed a Safe Marker.

While the majority of reactions to this Safe Program were positive, some concerns were raised. Interestingly, Evans (2002) noted that the concerns shared were about
potential problems rather than actual negative experiences. For example, a few students were concerned that the number of Safe Markers would provide a false sense of security for LGBT individuals. A concern was also raised regarding a lack of training for those who post a Safe Marker. One gay male expressed his worry that closeted LGBT students would experience stress as a result of worrying if others would perceive them as gay if they looked at a Safe Marker too long. LGBT persons and allies stated their belief that the project was not "enough," and hoped that the administration would not view the Safe Program as adequately addressing LGBT concerns and therefore neglect supporting additional initiatives that could improve the campus climate for LGBT persons.

**LGBT Student Organizations**

LGBT Student Organizations are becoming more prevalent on college and university campuses since the first LGBT Student Organization began at Columbia University in 1967 (Mallory, 1998). Surveys of student affairs professionals demonstrate that the percentage of campuses reporting gay and lesbian advocacy groups grew from 11 to 40 per cent between 1978 and 1997 (Levine & Curreton, 1998). Some colleges and universities have one LGBT Student Organization, while others have multiple LGBT organizations organized around ethnicity, gender, political ideology, religious affiliation, or function (Scott, 1991). The roles of LGBT Student Organizations vary between organizations, yet many involve the provision of social activities, political action, support services, educational activities, and student development (Scott).

A review of the literature regarding LGBT Student Organizations and a review of campus websites for LGBT Student Organizations illuminates various ways for heterosexuals to be involved with these groups. As noted by Sanlo et al. (2002), heterosexual students may participate within a campus LGBT Student Organization to join in planning and implementing programs. Some LGBT Student Organizations include "allies" in their group name, or offer statements of welcome for ally members. For
example, Duke Allies is an official undergraduate Student Organization, “...for individuals that are supportive and affirming of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. It is a gay-straight alliance that works to promote a LGBTA-friendly environment” (Duke Allies, 2003). There are also Student Organizations that are specifically designed for allies, such as ALLIES at Penn State University (Sanlo et al.). Student members of ALLIES note that the goals of ALLIES are to, “…raise awareness, to provide education about and discuss LGBT issues, to make it known that it is okay to be straight and care about LGBT issues, and to inform the community at large that queer issues affect straight people” (p. 99).

Heterosexual allies who are faculty or staff can be involved with LGBT Student Organizations offering professional assistance to establish a LGBT group, or by serving as group advisor (Wall & Evans, 2000; Ward, 1998). In an empirical study of heterosexual allies who are student affairs professionals, participants “... often indicated that they were advisors for LGB student groups. In addition to being formal advisors, participants reported assisting student groups in acquiring space, financial, or material resources” (DiStefano et al., 2000, p. 135). Institutions may strongly encourage or even require that student organizations have an advisor (Scott, 1991). “Even when student organizations are not mandated to have advisers, LGBT organizations, particularly those comprised primarily of undergraduates, are likely to reach out to a friendly and knowledgeable faculty or staff member to serve in that capacity” (Sanlo, 2002, pp. 81). Although some heterosexual advisors may be hesitant to become involved with LGBT issues on campus due to personal misunderstandings, discomfort with LGBT issues, or lack of awareness of their own heterosexual privilege (Ward), Scott notes that an advisor does not necessarily have to be gay or lesbian in order to be effective. Ward, in a chapter focused on advising LGBT Student Organizations, includes a brief section of considerations for non-LGBT advisors. Ward believes that effective heterosexual advisors are those who have educated themselves about coming out and other LGBT
issues, have personal and professional commitment to LGBT students, demonstrate genuine empathy for LGBT students, and understand the significance of sexual identity. Outcalt (1998) identifies the challenges of maintaining a successful LGBT campus group and provides a framework with suggestions for faculty or student affairs staff to help these groups flourish.

Speaker Panel Programs

Speaker Panels, also called speaker bureaus or panel teams, are comprised of LGBT and ally students, faculty, staff, and community members who share personal stories about being LGBT or being an ally, and facilitate discussion about LGBT issues for classes, residence halls, and campus groups (Lucksted, 1998). The main goals of Speaker Panels are to increase visibility and awareness of LGBT individuals and their issues (Lucksted) and to reduce homophobic attitudes (Croteau & Kusek, 1992; Sanlo et al., 2002).

Croteau & Kusek (1992) were the first to offer published material regarding the design and implementation of LGBT speaker programs, and a chapter by Lucksted (1998) offers an additional comprehensive guide for those interested in starting or improving a LGBT Speaker Panel. The main components of Speaker Panels are the sharing of personal narratives by the panelists, and the opportunity for audience members to ask questions of panelists.

Heterosexual student affairs professionals can be involved in Speaker Panels in a variety of ways recommended by Geasler, Croteau, Heineman, and Edlund (1995). These authors suggest that on campuses that do not have established Speaker Panels, student affairs professionals could articulate the need for such a program, establish the structure and organization of the program, recruit and train speakers, and advocate for the use of panels on campus. Student Affairs professionals on campuses with established programs could assist in the training of speakers, or work with speakers after programs to process
panelists' experiences. Another way heterosexuals can be involved with Speaker Panels is to participate as speakers. Some schools include allies as part of their Speaker Panels, although this possibility is mentioned without much elaboration in the literature (Lucksted, 1998; Sanlo et al., 2002). My experience at Western Michigan University involved being trained as an ally panelist (Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Student Services office, 2003), and later providing training for LGBT and ally students to become Speaker Panelists at Ball State University. Another program that includes ally speakers in their Speaker Panel is Duke University (Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Life, 2003).

An additional and unique type of Speaker Panel that involves heterosexual and LGBT speakers is described by the Multicultural Center at the Ohio State University. A "Guess the Straight Person Panel" is a program in which audience members ask questions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and heterosexual students, and then try to determine who on the panel is heterosexual (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Student Services at Ohio State University, 2003).

Empirically, little is known about ally Speaker Panelists. The small amount of empirical research on Speaker Panels only addresses the impact of Speaker Panels with lesbian, gay, and bisexual panelists (Croteau & Kusek, 1992; Geasler et al., 1995). Croteau and Kusek document decreased levels of homophobic attitudes among audience members, and a qualitative study by Geasler et al. found that many participants acknowledged more affirming attitudes toward LGB people and issues after the panel. Specifically, participants expressed how interacting with panelists dispelled previously-held stereotypes about LGB people, reported acknowledgment of the similarities between themselves and LGB men and women, acknowledged an increased understanding of the difficulties faced by LGB people due to heterosexism, reported more empathy for LGB people, and reported increased self-reflection about sexual orientation and their own attitudes. This study makes an important contribution by identifying how students...
changed after viewing a panel. Yet so far there are not any empirical investigations of Speaker Panels that include heterosexual allies as speakers. It is unknown what impact ally speakers have on other panel members, on LGBT audience members, or on heterosexual audience members.

LGBT Support or Counseling Groups

LGBT support or therapy groups provide students avenues through which to focus on particular issues or concerns, receive information, and gain awareness and insight within a supportive and therapeutic environment (Perez, DeBord, & Brock, 2000). Although LGBT group members are, by definition, limited to LGBT people, heterosexual individuals can play a role in the promotion or facilitation of such groups. For example, Evans and Wall (2000) encourage student affairs staff to assist, advocate, and promote the establishment of LGBT support groups on campus. On campuses in which a self-identified LGBT counselor is not available to lead the LGBT group a heterosexual counselor or counselors may be called upon to fulfill the facilitator role (Holahan & Gibson, 1994; Perez et al., 2000). The literature regarding groups for LGBT people include two personal accounts of what it is like for heterosexual counselors to facilitate LGBT groups (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995; Holahan & Gibson, 1994). Unfortunately, there are no personal accounts by LGBT group members nor any empirical studies of LGBT people who have participated in groups facilitated by heterosexuals. However, heterosexual therapists Holahan and Gibson offer a couple of interesting observations of their members. First, they stated that they were “well received” when they visited and informed members of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Student Alliance about the therapy groups, noting that the members appeared “grateful” for these group offerings. Initially, members claimed that having a leader of a different sexual orientation was not an issue. However as the members’ safety and cohesion increased during the following semester, the impact of the facilitators’ sexual orientation emerged and was processed. At the end
of the groups, gay and lesbian members provided anonymous responses to counseling satisfaction and counseling outcome measures indicating high degrees of satisfaction with the groups.

Issues mentioned in the literature specific to heterosexual group counselors of LGBT groups include a desire to be "politically correct," fear of engaging in inadvertently offensive comments or behaviors, experiencing members' rage at heterosexist society, internalized homophobia, and need to acknowledge one's own heterosexual privileges (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995; Holahan & Gibson, 1994; Perez et al., 2000). Each of these authors recommends working through these issues in supervision or consultation with someone who has extensive knowledge of LGBT issues.

*Faculty and Staff Mentors for LGBT Students*

Two book chapters provide information about mentoring for LGBT students (Alford-Keating, 2002; Kraig, 1998). Alford-Keating describes a formal mentoring program at the University of California at Los Angles in which volunteer LGBT student or staff mentors are paired with LGBT students to be "supportive guides and resource persons" (p. 101). Kraig provides a personal account of her experiences as an openly lesbian faculty member and mentor to LGBT students. Kraig also offers the following mentoring activities to support LGBT students: assisting LGBT campus groups, encouraging LGBT students to participate in co-curricular activities, providing academic support for LGBT students, and informally sharing life stories.

The appropriateness for heterosexuals to serve as mentors for LGBT students has barely been identified or addressed in the literature. Although Alford-Keating (2002) specifies that mentors for LGBT students are LGBT persons, Kraig (1998) encourages heterosexuals to serve as mentors for LGBT students. However, the prevalence of heterosexual mentors is unknown, and evaluations regarding mentoring programs for LGBT students do not yet exist.
Advisory Committees on LGBT Concerns

"A University wide advisory committee on LGBT concerns can be a powerful vehicle for keeping issues before individuals in positions of power" (Evans & Wall, 2000, p. 390). Evans and Wall suggest a variety of activities through which advisory committees can increase visibility of LGBT issues. Specifically, these authors recommend that advisory committees conduct studies to examine the campus climate for LGBT people on campus, promote symposia or invite speakers to raise awareness, or provide recommendations regarding policies and procedures to the appropriate administrators. The only published data found about LGBT Advisory Boards was part of Beemyn’s (2002) study of 54 LGBT centers or offices: 21 offices had Advisory Boards and 3 were in the process of creating an Advisory Board. Of those with Advisory Boards, membership included 5 to 32 members who were appointed by the center director or elected by the board itself. All Advisory Boards included students, faculty, and staff. Some boards included administrators, community members, or alumni members. The sexual orientations of Advisory Board members were not collected or addressed in this study. The participation of heterosexual allies in particular as members of LGBT Advisory Boards is not addressed in the literature.

Campus Programming on LGBT Issues

According to Evans and Wall (2000), campus programming specific to LGBT issues is often left to LGBT Student Organizations, and occurs only during Coming Out Week or Pride Week events. These authors encourage student affairs professionals to include LGBT speakers, entertainers, and artists as part of the regularly scheduled campus programming. A unique chapter by Wall, Washington, Evans, and Papish (2000) illustrates the components of successful LGBT programming, and offers four examples of exercises each with discussion questions. Although undocumented, heterosexual allies with facilitation and training skills could be effective presenters of LGBT programming.

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Allies of LGBT People

The literature has just recently begun to address the role heterosexual allies can play in responding to the unique needs and challenges facing LGBT people on university campuses (Evans & Levine, 1990; Evans & Wall, 2000; Lark, 1998; Washington & Evans, 1991). Evans and Wall assert that in addition to LGBT student affairs staff, allies are “equally important in demonstrating that values of inclusion and equity are a high priority...” (p. 397). Similarly, Lark (1998) calls for the collaboration of heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual student affairs administrators to address the impact of heterosexism and homophobia for everyone on campus.

The term, “ally” was introduced by Washington and Evans (1991) who define an ally as a heterosexual person who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support and advocacy for LGB people. Washington and Evans specifically state that by their definition, only heterosexuals can be allies; although LGB people can be advocates for themselves and other LGB people, these authors believe that the impact and effect of advocacy is different when conducted by heterosexual members. Lucozzi (1998) proposed that individuals or institutions can serve as allies. From this perspective, an individual ally is “someone who is willing to confront and challenge the institutional and cultural structures that support injustice” (pp. 48) and an educational institution can be an ally by implementing recruitment, retention, and diversity initiatives that support and embrace LGBT students and employees. The focus of the current literature review is on individual allies.

The ally and heterosexual literature includes two broad content areas. First, there are a number of conceptual and research works that inform our understanding of the development and the behaviors of allies. This literature includes models of ally development (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995; Worthington, Savoy, & Vernaglia, 2000) and heterosexual identity development (Broido, 2000; Eliason, 1995; Sullivan, 1998; Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002). In
addition to these models, there are a very small number of empirical works, which also speak to the development and experiences of heterosexual allies (DiStefano et al. 2000; Poynter & Burnett, 2001; Vernaglia, 2000). The second broad area of literature regarding allies or heterosexuals in general involves the promotion of practices that are sensitive to or supportive of LGBT people. Authors including Broido (2000), Livingston (1996), Rapp (1995), and Washington and Evans (1991) provide suggestions for becoming an ally and behaving as an ally. In addition, empirical works of LGB people’s interactions with heterosexuals provide descriptions, themes, or specific behaviors of heterosexuals that LGB people judge to be supportive or biased (Conley, Calhoun, Evett, & Devine, 2001; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Dorland & Fischer, 2001); these studies provide actual examples from LGB people about their experiences with heterosexual individuals.

Conceptualization and Research of Ally and Heterosexual Identity Development

Two types of developmental models identify the individual and social characteristics of heterosexual individuals across particular stages. First, there are a group of models that describe how heterosexuals come to form a heterosexual identity (Broido, 2000; Eliason, 1995; Sullivan, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002). Notably, the bulk of sexual identity literature has focused on gay or lesbian identity, or heterosexual attitudes toward LGB people (Eliason). Literature regarding heterosexual identity has only been addressed recently and is quite sparse. The existing heterosexual identity models emphasize that societal oppression of LGB individuals affects all people across heterosexual and LGB orientations. According to authors of these models, the more understanding an individual has about his or her own sexual identity, the more likely he or she will be to develop an appreciation for sexual diversity. There are another group of models outlining the developmental path of heterosexual allies (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995; Worthington et al., 2000). These models describe the
stages through which heterosexuals develop attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors affirming of LGB people. The heterosexual ally models began to emerge around the same time as the heterosexual identity models. The heterosexual identity models will be described below first followed by description of the ally development models.

Broido (2000) and Sullivan (1998) each undertook a model of heterosexual identity, adapting Hardiman and Jackson’s (1992) White Racial Identity Model. Although these models developed independently, their concepts are similar and their terminology is the same, so I will describe them together. Both models illustrate how heterosexuals’ membership in the majority social group is relevant to the development of attitudes and behaviors that are affirming of LGB people. In the Naive stage, heterosexuals are unaware of sexual orientation and therefore have no assumptions about which behaviors are appropriate for men and women in intimate relationships. Accordingly, there are no value judgements about what sexual identities and behaviors are accepted or preferred. In the Acceptance stage, homophobia impacts individuals’ socialization, and heterosexuals recognize and accept the dominant worldview that heterosexuality is normal and understandable. In this phase, negative stereotypes about LGB people are learned and believed. Heterosexuals in the Resistance stage begin to recognize heterosexism and homophobia. When heterosexuals come to realize that LGB people are hurt by homophobia and heterosexism and that heterosexuals benefit from heterosexism, they may experience feelings of guilt, shame, anger, or helplessness. While individuals in passive resistance recognize the injustice of heterosexism but feel powerless, those in active resistance recognize their own homophobia, and actively work on their attitudes and the attitudes of others by confronting homophobic comments, joining political organizations, or displaying LGB-affirmative symbols. In Redefinition, heterosexuals attempt to define their heterosexual identity in ways that are not dependent on heterosexism. These heterosexuals work with other heterosexuals to fight oppression against LGBT people. In the final stage of heterosexual identity development,
Internalization, heterosexuals accept a positive identity as heterosexual. Heterosexuals in the internalized stage see how they can personally benefit by a world that is not heterosexual, and work to end all types of social oppression.

The heterosexual identity model by Worthington et al. (2002) adds to the above models by highlighting the development of parallel individual and social identity process among heterosexual people. These authors note that previous models have overemphasized individual identity processes while excluding social identity processes; they offer a model that seeks to address this limitation by drawing upon the ideas of Fouad and Brown (2000) and McCarn and Fassinger (1996) who explicitly draw attention to both social and individual identity processes. Worthington et al. describe the individual sexual identity process as the development of one’s own sexual needs, values, orientation, and preferences. In contrast, the social identity process involves the recognition of one’s status as a member of a majority group and one’s attitude and behaviors toward sexual minority groups. According to these authors, the individual and social sexual identity processes are parallel. Therefore the understanding of individual heterosexual identity is an “essential foundation” for understanding the development of LGB-affirmative attitudes and behaviors.

The heterosexual identity model by Worthington et al. (2002) involves five statuses. Whereas Broido (2000) and Sullivan (1998) propose an early stage in which there are no value judgments about what sexual identities are preferred, Worthington et al. propose that the starting point for most individuals is Unexplored Commitment, in which individual and social identities are highly influenced by strong societal messages. Here, individual identity status is characterized by giving little conscious thought to sexuality. Group membership identity is characterized by holding negative social attitudes toward LGB people as heterosexuals accept and adopt society’s negative biases toward LGB people. Next, individuals may move to either Diffusion or Active Exploration. Diffusion is simply characterized by a lack of active exploration in which
the person may experience a loss or absence of a sense of identity. In contrast, those in Active Exploration see themselves as members of the dominant heterosexual group, as do heterosexuals in Broido’s and Sullivan’s Resistance stage. Individuals in Active Exploration actively explore, evaluate, or experiment with their sexual needs, values, orientation and/or preferences for activities, partner characteristics, or modes of sexual expression. In terms of group membership status, there is recognition of oneself as a member of the dominant heterosexual group. As noted earlier, Broido and Sullivan provide two potential consequences of having an awareness of being a dominant group member; those in Passive Resistance feel powerless, while those in Active Resistance work on their own attitudes and the attitudes of others. Similarly, Worthington et al. also propose two distinct responses to the awareness of oneself as a dominant group member. An individual may question the justice of having a privileged status, or even more consistently assert the privilege of that majority status. The Deepening and Commitment status is characterized by attitudes toward LGBT people that range from condemnation to affirmativeness; there is little elaboration to illustrate how such varying modes may be established. One’s individual identity status in the Deepening and Commitment status is described as moving toward a greater commitment to one’s sexual needs, values, sexual orientation, preferences for activities, partner characteristics, and modes of expression. Worthington et al. propose that the final stage, Synthesis, is perhaps the most “mature and adaptive” status in which individual sexual identity, group membership identity, and attitudes toward sexual minorities, “...merge into overall sexual self-concept that is conscious, congruent, volitional, and (hopefully) enlightened” (p. 519). At this point, heterosexuals are the most likely to be affirming toward LGB individuals. This status is similar to the final stage of Broido and Sullivan, Internalization, in which heterosexuals develop a positive heterosexual identity and work against heterosexism and other types of oppression.
Eliason (1995) pioneered the first empirical research investigating the sexual identity of heterosexuals. First, she adapted the general identity statuses proposed by Marcia (1987) to heterosexual identity. Then she analyzed the written essays of students describing how they believed their sexual identity formed, categorizing student responses into the four broad identity statuses, diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement.

In her analysis, Eliason was able to find examples that illustrated each of the four identity statuses. The first status, Diffusion, is characterized by lack of exploration and lack of commitment to any identity. In Eliason’s study, roughly one-fourth of the women and over one-third of the men stated that they had never thought about or given consideration to their sexual identity. In the second status, Foreclosure, the person accepts an identity imposed by another person or by societal expectations without critique or exploring other options. Eliason reported that the majority of respondents made statements indicative of this stage. Themes indicative of Foreclosure include responses that parents, environment, culture, or religion shaped or socialized them into heterosexuality, the belief that gender determines sexual identity, the view that sexual identity is innate and unchanging, and the belief that there is no other option outside of heterosexuality. Moratorium is the third status in which the person is actively in the process of exploring an identity and has not yet made a commitment. Eliason reported that only three women’s responses were illustrative of this stage at the beginning of the class, yet many students expressed increased awareness and questions about their own sexual identity throughout the semester. In the fourth status, Achievement, the person has made a conscious commitment to a particular identity. Eliason reported that a few students seemed to be Achieved in their sexual identity. Interestingly, the men in Achievement appeared to be committing to heterosexuality on the basis of rejecting a gay identity, whereas the women in Achievement had considered what it would mean to be lesbian or bisexual although they decided that heterosexuality suited them.
A significant relationship between a positive heterosexual identity and holding affirming attitudes toward LGB people has been hypothesized by each of the scholars who proposed heterosexual identity models (Broido, 2000; Sullivan, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002). One empirical investigation lends support to this hypothesis. Simoni and Walters (2001) believed that a more developed heterosexual identity would be associated with decreased negative attitudes toward LGB people. The authors adapted Helm’s White Racial Identity Model to describe a Heterosexual Identity Attitudes Model. Based on this adaptation, they described heterosexuals in the Contact stage as oblivious to sexual orientation issues. Heterosexuals in the Disintegration stage experience confusion about the effects of being heterosexual in this society and are completely unaware of heterosexual privilege. In the Reintegration stage, heterosexuals idealize heterosexuality and deprecate all that is LGB; they begin to see heterosexual privilege. The Pseudo-independence stage is characterized by an intellectual awareness of ones heterosexuality; heterosexual privilege is minimized due to feelings of guilt. Finally, in the Autonomy stage, heterosexuals develop an anti-heterosexist heterosexual identity, and fully acknowledge heterosexual privilege. Results did receive empirical support in that earlier stages (Disintegration and Reintegration) are related to heterosexist attitudes while the later stage (Pseudo-independence) is related to decreased heterosexist attitudes. Although autonomy attitudes were not significant in the regression equation, they were indeed highly correlated with scores on a scale of attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women. Researchers found that indeed, heterosexual identity attitudes, when controlling for gender, age, ethnicity, and education, account for 71 per cent of the variance in heterosexist attitudes.

Simoni and Walters (2001) conclude that heterosexuals develop an identity about sexual orientation similar to the process by which Whites develop a racial identity. These authors speculate that heterosexual privilege mediates this relationship, although they note that there currently is no measure of privilege, and there are no empirical research
investigations that focus on privilege. Their understanding is that as heterosexuals acknowledge the advantages and privileges of heterosexuals, they gain empathy and understanding of LGB people.

In addition to models of heterosexual identity described above, the literature also includes some models of heterosexual ally development. The ally development models illustrate stages through which heterosexual’s attitudes, reactions, and responses toward LGB people may change over time. The first model of ally development is presented by a pair of heterosexual counselors based on their experiences facilitating a LGB support group (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995) and providing career counseling to LGB students (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995). A few years later, Worthington et al. (2000) proposed a model to describe stages through which heterosexuals come to be affirming of LGBT people.

Gelberg and Chojnacki begin their description of ally development with the Awareness stage, describing heterosexuals who have the desire to “do something” about LGB oppression. Through personal relationships with LGB people, heterosexuals in this stage gain increased awareness and sensitivity to homophobia and heterosexism, which prompts them to become active in addressing LGB issues on campus. In the Ambivalence stage, heterosexual counselors experience difficulty matching their LGB-affirmative intentions with LGB-affirmative actions, which leads to feelings of depression, anxiety, and ambivalence. In this stage, support from LGB professionals and other affirmative heterosexuals are important to help reduce feelings of isolation and help manage anxieties about the ally role. The Empowerment stage is marked by the awareness of one’s development as an ally and leads to greater self-valuing and self-efficacy. These feelings of pride prompt heterosexuals to enter the Activism stage, which is characterized by becoming professionally, personally, socially, and politically active in LGB issues. In the Pride stage, heterosexuals experience congruency between their LGB-affirmative objectives and behaviors, which increases self-valuing. Counselors in this stage
experience greater alienation from individuals who exhibit homophobic or heterosexist statements. As a result of engaging in productive confrontations of heterosexism and homophobia, heterosexuals move to the final stage, integration. In the Integration stage, heterosexuals integrate their work as allies into other aspects of their lives resulting in greater feelings of professional and personal integration.

In a model similar to that of Chojnacki and Gelberg (1995), Worthington et al. (2000) propose a developmental model of five statuses describing how heterosexuals become affirmative in their attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors toward LGB people. In the first phase, Passive Conformity, heterosexuals do not question the heterosexist and homophobic society. These heterosexuals may have not yet formed opinions and ideas about LGB people, or they may simply absorb societal expectations about LGB people. In the Revelation and Exploration stage, contact with LGB people prompts heterosexuals to question their assumptions about those with a minority sexual orientation; contact with LGB people may be hostile, indifferent, ambivalent, or affirming toward LGB people. This stage appears most similar to the Awareness stage of Chojnacki and Gelberg, in which contact with LGB people raises awareness and sensitivity to LGB issues. The main difference is that while Chojnacki and Gelberg conclude that the result of increased awareness is a desire to become more active in LGB issues, Worthington et al. propose that heterosexual contact with LGB people at this stage can range anywhere from hostile to affirming. In the third stage, Tentative Commitment, Worthington et al. propose that heterosexuals accept the value of sexual diversity in the world without devoting energy to the concerns of LGB people; at this point, heterosexuals don’t see how heterosexism and homophobia personally impact their lives. The first stage in the Worthington et al. model in which heterosexuals engage in ally actions is the Synthesis and Integration stage. This stage is characterized by heterosexuals who value and respect sexual diversity in the world and engage with LGB people more openly. The fifth stage of both models is very similar. During the Active Commitment
stage of Worthington et al., and the Integration stage of Gelberg and Chojnacki, heterosexuals incorporate their knowledge and awareness of LGB issues into their personal, professional, and political lives.

Overall, the heterosexual and ally models have some important core themes. First, each of these models highlights the existence and impact of heterosexism and homophobia in society. According to the models, heterosexuals are influenced by the dominant worldview in which heterosexuality is believed to be “normal” and LGBT people are devalued. Also, personal contact with LGBT people is believed to be a common element important to heterosexual identity and ally development. Personal contact with LGBT people is proposed to increase heterosexuals’ awareness and sensitivity about the oppression against LGBT people, challenge heterosexuals’ assumptions and stereotypes about LGBT people, and spark a desire among heterosexuals to work against oppression. A third common element of these models is that they tend to focus primarily on cognitive experiences such as awareness, beliefs, recognition, or understanding with little description about how change occurs across stages. The model proposed by Gelberg and Chojnacki most consistently describes how movement occurs across one stage to the next. Finally, the last stages of these models appear quite similar in that they emphasize a comprehensive identity rather than a narrow aspect of identity. For example, allies at the final stages are proposed to integrate the ally role into their professional, personal, and political lives. Heterosexuals at the last stage of identity development are believed to recognize the benefit of working against not only oppression against LGBT people, but oppression toward all groups that face discrimination.

Although the models of heterosexual and ally development described above have not been tested, there are studies that focus specifically on heterosexual allies (DiStefano et al., 2000; Poynter & Burnett, 2001; Vernaglia, 2000). This ally research contributes to the understanding of heterosexual ally development and experiences. Allies who are parents of LGB children (Vernaglia), student affairs professionals (DiStefano et al.) and
members of a University Safe Program (Poynter & Burnett) were investigated to learn about the contributing factors to becoming an ally. In addition, allies in the DiStefano et al. and Poynter and Burnett studies were asked to report on ways that they have been actively supportive and ways they failed to be actively supportive of LGB/T people. The contributions of these studies are summarized below.

Across the ally studies, relationships with LGB people were cited as important factors for heterosexuals in becoming allies (DiStefano et al., 2000; Poynter & Burnett, 2001; Vernaglia, 2000). In particular, respondents shared that having personal relationships with LGB people increased their awareness of oppression as they witnessed LGB friends, family members, or coworkers experiencing discrimination, violence, or intolerance. These data provide support for Gelberg and Chojnacki's awareness stage, in which contact with LGB people increases awareness and prompts action. Some ally participants in the DiStefano et al. and Vernaglia studies noted that their own experiences with societal oppression helped identify with discrimination faced by LGB people. Allies in Vernaglia and Poynter and Burnett's studies cited involvement in other social movements such as civil rights or feminist movements as contributing to their ally development. These findings provide support for the heterosexual identity models which highlight the importance of one's awareness of dominant/minority populations; ally respondents illustrated how personal understanding of minority oppression in one context shed light on the oppression of LGB people. Receiving educational and professional development was also frequently cited as a contributing factor to becoming an ally (DiStefano et al.; Poynter & Burnett). Respondents did not specify the content or process of these programs, although the ally models would suggest that having contact with LGB people and allies, increasing one's awareness, learning skills, receiving encouragement or support, and finding out ways to be active may all be aspects of educational and professional development that made a difference to these allies. Allies further reported that their personal values such as open-mindedness or equality and family upbringing

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contributed to their development as allies (DiStefano et al.; Poynter & Burnett; Vernaglia). Respondents in Poynter and Barnett’s study noted that public participation in support of LGBT people and issues, personal exploration of LGBT issues, and membership in a LGBT or Ally Organization were factors which contributed to their development as allies.

Allies in the DiStefano et al. (2000) and Poynter & Burnett (2001) studies reported on ways of being actively supportive to LGBT people. Common ally activities include confronting homophobic or heterosexist remarks, supporting LGBT friends, peers, or coworkers, providing or attending LGBT-affirmative programming, training, or activities, and advocating for policy change. Allies in DiStefano et al.’s sample stated that they were supportive of LGB people by displaying LGB symbols of affirmation, and by advising or assisting LGB student groups. The sample in Poynter and Burnett’s investigation reported that they were supportive by providing an inclusive work or educational environment, being politically active, using inclusive language, educating themselves in LGBT issues, and working with LGBT people in the context of the AIDS crisis.

Allies have also reported instances they failed to be supportive to LGBT people including actively using heterosexist language, not confronting homophobia or heterosexism, and lack of participation in LGBT activities (DiStefano et al., 2000; Poynter & Burnett, 2001). Allies were also asked to share the reasons for not being supportive of LGB people during particular times. Common reasons for not acting as an ally across both samples include personal ignorance or lack of development concerning LGBT issues. Allies in the DiStefano et al. study explained that one reason for not acting as an ally was the belief that an ally action would be ineffective at a particular time or with particular people. This reason appeared to be related to a conscious choice and strategy. These allies also reported that fear of being the target of homophobia, fear of conflict, and lack of energy were factors that contributed to not acting as an ally. Allies in
the study by Poynter and Burnett responded that they were not supportive due to fear of being labeled LGBT, fear of sexual advances by LGBT people, or having discomfort around LGBT people. These reasons allies provided are real reports of not acting in actual situations, and could be helpful to address in the education and training of heterosexual allies. These factors are not explicitly included in the ally development models as obstacles, although very broadly, Chojnacki and Gelberg (1995) note that support from LGB professionals and other affirming heterosexuals helped manage allies’ anxiety about their ally role.

While there are no empirical studies asking LGB people about their experiences and reactions with allies, the reactions of LGB people to ally behavior was assessed by heterosexual allies in the DiStefano et al. (2000) study. Allies in this study were asked to identify, after reporting their supportive behaviors, how other people reacted to each of these behaviors. The allies in this study stated that LGB people were appreciative, supportive, patient, and welcoming to particular ally behaviors. The allies also noted that the supportive behaviors of LGB people resulted in increased sense of safety among LGB people, more frequent disclosures about sexual orientation, and LGB people seeking out more contact with them. Also, some allies reported that LGB people were surprised or curious about why they wanted to work with LGB individuals.

As a whole, the heterosexual identity and heterosexual ally models offer important core ideas. Each of these models highlights the existence and impact of homophobia and heterosexism in society. According to the models, heterosexuals are influenced by the dominant worldview in which LGBT people are devalued, and by societal expectations that heterosexuality is “normal.” Contact with LGBT people is a common theme among the models; such contact influences heterosexuals by raising their awareness, prompting them to question their assumptions, and increasing their sensitivity to the oppression faced by LGBT people. The models are focused quite heavily on cognitive experiences such as being unaware or aware, recognizing ideas, or holding attitudes and beliefs. The
specific behaviors of allies, such as confronting homophobia and heterosexism, joining political organizations, or displaying LGBT-affirmative symbols, are touched upon just briefly in the models without much detail. The models vary considerably in their focus on process of movement through the stages. Chojnacki and Gelberg’s model is based on their personal experiences and provides several specific examples of how personal change and movement occurs across stages. Other models are not as consistent in their description of how movement occurs between each of the stages, for example, it is unclear how heterosexuals come to define heterosexuality positively in Broido and Sullivan’s redefinition stage. The final stage in each of these models appear quite similar in that they describe heterosexuals engaging in supportive actions across various personal, professional, or political contexts with recognition of the importance of working against all types of oppression.

Promoting Ally Practices

In addition to the conceptual models described above, the ally literature includes practice oriented works that, although not empirically-based, identify and recommend specific ways to promote the development of allies (Broido, 2000; Rapp, 1995; Wall & Evans, 1991). These published contributions provide practical suggestions about what allies can do to be effective. In addition, the ally literature includes works that address the importance of heterosexuals becoming aware of their heterosexual privilege. These discussions illustrate how the recognition of privilege impacts not only one’s understanding of oppression, but desire to work against it.

Broido (2000) proposes three types of roles for heterosexual allies including support, education, and advocacy. Wall and Evans (1991) and Rapp (1995) provide specific suggestions that will be identified within Broido’s framework of 3 ally roles. The first role that allies can play is providing support to LGBT people. Examples of support found in this literature include using non-heterosexist and gender neutral language,
displaying LGB-affirming items such as posters, buttons, or books, joining a LGB supportive University program, or advising LGB student groups. The second role allies can play is providing education to help change the social structures that maintain heterosexism and homophobia. Educational interventions include challenging homophobic comments, misinformation, and stereotypes; including LGB histories, cultures, and issues in curricula; including sexual orientation in diversity training; and developing LGB Speaker Programs. The third role, advocacy, is important in making allies’ support highly visible. Advocacy may involve joining committees or groups working to address campus climate, writing letters of LGB-support to institutional decision makers (i.e., advocating for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the institution’s non-discrimination policy), speaking about LGB issues with colleagues, participating in protests and boycotts, developing majors in LGB studies, funding research on LGBT issues, addressing LGBT related harassment, or ensuring safety and housing access for LGBT individuals.

The ally literature also attends to the importance for heterosexuals to engage in reflection about sexual orientation issues to develop an awareness of their own heterosexual privilege. Heterosexual privilege refers to the opportunities and advantages heterosexuals have simply by being members of the dominant group. Heterosexuals are encouraged to reflect on how their personal reactions to LGBT people are influenced by societal biases, stereotypes, and beliefs about LGBT people (Morrow, 1998; Worthington, McCrary, & Howard, 1998). Although there are no empirical data on heterosexual privilege, this concept is present in the heterosexual identity and ally models as well as emphasized by Livingston (1996) and Washington and Evans (1991). Washington and Evans list several examples of heterosexual privilege, and hypothesize that when heterosexuals become aware of their privileges, they realize that equity for LGB people has not been achieved, and that they can play a role in making equity a
reality. According to Washington and Evans, the developing awareness of one’s heterosexual privilege is “often the most painful process of becoming an ally” (p. 196).

Studies of LGB People

As noted earlier, there are no studies about LGB people and their interactions with allies. There are, however, some studies of LGB people that investigate their experiences with heterosexuals in general (Conley et al., 2001; Croteau & Lark, 1995; Croteau & von Destinon, 1994; Dorland & Fischer, 2001). These studies are highly relevant to allies as they identify behaviors that LGB people report to be discriminatory, biased, sensitive, or affirming.

A national survey of job search experiences of LGB student affairs professionals provides descriptions of discrimination (Croteau and von Destinon, 1994); heterosexuals who want to be allies could avoid these discriminatory practices, which included demonstrating discomfort with sexual minority issues or minority sexual orientations, “outing” fellow colleagues without permission to disclose, gossiping about a candidate’s sexual orientation, asking applicants to disclose their sexual orientation, telling candidates to keep their sexual orientation private from others, using homophobic language, giving more difficult interviews to LGB candidates, overemphasizing sexual orientation in the interview, using language which excludes LGB people, ignoring issues of sexual orientation, making heterosexist assumptions, and evaluating candidates negatively based on sexual orientation. The authors propose alternative and affirming behaviors based on this research. Their suggestions are to be at ease discussing issues of sexual orientation, to be appropriately open to issues of sexual orientation without avoiding or emphasizing these issues, to respect an applicants decision to disclose their sexual orientation or not, to avoid speculation or manipulation to determine a candidates sexual orientation, to only share the applicant’s sexual orientation with that person’s permission, to avoid attempting to restrict a candidate’s choice about how “out” to be on
the job, to avoid actively discriminating by using derogatory language or more strenuous interviews for minority applicants, and to use inclusive, non-heterosexist language.

Another qualitative study of student affairs professionals provides information about both supportive and biased behaviors in student affairs practice (Croteau & Lark, 1995). This study is slightly broader than the previously discussed study as it reaches beyond job search experiences to the broad range of student affairs practices. Again, the themes of “exemplary” practices could be useful in the education of heterosexuals about the behaviors that LGB people report to be particularly beneficial and sensitive to LGB people and issues. Exemplary actions reported include the open affirmation of LGB people and confrontation of homophobia, supportive responses to homophobic harassment and violence including appropriate sanctions and anti-homophobia education, being inclusive in language, programming, written materials, social events, and diversity activities, treating LGB people with the same regard as any other students or colleagues, being sensitive to the unique developmental needs of LGB people, valuing LGB people who are “out” and respecting those who are not “out,” providing staff training and campus programming to reduce homophobia and increase awareness, providing specific support programs for LGB people on campus, advocating for LGB organizations and individuals, and providing equitable, affirming employment procedures.

Learning about the behaviors of heterosexual people that LGB people find to be biased or discriminatory can illustrate to allies specific behaviors to avoid. Conley et al. (2002) asked LGB people to report on the ineffective ways in which heterosexuals try to show that they are non-prejudiced. The most frequent response of LGB people was that some heterosexuals state that they know other LGB people. Directly pointing out that they are not prejudiced was another frequent response. Making statements based on stereotypes about LGB people, using prejudicial language, asking inappropriate or too many questions, ignoring gay issues completely, not owning up to discomfort with LGB issues, and being overly active or trying too hard were behaviors reported as mistakes. A
small number reported that there are no mistakes if the person is truly well intentioned. The behaviors reported in this study are likely to be representative of behaviors of allies who are early in their developmental journey as allies; having the intention to be supportive may not translate into effective behaviors due to lack of knowledge, education, training, or experiences with LGB people and issues.

A unique study conducted by Dorland and Fischer (2001) involved over 120 LGB individuals responding to counseling vignettes in which either heterosexist or non-heterosexist language was used by the therapist. The researchers expected that LGB respondents who read vignettes with inclusive language would have a more positive evaluation of the counselor. Specifically, they believed that LGB people would perceive the counselor with non-heterosexist language to be more credible. Researchers expected that LGB people who read the vignette with non-heterosexist language would indicate greater willingness to return to the counselor, would report more willingness to disclose personal information, and would express greater comfort disclosing sexual orientation to the counselor than respondents who read the vignettes with heterosexist language. Each of their hypotheses was supported empirically. These results illustrate the practical significance of inclusive, non-heterosexist language. While this study makes a fantastic contribution, it illuminates the reactions of LGB people to only one type of heterosexism, heterosexist language. What are the reactions of LGB people to the broad range of experiences they have with heterosexuals who identify as allies?

Summary

LGBT programs and services on college and university campuses are critical to ensure sensitive, supportive, and affirming experiences for LGBT people. As LGBT initiatives grow in number and scope, increasing numbers of heterosexual allies are becoming involved on campus in efforts to improve the lives of LGBT students, faculty, and staff. The literature is just beginning to address the role of allies working with LGBT
people. Proposed models of heterosexual and ally development, and a small number of works focused on the promotion of ally practices provide some basic information about who allies are and what they do. Indeed, there are numerous ways in which allies can positively impact the lives of LGBT people on college and university campuses. A few empirical and theoretical works have identified allies as those who are visible in their support of LGBT people through providing support, advocacy, and education (Broido, 2000). Furthermore, there is evidence to highlight the impact allies have to improve campus climate, change attitudes, improve visibility of LGBT issues, and provide support for LGBT people (Evans, 2002).

**Purpose of the Study**

Although the ally literature is growing, it is still small and empirical studies are scant. There are no empirical studies about the range of ways allies are actually involved on campuses, and there are no empirical works at all that focus on allies from the perspectives of LGBT people. There is a definite lack of depth of understanding about heterosexual allies, their presence, their behaviors, and their impact. Even so, allies are clearly called to join with existing efforts to support and advocate for LGBT people on campuses (Broido, 2000; Sanlo, 1998; Wall & Evans, 2000) as counselors (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995; Holahan & Gibson, 1994; Perez et al., 2000), advisors (Wall & Evans, 200; Ward, 1998), panel educators (Lucksted, 1998; Sanlo et al., 2002), trainers or facilitators (Geasler et al., 1995; Sanlo et al., 2002), mentors (Kraig, 1998), and safe resources (Evans & Wall, 2000). How are allies responding to this call? One original approach toward this inquiry is to sample LGBT people who have existing connections with allies. Although the perspectives that LGBT people have in regards to allies are highly relevant and extremely important, the views of LGBT people have not yet been investigated. Therefore, in this study, the focus of inquiry is: What are the experiences
that LGBT people have when working with heterosexual allies, and how are these interactions and experiences understood?
CHAPTER II

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe experiences that lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender directors of LGBT Campus Resource Centers (CRCs) have with heterosexual faculty, staff, and students who are involved with LGBT issues on college or university campuses. In this study, the participants encompassed two shared characteristics. First, all of the participants identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer. Second, participants are professional leaders (typically called "directors") of LGBT CRCs. Using a phenomenological approach, data were analyzed to identify themes that illustrate the core constituents and common elements of the experiences these LGBT people have with heterosexual allies (Polkinghorne, 1989).

This chapter describes the rationale and methods for this qualitative study. The first section presents the research questions under investigation. The second section discusses the appropriateness of qualitative methods, and phenomenology in particular, for investigating these research questions. The third section describes the procedures employed including recruitment of participants, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. In the fourth section, the researcher's background, experience, and assumptions with LGBT and ally issues are presented. The final section of this chapter attends to the rigor of the study.
Research Questions

The current study sought to explore the experiences of LGBT people when working on LGBT issues with heterosexual allies, and to describe how they make meaning of these experiences. In other words, what do LGBT directors experience when working with heterosexual allies, and how do they understand these experiences? Primary to this study was an exploration of the salient themes, patterns, and categories in participants' experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Selected LGBT directors were asked about their professional experiences with heterosexual students, faculty, staff, and administrators who are involved with one or more LGBT-affirmative organization, program, or initiative through a LGBT college or university office. For example, participants in this study were be asked about their experiences with heterosexuals who are involved with activities such as Safe Programs, Speaker's Panels, and LGBT-affirmative groups.

Qualitative Research and Phenomenology

This section summarizes the appropriateness of qualitative research and phenomenological inquiry for exploring the established research questions. As described in chapter 1, there is very little published literature about the professionals who work for college and university LGBT offices, and more specifically, there is no research specific to LGBT professionals' experiences with allies. Qualitative methods have great value for research on little-known phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Qualitative methods are used in exploring phenomena in which the variables have not yet been identified (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1995); therefore, a qualitative approach is useful to identify relevant variables, meanings, and perspectives that exist for this sample of LGBT people in describing their experiences.

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with heterosexuals. Qualitative research is also fitting for research questions about what experiences are and how they are experienced (Creswell, 1998).

Phenomenological inquiry focuses on understanding the essence of experiences (Creswell, 1998), and therefore is appropriate to explore the essence of how this sample of LGBT people understand their experiences with heterosexual allies. The purpose of these phenomenological interviews was to capture thick description of participant experiences. "It is through such descriptions that the inner life of the subject is revealed and through such descriptions that a story 'comes alive'" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 114). Phenomenological analysis focuses on the statements, meanings, meaning themes, and descriptions of participants’ experiences (Creswell, 1998). The researcher aims to present a results section that is an, “accurate, clear, and articulate description” (Polkinghorne, 1989) of what it is like for the selected LGBT people to work with allies on LGBT issues.

Procedures

This section describes the methodological procedures used in this investigation. The first sub-section details how potential participants were recruited. In the second sub-section, the process of criterion selection for choosing interviewees is described. The third sub-section outlines how data were collected through interviews, and specifies methods for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity among interviewees and their stories. The last sub-section identifies how data were analyzed.

Recruitment

Potential participants were recruited through the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education listserv. Permission to post the Invitation to Participate in a Research Study was obtained by the Consortium web-site
webmaster, David Barnett upon HSIRB approval (personal communication, April 23, 2003). The Invitation to Participate in a Research Study (Appendix A) requested that interested persons contact the researcher via phone or e-mail to receive additional information.

After receiving the Invitation to Participate in a Research Study, 19 directors of LGBT CRCs expressed their interest via e-mail. A recruitment letter (Appendix B) was mailed to 17 directors (two individuals did not provide adequate contact information upon request). The recruitment letter identified the research topic and invited the participation of individuals who a) self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, b) have served as director of a college or university LGBT office, and c) have had experiences working professionally with heterosexual allies. The recruitment letter briefly stated how this study would contribute to the LGBT scholarly literature. The components of participation (completion of the background questionnaire, and if selected, 2 phone interviews) were described. In addition, procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality, as well as the risks and benefits of participation were described. In the recruitment letter, the researcher identified some of her pertinent involvement in LGBT research and training experiences. To provide incentive for participation, potential participants were informed that a summary of the results of this research would be posted on the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education web-site.

Criterion Selection

Participant selection within qualitative research is critical; participants should be individuals who, based on relevant predetermined criteria, provide an information rich sample (Morrow & Smith, 2000). In phenomenology, the goal of selection is not large numbers in order to achieve statistical generalization, rather the goal is to select
a few participants who can provide “richly varied descriptions” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 48). For this investigation, potential participants are LGBT people who have extensive experience working professionally with heterosexual allies. Congruent with phenomenological inquiry, a relatively small sample (6 to 8 subjects) was sought in order to gather depth of data among a select group of participants. “Whereas the power of quantitative investigation comes from sample size, significance, and numerical data, in qualitative research the power lies in the words of participants” (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

The first phase of selection involved gathering information about potential participants through a background questionnaire (Appendix C). This information was used to select information rich participants, those who have characteristics and experiences relevant to this study. Respondents were asked to provide demographic (gender, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, highest educational degree obtained, field of study, geographic location) and professional (job title, length of time working for LGBT college or university office, experiences working professionally with heterosexuals on LGBT issues) information on the background questionnaire. Personal contact information was also gathered to assist the researcher in setting up phone interviews with selected participants.

The second phase of participant selection involved using criterion sampling to select the most appropriately suited interviewees for the study. Completed background questionnaires were returned by 12 individuals. All 12 respondents met the selection criteria of identifying as LGB or “queer,” having at least six months of experience as a director of a LGBT college or university office, and reporting at least two contexts of experience working professionally with heterosexual allies. The researcher selected eight individuals who together, represented the greatest diversity of gender, age, race, religion, geography, and contexts of experiences working with
heterosexual allies. An invitation to participate in two phone interviews (Appendix D) was mailed to the eight selected participants, and the four respondents who were not selected for interviews were notified by phone (Appendix F). Of the eight who were selected, seven returned completed informed consent forms and participated in two phone interviews. The eighth selected individual contacted the researcher about the feasibility of participating over three months after the invitation was mailed; this participant was not included because at that time, the researcher had already begun conducting follow-up interviews.

Participants self-reported their sexual orientation as lesbian (2), gay (2), queer (2), or lesbian-identified bisexual (1) and reported their gender as female (4), male (2), or transgender (1). The ages of participants ranged from 32 to 56 years old. While four participants reported having master's degrees, two reported having doctoral degrees and one participant reported having a bachelor's degree. All participants were Caucasian or White. Four participants reported having “none” or “n/a” religious affiliation, and three other participants reported being Jewish, Agnostic, and Unitarian Universalist respectively. The participants were from diverse geographic regions across the United States. Two were from the West, two were from the East, two were from the Midwest, and one was from the South. The reported years of experience as a LGBT CRC director ranged from two years to ten years, with a mean of 5.3 years of experience. The number of reported contexts of experiences working with allies ranged from four to nine.

Contextual information about participants was gathered in order to provide information regarding these selected directors and the settings in which they work. Each participant was asked to describe their campus climate in terms of LGBT issues. Overall, participants presented their campus climates as, “pretty good,” “pretty supportive,” and “generally positive, welcoming and nurturing.” A couple
participants described their campuses as better than most campuses, and one described the campus as “one of the most welcoming in the country.” Three participants noted that their campus climate had improved over the years, is changing for the better, or is, “headed in the right direction.”

Campus climates in regard to LGBT issues are impacted by a variety of factors. Most participants identified characteristics that contribute to a positive campus climate, including active LGBT student, faculty/staff, and alumni organizations, inclusive policies and benefits, the presence of out faculty, staff, students and allies, high visibility of LGBT issues, and appropriate administrative response to homophobic incidents. At the same time, nearly all of the participants identified negative aspects of campus climates, citing incidents of homophobia, lack of follow-through by administration, lack of inclusion of LGBT issues in curriculum, and the need for LGBT training among faculty and staff.

Directors also shared that LGBT campus climate can be influenced by the surrounding community and the institution itself. For example, a couple of participants noted that their campuses are situated in cities that are generally perceived as liberal or supportive in regard to LGBT issues. One noted that it is “easier” for allies to be allies within this particularly supportive environment, and another shared that campus professionals often follow the city’s lead in terms of how various LGBT issues are addressed. Another participant noted that his educational institution is known as “conservative,” however, he believes that the policies, initiatives, and administrative response toward LGBT issues are “better than most schools.”

Each of the participants described having positive professional and/or personal experiences with allies prior to becoming a director of a LGBT CRC. These directors cited examples of professional contact with allies including advocating for LGBT
employee benefits with allies, knowing allies who provided resources to a gay youth organization, having supportive ally colleagues, and receiving guidance from faculty or staff allies as an undergraduate student. Participants also noted having personal experiences with allies including friendships, developing close relationships with PFLAG members, and living in a community in which sexual orientation issues are openly addressed. Just one participant noted that having particularly negative discriminatory experiences by heterosexuals early on in life resulted in anger and lack of trust toward heterosexual people in general. However this participant explained how her perspectives changed over time as she met heterosexuals who truly cared about LGBT people and issues.

Participants were asked to share how they believed their previous experiences with allies impacted them at the time of the study. The most common response was that participants recognized the benefit of having allies involved. One participant stated, “Certainly I recognize the value [of allies] and I had very valuable experiences before…” Another participant shared, “I would say I understand the importance more of having allies.” One explained, “I think it influenced me in that I could see the benefit of there being people like [allies].” One participant who spent most of her life living in “less supportive” cities and then moved to a city in which LGBT issues were supported and openly addressed stated, “I’m keenly aware of allies and the important work they do.”

Some participants were able to remember particular instances in which they realized that there are indeed some heterosexuals who are interested and supportive of LGBT people and issues. Upon getting to know a woman in PFLAG, one participant shared, “…it began to occur to me that there really were people out there who really cared about lesbian and gay people…” Another participant stated that, as an undergraduate student, it was an “eye opener” to see that some heterosexual faculty
and staff had a vested interest in LGBT issues. One participant recalled seeing allies march with PFLAG and was amazed that even though these people do not personally identify as LGBT, “…they see that this is an important cause, and this discrimination has to stop.”

As a whole, participants in this study were encouraging and invested in working with heterosexual allies through LGBT CRCs. One participant stated, “I feel like I have a healthy sense of how important allies are in all social justice issues, and that I am basically willing to do almost anything to nurture them and support them.” A few allies emphasized the need for LGBT and ally advocates to create change in the world. One participant remembered realizing, “We probably can’t move our movement forward very far without people who are our allies.” One participant described his interest in understanding how allies become supportive; he has pursued research to investigate how allies develop, and designed learning and experiential opportunities for this growth to occur.

**Data Collection**

In phenomenological inquiry, written statements or interviews are the most common methods of data collection (Polkinghorne, 1989). Time, financial considerations, and issues of gaining access to participants influence the method of data collection (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In the current study, initial and follow-up phone interviews were conducted with each participant so information rich participants from various geographic regions could be included. Interviewing participants allowed the researcher opportunities to clarify what participants said, to probe for additional information, and to ensure participants expressed experiences in as much depth as possible (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Phone interviews have been suggested as “the best source of information when the researcher does not have
access to individuals” (Creswell, 1998, p. 124). Both interviews were audio-taped, and interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

A phenomenological approach to interviewing was followed, using guidelines presented by Rubin and Rubin (1995). This approach focuses on letting “…ideas emerge from the interviews, from the lives and examples of the interviewees, rather than to categorize answers initially according to preexisting categories from an academic literature” (p. 38). According to this approach, the interviewer is open to information that emerges and does not create interview questions that are shaped to test out questions or fill in predetermined categories.

An open-ended in depth interview format was used for the initial interviews (Appendix E). An open-ended interview allowed the interviewer to introduce the topic and invite participants to talk in detail about their experiences working with heterosexual faculty, students, or staff on LGBT issues.

Research questions were developed using guidelines offered by Rubin and Rubin (1995) who defined three types of questions asked in open-ended interviews. First, main questions are prepared in advance by the researcher. These questions may change throughout the course of interviewing based on interviewee responses. The wording of main questions should be open enough to encourage interviewees to express themselves, yet narrow enough to prevent interviewees from moving far away from the study’s focus. Main questions included, “Tell me about your experiences with heterosexual people who are involved with your LGBT center,” “What is it like for you to work with heterosexual people (in Safe Programs/on Speaker Panels, etc.),” “How would you describe an ideal ally?” “What is your perspective on what it means to be a heterosexual ally?” “What specific challenges are there in working with heterosexuals in your center?” and “What are some rewards working with heterosexuals in your center?”
Probes are another type of question used to gain longer or more detailed answers from respondents when original responses lack detail, depth, or clarity. Probes were not created in advance, because the content depends on the subjects’ responses. However, as Polkinghorne (1989) suggests, the wording of questions should help participants report on what they experienced, for example, “What did you experience?” and “What was it like for you when...?” (p. 46). Additional examples of probes include, “How did you feel at the time?” “Can you remember what you said then?” “Can you give me an example of that?” “What do you mean by that?” and “What happened exactly?” (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 114).

The purpose of the third type of question, follow-up questions, is to pursue themes the researcher notices, to examine the context of responses more fully, or to explore the implications of what was said. Follow-up questions were asked during the first interview and during the second interview after themes, ideas, concepts, and events were noted from the interview transcripts.

Qualitative research is flexible in that the design takes shape as the research continues (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This flexibility allows the researcher to modify questions and understandings throughout the data collection process. For example, the responses of early interviewees may spark ideas for new questions and allow the researcher to pursue unexpected insights with subsequent participants. After conducting the first two interviews, the student researcher conducted initial analyses of these two participants’ stories before proceeding to subsequent interviews. Analyzing data from the first two interviews provided an opportunity for the researcher to evaluate how well the interview questions elicited rich data, and to check for any major flaws before conducting all of the initial interviews. No major changes were made to the interview protocol; however the researcher and her doctoral advisor thought of some different ways to word questions to elicit more depth.
Bogdan and Taylor (1975) encouraged researchers to aim for an interview length that is long enough to adequately cover the topics raised, yet not too long that the subject becomes fatigued. Initial interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one hour and 45 minutes, and on average, lasted 1 hour and 29 minutes.

After the researcher analyzed the data from initial interviews, the researcher wrote a two-page summary story for each participant. The researcher’s doctoral advisor read each transcript and summary story, and provided feedback to the researcher regarding ideas to clarify or add to the stories. Summary stories were mailed to participants prior to conducting follow-up interviews. The summary stories are not included in the results to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Follow-up interviews included three main components. First, the researcher used these interviewees to determine how well her analysis fit with each participant’s experience. At the beginning of each follow-up interview, the researcher inquired how well the summary story captured the participants’ experiences working with heterosexual allies. Next, the participants were asked to clarify or elaborate on information shared during the initial interview. In particular, unique ideas expressed by single participants were explored further with the other participants during follow-up interviews. Finally, each participant was asked to respond to themes that arose across multiple participants. Follow-up interviews were each close to one hour in length. New data that emerged from follow-up interviews was analyzed and incorporated into the final results.

Throughout the data collection procedures, the researcher kept a journal to confidentially report on her personal reactions to the interviews. It was anticipated that the journal would be a useful tool in helping the researcher to process any reactions to difficult material (i.e., hearing negative stories about allies or distressing experiences). The researcher reflected in writing after each interview. In addition, the
researcher discussed each interview with her doctoral advisor. The purpose of journal writing and consultation was to provide adequate ways for the researcher to address personal reactions so that they did not negatively impact future interviews or analysis. Although some poignant, disappointing, and surprising stories were shared, the researcher did not experience any particularly distressing feelings during or after the interviews.

Special care was taken to protect the confidentiality of participant's interview responses. Since directors of LGBT CRCs comprise a relatively small community of professionals, their individual identities are likely to be known to one another. In addition, results of this study will be easily accessible through the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education. Therefore, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and security were particularly important.

To provide anonymity during the transcription process, audio-tapes of interviews were identified by a pseudonym rather than by the participant's name. Once transcripts from initial and follow-up interviews were completed, the researcher removed or altered all identifying information from each transcript. Identifying information included demographic information, geographic region, personal names, names of institutions, names of programs that are specific to an institution, or any information that could associate data with a particular participant or his or her academic institution. In addition, the researcher consulted with her doctoral advisor to ensure anonymity of transcripts. After transcripts were altered to render them anonymous by the researcher, they were saved, stored, and used for analysis.

Participants were provided with a copy of the Results and given opportunity to report any concerns or suggestions for changes to the researcher (Appendix H). No concerns or changes were reported to the researcher.
Data Analysis

According to Polkinghorne (1989), the goal of phenomenological data analysis is to describe, from participants’ statements, the “essential features” of the experience under investigation (p. 50). However, there is no single agreed upon approach to analyzing phenomenological data. In this investigation, the data analysis procedure primarily followed steps presented by Colaizzi (1978), and also integrated suggestions from Giorgi (1985), Moustakas (1994), and Polkinghorne. The steps described below were facilitated using Qualitative Solutions and Research Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching, and Theorizing (QSR NUD*IST) computer software. Such code and retrieve programs help investigators divide data into segments, assign codes to segments, and retrieve all text related to a particular code (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

The first step of phenomenological data analysis was for the investigator to read the initial interview transcripts in their entirety to acquire a “feeling for them” (Colaizzi, 1978) and get a “sense of the whole” (Giorgi, 1985).

The second step was to extract significant statements (Colaizzi, 1978) from each transcript, which involved identifying phrases or sentences that are directly related to the participants’ experiences with heterosexual allies. This activity breaks down the interviewee’s responses into manageable units (Giorgi, 1985).

The third step of analysis, formulating meanings, involved identifying the meaning of each of the participants’ significant statements. To complete this step, the researcher read through, for each transcript, each of the significant statements extracted in step two, and provided a label (a keyword or phrase) that captured the idea of each statement. For example, the researcher found sections of data that were about “ally effectiveness” or “fear of being labeled as LGBT.” Colaizzi (1978)
describes this process as illuminating what each statement means beyond what was explicitly stated by the interviewees. At the same time, the meanings must “stay with” the data so that the data is speaking for itself rather than the researcher imposing his or her conceptual theory upon it. These labels were coded in NUD*IST which facilitated the organization of data by labels, or codes. Once all significant statements were labeled, the researcher read through sets of data organized by codes. Adjustments were made to combine, delete, or modify the names of codes in ways that best fit with participants’ statements.

The fourth step of data analysis was to cluster meanings, which involved organizing the labels or codes identified in step three into clusters of themes (Colaizzi, 1978). Moustakas (1994) defined “clustering and thematizing” as gathering related statements, phrases, or keywords together into groups that will produce the core themes of the experience. During this step, the researcher grouped together codes that were about ideal allies, the impact of allies, the activities of allies, challenges, and ally development, for example. The investigator asked herself, “Is there anything contained in the original protocols that isn’t accounted for in the clusters of themes?” by reading the original data and making sure that significant statements were captured by codes. Also, she answered the question, “Do the clusters of themes propose anything which is not implied in the original transcripts?” by reading through all of the data within a theme to ensure that the themes were truly supported by the data.

The fifth step of the data analysis was to conduct a second phone interview with participants. The purpose of the second interview was to provide a member check and to gather new data. To conduct a member check, the researcher wrote a summary story for each participant and mailed it to participants prior to follow-up interviews; in the follow-up interview, participants had an opportunity to respond to

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how well the summary story captured their experience, and to add information if any important aspects of their experience were left out. Each of the participants reported that the summary story written by the researcher was accurate in capturing their personal and professional experiences working with allies. To collect new data, the researcher asked participants to reflect on how they related to themes that came up across multiple participants. New data was integrated and worked into the clustered themes as described above in steps two, three, and four.

An auditor was consulted throughout the research process. The auditor’s role was to provide an outside perspective regarding the consistency between the original data with the data analysis process and the written report of findings. The auditor was selected based on the criteria of having experience with LGBT and ally research and with qualitative methodology. After the initial two interviews were conducted and initial analysis was complete, the auditor was given anonymous transcripts of the interviews and the researcher’s initial scheme of NUD*IST codes. The auditor reported that she was able to see that each of the codes reflected original data. She also shared her observation (consistent with the researcher’s observation) that LGBT directors had different experiences with student allies versus faculty, staff, or administrator allies, a theme that was addressed during follow-up interviews. Once the researcher completed follow-up interviews, data analysis, and the results chapter draft, the auditor was consulted again. The auditor was given copies of the anonymous transcripts, summary stories, the audit trail notes of all coding changes, the NUD*IST printout of data organized by codes, and a draft of the results chapter. The auditor evaluated the congruency between the data and the researcher’s analysis and final written report. The auditor provided one substantial suggestion for a change; specifically she suggested increased discussion concerning the influence of ally
development on directors’ experiences. This change was consistent with the researcher’s understanding of the data and was incorporated into the results chapter.

Researcher’s Background, Experience, and Assumptions

Since this investigation was a qualitative study using a phenomenological framework, the process is closely tied to and shaped by the researcher. In qualitative methodology, the researcher serves as the data collection instrument (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Morrow & Smith, 2000). The method of analyzing data is highly dependant on the researcher who uses her judgment to make sense of the data. Therefore, it is particularly critical that the researcher identify her background, experiences, and assumptions regarding heterosexual allies as advocates for LGBT people and issues. As Polkinghorne (1989) suggested, the qualitative researcher engages in self-reflection as an attempt to keep preconceived ideas (from previous literature or researcher bias) from contaminating the research.

The researcher’s educational background in counseling psychology provides a foundation from which to conduct qualitative research. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), interpersonal skills (such as being an active and thoughtful listener and having empathetic understanding of and respect for others’ perspectives) are “paramount” to establishing relationships with research participants. The researcher has gained interpersonal skills through her doctoral training to become a counseling psychologist. Indeed, “counseling psychologists are in a good position to conduct interviews, as many of the same skills that underlie the counseling process are essential to qualitative interviewing” (Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 211).

The researcher’s professional background with LGBT and ally issues began during her first year of doctoral studies. Her academic involvement with LGBT and ally issues include completion of a graduate seminar course on LGB issues, research
presentations regarding ally experiences at her academic department (DiStefano, Croteau, Anderson, Kampa-Kokesch, & Bullard, 1999) and at the 1999 annual conference of the American Psychological Association (Distefano, Anderson, Croteau, Kampa-Kokesch, & Bullard) as well as a publication in the *Journal of College Counseling* on the topic of ally experiences (DiStefano et al., 2000). In addition to her academic experience, the student researcher was trained at Western Michigan University as a Safe on Campus member in 1996. She also trained to become a Speaker Panelist for the Speakout panel program and volunteered as an ally panelist for over 5 years. The researcher completed a specialty in LGBT issues at her pre-doctoral internship in psychology, which included developing advanced skills in the areas of LGBT training, programming, and consultation. Responsibilities of the specialization directly related to this study included training LGBT and ally students to serve as Speaker Panelists, facilitating the safe on campus orientation for faculty, staff, and students, and providing clinical training to master’s level psychology interns regarding affirmative counseling with LGBT clients.

The researcher’s assumptions regarding heterosexual allies are listed below for two main purposes. First, by making her assumptions explicit to herself, the researcher decreased the likelihood of imposing her opinions on interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) or on the study (Polkinghorne, 1989). Second, by sharing assumptions with readers, the student researcher makes clear the perspective through which the study was conducted.

1. Heterosexuals can (and do) have significant impact on the lives of LGBT people.
2. Ally behavior, as defined by Washington and Evans (1991) and noted in chapter 1, has positive benefits for heterosexuals, lesbians, gay men, and bisexual men and women.
3. Heterosexual allies can be significant advocates to encourage LGBT-affirmation.
4. Having positive attitudes about LGBT people does not necessarily translate into engaging in congruent ally behavior, so having the intention to be LGBT-affirming may or may not lead to affirming behavior.

5. LGBT individual's reactions to heterosexuals will vary depending on their own identity development as LGBT and the heterosexual persons' knowledge, awareness, and skills in working with LGBT people.

6. LGBT directors are likely to differ in their opinions regarding the roles heterosexual allies should play regarding LGBT-affirming programming, organizations, and initiatives.

7. Soliciting the voices and opinions of this sample of LGBT people is one way to increase understanding of the interaction between LGBT people and heterosexual allies.

Rigor of the Study

In this section, techniques to ensure the rigor, or trustworthiness, of the data are described using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These concepts are related to the quantitative concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, yet are more appropriate when using a qualitative paradigm.

Prolonged engagement, member-checking, constant comparison, and auditor review were used to increase the probability of credible findings. Prolonged engagement increased the probability of credible findings by allowing the interviewer sufficient time with each participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the researcher conducted both an initial and follow up interview with each participant, providing ample time with each participant to reflect and discuss experiences. Conducting a follow-up interview also increased credibility by providing member-
checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morrow & Smith, 2000). During follow-up interviews, the researcher received feedback from respondents that the summary stories were accurate in capturing participants' experiences. The researcher engaged in the constant comparison technique (Lincoln & Guba) by a continual process of coding and evaluating. After coding data, the researcher read reports of data organized by codes, evaluating how well the codes were supported by the data and questioning if alternative explanations were more appropriate. She reworked the codes until each code was strongly supported by participant quotes. Finally, the auditor provided an outside perspective to ensure a tight fit between the original data and the researcher's written themes.

To ensure strong transferability, the researcher provided contextual information about participants and their centers so that readers can evaluate transferability to other settings and situations. The literature review chapter provides a broad overview of LGBT CRCs and the directors of these centers. Furthermore, the researcher reported on information specific to the seven directors sampled. The participants selected were certainly information rich participants who had extensive experiences with allies in a variety of contexts. Transferability is also enhanced by providing detailed and vivid text (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The researcher relied heavily on participant quotes in the results chapter to illustrate core findings.

Dependability, the extent to which the process and product of data collection are supported by the data, was enhanced through member-checks and by the auditor's review of the data analysis process. Prior to follow-up interviews, each participant was provided with a summary story, reflecting the researcher's understanding of the participant's experiences shared during the initial interview. During follow-up interviews, all of the participants reported that the researcher's summary accurately captured their experiences. A second procedure for enhancing dependability was
through the auditor's review. The researcher created an audit trail of her initial coding scheme and all subsequent changes in a separate document. These records were provided to the auditor to demonstrate how changes were made throughout the steps of data analysis. The auditor reviewed the original data, NUD*IST reports of data organized by codes, and the results chapter draft. The auditor provided just one substantive suggestion, to emphasize findings regarding ally development more strongly.

Confirmability refers to objectivity. In this study, the auditor provided an outside perspective to ensure that the researcher's assumptions (provided in writing) did not contaminate the findings (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The auditor's feedback confirmed that the researcher did provide an objective view of the participants' experiences.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Initial and follow-up phone interviews were conducted with seven individuals who are directors of LGBT Campus Resource Centers and who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. The purpose of this investigation was to obtain a descriptive picture of what experiences these directors have as they work with heterosexual allies on their campuses, and to discern how directors understand their experiences with allies. To gather this information, participants were asked to describe and reflect upon their experiences with heterosexual allies. Participants were also prompted to talk about their personal perspectives about working with allies in their role as LGBT Center directors, and asked to describe an ideal ally. A phenomenological approach to data analysis was conducted in order to identity the core aspects and common elements among LGBT directors as they work with heterosexual allies. This chapter identifies the themes that emerged and illustrates them with key examples and selected quotes. To protect the confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms are used for each participant. Also, names of specific programs and specifying information have been altered.

The first section in this chapter identifies what allies do. Data regarding the activities of allies comes from two broad areas. First, directors talked about how allies
are involved in their LGBT Center programs. Additional information about ally activities comes from directors’ stories describing what “ideal allies” do. This first section also illustrates distinctions noted by directors between allies who are students, faculty, staff, or administrators. The second section of this chapter describes directors’ perspectives regarding ally involvement; directors in this sample are strong advocates for including allies who can promote safer campus climates, use privilege in positive ways, and promote social change. The third section focuses on the impact of allies on LGBT directors, LGBT people in general, and on heterosexual people. This section concludes by explaining that directors’ experiences are influenced by ally development. The fourth section identifies the challenges reported by directors as they’ve worked with heterosexual allies. Specifically, directors identified that there are not enough allies and that allies do not take enough action. Furthermore, directors discussed how it is risky to be an ally, and that it takes effort by LGBT directors to work with allies. A final theme that emerged regarding challenges is that directors were disappointed by heterosexual people who were expected to be allies, yet were not.

What Allies Do

Prior to the interviews, participants completed a background questionnaire indicating the organized contexts in which they have had experiences working with allies. During the initial interviews, the researcher inquired about the endorsed contexts for each participant, by asking, for example, “What have your experiences been with allies in Safe Programs?” Participants talked about their experiences with allies in Safe Programs, on LGBT Speaker Panels, in LGBT or Ally Student
Organizations, as facilitators of LGBT support groups, as mentors for LGBT students, as members of Advisory Committees for LGBT concerns, and as providers of LGBT programming on campus. Additional information about what allies do is from stories told about "ideal allies."

How Allies are Involved in LGBT Center Programs

All of the directors in this study shared that their institution offers a type of Safe Program for allies. Most Safe Programs provide training for allies. Beyond the initial training session, David offers additional voluntary programs for Safe Program members to address topics in greater depth. He stated, "These are issues I touched on and highlight in my Safe training, but there is never enough time to do it all." At Allen’s and Grace’s institutions, allies can obtain a Safe Marker simply by requesting one. Barbara and Grace shared that although their Safe Programs were originally designed for faculty and staff, more and more students are coming forward to visibly show their support for LGBT people. For example, many resident assistants have attended Safe Program training and are displaying Safe Markers in the residence halls. Eve highlighted a unique way for allies to be involved with Safe Programs: at her institution, she co-facilitates Safe Program training with heterosexual ally colleagues. Eve stated that heterosexuals are receptive to having a lesbian woman and an ally facilitate. “That is actually my preferred method. I think it’s very effective to have a straight ally facilitate these workshops with me, an out lesbian. So I think that really works well. I think it is very effective.”

LGBT Speaker Panels are another popular way in which allies are involved on campus. All of the directors in this sample reported having a LGBT Speaker Panel program that includes allies. The most common way for allies to participate is by actually speaking on the panel with other LGBT individuals. Ally students who speak
on panels typically have LGBT family members or good friends who are LGBT, or are invested in a variety of social justice issues. At Fay’s institution, faculty or staff allies participate on panels, too. Cheryl, David, and Fay shared that they like to have allies talk about their own coming out story. Cheryl stated, “One of the things that I like allies to talk about is their own coming out [experience] as an ally. That is a process too...and people need to understand that. So to me, it’s all part of our big ole queer family.” In addition to actually participating on the panels as speakers, Barbara noted that ally faculty promote LGBT Speaker Panels by requesting panels for their classes. Barbara stated, “the majority of faculty to have [LGBT Speaker Panels] in their class are straight-identified, identify clearly as allies, and think it is really important to get their students’ eyes open to LGBT people and issues. Real people, not just Will and Grace.” Fay shared how an ally faculty member who has done research about LGBT issues and the Christian Bible volunteered to speak with any audience members who “try to push the Bible issue” during panels.

All of the directors in this sample reported experiences with allies in LGBT or Ally Student Organizations. All of the campuses have at least one LGBT Student Organization, and David and Cheryl reported having a number of LGBT Student Organizations on their campuses. David’s institution also has a Student Organization specific to allies that was created years ago. Allen’s institution had an ally-specific organization at one time that has since become inactive. Although the number of allies in LGBT Student Organizations varies (Barbara noted having just a few allies in the LGBT Student Organization, while Grace reported that there are a “healthy amount” of allies in the LGBT Student Organization), it appears that including allies in LGBT organizations is a trend. Cheryl reflected that, “We don’t have an ally-specific organization, but allies are welcome in every organization on campus... it has taken a long time to build these organizations so that the students have that mindset,
but allies are welcome into every one of those groups.” Two other examples were provided regarding how allies can be involved with LGBT Student Organizations. First, Allen and Grace talked about how leaders of other Student Organizations can partner with LGBT Student Organizations to discuss issues, assist one another with projects, and cosponsor programs together. Second, as suggested by Barbara, faculty or staff allies could serve as advisors for LGBT Student Organizations.

Most of the directors reported having experiences working with allies who provide LGBT programming. Commonly, programming is organized through LGBT or Ally Student Organizations. David assisted an ally Student Organization to become a formal organization recognized by the university; the organization members applied for funding and used funds to provide programming for the campus community. Cheryl provides some programs through the LGBT Center including brown bag lunches for the LGBT Faculty and Staff Organization, which is open to allies. “We don’t ask anyone’s sexual orientation. So people who show up here, I don’t know what [their sexual orientation is]. But they come...Then we’ve got our Lavender Graduation every year, and I know that there are a lot of allies participating in that too, again through the LGBT Faculty and Staff Organization.” Eve described her LGBT center as highly involved on campus, “reach[ing] out to a much broader audience than just the LGBT students.” Heterosexual students who worked with the LGBT Student Organization and LGBT Center to produce the Vagina Monologues “became allies” as they got to know other LGBT students who were involved. At Barbara’s institution, there is a Program Board who provides campus wide programs, and “they’re really good co-sponsors for the drag shows that we put on campus.” Allies on this Programming Board also consult with the LGBT Center about specific LGBT comedians or entertainers they are considering bringing to campus.
Three of the directors reported having LGBT Advisory Boards that include allies. Cheryl has established an Advisory Board at her center and stated, “I do have allies on my Advisory Board. I try to have a variety of stakeholders [students, faculty, and staff] on my board. I think their input is very important.” Cheryl emphasized that it is critical to have an Advisory Board invested in LGBT work. To reach LGBT Center objectives, Cheryl asserted, “It’s about delegating, engaging others to learn this work, and in that community model, we get a whole lot more done than if it was just me trying to plug away.” David has “many” allies on his Advisory Board. David sees ally participation on Advisory Boards as a useful way for them to be involved, and appreciates how allies can speak to how particular issues or programs would be perceived by other heterosexual colleagues. Barbara praised an Advisory Board member for her attendance, creative ideas, and perspective.

Two directors in this sample talked about how allies can be part of LGBT support or discussion groups. At Barbara’s institution, students who responded to a campus climate survey expressed the desire to have a safe meeting that is not a social group. Barbara and an ally counselor from the university counseling center offer this group to LGBT students and “straight allies who may have a friend who is struggling with something. The basis of it is that this is a safe place to come to talk about issues of gender identity, sexual orientation, coming out, concerns you have about friends, things like that.” Barbara described the ally counselor as someone who is very interested and excited about working with LGBT students. An additional benefit of this program is that the ally counselor provides a “stepping stone” to the counseling center for LGBT and ally students who may need additional professional help. At Cheryl’s institution, the LGBT center provides several support and discussion groups “and allies are welcome in all of those groups...however people identify it doesn’t matter.”
In this sample, Cheryl's institution is the only one that has a LGBT mentoring program. Mentors in this program are LGBT or ally graduate students, senior undergraduate students, faculty, or staff. Cheryl explained that a counseling center psychologist provides training for mentors. "She believes that anyone can appropriately be a mentor provided they have the understanding that is necessary. She provides that. She provides very intense training...So there are definitely allies there who have [completed the training] and just because a person is not LGB or T does not mean they can't be an excellent person in a mentoring program..."

Beyond the programs described above that are generally organized or offered through LGBT Centers, participants identified many additional things that allies do. Broadly, participants identified ways in which allies are responsive to LGBT people and issues, and also identified ways in which allies take initiative to be allies. These activities are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Ally Activities Reported by LGBT Center Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Ally</th>
<th>Ally Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Visit the campus LGBT Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursue a class paper or presentation on a LGBT topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Become a member or leader of a LGBT Student Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help to create an LGBT or Ally Student Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work or volunteer at a campus LGBT Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Request training and professional development sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include LGBT people and issues in brochures or publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce yourself as a safe referral source for LGBT students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty

Include the LGBT center in campus activities
Advise a LGBT or Ally Student Organization
Participate in LGBT Faculty and Staff Organizations
Pursue leadership roles in LGBT Faculty/Staff Organizations
Encourage students to attend LGBT programs
Have LGBT books and resources visible and available in office
Integrate LGBT issues into curriculum
Request LGBT Speaker Panels for classroom
Advise LGBT Student Organizations
Participate in LGBT Faculty and Staff Organizations
Pursue leadership roles in LGBT Faculty/Staff Organizations

Administrators

Seek feedback from LGBT students
Extend personal invitations to LGBT directors
Seek funding for the LGBT Center
Create and modify LGBT-affirming policies

Any Ally

Serve on a LGBT Task Force
Attend a Safe Program or Ally Training
Be an ally Speaker for an LGBT Speaker Panel
Bring LGBT issues to the table
Participate in PFLAG activities
Wear and display LGBT symbols
Vocally express support for LGBT Centers
Provide resources to LGBT Centers
Attend LGBT programs
Use inclusive language
Participate in Lavender Graduation ceremonies
Respond to incidents of harassment
Speak up against homophobic remarks
Engage in LGBT or ally research
Ask LGBT Center directors how to help LGBT students
Seek out LGBT culture through movies, books, and music
Advocate for the creation of a LGBT campus center
Send LGBT-supportive letters to administrators

Allies as Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

As reflected in Table 1, directors made some distinctions about what allies can do based on their roles as students, faculty, staff, or administrators. Participants remarked how faculty, staff, and administrators have particularly strong impact because they are likely to be at the institution longer than students, who typically graduate in about 4 years. David stated, “I’ve always commonly thought in terms of trying to acquire allies on campus that it would be the staff and faculty that are the ones who are going to affect change over time, because they have the power and because they are likely to be here longer than four years.” Allen stated that the impact of an administrator with decision making powers would “tend to last longer and have broader impact. Where a student, say, a leader of a Student Organization may choose to partner with a LGBT organization on a project, that has impact, but the impact would only last as long as that student leader is in that leadership position.” Cheryl emphasized that, “Faculty and staff are the constants on a college campus...We are all going to be here as students come and go, so I really see a big piece of my role is that of working with faculty and staff to create allies... Because it is faculty and staff who will model the behaviors for the students who zip through this place.”
Student allies were also described as having unique influence. Eve believes that students have more power than faculty and staff in terms of political actions or strikes. She stated that are “limits” to what action faculty and staff are willing to take for fear of losing their jobs. However, “The [administration] can’t fire students.” Grace identified students as having a great deal of power as “consumers” of the institution. Grace shared how she has seen organized, articulate students be rewarded by administration. “When [administrators] are presented with some students who are very organized and very clear about what they’d like, and present a professional looking proposal in a little binder, that bowls away some administrators.” David noted that student influence extends beyond their physical presence on campus. “I think there are student cultures and communities… that will continue to persist regardless of how quickly students graduate. Traditions and customs are handed down, student by student. Things don’t change.”

Some directors also emphasized the similarities among allies across roles. Eve believes that all allies, regardless of their role as student, faculty, staff, or administrator, use their privilege to speak up and make a difference. According to Eve, the only difference is that an ally’s impact may play out differently based on the person’s role. For example, Eve explained that a resident assistant or president of an organization may have an “enhanced opportunity” or “a little more influence” yet for all, “the concepts are the same.” Similarly, Allen asserted that although different allies have varying levels of influence and different ways of affecting the climate, the “principles” are the same among all allies. David stated, “I think that a student ally can be just as affirming as a faculty or staff ally. It may come in different forms because of their role, I suppose. It would still be just as affirming.”

Cheryl described the role of faculty and staff allies as modeling inclusion and respectful behavior to students. Similarly, Grace emphasized how influential faculty
and staff allies are to one another, explaining that when faculty or staff talk to one another about LGBT issues, "it carries an import that is different than if a student does it. I think that has to do with how we perceive the messenger." Eve wishes that faculty, staff, and administration would examine LGBT issues at a "more personal level." She perceives administrators as wanting to support LGBT students because they support all students, yet she questions, "Have you looked in your heart? Have you really looked to see what you need to work on? I know you are committed to students and therefore you are committed to my students, and therefore you are here at this program, but how about as an individual?"

*An Ideal Ally*

Although a formal definition of heterosexual allies has been offered in the literature (Washington & Evans, 1991), directors of LGBT Centers may vary in their personal conceptualizations of allies. There is no single definition that has been agreed upon among LGBT Center directors. During the interviews, the researcher invited participants to talk about their experiences with allies without defining or specifying what she meant by "ally." The researcher also specifically asked participants to describe an ideal ally. The purpose of this inquiry was to obtain an understanding about the core factors that constitute an ally for this sample. Directors identified six components of an ideal ally. First, ideal allies take action by being responsive to and proactive about LGBT issues. Second, ideal allies are described as having genuine intentions to support LGBT people. Third, ideal allies have a personal understanding about oppression. Fourth, ideal allies support all human rights. Fifth, ideal allies are comfortable if others assume they are LGBT. Finally, ideal allies are educated and trained about LGBT issues.
Ally action. To describe an ideal ally, all of the participants expressed the importance of taking some sort of action as an ally. Directors noted a variety of ways in which allies take action, from confronting homophobic comments in one’s daily life to pursuing longer-term advocacy efforts. One important aspect of being an ally is to be responsive to LGBT people and issues. For example, participants appreciated when allies respond to incidents of harassment, verbally support LGBT initiatives, or visibly show their support by wearing or displaying LGBT symbols. Yet participants also expressed how ideal allies take initiative in their own lives to create change. For example, ideal allies take initiative by volunteering to serve on a task force, by seeking out education and training, or by advocating for policy changes.

Directors identified ideal allies as those who respond with action when opportunities arise, for example, when homophobic comments or jokes are heard. Eve defined an ideal ally as someone who takes “little steps” like telling someone that a homophobic joke is not appreciated. “That takes guts. Those little steps make a big difference.” An employee at Grace’s institution shared how he stood up in public when a homophobic comment was made at a bar. He confronted this individual saying, “When you say that, you are talking about my step-sister.” Grace explained, “He did not take the path of least resistance and just ignore the comment... He said, ‘No, I’m going to do something different.’” David described an ideal ally by telling the story of a Latino woman who “decided to take personal costs [to stand up for her brother], which is a personal thing to do. She learned she couldn’t do that with her father. To cope with it, she would talk with her siblings when her parents weren’t around. They would talk about their brother and sort of deal with it in that way.”

Ideal allies are also those who actively advocate for LGBT people and issues. These ally activities are proactive rather than simply responsive. Allen stated that an ideal ally is someone who “takes initiative.” He stated, “The potential is limitless”
but he provided an example in which a group of student allies formed an Ally Student Organization on campus. “They took initiative to form an organization, to raise funds, and to do advertising and advocacy on behalf of LGBT people.” Another example of initiative was suggested by Barbara who suggested that a faculty or staff ally could volunteer to serve as an advisor for an LGBT Student Organization. Grace specified that an ideal ally, in whatever way is meaningful for that person, acts in ways that promote social change. For Grace, an ideal ally is one who, “...is working not as an agent of oppression but as an agent of social change...People have a choice to act in ways that are oppressive or to act in different ways. It takes a lot of energy and courage and time to act in that different way.”

The definition of an ideal ally appears to vary for some directors, depending on who the ally is. For example, Barbara and Cheryl identified having different expectations for student allies in comparison to allies who are staff, faculty, or administration. These directors expressed understanding and patience toward student allies. Barbara stated, “I don’t want to push [student allies] into something. I see them as... students, so they are learning. They are growing.” In contrast, Barbara stated, “I think my expectations are probably quite unrealistic for faculty and staff, truly.” Cheryl said that if a student ally fails to speak up for LGBT people or issues, “I understand. Actually I think a neat study would be ally identity development...I guess I cut kids more slack, there is still that whole growth thing, and they are going through so many other things, that is just one more piece.” According to Cheryl, the role of a student ally is, “…to get clear and comfortable with themselves about what they can do and what they can’t do. My expectation of them is not necessarily to change the world by Thursday. They can do that later when they have more power in the world and certainly more personal power internally. I want student allies to just get comfortable with themselves and I want them to notice the world around them. I
want them to notice when they hear people jokingly say the word, ‘faggot,’ when they are walking [on campus]. I want them to notice when their roommates say the words, ‘that’s so gay.’ What is the context? Why did you say that? What was going on? I want them to notice bathroom signs that don’t include transgender people...because I know that with awareness comes action. I can’t force you to act. I can only ask you to become aware. As you become aware, if you are truly an ally, you are not going to be able to sit still.” In contrast, Cheryl described how Vice Chancellors who are allies are sometimes in situations “where they could speak out for us, but they don’t.” She stated, “I really wish [these allies] would be more courageous in speaking out.”

Grace reflected, “Honestly, I have to say that I have higher expectations for people who are staff and faculty. I have to say that I know that is not fair...Those stereotypes do not serve me well, and... if I have higher expectations of this one group, am I setting myself up to be disappointed? And if I have lower expectations of the student group, am I selling them short?”

Allies have genuine intentions. Participants further expressed that an ideal ally has genuine intentions and does not become an ally to portray a particular impression. Grace explained, “I think one component that would be crucial would be that the person has a strong sense of what it means to them to be an ally... that they have a clear sense of how it fits into their own personal mission statement...what about being an ally fits into each particular person’s set of mission, vision, and values statements for themselves. Not just, ‘I do this because it is nice’ or ‘I do this because I don’t want people to think I am biased.’ How does it integrate into who a person is. I think that is a crucial piece.” Participants shared frustrations with experiences in which people presented themselves as allies to promote their personal agenda.

Barbara received a letter from a church group that said, “We support LGBT people whole heartedly, and we’ll do anything to help them convert.” In contrast, Barbara's
ideal ally is someone who is an ally for "good intentions. They wouldn't do it to identify themselves so they could recruit gay people and tell them they were really going to hell." Fay also made a distinction that an ideal ally is not someone who thinks, "This would look good because of what I do for a living or because of the people I work with," rather, an ideal ally is someone who thinks LGBT issues are truly "important." Eve’s description of an ideal ally is related to that person’s "heart." She explained that when she provides training, she tells participants that she is not there to teach them to be politically correct or to use "proper language." Instead, her goal is to "raise awareness and raise their level of empathy."

Allies have personal understanding of oppression. Participants explained ideal allies as those who understand oppression on a personal level. For these participants, ideal allies have pursued personal exploration and work in regard to their own heterosexism and homophobia. Grace identified the "fundamental difference" that distinguishes someone as an ally as, "That person has an understanding of what oppression is, and how oppression works, and that they are interested to listening to perspectives of people who are oppressed." Eve also focused on the importance of allies having a clear understanding of concepts of oppression. She described an ally as one who is able to, "See and understand the cycle of oppression. This is really basic, but see and understand the cycle of oppression and how privilege works. That is big." Participants further expressed that allies need to see how oppression plays out in their own lives. Fay discussed her experience with graduate student allies who work on LGBT issues as a training experience. "These allies need to be willing to look at themselves, and explain to others, 'This is the job I have in graduate school, and this is what it means for me.' So for some of them I think it is really looking at their own privilege and what it means to be someone who is oppressed..." David offered that an ideal ally would have gone through "a process of learning about how they
abandoned their own heterosexism and homophobia, a process that probably took a long time and may never end." Eve stressed the importance of allies who have a personal understanding of LGBT issues and are personally committed to their own growth around homophobia and heterosexism. She explained that some allies "see themselves as champion of gay rights" yet "still have a lot of education to do. Just because they support gay rights and think, 'Yeah, I support same-sex marriage' doesn't mean that you've worked on all of your personal homophobia." Eve emphasized that the ideal ally is someone who truly recognizes one's own homophobia. Her attitude toward allies is, "Don't come in saying, 'I'm not homophobic,' because I'm homophobic! It's in the air we breathe. It's like smog, and if you say you are not homophobic, I'm going to say, 'What island were you raised on?'"

Allies support all human rights. Most of the participants emphasized that an ideal ally is someone who is an ally for all oppressed groups. As stated earlier, directors talked about how ideal allies confront homophobic jokes or comments, and speak out in affirmation of LGBT people. Furthermore, many of these directors added that allies must speak out and act as allies for all marginalized groups. Barbara stated that, "an ideal ally would also confront jokes when they hear them, whether they are racist jokes, homophobic jokes, or anything about people's abilities. Confronting all of the -isms. So an idea ally would be somebody who is supportive of everybody's rights. Not just gay stuff." Barbara gave an example of how she and directors of other multicultural centers on her campus are allies to one another. "We all work on each others' issues. My issue is not just to work on heterosexism on campus and to support the queer kids. I also support the Latino kids that come by when one of their directors is gone." Grace specified that it is important for allies of LGBT people to understand the dynamics and complexity of oppression as it relates to all people. "In a perfect
world, [allies] would understand the intersections of oppression. They wouldn’t just be a heterosexual ally around issues of LGBT people. They would be oriented in a broader social justice sense.” Cheryl shared that when she provides training, she tells the participants that they cannot be an ally for LGBT people and not be an ally for other people. “The whole thing about being an ally isn’t just about supporting the LGBT community as far as I’m concerned. As for what I teach, if one is going to be an ally, one must be an ally for all, or their allyness is questionable.” Eve noted that while she does provide workshops with LGBT specific information, she also talks about the importance of being an ally to all groups. She stated, “I tell them they have to be consistent because if I’m in the room... and I hear them making classist or sexist or racist remarks, I’m going to wonder, ‘Okay, when I walk out of the room, do they really have my back? Are they really my ally?’ Or are they just being politically correct in front of me?’”

*Allies are not uncomfortable being labeled LGBT.* Participants recognized that it is fairly common for people to assume that an ally is LGBT. Directors highlighted that an ideal ally does not worry about being assumed LGBT, and an ally does not feel uncomfortable if that assumption is made. David says that the ideal ally is “secure in their own sexual identity, and does not fear someone else questioning their sexual identity because of their affirmation.” Eve shared that part of being an ally is taking risks that others might assume you are LGBT. She described how she managed this issue at her Center’s Lavender Graduation Program. Eve decided to acknowledge the allies in her speech, without pointing them out specifically. Eve explained, “One of the things that an ally does is take risks, and by identifying with that community, your sexuality can be very ambiguous. A good ally will let that be.” Cheryl identified an ideal ally as someone that is not afraid of being called an ally, and not afraid of being called LGBT. She expressed her wish, “I want to see college administrators,
university administrators, and student affairs people be allies for everybody, and not be afraid to speak out because people might think they are 'one' too, whatever that 'one' is.” Cheryl shared a story of a student employee ally who managed others’ assumptions in a “courageous,” “subtle,” and “gentle” way. When this ally was asked if she was a lesbian, she would reply, “No, but thank you for the compliment. Can I help you?” Fay noted that an ideal ally is willing to go to an LGBT event and is “willing to risk what that might mean for them. I think [an ideal ally is] someone who isn’t worried that coming to a meeting is going to make people think they are gay as well.”

Allies are educated and trained. Participants noted that ideal allies are knowledgeable and have received training in regard to LGBT issues. For David, an ideal ally is one who has knowledge and skills. David stated that allies who attend his Safe Training, since they are attending voluntarily, usually come to the training with a certain level of knowledge. David provides an information packet to his participants for reading on their own, and focuses on practicing skills during the training session. He tells participants, “You all have some knowledge and awareness already, so we’re going to go a little farther here and practice some skills to [learn] how do we interact and react to people and [learn how to] live that knowledge in practice.” Eve emphasized how important it is for allies to pursue their own education about LGBT issues, and for allies to be committed to continuing this education on an ongoing basis. Eve stressed that pursuing education as an ally is “vital to building a good foundation.” She also stated, “If you are involved in doing this work, don’t be content to just say, ‘Hey I care. I stick up for these rights.’ But know that it is a continuing process, and that you need to take responsibility for your own education, and continue that. Have that be ongoing education.” Fay also stressed that ideal allies have done research or pursued education in regards to LGBT issues. According to
Barbara, an ideal ally is someone who has voluntarily gone through an ally training program, and knows what resources exist on campus and in the community.

**Director’s Perspectives on Ally Involvement**

Directors were asked about their personal opinion or stance regarding the role that heterosexual allies play within LGBT Campus Resource Centers. Participants in this sample were overwhelmingly positive in their attitudes about involving allies in LGBT Centers. Allen’s statement that allies become involved, “across the board… in every aspect of what we do on campus,” is representative of the perspectives shared among these directors. In fact, the only context in which the inclusion of allies was noted as not appropriate was noted by Cheryl, who mentioned that it would not be appropriate for heterosexual students to participate as members of support or therapy groups designed specifically for lesbian or bisexual women or for gay or bisexual men. Four themes emerged as directors expressed their personal stance about the value of allies in LGBT Center initiatives. First, participants pointed out how the inclusion of allies promotes a safer campus climate for LGBT people, which is a critical mission among LGBT Centers and directors. Second, allies can use their privilege as heterosexual people in positive ways. Third, directors asserted that allies are needed in order to create positive social and political change within society. Finally, directors talked about the need to make efforts to recognize, appreciate, and welcome allies to their centers and programs.

**Allies Promote Safe Campus Climates for LGBT People**

Participants explained that the inclusion of allies is positive because allies positively impact the campus climate regarding LGBT issues. Participants clearly connected the work of allies to enhancing safety and affirmation for LGBT people on
campus. Eve sees a strong and direct link between investing in allies and creating a safer campus for LGBT students. She stated that she looks at the “big picture,” and recognizes that providing resources and training for allies, “...is providing support for LGBT students, because the more allies we have on campus, the more support my students will have.” For example, when Eve’s LGBT Center was involved with the production of the Vagina Monologues, “We connected with so many people and they became comfortable with the [LGBT Center]. It was a step in building allies and building community on this campus. It was huge...I see it all as part of my mission in making this a better place for LGBT students.” Allen noted that LGBT directors have limited time and resources, and that alone (or even with more staff) it would be impossible to reach every LGBT student. Therefore, Allen’s strategy is to influence the “broader culture and climate of the campus. That comes through having strategic allies. Having allies especially in influential positions, but also allies on the front line... those people who are most likely to interact with LGBT students.” According to David, having allies on campus is “very, very critical” in order for LGBT people to develop an affirming identity. “I don’t think it is possible for someone to attain a completely 100 percent affirming identity if they don’t have those allies [and] if they don’t have those comfortable spaces where they can be themselves.” Barbara’s position is that, “...for maximum impact in improving campus climate, I think that it is crucial to have allies involved.”

**Allies Use their Privilege in Positive Ways**

Eve emphasized that it takes many voices to reach out and educate people about LGBT issues, and that as members of the “majority group,” heterosexual allies have the power to reach some heterosexual people who wouldn’t be receptive to LGBT people. Fay believes that heterosexual allies can be involved with LGBT
issues on campus to lend support to LGBT faculty and staff. She noted that there are times in which a LGBT person doesn’t feel safe to come out or to speak up about LGBT issues for fear of negative professional consequences (e.g., if a supervisor is known to be unsupportive of LGBT people). In these instances, Fay sees allies as having an opportunity to be vocal in support of LGBT people with less risk.

**Allies Positively Impact Social Change**

Participants emphasized that allies are particularly important, or even necessary to promote positive social changes. David, reflecting on his belief that allies are “extremely important,” offered, “...People of the majority or people who are heterosexual have the power to affect change. Until people who are heterosexual understand how these issues personally effect them, there will be no change. So we’ve got to focus on that, and find ways for that to occur.” Eve explained that all LGBT people, because of their smaller numbers in comparison to heterosexuals, cannot enact change by themselves. She stated, “…It is essential to have allies, because...even if we are 10 percent, we could never pass a vote. So how could we ever make meaningful changes in legislation if we don’t ally build? If we don’t build alliances, we’re never going to have a majority.” Ideally, Fay sees allies and LGBT people working together to make a difference in the lives of LGBT people. She shared, “…LGBT folks aren’t going to do it by themselves. We need to be okay about reaching out to the straight population...I think in any movement where there has been some change in regard to oppression, historically there were people of the majority or the people who were not oppressed who were part of the solution. It has always been important and I think that will continue.” As Cheryl described her own journey in regard to heterosexual allies, she remembers realizing that, “We probably can’t move our movement forward very far without people who are our allies.”
Directors Need to Recognize Allies

Participants in this study emphasized the importance of recognizing allies and the work they do. Allen noted that it is important for directors to realize that a “big part” of one’s job as LGBT Center director job is working with heterosexual allies. Participants shared that it takes special attention to remember allies, because it takes significant effort to respond to and address the needs of LGBT community members. David explained, “I think we always get sort of bogged down and [are] always concerned about the LGBT students, which of course we need to. But just reaching out and including [ally] students in the events and making sure that they are welcome. I think that is the biggest thing that can be done.” Similarly, Fay encourages directors to “not forget” that allies are important. She urges directors to thank allies for their involvement and call on them, “to do something important to show [allies] that you value them and you value what they can offer.” David suggests, “… specifically reaching out to people that you know are allies and include them in planning and implementation of events and advocacy in general.” Participants shared examples of extending welcome to allies, from making a personal phone call to sending written invitations to an event. Grace encourages directors to notice allies when they do something supportive. “I think part of it is about identification and appreciation.” For example, “Identifying people who are doing ally work even if it may not traditionally be defined that way, like…people who bring up the issue in contexts where otherwise it would not be brought up. Like we’re sitting around the table about the housing policy, and out of the blue someone says, ‘How might this affect sexual minority students?’ Appreciating that.” Eve also offered, “I think it is really important to acknowledge the importance of allies and to recognize exceptional acts. So, to let people know that they are appreciated. That the work that they do is appreciated.”
The Impact of Allies

Participants were asked to describe their personal experiences working with allies in various professional contexts. Several themes emerged. First, directors described how they are personally impacted by allies. Second, participants discussed the impact that allies have on LGBT people. Third, participants talked about how allies are significant role models for other heterosexuals. Next, directors recognized that there is a personal impact of being an ally. Finally, directors emphasized that their experiences with allies are influenced by the individuals’ level of ally development.

Allies Impact LGBT Center Directors

Participants provided multiple examples of experiences with allies that were “helpful,” “supportive,” or “positive.” Directors expressed their appreciation for allies who participate and really engage in LGBT work. Eve recalled the first time a colleague spoke out as an ally for the LGBT Center. When Eve’s colleague, a director of a multicultural center, was called to participate in a campus program, he asked if the LGBT Center was also invited. The requester replied, “Well, no, we’re just calling the ethnic centers.” This colleague said that his office would not participate unless all of the cultural centers, including the LGBT center, would be involved. Eve shared, “I actually get emotional thinking about it. That was the first time I remember somebody sticking up for us to that level... He saw it as a justice issue, that all of the groups should be treated the same with resources and inclusion. That touched me in a way that, I think I was out of steam at the time, and that gave me renewed strength...It was relatively small. It wasn’t some huge thing. But he spoke up for us and he didn’t have to. That was huge for me.”
Directors noted that it is affirming when allies engage in work on campus. David shared that years ago, he was approached by heterosexual students who wanted to form a gay-straight alliance. "So I of course was very excited about doing that and helping them. I still advise that group." David expressed how he had a unique experience advising this group compared to other LGBT specific groups he works with. "Watching them, and they primarily have been heterosexual, watching them use their power and role as heterosexual to affect change on campus. It is very interesting to see. When something happens on campus, and the [LGBT Student Organization] responds to it, the [Ally Student Organization], usually the President, will also jump up and join with them in helping them to respond. It is very interesting to have that dichotomy of the two groups. I had never seen that before." David noted that having these allies involved is "very affirming, personally. When things like that happen it is always very affirming regardless if it is the Ally group doing it or not." Barbara also expressed feeling affirmed by allies, saying her personal experience is, "Just feeling affirmed. Knowing that people outside your own community who are becoming part of your community as allies...care about you. It is self-affirming. For me it is affirming that they don’t have a fear about me. They don’t attribute the stereotypes to me. They don’t think I’m going to hit on them. They don’t reduce me to my sexual orientation. They’re really embracing us as human beings."

Allen stated, “I think it is positive [to have allies involved] for a number of reasons. Helps keep you grounded, helps to keep you connected to the world outside of LGBT people, and is just reassuring to know that there are heterosexual allies who are willing to do some work.” Similarly, Barbara shared, “It’s really helpful. The allies I know, whether they are involved in student groups or show up to the [Safe Program training], it’s helpful. It’s supportive. You don’t feel like you are alone in the work you are doing...I think it adds more support to the program to have allies
involved.” Barbara said that when ally students come into the center to gather resources, “They’re out there doing stuff in their class on issues that pertain to things we’re really interested in and need help on. So that is a highlight when that happens.” Cheryl described close relationships with allies in PFLAG, including her own family members, and stated, “That...has been a very valued part of my journey. To honor the allies who are doing this work.” In regard to student allies involved in the LGBT Student Organization, Grace’s experience has been “very, very positive” as allies get involved and participate in leadership roles.

Fay described an ally who is in her 80’s and is highly active as an ally through PFLAG, Speaker Panels, and in her church. “She does not have a LGBT son or daughter. She does this because this is an issue she feels is important. Seeing her at her age still being as vocal and active is truly inspiring.” Fay explained that when she sees allies advocating for LGBT issues, “...it makes me want to look at my own privilege and make sure that I am also being an ally to other groups that I don’t belong to.”

**Allies Impact LGBT People**

Directors identified many ways in which LGBT students, faculty, and staff benefit personally by having allies involved on campus. Allies were commonly referred to as providing support and affirmation to LGBT students. Cheryl noted that having allies involved with LGBT groups helps LGBT students know there are some heterosexual people they can trust. Furthermore, Cheryl sees that when LGBT students work closely with allies within their Student Organization, the LGBT students “become more comfortable with themselves in a larger community... They’re more integrated in community and their understanding of community is much more broad than just immersion in the gay community.” As a result, LGBT students
become “much more cognizant of the issues of all people... So our student leaders are truly understanding the issues of gay men, of lesbians, and bisexuals and transgender people and allies.” Allen stated that having allies on Speaker Panels is “one of the most affirming things that can happen.” He also echoed that trust can build when LGBT students get to know their ally peers. “I think one of the things that it underscores is that there are heterosexual people that you can trust. You may have to go through a process to get there, but you can trust heterosexual people and they will understand. So it breaks down some barriers. It also empowers [LGBT students] to be more open with other people.”

Participants witnessed the powerful impact of allies who took initiative to support their LGBT peers. David shared an incident in which ally students spoke out with LGBT student leaders in response to a homophobic incident on campus. When a group of employees defaced and threw away LGBT Student Organization signs and interfered with the group’s awareness event on campus, the President of the LGBT Student Organization and the President of the Ally Student Organization confronted the situation together by speaking to the supervisor of the individuals involved. “I think it was very powerful to see...It was powerful to see these allies stand up with the LGBT students and say, ‘This is wrong.’ It is not letting the minority have to stand up for themselves.” At Fay’s institution, a student ally and member of the LGBT Student Organization coordinated an educational event on campus focused on LGBT issues. “I think for the LGBT students in our group it was very important for them, because like any underrepresented group, the people in that group are usually the ones that are expected to educate everyone else.” Fay perceived the LGBT students to feel “really well cared for...” as a result of the ally’s efforts.

Participants provided many examples of LGBT students benefiting from having allies involved in LGBT Student Organizations. Grace shared that she and the
LGBT students in the LGBT Student Organization have had “very, very positive” experiences with allies in the group. “Those [ally] students get right in and do the work and are interested in the leadership roles, just as much and sometimes more than sexual minority students. There seems to be a healthy balance and people seem in a pretty positive space about that.” Grace identified some concrete benefits of having allies involved in the group, that allies bring greater numbers, additional perspectives and ideas, and more people to complete the work. At Eve’s institution, student allies are also members of the LGBT Student Organization. She explained, “I think most LGBT students I see are so grateful that somebody is sticking up for them, or someone is making positive statements on their behalf…” and “I think it is very affirming when there are folks who are willing to advocate for you.” Allen shared a story in which having an ally student leader of a Black Student Organization (BSO) allowed students who were LGBT and Black to embrace multiple aspects of their identities. One year when the BSO leader was not willing to collaborate with the LGBT Student Organization, students who were LGBT and Black “felt like they were running up against a brick wall, and [were] not able to do anything with [the Black Student Organization].” The following year, the leader of the BSO was “very much more open” and in turn, the BSO organization itself became more welcoming and open to LGBT students. As a result, “Individuals choose to be more active in one or the other, but they seem comfortable in either… The imperative to choose [among their identities] has lessened.”

Participants expressed how staff allies are visible and provide inclusive services for LGBT students. Fay remarked that it has a “big impact on LGBT students to know that there are other faculty and staff on campus who are supportive of who they are.” Barbara appreciated how allies in the Health Center asked her for suggestions to make Health Center services more LGBT-friendly. Barbara and Fay
noted ways that Admissions offices let prospective students know that LGBT students are welcome and supported on campus. Admissions allies at Barbara’s institution distribute LGBT Center literature to prospective high school students. Fay described how the Admissions office at her institution made space for the LGBT Center at the program for first year students so new students would be informed about support services available for LGBT people. Barbara shared that there is an ally staff person on her campus who wears a rainbow pin everyday. “As a result, a lot of the LGBT kids go to her for the services she provides on campus.” Similarly, Barbara notes that LGBT students feel more “comfortable” with a professor who displays office “indicators” that imply inclusion and support for LGBT people. Fay shared that LGBT faculty and staff in particular are grateful to have active ally members in their organization, saying that they are “glad that somebody is willing to step up to the plate to do something.”

Participants further highlighted that allies offer new and useful perspectives regarding LGBT programs and services. Participants described how ally perspectives are beneficial across a variety of contexts in offering a perspective that is different than the perspectives of LGBT people involved. Grace stated, “I think [allies] bring a unique perspective” and asserted that “The only way that the programming that emanates from [this LGBT Center] can be relevant to people is if we have as many voices as possible at the table.” Referring to ally students in the LGBT Student Organization, she stated, “Sometimes the way that [heterosexuals] come about thinking about things is different, and offers an important perspective or perspectives.” Cheryl and David remarked that heterosexual people are able to see things that LGBT people might initially miss. Cheryl stated, “I think [allies’] input is very important. I think sometimes they can see things that we can’t see. They can look at things from a different perspective. I think sometimes they’re involved in
different kind of things, not necessarily immersed in the gay community…” David stated that a benefit to having allies on the Advisory Board is that they can see how a particular program or initiative would be perceived by other heterosexual colleagues. David explained that personally, “I may…have tunnel vision and be so immersed in the program that I can’t see what the faults of it are, or the limitations… without [the ally’s] input.” Barbara praised an ally in a LGBT Advisory Board member for offering ideas that contribute to the ideas of LGBT people. “She offers the perspective that no one else has… She brings probably an obvious dimension to the table that most of us don’t think about, most of us being other queer people at the table.”

Allies Role Model to Heterosexuals

Participants provided multiple examples demonstrating ways allies impact heterosexual members of the campus community. The most common theme that emerged was that allies serve as role models to other heterosexuals.

A typical way allies role model to their heterosexual peers is through participation on LGBT Speaker Panels. Participants noted that the mere presence of allies on panels sends a strong message to other heterosexuals. Specifically, directors explained how having allies on these panels shows heterosexuals that interacting with LGBT people doesn’t “make” a person LGBT. Allen commented, “Simply their presence on some of the panels is a very powerful signal that you can interact with LGBT people. It doesn’t rub off (laughs). They are really modeling to these folks.” Cheryl added that, “I think that when people listen to allies, they are more able to personally relate. I think there is an understanding.” Allen stated that ally speakers are effective, in part because they are role modeling to others what it means to be a heterosexual ally. Consistent with this notion, David utilizes heterosexual allies as
part of LGBT Speaker Panels when he does Safe Program training in order to
demonstrate majority identity development to the allies in training.

Barbara recalled an ally Speaker Panelist who shared her experience having a
dad who is gay. Audience members were very interested listening to her story, and
“She made it safe for allies to want to be part of the [LGBT Student Organization].”
As noted earlier, Fay described the personal impact of a highly active ally woman in
her 80’s. Fay also observed the striking impact this woman has on students who
realize that, “it isn’t just LGBT folks’ responsibility to create change...She
encourages people that as a human being, you have some responsibility to care for
other people, and she gives them some ideas how you can do that.” Fay believes that,
“As a straight ally, she can help some of those students who are not quite sure how
they fit or how they feel about it, encourage them to get off that fence and become an
ally. It’s not that hard. There are things you can do.” Grace emphasized that student
allies are particularly influential to their student peers, as there is no power
differential to interfere with the message.

Barbara explained that heterosexual allies, when talking to their friends, or
including LGBT material in course material, are “role modeling for straight people
and gay people that it is okay to have a positive attitude and befriend LGBT
people...” David and Grace noted that when known heterosexual people act as allies,
other heterosexual people pause to think about why heterosexuals are involved. At
David’s campus, the Ally Student Organization coordinated a “huge awareness
raising event. It was standing room only in this huge hall.” David noticed that it
“opened [heterosexual students’] eyes” to see that the students organizing the event
were not gay. “Heterosexual students questioned, ‘Well, what is their reason for
doing this? Why are they doing this? Why are they invested in this?’” Grace
explained how heterosexual people have the ability to provide “zingers,” in which an
ally, because they are saying supportive things about LGBT people, is assumed to be LGBT by a heterosexual person. When the ally reveals a heterosexual orientation, the other heterosexual person is forced to reconsider and reexamine their assumptions.

“What that has to do with is challenging and confronting people’s stereotypes... It’s in the questions that follow. ‘Tell me more about why you assumed [I was LGBT]? How would it be different if I was? How would it be different if I wasn’t?’” In these instances, the exposure of a heterosexual ally prompts another heterosexual to wonder and reflect about reasons for heterosexuals to care about LGBT issues, and to engage in ally work.

Allies who are faculty, staff, or administration were identified as having especially strong potential to role model ally behavior to others. Cheryl asserted that when faculty, staff and administration are “…treating one another respectfully, speaking out as allies, speaking out when there is injustice, acting in socially just ways, the students are going to observe that. That’s great role modeling.” Similarly, Fay shared that it is particularly helpful for students to see faculty allies on Speaker Panels who are “willing to go through what a gay or lesbian person goes through when they are trying to fight for rights on campus. I think that is a good thing for students to see.” Grace shared an example of a “super” faculty ally who has donated resources to the LGBT Center, has LGBT books visible and available in his office, and provides a safe place for students. Grace stated, “Not only is he an incredible force in students’ lives (both sexual minority students and student allies) to model that, I think that on another level he models that for other staff and faculty on this campus. He can be self-confident and sure of himself and people don’t to his face or behind his back make any allegations toward his sexuality. They can see how that is modeled and see that nothing bad happens to him. He can choose to take these risks...
He's very successful. He's very respected. For him this is part of being as effective as he can be, and I think that is really effective modeling to the larger community.”

**Being an Ally Impacts Oneself**

Directors also shared their perceptions about how allies are personally impacted through their ally work. Fay witnessed how attending a pride event impacted a group of allies. Ally members of PFLAG and LGBT community members coordinated a pride event to stand up to anti-LGBT religious protesters. “To see how that feels for people to be yelling at you and calling you a sinner...it had a big impact on them.” Fay explained that attending this event influenced the allies to want to be more out and more vocal in the community. Fay stated that allies were emphatic saying, “We’re going every year. We’re going to do whatever we can to be very inclusive for LGBT folks.” Directors observed that doing one ally activity motivated allies to want to learn more and do more as allies. David stated that he and his colleagues at other institutions notice that allies are particularly “energized” at the completion of Safe Program training. He shared that before attending the training, heterosexual people convey the attitude that they “have to” go to training that is hours long, yet, “…once they are done with the training, so many people comment that they wished they had more time to delve deeper into the issues we address.” At Allen’s institution, some allies receive extensive education and training to become Speaker Panelists. Allen frequently sees how these allies have revelations as they become more educated and think of things in new ways. In one instance, “It was like a light came on for one of our allies in particular who said, ‘I never thought of it that way before. It never occurred to me.’” In addition to learning about issues that are highly relevant for LGBT people, allies reflect on how these issues impact themselves. Allen noted, “Our straight allies...in particular are reexamining who they
are at the same time.” Barbara witnesses how allies who visit the LGBT Center with their LGBT friends often return to the center at a later date to get resources and information. “I see the allies writing a paper on same-sex parents or certain topics like that...so I see the allies doing proactive things through their friend.”

Directors’ Perspectives on Ally Development

Directors described experiences with allies at various developmental stages or levels. Eve shared that being an ally, “is not a check the box, are you an ally or are you not an ally. It is a process. That is okay. It is a process, and it is a growth, and it is a daily commitment to that group.” Grace expressed her appreciation of allies in any stage of ally development, demonstrating that allies at different levels of development can give support in different ways. For example, after a homophobic incident occurred on campus, Grace received, “... a ton of e-mails and phone calls from staff and faculty people either saying, ‘You know that I am here behind you, and anything I can do, let me know’ or people finding a new voice and saying, ‘I never really thought about this, but I’m calling you now, because this [homophobic incident] isn’t cool.’ So again, people in many stages of their ally-ness. Some are much more comfortable with personal contact. I think that is really important.”

Directors shared how they try to tailor their interventions with allies in a way that addresses the ally’s developmental level. Barbara stated, “I have to be aware where people are at, and I can’t start at step 10 when they are at step 1.” In advising the LGBT Student Organization, Fay found that LGBT and student allies in the LGBT Student Organization varied quite remarkably in terms of their identity. “I think it is a struggle when you have people at all different levels of their development. We have some folks that really want to be political and in your face, and they are angry and that is where they are at. Then we have other students that come to the
[LGBT Student Organization] meetings, but beyond coming to that group they aren’t out to a soul. Then we have allies that are the same. We have allies that want to be called queer and who want to be involved in everything that goes on, and then we have some that, they are not quite sure how they want to be involved, but they care about [a LGBT person] and this is important to that person, so it’s important to them, too.” This variety in developmental stages created a challenge when group members tried to agree on creating organizational t-shirts. “Some people want [the group’s name printed] really big on the back, and some people, even LGBT folks, aren’t quite sure...Some people want ‘queer’ written on their shirt, and other people would never want that.” Fay described her role in advising this group as figuring out how to be “sensitive to everyone in the group,” and to help students understand one another. As a student development professional, Fay says, part of the process is that “sometimes you have to slow it down and lay it out very clearly for the students that not everyone is at the same place.”

Directors talked about how personal contact with LGBT people contributes to a heterosexual person becoming an ally. Grace said, “I think the big turning point is when that person makes a personal connection.” She continued that, “I think on a fundamental level, someone comes to a realization, whatever it means to them, that, ‘Aha, on a basic level, we share a common humanity.’” At Eve’s institution, heterosexual students who worked on a program with LGBT students “became allies. Because they get to know us.” David asserted that allies experience “significant events,” one of which is having personal contact with a good friend or family member who is LGBT. Barbara shared a story about a staff member who previously had rejected the idea of Barbara providing a Safe Training for her department. After this woman’s family member came out, she invited Barbara to provide training for her
department, asked for LGBT Center brochures to distribute, and was eager to collaborate with Barbara on a project to reach out to LGBT high school students.

Directors also talked about other significant steps that allies take along the way in their journey as allies. These steps include reflecting on socialization in a homophobic culture, becoming aware of privilege, understanding how oppression works, educating yourself, exploring and becoming comfortable with your identity, addressing your own emotional reactions and insecurities, and seeing how being an ally personally benefits you. Eve highlighted that part of the developmental process of becoming an ally is “You have to do your own personal identity exploration and become comfortable with that before you can advocate for other groups...I think you need to be secure and be comfortable in your own identity.” Barbara see allies going through a “pride” phase similar to the pride phase for LGBT students who would be likely to display a rainbow sticker or ribbon. At her institution, the Safe Program was designed for faculty and staff, yet several resident assistants have come forward for training. “People really want the sign. They want that visible symbol of the [Safe Marker]. They want to feel good. They want to be visible about taking a stand...I see allies going through their own pride stage. They’re like, ‘I’m an ally! I have a gay friend! I have a couple gay friends! And I have a [Safe Marker] now!”

Challenges

A key area of interest addressed in this research is the challenges that directors face when working with heterosexual allies. Directors were asked to discuss and elaborate on the challenges that arise as they interact with allies across a variety of contexts. One theme expressed by directors was that overall, there are not enough allies on campus. The second theme that emerged is that some allies do not take enough action. Third, directors believe that allies who are visible and vocal risk being...
thought of as LGBT and risk being questioned about their intentions. In other words, people commonly speculate about the sexual orientation and intentions of allies. A fourth theme among this sample is that it takes a great deal of work on the part of directors to work with allies. Finally, directors also talked about challenges with heterosexuals who were expected to be allies, yet were not allies.

There are Not Enough Allies

Some participants expressed that there are not enough allies on campus. Cheryl and Fay noted that few faculty members participate in campus Safe Programs. At Fay’s institution, there were “a good number of people” who have attended in the past, yet her experience in the last few years, is that only “one or two faculty or staff attend.” As a result, Fay is marketing their training services more to groups, such as academic classes. At Grace’s institution, there are a relatively small number of allies to meet the demand of the popular Speaker Panel program. According to Grace, the allies who are willing to be on Speaker Panels are also highly involved in other social justice activities. “So it is not that we are not crawling with allies. It’s that of the subset of allies who enjoy public speaking and are willing to be on a panel and … have that free time who aren’t working at that time, math dictates that it is very small.”

Allies Do Not Take Enough Action

Participants described how allies fail to commit time to becoming an ally. Allen and David recognized how some allies don’t want to invest much time for ally training. At Allen’s institution, there are Safe Markers available for anyone who requests one, as well as a formal Safe training session that lasts a full day. According to Allen, the program that includes a training component has not worked as well.
"The training goes fairly well, but asking people to do a full-day of training seems to be a very heavy commitment… People give a lot of lip service to things, but if you actually ask them to commit some time, it becomes much more difficult. People don’t seem to want to be as forthcoming with time commitments." David shared that the reason he is mindful about keeping his Safe Program training short enough, "is because I think people will not want to attend if it is too long."

Directors described that some allies identify as such without investing energy to initiate ally activity. Fay stated that, “I just wish that the folks that I work with would be more active.” She noted that there are “a lot of allies” who “don’t really do much. They are an ally, and they would say they are an ally, and if the issue comes across their desk, they would be in support. But they are not very active. We do have some faculty that are allies that are [active]. I can think of at least two or three people, but I think of how many other faculty and staff who would say that they are allies, and probably it is a lot more. Why aren’t they more vocal or more visible?” Eve wishes that student allies would be more committed to being allies. “More commitment would be something I would wish for or desire. In general, overall, I see people and they just lack the passion or commitment.” Barbara highlighted the lack of initiative among some Safe Program members by saying, “They don’t follow through, they don’t do outreach, they don’t show up at events.”

David highlighted a lack of initiative among some allies, noting that very few allies are involved with LGBT Speaker Panels or other LGBT social or educational events. He also described a Safe Program member who hasn’t taken any additional action to grow as an ally. David stated that this man “uses” his Safe Program membership in an attempt to convey to others that he’s a “great ally,” when in fact, David believes he still has “a lot of work to do!” David emphasized that simply talking about LGBT issues, “is not the end all be all of allyness!”
Directors provided several examples of people who say they are allies who don’t follow through with action. Fay stated, “Administration...says the right things most of the time, but I’m not quite sure that the follow through is there.” Barbara noted improvement at her institution in recent years, but said, “Administration in our [colleges and universities] tend to give a lot of lip service to support.” Fay noted how administrators at her institution talk about how they want to honor diversity, “but I rarely ever see them showing respect of that. She noted that one of the Deans has attended some LGBT events, but higher administrators have not ever attended LGBT Center programs. Fay stated that the Chancellor never mentioned LGBT people in his annual remarks nor made any comments about domestic partner benefits. She stated that an affirmative action administrator “is another person who says the right thing, but it is all talk. I haven’t seen much more than talk.” Fay also expressed frustration about administration’s response to LGBT and ally concerns about a fundraising campaign. Fay felt that their words were not taken seriously by administrators. “For two years, they just patted us on the head like, ‘Yes, yes, we hear you and here, we’re going to give you an opportunity to tell other people how you feel...’” Although administrators listened to the complaints, there was no change in their behavior. Fay concluded, “So you kind of feel like, ‘Thanks, you gave us our two seconds to give our thoughts,’ but it is not like they really matter much.”

Similarly, Barbara perceives her colleagues in the university career center to be allies and appreciates their enthusiasm regarding her ideas, yet the center has not implemented her suggestions. Barbara encouraged the career center staff to gather information that would be of interest to LGBT students from companies and corporations who visit campus. This would provide information to LGBT students so they would not have to out themselves to employers by asking. A couple years since
she first made this suggestion, Barbara concluded, “they’re still not doing it, so I brought it up again… But I haven’t heard anything.”

Grace shared that some faculty and staff allies suggest great ideas about new programs or services but do not take any action to implement the ideas. Grace explained, “I’ve tried to empower those folks, with me or without me, to look into some of the basic issues of how could we get X program off the ground, and that’s where they fall back and say, ‘Right, but that is your job.’ …that happens with both allies and LGBT people themselves. I’m primarily talking about staff and faculty.” So although these allies and LGBT people are excited about ideas, they place all the responsibility on Grace and the LGBT Center to put ideas into action. Similarly, Fay stated that she knows allies in various campus units who are “supportive” but she wishes they would “step up to the plate more… sometimes people just think, ‘Well, that’s your job, you are supposed to be doing it.’”

David shared that allies sometimes forget to follow through with their intentions to be inclusive of LGBT people. He stated, “…when issues of diversity and multiculturalism are discussed, oftentimes LGBT issues are left out. And when they are included it is very minor.” David remembered instances in which allies, when presenting training sessions on topics relevant to diverse groups of people, fail to consider how LGBT issues are relevant to the topic. “If I do stand up and say something, then the allies are like, ‘Wow, I totally messed up there’ and are very apologetic.” David explained that he does not expect an apology. “It’s usually about, well, how do we rectify this? Can we change this or make plans to do this better in the future?”
Being an Ally Involves Risks

Participants shared that it is a risk for heterosexuals to be allies. First, it is quite common for others to make assumptions about the sexual orientation or sexual identity of allies; people may speculate that an ally is really LGBT. Also, participants reported that some people don’t understand why allies would want to be involved with LGBT people or issues. Allies who express LGBT affirmation in any personal relationship or public situation take a risk that others will question their sexual orientation, their sexual identity, or their intentions.

Cheryl explained that allies risk being perceived as LGBT when they are vocal or visible allies. She stated, “I think people mean well with the Safe Program, [although] there is still the cultural piece and the social piece that people might think that they are [LGBT], too. I think that is very, very difficult, particularly for young people.” LGBT students have revealed to Cheryl that some heterosexual students displaying Safe Signs in the residence halls have said anti-gay things. When Cheryl followed up with these Safe members, she found that the persons are “afraid to stand up because someone might think he or she were gay or lesbian.” When providing ally training, Cheryl always addresses that one risk of standing up for LGBT people is that someone will question the speaker’s sexual orientation. “Everybody in the room nods their head. It never fails.”

When an ally attends LGBT programs, there may be questions or assumptions made about that person’s sexual orientation. David shared experiences in which Safe Program members reported fears about being perceived as LGBT if they were to attend LGBT programs. David described that it is a developmental process for allies to recognize that “it is not a bad thing if someone were to assume you were LGBT if you are at that event... or at least being okay with knowing that you are going to feel...
uncomfortable with that when that occurs...I think that, for some people, that is not a step that they’ve taken yet.”

In addition to people speculating about or making assumptions about an ally’s sexual orientation, people may question an ally’s intentions. Allies are questioned by others who don’t understand why an ally would want to be involved with LGBT people and issues. As Grace explained, “I think there can be backlash from within the LGBT communities, and people can doubt their motives like, ‘Why are they interested in this?’” Eve further shared that a gay man in the LGBT Faculty and Staff Organization didn’t want to include a particular faculty member; since she was married and had children, he assumed she was heterosexual when in fact she was bisexual. Eve explained her perception of this man’s perspective, “Just generationally, he was at a different place where gay and lesbian was like a little club and you didn’t let outsiders in. He didn’t really understand or recognize that people could want to advocate for you and not have some type of personal interest in that. So even gay and lesbian people, I think, it’s not just straight people who say, ‘What’s your motivation for that? Why are you doing this? You must be really attracted to women.’”

Directors noted that some LGBT people are so skeptical of allies that they do not welcome or include allies into LGBT programs. Cheryl stated, “I think the biggest challenge is among other [LGBT] people who don’t like the fact that allies are involved.” She described a conversation she had with a gay man who expressed dislike that allies were going to be included by name in a campus publication. When Cheryl inquired about his stance, he replied, “Well, they’re just a bunch of closet cases.” Cheryl stated that the publication included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and allies so that people who are not out and people who are allies could participate. Cheryl explained her position to this man by saying, “Even the closet
cases have to have the opportunity to participate. But more importantly, our friends who really are allies don’t have that many ways of sharing that information. This is just a way for them to do it.” Cheryl noted that this concern is fading over time, “I think that it is the old school people… who struggle with it far more. I think that young people don’t struggle with it much at all. I think for them, because of campuses like this and my colleagues and I doing this work in the ways that we do, I think that having allies participate is just becoming very much a natural audience. So I just don’t think it is that big of a deal anymore.”

Barbara and Allen also noted how LGBT and ally students who are traditionally aged differ from older adults in their attitudes. Barbara shared that after speaking to a class, a young man thanked her for coming and said, “I think we are going to be the generation that changes our society.” This student said that he grew up in a high school and junior high school that had gay-straight alliance groups, and remarked, “Most of my friends had gay friends, and it’s just not a big deal.” Allen’s perception is that, “The older you are, the fewer number of allies you feel you have. The younger you are, the more expectation you have for larger numbers of allies.” He described that many students come to campus with an attitude and expectation that there will be LGBT specific services offered: “We’re here, we’re queer, where are our services?” Allen continued that first year students, “…expect allies to be there, too. To be treated in a certain way. They are less tolerant of people who would say something homophobic… if someone says something out of line the older LGBT person would cringe and say, ‘There are some really bad attitudes out there, aren’t there.’ The younger person would say, ‘We need to censure that person!’” David pointed out that, “there are some faculty and staff who are very, very knowledgeable,” yet, “sometimes, the students know more than the faculty and staff…I think that is sort of because of the culture they are growing up in right now.
They have friends in high school who have been out, and they personally have known friends for a good part of their life, as opposed to staff and faculty, they may know some [LGBT] people, but for many of them it is still a new thing in their life…”

Grace, on the other hand, believes that the questioning of ally identity and intentions are very current issues. “It is still the case on this campus that if someone is an ally and seen as very involved in the workings of the LGBT center or seen as very interested in things LGBT, there are still questions about, ‘Well, why is this person interested anyway?’” Grace described how one ally student who spoke out in favor of the LGBT Center “weathered a lot of criticism especially from her peers” who questioned why she was interested in the LGBT Center, and administrators assumed that she was a lesbian because she supported the LGBT Center.

Grace perceives the sexual orientation and identity of ally students to be questioned much more than ally faculty, staff, or administrators. “I just don’t think that we question people on this campus who are [older] adults.” She hypothesized that ageism may contribute to the questioning of students, as people are more likely to think students are “in a phase,” or not yet confident enough to say that they are a sexual minority. “We have some very strong allies who are administrative folks or faculty and they don’t get questioned nearly in the same way. Students get questioned by everybody. But I would say peer administrative folks, staff, and faculty don’t get nearly the amount of questioning and they don’t nearly get it from all of the sides that students do. I don’t think that as a matter of course their colleagues make those kinds of assumptions or if they are having those questions they ask in a more constructive way. Not, ‘Oh, you must be gay because you are interested,” but, ‘Tell me more about why you are interested.’ So that dialogue is a little bit more respectful.”
Allies Require Work on the Part of Directors

Directors explained that it takes energy on their part to work with allies. LGBT Center directors are certainly engaged in providing support services for LGBT people; providing services to allies, too adds even more responsibilities to their workload. David encourages LGBT Center colleagues to reach out, include, and welcome allies, yet he recognizes it is difficult because directors can easily become “bogged down” addressing the concerns of LGBT students. Allen shared that he had not initially recognized how much time and effort it would take to “keep allies trained” and “interested” since he had initially been, “much more focused on providing support, encouragement, and developmental opportunities for LGBT people.” Barbara acknowledged that although her “door is open to anyone,” during the day, she acknowledged that she has limited time and energy to provide or organize programs based on every request that is made. She explained that she is frequently called upon by LGBT and ally students alike to participate in or organize programs and stated, “If I have to decide, I have to lean toward the LGBT kids.” Working with allies often requires more from directors than a simple invitation to become involved. Many allies need further education and training in order to be ready to engage in various ally tasks. Allen illustrated these ideas by contrasting his experiences with allies before and after becoming a LGBT Center director. Before becoming a LGBT Center director, Allen worked with allies who were “more developed” to advocate for policy changes to ensure benefits for LGBT employees. Later as a LGBT Center director, Allen encountered allies who were much more diverse in their readiness to be allies. He explained that when he first became a LGBT director, it became clear to him that it would take work to assist allies in gaining the knowledge, resources, and experiences they needed. He realized
that, "working with allies was something that was going to take much more effort and initiative on my part, whereas previously I didn’t have to provide that much effort."

Directors talked about the need to educate allies that the identities of LGBT people are complex and extend beyond sexual orientation and gender identity issues. Cheryl described how she worked to illuminate multiple identity issues among members of a professional organization who she considered strong heterosexual allies. Cheryl explained that this professional organization offered a scholarship for minority undergraduate students. When students with disabilities and LGBT students inquired if they could be considered for the scholarship, they were told that only students of minority racial or ethnic groups would be considered. However the professional organization created a panel to address the issue of inclusion of minorities beyond race and ethnicity. The panel members proposed that the organization create a second scholarship for persons with disabilities, and create a third scholarship for LGBT people. Cheryl was surprised that the panelists hadn’t thought about the impact of this decision for students with multiple minority identities. “I have to tell you I was shocked when they came up with this separate but equal thing. These are people who I know are allies who have stood up, who have said the words…” Cheryl presented her perspectives to the groups, pointing out that some people who would apply for scholarship might be members of multiple groups. She posed the question, “Which identity do you want to have a kid leave at the door? If they are African American and gay, where do they go?” Cheryl expressed to the panelists, “If we are trying to create behaviors that we want our students to emulate, then we have to design programs that are inclusive not exclusive.” When asked if Cheryl felt that the panelists understood her point of view after discussion, she replied, “Absolutely. I did.”

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Grace and Allen also emphasized how allies need to be educated about LGBT people with multiple identities. Grace shared that some allies fail to see connections between LGBT issues and other minority issues. For example, when Grace attended a meeting regarding Black History Month, people “who consider themselves very supportive and who are allies” wondered about Grace’s attendance questioning, “Wait...this isn’t gay month. It is Black History Month. Why are you here?” Grace shared, “That’s something that happens a lot and I’ve tried to create some programs to try to address it in a not hit-you-over-the-head kind of way. I’ve tried to do a lot of programming around people who have multiple identities to remind people, ‘I am on this committee because there are lesbian and gay people who have disabilities’ [for example]... Aside from the idea that obviously it would be important for people of various marginalized groups to come together and collaborate and find solutions that can assist as many people as possible, it’s also true that there are people within our communities in these other communities, who are also part of other communities, and that’s why I am here.” Grace described how others fail to see that it is possible to have a genuine interest in advocating for a group even if you personally do not share that identity. Grace explained, “It’s important to me that people understand that folks can be interested in issues because of the ways they affect us all, and it doesn’t particularly mean that I share that [identity], or that I’m coming from a purely self interested point of view...I’m trying to see connections.” Allen identified the widely held stereotype that all LGBT people are White and middle class. He stated, “The porousness and overlap between communities has to be pointed out otherwise people just don’t get it.”

At Allen’s institution, he struggles to help administrators understand the importance for a LGBT Center. “It’s a typical white privilege thing, where it’s ‘I’m not discriminating against you, why do you need to have a separate space? You’re
pulling away from me.' While I think some of them struggle around that even in regard to race, I do think that there are more who understand that concept around race and ethnicity and there are many fewer who understand that when it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity.” Allen perceives administrators at his institution as recognizing that there are indeed LGBT students on campus, and that they have particular needs. Yet Allen has experiences with administrators in which they question why a separate center is needed for LGBT students. Allen shared that, “The whole idea I feel like I’m having to articulate over and over again is that you can’t expect someone to reach out and interact with another who doesn’t feel secure enough in who they are and where they stand in order then to reach out. So you have to get them here, you have to get them feeling comfortable about who they are and feel confident that they’re being supported, and then you can talk about how much they reach across. So the whole idea of having services targeted to specific special populations I think is what is troubling to some administrators.”

Directors of LGBT Centers work diligently to educate administration about the importance of LGBT Centers and the role of LGBT Center directors. Participants shared stories revealing that some administrators, including direct supervisors, fail to see how critical LGBT Centers and services are. Most of the directors stated that administrators verbally support their LGBT Centers, yet some administrators displayed lack of knowledge, awareness, support, or understanding of LGBT directors’ needs. Barbara stated, “They don’t really understand what I do. They think I have a group of 10 kids. That I have a group of 10 students, and every once in a while they have a program, and that they run through the hall with their raise a flag for Coming Out Week, and the boys shop a lot. It is really stereotypical. So the work that I do has to be double top-notch.” If administrators had a deeper understanding of what LGBT Center directors do, Cheryl stated, “There would be a more professional
understanding of this work. It’s not just that they’re doing it because it is the politically correct thing to do, but from a professional perspective, it’s absolutely necessary for the safety, well being, and due care and regard of our students.” Allen relayed a story of a campus President who didn’t see the need for a LGBT Center. The President stated, “I understand the need for us to help ethnic and racial minority students with their studies so they can get through school, but frankly, all of the gay people I know are very bright and talented.” In response, Allen tried to explain that the President’s experience was limited and not representative of all LGBT students. Allen replied, “Well, that is because all of the people that you know, the people who are out to you, have all of the resources to let you know that. There are a lot of people who don’t have those resources. I think he finally started to get it.”

**Heterosexuals Expected to be Allies Who are Not Allies**

Although the focus of this investigation was on the experiences that directors have with allies, participants also described challenging experiences with heterosexual people in general. Throughout participants’ descriptions of challenges, a distinction appeared between heterosexuals who are clearly not allies, and heterosexuals who are indeed allies, yet who make mistakes or fail to act. A list of non-ally practices reported is listed in Table 2.

**Table 2**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Ally Activities Reported by LGBT Center Directors</th>
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<td>Telling jokes about LGBT people</td>
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<td>Failing to see how LGBT issues are relevant</td>
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Failing to request training or professional development on LGBT issues
Being unaware of what Campus Safe Program symbols mean
Making homophobic comments
Wearing a LGBT symbol to be politically correct
Ignoring the contributions of LGBT people or the LGBT Center
Failing to include LGBT people in campus publications
Blaming LGBT people when community members complain about LGBT events
Allowing the expression of anti-gay sentiments and rationalizing it as “free speech”
Telling LGBT directors to “expect” to be harassed because of their position
Failing to educate oneself about gender identity and gender expression

An important learning from the examples of non-ally behaviors is that participants often expected certain heterosexuals to be allies due to their status as faculty, staff, or administration, or due to their position in diversity, multicultural affairs, human resources, or affirmative action offices. For example, Fay stated, “You’d hope that somebody who is a Chancellor or President, especially at a public institution, would be an ally or at least be knowledgeable about some of the struggles that some of their students, faculty, and staff have because of their sexual orientation. Especially with an affirmative action director, you would hope that that person is doing whatever they can to educate themselves if they feel that is an area they don’t feel very clear about.”

When persons in powerful positions who were expected to be allies failed to be allies, it was particularly harmful for LGBT people. Upon hearing a homophobic comment from a colleague who worked in a multicultural center, Eve reflected on her reaction at the time saying, “This is somebody who is supposed to be on my side, and is supposed to be enlightened, and doing the work and fighting oppression, and they
didn't have a clue! They were oppressing me too! I was so destroyed by that...”
Barbara expected that her former supervisor, a woman of color employed at a
university multicultural center, would be a heterosexual ally. Barbara was shocked
when her supervisor told her that Barbara was the “most privileged one in the center”
because she was White and “could stay in the closet” if she wanted to. Barbara
stated, “I found that to be really condescending, really ignorant, really demeaning... I
found it abusive for that kind of thing to be said.” Barbara reported feeling very
misunderstood and isolated at that time. Grace shared her expectation that a particular
administrator, “because of the job purview of the person I was working with, I
assumed (and it was assumed) that they are an ally and that they are supportive.”
However, when the administrator made a request of Grace which demonstrated a lack
of, “even just a basic working knowledge of the way sexual minority students interact
on this campus,” Grace felt “completely unsupported. That was not a very good
day.”
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore and describe the experiences that LGBT directors of LGBT Campus Resource Centers have with heterosexual allies on campus. Data were analyzed in order to reveal the essential features of directors’ experiences interacting with heterosexual allies. This chapter presents the common elements that emerged among a sample of seven LGBT directors from across the United States to provide readers with an understanding of what it is like for LGBT people to work with heterosexual allies. Specifically, this chapter offers an integrated story that reflects the essence of directors’ experiences with allies. Before presenting the summary of findings and implications, a brief description of participants is offered to summarize relevant contextual information.

Contextual Information Regarding Participants

Information rich participants were interviewed about their experiences with heterosexual allies. These LGBT directors were diverse in terms of sexual orientation and gender, they had between two and ten years of experience as LGBT Campus Resource Center professionals, and they had numerous professional experiences with allies. These LGBT individuals held positive attitudes regarding the inclusion of allies on campus. The researcher found it quite remarkable that despite a number of negative experiences with heterosexual people as well as disappointments and
frustration with some allies, these directors expressed openness and willingness to work with allies. In fact, this sample of directors advocated strongly for the participation of allies. Specifically, directors highlighted that allies have unique opportunities to use their heterosexual privilege to promote safe campus climates and to promote positive social changes. These directors felt strongly that it is important for LGBT Center directors to welcome, recognize, and appreciate heterosexual allies for their work.

Structure of the Chapter

This chapter begins with a summary describing the essence of directors’ experiences with allies called Every Director’s Story. This summary story presents the essential features that capture the core experiences of directors in this sample. The next five sections present implications for training and future research for five core themes that emerged across participants: the activities of allies, the impact of allies on LGBT people, the impact of allies on heterosexual people, the influence of ally development and heterosexual identity development, and the challenges of work with allies. This chapter concludes with a section addressing the limitations of the current study.

Every Director’s Story

There are a variety of organized ways through which LGBT Center directors interact with allies. Directors work with allies who are members or advisors of LGBT or Ally student organizations, members of Safe Programs or LGBT Advisory Boards, facilitators or attendees of Ally Training or LGBT events, volunteer mentors for LGBT students, speakers for LGBT Speaker Panel programs, and/or facilitators of LGBT support or therapy groups. Allies also provide resources for LGBT Centers,
advocate for the creation of new LGBT Centers, seek funding for LGBT Centers, and communicate with LGBT Center directors about how to better serve LGBT students.

Directors also interact with allies outside of programs or services specific to LGBT Centers. Directors have experiences with allies who wear or display LGBT symbols, use inclusive language, include LGBT issues in written materials, bring LGBT issues to the table, speak out against homophobic remarks, and respond to incidents of harassment. Directors also work with allies who engage in LGBT research with allies, write letters to administrators in support of LGBT people and issues, and advocate for the creation and modification of policies that promote safety, inclusion, and benefits for LGBT people.

Directors notice that allies have different spheres of influence through which they make an impact. They distinguish how, based on their roles as students, faculty, staff, or administrators, allies have unique ways of influencing others. For example, directors believe student allies have particularly strong impact on their peers in student organizations and in residence halls. Directors view staff allies as having power to educate their colleagues through LGBT professional development sessions for their department or unit. Directors perceive faculty allies as having tremendous impact on classroom climate, as faculty can integrate LGBT issues into the curriculum. Directors highlight how administrators who are allies have power to create and modify policies to promote safety and inclusion for LGBT people.

Directors value their personal and professional experiences with allies, describing these experiences as positive, helpful, and supportive. They feel affirmed and moved by ally works. Directors express appreciation for allies who stand up for LGBT Centers, who become active members of LGBT communities, and who are willing to do work that promotes LGBT issues. Directors also believe that allies bring a unique perspective when working on LGBT issues. Directors describe how visible
allies (e.g., allies who display Safe Program signs or wear LGBT symbols) help LGBT people feel welcome, comfortable, and supported on campus. Directors believe that LGBT students feel well cared for and affirmed when allies work on behalf of LGBT people to speak out, educate others, and advocate for LGBT issues. Directors see how having experiences with allies encourages LGBT people to recognize that there are heterosexual people who are trustworthy. Furthermore, when trust is established among LGBT people and allies, LGBT individuals feel more comfortable in larger communities beyond LGBT-specific groups.

Directors notice that cohorts of LGBT people differ in their approaches to heterosexual allies. Directors have a wide range of experiences with LGBT individuals from traditional-age college students to employees who are nearing retirement. Directors experience that LGBT people in older generations articulate less trust and less openness to including heterosexual allies in LGBT groups, as these individuals grew up during an era when LGBT issues were much less visible in public consciousness. In contrast, directors shared that most traditional-age LGBT students are used to having allies in their lives. Directors observe how more recently, younger LGBT cohorts are entering college from high schools that have Gay/Straight Alliance Organizations. These LGBT individuals expect to find LGBT services and support on campuses, including support from allies, because they have received support from ally friends, family, or community members prior to college.

Directors perceive the advocacy efforts of allies as striking to other heterosexuals. They observe how heterosexuals are particularly receptive toward the advocacy efforts of allies as they are forced to wonder, "Why is a heterosexual person advocating for LGBT people?" Directors believe that allies are tremendous role models for other heterosexual people. When allies are engaged in ally work, they demonstrate to other heterosexual people what it means to be a heterosexual ally.
Through words and actions, allies demonstrate that caring about and interacting with LGBT people doesn’t “make” a person LGBT. In fact, allies convey to other heterosexual people that it is okay (and even admirable) to befriend and support LGBT people. When allies take initiative to work toward equality, it shows other heterosexual people that it is not the sole responsibility of LGBT people to eliminate oppression and discrimination. On a very practical level, allies provide suggestions to other heterosexuals about action steps to take. When allies talk about being an ally on LGBT speaker panels, they articulate their reasons for being an ally and describe the personal benefits of being an ally. Heterosexual students may hear, for the first time, why it is so important for heterosexual people to be involved in LGBT issues.

Directors understand being an ally as a developmental process. Directors see how allies experience significant events or turning points (having personal contact with LGBT people or recognizing the existence of homophobia in the world) through which they are moved to become an ally, or to act as an ally. Directors also emphasize how important it is for heterosexual allies to address their own sexual identity. Specifically, directors believe that it is critical for allies to explore their own sexual identity, become comfortable with their sexual identity, and become aware of their privilege as heterosexual.

Directors view part of their job as helping student allies to grow, and they express understanding when student allies fail to act as allies. However, when faculty, staff, or administrator allies fail to act, directors feel greater disappointment, frustration, and anger. Directors wish that they could rely on faculty, staff, and administrators to be allies, yet these individuals do not always live up to director’s expectations. Sometimes, directors wonder if their expectations for faculty, staff, and administrators are unrealistic, or notice that their expectations of faculty, staff, or administrators are not realistic given the ally’s developmental stage.
Directors painted a picture of an ideal ally. Ideal allies are individuals who have genuine intentions to support LGBT people. In their hearts, ideal allies are motivated to make the lives of LGBT people better; ideal ally actions are founded on a desire to support LGBT people and not motivated by self-serving reasons to appear unbiased, for example. Directors view an ideal ally as someone who takes action by being both responsive and proactive about LGBT issues. For example, ideal allies respond to incidents of harassment when they arise and they take initiative to advocate for change. Directors describe ideal allies as people who have a strong understanding about how oppression works. Furthermore, an understanding of oppression against LGBT people ideally leads to an understanding of how oppression works against all oppressed groups. Directors strongly hope for allies of LGBT people to also be allies for all people. Ideal allies are also willing to be visible and vocal as allies even though they might be mislabeled as LGBT. Finally, directors believe ideal allies are committed to pursuing their own ongoing education and training as allies.

Directors wish for more allies on campus, and wish that allies would take more action. Although directors are highly appreciative of allies who are visible and active, they wonder about the many people who could be allies yet are not. Directors have experiences with people who say that they are allies yet who fail to commit time to training, attendance at LGBT events, or providing outreach programs. For example, directors have colleagues who verbally express their enthusiasm about LGBT initiatives and even provide great ideas for new programs, yet they don’t follow through with any action to implement ideas. Directors are also distressed by heterosexual people who they expect to be allies who are not allies. When heterosexual persons in faculty, staff, or administrative positions, or those who are
employed through multicultural, diversity, affirmative action, or human resources offices are not allies, directors are particularly disappointed and disturbed.

Including allies in LGBT Center programs and supporting their development requires a tremendous amount of work by directors. The responsibilities of LGBT Center directors are wide in scope. Not only are directors highly committed to LGBT individuals on campus, directors are also devoted to developing allies. Recruiting, educating, training, and engaging allies are substantial tasks for LGBT Center directors. Incorporating services specifically for allies takes time, energy, and resources. Directors would welcome additional staff to focus exclusively on working with allies.

Directors also work particularly hard with allies to educate them about multiple identity issues. Directors are keenly aware that LGBT individuals are complex given a variety of diversity characteristics; however some campus allies fail to recognize the identities of LGBT people beyond sexual orientation and gender identity. Directors work diligently to educate allies that LGBT people are impacted not only by their sexual orientations and gender identities, but also factors including age, physical characteristics, race, ethnicity, abilities, religion, and class. Directors are beginning to address multiple identity issues of LGBT people through campus wide programming as well as ally training.

Directors recognize that allies are frequently mislabeled as LGBT because of their interest or involvement with LGBT issues. Directors also witness how people question the intentions of allies for doing ally work. One task of directors is to work with allies who struggle with being mislabeled. For example, some allies are afraid to go to LGBT programs or afraid to speak out as allies for fear of being labeled as LGBT. If these allies do not work through their concerns with being labeled as LGBT, they will fail to be visible or vocal allies.
In the following sections, selected core findings are identified and discussed in regards to their contribution to the literature, implications for training, and directions for future research.

The Activities of Allies

One major contribution of this study is that it expands knowledge regarding specific ways allies act to support and advocate for LGBT people and issues on campus. As this body of scholarly literature regarding allies is quite small and mostly theoretical, very little is known about what allies do and how they impact LGBT people. Only two empirical works include investigations of the supportive and unsupportive behaviors of allies (DiStefano et al., 2000: Poynter & Burnett, 2001). The current study adds to this empirical base by eliciting the perspectives of LGBT people to identify ways in which allies are supportive to LGBT people.

The ally activities identified by directors in this sample are compatible with the ally roles of support, education, and advocacy proposed by Broido (2000). The most common activities of allies are actions that provide support for LGBT people. Through the support role, allies demonstrate their support of LGBT people and issues by wearing or displaying LGBT symbols, using inclusive language, including LGBT issues in written materials such as brochures or publications, bringing LGBT issues to the table, speaking out against homophobic remarks, and responding to incidents of harassment. Allies verbally support LGBT Centers, provide resources to LGBT Centers, and communicate with LGBT Center directors about how to better serve LGBT students. Allies can increase their personal awareness of LGBT culture and issues through movies, books, or music. There are also a variety of more formal or organized ways in which allies can provide support. For example, allies can participate in LGBT Student Organizations as student members, leaders, or faculty or
staff advisors, become members of campus Safe Programs, attend LGBT educational events and participate in Lavender Graduation Ceremonies, and volunteer to be a mentor for LGBT students.

The second role of allies proposed by Broido (2000) refers to the role allies can play to educate other heterosexual people. According to Broido, education is a critical addition to the support role because, “While providing support to students is necessary, it does not change the social structure that sustains heterosexism and homophobia” (p. 361). In the current study, directors noted a variety of ways in which allies educate others about LGBT people and issues. A popular educational tool open to ally students, faculty, or staff is to participate as an ally on a LGBT Speaker Panel program. Faculty or students who are in leadership positions (e.g., resident assistants or student organization leaders) can request LGBT Speaker Panels for groups of students in classrooms, residence halls, or student organizations. Student allies can coordinate or co-facilitate LGBT educational programming through LGBT Student Organizations, Ally Organizations, or class projects. Engaging in LGBT research is another way to promote education regarding LGBT people and issues. Faculty and staff allies can work to increase knowledge and understanding among colleagues by requesting LGBT training and professional development sessions for their university department or unit. Faculty members have a powerful opportunity to integrate LGBT issues into curriculum.

Broido’s (2000) third role for allies is the advocacy role, characterized by working to change heterosexist policies and advocating for LGBT issues. Directors provided some examples of ally advocacy efforts in this study. First, allies can volunteer to serve on LGBT Advisory Boards or Task Forces. On campuses that do not have a LGBT Center, allies can advocate for the creation of a LGBT Center. As advocates, allies seek funding for LGBT Center initiatives, and write letters to
administrators in support of LGBT people and issues. Allies also advocate for LGBT people by creating new policies or modifying existing policies to promote safety, inclusion, and benefits for LGBT people. Broido explained that advocacy work is particularly effective when done by allies because, "...allies are not seen as advocating for their own benefit, but rather because they truly believe in the merits of their arguments" (p. 362). Indeed, data from this sample of directors support how heterosexual advocacy is quite striking to heterosexuals; directors observed that heterosexuals are particularly receptive toward the advocacy efforts of allies.

The ally activities revealed through this study are useful for allies themselves, as well as for professionals who provide ally training. These activities provide ideas for new allies who are looking for ways to become active, or for allies who are looking for options to expand their ally activity. Also, these examples can be used by professionals who train allies by providing specific, concrete examples for things allies can do across all three areas of support, education, and advocacy. For example, these ally activities could be incorporated into Safe Program written materials to offer ideas for action.

The investigation of ally activities also revealed an interesting recognition among directors that allies have different spheres of influence through which to make an impact. Directors distinguished that, based on their roles as students, faculty, staff, or administrators, allies have unique ways of influencing others. Individuals who train allies are encouraged to help allies recognize their spheres of influence, and identify ways in which they can maximize their role and impact as an ally. A related recommendation for ally training is to ensure that all allies are included and recognized within group discussions and written materials. As more and more students seek out ally training, it is important for training programs to include suggestions that are specific and appropriate for students.
The Impact of Allies on LGBT People

A key goal for conducting this study was to learn about the impact of allies on LGBT people. Although the ally literature is beginning to recognize ways in which allies can be helpful to LGBT people, there are no data about the impact of allies on LGBT people. This study is the first to empirically investigate what it is like for LGBT people to work with allies. Overall, participants' stories highlight how the work of allies can yield positive results for LGBT people.

Directors valued their personal and professional experiences with allies. Directors were moved by allies who speak out for LGBT people, and felt affirmed by allies who work to create positive changes on campus. When heterosexual allies were involved on campus, directors expressed feeling reassured and supported that there are some allies willing to do LGBT work. Directors also shared multiple stories about the positive ways allies impact LGBT students by providing support and through education of other heterosexuals. These directors observed how LGBT students who work with allies learn that there are some heterosexual people they can trust, and therefore, feel more comfortable in broader communities that include LGBT and heterosexual people. Directors also believed that LGBT students felt cared about and affirmed when allies took responsibility to educate other heterosexual people about LGBT issues. Also, LGBT students feel comfortable and safe to approach visible and active allies who are staff or faculty.

The current research offers an initial exploration concerning the impact of allies on LGBT people, based on the experiences and observations of LGBT Center directors on college and university campuses. Indeed, directors had numerous positive interactions with allies that were experienced as supportive and affirming. Evans and Wall (2000) note anecdotally that more and more heterosexual allies are joining their
LGBT colleagues in efforts to increase awareness about the needs and concerns about LGBT issues on campus. The current research provides the first information about how these efforts are experienced by directors of LGBT Centers who personally identify as LGBT. A valuable expansion of this study would to replicate it with additional LGBT populations such as students, faculty, staff, or administrators. Also, this study could be replicated with LGBT people in contexts outside of higher education, for example LGBT youth or employees.

Another intriguing finding regarding the experiences of directors is that they reported that allies bring a unique perspective when working on LGBT issues. This finding appears somewhat ironic because directors are surrounded by the dominant heterosexual culture every day. At the same time, perhaps the perspectives offered by allies are uniquely different than the perspectives offered by heterosexuals who are not allies. For example, the approaches of allies may differ substantially from the approaches of heterosexuals in the general population. Further inquiry is needed to better understand how the perspectives of allies in particular contribute to LGBT work.

The Impact of Allies on Heterosexuals

Directors also highlighted the ways in which being an ally impacts heterosexual people. In general, directors described how allies serve as role models to heterosexual people. The current findings emphasize the benefits of including allies in outreach efforts directed at heterosexuals. Since it is very common for LGBT Centers to coordinate and provide outreach to primarily heterosexual groups (Beemyn, 2002), LGBT Center directors are encouraged to specifically recruit allies for programs geared to educate heterosexuals. For example, heterosexual allies can serve as role models in LGBT Speaker Panels, as facilitators or co-facilitators of educational
programs, or as LGBT Center staff or volunteers. It is important for allies to recognize that in addition to providing important resources for LGBT people, they are also significant role models to educate and raise awareness among heterosexual people.

LGBT Speaker Panels are common programs through which allies educate other heterosexuals. Past research supports the effectiveness of lesbian, gay, and bisexual speaker panelists in decreasing levels of homophobic attitudes among audience members (Croteau & Kusek, 1992) and increasing affirming attitudes toward lesbian, gay, or bisexual people (Geaster et al., 1995). However those studies are limited to the impact of having lesbian, gay, and bisexual speaker panelists. The current study suggests that ally speakers in particular have positive benefits on heterosexual audience members. Through Speaker Panels, allies have a prime opportunity to articulate their reasons for being an ally and to describe the personal benefits of being an ally. Ally Speaker Panelists can educate heterosexuals about things that allies do by providing information about campus opportunities (LGBT Student Organizations, Safe Program, volunteer opportunities through the LGBT Center, etc.) and options for allies to pursue on their own (confronting homophobic jokes or comments, researching a LGBT topic for a class paper, increasing one's awareness of LGBT culture through books or movies, etc.). Allies are certainly not limited to conveying LGBT affirming messages to heterosexual people through organized programs such as Speaker Panels. Allies have opportunities every day to share their knowledge and understanding about LGBT people and issues as they interact with friends, peers, or family members. Allies are encouraged to talk with other heterosexual people as LGBT issues arise, for example, in the newspaper or on television.
These findings illuminate the significant impact that allies have on heterosexual people from the perspectives of LGBT people. Additional research targeted at heterosexuals who are the recipients of educational efforts that include allies would be valuable. For example, heterosexual audience members could report on their impressions and reactions to ally Speaker Panelists.

**Ally Development**

Although this study did not set out to validate models of ally development (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995; Worthington, Savoy, & Vernaglia, 2000), directors’ observations of allies appear to be consistent with these models. Directors described being an ally as a process, and shared that, just like LGBT people, allies go through stages. Furthermore, directors recognized a need to tailor their interventions for allies based on their developmental level.

Participant stories appear to illustrate various levels of ally development. Congruent with the Awareness (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995) and Revelation and Exploration (Worthington et al., 2000) stages, directors in this sample observed that personal contact with LGBT people is a turning point or significant event within one’s ally development. Specifically, knowing a LGBT person sparks the recognition of homophobia and heterosexism in the world, which prompts heterosexuals to question their assumptions about LGBT people (congruent with the Revelation and Exploration stage), or want to become more active in LGBT issues (as in the Awareness stage). The relationship between having a personal connection with LGBT people and more affirming attitudes is also consistent with empirical research that relationships with LGBT people are important factors for heterosexual people becoming allies (DiStefano et al., 2000; Poynter & Burnett, 2001; Vernaglia, 2000).
An investigation specifically focused on the relationships between heterosexual allies and LGBT people would be an intriguing and fruitful direction for future research.

Participants also shared their experiences with heterosexuals who call themselves allies yet take little or no action (i.e., Safe Program members who, after putting up an ally sign, never provide outreach or attend LGBT programs). Through a developmental lens, lack of action can be understood as a point in which a heterosexual person holds attitudes and intentions to be an ally, yet lacks the behavioral resources to act as an ally. Chojnacki and Gelberg (1995) hypothesize that in the Ambivalence stages, heterosexual allies identify as allies, yet have difficulty matching their intentions with their behaviors. Worthington et al. (2000) propose that heterosexuals in the Tentative Commitment stage value sexual diversity in the world, yet they do not devote any energy to the concerns of LGBT people; these individuals do not see how heterosexism and homophobia impact one’s life. Directors identified examples of allies who clearly fit these descriptions.

Very recently, authors have proposed models of heterosexual identity (Broido, 2000; Sullivan, 1998; Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002) which describe how heterosexual people come to form a heterosexual identity. In this sample, directors described heterosexual identity as significant to one’s attitudes and behaviors in regard to LGBT people. That is, the more understanding and comfort an individual has with his or her sexual identity as a heterosexual, the more likely he or she will be to develop an appreciation for sexual diversity. Indeed, participants emphasized how important it is for heterosexual people to explore their sexual identity, to become comfortable with their sexual identity, to recognize the existence of heterosexism and homophobia, to recognize how LGBT people are hurt by oppression, and to become aware of one’s privilege as heterosexual.
Another theme that emerged strongly among all participants is that an ideal ally is someone who works toward human rights for all people. Models of heterosexual identity development (Broido, 2000; Sullivan, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002) each identify a final stage of Integration or Synthesis in which heterosexuals work to end all types of oppression. Persons in the Integration or Synthesis stages are able to see how they can personally benefit from a world free from heterosexism, sexism, classism, etc., and therefore work to end all types of social oppression. Directors clearly have a preference and hope that allies for LGBT people are allies for all oppressed groups.

Exploration of heterosexual identity and ally development would be valuable components of Safe Program or ally training programs. Educating allies about existing models would help allies anticipate what to expect. The models and illustrations of various developmental stages could be used to normalize ally experiences and help allies who are struggling or inactive. Models of heterosexual identity and ally development could be used as springboards for discussion among allies. Facilitators could encourage allies to identify aspects of their personal developmental journey as an ally. Allies may benefit by talking about personal experiences in which speaking out or acting as an ally was a challenge, and getting feedback from others. Trainers could assist allies in identifying developmentally appropriate personal goals to stimulate further learning and growth experiences.

Additional research on ally development would add great value to current knowledge and understanding about how allies grow and change over time. The observations of directors in this study support the idea that multicultural training must take into account that people of majority identities differ in their readiness for multicultural learning (Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovski, 1991). A study of allies who have encountered and worked through various ally development stages would
inform interventions for other allies. Research investigating the critical incidents that have occurred during the developmental journey of allies would be valuable to inform understanding of how allies experience movement through developmental stages.

Challenges

Participants highlighted the positive impact of allies on LGBT people as well as allies, yet they also identified some challenges related to working with allies. Participants’ stories revealed a need for more allies and for allies to be more active. Stories about LGBT directors’ experiences with people they expected to be allies who were not allies were especially poignant. Another challenge is that some allies do not take enough action. Directors recognized that being an ally involves risks for allies. Specifically, allies are typically faced with assumptions about their sexual orientation, and questioned about their intentions as allies. Finally, a personal challenge for directors is the tremendous work involved with including allies in LGBT Center programs. These stories can be used to identify ways to address commonly encountered challenges and to generate recommendations for future research.

More Allies are Needed

A very fundamental challenge for LGBT Center directors is that there are not enough allies. Directors also shared a number of experiences with heterosexual people that they expected to be allies who were not allies. Directors hoped that persons in faculty, staff, or administrative positions, or those who are employed through multicultural, diversity, affirmative action, or human resources offices would be allies for LGBT people. When these heterosexuals failed to be allies it was particularly disappointing for LGBT center directors. An intriguing theme that emerged was that most participants expressed having different expectations among staff, faculty, and
administrator allies in contrast to student allies. Lack of action among students was more likely understood as lack of development whereas lack of action among faculty, staff, or administration was understood as lack of commitment. Understandably, directors wished that they could rely on faculty, staff, and administrators to be allies. However some staff, faculty, and administrators may need interventions that are quite basic in terms of providing information and raising awareness.

These stories clearly illustrate the need for LGBT issues to be more highly valued among all campus professionals. As Wall and Evans (2002) asserted, employee selection and professional development are critical. “Careful attention to the selection and training of staff is crucial if student affairs divisions are to provide active support for LGBT students. Individuals who are homophobic, ambivalent, or even just uninformed will be ineffective in carrying out even the most enlightened LGBT agenda” (p. 397).

One method for addressing the challenge of lack of allies is for allies themselves to work to mobilize more allies. Current allies are highly encouraged to lift some of the burden off of LGBT Center directors by putting energy into educating and recruiting heterosexual peers as allies. Within their spheres of influence, heterosexual allies can educate people about how they are personally hurt by homophobia and heterosexism, and can encourage action among others by demonstrating how their lives are enriched by working as allies.

The training of allies needs to include two broad components. Clearly, training needs to focus on providing appropriate support services to LGBT people. Training must also focus on helping allies understand the importance of their role in educating and raising awareness of LGBT issues among other heterosexuals. Directors of LGBT Centers witnessed how critical heterosexual allies are in role modeling to other heterosexuals what it means to be an ally. Heterosexual allies who are members of
Safe Programs and LGBT Speaker Panels should be made particularly aware of the high level of influence they have on their heterosexual peers. Their actions are most certainly seen and heard by other heterosexuals.

**Directors Desire More Action from Allies**

Another theme that emerged regarding challenges is that some allies do not take enough action. Directors provided examples in which allies fail to devote time to ally training or to ally work, fail to initiate activity, or lack follow-through. Lack of action plays out in many ways, including lack of attendance at Safe training or LGBT events, lack of growth among allies, failure among staff and administration to implement changes that would assist LGBT people, and greater burdens on LGBT directors to create, organize, and implement programs.

Clearly, for directors, taking action is an important aspect of being an ally. In fact, directors characterized an ideal ally as one who acts in both responsive and proactive ways to support LGBT people and issues. The challenges shared by directors along with descriptions of an ideal ally fit quite well with multicultural training literature that focuses on the concepts of awareness, knowledge, and skills (Sue & Sue, 2003). For example, having a personal understanding of oppression and genuine intentions are examples of Awareness. That ideal allies are trained and educated relates to having Knowledge. Acting in support of LGBT people and issues relates to having Skills. Conceptualizing the aspects of allies among each of these dimensions may be a useful training technique. Comprehensive training needs to address each of these areas. For example, directors may offer written materials to allies as a reference tool. Having a LGBT Speaker Panel is a personal and effective way to raise awareness about LGBT people and issues. Training sessions are also excellent opportunities for allies to practice skills for confronting homophobia or
responding supportively to a LGBT student in crisis, for example. Facilitators can incorporate exercises for allies to identify the barriers they face that inhibit or prevent them from acting in supportive ways to LGBT people. For example, using the list of supportive activities in Table 1, Safe Program facilitators could have ally members speculate about the potential barriers to action for various activities and focus particularly on barriers that are personally anticipated.

The current investigation highlights that some allies simply fail to act. Other research provides more specific information about various ways allies fail to support LGBT people (DiStefano et al., 2000; Poyner & Burnett, 2001) and how allies react to not acting as an ally, for example, by feeling self-critical or feeling frustrated with homophobic situations. Certainly, LGBT directors desire more action from allies. More research is needed to understand the experiences that allies have when they do not act as allies. Allies who are relatively new to publicly identifying as allies are likely to have current experiences of not acting as an ally that they could draw from. These individuals could be invited to focus groups to reflect on instances where they failed to act, describing the factors or contexts impacting their experiences. Greater understanding of these experiences would help allies negotiate their behaviors and reactions that arise as an ally.

Consequences of Being an Ally

In this study, two primary consequences of being an ally emerged that were considered challenging by directors. First, directors recognize that allies are frequently mislabeled as LGBT because of their interest or involvement with LGBT issues. Second, directors witness how people question the intentions of allies for doing ally work. Certainly some allies do not experience any discomfort if they are labeled as LGBT or questioned about their genuine intentions. In fact, directors
described an ideal ally as someone who does not become distressed or deterred from action as a result of being mistakenly labeled as LGBT. However, directors also reported experiences with allies who fear being labeled LGBT and allies who have difficulty articulating to others why they are engaged in ally work. These allies are probably less likely to speak out in support of LGBT people or to attend LGBT events where their identity and intentions may be called into question.

It would be useful for Safe Program training to incorporate opportunities for allies to explore their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to being labeled or assumed LGBT. Safe Program trainers may wish to facilitate role plays for new allies to allow them to recognize and process their personal reactions, and then practice ways of responding in ways that feel genuine and LGBT-affirming. Ongoing support or discussion groups could be formed to provide avenues to allies to give and receive support, share their feelings about their ally experiences, and practice techniques for responding to others. If allies do not learn how to manage being mislabeled and questioned, they will undoubtedly feel badly about their inaction or lack of congruency between their intentions and actions. In addition, it may be confusing, disappointing, or upsetting for LGBT people if someone who identifies as an ally fails to act like one due to fear of what others might think.

A valuable piece of research would be to explore the range of consequences of being an ally. Survey data could identify the spectrum of consequences of being an ally. Follow up qualitative research with allies who are advanced in their development would illuminate the techniques used by allies to appropriately respond to heterosexual and LGBT others about their sexual orientation and their intentions. In ally training, it would be helpful to address the potential consequences of being an ally to new members, and to help them prepare to respond to others who question their orientation or intentions.
Allies Require Work by LGBT Directors

Including allies in LGBT Center initiatives requires work on the part of LGBT directors. Directors need to address the needs of LGBT individuals on campus which is a substantial task in itself; working with allies requires even more time, energy, and resources. LGBT Centers would benefit by having greater financial resources to staff and fund programs for allies. Ideally, LGBT Centers would be able to fund a staff person that focuses solely on heterosexual allies. A professional employee responsible for the training and development of allies could engage in research about allies, collect and develop new resources for allies, provide ongoing educational programs for allies, and facilitate support and discussion groups for allies. Given the realities of financial limitations, another suggestion for assisting LGBT directors to provide resources for allies would be for allies themselves to participate in the training and development of fellow allies on campus. Allies who have the adequate knowledge and skills can train new Safe Program members, facilitate on-going training groups for allies, train allies to become Speaker Panelists, provide ally social or support group sessions, and provide LGBT outreach programs.

One specific area in which directors work particularly hard with allies is in educating allies about multiple identity issues. Directors are beginning to address the multiple identity issues of LGBT people through campus wide programming as well as ally training. However, more research is needed about the multiple identities of LGBT individuals to increase our understanding of how LGBT people integrate and manage multiple identities. In a review of LGB-related articles from counseling journals between 1990 to 1999, there were no articles that addressed transgender issues and no articles that addressed ability or disability issues (Phillips, Ingram, Smith, & Mindes, 2003). Further research and continued education about the
existence and impact of multiple identities among LGBT people will be critical to help allies become increasingly knowledgeable and sensitive to the needs of all LGBT people.

Limitations of the Study

This study illuminates the experiences among a very specific group of LGBT people: directors of LGBT Campus Resources Centers who volunteered to participate in a study about their experiences with allies. These individuals were particularly fruitful to sample, in that participants had rich and varied experiences with allies. At the same time, the qualities and characteristics of this sample are unique, and must be acknowledged to ensure that findings are not inappropriately generalized to other LGBT populations.

The perspectives among this sample of LGBT directors may or may not reflect the beliefs and opinions of other LGBT Center directors, nor the perspectives of other LGBT people in general. Notably, directors in this study volunteered to be interviewed about their experiences working with allies. These participants may be more likely to hold positive attitudes about allies and may have greater desire to report about their positive experiences with allies than directors who did not volunteer to be interviewed. The LGBT directors sampled worked on campuses that have adequate financial and institutional resources to have a LGBT Center staffed by at least one full-time professional. Also, these LGBT directors described their campus climates as fairly supportive in regards to LGBT issues. Different findings might emerge among LGBT people on campuses that do not have LGBT Centers, among LGBT directors who work on campuses with less supportive environments, and among LGBT people who are not strong advocates for the inclusion of allies on campus.
Studies that sample additional groups of LGBT people would be extremely useful to better understand the experiences that a broader range of LGBT people have with allies. For example, future studies are needed that sample LGBT students themselves, racially and ethnically diverse LGBT individuals, LGBT professionals who hold varied attitudes about allies, and LGBT individuals on campuses in which campus climates are less supportive.

Even though the LGBT directors in this study reported some difficult, frustrating, or negative experiences with allies, they all expressed positive views about including allies on campus. The researcher’s impression of interviewees was that they were honest and forthright regarding their experiences and perspectives. At the same time, it is reasonable to wonder if the interviewees’ positions as LGBT Center directors influenced their responses as well as their reporting of challenges in working with allies. Given that each of these directors reported spending a good deal of time and energy working with allies, they may have been particularly invested in working through challenges and maintaining a positive stance about this work. It is also possible that these directors developed this positive perspective about allies in part due to political realities on their campuses.

**Conclusion**

This study was conducted to explore and understand the experiences that LGBT directors of LGBT Centers have with heterosexual allies. Broadly, the findings increase our knowledge about the experiences among LGBT Centers directors and promote greater understanding about heterosexual allies. Information rich participants illuminated what allies do, the impact of allies on LGBT and heterosexual individuals, the influence of ally development on directors’ experiences, and the challenges experienced by directors in working with allies. Information gleaned by
this research sparks numerous implications for professional leaders and educators to enhance ally training and development initiatives. Also, findings speak to allies themselves, offering encouragement to continue their journeys as compassionate and energized advocates for LGBT people and issues.
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Kraig, B. (1998). Faculty and staff mentors for LGBT students: Key responsibilities and requirements. In R. L. Sanlo (Ed.), *Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual,
and transgender college students: A handbook for faculty and administrators (pp. 245-253). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.


transgender college students: A handbook for faculty and administrators (pp. 321-328). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.


college students: A handbook for faculty and administrators (pp. 135-143). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.


APPENDICES

Appendix A.

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Dear Consortium member,

This is an invitation for you to participate in a research study designed to investigate experiences that lesbian, gay, or bisexual Directors of LGBT Resource Centers have with heterosexual allies. Potential participants are those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and have experiences working professionally with heterosexual allies. This research is part of Melissa A. Bullard’s dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Mary Z. Anderson in the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Department at Western Michigan University. We expect the findings of this study to have direct implications for promoting supportive campus environments and enhancing training for heterosexual allies.

Below is a description of the research study for your review and consideration. If you are interested in learning more about participating, please contact the student investigator by e-mail (melissa.bullard@wmich.edu) or phone (269-352-2689) to receive additional information.

The first phase of this project involves the selection of potential interviewees based on a background questionnaire that takes about 10 minutes to complete. This background questionnaire requests that you provide some demographic and professional information. Information you provide will be used to select a diverse sample of directors who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

If you are selected from among those who agree to participate, you will be invited to participate in phase two of this project. Individuals who return a background questionnaire and are not selected for phase two will be notified by phone. Phase two
involves two phone interviews scheduled individually at a time convenient for you. Phone interviews will be approximately 1 to 2 hours in length, and will be scheduled about 3 months apart. All information collected is confidential. Demographic and professional information you provide will be used for selection purposes, and to describe the interviewee participants in aggregate. No information that is specific to you or your institution will be connected to your responses.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Melissa A. Bullard, M.A. Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University Western Michigan University
(269) 352-2689 (269) 387-5113
melissa.bullard@wmich.edu mary.anderson@wmich.edu
Appendix B.

Recruitment Letter

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator: Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Melissa A. Bullard, M.A.

Title of Study:
Working with Heterosexual Allies on Campus: A Qualitative Exploration of Experiences among LGBT directors of LGBT Campus Resource Centers

We are contacting you because you expressed interest in participating in a research study about the experiences that directors of LGBT Resource Centers have with heterosexual allies. Potential participants include individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and have experiences working professionally with heterosexual allies.

There is relatively little known about heterosexuals who demonstrate LGBT-affirming behaviors, and thus far, no investigation has elicited LGB individuals’ perspectives and experiences in working with heterosexuals who promote LGBT affirmation on campuses. We expect the findings of this study to have direct implications for promoting supportive campus environments and enhancing training for heterosexual allies.

The first phase of this project involves the selection of potential interviewees. If you would like to be considered for interviews, your participation will involve completion of the enclosed one-page background questionnaire. This questionnaire will take about 10 minutes of your time to complete. The questionnaire requests that you provide some demographic and professional information. Information you provide will be used to select a diverse sample of lesbian, gay, or bisexual directors of LGBT Resource Centers.

After phase 1, you may be selected and invited to participate in phase two of this project. If you are not selected to participate in the interviews, you will be notified by phone. Phase 2 involves two phone interviews scheduled individually at a time convenient for you. Phone interviews will be approximately 1 to 2 hours in length.

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and will be scheduled about 3 months apart. All of the information collected from you is confidential. No information that is specific to you or your institution will be reported. The research materials will all be coded, and Melissa A. Bullard will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. The demographic and professional information you report on the questionnaire will be used for selection purposes and to describe interviewee participants as a group. Specific words or phrases used during the interviews that could identify you or your institution will be changed to broad identifiers such as “an academic institution” or “LGBT Resource Center.” Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. All research materials will be retained in a locked filing cabinet for 7 years in the principal investigator’s office.

Expected risks of participation include only possible mild discomfort in recalling or revealing information regarding any unpleasant experiences working with heterosexuals on LGBT issues. Benefits of participation include having an opportunity to reflect on your personal and professional experiences, contributing to a study that will potentially inform your own LGBT-affirmative work on college or university campuses, and access to a summary of the results which will be available through the website of the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education. As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or additional treatment will be made available to the subject except as otherwise stated in this consent form.

The student investigator identifies as a heterosexual woman with strong interest and involvement in LGBT issues. Ms. Bullard has a variety of campus experiences in LGBT issues including Safe on Campus membership and training, participation and training of LGBT Speakers Panels, LGBT student organization membership, and research on a published qualitative study, “Experiences of being heterosexual allies to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people: A qualitative exploration” in the Journal of College Counseling (2000). She pursued a specialization in LGBT issues during her pre-doctoral internship at the Ball State University Counseling Center, where she conducted clinical services, training, programming, and consultation on LGBT issues.
You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If you have any questions or concerns about this study you may contact the student researcher, Melissa A. Bullard, at 269-352-2689 or melissa.bullard@wmich.edu or the principal investigator, Dr. Mary Z. Anderson, at 269-387-5113. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8298 or the vice president for research at 269-387-8298 with any concerns you have.

This letter contains consent information that has been approved of for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature in the upper right corner of each page. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Bullard, M.A. Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D.

By providing your signature below, you are indicating that you agree to respond to the background questionnaire and to be considered for two phone interviews. Please return this signed form to the primary researcher in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. An additional copy of this consent document is enclosed for your records.

__________________________  ____________________________
Signature                          Date
Appendix C.

Background Questionnaire

If you would like to be considered for participation in two phone interviews concerning your experiences with heterosexual allies on campus, please complete this background questionnaire, sign the enclosed informed consent form, and return both documents in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please keep a copy of the informed consent for your records. The information you provide below is for interview selection purposes. Review the informed consent form for additional steps that will be taken to ensure your confidentiality. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: _______________________________
Mailing Address: _______________________________

Phone: _______________________________
e-mail: _______________________________

Demographic Information
Gender □ female □ male □ transgender
Sexual orientation □ bisexual □ gay □ lesbian □ heterosexual □ other ______
Age ______
Race __________________ Religion __________________
Highest educational degree obtained _________________________
Field of study _________________________
State in which you currently work _________________________

Professional Information

What is your job title? _______________________________

Please check the appropriate box. Your position is:
□ full-time □ ¾ time □ half-time □ other ______

How long have you worked for a LGB University Center or Office
□ < 6 months □ 6 months - 1 year □ 1-4 years □ 5-10 years □ >10 years

As a professional working on LGBT issues, in what contexts have you worked with heterosexuals on LGBT issues? Please check all that apply.

□ Safe Campus Programs □ LGBT or Ally Student Organizations
□ Speaker Panels □ Advisory Boards □ Training Activities
□ Faculty or Staff Mentoring □ Campus Programming
□ Support or Therapy Groups □ other ______

Thank you very much for your time.
Appendix D.
Informed Consent for Interviews

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator: Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Melissa A. Bullard, M.A.

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your participation and response to the background questionnaire! We are writing to select respondents who have agreed to be considered for participation in two phone interviews. You have been selected as a potential participant based on responses to the background questionnaire that you completed and returned to Melissa A. Bullard.

You are invited to participate in the second phase of this study, which involves two phone interviews scheduled individually at a time convenient for you. Phone interviews will be approximately 1 to 2 hours in length, and will be scheduled about 3 months apart. All of the information collected from you is confidential. No information that is specific to you or your institution will be recorded in writing. All research materials will be coded, and Melissa A. Bullard will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. All other research materials will be retained in a locked filing cabinet for 7 years in the principal investigator’s office. Also, specific words or phrases that could identify you or your institution will be changed to broad identifiers such as “an academic institution” or “LGBT Resource Center.”

There is relatively little known about heterosexuals who demonstrate LGBT-affirming behaviors, and thus far, no investigation has elicited LGB individuals’ perspectives and experiences in working with heterosexuals who promote LGBT affirmation on campuses. We expect the findings of this study to have direct implications for promoting supportive campus environments and enhancing training for heterosexual allies.

Expected risks of participation include only possible mild discomfort in recalling or revealing information regarding any unpleasant experiences working with heterosexuals on LGBT issues. Benefits of participation include having an opportunity to reflect on your personal and professional experiences, contributing to a study that will potentially inform your own LGBT-affirmative work on college or university campuses, and access to a summary of the results which will be available through the website of the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education. As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or additional treatment will be made available to the subject except as otherwise stated in this consent form.

The student investigator identifies as a heterosexual woman with strong interest and involvement in LGBT issues. Ms. Bullard has a variety of campus experiences in
LGBT issues including Safe on Campus membership and training, participation and training of LGBT Speakers Panels, LGBT student organization membership, and research on a published qualitative study, “Experiences of being heterosexual allies to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people: A qualitative exploration” in the Journal of College Counseling (2000). She pursued a specialization in LGBT issues during her pre-doctoral internship at the Ball State University Counseling Center, where she conducted clinical services, training, programming, and consultation on LGBT issues.

You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the student investigator, Melissa Bullard at 269-352-2689 or melissa.bullard@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Mary Z. Anderson, at 269-387-5113 or mary.anderson@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8298 or the vice president for research at 269-387-8298 with any concerns you have.

This letter contains consent information that has been approved of for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature in the upper right corner of each page. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

__________________________   ______________________________
Melissa A. Bullard, M.A.    Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D.

By providing your signature below, you are indicating that you agree to participate in two phone interviews. Please return this signed form to the student investigator in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. An additional copy of this consent document is enclosed for your records.

__________________________   ______________________________
Signature                    Date
Appendix E.
Interview Script and Questions

Hello, [name], this is Melissa Bullard, and as we arranged, I’m calling to speak with you about your experiences on campus with heterosexual allies. First I have a couple of brief questions to learn a little bit about you and your campus, and then I have some questions prepared that are more specific to the research topic. Before we begin, do you have any questions about how I will ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the information you provide?” [If yes, share and clarify measures taken; if no, “Then let’s begin”].

Introductory questions

1. You indicated on the background questionnaire that you have worked at [name of LGBT Center] for [time]. Have you been professionally employed or active with LGBT issues on campus previously to your current job? [If yes] What was your title or role at that job, and how long were you employed in that position?

2. On your campus, what is your understanding of the climate in regard to LGBT issues?

Main questions

“Now I’d like to ask you some questions about your experiences with heterosexual allies. To protect the confidentiality of these allies, please do not share specific names of allies you’ve worked with, or information that would reveal their identity.”

1. What do you think an ideal heterosexual ally would be like, and what would an ideal heterosexual ally do?

2. Describe what your personal experience with heterosexual allies was like before you assumed the Director position, and whether this has influenced you
in your role as LGBT Director in regard to your plans for the center and your attitudes toward working with heterosexual allies.

3. Describe what has happened when you have worked professionally with heterosexual allies involved with LGBT people and issues on campus.

4. What is it like for you (or for other LGB people you know) to have heterosexual allies involved with your LGBT Center?

5. What challenges or barriers arise when heterosexual allies are involved with LGBT people and issues on campus?

6. What positive experiences are there when heterosexual allies are involved with LGBT people and issues on campus?

7. What is your personal stance about how heterosexual allies should be involved with LGBT people and issues on campus?

8. In your opinion, what should LGBT Centers and LGBT Center Directors do to foster the development of heterosexual allies to promote support and affirmation of LGBT people?

9. Is there anything that you'd like to share about your experiences with allies that we haven't talked about?

Probes
Tell me more about that experience.
What happened exactly?
Can you give me an example of that?
What was that like for you?
How did you feel at the time?
How did that experience impact you?
How did you react?
What were the reactions of others?
How is this experience similar to or different from interacting with LGB people?

Follow-up Interviews

Script

“Hello. This is Melissa Bullard calling to ask you some follow-up questions about your experiences with heterosexual allies. Have you received the personal narrative I sent to you and had a chance to read it?” [If yes, continue; If no, ask participant to read the narrative first before proceeding with interview] “First I’d like to ask you about the narrative I sent you, and later I’d like to share with you some themes that came up for other participants and see if these themes fit with your experience.”

How well does the personal narrative I sent you last week capture your experiences working with heterosexual allies? Are there any important aspects of your experience with heterosexual allies that are left out? If so, please tell me about these experiences.

Now I would like to share with you some things that other participants shared. One theme was [state theme]. Do you relate to this theme? If yes, how so? Another theme was [state theme]. Do you relate to this theme? [repeat for all themes]
Appendix F.

Telephone Script for Respondents to the Questionnaire Not Selected for Interviews

Hello [Name], this is Melissa Bullard, and you previously responded with interest in participating in a project about heterosexual allies. I am calling to let you know that I appreciate your response although I will not be able include you in the interviews. I selected a very small number of participants with diverse characteristics and experience, and am unfortunately unable to interview everyone who expressed interest in participation. Thank you for your response and for your interest in this project.
Appendix G.

Cover letter to Participants Prior to Follow-Up Interviews

Dear [Name],

Attached is a summary narrative based on the information you shared with me during our first phone interview. It is important to me to make sure that I clearly understand what you told me during the first interview. During our upcoming follow-up interview, I would like to ask you some questions about how well this written information captures your experience, and see if there are any aspects of your experience that are missing. I will also share some collective themes across multiple participants and discuss with you how well the collective themes fit your experience. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Bullard
Cover letter to Participants Regarding Anonymity and Confidentiality

Dear ,

Thank you for participating in two phone interviews about your experiences with heterosexual allies! Attached is a draft of the results section. I am writing to you to allow you an opportunity to ensure that the material you shared with me is written in a confidential manner and that your identity is anonymous. Please review this draft, and make note if there are any parts of this paper that you believe are revealing of your identity. If there are any parts of this paper that you believe are revealing of your identity, write the page number below, and circle the word, phrase, sentence, or section that you would like changed on the draft. Please return this paper and the draft to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope within 7 days.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Bullard
Appendix I.

HSIRB Approval Letter

Date: August 19, 2003

To: Mary Anderson, Principal Investigator
Melissa Bullard, Student Investigator

From: Mary Lagerwey, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 03-08-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Working with Heterosexual Allies on Campus: A Qualitative Exploration of Experiences among LGB Directors of LGBT Campus Resource Centers” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: August 19, 2004