The new queer teenager: Sexual & gender identity diversity in the twenty-first century
Phillip L. Hammack
University of California, Santa Cruz
Three big stories

1. There is a revolution in gender and sexuality, and adolescents are leading the way.

2. Queer youth struggle in the midst of stigma.

3. For queer teens, empowering settings help.
STORY 1

The revolution

Coming out at younger ages

Challenging received categories and taxonomies, creating new identities
The struggle

Stigma endures...

...and creates mental health disparities

Source: Russell & Fish (2016), Annual Review of Clinical Psychology
The power of settings

Supportive families & communities matter

Schools matter

Online communities matter

Settings empower
A Twenty-First Century Action Agenda

SCIENTISTS
1. Document diversity

SCIENTISTS & CULTURAL INFLUENCERS
2. Debunk myths of compulsory heterosexuality & gender identity

EDUCATORS
3. Educate for diversity

EDUCATORS & POLICY MAKERS
4. Reduce structural stigma through policy

EDUCATORS, POLICY MAKERS, COMMUNITY LEADERS
5. Recognize and enhance (fund) empowering settings
Acknowledgements

Questions?
hammack@ucsc.edu
KEY STATS: Queer Teens

- Bullying/victimization/harassment
  - 60% of LGB youth report past-30 day bullying, compared with 30% of straight peers (Haztenbuehler & Keyes, 2013)
  - 48.6% report cyberbullying (GLSEN, 2016)

- Demographics
  - 2-5% of adults identify as LGB
  - 1-8% of adolescents report same-sex attraction
  - 1% identify as transgender
KEY STATS: Queer Teens

- **Family support**
  - Most youth do not experience support
  - 24% say they can be themselves at home (HRC, 2018)
  - 67% say they hear derogatory comments about SGID at home (HRC)
  - Trans youth more than twice as likely to experience victimization at home

- **Mental health**
  - 95% report difficulty getting to sleep at night (HRC, 2018)
  - 85% report high stress levels (HRC)
  - 18% major depression vs. 8% general population (Mustanski/Kessler)
  - 11% PTSD vs. 3.9% general population
  - 31% lifetime suicidal behavior vs. 4.1 general population
KEY STATS: Queer Teens

School Climate

- 54% say their school has a GSA (GLSEN)
- 66% say their school has discriminatory or anti-LGBT policies/practices
- 30% disciplined for displays of public same-sex affection
- 22% prevented from wearing gender non-conforming attire
- 17% prevented from writing about LGBT topics
- 16% prevented from attending dance or event with same-gender partner
- 14% prevented from starting GSA
- 51% of trans prevented from using pronoun
- 60% of trans required to use bathroom of natal sex
- 10% say their school has a SOGI-inclusive anti-bullying program
- Over 95% hear derogatory remarks at school; 56% say they hear these from teachers or staff
KEY STATS: Queer Teens

- **Substance use**
  - Almost three times more likely compared to straight peers

- **Suicide**
  - Significantly higher rates among sexual minority than heterosexual youth
  - 31% lifetime suicidal behavior vs. 4.1 general population
  - Risk of suicide attempt is 20% greater for LGB youth in negative community climates (e.g., communities with fewer GSAs, registered Democrats, same-sex couples, anti-bullying school policies)
  - 33.7% of trans youth report past-year suicidal ideation compared to 18.85% non-trans LGB