

**Intimate relationship strengths and challenges amongst a sample of transgender people
living in the United States**

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Abstract

Many transgender people enjoy positive intimate relationships, however such relationships exist within a context of broader discrimination, specifically cisgenderism. The present study sought to investigate the relationships between demographic variables, significant other support, relationship satisfaction, resiliency, past relationship experiences and future relationship expectations, and gender-related discrimination amongst a convenience sample of transgender people living in the United States. 345 participants completed an online questionnaire designed by the authors assessing psychological distress, relationships with partners, and partner support. Findings suggest that participants had some difficulties in negotiating past relationships, though remained hopeful about future relationships. This was especially true for those who lived with animal companions and who reported higher levels of resiliency. Participants currently in relationships reported relatively high levels of significant other support (and this was especially true for participants in relationships with other transgender people), and such support was related to lower levels of psychological distress, though this was less true for older and/or agender participants. Participants were on average satisfied with their current relationships, though this was particularly true for participants with higher incomes. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the findings for clinicians who work with transgender people and their partners.

Keywords: intimate relationships, transgender people, animal companions, relationship satisfaction, discrimination, psychological distress

Introduction

As is true for the general population, many transgender people enjoy positive and healthy intimate relationships. Transgender, an umbrella term, is used to describe people whose gender differs from that normatively expected of their assigned sex, a diverse group of people who constitute approximately 0.6% of the population in the United States (Flores, Herman, Gates & Brown, 2016). Different to the general population, however, transgender people negotiate intimate relationships in social contexts where their lives and relationships are treated as open to question. Such questioning is the product of cisgenderism: the ideology that delegitimises people's understandings of their genders and bodies (Ansara, 2010; 2015; Ansara & Hegarty, 2014; Blumer, Ansara & Watson, 2013; Riggs, Ansara & Treharne, 2015). Cisgenderism shapes, for example, whether or not transgender people's intimate relationships are treated as pathological, whether cisgender (i.e., non-transgender) partners will be respectful of transgender people's bodies and experiences, and the degree to which transgender people's intimate relationships are socially supported.

To date, much of the research that has focused on transgender people and intimate relationships has canvassed the views of the cisgender partners of transgender people (e.g., Brown, 2010; Pfeffer, 2010; 2012). Research has also explored transgender people's relationship experiences through the process of gender transition (e.g., Fein et al., 2018), and transgender people's experiences of intimacy in the context of sexual relationships (e.g., Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2017; Schleifer, 2006). This research has often involved a focus on transgender people who are in intimate relationships with cisgender partners, though research on intimate relationships between transgender people is also emerging (Fein et al., 2018). Further, few studies have situated transgender people's intimate relationships within the broader context of cisgenderism. The study reported in this paper sought to contribute to the existing literature by considering the intersections of perceptions about relationships (past, present and future), gender-related discrimination, resiliency, and psychological distress

amongst a convenience sample of 345 people identifying as transgender living in the United States. In order to establish the basis for the research questions investigated, the paper first provides a brief overview of the literature.

Previous Literature

Over the past decade a small body of research has focused specifically on transgender people's experiences of intimate relationships, primarily focusing on relationships with cisgender partners. A relatively early study in this area by Hines (2006) involved interviews with 30 transgender adults living in the United Kingdom. Hines found that in negotiating intimate relationships, her participants were often confronted by cisgenderist presumptions on the part of their intimate partners, and that central to healthy intimate relationships were principles of respect for transgender people's bodies. Jourian (2017), in interview research with a diverse sample of 19 transgender people living in the United States, also found that cisgenderist assumptions about transgender people's bodies had a significant impact upon expectations about the roles that transgender people would play in intimate relationships with cisgender people.

Several studies have been conducted in the United States on cisgenderism in intimate relationships, and its impact on the mental health of transgender persons. Platt and Bolland (2016) found that intimate relationships were difficult to negotiate for the 38 transgender people whom they interviewed, with cisgenderist assumptions on the part of intimate partners presenting a significant challenge. Additionally, Iantaffi and Bockting (2011), in their survey of 1229 transgender people, too found that discrimination (or the fear of it) from intimate partners shaped how their participants engaged with potential partners. Many of their participants were fearful about disclosing their gender history, due to concerns about rejection from potential partners.

In terms of the relationship between being in an intimate relationship and mental health, in their research with 191 transgender-cisgender couples, Gamarel and colleagues (2014) found that relationship stigma was significantly associated with higher rates of psychological distress for both partners. Importantly, Gamarel and colleagues also found that for those couples where greater stigma was evident, this was related to increased strain upon the relationship. This was particularly so when financial hardship negatively impacted upon the couple. In their survey research with 593 transgender men, Meier and colleagues (2013) found that being in a relationship had a positive impact upon mental health for participants, though whether or not this was impacted by experiences of cisgenderism was not assessed in this study.

Similar themes have been demonstrated across Australian research on transgender people and their partners. Research by Riggs, von Doussa and Power (2015) with 160 transgender people reported that perceptions about future intimate relationships were shaped by past relationship experiences. Specifically, negative experiences with previous partners that were a product of cisgenderism were associated with a lower belief that an intimate relationship would occur in the future. This was especially true for older female participants within the sample.

Importantly, however, participants who lived with an animal companion (i.e., a domesticated animal who lived in the home) were more likely to be optimistic about the likelihood of a future relationship, regardless of their past experiences with intimate partners, echoing other research which suggests that animal companions may help mitigate the impact of past negative relationship experiences upon transgender people (Riggs, Taylor, Signal, Fraser & Donovan, 2018a).

Research Questions

Drawing on the previous research summarized above with regard to the impact of cisgenderism upon transgender people's intimate relationships, the research questions

outlined below were developed to investigate the how the characteristics of transgender adults and their partners, relate to perceiving support, satisfaction, and hopefulness about future relationships, as well as psychological distress. Thus both current intimate relationships and broader perceptions of intimate relationship possibilities are of interest. Given the relative dearth of studies that have included a focus on differences between such experiences based on whether transgender people are in intimate relationships with other transgender people or with cisgender people, this was also a focus of the present study.

- 1) Are demographic variables (specifically gender, partner's gender, age, and income) each related to past relationship experiences, significant other support, current relationship satisfaction, and perceptions about future intimate relationships?
- 2) Are being in a relationship, partner gender, significant other support, and relationship satisfaction related to psychological distress?
- 3) Does living with animal companions and resiliency shape the relationship between past relationship experiences and perceptions about the likelihood of future intimate relationships?
- 4) Are higher levels of gender-related discrimination related to lower levels of relationship satisfaction?

Methods

Participants

Ethics approval was granted by both authors' universities. Inclusion criteria were that participants were aged 18 years or older, were transgender, and lived in the United States. Data were collected from April 2017 to January 2018. A total of 558 people commenced the questionnaire, however only 345 provided complete responses and hence only these are included in the final sample reported in this paper. Participants were not compensated for their time. Table 1 provides a summary of participant demographic information.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Procedure

Data were collected via Survey Monkey, an online data collection software. Participants were recruited via community organizations in the United States that provide services to transgender people (e.g. Gender Proud, National Center for Transgender Equality, San Francisco LGBT Center, Portland Q Center, and Gender Spectrum), as well as advertisements on social media. Participants were asked to confirm that they were aged 18 or older, were transgender, and were living in the United States, in order to meet the inclusion criteria. Upon meeting inclusion criteria, participants gave their consent before beginning the questionnaire.

Measures

The questionnaire, designed by the authors, and available only in English, asked participants to first complete the demographic questions summarized above. Participants were then asked two single-item questions derived from a previous study on transgender people and intimate relationship (Riggs, von Doussa & Power, 2015). Both used a four-point Likert scale. The first question asked participants about challenges meeting a partner in the past ('As a trans and/or gender diverse person, have you experienced difficulties in meeting potential intimate partners?', with 1 = no difficulties, 2 = some difficulties, 3 = Quite a lot of difficulty, 4 = totally difficult). The second question asked participants about the degree to which they were hopeful about meeting an ideal partner in the future ('To what extent do you feel it is likely you will experience an ideal intimate relationship in the future?', 1 = not at all likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = quite likely, 4 = very likely).

Resiliency. The brief resilience scale (BRS) is a six-item measure of an individual's ability to cope and recover from stressful situations (Smith et al., 2008), and has previously been used successfully with transgender people (e.g., Bariola, 2015). Items are measured on

a Likert-scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Items 2, 4, and 6 are reversed scored. A sample item includes, “I have a hard time making it through stressful events”. Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.83$) indicates significant internal consistency. Scores range from six to 30, with higher scores indicating greater levels of resiliency.

Psychological Distress. Psychological distress was measured utilizing the Kessler 10 (K10) an instrument which asks participants to answer a series of questions regarding anxiety and depression symptoms over the past four weeks (Kessler et al., 1994), and has previously been used successfully with transgender people (e.g., Riggs, et al., 2018a). Symptoms are measured on the K10 using a Likert-scale from none of the time (1) to all of the time (5). The items are summed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of distress. An example item includes, “In the past 4 weeks, how often did you feel nervous?”. Scores range from 10 to 50. Scores under 20 denote participants are likely to be psychologically well, 20-24 likely to experience a mild level of psychological distress, 25-29 likely to experience a moderate level of psychological distress, and 30 and over likely to experience high levels of psychological distress and to meet diagnostic criteria for anxiety and/or depression. Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.93$) indicates significant internal consistency for this measure.

Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. The Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) measures perceptions of support and includes three subscales focused on family, friends, and significant others (Dahlem, Zimet, & Walker, 1991), and has previously been used successfully with transgender people (e.g., Riggs, et al., 2018a). Items are measured on a Likert-scale from 1 = very strongly disagree to 7 = very strongly agree. To calculate each subscale, items are added together, and divided by total items (4). Mean scores can range from low support (1 to 2.9), moderate support (3 to 5), and high support (5.1 to 7). Sample items for the significant other subscale used in this study include: “There is a special person who is around when I am in need”. Cronbach’s alpha for the significant other subscale was 0.87.

Relationship Satisfaction. Participants completed the relationship satisfaction subscale of the gay and lesbian relationship satisfaction scale (GLRSS; Belous & Wampler, 2016), a gender-neutral measure of relationship satisfaction. This measure was chosen due to the items' sensitivity to marginalized relationships, and its adaptability to transgender people's lives (though it has not previously been used with transgender people). Sample items include "Our differences of opinion lead to shouting matches" and "I often tell my partner that I love them". Scores above 50 are representative of relationship satisfaction, while scores below 50 are representative of relationship dissatisfaction. The GLRSS (Belous & Wampler, 2016) as applied to the present study had a Cronbach's alpha of .82, an acceptable level of internal consistency.

Gender Minority Stress and Resiliency (GMSR) Scale. Participants completed four subscales (gender-related discrimination, gender-related rejection, gender-related victimization, and non-affirmation of gender identity) of the Gender Minority Stress and Resiliency Scale (Testa, Habarth, Peta, Balsam, & Bockting, 2015). Sample items include: (1) I have had difficulty getting medical or mental health treatment (transition-related or other) because of my gender identity or expression (discrimination), (2) I have had difficulty finding a partner or have had a relationship end because of my gender identity or expression (rejection), (3) I have been verbally harassed or teased because of my gender identity or expression. (For example, being called "it"; victimization), and (4) I have to repeated explain my gender identity to people or correct the pronouns people use (non-affirmation). Scales assessing discrimination, rejection, and victimization asked participants to select all that apply—Never; Yes, before age 18; Yes, after age 18; and Yes, in the past year. Each scale is coded as 1 if answered yes at any point and 0 if answered as never. Participant scores are added for each subscale. Scores range from 0-5 for discrimination, and 0-6 for rejection and victimization. The non-affirmation subscale is presented as a five-point Likert Scale ranging from 0 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Scores are then added to reach an overall

score between 0 and 24. Cronbach's alphas indicate adequate internal consistency for each subscale when applied to the sample: discrimination ($\alpha = 0.61$), rejection ($\alpha = 0.71$), victimization ($\alpha = 0.77$), and non-affirmation ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Analytic Approach

After the questionnaire was closed all data were exported into SPSS 21.0, where they were cleaned in the following ways. First, negatively scored items on the BRS were reverse scored, and composite scores generated for the BRS, in addition to the GMSR, the K-10, the MSPSS significant other subscale, and the relationship satisfaction measure. Reliability testing was then performed on each of the scales (see above), and descriptive statistics for these generated (see results below).

To investigate the four research questions, the following tests were performed. One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine significant differences between demographic variables identified in previous research and past relationship experiences, significant other support, relationship satisfaction, and perceived likelihood of future ideal relationship. For the analyses of variance, chi-squares were conducted to determine equal variance. For each, results were non-significant, indicating that there were equal variances across groups examined. A multiple regression was undertaken to evaluate research questions two and four, and a step-wise regression was performed to evaluate research question three.

Results

Research Question 1: Relationships between demographic variables and past relationship experiences, significant other support, current relationship satisfaction, and perceptions about future intimate relationships

On average, participants stated they had experienced some difficulties in meeting intimate partners in the past ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.02$). Gender differences were found for difficulty meeting potential partners in the past, $F(3, 331) = 2.80$, $p < 0.04$. A Tukey post-hoc test indicated that non-binary participants were less likely than female participants to have experienced difficulty meeting potential partners in the past ($p < .02$).

Participants currently in a relationship reported their significant others as providing a relatively high level of support ($M = 5.53$, $SD = 1.67$) as measured by the MSPSS subscale. Significant other support was related to three of the demographic variables investigated. A one-way ANOVA yielded significant differences between genders for significant other support, $F(3, 206) = 3.11$, $p < 0.03$. A post-hoc Tukey test showed lower levels of support from significant others experienced by agender participants in comparison to female participants ($p < .04$). A Pearson- R correlation indicated a negative relationship between age and significant other support. Younger participants were more likely to report higher levels of significant other support ($r = -0.14$, $p < .01$). In terms of the relationship between partner gender and significant other support, an independent samples t-test indicated statistically significantly higher levels of support amongst participants who were in relationships with transgender partners ($M = 6.93$, $SD = 1.06$) as compared to those who were in relationships with cisgender partners ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.44$), $t = -2.02$, $p < .01$.

In general, participants reported feeling satisfied in their current relationships ($M = 58.57$, $SD = 6.48$). Relationship satisfaction was not significantly related to partner gender. Current relationship satisfaction was predicted by one variable. A one-way ANOVA yielded significant differences between income levels for relationship satisfaction, $F(4, 204) = 3.31$, ($p < .01$). A Tukey post-hoc test indicated that participants making between \$75,001-\$100,000 were more likely to feel satisfied in their current relationship compared to individuals making between \$0-\$25,000 ($p < .03$) and \$50,001-\$75,000 ($p < .01$).). On

average, participants felt somewhat hopeful that they would have an ideal relationship in the future ($M = 2.48, SD = 1.03$). There were no significant predictors for hopefulness of having an ideal relationship in the future.

Research Question 2: Relationships Between Significant Other Support, Relationship Satisfaction, and Psychological Distress

Participants on average reported experiencing moderate to high levels of psychological distress as defined by the K-10 ($M = 27.95, SD = 9.26$). In terms of the relationship between relationship status and psychological distress, an independent samples t-test indicated statistically significantly lower levels of psychological distress amongst participants who were in relationships ($M = 27.82, SD = 8.56$) as compared to those that were single ($M = 29.90, SD = 8.74$), $t = 2.11, p < .04$. There were no significant differences in psychological distress for participants in a relationship with transgender partners compared to those in relationships with cisgender partners ($p > 0.05$). To determine the aspects of transgender persons' relationship contributing to lower psychological distress, a multiple linear regression was conducted to analyze the relationship between relationship satisfaction and significant other support (Table 2).

Relationship satisfaction was positively correlated with significant other support ($r = 0.40, p < .001$), such that the more supportive significant others were, the more satisfied participants were in their relationships. Relationship satisfaction increased 2.16 for every increased unit of significant other support. Further, relationship satisfaction and psychological distress had a negative correlation, where increased relationship satisfaction reduced psychological distress ($r = 0.13, p < .05$). Relationship satisfaction decreased 0.40 for each increased unit of psychological distress. Significant other support as measured by the MSPSS subscale was negatively correlated with psychological distress ($r = -0.20, p < .001$), such that the more supportive significant others were, the lower levels of psychological distress participants

reported. An adjusted R^2 of 0.16 was returned for psychological distress and significant other support on satisfaction.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Research Question 3: Animal companions and resiliency as shaping relationship between past relationship difficulties and future expectations

Participants reported having some difficulty meeting partners in the past and only some hopefulness they would meet a partner in the future. To explore what factors may assist in helping transgender people overcome past difficulty with partners, the authors tested the hypothesis that living with animal companions and higher levels of resiliency increase hopefulness in the future by conducting a step-wise linear regression (Table 3). Participants on average reported a moderate amount of resiliency measured by the BRS ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .90$). Levels of F to enter and F to remove were set to correspond to p levels of .001 and .01, respectively, to adjust for family-wise alpha error rates associated with multiple significance tests. Tests for multicollinearity indicated that a low level of multicollinearity was present (tolerance = .998, .997, and .969) for difficulty meeting partners, living with animal companions, and resiliency respectively. Results of the stepwise regression analysis provided confirmation for the hypothesis: decreased difficulty meeting partners, living with an animal companion, and higher levels of resiliency contributed to a positive outlook about the likelihood of having an ideal intimate relationship in the future ($R = 0.51$, $R^2 = 0.26$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.24$). The overall F for the model was 25.74, $df = 3, 223$, $p < .001$. Unstandardized beta weights were -0.46 for difficulty meeting partners, -0.11 for living with a companion animal, and 0.15 for resiliency.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Research Question 4: Relationship between relationship satisfaction and gender-related discrimination

The four sub-scales from the GMSR were analyzed to determine associations with relationship satisfaction. On average, participants reported moderate to high levels of gender-related discrimination ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.48$), rejection ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.76$), victimization ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.99$), and non-affirmation ($M = 21.46$, $SD = 6.68$). A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the strength of the relationships between each of the GMSR subscales and relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was not significantly associated with any of the subscales ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

The findings reported in this paper with regard to transgender people's experiences with intimate relationships echo to a certain degree previous research (e.g., Riggs, von Doussa & Power, 2015), in that women reported experiencing greater difficulties in the past in meeting intimate partners. Notably, participants who were in relationships were overall satisfied in their current relationship, though again as per previous research, this was especially true for participants who reported higher incomes (e.g., Gamarel et al., 2014). A novel finding of the present research was the relationship between partner gender and perceived significant other support, suggesting that transgender people may feel more supported by transgender intimate partners as compared to cisgender intimate partners.

Again echoing previous research (e.g., Gamarel et al., 2014; Meier et al., 2013), there was a relationship between significant other support and psychological distress, and relationship satisfaction and significant other support. Notably, being in a relationship was predictive of lower levels of psychological distress, confirming the findings of Meier and colleagues (2013), and both relationship satisfaction and significant other support were essential to

mitigating impact of psychological distress. Interestingly, no statistical relationship was found between gender of partner and either relationship satisfaction or psychological distress.

Certainly it may be the case that relationships involving two (or more) transgender people may experience compounding effects of cisgenderism, which may mitigate to a degree the benefits of having a supportive and understanding partner.

A key and novel finding of the research reported in this paper is the fact that both animal companions and resiliency shaped whether or not past relationship difficulties impacted upon hopefulness about a future intimate relationship. Previous research with cisgender populations has suggested that animal companionship can play a key role in fostering resilience in the face of life challenges (Walsh, 2009). For transgender people specifically, research suggests that animal companions may be an important source of support (Riggs et al., 2018a; Riggs, von Doussa & Power, 2015). That this may be true for transgender people not currently in an intimate relationship, but who hope to enter into such a relationship in the future, warrants ongoing attention.

Limitations

A surprising finding of the research reported in this paper was that despite participants on average reporting relatively high levels of gender-related discrimination, this was not significantly related to relationship satisfaction. It may be possible, however, as was suggested above, that high levels of significant other support helped mitigate the impact of gender-related discrimination, thus reducing its impact upon relationship satisfaction. It may also be the case that whilst the GMSR could be viewed as a proxy measure for cisgenderism, it may indeed not function as such. Future research would benefit from utilizing the recently published cisgenderism measure (Ansara et al., 2018), which may give a clearer indication of a potential relationship between experiences of cisgenderism and relationship satisfaction.

Further in terms of limitations, the research reported in this paper relied upon a cross-sectional convenience sample of transgender people. Whilst there was a reasonable degree of gender diversity amongst the sample, further research is needed that specifically focuses on the experiences of non-binary and agender people. Given that non-binary people reported fewer challenges in past relationships, and agender people reported lower levels of support from significant others, future qualitative research might usefully help unpack some of these differences, and explore them explicitly in terms of cisgenderism. Further in terms of limitations, it should also be noted that whilst all of the findings reported were statistically significant, some of the correlations were weak, so caution should be taken when interpreting these particular findings. Finally, the sample was relatively racially homogenous, suggesting the need for future research to explore the specific relationship experiences of racially marginalized populations of transgender people.

Clinical Implications

With regard to the clinical implications of the findings reported in this paper, it is important to note that 63% of the sample were currently in an intimate relationship. As such, whilst it would appear that supportive intimate relationships help mitigate the effects of gender-related discrimination upon mental health, not all transgender people are in (or want to be in) an intimate relationship. Given 70% of the sample lived with an animal companion, sources of support may come from animals rather than (or in addition to) intimate partners.

Acknowledging the supportive role that animals can play in the lives of transgender people may thus be an important clinical focus. For some transgender people, however, who may live without an intimate partner or animal companion (either by choice or by circumstance), these sources of support will not be available. This would suggest that this population of transgender people (who live alone) may be especially vulnerable to the effects of discrimination upon mental health, and clinicians may need to creatively explore ways to connect those struggling with other forms of support.

Resiliency, of course, comes in many forms, and need not be limited to intimate partners or animal companions. Nonetheless, resiliency always develops in the face of adversity (Rutter, 2007). Furthermore, it is the case that for some transgender people adversity occurs in the context of intimate relationships, and specifically those that involve violence and abuse, often in the context of relationships with cisgender partners (Riggs et al., 2018b). Whilst on the whole participants in the research reported in this paper reported moderately high levels of significant other support and relationship satisfaction, it is important that clinicians are aware that such findings will not hold true for all people in relationships, and further that there are differences between transgender people's intimate relationships with other transgender people, as compared to relationships with cisgender people. The fact that, as for all people, transgender people experience relationship challenges, is important for clinicians to be aware of, and to support people to navigate relationship challenges.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings reported in this paper depict an overall positive image of transgender people's intimate relationships, a somewhat different image to that depicted in previous research (e.g., Platt & Boland, 2017). This is important, given broader cultural depictions of transgender people as unlucky in love, or as unable to negotiate intimate relationships. That the relatively positive image depicted in the research findings reported in this paper occurred in a broader context of gender-related discrimination is of particular note. Nonetheless, it is important that both researchers and clinicians continue to acknowledge the effects of cisgenderism upon transgender people's intimate relationships, and take up opportunities to advocate for the full inclusion of transgender people in social life so that happy intimate relationships, if desired, can be enjoyed by all, absent the effects of discrimination.

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Table 1. Participant demographics of the study sample ($n = 345$)

Age, M (SD)	27 (9.37)
Gender, n (%)	
Male	109 (31.60)
Non-binary	87 (25.20)
Female	85 (24.60)
Another Gender Identity (Non-Cis)	45 (13.00)
Agender	19 (5.50)
Sexual Identity, n (%)	
Pansexual	89 (25.80)
Bisexual	57 (16.50)
Lesbian	41 (11.90)
Another Sexual Identity (e.g., demisexual, androsexual)	36 (10.40)
Gay	34 (9.90)
Queer	31 (9.00)
Heterosexual	25 (7.20)
Asexual	32 (9.30)
Race, n (%)	
White, not of Hispanic origin	261 (75.70)
Black, not of Hispanic origin	15 (4.30)
Hispanic	12 (3.50)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	11 (3.20)
Asian or Pacific Islander	19 (5.50)
Other	27 (7.80)
Political Beliefs, n (%)	
Liberal	295 (85.50)
Moderate	42 (12.20)
Conservative	5 (1.40)
Religiosity, n (%)	
Not at all religious	225 (65.20)
Somewhat religious	89 (25.80)
Quite religious	21 (6.10)
Very religious	10 (2.90)
Income, n (%)	
\$0 - \$25,000	110 (31.90)
\$25,001 - \$50,000	107 (31.00)
\$50,001 - \$75,000	60 (17.40)
\$75,000 - \$100,000	39 (11.30)
\$100,001 and over	27 (7.80)
Relationship Status, n (%)	
One partner	171 (49.60)
Single	125 (36.20)

More than one partner	29 (8.40)
Another type of relationship (e.g. open, casual)	20 (5.80)
Partner Gender, <i>n</i> (%)	
Cisgender	156 (45.22)
Transgender	78 (22.61)
Live with animal companions, <i>n</i> (%)	
Yes	242 (70.14)
No	103 (29.86)
Region of U.S., <i>n</i> (%)	
East North Central	75 (21.70)
Middle Atlantic	55 (15.90)
Pacific	53 (15.40)
South Atlantic	50 (14.50)
New England	30 (8.70)
Mountain	29 (8.40)
West North Central	19 (5.50)
West South Central	17 (4.90)
East South Central	16 (4.60)

Table 2.

Means, Std Deviations, and Pearson R for Significant Other Support and Satisfaction, and Psychological Distress (N = 345)

Variable	Mean	SD	2	3
1. Significant Other Support (<i>MSPSS-SO</i>)	5.53	1.67	-0.39**	-0.20**
2. Relationship Satisfaction (<i>GLRSS</i>)	58.57	6.48	-	-0.13*
3. Psychological Distress (<i>K-10</i>)	28.70	8.97		-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 3.

Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Future Expectations (N = 345)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Difficulty Meeting Partner	-0.47*	0.06	-0.46
Live with Companion Animal	-0.24*	0.13	-0.11
Resiliency (<i>BRS</i>)	0.19*	0.07	0.15
R^2	0.26**		
F	25.74		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.