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**Exploring the association  
between discrimination and  
substance use among sexual  
and gender minorities**

# Fellowship Goals & Progress

## Research

- Strengthening quantitative skills; Increasing publication and presentation; peer review/editorial board experience

## Grantsmanship

- Grant-writing seminar; developing training grant aims for CDA-2/K Award; assembling team & establishing work history

# Fellowship Goals & Progress

## Management Experience

- Interdisciplinary Transgender Treatment Team – managing consults; updating consult language; publication in progress

## Clinical Experience

- SUD & Trauma treatment; clinical supervisory experience; TGD Veterans

# Background & Rationale

- SGM individuals have higher rates of substance use and are at higher risk of substance use disorders
- Disparities largely attributable to minority stress
- Much of prior work is cross-sectional

## Current Study Objectives:

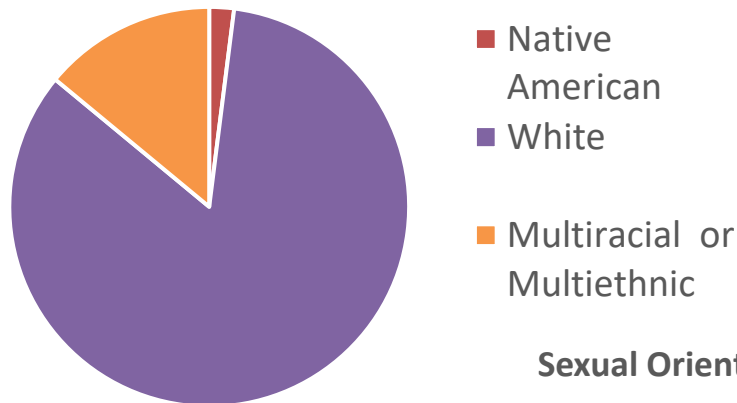
- Examine real-time associations between discrimination and substance use, considering other baseline factors

(Connolly & Gilchrist, 2020; Livingston et al., 2017; Medley et al., 2016; Rosner et al., 2021)  
(Meyer; 2003; Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Parent et al., 2019)

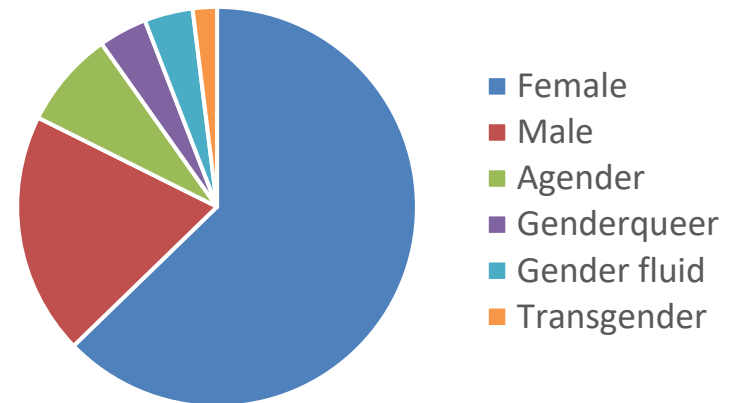
# Methods: Participants

- **50** SGM participants
- Ages **18-45** ( $M = 21.82$ ,  $SD = 4.70$ )

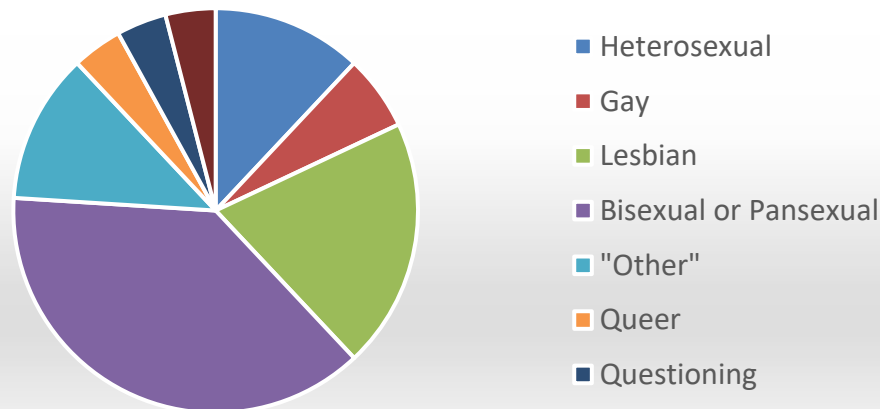
Race and Ethnicity



Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



# Methods: Procedures & Analysis

- Completed baseline measures (SGM identity valence, prominence, and integration; distal stress) and daily EMA for 14 days (SGM related discrimination, general mistreatment, substance use behavior)
- Secondary Data Analysis
- Multi-level logistic, random intercept models; analyzed in R using lme4

(Bates et al., 2015)

# Preliminary Results

Fixed parameter estimates regarding momentary alcohol use (yes/no)

Fixed Effects	Estimate	SE	z	p	<i>adjOR</i>
Intercept	-3.52***	.30	-11.84	<.001	0.03
Period 2	-1.00**	.36	-2.78	<.01	0.37
Period 3	-1.04**	.36	-2.92	<.01	0.35
Period 4	-1.20**	.38	-3.20	<.01	0.30
Period 5	0.34	.27	1.24	.22	1.40
Period 6	0.52*	.26	1.98	<.05	1.68
Weekend	0.73***	.18	4.03	<.001	2.07
Baseline: Identity Valence	<b>0.26†</b>	<b>.14</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>.065</b>	<b>1.30</b>
Baseline: Identity Integration	-0.39	.25	-1.54	.12	0.68
Baseline: Identity Prominence	0.37	.24	1.55	.12	1.45
Baseline: Discrimination & Victimization	<b>0.28*</b>	<b>.11</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>	<b>1.32</b>
<b>EMA: Daily Discrimination</b>	<b>1.55***</b>	<b>.41</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	<b>4.70</b>
<b>EMA: Daily Victimization</b>	<b>0.45*</b>	<b>.21</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>.04</b>	<b>1.57</b>

# Preliminary Results

Fixed parameter estimates regarding momentary drug use (yes/no)

Fixed Effects	Estimate	SE	z	p	<i>adjOR</i>
Intercept	-5.20***	.73	-7.09	<.001	0.01
Period 2	-1.04**	.33	-3.18	<.01	0.35
Period 3	-0.75*	.32	-2.36	<.05	0.47
Period 4	-0.57†	.33	-1.76	.079	0.56
Period 5	0.17	.30	0.58	.56	1.19
Period 6	0.64*	.29	2.21	<.05	1.89
Weekend	0.45*	.18	2.49	<.05	1.58
Baseline: Identity Valence	0.23	.40	0.56	.58	1.25
Baseline: Identity Integration	-0.40	.71	-0.56	.58	0.67
Baseline: Identity Prominence	0.28	.69	0.41	.68	1.33
Baseline: Discrimination & Victimization	0.07	.34	0.22	.83	1.08
EMA: Daily Discrimination	1.27*	.54	2.35	<.05	3.56
EMA: Daily Victimization	0.50	.37	1.37	.18	1.69



# Discussion

- Daily discrimination, but not general mistreatment, associated with both alcohol and drug use, controlling for time of day, day of week, general mistreatment, baseline identity factors, and baseline discrimination and victimization
- Clearer associations between predictors and alcohol use versus drug use may be due to greater availability of alcohol
- Non-significant trends: Worth studying if greater prominence of SGM identity, positive valence to SGM identity, and less integrated SGM identity into core identity could be associated with more alcohol use in larger samples
- **Limitations:** Lack of racial diversity, sample size, binary alcohol use and drug use measure/lack of context for use

# Future Directions

- Continuing to explore potential moderators of the association between discrimination and substance use with this dataset
- Exploring relevance to working with SGM Veterans who often face trauma, minority stress, and may struggle with SUD
- Working on a project led by Drs. Shipherd and Livingston to better understand how TGD patients and providers conceptualized trauma, minority stress, and treatment



# References

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The logo for Boston University, consisting of the words "BOSTON UNIVERSITY" in white, serif, all-caps font, centered within a red rectangular border.

# Questions and Answers



[Cara.Herbitter@va.gov](mailto:Cara.Herbitter@va.gov) for additional questions