

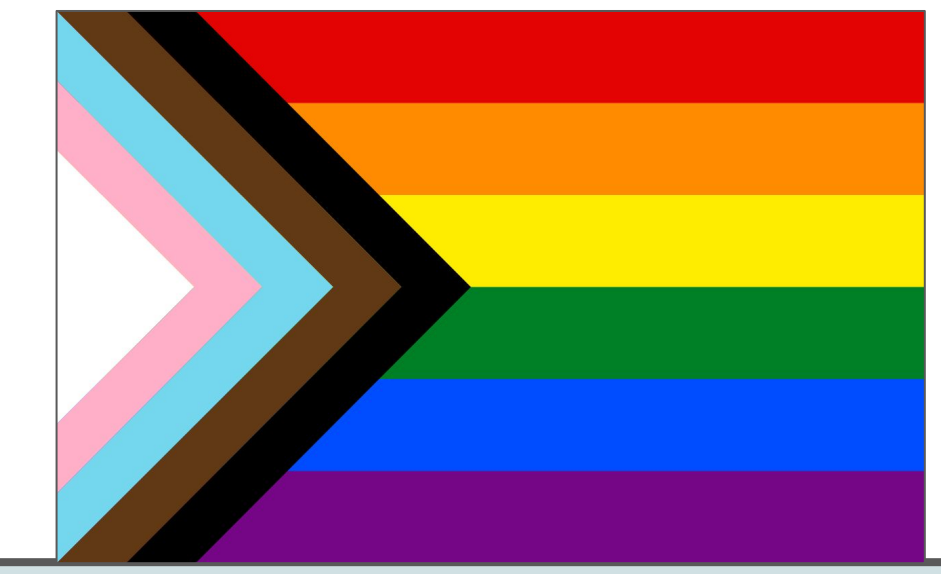
# Internal Working Models of Attachment and Secure Base Knowledge in LGBTQ+



## College Students

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### Introduction

LGBTQ+ individuals often experience unique hardships, so parental support extremely important.

Emerging adults are experiencing the world on their own (college, work) for the first time. During this period, a parent provides a **secure base** from which their children can explore and a **safe haven** to return to in times of need.

### Why LGBTQ+ Students?

Attachment patterns are under-researched in the LGBTQ+ population, especially in bisexual and transgender youths.

We aim to include all types of LGBTQ+ participants to ensure as many identities as possible are represented in attachment research.

### Method

Adapting Waters & Waters (2006) methodology, we will ask participants to create stories using prompts (see below).

By asking participants to create stories related to being LGBTQ+, we will be able to access “scripts” - cognitive representations of attachment they have built through their experiences.

### Existing Methodology

#### Baby’s Morning

mother	hug	teddy bear
baby	smile	lost
play	story	found
blanket	pretend	nap

Waters & Waters, 2006



### Our Methodology

#### Coming Out

today	LGBTQ+	reacted
ready	told	conversation
Mom/Dad	silent	walked away
sat down	nervous	change

VanDamme & Dykas, 2023

**Low Secure Base Knowledge:** Today I decided I was ready to come out to my parents, it was about time. I grabbed my mom and dad from the kitchen and sat down with them. I said “Mom, Dad, I’m gay.” They were silent for a while, so I got nervous. No one really reacted and we didn’t have much of a conversation. They eventually said “okay”, got up, and walked away. I got up too and got ready for the day, knowing that things were probably going to change.

**High Secure Base Knowledge:** Today was finally the day I was ready to come out to my parents as a gay. I got out of bed and walked downstairs to find them in the living room chatting. I sat down next to them and told them I wanted to talk. They were immediately concerned and asked me what was wrong, and if I was okay. I told them I was alright, but that I wanted them to know I was gay. They looked at me silently for a minute, so I got nervous since they weren’t reacting. After a short while they finally smiled and got up to hug me, telling me that it was perfectly okay and they loved me no matter what. I was so happy and relieved. We had a long conversation about it, making sure we all understood what my identity meant and how they could best support me. After it was over, I walked away to get myself ready, knowing that things were going to change for the better.

\*Examples modified from collected data to protect participants’ privacy.

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