



# The Impact on Mental Health in the LGBTQ College Student Population



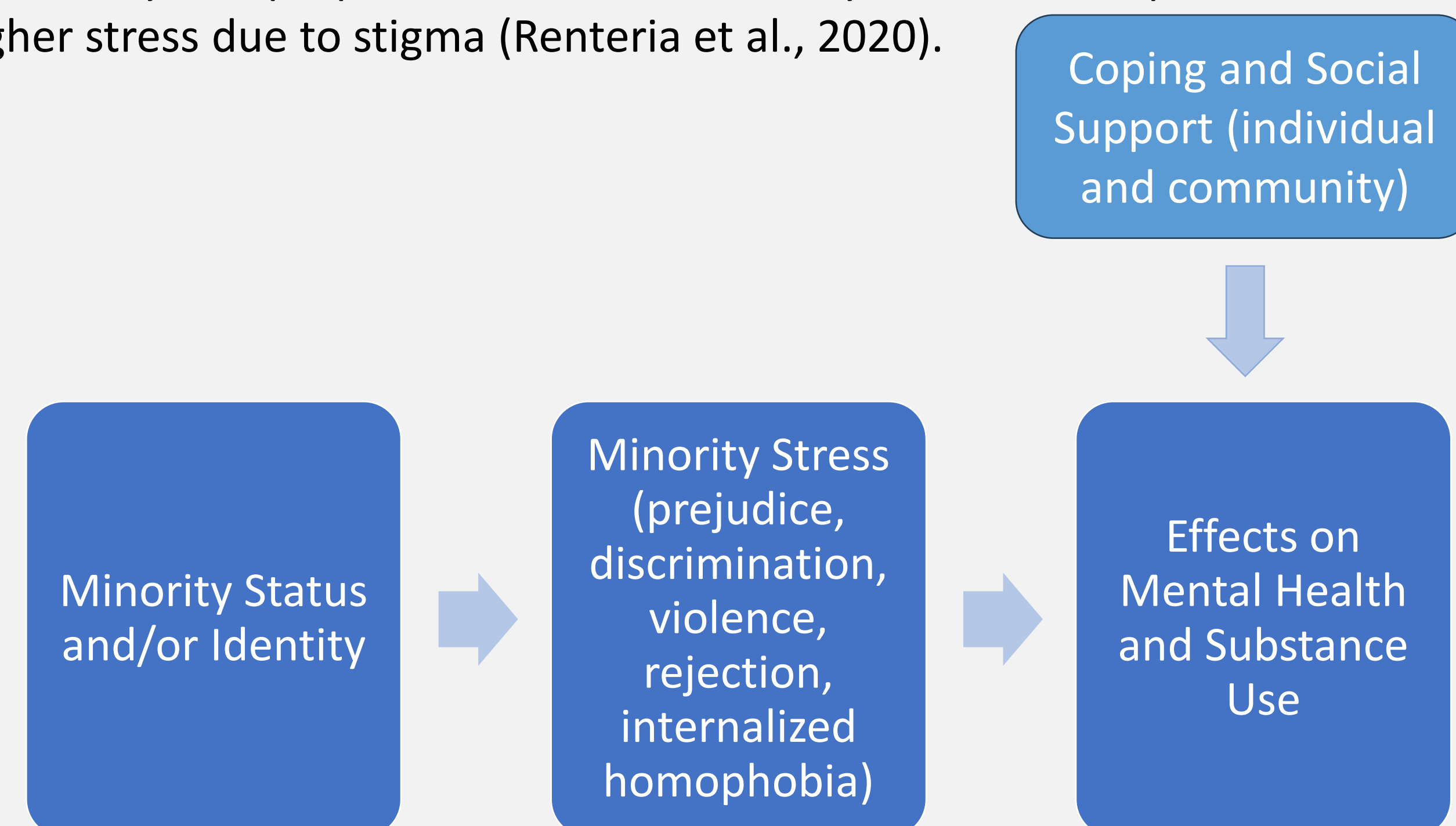
Susanna Albright MSN-Ed, BSN, RN

## Introduction

- Mental health among college students is a national concern in higher education (Woodford et al., 2018) and attending college is a life transition for many students (Squire & Norris, 2014).
- College campuses are typically comprised of a diverse student body. This includes diversity related to sexual orientation (Oswalt et al., 2018).
- Mental health is a state of mind that demonstrates an emotional well-being, good behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety, establishing constructive relationships, and the ability to cope with the everyday demands/stress of life (American Psychological Association, 2023).
- College contains many potential life-changing events, including exploring one's internal identity and potentially coming out to loved ones (Vespono, 2016).
- Inclusion of all groups is crucial to students' mental health, especially individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning/queer (LGBTQ) (The Trevor Project, 2022).
- In contemporary times, there have been many impacts on the mental health of LGBTQ college students. This includes COVID-19, incidence of specific mental illnesses (Gill & McQuillan, 2022), discrimination, and victimization (Busby et al., 2019).
- Access to mental health services on campus dramatically reduces the risk of suicide and exacerbations of mental health conditions. The availability of LGBTQ-centered mental health services is a factor in this decrease (The Trevor Project, 2022).
- Specific and holistic interventions are necessary to address the mental health of LGBTQ college students.
- The aim of this literature review is to understand the impact of mental health on LGBTQ college students and specific interventions that potentially can be implemented on higher education campuses (Murchison et al., 2016; Squire & Norris, 2014).

## Theoretical Framework

- This literature review is based upon Meyer's Minority Stress Theory. This theory proposes that stress is related to having a marginalized social identity, such as LGBTQ (Meyer, 2003).
- The theory also proposes that sexual minority individuals experience higher stress due to stigma (Renteria et al., 2020).



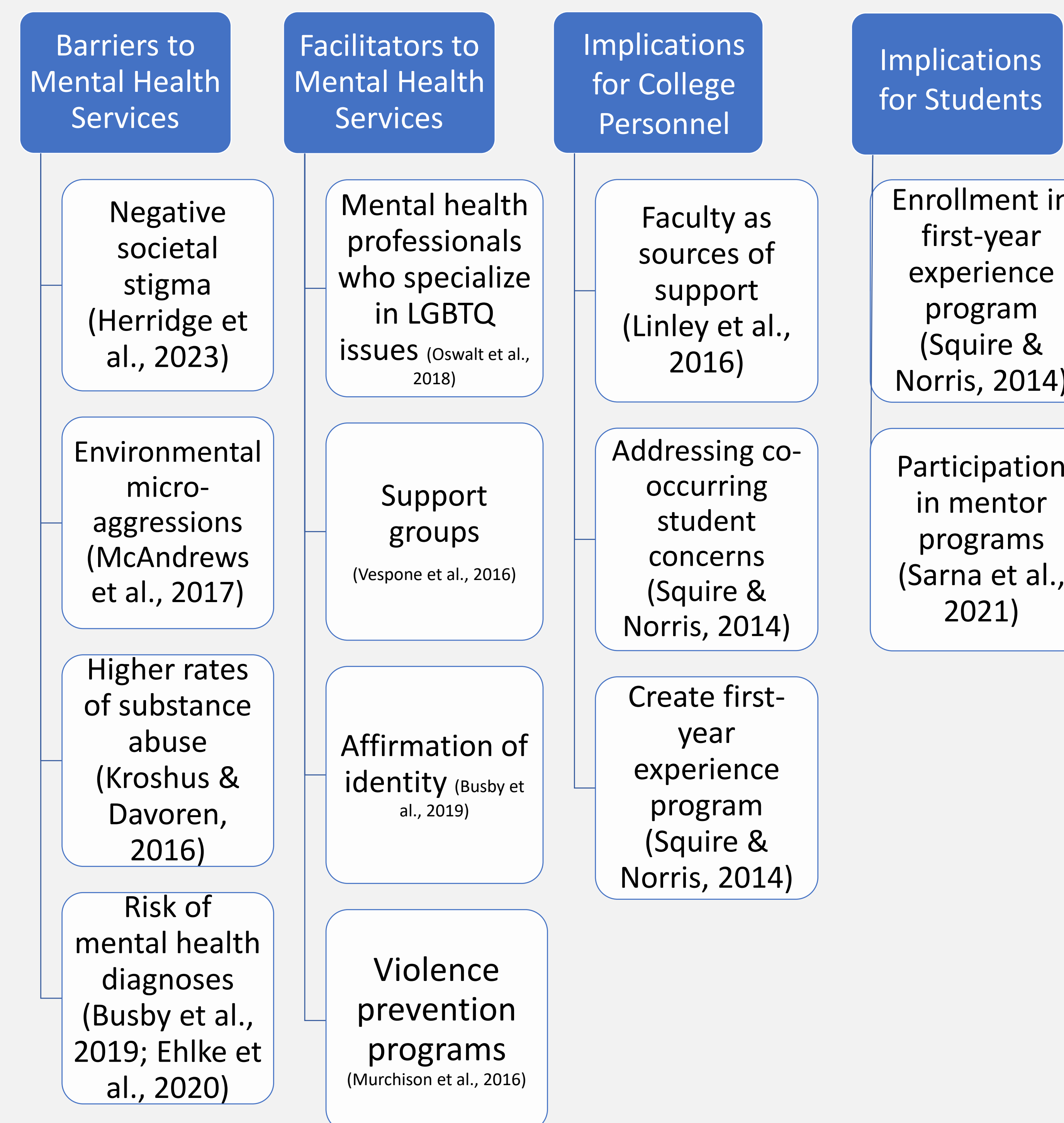
Source: Meyer, 2003

## Method

- Inclusion criteria included LGBTQ college students, undergraduate students, mental health campus-based services, and at least one type of mental health condition.
- Exclusion criteria included heterosexual sexual identity, graduate students, and inpatient mental health services.
- This literature review is based on current research from 2014 to 2023.
- A total of fifteen quantitative articles and seven qualitative research articles were included in this literature review.

Search Number	Search Terms	Database(s)	N	Rationale
#1	mental health, LGBTQ college students	EBSCO – Academic Search Ultimate, CINAHL Complete, Education Source, ERIC	18	Began with a search of databases researcher had previously utilized
#2	mental health, LGBTQ college students	EBSCO – all available databases	67	Expanded search to obtain more results
#3	mental health, LGBTQ college students	MEDLINE Complete	7	Searched a database correlated to the medical/mental health profession
#4	mental health OR mental illness, LGBTQ college students	APA PsycArticles	2	Searched a database correlated to psychology field
#5	mental health, LGBTQ college students	APA PsycInfo	15	Expanded search in a psychology database

## Results



## Conclusion

### Calls for Future Research

- Large gaps remain in the literature when studying issues that affect the LGBTQ community. Further research should be conducted regarding mental health and subgroups within the LGBTQ community (Vespono, 2016).

### Limitations

- Significant stigma regarding mental health and the LGBTQ community remains prevalent. The LGBTQ community has advocated strongly to increase their rights in contemporary times. However, LGBTQ college students are studied significantly less than other topics in higher education (Herridge et al., 2022).
- This literature review was researched at the undergraduate level in the United States. There could be vastly different results if this literature review was conducted and studied in different countries qualitatively and quantitatively (Sammut et al., 2021)

### Literature Review Conclusion

- LGBTQ college student mental health remains a pivotal issue amongst college campuses in the United States (Woodford et al., 2018).
- Rates of specific mental illnesses amongst this population are affected by a variety of factors. College campuses should be ready to improve access to mental health services and to meet the needs of all students (Crockett et al., 2022; Oswalt et al., 2018; Vespono, 2016).
- Coming together to alleviate mental health crises on college campuses can potentially positively impact the campus climate. Utilizing Meyer's Minority Stress Theory can assist college personnel in achieving this goal (Meyer, 2003).
- A positive campus climate will allow all students, including those who identify as LGBTQ to be successful in the transition to college life (Parker, 2021; Squire & Norris, 2014; Vespono, 2016).

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