Re-routing your map: Overcoming roadblocks to LGBTQ+ equity in Higher ED

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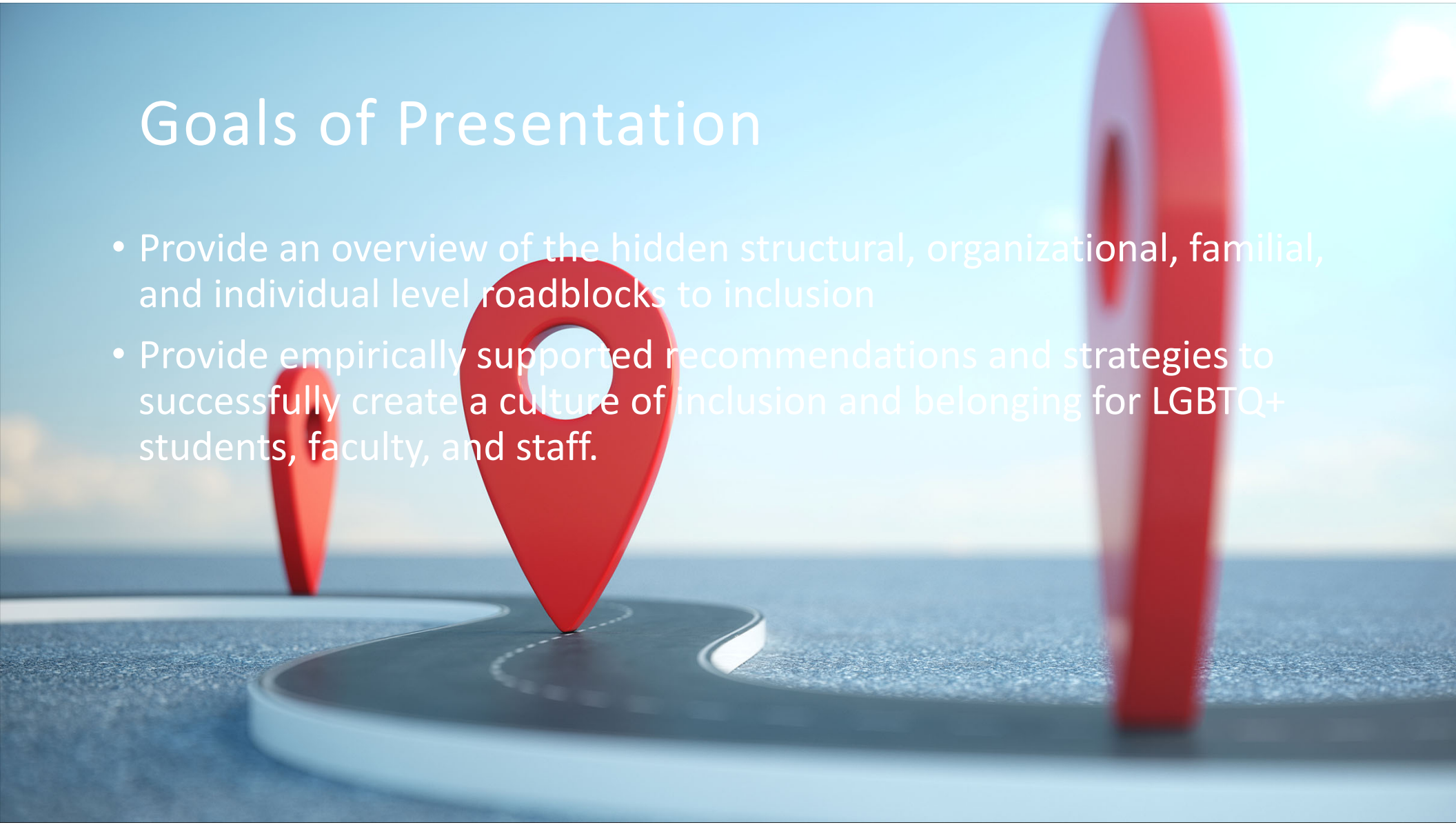
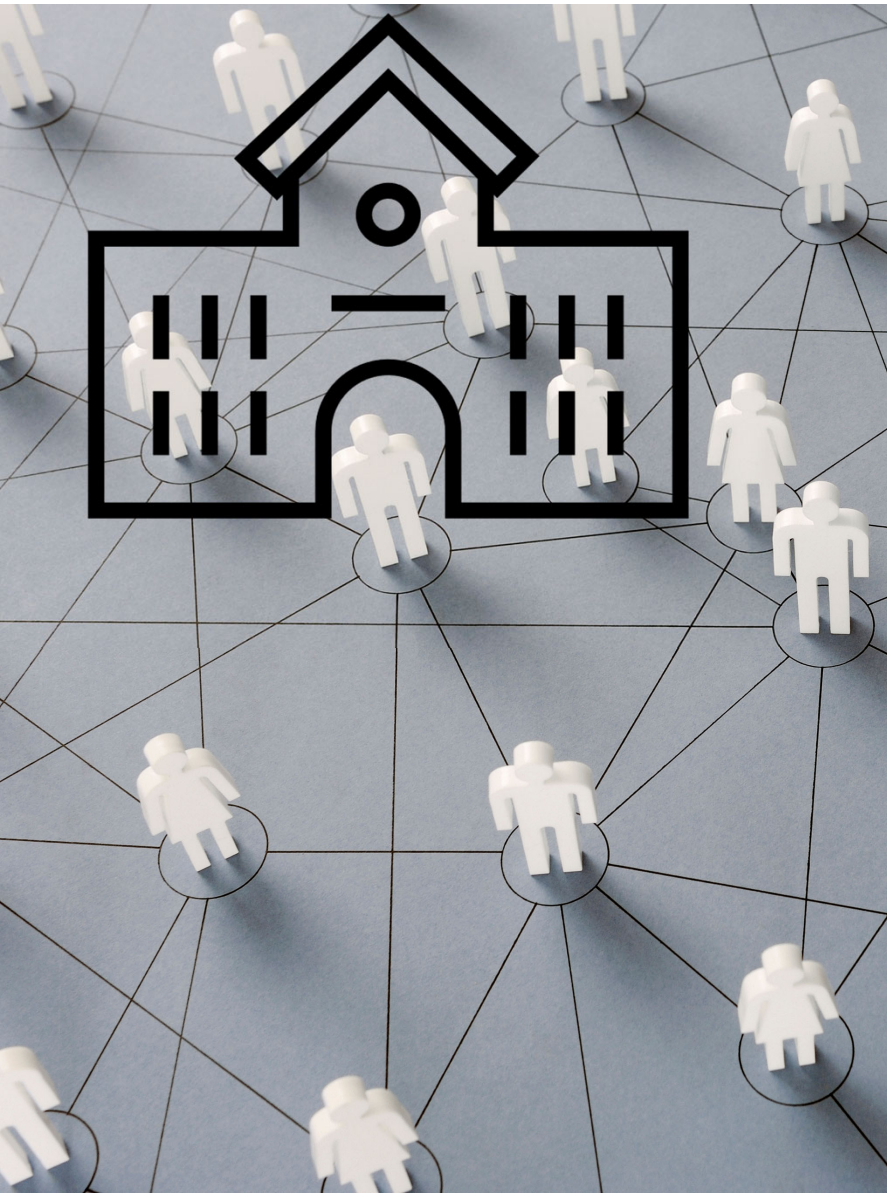
Goals of Presentation



- Provide an overview of the hidden structural, organizational, familial, and individual level roadblocks to inclusion
- Provide empirically supported recommendations and strategies to successfully create a culture of inclusion and belonging for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff.



What does it mean to belong, and to whom?

- Research has consistently shown that having a sexual and/or gender minority identity negatively impacts sense of belonging.
- Minority Stress Theory[10] is the primary explanatory underlying mechanism for the higher rates of negative physical and mental health outcomes.
- Consider the historical and current state of the socio-political context in which your university is embedded.
- What are the proximal and distal stressors that induce experiences of minority stress?

Historical Structural Barriers

Hooker (1956) presents research finding no difference between the psychological health of homosexual and heterosexual men.

APA removes homosexuality from the DSM-II (1973)

Homosexuality is removed from the International Classification of Diseases by WHO in 1992

2008 – Prop 8 passes in CA, NOH8 Campaign

2009 – Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act signed into law

1950 **1960** **1970** **1980** **1990** **2000** **2010** **2020**

Silent (1946 to 1974)

Boomers (1964 to 1993)

Gen X (1983 to 2009)

Millennials (1999 to …)

Gen Z (2015 to …)

Kinsey Studies on Sexuality (1948/1953)

1962 – Illinois becomes first state to decriminalize homosexual acts between two consenting adults.

1969 – Stonewall Riots

1981 - First case of GRID

Harvey Milk is assassinated in 1978.

1987 – ACT UP is formed

1993 – "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy

1996 – DOMA signed by President Clinton

Lawrence v. Texas (2003)

2010 – "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repealed

2011 – DOMA struck down

Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)

Bostock v. Clayton County (2020)

THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

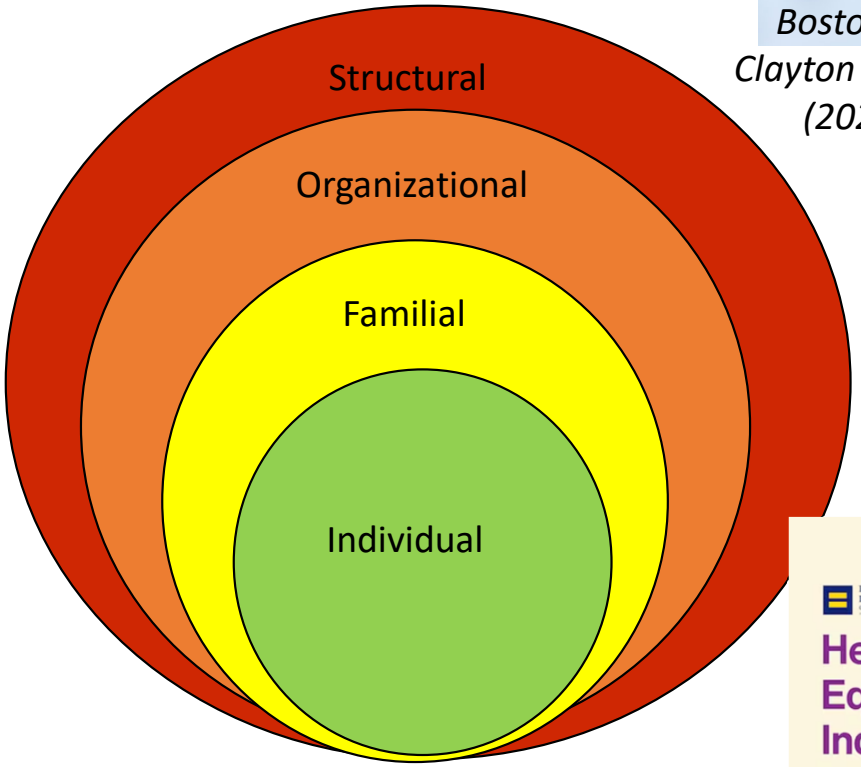
Honor the Past GSA75 years Enrich THE FUTURE

#GSA2020

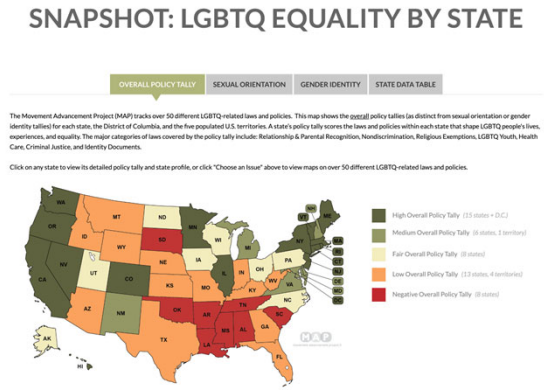
Structural

Bostock v. Clayton County (2020)

Lusardi v. Department of the Army (2015)



Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)



Indices, such as the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) Policy Tally, can be used to account for federal or state-level factors, quantifying the state-level ('distal') minority stress factors. This can be a good indicator of the structural discrimination LGBTQ+ people in that area may experience.

Kentucky's L

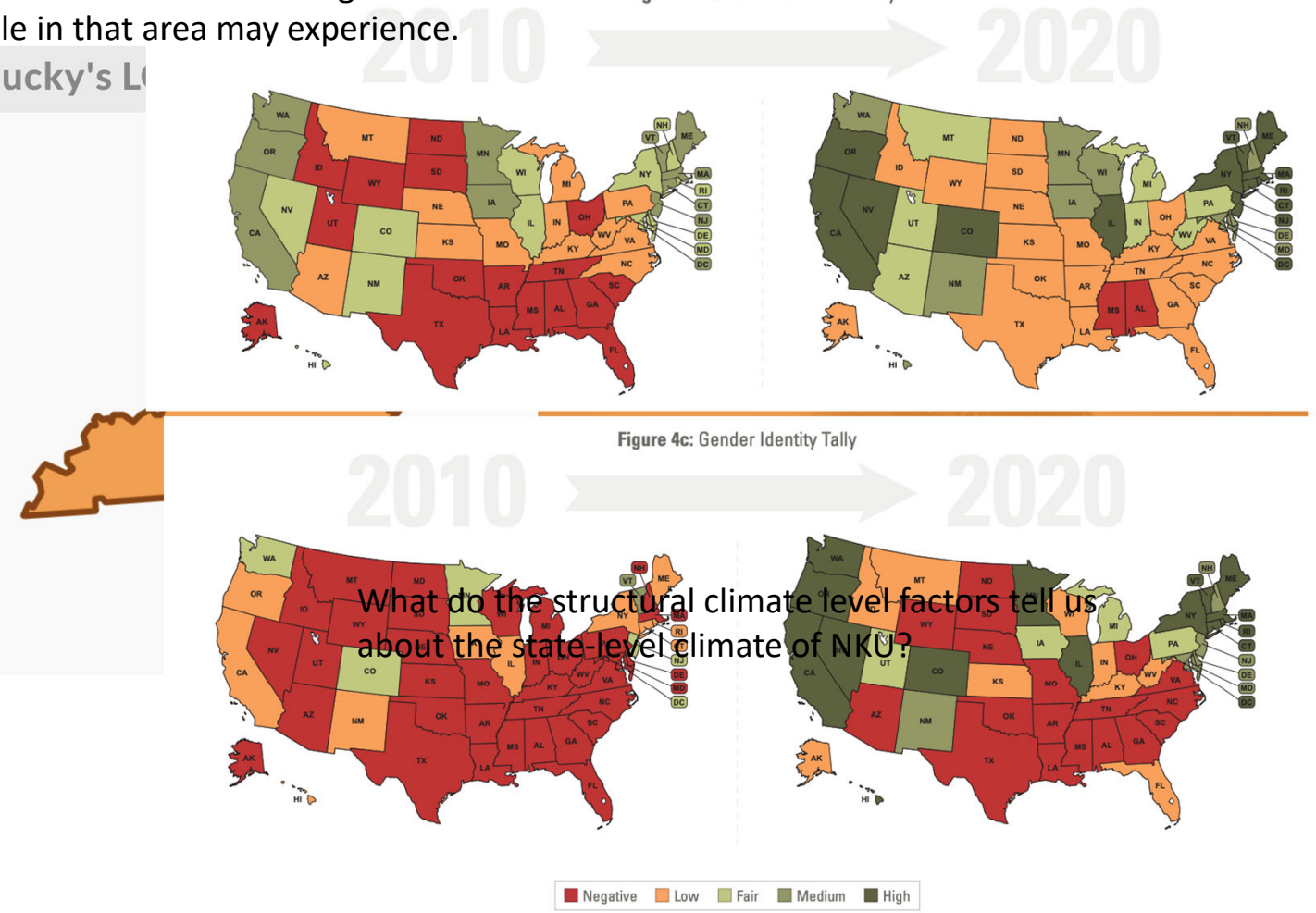


Figure 4c: Gender Identity Tally

Source: Data for 2010 based on MAP original research and assistance (see acknowledgments). Data for 2020 based on MAP's Equality Maps, as of January 1, 2020.

What do the structural climate level factors tell us about the state-level climate of NKU?

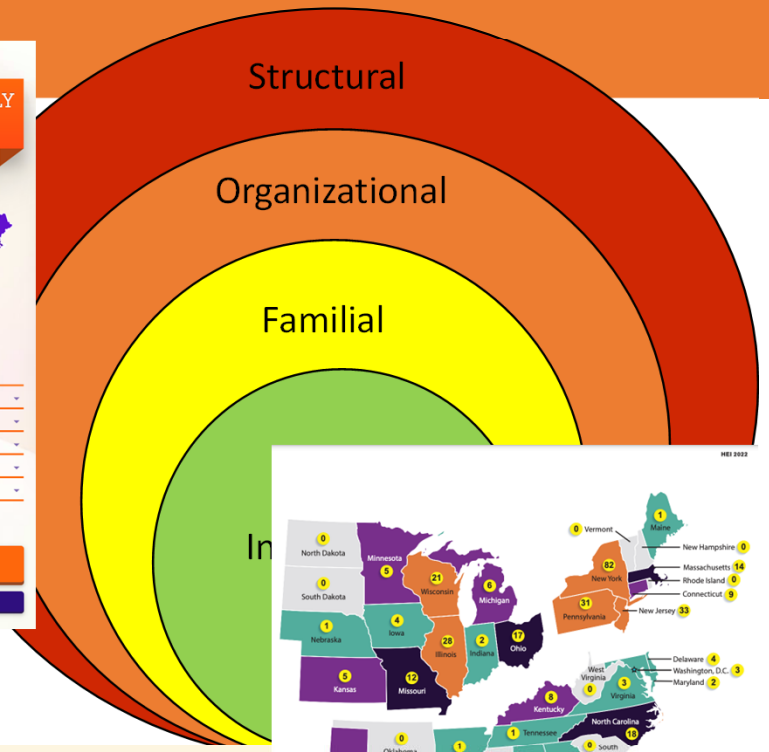
WHAT IS THE LGBTQ POLICY TALLY?

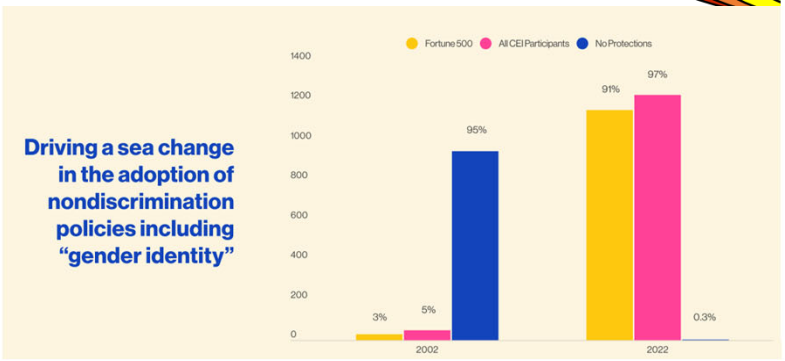
As of January 1, 2020, MAP tracked nearly 40 LGBTQ-related laws and policies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and the five U.S. territories. For each of these policies, MAP assigns a score or point value, and then sums these scores to create a "policy tally" for each state. The major categories of laws covered by the policy tally currently include:

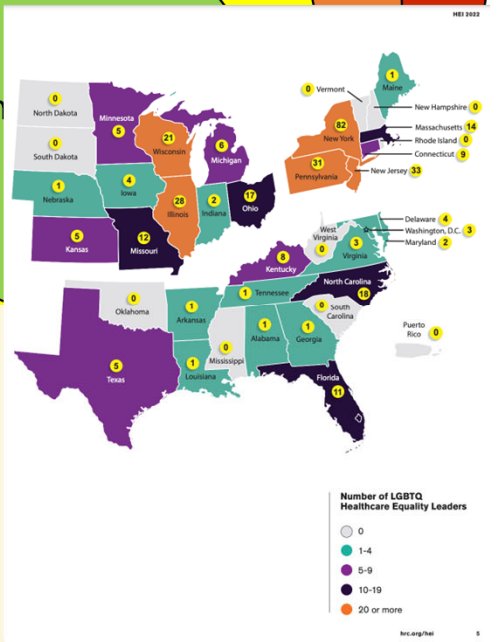
- Relationship and Parental Recognition
- Nondiscrimination
- Religious Exemptions
- LGBTQ Youth
- Health Care
- Criminal Justice
- Identity Documents

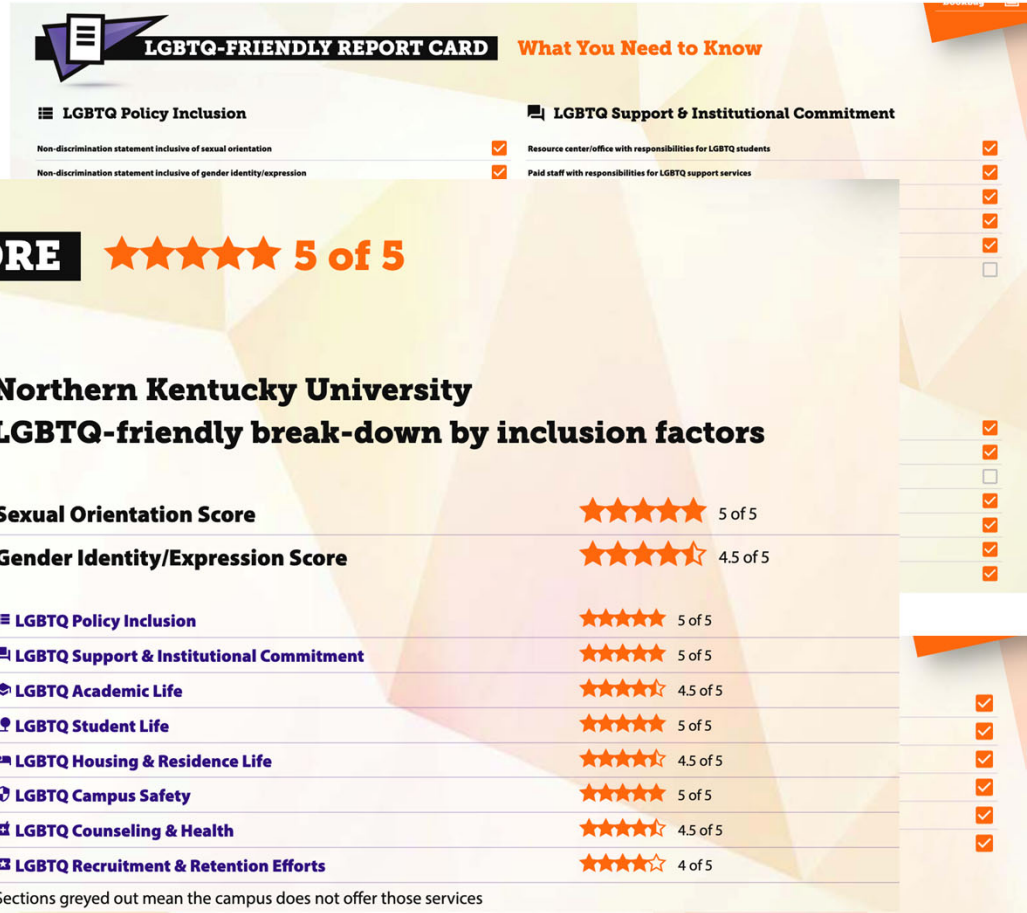
Organizational

- Indicators of LGBTQ+ Minority Stress Experiences within an Organization:
  - CORPORATE - HRC Corporate Equality Index
  - HEALTHCARE – Healthcare Equity Index
  - HIGHER EDUCATION – Campus Pride Index

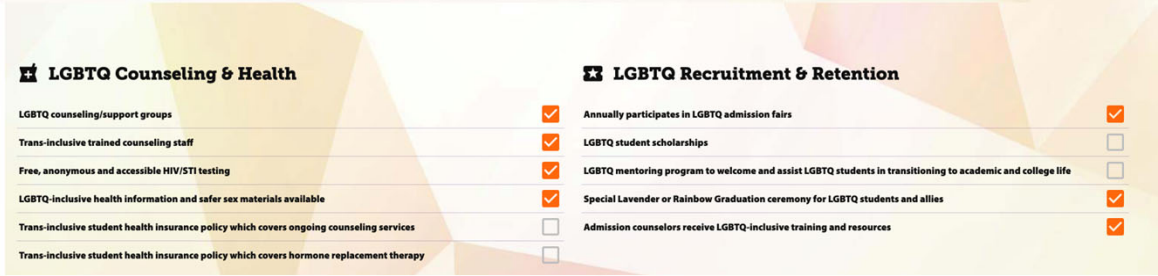




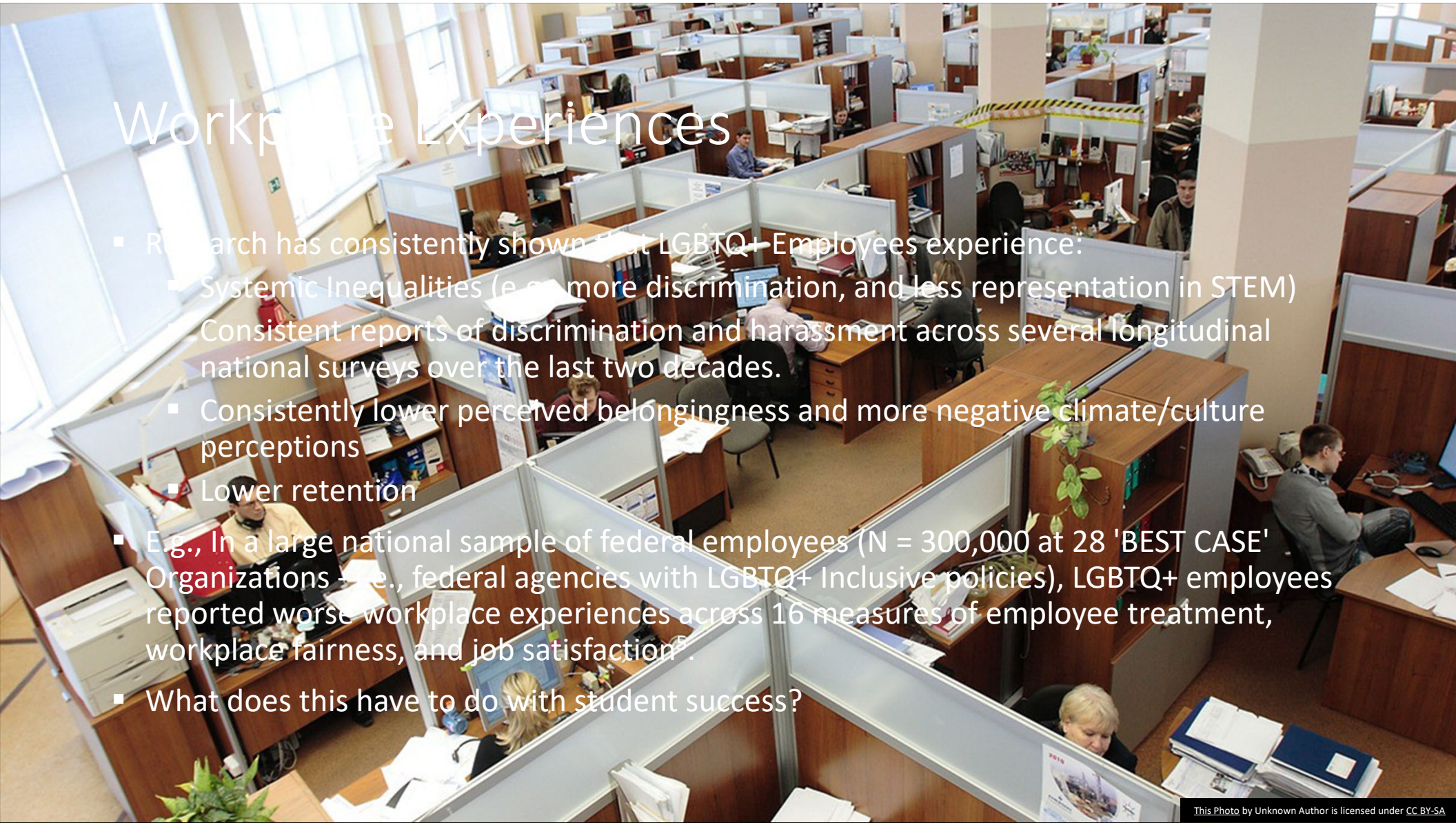




How are we doing at NKU?



Workplace Experiences



- Research has consistently shown that LGBTQ+ Employees experience:
  - Systemic Inequalities (e.g., more discrimination, and less representation in STEM)
  - Consistent reports of discrimination and harassment across several longitudinal national surveys over the last two decades.
    - Consistently lower perceived belongingness and more negative climate/culture perceptions
    - Lower retention
- E.g., In a large national sample of federal employees (N = 300,000 at 28 'BEST CASE' Organizations – i.e., federal agencies with LGBTQ+ Inclusive policies), LGBTQ+ employees reported worse workplace experiences across 16 measures of employee treatment, workplace fairness, and job satisfaction[5].
- What does this have to do with student success?

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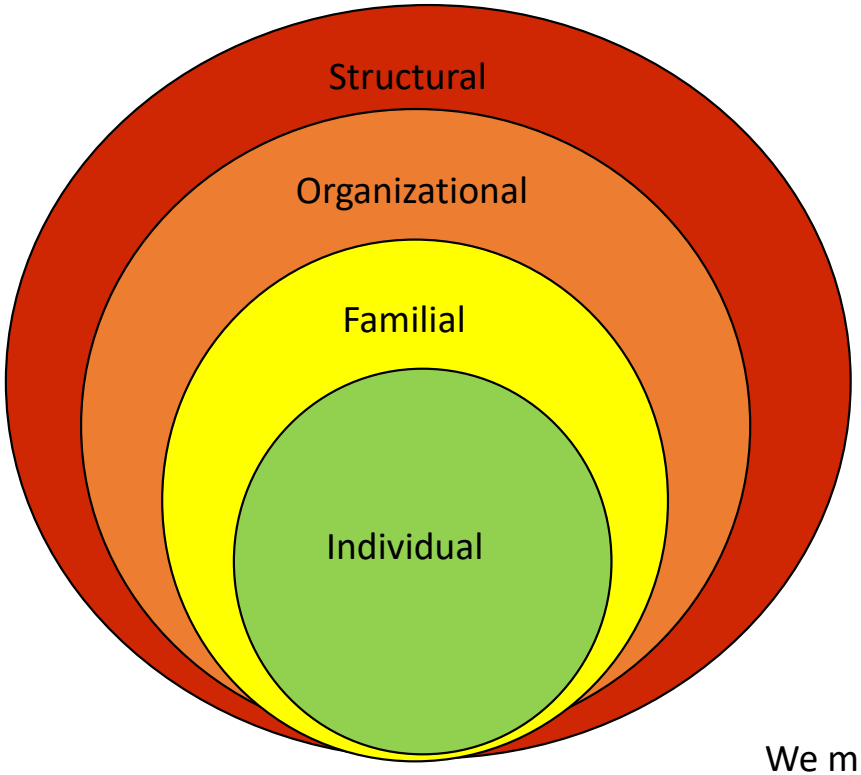
Individual and Familial - Proximal Minority Stress



- Navigating 'Outness' at work, and boundaries between work and home
- Cultural and Religious norms (both internalized and experienced externally)
- Societal Expectations about traditional gender beliefs, and those who violate those expectations
- Variability in experiences of Visibility/Invisibility
- Lack of consideration in the potential meaningful differences in experiences WITHIN the LGBTQ+ Community

We must consider the cumulative impact these Proximal and Distal Stressors will have Mental Health and Well-Being

So – What can Universities do?

- Visibility and Mentorship
- Recruit Purposefully
- Update Policies
- Use Personal Pronouns
- Make Meaningful Changes

Queer
Persistance
Leadership
Unity
Service

Q+

NKU LGBTQA+ Student Initiatives

Queer
Persistance
Leadership
Unity
Service

Visibility and Mentorship

- Seeing safe spaces, and posters that include LGBTQ+ students and people that **look similar to how SGM students present themselves,** can reduce student's stress when disclosing identity[15].
- In one sample of transgender and gender nonbinary adults, 82% had suicidal thoughts at some point[9].
- LGBTQ+ students report experiencing discrimination based on their identities in, for example, interpersonal relationships, physical and/or verbal attacks, and healthcare settings.
- Having mentors and assurance that they are in a safe place can allow students the freedom to reach out for help when they experience discrimination before it gets to the point of serious risk for crisis.

Recruit Purposefully

- Increasing retention and recruitment of diverse students begins with recruiting a diverse faculty and staff. Leadership needs to be on board with this shift and provide the financial resources to create meaningful change[17].
- Increasing diversity amongst faculty and staff will create the visibility and mentorship SGM students need to foster a sense of safety and belonging.
- Increasing safety and belongingness will help mitigate minority stress outcomes such as depression[16].
- Poor mental health, such as depression and anxiety, has a significant negative relationship with retention and student success.

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Update Policies

- One way to support LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff is to review student handbooks and HR policies and take out gendered language, and to make sure there are appropriate facilities for SGM students and faculty to use[1].
- Creating policies that espouse inclusivity both directly and indirectly, such as through gender-neutral language, further signals a safe environment.

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Use Personal Pronouns

- Introduce yourself using personal pronouns and include them in your signature, on Zoom, etc. because this signals a safe place for people to disclose their personal pronouns[11].
- Make sure to stress the importance of using the correct personal pronouns when people provide them to support a safe and inclusive environment.
- Respect faculty, staff, and students' rights to privacy by not forcing them to disclose personal pronouns if they are not comfortable doing so.

Meaningful Change

- LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff can tell when changes are only surface-level attempts to make changes.
- Changes should be meaningfully assessed and considered as part of the larger culture and climate at the university.
- Making meaningful changes to the culture of the university helps to support the necessary feelings of safety and belonging to reduce poor mental health in SGM students, faculty, and staff.

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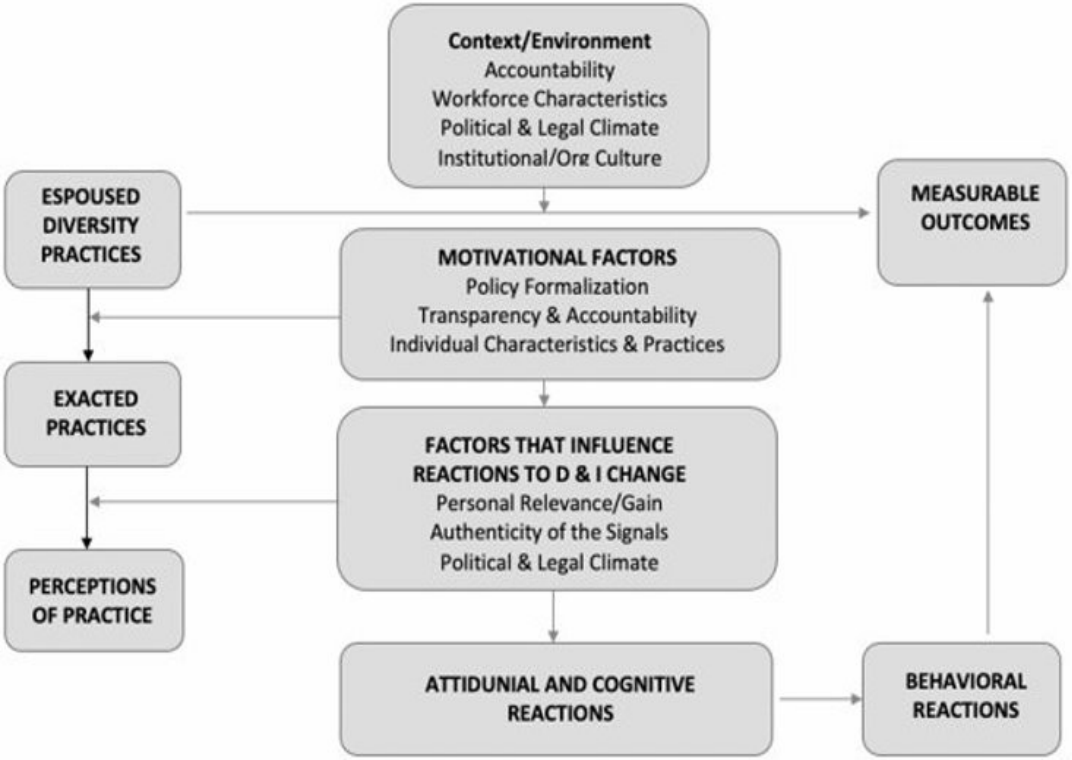
Importance of Measurement

- Having a SCIENTIFIC applied practitioner approach
  - Importance of follow-ups / reassessment
- DEI survey data
  - Using this process model to increase equity, inclusion, and belongingness in LGBTQ+ for faculty and students, where would we want to measure progress?
  - Identity impact findings
  - Class practices

Process Model

- In a departmental climate survey we conducted, sexual orientation had a significant impact on students' classroom experiences.
- Additionally, there were significant interaction effects of sexual orientation and race, gender, disability status, and socioeconomic status on classroom experiences.



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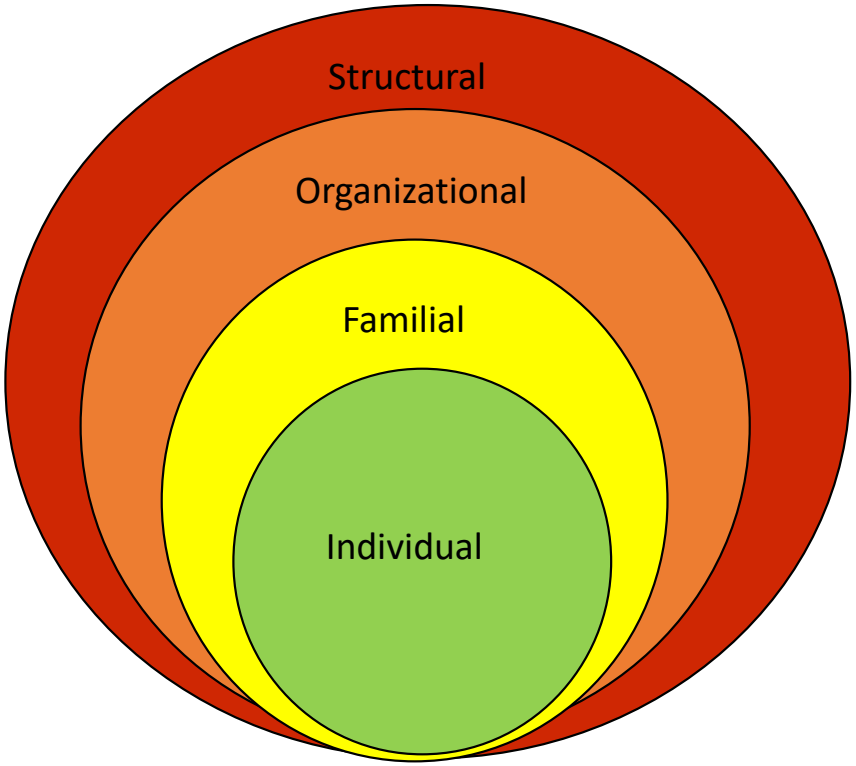
Measurement at all Levels

- Belongingness, recruitment, and retention
- What can we do at NKU?
  - Use national benchmark indices – e.g., Campus Pride Index. Other potentially useful indices include:
    - Movement Advancement Project
    - HRC Corporate equality index
    - Healthcare equity index
- Support research and researchers at the forefront of sexual and gender minority social and health equity.
- The minority stress experience is at multiple levels
- Campus climate index
  - What it means to be a 5/5
  - Limitations of this index



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