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Beyond Bathrooms: Exploring the Negative Impact of Hostile Campus Climates on Queer Students

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Introduction

In 2013, I went to Idaho as part of a contingent of students from South Puget Sound Community College. We were attending a regional conference focused on Queer students in higher education. The intent was to network with other Queer students, build community, and discuss institutional change strategies. My friends and I decided to attend a dance being held by the conference. As we left the dance, we found our way to the campus's main road, and began heading back to the hotel. The spring night was chilly, and the walk back was quiet, aside from the occasional cars driving past us. A red sedan broke the silence, slowing down next to us. As its window rolled down, a voice stopped us: "fags" they yelled, from the safety of their car. We were terrified. We had previously been advised that if we felt threatened when we were in Idaho to break a bottle to protect ourselves, but we did not have any glass bottles. We improvised, emptied our soda cans, and tore them into small pieces. The hastily made shanks made us feel slightly safer after the car left.

When we were met with the threat of violence, we were still on the college campus. Chances are the men who instilled fear into us that day were students on that campus, and they knew about the event because the school was publicly seeking Queer students to attend. Afterwards we thought maybe we were acting a certain way, and that is how we drew the attention of the person in the car, but in hindsight, how we acted is irrelevant. Regardless of why or how this violent incident happened, the issue is we, as Queer students who were on campus to connect with other Queer students and learn how we could address and reduce oppression in higher education, experienced anti-Queer violence on the university's campus.

My friends and I are not the only ones to experience anti-Queer violence in higher education. I have known people who were afraid to use restrooms because they were afraid of

getting beat up. There are students who see anti-Queer graffiti on their campuses, hear anti-Queer language in their classrooms, and study anti-Queer curriculum. Although campuses increasingly talk about allowing Queer students, specifically trans students, to use the restroom with the gender they identify with, larger issues having to do with violence and oppression of Queer students have gone unaddressed. Allowing a person to use the restroom they identify with does not prevent them from facing slurs or protect them from violent threats, physical assaults, and in some cases, murder. Students, staff, and faculty discussions need to move beyond bathrooms, to the root of the problem of violence and oppression. The purpose of this paper is thus to center the anti-Queer violence, that Queer students face, to acknowledge that this violence is perpetrated by fellow students, staff and faculty, and at the institutional levels This paper further clarifies the negative impacts of facing daily anti-Queer violence, and clarifies what institutions, staff and faculty, and fellow students can do to reduce the amount of violence and foster a context of what Ginwright frames as hope and healing (2015).

Queerness

I, as a trans person of color, identify with the word Queer. I acknowledge that Queer is a word used to demonize and other people like me, who are lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, Queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and pansexual. Queer is used "in a harmful and oppressive manner" to tell people what they are not, specifically not heterosexual and not cisgender (Hill & Grace, 2009, p. 92).. The word Queer, here in this paper, is used as an encompassing term to include those who are gay, lesbian, transgender, genderqueer, and anyone along the spectrum of sexuality and gender that strays from the expected norm of heterosexual and cisgender. Queer in this paper is also being reclaimed. I am purposefully taking this word that has been used against me, and people like me, and making the word Queer positive, and taking power of the word from

those in power, and putting the power back into my hands, and the hands of other Queer

students. Queer people have made many accomplishments that they should be proud of; they

have lead cultural revolutions that have advocated for their civil rights allowing for younger

Queer to be hopeful, and see themselves existing proudly in society. They have made efforts to

address issues that have affected their communities, such as addressing STI's and advocating for

safer sex. Collectively, Queer people have done much to fight against their oppressors; their

existence is resilience.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a tool used to understand and analyze the complexity of the world and

power relations between specific factors (Collins & Blige, 2016). These factors are identities

around age, race, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, citizenship, and

disability. Intersectionality would mean that a person does not perceive the world through a

single identity, but rather through the intersections of their identities. Intersectionality

acknowledges that power relations encompass people's lives, how they relate to others, and

determine who has privilege, and who is marginalized (Collins & Blige, 2016, p. 7). An

intersectional lens allows people to move beyond binaries; the issue is no longer understood as

"this or that", but rather "both/and" (Collins & Blige, 2016, p. 15).

This allows solutions to move on from "the one-at-a-time approach" (Collins & Blige,

2016, p. 7). This one-at-a-time approach is very slow to solving social issues; examples of this

can be found throughout the hegemonic feminist movement. For example, women's suffrage

gained white women the right to vote in 1920, but Black and Native women (and men) could not

vote without having to fight barriers such as poll taxes, literacy tests, and violence ("Voting

Rights", n.d.; "Voting Rights for Native Americans", n.d.). The barriers that previously

prevented Black and Native women from voting were removed 45 years later in 1965 with the Voting Rights Act ("Voting Rights", n.d.; "Voting Rights for Native Americans", n.d.). During second wave feminism, the main narrative focused on white women's liberation. This focus on white women's liberation pushed back the voices and stories of Black women, such as, Kimberlé Crenshaw, who believed that feminism also needed to work on issues such as antiracism (Ratts, 2017). Through this binary, one-at-a-time solutions only occurred for some women, in this case, those privileged by racism, rather than also women who faced intersectional oppression. Intersectionality allows for the centering of the multiple positionalities of Black and Brown Queer people; this allows people to understand the complexity of oppression that others live, and extends arguments for women to include more nuanced understandings of race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, language, and other core aspects of identity.

Racism

Race is "a social construct created by human beings to categorize their world"; race was created to put specific people into power and oppress others (Ponds, 2013, p. 23). Although race is a social construct, the impact of racism is very powerful and real (Ponds, 2013). Racism is reliant on systemic violence that perpetuates the idea that white people are superior to people of color (Ponds, 2013). Racism allows white people to maintain "domination, power, and control" in society (Ponds, 2013, p. 23). Ponds states that racism "provides the rationale and justification for debasing, degrading, and doing violence to people of color" (2013, p. 23). The racial violence people of color face ranges from overt to subtle, from systemic levels of racism and interpersonal level of racism (Ponds, 2013). Overt acts of racial violence can be the murdering of Black people in America by White police officers; these overt acts leave both a physical and psychological trauma on people of color (Ponds, 2013 & Harper, 2015). More subtle acts of racism include

telling a U.S. born person of color that they speak English well, which perpetuates the notion that a person of color does not look like they are someone from the United States and that English is that preferred/only way to speak (Knaus, 2011). These subtler acts may come from a well-intentioned place; however, they still leave a negative psychological impact on people of color (Ponds, 2013, p. 24). People's understanding of race, and racism, and themselves in contrast with race, is constantly shaped in them by society.

Racism, and how it shapes people can be seen in higher education through the concept of stereotype threat (Aronson & Steele, 1995). Stereotype threat is when a widely-known stereotype exists about a specific group, and a person belonging to that group is at risk doing an action or have a feature that may reaffirm the stereotype, specifically to themselves (Aronson & Steele, 1995). In Aronson and Steele's research, Black students who were told that an exam, which was 30 verbal items mostly from GRE study guides, would test their intellectual abilities scored significantly lower than Black students who were not told the same message (Aronson & Steele, 1995). The purpose of telling students the exam would test their intellectual ability was to trigger stereotypes threats (Aronson & Steele, 1995). Aronson and Steele show that the impact of racism and racial violence through stereotypes provides a negative impact on how a student sees themselves and how they perform academically in higher education.

Sexism

Sexism is a system of oppression that violently disenfranchises and harms women. Sexism, like racism, is about maintaining power, domination and control, specifically for men in society (Ponds, 2013). Subtle forms of sexism can appear in everyday language (Kahn, 1975, p. 65). For example, Kahn (1975) talks about the words *man*kind and *woman*kind, where the former is a word that represents human beings collectively and the latter simply women collectively (p.

65). This everyday language leaves the implication that man or maleness is the norm of the society. There are also subtle institutional ways in which sexism upholds patriarchal values. An example of this is the wage gap where women, on average, earn 79% of what men earn (Vujicic, Yarbrough & Munson, 2017, p. 204). Perhaps the gap could be explained by which occupations a woman goes into, which are generally influenced by systemic sexist messages, but even in similar occupations men earn more (Vujicic, Yarbrough, Munson, 2017, p. 205). Furthermore, when the issue of earnings comes to the intersection of race and gender, the wage gap for women of color is far wider (National Women's Law Center, 2015). Black women earn 64% of what white men make, and Latina's earn 56% of what white men make (National Women's Law Center, 2015). Sexism also plays a role in which degrees women earn in higher education, and what they can do with their degrees. In 2013, 57.3% of bachelor's degrees were earned by women, and 50.3% of those degrees were in STEM fields (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2016). A majority of these degrees are in the biological sciences, as fewer women earn degrees in mathematics, physical science, engineering and computer science (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2016). Despite the fact that the majority of degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, are awarded to women, only 29% end up in the science and engineering workforce (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2016). Sexism, is systematically preventing women from succeeding.

Heterosexism

Like sexism, heterosexism is a systemic form of oppressions that normalizes and perpetuates heterosexuality as the preferred sexuality. (Fine, 2011, p. 521). Heterosexism relies on heteronormativity, which is defined by Battles and Hilton-Morrow quoted by Papacharissi and Fernback, as "the discourses and practices by which heterosexuality is constituted as the

natural and compulsory norm against which homosexuality is defined as its binary, hence, negative opposite" (2008). Heterosexism relies heavily on homophobia, which is the fear and hatred of gay people (Fine, 2011). Subtle forms of heterosexism and homophobia can range from the belief that bisexuality is just a phase to everyday language where assumptions are made that heterosexuality is the default sexuality (Fine, 2011). Heterosexism is also perpetuated in the media. An example of this is *Will and Grace,* where the main character, Will, is gay (Papacharissi & Fernback, 2008). However, Will is reliant on the association that gayness means that a person is not masculine, and therefore the opposite of heterosexual (Papacharissi & Fernback, 2008). The character Will thus, reinforces the binary of this or that, and reinforces the idea that Queerness is an identity that is considered to be other.

More outright forms of heterosexism have been years of the United States denying homosexual couples the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts. Queer people have been denied the right to marry the same gender, have limited insurance and hospital visitation rights, and face discriminatory hiring practices (Fine, 2011, p. 252). It wasn't until 2015, that the United States gave Queer people the right to marry.

Cissexism, Transphobia and Transmisogyny

The terms transphobia, cissexism, and transmisogyny are terms that express specific forms of oppressions trans people face. Transphobia is defined by Austin and Goodman as an irrational feeling, such as anger or discomfort, at people who do not conform to the hegemonic ideas of gender, and favors those who adhere to the male/female sex binary or man/woman gender binary (2016. p. 826). Cissexism, like heterosexism, is the belief that identifying with the gender you are assigned at birth is the preference. This means that when a person is born with xy chromosomes, the doctor assigns them as male, and they are intended to identify with maleness.

Transmisogyny refers to the intersection of misogyny and transphobia, the term refers to oppression and violence that specifically targets trans women. An example of cissexism and transphobia is assuming a person's gender and pronouns, based on their gender expression. A more terrifying form of transphobia, and transmisogyny is violence that results in death.

Global Relevance

Twenty-two trans people were shot or killed by violent means in 2016, and as of June 3rd, 2017, eleven trans people have been murdered since January in the United States (HRC. 2016, 2017). Anti-Queer violence plagues the Queer community in the United States, yet this violence is not limited by national borders.

Uganda

Uganda has illegalized the existence of Queer people. The illegality of Queerness existed prior to colonial influence, but was strengthened by British Imperial law, which is seen in the Ugandan Penal Code Act of 1950 with sections 145, 146, and 148 (Devji, 2016, p, 349). Section 145 mentions that when a person commits an unnatural offence they can be imprisoned for life, 146 states that when a person attempts to commit an unnatural offence, and they can be imprisoned for seven years; Section 148 states that when a person commits an act of "gross indecency" , the person be imprisoned for seven years (Devji, 2016, p. 349). Section 145 is best understood that an unnatural offence is committed when penetration occurs, and section 148 is more ambiguous because penetration is not needed, which allows Queer Ugandans to be open to violence from authorities and law enforcement if they just *seem* Queer (Devji, 2016). While these laws are not usually enforced they can be used for the justification of anti-Queer violence, and can be used as a barrier from passing laws in favor of Queer rights (Devji, 2016, p. 350).

Anti-Queerness runs through the institutional level of law, through politicians, and through the everyday person. Newspapers, such as *New Vision* equated that Uganda's source of evil stems from acts such as corruption, theft and homosexuality (Devji, 2016, p. 353). Popular media perpetuate anti-Queer ideology and violence as well; one example came from *Rolling Stone* magazine, which released a list of Uganda's "Top Homos" which showed an image of a person believed to be Queer, their name, and their address (Devji, 2016, p. 353). This specific example led to the murder of David Kato, a Queer rights activist in Uganda (Devji, 2016, p. 353). Politicians continue to try to pass laws such as the Anti-Homosexuality Act. While such laws may not always be actively enforced, such as the Ugandan Penal Code of 1950, these laws continue to reflect the cultural climate of Uganda for Queer Ugandans, and they serve as a justification for the anti-Queer violence that Queer Ugandans face daily.

South Africa

South Africa's constitution legislates that the state may not unfairly discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their "race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth" (South Africa Const. chap. 2, art. 9, 1995). With the South African constitution, Queer people have access to full marriage rights, adoption, gender transition, and have their children legally considered legitimate if the child was conceived through artificial insemination (Devji, 2016, p. 345). However, despite what appears to be great strides for Queer South Africans on a legal level, within an everyday context, Queerness is still seen in a negative light (Devji, 2016, p. 346). In fact, 72% of South Africans considered Queer sexual activity to be 'morally wrong' and politicians have shown themselves to be uncomfortable with the Queer body (Meer & Müller, 2017, p. 93).

Anti-Queer violence in South Africa is considered a common occurrence and these violent acts often are "unnoticed, unregulated and unreported" (Devji, 2016, p. 346). A common act of violence is what is framed as corrective rape (Devji, 2016, p. 346). Devji quoted from a 2003 a study that "one in twenty rapes are reported to the police and of those cases only 48% went to court, of which 45% were thrown out" (2016, p. 346). Queer South Africans are also met with violence and exclusion within healthcare because of how society treats and others Queer identity (Meer & Müller, 2017). Many healthcare providers are not prepared to treat Queer patients, and those that are often exist within the private sector, further excluding intersectional Queer patients of color and those without economic resources (Meer & Müller, 2017). Some Queer South Africans report being pushed away from healthcare facilities, having been told that they, the Queer South African, should go somewhere else (Meer & Müller. 2017, p. 97). While South Africa legally appears to be supportive of Queer rights, the day to day actions reinforce anti-Queer hostility.

Hostile Campus Climates

Campuses at colleges and universities tend to be reflections, or microcosms, of the greater national climate. The climate is created by the "current attitudes, behavior and standards, and practices of employees and students…" (Rankin et. al., 2010, p. 25). As students, our understanding, and experience with campus climate is in part dependent on our intersections of identity. Queer students perceive and experience our campuses to be a hostile climate. Rankin et. al.'s countrywide (United States), research showed that 36% of us who were undergraduate in 2010, experienced some form of harassment. Queer students are facing violence that is daily perpetrated by fellow students, staff and faculty, and institutions.

Research collected on campus climates from 2003 to 2015 has shown that institutions of higher education (colleges, universities and community colleges), foster a hostile environment towards LGBTQ students (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et. al., 2010; Garvey et. al., 2015; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Queer students face hostility from our institutions, staff and faculty, and fellow students. These experiences range from hearing slurs and having little resources pertaining to Queerness or Queer studies, to having our institutions not respond to student concerns of a hostile environment for Queer students. In the case of Queer students these behaviors are hostile and they range from very blatant behaviors, such as the use of slurs, to more subtle forms, such as ignoring or excluding a student. Rankin, Weber, Blumefield, & Frazer (2010) clarify how LGBTQ students report these forms of harassment the most: receiving derogatory remarks, feeling deliberately ignored or excluded, feeling isolated or left out, observing others staring, being singled out as the resident authority on their identity group and even feeling intimidated or bullied (p. 57). Based on the response of Queer respondents at colleges and universities, over half (59.3%) of the respondents reported being a target of derogatory remarks based on either our sexual or gender identity. 52.9% felt as if they were deliberately ignored or excluded, 48.8% felt isolated or left out, 46.0% observed others staring, 54.9% felt singled out as resident authority, and 36.7% felt intimidated or bullied (Rankin, 2010). When broken down Queer respondents reported experiencing higher amounts of harassment than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts.

Anti- Queer violence occurs across all campus types. Yost and Gilmore (2011), show that anti-Queer violence can occur across all campus types by focusing solely on a single liberal arts institution, Dickson College. Faculty, staff and students at Dickson College appear to believe that they provide a warm and welcoming campus for Queer students (Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Staff

and faculty at Dickinson College reported low levels of sexual and gender prejudice (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1337). Queer staff reported lower feelings of sexual and gender prejudice than their heterosexual and cisgender colleagues (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1337). A similar pattern is shown amongst student respondents; students feel a low level of prejudice based on sexual and gender identity, and Queer students feel a lower level of prejudice than their hetero-cisgender peers (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1339) Yet, despite what seems to be an initial positive response from Queer students, they reported that they were more likely to feel that the campus climate is less positive than the non-Queer respondents (Yost & Gilmore, 1343). When campus climate perceptions are compared to violence Queer students face, the campus is not as warm as it appears to be.

With an initial response of what seems to be a small amount of prejudice based on sexuality and gender identity, and campus climate that is perceived to be neither too hostile or too welcoming, an alarmingly high percentage of students at Dickinson reported harassment. 51% of Queer students (75) reported experiencing verbal put-downs or remarks (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1348). This form of harassment has been and continues to be reported by researchers, such as Rankin et. al. (2010) and Garvey, Jackson, and Rankin (2015). Students have also been exposed to graffiti that expresses negative attitudes towards Queer people (25%), and to other written and visual forms of harassment (34%) (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1348). Students were also subjected to more alarming forms of violence. 22% of students experiencing verbal threats or attacks, 12% experienced physical threats, 8% experienced property damage, and 8% experienced physical attacks (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1348).

Respondents reported that they experienced harassment either in class, in public or while walking on campus (Rankin et. al., 2015, p. 58). The majority of harassment (~83.5%) that

Queer respondents experienced was by our own peers (Rankin et. al., 2010, p. 59). This is concerning when this information is coupled with the anecdotal data of students acknowledging that professors do not make any efforts to disengage the harassment (Garvey, Jackson, Rankin, 2015). The stories of students express that professors are not making efforts to shut down the harassment (Rankin et. al., 2010, p. 139). When faculty do not respond to the oppression Queer students are facing, such as the use of derogatory language by other students in their classrooms, this act echoes the message and actions that is seen from the administration. There have been instances where students reported the harassment they witness and the administration did nothing or deemed a response as unnecessary. One Queer student reported another student who shouted "we can either accept homosexuals or BURN THEM AT THE STAKE! ARE YOU WITH ME?!"[1]and was able to gather a large group of people together yelling "burn them!"; the student reported that they attempted to get the person removed from campus "but no one seemed to deem it necessary or possible" (Rankin et. al., 2010, p. 139). This is important to note, because, although a majority of respondents faced harassment from peers, the lack of addressing or responding to these acts reflects an institutional level acquiescence or support of violent hostility towards Queer students.

The hostility Queer students experience and the relation to oppression, becomes clear with how individuals responded to the harassment. In this study, Rankin et. al., defined a passive response as one that involves emotions, feelings, and telling friends, while active responses were defined as avoiding the harasser, confronting them or making a complaint (2015,3.). Respondents could make multiple choices from a list of actions, that were defined as either a passive action or an active action. A majority of Queer (94.4%) respondents chose options that

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[1]   Direct quote from student submission in Rankin et. al., 2010 study

show they reacted passively; while 67.7% of respondents chose actions that show that they reacted actively. While over half of respondents do react actively, heterosexual respondents were more likely to respond actively at 72.4% than Queer respondents, where only 67.7% of participants stated that they reacted actively. Heterosexual respondents were less likely to respond passively, at 84.7%, when compared to the 94.4% of Queer respondents who reacted passively to harassment and violence. This data reflects the power imbalance between heterosexual and cisgender students and Queer students. Heterosexual students felt like they were able make active responses, such as avoiding their harasser, making a complaint against their harasser, or even confronting them (Rankin et. al., 2010). Queer students, because of anti-Queer violence, were more likely to respond with passive emotions, such as feeling scared or angry, and telling their friends about their anti-Queer encounter (Rankin et. a., 2010). The anti-Queer violence students face is day to day, and often leaves them feeling afraid or angry, and feeling powerless.

<div align="center">**Impact of Hostile Campus Climates**</div>

Battle Fatigue

Usually referred to as racial battle fatigue, battle fatigue is the response oppressed individual feels when faced with a mundane extreme environment (Carroll, 1998). This response can include feelings of "frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear" (Smith, Allen & Danley, 2007, p. 562). A mundane extreme environment, as described by Carroll in the context of racism and anti-Blackness, is "an environment where racism and subtle oppression are ubiquitous, constant, and continuing and mundane" (Carroll, 1998, p. 271). This means that Black people are faced with daily micro-aggressions, which are often subtle forms of racism, such as being ignored for service or being

assumed to be guilty of anything negative (Carroll, 1998, p. 271). Mundane forms or subtle forms of anti-Queerness happen on hostile campus climates as expressed by Queer students' in Rankin et. al.'s Campus Pride study (2010). Students reported being ignored or dismissed, and even stared at because of our Queer identity (Rankin et. al., 2010). Like Smith, Allen & Danley's study, where male African American students expressed what they felt when experiencing racial battle fatigue, Queer students reported similar feelings of hopelessness, and fear (Rankin et. al., 2010, p. 562). Queer students are faced with these mundane forms of oppression daily, and these symptoms of racial battle fatigue daily, and this can cause further suffering for us over time and impact us academically.

Academic Impact

Constantly experiencing violence, and hostility causes a student to suffer. Suffering within this context is defined as "a way to describe the anxiety, fear, stress, disappointment, self-loathing, and other psychological and emotional conditions that show up in people's lives" (Ginwright, 2015, p. 28). The aspects that make up suffering, such as anxiety, and other psychological and emotional conditions can have a negative impact on a student's academic success. In a longitudinal study done by Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt (2009) on the effects of mental health, and academic success; students who were dealing with medium to high depression or anxiety had lower GPAs than those with low depression or no anxiety (p. 17). They note that "depression has a significant negative association with GPA…co-occurrence of depression and anxiety is associated with a significant additional drop" (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 20). Unfortunately, depression can also be a predictor, with a 4.7% increase, in a student dropping out of our institutions (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009, p. 20). This seems to correlate with the majority of Rankin et. al., (2010) where 35% of respondents had considered

leaving their institutions due to the campus hostility they faced (p. 138). In Rankin et. al.'s study some students report as to why they thought of leaving their institutions, such as, "… the obvious allowance of derogatory language towards gays by campus faculty" and "the atmosphere is completely toxic for me. Kids would call people fags… if you don't fit in, you are completely alone" (Rankin et. al., 2010, p. 139). When anti-Queer violence is not acknowledged, or called out by peers or staff and faculty, students often feel that they should either leave their institution or not disclose their identity, to feel safe.

Silencing

With the threat of violence, many oppressed individuals who can choose to not disclose oppressed identities out of fear. Within a reportedly hostile campus climate, respondents were more likely to avoid disclosure of their sexual and gender identity to avoid negative consequences such as isolation, dismissal, and physical violence (Rankin et. al., 2010 p. 117, 121). This creates what Noelle-Neumann calls a "spiral of silence", as quoted by Warber and Fox (2015). Generally, the spiral of silence references to a person with a minority opinion (Warber & Fox, 2015). This fear of isolation and continued violence continues to grow in us, and when one voice is silenced another person can lose the courage to come out, and be their authentic selves (Warber & Fox, 2015). Unlike in Warber and Fox's research, students cannot unfriend or unfollow their classmates, like they can online. Students can choose to avoid their oppressors, and they already do' 36.2% of Queer people who identified as LGBQ in Rankin et. al.'s study avoided their harassers (Rankin et. al., 2010).

However, sometimes Queer students will go to further lengths to protect themselves and keep their identities silent. To avoid the risk of isolation or being deemed an outcast, Queer students may avoid Queer spaces on campuses altogether (Warber & Fox 2015; Rankin et. al.,

2010). Being forced into silence to the point where Queer students avoid spaces that they may have created or were created for them is concerning, because these spaces were created to allow them to be Queer. These resource centers or clubs are often the only places students can find community pertaining to Queer history, safety, or transition related resources. Also, when students stop showing up to Queer clubs, and resource centers on campus, because of the threat of anti-Queer violence, other students may feel that they must silence their Queer identity, because they see very little Queer representation, and feel that their existence is very marginalized (Warber & Fox, 2015)

Creating Change and Healing

Queer students are suffering from psychological conditions, performing poorly academically because of these psychological conditions, being silenced, and leaving their institutions because of the daily systemic oppression they face. Suffering, which is the permanent conditions of injustice and a result of trauma and violence, leaves students feeling powerless, hopeless, and has them internalizing their oppression (Ginwright, 2015, p.25).

To help reduce the violence Queer students face, institutions, staff and faculty, and fellow students, must transform themselves and their relationships that are causing harm, and to collectively create healing and build hope (Ginwright, 2015). Healing, as describe by Ginwright, is "the process of restoring health and well-being to individuals and communities (2011, p. 36). Collective hope, involves three features: "(1) *shared experiences* from the conditions of everyday life, (2*) radical imagination* about freedom, peace, and justice, (3) *critical action*, when community members perceive the conditions, traumas of daily life as both wrong and subject to redress (Ginwright, 2015, p.22-23). Collective hope does not just involve Queer students, staff, and faculty; collective hope involves everyone, even those who do not suffer from the daily

traumas of anti-Queer violence (Ginwright, 2015, p. 21). Healing, allows Queer students recover

from the psychological suffering that anti-Queer violence has caused them. Hope will allow

Queer students to thrive, which is the optimal conditions of justice, and allow them to have

control of their life, envision and pursue their dreams, give them power, and give them peace

(Ginwright, 2015, p. 25).

Staff and Faculty

As an effort to make a warmer and accepting climate, staff and faculty can Queer the

curriculum. This means making the curriculum Queer-inclusive (Snapp et. al., 2015). O'Connell

(2008) suggests that Queer-inclusive curriculum should be added to school's current curriculum.

Doing so would allow new language to arise, and Queer narratives, that were silenced by

oppression, be heard (O'Connell, 2008). Although Snapp et. al.'s research focuses on education

at the high school level, their data shows that curricula that is Queer inclusive and supportive can

promote a positive campus climate for Queer students. A warmer climate occurs at institutions

that have Queer inclusive curriculum, because students saw the effort their staff and faculty put

into Queering the curriculum, and allowing students to see themselves in their studies (Snapp et.

al., 2015, p. 590). In fact, Queer students reported feeling safer and experienced less violence on

campus when their schools had a higher level of inclusive and supportive Queer curricula (Snapp

et. al., 2015, p. 590).

Queering the curriculum should go beyond just adding Queer courses, and Queer

examples within an institutions regular curriculum. Staff and faculty can advocate for the

creation of Queer courses, minors and majors. At the University of Washington, Tacoma, classes

focusing on sexuality are offered, but the course descriptions do not explicitly state that they are

focusing on Queer sexualities. When these courses, minors, majors are created, they need to be

clear in their wording that the courses emphasis is focused on Queerness, Queer sexuality, and Queer gender. The creation of Queer studies needs help from dedicated to anti-oppression work, to create hope and healing within their institutions (Ginwright, 2015).

Institutions

Institutions can improve campus climates through leading by example. One way for institutions to start is to gather data on students' Queer (or non-Queer) identities (Consortium of Higher Education, 2015). This can happen through campus wide surveys and within the institution's application process for admission, housing, and student health intake forms (Rankin et. al., 2010). The Consortium of Higher Education suggests specific wording, such as "this information is used for" or "your responses will be kept private and secure" (Consortium of Higher Education, 2015). This could be followed by students being shown a list of sexual orientations and gender identities, both lists allowing students to choose all that apply, add an additional category or choose not to disclose at all (Consortium of Higher Education, 2015). These questions should be asked if the application process asks a student about their sex (Consortium of High Education, 2015). The Consortium of Higher Education, also suggests that if these questions cannot be put into the school's application process, that another form should be created and filled out by students that asks about their gender identity, and sexuality, such as, a form filled out by students who are admitted to or enrolled at the institution (2015) The Consortium of Higher Education further suggests that these questions should be optional, students answers should not be listed in the visible directory, and that students should be able to change their information, because gender and sexuality are fluid (Consortium of Higher Education, 2015). This action can show Queer students that identities are seen and valid to their institutions, and that they have a choice on whether they should disclose their identities or not.

Another change an institution can take is to create a Queer specific resource center (Rankin et. al., 2010; Consortium of Higher Education, 2017). This resource center should be an institutionally funded space specifically related to Queer education and support services (Rankin et. al., 2010). The center should be staffed by a professional or graduate assistant, and be open ideally full time (Rankin et. al., 2010; Consortium of Higher Education, 2017). This means that the resource center should not be solely staffed by part-time undergraduate students. While not all schools have the resources to build a center dedicated solely to Queer students to provide us resources and solutions to our problems, researchers also suggest that another center, such as a diversity center, can take on the role and hire a related professional (Rankin et. al., 2010).

Lastly, institutions can make an effort to hirer Queer staff and faculty as well as Queer friendly staff and faculty. Hiring faculty that reflects the student body benefits Queer students in the same way as students of color, and that includes understanding values, "out-of-school" practices, and how students "practices and values shape them as learners" (Santoro, 2013, p. 859). Queer staff can have a better and deeper understanding of the oppression and violence Queer students feel, because they too have lived a similar experience (Santoro, 2013, p. 859). Even if Queer faculty do not match the same exact identity as their Queer students, such as a cis gay professor of color and a white asexual trans woman, the professor can understand and relate to the student's feeling otherness when compared to the hegemonic identity seen throughout their campuses (Santoro, 2013, p. 859). These professors, with shared experiences of the threat of violence, can advocate and provide space for Queer students (Santoro, 2013). When hiring Queer and Queer friendly faulty, the hiring process should take into consideration if the Queer and Queer friendly faculty are dedicated to anti-oppression work. Bringing in Queer and Queer friendly staff and faculty that are focused on anti-oppression work can prepare cisgender and

heterosexual students for a diverse world (Santoro, 20130). This change can allow cisgender and heterosexual students to grow and become "culturally aware, and socially just and responsible global citizens" (Santoro, 2013, p. 860).

Conclusion

In the U.S., eleven transgender people have already been killed by anti-Queer violence in, 2017. As a Queer student, am afraid to go to my campus because of this anti-Queer violence. The issue for Queer students is not our right to pee or our ability to change our names in a school's database, but instead the issue is that we are afraid to use the bathroom because we can be killed, and that we are afraid to ask if we can change our names, because we afraid of the repercussions of how ingrained it is in society for people to react violently towards difference. Although this paper focused on Queer students, anti-Queer violence, and hostility, systemic oppression can appear anywhere, such as K-12 schools, in the media, in our local and national politics, in our churches, and in our homes. Systemic oppression can occur to anyone, such as Black and Brown disabled youth, Queer undocumented immigrants, women in higher education, and although the issues people face may look different based on their intersecting identities and live experiences, the root cause is still systems of oppression that are created to uphold the power of men who are often white, cisgender, heterosexual, able bodied, fluent in the English language, and considered to be natural born citizens in their countries.

By creating a campus wide community, involving students, staff and faculty, and institutions, that is dedicated to hope and healing we can move beyond looking at the issues of underrepresented students as *just* singular issues or issues that occur because of our identity (Ginwright, 2015; Collins & Blige, 2016). Understanding why hope and healing is needed, is understanding that violence is systemic, and that violence happens to people with intersecting

identities, especially Black and Brown Queer women. Hope and healing is need on campuses, because the lessons as to why hope and healing is needed and how hope and healing can be created, will not remain solely on campuses. As students graduate, or transfer, the lessons learned about hope and healing can shape other communities they may belong too. Hope and healing can spread to families, churches, local and national politics, and even around the world.

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