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Predicting coming-out behavior in lesbian women

Constance Phillips

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PREDICTING COMING-OUT BEHAVIOR IN LESBIAN WOMEN

A Project Presented to the Faculty of California State College San Bernardino

by
Constance R. Phillips
June, 1984

Approved by:

Chairperson

6/12/84 Date
PREDICTING COMING-OUT BEHAVIOR
IN LESBIAN WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates behavioral, personality and psychological factors which influence coming-out behavior in lesbians. Twenty-one black lesbians and 56 white lesbians responded to questions designed to assess: Self-esteem, locus of control (LOC), anxiety, race, reference group affiliation, the length of time self-identified as a lesbian and the quality of coming-out experiences. Two step-wise multiple regression analyses were performed to determine the best model for predicting the extent to which a lesbian is out to family and friends (first model) and the degree of attempting to "pass" as heterosexual (second model). Data were analyzed with a canonical correlation in an attempt to understand the relationship between the linear composite of the "coming-out" and "passing" variables with the linear composite of the seven independent variables. Both regression equations resulted in reduced models which included six of the original independent variables. In the equation predicting "coming-out" behavior, reference group affiliation was the major contributor to variance accounted for. In the equation which predicted "passing" behavior, reference group affiliation and LOC each contributed significantly. The canonical correlation resulted in a
statistically significant and conceptually meaningful canonical variate which can be interpreted as: being high in reference group participation, having an internal LOC, being self-identified as a lesbian longer and having high self-esteem are related to passing less frequently.
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Lastly, a sincere thanks to my friends, whose interest in this project helped to motivate me, and to the lesbians whose participation allowed this study to materialize.
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INTRODUCTION

"Coming-out" has been defined as the process of self-identification as a gay man or lesbian woman (Dank, 1971). Through the course of this identity development, homoerotic persons (gays and lesbians) are faced with specific situations in which they can reveal their orientation to others. This process of making one's sexual orientation known is called "coming out" behavior.

Coming-out behavior is viewed as an essential element in lesbian and gay identity development (Lee, 1977; Cass, 1979). Given the significance of this process, it seems important to understand what variables affect coming out behavior. To facilitate this understanding, it is useful to view coming-out behavior as a special case of self-disclosure.

Coming-Out Behavior as a Special Case of Self-Disclosure

In reviewing the self-disclosure literature, varying conceptualizations were discovered. Self disclosure has been understood in a broad sense as practically anything that one says about oneself to another. Alternatives to this broad definition have been to make distinctions between types of self-disclosure. Culbert (1968), for example, proposed two ways in which we make ourselves known.
to others. The first, "self-disclosure" refers to explicit communication to others of information that one believes these others would not be able to acquire unless disclosed by him/herself. The second, "self-description", is information that one is comfortable revealing to almost anyone. Moustakas (1962) and Egan (1970) have also theorized with regard to types of self-disclosure and have proposed to forms. The first, proposed by Moustakas (1962) is known as "honesty". This is a self-description which is designed to invite the listener to share in the speaker's experience. "Honesty", like Culbert's "self-disclosure", represents a true attempt of the speaker to be known by the listener. "History" on the other hand, (Egan, 1970), is a type of disclosure in which the speaker presents past information about him/herself with the purpose of distracting the listener from personal involvement. This strategy to avoid being known is comparable to Culbert's "self-description" in that both represent attempts to avoid interpersonal closeness between the speaker and the listener.

If one refers to coming-out behavior in lesbians using the framework of self-disclosure theories, the revelation of one's sexual orientation can best be compared to Culbert's "self-disclosure" and Moustakas' "honesty". The theories presented thus far would seem to imply that when one is revealing one's homoerotic preference, it is
healthier to be honest and open than not. To help clarify
the concept of self-disclosure, it is useful to present
non-disclosure as a contrast. Non-disclosure comprises
strategies of communication designed to avoid being known,
like "self-description" and "history". "Passing" is the
term used to describe lesbians trying to hide their
socio-sexual orientation. Two such behaviors are: lying
(i.e., presenting information regarding one's identity
which is intended to convey a heterosexual identity), and
concealment (i.e., purposefully not revealing information
which would identify one as a lesbian).

Jourard (1967) proposed that the non-disclosure
pattern is only broken when the individual experiences the
process as safe and when there is much to be gained by
disclosing or lost by not disclosing. In applying this
principal to lesbian-identity disclosure, it seems that it
would be particularly difficult for lesbians to break their
non-disclosure pattern.

Other theorists have explored the quality and quantity
of self-disclosure. Such attempts to identify
interpersonal variables affecting this form of
communication have been quite productive. One discovery
has been that the nature of self-disclosure is affected by
the relationship in question. Quinn (1965) and Murdock,
Chenowith and Rissman (1969) found support for the presence
of a curvilinear relationship between the intimacy level
among communicators and the amount of self-disclosure. That is, individuals tended to disclose most to strangers with whom no further contact was expected (e.g., the "bus rider phenomenon") and to very close friends. The least amount of disclosure occurred when there was a moderate level of intimacy or with strangers with whom further contact was expected. In evaluating the variables which influence self disclosure, the issues of trust and acceptance appear to be important facilitators (Johnson & Noonan, 1972). Gilbert (1974) has referred to this as "confirmation", the degree to which one feels able to be accepted, regardless of the content of the information revealed. Theorists have seemed to suggest that a curvilinear model would be less likely if maximum confirmation were present (Gilbert, 1974). That is, if the threat of rejection in moderate friendships were lessened, then the level of self-disclosure in these relationships would be comparable to that found with strangers and close friends. In this case, the relationship between intimacy and self-disclosure would be linear in nature. If this hypothesis can be applied to the interpersonal relationships of lesbian women, then it is possible that lesbians more often come out to very close friends and strangers than to moderately close friends.

Even with the long-standing controversy between proponents of the linear and curvilinear models of
disclosure, there is still much agreement on the nature of this interpersonal behavior. Some points of agreement are that self-disclosure usually occurs in dyads, in the context of positive social relationships and where disclosure is reciprocated (Pearce and Sharp, 1973). Additionally, Pearce and Sharp concluded that self-disclosure typically occurs in increments. That is, information is disclosed as the relationship between the individuals stabilizes. Another point of agreement regarding factors influencing self-disclosure is in the area of "target" characteristics. The target is the listener in the self-disclosure interaction. When the target engages in reciprocal disclosure the likelihood of further self-disclosure increases (Pearce and Sharp, 1973). Littlefield added to our understanding of the effects of target characteristics in his 1974 study which compared white, Mexican-American and black males and females in their willingness to disclose to a variety of targets. The preferred target for white and Mexican-American women was their best friend, while the preferred target for black women was their mother. The least favored target for all groups was their father.

Some of the interpersonal variables impacting on self-disclosure have been identified. These same variables quite probably affect lesbian coming-out behavior as well. If this is in fact the case, then the coming out experience
is expected to be dyadic, be incremental and occur in the context of a positive relationship. To apply the research on target characteristics, it seems to follow that lesbians might disclose most when that behavior is reciprocated. Additionally, white lesbians should come out most to their best friends, whereas blacks should prefer their mothers as target.

While the literature reviewed above does contribute to our understanding of coming-out behavior in lesbians, this research should be applied to lesbians only after one considers the important fact that coming-out as a lesbian is probably more difficult than the types of self-disclosure typically researched. One must ask: "How is the process of self-disclosure affected when the content of that disclosure can lead to harmful consequences (i.e., psychological, political or economic oppression)?" Is self-disclosure modified by the degree of potential stress in the environment? In attempting to apply self-disclosure theories to coming-out behavior two categories of variables are of relevance. First, those factors which are external to the individual (i.e., societal oppression and peer pressure) will be presented. Additionally, the possible reactions to these stressors will be examined. Second, proposals will be made as to those factors which are internal and which may influence coming-out. These variables are present in varying quantities and qualities
across persons and across situations (i.e., personality variables). Such individual differences may also include race and personality variables. Internal variables will be appraised regarding their ability to mediate the stress resulting from external factors.

**External Factors and How They Influence Coming-Out Behavior**

Status as a lesbian in the United States at the present time means status as an oppressed minority (Humphreys, 1972). Few lesbians escape the ostracizing effects of overt oppression such as legal and religious sanctions against lesbianism. Oppressive conditions such as laws declaring the illegality of lesbian sexual activity, housing discrimination, the difficulty of adopting children and the lack of validation of their relationships by the government, social agencies, churches, family members and friends creates problems of self-esteem and identity with which many lesbians must struggle. Sexual oppression can also take less overt forms, specifically the roles required of persons by sex, age and other norms, (i.e., heterosexuality) which, if carried out successfully entitle one to be regarded as "normal." Jourard makes the important observation that normal is not necessarily "healthy" (Jourard, 1971b). These roles can alienate one from one's true self. In gays and lesbians such alienation
from themselves would seem to alienate them from other gays and lesbians who could serve as a reference group. Jacobs and Tedford (1980) have pointed out the harmful effects of such alienation which is directly related to low self-esteem. In addition to alienation from themselves and from their reference group, gays and lesbians risk alienation from larger society as a result of stigmatization (Cass, 1979).

Alienation is only one aspect of the experience of being a member of an oppressed sexual minority. In addition to alienation, some suffer the consequences of "passing" as heterosexual (Bayley, 1974). "Passing" refers to attempts by gays and lesbians to keep their sexual identity secret and has been found by Bayley to be related to shame, depression, interpersonal awkwardness and anxiety. The results clearly suggest the importance of coming-out to psychological well being.

In appraising the social and political situations of lesbian women, the issue of stress is most obvious. The question which presents itself is: how do lesbians adjust to the stress of their oppression?

Adaptive and Maladaptive Responses to the Stress of Lesbian Oppression

Stress theory proposes that adaptive responses to stress are more likely when an individual has, at his or
her disposal, stress mediators. For example, a positive association with one's lesbian reference group can serve as a buffer against the stress of being oppressed as a lesbian (Brooks, 1981; Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1973) and lessen the harmful effects of the resulting stress. One example of the harmful consequence of the absence of stress mediators is the choice of total non-disclosure. In such cases, the outcome is self-alienation or "estrangement from one's true self" (Jourard, 1971b). While Jourard did not directly refer to lesbians in his research, an application of his theories to lesbians seems to suggest that if a lesbian denies her identity, then this discrepancy must be hidden and self-disclosure becomes more threatening and more stressful. As a result, others are experienced as stressors since she must hide her identity from them.

Qualitatively, there are two ways in which lesbians can respond to the stress of their oppression. First, they can respond in ways which are adaptive and which involve positive resolutions (i.e., seeking support from the lesbian reference group). Second, they can respond maladaptively by devaluing lesbianism or the lesbian reference group; they can engage in self-hatred by disliking their lesbianism, being ashamed of their lesbian friends or lovers, etc. The maladaptive responses listed here reflect "homophobia" on the part of lesbians and demonstrate their fear of others discovering
their homoerotic orientation. This can lead to denial (e.g., passing as heterosexual) and guilt. If one denies one's lesbianism and devalues the lesbian community, then isolation from that reference group also becomes a problem, and the stress is further increased. The stressors which lesbians face are multidirectional (from self, society, significant others) and they are multidimensional (personal and interpersonal, psychological and physical). In efforts to counter these ego-destructive stressors, lesbians can become more visible and active members of the Lesbian and Gay community (Moses & Hawkins, 1981; Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1973). Based on self-congruence and social authenticity theories, lesbians thereby permit opportunities for validation of their lifestyle and create chances for new and old relationships to be built on authentic self-representation (Brooks, 1981).

Additionally, this disclosure can eliminate the tension of waiting to see how being discovered as a lesbian will affect one's status. From Jourard's theory of self-alienation and the necessity of hiding the true self, it seems reasonable that congruency, achieved through self-disclosure, could eliminate a great deal of stress. The sense of community achieved through association with one's reference group has been shown by Manneheim (1966) to be instrumental in increasing self-esteem. This was supported by Jacobs and Tedford (1980) in their study of
the importance of reference groups to gay men. They concluded that self-esteem was positively and significantly related to the importance of the reference group to the individual.

The costs of maladaptive responses to stress as a lesbian have been presented. They include alienation from one's reference group, lack of validation as a lesbian, low self-esteem and increased anxiety. The benefits include, at most, a possible postponement of negative responses from others. The costs of adaptive responses such as affiliation with the lesbian reference group, include being more visible as a lesbian, hence more frequently subjected to direct criticism from anti-lesbian factions of society. This is an experience which is often quite stressful and invalidating. The benefits, however, are many and invaluable. It has been pointed out that adaptive responses lower the anxiety which accompanies self-alienation. They also provide a sense of community, an increase in self-esteem and validation of one's lesbianism.

A review of self-disclosure theory has provided an understanding of some of the interpersonal variables which can influence self-disclosure and therefore may affect coming-out behavior. An examination of external factors which modify coming-out behavior has demonstrated that lesbians can respond either adaptively or maladaptively to
their unique oppression (i.e., oppression as a sexual minority). These reactions can be beneficial, costly or both. It is also evident that the oppressive condition of lesbians has the potential to influence their willingness to reveal their socio-sexual orientation. Given that lesbians in the United States exist in the same society and face approximately the same level of oppression, how can one account for the fact that some lesbians are more "out" than others and that some react more adaptively than others? The differences may be due to the influence of internal mediators or individual differences which permit many to function in a healthy manner despite their oppression, while others cope less well.

**Individual Differences and How They Influence Coming-Out Behavior and Its Accompanying Stress**

Much research has been done regarding the personality variables affecting self-disclosure. Personality variables are also expected to influence coming-out behavior and hence are of relevance to the present study. The important personality factors and influences are; self-esteem, locus of control orientation, the quality and quantity of prior self-disclosure experiences and race. Also, personality factors influence one's ability to cope with stress (e.g., internal sources of self esteem and an internal LOC orientation.)
Self-Esteem and Its Relationship To Self-Disclosure

Wells and Marwell (1976) explained that reliance on internal sources of self-esteem (e.g., a sense of self as competent and valid) as opposed to dependency on external sources (status-conferring roles, material possessions), provides a buffer against devaluation. Brooks, (1981) was consistent with this view when she posited that lesbians who rely on external sources of self-esteem are expected to experience more discomfort, in terms of stress and threat to self-esteem, in response to devaluation of their lesbianism, than those who rely on internal sources. As expected, the converse was true for lesbians with internal sources of self-esteem (i.e., they suffered comparably less stress because such situations were not as threatening to their self-esteem). Research on the importance of self-esteem to self-disclosure has also concluded that higher self-esteem is also a determinant of disclosure (Vosen, 1966). In the context of the self-disclosure literature which has been presented, it seems probable that when lesbians whose self-esteem is external and/or low, disclose their identity to others and are not responded to positively, they would see the experience as more threatening and harmful. Consequently, they would be less likely to disclose this information in the future. This hypothesis has been supported by Jourard (1971a) and Shapiro (1968).
Gilbert (1974), on the other hand, states that the relationship between self-disclosure and self-esteem is less clear and direct. She has found that persons with moderate levels of self-esteem are more willing to self-disclose than those whose self-esteem is high. More recently, Kinsler (1973) has researched ego identity and intimacy and found some support for the proposition that one must at least have an identity of some sort in order to interact freely and intimately with others. Of course, the quality of one's interpersonal relationships is greatly enhanced if his identity is not only present but is positive. With respect to lesbians, it seems implied that they will be able to have intimate relationships and "come-out" only to the extent that they, at minimum, experience themselves as having a valid identity as lesbians. The viewing of their identity as valid is a necessary precursor to positive self-esteem regarding that dimension of themselves.

**Locus of Control Orientation and Its Relationship to Self-Disclosure**

Like self-esteem, locus of control has been found to be capable of influencing self-disclosure. The construct of locus of control (LOC) was introduced in the early 1960's and refers to whether one perceives control of one's environment as being internal (under individual control) or
external (controlled by outside forces). Ryckman, Sherman & Burgess (Ryckman, et al., 1973) discovered that internals were more willing than externals to disclose information about themselves. Among the many studies on perceived control was an investigation by Glass et al., (1969) which demonstrated that subjects needed only to have knowledge that they could exert control in order to lessen the effects of aversive stimuli. That is, when the subjects LOC orientation was internal, they were not as harmed by the noxious stimuli. This was supported by Glass, Reim & Singer (1971). Glass et al., (1969) also found that when individuals could predict aversive events, perceived control over these events was greater and the effects were minimized. Thus, persons with an internal LOC are expected to be less affected by aversive stimuli. If this finding can be applied to lesbians, then it is possible that lesbians with an internal LOC are less affected by their oppression as a sexual minority. Lefcourt, et al., (1968) has pointed out another way in which internals differ from externals. Specifically, internals are more resistant to influence and more discriminating with regard to which influences they will accept. This was especially true when they were given directions which disagreed with their own more logical interpretations during an experimental investigation. This seems to imply that an internal LOC in lesbians will permit greater confidence in the legitimacy
of their socio-sexual orientation, as they will be more protected against the aversive effects of oppression.

Locus of control orientation, like self-esteem, has been demonstrated to serve as a stress mediator. This research, by Johnson and Sarason (1978), concluded that those subjects with an internal LOC orientation were better able to cope with stress. Those persons with an external orientation responded with depression and anxiety when faced with the same stressor. Again, the research on locus of control appears to say that lesbians who are internal, will be better able to cope with the stress of lesbian oppression (which includes coming-out as a lesbian). Thus far, two individual variables have been identified as influential to the process of coming-out. A third variable, the quality of one's coming out experiences, will be explored.

**Positive Coming-Out Experiences as a Stress Mediator**

A final potential stress mediator is the quality of one's coming-out experiences. Specifically, can positive experiences with past self-disclosure mediate the stress of being a lesbian? An application of self-disclosure theory would appear to support the following: If a lesbian self-discloses and is received in a positive manner and with acceptance then the expectation of confirmation is increased. Therefore she would expect, at least some of
the time, to be responded to positively and will be more likely to disclose her psychosexual orientation in the future. Thus, the quality of a lesbian's past coming-out experiences, if positive, can possibly serve as a stress mediator for the stress of coming-out and the fear of rejection.

The studies presented thus far have pointed to the importance of certain variables to the mediation of stress. If one were to apply these findings to black lesbians, it is probable that one would find some differences in the types of available stress mediators. The reason for this supposition is that research has demonstrated racial differences in the variables which have been identified here as important to coping with stress.

Racial Differences In Stress Mediation

It has been established that there are racial differences in variables demonstrated to facilitate coping with stress. Bell and Weinberg (1978) reported that black gays and lesbians complained of more stress than their white counterparts. At the same time, research has repeatedly portrayed blacks as more external in their LOC orientation, less self-disclosing (hence possibly less likely to have positive self-disclosure experiences) and, as Dyne (1980) has shown, less involved in gay activism. Dyne has supported the importance of involvement in the Gay
community to increasing self-esteem. Thus self-esteem is possibly another stress mediator found in lesser degrees in black lesbians. Does this imply that black lesbians are less able to cope with the stresses associated with their status as an oppressed socio-sexual minority?

In the investigation of locus of control orientation, attempts have been made to understand racial differences. Majority groups such as whites in this society, are more likely than minorities to be internal in their LOC. To explain this, Lefcourt (1976) takes the position that perceived control, or internal LOC, is positively related to the availability of opportunity and how punishing one's environment is. Since black lesbians, as an oppressed racial group, are afforded fewer opportunities for success (e.g., educationally, economically, etc.) and are more often discriminated against, they are expected to reveal a higher prevalence of external LOC.

A further examination of race as a variable in coping with the stress of coming out leads to Lefcourt (1975), a study of the relationship between LOC and self-disclosure. Lefcourt concluded that internals engaged in more self-disclosure. Hypothetically, this is because they feel more in control of the possible consequences of their disclosure. His research makes clearer the relationships among race, self-disclosure and LOC. Given the effect of LOC orientation on perceived control and consequently on
self-disclosure, the following questions arise with regard to coming-out behavior in black lesbians: Are they less able to cope with the stress of coming-out than are white lesbians? Is the combination of racial oppression and lesbian oppression significant enough to regard the environment of black lesbians as "punishing" as defined by Lefcourt? If so, then one would more often expect an external LOC and possibly less coming-out behavior. If there is less frequent coming-out behavior, then it is possible that black lesbians, by virtue of their comparatively low self-disclosure (Dyne, 1980), have fewer opportunities for positive coming-out experiences. Considering the importance of positive self-disclosure experiences to further disclosures (Gilbert, 1974) and the importance of coming-out to the validation of one's identity, the reduction of stress (Brooks, 1981; Bayley, 1974; Jourard, 1971a) and the maintenance of self-esteem (Manneheim, 1966), it seems logical that the black lesbians in Bell and Weinberg's study would report more tension and loneliness than the white lesbians.

Interpersonal, external and individual variables which can influence coming-out behavior have been presented. The importance of coming-out behavior to overall psychological health has been described as well. However, the specific role of coming-out behavior in lesbian identity formation remains to be clarified. Two theoretical models will be
presented and coming-out will be put forth as a behavior which is essential to identity development.

**Models of the Coming-Out Process**

Coming-out behavior has thus far been compared to self-disclosure and has been understood in terms of its interpersonal implications. That is, it can invite various forms of stressors (i.e., oppression, alienation from larger society, etc.). Coming-out behavior can also be placed in the context of lesbian/gay identity formation. Several models for this development have been proposed.

**Lee's Model**

Lee's (1977) "Going Public: A study in the Sociology of Homosexual Liberation", presents a three-stage model of self-identification. Each stage consists of a number of steps. The first stage, "signification", is the process of becoming "deviant" by giving up the options of claiming a "neutral" sexual identity and accepting one which is different from the heterosexual majority. In the early stages of signification, an individual may be aware of sexual attraction to the same sex but do nothing to act on it behaviorally. **STEP 1** of the signification stage involves fantasizing about same-sex sexual and emotional involvements. **STEP 2** is identified by anonymous sexual encounters (primarily in the case of gay men). There is no disclosing of one's sexual orientation and no contact with
the "gay world" (Hoffman, 1968). Such individuals may be married or otherwise live a heterosexual life. STEP 3 is characterized by long term involvements in lesbian or gay relationships without contact with the gay or lesbian community or other gays or lesbians. STEP 4 of the signification stage is the "closet queen". This person makes contacts with other gays and lesbians but is not active in that social world. He or she may or may not live with a same-sex lover and is careful that society does not discover his/her homoeroticism. While everyone does not go through each step of the signification process, everyone experiences at least some of its characteristics before moving on to STAGE II, "Coming-Out". This stage is described as a "debut" and is divided into five steps: STEP 1-"First debut": During this step the individual is reluctant to socialize with gays and lesbians and when contact is made he or she is nervous about being recognized. STEP 2-"Regular at bars": At this point one goes freely to gay/lesbian bars or gatherings alone or with friends without concern for being recognized. He or she sees such situations as opportunities to be with others like him/herself. STEP 3-"Out to heterosexual friend": At this point, a few carefully selected nongay friends are told with the understanding that they are not to disclose that information to others. Typically, nothing is said about homosexuality in the presence of others. Outside of
lesbian bars, etc. the individual plays the role of heterosexual. STEP 4-"Out at work": Now the lesbian woman or gay man will allow their sexual orientation to be known within a restricted social network (e.g., a close circle of friends, some lesbian and gay, and some not) or at work if social conditions (e.g., level of intimacy) allows it. Boundaries are clear enough so that the secret can be let out without traveling too far. STEP 5-"In Gay Liberon group": When this stage is reached, one comes out to gay/lesbian organizations and/or those supportive of the rights of homoerotic persons. After STAGE II, "Coming-Out", comes STAGE III, "Going public." This involves a public and completely open declaration of a gay/lesbian identity. Lee pointed out two steps, STEP 1: Identification in public media and STEP 2: Becoming a familiar name or spokesperson to and/or for the lesbian and gay community. Lee's model provides a useful framework for understanding coming-out behavior in the context of lesbian identity formation. Another such model was delineated by Cass (1977).

**Cass' Model**

Cass' is a six-stage model of identity formation based on interpersonal congruency theory. This theory rests on the assumption that change and stability in the way one behaves are a function of the congruency, or lack thereof,
which exists within a person's interpersonal environment. Movement from one stage to the next is motivated by incongruencies between the individual and him/herself and their environment. That is, while the individual may see him/herself as being attracted to same sex persons, he or she may still see him/herself as nongay. Growth occurs when the individual resolves the discrepancy between the perception of him/herself and others. Additionally, this person holds a perception of other peoples' view of his/her homosexuality. Finally, the person will have a perception of what homosexuality is and may or may not attribute those characteristics to the self. The interpersonal variables delineated above form a matrix. That is, each element may be assigned a positive or negative value (e.g., homosexuality may be seen as negative or positive, others' perceptions of one's homosexuality may be understood as positive or negative, etc.) Additionally, each variable in the interpersonal matrix has a cognitive element as well, as the individual will assign some value to their perceptions (e.g., the individual may perceive significant others as having negative feelings about her lesbianism. She may then either value or devalue their judgement.) Thus, congruency may be achieved by changing one's behavior to match the interpersonal matrix which labels one as heterosexual (this would be identity foreclosure) or the homoerotic individual can change his/her identity from
heterosexual to homosexual thereby achieving congruency. The latter is understood as a healthy resolution and permits the continued progression through the six stages of identity development.

STAGE 1: "Identity Confusion", involves a realization that one's homosexual thoughts, feelings, etc. are not congruent with one's identity as a heterosexual. As the individual becomes more able to label his/her behavior as homosexual, the incongruency is heightened and the motivation to move to STAGE 2 increases. On the other hand, one can engage in an elaborate system of denial which leads to self-hatred and results in identity foreclosure.

The second stage, "Identity Comparison", involves a tentative commitment to a homosexual identity. The task of this stage is to handle the social isolation resulting from the transition from nongay society to the new gay/lesbian reference group. To reduce feelings of alienation, an individual can behave in one of four ways: He or she can devalue the importance of heterosexual others while at the same time presenting a heterosexual image. Second, he or she can attempt to reduce the incongruency experienced at STAGE 2 by accepting his or her homoeroticism but seeing it as unacceptable. Persons choosing this style of coping will attempt a variety of strategies to devalue the homosexual self. Some of the include: 1.) seeing one's homosexuality as existing only in relation to a specific
person, 2.) focusing on perceiving everyone as ambisexual and maintaining both homosexual and heterosexual behaviors, 3.) accepting the homosexual self-image as a temporary identity which can change at will, 4.) and the final strategy, that of personal innocence: the individual accepts the identity but does not accept responsibility for viewing as desireable or undesireable and will make statements consistent with this view, such as "I was born this way" and "I can't help it." This denouncing of responsibility leads to a self-hating identity. A third approach to dealing with the incongruency and alienation of STAGE 2 is to view one's homosexual behavior as undesireable. Even though one sees his/her behavior as homosexual and defines him/herself as probably gay or lesbian, the behavior is not viewed positively. This pattern is more likely to be seen when the person accepts strong negative reactions from significant others. Attempts are made by these individuals to change their behavior and professional help may even be sought to achieve this end. By inhibiting all sexual activity, one is permitted an asexual identity. This pattern, of course, leads to identity foreclosure. The forth, and final approach to the alienation of STAGE 2 involves inhibition of all homosexual behaviors, the devaluation of homosexuality and the positive portrayal of a heterosexual lifestyle. This allows total rejection of the homosexual
self. Such a reaction is more likely to be found when there is extreme alienation. If these attempts to reduce alienation are successful, then foreclosure occurs and there is no progression to the later stages. If these attempts are unsuccessful, the individual is left with so much self-hatred that he/she may become extremely self-destructive. If the gay or lesbian individual passes through STAGE 2 without foreclosing, they will be faced with STAGE 3, "Identity Tolerance", and an increased commitment to the possibility of their homoerotic identity. This greater level of commitment has several implications. First, there is less confusion regarding one's identity thus making it easier to acknowledge social and sexual needs which are consistent with their self-definition as homoerotic. On the other hand the difference between the way the person (P) sees him/herself and the way that others see P is accentuated. This can heighten alienation and isolation. To cope with these feelings one can seek out the gay and lesbian subculture. These individuals have still not accepted their identity, rather, they tolerate it. Making contact with gays and lesbians is very important during this stage but what is more important is the quality of those contacts. Interacting with the Gay community can provide the person with positive experiences such as meeting partners, availability of role models, practice in feeling more
comfortable in the subculture and a support group. While these contacts are generally positive, this greater involvement with other gays and lesbians can pose some problems for the individual who is coming out. Specifically, one might be faced with the pressure of greater commitment to a gay or lesbian identity, and the possibility that one's identity will become known to persons who are nongay. If the individual emphasizes minimal contact in order to avoid the negative aspects, identity foreclosure is a risk. However, if his or her commitment to the new identity has increased to a point where he or she can say; "I am a homosexual", then STAGE 4 is underway. This fourth stage, "Identity Acceptance", is characterized by increased contacts with the gay/lesbian community. They experience their identity as being validated and accept their new way of life. Other gays and lesbians are given a more positive appraisal and the individual has a sense of belonging. The types of groups with which one becomes involved influence later development through the stages. One type of group affords only partial legitimation (i.e., homosexuality is valid as a private identity but not a public one). The second type of group proposes full legitimation and favors homosexuality as a valid lifestyle, both publicly and privately. If an individual's primary contacts are with the first type of group, then there is no tension caused by the discrepancy
between how P sees him/herself and how society sees P. The reason is that the emphasis is mainly on fitting in and maintaining the same interpersonal matrix. If on the other hand, one is to avoid identity foreclosure, there must be a realization of how nongays can be nonlegitimizing. Also, it must become apparent that P's view of self and how he/she believes others see that self, differ markedly. The realization of this incongruency must create discomfort in order to motivate passage to the fifth stage. To cope with incongruencies, gays and lesbians may engage in passing and limiting their contacts with heterosexuals to those who are close and who will not disclose P's identity. These methods of keeping incongruency at a manageable level succeed, foreclosure is the result. If on the other hand, the strategies are not successful, one may renew efforts to minimize discomfort (e.g., avoiding increasingly more nongays) or one may choose to reject the philosophy of the reference group which offers only partial legitimization (e.g., conclude that passing is no longer acceptable). When the latter occurs, incongruency is allowed to increase and the person progresses to STAGE 5. "Identity Pride", STAGE 5, includes an awareness of the incongruency between the person's view of him/herself as acceptable and society's rejection of that identity. To cope with this, P strategizes in an effort to devalue the importance of heterosexual others and increase the positive perception of
the gay and lesbian subculture. This is accomplished by categorizing the world into "heterosexuals" (which are not significant and not credible) and "homosexuals" (which are valid, significant and credible). Homosexuality is preferred and there is a strong sense of group identity. Incongruency is manageable, however in daily life the values of gays and lesbians are challenged by dominant heterosexual society. The conflict which results creates anger and frustration. This anger coupled with pride, leads to attempts at validation through purposeful confrontation with a society which would devalue P's identity. Thus, disclosure has become a means of coping. While disclosure helps to support one's view of oneself as homoerotic and achieves consistency between P's public and private identities, it can also lead to increased incongruency. When this discomfort becomes unmanageable, the individual may choose to be more selective in his/her disclosure and come out in some situations but not in others. To relieve this incongruency, one may find it necessary to avoid situations which create this discomfort. For example, he or she may change to a job which will allow total disclosure without negative consequences. The perceptions of others' reactions to identity disclosure are very important to whether identity development continues. If one perceives a negative reaction and this is consistent with P's expectation that all nongays will respond
negatively, then the outcome was expected, there is congruency and identity foreclosure results.

On the other hand, if the negative reactions are not consistent with what P expected, then the attempts to cope lead to a progression to STAGE 6, "Identity synthesis". Unlike STAGE 5, this stage is not characterized by a "them and us" philosophy. It is no longer true that "all homosexuals are good" and "all heterosexuals are bad." As P experiences more heterosexuals who are accepting and supportive, trust and credibility increase. At the same time, unsupportive gays and lesbians are devalued. Some of the ways in which this is done are: a.) by determining that other gays and lesbians are the only real source of companionship or b.) by rejecting "heterosexual values" such as marriage. In this stage congruency is maximal, incongruency is minimal and the clear dichotomy between heterosexuals and homosexuals dissipates. One's public life and private life become totally synthesized and integration of P's gay or lesbian identity with all aspects of the self is now possible. The individual's psychosexual orientation, instead of being her/his only identity, is now only one part of the self and the formation of a positive lesbian/gay identity is complete.

Cass (1979) presents her model as a framework for understanding the process of developing a lesbian/gay identity. She cautions that it will need to be revised
according to the context in which it is used. That is, as society's views of the homoerotic individual change, so will the model.

Conceptual Overview

It is evident through Lee's and Cass' models that coming-out behavior is an integral and essential element in the lesbian/gay identity. The literature also supports the necessity of coming-out behavior if individuals are to develop positive homoerotic identities. Depending on one's stage of development, coming out can either be perceived as alienating of one from larger society or as not being an obstacle to her or his integration therein. For example, the inner conflict experienced by some during STAGE I of Cass model, "Identity Confusion", is infrequently disclosed to others for fear of their defining her/him as lesbian or gay. As the individual moves into STAGE II, "Identity Comparison", the resolution of the resulting social alienation is primary. Therefore, during the early stages of the coming-out process, self-disclosure is seen more in terms of its alienating properties. It is not until Cass' sixth stage, "Identity synthesis", that coming-out to others can theoretically be understood in terms of its ability to help (or at worst, not hinder) one's integration into society. At this point the dichotomy between "heterosexuals" and "homosexuals" is less clear and one
incorporates their homoerotic identity with the other aspects of him/herself. According to Cass' model, coming-out behavior (i.e., disclosing one's homoerotic identity) plays an increasing part as identity development proceeds through the prescribed stages. While this is true, it is also the case that coming-out, although it may alienate (i.e., make one a more visible target of criticism from nongays and less open gays and lesbians), it also functions as a validator (i.e., provides a connection to other lesbians and gays and accepting nongays). It is evident that both coming-out to other gays/lesbians and nongays/lesbians are a part of an individual's growth. However, depending on the quality of one's reference group (legitimizing versus nonlegitimizing) coming-out to nongays can either unite one with or alienate one from their reference group. Also, coming-out to this particular type of reference group and adopting their philosophy of partial legitimization can lead to identity foreclosure and thus an identity which is less than completely positive. Furthermore, it has been proposed that coming-out to one's self (redefining oneself as lesbian or gay) is essential to the development of a new psychosexual identity as a homoerotic person. Since coming-out behavior is a vital part of the process of identity formation then it seems feasible that one would want to facilitate its occurrence. The desireability of facilitating this process requires a
greater understanding of relevant factors. Specifically, the functions of personality, racial and other individual variables in the coming out process and coming out behavior.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present study is to understand the contributions of certain psychological and interpersonal variables to coming-out behavior in black and white lesbian women. To facilitate this procedure a theoretical model of the determinants of coming-out will be tested. Based on the literature, it is postulated that affiliation with lesbian groups, the length of time self-identified as a lesbian, locus of control, self-esteem, trait anxiety, the quality of coming-out experiences and race can all be expected to predict the extent to which an individual is "out" to family, friends and co-workers. A further objective is to compare the expectations of others' responses to her coming-out behavior in the two subsamples formed by race. Additionally, there will be an effort to detect a pattern in the coming-out process (i.e., lesbians who tend to show a preference for certain target individuals over others.) Therefore, five hypotheses will be tested:
I. There will be a positive correlation between self-esteem and the degree to which the lesbian
community is viewed as a valued reference group.

II. Based on evidence supporting the lesser degree of lesbian community involvement in black lesbians and the importance of reference groups to self-esteem, a second hypothesis is proposed. That is, black lesbians will be lower in self-esteem than white lesbians.

III. Jourard has found that black women are less self-disclosing than white women. Additionally, Lefcourt theorized that blacks are more external in LOC and that externals less self-disclosing and more anxious than internals. Based on these studies, the following are hypothesized: a) anxiety will be highest in those women who do not come out as frequently and in women who attempt to "pass" more often. b) disclosure of one's lesbian identity will be positively correlated with an internal locus of control orientation and c) an internal LOC will be negatively correlated with anxiety.

IV. Lesbians with a higher quality of coming-out experiences will be less anxious, have higher self-esteem and because of positive past self-disclosure experiences, will come out more often. A model will be tested that is proposed to determine the degree to which a lesbian is "out". It will include data regarding her race, level of trait anxiety, LOC orientation, self-esteem, the quality of past coming-out
experiences, her reference group affiliation and the length of time she has been self-identified as a lesbian.
METHOD

Subjects

The participants in this study consisted of 21 black lesbians and 56 white lesbians. Volunteers over the age of 18 were recruited via word-of-mouth through friends and acquaintances and the Women's Resource Center at the University of California, Riverside. Community-based homophile organizations were also sampled (i.e., The Professional Advisory Council, which serves Riverside and San Bernardino counties and the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Centers in Los Angeles and San Bernardino). Additionally, volunteers were requested through an advertisement in the "Lesbian News", a Costa Mesa-based lesbian newspaper whose circulation is relatively large and spans most of Los Angeles County, Riverside and San Bernadino Counties as well as other areas of Southern California.

Whenever subjects were contacted in person, particular care was taken to assure them that they were in no way obligated to participate in the study. Because of the social pressure which might have been created by the experimenter's presence, this point was emphasized more than once (i.e., before the questionnaire was given to the subject and immediately after the cover letter was read).
Subjects were informed and reminded of their right not to participate and if they chose to take part in the study, had the option to discontinue at any point without negative consequences for doing so. These volunteers were required to complete a ten-page questionnaire (See Appendix A) designed to assess nine variables. The independent variables were: 1) race 2) trait anxiety 3) LOC orientation 4) self-esteem 5) the quality of past coming-out experiences 6) reference group affiliation and 7) the length of time she has been self-identified as a lesbian. The dependent variables were: "coming-out" (i.e., the number of people which she told of her lesbian identity) and "hiding" (i.e., the extent to which she attempted to deny her lesbianism during interpersonal interactions).

Three types of data were extracted from the questionnaire. The first type is that which was used to measure the variables in the linear model: $Y (\text{How "out"}) = X_1 (\text{Race}), X_2 (\text{LOC}), X_3 (\text{Self Esteem}), X_4 (\text{anxiety}), X_5 (\text{How long identified a lesbian}), X_6 (\text{Quantity of reference group affiliation})$ and $X_7 (\text{The quality of coming out experiences})$. The second type of data taken from the questionnaire was that which revealed the presence of any particular pattern in the coming-out process. Lastly, demographic data served to describe the sample for purposes of generalizability.
Demographic Data

The demographic section included eleven items assessing age, race, parents' and subject's occupation, source(s) of income, gross income in the past year, parents' and subjects' religious or spiritual affiliation(s), whether the subject had children and where they lived, where the subject grew up and where she currently lived.

Portions of the demographic section were adapted from a questionnaire by Brooks, (1981) which was constructed to assess minority stress in lesbian women. The comparison of that study to the present one was facilitated by the gathering of comparable descriptive data. Additionally, such information was necessary in order to test race as a variable in the model for predicting coming out behavior, and to help identify factors that might possibly influence the pattern of self-disclosure such as SES, income security, parenthood and where the subject lives. The latter is of possible significance because of the greater availability of lesbian resources in larger cities.

The Coming-Out scale

This aspect of the questionnaire included eight questions, seven of which had sub-items. Question one was a modified version of question number sixteen from Moses' (1978) questionnaire.
**Coming-Out Behavior**

This scale assessed the coming-out score which was equal to the total number of targets and/or situations in which the subject was out, divided by the total number of targets and/or situations possible for that individual. A portion of the coming-out scale was also used for a purpose other than the quantification of coming-out. Specifically, it was used in the derivation of a qualitative measure of coming-out experiences (independent variable #7).

**Quality of Coming-Out Experiences**

The subject's fears and expectations of disclosure and her experiences of the same were measured by using the Coming-out scale in the following way: With regard to their personal expectations of the coming-out process, subjects were asked three questions concerning the targets to whom they were out. First, "How did you expect them to react at first?" Second, "What was their reaction at first?" Third, "How do they presently feel about your lesbianism?" These responses were combined to yield the independent variable, "quality of coming-out experiences."

**The Passing Scale**

This scale consisted of 19 weighted items designed to measure the subject's attempts to deny her lesbianism during interpersonal interactions. The first twelve items
(Part A), concerned the frequency with which individuals disguised their lesbianism by actively behaving in certain ways. The last seven items (Part B), were designed to measure the degree of concealing one's lesbianism in situations where derogatory remarks are specifically made about lesbians. Subjects were asked to rate the frequency of these behaviors as "always", "often", "sometimes", or "never" and assign a numerical value of 0, 1, 2 or 3, respectively.

In order to develop appropriate weights for Part A of this scale, it was piloted on six lesbians who were asked to assign to each item a score from 1 to 12. This score was based on her opinion regarding the degree to which each behavior was designed to conceal one's lesbianism. Those behaviors which were seen as more concealing were assigned higher numbers while those behaviors which were less concealing were given lower numbers. The values for each statement were totalled across subjects and an average ranking was achieved. This procedure was followed for each of the 12 items. (The average rank given to each item may be found in Appendix B-1). The result of piloting these items was that each of these 12 items was assigned a weight based on its rank.

For the actual scoring of these items, the rank orders were reversed so that those items with a higher rank represented less, rather than more concealment. For
example, item #1 ("Using the pronoun 'he' instead of 'she' to refer to a roommate or lover") was given an average ranking of 4. After the rank orders were reversed, this number was given the equivalent rank of 9. Next, this item on the questionnaire was given a value of 4 if the subject's response was "never", 3 if she responded with "sometimes", 2 if her response was "often" and 1 if her answer was "always" (see Appendix B-2 for scoring procedure of Part A). The procedure for scoring Part B of this scale was the same as for that of Part A. (See Appendix B-3 for a details regarding the scoring of complete Passing scale). The major difference was that the weights for this section were assigned and not based on a pilot. The range of possible weights for each item was broader when that item represented more concealment. For example, the first item asked the frequency with which she felt hurt and said nothing in response to derogatory remarks. Because of the weight assigned to this item (and item 2), the scoring was -3 if she "always" responded in this way, -2 if her response was "often", +2 if her answer was "sometimes" and +3 for "never". This can be compared to the next four items which, because of their greater potential to conceal, were given more weight and therefore, a broader range of points associated with their response choices. The last item in part b was not included in the scoring because of ambiguities in the phrasing of the question. (See Appendix
B-3 for a complete explanation of the scoring of part b.) Both parts a and b of this scale were scored such that when subjects frequently behaved in a certain way, their score was lower for that item. In terms of scoring across items the same was true, the more extreme the concealment attempt, the lower the score.

**Length of Lesbian Identification**

Another independent variable which was extracted from the coming-out subscale was variable #5. This referred to the length of time the subject had been self-identified as a lesbian.

**Reference Group Affiliation**

The final variable which was assessed by the coming-out subscale was the degree of involvement in the lesbian community, (independent variable #6). It was measured by items indicating which aspects of the lesbian community were utilized by the subject and how frequently she used them.

**Self Esteem**

This independent variable was quantified by Rosenberg's Self-esteem scale, a ten-item, unidimensional, global self-regard scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Rosenberg originally developed this scale for use with high-school students. The responses were in a four point scale from
strongly agree to strongly disagree but are only scored as agreement or disagreement. The questions revolved around self-approval. The construction of this scale involved the Guttman scaling technique (Wylie, 1974) and was standardized on 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from New York. The scale has since been used on a variety of samples.

Reliability data was provided by the Guttman scale reproducibility coefficient of .92. Additionally, this scale was found to have a test-retest correlation of .85 over a two week period. Convergent validity was discovered by Silber and Tippett (1965) to range from .56 to .83 when they compared Rosenberg's with other self-esteem measures (See Appendix C). Discriminant validity was high when examined by Silber and Tippett and correlations close to zero existed. The predictive validity of this scale has also been demonstrated. Rosenberg (1965) provided much data regarding self-esteem and many social and interpersonal behaviors. For example, the amount of shyness, depression and extra-curricular activities were related to self-esteem as measured by this scale. In general, this scale has good validity and high reliability for such a short instrument.

State and Trait Anxiety

Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety scale (STAI)
consists of two 20-item self-report scales which measure state (situational) anxiety and trait (generalized) anxiety (Spielberger, Gorush & Lushene, 1970). State anxiety is a measure of one's transitory, emotional condition (i.e., feelings of tension). Trait anxiety refers to the individual's anxiety proneness. This is a relatively stable construct which reflects the tendency to respond to a given situation in a manner consistent with one's "acquired behavioral disposition" (Campbell, 1963).

The range of scores for each scale varied from a minimum score of 20, to a maximum score of 80. Subjects rated themselves for each item on a four point scale. The response choices for the A-State scale were: (1) Not at all, (2) Somewhat, (3) Moderately so and (4) Very much so. The categories for the A-Trait scale were: (1) Almost never, (2) Sometimes (3) Often and (4) Almost always.

Some items are worded so that a high rating indicated high anxiety and others were worded so that a high rating would equal low anxiety. To reduce the possibility of an acquiescence response set, the following was done; half the items on the A-State scale and seven of the items on the A-Trait scale were scored in the reverse direction.

Normative data for the STAI are available for large samples of college and high-school students, psychiatric patients, medical patients and young prisoners. In collecting this data, the A-State scale was given first.
The group most applicable to the present study was the group of undergraduate college females (N=231). The mean score and standard deviation for the A-Trait were 38.25 and 9.14, respectively. Test-retest reliability for this same norm group was high: With a time lapse of 1 hour, the reliability coefficient was .76 for the A-Trait scale and .16 for the A-State. With a time lapse of 20 days, these two values were: \( r = .76 \) and .27, respectively. When subjects were allowed a time lapse of 104 days, test-retest reliability was .77 for the A-Trait and .31 for the A-State.

Validity data for this scale is also favorable. Concurrent validity coefficients ranged from .52 to .85 (Spielberger et al., 1970). Construct validity was demonstrated by high point-biserial correlations (from .31 to .73). In experiments designed to induce anxiety, high discriminant validity was demonstrated by comparing the control group's score on the A-State with the same score for the experimental group.

**Locus of Control Orientation**

Rotter's Locus of Control scale is a 29-item, forced-choice, unidimensional scale intended to measure the degree of external control (the extent to which one feels controlled by chance, fate or powerful others) or internal control (the degree to which one feels in control of one's
own life). The scale contained six filler items intended to help disguise the purpose of the instrument. An example of one such item is: "Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much." The items are concerned with the subjects' expectations about how reinforcement is controlled rather than their preference for internal or external orientation. Internal consistency for this scale is quite stable and is often underestimated by common tests of such validity. For example, split-half reliability underestimates its validity because the items are additive in nature, not necessarily arranged hierarchically and are instead samples of attitudes on a variety of situations.

Studies of test-retest reliability have produced consistent results, even with different samples. Means for the second administration typically dropped one point in the direction of being less external. This correlation ranged, in various studies, from .55 to .83. Internal consistency studies revealed coefficients ranging from .65 to .79.

Some research has been done on the effect of socio-economic status of locus of control orientation as measured by this scale. Battle & Rotter, (1963) and Lefcourt & Ladwig, (1965) have both supported a significant effect for race. However, there was a large interaction effect between race and SES. Lower class blacks were much
more external than both middle class blacks and upper or lower class whites.

**Order of Questionnaire**

In an effort to control for the possible effects of the arrangement of the various questionnaires in the instrument, four different sequences were used. The first was arranged in the following manner: the cover letter, the demographic data, the Coming-Out scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, Rotter's Locus of Control (LOC) scale, Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety inventory (STAI) and the Passing scale in that order. The second type of arrangement differed from the first only in that the LOC scale immediately preceded the self-esteem scale rather than following it. In the third sequence, the STAI was placed between the coming-out scale and the self-esteem scale. Finally, the fourth sequence involved placing the Passing scale immediately after the Coming-Out scale rather than at the end.

**Procedure**

The cover letter of the questionnaire explained to the subjects that they were being asked to complete questionnaires describing their experiences and attitudes as lesbians. They were informed that some questions may have been difficult to answer, possibly because they had not given those issues much thought. If this were the
case, they were asked to give the item careful thought and respond in the way which most closely described their feelings instead of leaving it unanswered. Because of the personal and potentially sensitive nature of many of the items, the following statement appeared in the cover letter: "...you may have difficulty answering because the issue is particularly sensitive or painful. If after considering such items, you are still unable to or would rather not answer, please leave them blank."

Subject participation was encouraged by informing them in the cover letter, that the results of the study "would add to the understanding of lesbian women; our needs and our experiences." The use of the word "our" in that statement was an attempt to decrease the psychological distance between the subjects as lesbians and the experimenter, who is also a lesbian. Additionally, this statement attempted to establish a trust that would help assure the participants that the results would not be used in ways which were harmful to them as lesbians but rather in beneficial ways.

Because of the possibility of subjects discussing the study with friends who were potential subjects, detailed information on the precise purpose and expectations of the study were not given immediately following the subject's participation. Instead, the cover letter provided all participants with information on how to receive written
feedback at the conclusion of the study. They were told that this feedback would include further explanations of the purpose of the study, some hypotheses and results as well as the possible uses of the knowledge obtained from the research.

Subjects, particularly those completing questionnaires in the experimenter's absence, were given the option of anonymously returning their completed surveys to the Psychology Department Office at California State College, San Bernardino in the stamped envelope provided. For the convenience of those subjects who completed their questionnaire in person, a sealed box was provided in which they could deposit their surveys.
RESULTS

Demographic data

The questionnaire return rate was 78 out of 200, 77 of which were usable. This represents a 38.5% return rate.

Descriptive Data

Extensive demographic data were obtained from each volunteer because of the sampling difficulties inherent in studying lesbian populations. Each participant indicated her race, age, highest level of education, occupation of parents and self, primary and secondary sources of income, the religious affiliation of her parents and self, the number of children which she has and where they live. Additionally, she was asked where she was raised and where she currently resides. Table 1 summarizes this information. The average subject was 29 years old, white and had some college or business-trade school education. Her most frequent source of income was a salaried job which most often was professional and paid about $20,000 per year. Most of their mothers were homemakers or professionals and their fathers, blue or white collar workers. The majority of subjects held either no spiritual belief or one which was informal and their parents tended to be Protestant or Catholic. In general, subjects had no
Table 1

Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Some Coll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Coll.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coll. Grad.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000-4,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-7,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,000-11,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000-15,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16,000-19,999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 and &gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Category</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Prof.</th>
<th>H/M</th>
<th>U/R</th>
<th>Stu.</th>
<th>P/C</th>
<th>B/C</th>
<th>W/C</th>
<th>Dec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Subject</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Prot</th>
<th>Cath</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>I/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 (con't.)

Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Where Living N</th>
<th>W/ Subj. Fulltime N</th>
<th>W/ Subj. Parttime N</th>
<th>Older, out of home N</th>
<th>N/A N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Subj. Raised</th>
<th>Where Subj. Lives N</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
children but of those who did, most had children who lived with them at least part-time. Lastly, the lesbians in this study were almost equal in the numbers who grew up in a city and in a suburb, but the majority currently live in a city.

**Reference Group Affiliation**

Crosstabulation analyses were conducted on the frequency of five types of reference group affiliation by each race. Table 2 presents the results of this procedure. The five forms of reference group affiliation were: lesbian literature and music, lesbian/gay bars, lesbian/gay friends, lesbian organizations and feminist organizations.

Notable among the findings is that 82.0% of the white lesbians responded with "often" or "frequently" to the use of lesbian literature and music while only 38.1% of the black lesbians responded comparably. An examination of the frequenting of lesbian/gay bars revealed a reversal of the responses found above. That is, more blacks (42.9%) utilized bars often or frequently, while only 30.4% of the whites responded in the same way. When participants were asked about the degree to which they relied on lesbian/gay friends, a much higher percentage of white lesbians indicated frequent association than did black lesbians. These percentages were 69.6% and 47.6, respectively.

Regarding the participation in lesbian organizations, the
### Table 2

**Percentage of Reference Group Affiliation for Black and White Lesbians**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Affiliation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lit/Music</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesb. Org.</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem. Org.</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lit/Music</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesb. Org.</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem. Org.</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

percentages were not very different across race. Overall, lesbians regardless of their race tended to utilize friends for support at least 85% of the time.

**Expectations of Others' Responses to Coming-Out Behavior**

An additional crosstabulation was performed which compared white lesbians and black lesbians in their expectations of most peoples' reactions to their lesbianism, the initial reaction of these people and the current attitudes of these persons regarding her lesbianism. (See Table 3). A perusal of the data contained in this table reveals that approximately 52% of the white lesbians as compared to 62% of the black lesbians were not out to most people with whom they were acquainted. Another notable result of this analysis was that blacks were more conservative in their expectation of positive reactions from others. Nineteen percent of the blacks and 25.0% of the whites expected the reaction of others to be positive. Additionally, whites more greatly underestimated the positive reactions of others over the long-run as there was a difference of 12.0% between the number of positive reactions expected and the number of positive attitudes held by most of their acquaintances at the time of this survey. By comparison, this same difference for blacks was only 6.0%, half the difference found among whites.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atitudes</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>N/O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** N/O = Lesbians who had not come out. (This does not include those who responded with "not applicable").
Preferred Targets and Order of Coming-Out to Others

Frequencies were calculated to determine how many lesbians were out to various relatives, friends and organizations, the order in which they came out to these targets and if this differed according to race. The twelve targets were: 1) mother 2) father 3) brother(s) 4) sister(s) 5) men at work 6) women at work 7) men at school 8) women at school 9) men at nongay social groups or organizations 10) women at nongay social groups or organizations 11) best heterosexual male friend and 12) best heterosexual female friend. Table 4 summarizes the first eight targets to whom lesbians disclosed, the sequential order and their respective frequencies. A perusal of Table 4 reveals that the percentage of lesbians (based on the total sample) who were "out" to others ranges from 76.9% for "Best heterosexual female friend" to 15.4% for "Men at nongay organizations or groups." Those lesbians who were out to their "Best heterosexual female friend" tended to come out to them before any one else. (Seventy percent came out to her first or second.) Lesbians also seemed inclined to come out to "men at a nongay organization or group" last. (Twenty-five percent came out to them seventh or eighth.)

Hypothesis testing

The data were first analyzed with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation in order to test the validity of the
Table 4

Sequence and Percentage of Coming-Out Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
<th>7th</th>
<th>8th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nongay Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Friend</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
four hypotheses.

The first hypothesis, which predicted a positive relationship between self-esteem and reference group affiliation, was not supported.

The second hypothesis stated that black lesbians would be lower than white lesbians in self-esteem. This was not found to be the case according to the simple correlation between these two variables.

The third hypothesis predicted three conditions: first, anxiety would be higher in women who come-out less and who pass more; second, those lesbians who were internal in LOC would come-out more often and pass less often; and third, lesbians with internal LOC orientations would be less anxious. Only the relationship between passing and LOC was significant.

Regarding the fourth hypothesis, only the predicted relationship between the quality of coming-out experiences and anxiety was supported, \( r = -0.19, p < .05 \).

In summary, the data demonstrated that two of the hypothesized conditions exist. The first was that lesbians who engaged in more passing tended to be more external. The second was that lesbians who had more positive coming-out experiences also had a lower level of anxiety.

As a supplementary part of the data analysis, correlation coefficients were computed among the following variables: the degree of identity concealment (passing),
the extent to which the subject discloses (coming-out), race, trait anxiety, locus of control orientation, self esteem, the quality of past coming-out experiences, the degree of reference group affiliation and the length of time that she has been self-identified as a lesbian. Table 5 contains the intercorrelations among these variables. It can be seen that correlations range from .0004 (for the correlation between anxiety and the amount of hiding behavior) to .59 (for the relationship between passing behavior and coming-out behavior). Noteworthy among these relationships are: Reference group affiliation and the amount of coming-out (r = .42, p < .001), reference group affiliation and the amount of passing (r = .40, p < .001), locus of control and the amount of passing (r = -.39, p < .001), anxiety and self-esteem (r = -.35, p < .001) and lastly, anxiety and reference group affiliation (r = -.19, p < .05). While zero order correlations cannot be used solely to support or refute hypotheses, those correlations relevant to the four hypotheses can be found in Table 5. Each correlation was tested for significance by means of the Fisher r to z transformation.

Model Testing

Two step-wise regression analyses were performed to determine the best linear combinations of variables to predict each of the following dependent variables: 1) the
Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.13  .10  .08   .06  .03  -.19  .02  .21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.G.A.</td>
<td>-.19  -.03  .11  -.06  .40** .42  .18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>-.04  -.35** -.19* -.09  .00  -.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.O.C.</td>
<td>-.09  -.09  -.39** -.15  .21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.E.</td>
<td>-.16  .17  .11  .03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. C/O</td>
<td>-.02  .02  .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding</td>
<td>.58** .08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. C/O</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R.G.A. = Reference group affiliation; LOC = Locus of control; S.E. = Self esteem; Q. C/O = Quality of coming-out experiences; Pass. = The amount of passing behavior; A.C/O = Frequency of coming-out behavior; L.T.I. = Length of time self-identified as a lesbian. *p<.05. **p<.001.
extent to which a lesbian comes out and 2) the degree to
which she attempts to conceal her lesbian identity. By
definition, a stepwise regression permits the entry of one
independent variable during each step of the analysis. At
each step, the independent variable contributing the most
to $R^2$ is evaluated for the significance of its
contribution. Then, from the variables which remain to be
entered, the one contributing the most to $R^2$ is entered
into the equation. This procedure is continued until the
last variable is added which still allows a significant
increment to the Overall F.

A summary of the regression analyses can be found in
Table 6. The statistics reported are: the variables which
entered into the equation and the order in which they
entered, the R and F values at each stage, increment to $R^2$
and its associated F value and lastly, the significance
levels. An examination of Table 6 shows that of the seven
variables used to explain the extent to which a lesbian
conceals her identity, reference group affiliation
singly accounted for the most variance in the dependent
variable as it entered the equation first.

In the second step, locus of control was tested for
its contribution. Again, the independent variable produced
a significant individual contribution as well as a
significant Overall F. The remaining variables entered on
the five successive steps. Anxiety failed to make a
### Table 6

**Step-Wise Multiple Regression Analyses of Degree of Passing and Degree of Coming-Out**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Var. Entered</th>
<th>Amount of Passing</th>
<th>F for increment to $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>R.G.A.</td>
<td>0.400, $F_{1,75} = 14.32^{**}$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>L.O.C.</td>
<td>0.554, $F_{2,74} = 16.35^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,74} = 15.59^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>S.E.</td>
<td>0.562, $F_{3,73} = 11.25^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,73} = 1.03$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>L.T.I.</td>
<td>0.570, $F_{4,72} = 8.69^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,72} = .99$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.579, $F_{5,71} = 7.17^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,71} = 1.06$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Q. C/O</td>
<td>0.583, $F_{6,70} = 5.99^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,70} = .42$</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th><strong>R</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>R.G.A.</td>
<td>0.427, $F_{1,75} = 16.76^{**}$</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>L.O.C.</td>
<td>0.452, $F_{2,74} = 9.49^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,74} = 1.99$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.464, $F_{3,73} = 6.66^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,73} = 1.81$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>0.469, $F_{4,72} = 5.87^{**}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,72} = .44$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>S.E.</td>
<td>0.473, $F_{5,71} = 4.09^{*}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,70} = .35$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>L.T.I.</td>
<td>0.474, $F_{6,70} = 3.38^{*}$</td>
<td>$F_{1,70} = .09$</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Note.** R.G.A. = Reference group affiliation; L.O.C. = Locus of control; S.E. = Self-esteem; L.T.I. = Length of time self-identified as a lesbian; Q. C/O. = Average quality of coming-out experiences.

*p<0.01. **p<0.001.
significant contribution to the model. While none of these variables singularly produced a significant change in $R^2$, they did provide a significant Overall F as a part of the full model. Table 6 also shows the regression analysis of the same seven independent variables with the degree of coming-out used as the dependent variable. With this change in the criterion variable, reference group affiliation again entered the equation in the first step and locus of control again followed on step 2. Unlike the first model, LOC did not produce a significant $R$ square change. Race, anxiety, self-esteem and the length of self-identification as a lesbian followed successively on the remaining steps. The variable, quality of coming-out experiences, did not enter the equation. $F$ values associated with the $R$ of each step were significant, however the only $F$ value for increment to $R^2$ of significance was that for reference group affiliation.

The results were also analyzed using canonical correlation. This is a multivariate correlation analysis between two weighted linear composites (canonical variates). Its purpose is twofold. The first purpose is to account for as much variance as possible within each of the two sets of variables and second, to account for a maximum amount of variance between these two sets. Through the simultaneous assignment of appropriate weights during the computation, the correlation between the canonical
Variates is maximized and a coefficient is produced. Successive pairs of variates are formed and the variable weights adjusted such that each pair contains variates which yield the highest possible correlation. The squared canonical correlation (the eigenvalue) is the proportion of variance in one variate that is in common with the other variate. For coefficients calculated after the first, the canonical coefficient represents the maximum correlation of the two sets using residual variance, or the intercorrelations which are found after variance associated with the first canonical correlation is extracted. Pairs of variates and their canonical coefficients are computed until the number of coefficients calculated equals the number of variables in the smaller set or a pair of variates is reached whose coefficient does not account for a significant amount of residual variance. Each pair of canonical variates produces a coefficient which is uncorrelated with previous one(s). In this way, each coefficient is accounting for variance which is different than that of the previous sets of variates. Once all pairs of variates have been formed, the canonical variable loadings are determined. These are coefficients between each of the original variables and the canonical variates of which they are members. These coefficients indicate the relative contributions of these variables in forming their canonical variates.
The current study focused on the ways in which the two dependent variables (canonical variate #1) related to the seven independent variables (canonical variate #2). The goal was to account for as much variance as possible in the relationship between lesbian self-disclosure and personality/individual differences. The construct, lesbian self-disclosure, included the two variables previously used as dependent variables in the regression analyses: the extent of attempting to pass as nonlesbian and the quantity of coming-out behavior. The second construct, personality and individual difference, included variables which were believed to vary with coming-out behavior (i.e., race, LOC, self esteem, the quality of coming-out experiences, reference group affiliation, trait anxiety and the length of time self-identified as a lesbian). The results of this analysis can be found in Table 7. This includes: canonical coefficients and their eigenvalues, Wilk's lambda (a test for the residual linear association between the variates after the canonical variates are formed), Chi-square (a test for the difference in residual variance accounted for) and significance levels for Chi-square. The canonical loadings can also be found in this table.

The first pair of canonical variates produced an association between lesbian self-disclosure and personality/individual characteristics which was significant ($\chi^2=39.41; \text{df}=14$). Canonical variate loadings
Table 7


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pairs of Variates</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Wilk's</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Set</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>39.41**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Set</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>9.47</td>
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Canonical Loadings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Coefficients for Canonical Variables</th>
<th>Canonical Variates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Set</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. C/O</td>
<td>.138</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Passing</td>
<td>.912</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Set</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.O.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.E.</td>
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<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.034</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.T.I.</td>
<td>.189</td>
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**p<0.0001.
for the first canonical variate from the first pair of variates indicates that hiding one's lesbianism accounted for relatively more variance in the first variate than did coming-out behavior; \( r = .91 \). The loadings for the second canonical variate from the first pair of variables indicates that an internal locus of control and reference group affiliation accounted for relatively more variance than the remaining three variables; \( r = -.64 \) and \( r = .64 \), respectively. The second canonical coefficient was not significant \( (\chi^2 = 9.47; \text{df}=6) \). The canonical variate loadings for the first canonical variate from the second set revealed that hiding one's lesbianism still shared a relatively high amount of variance in common with the personality/individual factors \( (r = -.84) \). The loadings associated with the second pair of variables in the second canonical variate produced relative contributions which differed from comparable values for the first canonical variate. This time, reference group affiliation had a loading of \( r = .75 \) and being black was second with a loading of \( r = .59 \). Locus of control was third in its contribution and external rather than internal LOC was significant, \( r = .42 \).

**Comparison of Survey Data with Normative Data on the Personality Measures**

The subjects in the current study averaged 4.8 of the
possible 6 points on Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale. When their scores on Rotter's LOC scale were compared with a standardization sample of female college students, they were discovered to be similar in their LOC orientation. Lastly, the lesbians in this study were compared to a similar standardization sample for the level of anxiety. The results for these two groups were: Mean = 44.6; SD = 6.9; 81st %ile rank and Mean = 38.3; SD = 9.1; 60th %ile rank, respectively.
DISCUSSION

In focusing on lesbian coming-out behavior, this study has facilitated an understanding of lesbians' expectations of the coming-out process, their patterns of disclosing, their lesbian/gay reference group involvements and some of the personal factors which affect coming-out.

Patterns of Reference Group Affiliation and Race

The comparison of black and white lesbians in their reference group participation led to the discovery that although blacks' involvement was less than whites', this difference was not as large as expected. When the patterns of reference group involvement were studied by race, differences were detected which indicated that whites showed an interest in a larger variety of reference group activities than did blacks. Blacks associated with lesbian friends as often as did whites and frequented lesbian/gay bars more often than did whites. It is possible that these results are a consequence of the way subjects were recruited for this study. Most of the white lesbians were reached through organizations and feminist bookstores. Those gathered through acquaintance with the author were primarily white. Black lesbians were most actively recruited through a small social club which is exclusively
black and thus explains the high involvement of black lesbians with bars.

**Racial Differences in Expected Reactions to Coming-Out**

Black lesbians in this study expected positive reactions less often than whites did when coming-out to others. Given this finding, it seems reasonable to predict that black lesbians would come-out less frequently. The results of this study do tend to support this expectation, however, this relationship failed to obtain statistical significance possibly because of the small number of black lesbians in this study (N=21). It is interesting to note that black lesbians were not only more conservative than white lesbians regarding their expectations of positive reactions from others, but they were also more able to accurately anticipate positive responses. For blacks, the current positive reactions of others towards their lesbianism was closer to what they had expected than white lesbians.

**Preferred Targets and Order of Coming-Out**

The analysis of patterns of coming-out demonstrated that race was not a significant factor. Lesbians, irrespective of race, favored their best heterosexual friend as the first person to whom they came-out. The gender of this friend did not seem to alter this preference. Their next preferred targets were their close
female relatives and other female friends. Male relatives and friends were next, followed by acquaintances at work and nongay social groups. This pattern of showing a preference for disclosing to best friends seems to be a function of anticipating a greater degree of acceptance from them than from other targets. This would agree with Gilbert (1974), who theorized that the expectation of "confirmation" could facilitate self-disclosure.

The pattern of both black and white lesbians disclosing to their best friends first was somewhat contradictory to Littlefield's (1974) study. In his research he concluded that black lesbians preferred disclosing to their mothers rather than their best friends. This preference may be an indication that black lesbians are more reluctant to share their socioerotic orientation with their mothers than other types of information. In the current study all lesbians preferred disclosing to their best friend over coming-out to their mothers. It is therefore speculated that the lesbians in the present study perceived coming-out to their best friends as less threatening than coming out to their mothers.

Self-disclosure theory suggests that the frequency and comfort of one's disclosures are to a large extent controlled by whether or not the disclosure is believed to carry the potential of harm. In the case of lesbians, this "harm" could be the loss of their mothers' love or the
threat to economic survival. If so, this could help to clarify their seeming reluctance to come out to certain individuals. Based on this proposal, the lesbians in this study seemed least threatened by disclosing to their best friends, their mothers and women to whom they were close.

Jourard's theory of self-disclosure states that one discloses under two conditions; when there is much to be gained by disclosing or when there is much to be lost by not disclosing. If this is true of the lesbians in the current study, then it seems that they had the most to gain by coming out to their best friends and mothers or the most to lose by not coming out to them. The loss involved could be that of not having a genuine relationship. The gain could be that of receiving validation for their identity from significant others.

The participants in this study showed less of a desire to come-out to their fathers, which is in agreement with Littlefield's findings as well as those of Ryckman et al., (1979) and Jay and Young (1979). This pattern could indicate that the lesbians in the present study felt it less safe to disclose to their fathers than to their best friends, mothers and female significant others. It is also theoretically possible that they perceived that the loss incurred by not disclosing and the gain achieved by disclosing were not large enough to make their fathers a preferred target.
Hypotheses

Reference Group Involvement and Self-Esteem

(Hypothesis I)

Reference group affiliation has been presented throughout the literature as being essential to psychological health. Research conducted by Dyne (1980) with gay men, demonstrated that gays who were more involved in gay activism had higher self-esteem. In the present study, both self-esteem and reference group involvement were high; however, the relationship between them was not found to be significant. This failure to achieve a significant correlation is believed to be due to in part to the small variability in responses to Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale as a consequence of its face validity. The latter could have easily permitted some participants to inflate their scores thus reducing the range of scores. (The participants averaged 4.8 of the possible 6 points, demonstrating a ceiling effect.) Another factor which could have contributed to the small variance in the responses to this scale is the fact that the subjects who were sampled represented a group of lesbians who tended to be high in self-esteem because of their frequent reference group involvement. Due to of the difficulties in gaining access to lesbians who were not involved in their reference group, the present sample is over-representative of those lesbians who were involved and scored high in self-esteem.
Racial Differences In Reference Group Affiliation and Self-Esteem (Hypothesis II)

Black lesbians, because of their lower degree of reference group participation, were expected to be lower in self-esteem than white lesbians.

The current study, unlike Dyne's, did not support this difference in reference group involvement across race. Additionally, the data did not show blacks to be lower in self-esteem than whites. A possible explanation for the failure of the present study to replicate Dyne's significant correlation between race and self-esteem could be the differing operational definitions of reference group involvement across the two studies. Dyne restricted this definition to involvement in gay activism while the present study included other types of organizations (i.e., rap groups and political or social organizations with a regular membership), bars and friends. The results of the current study regarding the various forms of reference group involvement revealed that blacks tended to be less involved in organizations, which is consistent with Dyne's study. Based on the hypothesized relationships between reference group participation and race, black lesbians were expected to be lower in self-esteem. The fact that this relationship was not substantiated is proposed to be a function of three factors; first, the previously described limitations in measuring self-esteem (i.e., the ceiling
effect and its face validity) second, the ceiling effect of reference group affiliation and third, black lesbians were not as low in reference group participation as was expected.

Coming-Out, Passing, Anxiety and LOC

(Hypothesis III)

Like reference group involvement, locus of control has been presented in the literature as important to psychological well-being. Specifically, an internal locus of control orientation (Lefcourt, 1975) along with high self-esteem (Brooks, 1981) are presented as being potentially facilitative of self-disclosure, another factor important to emotional health. Coming-out behavior, in the present research, was treated as a special case of self-disclosure and hence was expected to relate similarly to certain behavioral components.

Coming-Out, Passing and Anxiety (Hypothesis III a)

Self-disclosure theorists have proposed that disclosure is characterized by less anxiety than non-disclosure. Therefore, anxiety was expected to be in lesbians who passed less and came-out more. However, this was not supported by the data. It is possible that the internals did not appear to be less anxious because the relationship between anxiety and hiding was not the linear one which had been expected. While hiding might have been
stressful, it is also possible that disclosing one's lesbianism, unlike many other forms of disclosure, is in itself anxiety producing. Further, lesbians tended to be higher in trait anxiety than a comparable standardization sample.

**Coming-Out, Passing and LOC (Hypothesis III b)**

Following the theory that externals tend to be less self-disclosing than "internals", the "external" lesbians in this study were expected to come-out less and pass more than the "internals." Of the two hypothesized relationships, only hiding behavior and LOC were significantly related. The failure of coming-out behavior to relate significantly with LOC makes it apparent that internal lesbians do not necessarily come-out with greater frequency than external lesbians, but they do seem to pass less. Additionally, the external lesbians did feel more of a need to hide their lesbianism. As with the relationships between anxiety and coming-out behavior, the relationships between LOC and passing behavior seem to be less linear than originally believed. While it follows theoretically that internals would pass less, the fact that internal lesbians do not disclose more frequently than do external lesbians seems to contradict theories regarding self-disclosure and LOC. In attempting to understand why internal lesbians are just as unwilling as external
lesbians to come-out, one must consider the fact that social oppression impacts on both groups of lesbians. Therefore, while the internals perceived themselves as being enough in command of their lives to not actively hide their lesbianism they, like the externals, did appear to be aware of the reality of lesbian oppression and the potential negative consequences of coming-out to non-homoerotic persons.

**LOC and Anxiety (Hypothesis III c)**

Since self-disclosure was expected to reduce anxiety, and an internal LOC orientation was expected to facilitate lesbians' willingness to reveal their socioerotic orientation, it was therefore anticipated that anxiety would be lower in lesbians who were more internal. The fact that "externals" and "internals" have comparable anxiety could be a consequence of two conditions: A) Both groups (i.e., internals and externals) experience the anxiety of social oppression and therefore tend to come-out to equal degrees, regardless of their perception of who controls their life (i.e., they or others). B) It is possible that internals do come out more and do experience a decrease in their anxiety which is related to non-disclosure, but after coming-out, are faced with an increase in their anxiety related to lesbian oppression. Of the two possibilities mentioned above, the former seems
more probable considering the results of Hypothesis III b, (i.e., internals do not come out more than do externals.

Quality of Coming-Out Experiences and Self-Disclosure
(Hypothesis IV)

Based on self-disclosure theories which propose that anxiety decreases with positive self-disclosure experiences, those lesbians who had had positive self-disclosure experiences were expected to be lower in trait anxiety. This was supported in the present study as anxiety did go down significantly with a higher "quality of coming-out" score. The significant negative relationship between the two variables referred to above, seems consistent with the self-disclosure literature as anxiety was lower in lesbians with high quality coming-out experiences in their past. These lesbians appeared to expect others to react positively and saw that experience as less stressful than did lesbians with more negative experiences.

Self-disclosure theorists have pointed out the importance of positive reactions to further disclosure and the current study validates this. They have also proposed that self-esteem can affect one's willingness to disclose, however, this was not found in the present study. This could be partially due to the present study's limitations in measuring self-esteem.
Additionally, this apparent contradiction could be a function of the differing operational definitions of self-esteem which were used in formulating theories on how it relates to self-disclosure. It appears that Wells et al., (1976) and Brooks (1981) did not theorize exclusively on the magnitude of one's self-esteem, but they emphasized its source as well. Both researchers stated that an internal source (e.g., a sense of self as competent and valid) was more valuable than an external source (e.g., status conferring roles and material possessions). The former permits less stress and less threat to self-esteem in the event of negative self-disclosure experiences. Thus, while high self-esteem can be related to coming-out, the source of that self-esteem is an important factor. The present study is limited in this regard as the self-esteem instrument utilized only measured the degree and not the source of self-esteem.

**Supplementary Relationships Among Variables**

In addition to the hypothesized intercorrelations, the relationships among certain other variables were examined. These three were: a) black lesbians were expected to be more external, less willing to come-out and more likely to engage in behaviors designed to hide their lesbianism than white lesbians; b) higher anxiety was expected in lesbians who did not participate in their lesbian reference group
than in those who did and c) high anxiety was anticipated for lesbians with low self-esteem. Passing behavior in black lesbians approached significance, as did the relationship between being black and having an external LOC. The last two hypotheses were significant, lending support to the roles of affiliating with a reference group and self-esteem in reducing stress.

Limitations of Zero-Order Correlations in Hypothesis Testing

Initially, zero-order correlations were utilized to examine interrelationships among variables which affect coming-out. However, complex patterns of relationships cannot be captured with simple correlations. Regression analyses demonstrated that six variables: Reference group affiliation, LOC, race, anxiety, self-esteem and the length of time self-identified as a lesbian can account for 22% of the variance in coming-out behavior. Another regression revealed that the combination of: reference group affiliation, LOC, self-esteem, the length of time self-identified as a lesbian, race and quality of coming-out experiences explained 34% of the variance in passing behavior. Reference group affiliation was the single best predictor in both models. This demonstrates a healthy adaptation to one's lesbian identity (Moses and Hawkins, 1981) in most of the lesbians who came out. The
second regression model demonstrated that LOC was also a valuable predictor of hiding. The failure of the other variables to make significant individual contributions to how "out" a lesbian is and how actively she hides her orientation can be understood in part as a function of "shared variance". That is, reference group affiliation, because it accounted for the most variance was accepted into the equation first, taking with it variance which it shared with some of the remaining variables.

A related problem was the shared variance among the independent variables. For example, anxiety and self-esteem had a moderate negative correlation with each other. Because of the variance shared between them, the independent contribution of one of these variables was lessened, thereby limiting that variable's ability to facilitate the understanding of coming-out or hiding. This limitation inherent in the regression procedure restricted the interpretability of the relative contributions of variables to the understanding of coming-out, hiding and personality/individual variables. To overcome this limitation, a canonical correlation analysis was employed. The first canonical correlation coefficient was significant and its canonical variates can be summarized as follows:

Having an internal LOC, high reference group participation, being self-identified as a lesbian longer and having high self-esteem were related to hiding less frequently (or less
passing as heterosexual.) The second canonical correlation was not statistically significant and thus, should be interpreted with caution. However, the relationships among the variables indicate that: High reference group participation, being black, having an external LOC, being self-identified as a lesbian for a shorter length of time and being anxious were related to passing more (or hiding more often.) The fact that reference group affiliation loaded high on both the first and second canonical correlations might possibly be due to the fact that most of the lesbians in the study were high in reference group participation.

**Theoretical Implications**

When zero-order correlations were utilized to evaluate the relationships of the average quality of coming-out experiences and anxiety level to coming-out behavior, they were each found to be significant. However, the multivariate statistics did not support these relationships, as neither the quality of coming-out experiences nor anxiety contributed significantly to understanding the variance in hiding or coming-out. It is possible that their apparent lack of statistical significance is of value in the exploration of what lesbians experience as they disclose their identities.

Based of self-disclosure theory, one factor which
should permit coming-out is the perception on the part of lesbians that the process would be safe. That is, they would not suffer ill consequences from declaring themselves lesbian. Other self-disclosure theories have proposed that one is further encouraged to disclose when shared information is received in a positive, accepting manner (Gilbert, 1974; Johnson, et al., 1972). Such theories also state that one's stress level should decrease after self-disclosure has taken place (Jourard, 1971). The question has been raised regarding the applicability of current self-disclosure theories to the coming-out process. Specifically, it was asked: How are the dynamics of self-disclosure altered when the content of the disclosure can lead to harmful consequences? This apparently presents a dilemma for lesbians during their process of determining whether or not to come-out. The fact that the average quality of coming-out experiences and anxiety level were not useful variables for predicting coming-out behavior is less confusing when one considers that lesbians are members of a society which invalidates and punishes their lesbianism. This knowledge possibly cautions lesbians and lessens their comfort with revealing their socioerotic identity to others, even though their most recent experience may have been positive. In fact, since coming-out, she may have to confront a new set of anxiety-arousing events, such as invalidation by friends or
the threat to her economic survival. Brooks (1981) discusses this as an "approach-avoidance" dilemma which is the product of the lesbian individual seeking authentic relationships with others while simultaneously facing the threat of social rejection. One important element in coping successfully with this form of stress is that of reducing the significance of external reinforcement (approval from nongays/lesbians) in favor of internal positive regard.

Another factor which was explored in an effort to better understand coming-out and passing was that of self-esteem. Self-esteem is an important element in the self-disclosure process. As mentioned previously, the lesbians in this study who were high in self-esteem tended to be significantly lower in anxiety. Since self-esteem has been understood as being influenced by one's reference group participation, it is not unexpected that in the present study, anxiety and self-esteem were negatively related.

The importance of race to coming-out was also studied and this resulted in the discovery that white lesbians were associated with less passing than blacks. The examination of race in the second canonical correlation does seem to imply that a notably higher proportion of blacks than whites attempted to hide their socio-erotic identities.
The "Approach-Avoidance Dilemma" of Coming-Out

The conflict present in the decision to come-out seems related to the fact that while non-disclosure and hiding are characterized by the stress of being ingenuine, it is also true that coming-out in an oppressive society can be equally stressful. What then contributes to overcoming this dilemma? Reference group affiliation has been demonstrated to be extremely important to coming-out. In an effort to understand one way in which the lesbian reference group facilitates coming-out, a 1979 study by Jay and Young was reviewed. Their extensive survey of the gay and lesbian community revealed that lesbians very seldom felt positively toward "closeted" individuals. Two percent felt positively toward gays and lesbians who hid their identities, 10% felt somewhat positively, 42% had neutral feelings, 35% felt somewhat negatively and 6% felt very negatively. With 83% of the lesbians feeling less than positively toward closeted persons, it seems probable that the fear of disapproval by the reference group helps to encourage coming-out, even though societal oppression makes this difficult. Brooks (1981) has theorized that this decision can signify the "mastery of minority stress." Individuals who accomplish this are not necessarily characterized by a decrease in stress as a minority person but it does signify a transition from experiencing one's oppression as a "personal conflict" to viewing it as a
"collective social action." The latter refers to a sense of belonging to one's reference group and sharing with them, the stress of being oppressed as well as a belief in collectively working toward social change.

In the present study, it was discovered that internals don't come out more often than do externals as a rule, but they do hide less frequently. The "approach-avoidance" dilemma can help to explain this phenomenon. Specifically, it was proposed that internals although confident enough in their identity to not engage in "passing" are still aware of the potentially harmful consequences of disclosing to nonhomoerotic individuals. Externals on the other hand are theoretically less confident in the value of their own self-evaluations and will go to greater lengths to attain the approval of others. This even extends to the willingness to risk disapproval by their lesbian reference group (a possible indication that externals place greater importance on the opinion of nongay society than on the opinion of other homoerotic persons). In the case of lesbians who are more external, "passing" seems vital to maintaining their sense of worth. It permits validation from nonhomoerotic others only to the extent that they are able to present themselves as nonhomoerotic.

**Practical Implications**

Thus far, the results of the present research have
been explained almost exclusively in terms of their theoretical implications. There are however practical implications as well. The present research seems to indicate that when reference group affiliation is high, anxiety is low and passing is less frequent than when reference group affiliation is low. Although causality cannot positively be inferred, the data on reference group affiliation would seem to support that participation in the lesbian reference group does reduce anxiety. Additionally, the data appear to indicate that this type of involvement facilitates a decrease in passing. Other variables which seem to be important are an internal LOC and high self-esteem which is internal (i.e. based on the individual's value system rather than one imposed by others.) This study has demonstrated the importance of the above factors for lesbians. Also, it has become clear that anxiety, while less of a problem for those who do not pass, is almost always present and problematic.

Practically speaking, a method needs to be found for manipulating the factors mentioned above in order that lesbians might lead lives which are less anxious. One suggestion for accomplishing this goal is that of making counselors and psychotherapists aware of the personal, psychological and social dynamics which impact on their lesbian clients. First, they should know that lesbian/gay reference group participation relates very strongly with
coming-out and with not hiding and therefore its encouragement might be therapeutically useful. It is important however, that this involvement include contact with those who ascribe to a policy of "full legitimization" and view their identities as fully valid and positive (Cass, 1979.) If one is exposed only to a view of "partial legitimization", then one risks the possibility that growth toward a positive lesbian identity will be halted.

Second, the mental health professional needs to be aware of the orientation of the clients' LOC and work on restructuring this value system such that they are able to view themselves as worthwhile despite the opinion of most members of society. This concept relates to the third factor of which therapists should be aware, that of self-esteem. The clients' self-esteem should be assessed for its quantity as well as its source. Although, in the current study, self-esteem did not appear to be useful to the understanding of coming-out or hiding, this is possibly more a function of limitations in the instrument used than it is an indication of the theoretical usefullness of the self-esteem construct. When self-esteem is low, it can be raised by helping clients to re-define themselves as positive and valid and by developing their collective identity as members of the lesbian reference group.

Lastly, the therapist must be aware of the degree of stress involved in having minority status as a lesbian.
With this awareness, she or he can work directly on stress reduction through such methods as relaxation training or even systematic desensitization. The latter can be done by training clients to relax as they imagine social situations in which their lesbianism is attacked. While this technique may reduce some stress, the therapist must constantly be aware of the fact that being identified as a lesbian does carry with it the potential occurrence of physical, emotional and economic harm. They can, however, help their clients identify their stress, its harmful effects and work on decreasing it where possible.

The present study emphasizes the value in being able to see one's self as being a member of a group which shares one's experience of being oppressed and which provides a sense of belonging as a positively-identified lesbian. This seems to imply that group therapy, consisting only of lesbians would be extremely useful. Given the theories on the stages of identity development, it seems especially important that those lesbians who are very early in their development (e.g., stages 1, 2 and 3) of Cass' (1979) model) be offered groups which are exclusively lesbian. Lesbians at these early stages are less able to feel positively about their possible identities and are more vulnerable to negative feedback from heterosexual others. At later stages in a lesbian's development, it is less likely that her lesbian identity would be threatened by
negative feedback from nonhomoerotic others (e.g., stages 4 and 5 of Cass' model.) At this point it would seem less vital that the group be exclusively lesbian because the validation received from the lesbian reference group provides support against invalidation by nonlesbian others. However, according to Cass' model, "Stage 6" lesbians seem the most amenable to groups which are not solely comprised of lesbians. Groups containing individuals of varying socioerotic orientations would appear to facilitate the "Identity Synthesis" which defines this stage. This experience can help to minimize the dichotomy between homoerotics "as good" and nonhomoerotics "as bad" (Cass, 1979).

It is apparent that lesbianism has been discussed as a valid and potentially positive identity. With this as a value base, it is obvious that mental health professionals can be most helpful to their lesbian clients if they are able to practice gay/lesbian affirmative therapy (Morin, 1977). Cass (1979) indicated that lesbian clients are most likely to enter therapy during the first two stages of their identity development (i.e., "Identity Confusion" and "Identity Comparison"). Therapists can be especially helpful by encouraging self-acceptance and (in the case of lesbian/gay therapists) by modeling self-acceptance. Therapists can assist clients during their transition from nonlesbianism to lesbianism by encouraging them to become
involved in the lesbian community, providing resources and by helping them to dispell their myths regarding "what a lesbian is." Lesbian clients at all stages in their development can benefit from skills which facilitate their coming-out to others. Specifically, research has demonstrated that assertiveness training can improve one's interpersonal functioning (Russell & Winkler, 1977; Duehn & Mayades, 1976).

Therapists not only need to be aware of the social and personal dynamics affecting their lesbian clients, but they need to be aware of the dynamics in their relationship as well. Research on the attitudes of lesbians toward psychotherapy has revealed that lesbians (both clients and non-clients) often fear discrimination on the basis of their lesbianism (Belote & Joesting, 1976; Jay & Young, 1979). Given these findings, it is important that therapists be able to address this transference issue by actively demonstrating their lesbian affirmative values. Therapists also need to be aware of their countertransference issues with regard to lesbian clients. That is, it is important that they identify and reduce homophobic attitudes which interfere with their ability to accurately evaluate and effectively counsel lesbian clients.
Limitations of the Present Study

In conducting the present study, the researcher attempted to obtain equal numbers of black and white lesbians. This would have facilitated a more statistically reliable examination of the racial differences in coming-out behavior, passing behavior and the individual/personality variables studied. Additionally, if the black lesbians had been recruited from similar sources and through similar survey techniques, then any sampling bias with respect to race, would have been less likely. Specifically, the early attempts to obtain participants involved soliciting subjects at feminist bookstores, lesbian organizations which were well established, politically active and visible and homophile newspapers. As a result, most of these early respondents were white.

In an attempt to attain a comparable number of black participants, the experimenter made direct contact with several organizers of the black lesbian community in Los Angeles and requested their assistance and influence in this regard. Their cooperation resulted in the involvement of approximately 15 of the 21 black lesbians who participated in this study. The organization from which these lesbians were sampled is a private, non-visible social organization which regularly holds closed (i.e., members only) dances in a local bar. Because of the differences in sampling procedures across race, significant
differences were found between the two subsamples. These differences included the fact that more whites than blacks were involved in feminist organizations and utilized lesbian/gay literature and music. The differences in the function, visibility and size of the organizations joined by blacks and whites might have accounted for the tendency for blacks to appear more social and less political in their reference group involvement. Another problem in the present study is the possible sampling bias which led to an over-representation of middle-class and college-educated women. LOC is one variable which is known to be confounded with SES. Consequently, it would be difficult to generalize some of the data regarding LOC to lesbians of a lower socio-economic status.

With regard to attempts to assess self-esteem, two limitations have been pointed out which resulted in a large number of lesbians scoring on the high end of Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. First, it has been speculated that the face validity of this measure easily permitted a defensive response set, thus creating a large number of artificially high self-esteem scores, low variability in this factor and poor correlations among it and other variables. Specifically, this would have lowered the correlations between self-esteem and the following two variables: 1) reference group affiliation and 2) the quality of coming-out experiences. Additionally, this methodology
problem might have decreased the contribution of self-esteem in the multivariate statistics. That is, self-esteem might have made a significant contribution to the understanding of coming-out and passing had it been measured with greater accuracy. Second, as mentioned earlier, it is very likely that a disproportionately large number of the lesbians in the present study were high in self-esteem. This may be due to the fact that a disproportionately high number of the lesbians in this study were also very involved in their reference group. This bias, inherent in the methodology of the present study was a function of the fact that it was not possible to sample lesbians who were not involved in the lesbian reference group at least to some degree. Therefore, this study probably tends to reflect coming-out and passing behavior among lesbians who are strongly identified as lesbians, value their reference group and are generally healthy psychologically. On the other hand, this study provided an inadequate portrayal of those lesbians who are less involved in the community, hence less available for research.

In light of the present study's difficulties in obtaining accurate information regarding self-esteem and reference group participation, all attempts to interpret the relationships among these variables and others in this study are tenuous and should be interpreted with caution.
Directions for Future Research

The current study has pointed out the importance of stress mediators such as LOC, reference group affiliation, high self-esteem and a high quality of coming-out experiences. It has also been indicated that psychotherapy could be facilitative in developing these traits. Therefore, a possibility for future research might include "Outcome" research on therapy techniques designed to alter the personality dimensions mentioned above.

Another potential direction for research is that of a pre and posttest design studying the interrelations among the individual/personality variables and coming-out behavior at various stages in identity development. Specifically, it would be of interest to know if the importance of the lesbian reference group, the degree of hiding, the amount of anxiety and the level of self-esteem change in a predictable manner across stages of lesbian identity formation. While the present study assessed the length of time identified as a lesbian, this is not necessarily indicative of the particular stage of her identity. This was emphasized in Cass' model where identity "foreclosure" (the halting of identity development) was possible at any of the six stages.

Further research is also needed in the area of the anxiety which surrounds coming-out and passing. It seems
useful to clarify the source of lesbian anxiety and why this does not change significantly after coming-out.

Finally, the present study did not distinguish between self-esteem which was internal in source and self-esteem which was external in source. The first type is derived from self-worth through a perception of one's self as valid and significant. The latter is derived from status-conferring roles or material possessions. The former is known to be more of a stress mediator and hence more useful to one's psychological health. Therefore, in studying lesbian self-esteem in the future and how it relates to anxiety, coming-out, passing, reference group involvement and the quality of coming-out experiences, it would be important to know the source as well as the amount.
Appendix A: Questionnaire
IMPORTANT: THIS SURVEY IS ANONYMOUS
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME

SURVEY ON LESBIAN EXPERIENCES
AND ATTITUDES

This survey consists of several questionnaires with which you are asked to describe yourself and/or your attitudes. It is most important that you answer carefully and honestly. A few questions may be difficult for you to answer, possibly because you have not given those issues much thought. In this case, select the response which you feel most closely applies to you. At other times, you may have difficulty answering because the subject matter is particularly sensitive or painful. If after considering such items you are still unable to or would rather not answer, please leave them blank.

Be sure to read the instructions and questions carefully. In many cases, misreading one or two words can change the meaning of the question.

Your cooperation will add to the understanding of lesbian women; our needs and our experiences.

If you are interested in the results of this study please write to the address below. Feel free to keep this page if you do not wish to copy the address.

Write to : Constance Phillips
Psychology Department
California State College, San Bernardino
5500 State College Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

*** NOTE: In order to insure anonymity, please do not include your request for the results with your questionnaire.

Your cooperation is greatly needed and most appreciated.

Thank You
QUESTIONNAIRE

AGE: ____________________________  

EDUCATION:  
___ Did not finish high school  
___ High school graduate  
___ Some college or business-trade school  
___ High school graduate ___ College graduate  
___ Professional degree (M.A., Ph.D., M.D., etc.)

RACE: White  
___ Black  
___ Other

Mother's occupation: ____________________________________________________________  

Father's occupation: ____________________________________________________________  

Your occupation: ________________________________________________________________  

Indicate your usual regular source of income:  
___ Salaried job  
___ Social security, welfare, unemployment  
___ Own business  
___ Mate supports me  
___ Inheritance, trust fund  
___ Illegal means  
___ Parents(s)  
___ Student loan, grant, etc.

About how much was your parent's religion; your religion:  

Parent's religion:  
___ Protestant  
___ Catholic  
___ Jewish  
___ None  
___ Other  
___ I have spiritual beliefs that do not fit a formal religion

Your religion:  
___ Protestant  
___ Catholic  
___ Jewish  
___ None  
___ Other  
___ I have spiritual beliefs that do not fit a formal religion

Have you had any children? (circle one)  

None  1  2  3  4  5 or more

If so, they ___ do not live with me  
___ live with me  
___ live with me part-time  
___ are older and on their own

In what city or area do you live now? ____________________________________________

Where were you primarily brought up?  

State or region: ________________________________________________________________

Country (if not U.S.): ____________________________________________________________

( Check one)
___ City  
___ Suburb  
___ Rural
Which of the following individuals and/or groups do you think know that you are a lesbian? Place a check mark next to those which apply. Place N/A next to those which do not apply to you. For example, if you are not a student, you would write N/A next to those items which apply to school.

Place a check mark next to those which apply. Place N/A next to those which do not apply to you. For example, if you are not a student, you would write N/A next to those items which apply to school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother or female guardian</th>
<th>Father or male guardian</th>
<th>How many brothers do you have?</th>
<th>How many are you out to?</th>
<th>Other relatives to whom you are close</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother or female guardian</td>
<td>Father or male guardian</td>
<td>How many brothers do you have?</td>
<td>How many are you out to?</td>
<td>Other relatives to whom you are close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group of non-gay and/or gay men at:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Non-gay organization or group (social, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group of non-gay and/or gay women at:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Non-gay organization or group (social, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most other heterosexual female friends</td>
<td>Most other heterosexual male friends</td>
<td>Church, temple, etc. which is nongay</td>
<td>Church, temple, etc. which is gay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost all of the people you know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those individuals and/or organizations, etc., which you have told you are a lesbian, rank them according to the order in which you came out. Place a (1) next to the first one to which you came out, etc. Some items may have the same number. Write your answers in column one.

Col 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother or female guardian</th>
<th>Father or male guardian</th>
<th>Brother(s)</th>
<th>Sister(s)</th>
<th>Small group of non-gay and/or gay men at:</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Non-gay organization or group (social, etc.)</th>
<th>Small group of non-gay and/or gay women at:</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Non-gay organization or group (social, etc.)</th>
<th>Other relatives to whom you are close</th>
<th>Best heterosexual female friend</th>
<th>Best heterosexual male friend</th>
<th>Most people at work or school</th>
<th>Most other heterosexual female friends</th>
<th>Most other heterosexual male friends</th>
<th>Almost all of the people you know</th>
<th>Church, temple, etc. which is nongay</th>
<th>Church, temple, etc. which is gay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Col 2

For those to whom you came out, how did you expect them to react? Write N (negative) or P (positive) on the lines in column 2.

Col 3

For those to whom you are out, what was their reaction at first? Write N (negative) or P (positive) on the lines in column 3.

Col 4

For the same individuals or organizations, indicate how they presently feel about your lesbianism. Write N (negative) or P (positive) on the lines in column 4.

Instructions for the next four items: Check the response which most closely describes your experience.

When you attend lesbian or gay bars, how often are you concerned about being recognized a lesbian by non-heterosexuals?

Always ______ Often ______ Sometimes ______ Never ______ Don't attend ______
Do you like being a lesbian?

Seldom ______ Sometimes ______ Often ______

NEVER ______ ALMOST ALWAYS ______

Are you a familiar lesbian name or spokeswoman in your community?

Yes ______ No ______ Would like to be ______

How long have you been identified as a lesbian?

How many:

Months ____________

Weeks ____________

Years ____________

Most of life ____________

All of life ____________

For the following items, indicate how often you utilize them by placing a check on the lines which apply to you.

Lesbian/gay literature and music ______ NEVER ______ SOMETIMES ______ OFTEN ______ FREQUENTLY ______

Lesbian/gay bars ______

Lesbian/gay friends ______

Lesbian/gay organizations and social groups, etc. ______

Feminist organizations, RAPS, etc. ______

Groups which support the lesbian/gay cause (Ex: Parents and Friends of Gays) ______
DIRECTIONS: A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then blacken in the appropriate circle to the right of the statement to indicate how you feel right now, that is, at this moment. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

1. I feel calm
2. I feel secure
3. I am tense
4. I am regretful
5. I feel at ease
6. I feel upset
7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes
8. I feel rested
9. I feel anxious
10. I feel comfortable
11. I feel self-confident
12. I feel nervous
13. I am jittery
14. I feel "high strung"
15. I am relaxed
16. I feel content
17. I am worried
18. I feel over-excited and "rattled"
19. I feel joyful
20. I feel pleasant
DIRECTIONS: A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then blacken in the appropriate circle to the right of the statement to indicate how you generally feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe how you generally feel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>OFTEN</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. I feel pleasant</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I tire quickly</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I feel like crying</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I am losing out on things because I can’t make up my mind soon enough</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I feel rested</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I am “calm, cool, and collected”</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I worry too much over something that really doesn’t matter</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I am happy</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I am inclined to take things hard</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I lack self-confidence</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I feel secure</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I try to avoid facing a crisis or difficulty</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I feel blue</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I am content</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I take disappointments so keenly that I can’t put them out of my mind</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I am a steady person</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests</td>
<td>1 3 5 7</td>
<td>2 4 6 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructions: Please rate the following statements on the degree to which they agree with your feelings. Indicate your response by writing the appropriate number.


1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. On a whole, I am satisfied with myself.

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

9. I certainly feel useless at times.

10. At times I think I am no good at all.
Below is a questionnaire to find out the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives lettered a or b. Please select the one statement of each pair (and only one) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true rather than the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief: obviously there are no right or wrong answers.

Please answer these items carefully but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for every choice. Circle either a or b as you choose one or the other for each item.

In some instances you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the one you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Also try to respond to each item independently when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
   b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
   b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
   b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
   b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
   b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
   b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
   b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
8. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.
    b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.
9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
    b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
10. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
    b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
    b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
    b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
    b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
    b. There is some good in everybody.
15. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
    b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
    b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.
    b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
    b. There really is no such things as "luck."
19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
   b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
   b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.
21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
   b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
   b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
   b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
   b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.
25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
   b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
   b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people; if they like you, they like you.
27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
   b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.
28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.
   b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
   b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.
(Passing Scale)

Instructions for the Items Below: Please rate on a scale from 0 to 3 the degree to which these statements apply to you. (0= Never 1= Sometimes 2= Often 3= Always)

Do you ever feel the need to disguise your lesbianism in any of the following ways? Indicate how often by placing the appropriate number on each line.

Using the pronoun “he” instead of “she” to refer to a roommate or lover
Avoiding being seen in public places with lesbian/gay friends
Introducing your lover or partner as a “friend”
Pretending to be engaged or married
Avoiding talking about your living situation or sexual preference
Actually getting married or engaged
Pretending not to see or recognize a lesbian/gay friend when you are with nongay people
Actually dating men to keep up appearances
Pretending not to see or recognize a nongay friend when you are with lesbian/gay people
Lying about your living situation or sexual preference
Failing to introduce your lover or partner as such to a nongay friend when it would have been appropriate to do so
Pretending to date men

Other

When people who don’t know you are a lesbian make derogatory remarks about lesbians, how often do you respond in the following ways?

Feel hurt and say nothing
Feel angry and say nothing
Make statements in defense of lesbianism as a lifestyle
Make statements in defense of your lesbianism
Understand and express an understanding of their dislike of lesbians without telling them that you are
Make a joke of it and laugh
Would like to defend lesbianism more but are not that assertive
Appendix B-1: Pilot and Rank Order of

Items in Part A of Passing Scale
Questionnaire on Lesbian Attitudes

Instructions: Please rate the following behaviors according to how extreme, or not extreme you think they are. Place a (1) beside the behavior(s) which you feel is least extreme, a (2) beside the one(s) which you feel is next most extreme, etc. You may give the same number to more than one item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the pronoun “he” instead of “she” to refer to a roommate or lover</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding being seen in public places with lesbian/gay friends</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing your lover or partner as a “friend”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending to be engaged or married</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding talking about your living situation or sexual preference</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting married or engaged</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending not to see or recognize a lesbian/gay friend when you are with non-gay people</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating men to keep up appearances</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending not to see or recognize a non-gay friend when you are with a lesbian/gay friend</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying about your living situation or sexual preference</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to introduce your lover or partner as such when it would have been appropriate to do so</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending to date men</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION
Appendix B-2: Scoring Procedure for Part A of Passing Scale

Part A of the Passing scale was weighted based on the rank orders assigned during the piloting procedure. During the piloting of Part A, higher numbers were used to indicate more passing and lower numbers were used to indicate less passing. These rank orders were reversed for scoring purposes, however the intervals between items weights remained consistent with those assigned by the participants in the piloting procedure. The scores with were assigned to the item responses were as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the pronoun &quot;he&quot; instead of &quot;she&quot; to refer to a roommate or lover</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding being seen in public places with lesbian/gay friends</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing your lover or partner as a &quot;friend&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending to be engaged or married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding talking about your living situation or sexual preference</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting married or engaged</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending not to see or recognize a lesbian or gay friend when you are with nongay people</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating men to keep up appearances</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending not to see or recognize a nongay friend when you are with a lesbian/gay friend</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying about your living situation or sexual preference</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to introduce your lover or partner as such when it would have been appropriate to do so</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretending to date men</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A = Always; O = Often; S = Sometimes; N = Never.
Appendix B-3: Rank order and point values of items in Part B of Passing Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel hurt and say nothing</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel angry and say nothing</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make statements in defense of lesbianism as a lifestyle</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make statements in defense of your lesbianism</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and express an understanding of their dislike of lesbians without telling them that you are</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a joke and laugh</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would defend lesbianism more but are not that assertive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The last item was not included in the scoring due to its ambiguity. A = Always; O = Often; S = Sometimes; N = Never.
Appendix C: The comparison of Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale with other measures of self-esteem

Silber & Tippett (1965) compared Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (R.S.E.) (a measure of global self-regard) with three other instruments measuring self-concept. These instruments and their respective correlations with R.S.E. scale are: "Interview Self-Esteem", (\( r = .67 \)); a Repertory Test measuring the difference between "Self" and "Ideal Self", (\( r = .67 \)); and a Self-image questionnaire measuring the difference between the "Self" and the "Social Ideal Self", (\( r = .83 \)).
References


