

**Trying to Be Like Jesus: Processes, Influences and Outcomes of Heterosexual Mormon
Ally Identity Development in Utah**

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Adam David Anthony Maughan

August 2025

Copyright © by Adam David Anthony Maughan
All rights reserved.

Acknowledgements

As this chapter of my life comes to a close, I am extremely grateful to all of the people who have made this journey possible. First, to Dr. Joe Miles for his support, not just in this project but throughout grad school. I appreciated your encouragement, support, patience, and willingness to dive into learning way more about Mormonism than you probably ever wanted or needed to know! I would also like to share my gratitude for my committee members: Drs. Kirsten Gonzalez, and Patrick Grzanka, as well as Donna Braquet. Your feedback, encouragement, insights, and advice were extremely valuable in helping this project to come to fruition.

To JD Goates, thank you so much for taking on this project with me. Between classwork, clinical work, community advocacy and your own research, it meant the world that you took the time to fit in a project that was personal for both of us. I really appreciated having you as a fellow queer Mormon from Utah to process reactions, laugh, and work through the challenges and rewards of this work.

Jesse Hunter Evans, I cannot say enough how much I appreciated having you on my research team. Thank you for being incredibly reliable, personable, and enthusiastic. I'm excited to see how you continue to make this world a better place in the future.

Keri Frantell, I genuinely am so grateful that I met you. You have been an incredible source of support, advice, and have helped me to see what is revolutionary in myself and this world. I would not have gotten this degree without your support.

I also am grateful for my parents, David and Charlotte Maughan, whose journeys as LDS parents of a gay son inspired me to research this topic. I am also thankful for the support of my family—Kelsie, Natali, Abby, Vardaan, Gossip, Mischief, Jeff, Aaron, Rachel, Ethan, Jesse,

Olivia, and Emma! I am so lucky to have such a wonderful family who is always there to love and support me, and remind me that nobody gets left behind.

Lastly, this research would not have been possible without the vulnerability and courage of my incredible participants. Thank you so much for trusting me with your stories and your truth. Thank you for all that you do to make Utah, the Church, and the world a better place for queer people like me.

Preface

Growing up in my Mormon household as the closeted son of the ward pianist/organist/chorister (whew! You go mom!), music played a huge role in my childhood. While there is much I could say here to preface this project, I will simply open it with the words of two prominent LDS songs that have stuck with me as I have worked to bring this research together.

As I have loved you,
Love one another.
This new commandment:
Love one another.
By this shall men know
Ye are my disciples
If ye have love
One to Another.
(Fox, 1961)

Jesus walked away from none
He gave his love to ev'ryone.
So I will! I will!
Jesus blessed all He could see,
Then turned and said, "Come, follow me."
And I will! I will!
I will! I will!
I'll walk with you.
I'll talk with you.
That's how I'll show my love for you.
(Pearson, 1987)

Abstract

Research has suggested that the presence of supportive allies can have a positive impact on the mental health and well-being of sexual minorities. Although existing research has explored how individuals come to be allies of sexual minorities, less is known about how allyship develops in highly homogenous conservative cultural and religious contexts where pressures to conform to anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes may be particularly strong. As such, the current study sought to understand the process, outcomes, and influences of heterosexual ally identity development among current and former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (colloquially referred to in the literature as Mormons) who live in the unique cultural and religious environment of Utah. Through utilization of constructivist grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2008), interviews and allyship timelines of 15 participants who identified as heterosexual, current or former members of the Church, and as allies to sexual minority people were analyzed to construct a seven-stage iterative Model of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development. In this model, allies moved from a state of naïveté to allyship through experiencing catalyst events, interpreting those events as problematic, negotiating identity crises, exploring their beliefs, and resolving to commit to being an ally. We observed that our participants negotiated various ways of understanding and engaging in allyship (which we refer to as allyship statuses) within their lived contexts. Barriers and supports identified by the participants to this process are shared, as well as implications and future directions for this work.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Policy of Exclusion.....	2
Mormons, Sexual Minorities, and Sexual Minority Mormons	5
Mental Health of Sexual Minority Members of the Church	6
Minority Stress.....	7
Cognitive Dissonance Theory	13
Becoming an Ally: What We Know	15
The Current Study: A Call for HMAs.....	28
Chapter 2: Method	30
Reflexivity Statement.....	31
Participants.....	33
Procedure	37
Data Analysis	38
Chapter 3: Results	42
The Process of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development.....	42
Model Context	44
Institutional and Cultural Context of Utah.....	44
Individual Context	47
Model Components.....	51
Naïveté	51
Experiencing a Catalyst Event	52

Interpreting the Catalyst.....	53
Identity Crisis.....	55
Exploration.....	58
Resolution/Commitment.....	60
Chosen Allyship Status.....	62
Staying in the Church.....	63
Reducing Activity/Leaving the Church	65
Conditional Ally.....	67
Silent/Passive Ally	67
Visible Ally	69
Vocal/Active Ally	72
The Impact of Additional Catalyst Events.....	75
Chapter 4: Discussion	77
The Process of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development.....	78
Defining Allyship.....	80
Barriers and Supports.....	84
Navigating Religious Identity Conflict.....	86
Limitations and Implications	88
Chapter 5: Conclusions.....	94
References.....	95
Appendices.....	119
Vita.....	138

Chapter 1: Introduction

Social justice *allies* have been defined as “members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership” (Broido, 2000, p. 3). Historically, allies have played a role in a variety of social movements, such as those aimed at addressing racism (Mann & Baker, 2020; Spanierman & Smith, 2017) and sexism (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Although allies’ contributions to social justice efforts are not without controversy (see Grzanka, 2022), research has suggested that support from allies may be beneficial to the mental health and well-being of sexual minorities (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, same-sex attracted and other non-exclusively heterosexual individuals; e.g., Chaudoir et al., 2017; Mutanski & Liu, 2012; Ryan et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2019). Research suggests that religious sexual minorities experience greater difficulties with their mental health and well-being than their non-religious peers (Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Szymanski et al., 2008), particularly in contexts where their religious beliefs are not affirming of sexual minorities.

In a 2013 Pew Research Center study, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (i.e., the Mormon/LDS Church; hereafter referred to as “the Church”) was perceived to be the most unfriendly Judeo-Christian religion toward sexual minorities (83%), with Catholicism following next (79%). It is unsurprising therefore that sexual minorities who are members of the Church (hereafter SMMCs) report poor outcomes related to their mental health and well-being (Dehlin et al., 2014; Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Given the benefits that heterosexual Mormon allies (HMAs) have been observed to have on the mental health and well-being of SMMCs (Bridges et al., 2020; Lefevor et al., 2022; Mattingly et al., 2016; Ryan & Rees, 2012), the current study sought to develop a theory of the

influences, process, and outcomes of HMA identity development, in order to better understand how to support the development of future HMAs. Particularly, this study builds on the limited extant research on HMA identity development (Allen, 2021; Gess, 2016) through creating a theory of the ally identity development process among HMAs who do not have a sexual minority child.

The Policy of Exclusion

On November 5, 2015, a new policy impacting SMMCs was leaked online (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2019). The policy, which came to be known by some as the *policy of exclusion*, was part of a revision to the Church's handbook for local leaders. This new policy labeled members of the Church in same-sex marriages as *apostates* (i.e., individuals who are in direct opposition to God), and required them to receive disciplinary council that could lead to eviction from the Church and cancellation of ordinances (e.g., baptism) that members of the Church view as essential for salvation in the afterlife. In addition, the policy barred their children from membership in the Church until age 18 and included a provision that they disavow the marriage of their parents in order to become members (Bailey, 2015; Weaver, 2015).

For SMMCs searching for their place in the Utah-based religion, the new policy was devastating. Three months later, it was reported that 32 SMMCs had died by suicide since the announcement of the policy, prompting the Church to respond saying, "We mourn with their friends and families when they feel life no longer offers hope" (Walch & Collins, 2016, para. 2). Although the number of suicides as well as the role of the policy in contributing to them have been a source of debate (Barker et al., 2016; Stack, 2016), what is clear is that for many SMMCs and HMAs, the policy of exclusion was the last straw. Following the policy's leak, it was reported that thousands of individuals withdrew their membership from the Church (Broverman,

2015; Riess, 2020). On April 4, 2019, however, the Church reversed the policy of exclusion, allowing children of same-sex couples to be baptized and removing the label of apostates for same-sex couples, prompting joy for its removal as well as anger and heartache for the losses in life and faith incurred (Stack, 2019). Discussing the policies in an address at Church-owned Brigham Young University (BYU), Russell M. Nelson, president of the Church, reported that both the policy of exclusion and its reversal were “motivated by love” (Nelson, 2019).

As SMMCs continue to search for their place within and outside of the Church today, their mental health and wellbeing has been found to be positively impacted by the presence of HMAs (Bridges et al., 2020; Lefevor et al., 2022; Mattingly et al., 2016; Ryan & Rees, 2012). Accordingly, increasing the number of HMAs within the Church may be beneficial for SMMCs. However, members of the Church may experience a number of barriers toward becoming an ally, including unclear rhetoric around whether being an ally to sexual minorities places an individual’s membership in the Church in jeopardy, and what such allyship may look like if it is allowed. For example:

- In a 2006 interview, Dallin H. Oaks, who currently serves as first counselor in the Church, suggested that parents whose children wish to bring home a same-sex partner respond by saying, “Please don’t do that. Don’t put us in that position,” (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2006, para. 59); or “Yes, come, but don’t expect to stay overnight. Don’t expect to be a lengthy house guest. Don’t expect us to take you out and introduce you to our friends, or to deal with you in a public situation that would imply our approval of your ‘partnership’” (para. 60). Thus, parents were discouraged from visibly demonstrating support for their sexual minority children and their partners.

- On December 6, 2012, the Church announced a website specifically geared toward increasing understanding around “same-sex attraction.” In this announcement, apostle Quentin L. Cook was quoted as saying, “As a church, nobody should be more loving and compassionate. Let us be at the forefront in terms of expressing love, compassion, and outreach. Let’s not have families exclude or be disrespectful of those who choose a different lifestyle as a result of their feelings about their own gender” (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2012, para. 5). This statement seems to contradict Oak’s harsher stance on whether and how to demonstrate support for sexual minorities (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2006).
- The policy of exclusion in 2015 and its reversal in 2019, further shed uncertainty about where members of the Church should stand on sexual minority issues.
- In the same 2021 meeting where BYU announced a new Office of Belonging to promote diversity and inclusion on campus, Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland cautioned that in dealing with sexual minorities, “...we have to be careful that love and empathy do not get interpreted as condoning and advocacy, or that orthodoxy and loyalty to principle not be interpreted as unkindness or disloyalty to people” (Weaver, para. 25). Here advocacy and acceptance toward sexual minorities appears to be discouraged, with priority given to a precarious balance between loving and condemning.

Despite these often confusing and conflicting messages from Church leaders they believe to speak for God, some members of the Church *do* choose to become HMAs. To date, limited research has examined the influences, process, and outcomes related to ally identity development

among heterosexual current and former members of the Church (Allen, 2021; Gess, 2016), particularly among those who do not have a child who identifies as a sexual minority. I argue that an empirically grounded model of these influences, processes, and outcomes may help support more individuals in becoming HMAs.

Mormons, Sexual Minorities, and Sexual Minority Mormons

Even prior to the policy of exclusion, the Church had a complicated history with sexual minorities. This history includes conducting electroshock conversion therapy at BYU (McBride, 1976), and its active political involvement in Proposition 8 to ban gay marriage in California (McKinley & Johnson, 2008). It also includes, however, its later support for LGBTQ+ housing nondiscrimination bills (Associated Press, 2015) and conversion therapy bans for minors in the state of Utah (Law, 2019). The Church's current official stance toward sexual minorities is that "the attraction itself is not a sin, but acting on it is. Even though individuals do not choose to have such attractions, they do choose how to respond to them" (Ballard, 2015, para. 27). This distinction between attraction and behavior has resulted in some SMMCs choosing to identify as same-sex attracted rather than another sexual minority label (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer) to indicate their devotion to the Church (Lefevor, Sorrell, et al., 2020). From this perspective, members of the Church may openly identify as sexual minorities but may not participate as active members in the Church unless they are celibate or enter a heterosexual relationship (sometimes referred to as a *mixed-orientation relationship/marriage* in the literature; e.g., Bridges et al., 2019; Legerski et al., 2017). Although leaders of the Church no longer explicitly encourage sexual minorities to enter mixed-orientation marriages (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2021), full access to the highest level of salvation in the Church's

understanding of the afterlife requires marriage between a man and a woman in an LDS temple (Nelson, 2008). In other words, to be saved, one must be heterosexual, or at least appear to be.

Relatedly, although the Church no longer explicitly encourages conversion therapy for minors, Church officials have stated that, "...same gender-attraction did not exist in the pre-earth life and neither will it exist in the next life" (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2006, para. 35). This suggests that, according to the Church, sexual minorities will be converted into heterosexuals in the afterlife (Burns, 2022). This not only reproduces sexual orientation conversion as a requirement for the salvation of sexual minorities (albeit in the afterlife), but also sets a dangerous precedent for SMMCs by suggesting that "freedom" from same-sex attraction lies on the other side of death.

Mental Health of Sexual Minority Members of the Church

Given this context, it is unsurprising that SMMCs report experiencing conflicts between their religious and sexual identities (Beckstead & Morrow, 2004; Dahl & Galliher, 2012; Dehlin et al., 2015; Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020). These conflicts have been observed to relate to greater depression, greater anxiety, lower self-esteem, greater suicidal ideation, worse life satisfaction, and lower quality of life among religious sexual minorities generally (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Schuck & Liddle, 2001) and SMMCs, specifically (Dehlin et al., 2014; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020). Concerningly, SMMCs report feeling greater incongruence between their religious and sexual identities compared to sexual minorities from other religious groups (Wolff et al., 2016), suggesting they may be at greater risk for developing these poor psychosocial outcomes than those from other religious denominations.

Given these poor mental health outcomes observed among SMMCs, it is important to explore ways to buffer and protect such individuals from harm. Research has suggested that

affirming social support from heterosexual allies is related to positive mental health outcomes in sexual minorities (e.g., Chaudoir et al., 2017; Mutanski & Liu, 2012; Ryan et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2019). This also appears to be the case among SMMCs (e.g., Bridges et al., 2020; Mattingly et al., 2016; Ryan & Rees, 2012). For example, in a study of 602 SMMCs and sexual minorities who had left the Church, Lefevor et al. (2022) observed that greater family and friend support related to less suicidal ideation regardless of Church membership status, highlighting the potential importance of HMAs in the lives of sexual minorities who are current or former members of the Church.

The extant research has primarily used minority stress theory (Brooks, 1981; Meyer, 2003; Meyer, 2015) and cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) to explain how, when, and why these conflicts negatively impact the mental health of sexual minorities (e.g., Dahl & Galliher, 2010; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020). To further explain the importance of increasing the number of HMAs, the sections below will outline these two theories, their applications to SMMCs, and how facilitating HMA identity development within the Church may help to ameliorate the impacts of both minority stress and cognitive dissonance on the mental health and well-being of SMMCs, particularly in Utah.

Minority Stress

Minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) suggests that mental health disparities observed among sexual minorities and those with other minoritized social identities can be explained by unique *distal* (external, e.g., prejudice and discrimination) and *proximal* (internal, e.g., internalized negative feelings about one's identity) stressors they experience in relation to their minority identity (Brooks, 1981; Meyer, 2003; Meyer, 2015). Notably, sexual minorities who grow up in non-affirming religious contexts report greater exposure to minority stressors than

their non-religious sexual minority peers (e.g., Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Szymanski et al., 2008) and, as such, are at greater risk of developing poor outcomes related to their mental health and well-being. This minority stress can be experienced as a result of structural stigma (Hatzenbueler, 2016; e.g., policy/legislation that upholds prejudice/discrimination against sexual minorities), as well as institutional (e.g., similarly oppressive policies and practices of groups and organizations), interpersonal (e.g., bullying, microaggressions, rejection by family/friends for being a sexual minority), and individual sources of such stress (e.g., internalized negative beliefs about being a sexual minority). The Church may have an impact on each of these levels, particularly in Utah, given that Church members may feel both explicit and implicit pressures to align themselves with the positions and beliefs of Church leadership, even when doing so “conflict[s] with your political views” (Lee, H. B. as quoted in Benson, 1980, para. 34; Thayne, 2021). Although the sweeping influence of the Church on individuals in Utah may be daunting, it is precisely this reason that efforts to increase allies of sexual minorities are likely to be beneficial for the mental health and well-being of SMMCs. This is consistent with research that suggests social supports can buffer the impacts of minority stress among sexual minorities (e.g., Doty et al., 2010; Rosario et al. 2009; Snapp et al., 2015). Furthermore, interventions designed to increase allyship for sexual minorities have been observed to reduce the presence of minority stress within a variety of social contexts (see Chaudoir et al., 2017, for a review).

Structural Minority Stress. Within the state of Utah, sexual minorities encounter many forms of structural stigma (Hatzenbueler, 2016) that act as a source of minority stress. For example, it is notable that 86% of elected officials in Utah identify as members of the Church (Dahl & Galliher, 2012; Davidson, 2021). Although the Church consistently claims political

neutrality (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2022), the Church's vocalized stance on political matters has been influential in deciding whether or not legislation is passed in Utah (Davidson, 2021). For example, initial legislation to ban conversion therapy for minors was blocked after Church officials submitted a letter expressing their concerns that the legislation represented a threat to religious freedom (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family Services, 2019; Curtis, 2019). The legislation was revised and was later passed only after Church leaders expressed their approval of the new policies (Rodgers, 2019). Undergoing sexual orientation change efforts such as conversion therapy is related to number of negative mental health consequences for sexual minorities generally (e.g., suicidal ideation, self-hatred, increased internalized homonegativity, intimacy difficulties; American Psychological Association, 2012; Andrade & Campo Redondo, 2022; Beckstead & Israel, 2007), as well as SMMCs, specifically (Beckstead & Morrow, 2004; Dehlin et al., 2014; Dehlin, Galliher, Bradshaw, & Crowell, 2015; Dehlin, Galliher, Bradshaw, Hyde, et al., 2015) including suicide, depression, anxiety, and general distress. Consequently, difficulties passing legislation that protects sexual minorities from this practice constitutes structural stigma that negatively impacts the mental health and well-being of sexual minorities.

It goes without saying that lay heterosexual members of the Church have the potential to become involved in the legislative process in Utah. Lay heterosexual Church members (particularly men) may also become high-ranking officials within the Church. As noted, the support of upper-ranking leaders in the Church has been influential in the Utah state legislature's decisions to enact (or withhold) positive political change for sexual minorities. Because of this, increasing the number of Church members who identify as HMAs would also increase the chances that these HMAs may take on these roles of power, and advocate for changes in policy

and procedure that will reduce structural stigma for sexual minorities in Utah, and by extension, the structural minority stress it produces.

Institutional Minority Stress. Institutional policies and practices that exclude or demote sexual minorities to second-class status in the Church also negatively impact the mental health and wellbeing of SMMCs, as evidenced in the earlier discussion of the policy of exclusion. In addition to the Church's current stance that identifying as a sexual minority itself is not sinful but acting on same-sex attraction is, SMMCs continue to face a number of other institutional minority stressors. For example, to become a high-ranking leader within the Church with the power to impact Church policy and procedures, the Church requires that individuals be in a heterosexual marriage (Leake, 1990; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2006, para. 47). Additionally, SMMCs and other sexual minorities who attend BYU are forbidden from demonstrating any form of romantic affection (including handholding) with someone of the same sex, with violators of this policy facing discipline up to and including expulsion from the university (Walch, 2020). Furthermore, after sexual minorities and their allies lit up the university's "Y" symbol on a nearby mountainside with rainbow-colored lights in protest of the school's treatment of sexual minorities, BYU administrators banned all demonstrations on the mountainside (Tanner, 2022). Notably, BYU was recently named the 2nd most LGBTQ-unfriendly university in the U.S., behind the University of Tennessee (Princeton Review, 2022). These institutional policies serve to silence the voices of sexual minorities and their allies, and act as a "rainbow stained-glass ceiling" (Kitchen, 2019), that permits sexual minority voices to only be seen and heard at lower levels of the institution. An inability to directly advocate for and experience change in harmful institutional policies and practices therefore acts as an institutional minority stressor.

The potential for heterosexual allies to carry the voices of SMMCs to positions of power within the Church may be an important way HMAs can positively impact the mental health and well-being of SMMCs. There is some evidence that this is possible. For example, despite leadership suggesting that the reversal of the policy of exclusion was “motivated by love” (Nelson, 2015), others have suggested the reversal was motivated by an “immense public backlash” (Jackson, 2019, para. 1) that included the Church membership resignation of HMAs. Such observations have compared it to other landmark policy reversals in the Church’s history (e.g., banning polygamy, allowing Black members of the Church to enter LDS temples) that some attribute to political and social pressure.

Research by Cragun et al. (2015) also provides support for this idea. They observed clear relationships between attitudes of members of the Church and shifts in rhetoric among Church leadership regarding sexual minorities: As attitudes among members of the Church became more affirming of sexual minorities, messaging from upper Church leadership similarly shifted from “condemnation to sympathetic understanding” (Cragun et al., 2015; p. 302). And, although Cragun (2015) notes this relationship is bidirectional, it is important to note that Church leadership is selected from lay members of the Church. As such, increasing the number of HMAs among lay members has the potential to both directly (through affirming leaders) and indirectly (through increasingly affirming attitudes of lay members) influence institutional rhetoric and policy impacting sexual minorities.

Interpersonal Minority Stress. Interpersonally, SMMCs report experiences of microaggressions in the Church (Simmons, 2017) consistent with the notion of “hate the sin, not the sinner” (Chakravarty & English, 2021, p. 249), and fears and experiences of rejection by family and peers who are members of the Church (Chakravarty & English, 2021). While sexual

minorities who are not members of the Church have also reported experiences of feeling hurt, misunderstood, rejected, mistreated, or offended by members of the Church, Lefevor et al. (2022) observed that these experiences were particularly harmful for the mental health of SMMCs. The increase of HMAs within the Church is likely to raise awareness both among HMAs themselves as well as within the Church more broadly of such microaggressions, and thus decrease the frequency of these experiences (which has implications for individual minority stress, as will be discussed below). Furthermore, fears and experiences of rejection are likely to be lower as SMMCs recognize the presence of affirming social supports in their lives and within the Church.

Individual Minority Stress. Given the previously described context of the Church, SMMCs are likely to experience minority stressors on an individual level, with negative implications for their mental health. These include internalizing negative messages about their sexual identity, feeling they must conceal or attempt to change their sexual identity, as well as the internal conflicts they may experience between their religious/sexual identities as mentioned earlier. In addition to the previously discussed impacts of sexual and religious identity conflict on SMMCs, Lefevor et al.'s (2021) study of 1,083 adults in the US found that concealment of one's sexual identity, as well as having negative beliefs about one's sexual identity (i.e., internalized heterosexism) were significantly related to more depression among SMMCs than sexual minorities who were not members of the Church. Similarly, a study of 634 sexual minorities who were current or former members of the Church found that a personal need for acceptance from others was strongly related to depression, with internalized heterosexism (for former members) and identity confusion (for current members) being the next significant predictors (Crowell et al., 2015). Research has suggested that social support is beneficial for

reducing the impacts of these individual minority stressors among sexual minorities broadly (e.g., Szymanski & Kashubeck-West, 2008), as well as SMMCs, specifically (Bridges et al., 2020; Lefevor et al., 2022; Mattingly et al., 2016). For example, HMAs may help SMMCs feel safe disclosing their sexual identity, may aid them in challenging the negative beliefs they may hold about their sexual identity, may support them in navigating identity conflicts, and may reduce the frequency in which SMMCs are exposed to heterosexist messages within the Church.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

In addition to minority stress theory, cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) may also help to explain poor mental health outcomes observed among SMMCs (Dehlin, Galliher, Bradshaw, & Crowell, 2015; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020). Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that individuals experience discomfort when their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and/or behavior are in conflict (Festinger, 1957). To reduce this discomfort, individuals may attempt to alter their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, or behaviors to make them congruent with one another. When they are not successful, the dissonance is maintained, and this psychological distress places them at risk of developing poor mental health outcomes (Festinger, 1957; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020).

Within the context of the Church, cognitive dissonance theory would suggest that SMMCs experience conflict between their sexual and religious identities and, as such, may seek congruence by changing one or the other. This is consistent with observations that SMMCs have reported engaging in conversion therapy and other sexual orientation change efforts (Beckstead & Morrow, 2004; Dehlin, Galliher, Bradshaw, Hyde, et al., 2015), leaving the Church, compartmentalizing these two aspects of their identity, or integrating their religious and sexual identities as attempts to resolve this internal conflict (Dehlin, Galliher, Bradshaw, & Crowell, 2015). Research on SMMCs suggests that individuals who have resolved this state of cognitive

dissonance appear to have better well-being than those who have not (Grigoriou, 2014; Lefevor, Blaber, et al., 2020). Specifically, the ability to give greater salience to either one's sexual identity or religious identity has been found to be associated with fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety (Grigoriou, 2014).

HMAs Impact on Cognitive Dissonance among SMMCs. Among sexual minority Christians broadly, social support from heterosexual religious friends, immediate and extended family members and clergy has been reported to aid in resolution of this cognitive dissonance (e.g., Dahl & Galliher, 2009; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Schuck & Liddle, 2001). This also appears to hold true among sexual minorities who are current or former members of the Church. As identified by participants in Beckstead and Morrow's (2004) qualitative study of SMMCs who previously sought conversion therapy, family and peer acceptance of their sexual minority identity was as an important support in their journey toward resolving conflicts between their sexual and religious identities. These participants chose a number of paths to resolve their sexual and religious identity conflicts (e.g., mixed-orientation marriage, celibacy, same-sex relationships) but acceptance from family and peers related to greater self-acceptance and positive self-identity for SMMCs. Similarly, in Grigoriou's (2014) study regarding resolution of these identity conflicts ($n = 142$), support from family and friends who were members of the Church was related to less depression and anxiety regardless of whether these SMMCs gave greater salience to their religious or sexual identity.

As outlined above, increasing the presence of HMAs within the Church may be beneficial for the mental health and well-being of SMMCs. This may be particularly true in Utah, given the potential power of HMAs to impact structural, institutional, interpersonal, and individual change that could reduce minority stressors faced by SMMCs at each of these levels. Additionally, by

increasing the number of Church members who identify as HMAs, SMMCs will have an increased chance of accessing social supports that can ease the process of resolving cognitive dissonance between their religious and sexual identities. Such affirming supports appear to be beneficial for the mental health and wellbeing of SMMCs within the Church, as well as those who have left. To develop interventions and supports to increase the number of HMAs in Utah, we must first understand the process of becoming a HMA. Furthermore, because some individuals who identify as HMAs may have left the Church, an understanding of this process of allyship would be incomplete without also including the perspectives and journeys of former members of the Church.

Becoming an Ally: What We Know

Although a limited amount of research exists on sexual minority ally development among heterosexual Mormons, a larger body of research has examined the processes and influences related to sexual minority ally development among the broader heterosexual population, and among heterosexual Christian individuals, specifically. The following sections explore the research on heterosexual ally development, broadly, and heterosexual Christian and heterosexual Mormon ally development, specifically.

Heterosexual Ally Development

Many theories of heterosexual ally development exist, broadly (i.e., not specifically centered on Mormon or Christian allyship), that touch on both affective (respect, positive attitudes toward sexual minorities; e.g., Stotzer, 2008; Worthington et al., 2002) and behavioral (advocacy and activism; e.g., Duhigg et al., 2010) components of allyship. These components parallel Grzanka et al.'s (2015) conceptualization of *passive* versus *active* allyship, respectively. A large amount of the extant research has explored heterosexual ally identity development within

college and university settings, including among student affairs professionals (e.g., DiStefano et al., 2000; Jordan, 2012), career and college counselors (e.g., DiStefano et al., 2000; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995), counseling psychology trainees (e.g., Asta & Vacha-Haase, 2013), and college students themselves (e.g., Stotzer, 2008). However, a growing body of literature has examined heterosexual ally development outside of academic settings, including among heterosexual activists working with sexual minority community organizations (Duhigg et al., 2010) and among parents of LGB youth (e.g., Phillips & Ancis, 2008; Vernaglia, 2000).

For example, in a sample of 68 college students, Stotzer (2008) found that affirming attitudes toward sexual minorities developed as a result of three factors. First, these students reported that sexual minority identities had been normalized during their childhood through affirming parental attitudes, familiarity with sexual minorities, and exposure to sexual minorities issues in pop culture. Second, these attitudes strengthened as they experienced empathy through personal interactions with sexual minorities. Third, affirming attitudes toward sexual minorities increased as a form of resistance after perceiving prejudice and discrimination targeting sexual minorities. Notably, Stotzer's (2008) research focused solely on the affective components of allyship but did not specifically explore what these affirming attitudes lead individuals to do, in other words, if and how they *acted* as an ally. There is much controversy among sexual minorities around whether individuals whose allyship is primarily passive and affective should be able to call themselves "allies" (e.g., Forbes & Ueno, 2020). For example, empathic attitudes toward sexual minorities have not been found to predict engagement in efforts to enact social change for this group, such as donating money to organizations or initiating discussions that promote rights for sexual minorities (Fingerhut, 2011). Accordingly, scholars such as Grzanka (2022) have suggested, "allyship should actually be action—not who you say you are, but what

you do,” (p. 14) highlighting the centrality of not just the passive, affective components, but also the active, behavioral components of allyship (see also Duhigg et al., 2010; Eichler, 2010). This active form of allyship is indicated in many models of heterosexual ally identity development.

Washington and Evans (1991), for example, suggested a linear, four-stage model of heterosexual ally development that includes stages of *awareness*, *knowledge/education*, *skills*, and, notably, *action*. They conceptualized *awareness* as a growing recognition of how one is similar to and different from sexual minorities. The *knowledge/education* stage includes efforts to familiarize oneself on the experiences and history of sexual minorities, and the pervasive presence and impacts of heterosexism. In the *skills* stage, developing heterosexual allies practice ways to communicate their knowledge. This ultimately leads to the *action* stage in which heterosexual allies engage in advocacy to “end oppression of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people” (p. 200).

Gelberg and Chojnacki’s (1995) six-stage model of heterosexual ally development rose out of observed parallels between the sexual identity development processes of sexual minorities and their own identity development as heterosexual allies. In Stage 1, *awareness*, their relationships with sexual minorities lead them to a greater understanding of “the influence of homophobia and heterosexism on society, ourselves, our friends, and family members” (para. 6). Stage 2, *ambivalence*, was characterized by the experience of difficult emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety, ambivalence) as they recognized incongruence between their values as allies and their behaviors. By engaging with sexual minorities and allies in their field, they were able to gain feedback and positive reinforcement, which enabled them to move into the next stage. Stage 3, *empowerment*, was characterized by greater self-efficacy and recognition of growth/progress toward being a heterosexual ally of sexual minorities. This empowerment moved them into Stage

4, *activism*, in which they began to engage in activism for sexual minorities in personal, professional, social, and political spheres. Stage 5, *pride*, arose as they experienced positive emotions in relation to greater congruence between their values and behaviors as allies through their continued growth and engagement in activism. Finally, in Stage 6, *integration*, they experienced even greater congruence, such that the values they held as allies began to incorporate into other areas of their life and lead them to advocate beyond the realm of their profession.

Some argue, however, such stage models may oversimplify or inaccurately represent the complex processes of ally development. In her foundational work on racial identity development of White people and people of color, Helms (1995) suggested the idea of *statuses* rather than *stages* as a more accurate way to understand dynamic navigation processes involved in identity development. Such *statuses* suggest that identity development is not linear and may involve leaving and returning to various statuses throughout the course of one's life based upon one's context and experiences. Helms' (1995) ideas of statuses has also been used in conceptualizing social justice ally development (Edwards, 2006) and heterosexual identity development (Worthington et al., 2001) processes. Jordan (2012) laid out five such statuses in his Heterosexual Ally Identity Development (HAID) model: *unexplored commitment*, which involves naïveté about one's heterosexual privilege, sexual minority issues, and the role of allyship; *aspiring ally to sexual minorities for self-interest*, in which one acts as an ally for sexual minorities one knows; *diffusion*, in which one experiences dissonance from experiences that challenge one's desire to engage in sexual minority allyship; *aspiring ally to sexual minorities for altruism*, which involves engaging in allyship for all sexual minorities; and *aspiring ally to sexual minorities for social justice*, which involves engaging in allyship in

collaboration with sexual minorities. This model importantly notes that achieving the status of ally, “does not mean that the individual has finished developing, but instead suggests that the individual has a highly complex understanding of their identity that they can continue to work on” (2012, p. 75). As such, heterosexual allyship for sexual minorities may be seen as a complex series of ongoing negotiations and re-negotiations rather than a linear process or destination.

Despite differences in heterosexual ally identity development models, some elements appear consistent. First, many models included changes from a state of ignorance to increased awareness of sexual minority issues (e.g., impacts and prevalence of heterosexism, educating oneself; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Jordan, 2012; Washington & Evans, 1991). Second, many of these models indicate that such increased awareness is often related to having personal relationships with sexual minorities (e.g., Asta & Vacha-Haase, 2013; DiStefano et al., 2000; Grzanka et al., 2015; Russell, 2011; Stotzer, 2008). Third, heterosexual ally identity development appears to involve the navigation and negotiation of internal conflicts, though these conflicts vary by model. Examples of such conflicts include re-evaluating one’s desire to be an ally based on challenging experiences (Jordan, 2012), experiencing dissonance between one’s values and behaviors (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995), and fears of being perceived as a sexual minority (Dillon et al., 2004; Duhigg et al. 2010). A fourth similarity across models is a period of growing confidence and self-efficacy in one’s skills and abilities to act as an ally (e.g., Distefano et al., 2000; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995). Fifth, a majority of these models include action (not just attitudes) as an important component (e.g., Edwards, 2006; Jordan, 2012; Vernaglia, 2000). Finally, these models suggest a variety of other factors may influence one’s decision to become an ally of sexual minorities. For example, individuals who hold other minoritized identities have reported that their experiences of prejudice and discrimination lead them to empathize with

sexual minorities (e.g., DiStefano et al., 2000; Duhigg et al., 2010; Stotzer, 2009; Vernaglia, 2000). Grzanka et al. (2015) and Russell (2011) observed that deeply held principles such as those related to social justice also influenced individuals to engage in allyship.

Heterosexual Christian Ally Development

Although the religious experiences of sexual minorities and heterosexual allies within Christian spheres are phenomenologically and structurally different due to the power and privilege that heterosexual allies hold, heterosexual Christian allies (HCAs) have reported conflicts between their religious and HCA identities that mirror some aspects of religious and sexual identity conflicts previously discussed among sexual minorities. These conflicts appear to be especially salient among those whose religious beliefs were not affirming of sexual minorities, leading them to experience cognitive dissonance (Zeininger, 2017). This cognitive dissonance has been observed to influence the HCA identity development process among Christians. For example, in a study by Borgman (2009), cognitive dissonance played a central role in the process by which Christian individuals became HCAs. Specifically, participants reported experiencing dissonance around holding both Christian and HCA identities. They then described seeking to resolve this dissonance by engaging in self-exploration/self-acceptance, exploring their Christian-based beliefs, and through exploring their beliefs about sexual orientation. Many of Borgman's participants found that integrating their Christian and heterosexual ally identities was an ongoing process rather than a destination.

In a grounded theory study by Minnix (2018), 15 heterosexual Christian counselors reported both obstacles as well as influential factors in resolving Christian and HCA identity conflicts. Obstacles to HCA identity development included fears of rejection by family, friends, and faith communities, and being taught that questioning religious beliefs about sexual

minorities meant questioning (and thus betraying) God (Minnix, 2018). Influential factors in resolving HCA and religious identity conflicts included: finding community and social supports in which exploring and questioning religious beliefs felt safe, encountering evidence that homosexuality was not a choice (and therefore could not be sinful), and utilizing spiritual practices such as prayer to find peace with religious conflicts around being an HCA (Minnix, 2018).

Incorporating these conflicts, an unpublished dissertation by Hildebrandt (2012) conceptualized a broader process in which 12 heterosexual individuals with an evangelical Christian background became HCAs. Hildebrandt found support for seven steps that individuals who were converted to evangelical Christianity in childhood typically endorsed. First, attitudes are learned in childhood from church leaders, parents, media, and in educational settings. These include both pro- and anti-gay attitudes but tend to lean toward the development of anti-gay attitudes overall. Second, in early adulthood, learned anti-gay attitudes and assumptions about sexual minorities often go unchallenged. Third, HCAs may experience crises that influence their development as allies, which include religious and HCA identity conflicts, but also other personal conflicts (e.g., divorce, discrimination, addiction). Fourth, the experience of these various crises causes HCAs to critically reflect on and change some religious beliefs, including beliefs about sexual minorities. Fifth, like the broader literature discussed earlier, exposure to sexual minorities and issues causes them to further challenge their assumptions and beliefs about this community. The sixth step includes a commitment to abandon beliefs that deem sexual minority identities and behaviors as sinful, which sometimes leads to leaving one's religion of origin. Last, Hildebrandt (2012) reported HCA's pro-gay attitudes are sustained through either quiet support of sexual minorities or engagement in advocacy, mirroring the previous

descriptions of allyship as both passive and active (Grzanka et al., 2015). Despite identifying this process in steps, Hildebrandt (2012) also noted that navigating these steps often involves a back-and-forth process. Dewey et al. (2014) reported similar findings in a qualitative study of thirteen White clergy who identified as HCAs. These clergy also typically reported that their HCA identity development was influenced by both tolerant and intolerant messages about sexual minorities while growing up, by close relationships with sexual minorities, and by critical experiences that impacted their attitudes and beliefs.

The process of becoming a HCA may differ for individuals from different Christian denominations, particularly as a growing number of denominations are becoming more accepting of sexual minorities (Chaves et al., 2021). For HCAs in Zeininger's (2017) study who experienced conflict between religious teachings about sexual minorities and their desire to be allies, resolving this conflict often led them to seek out more affirming Christian churches or to abandon religion entirely. For HCAs who perceived no conflict between their religion's teachings and their identity as a HCA, few changes in religious beliefs occurred. However, for some HCAs with deep ties to non-sexual-minority-affirming Christian churches, this conflict led them to compartmentalize their religious and HCA identities via attempts to ignore homophobic church teachings. Given the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint's current stance toward sexual minorities as previously discussed, it is likely that this conflict may be present in the lives of heterosexual members of the CJCLDS, and resolution strategies may look different.

Heterosexual Mormon Ally Development

Limited research has examined the process of ally development among heterosexual Mormon allies (HMAs). I identified only two studies addressing ally development of HMAs: a case study by Gess (2016) and an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Allen (2021). Gess (2016)

used Waters' (2010) developmental model of White racial development to understand the ally development process of a heterosexual Mormon counselor-in-training during counseling supervision. In the initial stage, the trainee reported having limited exposure to sexual minorities (and other types of diversity, broadly), and understood "differences through external sources and interpersonal relationships, such as religious figures (Waters, 2010)" (Gess, 2016, p. 90). In the intermediate phase, the trainee became more aware of power and privilege associated with her identity as a heterosexual White woman and included the experience of cognitive dissonance between this growing recognition and her religious beliefs. In the mature stage of ally development, the trainee, "engage[d] in activism as well as encourage[d] others to become advocates," (Gess, 2016, p. 81) which included opportunities such as discussing sexual minority issues with family, attending workshops addressing sexual minority issues, and being willing to "march in a gay pride parade" (p. 90). Despite being specific to the ally development of a counselor trainee, this study suggests the potential importance of "safe, supportive environments" (Gess, 2016, p. 91) for potential HMAs to explore sexual minority issues. It also suggests that increased knowledge of sexual minority issues and increased awareness and reflection on one's own power and privilege may be important components of HMA identity development. Importantly, this trainee identified the process of allyship as "continuous" (Gess, 2016, p. 90), rather than a process that could be completed.

Unlike Gess (2016), Allen (2020) did not conceptualize a specific process or model in which HMA identity development may occur, but rather used a narrative approach that discussed ten common themes among the experiences of Mormon parents as they sought to justify their support for their sexual and gender minority children with their religious identity. The first theme, *difficulties processing child's disclosure of LGBTQ+ status*, included parents

downplaying their child's identity and struggling to make sense of their child's identity in context of their beliefs in the Church. The second theme, *concern for child's welfare*, included fears of rejection/harm of their child both within and outside of the Church as well as concern for their spiritual and psychological health. The third theme identified, *loss of anticipated future*, included a grieving process in which they recognized their child's future would likely differ from the one they anticipated within the Church. In the fourth theme, *disruption of belief*, participants discussed experiences of religious and ally identity crises that mirror those mentioned in the broader HCA literature. A fifth theme, *fear of losing relationships*, revolved around fears that acceptance of their child's identity might result in friends, family, and church members cutting off social ties. Theme 6, *uncertainty with lay leadership*, described both positive and negative experiences with local Church leadership regarding their child and sexual minority issues broadly, and difficulties knowing what to expect from such leaders. In theme 7, *seeking guidance from God*, parents discussed using prayer and the Latter-Day Saint concept of receiving direct personal revelation from God to find peace with the conflicts they were experiencing. Theme 8, *feeling isolated*, discussed parents' experiences looking for understanding and support both within and outside of the Church, and wondering if they may be alone in experiencing these conflicts. In theme 9, *finding support*, parents reported being able to access supportive groups and organizations that connected them with others navigating similar conflicts (e.g., *Encircle*, *Mama Dragons*, *Affirmation*, *North Star*). The tenth and final theme, *becoming an advocate*, was characterized by engaging in a range of advocacy behaviors, such as flying pride flags, speaking up among peers in the Church, and creating safe gathering spaces for sexual and gender minorities in their homes.

There are limitations of the two studies just discussed for understanding the process and motivations involved in HMA ally development. For example, Gess (2016) represents only a single perspective of an individual who is a counseling supervisee and, as such their experience may differ from others in the broader population of the Church. Similarly, the ally development model used by Gess (2016) was not specifically grounded in the experiences of HMAs, and as such may miss central components of this process. For example, despite acknowledging identity conflicts experienced by her trainee, Gess (2016) does not discuss how this trainee moved from experiencing this conflict into a state of more “mature” allyship—or even a clear acknowledgement of whether and how resolution of this conflict was achieved. Given that resolution of these conflicts may influence ally development (Borgman, 2009; Zeininger, 2017), this represents a gap in the developmental process described in Gess’ (2016) study specifically.

Allen’s (2020) study, although indicative of common experiences of HMAs who are parents of sexual and gender minority children, does not increase our understanding of a developmental *process* of allyship—in other words, it does not help us understand influences on, barriers to, or outcomes of HMA ally development. If we are to increase the number of HMAs within the Church, creating a theory that helps us understand their ally development processes is essential. As such, while Allen gives an excellent understanding of common experiences of HMAs, our understanding of how such experiences come to be and are navigated is limited. Additionally, given the goals of the current study, it is notable that not all participants in Allen’s (2021) study lived in Utah. This is important, as the consequences of allyship for sexual minorities in Utah likely looks different than in areas where members of the Church are a minority. Allen’s participants also did not solely identify as heterosexual, with two participants identifying as sexual minorities in mixed-orientation marriages. This is a limitation, since sexual

minorities have a different level of empathy and investment for improving the circumstances of other sexual minorities than their heterosexual peers, and thus likely have different experiences. Lastly, Allen's research specifically examines the experiences of LDS *parents* of sexual minorities specifically and does not capture the identity development influences and processes of non-parent HMAs. Relatedly, Russell (2011) identified that ally development may look different for parents of sexual minority youth compared to those who do not have this tie with sexual minorities. Given this, our understanding of the process of HMA ally development is limited and would benefit from specifically examining the perspectives of individuals who are not parents of sexual minorities.

Relatedly, although identity conflict navigation was mentioned within both Gess (2016) and Allen's (2021) studies, additional examination of these processes is warranted given the specific constraints that likely uniquely impact the identity development of HMAs in Utah. One way in which the navigation of these conflicts likely differs highly from those of other HCAs is seen in ways in which cognitive dissonance may be managed. For example, as noted by Zeininger (2017), when individuals experience cognitive dissonance between their religious and ally identities, they typically resolve this conflict in one of three ways: (1) seeking out more affirming Christian churches, (2) abandoning religion entirely, or (3) compartmentalizing one's religious and ally identities. Congregations across the worldwide Church are uniform regarding beliefs, policies, procedures, and Church curriculum as established by upper leaders of the Church, thus differences between congregations are intentionally negligible (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2010, pp. 132-135). Even if such differences did exist, church policy requires individuals to attend the congregation that corresponds to their geographical location (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2023) so it is not possible for individuals to simply

“church shop” for a more affirming Church to resolve this dissonance (Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2010).

The Church’s belief that it is the one true church on Earth further creates a theological barrier for those seeking more affirming religious beliefs, since its all-or-nothing approach may make believing in and attending a different religious denomination difficult. This is consistent with research that suggests that individuals who leave the Church are less likely to reaffiliate with another religion (Albrecht & Bahr, 1983; Pew Research Center, 2015). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has been described as one of the most high-cost religions (e.g., Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2010; Scharp & Beck, 2017), meaning that “the values, practices, rituals, and relationships associated with membership not only extend into the member's everyday life, but play a primary role” (Hinderaker, 2015, p. 93). This may be particularly true in Utah, where church records have indicated just over 66% of residents are members of the Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2019). Thus, individuals challenging dominant beliefs within the Church may face a variety of social consequences, stigma, and ostracization that extend beyond the boundaries of their Sunday worship. The literature suggests consequences of leaving the Church could include worse reported health (Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2010), family estrangement (both now and, in Latter-Day Saint theology, in the hereafter; Scharp & Beck, 2017), divorce (Hinderaker, 2015), loss of friends (Brooks, 2020), existential fears of one’s eternal salvation (Hinderaker, 2015), “World Collapse,” as coined by Brooks (2020) which requires a complete overhaul of one’s perception of reality (Ormsbee, 2020), as well as potential losses to Church-provided welfare, and employment opportunities (Scharp & Beck, 2017).

The Current Study: A Call for HMAs

The role of heterosexual allies in ameliorating the negative health consequences sexual minorities experience has been well established (e.g., Chaudoir et al., 2017; Mutanski & Liu, 2012; Ryan et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2019). Given the extant research on the role of allies among religious sexual minorities (e.g., Bridges et al., 2020; Mattingly et al., 2016; Ryan & Rees, 2012, Lefevor et al., 2022), HMAs have the potential to impact mental health of sexual minorities in Utah, particularly through helping reduce minority stressors and cognitive dissonance experienced by sexual minorities. Given that existing research on HCA and HMA identity development has focused on parents of sexual minority youth, the current study aims to understand the perspectives of those without a sexual minority child, as investment in allyship likely differs between parents and non-parents. Therefore, the current study aimed to develop a theory of the processes, influences, and outcomes involved in HMA identity development, with hopes that this research may be used to facilitate future HMA development that positively impacts the mental health and well-being of SMMCs.

Given the considerations outlined above, the current study explored the following research questions:

1. What is the process of heterosexual ally identity development among current and former members of the Church living in Utah?
2. What are barriers and supports to heterosexual ally identity development among this population?
3. How do HMAs define allyship?
4. How do HMAs navigate conflicts related to their religious and ally identities?

An essential aspect of grounded theory is the creation of codes, categories, and themes that are tightly grounded in the data provided by participants as opposed to being constructed based upon a priori hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For this reason, no hypotheses were constructed for the research questions described.

Chapter 2: Method

The current study utilized constructivist grounded theory (Bowers, 1990; Charmaz, 2000, 2014; Fassinger, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While other qualitative frameworks include goals such as seeking to understand lived experiences of a phenomenon (phenomenology; Giorgi, 2012), a culture (ethnography; Geertz, 1973), or in-depth experiences of a specific individual/small group of individuals (case study; Crowe et al., 2011), grounded theory seeks to construct theories that increase understanding of a particular social process (Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Given the current study's goals of understanding the process of HMA development, grounded theory therefore was a fitting research methodology.

Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006, 2008) grew out of the classical method of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and in response to the highly systematic Straussian grounded theory methods later suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Charmaz critiqued both classical and Straussian grounded theory for being rooted in positivist traditions that assumed an external and objective reality that could be discovered through the methodology (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Furthermore, Charmaz believed that Straussian grounded theory was overcomplicated and could potentially limit creativity and discovery due to its formulaic procedures (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Furthermore, although both classic and Straussian grounded theory attempted to remove the influence of the researcher as to produce data that is objective as possible, Charmaz maintained that such objectivity was not achievable (Charmaz, 2000). Relatedly, while classical and Straussian grounded theory advise against a full understanding of the literature on a topic (as to again, promote objectivity), constructivist grounded theory understands knowledge as co-constructed and embraces the researcher's knowledge and experiences as part of the theory construction process. Furthermore,

constructivist grounded theory seeks to give voice to the language of participants, to help the theory be grounded in their perspectives. Due to my prior knowledge and experiences as a gay former member of the Church, as well as my desire to give voice to my participants, I believe that a constructivist grounded theory methodology accounts for the presence of my own perspectives within the co-construction of the realities of my participants, without creating a false pretense of objectivity on my part (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). I embrace, as Charmaz said, that I am “part of the world [I] study and the data [I] collect” (2006, p. 10).

To support us in developing a model of the process of allyship development for this population, we had each of our participants generate visual timelines of key moments in their allyship journey. These timelines served as helpful “visual prompts to guide the interview discussion” (Jackson, 2013) and allowed us to explore how our participants journeys played out in various contexts over time (Monico et al., 2020). Importantly, timelines were completed and uploaded by participants prior to their interviews. Such “take home” timelines have been observed to increase recall of important details and events, allow participants to think more deeply about their experiences, and support them in more clearly expressing their experiences (Bremner, 2020). Throughout our coding process, we compared our emerging model with the timelines of our participants, allowing us to verify our analyses, as well as identify and explore gaps in the model we developed from our participants data.

Reflexivity Statement

Our research team consisted of a group of individuals who varied in their connections to sexual minorities as well as the LDS Church. I am a counseling psychology doctoral candidate and identify as a White, queer, cisgender man who is neurodivergent and is an inactive member of the Church. I had previous experience conducting research at the intersection of sexual

minorities and religion, and was responsible for conducting participant interviews, auditing transcripts, coding, memo writing, and theoretical model development. Dr. Joseph R. Miles is a counseling psychology faculty member who identifies as a White, gay, cisgender man who is able-bodied, and has never been a member of the Church. He had previous experience advising on research at the intersection of sexual minorities and religion, had previously conducted and published research utilizing grounded theory, and served as the primary auditor for this study. JD Goates is a counseling psychology doctoral candidate who identifies as a White, queer, genderqueer individual and is a former member of the Church. JD had previous experience doing research on sexual and gender minorities, including grounded theory studies, and was involved in coding memo writing, and theoretical model development. Jesse Hunter Evans is an undergraduate student who identifies as a White, heterosexual, cisgender man who is able-bodied and has never been a member of the Church. Jesse had no previous training in research and was not involved in coding, but was supervised by myself and Dr. Joseph R. Miles in auditing and de-identifying transcripts.

To increase the quality and trustworthiness of our research, the coding team actively discussed our positionality, reactions, and memos related to the data (Morrow, 2005). We acknowledged that as sexual minorities, we were invested in others becoming allies to support this community. JD and I acknowledged our former connections to the Church, and shared passion for this work as a result of growing up as sexual minorities in Utah. Dr. Miles acknowledged little knowledge about the Church, but shared that he was raised in a non-affirming religion, though not in a religious family. We also shared our experiences of having family members who are allies, and how this positively impacted our experiences growing up and today. Given this history, we also discussed our dedication to accurately portray our

participants' experiences, even when our personal beliefs or experiences conflicted with what our participants shared. We also recognized that our varied familiarity with the Church was an asset, providing both insider perspective (from myself and JD) and the opportunity to ask questions/gain greater clarity on things that might otherwise be taken for granted as a result of less familiarity (from Dr. Miles). We openly discussed our reactions to the data throughout the coding process, finding data that was both consistent with our expectations as well as data that challenged them. JD and I processed the emotional impacts of this work with Dr. Miles.

Mindful of this information, I relied on my prior training in clinical work as a counseling psychology trainee and as an intergroup dialogue facilitator to adopt what Khuri (2004) described as, "a genuine stance of curiosity and acceptance, which required empathy and our ability to manage our own emotions" even when participants perspectives differed from my own. I discussed and explored the effectiveness of this approach to semi-structured interviews with my research team to get their perspectives and feedback. In addition to openly discussing reactions and being mindful of how our positionality could impact our findings, we believed it was important to involve our participants in providing feedback on both their individual transcripts, as well as our initial results. This member checking was particularly important as our participants were both inside and outside of the Church in Utah, and thus could provide a balanced understanding on whether we had captured their perspectives accurately. We received feedback from eight participants, representing perspectives both inside and outside of the Church, indicating that we had captured their stories accurately.

Participants

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling via social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X), email, and flyers sent to groups and organizations that interact with and

serve HMAs and sexual minorities in Utah. Additionally, the study was advertised through the Listen, Learn and Love podcast (<https://www.listenlearnandlove.org>) which often discusses the stories of sexual minorities who are current or former members of the LDS church. To qualify for the study, our participants had to identify as a current or former member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, identify as heterosexual, identify as an ally of sexual minorities, currently live in Utah, and endorse that they were not the parent of a sexual minority person.

After reviewing attention and validity checks, we narrowed down our potential pool of participants to 67. Our first three interview participants were selected randomly. Consistent with grounded theory procedures, we engaged in data collection and analysis simultaneously. After our first coding meeting and in each subsequent meeting, we engaged in purposeful sampling of the remaining pool of participants (Patton, 2002) to help fill gaps in the theory as it was being constructed. For example, noticing we had a large member of participants who had left the church, we purposefully sampled from the pool of active members to explore perspectives we may not have captured. We concluded that data saturation had been reached after conducting fifteen interviews. Although recommendations for qualitative research suggest that adequate data is not solely determined by the number of research participants (Levitt et al., 2017), Morrow (2005) suggests that 12-30 interviews typically suffice for quality research. Participant pseudonyms and demographics are displayed in Table 1. In order to protect confidentiality of our participants given this often interconnected population, participants were asked to choose a pseudonym, and reported age ranges are intentionally broad.

Table 1. Participant Pseudonyms and Demographics

Pseudonym	Age (range)	Gender Identity	Race/Ethnicity	Socioeconomic Status	Relationship Status	Church Membership Status	Relationship to Sexual Minorities
Bennett	25-64	Cisgender Man	White	Middle Class	Married	Inactive	Friends, Coworkers
Bob	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Single	Less-Active	Friends, Coworkers, Clients
Brad	25-64	Cisgender Man	White	Working Class	Married	Inactive	Sibling, Friends
Jason	25-64	Cisgender Man	White	Middle Class	Married	Less-Active	Friends, Coworkers
Jessica	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Married	Less-Active	Mixed-Orientation Marriage
Jim	25-64	Cisgender Man	White	Upper Middle Class	Married	Active	Friends, Coworkers, Family Members
Lexie	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Upper Middle Class	Married	Inactive	Friends, Coworkers, Family Members
Michelle	65+	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Married	Inactive	Friends
Paige	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Married	Active Member	Friends, Coworkers
Penny	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Single	Membership Withdrawn	Friends, Coworkers

Table 1. (Continued)

Pseudonym	Age (range)	Gender Identity	Race/Ethnicity	Socioeconomic Status	Relationship Status	Church Membership Status	Relationship to Sexual Minorities
Rose	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Married	Active	Friends, Coworkers, Mixed-Orientation Marriage Friends, Family Members
Samuel	65+	Cisgender Man	White	Upper Middle Class	Married	Active	Friends
Star	25-64	Cisgender Woman	African American /Black	Working Class	Married	Active	Friends
Stephanie	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Upper Middle Class	Married	Active	Friends
Stevie	25-64	Cisgender Woman	White	Middle Class	Dating	Membership Withdrawn	Friends

Procedure

Participants were directed from recruitment materials (Appendix A) via a link (for email/social media) or a QR code (for flyers/social media) to the informed consent statement (Appendix B). After reviewing the informed consent statement, those who consented were directed to an online screener survey (Appendix C). In addition to ensuring all participants met the inclusion criteria previously described, the screener requested contact information, and self-ratings of their level of activity in the Church (active, less-active, inactive, or ex-communicated/membership withdrawn). This screening information was used by the research team to engage in theoretical sampling as we worked toward the development of a grounded theory of HMA ally development that is both rich and thick (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Geertz, 1973). Participants who met the inclusion criteria were contacted via email by the research team to confirm their interest in participation, receive instructions for completion of the allyship timeline, and schedule a time for the interview (Appendix D). Participants were asked to complete the allyship timeline and upload it to a secure portal prior to the interview, which also included a consent form regarding potential use of their timeline for publication (Appendix E). Participants were given an optional template to use for their timeline (Appendix F) and given the following instructions:

In preparation for your interview, we are asking that you use a piece of paper and a writing instrument to create a physical timeline of important events throughout your life that you believe influenced your journey toward becoming an ally for sexual minorities. Your timeline should start from your birth and go until the present day. To the best of your ability, please label each important event with as specific a date as possible. Feel free to include important details of each event on the timeline itself, and know that you

will have an opportunity to talk in more detail about each event during your interview. This timeline will serve as a basic framework for your interview, and we will also ask other questions related to the process you went through in becoming an ally. For your convenience, you may print off the timeline template we have created, or create one of your own.

All participants complete and uploaded a timeline, with some using the provided template and others creating their own. I conducted semi-structured interviews (Appendix G) via a secure Zoom platform, lasting approximately 1-1.5 hours. These interviews were then transcribed utilizing Otter.ai technology. Participants were paid \$20 for their time via a Visa gift card or chose to donate these funds to a Utah-based organization that supported LGBTQ+ individuals.

Transcripts and allyship timelines were audited for accuracy and de-identified by myself and Jesse Hunter Evans following the interview. De-identified transcripts and timelines were then sent back to the participant for member checking. Participants were given a week to respond with any edits or clarifications. If participants did not respond within this time, it was assumed they did not have edits or clarifications, and their data was incorporated into our analyses. Following analyses, a summary of our findings was also sent to participants for member checking. As mentioned previously, 8 out of 15 participants responded to member checking invitations.

Data Analysis

Guidelines for constructivist grounded theory suggest that data collection and analysis occur simultaneously (e.g., Charmaz, 2014) to actively engage in what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called the “constant comparative method.” Myself, JD Goates, and Dr. Joseph R. Miles initially coded three interviews using open coding with gerunds on a line-by-line basis (Charmaz, 2014;

Glaser, 1978). Coding with gerunds (e.g., “feeling empowered,” “breaking silence”) has been found to help delineate subliminal processes involved, which aids in the creation of a theory of process. Additionally, each member of the coding team engaged in memo writing throughout the coding process to track their reactions and decision-making processes in relation to the constructed theory (Gilbert, 2001; Hardesty et al., 2022). These memos allowed the research team to engage in active reflection on their process of generating codes, ongoing reflexivity of their positionality, and tracking the development of the theory over time. During research meetings we shared memos and reactions, and discussed initial codes to ensure inter-coder reliability. Reoccurring codes across and within transcripts were collapsed into initial thematic categories. Consistent with the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), these emerging categories were compared to previously created codes and categories, and their relationships to one another were evaluated. Similar categories were combined, or important nuances were highlighted to distinguish them. These codes, categories and relationships between categories were used to develop a theory of the process of HMA identity development. Furthermore, we compared the evolving theory with the allyship timelines of our participants (see Figure 1) in order to verify the temporal nature of this developmental process, and identify gaps and areas of interest. After identifying gaps and areas of interest, we explored how to address them through modifying interview protocol questions and identifying participants via theoretical sampling to help fill in the identified gaps/areas of interest. For example, as data analysis proceeded, my research team noted that participants talked briefly about navigating religious and ally identity conflicts, but our questions did not tap deeper into *how* such conflicts were navigated. As a result, we adapted our protocol to include explicit questions around religious and ally identity conflicts, and identified the need to pull from a broad range of

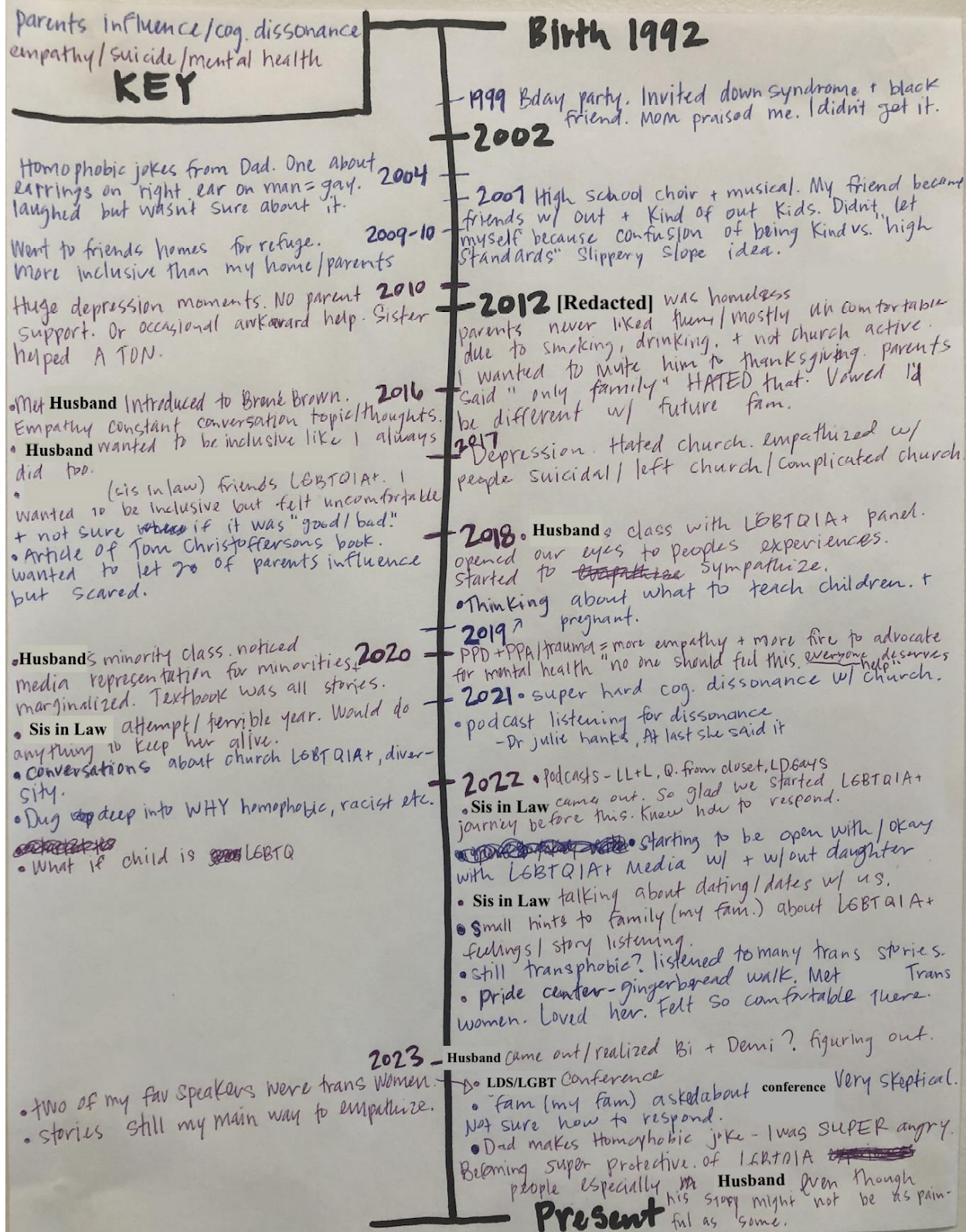


Figure 1. Example of de-identified allyship timeline from participant (used with consent)_

perspectives in and out of the church to explore the nuances in this process, as it appeared to be an important component of allyship development for this population.

In addition to examining how codes converged with one another, attention was also paid to ways the emerging theory was challenged or contradicted by newly acquired interview data and allyship timelines, and therefore was inaccurate or incomplete. These challenges and contradictions were actively explored, and the model was adjusted to better account for these components of the process. This process was repeated until data saturation was assumed to have been achieved. Saturation is described by Charmaz (2008) as, “having occurred when gathering data sheds no further light on the properties of [a] theoretical category” (p. 167). As such, data was collected, coded, and sampled until no novel knowledge emerged regarding categories, their contents, and their relationships to one another within our theory.

Chapter 3: Results

The purpose of this study was to develop a theory of the process that heterosexual, current or former members of the LDS Church living in Utah go through that leads them to identify as an ally of sexual minorities. Essential to this process was understanding how our participants understood allyship, as well as the barriers and supports that influenced this developmental process. Utilizing constructivist grounded theory methods (Bowers, 1990; Charmaz, 2000, 2014; Fassinger, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) a seven-stage iterative model of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Development was produced (see Figure 2). We first provide an overview of the model before exploring each of its components in greater depth.

The Process of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development

Based upon our analyses of data collected through semi-structured interviews and our participants' written allyship timelines, we identified individuals as moving through the following seven stages as they developed their identity as heterosexual allies: Naïveté, Experiencing a Catalyst Event, Interpreting the Catalyst, Experiencing an Identity Crisis, Engaging in Exploration to Address the Crisis, Coming to a Resolution or Commitment, and ultimately Choosing one or more of the Allyship Statuses (or ways of being an ally) within or outside of the LDS Church. We consider this to be an iterative process, in that subsequent catalyst events result in further meaning making, crisis, exploration, resolution/commitment and potential shifts in allyship statuses and locations. Furthermore, this process was situated within the individual contexts (e.g., social identity, family of origin) of our participants, which in turn were influenced by the larger shared institutional and cultural context of Utah. We will begin by discussing these contextual factors to help situate the process described in our model, and then proceed to describe the model itself.

Proposed Model of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development

(Maughan et al., 2024)

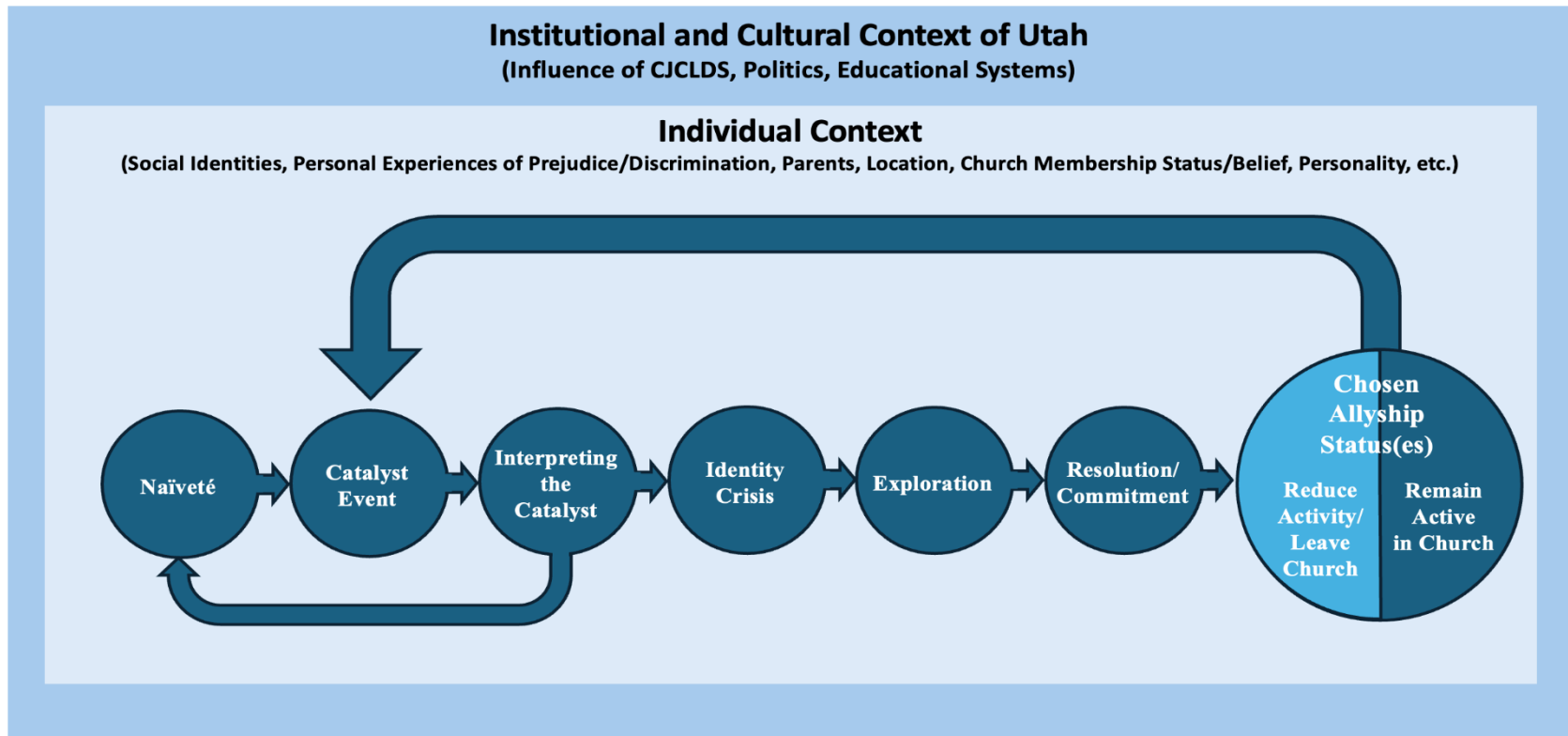


Figure 2. Proposed Model of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Development

Model Context

Institutional and Cultural Context of Utah

Participants in our study shared how Utah's institutional and cultural context impacted their allyship development. Some participants discussed how Utah's limited diversity in social and religious identities impacted their initial understanding of experiences and beliefs outside their own.

When asked about how living in Utah had impacted his allyship journey, "Jim," a 25–64-year-old White married man who is an active member of the Church shared:

Well, there's probably different ways to look at that. One way is through the influence of the Church. So, everything is sort of seen through what the Church teaches, right? So maybe it's easier to be LGBTQ than maybe in Alabama or some really far right [places], because of some of the more moderated positions the Church has took on issues that might have a side-effect of making otherwise extreme, MAGA-type people a little bit more moderate on that issue. Because they just do whatever the Church says. But on the other hand, you know, it's such a conservative, very LDS, White state, that it's very... I would imagine, it's super easy to not fit in... Maybe if you were born in someplace a little more cosmopolitan, or more tolerant, life would be easier.

Here, Jim suggests that the rhetoric of the LDS Church influences Utahn's attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals, a perspective echoed by many of our participants. As "Lexie," a 25–64-year-old White married woman who is an inactive member of the LDS Church, put it:

The Church with its doctrines and teachings was single handedly the biggest lens to the way I viewed queerness and allyship at any given point in my journey—whether I was in harmony with the Church’s teachings or viewing things in contrast to those teachings.

Notably, the Church’s rhetoric was viewed as being helpful in reducing otherwise extreme stances toward sexual minorities, while also harmfully contributing to biases, prejudice, and discrimination that queer people experience within Utah.

Participants also noted the impact of the Church’s rhetoric not only on the attitudes and behaviors of Utahns, but also on the political, cultural, and institutional contexts in which Utahns exists. Lexie shared:

The Church is really involved in politics in Utah. Almost all the lawmakers in the state of Utah are affiliated with [the] Mormon Church and will listen to top Church leaders. And I mean, hopefully this is clear, but like, the Church is really homophobic and really transphobic. So... the stuff that they're getting from them is not great. And that's taught over the pulpit every week. So many people in Utah are members or former members... Even if you didn't grow up Mormon, everything [in Utah] is in contrast to the Mormons who live here, right? So, everything is couched in either Mormon or Non-Mormon terms.

Participants within and outside of the Church shared that, as a result of the Church’s influence, they experienced social and religious pressure to conform to the dominant norms and beliefs established by the LDS Church. Particularly, participants noted the impacts of being perceived as an “outsider” in a largely homogenous culture. For example, “Jessica,” a middle class married woman who is a less-active member, shared:

In middle school... I became friends with a girl and... I think she had a single mom. She didn't live with her dad. But, she didn't go to church, like, she wasn't active. Her mom

would, like, you know, wear spaghetti straps, and tank tops. [laughs] And my parents were kind of funny about that, like, having me be friends with somebody that was... that was different and, um, didn't dress like we did. And also I had other friends in elementary school that were like that. Their parents smoked, and my parents were kind of funny about that.

Here, we see Jessica's parents being cautious of letting her interact with others who were either not active in the church or were not members. This suggests that an individual's Church membership status and adherence to its rules and beliefs can strongly influence how they are socially perceived and interacted with. "Stephanie" a White upper middle-class married woman who is active in the church, shared:

There's so many ways to be on the fringe. Obviously, there's [being a sexual minority] but also, people who are divorced, people who never got married, people who have a disability, people who just don't fit in for whatever reason. I feel like our church has created this little tiny box that you have to try to fit into, and it's just leaving so many people out.

Using how well someone fits into the Church's "box" as a gauge for trustworthiness of others appeared to be true for all of our participants, regardless of current affiliation with the Church—though for different reasons. For example, Lexie shared that in attempting to identify other allies in Utah, she often looks for people who appear, "subversive, based off like, the typical Mormon standard." Many of our participants shared that fears of "ostracization" within Utah's institutional and cultural context influenced how they thought about and approached allyship for sexual minorities.

Individual Context

We observed that each of our participants' journeys toward allyship, and even the way they approached allyship was also influenced by their individual context and experiences. For example, our participants discussed how their social identities (e.g., gender, race) and past experiences of personally experiencing/witnessing prejudice, discrimination, and other forms of unjust behavior impacted their empathy for sexual minorities and their understanding of allyship. "Star," an African American working class married woman who is active in the Church, shared:

I consider myself as a minority because of my race. And I think that has also helped on how I view the [LGBTQ+] community... Sometimes I don't feel seen, or I feel like sometimes I don't belong... And I think also the community feels that way in some way because of their identity.

"Samuel," a White upper middle-class man who is an active member of the Church, viewed an experience observing a peer be "mercilessly bullied" as relevant to his allyship journey. He noted, "I think that that just underlies, you know, at a pretty young, formative age seeing somebody helpless being abused. And I was... I was hurt by that, but I didn't do anything about it." He shared the experience led to feelings of regret for not acting like an ally, saying, "Even now, you know, years later, I'm still troubled by that." For "Penny," a White middle class woman who withdrew her Church membership, her experiences of being both bullied and sexualized in her youth, impacted her journey, saying, "It just kind of created somebody who understood deeply what it was like to be misunderstood, and rejected in certain ways and by certain people."

Nearly every participant shared the impact of their family of origin on their journey. Many shared growing up in homes where phrases like, "That's so gay," and homophobic jokes

were present. Others shared a recognition of avoidance of discussing sexual minorities in their homes and families. For some, such as Jessica, allyship spurred as a reaction to counteract the negative messages she had received from her parents' surrounding diversity and inclusion. She shared that following a personal experience of depression, she expressed a desire to invite an unhoused individual she knew to her family's home for a holiday dinner:

My parents said, "No, it's only family." And before that I had had friend's parents welcome me into their home. And I really wanted that for my parents, to like, welcome people that I wanted in our home that were different. And when that happened, I just knew, "Okay," like, "this isn't gonna happen." Like I kind of gave up on that idea... So then I just told myself, "Okay, like, in the future when I have my own family, this is how it's gonna be: we're gonna welcome whoever into our home. Because I know what it's like to feel like you don't want to live anymore. And so I don't think anyone should feel this."

Our participants also shared positive impacts of their family of origin on their allyship journey. "Bennett" a White middle-class married man who is an inactive member shared that despite growing up in a "strict" home that was, "pretty rigid with the rules within the LDS church," his mother's belief that it was always important to "be kind," ultimately paved the foundation for how he understands and embodies allyship. "Rose," a White middle-class married woman who is active in the Church, consistently shared the positive impact of having a father who identifies as an ally of sexual minorities, relying on him as both a sounding board and role-model at various points throughout her journey.

Individuals also shared how their geographic location within Utah also influenced their journey, understanding, and embodiment of allyship. For example, "Bob," a White, middle-class

single woman who is a less-active member of the Church, shared a recognition of how some cities in Utah feel safer to be open about allyship as compared to others:

When I was living down in [a less conservative city in Utah] it was much more accepted, you know, you could talk more about it. Be more open. And there was minimal, like, risk of rejection or ostracization. It's much harder to feel that it's okay up here.

Others shared how the unpredictable attitudes and behaviors of church leadership in their geographic area impacted their journeys in both positive and negative ways, as a result of “leadership roulette.” “Michelle,” a White middle class married woman who is an inactive member of the church, gave examples of this in her journey:

I had talked to bishops long before I ever put anything on Facebook saying that I was really uncomfortable with the way LGBTQ people were treated. And I got various responses from, “Oh, yeah, I understand what you're talking about. I've got a gay niece,” or something. Or...or just this blank look like, well, [chuckles] lack of understanding and that.

Michelle and others shared a recognition of how church leaders for one congregation may pursue church disciplinary action toward open allies, while leaders in other locations in Utah may be encouraging and supportive. Accordingly, although the teachings of the Church as an institution can be a barrier for allyship in Utah, having LGBTQ+ affirming local leadership was seen as a support, particularly for participants who were still active in the Church.

Church membership status and level of belief also had an impact on participants’ journeys. For many who had reduced their activity in the Church, the Church’s stance on sexual minorities played a large role in this decision. For others who had reduced their activity in the Church, their previous faith crises and struggles with the church’s history in relation to sexism,

racism, polygamy, its finances, truth claims, and protection of abusers acted as a foundation where allyship for sexual minorities felt more accessible. Lexie, for example, left the Church primarily as a result of exploring some of the Church's "disprovable truth claims." She shared the impact of this deconstruction of her faith on her allyship journey saying:

I remember, like feeling a true sense of relief and like a big breath of fresh air of like, "I don't have to reconcile that bullshit anymore. I don't have to worry about it. I can just follow my gut, and actually believe what I believe and act on those things." Like there was so much freedom there. And I do very much remember feeling super grateful that I just didn't have to reconcile any of the bullshit over those things anymore.

On the flip side, participants who were active in the Church shared that their membership and belief in the Church impacted their allyship journey in relation to the cognitive dissonance they had to work through as allies, the ways in which they embodied allyship (which we refer to as their *allyship status*), the ally role models they looked to, and their recognition of the need for allyship. For example, Stephanie shared that as an active Church member:

I feel like I have a great privilege and a great mission to take on what Jesus has taught me, which is love my neighbor as myself. Look for those who are in need. Provide for them. Stick up for them. You know, the Golden Rule! We've got to be the Good Samaritan.

Finally, we noted that a majority of our participants discussed attributes of their personality that supported them in their allyship journey. "Paige," a White middle class married woman who is active in the church shared, "I'm a very logical person... I have always kind of questioned things. Like even in Church if someone said something to me that I thought, 'Where did that come from?' I would want to know why." This desire for answers, curiosity around

truth, and openness to learning about new ideas and experiences was a common personality characteristic we observed in our participants. Samuel echoed this idea, saying, “I love listening to people who have new ways of looking at old issues.” Another personality trait that our participants shared as being an inherent part of them or “one of [their] gifts of the spirit,” was a pull toward empathy, fairness and being on the “side of the underdog.” Michelle shared, “I’ve always found myself questioning the rightness of things and just being always on the side of the...the victim in a way.” Others noted how their personality impacted how they embodied allyship at various points in their journey. For example, “Brad,” a White working class married man who is an inactive member of the church shared, “I don’t put myself out there as much as some people who like to rallies or protests and stuff. Which that’s part of my personality. I’ve never been really out there about anything in life.”

Model Components

Naïveté

The first stage of our ally development model, *Naïveté*, was characterized by having little exposure to or understanding of sexual minorities, the impacts of homophobia and heterosexism, or the importance of allyship for sexual minorities. When information about sexual and gender minorities was encountered by our participants at this stage, the information tended to align with their pre-existing worldview, rather than challenge it. Our participants described growing up “sheltered” or viewing Utah as a “bubble” in which sexual and gender minorities were “not on the radar.” For example, “Jason,” a White middle-class married man who is a less-active member of the Church, shared:

I feel like growing up in [a rural part of Utah] specifically... really made it very sheltered. I talked about how my parents, we didn’t talk about sexual minorities, we didn’t

talk about people who are gay. And I think it's because we didn't know people who were gay. And so, because of that I was just like, "Alright, we're not going to talk about it."

When our participants did talk about their early knowledge of sexual minorities, they often shared homophobic/heterosexist perceptions that were influenced by the words and actions of peers, family, the Church, conservative media representations, and world events. Brad shared how an experience of hearing homophobic rhetoric in his home growing up influenced his initial attitudes toward sexual minorities:

I just remember as a teenager, I started to hear [my mom] listening to Rush Limbaugh. And he would talk about "the gays," I recall, as this evil group of people. And at the time, I was an impressionable young person who would hear that, like, "Oh, yeah, that's scary! All these evil people! We don't want those, right?!"

Similarly, Samuel noted how his early perceptions of sexual minorities were influenced by the teachings of the Church:

In 1976, I read *The Miracle of Forgiveness*... And President Kimball took a real hard [stance on sexual minorities]. I mean, [homosexuality] was wrong. It was a sin. And it was a choice. And the people who were doing it were choosing open rebellion to God and His will... So that certainly influenced my understanding, for quite a while.

From these experiences, we understand this stage of Naïveté as laying the foundation of the taken-for-granted heterosexist and homophobic attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are ultimately called into challenge when our individuals experienced a catalyst event.

Experiencing a Catalyst Event

In the second stage, our participants experienced a *Catalyst Event*. We define *Catalyst Events* as personally significant experiences, typically surrounding sexual minorities, that caused

them to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors toward them. For some this included encountering positive media representations of sexual minorities, such as the television shows, “Will and Grace,” or “Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.” For others, this included learning a close acquaintance identified as LGBTQ+; encountering LDS-centered books and podcasts in which sexual minorities who are members of the Church shared their experiences; witnessing the Church’s engagement in anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, policies, or political action; and having interactions with allies of sexual minorities. “Stevie,” a White middle-class woman who is dating and has withdrawn her church membership shared, “The first real moment that I ever had, that was like, grounding was when [my cousin] came out. I was like, ‘Oh, I actually know a gay person now! This is crazy!’” For Star, a catalyst event occurred while hearing a talk in Church that conflicted with the close friendship she had been developing with a gay coworker:

The LGBTQ topic was brought up [in the talk] and I felt challenged. And I didn't know where...I laid in terms of supporting the LGBTQ community...The scripture is a bit confusing, because they say, “Treat everyone,” you know, “as your neighbor.”

Interpreting the Catalyst

In the third stage, *Interpreting the Catalyst*, we observed that the ultimate impact of these catalyst events depended upon how participants made meaning of them. For example, during Samuel’s journey, he spent some time in the Bay Area during the start of the AIDS crisis, which was an early catalyst event in his ally development. Samuel shared:

People were afraid of [AIDS]. Nobody knew anything about it. They just knew that it was associated with the gay community, mostly males. The perception of the gay community at that time was that it was a pretty...what's the word? Not strange, but, you know, it was a really in your face kind of a thing. The bathhouses—there was a lot of

promiscuity associated with, or at least perceived that there was a lot of promiscuity associated with it, which kind of played into my understanding of that it was contrary to God's ways. And that with them being so open and, and... belligerent isn't the right word, but so aggressive with it, that that just sort of reinforced my, my sense that it was just wrong or...immoral or whatever.

In this example, Samuel's experiences in the Bay Area with sexual minorities caused him to reflect on his attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward sexual minorities. At this moment in his journey, however, he interpreted the AIDS crisis as being evidence that his attitudes and beliefs about the immorality of homosexuality were justified. Because the information did not cause dissonance, it became another "data point" he could refer to. As a result, he temporarily returned to a state of Naïveté rather than progressing further in the proposed model.

Jim shared how he interpreted a catalyst event he experienced. He shared that he was present for a talk that Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone gave during his time at the Missionary Training Center:

A lot of what he was saying was very beautiful—there's nothing you could do that could move you out from the scope of God's love, that He will always love you. And he said—I'm paraphrasing, I don't remember exactly—but, he said, "He loves people who steal. He loves people who lie. He loves people who break commandments." And then he kind of paused and said, "He even loves the homosexual." And I just thought ... I don't know, it just felt so wrong. Like, of course, I believed God loves everyone, including people who are homosexual. But it just, to me, it came across as being homosexual belongs in this group with the other bad things he was saying. And that felt really wrong to me.

He interpreted Elder Featherstone's message about sexual minorities as feeling "really wrong." For Jim, who had grown up with extended family members who were sexual minorities and family members who were allies, Elder Featherstone's rhetoric felt dissonant with the individual context in which he had grown up. He shared that this talk, in combination with Kimball's book, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, struck him as particularly harsh toward sexual minorities and presenting them in ways inconsistent with his experiences. "I just remember thinking, 'Man, how could somebody read that and want to live? And it's not their fault.' So yeah, those are just two examples of maybe realizing I had a conflict with my church." As Jim interpreted the catalyst events, he identified that his feelings were in conflict with Church teachings. As a result, Jim moved forward into the next stage, *Identity Crisis*.

Identity Crisis

In the fourth stage, *Identity Crisis*, we observed when participants interpreted the catalyst event to be in conflict with existing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, they experienced an identity crisis. For many, this took the form of a faith crisis in which their identity as a member of the Church came into conflict with their identity as a budding ally of sexual minorities. An identity crisis we observed in Stephanie's journey occurred as she contrasted her experiences with a close lesbian coworker with encountering the Church's efforts to urge members to voice support for Proposition 8 in California in 2008, which sought to ban same-sex marriage:

And here I am with [my lesbian coworker], who I'm hanging out with every day, all day long. And it again just reaffirmed to me like, this just seems so unfair! Like what? Why is it a big deal if somebody gets married to someone of the same sex? They're not even our religion. And I just kept going back to [the Eleventh Article of Faith] that talks about like...let people believe what they want to believe. Like everyone gets to have their own

religious freedom. And so, for me, why are we making such a stink about people with different religious beliefs? Because [my coworker marrying her partner] doesn't affect me at all. So why am I trying to oppose it?

Bennett's identity crisis occurred as he felt a clash between his professional and religious identities:

I remember I was a senior and I was having these thoughts of like, "Well, okay, this is kind of conflicting with my religious views here. You know, this isn't really aligning very well. It's not very comfortable to go and have this job where I'm this person Monday through Friday, or even Saturday. And then Sunday, I'm this completely opposite person. Not even completely opposite, but just this... this different take of how I view people... And it was, "Okay, well, if I really want to stay involved in the church, but I really want to do [this career], how's this going to work? How's it gonna mesh?

For others further along in their journeys, their identity crises revolved around their allyship status—how, where, and when they engaged in allyship. We observed this in Michelle's journey. At this stage, she chose to be a visible and vocal/active ally. She shared a belief at the time that, "If the Church leaders heard [the stories of sexual minorities and their families], they would change their mind on this issue." During this time, Michelle had a conversation with a gay friend who had shared his experience as a gay member of the Church with Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Learning about his experience was a catalyst event in her journey. After learning her friend's conversation with Elder Bednar had resulted in no change in the Apostle's perception of sexual minorities, she shared:

It...it felt defeating...and I believed him. That was starting to be the inkling of the idea that this was not going to be something that would change over what's right. It is way

beyond that... The Church is so entrenched in this idea of the Family Proclamation, that no matter how many people come to them, and give them their stories, this is not going to be something that's going to be changed. I think that was that was the beginning of the end for me as far as the church goes, because I still had a lot of hope... I mean more and more every conference, I would just hear worse messages coming over the pulpit. And for me, personally, that was such a deep, dark time.

In addition to crises between their identity as budding allies and members of the Church, we observed other types of identity crises, as well. For example, two participants, Jessica and Rose, shared identity crises as their spouses came out to them as LGBTQ+. Jessica shared having to rethink her identity as a wife, “Like, wait, so now we're in a mixed-orientation marriage? Like, I thought we were just in a normal marriage?” Similarly, Rose, despite considering herself an ally at that point, shared her experience:

I [thought] “This is hell,” when it first happened...I sobbed for weeks. I was just... I was so scared that I just...I just didn't understand what it meant. And there was nobody in my immediate family who was any kind of LGBTQ, much less these “new” ones, the non-binary stuff, and well, that's part of the trans folks... like how does that play into stuff? And like, I've never heard of asexual before? And like, ‘Well, does that mean, you never want to have sex with me? It is like, we don't have kids! Do you not want to have kids?...There was a lot of anger, but not necessarily that changed my allyship, it was more because I just didn't understand.”

Whether related to questions about their religious identity, their identity as allies, or their identities as spouses, the crises our participants experienced resulted in feelings of discomfort, uncertainty, and distress that spurred them to engage in exploration.

Exploration

In the fifth stage, *Exploration*, participants sought out resources for support and information as they examined their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward sexual minorities, the LDS Church, the intersection of these, as well as regarding allyship itself.

Many participants reported looking for media resources that explored the intersection of the LDS Church and sexual minorities as they navigated the identity crises they experienced. Some of the resources our participants shared as being influential in their journeys included books such as *Goodbye, I Love You* by Carol Lynn Pearson, *Born That Way?* by Erin Eldridge, *That We May Be One* by Tom Christofferson, and *Expanding the Borders of Zion* by Charlie Bird. Participants who were members of the Church discussed the impacts of podcasts such as Richard Ostler's *Listen, Learn, and Love* and others that share the stories of sexual minorities within and outside of the Church. Jim shared, "I would say that that podcast has shaped my beliefs the last couple of years. It's made me look at things in ways that I never had before." Ask Dr. Julie Hanks, *At Last She Said It*, John Dehlin's *Mormon Stories*, John Larsen's *Mormon Expression*, and the *Faith Matters* podcast were also discussed by various participants as resources they utilized to explore their religious identities. We observed that participants often sought out media resources that they personally believed to be trustworthy and safe, often gauging this by the author or podcaster's current church membership status. For example, John Dehlin was excommunicated in 2015, and his podcast *Mormon Stories* was primarily discussed by participants who had reduced their activity in the Church or who had left the Church. Stephanie, an active member of the Church, echoed this idea of gauging trustworthiness, sharing how she decided which media resources to seek out:

I don't like to listen to things that are negative, or that put down something else. So, if I'm going to listen to a podcast that's LGBTQ+ ally based, but it's putting down the Church, that really doesn't interest me. Also, I don't listen to a church one that's going to put down the [LGBTQ+] group. So, I need one that's working together. And so, I try hard to find ones that are like, "There's good in both of these groups, and this is how they can work together." That's where I want to go. And that's where I feel like you learn to grow, and you learn how to be a better ally.

Participants also shared the importance of seeking out safe individuals and community to find support and ask questions. Jessica, for example, discussed looking for support groups online and in person after "my husband [came] out and [I was] feeling super, super alone, and super like unsure and not knowing what to do." She shared that when she and her husband attended a support group they found online, the leader asked:

"What are you longing for?"...And, afterwards, my husband and I were talking about it. And both of us thought when she said this was, "This!" Like, *this* is what we're longing for. Like, we're longing for a community here, not like stories on podcasts with people in Provo, or Salt Lake, or, you know, like, we want resources here where we live.

Stevie, who is no longer a member of the Church, shared the impacts of finding a community of allies and LGBTQ individuals who were also outside of the Church as she explored her religious identity:

When I was on the other side of the coin, and I was in the Church, I felt like there was so many things I couldn't talk about, and there were so many things that I couldn't say. Because I was just worried about like, "Oh, what is somebody else gonna say to this other person?" Like, "How are they going to treat me negatively because of this?" Whereas

with these people that I've met, who are so open, they listen to your story. They don't have any rules that they have to follow. They understand. And they're just like, more loving, you know?

In addition to exploring resources for support and information, individuals also engaged in exploration of their own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Bob shared her process of self-exploration as she navigated her faith crisis:

I started being told the thought “Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin.” And that was one thing that just helped the conflict be at a minimum, being a naturally anxious person. But I still didn't even like that. It's something I would come back to again and again for the next few years of wondering, well, are they actually sinning? Yes, it's something that is not agreed with by the church, but that is between that person and God. It's not between me and them. So is that actually a sin? Because it's according to the desires of their hearts and their understanding of who God is? That's not for me to say. And so I started to change probably about seven years ago, about the time I moved to Utah of, “That's not a phrase I'm going to use anymore.” Because it just didn't sit right.

Bob's exploration of her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in relation to sexual minorities lead her to want to change how she thought of and acted toward them. In other words, her exploration process propelled her toward a resolution or commitment as an ally.

Resolution/Commitment

In the sixth stage, a result of their exploration, our participants were equipped with supports and information that allowed them to either resolve their identity crisis, or develop a commitment to move forward as an ally, despite the crisis being unresolved. When asked about

how she handles the conflict between the messages she hears at Church and her personal experiences and beliefs around sexual minorities, Stephanie, an active member shared:

Well, it... it doesn't go away... this last conference [in October 2023] was pretty explicit on these types of issues. So, it's not like that...that internal struggle goes away... It just turns into me maybe turning off that talk for a little while or me just letting someone say what they need to and then just either not responding or saying something that I feel like is nice but lets them know that maybe we don't all share that same viewpoint.

Bob shared compartmentalization strategies that were echoed by other participants, “This is kind of how I've dealt with my dissonance—I call it my ‘mental shelf,’ where I put things on it, but I take them down as often as I can and try and wrestle with them.” Rose also discussed compartmentalization, sharing that when her spouse came out, she coped by:

not thinking too hard about it, not looking at it too close, and trying to take a further back view of it... We had to deal with the spiny parts, but for a lot of it, we were just able to keep moving through things.

Michelle was one of many participants who found that resolution/commitment came while seeking out personal revelation from God through prayer:

When I was just really still praying and... and being more spiritually in tune, this was something that I would pray about. You know, "God, why does this not change? Why is this...? I feel so strongly about this!" And that was when I got the very strong impression that I should do something. "Then do something." Like, "If you feel strongly about this, then do something."

For others, resolution came through personal experiences that shifted their understanding of who God is. Penny, who identified as a survivor of sexual assault, shared this experience:

But after all this [a relative of mine] looked at me and he said, “Could you believe in a God that would damn you to Hell? The God that you believe in, would He damn you to Hell for being raped? Would He damn you to Hell for trying to heal from that rape?” And I kind of just shook my head, no... I don't believe in that God. I refuse to believe in a God that would damn me in all of my imperfection, because I'm not perfect by any stretch... I can't believe in a deity that would damn me to Hell for trying to be loving and supporting and accepting of all people. I just... I just don't. I can't do it.

Penny's shift from believing in a harsh, vindictive God to a God who loved her “in all of [her] imperfection” allowed her to also be more open to the idea that God would be okay with her being an ally for sexual minorities. Furthermore, this experience shifted her perception of how God views sexual minorities. “I can't believe in a God who would damn you to Hell for finding somebody that you love and living a quiet, peaceful, beautiful life. I refuse.” Jessica too, expressed a desire to, “embrace the God that I think is the true God,” sharing characteristics of God as “all-loving, all-inclusive.” After reflecting, Jessica shared, “God is an ally. That's really what it comes down to.”

Chosen Allyship Status

In the seventh stage, as a result of their resolution or commitment to be an ally, participants made decisions about how, where, and when they would engage in allyship, which we refer to as a person's *Allyship Status*. Similar to Helms's (1995) work on racial identity development, as well as subsequent identity development models (e.g., Edwards, 2006; Jordan, 2012; Worthington et al., 2001), we conceptualized allyship statuses to highlight the dynamic process participants navigated in relation to how, where, and when they engaged in allyship. Where a traditional conceptualization of allyship as stages might suggest a sequential stepladder

toward ultimate allyship engagement, allyship statuses can be viewed like a game of Twister, in which individuals may fluidly shift between one or more ways of engaging as allies for sexual minorities depending on the context. These statuses arose from our participants' descriptions of what they believed allyship is (and is not), as well as how our participants described their understanding of and engagement in allyship over time. For example, "Samuel," a White, upper middle-class man who is active in the Church reflected, "I guess I would say that I'm still on the path to allyship if there is such a thing as all ally or not ally. I think it's far more continuous than that." Based upon our participants data, we observed four primary allyship statuses that our participants occupied: Conditional Ally, Silent/Passive Ally, Visible Ally, and Vocal/Active Ally. In this stage, our participants made decisions in relation to their Church membership status, and encountered various barriers and supports to the ways they engaged in allyship. We will first discuss factors that influenced our participants decisions to stay active in the Church, or to reduce their activity and/or resign from Church membership.

Staying in the Church. Participants who were active members in the Church shared several factors that influenced their decision to continue to navigate the Church as members who are also allies. They shared the supportive role of affirming local church leadership and wards, "living in color" by leaning into nuance rather than relying on black and White beliefs about sexual minorities, holding on to hope for change within the Church, having access to role models who were both active members of the Church and allies, "picking the good and leaving the bad" in the Church, and coming to believe that allyship is aligned with Church teachings.

Samuel shared the impact of finding an allyship role model in the family of Tom Christofferson, brother of Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

I really appreciated hearing how his family had embraced him. And his brother was an apostle, and he still had a great relationship with his brother. And that for me was a really important thing for me to see... It gave me confidence in the idea that we could love and respect people. And not necessarily judge them, but still hold ideas that are directly contrary to their ideas, and their ideas are directly contrary to my ideas. It was a model for me, of civility... I guess what I really appreciated was someone who, clearly was—I'm not gonna say loyal to the church—but fully embraced our understanding of the Plan of Salvation, God's purposes for placing us here, who had a brother that didn't fit into that mold... I just thought that was for me, that was just a really helpful model. You don't have to be antagonistic.

Jim shared that a recognition of the ways the Church has already changed its approach toward sexual minorities suggests gives him hope for the future:

I remember believing that the church taught—but I don't remember specifically why I thought this and I might have even been wrong—that people chose whether or not they were gay, and not only did they... or maybe they didn't necessarily choose it, but they could change it. And for sure the church doesn't teach either of those things now, and so they were wrong! And so if they're wrong, that means they can be wrong on other ways they teach as well on that issue.

Another participant, Paige, shared her observations of how allyship is aligned with her belief in the Church:

I've always thought of the primary song, “I'm Trying to Be like Jesus,” where if I'm a member of the church, and I still want to be part of it, then I should be acting like Jesus. And so I tried to hear [sexual minorities] experiences and tried to understand, you know,

what was difficult for them... So yeah, I guess that's kind of been my path is just realizing that... I see Jesus as someone that loved everyone and that was there on the margins for people and I want to be like that. I want to be like *that* version of Jesus and not the version of Jesus that is in the horrible illustrations blocking kids from the rainbow.

Reducing Activity/Leaving the Church. Participants shared several factors that influenced their decisions to be allies outside of active membership in the Church. These included becoming disenchanted with the possibility of change for sexual minorities within the Church, having their “shelf” break due to multiple concerns with the Church (e.g., sexism, racism, polygamy, the Church’s finances, truth claims, protection of abusers), and having Church leaders who were not affirming of sexual minorities or allyship. Participants shared that having family members who had left the Church, having social supports outside of the Church, and receiving positive reactions from sexual minorities for considering leaving the Church were factors that supported them in making this decision.

Jason, a less-active member, was one of many participants who shared that being an active member of the Church and being an ally for sexual minorities felt incompatible:

I felt like I couldn’t be an ally, and be a full, like fledged member. And there's something that we're taught in Sunday school where it's like, "You can't serve two masters." And I'm like... I feel like this is the same thing! ... It became a moment where I'm like, I feel like I can't be an ally and be open about these things, and also look someone in the face and say, "I love you. I support you. As long as you don't act upon these feelings." And like I said, I'm not... I'm not like, "Oh, I hate the Church, and I hate everything about it!" But

it's like, oh, on this one thing? We have completely different views. And so I love you, but I'm done for a little bit.

Bennett, who identified as an inactive member, shared the factors that influenced his and his wife's decision to leave the Church:

I think LGBTQ [issues were] a large portion of it. There's a lot of other things going on, too. You know, as we listen to podcasts, we listened to *Mormon Stories* podcast. We haven't listened to all of them. There's so many, but it's listening to a couple of them. Where one of them was about child abuse, and how leadership handled that. And working through those things. It's like this...this isn't okay! Like, we ought to expect better from organizations. It doesn't have to be spiritual, it doesn't have to be religious, it can just be all across the board: Abuse isn't okay.

Brad, an inactive member whose initial struggles with the Church were not directly related to sexual minority issues, shared the impacts of having built a community of support outside the Church. While discussing when he was debating leaving the Church he said:

It was just like, "What will people at church and my family think about me?" And what really helped me get over that hurdle was having my theater family. Like, I'd lived my life being afraid of what other people thought of me. And then I finally had a group of people who would accept me no matter what I believed. And that was kind of the last thing that made me see that I didn't need to be afraid of living authentically.

Having made a decision related to their membership in the Church, participants then made decisions on how to embody allyship through being a Conditional Ally, Silent/Passive Ally, Visible Ally, and/or a Vocal/Active Ally.

Conditional Ally. We conceptualized participants who occupied a *Conditional Ally* status as those who viewed themselves as having compassion for sexual minority individuals and a desire to support them, but within certain bounds. These bounds typically revolved around expecting sexual minorities to conform to norms related to sexuality and gender as established by the Church.

“Lexie” demonstrated characteristics of a Conditional Ally status at an early point in her ally development:

I think at that point, I still would have been like, yeah, like queer people deserve to have rights or whatever. But also, like, the *best* way to be happy is gonna be the way that I think [as an active member of the Church]. And there's still like, some superiority there as far as like, "Oh, I believe that [the Church's way] is the way that you can find the most happiness!"... [In other words] your classic, stay celibate or get in a mixed-orientation marriage if you are a gay person, or do not transition if you are trans or non-binary. Like, you know, basically try to pass as a cis-het person to the best of your abilities.

From this example, we see Lexie's occupation of a Conditional Ally status in the way she expressed support for sexual and gender minorities, providing they followed the standards of the Church in relation to sexual purity and gender presentation. Jason observed:

Something that I used to see is like, “I'm okay if you're gay, but not *that* kind of gay,” is what people would say... Like, “I'm okay if you're gay, but I can't *know* that you're gay.” Like, “Then you're not okay with me if I'm gay!”

Silent/Passive Ally. We conceptualized participants in this status as empathetic toward sexual minorities and their experiences, but typically refraining from speaking up when witnessing prejudice and discrimination. This status signifies an affective form of allyship, where

individuals harbor warm feelings for sexual minorities and exhibit kindness in their interpersonal interactions with them. Despite these positive sentiments, individuals in this status express discomfort in openly advocating for sexual minorities. Discussing passive allyship, Michelle shared:

There's probably a lot more people in that category—their hearts are there. Maybe their grandchild will come to them and say something, and they're immediately in their court, but they don't feel comfortable putting themselves out in a public space.

Some participants, like Jason likened this form of allyship as the heterosexual ally version of being “in the closet.”

Paige shared an experience in which she witnessed the bullying of a gay peer in her school who had been caught looking at gay pornography:

And so, I feel bad even now, because I... I didn't stand up for him. I didn't have a problem with him being gay. I felt bad that he was in the situation where he, he felt more comfortable looking at pictures at school where he could get caught than looking at them at home or talking to anyone about them. But it really, it made me feel bad that I realized that we had kids in our school that were homosexual, and that I didn't know how to talk to them and didn't know what the best way to talk to them would be.

As Paige suggests here, feeling uncertain about how to best be a support is one reason that people may choose to be silent allies.

Some of our participants chose to hide their allyship for sexual minorities in order to avoid conflict or ostracization from others in Utah. Brad shared:

I think it especially makes it difficult if you're still active in the church, which I'm not. So that brings me up a little bit in terms of not caring as much what people think. But even

then... you don't want to like, get in fights with people... You kind of have to assume that half the people you run into are active LDS members. So, it does kind of put a little more caution in what kind of conversations you want to bring up with people. Because, while you want to be an ally, you also want to maintain relationships with the people around you.

Visible Ally. We conceptualized participants who occupied a *Visible Ally* status as those who demonstrated support for sexual and gender minorities through visible cues, signs, and symbols. For many, this included wearing pins with rainbows or the colors of the trans flag, displaying pride flags, wearing “I’ll Walk With You” shirts or rainbow clothing, putting “rainbows on their profile pictures,” and liking and/or sharing posts on social media related to sexual minority issues.

Paige shared her motivation to be a visible ally within the Church:

Something as simple as a flag or a pin can symbolize that you're a safe place, not just for the person that is in that community, but for their family. Because I can't imagine being the parent of an LGBT child and not knowing how to tell other people that and worrying about their judgment or worrying about, am I not going to be welcome at church?

Interestingly, individuals shared that in the context of Utah, visible allyship did not always have to be related to publicly showing LGBTQ+ specific support. Some participants demonstrated their allyship more subtly, through publicly expressing discomfort or dissent with policies and decisions of the Church (including those related to racism or feminism) which, in this context, can be considered a “subversive” action. Michelle, for example, shared:

Years back, when I started just posting pro- anything that I thought was showing allyship for marginalized groups, especially the LGBTQ community, I would say it was kind of a

little bit veiled.... because of those that thought that I was still an active Church member... and others that were following my Facebook posts. I had several people reach out and ask me where I was--what my stance was--and...and then they were looking for someone actually to communicate with. A mother, especially over here in [the rural town I live in] reached out because she's like, "I'm not sure what your stance is, but um..." and she wanted to know more. And then we talked and talked and talked. And I kind of put her in touch with someone that I thought could be more empathetic with her--a mother that had a gay child.

Experiences like Michelle's were shared by others, and are another reason why we argue for visible allyship as a separate status from passive allyship. Through the simple act of giving visual cues through social media that she differed from the dominant religious perspectives of her community, she was identified as a potential safe space, and was able to facilitate increased social support and allyship for a mother and her gay child.

Relatedly, disclosing one's ex-Mormon status for participants who left the Church was seen as one way participants expressed their allyship. Penny shared:

I've left the Church and so that like that's kind of been part of it. Like I don't... I'm not like on top of the rooftops shouting, "I'm not a Mormon anymore!" Some kids never really know, but I always like, kind of err on the side of like, "Listen, I'm also not part of an institution that causes people a lot of trauma anymore."

Importantly, participants varied in the ways they engaged in visible allyship. Stephanie, for example, shared, "I do have rainbow flags on my church bag that I take every week to Church. I have a little pin that's on my purse that I wear." At the same time, Stephanie expressed hesitation about engaging in other forms of allyship, such as hanging up a rainbow flag in front

of her home, saying, “I feel like I'm in a pretty polarizing political climate here... I'm not brave enough to put up a pride flag yet, but I'm getting really close.” She shared a barrier to her openly flying a pride flag:

I guess there is an underlying worry that... Because for so long, it was don't—at least from a church membership standpoint--don't identify with anything that goes against Church teachings. Or don't affiliate with groups that [go against Church teachings]... I don't ever want to do anything at this point, that would damage any type of relationship there [with the Church].

Despite wanting to be “brave” enough to fly a pride flag, Stephanie notes that a fear that being a visible ally of sexual minorities could potentially jeopardize her membership in the Church, or imply that she actively opposes the Church. As such, we again observed how our participants' locations within or outside of active membership in the Church impacted the *allyship statuses* that they occupied.

Our participants noted fears of physical safety related to being a visible ally in Utah. Jim shared an experience in which he had made a post on social media about a time when a child of his showed up as an ally for the LGBTQ+ community:

I shared that story on social media. And ... my little universe of people thought that was an inspirational story. But somehow it got shared to others who didn't and people called my child a liar. And one of them, you probably know what DezNat is? Maybe not—that's like a far right, MAGA-style LDS [group] and they just piled on. I can't remember all the comments, but I was actually a little bit scared. Things like, “[Your kid] is a little bitch who should watch [their] back.” And that made me think. Even though they don't know who [my kid] is, but when it's your own [child], you're a little bit scared.

Despite these fears, many participants noted the role of heterosexual privilege. Bob said:

As far as like wearing my own pin or being outspoken, I don't shy away from it. But I also do think like, "Everyone's so volatile. What would happen?" And so, it feels like you just, again back to that, is everyone safe? ... Most of the time, it's less of what could happen to me. It does make me think twice. However, I very much am like, I do have some privilege here to be able to speak up without it being as negative as it is for [sexual minorities].

Vocal/Active Ally. We conceptualized participants who occupied a *Visible Ally* status as individuals who were supportive of sexual minorities and were, as Penny stated, "willing to take action," to address homophobia and heterosexism on an individual and societal level. Many participants shared efforts to utilize their positions as ward members, employees, mental health workers, teachers, and citizens to actively voice support for sexual minorities and advocate for change. Michelle shared this definition:

I think actively [being an ally] would mean to, actually, you know, attend rallies, meetings, pride events, maybe have friends that are in the LGBTQ community that you try to support in any way--have their backs when you can."

For some, like Bob, being a vocal/active ally meant engaging in political advocacy in Utah. She shared this experience in response to hearing about laws targeting LGBTQ+ youth, saying, "Last year I even wrote an email to the governor, I was so pissed. I was like, 'What you're doing is furthering potential for suicide for these kids and teenagers, like you're not protecting them.'"

For Paige, as well as others in our study, the decision to be a vocal/active ally came as a response to catalyst events in which she observed, “an uptick in anti-LGBT posts,” and other marginalized groups as a result of the election of Donald Trump:

I was so mad... People who I'd never knew where they stood were suddenly just... everything was fair game. And so that was really like when I was finally like, you know, I don't care if you think that I'm crazy, or that you don't have any idea where I stand in the church. I want to make it clear that I support this community and that I love everyone... Just seeing the uptick of posts about the LGBT community was when I really like, hit the roof, and was like, no, I have to be more of a public ally here... It was like, “Okay. If you can be blatantly racist and homophobic, then I can absolutely be the other way,” you know, “and share positive messages and share inclusive messages.”

Rose shared efforts that her and her spouse have made to be more active/vocal allies in their local congregation because of witnessing a culture of judgement and exclusion toward sexual minorities and others outside the norms of the Church:

We started to compensate for that by being much more vocal about our allyship, and being more... I don't know that aggressive is the right word for it, but just definitely more in Sunday School lessons being like, “No, I don't really think that that's what that says. And I think we should focus on what the words are that are there and not try to apply modern situations to ancient contexts.” ... We've got done a lot more in secular spaces to be super, super open with our allyship. Previously, it had been just little things and like talking to people who needed to know and kind of almost on a more need-to-know basis and making space quietly.

For participants who were active in the Church, fears of receiving discipline were cited as a concern in being a vocal/active ally. This included fears of being removed/restricted from callings within the church, being excommunicated, as well as having ones temple recommend revoked. For active members of the Church, a temple recommend is similar to a license that is granted by church leaders that allows the holder to enter one of the LDS temples and perform ordinances and make covenants (or promises to God) that members of the Church believe are essential for eternal salvation for themselves and their families. It requires participants to answer questions related to their behaviors and beliefs, to ensure they are in alignment with the church and its teachings. A question that was noted as an initial concern for Bob as well as many of our participants was, “Do you support anything that opposes the Church?”

Michelle noted:

For a long time, I had people that would say, "You know, you don't want to get yourself excommunicated." And I was just like, well, how in the world would that happen from just putting out a few posts? And, and then well, when I first started, you know, going to meetings and walking in pride parades and such, there were friends of mine that were facing consequences. Temple recommends were taken away... It was the whole Bishop/leadership roulette thing... I was still scared of that, you know, that consequence of facing...facing that kind of punishment... I always saw that the people that were the most punished, were the most vocal.

As an active member, Paige shared, “That idea of eternal families is so strong to me that I want to be eligible to go to the temple to have a temple recommend, because I feel so strongly about that temple covenant.” Noting she has had some negative experiences in the Temple and has been bothered by previous sexism she observed in the endowment ceremony, she said:

If I lost my temple recommend, it wouldn't be the end of the world because I don't go all that much, like to do ordinances. But there's a part of me that wants to feel that I have that power and that access to God. And also, that I could—the thing that would break my heart is if my kids were still in the temple, and I wasn't able to see them get married in the temple. And so I really, I really would hate to lose that.

From this, we see that the consequences of vocal/active allyship among members of the Church can depend on the attitude of the Bishop/leaders of the local congregations, and may not only impact someone's membership in the church, but their ability to participate in important familial events, such as temple weddings.

The Impact of Additional Catalyst Events

Finally, we observed that even after our participants had chosen an allyship status during their journey, additional catalyst events within their lived context ultimately impacted the allyship statuses and locations that our participants occupied. Jason's story was one example of this:

I feel like my allyship, it started progressing. I feel like I started making a difference a little bit. And then I kind of just stopped because I had that mentality of "Everything's good. This isn't really a problem. I can love you and love everyone the same. And that's it." And then in 2018, I started dating someone who was an open ally... She was very open about it. One of my roommates said something. I don't even remember what he said, but it was something homophobic. And she was like, "Ah, that's not cool." And so then she talked to me about her side and like her friends. And that's when I was like, "Oh, yeah," like, "I have friends too who are gay. And, like, if they were here, I would be so ashamed and embarrassed that my friend just said this." So that one made me think, like,

yeah, I need to be open about how I feel. And not kind of just, I don't know what the right word is, like, "closeted" almost. Like my allyship--I don't want to hide it away.

We observed from this example that Jason had prior warm feelings toward sexual minorities and was largely occupying a Silent/Passive ally role. However, as a result of the catalyst event in which he saw his girlfriend engaging in advocacy for sexual minorities, Jason was spurred to re-evaluate his identity as an ally, engage in exploration of how his silence might negatively impact his sexual minority friends, and resolved this discomfort by choosing to be more open about his allyship. As such, we observe this entire process of allyship as iterative and ongoing for each of our participants.

Lexie put it this way:

I will never know everything. I will always be learning. I will always be making mistakes. But like, the whole point is that you just don't give up on learning. And you just keep trying, and you just try to do better and learn more. And it's a process.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Although models of heterosexual ally identity development exist (e.g., DiStefano et al., 2000; Duhigg et al., 2010; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Grzanka et al., 2015; Jordan, 2012; Stotzer, 2018; Washington & Evans, 1991), including among Christians (e.g., Borgman, 2009; Dewey et al., 2014; Hildebrandt, 2012; Minnix, 2018; Zeininger, 2017), the current study sought to enhance our understanding of how allyship for sexual minorities may develop among current/former Mormons in Utah, a context where pressures to conform to anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes may be heightened due to homogenous cultural and religious influences. Specifically, this study extended the limited research on LDS allies (e.g., Gess, 2016; Allen, 2020) to develop a theory of the processes, influences, and outcomes involved in HMA identity development. Through grounded theory analyses of semi-structured interviews and written timelines with fifteen heterosexual current and former members of the Church in Utah, a seven-stage Model of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development was constructed. These stages included: Naivety, Experiencing a Catalyst Event, Interpreting the Catalyst, Experiencing an Identity Crisis, Engaging in Exploration to Address the Crisis, Coming to a Resolution or Commitment, and Choosing an Allyship Status Within or Outside of the Church. Specifically, participants occupied one or more of the following allyship statuses at various points in their journey: Conditional Ally, Silent/Passive Ally, Visible Ally, and/or Vocal/Active Ally. Many participants perceived allyship as an ongoing and iterative process rather than a destination, with new catalyst events in their lived context spurring further crises, exploration, resolution/commitment, and negotiations of allyship statuses. We now discuss our findings in context of our research questions and the extant literature. We then discuss limitations, implications and future directions for this work.

The Process of Heterosexual Mormon Ally Identity Development

We observed many consistencies between our model and existing models of heterosexual ally development. For example, many models share the role of significant events and experiences in spurring allyship for sexual minorities (e.g., Dewey et al., 2014; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Jordan, 2012; Washington & Evans, 1991), which we conceptualized as *Catalyst Events*. Further consistent with the literature, although the majority of these catalyst events revolved around sexual minorities, other catalysts were related to experiences that were not LGBTQ+ specific (e.g. mental health challenges, personal faith crises, personal experiences of exclusion) but nonetheless resulted in the individual becoming more empathic toward sexual minorities experiences and open to allyship (Hildebrandt, 2012). For example, Brad shared:

I feel like [becoming an ally] kind of coincided with my faith crisis a lot. Because as I was having a faith crisis, I was realizing that a lot of things didn't make sense to me. And, and I was kind of opening my mind to thinking about things differently. And I was consuming more progressive ideas, rather than just the conservative ideas I grew up with. And that led me to hear things about LGBTQ that helped me to relate to them more and have more empathy for them.

Additionally, existing allyship models have observed the navigation of internal conflicts as part of this process (e.g., Dillon et al., 2004; Duhigg et al. 2010; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995; Jordan, 2012;) which we observe to be analogous to the identity crises experienced by our participants. Specifically, we observed that the majority of the identity crises reported by our participants involved a perceived conflict between their identity as a member of the Church and their identity as a budding ally of sexual minorities, a conflict which has been observed to be common in the ally development processes of heterosexual Christians broadly (Borgman, 2009;

Hildebrandt, 2012; Minnix, 2018; Zeininger, 2017), as well as among heterosexual Mormon allies, specifically (Gess, 2016; Allen, 2020). We also noted that our participants' journeys were influenced by contextual factors like their social identities, personal experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and personal beliefs and values, which is consistent with the findings of other heterosexual ally development models (e.g., DiStefano et al., 2000; Duhigg et al., 2010; Grzanka et al., 2015; Russell, 2011; Stotzer, 2009; Vernaglia, 2000). Furthermore, consistent with previous literature, our participants shared allyship development as an ongoing process, rather than a destination (e.g., Jordan, 2012). Also consistent with previous allyship literature, we observed that our participants shared parallels in their allyship journeys with the coming out experiences of sexual minorities (e.g., fears of identity disclosure, loss of support/community), though many shared an awareness of how their heterosexual privilege resulted in important differences in their experience (e.g., Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1995).

We also observed similarities between our findings and existing research on Bystander Intervention (Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1969). For example, Darley and Latané (1968) suggested that “A person witnessing an emergency situation...is in conflict. There are obvious humanitarian norms about helping the victim, but there are also rational and irrational fears about what might happen to a person who does intervene” (p. 377). This statement mirrors not only our participants' process of experiencing catalyst events, but also the resulting identity conflicts, barriers, and supports that our participants navigated within their lived context in deciding whether, how, and where to take action as allies. Relatedly, to our knowledge, a unique contribution of our model is an awareness of how the ways in which our participants interpreted the catalyst events they experienced influenced whether they returned to a state of naivety or progressed further in their allyship development. Latané and Darley (1969) stated, “Before a

bystander is likely to take action in such ambiguous situations, he must first define the event as an emergency and decide that intervention is the proper course of action” (p. 248). Similarly, in order to progress toward allyship, our participants had to define or interpret the catalyst events they experienced as an “emergency”—something that needed to be addressed due to the ways in which the event challenged their previous attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors. Our participants shared perceptions of catalyst events as “feeling wrong,” or “thinking this is really weird” implying that there are both cognitive and affective components to this interpretation. Latané and Darley (1969) suggested that such interpretations are more likely when the events are less ambiguous (easily identifiable as wrong/hurtful), and when others are seen taking action/viewing the situation as an emergency. Although these factors may partially play a role in how heterosexual current and former members of the Church interpret catalyst events as emergencies that spur them further in their allyship journey, more research is needed.

Defining Allyship

In addition to understanding the process of HMA identity development, we hoped to explore the outcomes of ally development—that is, what allyship actually looked like for our participants. When asked about what it meant to be an ally, many of our participants drew distinctions between passive and active allies, mirroring previous conceptualizations discussed in allyship literature (e.g., Gzanka et al., 2015; Stotzer, 2008). Despite this binary distinction, we observed that our participants engagement in allyship was more fluid and contextually based. As a result of our participants’ descriptions of allyship, their written timelines, and their own stories about engaging in allyship, we constructed four primary allyship statuses that our participants occupied at various points in their journey: Conditional Ally, Passive/Silent Ally, Visible Ally, and Active/Vocal Ally.

These distinctions in allyship status are an important contribution of our study, as they highlight the unique impact of more nuanced forms of allyship within highly homogenous cultural and religious contexts. For example, where displaying a pride flag or changing one's social media profile in a more progressive community may be viewed as passive "slacktivism," (e.g., Grzanka, 2022, p. 6) that may not have any real-life impact on creating change for sexual minorities (e.g., Wolowic et al., 2017), we argue that within the largely homogenous cultural and religious context of Utah, such visible allyship may have more tangible consequences for sexual minorities, at very least through the formation of allies. As one example, we observed that among our participants visible allyship allowed them to locate other allies who could serve as mentors and supports. Additionally, the visible allyship of our participants also led others in their social circles to trust them to explore challenging questions and concerns they held about sexual minorities, the Church, and allyship. This visible allyship also included supporting sexual minorities directly as well as indirectly (through interactions with parents/loved ones of sexual minorities). Despite our agreement with the findings of Wolowic et al. (2017) that visible signs of allyship, such as rainbow flags, may or may not be an accurate reflection of someone's allyship for sexual minorities, we believe this furthers an argument that heterosexual Mormons may occupy one or more allyship statuses at a time, as passive/silent allies, active vocal/allies and even conditional allies may choose to engage in visible allyship, despite their range of acceptance and supportive actions.

We also acknowledge that the status of a conditional ally may be considered controversial to some, given the limits of support for sexual minorities inherent in this status. Despite this, we did observe conditional allyship as a position that our participants occupied that was distinct from earlier positions in their journey in which they did not consider themselves

allies. Furthermore, previous research has documented similar forms of conditional allyship for sexual minorities among heterosexuals (e.g., Brodyn & Ghaziani, 2018; Duggan, 2003). Active members of the LDS Church, in particular, may adopt a conditional ally status for several reasons. Bob, for example, shared how the phrase, “love the sinner, hate the sin” initially helped her navigate the cognitive dissonance she experienced in wanting to be an ally and maintaining her identity as a member of the Church. Another key reason may relate to the idea of *trustworthiness* that we have described. As we noted earlier, individuals who more closely align with the Church’s standards and beliefs are more likely to be perceived by active members of the Church as trustworthy. Sexual minorities, including those who identify as same-sex attracted, who are active in the Church, likely appear to more closely align with the Church’s standards and beliefs about same-sex behavior than sexual minorities who do not subscribe to the Church’s norms. As such, support for same-sex attracted and other active Mormon sexual minorities may feel in alignment with their religious beliefs, while the idea of supporting for sexual minorities outside of the context of the Church may feel more dissonant. On the other side of this relationship, it’s possible that such conditional allies may be perceived as trustworthy social supports for sexual minorities who desire to remain active in the Church, whereas allies who may be supportive of sexual minorities leaving the Church or pursuing same-sex relationships may be perceived as less trustworthy forms of social support. In other words, although conditional allies are likely to not be perceived as allies by all sexual minorities, within the context of the LDS church, these individuals likely do still play an important role in helping sexual minority members of the Church feel a sense of belonging within the religious sphere. A study on LGBTQIA Mormons by Chakravarty and English (2020) shared some support for this idea: “The process of slow and steady acceptance, sometimes complete, sometimes conditional from

religious family and acquaintances helped LGBTQIA Mormons cope with fitting in and belonging in a heteronormative...religious culture” (p. 246).

We also observed that when deciding which allyship status(es) to occupy, our participants took into account how their chosen form of allyship might be perceived by other potential allies. For example, in an early catalyst event, Lexie encountered allies who were loudly protesting the Church’s involvement in Prop 8 while she was attending a spiritual event on Temple Square. Lexie, while prefacing that her perceptions have since changed, shared that her initial takeaway from this early experience was that, “queer stuff is really scary and really feels very, like Satanic.” Now in her journey, Lexie shared perceptions that allies should be “champions” for the rights of queer people, should “be willing to stand up and say something when they see something wrong,” and should be aware of how political policies impact queer people’s lives, which would align more with a Vocal/Active ally status. That said, Lexie explained a perspective that several of our participants noted in their approach as Vocal/Active allies—that of engaging in allyship in person with an emphasis on the power of forming positive relationships, while avoiding behaviors that might unintentionally isolate potential allies. As such, Lexie’s initial disinterest in allyship, caused by encountering activists she found to be “loud” and “scary,” continues to shape her approach to allyship, despite her changed feelings toward these activists. Lexie stated:

I would say in general, I’m still the type of person who is much more likely to engage on an individual conversation level with anyone. I feel like that’s how most of the changes that have happened for me in my life have happened. It hasn’t been from somebody sharing something online that I disagree with. And so, I feel like I’m much more likely to do that. I feel like a lot of the people that I know that post things, their families that

believe very harmful things, it just isolates them from them. And then you have fewer opportunities to make a difference on an individual level. And show people like, oh, yeah, being an ally, or being a queer person, or being somebody who's not super far right-wing, like, those aren't that scary of things. And I'm still me, and I'm still normal. And I know that comes from a little bit of a privileged place, because not everyone has the ability to do that. But that is probably a little bit of where I'm coming from...

Here, and in the perspectives of many other participants, the role of having personal, trusting relationships with existing allies in changing their own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors was noted. We also observe in Lexie's comments an acknowledgement of how heterosexual privilege impacts her ability to foster these relationships with individuals who may hold attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that are disparaging of sexual minorities.

Barriers and Supports

We noted many barriers and supports that impacted our participants at various stages of their journeys. Barriers we observed in our participants' journeys included: social and religious pressure to conform to LDS beliefs and standards; having a distrust in others who differ from social and religious norms in Utah; living in more conservative areas of Utah; leadership roulette; lack of affirming social supports; fears that allyship might be perceived as being antagonistic toward the Church; fears of losing one's temple recommend/church membership; and fears of physical safety. These barriers were similar to those found in Allen's (2021) exploration of the experiences of Mormon parents of LGBTQ youth, who shared *fear of losing relationships, uncertainty with lay leadership* and *feeling isolated* as prominent themes in their experiences.

Consistent with prior research on ally development (e.g., Asta & Vacha-Haase, 2013; DiStefano et al., 2000; Grzanka et al., 2015; Russell, 2011; Stotzer, 2008) as well as Allport's Contact Hypothesis (1954), having personal experiences and interactions with sexual minorities, as well as vicariously learning about these experiences, supported ally development among our participants. Other supports included having a curious and empathic personality; finding trusted models of allyship; witnessing or personally experiencing prejudice and discrimination; locating LDS and LDS adjacent books, podcasts, and support groups for allies and sexual minorities; and engaging in self-exploration of personal attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward God, the Church, and sexual minorities. These supports were consistent with some of Allen's (2021) findings, such as naming *seeking Guidance from God*, and *finding support* as common themes in the journeys of Mormon parents of sexual minorities.

Interestingly, we observed that interactions with Church leadership surrounding LGBTQ+ issues were often a support for allyship, regardless of whether the interaction was positive or negative. For example, Stephanie shared relief in having an affirming member of her Stake Presidency, and Paige and Michelle both shared the positive impacts of having bishops who were supportive of their allyship. In contrast, when our participants encountered homophobic and heterosexist beliefs and behaviors from Church leaders at the local and institutional level, these events often served as catalyst events that ignited their allyship journey. While recognizing the impacts of homophobic rhetoric and policies on sexual minorities, we believe there is reason for hope, as both positive and negative actions of Church leaders appear to support the development of allyship for sexual minorities among members of the Church.

The teachings of the LDS Church appeared to be both a barrier and support to allyship. Although many noted the impacts of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric on their initial understandings and

hesitations for allyship, many also noted the role of the Church's teachings such as, "standing for truth and righteousness," and striving to "love one another," as being key motivators, particularly among those who remained active in the Church. Active members of the Church also shared the role of personal revelation and a belief in an ongoing restoration of the Gospel in sustaining their development as allies.

Navigating Religious Identity Conflict

Because prior research on heterosexual ally development among Christians, including Mormons, has named the central role of working through conflicts between religious and ally identities (e.g., Allen, 2021; Borgman, 2009; Minnix, 2018; Zeininger, 2017), our research also explored how participants navigated these conflicts. It is important to note that while most of our participants experienced conflict between allyship and the teachings of the Church, some did not experience this conflict. We observed this to be the result of either having left or reduced their activity in the Church prior to becoming an ally, or due to an earlier belief that allyship is consistent with the teachings of the Church.

Consistent with the literature on cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and the ally development processes of heterosexual Christian allies (e.g., Borgman, 2009; Zeininger, 2017), we observed that, as a result of the conflict between the teachings of the Church and their desire to be allies, our participants worked to resolve this conflict by changing their beliefs, changing their actions, or changing their perceptions of their actions. This included re-evaluating their perception of God, the Church, and/or about sexual minorities.

Among many of our participants who chose to stay active in the Church, resolution of the conflict between an ally identity and identity as a member of the Church an ongoing process, similar to the findings of Borgman (2009). For these individuals, we observed several supports to

working through this dissonance. These included having access to affirming local Church leadership and wards, identifying trusted models for allyship among lay Church members and Church officials, and finding hope for change based upon previous changes observed across Church history. Furthermore, similar to Minnix's (2018) findings, our participants found that seeking out personal revelation through spiritual practices like prayer were helpful in experiencing resolution to the dissonance. A range of cognitive strategies also were employed, such as "shelving" dissonant information until "further light and knowledge" on sexual minorities comes from God, picking the good and leaving the bad in Church, leaning into nuanced spiritual beliefs about sexual minorities/"living in color," re-thinking their understanding of how God perceives them and/or sexual minorities, and coming to believe that allyship is consistent with their own beliefs and teachings of the Church. These cognitive strategies are similar to those employed by heterosexual Christian allies from non-affirming Christian churches in Zeineger's (2017) study. In our study, the desire to "be the change" within the Church, as well as having positive experiences being seen as a support for members on the fringe emerged as factors that supported their engagement in the Church despite the conflict.

For our participants who decided to leave or reduce their activity the Church, this action was usually shared as offering "relief" of the dissonance between their Church membership and allyship. We observed these participants often engaged in some of the same strategies as their peers who were active in the Church, such as re-thinking their understanding of God and sexual minorities. Participants who resolved this dissonance through leaving the Church often had many reasons for leaving. They shared the benefits of having established social supports outside of the Church, having family members who had previously left the Church or who didn't fit the typical Utah Mormon "box," and/or having positive reactions from sexual minorities for leaving the

Church. We note that the process of leaving the Church for allies of sexual minorities is complex and a full exploration of this process is beyond the scope of the current study. However, some research does exist exploring the process of leaving the Church for members more broadly (e.g., Ormsbee, 2020; Scharp & Beck, 2017).

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

While offering us insights into the process in which heterosexual current and former members of the LDS Church come to identify as allies of sexual minorities, we note limitations of the current study. Previous research has suggested that much of the literature on heterosexual allies is from the perspectives of heterosexual allies, rather than from sexual minorities who are impacted by such allyship (Forbes & Ueno, 2020). As such, although our participants shared how they engage in allyship, the current study does not allow us to understand how sexual minorities perceive the allyship statuses our participants occupied. In other words, despite our participants defining themselves as allies, it is unclear whether sexual minorities within or outside of the Church would also consider them to be allies. In their grounded theory study of LGBTQ+ people's perceptions of straight allies, Forbes and Ueno (2020) observed that, "While those who considered their queer identities to be very salient expected allies to affirm queerness and take action, those who considered their queer identities to be not salient tended to not expect allies to be actively involved in supporting the queer community as a collective" (p. 166). Given the various salience that sexual minorities who are current or former members of the LDS Church give to their sexual identities, it is possible that expectations and perceptions of allyship may vary. Further research may choose to examine how the allyship of heterosexual current and former members of the LDS Church is perceived by their sexual minority counterparts.

Additionally, we are aware of the limited racial/ethnic diversity within our sample, as 93% (or 14 participants) identified as White, and 7% (only 1 participant) identified as African American/Black. While from a population perspective, this ratio of White individuals to people of color is similar to the demographics of Utah (90% White, 10% people of color, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022) the ally development process of racial and ethnic minorities who are current or former members of the Church is likely more complex than can be understood through a single individuals perspective, largely in part due to the LDS Church's history toward racial and ethnic minorities. Historical events such as the temple and priesthood restrictions of African American/Black members until 1978, varying historical interpretations of LDS scriptures that named dark skin as a curse from God (e.g., 2 Nephi 5:21), the controversial "Indian Placement Program," and others, likely present their own unique cultural and religious challenges that impact the perspectives and journeys of people of color broadly within the LDS Church, and specifically within Utah. For these reasons, future research should further examine the heterosexual ally development process of current and former members of the Church who identify as people of color.

Lastly, we believe it is important to note that although our study was focused specifically on how our participants became allies of sexual minorities, we were encouraged that many of our participants discussed their journeys becoming allies for gender minorities (e.g. transgender, gender-nonbinary individuals) as well. We approached this research with an understanding that sexual and gender identity are related but often conflated, and that allyship development for sexual minorities may differ from allyship development for gender minorities. For example, while much progress has been made in the advancement of securing rights for sexual minorities, gender minorities have been hit with many political attacks on their rights in recent years. This

suggests that among legislators, allyship for sexual minorities has come easier than for gender minorities. Similarly, within the Church, many books, resources and stories exist about sexual minorities and their families, while Church resources for gender minorities and their families are still limited in comparison. While the journeys of our heterosexual and cisgender participants showed similar allyship development processes for both groups, these processes occurred separately. In other words, our participant's timelines suggested their allyship for sexual minorities began first, with allyship for transgender and gender non-binary individuals developing later or still being in process. For example, Jessica shared, "I remember still feeling okay with, um, LG—Lesbian and Gay things and bisexual things— but still kind of being transphobic, like, "I just don't know." As such, individuals may simultaneously occupy different allyship statuses for sexual minorities (e.g. Vocal/Active Ally) than for gender minorities (e.g. Conditional Ally). We also note that since our study's focus was specifically surrounding allyship for sexual minorities, there may be additional elements of allyship for gender minorities that our current model does not capture. Future research may consider examining this process specifically for the development of allyship of gender minorities.

Implications for Mental Health Practitioners

The current study has implications for mental health providers working with current or former members of the LDS Church who are navigating the complex crossroads of faith and allyship. We believe it is important for mental health practitioners working with this population to have a greater understanding of how individual and cultural events can serve as catalyst events for allyship, while also potentially increasing distress as a result of increased cognitive dissonance. As observed in the stories of our participants, having a supportive, non-judgemental space to process questions and concerns about sexual minorities, the Church, and sexual

minorities who are members of the Church, can play an invaluable role for budding allies. The therapeutic relationship may serve as such a space for these clients and, as such, the therapist should be open to this type of exploration. We also note that such explorations did not inherently determine whether our participants activity within the Church.

A consistent finding in our study was the importance of accessing trusted support systems during the process of allyship development. Providers may wish to explore a client's values and explore with them with a range of options and resources for support and information, with the client ultimately being trusted to identify the supports that resonate with them and which they perceive to be trustworthy for where they are at in their allyship journey. Providers who push clients solely toward resources that fit their own personal beliefs as opposed to taking into account the values, Church membership status, and goals of their clients are likely to experience a rupture in the therapeutic relationship. Furthermore, because practitioners themselves can serve as knowledgeable sources of information about sexual and gender minorities that can aid in this exploration among developing allies, we encourage providers working with this population to stay up to date on the growing research surrounding sexual and gender minority mental health and the LDS Church.

Implications for Allies

Our research highlighted the importance of existing allies who can serve as role models to potential allies. While recognizing the multifaceted influences on the allyship status(es) one occupies at any given time, visible and vocal/active allies may play a particularly prominent role as they are most identifiable in their wards and communities as sources of nonjudgmental support—not just for sexual minorities, but for individuals considering allyship themselves. Within the context of Utah and given the concept of trustworthiness, we note the importance of

allies existing within and outside of the Church particularly for the development of future generations of allies. As members of the Church who are considering allyship for sexual minorities come to see that they are not alone, we see from our participants stories that they may be empowered to continue their development as allies.

Furthermore, while recognizing the importance of allies who work to disrupt oppression at the systemic-level, we observed that among our participants, forming individual relationships that were founded in respect, challenge, and trust were shared as supports that influenced changes in individual-level perspectives and belief. While acknowledging other aspects of intersectionality that may be at play, heterosexual allies may be uniquely positioned to develop and actively engage in such challenging yet supportive relationships with other heterosexual individuals who have the potential to be allies but might not be there yet.

Implications for Church Leaders

We observed that having Church leaders who are knowledgeable about sexual minorities, and the struggles that members of the Church “on the fringe” go through were seen to be supports for our participants as they navigated conflicts between their religious and ally identities. These affirming leaders helped members of the Church to navigate the cognitive dissonance they experienced between the teachings of the Church and their desires to care for and support sexual minorities. Encountering stigmatizing, uninformed or even homophobic messages and interactions with Church leaders was observed to increase the cognitive dissonance that our participants experienced, and was often accompanied with increased distress and distance from religious community. Furthermore, we observed that our participants were able to reach a stage of resolution or commitment in relation to their religious conflicts as a result of finding community, finding trustworthy models for allyship, and seeking out personal revelation

through practices such as prayer. Thus, Church leaders working with such individuals should familiarize themselves with the experiences of sexual minorities and the challenges they face within the Church, help members identify potential resources and models of Church members who are allies, and encourage members to seek out personal revelation. Furthermore, we recognize within our participants stories the role of Church leaders in establishing a ward culture of love and acceptance for those on the fringe—including sexual minorities and their allies.

Implications for Advocacy and Intervention

As a result of this knowledge, we believe that individuals interested in advocacy for sexual minorities may explore developing interventions to increase the presence of allies both within and outside of the LDS Church in Utah. Our results suggest a range of potential interventions. Empathy exercises in which participants explore previous personal encounters with prejudice, discrimination, and other forms of other-ing within the Church or within Utah could potentially be a helpful entryway to understanding the experiences of sexual minorities. Having the opportunity to interact with and get to know the experiences of sexual minorities personally also appears to be consistently supportive of allyship development for this group. Increased visibility and awareness of a range of resources for support and exploration among heterosexual allies among current/former members of the Church would also likely be helpful. Relatedly, having the chance to identify and develop personal relationships with trusted ally mentors could be beneficial for the development of future allies within and outside of the Church.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To our knowledge, this is the first study to explore the processes, influences, and outcomes of HMA identity development among current and former Mormons in Utah who are not parents of sexual minority children. Based upon grounded theory analyses of our participants' interviews and allyship timelines, a seven-stage iterative process emerged. Our model highlights the role of contextual factors, the experience and interpretation of catalyst events, and various barriers and supports in the ally identity development journeys of heterosexual Mormons. Our results suggest ways in which our participants navigated various identity crises, particularly those related to a conflict between their religious and ally identities. Furthermore, our results suggest that as a result of this process, heterosexual Mormon allies choose to occupy one or more allyship statuses, or ways of being an ally. We observed that negotiating their engagement in allyship for sexual minorities was a dynamic, fluid, and ongoing process for our participants as they navigate the unique cultural and religious context of Utah. We hope that through a greater understanding of how allyship develops within the confines of this context, we can foster greater allyship for sexual minorities among heterosexual current and former Mormons in Utah and beyond. We believe these efforts may in turn have positive impacts on the mental health and well-being of sexual minorities within Utah and beyond.

References

- Albrecht, S. L., & Bahr, H. M. (1983). Patterns of religious disaffiliation: A study of lifelong Mormons, Mormon converts, and former Mormons. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 22(4), 366–379. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1385774>
- Allen, L. (2021). *The social, emotional, and spiritual experiences of parents of LGBTQ+ children within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: A qualitative study*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2596920889?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Addison Wesley.
- American Psychological Association. (2012). Guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *American Psychologist*, 67(1), 10–42. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024659>
- Andrade, G. & Campo Redondo, M. (2022). Is conversion therapy ethical? A renewed discussion in the context of legal efforts to ban it. *Ethics, Medicine, and Public Health*, 20, 100732. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jemep.2021.100732>
- Ashworth, K. (2021). *On the record: A chronology of LGBTQ+ messaging*. Latter-Gay Stories. <https://lattergaystories.org/record/>
- Associated Press. (2015, December 20). Utah lawmakers pass anti-LGBT discrimination bill endorsed by Mormon church. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/utah-lawmakers-pass-anti-lgbt-discrimination-bill-endorsed-by-mormon-church>
- Asta, E. L., & Vacha-Haase, T. (2013). Heterosexual ally development in counseling psychologists: Experiences, training, and advocacy. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 41(4), 493–529. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000012453174>

- Bailey, S. P. (2015, November 6). Mormon Church to exclude children of same-sex couples from getting blessed and baptized until they are 18. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/11/05/mormon-church-to-exclude-children-of-same-sex-couples-from-getting-blessed-and-baptized-until-they-are-18/>
- Ballard, M. R. (2015, September). The Lord needs you now! *Ensign*.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2015/09/the-lord-needs-you-now?lang=eng>
- Barnes, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2012). Religious affiliation, internalized homophobia, and mental health in lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 82, 505–515. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01185.x>
- Barker, M., Parkinson, D., Knoll, B. (2016). The LGBTQ Mormon crisis: Responding to the empirical research on suicide. *Dialogue (Salt Lake City, Utah)*, 49(2), 1–24.
- Beckstead, L., & Israel, T. (2007). Affirmative counseling and psychotherapy focused on issues related to sexual orientation conflicts. In K. J. Bieschke, R. M. Perez, & K. A. DeBord (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling and psychotherapy with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients* (pp. 221–244). American Psychological Association. <https://doi-org.utk.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/11482-009>
- Benson, E. T. (2014). Follow the living prophet. In E. T. Benson (Eds.), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teachings-of-presidents-of-the-church-ezra-taft-benson/chapter-11-follow-the-living-prophet?lang=eng>

- Borgman, A. L. (2009). LGB allies and christian identity: A qualitative exploration of resolving conflicts and integrating identities. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 56(4), 508–520.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016691>
- Bowers, B. (1990). Grounded theory. In B. Sarter (Ed.), *Paths to knowledge* (pp. 33–58). Washington, DC: National League for Nursing Press.
- Bremner, N. (2020). Time for timelines: The take-home timeline as a tool for exploring complex life histories. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920948978>
- Bridges, J.G., Lefevor, G. T., & Schow, R. L. (2019). Sexual satisfaction and mental health in mixed-orientation relationships: A Mormon sample of sexual minority partners. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 19(4), 515–538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1669252>
- Bridges, J.G., Lefevor, T. G., Schow, R. L., & Rosik, C. H. (2020). Identity affirmation and mental health among sexual minorities: A raised-mormon sample. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 16(3), 293–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2019.1629369>
- Brodyn, Adriana, and Amin Ghaziani. 2018. “Performative progressiveness: Accounting for new forms of inequality in the gayborhood.” *City & Community*. 17(2):307–329.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12298>
- Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41, 3–17.
- Broverman, N. (2015, November 15). WATCH: Thousands quit Mormon church in wake of antigay policy. *The Advocate*. <https://www.advocate.com/religion/2015/11/15/watch-thousands-quit-mormon-church-wake-antigay-policy>

- Brooks, E.M. (2020). The disenchanted self: anthropological notes of existential distress and ontological insecurity among ex-Mormons in Utah. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*. 44(194), 193–213. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-019-09646-5>
- Brooks, V. R. (1981). *Minority stress and lesbian women*. Free Press.
- Brown, J., Low, W., Tai, R., & Tong, W. (2016). Shame, internalized homonegativity, and religiosity: A comparison of the stigmatization associated with minority stress with gay men in Australia and Malaysia. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 28(1), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19317611.2015.1068902>
- Bruce, Harper, G. W., & Bauermeister, J. A. (2015). Minority stress, positive identity development, and depressive symptoms: Implications for resilience among sexual minority male youth. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 2(3), 287–296. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000128>
- Burns, K. (2022). Guest op-ed: Several years after officially disavowing conversion therapy, does the LDS Church still practice it in the afterlife? *Daily Herald*. <https://www.heraldextra.com/news/opinion/local-guest-opinions/2022/jan/22/guest-op-ed-several-years-after-officially-disavowing-conversion-therapy-does-the-lds-church-still-practice-it-in-the-afterlife/>
- Chakravarty, D., & English, M. (2020). “I don’t like going to gay pride”: Experiences of negotiating LGBTQIA Mormon identity in Utah. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(1), 235–254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09767-9>
- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509–536). Sage.

- Charmaz, K. (2008). Grounded theory as an emergent method. In Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber & Patricia Leavy (Eds.), *Handbook of emergent methods* (pp.155-170). Guilford.
http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Charmaz_2008-b.pdf
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). Sage. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/constructing-grounded-theory/book235960>
- Chaves, M., Roso, J., Holleman, A., and Hawkins, M. (2021). *Congregations in 21st Century America*. Duke University, Department of Sociology. Retrieved from
https://sites.duke.edu/ncsweb/files/2022/02/NCSIV_Report_Web_FINAL2.pdf
- Chaudoir, S. R., Wang, K., & Pachankis, J. E. (2017). What reduces sexual minority stress? A review of the intervention “toolkit.” *Journal of Social Issues*, 73(3), 586–617.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12233>
- Chakravarty, D., & English, M. (2020). “I don’t like going to gay pride”: Experiences of negotiating LGBTQIA Mormon identity in Utah. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25, 235–254.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09767-9>
- Chodzen, G., Hidalgo, M. A., Chen, D., & Garofalo, R. (2019). Minority stress factors associated with depression and anxiety among transgender and gender-nonconforming youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 64(4), 467–471.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.07.006>
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2022). *Political Neutrality*.
<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/official-statement/political-neutrality>
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (2010) *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/english/pdf/language-materials/08702_eng.pdf?lang=eng

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2006). *Interview with Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Lance B. Wickman: "Same-Gender Attraction."*

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/interview-oaks-wickman-same-gender-attraction>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2019). Children of a parent living in a same-gender relationship policy. (Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops [unpublished work.]). Author.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2019). *Facts and statistics: Worldwide statistics*. <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family Services. (2019, October 15). *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family Services to Larry Marx, October 15, 2019*. [Letter]. Retrieved from https://www.scribd.com/document/430974069/Family-Services-letter?irclid=XYAXuEWAfzB5WcbSlo3JlxZhUkD09C2RR3b7Us0&irpid=10078&utm_source=impact&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=affiliate_pdm_acquisition_Skimbit%20Ltd.&sharedid=time.com&irgwc=1#from_embed

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (2021). *General Handbook: Serving in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/37-specialized-stakes-wards-and-branches?lang=eng>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2021, April 13). *Church Leaders: Why shouldn't leaders encourage heterosexual marriage for those who experience same-sex*

attraction or identify as gay?

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/gay/leaders?lang=eng>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2023, December 1). *First Presidency Announces Uniform, Worldwide Standards for Ward and Stake Boundaries.*

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/first-presidency-announces-uniform-worldwide-standards-for-ward-and-stake-boundaries>

Corbin, J. M. & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. (3e [ed.] / Juliet Corbin, Anselm Strauss.). SAGE.

Cragun, R. T., Williams, E., & Sumerau, J. E. (2015). From sodomy to sympathy: LDS elites' discursive construction of homosexuality over time. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 54(2), 291–310. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12180>

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed., pp. 62-68). Sage.

Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A. J., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), 100–100. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>

Curtis, L. D. (2019, October 16). LDS Church releases statement opposing proposed conversion therapy ban. 2KUTV. <https://kutv.com/news/local/lds-church-releases-statement-opposing-proposed-conversion-therapy>

Dahl, A. L. & Galliher, R. V. (2009). LGBTQ young adult experiences of religious and sexual identity integration. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 3(2), 92–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538600903005268>

- Dahl, A. & Galliher, R. (2010). Sexual minority young adult religiosity, sexual orientation conflict, self-esteem and depressive symptoms. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 14(4), 271–290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2010.507413>
- Dahl, A., & Galliher, R. V. (2012). The interplay of sexual and religious identity development in LGBQ adolescents and young adults: A qualitative inquiry. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 12, 217– 246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2012.691255>
- Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8, 377-383.
- Davidson, L. (2021, January 14). Latter-day Saints are overrepresented in Utah’s Legislature, holding 9 of every 10 seats. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2021/01/14/latter-day-saints-are/>
- Dehlin, J. P. Galliher, R. V., Bradshaw, W. S., & Crowell, K. A. (2014). Psychosocial correlates of religious approaches to same-sex attraction: A Mormon perspective. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 18(3), 284–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2014.912970>
- Dehlin, J. P., Galliher, R. V., Bradshaw, W. S., & Crowell, K. A. (2015). Navigating sexual and religious identity conflict: A Mormon perspective. *Identity*, 15(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2014.989440>
- Dehlin, J. P., Galliher, R. V., Bradshaw, W. S., Hyde, D. C., & Crowell, K. A. (2015). Sexual orientation change efforts among current or former LDS church members. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 62(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000011>

- Dewey, Schlosser, L. Z., Kinney, R. S., & Burkard, A. W. (2014). Faithful allies: The experiences of LGB-affirming, White Christian clergy. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 8(3), 298–321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2014.933467>
- Dillon, F. R., Worthington, R. L., Savoy, H. B., Rooney, S. C., Becker-Schutte, A., & Guerra, R. M. (2004). On becoming allies: A qualitative study of lesbian-, gay-, and bisexual-affirmative counselor training. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 43(3), 162–178. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2004.tb01840.x>
- DiStefano, T. M., Croteau, J. M., Anderson, M. Z., Kampa-Kokesch, S., & Bullard, M. A. (2000). Experiences of being heterosexual allies to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people: A qualitative exploration. *Journal of College Counseling*, 3(2), 131–141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1882.2000.tb00173.x>
- Doty, N. D., Willoughby, B. L. B., Lindahl, K. M., & Malik, N. M. (2010). Sexuality related social support among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(10), 1134–1147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9566-x>
- Drury, B. J., & Kaiser, C. R. (2014). Allies against sexism: The role of men in confronting sexism: Allies against sexism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 70(4), 637–652. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12083>
- Duggan, L. (2003). *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Duhigg, J. M., Rostosky, S. S., Gray, B. E., & Wimsatt, M. K. (2010). Development of heterosexuals into sexual-minority allies: A qualitative exploration. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 7(1), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-010-0005-2>

- Eichler, M. A. (2010). Joining the family: Experiences of being and becoming ally activists of LGBTQ people. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 8(2), 89–102.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344611406904>
- Fallon, K. M., Dobmeier, R. A., Reiner, S. M., Casquarelli, E. J., Giglia, L. A., & Goodwin, E. (2013). Reconciling spiritual values conflicts for counselors and lesbian and gay clients. *Adultspan Journal*, 12, 38–53. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0029.2013.00014.x>
- Fassinger, R. E. (2005). Paradigms, praxis, problems, and promise: Grounded theory in counseling psychology research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 156–166.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.156>
- Feinstein, B. A., Wadsworth, L. P., Davila, J., & Goldfried, M. R. (2014). Do parental acceptance and family support moderate associations between dimensions of minority stress and depressive symptoms among lesbians and gay men? *Professional Psychology, Research and Practice*, 45(4), 239–246. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035393>
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford University Press.
- Fingerhut, A. W. (2011). Straight allies: What predicts heterosexuals' alliance with the LGBT community? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 41(9), 2230–2248.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2011.00807.x>
- Fox, L.C. (1961). Love one another [Song]. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1985), *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. (p. 308).
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/music/songs/love-one-another?crumbs=hymns&lang=eng>

- Gelberg, S., & Chojnacki, J. T. (1995). Transitions of gay/lesbian/bisexual-affirmative, heterosexual career counselors. *Career Development Quarterly*, 43, 267–273.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1995.tb00867.x>
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.
- Gess, J. (2016). Discourse of a Mormon ally in supervision. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 10(2), 78–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2016.1157555>
- Gibbs, J., Goldbach, J.T. (2015). Religious conflict, sexual identity, and suicidal behaviors among sexual minority youth. *Arch Suicide Res.*, 19(4):472–88.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2015.1004476>
- Giorgi, A. (2012). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 43(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916212X632934>
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity*. The Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Aldine.
- Green, A. E., Price-Feeney, M., & Dorison, S. H. (2021). Association of sexual orientation acceptance with reduced suicide attempts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth. *LGBT Health*, 8(1), 26–31.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2020.0248>
- Grigoriou, J. A. (2014). Minority stress factors for same-sex attracted Mormon Adults. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 1(4), 471–479.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000078>
- Grzanka, P. R. (2022). The ally paradox. In N. L. Fischer & L. Westbrook (Eds.), *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies* (4th ed.). Routledge. [https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003163329-](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003163329-93)

- Grzanka, P. R., Adler, J., & Blazer, J. (2015). Making up allies: The identity choreography of straight LGBT activism. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 12(3), 165–181.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-014-0179-0>
- Hardesty, J. L., Crossman, K. A., & Haselschwerdt, M. L. (2022). Grounded theory methods. In K. Adamsons, A. Few-Demo, C. Proulx, & K. Roy (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies* (1st ed., pp. 315– 333). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92002-9_22
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Structural stigma: Research evidence and implications for psychological science. *American Psychologist*, 71(8), 742-751.
- Helms, J. E. (1995). An update of Helm's White and people of color racial identity models. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 181–198). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Herek, G. M., & Capitano, J. P. (1996). “Some of my best friends” Intergroup contact, concealable stigma, and heterosexuals’ attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(4), 412–424.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167296224007>
- Hildebrandt, T. (2012). Journeys of heterosexual-identified individuals with an evangelical Christian background from anti-gay to pro-gay. (Doctoral dissertation, Fielding Graduate University). Retrieved from
<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/docview/1074792450/fulltextPDF/CB5C98B170404974PQ/1?accountid=8440>
- Hinderaker, A. (2015) Severing primary ties: Exit from totalistic organizations. *Western Journal of Communication*, 79:1, 92-115, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2014.943422>

- Jackson, K. F. (2013). Participatory diagramming in social work research: Utilizing visual timelines to interpret the complexities of the lived multiracial experience. *Qualitative Social Work: QSW: Research and Practice*, 12(4), 414–432.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325011435258>
- Jackson, L. (2019, April 5). The Mormon church's new 'don't ask, don't tell' policy.
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/05/us/mormon-policy-reversal/index.html>
- Jordan, M. L. (2012). Heterosexual ally identity development: A conceptual model. *Journal of the Indiana University Student Personnel Association*, 67–78.
<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/jiuspa/article/view/1342>
- Kashubeck-West, S., Whiteley, A. M., Vossenkemper, T., Robinson, C., & Deitz, C. (2017). Conflicting identities: Sexual minority, transgender, and gender nonconforming individuals navigating between religion and gender–sexual orientation identity. In K. A. DeBord, A. R. Fischer, K. J. Bieschke, & R. M. Perez (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual orientation and gender diversity in counseling and psychotherapy* (pp. 213-238). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/15959-009>
- Kenny, M. & Fourie, R. (2015). Contrasting Classic, Straussian, and Constructivist Grounded Theory: Methodological and philosophical conflicts. *Qualitative Report*, 20(8), 1270–.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2251>
- Kitchen, N. (2019, August 23). Nathan Kitchen: The rainbow stained-glass ceiling in the LDS Church. *The Salt Lake Tribune*.
<https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2019/08/25/nathan-kitchen-rainbow/>
- Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1969). Bystander apathy. *American Scientist*, 57, 244-268.

- Law, T. (2019, November 29). Why the LDS Church joined LGBTQ advocates in supporting Utah's conversion therapy ban. <https://time.com/5741789/utah-conversion-therapy-ban-lds/>
- Leake, R. L. (1990, October). What callings are open to single members of the Church? *Ensign*, 20(10). <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1990/10/i-have-a-question/what-callings-are-open-to-single-members-of-the-church?lang=eng>
- Lefevor, G. T., Blaber, I. P., Huffman, C. E., Schow, R. L., Beckstead, A. L., Raynes, M., & Rosik, C. H. (2020). The role of religiousness and beliefs about sexuality in well-being among sexual minority Mormons. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 12(4), 460–470. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000261>
- Lefevor, G. T., Davis, E. B., Paiz, J. Y., & Smack, A. C. P. (2021). The relationship between religion/spirituality and health among sexual minorities: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 147(7), 647–666. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000321>
- Lefevor, G. T., McGraw, J. S., & Skidmore, S. J. (2022). Suicidal ideation among active and nonactive/former Latter-day Saint sexual minorities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(1), 445–464. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22591>
- Lefevor, G. T., Sorrell, S. A., Kappers, G., Plunk, A., Schow, R. L., Rosik, C. H., & Beckstead, A. L. (2020). Same-sex attracted, not LGBTQ: The associations of sexual identity labeling on religiousness, sexuality, and health among Mormons. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 67(7), 940–964. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1564006>
- Legerski, E., Harker, A., Jeppsen, C., Armstrong, A., Dehlin, J. P., Troutman, K., & Galliher, R. V. (2017). Mormon mixed-orientation marriages: Variations in attitudes and experiences

- by sexual orientation and current relationship status. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 13(2), 186–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2016.1159163>
- Levitt, H. M., Motulsky, S. L., Wertz, F. J., Morrow, S. L., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2017). Recommendations for designing and reviewing qualitative research in psychology: Promoting methodological integrity. *Qualitative Psychology*, 4(1), 2–22. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000082>
- Levy, D., (2014). Christian doctrine related to sexual orientation: Current climate and future implications. In A. B. Dessel & R. M. Bolen (Eds.), *Conservative Christian beliefs and sexual orientation in social work: Privilege, oppression, and the pursuit of human rights* (pp. 11-42). CSWE Press.
- Levy D., & Reeves, P. (2011). Resolving identity conflict: Gay, lesbian, and queer individuals with a christian upbringing. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 23(1), 53–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2010.530193>
- Mann, B., & Baker, E. (2020, September 22). Black protest leaders to White allies: 'It's our turn to lead our own fight.' *NPR*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/22/913094440/black-protest-leaders-to-white-allies-it-s-our-turn-to-lead-our-own-fight>
- Mattingly, M. S., Galliher, R. V., Dehlin, J. P., Crowell, K. A., & Bradshaw, W. S. (2016). A mixed methods analysis of the family support experiences of GLBQ Latter Day Saints. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 12(4), 386–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2015.1085345>
- McBride, M. F. (1976). *Effect of visual stimuli in electric aversion therapy*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Brigham Young University.

- McConnell, E. A., Birkett, M., & Mustanski, B. (2016). Families matter: Social support and mental health trajectories among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 59*(6), 674–680. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.07.026>
- McKinley, J. & Johnson, K. (2008, November 14). Mormons tipped scale in ban on gay marriage. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/15/us/politics/15marriage.html>
- Meyer, I.H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 674–697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Meyer, I.H., (2015). Resilience in the study of minority stress and health of sexual and gender minorities. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 2*(3), 209–213. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000132>
- Miller, K. K., Watson, R. J., & Eisenberg, M. E. (2020). The intersection of family acceptance and religion on the mental health of LGBTQ youth. *Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health, 1*(1), 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.1891/LGBTQ.2019-0005>
- Minnix, G. M. (2018). Reconciling counselors’ Christian beliefs and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender affirmation: A grounded theory. *Counseling and Values, 63*(1), 110–128. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cvj.12076>
- Monico, L. B., Ludwig, A., Lertch, E., & Mitchell, S. G. (2020). Using timeline methodology to visualize treatment trajectories of youth and young adults following inpatient opioid treatment. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920970106>

- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in Counseling Psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 250–260.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250>
- Moser, & Branscombe, N. R. (2022). Male allies at work: Gender-equality supportive men reduce negative underrepresentation effects among women. *Social Psychological & Personality Science*, 13(2), 372–381. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506211033748>
- Mustanski, & Liu, R. T. (2012). A longitudinal study of predictors of suicide attempts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 42(3), 437–448. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-012-0013-9>
- Nelson, R. M. (2008, October). Celestial marriage. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2008/10/celestial-marriage?lang=eng>
- Nelson, R.M. (2019, September 17). The love and laws of God. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/president-nelson-byu-transcript-september-2019>
- Ormsbee, J.T. (2020). “Like a cord snapping”: Toward a grounded theory of how devout Mormons leave the LDS church. *Critical Research on Religion*, 8(3), 297–317.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2050303220924096>
- Padilla, Y. C., Crisp, C., & Rew, D. L. (2010). Parental acceptance and illegal drug use among gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents: Results from a national survey. *Social Work*, 55(3), 265–275 211p. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/55.3.265>
- Parra, L. A., Bell, T. S., Benibgui, M., Helm, J. L., & Hastings, P. D. (2018). The buffering effect of peer support on the links between family rejection and psychosocial adjustment

- in LGB emerging adults. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 35(6), 854–871.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517699713>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Pearson, C.L. (1987). I'll walk with you [Song]. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (1989), *Children's Songbook of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. (p. 140). <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/music/songs/ill-walk-with-you?crumbs=childrens-songbook&lang=eng>
- Pew Research Center. (2013). *A survey of LGBT Americans: Attitudes, experience and values in changing times*. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/06/SDT_LGBT-Americans_06-2013.pdf
- Pew Research Center. (2015). *Chapter 2: Religious Switching and Inter-marriage*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/chapter-2-religious-switching-and-intermarriage/>
- Phillips, M. J. & Ancis, J. R. (2008). The process of identity development as the parent of a lesbian or gay male. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 2(2), 126–158.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15538600802125605>
- Princeton Review. (2022). *LGBTQ-unfriendly colleges*.
<https://www.princetonreview.com/college-rankings?rankings=lgbtq-unfriendly>
- Ream G. L., Savin-Williams R.C. (2005). Reconciling Christianity and positive non-heterosexual identity in adolescence, with implications for psychological well-being. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 2(3),19-36. https://doi.org/10.1300/J367v02n03_03

- Rodgers, B. (2019, November 26). “‘Conversion therapy’ ban OK’d by LDS Church and advocates, announces Gov. Herbert. *The Salt Lake Tribune*.
<https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2019/11/27/gov-herbert-announces/>
- Rosario, M., Schrimshaw, E. W., & Hunter, J. (2009). Disclosure of sexual orientation and subsequent substance use and abuse among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths: Critical role of disclosure reactions. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 23, 175–184.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014284>
- Ryan, C. & Rees, R. A. (2012). Supportive families, healthy children: Helping Latter-day Saint families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children. San Francisco, CA: Family Acceptance Project, Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.
<https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/FAP%20LDS%20Booklet%20pst.pdf>
- Ryan, C., Huebner, D., Diaz, R. M., & Sanchez, J. (2009). Family rejection as a predictor of negative health outcomes in White and Latino lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults. *Pediatrics (Evanston)*, 123(1), 346–352. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2007-3524>
- Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(4), 205–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x>
- Riess, J. (2020, November 12). Did Mormonism’s anti-LGBT policy cause more people to leave the LDS church? *Religion News Service*. <https://religionnews.com/2020/11/12/did-mormonisms-anti-lgbt-policy-cause-more-people-to-leave-the-lds-church/>
- Russell, G. M. (2011). Motives of heterosexual allies in collective action for equality. *Journal of Social Issues*, 67, 376-393. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01703.x>

- Scharp, K. M., & Beck, A. L. (2017). "Losing my religion": Identity (re) constructions in Mormon exit narratives. *Narrative Inquiry*, 27(1), 132–148.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.27.1.07sch>
- Scheitle, C. P., & Adamczyk, A. (2010). *High-cost religion, religious switching, and health*. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146510378236>
- Schuck, K., & Liddle, B. (2001). Religious conflicts experienced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 5(2), 63.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J236v05n02_07
- Shilo, G., & Savaya, R. (2011). Effects of family and friend support on LGB youths' mental health and sexual orientation milestones. *Family Relations*, 60(3), 318–330.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00648.x>
- Snapp, S. D., Watson, R. J., Russell, S. T., Diaz, R. M., & Ryan, C. (2015). Social support networks for LGBT young adults: Low cost strategies for positive adjustment. *Family Relations*, 64(3), 420–430. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12124>
- Spanierman, L. B., & Smith, L. (2017). Roles and responsibilities of White allies: Implications for research, teaching, and practice. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 45(5), 606–617.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000017717712>
- Simmons, B. W. (2017). *Coming out Mormon: An examination of religious orientation, spiritual trauma, and PTSD among Mormons and ex-Mormon LGBTQQA adults* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from
https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/simmons_brian_w_201712_phd.pdf.

- Stack, P.F. (2019, April 4). LDS Church dumps its controversial LGBTQ policy, cites ‘continuing revelation’ from God. *The Salt Lake Tribune*.
<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/04/04/lds-church-dumps-its/>
- Stack, P.F. (2016, February 16). Suicide fears, if not actual suicides, rise in wake of Mormon same-sex policy. *The Salt Lake Tribune*.
<https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=3473487&itype=CMSID>
- Stotzer, R. L. (2008). Straight allies: Supportive attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals in a college sample. *Sex Roles*, 60(1-2), 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9508-1>
- Szymanski, & Kashubeck-West, S. (2008). Mediators of the relationship between internalized oppressions and lesbian and bisexual women’s psychological distress. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 36(4), 575–594. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000007309490>
- Szymanski, D. M., Kashubeck-West, S., & Meyer, J. (2008). Internalized heterosexism: Measurement, psychosocial correlates, and research directions. *Counseling Psychologist*, 36(4), 525-574. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000007309489>
- Tanner, C. (2022, March 4). A year after rainbow ‘Y’ lighting, BYU cracks down on protests. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/education/2022/03/04/year-after-rainbow-y/>
- Thayne, J. (2021, August 15). 9 things I consider when prophets disagree with my politics. *Meridian Magazine*. <https://latterdaysaintmag.com/9-things-i-consider-when-prophets-disagree-with-my-politics/>

- Testa, R. J., Habarth, J., Peta, J., Balsam, K., & Bockting, W. (2015). Development of the gender minority stress and resilience measure. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 2(1), 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000081>
- Vernaglia, E.R. (1999). *Parents as straight allies: A qualitative study of the experiences of heterosexual parents in the gay rights movement*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/304511578?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Walch, T. (2020, March 4). New letter clarifies update to BYU's honor code following weeks of confusion. *Deseret News*. <https://www.deseret.com/faith/2020/3/4/21163585/byu-honor-code-lds-mormon-church-gay-marriage-lgbtq>
- Walch, T. and Collins, L.M. (2016, January 28). LDS Church leaders mourn reported deaths in the Mormon LGBT community. *Deseret News*. <https://www.deseret.com/2016/1/28/20581330/lds-church-leaders-mourn-reported-deaths-in-mormon-lgbt-community#sister-neill-f-marriott-of-the-young-women-general-presidency-o-the-church-of-jesus-christ-of-latter-day-saints-speaks-as-lds-leaders-re-emphasize-support-tuesday-jan-27-2015-for-lgbt-nondiscrimination-laws-that-protect-religious-freedoms-at-a-news-conference-inside-the-conference-center-in-salt-lake-city>
- Washington, J., & Evans, N. J. (1991). Becoming an ally. In N. J. Evans & V. A. Wall (Eds.), *Beyond tolerance: Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals on campus* (pp. 195–204). American College Personnel Association. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED336682.pdf#page=215>
- Waters, R. (2010). Understanding allyhood as a developmental process. *About Campus*, 15(5), 2–8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20035>

- Watson, R. J., Grossman, A. H., & Russell, S. T. (2019). Sources of social support and mental health among LGB youth. *Youth & Society*, 51(1), 30–48.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X16660110>
- Weaver, S. J. (2015, November 12). Elder Christofferson provides context on handbook changes affecting same-sex marriages. *Church News*.
<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2015-11-12/elder-christofferson-provides-context-on-handbook-changes-affecting-same-sex-marriages-29858>
- Weaver, S. J. (2021, August 23). Elder Holland asks BYU faculty to defend the university’s unique mission; offer love, hope to LGBTQ while upholding God’s commandments. *Church News*. <https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2021-08-23/elder-holland-byu-university-conference-love-lgbtq-223095>
- Wolff, J. R., Himes, H. L., Soares, S. D., & Miller Kwon, E. (2016). Sexual minority students in non-affirming religious higher education: Mental health, outness, and identity. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 3(2), 201–212.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000162>
- Wolowic, J. M., Heston, L. V., Saewyc, E. M., Porta, C., & Eisenberg, M. E. (2016). Chasing the rainbow: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth and pride semiotics. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2016.1251613>
- Worthington, R. L., Savoy, H. B., Dillon, F. R., & Vernaglia, E. R. (2002). Heterosexual identity development: a multidimensional model of individual and social identity. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 30, 496–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00100002030004002>

Zeininger, K., Holtzman, M., & Kraus, R. (2017). The reciprocal relationship between religious beliefs and acceptance of one's gay or lesbian family member. *Sociological Spectrum*, 37(5), 282–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2017.1348279>

Appendices
Appendix A: Recruitment Ads

A STUDY ON **CURRENT AND FORMER**
LATTER-DAY SAINT
Allies



Researchers at the University of Tennessee are conducting a paid study about the journeys of **heterosexual current and former** members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who identify as **allies of sexual minorities** and live in the state of **Utah**. We are particularly interested in hearing from allies who are **not** parents of sexual minority youth. If this applies to you, and you are interested in sharing your story with us, please follow the QR code below, or fill out our survey at tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies



Figure 3. Recruitment Flyer

Facebook Recruitment

Hey y'all! My research team and I are looking for heterosexual current and former Latter-Day Saints who live in Utah and identify as allies of sexual minorities who would be interested in being interviewed about their journey towards becoming an ally. We are particularly hoping to learn more about this process for members and former members who don't have a child who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, same-sex attracted, or holds another non-heterosexual identity. Consider participating in this \$20 paid research study, or share with a friend who might be interested in sharing their journey with us! Learn more/sign up at: <https://tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies>

Instagram Recruitment

Do you live in Utah? Are you a heterosexual current/former member of the LDS Church? Are you an ally to sexual minorities? Learn more about this paid research opportunity & consider sharing your story! Please share with others who might be interested! Link in bio.

Twitter Recruitment

Do you live in Utah? Are you a heterosexual current/former member of the LDS Church? Are you an ally to sexual minorities? Learn more about this paid research opportunity & consider sharing your story by following this link: <https://tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies>

Podcast Interview (if invited to be a guest on a podcast to share my story as a queer Mormon/my story related to the research, I plan to discuss some or all of the following):

- Messages I encountered growing up in Utah about what being “gay” meant
- My growing recognition of conflict between my sexual orientation and religious identity and attempts to change my sexual orientation via both formal/informal conversion therapy.
- My experience coming home early from an LDS mission after experiencing depression and anxiety related to being both Gay and Mormon.
- Difficulties with attending church following this experience, and worsening depression
- My experience of hospitalization for my own mental health, and the huge role of allies in my life (specifically my family) in helping me to come to terms with my identity.
- Positive and negative experiences with Church members coming out afterwards
- Healing religious experiences of acceptance and love for who I am
- My desire to help build bridges between the queer community and the Mormon community, including my previous work with this community.
- The process of going to grad school and using my education to help other queer Mormons and their allies navigate the challenges they face.
- What lead me to want to explore the experiences of allies.

***In addition to this, I will read word for word the podcast recruitment script below. As needed, I will respond to any additional clarifying questions from the podcast host about the study, sticking with relaying the information contained within my informed consent document.

Podcast Recruitment Script (if invited to personally record)

Hey y'all—my name is Adam Maughan! I'm a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Right now I'm getting started on a study that I'd really love for you to participate in if you qualify. As a researcher and as someone who grew up as a queer member of the Church, I think I've really learned the role that heterosexual allies both within and outside of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints can have on improving the mental health and well-being of sexual minorities, especially in Utah. My research team and I are wanting to hear from heterosexual current and former members of the Church who live in Utah and identify as allies of sexual minorities about their journeys in becoming allies. In recent years, there have been some studies on the process that these folks go through that lead them to identify as allies, but that majority of information we have revolves around the journeys of LDS parents of LGBTQ+ youth. Because of this, I am really wanting to learn more about those journeys from people who do not have a child who identifies as a sexual minority. If this sounds like you and you are over 18 years old, please feel free to check out our study at tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies. Again, that is tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies. If you're a good fit for our study and are selected for an interview, we plan to compensate you with a \$20 VISA gift card for your time.

Podcast Recruitment Script (if read by podcast host)

Adam Maughan, who is a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and grew up as a queer member of the Church is currently conducting a study on the journeys of current and former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who identify as allies of sexual minorities. Specifically, he and his research team are hoping to interview current and former members of the church who identify as heterosexual, live in Utah, are over 18 years old, and who are not the parent of a sexual minority. He is making a specific effort to include voices across the spectrum of involvement in the church. If you are interested in sharing your story of how you became an ally, or want to learn more about the study, you can go to tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies. Again, that is tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies. Participants who complete an interview will be paid \$20 for their time. [optional: We will also include that link in the description for this podcast].

Email Recruitment

Hello!

My name is Adam Maughan, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I'm reaching out to you to see if you would be willing to assist me in recruiting participants for my doctoral dissertation on the journeys of current and former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who identify as allies to sexual minorities. My research team and I are particularly interested in learning about the allyship journeys of current/former members of the Church who live in Utah, identify as heterosexual, and who do not have a sexual minority child.

As a gay man who grew up in Utah as a member of the Church, I am reaching out to you specifically because of the work that [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] does to support both

LGBTQ+ individuals and their family and friends navigate difficult issues of sexuality and deeply-held religious beliefs. Because I recognize this topic can be divisive, I am making a special effort to reach out to organizations across the spectrum of political and religious beliefs. Additionally, each of my participants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and clarification to ensure their perspectives are represented in good faith.

If you are willing to help me recruit for this study, I am hoping that you will publicize the announcement and social media graphic below to your social media, listserv, forum, and/or group message boards that may reach current/former members of the Church who identify as allies to sexual minorities. Alternatively, if you are able to share this survey in person or to personal contacts, we have also included a flyer with the link (and a QR code) that could be distributed and/or posted in a publicly visible space.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact the researchers, Adam Maughan (amaughan@utk.edu) or Joe Miles (joemiles@utk.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the IRB Compliance Officer at (865) 974-7697 or by email at utkirb@utk.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board (UTK IRB).

Thank you,

Adam Maughan, M.A.
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student
Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Joseph Miles, Ph.D.
Professor and Director of Clinical Training
Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Announcement we request be posted:

Researchers at the University of Tennessee are conducting a paid study about the journeys of heterosexual current and former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who identify as allies of sexual minorities and live in the state of Utah. We are particularly interested in hearing from allies who are **not** parents of sexual minority youth. If this applies to you, and you are interested in sharing your story with us, please follow the QR code on the attached flyer, or fill out our survey at <https://tiny.utk.edu/LDSAllies>

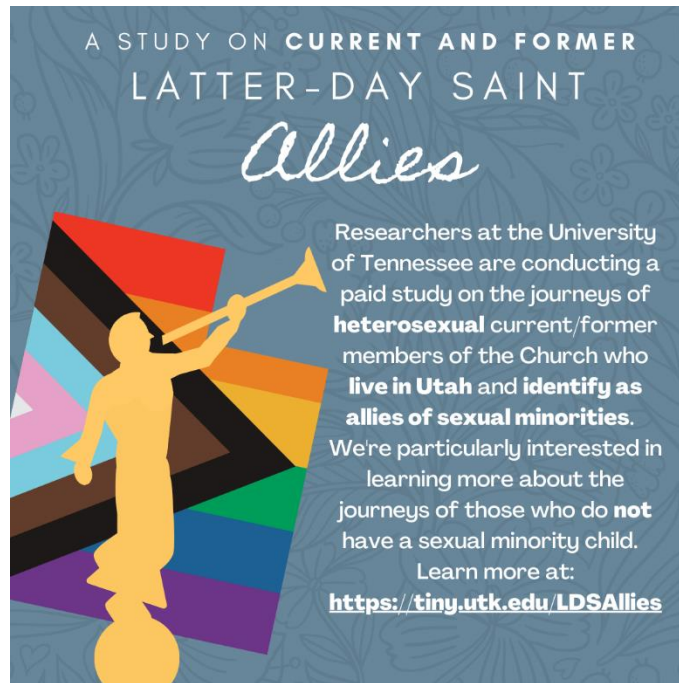


Figure 4. Accompanying Social Media Graphic

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Consent for Research Participation

Research Study Title: **Straight Ally Development among Current and Former Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints living in Utah**

Researcher(s): Adam Maughan, M.A. University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Joe Miles, Ph.D., University of Tennessee, Knoxville
James D. Goates, Ed. M., University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

We are asking you to be in this research study because you:

- Are a current or former member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Identify as heterosexual
- Live in the state of Utah
- Are interested in sharing your journey towards being a straight ally of sexual minority (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, same-sex attracted, or any other non-exclusively heterosexual identity; i.e., LGBQ+/SSA) individuals.
- Are **not** the parent of an individual who identifies as a sexual minority
- Are at least 18 years old

What is this research study about?

The purpose of the research study is to utilize timelines to understand the process that heterosexual, current or former members of the LDS Church living in Utah go through that leads them to identify as an LGBQ+/SSA ally. Because some research already exists on this process among parents of sexual minority youth, we are especially interested in learning about the journeys of those who don't have a sexual minority child. We are also interested in learning more about what being an ally means to you, as well as challenges and supports you have encountered throughout your journey.

Who is conducting this research study?

Our research team consists of two sexual minority grad students who were raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (but are no longer active members), as well as a sexual minority faculty member who is not a member of the Church. The two graduate students involved in this project maintain positive relationships with active members of the Church. However, given that our team is made up of individuals who are primarily no longer associated with the Church, we have made a special effort to involve your perspectives and feedback throughout our research process through offering you the opportunity to edit/clarify your interview transcript, as well as to give us feedback about our results following our analyses. Accordingly, we will make special efforts to include the voices and perspectives of individuals

from across the spectrum of involvement in the Church. We value your perspectives and contributions to this work.

How long will I be in the research study?

If you agree to be in the study, your participation will include creating and uploading a timeline of your journey towards allyship, participating in a 1-1.5 hour interview, and optionally reviewing your interview transcript and/or a summary of the results of our study. Creating and uploading your timeline may take as little as half an hour, but could be longer depending on the level of detail you decide to include. A de-identified version of your transcript will be sent to you within 2-3 weeks of your interview. Your decision to give feedback on this transcript and/or our final results in no way impacts your inclusion in this study, or your compensation.

What will happen if I say “Yes, I want to be in this research study”?

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to:

- Fill out a short online demographic survey, as well as your email address so we may contact you if we think you are a good fit for the study.
- If contacted via email for an interview, fill out a poll suggesting times you would be available for an online interview via Zoom
- **At least 2 days before your interview**, create and upload a timeline of key moments that have influenced your journey towards allyship (including as specific dates as possible). You will upload a photo of this timeline through a secure online link that will be sent to you. If not uploaded by that time, you will be contacted to reschedule. You will be given the opportunity to give your consent for us to use a de-identified copy of your timeline in our published results.
- Participate in a 1-1.5 hour long recorded online interview about your journey and experiences being an ally for sexual minorities as someone who is a current or former member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
- Review a transcript of your interview within one week of receiving it to make any changes or clarifications you would like (this is appreciated, but completely optional).
- Provide feedback within a one-week window on a summary of our overall results once we have completed our analyses (again, appreciated, but completely optional).

What happens if I say “No, I do not want to be in this research study”?

You can leave the study at any point prior to the one week cutoff for providing feedback on your interview transcript. Your decision to withdraw from the study won't affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Tennessee.

What happens if I say “Yes” but change my mind later?

Even if you decide to be in the study now, you can change your mind and leave the study at any point before the one-week cutoff for providing feedback on your interview transcript. Following the one week cutoff, it will not be possible to withdraw your data from the study as your de-identified data will already be included in our analyses. If you leave the study prior to participating in the interview, you will not be compensated.

If you decide to stop before the one-week cutoff, you can:

- Communicate via email if you are no longer interested in being interviewed.
- Communicate verbally to the researcher during your interview that you are no longer interested in participating in the study.
- Communicate via email to the research team within a week following your receipt of the transcription of your interview if you would like your interview and timeline to not be included in our analyses.

If you indicate you would like to stop your participation before the one-week cutoff, any information collected by the research team related to your interview will be destroyed, including but not limited to your submitted timeline, interview recordings and/or transcriptions. However, as mentioned, please note that following the one-week period in which you are able to audit your interview transcript, your de-identified data will be incorporated into our analyses and cannot be withdrawn.

Are there any possible risks to me?

It is possible that discussing challenges related to your ally journey could result in some psychological discomfort. It is also possible someone could find out you were in this study or see your study information, but we believe this risk is small because of the procedures we use to protect your information. These procedures are described later in this form.

Are there any benefits to being in this research study?

There is a possibility that you may benefit from being in the study, but there is no guarantee that will happen. One possible benefit includes a greater understanding of your identities as an ally and/or a current or former member of the Church. Even if you don't benefit from being in the study, your participation may help us to learn more about what influences current or former members of the Church to become allies, how they navigate challenges associated with allyship, and what allyship looks like for them. We hope the knowledge gained from this study will benefit others in the future.

Who can see or use the information collected for this research study?

We will protect the confidentiality of your information in the following ways:

- Your timeline will be submitted via a secure online portal prior to your interview, de-identified, and will then be stored in an encrypted storage drive. These will only be shared with members of the research team.
- Your interview will be audio and video recorded as well as stored via a secure online Zoom platform. If you are uncomfortable being video recorded, you may choose to keep your camera off during your interview. Only the primary investigator (Adam) who will be conducting your interview will have access to these recordings.
- Following your interview, we'll utilize a secure transcription software to transcribe your interview, after which the primary investigator will remove all identifying personal information from the interview and submitted timeline. Your de-identified interview transcript and timeline will then be shared only with members of the research team.
- We'll ask you to come up with a pseudonym so that if we quote from your interview in any publications or presentations, your real name will not be used.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information or what information came from you. Although it is unlikely, there are times when others may need to see the information we collect about you. These include:

- People at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville who oversee research to make sure it is conducted properly.
- Government agencies (such as the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and others responsible for watching over the safety, effectiveness, and conduct of the research.
- If a law or court requires us to share the information, we would have to follow that law or final court ruling.
- Business offices at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville may be given your email information to issue your payment and report tax information.

What will happen to my information after this study is over?

We will keep your de-identified transcripts and timelines to use for future research. Your name and other information that can directly identify you (including all audio/video recordings) will be deleted from your research data collected as part of the study.

We may share your research data with other researchers without asking for your consent again, but it will not contain information that could directly identify you.

Will I be paid for being in this research study?

If you are selected to participate in an interview, you will be paid via a \$20 Visa Gift Card for your participation in this study. You will be paid immediately following your interview by your preference of a digital or physically mailed gift card sent to the address you provide.

What else do I need to know?

About 30-40 people will take part in this study. Because of this smaller number of participants, it is possible that someone could identify you based on the information we collect from you.

We may need to stop your participation in the study without your consent if we discover you do not meet the study's eligibility requirements.

Who can answer my questions about this research study?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem or injury, contact one of the researchers below:

Adam Maughan, M.A.

amaughan@vols.utk.edu

Joe Miles, Ph.D.

joemiles@utk.edu

For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:

Institutional Review Board
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

1534 White Avenue
Blount Hall, Room 408
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
Phone: 865-974-7697
Email: utkirb@utk.edu

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read this form, been given the chance to ask questions and have my questions answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact. By clicking the “I Agree” button below, I am agreeing to be in this study. I can print or save a copy of this consent information for future reference. If I do not want to be in this study, I can answer “I Do Not Agree” or close my internet browser.

Appendix C: Qualtrics Screener Survey

1. (Informed Consent Document—Appendix B)

I Agree

I Do Not Agree

2. In which state do you currently reside?

Utah

*(List of other 49 U.S. States)

3. What is your gender identity? (select all that apply)

Woman

Man

Cisgender

*Transgender

*Gender Non-Binary

4. What is your age?

*Younger than 18

18-24

25-64

65+

5. What is your racial identity? (select all that apply)

African American/Black

Middle Eastern

East Asian/East Asian American

South Asian/South Asian American

Southeast Asian/Southeast Asian American

Native American Indian or Alaskan Native

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Multiracial and/or Multiethnic

White

Hispanic or Latino/a/ae

None of the above options accurately describe my race/ethnicity. I describe my race/ethnicity as _____

6. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/Straight

*Lesbian

*Gay

*Queer

*Questioning/Uncertain

*Bisexual

*Pansexual

- *Asexual
- *Same-Sex Attracted
- *Other (please describe) _____

7. Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- Yes
- No

8. What socioeconomic class have you spent the majority of your life in?

- Lower Class
- Working Class
- Middle Class
- Upper Middle Class
- Upper Class

9. What is your current relationship status?

- Single
- Married
- Partnered/Dating

10. How would you describe your relationship to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?

- Active Member
- Less-Active Member
- Inactive Member
- Excommunicated Member
- Membership Withdrawn
- *I have never been a member of the Church

11. To help us make sure you're not a robot, please select the first president of the Church.

- *Gordon B. Hinckley
- Joseph Smith
- *George Washington
- *Brigham Young

12. Do you identify as an ally of sexual minorities (individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual, same-sex attracted, or another non-exclusively heterosexual sexual identity)?

- Yes
- *No

13. Which of the following best describes your relationship to sexual minorities? (select all that apply)

- *I have a child who is as a sexual minority

I have a sibling who is a sexual minority.
I have a parent who is a sexual minority
I have a friend who is a sexual minority
I am dating someone who is a sexual minority
I have a coworker who is a sexual minority
I have a coworker who is a sexual minority
I do not know any sexual minorities personally
I am a sexual minority
Other relationship (please describe)

*indicates that selecting this response means the individual does not meet the criteria for participation in the current study. Individuals selecting any of these answers will be routed to the **Criterion Unmet Announcement** listed below. Where participants qualify for inclusion, they will be routed to the **Criteria Met Announcement/Questions** below.

Criterion Unmet Announcement:

Thank you for your interest in our study! While we wish we could interview everyone, you unfortunately don't qualify for our study. Still want to help our research on this community? Consider sharing our survey to other allies you know who live in Utah and are current and/or former members of the Church. You can also leave your email address **here** (links to a separate survey that is not connected to the information they have provided) to be notified of our results.

Criteria Met Announcement:

Thank you for your responses! Based on the information you provided, you may be a good candidate for our study. We will be conducting interviews over the next few months, and are hoping to gather a wide range of perspectives. Because of this, we may not be able to interview everyone who is interested in sharing their story.

If you are selected to participate, you will be sent an email with instructions about the next steps. If you participate in an interview, you will be sent a \$20 Visa Gift Card immediately following your online interview.

If you are interested in participating, please leave your contact information with us below! If you are not selected, we will inform you of this once our data collection has been completed. If you are interested in being informed of the results of our study, you can leave your email address **here** (links to a separate survey that is not connected to the information they have provided). We look forward to the opportunity to learn from you about your experiences!

Email: _____
Name: _____

Appendix D: Instructions for Participants

Hello [participants name],

I hope you're doing well!

Thank you so much for your interest in our research study and for completing the demographics survey. As stated in our study materials, the main goal of this study is to understand the process that heterosexual, current or former members of the LDS Church living in Utah go through that leads them to identify as an LGBTQ+/SSA ally.

Based on your responses to the online survey, you are eligible for participation in our study. As mentioned previously, your participation involves both **creating a timeline** of your allyship journey as well as **participating in an online interview** via Zoom, after which you will be compensated via a \$20 VISA gift card. I am now reaching out to schedule your interview. Please use the link below to sign up for a time slot that works best for your schedule.

Interview Scheduling Link: <https://ldsallies.youcanbook.me/>

If none of the listed days/time slots work for you, please reply to this email and I can offer additional availability. We expect the interview to take about 60 minutes; however, the time slots are listed for 90 minutes just in case we go over. Once you reserve a day/time using the link above, you should get a confirmation email via the youcanbook.me page. One week before your interview, you will receive a Zoom link for your interview, as well as a reminder to submit your timeline to the portal if you have not done so already. The instructions for your timeline are below. We ask that you submit your timeline **at least two days prior** to your interview. You will submit your timeline at the link below:

Timeline Submission Link: [Insert Personal Qualtrics Link here]

Timeline Instructions:

In preparation for your interview, we are asking that you use a piece of paper and a writing instrument to create a physical timeline of important events throughout your life that you believe influenced your journey toward becoming an ally for sexual minorities. Your timeline should start from your birth and go until the present day. To the best of your ability, please label each important event with as specific a date as possible. Feel free to include important details of each event on the timeline itself, and know that you will have an opportunity to talk in more detail about each event during your interview. This timeline will serve as a basic framework for your interview, and we will also ask other questions related to the process you went through in becoming an ally. For your convenience, you may print off the timeline template we have created, or create one of your own.

Once again, thank you so much for your interest and time! Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions regarding the study.

Warmly,

Adam

Appendix E: Timeline Portal Submission and Consent

Thank you for your help with our study!

In preparation for your interview, we are asking that you use a piece of paper and a writing instrument to create a physical timeline of important events throughout your life that you believe influenced your journey toward becoming an ally for sexual minorities. Your timeline should start from your birth and go until the present day. To the best of your ability, please label each important event with as specific a date as possible. Feel free to include important details of each event on the timeline itself, and know that you will have an opportunity to talk in more detail about each event during your interview. This timeline will serve as a basic framework for your interview, and we will also ask other questions related to the process you went through in becoming an ally. For your convenience, you may print off the timeline template we have created, or create one of your own.

Please upload a photo of your timeline here. Please make sure that the photo you upload is readable and clear.

[File Upload Button]

Please type your name so we can refer to your timeline during your interview:

CONSENT FOR USE IN PUBLICATION

For publication of these results, we would like to include copies of some of our participants timelines, though details that might specifically identify you will be removed (such as your name, demographic information, jobs/callings, specific locations, etc.). We also recognize that there may still be some risk of others identifying you despite these efforts. We are asking for your permission to use a copy of your timeline in our results. This is entirely voluntary, and your decision will in no way impact your participation or compensation for this study.

If you do give your permission, it is still possible we may not use a copy of your timeline in the final publication depending on space.

If you do **not** give us permission to publish your timeline, we will use your timeline in our analyses, but will not include a copy of your timeline in our publication.

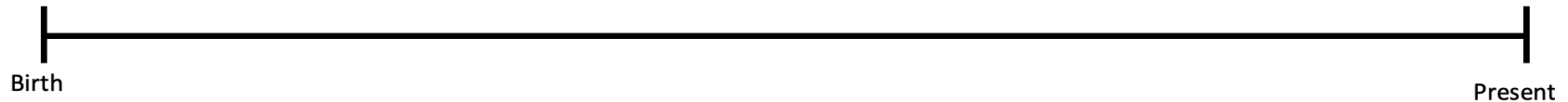
Please indicate whether you consent to us using a copy of your timeline in our published results.

- A. I give my permission for you to use a copy of my timeline in your publication.
- B. I do NOT give my permission for you to use a copy of my timeline in your publication.

Appendix F: Optional Allyship Timeline Template

Timeline of Allyship Journey

In preparation for your interview, we are asking that you use a piece of paper and a writing instrument to create a physical timeline of important events throughout your life that you believe influenced your journey toward becoming an ally for sexual minorities. Your timeline should start from your birth and go until the present day. To the best of your ability, please label each important event with as specific a date as possible. Feel free to include important details of each event on the timeline itself, and know that you will have an opportunity to talk in more detail about each event during your interview. This timeline will serve as a basic framework for your interview, and we will also ask other questions related to the process you went through in becoming an ally.



Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Procedure: Participants will be interviewed by the PI via a secure online Zoom platform. Following introductions and rapport building, the PI will revisit the informed consent document, answer any questions the participant may have, and obtain verbal consent. If consent for participation is reaffirmed, PI will verbally indicate the beginning of interview recording. If consent is not given, interviewer will be thanked for their time, and the Zoom meeting will be ended.

1. What does it mean to be an ally for sexual minorities in Utah?
 - a. How, if at all, might others in Utah know that you are an ally?
 - b. When, if at all, is it difficult for you to be an ally in Utah?
 - c. How would you describe someone who is not an ally in Utah?
2. Walking through the timeline you've created, tell me the story of how you became an ally as a member of the Church.
 - a. Tell me about your earliest memory learning about or interacting with sexual minorities? What was that like?
 - b. How did living in Utah impact your journey?
 - c. Tell me more about the major turning points you identified in your journey.
 - i. What do you remember feeling at that time?
 - d. Were there any other major influences that lead you to become an ally?
 - e. What challenges, if any, did you face in becoming an ally in Utah?
 - i. How, if at all, did you work through those challenges?
 - ii. What challenges, if any, do you still face?
 - iii. Why do you continue to be an ally despite these challenges?
 - iv. What resources or supports have you relied on in your journey?
 - v. How has your understanding of allyship changed over time?
3. How has your identity as an ally influenced your identity as a member of the Church?

4. How has your identity as a member of the Church influenced your identity as an ally?
5. How do you see other identities in your life (such as your race or gender) impacting how you approach or understand allyship?
6. Is there anything else you would like to say about your journey in becoming an ally in Utah?
7. We'd like to use a pseudonym so if we quote from you in any publications or presentations, we don't use your real name. What name would you like us to use?

Vita

Adam D.A. Maughan grew up in Avon, Utah, a small rural community in northern Utah. He graduated from Utah State University with a Bachelors of Science in English as well as a Bachelors of Science in Psychology in 2018. Prior to entering his PhD program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Adam engaged in advocacy work to build bridges between members of the LGBTQ+ community and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. His research interests include mental health and wellbeing among religious sexual minorities, and the process and outcomes of intergroup dialogue, and heterosexual ally development. He earned his Masters in Counseling Psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2020. After completing his doctoral internship at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Student Counseling Center, he plans to pursue licensure to work as a licensed psychologist at a University Counseling Center or private practice.