

Perceived climate in physical activity settings.

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Abstract:

This study focused on the perceived climate for LGBT youth and other minority groups in physical activity settings. A large sample of undergraduates and a selected sample including student teachers/interns and a campus Pride group completed a school climate survey and rated the climate in three physical activity settings (physical education, organized sport, exercise). Overall, school climate survey results paralleled the results with national samples revealing high levels of homophobic remarks and low levels of intervention. Physical activity climate ratings were mid-range, but multivariate analysis of variation test (MANOVA) revealed clear differences with all settings rated more inclusive for racial/ethnic minorities and most exclusive for gays/lesbians and people with disabilities. The results are in line with national surveys and research suggesting sexual orientation and physical characteristics are often the basis for harassment and exclusion in sport and physical activity. The current results also indicate that future physical activity professionals recognize exclusion, suggesting they could benefit from programs that move beyond awareness to skills and strategies for creating more inclusive programs.

Keyword: physical activity | perceived climate | sport | exercise | lesbian | gay | racial minorities | physical disabilities | homophobia | harassment

Article:

The current study is part of a larger project aimed at developing cultural competencies among physical activity professionals and providing safe, inclusive sport and physical activity programs for all participants. This descriptive study focuses on the climate in physical activity settings, often assumed to be particularly hostile environments for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) persons. Specifically, we examined the school climate for LGBT youth and the perceived climate for four selected minority groups (gays/lesbians, racial/ethnic minorities, older/nontraditional students, and people with physical disabilities) in three physical activity settings (school physical education (PE), exercise settings, and organized sport/athletics). We purposely cover a broad range of physical activity settings and argue that inclusive physical activity is both a public health and social justice issue; that is, physical activity is a key element in health and well being, and all people have a right to physical activity. As physical activity

professionals, physical education teachers, coaches and exercise instructors are responsible for ensuring that programs and opportunities are safe and welcoming for all participants. Researchers and faculty in professional preparation programs can direct efforts toward promoting inclusive physical activity and developing culturally competent professionals and programs to meet public health goals.

Reports such as Healthy People 2010 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2000) and the Surgeon General's Report (USDHHS, 1996) clearly highlight the role of physical activity in health promotion, yet those same reports indicate that physical inactivity is epidemic. Moreover, activity and inactivity levels are not equal, but clearly related to the social environment and culture. Physical activity declines with increasing age from childhood through older adult years. Research consistently documents that males are more active than females, and that race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status and environmental conditions influence physical activity throughout youth and adult life (Crespo, 2005; Pratt, Macera, & Blanton, 1999; Sallis, Zakarian, Hovell, & Hofstetter, 1996). No national surveys or research reports provide data on physical activity and sexual orientation. However, popular reports and some relevant scholarly work suggest that sport and physical education are particularly hostile environments for LGBT youth. Exclusion, whether on the basis of sexual orientation or anything else, puts people at risk and deprives them of optimal positive health. While physical inactivity may not seem as compelling a concern as risk for suicide or substance abuse, the long-term consequences for health and well being are substantial. Exclusion and hostile environments are a particular concern for youth as activity (or inactivity) patterns begin in childhood, and national data show that adolescence is a critical period with dramatic declines in physical activity.

Several reports document persistent inequities in organized sport. Lapchick (2006) has been monitoring gender and racial diversity in sport for several years, and the most recent Racial and Gender Report Card shows that White men dominate intercollegiate coaching, even of women's teams, and administration remains solidly White male as well. As documented with regular reports, over 90% of women's athletic teams were coached by women and had a woman athletic director when Title IX was adopted in 1972, but today less than one half of women's teams are coached by women, and very few have a woman director (Carpenter & Acosta, 2006). To our knowledge, no comparable reports or research studies provide data on the participation of LGBT people in sports. Apart from the very few professional athletes who have identified themselves as gay or lesbian (usually after ending their professional careers), LGBT athletes are invisible. We have little data or empirical evidence on the climate, perceptions and behaviors related to LGBT people, and little more for any other cultural minorities in sport and physical activity settings. Scholarship on LGBT and broader cultural diversity issues is limited within our academic area of sport and exercise psychology. Indeed, apart from the relevant work of a few sport studies scholars, there is little scholarship on LGBT issues within any area of exercise and sport science, and cultural studies scholars seldom address physical activity. Much of that limited scholarship on LGBT issues focuses on competitive sports and elite athletes, with some recent work on homophobia in physical education. Duda and Allison (1990) first identified the lack of research on race/ethnicity in sport and exercise psychology journals. In an update, Ram, Starek, and Johnson (2004) found that only 20% of the articles between 1987 and 2000 made reference to race/ethnicity and a barely noticeable 1.2% to sexual orientation. Moreover, there is little research on any physical activity settings other than intercollegiate athletics.

Given the lack of sport and exercise psychology research, we turn to research in psychology and education as well as the sport studies scholarship. Considerable psychological research confirms persistent sexual prejudice and hostile climates faced by lesbian and gay individuals in society (e.g., Herek, 2000; Rivers & D'Augelli, 2001). National surveys (e.g., Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) confirm a persistent, hostile school climate for LGBT youth. Although scholarly research seldom addresses physical activity settings, national reports from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute (Rankin, 2003), Human Rights Watch (2001), as well as observations and anecdotal evidence suggest organized sport is a particularly hostile environment. In the initial report of the ongoing American Psychological Association (APA) Healthy LGB Students Project, Ryan (2000) argued that LGB youth face added pressures due to their stigmatized identity. Ryan reviewed over 190 articles, but concluded that those articles provide little empirical data, and much information is outdated. Data are even more limited in relation to sports and physical activity. However, several sport studies scholars have addressed sexuality issues from critical perspectives.

These sport studies scholars convincingly argue that the socially constructed climate in sports and physical activity heightens heterosexism and homophobia, and this restricts the behaviors of participants and potential participants. They also note that gender, sexuality, and sport are complexly interconnected and have different meanings and implications for women and men. It is quite clear in our society, even without a critical cultural analysis, that sport for men is closely linked with masculinity and heterosexuality, but sport for women disrupts gender constructions. As Messner (1996, p. 225) noted, the equation is clear for men: athleticism = masculinity = heterosexuality. However, for women, the equation is more paradoxical: athleticism? femininity? heterosexuality? Messner (1992) describes sport as a powerful force that socializes boys and men into a restricted masculine identity, and argues that homophobia leads all boys and men (gay or straight) to conform to a narrow definition of masculinity. Messner (1992) also suggests that homophobia restricts men in sport even more than it restricts women. Men who deviate from the heterosexual norm within the homophobic athletic culture often face ridicule, harassment, or physical violence. Messner is one of the few scholars who have focused on men and homophobia in sport. More scholars who have addressed these issues have focused on women in sport. Griffin (1998) has written extensively on homophobia in sports and physical education, focusing on connections among sexism, heterosexism and sport, and documenting ongoing homophobic hostility. Lenskyj (2003) notes that despite feminist activism and gains in sports, the problem of homophobia has attracted little attention in academic or professional sport circles. As she states, "sport is still viewed as the route to (heterosexual) manhood, a formula that leaves sporting females in a sexual-identity limbo" (p. 146). Sykes (1998, 2004) is one of the most active scholars addressing sexuality in both sports and physical education settings. Her work typically takes a critical perspective and incorporates queer theory, providing insights into climate for LGBT people in physical activity settings.

Like Sykes (2004), Clarke (2006) and McCaughy Dillon, Jones, and Smigell (2005), who have written on sexuality and physical education, take a critical approach. These scholars all note the close connections between organized sports and physical education, and also suggest that the emphasis on the body and physicality heightens the gender-sexuality connections. Clark (2006) refers to sexuality as the "last taboo" in physical education, and notes that heterosexual identity

is privileged, regulated, and controlled. Clark also cites “the unique context and emphasis on the physical body as a prime site for the manifestation and institutionalization of heterosexism and homophobia in both teaching and content of physical education” (p. 733). McCaughtry et al., reviewing literature in education and sport studies, argue that “school physical education and sport programs persist as geographies in school life where heterosexism, homophobia, and heteronormativity prevail most vehemently” (p. 426). They further note that physical education teachers and coaches often play key roles in this oppression, whether or not they realize they are doing so.

As these scholars and others suggest, teachers and coaches can move from being part of the problem to being part of the solution. McCaughtry et al. (2005) specifically call for awareness, support of broader school initiatives, vigilance, socially sensitive images in teaching, and developing a critical consciousness about sexualities, school, and physical culture. To meet the call, our educational and training programs must help professionals and future professionals develop multicultural competencies. Education programs often include some content on multicultural issues, and Lipkin (2001) has forcefully argued that the failure to include homosexuality in such teacher education programs is inexcusable. At this point, however, pre-professional programs in exercise and sport science that prepare future physical education teachers, health and fitness instructors, and sports medicine professionals neglect multicultural education and have totally ignored LGBT issues.

Krane (2001; Krane & Barber, 2003) is the most active sport and exercise psychology scholar addressing issues of sexuality and heterosexism. Krane and colleagues draw connections among gender, sexism and heterosexism, and have applied social identity as a theoretical framework for their work (e.g., Krane & Barber, 2003). Barber and Krane (2005) have moved to action and advocacy, offering suggestions for considering gender and sexuality in sport psychology practice. As well as the limited scholarship, a few sport psychology professionals have addressed sexuality issues in professional practice. Anderson (2005), one of the few professionals who has consistently addressed gender and sexuality issues, included several relevant chapters in his book, *Sport Psychology in Practice*. Of most relevance here, Martens and Mobley (2005) discussed homophobia in sport psychology consulting with male athletes. Citing media and popular press reports, such as former football player Dave Kopay's (Kopay & Young, 2001) description of contempt for gay men, as well as their own observations in consulting with athletes, they describe the hostile environment for gay men in sport. Barber and Krane (2005), in a parallel article, discuss lesbianism as the “elephant in the locker room” of women's sport. That is, lesbianism is stereotypically associated with women athletes, but no one in the women's sport community acknowledges lesbian presence. Kauer (2006) interviewed both lesbian and heterosexual women athletes and found that all recognized the stereotypes of women athletes as masculine and lesbian. On a more positive note, Kauer also found that the women described team settings as accepting of lesbians. Notably, neither chapter could cite much empirical evidence from the research literature.

In one of the few empirical studies, Morrow and Gill (2003) reported that both physical education teachers and students witnessed high levels of homophobic and heterosexist behaviors in public schools, but teachers failed to confront those behaviors. Over 75% of the teachers said that they want safe, inclusive PE; but at the same time, over 50% reported that they never

confront homophobia. Subsequent research (Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey, & Schultz, 2006) examined attitudes toward racial/ethnic minorities, older adults, and persons with disabilities, as well as sexual minorities. Overall, attitudes of undergraduate students were generally positive, but markedly more negative for both gay men and lesbians than for other minority groups. The Gay, Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has been surveying LGBT students in secondary school on the school climate since 1999. The biannual reports consistently find high incidence of homophobic name-calling, harassment, and little intervention by teachers or staff. Specifically, the 2005 report (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) found that 75.4% of the students heard derogatory remarks frequently or often, 37.8% reported physical harassment because of sexual orientation in the last year, and only 16.5% reported that teachers intervened always or most of the time, with 40.5% reporting that teachers never intervene. That report also found that homophobic remarks and harassment were more prevalent in the south (our home region) than in other regions of the country. A similar survey was conducted by Safe Schools NC (Phoenix, et al., 2006) in six high schools in the triangle region using the 2003 GLSEN survey. Results were similar to the national survey with 64.2% frequently or often hearing homophobic remarks, and 47% reporting that teachers never or rarely intervened.

Both the GLSEN and Safe Schools NC surveys sampled LGBT youth, but a 2005 national survey on bullying (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005) sampled the full range of secondary school students with similar results. The results indicated that 65% of students reported harassment, with 33% reporting harassment related to sexual orientation, second only to body size/appearance (39%). Teachers were also surveyed. On a positive note, teachers strongly agreed that they have an obligation to ensure a safe environment, and most believed they did so. Unfortunately, students did not share those perceptions. These results suggest that all students recognize the hostile climate for LGBT youth in schools. These survey results and the Morrow and Gill (2003) study also suggest that teachers want to create safe space, but persistent homophobic remarks and harassment maintain the hostile climate. Sport studies scholars suggest that masculine stereotypes and homophobia create a particularly hostile climate in sports and physical education settings, and offer directions. However, neither research nor professional programs for physical education teachers, coaches and physical activity professionals have begun to address the issues.

This study begins to address some of our many questions by examining the perceived climate for LGBT youth and selected minority groups in physical activity settings. More specifically, undergraduate students were surveyed on their perceptions of the school climate for LGBT youth, and the physical activity climate for gays and lesbians, racial/ethnic minorities, older/nontraditional students and persons with disabilities in three settings—school physical education, exercise settings, and organized sports and athletics. All these groups have physical activity levels lower than the majority population, and the climate (inclusive or exclusive) may well be one source of the activity disparities. This study focuses on sexual minorities, specifically gay men and lesbians, while including racial/ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. We recognize that sexuality is more diverse and that issues faced by bisexual, transgender, and those with varying gender identities are relevant, but they are beyond the scope of this study. Although the sample does not overrepresent the minority groups, it does represent the participants and professionals who dominate and set the climate in physical activity settings. Our main sample includes similar numbers of males and females, about one third racial/ethnic

minority students, and about one third beginning level exercise and sport science majors. In our smaller second sample we purposely included a campus Pride group to add more LGBT participants, as well as upper level pre-professional students. This study on the perceived climate in physical activity settings provides information on the climate in physical activity settings and perceptions of future professionals. That information provides a base for ongoing research and professional programs, and may ultimately contribute to creating safe, inclusive environments that offer the benefits of physical activity for health and well being to all participants.

METHOD

The current study involves two phases with similar measures but distinct samples. In phase 1, we assessed school climate and climate in physical activity settings with a large sample of undergraduate students that included a significant number of beginning pre-professional students in exercise and sport science (ESS). In Phase 2, we used the same measures with upper level ESS students and a campus Pride group with predominantly LGBT students. Details on the sample are included in the results section.

Measures

The survey packet included a demographic information sheet with gender, age, race/ethnic identification, sexual orientation (Kinsey scale), and exercise and sport experience, as well as the school climate survey and the primary physical activity climate measure. The survey also included attitude measures used in another study (Gill, et al. 2006), but not reported here.

School climate survey

The National School Climate Survey (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) is a national survey of LGBT students in U.S. secondary schools that has been conducted every other year since 1999 by GLSEN. Information on GLSEN and the complete 2005 survey results are available on their Web site (<http://www.glsen.org/>). In this study we used items from the original 1999 survey, which asked students about their experiences with homophobic comments (how often they hear them, where, by whom; whether anyone intervened; whether they find comments offensive). Those same items are included in more recent surveys, along with several new items. In our survey, undergraduates were asked to think back to their high school experience in responding to the six questions from the GLSEN survey, with a final question: Do you think a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender student would have felt safe at your school?

Physical activity climate measure

Our primary physical activity climate measure was developed specifically for this study. Respondents rated the climate in three settings (school physical education, exercise settings, organized sport/athletics) for each of four minority groups (gays/lesbians, racial/ethnic minorities, older/nontraditional students, people with physical disabilities) on a 1–5 scale (1 = very inclusive/inviting, 2 = somewhat inclusive, 3 = neither inclusive nor exclusive, 4 = somewhat exclusive, 5 = very exclusive/hostile).

Procedures

In Phase 1, the principal investigator gave an overview of the study and distributed survey packets to students in all sections of a “Fitness for Life” course. That beginning level course is required of ESS majors but also attracts a wide range of students from across campus. Participation was voluntary, consent forms were collected separate from packets, and confidential surveys were returned in an envelope. All students contacted completed the surveys and only one packet was discarded because of incomplete/unusable data ($n = 150$).

In phase 2, the same surveys were administered to three selected groups: ESS student teachers ($n = 8$) who were student teaching in the public schools, ESS interns ($n = 14$) who were working in fitness and exercise programs and a campus Pride group ($n = 27$), which is a university group that promotes nondiscrimination and supports lesbian/gay/bisexual (LGB) students. Survey packets were administered at the beginning of a group meeting, and all present completed the surveys. After surveys had been collected in each group, the principal investigator gave a brief presentation, shared resources, and led discussion on LGBT issues in sport and physical activity.

RESULTS

The primary analyses included descriptive analyses of responses to the School Climate Survey and Physical Activity Climate measure, and also a Setting by Minority group (3×4) within-subjects multivariate comparison of physical activity climate ratings. That is, we compared climate ratings across the three activity settings and the four minority groups. For the larger Phase 1 sample, the primary multivariate analysis of variation (MANOVA) also included a between-subjects comparison by gender; we also did additional exploratory MANOVAs with a between-subjects comparison by race/ethnicity and by ESS-other major. For Phase 2, the primary MANOVA included a between-subjects comparison of the ESS (combining student teachers and interns) and Pride groups as well as Minority group \times Setting (4×3) within-subjects comparisons.

Sample Demographics

The Phase 1 sample included similar numbers of males ($n = 65$) and females ($n = 84$), with a mean age of 20.7 years. Students were distributed across the class years with 58 freshmen, 31 sophomores, 37 juniors and 22 seniors. Of the total, 41 were ESS majors and future professionals, and 96 were in other majors. Most were White/European ($n = 102$) with a significant number of African Americans ($n = 33$), and small numbers of Asian ($n = 2$), Hispanic ($n = 4$), Native American ($n = 1$) and other ($n = 7$) students.

Given our emphasis, we also assessed sexual orientation using the Kinsey scale, which asks respondents to use a 0-1-2-3-4-5-6 rating with 0 = exclusively heterosexual; 3 = equally heterosexual and homosexual, and 6 = exclusively homosexual. Almost all respondents ($n = 143$) circled the 0 (exclusively heterosexual), with 3 circling 1, 2, or 3 (toward heterosexual) and only 3 circling 4, 5, or 6 (toward homosexual). Interestingly, several respondents went out of the way to identify as exclusively heterosexual by circling the 0 multiple times or writing in comments such as “definitely” “absolutely heterosexual” to make sure their response was clear. As noted,

all surveys were returned in an envelope with no identifying information; no one added such emphasis for any other item on demographics or anywhere else on the survey.

The Phase 2 sample was slightly older ($M = 22.0$) than the Phase 1 sample, and both ESS groups were predominantly female with one male intern, while the Pride group included more females ($n = 17$) than males ($n = 10$). The sample was predominantly White/European with two African Americans in each of the Pride and Intern groups, one Asian American in the Student Teacher group, and two indicating “other” in Pride. Most ESS group members were predominantly heterosexual (scores 0–2) with 3 ESS students predominantly homosexual (scores 4–6). As anticipated, most Pride students ($n = 22$) were bisexual or homosexual and 5 were heterosexual.

School Climate Survey Results

As found in the national survey of LGBT students, and in a national sample of all secondary students on bullying, our sample reported high levels of homophobic remarks, and little intervention. Table 1 includes the primary results. On the first question, “I heard the words “faggot, dyke, queer, etc.” used at my school,” nearly half of the sample in both phases reported frequently and about 90% reported either frequently or sometimes. In response to who was speaking (question 2), the words were most often spoken by students (about 80–85%) rather than faculty/staff (none) or both (15–20%). On question 3 (where), most participants reported they were frequently or sometimes spoken in all five locations listed, with the highest incidence in “hallways” (83.9% frequently/sometimes combined—Phase 1; 92.3%—Phase 2), and lowest in classes (65.7%, 58.7%) with bath/locker rooms (72.2%, 55.3%), buses (73.9%, 60.5%) and fields/gym (our addition to the survey) (72.5%, 61.4%) in between.

TABLE 1 School Climate Survey Results

1 . I heard the words “faggot, dyke, queer, etc” used at my school

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
Phase 1 (n = 150)	45.3%	44.7%	10%
Phase 2 (n = 49)	49%	38.8%	12.2%

4 . When I heard the words used someone intervened

	Always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
Phase 1 (n = 150)	1.3%	4.7%	57.3%	36.7%
Phase 2 (n = 49)	6.4%	4.3%	36.2%	53.2%

6 . (ratings on 0–5, 0 = not offensive; 5 = extremely offensive)

a) I find hearing comments like “faggot, dyke, queer, etc.” to be offensive

	0–1	2–3	4–5	M	SD
Phase 1	36.7%	32.7%	30.7%	2.35	1.71
Phase 2	8.2%	22.4%	69.4%	3.67	1.45

b) People who are called “faggot, dyke, queer, etc.” find these comments offensive

	0–1	2–3	4–5	M	SD
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Phase 1	5.4%	16.8%	77.9%	4.15	1.20
Phase 2	0%	6.3%	93.7%	4.54	.68

c) I would be hurt if someone called me “faggot, dyke, queer, etc.”

	0–1	2–3	4–5	M	SD
Phase 1	30.2%	19.4%	50.3%	2.91	1.92
Phase 2	16.7%	27.1%	56.3%	3.40	1.72

7. Do you think a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender student would have felt safe at your school?

	No	Yes
Phase 1	46%	54%
Phase 2	61.2%	38.8%

Note. Results related to items 2, 3, and 5 reported in text. Frequencies for items 6a, 6b, and 6c are combined for 0 and 1, 2, and 3, and for 4 and 5 for readability.

While the incidence of derogatory remarks was high, the incidence of intervention (questions 4 and 5) was nearly the opposite. Fewer than 10% of the participants in both phases reported that someone always or most of the time intervened. In Phase 1, 36.7% reported never as did 51% in Phase 2. As for who intervened, faculty intervened more often than students, but the most common response was that both intervened. Our participants reported their own intervention rates slightly higher than “someone” intervened, but still 38.7% of Phase 1 and 24.5% of Phase 2 participants never intervened.

As well as reporting the frequencies, we also ran cross tabs by gender in Phase 1 and by group (ESS-Pride) in Phase 2. With the Phase 1 sample, responses were generally similar for men and women. However, men (40.6%) reported “frequently” hearing comments in bath/locker rooms more than did women (26.6%), $\chi^2(3) = 9.69, p < .05$. More men also tended to report hearing derogatory comments frequently in fields/gyms (39.1% men, 26.0% women), but the chi-square was nonsignificant. With the Phase 2 sample, similar trends were observed with men more likely to report hearing comments frequently in bathroom or locker rooms (63.6% men, 30.6% women) and fields/gym (54.5% men, 15.2% women), but chi-square values did not reach significance. Still, these trends are clear, consistent with the literature, and suggest that physical activity spaces (locker rooms, gyms) are particularly sites of homophobic harassment for male students. Interestingly, similar cross tabs comparing ESS and Pride groups in Phase 2 revealed almost identical responses with the exception that Pride group members (66.7%) were more likely than ESS groups (35.0%) to respond to question 4 by reporting that someone never intervened.

Item 6 asked whether a) I find hearing comments like “faggot, dyke, etc” offensive; b) people called ... find them offensive; and c) I would be hurt if called ... with all responses on a 0 (not offensive) to 5 (extremely offensive) scale. Mean values, as well as frequencies are reported in Table 1 as these ratings were on Likert-type scales. Phase 1 participants had mixed responses on their own responses with 10–30% at each extreme end for both a and c items, but recognized that people called names would find it offense with over one half marking 5. Phase 2 participants, the more senior ESS students and the Pride group, were less likely to rate the comments as not offensive. A MANOVA was used to compare women and men on responses to these three items

in both Phase 1 and 2, and ESS-Pride groups were compared in Phase 2. The multivariate gender difference was significant in Phase 1, $F(3,144) = 3.10, p < .05$, with males scoring lower (less offensive) on both a and c. No gender or ESS-Pride group differences were found in Phase 2, and the overall higher ratings for Phase 2 on items a and c are more notable than group differences.

On the final question, Phase 1 participants were about evenly divided on whether LGBT students would have felt safe at their school. Females were slightly more likely to say yes but the gender difference was nonsignificant. For Phase 2 participants, the majority (61.2%) said no, and Pride group members were more likely to say no than ESS groups, but the group difference was nonsignificant.

Physical Activity Climate MANOVA Results—Phase 1

MANOVA analyses used the GLM procedure of the SPSS program with a Minority group (gay/lesbian, racial/ethnic minority, older/nontraditional, disabilities) \times Setting (PE, exercise, sport) within-subjects design as well as between-subjects factor (Gender). The Phase 1 MANOVA on climate ratings revealed strong within-subjects effects for Minority group, $F(3, 140) = 57.67, p < .001, \eta = .55$, Activity Setting, $F(2, 141) = 11.05, p < .001, \eta = .14$, and a Minority Group \times Activity Setting interaction, $F(6, 137) = 10.31, p < .001, \eta = .31$. The Gender between-subjects effect was nonsignificant, and gender did not interact with any within-subjects effects. Also, a separate MANOVA was run with Race/Ethnicity (White/European vs. all racial/ethnic minorities) as the between-subjects factor and the same Setting \times Minority group within-subjects design. As with the primary MANOVA, the race/ethnicity between-subjects effect was nonsignificant and race/ethnicity did not interact with any within-subjects effects. Finally, another MANOVA was run with ESS-other major as a between-subjects factor. Again, neither the main effect for major nor any interactions were significant.

Table 2 includes the climate ratings for all settings and minority groups. Overall, the ratings were in the mid-range (near 3), but perceived climate varied across settings and minority groups. All settings were rated most inclusive for racial/ethnic minorities, and least inclusive/most exclusive for gays/lesbians and those with disabilities, with older students in between. Follow-up Helmert contrasts and simple contrasts indicated these differences across minority groups were statistically significant, except for ratings for gays/lesbians and people with disabilities, which did not differ from each other. The three settings all differed from each other, with exercise as most inclusive, organized sport as most exclusive, and PE in between. The interaction is due to the stronger differences among the four minority groups in the organized sport setting than in the exercise setting; that is, the difference between the most included group (racial/ethnic minorities) and the most excluded groups (gay/lesbian, disabilities) is greater in organized sport than in exercise settings.

TABLE 2 MANOVA Results for Physical Activity Climate Ratings

Minority Group	Setting			Total M (SE)
	PE M (SE)	Exercise M (SE)	Sport M (SE)	
Phase 1				
Gay/lesbian	2.97 (.09)	2.72 (.08)	3.15 (.09)	2.95 (.08)
Racial/ethnic	1.93 (.08)	2.09 (.08)	1.98 (.08)	2.00 (.08)

Older	2.60 (.08)	2.42 (.08)	2.75 (.09)	2.59 (.07)
Disabilities	2.88 (.10)	2.87 (.10)	3.24 (.10)	3.00 (.09)
Total	2.60 (.06)	2.52 (.06)	2.78 (.07)	2.64 (.06)
Phase 2				
Gay/lesbian	3.32 (.18)	2.61 (.16)	3.00 (.20)	2.98 (.15)
Racial/ethnic	2.07 (.17)	2.25 (.17)	1.95 (.16)	2.09 (.13)
Older	3.30 (.15)	2.80 (.16)	3.25 (.16)	3.11 (.12)
Disabilities	3.52 (.16)	3.16 (.17)	3.48 (.17)	3.39 (.15)
Total	3.05 (.12)	2.70 (.12)	2.92 (.12)	2.89 (.10)

Note. Climate ratings are on a 5-point scale (1 = very inclusive, 2 = somewhat inclusive; 3 = neither inclusive nor exclusive, 4 = somewhat exclusive, 5 = very exclusive).

Physical Activity Climate MANOVA Results—Phase 2

The Phase 2 MANOVA analyses used a similar Minority group (gay/lesbian, racial/ethnic minority, older/nontraditional, disabilities) \times Setting (PE, exercise, sport) within-subjects design with a between-subjects Group factor (ESS or Pride Group). The Phase 2 MANOVA on climate ratings again revealed strong within-subjects effects for Minority group, $F(3, 40) = 21.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta = .62$, Activity Setting, $F(2, 41) = 4.87$, $p = .013$, $\eta = .13$, and a Minority Group \times Activity Setting interaction, $F(6, 37) = 3.57$, $p < .01$, $\eta = .36$. The Group between-subjects effect was nonsignificant, but there was a significant Group \times Minority group interaction effect, $F(6, 37) = 4.87$, $p < .02$, $\eta = .22$. The lower part of Table 2 includes the climate ratings for all settings and minority groups. Again, racial/ethnic minorities are rated as most included in all settings, but persons with disabilities are more clearly rated as most excluded in all settings, and follow-up contrasts indicated ratings for those with disabilities differed from all other minority group ratings. Differences across settings were not as clear. Again, exercise was rated most inclusive, but PE was rated just as exclusive as organized sport in Phase 2. The interaction was similar to that of Phase 1, with differences across minority groups stronger in organized sport and PE, and less pronounced for exercise settings. The Group \times Minority group interaction revealed some variations on the within-subjects effects, although the general pattern was the same for both groups. The Pride group gave more extreme climate ratings by rating gay/lesbian, older and disabled groups as more excluded, but racial/ethnic minorities as more included, than did the ESS groups.

DISCUSSION

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METHOD

RESULTS

DISCUSSION

The current results indicate that these students and future professionals recognize the hostile climate for LGBT youth and exclusion of minority groups in physical activity settings. Our school climate results match those of larger national samples and confirm that all students recognize homophobic name-calling and harassment of LGBT youth. Our results also confirm the larger national sample results of low intervention suggesting that such harassment is tolerated. Although other research suggests that teachers express concern about bullying and intend to create safe space, our results are consistent with others in finding that students do not perceive safe spaces in schools.

Our physical activity climate results confirm that sexual minorities and people with physical disabilities are especially likely to be excluded from physical activity, especially in organized sport settings. Although these results are limited by our sample and methods, it is notable that even the participants of our main sample, which included almost no sexual minorities or persons with disabilities, recognized exclusion. Also, there were no differences between the racial/ethnic minority students and White/European students; indeed, all perceived climate ratings for both groups, including those for racial/ethnic minorities in all settings, were nearly identical. These results add empirical data to the sport studies scholarship, which suggests that heterosexism and homophobia are prevalent in sport. Our organized sport ratings are in line with that work. It is more surprising and disturbing that physical education, which is part of an educational system that should be a safe, inclusive environment, is perceived as just as hostile an environment for lesbians and gays. These results support the scholars (e.g., Clarke, 2006; McCaughy et al., 2005; Sykes, 2004) who argue that physical education carries the same heterosexist stereotypes and restrictions as sport.

Our results on exclusion of those with physical disabilities parallel the national bullying report (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005), which found that students were most likely to be harassed because of body size/appearance and sexual orientation. We asked about physical disabilities rather than body size/appearance, but both sets of results highlight the importance of physicality in physical activity settings. While our sample found the climate similarly hostile for gays/lesbians and those with disabilities, it is likely the basis for those ratings is different. Specifically, physical barriers are clear and obvious for those with physical disabilities, and respondents may well have been thinking of physical barriers in rating exclusive climates. Moreover, physical disabilities and strategies for including those with disabilities are addressed in professional programs. As noted earlier, several participants emphatically circled the exclusively heterosexual end of the Kinsey continuum. Apparently they wanted to make sure that we knew they were not at all homosexual (and many wrote in comments expressing that) despite the fact that all surveys were anonymous and returned in envelopes. No one added such emphasis to responses on physical disabilities, race and ethnicity, or anything else on the survey.

On the other hand, harassment on the basis of physicality, particularly physical size, appearance and skill, may well be prevalent in physical activity settings. Physical abilities and characteristics are prominent, and exclusion on the basis of physicality seems nearly universal in sports and exercise. Indeed, sport and physical activity settings are physically elite spaces, and those lacking physical skills or not fitting the physical body ideal may be especially targets of harassment in physical activity settings. We regret not including physical size/appearance on our climate measure. The bullying survey showed high levels of harassment, and we believe that a hostile climate on the basis of physical size/appearance is likely to be even more prevalent in physical activity settings. With increasing attention to obesity in our society, larger individuals face increasing stresses and overt hostility. For example, Puhl and Brownell (2001) documented clear and consistent stigmatization of obese individuals in employment, education and health care. Physical activity settings are likely to highlight body issues, and some research suggests that physical activity professionals are just as likely as others to hold negative stereotypes and biases. Greenleaf and Weiller (2005) found that physical education teachers held moderate anti-fat bias and strong personal weight control beliefs (obese individuals are responsible for their obesity). Similarly, Chambliss, Finley, and Blair (2004) found anti-fat bias among exercise science

students and as they concluded, such bias among professionals has important implications for health promotion.

As well as addressing perceptions and behaviors related to the climate on the basis of sexual orientation and physicality, it is important to consider intersections. Multicultural psychology, LGBT and gender scholarship all increasingly emphasize intersections and complexities of cultural identities and issues. Our results, while limited, are in line with intersections of gender and sexuality discussed in the sports studies literature. That is, homophobic harassment was more prevalent and more tolerated for males than females in both school and physical activity spaces. As several scholars emphasize, gender identity and sexual identity are linked, and may well be associated with physicality in sport and exercise settings. Sport and physical activity is associated with masculinity and heterosexuality, and boys and men who are not physically skilled or who do not appear to be athletic are often targets of homophobic harassment. Similarly, girls and women in sport or who are physically large, strong or appear athletic may be labeled as non-feminine and lesbian.

Within physical activity settings, intersections of physicality with sexual orientation and other cultural identities are compelling but largely uninvestigated topics. As the national bullying report indicated, LGBT students were more likely to be harassed for all reasons, not only for sexual orientation, and girls were more likely to be harassed for physical appearance/size than were boys. Both LGBT youth and youth who are not physically skilled or who do not have ideal physical appearance, particularly those who are overweight, are likely targets for harassment, and likely to be excluded in physical activity settings. Quite possibly expectations, stereotypes and the level of harassment differ by varying combinations of sexuality and physicality, as well as across racial/ethnic groups. Researchers and professional programs for physical activity professionals have not addressed physicality as a cultural issue, or explored the intersections.

Given that our Phase 1 sample included a large number of beginning level ESS majors and the Phase 2 sample included upper level ESS student teachers and interns, the results hold some promise for future professionals. Recognition and awareness is a first step toward multicultural competence, and it appears that the future physical activity professionals, particularly those advanced students who are beginning to work in professional settings, have some level of cultural awareness, and were just as likely as Pride participants to recognize harassment and hostile climates. Whether that awareness will translate into more inclusive practice is an open question. Our limited results, along with other research suggesting that teachers recognize the need for cultural competence is promising. To have an impact on the climate, multicultural education must move beyond awareness to the development of knowledge and skills. Sport and exercise psychology professionals could help move toward more inclusive physical activity for all by extending the limited research base, and by directly incorporating multicultural competencies in educational programs and professional practice. Sport and exercise psychology professionals are also in a good position to work with other physical activity professionals (e.g., coaches, exercise instructors, sports medicine professionals) to help them develop multicultural competencies.

Promising research directions include more direct investigation of perceptions, climate and behaviors in physical activity settings. Perceptions of LGBT youth and those who are overweight

or lacking physical skills, and the professionals who might work with them are especially relevant. Researchers can also work with teachers and other professionals on strategies and interventions. Teachers recognize harassment and strive to provide safe space, but apparently lack preparation and resources to do so. Other physical activity professionals may not even be at the awareness level of the teachers, as they are less likely to have any training in multicultural diversity or LGBT issues in particular. Professionals can also be social justice advocates in their settings. As the national survey results indicate, explicit policies help; when anti-harassment policies were in place and when policies explicitly included sexual orientation, less harassment was reported. Policies and practices can be incorporated into physical activity settings, and may be specifically adapted for the unique environment.

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