

The importance of Black sexual minority men, transgender women's ability to disclose sexuality to parents

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Black sexual minority men (BSMM) and transgender women (BTW) face racial and sexuality-based discrimination, and disproportionately

high depression compared to Black heterosexual men and Black cisgender women, respectively. Though previous studies have demonstrated the relationship between discrimination and depression among racial and sexual minorities, few studies explore the extent to which openness with parents impacts this relationship.

A new study by College of Public Health Assistant Professor Rodman Turpin found that sexual identity disclosure modified the relationship between discrimination and depression among Black sexual [minority](#) men and Black transgender women. Participants who were able to discuss their sexuality with their parents and had their support had lower levels of depression related to discrimination.

The findings are published in the journal *Family & Community Health*.

"This study highlights the importance of family support in helping Black queer individuals cope with the harmful effects of discrimination and can better inform our understanding of discrimination and health among Black sexual minority men and Black [transgender women](#)," said Turpin. "Our findings underscore the role that parents have in combating adverse mental health disparities facing BSMM/BTW compared with their heterosexual and cisgender peers."

To the researchers' knowledge, this is the first study demonstrating how the association between experiencing discrimination and [depression](#) is altered by disclosure of sexuality to parents.

Turpin notes that the protective nature of disclosing one's sexuality may depend on having supportive parents and possibly the timing of the disclosure. More research is needed on these topics.

This study was a secondary analysis of "Rationale, Design and Methods of the Ecological Study of Sexual Behaviors and HIV/STI Among

African American Men Who Have Sex With Men in the Southeastern US," known as the [MARI Study](#). Participants for the original study were recruited from Mississippi and Georgia. As this study only included participants from the Deep South, where stigmatizing beliefs and structural [discrimination](#) regarding sexual and [gender minorities](#) are especially prevalent, Turpin and his team acknowledge that additional research is needed before the findings can be applied to a broader geographical region.

Additional researchers include Derek T. Dangerfield II from George Washington University, Temitope Oke from the University of Buffalo, and DeMarc A. Hickson from Us Helping Us, People Into Living, Inc. Dangerfield and Oke are also affiliated with Us Helping Us, People Into Living, Inc.

More information: Rodman E. Turpin et al, Parental Sexuality Disclosure, Discrimination, and Depression Among Black Sexual Minority Men and Black Transgender Women, *Family & Community Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/FCH.0000000000000360](https://doi.org/10.1097/FCH.0000000000000360)

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