Investigating: The Citizen Science Program at the Urban Ecology Center

Timothy Allen, Jr.
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jill Birren, Educational Policy and Leadership

The overall goal of science education is scientific literacy. Though definitions of scientific literacy diverge among both educators and researchers, it is understood here as the ability of adults to make informed, value-based decisions about science-related issues in their everyday lives. This research is in response to current calls for science education reform that focus on the low achievement levels of learners in traditional classroom environments. As low achievement in science classrooms inevitably leads to scientifically illiterate adults, citizen science, as it occurs in non-formal learning environments, may address the issue as it can elucidate strategies for developing more meaningful and effective learning experiences. This research contends, and seeks to show, that the context of citizen science projects promotes the acquisition of scientific literacy. A qualitative ethnographic methodology was used in this research to conduct a case-study of the citizen science program at the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, WI. The study investigated the various projects that make up the program, primarily through daily/weekly observations of participants during the course of the project. The study primarily focused on the participants’ perceived, and researcher observed, benefits. Through observation of participants in workshops and projects, outcomes were informally assessed. Observed outcomes included increased interest in projects), learning about wildlife research practices (i.e., the scientific processes involved in conducting wildlife research, as well as the learning of science knowledge including awareness of local ecosystems, and learning about the particular animals and insects within them.

The Emotional Response to Historical Images of Victimization Based on In-group and Out-group Categorization

Jazzymne A. Anderson
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It is difficult to understand the circumstances that result in victimization and dehumanization. Research suggests one factor is when victims belong to a different ethnic/nationality group (out-group) than the perpetrator(s). A first step to understanding this phenomenon is to assess how individuals respond when viewing images of in-group and out-group victimization and dehumanization. Participants completed questionnaires that detailed demographics, nationality, ethnic identity, and ability to regulate emotions. The images depicted acts of lynchings, torture of Iraqi detainees, and a series of violent acts. The images of lynchings were selected from the book Without Sanctuary (Allen, Als, Lewis & Litwack, 2000). The images of the Iraqi detainees were selected from online sources of the Abu Ghraib incident in Iraq. The images that depicted a series of violent acts were selected from the International Affective Picture System (IAPS; Lang, Bradley, & Cuthbert, 1999). All images were counterbalanced across participants and randomized throughout the experiment. Each participant was shown a set of 5 pictures for 4 seconds each during each set of images. Each condition was 20 seconds long and was followed by a set of neutral images selected from the IAPS. Individuals’ emotional reactions towards the images were evaluated using a visual analog scale that was anchored by “not at all” and “extremely”. Participants moved a cursor along a 10 cm line to rate the intensity of several emotions at baseline and after viewing images using emotionally descriptive words (e.g. angry, disappointed, guilty, nauseous, and sad). To compare the emotional reactions of the participants after viewing photos to a baseline level, change scores were computed. Results and theoretical applications of this baseline study are discussed.

The Impact of Job Embeddedness on the Decision to Retire

Toby D. Baker
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With the influx of the entire Baby Boom population (those born between 1946 to 1964) entering the retirement age in the 21st century, researchers have honed in on the topic of retirement. A vast quantity of this research has focused on the variables that influence the decision-making process, typically involving financial readiness. This research extends those previous efforts by looking at the impact of embeddedness—the extent to which an individual is enmeshed within a system—on retirement. Embeddedness is measured on three distinct levels: fit, the degree to which the person feels their workplace is a good match for them; links, the lengthiness of the person’s connections or people within their network; and sacrifice, the degree to which the person values what will be sacrificed or lost in his or her separation from the company. More specifically, this research focuses on the two types of embeddedness: organizational (on-the-job embeddedness) and community (off-the-job embeddedness). Using the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) composed of 10,317 men and women who graduated from High school in 1957-1958, we searched its data for variables that appeared in the employee’s information during the latter stages of employment, but prior to retirement, in 1993 and compared them with the information of the respective individuals after retirement, in 2003. Preliminary findings support past research (e.g. Lee et al., 2004) in that they suggest that community embeddedness is a stronger predictor of retirement than organizational embeddedness.

Effects of Perceived Discrimination, Acculturative Stress and Coping on Depression in Latino College Students

Brett J. Christensen
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lucas Torres, Psychology

Past research has explained that perceived discrimination and acculturative stress are related to negative mental health outcomes for Latinos. However, the degree to which different factors contribute to psychological distress among Latino college students is an understudied area. The goal of this study was to examine the influence of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress upon depression scores in a sample of Latino college students (N=203). Not only is it important to examine the influence of these stressors upon depression, but also the type of coping that occurs in response to the stressors. Consistent with past literature, the first hypothesis was that perceived discrimination and acculturative stress will be negatively related to depression. Also, it was expected that indirect coping would be positively related to depression while direct coping would have a negative relationship with it. The last hypothesis explained that although all of these variables predict depression, perceived discrimination is the strongest predictor. The expected trend in this study was that as participants endured stressors in the form of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress, they responded with either direct or indirect forms of coping which revealed a cumulative effect on depression scores. The results were not consistent with the initial hypothesis as a multiple linear regression revealed that indirect coping, rather than perceived discrimination, explained the greatest proportion of variance in depression scores. However, the first and hypotheses were confirmed. These findings reiterate the necessity to research the factors that account for depressive symptoms specific to Latino students.
Maritza Contreras is a senior majoring in nursing and minoring in information technology. She is the recipient of many academic awards, including the Bill Gates Millennium Scholarship. Upon graduation, she plans on pursuing a doctoral degree in nursing as she plans to pursue her lifelong dream of teaching in a university setting.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify attitudes and beliefs of Hispanic women, ages 60 or older, that impact their adherence to treatment recommendations from U.S. healthcare providers. Despite having access to traditional health care, some Hispanics prefer to pursue alternative herbal and/or folkloric remedies or prayer as a source of healing. Choosing not to accept treatment recommendation from healthcare providers may impact their health and wellness, and contribute to noted health disparities within this population. Expectations were that the most prevalent attitude and belief affecting adherence amongst Hispanic women, 60 years or older, would be lack of U.S. Healthcare providers’ credibility. Using the Q-sort methodology, 25 participants were asked to arrange ten index cards, nine with written factors and one blank, using the rank-order scale from least to most applicable. I indicated “least applicable” and 9 “most applicable.” The identified attitudes and beliefs differed from what the the researcher initially expected. The results suggest that the most common factor or belief affecting adherence was that their faith in God, along with the U.S. healthcare providers’ prescribed medication, can heal the illness. When taking into consideration the importance and meaning that faith has in their lives, it would be beneficial to attempt including that in their plan of care. Assessment is the first, most critical stage in the healthcare process. U.S. healthcare providers should ask the women their preference of treatment to assure quality and adherence of treatment.

Comparing Scientific Student Achievement at Public and Charter Schools

Marlena A. Eanes
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Francesca Lopez, Educational Policy and Leadership

Standardized testing is the only consistent manner in which schools are held accountable for student achievement. Signed in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act requires testing in grades 3-8, and 10th grade every year to determine whether or not students are proficient in core subjects, which effects school funding. In the state of Wisconsin, schools are required to administer the Wisconsin Knowledge Concepts Examination annually, with students being tested in science in the 4th, 8th and 10th grades. All students in public schools must take these exams while private and charter schools have the option of administering the test.

Milwaukee has the oldest school choice program in the nation and is one of the strongest advocates for charter schools (Good & Branden, 2000). Recently there has been a push for more charter schools as another option for students aside from public and private schools. There is little research available about Milwaukee subject specific charter schools in comparison to public schools and there is very little research on the individual gains and how specialized curriculum assists in these gains. This study focused on comparing WKCE scores from science based charter schools to public schools. This paper addresses the following question: Does this science emphasis result in higher scientific achievement (in the form of standardized test scores) than public school students? Using the federal website “Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction” as the database for all of the test scores from 2007-2011, I analyzed science WKCE scores from 4 schools with a t-test to compare the schools against one another annually.

The Effects of Breastfeeding Peer Counselors on African American Women’s Infant Feeding Decisions

Jamarrah J. Foster
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Karen Robinson, Nursing

Purpose: Nationally, breastfeeding rates are on the rise; however, ethnic disparities still exist as African American women are less likely to breastfeed than any other ethnicities/races. Breastfeeding education and interventions are crucial to not only initiating breastfeeding, but sustaining it. Furthermore, research has shown that African American women are more likely to continue to breastfeed if they have received support and assistance from people who have knowledge or personal experience with breastfeeding. The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify how peer counseling impacts the initiation and duration of breastfeeding in African American mothers. Method: A convenience sample of 8-10 African American women, ages 18 and up, frequently attending the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinic in Southeast, Wisconsin will be recruited to participate in two split-up focus groups in which they will respond to a series of questions in relation to their experience with breastfeeding and with their peer counselors. Furthermore, the participants within this study will also be asked to fill out demographic profiles for additional data collection. The data that will be collected will each consist of the participants’ education level, income, marital status, parity and number of children, their involvement in the WIC program, their breastfeeding intentions, the age of the infant, and the duration of their breastfeeding. Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data collected. Results: Will be obtained once study is completed.

It’s a Woman’s World: Defining the Complexity of Amy Jacques Garvey

Cicely Bianca Hunter
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kristen Foster, History

This research project explores the way in which Amy Jacques Garvey, the second wife of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, influenced the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to uplift the Negro race in the early twentieth century. Amy Jacques Garvey functioned as the helpmate to her husband. During Garvey’s incarceration, she acted temporarily on his behalf. Unfortunately, she encountered conflicting interests by men who did not want her to represent the race because of her sex. Her strong role within the UNIA was questioned and considered abnormal in the early twentieth century, because of her versatility as a helpmate and a leader. Although her activism included both men and women, she emphasized that women should have the right to choose leadership roles if their qualifications meet the need of a position. Specifically, she created and edited a women’s column in the Negro World called “Our Women and What They Think.” Within this column, she and other Negro women expressed their concerns about various issues. Historians have labeled Amy Jacques Garvey a black feminist because of her views on male and female roles, but this project explores how her social, political, and cultural activism enabled her to effectively engage in momentous change as a pragmatic feminist. Her work reveals the significance of precision and time in relation to the needs of the Negro race. Through her pragmatic approach to black activism, she adds a unique voice to the complexity of early twentieth-century feminist discourse.
Not Our War: Anti-imperialist Discussions on the Spanish-American War Across the Racial Divide

Casimir E. Korducki
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Laura E. Matthew, History

The Spanish-American War of 1898 sparked a prolonged and complex debate on the issue of imperialism. Despite the array of opinions, contemporary analysis of the war’s opposition tends to consolidate the arguments of a small number of high-profile thinkers and organizations into a singular national perspective. This approach focuses on the debate within the mainstream press, thereby failing to acknowledge criticisms which fell outside the perspective of educated white men. In reality, there existed at least two parallel discussions on the philosophical and social implications of the war: the mainstream debate and the debate within the African-American community. The roots of these differences are traced to racial politics following the Civil War and white America’s brief flirtation with universal equality. When northern politicians abandoned racial equality for national political cohesion in the 1870s, African-American citizens were left with an ambiguous definition of what it meant to be both black and American. This alienation is reflected in anti-imperialism which came from the African-American community. This paper analyzes how the differences between these two sets of arguments reflect priorities and understandings which developed out of each community’s perception of race, power, and the country’s values after the failure of Reconstruction.

Competent In-Home Therapy: The Implications for Traditionally Marginalized Children and their Families

Cinthia Lopez
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kevin Tate, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Research related to the skill set necessary to effectively provide family based in-home mental health intervention therapy has been largely ignored by the research community (Cortes, 2004). Although there is research that reports clinician satisfaction in their training, expertise, and the ability to effectively use it to provide in-home services (Adams & Maynard, 2000), there is still a lack of research necessary to accurately understand the skills needed to conduct in-home counseling with young children and their families. As a result, the specific mental health needs of these children and their families are continually neglected. The purpose of the present study was to identify what skill set and qualities a competent in-home counselor must possess to effectively work with traditionally marginalized children ages 0-5 and their parents. The study was conducted using the qualitative approach of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Participants included 11 clinician staff members belonging to an early mental health intervention nonprofit behavior clinic for children ages 5 and younger located in a large Midwestern city. A transcribed group interview, counseling session observations, and a treatment manual were coded using an open coding technique. Six subsequent themes emerged from this data analysis: (1) conceptualization, (2) knowledge set, (3) flexibility in session, (4) applying the behavior clinic model, (5) basic counseling skills, (6) professional attitudes and behaviors. The themes suggest a complex array of competencies needed by counselors working in this context. Suggestions are also made in the discussion in regard to research, training, and practice.

Pilot Testing of a Revised Instrument Measuring Gastrointestinal Symptoms in Healthy Pregnant Women

Tamiah N. McCoy
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Leona VandeVusse and Dr. Lisa Hanson, Nursing

Although pregnancy is a healthy state, it is accompanied by normal discomforts including GI changes and symptoms. These changes and discomforts are related to pregnancy anatomy and physiology. Existing gastrointestinal tools are focused on pathology and its associated symptoms. The aim of this research was to explore whether the modified Severity of Dyspepsia (M-SODA-9) Nonpain Symptom Subscale can be used as a valid, reliable tool, as well as if it is able to better measure gastrointestinal symptoms found in healthy pregnant women. The original SODA scale, developed by Rabeneck, et al. (2000), focused on dyspepsia symptoms typical in illness. However, this tool lacked two common symptoms found in healthy pregnant women: diarrhea and constipation. Those two items were added to the scale to create a nine item modified M-SODA-9 instrument. In order to evaluate the test-retest reliability of the modified M-SODA-9, 45 pregnant participants were given both a pre-test and post-test of the M-SODA-9. After analyzing the data, student T-tests and Cronbach’s alpha scores will be done to demonstrate reliability. It is hoped that the M-SODA-9 can be a valid, reliable tool in future research projects involving gastrointestinal symptoms in healthy pregnant women.

Grin and Bear It: Black Women’s Perceptions of Depression Diagnosis and Treatment

Darielle Mitchell
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Marcia Williams, Sociology

There has been minimal research on the sociological factors that influence perceptions of depression and appropriate treatment among African Americans. The research that has been done is limited to experiences of discrimination from mental health workers e.g. racist stereotypes informing mental health diagnosis. Specifically, the research details how such discrimination has shaped the decisions of many African Americans to seek (non-clinical) methods of coping with depression. The research on African American women’s perspectives of mental health is particularly sparse. Thus, this qualitative study seeks to examine the social influences that shape how African American women define depression and how they believe one should respond to this medical condition. The sample consisted of 5 women ranging in ages 30-45 years who participated in voluntary in-depth interviews. The interview questions focused on the potential stressors caused by their day to day interactions, their coping strategies and ideas of how depression should be treated. Preliminary results suggest serious implications for African American women seeking psychiatric treatment should they show signs of clinical depression. Three main themes emerged from the collected data: (1) Trust vs. Mistrust and Isolation, (2) “The Strong Black Woman Complex”, (3) The Influences of Religiosity, Class and Education. This study is not generalizable to all African American women; however, it identifies some social influences that may be key to understanding how African American women perceive mental health and their ideas on how depression in particular, should be treated.
Numerical Structural Analysis of Marquette University's Engineering Hall

Natanael Ramos
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Christopher M. Foley, Civil Engineering

There are many pedagogical techniques used to enhance student learning who seeks in becoming structural engineers. Learning structural engineering principles is often done by following pre-written textbook examples and by completing numerous problems involving structural engineering principles. The immense benefit that Engineering Hall brings to the table is the hands-on experience with regard to being able to collect real data from the building and using structural analysis software to predict the behavior of the structure when subjected to lateral and gravity loads and correlate the predicted behavior with the measured response. Correlating the simulation with real time data from the actual strain gauges will facilitate the student being able to understand methods that cannot clearly be visualized when learning from the book or examples. The research project was composed of modeling the structural steel framework for Engineering Hall with a software package (SAP2000). Calculation for the loads applied to the analysis model was done using structural engineering codes and standards (IBC 2006 and ASCE 7-05). Of course, none of this would have been possible if no one thought of installing building instruments to conduct research on how a building behaves. The strain gauges were first used for tall building located in seismically active environments to monitor that no major damage to the structure occurs during ground motion events. The research effort also involved a synthesis of the process used to instrument Engineering Hall including location of strain gauges and their use as part of instructional activity in structural engineering analysis.

Sex Differences in the Neurological Adaptation to Resistance Training

Jason D. Raymond
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Alexander Ng, Exercise Physiology

Many studies have investigated the adaptations to resistance training and have discovered that the first six-to-nine weeks result primarily in improvements within the central nervous system with little change in the size of the muscle. In a recent twelve week study, researchers have found that women have a larger increase in relative strength (force exerted post-training/force exerted pre-training) and men have a greater increase in absolute strength (force exerted post-training – force exerted pre-training). This study provides insights to possible neurological differences in men and women, but because of its duration, changes in muscle size may have confounded results. To our knowledge, there are no studies that explore sex differences in the neurological response to a short bout of resistance training. We investigate this by using electrophysiological techniques such as EMG and electrical stimulation to measure indices of coactivation and the Central Activation Ratio. We also measure subjects’ Maximal Voluntary Contraction in both dominant and non-dominant leg to monitor strength improvements. These tests are a good indicator of central nervous system change in the absence of muscle growth. The purpose of our ongoing study is to investigate the differences in the neurological adaptations between men and women in response to two weeks of resistance training. We hope to provide insights for rehabilitation strategies for pathological conditions that have an unequal distribution of sex. Initial data suggests women have a larger neurological adaptation to the first two weeks of resistance training.

Gender Differences in Perceived Discrimination as a Predictor of Depressive Symptoms among Latinos

Alexandra K. Reveles
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lucas Torres, Psychology

Previous research has identified perceived discrimination as a predictor of depressive symptoms in Latinos, but gender differences within perceived discrimination and depressive symptoms have not been sufficiently examined. The present study examined gender differences in depressive symptoms and discrimination particularly when predicting depression among Latino men and women. Participants were recruited from a Latino community event in a moderately sized Midwestern city. Data for 469 participants were obtained through self-report surveys. Two hierarchical regressions were performed and the results indicate that years in school was the only variable that predicted depression in Latino men, but years in school, perceived discrimination in the workplace and in covert contexts were predictors of depressive symptoms in Latino women. These results suggest that difference in perceived discrimination do exist for men and women and that certain types of perceived discrimination predict depressive symptoms in Latinos, but not Latinos. Suggestions for future research are included.

‘Small Hinges Swing Big Doors’: Social Entrepreneurs and Waves of Grand Change

Virginia Sánchez
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeremy Fyke, Communication Studies

Very little research exists on social entrepreneurship in general. This study focuses on two levels of social entrepreneurship: the individual as a social entrepreneur and the organization as a means for social change. A shift from a Keynesian model to an adoption of a free-market, which required the privatization of many formerly government owned assets, led to an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. Due to this, organizations developed that were not well equipped to provide welfare for people who needed it. Data from the interviews of twelve young social entrepreneurs (ages 12-19) was analyzed using a grounded theory approach. These interviews provided insight about how young social entrepreneurs make sense of their roles as changemakers and the experiences that lead them to create ventures. The grounded theory analysis revealed four key themes: the social entrepreneurial mindset, metrics and difference making, collaboration and community, and experience and exposure. It is significantly relevant that the age at which these social entrepreneurs are becoming active is decreasing. Using personal experiences, young social entrepreneurs are building ventures that are more equipped to handle social change. These new social entrepreneurial organizations recognize how important the communities are to the success of an organization in the long run. As a result, a new understanding of the word “social” pointed to a new understanding of the topic of social entrepreneurship that includes not only social problems, but also emphasizes the importance of building a network.

Virginia Sánchez is a senior majoring in psychology. During her undergraduate career she participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Milwaukee program. Alexandra is a member of Psi Chi, the Midwestern Psychological Association, and the National Latina/o Psychological Association. After graduation in May 2013 she plans to pursue a doctoral degree in clinical psychology.
"Blackness as Property" to Agents of Contract: The Alternative Model  

Shoji Sanders  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kali Murray, Law School  

Free blacks in Antebellum America held an interesting social and legal status. There is a common misunderstanding of free blacks and their status because they were not slaves nor were they "legal aliens." They held a unique status in the "middle ground," that allowed them to enter into lifestyles similar to that of white citizens at the time. In this paper I will conduct a critical race analysis of the status of "free blacks" in Antebellum Maryland from the paradigm of Mitchell Crusto's "Blackness as Property." The status of "free black" offered people a distinct right to property and transactional knowledge that would lead to a more progressive lifestyle and legal personality. However, these rights could be infringed upon by whites; evidence of this is provided in two historical cases that serve as the center of my argument. These cases serve as the primary sources that involve free blacks and their right to exclude, transfer and use property to aid in the construction of an alternative point of view. Using this perspective as a basis, I have constructed "The Alternative Model." The Alternative Model acknowledges free black status and the method of manumission by deed in the acquisition of freedom as an alternative to the commonly studied process of manumission by will. The Alternative Model illustrates an alternative to the sexual economy that is often associated with manumission by will.

Synthesis of a Pentadentate Ligand for Modeling the Active Site of an Intradiol Catechol Dioxygenase  

Maurice Sharpe  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Adam Fiedler, Chemistry  

Over the past several decades, pollutants have played a significant role in how we conduct our daily lives. While many measures have been taken to reduce the amount of pollution discharged into nature, efforts are also being made to remove pollution that has already been released into the environment. *Pseudomonas putida,* a bacteria found in soil, has been discovered to survive by consuming benzene based pollutants. As a result, much effort has been placed into learning how this bacteria performs this task. Through much labor, not only has the enzyme responsible for this behavior – Catechol 1,2-dioxygenase – been found, but the active site of this enzyme has been discovered, characterized, and the catalytic behavior of the active site has been recorded. Now projects involving this enzyme involve investigating different ligand combinations. Through altering the ligands bonded to the iron complex, many hope to gain an understanding of not only how this enzyme works but how other enzymes work – along with creating a version of the iron complex that can be used in large scale pollution events. This project aims to report a new ligand, including synthesis and characterization, that further explores this topic.

The restorative justice process seeks to heighten the awareness of harm impact- ed upon members of the community and offers solutions for offenders to repair the harm. The restorative justice program in Milwaukee, called the Community Conferencing Program (CCP) aims to hold offenders more accountable than the traditional court procedures, offers an alternative to incarceration and contributes to the victim’s healing process… (Umbreit, M. S., Coates, R. B. & Vox, B., 2007). To serve the needs of vic- tims, the CCP bases its mediation around face-to-face dialogue with the victim, offend- ers and community members, to reach a sense of restoration from the crime commit- ted. This study focused on four distinct past victims who have been identified in suc- cessful conferencing circles. The participants in this study (1) described their cases, (2) expressed their needs as victims and (3) revealed their satisfaction with the CCP. This research explored the factors that make conferences successful, which can assure com- munities (esp. the criminal justice system) about the effect that the CCP has on some of its victims. Components of this research could influence the criminal justice system to modify its court case procedures to allow the victims to have more of a voice when the prosecution takes place.

Impacting the Closet Door: Factors that Influence Homosexuals Declaration of Sexual Orientation to Their Parental Figures or Guardians  

C. Alexander Weightman  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dawne Moon, Sociology  

With the public’s targeting of the bullying issue in schools, the increased aware- ness of suicide among homosexual youth and the acceptance of gay marriage and civil unions in an increasing number of states in the U.S., it would seem that we are experi- encing an important era of the gay rights movement. The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, a sexual orientation law and public policy think tank, estimates that 9 million (about 3.8%) Americans identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, a figure that resembles the population of New Jersey (Gates, 2012). Despite the large number of those who identify themselves as part of the LGBT community, the journey of “coming out” is not streamlined and takes strength with many facing extreme adver- sity in an effort to express their sexual identity. The purpose of this research is to exam- ine how factors such as race, cultural background and family life influence members of the LGBT community to disclose or not to disclose their sexual orientation to their par- ental figures. My research explores whether there is a relationship between affecting factors and individuals decision to come out to their parents, while also discovering that the process of coming out to one’s parents is grounded in factors such as parents finding out about an individuals sexual orientation before they come out and the parents’ his- tory with homosexuals. This research will familiarize individuals with the factors that play a key part in the coming out process, while also promoting change by shedding light on these factors and their effects.