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Is Transphobia Conditional? The Effects of Coming Out Before or After an Interaction

Senior Project Submitted to

The Division of Science, Math, and Computing of Bard College

by

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Abstract

Knowing when to come out is an important decision in the lives of transgender people, especially as doing so can put them at great risk of hate crimes or aggressions. Coming out, however, can also bring a feeling of freedom and foster a community more openly. A friend or child coming out is different than a stranger coming out to you, and this may change how you feel towards this person's queerness. A person you do not know is already in an out-group so you may be more likely to jump to negative conclusions about them. This is compounded if you are cisgender and they are transgender (or vice versa) and it is a further, perhaps more notable, out-group. This study explores when it is safe to come out by presenting participants with a vignette in which someone either comes out early in the vignette, late, or not at all to simulate someone coming out before or after you get to know them. Warmth and trust are then measured between transgender and cisgender participants. Results showed positive reception towards the character in the vignette who came out, and that transgender participants rated all characters higher than cisgender participants. It was also found that transgender participants, and cisgender participants with transgender friends, had higher explicit support of transgender people as a whole. This provides hopeful evidence that, while the world remains dangerous for transgender individuals, coming out is getting safer, and understanding its role is an important starting point for research.

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Introduction

Transgender people (trans people) are often afraid of coming out. Every year there are more murders of trans people, and more laws contesting their rights (Ronan, 2021). But there are benefits to coming out, such as more connection to community, less fear of being outed, and less shame overall (Legate & Weinstein, 2012). Queer and trans history is rich with connections to community, sprouting from when fewer individuals could safely be out, and had only each other to lean on. Today, it can be safer to be out as transgender, thanks to education and laws (such as non-discrimination laws), but unfortunately the number of murders of transgender people continues to rise. Tragically, these murders, due to transphobia and racism, are often committed against Black trans women, who have created much of the culture we benefit from today, whether queer culture or not (Hart & Roberson, 2021 provide an article explaining this in the context of ballroom culture).

For this reason, coming out is a gamble. You lose the safety net of being perceived as cisgender (identifying with the gender assigned at birth; not transgender) in exchange for the joy of living a fuller life. While it's a difficult choice, not everyone even has the choice to come out. They could be outed by someone else, their legal gender marker could differ from how they present, or their legal name could be different. While you cannot "tell" someone is trans or their gender by looking, sometimes people act based on what they assume someone is. This means that they may perceive someone as transgender before they come out, and treat them negatively based on this assumption, making it dangerous for transgender people, if they are assumed to be transgender, without having the agency to come out on their own terms. There are many ways to be trans, and everyone's experience is different, but for most, coming out is an action taken with great consideration of these factors.

Unfortunately, minority groups often have to protect themselves, rather than wait for the majority groups to change. This means that understanding when to come out, or how reactions to coming out may look, is valuable. Investigating these risks, in this study I explore if feelings of warmth and trust towards people change depending on if they come out before or after someone gets to know them, especially within trans and cisgender populations. Previous studies have shown that cisgender individuals have negative implicit biases towards trans individuals (Axt et al. 2021), which may be due to the idea of in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel, 1979). Simply put, you will feel more warmth towards those similar to you, and more negatively towards those different from you. I hypothesize that cisgender participants will think more warmly of someone they learn is trans after they get to know them than before. I further hypothesize that transgender participants will show more warmth towards someone who comes out as trans compared to someone who does not disclose this information. I expect to find no significant differences in how warmly transgender participants rate someone who comes out early or late.

Transgender Identity

Someone who is transgender doesn't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. They can be binary (identify as male or female) or non-binary, which holds a wide multitude of identities from neither male nor female, both male and female, a little male or female, a gender that fluctuates over time, or other gender identities entirely. It's an inclusive term, so anyone who isn't cisgender can use it to describe themselves (Human Rights Campaign. "*Understanding the transgender community*." (n.d.)). In contrast, cisgender (or cis) is the term for someone who always identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

The world we live in is cis-normative (much like hetero-normative), so the standard assumption is that everyone is cisgender until stated otherwise, which may create a hostile environment for those who are different from the norm (non-cisgender; transgender). Being transgender is a concealable stigmatized identity. These identities "can be hidden from others and that are socially devalued and negatively stereotyped" (Quinn & Earnshaw, 2013). Generally, it is more difficult to know someone is transgender when you first meet them than it would be to determine their race, for example. For transgender individuals, it may be easier to identify someone of their own group, but still it is a group that can "pass" fairly often - a contested term that means you may not seen as transgender until coming out, and can go without disclosing it; being assumed cisgender. Cis people may think of a "passing" trans person as cisgender, and as such a part of their in-group.

This means that exposure to transgender people is more muted, oftentimes they will have to come out to a person, or signal in some way that they are transgender, for it to be apparent. Research on exposure to transgender individuals has been mixed, showing that people who have personal exposure to sexual minorities have more positive attitudes towards transgender people, but only generally does exposure to transgender people indicate increased positivity, not all studies conclude this (as discussed in Axt et al. (2021) and Flores (2015)).

This may be due to the way in which transgender people are stereotyped in the media. These stereotypes promote the idea that transgender people are dangerous, confused, or imposters, while in truth transgender people are no more likely than cisgender people to be dangerous. The research I am conducting asks, for exploratory purposes, if participants know any transgender individuals, and through this we may see a glimpse of this effect on opinions towards transgender people.

Transgender people can come out at any point in their lives, from very young to very old. Children develop a concept of gender from a very young age (Boyle et al. (2003) suggest as young as 4 years old), although many people come out later in life. No matter what time they come out, they are a part of the transgender community, as well as the LGBT+ or queer community. Oueer is an umbrella term that is used in different ways to describe the LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community. I use it as an umbrella term for anyone identifying with one or more of these identities.) As of 2016, roughly 4% of the United States population identified as queer (Flores et al., 2016), with roughly 6% of millenials identifying as such. Roughly 1% of the United States population identifies as transgender, but more and more people are stating that they know someone transgender (as noted within Axt et al., 2021), implying a potential rise in this number since. Additionally, it is seen as dangerous to disclose identity (discussed about LGB individuals in Riggle et al., 2010), so there may be more transgender people than reported, as trans people may feel uncomfortable coming out. There are also higher reported rates of trans youth and adolescents (roughly 1.5% of the population) than trans adults (roughly .5%), which may be due to older stigmas waning, but also adds to the prevalence of exploring this area of study, as coming out impacts an increasingly large number of people (Herman et al., 2022). Further understanding the process of coming out could be valuable for a safer society, such as understanding when to come out, and why people may react as they do to someone coming out.

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Due to the minority stress model, which posits that minority groups (centering around gay, lesbian, and bisexual (LGB) individuals but generalized to others) are under more stress for being a minority due to societal and outside stressors (such as homophobia), transgender individuals are, on average, under more stress than their cisgender counterparts (Meyer, 2003, Bowling et al., 2020). Living in a society that is built without you in mind, in this case a cis-normative society, is challenging. This can be seen anywhere from not being able to use the bathroom (Seelman, 2014) or not being able to walk down the street for fear of being attacked. It's a fear that comes out in everyday life. The hidden and discriminated nature of living as a transgender person has lead to higher stigma, with lower levels of mental health and healthcare available (Bowling et al., 2020). As Bowling et al. (2020) notes, transgender people reported higher levels of stigma experienced, and higher adverse mental and physical health effects than cisgender individuals. Suicide, anxiety, depression, and substance abuse are all markedly higher in transgender than cisgender populations. Transgender people are also more likely to experience physical and sexual violence, with mental health issues, including depression and suicidal ideation, related to these exposures (Testa et al., 2012). The pressure to stay hidden, or the dangers of coming out, are alienating and create harm and internal turmoil. Like many minority groups, transgender people form their own communities in order to feel seen and lower levels of loneliness, as being out around cisgender individuals can often prove intimidating and dangerous.

Non-cisgender people have been around for a long time, for example, many North American indigenous cultures accepting more than just two genders (Rainbow Resource Centre, 2014). For example, Two-Spirit is a generalized term for indigenous individuals in North American tribes to describe someone who was not the gender assigned at birth, and often had aspects of male and female identities. Different nations hold different beliefs and names for two-spirit individuals, but the Indian Health Service (ihs.gov, n.d.) describes it as such: "Traditionally, Native American two-spirit people were... individuals who combined activities of both men and women with traits unique to their status as two-spirit people. In most tribes, they were considered neither men nor women; they occupied a distinct, alternative gender status... Although there were important variations in two-spirit roles across North America, they shared some common traits." Some of these included roles as spiritual and ceremonial leaders, and luck in love, including non-heterosexual love. Those who are two-spirit are often valuable members of the community, in contrast to the attitudes of colonial American society, and it goes to show that non-cis individuals have existed for a long time, and this is only one example of many worldwide.

Research in transgender individuals is a complicated subject, because it's often a goal to understand why someone is transgender (such as Smith et al. (2015)), and while there are many examples from old to new, they are not helpful to transgender individuals themselves and should not be given more attention. There are countless articles looking into the brains of transgender individuals, particularly trans women unfortunately, to see if their chemistry is more like cis men or cis women's. This isn't important since transgender people have been around and thriving for as long as cisgender people, and it assumes cisgender to be the standard and normal, and that there is something strange to be observed in transgender people. Caselles (2021) explains the issue well: "The idea of the existence of neurological traits specific to trans people, is a culturally powerful narrative that has the potential to impact social perceptions, as well as legislative and medical regulations of trans people." It's a divide often created to deny transgender people their rights and public health care. Understanding thought processes are more helpful towards ensuring safety for minority groups than understanding why they exist in the first place.

Coming Out

Hendricks & Testa (2012) highlight the importance coming out, both for transgender individuals coming out and for those being come out to, as it increases visibility. This increased visibility coincides with more attention towards transgender people and the need for them to be seen and integrated into society, which allows, in turn, for more people to feel comfortable coming out. For this reason, coming out has both the positive repercussion of being out and enacting social change, while holding the dangers of being visible, in a cis-normative society.

A common coming out experience is children to their parents, guardians, and loved ones. Armesto and Weisman (2001) discuss that it can lead to great shame to divert from the "norm." Their article discusses the phenomenon of parents of gay and lesbian people feeling shame and responsibility for the "coming out" of their children, but, likely, this can be generalised to transgender people as well. They are different identities, and someone may be gay and transgender and come out more than once, but the idea of coming out remains daunting.

Attribution Theory states that people feel less empathy and more anger when they feel a negative outcome is the fault of the victim rather than out of their control (Weiner, 1980). A child coming out, for example, is seen by many as a choice they have made, that they have chosen to be queer in some way, i.e. the fault of the victim. This may expand to show that when queerness is seen as a choice, there is less empathy, and less fault on the parents who have raised this child who decided to live life in this less than favorable way (Armesto & Weisman, 2004). For parents,

it may be seen as a personal failure if their child is queer, as this goes against the norms of society, and may create a hostile view.

There has been a rise in reports of people knowing a transgender person (Halloran, 2015), going to show that 35% of voters know a trans person, but discrimination continues at rapid rates. Knowing a transgender person proves to have mixed results, between family and acquaintances. There are a complexity of emotions towards someone coming out, for parents or other people, as well. "Feeling 'sorrow' towards a gay child could be elicited by parents' attributions about homosexuality as a less-than-desirable 'lifestyle,' or because they identify with the child's struggle in coming to terms with a socially stigmatized identity. In the first instance, sorrow might be more negative in valence because it reflects parents' negative judgements about having a homosexual child. In the second situation, sorrow might be more positive in valence as it reflects a level of compassion or appreciation for the child's struggle" (Armesto and Weisman, 2001). There may be compassion, or there may be resentment, and they can come from many facets, including upbringing of the person, understanding and education on the topic, and general social beliefs. In the present study, I have included multiple questions regarding different areas of warmth or trust towards a person in hopes to better understand where exactly a person may spout potential negative feelings from, whether it is feelings of fear or more general out-group resentment. It asks, is there a difference between how someone close to them is treated (such as a child coming out to a parent) versus someone they know less well?

While the study I have conducted does not focus on parental relationships, it does relate to getting to know someone who is transgender. This includes a variety of people, and stems in parents, often upon the first people transgender children will come out to. Knowing how even those a transgender individual don't know as well will react can be valuable in order to they can judge how and when to come out to be safe and understood as much as possible.

There are also vast benefits to coming out, which speaks to why people come out in the first place. Being "in the closet" (not being out as queer) is stressful, as many feel they are hiding a part of themselves, and unable to express pride in their identity.

In-Group Favoritism and Out-Group Hostility

In a world in which we are greatly separated by social differences, social identity is important. Social identity can range from gender, to race, to culture, and more, and biases towards and against groups are compounded by societal stereotypes and ideas. For example, transgender people are discriminated against more for societal reasons than ones backed by science - they are no more dangerous for being transgender than cisgender people are, since the only difference is a gender identity (an example being bathroom and housing discrimination as seen in Seelman (2014) study). This doesn't speak to a more antagonistic personality. Regardless, we create groups of people, often of "us" and "them", or in-groups and out-groups. Groups can range from soccer teams to gender identity, and cisgender and transgender are a definitive part of this separation.

Tajfel (1979) (summarized by McCleod, 2019) speculated that these social sortings were due to our intrinsic desire to group, and basing them on stereotypes (like schemas) was a shortcut to do so. This is called Social Identity Theory, and it also posits that people will create negative visions of an out-group, in order to boost the image of their own in-group. There's a safety in familiarity and in others who think like you, so the desire to group is understandable. Tajfel suggested that we use these groups to emphasize differences in out-groups, and similarities in in-groups, creating an even tighter in-group. As evidence for the influence of social identity, much of society has been built with the dehumanization of outgroups in mind, such as negative stereotypes about trans women being dangerous men, just dressed up (gender "deviance" being demonized as seen in popular culture as the villain of "Silence of the Lambs" (Demme, 1991), among other examples), in order to save their in-groups.

Often prevalent are majority groups villainizing minority groups, when the danger is the other way around. Minority threat theory, as proposed by Blalock (1967), suggests that the larger the perceived out-group, the larger threat the in-group feels, particularly when the in-group is a majority in fear of losing their privilege and power. This can lead to ideas and actions of violence against an out-group. It is a contested theory (see Zane, 2017) and one based on race and not gender, but the groundwork holds that often majority groups will feel threatened and will lash out either physically or in verbage, and that minority groups pose a perceived threat to majority groups. This can make becoming visible by choice, or coming out, much scarier when you understand what may be on the line.

Stereotypes are a way of separating "us," the privileged, from "them," those who could threaten this. Placing someone in an out-group can dehumanize them. Leyens et al. (2000) suggested that in-groups are more associated with intelligence, language, and certain emotions, and that out-groups are more often associated with animalistic features (Buckels & Trapnell, 2013). Members of your own in-group, then, will be viewed more positively. In this case, it may lead to in-group preference and humanization, such as cisgender participants seeing someone who doesn't come out (and they perceive as cisgender) more positively, and someone transgender seeing someone who comes out as transgender more positively. Coming out both alienates and unites people, so weighing these options, of when and who to come out to, become a part of the equation.

Crawley (2009) discusses the depths of coming out as lesbian to her students, and when to do so, even though she is quite "visibly" queer. She explains that often when people are trying to "figure her out" (if she's gay or not), they're looking for pieces that confirm their own suspicions, that this will be the only acceptable queerness. Coming out has many layers, and being placed into boxes of queer or not both have their obstacles. Crawley explains having tested coming out as transgender to her class by showing them pictures of her in a dress versus her in a suit, and found her students continuing to attempt to put her in a box she did not want to be in. She was different than they expected and what they were used to, so they spent time and energy trying to place her - with the idea that she owes them a boxed in identity. This is the rigid thought structure at play, and is part of why it may be taxing to come out. Reactions come in many layers, and many of them are tiring to the person coming out, even if not dangerous. Good reactions of course exist, but it is still a newer concept to the public eye, so some explanation may be unfairly demanded of the individual coming out.

In this case, being transgender would complicate the beliefs of many cisgender individuals raised to believe that "normal" is cisgender, that gender is binary and simple. Transgender people complicate this by existing, unfortunately, since most only wish to exist not to be controversial, but the second they are seen as an out-group, hostility may follow. Everyone follows in- and out- groups to varying degrees and in varying ways, no two people will show it the same way or even intentionally, but it is likely, especially with internalized transphobia and similar ideas, that most people experience this in some form. In-group favoritism also means that transgender individuals will often feel more comfortable around other transgender individuals, as they can bond together in the face of common fears and experiences, creating community and comfort.

Community Importance

Bowling et al. (2020) looks into participation in the transgender community, and the perceived effects of this on health. They ran a correlational study using surveys and semi-structured interviews in order to get the most rounded responses, and a deeper understanding. It was a mixed methods study, and in the qualitative section where they received comments and quotes from participants, it was clear that, for many, community is important. That the community is available if they need advice, resources, or if they just want to exist with no questions asked. This is the importance of a community who understands your identity - most people outside this identity have been taught that they are the norm and everything else is "other" (an "other" or out-group may be a dehumanizing factor, especially for minority groups (Bain et al., 2009)). They described that, while this community support was not necessary, it was helpful to see other people who looked like them, and understood them, and described feelings of safety in these groups. This is the bright side of coming out, the freedom to be out and the sense of community it comes with. To be with those of a similar identity is comforting in a cis-normative world, so, for many, it is important to come out and find their community.

Bowling et al. (2020) writes about community, specifically that many trans people who feel in touch with their community feel less lonely, and have better mental health. These findings may suggest that trans people feel an affinity towards other trans people, with the connections toward better mental health, and that they could find someone as warmer when they are in the

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same community. This could imply that trans people feel warmer towards someone if they learn early on, rather than later, that they are trans.

This comfort and safety may lead to transgender participants feeling more warmly towards the characters in the vignette who come out, more than the character who does not specify this identity. It is an in-group and suggests a deeper connection between transgender individuals. In my research, roughly half the participants were transgender, with the hypothesis that transgender people would like someone else who is transgender more than someone cisgender, regardless of when they come out.

Implicit Associations

"Implicit biases are discriminatory biases based on implicit attitudes or implicit stereotypes. Implicit biases are especially intriguing, and also especially problematic, because they can produce behavior that diverges from a person's avowed or endorsed beliefs or principles." (Greenwald and Krieger, 2006)

Axt et al. (2021) is a study looking into implicit (or unconscious) biases in individuals towards transgender and cisgender people. While many minority groups hold internalized implicit biases against their in-group (due to society feeding them negative stereotypes), Axt et al. found that transgender people actually have slight implicit preferences for other trans people.

The threat of the majority group means that their actions matter in minority safety, in this case meaning cisgender opinions still matter for transgender safety. The link between implicit biases and external actions isn't always clear, and it's unlikely that all external and internal biases line up, but Axt et al. (2021) did find that participants with higher cisgender preference than transgender had higher rates of transphobia. Axt et al. (2021) also found a robust

anti-transgender bias amongst cisgender participants which shows certain anti-transgender internalized bias, regardless of explicit feelings. The present study touches on this divide by considering the vignette as a more implicit measure, while following up with questions touching on explicit feelings towards trans people.

Prejudices and biases are not always a piece of a person they are aware of, they may have internalized actions and thoughts that make them act in a way out of line with their explicit beliefs. This is like the idea of intent versus impact, stating that just because you didn't mean to harm someone, it doesn't mean they aren't harmed, and you are still responsible for your actions.

"Biases can be either favorable or unfavorable. Ingroup bias designates favoritism toward groups to which one belongs. There is a widespread intuition that it is often acceptable to be biased in favor of at least some of the groups to which one belongs. In this view, bias is a problem only when it is directed against some group. Thus it may be considered acceptable to be biased in favor of one's siblings, children, schoolmates, and friends." Here, Greenwald and Krieger (2006) accidentally pose a bit of a paradox - what if someone is both in the out-group and close to you?

In an extreme example of closeness, straight, cisgender parents may treat the queerness of their child differently than the queerness of a friend, or a stranger on the street. A parent learning their child is transgender will have a different reaction than if they learned a stranger was (Abreu et al. 2019). There is a feeling of grief, discussed in Broad (2011), when a child comes out. Parents feel as though they've lost someone close to them, and this feeling will be different when it's a different relationship between the two people. This counters the idea that you are more likely to accept someone you know better, and may show variance in this lay theory. In this sense, they are an in-group in relation to you, but an out-group otherwise. Schemas and

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stereotypes generally activate for those you are first meeting or seeing, they are for split-second judgements, so those judgements on someone you already know may be skewed, if these stereotypes come in when someone comes out.

The effects of knowing a trans person, closeness to a trans person in your own life, is another question. Barbir et al. (2017) finds that, for cisgender heterosexual individuals, having at least one transgender friend significantly decreased the rates of anti-transgender prejudice. This shows that some closeness to a transgender person can broaden your worldview on the topic. Friends are likely different from strangers, as well, since you are closer to them, but the divide between friends, family, and strangers is yet to be studied in the transgender population, to my knowledge. Fortunately, there has recently been an in influx of research on transgender individuals, so more may be available soon.

Present Study

In psychological research, there is not much available about the well-being and general lives of transgender people. Instead, much research opts to debate about why people are transgender in the first place. This is a gap that needs to be filled. More transgender people deserve to be seen and understood by studies, instead of investigated, and to have more studies to aid in their well-being in a difficult world. Social psychology can observe interactions between different groups of people, such as transgender versus cisgender in terms of out-groups, and transgender versus transgender in terms of in-groups, which is a unique lens. A piece of the present study is understanding how quickly out-group and in-group biases form, if they can form so soon as a small vignette, and seeing how quickly an out-group becomes a threat.

The present study asks if the effect of how one feels towards someone coming out to them is impacted by how well they know them. It's based on the general idea that a friend, family member, or stranger coming out to someone might receive a different level of warmth in reaction. There's the complication of being both in an in-group when you're close to someone, such as a friend or family member, but the out-group of being different identities. Additionally, family members and friends feel like they know a person, so for them to come out as something different than expected may throw off their perception and reaction.

Participants read different vignettes in which the character came out early, late, or not at all, emulating getting to know someone before they come out, getting to know someone after they come out, or them not coming out at all (as a control group). I predicted that cisgender participants would feel warmer towards a character who does not come out as transgender than ones that do come out, and that they would feel warmer towards the character if they come out later in the passage, so they would get to know them better first. I predicted that cisgender participants would feel least warm towards a character who comes out early in the passage as they would immediately be placed in an identified out-group (transgender). In order to observe within-group biases and phenomena, half the participants recruited were transgender. Axt et al. (2021) suggest that transgender people, unlike some other minorities such as religious and racial minorities, actually have positive implicit associations towards their own community, which provides further support for the hypothesis that transgender people would feel more warmly towards the transgender character than that who does not come out.

Methods

Participants

100 United States residents were recruited online through the Prolific[™] online participant recruitment platform. One person was excluded from the analyses due to failing the attention check. Data from 99 participants was used. Participants were paid \$1 for a \$12/hr rate, and the study averaged 5 minutes to complete.

Data used was split by Prolific[™] screeners which had 49 transgender and 50 cisgender participants. There were 76 white participants, 6 East Asian, 5 Black or African American, 2 South Asian, 2 Asian (other), 2 Native American or Alaskan Native, 1 Native Hawaiian, and 5 participants who selected "Other".

Participants ranged from 20 to 70-79 years old. 57 participants were in the 20-29 years old range, with 21 being 30-39, and fewer older participants until just 1 participant reported being 70-79 years of age.

Design and Stimuli

The study design was a short vignette of a character introducing themselves followed by questions about warmth towards the character in the vignette. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three potential groups in this between-subjects design. The vignettes were identical except for one sentence: one vignette had the character coming out as transgender early on (second sentence), the second had the character coming out late (final sentence), and in the third the character did not come out at all (all vignettes can be found in *Appendix C*). This is meant to emulate, on a small scale, someone coming out before you get to know them, after you get to know them, or not at all. The vignette was adapted from <u>excellentesl4u.com</u> (with consent

from the creator (*Appendix D*)), a website teaching English as a second language and thus providing short introductory passages to fictional characters. The vignette was scored with a questionnaire on warmth and trust.

The vignette was pilot tested for floor or ceiling effects in participant opinions about the character (in which case the character would be greatly disliked or greatly liked with no room to see change between groups). In the pilot, participants were given the vignette in which the character did not come out. The pilot data showed that the vignette was fairly neutral, with no particular political affiliations or strong opinions, and that this character was received neutrally to moderately well. The short pilot test consisted of roughly 20 responses, convenience sampled. They received an average of 3-4 in likeability on a scale of 1-5, with the questions similar to those participants were asked on the final study (such as "I like this person" and "I would trust this person to help me"). Additionally, testing for an extraneous variable (where the character was from between an American (local) and British (foreign) example), did not make a significant difference, so the character in the final vignette was American.

Questions were rating warmth and trust of this character, and were adapted from the Reyson Likeability Scale (Reysen, 2005), along with some of my own questions, targeting more specific stereotypical transphobic ideas, such as a cisgender individual not feeling safe around a transgender individual with the question "I would trust this person not to harm me." It is a common and harmful misconception that transgender women are out to harm cisgender women, and are therefore a threat. Slipping in coded questions such as this will help in exploratory analyses. Further questions include "I like this person" and reverse-coded questions such as "I would not be friends with this person" in hopes of stopping automatic responses from participants. There were 8 questions total, all ranked on a 5 point likert scale ranging from

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strongly disagree to *strongly agree*, with 3 being neither agree nor disagree. One attention check was also included between questions, stating simply "If you are reading this, select 'somewhat agree." Participants who failed this attention check were excluded from the analysis.

After completing this portion, participants were directed to questions targeting explicit opinions on transgender individuals and rights. They answered 4 questions, with answers ranging as above from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, and questions such as "I support transgender people", and "Transgender people are misguided" (reverse coded) (*Appendix E*). This was used in correlational comparison to the questions before it to compare mostly implicit and fully explicit opinions. The final question before the debrief, asked if the participants knew any transgender people, with multiple choice answers ranging from "Yes, myself" or a family or friend, to no, or "No, but I've seen one on TV/in books," and an optional fill in the blank field, if desired. This was used for exploratory analyses.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through ProlificTM, and sent to QualtricsTM, where the experiment was conducted. The study was created in two parts to ensure a screener, and create a divide of transgender and cisgender participants. One study sent out through ProlificTM just asked that participants identified as male or female, to exclude non-binary people, but transgender people participating in this one is also entirely possible. The second study screened for transgender or non-binary as a requirement to take the study. Participants were provided with a consent form (*Appendix B*), and then directed to demographics. Demographics included race, age, what state participants live in, what state they grew up in (in case this is different), and the level of formal education completed. Participants were also asked religious affiliation, including

Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish, pulling from common religions in the United States and in the world. There were also options for other religions, agnostic, and not religious at all. Then, the participants were sent to the manipulation (the vignette), the questions based on the vignette, the explicit feelings, and the question on if they knew any transgender people before being debriefed (*Appendix F*) and paid.

Results

Main analyses

Of the 99 participants, n = 38 were in *outearly* (21 transgender, 17 cisgender), n = 31 were in *outlate* (13 transgender, 18 cisgender), and n = 30 were in *notout* (15 transgender, 15 cisgender). A significance value of p < 0.05 was used in analyses in this 3 outwhen (*outearly, outlate,* or *notout*) x 2 participant identity (transgender or cisgender, variable of *trans or not*) ANOVA. The ANOVAs are run by composite score (all the questions scored together with a range of 8-40), and by each question to attend to what each specific question targets.

Composite score

No main effect was found in the *outwhen* (F = 1.011, df = 2, p = 0.368). No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 2.531, df = 1, p = 0.115). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 1.906, df = 2, p = 0.154) (*Figure 1*).



Figure 1. Comparing average rates of warmth with the participant's gender identity.

"I would hang out with this person"

No main effect was found in the *outwhen* (F = 0.502, df = 2, p = 0.607). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 3.483, df = 1, p = 0.065), though it was marginally significant. No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 1.150, df = 2, p = 0.321).

"I like this person"

No main effect was found in the *outwhen* (F = 1.123, df = 2, p = 0.330). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 1.977, df = 1, p = 0.163). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 0.389, df = 2, p = 0.389).

"I would not be friends with this person" (Reverse coded)

No main effect was found in the *outwhen* (F = 0.155, df = 2, p = 0.857). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 1.877, df = 1, p = 0.174). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 1.503, df = 2, p = 0.228).

"I would trust this person not to harm me"

There was a main effect in *outwhen* (F = 3.384, df = 2, p = 0.038). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 0.225, df = 1, p = 0.636). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 2.953, df = 2, p = 0.057), though it was marginally significant.

"This person is approachable"

There was no main effect in *outwhen* (F = 1.095, df = 2, p = 0.339). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 1.395, df = 1, p = 0.241). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 1.333, df = 2, p = 0.269).

"I do not like this person" (Reverse coded)

There was no main effect in *outwhen* (F = 0.175, df = 2, p = 0.840). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 1.564, df = 1, p = 0.214). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 1.844, df = 2, p = 0.164).

"I would call this person knowledgeable"

There was no main effect in *outwhen* (F = 1.179, df = 2, p = 0.312). There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 0.733, df = 1, p = 0.394). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 0.067, df = 2, p = 0.935).

"I would trust this person to help me"

There was no main effect in *outwhen* (F = 2.840, df = 2, p = 0.064), although it was marginally significant. There was no main effect in the *trans or not* (F = 1.595, df = 1, p = 0.210). No interaction was found between *outwhen* and *trans or not* (F = 2.593, df = 2, p = 0.080), although it was marginally significant.

Overall

A main effect was found in *outwhen* for "I would trust this person trust not to harm me", with means showing that, generally the character that came out was rated higher than that who did not (for transgender participants, the character that comes out later is scored highest, and for cisgender participants the character who came out earlier was scored highest).

There was marginal significance for *trans or not* in "I would hang out with this person," with means indicating that transgender participants, on average, felt more warmly towards the character than cisgender participants, regardless of when the character came out.

All other effects were not significant or marginally significant, indicating no noticeable differences between groups.

Follow up analyses

To test the possibility of effects canceling out, further analyses were conducted testing the individual connections. The risk of cancellation can be seen in *Figure 1* where there may be an effect hidden by the higher and lower scores averaging to a more neutral score. Those which had the diamond shape seen were used in follow up analyses. These were also to test differences between *out or not* in more depth. Follow up analyses included two 2x2 ANOVAs. The first is 2

out or not (not out versus out early and out late scored together) x 2 participant identity, which tests whether or not the character is transgender shows a difference in warmth towards them. The second is 2 early or late (out early versus out late) x 2 participant identity, which tests whether the effect of early or late shows any difference that may have been canceled in the original 3x2 ANOVA.

Composite score

There was no main effect in *trans or not* (F = 0.604, df = 1, p = 0.439). There was no main effect in *out or not* (F = 1.140, df = 1, p = 0.288). No interaction was found between the two (F = 2.671, df = 1, p = 0.106).

There was a main effect in *trans or not* (F = 7.138, df = 1, p = 0.010) (*Figure 2*). No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 0.939, df = 1, p = 0.336). No interaction was found between the two (F = 1.231, df = 1, p = 0.271).



Figure 2. Comparing average rates of warmth between coming out early or late in the vignette with the participant's

gender identity.

"I would hang out with this person"

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 1.364, df = 1, p = 0.246). No main effect was found in *out or not* (F = 0.397, df = 1, p = 0.530). No interaction was found between the two (F = 2.124, df = 1, p = 0.148).

There was a main effect in *trans or not* (F = 6.789, df = 1, p = 0.009). No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 0.725, df = 1, p = 0.398). No interaction was found between the two (F = 0.060, df = 1, p = 0.800).

"I like this person"

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 0.843, df = 1, p = 0.361). No main effect was found in *out or not* (F = 2.046, df = 1, p = 0.156). No interaction was found between the two (F = 0.843, df = 1, p = 0.361).

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 3.574, df = 1, p = 0.063), although it was marginally significant. No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 0.011, df = 1, p = 0.917). No interaction was found between the two (F = 1.244, df = 1, p = 0.269).

"I would not be friends with this person" (Reverse coded)

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 0.575, df = 1, p = 0.450). No main effect was found in *out or not* (F = 0.051, df = 1, p = 0.822). No interaction was found between the two (F = 3.166, df = 1, p = 0.078), but it was marginally significant.

A main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 4.709, df = 1, p = 0.034). No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 0.256, df = 1, p = 0.615). No interaction was found between the two (F = 0.042, df = 1, p = 0.838).

"I would trust this person not to harm me"

There was a main effect in *out or not* (F = 5.233, df = 1, p = 0.024). No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 0.145, df = 1, p = 0.704). No interaction was found between the two (F = 3.300, df = 1, p = 0.072), although this was a marginally significant result.

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 3.308, df = 1, p = 0.074), although it was marginally significant. No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 1.303, df = 1, p = 0.258). No interaction was found between the two (F = 3.080, df = 1, p = 0.084), though it was marginally significant.

"I do not like this person" (Reverse coded)

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 0.330, df = 1, p = 0.567). No main effect was found in *out or not* (F = 0.004, df = 1, p = 0.951). No interaction was found between the two (F = 1.586, df = 1, p = 0.211).

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 3.516, df = 1, p = 0.065), although it was marginally significant. No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 0.350, df = 1, p = 0.556). No interaction was found between the two (F = 2.023, df = 1, p = 0.160).

"I would trust this person to help me"

No main effect was found in *trans or not* (F = 0.118, df = 1, p = 0.732). No main effect was found in *out or not* (F = 3.173, df = 1, p = 0.078), though it was marginally significant. No interaction was found between the two (F = 2.998, df = 1, p = 0.087), though it was marginally significant.

There was a main effect in *trans or not* (F = 7.081, df = 1, p = 0.010). No main effect was found in *outearly or late* (F = 3.096, df = 1, p = 0.083), though it was marginally significant. No interaction was found between the two (F = 2.595, df = 1, p = 0.112).

Overall

Composite score, "I would hang out with this person", "I would not be friends with this person", and "I would trust this person to help me" had main effects in *trans or not* in the *outearly or late* analysis, with means indicating that transgender participants rated the character higher than cisgender participants.

"I like this person", "I would trust this person not to harm me", and "I do not like this person" had marginally significant effects in *trans or not* in the *outearly or late* analysis, with similar means indicating transgender participants rated the character higher than cisgender participants.

"I would trust this person not to harm me" had a main effect in *out or not* with means indicating that the character who came out was rated higher than that who did not by both transgender and cisgender participants.

"I would trust this person to help me" had a marginally significant effect in *out or not* with means indicating that the character who did come out was rated higher than that who did not.

"I would not be friends with this person", "I would trust this person not to harm me", and "I would trust this person to help me" had marginally significant interactions in between *trans or not* and *out or not*. Means showed that transgender participants rated the character who came out highest across the board over cisgender participants, and characters who did not come out. "I would trust this person not to harm me" had a marginally significant interaction between *trans or not* and *outearly or late*. Means implied that transgender people rated the character who came out later highest, with the character that came out early scoring lowest across both transgender and cisgender participants.

All other effects were not significant or marginally significant, indicating no noticeable differences between groups.

Exploratory analyses

Explicit Composite

After the 8 questions and the vignette, participants were asked questions about their explicit opinions on transgender people, including "I support transgender people" and "Transgender people are misguided" (reverse coded), in order to correlate these to the hopefully more implicit questions beforehand (the main study questions and analyses).

First, a t-test was conducted to test whether transgender participants or cisgender had different explicit feelings towards transgender people as a whole. The results were significant (t(97), p < .001) with that transgender participants had higher explicit ratings of transgender individuals.

A correlation was also run between explicit composite score and general composite score, finding a significant positive correlation (Pearson's r = 0.360, p < .001). This implies that participants with higher scores on the original questions about the character also had more positive explicit opinions about transgender people as a whole (*Figure 3*).

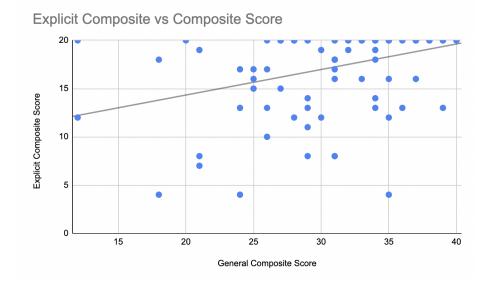


Figure 3. Correlation between explicit composite score and general composite score on feelings of warmth and trust towards the character in the vignette.

Knowing a transgender person

Prior research has shown that knowing a transgender person positively influences your opinions towards trans people (Barbir et al., 2017), and that trans people have positive associations with other transgender people (Axt et al., 2021), so this measure explored the phenomenon of knowing a transgender person's effect on warmth towards the character in the vignette. A one-way ANOVA (*Figure 4*) was conducted to determine if knowing someone who is transgender changes your opinions towards meeting someone new who is trans. Participants were categorized into one of six groups based on their responses: those who are transgender themselves (1), those who have a trans friend (2) those having a trans family member (3), those haveing a trans acquaintance (4), those not knowing a trans person but having seen them in TV or in books (5), and those not knowing a trans person (6). A significant effect was observed (F = 3.887, df = 5, p = 0.003), with means suggesting that those who know a transgender person rate a new person higher than those who do not.

knowingtrans_numeric	Ν	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of Variation
1	33	33.697	5.654	0.984	0.168
2	27	32.074	4.706	0.906	0.147
3	4	28.500	5.916	2.958	0.208
4	19	28.000	5.821	1.336	0.208
5	6	28.333	6.439	2.629	0.227
6	10	28.600	4.575	1.447	0.160

Descriptives

Figure 4. Average rating of warmth towards character based on exposure to transgender people in participant's life.

A further t-test (*Figure 5*) grouping 1, 2, and 3 (those close to a transgender person in some way) into Group 1 and 4, 5, and 6 (those not close or who don't know one) into Group 2 show significant results as well (df = 97, p < 0.001), implying more concretely that those who know a trans person are more likely to rate a new transgender person warmly than those who do not.



Figure 5. Average rating of warmth from participants based on being or being close to a transgender person (Group 1) or not knowing or being close to a transgender person (Group 2).

Education

An ANOVA run shows that no significant effects were found between the level of education the participants have received and the overall warmth and trust felt towards the character (F = 0.509, df = 3, p = 0.677).

Race

No significant differences in *compositescore* were found based on the race of the participants (F = 0.503, df = 4, p = 0.734). Unfortunately, due to low numbers of Asian (other than South and East Asian), Native American, and Native Hawaiian participants, along with those who selected Other, were grouped together for this analysis.

Gender

No significant differences in *compositescore* were found in the different genders of participants (male, female, non-binary, or other) (F = 0.439, df = 3, p = 0.726).

Discussion

The present study sought to understand how quickly out-group and in-group biases form, if they can form as soon as a small vignette, and to see how quickly an out-group is perceived as a threat. The main findings of this study were that, in a short period of time, participants often rated the character who came out as transgender higher than the character who did not come out. This is hopeful news towards opinions on transgender people as a whole. While it does not counteract the pervasive transphobia experienced by many daily, it offers hope that coming out may prove safer than it has before. One potential explanation for this outcome, other than a more accepting society, is that the character that came out provided more personal information, and the participants may have felt closer to them for this reason over reasons of their trans identity. This supports the null hypothesis, in that the transgender character was received by cisgender participants with more warmth than expected. In a short vignette, not much in- and out- group identification was formed, but it wasn't entirely absent, either.

It's also possible that participants rated the characters that came out more warmly because they felt closer to this character. The character was purposefully neutral, enjoying walks and books, but this piece of personal information may have let the participant in to feel closer and overall more warmly towards them. Transgender participants, as well, generally felt more warmly than cisgender participants, regardless of when or if the character came out as transgender (although they did also rate the transgender characters slightly higher than those who did not come out, but this was not a significant result). This could be because they have been through more hardship and exclusion in their lives, and are willing to give more benefit of the doubt before judging someone negatively, while cisgender participants are less likely to have had this experience.

For *outearly or late*, the difference was getting to know the character before learning they were transgender, or knowing they're trans before getting to know them, with the idea that this may color how the participant sees them afterwards, especially as this is the only part of the vignette to change. This could determine when a trans person comes out, if they wish to and have the option, to know when would be safer to do so, and generally have a better understanding of people's processes when someone comes out to them, but it appears that, in a small vignette scale, there was not much difference between the two groups. Transgender participants, additionally, did regularly rate the transgender character higher than cisgender participants did,

often significant in the *outearly or late* analysis. This is consistent with in-group and out-group ideas and mostly supports the initial hypothesis that transgender people will rate other transgender people higher than cisgender, however it was not across all analyses.

This supports the hypothesis in that transgender people did not react significantly differently towards characters who came out early or late, but complicates interpretation of this when noted that only one of the questions found a significant *out or not*. This is strange because since *trans or not* was significant in *outearly or late*, then transgender people may just like other trans people better than those who don't disclose identity (the not out), but if this were the case, then we would see this effect in *out or not*, but it is not present. A possible explanation for this is that we see the effect significantly in *outearly or late* because there is a small difference in the two, that *late* is higher, but not significantly. Regardless, this brings up the average, whereas in *out or not*, grouping the *early* in with *late* brings the average down, closer to *not out*, which makes no significant differences appear. From this analysis, it appears that transgender people feel more warmth and trust towards other transgender people, likely stemming from in-groups closeness, and community importance. This is supported by other research done on transgender people.

It is also possible that transgender people assumed the character who does not come out to be transgender, as well, since it is not disclosed whether they are cis or trans, and this could mean they are treated similarly to the character who did come out. This could also provide an explanation for the significant effects in the *outearly or late* analyses, since in both of these the character is disclosed as transgender. This means less is left to the variability of assumption, and therefore the results are clearer. The main significant effect for *outwhen* came from "I would trust this person not to harm me." This was a hopeful result, as it showed that participants felt more warmly towards the character who did come out than that who didn't, across both transgender and cisgender participants. Interestingly, transgender people rated the character who came out later (who they'd gotten to know before they came out as trans) higher, which may imply a warmth towards a person coming out once you have some connection to them already, versus an immediate connection. Cisgender people rated the character who came out earlier higher, which may be due to feeling closer to this person who has revealed personal information, but goes against the idea out-group hostility.

"I would trust this person not to harm me" also had the most notable findings of any of the questions. It had two significant findings, one in *outwhen* in the first analysis, and the second in *out or not* in the second analysis. Notable is the absence of a significant effect in *outearly or late*, which implies that the significance of *outwhen* comes in whether or not the character comes out, more than when they come out.

However, generally there were no other main effects in *outwhen*, retaining the null hypotheses. One hypothesis was that cisgender individuals would feel more warmth towards someone who comes out later, and most warmth towards someone who does not come out. The other was that transgender participants would feel more warmth towards the character who came out, regardless of when. These findings imply that, in a short period of getting to know someone, it does not significantly matter if or when they come out as transgender, or, that if they do, it's generally a positive reaction, which is a hopeful finding.

Marginally significant findings in the study mean that, while effects are not definitively present, they shouldn't be written off entirely, as it could provide an interesting study in the

future, especially since it has been well documented that transgender people are treated differently than cisgender people. Transgender people live in harsher conditions than cisgender people, and prejudice against transgender people is still well-documented. Overall, one significant finding was reported in *out or not*, implying little difference in how transgender and not out (potentially assumed cisgender) character are treated in this short vignette. This could imply that in getting to know someone in a short fashion (such as the vignette provided) does not show significant differences in how someone is treated, regardless of whether they are transgender or not, which may mean that the danger of judgement takes time to develop. This may be comforting in a passing environment, in which you only just meet someone, or potentially concerning in friend and family situations, in which someone is known much better. More research is needed on this topic to supply more explanation as this is a complex matter.

There are other factors that go into identity to be explored, such as the intersection of race or class and transgender identity, especially as these create sub-communities, and, transgender people of color experience more prejudice and discrimination than white transgender individuals. I explored these briefly in exploratory analyses, reaching no significant differences between participants' education, gender, or race. As discussed in results, race was unfortunately grouped together into Black or African American, White, and Other due to low rates of participants identifying as Asian and Native American and Hawaiian, as well as those who selected Other. Race, gender, and other defining factors of the character is left ambiguous, so sub-communities cannot be explored properly, but would be important next steps.

If participants have transgender individuals in their lives was also explored, and it was found that transgender participants, along with those who had a transgender friend, responded similarly and significantly higher on explicit support of the transgender community than those

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with transgender family members, acquaintences, or did not know any transgender people. This supports in-group favoritism in the transgender community, and that closeness to a transgender person may also create support for the community. As more transgender people come out (as there has been an upward trend in recent years), it may lead to more support from those who are friends with the individuals coming out, both personally and systemically. Also possible, however, is that those who do not like transgender people just do not have them as friends for this reason. Still, it is a positive result, and may show growing support in people of the trans community once they become closer to transgender people.

Those who reported that they don't know any transgender people, but have seen them in TV or in books did not score higher than those who did not know a transgender person on explicit opinions. This means it is valuable to be with transgender friends and people in your life, more than seeing them in media, but should not discount the power of representation in media as it can be supportive for transgender individuals.

These findings do not speak to the general world, which still holds fear of coming out and high rates of transphobia. 2021 was the deadliest year on record for transgender people (Powell, 2021), so keeping each other safe is as important as ever. This study shines certain hope that transgender characters were rated higher than cisgender by many, and shows the power of a strong community, that transgender people rated everyone (but especially transgender characters) higher than cisgender. Staying vigilant is important, and seeing that this study is a starting point to understanding coming out and lashback against trans people, not an end.

Limitations

As a college thesis, there was a relatively small sample size, which could be a strong limitation. This means there is error of a lower power than is necessary to see significant differences.

There is also an unfortunate limitation of the method. This was a preliminary study in an understudied area of research, intended to shine a light on a potential issue and disparity between groups of people. In order to get a general American perspective, for higher generalizability than would be available if participants had been recruited on the liberal arts college campus, for example, this study was conducted online, which is a strength. This means, though, that it was less intimate than it perhaps should have been, and lacked many opportunities to better understand each individual participant.

A further limitation of the method was that the vignette provided may have proved too short to notice significant differences between conditions. It is possible that there were no differences regardless, but the vignette may have been too short to notice if one existed. The length of the vignette is due to efforts to keep it neutral and not have other confounding variables, such as personal disagreements between the participant and the character, but it may have come across as impersonal. A study about getting to know someone, especially with the intentions of friends and family, may benefit from a more personal experience, and this study did shine a light on personal information (such as coming out) being positive overall. Friend and family bonds are much more complicated than the short vignette, so exploring this more in depth in the future would be a great strength.

There was also some issue in categorization of participants. The participants were categorized based on how they identified to Prolific[™] (either transgender or not). The same

study was sent out to 50 participants under the filter "Male, Female" and another 50 under the filter "Trans Male/Trans Man, Trans Female/Trans Woman, Genderqueer/Gender Non Conforming", which means that they selected one of these identities when signing up for Prolific[™]. In the study itself, there is also a semi-ambiguous question of "Do you know any transgender people?" and the opportunity to select "Yes, myself" among other answers. This question allowed participants to select more than one answer, as well. In running this question, only 33 participants listed themselves as transgender, when 50 were screened to be through ProlificTM. A possible reason for this is that they were non-binary, genderqueer, two-spirit, or another non-cisgender identity but did not necessarily identify as transgender. Regardless, I chose to run analyses based on the Prolific[™] groupings, since the question I included may have been a vague method of asking participants to identify themselves, and Prolific[™] provided more in-depth identification by including more than just transgender. It is possible that people also identified as transgender when they signed up for Prolific[™] and no longer do, but "detransitioning" is very uncommon in the transgender community, so this is unlikely, especially at a scale of nearly 20 people. I am unsure if this has affected the reliability of the results since there is this discrepancy between ProlificTM and the question included, but in a future study it would be important to clarify this, perhaps have a more direct question about a participant's identity.

Future Directions

Although there were few significant results, the topic of differential treatment of those close to you when they come out as transgender is a valuable area of study for many. Building off a major limitation of this study, a future direction would be to create a longer, more intimate study to better emulate a real-world experience.

One version, to test meeting someone, could let participants get to know someone new (a confederate, who is a hired researcher acting in a role in psychological experiments) in person and more in depth, with a similar set up in that they will either come out early, late, or not at all, while sticking to similar topics of discussion.

Another possibility, in order to focus more on familial and friendly relationships, would be to have participants report on people in their lives already who are transgender, with participants being both transgender and cisgender in order to explore this divide further. Employing qualitative aspects, as well, to understand why family and friends may react to a transgender person in their life, would be helpful. This would explore closeness in relation to being out, putting more emphasis on relationship with the person than the when to come out.

Race was a very brief analysis, and, although there were no significant differences, it could be done more justice in future studies, potentially giving the character in the vignette a particular race, in order to better emulate how someone is viewed when seen in person (often there are assumptions based on looks, and, as previously mentioned, that trans people of color experience more discrimination), along with creating a better-rounded character. Including race would also create more intricate and realistic sub-communinites (such as Black transgender people within the Black and trans communities) which would be valuable in a world in which Black transgender individuals and trans people of color are most at risk. Exploring how people view their prejudice to better understand how to help transgender people experiencing discrimination would be valuable, and the intersection of race and gender provide an important lens that this study did not explore.

Conclusion

Overall, there were mixed results, but hopeful implications. It is notable that transgender people are more likely to support other transgender people explicitly, and appear to feel more warmly towards all people than cisgender people. There is also the possibility that people feel safe around a transgender person they have just met (such as the character in the vignette). This could indicate a positive direction for society as a whole in support of an historically discriminated against group. It is also notable that cisgender people with transgender friends were more supportive of the transgender community as a whole, which could show that knowing someone well changes ones opinions on the community, although the manipulation and short vignette did not show much support for this. This could be due to the short length, as those who reported having friends (with whom they've likely spent more time with than the vignette), so future studies could explore this by creating a longer manipulation, in order to simulate friends and family and getting to know someone better. This was a successful stepping stone for future studies, and shows positive implications for support of the transgender community and safety of coming out.

Citations

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Appendix A:

IRB Proposal and Approval

lease enter the following information about vourself.	
lease enter the following information about yourself:	May 07, 2022
lame:	Cam Goldberg
mail:	cg1913@bard.edu
our Academic Program/Department/Office:	Psychology
our status (faculty, staff, graduate or undergraduate tudent):	Undergraduate Student
dviser or Faculty Sponsor (if applicable):	Thomas Hutcheon
you are a graduate or undergraduate student, has your dviser or Faculty Sponsor seen and approved your pplication?	Yes
our Adviser's or Faculty Sponsor's email address (if pplicable):	thutcheo@bard.edu
lease list all individuals (full name and status, i.e. faculty, veryone listed must have completed Human Subject Rese am Goldberg, Undergraduate Student homas Hutcheon, Faculty	staff, student) involved in this project that will be working with human subjects. Note: earch Training within the past three years.
o you have external funding for this research?	No
Vhat is the title of your project? conditional Transphobia? Impact of Coming Out Before or Afte	er an Interaction
When do you plan to begin this project? (Start date):	Jun 04, 2022
em. Participants will be asked demographic questions, then v his passage is the same between participants, except for a sn in the passage, later on, or not at all. After this, participants and finally a few questions more explicitly about their feelings a lebrief Forms").	out as transgender changes the reactions they recieve, and how the other person feels towards will be given a short passage to read (see "Demographic Questions and Manipulation Passage"). nall edit. The passage will introduce a character, and either have the character come out early will be asked questions about their feelings towards the character, such as "I like this person", about transgender people. They will then be debriefed and compensated (see "Consent and
o IRB@bard.edu	u plan to recruit participants. Please submit all recruitment material, emails and scripts he age of 18 and in the United States. Recruitment will be through Prolific, which will advertise
Vill your participants include individuals from vulnerable r protected populations (e.g., children, pregnant /omen, prisoners, or the cognitively impaired)?	no
pproximately how many individuals do you expect to articipate in your study?	120
bout how much time will be expected of each individual. I uestions, etc.), email these documents separately as attac escription (e.g., "WatsonSurvey.doc"). articipants will be recruited through Prolific, and will be first as ut early in the passage, late in the passage, or not at all, and v	r research. Include descriptions of what tasks your participants will be asked to do, and NOTE: If you have supporting materials (printed surveys, questionnaires, interview chments to IRB@bard.edu. Name your attachments with your last name and a brief sked demographic questions. They will then read a short passage in which a character comes will be asked questions regarding warmth and trust towards this character (see "Demographic iefed and paid \$2 (see "Consent and Debrief Forms"). This study is designed to take no longer
escribe any risks and/or benefits your research may have here are no potential risks. Benefits include monetary comper	
escribe how you plan to mitigate (if possible) any risks th lo risks anticipated. Participants will have my email and my fac	
	e consent form and the consent process to your participants): t and Debrief Forms") and asked to indicate if they provide consent (and are over the age of 18), and their data will not be used or recorded.
lave you prepared a consent form(s) and emailed it as n attachment to IRB@bard.edu? lote: You must submit all necessary consent forms efore your proposal is considered complete.	Yes
you are collecting data via media capture (video, audio, hotos), have you included a section requesting consent or this procedure(s) in your consent form(s)?	Not applicable
your project will require you to employ a verbal consent ow verbal consent will be obtained and stored. I/A	process (no written consent forms), please describe why this process is necessary and

access or dissemination?

No identifying information will be recorded (such as names, email addresses, or IP addresses), and information taken will be password protected through Qualtrics. Myself and my faculty advisor, Tom Hutcheon, will be the only people viewing the data. All data will be stored on a password protected computer.

Will it be necessary to use deception with your participants at any time during this research? Withholding details about the specifics of one's hypothesis does not constitute deception, this is called Yes incomplete disclosure. Deception involves purposefully misleading participants about the nature of the research question or about the nature of the task they will be completing.

If your project study includes deception, please describe here the process you will use, why the deception is necessary, and a full description of your debriefing procedures. Deception is required in order not to prime the participants, and ensure some external validity. If I tell participants that the study is about their opinions on

transgender people, they will answer the follow-up questions in a biased manner, and their focus will not be on the passage as a whole, as intended. The only piece of information being withheld is the true intent of the study, and they will be debriefed and asked if their data may still be used, after this.

For all projects, please include your debriefing statement. (This is information you provide to the participant at the end of your study to explain your research question more fully than you may have been able to do at the beginning of the study.) All studies must include a debriefing statement. Be sure to give participants the opportunity to ask any additional questions they may have about the study. (see "Consent and Debrief Forms" or below)

Debrief form:

Thank you for participating in this study. In order to get the information I was looking for, I withheld some information/or provided you with incorrect information about some aspects of this study. Now that the experiment is over, I will describe these to you, answer any of your questions, and provide you with the opportunity to make a decision on whether you would like to have your data included in this study.

The purpose of this study was to determine if when someone comes out as transgender effects how someone will react or feel towards them. I told you that this was a study on reading comprehension, and only withheld the true intent of the study. It is often the case that someone's friend or family member coming out will receive a different reaction than if a stranger had come out, so this was a very small-scale version of testing this concept. Participants all read the same passage, with minor changes. Either the character in the passage came out as transgender early on, later on, or not at all.

If you would like to learn more about transgender individuals, information is available here: https://www.hrc.org/resources/understanding-the-transgender-

This passage was taken and edited with permission from: https://www.excellentesl4u.com/esl-meeting-someone-new-reading-comprehension.html

Although you have already completed the experiment, your involvement is still voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw the data you provided prior to debriefing, without penalty or loss of compensation offered to you. Withdrawing your submission will not adversely affect your relationship with Bard College, the researcher, or any of my affiliates.

If you agree to allow us to use your data, it will remain confidential. No names were taken in this study, and your answers will only be shared with the researchers, and will be kept on a password-protected computer.

Please click the appropriate box below if you do, or do not, give permission to have your data included in the study (if you do not give permission, your information will not be retained or used).

() Yes, you may use my data () No, you may not use my data

If you will be conducting interviews in a language other than English, will you conduct all of the interviews yourself, or will you have the assistance of a translator? If you will be using the assistance of a translator, that individual must also certify that he or she is familiar with the human subject protocol and has completed the online training course.

If your recruitment materials or consent forms will be presented in languages other than English, please translate these documents and email copies to IRB@bard.edu. I have submitted all of my translated materials.

Not applicable

Not applicable

Bard College

Institutional Review Board

Date: June 3, 2022 To: Cam Goldberg Cc: Tom Hutcheon, Deborah Treadway Re: Conditional Transphobia? Impact of Coming Out Before or After an Interaction

DECISION: APPROVED

Dear Cam,

The Bard Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your proposal entitled "Conditional Transphobia? Impact of Coming Out Before or After an Interaction." Your proposal is approved through June 2, 2023 and your proposal number is 2022JUNE3-GOLD.

Please notify the IRB if your methodology changes or unexpected events arise.

We wish you the best of luck with your research!

Brond Burgs

Brandt Burgess, Ph.D. IRB Coordinator and Member bburgess@bard.edu

PO Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York 12504-5000

Appendix B:

Consent Form

Project Title: Is Trust Conditional?

Researcher: Cam Goldberg

Faculty Adviser: Thomas Hutcheon

I am a student at Bard College and I am conducting a study for my Senior Project. I am studying reading comprehension, and willingness to trust someone you have recently met, in various conditions.

During this study, I will ask you to read a passage, and answer some questions afterwards. This study is designed to last approximately 5-10 minutes, and takes place entirely online.

There are no potential risks of this study, although if you feel uncomfortable with any questions asked, you are welcome to skip the question, or exit the study at any time without penalty.

There are no direct benefits.

Monetary compensation of \$1 upon completion of the study will be provided through Prolific.

All the information you provide will be confidential. No identifying information (such as name, email, or IP address) will be recorded, and all information will be kept password-protected on a computer. Only my faculty adviser and I will have access to this information.

Participant's Agreement:

I understand the purpose of this research. My participation is voluntary. If I wish to stop the experiment for any reason, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

I have been presented with the relevant risks and potential direct/indirect benefits, to the extent there are any. I am aware the information will be used in a Senior Project that will be publicly accessible online and at the Stevenson Library of Bard College in Annandale, New York. I have the right to review, comment on and withdraw information prior to November 1st, 2022. This may be done by contacting the researcher at cg1913@bard.edu or the faculty adviser at thutcheo@bard.edu.

The information gathered in this study is confidential with respect to my personal identity, and password-protected.

If I have questions about this study, I can contact the researcher at cg1913@bard.edu or the faculty adviser at thutcheo@bard.edu. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I can contact the chair of Bard's Institutional Review Board at irb@bard.edu.

Please select below:

□ I am at least 18 years of age and I consent to participate in this study.

Appendix C:

Vignettes

Pilot testing:

English:

Hi, my name is Alex and it is great to meet you! I'm really excited to meet people. I am 24 years old and have a couple siblings. I come from Newcastle, which is in the North of England and a long way away from here. My mother is a teacher and my father works in an office. I finished a degree in Media Studies last year and I'd like to move to London to find work sometime. My hobbies include reading, writing, watching films, and going for walks. I especially enjoy going outside on warm days with friends. The community around here is lovely.

American:

Hi, my name is Alex and it is great to meet you! I'm really excited to meet people. I am 24 years old and have a couple siblings. I come from Boston, which is in Massachusetts and a long way away from here. My mother is a teacher and my father works in an office. I finished a degree in Media Studies last year and I'd like to move to Manhattan to find work sometime. My hobbies include reading, writing, watching films, and going for walks. I especially enjoy going outside on warm days with friends. The community around here is lovely.

Experiment:

Out Early:

Hi, my name is Alex and it is great to meet you! I am really excited to meet people. I am 24 years old, I am transgender, and have a couple siblings. I come from Boston, which is in

Massachusetts. My mother is a teacher and my father works in an office. I finished a degree in Media Studies last year and I'd like to move to Manhattan to find work sometime. My hobbies include reading, writing, watching films, and going for walks. I especially enjoy going outside on warm days with friends. The community around here is lovely.

Out Late:

Hi, my name is Alex and it is great to meet you! I am really excited to meet people. I am 24 years old and have a couple siblings. I come from Boston, which is in Massachusetts. My mother is a teacher and my father works in an office. I finished a degree in Media Studies last year and I'd like to move to Manhattan to find work sometime. My hobbies include reading, writing, watching films, and going for walks. I especially enjoy going outside on warm days with friends. Also, I am transgender, and the community here is lovely.

Not Out:

Hi, my name is Alex and it is great to meet you! I'm really excited to meet people. I am 24 years old and have a couple siblings. I come from Boston, which is in Massachusetts. My mother is a teacher and my father works in an office. I finished a degree in Media Studies last year and I'd like to move to Manhattan to find work sometime. My hobbies include reading, writing, watching films, and going for walks. I especially enjoy going outside on warm days with friends. The community around here is lovely.

Appendix D:

Excellentes4U

Original vignette:

Good morning, I would like to introduce myself. My name is David Johnson and it is nice to meet you. I come from near Cambridge. I live in a small village that is close to the city of Cambridge. I am 20 years old. I am studying history at university and work in a shop at the weekends. I have one brother and one sister. They are both older than me. My sister is 26 years old and my brother is 22 years old. They have both graduated from university and work in London.

Consent:

Bace to Think Re: Contact Form - EE4U - Cam Goldberg Jolyon <jolyon@excellent-proofreading-and-writing.com> To: cg1913@bard.edu Hello, Yes that is fine as long as you include a reference to my site as the source of the material. Best wishes Jolyon

On 02/05/2022 13:58, Cam Goldberg wrote:

	🛠 Contact Form - EE4U		
	Name	Cam Goldberg	
	E-mail	cg1913@bard.edu	
	Country	Country: United States	
	Message	Hello,	
		My name is Cam Goldberg and I an college at Bard College. I am a psyc looking to use a passage of getting my senior project experiment.	chology major, and am
		Would I have permission to use you under "ESL Meeting Someone New Comprehension" for this, with minor manipulation?	Reading
		The study is testing warmth towards just met, and coming out as transge so the changes to text would be ins identity.	nder in relation to this,
		Thank you very much, Cam	
	Jotform. Anywhere. Anytime.		Google Play
			Do not show this anymore (\mathbf{X})
Virus-free. www.avg.com			

Cam Goldberg <cg1913@bard.edu>

Mon, May 2, 2022 at 12:17 PM

Appendix E:

Explicit Transgender Opinion Questions

I support transgender people

Transgender people should be allowed in the bathroom of their choice

Transgender people are denying their DNA

Transgender people are misguided

Appendix F:

Debrief

Thank you for participating in this study.

In order to get the information I (the researcher) was looking for, I withheld some information/or provided you with incorrect information about some aspects of this study. Now that the experiment is over, I will present these to you below, and provide you with the opportunity to make a decision on whether you would like to have your data included in this study.

The purpose of this study was to determine if when someone comes out as transgender effects how someone will react or feel towards them. I presented that this was a study on reading comprehension, and only withheld the true intent of the study. It is often the case that someone's friend or family member coming out will receive a different reaction than if a stranger had come out, so this was a very small-scale version of testing this concept. Participants all read the same passage, with minor changes. Either the character in the passage came out as transgender early on, later on, or not at all.

If you would like to learn more about transgender individuals, information is available here: https://www.hrc.org/resources/understanding-the-transgender-community

This passage was taken and edited with permission from: https://www.excellentesl4u.com/esl-meeting-someone-new-reading-comprehension.html Although you have already completed the experiment, your involvement is still voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw the data you provided prior to debriefing, without penalty or loss of compensation offered to you by selecting below. Withdrawing your submission will not adversely affect your relationship with Bard College, the researcher, or any of my affiliates.

If you agree to allow us to use your data, it will remain confidential. No names were taken in this study, and your answers will only be shared with the researcher and faculty advisor, and will be kept on a password-protected computer.

If you have any questions or concerns, the researcher is reachable at cg1913@bard.edu, and the faculty advisor is reachable at thutcheo@bard.edu. You can review and withdraw your data at any time until November 1st, 2022, should you wish to, by contacting one of these email addresses.

If you have any questions about the ethics of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board of Bard at irb@bard.edu.

Please click the appropriate box below if you do, or do not, give permission to have your data included in the study (if you do not give permission, your information will not be retained or used).

- \Box Yes, you may use my data
- \Box No, you may not use my data

Appendix G:

Preregistration





Created: 09/13/2022 11:14 AM (PT) Public: 09/13/2022 11:17 AM (PT)

Is Transphobia Conditional? Impact of Coming Out Before or After an Interaction. (#106910)

Author(s)

Cam Goldberg (bard college student) - cg1913@bard.edu

1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

Are people warmer to transgender individuals coming out once they know them or before they know them well? Cisgender participants will think more warmly of someone they learn is transgender after they get to know them than before. Transgender participants will show more warmth towards someone they learn at any point is transgender (more than someone who doesn't disclose this information).

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

Trust and warmth will be measured in an 8-question questionnaire including "This person is approachable" and "I would trust this person not to harm me".

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

3 conditions. 6 cells.

Each participant reads one vignette of a person introducing themselves. The person either comes out early on in the vignette, later in the vignette, or not at all, to simulate getting to know someone.

Participants will be half cisgender and half transgender, creating 6 cells (3 conditions x 2 types of participants).

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

One way ANOVA will be used to compare the questionnaire to the condition the participants were in. Another ANOVA will compare explicit transgender opinions to the level of trust. As an exploratory measure, there will also be an ANOVA to test demographics against level of trust. A further exploratory t-test will be done to measure exposure (if the participant knows any transgender individuals) against total levels of trust.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

I will exclude participants who fail the attention check (there is one attention check).

I will exclude participants who take longer than 20 minutes to complete the study.

I will exclude participants who take less than 1 minute to complete the study.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

I will offer the experiment on Prolific until I have recieved roughly 100-120 participants, or until October 1st, 2022 whichever comes first.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

Demographic information (including age, race, state of birth and current residence) and explicit opinions towards transgender individuals (such as answering a likert style question stating "I support transgender people") will be recorded for exploratory purposes.

Version of AsPredicted Questions: 2.00

Available at https://aspredicted.org/6mp5v.pdf