Renegade Children:
Identity Negotiations of Three Christian Lesbians from the American South

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Abstract

This poster session focuses on a study of the identity formation of three specific lesbian/bisexual women who were raised in the Southeast region of the United States characterized by a strong Christian fundamentalist/evangelical influence. Narrowing in on the *intersection* between religion, sexual orientation, geographic region and/or culture (amidst a variety of other factors having to do with the personal lives of these three participants), this poster will highlight therapeutic implications for counselors and psychologists.

Beginning with the basics of identity politics and theory, "intersectionality" is a concept coined by Crenshaw in 1989 to describe the way that issues like racism, sexism etc. seem to overlap and create multiple levels of social injustices (2016). Research findings suggest that each minority class a person possesses compounds and interacts, thereby increasing threats of discrimination. This conceptualization of identity formation challenges the hierarchal nature of power within society and provides the following implications for psychological practitioners:

1. Practitioner cultural competence is a dire necessity.
2. When working with persons who are participants in one or more minority classes, the following frameworks must be integral to the counseling process: feminist theory, multicultural counseling theory, relational-cultural theory etc. (ie. empowerment modality used to dismantle the ways in which an individual has been silenced or blamed for his/her sexual orientation as "choice," etc.).
3. Understand the dangers of prioritizing culture over other factors/identities (sexuality, SES, etc.) which may reinstate powerlessness (ie. lack of access to services, problems within that culture).

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Biography

Lauren Quesenberry, M.A., is a second-year student in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Washington D.C. She obtained a master of arts in Women's Studies Gender Studies from Loyola University Chicago in 2011 and a bachelor of arts in English and minor in Psychology from Gardner-Webb University in 2009. Lauren's areas of professional and academic focus include women's trauma/recovery and LGBTQ populations.

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