



Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Suicide Prevention

**Russell (Russ) Toomey, Ph.D: Associate Professor at the University of Arizona
Chair, Youth Development and Resilience Initiative, FMI**

Date: Thursday May 17, 2018

Location: Regis University – Lowell Campus

Time: 2:45-4:00pm

Title:

Sexual and Gender Minority Disparities in Suicide Behavior: Risk and Resilience

Abstract:

Nearly 25 years of research has documented that sexual minority adolescents are more likely to engage in suicide behavior compared to their heterosexual peers. More recent studies have documented a similar disparity between gender minority and cisgender adolescents. Dr. Toomey will describe his recent research, funded by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, that describes disparities by sexual and gender minority subgroups (i.e., not treating sexual and gender minority groups as monolithic), including intersections with other key sociodemographic characterizes that are known to be risk factors for suicidal behaviors. Additionally, he will describe findings from his recent national study, in collaboration with the Search Institute, that focus on how universal risk and resilience factors differ in their relationships with suicidal behaviors by sexual and gender minority status. His presentation will detail the importance of understanding minority-specific risk and resilience processes.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this talk, participants should be able to:

- 1) Understand disparities in suicidal behavior among sexual and gender minority adolescent and young adult populations
- 2) Identify risk and protective factors for targeting in prevention efforts aimed at reducing suicidal behavior among sexual and gender minority populations.
- 3) Improve understanding of how minority-specific processes are critical for suicide prevention/intervention programs for sexual and gender minority adolescents

Presenter Biography:

Dr. Russell Toomey is an Associate Professor of Family Studies and Human Development at the University of Arizona and Chair of the Youth Development and Resilience Initiative of the Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families. Dr. Toomey received his Ph.D. in Family Studies and Human Development from the University of Arizona, completed an NIH-funded postdoctoral fellowship at Arizona State University in the Prevention Research Center and the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics. Dr. Toomey's research identifies malleable contextual (e.g., family, school) and individual-level (e.g., identity processes) factors that contribute to and mitigate health disparities experienced by marginalized adolescents in the United States. His research has examined these relationships with explicit attention to the minority-specific stressors of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination that contribute to the disparate rates of negative outcomes experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) adolescents and Latinx youth, and the culturally-relevant protective factors (e.g., ethnic-racial identity, Gay-Straight Alliances) that buffer these associations. Dr. Toomey's current research integrates these two distinct – but conceptually similar – lines of research (i.e., LGBTQ youth and Latinx youth), and focuses on how the amalgamation of individuals' multiple marginalized identities contributes to their contextual experiences, health, and well-being. Dr. Toomey is Associate Editor for the *Journal of Adolescent Research*, and is a recipient of the Society for Research on Adolescence Young Investigator Award, a National Institutes of Health Loan Repayment Award, and the University of Arizona Shirley O'Brien Diversity Award.

Citations:

Toomey, R. B., Syvertsen, A. K., & Flores, M. (2017, under review). Are developmental assets protective against suicidal behavior? Differential associations by sexual orientation.

Toomey, R. B., Syvertsen, A. K., & Shramko, M. (2017, under review). Transgender adolescent suicide behavior: Understanding subgroup differences.

Toomey, R. B., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2017, April). Protective factors associated with suicide attempts among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth. Paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Austin, TX.

Toomey, R. B., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2015, March). Profiles of internal and external assets among transgender youth: An examination using latent class analysis. Paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Russell, S. T., Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., & Diaz, R. M. (2014). Being out at school: The implications for school victimization and young adult adjustment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84, 635-643. doi: 10.1037/ort0000037

Russell, S. T., & Toomey, R. B. (2013). Risk and protective factors for suicidal thoughts among sexual minority youth: Evidence from the Add Health study. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, 17, 132-149. doi:10.1080/19359705.2012.753398

Russell, S. T., & Toomey, R. B. (2012). Men's sexual orientation and suicide: Evidence for U.S. adolescent-specific risk. *Social Science and Medicine*, 74, 523-529. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.07.038

Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., Diaz, R., & Russell, S. T. (2011). High school gay-straight alliances (GSAs) and young adult well-being: An examination of GSA presence, participation, and effectiveness. *Applied Developmental Science*, 15, 175-185. doi:10.1080/10888691.2011.607378