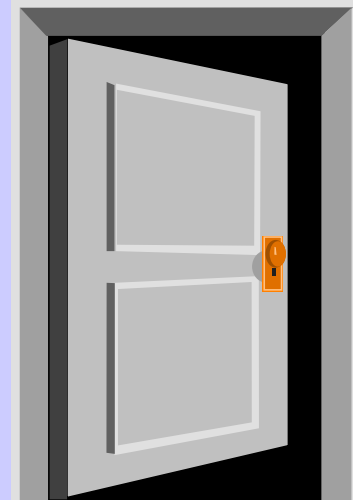


ALLISTER BUTLER

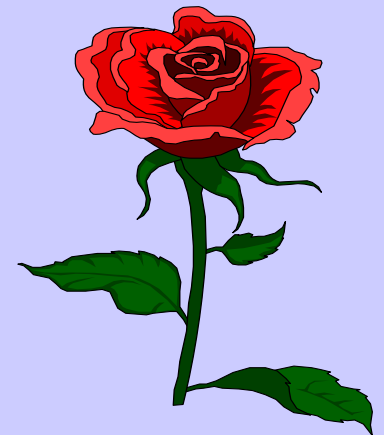
MAKING YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE COMING-OUT
PROCESS OF GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH
IN A TRANSFORMING SOUTH AFRICA

Study in progress towards the
completion of DPhil Social Work

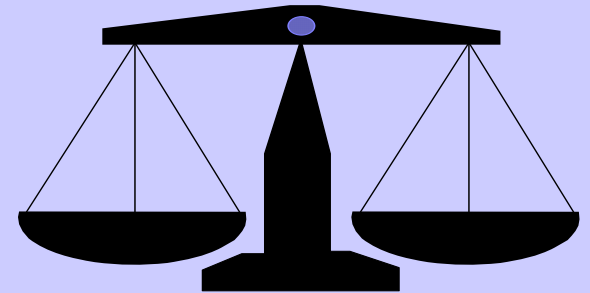


Dedicated to the memory of
Matthew Shephard

1976 to 1998



Historical Context



- Oscar Wilde (England 1890)
- "The love that dare not speaketh its name."*
- South Africa's Emerging democracy (1994)
- South Africa's New Constitution (1996)
- Protection of sexual orientation rights

Metthys Strydom (1997) – Expelled from Otto du Plessis high school

Matthew Shephard's Death (USA, 1998)

*“One of our own was lynched
in such a grotesque manner
that we had to hear the warning signal
loud and clear.*

*Matthew Shephard’s death has been likened
to the crucifixion of Jesus
as he was pistol whipped, burned, cut,
beaten unconscious,
tied spread eagle against a pole
and left to die in the freezing cold
as he begged for his life.*

*It takes years to perfect and execute hate
with such diligence.”*

(EXIT, Issue 108, February 1999)

*Clinton passed
the Matthew Shephard Anti Hate Crime Bill (1999)*

Research Study

Central Question

“What meanings and interpretations do gay and lesbian youth attribute to their coming out process in contemporary South Africa?”

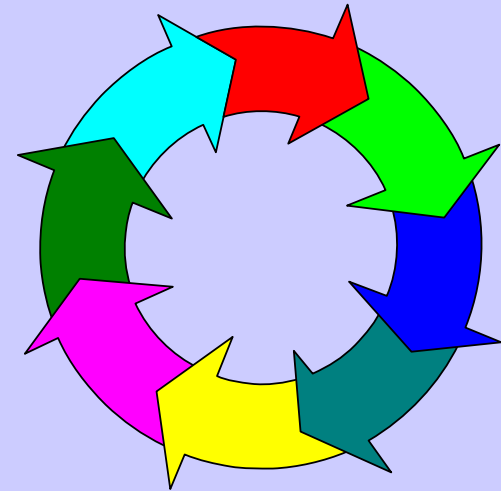
Methodology

Qualitative interviews

Content analysis

Reflective sample

Emerging themes



The five emerging themes are:

Theme 1: Mental Health Stressors and Coping Strategies

Theme 2: Stages of Coming Out

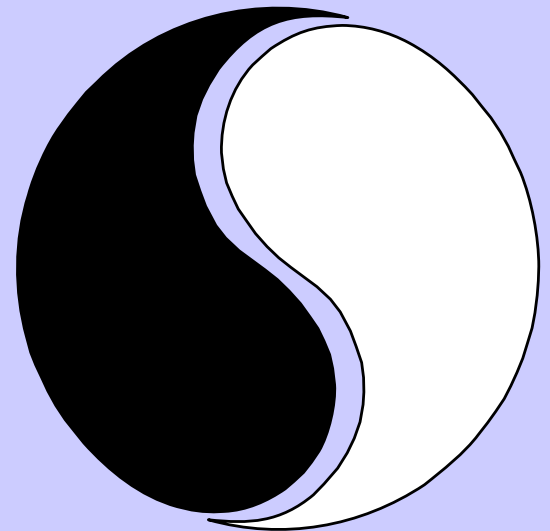
Theme 3: Homophobia and Hinderances

Theme 4: Support Systems

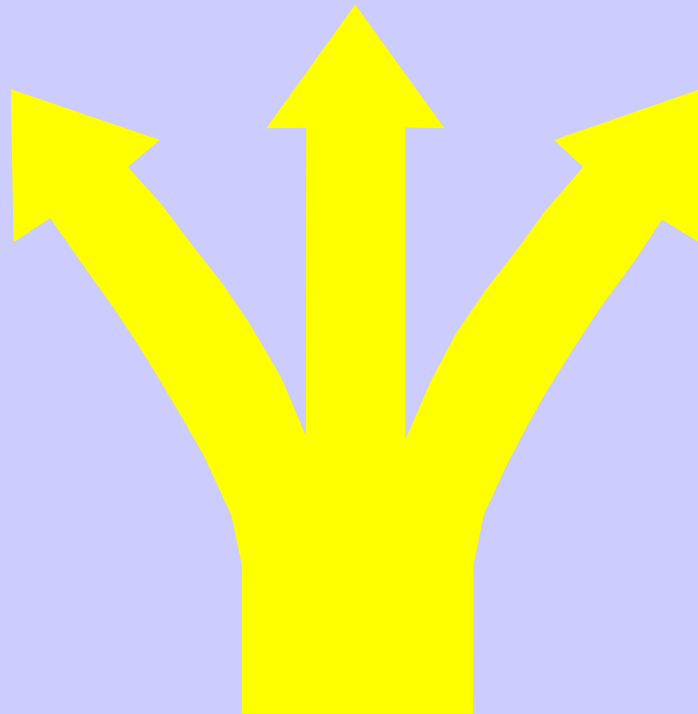
Theme 5: Recommendations

Theme 1: Mental Health Stressors and Coping Strategies

1. Internal dissonance
2. Social dissonance
3. Coping strategies
4. Positive affirmation



Theme 2: Stages of Coming Out



Stage 1:

Early Adolescent Exploration and Self Identification (10 - 14 years)

- * Internal turmoil
- * First self-realisation
- * First sexual experience
- * Gender differences

Stage 2:

Mid-adolescent self-disclosure
and validation
(15 - 18 years)

- * Coming out to self
- * First coming out experience
- * Access to lesbigay community
- * Coming out to parents

Stage 3:

Late adolescent consolidation
and integration
(18 - 22 years)

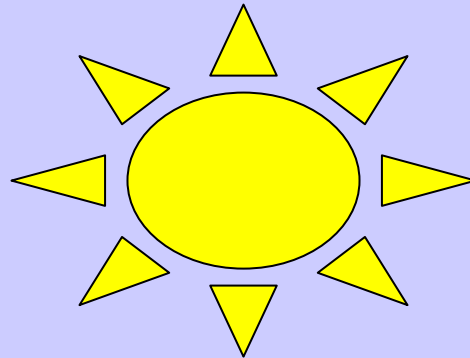
- * Coming out to broader family members
- * Coming out to broader peer networks
- * Antonovsky's 'Sense of Coherence'

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

(MAMA CASS)



Nobody can tell ya
.. there's only one song worth singin'
They may try and sell ya
'Cos it hangs them up
... to see someone like you



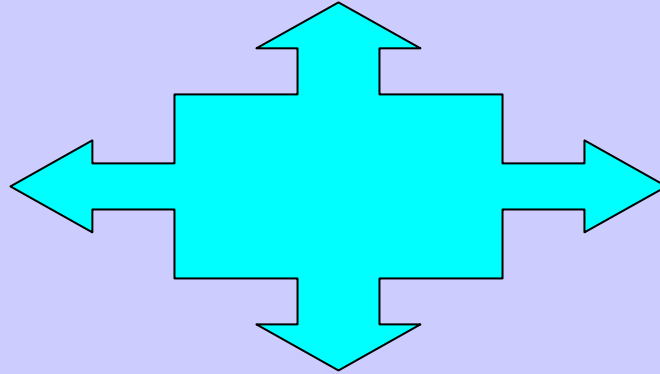
But you've gotta

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

Sing your own special song

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

Even if nobody else sings along



You're gonna be nowhere
The loneliest kind of lonely
It may be rough goin'
Just to do your thing's
... the hardest thing to do

But you've gotta

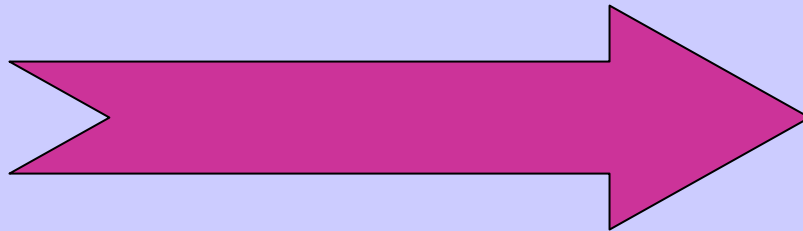
MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

Sing your own special song

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

Even if nobody else sings along

So if you cannot take my hand
And if you must be goin'
I will understand



But you've gotta

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

Sing your own special song

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

Even if nobody else sings along

The researcher acknowledges the assistance of ...

The Faculty of Health Sciences, UPE, with specific reference to the following:

- * Prof J.P.P. Fullard
- * Dr A.H. Alpaslan
- * Prof J. Strumpher
- * Mrs D. van Rooyen
- * Ms G. Astbury

*South Africa's gay and lesbian youth have
a profoundly unique story to tell.
This, in most part in their words, is the
unveiling of their coming out stories.
The researcher has simply been granted
the opportunity to tell these stories
of extraordinary self will, courage,
fortitude and resilience,
leaving one
with the renewed belief and confidence
in the power and the beauty
of the human spirit*