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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

Parental Support of Transgender Latinx Youth: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy in Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology

by

Sam del Castillo

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September 2022

The dissertation of Sam del Castillo is approved.

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June 2022

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To my friends, peers, cohort members, and community, I could not have done this without you. I am inspired by all of you and the life-changing work you do. From psychology, feminist studies, history, to engineering, seeing the ways you make this world a more just place makes me want to keep going. Thank you.

This is for trans youth. You are worthy of love and support. I see you and I believe in you. We will create a better world for you.

SAM DEL CASTILLO

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EDUCATION

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University of California, Santa Barbara
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Transgender and LGBTQIA+ Populations | Latinx and BIPOC Populations | College Student Populations | Social Justice | Racial Justice | Advocacy and Community Outreach | Underserved and Marginalized Students | Outreach and Consultation | Multicultural Issues | Group Therapy | Supervision

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- 2021 – Present **Predoctoral Intern – CSULB Counseling & Psychological Services**
Co-facilitated Understanding Self and Others therapy group
Co-facilitated Rainbow Café drop-in support space for LGBTQIA+ students

Conducted outreach activities including workshops, experiential activities, and presentations

Provided individual therapy utilizing a brief therapy model

Conducted crisis assessment, management, and intervention during weekly on-call shifts

Supervisors: Shelly-Ann Collins, Ph.D., Diane Hayashino, Ph.D., Beth Sullivan, Psy.D., Ferdinand Arcinue, Ph.D., Abby Bradecich, Psy.D.

2020 – Present

Advanced Practicum Student – UCSB Counseling & Psychological Services

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Provided tele-mental health utilizing a brief therapy model and evidence-based interventions, such as DBT skills training and CBT worksheets

Provided individual therapy to university students for treatment of a range of mental health issues including mood disorders, complex trauma, suicidality, and stage of life issues

Assisted in outreach initiatives

Completed intake interviews to assess level of care needed and services referrals

Attended weekly individual supervision and case consultation team meetings

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2019 – 2020

Practicum Student – UCSB Counseling & Psychological Services

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Created case conceptualizations, including diagnoses

Conducted quarterly case presentations

Participated in weekly supervision and didactics

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2018 – 2019

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Administered and interpreted cognitive and diagnostic assessments

Conducted intake interviews

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 Department of Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology
 Course: Psychology of Gender
 Responsible for all aspects of the course: syllabus design, lesson development, and grading
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 Facilitated class discussions and activities
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 Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology
 Course: Psychology of Gender – Winter 2018, Winter 2019, Spring 2020
 Course: Introduction to Helping Skills – Spring 2018, Spring 2019
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 Created lesson plans, facilitated activities, and evaluated students’ course work
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- 2011 – 2012 **Research Assistant, *Neural Basis of Addiction Laboratory- University of Houston***
Entered and managed precise data into Excel and other specialized databases
Assisted in writing grant proposals
Helped prepare posters, presentations, and research papers for dissemination
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RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Developed programming intended to foster community amongst marginalized students
Created reports that included impact of programming on underrepresented students
- 2017 – 2019 **Department Chair Assistant – *University of California, Santa Barbara***
Provided direct administrative assistance to the Chair of the Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology
Provided project support, including scheduling, announcements, and room reservations
Processed reimbursements
- 2017 – 2018 **Resident Assistant – *University of California, Santa Barbara***
Promoted community development through social and educational programming
Provided paraprofessional advising for over 40 student residents

- 2013 – 2016 **Center Coordinator, Texas A&M Health Science Center- IBT**
 Responsible for the administrative operations of the Center for Epigenetics & Disease Prevention
 Served as the executive assistant to the Center Director
 Prepared budget reports and provided pre- and post-award grant support
 Revised grant proposals and manuscripts
 Collaborated with the Human Resources department to process visiting scholars' international paperwork, performance reviews, and faculty hiring process
- 2013 **Educational Programs Coordinator, Mexican Institute of Greater Houston**
 Secured collaborations from organizations in the Houston area and expanded the Community Learning Center locations to deliver computer literacy classes for under-served adults
 Delivered presentations to community leaders and organizations
 Supervised classes and ensured students were meeting their educational goals
 Revised and updated student manuals

PUBLICATIONS

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Barrita, A., Caso, T. J., **del Castillo, S.**, Delucio, K., & Heredia, D. (2020, October 15). Challenging Times for Latinx Transgender and Non-Binary People. *Latinx Psychology Today* [Newsletter]. Retrieved from <https://nlpa.memberclicks.net/>

Barrita, A., Abreu, R. L., Aranda, E., Caso, T. J., **del Castillo, S.**, Cerezo, A., Delucio, K., & Heredia, D. (2020, June 9). Joint Statement Against the Removal of Health Protections for

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|------|---|
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| 2020 | Panelist, "Keys to Success and Survival in Graduate School." Virtual panel at the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education. |

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2018 Panel at *University of California, Santa Barbara*

SERVICE

- 2017 – Co-Founder and President, Queer and Trans Graduate Student Union
2021 *University of California, Santa Barbara*
- 2017 – Youth Support Group Leader, *Santa Barbara Transgender Advocacy*
2018 *Network*
- 2017 – Graduate Student Mentor, Graduate Scholars Program
2021 *University of California, Santa Barbara*
- 2016 – Trans Taskforce Member, Resource Center for Sexual and Gender
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- 2015 – Director of Student Engagement, *University of Houston LGBTQ Alumni*
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AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2020 National Latinx Psychological Association 2020 Conference Student
Scholarship Award
- 2019 American Psychological Association Division 44 Leadership and Advocacy
Travel Award
- 2018 Dixon-Levy Graduate Student Association Service Award
- 2018 Outstanding LGBTQ Organization Award – Queer and Trans Graduate
Student Union
- 2017 and 2018 POINT Fellowship – Semifinalist

- 2015 GLBT Leadership Education & Advocacy Program Scholarship – Winner
- 2015 OutTexas Scholarship – Winner

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

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American Psychological Association
- 2017 Gottman Couples Therapy Level 1 Training: Bridging the Couple Chasm
The Gottman Institute
- 2016 Trans Youth Care, *Los Angeles Gender Center*
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PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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Orgullo Special Interest Group – Leadership Collective Member
- 2015 – Present American Psychological Association, Divisions: APAGS, 17, 35, and 44 –
Graduate Student Member

ABSTRACT

Parental Support of Latinx Transgender Youth: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study

by

Sam del Castillo

The present study explored parental support of transgender Latinx youth. Transgender Latinx youth experience multiple, intersecting forms of oppression. Given the important role that parents play in youth's lives, parental support can act as a buffer against minority stressors (Meyer, 2003). Parental support is, in fact, associated with positive mental health outcomes, such as lower levels of depression, anxiety, and increased self-esteem (Olson et al., 2016; Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Ryan et al., 2010; Simons et al., 2013). However, transgender Latinxs have reported lower levels of acceptance compared to other ethnic groups (Harrison-Quintana et al., 2008). Research is lacking regarding factors that may play a part in parental support of transgender Latinx youth, including cultural values, such as *familismo*, *machismo/marianismo*, and *respeto*. Additionally, youth themselves can contribute valuable information about types of parental support they desire or would find most helpful. An understanding of parental support for transgender Latinx youth grounded in the voices of youth could provide valuable insight to inform parents, clinicians, and researchers. Thus, the present study seeks to draw on youths' perspectives to elucidate parental support for transgender Latinx youth.

Nine nonbinary and trans men/transmasculine Latinxs aged 18-23 were interviewed regarding their experiences with parental support. A research team analyzed the data utilizing a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). Analyses yielded six themes and

thirty-two sub-themes that created a model of parental support of transgender Latinx youth. Themes included in the model were as follows: Cultural Factors, External Factors, Existing Relationship with Parents, Youth Strategies, Supportive Behaviors, and Unsupportive Behaviors. The resulting model, *Dynamic Model of Parental Support for Transgender Latinx Youth*, illustrates the impact of cultural factors, external factors, and the existing parent-child relationship on youth's strategies, parental behaviors, and felt sense of support. In this model, parental support is a dynamic process, as well as a snapshot in time, with fluctuations in parent and youth behaviors modifying youth's feelings of support at a given point in time. This study advances research in parental support with unique contributions in terms of Latinx cultural factors, nuanced understanding of parental support, and dynamic interactions between parent and youth, as all of which is captured in the *Dynamic Model of Parental Support for Transgender Latinx Youth*. Limitations are addressed in terms of trustworthiness and transferability of results. Implications for practice, research, and parenting are discussed.

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Parental Support of Transgender Latinx Youth: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Transgender Latinx¹ youth are a systemically oppressed population existing and surviving at the intersection of transphobic and racist/xenophobic climates. Predictably, given the structural and interpersonal levels of oppression these youth face, they are at risk for worse mental and physical health outcomes. Latinx transgender youth are at one of the highest elevated risks for attempting suicide (33%) compared to other transgender youth (The Trevor Project, 2019). Health disparities in this population are also prevalent – for example, transgender Latinxs have the second highest rates of HIV diagnoses compared to all other ethnicities (Clark et al., 2017).

The transgender Latinx community is a significant and growing subpopulation of both the larger LGBTQ and Latinx communities. According to an analysis from The Williams Institute (2019), approximately 21% of LGBTQ people in the U.S. are Latinx, the majority of which are in the 18 – 24-year-old age range. Additionally, approximately 6% of Latinxs in the U.S. identify as LGBTQ, which is comparatively higher than other racial and ethnic groups (The Williams Institute, 2019). When it comes to Latinx millennials, the University of Chicago-based GenForward project found that 22% of Latinx millennials identify as LGBTQ, which was the highest among all ethnic groups (Cohen et al., 2018).

Transgender Latinx people experience marginalization both within the LGBTQ and Latinx communities. Frequently, Latinx LGBTQ people experience racism and stigma within

¹ *Latinx* is a term used due to its gender-inclusive versatility and it is meant to refer to people of Latin American origin and descent. It includes people who identify as Hispanic, Latino/a, and Chicano/a/x. For more information on the term *Latinx*, please see Santos (2017).

White LGBTQ spaces (Worthen, 2018). Latinx LGBTQ people are often fetishized and frequently experience invisibility and alienation within the larger LGBTQ community (Worthen, 2018; Alimahomed, 2010; Diaz et al., 2001). Transgender Latinx youth experience even more precarious circumstances. Although still severely underrepresented in the literature, research has found that trans Latina young women feel that sex work is the only resource available to survive (Bith-Melander et al., 2010). In addition to frequently experiencing racism, violence, and unemployment (Bith-Melander et al., 2010), transgender Latinxs often lack access to health care and mental health services that could help address the racist and transphobic conditions this community faces. LGBTQ Latinx have also reported experiencing “a lot” of discrimination against LGBTQ people in their racial communities (Cohen et al., 2018). The experience of multiple marginalization within both LGBTQ and Latinx spaces creates unique needs for this population that are specific to transgender Latinx youth.

Also specific to transgender Latinx youth is their cultural context. While the Latinx community is heterogenous, vibrantly diverse in terms of race, religion, immigration histories, and beliefs, there are uniting historical roots and cultural values prevalent in this community (Adames & Chavez-Duenas, 2016). The Latinx community consists of individuals with ethnical and cultural connections to Latin America (Salinas & Lozano, 2017). The transmission of cultural values often occurs through parental socialization, namely, it is parents who pass on cultural values to their children. Parents transmit cultural values, beliefs, traditions, and behavioral norms to their children through a process of ethnic-racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). Therefore, Latinx youth receive such ethnic-racial

socialization and are exposed to cultural values and beliefs through their parents, regardless of the youth's immigration status or national origin.

Given the crucial role that parents play in the lives of youth, as well as their role in transmitting beliefs and cultural values, parental support can buffer against minority stressors the youth might experience, such as harassment, discrimination, or rejection due to gender identity (Meyer, 2003). Minority stress theory provides a framework to understand the role parental support has in the lives of Latinx transgender youth (Meyer, 2003). Under the minority stress framework, factors such as positive interpersonal relationships (e.g., supportive parents) and social support may provide protections against minority stressors. Indeed, gender minority youth who receive parental support have lower rates of substance use, risky sexual behavior, depression, and suicide attempts compared to youth who experience familial rejection (Snapp et al., 2015; Rosario et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 2009; Rothman et al., 2012). Parental support may act as a buffer and has been associated with decreased depression and increased self-esteem (Ryan et al., 2009). Compared to transgender youth who do not receive parental support, youth who receive parental support are less likely to experience depression and anxiety, and they are more likely to have higher life satisfaction (Olson et al., 2016; Simons et al., 2013). These findings suggest the crucial role that parental support plays in transgender youth's wellbeing. Therefore, interventions that help promote parental support have a high potential to affect the wellbeing of transgender Latinx youth.

However, parental support is not always present. It is common for parents to exhibit negative reactions to their child's gender identity. A secondary analysis of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (2009) found that 45% of participants reported experiencing moderate to high amount family rejection (Klein & Golub, 2016). In a

qualitative study examining expectations of rejection (proximal stressor) among transgender individuals, participants noted that expectations of rejection from family were particular sources of internal stress (Rood et al., 2016).

Sociocultural influences appear to impact parental reactions to their child's sexual identity (Richter et al., 2017; Crosbie-Burnett et al., 1996). Ethnic minority parents (i.e., Black and Latinx) have reported greater parental rejection than White parents, a relationship which was mediated by greater levels of homonegativity (negative attitudes toward homosexuality; Richter et al., 2017). Parental rejection in Latinx populations is elevated compared to their White peers (Ryan et al., 2009). When it comes to transgender and gender nonconforming Latinxs, less than half (47%) reported being accepted by their families according to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (Harrison-Quintana et al., 2008). A 2010 survey found that less than half (45%) of Latinx LGBT people were out to all family members (Battle et al., 2012; Worthen, 2018), possibly due to expectations of parental rejection.

Factors influencing lower levels of Latinx parental acceptance have seldom been examined. However, research points to the influence of Latinx cultural values on general parenting behaviors (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007). It is possible that cultural values and gender role expectations (e.g., *machismo* and *marianismo*) may play a role in lower rates of acceptance. In fact, previous studies have suggested that Latinx cultural values that emphasize traditional gender roles may increase likelihood of familial rejection (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Akerlund & Cheung, 2000).

Simultaneously, cultural values may also act as protective factors. *Familismo*, or strong feelings of solidarity and loyalty within family members (Marin & Marin, 1991) is

highly prevalent within Latinx families, and may influence support among parents of LGBTQ youth. Previous research has found a complex relationship between *familismo* and parental support – at times positively influencing parental support, while at others creating conflict in how parents navigate relationships with other family members who are not supportive (Abreu et al., 2020).

An additional important factor to consider given the implications of parental support on Latinx transgender youth's mental health are the specifics of what support (e.g., behaviors, words, attitudes) the youth find most helpful. Little research has focused on what Latinx transgender youth experience as parental support or what would constitute as parental support. While existing research has provided some specific behaviors (e.g.,), this literature primarily exists for sexual minority youth, which may not always be transferable to the needs for support that transgender youth may require. Further exploration of specific factors of parental support (e.g., more affirming behaviors, greater knowledge of transgender issues, etc.) that may facilitate wellbeing of transgender Latinx youth would be highly beneficial.

Additionally, existing literature rarely takes into account cultural factors when assessing parental support. Although previous studies have shown that parental support may play a role in transgender individuals' wellbeing, the existing literature has mostly utilized measures that derive from White Eurocentric values of family and that were tested primarily on White samples which were then applied to Latinx populations. Parental support has been operationalized in previous studies as frequency of experiencing positive reactions related to LGBTQ identity (e.g., frequency of parents bringing child to and LGBTQ organization or event, frequency of parents talking openly about child's sexual orientation; Ryan et al., 2010), or as perceived parental reactions to sexual orientation, typically ranging from very

positive to very negative (D'Augelli et al., 2008; Willoughby et al., 2006). While these measures have been used with transgender Latinx populations, Latinx cultural values are largely missing from such evaluations of parental support.

Previous research has established a connection between parental support of Latinx LGBTQ youth and mental health outcomes (e.g., Ryan et al., 2009; Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). However, little is known about the specific types of support transgender Latinx youth find most helpful. The shift in needs of support over time has also seldom been explored. It is important to understand how Latinx cultural values influence the forms of parental support trans Latinxs receive. It is likely that the forms of parental support transgender Latinx youth desire and receive may be different than the forms of parental support that communities with different cultural backgrounds provide.

Purpose of the study

Transgender Latinx youth have a considerably elevated risk of experiencing negative mental health outcomes. Given the role that parental support plays as a protective factor, investigation of factors contributing to parental support should be further examined. The existing literature focuses primarily on models of parental acceptance and rejection that fall short of addressing the experiences of youth at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities. Thus, studying the perspectives of transgender Latinx youth may improve upon existing literature.

The present study aimed to fill this gap by explicating parental support of transgender Latinx youth from the standpoint of the youth. To that end, using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014), the researcher gathered interview data from transgender

Latinx youth to develop a theoretical model of parental support. Ultimately, the goal of the study was to answer the question, “What is parental support for transgender Latinx youth?”

This project has great potential for helping explicate factors influencing wellbeing through forms of parental support for transgender Latinx youth. In addition to advancing theory and research about this population and about parenting, a model of parental support for transgender Latinx youth can enhance efforts to reduce health disparities experienced by a particularly vulnerable segment of our society. Findings could help inform future interventions aimed at increasing parental support of transgender Latinx youth, develop or enhance culturally attuned parent support therapy groups, as well as psychoeducational materials for both youth and parents. Finally, results may be useful for a wide variety of purposes and contexts well beyond academic and clinical settings – one such example could be in helping community-based organizations that serve Latinx communities to become better equipped to serve parents of transgender youth and transgender youth themselves, as well as organizations that serve LGBTQ communities to become better equipped to serve Latinx communities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental Support of Transgender Youth

Transgender youth face discrimination, bullying, stigma, prejudice, and violence, which often lead to mental and physical health disparities (IOM, 2011). Transgender youth are more likely to be homeless than their heterosexual peers and 20 – 40% of homeless youth are LGBT, many of whom indicated that parental rejection was a main reason for experiencing homelessness (Durso & Gates, 2012; Ray, 2006). Minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) helps explicate the pathways between discrimination and negative mental health outcomes. Minority stress theory posits that, due to their minority position, transgender individuals are exposed to additional proximal (e.g., internalized transphobia, expectations of rejection) and distal (e.g., prejudice events, violence) stressors that create a hostile social environment which leads to negative mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003; Hendricks & Testa, 2012). However, there are also stress-ameliorating factors that help disrupt pathways and can buffer or prevent adverse mental health effects (Meyer, 2003). Within this framework, parental support may be viewed as disruptive to stressors because it has been shown to provide ameliorating effects.

Parental support may act as a protective factor for LGBT individuals, protecting from the development of psychopathology through social support and acceptance (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Ryan et al., 2010). In fact, parental support of LGBT youth often leads to positive mental health outcomes and psychological wellbeing (D'Amico et al., 2015). A study examining the positive role that parental support has on LGBT young adults found that, when considering other forms of support (e.g., friend and community support), parental

support had the strongest overall influence on positive outcomes such as life adjustment, self-esteem and LGBT esteem (Snapp et al., 2015). Therefore, parental support may be considered critical to the wellbeing of transgender youth.

Parental support has been shown to shift over time. Initially, it is common for parents to have a negative reaction to learning their child's transgender identity; however, parents frequently come to eventually accept their child (Goodrich, 2009; Philips & Ancis, 2008). An interview study of parents of LGBTQ individuals by Goodrich (2009) found that social support (e.g., through PFLAG or Dignity USA, or friends or relatives) shifted parents' initial negative reactions and allowed them to accept their new identity as parents of an LGBTQ child. Other studies have had similar findings, identifying in particular that social support, education, and viewing this process as an opportunity for personal growth may lead to more supportive behaviors and more satisfying familial bonds (Gonzalez et al., 2013; Goodrich, 2009; Philips & Ancis, 2008).

Factors influencing parental reactions to their child's gender identity can shed light on this phenomenon. A review of literature regarding factors associated with positive outcomes (acceptance, emotional wellbeing, and a healthy family environment) to the disclosure of sexual orientation to parents found that individual differences such as a child's status in the home, age of disclosure, involvement in a romantic relationship, and pride in sexual orientation have been known to affect parental reactions (Heatherington & Lavner, 2008; Savin-Williams & Dube, 1998). As Heatherington and Lavner (2008) rightfully pointed out, while these factors are often treated separately, individuals have multiple identities (e.g., Latinx transgender woman). As such, factors influencing parental support of Latinx

transgender youth should be examined holistically rather than individually or in an additive manner.

Parental acceptance is facilitated by parental contact with their child, listening, and exposure to other sexual minority individuals (Heatherington & Lavner, 2008). Parents may also benefit from understanding the positive aspects of being a parent of a transgender child. Perhaps reframing the challenges of learning a child's gender identity as an opportunity for growth and greater openness with their child may help parents along their acceptance journey. There are, of course, many positive aspects to being a parent of a transgender child. In a previous study examining self-reported perceptions of the positive aspects of being the parent of an LGBT child (Gonzalez et al., 2013), parents reported that having an LGBT child has presented them with opportunities for personal growth and development, including open mindedness, new perspectives (e.g., reevaluating previously held beliefs), deepening compassion, and closer family relationships. In fact, participants in this study indicated that having an LGBT child helped them build a closer bond with their child (Gonzalez et al., 2013). This could prove to be a potentially fruitful avenue for intervention. Highlighting positive aspects of having an LGBT child or helping parents articulate these positive aspects may help parents become more supportive and strengthen their relationships with their child (Brinol et al., 2012). Perhaps presenting this information to parents who are early in their acceptance journey or to transgender youth themselves could be useful in helping them along and provide them with hopeful outcomes to look forward to.

In framing the discussion regarding parental support, it is worth considering that the metrics of what constitutes healthy and affirming behaviors on the part of parents has largely been determined by White Eurocentric ideals of family. Namely, previous research has

mostly framed desired outcomes for transgender youth within a White Western framework of family support – e.g., affirmation of gender identity, emotional wellbeing, and healthy family environment (Heatherington & Lavner, 2008) and has utilized top-down approaches to examine parental support. Additionally, previous research on family support of transgender youth has included primarily White samples.

Little is known about affirming behaviors and desired outcomes from the perspective of Latinx youth and Latinx families themselves. To date, the needs of Latinx transgender youth in regard to specific affirming and supportive behaviors that they would like to receive from their parents remain unclear. Latinx parents of transgender youth have also been largely left out of the literature and their perspectives on the specific support they are able to offer and/or would like to provide to their child is needed. It is of crucial importance to further explore how Latinx cultural values help shape these expectations and dynamics.

Latinx Cultural Values

Little research has been conducted to examine the ways in which Latinx cultural values may impact parental support of Latinx transgender youth. Previous research has indicated that Latinx cultural values guide and influence behaviors, including parenting behaviors (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007). Therefore, it is important to understand how these values may influence parenting behaviors of parents of transgender youth.

Latinx communities tend to endorse collectivism, or a tendency to define oneself in relation to social and cultural roles (Eaton & Rios, 2017; Oyserman et al., 2002). Within the Latinx community there is a prevalence of certain cultural values, which include *familismo*, *respeto*, *simpatia*, *personalismo*, *machismo*, and *marianismo*. Of most importance to the present study are the values of *familismo*, *machismo*, and *marianismo*.

Familismo. *Familismo* can best be described as the strong identification and attachment of individuals with their families, as well as feelings of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity among family members (Comas-Diaz, 1989). *Familismo* has been conceptualized as including four primary components: familial support (reciprocity), interconnectedness, familial honor, and the subjugation of self for family (Lugo Steidel & Contreras, 2003). Strong feelings of loyalty and solidarity are thought to be part of this value (Marin & Marin, 1991). Previous research has found *familismo* to be identified as a core value by Latinxs and within this value there is a view of extended family as serving a primary role in providing social and emotional support (Calzada et al., 2010).

It is important to remember that Latinx families exist within a larger society that is patriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic. Thus, Latinx families are not inherently or uniquely homophobic or transphobic, but rather, are influenced by their broader social context that (re)enforces these systems which leads to the enactment of these oppressive systems within interpersonal and familial networks (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Patron 2020; Abalos, 2002).

Parenting is influenced by the value of *familismo* in Latinx households. Previous research has indicated that the value of *familismo* is a critical value for Latinxs and that it is inherent to parenting practices and styles for many Latinxs (Ayon et al., 2015). Within the value of *familismo*, Latinx parents tend to highly value obedience and respect from their children (Calzada, 2010; Gonzalez-Ramos et al., 1998; Harwood et al., 1999).

There are many positive aspects and outcomes of *familismo* that help us understand the utility and importance of such a value within Latinx communities. *Familismo* has been shown to serve as an asset that contributes to educational success and academic achievement

(Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Research has found higher levels of *familismo* to be correlated with greater parental warmth, which can in turn lead to reducing adolescent externalizing behaviors (Gonzales et al., 2011). Additionally, a meta-analysis of studies on the relationship between *familismo* and mental health outcomes in Latinx populations indicated that there is a small effect size of *familismo* on depression, suicide, and internalizing behaviors (Valdivieso-Mora et al., 2016).

In terms of understanding how *familismo* functions within families of transgender youth, the few studies that have examined this relationship point to a complex dynamic, and have mostly focused on LGBT families more broadly. A qualitative study by Abreu and colleagues (2020) suggested that the cultural value of *familismo* may play a complicated role in how parents react to their child's sexual orientation or gender identity. In this study, some families responded to this cultural value by accepting their child in order to keep harmony in the family or model acceptance to other family members, while other participants faced difficulties in their family dynamics due to unaccepting family members (Abreu et al., 2020). Perhaps individuals who disclosed experiencing difficulties in family dynamics can best be understood within the framework of *familismo* which requires individuals to make sacrifices for the larger family unit (nuclear and extended; Calzada et al., 2012).

In a secondary analysis of interviews with gay and queer Latino college students, Patron (2020) found that many participants discussed their difficulty with self-identifying as queer and gay due to cultural and familial messages connotations of non-heterosexual identities and behaviors as “wrong” or “bad.” A few participants mentioned that they preferred to wait to come out to their families out of fear of disappointing their parents or lack of acceptance (Patron, 2020). Regarding familial experiences, Patron (2020) identified

disparate familial experiences in which *familismo* appeared to lead to both adverse and supportive experiences, further complicating the way we understand this value to play out in the lives of LGBTQ Latinxs. Three participants reflected on their negative experiences coming out to their parents, as well as being surprised by negative reactions given previous support from the same family members. These participants mentioned hoping that their academic success would overshadow their queer or gay identity and thus lead to acceptance from their parents. Simultaneously, other family members and chosen family were able to provide support and were accepting of these same participants, further illustrating how parental rejection or acceptance did not dictate their experiences in their totality (Patron, 2020).

Tacit disclosures of gender identity may be a way for Latinx transgender individuals to maintain cultural traditions of *respeto* and *familismo*, while also living authentically and being true to oneself (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). In previous work by Decena (2008), “tacit subjectivity” was used to describe how Latinx sexual minorities navigate the complexities of cultural norms and expectations with individual realities by partially making their identities known to their family without crossing boundaries of *respeto* and not verbally coming out. Building on this area, Delucio and colleagues (2020) conducted interviews with gay Mexican American men in which the participants discussed the importance of navigating and negotiating cultural and gender(ed) expectations with disclosures to their family members. It is possible that this form of tacit disclosure may facilitate family support for families who are not ready to directly confront the realities of their child’s sexuality or gender at that particular time, or may interpret explicit disclosure as a form of disrespect for hierarchy or as the individual placing their desires above the family’s needs. It is likely that this would also be

the case with Latinx transgender youth, especially early in their transition journey. For Latinx transgender individuals whose transition may include medical interventions (e.g., hormone replacement therapy, puberty blockers, mastectomy, etc.), tacit disclosures may not be possible. Given that parental consent is often required in order to receive medical interventions as a minor, Latinx transgender youth may find themselves in a position to have to come out to their parents or caregivers about their gender identity in order to receive medical treatment.

Machismo and Marianismo. Latinx cultural values that emphasize traditional gender roles may increase likelihood of familial rejection and reduce family support (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Akerlund & Cheung, 2000). Previous research has indicated that traditional gender roles such as *machismo* and *marianismo* may play a role in parental support. Parents who have more traditional *machista/marianista* beliefs may be less willing to accept nontraditional gender roles and have more strained parent-child relationships (Gattamorta et al., 2019), leading to higher levels of rejection (Richter, 2015).

Machismo refers to the idealization of masculinity and the expectation of Latino men to exhibit bravery, aggression, emotional restraint, and sexual prowess (Mirandé, 1997). *Machismo* was weaponized as a tool during the process of colonization. Through colonization, *machismo* was enforced by colonizers and maintained in Latin America in order to control the male body (Hardin, 2002). Therefore, *machismo* can be thought of as a tool for subjugation. *Machismo* may affect parental support due to cultural gender role expectations and could help explain the higher prevalence of parental rejection reported by Latinx sexual minority men in comparison to their White peers and even Latina women (Ryan et al., 2009). Due to *machismo*'s expectations of traditional gender roles and

masculinity, transgender youth who may be exhibiting nontraditional gender roles may experience higher levels of parental rejection. Those who are more supportive of traditional patriarchal gender roles are less likely to be supportive of sexual minorities (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). In fact, some Latinx people believe that “being gay is the worst thing a man can do” (Estrada et al., 2011; see also Mirandé, 1997). Gay male sexual behavior (e.g., risky behavior) has been shown to be influenced by *machismo* (Carballo-Diequez et al., 2004). Additionally, *machismo* has been shown to be positively associated with internalized homophobia (Estrada et al., 2011).

Marianismo refers to the expectations that Latina women be submissive, feminine, chaste, and religious (Cauce et al., 2002). In a similar vein, *marianismo* expects Latina women to be family-centric, nurturing, and respect patriarchal values (Nuñez et al., 2016). Because of these expectations, Latinx sexual minority women have reported that their families expect them to marry a man and become mothers (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2018). In these cases, the participant’s sexual orientation created strife between them and their families, as their family members assumed that they would not be able to marry or have children due to their sexual orientation (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2018). These women reported that they were concerned about not receiving support from their families if they violated traditional gender roles (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2018). However, a study that examined Latina sexual minority women’s experience with coming out to their families found that the majority of women received moderate to positive reactions from their families (Acosta, 2011). Perhaps this helps reinforce the belief that because of the patriarchal structure prevalent in Latinx culture, it is less acceptable for men to violate gender role expectations.

Not all aspects of *machismo* are considered to be negative. There has been a shift to begin to understand how *machismo* has been used to stereotype Latino men and enact racist ideologies and expectations (e.g., Arcienaga et al., 2008). Emotional connectedness, ethnic identity, and problem-solving are among the positive aspects of Latinx male gender role socialization, sometimes differentiated from traditional *machismo* and referred to as *caballerismo* (Arcienaga et al., 2008). A previous study with Mexican-American gay males indicated that most participants aligned themselves more with *caballerismo* than traditional *machismo* (Estrada et al., 2011). Similarly; *marianismo* may also be expressed as the desire to unify, care, and protect the family (Abreu et al., 2020; Delgado-Romero et al., 2013). It is also important to note that *machismo* and *marianismo* are not exclusive to men and women respectively, but rather, they reflect a patriarchal ideology and power structure that is systemic and widespread, and such values are expected to be internalized as patriarchal values (Nuñez et al., 2016).

While on their own *machismo* and *marianismo* may lead to prejudice, homophobia, transphobia, and familial rejection, it is also possible that when taken into a larger context and combined with other Latinx cultural values their additive effect may result in different outcomes. When combined, *machismo*, *marianismo*, and *familismo* have shown to foster an environment of support and acceptance (Abreu et al., 2020). During a qualitative study with Latino fathers of sexual minority Latinxs, several of the fathers discussed how it was precisely their cultural values that led them to have stronger connections to their child and facilitated their acceptance (Abreu et al., 2020).

Transgender Latinx Youth

The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, the largest transgender survey to date, found that more than one in five (21%) Latinx transgender respondents who had transitioned did so before the age of 18, and nearly half (47%) transitioned between the ages of 18 and 24 (James & Salcedo, 2016). Latinxs are more likely to identify as transgender than their White peers (Flores et al., 2016). The majority, or approximately 38%, of the LGBT population is considered to be youth and young adults (ages 18 – 24 years; The Williams Institute, 2019). Of the LGBT population living in the U.S., 21% is Latinx, and females comprise 54% of this particular population (The Williams Institute, 2019). In regard to identity labels, younger Latino men are more likely to identify as bisexual compared to older men, and their open bisexual identity has been correlated with kinship/peer support and flexible gender roles (Severson et al., 2013). Of a larger national transgender survey, the largest group within transgender Latinxs was comprised of nonbinary people (James & Salcedo, 2017) and similarly to the larger LGBT community, most transgender Latinxs were between the ages of 18 – 24 years old (49%; James & Salcedo, 2017).

Issues that face transgender Latinx youth are at times similar to issues facing non-Latinx transgender youth; however, experiencing oppression due to race/ethnicity and LGBT status, as well as navigating cultural contexts presents unique challenges for transgender Latinx youth. Latinx sexual and gender minority youth tend to be less likely than their White peers to be out to their parents (Groves et al., 2006). Latinx LGBT youth are often faced with a “double bind” of choosing between coming out and risking rejection from their families or concealing their identities and compromising their ability to be fully authentically themselves (Legate & Ryan, 2014). LGBT Latinx youth experience the additional tension of upholding their collectivist values and maintaining group harmony over their own individual needs

(Eaton & Rios, 2017; Chang, 2015). However, younger Latinx sexual minorities are more likely to be out to their family compared to older Latinx sexual minority individuals (Severson et al., 2013).

Utilizing Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, Duran & Perez (2017), found that Latino undergraduate queer young men negotiated the process of coming out to their family by constantly educating them on their sexuality. Those who chose not to come out did so in order to remain financially and emotionally stable (Duran & Perez, 2017). Regardless of outness, all participants found familial capital from peer networks and by finding individuals who shared similar racial identities and sexualities, which allowed them to build communities of acceptance that fostered ties to their Latinx culture (Duran & Perez, 2017).

A meta-analysis that examined literature on the role of family in Latinx sexual minorities found that family support has been consistently associated with lower rates of stress and higher self-esteem (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Snapp et al., 2015). While some LGBT Latinx individuals experience parental rejection including being kicked out of their homes due to their identity, it is also common for this population to find support within extended family networks or by expanding their definition of family (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Duran & Perez, 2017). A study on sexual minority migrant and immigrant individuals found that the majority of participants saw their family and friends as their primary source of support (Chavez, 2011). When they experienced difficulties, these participants reported turning to other family members and friends in their time of need (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Chavez, 2011).

The complicated dynamics that can be present in Latinx families of LGBT individuals was discussed in a meta-analysis by Przeworski & Piedra (2020). In a study by Duran & Perez (2017), Latinx sexual minority men indicated that they found their families to be both supportive and non-supportive (such as committing microaggressions against them). Other studies have also reported that within Latinx families, family members can serve as both a source of stress and support (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). Latinx LGBT individuals have indicated that they have experienced bullying and taunting by their family members; however, they also experienced support (e.g., emotional support) from other members within the same family (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020; Finlinson et al., 2008). Exploring coming out experiences of Hispanic² sexual minority youth and young adults, Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez (2018) found that most participants described their relationship with their parents had improved over time.

In a large national survey, transgender Latinx youth reported slightly higher rates of experiences of familial rejection in comparison to the average (49% to 44%) (James & Salcedo, 2017). However, 81% of respondents reported receiving some level of support from at least one immediate family member, such as using their preferred name or pronoun or expressing their support (James & Salcedo, 2017). Such data indicate that complex family dynamics are present for Latinx youth across the LGBT spectrum and highlight the need for culturally-relevant interventions and services.

For LGBT Latinxs, cultural expectations and gender roles play a role in mental health outcomes. For example, higher levels of gender nonconformity among cisgender gay and

² The term *Hispanic* is used here to reflect the language used by this particular study.

bisexual Latino men were associated with higher levels of distress (Sandford et al., 2007). This suggests that *machismo* and expectations around gender conformity affect cisgender sexual minorities as well. It would be important to understand how parental support is affected by gendered expectations and whether transgender Latinx youth face similar expectations.

Support for Parents of Transgender Latinx Youth and Access to Services

Previous research on Latinx college students has suggested that collectivist values prevalent in Latinx communities may prevent or make it difficult to utilize social support networks due to cultural values that prioritize group harmony and not burdening others (Eaton & Rios, 2017; Chang, 2015). Additionally, because of group harmony values and values of *respeto* [respect], parents are less likely to openly communicate with their children compared to White American families (Calzada et al., 2012). Almost paradoxically, *familismo* encourages mutual support among family members (Sabogal et al., 1987; Triandis et al., 1982), appearing to be in conflict with the value of *respeto*. It is unclear how or when seemingly competing cultural values are prioritized. Therefore, this begs the question – where do parents of Latinx LGBT youth receive support?

Cultural insensitivity (e.g., lack of Spanish-speaking providers or culturally relevant interventions) can lead LGBT Latinxs to have difficulty finding appropriate care or refuse to seek treatment altogether (Chavez, 2011). Individuals who are situated within the margins due to being both Latinx and LGBT may have an especially difficult time finding providers who are competent in providing care. Additionally, the fear of deportation due to seeking healthcare is a legitimate concern for Latinx LGBT individuals who are undocumented and may prevent them from accessing services (Chavez, 2011). Latinx LGBT individuals who are

undocumented may also lack access to health insurance or affordable mental health services (Chavez, 2011).

In addition to difficulty finding competent care for Latinx populations, Latinx LGBT youth also must find care that is competent in LGBT issues. Exemplifying this issue is the concern that 32% of trans Latinx respondents who saw a health care provider in the last year reported having at least one negative experience related to being transgender and 26% reported that they did not see a doctor when they needed to due to fear of being mistreated for being transgender (James & Salcedo, 2017). Therefore, health providers who serve Latinx populations must also be informed and trained in working with LGBT populations.

Community-based support networks offer a promising avenue for helping parents offer the support to their LGBT child. This is especially important given that 25% of Latinxs do not have health insurance (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Organizations such as Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Gay-Straight Alliance (GSAs) school organizations, and other similar such networks have been present in U.S. communities since the early 1970s and 1980s, and often offer parent support groups to parents of LGBT youth. An additional benefit of such organizations, such as GSAs, is that they have been associated with safer school climates for LGBT youth (Toomey et al., 2012; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2004; Russell et al., 2009). However, many of these organizations' initial educational information such as pamphlets, websites, and other media were not accessible in Spanish language, thus leaving Spanish-speaking parents of Latinx LGBT youth without the ability to access these resources. It appears that more recently, such organizations have been making an attempt at reaching Latinx communities and have even translated their websites into Spanish or offer Latinx-specific resources such as workshops for Latinx youth and parents.

Community health workers, such as *promotoras* (briefly trained, paraprofessional community health workers), may be able to help Latinx parents of transgender youth navigate available services and fill the gap in services that are sorely needed in the community. Previous research on implementation of community-based interventions on Latinx families have indicated that the camaraderie between participants' and *promotoras* may contribute to programs' success (Schmied et al., 2015; Bill et al., 2009; Deitrick et al., 2010; Reinschmidt et al., 2006). It is also likely that Latinx cultural values of *personalismo* may facilitate receiving information regarding mental health services from someone from their own community such as a *promotora*. Discussing a child's transgender identity with a paraprofessional from the community may eliminate the barrier of stigma and may be easier and more culturally congruent for Latinx parents.

These promising results in the use of *promotoras* to help Latinx communities access services suggest the value of employing similar strategies in the context of assisting parents of Latinx transgender youth gain access to services. The goal of such strategy is that gaining access to community support, information on transgender youth, and parent support groups may assist parents in better being able to provide the support that transgender youth need from them. As previous research has shown, being exposed to other sexual minorities is one example that has helped facilitate parental acceptance (Heatherington & Lavner, 2008). Gaining access to information regarding issues facing transgender youth may also help alleviate the burden that Latinx transgender youth have expressed of constantly having to educate their families on transgender issues (Duran & Perez, 2017).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Rationale for Approach

The present study aimed to develop a theoretical framework grounded in participants' experiences of parental support. To this end, a qualitative approach was selected in order to explore the study's research question: What is parental support for transgender Latinx youth?

Qualitative approaches are most useful when the goals of the study are of exploring individuals' perspectives, understanding of meaning-making, and values that may underly or influence behaviors (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, this approach is consistent with this study's research questions and purpose. Additionally, utilizing a qualitative approach was particularly useful given the existing gap of literature addressing the topic and population of the present study.

The present study consisted of virtual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, within a constructivist grounded theory tradition as established by Kathy Charmaz (2014). Constructivist grounded theory was selected as the most appropriate approach for this project due to its constructivist and interpretative approach. Such bottom-up approach is helpful in addressing the goal of this study, namely gaining an in-depth understanding of parental support for Latinx transgender youth that is grounded in the data. Additionally, this approach helps elucidate how cultural factors influence the youth's experiences with support, as well as barriers and facilitators of parental support. A constructivist grounded theory approach helps create theory emerging from the data. Theory development is beneficial in this case due to the potential for development of interventions that would help increase parental support in this population.

Research Paradigm

The present study utilizes a constructivist grounded theory approach. A constructivist approach assumes that reality is socially constructed and asserts that there are many truths and realities that may exist, while also contending that such realities may be shared among people (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such paradigm is useful in this study given that youth may have different views on which forms of support are most helpful, as this approach allows for the exploration of multiple experiences. Additionally, constructivist grounded theory encourages the development of a partnership between participant and researcher and enables a mutual construction of meaning (Mills et al., 2006). The focus on partnership and co-construction of meaning allows the researcher to be emerged in the data from the beginning and develop theory that is grounded in the data, a central aspect of this approach (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, the use of this approach minimizes privileging certain narratives over others based on the researcher's views (Charmaz, 2014). For these reasons, grounded theory is considered to be the gold standard of qualitative research (Birks & Mills, 2015).

The inductive strategies of analyzing data utilized in a grounded theory approach take individual cases, incidents or experiences and develop progressively more abstract conceptual categories to synthesize, explain, and identify patterns within the data (Charmaz, 2001). Grounded theory involves a process of collecting data, creating categories based on the data, exploring the connections found among the categories, and developing theory that is based on the data (Charmaz, 2014; Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Given that this is an understudied area of research, a constructivist and interpretative approach allowed for the data to guide analysis and develop theory grounded in the data.

Positionality and Reflexivity

The utilization of a constructivist grounded theory approach necessitates the examination of preconceptions, biases, and values on behalf of the researcher, as this approach posits that the researcher is not a neutral observer (Charmaz, 2000). I conducted this study as a graduate student in Counseling Psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara with a research background on LGBTQ and Latinx populations and issues. My identities include mixed-race Mexican immigrant, queer, and transgender (nonbinary/transmasculine). In terms of my roles on the project, I collaborated with faculty and student researchers to develop of the interview protocol, conducted the majority of interviews with participants, co-led research team meetings throughout the coding process, and finalized the study findings with the guidance of my faculty advisor. I believe that my identities as a nonbinary Latinx young person may have facilitated building rapport between myself and the participants. Another important consideration is that my gender expression is transmasculine, which potentially influenced the dynamic with the participants. This appeared to have allowed for deeper conversations on these topics and facilitated building trust with participants due to shared experiences.

Given my lived experience as a queer and trans Mexican immigrant, and knowledge of existing research on parental support of LGBTQ Latinx youth (e.g., Ryan et al., 2009; Abreu et al., 2020), there are a variety of assumptions and biases that I brought into the research process. Prior to the beginning of data collection, I articulated my biases and assumptions. Specifically, I believed that, in general, youth would perceive their parents to be generally supportive of them in their overall wellbeing; however, I expected that parental support specific to the youth's transgender identity, the youth would desire supportive behaviors that the parents were likely not already providing. I expected that the participants

would wish that their parents engaged in specific behaviors that affirm their gender identity, rather than providing a more overall or general support. I anticipated that the youth would desire that their parents communicated more directly their acceptance of their gender identity, such as explicitly stating that they support their child's transgender identity. I believed that youth would want their parents to use current inclusive language to signal that they were knowledgeable of transgender issues, and as a way to affirm their child's identity. Given the context of the global pandemic of COVID-19, I expected that there might be new tensions that would arise between youth and their parents in regard to parental support. Since I expected that many youth may have had to spend more time at home with their parents or return to live at home due to the pandemic and perhaps without access to spaces with other transgender youth, I expected that the youth would discuss their needs of parental support within this context. Despite these preconceived assumptions, I attempted to approach the interview and data analysis in a nonjudgmental and nonleading way with the goal of fully capturing the experiences of the participants. The research team and I engaged in memo writing throughout the process in order to discuss and process our reactions.

In an effort to enhance the rigor of the study, I enlisted a coding team. The coding team consisted of three undergraduate research assistants, as well as myself. The three undergraduate research assistants were students at the University of California, Santa Barbara. All three research assistants were Latinx, and were knowledgeable about research in the area of LGBTQ and Latinx psychology. Prior to beginning the data analysis process, the research team met to discuss positionality and social locations. The researcher team examined values, beliefs, and preconceived notions that may influence the research process. Discussions included values surrounding parental support of transgender youth, and cultural

values, as an example. Ongoing discussions and engagement in reflexivity occurred throughout the data analysis process. Additionally, the research team engaged in memo-writing throughout the process. Memo-writing helped elaborate processes, assumptions, and actions that were contained within the codes (Charmaz, 2006).

Participants

Interviewees were nine young adults (age range 18-23 years old) who self-identified as Latinx and transgender. Participants resided in the California central coast region, including Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

Although there was a mix of transmasculine, transfeminine, and nonbinary participants, the majority of participants were trans men/transmasculine and nonbinary. Participants included first, second, and multi-generation immigrants, which allowed for a range of experience of varying levels of acculturation, adherence to cultural values, and immigration experiences. Please see *Table 1* for more information on participant demographics.

The size and composition of the sample were consistent with constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000). There was high homogeneity among the sample, largely due to limited locations of participant recruitment, narrow eligible age ranges, and other specific inclusion criteria. The Latinx community in the Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties consists primarily of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American individuals (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017; Lima et al., 2019). Additionally, the questions the participants were asked were specific and focused, and interviews continued until saturation was reached.

Considering these factors, the total number of participants (nine young adults), provided

sufficient data to gain a greater understanding of the phenomena without posing an issue of amassing large amounts of unfocused data.

Instruments & Measures

Interviews were chosen, as opposed to other methods of data collection such as focus groups, because they were deemed more appropriate for gathering the thick, rich data that was sought for this study (Geertz, 1973). Face-to-face interviews that include open-ended questions are capable of providing the most in-depth and rich source of knowledge (Kvale, 1996). The selected method and approach was the most appropriate avenue to accomplish the study's goals and answer the study's research question. This study is of great importance given the implications of parental support on Latinx transgender youth mental health.

Demographics. Participants completed a demographics questionnaire via Qualtrics prior to their interview. Responses to demographic questions determined participant eligibility, such as responses to age, gender, sexual orientation, immigrant status, and ethnicity.

Interview Protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on research literature on parental support (e.g., Ryan et al., 2009; Abreu et al., 2020), LGBT Latinx youth (e.g., Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2018; Eaton & Rios, 2017), and Latinx cultural values (e.g., Patron, 2020; Calzada, 2010). Interviews are ideal for similar topics discussed in this study which may include sensitive disclosures on the part of the participant (Few et al., 2003). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for follow-up questions based on participant responses, as well as clarification, elaboration, and recontextualization from participants on specific meanings they ascribe to phenomena (Kvale, 1996). Please see *Appendix A* for interview protocol.

The interviews were semi-structured and based on the research question (see *Appendix A*). The research question that this study aimed to elucidate is: What is parental support for transgender Latinx youth? The questions listed in the interview protocol (*Appendix A*) represent the general topics that guided the interviews and do not represent a comprehensive list of questions asked, as it would not be appropriate for research within a constructivist grounded theory approach to conduct interviews in a solely structured interview format (Kvale, 1996; Charmaz, 2014). For these reasons, a semi-structured interview protocol was selected above other methods of data collection.

Procedure

Inclusion Criteria. In order to meet inclusion criteria for the study, participants had to be individuals who self-identified as: transgender (identified with a different gender than the sex they were assigned at birth), Latinx/Hispanic/Chicanx, reside in California, and be 18-23 years of age. Participants included in the study were not necessarily out to their parents about their transgender identity. Individuals who did not meet inclusion criteria were not interviewed.

For the purposes of this study, participants consisted of individuals between the ages of 18 and 23 who reflected on their current and previous experiences as youth. The age range was selected based on several factors. Firstly, youth who are aged 18-21 are still likely living at home with their parents or primary caregivers or may have just recently moved away after high school and began gaining some independence. Thus, their environment is likely to still be influenced by their parents during this period. During this age range, it is likely that the youth are still included in their parent's health insurance plan, and therefore their parents may be aware of transition-related care they may be receiving and may be dependent upon

their parent's consent and support in order to receive transition related care. It is also likely that the youth may have recently "come out" or disclosed their trans identity to their parents during this period (James et al., 2016).

Recruitment. Participants were recruited through purposive and theoretical sampling methods (Palinkas et al., 2015; Naderifar et al., 2017; Chenitz & Swanson, 1986) as part of a larger study examining family navigation as a means to improve access to mental health services for LGBTQ youth and their parents. Consistent with constructivist grounded theory, sampling was intended to assist with the development of theory, as opposed to population representation (Charmaz, 2014). Participants were recruited from November 2020 until August 2021. Participants were recruited through local LGBT and/or Latinx community centers and nonprofit organizations (e.g., SBTAN, Pacific Pride Foundation, CAUSE, Lompoc Pride Alliance) in California. These organizations were selected due to their connections to the transgender community, Latinx community connections, and their parent-focused programming, which have high potential for recruitment opportunities. Recruitment materials instructed participants to contact the researcher via email. Additionally, participants also referred other community members to the study, which was helpful in gaining access to more participants from the community who may not otherwise have access to community organizations. After the completion of their interview, each participant received a \$50 gift card. IRB approval for this project was obtained prior to data collection.

Interviews. Participants completed demographic forms prior to the interview in order to determine eligibility. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine transgender Latinx young adults from California central coast in order to address the study's research questions. Interviews with participants continued until saturation was reached. Interviews

lasted approximately one hour and were conducted by the researcher via video conferencing (e.g., Zoom). Interviews were conducted in English, though participants were offered the option of English or Spanish depending on their preferred language. Verbal consent was obtained from participants at the time of the interview and the interview was audio recorded for transcription.

Interviews were digitally recorded and most interviews were transcribed verbatim by a team of five Latinx undergraduate research assistants that were trained by the researcher and had experience in qualitative research. Identifying information was omitted from transcripts. Transcripts were then reviewed, and any remaining identifying information was removed. Audio recordings and transcripts were labeled with a unique participant ID number in order to maintain participant confidentiality. The team of transcribers received training on conducting research with the transgender Latinx community. Approximately three of the interviews were also transcribed by the software Transcribeme in order to facilitate the transcription process.

Participants were invited to participate in the participant check process at two points in the data analysis process, as participant checks help ensure credibility in the process (Morrow, 2005). They had the opportunity to individually review their own transcript and provide feedback once initial codes were developed, and they could participate in a group participant check once the initial themes were developed. No participants elected to engage in participant checks.

Data Analysis

Data Analytic Plan

Transcripts were coded and analyzed by a coding team comprised of four members, including the researcher. The coding team received training on constructivist grounded theory and qualitative coding (e.g., theoretical, focused, axial coding). During the initial phase of coding, all coding team members participating in exercises to discuss their interpretations of the data, coding technique, and consistency. Transcripts were independently coded by each member of the coding team and were then discussed and compared in order to develop codes and categories from the data. Qualitative interviews were analyzed in accordance to the constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014).

Data were analyzed by the coding team utilizing a Constructivist Grounded Theory framework of analysis based on the work of Kathy Charmaz (2014). Within this approach, data is analyzed by constant comparison which is then translated into codes and categories (Charmaz, 2014). Initially, the coding team read transcripts line by line and identified the analytic importance of the data, developing preliminary codes.

Operating from a grounded theory approach, the coding team allowed the codes to emerge from the data, rather than using preconceived (a-priori) codes on gathered data (Charmaz, 2014). The coding team developed initial codes, which were then used to engage in more focused coding and creation of themes (Charmaz, 2014). The coding team reviewed the data in a constant comparative model in order to consolidate, create new themes, and eliminate themes as needed (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Themes were then consolidated and related back to research question and previous literature. Examples that are representative of each theme are included in this manuscript.

Grounded Theory engages in a simultaneous process of data collection and analysis in which emerging themes shape future subsequent data collection (Charmaz, 2001). This was

the case for the present project, as initial themes that were noted by the coding team were included in the interview questions on subsequent interviews. After initial interviews were complete, the coding team reviewed the first participant's transcript line by line and developed codes that emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2014). This coding and data analysis process is in line with the constructivist grounded theory method of analysis as described by Kathy Charmaz (2014), in which the researcher develops codes based on the data, rather than using preconceived codes to code unanalyzed data. Once initial codes were developed, the process of focused coding began. Focus coding refers to taking codes that reappear in the initial coding and using those codes to apply to larger chunks of data (Charmaz, 1983). Finally, categories were developed which contain common themes and patterns identified across codes. The next step in data analysis utilizing a grounded theory approach was to engage in memo-writing to explore ideas about the categories developed, which were then utilized for theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2001). This process of data analysis and collection continued until saturation was reached.

Charmaz (2014) provided a model that describes the process of data collection and analysis in accordance with constructivist grounded theory. In this process, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, through constant comparison (Charmaz, 2014). Through the use of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), categories and themes are developed. This process eventually leads to theory development. For this study, a slightly modified version of this process was followed.

Initial Coding

For the initial phase of coding, a slightly modified version of Charmaz's (2014) Constructivist Grounded Theory methods were utilized. Following Charmaz's (2014) guiding

questions for the initial coding phase: What is this data a study of? What do the data suggest? Pronounce? Leave unsaid? From whose point of view? What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate? (p. 116).

In the initial coding phase, the coding team engaged in line-by-line coding of the first transcript that was collected. The coding team met twice weekly, taking turns on notetaking and leading each meeting. Rotating meeting leader and notetaker allowed for a more collaborative and equitable process, in which all of our different styles, perspectives, and positionalities were accounted for. The coding team engaged in memo writing throughout this phase in order to capture initial impressions, ideas, and processes. During this phase of initial coding, all codes were captured line-by-line with no attempt to collapse or condense codes. Initial codes were included into a code book that was then applied to subsequent transcripts. Unlike Charmaz (2014), following line-by-line analysis of the first transcript, subsequent analyses did not follow line-by-line coding due to time constraints.

Following the initial line-by-line analysis of two transcripts, the coding team began to notice themes beginning to emerge. Initial themes identified in line-by-line coding included: Cultural Values, Family Rejecting Behavior, Family Support, Latinx Community, Navigating Trans Identity, Other Sources of Support, Parent Process of Acceptance, Parental Rejecting Behavior, Parental Support, Parental Support Desires/Unmet Needs, Parent-Child Relationship, Religion, and Support Desires. These codes were then used for the focused coding process.

Focused Coding and Categorizing

The next stage in Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014) analysis is focused coding. In this phase, codes that are similar are collapsed, and codes are revised in

order to develop a codebook that is robust but neither too specific nor too broad. During this phase of coding we utilized Charmaz's (2014) questions to guide the process of developing focused codes:

1. What do you find when you compare the initial codes with data?
2. In which ways might your initial codes reveal patterns?
3. Which of these codes best account for the data?
4. Have you raised these codes to focused codes?
5. What do your comparisons between codes indicate?
6. Do your focused codes reveal gaps in the data? (p. 140-141).

Codes were revised iteratively as new data or ideas emerged from subsequent analyses. New codes were also added as theoretical sampling continued. New ideas and data helped guide the development of new interview questions that were subsequently added to latter interviews. The coding team continued engaging in memo-writing, as suggested by Charmaz (2014) and in consistency with standards of trustworthiness (Morrow, 2005).

After completing the focused coding process, participants were contacted via email by the researcher in order to provide the opportunity to engage in participant-checks. None of the nine participants responded to the request. Because participant-checks were not conducted, the researcher consulted with their advisor, who is a counseling psychologist with expertise in qualitative research. The final list of focused codes was agreed upon by the researcher, advisor, and one undergraduate research assistant.

Theoretical Coding.

In this stage of analysis theory is developed from the data (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical coding involves synthesizing categories that emerged during focused coding into

a coherent theory (Charmaz, 2006). Categories and themes resulting from focused coding were used to develop a theoretical model of parental support of transgender Latinx youth. The initial line-by-line coding process yielded approximately 300 codes. Approximately 50 of those codes were deemed irrelevant to the research question. Subsequent focused coding yielded approximately 60 focused codes. The theoretical coding process yielded six themes and thirty-two sub-themes which were used to create the *Dynamic Model of Parental Support of Transgender Latinx Youth*. Table 2 provides a conceptual description of themes and sub-themes that were used to develop this model. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the model. Results and model are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview of the Model

Participants' narratives revealed parental support as a subjective, felt experience, and not only a list of behaviors that parents were or were not engaging in. Additionally, participants' assessment of parental support was based on a point-in-time snapshot that was both in comparison to previous experiences and in relation to desired future support. Finally, parental support and all factors involved in this process exist within a context, and are influenced by cultural factors, the relationship between parent and child, and external influences on parental support.

The analysis yielded a model of parental support for transgender Latinx youth that included six themes and thirty-two sub-themes. The themes that emerged from the data which served to create a model of parental support for transgender Latinx youth were: Cultural Factors, Existing Relationship with Parents, External Influences on Parental Support, Youth Strategies, Supportive Behaviors, and Unsupportive Behaviors. These themes created a process which resulted in a Felt Sense of Support. A visual representation of this model is available in Figure 1. Themes identified helped elucidate the experiences of parental support for transgender Latinx youth. Themes and sub-themes are outlined and described in the following sections, including corresponding quotes from participants.

The Dynamic Model of Parental Support of Transgender Latinx Youth was derived from participants' narratives and descriptions of their experiences. In this model, there are three overarching factors that provide context and impact parental support: Cultural Factors, External Influences on Parental Support, and the Existing Relationship with Parents. These factors impact the process of parental support. In this process, Youth Strategies impact

Parental Behaviors – both Supportive Behaviors and Unsupportive Behaviors, which results in Felt Sense of Support. The process exists within a cultural context and is thus influenced by Cultural Factors. This process ultimately leads to a Felt Sense of Support, which is a subjective experience. Importantly, the felt sense of parental support is a snapshot in time – meaning it is reflective of this process at a specific point in time and may change (and likely will change) as this process changes.

Cultural Factors

Given that the present study focuses on the experiences of transgender Latinx youth, cultural factors were an important aspect of consideration in this study. Six main categories emerged within the sub-theme of Cultural Factors: Religion, Language, Respeto, Familismo, and Machismo/Marianismo.

It is important to note that cultural factors are imbued within every aspect of participants' experiences. Their Latinx identity and culture are an inseparable part of who they are, and thus, an inseparable part of their experience. Although Cultural Factors are presented as a theme, they are present throughout every theme, sub-theme, and aspect of this process.

Religion. Although participants were not asked any questions related to religion, nearly all participants identified religion as a major influence in the Latinx community, their families, and more specifically parental support. Several participants believed the influence of religion on Latinxs created a negative impact on parental support. Two participants explicitly described being seen as a “sin” within the Latinx community because of their trans identity.

Aiden, who in his interview discussed growing up in a religious home, and was even sent to a form of conversion camp to try to change his sexuality, reflected on the messages he received about his identity due to religiosity within the Latinx community. This message made him believe that he could not be fully himself around his family.

“Definitely, the cultural component that gets in the way for me is religion because my parents are heavily Catholic, very strictly Catholic. So growing up, always I was taught being gay is not okay. God doesn't like that or whatever. So I've always learned to push it back and not talk about it with my family.” – **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

Xavier echoed many of the sentiments expressed by Aiden. Xavier also received the message that their trans identity was seen as a “sin” within the community. They went so far as to say that in the eyes of the religious Latinxs, they should not exist.

“So, you know, I think that it’s very difficult, at least in my community, because of the religion aspect of it. We have a lot of, you know, religious zealots in our community and they’re so, like, ingrained, it’s so ingrained in, in our community, at least in the Latinx community, that it’s a sin, what I’m doing, it’s a sin, what I am, you know. And it’s something that my existence shouldn’t be, you know, because it’s not normal to them, um, so I think that it’s very difficult, in my experience.” – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Due to these messages, religion impacted participants’ experiences of parental support. Participants who described their parents or family as “very religious” or perceived them to espouse conservative religious views, were less likely to disclose their trans identity

to parental figures and expected rejection of their identity. Additionally, many of these participants described feeling unsupported – that is, unless their parents changed their behavior related to religion (e.g., stopped attending church). Some participants expressed their desire for their parents to stop attending churches who promote homophobic or transphobic beliefs. However, it is also important to note that there were several participants who were surprised by acceptance and support from religious family members.

Language. Participants whose parents primarily spoke Spanish described a difficulty in communicating about their trans identity in Spanish. Participants who are nonbinary noted particular difficulties explaining their nonbinary identity to their parents within the constraints of a gendered and binary language such as Spanish. Leo discusses his experience trying to communicate in Spanish with his grandmother, one of his primary caregivers, about his identity.

“I think it's more of a language barrier when it comes to having to explain a lot of things is my biggest challenge. When I came out to my grandmother, she's only starting to learn more English. So I explained it. I came out to her in Spanish, and that was a really hard language barrier. [...] I think a big thing with it is just how gendered Spanish is. So it's really difficult to figure out things where it's non-gendered. And I think that's what's a big struggle with that.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Respeto. The cultural value of *respeto* emphasizes obedience and dictates that children (or youth) should be highly considerate of adults (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). *Respeto* also relates to exhibiting decorum and courtesy in given situations in relation to other people of particular age (e.g., elders), sex, and social status (Harwood et al., 1995). The value of

respeto appeared as a category within participant narratives as several participants mentioned having to navigate this cultural value within the context of identity disclosure, conflict regarding gender expression and public image, and hierarchies within Latinx culture. For example, Max discussed how even though they are nonbinary and prefer to use gender-neutral pronouns such as *elle*, or even the masculine *el*, in interactions with elders, they use the feminine pronoun *ella* in order to appear respectful.

“in some spaces, I even use ella. I prefer el but in spaces where I'm speaking with elders, I'm like, ‘You can call me ella,’ it doesn't-- I don't know why, for me, it feels-- I think what I'm doing is trying to make them feel more comfortable around me because I feel like they were never introduced to what non-binary is. And so I feel like because they're elders, I want to be respectful, and I don't want them to feel like I'm trying to tell them that I know more than they know. So I am kind of always-- if they misgender me and call me ella, I just let it go, I never explain to them, I never correct them. Yeah, so it's hard, very difficult thing to navigate.” – **Max (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

In a similar vein, Leo discusses the cultural pressure to not make things complicated for elders and authority figures. For Max, this came at a cost of being misgendered and setting aside their own needs. Leo recognized how respect is different in Latinx families compared to white families and how this plays a role in parental support.

“It's a lot of respect and authority is a lot different, especially compared with white families. And so there's a lot of pressure to kind of fit and not make things complicated for the authority figures. And kind of following what they

say and conforming to that is a big thing. So I think that that's why parental support is just so much the dynamic and just so much different because the way that there's a lot of different respect. And it's like you can't upset-- it's like don't disrespect them.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Familismo. *Familismo* is a Latinx cultural value that refers to the importance of strong family loyalty, closeness, and contributing to the wellbeing of nuclear and extended family, as well as kinship networks (Ayon et al., 2010). The cultural value of *familismo* was woven throughout participant narratives primarily in the mention of how important family was to them and to their parents. Several participants discussed the role of extended family within Latinx culture, as well as for them individually, and how aunts, grandmothers and extended family played a parenting role at various points in their lives.

However, several participants discussed experiencing transphobic comments and lack of support within their extended family. Due to the role that extended family and *familismo* plays in transgender Latinx youth’s lives, several participants expressed a desire to receive parental support in the form of advocacy towards extended family members who may be unsupportive. Further discussion on how *familismo* impacted parental support is presented within the *Supportive Behaviors* section of this chapter.

When asked about the parental support they would like to receive, one participant provided responses that are in line with cultural values of *familismo*, as well as *respeto*. Belen Canul discussed the pressure they feel to be appreciative of their mother and her sacrifices, which complicates their ability to ask for other forms of parental support they would like to receive.

“See, I think it's like the Mexican part of me. I mean, it's just kind of saying like, ‘I don't need anything from my mother. I don't want to ask for anything from my mother because she's already given me too much.’ And already what she's done is above and beyond. And I feel bad saying anything negative about her because I know she's worked so hard to get to where she is. So there's a lot of hesitance for me to say anything.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Machismo/Marianismo. Nearly all participants discussed their perception of the prevalence of *machismo* and deeply engrained gender roles and expectations affect parental support, as well as overall acceptance of transgender identities within the Latinx community.

Xavier discussed how gender role expectations (e.g., *machismo/marianismo*), as well as religion impact views on transgender people within the Latinx community.

“I think it’s more, most prevalent with the Latinx community because of the fact that machismo, you know, exists and, you know, the men in our families are supposed to be big, strong, and manly, and the women are supposed to be in the kitchen cooking for the man and waiting for, to be told what to do by the man. You know? And so, having that in our community, it’s really hard to stray away from normal gender norms, especially transitioning, I mean, don’t even think about it, because you’re supposed to be a woman, you’re supposed to be what God made you.” – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Xavier described a narrow definition of manhood and womanhood that are part of the constructs of *machismo* and *marianismo*. Leo highlighted the difference in acceptance of

trans woman compared to trans men in Latinx households due to prevalence of *machismo* within the community. He recognized how it was easier for him to be accepted as a trans man in his family than it would have been for a trans woman.

“I think that that is also like, I think that with transitioning, especially being [...] a transwoman in a Hispanic household is a lot worse than being a trans man in Hispanic household. And that has to do with that machismo. It's like, ‘Oh, well, why would you want to become a woman?’ versus becoming a man.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Later in the interview, Leo noted how his grandmother was very supportive of him and his transition. He believed this was partially due to only having one other male grandchild. He shared that he did not expect his grandmother to be as accepting had there been a transwoman/transfeminine grandchild in the family.

External Influences on Parental Support

Time Apart. A few participants identified that time apart from their parents helped in the process of parental acceptance. This typically occurred when the youth went off to college and lived away from home for the first time. Presumably, having time apart helped parents process and adjust to their child’s new identity. For example, here Gabriel discusses their experience.

“I first came out as gay to my parents in 2015. At first my parents were like... ‘Okay, sure.’ Like they were supportive but they were like, they just kind of dismissed it. But after I left home to go to college here in [city] my parents were really accepting.” – **Gabriel (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Leo also believed that time apart helped his relationship with his mother. He initially experienced his mother as rejecting of his trans identity and described their relationship as “strained” when he first went off to college. Approximately a year and a half later, when he had to return to live home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he noticed an increase in her support and acceptance of his identity.

“I think just she needed time to process, but also us not being in the same household for a little bit helped as well.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Education. Education appeared to be another factor influencing parental support. Some participants noted the lack of exposure and education among the Latinx community on transgender identities and issues, which may contribute to lower levels of support. Therefore, participants whose parents became more educated on trans identities, learned about the inability to choose one’s identity, and/or learned about trans people’s experiences, became supportive or increased their support.

For Max, having come out previously about their sexuality allowed their mother time to learn about LGBTQ community. By the time they came out again about their gender identity, their mother had already educated herself and learned about LGBTQ communities and identities. It appears that already being educated about the LGBTQ community and identities helped their mother be more understanding of their nonbinary identity, an identity that may otherwise be new to some parents.

“Well, when I first came out to my mom, it was the-- I kind of made it easier for myself and I changed my name on Facebook to [NAME] before I even spoke that name to her out loud. And she saw it, and she didn't tell me

anything. So the next time I went home, I sat down with her, and I explained to her that I was trans, my name is [NAME], and that I would like for her to refer to me in this way. And she was completely comfortable with it. She, kind of, I think because I had already come out to her years before, as a lesbian, she had already taken a few years to learn about LGBTQ communities and their struggles. So it wasn't like I was dropping something completely new on her.” – **Max (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

For Belen Canul, having a sister who is trans and had already come out to their parent helped in the process of acceptance. Their mom had become educated and done her research about trans identities and issues. When they came out as nonbinary, their mother was more readily accepting of their identity.

“my sister came out first as trans, and she kind of took the brunt of it all because my mom didn’t know how to react [...] And so it took a lot of years for [their mother] to unlearn certain things and also talk to my sister and ask about what's going on in her mind. But afterwards, when I came out as non-binary, at that point, she was just very accepting. And it took her a while to get used to pronouns. But it also helps that she did a lot of reading.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Several other participants also attributed education as a major factor in their parents’ process of acceptance. Xavier shared that for their mother, going to the local LGBT center, becoming involved and getting educated was what finally helped her accept their identity. They mentioned that she did not ask them any questions, but rather, utilized the LGBT center and their resources to educate herself. Learning from other parents’ experiences and

understanding that trans identities were not a choice helped their mother along her journey of acceptance.

Other External Factors. There were other external factors that also appeared to influence parental support. Xavier mentioned that their mother sought support from other parents of trans youth who had shared experiences. They shared that this appeared to help her in her process of acceptance. Additionally, learning from a community advocate also helped Xavier's mother become more supportive. Leo also mentioned that he was unsure of what factors contributed to his mother becoming more accepting, other than time apart.

Existing Relationship with Parents

Another theme that emerged that was a contributing factor of parental support was that of the Existing Relationship with Parents. Participants who had an existing relationship with their parents in which there was trust between them, disclosed their trans identity to their parents, communicated with their parents about the support they desired, and perceived their parents' behaviors as supportive. Conversely, participants who described their relationship with their parents as "strained" or had experienced previous rejection by their parents, did not disclose their identity to their parents and appeared less likely to interpret their parents' behaviors as supportive. There were three categories that emerged within the sub-theme of Existing Relationship with Parents: Trust, Expectation of Rejection, and State of Relationship with Parents.

Trust. Having existing trust in the relationship with their parents, appeared to be an important factor in parental support. Trust was important both in how the participants felt towards their parents, as well as whether or not they felt their parents had trust in them. Trust appeared to be indicative of the overall state of the relationship between youth and parents.

For example, for Belen Canul, it appears that already having had an established relationship with their mom in which they could trust that their mom would be open to their trans identity helped them with disclosing their trans identity.

“I mean, it's really scary coming out at first, because you know that there's going to be this shock and that there's going to be this shift in the way your parents perceive you. And I feel like at first, there's going to be, like I mentioned, so much unlearning that we need to do. And also, you're like allowing your parents to learn a new part of you that maybe that they had not seen before. So that's going to be scary and everything. But I don't know, I think it's different for everybody, but for me, I had to trust that my mom cared enough to want to know those parts of me.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Conversely, for Xavier, their relationship with their mom completely lacked trust. They discussed how strained their relationship was at the time of first disclosing their trans identity.

“Sometimes, you know, she would think I was just telling my therapist lies and that I wanted to lie to them and that I was lying to her, things like that, you know, it was, that sense of trust wasn't there at all, from her point of view or her perspective, you know. She didn't trust me and I didn't trust her. You know, and that was the relationship. It was built on, ‘You're just my mom and that's it.’ I'm not your homie, I'm not your best friend, and we just lived together and you're my mom and that's it.” – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Due to the lack of trust between them, Xavier later shared that they communicated with their mother primarily through their therapist. At that point, Xavier did not feel supported by their mother. The lack of trust in each other appeared to have driven a wedge between them. Trust clearly impacted participants' communication with their parents. Another participant, Mage, strategically decided not to discuss the parental support they wanted to receive because they did not trust their parents would be able to provide it, and in fact, believed that they would actively oppose it in order to "make a point."

Prior Experiences of Rejection. Previous experiences of rejection of identity made it more difficult to disclose new identities or identity labels. Participants who believed they would be rejected were less likely to disclose their identity to their parents. Ezra discusses how having a negative experience when coming out about his sexuality led him to believe he could not be fully himself with his parents because he expected he would experience rejection again.

"I had come out with a sexual, one label before. And then, that didn't go the way I-- it wasn't really what I needed at the time. [...] And then there was just a lot of just silence. [...]. And it had such a negative connotation. And there was just a religious undertone of wanting to talk about it. And just questions of just like, what about religion? What about church? Like, "You're not going to tell anyone." It's just like bringing up those kind of-- wanting to keep everything kind of hidden away and not talk about it almost. But wanting to understand kind of? But it's also like-- it just didn't feel right in that sense. It didn't come from places like, 'Oh, let's talk. How does it—' It didn't seem so open. I've seen coming out videos online and stuff where it's gone positively.

And it was like I don't think I could see that in that experience. [...] It just makes it kind of harder to think about ever coming out completely to them, and just ever really opening that dialogue. Because it just seems like it'll be met with the same response.” – **Ezra (he/him), 21-year-old, Trans man.**

Aiden also experienced rejection because of his sexuality in the past and decided not to come out to his parents about his trans identity.

“It's very hard because I'm not out to my parents. I came out to them regarding my sexuality back in high school. I forget the timeline. But it did not go well. They were totally unaccepting about it. They, they tried to take me to like, well, their version of, of conversion therapy, I guess. They put me in this Catholic youth group. So having seen that, I decided to not come out to them regarding my trans identity. But it's been very difficult because it feels like I'm tip-toeing around.” – **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

State of Relationship with Parents. The overall state of the relationship between participants and their parents emerged as a contextual factor influencing parental support. Participants who had an overall sense of a positive relationship with their parents, were more likely to disclose their trans identity and feel supported by their parents. Gabriel shares how because of their mother's open-mindedness, they felt free to be themselves. This later translated to being open with their mother about their trans identity and receiving a positive reaction when coming out.

“when I was growing up, I grew up in Mexico, like I grew up with mostly my mom's side of the family and they were very like non-traditional like they

were very like progressive and open-minded, and they allowed me to dress whatever I liked and they didn't really like, force a lot of you know like traditionalist type of views, like you need to get a girlfriend and stuff and they just was always allowed me to be free.” – **Gabriel (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Conversely, for Leo, his relationship with his father was strained prior to him even understanding his own trans identity. This appeared to impact how Leo perceived his father's behaviors. Leo believed his father was not making an effort to understand his identity.

“[His relationship with his father] was super strained before. It was unrelated. But and then it just didn't help how he was trying to... not even trying, just instead of picking up on things, he didn't really. Like I took him to a meeting, a group thing with parents and he was on his phone the whole time. I'm like, ‘Okay, cool.’” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Because of the state of their relationship, Leo interpreted his father's questions as invasive. This drove an ever bigger wedge to an already strained relationship.

“But the relationship with my father is just an interesting thing that's not really related to being trans at all. He didn't really... It was more like he didn't care, but at the same time he would... there was these questions he would ask, really weird, like, ‘Oh, are your breasts going to be smaller?’ or, like ‘Do you still get your period?’ or weird questions like that. I'm like you can Google things. You could learn things.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Other participants expressed similar sentiments as Leo. The existing relationship with their parents deeply impacted them. Riley discussed how because of their family's

heteronormative and *machista* views, their relationship with their parents is difficult. They feel that they had to hide their authentic self, which has negatively impacted their mental health.

“Not being my most authentic self with my family is really hard. At least for me, I don't come from the most loving and safe home environment. And so I feel like that adds on an extra layer of stress and burden.” – **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Youth Strategies

Another theme that emerged from the data was that of the strategies youth utilized as a way to navigate existing as trans individuals within the context of their parental support. These strategies appeared to have been utilized by youth as a way to live out their trans identity while seeking to build on parental support or minimize parental rejection. The following sub-themes were identified as part of the theme of Youth Strategies: Concealing Identity/Living a Double Life, Resistance, Relying on Other Sources of Support, Using an Advocate to Increase Support, and Communication. Most participants utilized multiple of these strategies.

Concealing Identity/Living a Double Life. Participants developed strategies to negotiate between living life authentically as themselves while concealing their identity from their parents in order to preserve safety, avoid rejection, or maintain a relationship with their parents. This was usually done through what some participants described as “living a double life” or being out in certain spaces and not in others. Several participants would use the name or pronouns that aligned with their gender identity among friends or chosen family, and at home they would use their birth/given name. There were other ways that participants

navigated the tension between living their lives as trans youth and delayed or avoided coming out to their parents, such as disclosing their sexual identity but not disclosing their trans identity.

Several participants also engaged in a process of identity exploration in which they “tried on” different identities or identity labels. Identities or labels that they once used sometimes changed over time. Many participants experienced changes in their identity labels and engaged in a second or even third “coming out” to their parents. Some participants concealed certain identities or felt pressured to disclose one identity label over another because they believed it was more acceptable or understandable to their parents.

Here, Miles discussed how they chose to disclose their identity to their parents. At the time they initially came out to their parents, Miles identified as bisexual. However, they also strategically chose to disclose this identity label because they believed this identity would be more acceptable to their parents.

“I originally in sexuality, I come out as bi because I didn't want them to be mad at me. So I wanted them to think like-- and also was me and my own religious trauma and stuff like that. I was thinking, ‘Well, if I say that I'm bi, at least there's a chance that I could be 'normal', which is what I believed at the time.’ And my parents latched on to that. And when I came out as sapphic and stuff, they told me, ‘Well, are you lying to us then? Because you told me that you were bi and we had hoped that you would get with a man.’ And I was like, ‘I told you that because I was scared.’ And so they kind of just still latch on to the idea that I'm bi.– **Mage/Miles (they/them), 19-year-old, nonbinary.**

For Aiden, “living a double life” was a way to exist as a trans man while hiding his identity from his parents due to previous rejection of his sexuality and fears of rejection of his trans identity. He began hormone replacement therapy without telling his parents while in college. When he had to return to live at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he hid the fact that he had been on testosterone for nearly a year and a half. He described feeling like he was “living a double life.”

“Living here kind of pushing myself back into the closet for the sake of not bringing up any conversation or suspicion. Although, I have been on testosterone for a year and four months. [...] I'm not going to talk about it. I'm going to try and hide it as best as I can. So, yeah, it's just been very difficult living like a double life kind of when I'm here being like their daughter in their eyes and being myself outside of it.” – **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

Later in the interview, Aiden discussed how he navigated concealing the fact that he had been on hormone replacement therapy from his parents. He also wondered to what extent his parents may be aware but were perhaps avoiding the discussion.

“Sometimes I think like, “How?” I've always been kind of more on the masculine side. My voice was always a bit low. So I was like, ‘Okay. Maybe that's why they're not noticing.’ I've always been very hairy. So I'm like, ‘Okay. Maybe that's why they're not noticing.’ But I have grown facial hair. I just shave it. I mean, I've probably had a stubble now for like-- I shave it every day just so they won't say anything. But my mom has noticed an

increase like hair on my face so sometimes she's like, 'Why?' And I'm like, 'I don't know.'"— **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

Participants who were not out about their gender identity to their parents strategized about when to disclose their identity. They identified wanting to be financially independent or no longer living at home with their families in order to come out. Riley shared this during their interview:

"I'm trying to be strategic and hoping that-- because I'm a fourth year and I foresee living at home for a while before I go off on my own officially. I'm hoping that once I live on my own and have my own space [...] even then, I feel like if I were to come out now, and depending on how they would react, I feel like I don't have a safe space to retreat to. And so I'm trying to be, I guess, pre-cautious in the sense that I'd be more comfortable coming out to them once I have my own space where I can be myself and go back to, if that makes sense."— **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Resistance. Some participants resisted their parents' lack of support and pursued transition and other ways to be affirmed in their gender identity despite their parents' approval. Xavier described defying their mother and pursuing transition, which in turn, eventually helped their mother become more accepting.

"I kind of had to have, like, a disconnect between me and her, because our relationship wasn't that good at the time, so it was just like, 'I'm gonna do whatever I want, and if I wanna be a boy, I'll be a boy.' And so, you know, after therapy and, like, hospitalization -it, it kinda, she kinda realized that it was more serious than just me saying what I wanted to say, or being

rebellious, you know. And so, um, from that point on, it kind of took her awhile to, um, accept the fact, that it wasn't just, you know, a phase... Or something that wasn't gonna, you know, was just in my mind, and I wasn't actually gonna go through with it. – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Leo was determined to medically transition. He decided to fund his own gender-affirming medical care, despite his mother's disapproval. In the end, he believed that continuing to pursue medical transition helped his mother take him more seriously and become more accepting.

“I think it was just seeing me and doing what I'm doing and continuing to do it even without her approval. [...] And then I think another thing is that seeing me doing things on my own and realizing this is not just something that's a spur of the moment and seeing me change and be who I am.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Relying on Other Sources of Support. The sub-theme of relying on other sources of support emerged as participants described relying on friends or chosen family to feel seen and receive support when their parents were unsupportive. Some participants shared that relying on friends and community for support helped them feel affirmed in their gender identity despite experiencing rejection or even hiding their gender identity at home. Belen Canul shared that when they were considering coming out to their mother, knowing that their community was supportive of them helped them overcome the fear of possible rejection from their mom.

“also like knowing that if [their mother’s] perception of me didn't change, then I did have my community to fall back to, my roommates and my sister, who were going to understand me.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Using an Advocate to Increase Support. Although only one participant stated that they had used a third party to advocate for their needs with their mother, several participants suggested using this strategy to increase support. Participants mentioned that they have found parents to be more likely to listen to other adults than they are to youth. The majority of participants who mentioned this, suggested using a therapist, preferably the youth’s therapist, as someone who would be in an ideal position to advocate for the youth. Xavier shared that when they asked for parental support, they usually did so through a therapist.

“I did [ask for support], in a sense. It was usually through, like, therapy sessions with my therapist or her therapist.” – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Communication. This sub-theme emerged as participants described intentionally communicating with their parents as a way to help them understand their experience and trans identity. Some participants stated that they began to open up about their struggles as trans youth and their identity with their parents, which they believed helped increase parental support. This was typically the case for participants whose parents were already exhibiting some supportive behaviors. Participants who felt unsupported or expected rejection tended to avoid communication about their gender identity with their parents.

For Leo, communicating his boundaries with his mother was important. He made it clear to his mother that she had to respect his identity otherwise he would cut communication with her.

“I try to open up more about things like regarding trans stuff and talking about my injections. And so I think that just opening that bit also kind of helped her see that this is something that's... this is who I am and you need to start respecting that. And I think I told her that, too. I don't remember when, but I think it was like, "If you don't respect my pronouns and if you don't respect who I am, then you and I are, like, don't talk to me. Don't interact with me. We are just going to be in the same household, but I'm not gonna it's, it's not going to be a good time for either of us." And I think that was a big thing as well.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Supportive Behaviors

Participant responses described behaviors and actions that their parents engaged in which they perceived as supportive or desired as supportive behaviors. This theme included the sub-themes of Medical Transition Support, Financial Support, Tacit Support, Mental Health Support, Expressed Love and Support, Emotional Support, Making an Effort, and Advocacy. It is important to note that while exhibiting supportive behaviors frequently increased youth's felt sense of support, this increase in felt sense of support was not automatic. Upon occasion, some participants related that a negative prior relationship with parents may lead them to feel limited support even though parents may be exhibiting some of these behaviors.

Medical Transition Support. Several participants discussed their experiences receiving or desiring support through the medical transition process. Examples of Medical Transition Support included: the parents taking their child to appointments to receive gender-affirming care, assisting during recovery of gender-affirming surgery such as mastectomy, helping pay for their child’s hormone replacement therapy, and/or encouraging their child to pursue gender-affirming medical interventions. For example, Xavier shared:

“And, you know, it kind of, really set into reality of my mom supporting me when she wanted to get me top surgery around like 15? I think 15, 16.” –

Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, nonbinary.

Aiden, who was not yet out to his parents about his trans identity but had been on testosterone for nearly a year and a half, shared how important it would be for him to receive his mother’s support in the future when he undergoes top surgery. Although he is speaking about receiving help with practical aspects of undergoing gender-affirming procedures, there is an important emotional component to such support. He discussed his desires for medical transition support here:

“I do plan on having top surgery sometime. And just thinking about the care that is needed for recovery and even just going to the consultations and all that stuff, I would want someone to be there with me for emotional support. And given that my parents will probably not be there, just thinking how my mom would always be there for doctor's appointments and stuff like that. I don't know. Sometimes when I was at school, I really missed my mom's comfort in terms of when something bad happened like if I was getting misgendered or, I don't know, I felt sick or something like that. Those are just things I miss just

in general like my mom's comfort and her presence. And knowing that I probably won't have that, it sucks thinking about it so, definitely, that emotional support there. And, yeah, when I do get [top surgery], like after, just in terms of care like helping me get things or change the bandages or whatever processes I have like that. Really, just having that physical and mostly emotional support in terms of my well-being, I feel like that's just the most important thing to me, for my emotional state of being. – **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

Financial Support. When asked about parental support, several participants responded by sharing that they receive financial support from their parents. Financial support appeared to be a more general supportive behavior rather than a supportive behavior specific to participants' trans identity. One participant, Xavier, did mention receiving financial support from his mother for his testosterone and gender-affirming care. Other participants expressed feeling appreciative to their parents for providing financial support in the form of food, shelter, and paying for their education. Generally, participants who stated that they received financial support from their parents did not necessarily mention feeling supported by them.

Mental Health Support. Several participants expressed a desire for their parents to attend family therapy with them and/or attend individual therapy. Participants shared that they believed it would be helpful for their parents to attend therapy in order to unlearn the harmful gender binary and cisgenderism they have been exposed to. Riley stated their desire to have their parents attend therapy with them:

“I feel like in an ideal world, doing therapy with me. [...] in an ideal world, that would be incredible, if I could get them to go to therapy and unpack all this. And unlearn all this behavior that I understand that they were raised with.” -

Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.

Tacit Support. Several participants noted their experiences of parental support within Latinx families as being unspoken or tacit. This finding appears to be in line with previous research on Latinx sexual and gender minority research that suggests that tacit disclosures (and thus, support) may be a way for Latinx individuals to maintain cultural values of *respeto* and *familismo* (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020) while navigating their identity. Participants mentioned the expectation to *know* that parents are being supportive despite never receiving explicit words of affirmation, praise, or support. Participants described receiving support in subtle, tacit ways, and without explicit discussion. For example, some participants shared that their parent would buy them clothing that aligned with their gender identity, such as clothing from the “men’s section.” Their parent would not explicitly acknowledge this gesture or even discuss their youth’s gender identity.

When Aiden’s parents initially found out about his sexuality, they were rejecting and even took him to a form of conversion camp. More recently, his mother alluded to wanting to be supportive. Aiden appeared to be confused as to how to interpret her comments because they never had open conversations about his identity or her support.

“my mom would sometimes allude to it, I feel. Again, she would never directly say the words like, ‘Are you still gay?’ or whatever. But sometimes she will say like, ‘I’m going to love you the way you are. You can talk. You can trust me. It might take me a while but I’m going to support you.’ But she

never said in regards to what. So that's what I was thinking, right? So that's kind of how it's been. And the last time we had a conversation like that was last summer in August, really. So I don't know. It's just been kind of swept under the rug. I don't really know what they're thinking. And I don't think they have really changed their views so I don't even feel confident enough or safe enough to have those conversations with them still. So I don't really know how their views have changed in regards to that, my orientation. It's all a mystery.” – **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

Here, Aiden discussed perceiving his mother’s gift of masculine clothing as supportive, despite never explicitly having a conversation about it.

“In terms of gender identity, I don't know. I think my mom has been a bit more supportive in terms of that. Sometimes she'll buy me clothing from the men's department. [...] stuff like that. And sometimes she'll see like a t-shirt and she's like, ‘Oh, I thought you'd like this design or this cartoon, or whatever,’ so she buys it for me. And, to me, that goes a long way because you can tell it's from the men's department or the boys. I'm like, Okay. Cool. Maybe you wouldn't have gotten me this a couple of years ago so this is really nice. – **Aiden (he/they), 21-year-old, trans man/transmasculine.**

Ezra had a similar experience wherein his parents eventually relented and bought him clothing from the men’s department. His parents never explicitly shared that this was a way to support his gender identity. In fact, his parents, as far as Ezra knows, are not aware of his trans identity. However, he shared that he chose to interpret this gesture as supportive .

“I mean, not really directly supporting me. Because somehow, I almost kind of make it out to be support. Like they'll buy me-- they'll support me financially with buying me these men's pants that I want, or just not really questioning my-- after a while, not questioning my clothing choices. So they're being open to buying me clothes from the men's section. That's some indirect kind of support that happens where I kind of make-- in my head, I make it out to be support so I kind of feel better.” – **Ezra (he/him), 21-year-old, trans man.**

Expressed Love and Support. All participants mentioned their desire for their parents to explicitly reassure them of their love. Even some participants who did receive other forms of support, such as medical transition support or who generally felt supported by their parents, mentioned the importance of hearing their parents affirm their unconditional love for them. For participants who did receive expressed love and support, they shared how meaningful this was for them. Gabriel appreciated hearing their mother tell them they would support them:

“Like my mom at first, she was fine, like she, you know, she was kind of sad because like, I first came out on social media [...] And she was upset that I didn't tell her first, but I told-, you know I was afraid. You know there's evidence, you know when like LGBTQ+ people come out to their families they get evicted and stuff, and you know like they get left on the streets and I don't want that to happen to me. And she said “Why would I do that to you, I'm your mom, like I will support you.” And when she said that to me, I was like, oh wow, oh-, like I got like oh she really does love me. And, that was

very meaningful to me, coming from her to say that from her religious background was very meaningful.” – **Gabriel (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Similarly, for Max, knowing that their mother loved them helped them feel accepted and supported. Receiving expressed love and support using their affirming name made Max feel seen. This was most important to them above all else.

“My mom...I think the first way that she provided support for me ever was when she texted me once, and we were just having a conversation, and then we said, "Bye, I love you," and she said, "Bye, I love you, [affirming NAME]." And that was before I had even really sat her down and talked to her about my identity. And that was my first source of validation from her. If my mom sees me, that's all that matters. If my mom accepts me, if my mom is the only person in my family to accept me, that's it for me. That's all that matters.” – **Max (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Riley expressed how important it would be for them to hear their parents explicitly tell them they love them unconditionally. They highlighted the importance of the explicit aspect of receiving reassurance of unconditional love by their parents. They also wanted their parents to be more involved in their life.

“In an ideal world, I would want them to, explicitly, because I feel like that's really important to me, the explicit part of it, but really reaffirm me and to know that their love for me hasn't changed regardless of how I identify. And I feel like I would want them to be a part of that part of my life because I feel like my parents, in general, don't really know what I do, like the stuff that I'm

involved in, the things that I do. So I feel like in an ideal world, them having an active, supportive role in that would be amazing.” – **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Emotional Support. The sub-theme of emotional support emerged from participant narratives and includes parental behaviors such as extending comfort, reassurance, checking-in and asking about the youth’s emotional state and needs. Several participants expressed their desire for this supportive behavior. This was perhaps also in contrast with Latinx cultural norms around emotional expression and stigma around mental health.

While Xavier had discussed his experiences with receiving parental support through his medical transition, his desires for reassurance and comfort while exploring identity were not met. Throughout his interview, he expressed a strong desire for emotional support from his mother.

“I think that the emotional sense of it was very absent in the whole coming out thing, um, and then I had to deal with it myself, um, instead of having that support, other than financially [...] You know, but I wanted to be able to be told, you know, ‘It’s gonna be okay. You’re gonna be fine. You don’t have to subscribe to these gender norms and I’m okay with you not doing that.’ –

Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.

Making an Effort. Participants described feeling supported by noticing when their parents made an effort. The sub-theme of Making an Effort includes parental behaviors and actions that demonstrate growth and learning, as well as efforts to understand their child’s trans identity. Even small gestures that indicated an effort in progress in terms of acceptance or knowledge of the child’s trans identity, appeared to be appreciated by the participants.

Belen Canul disclosed how meaningful it was for them to know that their mother was practicing their pronouns:

“And then also she said she was talking about her-- She was talking to her therapist about me being non-binary and how to navigate that. So it meant a lot that she did that. And my sister and her had a session where she was practicing my pronouns. So that was really sweet.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Despite the fact that Max’s mother did not always get their pronouns or name correctly, they still appreciated the fact that their mother was making an effort and accepted corrections.

“But my mom is actually getting better, I would say. When I talk to her, I feel comfortable, even though she still deadnames me and misgenders me. But when I remind her, she doesn't get offended, she's like, ‘Okay, thank you,’ and corrects herself.” – **Max (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Advocacy. The desire for advocacy as a supportive behavior became evident through participants’ narratives which included mention of wanting their parents to “stand up for [them]” and advocate for them. The sub-theme of advocacy encompasses advocacy within systems, as well as interpersonally. Participants mentioned their experiences and desires for parental advocacy with larger systems, such as insurance companies or school systems, as well as within their family.

Given the role that extended family plays in Latinx family day to day life and family dynamics, participants expressed a desire to have their parents advocate for them with other family members if they were not supportive of their trans identity. Riley shared that they

would like their parents to “stick up” for them if extended family members were to be unsupportive of their identity.

“So something that comes to mind is if my extended family or whatever, were to start questioning me, because I feel like I don't see all them being supportive either, but I would want my parents to defend me and to really reaffirm me and support me. [...] I would want my parents to really stick up for me, which they don't now. I feel like they don't now. But I wish that that's something that they would do. Like if someone in our family is talking, like saying stuff about me because of my identity, which I can foresee happening, I would want my parents to stick up for me.” – **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Max felt supported by their mother because of her advocacy and public support of them. Their mother used social media to advocate for them and affirm their identity.

“And my mom is constantly trying to-- my mom is kind of that stereotypical Latinx mom who sends memes through Facebook [...] Or she'll post on Facebook like, ‘my child is non-binary, and they're valid,’ and all this other stuff just like-- and in Spanish, too-- and it's so funny to me, it makes me smile when I see it on my feed. And I feel like my mom is very proud to have me as her kid and that makes me feel good. Yeah. I guess, just, it makes me feel good that my mom is very outspoken about who her child is. And it makes me feel good that my mom doesn't hide who I am from her friends or the rest of our family. So my mom's very supportive.” - **Max (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Other Supportive Behaviors. There were other supportive behaviors that participants mentioned in their interviews but either did not elaborate on or did not emphasize. These other mentions of supportive behaviors appeared vague and did not fit within other sub-themes, therefore, it was unclear whether or not participants considered these important factors. Other forms of parental support that participants mentioned in their interviews included: use of their correct pronouns (including the pronoun “elle” in Spanish), support of their identity exploration, explicit acceptance of their identity, acceptance of their partner(s), and more open communication.

Unsupportive Behaviors

Although participants were not asked or prompted to discuss behaviors or actions from their parents that they perceived as unsupportive, another theme that emerged throughout participant narratives was that of Unsupportive Behaviors. Participants discussed behaviors and actions that were unsupportive or even rejecting. It is important to note that although nearly all participants experienced some unsupportive behaviors from their parents at various points in time, this did not negate an experience of supportive behaviors or overall feeling supported by their parents. The sub-themes that emerged within the theme of Unsupportive Behaviors were Feeling Alone/Unsupported/Misunderstood, Rejecting Identity, Silence, and Controlling Gender Expression.

Feeling Alone/Unsupported/Misunderstood. Participants’ feelings and emotional experience was frequently mentioned throughout their interviews. Several participants mentioned feeling alone and unsupported throughout the process of exploring their gender identity. Even some participants who did receive forms of parental support expressed feeling alone or misunderstood at various points in their journey of identity development.

Xavier expressed feeling confused as to why their family was grieving their transition when this was a life-saving decision for them. Throughout their interview they described feeling misunderstood by their mother because of their trans identity. They also felt alone trying to navigate their transition while their family was focused on grieving. Later in their interview, they shared that they felt they were viewed as the “bad kid” by their mother, simply because of their trans identity.

“Why are [their parents] so, like, sad that I’m gonna transition when it’s, like, that’s, should be, you know, I’m gonna be happier, clearly, -than, you know, either be dead, be hospitalized, or other things, you know. So I think that it was very, it was very difficult.” – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Mage made an effort to explain their nonbinary identity in Spanish to their parents. Their parents did not relate to their experience. Mage did not feel understood or supported by their parents.

“they didn't understand what the word [nonbinary] meant. And so I had to explain to them how I felt, which they were not very receptive to. They kind of just ignored it. They were like, ‘Well, I've never felt like that. So I don't understand why you feel like that.’” – **Mage/Miles (they/them), 19-year-old, nonbinary.**

Rejecting Identity. The sub-theme of rejecting identity includes parental behaviors and actions that are rejecting the youth’s trans identity. This included verbal disapproval or rejection of trans identity, as well as indirect messages that contribute to youth’s feelings of rejection. Some participants described hearing homophobic and transphobic comments from

their parents, which although not directed at them, contributed to a feeling of rejection and lack of acceptance of their own trans identity.

In this excerpt, Xavier shared their experience with telling their mother they wanted to transition. Her response rejected his trans identity. She explicitly told Xavier she did not want him to transition.

“And around like 13 or 14, a couple of years after I came out as being lesbian, I told my mom that I wanted to transition -and to her, it was kinda like, ‘no, I don’t want you to do that, like, I want you to be a girl. I don’t want you to be anything other than that. Or what you were meant to be.’” – **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Riley was not out to their parents about their trans identity because they had received messages that were rejecting of their trans identity.

“I always think about what if I were just to come out right now and how would they react. I always hold myself back and I never do. And something that I've been struggling with for a long time, before it came to how I identified and everything with gender. And my parents, especially my dad, would contribute a lot to my gender dysphoria. And not really realizing the implications of what he says. Because my home is very patriarchal and very machista and like. It's not supportive and conducive in a way that I would want it to be, to let me be open with my identities at home.” – **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Similarly, Ezra was also not out about his trans identity to his parents. He noticed that when he tried to express his gender identity through masculine clothing, his parents responded negatively. This was an indirect message that was rejecting of his trans identity.

“It has to do with a lot of-- growing up, I noticed whenever I kind of strayed away from my biological sex, it caused a lot of weird kind of tension every time. Where it's like, I don't want to wear dresses anymore. I want to wear these jeans and T-shirt to church. Or I want to wear a suit to my high school senior prom. And it caused so much tension that it would be almost like an argument. Where like, I couldn't just win because it became so frustrating because I was like, well, I'm the one wearing it. What does that matter?” -

Ezra (he/him), 21-year-old, trans man.

Later on, Ezra reflected on his parents negative responses to changes that he had done to feel more affirmed in his gender.

“Because everything I have ever done, that has made me feel really good, it made me feel very seen, has kind of been met with such a weird response [by his parents]. So it's like I can't really have the highs without meeting just one low almost.” – **Ezra (he/him), 21-year-old, trans man.**

Silence. Several participants experienced silence from their parents in response to conversations about their trans identity. Participants described their parents brushing things under the rug or having a “don’t ask, don’t tell” dynamic with their parents. Some participants shared that their parents refused to discuss or acknowledge their trans identity.

Mage disclosed their nonbinary identity to their parents. Their parents responded by refusing to discuss it and attempting to ignore it. They later shared that their parents were hoping they would “snap out of it” someday.

“Yeah, I've told them [about their trans identity], but it wasn't in circumstances that were ideal. And it also was-- they put things under the rug and pretend that they're not there. So it's not like a thing where they're like constantly thinking about it. They would just rather ignore it, if that makes sense. So I did come out to them, and it was more of a thing of like, "We're just not going to talk about it." – **Mage/Miles (they/them), 19-year-old, nonbinary.**

Ezra noticed that when he changed his gender expression (a way to socially transition for him), his parents responded with silence. He shared that his parents would then move forward “as if it never happened.” He did not have discussions with his parents about his changes, as they did not appear open to having conversations.

“my mother definitely wanted just to push forward femininity. Yeah. So that was always a struggle. And just even with the haircut, it was kind of like I just did it. And having to face her after was just silence for a 20-minute car ride to my friend's house. And then, it was just like-- and then silence for the next couple of days, where it's just them coming to terms with me cutting my hair, and then me, just kind of wanting to celebrate it almost. But then not being able to celebrate it in my household [...] the joy behind this one little thing that really just made the biggest difference. But yeah. It's a lot of like, I do something, and then it's kind of this weird silence that comes with it. And then

going forward as if it never happened.” - **Ezra (he/him), 21-year-old, trans man.**

Controlling Gender Expression. Participants who were not yet out to their parents about their trans identity mentioned navigating tensions with their parents regarding their gender expression. Several participants recounted being asked by their parents to maintain a cisgender presentation – meaning, participants who were assigned female at birth were asked to maintain a feminine presentation. For example, Riley was not able to have a gender expression that was in line with their gender identity due to their parents’ request to maintain a cisgender presentation.

“And I feel like, too, that's something that as of right now, living under their household, I feel like I'm not afforded to. Because they always-, whenever I kind of mentioned the idea of exploring how I want to express myself and everything, like when I casually mention it in conversation, they're always like, or my mom especially, is always like, 'No, you can't do that. You're hija de casa, like, you're daughter of this house. You can't do that.' Which I think is ridiculous because I'm my own person and I shouldn't be an extension of them. But I feel like that really hinders my ability to really express myself the way I want to.” – **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Miles had a similar experience in which their parents attempted to control their gender expression. Miles believed that their mother found them to be embarrassing the rest of the family solely by choosing clothing that aligned with their masculine-of-center gender identity. Throughout their interview they discussed their parents values around public image and disapproval of anything that would signal to others that they were not a “woman.”

“[when shopping with their mother] I always try to go for the more masculine things, but like, ‘Oh, look at this, it fits nice, it looks good and stuff like that.’ And she's always like, ‘That's for a man.’ And she always emphasizes it, and I'm like, ‘Well, it's a piece of cloth. So I should be allowed to wear it.’ And she's always very, very angry about that. She doesn't yell or anything like that, but she just give me looks like, ‘Keep it down.’ [...] Essentially, she thinks it'll be embarrassing to the rest of the family if they see that their oldest ‘daughter’ is not their daughter anymore.” – **Mage/Miles (they/them), 19-year-old, nonbinary.**

Invalidation. The sub-theme of invalidation emerged from participants’ descriptions of experiencing subtle microaggressions that invalidated their trans identity. Invalidating behaviors included parents not taking the youth’s trans identity seriously and repeatedly using incorrect pronouns despite education and corrections. Another way invalidation was discussed by participants was through their parents making implicit assumptions about their roles based on their sex assigned at birth – for example, assigning household chores to a child who was assigned female at birth (AFAB) because of the assumption that only women or AFAB people should do household labor, or referring to their nonbinary child as a “daughter.”

Belen Canul felt supported by their mother. However, they noticed subtle ways in which their mother was invalidating of their identity. In this part of their interview, they discussed how they feel that their mother would only take their identity seriously if they were a trans man:

“Although [their mother is] very supportive, I know from-- I'm pretty certain she doesn't understand, and that it's just a phase or that I'll care about it less in the future. So she's trying not to give too much energy into it. Yeah. Because it's not like if it was-- It would be different if I was transitioning into like a trans man. She would take it a lot more seriously.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Max also stated that they felt very supported by their mother. They shared that despite having asked their mother to incorporate the gender-neutral pronoun of “elle,” their mother still has not used it. They described this as a limitation in her support towards them.

“I think I've mentioned to her before the pronoun, elle, and I would talk to her about it, but I feel like it's still hard for her to integrate that into her daily language. And so when she talks to me, she still uses the masculine form, the masculine pronoun. And that's hard for me because I have had conversations with her about it, I've sent her videos about it, I've sent her infographics about it, and it still has not gotten through to her. So although I feel like my mom is very supportive and I'm lucky to have a really supportive mom, I still feel like that piece is missing. And it makes it hard for me to feel like she sees me. And I know that's something I constantly say, have been saying throughout this interview, but I constantly feel like people don't see me, they project gender onto me, and I feel like my mom does that, maybe unconsciously, like it's not on purpose, but I still wish that she would put in the work to integrate that into her language.” – **Max (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Conditional Support. Some participants expressed feeling like their parents' support was conditional. Conditional support was described within the context of changing identity. For example, Xavier felt that their mother eventually became very supportive of their trans identity when they identified as a trans man. However, later on they discovered that they identified as nonbinary, rather than as a trans man. This created tension in their relationship with their mother. They felt that their mother's support was conditional and did not include their nonbinary identity.

“I think kind of...uh, well, also, finding out that I'm nonbinary and not just a trans man. It kind of made the relationship a little rocky because it was, like, 'Okay, well I took this many years trying to figure out and trying to conform to these pronouns and this name and now you wanna change your pronouns, you know, and now you wanna do this and you wanna do that. Go ahead, but not on my money. You know, not on my time.' [...] It was, it kinda felt like, okay, well, you're only supporting me, at, on this stage of the life, my life, but then it cut off right there, kind of when I came out as, you know, non-binary.”

– **Xavier (they/he), 19-year-old, transmasculine/nonbinary.**

Other Unsupportive Behaviors. Participants described other parental behaviors and actions that appeared unsupportive did not fit other sub-themes. These behaviors were mentioned by one or two participants but reappeared throughout their interviews and thus appeared significant due to their implications for parental support. Further description of these behaviors is provided below.

Youth may notice hesitancy or worry from their parents when asking for support, and this may influence the type of support youth may ask for. For example, Belen Canul sensed

that their mother was scared to be asked to provide certain types of support for them.

However, it is also important to note that this participant also noticed that their mom wanted to be supportive and did not want to make them feel bad.

“[When coming out] what happened to me was just like my mom hugged me, which was like a really good sign, but like she was-- I think she was scared of me asking for or like saying that I wanted hormones or that I was going to change my name or anything. Because the name in and of itself was like she gave it to me, so it would be like very unappreciative of me to take away my name and choose another one. So in that way, it was kind of I could feel her hesitancy and her uncertainty. But she didn't want to wrong me or make me feel bad.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

Although Leo recognized that his mother used his correct pronouns and name, and even mentioned pride events to him, he shared that he did not feel very supported by his mother because he would like for her to demonstrate more effort and advocate for him. His descriptions are consistent with previous participant narratives expressing a desire to receive advocacy as parental support.

“I mean, bare minimum [support]. I mean, I can't even think of a time where it's like, oh, yeah, she'll post about a pride thing or mention a pride thing to me, or. But in terms of specific trans stuff, I can't actually even think of anything besides my pronouns and my name. And I think it's just more it just always felt I have to constantly explain things and advocate for myself when it's also the parent you could be advocating for me or you could be [getting educated] to help alleviate some of that. And I've said that before. And it's like

I don't, like it just felt like there was never effort put into it. And I think that's a big thing for me, just putting in more effort and showing me that. And it was never shown.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Leo mentioned being met with defensiveness when he asked his mother for different types of support. He suggested that this response from his mother makes it difficult to communicate with her and ask for support. He shared that he stopped asking altogether because of her defensiveness.

“And so I've asked a little bit [for parental support], but it's just like if it, sometimes always ends with her being like, ‘Oh, well, you think I'm not a good mother.’ And I'm like, ‘Okay, we're done here.’ And she just gets very defensive with because she thinks it's, what she's doing is good enough. And it's like, ‘Okay, well, you could be doing more.’ But if I tell her that, she's like, ‘You think I'm a terrible mother.’ I'm like, ‘No, I don't. I'm just asking for more support.’ And so it's a lot of that. So I never really ask.” **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Felt Sense of Support

The Dynamic Model of Parental Support of Trans Latinx Youth depicts the aforementioned themes as factors influencing each other and ultimately leading to a Felt Sense of Support. The outcome, *Felt Sense of Support*, emerged as a subjective experience that participants described. The outcome of *Felt Sense of Support* was specific to a point in time – for example, some participants reflected on previous points in time in the past in which they described feeling unsupported, but were, at the time of the interview, feeling

supported. This result, as the model suggests, is indicative of various factors, such as the relationship with their parents, as well as the behaviors they may be exhibiting.

Aiden described feeling generally supported by his parents through their financial support of his education and providing for his basic needs (Supportive Behaviors). He even shared that he felt supported by his mother's gifts of masculine clothing, despite the fact that they never openly discussed the meaning of these gifts (Tacit Support). Aiden had been sent to a form of conversion camp by his parents to attempt to change his sexuality. His parents reacted negatively to finding out about his queer identity (Existing Relationship). When he went off to college, he saw this as an opportunity to transition (Strategies). At the time the COVID-19 pandemic forced him to return to live at home, he had been on testosterone for nearly one and a half years. He hid his trans identity from his parents and avoided discussions that may inadvertently out him (Strategies). Despite these negative experiences with his parents, he still expressed feeling generally supported and received tacit support that felt affirming of his gender identity (Felt Sense of Support).

Belen Canul had an existing relationship with their mother in which there was trust between them. This enabled Belen Canul to open up about their gender identity with their mother (Youth Strategies). When they disclosed their nonbinary identity to their mother, they could sense her hesitancy regarding different types of support Belen Canul may ask for. However, they described having a positive experience coming out, in which their mother hugged them and reaffirmed her love for them (Supportive Behavior). Although they believed their mother did not take their nonbinary identity seriously (Unsupportive Behavior), they stated that they felt "very supported" by their mother (Felt Sense of Support).

They appeared appreciative of their mother's efforts to practice their pronouns and learn more about their identity (Shown Effort).

The existing relationship with Ezra's parents was difficult to begin with. He experienced tension with his mother when he came out about his sexuality. The tension then turned to silence (Unsupportive Behavior). He had a difficult time interpreting his parents' silence, but eventually concluded that silence was a way for them to process their grief over the dreams they had for their child. Ezra decided not to disclose his trans identity to his parents due to fears that they would be rejecting (Youth Strategies). However, he did change his gender expression to a more masculine presentation in order to fit his identity (Youth Strategies). Which he noted affected his parents' behaviors by eventually relenting to his new gender expression. He noted their progress and appreciated them providing tacit support in the form of buying him masculine clothing. While he appreciated their financial support and thanked them for providing for his basic needs, he ultimately did not feel supported by them.

For Gabriel, growing up in a progressive family, they felt free to explore their identity (Existing Relationship with Parents). They decided to come out via social media (Youth Strategies) and their mother was accepting of their nonbinary identity and she reassured them of her unconditional love and support (Supportive Behaviors). They shared that their father initially had difficulty adjusting to their identity because of his religious beliefs (Existing Relationship), but Gabriel noticed progress in his process of acceptance (Supportive Behaviors). Nonetheless, they shared feeling supported by their parents.

“I feel like my parents are generally supportive. Like they're supportive, you know, being who I am, financial supporting me and if I have a boyfriend or

partner, like they're pretty okay with it.” – **Gabriel (they/them), 21-year-old, nonbinary.**

Leo described a “strained” relationship with his father (Existing Relationship with Parents). Despite his efforts to take his father to a support space for parents of trans youth (Youth Strategies), he did not feel like his father was interested in reciprocating such efforts (Unsupportive Behavior). When he confronted his father about experiencing transphobia from his side of the family, he shared that his father was “gaslighting” him (Felt Sense of Support). Because he did not feel supported, he cut ties with his father. Initially after disclosing his trans identity to his mother, he felt unsupported (Existing Relationship with Parents). He believed that continuing to pursue medical transition and having direct communication with her in which he asserted his boundaries regarding respecting his identity (Youth Strategies), helped her become more supportive. He shared that he was surprised by how much more supportive she became over the years. However, he also stated that he felt she was only doing the “bare minimum” in terms of support. While his mother did use his correct name and pronouns, and even helped him after undergoing top surgery, he only felt minimally supported (Felt Sense of Support). The difficulties he experienced while trying to receive more support from her (Existing Relationship with Parents), as well as her lack of effort and advocacy (Unsupportive Behaviors) contributed to him feeling minimally supported (Felt Sense of Support).

Mage’s family environment growing up was described as “very machista” (Existing Relationship with Parents, Cultural Factors). They shared that their parents appeared more concerned with their public image over their identity and comfort. When they would try to buy clothing that match their gender identity, their mother would disapprove, and this would

create arguments between them. They shared that their mother would become “very, very angry” when they were seen in public wearing masculine clothing (Unsupportive Behaviors). Mage explained their nonbinary identity to their parents (Youth Strategies), who were dismissive and “tried to put things under the rug” (Unsupportive Behaviors). Mage felt that their identity was ignored. When asked if they felt supported by their parents in any way, this was their response:

“No, I wouldn't say that they've been really supportive about anything.” –
Mage/Miles (they/them), 19-year-old, nonbinary.

The relationship between Max and their mother was one in which they openly communicated about their experience (Existing Relationship with Parents). Max felt like because they had initially come out as a lesbian, their mother had had time to learn about the LGBTQ community (External Factors) and was more readily accepting when they came out as nonbinary. They “sat down” their mother and shared their experience with their nonbinary identity (Youth Strategies) and their mother was accepting. At the time of the interview, their mother still made mistakes and misgendered and deadnamed them. However, Max shared that they “still felt comfortable” because she welcomed corrections and appeared to show effort in using their correct name and pronouns. Max felt supported by their mother’s use of social media to advocate for them and their nonbinary identity. They expressed feeling “good” that their mother was outspoken and did not hide their trans identity from her friends or extended family (Supportive Behaviors, Felt Sense of Support).

Growing up, Riley shared that their family perpetuated heteronormative and gendered values (Existing Relationship with Parents, Cultural Factors). This made them believe that they had to hide their identity from their parents because they would not be supportive of

their nonbinary identity (Youth Strategies). Indeed, when they shaved their head as a way to express their gender identity, their father was unsupportive. Their mother was also unsupportive of them changing their gender expression (Unsupportive Behaviors). These parental behaviors led to them feeling unsupported. In their interview, they shared the following regarding parental support:

“Honestly, no. I feel like, if anything, they've added extra layers of stress, if I'm being honest.” – **Riley (they/she), 21-year-old, genderqueer.**

Initially, Xavier's mother was rejecting of their identity (Existing Relationship with Parents). Xavier responded to her rejection of their identity by resisting and continuing to express their trans identity (Youth Strategies). This led to their mother to do her own research, become educated about trans issues, and seek support from other parents of trans youth. She eventually became an advocate for them at school. She provided financial, legal, and medical transition support (Supportive Behaviors). They desired emotional support from her throughout the process of figuring out their identity. However, they felt that her support was limited because she seemed unsupportive of their nonbinary identity (Unsupportive Behaviors). They felt that her support only went so far as supporting them as a trans man but stopped short of supporting their trans identity (Felt Sense of Support).

Support over Time. Most participants found parental support to increase over time. Factors such as Youth Strategies and External Factors influenced this process. For some participants, a combination of factors may have contributed to the increase in support – such as, extending patience toward their parents, allowing time for their parents to adjust to their trans identity, and/or exposure to resources. Participants below discussed their experiences and suggestions regarding this process.

Here, Leo discussed his experience. Over time, his mother became more supportive, even beyond his expectations. By the time of the interview, his mother had supported him by taking him to doctor's appointments to receive gender-affirming care, and even helped him after undergoing top surgery.

“I didn't actually tell my mother anything until I think the August of 2019-ish. And then, I, it was really a struggle then. We didn't really talk. Our relationship was super strained. I didn't really want to interact with them and she didn't understand it at all. It was a really bad situation. [...] But comparing that to now is a completely different person. I would say that there's still some points where she doesn't really get it and it slips, but she definitely is more understanding and helpful. And the relationship is a little bit better than it was when I left for [college]. And it's an interesting thing to see. It's weird for me just having that, but it's great, but also kind of weird. But I just got top surgery, and she helped out with that and she has been taking me to my appointments and stuff. And I'm just lucky enough to have that. And I just couldn't think that that would be possible in 2019. Thinking about it then, I could never have seen that happen.” – **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Belen Canul extended empathy and understanding toward their mom as she was adjusting to their identity. They recommend offering patience and leniency towards parents, as they too are suffering from a strict gender binary. They shared that they believe having patience ultimately helped their mother become more supportive.

“I think that like-- I think that parents do deserve some patience and leniency, because of how... I think that they are also suffering from this strict gender

binary. And I think that once they give themselves that patience and leniency, they can give it to others as well. So yeah, I think that's what helped with my mom the most.” – **Belen Canul (they/them), 23-year-old, nonbinary.**

While the majority of participants did indicate that their parents became more accepting over time, Leo discusses his perspective as a youth navigating his identity without necessarily receiving parental support in the initial stages. He highlighted the importance of finding other ways to provide youth support, such as having another adult advocate for the child, as parents are in their process of acceptance. He shared how painful it was for him to be told to be patient with his mother while he was suffering.

“because as, like a youth, a lot of people told me like, ‘Oh, just give her time. Give her time.’ And that's not what I wanted to hear because it's like, yeah, I can give her time, but it's hurting me. It's hurting me in the moment. And I think that, like yeah, you can tell youth that, but I think that in the moment they need support because they're not getting it from their parents as much. [...] And I think that like there needs to be another like kind of like a third party that is able to advocate for that child and help them navigate that and help the parent navigate it as well. Because I know that sometimes parent to parent versus parent to kid, as much as I don't like that, I hate that that's how it has to be done, but sometimes hearing it from another adult makes them see it a little bit better. But I think that a big thing, even if it is like, "Give them time," it's like you need to focus on the youth and get them help first because as much as the parent is and will maybe change, it's still hurting the youth in the present. [...] And it's always about [parents] and it wasn't like, "Hey, how

are you? How is this making you feel right now?" And it was just-- and it felt like it was never about me. And that hurt a lot. “– **Leo (he/him), 20-year-old, trans man.**

Mage shared their desire for reassurance of unconditional love even if parents are not completely understanding or supportive yet. Similar sentiments were expressed by other participants. Given that parents’ process of acceptance may not always be evident to the youth, receiving explicit affirmation of love by their parents may help youth feel supported.

“I guess mainly, what I see when people talk about family support and such is that people accuse people in the LGBT community of wanting for things to change immediately, for people to want things to be like this and that, like, ‘Oh, I’m supportive for you.’ Like, ‘I’ll go out to pride with you’ and stuff like that. And that’s not always the case. It might be the case for some kids, and that doesn’t mean that it’s bad at all. It’s just that it’s not for everyone. And like for me, personally, all I would really want is for people to, my parents specifically, to just be like, ‘We still love you no matter what,’ and mean it. Not just have that be a phrase that they just throw around all willy nilly. So I guess the only thing that I would say is sometimes all that’s really needed is for someone to be like, ‘Well, you’re you, and I still love you for you.’ And to mean it, not to just say it to make you be quiet.” – **Mage/Miles (they/them), 19-year-old, nonbinary.**

In this quote, Ezra reflected on his parents’ overall process of acceptance. He appeared to extend empathy and understanding towards his parents, as they processed their

new reality and undergo a grieving process over the dreams or ideals they may have had for their child.

“I’ve just had to think about [his parents’ silence] a lot. And it really comes down to-- I feel like it was just a processing moment almost - that’s how I viewed it - of just really having really come to terms with just how one of their children just isn’t really-- because I feel there’s a whole narrative where parents have this whole plan out for their children almost. Even when they’re born, it’s like they kind of have this moment of just thinking about the life that will come from this child. And then I feel like it’s almost processing that moment of just it not happening that way they’ve pictured it. [...] It almost seems like a moment of coping with the loss of that envisionment of a life, and just how it’s not really playing out the way they thought. [...] I just feel like people will think, "Oh, parents are just mad." And that’s it. But it just really feels like something else almost. Because it just seemed like such a-- it seemed very out of pocket in my point of view back then. But then, every now and then I reflect on that, I’m just like, "Well, it kind of makes sense because it’s like--" It’s a big shock– **Ezra (he/him), 21-year-old, trans man.**

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study examined transgender Latinx youth's experiences with parental support. Nine nonbinary and trans men/transmasculine Latinx participants from California between the ages of 18-23 were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol to explore their experiences with parental support. Interviews were analyzed utilizing constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). Results yielded six themes and 32 sub-themes that were used to create the Dynamic Model of Parental Support of Transgender Latinx Youth.

Main Findings

Findings of this study and resulting model depict parental support of transgender Latinx youth as a dynamic process, as well as existing on a continuum – rather than a static, binary category that is or is not present. The model conceptualizes parental support as a subjective, felt experience influenced by themes and sub-themes identified. According to the model, parental support exists within a context that is reflective of an interaction between cultural factors, external factors, and the existing relationship with the parent. Within this context, youth utilize strategies that influence parental behaviors, such interaction results in a felt sense of support. The result, Felt Sense of Support, is a subjective felt experience that exists on a continuum and is time-specific. Findings point to parental support as a snapshot in time (rather than a static category), suggesting it may evolve and change over time. These findings build upon previous research on parental support or parental acceptance (e.g., Rohner, 2005; Ryan et al., 2010), which primarily focused on parental behaviors but did not include dynamic or cultural factors – a unique contribution of this study.

Unique contributions of this study include further incorporation and examination of cultural factors' impact on parental support. Previous research has shown that Latinx cultural values may guide and influence parenting behaviors (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007); however, specific mechanisms of action on how these cultural factors impact parental support or how this informs how youth conceptualize parental support have seldom been examined. Results from this study elucidated how Latinx cultural values, such as *machismo/marianismo*, *familismo*, and *respeto* impacted the overall model of parental support. Additional cultural factors that have seldom been highlighted in previous research were also identified. For example, Tacit Support emerged as a sub-theme from participants' descriptions of receiving parental support that was unspoken but implied. Additionally, participants mentioned their parents' expectations that they *know* they are loved and supported without necessarily being explicitly told. A potential explanation for tacit support is that this may be a way for parent(s) and youth to navigate multiple, sometimes competing cultural values, such as *respeto* and *familismo*. For example, parents may gift their child masculine clothing that allows them to express their trans identity as a way to provide support and maintain a relationship with their child (*familismo*) but may not have explicit conversations about the meaning behind such gift in order to respect their child's privacy and avoid conflict. In fact, this is consistent with previous research on tacit disclosure of sexual identity among Mexican-American gay men which found that nonverbal disclosures were a way for participants to maintain positive relationships with family and act according to the cultural values of *familismo* and *respeto* (Delucio et al., 2020).

Another important contribution this study provided was further elucidating how the existing relationship between youth and parents influenced parental support. The existing

relationship was found to be a contextual and pre-existing factor of great importance impacting participants' experiences of parental support. For example, several participants experienced previous rejection of their identity in the past by their parents, which made them hesitate or even refuse to disclose their gender identity to their parents. Conversely, previously established trust in the relationship with their parent, influenced how participants viewed and interpreted their parent's behaviors. In the case of Max, for example, their relationship with their mother prior to them disclosing their trans identity was one where they communicated openly with each other and there was a sense of trust established between them. When Max's mother misgendered or deadnamed them, they did not experience this as rejection, but rather, noted her progress and willingness to welcome corrections. Findings from this study suggest that Max's existing relationship with their mother impacted their interpretation of her behavior. While the interpretive component of this finding is accounted for in existing research, for example in Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (Rohner, 2004), specific focus on how the existing relationship may inform such interpretation is further contribution of the present study.

Strategies that youth may utilize in response to parental reactions to their gender identity have seldom been examined by previous research. A novel contribution that emerged from this study is a greater understanding of the strategies that participants used in response to their parents' reactions or expected reactions, frequently in response to disapproval of their trans identity. Through participant narratives, it became clear that youth enacted agency when possible and coped with their parents' reactions to the best of their ability – that is, they were not passive subjects in this process. Participants engaged in various strategies in order to exist as trans youth and navigate their parents' reactions. While the parent may have been

engaging in their own process of acceptance, the youth were utilizing various strategies in response to parental reactions. For some youth, strategies included resisting their parent's denial of their identity and pursuing medical transition regardless of their parent's disapproval, concealing their identity while at home, relying on community or chosen family for support, using a therapist to advocate for their needs, or communicating with their parents more directly about their needs and boundaries. These strategies highlight the ways in which youth try to navigate their identity within a cis-normative world in which they have to strategize as a way to survive in the first place. Two previous studies have discussed strategies or ways in which sexual minorities may cope with parental rejection. The first of such studies, a study of Australian gay and lesbian individuals, found that participants relied on social support, self-acceptance, and strategic concealment of their identity as a way to cope with family rejection and foster resilience (Carastathis et al., 2017). Finally, a dissertation study examined sexual minority adults' strategies for coping with parental rejection and developed a model that included strategies such as finding alternative forms of support, substance use, and establishing healthy boundaries with their parents (Herbitter, 2017). It is important to note that these two previous studies are of sexual minorities; the current study is the first to identify strategies used by transgender people.

Participants' narratives included descriptions of supportive behaviors that are consistent with previous literature on parental support (e.g., Hale et al., 2021), such as medical transition support, mental health support, and financial support. However, there were unique findings that emerged from the data that have seldom been described before. For example, several participants commented on the importance of being explicitly reassured by parents of their unconditional love and support. Even participants who received tangible

forms of support, such as medical transition support, expressed a desire to be told by their parent(s) that they were loved unconditionally, despite their identity. Indeed, several participants also described their desire for emotional support as a form of parental support. The desire for reassurance, comfort, and emotional connection appeared throughout the interviews.

Other supportive behaviors that emerged as sub-themes within this study that may be lacking from current literature include Making an Effort and Advocacy with family members. Perhaps because of the cultural value of *familismo*, which places a great importance in family networks, Latinx families tend to congregate with and rely on extended family members. The sub-theme of Advocacy included an emphasis on participants' desire for support in the form of advocacy with extended family members. The desire for parents to "stick up" for youth against family members who make transphobic comments, for example, could be a particular way that parents could demonstrate public support and perhaps practice *familismo*. An additional supportive behavior that stood out as previously unmentioned by the extant literature was Making an Effort. Participants described a desire for their parents to exhibit making efforts to understand their identity, educate themselves about transgender issues and identities, and make progress in their acceptance. The two sub-themes mentioned Making an Effort and Advocacy with family members do not appear to be included in previous measures of parental support (e.g., Rohner, 2004; Ryan et al., 2010; Espelage et al., 2008; Needham & Austin, 2010), thus making this a novel contribution of the present study.

Another possibly culturally-specific phenomenon that emerged from this study was captured by the sub-theme of Silence. Participants noted their experience within Latinx families of being met with silence by their parent(s) after disclosing their identity or changing

their gender expression. Several participants mentioned that they believed this to be specific to Latinx families and Latinx culture. A possible explanation could be that this is a way for parents to avoid conflict and maintain a relationship with their child. Although such response did tend to successfully avoid overt conflict, it also appeared to further distance youth from their parents and made it less likely that they would communicate with them about their identity. This sub-theme may also be similarly related to Tacit Support, which again, appeared to be influenced by the same cultural factors of *familismo* and *respeto*.

A final notable finding from this study was captured by the sub-theme of Controlling Gender Expression. Some participants described feeling stymied in their ability to socially transition or have a gender expression that matched their identity because of their parents. Participants described being denied clothing or hairstyles that were disapproved of by their parent(s) due to not aligning with a gender expression that matched their sex assigned at birth. For example, participants who were transmasculine were denied masculine clothing. Sometimes their parent(s) would not directly deny their ability to wear such clothing, but participants noticed this created tension with their parent(s) that negatively impacted their relationships. This parental reaction appeared to stem from a concern with public image. One participant even noted that they believed their parents did not allow for them to wear masculine clothing because they were concerned about others' opinions. From the youth's perspective, it appeared that parents were more concerned with their public image above the wellbeing and comfort of their own child. This may also communicate to youth that their trans identity is shameful and should be kept hidden from others. It would be beneficial to understand that gender expression is a crucial way that trans youth can use to alleviate

feelings of gender dysphoria and that denying them agency in their gender expression can negatively affect their mental health.

Parenting Implications

Results from this study reveal important parenting implications. Parents of transgender Latinx youth should first understand the crucial role parental support plays in youth's lives. Previous research has found rates as high as 86% of youth surveyed have considered suicide (Austin et al., 2020). However, previous research has also identified that parental support, such as use of correct name, is associated with lower rates of depression and suicidality (Russell et al., 2018). Transgender youth are in dire need of parental support and findings from the present study can help guide the support that parents provide.

Throughout their interviews, participants expressed over and over again their desire for explicit reassurance that they are loved, even if the parent is not yet completely understanding or even supportive. As previously mentioned, given elevated rates of suicidality, as well as the protective role parental support serves among transgender youth, reassurance of unconditional love alone may play a role in keeping youth alive, making them feel supported, and maintaining their relationship with their parent. While this may be difficult to do given cultural norms or own parenting style, it is important to note that all participants in this study mentioned this as an important factor in feeling supported. It may be beneficial for parents to be aware of this so that they might prioritize expressing love even when struggling to accept their child's gender identity and expression.

It may be helpful for parents to recognize that some youth behaviors are strategies they are using in response to parental reactions, and to respond to them as such. Strategies identified by this study included: resistance, concealing identity/living a double life, and

using an advocate to increase support. Parents who find their child resisting against them and cutting their hair or purchasing gender-affirming clothing, for example, may consider that their child is not engaging in this behavior simply to be rebellious, but may be trying to express their identity and cope with gender dysphoria. This is exemplified by Xavier in this portion of their interview where they discussed that despite pleas for their mother to accept their gender identity and allow them to pursue medical transition, it took hospitalization for a suicide attempt for her to believe they were not just being rebellious: “And so, you know, after therapy and, like, hospitalization - she kinda realized that it was more serious than just me saying what I wanted to say, or being rebellious, you know.” However, it is also important for parents to understand that nonbinary people are not necessarily androgynous in their gender presentation/expression. Therefore, having a conversation with their child regarding what their nonbinary identity means to them, language that feels affirming, and limiting assumptions about their child’s gender expression could contribute to youth’s feelings of support.

Similarly, if a parent were to find out that their child has been concealing their identity from them, having a conversation with their child in which they express their unconditional love may help the youth be more open to discuss their identity. As findings from this study suggest, youth may interpret parents’ silence as rejection or grief. Thus, having an open conversation in which the parent may express gentle curiosity and acknowledge the child’s identity may result in a stronger parent-child relationship and greater feelings of support.

Several participants discussed engaging in a process of identity exploration in which they “tried on” different identities or identity labels. Participants expressed a difficulty in

communicating such changes of identity to their parents. Participants believed that their parents would not be accepting of changing labels or may have difficulty “letting go” of a certain identity label the youth might have used in the past. It is important that parents try to be flexible and understanding of this process, without holding on to one identity or label too tightly, as that may change. Parents may also need awareness around changing identity and identity exploration as it relates to their own process of acceptance. Parents may also be transparent about their process of acceptance, but should be mindful that this does not place additional burdens on the child. This may be beneficial because this may allow youth to see the parents show effort and progress in their process. In order to avoid further burdening youth with educating parents or carrying their emotional load, parents may rely on mental health professionals and community resources (e.g., PFLAG, local LGBT centers) to provide education and support for them.

Clinical Implications

Lack of parental support impacts trans Latinx youths’ mental health. Trans youth who are supported in their identities have significantly better mental health outcomes than those who are unsupported (e.g., Olson et al., 2016). As participants shared their experiences, it became evident that hiding their identity and feeling unsupported by their parents was a major contributing factor in their mental health.

Mental health providers working with transgender Latinx youth and parents of trans Latinx youth should understand the importance of parental support for this population. Given elevated rates of suicidality among this population and the positive impact that parental support can have on trans youth’s mental health, increasing parental support can be thought

of as a life-saving endeavor. Thus, findings from this study have the potential to inform clinical practice that may have a critical impact on transgender Latinx youth's lives.

Several participants expressed a desire for their parents to attend individual and family therapy. Participants who mentioned this suggested that this could be a way for parents to process their own emotions and unlearn harmful cis-centric and binary systems that they may have been exposed to. Participants also expressed feeling burdened by constantly having to educate their parents about trans issues and their trans identity. Additionally, one participant shared his difficulty with having to wait for his mother to support him while he was not receiving emotional support himself.

A way to incorporate these findings into clinical practice could be to create therapy groups for parents of trans Latinx youth. Providing a therapeutic space, facilitated by a trained mental health professional who has expertise in working with trans communities, as well as cultural competence could be instrumental in increasing parental support. It could be especially beneficial to create spaces that are facilitated in Spanish, as those are rarely available. Parents could use such space to process their emotions, receive peer support, and connect with other parents who may share similar experiences.

Psychoeducation in the form of accessible pamphlets, infographics, and/or workshops can also be a way to access parents who may have higher levels of stigma regarding accessing therapy, and/or who may not be interested in pursuing psychotherapy. Psychoeducation can also be used as a supplemental tool to group and individual therapy. Information in Spanish and inclusion of nonbinary identities might be particularly useful for parents of trans Latinx youth.

Participants mentioned relying on community and chosen family for support as a way to cope when parental support was not available to them. Creating support spaces and therapy groups where youth can connect and establish supportive networks may be beneficial. Additionally, encouraging youth to access existing community resources where they can connect with other trans youth, such as local LGBT center community events, could help in establishing social support.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

This study provided novel contributions to an understudied and severely marginalized population; however, it also contained several limitations and opportunities for future research. The first limitation of this study that could be addressed with future research was regarding the interview protocol. According to constructivist grounded theory, interview protocols should be flexible, adapt based on emerging data, and avoid pre-determined responses (Charmaz, 2006). This principle was adhered to in this study. As analysis progressed, subsequent interviews included more follow up questions and thus, yielded richer, more focused data that was relevant to the study. However, in the final stages of theoretical coding, it became clear that additional questions regarding felt sense of support could have added to the strength of the study.

The present study was conducted in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The context of the pandemic may have influenced participants' experiences of parental support. Many participants were forced to return to live with their parents due to the pandemic. This often meant moving away from social support and access to gender-affirming services that were available to them on college campuses. For some participants, it meant what they described as "going back in the closet" or hiding their identity from their parents, or delaying

coming out due to uncertainty over parental support and living situation. The age of participants (19-23) is an additional important consideration in the context of the pandemic, given the influential role parents tend to play at this stage of development. The majority of participants still depended on their parents for financial support, health insurance, and housing. The context of the pandemic and subsequent return to live with their parents away from affirming environments, may have impacted participants' ability to transition, come out, and experiences of parental support. An additional contextual factor that must be considered in this study is that of anti-transgender legislation. At the time interviews and analyses were conducted, the surge of anti-transgender legislation proposed and passed by various states had not yet occurred. Undoubtedly, this anti-trans climate would have impacted participants' experiences of parental support. Results published in January 2022 of a poll conducted by The Trevor Project found that over 60% of LGBTQ+ youth reported that their mental health deteriorated as a result of anti-trans legislation. Participants may have been impacted by such climate despite not being directly impacted by such legislation in California. Attention to political events that directly impact transgender people, as well as attention to other contextual factors is of great importance that future studies should consider given the current anti-trans climate and vulnerability of this population.

Another limitation of this study was that no participants agreed to engage in participant checks. Participants were contacted via email and invited to contribute to the study by engaging in a participant check either individually or as a group. There were no responses to the email solicitation. Given that this is a particularly vulnerable population, phone numbers were not collected, and thus were not used to contact participants regarding participant checks. Given the small sample size, it is understandable that none of the nine

participants agreed to participate in participant checks. While participant checks are not a requirement while using a constructivist grounded theory, contributions through participant checks would have undoubtedly added an important aspect to the collaborative and co-created approach that the constructivist grounded theory framework espouses.

The recruitment process of this study presented another limitation in terms of reach and accessibility for participants. Recruitment was primarily done through my connections with my university's LGBT center and local LGBT organizations. Additionally, because this study was part of a larger grant-funded study, the age range for participation was 18-23 years old, which inadvertently contributed to all participants being college students or had received some college education. Due to recruitment strategies and inclusion criteria of the study, there was a high level of education among the sample. Incorporating the perspectives of youth who may not be college educated would be beneficial, especially the perspectives of youth who may have had to drop out of college or not attend due to parental rejection.

Participants in this study shared their experiences retrospectively – that is to say, they reflected on past experiences of parental support. This may have influenced how participants related to their past experiences, rather than relating to them more immediately. Further research could include youth under the age of 18, as this may capture the process of parental support as it is more immediately occurring, rather than reflecting on it retrospectively (as is the case in the present study). This may also provide different perspectives on support that may include experiences of youth within different school systems and contexts.

The primary purpose of qualitative research is not to create generalizability, but rather, to provide in-depth understanding and inspire social change (Charmaz, 2001; Chatfield, 2018). Transferability, on the other hand, concerns the extent to which findings

and theory can be applied (Morrow, 2005). Therefore, it is important to consider transferability of findings of the present study. While the number of participants and length of their interviews provided thick narratives that yielded sufficient data to reach saturation, it is important to consider the demographic composition of these participants – college-educated, young adults, who were resided in California. Given that this study was part of a larger research study, location of participants was limited to California. Thus, the vast majority of participants were Mexican or Mexican-American. Therefore, there was a lack of ethnic diversity within the participant sample. Future research should aim to include the perspectives that are more reflective of the ethnic diversity that exists within the Latinx community, such as Caribbean and South American Latinxs. Further research with a larger, more heterogenous participant sample would be beneficial to capture additional perspectives.

Nearly all participants of the present study were trans men or transmasculine Latinxs. Gaining understanding about parental support from trans men and nonbinary/transmasculine youth is without a doubt a significant contribution to existing literature. However, as one participant suggested, trans women and transfeminine participants likely have a different experience of parental support – another important consideration regarding transferability of results. As Leo mentioned in his interview, factors such as *machismo* and strict gender roles that prize masculinity above femininity that may be present within the Latinx community would likely contribute to different needs and experiences of parental support. Incorporating the perspectives of youth that include diversity regarding sex assigned at birth, medical transition status, and gender binary could yield potential differences in parental support. Future studies could aim specifically to recruit trans women and transfeminine participants.

Understanding the experiences of trans women and transfeminine participants would be a necessary next step in understanding parental support of transgender Latinx youth.

It is important to highlight that the transgender community is not a monolith. There is great diversity in terms of gender presentations, desire to pursue medical interventions, and what may or may not feel affirming for an individual. Some youth do not desire to pursue medical interventions (e.g., hormone replacement therapy, or surgery) in order to feel affirmed in their gender. Indeed, not all trans people experience gender dysphoria (e.g., Davy & Toze, 2018). Nonbinary people are not necessarily androgynous, and they have a wide range of gender presentations/expressions that may or may not change in time or in different contexts (e.g., gender fluid). Future research may examine how these different experiences may relate to parental support, and how parents may best support their child given this information.

Future research on parental support may also consider the findings of this study and how they may relate to measurement. Current measures of parental support are limited and not specific to transgender youth (e.g., Rohner, 2005; Ryan et al., 2009). Creating measures of parental support specific to transgender youth informed by the present study may provide fruitful avenues for intervention and clinical implications.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to answer the following research question: What is parental support for transgender Latinx youth? Semi-structured interviews of approximately one-hour were conducted with nine transgender Latinx participants ages 18-23. A constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) approach was used for analysis and theory-building. The resulting model, *Dynamic Model of Parental Support of Transgender Latinx Youth*, included

six themes, and thirty-two sub-themes that emerged from the data. Themes included in the model were as follows: Cultural Factors, External Factors, Existing Relationship with Parents, Youth Strategies, Supportive Behaviors, and Unsupportive Behaviors. This study's findings and model have important implications for research, practice, as well as parental and community interventions. Results can help better serve one of the most marginalized populations that exist at the intersection of multiple oppressive systems. As previously mentioned, transgender Latinx youth who receive parental support have better outcomes than those who are unsupported. May the knowledge acquired from this study be used directly to provide the support that these youth need.

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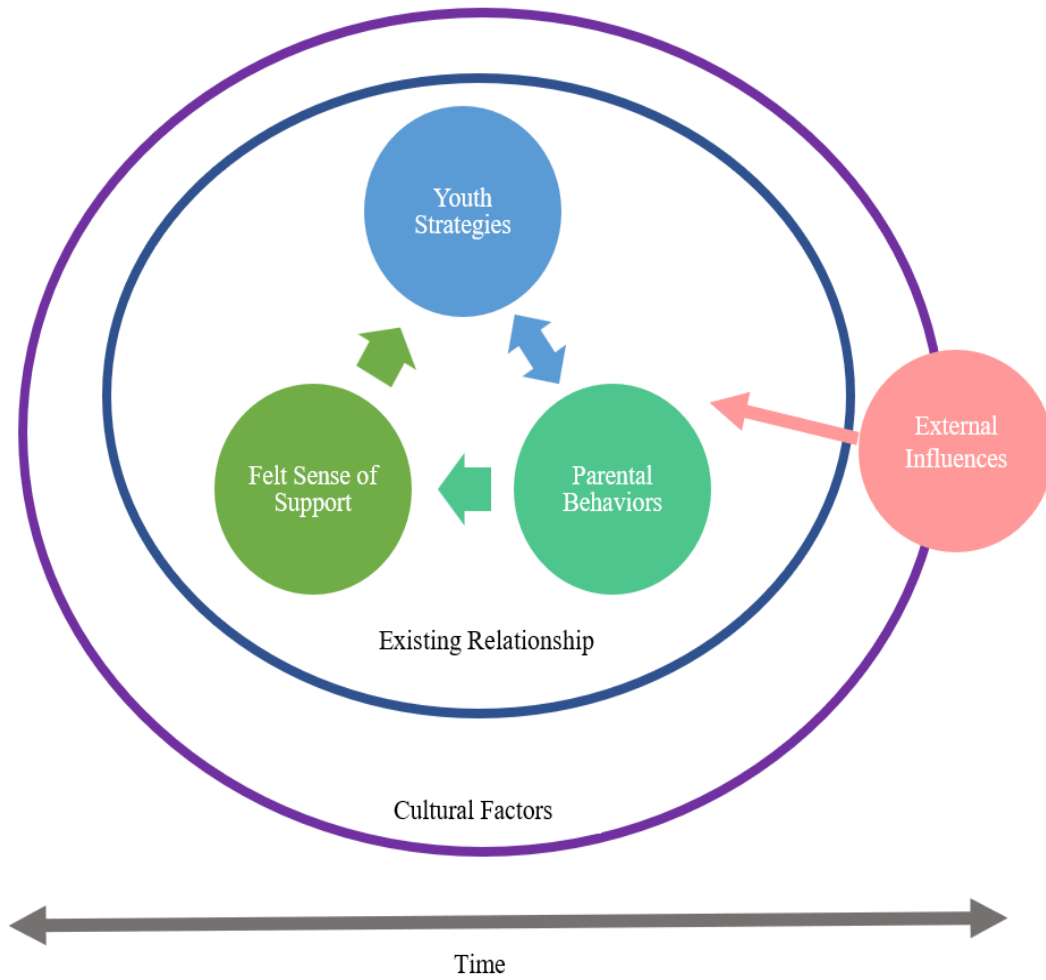
Table 1: Participants

Pseudonym	Pronouns	Age	Race and Ethnicity	Gender Identity	Sexuality	Immigration
Aiden	he/they	21	Hispanic/Latinx (Mexican)	Trans man / transmasculine	Bisexual	2nd generation
Belen Canul	they/theym	23	Indigenous/Latinx (Mexican)	Nonbinary	Lesbian / queer	2nd generation
Ezra	he/him	21	White/Mexican (Mexican-American)	Trans man	Queer	2nd generation
Gabriel	they/theym	21	Latinx (Mexican)	Nonbinary	Gay	1st generation
Leo	he/him	20	Other/Latinx (Mexican)	Trans man	Heterosexual	2nd generation
Mage/Miles	they/theym	19	Hispanic/Latinx (Mexican)	Nonbinary	Lesbian / sapphic	2nd generation
Max	they/theym	21	White/Latinx	Nonbinary	Lesbian	2nd or 3rd
Riley	they/she	21	White/Latinx (Salvadorean and Mexican)	Genderqueer	Bisexual / Pansexual	2nd or 3rd
Xavier	they/he	19	White/Latinx (Mexican)	Transmasculine / nonbinary	Queer	1st generation

Table 2: Frequency of Endorsement of Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-themes	n
Cultural Factors	Religion	7
	Language	3
	Respeto	3
	Familismo	2
	Machismo/Marianismo	4
External Factors	Time Apart	3
	Education	3
	Other External Factors	3
Existing Relationship with Parents	Trust	3
	Prior Experiences of Rejection	5
	State of Relationship with Parent(s)	8
Youth Strategies	Concealing Identity/Living a double life	5
	Resistance	3
	Relying on other sources of support	5
	Using advocate to increase support	3
	Communication	3
Supportive Behaviors	Medical Transition Support	3
	Financial Support	3
	Mental Health Support	4
	Tacit Support	3
	Expressed Love and Support	9
	Emotional Support	4
	Making an Effort	4
Unsupportive Behaviors	Advocacy	6
	Feeling Alone/Unsupported/Misunderstood	6
	Rejecting Identity	5
	Silence	4
	Controlling Gender Expression	3
	Invalidation	5
	Conditional Support	2
Other Unsupportive Behaviors	2	

Figure 1: *Dynamic Model of Parental Support for Transgender Latinx Youth*



Appendix A

Youth Interview Protocol

Prompt: Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. My name is _____ and I am a part of a group conducting interviews with LGBTQ youth and their parents to help identify better ways to support them in getting the services they need.

We would like to hear about your experiences and get your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. In order to understand the needs of this community and identify better ways to support, we are recording the interviews. All identifiable information such as your name, will be omitted from any transcripts and recordings. Do you have any questions about that? Is it okay with you if I start the recording?

Great. Now let's start by talking a little bit about you.

- How do you describe your sexuality? Or what words you would you use to describe your sexual orientation?
- How would you describe your gender?
- What about your racial and ethnic identity?
- Who is part of your family? (e.g., who do you consider part of your family, like brothers, sisters, etc.?)
- How do you navigate being transgender within your Latinx family/community?
- Parents have different reactions to their child's sexual orientation/gender identity over time. Can you tell me a little bit about how that has looked like in your family?
 - How would you describe your parents' adjustment to you coming out?
- What are some challenges that you have had to face or are currently facing as a transgender youth?

- How have your parents provided support?
 - What kinds of support have you wanted from your parents but perhaps have not received?
 - How has that changed over time?
 - What kinds of discussions have you had with your parents about support you want?

- Are there ways that support would look different in your family compared to other families?
 - Probe about cultural norms
 - In your community?
 - Relatives

- How have other people besides your parents provided support?
 - What kinds of support have you wanted from others but perhaps have not received?

Appendix B

Consent Form

Purpose:

You are being asked to voluntarily participate in a research study. We are doing this study to learn more about how to best provide support to sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth and their families. A SGM youth may be someone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or another sexual or gender minority. We hope to learn how community health workers may provide support and access to resources for individuals who identify as SGM. Community health workers are usually people without formal mental health training who help families get connected to services they may need. We are contacting you because you may identify as a SGM youth.

Procedures:

If you agree, we will ask you to participate in a brief 1-hr interview about your experience as a SGM youth. This interview will be done over video conferencing and will be audio recorded. You can ask for audio recording to be paused at any time. Some of the questions we may ask you include “Tell us about your experience as a SGM youth? What are some challenges you currently face or have faced, and what supports would be helpful? If someone wants to support a SGM youth and their family, what should this individual know? Were there specific resources related to being a SGM youth that would have been helpful for you and/or your family?” You may skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to participating in this project. The results of this research might inform interventions for families of sexual and gender minority youth.

Risks:

You may experience some discomfort in having your interview about your experiences audio recorded for the purposes of research. You may refuse to allow the interview to be audio recorded to share it with the research team when it is completed. You may request that parts of the interview be omitted from the recording used for research. Audio-recordings will be transcribed and de-identified. Upon transcription, audio-recordings of interviews will be permanently deleted.

Confidentiality:

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can identify you will remain confidential. It will be discussed only with your permission or as required by law. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, since research documents are not protected from subpoena. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding all information you provide with a participant number and you will not be named in any of the data. Interviews will be coded in the aggregate. All audio-recordings and transcripts will be on password protected computers and only accessed by authorized project personnel. However, we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality.

Costs/Payments Section:

You will receive a \$50 gift card for participating in the interview. You may choose to skip any questions and still receive the payment.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw:

You can refuse to take part in this project and you can stop participating at any time. You can skip questions or refuse to have your interview audio-recorded at any point in the interview. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about the research, you can call Dr. Miya Barnett at mbarnett@ucsb.edu or 805-893-7459.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Committee at (805) 893-3807 or hsc@research.ucsb.edu. Or write to the University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050