



# THE IMPACT OF FAMILY SUPPORT AMONG LGBT+ MILLENNIALS IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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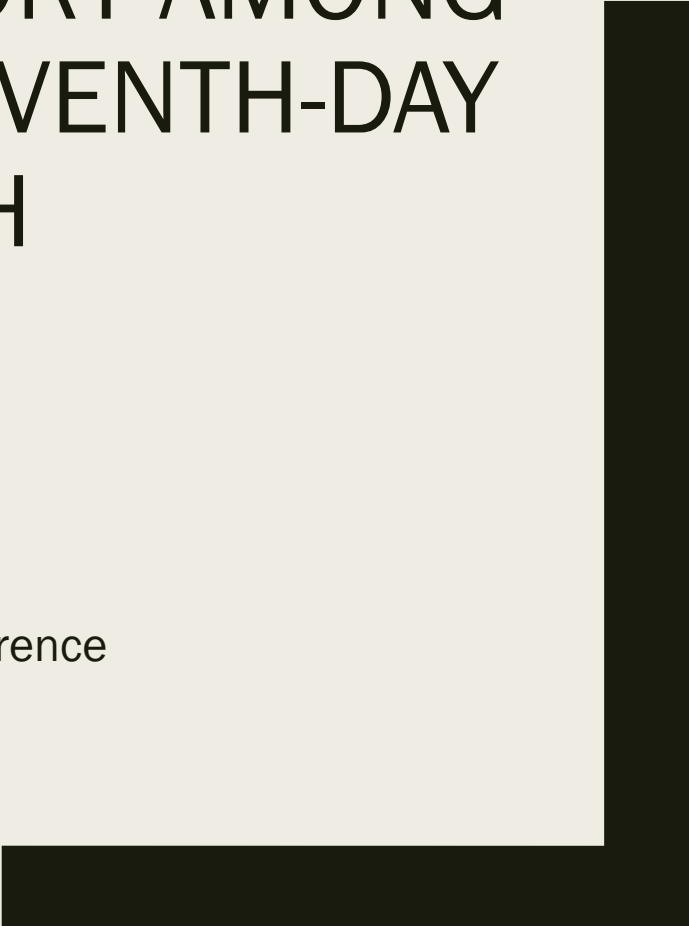
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Loma Linda, CA

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# Purpose and Sponsorship

- Andrews University Taskforce on Teen Homelessness
- Student stories of rejection and heartache
- Family Acceptance Project at SFSU – Mormon church initiative
- Encouragement from GC and NAD Family Ministries
- Support from various SDA LGBT+ groups
- First LGBT+ denominational study we are aware of
- Confidentiality of data

# Survey Construction

- Family acceptance/rejection questions
  - *Family Acceptance Project – Caitlyn Ryan discussion & materials*
  - *Brainstorming categories and questions*
  - *Feedback from SDA LGBT+ students and leaders*
    - Andrews University UG and Graduate students
    - Coming Out Ministries
    - SDA Kinship, SDA bloggers, SDA researchers
- Dependent variables – standardized questionnaires
  - *Self-esteem, social support, depression, substance use, risky sex, suicidal ideation & suicide attempts*

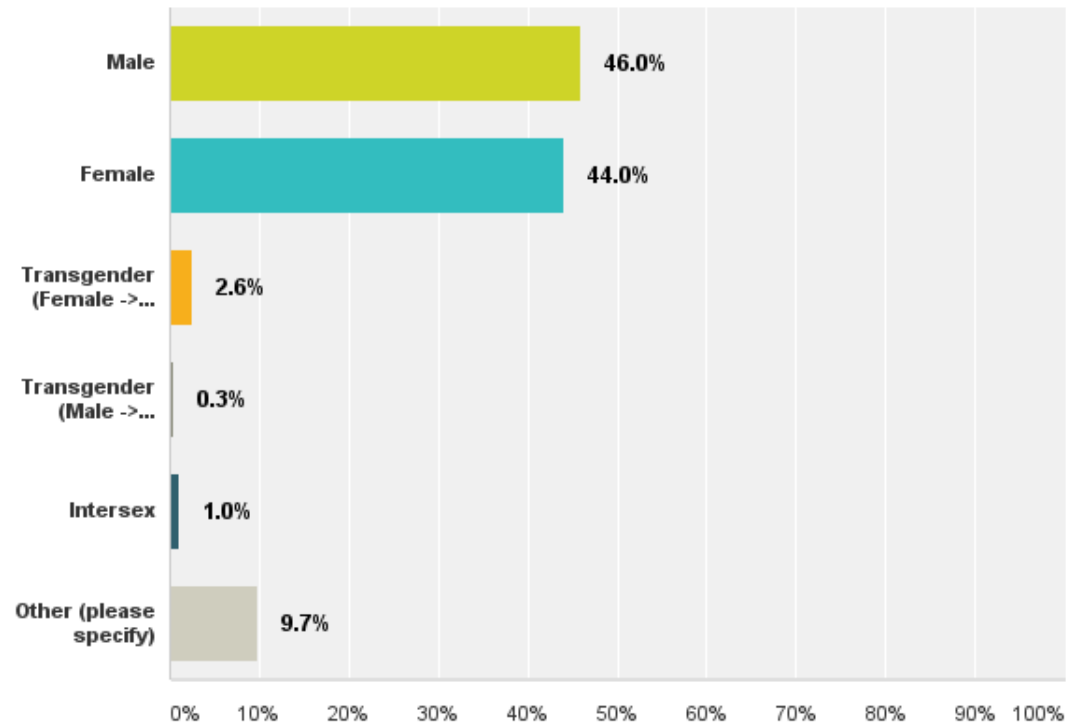
# Data Collection

- Developed SurveyMonkey link
- Distributed to:
  - *SDA bloggers*
  - *SDA Kinship readership list*
  - *Adventist Today readership list*
  - *Intercollegiate Adventist Gay/Straight Alliance Coalition*
- Criteria for involvement
  - *SDA childhood background (96%)*
  - *Identify as LGBT+*
  - *Ages 18 - 35*
- N = 310 LGBT+ individuals

# Gender

**Q28 Tell us about your gender (use the Other box if you wish to make a response that does not fit within the selection categories)**

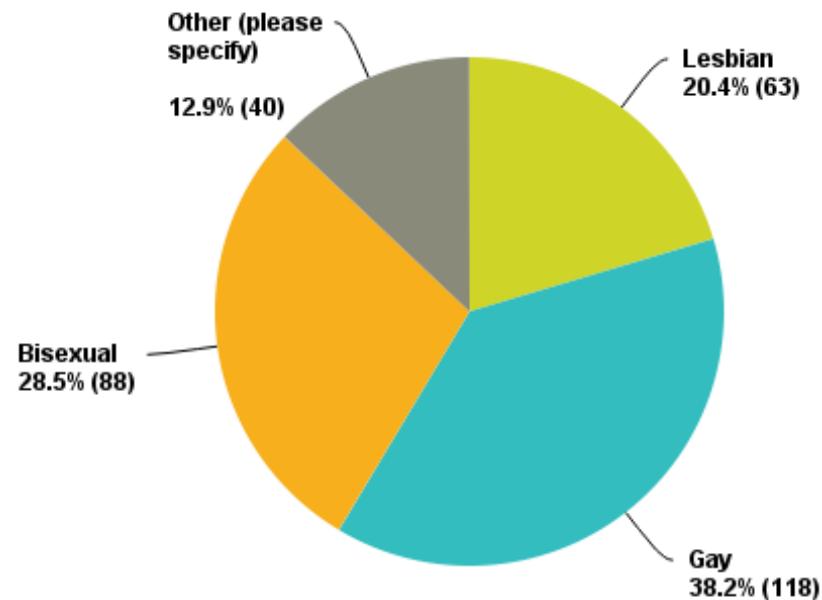
Answered: 309 Skipped: 185



# Sexual Orientation

**Q29 What is your sexual orientation? (we understand the challenges inherent in labeling, as well as lack of gender fluid category choices, but our analysis requires limited categories)**

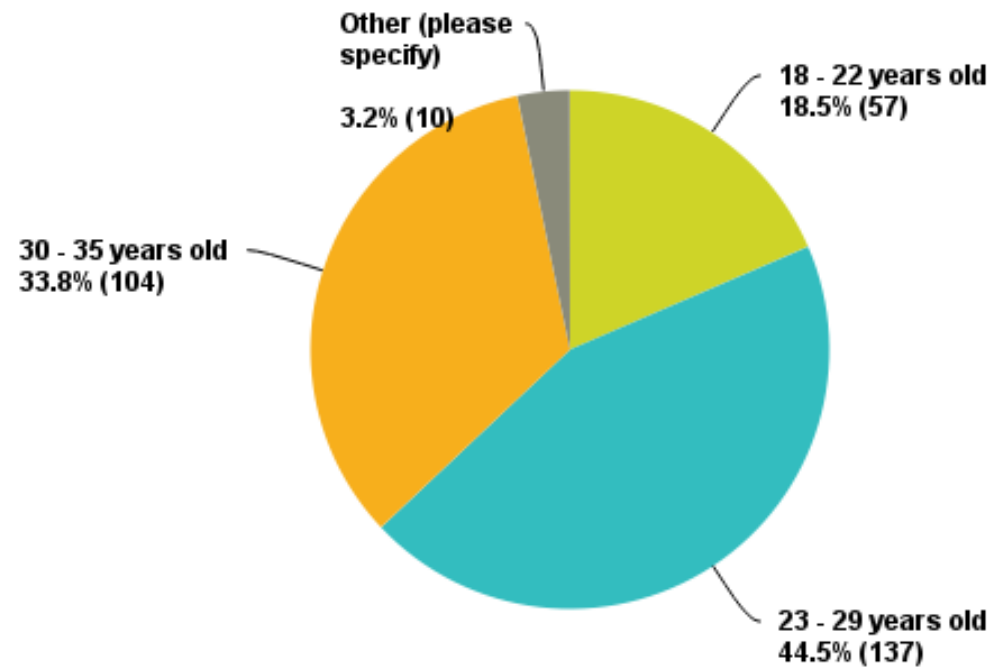
Answered: 309 Skipped: 185



# Age

**Q30 In what age category would you place yourself?**

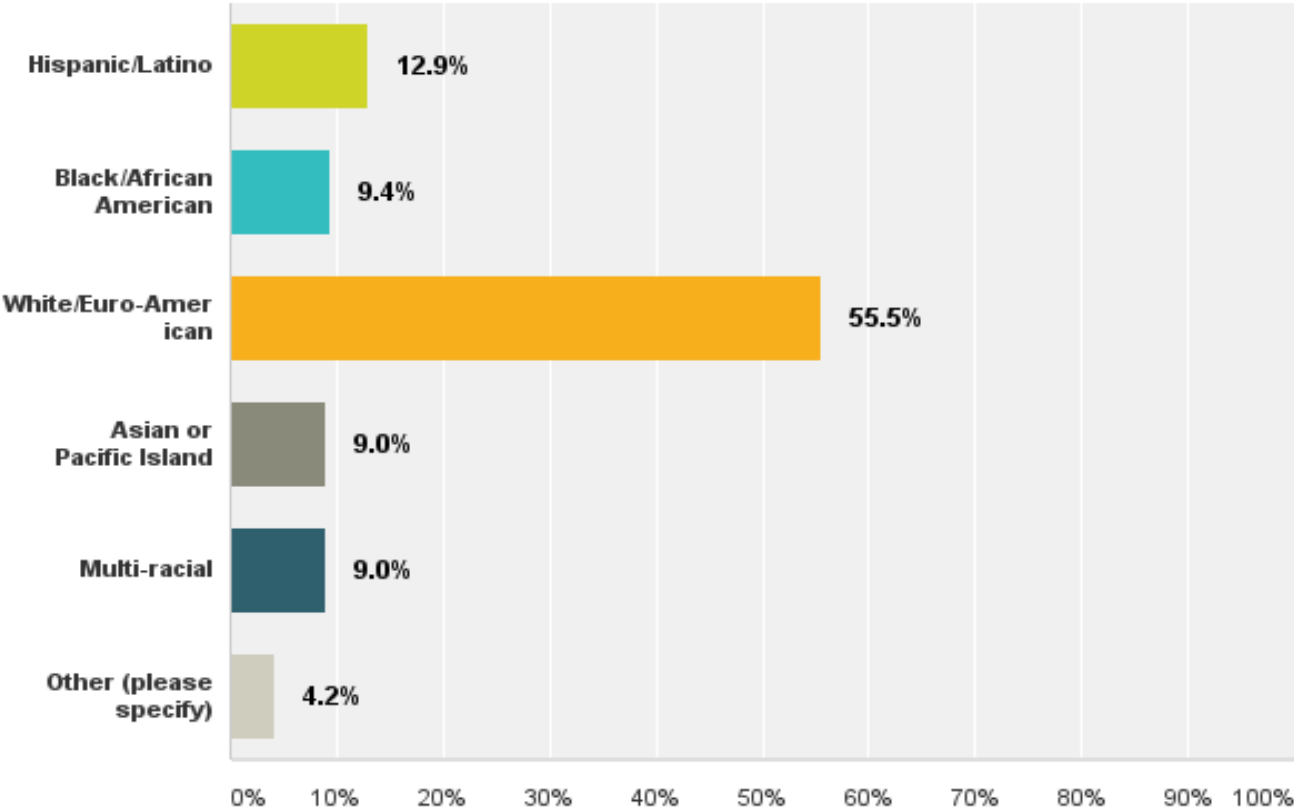
Answered: 308 Skipped: 186



# Ethnic Background

Q31 What is your ethnic background?

Answered: 310 Skipped: 184

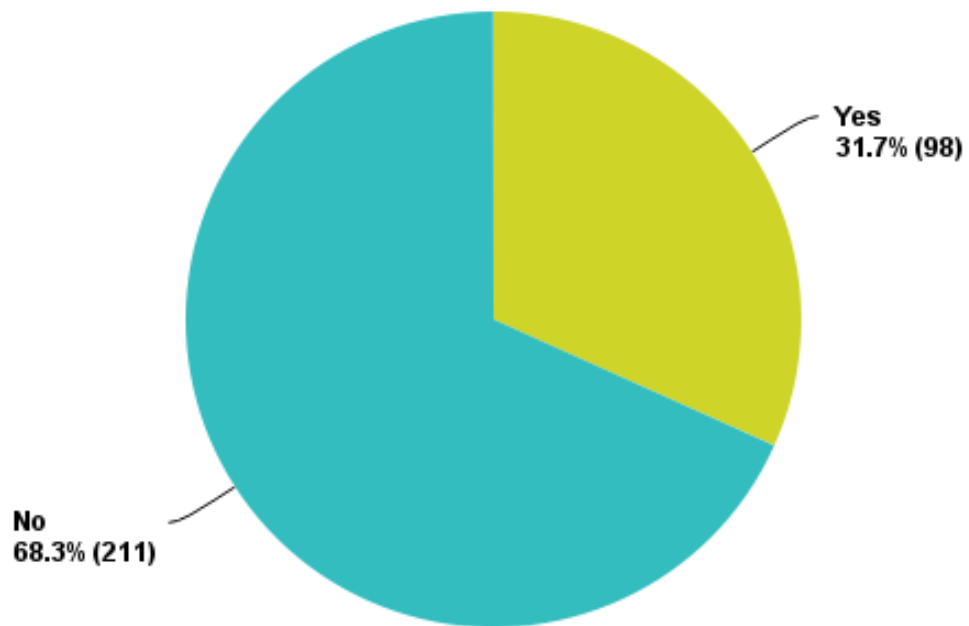




# Suicidal Ideation

**Q19 During the past six months did you have any thoughts of suicide or thoughts of ending your life?**

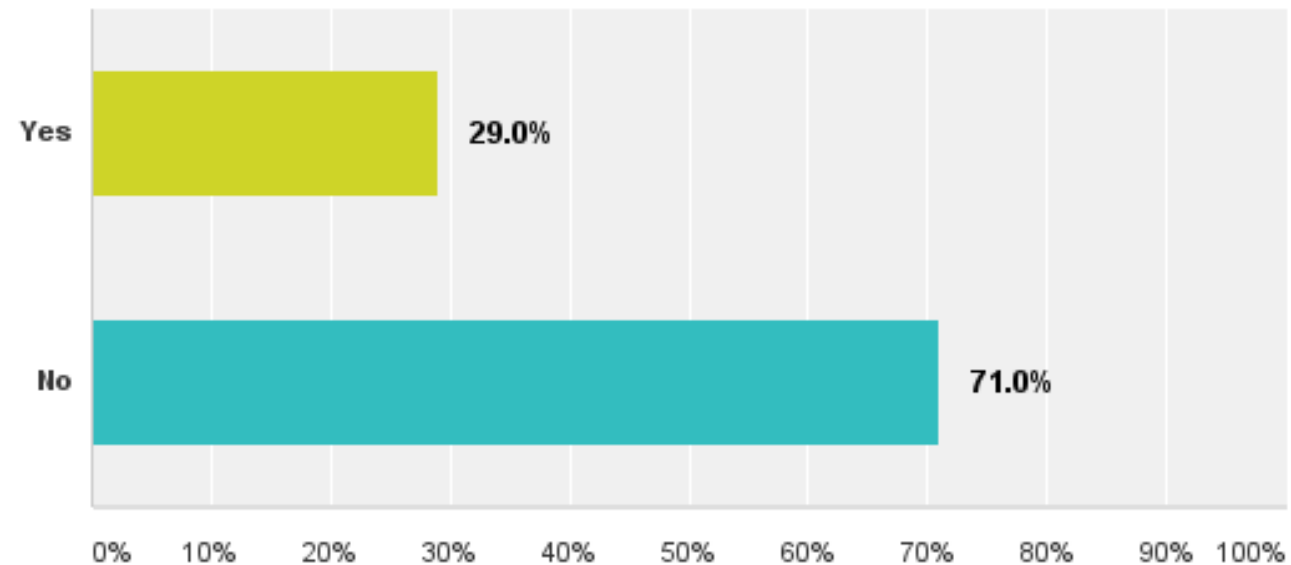
Answered: 309 Skipped: 185



# Lifetime Suicide Attempts

**Q20** Have you ever, at any point in your life, attempted to take your own life?

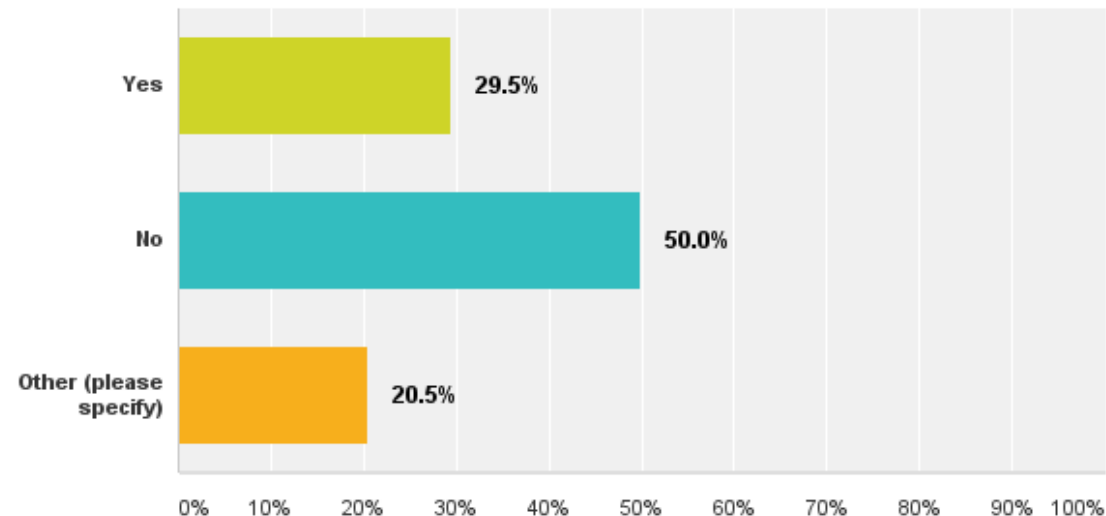
Answered: 310 Skipped: 184



# Suicide – Connection to LGBT Orientation/Identity

**Q21 If you answered 'yes' to questions 19 or 20 above, do you see the thoughts or attempt(s) as related to your sexual orientation and/or gender identity? Feel free to comment in the 'Other' comment box if you wish to explain your answer further.**

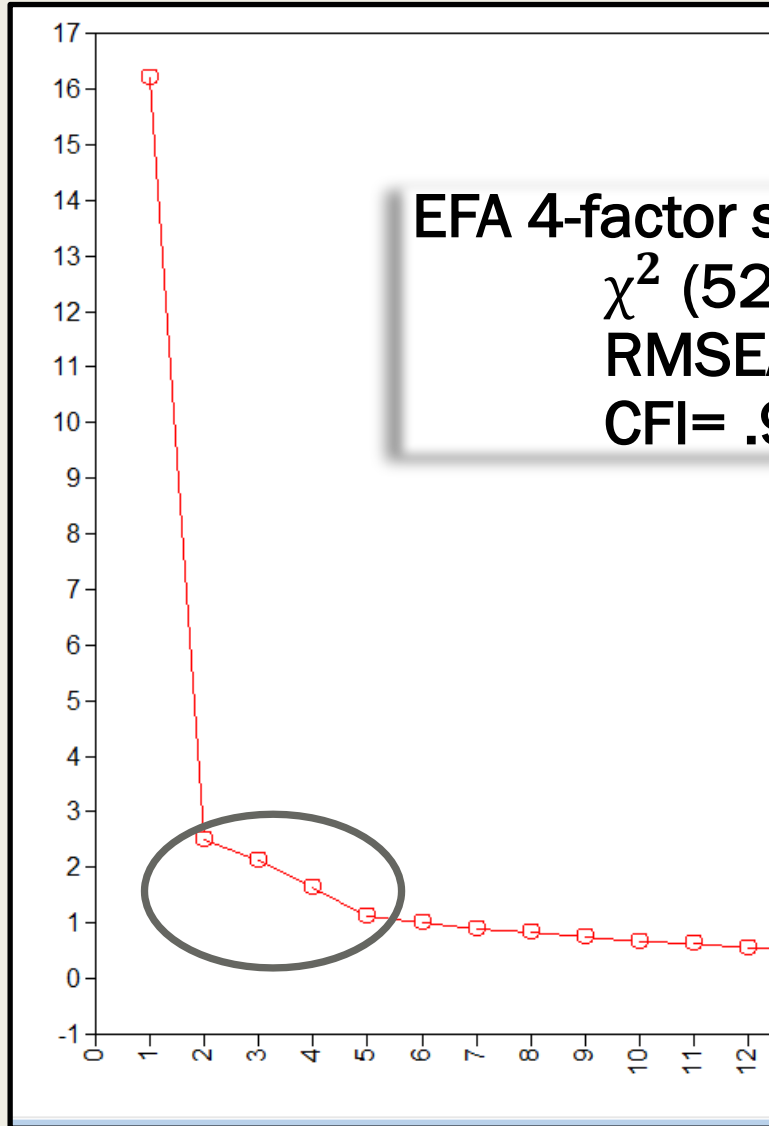
Answered: 224 Skipped: 270



# Current Data Analysis

- Exploratory Factor Analysis
  - *Assess the psychometric quality of the questionnaire*
  - *Determine the underlying factor structure*
  - *Create subscales*
  
- Allows for the use of all items in the analysis with DVs
  - *SPSS and Mplus*
  - *Robust Weighted Least Squares Means and Variances Adjusted (WLSMV) Estimator*
  - *Varimax Rotation*
  - *Scree Plot*
  - *Model Fit Indices (Chi-Square, RMSEA, CFI)*
  - *Item Factor Loadings (0.4 and below considered for elimination)*

# Scree Plot



**EFA 4-factor solution with whole sample;**  
 $\chi^2 (521) = 1414.393, p < .001$   
 RMSEA = .071  
 CFI = .934, TLI = .923

# Model Fit Indices

Model	$\chi^2$ (df), <i>p</i> -value	RMSEA	RMSR	$\Delta$ df/ $\Delta\chi^2$ / <i>p</i>
1 Factor	1414.393 (521), <i>p</i> < .001	.096	.096	
2 Factors	689.733 (501), <i>p</i> < .001	.079	.079	(33) 364.61, <i>p</i> < .001
3 Factors	642.243 (481), <i>p</i> < .001	.060	.060	(32) 292.48, <i>p</i> < .001
4 Factors	749.733 (431), <i>p</i> = .001	.047	.046	(31) 257.69, <i>p</i> < .001
5 Factors	642.243 (401), <i>p</i> = .001	.042	.041	(30) 107.49, <i>p</i> < .001
6 Factors	Failed to Converge			

# Parental Support and Rejection Subscales

Factor Loadings	F1- Parental Support, $\alpha = .827$ , $M = 16.6$ , $SD = 6.33$	SD and D	A and SA
0.588	(1) I felt comfortable coming out to my parents/caregivers.	85.2%	11.0%
0.574	(11) My parents/caregivers were open to exploring ways of supporting me as an LGBT+ person.	60.8%	27.8%
0.574	(12) My parents/caregivers searched for organizations that would help them understand, support and accept my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	64.4%	16.5%
0.604	(13) My parents/caregivers took me to counseling to help me understand and accept my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	85.4%	11.8%
0.486	(20) My parents/caregivers were supportive of the way I dressed to express my sexuality and/or gender.	36.8%	19.2%
0.443	(23) My family listened attentively as I shared my sexual orientation and/or gender identity journey with them.	51.0%	11.10%
0.505	(30) My parents/caregivers drew upon their religious faith and beliefs to help them understand and support my sexual and/or gender journey.	44.5%	37.0%

Factor Loadings	F2- Parental Rejection, $\alpha = .926$ , $M = 36.5$ , $SD = 11.0$	SD and D	A and SA
0.742	(2) My parents/caregivers <b>struggled to accept</b> my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	8.1%	81.9%
0.697	(3) My parents/caregivers were disappointed when I came out to them.	14.4%	69.5%
0.583	(4) My parents/caregivers supported my dating people who were LGBT+. (REVERSE SCORE)	49.6%	14.2%
0.865	(5) Given my parents/caregivers' religious beliefs, they had difficulty accepting my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	10.2%	82.4%
0.700	(7) My parents/caregivers used Scripture to try to talk me out of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	36.7%	57.0%
0.488	(8) I was forbidden to tell anyone else of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	45.9%	42.8%
0.636	(14) My parents/caregivers took me to counseling to <b>try to change</b> my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	69.0%	26.0%
0.767	(15) My parents/caregivers prayed that God would change my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	12.5%	60.4%
0.594	(16) My family was open to me inviting LGBT+ friends to come to our home. (REVERSE SCORE)	41.4%	27.0%
0.690	(24) One or more of my parents/caregivers responded as if my sexual orientation and/or gender identity was a <b>poor reflection</b> on them.	21.4%	65.8%
0.962	(27) My parents/caregivers took me to a pastor for prayer and counseling to change my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	70.2%	25.0%

Factor Loadings	F3- Parental Abuse, $\alpha = .907$ , $M = 24.0$ , $SD = 9.9$	SD and D	A and SA
-0.802	(6) When I came out to my parents/caregivers, I was kicked out of my house.	89.0%	8.9%
-0.556	(9) I was not permitted to associate with any LGBT+ friends.	59.1%	27.7%
-0.496	(10) I knew that I would be rejected if I revealed my sexual orientation and/or gender identity to my family.	26.2%	47.9%
-0.708	(17) My family used demeaning language about my sexual orientation and/or gender identity after I came out to them.	53.8%	37.5%
-0.672	(18) I was called names such as "fag" or "sissy" by my family.	71.9%	20.6%
0.697	(21) I was ridiculed by my family for the way I dressed or fixed my hair to express my sexuality and/or gender.	47.1%	42.1%
0.489	(22) My parents/caregivers would defend me if anyone else demeaned or attacked my sexual orientation or gender identity. (REVERSE SCORE)	39.2%	26.7%
-0.568	(25) Immediately or very soon after coming out, my parents/caregivers communicated that they loved me no matter what. (REVERSE SCORE)	67.1%	25.9%
-0.671	(26) My family blamed me for any anti-LGBT+ mistreatment I received.	55.4%	28.4%
-0.720	(34) My parents/caregiver's financial support was dependant on my complying with their wishes about my sexuality and/or gender.	55.4%	29.0%



Factor Loadings	F4- Self-Rejection, $\alpha = .750$ , $M = 24.1$ , $SD = 5.0$	SD and D	A and SA
-0.526	(19) I knew of my parents'/caregivers' prejudice against LGBT+ persons, so it was hard for me to come out to them.	16.4%	75.8%
-0.727	(28) Due to my religious beliefs, I had difficulty admitting to myself that I was LGBT+.	13.1%	80.2%
-0.529	(29) When I came out, my religious beliefs triggered feelings of guilt and shame.	21.4%	75.2%
-0.613	(31) I was scared to come out because knew my family would think I was sinful and/or disgusting.	9.9%	80.5%
-0.540	(32) Through my teen years, I felt isolated and alone as I faced my sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	11.2%	56.5%
-0.543	(33) I was afraid that my parents would disown me if I came out to them as LGBT+.	31.8%	57.2%

# Correlational Analysis

Subscales and Dependent Variable Correlations * $p < .05$ , ** $p < .01$							
	PS	PR	PA	SR	Suicidal Thoughts (2=no)	Suicide Attempts (2=no)	Depression (higher worse)
Parental Support					.162*	.054	-.216**
Parental Rejection	-.658**				-.135	-.055	.118
Parental Abuse	-.680**	.784**			-.329**	-.327**	.392**
Self Rejection	-.383**	.614**	.519**		-.166*	-.229**	.216**

# Implications for the Church

- This study, if taken seriously, could move the church administrators beyond simply making theological statements to the development of resources for LGBT+ persons, their families, and the congregations in which they worship. Such resources would help family members, friends, church members and pastors to be more supportive as we walk this journey with our LGBT+ youth and fellow churchgoers.
- The SDA Church would do well to proactively address the needs of its LGBT+ members and their families. Many of our churches are not prepared to welcome with graciousness either one of their own or a member of the community who is same-sex attracted or transgender.

# Implications for the Church

- Leaving families and young people to figure out how to deal with this major life event alone without the faith community's support and love is counterproductive for all.
- Beginning steps might include learning to listen without judgment, addressing our own fears about sexuality, exploring resources that can help LGBT+ persons and their families, providing the same generous, unconditional welcome that Jesus did with the outcasts of his day, and providing spaces for honest, humble conversations about this difficult issue.
- Another possibility is sponsoring a conference in which persons from all sides of the LGBT+ question would come together to humbly listen and learn from one another and begin to outline the types of resources that would be helpful to church administrators, pastors, local churches, families, and LGBT+ persons.

# Limitations

- Rolling convenience sample (appropriate for exploratory analysis)
- Smaller sample size for factor analysis (meets minimum requirements)
- Only generalizable to SDA Millennials
- Can't generalize to other faith populations

# Next Steps

- Conduct more data analysis (chi squares, odds ratios, regressions, etc.)
  - *Level of family rejection as it relates to dependent variables (depression, suicidality, risky sex, self esteem, substance abuse, etc.)*
- Compare rates of various outcomes with national data
- Continue to publish and present findings in national journals and conferences
- Future research with parents?

# Publications and Presentations

- Sedlacek, David and VanderWaal, Curt. “Supporting LGBT+ Youth in Seventh-day Adventist Homes.” Adventist Conference on Family Research and Practice, Berrien Springs, MI. July 22, 2016.
- Sedlacek, David, VanderWaal, Curtis, and Lane, Lauren. “The Impact of Family Rejection or Acceptance among LGBT+ Millennials in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” North American Association of Christians in Social Work Annual Conference 2016, Cincinnati, OH, November 18, 2016
- VanderWaal, C., Sedlacek, D., and Lane, L. (2017). The Impact of Family Rejection or Acceptance among LGBT+ Millennials in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 44, No. 1&2, 72-95.
- VanderWaal, C., Sedlacek, D, Carbonell, N. and Trecartin, S. (2017). The Ties that Bind? Exploring the Impact of SDA Family Response to LGBT+ Children. Spectrum, Vol. 45, Issue 1.

EFA 4-factor solution with whole sample;

$\chi^2 (521) = 1414.393, p < .001$

RMSEA = .071

CFI = .934

Factor Correlations * $p < .001$			
	F1	F2	F3
F1 Parental Support			
F2 Parental Rejection	-.838*		
F3 Parental Abuse	-.843*	.849*	
F4 Self Rejection	-.746*	.811*	.746*