

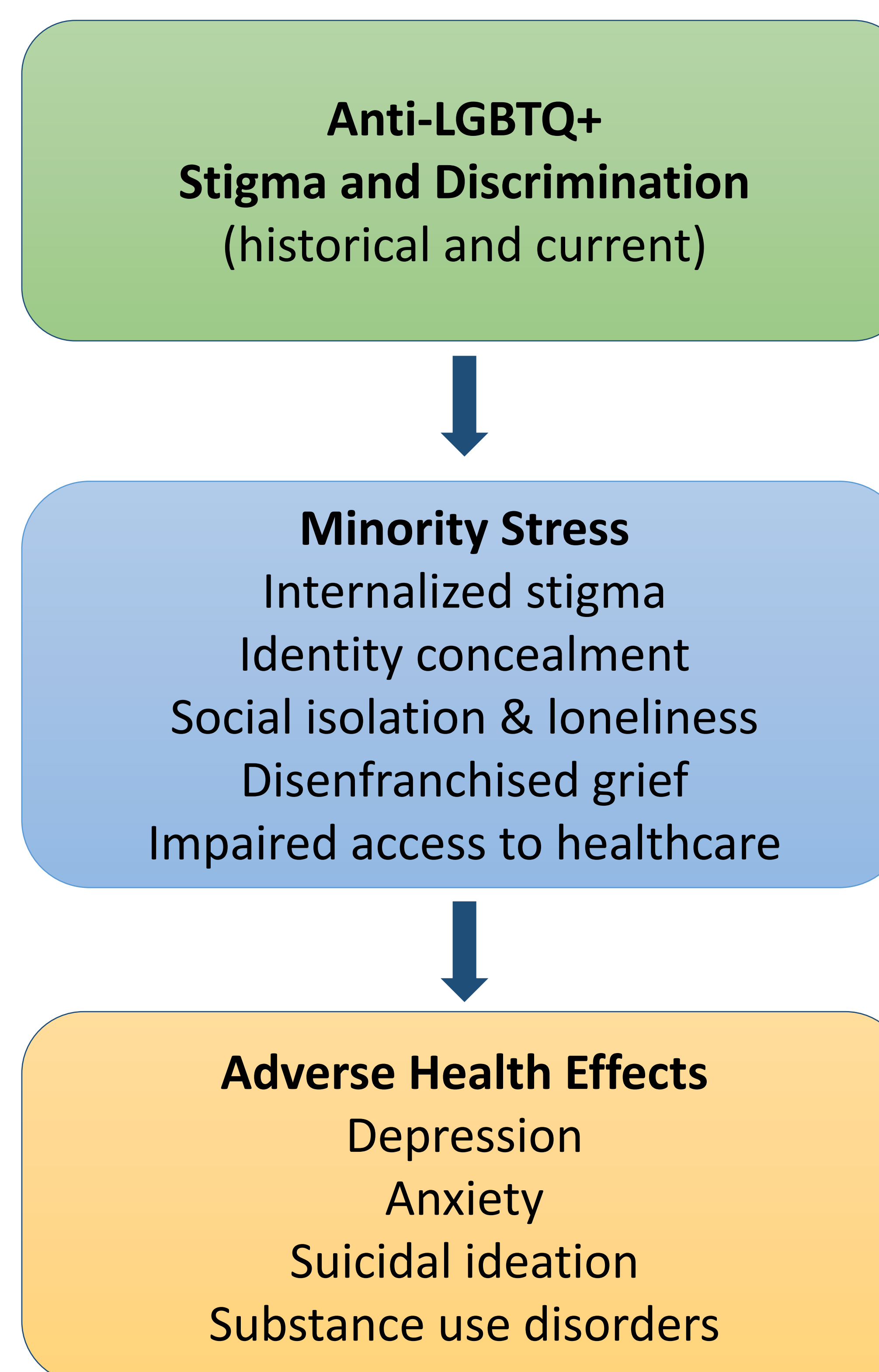
INTRODUCTION

- Young adults with sexual and gender minority identities (i.e., LGBTQ+) are exposed to stress on individual, interpersonal, community, and structural levels.
- Mental health challenges (i.e., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, eating disorders) have a high prevalence in the LGBTQ+ community.
- The minority stress model proposes that mental health outcomes among LGBTQ+ individuals are influenced by interactions among general and identity-specific stressors, as well as various risk and protective factors.
- The aims of the present study were to:
 1. Characterize psychological distress and lifetime stress exposure in a sample of LGBTQ+ young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 2. Examine the associations among several dimensions of psychological distress (e.g., *anxiety, depression*), stress exposure, and risk/resiliency factors (e.g., *self-esteem, positive identity, social support*) implicated by the minority stress model.

METHODS

- Participants.** *N* = 69 LGBTQ+ young adults participated in an online study between December 2021 to April 2022. The sample was majority female (57.97%), White (59.42%) and on average, 19.41 years old (*Range* = 17-25). See supplemental materials for detailed overview of sociodemographic sample composition.
- Procedures.** Participants completed validated self-report measures of a) lifetime stress exposure, b) risk or resilience factors, and c) mental health symptom outcomes (i.e., IDAS-II, PCL-5, TSDS, and EDE-Q).
- Data Analyses.** Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample and clinical variables. Bivariate correlation analyses were used to examine associations among study variables.

FIGURE 1.



Goldhammer, H., Krinsky, L. and Keuroghlian, A.S. (2019), Meeting the Behavioral Health Needs of LGBT Older Adults. *J Am Geriatr Soc*, 67: 1565-1570. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.15974>

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

SCAN ME



Acknowledgements: Samantha N. Hellberg and Drs. Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Adam B. Miller, George M. Slavich and Patrick Harrison.

RESULTS

- Stress exposure (*STRAIN*) was associated with distress across clinical variables, with the strongest correlation observed between stress and PTSD.
- The significance and strength of the correlations varied across the various dimensions of psychological distress (e.g., *IDAS-II subscales, PCL-5, EDEQ*) and the risk/protective factors assessed (see *Table 5*).
- General protective factors, such as social support (MSPSS) and self-esteem (SISES), were associated with lower psychological distress across several mental health symptom dimensions (see *Table 5*).
- Scores on several subscales of the LGBTQ+ positive identity measure (*LGBT-PIM*) were associated with increased psychological distress (see *Table 6*).
- Higher scores on several minority stress subscales (LGBT-MSM) were associated with greater psychological distress, particularly for traumatic stress and depressive symptoms (see *Table 7*).

DISCUSSION

- Exposure to stress was transdiagnostically associated with greater mental health symptom severity, consistent with the minority stress model.
- Emotion regulation and self-esteem emerged as more consistent correlates of psychological well-being, while identity-specific factors- such as positive identity agreement- presented with nuanced relationships to mental health outcomes.
- Study limitations include the cross-sectional design, lack of a comparator condition, and convenience sampling in a single geographic location.
- Findings may inform further research tailoring the minority stress model to young adults in the LGBT+ community; the relationship between mental health and identity-related factors, such as commitment to social justice, warrants further attention.