

Doing Family: Decentering Heteronormativity in “Marriage” and “Family” Therapy

Jacqueline Hudak and Shawn V. Giammattei

Introduction

What would family therapy teaching and training look like if we were to deconstruct the core concept of family? In this essay, we begin that conversation by addressing the issue of heteronormativity and the profound impact it has upon the ways we think about and legitimize relationships.

The words, *marriage* and *family*, the nomenclature of our profession, are central to some of the most fiercely debated issues of our time. Despite the increased visibility of gay men and lesbian women, and the increasingly younger ages at which youth “come out” (Savin-Williams 2005; Tanner and Lyness 2003), there remains no definition of “family” in the public consciousness that refers to same-sex couples with children. In fact, in the not too distant past, the notions of lesbian mother, gay father or lesbian/gay family would have been nonexistent and the constitutive terms seen as mutually exclusive. We are further challenged to incorporate the discourses of a younger generation that refuses to define itself within the binary construction of sexual identity and chooses instead to live out narratives of queerness, heteroflexibility, ambisexuality (Morris 2006; Savin-Williams 2005). Current research (Diamond 2008a, b) compels us to incorporate the idea of sexual fluidity into our thinking about life trajectories.

In contrast to these cultural shifts, our field continues to engage in heteronormative discourses seen clearly, for example, by the frequency with which the language of “marriage,” “couple,” and “family” is used in theory, training, and conference plenaries without naming heterosexuality. As postmodern theorists have posited, attention must be given to the importance of cultural discourses and language as

Editors’ note: First published in 2010, American Family Therapy Academy Monograph Series.

J. Hudak (✉)

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

e-mail: jack4fta@comcast.net

S. V. Giammattei

San Francisco and Santa Rosa, CA, USA

T. Nelson, H. Winawer (eds.), *Critical Topics in Family Therapy*,
AFTA SpringerBriefs in Family Therapy, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-03248-1_12,
© American Family Therapy Academy 2014

they shape and impact the conception of both reality and legitimacy (Bruner 2002; Flax 1990; Harding 1990; Hare-Mustin 1994, 2004; Lather 1992). What is silenced or left unsaid is of tremendous consequence. As Hare-Mustin (1994) stated, “We do not only use language, it uses us. Language is recursive: it provides the categories in which we think” (p. 22).

This silence around heterosexuality maintains it as the default position, a position of dominance and superiority. For example, the descriptive terms, “couple” or “family” refer to heterosexual couples or heterosexual families. Couples and families who are “gay” or “lesbian” have to be named as such because otherwise they are invisible. Within these heteronormative discourses, heterosexuality and heterosexual forms of relating are considered the norm. This maintains the illusion that only LGBT individuals have a sexual orientation and that it is unnecessary to examine the development of heterosexuality.

As postmodern, feminist family therapists, we begin by situating ourselves in relation to this work. I (Jacqueline), one of the authors, am a second generation, European-American, middle-class woman who has practiced and taught family therapy since the early 1990s, always with a focus on issues of gender, power, diversity and social justice. I was in a heterosexual marriage for 13 years and am the mother of two children. In my mid-forties, I divorced and became partnered with a woman, necessitating that I “come out” to my children, family, and community.

I (Shawn), the other author, am a second generation Italian-American, upper middle-class married man who has practiced family therapy since 2000. I have been teaching family therapy and specifically about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in therapy since 2002. Similar to Jacqueline’s, my work always has a focus on gender, power, diversity, community, and social justice. I have identified with the LGBT community since I was very young, but have spent many years trying to be “normal and straight” for my family. I have had long-term, significant relationships over the years with people of different genders.

If pushed to choose a category, each of us would identify as queer because that best represents the fluidity of our life trajectories and who we are today.

Heteronormativity

We contend that heteronormativity, defined as the dominant and pervasive belief that a viable family consists of a heterosexual mother and father raising heterosexual children together (Gamson 2000) is an organizing principle that shapes and constrains family therapy theory, practice, research, and training. Perlesz et al. (2006) make the following distinction between it and heterosexism: “We have defined heteronormativity as the uncritical adoption of heterosexuality as an established norm or standard. Heterosexism is the system by which heterosexuality is assumed to be the only acceptable and viable life option and hence to be superior, more natural and dominant” (p. 183). Aptly described by Oswald et al. (2005) as a “vast matrix of cultural beliefs, rules, rewards, privileges and sanctions” (p. 144), heteronorma-

tivity is buttressed by claims about what is considered “normal” and “healthy” for individuals, couples, and families.

Heteronormativity sustains the dominant norm of heterosexuality by rendering marginal any relational structure that falls outside of this “norm.” Further, heteronormativity renders the diversity of human sexuality and identities invisible. This invisibility is marked by the fact that there is limited language to describe sexual minority experience and identities within dominant discourses. This creates a category of “other” in our culture, which is rendered invalid or pathological. What little language there is often creates false binary systems that are inaccurate representations of the actual lived experiences of many individuals. Given this lack of language, we often are left with the antiquated and imprecise categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT).

The heteronormative presumption, that everyone is heterosexual unless proven otherwise, is best expressed by the concept of “the closet,” a metaphor for keeping one’s sexual orientation and/or gender or sexual identity a secret. Sedgwick (1990) referred to “the closet” as “the defining structure for gay oppression in this century” (p. 71). Yoshino (2006) described it beautifully: “It was impossible to come out and be done with it, as each new person erected a new closet around me” (pp. 16–17).

Gender, Sexuality and Family

Intrinsic to heteronormative assumptions are ideas about “correct” or “normal” gender, sexuality, and family. Oswald and colleagues (2005) point out that it is the combination of these three structural components that constitute heteronormativity as a system of privilege. Oswald and colleagues stated, “Heteronormativity entails a convergence of at least three binary opposites: ‘real’ males and ‘real’ females versus gender ‘deviants,’ ‘natural’ sexuality versus ‘unnatural’ sexuality, and ‘genuine’ families versus ‘pseudo families” (p. 144). The construction of binary opposites creates the illusion of an actual boundary between various genders and identities and privileges one side over the other. Gender, sexuality, and family are intrinsically linked, and as Oswald and colleagues stated, “Doing sexuality and doing family properly are inseparable from doing gender properly” (p. 144). All of the markers of adulthood—dating, marriage, and parenting—are traditionally tied to heterosexuality. Adult competencies associated with heterosexuality are distributed on the basis of gender (Spaulding 1999). Achieving mature adult status is most commonly measured by milestones that are linked to traditional heterosexual gender roles and behaviors.

The transformative use of gender as a verb is worth noting, as it was important in breaking down essentialist and binary assumptions about masculinity and femininity. Queer theorist Judith Butler (1990) introduced the notion of gender as an act or performance rather than a quality intrinsic to one’s inherent nature. In this paradigm, gender is what you do at particular times rather than a universal of who you are. Historically it was believed that people were “inherently” male or female, gay or

straight and each of these was dichotomously opposed to its counterpart (Fausto-Sterling 2000). This essentialist narrative of gender and sexuality continues to be a powerful and privileged narrative in our culture (Fausto-Sterling 2000; Laird 2003).

Sexual Minority Status

Dominant definitions of relationship and family have historically not included “sexual minorities.” While gay men and lesbians are more visible in the family therapy literature, they still occupy the status of members in a minority group. Although it is not within the scope of this article to deal with all aspects of identity politics for LGBT families, certain facets of that politic are governed by heteronormative assumptions. The positioning of LGBT people as a minority group is one of the fixtures of heteronormative culture and thus merits further attention.

It is important to acknowledge the significant gains and scholarship in the field of marriage and family therapy regarding the inclusion of gay and lesbian couples and families in the literature. Since the publication of reviews that documented the omission of gay and lesbian issues in the marriage and family therapy field (Allen and Demo 1995; Clark and Serovich 1997), there has been a growing body of work that depicts living outside of the bounds of heterosexuality (see, for example, Green 2000; Green and Mitchell 2008; Greenan and Tunnel 2003; Laird 1999; Laird and Green 1996; LaSala 2007). In 2000, a special section of the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* was devoted to lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues in family therapy, and in 2006, an issue of the *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* was devoted exclusively to lesbian families. Lev (2004) documented the gender revolution that was underway; her work upended essentialist notions of gender and expanded possibilities about what could be understood as “normal” and “healthy.” Despite this forward movement, however, the literature and training in the field of family therapy is still primarily situated in the paradigm that privileges heterosexuality.

Fortunately, we can begin to imagine a more expansive view of relational health not linked exclusively to heterosexuality and traditional gender roles. For example, Knudson-Martin and Laughlin (2005) call for the development of new models of health and normalcy that are based on relational equality rather than gender. Stone-Fish and Harvey (2005) urge family therapists to attempt to develop family environments that actually nurture queerness.

Queering Family Therapy

Critiques from postmodern and queer theory challenge the construction of sexualities in general (Foucault 1981; Langdridge 2008; McPhail 2004; Seidman 1996; Warner 1993). They assert that by not challenging the gender binary, masculinity and femininity are reified and heterosexuality institutionalized. Queer theory sug-

gests that the study of homosexuality should not be about the identity of a sexual minority group but rather about the need to question the social practices that “organize society as a whole by sexualizing—heterosexualizing or homosexualizing—bodies, desires, acts, identities, social relations, knowledges, cultures, [and] institutions” (Seidman 1996, pp. 12–13). According to Stone Fish and Harvey (2005), queer identity belongs to “anyone who violates the basic assumptions of heterosexuality” (p. 27). The field of family therapy has taken a stance of accommodating to or managing nonheterosexuality by helping families to “cope” with a LGBT member (Stone Fish and Harvey 2005). This approach is inherently pathologizing as it posits that any nonheterosexual or gender-variant family member is something to be “managed.” By not questioning current language, false dichotomies, and essentialist views, family therapy colludes with the discourses that, at worst, pathologize the natural variability of human nature, and, at a minimum, render variations invisible. According to Perlesz and colleagues (2007), a lack of accepted and universally understood terms to describe nonheterosexual family relationships limits family narratives. The experiences of nonheterosexual parents are not included, invalidating both the parents’ relationship and the family as a whole.

How would our language change if we embraced the belief that variation is the norm? What would this render possible when working with families? A true second-order change would not only embrace diversity as normative, but would also uphold the value and beauty of nonheterosexual or gender-variant family members not *in spite of* their identity but *because of* it. This would be family therapy transformed. This would actually be breaking down the heterosexual core of the idea of “family.” How then might we understand what is unique about families created outside the bounds of heterosexuality, and as a result, how would this inform our work with all families?

“Doing Family”: Family Therapy Transformed

It is helpful to think about a shift in language that allows family to be considered as a verb, thus enabling us to “do family” (Stiles 2002). In the same way that Butler (1990) entertained the performative aspects of gender, “family” would be transformed to a more fluid, ambiguous entity that embraces diversity and variation as the norm. The performative aspect of “doing family” entails intentionally committing to add elements of responsibility and caretaking to the bonds of love, which usually embody roles traditionally assigned to kinship networks. Perlesz and colleagues (2006) point out that “doing family” is a counterpoint to the essentialist notions about “the family” as a discrete institution with particular boundaries. It creates possibilities for relating and parenting outside the bounds of heterosexual relationships.

In fact, because nonheterosexual couples and families are not limited to prescribed gender roles, their decisions about who does what in a relationship are often based on what each partner has skills in and/or enjoys, and are more likely to

be egalitarian in household chores and childcare (Giammattei 2007; Green 2008; Patterson 1995). Some research suggests that lesbians tend to navigate older age with more resilience, possibly as a result of learning to deal with adversity (Gabbay and Wahler 2002). Children being raised by lesbian or gay couples are more likely to have two parents who are highly involved in their upbringing and care (Giammattei 2007; Patterson 2006). Lesbians and gay men have been found to be more satisfied with their relationships than heterosexual couples (Bigner 2000; McPherson 1993; Patterson 1995). It could also be argued that gay men who have been able to stay together in long, happy relationships while successfully navigating nonmonogamy may have something to teach others about surviving sexual encounters that occur outside the primary relationship (LaSala 2004). As the result of heteronormativity and a lack of openness to any divergence from the heterosexual ideal, these possible advantages are silenced and obscured, thereby making invisible factors that may actually help couples and families of all orientations and identities become more successful, satisfied, and happy.

Recently, researchers have begun to ask questions about what is unique or interesting about nonheterosexual families in and of themselves. In studying the ways in which women allocate work and parenting, Dunne (2000) found that the mothering experiences that lesbian women construct are qualitatively different from those in heterosexual coparenting. Mothering in a lesbian relationship is usually carried out in a context where both mothers receive a great deal of practical and emotional support from their partners, routine domestic responsibilities are shared, and there is a mutual recognition of a woman's right to an identity beyond the home. Without the prescriptive gender divisions of labor both within and outside of the home, these lesbian comothers have greater latitude to operationalize their egalitarian ideals, particularly in relation to parenting. Dunne states:

In their everyday lives of nurturing, housework, and breadwinning, respondents provide viable alternative models for parenting beyond heterosexuality.... Their positioning outside conventionality and the similarities they share as women enable and indeed insist upon the redefinition of the meaning and content of motherhood. (p. 32)

Perlesz and colleagues (2007) found that lesbian-headed families often expand the notion of family by creating "families of choice," which might include both immediate and extended biological relatives and social and friendship networks. Thus if "family" is examined from the perspective provided by those who are finding new ways of "doing family," the opportunity will emerge to discover a more expansive way of relating while further deconstructing heteronormative ideas and practices. As Perlesz and colleagues explain,

Thinking of ourselves and our clients as doing family opens up a greater repertoire for flexibility, negotiated meanings, fluidity, and ambiguity. It acknowledges, too, that families are in a social time of transition and flux. The families in our study show us that it is not always comfortable living differently. Understanding the tension that arises in attempting to do family within and beyond a heteronormative frame provides a useful starting point for tackling the everyday vicissitudes of family life that bring lesbian, gay, and straight families to therapy. (p. 197)

Shifting the Paradigm

We are only just beginning to understand the impact of heteronormative culture and the ways in which it has shaped conceptualizations of normalcy, health, and “legitimate” relationships. How can we begin to deconstruct family and disentangle it from the heteronormative paradigm?

Typically, instruction in family therapy includes the presentation of core theories (such as structural, strategic, solution focused) with some integration of the critiques emanating from feminist, postmodern, or social justice approaches. Even with these additional lenses, students of family therapy learn models that implicitly represent a particular kind of family structure: white, heterosexual, middle class, with “add on” components of ethnicity, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation in order to be more inclusive. In this approach, dominant cultural norms about family are the center from which theory and practice derive. One need only look at introductory family therapy texts to find evidence of this fact. The question we then raise is: How does the field move toward a paradigm that celebrates gender and sexual diversity as a norm? We offer some preliminary ideas.

Attend to the Use of Language and Name What Has Been Silenced

Both the presumption of heterosexuality and the essentialist and binary assumptions about masculinity and femininity can be made much more explicit in professional discourses. Students can be taught the importance of how language is used and the skill of noticing what goes unnamed. In this way, essentialist notions of gender and of heterosexuality can be removed from their current default positions. We attempt to consistently deconstruct binary notions of gender and do not presume that a “couple” or “family” is heterosexual. Together with students, we practice the simple but very powerful act of naming heterosexuality.

Understand the Impact of Heteronormative Culture on Research and Practice

Many of the past studies of gay and lesbian parents were shaped and constrained by a heteronormative lens. Since lesbian and gay parents were often denied custody of their children on the basis of sexual orientation, the research mandate was set to dispel common myths and assumptions held by most judges. Although maladjustment in children of heterosexual parents would not be an indictment of heterosexuality, the assumption was implicit that symptoms could be attributed to the “harmful” environment of LGBT lesbian and gay family life. It was thus necessary to establish that there was no difference between children raised by lesbian and gay parents

when compared to those raised by heterosexual parents (Patterson 2006; Stacey and Biblarz 2001; Tasker and Patterson 2007).

This approach to the study of LGBT families has led to a “normalizing” discourse that has permeated the field. Children of gay and lesbian parents must look like children of heterosexual parents. Gay and lesbian families must be similar to heterosexual families. The discourses of “no difference” and “normalizing” are fundamentally defensive and apologetic. Yoshino (2006) described the mandate for all outsider groups to assimilate to the dominant norm as a “covering” demand, the expectation that how a person’s identity is expressed should conform. For example, one can *be* gay or lesbian, but must still *look and act* according to the confines of heterosexual norms. According to Yoshino, “The contemporary resistance to gay marriage can be understood as a covering demand: ‘*Fine, be gay, but don’t shove it in our faces*’” (p. 19). Covering, he believes, is the paramount civil rights issue of our time.

Another way to investigate the impact of heteronormativity is to utilize the concept of microaggressions—the brief, commonplace verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities experienced by nonheterosexual families and other marginalized groups. These microaggressions can manifest in a variety of ways that are subtle and unintentional, and can include invisibility, silence, intrusive questioning, and the limitations of language to describe relationship and familial bonds. Developing a clear description of the incidence and impacts of microaggressions could do much to sensitize students to the negative cumulative effects of heteronormativity on LGBT families.

Include an Examination of Heterosexual Privilege

The privileges of a heterosexual lifestyle are vast and can operate in both an overt and covert fashion. For example, people of all sexual orientations have the right to talk about who they are without the necessity of discussing sexual behavior as the central component of their identity. The barrier that many heterosexual people describe as inhibiting their capacity for authentic intimate relationships with LGBT people is their assumption that sexuality will be central to conversation. Heterosexual youth are allowed to talk about their interests, beliefs, and relationships without discussing sexual behavior, whereas sexual minority youth do not hold this privilege.

Hudak (2007) points out that the heterosexual part of marriage remains largely detached from any analysis of relationship in the marriage and family therapy literature. This has obfuscated the fact that gender oppression can coexist with heterosexual privilege. Although women may experience gender oppression within the context of heterosexual marriage, they are simultaneously conferred significant social status and a variety of economic and legal rights and protections based on their partnerships with men. Incorporating heterosexual privilege into our analysis of relationship also would foster a deeper understanding of intersectionality. Those

whose lives have been marginalized by their gender, race, and/or class often fail to recognize their heterosexual privilege and may resist the use of civil rights as a framework for discussing LGBT exclusion. Students could gain the capacity to support conversations that examine the various and complex forms of subjugation and privilege that exist simultaneously and function to shape the lives of families.

Conclusion

We are only beginning to understand the ways in which heteronormativity, the practices and institutions that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality, shape cultural conceptions of health and normalcy. Decentering heteronormativity is a generative process; it creates possibilities for being in the world and in relationship outside the confines of heterosexuality and traditional gender roles. It transforms the notion of “family” as a static entity to a verb that enables us to “do family.” “Doing family” celebrates diversity and variation as the new norm, enhances research questions, and furthers scholarship and social justice.

To decenter heteronormativity, the rules of culture must be suspended—particularly the constraints attached to binary definitions of gender, family, and sexual orientation. Indeed, the very ways that Western thought is organized “around a series of dualities, of operations of comparing and contrasting” (Hare-Mustin 2004, p. 15) maintains the illusion of binaries—male/female, heterosexual/gay—always subjugating one to the other. To abandon these discourses would mean articulating a challenge to “traditional” family values.

What is the definition of a marriage or a family? Who gets to decide, and for what purpose? Will nonheterosexual couples and families be included in considering current definitions? As family therapists, we are uniquely poised to transform the meanings attached to “marriage” and “family”—to focus on the *quality* of relationship rather than on the gender of a partner or the assumption of particular roles. We have attempted to take a step forward in grappling with these questions, beginning what we hope is a long and fruitful conversation.

References

- Allen, K. R., & Demo, D. H. (1995). The families of lesbian and gay men: A new frontier in family research. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 57, 1–17.
- Bigner, J. (2000). Gay and lesbian families. In W. C. Nichols, M. A. Pace-Nichols, D. S. Becvar, & A. Y. Napier (Eds.), *Handbook of family development and intervention: Wiley series in couples and family dynamics and treatment* (pp. 279–298). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Bruner, J. (2002). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Clark, W. M., & Serovich, J. M. (1997). Twenty years and still in the dark? Content analysis of articles pertaining to gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues in marriage and family therapy journals. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 23, 239–253.

- Diamond, L. M. (2008a). Female bisexuality from adolescence to adulthood: Results from a 10-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, *44*(1), 5–15.
- Diamond, L. M. (2008b). *Sexual fluidity: Understanding women's love and desire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press.
- Dunne, G. (2000). Opting into motherhood: Lesbians blurring the boundaries and transforming the meaning of parenting and kinship. *Gender and Society*, *14*, 11–35.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). Of gender and genitals: The use and abuse of the modern inter-sexual. *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Flax, J. (1990). Postmodern and gender relations in feminist theory. In L. Nicholson (Ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (pp. 39–62). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1981). *The history of sexuality, volume one: An introduction*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Gabbay, S. G., & Wahler, J. J. (2002). Lesbian aging: Review of a growing literature. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *14*(3), 1–21.
- Gamson, J. (2000). Sexualities, queer theory, and qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 347–365). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Giammattei, S. V. (2007). Family relations and emotional intelligence of children raised by lesbian or heterosexual parents. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. San Francisco, CA: Alliant University.
- Green, R-J. (2000). Lesbians, gay men and their parents: A critique of LaSala and the prevailing clinical “wisdom.” *Family Process*, *39*, 257–266.
- Green, R-J. (2008). What straights can learn from gays about relationships and parenting. *Quarterly Voice*, *7*(1), 11.
- Green, R-J., & Mitchell, V. (2008). Gay and lesbian couples in therapy: Minority stress, relational ambiguity, and families of choice. In A. S. Gurman (Ed.), *Clinical handbook of couple therapy* (4th ed., pp. 662–680). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Greenan, D. E., & Tunnel, G. (2003). *Couple therapy with gay men*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Harding, S. (1990). Feminism, science, and the anti-enlightenment critiques. In L. Nicholson (Ed.), *Feminism/postmodernism* (pp. 83–106). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hare-Mustin, R. T. (1994). Discourses in the mirrored room: A postmodern analysis of therapy. *Family Process*, *33*(1), 19–36.
- Hare-Mustin, R. T. (2004). Can we demystify theory? Examining masculinity discourses and feminist postmodern theory. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, *24*(1), 14–29.
- Hudak, J. (2007). Are we not family? The transition from heterosexual marriage to partnering with a woman. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Philadelphia, PA: Drexel University.
- Knudson-Martin, C., & Laughlin, M. J. (2005). Gender and sexual orientation in family therapy: Toward a postgender approach. *Family Relations*, *54*(1), 101–115.
- Laird, J. (1999). Gender and sexuality in lesbian relationships. In J. Laird (Ed.), *Lesbians and lesbian families: Reflections on theory and practice* (pp. 47–90). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Laird, J. (2003). Lesbian and gay families. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes* (pp. 176–209). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Laird, J., & Green, R-J., (Eds.) (1996). *Lesbians and gays in couples and family therapy: A handbook for therapists*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Langdrige, D. (2008). Are you angry or are you heterosexual? A queer critique of lesbian and gay models of identity development. In L. Moon (Ed.) *Feeling queer or queer feelings? Radical approaches to counseling sex, sexualities and genders* (pp. 23–35). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- LaSala, M. C. (2004). Monogamy of the heart: Extradyadic sex and gay male couples. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *17*(3) 2–24.
- LaSala, M. C. (2007). Old maps, new territory: Family therapy theory and gay and lesbian couples. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, *3*(1), 1–14.
- Lather, P. (1992). Postmodernism and the human sciences. In S. Kvale (Ed.), *Psychology and post-modernism* (p. 88–109). London, UK: Sage.

- Lev, A. (2004). *Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families*. New York, NY: Haworth Clinical Practice Press.
- McPhail, B. A. (2004). Questioning gender and sexuality binaries: What queer theorists, transgendered individuals, and sex researchers can teach social work. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 17*(1), 3–21.
- McPherson, D. (1993). Gay parenting couples: Parenting arrangements, arrangement satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Graduate School of Psychology.
- Morris, A. (2006, February 6). Love and the ambisexual, heteroflexible teen. *New York, 26–33*.
- Oswald, R. M., Blume, L. B., & Marks, S. R. (2005). Decentering heteronormativity: A model for family studies. In V. Bengston, A. Acock, K. Allen, P. Dilworth-Anderson, & D. Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theory and research* (pp. 143–165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patterson, C. J. (1995). Families of the baby boom: Parents’ division of labor and children’s adjustment. *Developmental Psychology, 31*, 115–123.
- Patterson, C. (2006). Children of lesbian and gay parents. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*(5), 241–244.
- Perlesz, A., Brown, R., Lindsay, J., McNair, R., de Vaus, D., & Pitts, M. (2006). Family in transition: Parents, children and grandparents in lesbian families give meaning to “doing family.” *Journal of Family Therapy, 28*(2), 175–199.
- Savin-Williams, R. (2005). *The new gay teenager*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Seidman, S. (1996). Introduction. In S. Seidman (Ed.), *Queer theory/sociology* (pp. 1–29). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Spaulding, F. (1999). Unconsciousness-raising: Hidden dimensions of heterosexism in theory and practice with lesbians. In J. Laird (Ed.), *Lesbians and lesbian families: Reflections on theory and practice* (pp. 11–26). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Stacey, J., & Biblarz, T. J. (2001). (How) does the sexual orientation of the parents matter? *American Sociological Review, 66*(2), 159–183.
- Stiles, S. (2002). Family as a verb. In D. Denborough (Ed.), *Queer Counseling and Narrative Practice* (pp. 15–19). Adelaide, SA: Dulwiche Center Publications.
- Stone Fish, L., & Harvey, R. G. (2005). *Nurturing queer youth: Family therapy transformed*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Tanner, L. R., & Lyness, K. P. (2003). Out of the closet, still in the home: Providing queer affirmative treatment for youth and their families. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 15*(1), 21–35.
- Tasker, F., & Patterson, C. J. (2007). Research on gay and lesbian parenting: Retrospect and prospect. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies, 3*(2/3), 9–34.
- Warner, M. (1993). Introduction. In M. Warner (Ed.), *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory* (pp. vii–xxxii). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Yoshino, K. (2006). *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights*. New York, NY: Random House.