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## From Identity to Intimacy: Exploring Transgender People's Dating Attitudes for Gender Experience

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**From Identity to Intimacy: Exploring Transgender Individuals' Dating Attitudes Towards**

**Gender Experience**

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Honors Project

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IHRTLUHC

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### **Abstract**

Of the research that exists on transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people's dating lives, much of it focuses on cisgender people's negative perceptions of TGNC partners. The little that does focus on TGNC experiences offers limited and contrasting information about TGNC dating preferences for cisgender and TGNC partners. Using an online survey distributed to TGNC adults ( $N = 246$ ), we explore TGNC people's attitudes toward both cisgender and TGNC partners as well as what influences these attitudes. Our predictive model is modified from the Gender Minority Stress and Resilience (GMSR) model (Testa et al., 2015), and we draw upon both social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social exchange theory (Homans, 1975) to explain the relationships between dating attitudes and the GMSRs factors of distal stress, proximal stress, and resilience. Most participants preferred TGNC partners over cisgender partners (77.24%), and there was mixed support for our predictive model which is discussed. These findings provide foundational knowledge to the field of relationship research regarding TGNC dating experiences.

*Keywords:* transgender, dating preferences, social identity theory, social exchange theory, minority stress, resilience

## **From Identity to Intimacy: Exploring Transgender Individuals' Dating Attitudes Towards Gender Experience**

In the past decade, transgender identities have been brought to the center of political discourse. This may be due to transgender identities sometimes being perceived by dominant groups as gender transgressions which elicit fear and backlash against hegemonic systems (Currah, 2022). The extreme focus on transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people may be surprising considering transgender people make up only a small fraction of the population of adults (1.6%), but newer generations are beginning to identify outside of traditional gender identities more frequently with 5.1% of young adults aged 18-29 identifying as TGNC (Brown, 2022).

Because of the rejection and violence TGNC people have faced, forming a safe and affirming community is a vital, long held tool of resilience. One key source of resilience many in the TGNC community are familiar with is trans-for-trans, or “t4t” relationships. T4t has origins in online hookup culture around the turn of the millennium and refers to transgender individuals' preferences for other transgender people as romantic and/or sexual partners (Hall, 2023). These t4t attitudes and behaviors provide a variety of benefits, but as queer and trans theorist Hil Malatino suggests, t4t love is a means of survival during the process of creating a safer world for TGNC people (Malatino, 2019). Some qualities that TGNC people have noted their transgender partners can provide include shared experiences and knowledge of terminology, a lack of fetishization, and flexibility in gendered relationship roles (Griffiths & Armstrong, 2023; Hall, 2023). T4t has also come to function as a political identity that calls for community care and platonic love by encouraging those within the TGNC community to uplift others and openly share knowledge, skills, and resources with one another (Hall, 2023). Asanni Armon, founder of

the mutual aid collective For the Gwols led by Black and transgender activists, describes the importance of t4t love: “We need to show up for each other, because usually, nobody else will show up for us” (Hall, 2023, p. 10).

### **Previous Research on TGNC People Dating**

While people within the TGNC community are familiar with the complexities of TGNC people’s dating attitudes, little research explores t4t preferences in depth. A considerable swath of research does exist regarding transgender people and dating, though much of it pursues questions of cisgender desire for transgender partners. Blair and Hoskin (2019), for example, found that 87.5% of their mostly cisgender sample were unwilling to date transgender people. Mao and colleagues (2018) similarly looked at how perceptions of attractiveness are influenced by transgender status and found that their all-cisgender sample perceived nonbinary and transgender targets as less attractive than cisgender targets. While it is important to ask questions about the dominant group’s biases against minoritized populations, research formed from TGNC perspectives and experiences is severely lacking.

There has, however, been some qualitative data that describes TGNC people’s dating experiences. In one such study by Griffith and Armstrong (2023), the authors interviewed 15 transgender people regarding their experiences with dating apps. While not the focus of their research, they found that most participants expressed a preference for t4t relationships due to shared experiences and a wish to avoid fetishization from cisgender partners. Contrastingly, Tree-McGrath and colleagues (2018) interviewed 16 transgender men who have sex with men about their cisgender male sexual partners. Many participants reported that cisgender men viewing them as masculine objects of desire affirmed their gender identity and sparked feelings of gender euphoria. The only mention of TGNC sexual partners was a few participants noting

that they experience more pressure from other transgender men to adhere to strict gender roles, likely due to pressure from cisgender norms of masculinity. Cisgender partners, on the other hand, were often safer to be flexible in their gendered sexual roles, and, consequently, were more affirming of participants' genders. These findings offer a contrasting perspective from Griffith and Armstrong's (2023) results and are useful to understand the experiences that inform a diverse range of partner preferences.

Because of the limited and conflicting research on this topic, we first aim to determine what the predominant dating attitudes (i.e., expectations and preferences) are amongst TGNC people regarding their partners gender experience. Because this is not a homogenous population, we additionally seek to understand what factors influence differences in these attitudes. To formulate our hypotheses for these questions, we will first draw on a predictive model for TGNC experiences in the Gender Minority Stress and Resilience model (Testa et al., 2015). From there we will explain how social identity theory and social exchange theory provide a framework to approach our hypotheses on dating attitudes in TGNC populations.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

### ***Gender Minority Stress and Resilience***

Building from Meyer's (2003) Minority Stress Model, the Gender Minority Stress and Resilience (GMSR) model proposed by Testa and colleagues (2015) predicts physical and mental health outcomes in TGNC populations (Figure 1). To do this, the GMSR breaks down three major components: distal stressors, proximal stressors, and resilience factors. Distal stress factors are external gender-based experiences that cause stress, such as gender-based discrimination, rejection, and victimization, and nonaffirmation of identity. Distal stressors are negatively related with health outcomes because they reflect barriers to effective mental and physical healthcare.

Distal stressors are also positively associated with the second factor of proximal stress, which are negative internal experiences including internalized transphobia, negative expectations of the future, and concealment of identity. Similarly to distal stress, proximal stress is negatively related to health outcomes. Additionally, the relationships between distal and proximal stress to mental and physical health outcomes are moderated by resilience variables. Resilience includes community connectedness and identity pride, which are protective factors that reduce psychological distress and increase feelings of comfort.

**Extension to Dating.** The variables and relationships the GMSR depicts offer a helpful framework that describes how varying experiences of transness can influence an outcome for TGNC people. The present study extends the GMSR to dating attitudes because of theorized connections between its predictor variables and dating attitudes. Due to differences in the outcome variables, slight revisions were made to the GMSR for the purpose of this study (Figure 2). First, our model predicts dating attitudes which includes expectations of and preferences for TGNC and cisgender partners. Second, we are adding to distal stress the experience of being fetishized for ones' TGNC identity, which has been noted by many TGNC people to be a complicated stressor connected to sexual and romantic relationships (Anzani et al., 2021; Griffiths & Armstrong, 2023). Third, because proximal stress variables revolve around negative attitudes towards transness, we are including traditional and rigid gender role beliefs, which have been positively associated with internalized transphobia and negatively associated with self-esteem (Iantaffi & Bockting, 2011). Fourth, we are adding identity centrality to the resilience variables because of its association with preferences for those with the same social identity (Cameron, 1999, 2004). Finally, resilience is predicted in our model to moderate the effect distal stress has on proximal stress, because Li and colleagues (2021) found resilience moderates

enacted stigma's (i.e., distal stressors) effect on internalized stigma (i.e., proximal stressors). Resilience is additionally expected to have a direct effect on dating attitudes, for reasons to be explained later. In the following sections, we will discuss the theoretical bases for our predictions and modifications to the GMSR in more detail.

### *Social Identity Theory*

One theoretical framework that can be used to examine these relationships in the context of dating is social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). A social identity is a part of an individual's self-concept that is derived from the social groups that they are a member of (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These shared groups are "in-groups," whereas the groups that are separate from one's in-group are "out-groups." This intergroup distinction works to create a positive self-concept through the mechanism of in-group favoritism, which is the exaggeration of favorable qualities given to members of one's in-group. Hyperbolic evaluations of in-groups, along with degradation of out-groups, increases positive feelings of the self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Research on in-group favoritism in dating shows people prefer partners of their in-group in several domains of identity, including race and political affiliation (Hernandez & Sarge, 2020; McClintock, 2010; Yancey, 2009). Of note, some scholars argue in-group favoritism does not require a negative evaluation of the out-group (Voci, 2006). However, the present study specifically explores in-group favoritism in the context of preferences for romantic partners; because preference refers to "greater liking for one alternative over another or others" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.), we mirror Essien's (2020) perspective on in-group favoritism as existing alongside a distancing of the out-group.

*Hypothesis 1.* TGNC people will predominantly prefer to date other TGNC people over cisgender people, because of their shared group membership.



Because in-group favoritism is the hyperbolic positive evaluation of one's in-group, it is strongest when an individual is high in identity pride (Trofimoff, 1992), that identity is central to their self-concept (Cameron, 1999, 2004), and they feel a strong connection to the community (Balliet et al., 2014; Hunter et al., 2017). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 2.* The resilience variables of identity pride, identity centrality, and community connectedness will predict stronger in-group favoritism in TGNC individuals' dating attitudes.

Another element of social identity theory that connects to in-group favoritism is social identity threat, which functions similarly to distal stress in the GSMR model. Threats to social identity are categorized in four types: categorization threat, distinctiveness threat, acceptance threat, and value threats. Of these four types, value threat is most related to distal stressors, because they reflect "some action or communication that directly or indirectly seems to undermine the value of being a group member" and "takes the form of an attack on central, shared in-group attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and group practices, rejecting and derogating their nature and importance" (Grant & Brown, 1995, p. 198). For example, someone calling a TGNC person a slur is an act of gender-based victimization - one of the distal stress variables - and threatens the value of their TGNC social identity. Because one's in-group can act as a safety net in these moments of threat, research links social identity threats to higher in-group favoritism (Voci, 2006), which leads us to predict:

*Hypothesis 3.* More distal stressors, which includes fetishization, nonaffirmation, gender-based discrimination, rejection, and victimization, will positively correlate with stronger preferences for TGNC partners.

As Testa and colleagues' (2015) GMSR demonstrates, distal stress is positively correlated with proximal stress; however, we argue resilience will moderate this relationship instead of moderating relationships with the outcomes. This moderation effect is supported by Li and colleagues (2021), who examined how resilience moderates the effect that enacted stigma (i.e., unfair treatment by others) has on internal stigma (i.e., the shame and expectation of discrimination) in the context of depression symptoms in young men who have sex with men in China. Though their study had a different focus and context, the mechanisms at play are conceptually similar to the variables of distal and proximal stress in the GMSR; distal stress can be thought of as enacted stigmas because they reflect external experiences of gender-based mistreatment. Similarly, internal stigma is operationalized comparably to proximal stigmas in the centrality of internalized stigma within both concepts. Therefore, Li and colleagues' (2021) research supports resilience moderating distal stressors effect on proximal stressors.

*Hypothesis 4.* Distal and proximal stress will be positively related. Resilience will moderate this relationship, so that more resilience will reduce distal stress's impact on proximal stress, which we predict will be demonstrated by resilience negatively correlating with proximal stress.

While most research in social identity theory demonstrates the prominence of in-group favoritism, this effect can be different for low status groups such as TGNC populations. Marques and colleagues (2001) argue that in the same manner in-group favoritism increases self-esteem, low status group members may prefer superordinate groups. This is because in-group members are evaluated more critically than out-group members when dominant norms favor the out-group (Marques et al., 2001). This is supported by Le and Kler's (2022) findings where, in a sample of queer Asian American men, internalized racism was positively associated with White dating

preferences. We can therefore expect that the more cisgender norms are internalized, which are represented by proximal stressors, the more TGNC people will prefer cisgender partners.

*Hypothesis 5.* Higher proximal stress, which includes traditional and rigid gender roles, internalized transphobia, negative expectations of the future, and concealment of identity, will correlate with higher out-group preferences.

### ***Social Exchange Theory***

One additional theory which can frame the outcome of dating attitudes is social exchange theory (Homans, 1958). This theory posits that relationships between two individuals are based on an implicit cost-benefit analysis that each party does upon beginning the relationship to examine the positive and negative characteristics the other will bring into their lives. Particularly true for romantic relationships, “people are attracted to those who can impart reinforcement and grant rewards of some kind” (Shtatfeld & Barak, 2009, p. 21). Equity is a principle factor in social exchange theory, which argues individuals feel they should “get what they deserve” and contribute as much to the relationship as their partner (Frieze et al., 2018).

As social exchange theory argues everyone does, TGNC people have specific expectations for the costs and benefits associated with potential cisgender or TGNC partners. The limited qualitative research on TGNC people’s dating experiences suggests many TGNC individuals expect costs associated with cisgender partners, such as needing education on transgender experiences and terminology, being more likely to fetishize their transgender identity, and being more likely to be violent towards them (Griffiths & Armstrong, 2023; Tree-McGrath et al., 2018). However, they may expect cisgender partners to provide more safety in a transphobic society and can affirm their gender identity (Tree-McGrath et al., 2018). Additionally, a TGNC individual may expect TGNC partners to impart costs like rigid gender

roles from internalized stigma, disapproval from family and social networks, and a higher likelihood of being victimized in public (Griffiths & Armstrong, 2023; Tree-McGrath et al., 2018). Whereas some benefits associated with TGNC partners are shared experiences, common knowledge regarding the community and terminology, and more comfort in sexual negotiations (Griffiths & Armstrong, 2023). We intuitively anticipate these expectations of costs and benefits are correlated with dating preferences, because if one expects a TGNC person to be better partner, for example, then they will likely prefer those expected positive experiences.

*Hypothesis 6.* Expectations for TGNC partners will positively relate to in-group preferences, and expectations for cisgender partners will negatively relate to in-group preferences.

### **Summary of Hypotheses**

As social identity theory would suggest, the TGNC population may predominantly prefer other TGNC people as dating partners because of their shared group membership. Additionally, the GMSR factors of distal stress, proximal stress, and resilience shape TGNC individuals' expectations and preferences for TGNC and cisgender partners. For clarity, the following are the hypothesized variables and their relationships which will predict TGNC individuals' dating expectations and preferences regarding their partners' gender experience:

*Hypothesis 1.* TGNC people will predominantly prefer to date other TGNC people, because of their shared group membership.

*Hypothesis 2.* The resilience factors of identity pride, identity centrality, and community connectedness will positively correlate with stronger desires for TGNC partners.

*Hypothesis 3.* TGNC people with higher rates of distal stress, which include past fetishization and gender-based discrimination, rejection, and victimization, will avoid cisgender partners and prefer TGNC partners.

*Hypothesis 4.* As depicted in the original GMSR, distal stress will positively correlate with proximal stress (i.e., traditional and rigid gender roles, internalized transphobia, negative expectations of the future, and concealment of identity). However, this relationship will be moderated by resilience factors, so that resilience will negatively correlate with proximal stress.

*Hypothesis 5.* Those with more proximal stress will want to avoid TGNC partners and prefer cisgender partners.

*Hypothesis 6.* Expectations for TGNC partners will positively relate to in-group preferences, and expectations for cisgender partners will negatively relate to in-group preferences.

## **Method**

### **Procedure**

All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board of the university this study was conducted under. A Qualtrics survey was distributed using a QR code in the recruitment materials. Upon scanning the QR code, participants were directed to the online survey where they completed an informed consent form and responded to eligibility and survey questions. Eligibility was limited to participants who identified as TGNC and experienced romantic attraction. Participants offered their email address in order to be compensated \$20 upon completion of the survey. Compensation was delivered through the online gift card platform Tango, which allowed participants to select a \$20 gift of their choosing.

***Bot Detection***

Data collection occurred in two legs, the first of which was from January through February of 2024. In this leg, no bot detection techniques (BDTs) were utilized which led to an influx of fraudulent responses. To discern which responses were genuine, we reviewed existing research on BDTs (Casalheira et al., 2023; White-Cascarilla & Broadhead, 2023) and consulted with peers familiar with online survey techniques. From this review, we created a protocol to filter out fraudulent responses from our data set.

The following is our bot detection protocol for the first leg of data collection. The first step was creating levels of flagging, with “2” indicating a response to be immediately removed and “1” as a response for consideration. If a response had a sum of two or higher in all categories of bot detection flags, they were removed from analysis. Responses with an IP address, email, or location that was duplicated from another response were flagged with a 2. Speeders, or responses that took less than 500 seconds (8.3 minutes) to complete the survey, were flagged with a 2, and responses taking less than 600 seconds (10 minutes), were marked as a 1. This is because the median survey duration was 1854 seconds (30.9 minutes), so less than 10 minutes is dubious, and less than 8 minutes is likely poor data. Next, we visually reviewed the email addresses. Emails with a random string of letters or numbers were immediately removed, and those formatted as FirstnameLastnameYEAR@email.com were flagged as a 1. From there, we went through the qualitative data that was collected to find suspicious responses. Responses marked with a 2 were incoherent, blatantly contradictory (e.g., stating cisgender people are better partners in one response and TGNC people are better partners in another), groups of responses with similar response patterns, and duplicated answers. Additionally, responses that seemed strange or dubious were flagged with a 1.

After noticing the influx of bots in our survey, there were several changes we made in the second leg of recruitment to prevent bots from taking the survey and to make them more discernable from genuine responses. The survey in the second leg, which lasted from March to April 2024, utilized Qualtrics fraud detection tools such as reCAPTCHA, security scan monitoring, flagging relevant ID, and preventing “ballot box stuffing.” A number of screener questions were also added, including multiple questions for each inclusion criteria in different question formats, attention checks, honeypot items (i.e., questions only visible to bots, so an answer marked indicates a fraudulent response), and asking for a participant’s age in a different question format than is asked later in the demographics portion of the survey. The rest of the survey had additional attention checks and honeypot items, as well as asking participants to write at least 3 sentences for the open-ended questions.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment of participants was conducted in two phases and primarily done through snowball sampling. In the first phase of recruitment, flyers were posted on the campus of the university the research was conducted from, as well as being shared on social media through a local TGNC activist’s Facebook page. The poster and the final page of the survey encouraged participants to share the survey link with their TGNC friends and community networks. The second recruitment period primarily consisted of posting the materials to a large TGNC Facebook group.

### **Participants**

We collected 1,163 responses, and after removing 917 responses deemed fraudulent by our BDTs, our sample consisted of 246 participants identifying as TGNC and who experience romantic attraction. Their ages ranged from 18-67 ( $M = 30.43$ ,  $SD = 9.53$ ). Table 1 depicts additional demographic information about participants’ race, gender identity, sexual orientation,

relationship style, and stage in transition. The most common demographics were 81.71% White, 42.28% nonbinary, 46.75% queer, 52.85% monogamous, and 48.78% were in the middle of their transition having met some of their gender affirmation goals.

### **Instruments**

The range, means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alphas for all measures are reported in Table 2.

### ***Preferences***

The preferences measure is adapted from Nehl and colleagues' (2014) research on gay Asian American men's racial preferences. After adjusting the wording to reflect preferences for gender experience instead of race, the 10-item measure has respondents choose on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Four statements assess preferences for TGNC partners (e.g., "I would rather date a TGNC person than a cisgender person"), four statements assess cisgender preference (e.g., "Cisgender people are the most attractive"), and two assess having no preferences (e.g., "I like going out on dates with people of any gender experience"). Because we are seeking to understand TGNC people's preferences for one gender experience over another, we eliminated the two items on no preferences and reversed the appropriate items to create one preference scale with high scores reflecting stronger TGNC preferences and low scores indicating stronger preferences for cisgender partners.

### ***Expectations***

Items assessing participants' expectations for TGNC and cisgender partners was created by the authors based on previous qualitative research (Griffith & Armstrong, 2023; Tree-McGrath et al., 2018), consulting with a transgender-focused academic and activist, and through the first author's experience in the TGNC community. Because social exchange theory suggests



one can have positive expectations for different groups, expectations were broken down into four subscales: expectations for TGNC partners (TE), expectations for cisgender partners (CE), expectations for others' reactions to TGNC partners (TEO), and expectations for others' reactions to cisgender partners (CEO). TE and CE will be considered alongside preferences for our hypotheses, and TEO and CEO will be utilized for exploratory analyses. Each subscale was comprised of identical questions with either "transgender/gender nonconforming" or "cisgender" as the object. Six items assessed expectations for the partner (e.g., "How much do you expect to feel sexually satisfied with a transgender/gender nonconforming romantic partner?") and 4 items assessed expectations for others' reactions to the partner (e.g., "How would you expect your close social group [e.g., family and friends] to react to you beginning a relationship with a cisgender person?"). Response choices range on a 5-point scale with varying anchors depending on the wording of the question (see Appendix for all anchors). High scores indicate positive expectations for TGNC and cisgender partners, respectively.

### ***GMSR***

The Gender Minority Stress and Resilience (GMSR) measure (Testa et al., 2015) was adapted for the purpose of this study. The original GMSR is comprised of three major factors: distal stress, proximal stress, and resilience. Three subscales of distal stress (Discrimination, Rejection, and Victimization) have response options of *Never*; *Yes, before age 18*; *Yes, after age 18*; and *Yes, in the past year*. Following Testa and colleagues' (2015) analyses, responses are converted into a binary, with *Yes, in the past year* scored as 1 and all other as 0. Distal stress includes the four subscales of gender-based Discrimination (e.g., "I have had difficulty getting medical or mental health treatment [transition-related or other] because of my gender identity or expression"), gender-based Rejection (e.g., "I have been rejected or distanced from friends

because of my gender identity or expression”), gender-based Victimization (e.g., “I have had my personal property damaged because of my gender identity or expression”), and Nonaffirmation (e.g., “I have to repeatedly explain my gender identity to people or correct the pronouns people use”). Nonaffirmation is on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An item measuring past experiences of Fetishization (e.g., “Have you experienced being sexually fetishized due to your transgender/gender nonconforming identity?”) was added for this study, with participants responding *Yes* or *No*.

Proximal stress is originally made of three subscales: Internalized Transphobia (e.g., “I resent my gender identity or expression”), Negative Expectations for the future (e.g., “If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, employers would not hire me”) and Nondisclosure of gender identity/history (e.g., “Because I don’t want others to know my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I change the way I walk, gesture, sit, or stand”). These subscales, along with the rest of the measures we used, are on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Gender role rigidity (Gender Roles) was added to proximal stress using Baber & Tucker’s (2006) Social Roles Questionnaire (e.g., “People can be both aggressive and nurturing regardless of gender”).

Two subscales assessed the resilience factors of Pride (e.g., “It is a gift that my gender identity is different from my sex assigned at birth”) and Community Connectedness (e.g., “I feel connected to other people who share my gender identity”). An additional item assessing Identity Centrality (e.g., “How important is your transgender/gender nonconforming identity to you?”) was included in resilience, which was on a 5-point scale from 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*).

## Results

## Dating Attitudes

We utilized R Studio to conduct all analyses. Our first hypothesis predicted TGNC people favored other TGNC people as partners. To investigate this, we first averaged responses for preferences into one column. Means that were above 3 (i.e., the moderate response choice) reflected a preference for TGNC partners, below 3 indicated a preference for cisgender partners, and 3 reflected no preference. Using these points of delineation, the majority of participants preferred TGNC partners (77.24%), 17.48% preferred cisgender partners, and 5.28% had no preference. Expectations for TGNC and cisgender partners, respectively, was assessed on separate scales. Again using a mean of 3 as a cut off, 63.3% of participants expected positive experiences with cisgender partners (CE), 28.46% expected negative experiences with cisgender partners, and 8.13% expected neither good nor bad experiences. Expectations were more favorable towards TGNC partners with 90.65% having positive expectations for TGNC partners, 2.03% having negative expectations for TGNC partners, and 7.32% expecting neither good nor bad experiences. Regarding expectations for others' reactions to cisgender partners, 75.20% of participants expected positive reactions, 8.13% expected negative reactions, and 16.67% expected neither good nor bad reactions. For reactions to TGNC partners, 33.33% of participants expected positive reactions, 46.34% expected negative reactions, and 20.33% expected neither good nor bad reactions. When these four subscales were combined into a general expectations scale with lower scores indicating positive expectations for cisgender partners and higher scores indicating positive expectations for TGNC partners, 72.36% of participants expected better experiences dating TGNC partners, 23.17% expected better experiences with cisgender partners, and 4.47% held neutral expectations. Our sixth hypothesis predicted that preferences would be positively related to TE and negatively related to CE. Preferences were strongly positively

correlated with TE ( $r(244) = .40, p < .01$ ) and were weakly negatively correlated with CE ( $r(244) = -.15, p = .019$ ).

### **Correlations**

Table 3 depicts the bivariate correlations between the distal stress, proximal stress, and resilience variables along with expectations for TGNC and cisgender partners, respectively, and preferences. Our second hypothesis was that resilience would positively correlate with positive attitudes towards TGNC partners (i.e., preferences and TE). Preferences was weakly correlated with two of the resilience variables (Pride,  $r(244) = .18, p < .01$ ; Identity Centrality,  $r(244) = .16, p = .013$ ) and nonsignificant with Community Connectedness. All three resilience variables were moderately or strongly positively correlated with TE (Community Connectedness,  $r(244) = .27, p < .01$ ; Pride,  $r(244) = .24, p < .01$ ; Centrality,  $r(244) = .34, p < .01$ ). CE was nonsignificant across resilience variables.

Our third hypothesis was distal stress positively relating with positive TGNC attitudes and negative with CE. Two of the five distal variables were weakly or moderately associated with preferences (Discrimination,  $r(244) = .21, p < .01$ ; Nonaffirmation,  $r(244) = .18, p < .01$ ), and the rest were nonsignificant. TE was weakly or moderately positively correlated with two distal stressors (Discrimination,  $r(244) = .15, p = .021$ ; Nonaffirmation,  $r(244) = .21, p < .01$ ). TE was also weakly or moderately negatively correlated with two distal stressors (Victimization,  $r(244) = -.17, p < .01$ ; Fetishization,  $r(244) = -.20, p < .01$ ), and nonsignificant with Rejection. CE was weakly negatively related to Nonaffirmation ( $r(244) = -.14, p = .030$ ), and nonsignificant with the four other distal stressors.

Similarly to the original GMSR, our fourth hypothesis predicted positive correlations between distal and proximal stress variables. Fourteen variables were significantly positively

correlated between distal and proximal stress, though four relationships were nonsignificant, and Gender Roles was varied with significant positively correlations with Victimization ( $r(244) = .30, p < .01$ ) and Fetish ( $r(244) = .28, p < .01$ ), nonsignificant with Rejection, and significant negative correlations with Discrimination ( $r(244) = -.16, p = .012$ ) and Nonaffirmation ( $r(244) = -.24, p < .01$ ). We also hypothesized that resilience factors would negatively correlate to proximal stressors. Eight of the twelve relationships between resilience and proximal stress variables were significant and negative. Four relationships were nonsignificant which included Negative Expectations relationships to the three resilience variables and Gender Roles' relationship to Identity Centrality.

Our fifth hypothesis was proximal stressors negatively correlating with positive TGNC dating attitudes and positively correlating with CE. Preferences was moderately negatively significant with two of the four proximal stressors (Internalized Transphobia,  $r(244) = -.20, p < .01$ ; Gender Roles,  $r(244) = -.21, p < .01$ ). Three of the four proximal stressors were negatively significantly correlated with TE, those being Internalized Transphobia ( $r(244) = -.34, p < .01$ ), Nondisclosure ( $r(244) = -.14, p = .024$ ), and Gender Roles ( $r(244) = -.57, p < .01$ ). CE was positively correlated with Gender Roles ( $r(244) = .14, p = .029$ ), negatively correlated with Nondisclosure ( $r(244) = -.14, p = .034$ ), and nonsignificant with Internalized Transphobia and Negative Expectations.

### **Exploratory Analyses**

To better understand the differences between expectations of a partner and others' reactions to a partner, we also explored correlations between TEO and CEO with the other measured variables (Table 3). TEO was significant in most relationships that TE was significant, though always in the opposite direction. A similar pattern was found for CEO and CE, though

both were much more often nonsignificant than TE and TEO with CE only being significant with three out of twelve variables and CEO significant with just four out of twelve.

Additionally, the mixed results between the expectations subscales and the predictive variables led us to examine the relationships with each expectations item to see if the items were conceptually distinct from one another. The items respectively assessed expectations of a partner to be affirming, trustworthy, fetishizing, rejecting, sexually satisfying, and safe. Items measuring expectations for others' reactions to a partner assessed discriminatory treatment, welcoming attitudes, systemic barriers, and approval. Because some of these items operationally map onto the predictive variables more directly than others (e.g., Rejection), we explored if the expectations items individually correlate in similar patterns to the expectations subscales. Tables 4.1.1-4.3.2 depict these relationships, and similar patterns of significance were found with the individual items and the four expectations subscales.

As we have noted, Gender Roles had directionally mixed significant relationships with the distal stressors, including two negative relationships (Discrimination,  $r(244) = -.16, p = .012$ ; Nonaffirmation,  $r(244) = -.24, p < .01$ ), one nonsignificant relationship (Rejection), and two positive relationships (Victimization,  $r(244) = .30, p < .01$ ; Fetish,  $r(244) = .28, p < .01$ ). These directionally varied correlations led us to explore additional relationships. Gender Roles was strongly positively correlated with stage in transition ( $r(244) = .32, p < .01$ ). Gender Roles was also weakly positively correlated with identifying as a man ( $r(244) = .13, p = .047$ ), and strongly negatively related to identifying as nonbinary ( $r(244) = -.47, p < .01$ ).

## Discussion

### Hypotheses Support Summary

We proposed six hypotheses, which had mixed support.

*Hypothesis 1:* TGNC people will predominantly prefer to date other TGNC people, and more TGNC people will have positive expectations for TGNC partners than for cisgender partners. This hypothesis was fully supported.

*Hypothesis 2:* The resilience factors of identity pride, identity centrality, and community connectedness will positively correlate with preferences and TE. This hypothesis was partially supported.

*Hypothesis 3:* TGNC people with higher rates of distal stress, which include past fetishization and gender-based discrimination, rejection, and victimization, will prefer TGNC partners, have positive expectations for TGNC partners, and have poor expectations for cisgender partners. This hypothesis was partially supported.

*Hypothesis 4:* As depicted in the original GMSR, distal stress will positively correlate with proximal stress (i.e., traditional and rigid gender roles, internalized transphobia, negative expectations of the future, and concealment of identity). However, this relationship will be moderated by resilience factors, so that more resilience will reduce distal stress's impact on proximal stress. This moderation will be demonstrated by resilience variables negatively correlating with proximal stress. This hypothesis was partially supported.

*Hypothesis 5:* Those with more proximal stress will prefer cisgender partners, have better expectations for cisgender partners, and have poor expectations for TGNC partners. This hypothesis was partially supported.

*Hypothesis 6:* Expectations for TGNC partners will positively relate to preferences, and expectations for cisgender partners will negatively relate to preferences. This hypothesis was fully supported.

## Dating Attitudes

We found full support for our first hypothesis, that TGNC people would predominantly prefer to date other TGNC people over cisgender people. This preference has yet to be explored or found in literature on in-group favoritism and dating preferences but is in alignment with research around political and racial identities (Hernandez & Sarge, 2020; McClintock, 2010; Yancey, 2009). It is important to note, however, that the link between ideal partner preferences and partner selection is ambiguous (Campbell & Stanton, 2014; Driebe et al., 2023; Eastwick & Neff, 2012; Eastwick et al., 2011; Eastwick et al., 2014; Gerlach et al., 2019). For example, Gerlach and colleagues (2019) found that trait preferences predicted partner selection at a five month follow up. Contrastingly, Eastwick and colleagues (2011) found that ideal partner traits predict dating outcomes when asked about a theoretical partner but are not predictive of potential partners an individual has met in person. Because of the questionable utility self-reported dating preferences have for predicting partner selection, further research is needed to see if preferences for gender expression extend to partner selection.

Our sample's varied expectations for TGNC and cisgender partners suggest the cost-benefit analysis that social exchange theory outlines is occurring. Because most participants expected positive experiences with TGNC partners but negative reactions to having a TGNC partner, while simultaneously indicating a predominant preference for TGNC partners, we may infer participants felt the benefits expected from a TGNC partner would outweigh any social costs. Interestingly, a majority of participants expected both positive experiences with a cisgender partner and positive reactions to a cisgender partner, even though the majority preferred TGNC partners. Again, this suggests a cost-benefit analysis is occurring with the



benefits TGNC partners offer potentially being perceived as more valuable than the benefits a cisgender partner may provide.

### **Distal Stress, Proximal Stress, and Resilience Predictors**

The second hypothesis that resilience variables would be positively associated with TGNC attitudes was partially supported, with five out of six relationships being significant in the predicted direction. This relationship suggests positive connotations of transness – both in one’s own identity and for their in-group – is exemplative of in-group favoritism. Additionally, the lack of significant relationships between resilience and expectations for cisgender partners reflects the distinction between in-group favoritism and out-group distancing. While preferences were assessed on a single in-group to out-group continuum to explore overall preferences, our expectations subscales kept TGNC and cisgender identities on distinct scales. Doing so allows us to see that in-group favoritism does not inherently suggest the out-group is being negatively evaluated, which echoes Voci’s (2006) argument that in-group and out-group evaluations are not necessarily zero-sum. This distinction also mimics work done in sociology on t4t politics. In this field, the t4t framework is critiqued and reworked to avoid creating a new cisgender/TGNC binary (Awkward-Rich & Malatino, 2022). Participants’ relationships to their own TGNC identity and community as assessed by the resilience variables did not equate to particular attitudes towards cisgender people, which speaks to the importance of conceptualizing t4t as an “interpersonal form” and not as a tool to further TGNC “isolation through the promise of community, euphoria, and bliss” (Awkward-Rich & Malatino, 2022, p. 2).

Our third hypothesis of distal stressors positively associating with TGNC attitudes was partially supported for preference, with only Discrimination and Nonaffirmation having significant relationships. Additionally, the mixed relationships between expectations and distal

stressors offer interesting insight. Victimization and Fetishization's directionally opposite relationship with TGNC partner expectations compared to the rest of the distal stressors may be due to the poor reliability of their subscales. Three of the GMSR's distal stress variables (Discrimination, Rejection, Victimization) had low Cronbach's alphas, much lower than the original GMSRs findings, and Fetishization was only assessed with one item. These limitations in assessment tools may have influenced the unexpected correlations. Though we are unsure why the Cronbach's alphas are lower in our sample, we suspect the BDTs were imperfect and led to some bots influencing our results, or that the binary response option limits the likelihood of finding relationships between each item.

Another explanation for these surprising findings is that there are more relationships at play than we can analyze with bivariate correlations. For example, we predicted proximal stress to mediate the relationship between distal stress and dating attitudes, which cannot be determined with bivariate correlations. Of the distal stressors, Victimization and Fetishization were the most strongly related to proximal stressors, perhaps indicating that their influence on proximal stress is stronger. Then, because proximal stress was predicted to be negatively related with TGNC expectations, these distal stressors' strong relationships with proximal stressors may imply a mediation that we cannot discern without further analyses.

Additionally, there could be something about Victimization and Fetishization that functions differently than other distal stressors. Victimization assesses physical and verbal acts of violence, and Fetishization is sometimes felt as a form of victimization (Anzani et al., 2021); somewhat disparately, the other distal stressors of Discrimination, Rejection, and Nonaffirmation reflect structural and social harms. Perhaps the immediacy and intensity of being victimized affects dating attitudes differently than these other forms of distal stress. When investigating in-group

favoritism and victimization in a different context, Restrepo-Plaza and Fatas (2022) found that victims of conflict in Colombia discriminated against ex-combatants less than non-victims did. This is an instance where being victimized does not lead to in-group favoritism, supporting Marques and colleagues' (2001) theorization of minoritized groups preferring dominant groups as a way to disidentify with their lower status.

Finally, the ambiguous wording of the questions may explain these mixed results. The questions assessing most of the predictive variables did not specify who was committing the acts of harm, whether it was TGNC or cisgender people doing the discriminating, rejecting, victimizing, etc. While social dominance theory describes how dominant groups are more likely to be the aggressors towards minoritized people in order to maintain their power (Perez-Arche & Miller, 2021; Pratto et al., 1994), Tree-McGrath and colleagues (2018) described some TGNC people experiencing more threats from other TGNC people who are subscribing to cisgender norms. If participants have experienced more Victimization and Fetishization from TGNC people, they will likely then expect more negativity from TGNC people.

Our fourth hypothesis, following suit from the GMSR, that proximal and distal stressors would be positively related, was partially supported. Of the twenty relationships, fourteen were significantly positively correlated, four were nonsignificant, and two were significantly negatively correlated. Gender Roles had varied relationships with the distal stressors; to summarize, participants with highly rigid and traditional Gender Roles were less likely to experience Discrimination and Nonaffirmation, but more likely to experience Victimization and Fetishization. If a participant held rigid gendered norms, they were also more likely to be farther along in their transition goals and identify as a man. These varied relationships may simply mean that Gender Roles does not conceptually or functionally align with the other proximal stressors,

though these patterns are still of interest. Perhaps scoring highly in Gender Roles suggests a high valuing of passing, which is the ability to be perceived as cisgender and as the gender you identify as - a highly critiqued concept within the TGNC community (Williams, 2013). This supposition is based on the conjecture that a TGNC person who values binary norms of gender roles will likely also seek to fit more within those norms. While recognizing a desire to pass may also come from safety concerns rather than personal values (Anderson et al., 2020), Gender Roles' negative relationships with Discrimination and Nonaffirmation may be due to the effect of passing: by fitting within binary norms, it is easier to navigate discriminatory systems and be affirmed within your gender by the cisgender majority. This mimics Phillips & Rogers' (2021) research with transgender men in the Southeastern United States, who often participated in sexism to boost their claims to manhood. By adhering to traditional and rigid gender roles that suggests masculinity rests upon sexist attitudes, these transgender men are affirmed in their binary gender identities. Similarly, our participants who held traditional and rigid gender roles may experience more affirmation and less discrimination by placing themselves within these binary gender expectations. Nonbinary participants scoring significantly lower on Gender Roles further exemplifies this idea, with nonbinary individuals having noted the complexity and impossibility of passing when identifying outside the gender binary (Nicolazzo, 2016).

Our fifth hypothesis was also partially supported, with low levels of proximal stressors sometimes predicting positive TGNC attitudes and poor expectations for cisgender partners. Six out of twelve relationships supported this hypothesis, five relationships were nonsignificant, and Nondisclosure was negatively related with expectations for cisgender partners, which conflicts with our hypothesis. This relationship may be due to the reasons a TGNC person chooses to or not to disclose their TGNC identity; because disclosing a TGNC identity makes you more

vulnerable to discrimination, rejection, or violence from cisnormative society (Lombardi et al., 2001), a person may conceal their identity out of fear of being harmed by cisgender groups. Therefore, if this fear is driving a TGNC person to not disclose their transness, they will likely hold negative expectations of cisgender people.

We also observed interesting patterns amongst the expectations variables. One of which is that expectations for cisgender people, both cisgender partners and reactions to cisgender partners, were more often nonsignificant with other variables than expectations for TGNC people. This could be due to the tendency of lower status groups to self-stereotype more strongly than high status groups, as seen in a sample of Italian women who showed stronger in-group-stereotyping than men (Cadinu et al., 2013). This in-group-stereotyping increases self-esteem in minoritized groups by creating a schema for one's in-group which can then be positively exaggerated (i.e., in-group favoritism), thereby viewing oneself more positively (Latrofa et al., 2009). Therefore, TGNC people may have a more unified or stereotypical perception of what other TGNC people are like to then place expectations upon, whereas the dominant cisgender group may be viewed with more variety. We also found that there were many nonsignificant relationships found overall, unlike the original GMSRs relationships to their outcomes of mental and physical health. The lack of significant relationships may be due to the ineffectiveness of bot detection, thus influencing our sample, or that the variables we studied simply do not all influence dating attitudes in significant ways.

Overall, the correlations we found between the variables of distal stress, proximal stress, resilience, and preferences partially support our adapted model, with some variables having no significant relationship. Of note, the relationships to expectations were more mixed in directionality, suggesting there is a difference between how expectations and preferences are

formed. These results are intriguing, because social identity theory and in-group favoritism would suggest preferences and expectations go hand-in-hand, with people expecting hyperbolically better qualities from their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this study, we sought to extend the research conducted in the GMSR model (Testa et al., 2015) and thus adopted most of their measurement and analytic strategy, assessing bivariate correlations between our variables of interest. Perhaps these unique findings are due to, as previously noted, the limitations of bivariate correlations if central components to predicting in-group favoritism like identity centrality, sense of belonging, prototypicality, and identity salience are moderating these relationships in unseen ways. Future analyses will examine these questions further.

### **Limitations**

There are a few important limitations of this study to note. First, the primary investigator is a White, middle class, transmasculine person and was the only TGNC-identifying researcher on the team. While the PI has expertise in their own experience of transness and consulted with other researchers and TGNC people in the development of the study, there are certainly ways this research was impacted by the lack of racially and culturally diverse TGNC people working on the study. For instance, this study did not look at race as a primary variable of interest; while we felt it best to start this foundational research on the dating attitudes of TGNC people by looking at the group as a whole, it is necessary to note that race, along with other factors like class, religion, and ability, impact one's experience of transness. Transgender women of color, for example, experience disproportionate levels of interpersonal partner violence (James et al., 2016), illustrating how intersecting marginalized identities synergize to create unique and significant dating experiences. There are likely variables we did not include that influence dating

attitudes which are more unique to non-White and other marginalized identities such as feeling culturally or spiritually connected to your gender identity.

Along with the limitations of the research team, there are additional limitations in the study design itself. The first, potentially stemming from the aforementioned research team, is the sample being majority White, which may be due to our avenues of recruitment, the recruitment materials being perceived as biased or uncomprehensive to the people of color who saw them, or another reason we may be missing. The sampling being majority White limits the generalizability and depth of our findings because, as already described, race and TGNC identity cannot be unbound from one another. Another limitation found in all research conducted exclusively online is the limiting of the sample to those with access to the internet. By doing so, online research can disproportionately exclude people with lower incomes thereby further limiting the study's generalizability. Online surveys are also prone to selection bias, meaning the sample may not represent all TGNC experiences. Finally, we utilized a cross-sectional design which limits our ability to infer causality between our predictive variables and dating attitudes.

### ***Future Directions***

This study is beginning to fill a gap in the literature around transgender people's dating experiences and can therefore provide a foundation for future research to build upon. First, there are several next steps we hope to take with the present study. Due to time restraints, we were limited in data collection and analyses, but we hope to collect more data to then conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Commonly employed in research with the GMSR, a CFA will help us better understand how the modeled variables work together. We also collected open-ended responses on dating preferences, preference formation, and expectations for cisgender and TGNC partners, which we plan to analyze by looking for patterns in responses.

Future research may utilize these findings in several ways. Firstly, to discern the predictive validity of gender experience preferences, researchers might utilize a longitudinal method exploring preferences and partner selection. Another important next step will be to explore how other aspects of identity may influence dating attitudes. For example, might the centrality of one's race be more impactful on the kinds of partners one prefers? How influential is the support of an ethnic and/or cultural community in the formation of dating attitudes for gender experience? Relatedly, another facet to explore is the differences in dating attitudes and their predictive variables between transmasculine and transfeminine people. It is well documented how transfeminine people encounter disproportionate stigma compared to transmasculine people due to cultural and systemic transmisogyny (Human Rights Campaign [HRC], 2023). Future research should seek to explore these layers of identity like race and gender presentation in tandem because of how they work together to shape experiences, exemplified by two-thirds of the TGNC people murdered in 2023 being Black femmes (HRC, 2023).

Another avenue of future research might be to examine the clinical applications these findings can have in the context of individual and couples therapy. Though research on the predictive validity of preferences in relationship formation is mixed (Campbell & Stanton, 2014; Eastwick et al., 2014), Eastwick and Neff (2012) found that the pattern of preferences (e.g., a highly valued trait matched in a partner being more important than a trait valued lower) was negatively associated with divorce. In other words, when strong preferences for certain traits were not met in a partner, they were less likely to stay married. This suggests that the variables influencing relationship formation, like preferences for gender experience may be, can affect relationship dynamics and outcomes. While more research is needed to explore how this



understanding can be applied in couples counseling, the present study offers a foundation for that work to begin with TGNC populations.

### **Conclusion**

Previous research exploring the dating experiences of TGNC individuals often sees TGNC people as targets of cisgender desire, rather than examining TGNC individuals' own dating preferences and experiences. The variables that influence preference formation are complex, and more work is needed to understand how other aspects of identity influence dating attitudes and how these attitudes may translate to partner selection. It is also important to recognize the nuances of t4t theorizing and politics in the context of this research; as Awkward-Rich and Malatino (2022) describe, t4t ideology has previously been utilized to “distract[] from or cover over the significant axes of difference, race chief among them” in TGNC communities (Awkward-Rich & Malatino, 2022, p. 2). The present study seeks to offer a first look at the complexities of TGNC dating attitudes and their influences, while acknowledging the breadth of work that must be continued in order to properly understand the varied experiences of this population.

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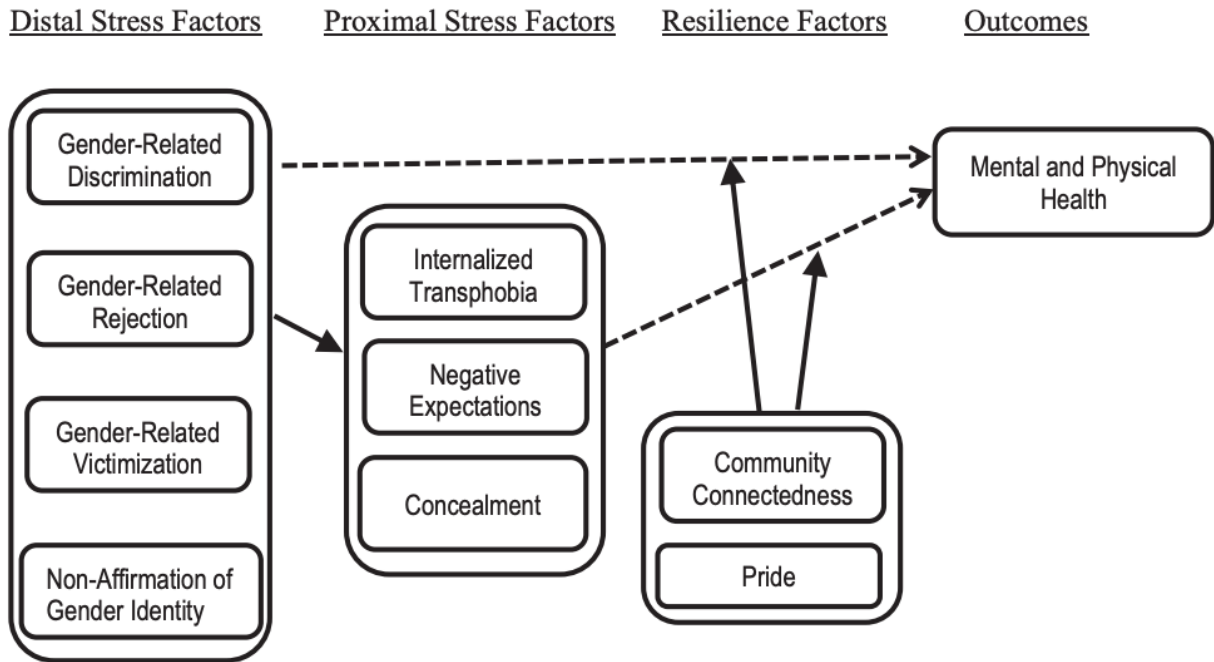
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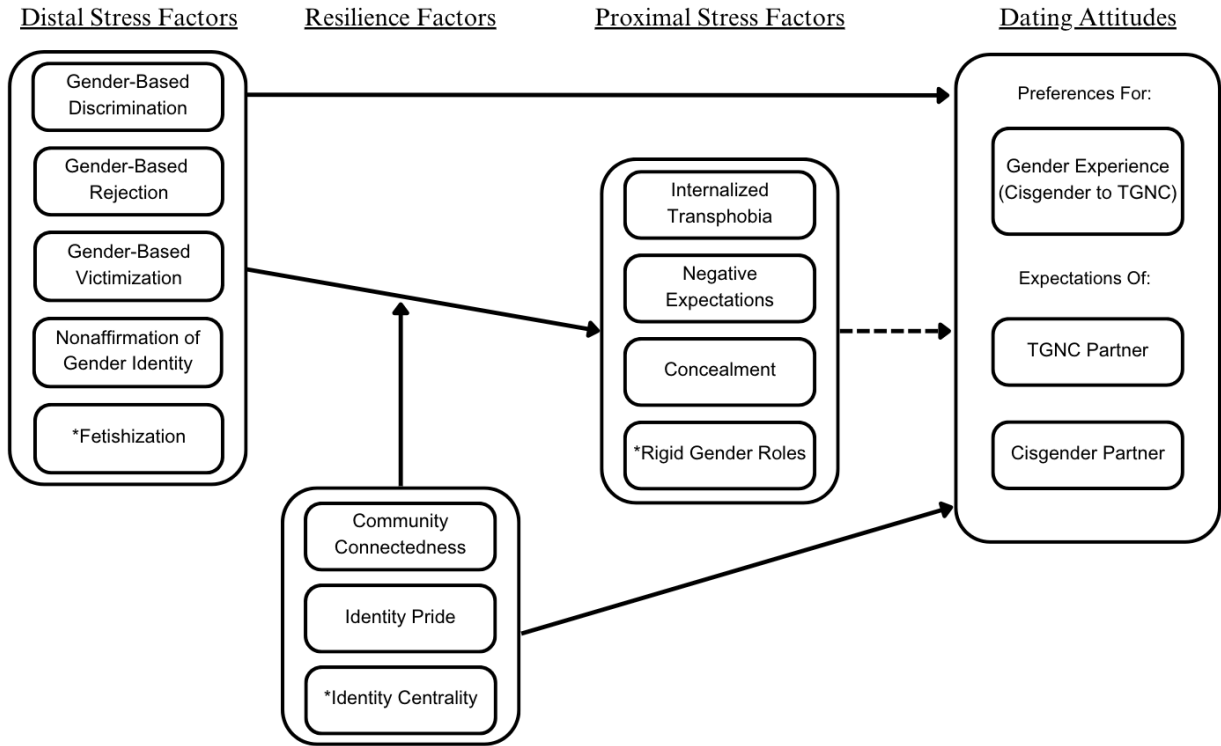
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**Figures and Tables**



*Figure 1.* Testa et al. (2015). Minority stress and resilience factors in transgender and gender nonconforming people. Dashed line indicates inverse relationships.



*Figure 2.* Revised minority stress and resilience factors in transgender and gender nonconforming people. Asterisks indicate added variables, and dashed line indicates inverse relationship.

**Table 1**  
*Demographics*

	N	%
<b>Race</b>		
White	201	81.71%
Black or African American	26	10.57%
Native American	4	1.63%
Latiné	26	10.57%
Asian	9	3.66%
Arab	5	2.03%
Multiracial	27	10.98%
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	59	23.98%
Woman	48	19.51%
Transmasculine	91	36.99%
Transfeminine	62	25.20%
Nonbinary	104	42.28%
Agender	26	10.57%
Not listed	21	8.54%
Prefer not to say	3	1.22%
<b>Intersex</b>		
Intersex	36	14.63%
Not intersex	181	73.58%
Unsure	24	9.76%
Prefer not to say	5	2.03%
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
Gay	41	16.67%
Lesbian	52	21.14%
Bisexual	84	34.15%
Pansexual	78	31.71%
Queer	115	46.75%
Heterosexual	15	6.10%
Asexual	19	7.72%
Other	20	8.13%
<b>Stage in transition</b>		
Met all transition goals	45	18.29%
Met some transition goals	120	48.78%
Met no transition goals	45	18.29%
Have no transition goals	36	14.63%
<b>Relationship style</b>		
Polyamorous	96	39.02%
Monogamous	130	52.85%
Prefer no romantic partners	3	1.22%
Prefer not to say	17	6.91%

*Note.* The data depicts response rates for each response option, so the total percentages will equal to over 100%.

**Table 2***Descriptive statistics*

Variable, number of items, coding	Alpha	Range	Total score: Mean (SD)
GMSR-Gender-related discrimination (5) 0 = No, 1 = Yes	0.51	0-5	2.1 (1.54)
GMSR-Gender-related rejection (6) 0 = No, 1 = Yes	0.65	0-6	2.01 (1.64)
GMSR-Gender-related victimization (6) 0 = No, 1 = Yes	0.46	0-6	3.1 (2.05)
GMSR-Gender-related nonaffirmation (5) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.85	5-25	22.17 (5.71)
Past fetishization (1) 0 = No, 1 = Yes	NA	0-1	0.63 (.48)
GMSR-Internalized transphobia (8) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.88	8-40	20.18 (7.77)
GMSR-Negative expectations of the future (9) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.81	9-45	28.87 (6.61)
GMSR-Nondisclosure (5) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.76	5-35	15.4 (4.73)
Gender Roles (13) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.9	13-65	23.73 (9.77)
GMSR-Community connectedness (5) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.75	5-25	17.66 (3.94)
GMSR-Pride (8) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.78	8-40	28.64 (5.75)
Identity centrality (1) 1-5 ordinal scale	NA	1-5	4.37 (0.85)
Expectations partner-Cis (10) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.72	1-5	3.31 (0.62)
Expectations partner-TGNC (10) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.71	1-5	3.99 (0.66)
Expectations others-Cis (10) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.58	1-5	3.54 (0.6)
Expectations others-TGNC (10) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.63	1-5	2.91 (0.7)
Preferences (8) 1-5 ordinal scale	0.79	1-5	3.62 (0.72)

**Table 3***Correlations among distal stressors, proximal stressors, resilience factors, and outcomes*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>Distal Stress</b>																	
1. GMSR-Discrim	-																
2. GMSR-Reject	.49**	-															
3. GMSR-Victim	.31**	.47**	-														
4. GMSR-NonAff	.37**	.25**	.12	-													
5. Fetish	.04	.07	.23**	0	-												
<b>Proximal Stress</b>																	
6. GMSR-IntTrPh	.11	.15*	.19**	.17**	.21**	-											
7. GMSR-NE	.21**	.23**	.19**	.38**	.19**	.34**	-										
8. GMSR-ND	.1	.12	.19**	.13*	.18**	.48**	.28**	-									
9. Gender Roles	-.16*	-.05	.30**	-.24**	.28**	.36**	.03	.14*	-								
<b>Resilience</b>																	
10. GMSR-Comm	.02	-.01	-.13*	.11	-.14*	-.40**	-.1	-.18**	-.29**	-							
11. GMSR-Pride	.16*	.1	0	.16**	-.01	-.37**	-.11	-.36**	-.22**	.32**	-						
12. Centrality	.12	.05	-.13*	.24**	-.13*	-.19**	-.01	-.1	-.49**	.30**	.38**	-					
<b>Outcomes</b>																	
13. Expect Partner-TGNC	.15*	-.04	-.17**	.21**	-.20**	-.34**	-.01	-.14*	-.57**	.27**	.24**	.34**	-				
14. Expect Partner-Cis	-.02	-.08	.04	-.14*	-.08	-.11	-.1	-.14*	.14*	.01	.05	-.01	.11	-			
15. Expect Other-TGNC	-.22**	-.13*	.09	-.27**	.16*	.18**	-.06	.06	.48**	-.19**	.02	-.17**	-.25**	.07	-		
16. Expect Other-Cis	.11	.13*	.04	.13*	-.03	.09	.13*	.20**	.05	-.01	.03	.04	-.03	.09	-.11	-	
17. Preferences	.21**	.05	.04	.18**	-.06	-.20**	.11	-.05	-.21**	.12	.18**	.16*	.40**	-.15*	.01	.06	-

Note. See Table 2 for full scale names. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

**Table 4.1.1***Correlations between distal stressors and expectations items*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Distal												
1. GMSR-Discrim	-											
2. GMSR-Reject	.49**	-										
3. GMSR-Victim	.31**	.47**	-									
4. GMSR-NonAff	.37**	.25**	0.12	-								
5. Fetish	0.04	0.07	.23**	0	-							
Expect Partner - TGNC												
6. Affirmation	.13*	-0.03	-.13*	.15*	-.14*	-						
7. Trust	0.1	0.07	-0.08	.15*	-0.06	.50**	-					
8. Fetishization	0.04	-.13*	-.27**	0.1	-.22**	.32**	.21**	-				
9. Rejection	0.03	-0.1	-0.06	0.11	-.23**	.35**	.33**	.38**	-			
10. Sexual Satisfaction	.14*	0.08	0	.21**	0.04	.22**	.33**	0.01	.18**	-		
11. Safety	.15*	0	-0.06	0.12	-0.11	.44**	.44**	.25**	.32**	.32**	-	
Expect Partner - Cis												
12. Affirmation	-0.08	0.01	0.12	-.17**	0.06	-0.07	0.01	-.20**	0.06	-0.04	-0.1	-
13. Trust	0.01	-0.07	0.09	-.13*	0.03	0.03	.21**	-0.11	0.11	0.11	0.04	.59**
14. Fetishization	-0.03	-0.1	-.22**	-0.12	-.29**	.14*	.18**	.37**	.22**	-0.09	0.09	0.08
15. Rejection	0	-0.12	-0.01	0.02	-.19**	.17**	.21**	-0.04	.34**	0.01	0.08	.32**
16. Sexual Satisfaction	-0.05	-0.06	0.07	-0.06	0.09	-0.03	0.03	-0.1	-0.03	0.12	0.02	.36**
17. Safety	-0.05	-0.1	0.04	-.13*	0.02	0.01	0.08	-0.11	.14*	0.01	.13*	.52**
Expect Other - TGNC												
18. Discrimination	-.18**	-0.07	0.06	-.22**	.18**	-.18**	-0.09	-.39**	-.13*	-0.02	-0.04	.21**
19. Attitudes	-0.12	-0.07	.13*	-.19**	0.1	-.13*	-0.09	-.36**	-0.08	0.03	-0.1	.15*
20. Systemic Barriers	-.19**	-0.05	.24**	-.20**	.22**	-.28**	-.18**	-.40**	-.14*	-0.06	-.22**	.15*
21. Approval	-0.11	-.18**	-.18**	-.14*	-0.07	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.08	.15*	0.04
Expect Other - Cis												
22. Discrimination	.14*	.17**	0.12	0.06	0	-0.1	-0.07	-.18**	-0.11	0.04	0.01	0.02
23. Attitudes	0.1	0.11	0.03	0.11	0.01	0.08	0.06	-.13*	-0.04	0.09	-0.02	-0.01
24. Systemic Barriers	0.06	0.06	0.04	.13*	0.01	0.07	-0.01	-0.1	0.03	0.07	0.04	-0.06
25. Approval	0	0.02	-0.06	0.04	-0.11	-0.03	0.12	0.04	-0.07	0.01	0.04	0.03

*Note.* High expectation scores indicate positive expectations of that group. Expectations of Fetishization and Rejection are reverse coded to align with the hypothesized directionality of the grouped variables. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . See supplementary file "Table 4.1" for the full table in excel format.

**Table 4.1.2***Correlations between distal stressors and expectations items*

Variable	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Distal												
1. GMSR-Discrim												
2. GMSR-Reject												
3. GMSR-Victim												
4. GMSR-NonAff												
5. Fetish												
Expect Partner - TGNC												
6. Affirmation												
7. Trust												
8. Fetishization												
9. Rejection												
10. Sexual Satisfaction												
11. Safety												
Expect Partner - Cis												
12. Affirmation												
13. Trust	-											
14. Fetishization	.15*	-										
15. Rejection	.40**	.22**	-									
16. Sexual Satisfaction	.33**	0.08	.17**	-								
17. Safety	.61**	.13*	.39**	.36**	-							
Expect Other - TGNC												
18. Discrimination	.13*	-.24**	0.06	0.05	.14*	-						
19. Attitudes	0.07	-.22**	0.12	0.09	0.11	.59**	-					
20. Systemic Barriers	0.08	-.23**	0.03	0.11	.17**	.40**	.44**	-				
21. Approval	0.09	-0.02	-0.01	0	0.03	.25**	.18**	-0.06	-			
Expect Other - Cis												
22. Discrimination	0.02	-.22**	-0.06	-0.01	0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.1	-.15*	-		
23. Attitudes	0.06	-.15*	0	0.02	-0.06	-0.06	0.12	-0.08	-.14*	.45**	-	
24. Systemic Barriers	-0.08	-.16*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.03	-0.09	-0.06	.37**	.30**	-
25. Approval	0.1	0	0	0.04	0.05	-0.04	-0.07	-.14*	.14*	.22**	.18**	0.08

*Note.* High expectation scores indicate positive expectations of that group. Expectations of Fetishization and Rejection are reverse coded to align with the hypothesized directionality of the grouped variables. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . See supplementary file "Table 4.1" for the full table in excel format.



**Table 4.2.1***Correlations between proximal stressors and expectations items*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Proximal Stress												
1. GMSR-IntTrPh	-											
2. GMSR-NE	.34**	-										
3. GMSR-ND	.48**	.28**	-									
4. Gender Roles	.36**	0.03	.14*	-								
Expect Partner - TGNC												
5. Affirmation	-.22**	0.03	-0.06	-.41**	-							
6. Trust	-.19**	0	-0.08	-.35**	.50**	-						
7. Fetishization	-.31**	-0.11	-.17**	-.62**	.32**	.21**	-					
8. Rejection	-.29**	-0.07	-.16*	-.33**	.35**	.33**	.38**	-				
9. Sexual Satisfaction	-0.05	.14*	-0.04	-0.12	.22**	.33**	0.01	.18**	-			
10. Safety	-.21**	0.01	-0.01	-.30**	.44**	.44**	.25**	.32**	.32**	-		
Expect Partner - Cis												
11. Affirmation	0.02	-0.05	-0.02	.27**	-0.07	0.01	-.20**	0.06	-0.04	-0.1	-	
12. Trust	0	-0.04	-0.08	.19**	0.03	.21**	-0.11	0.11	0.11	0.04	.59**	-
13. Fetishization	-.26**	-.14*	-.19**	-.35**	.14*	.18**	.37**	.22**	-0.09	0.09	0.08	.15*
14. Rejection	-.15*	-0.05	-.19**	0.04	.17**	.21**	-0.04	.34**	0.01	0.08	.32**	.40**
15. Sexual Satisfaction	-0.03	-0.05	-0.1	.14*	-0.03	0.03	-0.1	-0.03	0.12	0.02	.36**	.33**
16. Safety	-0.03	-0.11	-0.11	.21**	0.01	0.08	-0.11	.14*	0.01	.13*	.52**	.61**
Expect Other - TGNC												
17. Discrimination	.21**	0	0.06	.47**	-.18**	-0.09	-.39**	-.13*	-0.02	-0.04	.21**	.13*
18. Attitudes	.20**	-0.06	0.08	.41**	-.13*	-0.09	-.36**	-0.08	0.03	-0.1	.15*	0.07
19. Systemic Barriers	.28**	-0.02	0.08	.53**	-.28**	-.18**	-.40**	-.14*	-0.06	-.22**	.15*	0.08
20. Approval	-.20**	-0.1	-0.06	-0.09	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.08	.15*	0.04	0.09
Expect Other - Cis												
21. Discrimination	0.08	0.06	.21**	.16*	-0.1	-0.07	-.18**	-0.11	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.02
22. Attitudes	0.1	0.12	.14*	0.05	0.08	0.06	-.13*	-0.04	0.09	-0.02	-0.01	0.06
23. Systemic Barriers	0.08	.14*	.17**	-0.04	0.07	-0.01	-0.1	0.03	0.07	0.04	-0.06	-0.08
24. Approval	-0.03	0.03	0.03	-0.01	-0.03	0.12	0.04	-0.07	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.1

*Note.* High expectation scores indicate positive expectations of that group. Expectations of Fetishization and Rejection are reverse coded to align with the hypothesized directionality of the grouped variables. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . See supplementary file "Table 4.2" for the full table in excel format.

**Table 4.2.2***Correlations between proximal stressors and expectations items*

Variable	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Proximal Stress											
1. GMSR-IntTrPh											
2. GMSR-NE											
3. GMSR-ND											
4. Gender Roles											
Expect Partner - TGNC											
5. Affirmation											
6. Trust											
7. Fetishization											
8. Rejection											
9. Sexual Satisfaction											
10. Safety											
Expect Partner - Cis											
11. Affirmation											
12. Trust											
13. Fetishization	-										
14. Rejection	.22**	-									
15. Sexual Satisfaction	0.08	.17**	-								
16. Safety	.13*	.39**	.36**	-							
Expect Other - TGNC											
17. Discrimination	-.24**	0.06	0.05	.14*	-						
18. Attitudes	-.22**	0.12	0.09	0.11	.59**	-					
19. Systemic Barriers	-.23**	0.03	0.11	.17**	.40**	.44**	-				
20. Approval	-0.02	-0.01	0	0.03	.25**	.18**	-0.06	-			
Expect Other - Cis											
21. Discrimination	-.22**	-0.06	-0.01	0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.1	-.15*	-		
22. Attitudes	-.15*	0	0.02	-0.06	-0.06	0.12	-0.08	-.14*	.45**	-	
23. Systemic Barriers	-.16*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.03	-0.09	-0.06	.37**	.30**	-
24. Approval	0	0	0.04	0.05	-0.04	-0.07	-.14*	.14*	.22**	.18**	0.08

*Note.* High expectation scores indicate positive expectations of that group. Expectations of Fetishization and Rejection are reverse coded to align with the hypothesized directionality of the grouped variables. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . See supplementary file "Table 4.2" for the full table in excel format.

**Table 4.3.1***Correlations between resilience variables and expectations items*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Resilience											
1. GMSR-Comm	-										
2. GMSR-Pride	.32**	-									
3. Centrality	.30**	.38**	-								
Expect Partner - TGNC											
4. Affirmation	.22**	.17**	.29**	-							
5. Trust	.21**	.24**	.26**	.50**	-						
6. Fetishization	.20**	0.04	.25**	.32**	.21**	-					
7. Rejection	.25**	.16*	.18**	.35**	.33**	.38**	-				
8. Sexual Satisfaction	0.02	.21**	0.07	.22**	.33**	0.01	.18**	-			
9. Safety	.14*	.16*	.28**	.44**	.44**	.25**	.32**	.32**	-		
Expect Partner - Cis											
10. Affirmation	-0.04	-0.02	-.16*	-0.07	0.01	-.20**	0.06	-0.04	-0.1	-	
11. Trust	-0.02	0.07	-0.03	0.03	.21**	-0.11	0.11	0.11	0.04	.59**	-
12. Fetishization	.15*	0.03	.14*	.14*	.18**	.37**	.22**	-0.09	0.09	0.08	.15*
13. Rejection	0.09	0.12	0.07	.17**	.21**	-0.04	.34**	0.01	0.08	.32**	.40**
14. Sexual Satisfaction	-0.07	0.03	0	-0.03	0.03	-0.1	-0.03	0.12	0.02	.36**	.33**
15. Safety	-0.07	-0.01	-0.04	0.01	0.08	-0.11	.14*	0.01	.13*	.52**	.61**
Expect Other - TGNC											
16. Discrimination	-.14*	0.03	-.15*	-.18**	-0.09	-.39**	-.13*	-0.02	-0.04	.21**	.13*
17. Attitudes	-.16*	0.01	-.14*	-.13*	-0.09	-.36**	-0.08	0.03	-0.1	.15*	0.07
18. Systemic Barriers	-.25**	-.15*	-.26**	-.28**	-.18**	-.40**	-.14*	-0.06	-.22**	.15*	0.08
19. Approval	0.03	.19**	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.08	.15*	0.04	0.09
Expect Other - Cis											
20. Discrimination	-0.04	-0.01	-0.05	-0.1	-0.07	-.18**	-0.11	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.02
21. Attitudes	-0.02	0.01	0.08	0.08	0.06	-.13*	-0.04	0.09	-0.02	-0.01	0.06
22. Systemic Barriers	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.07	-0.01	-0.1	0.03	0.07	0.04	-0.06	-0.08
23. Approval	0.02	0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.12	0.04	-0.07	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.1

*Note.* High expectation scores indicate positive expectations of that group. Expectations of Fetishization and Rejection are reverse coded to align with the hypothesized directionality of the grouped variables. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . See supplementary file "Table 4.3" for the full table in excel format.

**Table 4.3.2***Correlations between resilience variables and expectations items*

Variable	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Resilience											
1. GMSR-Comm											
2. GMSR-Pride											
3. Centrality											
Expect Partner - TGNC											
4. Affirmation											
5. Trust											
6. Fetishization											
7. Rejection											
8. Sexual Satisfaction											
9. Safety											
Expect Partner - Cis											
10. Affirmation											
11. Trust											
12. Fetishization	-										
13. Rejection	.22**	-									
14. Sexual Satisfaction	0.08	.17**	-								
15. Safety	.13*	.39**	.36**	-							
Expect Other - TGNC											
16. Discrimination	-.24**	0.06	0.05	.14*	-						
17. Attitudes	-.22**	0.12	0.09	0.11	.59**	-					
18. Systemic Barriers	-.23**	0.03	0.11	.17**	.40**	.44**	-				
19. Approval	-0.02	-0.01	0	0.03	.25**	.18**	-0.06	-			
Expect Other - Cis											
20. Discrimination	-.22**	-0.06	-0.01	0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.1	-.15*	-		
21. Attitudes	-.15*	0	0.02	-0.06	-0.06	0.12	-0.08	-.14*	.45**	-	
22. Systemic Barriers	-.16*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.03	-0.09	-0.06	.37**	.30**	-
23. Approval	0	0	0.04	0.05	-0.04	-0.07	-.14*	.14*	.22**	.18**	0.08

*Note.* High expectation scores indicate positive expectations of that group. Expectations of Fetishization and Rejection are reverse coded to align with the hypothesized directionality of the grouped variables. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . See supplementary file "Table 4.3" for the full table in excel format.

## Appendix

### Survey Instruments

#### *Expectations*

1. What do you expect to be different when dating a cis person compared to dating a TGNC person?
  - a. [long answer]

#### **Expectations for partner.**

Response options: 5-point scale from *not at all* to *very much*

TGNC

2. How much do you expect to trust a TGNC romantic partner?
3. How much do you expect to feel affirmed by a TGNC romantic partner?
4. How much do you expect to feel fetishized by a TGNC romantic partner?
5. How much do you expect to feel rejected by a TGNC romantic partner?
6. How much do you expect to feel sexually satisfied with a TGNC romantic partner?
7. How safe do you expect to feel with a TGNC romantic partner?

Cisgender

8. How much do you expect to trust a cis romantic partner?
9. How much do you expect to feel affirmed by a cis romantic partner?
10. How much do you expect to feel fetishized by a cis romantic partner?
11. How much do you expect to feel rejected by a cis romantic partner?
12. How much do you expect to feel sexually satisfied with a cis romantic partner?
13. How safe do you expect to feel with a cis romantic partner?

**Expectations for Others.**

## TGNC

14. How much do you expect others' discrimination toward you to change when dating a TGNC person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *treated much worse* to *treated much better*

15. How do you expect others' attitudes towards you to change when dating a TGNC person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *very unwelcoming* to *very welcoming*

16. How much difficulty in navigating legal and/or medical systems do you expect to experience when dating a TGNC person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *much more difficult* to *much easier*

17. How do you expect your close social group (e.g., family and friends) to react to your relationship with a TNGC person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disapprove* to *strongly approve*

## Cisgender

18. How much do you expect others' discrimination toward you to change when dating a cisgender person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *treated much worse* to *treated much better*

19. How do you expect others' attitudes towards you to change when dating a cisgender person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *very unwelcoming* to *very welcoming*

20. How much difficulty in navigating legal and/or medical systems do you expect to experience when dating a cisgender person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *much more difficult* to *much easier*

21. How do you expect your close social group (e.g., family and friends) to react to your relationship with a cisgender person?

a. Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disapprove* to *strongly approve*

### ***Preferences***

1. How would you describe any preferences you have or have had in romantic partners regarding their gender experience (e.g., transgender, cisgender, nonbinary, etc)?

a. [open response]

2. Why do you think you have those preferences?

a. [open response]

### **Adapted from Nehl and Colleagues (2014).**

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

22. I like going out on dates with people of any gender experience.

23. Most of my dates in the past were with TGNC people.

24. I would rather date a TGNC person than a cisgender person.

25. I would feel proud to have TGNC partner.

26. I would rather date a cisgender person than a TGNC person.

27. I don't feel attracted to any TGNC people.

28. My ex-partners were mostly cisgender.

29. I prefer to date people with a similar connection to the TGNC community.

30. I don't really care about the gender experience of my dates.

31. Cisgender people are the most attractive.

### **Gender Minority Stress and Resilience (Testa et al., 2015)**

#### ***Gender-Related Discrimination***

Response options: *Never*; *Yes, before age 18*; *Yes, after age 18*; *Yes, in the past year*

1. I have had difficulty getting medical or mental health treatment (transition-related or other) because of my gender identity or expression.
2. Because of my gender identity or expression, I have had difficulty finding a bathroom to use when I am out in public.
3. I have experienced difficulty getting identity documents that match my gender identity.
4. I have had difficulty finding housing or staying in housing because of my gender identity or expression.
5. I have had difficulty finding employment or keeping employment, or have been denied promotion because of my gender identity or expression.

### ***Gender-Related Rejection***

Response options: *Never; Yes, before age 18; Yes, after age 18; Yes, in the past year*

6. I have had difficulty finding a partner or have had a relationship end because of my gender identity or expression.
7. I have been rejected or made to feel unwelcome by a religious community because of my gender identity or expression.
8. I have been rejected by or made to feel unwelcome in my ethnic/racial community because of my gender identity or expression.
9. I have been rejected or distanced from friends because of my gender identity or expression.
10. I have been rejected at school or work because of my gender identity or expression.
11. I have been rejected or distanced from family because of my gender identity or expression.

### ***Gender-Related Victimization***

Response options: *Never; Yes, before age 18; Yes, after age 18; Yes, in the past year*



12. I have been verbally harassed or teased because of my gender identity or expression. (For example, being called “it”)
13. I have been threatened with being outed or blackmailed because of my gender identity or expression.
14. I have had my personal property damaged because of my gender identity or expression.
15. I have been threatened with physical harm because of my gender identity or expression.
16. I have been pushed, shoved, hit, or had something thrown at me because of my gender identity or expression.
17. I have had sexual contact with someone against my will because of my gender identity or expression.

### ***Nonaffirmation of Gender Identity***

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

18. I have to repeatedly explain my gender identity to people or correct the pronouns people use.
19. I have difficulty being perceived as my gender.
20. I have to work hard for people to see my gender accurately.
21. I have to be “hypermasculine” or “hyperfeminine” in order for people to accept my gender.
22. People don’t respect my gender identity because of my appearance or body.
23. People don’t understand me because they don’t see my gender as I do.

### ***Internalized Transphobia***

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

24. I resent my gender identity or expression.

25. My gender identity or expression makes me feel like a freak.
26. When I think of my gender identity or expression, I feel depressed.
27. When I think about my gender identity or expression, I feel unhappy.
28. Because my gender identity or expression, I feel like an outcast.
29. I often ask myself: Why can't my gender identity or expression just be normal?
30. I feel that my gender identity or expression is embarrassing.
31. I envy people who do not have a gender identity or expression like mine.

### ***Pride***

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

32. My gender identity or expression makes me feel special and unique.
33. It is okay for me to have people know that my gender identity is different from my sex assigned at birth.
34. I have no problem talking about my gender identity and gender history to almost anyone.
35. It is a gift that my gender identity is different from my sex assigned at birth.
36. I am like other people but I am also special because my gender identity is different from my sex assigned at birth.
37. I am proud to be a person whose gender identity is different from my sex assigned at birth.
38. I am comfortable revealing to others that my gender identity is different from my sex assigned at birth.
39. I'd rather have people know everything and accept me with my gender identity and gender history.

Question to determine appropriate wording for items regarding negative expectations for the future and nondisclosure:

40. Do you currently live in your affirmed gender all or almost all of the time? (Your affirmed gender is the one you see as accurate for yourself.)

- a. Response options: *Yes, I live in my affirmed gender most or all of the time; No, I don't live in my affirmed gender most or all of the time* If *yes*: use “history” in items below. If *no*: use “identity” in items below.

### ***Negative Expectations for the Future***

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

41. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, others wouldn't accept me.
42. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, employers would not hire me.
43. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, people would think I am mentally ill or “crazy.”
44. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, people would think I am disgusting or sinful.
45. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, most people would think less of me.
46. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, most people would look down on me.
47. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I could be a victim of crime or violence.
48. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I could be arrested or harassed by police.
49. If I express my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I could be denied good medical care.

### ***Nondisclosure***

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

50. Because I don't want others to know my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I don't talk about certain experiences from my past or change parts of what I will tell people.

51. Because I don't want others to know my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I modify my way of speaking.
52. Because I don't want others to know my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I pay special attention to the way I dress or groom myself.
53. Because I don't want others to know my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I avoid exposing my body, such as wearing a bathing suit or nudity in locker rooms.
54. Because I don't want others to know my gender IDENTITY/HISTORY, I change the way I walk, gesture, sit, or stand.

### ***Community Connectedness***

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

55. I feel part of a community of people who share my gender identity.
56. I feel connected to other people who share my gender identity.
57. When interacting with members of the community that shares my gender identity, I feel like I belong.
58. I'm not like other people who share my gender identity. (R)
59. I feel isolated and separate from other people who share my gender identity. (R)

### **Gender Roles (Social Roles Questionnaire; Baber & Tucker, 2006)**

Response options: 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

60. People can be both aggressive and nurturing regardless of gender.
61. People should be treated the same regardless of their gender.
62. The freedom that children are given should be determined by their age and maturity level and not by their gender.
63. Tasks around the house should not be assigned by gender.

64. We should stop thinking about whether people are male or female and focus on other characteristics.
65. A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children.
66. Men are more sexual than women.
67. Some types of work are just not appropriate for women.
68. Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up.
69. Mothers should work only if necessary.
70. Girls should be protected and watched over more than boys.
71. Only some types of work are appropriate for both men and women.
72. For many important jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women.

### **Identity Centrality**

73. How important is your TGNC identity to you?
  - a. Response options: 5-point scale from *not important at all* to *very important*

### **Past Experiences of Fetishization**

74. Have you experienced being sexually fetishized due to your transgender/gender nonconforming identity?
  - a. Response options: *yes, no, prefer not to say*

### **Demographic Information**

75. What is your primary gender identity today? Please check all that apply:
  - a. Response options: *man, woman, transmasculine, transfeminine, nonbinary, genderfluid, agender, not listed, prefer not to say*
76. Would you like to elaborate on your gender identity? (optional)
  - a. [short answer]

77. Do you identify as intersex or as having a difference of sex development?

a. Response options: *yes, no, unsure, prefer not to say*

78. Have you or do you want to socially, legally, and/or medically transition away from the gender assigned to you at birth?

a. Response options: *Yes, I have met all my gender affirmation goal; I have not yet met all my gender affirmation goals, but someday I want to; I have not yet met any of my gender affirmation goals, but someday I want to; No, I do not want to pursue any social, legal, and/or medical gender changes.*

32. What is your sexual orientation? Please check all that apply.

a. Response options: *gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, heterosexual, asexual*

33. What is your race/ethnicity? Please mark all that apply.

a. Response options: *White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, Arab or Middle Eastern, multiracial or mixed race*

34. How old are you?

a. [#]