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Euphorias in Gender, Sex and Sexuality Variations

Positive Experiences

Tiffany Jones

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CHAPTER 1

Euphorias! Positive Feelings Within Negative Conditions

Abstract People within marginal gender, sex, and sexuality groups are mostly framed within conservative psycho-medical research, or critical empowerment literature. In both literatures, their framing has negative aspects either negating their bodies, identities, health, or function, or positioning within discriminatory contexts. Resisting deficit-based framings, this book uses the concept ‘euphoria’ to investigate when, why, and how marginal gender, sex, and sexuality groups have positive experiences of their diverse variations. These positive experiences appear to occur within, and even in part due or at least in relation to, marginal groups’ repressive and disordering contexts and marginalisation itself. This chapter supplies an overview of the different literatures on euphoria. It relates this work to information on dysphoria. It then supplies an outline of the chapters of the book.

Keywords Euphoria • Dysphoria • Gender • Sex • Sexuality • Media

Key Points

- ‘Euphorias’ are conditions of feeling happy and comfortable within uncomfortable contexts—bearing difficulties well.
- Euphorias are increasingly used in metaphoric and material descriptions of positive identity and/or bodily experiences for marginal sex, gender, or sexuality diverse groups.

- If considered critically, euphorias may counter overreliance on deficit models for LGBTIQ+ people’s research, services, and lives.
- Euphorias are not validated like, and have complex relationships to, ‘dysphorias’.
- Euphoria research lacks larger cohorts; lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex people; youth; and institutional contexts.

INTRODUCTION

I have wondered if cisgender people might experience it, too. As being cisgender is the norm, my initial suspicions were that it was a uniquely trans experience, because normalcy brings with it an innate mundanity. However, I think gender euphoria is just the act of being seen—by yourself or by someone else. When you are transgender, that feeling is often very elusive which means that the experience of it feels almost spiritual; the clouds part and for a moment everything feels right (Fury, Queer Non-Binary Writer). [1]

‘Euphorias’ suggest ‘pleasure’ within, and related to, ‘difficult’ conditions. This book offers a broad umbrella conceptualisation of euphoria as pluralistic (there being ‘euphorias’); expressing positive experiences of sex, gender and sexuality identities or embodiments problematised by ‘illness’ constructions and discriminatory contexts. As an LGBTIQ+ researcher, absorbing steady streams of suicidality data unsettled and (re)framed my lenses on LGBTIQ+ experience well beyond ‘work’ hours. Positive psychologies promised relief merely by denying my community’s difficulties; I sought alternate framings. Foregrounding euphorias—acknowledging difficulties without exclusively centring them—offers healthier nuanced positions for LGBTIQ+ researchers, LGBTIQ+ people broadly and community (re)framings combatting our disordering and victimising political misuses. This chapter argues that exploring ‘euphorias’ across larger data on marginal sub-groups within shared contexts is necessary to understanding key types and typicalities. It firstly defines euphorias, secondly reviews euphoria research, and finally problematises simplistic dysphoria and euphoria lenses before providing chapter outlines.

BACKGROUND TO ‘EUPHORIA’

What Are Euphorias?

Several fields of knowledge define euphorias as comprising (1) positive feelings, (2) within negative conditions of stimulation. ‘Euphorias’ described:

- *Medicines’ effectiveness on patients* in circa 1680s+ medical Latin [2].
- *Bearing sickness or discomfort well* in circa 1720s+ medical Greek eu ‘well’ + pherein ‘to carry/bear’ [2].
- *Joyous emotion and/or physical highs surrounded by lows* in 1800s+ alienism, psychiatry and psychogeriatrics stimulated by internal mental illnesses like bipolar disorder, mania and dementia [3], external sources like drugs or media [4]; and/or denial of negative conditions or contexts [5].
- *Substance-related or addictive disorder symptoms* in 1980s+ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR)* [6] lists of stimulant use disorder’s associated features (p. 636) and stimulant intoxication’s clinically significant problematic behavioural or psychological changes (p. 640) and diagnostic features (p. 641).
- *Spending, capital and asset value highs surrounded by market slumps or falls* in 1990s+ economic and housing literatures [7], suggesting denial of unhealthy markets.

In these discourses, euphorias are mentioned for the negative conditions they indicate and thus, barely discussed. Euphorias are more focal in gender euphoria literature.

What Are Gender Euphorias?

‘Gender Euphorias’—though poorly established in theoretical or empirical research literature [8, 9]— can in practice be used especially by transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people to describe metaphoric or somatic positive feelings and excitement about oneself, one’s body, and/or one’s gender identity or gender [1, 10, 11]. Euphorias are sometimes discussed in relation to ‘dysphorias’—feelings of distress around incongruences between one’s experienced or expressed gender, and assigned gender [12]. Euphorias are largely unexamined and under-theorised compared to dysphoria, though there has been some basic data collection to support

the notion [8, 9]. This book proposes that there may be a plurality of different euphorias, encompassing different types and experiences. It takes up the proposition within the opening quote wherein TGD writer Fury asserted euphorias have wider applications beyond TGD use—potentially encompassing cisgender and other experiences. That lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ+) people find euphorias about LGBTIQ+ identity applicable in the grey literature [11] begs further examination. Emphases for LGBTIQ+ people’s euphoric occurrence, types, frequencies, and change-trends were research gaps demanding investigations, starting with existing research literature.

SEX, GENDER & SEXUALITY EUPHORIA RESEARCH

Have Sex, Gender, or Sexuality Euphorias Been Studied?

Research on marginal sex, gender, and sexuality groups’ euphorias is minimal. Studies are mostly recent to the last few years, largely from the West (United States, Canada, and Australia) and focussed on practices stimulating gender euphoria mainly within transgender and gender diverse (TGD) populations [8, 9, 13–15]. Firstly, individual trans people have discussed their experiences and frameworks for achieving positive gender experiences including euphoria such as Benestad—a medical doctor, a family therapist, and a sexologist [13]. Benestad discussed how their gender therapy does not aim at changing the clients’ perception of self, but at changing perceptions surrounding the client through strengthening their self-confidence, educating their networks, and assisting in moving from unsatisfying to satisfying lives. The optimal endpoint does not have to lie within the gender majorities or binaries, but aims at congruence between the individual’s sense of gendered or non-gendered self, and external perception of it, towards positive gendered belonging which can include elements of euphoria. In another solo reflective study, Lester—a creative drag artist and painter, explored how disruption of socially constructed gender codes in drag and painting provide opportunities for positive experiences of self [14].

Secondly, small group studies examine euphoria definitions and sources. For example, McKinney used in-depth semi-structured interviews with 13 TGD participants, to explore the ways participants both engaged with and contested hegemonic understandings of transgender embodiment at the individual, interactional, and macro levels of society [15]. McKinney

argued the conceptualisation of gender dysphoria as an illness creates a trans-normative medical model that places the burden on the individual—rooted in the idealisation of medical affirmations as corrections towards legitimate, valid gender identity in binary gender models. In McKinney’s recursive dysphoria model, reframing it beyond individual models, distress results from gender euphoric desires being filtered through cis-normative cultural lenses at multiple levels. Without options for socio-cultural redress, only the linear journey from one cisgender category to the other was given to participants as a material solution to this socio-cultural dysphoria and their reactions to trans-normative frameworks often relied on gender euphoric idealised self-imaginings. A focus on euphoria instead of the dysphoria, McKinney posits, shifted participants’ focus away from pathology and towards dignity.

To better understand how trans community members and others in the LGBTQ community conceptualise the term ‘gender euphoria’, its relationship to dysphoria and sources, one team of researchers administered an online qualitative survey to 47 participants of transgender, cisgender, and non-binary participants who used the term [9]. Participants answered open-ended questions about how they would define and source euphoric experiences. Five themes emerged, with gender euphorias described as:

1. joyful feelings of rightness in gender/sex (‘shiny breakthroughs’),
2. external, internal, and/or social experiences,
3. originating in and circulating in online and in-person gender/sex minority communities,
4. oppositional to dysphorias in nature, and
5. in complex relationships to dysphorias.

Claims of euphorias’ potentially complex relationships to dysphorias or negativities broaden McKinney’s ideas, applying them also to LGBQ+ groups.

Finally mid-sized studies included a US study of 281 transfeminine adults using an online questionnaire noted associations with both euphoria and dysphoria for hair removal [8], the most common medical affirmation for transfeminine people. Satisfaction with one’s current state of hair removal was negatively correlated with situational body image dysphoria, depression symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and negative affect, and positively correlated with positive affect. Therefore, the researchers asserted that hair removal was associated with both decreased distress and increased positive affect—an element of euphoria. There is in the existing research,

then, constructions of euphorias further to the five elements already noted above, including euphorias' potential relationships to:

6. medicalisation/disordering of identity and change,
7. material/embodied expressions of identity and change (including but not limited to dress, beautification, or commodities),
8. difficult mental health around identity and its change,
9. fantasy, imagination, and idealisation, and
10. problematising socio-cultural contexts of various kinds.

These are not parameters and indeed, there are currently no validated criteria defining euphorias; these are instead possibilities to be alert to in euphorias' explorations. Euphorias then potentially have some oppositional factors to dysphorias as the literature suggests—being potentially experienced around congruence (Beischel's 'rightness') with one's identity rather than incongruence, or enjoyment of one's characteristics rather than significant distress. Further, the significant social impairment seen around dysphorias [6] implies euphorias around LGBTIQ+ identities or bodies may (in opposition) lead to increased social functioning. Overall, research has only considered the individual-centred experiences of adults, and privileged TGD foci. There have been no studies on youth euphorias or shared institutions—like the schools that most LGBTIQ+ people spend some time in.

Problematising Dysphoria, Disorder & Discrimination Emphases

This book's foregrounding of euphorias does not deny or denounce dysphorias or discriminations as important theoretical concepts which the lead author contributed towards [16–19]. Rather, it allows us to deepen understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality, questioning and providing alternatives to the over-reliance on negative framings of LGBTIQ+ people. Dysphorias are often used in defining TGD people [20]. Whilst they can overlap with TGD people's euphorias [9, 13], they are privileged above them. 'Dysphoria' came to greater prominence in the far shorter time of its use than 'euphoria'. It was firstly privileged in psycho-medical definitions of TGD people where it was initially most often used for justifying medical gender transition supports [21], replacing the more pathologizing term 'gender identity disorder' [6]. Debates around this replacement emphasised dysphoria's medical uses for TGD people and people with intersex variations without requiring their disordering as

individuals or groups [22, 23]. Dysphorias are secondly central in much research framing of TGD people's [24, 25] or people with intersex variations' [26] experiences, their policy and services and even gender literature [16, 18, 27]. Thus, TGD people can feel required to overplay dysphoria in particular psycho-medical or social settings; its lack can be a key barrier to services especially for non-binary people [17, 28].

Dysphorias' centralities for TGD people are questionable. First, dysphorias are experienced by other people. Some cisgender girls and self-identified butch lesbians report dysphorias about their breasts or being considered 'girly' [29]; some cisgender women feel dysphorias over inability to respond sexually in line with gender-based expectations [12]; and some cisgender males feel distress around masculine stereotypes in their friendships [30]. Second, gender dysphoria is not experienced by all TGD people, suggesting affirming emotion or experiences may matter more for some gender identity epiphanies [28]. Third, some TGD people only experience dysphorias in lesser degrees or frequencies, intermittently or in passing [17, 31]. Transmasculine and particularly non-binary/agender individuals find dysphoria scales inadequate for their experiences [17, 28]. Further, in socio-cultural and familial groups where stigma towards gender nonconformity is weaker or non-existent, and gender roles less prescriptive, dysphorias may be decreased. Fourth, the assumption that gender dysphorias require medical programmes of transition [21] can be problematic. Some TGD people's dysphorias are partially or entirely overcome through personal perspectives (self-acceptance) or social changes like pronoun use, legal changes around names or gender documentation, or physical practices like chest-binding, attire and genitalia prostheses [17, 25, 31]. Systems-focussed studies have also shown that for some TGD people dysphorias can be relieved through relational, socio-cultural, and service-based systemic structural efforts at respecting their identities and language use; education, awareness-raising and inclusion; and other efforts [16]. Around 4% of TGD people who do experience dysphorias, report nothing can alleviate them [16]. Finally, international media and political networks sometimes promote widely contested models of dysphorias as rapidly absorbed by TGD youth from social trends or school-based 'gender ideology/anti-gender' indoctrination; within broader anti-LGBTIQ+ political campaigns [32, 33]. So whilst dysphorias have some importance for some TGD identity, affirmation processes, and service access pathways, they offer only a much-vexed portion of complex pictures. Advocacy bodies, governments in Portugal and Malta, and various researchers have promoted 'informed consent' models of affirmation access, relying on

individuals' sustained genuine desire for aid, towards overcoming perceived centralities for dysphorias within gender affirmation, being TGD or intersex and supporting healthcare autonomies [18, 34]. Considering euphorias, happiness and comfort could better inform developing models for LGBTIQ+ people's identifications, decision-making, and support provision pathways.

WHY (RE)CONSIDER EUPHORIAS NOW?

The Eruption of LGBTIQ+ Euphorias Outside of Research Demands Critical Thought

'Euphoria' as a concept is coming of age, becoming less peripheral in the thinking of everyday LGBTIQ+ people. The term 'euphoria' has a history of use within TGD communities, feminist and lesbian/LGBTIQ+ communities, and an observably increasing currency and spread in online and 'real world' gatherings. It was for example used in past journals like *Urania* (run by suffragettes and a transgender lawyer and scholar, 1916–1940); which took as its mission debunking notions of sex. It has recently been revived by online and artistic TGD communities (especially on YouTube and TikTok), writers and playwrights, and the HBO series 'Euphoria' exploring various LGBTQ+ youth characters' emotional highs in vexed contexts around queer love, gender diversity and addiction [1, 10]. Actor Elliot Page declared his Euphoria or pure 'trans joy' over his 2022 Oscars' tux [35].

The 'live' and public nature of discussions of 'euphorias', and their predominant location in identity-based online communities and alternative popular media outlets, suggests an urgent need for their more critical and careful treatment. Discussion of concepts that dominate identity-based online communities—especially for TGD people in contexts where political transphobias abound—can be driven by algorithms favouring repetitions, disinformation or misinformation and shock value; rather than research-based information [36, 37]. Political and socio-cultural views of homogenous identity-based groups can exaggerate or polarise the experiences of groups and individuals creating echo chambers foregrounding extreme experiences [38], rather than the statistically typical. There are significant research gaps on 'typical' euphorias typologies and change-trends. There is thus a need to both honour and moderate emerging LGBTIQ+ community-based discussions of euphorias with theory and evidence towards

developing and complexifying conceptualisations using statistics on dominant trends and qualitative analyses foregrounding typicalities. Such information can carry implications for LGBTIQ+ communities' treatment within commonly vexed mass institutional service contexts—education for LGBTQ+ people and health settings (around diagnoses) for people with intersex variations. It may also have implications for theorising happiness, building on current feminist and Queer accounts.

Feminist and Queer Suspicion of Mainstream Happiness

Feminist and Queer writings celebrate hard-won, repressed acts as heightened euphoric pleasures for *marginalised* (transgender, lesbian, female) identities. Jan Morris described undergoing gender affirmation as '*a lost traveller finding the right road at last*' [39]. Audre Lorde described starvation from, and euphorically consuming, female lovers [40]. Fadwa Tuqan's dancing, repressed by Sufi orders, became pleasurable 'liberation' [41]. Seminal writings however eye *mainstream euphoric ideals of femininity* promising liberation in advertising, propaganda, or everyday life with deep suspicion. These were denounced for hand-cuffing women to commercial, subjugating, or silencing ends. Betty Friedan for example described post-World War II women as beset with aggressively euphoric advertisements of feminine enjoyment of dishwashers, dryers, and vacuums endorsing their 'separate domestic spheres'; (re)positioning women as without (and subordinate to) their husbands' public working lives [42]. Whilst Friedan's manifesto overlooked African American, lesbian, and working-class women's necessity-based employments [43], it galvanised feminists against false counter-revolutionary gendered euphorias.

Building intersectionality into happiness critiques, Sara Ahmed and Oristelle Bonis' '*Feminist killjoys*' [44] posited that marginal people's acts asserting their will to rights (around gender, race/ethnicity and sexuality discrimination) are negated as 'killing joy' to silence marginal groups' cultural critiques. 'Wilful killjoys' are needed in socio-cultural critique and in improving critiques; joy killing work and its persistency (wilfulness) is crucial for diverse feminist and queer groups and the inclusivity of theory. For Ahmed, though emotions have psychological impacts, their cultural politics are key [45]. Some bodies/identities are allocated positive value above others through emotions in popular ideologies; some bodies associated with negative emotions become 'othered' outsiders [45]. Thus 'the promise of happiness' is a cultural construction in which pleasure is an implied

or declared reward for inhabiting privileged bodies and performing idealised identities, relationships and life-scripts [46]. Happiness is most promised for positions atop white colonial, patriarchal, cis-heteronormative dyadic social hierarchies. Wilful black and LGBTIQ+ women become stereotyped as angry kill-joys and objects of fear; mainstream happiness demands compliant, silent subordination. Mainstreamed gendered, capitalist, and racialized euphoric ideals of key structures thus package acquiescence to traditional social hierarchies and inaction around inequities as ‘happiness’. Queer unhappiness is thus a ‘*political gift*’ (Ahmed, 2010, p. 88). Accepting the generation of others’ unhappiness and enagement allows queer people, women, and marginalised ethnic/racial groups to live in unendorsed identities and bodies, doing unsanctioned work: improving marginal lives.

Euphorias then should not be, and are not here, considered unproblematic. They can have harmful uses within commercial, patriarchal, racial, or other hierarchical structures. They are not perfect, fixed, or stable concepts. They do not necessarily ‘resolve’ dysphorias nor should they sit above (or excluding) those goals of the marginal killjoy, nor of necessary joy-killing work in socio-cultural critiques of discrimination (or discriminatory socio-cultural critiques). Euphorias do however provide *different* lenses for viewing the many complex possibilities around identities and bodies to consider for understandings, harms, and benefits. Accounts of positive experiences and feelings in LGBTIQ+ communities are under-represented [19, 31, 47]. They require careful, suspicious attention. Which LGBTIQ+ euphorias demand normative identities, existing hierarchical compliance, and complicity? Which defy mainstream happiness’s contracts, celebrating subversive identity manifestations or embodied enactments in Butlerian queer-troubling and norm-undoing counter-hierarchies [48, 49]? Can happiness, like unhappiness, do important psycho-social and cultural work? The commonalities for euphorias, how they change over time and change us, must be critically considered. If emotions are what move us [45], the direction of our movements matters.

CONCLUDING AIMS & OUTLINE

Affirming yet critically driven sociological studies exploring euphoric experiences of people of diverse gender, sex and sexuality variations are needed, to overcome research gaps on a wider range of people’s potential euphorias. Quantitative data from larger cohorts and qualitative data analysed for typicality are necessary for deepening understanding of

commonalities; countering online discussions' extremist and inaccuracy tendencies; and exposing euphorias' normalising and subversive potentials. Accordingly, this book aims to draw together data from strength-based studies, to ask:

1. *How can we characterise typical euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences of LGBTIQ+ people around some typical institutional engagements, and their influences?*
2. *How do these euphorias typically change over time, and what influences changes?*

It specifically addresses research gaps on LGBQ+ identities, people with intersex variations, youth, and institutional settings. It includes first contributions on education and diagnosis-related euphorias. It considers these data alongside euphoria literatures and finally, this chapter's broader questioning of euphorias' Queer potentialities. Chapters cover:

1. **Euphorias!** This chapter reviewed euphoria literatures and considered how these relate to and offer new lenses compared to dysphoria. It argued it is timely and appropriate to (re)consider LGBTIQ+ peoples' euphorias.
2. **Why Be Euphorically Queer?** Augmenting existing clinical, psychological, and individualist TGD euphoria frames, this chapter supplies a new broader ecological model of influences on euphorias to assist LGBTIQ+ research, therapy, and individual reflection. It adds culturally embedded Queer and feminist psycho-social accounts of affect and development. It argues for being *euphorically queer* towards energising responsiveness to LGBTIQ+ and other othered groups' needs.
3. **Education-based Euphorias!** This chapter argues that more positive and affective framings of LGBQ+ experiences are needed in education research. It draws on the *2021 LGBTIQ+ You* survey's 2407 participants' experiences of euphorias in Australian education spaces, exploring typical change-trends.
4. **LGBTQ+ Youth Euphorias!** LGBQ+ youth points are often portrayed as victims of queer social trends, bullying or underrepresentation. This chapter considers 1968 LGBQ+ students' experiences of euphoria and their stop-start monumentality.
5. **LGBTQ+ Professionals' Euphorias!** LGBQ+ education staff can be fired legally by some Australian religious education institutions,

and disclosure decisions are fraught in rural areas. This chapter investigates 229 LGBTQ+ professionals' euphoric experiences of their identities, and their site-specific shifts.

6. **LGBTQ+ Parents' Euphorias!** LGBTQ+ parents' rights have been questioned in harmful media debates around relationship and education laws. This chapter explores the steadiness across 208 LGBTQ+ parents' euphoric (in)experiences, showing some sit beyond external influences.
7. **Intersex Euphorias!** People with intersex variations are mostly framed within conservative psycho-medical studies which negate their bodies, identities, and health; or Critical Intersex Studies emphasising discriminatory contexts. This chapter investigates 272 survey participants' euphorias around their intersex variations and how these changed post-diagnoses.
8. **Setting Euphoria Agendas?** Using the ecological model from Chap. 2, this chapter frames what was learned about euphorias for different groups, age-stages, contexts, and time periods, across the various studies in the book. It considers findings against existing research, applications for various stakeholders and euphoria research agendas.

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CHAPTER 2

Why Be Euphorically Queer? An Ecological Model of Euphorias' Influences & Impacts

Abstract Expanding on psychological and individualist frames emphasizing transgender and gender diverse (TGD) experiences; this chapter supplies a new ecological model of potential influences on the development of euphorias to assist in service applications, everyday lives, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) research. The model adds culturally embedded psycho-social accounts of affect and development from Bronfenbrenner, Erikson, Ahmed, and Butler. It shows euphorias as potentially influenced by what is privileged in individuals' developmental stages and systems of social and institutional engagements, policy contexts, and cultural norms over time. The chapter argues for being *euphorically queer*—using erasure, overplay, and transference of happiness onto non-traditional identities and bodies, towards energising responsiveness to LGBTIQ+ and other othered groups' needs, and against conforming contentedness which stagnates activism.

Keywords Euphoria • Theory • Model • Psychology • Queer • Feminism

Key Points

- Euphoria has mainly been constructed in clinical and psychological frames, or individualist narratives.

- This book’s ecological model frames potentials for euphorias’ evolutions according to what is privileged in individuals’ development stage, institutional and social community engagements, policy context, and cultural norms.
- The model underlines the likely importance of objects, meta-emotions and the identities and bodies groups move towards for euphorias.
- LGBTIQ+ activism can be stagnated by conformity drives within economies of happiness and the invisibility of othered others’ unhappiness.
- The ‘euphorically queer’ may subvert these economies by foregrounding unhappiness erasure, or overplay and transference of happiness onto non-traditional bodies.

INTRODUCTION

Being happily queer (rather than being a happy queer) does not necessarily promote an image of happiness that borrows from the conventional repertoire of images ... The queer who is happily queer still encounters the world that is unhappy with queer love, but refuses to be made unhappy by that encounter. I have argued that the risk of promoting happy queers is that the unhappiness of this world can disappear from view. To be happily queer can also recognize that unhappiness; indeed to be happily queer can be to recognize the unhappiness that is concealed by the promotion of happy normativity (Ahmed, 2010, p.115) [1].

Critiques of research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people’s experiences highlight the lack of appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodological stances [2]. The previous chapter showed that euphoria has so far mostly been studied in clinical approaches and psychological frames [3, 4], or addressed sociological and individualist definitional narratives or experiences [5–7]. The studies modelled euphorias for therapies and individuals. However, this book encompasses curiosity about how euphoria is typically experienced by populations in institutional (education and health) contexts and across development in the younger years—addressing gaps identified in Chap. 1. It seeks to account for feminist and queer concerns about the cultural politics around LGBTIQ+ and other ‘othered’ bodies and identities, and how happiness operates upon and around them towards serving normative or disruptive functions for socio-cultural hierarchies [1, 8, 9]. Therefore, a model

framing cultural, psychological, and social influences on euphorias is required. A new critical ecological model is offered in this chapter framing the psycho-social development of individuals' emotions over time, including influences on their possibilities for developing and experiencing euphorias. This chapter details the model, including its cultural, institutional, relational, and then individual foci.

FRAMING PSYCHO-SOCIAL ECONOMIES OF EMOTIONS

Ecological Development Theory has been contributed to primarily by Uri Bronfenbrenner's seminal work [10, 11]. It answers the nature versus nurture debates in developmental psychology by integrating staged theories of individual development, with acknowledgement of the influences of socio-cultural relationships and contexts. Taking heed of this combination of influences can potentially strengthen our understanding of, interventions around and research on the development of our own and others' euphorias. Firstly, it can overcome the problem of a lack of a theoretical framework in consideration of LGBTIQ+ lives [2]. Secondly, it can help to avoid potential biases or heteronormative assumptions implicit in some alternate theories of development [12]. Depicted in Fig. 2.1, the ecological model situates considerations for the conceptualisation of how

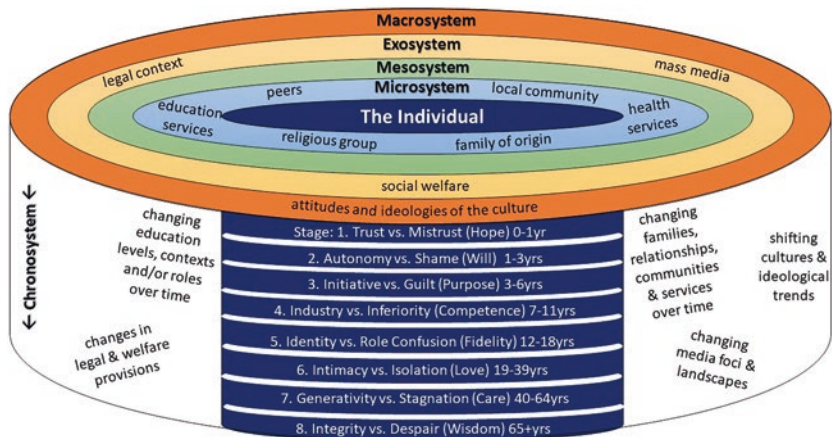


Fig. 2.1 An ecological model of potential influences on euphorias in the psycho-social development of individuals

euphorias are supported and negated within what existing research suggests as the potential influence(s) in psycho-social development at many levels in the combination(s) of individuals' multiple stages and contexts of development. Potential influences on one's psycho-social development and its allowances for euphorias include for example individuals':

- psychological conditions and personal motivations and characteristics;
- social and relational conditions including experiences of relationships, parenting styles and subjection to social engagements and meta-social engagements about their social engagements;
- institutional conditions and experiences;
- cultural conditions and exposures; and
- how all these conditions variously develop and change over time.

The model (Fig. 2.1) and the book's considerations in applying it combines core concepts from the psycho-social models of Uri Bronfenbrenner, Erik Erikson, and other psycho-social psychologists' work with ideas from critically situated Queer theorists/post-structural and education feminists including Sara Ahmed and others.

The over-arching structure of this model employs Bronfenbrenner's ecological development model [10]; considered beneficial in informing minority-inclusive frameworks for policies and practices and LGBTIQ+ studies [13]. It theorises an '**Individual**' as centred in their development as autonomous and socio-cultural beings in their relationships to their sex characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliations, mental health, and other personal characteristics (Fig. 2.1 expands the stages of development for the individual, and we will return to these stages shortly in another sub-section of this chapter). The Individual and their characteristics and developmental stages sit at the core of five broader surrounding ecological systems, including:

1. **The 'Microsystem'**—institutional and social contexts individuals are frequently and repetitively directly exposed to. Transgender, cis-gender, and non-binary survey and therapy participants have described 'gender euphoria' as influenced by social context influences, peers, and family members for example [3, 6].
2. **The 'Mesosystem'**—this includes interactions across Individuals' Microsystems which they only indirectly experience. Relations

between LGBTIQ+ people's familial, religious, health, educational and/or employment communities can for example be especially intertwined for those in ex-gay and ex-trans conversion therapies making covert exploration of their identities difficult for example [14]. Research shows health or education providers and parents can have interactions surrounding interventions into enabling or restricting their LGBTIQ+ people's sex characteristics or gender expressions [15–18], that don't involve them directly but may impact their wellbeing.

3. **The 'Exosystem'**—this includes broader institutional influences on Individuals and their Microsystems (media contexts, legal contexts, welfare contexts, and so forth). There have been major changes in LGBTIQ+ Australians' exosystems likely impacting their potential experiences of euphoria, such as the marriage equality plebiscite [19], religious schools being given the right to discriminate on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation [20] and so forth.
4. **The 'Macrosystem'**—surrounding cultural attitudes and ideologies (including religious and LGBTIQ+ sub-cultural ideals). LGBTIQ+ people have both benefited and been harmed by cultural debates on their marriage and education rights for example [21, 22]. A study comprising 13 in-depth semi-structured interviews with transgender and gender diverse (TGD) participants showed that options presented to them for socio-cultural redress for factors blocking their gender euphoric desires, only included the linear journey from one binary gender category to the other, when socio-cultural barriers like transphobic attitudes were the main influences restricting euphorias [4].
5. **The 'Chronosystem'**—the time periods within which all systems shift and change. This influences and changes the development of the individual alongside their experiences of variations in their conditions, communities, institutions, contexts, and cultural nuances.

For Bronfenbrenner the Microsystem is most directly influential on individuals' development including gender and sexuality in their early years. However, the individual's self-development of autonomy is most core and must be reconciled to their engagements with all systems' influences over time.

Cultural Politics of Emotions

In theorising the **Macrosystem** surrounding the Individual and their communities and structures, Sara Ahmed's theory of the cultural politics of emotions offers the argument that some bodies/individuals are given greater value than others in cultural economies of emotion [9]. Thus, popular cultural ideologies and attitudes align with these identities/bodies or 'other' them as outsiders [9]. Ahmed argues 'the promise of happiness' is a cultural construction set up as implied reward and actual rewarding processes in which pleasure is associated with, allowed for and enabled for inhabiting particular (privileged) and performing their idealised identities and life scripts/actions [1]. Ahmed's arguments suggest we might most expect happiness to be associated with and promised for more privileged bodies to higher degrees of intensity and regularity within a particular institutional or social space [1]. Indeed, loved ones and institutions may use the expressions of the seeming desire for people's happiness to control people—the mode of 'just wanting happiness' for LGBTQ+ people can be in some instances be an argument made to stop them from living out queer lives in contexts where these will not be rewarded (*we don't want you to wear that/date this person and be bullied; we just want you to happy*). She shows that in culture and media queer stories are often only told in a context of one partner dying, barriers to identity achievement for trans people and general unhappiness; reinforcing this unhappiness allocation. Ahmed asserts that a series of other lesser privileged and normative bodies and identities (beyond the happy norms) may be sometimes culturally afforded happiness contingent to conditions and actions that may be temporary or to lesser degrees dependent on their positions in social hierarchies; or within sub-cultural norms where their enactments or resistances to idealised presentations and behaviours for which happiness is the reward [1]. Ahmed argues that attending to emotions in research allows us to understand that 'actions are reactions' and that what we do and how we do it is shaped by the contact that we have with other people [9]. Ahmed frames the affective exchanges that happen between people as shaping the very surfaces of bodies within the exchanges, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others.

Ahmed's model of the cultural politics of emotions provides a broader framing for McKinney's recursive understanding of gender dysphoria beyond individual models, as the outcome of a process by which gender euphoric desires are filtered through cis-normative cultural lenses

resulting in dysphoric distress [4]. Meyer's [23] model of minority stress helps to further explain how the relationship of social stressors, as well as their associated physical and mental impacts, leads to LGBTQ+ health disparities. Research across a variety of countries and methodologies consistently demonstrated various LGBTQ+ populations including in education settings are subject to greater stigma, prejudice, and discrimination than heterosexual cisgender people and related to mental health and health disparities [24, 25]. This relationship can be a further perpetuating factor in Ahmed's notion of the restrictions on happiness for minorities in the cultural politics of emotions; as mental and physical health outcomes themselves lower identities and bodies' positionings in cultural hierarchies around happiness. Notably however, Ahmed pushes a refusal of any distinction between happy and unhappy endings in queer stories because they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and are generative (2010, p.89):

We must resist this literalism, which means an active disbelief in the necessary alignment of the happy with the good, or even in the moral transparency of the good itself. Rather than read unhappy endings as a sign of the withholding of moral approval for queer lives, we must consider how unhappiness circulates within and around this archive, and what it allows us to do [1].

Both happiness and unhappiness then can potentially enable sex, gender, and sexuality minorities to do important work within themselves and their relationships and within institutions and cultures more broadly. However, for Ahmed there is a need to be wary of happiness obtained at a cost [1]. Particularly Ahmed warns against happiness obtained by a conforming stagnation within the dominant culture's ideals or some comfort zone within broader personal or LGBTIQ+ discomfort. Ahmed also warns against happiness for conditional recognitions of rights or identities such as access to marriage rights and husbandry/wifery or limited access to gendered categorisations; where these are functioning to encourage stagnation of wider progress for the individual, their work towards their own and other othered sub-group's socio-cultural standing and rights, or revolutionary generativity for ethnically/culturally diverse sex, gender, and sexuality groups broadly (2010. pp. 106-115):

The implication of such a description is that queers can now come out, be accepted, and be happy. Those of us committed to a queer life know that forms of recognition are either precariously conditional, you have to be the right kind

of queer by depositing your hope for happiness in the right places (even with perverse desire you can have straight aspirations), or it is simply not given. Not only is recognition not given but it is often not given in places that are not noticeable to those who do not need to be recognized, which helps sustain the illusion that it is given [1].

Ahmed's contributions suggest being *euphorically queer* (rather than happy and queer) does not necessarily promote an image of happiness, which can function to stagnate one's push for revolutionary sex, gender, and sexuality or other rights progress.

Institutional Politics of Emotions

In framing **Exosystems** affecting individuals' development, LGBTIQ+ people's exosystems collectively around the world have in the last decade seen major fluctuations in their supportive and harmful treatments and influences. The United Nations have recognised the right to non-discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and intersex variations [26, 27]. There has been a proliferation of regional, international, and state-level legislative and policy protections in areas like de-criminalisation, discrimination, relationships, education, health-care, employment, and service rights in many contexts; and surrounding these there were debates often negatively impactful on LGBTIQ+ people's mental health and wellbeing [28, 29]. Further there have also been legislative and policy rescindments, restrictions and punitive approaches leading to criminalisation of certain corporeal and speech acts for LGBTIQ+ people depending on jurisdiction and institutional setting; as politicians perceive the value of 'political homophobia' and 'gender ideology' (anti-transgender and anti-woman sentiments) and anti-intersex sentiment for authoritarian and populist state building [30, 31]. These may be harmful influences weighing LGBTIQ+ bodies down with negative sentiments and potentially influencing or restricting potentials for euphorias.

In considering how **Exosystems** and **Microsystems** interact in ways affecting individuals' development, Ahmed's (2004, 2010) and other sociologists' theories of emotional politics have been applied to education and health legal debates, institutions and classrooms in ways that suggest the importance of institutional politics of emotions [32–34]. Noddings theorised that education centred around emotional community connection was key to creating a sense of belonging in schools [35]. Schutz and

Pekrun [32] particularly applied the notion that emotions are not private but are socially organised to the classroom, in a small study of students' emotions. This institutional organisation of emotions fits how Benested pitched gender therapy aimed at enabling euphoria not at changing clients' perception of self, but at changing their surroundings' perception of the client—targeting social and institutional organisations of emotions [3]. Similarly, many transgender and gender diverse informants argued health provider and other service provider institutions have roles to play in relieving dysphoria and engendering more positive emotions in their social approach to transgender people [34].

Schutz and Pekrun applied the idea of affective economics; that emotions become attached to *material objects* that join some people together while separating others [32]. This relates to the concept of the importance of hair and its removal for transgender women in joining together or separating from identity groups and categories towards enabling euphoria [36]; however, in Schutz and Pekrun's work, the objects, community memberships, and attendant emotions are institutionally promoted or demoted. Institutionally focussed examinations of euphoria do not exist in the emerging euphoria research. However, there is a strong suggestion that increased sense of membership in a sub-group or community within institutions is linked to improved wellbeing and mental health outcomes for people in psychological research [37]. Further, studies show community memberships within formal or informal LGBTIQ+ identity groups including gay-straight-alliances (GSAs), meet-up social groups and online networks improves wellbeing [38, 39]. Both happiness and unhappiness then may potentially be linked to a sense of institutional and community memberships and social treatment therein, including sub-group memberships within communities.

Relational Politics of Emotions

Another relevant concept to contemplate in the economy of emotions is the relational politics of emotions, operating both in the **Microsystem** where individuals interact with people, and in the **Mesosystem** where interactions are had about the **Individual** in their absence. Research has shown both support and rejection for LGBTQ+ youth, teachers and parents' identity disclosures by individual school community members can have concrete impacts on their emotional experiences, educational and wellbeing outcomes [16, 40–42]. Gray uses Ahmed's notions of affect

through emotional engagements between people in education settings which move teachers and students both towards and away from each other, to discuss how four queer teacher educators understood the affective dimensions of the work that they do [33]. Gray argued that teaching from a place of difference towards socially just aims enables a pleasure in a kind of joyful difference that comes from acknowledging the chaos, crisis, and injustice before the teacher educators and coping by continuing to imagine a more liveable alternative. Gray notes that there is a cruelty inherent to such optimistic imagining, without experiential outcomes.

However in thinking about euphoria in school, health, religious, family settings and other structured settings, it can be useful to go beyond consideration of primary emotions to consider ‘meta-emotions’—the affective pedagogical role of parents and adults in the lives of youth through their attitudes and emotional responses about and to youths’ emotions [43]. Meta-emotions also include adults’ ‘secondary emotions’ about emotions as concepts and in children’s or adults experiences of (initial) emotions (anxiety concerning one’s anger). Gottman et al. [43] posited adults—particularly parents—have different philosophies in their meta-emotional approach to youths’, others’ and their own emotions. These potentially block, enable, or impact their own and others’ euphorias, including:

- **An emotion-coaching philosophy** wherein adults are aware of their emotions and the emotions of others and see them as opportunities for growth. They connect and empathise with the negative emotions and experiences of children and discuss and help children understand and express or problem-solve around emotions.
- **A dismissive philosophy** wherein adults feel as though emotions could be harmful and that their primary job is to alleviate harmful emotions as quickly as possible. They ignore, disconnect from, down-play, deny or promote distraction from emotions; and teach children negative emotions will not last or matter.
- **A disapproving philosophy** wherein adults view children’s negative emotions as attempting to manipulate or control others. They reprimand or discipline children for any unwanted (even appropriate) emotional expression, teaching children to frame emotions as inappropriate and invalid, engendering difficulty with emotion regulation.

Some euphoria studies emphasised the importance of relational/inter-actional influences on euphoria for transgender and gender diverse (TGD)

people [4]. Relational emotions and meta-emotions are important to contemplate in investigating possibilities for euphorias in institutional or social settings where adults and youth interact.

Individual Politics of Emotions

Economies of emotions in education institutions can finally also be impacted by **Individuals'** motivations and emotional development, returning to the core of the ecological model of psycho-social development (Fig. 2.1). Past survey-based research has shown transgender, cis-gender, and non-binary people described 'gender euphoria' as influenced by internal factors and identity-related motivations [6], and individual practices in pursuit of these motivations like hair removal [36] or drag and painting [5]. Whilst there could be many intersectional framings of individuals' emotions and development useful to reflect upon here capturing their changes across their **Chronosystem**/time, emphasising the different life stages across and within educational institutions using developmental theories is most congruent. Erik Erikson's model of psycho-social development is useful firstly for being one of the most widely known by educators and education psychologists, making the potential for LGBTQ+ euphorias more legible to education stakeholders. Secondly, Erikson's model especially considers the role of parents and culture enabling confluence with Bronfenbrenner's work (for extension to Bronfenbrenner's model that aligns with affordance for the **Micro, Macro**, and related **systems'** influences). Erikson not only offers culturally endorsed and rewarded psycho-social developmental foci motivating different developmental life stages, but also their opposites (those identity and action emphases which are *negated* at different stages). In considering euphoric potentials using Ahmed's work on the cultural politics of happiness, framing identities and actions which do not align with endorsed ideals as culturally and institutionally devalued against what Erikson asserts as the motivation of individuals by stage, is important. This Erikson's 'crises' (frustrated motivations) offer likely sites of euphoria blockages, and possible euphoric or dysphoric values. Thus, the Erikson eight-stage psycho-social and emotional development model's inclusion of both culturally rewarded motivation achievements and negated crises, then, provides clues suggestive for how *certain* euphorias might be more available and endorsed at various developmental stages depending on context and relational factors, above others. Thirdly, the fact that Erikson's model considers adult psycho-social

and emotional development as ongoing was especially relevant to our desire to include LGBTIQ+ adults in education and health, not just youth.

Erikson's eight-stage model of psycho-social development expanded Freud's theory of childhood and adolescent psychosexual development by emphasising the importance of culture in parenting practices and the motivations core to different stages, and adding three stages of adult development [44, 45]. Erikson's model frames people as motivated by core psycho-social tasks or crises in predetermined stages such as the need to develop one's identity fidelity, love, and care; influenced by socio-cultural settings and cultural emphases. These eight stages are positioned at the centre of the Chronosystem and as moving 'The Individual' across changes to their ecological psycho-social development over time. Progress through each of the eight stages is partially affected and determined by one's achievements in all the previous stages for Erikson, affecting one's overall personality and potential for happiness and euphorias. Critiques have been offered for the model in terms of the variability of individuals' ageing versus staging, and differences in gendered trends not represented by Erikson's testing of his theories via longitudinal analyses on the lives of 'great men' [46–48]. James Marcia and others since have noted that identity formation can be more prolonged as teens and young adults live with parents and continue their educations for longer, and then again undergo different types of identity development requiring different settings like sexual orientation versus religious versus professional identity development into their early twenties [46–48].

Further, females, LGBTIQ+ and ethnically diverse people were not the main source for Erikson's modelling, so we propose stages should be considered potentially recurrent or revisited at different points in life (such as identity formation for gender and sexuality) whilst maintaining an awareness of what is held up as 'Erikson's norm' as a point of comparison. This is important since although sexual and gender diverse identity disclosures most often occur in puberty as suggested in Erikson's model this can also take place earlier or later; and may involve rejection of established or promoted identity or role models promoted in one's culture or more identity fluidity than that endorsed in Erikson's original model [16, 40, 49]. Stages also potentially vary in occurrence and length across sub-cultures and ethnic cultures privileging other identity ideals and milestones; and affected by different parenting dynamics enabling or providing barriers to particular milestones and expressions [50, 51]. Research has shown that in Western majority cultures youths within mainstream ethnic majorities

tend more towards identity foreclosures whilst those in ethnic minorities tend more towards lengthened identity explorations and delayed identity achievements [50]. It is likely that euphorias are affected by how much the achievement of motivations for development occur in line with Erikson's norms however, as Ahmed says norms can be rewarded in ways leading to queer activist stagnation and deviation from norms may be culturally devalued such that happiness is less accessible, even via gate-keeping [1]. Erikson's [44, 45] eight stages are thus re-appropriated in Fig. 2.1 as *indicative though not prescriptive* in age-based application, order and cultural consistency. They expand inside the middle of the ecological model to give a stronger sense of how opportunities for 'successful achievement' of the motivations can be influenced by surrounding socio-cultural systems. Individuals' eight developmental stages include:

- **Stage 1. Trust versus Mistrust (Hope), Birth to 1yr:** infants dependent on adult care-givers develop trust in adults to meet their basic needs for survival. Ideally, care-givers are responsive and sensitive making the world a safe, predictable place; neglect or abuse may engender anxiety, fear, and mistrust.
- **Stage 2. Autonomy versus Shame (Will), 1-3yrs:** toddlers working to establish less dependence on adults explore their world and preferences, and learn about autonomy. Ideally, adults support toddlers' inputs into basic choices. Denying or shaming toddlers' choices, engenders their doubt in their abilities and bodies.
- **Stage 3. Initiative versus Guilt (Purpose), 3-6yrs:** preschool children begin initiating activities and asserting control over their social interactions and play. Ideally care-givers enable exploration within limits encouraging a sense of purpose. If initiatives misfire or are stifled, it engenders guilt.
- **Stage 4. Industry versus Inferiority (Competence), 7-11yrs:** elementary/primary-school children compare their industrious efforts to their peers'. Ideally, they develop pride and accomplishment in school, sports, and social life. Culturally negated setups feature feeling inferiority and inadequacy.
- **Stage 5. Identity versus Role Confusion (Fidelity), 12-18yrs:** children, adolescents and young adults in high-school, higher-education or vocational settings especially develop their self, social, sexual, professional, and political roles. Identity 'moratoriums' (identity exploration towards commitment), and 'achievements'

(commitment to identities after exploration) are culturally rewarded ideals [46, 47]. Identity ‘diffusion’ (lack of exploration or commitment) or ‘foreclosure’ (commitment to one’s own or others’ pre-formed ideals without exploration) are negated as inauthentic, causing weak self-hood and role confusion [46, 47].

- **Stage 6. Intimacy versus Isolation (Love), 19-39yrs:** young adults are concerned with establishing intimacy in romantic, familial, platonic, and/or other relationships. In cultural ideals, individuals have a strong sense of self informing their development in successful intimate relationships. In negated scenarios, people struggle developing and maintaining successful relationships with others in line with their needs or values, engendering loneliness, and emotional isolation. Theorists posited this relates to earlier development issues, like role confusion [44-47].
- **Stage 7. Generativity versus Stagnation (Care), 40-64yrs:** in middle adulthood, the core motivational concern is generativity—contributing to one’s life work and/or the development of others in the next generation or generally. Cultural ideals include volunteering, mentoring, and raising children; or engagement in meaningful and productive work which benefits society. Culturally problematised scenarios include lacking connection to others, productivity and/or self-improvement, or meaningful impact, or submitting to stagnation.
- **Stage 8. Integrity versus Despair (Wisdom), 65+yrs:** late adulthood centres reflection about one’s life-span and development of overall satisfaction or failure. Culturally endorsed ideals across life engender a sense of integrity about the life lived and one’s development and happiness across it, pride, and few regrets. Culturally problematised scenarios engender bitterness, depression, and despair.

These stages suggest that euphorias may ‘reward’ identity establishment, intimacy, and generativity across adolescent and adult stages. However, the model also suggests potential for culturally negated scenarios to block euphorias or be complicating influences. For example, frustrated will, role confusion, or despair may have dysphoric value across some LGBTIQ+ people’s evolving lives and contexts.

Returning to individuals’ potential for happiness given the broader cultural context negating their motivations, bodies and identities, Sara Ahmed [1] declares the importance of aiming to be ‘*happily queer (rather than*

being a happy queer’ (2010, p.115). This involves resisting the conformity drives inherent in all stages and systems’ economies of happiness, and developing psycho-social and cultural motivations endorsing visions of happiness challenging conventional repertoires of motivations. Ahmed’s work suggests euphoric value in opportunities to *inhabit queer identities, bodies, and lives wilfully and euphorically ‘beyond the straight lines of happiness scripts’* (2010, p.115) whilst maintaining a clear-eyed view and denouncement of harmful mainstreaming scripts. Other post-structuralist feminist/Queer work also contributes ideas that imply LGBTIQ+ euphorias may have destabilising or stagnating political qualities and outcomes. Judith Butler particularly offered three subversive possibilities of queer gender identities [8, 52, 53]. Butler argues these identities can erase or refuse identity norms (e.g. non-conforming people and bodies, asexuality, non-binary expressions), overplay or exaggerate norms (femme lesbians, butch gay men, cartoonish hyper-traditionalism) or transfer norms onto non-traditional bodies (butch-femme play on same sex couples’ bodies, transgender and intersex embodiments, fluidity and so forth)—questioning normalising ideas of ‘authenticities’. One can theorise by extrapolation that LGBTIQ+ euphorias have subversive value in Butlerian lenses towards [8, 53]:

- exposing **the ‘erasure’** of unhappiness for LGBTIQ+ and other othered people around motivations, stages, bodies and identities presumed normative through the *‘dissonant play of attributes that fail to conform to sequential or causal models of intelligibility’* (Butler, 1990, pp.23-32);
- representing **the ‘overplay’** of happiness and feelings of rightness for normative motivations, bodies and identities revealing *‘it is all impersonation, whether the [identity] underneath is true or not’* (Butler, 1990, p.163); and/or
- enabling **the ‘transference’** of happiness onto non-traditional bodies, identities, and motivations; where it usually only rewards cis/heteronormative endosex identities, bodies, and achievements; and *‘does not assume that there is an original which such parodic identities imitate ... the parody is of the very notion of an original’* (Butler in Leitch et al., 2001, p. 2498).

Therefore, whilst making LGBTIQ+, black people’s or women’s unhappiness visible fruitfully highlights problems; Queer revolutions lack

misery mandates. Happiness and euphorias *over being in LGBTIQ+, black Indigenous or female identities and 'other' bodies*, whilst recognising their structural and socio-cultural marginalisation, can be radically subversive robust strategies. This is especially so where the euphoric or happy feeling does not represent the contented stagnation around personal and group rights progress Ahmed warns against [1]; but contributes towards valuing identities or bodies in ways expanding socio-political awakening and action. Appropriations of Butler's work suggest one-off or ongoing acts may contribute to subversive thinking, experiencing, and (re)ordering of bodies and identities. Such disruptions may be temporary, periodic, or continuous. They may generatively energise people and movements feeding into and sustaining future revolutionary works whilst alleviating current exhaustions or the off-putting nature of necessarily unhappy activist efforts and difficult experiences.

Therefore, both the motivations behind individuals' development stages, and how the cultural positionings of queer lives can complicate or subvert motivations and 'staging', are important considerations in exploring enablers and blockers to euphorias in research—and everyday life. Euphorias could be radical politicised experiences, subverting associations of happiness with particular norms and challenging psycho-social and cultural orders internally for Individuals and across the systems in which they live. Or, they could have stagnating functions rewarding relative compliance with suppressive norms across ones' systems, stages, and social orders. Thus, in research and practice we should privilege 'being happily/euphorically queer' in ways that energise recognition of and response to unhappiness for LGBTIQ+ and other othered groups; above those euphoric experiences that merely render difficulties invisible or stagnate efforts towards rights progress, refinements, and defence.

CONCLUSIONS

The ecological model proposed in this chapter for understanding euphorias has applications in individuals' lives, clinical settings, and wider institutional and socio-cultural research. It suggests psycho-social inquiry into euphoria across the life-span should consider cultural, institutional, and relational systems' regulatory or subversive influences upon individuals (Macrosystems, Exosystems, and Microsystems including their attending Mesosystems) and vice versa. The model emphasises achievement of individuals' own development stage-based motivations (including autonomy,

intimacy etc.) as likely rewarded in socio-cultural economies of happiness; yet stagnating where inauthentically achieved or feigned. Stage-based crises should be considered for euphoric and dysphoric values, alongside happiness associations in institutional economies moving towards (and recoiling from) particular bodies, identities and/or objects. Since emotional politics are co-constructed continually, euphoric patterns may also be impacted by the coaching, dismissive, or disapproving meta-emotions of individuals and their surrounding systems. Exploring generative or disruptive intergenerational influences thus appears worthwhile. Being *happy and queer* can engender stagnation where this requires subordination within economies of happiness privileging cis/heteronormative endosex lives; ignoring other others' plights. Being *euphorically queer* contributes immediately and/or generatively to new and revolutionary happiness embodiments, without losing responsiveness to the difficulties othered groups face. Exposing unhappiness erasure and overplaying and transference of happiness for LGBTIQ+ identities and bodies offer revolutionary potential. The next chapter considers such potentials for LGBTIQ+ identities and bodies in education settings.

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Education-based Euphorias! How Happiness & Comfort for LGBTQ+ People in Education Evolves

Abstract Affirming affective framings of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) experiences are needed in education research. Drawing on the *2021 LGBTQ+ You* surveys, this chapter explores experiences of euphoria in Australian education institutions among 2407 LGBTQ+ staff, parents, and students participants and how these changed over time. Staff members and out LGBTQ+ participants were more likely to have euphorias; heterosexuals, parents, and those in religious or rural schools were less likely. *Community Connection*, *Institutional Inclusion*, *Acceptance* and *Category Validation euphorias* were most common. Change-trends included: (1) expansion of *Community Connection euphoria* through socialisation, (2) gradual building of *Acceptance euphoria*, (3) site-specific changes in *Institutional Inclusion euphoria*, (4) sudden shifts in *Category Validation euphoria*, and (5) removal or addition of euphoria blockers especially the spectre of parental backlash.

Keywords Euphoria • LGBTQ+ • Education • School • University
• College

Key Points

- Two fifths of LGBTQ+ people experience education-based euphorias; likelihood increased for those who were ‘out’ or staff members.
- Likelihood decreased for LGBTQ+ people who identified as heterosexual or students’ parents; or attended religious or rural institutions.
- LGBTQ+ people mainly experienced euphorias sometimes (46%) or often (34%).
- *Community Connection euphoria* expands with socialisation, *Acceptance euphorias* build more gradually.
- ‘Euphoria blockers’, especially disapproving parents, cause sudden and ongoing shifts for LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias.

INTRODUCTION

*I have been able to find a community of people who are supportive of my identity. This has allowed me to become more confident ... For example, in year 8 (the first year of high-school in SA), I couldn't even muster up the courage to go near the GSD [gender and sexuality diversity] room, in case someone saw me. (...) Now, in year 10, I will often hold hands with my friends and not worry what others might think, I have been a part of many different projects where we painted a rainbow mural (even signed my name on it) and have performed as part of 'Wear it Purple Day' (which was an event I was involved in organising and running). Even just advocating for pronouns on badges, all these things I wouldn't have been able to do in year 8 due to the anxiety associated with being involved in something LGBTQ+-related. (Giovanni, Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs, on *Community Connection, Institutional Inclusion and Acceptance euphorias* expanding with community contact and activism)*

Education institutions, shared sites LGBTQ+ people typically attend in democracies, enable exploration of collective euphoria trends. Research shows Western democratic education institutions including in Australia are largely neoliberal or conservative in nature [1, 2]. They promote individualist competitive skill and knowledge development; or traditional employment hierarchies and values inculcation; above whole-scale critical reforms for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) and other othered people [1, 2]. This chapter describes how Australian education addresses sexuality and gender, and then reports on education-based euphoria trends from Australian surveys of LGBTQ+ people.

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY

In Australia, government or ‘public’ schools have most enrolments (65.1%), followed by Catholic schools (19.5%) and independent schools (15.4%) [3]. The latter two sectors have had anti-discrimination law exemptions for their treatment of LGBTQ+ people since 2013 [4]. Policy makers and educators alike are influenced by assumptions about parents’ dis/approval of LGBTQ+ people, including their coverage in K-12 curricula [5, 6]. In recent years, multiple draft laws have been debated in parliaments to ‘protect parents’ from having LGBTQ+ topics taught to their offspring in schools and universities [e.g. 7, 8]. Repeated Murdoch-owned media emphasis on (sparse) parental anecdotes resisting LGBTQ+ curricula coverage over the past decade, contributed to the de-funding of the national ‘Safe Schools Program’ which combatted anti-LGBTIQ+ violence [9]. Contrary to these constructions, data from Australian parents (N=2093) show over 80% support primary and secondary school coverage of gender and sexuality diversity-inclusive relationships and sexual health education [5].

The new *Australian Curriculum* emphasises a teacher-facilitated approach to sexuality education, encouraging students to think critically about sexual diversity [10]. For 156 teachers surveyed who had taught it, most of their sexuality education work occurs in secondary schooling (Grades 7–10) and little in senior secondary (Grades 11–12), primary (K-6) or early childhood [11]. Under half of teachers were comfortable addressing sexuality and gender diversity; yet four fifths report their school requires them to address sexual diversity. Less than half the teachers addressed intersex issues (43%), and transphobia was the least addressed of all topics (39%). A survey of 2500 Australian students aged 14+ yrs showed gender and sexuality coverage in public schools privileged comprehensive equitable approaches and tolerance for diversity [1]. Catholic students more often reported schools promoting essentialist binary sex-gender roles and diversity censorship [1].

Sexuality, then gender, are the two topics Australian students and teachers most want improved school coverage for [1, 11]. Rural LGBTQ+ students report increased gender and sexuality education coverage needs; isolation; identity concealment and worse wellbeing [12, 13]. Many shared narratives evidencing Gray’s [14] ‘metronormativity’—assuming their identities required metropolitan contexts.

REDRESSING EDUCATION EUPHORIA RESEARCH GAPS

The ‘*LGBTQ+ You*’ study was designed as an affirming sociological study exploring LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias to answer the call for more positive education research on LGBTQ+ people [14, 15], and affective analyses [16–18]. It framed euphorias as happiness or comfort in identities that may have cultural, institutional, and relational elements [19–21]. It asked:

1. *How can we characterise typical euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences of LGBTQ+ people in education settings, and their influences?*
2. *How do these euphorias typically change over time, and what influences changes?*

METHODOLOGY & METHOD

Online Survey

The ‘*LGBTQ+ You*’ study collected data on LGBTQ+ people aged 14yrs and above, in education contexts. It was therefore structured around education-based roles; participants could complete anonymous online student, staff, or parent/guardian surveys. Survey use was informed by the ideals of positive social-psychology seeking affirming self-constructions [22], and critical views privileging LGBTQ+ insider insights into service systems using larger-scale data [23]. Survey development was led by LGBTQ+ individuals active in education policy and intervention consultancies with quantitative and qualitative psychology, sociology, and health science expertise. We consulted with LGBTQ+ organisations (Rainbow Network and others) on wording sensitivities. The surveys were hosted by Lime Survey, via the Macquarie University website. They had up to 50 forced-choice and open-ended questions (depending on selections triggering additional questions) around demographics, education, and euphorias. The sex, gender and sexuality questions applied the Australian Bureau of Statistics/ABS [24] and UNESCO [25] standards, wherein sex includes sex characteristics and initial sex allocation at birth [24, 25]. However, intersex euphorias are addressed separately (Chap. 7) using data from a more targeted intersex cohort survey as recommended. Gender includes social and cultural differences in identity determined by asking how participants describe their gender identity and offering common choices [24, 25]; and write-in space enabling individuation [26, 27].

Approval was obtained for this project from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee in 2021 (52022946538066). Ethical considerations towards enhancing safety included that the participants self-selected to join the research, had the right not to answer any question, and were supplied links to cohort help lines and support groups across the survey. Younger participants (aged 14–17) were not required to seek parental approval for participation, given past data on outness engendering parental/guardian abuse [27–29]. Due to the likelihood of fewer older participants and risks of workplace outings, we used age-ranges for adult surveys but enabled direct ages for youth (a larger cohort). The survey ran June 2021–May 2022. Recruitment utilised paid advertising via Facebook and Instagram (Fig. 3.1), alongside announcements via university media, LGBTQ+ websites, e-lists, advocates, and word-of-mouth.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were downloaded from the Lime Survey site and then transposed into SPSS v15 and Excel. Whilst 7050 surveys were initially collected (5274 student, 922 staff and 854 parent surveys); data cleansing removed non-response, incomplete and non-target-group surveys. This left 2407 survey participants responses (1969 students, 230 staff, and 208 parents). Basic descriptive and correlative statistical analyses were undertaken for quantitative data in SPSS and Excel including chi-square tests.

Within the qualitative analyses of survey written responses around euphoria sources and changes, social concepts were foregrounded as they appear within participants' own conceptual frames and terms using initial grounded thematic analyses emphasising commonalities. Two fluid coding stages placed a focus on emergent categories/strategies [30]. The automated content analysis programme Leximancer, historically used in sociology and psychology studies [31] was firstly applied to analyse participants' comments on two questions where they (1) explained a time when they experienced euphoria, and (2) how their euphoric experiences changed over time. All answers for each question were collated into PDFs by education role-group, and uploaded to Leximancer both collectively per question and individually by education role-group per question (student, staff, parent/guardian). Leximancer uses word occurrence and co-occurrence counts to identify dominant themes, their sub-concepts, and how they relate. It was applied to ensure dominant thematic concepts and their 'typical' quote samples were identified and examined systematically



Fig. 3.1 Advertisements

based on data representativeness. Equivalent concepts in different tense (became/become), quantity (parent/parents), capitalisation (student/Student) or acronym forms (e.g. LGBT/LGBTQ) were merged in Leximancer's concept-editing stages. Reproducible concept maps evidence how participant comments' over-arching themes and sub-concepts related, were auto-generated using Leximancer, with theme titles



Fig. 3.1 (continued)

auto-named for the dominant sub-concept in each cluster. Each concept map visually shows asymmetric concept occurrence and co-occurrence information (size, relationships and groupings of themes and sub-concepts) from software-driven content analyses of comments. Map settings were kept at ‘100% visibility’, which made all sub-concepts visible and ‘50% theme size’, showing only common themes/overlaps. Leximancer algorithms have been verified for foregrounding the global significance and context of concepts and their relations, ensuring that analyses focussed on typicality, not one-off atypical/erroneous anecdotes [32].

All Leximancer-identified themes were secondly elevated for theoretical sampling: tracing euphorias’ types and change-trends for the role-groups over time. Open coding processes included line-by-line coding; different euphorias within a single story were separated out for cross-checking of concept-level and individual-level ‘meanings’. Finally, coding actions exposed implicit and explicit connections between euphorias. This chapter reports and discusses key collective findings for LGBTQ+ survey participants *overall*; subsequent chapters discuss sub-groups (students, staff, or parent/guardians) *only*. Leximancer-selected theme-typical quotes are reported using gender-congruent pseudonyms. Discussion sections apply the ecological model (Chap. 2), to understand euphoria trends.

COLLECTIVE FINDINGS ACROSS THE 2021–2022 *LGBTQ+* *YOU* SURVEYS

Existence of Education-based Euphorias

Participants were asked whether they had ever had euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences in schools around their LGBTQ+ identity. Most respondents were unsure (998, 41.6%), some had felt euphoric (932, 38.8%) and a fifth had not (471, 19.6%)—see Fig. 3.2. Table 3.1 displays these data by participant demographics. Chi-square tests supported no significance for LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias overall by age, Indigeneity, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD), dis/ability, sex assignment, gender or their education institution’s state or level (all $p > 0.05$). Table 3.2 shows heterosexual LGBTQ+ people were least likely to experience

LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN EDUCATION

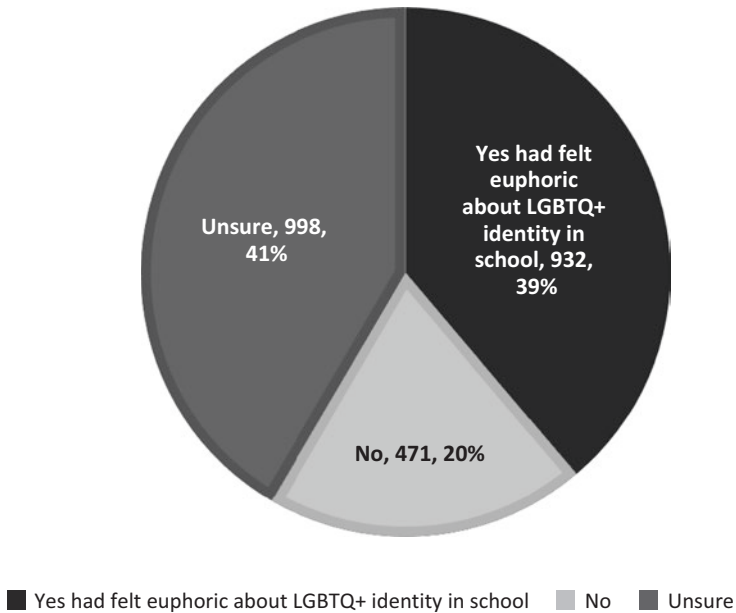


Fig. 3.2 Whether LGBTQ+ people felt euphoric about identity in education

Table 3.1 LGBTQ+ people's euphorias versus demographics

	<i>LGBTQ+ people felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school (N=2401)</i>			
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
TOTAL	932	998	471	2401
Age				
<i>14–17yrs</i>	726	754	380	1860
<i>18–25yrs</i>	39	68	27	134
<i>26–35yrs</i>	38	44	17	99
<i>36–45yrs</i>	68	69	26	163
<i>46–55yrs</i>	48	47	16	111
<i>56–65yrs</i>	10	14	4	28
<i>66yrs+</i>	3	2	1	6
State^a				
<i>Australian Capital Territory (ACT)</i>	40	26	18	84
<i>New South Wales (NSW)</i>	293	325	141	759
<i>Northern Territory (NT)</i>	4	9	6	19
<i>Queensland (QLD)</i>	201	238	111	550
<i>South Australia (SA)</i>	81	79	27	187
<i>Tasmania (TAS)</i>	23	27	6	56
<i>Victoria (VIC)</i>	181	173	104	458
<i>Western Australia (WA)</i>	108	120	57	285
<i>Other (Multi, distance)</i>	1	1	1	3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander				
<i>Yes</i>	31	51	16	98
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	901	947	455	2303
Cultural & Linguistic Diverse (CALD) (incl. reported languages other than English, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, birth country outside Australia)				
<i>Yes</i>	336	359	158	853
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	596	639	313	1548
Disability				
<i>Yes</i>	172	203	84	459
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	760	795	387	1942
Regional, remote, or rural area^a				
<i>Yes</i>	187	272	122	581
<i>No</i>	635	603	267	1505
<i>Unsure</i>	110	123	82	315
School Type^a				
<i>Government/public</i>	622	528	274	1424
<i>Non-religious private/independent</i>	54	31	21	106

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

	<i>LGBTQ+ people felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school (N=2401)</i>			
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Religious private/independent</i>	235	427	170	832
<i>Other</i>	21	12	6	39
<i>School Level^a</i>				
<i>Higher-education (TAFE/Uni)</i>	9	23	6	38
<i>High-school (Years 7–12)</i>	828	871	415	2114
<i>Primary-school (Prep-Year 6)</i>	72	72	35	179
<i>Pre-school (Early Child Care)</i>	5	3	0	8
<i>Other (e.g. no longer attend)</i>	18	29	15	62
<i>Assigned sex at birth (M, F, X)</i>				
<i>Assigned male at birth (AMAB)</i>	136	169	55	360
<i>Assigned female at birth (AFAB)</i>	769	810	405	1984
<i>Assigned X or another option at birth (AXAB)</i>	27	19	11	57
<i>Gender</i>				
<i>Cisgender male (Cis-male)</i>	86	97	32	215
<i>Cisgender female (Cis-female)</i>	367	386	207	960
<i>Transgender female-to-male (Trans-male)</i>	60	89	31	180
<i>Transgender male-to-female (Trans-female)</i>	20	32	12	64
<i>Non-binary or another gender (genderqueer, fluid, no label etc.)</i>	399	394	189	982
<i>Sexuality</i>				
<i>Asexual</i>	58	56	36	150
<i>Bisexual (or multi-gender, queer, or fluid sexualities)</i>	394	441	188	1023
<i>Gay or Lesbian</i>	308	328	121	757
<i>Heterosexual</i>	18	25	20	63
<i>Another answer (other, don't know, prefer not to say etc.)</i>	154	148	106	408
<i>School-based role</i>				
<i>Parent</i>	66	97	42	205
<i>Teacher</i>	111	91	27	229
<i>Student</i>	755	810	402	1967
<i>Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school^b</i>				
<i>Always</i>	36	275	46	357
<i>Often</i>	209	368	153	730
<i>Sometimes</i>	292	198	131	621
<i>Rarely</i>	225	74	76	375
<i>Never</i>	168	82	55	305
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	2	1	10	13

^aFor participants' focal school and latest education-based role

Table 3.2 Relationships between LGBTQ+ people's euphorias and demographics

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Pearson Chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ people felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school (N=2401)</i>		
			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>Regional, remote, or rural area*</i>	27.25***	4			
<i>Yes</i>			187	272	122
<i>No</i>			635	603	267
<i>Unsure</i>			110	123	82
<i>School Type</i>	70.57***	6			
<i>Government/public</i>			622	528	274
<i>Non-religious private/ independent</i>			54	31	21
<i>Religious private/independent</i>			235	427	170
<i>Other</i>			21	12	6
<i>Sexuality</i>	27.64***	8			
<i>Asexual</i>			58	56	36
<i>Bisexual (or multi-gender, queer, or fluid sexualities)</i>			394	441	188
<i>Gay or Lesbian</i>			308	328	121
<i>Heterosexual</i>			18	25	20
<i>Another answer (other, don't know, prefer not to say etc.)</i>			154	148	106
<i>School-based role</i>	17.70**	4			
<i>Parent</i>			66	97	42
<i>Teacher</i>			111	91	27
<i>Student</i>			755	810	402
<i>Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school</i>	373.61***	8			
<i>Always</i>			36	275	46
<i>Often</i>			209	368	153
<i>Sometimes</i>			292	198	131
<i>Rarely</i>			225	74	76
<i>Never</i>			168	82	55

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

euphorias by sexuality group ($p < 0.001$, Fig. 3.3). LGBTQ+ people's euphorias had a highly significant decreased likelihood of emerging in religious private ($p < 0.001$, Fig. 3.4) and rural education institutions ($p < 0.001$, Fig. 3.5). Participants' school-based role was a highly significant factor explored in upcoming chapters ($p = 0.001$); staff were most likely to experience euphorias, followed by students and lastly parents.

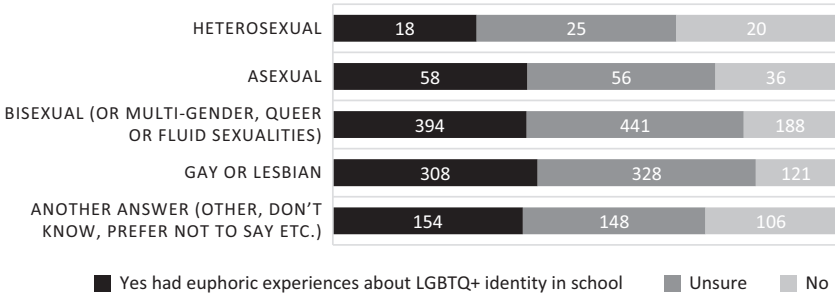


Fig. 3.3 LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias versus sexuality

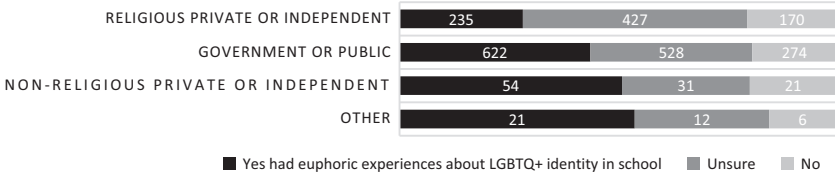


Fig. 3.4 LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias versus school type

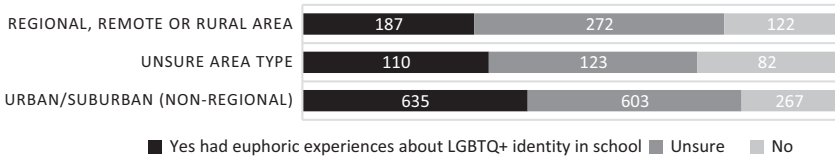


Fig. 3.5 LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias versus school rurality

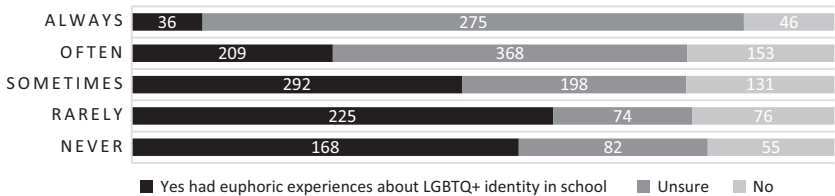


Fig. 3.6 LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias versus identity concealment frequency

Finally, Fig. 3.6 shows a highly significant inverse relationship between LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias and LGBTQ+ identity concealment in education institutions ($p < 0.001$).

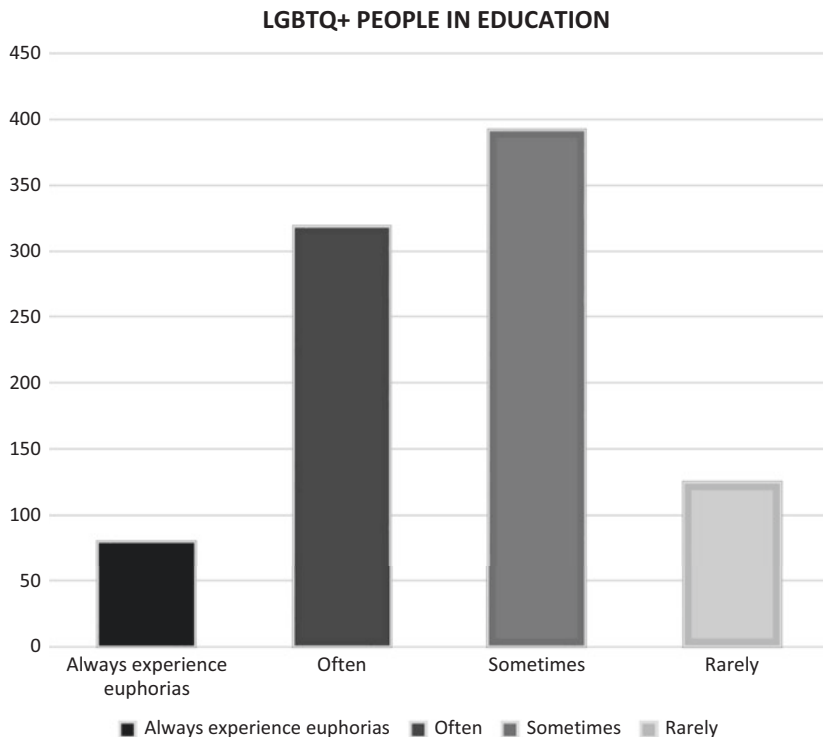


Fig. 3.7 LGBTQ+ people's euphoric frequency

Frequency of Education-based Euphorias

Participants who experienced education-based euphorias about their LGBTQ+ identities were asked how often they experienced them. Figure 3.7 shows most selected 'sometimes' (42.8%) or 'often' (34.8%). LGBTQ+ parents experienced euphorias most consistently (mainly often and always), followed by staff (mainly often and sometimes) and students (mainly sometimes). A chi-square test of independence showed the relation between role and euphoria frequency was significant, $\chi^2(6, N=916) = 86.06, p < 0.001$.

LGBTQ+ People's Education-based Euphorias

LGBTQ+ people were asked to describe a time when they felt particularly euphoric about their LGBTQ+ identity in their education context. Leximancer uncovered five themes in the 870 write-in responses: people, school, friends, teachers, and gay (Fig. 3.8).

'People': Community Connection Euphoria

The largest Leximancer-identified theme was 'people' (609 hits, 47% relationality). It focussed on LGBTQ+ people's feelings of happiness, comfort, satisfaction, and safety associated with connection to other LGBTQ+ individuals and groups in shared education settings (sub-concepts: people, felt, community, comfortable, happy, LGBTQ, group, time, queer, sexuality, safe, talk, able, friend, having). LGBTQ+ community connections typically occurred within friendships. For example, Gerhard (Bisexual Cis-male, 16yrs) felt euphoria at his Victoria public school: *'Around friends, we talk about and share our experiences as members of the LGBTQ+ community, and I feel truly happy and comfortable'*. Rickie (Bisexual Non-Binary/All Gender Person, 14yrs) felt euphoria with a Year Nine friend in a SA public school: *'I have felt this way when my best friend makes funny jokes about it and when I'm with my bisexual friend'*. Rebecca (Bisexual Cis-female, 18yrs) experienced euphoria 'as' community connection for a friend in Year Twelve in her NSW public school:

When I was able to help one of my friends come to terms with her sexuality by allowing her a safe space to talk about her attraction to women. I felt really happy that I was able to provide that for her.

Other LGBTQ+ community connections typically occurred across schools more broadly. For example, Ian (Gay Trans-male, 46–55yrs) felt euphoria when: *'A group of queer parents do a talk each year about Mardi Gras which is a time our families are celebrated in schools'*. Alana (Questioning Cis-female, 17yrs) said of her Eleventh Year cohort at a Victorian public school: *'I feel happy about my sexuality at school all of the time because there is such a big group of people who are queer in my year level'*. The *Community Connection euphoria* evident in the 'people' theme was the most central and dominant euphoria in the study. It overlapped with the most euphorias in Leximancer's map and participants' comments (particularly *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* and *Acceptance euphoria*, seen in map overlaps with the 'school' and 'friends' themes).

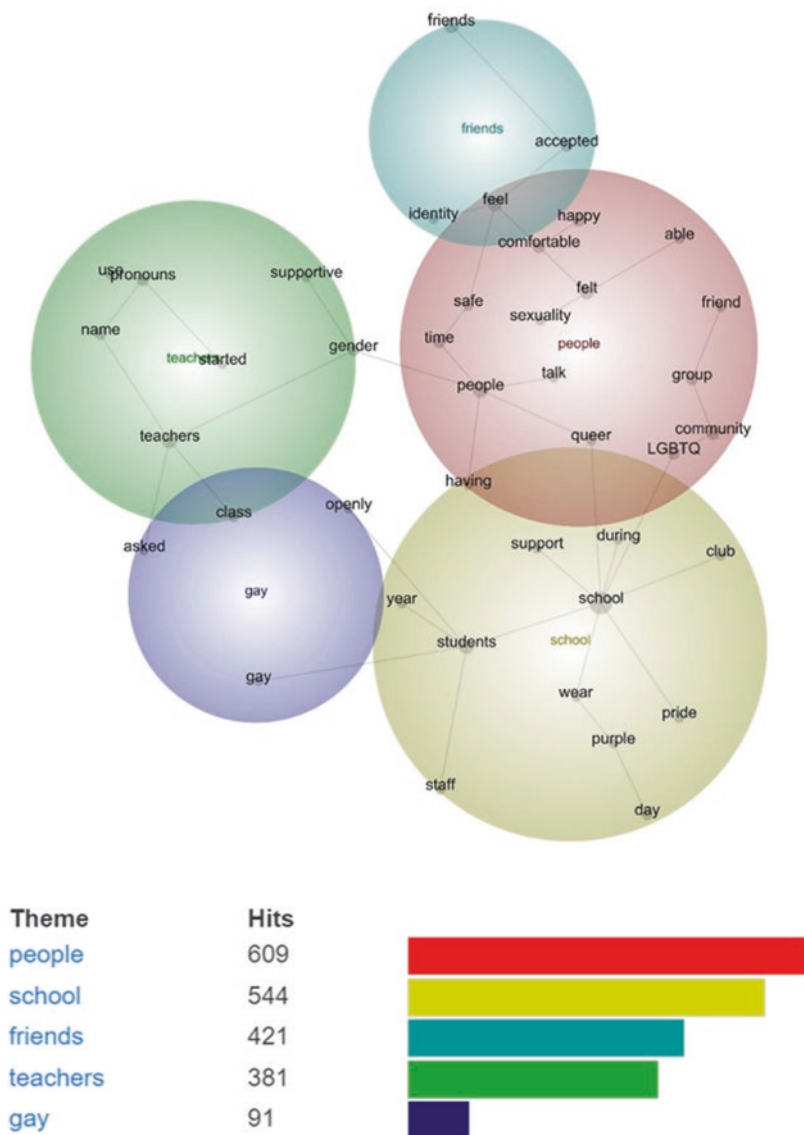


Fig. 3.8 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ people’s euphoria descriptions (N=870). (Note: Dark font indicates Leximancer-generated sub-concepts, light font indicates over-arching theme titles from dominant sub-concept, circles indicate theme showing any overlap or shared sub-concepts)

'School': Institutional Inclusion Euphoria

'School' (544 hits, 100% relationality) constituted LGBTQ+ people's feelings of affirmation and comfort from institutional efforts at direct structural supports and celebratory inclusion (sub-concepts: people, felt, community, comfortable, happy, LGBTQ, group, time, queer, sexuality, safe, talk, able, friend, having). It emphasised that euphoria could be supported through LGBTQ+ clubs, celebratory days, and structures like open uniform codes. For some participants, supplying direct leadership or contributions to supports was important; principal Annabella (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) felt euphoria helping *'my staff recognise Mardi Gras'*. Brighton (Gay Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) felt euphoria *'organising and celebrating Wear it Purple Day¹ at my school and seeing students of all identities come together in support'*. For Anastacie (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 14yrs) *'the first most euphoric time was during a Wear it Purple Day panel hosted by a group of selected members from our true colours club, which I was a part of'*.

For some participants, others' roles in such supports were the emotionally moving component. Sophie (Bisexual Cis-female, 26–35yrs), lecturing in a QLD public university, reflected:

After I was the subject of a homophobic attack on my classroom and my car, the school community came together to support me and pursue the students involved. I felt incredibly seen and accepted (when the institution) did a special pride day and allowed the students to wear rainbow colours to show support.

Annabella (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) felt euphoric when the NSW public primary-school class she taught *'arranged to all have Wear it Purple Day background slides on out zoom without my knowledge'*. Euphorias were also sparked when past students returned to acknowledge the impacts of, *'having out teachers at their primary-school'*. Peyton (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) experienced euphoria around how their NSW public school *'celebrate Wear it Purple Day and also has a (alliance)'*. *Institutional Inclusion* and *Community Connection* euphorias sometimes overlapped on the Leximancer map and quotes where institutions included LGBTQ+ people by facilitating their community connections.

¹ An August day on which people wear purple clothing or items in support of LGBTQ+ rights to non-discrimination and support, especially in schools and involving formal or informal events (<https://www.wearitpurple.org/>).

'Friends': Acceptance Euphoria

'Friends' (421 hits, 67% relationality) explored how social acceptance combatted loneliness or other negative feelings and contributed to individual self-acceptance (sub-concepts: friends, feel, accepted, identity). When participants in the theme described general acceptance amongst friends and staff in their school as sparking euphoria, they emphasised a one-way belonging mechanism, not the bidirectional interactions of *Community Connection euphoria* where group admission/sustenance was mutual. Otho (Gay Genderqueer, 14yrs) said at their Victorian public school:

I have very accepting and kind friends and I tend to voice my concerns relating LGBTQIA+ matters very often during class. It makes me happy when my teachers are accepting of this.

Garnet (Gay Non-Binary Person, 15yrs) commented that '*A lot of my friends are also LGBTQ so it helps me feel accepted*', and Dee (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) said '*I feel euphoric in my LGBT identity when I'm around my friends*' who accepted it.

Some participants described conditional acceptance experienced from some populations or behaviours, whilst showing reticence about potential (real or imagined) lack of acceptance around other populations or behaviours. For example, Kaia (Lesbian Cis-female, 14yrs) said she felt euphoria to a limited degree at her NSW religious school, by friends only:

My friends at school were very accepting when I came out to them, which makes me feel comfortable at school, but I don't talk about it to other people because I don't know what their views are.

Similarly, Aarya (Lesbian Cis-female, 56–65yrs) discussed acceptance limits at her religious SA school, influencing her behaviours:

I'm not my LGBTQ identity, I am me and my partner is my partner, we don't announce who we are any differently to any mainstream couple which I feel helps in being accepted in any community.

Institutional Inclusion and *Acceptance euphorias* overlapped where institutions worked to become sites where acceptance occurred, or where accepting populations congregated.

‘Teachers’ and ‘Gay’: Category Validation Euphoria

Finally, overlapping themes ‘teachers’ (381 hits, 51% relationality) and ‘gay’ (91 hits, 14% relationality) showcased *Category Validation euphoria* wherein a sense of validation within a category was attended by feelings of relief, elation and/or humour. The ‘teachers’ theme emphasised validations from teachers’ gender-inclusive pedagogies (sub-concepts: teachers, pronouns, name, gender, class, supportive, use, started). Sometimes one teacher’s support inspired euphoria: Courtney (Gay Genderfluid, 14yrs) said at their QLD public school *‘In my English class my teacher is really supportive and used my correct name and pronouns’*. Derwin (Bisexual Trans-male, 15yrs) felt euphoria at their Victorian religious school *‘When I first told my year 9 English teacher I was trans and she started using my correct name in class’*. Chas (Bisexual Trans-male, 15yrs) recalled euphoria at his QLD public school:

I told my drama teacher I was trans over email and the next lesson she immediately started referring to me as my chosen name and was super supportive. It felt amazing to be addressed by someone of authority as who I believe I am.

For others multiple teachers contributed. Sal (Asexual Trans-male, 15yrs) said *‘The first few times my teachers started using my correct name and pronouns in class made me feel very euphoric’*, and Percy (Omnisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) said euphoria arose when *‘my teachers started using my new name and correct pronouns’*, at NSW public schools.

The theme ‘gay’ emphasised positive feelings around how individuals were supported as members of their sexual identity category within schools (sub-concepts: gay, openly, asked). For example, Waldemar (Gay Cis-male, 16yrs) felt euphoria when *‘I recently won the election process for school captain and am now our [religious school’s] first openly gay school captain’*. Other comments emphasised the role of peers in enhancing and encouraging self-support. Catalina (Bisexual Cis-female, 15yrs) felt euphoria tied to support after a forced outing at her QLD public school; *‘Another student asked me if I was gay again, I said no. Then another student who thinks I am gay said ‘bull-shit’*. Noting the potential for violence, bullying, loss or autonomy, the example showed euphorias are complex and may reflect relief that negative outcomes have not eventuated. Lillie (Bisexual Cis-female, 15yrs) experienced euphoria at her QLD public school when a friend questioned, *‘why is there a slur for gay people and said it’s stupid’*. Zora’s (Queer Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) euphorias were incited at a

QLD public school around ‘*teachers openly saying they are in support of LGBTQ+ rights and punishing students for saying gay slurs*’. Poppy (Bisexual Cis-female, 15yrs) felt euphoria at a non-religious independent school:

When I saw my teacher with a rainbow flag sticker on his laptop and I asked him about it, he told me he was gay. It was so exciting to have an openly gay POC teacher, it made me feel included and safe.

Accordingly, *Category Validation euphoria* responded to LGBTQ+ categories being validated by one’s self, or by or for others.

Existence of Changes in LGBTQ+ People’s Education-based Euphorias

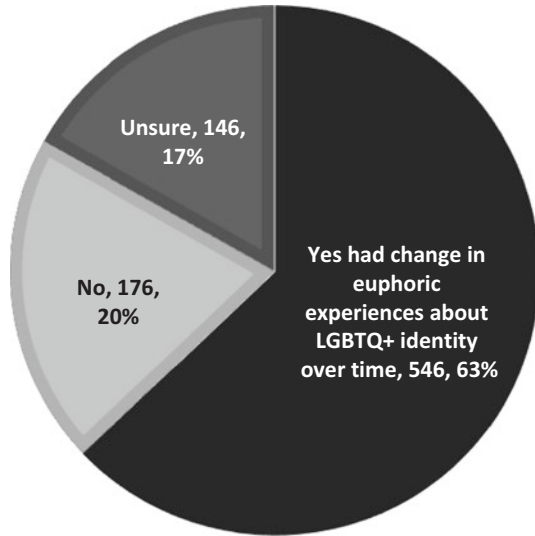
LGBTQ+ participants experiencing education-based euphorias were asked ‘*Has your sense of euphoria (happiness or comfort) with your LGBTQ+ identity changed over time?*’. They could select Yes, No, or Unsure. Over three in five reported (yes) their euphoria had changed (Fig. 3.9). Around a fifth of them said no. Under a fifth of them were unsure. LGBTQ+ staff, followed by students, were most likely to report that their euphorias changed over time, considerably above parents. A chi-square test of independence showed the relationship between education role and euphoria change was significant, $\chi^2(4, (N=868) = 72.11, p < 0.001)$.

Change-trends for LGBTQ+ People’s Education-based Euphorias

LGBTQ+ people were asked to describe how their sense of euphoria (comfort or happiness) about their LGBTQ+ identity changed over time. In total, there were 532 write-in responses. Leximancer showed five themes across them: people, feel, school, year, and parents (Fig. 3.10).

‘People’: *Community Connection Euphorias Expand with Socialisation*
The largest Leximancer-identified theme for how LGBTQ+ people’s euphoria changed was ‘people’ (613 hits, 61% relationality). It captured LGBTQ+ people’s euphorias—especially *Community Connection euphoria* and its associated comfort—expanded with greater socialisation with LGBTQ+ communities over time (sub-concepts: people, comfortable, identity, time, sexuality, become, started, queer, others, able, changed, LGBTQ, someone). Typically, Juliet (Bisexual Cis-female, 26–35yrs)

LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN EDUCATION



Yes had change in euphoric experiences about LGBTQ+ identity
 No
 Unsure over time

Fig. 3.9 LGBTQ+ people's euphoric change

noticed: *'I have found the LGBTQ+ community and started doing drag, plus social attitudes have changed, so I have become much more comfortable'*. Quinton (Queer Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) similarly said *Community Connection* and *Category Validation euphoria* increased with like-minded contacts:

Over time I have become more comfortable with both my identity and have found labels that fit me as well as others who share similar identities as me which makes me feel euphoric as I feel validated by both knowing my identity and being able to share it.

Palmer (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) also said *Community Connection* and *Acceptance euphorias* expanded with her outness:

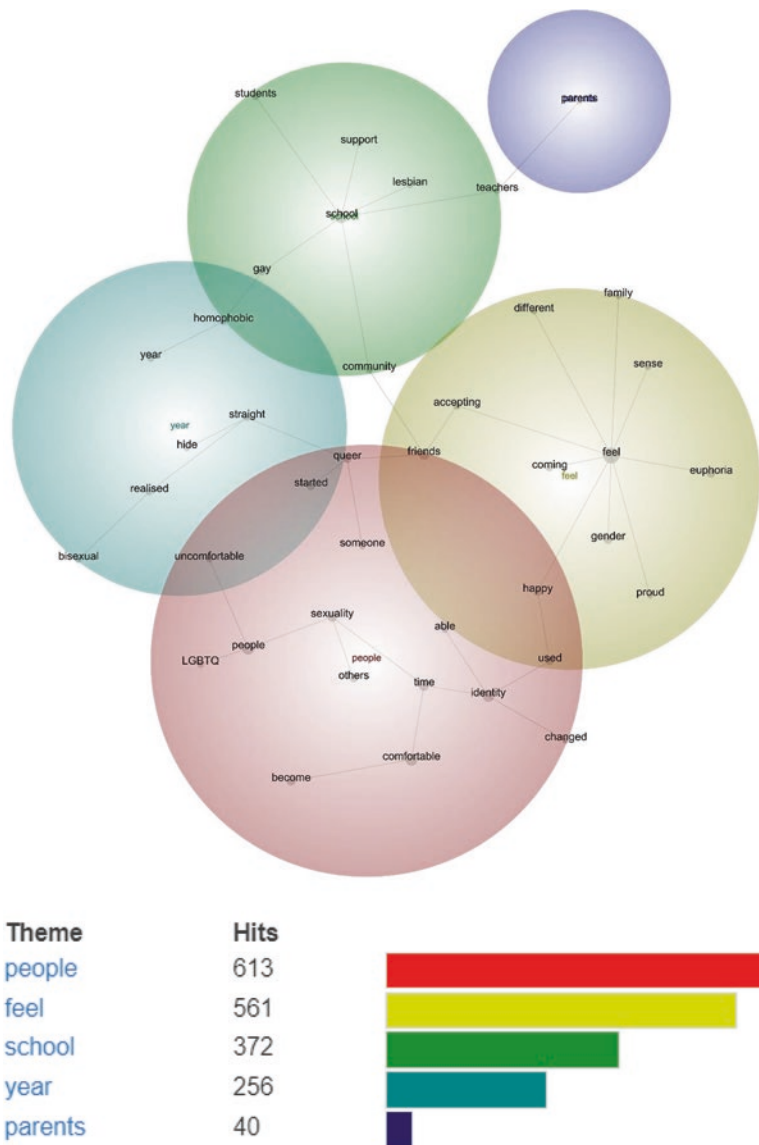


Fig. 3.10 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ people’s euphoric change descriptions (N=532)

The acceptance of my identity by those I respect and care about has increased my comfort level, pride in my identity and being able to share that part of my life with others means I'm not working to hide or obscure it.

Leximancer also allocated the introductory quote used for this chapter to this theme, wherein Giovanni (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) reflected on how their comfort from community contact supported *Community Connection*, *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias*; activism; and reduced anxiety. Linds (Demisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) discussed the complex nature of increasing LGBTQ+ community—it increased *Community Connection euphoria* over time; but also dysphoric jealousies around gender affirmation goals; ‘*As time has gone on, I’ve started feeling more and more envious of those presenting masculine so that too may become a part of my LGBTQ+ identity in the future*’. Co-expansions of *Community Connection* and *Acceptance euphorias* are seen in some comments, and Leximancer map overlaps for ‘people’ and ‘feel’.

‘Feel’: Acceptance Euphorias Build Gradually

‘Feel’ (561 hits, 100% relationality) captured LGBTQ+ people’s gradual growth of external (Social-) and internal (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias*, and sometimes their mutual interrelation (sub-concepts: feel, friends, gender, euphoria, happy, accepting, used, coming, sense, family, different, proud). Lillian (Asexual Cis-female, 14yrs) said of her (Self-) *Acceptance euphoria*:

Each time I come to understand myself more, I feel that sense of euphoria and security. When I learned about asexuality, I was no longer waiting to ‘catch up’ as if I was some immature outsider among friends and family.

Landry (Bisexual Genderfluid, 17yrs) felt (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias* increase given social examples and self-possession:

I was a part of a community that I knew I would be accepted in ... More recently, I have been able to feel euphoric about my identity on an individual level too ... There are still instances where I feel ashamed or ‘wrong’, but over time I started feeling stronger to handle those feelings without the presence of other queer people.

Some participants required social acceptance before developing internal (Self-) *Acceptance euphoria*. Angela (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) explained:

As a single parent I felt I needed to hide my gender identity depending on context, e.g. heteronormative pre-school/childcare centres (...) Now as a married parent I feel more supported and prouder of my gender identity.

Conversely, some required internal acceptance before seeking social acceptance towards (Social-) *Acceptance euphoria*. Kane (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 14yrs) explained:

I use a different name that is less feminine and is gender neutral. I asked some of my teachers that I felt comfortable with to use that name, and I think one of the first times that I felt euphoric was when they used that name during roll.

For some participants both *Acceptance euphorias* built gradually in unison. Vera (Pansexual Cis-female, 16yrs) reflected:

I began going to Pride club as an ally, listening to others speak I realised it wasn't something to be ashamed of, instead something to be proud of—the strength I have to feel comfortable in a world which tells me not to be. Now I have a sense of euphoria whenever I go.

Relationships between *Community Connection*, *Acceptance*, and *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* expansions were typical in comments, and overlaps in ‘people’, ‘feel’, and ‘school’ themes.

‘School’: Institutional Inclusion Euphorias Are Site-Specific

‘School’ (372 hits, 71% relationality) expressed how LGBTQ+ people’s experiences of *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* changed depending on their specific institutions over time (sub-concepts: school, community, students, gay, teachers, support, lesbian). Many participants experienced *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* at some sites and not others; changes mainly involved participants choosing to move from worse to more inclusive contexts. For example, Larry (Gay Cis-male, 46–55yrs) had *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* now in a structurally supportive public school; but had previously experienced prohibitive contexts:

When I resigned from my religious school and then publicly came out, my principal said that had I not resigned the school board would have requested the principal to dismiss me.

Likewise, Joyce (Bisexual Genderqueer, 16yrs) said:

I was terrified to talk about being a part of the lgbtq+ community because both teachers and students were horrible about it. So once I moved schools, I slowly learnt that who I was is okay and that I'm not invalid.

Roscoe (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) said he moved to a new school to teach where he saw more inclusion after receiving mentoring from queer education professionals:

Through their mentoring I discovered that I could be more myself at work and in turn students started seeing me as a GLBTQI mentor for them. Over my time as a public school teacher I became more involved with the GLBTQI members of NSW teachers Federation to support members.

Wardell (Bisexual Trans Masc., 16yrs) moved from a school without supports to a more inclusive school for his wellbeing:

When I moved school, I felt so much more happy and free to be myself. People there are respectful and kind, the school also has good support systems in place for LGBTQIA+ students.

Relationships between site-specific *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* and contexts enhancing several euphorias were evident in many comments, and proximities of 'school' to other Leximancer map themes.

'Year': Sudden Shifts in Category Validation Euphorias

'Year' (256 hits, 23% relationality) showcased those LGBTQ+ people suddenly exposed to new categories or new ways of thinking, opening-up or shutting-down validation of categories (sub-concepts: year, homophobic, realised, straight, bisexual, hide, uncomfortable). This created sudden shifts in *Category Validation euphoria* across the years. For many including Armani (Bisexual Cis-female, 14yrs), *Category Validation* and *Acceptance euphorias* expanded simultaneously:

I had to hide a big part of me in fear of being judged, discriminated against, hate-crimes, losing friends, etc. When I came out to my friends, I wasn't so conflicted in my mind and I became a lot happier, although I always worry about being outed.

Debo's (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) pre-existing *Category Validation* and (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias* dropped off in a new school and then re-built:

High-school was a shock. I walked in being openly bisexual and immediately had slurs and homophobic phrases said to me. It made me uncomfortable and scared to be who I was. As the years have gone on I've slowly gotten better at blocking out the negative and focusing on the fact I am me and nothing can change that.

Rachel (Bisexual Cis-female, 17yrs) typified a portion of younger students whose *Category Validation euphorias* fluctuated depending on group-specific endorsements:

A few years into high-school I realised how normal it was to not be straight and cisgender and realised I was bisexual and I came out about a month after to a few friends after realising and I was pretty happy. I was scared and still am about my parents or family knowing (...) it made me a lot more conscious, uncomfortable, and worried at home.

Theodora (Asexual Cis-female, 14yrs) had experienced a few sudden shifts in her sexuality categories and so had related euphorias' alternate increases and decreases: '*I only realised I was asexual recently and am still questioning my romantic orientation. Earlier this year I thought I was completely straight and allosexual*'. Bee (Bisexual Demi-Girl, 14yrs) underwent the multiple sudden shifts around categories and attendant *Category Validation euphorias* experienced by many questioning students sorting through several identities across a year:

at first I thought I was just a straight asexual, then I thought I was bi, but I was doubting myself telling myself that I'm just a straight girl looking for attention, and then I thought no wait I actually am bisexual, and then realised I'm not exactly comfortable identifying as a girl, and I have got more comfortable with who I am.

Socio-cultural contexts strongly influenced the categories participants—especially youth—were exposed to and their openness to category ‘fit’. Context-specific enablers or blockages to *Institutional Inclusion*, *Acceptance* and *Category Validation* euphorias could overlap.

‘Parents’: Euphoria-Blockers Added or Removed

‘Parents’ (40 hits, 13% relationality) was a stand-alone theme illustrating periodic additions or removals of real-word and spectral parent euphoria blockers. Real parents’ disapprovals or imagined disapprovals from one’s own parents or parents broadly, blocked euphorias sporadically or in site-specific ways. Spectral parents stand-in for concerns over client markets in neo-liberal schools; or conservative family values in conservative schools, functioning to limit care-free, comfortable diversity expressions as a cultural bogeyman. Pre-marriage equality, Cedric (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) recalled *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance* euphorias were limited by spectral/imagined ‘parent backlash’:

Previously I was only ‘out’ to the staff. Since the marriage equality issue, I told the Principal that if any students asked my opinion or my own identity, I will be honest and ‘come out’ to them. My principal said [If needed the school] would handle any backlash from parents or students. Since then, I have felt more confident.

Andrea (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) also experienced earlier difficulties with other families at her child’s school, but marriage equality combatted actual ‘parent backlash’:

To my relief this has been well supported and often other parents have apologised for the discomfort their assumptions cause. We are now settled into the school community, with soccer, play dates, birthday parties and parent catch ups. I’m not so anxious.

Specific parents were past and present euphoria blockers. Wally’s (Straight Trans-male, 17yrs) faded around his parents: ‘*My parents don’t know about the binder nor the pronouns because they are still unsupportive but the fact that I don’t have to pretend now [in] parts of my life is great*’. Gracelyn (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) said that parents had caused difficulty for her lesbian-reared children: ‘*another child would say something about her parents*’ [comments] *in a negative way*’. Parents could both

block and enhance *Acceptance euphoria* in educational communities with the force of their influence, as Adalynn (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) experienced: ‘*Staff and parents have got to know us over the years and I think their acceptance has made me accept myself more*’. Parents were the prominent euphoria blocker for LGBTQ+ people overall. Role-specific blockers are examined in upcoming chapters.

DISCUSSION

Dominant LGBTQ+ Education-based Euphorias

For the two fifths of LGBTQ+ people in education experiencing euphorias, (1) *Community Connection*, (2) *Institutional Inclusion*, (3) *Acceptance*, and (4) *Category Validation euphorias* dominated. These were interconnected and inter-conductive, and largely incited by positive (re)actions or schools’ Ahmedian ‘moving towards’ LGBTQ+ people [33]; countering past ‘moving away’. These euphorias echoed research emphasising group memberships for LGBTQ+ people’s wellbeing [34–36], and showed Erikson’s [37, 38] Stage 5 identity formation and Stage 6 intimacy motivations’ influence (Fig. 3.11). Microsystems had core roles in emotional development, as Bronfenbrenner predicted [39]. Schools could inspire euphorias, (re)organising emotions [17, 40] using Schutz &

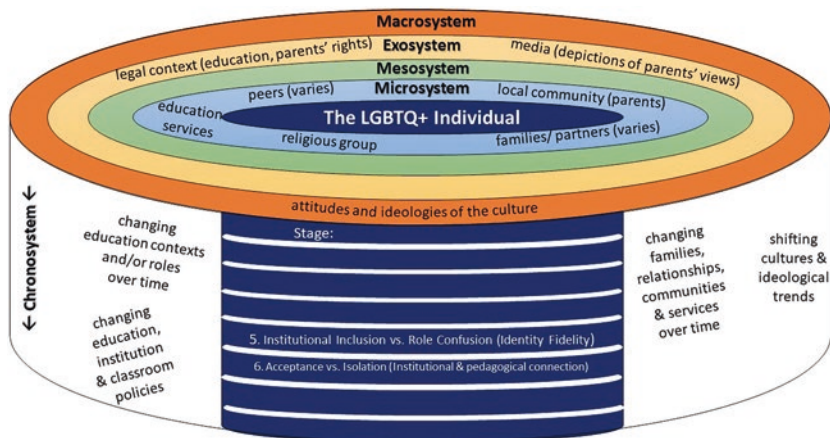


Fig. 3.11 Ecological model of psycho-social influences on LGBTQ+ individuals' education-based euphorias

Pekrun's object-focussed group identification processes [17, 41] via purple or rainbow object/icon-centred celebratory events. This institutionalised Gottman et al.'s (meta-)emotion-coaching and movement towards LGBTQ+ identities and bodies; aligning with Ahmedian [33, 42] and Butlerian [43] goals for exposing erasures of LGBTQ+ unhappiness in happiness economies; subverting these economies through collective euphorically queer expression and euphorically queer collectives. These euphorias supported Butlerian 'transference' of happiness and acceptance onto non-traditional bodies [44], re-ordering institutional acceptability hierarchies, and expanding euphorias' connections to social redress [21]. Such euphoric phenomena were less likely in religious and rural schools, reflecting greater anti-LGBTQ+ policy restraints in religious school Exosystems and Microsystems [29, 45], and higher concealment of LGBTQ+ status in rural Microsystems [12, 13]. Notably, (Social-) *Acceptance euphoria* was sometimes obtained for subdued expression, down-played or conforming/marital relationships, and activism disdain; reflecting happiness economies' conformity drives [42].

Typical Change-trends

Different euphorias had distinct change-trends: *Community Connection euphorias* expanded with socialisation; *Acceptance euphorias* built gradually; *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* were site-specific; *Category Validation euphorias* had sudden shifts. LGBTQ+ people's euphorias can be subject to 'parent' blockers arising across their Microsystems, Exosystems and Macrosystems intermittently (across the Chronosystem). Given most Australian parents support gender and sexuality diversity education [5], parent blockers were sometimes false spectral assumptions of parents' dismissive or disapproving meta-emotions echoing Macrosystem Murdoch-media constructions [5, 6, 46]; and Exosystem (anti-LGBTQ+) parents' rights bills [e.g. 7, 8]. Euphoria blockers are long-term or situational inspired movement: site shifts (moving schools) or activism shifting sites. This reflected relationships between euphoria and possibilities of material change in socio-cultural contexts in TGD studies [20, 47], and Ahmed's 'productive unhappiness' [42].

Significance & Limitations

The study provided the largest euphoria data collection to date for the broadest range of LGBTQ+ identities and age groups, and the first education euphorias taxonomy. It showed methods supporting LGBTQ+ community connections and institutional inclusion encouraged in other studies, enhance euphorias' likelihoods: hosting gay-straight-alliance/pride groups; using celebratory events and symbology; providing affirming diverse identity category information; and supporting structural inclusion from policies to names/pronoun use [36, 48, 49]. Additionally, promoting the data on parents' support for gender and sexuality diversity in schools [5] may reduce fallacious spectral 'parent' (Micro-, Exo-, and Macro-) system-level euphoria blockers. Findings reflected euphorias' relations to external, internal, and social experiences; and negative wellbeing [20, 42]. Higher volumes of youth responses reflected higher youth engagements in online surveys generally; upcoming chapters explore age-based nuances. Limitations included the study's lack of direct questioning about dysphoria; euphorias' relationships to dysphoria may be under-represented. The study lacked cisgender heterosexual and non-education institutional comparisons, and statistically atypical CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQ+ euphorias may have nuances undetectable in 'typicality'-driven, institution-centred surveys.

CONCLUSIONS

People in education were sometimes euphoric *and queer*, even *euphorically queer*. LGBTQ+ people's unhappiness is therefore not inherent; but shaped, and potentially shifted, by their surrounding systems. Education providers, leadership and staff seeking non-deficit-based LGBTQ+ models, can foster *Community Connection* and *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* for LGBTQ+ people—conducive to other euphorias. Their pre-conditions and change catalysts include: expanding opportunities for LGBTQ+ community connections (events, speakers, groups); adapting institutional structures, training, resources and processes to foreground inclusion; increasing safety; and increasing visibility of LGBTQ+ acceptance (rainbow symbols, celebratory days). Activists could usefully promote parents' support for diversity education [5], rural LGBTQ+ euphorias' visibility [14], and rescinding religious school anti-discrimination exemptions. Further research could explore whether

LGBTQ+ people experience comparable euphorias in international education or other institutions; and nuances for cisgender heterosexuals (via comparative studies) or intersectional communities (via interviews/focus groups). Upcoming chapters examine nuances for LGBTQ+ youth, professionals, and parents' euphorias.

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LGBTQ+ Youth Euphorias! Stop-Start Shifts in LGBTQ+ Youth Happiness & Comfort

Abstract Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) students were a point of policy contention in recent elections and often portrayed as victims. This chapter investigates 1968 LGBTQ+ students experiences of euphoria. Of over a third who had euphoric experiences, most students experienced euphorias sometimes or often. Young, out, and non-binary youth especially experienced euphorias. *Community Connection*, *Acceptance*, *Category Validation*, and *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* dominated. Change-trends included: (1) increase and intensification of *Acceptance euphorias* with support; (2) shifts in *Category Validation euphorias* dependent on identity fit, exposure and bias; (3) more *Acceptance euphorias* upon dissipation of internalised biases, and (4) heightening and deadening of *Acceptance euphoria* around specific teachers. Changes to youth euphorias thus had a monumentality; *Acceptance* and *Category validation euphorias* were especially reactive.

Keywords Euphoria • LGBTQ+ • Youth • Student • Non-binary • Religion

Key Points

- Over a third of LGBTQ+ students experience education-based euphorias; the likelihood increased for those who were younger, allocated non-male sex, non-binary, and always out.

- They were less likely to experience euphorias in religious and rural schools.
- Externally and socially driven *Community Connection* and *Acceptance euphorias* were most dominant for youth.
- LGBTQ+ students' *Category Validation euphorias* shifted often around category fit and social endorsement.
- Some LGBTQ+ students' euphorias were heightened or deadened by certain teachers.

INTRODUCTION

*I soon abandoned my label as Bisexual and felt much more comfortable identifying as a lesbian, much happier and euphoric, however when I first made that shift, I sobbed at the lost experiences. To me, the hard part wasn't liking girls, the hard part was not liking boys. Something still felt wrong with this change. Eventually, I understood what asexuality was, and realised that that was the identity that seemed most like me. This was the worst realisation to me. This destroyed me. I believed that this would ruin my chances of finding love, of having a partner and building a life with someone because I just can't understand the standard dating scene, because people will misunderstand the label and assume I don't want a partner, because I lose so many experiences that other people—queer or straight—get to have. I have grown into my label, although I usually just say that I am gay to avoid explaining that I am actually asexual but date girls ... I have been questioning my gender more and more, but I cannot say how it will turn out. (Chloe, Asexual Lesbian CIS/Questioning Female, 16yrs on sudden shifts in *Category Validation euphoria* across her sexual and gender identity moratoriums)*

Debates around lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) youth in education are heated and the United Nations promotes anti-bullying protections for the group [1, 2]. LGBTQ+ students have been points of policy contention in the last three Australian elections and multiple proposed bills—including those further enshrining religious schools' rights to expel them, dismantling government-funded programme like 'Safe Schools' designed to protect them, and limiting educators' abilities to mention gender diversity [3–5]. This chapter briefly reviews literature on LGBTQ+ students, showing its victimhood emphases. It then continues from Chap. 3's broader presentation of euphoria data from the *LGBTQ+ You* study, expanding upon findings of the student survey's data and its contributions.

VICTIMISING LGBTQ+ STUDENTS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

Education research on LGBTQ+ youth has several trends constructing these students as overlooked or invisible, or victims of social or structural conditions since the early 2000s. First, some secondary analyses of national survey studies portray the group as *overlooked 'others'*; especially in work conducted from Euro-centric or Western perspectives [6]. These studies included both general sexuality education surveys with one or two questions on sexual behaviours or experiences, and youth studies in which LGBTQ+ young people formed a specific subgroup through a question on sexual preference or identity. Second, research constructing LGBTQ+ youth as *at risk of victimhood or discrimination* comprised descriptive, correlational, or mixed methods studies using LGBTQ+-specific surveys, interviews, and focus groups [7–9]. These studies commonly operated within Critical/Gay Liberationist methodologies and identified links between LGBTQ+ students' experiences of homophobic bullying and problematic mental and sexual health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes. This research necessarily stressed victimhood in foregrounding real education problems and suicide risks.

Third, studies portraying LGBTQ+ youth as *invisible semantic groups* used semiotic or cultural investigation of policies, textbooks, and other resources. These studies generally utilised content analysis, semiotic theory, discourse analysis and sometimes feminist or Gay Liberationist frames [10]. Study objectives included investigating barriers to effective sexuality education, revealing lacks in LGBTQ+ coverage. Fourth, studies constructing LGBTQ+ people as a *special needs group* involved quantitative and qualitative evaluative research on interventions, sexuality education programmes, and support structures [7, 11]. Finally, some studies cast LGBTQ+ youth as *conceptually disruptive subjects*, especially post-structuralist and critical post-modern historical investigations of sexuality education discourses in Western countries [12], and studies applying Queer theory to sexuality education texts [13]. Though research acknowledging LGBTQ+ students' negative experiences or centring disruptiveness underscored advocacy towards policy protections and social change, factors aiding LGBTQ+ students in thriving remain unexamined.

REDRESSING YOUTH EUPHORIA RESEARCH GAPS

Researchers have called for more positive strengths-based constructions of LGBTQ+ youth and factors contributing to their thriving [14], neglecting euphorias. This chapter explores:

1. *How can we characterise typical euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences of LGBTQ+ students, and their influences?*
2. *How do these euphorias typically change over time, and what influences changes?*

The following data stem from the 2021–2022 *LGBTQ+ YOU* study's 1968 student surveys (Chap. 3 includes methodology and methods).

LGBTQ+ YOU STUDENT SURVEY FINDINGS

Existence of Youths' Euphorias

Of the 1967 LGBTQ+ students aged 14+ yrs who answered the question, 'Have you ever felt happy or comfortable (euphoric) about your LGBTQ+ identity in school?', 810 (41.2%) had *never* felt euphoric; 755 (38.4%) had; and 402 (20.4%) were unsure (Fig. 4.1). Table 4.1 shows how LGBTQ+ students' demographics and euphorias intersected. There were no relationships for students' euphorias for Indigeneity, CALD, dis/ability, sexuality, education institution state, or Year level. Table 4.2 shows significant relationships between students' increased likelihood of euphorias and being under 18 yrs ($p < 0.05$); assigned an F/female or X/another (non-male) sex at birth ($p < 0.05$);¹ or non-binary ($p < 0.01$).² There was a highly significant relationship between student euphorias and never concealing LGBTQ+ identity ($p < 0.001$). Over half of LGBTQ+ students attending non-religious independent/private schools experienced euphoria, yet there was a highly significant decreased likelihood for LGBTQ+ student euphorias in religious private ($p < 0.001$) and rural schools ($p < 0.001$).

¹ Both calculated for the M, F and X categories separately as here; or F and X combined versus M for more robust total figures ($\chi^2=8.8163$; $p=0.012178$; $df=4$).

² Compared to both any gender identity listed in Fig. 6.2 as here, or binary cisgender and binary transgender identity groupings ($p=0.00227$).

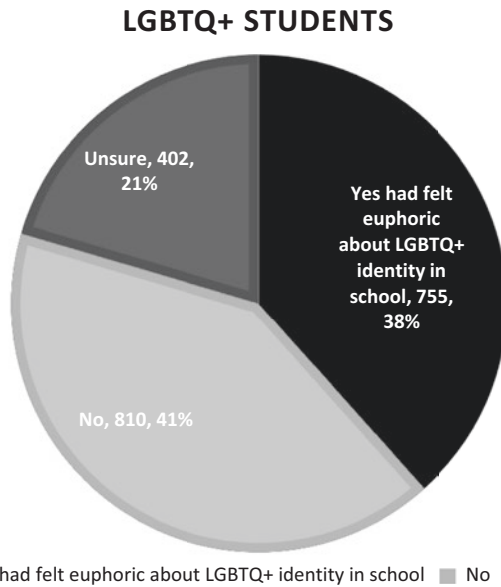


Fig. 4.1 Whether LGBTQ+ youth felt euphoric about identity in education

Table 4.1 LGBTQ+ students’ euphorias versus demographics

	<i>LGBTQ+ students felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school^a (N=1967)</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
Total	755	810	402
Age			
14yrs	216	245	139
15yrs	225	197	111
16yrs	160	175	74
17yrs	125	135	55
18yrs	20	34	15
19yrs	3	5	1
20yrs	3	2	0
21yrs	0	3	0
22yrs	0	1	1
23yrs	0	0	1
24yrs	0	1	1
25yrs	3	12	4

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

	<i>LGBTQ+ students felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school^b (N=1967)</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>State^a</i>			
<i>ACT</i>	35	20	17
<i>NSW</i>	223	262	117
<i>NT</i>	3	7	3
<i>QLD</i>	175	197	94
<i>SA</i>	61	60	20
<i>TAS</i>	20	21	5
<i>VIC</i>	146	140	92
<i>WA</i>	91	102	53
<i>Other</i>	1	1	1
<i>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	27	42	14
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	728	768	388
<i>Cultural & Linguistic Diverse (CALD)</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	289	316	139
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	466	494	263
<i>Disability</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	154	173	74
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	601	637	328
<i>Regional, remote, or rural area^a</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	131	206	95
<i>No</i>	517	483	225
<i>Unsure</i>	107	121	82
<i>School Type^a</i>			
<i>Government/public</i>	489	394	222
<i>Non-religious private/independent</i>	44	22	15
<i>Religious private/independent</i>	206	384	161
<i>Other</i>	16	10	4
<i>School Level^b</i>			
<i>Higher-education</i>	7	16	6
<i>High-school</i>	736	766	385
<i>Year 12</i>	89	104	38
<i>Year 11</i>	135	129	54
<i>Year 10</i>	155	178	88
<i>Year 9</i>	225	211	112
<i>Year 8</i>	122	139	86
<i>Year 7</i>	10	5	7
<i>Primary-school</i>	0	0	0
<i>Pre-school</i>	0	0	0

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

	<i>LGBTQ+ students felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school^a (N=1967)</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>Other (e.g. no longer attend)</i>	12	28	11
<i>Assigned sex at birth (M, F, X)</i>			
<i>Male (AMAB)</i>	82	119	38
<i>Female (AFAB)</i>	649	673	353
<i>X or another option (AXAB)</i>	24	18	11
<i>Gender</i>			
<i>Cis-male</i>	50	66	25
<i>Cis-female</i>	267	276	170
<i>Trans-male</i>	53	77	21
<i>Trans-female</i>	5	17	3
<i>Non-binary or another gender (genderqueer, fluid, no label, etc.)</i>	380	374	183
<i>Sexuality</i>			
<i>Asexual</i>	58	48	33
<i>Bisexual (or multi-gender, queer, or fluid sexualities)</i>	359	390	168
<i>Gay or Lesbian</i>	182	226	91
<i>Heterosexual</i>	13	9	7
<i>Another answer (other, don't know, prefer not to say etc.)</i>	143	137	103
<i>Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school^a</i>			
<i>Always</i>	33	233	46
<i>Often</i>	201	324	139
<i>Sometimes</i>	247	168	112
<i>Rarely</i>	181	52	63
<i>Never</i>	91	32	32
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	2	1	10

^aFor most recent education institution/school

Frequency of Youths' Euphorias

Youth who experienced education-based euphorias were asked '*How often have you felt happy or comfortable (euphoric) about your LGBTQ+ identity in the school you attend?*' Most selected 'sometimes' (just under half, Fig. 4.2) or 'often' (around a third). Fewer selected rarely (15.0%) or always (5.4%). Four said never, three preferred not to say.

Table 4.2 Relationships between LGBTQ+ students' euphorias and demographics

	Pearson	Chi-square	df	LGBTQ+ students felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school (N=1967)		
				Yes	No	Unsure
<i>Age</i>	8.17*		2			
14–17yrs				726	752	379
18–25yrs				29	58	23
Regional, remote, or rural area	27.44***		4			
Yes				131	206	95
No				517	483	225
Unsure				107	121	82
School Type	69.55***		4			
Government/public				489	394	222
Non-religious private/independent				44	22	15
Religious private/independent				206	384	161
Assigned sex at birth (M, F, X)	9.87*		4			
Male (AMAB)				82	119	38
Female (AFAB)				649	673	353
X or another option (AXAB)				24	18	11
Gender	23.61**		8			
Cis-male				50	66	25
Cis-female				267	276	170
Trans-male				53	77	21
Trans-female				5	17	3
Non-binary or another gender (genderqueer, fluid, no label, etc.)				380	374	183
Gender groupings	16.64**		4			
Binary cis-male or -female				317	342	195
Binary trans-male or -female				58	94	24
Non-binary or another gender (genderqueer, fluid, no label, etc.)				380	374	183
Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school	35.33***		2			
Never				91	32	32
Ever (from rarely to always)				662	777	360

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

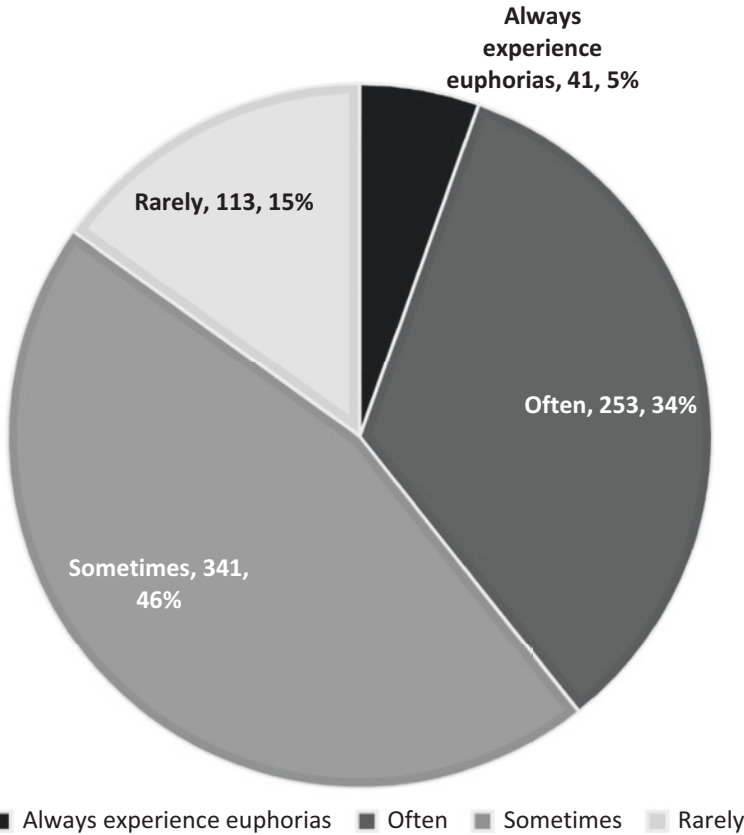


Fig. 4.2 LGBTQ+ students' euphoric frequency

LGBTQ+ Students' Euphorias

Students were asked: *'Please tell us a time when you felt particularly euphoric (happy or comfortable) about your LGBTQ+ identity in school'*. Leximancer revealed four themes in their 706 write-in responses: school, feel, teachers and pride (Fig. 4.3).

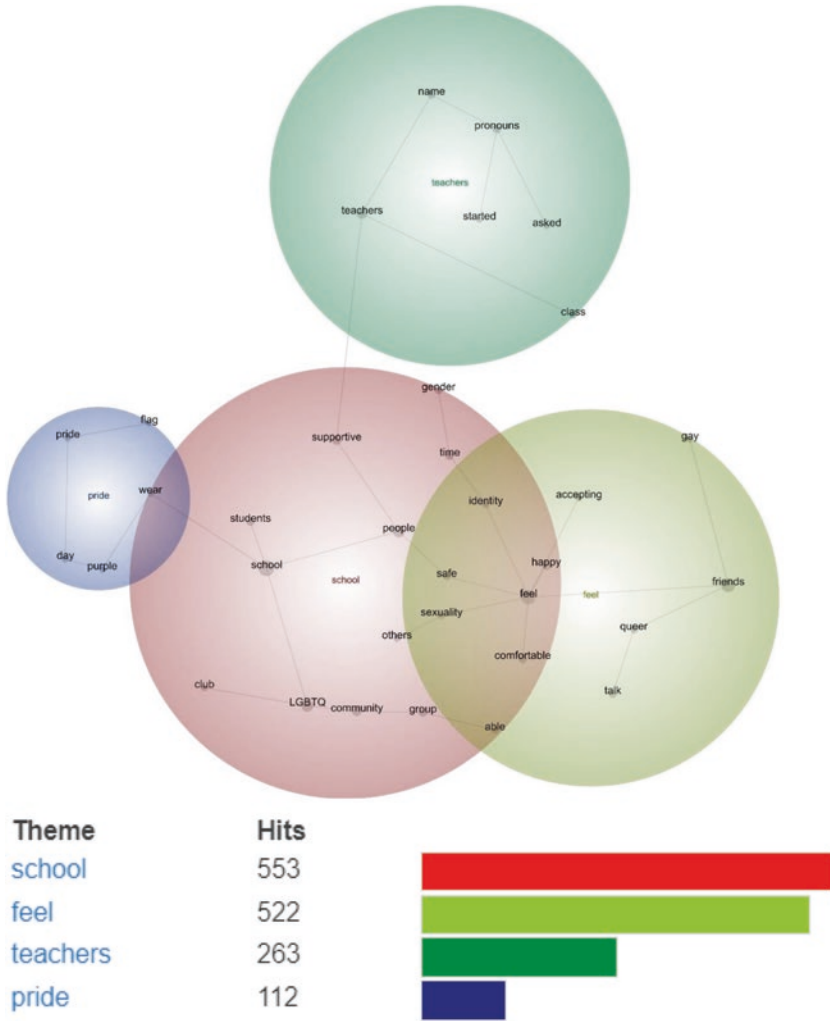


Fig. 4.3 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ students' euphoria descriptions (N=706)

'School': Students' Dominant Community Connection Euphoria

The largest Leximancer-identified theme for students' euphorias was 'school' (553 hits, 100% relationality). It captured LGBTQ+ students' *Community Connection euphoria*—enhanced support, safety and

confidence from connection to other LGBTQ+ individuals and groups in schools (sub-concepts: school, LGBTQ, people, community, supportive, group, students, time, gender, sexuality, safe, club, others). Students described schools as social worlds, first and foremost; collections of people not sites for service provision (as for parents) or pedagogies and relational hierarchies (as for staff). Thus, their dominant positive experiences emphasised schools enabling LGBTQ+ communion. Core communion sources included gay-straight-alliances (GSAs), or queer-related clubs and peer groups. These typically featured more LGB than transgender and gender diverse (TGD) students due to their increased population representation generally. Sometimes groupings were institutionally supported, sometimes not. Ollie's (Asexual/Lesbian Genderfluid, 14yrs) school had an unofficial: *'small lunch time group for people in the lgbtq community to play games'*. Giovanni (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) explained their SA public school had an official *'gsd group (gender and sexual diversity)'* group:

Often when in this group, surrounded by supportive people who understand my struggles, I feel comfortable in my identity (...) and watch people become more confident in their identity (as well as finding friends in the community or allies). I have been able to be confident in my own sexuality/gender anywhere in the school.

Harlan (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) reflected that his current vocational education programme at a NSW TAFE:

is very inclusive and comfortable with students in the LGBT+ community so I often feel comfortable and safe to be there. One particular time I felt euphoric is when I came out as trans to someone.

Story (Bisexual Genderfaer, 14yrs) was typical of many students whose euphorias sparked over engaging with school LGBTQ+ community for the first time. Year Eight at their current NSW public school held an *'LGBTQ+ civi day'* celebrating queer identities:

people had brought pride flags, wore rainbow clothes and accessories and everybody looked so happy and so proud. I had grown up in regional Sydney and attended a Catholic school, and this was the first time I had ever seen people in real life celebrating or actively supporting the LGBTQ+ community. At the time I was still questioning, but it made me feel safe, and confident in my identity.

Euphoria was also incited by reciprocally aiding others' first engagement as school LGBTQ+ community representatives. Demarco (Bisexual Cis-male, 16yrs) said at his Victorian public school, '*It is nice knowing that you can support others who can support you*'. Thus students' *Community Connection euphoria* had reciprocity and circularity; youth learned from others' confidence and LGBTQ+ community experience within social engagements or observations, later passing these contributions onwards. This theme linked to 'feel', 'pride', and 'teachers'.

'Feel': Students' Acceptance Euphoria Underlined Friends

'Feel' (522 hits, 74% relationality) explored how social (peer) acceptance combatted loneliness or other negative feelings, contributing to self-acceptance (sub-concepts: feel, friends, happy, comfortable, talk, identity, queer, able, accepting, gay). Irene (Lesbian Cis-female, 16yrs) said euphoria was incited by coming out to most of her friends by Year Eleven in a Victorian public school; '*afterwards I felt comfortable and happy to talk to them about things like that*'. Cornette (Bisexual Demi-Girl, 15yrs) felt euphoria due to being accepted by many in the Ninth Year at a SA public school: '*the majority of my friends are queer and so being able to talk them about lgbtq+ stuff makes me comfortable and happy that other people understand how I feel*'. Emerald (Bisexual Cis-female, 15yrs), also in the Ninth Year at a public school in NSW, said euphoria came from, '*Hanging out with my queer friends in drama. We were just talking about the struggles but also all of our gay awakenings and happy moments*'. Finally, some like Ivan (Gay Cis-male, 16yrs) reflected that euphoria was sparked by the realisation he had acceptance by Year Eleven in his ACT public school, when others lacked support:

Once I was with a guy who was hinting at being gay alone in a space at the school and I felt really happy to have been able to come out to myself and others and truly love myself for I thought I'd be able to actually live happily with another man the same as heterosexual couples do even in college.

Youths' (Social-) *Acceptance euphorias* thus emerged on nullification of perceived social exclusion threats. They overlapped with *Community Connection euphorias* where acceptance came from LGBTQ+ school community or was relative to others' acceptance levels.

'Teachers': Students' Category Validation Euphoria Led by Pedagogies

'Teachers' (263 hits, 53% relationality) illustrated LGBTQ+ students' positive feelings around how their gender identity category was validated by

teachers (sub-concepts: teachers, pronouns, name, class, started, asked). Comments were overwhelmingly from TGD youth. Over a hundred quotes reflected teachers' sparking students' *Category Validation* euphorias through compliance with directly requested name changes and pronoun use. Derwin (Bisexual Trans-male, 15yrs) experienced euphoria in a religious Victorian school, '*When I first told my year 9 English teacher I was trans and she started using my correct name in class*'. Sal (Asexual Trans-male, 15yrs) similarly recalled that in the Tenth Year in a QLD public school: '*The first few times my teachers started using my correct name and pronouns in class made me feel very euphoric*'. Sometimes, staff and/or students sparked euphorias in requesting, and then fulfilling, participants' category validation needs. Alton (Asexual Non-Binary Person, 14yrs) felt euphoria at their WA public school when '*A teacher of mine asked me for my preferred name and pronouns*'. Two dozen quotes reflected gendered form, bathroom and policy inclusion, whilst other quotes reflected combined social and structural validation. Bronn (Queer Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) experienced euphorias as their category was validated across their Victorian public school:

when my friends started to call me by my chosen name, and a lot of my year level cohort caught on quickly and would refer to me by my chosen name despite me not asking them to. This is also the case with a couple of my teachers who approached me and asked me for my name and pronouns after overhearing ... the unquestioning, quiet acceptance of who I am has been really nice and means a lot more to me than the big school events such as 'wear it purple day' celebrations which often come off as a bit tokenistic.

In rare comments, the mere *promise* of teachers' *potential* category validation of students' gender if needed, kindled euphorias. For example, Alpha (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 14yrs) explained that in their Year Eight QLD public school:

We were naming this stuffed animal for philosophy (to throw around and take turns with), and once we decided a name, the teacher asked what the toy's pronouns were (now the toy uses he/they), and it made me pretty sure if I was to ever tell the teacher my pronouns it would be ok.

For (especially TGD) students, *Category Validation Euphoria* accordingly had overlaps to *Community Connection* and *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* through the supportiveness of social and institutional communities for their identities.

‘Pride’: Students’ Institutional Inclusion Euphoria Emphasised Events
 ‘Pride’ (112 hits, 21% relationality) constituted LGBTQ+ students’ feelings of visibility, fun and safety from their schools’ institutional efforts at direct structural supports and celebratory inclusion (sub-concepts: pride, day, wear, purple, flag). Students emphasised recognition of Wear it Purple Days, International Days Against Homophobia, Intersex-bias, and Transphobia (IDAHOBITS) and Pride Days as key sources of *Institutional Inclusion euphorias*. For example, Bee (Bisexual Demi-Girl, 14yrs) reported euphoria at a NSW public school: *‘when we did a Wear it Purple day for lgbtq+ pride’*. Blaise (Gay Non-Binary Person, 15yrs) experienced euphoria when their Victorian public school *‘had a whole week dedicated to IDAHOBIT day activities, including a pride flag display’*. Trinity (Bisexual Cis-female, 17yrs) reported euphoria when her Victorian non-religious independent school: *‘gave out wristbands for Wear it Purple Day’*. Antonella (Lesbian Cis-female, 14yrs) reflected her WA public school *‘has a pride day and I got to get my flag painted on my cheek and it was really fun’*. Riley (Gay Questioning Gender, 18yrs) explained their *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* was sparked by their Victorian public school’s *‘Wear it Purple Day and IDAHOBIT’*, involving:

hosting small events or putting up posts to educate students on LGBTQ+ identities which makes me feel more seen and safe. An event in 2019 was allowing students to write messages on sticky notes that were stuck on a rainbow flag in the courtyard. These had really kind and inspiring things written on them which made me feel good about myself and safer at school.

Students’ *Community Connection* and *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* had overlaps seen in these comments and the Leximancer map on ‘special events’ celebrating LGBTQ+ and institutional connections.

Existence of Changes in Youth Euphorias

Youth experiencing education-based euphorias were asked *‘Has your sense of euphoria (happiness or comfort) with your LGBTQ+ identity changed over time?’*. Around two thirds reported that ‘Yes’ it had changed over time (64.1%, Fig. 4.4). Less than a quarter were ‘Unsure’ (23.2%), and 12.8% indicated ‘No’ changes.

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

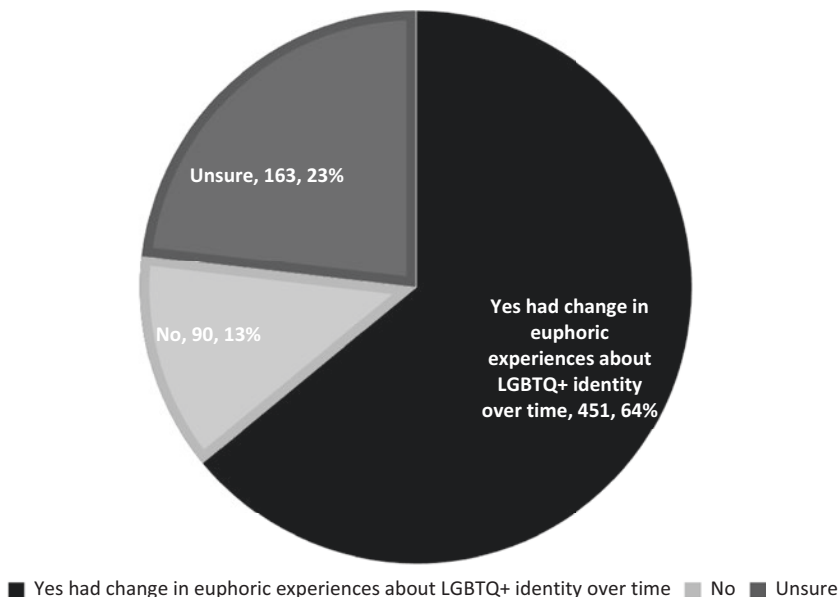


Fig. 4.4 LGBTQ+ students' euphoric change

Change-trends for LGBTQ+ Youth Euphorias

Students were asked: 'Please describe how your sense of euphoria (comfort or happiness) about your LGBTQ+ identity has changed over time'. Leximancer found six themes across their 439 responses: feel, people, friends, become, bisexual and teachers (Fig. 4.5).

'Feel' & 'People': Students' Acceptance (& Other) Euphorias Intensified with Support

The largest two overlapping Leximancer-identified themes for LGBTQ+ youth euphoria change-trends were 'feel' (442 hits, 100% relationality) and 'people' (370 hits, 71% relationality). They portrayed students' increased *Acceptance (and other) euphorias* over time (sub-concepts: feel, comfortable, identity, time, gender, euphoria, coming, people, sexuality, used, queer, others, community, LGBTQ, someone, proud). For example, at her NSW public school Valentina (Bisexual Cis-female, 15yrs) felt



Theme	Hits
feel	442
people	370
friends	336
become	197
bisexual	171
teachers	26

Fig. 4.5 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ students' euphoric change descriptions (N=439)

Acceptance and Community Connection euphorias ‘increased over time, I feel most likely due to more people around me coming out’. Anna (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) felt these euphorias expand *‘through conversations with my friends and peers over what gender is’*. Bronn (Queer Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) reported *Acceptance and Category Validation euphoria* increase around friends at their Victorian public school, with lapses during invalidations:

After coming out, particularly to friends, there was a brief period of a few months of pretty high levels of euphoria (...) My levels of euphoria are fairly consistent now but fluctuate a bit as I’m not properly out to my school or work yet, so there’s a fair bit of deadnaming and misgendering that occurs.

These euphorias increased for Christina (Lesbian Cis-female, 15yrs) in her NSW public school:

Prior to year 9, I often questioned my identity, gender, and my ‘validity’ of being LGBT. However, now I am much more comfortable in myself, and allow myself to feel much more euphoric in public spaces such as school.

Kameron (Bisexual/Asexual Non-Binary/Genderfluid Person, 16yrs) felt *Acceptance euphoria* increase with friends at their SA public school, *‘they were supportive and helped me when changing pronouns to something I felt more comfortable’*. Teachers inhibited their outness and euphorias: *‘as many of them have purposely misgendered others’*.

Many students narrated redemption arcs from negative to positive contexts, wherein euphorias increased. Ardell (Pansexual/Bisexual Non-Binary/Confused, 15yrs) felt *Acceptance euphoria* increase, after initial fear about their SA public school subsided: *‘I used to be so scared about coming out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community but now I’m pansexual and proud’*. Allison (Queer Non-Binary Person, 15yrs) felt *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* increase with their NSW independent school’s increased app-based supports *‘In year 7, [when] an app called Tellonym (and other similar sites) was trending where you could send in anonymous messages to someone’*. Lilyana (Asexual/Omni or Pan Cis-female, 14yrs) had increased *Community Connection, Institutional Inclusion and Acceptance euphorias* at her current WA public school:

I moved schools from a strict, religious private school that was known for being homophobic to a public school that had many programs to help me and others.

There was a club and a lot of people were LGBTQ+, and that made me a lot happier about my sexuality.

(Self-) *Acceptance euphoria* deepened over time for Megan (Lesbian Cis-female, 14yrs), who went from terrible ‘*internalised homophobia*’ and telling herself she was straight, to being embraced by her increasingly socially accepting WA public school towards becoming ‘*more accepting of myself as I grew older and matured*’. Youth euphorias thus often changed in relationship to supports, contacts, and time. Sometimes *Acceptance* and other euphorias’ increases correlated to social and self-categorisation processes; evident in overlaps with ‘friends’ and ‘bisexual’ Leximancer themes and linked *Category Validation euphorias*.

‘Friends’ & ‘Bisexual’: Students’ Category Validation Euphoria & ‘Identity Fit’ Indication

‘Friends’ (336 hits, 54% relationality) and ‘bisexual’ (171 hits, 21% relationality) themes combined to depict youths’ sudden, sporadic or slow shifts in *Category Validation euphorias* in relation to their friends’ identities, attitudes to identities or trialled identities’ ‘fit’ (sub-concepts: friends, school, started, year, pronouns, changed, different, uncomfortable; and bisexual, realised, gay, straight, thought, lesbian). For example, Lesleigh (Asexual Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) felt euphoria around their Year Twelve NSW public school friends’ outness, but retained barriers to their own *Category Validation euphoria*:

I didn’t know I was ‘different’ from straight people but I still felt strange. When I started talking about it with my friends and they came out I felt way happier although I still feel uncomfortable with some people about it.

Wally (Straight Trans-male, 17yrs) felt his greatest *Category Validation euphoria* when dressing congruently and wearing a binder ‘*which made me feel so much happier going out*’, and when his Victorian public school friends validated their pronouns ‘*which also improved things greatly*’. Harmon (Bisexual Questioning/Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) felt *Category Validation euphoria* when their NSW public school friends validated their sexual categorisations; however, shifting gender categorisations demanded new peer validations:

In year 10 I came out to the whole school and that felt euphoric and I'm open now, so it's changed a lot. Now I'm back to square one with my gender identity and correcting people on my pronouns.

The 'bisexual' concept captured how LGBTQ+ students sometimes moved across multiple categories variably, changing *Category Validation euphorias*—which sometimes intensified when identities felt appropriate but reduced when they did not. For example, Theodora (Asexual Cis-female, 14yrs) felt *Category Validation euphorias* fluctuate over different categories over time: *'I only realised I was asexual recently and am still questioning my romantic orientation. Earlier this year I thought I was completely straight and allosexual'*. Bisexuality and non-binary identities in particular—whether students' own, or others'—sometimes featured as temporary sites of identity exploration or inspirational stepping-stones facilitating moves across categories. Temporary identification staged-out trajectories towards categories offering greater fit and later *Category Validation euphoria*, but which initially appeared too distant or unliveable. Mia (Aegosexual Lesbian Cis-female, 14yrs) for example, said she felt euphoria over her lesbianism more when a friend announced their bisexuality:

When I was younger I always came up with these scenarios and as a bit of a joke I thought 'lol what if you're lesbian' and then I quickly shut that thought down thinking (...) I always convinced myself that I'm not gay but one day my old friend came out as bisexual.

Reagann (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) said:

At first when I started identifying as Non-binary and earlier Bisexual I felt like I wasn't 'queer' enough and like I was just pretending. Once I started to accept myself I started to be happy with my identity. I also feel like talking to other queer students helped to get rid of the stigma I was feeling towards myself.

Bee (Bisexual Demi-Girl, 14yrs) traversed phased identifications with asexuality, bisexuality, and gender diversity—intensified *Category Validation euphoria* indicated progressively improved categories' fit:

At first I thought I was just a straight asexual, then I thought I was bi, but I was doubting myself telling myself that I'm just a straight girl looking for attention, and then I thought no wait I actually am bisexual, and then realised

I'm not exactly comfortable identifying as a girl, and I have got more comfortable with who I am.

Chloe's (Asexual Lesbian CIS/Questioning Female, 16yrs) journey from bisexual, to lesbian, to asexual lesbian (in this chapter's introductory quote) typified a phenomenon where monumental *Category Validation euphoria* intensifications and blockages arose across complex self-discoveries over time. Chloe's experiences illustrated how initially some youth *Category Validation euphorias* plummeted when stigmatised identities fit them most, tempering their joy in 'best-fit' categories. *Category Validation euphoria* functioned as a sign of identity fit for youth, both in its presence or severe absence; depending on categories' socio-cultural (de)valuing. The influences social exposures, and responses to, identities had on *Category Validation euphorias* manifested in overlaps with *Acceptance euphorias* (and Leximancer concepts 'feel' and 'people').

'Become': Students' Acceptance Euphoria Blocked by Internalised Biases

'Become' (197 hits, 36% relationality) showcased how LGBTQ+ students' (Self-) *Acceptance euphoria* was often initially blocked by internalised biases (particularly internalised homophobia), and then arose upon these biases' dissipation (sub-concepts: become, happy, able, accepting, homophobia). Typically, Iliana (Queer Cis-female, 17yrs) said *'when I was younger, I identified as an LGBTQ ally and experienced a lot of internalised homophobia. Now I am able to be quite open about my identity'*. Brighton (Gay Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) explained, *'I have worked through [much] internalized homophobia, as I have overcome this and other anxieties I've become more confident in myself'*. Devintae (Gay Undeclared Gender, 17yrs) said:

I was very reluctant to accept myself to start with and dealt with a lot of internalised homophobia. Being around people who were accepting or out themselves helped me accept myself more and allowed me to feel happy in my identity.

Megan (Lesbian Cis-female, 14yrs) enjoyed increased (Self) *Acceptance euphoria* after broader socio-cultural change reduced her internalised homophobia:

I don't view being LGBTQ+ as a bad thing anymore, as society is more accepting, I feel better about myself and it makes me happy that there are people openly expressing their sexuality, it is helping destigmatise queerness.

Alaia (Bisexual Cis-female, 16yrs) similarly felt (Self) *Acceptance euphoria* after internal biases passed, ‘as *I have come to accept my identity or am able to become happy with who I am and how I belong in the world*’. This theme’s overlaps with broader intensifications of *Acceptance euphorias* over time were reflected in overlaps with the Leximancer map concepts ‘feel’ and ‘people’.

Teachers’: Students’ Acceptance & Institutional Inclusion Euphorias Affected by Teachers

Minor stand-alone theme ‘Teachers’ (26 hits, 11% relationality) exhibited moments and time periods specific teachers upraised or dampened LGBTQ+ students’ *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias*. For some participants, accessing progressive teachers by changing year-levels or schools advanced these euphorias. Typically, Daryle (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 17yrs) said by Year Eleven at their QLD public school, ‘*I came out to teachers as well, so I get euphoria from being gendered correctly by them too*’. Princess (Bisexual Cis-female, 14yrs) said that in Ninth Year at her religious Victorian school, ‘*it’s changed because I’ve learned about myself but I’ve also met supportive teachers*’. Amir (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 15yrs) said moving to a WA public school provided ‘*more progressive teachers and has a program that educates students (not entirely accurately) on LGBTQ+ topics. While it is not perfect, it is a step in the right direction*’.

For other participants, particular teachers deadened euphorias. Winter (Gay Non-Binary Person, 16yrs) described how by Year Eleven at their ACT public school: ‘*Since I stopped being female I don’t feel as accepted anymore as my teachers still use my dead name (...) I feel like I can’t approach them about it*’. Harper (Bisexual Cis-female, 15yrs) found teachers’ acceptance and inclusion worsened over time at her Victorian religious private school. This decreased her euphorias in their vicinities:

After I came out to many of my friends I have felt a sense of euphoria when I am talking to them. These days, I can feel downhearted though, when teachers are talking negatively about LGBTQ+ matters.

Therefore, for some LGBTQ+ youths, teachers mediated euphorias, as builders or blockers. Overlaps in the Leximancer map for teachers’ dulling of *Acceptance* and *Category Validation euphorias*, are seen between ‘friends’ and ‘teachers’ concepts.

DISCUSSION

Dominant Youth Euphorias

For over a third of LGBTQ+ students, (1) *Community Connection*; (2) *Acceptance*; (3) *Institutional Inclusion*; and (4) *Category Validation euphorias* dominated. These euphorias' inciting sources and dominance orderings strongly reflected students' social focus [15–17], and *Community Connection euphoria* was accordingly most connected and conducive to other youth euphorias. *Category Validation euphorias* reflected joyful feelings of rightness from existing TGD studies [18, 19], and Erikson's assertion that the teen years (Stage 5) often lend heightened importance to engagement with and approval of same-stage peers and shared identity formation groupings, and also the formation of (Stage 6) intimacy [16, 20]—Fig. 4.6. The socially driven nature of youth euphorias perhaps explained their positive correlation with outness—disclosing LGBTQ+ (especially non-binary) identity enables some youth to access community connection, acceptance, and inclusion. Stalled identity moratoriums, feigned identity foreclosures, and most LGBTQ+ youth's lack of euphorias; suggested many LGBTQ+ youth identities were unknown, unvalidated, or unaccepted. This reflects theories happiness is less available to

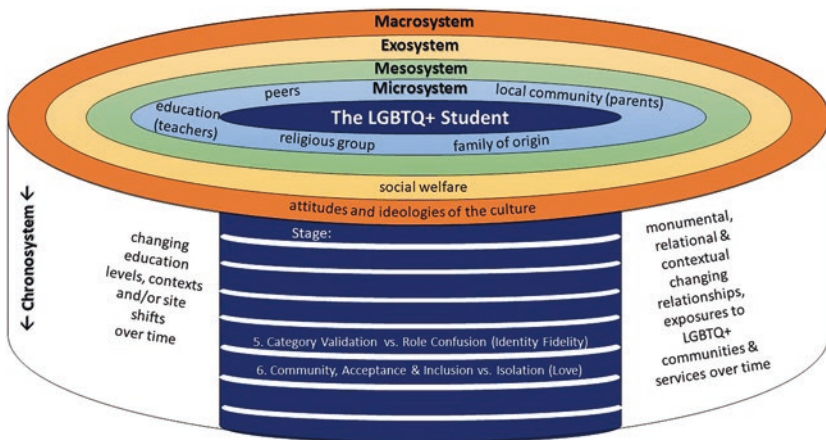


Fig. 4.6 Ecological model of psycho-social influences on LGBTQ+ students' euphorias

individuals forsaking aged/staged ideals [16, 21]. Whole-school institutional efforts and students' reciprocal co-contributions transforming LGBTQ+ experiences, taking and giving peer support, thus appeared subversive.

Monumental Change-trends

LGBTQ+ students' euphorias were variable, fluid, and tenuous across their Chronosystem/time: *Acceptance euphorias* were especially reactive to socio-institutional contexts. Students' *Category Validation euphorias* could function as signs of *endorsed* identities' fit reflecting the joyful feeling of rightness from TGD studies [18, 19]. However, their *absence* could signify *stigmatised* identities' fit; especially around teachers' or parents' 'disapproving' meta-emotions over LGBTQ+ pleasures [22]. Some youth used what Marcia terms 'identity foreclosure'—commitment to identities with greater socio-cultural endorsement in their Macro and Microsystems; or feigned 'identity moratoriums' (pretending continued exploration) [23, 24] to avoid identities laden with stress and denied happiness [21, 25, 26]. Hence, students struggled with conformity drives against the sometimes-unhappy-queer-within-the-euphorically queer position, particularly in religious and rural schools. Many showed strength and bravery achieving stigmatised identities *nonetheless*. Youth euphorias were not, however, the stable reward-based positions implied in adult research and therapies [18, 27, 28]. Though LGBTQ+ students sometimes improved education environments towards supporting euphorias through activisms, changes more often required factors beyond their control: information exposures, social environments, disclosure, and treatment request supports and so on. Youth euphorias change-trends were therefore not linear but relational, stop-start and monumental (involving mile-stones, events, sudden shifts).

Significance & Limitations

The study provided the largest-scale student euphoria data to date, offering (re)conceptualisations of many LGBTQ+ youth as joyful, brave, peer-supporting, and strategic. Students' comments were particularly elaborative compared to those of adults in the *LGBTQ+ You* study, and their discussion of euphoria likely benefitted from the enhanced clarity emotion brings youth [29]. Past research emphasises that dysphoria models overlook non-binary and transmasculine people's experiences [30]; these data show

euphorias as especially useful for identifying and understanding such youths' experiences. The study showed pedagogies endorsing diversity and students' requested names/pronouns supported in anti-suicide data [1, 31, 32], also support students' *Category Validation euphorias*. Teachers could be LGBTQ+ youth euphoria builders or blockers, reflecting research linking teacher rejection to increased wellbeing risks [14, 33, 34]. However, the study offered limited exploration of conditions for students never reporting euphorias.

CONCLUSIONS

Youth euphorias are not pervasive, but occur enough to substantiate alternative lenses to deficit models for mental health, health, education, and other service providers exploring consent-based models [35]. Euphorias appear relevant for identifying and understanding non-binary youth and transgender youth not allocated a male sex at birth, particularly given their dysphoria discrepancies [30]. The scant, monumental nature of LGBTQ+ youth happiness overall suggests LGBTQ+ identity formation and community connection goals are less supported within schools' available happiness economies than they should be in a 'euphoric ideal'. LGBTQ+ youth also sometimes disrupt normative identity development models; combatting more external biases or abandoning the binaries identities are usually based around. Thus, their once-settled inter-related identities may be repeatedly recalled for questioning and identity fidelity achievement may take longer or have alternative impacts compared to rewarded norms. However, youth showed strength in bravely embodying stressed categories *regardless*, and euphoric-sharing circularities with/for peers. Studies on euphoria blockers for youth *never* experiencing euphorias are needed. Activists can debunk spectral ideas about teachers' anti-LGBTQ+ disapproving meta-emotion by promoting data showing most teachers' desire improved sexuality and gender diversity education and training [36]. School social, structural, and pedagogical supports can enable *Community Connection* and *Acceptance euphorias* for LGBTQ+ students. Comparative and intervention studies may help to understand if and how often *Community Connection euphoria* is experienced by all youth and/or marginal groups particularly; and which models best support it (of GSAs, queer rooms, events etc.). Chapter 5 explores professionals' euphorias.

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LGBTQ+ Professionals' Euphorias! Site-specific Shifts in LGBTQ+ Education Staff's Happiness & Comfort

Abstract Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) education professionals have been portrayed negatively in education research literature and can be fired in religious institutions. This chapter investigates 229 LGBTQ+ professionals' euphorias in their employing education institutions. Almost half of LGBTQ+ staff were euphoric about their identities at school especially if out or in urban/suburban contexts. Many were euphoric often. *Institutional Inclusion*, *Acceptance*, and *Pride Generativity euphorias* dominated. Over two-thirds of staff reported changes to euphorias, including (1) site-specific shifts in *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* depending on the support employment bodies and communities, employment security and safety concerns and (2) a less pronounced slow increase of *Community Connection euphoria*, especially relative to the disclosure, education, and activist efforts of colleagues. Changes had site-specific or variable qualities.

Keywords Euphoria • LGBTQ+ • Staff • Professional • Teacher • Rural

Key Points

- Under half of LGBTQ+ staff experience education-based euphorias; the likelihood decreased for those who were closeted or in rural settings.
- LGBTQ+ staff euphorias were volatile: experienced often or sometimes; and changing over time for over two-thirds of staff.
- Staffs' dominant *Institutional Inclusion, Acceptance, and Pride Generativity euphorias* align with their needs for fidelity across professional and LGBTQ+ identities, pedagogical intimacy and connection.
- LGBTQ+ staffs have site-specific shifts in *Institutional Inclusion & Acceptance euphorias* across their careers.
- Employment, safety, and rejection concerns can outweigh professionals' euphoric will.

INTRODUCTION

*The Headmaster asked me about my partner and family life and inferred a gender by asking 'what does he do? Your partner?' I felt that a powerful moment that this school was going to support me because they valued me as a professional for the job and my sexual orientation was a non-event. (Roscoe, Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs on site-specific *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphoria*, sparked by his religious employer)*

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) professionals in education contexts (including principals, school/TAFE/university educators, administrators and others) have been portrayed negatively in historic and contemporary research literature [1, 2]. Used as objects of fear in media and political debates, in some Australian and international jurisdictions they can be legally fired under religious institutions' anti-discrimination law exemptions [1, 2]. This chapter briefly reviews the literature on LGBTQ+ education professionals to emphasise its deviance lenses. It then considers affirming LGBTQ+ staff experiences in schools—continuing Chaps. 3 and 4's presentation of *LGBTQ+ You* data.

DEVIATING LGBTQ+ STAFF IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

Research literature on LGBTQ+ staff and education staff on LGBTQ+ issues includes both quantitative and qualitative studies on teachers' capacity to affect homophobia [3] and coverage of sexuality or LGBTQ+ issues [4]. There have additionally been historical investigations on their contributions to sexuality education discourses particularly in Australia [2, 5]. Such studies highlighted the historic association of gay identity with potential deviant/paedophilic teacher seductions of students (found in older psychology/psychiatry discourses which falsely construed homosexuals as necessarily mentally ill, infectious predators). Some research emphasises that teachers can:

- be unwilling or under-prepared to engage with LGBTQ+ inclusive syllabi [5–7];
- risk being labelled 'deviant' for addressing LGBTQ+ issues or being LGBTQ+ [1, 8];
- or find themselves in a precarious employment position where tackling LGBTQ+ issues [6, 9].

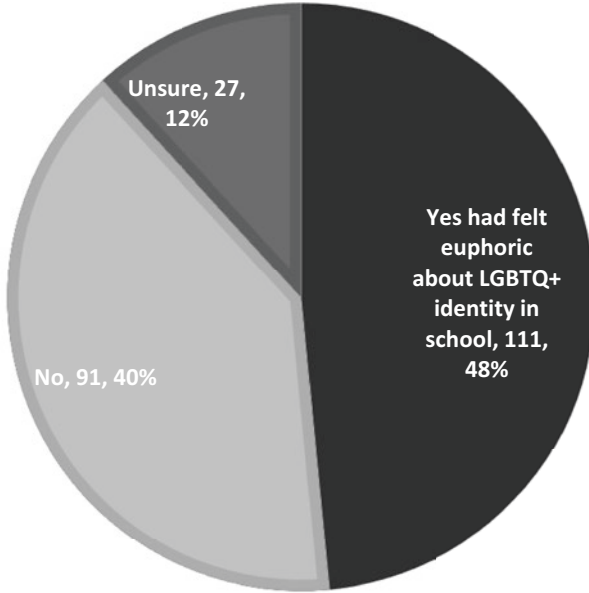
Little research specifically explores the experiences of LGBTQ+ education staff. Where it exists this work mainly comes from the United States and the United Kingdom [10, 11]. Australasian literature suggests that gay and lesbian teachers struggle to address homophobia or LGBTQ+ student issues, sometimes expressing concern about employment security [1, 10]. Interviews, surveys, and focus groups showed LGBTQ+ professionals navigate tricky private and professional boundaries and complex identity disclosure terrain. These concerns are compounded by the lack of positive historical representations of themselves LGBTQ+ education professionals can draw on, and being viewed with a suspicion reserved for the criminally deviant [10].

REDRESSING PROFESSIONAL EUPHORIA RESEARCH GAPS

Positive framings of LGBTQ+ education staff are lacking [1, 8, 12], and studies ignore professionals' euphorias. This chapter asks:

1. *How can we characterise typical euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences of LGBTQ+ education staff, and their influences?*

LGBTQ+ STAFF



■ Yes had felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity in school ■ No ■ Unsure

Fig. 5.1 Whether LGBTQ+ staff felt euphoric about identity in education

2. *How do these euphorias typically change over time, and what influences changes?*

The following data derive from the 2021–2022 *LGBTQ+ You* study’s 229 staff surveys (Chap. 3 outlines methodology and methods).

LGBTQ+ YOU STAFF SURVEY FINDINGS

Existence of Professionals’ Euphorias

Of the 229 LGBTQ+ staff aged 18+ yrs who responded to, ‘*Have you ever felt happy or comfortable (euphoric) about your LGBTQ+ identity in your school of employment?*’, 111 (48.5%) had felt euphoric; 91 (39.7%) had never; and 27 (11.8%) were unsure (Fig. 5.1). Table 5.1 reveals how

Table 5.1 LGBTQ+ professionals' euphorias versus demographics

	<i>LGBTQ+ professionals felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school^a (N=229)</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>Total</i>	111	91	27
<i>Age</i>			
<i>14–17yrs</i>	0	0	0
<i>18–25yrs</i>	9	9	4
<i>26–35yrs</i>	35	35	12
<i>36–45yrs</i>	36	27	5
<i>46–55yrs</i>	23	12	3
<i>56–65yrs</i>	6	6	2
<i>66yrs+</i>	2	2	1
<i>State^a</i>			
<i>ACT</i>	3	2	1
<i>NSW</i>	50	39	10
<i>NT</i>	1	1	2
<i>QLD</i>	14	18	3
<i>SA</i>	14	13	5
<i>TAS</i>	1	3	1
<i>VIC</i>	20	6	4
<i>WA</i>	8	9	1
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0
<i>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	2	4	0
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	109	87	27
<i>Cultural & Linguistic Diverse (CALD)</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	24	17	8
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	87	74	19
<i>Disability</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	13	10	6
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	98	81	21
<i>Regional, remote, or rural area^a</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	31	29	15
<i>No</i>	79	61	12
<i>Unsure</i>	1	1	0
<i>School Type^a</i>			
<i>Government/public</i>	89	62	20
<i>Non-religious private/independent</i>	3	3	2
<i>Religious private/independent</i>	16	25	4
<i>Other</i>	3	1	1
<i>School Level^b</i>			

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

	<i>LGBTQ+ professionals felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at school^a (N=229)</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>Higher-education</i>	1	2	0
<i>High-school</i>	68	58	13
<i>Primary-school</i>	34	30	11
<i>Pre-school</i>	3	1	0
<i>Other (e.g. no longer attend)</i>	5	0	3
<i>Assigned sex at birth (M, F, X)</i>			
<i>Male (AMAB)</i>	42	31	7
<i>Female (AFAB)</i>	68	60	20
<i>X or another option (AXAB)</i>	1	0	0
<i>Gender</i>			
<i>Cis-male</i>	36	25	6
<i>Cis-female</i>	59	51	16
<i>Trans-male</i>	1	1	1
<i>Trans-female</i>	5	3	1
<i>Non-binary or another gender (genderqueer, fluid, no label, etc.)</i>	10	11	3
<i>Sexuality</i>			
<i>Asexual</i>	0	7	1
<i>Bisexual (or multi-gender, queer, or fluid sexualities)</i>	25	27	9
<i>Gay or Lesbian</i>	82	55	16
<i>Heterosexual</i>	1	1	1
<i>Another answer (other, don't know, prefer not to say, etc.)</i>	3	1	0
<i>Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school^b</i>			
<i>Always</i>	3	27	0
<i>Often</i>	7	31	10
<i>Sometimes</i>	38	15	10
<i>Rarely</i>	28	10	3
<i>Never</i>	35	8	4

^aFor most recent education institution/school of employment

education professionals' demographics and euphorias intersected. There were no reliable relationships between professionals' euphorias and their age, sex assignment, Indigeneity, CALD, dis/ability, gender, sexuality; or education institution state, type or level. Table 5.2 displays the significance of LGBTQ+ professionals' decreased likelihood of euphoria in rural schools ($p < 0.05$) or for LGBTQ+ identity concealment ($p < 0.001$).

Table 5.2 Relationships between LGBTQ+ education professionals' euphorias and demographics

	Pearson Chi-square	df	LGBTQ+ professionals felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity at employing school (N=204)		
			Yes	No	Unsure
Regional, remote, or rural area*	7.58*	2			
Yes			31	29	15
No or unsure			80	62	12
Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school	16.46***	2			
Never			35	8	4
Ever (from rarely to always)			76	83	23

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Frequency of Professionals' Euphorias

Professionals who experienced euphorias were asked 'How often have you felt happy or comfortable (euphoric) about your LGBTQ+ identity in your school of employment?'. Figure 5.2 shows most selected often' (38.7%) or 'sometimes' (36.0%). Fewer selected always (16.2%) or rarely (9%).

LGBTQ+ Professionals' Euphorias

Staffs were asked: 'Please tell us a time when you felt particularly euphoric (happy or comfortable) about your LGBTQ+ identity in your workplace'. Leximancer exposed five themes in their 107 write-in responses: students, felt, day, gay and partner (Fig. 5.3).

'Students': Institutional Inclusion Euphoria Dominant for Staff

The largest Leximancer-identified theme for staff euphorias was 'student' (130 hits, 100% relationality to all other concepts). It expressed LGBTQ+ staffs' feelings of happiness and euphoria from institutional efforts at direct inclusion, sometimes directly negating exclusion possibilities (sub-concepts: students, school, staff, support, community, happy, class, work, euphoric). Sometimes institutional inclusion for individuals' own identities sparked euphoria. For example, Paisleigh (Lesbian Cis-female,

LGBTQ+ STAFF

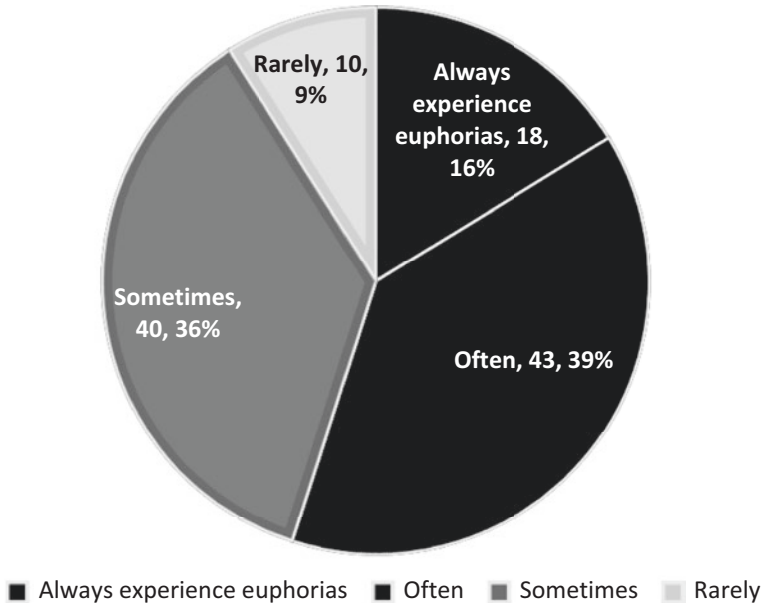


Fig. 5.2 LGBTQ+ professionals' euphoric frequency

36–45yrs) said of her WA private primary-school ‘*My wife and I work at the same school and all the staff have accepted us with open arms and are very supportive*’. Sophia (Bisexual Trans-female, 56–65yrs) explained that in her religious Victorian high-school:

I was outed because a staff member saw my Facebook profile and drew the correct conclusion that I, the male member of staff was this trans woman (...) the leadership class, Principal and a selection of vice principals supported my right to be who I am. They argued on my behalf that the College would stand by the Catholic principles of community, we support each other and diversity. I think you can understand the essences of the euphoric moment there, potentially the outing of me could've lead to me losing my job.

Helga (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) experienced euphoria over inclusion efforts at a QLD private religious high-school:

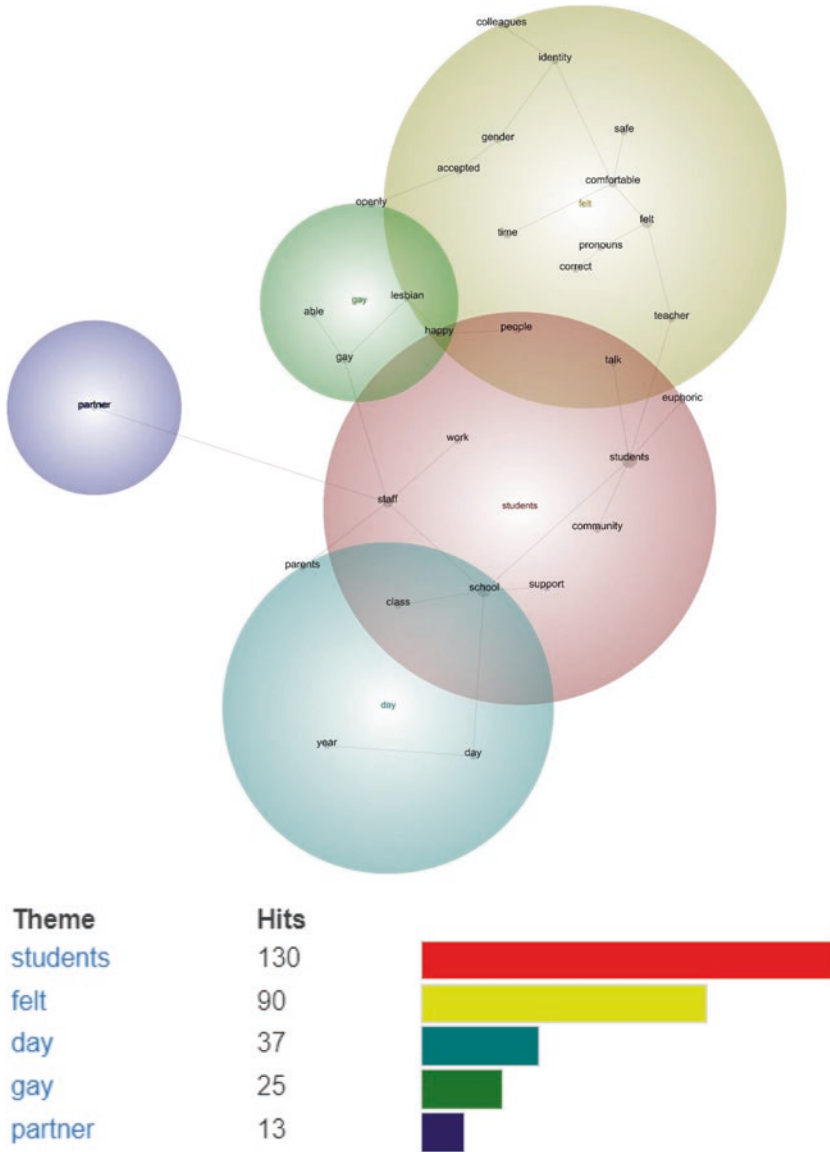


Fig. 5.3 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ professionals' euphoria descriptions (N=107)

When the school priest included lgbtiq people in prayer. When the class was supportive of diverse students and (...) to know that over time I had contributed to it and that this was a pure expression of support for self through supporting wider (and especially younger) members of the community sharing my identity or similar.

Other LGBTQ+ staff felt euphorias over general inclusion efforts. Larry (Gay Cis-male, 46–55yrs) enjoyed his public NSW high-school's '*Wear it Purple Day when you see how many teachers support the wellbeing of LGBTQ community*'. Ellison (Bisexual Cis-female, 36–45yrs) said at her Victorian public high school: '*I feel happy & comfortable with my students & other staff*'. Thus for staff, *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* evident in the 'students' theme was the central and dominant euphoria. It had relationships to most euphorias, visible in Leximancer map overlaps with 'felt', 'day' and 'gay' themes (thus *Pride Generativity*, and *Acceptance euphorias* as explained following), and a link to 'partner' (*Category Validation euphorias*).

'Felt', 'Gay' and 'Partner': Staffs' Acceptance Euphoria
Underlined Colleagues

Acceptance Euphoria emerged within 'felt' (90 hits, 50% relationality), 'gay' (25 hits, 20% relationality), and 'partner' (13 hits, 18% relationality). 'Felt' captured LGBTQ+ and especially transgender staffs' comfort and safety from acceptance of their identities, or others' (sub-concepts: felt, comfortable, identity, teacher, people, safe, time, colleagues, talk, accepted, gender, correct, pronouns). Usually stories emphasised colleagues' acceptance. Delmar (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) emphasised long-term comfort from acceptance with NSW public primary-school colleagues; '*All colleagues knew of my sexual orientation and it was never an issue for any*'. Stephanie's (Bisexual Cis-female, 36–45yrs) said in her K-12 NSW public school, '*I have felt comfortable discussing my identity when I have felt safe with colleagues. This took time, building trust and rapport with them*'. Conversely, Carolina (Lesbian Cis-female, 26–35yrs) described euphoria one incident type at a SA public primary-school: '*I think the biggest time I felt comfortable was when I say my partners name, and my colleagues don't react. It makes me feel accepted for who I am and who I am with*'.

Trans staff members often listed off multiple moments they were accepted around their gender. For example, Julianna (Straight Trans-female, 18–25yrs) had euphorias at her public NSW high-school over:

- *Being accepted wearing dresses/skirts as a transgender female (no student or colleague has openly questioned it or pointed it out).*
- *Being known as Ms (and feeling comfortable/safe enough to correct people if they accidentally misgender me).*
- *Students and colleagues asking (very politely) for my preferred pronouns and apologise if they accidentally misgender me.*
- *Students treat me respectfully in terms of my gender identity (I still find classroom management challenging, but mostly because I am a first-year teacher more so because of my gender).*

Finlay (Questioning Sexuality Non-Binary Person, 26–35yrs) had many euphorias at a public NSW high-school:

I used a Wear it Purple Day celebration to let students and staff know that I was a nonbinary person. I think this was a particularly nerve-racking event but the euphoric moments came in the weeks following this event, overhearing students correct each other who were giving me the prefix Ms/sir. I additionally felt a sense of euphoria during weekly lunchtime sessions with the lunch time GSA I facilitated, observing students feel comfortable to talk about how they are feeling and use their preferred pronouns and/or names in a safe space.

The ‘gay’ theme expressed gay and lesbian staffs’ comfort and safety from social acceptance where their identities, or others’ identities, were expressed openly (sub-concepts: gay, openly, lesbian, able). Casimer (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) felt euphoria in a public SA high-school just ‘*being able to be myself and share my life experience being a gay man*’. Kadence’s (Lesbian Cis-female, 66+yrs) euphoria triggered at a public NSW primary-school when straight colleagues were ‘*supportive of gay and lesbian issues and those friends (straight) provided many happy times*’ or when LGBTIQ+ colleagues let her ‘*talk naturally with someone without first thinking would they become negative to me if I somehow disclose my lesbianism*’. Lance’s (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) euphorias generated over acceptance from and for a public NSW high-school’s students:

conversations about LGBT people from our students also reflect a strong sense of acceptance. I have several openly gay students in my class, and (as far as I can tell), there has been no issues with their peers.

Finally, the overlapping singular ‘partner’ theme depicted acceptance for staff’s same-sex or non-binary lovers. At a public NSW high-school

event, Aniya's (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) euphoria kindled upon being accepted with her partner:

This was also not long after the first Covid-19 lockdown so it felt very special to be able to celebrate in person with everyone. It was one of the times I felt most accepted, even celebrated, in my identity as a lesbian/in a same sex couple.

At a NSW public primary-school, Julissa's (Bisexual Cis-female, 46–55yrs) *Acceptance euphoria* initiated over being 'very open about having a female partner and my family'. At a NSW public high-school Abe's (Gay Cis-male, 56–65yrs) *Acceptance euphoria* ignited when 'comfortable to discuss me and my partner with colleagues'. Euphorias could also spark with normalisation of one's relationship; for example at a public ACT primary-school Ayden (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) said 'All staff know my partner and there is no awkwardness. This fact doesn't hurt my career which is great'. At a SA public primary school Summer (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) felt *Acceptance euphoria* when 'Colleagues always invite my partner to social events. Accept us as normal and valued'. Paityn (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) explained her public NSW primary school produces euphorias around 'General acceptance by other staff members. It is not something I need to flaunt, and as some staff have met my partner it is not a big deal'. Overall professionals' *Acceptance Euphorias* were mostly socially driven, and reliant on institutional facilitations and antecedents, so *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* could also be evident across 'felt', 'gay', and 'partner' theme comments. Leximancer's map also displayed this inter-euphoric relationship.

'Day': Staffs' Pride Generativity Euphoria Emphasised Risk-taking

'Day' also overlapped with the *Institutional Inclusion Euphoria* experiences staff described, emphasising how these efforts advanced pride within contexts lacking it (37 hits, 28% relationality). It denoted LGBTQ+ staffs' happiness from aiding institutional efforts at direct inclusion, usually on one specific day, sometimes directly negating past expectations or norms of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment (sub-concepts: day, year, parents). Typically, this staff euphoria involved their organising role in a Wear it Purple Day or other event. Paislee (Lesbian Cis-female, 26–35yrs) for example felt *Pride Generativity euphoria* at a NSW public high-school:

When I helped organise and facilitate the school's first Wear it Purple Day and that it has continued to be celebrated each year since then. Seeing this day embraced by the whole school community has been extremely heart-warming and rewarding.

At a public SA high-school, Barney (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) sparked euphoria by discouraging homophobia: *'The first time we ran an LGBT day of significance at a small country school with rampant homophobia and a high No vote [on marriage equality]'*.

Staff also felt *Pride Generativity euphoria* over their pride efforts' impacts. Leilani (Bisexual Cis-female, 36–45yrs) had Pride Generativity euphoria over increasing Wear it Purple Day participation at a NSW public primary-school:

I arrived at school dressed in purple and was so scared that I would be the only one (the year before, I had been too scared to tell anyone about WiP, and had just quietly worn purple myself). Heaps of students wore purple, and many of the parents who dropped them off.

Kyler (Gay Non-Binary Person, 46–55yrs) impacted their SA public high-school which was:

pretty keen to have a non-binary staff member so that non-binary and queer students would experience being normalised... I had year 8s one day and they attempted to mock me for not being clearly gendered (according to their narrow views) so I told them I was non-binary and could see the ideas clicking into place in their head.

Barney (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) felt excited by his impacts in: *'Being able to teach an LGBT specific history lesson with no flak or push back from students, parents or leadership'*. Gavin (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) vicariously enjoyed students' own pride generation at a Victorian public high-school including when year 12s distributed Wear it Purple badges and *'All the kids in my class took a badge, led by the boys'*. For staff, *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* in the 'students' theme overlapped with *Pride Generativity euphoria* in the 'day' theme, when institutional efforts cumulatively garnered positive real-world change for upcoming generations.

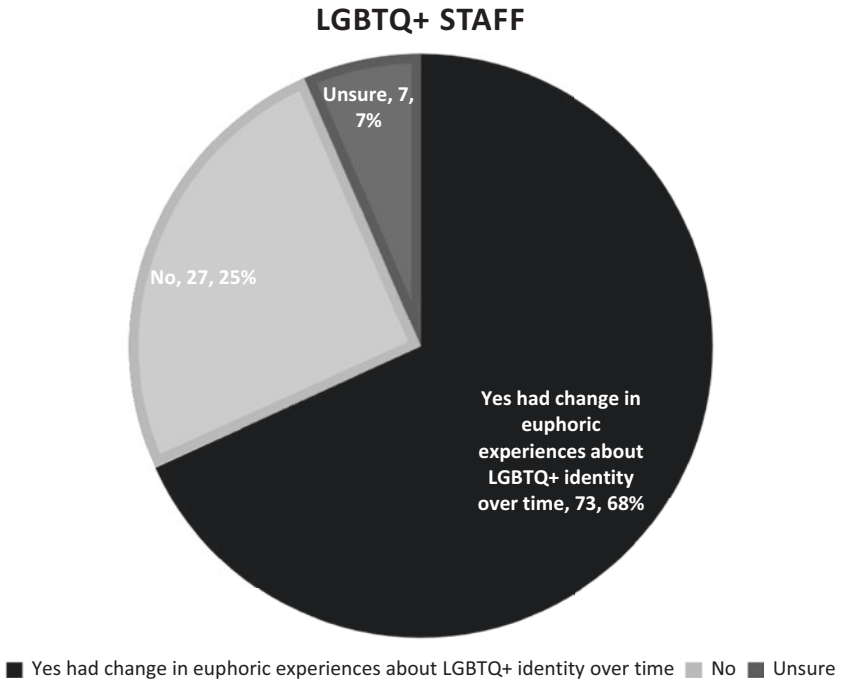


Fig. 5.4 LGBTQ+ professionals’ euphoric change

Existence of Changes in Professionals’ Euphorias

Staff experiencing education-based euphorias were asked, ‘*Has your sense of euphoria (happiness or comfort) with your LGBTQ+ identity changed over time?*’. They were most likely (over two-thirds) to select ‘Yes’ (Fig. 5.4).

Change-trends for Professionals’ Euphorias

Professionals were questioned: ‘*Please describe how your sense of euphoria (comfort or happiness) about your LGBTQ+ identity has changed over time?*’. Leximancer revealed 7 themes across their 73 responses: school, students, working, parents, community, euphoria, and safe (Fig. 5.5).

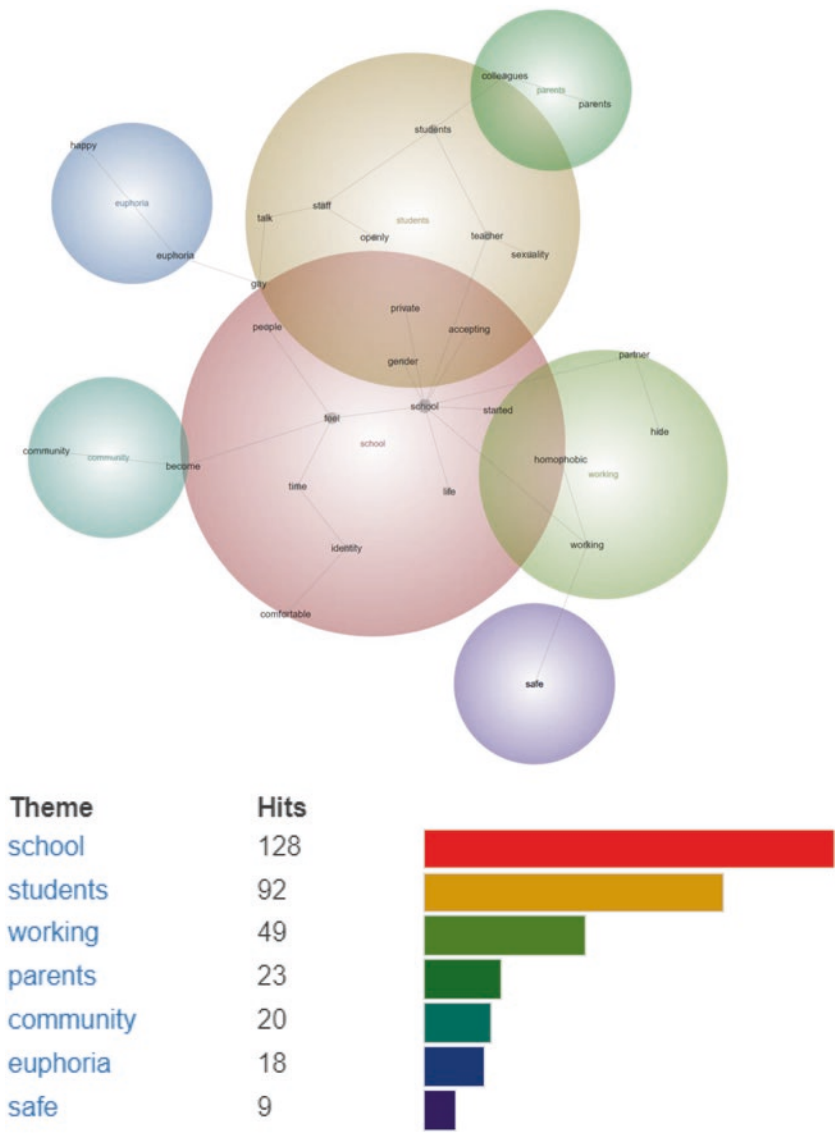


Fig. 5.5 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ professionals' euphoric change descriptions (N=73)

'School' & 'Community': LGBTQ+ Staff Have Site-Specific Shifts in Institutional Inclusion & Acceptance Euphorias Across Their Careers

The largest Leximancer-identified theme for how LGBTQ+ staff members' euphorias changed combined 'school' (128 hits, 100% relationality) and 'community' (20 hits, 18% relationality). This encapsulated how professionals' *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* changed depending on the education site they attended and people therein (sub-concepts: school, feel, identity, time, comfortable, started, life, people, gender). Starting out in education as an industry, many professionals who later came out and experienced euphorias, were initially closeted and unhappy. For example, Finlay (Questioning Sexuality Non-Binary Person, 26–35yrs) said in their NSW public high-school '*It felt a lot safer to remain a cis-gendered teacher at school for a long time*' and they previously believed '*it would be so hard to experience life as a trans/gender diverse individual at school*'.

Juliet (Bisexual Cis-female, 26–35yrs) shared:

When I first realised I was queer, aged 12, I was quite confronted and ashamed by it, as I was very religious and at a single-sex school, so I was worried I would lose all my friends.

Ageing supported euphoric change for SA elementary teacher Carolina (Lesbian Cis-female, 26–35yrs):

When I first started working in the school setting after uni, I felt uncomfortable to tell people that I am in a same sex relationship. I hid my partner's name and gender. I felt this way particularly working in smaller schools. I wanted colleagues and leadership to judge me on my teaching and professionalism rather than my sexuality. As I've gotten older and started to accept who I was more and more, I am more open about my partner and who I am.

New jobs in new schools improved many professionals' euphoric opportunities across their careers. Aniya (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) finally experienced ongoing *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* at her new site, after past sites' traumas waned:

My [self and my] wife (then girlfriend) were subject to horrific homophobic bullying (bordering on violence—fireworks thrown at our house) and exclusion when we worked rurally in Western NSW. ...As a result of this experience, I suffered long term clinical depression and, when we moved back to Sydney, I hid

my identity at my new school, a selective school in the Hills with quite a conservative student body. (...) My new school is the most accepting and supportive workplace I have ever experienced, to the point that I never ever think about my identity or second guess what I should reveal.

Murphy's (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 36–45yrs) *Acceptance euphoria* increased as '*society has become more accepting*', and '*bullying I have received from senior executive has lessened*'. Eli's (Lesbian Cis-female, 18–25yrs) new WA public high-school kindled *Acceptance euphoria*:

As I have gotten to know my co-workers better, I have felt more comfortable sharing information about my identity with them. Knowing that they have this information, I have felt more comfortable not dressing within the guidelines of a particular gender, instead dressing in what I feel comfortable with on a day-to-day basis.

Thus, LGBTQ+ education professionals had contextually contingent euphorias. Site-specific *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* were also related to community connections seen in the 'students' theme.

'Students' & 'Euphoria': Community Connection Euphoria Slowly Increasing for Staff

'Students' (92 hits, 54% relationality) and 'euphoria' (18 hits, 11% relationality) denoted the slow emergence of *Community Connection euphoria* for LGBTQ+ staff (sub-concepts: students, teacher, staff, sexuality, openly, gay, talk, accepting, private; and euphoria and happy). Professionals' euphorias increased when students progressively disclosed LGBTQ+ identities or shared supportive cultures. Baron (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) said his euphorias changed slowly at his NSW public primary-school from: '*My comfort levels in hearing students talk openly about being gay and going from a negative discussion years ago to more positive ones in recent years*'. Lance (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) said, '*My sense of happiness also increased when I learn of openly gay students in the school, as well as the positive and accepting attitude of the students*'.

LGBTQ+ staff *Community Connection euphoria* is also emerging as more LGBTQ+ colleagues come out. For example, Lance (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) recalled at his NSW public high-school job:

After learning of the relatively high number of gay teachers and executive staff at our school, I have grown to feel much more comfortable with my sexual orientation at work. This is true despite that I do not openly talk about my same-sex relationships.

Xanthe (Bisexual Cis-female, 56–65yrs) recalled developing euphoric relief over increases in LGBTQ+ colleagues at both NSW Uniting church and secular schools; ‘*At these places my sexuality was not generally assumed to affect my appropriateness as a teacher of girls*’.

Currently teaching at a NSW public primary-school, Ronnie (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) explained how LGBTQ+ staff communities are shifting opportunities for *Institutional Inclusion euphoria*, not just connection:

some staff are fully out to their students, others aren’t, others talk about their private lives, others don’t, so these experiences also impact on whether LGBT staff feel pressure/stress to be fully out to the community.

For some staff, representing LGBTQ+ community to others increased *Community Connection* and *Pride Generativity euphorias*. Cat (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) outlined how this shift evolved across her QLD education system engagements:

When I was younger it was more specific to myself; my euphoric moments of mutual recognition of attraction to another woman and [hers] to me, and our recognition of gendered dynamics in our relationship that pleased us. Now I am older it is more specific to the broader community; there is a euphoria to helping others be happy or to greater political change.

Jaren (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 26–35yrs) similarly outlined how contributing to others’ *Community Connection euphoria* across the NSW education system expanded joy:

My euphoria has only grown the more I accepted myself and was able to be my true self in more and more aspects of my life. Now I feel euphoria about the fact that I can be a role model for young queer people and it makes me feel incredible happiness that these students are growing up with a nonbinary teacher and have learnt that queer adults can [be] and are, happy.

Community Connection euphoria somewhat required conditions of safety for LGBTQ+ people, which LGBTQ+ people are increasingly benefiting

from and passing on through openness and bravery, with collegial circularity across employment sites.

'Working': Employment Concerns Can Outweigh Some LGBTQ+ Staffs' Will to Euphoria

'Working' (49 hits, 39% relationality) illustrated changes around LGBTQ+ staffs' decisions to privilege complex employment concerns above their euphoric will (sub-concepts: working, partner, homophobic, hide). For some professionals, years spent seeking out their own happiness as out LGBTQ+ people in education settings were set aside alongside pro-active euphoric pursuit within institutional spaces as products of a more radical youth, when new conditions or constraints attendant to new roles or policies arose. Kadence (Lesbian Cis-female, 66+yrs) felt a *'general feeling of contentment'* when first teaching and regularly disclosing her lesbian identity in more progressive public primary-schools *'as a young radical teacher'* in the 1970s. She later sacrificed euphorias towards increasing her approachability in a union role and now teaching casually in her 70s:

As I moved to work in more standard settings with some homophobic and anti-progressive types I was cautious about a lot of things. I was also frequently elected as the Union Representative. I wanted staff to feel OK about approaching me. It is easier to be a left-leaning person (which I am) than lesbian.

Similarly, Roscoe (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) felt kneejerk concern about his gendered mannerisms arise during a job interview even after a long period of previous school employment in which he was 'out', and commitment to self-expression. Privileging financial opportunity was reflexive:

After 20 years in the public education system I took a change in role and am now managing a department at a private Anglican boys school. My concern about my sexuality crept in during the interview process and at times I felt I needed to 'butch up'.

However, the reverse could also be true: staffs who once privileged privacy and security in difficult environments in ways that made some euphorias untenable might find that improvements occurred to their context enabling outness and attendant euphorias. For example, Abdul (Gay Cis-male, 26–35yrs) felt *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* around changes in Queensland public secondary education policy contexts, which

mediated job-security-related euphoria blockers because the change was top-down:

A big change came with the introduction of the Inclusive Education Policy for Ed Qld. This document made my community visible and acknowledged our rights to be a part of the system. When I first started teaching, I had received many homophobic comments and the policies only favoured those in opposite sex relationships. In particular, the transfer policy and being able to move with your partner. Additionally new policies around maternity/paternity leave for Gay Dads has been another great boost to inclusive practice.

Further, Roscoe's (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) quote from this chapter's introduction was also Leximancer-identified as typical to this theme. Roscoe describes *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphoria* upon realising that his religious principal's leadership ensured a new period of inclusive and accepting employment around being gay. The will towards experiencing euphorias can be briefly, periodically, or permanently compromised for professionals by the drive to work/have a career, financial concerns, role dynamics and industry or institutional policy contexts. It could thus also be (re)enlivened when these blockers disappeared. Notably the 'working' theme links to the 'safe' theme; the employment dynamics discussed in relation to *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* particularly could be mediated by not just job security but safety.

'Parents': LGBTQ+ Staffs' Acceptance Euphoria Often Preceded by Rejection Fears

'Parents' (23 hits, 16% relationality) captured how LGBTQ+ staff grapple with 'the spectres of parents' and others' anti-LGBTQ+ disapproval both real and imagined, periodically and by site (sub-concepts: parents, colleagues). LGBTQ+ staff can experience *Acceptance euphoria* in some circumstances and yet this is often preceded and followed by cyclical rejection fears or threats around other parties' reactions to their identities. Initial doubts upon entering their profession, could return in various cycles or sites over time. For example, Persephone (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) commented: *'I am still at times very cautious and avoid overt disclosures but that is usually confined to specific situations such as when speaking to students, parents or unfamiliar colleagues'*. Leilani (Bisexual Cis-female, 36–45yrs) explained:

In 2011 and 2012 I was a beginning teacher and didn't know how to tell anyone, so I was back in the closet at school, despite having been out for 12 years previously. I didn't hide my identity in any other area of my life. I was given a temporary contract, and told a couple of colleagues. One was a gay man who had been teaching for over 20 years, but kept his identity hidden. I then got a permanent contract out in a rural town, and went back into the closet. I eventually told my colleagues, but never came out to students despite teaching there for 3 years. I moved back to a larger regional town, and decided to stop hiding. All colleagues knew, but it wasn't something I would talk about to students. Then I met someone, and when we got engaged, I wore my ring into class. I told students I was getting married to a woman, and although one or two did a big 'double take', most were fine. Since then I have found it much easier, although I still find it hard to feel as though I am endlessly coming out to students, parents and colleagues.

Elora (Lesbian Cis-female, 46–55yrs) also reflected on how (Self-) *Acceptance euphoria* could involve real rejections for religious schools' teachers:

I began my teaching career in a private Christian school in Sydney. (...) I had to leave that place of employment when I came out as I knew if I chose to stay I would be asked to leave purely because I identified as LGBTQI+. This had nothing to do with my ability to teach. I went overseas for six months and when I returned to Australia I began looking for employment with the DoE. I have secured temporary roles since that time (2018) and have been known as an LGBTQI+ teacher wherever I go. However, since being married I have perceived greater acceptance by colleagues, students, and parents.

For LGBTQ+ staff, externally driven *Acceptance euphoria* could be hit-and-miss; it required gambling. Adalynn (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) this gambling at her WA public primary-school paid, as '*Staff and parents have got to know us over the years and I think their acceptance has made me accept myself more*'. Conversely, Ellis (Bisexual Cis-female, 26–35yrs) had mixed feelings and experiences around acceptance over time. She said of her current QLD public high-school, '*I have moved away from work to a place where my co-workers are very accepting. The students aren't always though*'. There were overlaps with this 'parents' theme and the 'students' theme, then, showing professionals' *Community Connection* and socially driven *Acceptance euphorias* were contextually, institutionally, and socially conditional.

‘Safe’: LGBTQ+ Staffs’ Institutional Inclusion & Acceptance Euphoria Increased With Safety

The smallest stand-alone theme ‘safe’ (9 hits, 11% relationality) denoted increased safety increasing staff euphorias. For example, Roscoe (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) felt euphoria about running efforts to increase the safety of his religious high-school and said, ‘*I have to say I have felt very blessed ... I don’t believe I should hide who I am at home and work.*’ Paisley (Lesbian Cis-female, 36–45yrs) felt *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* only when ‘*I feel safe and accepted and able to be visible without it being controversial ... It has definitely changed since marriage equality—I am confident that the law is on our side.*’ Adaline (Lesbian Cis-female, 26–35yrs) felt safety had increased at her non-religious independent high-school as well:

I feel comfortable in my workplace with my sexuality and feel more so over time. The interactions I have had regarding my sexuality at school have been a non-event—e.g. someone referring to my partner as a male, being corrected, and just simply apologising without interrogating or being rude. It feels like a safe place.

Ronnie (Gay Cis-male, 36–45yrs) said at his NSW public primary-school his euphoric change ‘*depends on which staff are present as sometimes new staff come in and you’re not sure about their opinions on LGBT people, so you always have to be wary at first.*’ He expanded:

Also, parental community also affects this. There have been homophobic parents in the past who have publicly made comments about staff and staff choices (such as gay teachers who have undergone surrogacy). They are a minority, but these experiences impact on how safe we feel.

The ‘safe’ theme linked to the ‘working’ theme; showing that staff concerns for safety had mediated security, outness, and euphorias over time. Experiences of euphorias for LGBTQ+ staff could hence overall be very fluid, and tenuous. Professionals’ euphoric goals were umpired by site-specific variables of security, anti-LGBTQ+ spectres and safety.

DISCUSSION

Dominant Professional Euphorias

Under half of LGBTQ+ staff experienced euphorias, largely often and sometimes. The ‘overplaying’ and ‘transferring’ of the happiness reward of normative identities onto this non-dominant group; arguably has disruptive potential in Queer and post-structural feminist given cultural politics debates and refuses to protect their identities and bodies in many education sites [13, 14]. This group’s showing pleasure in LGBTQ+ education professional identity as no less authentic than other teachers’, queries normative assumptions about and infantilising restraints on who ‘valid education professionals’ should be and what educational gifts they should offer [15, 16]. Three euphorias were dominant: (1) *Institutional Inclusion*, (2) *Acceptance*, and an additional (3) *Pride Generativity euphoria* specific to adults. Education professionals’ *Institutional Inclusion and Acceptance euphoria* were linked to achieving disclosure, acceptance, and fidelity for their LGBTQ+ and professional identities, and collegial and pedagogical connections to others. Thus they related to the identity formation and intimacy foci of Erikson’s Development Stages 5 and 6 [17, 18]—Fig. 5.6. *Pride Generativity euphoria* linked to participant, colleague and student

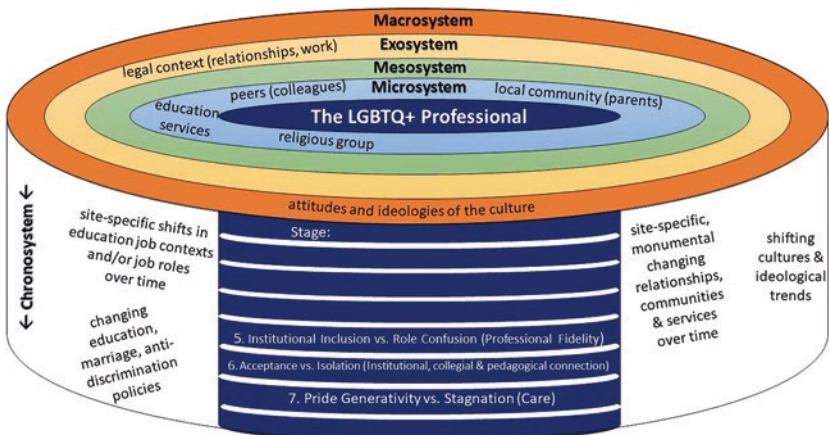


Fig. 5.6 Ecological model of psycho-social influences on LGBTQ+ professionals' education-based euphorias

activism events, reflecting McKinney's euphoria of social redress [19] with future-orientated emphases, and achievement of Stage 7's generativity motivation [17, 18]. There was no strong alignment with stages' foci by age, echoing Butler's notion of 'transference' where norms of identity emphases play out differently on non-traditional identities and bodies in ways that call identity norms themselves into question [16]. However, these data do support theories that social groups are more likely to find happiness accessible broadly enacting motivation ideals [14]. This study reflected past studies showing LGBTQ+ teachers may consider activism and outness 'employment risks' [1, 9, 20]. However, these phenomena could enhance LGBTQ+ staffs' euphorias, especially where socialised and institutionalised pedagogical versions of Gottman et al.'s 'emotion-coaching philosophy in meta-emotion' drove teachers' inter-generativity [21].

Site-specific Change-trends

Most (over two-thirds of) LGBTQ+ staff experiencing euphorias reported they changed over time (their Chronosystems). Trends included site-specific shifts in *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* depending on the support of education employers and communities; and shifts in their Microsystems, Exosystems, and Macrosystems. *Community Connection euphoria* changed in relation to the disclosure, education, and activist efforts. *Institutional Inclusion* and *Acceptance euphorias* were variable, fluid and tenuous; sometimes site-specific and reliant on inclusion by institutions and colleagues; sometimes slowly increasing; sometimes suddenly or gradually less attainable; peppered with monumentality, retrogression, even circularity. Professionals' euphorias were impacted by rights debates and votes and other Exo- and Macrosystem changes; reflecting the LGBTQ+ reactivity to cultural politics [13] and policy debates [22, 23]. Rural, regional and remote employment contexts were associated with decreased euphorias and increased rejection, safety and employment security concerns; likely enhanced for those lacking intergenerational wealth (reliant on income for survival)—reflecting TGD literature showing relationships between euphoria and material and socio-cultural contexts [24, 25]. Furthermore, staff LGBTQ+ professionals' euphoric will itself fluctuates. These conditions reflected Ahmed's arguments that where identities are devalued happiness becomes culturally and institutionally less available and bodies associated with shaming [13, 14]; some staff indeed reflected

Erikson's isolation and/or stagnation 'crises' as LGBTQ+ people for periods in their careers [17]. However, such periods were not uniformly unproductive. Sometimes being euphorically queer was exchanged for career establishment, progress, or role-specific goals like approachability.

Significance & Limitations

The study provided the first and largest scale data collection on LGBTQ+ professionals' euphorias to date. It underlined that supports encouraged in the broader literature towards reducing LGBTQ+ staff wellbeing concerns, can enhance euphorias. These include: protective employment policies; support for but not requirement of LGBTQ+ staff 'outness'; LGBTQ+ celebratory events and staff community groups; supporting LGBTQ+ staff partners' at events [1, 8, 9, 20]. The data emphasised for the first time that institutional and industrial conditions have supportive or restrictive influences on euphoric opportunities; this likely affects other industries. The findings reflected influences on euphorias from the literature including the value of external and social experiences; and oppositional or complex relationships to negative wellbeing [25]—extending these to include site-specific workplace discrimination and repression, and conformity drives.

CONCLUSIONS

Euphorias were more common, frequent, and yet volatile and site-specific for LGBTQ+ education staff than other groups examined in schools. *Institutional Inclusion, Acceptance* and to a lesser extent *Pride Generativity euphorias* were typically experienced in relationship to specific school support and professionals' efforts at organising inclusive events and practices, reaching out to, and engaging with staff and students, and activism. This reflected the intimacy and generativity pre-occupations of Erikson's Stages 6 and 7, though not their age-alignments. Changes to education professionals' euphorias had elements of progressive more linear growth; monumentality; retrogression and circularity. Professionals' generative and intimacy motivations can be dulled by fears around employment security, fears of rejection, and issues of safety; making the removal of religious exemptions in anti-discrimination and employment law an *absolute imperative* for supporting more euphoric LGBTQ+ professionals in education,

and likely other sectors. Further protections for LGBTQ+ staff in rural areas (employment guarantees and union support) could enable greater outness and euphoric potential. Chapter 6 investigates parents' euphorias.

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LGBTQ+ Parents' Euphorias! Consistencies in LGBTQ+ parents' Happiness & Comfort

Abstract Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) parents' rights were openly debated around marriage legislation movements. Religious schools can deny their families services. This chapter investigates 208 LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias in their children's schools. Under a third of them were euphoric and mostly always or often; gay or lesbian parents were more likely to experience euphorias and parents with disabilities were less likely. *Institutional Inclusion*, *Category Validation*, *Pride Generativity*, and *Community Connection euphorias* dominated. Most parents reported no changes to their euphorias. Change-trends included: (1) increased expectation for *Institutional Inclusion euphoria*; (2) steady growth in (Self-) *Acceptance euphoria*; (3) relationships and relationship views as a moderating factor; (4) learning and teaching euphorias; and (5) time as an enabling factor. Parent euphorias had stable and revolutionary qualities.

Keywords Euphoria • LGBTQ+ • Parent • Mother • Father • Family

Key Points:

- Under a third of LGBTQ+ parents experience education-based euphorias; the likelihood increased for gay and lesbian parents.
- The likelihood decreased for parents with disabilities or who were closeted.

- LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias were relatively stable: almost four fifths experienced them always or often, and most reported no changes over time.
- *Institutional Inclusion*, *Pride Generativity*, and *Community Connection euphorias* all captured parents' responsiveness to improved collective conditions for LGBTQ+ education communities.
- LGBTQ+ parents demanded more institutional inclusion over time and some built stable, subversive (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias* unhindered by external forces.

INTRODUCTION

The older I get, the more comfortable I am with myself, this may come with confidence, but also the visual representation that I am not alone, my sense of community and the support of those queer and straight around me (Sloane, Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs, on her increased Acceptance euphoria at her child's religious WA high-school).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) parents (including guardians) have been structurally overlooked in familial constellations on education in-take forms, under-represented in family curricula and celebratory days, and legal familial exclusion targets for Australian religious schools [1–3]. Their rights have been questioned in harmful media debates around changes to Australian marriage legislation, from being idealised as ‘homo-normative’ wealthy coupled providers to being negated as harming children [4, 5]. This makes enrolling children into education settings, coming outness or changing relationship status (becoming single, divorcing, or dating) daunting prospects [4, 5]. This chapter reviews literature on LGBTQ+ parents in education to emphasise its reproachful lenses. It then particularises LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias in education spaces—completing Chaps. 4-6 examinations of *LGBTQ+ You* project data.

BLAMING LGBTQ+ PARENTS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

LGBTQ+ parents of children in education are portrayed in a mixture of ways in the dominant framings of research literature. Three movements in the literature were strongly negative. Firstly, anti-LGBTQ+ studies in the 1950s-1970s, questioned LGBTQ+ parents' ability to offer healthy family

environments for well-adjusted child development. Traditional psychological methods were used to align non-heterosexual identities with inherent mental disorders [6, 7]; ignoring contextual factors. LGBTQ+ parent and child development studies emerged in the 1970s-1980s+, exploring different aspects of psycho-social development of LGBTQ+ parented children. This literature could 'blame' LGBTQ+ parents for their children's cognitive impairments, gender and sexual orientation confusion, social isolation and victimisation, or general maladjusted developmental trajectories based on assumptions of parent promiscuity and deviance [1]. Later research suggested the gender identity and norms of children of LGBTQ+ parents did not differ significantly from heterosexual parented children [8, 9]. From the 1990s, as a backlash to social and legislative change in favour of LGBTQ+ identities and families, anti-LGBTQ+ research resurged; (re) positioning LGBTQ+ parented families as 'risks' against the 'best interests' of children around sexual abuse, social/psychological maladjustment and becoming LGBTQ+ [10, 11]. These papers overlooked structural and social homophobia and transphobia influencing children's outcomes [12-14].

However, there were also movements in the literature towards more positive LGBTQ+ parent portrayals. These included LGBTQ+ parented family diversity and functioning studies of the 1990s, which coincided with affirming shifts around LGBTQ+ identities, documenting their home life characteristics and experiences in sociological lenses and informing professionals of LGBTQ+ families' needs [1]. Studies explicitly focussing on LGBTQ+ parents within schools challenging heteronormative approaches to families emerged due to rising recognition of the unique challenges that LGBTQ+ parented families faced therein. Lenses from sociological and psychological disciplines including queer theory, post-modern theory, grounded theory, Foucauldian theory, and psychological/ecological development frameworks utilised predominantly qualitative interview methodologies to explore experiences of LGBTQ+ parents in mainly Western school environments [1, 2]. The most recent critical sociological research explored positive and supportive aspects of school environments for LGBTQ+ parents, uncovering the value of representation of diversity, explicit inclusive school policy on family diversity and forms, and staff training [1, 2]. However, LGBTQ+ parents' education research representations are still largely deficit-based.

REDRESSING PARENT EUPHORIA RESEARCH GAPS

Calls to overcome deficit-framings in LGBTQ+ parent research are expanding [1, 2], and research overlooks parent euphorias. This chapter contemplates:

1. How can we characterise typical euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences of LGBTQ+ parents, and their influences?
2. How do these euphorias typically change over time, and what influences changes?

The following data are from the 2021-2022 *LGBTQ+ You* study's 208 parent surveys (Chap. 3 details methodology and methods).

LGBTQ+ YOU PARENT SURVEY FINDINGS

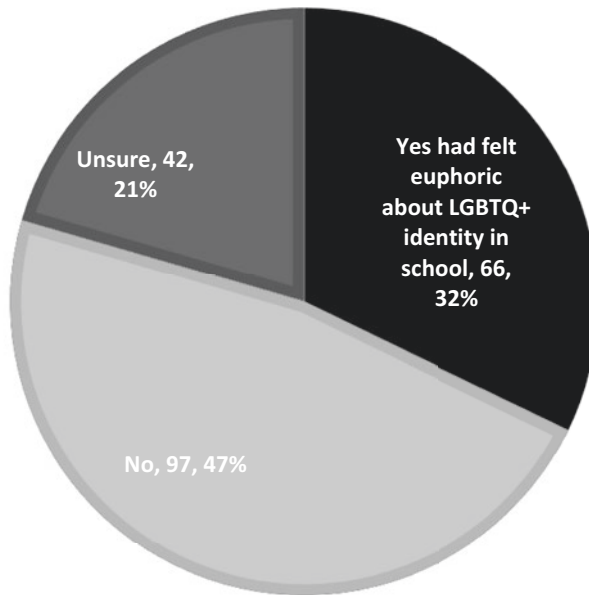
Existence of Parents' Euphorias

The 208 LGBTQ+ parents surveyed in the *LGBTQ+ You* study were asked: '*Have you ever felt happy or comfortable (euphoric) about your LGBTQ+ identity in your child's school?*'. Of the 205 LGBTQ+ parents who responded, 97 (47.5%) had not felt euphoric; 66 (31.7%) had; 42 (20.5%) were unsure (Fig. 6.1). Table 6.1 outlines how parents' demographics and euphorias intersected. There were no relationships between parents' euphorias and their age, sex assignation, Indigeneity, CALD or gender; or their children's school state, rurality, type or level. Table 6.2 shows significant relationships between parents' decreased likelihood of euphorias and having a disability ($p < .05$), and for LGBTQ+ identity concealment ($p < .05$). However, there was a highly significant increased likelihood for gay/lesbian parents to have euphorias, above other sexualities ($p < .001$).

Frequency of Parents' Euphorias

LGBTQ+ parents who experienced euphorias were asked: '*How often have you felt happy or comfortable (euphoric) about your LGBTQ+ identity in your child's school?*'. Figure 6.2 shows most selected 'often' (36.8%) or 'always' (36.8%). The remaining fifth selected sometimes or rarely.

LGBTQ+ PARENTS



■ Yes had felt euphoric about LGBTQ+ identity in school ■ No ■ Unsure

Fig. 6.1 Whether LGBTQ+ parents felt euphoric about identity in education

Table 6.1 LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias versus demographics

	LGBTQ+ Parents Felt Euphoric about LGBTQ+ Identity at Child's School ^a (N=204)		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Total	66	97	42
Age			
14-17yrs	0	2	1
18-25yrs	1	1	0
26-35yrs	3	9	5
36-45yrs	32	42	21
46-55yrs	25	35	13
56-65yrs	4	8	2
66yrs+	1	0	0

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

	<i>LGBTQ+ Parents Felt Euphoric about LGBTQ+ Identity at Child's School^a</i> (N=204)		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>State^a</i>			
<i>ACT</i>	2	4	0
<i>NSW</i>	20	24	14
<i>NT</i>	0	1	1
<i>QLD</i>	12	23	14
<i>SA</i>	6	6	2
<i>TAS</i>	2	3	0
<i>VIC</i>	15	27	8
<i>WA</i>	9	9	3
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0
<i>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	2	5	2
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	64	92	40
<i>Cultural & Linguistic Diverse (CALD)</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	23	26	11
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	43	71	31
<i>Disability</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	5	20	4
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>	61	77	38
<i>Regional, remote, or rural area^a</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	25	37	12
<i>No</i>	39	59	30
<i>Unsure</i>	2	1	0
<i>School Type^a</i>			
<i>Government/public</i>	44	72	32
<i>Non-religious private/independent</i>	7	6	4
<i>Religious private/independent</i>	13	18	5
<i>Other</i>	2	1	1
<i>School Level^b</i>			
<i>Higher-education</i>	1	5	0
<i>High-school</i>	24	47	17
<i>Primary-school</i>	38	42	24
<i>Pre-school</i>	2	2	0
<i>Other (e.g. no longer attend)</i>	1	1	1
<i>Assigned sex at birth (M, F, X)</i>			
<i>Male (AMAB)</i>	12	19	10
<i>Female (AFAB)</i>	52	77	32
<i>X or another option (AXAB)</i>	2	1	0

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

	<i>LGBTQ+ Parents Felt Euphoric about LGBTQ+ Identity at Child's School^a</i> (N=204)		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>Gender</i>			
<i>Cis-male</i>	0	6	1
<i>Cis-female</i>	41	59	21
<i>Trans-male</i>	6	11	9
<i>Trans-female</i>	10	12	8
<i>Non-binary or another gender (genderqueer, fluid, no label, etc.)</i>	9	9	3
<i>Sexuality</i>			
<i>Asexual</i>	0	1	2
<i>Bisexual (or multi-gender, queer, or fluid sexualities)</i>	10	24	11
<i>Gay or Lesbian</i>	44	47	14
<i>Heterosexual</i>	4	15	12
<i>Another answer (other, don't know, prefer not to say, etc.)</i>	8	10	3
<i>Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school^b</i>			
<i>Always</i>	0	15	0
<i>Often</i>	1	13	4
<i>Sometimes</i>	7	15	9
<i>Rarely</i>	16	12	10
<i>Never</i>	42	42	19

^aFor their child's focal school.

Table 6.2 *Relationships between LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias and demographics*

	<i>Pearson Chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ Parents Felt Euphoric about LGBTQ+ Identity at Child's School* (N=204)</i>		
			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
<i>Disability</i>	6.43*	2			
<i>Yes</i>			5	20	4
<i>No (or undeclared)</i>			61	77	38
<i>Sexuality</i>	16.47***	2			
<i>Gay or Lesbian</i>			52	57	17
<i>Sexual identity besides gay or lesbian</i>			14	40	25
<i>Concealment of LGBTQ+ identity in school</i>	7.03*	2			
<i>Never</i>			42	42	19
<i>Ever (from rarely to always)</i>			24	55	23

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

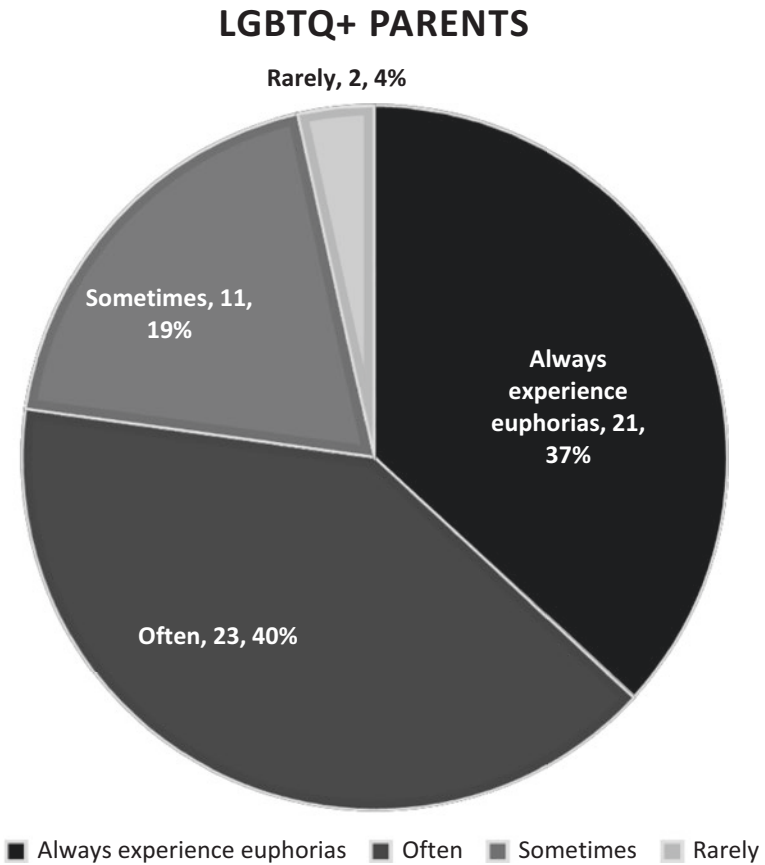


Fig. 6.2 LGBTQ+ parents' euphoric frequency

LGBTQ+ Parents' Euphorias

Parents were asked: *'Please tell us a time when you felt particularly euphoric (happy or comfortable) about your LGBTQ+ identity in your child's school'*. Leximancer found 5 themes in their 57 responses: school, mums, open, year, and kids (Fig. 6.3).

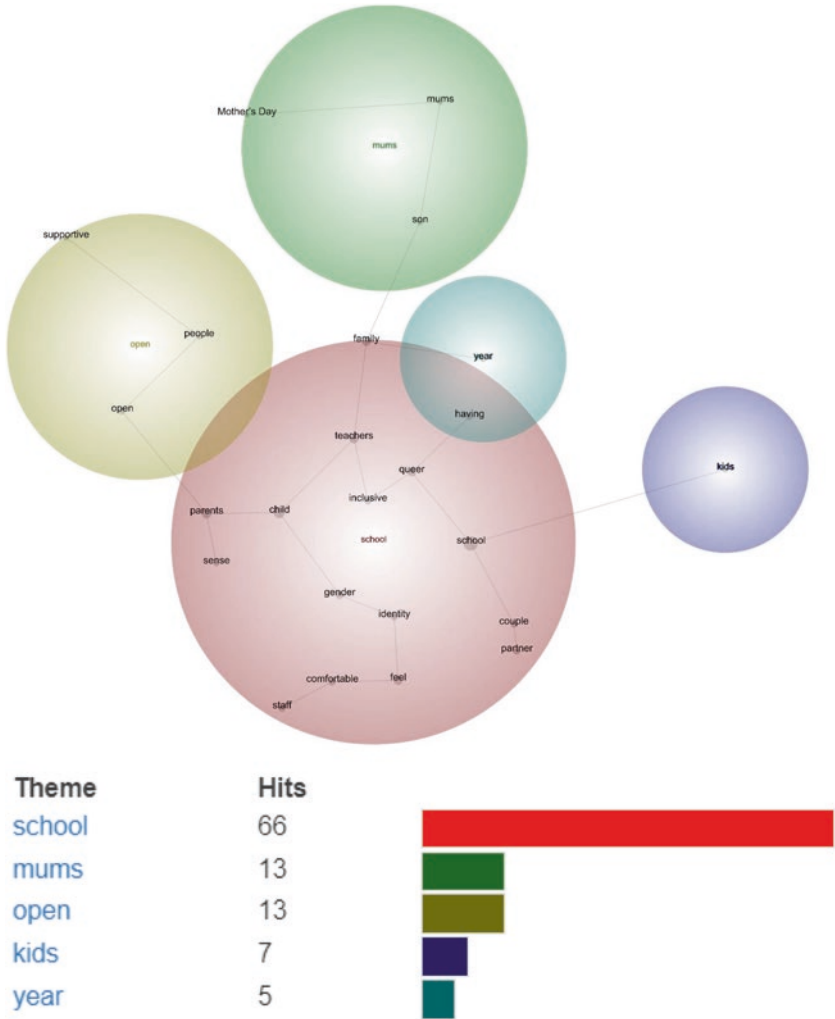


Fig. 6.3 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ parents' euphoria descriptions (N=57)

'School': Parents' Dominant Institutional Inclusion Euphoria

The largest Leximancer-identified theme for LGBTQ+ parent euphorias was 'school' (66 hits, 100% relationality). This theme focussed on LGBTQ+ parents' feelings of affirmation and comfort from institutional

efforts at direct structural supports and celebratory inclusion (sub-concepts: school, child, parents, feel, teachers, family, queer, gender, comfortable, partner, inclusive, staff, couple, identity, having, sense). For some participants institutional inclusion for their own identities sparked euphoria. In a typical example, Gracelyn (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) said of her child's Victorian public primary-school:

I have just always felt comfortable with my identity at my child's school. It didn't seem to be an issue, I felt that I was treated the same way a heterosexual parent would have been treated by staff and other parents.

Amber (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) said:

I have felt that it's affirming when I've seen flags, brochures, art works, notices for queer clubs etc that make it clear that the school is an inclusive place. I've also felt comfortable when the interactions with teachers are respectful and productive.

For some participants institutional inclusion for their relationships was key to euphoria. Maren (Bisexual, Cis-female, 46-55yrs) commented on an independent Victorian pre-school '*Our child's teacher telling my (same sex) partner and I that we are doing a great job parenting our child. It felt validating as a same sex couple*'. Similarly, Mallory (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) reflected on an independent Victorian primary-school, '*School staff have been welcoming to my ex-partner and I and treated us the same as a hetero couple*'. However, there were some LGBTQ+ parents for whom euphoria instead occurred when institutions included their children and/or families. Mallory noted that euphoria occurred because '*My daughter's family has been seen as just as valid as hetero parents*' and '*Made to feel welcome as a same-sex family by staff and other parents*'. Amber also described how she experienced euphoria that was:

just a sense of one's whole self being present and welcome. I've also been pleased when teachers have used inclusive terms like parents and carers (not 'mum and dad') and forms have these options, and when they have used my gender fluid child's pronouns correctly.

Hence for parents, *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* evident in the 'school' theme was the most central and dominant euphoria. It had

relationships to the most euphorias in Leximancer's map overlaps and participants' comments (particularly *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* and *Acceptance euphoria* as explained following), showing visible overlaps with the 'open' and 'year' themes, and some weaker ties to 'Mums' and 'Kids' (*Category Validation euphoria* and *Pride Generativity euphoria*).

'Mums' and 'Open': Category Validation Euphoria for Parenting Validation

The theme 'mums' (13 hits, 15% relationality) and 'open' (13 hits, 15% relationality) overlapped. 'Mums' denoted participants' elation and relief upon being treated as within a parent category or group they belonged to—particularly mother categories (sub-concepts: mums, son, Mother's Day). There was an emphasis on validation of their own and their partners' parenting roles via parental-theme days, welcoming treatment and/or form or work-sheet inclusion. Due to the high portion of lesbian mothers in the LGBTQ+ parent survey and broadly amongst LGBTQ+ parents in general [1, 15], the affirmation of the parents within gendered parent roles and parent celebration days including 'mums' and Mother's Day' was notably a key way this validation occurred; with attention to how these gendered parenting roles were being expansively validated (not restricted to historic feminising conceptualisations). Sometimes this occurred via activities the parents' children were supported to do by the school. Typically, Brienna (Lesbian Trans-female, 46-55yrs) said euphoria was sparked when she and her co-parent were not left out of representations of parents in their child's family constellation map exercise:

Instead, we were delighted to see our son's teacher had already made the change, so our son's family tree had two 'mother' branches. Our son had no idea of course, because his worksheet reflected his reality, but for his mums, it was a wonderful moment.

In another example, Bess (Lesbian Trans-female, 46-55yrs) said at a NSW public school:

Our child's teacher let her make 2 Mother's Day gifts this year, made sure she purchased 2 gifts at the stall and asked her who she wanted to make her Father's Day card for. (Grandad or Poppy).

Sometimes the staff's actions were key for inspiring euphoria. For example, Joyce (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) said at her child's NSW independent school, *'All correspondence is to both mums. Children can buy two Mother's Day presents'*. Guiliana (Queer/pansexual Cis-female, 46-55yrs) commented that they experienced euphoria because at the NSW public high-school their child attends: *'Staff have always been supportive and welcoming- always receive two Mother's Day cards'* and Finis (Gay Non-Binary Person, 46-55yrs) said euphoria occurred at an independent QLD high-school *'When it was recognised that my daughter would need access to buy two Mother's Day gifts when the rule was 'strictly one gift per student'*.

The 'open' theme expressed parents' euphoria over LGBTQ+ people being included in the open support of the school for the LGBTQ+ category in general as parents or other role-groups in their school community (sub-concepts: open, people, supportive). It was less directly focussed on mothers or motherhood; however, it was still a form of category validation because it combined LGBTQ+ category and school community category membership validations. For example, Julia (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) said euphoria was sparked in how her child's WA public kindergartens' parent group *'is very open and welcoming and supportive'* and Rizzo (Bisexual Cis-female, 26-35yrs) said of a QLD public primary-school *'When first looking at the school I went to an open day during which the head boy spoke about diversity and wanting diverse people at the school'*. Other examples included how schools could have LGBTQ+ families visibly and noticeably represented in a variety of sites, media, at pick-up and so forth. Accordingly for parents, *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* evident in the 'school' theme linked to *Category Validation euphoria*, in two separate ways. First, a link occurred where institutions facilitated inclusion through validating parent identities and roles within family constellations through the treatment of individuals, especially mothers, as offering multi-faceted (not just feminine) guardianship support. Second, a link occurred where institutions were open in their support for LGBTQ+ categories and families in a broad public way, as wanted and welcome school community members.

'Kids': LGBTQ+ Parents' Pride Generativity Euphoria for Improved Conditions

The stand-alone small theme 'kids' (7 hits, 18% relationality) portrayed LGBTQ+ parents' euphoria as inspired by their own or others' work building other generations' LGBTQ+ pride and acceptance. Joyce

(Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) felt euphoria around their contribution to inter-generational pride through the inter-familial education typical to this theme, in how her *'Children have told their friends about having two mums and other kids ask questions to seek further advice'*. Berkeley (Gay Non-Binary Person, 46-55yrs) felt euphoric around observing their son and their QLD public school's principal coming out as acts of solidarity, and this led to their own self-revelations:

The school was the reason I came out. My eldest son (...) came home one day when Safe Schools was still a thing. He said he was going to assume he was bisexual while he worked out whether or not he was (subsequently all three of them came out as straight but that's OK). He said his school principal was bisexual (I never did find out if it was a true thing or something he said as part of his solidarity with LGBTIQ+ kids) and that the school would be VERY STRICT against any transphobia or homophobia. Over the next few weeks my son taught me a lot about identity and tolerance and I finally (aged 35) was able to come out to myself and then other people.

Berkeley also is an example of those parents who experienced euphoria around observing their school's support for the next generation's pride in LGBTQ+ people through music events, educational and gender-flexible structural supports:

Fast forward to about 2019, music night. Some of the music kids sang songs with queer interpretations (like girls singing about attractive girls or whatever). I felt like everyone was OK with that and I felt safe being part of that community. I feel like the pro-LGBTIQ+ thing has had implications more broadly. My kids are cis-het males but are not the toxic types. They have strong, capable but also caring, communicative masculinities and I feel this is a result of their school not being heteronormative.

For parents then, *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* evident in the 'school' theme was linked to the *Pride Generativity euphoria* seen in the 'kids' theme by some examples of school-facilitated pride-inducing education and supports. This is visible in the Leximancer map and some comments.

'Year': LGBTQ+ Parents' Community Connection Euphoria
Underlined Collectives

The smallest stand-alone theme 'year' (5 hits, 13% relationality) showed *Community Connection Euphoria* arose from some LGBTQ+ parents'

enjoyment of connection with community across the school year, or different positive moments across years. This reflected parents' forward-facing hope for future connections or nostalgic reminiscences of past connections, manifesting as joy in the present. For example, Elliot (Queer Trans-female, 46-55yrs) discussed euphoria sparked by a NSW public school within: '*A show and tell Type scenario where you had to share a celebration. Kiddo chose to talk about their Mums' wedding the year before!*'—describing both pleasure in the moment and in the past. Pina (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) described euphoria at a QLD primary-school '*When my partner and I realised that the new Principal at the school our daughter was enrolled to start in the next year was a Lesbian*'—describing both pleasure in the moment and in the future. Similarly, Pina described euphoria in both the moment of an announcement and in future hopes for improved connection to LGBTQ+ and school community when: '*at a school P&C meeting there was an item for discussion/voting about choosing to rid the school of the (anti-LGBTQ+ organisation) 'school chaplain' and replacing with a student welfare worker*'.

Ian (Gay Trans-male, 46-55yrs) described euphoria in both the moment of and in future hopes connection to community annually through different events at a Victorian religious primary-school: '*A group of queer parents do a talk each year about Mardi Gras which is a time our families are celebrated in schools*'. Several parents discussed euphoria around the present and future possibilities of their child's flexible options in celebration of their rainbow family's connections on various parent days provided by teachers or school (Mother's Day, Father's Day); and several parents described looking forward to or reflecting on connecting with other families. Pina's example further typified the group in recalling:

it was lovely to connect with other 'Rainbow families' and our surrounding environment and we were all interacting with a range of others in the space, I couldn't help but note 'ah the queers have found each other and gathered'.

For parents, *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* evident in the 'school' theme overlapped with the 'year' theme's *Community Connection euphoria*, where institutions facilitated inclusion through including LGBTQ+ people including parents at events or in class activities, and the hiring of LGBTQ+ or LGBTQ+-friendly staff.

LGBTQ+ PARENTS

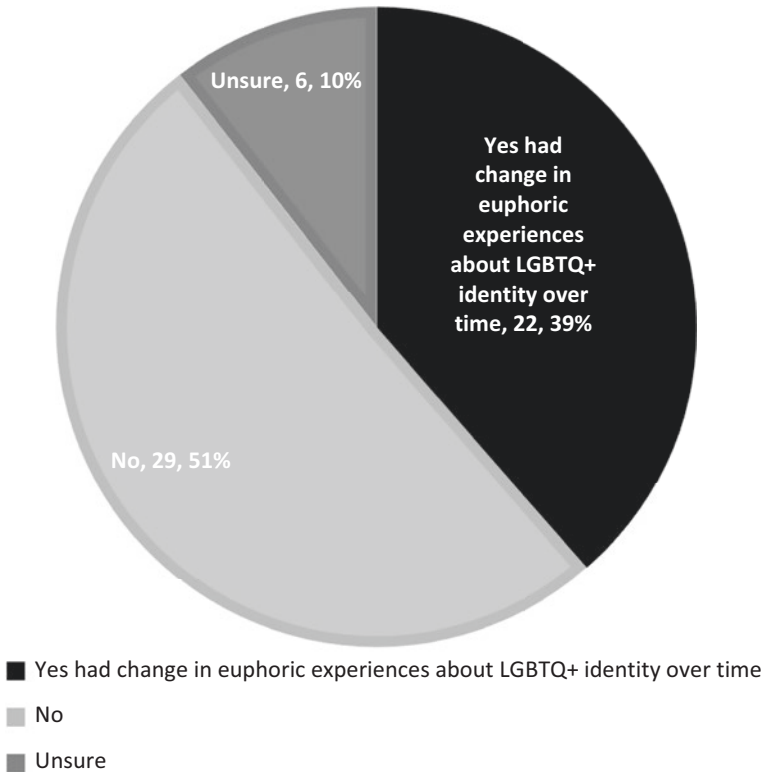


Fig. 6.4 LGBTQ+ parents' euphoric change

Existence of Changes in Parents' Euphorias

Parents experiencing education-based euphorias were asked: *'Has your sense of euphoria (happiness or comfort) with your LGBTQ+ identity changed over time?'.* They mostly reported 'No' changes (50.9%, Fig. 6.4). Over a third experienced changes (38.6%). Around a tenth of them were 'Unsure' (10.5%).

Change-trends for Parents' Euphorias

Parents were asked: '*Please describe how your sense of euphoria (comfort or happiness) about your LGBTQ+ identity has changed over time*'. Leximancer uncovered five themes across their 20 responses: people, feel, school, accepted, helped, and time (Fig. 6.5).

'School': LGBTQ+ Parents Demanding More Institutional Inclusion Euphoria

The largest Leximancer-identified theme for LGBTQ+ parents whose euphoria changed over time was 'school' (35 hits, 100% relationality). It comprised LGBTQ+ parents' increasing desire for, expectations of and planned advocacy for institutional inclusion and its attendant euphoria (sub-concepts: school, feel, kids, parent, family, gender, child, queer, become, identity, talk, principal, changed, daughter). Several parents described growing irritations at the lack of inclusion in their schools, and the sense more could be done as inspired by legislative change, better curricula or growing LGBTQ+ staffing. For example, Pina (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) aspired to features of nearby schools offering better inclusion:

I find I am feeling more critical of the invisibility/absence of directly mentioning/addressing 'us' (LGBTIQ+ families/kids/issues) generally. I have recently learned that a nearby primary-school flies the progress flag - this is just one example of something we should be doing - and that's why I feel we need to get a few families to meet the new principal once she arrives - to talk gender/sexuality/family diversities overtly and see what existing policies, processes, structures etc in the school enable more inclusion to be embedded.

Capri (Queer Cis-female, 36-45yrs) had been spurred on by legislative change to increase expectations of positive institutional engagements at a Victorian public high-school as a queer mother:

When we were trying to get pregnant and until my children were about 3 and 18 months old the Victorian and federal law changed to recognise our family which profoundly changed how confident I felt when accessing services or explaining my family to others. Legal changes, including marriage equality, make the world a safer and more inclusive place for my kids and their family, including at school.

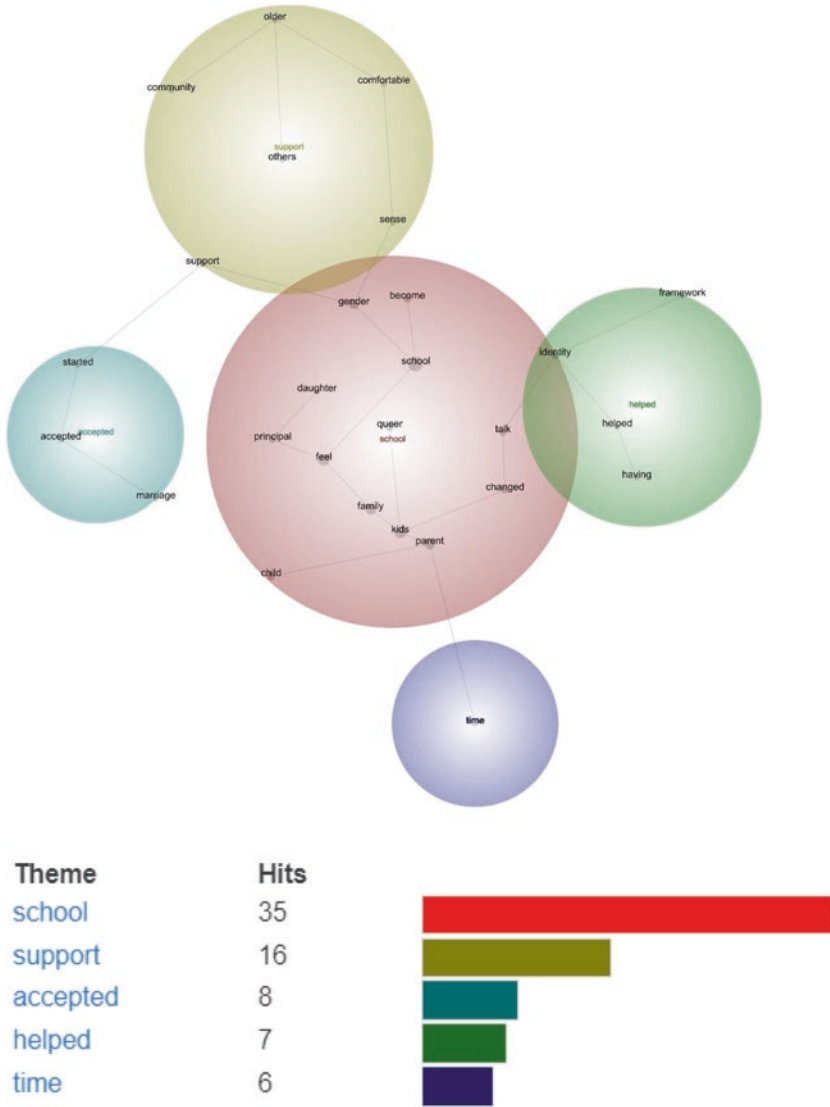


Fig. 6.5 Leximancer map for LGBTQ+ parents' euphoric change descriptions (N=20)

Other parents were increasing their advocacy. Angela (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) felt more secure and confident around advocacy, and more expectant of positive experiences in education settings, since marriage equality and getting married she emphasises, *'my sense of responsibility to advocate and educate - mostly for the sake of my family and their safety and happiness'*. Abigail (Bisexual Cis-female, 36-45yrs) was spurred on by increased *Acceptance euphoria* to demand the conditions for Institutional Inclusion euphoria around a QLD public high-school her child attended:

As I have been able to talk about my identity more openly, this has helped me feel better about advocating and feeling like the people I'm talking to understand me better as I am more visibly queer, but also I know I can pass for straight female especially because I have kids, there is an assumption I have a husband etc.

At her child's NSW public high-school, Elliot (Queer Trans-female, 46-55yrs) had higher expectations for inclusion from growing confidence in her identity, and moving to a less regional/remote context:

I didn't (identify fully) as queer until 30 so it's definitely changed over time. My family moved from regional/remote QLD to SE QLD.

Overall LGBTQ+ parents' increased expectation for inclusion and pre-conditions for euphorias appeared a strongly supported theme. Reflections on desire for *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* overlapped with the mediating factors in the 'helped' and 'support' themes.

'Support': LGBTQ+ Parents' (Self-)Acceptance Euphoria Increased With Age

'Support' (16 hits, 21% relationality) showed some LGBTQ+ parents perceiving themselves as 'getting older' became less concerned about the views of others, though they accepted supported where it was available (sub-concepts: support, sense, comfortable, older, community, others). These parents had once sought out external approval or support from others, but no longer felt a strong desire to seek out it out, though they would accept it if it was unavailable. These parents saw this change in themselves and their lessened striving for inclusion or validation, because of increased *Acceptance euphoria* built on self-acceptance and the effects of ageing. For example, Adrena (Bisexual Cis-female, 36-45yrs) was increasingly becoming *'more comfortable with myself as I get older, don't care what*

others think' at the Victorian public primary-school her child attended; Mara (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) found at her child's ACT public primary-school she was '*now older than most of the teachers, it helps*'; and Pina (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) said '*I think it is an age thing. The older I get the less I care about what others may think of me*'. The introductory quote to this chapter, identified as typical for this theme by Leximancer, showed that Sloane (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) commented became increasingly comfortable with age at a religious WA high-school her child attended, although this (Self-) *Acceptance euphoria* may also '*come with confidence, but also the visual representation that I am not alone, my sense of community and the support of those queer and straight around me*'. Kori (Bio-bisexual Non-Binary Person, 36-45yrs) relied more on their self-acceptance now and less on community connection or institutional inclusion at a Victorian public primary-school as a source of euphoria, recalling: '*I used to be proud of the community. Less so nowadays and with that I'm less likely to actively participate*'. For some parents then, pro-active desire for externally stimulated *Institutional Inclusion, Community Connection or (social) Acceptance euphorias* decreased as they grew *Acceptance euphoria* based on internal acceptance over many years.

'Accepted': LGBTQ+ Parents' Relationships & Relationship Views Affected Euphorias

'Accepted' (8 hits, 21% relationality) depicted how LGBTQ+ parents' *Acceptance euphoria* around social acceptance changed due to their new relationships and new information on others' views on their relationships (sub-concepts: accepted, marriage, started). Specifically, some parents were recently more worried about their current and future relationships due to how others might view their LGBTQ+ identities. Cara (Bisexual Cis-female, 36-45yrs) experienced barriers to euphoria at a Tasmanian public primary-school due to being in a heterosexual marriage:

I have only recent (in the past 18 months) even acknowledged my sexuality to myself. At first I was scared of what it might mean - for myself, my kids, and especially my marriage.

Gaston (Gay Trans-male, 36-45yrs) experienced reduced *Acceptance euphoria* only recently at his child's NSW public primary-school, especially after discovering many Australian voters did not accept LGBTQ+ relationship equality:

I was happier before the same sex marriage survey because I thought I was accepted by everyone. When the survey started, I realised that wasn't the case.

However, a few parents experienced increased *Acceptance euphoria* around approaching or getting into relationships. Angela (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) felt more *Acceptance* and *Community Connection euphorias* when dating at the NSW public primary-school: '*Single, I felt alone and had trouble connecting with my community. In a relationship, I felt more accepted and connected*'. For Jeb (Gay Non-Binary Person, 46-55yrs), crushes and potential relationships increased *Acceptance euphoria* based on both increased self- and social-acceptance:

I was wearing my rainbow jumper and a woman who has a lesbian daughter came up and hugged me and said 'I am so glad you are here' and after that I started just even telling people (...) there had been another non-binary person working there before me and everyone was excited to support me with the right pronouns or whatever and now I have just become as out as anything and quite calm in myself to the point where I even admitted I was non-binary to my crush and she started being more careful about pronouns around me (although I would totally forgive her if she didn't).

Peng (Gay Non-Binary Person, 46-55yrs), experienced ongoing and evolving *Acceptance*, *Category Validation* and *Community Connection euphorias* due to crushes and new contacts:

partly someone at uni and some other people in my extended networks I came to realise I WANTED to define myself as queer but I didn't dare to, then through being accepted by all the wonderful 'queer family' at Feast and in safe spaces I came to know I am actually a non-binary, demisexual lesbian (it's just a label but it gives me permission not to be the other things) and I have been euphoric about who I am ever since.

Therefore, some parents found externally driven (Social-) *Acceptance euphorias* to be fickle, whilst (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias* were more lasting.

'Helped': LGBTQ+ Parents Euphorias Were Progressively 'Learned' & 'Taught'

'Helped' (7 hits, 16% relationality) denoted how sometimes euphorias, or the conditions that support their occurrence, can be taught, and learned (sub-concepts: helped, having, framework). Some parents explained that

they had learned frameworks supporting euphorias. For example, Jaquan (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 36-45yrs) described feeling *Category Validation euphoria* more since learning about their identity categorisations with links to the WA public high-school their child attended, noting *'My identity hasn't particularly changed, but I having a framework and language to talk about it has helped'*. Jaquan also recalled that *Category Validation euphoria* came from learning over time: *'Learning about a non-binary gender framework so that I had language and greater understanding of myself has given me the greatest sense of euphoria and sense of self'*. Jeb (Gay Non-Binary Person, 46-55yrs) experienced ongoing and evolving *Acceptance*, *Category Validation* and *Community Connection euphorias* in part, from *'learning from my kids ... euphoria grows with awareness and acceptance'* alongside other stimuli. These included their school's staff, a university community, and relationships.

Some parents also said the conditions for euphorias could be taught. Pina (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) argued that the conditions for euphoria can be shared and co-constructed immediately and progressively in education settings:

There are some 'easy reach' things like anti-bullying/wear it orange [sic] day and the school is also moving to embrace a Positive Behaviour for Learning framework I've been told. This sounds like it will allow space for continuing an ethos of the anti-bullying messaging that needs to carry throughout the year, not just around a particular day.

Jaquan (Bisexual Non-Binary Person, 36-45yrs) had even engaged in teaching school staff to set up the conditions for *Institutional Inclusion* and *Pride Generativity euphorias* for their family and themselves:

In relation to my child's school, the principal and staff had very limited knowledge regarding gender diversity when my child started school at age 5. After working with the principal and staff for the past 5 years, they are much more aware and understanding leading them to have taken significant action to embrace and celebrate gender diversity. This has helped me to feel more euphoric in the school space.

Parents thus engaged in 360-degree inter-generational euphoric pedagogies.

'Time': Time & Persistence Enabled Conditions for LGBTQ+ Parents' Euphorias

The stand-alone theme 'Time' (6 hits, 32% relationality) denoted how some LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias increased at schools as initial blockages were overcome gradually, with their persistence. For example, Cara (Bisexual Cis-female, 36-45yrs) felt increased *Category Validation* and *Acceptance euphorias* over time at the Tasmanian public primary-school her child attended: 'over time I have come to realise that I am who I am. Trying to hide it nearly killed me. Now I am openly and honestly me'. Olivia (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) saw initial barriers to euphorias built into education systems, including her child's WA TAFE vocational education programmes, which are starting to be mediated:

In the beginning, it was difficult with the lessons being tailored to match a 'nuclear family' which confused our child. At Prep we found many parents stand-offish as we had been the only rainbow family in the grade at that time.

Abby (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) felt initial barriers but increasingly experienced euphorias at her child's SA public primary-school:

I was initially afraid to drop off and pick up my child with my partner. However, I have felt happier over time seeing other same sex or diverse parents and knowing too, that our being there and open, helps them too.

Gracelyn (Lesbian Cis-female, 36-45yrs) felt increased *Acceptance euphoria* over time at her child's religious NSW primary-school:

I suppose I just got more comfortable with my identity over time and with age and experience. As I saw that it didn't seem to be an issue from young school years. I just got more comfortable with it.

Alysha (Lesbian Cis-female, 46-55yrs) felt *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* increase through her persisting in activism and through greater LGBTQ+ representation in the NSW school system:

If you're asking about comfort within the school system, I think I've become more confident as a parent over the course of 20 years of having 2 kids go through the school system. This applies to general self confidence in the school system, so it's probably mirrored with comfort about being more assertive about the need for inclusive curriculum etc. We always made the

points, and raised the issue but it's got easier over time. (Ageing?) Also helpful when there's other queer parents - and kids - around, and in the school.

Through this latter type of example, there were links between the 'time' and 'school' themes, where parents had themselves worked over extended periods towards mounting the conditions for increased *Institutional Inclusion euphoria* and felt they were achieving improved conditions for their families in education.

DISCUSSION

Dominant Parent Euphorias

Under a third of LGBTQ+ parents experienced euphorias; for this group (1) *Institutional Inclusion euphoria*; (2) *Category Validation euphoria*; (3) *Pride Generativity euphoria*; and (4) *Community Connection euphoria* mostly occurred always and often across their Chronosystem (time). Parents' *Category Validation euphorias*, reflected the joyful feeling of rightness in TGD studies [16, 17] around parenting roles, and the intimacy focus and familial role building of Erikson's Stages 5-6 [18, 19]—see Fig. 6.6. Parents' *Pride Generativity euphorias* often sparked around

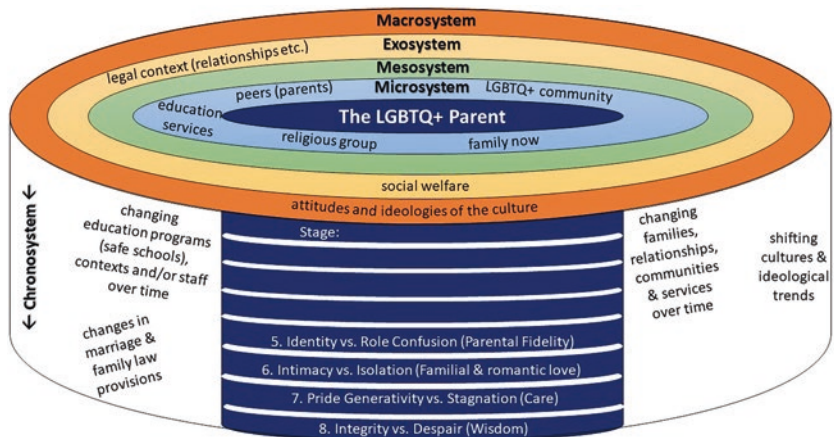


Fig. 6.6 Ecological model of psycho-social influences on LGBTQ+ parents' education-based euphorias

support for youth LGBTQA+ embodiments or informal role-modelling-based learnings, whereas staff versions ignited from formal activism events; both were strongly aligned with Erikson's Stage 7 generativity motivation [18, 19]. These alignments underlined Ahmed's argument that social groups find happiness more accessible when enacting cultural ideals, though achievements were not always age/stage-aligned. *Institutional Inclusion*, *Pride Generativity*, and *Community Connection euphorias* all to various degrees captured responsiveness to collective condition improvements for LGBTQ+ communities in education reflecting notions of euphoria as involving redress [20], extending this to institutional inter-generative redress. These findings emphasised the importance of inclusive structural and social efforts, and the increased likelihood of gay and lesbian parents particularly experiencing euphorias may reflect research on how institutions' inclusion efforts usually focus on gay and lesbian people above transgender people [1, 2].

Stabilising Change-trends

LGBTQ+ parents' euphorias' were relatively stable. Most (over half) reported no changes across their Chronosystem. Given that most LGBTQ+ parents did not report euphorias or changes, parent happiness plateaus pervade education. Smaller change-trends included increased demand for supportive Microsystems enabling *Institutional Inclusion euphoria*; steady growth in (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias* with time and age; and complex influences on (Self- and Social-) *Acceptance euphorias* from relationships or relationship ideas (from Exosystems and Macrosystems). Sometimes sighting a colour or object (purple, rainbow, clothes or flags) literally moved people physically and emotionally closer to LGBTQ+ acceptance or institutional inclusion demands; (re)organising emotions [21, 22] both in informal and formal (dis)organised object-focussed group identification processes [21, 23]. (Social-) *Acceptance euphorias* were most affected by relationship versions of the intimacy versus isolation focus of Erikson's Stage 6 [18, 19]; underlining Ahmed's argument that social sub-groups find happiness more accessible when enacting culturally endorsed phenomena—romantic, familial, community roles [24, 25]. However parents' (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias*, once independent of external acceptance, aligned with the integrity focus of Erikson's Stage 8 [18, 19] and contributed to some parents' comparative resilience around rights debates in their Exo and Macrosystems, defying historic rejections in overlaid happiness

in Butlerian dissidence [26]. Indeed some parents had dismissive meta-emotions around their own and their children's negative education experiences [23], fortifying their euphorias ... through negativity emotional shut-downs. Earlier maturation around generativity again suggested LGBTQ+ (and parent) identities could disrupt identity-staging [27]. Some LGBTQ+ parents progressively learned and taught euphorias; displaying a 360-degree version of Gottman et al.'s dismissive or (meta-) emotion-coaching patterns [23], socio-culturally and institutionally.

Significance & Limitations

LGBTQ+ parent responses were brief yet direct reflecting earlier studies [1], providing the largest-scale parent euphoria data collection to date. The study showed approaches promoted in broader LGBTQ+ parent institutional inclusion literature also enhanced euphorias, including training staff on LGBTQ+ families as part of family diversities broadly and ensuring structures (forms, event invites and procedures, class activities around families) adapt to diverse family models [1]. The study underlined the value of advocacy for LGBTQ+ families in cultural debates; groups sharing established rainbow parents' resilience and self-acceptance strategies with newer LGBTQ+ parents/people; and pro-active (indirect, generalised) school validation of diverse parents *as parents* [1, 2, 15, 28]. The importance of LGBTQ+ youth activism for their wellbeing has been previously established [13, 29]; this study was significant in underlining parents' educational outness and activisms for *their* happiness. Parents' activisms had comparably longer-term/cumulative, more persistent qualities; the wilfulness [30] of the euphorically queer prepared to be the needed 'killjoy'.

Parents' euphoric barriers included relationship status (being single or divorced), and disabilities played a role, reflecting literature on pressures to embody able-bodied homonormative parent coupledness [4, 5].

CONCLUSIONS

LGBTQ+ parents' lack of education-based euphorias and minimal euphoric change-trends may relate to historic and contemporary barriers to their open achievement of intimacy and generativity goals; which may be less possible, accepted or condoned within education-based economies of happiness. Intervention-based norm-critical studies relieving LGBTQ+

parent euphoria blockers including isolation and stagnation may be useful, especially for those with disabilities or less dominant (e.g. multi-gender) sexualities. For LGBTQ+ parents dominant *Institutional Inclusion* and *Category Validation euphorias* particularly emphasised parent roles, and occurred mostly always or often. *Pride Generativity* and finally *Community Connection euphorias* emphasised personal role-modelling and collective LGBTQ+ contributions. Parents' (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias*—once achieved through resilience or dismissive meta-emotion—had armour sustaining long-term action and euphorically queer persistence for improving institutional inclusion and teaching euphoric mentalities; but may temper emotional openness. This differed to student and staff (Social-) *Acceptance euphorias*, potentially reflecting some protection from parents' less centralised daily positioning within volatile school communities. School facilitation of greater access to LGBTQ+ parenting groups may enable role-modelling of resilience resourcing, spread of euphorias, and euphorically queer identity. Chapter 7 considers people with intersex variations' euphorias; redressing gaps in *LGBTQ+ You* data.

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Intersex Euphorias! Positive Experiences of Intersex Variations on and After Diagnoses

Abstract People with intersex variations are mostly framed within conservative psycho-medical research challenging their autonomy, or critical empowerment Intersex Studies literature noting discrimination. Resisting deficit-based framings, this chapter uses the concept ‘euphoria’ to investigate when, why and how 272 Australian online survey participants (aged 16-87yrs) had positive experiences of their intersex variations. Upon diagnosis, under one fifth described what this piece calls *Category Validation*, *Difference Legitimisation*, *Knowledge Integration*, *Medical Sense-making* or *Sudden Hope euphorias*. Post-diagnosis euphorias were more common, most often *Body Positivity euphoria*. Also, *Acceptance*, *Autonomous Control*, *Relative Gains*, or *Fitness Edge euphorias* emerged. Euphorias had different feelings, stimuli, processes, and impacts. *Body Positivity euphoria* was most connected and conducive to other euphorias, and has external stimuli which could be invested in further.

Keywords Euphoria • Intersex • Sex • Body • Positivity • Autonomy

Key Points:

- Under a fifth of people with intersex variations had diagnoses-related euphorias.
- Most people with intersex variations had post-diagnoses euphorias, especially *Body Positivity* and *Acceptance euphorias*.

- This cohort often experienced enforced interventions during the developmental stage ideally establishing autonomy; *Autonomous Control euphoria* may help redress developmental impacts.
- *Body Positivity euphoria* was most linked and conducive to other euphorias, and could be learned.
- *Body Positivity euphoria* may aid individuals' health-care and social engagements.

INTRODUCTION

I spent so much time revising everything they had taught us in school, in the media, in daily life about bodies (...) more than anything it helped to know some intersex people who loved their bodies and believed I too could love mine (Fernanda, female/X with PAIS, 25yrs, on how *Body Positivity euphoria* evolved from contact with intersex community and exposure to resourcing countering body normative messages across her Micro and Macrosystems).

Intersex is an umbrella term for the over 1.7% of people born with atypical sex characteristics; including over 40 variations to chromosomes, hormones or hormone sensitivity, and/or anatomy [1]. Intersex variations discussed in research most commonly include partial or complete androgen insensitivity syndromes (PAIS or CAIS), congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), Klinefelter's Syndrome (KS)/47XXY, Poly-Cystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)-related hyper-androgyny and Turner's Syndrome (TS) [1, 2]. This chapter explores people's positive experiences of their intersex variations. It firstly summarises how people with intersex variations are framed in the literature. It secondly uses 'euphoria' to report on positive experiences from an online survey of 272 Australians with intersex variations. It discusses these data using Chap. 2's ecological model.

PROBLEMATISING INTERSEX HEALTH RESEARCH

Most research literature on people with intersex variations is from the American-Canadian region [2, 3], Asia-Pacific [4, 5], and Europe [6]. People with intersex variations were historically largely framed within traditional institutional expert-centred psycho-medical lenses, constructing them as disordered and requiring 'normalising' bodily interventions without consent [5, 7]. Clinical studies privileged constructions of this group as having 'Disorders of Sex Development' (DSD)

pathologizing their anatomy, endocrinology, genealogy and/or urology. The group was thus cast as needing expert-centred clinically/institutionally based analysis, diagnosis and often so-called corrective hormone therapies or genital surgeries. Medical researchers were thus interrogative over their patients' perceived disorders rather than the biases behind their medical practices.

Contrastingly, recent community-centred Critical Intersex Studies sociological survey work and Bioethical Narrative Inquiry work [4, 8] has framed people with intersex variations as marginalised within discriminatory contexts (or medical and education institutions). These narrative or sociological survey argue for reforms involving people with intersex variations agentively and aligning with rights-based consensus statements [9], privileging a critical view of people with intersex variations as members of a marginalised community collectively at risk of poor access to medical information or discriminatory medical structures limiting bodily autonomy. Medical views on intersex variations are interrogated for discriminatory binary 'norm' biases, problematic ethics, and impacts. Given 'euphoria' suggests 'pleasure' within 'difficulties' in condition/s, a non-academic '*Gender Euphoria*' book included people with intersex variations (e.g. Mari Wrobi) in stories of moving from a birth-assigned gender [10], casting euphoria in relation to 'dysphoria'. The *DSM-5-TR* sub-section 'Gender dysphoria with a disorder of sex development' claims individuals may experience '*uncertainty about their gender, as opposed to developing a firm conviction that they are of another gender*' as they become aware of '*their condition and medical history*' [11], but does not consider euphorias. Whilst 8.5–20% of people with intersex variations experience dysphoria [12], there is a research gap on the cohort's euphorias.

REDRESSING INTERSEX EUPHORIA RESEARCH GAPS

An affirming sociological study solely exploring people with intersex variation experiences of euphoria was needed, to complexify deficit frames of disorder and discrimination in research, and extend on Wrobi's anecdotal euphoric account. The study aimed to consider:

1. How can we characterise typical euphoric (happy or comfortable) experiences of **people with intersex variations**, and their influences?
2. How do these euphorias typically change over time, and what influences changes?

METHODOLOGY & METHOD

Online Survey

An anonymous online survey was used to collect data on people with intersex variations aged 16yrs+. Informed by Critical Intersex Studies, the researcher formed a reference group (with AISSGA, OII and other representatives), who assisted around sensitivities. The survey hosted by Survey Monkey at a URL that included the term ‘ausvariations’, contained 10 pages including 61 forced-choice and open-ended questions. Completion times varied greatly (between 15min-2hrs). Ethical approval was obtained for this project from the UNE Human Research Ethics Committee. Participants self-selected to join the research, had the right not to answer any question. Employing post-modern deconstructive work the researcher enabled participants’ own self-definitions and descriptions through a focus on open-choice written response questions around positive experiences in the questionnaire. Younger participants (16-17yrs) were not required to seek parental approval for their participation, in recognition of anecdotal reports of discrimination or abuse. The survey also supplied links to related help lines and support groups. It opened in May 2015, and closed after two months. Various media were used to promote the project, such as intersex groups, networks, services, various media, social networking sites, websites, e-lists, advocates, and word-of-mouth.

Data Analysis

Final survey quantitative data were downloaded from the Survey Monkey site and then transposed into quantitative computer programs (SPSS v10, Excel). The data were screened and cleansed and those participant surveys that did not fit the target group were excluded. Descriptive statistical analyses were undertaken for the participants with intersex variations, and grounded thematic analyses of their written responses. There were no significant test results by age, sex, or location.

Initial codes were developed from the survey written responses around euphoria using Grounded Theory. Two fluid coding stages placed a focus on emergent categories/strategies [13]. The automated content analysis programme Leximancer, was firstly applied to analyse participants’ comments on two questions where they explained why they felt ‘good’ or ‘very good’ about their intersex variations on diagnosis, or ‘now’

(post-diagnosis). All positive answers for each question were collated into PDFs, and uploaded to Leximancer, applied to ensure dominant thematic concepts and their ‘typical’ quote samples were identified and examined systematically based on data representativeness (see Ch:3). Equivalent concepts in different tense or quantity were merged in concept-editing stages. Map settings were kept at ‘100% visibility’ and ‘50% theme size’ to show common themes and overlaps. All Leximancer-identified themes were secondly elevated for theoretical sampling, tracing euphorias’ feelings, stimuli, processes, and outcomes. Open coding processes included line-by-line coding, so different euphorias within a single story were separated out for concept-level and individual-level ‘meanings’. Finally, connections between euphorias were explored. Leximancer-selected typical quotes are reported using gender-congruent pseudonyms.

RESULTS

Demographics

The average age of the 272 people with intersex variations aged 16-87yrs who completed the survey was 36yrs. Most came from the three most populated Australian states [NSW (32%), VIC (21%) and QLD (18%); or WA (6%), SA(10%), TAS (2%), the ACT (5%) and NT (4%)]. Around one fifth of the participants were living outside of Australia, commonly in the United States (31 people), England (7), and Canada (3). There were no ‘statistically significant’ comparative findings for international groupings. Whilst 4% of people with intersex variations in the study were Australian Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders, they had no distinct trends. Many participants (65%) were working (full-time, part-time, or casually); 12% were unemployed—a higher portion than for Australians broadly. The majority (63%) earned an income under \$41K per year. Most had not disclosed their variations at work.

Whilst 52% were allocated a female sex at birth and a similar portion used that marker now; 41% were allocated a male sex at birth yet only 23% used that marker now (Fig. 7.1) Only 8% of participants were transgender; changes in sex markers (mostly to ‘X’) mainly related to individuals’ fundamental disagreement with medical practitioners’ assessment of their sex characteristics (not gender identity). Whilst 27% of the group had disabilities (e.g. anosmia, osteoporosis etc.), only 12 reported gender dysphoria diagnoses. Over half the participants had experienced two medical

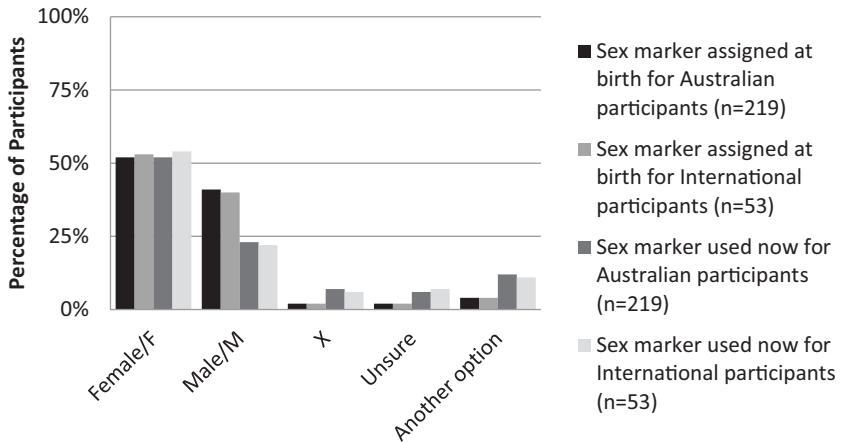


Fig. 7.1 Comparing people with intersex variations' sex marker assigned at birth and used now (N=272)

interventions for their intersex variation, commonly hormonal treatments and genital surgeries when aged under 18yrs. Most experienced at least one negative impact from surgeries (from scarring, decreased genital sensation, depression, anxiety, PTSD, to life-threatening septicaemia). Participants were asked to select variations that they were born with from an alphabetised list. On average, they selected two (Table 7.1).

Positive Feelings Upon Diagnosis

Most participants (64%) learned of their variation aged under 18yrs, a third as adults, and a few remained unsure of the details. Participants were asked how they felt about their intersex variations upon diagnosis. From the options provided 7% selected 'Very Good', 12% 'Good', 33% 'Neutral', 20% 'Bad' and 28% 'Very Bad' (Fig. 7.2). Euphoria was possible but unlikely on diagnosis: 19% of participants felt positively about their variations on diagnosis. Of the 51 participants who had positive feelings on diagnosis (19 very good and 32 good), six also reported gender dysphoria. Leximancer found five themes in their 50 comments about participants' positive feelings on diagnosis: felt, different, knew, medical and due (Fig. 7.3).

Table 7.1 Variations experienced by participants (N=272)

<i>Answer Choices Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
5-alpha reductase deficiency (5-ARD)	2
17-beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency	3
Aphallia	1
Bladder exstrophy	4
Clitoromegaly (large clitoris)	14
Classic CAH	10
CAIS	20
Cryptorchidism (undescended testicle/s)	17
De la Chapelle (XX Male Syndrome)	4
Epispadias	1
Fraser Syndrome	2
Gonadal dysgenesis (partial or complete)	8
Hypospadias	12
Jacobs/XYY Syndrome	2
Kallmann Syndrome	4
KS/47XXY	25
Late Onset CAH	2
Leydig Cell Hypoplasia	1
Micropenis	21
Mosaicism involving 'sex' chromosomes	7
MRKH (Mullerian agenesis; absent vagina)	6
Mullerian (Duct) Aplasia	1
Ovo-testes	16
PAIS	24
Persistent Mullerian Duct Syndrome	0
PCOS-related Hyperandrogenism	38
Progestin Induced Virilization	1
Swyer Syndrome	4
TS (One X Chromosome)	10
Triple-X Syndrome (XXX)	1
XXY/47	31
XY/XO Mosaics	8
XY-Turner's Syndrome	2
Unknown	22
Another variation	29

'Felt': Category Validation Euphoria

The largest Leximancer-identified theme was 'felt' (27 hits, 100% relation-ality to—co-occurrence with—all other concepts). It focussed on partici-pants' elation, relief and reduced loneliness upon finally having a category or group they belonged to (sub-concepts: felt, finally, people, life, female,

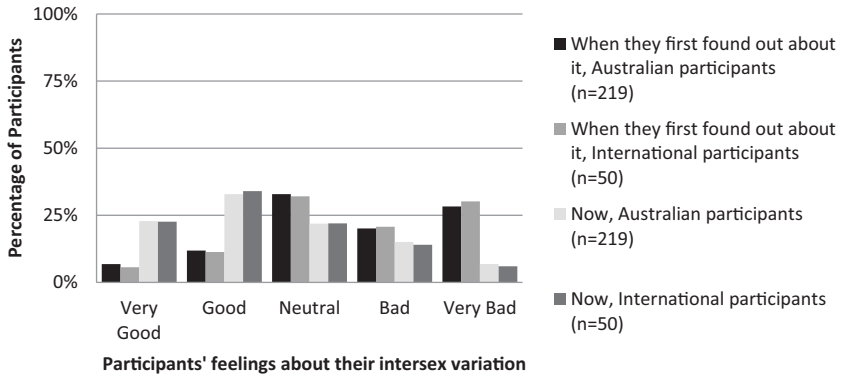


Fig. 7.2 How participants felt about their intersex variation/s when they first learned of them, compared to now (N=270)

having, time, relieved, able, children, sex, alone). Zoe (intersex woman with CAIS, 53yrs) felt good learning about her intersex variation; *'I was relieved to understand why my body was the way it was'*. It helped her to connect socially, *'I had felt very alone with it for a long time, so it was good to put the pieces of the puzzle together and then to be able to meet others with AIS was a huge relief'*. Dylan (man with PAIS and Hypospadias, 24yrs) had experienced suicidal ideation and sex/gender confusion. Diagnosis made him feel 'very good', relief, and elation:

It was entirely life affirming and so brilliant to have the truth out and to know why I am how I am (...) why I felt like I could be female sometimes. I had thought I was crazy. I am not crazy. I am intersex!

Dylan said participating in the survey and affirming himself as 'intersex' was also 'energising'. Similarly, Jamie (X intersex individual with CAH/21 hydroxylase deficiency, 39yrs) was raised male but used an 'X' category. Upon diagnosis, Jamie felt relief joining the intersex category for several reasons:

First, there were others (...) I was not alone. Secondly, it explained to me why I was like I was, most of my issues are common with my condition, it was like a breath of hope. Finally, I am able, if I get help, to live a somewhat normal life and not have to be something I'm not.

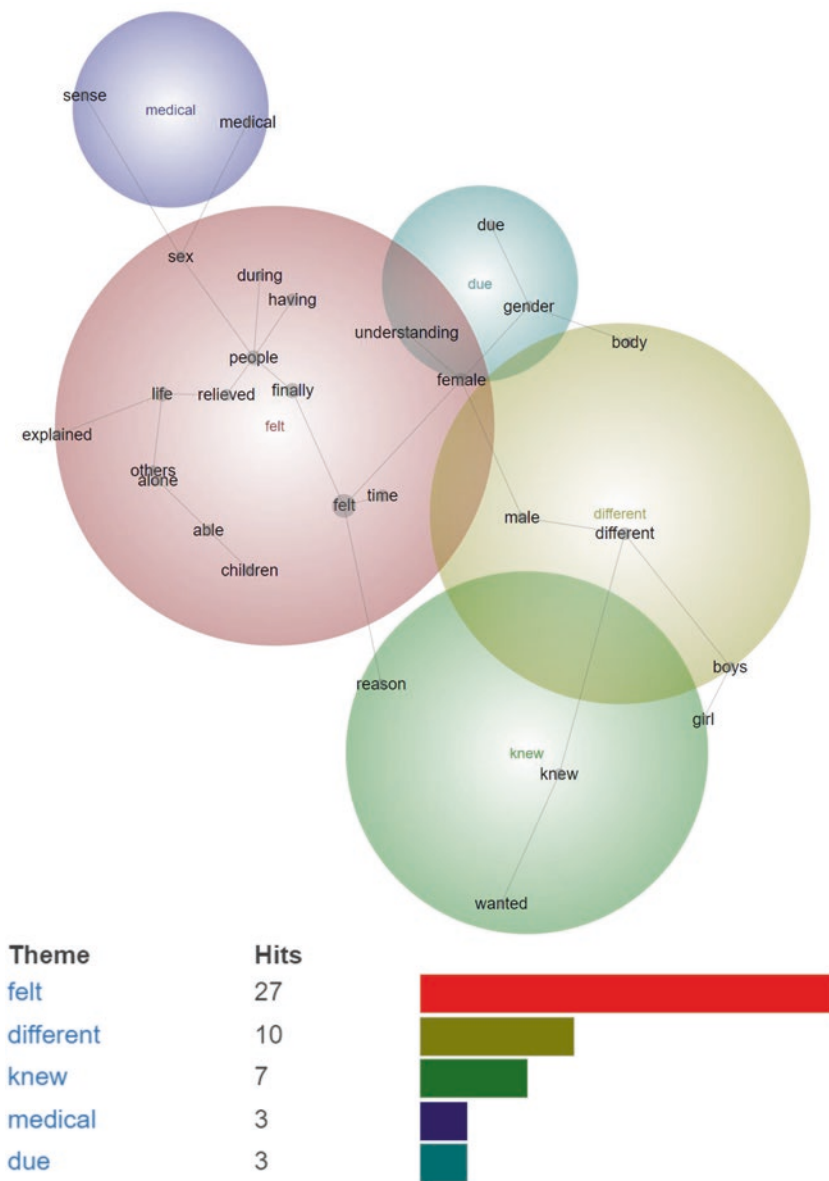


Fig. 7.3 Leximancer map for people with intersex variations' diagnosis euphoria descriptions (N=50)

Cary (intersex woman with Classic CAH and Clitoromegaly, 19yrs) felt ‘good’ when diagnosed; saying it aided her use of more categories; *‘Sometimes queer when I feel like I am genderqueer or feeling more like a boy. Baby butch is ok too’*. She commented on her gleeful feelings over the ‘serious’ diagnoses time:

It seemed right. It was sort of funny and sort of our joke, and then it was more serious but it was not a problem, it made sense. I think having my girlfriend there makes things special and sort of something we are doing together, it is tied to our sex life...

She rejected her doctor’s recommendation for reducing the size of her clitoris; *‘if anything I feel a bigger clit would be more fun’*. Similarly, Clara (trans-woman with KS/47XXY, 21yrs) was overjoyed when she learned of her KS/47XXY diagnosis: *‘I felt that I now had a reason for how I felt growing up, I have always felt more like a girl than a boy’*.

Karma (transgender non-binary intersex person with PCOS/Hyperandrogenism, 25yrs) felt ‘good’ about having PCOS/Hyperandrogenism because it helped them identify as non-binary; *‘I never identified as female, and was relieved that I did not develop wide hips or breasts’*. Similarly, Celine (female with XXY/47, 50yrs) felt ‘very good’ upon diagnosis and *‘elated that I finally had a confirmation my gender was genetically different to anything ‘standard’*. She resisted the suggestion from medical professionals that most people with XXY/47 are male; feeling her karyotype further validated her female category. The *Category Validation euphoria* identified within the ‘felt’ theme was overall the most central euphoria uncovered by Leximancer for participants’ comments on diagnosis. It had connections to the ‘medical’ and ‘knew’ themes, and overlaps with the ‘due’ and ‘different’ themes.

‘Different’: Difference Legitimation Euphoria

‘Different’ (10 hits, 35% relationality) depicted feeling legitimised as unique or special in the moment of learning of one’s intersex variation/s, and was especially associated with people who were allocated a ‘Male/M’ sex on their birth certificate and celebrated having a differentiation from typical male bodies or identities (sub-concepts: different, male). Ahmed (intersex man with micropenis, 29yrs) felt good about his diagnosis because of: *‘a combination of being different and legitimised. I also think it’s very interesting (...) Part of me also likes that T [testosterone therapy]*

enhances my erections rather than being responsible for growth'. Selma (intersex woman with 47XXY, 24yrs) 'felt good' about the difference implied by her diagnosis, because it legitimised her feelings of difference from the sex she was raised in:

I knew something was different and I related more to girls than boys as a child. So given that I had learned in school that girls are xx and boys xy. This was kind of a proof to why I felt like such an outsider.

Jordan (intersex individual with KS/47XXY, 56yrs) also said diagnosis legitimised his sense of difference from other boys, because it: *'Merely confirmed my androgynous, non-sexual sense of self. Had known I was different to the other boys since early childhood, but didn't have an explanation'*.

For several participants however, their initial joy at difference dissipated. Bailey (intersex non-binary individual with KS/47XXY and ootestes, 25yrs) found diagnoses made them initially feel 'very good', commenting *'it was a relief to me to learn that I was neither male nor female, or that perhaps I was both or something in between'*. However, Bailey later was pressured by parents and doctors to be more masculine, and experienced phases of hiding their difference. Similarly, for Angelina (intersex female with PAIS, 35yrs) initially on diagnosis: *'I felt really good about it, because it explained so much. It was like everything in my life finally clicked'*. Her family *'accepted it without question'*. However, the initial euphoria left; *'once it sunk in I was Intersex, I got depressed for nearly two months'*. Scarlet (female with 3BHSD Late Onset CAH, 40yrs) similarly initially felt 'very good' about not being traditionally male, but nonetheless her euphoria was complicated since her diagnosis included fertility issues *'it was bad enough having a female gender identity and consequent Gender Dysphoria due to a male body, but to have a 'defective' one with very limited fertility seemed very unfair'*. Scarlet's euphoria over differentiation from male identity was temporary, and complicated by dysphoria. Noreen (transgender intersex woman with Cryptorchidism, 61yrs) felt 'good' about her variation on diagnosis later in life, because it explained her feelings of difference. However, it also created difficult impacts (contributing to her divorce), and evoked hard memories. So her euphoria mixed with anger and bitterness:

I didn't know whether to be angry or to have a good cry. It was good though to finally know why I'd always felt like a fish out of water all my life.

After years of my young life spent blaming myself as I grew up for not being able to measure up as a male, I now knew the reason why.

The *Difference Legitimation euphoria* in the ‘different’ theme overlapped with *Category Validation euphoria* and other types. It especially overlapped where several participants had ‘always felt’ different.

‘Knew’: Knowledge Integration Euphoria

The stand-alone theme ‘knew’ (7 hits, 30% relationality) covered the pleasure of having a pre-existing subliminal knowledge about one’s intersex variations confirmed on diagnosis; often coupled with yearning to have had the direct knowledge earlier. Victor (male with Kallman Syndrome, 28yrs) felt ‘good’ upon diagnosis because it confirmed an indistinct ‘inner knowing’:

I knew there was something about me, but I did not know what it was. Knowing you have KS helps and I wish I had known earlier. It sounded weird to other people but it did not sound weird to me as it fit so many parts of me.

Nadine (female with Clitoromegaly/Classic CAH, 53yrs) felt ‘good’ upon diagnosis because *‘It just felt like a useful revelation that put words to feelings and answered questions, and made sense of memories like the hospital visits, and the pills conversation’*. She was pleased she had avoided genital surgery and declined hormone pills; *‘I loved my lean body while lots of my girlfriends were fatter and had big baggy breasts slowing them down. Mine were cute and perky’*.

Cameron (male with KS/47XXY, 66yrs) said his diagnosis made him feel ‘good’ because it meant, *‘I knew why I had the lumps and to some extent, I felt special’*. He found out about the variation when investigating his sterility later in life, and so wished he had learned about it earlier to confirm his previous suspicions about his hormonal differences and enable earlier hormonal interventions. Mia (intersex woman with clitoromegaly and unknown variation, 24yrs) felt ‘good’ upon diagnosis, because *‘I knew I was a bit different. I have no desire to be a man but I do not feel or look like a girly girl either’*. It also helped that she had experienced pre-diagnosis positive exposure to people with intersex variations at LGBTI events: *‘I did not know it at the time, but seeing those intersex people at Mardi Gras*

meant a lot to me when I was first getting the results (...) those people and how happy they were'.

Mia's story showed how some participants both knew, and didn't know, about their intersex variations simultaneously pre-diagnosis. The 'knew' theme overlapped with the 'different' theme, through stories like Jordan's (intersex individual with KS/47XXY, 56yrs) where the participant always knew they were different. *Knowledge Integration euphoria* also had relationships to individuals' past exposures to communities, people or traits related to intersex variations.

'Medical': Medical Sense-making Euphoria

'Medical' (3 hits, 13% relationality) comprised the joy of sense-making upon medical intersex diagnosis, with two sub-concepts (medical and sense). It particularly linked to the 'felt' theme through stories like Cary's and others', where one or more medical diagnoses made sense of a feeling that the participants already had, that they aligned with a sex category or social cohort different to the one they were assigned at birth. Clara (trans-woman with KS/47XXY, 21yrs) commented that her diagnosis provided medical sense-making of her sense of self as female: *'With the diagnosis I felt I could finally be myself as I now had a medical excuse as to why I felt this way'*.

Drew (intersex person with Cloacal Exstrophy, 36yrs) commented that their diagnosis gave them 'good' feelings, because it made sense of their identity. Despite later difficulties and challenges around their identity, they argued that because they had positive support and experiences of care around the initial medical explanations, the initial positive sense-making processes mediated relations with family, and harder times later, and *'due to having two ostomies and other medical complications I was brought up to be resilient and independent'*. So, participants' comments revealed that *Medical Sense-making euphoria* identified within the 'medical' theme potentially had a relationship to positive treatment by medical professionals and family, and *Category Validation euphoria*.

'Due': Sudden Hope Euphoria

The smallest stand-alone theme 'due' (3 hits, 13% relationality) expressed respondents' sudden hope upon diagnosis for understanding or envisioning a better future occurring *due* to its contrast against preceding negative contexts of confusion or difficulties. Blake (male with XXY/47, 49yrs) described a 'good' sudden hope upon diagnosis, because it gave him the

knowledge to overcome sexual issues he was experiencing with his wife and some context for the bad treatments he had experienced without explanation during childhood. Information was hope-inducing for Blake, in the context of having previously lacked it, since ‘*Knowledge helps us to live well. Research must continue to allow everyone a better quality of life*’.

Reese (intersex female with CAIS, 40yrs) described a sudden euphoric ‘very good’ hopeful feeling upon diagnosis:

There was a name, and other people who had this, and an answer as to why I felt different to other female friends. Definitely shock and confusion at first due to not understanding or knowing of these variations prior to now, however a feeling of finally understanding myself. Lack of support for myself and my family at this time however affected our relationships (...) This new information allowed me to be involved in the (intersex support group) which then gave support...

Being diagnosed in a context of negative prior understanding and relationships meant Reese saw the diagnosis as hopeful and a pathway towards alternate supports. The ‘Due’ theme thus suggested that *Sudden Hope euphoria* may occur for some individuals upon diagnosis. It especially was due to a break from prior hopelessness, negativity, and/or confusion. Though it strikes fleetingly, *Sudden Hope euphoria* appeared more impactful the greater the intensity of the pressures it relieved. Even in memory it appeared to have sustained or sustaining effects.

Positive Feelings Now/post-diagnosis

Asked how they felt about their intersex variations at the time of taking the survey/post-diagnosis; 23% of participants selected ‘Very Good’, 33% ‘Good’, 22% ‘Neutral’, 15% ‘Bad’ and 7% ‘Very Bad’ (Fig. 7.2). Most (56%) participants felt positively about their intersex variations now (on average over a decade post-diagnosis); over twice as many felt good post-diagnosis than on diagnosis. Thus, the cohort felt better about their variations over time and ultimately had mostly positive feelings towards them, despite initial negativities. Of the 56% of participants who had positive feelings post-diagnosis (62 very good and 89 good), nine also reported gender dysphoria. Leximancer found five themes across the 150 comments provided about participants’ positive feelings post-diagnosis: body, accept, surgery, makes and fit (Fig. 7.4).

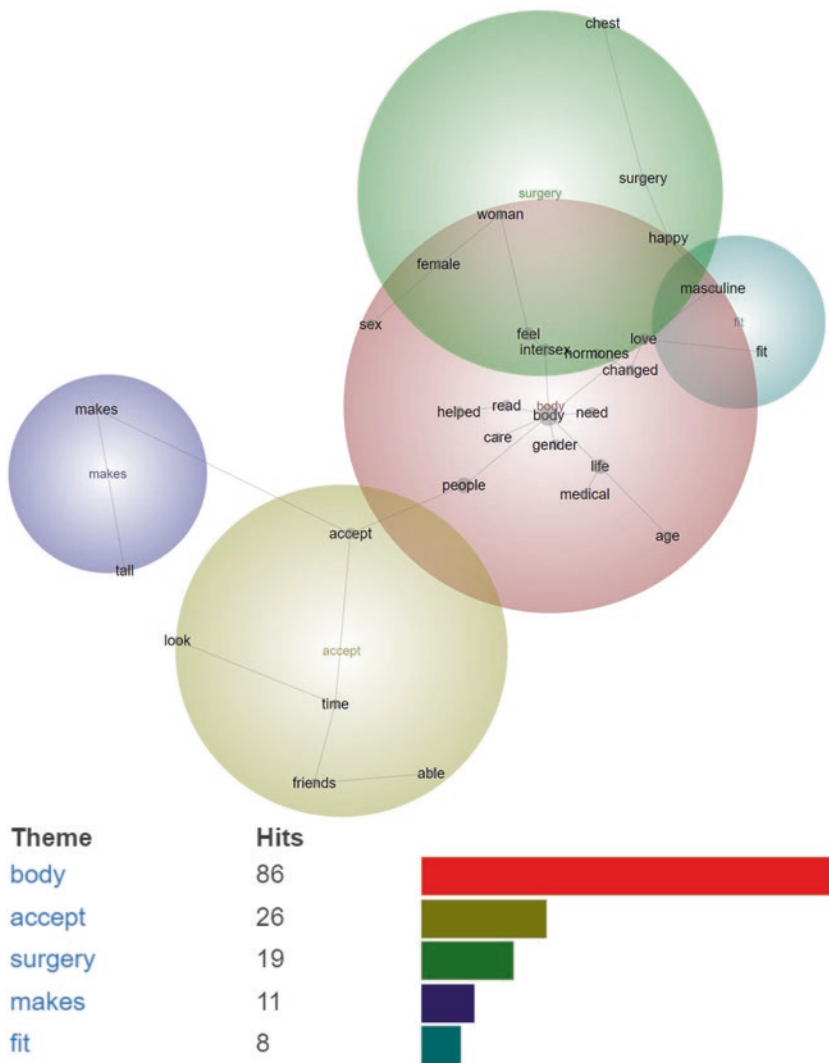


Fig. 7.4 Leximancer map for people with intersex variations' post-diagnosis euphoria descriptions (N=150)

'Body': Body Positivity Euphoria

The largest Leximancer-identified post-diagnoses theme was 'body' (86 hits, 100% relationality). It captured participants' increased experiences of body positivity across life, often after negative diagnoses experiences (sub-concepts: body, people, life, feel, intersex, love, read, helped, need, changed, gender, hormones, medical, happy, sex, age, care). For some this shift to body positivity was inspired by other people with intersex variations. Lily (intersex female with Mayer Rokintanky Kuster Hauser Syndrome—MRKH/congenital absence of vagina, 31yrs) had 'very good' feelings about her intersex variation now, years after 'traumatic' medical treatment incidents upon diagnosis in her teens and periods of self-harm. Connecting to other people with intersex variations was life-changing for Lily, creating connection to her body and those who loved it:

The intersex community changed my life. Becoming connected and becoming an activist and educator changed everything. I love my intersex body and have found partners that do, too. My fears about being a freak and being rejected simply haven't played out.

Fernanda (female/X with PAIS, 25yrs) also felt 'very good' about her intersex variation and body now. Fernanda's comment, opening this chapter, explained that this shift was inspired by intersex community groups that '*affirmed intersex body-positive ideas*'; reading '*feminism, gender theory*' and time spent revising school curricula, media, and daily life body normativity messaging. Fernanda thus reframed her body as, '*one of many possibilities, and one of the many body types that is not accepted or celebrated as it should be*'. Jannali (intersex female with CAIS, 25yrs) also now shifted to feeling 'very good' about her body due to online intersex contacts who:

caused a complete and radical shift in my thinking and wellbeing. Seeing that they had come out about being intersex, and that they liked themselves, that some had partners... BEST. THING. EVER!

Warren (intersex man with unexplained scarring, 38yrs) felt 'good' when '*I started to meet other intersex people and find social support*' around his body. This inspired positive changes:

I started to find medical professionals who treated me with respect and care, instead of bullying me into hating my body or doing interventions that I

didn't want to do. I take better care of my body and am more likely to seek medical care now

For some participants, *Body Positivity euphoria* was inspired by reading body positive texts. Edwina (woman with MRKH Syndrome, 27yrs) had negative schooling and medical experiences which initially made her feel 'very bad' about her body. However, body positive reading often created 'very good' feelings of validation of her body and:

helped me to see the pressure placed on women's bodies (...) The more I read and talk to other people with bodies like me, the more I know the stories we are sold about living up to sex ideals are the stories that make us feel we cannot live. I have let those old ideas go now.

The *Body Positivity euphoria* evident in the 'body' theme was the most central and dominant euphoria in the study. It had relationships to the most euphorias in Leximancer's post-diagnosis comments map, including those within the 'surgery', 'fit', and 'accept' themes.

'Accept': Acceptance Euphoria

'Accept' (26 hits, 31% relationality) explored increased individual self-acceptance or social acceptance over time (sub-concepts: accept, time, able, friends, look). Ralph (man with KS/47XXY, 42yrs) had a history of negative experiences including being bullied, around his low testosterone. However, he increasingly had moments where he felt 'good' about himself as he became more self-accepting, and more accepted by family and friends. He stopped using drugs and increasingly disclosed identity elements to others: *'Since 'coming out' couple years ago to my family and friends about my cross dressing, I have been able to accept who I am today'*. Raj (male with 17-beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency, 26yrs) said he felt 'good' now because *'I am getting the look I want and accept what happened [to my body] and why'*. He also became increasingly able to discuss his variation or body with accepting colleagues; *'That kind of acceptance feels good and I like being able to talk to them about it'*. Jonah (male with XY/XO Mosaics, 63yrs) commented: *'I'm content with my body. When I first found out that my XO cell line was responsible for my feminine face (due to micrognathia) I was angry. (...) It took some time, but I grew to accept my body'*.

Younger people in this theme group especially commented on satisfaction about body parts they accepted. Giana (female with PAIS, 17yrs)

commented: *'I like my body, how I look, how boys like it. Girls get jealous that I am not hairy, and don't have to wax all the time'*. Vita (intersex female with Kallman Syndrome, 18yrs) commented: *'I like my little boobies! I am still a bit skinnier than most girls'*. The *Acceptance euphoria* in the 'accept' theme had an overlap with the 'body' and 'makes' themes.

'Surgery': Autonomous Control Euphoria

'Surgery' (19 hits, 19% relationality) described feelings of achievement over increased autonomy and personal choice/control around identity, information, hormonal and/or surgical treatments (sub-concepts: surgery, woman, female, and chest). Sloan (individual with PCOS/hyperandrogenism, 45yrs) had felt 'very bad' upon diagnosis but felt 'good' and happy after engaging in a chosen surgery, and aimed at feeling 'very good' in future: *'living in the appropriate gender for me has made me happier with my body more than medical interventions. I would choose very good, but I need to go to the gym for that'*. Sherry (woman with PAIS, 55yrs) felt 'very good' and happy about her increased control over her surgical and hormonal interventions now. Chris (intersex individual with 47/XXY, 44yrs) felt 'Very Bad' about the initial experience of receiving minimal information about their diagnosis as a teen. However, having recently gained full access to their medical records on their chromosomes and greater control over interventions, Chris now felt 'Very Good': *'Finally being able to realise and say who I am, and doing what I wanted to do about that has made a massive difference to every aspect of my life'*.

Dana (woman with XXXY chromosomes, 45yrs) felt 'good' and satisfied due to increased information access around her variation; *'initially, I was gendered female, then they sealed that and made it look as if no previous record had existed. I have now been able to get the original with the original registration date reinstated'*. She also increasingly felt self-love after controlling her surgeries: *'You just learn to love yourself, made it a lot easier after recent surgery to undo damage done'*. Andy (intersex man with Jacobs/YYY Syndrome, 34yrs) felt 'Very Bad' upon diagnosis as a teen, because he did not know exactly 'what' he was. After exposure to intersex support groups online, he now feels 'Very Good' about his variation and has more information and treatment control; *'When you know what you are, you can learn to live with it'*. Elaine (trans intersex woman with KS/47XXY, 31yrs) shifted from feeling 'bad' upon diagnosis to 'good' now. Raised as male, she transitioned to female later in life and she was forced to divorce, lost her mortgaged home and family and began couch-surfing. However,

increased control over bodily interventions made her '*happier than ever*'. Nina (intersex female with 3beta hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency, 32yrs) now felt 'good' but had experienced many difficulties when younger. Her happiness increased around becoming 'in control' over her interventions:

I have a designer vagina! Very perfect body, my friends say. My regrets are just that it needs to be perfect. You never stop being seen as intersex or trans (...) I feel more pressure.

The *Autonomous Control euphoria* evident in the 'surgery' theme overlapped with *Body Positivity* and *Fitness Edge euphorias* in the 'body' and 'fit' themes through several stories, illustrated in the Leximancer map.

'Makes': Relative Gains Euphoria

'Makes' (11 hits, 19% relationality) denoted positive feelings on relative gains people had around having intersex variations compared to their own or others' experiences (sub-concepts: makes, tall). Gains included height, strength, uniqueness, or positive social differentiations. Some participants experienced gains relative to others. Gabriel (male with XY/XO Mosaics, 19yrs) used to find being shorter than others difficult, but now he feels 'good' about being intersex, as it '*makes you stick out*'. Stewart (male with KS/47XXY, 39yrs) said HRT helped him to look masculine and he felt it gave him advantages his brother did not have that made him feel 'Very Good'. He commented: '*Like being tall, like being on T. My brother did not have this. He's not as good looking.*.'. Siobhan (girl with TS, 16yrs) described a special feeling around giving a speech at her school on her Turner's Syndrome, when the students gave her a standing ovation: '*It makes me feel so much more special*'. She also liked getting taller; '*I'm growing a bit! It is exciting*'. Vincent (male with XXY/47, 49yrs) enjoyed feeling 'Very Good' now when realising he was more interesting than if he had been endosex: '*It is now a point about me I find interesting and unusual. There is not much else about me that makes me unique*'.

Some participants experienced gains relative to their own earlier or compartmentalised experiences. Marcia (intersex woman with Turner's Syndrome, 27yrs) got '*happier as I get older*'. Barbara (trans intersex female with PAIS, 40yrs) had felt 'Very Bad' about her intersex variation growing up due to poor socialising, but now felt 'Very Good' as '*Hormones and hair removal have made a huge difference*'. Gordon (male with KS/47XXY

and micropenis, 21yrs) felt ‘good’ about his height relative to his other body features: ‘*Being tall makes up for so much. Unhappy about my teeth*’. Briony (female with Turner’s Syndrome/One X Chromosome, 30yrs) had felt bad earlier but now enjoyed her gains from TS, feeling:

Very good about the body, I am old enough to know you only get one and everyone has some complaint or another. My complaint is the infertility, TS itself just makes me special and more open-minded. I think it made me stronger.

The ‘makes’ theme had a link to the ‘accept’ theme and revealed a connection between *Relative Gains* and *Acceptance euphorias*.

‘Fit’: Fitness Edge Euphoria

The smallest theme ‘fit’ (8 hits, 14% relationality) comprised participants’ positive feelings around how their intersex variations enhanced fitness, litness, muscle-tone, or masculinity (sub-concepts: fit, masculine). Kelly (intersex woman with clitoromegaly and CAH, 19yrs) felt ‘very good’ about their fit body and masculinity, saying:

I’m happy with it, I am fit and strong. I like sex a lot and would not want to wreck that. I don’t have big boobs or anything so I look androgynous which is what I like and what my partner finds attractive.

Nina (intersex female with 3beta hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency, 32yrs) enjoyed being ‘*very pretty, very fit, very easy on the eye*’. Sherry (woman with PAIS, 55yrs) felt masculinity aided her looks:

I love that even middle-aged I have remained fit and lean. My chest is not sagging, my hips are not large, I have no stretched belly having carried no children. It is ironic that the ideal woman is like a man.

Marnie (intersex woman with gonadal dysgenesis, 58yrs) felt ‘good’ having realised that, ‘*Overall I am fit and healthy and there are people with much more significant and incapacitating conditions, so I count my blessings*’. Tina (woman with 17-beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency, 33yrs) sometimes felt ‘very good’ now, based on ‘intersex advantages’ including, ‘*I have some masculine traits within my personality that are a real gift - they contribute to my success at work, and in my personal relationships*’. The *Fitness Edge euphoria* seen within the ‘fit’ theme had an

overlap with the ‘body’ theme/*Body Positivity euphoria*, and ‘surgery’ theme and *Autonomous Control euphoria* according to the Leximancer map.

DISCUSSION

Dominant Intersex Euphorias

This study uncovered intersex diagnosis-specific (1) *Category Validation*, (2) *Difference Legitimation*, (3) *Knowledge Integration*, (4) *Medical Sense-making*, and (5) *Sudden Hope euphorias*; and post-diagnosis (1) *Body Positivity*, (2) *Acceptance*, (3) *Autonomous Control*, (4) *Relative Gains*, and (5) *Fitness Edge euphorias*. For these participants *Category Validation euphoria* most reflected a joyful feeling of rightness in existing studies; whilst *Difference Legitimation euphoria* most reflected relationships to identity struggles and dysphoria, though 10 of 12 participants with dysphorias experienced euphorias overall [10, 14]. The four most dominant euphorias upon diagnosis (*Category Validation*, *Difference Legitimation*, *Knowledge Integration* and *Medical Sense-making euphorias*) each appeared linked to overcoming adolescent Stage 5 identity formation crises [15, 16]—see Fig. 7.5. Stories cited in this paper underlined theories that without identity formation achievement in adolescence adults can experience

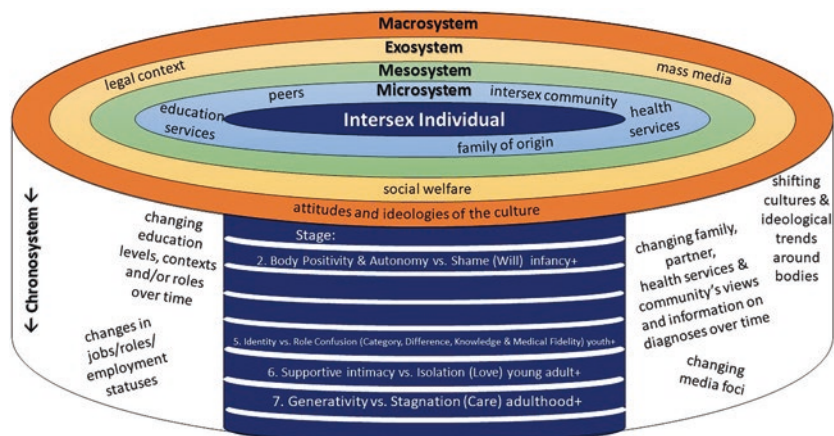


Fig. 7.5 Ecological model of psycho-social influences on people with intersex variations’ diagnoses and post-diagnoses euphorias

barriers to happiness and role confusion. *Body Positivity, Acceptance* and *Autonomous Control euphorias* reflected how euphoria related to redress [17], extending this to health-care institutional redress. *Body Positivity* and *Autonomous Control euphorias* linked to the focus on will in Stage 2 of Erikson's psycho-social development model [15, 16]; though redress of coerced or enforced bodily intervention around Stage 2 and subsequent (will-related) developmental difficulties occurred in later adulthood (post-infancy). For people with intersex variations their bodies (particularly sex characteristics not aligned with binary sex) can become objects health-care providers and families collectively projected unhappiness upon [18]; and literally moved participants away from [19] through coerced removal or reshaping 'for (repressive) happiness'. *Autonomous Control* and *Body Positivity euphorias* for this group, then, acknowledged but subversively countered body negations. These euphorias celebrated transference of subjective control and de-objectification to non-traditional euphorically queer(/intersex) [19] identities and bodies.

Dramatic Change-trends

Intersex diagnosis euphorias included sudden, temporary, longer, or recurrent shifts away from pre-existing negative feelings from youth; sometimes followed by depression or mixed emotions. Post-diagnosis euphorias often a decade later evolved at a dramatic increase across the cohort's reporting, changing with absorption of external ideas and social stimuli; the passing of time and/or increased positive feedback; monumental increases in control over social and medical treatment; and/or changing perception around how one fared relative to physical, socio-cultural and workplace ideals. Core changes in Microsystems and Macrosystems over the Chronosystem supported euphorias, reflecting relationships with material expressions of identity and possibilities of material change, and socio-cultural contexts, seen in TGD literature [14, 20]; and extending these findings to include time and perspectival-shifts. Euphorias also related to participants' self-estimations compared to others, reflecting Ahmed's argument that happiness is relative to social hierarchies [19, 21], and whether bodies belong to 'insider' versus 'outsider' groups—the fit versus unfit, loved versus unloved. *Relative Gains* and *Fitness Edge euphorias* expressed radical re-orderings of people with intersex variations' bodies and identities in socio-cultural hierarchies above other types. These re-orderings fit Butler's notion that transference of

norms—in this case, of happiness associated with norms—to atypical bodies showed intersex euphorias do disruptive socio-cultural work [22, 23]. In sharing these disruptive euphorias for publication, participants ensured their wider re-ordering value, offering templates for euphorically intersex perspectives.

Significance & Limitations

This first study of people with intersex variations' euphorias showed they may support wellbeing as for TGD people [20], *and* contributed towards undoing the identity-based foreclosures and stagnations theorists warn against [15, 19, 24]. Intersex diagnosis euphorias may aid people's relationships to sex/gender development; and mediate knowledge and community seeking behaviours. Post-diagnoses euphorias may aid disclosures, overall contentedness, and positivity in self-accounts or comparisons. *Body Positivity euphoria* may aid people in pursuing improved personal treatment of their bodies, supportive health-care, and sexual/romantic and social engagements. The findings support existing calls for bodily autonomy protection in the Exosystem [8, 9]; body diversity positivity in the Micro and Macrosystems [25–27]; more affirming category and body information in Microsystem institutions [1, 4, 28]; and funding for support groups that promote positive body messaging and health autonomy [1, 9]. The cohort's high representations of Androgen Insensitivities, PCOS-related Hyperandrogenism, and KS/47XXY reflect their wider prevalence [2]. However, this sample had low rates of dysphoria compared to other samples [12], limiting exploration of euphorias' associations with dysphorias. There were no endosex participants and small diverse international cohorts; thus the study could not compare Australian intersex people's impacts from *Body Positivity* (or other) *euphorias*, to endosex or international cohorts' impacts.

CONCLUSIONS

Most people with intersex variations had euphorias usually after, not at, diagnosis. Euphorias aid more affirming feelings, relations, accounts, and actions around having intersex variations. Given that *Body Positivity euphoria* was most dominant for this intersex cohort, most linked to other euphorias, and a response to external ideas and social stimuli; it may be promoted. Increased body positivity themed intersex community events

and texts; government funding and supports; and messaging in psycho-medical approaches and texts (e.g. revising the *DSM-5-TR*'s deficit-based frames for intersex people) may aid earlier and wider exposure to *Body Positivity euphoria* and its benefits. Future studies could consider if the euphorias seen here present for other cohorts, and explore body positivity resourcing interventions.

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Setting Euphoria Agendas? What We Know and Need to Know

Abstract This final chapter uses the ecological model of psycho-social development introduced in Chap. 2 to frame what was learned about euphorias for different groups and contexts, and different age-stages and time periods, across the data presented from several different studies in the book. It considers and discusses these findings in relation to existing literature on euphoria, emotion, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people. It clarifies the new information presented across the studies and its value in terms of various disciplines of knowledge. The chapter finally concludes by offering possible applications of this new knowledge in practice for stakeholders. It then also discusses what is not yet known about euphoria and sets new agendas for the uses and study of euphorias.

Keywords Euphoria • LGBTIQ+ • Community • Acceptance • Identity • Inclusion

Key Points

- Several euphorias were strongly evidenced across multiple LGBTIQ+ cohort surveys and sites.

- Individual and Microsystem influences had the strongest impacts on euphorias, particularly identity and intimacy achievement motivations, and institutional inclusion.
- LGBTQ+ professionals had the most changeable euphorias, LGBTQ+ parents the most stable.
- Events, objects, and colours have euphoric values, stimulating collective social and institutional euphorias. The euphorically queer dismiss or re-order dysphoric values of bodies, social spectres, and institutions.
- These studies suggest more nuanced models of LGBTQ+ people for service provision pathways, and research.

INTRODUCTION

This book shared the euphorias or positive feelings of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) about their identities and variations around education contexts (Chaps. 3, 4, 5, and 6) and health-related diagnoses. This final chapter revisits their data to answer the book's key questions on the typical characterisations of:

1. *Euphorias of LGBTQ+ people around institutional engagements, and their influences.*
2. *Change-trends for these euphorias, and their influences.*

This chapter first reflects across the data and literature examined to assert the most typical euphorias for LGBTQ+ people uncovered overall, and their value for stakeholders. It then uses the ecological model of psychosocial development introduced in Chap. 2 to frame a comparison of the dominant influences on euphorias for LGBTQ+ people across the studies examined. It explores these findings in relation to existing literature and theory on euphoria, emotions, and LGBTQ+ people, clarifying significant new information and information gaps arising across the studies. The chapter concludes by summarising applications of euphoria knowledge in practice for stakeholders and setting agendas for the study of euphorias.

COMPARING TYPICAL LGBTQ+ EUPHORIAS

The four surveys covered across five chapters in this book found that 13 euphorias were most typical for LGBTQ+ people in education, health-care, and potentially other settings (see Fig. 8.1). Data were especially



Fig. 8.1 Leximancer hits by survey group for specific euphorias

strong (with the highest collective number of hits across all survey comments examined) for five dominant euphorias:

1. ***Institutional Inclusion euphorias***: 740 hits across three surveys.
Feelings of affirmation, comfort, safety, joy and/or fun from institutional efforts and supports; feelings of affirmation, comfort, safety, joy and/or fun from institutional efforts and supports; including direct structural supports and celebratory inclusion including events (inclusive forms, inclusive education, expressions of support in classrooms and activities).
2. ***Acceptance euphorias***: 676 hits across three surveys.
Feelings of safety and comfort in social acceptance and to a lesser degree self-acceptance (more common for LGBTQ+ adults and particularly parents, and people with intersex variations around their bodies), sometimes surrounded by negative feelings or their potential; from being accepted by others (especially friends for students and colleagues and students for staff) or the self, sometimes in the face of or against potential negativity or exclusion.
3. ***Community Connection euphorias***: 558 hits across two surveys.
Feelings of happiness, comfort, satisfaction, and safety in connection to other LGBTQ+ individuals and groups; from observing or engaging with other LGBTQ+ individuals and groups in shared education settings.
4. ***Category Validation euphorias***: 316 hits across three surveys.
Feelings of validation within a category, relief, elation and/or humour; from validation of LGBTQ+, gender or parental identity categories through institutions or people's open acknowledgement of or support for the identities conceptually, in forms/work-sheets or pragmatic efforts at correct nomenclature/pronoun use and so on, or sometimes surrounded by negative feelings or their potential over the possibility of fit versus non-fit over time or related social treatment prospects.
5. ***Body Positivity euphorias***: 86 hits across one survey.
Feelings of increased love and care for one's body and bodily diversity; often inspired by exposure to body positive messaging, resources or communities after a negative experience around physical condition diagnoses or body negating viewpoints and experiences.

The five dominant euphorias' recurrences across many comment hits in the Leximancer analyses, often across several surveys, suggest them as core starting points for individuals, therapists, (education, health, mental health and social) service providers' work towards their exploration and encouragement. It also suggests them as core themes for comparative euphoria studies for other focal identities and bodies; for other institutional contexts for LGBTIQ+ people; or in other contexts internationally. These five dominant euphorias were particularly important for LGBTIQ+ people in how they correlated and overlapped with experiences of other euphorias; suggesting they may be conducive towards them. Across several surveys and populations *Institutional Inclusion and Community Connection euphorias* and some instances of *Acceptance euphorias* reflected several theorists' concepts of euphoria as being or requiring social redress [1, 2], here including institutional redress within Microsystems for both LGBTQ+ staff and students for whom these euphorias could emerge in response to rectifying perceived social and institutional exclusion threat. These euphorias had revolutionary, Butlerian subversive potentials through their use of 'transference' onto non-traditional bodies [3] happiness and acceptance by institutions re-ordering existing hierarchies of acceptability. *Category validation euphorias* reflected the joyful feeling of rightness, upon identity achievement and fidelity in engagement with the Microsystem, seen in existing studies [4, 5]. Though *Body Positivity euphorias* only emerged for people with intersex variations, they may also have especial relevance for other (e.g. TGD, female) groups around overcoming suppressive health contexts or body image issues [6–8]; further research would be useful. The five dominant euphorias largely focussed on actions representing positive reactions to the LGBTIQ+ people by themselves as 'the Individual' or in what Bronfenbrenner terms the Individuals' Microsystems [9], and reflected Ahmed's idea that emotion-laden actions are reactions to particular identities and bodies in a politics of their value within institutions and cultures (2004, p. 4). Like in early feminist and queer writings, euphorias overlapped joy from achieving what is problematized or denied—for LGBTIQ+ people broadly (acceptance, category validation); LGBTQ+ people in education (inclusion, community) or people with intersex variations (body positivity) [10–12]. Thus, euphorias can have oppositional traits to dysphorias [13], yet complex relations to negative contexts and feelings, echoing this emphasis in euphoria literature [4, 14]. The next section considers influences on these euphorias, using Chap. 2's ecological model.

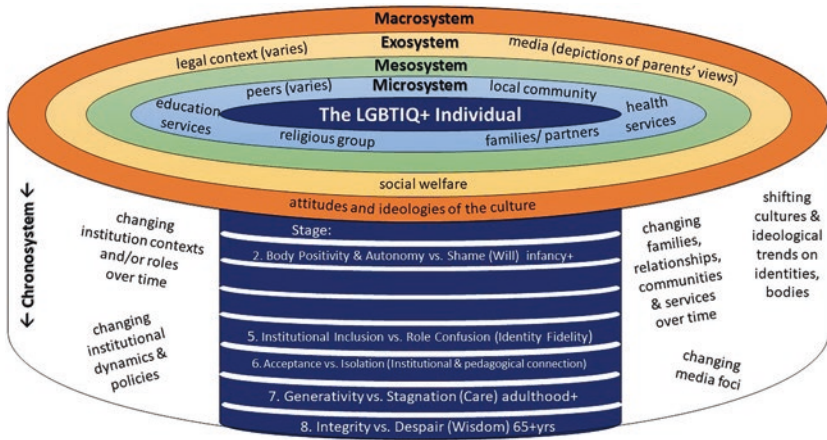


Fig. 8.2 Ecological model of emphasised influences on LGBTIQ+ people’s euphorias

COMPARING LGBTIQ+ EUPHORIAS’ INFLUENCES

The ecological model of influences on LGBTIQ+ people’s euphorias developed for this book provides a useful picture of influences the surveys in previous chapters emphasised (Fig. 8.2). This section discusses (sometimes inter-related) Individual, Micro and Meso, Exo and Macrosystem level influences towards the second research question on what influences euphorias; whilst the next considers the influence of the Chronosystem with other data towards addressing the third research question on change over time.

Individual Level Influences on Euphorias

At the **Individual level** LGBTIQ+ groups had asymmetric experiences of euphorias overall, and specific euphorias, with influences including their stage-based motivations, demographics, and roles. Firstly, Table 8.1 shows how all surveys emphasised the importance of Erikson’s Stage 5 & 6 identity fidelity and intimacy motive achievements for increasing the likelihood of LGBTIQ+ people’s euphorias [15, 16]. Happiness rewards for what Marcia termed identity moratoriums and formation fidelity—especially where explored identities were socially endorsed—were highlighted in

Table 8.1 Influences on euphorias for LGBTQ+ groups from previous chapters

<i>Level of influence on euphorias</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ people in education</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ youth</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ staff</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ parents</i>	<i>People with intersex variations in health</i>
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 5 & 6 motives (identity fidelity, intimacy). - Outness. - Education (staff/parent) role. - (Hetero) sexuality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 5 & 6 motives (identity fidelity, intimacy). - Being under 18yrs. (Male) Sex allocation at birth. - (Non-binary) gender. - Outness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 5, 6 & 7 motives (identity fidelity, intimacy, & generativity). - Outness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 5, 6, 7 & 8 motives (identity fidelity, intimacy, generativity & integrity). - (Gay/lesbian) Sexuality. - Outness. - Willful self-acceptance. - Disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 2, 5, 6 & 7 motives (autonomy, identity fidelity, intimacy, & generativity). - Gains from variations in comparison to self or others.
Microsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LGBTQ+ community connection. - Institutional inclusion. - Acceptance, validation. - School rurality. - School religiosity. - Parent blocker presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LGBTQ+ friends, teachers, GSAs. - Celebratory events/objects. - Acceptance by peers & teachers. - Gender pedagogies. - School rurality. - School religiosity. - Adult blocker presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional inclusion. - Colleagues & boss acceptance. - Pride in risk-taking. - School rurality. - Safety level. - Job security. - Role complexities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional inclusion efforts. - Category validation as parents. - Pride in improving conditions. - Community connection. - Relationship status. - Relationship attitudes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medical diagnoses. - Health information. - Intervention control. - Treatment by medical professionals and family. - Body positivity exposure. - Relationship status. - Exposures to people or concepts.

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Level of influence on euphorias</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ people in education</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ youth</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ staff</i>	<i>LGBTQ+ parents</i>	<i>People with intersex variations in health</i>
<i>Mesosystem</i>	Spectre of parents (meta-emotion).	Spectre of adults (meta-emotion).	LGBTQ+ students & colleagues outness & activism (meta-emotion).	Other parents' & students' outness & activism & views (meta-emotion).	Centrality in conversations deciding identity or body choices.
<i>Exosystem</i>	Rights/religious freedom media & law pushes.	School policy.	Relationship and anti-discrimination law provisions.	Relationship law debates.	Health rights laws/information sharing policies.
<i>Macrosystem</i>	Inclusive ed & parents' rights movements.	LGBTQ+ community & post-gender movements.	Inclusive ed & pride movements.	Inclusive ed & pride movements, parenting ideals.	Intersex rights & body positivity movements.
<i>Chronosystem</i>	Variable, fluid and tenuous.	Increase & monumentality.	Site-specific shifts.	Stability or gradual increase.	Diagnosis monumentality & post-diagnosis increase.

quantitative data showing outness increased euphorias [17, 18], and qualitative data showing the increased achievement of identity formation and intimacy/connection were emphasised across LGBTIQ+ people's euphorias. *Acceptance, Category Validation, Community Connection, Institutional Inclusion, Knowledge Integration, Sudden Hope* (and other) euphorias rewarded identity and intimacy achievements for different sub-groups variously. Although transgender and gender diverse (TGD) identity is especially emphasised in existing euphoria literature, online media and artistic subcultures [4, 5, 7, 19–21], its influence on euphorias depends on context. Being non-binary and non-male sex allocations at birth were more associated with euphorias and positive experiences of what Sara Ahmed terms 'moving towards' [22] or social endorsement for youth amongst their friends in schools. Since non-binary people have lower dysphoria presentation [23], euphoria is an important additional consideration for use in affirmation and support pathways for the group in mental health and other services. TGD youth euphorias also emphasised their pronouns and names being endorsed by teachers; whereas LGBQ+ youth euphorias emphasised community contact and acceptance from friends. Contrastingly, school endorsement underlined staff roles and lesbian and gay sexuality and to a small extent mother roles for adults, particularly from teachers, above TGD identities or other sexualities. In schools where *Institutional Inclusion* and *Community Connection* euphorias dominate, this reflected how professional, gay, and lesbian, and mother identities are privileged for social inclusive measures above the less common structural supports TGD people need [24–27]. Lesbian and gay parents' euphorias may also benefit both from how their identities are statistically more common [26] enabling more connections with more peers supporting *Community Connection* euphorias; and how traditional cis-gendered parenting roles are celebrated in schools even when conceived more expansively—including in Mothers' or Fathers' Days (excluding non-binary parent conceptualisations). LGBTQ+ parents were however overall less likely to experience euphorias compared to LGBTQ+ staff and students; as *relative* 'outsiders' in school spaces during most of the day physically and ideologically. This supports the argument that outsiders are less aligned to positive emotions in an emotional economy [28], and less likely to experience alignment to institutional 'insider' objects and events creating community memberships and institutionalising happiness [29]. These data underlined the idea that happiness is allocated to certain privileged

identities, bodies, and roles within varying contextually, institutionally, or social-group orders.

Secondly, three surveys emphasised the importance of Erikson's Stage 7 generativity motive achievement [15, 16] for LGBTIQ+ adults. LGBTIQ+ adults were rewarded for generative processes of development of pride in identity or bodily diversity and contributing towards the expansion of these phenomena across marginal group community engagements, institutional activisms, and education efforts in purposeful via *Pride Generativity* and *Body Positivity euphorias*. These processes evoked Ahmed's and Butler's notions of the subversive work of the euphorically queer [22, 30, 31]; disrupting existing politicised happiness economies upholding identity and body orders; and co-contributing to new (re) orderings. Only the survey of LGBTIQ+ parents emphasised the importance of Erikson's Stage 8 integrity motive achievement [15, 16]; and this was an important influence for some parents' development of (Self-) *Acceptance* and *Pride Generativity euphorias*. This reflected the culturally endorsed ideals of a sense of integrity about the life lived and one's development and happiness across it, pride, and few regrets. It was especially associated with age, time, and perseverance of the euphorically queer parent-advocate. Finally, individual surveys emphasised other stages. Only the survey of people with intersex variations emphasised the core nature of Erikson's Stage 2 autonomy motive achievement [15, 16], driving their *Autonomous Control* and *Body Positivity euphorias*. Development of will can be frustrated for people with intersex variations by enforced early *unwanted/unconsented to* surgeries reshaping their genitalia to fit endosexist norms, and similarly coercion into hormonal therapies. This increases shame and confusion about bodies, foreclosed identities, and social isolation from infancy and youth [32–34]. Chapter 7 showed (re)claiming autonomy and wilfulness around one's control of healthcare, identity, or bodily pride within a broader concept of valuing and allocating positive emotions to diverse bodies underscored the euphoric person with intersex variations' development of happiness and will. This was a subversive, re-ordering development. It centred most people with intersex variations in their own bodily engagements troubling their past Microsystems and challenging ideas within their Macrosystems, by transferring autonomy and positivity onto non-traditional bodies towards Butlerian and Ahmedian 'liberatory willfulness' [22, 30, 31]—making them especially euphorically queer(intersex). Contrastingly, LGBTIQ+ education data featured no *Autonomous Control* and *Body Positivity euphorias*; issues of Will around

bodies may be comparatively less vexed for these identities in these contexts. Further research could explore whether TGD people or women experience *Autonomous Control* and *Body Positivity euphorias* in overcoming barriers vexing their health decision/body autonomies (within Exosystems restricting affirmation or abortion, etc.); or whether these are stronger where bodily will was problematized in (Stage 2) infancies. Demographic-specific nuances in stage-based crises shape both what is ‘difficult to achieve’ and thus most euphorically celebrated. Discriminatory interventions and disapprovals of LGBTIQ+ peoples’ atypical identity and bodies could defy, stall or block normative age-based staging progression; especially frustrating will, identity and intimacy achievement. Overcoming such conditions could conversely advance LGBTIQ+ people’s self-possessed, community-minded and/or purpose-driven maturation, especially accelerating (pride) generativity, or (euphorically queer) integrity achievements and related euphorias.

Micro- and Mesosystem Level Influences on Euphorias

At the **Micro and Mesosystem** levels LGBTIQ+ groups had asymmetric experiences of euphorias overall, and of specific euphorias, due to various influences including service provider characteristics or efforts, and sometimes social exposures. Firstly, Table 8.1 shows how all surveys emphasised the importance of service providers. Across the board inclusion efforts by education and health providers and supportive accepting treatment by professionals improved likelihood of euphorias. Inclusion efforts could become centred on events Wear it Purple day and Pride events such that the colour purple, or purple objects, badges and wristbands; or rainbow objects like jumpers and flags associated with these events, became euphoric symbols for diversity tied to and increasing euphoric emotions within institutions. The colour purple or rainbow icon were not important nor the objects themselves; indeed these were interchangeable (including the orange some parent participants perhaps erroneously or randomly recalled). Instead it was colours and objects’ symbolic affective values that increased euphorias; their making visible—and rectifying impulse towards—harmful rejecting or conforming mainstream happiness economies through accepting affirmation of and ‘moving towards’ the LGBTIQ+ groups that mattered; like for any community-uniting-object or joy-laden-symbolic-body in Schutz, Pekrun and Ahmed’s theories [22, 29]. Colour/objects could be worn from one’s existing wardrobe, not solely purchased,

mediating feminist identity commodification concerns [35], to co-socialise and institutionalise inclusion, connection, acceptance, and validation for LGBTQ+ identities, bodies, and groups. Euphorias around coloured-object/events thus challenged existing social orders and performed Butlerian processes towards revealing queer unhappiness and transferring or overplaying happiness for non-normative parties, building euphorically queer people and institutions [30, 31]. The same process of euphoric socialisation may also conceivably be used at education and health provider events with intersex flags and symbols to encourage *Community Connection euphoria* for people with intersex variations, as the intersex Mardi Gras example implied. Microsystems and institutions' uses of colours, objects, symbols, flags and even strangers' bodies thus can have euphoric value; and euphoric object manifestation can likely be re-appropriated as needed to contribute towards institutions and communities enabling other othered marginal groups' euphorias. *Community Connection, Institutional Inclusion, Acceptance* and other *euphorias* stimulated in these ways have incredible benefits for LGBTIQ+ people; diminishing their sense of negated vulnerability through strength of numbers and loss of individuation within broader diversity of or support for LGBTIQ+ expression that necessarily includes positive expressions, role models and feelings as people move towards each other. As individuals become protected by being with a peer or group and responsibility becomes shared, it helps to override the broader cultural or institutional reflexes working against marginal gender, sex characteristics, and sexuality identifications; alternative unanimity drives disrupt mainstream conformity drives and enable Individuals to accept and pleasure in otherwise vexed identities.

In education services, institutions' rurality, religiosity, and exclusionary institutional approaches to LGBTQ+ people decreased likelihood of their euphorias. Quantitative data showed school rurality was an especial factor of decrease for LGBTQ+ students and staff euphorias reflecting broader rural research underlining increased harms around the lack of anonymity and harder to escape nature of homophobia in some rural areas [36, 37], but also potentially showing the impact of metronormativity (assumptions that queer lives are better in metropolitan institutions) [36]. School religiosity especially decreased euphorias for LGBTQ+ students, extending the research on how religious schools show increased harms to the groups' mental health, and discrimination and violence exposures [38–40]. Euphoric potentials were also decreased by a range of negative social

interactions at the Microsystem level and social spectres at the Mesosystem level though this varied by LGBTIQ+ sub-group; and mostly comprised those adults of institutional or local community authority believed to have disapproving meta-emotions [41] around LGBTIQ+ bodies and identities. For students this included certain parents and teachers, for parents it could include parties expressing judgement over marriage equality, for professionals it could include communities in which they lacked safety or job security and for people with intersex variations it included providers not foregrounding their access to health-care information and decision-making. Euphoria blockers in the Mesosystem also include the spectre of anti-LGBTQ+ parent, which may be exacerbated in Australia by media exaggerations and a lack of awareness of increased parent support data [42]. Indeed there were examples where in various parents, staff and students experiences displayed a 360-degree version of Gottman et al.'s meta-emotion emotion-coaching pattern [41], occurring culturally and institutionally, to encourage *Pride Generativity*, *Acceptance* and *other euphorias*. For people with intersex variations their being excluded from key decision-making processes about their identities and health that occurred in the Mesosystem was a key euphoria blocker hindering *Knowledge Integration*, *Category Validation* and *Autonomous Control euphoria* among others, especially where their body parts were allocated dysphoric values and targeted for removal.

Exo- and Macrosystem Level Influences on Euphorias

Whilst Individual and Microsystem factors were the most important and influential for euphorias' development, as Bronfenbrenner has asserted [9] for all development, there were **Exo and Macrosystem level** influences. The survey data emphasised particular laws, policies, media debates, and (indirectly) various conceptual movements. Specifically, LGBTIQ+ student and staff euphorias could be complicated by specific anti-discrimination and workplace protections (which protected people in government schools, but exposed those in religious schools due to exemptions). Both LGBTIQ+ education staff and parents' euphorias could be enabled *or* blocked by marriage equality laws and related media debates. There were also indirect impacts of the lack of historic protections for the health and autonomy rights for people with intersex variations in Australia [43], which underscored and enabled past negative experiences of health-care. At the Macrosystem level various identity movements (post-gender) and

inclusive movements (inclusive education, body positivity, pride) likely contributed indirectly to the reported euphoric experiences of participants through supporting enabling environments.

Euphorias themselves hold the potential, in return, to contribute their most impactful socio-cultural work to movements through not just individuals, but groups. Taking these studies' data together suggested that certain euphorias require the involvement of groups, whilst others are more clearly individual, and that the former had subversive potential at the Exo and Macrosystem levels. The more massive euphorias are in terms of number, overlap, collective engagement in them, intensity, and duration; the more distorted and changed the hierarchies of emotional politics in the systems around the individuals experiencing them. This reinforces their greater subversion to institutional and socio-cultural dynamics. *Community Connection*, *Institutional Inclusion* and *Body Positivity euphorias* especially appeared to have a gravity that creates a magnetism for people in schools, pride events or online groups [8] moving towards joy; such that they can warp the fabric of classrooms, public and online spaces and thus 'attract' other LGBTIQ+ bodies to engaging in them physically or ideologically. This consequently increases the conceptual and socio-cultural weight and pull of these euphorias, with more bodies joyfully moving towards these more joyful bodies. Such euphorias can hold LGBTQ people within certain institutions, classrooms, or social spaces in practice and in reminiscence, whilst their absence can make people more free to leave certain institutions and move on. The specifics of collectively catalysed euphoric events like Wear it Purple Day, Mardi Gras, and pride do not matter so much as how they operate to reaffirm joyful commitments and engagements with our political movements and reinvigorate and reinforce pushes for policy change. In these times of complex policy advancements and rescindments, collective discrimination and dysphoria, the euphoric value to such events can reaffirm community connection to each other through the symbols of our shared policy goals for greater inclusion and safer more positive futures. Events, objects, colours, bodies, and social spectres thus have euphoric or dysphoric value influencing collective social and institutional euphorias. With Micro-/Mesosystem support (e.g. education inclusion, therapy or community), and Exo-/Macrosystem inspiration (enabling laws, Wear it Purple and body positivity movements etc.) the euphorically queer may learn to dismiss or subvert dysphoric values of their identities, bodies, social spectres and institutions.

COMPARING LGBTIQ+ EUPHORIAS' CHANGE-TRENDS

Particular LGBTIQ+ sub-groups euphorias' had differing changes expressed across Individuals' Chronosystems, frequency of euphoric experiences; and reporting on euphorias' change manifestations and trends. The Chronosystem's characterisation for LGBTIQ+ people's euphorias overall was variable, fluid and tenuous. Chronosystem influence LGBTQ+ youth on euphorias was characterised by increase and monumentality; for LGBTQ+ professionals by site-specific shifts; for LGBTQ+ parents by relative stability or stable gradual increase; and for people with intersex variations by diagnoses monumentality and post-diagnoses increase (Table 8.1). There were also variable changes across the frequencies of LGBTIQ+ people's euphorias, which mostly occurred sometimes or often. Over half of people with intersex variations experienced euphorias post-diagnoses and some upon diagnoses (around a fifth), followed by LGBTQ+ parents in schools who mainly experienced euphorias often or always; LGBTQ+ professionals who mainly experienced euphorias often or sometimes; and LGBTQ+ students who experienced euphorias least frequently overall (mainly sometimes or often). The existence of change for euphorias was directly reported by most LGBTIQ+ people overall; over two thirds of LGBTQ+ professionals (68.2%); under two thirds of LGBTQ+ youth; and just over a third of LGBTQ+ parents and people with intersex variations. Considering all change collectively, it appears most apparent for LGBTQ+ education professionals' euphorias in amount and nature; followed closely by students. The least change overall is apparent for LGBTQ+ parents and even where it occurred it had a stable graduality. Although people with intersex variations appeared to report less euphoria change than some other groups, the monumentalism and life-long impact inherent to their changes (sudden shifts around diagnoses, information sharing, community engagement etc.) were more dramatic than the graduality of LGBTQ+ parent education euphorias' changes.

There were different change-trends for the same euphorias across different LGBTIQ+ groups. Whilst *Acceptance euphorias* mostly build gradually, for LGBTQ+ youth they may be intensified and increased with support; blocked, or inspired by dissipation of, internalised biases; and heightened or deadened by specific teachers. For LGBTQ+ staff they may have site-specific shifts across long careers; are increased with safety; and blocked by employment concerns and rejection fears. For LGBTQ+ parents (Social-) *Acceptance euphorias* were more consistent; but they still had

external contingencies when increased by relationships or relationship view changes; and could even be learned and taught. (Self-) *Acceptance euphorias* instead were internally driven and could increase with age and time. They were also grown through persistence; or Ahmed's 'wilfulness' around activism [44] and have a radical quality for the euphorically queer parent. These euphorias sometimes teamed with dismissive meta-emotion philosophies [41] which resisted external views' change impacts, affording gains (resilience) and costs (emotional/relational shut-down). For people with intersex variations (Self-) and (Social-) *Acceptance euphorias* were both more common post-diagnosis, increasing with contact with exposures to affirming intersex community, ideas, or resources.

Conversely, *Category Validation euphorias* mostly shift suddenly. For LGBTQ+ youth sudden shifts in these euphorias functioned as complex indicators of 'identity fit' and yet their lack also revealed youth wariness around socialised and cultural biases for or against identities that likely fit them, during identity 'moratoriums' within Stage 5 identity formation [16–18]. For parents *Category Validation euphorias* could be learned and taught in school communities over time in inter-generational ways. They could also arise when parenting categories were validated in specific moments onwards through institutional and pedagogical acknowledgements by teachers and children; and in their own sudden relationship changes. Relationships usually increased LGB people's personal identifications and social validations in schools—reflecting Hook and Power's emphasis on institutional and socio-cultural valuing of homonormative coupledom for parents [45, 46]. Marriage debates in the Macro, Meso, and Microsystems both reduced and increased parents' sense of validation. For people with intersex variations *Category Validation euphorias* were more common upon their initial diagnosis usually before 18, and as they progressed through identity moratoriums to formation fidelity.

Community Connection euphorias expand with community socialisation for LGBTQ+ youth overall; but were slower to increase for LGBTQ+ staff; and shifted in relation to relationships and learning for LGBTQ+ parents. *Institutional Inclusion euphorias* were site-specific overall, especially for LGBTQ+ staff for whom they were blocked by employment or safety concerns. For LGBTQ+ youth they monumentally and erratically shifted in the presence of specific teachers, whilst LGBTQ+ parents increasingly expected and enabled these euphorias through inclusion advocacy. *Pride Generativity euphorias* were associated with adulthood—increasing for LGBTQ+ staff and parents closer to Erikson's Stage 7 in

motivational development [15, 16]. For people with intersex variations initial diagnoses (mostly in youth) might slowly or quickly spark *Difference Legitimisation*, *Knowledge Integration*, *Medical Sense-making* or *Sudden Hope euphorias*; whilst post-diagnoses *Body Positivity*, *Relative Gains & Fitness Edge euphorias* built up over age, time, and exposures. *Autonomous Control euphorias* had the most unique change catalysts, increasing only upon people with intersex variations' increased control of their body, intervention, and health-care decision-making. Widening this experience requires many system levels: Micro- and Mesosystem health provider and family supports, Exosystem health autonomy policy protections, Macrosystem body diversity positivity movements.

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS & RESEARCHERS

It is politically important to emphasise, when anti-LGBTIQ+ campaigns claim otherwise, that there is nothing inherently queer about unhappiness, and nothing inherently straight about education or health ... such alignments occur *where we make them*. Given supportive efforts (occasionally even lacking them) people pleasure in their LGBTIQ+ identities and bodies, and education and health providers joyfully upraise human sex, gender, and sexuality diversities. The ecological model of influences on euphorias provided in this book showing happiness (re)alignments can be changed over time, was repeatedly supported by data from the largest combined LGBTIQ+ cohort euphoria surveys to date. It is of value to individuals, mental health providers, and institutional service providers. It shows euphorias are strongly influenced by norms across individuals' development stages, institutions, and socio-cultural systems—and efforts towards their dismissal or subversion. Euphorias are not experienced by all LGBTIQ+ people in all contexts. However, convincing evidence showed significant groups experienced euphorias this book taxonomised most typically *Institutional Inclusion*, *Acceptance*, *Community Connection*, *Category Validation*, or *Body Positivity euphorias*. These euphorias have key implications for various disciplines and stakeholders.

In setting agendas for 'euphorias' uses', this book showed that individuals, groups, institutions, resources, and events can support the conditions for and incite the proliferation of euphorias; especially by expanding LGBTIQ+ community connections, institutional inclusions, social- and

self-acceptance, category validation, body positivity, and pride generativity efforts. Euphorias also have applications for consent-based and other models supporting additional non-disordering, non-victimising, or nuanced understandings of LGBTIQ+ people, services access, and institutional support expansions. Recommendations for the uses of euphorias therefore include:

- **Individuals from marginal groups** should consider their euphoric experiences and happiness in making identity determinations, not just unhappiness with mainstream offerings. Those confident in long-term identifications might share positive reminiscence about their identities and bodies to contribute to our understanding of what that entails, as well as towards the broader positive euphoric circularity movements uplifting LGBTIQ+ communities. Sharing reminiscences online and in-person creates emotion-coaching contexts within encouraging and celebrating positive experiences as core to an identity or bodily variation type; breaking away from negating stereotypes reliant solely on dysphoria, discrimination or victimisation (which though important to acknowledge, should *never* be our ideal). The ecological euphoria models or lists of euphorias in this book, as well as participants' story samples, are useful starting points. For LGBTIQ+ people, questions of whether one is happy and queer, or *euphorically queer*, can deepen ongoing self-reflections.
- **Service providers in social services, education, mental health and health** should introduce the concept of euphoria/happiness into discussions, classifications and identifications of LGBTIQ+ people for consent-based service support pathways and models (are clients happier as, rightly, more comfortably 'X?'), to provide alternative added nuanced understandings of these groups to deficit-based models (which retain some value given an overall lack of queer happiness). Emphasis of euphoria for non-binary youth who may not experience classic dysphoria presentations, for LGBTQ+ staff employment decisions and for LGBTIQ+ youth support framings could have especially useful mental health service applications. A caveat: euphorias' socio-cultural blockers *must be* accounted for. The ecological model of euphoria development, euphoria lists and participants' story samples and data, might be useful for furthering identity-based supports in and beyond education, health, and social services.

- **Organisations supporting people with intersex variations** should promote the conditions for *Body Positivity euphoria*, given it is the euphoria most linked to other euphorias and most beneficial for the group, that could be externally encouraged. Body positivity themed intersex community events and texts, government funding and supports (training on body diversity for health, mental health and other service providers in contact with this cohort), and revised body diversity messaging in psycho-medical approaches and texts (e.g. the *DSM-5-TR*) are recommended. Body positive stories from this book may be starting points, alongside community group resources (InterAct, IHRA, AISSGA etc.).
- **Education and health institutions and professionals** should promote LGBTIQ+ institutional supports enabling *Institutional Inclusion, Community Connection, Acceptance* and *Category Validation euphorias* (which can all be externally encouraged), for staff and the communities served. Use of celebratory and symbolic events, colours, objects, flags, and symbols; support groups/GSAs; training and education about euphorias and factors supporting euphorias' development; distribution of affirming resources around identity and body diversity and other methods this book emphasised are encouraged. Positive stories and statistics from this open access book can be used to change the conversation about LGBTIQ+ identities and bodies via pamphlets, posters, websites, memes, and other displays. Other options include supporting protective policies for LGBTIQ+ people's rights; whole institution and community use of requested names/pronouns; removal of religious institutions' anti-discrimination law exemptions; and countering cultural propaganda. Data on parents, teachers, and students' support for improved gender and sexuality diversity education may counter false spectral meta-emotions used in education and health cultural wars.

In proposing new fields and setting agendas for 'Euphoria Studies', the implications of this work included the fact that researchers may be overlooking positive experiences through focusing on harm. Our work in past years necessarily emphasised and must still capture discrimination, dysphoria and other concepts towards policy protections that may alleviate these negating phenomena ... the research suggests negative experiences still may be more dominant than positive ones depending on LGBTIQ+ people's stages, roles, and system contexts. But over-emphasising the rain,

overlooks the rainbows, euphorias can alleviate LGBTIQ+ people's difficulties and support important community-supporting and advocacy work. Unhappiness need not be 'inherent' to LGBTIQ+ identity or experience. The research here went beyond existing literature to show euphorias aren't merely sourced from individual practices like hair removal or alignments with mainstream corporate gendering processes and political functions. Euphorias are also inspired by ideological, social, and institutional phenomena with important subversive queer socio-cultural functions. These phenomena can be sourced from and enhanced by Australian education and health contexts; but are not limited to them. They conceivably could occur across countries; industries; worlds real, fictional, media-constructed and virtual. Euphoria studies are urgently needed to evidence (or dispute) this prediction, including (but not limited to):

- **LGBTIQ+ people's euphorias in other settings** within and beyond education including online and in-person classrooms, and work in health, mental health, social, aged care, sport, and other services—including consideration of dysphorias.
- **Iterative measures for euphorias** that should factor in systemic socio-cultural blockers' influences.
- **Intersectional influences for LGBTIQ+ people's euphorias** via norm-critical interviews and deeper community focus group sharing for Indigenous peoples, CALD sub-groups, women and LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities or in especially vexed rural and religious contexts and so on.
- **Non-LGBTIQ+ people's euphorias including cisgender, heterosexual, endosex male and female experiences for mainstream and other marginal groups**; including for the most common euphorias in institutions and any alternatives (and particularly where identities or bodies might be problematized).
- **Why people lack euphorias and action-based interventions**, including how euphorias are best enabled, taught, and learned, and the overcoming of euphoria blockers in clinical, educational, social, and other settings.
- **International, longitudinal, comparative**, and other angles.

Such studies will enrich our understandings and hopefully, experiences of euphorias. Collective efforts can, over time, contribute towards expanding access to the euphorically queer life.

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