

# LGBT Asian and Pacific Islander Struggles About Coming Out To Family and Resources That Are Needed To Help

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## INTRODUCTION:

The LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community are gaining more acceptance. Within this growing acceptance, there are many young Asian Americans who find it difficult to come out to their family due to cultural expectations yet there is a very limited number of resources and research about them.

## PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the coming out process for Asian Americans from the ages of 13-25. The main goal of this research is to find resources to assist young Asian Americans on coming out to their parents and other family members.

## METHODS:

Methods of gathering primary source data are conducting an online survey and semi-structured interviews; secondary sources will also be used which includes documents (blogs, personal essays, Facebook post, etc.) and YouTube video.

## COMING OUT:

Coming out is disclosing one's sexual orientation is a significant part of the LGBT identity formation process.

The process involves personally coming to terms with one's sexual orientation and then disclosing their sexual orientation to friends, family, and the general public. Coming out to other involves risks and difficulties depending on the person one comes out to, the relationship, how accepting they are to LGBT folk, and their power in the relationship. There have been many theories about sexual identity formation and all of them are centered on the acknowledgement of one's own sexual orientation. However many of these models have been constructed around White, heterosexual norms and does not take in account minorities experiences (Narui)

## WHO ARE ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS?

Asians/Pacific Islanders is defined by the U.S. Department of Federal Contract Compliance Programs as "A person with origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands.

Many LGBT Asians/Pacific Islanders have to overcome obstacles of negative family reactions, unwelcoming religious traditions and societal prejudice ("Coming Out Issues for Asian Pacific Americans"). Emphasized by Edward Kai Chui from the Gay Asian Pacific Support Network (GAPSN), "Being gay and Asian in America is like fighting a two-front battle. One not only has to fight racism and homophobia in society in general, but also stereotypes and lack of representation in the gay community.

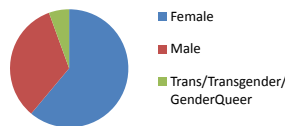
## OTHER RESEARCH:

I went to a LGBT conference called Western Regional LGBTQIA in Stockton and participated in an Asian and Pacific Islander caucus. Many of them were still having a hard time and looking for answers on how to come out due to reasons that have been stated but there were people in that group that were out to the family and tried to help those people. Some of them mentioned and related to that even though they were out to the family, it was something wasn't talked about, almost like the elephant in the room.

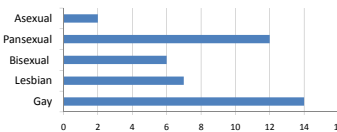
I also participated in "Q&A: A Lunchtime Discussion on Family and Coming Out" at the Women's Union at Pomona College in Claremont. It was basically a discussion among people who are Asian and those who are not, that are struggling to come out to the family and how ethnicity makes it just a little bit harder. It seems that it is easier to come out to sibling and friends then it is to parents. Parents seem to be the hardest people to come out to. Not only do you have to deal with cultural differences but also language barriers. There was not much of a conclusion but there were some suggestions such as getting as much as support as you can and being aware of how open the other person is. If you aren't sure how open the family member is about LGBT people then drop in questions such as "what do you think about same-sex marriage?" to get an idea.

## RESULTS:

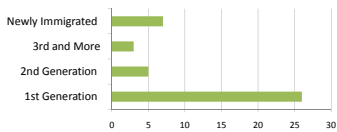
Gender - How Do They Identify Themselves



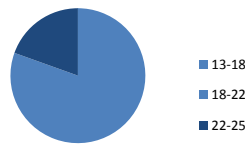
Sexual Orientation



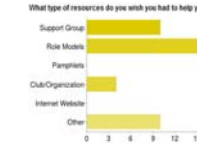
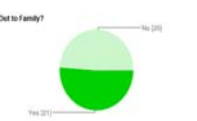
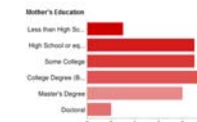
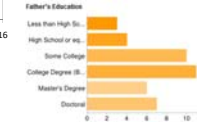
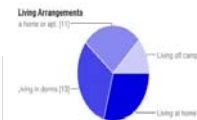
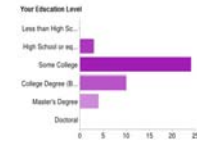
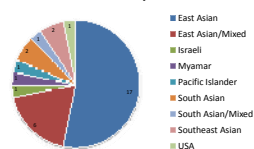
Generation



Age



Ethnicity



## ANALYSIS OF SURVEY:

After reading some of the ranking it seems that a majority of them would come out to their friends, siblings, and/or cousins first. Many of them emphasizes that they would **come out to whoever they felt were more supportive, open-minded, and/or comfortable with telling.** The internet and club/organizations was also a good tool to help them come out. Others needed another family support. According to the group that is out to their family, they wish **there were more role models and support groups to help with the coming out process. The group that was not out also were looking for role models and support groups.** An interesting answer was "Korean Language Resources" because that indicates there is a language barrier and it would be helpful for resources in other languages. Both groups expressed that the reasons why they are not out is fear, disappointment, economic reasons, and the unknown of how parents would handle the information. One person said that they didn't feel the need to tell their family.

## CONCLUSION:

There is still a lot of research that needs to be done to get a better understanding. I need to get more interviews and hear more coming out stories. Even though this was a bigger group then I thought I would have I still need a larger and more diverse sample. There has been some new research done for API Queer people that I need to include. It is important to have a support group either from other family members or friends to help API Queer people on their journey of finding themselves and coming out. There is a real need for role models so there needs to be more visibility of API Queer people.