Isolation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth: A Dimensional Concept Analysis

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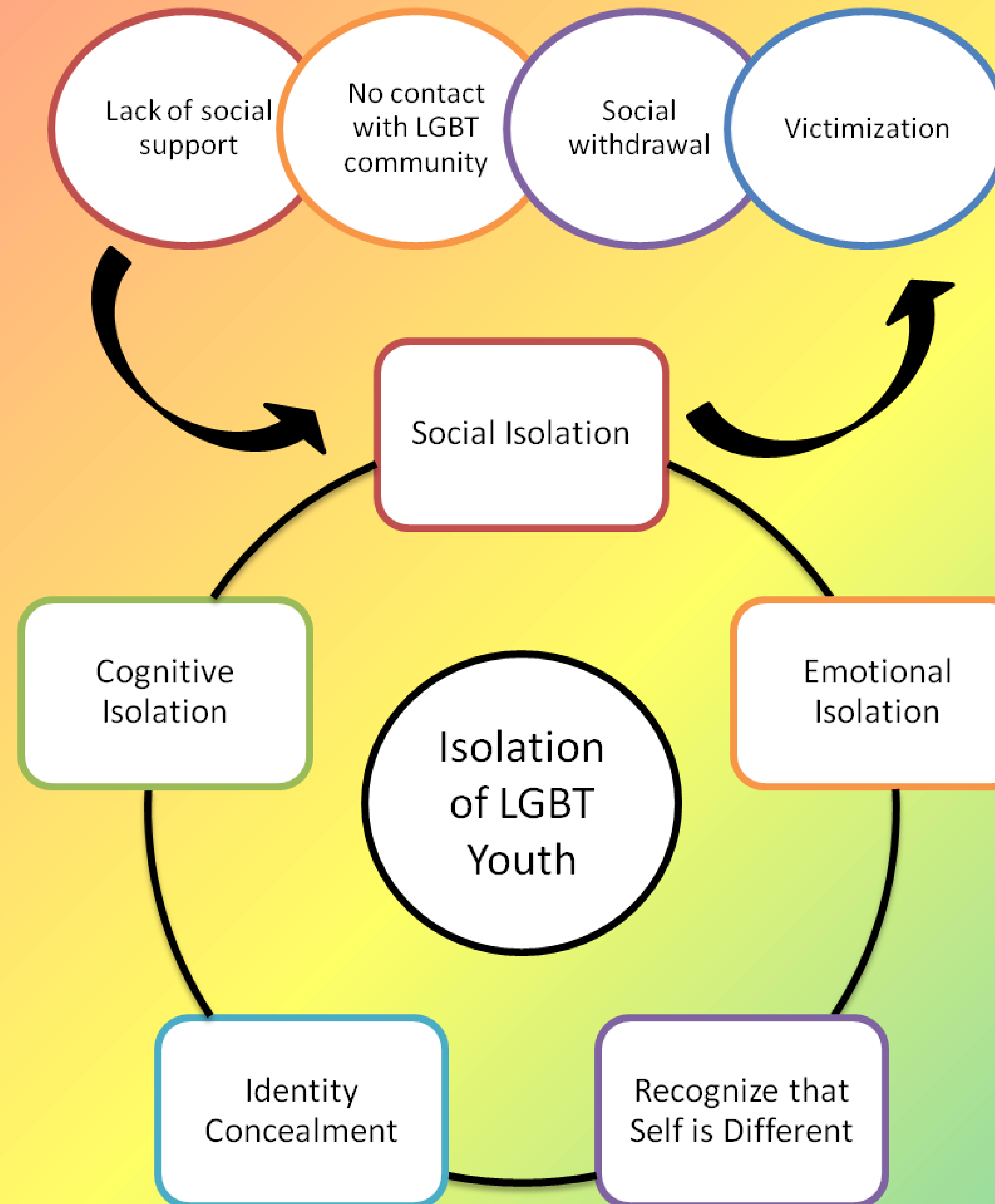[2]Professor at College of Nursing, Medical University of South Carolina

Purpose: Present the findings of a dimensional concept analysis of isolation within the context of LGBT youth.

Background: LGBT youth are at greater risk for negative health outcomes as compared to heterosexual youth, including depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

Some studies suggest LGBT feeling and being isolated is related to some negative health outcomes. Other research reveals a relationship between isolation and negative health outcomes in other populations.

Methods: Authors reviewed 539 articles, and a dimensional analysis was performed on 35 of those articles that met the inclusion criteria of being in English, the study being conducted in U.S., had LGBT participants ages birth to 25, and mentioned the concept of isolation.

Lack of social support · No contact with LGBT community · Social withdrawal · Victimization

Social Isolation

Cognitive Isolation

Emotional Isolation

Isolation of LGBT Youth

Identity Concealment

Recognize that Self is Different

Conclusion: This analysis revealed wide variability in the how the concept, isolation, is used, perceived, and defined. The disproportionately greater physical and mental health disparities between LGBT and heterosexual youth is a signal to conduct more research to clarify the concept, isolation, to develop an explanatory middle range theory, and to develop instrumentation.

Results: This analysis revealed 5 dimensions and 4 sub-dimensions.

Social isolation (n = 15): Family and friends rejecting youth after revealing sexuality; youth not being able to talk to anyone about sexuality. Sub-dimensions included lack of social support (n = 5), no contact with LGBT community (n = 4), social withdrawal (n = 5), and victimization (n = 2).

Emotional isolation (n = 10): Feeling separated affectionally and emotionally from all social networks, especially family.

Cognitive isolation (n = 8): Lack of access to accurate information about homosexuality, including lack of appropriate role models. Most fundamental information is denied to these young people.

Concealment of identity (n = 9): Conceal identity because of pressures to be "normal" and might conform to heteronormative expectations.

Recognition that self is different (n = 3): Recognize self is different from heteronormative society.