

Bringing Awareness and Creating a Stronger Community: LGBTQ+ Students and their First-year Experience

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ABSTRACT: Using in-depth interviews, we obtained qualitative data about the experiences of students who are involved in or part of the LGBTQ+ community at Chico State. The results of the study showed that participants felt that moving away from home has benefited their expression of sexuality greatly. Students were able to express themselves freely without fear of judgment from family and the people closest to them. The results help us understand that students benefit from being in an environment that supports and allows them to feel safe. Adjusting to their new homes they are still exploring and experiencing their sexuality. We recommend that Chico State brings more awareness and to the LGBTQ+ community with multiple events that both the community and allies can attend that will educate all.

Research Question

- Our research focuses on the LGBTQ+ population that tends to face challenges due to discrimination. The purpose of this project is to gain data that will help create resources on campus and a safer community. To gain this data we will be asking questions such as, how do the experiences of the people that identify themselves as LGBTQ differ from the experiences of others on and off campus? How do the effects and influences of Chico State affect the LGBTQ community on campus?

Methods

- We conducted ten Face-to-face interviews with fellow peers. Our group also incorporated recordings from the interviews.

- We carefully reviewed our data and made any changes we needed to increase the accuracy and depth of the interview. Afterwards each member of our group identified the themes we found, and we discussed it to make sure we all agreed on the theme of each interview.

Results

- Leaving home helped our participants express themselves freely without fear of judgment.
- The majority of students didn't know much in regards to the resources available to them.

Recommendations

- The school should provide counseling for the LGBTQ+ community specifically.
- More awareness should be on campus whether it be more events/ specific club events.
- Establish a course on the LGBTQ+ community (their History) and the people that are part of it.

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