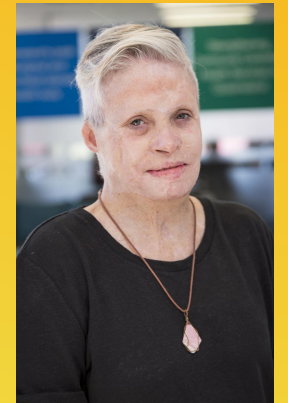


Suicide Risk Among LGBT+ People

An Australia Lived Experience Perspective

When Marriage Equality Came to Town

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Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to recognise the
traditional Custodians of
Meanjin (Brisbane) the
Turrbal and Yagera people

A view down the Meanjin (Brisbane) River, across the city from South Bank



Acknowledgements and welcome





- **Keep your eyes on the road head - don't forget to learn from the past**
- **A look at some research evidence**
- **A personal perspective**
- **Learnings from the research**
- **Where to from here?**



- ***"By the end of today Australia will be better, kinder, fairer place for all of us." – (Federal Labor deputy leader Tanya Plibersek, 7th December, 2017)***
- ***"I don't care if he ever gets married - I just wanted him to have the right." – (Shelley Argent, the mother of gay son, James, leading Australian LGBTQ+ Advocate)***

On the 8th of December 2017, these and many more dreams were realised

The day
Australia said
Yes!



Marriage Equality Around the World



30 countries have legalized same-sex marriage

21 – including Australia, Ireland and Switzerland legalized same-sex marriage through legislation **after nation-wide votes**

7 countries have legalized same-sex marriage nationally **through court decisions** — Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, South Africa, Taiwan and the United States of America

2 countries, South Africa and Taiwan, enacted legislation legalizing same-sex marriage **after courts mandated them to do so**

Human Rights Campaign. (n.d). *Marriage equality around the world*
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/marriage-equality-around-the-world>

A USA Study

- Large US youth high school students' survey
- Method: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)
- Collection period - (January 1999 – Dec 2015)
- 762 678 adolescent participants across 47 states
- Compared suicide attempts across a 12 month period

Findings

- Introduction of same-sex marriage policies & legislation associated with a 7% reduction in the proportion of all high school students **reporting a suicide attempt within the past year**
- **Effect concentrated among adolescents who identified as being from a sexual minority**

Raifman, J. et al, (2017) Difference-in-Differences Analysis of the Association Between State Same-Sex Marriage Policies and Adolescent Suicide Attempts

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Minority stress, social support, and the mental health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual Australians during the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey**Stefano Verrelli¹  | Fiona A. White¹ | Lauren J. Harvey¹ | Michael R. Pulciani²

‘frequent exposure to stigmatising media messages was associated with increased psychological distress amongst lesbian, gay, and bisexual Australians during the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey.....and

corroborates the public health concerns regarding the detrimental effect of the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey on the mental health of LGB Australians... and

highlights how legislative processes related to the rights of stigmatised, minority populations have the potential to adversely affect their mental health’

Mental Health, Minority Stress, and the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey: A Longitudinal Study

Liam J. Casey, Bethany M. Wootton, and John McAloon
 University of Technology Sydney

Research indicates that marriage equality legislation is associated with improved mental health outcomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people. However, the public debate that often precedes such legislation may exacerbate psychological distress and minority stress. In 2017, the Australian Federal Government conducted a national survey to gauge support for marriage equality. The present study investigated the mental health of a sample of LGBTQ people during and after this survey period. A sample of 2,220 LGBTQ participants completed measures of psychological distress and minority stress during the survey period. Participants were invited for follow-up 1 week, 3 months, and 12 months after the postal survey results were announced. Data were analyzed using linear mixed models to evaluate change in psychological distress and minority stress across time points, and the influence of exposure to the marriage equality debate, sexual identity, and gender identity on psychological distress and minority stress. Reported symptoms of psychological distress and minority stress significantly decreased following the postal survey period. Greater exposure to the marriage equality campaign was associated with greater psychological distress and perceived stigma but not internalized stigma. Sexual and gender identity subgroups significantly differed on outcome variable means. This study documents the longitudinal effects on a minority group of a public vote and the enactment of legislation regarding their human rights. The results suggest the postal survey served as a significant stressor to Australia's LGBTQ community. Implications for policy and clinical practice are discussed.

Public Policy Relevance Statement

Exposure to campaigns to deny marriage rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people has been associated with greater psychological distress for this community. This longitudinal study considers the case of Australia, in which marriage equality legislation was recently passed following a public debate and vote on the topic. The findings suggest that this debate and vote represented a period of heightened stress for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people, and that direct democracy approaches to determining the rights of minority groups have serious implications for the well-being of members of those groups.

‘Broadly, the results demonstrate an association between public debate regarding LGBTQ rights and psychological distress in LGBTQ people and between the passage of marriage equality legislation and improved mental health outcomes for LGBTQ people’

Key Take Away Message 

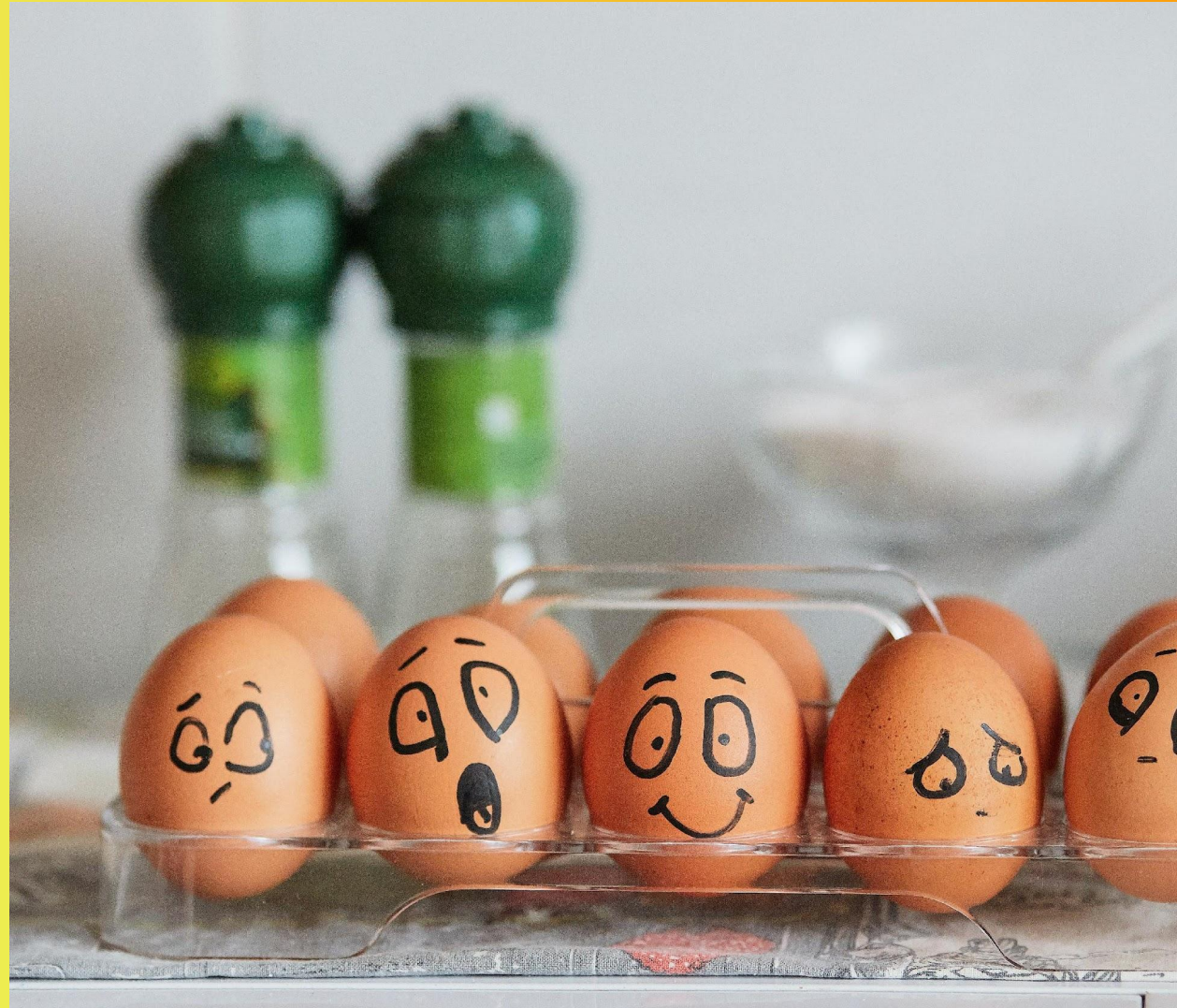


Marriage Equality is a good thing for the health and wellbeing of all LGBT+ people!

But.....*the how its achieved matters!*

There must be an increase in both formal and informal supports for LGBT+ people, including the role of media

A personal reflection



Twitter: @MartinaMcGr



"It takes no survey to remove repressions. It takes no compromise to give people their rights. It takes no money to respect the individual." (Harvey Milk, USA Activist and Politician)

Keep Connecting



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