D’Augelli’s Theory of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Development
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Model from D’Augelli’s (1994a) original research article on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development.

**Theory Tenents**

- Identity is socially constructed and shaped by different degrees of social situations (D’Augelli, 1994a).
- Development of sexual orientation is a life-long development process (D’Augelli, 1994a and 1994b).
Theory Tenets Continued

- Environmental and biological changes can impact developmental plasticity (D’Augelli, 1994a).
- Individuals have an impact on their own development (D’Augelli, 1994a and 1994b).

Terminology

- **3 Interrelated Variables:**
  - **Personal subjectivities and actions** – “how individuals feel about their sexual identities over their lives, how they engage in diverse sexual activities with different meanings, and how they construct their sexual lives and feeling around them” (D’Augelli, 1994a).
  - **Interactive intimacies** – “how parental and family factors sexuality development, how age-peer interactions shapes and modifies the pact of early parental and family socialization, and how this learning affects and is affected by intimate partnerships of different kinds” (D’Augelli, 1994a).
  - **Sociohistorical connections** – “social norms and expectations of various geographic and subcultural communities; local and national social customs, policies, and laws; a major cultural and historical continuities and discontinuities” (D’Augelli, 1994a).

Six Processes of LGB Development (D’Augelli, 1994a & 1994b)

- **Exiting Heterosexual Identity**
  - Recognizing that one’s sexual orientation is not heterosexual.

- **Developing a Personal Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Status**
  - Finding out what it means to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

- **Developing a Personal Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity**
  - Creating a support network that consists of people who knows the individual’s sexual orientation and accepts them for who they are.
  - Positive social network is ideal.
  - Negative support networks would rather have individual’s sexual orientation to remain hidden or they don’t discuss it.

- **Becoming a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Off-Spring**
  - “Coming Out” about one’s sexual identity to parents.
  - Most difficult disclosure most lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals face and problems with development can be caused by lack of family support (D’Augelli, 1996; Evans & D’Augelli, 1996).

- **Developing a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Intimacy Status**
  - Individual is in a non-heterosexual intimate relationship.
  - Hard to achieve because of the invisibility of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

- **Entering a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Community**
  - Development of commitments to political and social action.
  - Some never go through this process.
Theory Critique

• Strengths
  o Other researchers findings support the interrelated variables within the theory.
  o Focuses on the importance of environment.
  o Focuses on the significance of relationships and context (Clark & Caffarella, 1999).

• Weaknesses
  o No initial research study.
  o No recent research about the theory.
  o Doesn’t allow for complexity and multiplicity of identity (Clark & Caffarella, 1999).

References


