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Self-Identified Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale

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Exhibit

Internalized Homophobia Scale

*Instructions:* The following are some statements that individuals can make about being gay. Please read each one carefully and decide the extent to which you agree with the statement, then circle the number that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

Response format: 
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

1. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in human males.
2. I wish I were heterosexual.
3. When I am sexually attracted to another gay man, I do not mind if someone else knows how I feel.
4. Most problems that homosexuals have come from their status as an oppressed minority, not from their homosexuality per se.
5. Life as a homosexual is not as fulfilling as life as a heterosexual.
6. I am glad to be gay.
7. Whenever I think a lot about being gay, I feel critical about myself.
8. I am confident that my homosexuality does not make me inferior.
9. Whenever I think a lot about being gay, I feel depressed.
10. If it were possible, I would accept the opportunity to be completely heterosexual.
11. I wish I could become more sexually attracted to women.
12. If there were a pill that could change my sexual orientation, I would take it.
13. I would not give up being gay even if I could.
14. Homosexuality is deviant.
15. It would not bother me if I had children who were gay.
16. Being gay is a satisfactory and acceptable way of life for me.
17. If I were heterosexual, I would probably be happier.
18. Most gay people end up lonely and isolated.
19. For the most part, I do not care who knows I am gay.
20. I have no regrets about being gay.

Self-Identified Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale

STACY WEIBLEY and MICHELLE HINDIN, Johns Hopkins University

The Self-Identified Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale (SLIHS) was developed to gain a greater understanding of internalized homophobia in the lives of women who identify as lesbian and to address significant gaps in the literature regarding this topic. It has been hypothesized that internalized homophobia is linked to the elevated rates of mental health and substance abuse issues experienced by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals, including the disproportionately high rates of suicide among GLBT youth. However, although previous research suggests internalized homophobia is a statistically significant and distinct factor in the lives of gay men (Meyer, 1995), there is a dearth of research regarding this issue among other GLBT groups, including lesbians.

Of the few existing empirical studies regarding internalized homophobia among lesbians, many rely on
questions developed to measure this construct among gay men rather than those that appropriately address lesbian culture (Radonsky & Borders, 1995). Other studies are limited owing to a lack of theoretical support, small sample size, or additional methodological issues (DiPlacido, 1998; Peterson & Gerrity, 2006). Although there are several published scales that assess internalized homophobia among men, only one scale addresses women (Szymanski & Chung, 2001). However, this scale was validated using a sample that included a significant number (approximately 30%) of participants who did not identify as lesbian and was biased in terms of education level, and it includes questions that confound internalized homophobia with other psychological issues or personality traits.

Description
The SLIHS is a self-administered survey that is completed by women who self-identify as lesbian. The instrument includes four subscales, Visibility, Connectedness, Self-Acceptance, and Judgment, and a total of 30 closed-ended questions.

Response Mode and Timing
This two-page self-administered survey takes approximately 3 minutes to complete. The response has been very high: Over 95% completed the survey.

Scoring
Overall and subscale scores can be calculated. Possible overall scores range from 30 to 120 (with higher numbers representing greater internalized homophobia), whereas subscale scores range from 7 to 28 for Visibility (Items 1–7) and Connectedness (Items 8–14), 5 to 20 for Self-Acceptance (Items 15–19), and 11 to 44 for Judgment (Items 20–30). The Likert-type scale response categories and associated points for about half of the items are the following: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Disagree = 3, and Strongly Disagree = 4. The remaining items are reversed (R), with point structures as follows: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1.

Reliability and Validity
The SLIHS was validated with a sample of 786 women, ranging in age from 18 to 82, from 39 states across the United States (Weibley, 2009). The sample was 81.7% White, 4.7% Hispanic, 4.6% Asian, 4.4% African American, 3.8% Biracial, and 0.8% other. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the internal reliability of the four subscales, with Cronbach coefficient alpha values ranging from .74 to .85. The original scale items were developed by lesbian focus group participants using the concept mapping technique (Trochim, 1989), and the construct validity was assessed and affirmed by a total of 14 face and content validity reviewers.

Other Information
The scale was copyrighted by Stacy Weibley in 2009.

References

Exhibit

Self-Identified Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable being “out.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am “out” to my boss/employer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am “out” to my co-workers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am “out” to my parents.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable discussing homosexuality in a public setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>When discussing your partner, it is all right to use gender neutral pronouns to make heterosexual people more comfortable. [R]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When/if I am in a relationship, I feel comfortable talking about my lesbian partner.
I feel comfortable about the idea of another woman making an advance toward me.
I feel comfortable at lesbian-centered events or places.
I feel comfortable in social situations with other lesbians.
I have stopped myself from coming out because no heterossexuals are truly accepting. [R]
I have very little in common with other lesbians. [R]
It is important for me to be part of the lesbian community.
It is important to have people in my life who know I am a lesbian.
I am comfortable being a lesbian.
I feel comfortable thinking about my homosexuality.
I sometimes feel disappointed in myself for being a lesbian. [R]
I sometimes feel embarrassed to be a lesbian. [R]
I would prefer to be heterosexual. [R]
Being a lesbian is all right when you are young, but I worry how people will perceive me as an older lesbian. [R]
Children should be taught that being gay or lesbian is normal.
I find myself making negative comments about other lesbians. [R]
I sometimes think heterosexual people’s judgments of lesbians are, at least in part, justified. [R]
I think of lesbians as sexually predatory. [R]
I wish other lesbians would not flaunt their lesbianism. [R]
It is understandable that people judge lesbians who do not dress or act “straight.” [R]
It is understandable that some people believe that lesbians are not worthy of the same treatment as other women. [R]
Lesbians should try to look as non-offensive as possible. [R]
Lesbians who have a very masculine appearance make me uncomfortable. [R]
Most lesbians grow out of their lifestyles. [R]

Note. [R] = reverse-scored items.

The Homophobia Scale (HS) was developed to assess the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of homophobia.

**Description**
The HS consists of 25 statements to which respondents answer on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). The majority of the homophobia scales currently in use measure attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals and what has been referred to as homonegativity, but do not capture the entire construct of homophobia. The inclusion of items that assess social avoidance and aggressive acting, in addition to the attitudinal items found on many homophobia measures, differentiates the HS from other scales.

The participants for the development and validation studies (N = 321 for the initial field trial and N = 122 for test-retest reliability) were students from a large midwestern university. Their average age was 22.38 (SD = 4.12).

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**Homophobia Scale**

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