

Family and Community Experiences of Transgender and/or Nonbinary Youth

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What is this about?

Starting in 2016, the **Trans Teen and Family Narratives Project (TTFN)** interviewed 33 families with trans teens to learn more about their experiences. Each family consisted of a trans teen (13-17 years old) and at least one caregiver. Many families had as many as four participants: two **caregivers**, a **trans teen**, and a **sibling**.

On the right, take a look at some demographic information about the **trans teens in this study**: gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial identity.

What did we do?

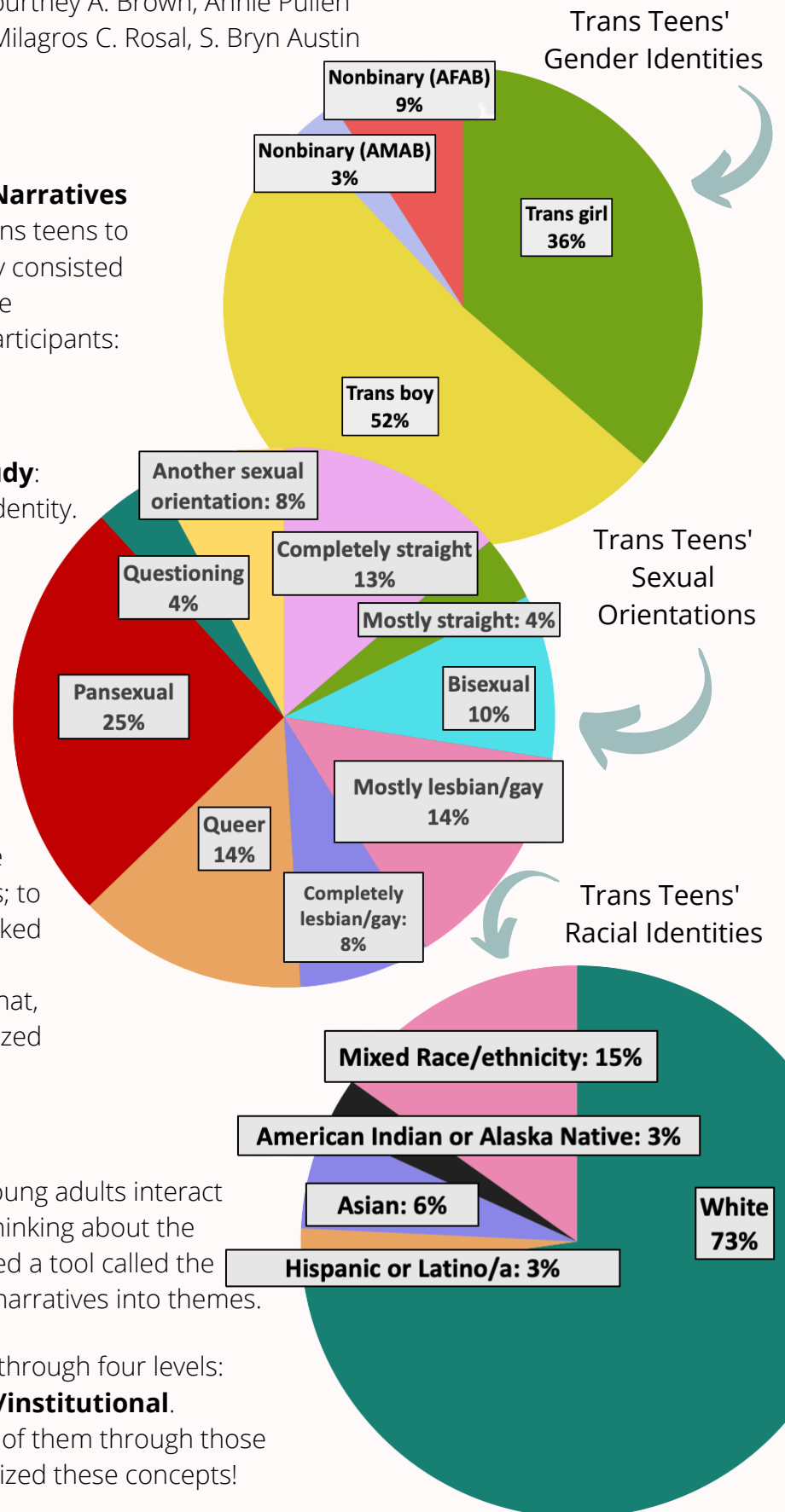
Recently, we analyzed the **first conversations we had with trans teens in 2016** to learn more about the challenges and facilitators for trans people as they navigated adolescence with their families and communities.

To analyze the interviews, we transcribed all the audio clips and organized the written interviews; to do this, our team members see what people talked about and assign labels to the paragraphs and sentences that touched on those topics. After that, they looked at the organized data and summarized them in themes.

What did we find?

There are so many ways that trans teens and young adults interact with the places and people in their lives. After thinking about the narratives of more than **30 trans teens**, we used a tool called the **ecological systems model** to organize those narratives into themes.

This tool helps people think about experiences through four levels: **individual, family, community, and societal/institutional**. We found eight broad themes and made sense of them through those four levels. See the next page for how we organized these concepts!



Ecological Systems Model

My mom is just like, she looks at the odds, and when she was thinking about doing the [puberty blocker] implant, she was just like, "If you look at the suicide rate [for trans youth]...I'm not taking that chance on my watch. Get that implant in." She was just like, "I'm not taking that chance." So, she's always there. Always there. *(14 years old, girl)*

Theme 3. General Family Experiences

Theme 4. Family Support

Some positively, some negatively. There's no easy way to really explain it. You're going to find some people who do accept you, you're going to find some people who do not, and it's just like a gambling game. A good majority of my friends handled it well... It's not something they really thought about, whether or not it makes me a good person or not. *(17 years old, boy)*

Theme 5. General Community Experiences

Theme 6. Community Support

Theme 7. LGBTQ Community

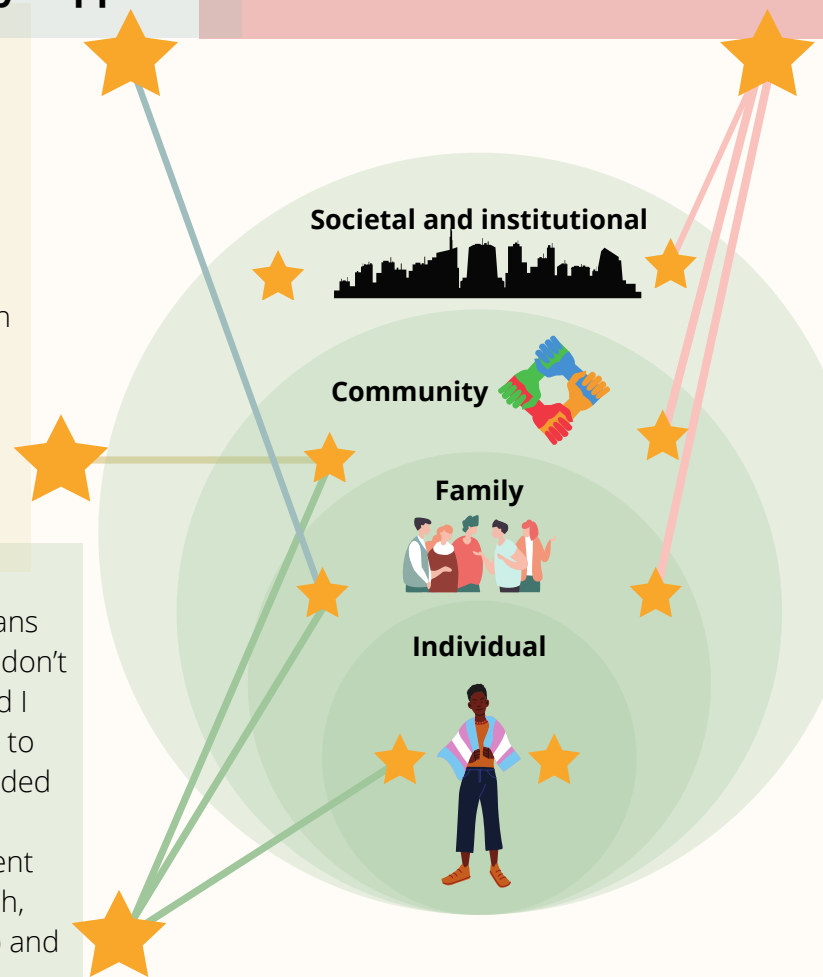
When I was 13 [years old], I was like "Oh, maybe I'm a trans boy," so I went like that for a while and then I was like, "I don't have to be a boy or a girl." So, then I was like, "Okay." And I went with that, but I still didn't really know how I wanted to dress and then I was just like, "Fuck it." And so, I just decided not to label anything, and I just dress how I wanted to dress... It was more just like me finding out about different identities and which one I was identifying the closest with, and none of them really worked for me so I just gave up and I'm just me. *(16 years old, nonbinary)*

Theme 1. Identity Processes

Theme 2. Emotions and Coping

The VANTAS implant, that cost a lot of money, but I think our insurance turned it down once. They turned it down once, they turned it down again, and then they agreed. And now that's happening again because I need to get another dose of my hormones and so we're gonna go through the process again. And it's just going to keep happening, but it's always going to be a yes because we have GLAD [GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders]. *(15 years old, girl)*

Theme 8. External Forces.



What did we learn?

Healthcare workers, researchers, and community members are still learning a lot about how to best support trans people and their families. What we found in this part of the study was that experiences in different part of teens' lives are interrelated, and to support a trans youth in their family requires effort and attention to all parts of family life, in and out of the home. Knowing this, we plan to build on this information by exploring perspectives families shared later in the study.