



Pathways to Occupational Therapy: Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Practitioners



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BACKGROUND

- Diversity is necessary in occupational therapy (OT).
- Current OT practitioners are not representative of the populations they serve (Wilson et al., 2020).
- Diversifying the field of OT can lead to more equitable outcomes for minority populations and reduce health disparities (Wilson et al., 2020).

RESEARCH AIM

- To understand the supports and barriers queer practitioners experienced on their journey to become occupational therapists.

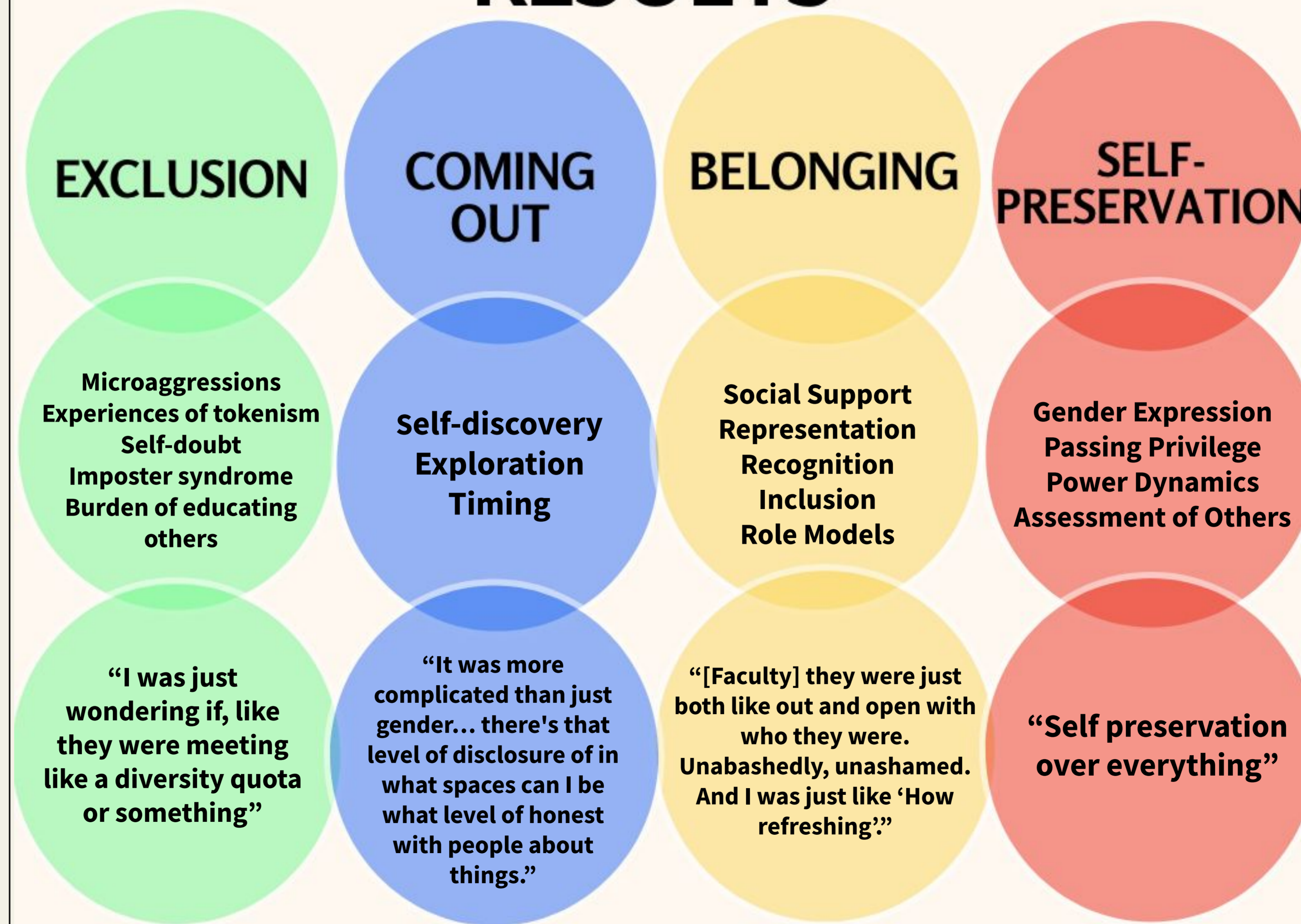
METHODS

- Qualitative descriptive research design
- 11 Participants who were LGBTQIA+ identifying, credentialed, and currently practicing as OTs at least 10 hours a week in the United States
- Participants interviewed using semi-structured interviews via Zoom.

ANALYSIS

- Thematic coding used to identify different themes and subthemes (Braun & Clark, 2006).

RESULTS



DISCUSSION

- Participants had some experiences similar to that of their cisgender and heterosexual peers. (Oswalt & Riddock, 2007)
- Experiences of tokenism, microaggressions, self-doubt, and having to educate others acted as barriers to inclusion for participants. (Ford et al., 2021)
- Participants enacted forms of self-preservation to enhance their safety and acceptance within the community.
- Social support, representation, recognition and inclusion, and role models increased participants’ sense of belonging and support.

IMPLICATIONS

- Media representations of OT need to be inclusive of diverse OT practitioners and educators.
- Materials introducing OT as a career should be developed for school-aged children and should represent diverse practitioners and perspectives.
- OT educational programs should make active, intentional, and visible efforts to implement structures and resources that support queer OT students.