The Fluidity of Human Intimacy: A Look at Relationship Orientation and Identity with a Focus on Polyamory

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Polyamory (or “Poly”) is an alternative way that people conduct their relationships. My research was aimed at discovering what role relationship structure has to an individual’s identity. In this presentation, identity is defined as characteristics, beliefs and behaviors that make up a person’s self-image. To answer this question, I conducted a small case study involving personal interviews to find out how personal relationship structure played a role to their individual identities, particularly in the case of Polyamorous relationships. According to my findings, it seems that relationship structure has its own orientation, separate from sexual or gender orientation. The importance of this orientation varies on personal opinion from individual to individual, but that does not make relationship orientation insignificant because it still exists as a characteristic of a person’s identity.

Abstract

Polyamory is not:

- My Five Wives **"Sister Wives"** or other reality TV shows depicting religious Polygamy (a man with multiple wives)
- Infidelity or “cheating” Cheating involves deception, dishonesty, and betrayal of a partner or partners. (Yes, one can cheat in an open relationship)
- Polyamory involves the belief that one can share multiple romantic intimate and/or sexual relationships with more than one person in an open, honest, and consensual way
- Polyamory has no template. It allows people to create their relationship boundaries based on their personal needs and desires and incorporates various aspects of identity such as gender orientation and sexual orientation
- Ethical Polyamory is built on consistent negotiation, communication, honesty, freedom, safety, and exploration of self through experiences and identity discovery

Polyamory is:

- “Poly” is all about love, consent, and communication:
- Polyamory involves the belief that one can share multiple romantic intimate and/or sexual relationships with more than one person in an open, honest, and consensual way
- Polyamory has no template. It allows people to create their relationship boundaries based on their personal needs and desires and incorporates various aspects of identity such as gender orientation and sexual orientation
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References

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Next, I would like to thank Dr. Kreydatus for encouraging me to try a presentation I’ve never done before and assist me with ridding a very complicated and challenging topic. She offered me advice and suggestions for organizing my topic and offered new perspectives and questions that added me in presenting this research.