

Exploring the Interconnections Between Learning Disabilities and Sexual Orientation

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In various spaces in society, there has been increased advocacy for greater equity, diversity, and inclusion for individuals from historically and systemically marginalized groups. One step toward supporting these individuals is to consider how they understand and make sense of their self-concepts. As such, we explored the self-concepts of individuals who identified with two specific identities: learning disability (LD) and sexual orientation (SO) diversity. The current study examined participants' (n = 120) perceptions of their LD and SO through word associations and an open-ended response question. Overall, participants provided 310 unique words when reflecting on their LD and 272 words when considering their SO. The most frequent words associated with LD highlighted the challenges these individuals face, whereas the words associated with SO emphasized the diversity of sexual orientations. Nevertheless, 15 words overlapped between these two identities: different, unique, misunderstood, struggle, hard, understanding, creative, confusing, judged, lonely, difficult, shame, special, annoying, and challenging. These overlapping terms highlight both the differences and similarities in how individuals make sense of their LD and SO. This was also evident in their open-ended responses, wherein some participants indicated that there was no connection between their LD and SO, while others believed the two were interconnected. The findings from this research provide an opportunity to better understand the complexity of the experiences of individuals within these two marginalized groups. In closing, we discuss the study's limitations and offer recommendations for future research.

Keywords: **learning disabilities, sexual orientation, self-concept, identities, intersectionality**

Introduction

Rights, Identity, and Intersectionality

In various spaces in society, there has been increased advocacy for more equity, diversity and inclusion for individuals who are from historically and systemically marginalized groups. However, this need is not new as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Government of Canada, 1982) was published over four decades ago, and in it, highlights the important of equality of rights, stating:

> Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on

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race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

It is important to note that while sexual orientation is not explicitly mentioned in Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provided above, it is still protected within this section of the Charter as evidenced by court cases Egan v. Canada (1995) and Vriend v. Alberta (1998). Therefore, while not explicitly named in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, SO is a protected characteristic under the Charter and under Human Rights legislation federally and provincially, as are learning disabilities. Nevertheless, sexism, homo/trans/biphobia, racism, and ableism and other systems of oppression continue to exist.

As a potential first step toward supporting individuals from these marginalized groups, it is important to consider how they understand and make sense of their self-concepts. In particular, we were interested in two specific identities: learning disability (LD) and sexual orientation diversity. We selected these two identities because they are not immediately apparent upon first glance, unlike those that are externally visible (e.g., race or physical disability). Indeed, LD is often considered a hidden disability (Panshikar, 2019), while someone with a non-heterosexual orientation frequently engages with a process of "coming out" (Coleman, 2022). Moreover, research specifically exploring the intersectionality of learning disabilities (LD) and sexual orientation (SO) could not be found. Instead, existing studies have examined disability and SO more broadly (e.g., Kimball et al., 2018; Miller, 2019). Therefore, focusing specifically on LD and SO would address a timely and important gap in the current research literature.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how individuals who identify as both LD and non-heterosexual make sense of these identities, both separately and together. We begin by providing background information on LD and sexual orientation (SO), followed by a review of the relevant literature to situate our study within the broader context.

Learning Disabilities

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2022), Learning Disabilities (LD) are considering within the category of neurodevelopmental disorders. To be diagnosed with an LD, an individual needs to have one or more of the following symptoms for a duration of six months or longer, (a) inaccurate or slow and effortful word reading, (b) difficulty understanding the meaning from what is read, (c) difficulties with spelling, (d) difficulties with written expression, (e) difficulties with numbers and number facts, and (f) difficulties with mathematical reasoning (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). As such, these challenges are often grouped into three areas: reading, written expression and mathematics, and an individual can have challenges in one or more of these areas (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Of those diagnosed with LD, the majority has an LD related to reading, often called dyslexia (Dyslexia Canada, n.d.).

Furthermore, the challenges experienced by the individual must be significantly below what would be expected for their age and must have a substantial impact on daily living (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Having said that,

individuals with LD have average to above-average intelligence, as an intellectual disorder would typically be ruled out before diagnosing LD (Learning Disability Association of Canada, 2015). Indeed, to be diagnosed with an LD, other potential causes must be ruled out, such as other disorders or contextual factors (e.g., socioeconomic status or linguistic differences; Grigorenko et al., 2020). Moreover, researchers have explored the genetic components of LD for decades and have identified a strong hereditary link (Erbeli et al., 2021; Grigorenko et al., 2020). LDs are lifelong, however, how they are experienced may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the individual and their environment (Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 2015). In terms of prevalence, the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (n.d.) suggests that one in ten Canadians, has an LD, making them the largest group of students receiving special education services (Yakut & Akgul, 2023).

Researchers have explored the self-concepts and perceptions of individuals with LD. Goegan and colleagues (2021), asked high school students with LD "*what does it mean to you to have a learning disability?*" and found that many students commented on the effort required to do well in school, often indicating having to try harder, or work harder than their peers. Moreover, the students regularly compared themselves to their peers in their need to try harder or learn differently. A meta-analysis by Nelson (2013), explore the self-concepts of adults with LD and found that overall, individuals with LD reported lower general self-concepts than individuals without LD. Moreover, when examining specific domains, the differences in self-concepts were more apparent for academic self-concept, which had a medium effect, followed by a smaller effect size for social self-concept and negotiable differences in physical self-concept. This is consistent with the definition of LD which is linked to the areas of reading, writing and mathematics as outlined above. Moreover, a systematic literature review by Yakut and Akgul (2024) found that individuals with LD had lower self-concept compared to their peers, but there was some inconsistency across the studies reviewed, partially due to how self-concept was operationalized, or the specific domain of interest.

To gain a deeper understanding of the self-concepts of individuals with LD, we aimed to extend the current literature by examining how individuals with LD make sense of their LD identity in relation to other self-concepts, particularly their sexual orientations. While individuals with disabilities are often regarded as one of the largest marginalized groups, they may also hold additional marginalized identities (Brinkman et al., 2023). We focused on SO because, like LD, it is not immediately apparent upon first encountering an individual. Before exploring the research connecting LD and sexual orientation, we provide some background on SO.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation (SO) refers to the way that a person is attracted to another, often broken down into categories like homosexual (an individual attracted to the same gender as themselves), bisexual (attracted to both or all genders), and heterosexual (attracted to a different gender). There is no singular definition of sexual orientation that is universally agreed upon (Dembroff, 2016; Moser, 2016). Many popular definitions of sexual orientation center on the people that an

individual is attracted to, relative to their own gender identity (Dembroff, 2016). The earliest Western definitions of sexual orientation focused almost exclusively on men's experiences and centered solely on sexual urges and experiences, and considered heterosexuality to be the default (Sell, 1997). Scholars have criticized the heavy reliance on heterosexuality as an unspoken norm (Dembroff, 2016; Jackson, 2006) and there are now many terms that are used colloquially to identify a variety of sexual orientations.

In this study, we spoke only to people who identified as having a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Often referred to as "sexual minorities," people with sexual orientations other than heterosexual historically and contemporarily face discrimination and marginalization (Herek & Garnets, 2007).

Intersectionality

Coined by Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality refers to the ways that oppressions intersect for an individual. Crenshaw's work focused on Black women's experiences of multiple oppressions due to both their gender and their race, and scholars like Davis (1981) and the Combahee River Collective (1977) wrote similarly about Black women and Black lesbian women's experiences at the same time. Other significant contributors to the development of intersectionality as a theory include Latina/x and Mestiza scholars and other women of colour including Moraga and Anzaldúa (1984). Contemporarily, the term has been taken up to include the intersections of any number of facets of identity, including (but not limited to) race, Indigeneity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, social class, economic status, age, spirituality, religion, and citizenship (Hankivsky, 2014). Essential to intersectionality is the idea that none of these elements can be separated from a person, and our experiences are a culmination of the ways that each of these facets interact with and experience the world.

The Intersectionality Between Learning Disabilities and Sexual Orientation

According to research by Warrier and colleagues (2020), who examined five large scale data sets, they determined that transgender and gender-diverse individual were more likely to identify with neurodevelopmental and psychiatric diagnoses than cisgender individuals. Moreover, in two of their datasets, they were able to determine that transgender and gender-diverse individuals were more likely to report an LD than cisgender individuals. This is consistent with a large-scale study from the United States that utilized the Household Pulse Survey and determined that when examines disabilities broadly, they were 156% more prevent within the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community (e.g., Surfus, 2023). In a study by Miller (2019), he interviewed 25 postsecondary students to examine their perceptions on the connections, or lack there of, between disability and queer identities. From the analyses five main themes emerged (a) identities as intersectional, (b) identities as interactive, (c) identities as overlapping, (d) identities as parallel and (e) identities as oppositional. Unfortunately, only one of the participants identified as LD (dyslexia). Nevertheless, it stands to reason that there is a connection between disability and sexual orientation, and more research is needed within the LD community specifically. As such, the current study aimed to address this gap in the literature by exploring the

self-concepts of individuals who identify as having an LD and as belonging to a non-heteronormative SO.

The Current Study

The purpose of the current study was twofold: (a) to examine the self-concepts of individuals who identify as having an LD and as belonging to a non-heteronormative SO, and (b) to explore the intersection between how individuals make sense of their LD and SO, either as interconnected or separate identities. The results of this study can provide valuable insights into the experiences of these individuals and contribute important information about the intersection between different marginalized identities within our society. Therefore, the research questions were as follows: (1) What are the words that individuals associate with their LD and SO? and (2) Do individuals see LD and SO as connected and if so, how?

Method

Participants and Procedures

We collected self-report data from a convenience sample of 120 individuals who identified as both a person with LD and with a non-heterosexual orientation who completed a survey on Prolific©. Prolific is an online platform that connects researchers with individuals who are willing to engaged in academic research studies. The full survey consisted of 40 questions, only a portion of which are utilized here as they pertain to our specific research questions. Additional information about the items is provided below. After completing the survey, participants were paid for their time based on the Prolific guidelines (https://www.prolific.com/calculator). Ethics approval was obtained from the Human Ethics Research Office at the researchers' university.

Measures

Demographic Measures (five items)

To describe the sample, we asked participants to indicate their age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and the nature of their LD. First, participants ranged in age from 20 to 62 years ($M = 32.66$, $SD = 9.50$). Second, in terms of ethnicity, the majority of participants identified as White (65%), followed by Black (10.8%) and Latin American (4.2%). Additional participants identified as South Asian, Chinese, First Nations, Inuit, Korean, or chose not to indicate their ethnicity. Third, regarding gender identity, 59 participants identified as women, 25 as men, 22 as non-binary, six as genderqueer, two as transgender, and one each for the following identities: two-spirit, agender, genderless, and no label. Fourth, for sexual orientation, participants identified as bisexual (66), homosexual (21), asexual (12), pansexual (11), or did not specify their sexual orientation. Lastly, with respect to LD, 76% identified with dyslexia, 15% with dysgraphia, and 53% of participants identified with dyscalculia (note that these percentages total more than 100% as participants could identify with more than one LD).

LD and SO Questions (three items)

To explore our first research question, individuals were asked to respond to two open-ended questions. First, participants were provided with the prompt: We want you to write down all the words that come to mind when you think about the question "*What does it mean to be a person with a learning disability*?" and were encouraged to write down as many words as possible. Second, participants were provided with the prompt: "We want you to write down all the words that come to mind when you think about the question "*What does it mean to be someone with your sexual orientation?* Again, participants were encouraged to write down as many words as possible. These two questions were developed by the authors through discussions about wording and phrasing, with the aim of encouraging participants to reflect on their self-concepts related to their LD and SO separately.

To explore our second research question, we directly asked participants: *How do you see your learning disability and sexual orientation being connected?* Again, this question was developed by the authors, and participants were encouraged to write as much as they wished on the topic. This approach was intended to give them the opportunity to reflect on how their LD and SO may be connected.

Results

Words Associations

We collected all the words provided in our participants' responses to the question "*What does it mean to be a person with a learning disability*?" and entered them into an online word cloud software (https://www.wordclouds.com). Word clouds are considered an efficient way to examine the frequency of words used by a group of people, with more frequently used words displayed in larger fonts (e.g., Cidell, 2010; DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014; Goegan & Daniels, 2022; Hinkle et al., 2020; Meehan & Howells, 2019). All words were included, with the exception of "Learning Disability" or "LD," due to the nature of the prompt. The word cloud generated from the words participants associated with LD is presented in Figure 1, and the 15 most frequent words are listed in Table 1. In total, participants came up with 310 unique words. The five most frequent words were *difficult*, *different*, *harder*, *slow*, and *frustrating*, highlighting the challenges faced by individuals with LD.

Table 1. ***Top word from the Word clouds and overlapping Words***

Top 15 Words to Describe LD	Top 15 Words to Describe SO	All Overlapping Words
1. Difficult	1. Attracted	1. Different
2. Different	2. Bisexual	2. Unique
3. Harder	3. Gender	3. Misunderstood
4. Slow	4. Queer	4. Struggle
5. Frustrating	5. Love	5. Hard
6. Struggle	6. Women	6. Understanding
7. Time	7. Gay	7. Creative
8. Unique	8. People	8. Confusing
9. Behind	9. Men	9. Judged
10. Misunderstood	10. Fluid	10. Lonely
11. Struggling	11. Fun	11. Difficult
12. Accommodations	12. Loving	12. Shame
13. Challenging	13. Misunderstood	13. Special
14. Help	14. Open-Minded	14. Annoying
15. Lazy	15. Pansexual	15. Challenging

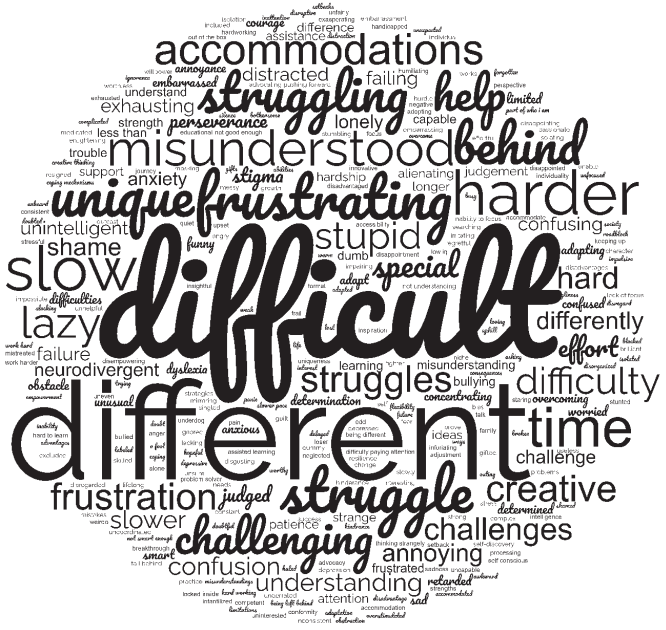

Figure 1. **Word Cloud for: What does it mean to be a person with a learning disability?**

Words Associated with SO

A second word cloud was created using all the words provided by participants in response to the question, "What does it mean to be someone with your sexual orientation?" Similar to the previous analysis, all words were included except for "sexual orientation." The word cloud generated from the words participants associated with sexual orientation is presented in Figure 2, and the 15 most frequent words are also listed in Table 1. In total, participants identified 272 unique words. The five most frequent words were *attracted*, *bisexual*, *gender*, *queer*, and *love*, highlighting the diverse range of sexual orientations that individuals may possess.

Figure 2. **Word Cloud for: What does it mean to be someone with your sexual orientation?**

Interconnection

To examine the connection between LD and SO, we first analyzed which words were used by participants in both word clouds. Of a possible 272 words, only 15 (5%) appeared in both word clouds (presented here in alphabetical order): *annoying*, *challenging*, *confusing*, *creative*, *different*, *difficult*, *hard*, *judged*, *lonely*, *misunderstood*, *shame*, *special*, *struggle*, *understanding*, and *unique*. These words highlight shared themes of difficulty and misunderstanding, as well as the unique challenges and strengths associated with both identities.

Second, we engaged in open-coding of participants' responses to the question, "How do you see your learning disability and sexual orientation being connected?" We conducted an inductive thematic analysis (Neuendorf, 2018) to identify common themes in the participants' responses. As a first step, the authors independently read through the responses to become familiar with the data and to begin considering preliminary themes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Next, the authors engaged in a collaborative process to discuss the recurring patterns observed in participants' responses, ultimately identifying three key themes. Finally, the responses were reviewed once more to ensure that participants' comments aligned with these themes and that no additional themes were necessary to accurately capture their perspectives. The themes identified from the participants' responses are described below.

One theme that emerged from their responses was that LD and SO were not directly connected, as many participants perceived them as separate and unrelated. For example, participants said, "sexual orientation isn't a disability, so they're not connected," "I struggle to see the connection," and "I don't think the two are related in any way."

Another theme that emerged was the parallels participants saw between these two identities. While participants acknowledged that LD and SO are different, they emphasized that both contribute to one's overall identity and experiences. Within this theme, participants frequently commented on the challenges of social acceptance resulting from their LD and SO. For example, one participant shared, "I'm already an outcast for my learning problems; I don't belong anywhere. The same is true for my sexual orientation," while another said, "I see them both as reasons for society to further stigmatize me and others like me." Comments often focused on interpersonal relationships, with participants stating, "They are also both things that I can't open up about with just anyone," and "They both caused me to be teased at one point or another in my life."

The third theme that emerged was the perceived intersection between neurodiversity and diversity within sexual orientations. One participant summarized their perspective as follows:

> I feel that a lot of folks who are anything other than heterosexual are more willing to acknowledge that they have learning disabilities. Since we are already weird or different, it's no big deal to just be authentic. Hetero people often try to fit into a specific 'box' in society and seem uncomfortable drifting from anything considered normal.

Other participants echoed this sentiment, making comments such as, "I think more people who are neurodivergent are some sort of degree of queer," "I find there's a lot more queer and learning-disabled people than straight cis ones," and "I know that neurodivergent people are statistically more likely to be queer." Taken together, participants' perspectives varied in the extent to which they perceived LD and SO to be interconnected.

Discussion

The current study explored participants' perceptions of their learning disabilities (LD) and sexual orientation (SO) through word associations and an open-ended response question. In this discussion, we focus on how these findings expand our current understanding of how individuals conceptualize these identities separately and in relation to one another. In closing we identify limitations and implications from our study and make recommendations for future research.

Word Associated with LD and SO

The word clouds generated from participants' responses revealed distinct themes when they reflected on their LD and their SO. For instance, the most frequent words associated with LD highlighted the challenges these individuals face. Indeed, a common theme was the need to work *harder*, a finding that aligns with previous research on the experiences of students with LD (Goegan et al., 2021). Additionally, emotional experiences were evident in the use of words such as *frustrating*, *shame*, *anxiety*, and *lonely*, which is also consistent with previous research (e.g., Hozmi, 2022; Sender et al., 2024). Misperceptions were also reflected in terms such as *misunderstanding*, *unintelligence*, *lazy*, and *stupid*, which are common in the self-perceptions of individuals with LD, as noted in prior studies (e.g., Rousey, 2016). Indeed, a review of dyslexia research by Mather and colleagues (2020) identified the significant impact of *shame* and the prevalence of *misconceptions*. Taken together, these findings underscore the emotional toll and societal misunderstandings associated with LD, highlighting the need for greater awareness and supportive interventions to foster resilience and self-advocacy among LD individuals. Indeed, October is recognized as LD Awareness Month (LDAO, 2024), and the word cloud generated in this study could help support dialogue around the experiences of individuals with LD.

In contrast, the words associated with SO highlighted the diversity of sexual orientations, including terms such as *bisexual*, *pansexual*, *queer*, and *asexual*. Indeed, an article by Abrams (2023) identified 47 different terms that describe sexual attraction, behavior, and orientation. This suggests that participants, when asked to provide words about SO, focused on identifying their specific orientation. Moreover, there is a balance between positive and negative words. On the one hand, positive words included *open-minded*, *freedom*, *acceptance*, and *happy*. On the other hand, negative words included *misunderstood*, *judged*, and *scared*. The presence of both positive and negative words reflects the complex history experienced by individuals who identify as non-heterosexual in Canada. As Cunes (2024) outlines, the history of social movements related to the LGBTQ community indicates that while there have been many positive advancements, there is still much work to be done.

Moreover, the overlapping terms suggest that while LD and SO are distinct, individuals can identify common associations with both of them. These shared terms may reflect how individuals navigate multiple marginalized identities simultaneously, often within environments that may not fully understand or accommodate either. This maybe why we see words such has challenging and judged, as well as unique and understanding.

Similar to SO above, we see the juxtaposition of positive and negative words highlighting the complexity of the experiences of people who identify as LD and with a nonheteronormative SO. Words such as *annoying* and *shame* are contrasted with terms like *creative* and *unique*. This duality, that is, feeling both different and creative, misunderstood yet understanding, underscores the nuanced ways in which individuals make sense of their identities. Moreover, it suggests that the intersection of one's LD and a nonheteronormative SO contributes to a layered and multifaceted understanding of one's self. These insights emphasize the importance of creating spaces where individuals can explore and express these overlapping identities without fear of judgment or misunderstanding.

Perceptions of the Connection Between LD and SO

Open-ended responses provided further nuance, with participants expressing varied perspectives on the connection between LD and SO. This aligns with Miller's (2019) findings, as participants in our study also drew parallels between their LD and SO identities, while also exploring how these two identities intersect. Moreover, the lack of identification of a connection mirrors Miller's *identities as oppositional* theme. Miller suggests that within this theme, individuals acknowledge the presence of both their disabilities and SO identities but reject the notion of their intersectionality. One explanation for this rejection was the desire to "escape" the weight of multiple forms of oppression (p. 340). For our participants, however, it seemed less about rejecting intersectionality. Indeed, the comment, "I don't really see them as connected" or "I don't think they are." This may suggest that these individuals have not yet had the opportunity to reflect deeply on the intersectionality of these identities, rather than consciously rejecting how they are connected.

Future research should investigate the timing of individuals being identified as having an LD and as identifying with a non-heterosexual SO. This could reveal whether the duration of time spent processing these identities influences how individuals perceive the interconnection between them. It seems logical that individuals who have had more time and space to reflect on both identities might better recognize connections, whether in parallels or through a deeper sense of intersectionality.

Limitations

While the findings presented here offer valuable insight into how individuals who identify as having an LD and an SO other than heterosexual make sense of their identities, two important limitations should be noted. First, the study utilized a convenience sample of individuals residing in Canada and the United States who had internet access and utilized the Prolific platform. The ways in which individuals from these two countries understand their LD and SO identities may differ from those in other cultural or national contexts. Therefore, future research could benefit from including participants from a wider range of countries to extend the findings.

Additionally, we recommend exploring various demographic factors among participants (e.g., age, employment status, education level). For instance, older individuals may have grown up with different societal messaging around LD and SO compared to more contemporary perspectives. Indeed, the Learning Disabilities

Association of America (n.d.) notes that the term "learning disability" was first introduced in 1963 by Dr. Samuel Kirk and gained broader recognition in the years that followed. Furthermore, the characteristics of LD, as described in the DSM, have evolved over time, which may influence how individuals conceptualize their LD identity. As such, exploring additional demographic factors would provide more nuanced information as to how individuals see the connection between their LD and SO.

The second limitation relates to our use of Prolific for participant recruitment. We chose this online platform to reach individuals who identified as having an LD and a non-heterosexual SO, aiming to encourage participation while maintaining anonymity. This consideration is especially important for individuals with LD, who may hesitate to self-identify due to potential stigma (Goegan et al., 2018). However, using this platform did not allow for a conversation between the researchers and the participants. As such, future studies should consider incorporating interviews and/or focus groups to extend the findings presented here.

Implications and Future Directions

The findings of this study contribute to a growing body of research on intersectional identities and offers information to start a conversation for educators, clinicians, policymakers, or in the community more broadly. First, the overlapping challenges associated with LD and SO suggest a need for more inclusive and intersectional support systems. Organizations should consider how stigma and social exclusion impact individuals with multiple marginalized identities and provide tailored interventions to address these concerns. While our research only focused on two marginalized groups that are not visually identifiable, it would be interesting to extend our research to other marginalized identifies as well, such as ethnicity.

Second, the connection between neurodiversity and SO diversity calls for further exploration as noted above. Future research should continue to investigate the range in perceptions as to why some individuals see no connection while others see LD and SO significantly interrelated. This could be accomplished through interviews or focus groups to capture the more nuanced experiences of the individuals. Lastly, fostering inclusive environments that celebrate both neurodiversity and sexual orientation can help individuals feel more accepted and less marginalized. Awareness campaigns, educational programs, and peer support groups can play a pivotal role in reducing stigma and promoting understanding. Notably, as mentioned above, October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month in Canada (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, 2024), and June is Pride Month (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). It would be beneficial for organizations coordinating events during these months to align their efforts to promote intersectional awareness. Moreover, researchers could engage with community members during these events to gather additional insights into the experiences of individuals who identify as both having an LD and a non-heteronormative SO. Such engagement could also inform more inclusive awareness initiatives, offering recommendations based on individuals' lived experiences with these events.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while participants largely perceived LD and SO as distinct, common themes of misunderstanding, stigma, and resilience emerged across both identities. The intersection between these identities highlights the importance of adopting an inclusive and holistic approach to supporting individuals with diverse experiences. Future research should continue to examine the nuanced relationships between LD, SO, and other aspects of identity to inform more effective practices and policies.

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