DR. VICTOR HARRIS

VICTORHARRIS@UFL.EDU

352-273-3523

3028 D MCCARTY HALL D,
GAINESVILLE, FL 32611

COMPILED BY:
PRAMI SENGUPTA

GRADUATE STUDENT
FAMILY, YOUTH AND
COMMUNITY SCIENCES

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UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

SMART
Strengthening Marriages and Relationships Training

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: LGBT INDIVIDUALS AND SAME-SEX COUPLES[1]

[1] Adapted from "*Marriage and Family: LGBT Individuals and Same-Sex Couples*" by Gary J. Gates, "*The Future of children", Volume 25(2),* p. 89. Copyright 2015 by the *Center for the Future of Children, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.*

1. "Measures of social acceptance related to sexual relationships, parenting, and marriage recognition among same-sex couples all increased substantially in the last two decades (p.68)."
2. Constitutional right to marry was granted to same-sex couples by the Supreme Court, by June 2015.
3. Between 1973 and 1991, the proportion of people who perceived same-sex sexual relationships as wrong doings showed little variance, "peaking at 77 percent in 1988 and 1991 (p.68)."
4. This number has rapidly declined over the next two decades, "from 66 percent in 1993 to 40 percent in 2014 (p.68)."[1]
5. "In 1988, just 12 percent of U.S. adults agreed that same-sex couples should have a right to marry (p.68)."
6. By 2014, 57 percent of U.S. adults agreed to the same.

Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Relationships

1. 'Shifts in public attitudes toward same-sex relationships and families have been accompanied by similarly dramatic shifts in granting legal status to same-sex couple relationships (p.68)."
2. Same-sex couples was first recognized by California when the state, in 1999, implemented its domestic partnership registry
3. "In 2000, Vermont enacted civil unions, a status designed specifically for same-sex couples to give them a broader set of rights and responsibilities akin to those associated with marriage (p.68)."
4. In 2004, "Massachusetts became the first state to legalize marriage for same-sex couples (p.68)."
5. Finally, in 2013, "the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the provision of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (passed in 1996) that limited federal recognition of marriages to different-sex couples (p.68)."[1]
6. Same-sex couples have some forms of legal rights "across northern, western, and central Europe, large portions of North and South America, and in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (p.69)."

7. However, “homosexuality remains criminalized” “throughout much of Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, and in Russia and many Pacific and Caribbean island nations (p.69).”

Effects on LGBT Relationships and Families

1. Social stigma directed toward LGBT people can negatively impact their health, wellbeing, and the way they form relationships and families, and become parents (p.69) (Meyer, 2003)
2. On average, same-sex couple relationships were found to be less stable than those of different sex couples (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1991).
3. “Lesbians and gay men were less likely than their heterosexual counterparts to be in a cohabiting relationship (p.69) (Black et al., 2000).”
4. As of March 2015, “nearly 40 percent of same-sex couples were married (p.69)” (Gates & Newport, 2015).
5. “As society has begun to treat same-sex couples more like different-sex couples, the differences between the two groups have narrowed (p.69).”
6. “Most children being raised by same-sex couples were born to different-sex parents, one of whom is now in the same-sex relationship (p.69).”

LGBT Families: Demographic Characteristics

1. Depending on different surveys, “from 5.2 million to 9.5 million U.S. adults identify as LGBT (p.71) (Gates, 2014).”
2. “The population of married same-sex couples appears to have doubled or even tripled in just one year (p.72).”

LGBT and Same-Sex Couple Parents and Families

1. “Thirty-seven percent of LGBT individuals have been parents and as many as 6 million U.S. children and adults may have an LGBT parent (p.72) (Gates, 2013).”
2. “Most children currently living with same-sex couples were likely born in previous different-sex relationships (p.72).”
3. “LGB youth are more likely to experience unintended pregnancy or fatherhood when compared to their non-LGB counterparts (p.73) (Saewyc, 2011).”
4. Social stigma exhibited toward LGB youth may lead to psychological stress that can ultimately result in risky behaviors, including sexual activity that results in unplanned pregnancies (p.73).”
5. “Individuals in same-sex couples have higher levels of education than those in different-sex couples (Jepsen & Jepsen, 2002; Gates & Ost, 2004)(p.73).” However, couples raising children do not exhibit this pattern.
6. “The percentage of same-sex couples who are raising children began declining in 2006 (p.73)(42).”
7. According to the American Sociological Association, “children raised by same-sex parents fare just as well as children raised by opposite-sex parents … across a wide spectrum of child-wellbeing measures: academic performance, cognitive development, social development, psychological health, early sexual activity, and substance abuse (Potter, 2012; Fedewa & Clark, 2009; Wainright, Russell, & Patterson, 2004; Wainright & Patterson, 2008) (p.75).”

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