

Mental Health, Coping, and Discrimination Among College Students with Marginalized Gender Identities

Chloe Crosby, Paulina Paredes Cienega, M.A., Keely Bieniak, M.A., Kayla McCracken M.S., Elizabeth Fenelon, B.A., Susan T. Tran Ph.D.
DePaul University

Abstract



Introduction

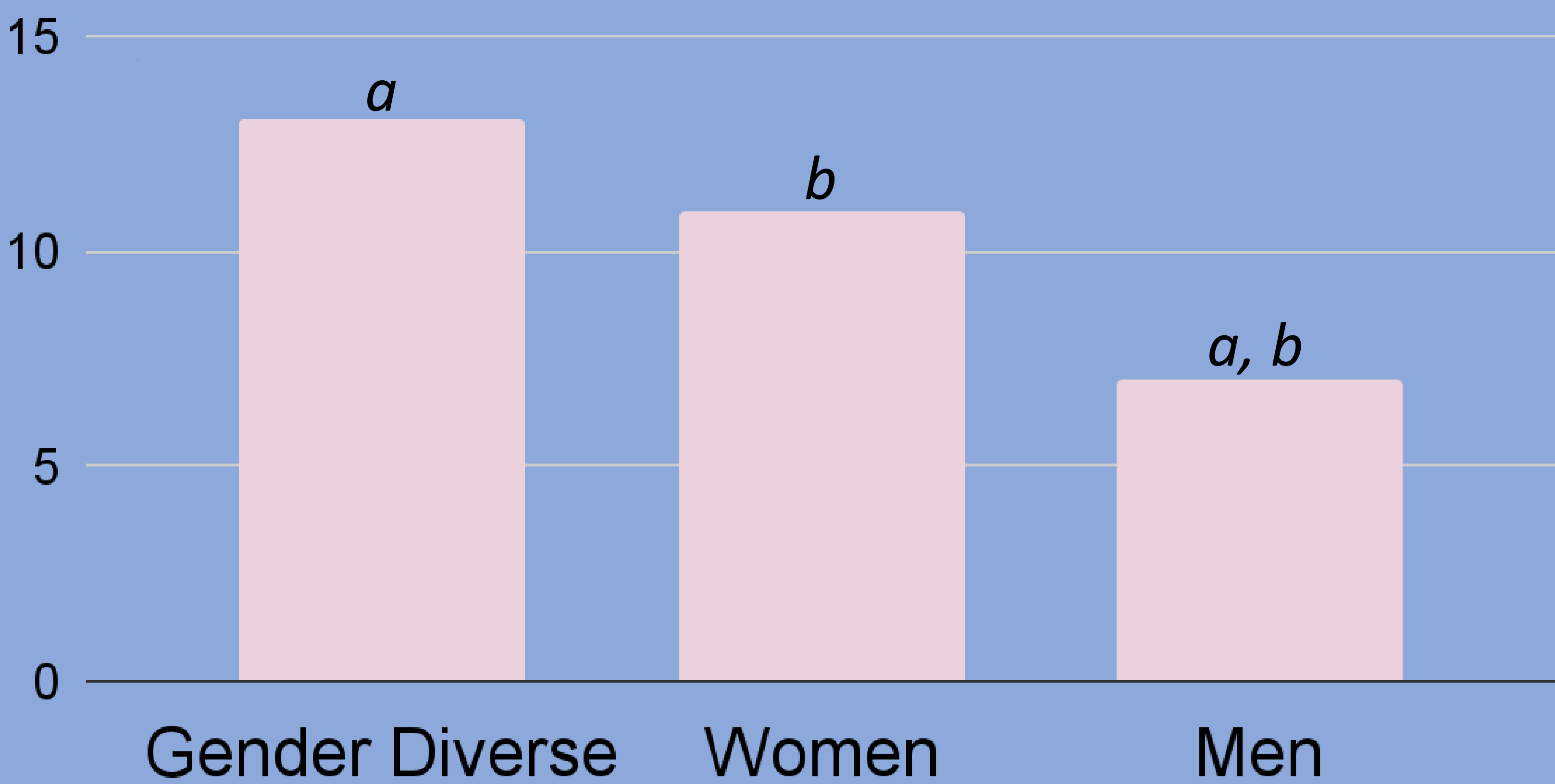
- Past research shows that unhealthy coping mechanisms are common among individuals with marginalized gender identities.
- Healthy coping mechanisms are infrequent among individuals with marginalized gender identities, and coping strategies are related to discrimination.
- There have been little to no studies on coping and discrimination that include gender-diverse folks at the college level.
- Invalidation by health care systems has been shown to increase mental health issues among gender diverse folks.
- We hypothesized that students with marginalized gender identities would have higher rates of symptoms of anxiety and depression, and discrimination would be linked to coping.

Methods

Participants ($N = 406$; M age = 19.44, SD age = 1.51), enrolled at a Midwestern United States university completed an online survey about their demographic characteristics, mental health, discrimination experiences, and coping behaviors.

- Mental Health Questionnaires:
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7)
 - Emotional Distress - Depression - Short Form 8A
 - If they had previous diagnoses
- Brief Cope scale
 - Substance use
 - Emotional Support
 - Self Blame
- Daily discrimination experiences

Anxiety Scores



Mental health among marginalized gender identities is worse than men

Depression Scores



a, b: columns with the same letter are statistically different from one another

Mental Health

- We looked at demographic questions to identify gender.
- Compared gender groups (i.e., women ($n = 301$) vs gender-non-conforming ($n = 23$) vs men ($n = 82$))
 - Women and gender-diverse participants had higher anxiety and depression than men ($F(2) = 15.70$) and $F(2) = 11.07$, respectively, both $p < .001$)

Coping

- Gender groups didn't differ in substance use or emotional support, but they did in self-blame ($F(2) = 5.64$, $p = .004$).
- Gender-diverse folks had higher self-blame than men.

Discrimination and Coping

- For men, discrimination was related to self-blame ($r = .25$, $p = .03$).
- For women, discrimination was related to substance use and self-blame ($r = .18$, $p < .001$, and $r = .25$, $p < .001$).
- For gender-diverse folks, discrimination wasn't associated with any coping strategy.

Discussion

- Results reveal that mental health among women and gender-diverse folks is worse than in men.
- Gender-diverse folks have higher experiences of self-blame, but it wasn't shown that discrimination correlated to coping.
- In men and women, discrimination and self-blame were linked; and discrimination and substance use are related in women.
- Findings provide greater insight into the mental health of college-age minoritized genders as well as the link between coping and discrimination in this population.
- Further research should widen their scope of mental health in terms of assessing anxiety and depression in addition to other conditions.



CCROSBY8@depaul.edu

