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Physical Education and Extracurricular Activity Participation of Autistic, Neurodivergent, Disabled Trans Adults

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION OF
AUTISTIC, NEURODIVERGENT, DISABLED TRANS ADULTS

by

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ABSTRACT

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION OF AUTISTIC, NEURODIVERGENT, DISABLED TRANS ADULTS

Steven Kelly Holland
Old Dominion University, 2021
Director: Dr. Justin A. Haegele

Disabled trans students may be multiply marginalized and/or have reduced access to otherwise affirming gender identity- or disability-related spaces in educational contexts because of their intersectional identities. At present, a limited understanding of disabled trans students school experiences are known. This dissertation was constructed using a two-manuscript format. The purpose of the first study was to investigate the physical education experiences of disabled trans adults. The study was conducted from an interpretivist paradigm and used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of disabled trans adults. Six adults (aged 18-30), who identified as: autistic, neurodivergent, disabled, trans, non-binary, and queer participated in the study. Data analysis guided by the IPA approach revealed three major themes: (a) elementary to secondary: participation and expectation changes, (b) surviving inaccessible spaces: impact of PE on school experiences, and (c) becoming more self-aware: navigating labels and needs in PE. Participants recalled more favorable experiences in elementary settings, had difficulty navigating sensory, disability, and gender related experiences in changing spaces, and had to budget their energy and participation in PE to make it through the school day. The purpose of the second study was to explore the experiences of an autistic disabled trans individual and their social network in extracurricular activities (EAs). The study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm and utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of each participant as it related to the autistic

disabled trans individuals' participation in EA. Six participants including the autistic disabled trans participant, their father, two friends, and a coach participated in the study. The IPA approach guided data analysis and two themes were interpreted from the data: (a) "I'm in pain and tired, but this makes me feel so good": navigating identities and needs, and (b) "social interaction fueled me, but it came at a cost": managing social expectations. Identity development and understanding was fluid and centered around activity participation. Lack of support and understanding of disability-related needs may reduce participation or lead to greater masking. The opportunity for socialization varied by EA but, overall, the participant had opportunities for acceptance and understanding among peers. Parent perceptions and understandings of socialization may be incongruent with the needs and values of their child's social experiences.

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To the participants who took a chance on me and participated in this study—thank you!

I am honored to get to tell part of your story and hope that I do it justice.

I dedicate this dissertation to every one of you.

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Every half marathon I have run, which is only a few, I have felt elated at the 13-mile mark only to realize I still had a tenth of a mile to go to reach the finish line. Well, that feeling isn't the same as this experience at all, but the imagery and exhaustion are comparable. I relied heavily on the support of others to help me cross the finish line and likely would not have come close on my own. While I attempt to offer pats on the back and my gratitude, the words fall short of how much I appreciate you all.

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making sense of my sporadic thoughts and helping me see things in a different light while supporting and encouraging me to pursue the things that make me happy. You make me a better teacher, researcher, father, and human. You brought a tiny human into the world, finished your comprehensive exam, and completed your dissertation and degree while carrying the weight and burden of our family; I am amazed by your strength and abilities. I look forward to our next adventure and I love you, Dr. Katherine Holland.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Disabled¹ students are more likely to be bullied and harassed in school than their nondisabled peers (Office of Civil Rights [OCR], 2018). Similarly, research suggests that trans students face higher rates of bullying, harassment, and violence than other members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community as well as their cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018; Grant et al., 2011; James et al., 2016; Johns et al., 2019). Consequently, students identifying as disabled and trans are often subject to negative experiences resulting from their trans identity, disability identity, and/or a combination of the two (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015). Physical education and extracurricular settings, specifically, may perpetuate harassment, violence, and exclusion for disabled trans students (Devís-Devís, et al., 2018; Hargie et al., 2017; Haegele & Sutherland, 2015). In physical education, this may be a result of students' non-normative bodies in a space that prioritizes a specific, cisgendered performance or appearance (Block, 2014). Fagrell and colleagues (2012) explained this phenomenon best when they said that "there is no other school subject in which the body is as exposed as in physical education" (p. 101). Similarly, extracurricular activity participation may rely on cisgendered, normative appearances or performances to be successful (e.g., sport), or be entirely inaccessible for disabled trans students because of their disability, their gender identity, or a combination of the two (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015). For example, Kahn and Lindstrom (2015) described situations in which sexual and gender minority disabled students were unable to access extracurricular clubs such as the Gay-Straight Alliance because of a conservative school political culture that refused

¹ Person-first language (e.g., students with disabilities) is generally the accepted representation of disability in academic writing in the United States (Peers et al., 2014). However, this study uses a social-relational model of disability to describe how both society and impairment can *disable* participants, thus terms such as *disabled student* are used throughout.

to allow students to engage in pro-LGBTQ activities or because of barriers resulting from students' disabilities.

Background and Setting

Physical education is an academic subject characterized by motor skill development and the knowledge and behaviors necessary to live a healthy, physically active lifestyle (SHAPE America, 2015). Further, physical education purports to teach students about fitness, sportsmanship, and positive mental-health and self-worth related concepts (SHAPE America, 2015). However, despite the expectations and standards provided and ascribed by SHAPE America, physical education programs lack uniformity as districts are put in charge of their own curriculum development (Oh & Graber, 2017). Teachers may lack the training necessary to implement standards-based curricula (Casey, 2014), or face decreasing budgets and increasing class sizes that limit their ability to experiment with curricula (Ennis, 2014). Often, this results in multiactivity, traditional team sport-based curricula that are familiar to teacher's own experiences and privilege highly skilled students (Ennis, 2014).

While physical education is a required academic aspect of school, extracurricular activities are "an integral part of high school for many students" (Stearns & Glennie, 2010, p. 296). Extracurricular activities are "activities occurring outside of the school hours [...] and in the presence of an adult coach, teacher, or mentor" (Luthar et al., 2006, p. 585) and may include activity categories such as sports, arts, or community programs (Oberle et al., 2019). Research suggests that extracurricular activity participation may positively influence youth development from early adolescence (Oberle et al., 2019) through older adolescence (Deutsch et al., 2017). Research suggests that students participate in sports-based extracurricular at significantly higher rates than other, non-athletic activities (Thouin et al., 2020; Vandell et al., 2020). As a result, the

sports-based literature was prioritized in understanding extracurricular activity participation when framing this study.

The current construction of sports in school likely privileges highly skilled athletes who are able to make competitive rosters (SHAPE, 2013b). Data from the 2006 School Health Policies and Practices Study (SHPPS) suggested that schools overwhelmingly chose to offer interscholastic sports over intramural or club-type sports (Lee et al., 2007). The most recent iteration of the SHPSS omits questions about intramural and interscholastic offerings, instead reporting recommended versus required before- and after-school activity programming (CDC, 2017). When extracted, research indicates that intramural sports may be more welcoming opportunities for physical activity engagement as membership is typically open to all students regardless of ability, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, or other factors that may restrict participation in interscholastic sports (Edwards et al., 2014; Wechsler et al., 2000). Further, intramural sport opportunities may improve skill acquisition (Bocarro et al., 2008), increase engagement and participation in more vigorous activities (Fuller et al., 2011), and result in participation in a higher number of sports (Edwards et al., 2011; Kanters et al., 2013).

Counter to the open enrollment of intramural sport opportunities, interscholastic sports are more likely to implement cut policies that limit participation and engagement to the most highly skilled athletes at a particular school (SHAPE, 2013b). Interscholastic sports are typically sex-segregated, and it is suggested that male students participate at higher rates than females (SHAPE, 2013b). Available reports on sport participation among youth indicated that only 38% of children aged 6-12 participated in sports in 2018, a 7% decrease from 10 years earlier (The Aspen Institute, 2019). Research suggests that children quit regular sport participation by 10.5 years of age after participating for approximately three years (The Aspen Institute, 2019). Higher

participation disparities may exist within marginalized groups of participants. Specifically, disabled students likely have less opportunities to engage in sport than their nondisabled peers and lesbian, gay and bisexual students likely participate at lower rates than their heterosexual peers, trans students were absent from the reporting (National Physical Activity Plan [NPAP], 2018).

While physical education and sport may “increase students’ overall physical activity and health” (CDC, 2019a, p. 2), available data and literature suggests that opportunities are not equitable for all students as these settings may privilege masculinity and ideal body images that exclude students with non-normative bodies. Specifically, disabled and trans students may face harassment, bullying, violence, or exclusion in physical education and sport settings because of their body’s incongruence with the privileged values of these spaces (Caudwell, 2014; Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2005; Hargie et al., 2017). For example, in a study of disabled youth participating in a school team sport (boccia), Fitzgerald (2005) argued that their experiences in sport were diminished and devalued because their sport did not hold the same status or standing in school as others populated by their nondisabled peers. Additionally, these feelings of being devalued may have carried over to physical education where masculinity permeated the experience, resulting in hyper-competitive, aggressive behaviors and actions that limited disabled students’ willingness and opportunities to participate (Fitzgerald, 2005). Trans students often face similar experiences in school as hegemonic masculinity and the privileged cis male body in physical education may be established and reinforced by teachers (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). The power dynamic created when masculinity is upheld and perpetuated may create feelings of alienation or discomfort in activities that were otherwise gender-congruent and affirming for trans students (Hargie et al., 2017).

Physical education and extracurricular activities may draw attention to the potentially non-normative bodies and experiences of disabled and trans youth. Researchers have highlighted commonalities in trans and disabilities studies and the concern with the body and its' existence and performance outside of societal and cultural norms (Mog & Swarr, 2008). These commonalities are obvious when examining common structures, such as bathrooms, that may negatively impact the livelihoods of trans and disabled folks. Often, bathrooms are segregated by sex, inaccessible for disabled individuals, or a combination of the two, leaving trans and disabled individuals to create their own solutions, or not engage with public spaces (Slater et al., 2018). Physical education and sport offer another context in which these commonalities may be realized and discussed.

The commonalities and similar experiences of trans and disabled individuals highlight the need to examine experiences of those who identify as both disabled and trans. Research suggests that disabled trans individuals may face instances of being multiply marginalized as members of two oppressed communities (Miller, 2018). As a result, this two-manuscript format dissertation used an intersectional approach to understanding the experiences of disabled trans students in physical education and extracurricular activities. Intersectionality, a term coined by Crenshaw (1989), was used to explore the multidimensionality of people's experiences because the approach "reflects the reality of our lives" (Shields, 2008, p. 304) as individuals positioned at the intersection of multiple identities, in which power relations build upon each other to impact our social worlds (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Often, research examines and privileges the viewpoints of specific members of a group, primarily those who hold the most power or social capital (Wilson et al., 2019). For example, Crenshaw (1989) discussed that when considering racial discrimination of Black employees, the experiences of Black men were privileged, and when

considering sex discrimination of female employees, White female employees were privileged. Black women were neither the concern of race nor sex. Looking at these issues through an intersectional lens allows the researcher to privilege or center the research questions around the experiences of participants whose voices are often silenced within singular, mutually exclusive categories. Thus, intersectionality provides a framework for examining how complex, multidimensional categories and conceptualizations of identity are interrelated and shape one another and experience (Collins & Bilge, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Disabled youth and trans youth face a number of potential obstacles in physical education and extracurricular activities. Largely, research in this area continues to construct experiences in a way that focuses on one specific dimension of a student's identity, disability-focused or trans-focused. Flintoff and colleagues (2008) discussed the singularity of understanding around the experiences of disabled students and issues this approach can have on understanding the lives of disabled students. To our knowledge, only a handful of studies have examined the intersectional experiences of disabled trans individuals in school or extracurricular activities. Kahn and Lindstrom (2015), for example, found that when provided with affirming opportunities and safe spaces, disabled trans students may openly explore and discuss their identities. Others have called for the inclusion of queer and trans disabled students within a variety of extracurricular activities at the collegiate level (Harley et al., 2002) and highlighted how disabled trans students may be excluded in LGBTQ communities because of their trans or disabled identities (Mizock et al., 2013). Recent literature, in other contexts, has explored the intersection of disability and trans identities and the multiple marginalization that may exist for members of both communities (Miller, 2018; Rodríguez-Roldán, 2020). For example, Baril (2016) highlighted the pathologized

histories of disability and trans studies and the desire of medicine to change or fix trans and disabled bodies. Adding to this, Rodríguez-Roldán (2020) retold the story of Kayden, an autistic trans man in crisis who was fatally shot by the police during a wellness check, whose own doctors' pathologization of his disability resulted in withholding the gender-affirming care that ultimately cost him his life. While physical education and extracurricular activities may not have identity-related life or death implications, multiple marginalization may occur in these settings if focus is given to an individual's disability status or trans identity rather than considering the implications of the two and how it impacts students' experiences. Due to the status of physical education and extracurricular activities as contexts often focused on the display and performance of the body, it is wholly important to develop understandings of the intersectional identities of disabled trans individuals.

Purpose Statements

This dissertation is presented in a multiple-article format. As a result, each study has its own purpose and research design. However, both studies utilized an intersectional approach to understanding participants' experiences. The first study investigated the experiences of disabled trans individuals in PE. The purpose of this second study was to explore and understand the extracurricular activity participation experiences of an autistic disabled trans student and their social network.

Research Questions

Research questions for Study One included:

1. What experiences did disabled trans individuals have in physical education?
2. What feelings do disabled trans individuals have about their experiences in physical education?

3. What meaning do disabled trans individuals place on experiences with their teachers, peers, and the curriculum in physical education?

Research questions for Study Two included:

1. How does an autistic disabled trans individual make sense of their school-based extracurricular activity participation and participation decisions?
2. How did an autistic disabled trans individual experience extracurricular activities?
3. How did an autistic disabled trans individuals' social network experience the individuals' participation in extracurricular activities?

Delimitations

The following were delimitations to both studies:

1. Criteria for inclusion was purposefully limited to include only those 18 years or older, who self-identified as disabled and trans, and previously attended a public K-12 institution in the United States.
2. Only individuals fluent in English were able to participate in this study.
3. Participants were recruited through social media and snowball sampling, which may have limited the sample to those who are active on social media.

The following was a delimitation specifically for Study Two:

1. Members of the participants' social network were asked to participate in this study. Therefore, participation was limited to one disabled trans participant who participated in study one and four close contacts who were willing to participate.

Limitations

The following were limitations of these studies:

1. While a retrospective approach to data collection was deliberately undertaken, it may have limited the amount of information or experiences participants are able to recall. Further, it may have resulted in participants only recalling critical instances that left a lasting memory, resulting in responses that skewed positively or negatively depending on the experience.
2. Both studies utilized a variety of data collection methods for the individual interviews to ensure accessibility for participants, which may have limited participants' willingness to share in-depth information or detail about their experiences or resulted in inconsistent responses among participants.
3. Through reflexivity, the author revealed that his conceptualization and creation of this dissertation was limited in scope as he tried to isolate gender identity from sexuality, which likely limited the literature reviewed and design of the study.

Definition of Terms

Disability: “A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment” (ADA, 1990). Within a social relational model of disability, disability is conceptualized to understand how societal disablement and impairment may operate simultaneously (Haslett & Smith, 2020; Martin, 2013).

Extracurricular Activities: “Activities occurring outside of the school hours [...] and in the presence of an adult coach, teacher, or mentor” (Luthar et al., 2006, p. 585), which may include activity categories such as sports, arts, or community programs (Oberle et al., 2019)

Gender (or Gender Identity): “Person’s internal, deeply held sense of their gender” that is typically man or woman but may be outside of the binary altogether (GLAAD, 2016, p. 10).

Gender Expression: “External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics” (GLAAD, 2016, p. 10).

Intersectionality: The examination of the role that membership in multiple identities such as race, gender identity, class, disability, and/or sexual orientation have on the experience of individuals (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991).

Interscholastic Sports: Organized, competitive sport opportunities in which competition occurs between schools (CDC, 2019a).

Intramural Sports: “Team and dual/individual activities, tournaments, meets and/or special events that are limited to participants and teams from within a school or institutional setting” (SHAPE, 2013b, p. 3).

Physical Activity: “Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure” (CDC, 2019a, p. 2).

Physical Education: “Academic subject that provides a planned, sequential, K-12 standards-based program of curricula and instruction” (SHAPE America, 2015, p. 3)

Sex: The male or female classification typically assigned at birth. Sex is a “combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics” (GLAAD, 2016, p. 10).

Social Network: A group of individuals involving a disabled individual and “their parents, peers, and teachers” that “interact dynamically and influence one another” (Kozub et al., 2020, p. 410).

Sport: Umbrella term used to describe school-based sport experiences, which incorporates intramural and interscholastic sports.

Transgender: “Umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth” (GLAAD, 2016, p. 10).

Trans: Used as shorthand for the term transgender and may be more inclusive of individuals who are genderqueer and identify outside of or beyond the binary model (GLAAD, 2016; Jones, 2018).

Significance of the Study

The findings of the first study add to the limited knowledge base of disabled trans students experiences in physical education. Further, the study adds to the dearth of literature that has examined the intersectional experiences of disabled trans students in physical education. These findings may help facilitate the conversation about the need to explore the intersectional nature of student’s experiences rather than treating students as monolithic, especially given the complexity and unstable, or changing, needs of disabled trans students in physical education. Perhaps the most important takeaway from this study is the incongruence that may exist between the ascribed benefits of physical education participation and students’ lived experiences that highlight the potential for ableism. Study two, to our knowledge, was the first to specifically center extracurricular activity experiences of an autistic disabled trans individual, particularly with the addition of exploring social network experiences as well. The results of this study support literature that suggests identity development may be facilitated by activities and opportunities that are safe and affirming. Further, the results highlight the incompatibility of participant and stakeholder perceptions of socialization, which should continue to be discussed and reviewed with more opportunity for participant voice to guide the literature.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to the research questions and inquiry outlined. Additionally, this chapter will introduce the framework that will be used to conduct said inquiry. First, the chapter provides insights of disabled and trans students experiences in schools as well as the conceptualization of language surrounding disability and trans identities. Next, the contexts of physical education and extracurricular activities in the United States are explored to develop an understanding of the setting and phenomena of interest. Following this outline, the experiences of trans and disabled youth in physical education and extracurricular activities are explored to provide an in-depth view of the affirming and positive experiences in physical education and extracurricular activity settings as well as the harassment, violence, bullying, and exclusion trans and disabled students are subjected to in these spaces. Finally, the chapter ends with an introduction to intersectionality and its value as a framework for studying disabled trans students experiences in physical education and extracurricular activity.

School Experiences of Disabled and Trans Youth

While it is important not to coalesce the experiences of trans and disabled youth in schools, some similarities and commonalities may be seen. Although this study will examine the experience of disabled trans individuals in physical education and extracurricular activity, it is important to develop an understanding of the school-based experiences of students from each identity separately. This section, and sections that follow later in this chapter, seek to provide context and understanding of the experiences of trans youth and disabled youth before arguing for an examination of the similarities and multiple marginalization disabled trans youth may face.

School Experiences of Disabled Youth

School experiences of disabled youth have been molded by ever-changing educational policies and social acceptance. In the United States, disabled students were originally excluded from public schools, rejected by society, and thought to have better lives if they were placed in institutions (Block et al., 2020). States, districts, and courts went as far as to uphold rules that prevented disabled students from attending public schools (Yell et al., 1998). The passage of Public Law 94-142, better known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, provided the first requirement for disabled students to receive a free and appropriate public education (Block et al., 2020). This law was later reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 and, again, as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 (Block et al., 2020; Yell et al., 1998). In its current iteration, the law includes requirements for (a) a free and appropriate public education for disabled students, (b) appropriate evaluation and identification process used to determine disability status, (c) parent participation and agency including procedural safeguards such as due process to ensure agreement regarding student placement and services, (d) an individualized education plan (IEP) document designed to meet each individual student's educational needs, and (e) placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible with nondisabled peers (Block et al., 2020; IDEA, 2004; Mead & Paige, 2008). While the law provides several additional, nuanced provisions and protections, the above listed are larger points of interest outlined in IDEA. However, as Zirkel (2019) noted, "the world of special education law is fluid and fascinating" (p. 264).

In addition to IDEA, disabled students were (and continue to be) protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as well as Titles II and III of the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (Block et al., 2020; Yell et al., 1998; Zirkel, 2019). Section 504 was intended to “prohibit discrimination against a person with a disability by any agency receiving federal funds” (Yell et al., 1998, p. 224). In education, this often manifests as accommodations spanning preschool through postsecondary education, and a variety of settings including private and parochial schools (Dragoo & Cole, 2019). In a similar vein, the ADA provides broad, non-discrimination protections for disabled individuals and a broad definition of disability (Dragoo & Cole, 2019).

Approximately 7.1 million students aged 3-21 received special education services under IDEA in the 2018-2019 school year, which accounted for 14% of total public-school enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2020). Students labeled as having a specific learning disability comprised 33% of the total number of students receiving services under IDEA (NCES, 2020). Data available for students aged 6-21 illustrated that 18% of male students and 10% of female students received special education services under IDEA, and 64% of students receiving services spent at least 80 percent of their time in general education classes (NCES, 2020). In this study, we refer to general class placement as integrated education, where students with and without disabilities are educated together (Haegele, 2019). While perhaps the term “inclusion” is more commonly used in educational contexts, conversations about the meaning of inclusion being less of a placement and more of a philosophy may make it an inappropriate label for all integrated contexts. While data regarding students receiving services under Section 504 is less readily available, data from the 2015-2016 school year shows that 1.1 million students, or 2% of the total student population at that time, received services under Section 504 (OCR, 2018). Of the students receiving services under Section 504, 51% were male and 49% were female (OCR, 2018). However, it is important to note that these numbers refer to students who have

official diagnoses and there are likely many more who are undiagnosed or living with invisible disabilities (Kattari et al., 2018).

The data available from the 2015-2016 school year paints a negative image of the treatment of disabled students in schools. Despite accounting for 12% of total student enrollment, which included students receiving services under both IDEA and Section 504, disabled students accounted for 71% of students put in restraints, 66% of students receiving seclusive practices and treatment, and 26% and 24% of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, respectively (OCR, 2018). Furthermore, despite the fact that a majority of disabled students spend at least 80% of their time in general education classes (NCES, 2020), research suggests that disabled students may prefer to self-exclude and interact with others in the disability community rather than their nondisabled peers (Salmon, 2013). Or, in more extreme cases, families may decide to move schools, districts, or states in search of more accepting and integrative school environments for their disabled student (Kluth et al., 2007).

Often, disabled students are the victims and targets of harassment and bullying in schools (OCR, 2018; Rose et al., 2011, 2015). However, victimization rates vary by disability category and setting with students with specific learning disabilities or autistic students facing higher rates of victimization in integrated settings while students with emotional and behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities being victimized more often in restrictive, or segregated, settings (Rose et al., 2015). Although disabled students may be subjected to higher rates of bullying and harassment, some researchers have found positive responses from disabled students regarding their school experiences. Shogren et al. (2015) suggest that disabled students preferred receiving special education services in integrated settings so that they would have the same opportunities as their nondisabled peers and enjoy the challenge of learning the same material. While these

findings imply that these experiences were positive on the surface, one may draw conclusions that students were fearful of missing out or not getting the same opportunities as their nondisabled peers. Further, despite being framed in a positive light, the findings also suggest that disabled students would like more support in developing friendships and relationships with their nondisabled peers (Shogren et al., 2015).

Shogren and colleagues (2015) used the voices of students with and without disabilities in their findings, a practice not found in a vast majority of the available disability, or inclusion, related research in schools that typically gives privilege to the voice of stakeholders: teachers, peers, support staff, and/or parents (Amor et al., 2018; Koller et al., 2018; Roberts & Simpson, 2016). Despite the well intentions of stakeholders, research should examine the school experiences from the perspectives of disabled students because, as Curtin and Clarke (2005) explained, disabled students do not make up one homogenous group, rather they are “individuals that have their own diverse views and opinions” (p. 211). In reviewing physical education literature about the experiences of disabled students, Coates and Vickerman (2008) highlighted that “it is not possible for teachers to personalize [physical education] programs without knowledge of the child’s needs and abilities, and it is the children themselves who know these needs and abilities better than anyone else” (p. 175). This same principle should apply in all other facets of disabled students’ school days.

Defining Disability

Defining disability and determining the model of which to discuss disability are often debated within disability studies. In education, disability is typically viewed and understood through the special education services students receive. Under IDEA (2004), a disabled student is described as such if they have been evaluated and meet the criteria for a specific disability

category and require special education and related services. According to 34 CFR § 300.8(a)(1), IDEA disability categories include: (a) intellectual disabilities, (b) hearing impairments (not including deafness), (c) deafness, (d) speech or language impairments, (e) visual impairments (including blindness), (f) serious emotional disturbance, (g) orthopedic impairment, (h) autism, (i) traumatic brain injury, (j) other health impairments, (k) specific learning disability, (l) deaf-blindness, (m) or multiple disabilities. Further, a child aged 3-9 may qualify for special education services under the category of *developmental delay*. The definition of disability under Section 504 and the ADA includes persons who have “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment” (ADA, 1990, n.p.). Major life activities may include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, work, and/or the operation of a major bodily function such as functions of the immune system, cell growth, digestion, and bowel movements (ADA, 1990). While someone who qualifies as having a disability under IDEA is likely to be covered under Section 504 and ADA, the same may not be true in reverse (Dragoo & Cole, 2019).

Much like the broad and varying definitions of disability, researchers and the disability community have multiple ways of conceiving and understanding disability (Haegele & Hodge, 2016; Haslett & Smith, 2020). Notably, the medical model, United Kingdom social model (or, simply, social model), and social relational model (SRM) are some options used and discussed in literature. Historically, the medical model of disability has dominated research and viewed disability as a deficit that needs to be corrected and fixed through medicine or intervention without taking into consideration the values or desires of the person with the disability (Haegele

& Hodge, 2016). In U.S. education, this most often results in disabled students only receiving special education services, and a right to a free and public education, if they “fit” into one of the categories of disability under IDEA (or general definition under Section 504), which rely on medicalized conceptualizations of disability (Triano, 2000). When researchers fail to disclose what model of disability influences their work, it is often assumed that the medical model drives the research (Haslett & Smith, 2020).

The social model posits that society is capable of and does restrict, or disable, people with impairments (Goodley, 2001). While the social model has proven beneficial and useful in changing the politics surrounding disability, it also oversimplifies disability and the influence of impairment on individuals’ lives (Haegele & Hodge, 2016; Haslett & Smith, 2020; Shakespeare, 2017). Shakespeare (2017) explained that the social model does not ask “whether disabled people are oppressed in a particular situation, but only the extent to which they are oppressed” (p. 200), and that different impairments, or even individuals with the same impairment, require different responses and solutions.

Finally, the SRM includes aspects of both the medical and social models of disability discourse in that both disablement and impairment are taken into consideration and may operate simultaneously (Haslett & Smith, 2020; Martin, 2013). An example of the SRM is provided by Martin (2013) as he explained that restrictions for physical activity may be the result of social issues such as discrimination and/or impairment such as lack of sight. The SRM may be useful to researchers for a number of reasons, some of which include developing an understanding of disability at multiple levels (individual, social, cultural, and political), exploring disability as an experience of socialized impairment, or thinking differently about disability (Haslett & Smith, 2020).

This study adopted an SRM of disability to develop an understanding of how disability impacts participation in physical education and extracurricular activities. Specifically, this model of disability may provide insights as to how individuals are restricted by curriculum, physical education teachers, or peers as well as the limitations and restrictions imposed by their impairment. In line with the social model of disability and the SRM (Peers et al., 2014), these studies used the term *disabled* rather than *with a disability* when referring to participants or refer specifically to. The term *disabled* more accurately describes society's role in disabling someone (Peers et al., 2014). However, while this term is used throughout the literature review and other sections of this document, participant self-identification ultimately determined how chapters four and five were written. Allowing participants the opportunity to self-identify and the use of phrases such as *person who identifies as...* may be more representative and appreciative of individuals' embodied life experiences and the intersectional nature of their identities as trans and disabled (Peers et al., 2014).

School Experiences of Trans Youth

Transgender is an “umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth” (GLAAD, 2016, p. 10). Further, the term *trans* is used as shorthand and may be more inclusive of individuals who are genderqueer and identify outside of or beyond the binary model (GLAAD, 2016; Jones, 2018). As a result, the term *trans student*, or a similarly constructed term, is used throughout this document. Like the above-described phrase of *person who identifies as...*, individual identity is used in later chapters to describe study participants.

Approximately 1.4 million (0.6%) adults in the United States identify as trans (Flores et al., 2016). While it is unknown how many trans youth are in the United States, research suggests

that approximately 1.8% of high school students identify as trans (Johns et al., 2019). However, these numbers are likely inaccurate due to underreported or misreported findings as a result of students not disclosing their identity (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). Likely, the most representative survey sample of trans individuals is the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, which included the largest sample of trans participants at 27,715 (James et al., 2016).

Surveys examining school experiences of trans youth suggest that harassment, violence, and discrimination are rampant (Day et al., 2018; Grant et al, 2011; James et al., 2016; Johns et al., 2019). For example, James and colleagues (2016) reported that 77% of students who were out (open about trans identity) or perceived as trans faced some sort of mistreatment in school, and students were verbally harassed (54%), physically attacked (24%), and/or sexually assaulted (13%) based on their identity. As a result of their mistreatment in school, 17% of participants left school (James et al., 2016). The experiences of participants of the 2015 survey were similar to those of students who participated in the 2017 study conducted by Johns and colleagues (2019) who found that 27% of trans high school students felt unsafe going to or leaving school while 35% reported being bullied in school. Trans students had reportedly higher rates of truancy, absenteeism, and negative perceptions of the school climate than their cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018). Alarming, 35% of high school trans participants indicated that they had attempted suicide (Johns et al., 2019).

While surveys help provide overview of the climate and experience of trans youth in schools, interview-based qualitative studies conducted with youth may be more useful in revealing the severity and context of some of the violence described (Grossman et al., 2009; Wyss, 2004). Wyss (2004) interviewed trans high schoolers and indicated that students had experienced severe physical and sexual violence including being burned, sexually grabbed, and

constant threats of harm if seen in public spaces alone. Trans youth who were believed to be violating heteronormative or cisnormative expectations may be verbally assaulted in school spaces and face the potential of being physically assaulted if they enter unsafe spaces such as bathrooms and locker rooms (Grossman et al., 2009). One teen reported to researchers that she was assaulted on her way home from school because of her trans identity and indicated that she attempted suicide because she would rather not be alive than be tormented and assaulted (Grossman et al., 2009).

Trans students are often confronted with cisnormativity in schools. These experiences can be from peers, as highlighted above, teachers and the structure of the building, or facilities within the building. Teachers may reproduce and promote cisnormative behaviors as early as elementary school through gender-segregated line formations or commenting on and dictating what type of play students should engage in based on their sex (Shelton & Lester, 2018). School buildings and structures often present as a gendered space with two options, boy or girl, which may not be compatible to the identity of all trans youth (Johnson et al., 2014), or may not offer opportunities for youth to seek out gender-affirming opportunities, particularly in restrooms or locker rooms (Beese & Martin, 2018; Herrick & Duncan, 2020; Ingrey, 2018). McBride (2020) implied that negative school experiences may act as cisnormative macroaggressions that erase, silence, and paint trans youth as aberrations, and microaggressions that impact emotional well-being and connectedness.

Despite the negative findings reported above, studies show that when trans students have access to LGBTQ+ related resources and opportunities to discuss LGBTQ+ issues, they may be more likely to feel engaged and connected to their school community (Greytak et al., 2009). However, it is important to note that while access to resources and trans-inclusive curricula

might be affirming, research indicates that the majority of trans youth do not have access to these types of materials (Greytak et al., 2009; McBride, 2020). Finally, while school environments may promote cisnormativity, they may also provide a space for trans youth to engage with peers in validating and affirming ways (Shelton & Lester, 2018).

Physical Education in the United States

Physical education in the United States is defined as an “academic subject that provides a planned, sequential, K-12 standards-based program of curricula and instruction” with the purpose of developing “motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for healthy, active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence” for students (SHAPE America, 2015, p. 3). In an attempt to parallel other academic subjects, SHAPE America (2014) describes physical education as the pursuit of physical literacy, a term that has accrued international appeal while being operationally defined in a variety of ways (Dudley et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2017). Within the context of U.S. physical education, physically literate individuals acquire necessary skills for physical activity participation, understand the costs and benefits of participation in a variety of physical activities, and are physically fit, value, and participate regularly in physical activity (SHAPE America, 2013a).

Standards and Curriculum

In order to reach physical literacy, students in physical education are expected to meet grade-level outcomes associated with the five national standards. The national standards for physical education include: 1) motor skill and movement pattern competency, 2) knowledge of movement and performance concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics, 3) knowledge and skills necessary to attain and maintain health-enhancing activity and fitness levels, 4) respect for self and others through demonstrated responsible behavior, and 5) a value of physical activity for a

variety of health-promoting outcomes (SHAPE America, 2013a). All five national standards are represented from elementary through high school in various capacities and provide flexibility in regard to the curriculum and how outcomes are met.

Curriculum in the U.S. may vary from district to district or school to school within the same district. This variance has resulted in a call for curriculum standardization or, to a lesser extent, alignment between program goals, instructional practices, and student assessments from some scholars (Oh & Graber, 2017). Despite this call for uniformity, a study of physical education teacher education professors found that most oppose the idea of a national curriculum because of the rigidity and erasure of diverse sociocultural and geographical needs (Oh & Graber, 2019). In lieu of a national curriculum, the CDC (2019b) published the *Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool* (PECAT) to “help school districts and schools conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of physical education curricula for K-12 students” (p. 1). However, data from the 2016 SHPPS indicated that only 12.5%, 14.5%, and 11.8% of elementary, middle school, and high school programs had ever used the PECAT to assess their physical education curricula, respectively (CDC, 2017). Further, only 15% of districts indicated that they provided or offered funding to teachers to use the PECAT in order to assess their physical education curricula (CDC, 2017).

Not only do districts rarely assess their physical education curricula, but they may also allow teachers to implement a multiactivity, team-sport curriculum that typically favors skillful students and the teacher’s own activity preferences (Ennis, 2014). Researchers have advocated for a shift to standards-based curriculum that is designed with the end goals and outcomes in mind and delivered through a variety of alternative instructional models rather than traditional, direct instruction. (Ennis, 2014; Lund & Tannehill, 2015; Metzler, 2017). Despite the call for

standards- and models-based instruction, teacher training and ever-changing classroom environments may impact their implementation (Casey, 2014; Ennis, 2014). For example, Casey (2014) suggested that teachers may lack the necessary experience, or the process may be too laborious, to implement new models-based instruction. Similarly, Ennis (2014) reported that U.S. schools often mirror and mimic team sport facilities and may use increasing class sizes and decreasing budgets as the rationale for multiactivity, team-sport based curricula.

Extracurricular Activity in the United States

While physical education is a required academic aspect of school, extracurricular activities are “an integral part of high school for many students” (Stearns & Glennie, 2010, p. 296). Extracurricular activities are “activities occurring outside of the school hours [...] and in the presence of an adult coach, teacher, or mentor” (Luthar et al., 2006, p. 585) and may include activity categories such as sports, arts, or community programs (Oberle et al., 2019). Research suggests that extracurricular activity (EA) participation may positively influence youth development from early adolescence (Oberle et al., 2019) through older adolescence (Deutsch et al., 2017). According to Deutsch and colleagues (2017), early literature and initiatives were centered around reducing at-risk behavior and finding ways to engage youth, which led to a greater push for extracurricular activity expansion in schools. More recently, findings have promulgated that extracurricular activity participation may lead to better academic performance (Furda & Shuleski, 2019; Mahoney et al, 2005; Stearns & Glennie, 2010), however others have cautioned that while there may be associations, causal effects likely cannot be traced between the two (Shulruf et al., 2008). Additionally, researchers have reported that positive social experiences and increased mental health status (Oberle et al., 2019), decreased instances of bullying and physical violence (Matjasko et al., 2019), skill acquisition and long-term

participation for activity-based opportunities (Boccarro et al., 2008), and a reduction in various forms of misconduct (Vandell et al., 2020) may be important and relevant outcomes of extracurricular activity participation. While much of the research has focused on the potential positive outcomes of extracurricular activity participation, others have expressed concern that programs and opportunities may not reach or expand to all youth in schools (Gilman et al., 2004). Despite the array of potential extracurricular opportunities, research suggests that students participate in sports-based extracurricular activities at significantly higher rates than other, non-athletic activities (Thouin et al., 2020; Vandell et al., 2020). As a result, the sports-based literature was prioritized in understanding extracurricular activity participation when framing this study. Specifically, intramural and interscholastic sport were the primary foci for this study.

Intramural Sports

The term intramural sport refers to “team and dual/individual activities, tournaments, meets and/or special events that are limited to participants and teams from within a school or institutional setting” (SHAPE, 2013b, p. 3). Intramural sports may be competitive and/or non-competitive (Wechsler et al., 2000). Intramural sports can be offered as before- and/or after-school programs. However, data from the SHPPS indicates that school districts are more likely to recommend or require after school physical activity opportunities (CDC, 2017).

Intramural sports have been touted as a more welcoming physical activity option than interscholastic sports because they can provide membership to all interested students regardless of ability, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, or other potentially limiting descriptors (Edwards et al., 2014; Wechsler et al., 2000). In addition, intramural sports may offer students more autonomy in the decision-making process and an unlimited list of sport and physical activity options (Edwards et al., 2011). Although sports opportunities are infinite, a study examining

middle school intramural sport opportunities suggested that team sports are the most prevalent opportunities available (Edwards et al., 2011).

While the research available on K-12 intramural opportunities is limited, the available findings suggest that the opportunities may have positive physical activity related outcomes. Bocarro and colleagues (2008) found that intramural sports opportunities may result in greater skill acquisition and long-term participation. Fuller and colleagues (2011) suggested that students who had access to intramural sports were more engaged and participated in more vigorous activities than students with less access. Similarly, research comparing middle schools with intramural programs versus middle schools with interscholastic programs suggest that students who have access to intramural sports programs may participate in a higher number of sports as those with access to interscholastic sports program (Edwards et al., 2011; Kanters et al., 2013). Finally, Kanters and colleagues (2008) found that a positive association between participation in intramural sports and intentions for future participation may exist.

Despite the reach and potential positive outcomes of intramural sports, schools are less likely to implement intramurals than interscholastic sports (Edwards et al., 2011; Koplan et al., 2005; Wechsler et al., 2000). Available data from the 2006 SHPPS indicated that 48.5% of middle schools and 44.8% of high schools offered intramural sports and/or physical activity clubs in comparison to 77.0% and 91.3% of middle and high schools, respectively, offering interscholastic sports (Lee et al., 2007). However, data from the most recent SHPPS omits any mention of intramural or interscholastic participation (CDC, 2017). Rather, the data includes information about the requirements or recommendations for before and after school physical activity programming, and the requirements of safety equipment during sport participation (CDC, 2017). The results of an undisclosed survey conducted by SHAPE America (2013b)

reported that 69% of responding schools offered physical activity clubs and/or intramural sports while 89% of responding high schools offered interscholastic sports. While the available data provides a limited and inconsistent view of the changes in intramural sport availability over time, inferences can be made from the omission of intramural/interscholastic sport-based questions and the limited number of recent publications focused on intramural sport participation that schools likely favor interscholastic sport participation.

Interscholastic Sports

Interscholastic sports are organized, competitive sport opportunities in which competition occurs between schools (CDC, 2019a). Interscholastic sports are often simply referred to as school sports. Typically, interscholastic sports are offered at the middle school and high school levels with the most available opportunities occurring at the high school level (Bassett et al., 2015; SHAPE America, 2013b). Interscholastic sports are most often sex-segregated with reports that male students participate in sports more frequently than female students (SHAPE America, 2013b).

A report by the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) Alliance (2018) indicated that 60% of male and 49% of female students participated in high school sports. A trend report of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicated that there has been no change from 1991 to 2017 in the percentage of youth participating in at least one sport (CDC, 2018). Further, a review by Bassett and colleagues (2015) reveals that male student participation in high school sports has remained around 50% from 1970-2012 while female student participation saw a significant increase in the early 1970s with the passing of Title IX but has since stabilized. Of the interscholastic sports available to high school students, male students participate most frequently in football, outdoor

track and field, basketball, baseball, and soccer while female students participate in outdoor track and field, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and fast pitch softball (NPAP, 2018).

Despite the number of male and female students engaged in high school sports, a report by the Aspen Institute (2019) found that only 38% of children aged 6-12 regularly participated in team or individual sports in 2018, which had decreased from 45% in 2008. The average age children quit regular sport participation was estimated to be 10.5 years of age while the average length of participation was only three years (The Aspen Institute, 2019). Participation varied by family household income levels as only 22% of children from homes with a household income of \$25,000 or less regularly participated in sports compared to 43% of children from homes with a household income of \$100,000 or greater (The Aspen Institute, 2019). Despite the lower overall numbers, sex-based differences remained consistent with high school participation as it was reported that males aged 6-12 participated more frequently than females (The Aspen Institute, 2019).

While sex and socioeconomic status are the two most prevalent demographics of sport participation reporting, several reports briefly mentioned disabled students as well as lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Only 39% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students participated in sports compared to 58% of their heterosexual peers (NPAP, 2018). Notably absent from these results are students who identify as trans. However, without asking the question directly, it is difficult to determine whether trans students chose not to participate, chose not to disclose their gender identity, and/or were calculated in the reported findings of male and female student participation as their sex assigned at birth. As is, the numbers are likely inaccurate and underreported as participants may have opted to protect their identity rather than outing themselves.

Like lesbian, gay, and bisexual students, disabled students are less likely to participate in sports than their nondisabled peers. Findings show that disabled students “do not participate in sport to the same extent as their peers without disabilities, nor do they have equal opportunities to participate” (NPAP, 2018, p. 22). A survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS, 2019) found that only 14 states offered adapted sport opportunities for disabled male students and 15 states offered adapted sport opportunities for disabled female students. Adapted sport offerings included traditional team sports such as basketball, football, soccer, softball, and volleyball as well as specific, adapted sports like corn toss, floor hockey, and handball (NFHS, 2019). In addition to adapted sports, 10 states offered one or more Unified Sport program to both male and female students (NFHS, 2019). According to the Special Olympics (2012), Unified Sports are “an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competition” (p. 1). Unified Sports are offered based on ability and typically avoid sex-segregation constraints.

Experiences of Disabled and Trans Youth in Physical Education and Extracurricular Activity

The literature discussed to this point provides a snapshot of the limited opportunities for disabled and trans youth, but it does not fully encapsulate physical education and extracurricular activity experiences. The purposes of this two-part study are to understand the experiences of disabled trans adults in physical education and extracurricular activities. As a result of this purpose, focus is placed on the participants’ perspective. This approach is the most appropriate as disabled (and trans) individuals are the best source of information to speak to their lives and

experiences (Fitzgerald & Stride, 2012), and are likely to describe their experiences differently than other stakeholders (Leo & Mourton, 2020). More specifically, individuals with first-hand accounts and experiences are likely to interpret their experiences and interactions with others differently than adults or other observers and second-hand accounts (Leo & Mourton, 2020). As a result, the information included in this review of literature is concerned with experiences from the perspectives of disabled youth and trans youth in physical education and extracurricular activities.

Physical Education and Extracurricular Activity Experiences of Disabled Youth

While researchers have acknowledged and highlighted the need to understand experiences from the participants' perspectives, the existing literature with disabled students in physical education and extracurricular activity remains sparse, specifically within the U.S. (Coates & Vickerman, 2008; Haegele & Sutherland, 2015). In their review of literature, Haegele and Sutherland (2015) found that disabled students may experience physical education positively and/or negatively from a number of perspectives including peer relationships, teacher relationships, and class placement. Of note, students reported experiences of bullying and harassment in physical education, which were similar to findings in school settings at-large (OCR, 2018).

Further examination of the available literature shows that social interaction may be a major topic of concern for disabled students in physical education (Blagrave, 2017; Bredahl, 2013; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Haegele & Buckley, 2019; Seymour et al., 2009; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010), despite being external to the main tenants and purposes of physical education as defined by IDEA. Nondisabled peers may act as gatekeepers that determine whether disabled students were accepted and included in physical education (Spencer-

Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010), and positive relationships and friendships for disabled students may often be limited to in-school interactions only (Seymour et al., 2009). Forced, or planned, social interaction by means of peer support might help students with interaction and be a positive or may take away the students' agency and independence resulting in negative emotional responses (Goodwin, 2001).

Similar to social interactions, the curriculum and course design disabled students are exposed to in physical education may impact participation (Bredahl, 2013; Coates, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2005; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000). Physical education may privilege normative, mesomorphic bodies and masculinity that manifests as hyper-competitive, aggressive behaviors and actions, limiting disabled students' opportunity or willingness to participate or fit in the course (Fitzgerald, 2005). Similarly, students may be exposed to traditional, team sports-based curricula that privileges ability, which may result in disabled students being excluded (Bredahl, 2013; Healy et al., 2013), asked to sit out (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000), or receiving limited opportunities to learn basic skills such as running (K. Holland et al., 2020). Conversely, an emphasis on fitness and health-related outcomes over skill acquisition may result in limited learning and understanding of concepts such as physical literacy (Coates, 2011), or cause students to navigate sensory input that encourages participation (e.g., feeling heavy) or reduce participation (e.g., excessive sweating; Blagrove, 2017).

Consistent with Gilman and colleagues' (2004) assertion that extracurricular activity programs and opportunities may not reach or expand to all students, there is a dearth of literature relating to the experience of disabled student participation in extracurricular activities, particularly from the student's perspective. Although some of the abovementioned studies used the terms physical education, physical activity, and sport experiences interchangeably, the

impetus of most of the studies was to explore experiences in the physical education context. One study examined both the physical education and sport experiences of disabled students (Fitzgerald, 2005). The findings suggest that while disabled students enjoyed belonging to a team and participating in boccia, they had diminished views of their sport participation because it didn't hold the same value as other teams and sports within their school. Their efforts and participation in sport were delegitimized despite the desire and longing for acceptance and recognition (Fitzgerald, 2005). This finding may be especially useful in examining sport participation in the U.S. as several states report recognizing adapted sports and Unified Sports programs as interscholastic sports (NFHS, 2019). Dymond and colleagues (2020) found that students with higher support needs for participation are less likely to participate or may be excluded, while Agran and colleagues (2017) suggested that disabled students may be less likely to have or seek out opportunities for participation. Positively, Haegele and colleagues (2020) found that extracurricular activity participation may result in fewer instances of bullying victimization among disabled students.

In conclusion, the extant research examining disabled students experiences in physical education and extracurricular activities reveal mixed and variant responses and opportunities. Physical education and extracurricular activities have the opportunity to foster feelings of belonging, acceptance, and friendship, but may also serve to exclude, diminish, and otherwise devalue disabled students' experiences. Similarly, the curricula and course design may draw attention to the ability or lack of ability of students and privilege bodies that are incongruent with disabled students own embodied experiences and understanding. Finally, researchers should continue to explore disabled students experiences in extracurricular activities and the outcomes or understanding associated with participation and belonging to a club or team.

Physical Education and Extracurricular Activity Experiences of Trans Youth

Research shows that trans youth may have more negative views of the school climate than their cis peers (Day et al., 2018). Some of the school structures and spaces highlighted in the earlier literature, such as restrooms and locker rooms (Beese & Martin, 2018; Herrick & Duncan, 2020; Ingrey, 2018), may make physical education and extracurricular activities especially daunting environments and experiences for trans students. Similar to the findings in disability research, many of the studies on physical education, physical activity, and sport experiences conflate the terms and use them interchangeably.

Findings indicate that trans students' perceptions of physical education and sport are likely influenced by the hetero- and cis-normative, hegemonic (and toxic) masculinity that defined them (Block, 2014; Caudwell, 2014; Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Hargie et al., 2017; Herrick & Duncan, 2018). Devís-Devís and colleagues (2018) reported that participants were subjected to hegemonic masculinity that ignored female students and male students who performed alternative masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity and the privileging of cis male bodies in physical education may be consistently and outwardly reinforced by teachers (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). However, when trans boys were able to participate in a gender-affirming way, their performance may have perpetuated and upheld the experience of heteronormative, hegemonic masculinity which might have marginalized and othered trans girls at the same time. Toxic masculinity may cause participants to fear potential violence, especially in vulnerable locations, if they are found to violate normative expectations and identities (Herrick & Duncan, 2018), or lead to feelings of alienation and discomfort in otherwise gender-affirming activities because of the uneven power structure afforded to cisgender men in sport and physical education settings (Hargie et al., 2017). Activities that promote power and dominance over other people in

PE may support this notion of hegemonic masculinity and result in limited performance or underperformance among those in the minority (Block, 2014).

While hegemonic, toxic masculinity was discussed in several of the studies, the physical construction and social understanding of navigating locker rooms, restrooms, and changing spaces seemed to be central to all participants' experiences in physical education and sport settings (Caudwell, 2014; Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Hargie et al., 2017; Herrick & Duncan, 2018; 2020; Jones et al., 2017). Some participants might have opted out of participation entirely if they felt their safety would be in jeopardy by accessing locker rooms or changing areas (Hargie et al., 2017; Herrick & Duncan, 2020; Jones et al., 2017) while others may have been forced to use the locker room of their sex assigned at birth (Caudwell, 2014). The locker room or changing room trans students choose to use is likely highly personal and may be influenced by a variety of factors such as one's ability to pass (Herrick & Duncan, 2018), concerns about interactions with cis women (Hargie et al., 2017), or the structure of the environment, such as attending a sex-segregated school with one set of changing rooms (Caudwell, 2014). Some participants expressed a lack of socialization and prior experiences in locker rooms and changing areas that match their gender identity, which may cause stress and anxiety in trying to learn how to navigate the culture of the space (Hargie et al., 2017). Participants in that particular study suggested that individual changing cubicles may be a simple solution.

Locker rooms and changing spaces may draw unnecessary and undesired attention to one's physical body. Similarly, when faced with decisions about gender performativity, trans youth may be at risk of drawing attention to their body and identity. Participants may choose to self-exclude from sports in order to avoid transphobic insults and other forms of harassment that could come from participating in gender congruent sports (Hargie et al., 2017). In schools, trans

students may be put on the spot when teachers use gender segregation for groupings or divisions in class (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). Students may be forced to navigate, in real time, whether to deny their gender identity and participate with the gender that most closely aligns with their sex assigned at birth, or draw attention and face isolation, harassment, or violence for aligning with their identified gender (Caudwell, 2014; Devís-Devís et al., 2018). Physical education, as a space, has been suggested to be the ultimate source of gender segregation in schools (Devís-Devís et al., 2018).

Despite the potential for harassment, othering, and violence associated with the attention drawn to the bodies and gender identities of trans youth, some have highlighted positive aspects of extracurricular activity and physical education (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2017; 2018). As mentioned briefly above, some of participants in Devís-Devís and colleagues' (2018) study revealed in the opportunity to engage in physical education experiences consistent with their gender identity. They liked the competition or opportunity to fit in with their peers of the same gender identity. Jones and colleagues (2017) found that the choice to engage in physical activity and sport may revolve around health outcomes such as body satisfaction. Similarly, Jones and colleagues (2018) found that trans individuals who were actively taking hormones might be active for body satisfaction reasons while those not on hormones may be motivated by self-esteem. Further, participants may choose activities, such as Gay-Straight Alliances or Queer-Straight Alliances, if the club or activities are perceived to be affirming and provide extra-familial support from peers and teachers (Allen et al., 2019). However, policies that reinforce conservative, hetero- or cis- normative school policies may limit access to such opportunities (Mayo, 2017).

Summarily, these findings highlight how physical education and extracurricular spaces may act as privileged, heteronormative masculine spaces that serve as the source of oppression and marginalization for trans youth. When gender segregation is promoted and upheld by physical education teachers, trans youth may be forced to choose between their sex assigned at birth or gender identity to participate in class. Further, locker rooms and changing spaces may present as challenging locations for trans youth to navigate and potentially reinforce violence, discrimination, or general discomfort about one's own body depending on the type of facility used. While participants highlighted several potential negative aspects of participation in extracurricular activities and physical education, some trans youth may choose to be active and engaged for health-related purposes or for gender-affirming experiences.

Intersectionality as a Conceptual Framework

This dissertation was conceptually framed through intersectionality focused on the examination of disabled trans individuals' perspectives of physical education and extracurricular activity participation. Intersectionality is largely attributed to the early work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) who "coined" the term to describe the racial and sexual discrimination faced by Black women in workplace legal cases. She described incidences of race and sex workplace discrimination as mutually exclusive categories that dominated antidiscrimination law and sought to explore the multidimensionality of Black women's experiences in contrast. Her position was that by addressing and dismantling systems of oppression for the most disadvantaged and marginalized, "others who are singularly disadvantaged would also benefit" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 167). Intersectionality can be used to think about "the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1297). At its core, intersectionality is concerned with how the power relations of various identities (i.e.,

race, class, disability) build on each other and work together to in/visibly impact social worlds (Collins & Bilge, 2020). In educational settings, this may occur through the perpetuation of ‘normalcy’ as a “male, White, heteronormative, able-bodied superiority” that views all other students as “deficient, inferior, and deviant from the normative cultural standard” (Azzarito, 2020, p. 255). An intersectional approach may draw attention to the inadequate ability of school systems to identify how complex, non-normative identities and social class impact students’ learning and the ways in which to address such issues (Azzarito, 2020).

Since its inception, intersectionality has expanded to include the intersection of all identities and experiences (Nash, 2008). As Shields (2008) describes it, intersectionality “reflects the reality of our lives” (p. 304). Researchers have used intersectionality as a framework for studying asexuality and disability (Cuthbert, 2015), disability, class, gender, and religion (Björnsdóttir & Traustadóttir, 2010), gender, race, social class, and education level (Nichols & Stahl, 2019), and a variety of other intersecting identities of oppression and (dis)advantage. Consistent with Crenshaw’s (1989; 1991) early usage of the term and framework, the prioritization of race, gender, and class is most prevalent in intersectionality research (Yuval-Davies, 2006), which has been questioned and criticized by researchers as erasing or failing to recognize the experiences of other marginalized groups (Flintoff et al., 2008). Researchers using intersectionality can, and have, employed a variety of methodological strategies to conducting intersectional research including ethnography, interviews, or comparative analyses (Misra et al., 2020).

Intersectionality Research in Physical Education and Extracurricular Activity

While intersectionality research and understandings of physical education and sport experiences have increased, researchers in physical education and extracurricular activity,

namely sport, often focus on single-item issues or identities rather than attempting to understand the complexities of individuals' experiences (Penney, 2002). Over the past decade, physical education and extracurricular activity researchers have increasingly used intersectionality to attempt to understand students' (and participants') experiences at a variety of identity intersections. For example, Azzarito (2009) used an ethnographic research design to explore how students perceive the ideal body at the intersection of race and gender. She found that ideal bodies may be racialized and perpetuated by societal and cultural ideologies of what an ideal body should look like. Similarly, Dagkas (2016) explained how social justice can be problematized at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class to legitimize diverse bodies in physical education. He claimed that healthcare professionals and those focused on specific health-related outcomes might prioritize homogenous, binary outcomes and understandings of health while erasing the experiences and factors of diverse groups of students. Another study explored the experiences of students in physical education and sport at the intersection of gender and religion and found that specific, gender expectations of religion (e.g., clothing, appearance in front of male students) may have impacted participation (Dagkas et al., 2011).

Similar to physical education research examining the intersections of gender, race, and other identities, research focused on disability, primarily visual impairment, has explored the intersections of gender and weight status (Haegele & Kirk, 2018; Haegele et al., 2018; Haegele et al., 2019). The examination of disability and weight status is particularly unique to physical education and sport contexts as the intersection is focused on the physical body in a setting where the body is on display (Haegele et al., 2019). Further, understanding the embodied experiences of disabled students and the role of other physical manifestations may provide more detail and information than disability alone (Flintoff et al., 2008). Highlighting this point,

Azzarito (2020) wrote that “ableism and the prejudice it fosters against individuals with disabilities do not take shape in society independent from other forms of oppression” (p. 258).

Disability and Trans Intersectionality

Scholars have highlighted the commonalities in trans and disability studies as the body, and its’ existence outside of societal or cultural norms, is often central to experience (Mog & Swarr, 2008). This issue may best be understood through the context of restrooms as they are often segregated by sex, inaccessible for disabled individuals, or a combination of the two, which can act to erase the existence of disabled trans individuals who are unable to have their toileting needs met (Slater et al., 2018). Both trans and disability scholarship focus on the experiences of the lived body (Mog & Swarr, 2008), which have been historically pathologized through medicine (Baril, 2016). In line with this medicalized approach is the story of Kayden, an autistic trans man, who was considering suicide before being fatally shot by police during a welfare check (Rodríguez-Roldán, 2020). Ultimately, it was revealed that Kayden had been denied gender-affirming healthcare because of his disability diagnosis. Further, a study examining the intersectionality of disability and queer identities illustrated the multiple marginalization that disabled trans individuals may face as members of two oppressed communities (Miller, 2018).

At present, limited understanding exists regarding the experiences of disabled trans individuals in physical education and extracurricular activity contexts. Kahn and Lindstrom (2015) explored the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students and found that when presented with extracurricular activity opportunities that were affirming, students may have had the opportunity to openly explore and discuss their identities in what they referred to as a “marked space” in which they didn’t have to mask, or pretend to be nondisabled and/or hetero/cis, to feel safe and comfortable (p. 370). However, there

were times where LGBTQ friendly spaces may have been inaccessible because of disability-related needs, such as one autistic participant's perceived inability to connect or engage with his peers with content he deemed to be "mindless banter" (p. 371). Conversely, there were no recollections of disability spaces that were inaccessible because of LGBTQ-related needs. Duke (2011) suggested these affirming spaces may result in greater engagement with community/ies for disabled LGBTQ individuals. Others have called for the inclusion of queer and trans disabled students within a variety of extracurricular spaces at the collegiate level (Harley et al., 2002) and highlight how disabled trans students may even be excluded in LGBTQ communities because of their trans or disabled identities (Mizock et al., 2013). While there are some available findings on the experiences of disabled trans individuals in school and extracurricular activities, most are a call to action to promote the inclusion of disabled trans individuals in all spaces. Consistent with Kahn and Lindstrom's (2015) suggestion for more intersectional work that illuminate the experiences of disabled trans adolescents and how our education system can better support them, we believe that more work is critical in this area.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature surrounding the school, physical education, and sport experiences of disabled and trans youth, context of physical education and sport in the United States, and the value of intersectionality as a framework for this study. Findings highlight the negative experiences of disabled and trans students in schools as potential victims of harassment, bullying, and curricula that devalues their embodied experiences. Additional findings suggest that while physical education is guided by national standards and outcomes, teachers likely have the ability to implement whatever curricula they feel comfortable with, often replicating their own experiences as a child. Extracurricular programs, largely sport-

based, may be implemented as low stakes opportunities for engagement or as competitive interscholastic sports. As sports participation is more common among students, schools are likely to implement competitive sports programs that reduce opportunities for engagement.

Experiences of disabled and trans students in physical education and extracurricular contexts demonstrate the focus and concern of the body, specifically the privileged masculine body with high ability. Thus, physical education and extracurricular settings are likely to act as sites of oppression and marginalization for disabled and trans youth. Finally, intersectionality was discussed as a framework that can be used to explore the intersection of disability and trans identities in physical education and extracurricular activities.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter provides a discussion of the methods used for each inquiry included herein. This dissertation was designed using a manuscript format, which consists of two separate but interrelated studies. The overarching aim of this project was to adopt an explicitly intersectional approach to explore the physical education and extracurricular activity experiences of disabled trans adults (and their social networks' experiences of their participation in extracurricular activity). While some components of the two studies are similar such as the research paradigm, research approach, and researcher positionality statements, the two studies are presented separately below with overlapping content presented first.

Research Paradigm

This study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm includes a relativist ontology, which suggests the existence of multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The interpretivist ontology has been described as one that postulates that “reality is fluid, multiple, and dependent on the meanings given to objects and events” (Gibson, 2019, p. 385). Thus, from an ontological perspective, we “cannot know reality for real, only how it is experienced and made meaningful” (Gibson, 2019, p. 285) and reality is interdependent on perception (Potrac et al., 2014). The interpretivist paradigm also assumes a subjective epistemology, in which knowledge is subjective and co-created or produced through the interaction(s) of the participant and researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Gibson, 2019). Gibson (2019) notes that the interpretivist paradigm is about the interpretation and sense-making that occurs between the participant and researcher. Knowledge is subjective based on experience, interest, values, and emotions and is subject to change (Potrac et al., 2014).

In adhering to these relative and subjective ontological and epistemological assumptions, research conducted within the interpretivist paradigm typically utilizes idiographic methods centered around the experiences and interpretations of individual or specific groups of participants (Potrac et al., 2014). Further, interpretivist research methods are more concerned with quality, credibility, and dependability (among others) than validity and reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Methods such as interviews and note taking have been adopted and are used to gather a sense of participants' experiences and interpret their meanings (Thorpe & Olive, 2019).

Research Approach

An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach was used in this study to develop an understanding of how disabled trans individuals experience school-based physical education. IPA aims to examine personal lived experiences (Smith, 2019) and the meaning those experiences have for individuals (personally and socially) as they encounter them (Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA is exploratory rather than explanatory with the intent of “understanding a person’s relatedness to the world (and to the things in it which matter to them) through the meanings that they make” (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 102). IPA draws from three theoretical underpinnings including phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith, 2019).

Phenomenology is “the study of phenomena; things as they present themselves to and are perceived in consciousness” (Allen-Collinson, 2019, p. 11). More simply, phenomenology is the study of existence and experience, or “being” (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). While phenomenology is complex, debated, and includes a panoply of forms (Allen-Collinson, 2019), researchers often agree that phenomenology is concerned with lived experiences of individuals,

whether structural and fixed or embodied and contextual (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Smith and colleagues (2009) highlight the importance and historical relevance of phenomenology:

Husserl's work establishes for us, first of all, the importance and relevance of a focus on experience and its perception. In developing Husserl's work further, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre each contribute to a view of the person as embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns. They move us away from the descriptive commitments and transcendental interests of Husserl, towards a more interpretative and worldly position with a focus on understanding the perspectival directedness of our involvement in the lived world (p. 21).

Specifically, an IPA approach is focused on the "life-world" of individuals (Eatough & Smith, 2006) and the "experiential claims and concerns of the persons taking part in the study" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 104), which aligns with the approaches concern for the "understanding of people and the worlds they inhabit as socially and historically contingent and contextually bounded" (Eatough & Smith, 2017). This process involves a deep concern and commitment to the detailed, lived experiences of individuals and how those individuals perceive or understand their experiences without bias or predisposed restrictions or views by the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In summation, IPA has the "modest ambition of attempting to capture particular experiences as experienced for particular people" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 16).

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation, which is central to an IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009). Historically, hermeneutics was used to examine and interpret texts and their relevance to the context of the time period they were written as well as the time period for which they were being interpreted or applied (Eatough & Smith, 2017). More contemporary understandings highlight the significance of learning about both the text as well as the author of

the text while understanding the presence of the researchers' predispositions and biases during interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). In fact, during interpretation of text or verbal communication in an IPA approach, the researcher may come to understand their predispositions more clearly after interpretation and reading rather than before and should commit to grounding interpretations in the participants' views (Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

Hermeneutics in an IPA approach is described as a "double hermeneutic process" because the researcher is tasked with making sense of the participant making sense of their experience (Smith, 2019). This double hermeneutic process is reliant on the participant sharing their phenomenological experience (meaning-making) before the researcher is able to interpret (sense-making) the experience through their own lens (Smith et al., 2009). The double hermeneutic process in IPA is also expressed through the approach researchers take to interpretation. That is, researchers conducting IPA research approach interpretation from both an empathetic (insider) and questioning (outsider) perspective rather than one or the other (Smith et al., 2009). Hermeneutics is an important part of the IPA approach as the researcher and participant seek to understand the experience because the process "inevitably becomes an interpretative endeavor for both participant and researcher" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 37).

Finally, IPA is idiographic due to the concern with understanding the experiences of each participant (Smith, 2019). Idiography simply refers to the concern for the particular (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), or an "in-depth analysis of single cases" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Idiography is concerned with the detail and depth of analysis as well as the particular understanding of a phenomena from the "perspective of particular people in a particular context" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). Idiography is of particular relevance and importance during the data analysis process of IPA as it provides guidelines for the researcher to pay particular attention to

each individual case singularly before moving to the next case or drawing commonalities or themes from all cases (Smith, 2019). The idiographic nature of IPA allows researchers to report shared themes and findings while also drawing attention to the subtle or nuanced differences in experiences between participants (Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

The IPA research approach has been used increasingly in health, sport, and exercise contexts over the past 10 years (Smith, 2019). IPA research has been used in adapted physical education and activity contexts to examine the experiences of individuals with visual impairment (Haegele et al., 2019; K. Holland et al., 2020), the socialization experiences of first year adapted physical education teachers (S. Holland & Haegele, 2020), familial experiences in leisure settings (Boyd & Goodwin, 2019; Goodwin & Ebert, 2018), and to reflect on the meaning of disability simulations (Leo & Goodwin, 2014: 2016). Further, IPA has been used to explore the intersectionality of disability and gender (Haegele & Kirk, 2018; Haegele, Yessick, & Zhu; 2018), and disability, weight status and gender (Haegele et al., 2019) in physical activity and physical education settings. Additionally, intersectionality and IPA have been used in psychology to examine the health care experiences of gay Muslim men (Semlyen et al., 2017).

This increase in IPA studies in health, sport, and physical activity contexts may be a result of the experiential nature of such contexts. Smith (2019) notes that “engaging in sport and exercise is an experience and IPA is well placed to explore the multifarious aspects of that experiential component” (p. 221). The IPA approach may be particularly useful in answering questions about how particular group of participants (in this case, disabled trans individuals) experience physical education and extracurricular activity contexts because of the interest in and importance of the meaning and feelings participants ascribe to their experiences.

Researcher Positionality Statement

The researcher identifies as a non-disabled, cisgender heterosexual male (he/him) who conducts physical education and adapted physical education research and was formally a physical education and adapted physical education teacher in a public-school setting. The researcher acknowledges that his own K-12 physical education experiences were mostly positive but recalls some negative experiences in elementary and middle school due to body image concerns related to weight. The researcher was personally engaged in several extracurricular activities as a K-12 student ranging from sport participation to community-based service organizations. Additionally, as an educator, the researcher spent a great deal of time engaged in extracurricular activities as a coach of both boys and girls high school sports.

Further, the researcher acknowledges that although he is concerned with and sensitive to the experiences of disabled and trans individuals, he comes from a position of privilege as a non-disabled, white cisgender heterosexual male who has not been subjected to the marginalization and harassment in physical education that disabled and trans communities have. Through the course of data collection and reflexive and reflective note taking, the researcher recognized the need to negotiate his own biases and understandings of disability and what it means to be disabled. Namely, the researcher's experience with disability and disabled people has largely been framed as individuals with diagnosed disabilities who receive or received services under one or more IDEA category of disability. The researcher's mother and sister both have diagnoses of fibromyalgia, which the researcher admittedly has largely ignored and denigrated as 'not a real disability' previously. During recruitment, interviews, and data analysis, the researcher often asked himself, "is that a disability?" and had to revisit the model of disability adopted and design of the study to confront his own ableism and conceptualizations of what 'being disabled' entails.

While the researcher attempted to address this bias, it is possible that it came through in either underreporting or overcompensating and overreporting experiences surrounding invisible disabilities.

Further, the study was framed in a way that separated gender identity from sexuality based on a quote the author found early on in the conceptualization of this project (and a few others before it), that problematized the LGBTQ umbrella because it placed “artificial alliances between groups of people who have diverse sexual and gendered identities/subjectivities” and “frequently becomes synonymous with the experiences of lesbian and gay individuals and communities” (Caudwell, 2014, p. 401). In attempting to prioritize the voices and perspectives of trans individuals and trans research, he may have marginalized and attempted to dictate what was relevant regarding gender identity. This resulted in isolating and viewing gender identity and sexual identity as separable constructs and identities. The author attempted to remedy this and become more understanding of the complexity of gender and sexual identities but is aware of some of the flaws that these initial biases created from the outset of this project. While these limitations and reflective experiences impact this project and its findings, it is the researcher’s hope that readers are able to find some impact and importance within the findings.

Study One

The purpose of study one was to investigate the experiences of disabled trans individuals in PE and included the following research questions: (a) What experiences do disabled trans individuals have in physical education? (b) What feelings do disabled trans individuals have about their experiences in physical education? and (c) What meaning do disabled trans individuals place on experiences with their teachers, peers, and the curriculum in physical education?

Participants and Sampling

A purposive sample was recruited and selected to participate in this study in accordance with predetermined eligibility criteria that included (a) identifying as trans/non-binary and disabled/having a disability, (b) being 18 years of age or older, (c) being no longer enrolled in public K-12 education, and (d) having attended physical education in an integrated setting within the United States for at least one academic school year. Participants were recruited through social media platforms, specifically Twitter and Reddit, using direct outreach by the first author to individuals who included their trans and disability identities within their profile descriptions and general study information postings to the author's own profile. Further, some participants were recruited through other participants via snowball sampling. Outreach was conducted using a letter (Appendix A) that introduced the researcher, described the purpose and protocol of the study, and invited the participant to click to the demographic survey (Appendix B) to review informed consent and additional study information as well as complete the survey if they were interested in participating.

In total, six individuals met all inclusion criteria and participated in this study which was consistent with sample size recommendations for IPA research (Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2009). In an effort to respect participants' identities, each participant self-selected their pseudonym that is presented with their narrative summary and data within the study. Further, the pronouns and identity of each participant were provided by participants in the demographic survey and the identity information stems from participants' responses to the question "How would you describe your identity?" Information following "who identifies as..." or "identifying as..." is provided as written from participants.

Charlie (they/them) is a white 27-year-old who identifies as autistic and non-binary. Max (he/him) is a white 18-year-old identifying as a queer disabled trans person. Ira (they/them) is a white 29-year-old identifying as autistic and non-binary. Willow (she/her/hers) is a white 28-year-old who identifies as a disabled trans woman. Dallas (they/them/theirs) is 19 years old and identifies as Black, transgender, queer, Korean, and neurodivergent. Alex (they/them) is a white 30-year-old identifying as autistic, disabled, and trans. Participants in this study attended schools that represent all four major U.S. Census regions and some participants attended school in more than one region during their K-12 education because of family relocation. Further, participants reported a number of accessibility needs for participation in this study that included receiving question prompts ahead of time, call and/or email reminders for scheduled interviews, and the use of a messaging application for participation spanning several days.

The researcher took several steps to protect participant information. All recorded participant data was stored on the researcher's personal, password protected computer. Only the researcher had access to participants' transcribed data. Due to the possibility of "outing" participants who have not disclosed their identity to the public or creating safety concerns for those involved, extra precaution and consideration was taken throughout recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of the findings of this study. In particular, participants had the option to disclose their real name or provide a pseudonym only. This measure ensured that participants had the opportunity to maintain anonymity and could not be linked to any of the demographic information collected in the screening survey. If participants chose to provide their real name, it was only used in personal communication with them and during the interview, but all files were saved using the chosen (or assigned) pseudonym. changed to their chosen pseudonym during transcription and analysis.

While no harm was anticipated as a result of participation in this study, it was important to be cognizant of the potential harm that may arise as a result of talking about particular experiences (Smith et al., 2019). This study was retrospective so that participants had time to emotionally distance themselves from any potentially harmful or negative associations they may have had with physical education (Paechter, 2012). In an effort to combat potential harm, the researcher followed-up after data collection to thank participants for their participation, ask them to review and confirm the accuracy of their interview transcript, and check-in to determine if community-based resources were necessary to continue to process through the experiences they shared.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a demographic survey, written prompts, semi-structured individual interviews, and reflective researcher notes. Following human subjects' review board approval at the authors' university, recruitment information and the demographic survey were sent to prospective participants. The demographic survey included study information and informed consent and was used to screen participants based on inclusion criteria. The survey included questions related to (a) age, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) disability description, (d) gender identity, (e) pronouns, (f) personal identity description, (g) U.S. Census region, (h) accessibility needs, (i) participation preferences, (j) preferred pseudonym and representation, and (k) personal contact information for writing prompt and interview scheduling.

Written Prompt

After completing the demographic survey, participants were asked to respond to a writing prompt. Written prompt responses were used to provide the researcher with an initial understanding and idea of participants' physical education experiences and provide an

opportunity to ask curated follow-up questions while the reflective researcher notes were used during data analysis to help find and define emergent themes. The prompt contained the following question: “How would you describe your most memorable physical education experience?” Participants were asked to reflect on the question and respond via email. To ensure accessibility, participants were given the option to respond in a variety of ways (e.g., audio recording, dictation to scribe), but all chose to respond via written email response.

Semi-Structured Individual Interview

Each participant then completed one semi-structured interview with the first author. Interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C), which was developed with and reviewed by university faculty with IPA and physical education experience and an autistic non-binary adult to ensure that the questions were sensitive, appropriate, and accessible for participants and the purpose of the study. The semi-structured interview guide was used consistently across participants but remained open to allow participant voice and experience to guide the discussion (Smith et al., 2009). The lead author conducted all interviews. The interviewer asked a series of primary interview prompts and provided space for the participant to respond freely and openly with what came to mind or was of importance to them regarding the question. Primary interview prompt examples include: (a) What was your experience of being in physical education? (b) Can you describe an experience in physical education that was impacted by your identity as being trans/non-binary? and (c) Can you describe how having a disability may have influenced your experience in physical education? Depending upon the participant’s response, the interviewer asked follow-up, probing questions to gain more detail and information or pursued an unplanned line of questioning that originated from participants’ experiences.

To ensure accessibility, participants had the option to complete the interview via telephone, videoconference, or messaging application. One participant completed a telephone interview, two participants completed videoconference interviews through Zoom, and three participants engaged via messaging application including iMessage, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. Each telephone or videoconference interview was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and saved as a word document. Each messaging-based interview was downloaded, formatted in a manner that was consistent with the audio-recorded interviews and saved as a word document. Participants were sent the word document transcript and asked to review the transcript and ensure their responses were accurately represented. Participants had the opportunity to modify or add information to the transcript and send it back to the author. Once participants returned the transcript file, it was considered complete and finalized.

Reflective Notes

Reflective interview notes were taken as a secondary source of data. The researcher made contextual notes during and immediately after interviews to capture overall feelings of the conversation and initial ideas of emerging themes (Smith & Sparkes, 2017). This process allowed the researcher to reflect on his own biases, preconceptions, and initial interpretations throughout the data collection and analysis process (Walker et al., 2013). Additional notes were taken during the data analysis process and used in the same manner of discovering biases and preconceptions as well as emergent themes and similarities or differences among participant responses.

Data Analysis and Quality Assessment

Consistent with an IPA research design, the focus of the data analysis “directs our analytic attention toward our participants’ attempts to make sense of their experiences” (Smith et

al., 2009, p. 79). Most significant to maintaining an IPA approach is the focus on ensuring an idiographic reading and development of themes that prioritize each individual case or participant (Larkin et al., 2006). While the analysis procedure was flexible (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), there were a number of traditional steps that were utilized by the lead author (i.e., the analyst) for data analysis in this study. First, the analyst engaged in reading and rereading prompt responses and interview transcriptions to familiarize himself with the content and context of the text (Smith et al., 2009). This process included relistening to available recorded audio to establish context, as necessary, or returning to the original messaging thread. Consistent with Larkin and Thompson's (2012) recommendation of engaging in "free coding," the analyst made notes as he constructed ideas and addressed preconceptions. Next, the analyst engaged in close, line-by-line analysis of the data and looked for "objects of concern" and "experiential claims," rather things that matter to participants and the meaning they attribute to those things (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 106). This step in the analysis process involved several different types of notation including descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments (Smith et al., 2009). The third step involved reducing the data to develop emergent themes within the case while the fourth step involved searching for connections across the emergent themes of the case (Smith et al., 2009). Step five involved moving to the next case and repeating the first four steps with the new case. This step continued and was performed for each and every case, so all cases were given the individual attention necessary to develop a deep understanding of the data. The final step of data analysis involved looking for connections and themes across cases to report in the study findings. This process involved constant comparison of cases and the restructuring of themes that apply across cases.

IPA research is often evaluated using Yardley's (2000) four broad principles of assessing quality: (a) sensitivity to context, (b) commitment and rigor, (c) transparency and coherence, and (d) impact and importance, which were the principles used to assess quality in this study.

Sensitivity to the context was addressed through an explicit acknowledgement and reporting of the researcher's biases and positionality prior to data collection as well as consistent reflexivity to check for emerging or undiscovered biases. Commitment and rigor were addressed through the careful and relatively homogenous sample (through the experience of participants as disabled trans individuals who participated in integrated physical education settings) as well as the commitment to each case individually during the analysis procedure to ensure the analyst was adhering to the idiographic nature of IPA. Transparency and coherence were addressed through the write-up of the research process and ensuring the clarity of details of recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Additionally, coherence is to be judged by the reader consuming this, the finished product, and how well it presents a coherent argument and cohesive themes (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, impact and importance will be determined by the authors' ability to produce a piece that is interesting, important, and/or useful to its' readership (Yardley, 2000). Therefore, impact and importance are determined by the readership.

Study Two

The purpose of study two was to explore and understand the extracurricular activity participation experiences of an autistic disabled trans student and their social network. Research questions included: (a) How does a disabled trans individual make sense of their school-based extracurricular activity participation and participation decisions? (b) How does a disabled trans individual experience extracurricular activities? and (c) How do a disabled trans individuals' social network experience the individuals' participation in extracurricular activities?

While the research approach, research paradigm, and researcher positionality were consistent with study one, it is important to acknowledge a slight change in design in this study from the first. In addition to IPA, this study utilized a single case study design to examine how a single case (social network) experienced the phenomenon of being involved in extracurricular activities. Of note, participants were asked to describe their own experiences from their perspective and meaning as participant, coach, friend, and/or parent rather than assumptively describing how someone else (i.e., the autistic disabled trans participant) experienced the participation. The focus was appropriate for a case study as the concern was *what* was being studied (the phenomenon), rather than *how* it was studied (Hodge & Sharp, 2019). Following approval from the authors' human subject review board, participant recruitment began

Participants and Sampling

An autistic disabled trans participant, Alex (pseudonym) was recruited through their participation in study one. Recruitment details were personalized to be about Alex (Appendix D) and snowball sampling was used to recruit members of their social network through them. This strategy ensured that recruited individuals were a part of Alex's social network that they deemed to be valuable or relevant to their participation to their extracurricular activities. Five participants were identified for and completed participation in the study. Information about each participant is provided below and intended to describe their own relevant demographic information as well as their relationship with Alex, beginning with and centering Alex themselves. Participants had the opportunity to decide whether to use their name or a self-selected pseudonym to represent them throughout the study.

Alex (they/them) is a white 30-year-old. In addition to being autistic, they identify as having fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, sensory processing disorder, and attention-

deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). They participated in a variety of extracurricular activities growing up but focused on and wanted to discuss their experiences in color guard as a 9th and 10th grade student and performing arts activities (choir and musicals) in 11th and 12th grade. They were undiagnosed as autistic throughout the entirety of their K-12 education but began to have symptoms of fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue at an early age. Additionally, they were not out to their peers as trans until after high school but began to explore and question their gender identity in 12th grade and identified as queer in high school. Irvin (he/him) is a 60-year-old white cis male. He is Alex's father and someone Alex described as knowing everything there was to know about their participation and gender and disability-related experiences. Raelynn (she/her) is a white 31-year-old cis female. She is a friend of Alex's who supported Alex in the extracurricular activities they participated in but did not participate in any herself. Shelly (she/her) is a white 34-year-old cis female. She is a friend of Alex's and was the color guard captain during Alex's first year of participation. Molly (she/her) is a white 43-year-old cis lesbian female. She was Alex's music teacher in high school and served as color guard coach and director of choir and several plays that Alex performed in.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a demographic survey, semi-structured individual interviews, and reflective researcher notes. The demographic survey (Appendix E) included questions related to (a) age, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) disability description, (d) gender identity, (e) pronouns, (f) personal identity description, (g) relationship to Alex, (h) accessibility needs, (i) participation preferences, (j) preferred pseudonym and representation, and (k) personal contact information for interview scheduling. After completing the demographic survey, participants were contacted to schedule their semi-structured individual interview.

Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

The interviews were audio-recorded and took place via Zoom (Alex) or telephone (social network). Alex participated in two, individual semi-structured interviews used as a pre- and post-interview. The pre-interview was conducted before any social network interviews and was used to gather baseline information about what types of extracurricular activities they had participated in and their initial thoughts, feelings, and meanings ascribed to extracurricular activity participation. Then, that information was used to conduct the social network interviews and center the conversation around participation in the particular activities that were meaningful to Alex. Finally, a follow-up interview with Alex was conducted that included follow-up questions or lines of inquiry that had been uncovered during social network interviews as well as questions from the semi-structured interview guide.

While interviews included flexibility and the opportunity to follow lines of inquiry as topics were presented, a semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate interviews with Alex (Appendix F) and their social network (Appendix G) which is consistent with the IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009). The lead author conducted all interviews. Both the participant and social network semi-structured interview guides were created by the first author and reviewed by university faculty with IPA and intersectionality research experience as well as an autistic non-binary doctoral student who had participated in a previous study. Additionally, Alex was actively involved in the shaping and use of the semi-structured guide for members of their social network to ensure that they were comfortable with the questions and information being. Following each interview, verbatim transcription was acquired and saved as a word document. Participants were sent the transcript and asked to review, modify, and return it to the first author. This was to give participants the opportunity to clarify responses, expand on responses, or note mistakes and

misinterpretations from the transcription. Once transcriptions were returned, they were considered complete and ready for data analysis.

Reflective Notes

Reflective interview notes were collected as a secondary data source. During each interview, the first author made notes of things that came up contextually and wrote additional notes as soon as the interview had ended to track overall feelings and perceptions of the conversation as well as emergent themes that were front of mind (Smith & Sparkes, 2017). The first author took additional notes during data analysis to further reflect on personal biases, initial interpretations, and to track emergent themes and differences among participants (Walker et al., 2013).

Data Analysis and Quality Assessment

Following completion of all interviews and return of transcriptions, the first author (i.e., analyst) began thematic development consistent with the IPA approach. Rather than a prescriptive, concrete process that must be adhered to, IPA researchers prioritize the idiographic nature of the study (Larkin et al., 2006). First, starting with a single individual (Alex's pre-interview) the analyst began by reading and rereading the interview transcript and listening to available interview audio to become intimate with the content of the text (Smith et al., 2009). Next, the analyst highlighted and/or wrote notes in the margins as he engaged in "free coding" and making meaning of messages in text (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), which led to the reduction of data into initial themes and then the development of emerging themes from connections across the case (Smith et al., 2009). After themes were developed, the analyst moved to the next individual (social network member) and began the process over again, repeating the process until all cases or individuals had been individually reviewed and coded for themes (Smith et al.,

2009). Finally, the analyst reviewed the themes and looked for similarities and connections between individuals, prioritizing and centering Alex's experiences as the participant and driving force behind the analysis. This final process includes a constant comparison of cases and the structuring and restructuring of themes that apply to all cases.

Yardley's (2000) four principles were used to assess quality of this study. *Sensitivity to the context* was supported by attempting to balance the power dynamic between the author and participant by involving them in the design of research questions and procedures, using identity-first language throughout consistent with the participants' wishes, and attempting to contextualize the study from a place of question and dearth of knowledge rather than an exploitation or trauma-inspired account of a multiply marginalized individual. *Commitment and rigor* were addressed through the careful and intentional selection of a familial case who all had experience with the disabled trans individual's EA participation to acquire and analyze an adequate breadth of data and depth. Further, a commitment to each case individually during the analysis procedure was made to ensure the researcher adhered to the idiographic nature of IPA. *Transparency and coherence* were addressed through the write-up and reporting of the process from recruitment to data analysis as well as presenting a balanced account of participant transcripts and researcher interpretation to ensure the reader can hear the voice of the participants within the study in a coherent and cohesive presentation (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, *impact and importance* will be determined by the author's ability to present a work and argument deemed relevant, interesting, and/or provoking by those it was intended for, the journal's readership and EA facilitators (Yardley, 2000).

CHAPTER IV: STUDY MANUSCRIPTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present each manuscript included in this two-manuscript format dissertation. The manuscript for the first study, titled Physical Education Experiences of Autistic, Neurodivergent, and Disabled Trans Adults, begins on page 62. It was formatted to meet the word limit requirements of *Disability & Society*. The manuscript for study two, titled Extracurricular Activity Participation: Exploring Experiences of an Autistic Disabled Trans Adult and Their Social Network, follows the first manuscript starting on page 99. It was formatted according to the authorship guidelines of *Autism*.

Manuscript I

**Physical Education Experiences of Autistic, Neurodivergent, and Disabled Trans/Non-
Binary Adults**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the physical education experiences of disabled trans adults. The study was conducted from an interpretivist paradigm and used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of disabled trans adults. Six adults (aged 18-30), who identified as: autistic, neurodivergent, disabled, trans, non-binary, and queer and represented all four major U.S. Census regions, participated in the study. Data analysis guided by the IPA approach revealed three major themes: (a) elementary to secondary: participation and expectation changes, (b) surviving inaccessible spaces: impact of PE on school experiences, and (c) becoming more self-aware: navigating labels and needs in PE. Participants highlighted more favorable experiences in elementary settings than secondary settings, had difficulty navigating sensory, disability, and gender related experiences in changing spaces, and had to budget their energy and participation in PE to make it through the school day.

Keywords: transgender, LGBTQ, gender identity, chronic pain, physical activity

Introduction

In a reprinted story included in *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*, Patty Berne, as told to and edited by Vanessa Raditz, (2019/2020), stated that the “history of disabled queer and trans people has continually been one of creative problem-solving within a society that refuses to center our needs” (p. 233). Through a meta-synthesis of disabled (a term used intentionally to convey identity-first representation that aligns with our participants’ self-identifications; Peers et al., 2014) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) literature, Duke (2011) suggested that while disabled LGBTQ individuals are often forced into hetero- and cis-normative stereotypes and conceptualizations, when given the proper space and support, disabled LGBTQ individuals may feel empowered to develop and embrace positive queer and disability identities and engage within their community/ies. Further, disabled trans (shorthand for transgender that is inclusive of genderqueer and those identifying non-binary individuals; GLAAD, 2016) youth may develop strong disability and sexual or gender identities and coping skills in the face of oppression and discrimination they face (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015).

The school context is frequently where disabled trans students are first labeled as different, othered by their nondisabled cisgender peers, and forced to confront or acknowledge the labels and identities used to describe them (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015). Disabled trans students “often find themselves twice invisible—both in the able-bodied LGBT community and the heteronormative (i.e., assuming heterosexuality is the norm) disability community” (Morgan et al., 2011, p. 7). Others suggest that disabled trans individuals may be dually, or multiply, marginalized as members of two oppressed communities (Miller, 2018). In reviewing the experiences of disabled students and trans students (independently) in schools, the experiences

highlight how these types of marginalization may compound. Disabled students are more likely to be bullied and harassed in school than their nondisabled peers (Office of Civil Rights [OCR], 2018). Similarly, trans students face higher rates of bullying, harassment, and violence than other members of the LGBTQ community as well as their cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018; Grant et al., 2011; James et al., 2016; Johns et al., 2019).

While research suggests the school context at-large may be problematic for disabled trans students, specific contexts such as physical education (PE) may further exacerbate marginalizing disabled trans youth. Researchers have found that PE is a space where disabled students and trans students are subject to harassment, violence, and exclusion (Devís-Devís et al., 2018; Haegele & Sutherland, 2015; Hargie et al., 2017) because of their non-normative bodies existing and performing in a space that prioritizes able-bodied cisgendered participants. Landi (2018) indicated that teachers and practices within PE may “heterosexualize [students’] experiences” and “erase and silence the affective and subjective experiences of queer bodies” (p. 11). Additionally, the physical ability and body of students is put on display for others to see and examine, which may perpetuate ableism (Fitzgerald & Stride, 2012). Those working at the intersection of queer and disability studies would likely point to the invisibility and nonidentity of heteronormativity and able-bodiedness that permeates and dominates spaces such as PE (McRuer, 2006). Fagrell and colleagues (2012), for example, explained the space of PE succinctly in stating that “there is no other school subject in which the body is as exposed as in physical education” (p. 101).

Examination of the available literature of experiences of disabled students in PE highlights potential sources of marginalization and othering. For example, nondisabled peers may act as gatekeepers that determine whether disabled students were accepted and included in

PE (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010), and positive relationships and friendships for disabled students were often limited to in-school interactions only (Seymour et al., 2009). Forced, or planned, social interaction by means of peer support may help students with interaction or may take away the students' agency and independence resulting in negative emotional responses (Goodwin, 2001). Similarly, the curriculum and course designs disabled students are exposed to in PE may impact participation (Bredahl, 2013; Coates, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2005; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000). PE may privilege normative, mesomorphic bodies and masculinity that manifests as hyper-competitive, aggressive behaviors and actions, limiting disabled students' opportunity or willingness to participate or fit in the course (Fitzgerald, 2005). Further, students may be exposed to traditional, team sports-based curricula that privileges ability, which may result in disabled students being excluded (Bredahl, 2013; Healy et al., 2013), asked to sit out (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000), or provided limited opportunities to learn basic skills such as running (Holland et al., 2020). Conversely, an emphasis on fitness and health-related outcomes over skill acquisition may result in limited learning and understanding of concepts such as physical literacy (Coates, 2011), or cause students to navigate sensory input that encourages participation (e.g., feeling heavy) or reduce participation (e.g., excessive sweating; Blgrave, 2017).

Trans students may have similar experiences participating in PE as their disabled peers. For example, Devís-Devís and colleagues (2018) found that trans students tend to be subjected to hegemonic masculinity that ignores female students and male students who performed alternative masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity and the privileging of cis male bodies in PE has been consistently and outwardly reinforced by teachers (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). However, when trans boys were able to participate in a gender-affirming way, their performance

perpetuated and upheld the experience of heteronormative, hegemonic masculinity which marginalized and othered trans girls at the same time. Toxic masculinity may cause participants to fear potential violence, especially in vulnerable locations, if they are found to violate normative expectations and identities (Herrick & Duncan, 2018), or lead to feelings of alienation and discomfort in otherwise gender-affirming activities as a result of the uneven power structure favoring cisgender men in sport and PE settings (Hargie et al., 2017). Activities that promote power and dominance over other people in PE supports this notion of hegemonic masculinity and results in limited performance or underperformance among those in the minority (Block, 2014).

While a breadth of information about the disabled experience and trans experience in PE exist, understanding and consideration of disabled trans students' experiences are limited. In a study examining embodied experiences in PE, Sykes (2011) interacted with a participant who identified as a transguy living with chronic pain. The researcher questioned how transphobic, gender normative responses to student bodies may erase disability needs and require teachers to disrupt and queer the discourse of "no pain-no gain" in favor of "cripping physical education by teaching movements of vulnerability, repair and respite, rather than invincibility, fortification, and injury" (Sykes, 2011, p. 41). In support of Sykes recommendations, educational researchers from other disciplines have called for the adoption and implementation of intersectional research to understand how disabled trans students experience the world and make sense of their labels and differences without assuming a deficit approach (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of disabled trans individuals in PE.

Conceptual Framework

This study was conceptually framed through intersectionality focused on the examination of disabled trans individuals' perspectives of and experiences as a participant in PE.

Intersectionality refers to the examination of the role that membership in multiple identities such as race, gender identity, class, disability, and/or sexual orientation have on the experience of individuals (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). At the core, intersectionality is concerned with the ways in which power relations of various identities build on each other and work together to impact social worlds in/visibly (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Specifically, this study examined how students who identify outside of “normative cultural standards” that privilege and give power to “male, White, heteronormative, able-bodied superiority” experienced PE (Azzarito, 2020, p. 255). This framework has been used successfully within PE to investigate several intersectional inquiries including student perceptions of the ideal body at the intersection of race and gender (Azzarito, 2009), and understanding sport and PE participation at the intersection of gendered expectations and religion (Dagkas et al., 2011).

Methods

This study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm that includes a relativist ontology, which suggests the existence of multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Thus, from an ontological perspective, we “cannot know reality for real, only how it is experienced and made meaningful” (Gibson, 2019, p. 285) and reality is interdependent on perception (Potrac et al., 2014). The interpretivist paradigm assumes a subjective epistemology, in which knowledge is co-created or produced through the interaction(s) of the participant and researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) and is based on experience, interest, values, and emotions and subject to change (Potrac et al., 2014). Gibson (2019) notes that the interpretivist paradigm is about the interpretation and sense-making that occurs between the participant and researcher. In practice, use of an interpretivist paradigm may utilize idiographic methods centered around experiences and interpretations of individual or specific groups of participants (Potrac et al., 2014) through

data collection methods such as interviews and note taking (Thorpe & Olive, 2014). Given that researchers' subjective beliefs, values, and inclinations inevitably shape the interpretive process, it is crucial for positionalities to be publicized so that others can consider how it may have shaped methodological decisions and interpretations of the participants' experiences and meaning making of those experiences. The first author identifies as a non-disabled, cisgender heterosexual male (he/him) who conducts PE research and was formally a PE teacher in a public-school setting. Further, the first author acknowledges that although he is concerned with and sensitive to the experiences of disabled individuals and trans individuals, he comes from a position of privilege as a non-disabled, White cisgender heterosexual male who has not been subjected to the marginalization, harassment, or violence in PE that disabled and trans communities have. Through reflexivity, the author revealed that he had biases about particular disability diagnoses (e.g., invisible disabilities) that may have come through in questions and the analysis, but he attempted to address and discuss these biases with participants as they came up and allow participant experiences to come through rather than gatekeep disability.

An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach was used in this study to develop an understanding of how disabled trans individuals experienced school-based PE. The approach is exploratory rather than explanatory with the intent of "understanding a person's relatedness to the world (and to the things in it which matter to them) through the meanings that they make" (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 102). IPA draws from three theoretical underpinnings including phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith, 2019). Phenomenology is the study of existence and experience, or "being" (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). While phenomenology is complex, debated, and includes a panoply of forms (Allen-Collinson, 2019), researchers often agree that phenomenology is concerned with lived

experiences of individuals, whether structural and fixed or embodied and contextual (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation, which is central to an IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009). Hermeneutics in an IPA approach is described as a “double hermeneutic process” because the researcher is tasked with making sense of the participant making sense of their experience (Smith, 2019). Finally, IPA is idiographic due to the concern with understanding the experiences of each participant (Smith, 2019). Idiography simply refers to the concern for the particular (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), or an “in-depth analysis of single cases” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 8). The idiographic nature of IPA allows researchers to report shared themes and findings while also drawing attention to the subtle or nuanced differences in experiences between participants through the reporting of results (Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

Participants and Sampling

A purposive sample was recruited and selected to participate in this study in accordance with predetermined eligibility criteria that included (a) identifying as trans/non-binary and disabled/having a disability, (b) being 18 years of age or older, (c) being no longer enrolled in public K-12 education, and (d) having attended PE in an integrated setting within the United States for at least one academic school year. Participants were recruited through social media platforms, specifically Twitter and Reddit, using direct outreach by the first author to individuals who included their trans and disability identities within their profile descriptions and general study information postings. Further, some participants were recruited through other participants via snowball sampling.

In total, six individuals met all inclusion criteria and participated in this study. In an effort to respect participants’ identities, each participant self-selected their pseudonym that is presented with their narrative summary and data within the study. Further, the pronouns and

identity of each participant were provided by participants in the demographic survey and the identity information stems from participants' responses to the question "How would you describe your identity?" Information following "who identifies as..." or "identifying as..." is provided as written from participants.

Charlie (they/them) is a White 27-year-old who identifies as autistic and non-binary. Max (he/him) is a White 18-year-old identifying as a queer disabled trans person. Ira (they/them) is a White 29-year-old identifying as autistic and non-binary. Willow (she/her/hers) is a White 28-year-old who identifies as a disabled trans woman. Dallas (they/them/theirs) is 19 years old and identifies as Black, transgender, queer, Korean, and neurodivergent. Alex (they/them) is a White 30-year-old identifying as autistic, disabled, and trans. Participants in this study attended schools in the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West U.S. Census regions and some participants attended school in more than one region during their K-12 education because of family relocation. Further, participants reported a number of accessibility needs for participation in this study that included receiving question prompts ahead of time, call and/or email reminders for scheduled interviews, and the use of a messaging application for participation spanning several days.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a demographic survey, written prompts, semi-structured individual interviews, and reflective researcher notes. Following human subjects' review board approval at the authors' university, recruitment information and the demographic survey were sent to prospective participants. The demographic survey included study information and informed consent and was used to screen participants based on inclusion criteria. The survey included questions related to (a) age, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) disability description, (d) gender identity, (e) pronouns, (f) personal identity description, (g) U.S. Census region, (h) accessibility

needs, (i) participation preferences, (j) preferred pseudonym and representation, and (k) preferred contact information for writing prompt and interview scheduling.

After completing the demographic survey, participants were asked to respond to a writing prompt. Written prompt responses were used to provide the researcher with an initial understanding and idea of participants' PE experiences and provide an opportunity to ask curated follow-up questions while the reflective researcher notes were used during data analysis to help find and define emergent themes. The prompt contained the following question: "How would you describe your most memorable PE experience?" Participants were asked to reflect on the question and respond via email. To ensure accessibility, participants were given the option to respond in a variety of ways (e.g., audio recording, dictation to scribe), but all chose to respond via written email response.

Each participant then completed one semi-structured interview with the first author. Interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide, which was developed with and reviewed by university faculty with IPA and PE experience and an autistic non-binary adult to ensure that the questions were sensitive, appropriate, and accessible for participants and the purpose of the study. The semi-structured interview guide was used consistently across participants but remained open to allow participant voice and experience to guide the discussion (Smith et al., 2009). The lead author conducted all interviews. The interviewer asked a series of primary interview prompts and provided space for the participant to respond freely and openly with what came to mind or was of importance to them regarding the question. Primary interview prompt examples include: (a) What was your experience of being in PE? (b) Can you describe an experience in PE that was impacted by your identity as being trans/non-binary? and (c) Can you describe how having a disability may have influenced your experience in PE? Depending upon

the participant's response, the interviewer asked follow-up, probing questions to gain more detail and information or pursued an unplanned line of questioning that originated from participants' experiences.

To ensure accessibility, participants had the option to complete the interview via telephone, videoconference, or messaging application. One participant completed a telephone interview, two participants completed videoconference interviews through Zoom, and three participants engaged via messaging application including iMessage, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. Each telephone or videoconference interview was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and saved as a word document. Each messaging-based interview was downloaded, formatted in a manner that was consistent with the audio-recorded interviews and saved as a word document. Participants were sent the word document transcript and asked to review the transcript and ensure their responses were accurately represented. Participants had the opportunity to modify or add information to the transcript and send it back to the author. Once participants returned the transcript file, it was considered complete and finalized.

Reflective interview notes were taken as a secondary source of data. The researcher made contextual notes during and immediately after interviews to capture overall feelings of the conversation and initial ideas of emerging themes (Smith & Sparkes, 2019). This process allowed the researcher to reflect on his own biases, preconceptions, and initial interpretations throughout the data collection and analysis process (Walker et al., 2013). Additional notes were taken during the data analysis process and used in the same manner of discovering biases and preconceptions as well as emergent themes and similarities or differences among participant responses.

Data Analysis and Quality Assessment

Consistent with an IPA research design, the focus of the data analysis “directs our analytic attention toward our participants’ attempts to make sense of their experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 79). Most significant to maintaining an IPA approach is the focus on ensuring an idiographic reading and development of themes that prioritize each individual case or participant (Larkin et al., 2006). While the analysis procedure was flexible (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), there were a number of traditional steps that were utilized by the lead author (i.e., the analyst) for data analysis in this study. First, the analyst engaged in reading and rereading prompt responses and interview transcriptions to familiarize himself with the content and context of the text (Smith et al., 2009). This process included relistening to available recorded audio to establish context, as necessary, or returning to the original messaging thread. Consistent with Larkin and Thompson’s (2012) recommendation of engaging in “free coding,” the analyst made notes as he constructed ideas and addressed preconceptions. Next, the analyst engaged in close, line-by-line analysis of the data and looked for “objects of concern” and “experiential claims,” rather things that matter to participants and the meaning they attribute to those things (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 106). This step in the analysis process involved several different types of notation including descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments (Smith et al., 2009). Further, the analyst used this opportunity to explore how participants perceived their experience in relation to the normative standards of PE, consistent with an intersectional approach. The third step involved reducing the data to develop emergent themes within the case while the fourth step involved searching for connections across the emergent themes of the case (Smith et al., 2009). Step five involved moving to the next case and repeating the first four steps with the new case. This step continued and was performed for each and every case so all cases were given the individual

attention necessary to develop a deep understanding of the data. The final step of data analysis involved looking for connections and themes across cases to report in the study findings. This process involved constant comparison of cases and the restructuring of themes that apply across cases.

IPA research is often evaluated using Yardley's (2000) four broad principles of assessing quality: (a) sensitivity to context, (b) commitment and rigor, (c) transparency and coherence, and (d) impact and importance, which were the principles used to assess quality in this study.

Sensitivity to the context was addressed through an explicit acknowledgement and reporting of the researcher's biases and positionality prior to data collection as well as consistent reflexivity to check for emerging or undiscovered biases. Commitment and rigor were addressed through the careful and relatively homogenous sample (through the experience of participants as disabled trans individuals who participated in integrated PE settings) as well as the commitment to each case individually during the analysis procedure to ensure the analyst was adhering to the idiographic nature of IPA. Transparency and coherence were addressed through the write-up of the research process and ensuring the clarity of details of recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Additionally, coherence is to be judged by the reader consuming this, the finished product, and how well it presents a coherent argument and cohesive themes (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, impact and importance will be determined by the authors' ability to produce a piece that is interesting, important, and/or useful to its' readership (Yardley, 2000). Therefore, impact and importance will be determined by the readership.

Results

Using the data analysis process described above, three themes were constructed from participant data including: (a) elementary to secondary: participation and expectation changes,

(b) surviving inaccessible spaces: impact of PE on school experiences, and (c) becoming more self-aware: navigating labels and needs in PE.

Elementary to Secondary: Participation and Expectation Changes

As participants shared their experiences in PE, it became evident that experiences, feelings, and understandings of PE changed over time. Most notably, participants described PE as a subject in elementary school that was more enjoyable, resulting in greater participation than secondary PE participation. However, everyone described different antecedents for their enjoyment. For Dallas, it was simply that there was less “dread” related to attending PE during their early education. Similarly, Charlie couldn’t recall many elementary PE experiences, but did recall that there were experiences they “enjoyed” whereas middle school and high school experience were “consistently bad.” Ira explained that the structure and limited sensory implications associated with elementary PE were less stressful. While PE was “kind of loud and chaotic” at that age, the classes Ira attended were outside under a pavilion so “it wasn’t as loud because we were outside, we weren’t in a gym or any really big room with really bad acoustics,” which were more accurate descriptions of their participation in middle school and high school being in gymnasiums.

For other participants, the activity selection and opportunities were superior to the opportunities offered in higher grades. Alex preferred the focus on “joy and movement” that came with elementary PE courses and content describing that “I remember some of the best classes that actually got me active were in elementary school with those scooters where you’d run your fingers over (laughter)” and the “big parachutes and games instead of ‘let’s get better at this specific sport for three weeks’.” Further reflecting, they recalled that their elementary PE teachers were “always super fun and energetic and liked to dance and laugh and play.” Max’s

experiences were similar, and he described himself as a “pretty active participant” in elementary school because they would “mostly just play fun games.”

In addition to the activities and structure of elementary PE experiences, participants described feeling as though their skills and physical development were on pace with their peers during their early education but noticed gaps as they aged. Willow said, “when I was younger, that was less bad [specific sports] because everyone is kind of young and uncoordinated.” However, she noted that there became a noticeable gap between her skills and the skills of the cis boys she was compared against at the time. She said by eighth grade cis boys who were “good at sports” were praised for their performance and that it “only worsened my relationships with other people because we were having to do team things and be graded on our participation in the team, but it’s not just your grade” and peers would “get frustrated if you’re doing badly” because their grade was also impacted. While Willow explained the differences as skill-related, Max realized that while some of the differences were in ability, his “chronic illness symptoms were worsening” at the same time. Charlie began to have suicide ideations and adverse physical responses to the anxiety caused by PE participation as they aged such as feeling sick or vomiting.

Furthermore, participants also became more aware of the social dynamics at play in PE courses. Namely, the expectations to participate in and understand gendered roles and assumptions. Alex said that in early elementary, students hadn’t “started as much of the gender things and to some extent the clique things and peer pressure, wanting to be cool.” They indicated that the “social faux pas and cliques” began around late elementary school and was a drastic and immediate change. As an example, they said, “I remember like the monkey bars and four square and Red Rover were all the rage first semester and then second semester was like, ‘oh, we don’t do that anymore’.” Similarly, Ira described elementary PE as a space that “wasn’t

actually very gendered at all” while normative gendered expectations became palpable heading into junior high. Because they were presenting as female at the time, it became an unspoken rule that it was “weird to talk to boys” by the sixth grade. Ira struggled with making connections with the cis girls in class because they had always had friendships with cis boys and wanted to continue those friendships. Describing the situation, Ira said:

I couldn't be friends with guys. So, for me, I was like ‘Oh, I got to stay within the circle of girls in PE and talk to them and make friends with them.’ It seemed way harder than making friends with guys. People just kind of segregated off into ‘Oh, this is where the girls are talking, and this is where the groups of guys are talking.’ And so, it was a lot harder because I knew I'm not supposed to go over there and talk to the group of guys because I don't know them and I don't know how to introduce myself because I'm autistic, right? I didn't know I was autistic, but I knew I didn't know how to do the thing and it would have been easier to talk to guys, but I couldn't because that's not what I was supposed to do.

While all students were navigating these new gendered expectations and roles, several of the participants in this study felt as though the expectations did not or should not apply to them. They didn't care to adhere to the gendered norms and roles but were also trying to navigate social relationships and new terrain.

As students aged, changing out for PE and using locker rooms, a physical space linked to PE, became part of participants' daily routine, and added to the increasingly cisgendered expectations and norms they experienced. Charlie had very strong aversions to changing in the locker room because they “didn't like labeling myself as any gender and because the girls would be mean to me if I didn't wear a bra, shave my legs, et cetera.” To them, the locker room

expectations were just “another random arbitrary rule that people force on each other because they hate anything that’s not ‘normal’.” Similar to Charlie’s experiences, Ira said, “the changings rooms brought me anxiety” because “being autistic or the sensory stuff and this is a new ritual kind of thing, no one is telling you this is what you do when you go into a changing room.” Ira struggled to adhere to the norms and had no intention of doing so because “masking [being autistic] and being a person took up so much energy” that they had “no more bandwidth for this other ‘girl stuff’.” Ira was “told in sixth grade that if you do not wear a bra for seventh grade, they will send you home from school even though no one has boobs. You were required to get this thing and wear it for no apparent reason.” Ira described how being autistic made it difficult to process the information and accept it as meaningful. They said, “it doesn’t make sense and sensory-wise it also is horrible to try to find a training bra that’s not awful and not prickly or sketchy or whatever. There were just so many things wrong with that.” Max found the added components of a PE uniform and expectations to change more difficult to handle “mentally and physically.”

Surviving Inaccessible Spaces: Impact of PE on School Experiences

While participants were navigating expectations and norms that changed over time, they were also navigating (in)accessibility within PE contexts and the implications that PE participation had on their education and school experience. Inaccessibility in PE stemmed from a variety of disability-related needs and concerns (e.g., sensory needs), gendered expectations (e.g., gender separated activities), and accessibility related issues in which participants couldn’t divorce their identity as disabled trans individuals operating outside of the normative culture of PE. For example, Dallas said, “I guess because I’m neurodivergent, I didn’t realize that PE wasn’t designed for kids like me until I was older” and

I think most of what made me uncomfortable about my PE experiences can be attributed to ADHD, RSD, or being trans, but as a kid ofc [of course] none of that registered, so I didn't know why I was so bad at PE.

Dallas' asthma prevented them from participating to the same extent as their peers in some activities, which was further complicated by their desire to compete against cis boys rather than cis girls. Alex described PE as sensory overload from the "scratchy tight gym uniform" to the "fluorescent lighting" and "everybody screaming and yelling and cheering" and said that once you add the "social sensory implications to that, it's just kind of all a clusterfuck." Ira was also overwhelmed by the sensory input and noise within PE and described the volume in PE as "the equivalent to having an hour where you're just in a hallway walking during a passing period." For other students, such as Max, they faced inaccessible PE spaces due to both gendered and disability related expectations and norms. Specifically, he described swimming as a unit in which he was expected to change into a uniform that he didn't feel comfortable wearing "in front of people who I wasn't comfortable with seeing my body" and the pool itself was cold, which "severely exacerbated my joint issues, to the point where my knees and ankles were stiff and inflamed after every time I had to get in the pool."

Not only did the sensory, mental, and physical implications of an inaccessible PE space make participation difficult, it also had lasting impacts on participants' overall school experience. For several individuals, this meant they had to "budget their energy" (Alex) to ensure that they could attend to and excel in their other classes. Dallas described the frustration they felt in having to "go to class immediately after [PE] and be expected to dive right in like someone coming from physics as if I didn't just run a mile or swim for an hour." They continued:

At least in elementary school, If the whole class is tired, the teacher would just wait a second. If we're all tired after a middle school PE class, we all go to different teachers and we're the only ones in our next classes that are exhausted (lol).

Others shared a similar sentiment and described the importance of making sure they scheduled PE at the right time of day to ensure they'd be at their best for other courses. Ira recalled feeling lucky that their PE courses were scheduled later in the day because they "wouldn't have paid attention as well in class because I was too tired."

While some described mental fatigue and exhaustion from processing through their PE experiences as disabled trans students, others who had undiagnosed (and/or untreated) chronic pain-related disabilities felt the physical toll that PE participation took on their body. Max "had PE in the morning so it made the rest of the school day incredibly hard to move through" because he "could barely walk a lot of the time," but because he had "an invisible illness I was not provided any aid for my pain or mobility issues." Other times, the physical toll and pain caused by some PE participation (e.g., timed mile run) resulted in Max "having to take days off of school" and facing more serious consequences and recovery time. He was frustrated because he "felt that a lot of my time and enjoyment and ability was being taken away by a class that wasn't even worth anything in the first place."

The implications of PE could be felt in other classes as students budgeted their energy, battled through physical pain, and tried to maintain focus, but it's worth noting how much more difficult of a course PE was for participants in comparison to other courses, which many participants determined was likely inconsistent with their nondisabled, cisgendered peers. "For other kids, PE was fun because you didn't have to think, you just had to play games or work out.

For me, it required a lot more thinking than [other subjects]" (Dallas). Alex provided more insight:

When you're in a classroom, there's expectations that are laid out, like the teacher's talking and you're listening, or you're in a small group and you're talking, or doing silent studying, but in gym class, there's so much unscripted time where you're learning all these new skills each week or trying to learn them, but then there's also the teams changing all the time and the expectations are changing [...] There might be days in an English class where you have to present a project, but that's not every day that you have to go up in front of everybody. But in gym, when it's your turn, you're up there alone and everyone's watching you and they're invested in how you do.

Ira had to view PE as transactional to "survive" because otherwise they would have felt confused or anxious about doing the wrong thing or upsetting others. Charlie also had a fear of messing up or not meeting the expectations required to participate in PE resulting in others being "mad at me for doing the wrong thing." The participants in this study had difficulty with the lack of structure and expectations in PE or how rapidly those expectations and norms would change by the day or activity to activity, which may be linked to their status as a disabled student but may also speak to their experience attempting to navigate the societal gendered expectations set forth.

Becoming More Self-Aware: Navigating Labels and Needs in PE

As participants in this study began to understand more about their experiences and identities, many began to embrace who they were and their role within PE contexts. Often, participants championed the moniker and stereotype of "being the weird kid" (Alex) or "keep[ing] the weirdness alive" (Ira) as they reached middle or high school. For participants like Ira, they found community with other students they deemed to fit the "weird" stereotype and

were “drawn to them” because they were “people who also kind of got, not actively excluded by anyone, but just they didn’t really find a group either.” Often these were peers who may have also been neurodiverse, shared similar science-fiction interests, and/or failed to adhere to cisgender norms with dress and expression. Embracing the stereotype and peers with a similar mindset “saved [Ira] from really being worried about being self-conscious” or caring much about what others thought, which reduced anxiety. Alex described their friends as “similar wall flowery” type students and found comfort in having friends or similar peers to participate in PE with because it “felt like a security blanket kind of thing, especially being autistic”.

However, it wasn’t always easy for participants to embrace these labels or stereotypes and instead felt like these labels were used as “targets” (Charlie) that other students put on them for existing outside of established norms. Willow said, “I knew I was different; I knew I was one of the weird kids, I knew there was something different.” The treatment she received from peers created an “otherness” and that she “came to understand a differentness [about herself] but did not have a specific label or identification for it until later.” Max said he “could generally make friends with anyone” but “rarely felt understood by most people.” He tried to seek out relationships with peers with “similar identities and conditions” but often “just kept to myself and didn’t think about [his identity and differences] too much, but it did contribute at least somewhat to me entirely not wanting to participate in PE.” In a similar experience, Dallas struggled to understand their identity because they “weren’t super cognizant of how gender dynamics worked or my place within them,” they didn’t “totally know what it meant to be a girl or not be a boy, so I didn’t feel like a lot of the expectations even applied to me.”

The difficulties participants had with peer relationships extended to their relationships and interactions with teachers. While participants often described themselves as compliant

students who adhered to teacher directions and instruction, sometimes they participated at the expense of their own needs. Ira described themselves as a “rule-following person who does everything” even when those activities resulted in pain, sensory concerns, or feeling unsafe. Charlie “wanted to show [teachers] that I was capable of doing things when they make those things safe for me” and would put forth effort if activities addressed their disability and gender-related concerns. Despite these compliant behaviors, participants felt like their needs weren’t always met or considered because they fall outside of the normative culture established in PE. Most participants were not out as trans/non-binary and did not have a disability diagnosis during their school experiences and received very little support from their teachers. Teachers often “assumed that if you’re young, you’re healthy and like suck it up kind of thing” (Alex). Further, all students were expected to meet the same benchmarks to obtain certain grades, which Ira described as “messed up” because “you’re basically making someone be in more pain to get the same grade as someone else.”

Some participants’ experiences and interactions were specifically and explicitly impacted by their disability, gender identity, or a combination of the two because they flouted the established norms. Willow remembered being “reluctant and passive, never volunteering for things” in PE. Although she did not receive disability-related services, she recalled being conflicted about being a disabled student. She said, “there was a heavy stigma and level of hatred and disgust levied towards disabled students. On some levels, it felt like I was escaping something negative, and, on some levels, it felt like I was missing something.” For Charlie, being autistic made it more difficult to come to a level of understanding with their teachers about their gender identity. They explained that had they not been “disabled then I might have been able to discuss being nonbinary with the teachers and maybe come to some kind of understanding,” but

felt as though they were unable to communicate their gender identity and needs because of barriers related to being autistic. Being nonbinary “was at the forefront of my mind during those times and ultimately affected my participation far more in ways than I was aware of at the time” for Max, who later came to understand and link some of his physical distress and pain to his chronic pain disabilities and pinpoint specific instances of discomfort.

To cope with the difficulties participants had with peer or teacher interactions, many found it easier to be invisible in PE. Dallas looked for “roles in team sports that were unimportant or ones that wouldn’t disrupt anyone if I didn’t fully participate” while Alex thought “maybe if I’m like quiet enough and just do what I’m supposed to do and be done, people won’t narrow in on me.” Max was satisfied with his teachers’ attention being on athletes and “more skilled” students because he was “happy to fly under the radar and not receive any direct attention.” However, as he got older, Max felt he was “doing the bare minimum” to get a grade he was comfortable with but getting more attention and being given higher expectations because his peers “refused to participate at all most days.” This increased pressure and expectation eventually led to Max finding a way to opt out of PE without jeopardizing his grade.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of disabled trans individuals in PE. The results and constructed themes illustrate the complexity of gender- and disability-related experiences participants regularly navigated as individuals whose identities were outside of the normative PE culture. This is highlighted in all three themes as participants reflected upon disability-centric experiences, gender-centric experiences, and experiences in which both disability and gender compounded to impact the experience. These experiences are consistent with Kahn and Lindstrom’s (2015) findings that identity development occurs in a variety of

stages, which are fluid over time and impacted by environmental contexts. It also disrupts the notion that there are clear, dichotomous groups or categories in which students fall (i.e., cisgender or transgender, disabled or nondisabled; Thompson et al., 2001), rather there is complexity and nuance within identity development that should be encouraged and respected. Sykes (2011) described these experiences and negotiations as a “crucial form of embodied talk, talk that constitutes queer bodies as interruptions to the historical and contemporary normative imaginaries about binary gender” (p. 41).

Participants’ experiences were impacted by the type of activities performed during class and whether choice and autonomy were available to them. Often, activities were novel (i.e., scooters) or centered around movement and fun (i.e., parachute games) in elementary school, but, as students aged, were replaced by more competitive team sport or fitness-related activities that may have put students on display and in uncomfortable social situations, and/or caused physical pain and discomfort. Teachers’ overreliance on multi-activity, team sport-based curricula has been documented within PE literature (Banville et al., 2021; Ennis, 2014) and specifically in working with disabled students (Coates, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2005; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000) and trans students (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). Banville and colleagues (2021) discussed this as an ongoing issue within the field of PE that has extended for decades. We posit that this style of PE will likely outlast our careers. However, it is our hope that in valuing and promoting diverse student voices’ and challenging the status quo of normative culture or ‘traditional’ iterations of PE will result in more transformative pedagogies that center students’ needs (Fitzpatrick & Enright, 2017).

Like the well documented experiences of multi-activity curricula, changing area experiences have been exhaustively documented as contexts and spaces in which trans students

may be subjected to violence (Hargie et al., 2017), being misgendered (Caudwell, 2014), or developing anxiety and stress related to one's gender identity (Herrick & Duncan, 2018). The experiences of disabled students in changing spaces have been largely undiscovered or framed around experiences of physically disabled individuals who felt like their body was on display (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Haegele et al., 2019). Findings in this study highlighted intersectional experiences within changing areas, including cisgendered expectation-related anxiety and uncertainties as well as sensory needs stemming from the design of the physical space that led to high noise, sensory overload, and difficult body temperature regulation. These experiences compounded and made changing areas difficult spaces to navigate. Further, students expressed issues with PE uniforms that included cisgendered expectations and norms for appearance and sensory concerns. Future research may need to examine locker room experiences beyond a singular gendered perspective and seek to better understand how locker rooms and PE uniforms may be inaccessible from multiple perspectives and for multiple individuals who exist beyond the normative culture established within PE.

Participants in this study overwhelmingly described PE as a course that had negative impacts on the rest of their school day. This largely stemmed from disability-associated needs such as being overstimulated from noises, having severe headaches associated with the fluorescent lighting in the gym, having to concentrate harder to understand the rules and expectations, and/or physical implications of participating and handling flare-ups and pain associated with asthma or chronic pain conditions. Ira provided some context to this issue when they said attending PE was “the equivalent to having an hour where you're just in a hallway walking during a passing period.” To combat issues associated with PE, participants often had to budget their energy (i.e., limiting participation or being intentional when registering for PE

courses), but it wasn't always possible to avoid negatively impacting days in PE. Researchers often lament the need to remove as many barriers to participation as possible (Coates & Vickerman, 2008), typically viewed as physical accessibility barriers (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000), but PE remains a space with deeply entrenched norms and processes as discussed earlier in this discussion. The findings and experiences in this study highlight the need to think beyond physical constraints and examine other ways in which PE may be designed as an inaccessible space for some students.

One potential area of examination pertains to the relationship between PE and physical activity. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (2018) *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, "evidence indicates that both acute bouts and regular moderate-to-vigorous physical activity improve the cognitive functions of memory, executive function, processing speed, attention, and academic performance for these children" (p. 47). The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America), an influential national PE organization in the US, includes this information in their *Speak Out! Day* materials for PE teachers and key stakeholders to lobby legislators to approve funding of PE in educational policy each year. While we do not argue the breadth or extent of literature documenting physical activity and academic performance associations, particularly among nondisabled, cisgender students, we'd be negligent if we didn't point out the inference and value SHAPE America assigns to PE as a proxy for physical activity during the school day may not be of value for all students. While findings from this study are not intended to be generalizable, they suggest that PE participation can have a detrimental, or a perceived detrimental impact, on later academic performance and learning for some students, specifically those identifying as disabled and trans. This assertion is consistent with prior claims that benefits associated between PE and academic

performance are highly dependent on optimal contextual factors (Bailey et al., 2009). At the very least, it is important to consider that such a broad assumption and position statement may minimize or erase the experiences of invisibly disabled students (Kattari et al., 2018) and perpetuate ableistic views of activity in PE (Smith et al., 2021). More research and examination are necessary to determine how (disabled, invisibly disabled, disabled trans) students experience PE within the greater context of the school day. This type of examination may reveal more information as to how courses and spaces are intertwined and impact one another and students' experiences and access.

Conclusions

This study was conducted to investigate the PE experiences of disabled trans students. Findings revealed that the intersectional nature of disabled and trans identities described within the study were intertwined and hard to divorce, but that disability-related or gender-related needs may come to the forefront of specific experiences, consistent with literature about the messiness and fluidity of identity development. Participants enjoyed early childhood PE experiences more than the multi-activity, team sport curricula they were exposed to later in their PE experience, a phenomenon that continues to dilute teaching within the field of PE. While students described difficult situations related to PE uniforms and locker room settings that are consistent with previous findings from predominantly trans perspectives, findings in this study highlight the sensory and disability-related needs that may also exist in those spaces. Finally, scholars and stakeholders in the field of PE have long prioritized research on the association between physical activity (and, relatedly, PE) as a rationale for PE, which may negatively impact experiences of disabled trans students through ableism and erasure of their (invisible) disability and/or trans identities.

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Manuscript II

**Extracurricular Activity Participation: Exploring Experiences of an Autistic Disabled
Trans Adult and Their Social Network**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of an autistic disabled trans individual and their social network in extracurricular activities (EAs). The study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm and utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of each participant as it related to the autistic disabled trans individuals' participation in EA. Six participants including the autistic disabled trans participant, their father, two friends, and a coach participated in the study. The IPA approach guided data analysis and two themes were interpreted from the data: (a) "I'm in pain and tired, but this makes me feel so good": navigating identities and needs, and (b) "social interaction fueled me, but it came at a cost": managing social expectations. Identity development and understanding was fluid and centered around activity participation. Lack of support and understanding of disability-related needs may reduce participation or lead to greater masking. Socialization opportunities varied by opportunity but offered opportunities for acceptance and understanding among peers. Parent perceptions and understandings of socialization may be incongruent with participant's needs and values of social experiences.

Keywords: LGBTQ, gender identity, invisible disabilities, school activities

Introduction

Participation in extracurricular activities (EAs) may positively influence youth development from early adolescence through older adolescence (Deutsch et al., 2017). EAs are “an integral part of high school for many students” (Stearns & Glennie, 2010, p. 296), and can include a variety of activities. For the purposes of this study, EAs are conceptualized as “activities occurring outside of the school hours [...] and in the presence of an adult coach, teacher, or mentor” (Luthar et al., 2006; p. 585), which often include sports, art-based programs such as performance and visual arts, and community programs or clubs. Research supports the utility of EA participation, which may lead to better academic performance (Furda & Shuleski, 2019), positive social experiences and increased mental health status (Oberle et al., 2019), decreased instances of bullying and physical violence (Matjasko et al., 2019) for both nondisabled and disabled² students (Haegele et al., 2020), and a reduction in various forms of misconduct (Vandell et al., 2020). While much of the research has focused on the potential positive outcomes of EA participation, others have expressed concern that programs and opportunities may not reach or expand to all youth in schools (Gilman et al., 2004).

Students that may be excluded from participation in EAs, and therefore the positive benefits associated with EAs, include students who identify as disabled. For example, the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) Alliance (2018) suggested that disabled students “do not participate in sport to the same extent as their peers without disabilities, nor do they have equal opportunities to participate” (p. 22). Highlighting this, Fitzgerald (2005) found that while

² Consistent with Peers and colleagues’ (2014) conceptualization of disability-related language in academic reporting, this study adopts an identity-first approach to language use consistent with the preferences of the primary participant in this study. The participant describes themselves as *autistic* and *disabled*, and both are used throughout the manuscript as it is impossible to extricate the two as separate identities of the participant.

disabled students may enjoy having the opportunity to participate within team environments, they may not receive the same level of recognition as nondisabled peers and diminish their own efforts as a result. Much of the available research has highlighted parent perspectives of participation (Nichols et al., 2019). Specifically, parents of autistic youth described wanting their children to be more involved in EAs but acknowledged there were often physical and social barriers to successful participation (Arnell et al., 2020) and students with higher support needs for participation are likely to be excluded or have reduced opportunities (Dymond et al., 2020). Despite guidance from the U.S. Department of Education alerting schools to the obligation to ensure equal opportunities for disabled students in EAs (Office for Civil Rights [OCR], 2013), they are less likely to have or seek out opportunities for participation (Agran et al., 2017).

While opportunities are often sparse for disabled students, trans³ students must negotiate whether they can participate safely in activities that align with their gender identity (Caudwell, 2014). Specifically, sports opportunities can be beneficial and enjoyable if they offer opportunities that align with the student's gender identity (Devís-Devís et al., 2018) or result in body satisfaction (Jones et al., 2017). However, students may self-exclude if they fear they will face transphobic insults or other forms of harassment by participating in gender congruent activities (Hargie et al., 2017). Similarly, students may choose to participate in certain clubs and activities that are affirming and provide extra-familial support from peers and teachers (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliances; Allen et al., 2019), but may come up against conservative, hetero- and cis- normative school policies that restrict access to such EAs (Mayo, 2017).

³ Shorthand use of transgender, is an “umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth” (GLAAD, 2016, p. 10). Within this manuscript, the term *trans* is used consistent with the participants' self-identification and is inclusive of genderqueer, agender, non-binary, and other identities that fall outside the binary model of gender (GLAAD, 2016).

Disabled students and trans students often must prioritize their own health and safety in deciding to engage in EA, which may be because of their body and its existence and performance outside of cultural and societal norms (Mog & Swarr, 2008). For example, Kahn and Lindstrom (2015) explored the experiences of disabled lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students and found that when presented with EA opportunities that are affirming, students had the opportunity to openly explore and discuss their identities in what they referred to as a “marked space” (p. 370). In these spaces, participants recalled that they didn’t have to mask, or pretend to be nondisabled and/or hetero/cis, to feel safe and comfortable. However, there were times where LGBTQ friendly spaces were inaccessible because of disability-related needs, such as one autistic participant’s perceived inability to connect with his peers with content he considered “mindless banter” (p. 371). Others have called for the inclusion of queer and trans disabled students within a variety of EAs at the collegiate level (Harley et al., 2002) and highlight how disabled trans students may even be excluded in LGBTQ communities because of their multiplicative identities (Mizock et al., 2013).

While researchers have described disabled trans students as multiply marginalized individuals within a variety of contexts and spaces (Miller, 2018), there is a dearth of knowledge as to the experiences of disabled trans students in EAs. Further, as discussed above, researchers have described the role that parents, coaches/teachers, and peers may have in participation (Allen et al., 2019; Arnell et al., 2020; Nichols et al., 2019), but these perspectives have largely been gathered in isolation without understanding the shared experience of individuals (Kozub et al., 2020). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore and understand the EA participation experiences of an autistic disabled trans individual and their social network. Conceptually, this study was framed through an intersectional framework concerned with investigating the

experiences of a disabled trans individual and their social networks' understanding of EA participation. Intersectionality can be used to consider the ways in which "power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1297). Within education contexts, intersectionality may draw attention to the inadequate ability of school systems to meet the needs of students who are positioned as non-normative (e.g., disabled and trans; Azzarito, 2020) in a system that gives privilege and power to nondisabled, hetero/cis normative students. Kahn and Lindstrom (2015) have suggested that more intersectional examination is "needed to further illuminate the experiences of adolescents with disabilities who identify as a sexual or gender minority" (p. 375).

Methods

This study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm. An interpretivist paradigm includes a relativist ontology, which rejects a positivist view of external reality, instead valuing realities that exist subjective through and within people's minds (Potrac et al., 2014). In this paradigm, knowledge is subjective and co-constructed between the researcher and the individual sharing their experiences (Maher & Coates, 2019). Interpretivism relies on axiological assumptions and practices that ensure reporting of data are balanced between participant data and experiences and the researchers' interpretation of such (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Due to the subjective nature and interpretive nature of the study, it is important for the readers to understand the authors' positionality so that readers may appreciate how the authors' worldview, assumptions, and biases may have impacted or crafted the findings. The first author identifies as a nondisabled, cisgender heterosexual male (he/him) who conducts physical education research, was formally an adapted physical education teacher in a public-school setting, and coached traditional high school sports including football and lacrosse. He has conducted previous studies

with disabled individuals and trans individuals separately to gain their experiences in various physical activity-related settings but acknowledges his perspectives and understandings of EAs are limited to traditional conceptualizations and shaped by his former experiences as an athlete and coach of nondisabled, cis gender athletes.

Consistent with interpretivism, this study utilized an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach to examine how an autistic disabled trans individual and members of their social network experienced their participation in EA. The approach is concerned with how “people make sense of their major life experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 1) and draws from foundational philosophies of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith, 2019). In addition, this study utilized a single case study design to examine how a single case (social network) experienced the phenomenon of being involved in EAs. Of note, participants were asked to describe their own experiences from their perspective and meaning as participant, coach, friend, and/or parent rather than assumptively describing how someone else experienced the participation. The focus was appropriate for a case study as the concern was *what* was being studied (the phenomenon), rather than *how* it was studied (K. Hodge & Sharp, 2019). Following approval from the authors’ human subject review board, participant recruitment began.

Participants

One autistic disabled trans participant, Alex (pseudonym) was recruited through a previous and related study examining physical education experiences of disabled trans individuals. Recruitment details were personalized to be about Alex and snowball sampling was used to recruit their social network through them. This strategy ensured that recruited members of their social network were individuals that Alex deemed to be valuable or relevant to their

participation in EAs. A total of five participants were identified for and completed participation in the study. Information about each participant is provided below and intended to describe their own relevant demographic information as well as their relationship with Alex, beginning with and centering Alex themselves. Participants had the opportunity to decide whether to use their name or a self-selected pseudonym to represent them throughout the study.

Alex (they/them) is a white 30-year-old. In addition to being autistic, they identify as having fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, sensory processing disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). They participated in a variety of EAs growing up but focused on and wanted to discuss their experiences in color guard as a 9th and 10th grade student and performing arts activities (choir and musicals) in 11th and 12th grade. They were undiagnosed as autistic throughout the entirety of their K-12 education but began to have symptoms of fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue at an early age. Additionally, they were not out to their peers as trans until after high school but began to explore and question their gender identity in 12th grade and identified as queer in high school. Irvin (he/him) is a 60-year-old white cis male. He is Alex's father and someone Alex described Irvin as knowing everything there was to know about their participation and gender and disability-related experiences. Raelynn (she/her) is a white 31-year-old cis female. She is a friend of Alex's who supported Alex in the EAs they participated in but did not participate in any herself. Shelly (she/her) is a white 34-year-old cis female. She is a friend of Alex's and was the color guard captain during Alex's first year of participation. Molly (she/her) is a white 43-year-old cis lesbian female. She was Alex's music teacher in high school and served as color guard coach and director of choir and several plays that Alex performed in.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a demographic survey, semi-structured individual interviews, and reflective researcher notes. The demographic survey included questions related to (a) age, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) disability description, (d) gender identity, (e) pronouns, (f) personal identity description, (g) relationship to Alex, (h) accessibility needs, (i) participation preferences, (j) preferred pseudonym and representation, and (k) personal contact information for interview scheduling. After completing the demographic survey, participants were contacted to schedule their semi-structured individual interview. The interviews were audio-recorded and took place via Zoom (Alex) or telephone (social network). Alex participated in two, individual semi-structured interviews used as a pre- and post-interview. The pre-interview was conducted before any social network interviews and was used to gather baseline information about what types of EAs they had participated in and their initial thoughts, feelings, and meanings ascribed to EA participation. Then, that information was used to conduct the social network interviews and center the conversation around participation in the particular activities that were meaningful to Alex. Finally, a follow-up interview with Alex was conducted that included follow-up questions or lines of inquiry that had been uncovered during social network interviews as well as questions from the semi-structured interview guide.

While interviews included flexibility and the opportunity to follow lines of inquiry as topics were presented, a semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate interviews with Alex and their social network which is consistent with the IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009). The lead author conducted all interviews. Both the participant and social network semi-structured interview guides were created by the first author and reviewed by university faculty with IPA and intersectionality research experience as well as an autistic non-binary doctoral

student who had participated in a previous study. Additionally, Alex was actively involved in the shaping and use of the semi-structured guide for social network members to ensure that they were comfortable with the questions and information being. Following each interview, verbatim transcription was acquired and saved as a word document. Participants were sent the transcript and asked to review, modify, and return it to the first author. This was to give participants the opportunity to clarify responses, expand on responses, or note mistakes and misinterpretations from the transcription. Once transcriptions were returned, they were considered complete and ready for data analysis.

Reflective interview notes were collected as a secondary data source. During each interview, the first author made notes of things that came up contextually and wrote additional notes as soon as the interview had ended to track overall feelings and perceptions of the conversation as well as emergent themes that were front of mind (Smith & Sparkes, 2019). The first author took additional notes during data analysis to further reflect on personal biases, initial interpretations, and to track emergent themes and differences among participants (Walker et al., 2013).

Data Analysis and Quality Assessment

Following completion of all interviews and return of transcriptions, the first author (i.e., analyst) began thematic development consistent with the IPA approach. Rather than a prescriptive, concrete process that must be adhered to, IPA researchers prioritize the idiographic nature of the study (Larkin et al., 2006). First, starting with a single individual (Alex's pre-interview) the analyst began by reading and rereading the interview transcript and listening to available interview audio to become intimate with the content of the text (Smith et al., 2009). Next, the analyst highlighted and/or wrote notes in the margins as he engaged in "free coding"

and making meaning of messages in text (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), which led to the reduction of data into initial themes and then the development of emerging themes from connections across the case (Smith et al., 2009). During this process, the analyst made efforts to examine non-normative EA experiences described by the participant or their social network to adhere to the intersectional framework of the study. After themes were developed, the analyst moved to the next individual (social network member) and began the process over again, repeating the process until all cases or individuals had been individually reviewed and coded for themes (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, the analyst reviewed the themes and looked for similarities and connections between individuals, prioritizing and centering Alex's experiences as the participant and driving force behind the analysis. This final process includes a constant comparison of cases and the structuring and restructuring of themes that apply to all cases.

Yardley's (2000) four principles were used to assess quality of this study. *Sensitivity to the context* was supported by attempting to balance the power dynamic between the author and participant by involving them in the design of research questions and procedures, using identity-first language throughout consistent with the participants' wishes, and attempting to contextualize the study from a place of question and dearth of knowledge rather than an exploitation or trauma-inspired account of a multiply marginalized individual. *Commitment and rigor* were addressed through the careful and intentional selection of a familial case who all had experience with the disabled trans individual's EA participation to acquire and analyze an adequate breadth of data and depth. Further, a commitment to each case individually during the analysis procedure was made to ensure the researcher adhered to the idiographic nature of IPA. *Transparency and coherence* were addressed through the write-up and reporting of the process from recruitment to data analysis as well as presenting a balanced account of participant

transcripts and researcher interpretation to ensure the reader can hear the voice of the participants within the study in a coherent and cohesive presentation (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, *impact and importance* will be determined by the author's ability to present a work and argument deemed relevant, interesting, and/or provoking by those it was intended for, the journal's readership and EA facilitators (Yardley, 2000).

Results

Two major themes were constructed based on the data analysis: (a) "I'm in pain and tired, but this makes me feel so good": navigating identity and needs, and (b) "social interaction fueled me, but it came at a cost": managing social expectations.

"I'm in Pain and Tired, but This Makes Me Feel So Good": Navigating Identity and Needs

When analyzing the data, it became evident that there were changes in Alex's identity development over time that were consistent with their EA participation decisions. While it's difficult to make inferences that the changes and stages of identity development were directly linked to changes in EA participation, it provides an interesting connection and opportunity for exploration. Alex participated in color guard as a freshman because it "was playing to my strengths and comfort level but still challenging enough to be interesting." They recalled thinking "this is who I am" and recognized that it quickly became part of their identity. Their dad "was excited to see them explore" and practice because he "hadn't ever seen them do [anything like it] before." Molly described the first year of color guard as "stressful" and a "lot of pressure" for new participants, which they saw Alex have "their fair share of struggle with that first season." Alex confirmed that it wasn't something that "came naturally" and "I had to work at it all the time."

By sophomore year, Alex recalled that their “health was starting to be a little wonky, more wonky. I started to have a lot of wrist pain from spinning the flags and tossing them and catching them and my back pain had started to get really bad.” In addition, they were having difficulty with anxiety “off and on throughout the whole two years because I didn’t want to let people down” and felt a lot of “discomfort” trying to “keep up and mask and do everything I was supposed to do.” Alex continued that they “couldn’t keep it up anymore, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, all of it” because “when you’re chronically ill and disabled, and you don’t know it, your body will eventually tell you no.” Those around Alex also had mixed reactions and perceptions about Alex’s ability to complete the tasks. Irvin reflected, “I don’t know that they were ever in enough pain that they couldn’t” participate. Molly speculated that “some of the difficulties they had because of autism could have been more prominent in color guard” than other activities such as musicals and choir. Reflecting on what she now knows about Alex’s diagnoses, Shelly believed it “kind of makes sense why those issues were arising when they did” but as a teenager wrote it off as “some people just aren’t that strong, you know?” Speaking earnestly, Shelly continued, “I think even if we had known that they were autistic or had fibro[myalgia] at that point, I think, if anything, they would have been looked down on.”

For Alex, gendered norms were less of a concern than disability-related needs in color guard because “our uniforms were never really super feminine” and the activities felt “very strong and powerful” compared to other activities they deemed “hyper feminized” like cheerleading and dance. However, there were times when they wished there was more inclusive participation because they “only ever had one guy [participating] and he was pretty feminine, so I had a slight bit of that feeling [of dysphoria]” and they were “having a lot of back pain, which

probably wasn't helped by trying to round my shoulders over my chest" impacting their participation.

When Alex participated in musicals and choir, their gender identity became deeply embedded in their participation and was a "pivotal moment in my life and my identity." They said:

Late elementary school up until sophomore year of high school I was very much trying to fit the expectations of those around me to be a girl and to be able bodied and to be neurotypical and to be straight. I think that, particularly senior year, was when I was able to kind of let a lot of that go through the disguise of being JoJo [in *Seussical: The Musical*].

They "fell in love with" with the role of JoJo. The other parts were "pretty feminine" while JoJo was "this young boy and he had a lot of big feelings" and the songs for JoJo resonated with Alex. In reflection, Alex said:

I was able to apply a lot of what I was feeling, gender and sexuality and disability and just everything. I think I was able to, without realizing it, have an outlet through that song.

In preparation for the role, Alex "cut all of my hair off, my super long, long hair, got a boy's cut and I wore clothes that were more gender neutral for the audition." They continued that it was "really funny to look back on that and see how much I thrived and felt like myself and everything kind of clicked."

The role of JoJo "sticks out" (Raelynn) with Alex's social network as well. Irvin was "just excited and happy for them" because they "were finding a way to articulate and experience an artistic side in school." Similarly, Molly recalled that "it felt like that's where they belonged"

and “there were so many accolades that came their way”. Reliving a climactic moment of the play that Alex performed well, Molly said she “can still see that replay in my mind all the time because it was one of the best scenes, I think, that I’ve ever been a part of as a director, directing high school kids.” Raelynn was “a little bit in awe” because she “wouldn’t have had that same self-confidence.”

Alex’s participation in musicals and choir didn’t come without hiccups and instances of having to navigate their disability-related needs. It was a difficult balance of “I’m in pain and tired, but this makes me feel so good” that they had to navigate. They explicated:

I remember, for the musical, always being really exhausted and kind of getting through one scene and running off stage to just lay on the floor to make my back stop hurting. But I was so happy to be JoJo and it was such a strongly validating thing that I didn’t even really care.

They had to negotiate with themselves to balance energy to ensure they could make it through the whole performance because they were “managing all of these different bars of energy and masking and sensory, and constantly keeping those in mind.” And at times felt like they were “not disabled enough” to receive support from some of the staff, but those experiences “showed me how much [Molly] and [band teacher] were incredible teachers.”

“Social Interaction Fueled Me but It Came at a Cost”: Managing Social Expectations

Alex participated in EAs in high school because they wanted to “find a group of people who will support me, basically. And defend me and protect me” because it was their “chance to start over socially” in a new school where “a lot of people aren’t going to know me, most of my bullies [from middle school] aren’t even going to go to the school.” When asked about their

experiences with bullying, they described middle school as having several “cliques” and “just really bad stuff going down” there.

Alex was drawn to color guard at the activity fair where they met Shelly and remembered thinking “these are really cool people and I want to be part of it.” It helped that color guard was a part of the larger band because Alex “always really liked bands and it would be a huge group, a bunch of different people that I would know and like to hang out with.” The experience was positive because “there were quite a few people that I probably wouldn’t have ever been friends with outside of color guard” because they “were just very different people.” Within color guard, they were all “in our little cliques and that’s fine, you know? It didn’t mean people weren’t ever assholes, but we were together, and we thought we were cool at least and we had each other’s backs” (Alex). Color guard afforded them an opportunity to go from “kind of a wallflower to a wallflower in a group (laughing).” For Shelly, as color guard captain, she had an opportunity to “essentially be a mentor to not only Alex, but quite a few other people who were all about the same age.” She viewed herself as “their big sister” and tried to be “warm and welcoming.” Their relationship grew to the point that her and Alex “stayed in touch” after Shelly graduated because they “were part of the same group.”

While color guard seemed to afford Alex several socialization opportunities, they described having fewer social opportunities within the context of musicals and choir activities. They said they remember “feeling kind of other from a lot of people in the music department.” They described a social hierarchy that existed within the music department where “there’s like the cool kids and like, the not cool kids, or the ones who make people laugh, but they might not be cool” so Alex said they “still feel like I’m some odd, strange category in my own little space.”

There was at least one peer in music who Alex confided in, their counterpart for *Seussical: The Musical*. They explained:

He and I were really close for a long time and he was also struggling with his own LGBT stuff, so I think that friendship has probably helped me to become more knowledgeable and open to then have that talk with my dad or start to explore who I actually was.

This particular peer was one of the only peers Alex described as being supportive and involved in making sense of their identity as LGBTQ aside from a passing discussion of past romantic relationships. But they did speak generally about fellow students in the LGBTQ community saying, “I feel like the queer community on some subconscious level kind of ends up together, whether we know it or not, so I know that I was not the only queer person in most of the spaces.”

Alex’s dad recalled the support Alex received from some of their teachers. He thought “the interaction with the adults had more of an impact on Alex and their desire to continue [activities]” and he was “glad” Alex found teachers to “look up to” who treated them “with respect” and were “truly good mentors.” Molly also affectionately recalled the close relationship she had with Alex because “we get to spend a lot more time together than I would spend with other students that weren’t involved in as many activities.” Molly, who identifies as a lesbian, was not out when Alex was in school, but saw herself as a resource and was willing to “talk to [students] openly about it and be supportive” while maintaining some “boundaries there for myself” as well as members of the community who were more conservative.

Despite the positive teacher relationships, Alex’s dad did not “really recall them hanging out with the people in those activities” outside of practice and competitions or performances. When asked about the peers Alex participated with, he said he “didn’t really observe how they related to the others on the team” aside from word of mouth from Alex and that he “was

shockingly unaware” and “ignorant about this question.” In approaching the topic with Alex, they said:

I think part of why he can't remember is that I didn't really...if you spend a few hours in class and then a few hours after school with those people, that's plenty of socializing for me. You know? I'm not going to call somebody, after seeing them for three hours in a day and be like 'You want to hang out?' I'm very introverted. I do a good job of masking as an extrovert, but part of the consequence of that is that when I get home, I don't, I can't.

They continued that “throughout the day, I'm pretty much constantly texting and messaging and Facebook or even Twitter or what have you. That's been my format of staying in touch with people for at least a decade, if not more.” When asked to explain why, Alex explained that those methods of socialization are “more sustainable in many ways, I can control when I need a break, I can go do something and come back to the conversation, I can use a GIF, so people know what I'm trying to convey.” Raelynn said, “we didn't always socialize” but “connected” by “spending time with somebody without actually spending time with somebody.” She described this as occupying the same space with “no expectations on you, you're not expected to socialize with the other person.” Shelly added more to the conversation and experience in stating that she was “the same way, I would only hang out with people occasionally” because EA participation “takes a lot out of you.” At times, her parents “had the same issue with me not hanging out with some of my friends, but it's like, we were pretty much all in performing arts of some sort and at that point I was just tired.”

Discussion

Results from this study provide an exploratory glimpse into the experiences of an autistic, disabled trans individual and their social network as they navigated EAs in high school. During the interviews, it became obvious to the interviewer and Alex, the primary participant, that they had a ‘tale of two activities’ as it related to their experiences in color guard and musicals (or choir-related activities generally). Color guard exacerbated Alex’s disability-related needs and forced them to mask the physical, emotional, social, and mental difficulties they were having when attempting to keep up, and eventually burned out. Alex did not have a known diagnosis in school, which may have explained why they had more opportunities than autistic and disabled students typically have (Agran et al., 2017), but may have also led to burnout and discontinuing participation because of the need to mask (Miller et al., 2021) or receive higher support (Dymond et al., 2020). This type of experience may have also led to internalized ableism as Alex tried to adhere to certain organizational expectations and normative practices that were unattainable (Kattari et al., 2018). Further, those around Alex were aware they were struggling to participate but failed to understand how they could support Alex, or, worse, reflected that they likely wouldn’t have and would have stigmatized Alex if their disability identity was known. Hodge and colleagues (2019) proposed a framework for working through this lack of support and othering that involves awareness of and appreciation for autistic participants in the space, and commitment to removing barriers. However, they emphasized that more input is necessary from autistic and disabled adults as to how they can best be supported, which we support as important participatory work that needs to be undertaken to break down unattainable and exclusionary norms.

Although disability-related needs remained a concern as Alex transitioned to choir/musical based EAs, it became less central to their experience as they began to explore and enjoy gender expression. Alex's experiences support research suggesting that affirming spaces may provide trans and queer youth the opportunity to explore and 'unmask' their identities (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015), and theater, specifically, has been described by others as an affirming space for self-expression (Allen et al., 2019). Interestingly, Alex took more intentional steps to manage or mask their disabilities because of the affirmation and joy they felt participating in gender affirming activities. There were no outside supports as Alex was not 'disabled enough' to qualify for support (Kattari et al., 2018). This provides a unique intersectional look at how an autistic disabled trans person negotiated norms that presented as barriers (i.e., nondisabled participation) to receive the benefits of other normative expectations (i.e., open gender expression in theater). Research suggests LGBTQ affirming spaces may not be accessible to autistic or disabled individuals (Harley et al., 2002; Mizock et al., 2013) and/or may prevent full participation (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015), however, to our knowledge, no one has explored how individuals with invisible, or maskable, disabilities are able to negotiate and circumvent nondisabled normative practices to engage in activities. We are interested in further understanding how autistic and/or disabled trans and queer individuals negotiate their identities to find affirming spaces and how ableist, hetero- and cis- normative spaces can be deconstructed in schools.

In addition to varied experiences in EAs they chose to participate in, Alex had varying levels of socialization and connectedness to others in each activity. EA participation provided Alex an opportunity to 'start over' and reconstruct their peer group in high school, leaving behind bullies and negative experiences with peers in middle school. Alex's experiences add to

the growing body of literature that EAs may reduce instances of bullying or mistreatment (Matjasko et al., 2019), particularly for autistic youth (Haegele et al., 2020), and increase positive social experiences (Oberle et al., 2019). Alex felt more connected to their peers in color guard, but specifically connected with an LGBTQ peer during a musical that meaningfully influenced their understanding of themselves, supporting literature that LGBTQ youth find comfort and support in peers navigating similar experiences (Allen et al., 2019).

While Alex wasn't entirely fulfilled with their social life, they felt that it was adequate for the time and constraints they faced. Interestingly, their father had a very limited understanding and perspective of their socialization and may have assumed that they weren't socializing with peers outside of activities because he did not see it take place. This incongruence in viewpoint has important implications. For example, literature has highlighted and privileged parents' desires for increased socialization for autistic youth as an outcome of EA participation (Arnell et al., 2020; Obrusnikova & Miccinello, 2012). Our findings provide an important voice to the conversation, the participant, and highlight the need to reconceptualize what we view as socialization and friendship. Students navigating invisible disabilities or uncertainty about their gender and/or sexual identities may limit their social circle to those they feel are safe and affirming (Allen et al., 2019) or find socialization during school and activity to be adequate and fulfilling while anything beyond may be taxing and unnecessarily burdensome. Researchers should look to participants to understand socialization experiences rather than stakeholders as the two are likely to be incongruent (Leo & Mourton, 2020).

Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore how an autistic disabled trans individual and their social network experienced their participation in EAs. Findings revealed that identity

development and understanding are complicated and were impacted by the type of activity the autistic disabled trans individual chose to participate in with more physically rigorous and rigid experiences highlighting and exacerbating disability-related needs. Meanwhile, experiences such as musicals and choir allowed the participant to explore gender expression and identity in a safe and affirming way without being outed or othered. However, exploring their gender identity came at the cost of ignoring their disability identity and disability-related needs. Further, socialization and social opportunities were also influenced by activity participation, but both offered an opportunity to be a part of a group, make friends, and reduce instances of bullying and rejection. However, parent understandings and expectations of socialization may be incomplete or incompatible with that of the actual participant.

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CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To date, few studies have examined the intersectional experiences of disabled trans individuals in school contexts (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015). Moreover, little is known about the intersectional experiences of disabled trans individuals in contexts within school where mistreatment, harassment, exclusion, and violence of disabled students and trans students, independently, is well documented (Devís-Devís, et al., 2018; Hargie et al., 2017; Haegele & Sutherland, 2015). Kahn and Lindstrom (2015) put forth a mandate for researchers to take intersectional approaches to understanding the school-related experiences of disabled trans students so that we may change and better the education system for all students. The manuscripts presented in this dissertation sought to add to the literature starting with contexts in which students may be most on display and marginalized, physical education and extracurricular activities.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of disabled trans individuals in PE. The results and constructed themes illustrate the complexity of gender- and disability-related experiences participants regularly navigated as individuals whose identities were outside of the normative PE culture. This is highlighted in all three themes as participants reflected upon disability-centric experiences, gender-centric experiences, and experiences in which both disability and gender compounded to impact the experience. These experiences are consistent with Kahn and Lindstrom's (2015) findings that identity development occurs in a variety of stages, which are fluid over time and impacted by environmental contexts. It also disrupts the notion that there are clear, dichotomous groups or categories in which students fall (i.e., cisgender or transgender, disabled or nondisabled; Thompson et al., 2001), rather there is complexity and nuance within identity development that should be encouraged and respected.

Sykes (2011) described these experiences and negotiations as a “crucial form of embodied talk, talk that constitutes queer bodies as interruptions to the historical and contemporary normative imaginaries about binary gender” (p. 41).

Participants’ experiences were impacted by the type of activities performed during class and whether choice and autonomy were available to them. Often, activities were novel (i.e., scooters) or centered around movement and fun (i.e., parachute games) in elementary school, but, as students aged, were replaced by more competitive team sport or fitness-related activities that may have put students on display and in uncomfortable social situations, and/or caused physical pain and discomfort. Teachers’ overreliance on multi-activity, team sport-based curricula has been documented within PE literature (Banville et al., 2021; Ennis, 2014) and specifically in working with disabled students (Coates, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2005; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000) and trans students (Devís-Devís et al., 2018). Banville and colleagues (2021) discussed this as an ongoing issue within the field of PE that has extended for decades. We posit that this style of PE will likely outlast our careers. However, it is our hope that in valuing and promoting diverse student voices’ and challenging the status quo of normative culture or ‘traditional’ iterations of PE will result in more transformative pedagogies that center students’ needs (Fitzpatrick & Enright, 2017).

Like the well documented experiences of multi-activity curricula, changing area experiences have been exhaustively documented as contexts and spaces in which trans students may be subjected to violence (Hargie et al., 2017), being misgendered (Caudwell, 2014), or developing anxiety and stress related to one’s gender identity (Herrick & Duncan, 2018). The experiences of disabled students in changing spaces have been largely undiscovered or framed around experiences of physically disabled individuals who felt like their body was on display

(Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Haegele et al., 2019). Findings in this study highlighted intersectional experiences within changing areas, including cisgendered expectation-related anxiety and uncertainties as well as sensory needs stemming from the design of the physical space that led to high noise, sensory overload, and difficult body temperature regulation. These experiences compounded and made changing areas difficult spaces to navigate. Further, students expressed issues with PE uniforms that included cisgendered expectations and norms for appearance and sensory concerns. Future research may need to examine locker room experiences beyond a singular gendered perspective and seek to better understand how locker rooms and PE uniforms may be inaccessible from multiple perspectives and for multiple individuals who exist beyond the normative culture established within PE.

Participants in this study overwhelmingly described PE as a course that had negative impacts on the rest of their school day. This largely stemmed from disability-associated needs such as being overstimulated from noises, having severe headaches associated with the fluorescent lighting in the gym, having to concentrate harder to understand the rules and expectations, and/or physical implications of participating and handling flare-ups and pain associated with asthma or chronic pain conditions. Ira provided some context to this issue when they said attending PE was “the equivalent to having an hour where you’re just in a hallway walking during a passing period.” To combat issues associated with PE, participants often had to budget their energy (i.e., limiting participation or being intentional when registering for PE courses), but it wasn’t always possible to avoid negatively impacting days in PE. Researchers often lament the need to remove as many barriers to participation as possible (Coates & Vickerman, 2008), typically viewed as physical accessibility barriers (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000), but PE remains a space with deeply entrenched norms and processes as discussed earlier

in this discussion. The findings and experiences in this study highlight the need to think beyond physical constraints and examine other ways in which PE may be designed as an inaccessible space for some students.

One potential area of examination pertains to the relationship between PE and physical activity. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (2018) *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, "evidence indicates that both acute bouts and regular moderate-to-vigorous physical activity improve the cognitive functions of memory, executive function, processing speed, attention, and academic performance for these children" (p. 47). The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America), an influential national PE organization in the US, includes this information in their *Speak Out! Day* materials for PE teachers and key stakeholders to lobby legislators to approve funding of PE in educational policy each year. While we do not argue the breadth or extent of literature documenting physical activity and academic performance associations, particularly among nondisabled, cisgender students, we'd be negligent if we didn't point out the inference and value SHAPE America assigns to PE as a proxy for physical activity during the school day may not be of value for all students. While findings from this study are not intended to be generalizable, they suggest that PE participation can have a detrimental, or a perceived detrimental impact, on later academic performance and learning for some students, specifically those identifying as disabled and trans. This assertion is consistent with prior claims that benefits associated between PE and academic performance are highly dependent on optimal contextual factors (Bailey et al., 2009). At the very least, it is important to consider that such a broad assumption and position statement may minimize or erase the experiences of invisibly disabled students (Kattari et al., 2018) and perpetuate ableistic views of activity in PE (Smith et al., 2021). More research and examination

are necessary to determine how (disabled, invisibly disabled, disabled trans) students experience PE within the greater context of the school day. This type of examination may reveal more information as to how courses and spaces are intertwined and impact one another and students' experiences and access.

This study was conducted to investigate the physical education experiences of disabled trans students. Findings revealed that the intersectional nature of disabled and trans identities described within the study were intertwined and hard to divorce, but that disability-related or gender-related needs may come to the forefront of specific experiences, consistent with literature about the messiness and fluidity of identity development. Participants enjoyed early childhood physical education experiences more than the multi-activity, team sport curricula they were exposed to later in their physical education experience, a phenomenon that continues to dilute teaching and teachers within the field of physical education. While students described difficult situations related to physical education uniforms and locker room settings that are consistent with previous findings from predominantly trans perspectives, findings in this study highlight the sensory and disability-related needs that may also exist in those spaces. Finally, scholars and stakeholders in the field of physical education have long prioritized research on the association between physical activity (and, relatedly, physical education) as a rationale for physical education, which may negatively impact experiences of disabled trans students through ableism and erasure of their (invisible) disability and/or trans identities.

The purpose of study two was to explore the experiences of an autistic disabled trans individual and their social network in extracurricular activities. Results from this study provide an exploratory glimpse into the experiences of an autistic, disabled trans individual and their social network as they navigated EAs in high school. During the interviews, it became obvious to

the interviewer and Alex, the primary participant, that they had a ‘tale of two activities’ as it related to their experiences in color guard and musicals (or choir-related activities generally). Color guard exacerbated Alex’s disability-related needs and forced them to mask the physical, emotional, social, and mental difficulties they were having when attempting to keep up, and eventually burned out. Alex did not have a known diagnosis in school, which may have explained why they had more opportunities than autistic and disabled students typically have (Agran et al., 2017), but may have also led to burnout and discontinuing participation because of the need to mask (Miller et al., 2021) or receive higher support (Dymond et al., 2020). This type of experience may have also led to internalized ableism as Alex tried to adhere to certain organizational expectations and normative practices that were unattainable (Kattari et al., 2018). Further, those around Alex were aware they were struggling to participate but failed to understand how they could support Alex, or, worse, reflected that they likely wouldn’t have and would have stigmatized Alex if their disability identity was known. Hodge and colleagues (2019) proposed a framework for working through this lack of support and othering that involves awareness of and appreciation for autistic participants in the space, and commitment to removing barriers. However, they emphasized that more input is necessary from autistic and disabled adults as to how they can best be supported, which we support as important participatory work that needs to be undertaken to break down unattainable and exclusionary norms.

Although disability-related needs remained a concern as Alex transitioned to choir/musical based EAs, it became less central to their experience as they began to explore and enjoy gender expression. Alex’s experiences support research suggesting that affirming spaces may provide trans and queer youth the opportunity to explore and ‘unmask’ their identities (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015), and theater, specifically, has been described by others as an

affirming space for self-expression (Allen et al., 2019). Interestingly, Alex took more intentional steps to manage or mask their disabilities because of the affirmation and joy they felt participating in gender affirming activities. There were no outside supports as Alex was not 'disabled enough' to qualify for support (Kattari et al., 2018). This provides a unique intersectional look at how an autistic disabled trans person negotiated norms that presented as barriers (i.e., nondisabled participation) to receive the benefits of other normative expectations (i.e., open gender expression in theater). Research suggests LGBTQ affirming spaces may not be accessible to autistic or disabled individuals (Harley et al., 2002; Mizock et al., 2013) and/or may prevent full participation (Kahn & Lindstrom, 2015), however, to our knowledge, no one has explored how individuals with invisible, or maskable, disabilities are able to negotiate and circumvent nondisabled normative practices to engage in activities. We are interested in further understanding how autistic and/or disabled trans and queer individuals negotiate their identities to find affirming spaces and how ableist, hetero- and cis- normative spaces can be deconstructed in schools.

In addition to varied experiences in EAs they chose to participate in, Alex had varying levels of socialization and connectedness to others in each activity. EA participation provided Alex an opportunity to 'start over' and reconstruct their peer group in high school, leaving behind bullies and negative experiences with peers in middle school. Alex's experiences add to the growing body of literature that EAs may reduce instances of bullying or mistreatment (Matjasko et al., 2019), particularly for autistic youth (Haegele et al., 2020), and increase positive social experiences (Oberle et al., 2019). Alex felt more connected to their peers in color guard, but specifically connected with an LGBTQ peer during a musical that meaningfully

influenced their understanding of themselves, supporting literature that LGBTQ youth find comfort and support in peers navigating similar experiences (Allen et al., 2019).

While Alex wasn't entirely fulfilled with their social life, they felt that it was adequate for the time and constraints they faced. Interestingly, their father had a very limited understanding and perspective of their socialization and may have assumed that they weren't socializing with peers outside of activities because he did not see it take place. This incongruence in viewpoint has important implications. For example, literature has highlighted and privileged parents' desires for increased socialization for autistic youth as an outcome of EA participation (Arnell et al., 2020; Obrusnikova & Miccinello, 2012). Our findings provide an important voice to the conversation, the participant, and highlight the need to reconceptualize what we view as socialization and friendship. Students navigating invisible disabilities or uncertainty about their gender and/or sexual identities may limit their social circle to those they feel are safe and affirming (Allen et al., 2019) or find socialization during school and activity to be adequate and fulfilling while anything beyond may be taxing and unnecessarily burdensome. Researchers should look to participants to understand socialization experiences rather than stakeholders as the two are likely to be incongruent (Leo & Mourton, 2020).

This study was conducted to explore how an autistic disabled trans individual and their social network experienced their participation in EAs. Findings revealed that identity development and understanding are complicated and were impacted by the type of activity the autistic disabled trans individual chose to participate in with more physically rigorous and rigid experiences highlighting and exacerbating disability-related needs. Meanwhile, experiences such as musicals and choir allowed the participant to explore gender expression and identity in a safe and affirming way without being outed or othered. However, exploring their gender identity

came at the cost of ignoring their disability identity and disability-related needs. Further, socialization and social opportunities were also influenced by activity participation, but both offered an opportunity to be a part of a group, make friends, and reduce instances of bullying and rejection. However, parent understandings and expectations of socialization may be incomplete or incompatible with that of the actual participant.

Limitations and Conclusions

Throughout the construction of this dissertation, limitations came through and were revealed through reflexive notetaking as part of the data collection and analysis process. First, while this study was designed as a retrospective study to ensure participants had had time to emotionally distance themselves from any potentially harmful or negative experiences (Paechter, 2012) it became clear that particularities of experiences may have been lost. Participants frequently responded with statements such as “I don’t really recall” or “My memories of that are kind of fuzzy at this point.” This may have affected what participants shared and skewed their memories positively or negatively depending upon the overall experiences they had. While these accounts are still important perspectives and information to have, the recall ability of participants should be considered in reading and understanding the findings. Further, through reflexive notetaking, the author came to realize that some of the decisions that were made regarding disability and gender identities were formed out of his own biases and presumptions. That is, while the author framed the study in a way that was inclusive of all self-identifying disabled people, there were instances when he attempted to gatekeep or define what did and did not qualify as disability. The researcher tried to address this through honest conversation with participants and consideration of the emerging bias during data collection, analysis, and writing of results, however it may have impacted how questions were asked and what information is

reported in study findings. Further, the study was framed in a way that separated gender identity from sexuality based on a quote the author found early on in the conceptualization of this project (and a few others before it), that problematized the LGBTQ umbrella because it placed “artificial alliances between groups of people who have diverse sexual and gendered identities/subjectivities” and “frequently becomes synonymous with the experiences of lesbian and gay individuals and communities” (Caudwell, 2014, p. 401). In attempting to prioritize the voices and perspectives of trans individuals and trans research, he may have marginalized and attempted to dictate what was relevant regarding gender identity. This resulted in isolating and viewing gender identity and sexual identity as separable constructs and identities. The author attempted to remedy this and become more understanding of the complexity of gender and sexual identities but is aware of some of the flaws that these initial biases created from the outset of this project. While these limitations and reflective experiences impact the study and its findings, it is the author’s hope that readers are able to find some impact and importance within the findings.

Despite some limitations on the findings and design of the study, the two manuscripts served their purpose in expanding the knowledge base of experiences of disabled trans individuals in school. The manuscripts offered some interesting findings as both highlighted the fluidity of identities and how identity development may change over time or by activity. Further, both studies highlighted normed practices within the field of physical education that need to be questioned. Namely, the findings in study one challenge the rationale that physical education is associated with better academic performance as participants often spent class feeling anxious about their gender identity or disability-related needs and exhausted by sensory inputs or the physical exertion involved and believed they struggled in the classes that followed. In study two,

the participant's father had an incomplete view of Alex's socialization experiences because he did not see them socialize outside of school or activity, which, from Alex's perspective, was by design to prioritize their needs. When disabled trans individuals prioritize their needs and well-being, it may be viewed as non-normative and unacceptable to stakeholders around them, and researchers should continue to dismantle and understand the pervasiveness of ableism and transphobia in educational settings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Study One Participant Recruitment Letter

My name is Steve Holland, and I am a nondisabled, cisgender doctoral student in the Department of Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University. The purpose of this study is to understand the physical education and sport experiences of individuals who identify as both a disabled person/person with a disability and trans, non-binary, or not cisgender in the United States and the meaning individuals ascribe to their experiences. I am looking for anyone who identifies as a disabled person/person with a disability and who is also transgender, nonbinary, or is not cisgender. An official diagnosis of disability is not required—individuals can self-identify. Individuals participating in this study do not need to be "out" about their disability or gender identity to take part in this study. Individuals should both be disabled/have a disability and be transgender, nonbinary, or not cisgender. Language preferences for disability regarding identity-first and person-first language will be respected based on individual preferences. Further, participants must be 18 years or older, no longer enrolled in K-12 education, and participated for at least one year in general physical education (integrated setting with nondisabled peers).

Interested and selected individuals will be asked to respond to an email prompt and participate in a one-to-one interview with me. Interviews will be conducted via telephone, video conference, messaging application such as GroupMe or WhatsApp, and/or other platforms as necessary to meet the accessibility needs of each individual participant. If you are interested, please complete this Google Form [Link to form]. If you have any questions or would like clarifying information, please contact me via email (sholl012@odu.edu) or cell (call or text) at [removed for dissertation publication]. All selected participants are eligible to receive a **\$50 gift card** for their participation.

Thank you,

Steven Holland (he/him)
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX B

Study One Participant Informed Consent and Demographic Survey

School-Based Physical Education and Sport Experiences of Disabled Trans/Non-Binary Adults Recruitment Survey

* Required

Accessibility Audit

An accessibility audit was performed on this form and was deemed compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1. In addition, the form was audited for accessibility using the screen reader NVDA version 2020.3 with the browser Google Chrome.

Introduction

The purposes of this form are to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. This project, School-Based Physical Education and Sport Experiences of Disabled Trans/Non-Binary Adults: A Retrospective Inquiry, will be conducted in several ways. First, participants will be asked to complete this short demographic form, second participants will be asked to respond to a short email prompt, and finally, participants will participate in an individual interview which will be audio-recorded or downloaded with the second researcher (Holland) via telephone, video conference call, messaging application (e.g., GroupMe, WhatsApp), and/or other platforms as requested. The email prompt and interview will be conducted in a way that ensures participation is accessible to each individual participant. Questions about accommodations are included at the end of this survey and the researcher (Holland) will follow up with any questions and to arrange accessible participation.

Researchers

Steven Holland, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Human Movement Sciences, Old Dominion University
Justin A. Haegle, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Human Movement Sciences, Old Dominion University (PI)

Description of Research Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning adults who identify as a disabled person/person with a disability and who are also trans, non-binary, or not cisgender attribute to their physical education and sport experiences in the United States.

If you decide to participate, then you will be asked to respond to a short email prompt and participate in audio-recorded (or downloaded) one-to-one individual interviews via telephone, video conference call, or messaging application. For video conference calls, only the audio recording and transcript will be recorded. The researcher may contact you for a follow-up interview or to get clarification on the transcript of your responses. The total time of participation will be between 75-120 minutes and will be scheduled around your availability.

Further, one participant will have the opportunity to participate in a follow-up study that will examine your experiences in or attempts to participate in school-based sport (competitive and/or intramural). In this study, you would be asked to recruit 4-5 close members of your social network (ex. friends, family, coaches, teachers) to participate in an individual interview as well. This study includes its own \$50 gift card to each participant, more information will be given to participants following the first study.

Inclusion/Participation Criteria

In order to participate in this study, you should (a) identify as both a disabled person/person with a disability and trans, non-binary, or not cisgender, (b) be 18 years of age or older, (c) have graduated from or are no

longer enrolled in public K-12 education, (d) attended physical education in an integrated setting for at least one academic school year, and (e) are willing to participate in interview and a written prompts for a total of 75-120 minutes.

One participant will be identified for participation in part two of this study and receive information separately.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

RISKS: There are no expected or predicted potential risks associated with participation in this study. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. However, it is important to note that while participants have the option to skip or not answer questions, the questions asked during this interview may result in the recall of negative school or personal experiences that elicit strong emotions. As a result, the researcher will follow-up after data collection to ensure participant well-being, offer resources as appropriate, and help in setting up appointments or services as necessary.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to participants as a result of participation in this study.

Cost and Payment for Participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, in an effort to increase participation and thank participants for their time, a gift card of \$50 will be electronically delivered to all participants who are chosen to participate following the completion of data collection. Additionally, there are no costs associated with participation in this research.

New Information

If the researchers find new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will give it to you.

Confidentiality

The researchers will take reasonable steps to keep information private. First, participants have the option to provide only a pseudonym if they prefer to further ensure confidentiality. However, all participants' information will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive that is only accessible by the second researcher (Holland). The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify you and only use the selected pseudonym to report findings. Additionally, the researcher will avoid the use of summary tables in the findings that list participant demographic information to further provide confidentiality. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

If participating in the second study, only information you deem appropriate to share with your social network will be revealed. The purpose of the follow-up is to examine your experiences in extracurricular activities, which is the information that will be provided to your social network, if they are unaware that you identify as trans/non-binary, the researcher will ensure that the information provided and questions asked do not out you or put you in a vulnerable position. None of their responses will be shared with you nor your responses shared with them, rather the interviews will help center around experiences that took place (e.g., making/getting cut from the seventh grade basketball team) and each individuals' understanding of that experience.

Withdrawal Privilege

It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later by opting out of data collection or deciding not to answer specific questions. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

Compensation for Illness and Injury

If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact Dr. Justin A. Haegele, at jhaegele@odu.edu or 757 683 5338, Dr. Laura C. Chezan, the current chair for the DCOE Human Subjects Committee, at lchezan@odu.edu or 757-683-7055.

Voluntary Consent

The purpose of this form is to inform you about the study prior to participation. By agreeing to complete and submit this screening survey, you are consenting to participate in this study. This means, you are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research, however if you have additional questions prior to completing this survey, please reach out to Steve Holland (sholl012@odu.edu; 765-398-1972). If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them:

Steven K. Holland: 765-398-1972

Justin A. Haegele: 757-683-5338

If at any time you feel pressured to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, then you should call Dr. Laura C. Chezan, the current chair for the DCOE Human Subjects Committee, at lchezan@odu.edu or 757-683-7055.

Do you consent to participation in this study? *

Yes

No

Demographic Questions

In numerical form, what is your age?

Your answer

How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

Your answer

How would you describe your gender identity?

Your answer

How would you describe your disability?

Your answer

What are your pronouns?

Your answer

How would you describe your identity? You are a person who identifies as [blank].

Your answer

Image Description: Map of US Census Regions and Divisions of the United States. List of states by region included in next question.



Using the above map or below descriptions as reference, which US region are you located in?

West (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, or Washington)

Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, or Wisconsin)

Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or Vermont)

South (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, South Carolina, Virginia, or West Virginia)

How can I ensure your accessibility needs are met as a participant in this study?

Your answer



How do you prefer to participate in the individual interview?

Telephone

Zoom video or audio conference call

GroupMe/WhatsApp/Text messaging

Other:

What is your name? (Optional)

Will only be used in correspondence between you and the researcher. If left blank, your pseudonym will be used.

Your answer

What is your preferred pseudonym?

This is a name that will be used instead of your name in the final report (and when communicating if the above response about name is left blank).

Your answer

Please provide an email where you can be reached to send participation information.

-End of Survey-

APPENDIX C

Study One Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Hello [interviewee] my name is [interviewer] it's nice to meet you. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. Before we begin, I want to take a minute to review the purpose of this interview: I am interested in understanding your experiences in physical education as a disabled trans/non-binary individual. I am a nondisabled, cisgender, heterosexual doctoral candidate studying physical education. I have worked as an adapted physical education teacher in the past. I am interested in this study because the experiences of disabled trans/non-binary people are not taken into consideration in physical education research and that students are often looked at as disabled or trans/non-binary without understanding the complexity and intersection of those identities and life experiences.

The interview should take between 45-90 minutes. Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential. That is, we will transcribe this conversation and then remove your name and any identifying information from the interview and replace it with a pseudonym or we will use the pseudonym you have already provided throughout the interview. This pseudonym will be used in place of your real name when referring to you in any research reports. Following transcription, the audio file from the interview will be destroyed.

I also want you to know that your participation in this interview is entirely optional. There is no penalty for not participating, and you may drop out of the study at any point. While the risk associated with this study is low, it is possible that some of the questions could make you feel uncomfortable. If that occurs, feel free to say that you do not want to answer those questions. In addition, if you say something during the interview and decide later that you do not want us to use it, we can delete these comments. Do you have any questions or concerns before we get started? Okay, I am going to start the audio recording and ask the first question when you are ready.

1. How would you describe physical education?
 - a. How did you feel about PE?
 - i. What was your experience of being in PE?
 1. Was it negative/positive/neutral?
 - b. Was PE a meaningful part of your day? Why/why not?
2. How would you describe your participation in PE?
3. How do you think your teachers/peers would describe your participation in PE?
 - a. How does that make you feel?
 - i. Or do you agree or disagree with their description? Did you find their description to be inaccurate in any way? If so, how?
4. What kind of expectations were set out for you in PE (e.g. achievement, participation, fitness, etc.)? How were these expectations similar or different from other students?

5. What kind of activities did you engage in in PE? How were these choices similar or different from your peers?
6. Do you believe [having a disability/being disabled] influenced how you experienced physical education?
 - a. Can you describe how? OR if so, please describe how this influenced your experience.
 - b. How did this make you feel at the time? OR What did you think about this at the time?
7. Do you believe [being trans/non-binary / identifying as trans/non-binary] influenced how you experienced physical education?
 - a. Please describe your experience if you can.
 - b. What did you think about this at the time? OR How did that make you feel?
8. How did being disabled and trans/non-binary impact your participation or experiences in PE?
 - a. Please describe your experience if you can.
 - b. How did that make you feel/how does that make you feel now?
 - i. What did you think about this/what do you think about this now?
 - c. Were there situations in which being disabled impacted your participation and experience more or less than being trans/non-binary? Or vice versa?
9. How would you describe the peers that you chose to participate in PE with?
 - a. Why do you think you chose to participate with those peers?
 - b. Would you still choose to participate with those peers?
 - c. Do you believe your disability influenced your relationship with your peers during physical education?
 - d. Do you believe being trans/non-binary influenced your relationship with your peers during physical education?
 - e. Do you think your disability or being trans/non-binary had a greater impact on your relationship with your peers?
 - i. Why do you think that?
 - ii. How did that make you feel at the time?
10. Did you ever experience any sort of bullying or teasing?
 - a. Do you think this had to do with being disabled and/or trans/non-binary?
 - b. How did these experiences make you feel?
11. Can you describe your experiences with your physical education teachers?
 - a. Do you believe you had a meaningful relationship with your physical education teacher?
 - b. How did being disabled and trans/non-binary impact your relationship with your teacher?
 - c. How did this relationship make you feel at the time?

12. Did you experience any pressure from your physical education teacher to be good or bad at activities?
13. How have your K-12 physical education experiences influenced your understanding about your capabilities?
14. Can you describe how your K-12 physical education experiences impacted your current physical activity participation?
 - a. How would you have changed your K-12 PE experience?
15. Do you remember a particularly meaningful/challenging experience you had while in physical education (describe)?
16. Is there anything else you would like to describe about physical education as a disabled and trans/non-binary student?
17. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences in physical education?

APPENDIX D

Study Two Social Network Recruitment Letter

My name is Steve Holland, and I am a nondisabled, cisgender heterosexual doctoral student in the Department of Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University. I am conducting a study examining the extracurricular activity experiences of [Alex] and how their social network experienced their participation. [Alex] has identified you as a member of their social network during their participation and would like to request that you participate in this study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years or older, have a relationship with [Alex], and be able to speak to their experiences in school-based extracurricular activities. You will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. Interviews will be conducted via telephone, video conference, and/or messaging application such as GroupMe or WhatsApp, depending upon what is most accessible to you. All participants have the opportunity to self-select a pseudonym that will be used for publication and all personal information will be kept confidential by the researchers. Further, participants have the option to report only a pseudonym to further preserve confidentiality. If you are interested, please fill out this [short demographic survey](#) [link removed for dissertation publication]. All selected participants are eligible to receive a **\$50 gift card** for their participation. If you have any questions, please reach out to me by email at sholl012@odu.edu.

Thank you,

Steven Holland (he/him)
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX E

Study Two Social Network Informed Consent and Demographic Survey

Understanding the School-Based Extracurricular Activity Experiences of [Alex] and [Alex]'s Social Network

Accessibility Audit

An accessibility audit was performed on this form, and was deemed compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1. In addition, the form was audited for accessibility using the screen reader NVDA version 2020.3 with the browser Google Chrome.

Introduction

The purposes of this form are to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. This project, Understanding the School-Based Extracurricular Activity Experiences of [Alex] and [Alex's] Social Network, will be conducted via this short demographic form and a one-to-one individual interview which will be audio-recorded or downloaded with the second researcher (Holland) via telephone, video conference call, and/or messaging application (e.g., GroupMe, WhatsApp).

Researchers

Steven Holland, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Human Movement Sciences, Old Dominion University

Justin A. Haegele, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Human Movement Sciences, Old Dominion University (PI)

Study Description

The purpose of this study is to examine the extracurricular activity participation of [Alex] and how they and their social network experienced and understand their participation.

If you decide to participate, then you will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded (or downloaded) one-to-one individual interview via telephone, video conference call, or messaging application. Only the audio recording and transcript will be recorded if you elect to participate in the video conference call for your interview. The researcher may contact you for a follow-up interview or to get clarification on the transcript of your responses. The total time of participation will be between 60-120 minutes and will be scheduled around your availability.

Inclusion Criteria

In order to participate in this study, you should (a) be 18 years of age or older, (b) have a relationship with and knowledge of Alex's participation in extracurricular activity, and (c) be willing to participate in an individual interview and any necessary follow up for a total of 60-120 minutes of participation.

Risks and Benefits

RISKS: There are no expected or predicted potential risks associated with participation in this study. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to participants as a result of participation in this study.

Costs and Payment

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, in an effort to increase participation and thank participants for their time, a gift card of \$50 will be electronically delivered to all participants who are chosen to participate following the completion of data collection. Additionally, there are no costs associated with participation in this research.

New Information

If the researchers find new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will give it to you.

Confidentiality

The researchers will take reasonable steps to keep information private. First, participants have the option to provide only a pseudonym if they prefer to further ensure confidentiality. However, all participants' information will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive that is only accessible by the second researcher (Holland). The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify you and only use the selected pseudonym to report findings. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

Withdrawal Privilege

It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later by opting out of data collection or deciding not to answer specific questions. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

Compensation for Illness and Injury

If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact Dr. Justin A. Haegele, at

jhaegele@odu.edu, Dr. Laura C. Chezan, the current chair for the DCOE Human Subjects Committee, at lchezan@odu.edu.

Voluntary Consent

The purpose of this form is to inform you about the study prior to participation. By agreeing to complete and submit this screening survey, you are consenting to participate in this study. This means, you are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research, however if you have additional questions prior to completing this survey, please reach out to Steve Holland (sholl012@odu.edu). If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them:

Steven K. Holland: [removed for dissertation publication]

Justin A. Haegele: [removed for dissertation publication]

If at any time you feel pressured to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, then you should call Dr. Laura C. Chezan, the current chair for the DCOE Human Subjects Committee, at lchezan@odu.edu.

Do you consent to participation in this study? *

Yes

No

Demographic Information

In numerical form, what is your age? *

Your answer

How would you describe your race/ethnicity? *

Your answer

How would you describe your gender identity? *

Your answer

What are your pronouns? *

Your answer

If you have a disability, how would you describe your disability?

You may type N/A or leave blank if this question does not apply to you.

Your answer

How would you describe your identity? You are a person who identifies as _____. *

Your answer

How do you know Alex? How would you describe your relationship with Alex? *

(Ex. Mother, Step-Father, Brother, Coach, Friend, Significant Other, etc.)

Your answer

Are there any accessibility needs that you have in order to participate in this study? If so, please describe how your needs can be met.

Your answer

How would you like to participate in this study? *

Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, or other video conference call

Phone Interview

WhatsApp, GroupMe, iMessage, or other text-based interview

Other:

What is your name?

 Your answer

What is your preferred pseudonym?

(This is the name that will be used in print or when reporting information about this study.)

 Your answer

Please provide an email address where you can be reached to schedule the interview? *

 Your answer

-End of Survey-

APPENDIX F

Study Two Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Autistic Disabled Trans Participant

Hello [interviewee] my name is [interviewer] it's nice to meet you. Thank you for your willingness to participate in part two of this study. Before we begin, I want to take a minute to review the purpose of this interview: I am interested in understanding how you and your social network experienced extracurricular activity participation.

The interview should take between 45-90 minutes. Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential. That is, we will transcribe this conversation and then remove your name and any identifying information from the interview and replace it with a pseudonym or we will use the pseudonym you have already provided throughout the interview. This pseudonym will be used in place of your real name when referring to you in any research reports. Following transcription, the audio file from the interview will be destroyed.

I also want you to know that your participation in this interview is entirely optional. There is no penalty for not participating, and you may drop out of the study at any point. While the risk associated with this study is low, it is possible that some of the questions could make you feel uncomfortable. If that occurs, feel free to say that you do not want to answer those questions. In addition, if you say something during the interview and decide later that you do not want us to use it, we can delete these comments. Do you have any questions or concerns before we get started? Okay, I am going to start the audio recording and ask the first question when you are ready.

(Numbered questions are main prompts; lettered questions are potential interviewer follow-ups. Interviews will be semi-structured and allow the researcher/participant to follow a specific line of inquiry.)

1. What extracurricular activities did you participate in during school?
 - a. Why did you participate in those activities?
 - i. Did you choose them, or were they chosen for you?
2. How would you describe yourself as a participant?
 - a. Why do you see yourself that way?
 - b. Has that changed?
3. Were there any extracurricular activities that you wanted to participate in but were unable?
 - a. What prevented you from participating in them?
4. What meaning or value did extracurricular activity participation have for you?
5. Did your disability impact your participation? Can you describe how?
 - a. How did this make you feel?

6. Did being trans/non-binary impact your participation? Can you describe how?
 - a. How did this make you feel?
7. How did being disabled and trans/non-binary impact your extracurricular activity participation?
 - a. Do you think your disability or being trans/non-binary had a greater impact on your participation?
 - b. How did that make you feel?
8. How would you describe your teammates?
 - a. Were they supportive? How?
 - b. Were they discouraging? How?
 - c. Were you subject to bullying or teasing? How did that make you feel?
 - d. How did being disabled and trans/non-binary affect your relationships with your teammates? How?
9. What was the most important aspect of participating in extracurricular activities for you?
 - a. Why do you think that is?
10. What value does/did “being a member of _____” have for you? Why?
11. How would you describe your coaches?
 - a. Were they supportive? How?
 - b. Were they discouraging? How?
 - c. Did your disability affect your relationships with your teammates? How?
 - d. Did being trans/non-binary affect your relationships with your teammates? How?
 - e. Do you think being disabled or being trans/non-binary had a greater impact on your relationships? Why?
12. What role did your [parents/siblings/friends/others] have on your participation in extracurricular activities?
 - a. Were they supportive/unsupportive? How so?
 - b. How did that make you feel?/What did you think about that?
13. How meaningful are those activities in your life today? Why do you think that is?
14. Can you describe a particularly positive/negative experience from your participation?
 - a. How did that make you feel?
 - b. Why do you think that memory stands out to you?
15. What is your experience with physical activity as an adult?
16. Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about your participation as a disabled trans/non-binary individual?
17. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experiences in sport that we haven’t covered?

APPENDIX G

Study Two Social Network Interview Guide

1. How would you describe your relationship with [Alex]?
 - a. How meaningful is your relationship with [Alex]?
2. What do you remember about [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities?
 - a. What can you tell me about [Alex]'s participation in color guard?
 - i. What meaning did that experience have for you?
 - b. What can you tell me about [Alex]'s participation in musicals/choir?
 - i. What meaning did that experience have for you?
3. How would you describe [Alex] as a participant/member of the team?
4. How meaningful was [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular events to you? Why?
 - a. What meaning does COLOR GUARD / MUSICALS/CHOIR have in your relationship with [Alex]?
 - i. Can you describe why?
 - ii. How does that make you feel?
5. How would you describe [Alex]'s peers within COLOR GUARD /MUSICALS/CHOIR?
 - a. What role did they have in [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities?
 - b. How did you feel about [Alex]'s peers in extracurriculars?
6. How would you describe [Alex]'s coaches/activity leaders?
 - a. What role did they have in [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities?
 - b. How did you feel about the coaches/activity leaders? Why?
7. How would you describe [Alex]'s social network (family, friends, etc.)?
 - a. How meaningful was their social network to [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities?
 - b. How did these relationships enhance or deter [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities? Why?
 - c. How would you describe your interaction with other members of [Alex]'s social network?
8. How would you describe your role in [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities?
 - a. How does that make you feel?
 - b. Is there anything you would have done differently? Why/why not?
9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about [Alex]'s participation in extracurricular activities?

As appropriate, depending upon social network knowledge of identity

10. What was it like having a [trans/non-binary AND/OR disabled] [child/friend/athlete] in extracurricular activities?
11. What role did [Alex]’s disability have on their participation in extracurricular activities?
 - a. Why do you think that is?
 - b. How does that make you feel?
12. What role did being trans/non-binary have on [Alex]’s participation in extracurricular activities?
 - a. Why do you think that is?
 - b. How does that make you feel?
13. Do you think that either [Alex]’s disability or trans/non-binary identity had more of an impact on their participation in extracurricular activities?
 - a. Why?
 - b. How does that make you feel?
14. What was it like being a [parent/sibling/peer] and interacting with other [parents/siblings/peers] during [Alex]’s events?
15. Was it easier/harder as a [parent/sibling/peer] to access extracurricular activities based on disability or trans/non-binary identity?

VITA

Steven Kelly Holland
Human Movement Sciences
2004 Student Recreation Center
Norfolk, VA 23529-0196

EDUCATION

- 2018-Present **PhD**, Old Dominion University
Human Movement Sciences
Health and Sport Pedagogy
Dissertation Topic: Physical Education and Extracurricular Activity Participation of Autistic, Neurodivergent, Disabled Trans Adults
- 2015 **MS**, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
Exercise and Sport Science- Physical Education Teaching
Concentrations: Adapted Physical Education & Adventure Education
Thesis Topic: Parent goals of school-sponsored adapted sport participation for their students with disabilities.
- 2012 **BS**, Purdue University
Physical Education & Health and Safety Teaching

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Holland, S.K., & Haegele, J.A. (2020). Socialization experiences of first-year adapted physical education teachers with a master's degree. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 37(3), 304-323. <https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.2019-0126>

Wilson, W.J., **Holland, S.K.**, Haegele, J.A., & Richards, K.A.R. (2020). Workplace experiences of adapted physical educators: A comparison of educators with and without national certification. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 40(2), 267-275. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.2019-0239>

Haegele, J. A., Kirk, T. N., **Holland, S. K.**, & Zhu, X. (2020). "The rest of the time I would just stand there and look stupid": Access in integrated physical education among adults with visual impairments. *Sport, Education, and Society*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2020.1805425>

Wilson, W.J., Haegele, J.A., **Holland, S.K.**, & Richards, K.A.R. (2020). Co-curricular service-learning through a camp for athletes with visual impairments. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 40(2), 190-198. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.2019-0109>

Zhu, X., Haegele, J. A., & **Holland, S.K.** (2020). Cardiorespiratory fitness growth in middle school: Sociodemographic factor associations. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2020.1834492>