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APA 117TH ANNUAL CONVENTION • AUGUST 6-9

# 2009

## Self-Care and Working within LGBT Communities

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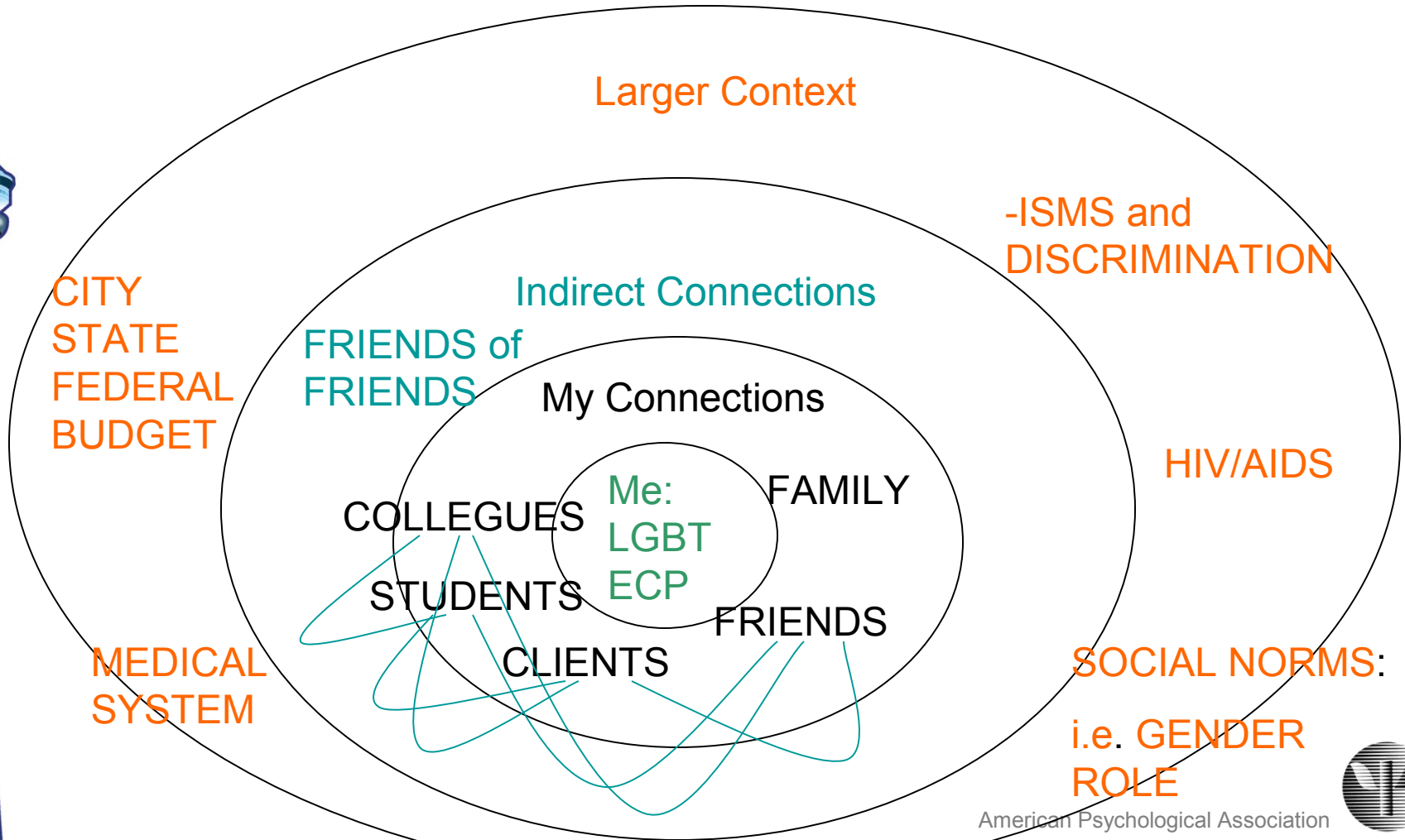
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## Who am I?

(Bronfenbrenner style)





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## Factors common to all small communities

- Few degrees of separation between clients and therapists
  - Frequent boundary negotiations
  - Our partners/families may also need to navigate boundaries related to our profession
- Higher risk of vicarious traumatization due to shared experience with clients



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## Factors unique to LGBT communities

- “High risk” population

- Minority stress
- Increased risk of trauma
- Being subject to discrimination
- Internalized homo/bi/trans-phobia
- Higher rates of suicide, substance abuse, HIV infection

- Clients may seek us out specifically due to presumed commonalities

- Mirroring vs. idealization





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## Importance of Therapist Self-Care

- Resolution of own issues related to trauma, internalized oppression and facing discrimination
  - Also, ownership of privilege
- Building and maintaining support networks, and navigating potential overlaps with clients
- Consultation with colleagues





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## ABCs of Self-Care (O'Conner)

- Awareness
  - Personal vulnerabilities
  - Impact of work
- Balance
  - Time to rest and play
- Connection
  - Friends
  - Colleagues



## Further Reading

- 2008 Spring and Summer Division 44 Newsletters  
<http://www.apadivision44.org/publications>
- Russell, G. M. & Bohan, J. S. (2007). Liberating psychotherapy: Liberation psychology and psychotherapy with LGBT clients. In Glassgold, J. M. & Drescher, J. (Eds.), *Activism and LGBT psychology* (pp. 59–75). New York: Haworth.

