

Families with more than one trans person: Investments and divestments in cisnormativity

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Abstract

Objective: To examine how having more than one trans person in a family facilitates investments in or divestments from cisnormativity.

Background: While there is now a robust body of literature on trans people's experiences with cisgender family members and vice versa, largely missing has been a focus on families where more than one person in the family is trans.

Method: This paper focuses on a subsample of 10 families from a large international qualitative longitudinal study conducted across six countries, focused on trans young people and their families. The paper draws on interviews conducted in 2022 and 2023 with families in which more than one family member was trans. Transcribed interviews were analyzed thematically.

Results: The themes developed indicate that while for some families having multiple trans family members may mean that some cisgender family members invest further in cisnormativity, for other family members the existence of multiple trans family members may encourage divestments from cisnormativity, to the benefit of trans young people. Specifically, themes focus on multiple trans family members highlighting cisnormativity, and conversely, multiple trans family members indicating likelihood of support and offering a safe haven.

Implications: The paper concludes by emphasizing that while encouraging divestments from cisnormativity should not be the work of trans people, it is nonetheless important that research continues to investigate the experiences of families in which more than one person is trans.

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cisnormativity, divestments, family, investments, trans, young people

INTRODUCTION

Research on both the experiences of trans people with their cisgender family members (e.g., Fuller & Riggs, 2018; Katz-Wise et al., 2022), and the experiences of cisgender family members of trans people (e.g., Godwin et al., 2024), constitute rapidly growing areas within the field of trans studies. Yet largely overlooked to date are the experiences of families with more than one trans person in the family. A focus on what it means not to be the only trans person in a family is important, given that having a shared experience with another family member may offer an important and unique source of support. Drawing on an international project focused on the experiences of trans young people and their families, this paper explores what having another trans family member means for trans young people and their parents.

To frame our paper, we draw on a recent paper by Robinson and Stone (2024), which offers a family systems framework for understanding both investments in and divestments from cisnormativity in the familial context. Cisnormativity refers to institutionalized practices that privilege cisgender people over trans people, practices that are informed by the ideology of cisgenderism, one that delegitimizes people's own understandings of their genders and bodies (Pearce et al., 2024). As Robinson and Stone (2024) note, (primarily cisgender) people may either invest in or divest from cisnormativity. Examples of investments include the policing of people's genders (e.g., a parent not allowing their child to wear a certain piece of clothing), which stem from an individual stake by cisgender people in perpetuating a particular (cisgenderist) narrative about trans family members. Examining stakes in cisgenderism is, Robinson and Stone suggest, an important part of examining cisnormative investments. In other words, it does not suffice to simply identify investments. It is also important to understand why some people are driven to invest in cisnormativity.

In terms of divestments, Robinson and Stone (2024) define these as instances where cisgender family members actively, rather than passively, divest themselves of perpetuating cisnormativity. Examples of divestments include parents actively supporting their children to explore their gender, challenging other people who misgender their children, and cisgender family members advocating for the rights of trans family members. Robinson and Stone suggest that the 'why' of divestments can range from wanting to show love to trans family members, to actively seeking to challenge and dismantle cisnormativity. Importantly, we would suggest further that divestments should not simply seek to fold trans people into a narrative that is comfortable for cisgender people. Rather, divestments must actively seek to challenge the very stakes of cisnormativity.

In this paper we seek to further Robinson and Stone's (2024) work by exploring how having another trans family member may help trans young people and especially their cisgender parents to divest from cisnormativity. Importantly, our focus on families where more than one person is trans sits in a broader family science literature that has explored the many different ways in which the existence of multiple family members with shared experiences of a particular identity can be productive. For example, research on 'second-generation queer' families' suggests that for young sexuality diverse people, having a sexuality diverse parent can help to ease the path to identity disclosure and self-understanding (Kusalanka & Goldberg, 2009). Importantly, however, members of second-generation sexuality diverse families have also suggested that there are limitations to the benefits, specifically in terms of generational differences in experiences, and negative assumptions about 'inheritance' of sexuality diversity (Mooney-Somers, 2006). Mindful of the differences between families where more than one person is

sexuality diverse, and families where more than one person is trans, and before outlining our project and findings, we first outline the literature on families in which more than one person is trans.

Literature review

As noted above, the literature on trans family members supporting one another is scant, and unfortunately much of the existing literature on more than one trans person in a family is problematic. Echoing the long history of twin studies and heritability, a body of research has sought to explore the co-occurrence of being trans within families (e.g., Diamond, 2013). We opt not to cite or explore this literature in depth, given its often pathologizing nature. This literature is problematic given its potentially eugenic implications: literature that focuses on genetic ‘causes’ of being trans may ultimately be used to prevent the birth of trans children. Similarly, literature that focuses on environmental factors furthers narratives of mother blaming, and may only serve to perpetuate the idea that being trans is something to be ‘fixed’ (i.e., by ‘better’ parenting). Beyond simply stating that in some families there is more than one trans person (which should not be inherently surprising), we thus take with extreme caution the literature on co-occurrence.

Beyond the literature on co-occurrence, there are a small number of papers that have explored the benefits to trans people of having a trans family member. In one paper, Stone et al. (2022) share the story of a trans man who was elated to find out that his aunt was trans, making him feel less alone, however not finding out about his aunt before he transitioned meant that he was not able to avail himself of her support during his transition. By contrast, another participant who was trans described the importance of having a trans aunt who supported him in the face of transphobia from his father. Other research has described trans family members as part of a chosen family network. Chosen family may be particularly important as a source of support for trans youth and adults who live with hostile family members of origin (Hailey et al., 2020; Tourjée, 2018). Dasgupta (2023) writes about the vital role played by Agniva, an Indian trans activist who took on an aunty role for many younger trans people. For Agniva, this role was centrally about community, helping young trans women connect with one another, and providing support in the context of an often-hostile society. A review of research on chosen family among African American LGBTQ+ youth found that chosen family played an important supportive role in helping trans youth navigate their gender after experiencing rejection from their family of origin (Hailey et al., 2020). We might suggest from these research examples that trans family members—whether in families of origin or in chosen families—can help one another to resist cisgender family members’ investment in cisnormativity. Importantly, we would note here the relative cultural diversity of the small number of accounts of multiple trans family members in the literature, but would also suggest that beyond this literature it is likely to be the case that there are further international differences in terms of how having more than one trans person in a family encourages (or not) cis family members to divest from cisnormativity.

Increasingly, we are also seeing media stories that report on families with trans siblings. Tourjée (2018) writes that having a non-binary sibling was vitally important to her own survival within a hostile family environment. While this story is written in the first person, more common are news stories reporting on trans siblings. One such story includes a quote from the parents challenging the idea that one sibling simply was ‘mimicking’ the other, an important divestment from cisnormativity (Sheehy, 2019). By contrast, another story demonstrates investments in cisnormativity, where it is reported that the parents hold ‘traditional’ views and struggle to accept their trans children (Mazziotta, 2020).

Finally, we would note that while there are likely similarities between the disclosure journeys of all trans people (e.g., deciding who to tell and when, navigating responses, educating family members who may have no understanding of what it means to be trans), the literature suggests that there may be specific aspects of disclosure relatively unique to trans young people. These specific aspects primarily center upon the relative power that adults hold over trans young people who live at home with their parents. While trans adults may choose to distance themselves from family members upon disclosure (i.e., if they receive a negative response), trans young people may in effect be ‘trapped’ with family members who do not support them (Wood, 2021). This may lead some trans young people to defer disclosure (Kennedy, 2022). While having another trans person in the family may help trans young people to navigate unsupportive familial contexts, ultimately unsupportive parents may prevent contact with trans family members for trans young people (who may themselves have already been ostracized within the family).

Research question

Given the relative dearth of literature on families where more than one person is trans, and the importance of extending Robinson and Stone’s (2024) family systems framework for understanding investments in and divestments from cisnormativity in this context, the present paper reports on a secondary analysis of interviews with trans young people and their family members. We say this is a secondary analysis as families with more than one trans person were not a focus of the study. Nonetheless, and again unsurprisingly, for a number of the families we are interviewing there was more than one trans person. As such, in this paper we seek to explore how having another trans person in the families supports divestments in cisnormativity, but also how responses to there being more than one trans family member may also reflect investments in cisnormativity.

METHOD

Researcher positionality

We are a collective of researchers with a diversity of genders, sexualities, and gender modalities. Our cultural backgrounds encompass both Indigenous, non-Indigenous, and other racially diverse standpoints, and our academic, personal, and professional experiences encompass clinicians and researchers who work with trans young people, parents of trans young people, and facilitators of trans youth and parent groups. These positions accord us relative insider insight into the experiences of trans young people and their parents, while at the same time as researchers and as adults we also hold an outsider status as people presumed to hold knowledge about the topics that we study.

Broader study

The findings reported in this paper draw on data collected in the context of an international qualitative longitudinal and prospective research project conducted in six countries (Australia, Canada, India, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Each country aimed at recruiting 10 trans young people and their immediate family members, and to interview them once per year four times, to obtain a complete 3 years of experience. A total of 45 families were recruited, with some countries facing challenges in the context of an increasingly hostile social

climate for trans people. The aims of the larger study are to explore how trans young people and their families experience the transition into and through the commencement of gender affirming medical care, and how this relates to their sense of self, their relationships with others, and their views about the future. For this paper, we draw from the initial baseline data (first interviews) with all families from all six countries, as well as the second interviews that have already been conducted in Australia and Canada.

Participants and procedure

Ethics approval for the study reported in this paper was granted by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee, the University of Montreal Committee for Research Ethics, the Research Ethics Sub-Committee of Goldsmiths University, and the Harvard Longwood Campus Institutional Review Board. Inclusion criteria were (1) living in one of the six countries listed above, (2) being a family comprised of at least one trans young person aged 8–14 years at the time of the first interview, and at least one of their parents or family members willing to be interviewed alongside one another, and (3) that the trans young person was intending to commence gender affirming medical treatment, including pubertal blockers and/or hormones, at the time of the first interview. Participants were recruited primarily through support organizations for trans young people and their families, word of mouth, social media posts, and institutional sources (e.g., hospitals that provide affirming care to trans young people). Those most likely to view the recruitment material were parents, given the age of the trans young people and the nature and outlets of the information shared. The information advised potential participants to contact the project lead for each country to receive full information about the study, including an information sheet, a consent form, and a demographic sheet. Potential participants were asked to return the completed forms and schedule an interview time with the research assistant in each country. Each participating family member was provided with a remuneration voucher in their local currency as compensation.

Materials

Interviews were conducted by the research assistant in each country, in 2022–2023 for the first round, and in 2023–2024 for the second round. At the beginning of each interview, in addition to their parents having signed consent, young people were asked to assent to participation, prior to which the interviewers again explained the purpose of the interviews, including that young people could decline to answer any questions. All participating family members were interviewed together in a group interview. Interviews took place either in person or online via secure videoconference. Interviews lasted 85.5 min on average (range 42–137 min). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service. Pseudonyms were allocated by research assistants following transcription, and all identifying information was removed from the transcriptions.

Analytic approach

For the purposes of the present paper, all extracts from families where there was more than one trans family member were collated, focusing specifically on when participants spoke about another trans family member (or where another trans family member was present). After extracting the interview responses, the first author then coded the data using the reflexive thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). The first step in this process involved reading the extracts, looking for repeated topics or codes. Having developed codes based

on repeated readings of the transcripts, the first author then developed a draft thematic structure, which was shared with and confirmed by the second author. While codes encompass broad salient topics repeated across the data set, themes by comparison organize codes into logical and coherent sets of information. Themes developed are indicative of topics seen as salient by researchers, rather than being exhaustive of all possible readings of the dataset. Further, codes and themes were not mutually exclusive across participants; some gave interview responses located within more than one code or theme. Having agreed upon the thematic structure, the first author then identified and collated representative quotations for each theme. As such, the quotations included in the findings are indicative but not exhaustive of each theme. Having identified representative quotations for each theme, the first author then compiled the findings reported below.

FINDINGS

Sample

Out of the broader sample, there were two families with two siblings who were trans, two families in which a sibling was exploring or had previously explored their gender modality, three families in which there was a trans parent, and three families in which a member of the extended family was trans (10 families total, representing 24 family members). While this represents over one fifth of our total sample of families ($N = 45$ families, representing 111 family members), we are very mindful that the 10 families included in the present analysis are likely highly identifiable. As such, we have opted to only provide summary information here, and not to include any identifying information alongside the extracts below. In terms of the gender of parents, eight were cis women, two were cis men, one described their gender as queer, one agender, and one non-binary. The average age of parents was 39 years. In terms of the gender of young people, four were girls, four were boys, and three were non-binary. For young people, the average age was 12 years. Almost all of the participants reported their ethnicity as white. We would note that these families were in general not different from the broader sample in terms of average ages of parents or young people. In terms of gender, obviously three of the participants in the sub-sample included in the present paper were not cis. However, in terms of the ratio of cis mothers to fathers this mirrors the broader sample, and the gender of young people also mirrors the broader sample.

Investments in cishnormativity

Although Robinson and Stone (2024) focus on cisgender family members' investments in cishnormativity in response to one trans person being in the family, it is important to also think through how the existence of multiple trans family members may signal investments in cishnormativity to trans young people. This is a subtle but important distinction. In the absence of other trans family members, trans young people are left relatively on their own to gauge how cisgender family members view them and their relative investments in cishnormativity. Having other trans family members may serve to highlight to trans young people the investments that cisgender family members have in cishnormativity through cisgender family members' responses to other trans family members.

Responses to trans family member highlight cishnormativity

In terms of investments in cishnormativity, one theme was developed that explores how having other trans people in the family highlights investments in cishnormativity by cisgender family

members. For a small number of our participants, this played out in terms of a cisgender family member being less accepting of having a trans child, potentially indicating to our participants that such family members may not be accepting of them.

In their first interview, Holly and her mother Eva spoke about an aunt who had taken some time to come on board with using the correct pronouns and name, however at the time of the first interview this particular aunt had been slowly showing signs that she was accepting of Holly. By contrast, at the time of the second interview the aunt had returned to misgendering and misnaming Holly, and Eva shared that the aunt's child had also disclosed that he is trans:

Eva: What's quite sad is her, now son, has just recently transitioned, well in the last 12 months to male. So, I think she's struggling with him doing that and not that it's our fault or Holly's fault. And he's quite old, he's early – well, not old, but he's much older than Holly, he's early 20s, mid 20s. Her and her husband have just struggled with that, with his journey. They're quite religious and yeah, it's, there's a few facets to it. But it's not super nasty or anything, we're not fighting or anything like that. We're just trying to remove ourselves from situations that expose Holly to that sort of commentary.

As Eva noted, the aunt and uncle have 'struggled' with their son transitioning. Eva's quote indicates that she does not see the family's actions as 'super nasty,' even though they have been misgendering and misnaming Holly. Yet, she recognizes that they have had to 'remove themselves from some situations,' which suggests a level of distress caused by the family's actions. More broadly, although not explicitly stated by Eva, it would seem to be the case that, at least for this aunt and uncle, investments in religious beliefs translate into cisnormativity, similar to the concept of 'honor-based abuse' (Rogers, 2017), which occurs for trans people when family members feel shamed by another family member disclosing that they are trans. Indeed, the very idea that there could be 'fault' in one family member disclosing that they are trans after another family member has already done the same suggests the idea of social contagion: that one person may be influenced by another to be trans.

Rhea, mother to Kody, also spoke about her grandfather having disowned her trans aunt, and how this may have shaped the subsequent decisions of family members disclosing that they were trans:

Rhea: So my pa, bless him, he's passed but my pa disowned his son which is now my aunty. So she ended up getting married and having kids and a wife and actually ended the marriage due the feelings that she couldn't contain anymore inside, and the marriage broke down. She has had a hard struggle throughout her life because her dad didn't accept her, and it wasn't until he was on his deathbed that he's like "I wish I had accepted you." So there's that side of people who have grown up or people who are now coming out because the parents have passed on and they don't feel that stigma.

It is likely that Kody was aware of the story of his great grandfather disowning his trans great aunt. Hearing about this type of extreme investment in cisnormativity could, potentially, have given Kody a template for how his own experience may transpire. Although ultimately his mother was accepting, it is nonetheless reasonable to suggest that Kody's knowledge about his great aunt may have shaped his expectations about how the family more broadly might have responded to his disclosure.

Divestments from cisnormativity

Although only a small number of our participants spoke about investments in cisnormativity by cisgender family members specifically in regard to other trans family members, a greater

number spoke about examples of family members divesting themselves of cisnormativity, both as trans family members and as cisgender family members in response to other trans family members. Two themes were developed under the banner of divestments from cisnormativity.

Acceptance of other trans family members demonstrates likelihood of support

In contrast to the theme developed under investments in cisnormativity, a small number of participants spoke about the ways in which acceptance of a trans family member by cisgender family members helped to signal that support was likely to be forthcoming when a child transitioned. Although in the theme above Rhea shared a negative family example, she also shared a positive example with her own father. Rhea had not been in contact with her father for some years, and when she decided to re-establish contact with him her starting premise was that he was accepting of Kody:

Rhea: I said to my dad, "I actually have something I need to share with you." And I said, "I'm sharing this with you because I just want to know if you're either going to be supportive or not, because it's something that's important to me. And for us to continue wanting a relationship with each other, I actually want you to support me, or I don't think I can have a further relationship with you." Because that's how important my son is to me, is that if he wanted to be a bigot, then I won't have any of that in my life. When I told him my son's trans, he just looked at me and he said, "Get out of here, no." And I was kind of like, oh, shit. That's it. He doesn't like my son because he's trans. And he's like, "Well, you know how you used to have a sister?" And I'm like, "Yeah," and he goes, "Well, they are now a brother." And I was like, "what?" He goes, "Yep. Happened about seven or eight years ago. And we would not have it any other way." And I was like, wow. And then he went on this whole tangent about bigots and how much he hates them.

As we can see, Rhea went into the conversation assuming cisnormativity, so much so that her father's initial response led her to assume that 'he doesn't like my son because he's trans'. Yet as it turned out, her father was not only affirming of his own son, but 'wouldn't have it any other way'. That this conversation played out in front of Kody during the interview was potentially an important source of affirmation that countered other messaging about the experiences of his trans great aunt. That his grandfather would divest himself of cisnormativity and simply love his son likely signaled to Kody that, when he eventually met his grandfather (they had not been in contact thus far), he would be accepted. Another parent also spoke about how having a trans family member had paved the way for children who subsequently disclosed that they were trans:

Anita: My brother met a girlfriend who's trans and is now married to her. So, the entire family had been kind of researching and learning more about it already. My mum is incredibly supportive, my dad said this is going to be hard, because I've known [my child] all this time by these pronouns and this name, so you have to remind me if I get it wrong. But he's very much like wanting to support.

For Anita, having had a brother whose wife was trans meant that the family had already been 'researching and learning more', such that when Anita's child disclosed that they too were trans, the family were already prepared. While it is not automatic that the acceptance of one family member translates into the acceptance of another, participants included in this theme appeared to indicate that when one family member is accepted this indicated the likelihood that

a trans child will be accepted. As Anita noted, while her father expressed that it might be 'hard' to reorient himself to new pronouns, there was a broader willingness to 'research and learn'.

Trans family members provide a safe haven in a cisnormative world

Although the two themes above focus primarily on the views of parents, the second theme focused on divestment explores more closely some of the views of the trans young people we spoke with, in addition to the views of their parents. In this theme both trans young people and their parents spoke about trans family members as offering safety, care, and support for exploration. By both embodying and explicitly offering support that was divested of cisnormativity, trans family members were an important source of support for both cisgender parents and trans children in our study.

In some of the families we interviewed, more than one child was trans. In our first interview with Imogen and her mother Melody, Imogen's sibling had not disclosed that they were trans. By the time of the second interview, however, Imogen was proud to share that she now had a sister:

Melody: So that's been a big thing. So now Imogen has somebody else in the family who's also trans who – whilst the journeys are quite different – you have someone else who kind of understands in a very profound way that we might like to, but we can't, because we haven't done – we haven't walked there.

As Melody went on to note, having a trans sister was 'profound' for Imogen, as it meant someone understood her journey in ways that cisgender family members could not. At the same time, Melody recognized that all trans people do not have the same journey. This, we would suggest, represents a divestment in cisnormativity. Rather than presuming that all people's experiences are essentially the same, and that loving cisgender parents can truly understand their children's journey, Melody instead recognizes the specificity of being trans, and the importance of Imogen being able to share her journey with her sister. This is not to suggest that the two sisters' experiences are identical. Rather, it is to suggest that there is something unique about being trans, and that in recognizing a 'profound understanding', Melody is divesting herself of the cisnormative assumption that cisgender people can inherently understand trans people's experiences.

In another family both siblings were also trans, but different to Imogen and her sister, the siblings in this second family had shared their journey together as trans siblings, including exploring their genders at the same time. During the interview they shared memories of wearing different clothes, and affirming one another in these experiences, and then one of the siblings went on to share how they had supported one another in coming to understand their genders:

Jess: Thanks to Sam because Sam is a researcher and Sam kind of went into the internet, got the whole spectrum, and then kind of started discussing it with me, the different manifestations of gender and I started saying, "Maybe I'm queer. Maybe..." You know, and I remember them talking, right? And the whole search of how can I define myself?

For Jess, having a trans sibling meant not only that they had someone to explore their gender with, but also that they had someone who could actively investigate different ways to understand their gender. For both Jess and Sam, having the full support of their parents meant that they were free to explore and discover who they were, free of cisnormative expectations. Here we see a divestment in cisnormative expectations by the parents, but also that in having a trans

sibling, for both children there was an absence of sibling pressure to conform to cisnormative expectations.

Finally, another parent spoke about the importance of trans family members in providing both support and access to information that encouraged a divestment in cisnormativity. Jane spoke about not having the time to read information and medical treatment for her child, and also not knowing which information could be trusted. Trans family members helped to provide access to information, as well as helping to parse that information:

Jane: I just don't have the capacity at the moment to read that in detail. But her Auntie and another friend, who also happens to be non-binary, are both academics. I asked them to see if they could access any research about puberty blockers. I wanted to reassure myself that blockers are safe and that they have a positive mental health outcome. It's hard to have the capacity, when you've got so much else going on. Also, it's really beautiful when her trans aunt and uncle said "Welcome to the club". They immediately offered, "What can we do to support? Do you need us to buy anything?"

This account by Jane is interesting. On the one side, we see what might be construed as an investment in cisnormativity. In feeling the need to be 'reassured' about puberty blockers, there is an apparent investment in the worries of cisgender people, rather than the needs of trans young people. On the other side, however, Jane is very open to receiving information from trans family members, particularly given her own limited capacity. Jane further notes that her own divestment in cisnormativity is facilitated through the responses from trans family members who offered her support. Additionally, for her child, and similar to Melody above, the idea of being 'welcomed to the club' recognizes the unique experiences of trans people, and the importance of trans young people being welcomed by those who share similar experiences.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have used the work of Robinson and Stone (2024) to map out investments in and divestments from cisnormativity in families where more than one person is trans. Certainly, we would acknowledge, as is central to the work of Robinson and Stone, that divestments from cisnormativity should be the work of cisgender family members, just as investments in cisnormativity are the responsibility of cisgender family members. In other words, it is not the responsibility of trans people to encourage divestment. Nonetheless, our findings would appear to suggest that when there is more than one trans person in a family, this can help to support divestments in cisnormativity. In some cases this was indeed due to trans family members actively supporting divestments, and in other cases the very existence of more than one trans family member appeared to encourage cisgender family members to rethink the ways in which they approach trans people and to question cisnormativity more broadly.

Of course we must also acknowledge that in a small number of families investments in cisnormativity were evident. This, unfortunately, is not unexpected. While for some cisgender family members having an extended family member disclose that they are trans may be tolerable, having one's own child disclose that they are trans may be another matter entirely. Investments in cisnormativity are likely framed by how one feels one's own self is reflected by those closest to us. For cisgender parents who struggle to accept a trans child, the default position for many may indeed be a further investment in cisnormativity: out of fear, or shame, or concerns about judgment (Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018). However, we must again note that this was only true in a small minority of cases. It was overwhelmingly the case in the present study that most families actively sought to divest themselves of cisnormativity.

In terms of limitations, we must acknowledge that this was an ad hoc secondary analysis of data that did not purposively focus on families with more than one trans person. Nonetheless, that this was the case for over a fifth of our sample would indicate that a focus on such families is important. Needed, however, is purposive research that focuses on families where there is more than one trans family member. Given we are conducting a longitudinal qualitative project, we will most certainly focus more closely on the families included in this paper. Such a focus may also help to extend the work of Robinson and Stone (2024) in further directions. It is certainly the case that not only cisgender people invest in cisnormativity. Trans people may also be invested in cisnormative accounts of trans people's lives. Certainly, we might suggest, transnormativity itself is a form of cisnormativity. Transnormativity is typically defined as the expectation that (1) all trans people endorse a "wrong body narrative" when describing their experience of being trans, (2) all trans people desire medical treatment, and (3) all trans people seek to be perceived as cisgender (Latham, 2019). When trans people feel compelled, or when we compel one another, to conform to binary notions of gender or particular images of what it means to be trans—fashioned as a replication of being cisgender—then we are ourselves wrapped up in cisnormativity. Whether or not this happens in families where more than one person is trans is a topic requiring further attention. While it was not evident in our data, it is reasonable to suggest that investments in cisnormativity may involve insisting that a trans family member presents in particular ways that echo another family member, and this insistence may be on the part of both cis and trans family members. Divesting from cisnormativity may thus involve divesting from transnormative accounts of what it means to be trans.

For the field of family science more broadly, the findings provided in this paper highlight the ongoing importance of research on families where more than one person is part of a particular marginalized group or holds a particular identity. Unfortunately, much of the research on 'co-occurrence' is medical in nature, and thus often either reductive or pathologizing. To us, it is unsurprising that in some families there will be more than one person with, say, autism, or more than one person who is gay. This reflects diversity in the world. What is of interest, however, is how family members navigate both the potential benefits and limitations of having another family member who shares similar experiences. Following Robinson and Stone (2024), we would suggest that key to any such research must be a focus on a very specific 'why'. Not *why* are there more than one trans, and/or gay and/or autistic (for example) people in a family (in the sense of genetic co-occurrence). Rather, the *why* that is important in our view is why it matters to the people in the family. Why does having another trans person in the family potentially help or hinder trans young people? Why do some family members struggle when more than one person is trans, whereas others embrace this? These are the questions that will help to continue to build and extend the study of familial co-occurrence.

In conclusion, in this paper we have provided an exploration of what it means to be a trans young person, or the parent of a trans young person, in a broader familial context where other people are also trans. Through the lens of the work of Robinson and Stone (2024), we have provided an initial mapping of how trans family members may serve as an implicit or explicit motivation for cisgender family members to invest in or divest from cisnormativity. Furthermore, this paper has also added richness to how we understand the lives of trans people in a familial context, exploring from an affirming perspective the realities of families in which more than one person is trans.

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