

Barriers to Coming Out in Immigrant Communities

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Learning Objectives

- Identify barriers experienced by immigrant identities
- Identify a framework in assessing and understanding the intersection between immigrant identities and queer identities
- Discuss barriers that immigrants and children of immigrants may face in coming out to their families of origin

**There are an estimated 1,000,000 LGBT immigrants
in the United States and of that an estimated
267,000 are undocumented.**

The Williams Institute (2019, February 2) *LGBT Adult Immigrants in the United States*.

Retrieved from <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/us-lgbt-immigrants-mar-2013/>

My Migration

- Born to Iranian parents in Tehran, Iran in 1985
 - This is 6 years after the Iranian Revolution
 - 5 years after the Iran/Iraq war started but 3 years before it ended
- Needed multiple surgeries in the United States in 1986 and 1988
- During a medical visit in the US, my mother decided to stay

My Migration

- Stayed with family in different states until my parents decided to settle in Rancho Palos Verdes, California in 1989
- Obtained Green card in 1992
- Became a naturalized citizen in December, 2001

Stages of Migration Framework

- Pre-Migration
- Migration
- Resettlement

Stressors During Resettlement

- Trauma
- Acculturation Stress
- Immigration Status
- Mental Health Concerns
- Family Hierarchy
- Economic Instability
- Building Community

Congress, Elaine (1994). The Use of Culturagrams to Assess and Empower Culturally Diverse Families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*. 75 (9) pp: 531-540 doi: [10.1177/104438949407500901](https://doi.org/10.1177/104438949407500901)

Drachman Diane (1992). A Stage-of-Migration Framework for Service to Immigrant Populations. *Social Work*. 37 (1) pp: 68–72 doi: [10.1093/sw/37.1.68](https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/37.1.68)

Ganji, Iman (2015). The Silent Movements of the Iranian Queer. *Thamyris Intersecting*. 30 pp: 105-120

Barriers to Coming Out

- Fears of Deportation/Visa Revocation
- Living in a Bicultural World
- Language
- Duty to Family
- Mistrust Outside of Community

LGBTQ Identities and Muslim Immigrants

- Islamophobia in a post 9/11 world
- Real dangers of coming out in Muslim communities
- Invisibility and Isolation

How Do We Help?

- Find and provide resources in native language
- Do your homework
- Remember: *The client is the expert*

Resources

Tarab: <https://tarabnyc.org/>

IRQO: <http://www.irqo.org/english/>

Family is Still Family: <http://familyisstillfamily.org/>

Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/coming-out-resource-guides>

The Audre Lorde Project: <https://alp.org/>

Salga NYC: <http://www.salganyc.org/>

Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD): <http://muslimalliance.org/>

GAPIMNY: <http://gapimny.org/>

FIERCE: <http://www.fiercenyc.org/>

National Immigrant Justice Center: <https://www.immigrantjustice.org/services/lgbtq-immigrants>

Immigration Equality: <https://www.immigrationequality.org/>

United We Dream: <https://unitedwedream.org/our-work/lgbtq-justice/>

Muslim Advocates: <https://www.muslimadvocates.org/>