

## ABSTRACT

THESIS: Religious Beliefs among Family Members of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Individuals: Examining Their Stability Over Time

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In recent years, research has begun to examine the relationship between individuals' acceptance of their lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) family member and their religious beliefs. However, little is known about how the process of accepting one's LGB family member is both influenced by and influences one's religious beliefs. Thus, data were collected from 14 semi-structured interviews with family members of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals in order to examine how accepting one's LGB family member influences one's religious beliefs and how one's religious beliefs influence the process of accepting one's family member. Results revealed that while many participants were immediately accepting of their LGB family member when they came out, others were not. These reactions were directly connected to participants' religious beliefs. Also, several participants experienced conflict between having an LGB family member and their religious beliefs while others did not. The level of conflict these participants experienced – and the way in which they resolved this conflict – was related to the type of denomination they belonged to and the level of investment they had with their church.