

***Windsor* and *Perry*: Reactions of same-sex and heterosexual couple members**

The U.S. Supreme Court issued two decisions impacting marriage equality in 2013. *Hollingsworth v Perry* effectively allowed civil marriages for same-sex couples in California to resume. *U.S. v Windsor* found section 3 of the federal “Defense of Marriage Act” unconstitutional, making most federal benefits available to married same-sex couples regardless of the state in which they are living.

Prior research has found that legal relationship recognition is associated with lower levels of psychological distress and higher levels of well-being (Riggle, Rostosky & Horne, 2010). Having access to civil marriage may also increase feelings of security and permanence in a same-sex relationship (Shulman, Gotta, & Green, 2012).

We conducted an exploratory study of the reactions of members of same-sex and different-sex couples ($N = 250$) to the Supreme Court decisions. Participants were originally recruited for a longitudinal study in 2002 and included same-sex couples who obtained civil unions in Vermont, same-sex couples without a civil union from their friendship group, and a married heterosexual sibling and spouse. These participants were surveyed again in 2013. We asked: “Please tell us anything you would like us to know about your reactions to the Supreme Court decisions on June, 26, 2013 regarding same-sex marriage.”

Thematic content analysis explored participants’ responses. The reactions of same-sex couple members were categorized as: 1) emotion-based, 2) longitudinal perspectives, 3) practical, and 4) affirmation. Thematic categories for respondents from heterosexual couples were: 1) ally, 2) flat support, 3) indifference/ignorance, and 4) disapproval. This talk compared the comments of same-sex couples and heterosexual couples and discussed them in light of evolving social attitudes and public policy.