Mapping Q is an annual art program, serving LGBTQ+ youth, created in collaboration with The University of Arizona Museum of Art and the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation. The program aims to reduce stigma regarding queer and trans identities, queer and trans bodies, and youth mental health. Participants learn skills for life’s challenging moments, such as how to identify warning signs and how to discuss suicide with their peers. With a critical eye, the youth also investigate where and how their identities are represented in the museum space and within their wider communities. These investigations reveal profound observations of gaps in the mental health system, struggles with resiliency in the face of homophobia/transphobia, and the revelation of how powerful family and community support can be for LGBTQ+ youth.

LGBTQ youth experience disproportionate risk for suicide-related behaviors (i.e., suicide ideation or attempts). Reducing adolescent suicide-related behaviors is a public health priority that requires the identification and leveraging of internal strengths and external supports. And while these facts are critically important, the works shown here highlight the creativity, resiliency, and collaborative spirit of one small community of LGBTQ+ youth here in Tucson, Arizona.

In the summer of 2018, we had over 50 youth attend a Mapping Q session with twelve youth submitting artwork for the exhibition. The program and its following exhibition started in 2014 with just six youth participants. I am extremely honored each year to work with returning youth (some who have been coming since 2014) and youth who participate for the first time. They had an insightful awareness of the destructive inequalities that impact them as LGBTQ youth as well as their peers in various marginalized communities. During our summer program, youth shared that, the LGBTQ community has had to, “Fight to create communities and physical spaces where [we] belong.” And, “When you don’t have words to define yourself, its limiting. Having the words is powerful.” This is why Mapping Q exists and why youth return to express and exhibit their voices. Our youth have important things to say, I encourage readers and viewers of Our Stories: Mapping Q to sit down and listen.

CHELSEA FARRAR
Curator of Community Engagement, University of Arizona Museum of Art

Ongoing evaluation of the Mapping Q program suggests that it is effective in reducing psychological and emotional distress, boosting perceptions of support, and perhaps most importantly, increasing youths’ internal assets (e.g., self-awareness, gratitude, and zest). These results reveal the incredibly impactful nature of providing space of queer and trans representation and using art as a mechanism to thrive despite oppression.

DR. RUSSELL TOOMEY
Associate Professor, Family Studies and Human Development, Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences
I painted this to show that pets don’t care about who you are, what you look like, how you act, or your identity. They love you no matter what. Plus, I wanted to paint my cats. (The tabby is Cookie, and the black one is Beanie).

He is the personification of my mental illnesses, how I act during a panic attack. He means a lot to me. There isn’t anything I can think of that doesn’t have meaning behind it. He is a very complicated thing; I could never fit all my thoughts into a single label.
JAY G. (B. 2003), 2018
Acrylic on canvas

Tweet, 2018
Watercolor and acrylic on canvas
A collab piece between two friends.
MICHAEL R. (B. 2001)
Outlaws from Bathrooms, 2018
Ink

Created as some states submitted “bathroom bills,” this piece shows the slightly exaggerated end goal of said bills. To keep transgender people out of public spaces. If you were banned from using the bathroom at the mall, would you still go to the mall?

MICHAEL R. (B. 2001)
Reflections of Nature, 2018
Watercolor, acrylic, crayon

“A [wedding] ring is like a circle; it goes on forever. It’s not like a triangle, triangle have corners. It’s like a circle.”
—ADAM SANDLER, I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

MICHAEL R. (B. 2001)
Outlaws from Bathrooms, 2018
Ink

Created as some states submitted “bathroom bills,” this piece shows the slightly exaggerated end goal of said bills. To keep transgender people out of public spaces. If you were banned from using the bathroom at the mall, would you still go to the mall?
Sometimes I do not recognize myself. There is a battle between what I look like and who I know I am.

The feeling of euphoria attached to receiving the necessary treatment to alleviate dysphoria. I hope to someday recognize myself in the mirror...
When my physical body and mind feel different, sometimes I feel like two separate people. My body doesn’t feel like it belongs to me, and my mind detaches to cope with feeling trapped in a body that I wish wasn’t mine.
JAYY G. (B. 1994)
*My world in my head*, 2018
Marker, acrylic paint, glitter

I love unicorns and pugs and glitter!

ELVIS G.
*A happy little space*, 2018
Found bird cage, acrylic, and mixed media
I drew this 'cause I love butterflies. But sometime darkness takes over and it’s hard to find the way, but in the end there is great light.

Got news when my Dr. told me I have this on May 25, 2018. They told me I had this as a child. I did this artwork show awareness and to show about information about FTD. There are 10 different types of Dementia out there.
AMBER ROSE: FOSSIL-FLOWER (B. 1993)

SOS Cling to the light, 2018
Mixed media

“It’s not in my nature to ever give in- so I’m gonna choose to survive again.”

This piece started with a comment left on Markiplier’s (aka March Fischbach) Let’s Play of a game called, “You Left Me” and it just grew from there. The Game itself focuses on the serious topics of loss and suicide which connects back to the piece as the Mapping Q project touches on suicide prevention and the Sources of Strength wheel.

- MARK FISCHBACH

JAYY G. (B. 1994)

I am me, 2018
Acrylic and pencil on canvas

I am transgender and want to show what I will look like in the future.
I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community that battles with severe mental disorders. I chose this quote because when I think of my mental disorders, a lot of the time I feel music is a significant relief for when I feel low. This piece was made using canvas, various types of paint, and markers. After viewing this piece, I hope that others that may battle with a mental illness learn that if they need a type of relief that music is one of several possibilities.
MATHIEU NEVERLAND E. (B. 1999)

It's Sad but it's the Truth, 2018
Wooden rocket ship

Even at the loss of a friend your life goes on. It can tear friends apart or bring us closer, though never forget the good times.
Coming out to your family is hard but even worse when you only get sadness or anger from it but as a parent it must be hard with the vast information they now must know and come to their own thoughts to accept who their child truly is.
It's not worth it. Just don't. You have fought bigger foes and lived. You are strong enough to face this. You don’t have to run.

This is a physical representation of one of my sobriety mantras. It's something that we tell each other when we want to say 'don't use'.
How do you represent gender without bodies?

What is femininity? What does it mean to be a woman? How do you create a perfect woman? Transpeople always have to be perfect. If there is even the tiniest flaw in your aesthetic, it will be used to discredit your identity. Realness is imperative, passing is safety.
Coping is defined as the top of a brick or stone wall. In skating you try to hit or grind on the coping. In queer communities, we try to find a strong method of coping. Some are harmful. This piece is meant to fall apart over time, like unhealthy coping methods leave us.
MAPPING 2017 PROJECT RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

Decades of research demonstrates that sexual and gender minority youth (SGMY) experience higher levels of psychological and emotional distress and lower levels of support compared to heterosexual and cisgender youth. Studies that sought to explain why these differences between sexual or gender orientation groups exist point to “minority stressors”, or environmental or interpersonal stress that occurs related to one’s identity. For SGMY, these stressors can include being bullied at school because of one’s sexual or gender orientation, or being rejected by classmates, teachers, peers, and even family members. Despite this knowledge, few studies have examined whether interventions for SGMY are effective in reducing levels of psychological and emotional distress and increasing positive youth outcomes.

METHODS

Results shown are from a 10-week longitudinal study of 20 Mapping Q (MQ) participants from 2017. Surveys were distributed when participants attended their first 2017 Mapping Q session and again during the last two days of the 2017 session. Measures were chosen for inclusion in the survey if they had been validated for use with SGMY in prior studies. In addition to the surveys, in-depth interviews were conducted with 5 Mapping Q participants. These interviews provided additional insight into the reasons why Mapping Q appears to be an effective intervention method for SGMY.

FINDINGS

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

- Youth reported lower levels of anxiety and depression symptoms at the end of MQ 2017.
- On average, a 5% reduction in anxiety symptoms and nearly 10% reduction in depressive symptoms was found.
- Specifically, youth in the interviews discussed how art-making served as a coping mechanism: “I used a lot of liquid watercolor because it was easy to manipulate and sometimes when I was feeling really stressed I would just pour a bunch of drops onto a page and I would just blow it around to just like scream without screaming. And in a way it helped because it helped me calm down and in the end it looked really cool.”
- Youth reported that they were less likely to perceive that they were a burden (a 10% reduction) to others at the end of MQ 2017. Perceived burdensomeness is a key predictor of suicidal behavior among SGMY.
- Youth reported that they were less likely to feel like they “didn’t belong” (a 20% reduction). Similar to perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belonging is another key predictor of suicidal behavior among SGMY.

2. SUPPORT

- SGMY perceived that their schools and peers were more supportive at the culmination of MQ 2017.
- In particular, peer and school support increased by nearly 15%.
- In response to a question about how MQ has affected them, one youth responded: “Because like as someone who is only a youth but has experienced homelessness and is queer, I don’t have very many opportunities to be in a museum. You know, so like, um, I feel like it opened the door and said you can do things like this. The world sucks, sometimes but like there are people out there that are willing to help you if you reach out for them and you know, um, I feel like that’s been my experience.”
- Feelings of belonging to an LGBTQ+ community also moderately increased at the end of MQ (i.e., increase of 8% on average).

3. POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSETS

- Youth reported higher self-esteem, self-awareness, optimism, gratitude, and zest at the end of MQ 2017.
- Many of these assets increased by approximately 10-15%.
- SGMY reported less internalized homonegativity (i.e., the internalization of society’s messages that sexual and gender minority identities are negative, bad, or something to be ashamed of) by the end of MQ. Similarly, they felt more positive about their sexual and gender identities.
- Related to identity, in response to discussing the MQ gallery opening, one participant said: “Because when you’re disenfranchised when you’re queer you learn to disappear or be invisible and like this allows us to be seen in the way we want to be seen.”
- MQ appears to teach youth new coping skills and potential career options:

  - “I mean I was really excited for the idea of the program. I wasn’t sure about it at first myself. Um, but I think that’s one of the things Mapping Q has really done for me is like open up because it’s taking away that elitism around the word artist and like breaking down the layers and being like why is that even a real thing. So like one of the things that’s like really holding that down for me is because at the time I wouldn’t consider myself an artist like I wasn’t trying to do visual art because like I’m just sad and always drawing and all things. Um, so like it opened up this form of expression to create that is really important to me now.”

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the pilot study evaluating the effectiveness of Mapping Q suggests that it is beneficial in reducing psychological and emotional distress, boosting perceptions of support, and, perhaps most importantly, increasing youths’ assets (e.g., thriving).
AFAB  Acronym for Assigned Female at Birth
AMAB  Acronym for Assigned Male at Birth
Aromantic  An umbrella identity used by individuals who experience little to no romantic attraction.
Asexual  An umbrella identity used by individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction.
Binder  An article of clothing meant to compress the chest. Usually worn by Masculine identified AFAB Individuals.
Bisexual  An identity for individuals who is attracted, either romantically or sexually, to other masc and femme identified individuals.
Cisgender  A label used to describe individuals who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
Cis-het  Short for Cisgender Heterosexual
Cisnormative  The world view that being Cis is normal/standard and Queerness is not.
Drag  A performance art that plays with the idea of what gender is. Not exclusive to any gender or sex.
Faggotry  Being totally and unapologetically queer.
Femme  Short for feminine. Not exclusive to any gender or sex. Can be used as an identity, a label for artifacts of femme culture, a style, a community, or any other Femme individuals see fit.
Gay  An identity for any masc identified individual who is attracted, either romantically or sexually, to other masc identified individuals.
Gender Queer  An umbrella identity used by individuals outside of the gender binary of men and women.
Heteronormative  The world view that heterosexuality is normal/standard and Queerness is not.
HRT  Acronym for Hormone Replacement Therapy, the process of replacing the sex hormones your body naturally produces with different sex hormones.
Lesbian  An identity for any femme identified individual who is attracted, either romantically or sexually, to other femme identified individuals.
LGBTQ  Acronym for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning
Masc  Short for masculine not exclusive to any gender or sex.
Nonbinary  An umbrella identity for individuals that is outside of the gender binary of Man and Woman.
Packing  The act of wearing padding or a phallic object in the front of the pants or underwear to give the appearance of having a penis and bulge. While most commonly practiced by masc identified AFAB Individuals it is also done by individuals who participate in drag.
Pansexual  An identity for individuals who is attracted, either romantically or sexually, to individuals of all identities and bodies.
People Of Color  An umbrella identity used by individuals of mostly non-European decent, or individuals who are not white.
POC  Acronym for People Of Color.
QTPOC  Acronym for Queer and Trans People Of Color.
Queer  A vague umbrella term roughly meaning non cis-het. Can be used as an identity, a label for artifacts of Non cis-het culture, a style, a community, or any other non cis-het individuals see fit.
Trans  Short for Transgender
Transgender  An umbrella identity used by and individual who does not fully identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
Transsexual  An umbrella identity used by and individual who does not fully identify with the Sex they were assigned at birth.
Tucking  describes multiple techniques to try to lessen the appearance of external genitals and achieve a flat front. While most commonly practiced by femme identified AMAB Individuals it is also done by individuals who participate in drag.
Two Spirit  An umbrella identity used exclusively by queer indigenous peoples of the Americas. Two Spirit people have both a masc and femme spirit within them and are blessed by their Creator to see life through the eyes of both genders.
ABOUT EON:
"Eon works to strengthen the lesbian, gay, bisexual, two spirit, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexed, and straight allied youth communities by creating social opportunities, providing information and support on health issues, advocating for youth rights and challenging society's perceptions of youth as they face institutionalized oppressions that target the many facets of their identity."

ACTIVITIES OFFERED:
- Gender Spectrum (Support Group) • Dance • Yoga • Community Spotlight • Drum Circle • Sex Chat • HIV Testing • Pride Meal • Workshops

LOCATION
526 North 4th Avenue

CONTACT INFORMATION
PHONE: (520) 547-6106
EMAIL: Eon@saaf.org
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/eonyouth/

Eon After Dark
3rd Saturday Monthly

LOCATION
526 North 4th Avenue

CONTACT INFORMATION
PHONE: (520) 547-6106
EMAIL: Eon@saaf.org
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/eonyouth/

LGBTQ YOUTH CENTER AND LOUNGE
A program of Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

EON After Dark
3rd Saturday Monthly

LOCATION
526 North 4th Avenue

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If this is an emergency, call 911
All Services are Free and Confidential

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1.800.273.TALK (8255)
English, 24hr National Lifeline

Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio
1.888.628.9454
para Español (24hr asistencia)

Crisis Response Network
1.520.622.8560 (toll)
1.800.796.6762 (tx 1 Free)
24hr assistance; telephone assessment, intervention, mobile teams & crisis transportation

Teen Lifeline (Arizona)
1.800.248.TEEN (8336), 24hr assistance

The Trevor Lifeline
1.866.488.7386 (call), 24hr assistance

Trans Lifeline
1.877.565.8880, 9am-3pm (MST)
Staffed by transgender people for transgender people
University of Arizona

LGBTQ+ Resource Center

Location:
Student Union Memorial Center, 4th Floor, Suite 404-O

Hours:
Mon.-Fri., 10AM-5PM

Contact:
lgbtq.arizona.edu
(520)-621-7585
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