LEADERS' CONCEALABLE STIGMATIZED IDENTITIES: EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES FOLLOWING WORKPLACE DISCLOSURE

by

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Abstract

The intersection of organizational leadership and concealable stigmatized identities has not received adequate scholarly attention. In practice, leaders seem to disclose minority identities at a rate that exceeds research and theory. Idealist and conceptual perspectives have suggested such disclosures will be met with positive outcomes, but emerging empirical investigations of the phenomena suggest this is not always the case. Three studies were conducted to investigate the consequences of disclosing a leader's concealable stigmatized identity from the employee's perspective.

Study 1 is a mixed methods, time-lagged survey of full-time employees ($N = 326$). Thematic analysis of 53 participants' interpretations of the downward disclosure experience reveals important contextual similarities and differences with same status disclosures. Employees interpreted the discloser's motivation as largely approach-focused (relationship development, establishing trust, self-verification, reactance), with some evidence of negative attributions of the discloser's motivation (gossip, disgust). Testing a parallel mediation model illustrates that mental illness disclosures negatively predict employee perceptions of leader intelligence and positively predict employee perceptions of leader vulnerability. Study 2 presents the results of two experimental vignette studies ($N = 478$) of employed adults which investigate the role of disclosure content, leader gender, and discloser identity on perceived leadership effectiveness. Leaders who disclose a minority sexual orientation are rated significantly higher on perceived leadership effectiveness than those who disclose substance abuse disorder.

Study 3 utilizes multimedia to create another experimental vignette to test a conditional process model on a sample of employed adults ($N = 487$). The conditional effects of disclosure appropriateness on follower ratings of leadership effectiveness and leader liking through

followers' perceptions of affective trust in leader and perceptions of leader vulnerability were examined using moderated-mediation and Hayes' (2018) PROCESS macro. Leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosures did not make a difference to how much employees liked their manager/supervisor, but leader disclosures of substance abuse disclosure directly were detrimental for employee ratings of leadership effectiveness - especially when the disclosure was perceived as inappropriate. When perceived as appropriate, leader disclosures of mental disorder/disease and minority sexual orientation produced positive effects on leader evaluations through affective trust in their leader. A model of stigma content hierarchy is proposed to predict outcomes of leader disclosures from the employee perspective in organizational settings. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Recent best-selling books and popular TedEx talks have encouraged people to bring their whole selves to work (e.g., Robbins, 2015, 2018) and to share emotional vulnerability (e.g., Brown, 2010, 2013). These perspectives maintain that showing up "fully and authentically" allows people to "work better, lead better, and be more engaged and fulfilled" (Robbins, 2018, p. i). These trends have facilitated a shift towards the blurring of lines between professional and personal lives in many modern-day organizations (Dumas, Rothbard & Phillips, 2008). A brief scan of headlines suggests this is occurring in practice, but a research-informed understanding of its consequences is lagging. To their credit, it is no longer uncommon for modern-day organizational leaders to disclose personal information in public spheres (Willing, 2014) – the type of information that would have resulted in others perceiving them as a moral failure or a medical abnormality decades ago (Goffman, 1963).[1] This practice has been referred to as "the authenticity trap" (Hewlett, 2014, p. 2) to reflect varying degrees of acceptance of minority identities inside of organizations.

A concealable stigmatized identity disclosure is "the verbal communication that occurs between a discloser and a confidant regarding" the possession of a concealable stigmatized identity (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010, p. 240). In organizational settings, disclosures normally

[1] The focus of this research is *not* the legal aspects of workplace disclosure, rather the personal and social consequences that follow disclosure of one's personal affiliation with a minority or marginalized group in an organizational setting (Ellison, Russinova, MacDonald-Wilson, & Lyass, 2003; Jones, 2011).

follow an upward pattern of communication where information flows from direct reports up the organizational hierarchy to someone who occupies a higher position, such as their manager or supervisor (Harriman, 1974). The purpose of upward disclosures is often to access health or insurance benefits (Jones, 2011). Conversely, downward disclosures refer to information communicated from higher in the organization to employees or direct reports (Harriman, 1974). Examples of leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosures include CEO Tim Cook's' coming out in 2014, making him the first openly gay CEO of Fortune 500 company, Apple (Mejia, 2018). Similarly, Beth Ford is the first "out" lesbian CEO of Fortune 500 company, Land O Lakes (Time, 2020). Tesla and Space-Ex founder, Elon Musk, revealed his clinical diagnosis of bipolar and depressive disorders via Twitter (Sumagaysay, 2017). Canadian Cabinet Minister Seamus O'Regan went public about his struggle with addiction and took leave from political life to spend time in a rehabilitation treatment centre (Zimonjic, 2017). Olympic medallist and *Bell Let's Talk* spokeswoman, Clara Hughes, now travels the world raising awareness by sharing her personal story of mental illness (Clark, 2015). Previous research suggests that others' reactions are important determinants of the consequences of such disclosures, but how this applies to downward disclosures in a leader-follower context is an under-researched area (Johnson, Joshi, & Hogan, 2020; Peters & Brown, 2009).

Ragins (2008) provides a model for stigma-holders that outlines important considerations for disclosing invisible identities across work and non-work domains, which includes a combination of internal psychological processes, characteristics of the stigma, and environmental factors such as the presence of similar others, supportive relationships, and institutional support. This paradigm is one example of how research on stigmatized identities in the workplace has focused on stigma-holding employees or disclosures between co-workers (e.g., Brohan et al.,

2014; Elraz, 2018; Rumens & Broomfield, 2012). Outcomes of this work include identity management guidance for *employees* who possess concealable stigmatized identities (Jones & King, 2014) and the managers who may receive the disclosures; however, a paucity of research exists on the intersection of leadership and concealable stigmatized identity disclosures. This is an important oversight given the widely held perspective that "leadership resides as much in followers' reactions as leaders' actions" (Eagly, 2005, p. 460). Critics of authentic leadership are quick to point out that concepts of "authenticity" and "leadership" may be at odds (Alvesson & Einola, 2019, p. 384). In discussing the potential negative consequences of leaders who act authentically by putting themselves in the centre, expressing "true" thoughts, and espousing views consistent with personal moral convictions, Alvesson and Einola (2019) suggest authentic leadership may lead to confusion, conflict, undermining of trust and authority and, perhaps, firing, or other forms of marginalization from organizational leadership (p. 393). They posit that pursuit of authenticity is an ill-defined ideal, which may create friction due to misalignment between one's own self, values, and beliefs with requirements of various interest groups, including senior managers, colleagues, subordinates, and customers.

The overarching goal of this research is to investigate consequences of disclosing a leader's concealable stigmatized identity from the perspective of individuals who report to that leader. It is important to understand when and under what conditions followers perceive leaders as effective (e.g., Weischer, Weibler & Petersen, 2013), likeable, and whether what is known about same status and upward disclosures will apply to leaders' stigmatized identity disclosures (i.e., downward disclosures). For example, disclosure has long been theorized to be a goal-directed behaviour in which the discloser is motivated by hopes of self-expression, social validation, social control, or relationship development (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010), but others'

interpretations of the downward disclosure experience have not been examined in a leader-follower context. How do followers perceive a leader with a concealable stigmatized identity? How do followers interpret the leader's downward disclosure motivation? These are worthwhile questions due to the important role of followers in granting leadership status, and the importance of disclosure motivations to understanding when and how disclosure might lead to negative or positive outcomes (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Mathews, Derlega, & Morrow, 2006). Furthermore, research on mental illness disclosures made between employees suggests elements of the disclosure process, such as disclosure content and communication context (Brouwers, Joosen, Van Zelst, & Van Weeghel, 2020), play a significant role in how the disclosure is received and the future experience of the discloser (Peters & Brown, 2009). Similarly, meta-analysis has determined that supportive workplace relationships are one of the most important factors in minority sexual orientation disclosure in organizational settings (Webster, Adams, Maranto, Sawyer, & Thoroughgood, 2018). How these processes unfold will vary depending on the context including important considerations such as gender of the leader and identity of the discloser (Adams & Webster, 2017; Junker & Van Dick, 2014). This dissertation considers these actors in a leader-follower context. Overall, the broad research questions guiding this dissertation are:

1. What are the psychological and contextual factors involved in shaping employee perceptions when a leader's invisible identity is disclosed?
2. Will the role of contextual factors determined in research regarding upward and same status disclosures hold for disclosures made by or about one's leader?

In this dissertation, I investigate these research questions using stigma theory as a guiding theoretical framework and several supporting theories described throughout. The employee

account of the disclosure event is qualitatively and quantitatively examined through three studies that rigorously investigate various aspects of the leader disclosure process. Study 1 tests a parallel mediation model of the disclosure – evaluation process with employee ratings of leader effectiveness and leader liking as outcomes of interest. Study 1 also includes descriptive and thematic analysis of participants' descriptions of their downward disclosure experiences – including discloser motivation. Study 2 examines the role of disclosure content, leader gender, and discloser identity on follower ratings of leader effectiveness. Finally, Study 3 tests a moderated-mediation model of the direct and indirect effects of disclosure on leader evaluation (effectiveness and liking) through follower ratings of affective trust in their leader and perceived leader vulnerability conditional upon follower perceptions of disclosure appropriateness.

1.1 Guiding Theoretical Framework: Stigma and Leadership in Organizations

For decades, stigma has provided a theoretical framework for studying attributes, characteristics, and social affiliations that are considered the source of undesirable social difference, including: skin colour, religion, sexual preference, physical ability and appearance, gender identity, mental illness, and more (Jones, 1984; Lakshmi & Erin, 2013; Pachankis et al., 2018; Ragins, 2008; Summers et al., 2018). Stigma refers to socially devalued identities, traits, or any undesirable attributes that are "incongruous with our stereotype of what a given type of individual should be" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). It is a negative discrepancy between the actual or inferred attributes of an individual versus the expectations for typical individuals in that context (Beatty & Kirby, 2006). Stigmatized individuals often face harmful consequences such as diminished sense of self-worth, stereotyping, discrimination, ostracism, and bias (Lynch & Rodell, 2018; Thomson & Grandy, 2018). Due to the context-dependent nature of stigma, when

considered across general social settings there are many sources of personal attributes and social group affiliations that could trigger the negative outcomes associated with stigmatization.

In a survey of over 1,000 Americans, the average participant reported possessing at least *six* stigmatized statuses each (Pachankis et al., 2018). This level of representation in the general population provides strong rationale to support the claim that stigmatized identities are represented at all levels of organizations - from junior employees, to middle and upper management, to senior executives and CEOs (Phillips, Rothbard, & Dumas, 2009; Summers et al., 2018). Minority sexual orientation, non-binary gender identity, and mental health/illness are examples of social identities steeped in a history of prejudice and discrimination as individuals in these minority groups continuing to face negative consequences both at work and in daily life (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Follmer, Sabat, & Siuta, 2020; Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve, & Pescosolido, 1999). In this dissertation, I investigate how followers evaluate their leaders after one of these identities are disclosed by or about their manager.

Gender is a particularly important contextual factor in both leadership and disclosure research. This is, in part, because traditional gender stereotypes suggest that women are more relationship focused, communicative, and more concerned with issues of intimacy than men (Eagly, 1987). Thus, a man who makes a sensitive disclosure may violate others' expectations of masculine gender norms, and the disclosure may be viewed as less appropriate than a female who makes a sensitive disclosure (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008). Gender has been found to moderate the disclosure-liking relationship such that female disclosers are liked more than male disclosers (Burke, Wang, & Dovidio 2014; Collins & Miller, 1994). In terms of leadership, the relationship between gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness is widely studied (e.g., Badura, Grijalva, Newman, Yan, & Jeon, 2018; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, &

Woehr, 2014). In leadership positions, men are expected to uphold agentic role expectations associated with the male gender, such as achievement-oriented, competent, ambitious, task-focused, dominant, independent, decisive, and objective. When women occupy leadership positions, however, they are expected to maintain communal attributes associated with the female gender role (e.g., helpful, kind, caring, self-effacing, affiliative, sensitive, understanding, collaborative, etc.) in addition to fulfilling prescriptive and descriptive leadership stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2012). The challenge of fulfilling communal gender role expectations while occupying leadership positions is explicated by the role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002), which proposes that preconceived notions of leaders as masculine creates a perception of incongruity between the female gender role and leadership, is drawn from to develop Study 2 hypotheses. Investigating the leader's gender when the leader is the discloser will shed light on the extent to which male and female leaders can display sensitivity and the implications this may have on leader evaluations (Offermann & Coats, 2018).

1.1.1 Stigma as a Multi-level Construct

Stigma in organizations has been conceptualized as a multilevel construct because it may be assessed at the individual level (micro), occupational or group level (meso), organizational or industry level (macro) (Thomson & Grandy, 2018). Micro or individual-level stigmas, which are the subject of this dissertation, include personal characteristics or attributes that are considered a negative departure from what is expected of a "normal" person in a particular context (Goffman, 1963, p. 14), such as disability, illness, obesity, minority gender identity and/or sexual orientation, infidelity, criminal record, unattractiveness, and so on. At the occupational level, entire professions may become stigmatized, which Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) refer to as "dirty

work" (p. 413). Examples of such occupations in Western society include garbage collection, embalmer, butcher, prostitute, and so on. Within an organization, stigma can also exist at the group level, where a team or department within an organization becomes stigmatized by other members within the organization if one of the group members possess a stigmatized attribute or identity (Kulik, Bainbridge, & Cregan, 2008). Finally, macro-level stigma refers to organizational-level stigma, such as Cook's travel agency in Victorian Britain, which was once described as a company that planned trips for "barbarian hordes" (Hampel & Tracey, 2017, p. 2176). Macro-level stigma can also exist at the industry-level where an entire industry is devalued by nature of its involvement in producing that may have net harmful effects to people or the environment, such as tobacco, alcohol, or oil and gas suppliers or producers.

At all levels, stigmatization poses distinct challenges and "is a phenomenon that is defined in the context of social interactions" (Hebl & Dovido, 2005, p. 156). Most definitions of stigma acknowledge "its dynamic nature, or the fact that it is embedded and evolving within social interactions, norms, context, and values" (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005, p. 157). What is deemed to be a stigmatizing label in one context, may not be viewed as such in another (Jones, 1984). Several examples illustrate this point, such as perceptions of homosexuality in a Southern Baptist church meeting as compared to a book club in San Francisco in the 1980's (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). In the former, negative repercussions are expected, such as devaluation of and/or disassociation from individuals who identity as homosexual, and in the latter context this negative consequence is not expected due to a climate reputed for acceptance of minority sexual orientations (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Link and Phelan (2001) clarify that an attitude becomes stigmatizing when "elements of labeling, stereotyping, separating, status loss, and discrimination co-occur in a power situation" (p. 382). Depending on the setting in which a stigmatized attribute

or identity is introduced, the extent to which the stigma holder is judged, and the extent to which perceptions will be negative, will vary.

1.1.2 The Stigma Holder and the Relational Other

Stigma theory and research describe the perspective of the *non*-stigma-holder using a variety of terms including "relational other" (Gibson, 2018, p. 573), "confidant" (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010, p. 236), or "stigma disclosure recipient" (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 201). In the employee-supervisory relationship, the employee occupies this receiving role in the case of disclosures made by or about their leader. Interestingly, when describing a stigmatized identity disclosure, the non-stigma holding party is referred to as "the dominant" group (Lyons, Pek, & Wessel, 2017, p. 619). In the case of downward disclosures, the employee/direct report is positioned in the dominant group. This reverses the typical downward flow of formal authority of leader-follower relationships. Emerging work that investigates the consequences of such exchanges offers mixed findings with respect to employee evaluations of leaders following disclosures of concealable stigmatized identities made by or about the leader.

In several studies, employees rated their leader as less effective and less likeable after the disclosure when the type of disclosure was a manager's transgender identity or a manager who had been seeking psychological counseling (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2017; Gibson, Harari, & Marr, 2018). Empirical investigations of leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures suggest more positive results, but typically rely on qualitative methodology to explore post-disclosure perceptions. For example, Chang and Bowring (2017) interviewed 18 leaders in Canadian workplaces (education, not-for-profit, and educational sectors) who had come out as gay or lesbian at work. They reported *leaders'* perceived advantages of disclosure, such as higher quality relationships with employees (Chang & Bowring, 2017). Similarly, Schneider's (2016)

study of American library directors also reported benefits of disclosing minority sexual orientation at work. However, given the disclosure experience involves more than one party, this work tells only one side of the story from the leaders' perspective. Yet, a largely conceptual body of literature encourages leaders to share minority identities, such as identifying as gay or lesbian or having a disability, with the goal of strengthening emotional ties with followers through building trust, sharing vulnerability and establishing an inclusive climate (e.g., Bowring, 2017; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Ito & Bligh, 2016; Nittrouer, Trump, O'Brien, & Hebl, 2014). On balance, differences in outcomes suggest type of disclosure plays an important role in shaping employee attitudes.

Also referred to as stigma expression or claiming, disclosure has the potential to change the dynamic of the employee-supervisory relationship which holds consequences in organizational settings (Johnson et al., 2020; Lyons et al., 2017). Typically, leadership is understood as a style, such as transformational (e.g., Judge & Piccolo, 2004), authentic (e.g., Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005), servant leadership (e.g., Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019), and others (Dinh et al., 2014). In all styles of leadership, the leader-follower relationship is characterized by power asymmetries due to hierarchical status differences that can influence outcomes of leader-follower interactions (Epitropaki, Radulovich, Ete, Thomas, & Martin, 2020). Followers' social perceptions of leadership can give power to their leaders, which can affect the leaders' future behaviour and influence over the group (Weischer et al., 2013). Due to hierarchical status differences, high levels of interdependence are inherent in leader-follower relationships in which the follower depends on the leader for affiliation, money, information, and other resources, and the leader depends on the follower for performance (Epitropaki et al., 2020).

To enhance the specificity of leadership studies, researchers have been encouraged to examine leadership at the event level (Dinh & Lord, 2012) where an event is defined as a "distinguishable unit of activity occurring in a specific time and location, and having a perceptible beginning and end" (Hoffman & Lord, 2013, p. 559). When viewed from the perspective of the relational other, workplace disclosures have been conceptualized as events (Johnson et al., 2020). The current research adopts this perspective and conceptualizes downward disclosure as an event. More specifically, disclosure of a concealable stigmatized identity is a micro-level event that provides a frame of reference for future interpersonal encounters (Gibson, 2018). Little empirical evidence examining this type of event exists (see Adams & Webster, 2017 and Gibson et al., 2018 for exceptions).

1.1.3 Disclosure of Concealable Stigmatized Identities

Both discredited and discreditable stigmas are associated with social devaluation and may trigger negative repercussions, such as disassociation, prejudice, or discrimination (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005; Quinn & Earnshaw, 2013). Stigma theory differentiates between discredited and discreditable identities such that discreditable stigmas are identities or labels that are either invisible or of low visibility and are likely to be devalued in a particular social context should they become known (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998). Discredited identities, on the other hand, are visible and lead to earlier recognition of the difference; examples include skin colour, a religious headscarf; facial disfiguration, missing limb, or mobility devices such as a cane or a wheelchair. The current research uses the term concealable or invisible stigmatized identity interchangeably to describe what Goffman (1963) refers to as discreditable.

The study of stigmatized identities originated in general social settings, demonstrating that concealable stigmatized identity disclosures can have implications at the individual

(psychological, behavioral, health), dyadic (liking, intimacy, and trust), and contextual (social and cultural) levels (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Individuals who possess concealable stigmas report higher feelings of anxiety and depression than people who possess either visible stigmas, or no stigmas at all (Frable, Platt, & Hoey, 1998). When compared to persons with visible stigmas, persons with invisible stigmas are more likely to have poor outcomes with respect to housing, employment, social relationships, and overall health outcomes outside of organizational life (Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, & Link, 2013; Quinn & Earnshaw, 2013).

In an organizational context, research surrounding disclosure at work implicitly assumes that managers themselves do not possess concealable stigmas (Barling & Cloutier, 2017) and, as such, has not thoroughly investigated the possibility and consequences of diversity in leaders themselves. Identity management theorists suggest that communication about one's stigmatized identity can determine whether others' attitudes towards the stigma and the individual possessing it are positive or negative (Lyons et al., 2017). However, this work stops short of considering how leaders fit into the equation by focusing on disclosures within or by employee populations. Employee-focused disclosure research demonstrates that employees who disclose concealable stigmatized identities may have their competency questioned; risk experiencing differential treatment from interviewers, supervisors, or coworkers; face potential discrimination resulting in missed opportunities for promotion; and receive less support from one's supervisor or manager (Beatty & Kirby, 2006; Ellison et al., 2003). Similarly, disclosures between co-workers can shape other organizational members' perceptions of the disclosing individual and either encourage or discourage the organizational members who receive the disclosure from making a similar disclosure (Peters & Brown, 2009). To what extent will these findings hold and predict employee perceptions when it is the leader who identifies as a member of a stigmatized group?

The role of organizational leaders has been incorporated in disclosure research in a limited capacity – focusing largely on how managers can support others with stigmas rather than addressing the possibility of managers themselves having stigmatized identity(ies). For example, tools and training programs have been developed to assist supervisors in supporting employees who experience mental health issues (Dimoff & Kelloway, 2019; Gayed et al., 2018). Similarly, organizations are encouraged to provide disclosure opportunities for minority sexual orientation and gender identity *employees* to self-identify using tools such as a voluntary diversity census (Sasso, 2015). As an approach to strategic management, leaders, too, have been encouraged to embrace diversity and to constructively manage diversity-related conflict *among others* (Ng, 2008). My dissertation examines outcomes from the employee perspective when a leader possesses a concealable stigmatized identity that is disclosed by the leader or someone else in the workplace to someone who occupies a lower level of the organizational hierarchy.

Within the organizational hierarchy, leaders possess various types of power and authority due to their position. Both inside and outside of organizational settings, stigma-holding individuals are presumed to be at a power disadvantage due to a "marked" personal characteristic or identity (Goffman, 1963). However, this does not preclude an organizational member from possessing a personal stigma – regardless of hierarchical positional and associated power or authority. Nonetheless, the assumption that those possessing a stigma also have low power persists in organizational scholarship, which reinforces this oversight in existing stigma and leadership research (Lyons et al., 2017). This gap in leadership research has been attributed to concepts such as the romance of leadership, which over-emphasizes the importance of the leadership position rather acknowledging characteristics of the individual leader in the position (Barling, Christie & Hoption in Zedeck, 2011). At the same time, emphasis on authentic

leadership and other recent trends, such as working virtually from home, that have elevated the integration of details once considered private into one's professional identity, are dismantling the conception of leaders as lone, heroic, flawless individuals (Ancona, Malone, Orlikowski, & Senge 2007; Ibarra, 2015; Sarkis, 2021). The gap this has created in organizational scholarship is clear – further research on leaders' stigmatized identity disclosures from the perspective of their direct reports is necessary.

1.1.4 Disclosure Type – Stigma Content

Drawing from research and theory developed in non-organizational settings, there is reason to believe that disclosure content may directly or indirectly affect the employee's perceptions following disclosure of the leader's concealable stigmatized identity. Central to this point is the multi-dimensional stigma framework developed by Jones (1984); social scientists often draw from this paradigm to illustrate dynamic and varied combinations of factors that drive others' attitudes and reactions towards various concealable identities in general social settings. The framework identifies six key constructs underlying stigma including *visibility, peril, (unappealing) aesthetics, (persistent) course, disruptiveness* and *(controllable) origin* (Jones, 1984). Visibility has been previously described and the following paragraphs briefly explain the remaining five dimensions.

Peril is the extent to which a stigma poses a personal threat or potential for contagion (Jones, 1984). Individuals with mental disorders are often perceived as frightening, unpredictable and strange (Ahmedani, 2011). In a ranking study of 93 stigmas on the six dimensions, symptomatic mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, and involvement with illegal activities such as drug dealer, gang member, and sex offenders received the highest ratings on peril (Pachankis et al., 2018). Often discussed in combination with peril is the dimension of *unappealing*

aesthetics, which measures the potential to evoke a disgust reaction from others due to discomfort created by divergence from expected social norms (Jones, 1984). Conditions high in unappealing aesthetics include drug dependencies, HIV and bacterially transmitted sexually transmitted diseases, use of crystal methamphetamines, injection drug use, and homelessness (Pachankis et al., 2018). Due to relatively high scores on both peril and aesthetics, mental disorders are often described as displeasing which leads to a generalization of the connection between abnormal behaviour and mental illness, labeling and avoidance (Ahmedani, 2011).

Course is the extent to which a stigma persists over time and is perceived as permanent or irreversible (Jones, 1984). Features rated highly on course include age, race, height, sexual orientation, deaf and/or blindness, unattractiveness, and mental retardation (Pachankis et al., 2018). Identifying openly as gay or lesbian tends to be rated highly on course but low on all other dimensions of stigma, which makes this grouping one of the least severely stigmatized groups (Pachankis et al., 2018). *Disruptiveness* refers to if and how a stigma interferes with smooth social interactions. Highly disruptive conditions include cognitive deficits (e.g., autism, stroke, or mental disability) and symptomatic mental diseases, such as active symptoms of bipolar disorder or schizophrenia (Pachankis et al., 2018). *Origin* is whether a stigma is believed to be present at birth or acquired. Perceptions of preventability are high for individuals who are overweight, engage in prostitution, or drug dealing which suggests an element of blame for the stigma holder. Conditions high in controllable origin as well as high in unappealing aesthetics are more harshly stigmatized than those high in both course and unappealing aesthetics. Interestingly, research suggests that individuals whose stigma is perceived as high in controllability (the individual is to blame for their characteristic) are evaluated more favourably when they disclose sooner rather than later, while individuals whose stigma is rated lower in

controllability are allowed more flexibility for when they disclose their 'born this way' characteristic (King, Reilly & Hebl, 2008).

Management scholars have recently begun to integrate and extend Jones' (1984) framework to propose a conceptual framework for stigma in organizations in the form of literature reviews to identify research gaps (e.g., Follmer et al., 2017). Summers et al. (2018) propose that the six dimensions of stigma are not equally deleterious in organizational settings and merit further investigation within the context of work. My research seeks to better understand employee attitudes toward leaders who possess stigmatizing characteristics and identities at work. This work further develops research predicated upon stigma theory by focusing on concealable stigmas related to minority sexual orientation and mental illness (Goffman, 1963; Jones, 1984; Summers et al., 2018).

The disclosure types under investigation in this dissertation were selected based on an emerging body of evidence, which has produced mixed results. In general, employee attitudes toward leaders who disclose a minority gender identity (Adams & Webster, 2017) or mental health/ illness related information (Gibson et al., 2018) seem less likely to be met with favorable reactions from employees in comparison to leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation (Chang & Bowring, 2017; Sabat et al., 2019; Schneider, 2016). On balance, it seems that different types of stigmas are met with varying degrees of acceptance in organizational contexts. Thus, I acknowledge the wide breadth of minority identities encompassed within stigma theory and took steps to design the research herein in a manner that would preclude an overly-generalized research model related to stigma at work (See Follmer et al., 2020 for a review). This risk occurs when the results of an investigation into one type of stigma are extended broadly to cover multiple concealable stigmatized identities; such is the case in existing theoretical models

that have drawn primarily from research on minority sexual orientation and applied it evenly to all types of concealable stigma disclosures across all organizational settings (see Jones & King, 2014; Ragins, 2008). To reduce the risk of producing an under-specified research model, I employ a multi-categorical predictor across all studies to compare a non-disclosure condition with minority sexual orientation and mental illness (Study 1), and substance abuse disorder (Studies 2 and 3). The rationale for doing so is briefly discussed.

Substance abuse or addiction is situated within the medical model and considered a mental illness (Link et al., 1999); however, stigma researchers have determined that from the perspective of the relational other, stereotypes and attitudes held towards substance abuse differ from those held about mental disorders and diseases (e.g., Pachankis et al., 2018; Sabat et al., 2019). Similarly, minority sexual orientation and nonbinary gender identity differ in important ways such as the individuals' lived experiences (Scheffey, Ogden, & Dichter, 2019), and others' more stigmatizing attitudes towards minority gender as compared to minority sexual orientation (Sabat et al., 2019). As such, in Study 1, I endeavored to collect and examine gender identity and sexual orientation as separate disclosure categories, but I could not recruit a large enough sample size of minority gendered individuals. Therefore, Study 1 participants who reported working with a manager who had a minority sexual orientation or gender identity were considered as one broad disclosure category and cross-compared with a second broad disclosure category of mental illness and substance abuse. In the Study 1 analysis, both disclosure categories were compared to participants whose manager did not have a known stigmatized identity referred to as the non-disclosure category – this served as the reference group in the statistical analysis. Thus, the multi-categorical predictor in Study 1 has three levels: 1) non-disclosure; 2) minority sexual orientation and gender identity; and 3) mental illness including substance abuse. In Studies 2 and

3, mental illness is parsed into multiple predictors so I could examine mental disorder/disease separately from substance abuse to determine if there are differential reactions to leader disclosures within the mental illness frame. Both disclosure categories are then compared to minority sexual orientation and non-disclosure conditions, leaving the distinct and complex phenomenon of gender identity for future research. Thus, the multi-categorical predictor in Studies 2a and 3 has four levels – 1) non-disclosure; 2) minority sexual orientation, 3) mental disorder disease; and 4) substance abuse. The experimental methodologies in Studies 2 and 3 allowed me to collect larger samples, which enabled a more nuanced treatment of mental illness to compare leader evaluations following disclosures of mental disorder/disease as compared to substance abuse disorder as separate categorical predictors. This type of cross comparison between stigma categories sheds light on which types of stigmas are more favorably received in the context of downward disclosure.

1.2 Study Design

To answer the research questions, I conducted three studies the conceptual diagrams for which are displayed in Figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4. Meta-analysis of disclosures that occur in social settings suggest that study paradigm (i.e., experimental, or non-experimental) can account for a significant amount of variance in observed outcomes and effect sizes (Collins & Miller, 1994). Therefore, I employed both research designs to investigate disclosures in organizational settings using non-experimental data collected in a field setting (Study 1) and under experimental conditions (Study 2 and 3). In Study 1, I collected data from participants who may have experienced working with a leader who has disclosed a concealable stigmatized identity in the workplace. In Study 2, I employed experimental vignette methodology to test the moderating potential of leader gender and discloser identity in the disclosure and leadership evaluation

relationship. Study 3 also used an experimental, multimedia vignette to test a conditional process model of moderated mediation. Selection of mediators, moderators, and outcomes for investigation in Study 3 were informed by emerging research and results of Studies 1 and 2.

1.2.1 Intended Contribution

As leaders continue to disclose minority identities, this research responds to calls to improve understanding of processes and contextual considerations that play a role in disclosure by examining employee perceptions of the intersection of stigmatized identities and leadership. A key aim of the current work is to extend the normative focus of organizational stigma research by shifting the focus away from the experience of stigmatized individual toward the party who receives the disclosed information. This focus answers calls to increase understanding of concealable stigmatized identity disclosures in the workplace from the perspective of the relational other (e.g., Follmer et al., 2017; Gibson, 2018; Hebl & Dovido, 2005; Ragins, 2008). A theoretical contribution is made by investigating concealable stigmatized identity disclosures as an antecedent of employee-rated perceptions of their leader. These findings will be of practical benefit to leaders facing a disclosure decision allowing them better understanding of how their direct reports' attitudes might be affected by their disclosure (Beardwood, Kirsh, & Clark, 2005).

Figure 1-1: Visual summary of conceptual model (Study 1)

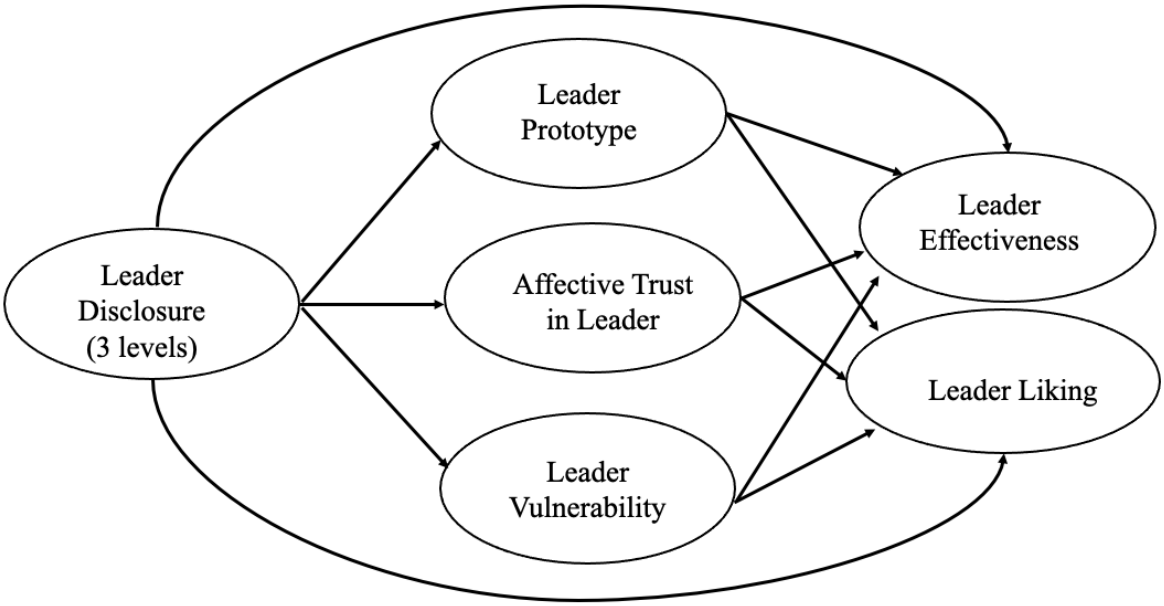


Figure 1-2: Visual summary of conceptual model (Study 2a)

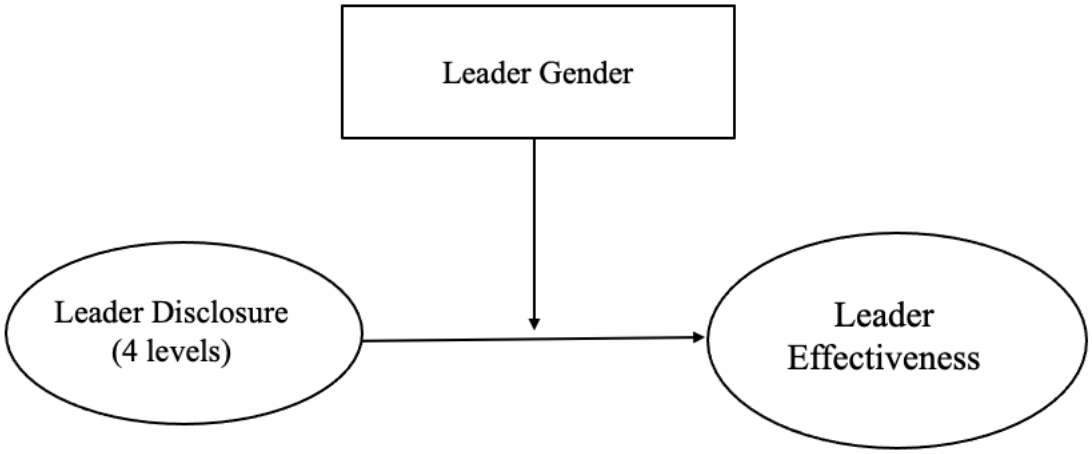


Figure 1-3: Visual summary of conceptual model (Study 2b)

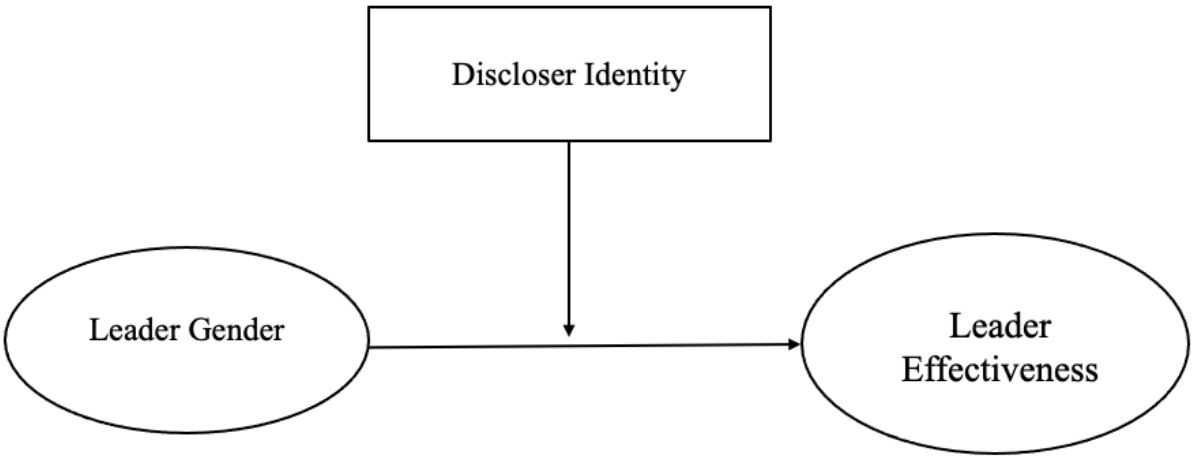
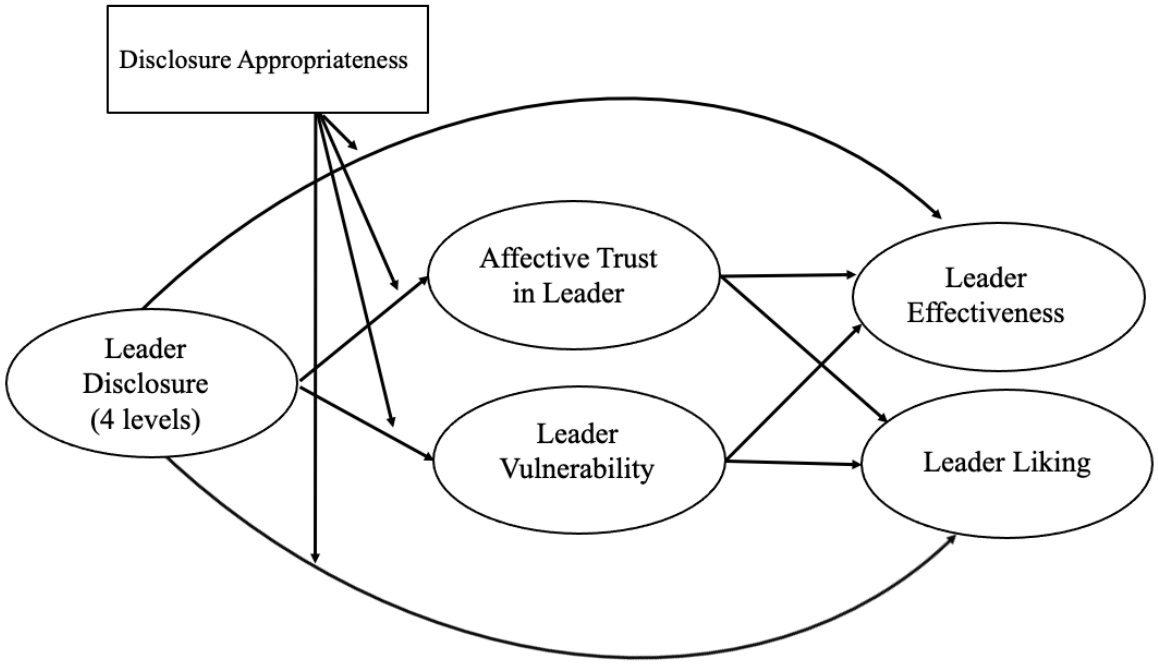


Figure 1-4: Visual summary of conceptual model (Study 3)



1.2.2 Overview of Document

Following this introductory section, in **Chapter 2** I review relevant literature to develop the hypotheses used to examine Study 1's parallel mediation model. This model tests three theoretically supported variables that may explain the relationship between disclosure of a leader's concealable stigmatized identity and employee evaluations. In this chapter, I also explain how open-ended responses on employees' experiences of downward disclosures were collected and analyzed. The rationale and procedure for revising the recruitment strategy, data collection instrument, and combining samples in this time-lagged online survey are detailed, and results are presented and discussed. In **Chapter 3,** I summarize literature on the contextual factors that may play a role in disclosure attitudes and perceptions and present a test of simple moderation models to investigate the roles of leader gender and discloser identity (Study 2). This chapter presents an overview of the experimental vignette methodology (EVM) used to design, implement, and analyze this study. Informed by the results of Studies 1 and 2, **Chapter 4** presents a conditional process model of employees' leader evaluations as moderated by disclosure appropriateness and mediated by affective trust and perceived vulnerability (Study 3). In **Chapter 5,** I provide a general discussion of leader evaluations following disclosures of concealable stigmatized identities from the employee perspective, highlight the contributions and limitations of the current research, suggest avenues for future research, and comment on theoretical and practical implications.

CHAPTER 2 - STUDY 1: A MEDIATION MODEL OF LEADER DISCLOSURES AND EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS

In this chapter, I present theoretically grounded hypotheses to set-up an empirical investigation of how employee reactions to a downward disclosure might affect employee evaluations of their leader (i.e., direct supervisor) and the mechanisms through which this may occur. I propose a model to investigate employee ratings of leader prototypes, affective trust in leader, and perceptions of leader vulnerability as mediators of the disclosure-leader evaluation process. Relevant theory and research are synthesized to justify the predicted relationships between disclosure, three mediating variables, and two focal outcomes - leader effectiveness and leader liking. I review the details of a time-lagged online survey and discuss the findings of the qualitative thematic analysis and quantitative results of hypothesis testing conducted using ordinary least squares regression (OLS) with Hayes' (2018) PROCESS Macro.

2.1 Perceptions of Others

Widely held beliefs about social groups (stereotypes) affect assumptions and expectations about the attributes and behavior of those groups in social and professional settings (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015). Individuals who violate the expected norms and stereotypes of their social group often experience evaluation penalties (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989). This chapter discusses stereotypes held about two different types of groups – first, stigmatized identity groups and, second, leaders. I draw from stigma and implicit leadership theories to introduce the possible intersection of these two identities: organizational leader(s) and stigmatized identity(ies). Organizational leaders may identify as a sexual or gender minority, an individual with mental illness, or someone who is currently dealing, or has in the past dealt with, substance abuse (e.g., Hewlett, Luce & West, 2005). Reconciliation of an

employee's awareness of their leader's minority social identity in addition to the leader's role as an organizational authority is an under-researched area. Based on the negative expectations predicted by stigma theory, hypotheses that suggest disclosure of concealable stigmatized identities will be associated with *less* favourable leader evaluations in terms of effectiveness and liking are fully developed in the following sections.

2.1.1 Why Leader Disclosures Are Different

Stigmas are "socially constructed" (Ragins, 2008, p. 196), which means prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes are perceived about an individual in a certain social context and can change with time and circumstance. The context-dependent nature of stigma highlights the importance to study how stigma operates in organizational settings. To date, study of concealable stigmatized identity disclosures in organizational settings suggests that workplace disclosures may affect the receiving party more adversely than the disclosing party (Gibson, 2018; Gibson et al., 2018; King et al., 2008). Following this, two key gaps that persist in stigma literature are relevant to organizational settings. First, stigma research typically adopts the perspective of the stigma holder instead of the important relational other (Follmer et al., 2020; Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Second, neither leadership nor stigma researchers have thoroughly investigated the possibility of leaders holding concealable stigmatized identities and disclosing them in organizational settings (e.g., Barling & Cloutier, 2017; Cloutier & Barling, 2017). As previously described, early investigations of employee reactions to leader disclosures in organizational settings have produced mixed results.

Explanations for adverse reactions to leader disclosures have received less attention than the conceptual and potential benefits of leader disclosure (e.g., Bowring, 2017; Ito & Bligh, 2016; Nittrouer et al., 2014). Negative evaluations of leaders who disclose could be related to the

tendency for individuals to attend to negative information longer than they do to positive, which can disproportionately impact on impressions and create impressions resistant to later improvement (Lazowski & Andersen, 1990). Similarly, evaluators tend to overweigh negative information relative to positive information (Baumeister, Bratslavesky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001). Specific to the leader-follower relationship, followers are outcome-dependent on their leader, which means they will be strongly attuned to their leader's characteristics and will be more likely to intentionally seek out information and pay careful attention to form the impressions that will be used when evaluating their leader (Dépret & Fiske, 1993; Fiske & Dépret, 1996). Due to the asymmetrical nature of the employee-supervisor relationship in terms of status, power and influence, managers and employees' outcome dependency effects may be even more pronounced than in same-status dyads (Gibson et al., 2018). Implicit leadership theory provides an avenue for understanding these early observations of unfavourable leader evaluations. Specifically, researchers have theorized that the negative evaluations to leader disclosures of concealable stigmas were driven by employee perceptions of deviance (e.g., minority sexual orientation: Platt & Lenzen, 2013) and individual weakness (psychological counselling: Gibson et al., 2018), which are presumed to be outside of the leadership prototype (Cloutier & Barling, 2017).

Two outcomes of interest, leader liking and leader effectiveness, were deliberately selected for investigation in this dissertation. Research on self-disclosures in close relationships has long employed liking, or affect, as a focal outcome. Meta-analysis of disclosure and liking in close relationships demonstrate that people who disclose intimate information tend to be more liked than those who disclose more routine information (Collins & Miller, 1994). However, organizational scholars have emphasized the importance of extending the study of workplace

disclosure beyond liking to include organizationally relevant outcomes. Important to the outcomes of interest in this organizationally focused investigation is that leader liking evaluates a different component of employee-supervisor relationship quality than leader effectiveness. This is because affective reactions (e.g., leader liking) tend to occur involuntarily and take precedence over cognitive processing (e.g., employee knowledge of leader's actual performance) that are drawn from to evaluate one's leader on other more demonstrable outcomes, such as leader effectiveness (Dulebohn, Wu & Liao, 2017). Therefore, employee ratings of leader liking, and leader effectiveness are distinct yet complimentary outcome variables. Decrements of either leader liking or leader effectiveness suggest degradation of the leader's symbolic power and diminished capacity to influence followers; however, employee's liking ratings will be more automatic and rely on the employee's emotional valence, while leader effectiveness ratings should be more deliberate as determined by cognitive processing of the employee's interpretation of the leader's conduct at work (Dulebohn et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Follower Evaluations of Leaders

What it means to be an effective leader can vary widely depending on one's perspective and conceptualization/measurement of effectiveness. According to Yukl (2006) the definition of leadership hinges on one's ability to influence others as well as the process of getting others "to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it" (p. 8). How might an organizational manager or supervisor with a known concealable stigmatized identity be evaluated by employees? Outside of organizations, the severity of stigmas has been measured using social distance such that greater levels of social distance indicate higher stigma (Pachankis et al., 2018). Social distance is not an appropriate measure for employee-supervisory relationships. In some cases, it is not feasible to expect to maintain social or physical distance

from one's manager or supervisor due to outcome dependence, as well as task and environmental considerations (Dépret & Fiske, 1993). As such, I respond to calls for stigma and disclosure research that is specific to organizational settings by assessing leadership effectiveness and leader liking from the follower's perspective (e.g., Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Luria, Kalish, & Weinstein, 2014).

To date, two experimental studies have shed light on how leaders with a known concealable stigmatized identity are evaluated by followers. Gibson et al. (2018) determined that leaders who disclosed a personal weakness (i.e., seeking psychological counselling) were rated significantly lower in status than leaders who did not make such a disclosure. This outcome was unique to leader-follower pairs such that status degradation was not present when this disclosure occurred between peers who occupied the same level of organizational hierarchy. A second experimental study determined that managers who disclosed a transgender identity were rated less likeable and less effective than managers who did not have a known concealable stigmatized identity (Adams & Webster, 2017). In both cases, the disclosure outcomes suggest degradation of the leader's symbolic power and diminished capacity to influence followers. These findings may be an extension of previous research grounded in social identity perspectives of leadership which purports that leaders who are seen as different from their followers are rated lower in trust and effectiveness (Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009). Moreover, disclosure event theory suggests stigmatized identity disclosures may result in micro-aggressions from others which can be reasonably expected to predict lower levels of liking (Johnson et al., 2020).

In social settings, information sharing is viewed as a gesture of friendship and can increase how much the disclosure recipient likes the disclosing party, while concealing the same information may result in social rejection (Collins & Miller, 1994), Consistent with previous

leader disclosure research specific to organizational settings (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2017; Gibson et al., 2018), I expect that the concealable stigmatized identity disclosures under investigation in the current research will be deleterious for followers' liking perceptions of their leader given the organizational context, differences in hierarchical position, and sensitive subject matter. This is largely driven by stigma theory, which suggests that the stigmatizing nature of the disclosure content may elicit feelings of awkwardness, inappropriateness, social norm violations and even disgust from some followers (Collins & Miller, 1994; Jones, 1984; Lynch & Rodell, 2018; Sun & Slepian, 2020). This may lead to a negative association between disclosure and post-disclosure evaluations of both leadership effectiveness and liking. Based on past investigations of personal information disclosures, content of the disclosure will be an important predictor of these ratings (Mathews et al., 2006).

2.1.3 Stigma Disclosures as a Multi-categorical Predictor

The lack of empirical studies that focus specifically on the hierarchical position of the stigma holder and the relational other is an identified gap in concealable stigma research (Jones & King, 2014). As such, little is known about the extent to which existing disclosure knowledge will apply in a leader-follower context. Despite minority sexual orientation being relatively less stigmatized compared to mental illness and substance abuse (Pachankis et al., 2018; Sabat et al., 2019), both minority sexual orientation and mental illness at work have been identified as an area in need of theoretical development and empirical investigation for over a decade (e.g., Fassinger et al., 2010; Jones, 2011; Link et al., 1999).

Studies of marginalized or minority social identity groups at work have been criticized for their "one-size-fits-all" (Follmer et al., 2019, p. 13) approach. In terms of minority sexual orientation and gender identities, there is now ample evidence to support that minority sexual

orientation is less stigmatized than minority gender identity in organizational settings (e.g., Sabat et al., 2019). Regardless, 'LGBT' remains a frequently referenced category which combines minority sexual orientation and minority gender identity (e.g., transgender, gender fluid, gender nonbinary) (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). Combining these categories may not always be appropriate due to differences in the individuals' lived experiences (Scheffet et al., 2019). The nuance of these differences are explicated by a study that relied on Jones' (1984) six dimensions of stigma to compare people's attitudes towards individuals with minority sexual orientation to transgender identity. Pachankis et al. (2018) determined that transgender individuals were rated lower in course (the extent to which a stigma persists over time and is permanent or irreversible), but higher on visibility, disruptiveness, disgust, and controllability than minority sexual orientation individuals. Despite these differences, separate treatment of these categories is not always practical or possible for practical (e.g., many non-binary individuals may also possess minority sexual orientation: Scheffy et al., 2019) and methodological (e.g., recruiting a large enough sample size) reasons. So, while some sex and gender scholars recommend treating minority sexual and gender identities as separate entities when possible, researchers often combine them into one empirical category (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Salter & Liberman, 2016)

Similar to minority sexual orientation, organizational scholars have recognized the need for more detailed study and theoretical development of mental illness in the workplace (e.g., Follmer & Jones, 2018). Within the spectrum of mental illness, substance abuse is perceived as having more controllable origins than mental disorder and diseases (Pachankis et al., 2018). Similarly, the acuity of mental illness symptoms – whether active or remitted - affects ratings across all six dimensions of stigma (Pachankis et al., 2018). Undeniably, mental illness disclosures are more likely to flow upward (i.e., from the employee to someone higher in the

hierarchy) rather than downward (i.e., from manager/supervisor to someone lower in the hierarchy) for a variety of reasons such as the need to access accommodations or other organizational supports for disability (Jones, 2011). However, management scholars have long acknowledged the potential for managers and supervisors' heightened risk for mental illness including drug and alcohol addictions (e.g., Dzhingarov, 2017; Murray, 1973). This is consistent with empirical studies that acknowledge a relationship between workplace stressors and organizational culture of alcohol consumption and drug use as a coping strategy (Bacharach et al., 2008; Frone, 2016).

Following this summary of the within-group differences of minority sexual orientation (and gender identity) and mental illness (including substance abuse), cross-comparisons between these categories are now discussed. Studies that utilize the six dimensions of stigma suggest that minority sexual orientations are perceived as less disruptive, longer term, and lower in visibility than mental disorders and disease (Pachankis et al., 2018). Furthermore, minority sexual orientation may be considered more appropriate for workplace sharing due to the expected higher degree of stigma centrality, closeness to one's self concept, identity, and sense of self (Brohan et al., 2014; Jones & King, 2014; King, Reilly, & Hebl, 2008; Ragins, 2008). One important difference between mental illness and substance abuse disorder from minority sexual orientation and gender identity stigmas is the categorization of the former two within the medical model. Thus, despite claims that sexual orientation is likely to be of higher stigma centrality and more of an individual identity than illnesses are, disability researchers point out that individuals can experience a health problem as part of their identity, which can encourage them to disclose their identity in a workplace setting (Biggs, Hovey, Tyson, & MacDonald, 2010; Cruwys & Gunaseelan, 2015). However, the research that demonstrates an increased propensity to disclose

at work pertains to the stigma holder and provides no insight into the perspective of the relational other, which is a special consideration in leader-follower relationships and, as previously mentioned, is an under-researched area. Recognizing these important differences in stigma content, Study 1 hypotheses are based on a three-level multi-categorical predictor (non-disclosure as the reference group; minority sexual orientation including gender identity as the first disclosure category, and mental illness including substance abuse disorder as the second disclosure category).

Hypothesis 1a: Followers will rate leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation as more effective than leaders who disclose mental illness.

Hypothesis 1b: Followers will rate leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation higher on liking than leaders who disclose mental illness.

Hypothesis 1c: Followers will rate leaders who have not disclosed a concealable stigmatized identity highest on both leader effectiveness and leader liking compared to ratings of leaders who have disclosed either of the concealable stigmatized identities.

2.2 Understanding the Disclosure - Leader Evaluation Process

The previous section has offered predictions regarding the direct effects of leaders' concealable stigmatized disclosure at three levels of the predictor variable – leader non-disclosure, leader minority sexual orientation and gender identity disclosure, and leader mental illness (including substance abuse) disclosure. Leaders influence people through a variety of mechanisms, such as their perceived power and their relationships with individual employees (Erks, Nyquist, Allen, & Rogelberg, 2017), and concealable stigmatized identity disclosures can detract from this influence (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2017; Gibson et al., 2018). Thus, one objective of this dissertation is to identify mediators in the disclosure-leader evaluation

relationship. This is an important line of inquiry given the possibility of uncovering new mechanisms that explain the indirect path from disclosure to evaluation.

Disclosure of concealable stigmatized identities in workplace settings is thought to be a multiply mediated process (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Previous leader disclosure research has drawn from impression management and social identity perspectives of leadership to determine the deleterious effects of leader disclosures on employee evaluations (Adams & Webster, 2017; Gibson et al., 2018; Jiang, Kouchaki, Gino, Boghrati & John, 2020). These studies explicated the mediating roles of (decreased) status (Gibson et al., 2018) and relational identification (Adams & Webster, 2017), which indirectly led to lower ratings of leader effectiveness and liking after the leader's concealable stigmatized disclosure. Empirical understanding of the intersection of leadership and concealable stigmatized identity disclosures is in the early stages and will benefit from further investigation of mediating mechanisms (Capell, Tzafrir, & Dolan, 2016; Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Extant literature suggests employee ratings of leadership prototype, leader trust, and leader vulnerability may also play a mediating role between leader disclosure of mental illness or minority sexual orientation and employee evaluations of effectiveness and liking.

2.2.1 Implicit Leadership Theory

Knowledge about the multiple roles individuals occupy across various social domains is cognitively organized into mental representations called *role schemas* (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). Also referred to as exemplars or prototypes, information processing theories purport that role schemas tell us the typical or appropriate behaviours expected of a person occupying a certain position (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Lord et al., 2001). Perceptions are developed following activation of relevant schemas, and the target stimulus is compared to the activated pattern or prototype (Lord et al., 2001).

Role schemas for organizational leaders are a specific type of schema, referred to as implicit leadership theories (ILT), which have been determined to hold stable over multiple decades (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Offermann & Coats, 2018). Stemming from the study of bias in leadership ratings generally, implicit leadership theory (ILT) describes a field of research focused on knowledge structures about leaders and how this affects others' attitudes and behavioral responses to leader behaviour (Dinh et al., 2014). Through socialization and past experiences with leaders, mental representations of leaders are developed and stored in memory (Lord et al., 1984). These leader-like characteristics combine to form a leadership prototype, which individuals use to benchmark and evaluate actual leader behavior against (Lord & Maher, 1991). Leadership prototypes are followers' idealized images of leadership (Tavares, Sobral, Goldszmidt, & Araújo, 2018). As abstract mental knowledge structures, leader prototypes develop like categories around a set of attributes and behaviors shared by different types of leaders (Foti, Hansbrough, Epitropaki, & Coyle, 2017). Individuals rely on the prototypes to distinguish leaders from non-leaders based on past experiences.

Leader prototypes have been measured in many ways (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Offermann and Coats, 2018). To select a measurement scale, I relied on evidence from a recent study that examined which leader attributes explained the most variance in follower leader ratings. Tavares et al. (2018) determined that focusing on positive leadership qualities captured in the leader prototype construct were more reliable and explained more significantly variance in follower ratings than anti-prototypical qualities such as tyranny and masculinity. Using the Epitropaki and Martin (2004) scale, the leader's overall prototype score is determined by combining ratings on the dimensions of intelligence, sensitivity, dynamism and dedication. High scores on leader prototype indicate that the leader is very characteristic of the followers'

preconceived ideas of leadership, which is often linked to more favorable measures on broader measures of leader evaluation (e.g., Riggs & Porter, 2017).

Despite high correlations between leadership prototype dimensions, ILT studies typically examine leadership prototypes as a unitary construct (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Van Quaquebeke, Graf, & Eckloff, 2014). Investigations that have examined mental illness and leader prototypes reveal that mental illness is incongruent with leadership prototypes - despite similar prevalence rates of mental illness in leader and non-leader samples (Cloutier & Barling, 2017). Specifically, employees perceive leaders as enjoying greater well-being and experiencing less mental illness than non-leaders; however, comparative analysis of a nationally representative Canadian sample demonstrates there is no difference in experiences of well-being and rates of mental illness between leaders and non-leaders (Cloutier & Barling, 2017). This suggests that how we perceive leaders' mental health and well-being may not reflect reality. Research regarding the suitability of other concealable stigmatized identities for leadership are more nuanced.

Minority sexual orientation disclosures have received mixed reviews when it comes to leadership suitability. One investigation found gay men were perceived as a better fit for "stereotypically feminine leadership positions" than their heterosexual counterparts, and they continue to accrue advantages over their female counterparts for "stereotypically masculine leadership positions" by virtue of being male (Barrantes & Eaton, 2018, p. 558). Another study examined the stereotype content of gay male and lesbian leaders, and determined that others perceive sexual minorities as embodying characteristics, skills, and attributes outside of typical leadership prototypes (Salter & Liberman, 2016). Furthermore, individuals may use stereotypes around sexual orientation and gender as a heuristic in evaluating leadership behaviours, which

has implications for performance appraisal, promotions decisions, and leadership effectiveness (Salter & Liberman, 2016). This is also reflected by heteronormative prescriptions that ideal North American leaders are straight, white males (Rossette, Leonardelli & Phillips, 2008; Melaku, Beeman, Smith & Johnson, 2020). As this rapidly expanding area of research regarding the suitability of minority sexual orientation individuals for leadership positions continues to develop, these early findings suggest overall leader suitability with minority sexual orientation will be superior to leaders with mental illness, but lower than leader prototype ratings of leaders who have not disclosed a concealable stigmatized identity.

> *Hypothesis 2: Leaders whose mental illness(es) has(have) been disclosed will receive significantly lower leadership prototype ratings than leaders whose minority sexual orientation has been disclosed, and leaders in the non-disclosure category will receive the highest on ratings on leader prototype.*

2.2.2 Leader Trust

Disclosure research suggests that in social settings, individuals who are open and share personal information tend to create positive impressions of themselves with their interaction partners, which builds trusting relationships with others (Collins & Miller, 1994). Similarly, research between peers illustrates a modest positive association between self-disclosure and perceived trustworthiness, which suggests that self-disclosure and trustworthiness are related but distinct concepts with a bi-directional relationship (Wheeless, 1978). Additionally, levels of trust between peers in social settings have been shown to increase proportionately to the content and honesty of the individual's self-disclosure (Wheeless, 1978). However, organizational dynamics must be considered in the case of leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosures and followers' trust ratings of that leader.

Trust in the context of organizations has been defined as "a psychological state comprising a willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations about the intentions or behaviour of another" (Yang & Mossholder, 2010, p. 50). The extent to which disclosure of a concealable stigmatized identity will affect the level of trust in the employee-supervisory relationship is an interesting one given the status asymmetry and outcome dependence that is built into the leader-follower context. To minimize overlap between the cognitive dimension of trust and conceptually similar elements of leadership prototype, such as intelligence, I focus on the affective dimension of trust as a mediator of the disclosure-evaluation relationship.

Affective trust is based on socioemotional elements surrounding interactions with others (Yang & Mossholder, 2010). In the employee-supervisory relationship, affective trust is established on interpersonal bonds and is more relationship than task focused. A video analysis study of a large Dutch organization determined that followers developed affective trust in leaders who provided frequent positive feedback to employees and showed interest in their work through monitoring behaviours (Jacoub, 2014). In turn, employee perceptions of affective trust in their leader positively predicted follower ratings of effective leadership (Jacoub, 2014). As the duration of the reporting relationship increases, it is expected that affective trust may grow as a leader and a follower show reciprocated, genuine care and concern for each other, establishing a relational band.

Grover, Hasel, Manville & Serrano-Archimi (2014) suggest that leader trust violations are deemed by followers to be either *recoverable* (e.g., minor, common) or *irrecoverable* (p. 689). Irrecoverable violations end with the follower withdrawing from the relationship, while recoverable violations are less damaging. According to this framework, recoverable violations

are comprised of task expectation ambiguity (e.g., leader does not give clear explanations, instructions, and goals), lack of legitimacy (e.g., leader makes mistakes or poor decision-making), as well as unpredictable behaviour (e.g., leader changes mind, leader does not make firm decisions) (Grover et al., 2014). On the other hand, examples of irrecoverable trust violations include acts of deception, unkept promises, lies and deliberate information retention (Grover et al., 2014). Because a leader's concealable stigmatized identity disclosure may be perceived by employees as a form of deception or deliberate information retention by their leader (irrecoverable), Grover et al.'s (2014) model of everyday trust violations between leaders and followers supports the prediction of a negative relationship between leader disclosure of a concealable stigmatized identity and employee trust. Furthermore, a leader who shares information beyond what is required by their role may have detrimental implications for followers' trust in their leader (e.g., Durmus, 2013).

Chang and Bowring's (2017) qualitative study of leaders who disclosed minority sexual orientation highlighted that *leaders* who reported an improved relationship with their direct reports after minority sexual orientation disclosure fostered heightened levels of trust. However, post-disclosure trust has not yet been assessed from the employee perspective. With respect to the association between trust and mental illness disclosures, it is likely that widely held perceptions of persons with mental illness, such as illegitimacy, incompetence, violence (Follmer & Jones, 2018; Link et al., 1999), will lead to a negative relationship between concealable stigmatized identities and follower trust. This was the case in a previously summarized experimental study that was conducted in a task-oriented environment, which determined that followers were more likely to anticipate future task conflict and were less influenced by a leader

who disclosed they had been receiving psychological counselling (Gibson et al., 2018). Thus, I hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 3: Leaders whose mental illness(es) has(have) been disclosed will receive significantly lower affective trust ratings than leaders whose minority sexual orientation has(have) been disclosed, and leaders in the non-disclosure category will receive the highest on ratings on affective trust in leader.*

2.2.3 Leader Vulnerability

There is sparse empirical analysis and little to no conceptual or empirical work directed at understanding the role or nomological net of vulnerability (Neinbar, Romeike & Hofeditz 2015) in these relationships. Despite the popular press having reintroduced the term 'vulnerability' as an opportunity for leaders to be authentic and create opportunities for emotional connection (Brown, 2013; Ito & Bligh, 2004), thus far management studies focused on leader disclosure of concealable stigmatized identities have taken a different approach. Organizational and management researchers conceptualize vulnerability in a manner consistent with the origin of the word - as a weakness or insecurity. In this context, followers may perceive leaders who disclose the need for mental health support as weak (Gibson et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2020), which aligns with previously discussed stereotypes of emotional or psychological instability characteristic of mental illness stereotypes (Follmer & Jones, 2018; Jones, 2011).

In addition to management studies that position psychological counselling as a sign of leader weakness as rated by their followers (Gibson et al., 2018), additional evidence suggests that illness disclosures will elicit higher ratings of leader vulnerability than minority sexual orientation disclosures. Research drawing from the stereotype content model studied job applicants who disclosed a stigmatized chronic invisible illness during recruitment and

determined they were perceived as warm but incompetent and they were less likely to receive a callback (Martinez, White, Shapiro, & Hebl, 2016). This study examined individuals who returned to work after cancer and illustrated that employees who disclosed cancer received worse interpersonal treatment from others in the form of passive harm (e.g., avoiding eye contact, being dismissive and ignoring the stigmatized individual) compared to treatment of employees who had not had cancer (Martinez et al., 2016).

Thus, overall, I expect leaders' stigmatized identity disclosures will elicit heightened perceptions of vulnerability where vulnerability is defined as weakness. Due to the debilitating nature of some illnesses, it is expected that leaders who disclose mental illness will be perceived as more vulnerable than leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation.

Hypothesis 4: Leaders whose mental illness(es) has(have) been disclosed will receive significantly higher ratings of leader vulnerability than leaders whose minority sexual orientation has(have) been disclosed, and leaders in the non-disclosure category will receive the lowest ratings on leader vulnerability.

2.2.4 Linking Disclosure and Leader Evaluations

Past research focused on the stigma holder has established that the discloser is likely to experience benefits in the form of alleviation of inhibition (e.g., discloser expresses pent up thoughts, which assists with cognitive and affective processing of previously inhibited thoughts) after making a verbal self-disclosure (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). In a conceptual model for exploring the range of consequences of concealable stigmatize identity disclosures in organizations, Chaudoir and Fisher's (2010) disclosure process model suggests that of concealable stigmatized identity disclosure is a multiply mediated process for which much additional research and theory-building regarding the wide range of potential mediating

mechanisms remains incomplete (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Thus, this section develops rationale for three mediators – leader prototype, affective trust in leader, and leader vulnerability.

Typically, leaders who are rated high on prototypicality are also evaluated positively on other leadership criteria (Foti et al., 2017). A recent systematic review of ILT shows that leaders with high scores on leader prototype receive higher ratings on effectiveness, liking, endorsement and collegiality than leaders with low ratings on leader prototype (Junker & van Dick, 2014). Leader prototype ratings have been shown to play a mediating function between leader demographics and leader evaluations (Shah, 2017). Building on hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 5a: The negative indirect effect of disclosure on leader evaluations through leader prototype will be strongest for mental illness disclosures.

Prior research on the disclosure of concealable stigmas at work has largely overlooked the possibility for trust to play a mediating role in disclosure processes (Capell et al., 2016). Several exceptions include studies that have displayed the mediating role of trust in the relationship between leader disclosure and follower outcomes. For example, trust was found mediate the relationship between leaders' displays of emotional sincerity and follower performance outcomes (Caza, Zhang, Wang, & Bai, 2015). The extent to which leaders' emotional sincerity (e.g., "My manager shows his/her true feelings" "My manager puts on act about his/her emotions" or "My managers fakes his/her emotions and feelings") positively predicted employee job performance as rated by their manager/supervisor (Caza et al., 2015). Similarly, trust in one's manager and organization have been shown to predict employee disclosure of sensitive information including feelings, opinions, concerns, mistakes, and wrongdoing (Capell et al., 2016). Focusing on employee ratings of affective trust in their leader may assist with determining the point at which leader information sharing is positively received

by followers as a collegial act to the point at which it is perceived as a weakness and seemingly harmful for leader evaluations (Gibson et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2020).

To understand how this might apply in a leader-follower context, this study explores the potential for similarity between leaders' displays of emotional sincerity with leader disclosures of concealable stigmas. Affective-based trust is representative of stronger degrees of confidence between parties relative to other forms of trust such as cognitive or calculus-based trust, in part, because it is more subjective and emotional in nature (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). Affective trust is derived from the quality of the relationship over time more so than from observation of the other party's specific behaviours. Therefore, employee ratings of affective trust in their leader could play a mediating role between leader disclosure and employee ratings of their leader (e.g., Cappell et al., 2016). Furthermore, leader trust has been shown to predict employee perceptions of social support, such that employees who place a high degree of trust in their leader are more likely to perceive high levels of social supported and more likely to seek assistance when they feel challenged (Audenaert et al., 2020; Mortenson, 2009). Like social support, it is anticipated that trust may play an intermediate role in shaping followers' evaluations of their leader after disclosure of a concealable stigmatized identity (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Extending hypothesis 4:

Hypothesis 5b: The negative indirect effect of disclosure on leader evaluations through affective trust in leader will be strongest for mental illness disclosures.

In terms of opening oneself up to others' judgments, disclosure of either minority sexual orientation or mental illness can increase one's level of "vulnerability" (Capell et al., 2016, p. 4). When one party becomes vulnerable or exposed following information sharing, the overall outcome of the experience largely depends on others' reactions (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010).

Investigation of leader disclosures of concealable stigmatized identities has shown that reactions of the relational other are not always positive (e.g., Lynch & Rodell, 2018). Leaders who openly discuss their mental health issues at work were rated as more vulnerable and less effective leaders by followers than leaders who did not disclose other (perceived) weaknesses (Gibson et al., 2018). Finally, vulnerability is negatively correlated with the strength component of leadership prototypes that predicts favorable leader evaluations (Offermann & Coats, 2018). Therefore:

Hypothesis 5c: The indirect effect of disclosure on leader evaluations through leader vulnerability will be strongest for mental illness disclosures.

2.3 Phase 1 Methods

To test the hypotheses, I conducted a time-lagged questionnaire of full-time employees who may have experienced working with a supervisor with an invisible identity using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that involves collecting both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data and integrating the two forms of data to answer research questions. The core assumption of mixed methods research is that it "yields additional insight beyond the information provided by either the quantitative or qualitative data alone" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). Data integration occurs through deliberate processes of merging the data, explaining the data, and connecting data to larger frameworks. An online format was selected for data collection because participants share sensitive information at higher rates in online data collection formats than interview or paper and pencil surveys (Kays et al., 2012). This section describes the materials and procedures for online questionnaire data collection and outlines the modifications made between phases. Initial ethics approval is provided in Appendix A and any modifications were approved through

Memorial's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research amendment process. The sample was recruited over two phases of data collection using three recruitment strategies. Results from the first phase were used to inform modifications made in the second phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.3.1 Procedure

To test the hypotheses, I launched an online questionnaire (two waves, three weeks apart) of full-time employees using online survey-hosting software *Qualtrics* and Amazon Mechanical Turk ("MTurk") for online panel recruitment. Across all data collection phases, eligibility criteria included a minimum age requirement of 18, current full-time employment status (defined as 35 or more hours weekly and not self-employed), and organizational tenure of at least one year. To mitigate the threat of common method bias, there was temporal separation between data collection points (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012) with predictors, demographics, controls, and moderators at Time 1, and mediators and criterion variables at Time 2. Furthermore, the questionnaires were confidential, and the survey instruments defined key terms and used previously validated measures. To disguise the true purpose of the survey, the study title presented to participants was *'Diversity in the workplace'* in all iterations of the survey, recruitment text, and consent information. This is another strategy to mitigate common method variance referred to as psychological separation, which entails the use of a cover story to reduce the salience of the linkage between predictor and criterion variables (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

2.3.2 Instrument Development

Due to the sensitive subject matter of invisible identities, and the newness of leader disclosure research, it is likely that closed-ended items would not have adequately captured the full range of direct reports' experiences with this phenomenon. As such, eight open-ended items

were used in the Phase 1 data collection instrument. The following sections describe the process used to collect and code open-ended responses in Phase 1 in order to create closed-ended response options for Phase 2. Two open-ended items from the Phase 1 questionnaire were retained in the Phase 2 instrument. Details are also provided on revisions to the participant recruitment strategy for Phase 2 based on descriptive statistical analysis of Phase 1 data.

2.3.3 Measures

In the Phase 1 version of the online questionnaire, eight open-ended items with a textbox response format were used to solicit qualitative responses (see Table 2.1). This type of data collection strategy has previously been used to investigate circumstances surrounding disclosure of sensitive information in social settings (e.g., Mathews et al., 2006). It was further deemed appropriate for the current study for two key reasons. First, I expected this would be an effective way to obtain insight into the under-researched phenomenon of downward disclosures of several types of concealable stigmatized identities. Second, I wanted to ensure closed-ended response options in the Phase 2 questionnaire were reflective of the complete spectrum of downward disclosure experiences.

Most measures and response options in Phase 1 and 2 data collection instruments were the same except for one section focused on details of the disclosure event. Participants who indicated that their manager *did not* have an invisible identity automatically skipped this section using *Qualtrics'* skip logic function. Participants who affirmed they currently work with a manager whose minority social identity has been disclosed by the leader or someone else were brought to this section, which I refer to as the *Disclosure Details*. The original and revised versions of the items and response formats used in this section are summarized in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Disclosure Detail Measures Comparison (Phase 1 & 2)

Disclosure Details Category	**Phase 1 Item wording**	**Phase 1 Response Format**	**Phase 2 Item wording**	**Phase 2 Response Format**
Disclosure Timing	Approximately how long were you reporting to this manager/supervisor before you became aware that they identify as a member of the social group(s) you selected in the previous question?	Open-ended Textbox	Same as Phase 1	I was aware before they became my manager/supervisor Less than 1 week Less than 1 month Less than 6 months Less than 1 year Longer than 1 year, approximately how many years: _____
Discloser Identity	Was the information about your manager/supervisor's identity first shared with you by your manager/supervisor themselves or someone else?	Open-ended Textbox	Who first shared information about your manager/supervisor's minority identity with you?	My manager/supervisor themselves Peer, co-worker or colleague Someone in senior leadership / top management (other than my manager/supervisor) Employee(s) that I supervise / manager (i.e. direct reports) Human Resources or Occupational Health Personnel Other, please specify: _____
Disclosure Circumstances	"...tell us about the location, setting, and medium of communication through which you learned that your manager/supervisor identifies with the social group(s) you selected"	Open-ended Textbox	Through which medium was information about you manager/supervisor's minority identity first shared with you?	Face to face (e.g., in-person meeting, interview) Telephone Email Organizational media (e.g., office messenger, company intranet, online meeting etc) Personal social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) Other, please specify: _____
			Which of the following options best describes the context in which this information was first shared with you?	Business professional (e.g., in the office, at a meeting on or off-site, training course, conference) Business casual (e.g., lunch with co-worker(s), office social) Social (e.g., outside of work, unrelated to work) Other, please specify: _____

Presence of Others	“When information about your manager/supervisor's identity with the social group(s) you selected was first shared with you, how many others were present (if any)?	Open-ended Textbox	When information about your manager/supervisor's minority identity was first shared with you, how many other people were present (if any, besides you)? If this communication was electronic, please indicate how many other people were included in the 'To' or 'Cc' address line or the online forum in which it was shared (if any, besides you). You may skip this question if not applicable or if no one else was present.	Sliding number response scale from 0 to 100.
Disclosure Motivation	Why do you think the information about your manager/supervisor's identity with the social group(s) you selected was first shared with you?”		Same as Phase 1	Open-ended Textbox
Other Notable Details	“Please use the space below to describe any other relevant details regarding your manager/supervisor's identity with the social group(s) you selected and how you found out about it”		Same as Phase 1	Open-ended Textbox

2.3.4 Sample

Participants were recruited to complete the Phase 1, Time 1 survey through MTurk. Recruitment was limited to MTurk workers ("MTurkers") who were Masters or had approval ratings above 95%.[2] Phase 1 participants were compensated $1.50USD for each survey completed. After entering the questionnaire, within-survey screening was performed as participants completed five eligibility questions. If a participant was deemed ineligible (e.g., under 18 years of age, self-employed, not employed full time, had not worked with current organization for one year), they were automatically exited from the survey before the informed consent section. Immediately following the informed consent, all participants completed several scales of theoretically supported control variables to further mask the true purpose of the study. Consistent with best practices, an attention check item (i.e., 'Please select strongly disagree for the response to this question') was placed in the first half of the questionnaire to capture careless responses (Maniaci & Rogge, 2014). Near the end of the survey, participants were invited to complete an optional demographics section and reminded of the confidentiality of the survey.

2.3.5 Data Screening

Of the 412 MTurkers who entered the survey, 80 were screened out because they did not meet the eligibility criteria. Another 22 participants were excluded from analysis because they

[2] The difference between Masters and workers with ratings over 95% is that those with Masters qualifications have been statistically determined by MTurk to have provided high quality responses in previous tasks (Amazon Mechanical Turk: *FAQs*, 2005-2018) and requesters pay a premium to recruit Masters qualified participants. The Masters qualification is monitored continuously, and this qualification is revoked if a decrease in work quality is observed. Workers with the Masters qualification have access to work that requires a Masters Qualification to which other workers (i.e. workers with standard approval ratings who have not received a Masters qualification) do not have access.

completed fewer than 50% of the items, their validation codes did not match, or they failed the attention check. Of the remaining responses, six were eliminated for speedy responses (less than one second per item) - a strategy to enhance data integrity by minimizing inclusion of results from inattentive or rushing participants (Wood, Harms, Lowman, & DeSimone, 2017).

The mean completion time for the remaining 304 participants was 9 minutes, 44 seconds (*S.D.* 7 minutes, 35 seconds; *MIN.* 2 minutes, 10 seconds, *MAX.* 53 minutes, 14 seconds). Of the 304 Time 1 participants, 204 were qualified to participate at Time 2. All 139 participants who entered the Time 2 survey met the eligibility criteria that were assess at Time 1, but 11 were screened out because their validation codes did not match or speedy responding leaving 128 responses in a mean completion time of 14 minutes, 54 seconds (*S.D.* 10 minutes, 32 seconds, *MIN*. 4 minutes, 49 seconds, *MAX* 1 hour, 11 minutes, 19 seconds).

2.4 Phase 1 Results

In explanatory sequential designs, the researcher analyzes and uses data obtained in the first phase to plan the second phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phase 1 of the current study included closed and open-ended items that were analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis and qualitative thematic analysis to inform modifications for the next phase of data collection. The following sections review these analyses, which justified revisions to the Phase 2 recruitment strategy as well as the data collection instrument.

2.4.1 Quantitative Descriptive Analysis

Of the 304 participants who responded at Time 1, 7.2% (n = 22) had experienced working with a manager/supervisor who had disclosed an invisible identity. Of those 22, 8 returned to complete the second part of the questionnaire. Thus, an attrition rate of 64% of all participants was observed between the two data collection points, which led to a 6.25%

representation in the phenomenon of interest (participants who had experienced working with a manager/supervisor after their invisible identity disclosure) at Time 2 as displayed in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Phase 1 Representation of Supervisor Invisible Identity Frequencies

	Time 1	Time 2
Phase 1 Sample size (n)	304	128
Participants whose supervisor had an invisible identity	22	8
Types of invisible identity(ies)	10 mental illness and/or substance abuse 9 minority sexual orientation 3 transgender	4 mental illness and/or substance abuse 3 minority sexual orientation 1 transgender
% of Participants who had experienced downward disclosure	7.57%	6.25%

2.4.2 Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Phase 1 participants who had experienced working with a manager with a known invisible identity were automatically directed to the *Disclosure Details* section of the questionnaire. Table 2-3 displays participant demographics and disclosure characteristics of these 22 participants where each row represents a participant who had experienced working with a leader whose invisible identity had been disclosed who responded at Time 1 of Phase 1, and columns display participant reported information including their own gender and age, their manager's gender and age, the manager's invisible identity, and the participants' appropriateness rating of the downward details experience. The sections after the participant data matrix summarize the responses of participant responses to Phase 1 items displayed in the second column of Table 2-1.

Table 2-3 Participant Data Matrix (Phase 1)

Ppt No.	Industry	Ppt Gender	Ppt Age	Manager Gender	Manager Age	Manager's Invisible Identity	Invisible Identity Description	Ppt Perceived Appropriateness of Disclosure
1	Business support and logistics	Male	30	Male	31	Mental illness	Substance Abuse	Very appropriate
2	Insurance	Male	30	Male	47	Mental illness	Learning Disability	Very inappropriate
3	Finance and financial Services	Male	30	Male	30	Mental illness	Learning Disability	Somewhat appropriate
4	Finance and financial Services	Male	30	Male	30	Mental illness	Substance Abuse	Somewhat appropriate
5	Food and Beverage	Female	27	Female	27	Mental illness	Substance Abuse	Very appropriate
6	Advertising and Marketing	Female	50	Female	59	Mental illness	Substance Abuse	Somewhat appropriate
7	Retail and consumer durables	Female	35	Female	45	Mental illness	Anxiety	Very appropriate
8	Telecommunications, technology, internet and electronics	Male	26	Male	35	Mental illness	Depression	Very appropriate
9	Substance Abuse Treatment	Female	50	Male	29	Mental illness	Substance abuse and ADHD	Undecided/ Neutral
10	Telecommunications, technology, internet and electronics	Male	29	Male	29	Mental illness	Substance Abuse	Somewhat appropriate
11	Education	Male	30	Male	31	Minority Sexual Orientation		Somewhat appropriate
12	Non-profit	Female	33	Female	35	Minority Sexual Orientation	Lesbian	Very appropriate
13	Finance and financial Services	Male	28	Male	28	Minority Sexual Orientation	Gay	Somewhat inappropriate
14	Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals	Female	27	Female	27	Minority Sexual Orientation	Lesbian	Very appropriate
15	Insurance	Female	46	Male	40	Minority Sexual Orientation	Gay	Very appropriate

16	Government	Male	60	Male	51	Minority Sexual Orientation	Gay	Somewhat appropriate
17	Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	Female	28	Male	30	Minority Sexual Orientation	Gay	Very appropriate
18	Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	Male	32	Male	49	Minority Sexual Orientation		Very appropriate
19	Education	Male	38	Male	43	Minority Sexual Orientation		Very appropriate
20	Construction, machinery, and homes	Male	28	Male	32	Transgender		
21	Retail and consumer durables	Female	41	Male	40	Transgender		Somewhat appropriate
22	Education	Male	34	Male	32	Transgender		Very appropriate

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for essentialist thematic analysis, textual responses were organized to reflect participants' perceptions of experiencing a downward disclosure in the categories of timing, discloser identity, disclosure circumstances (medium and setting), presence of others, and disclosure motivation. Where possible, frequency analysis was used to develop closed-ended response options for Phase 2.

Disclosure Timing

Using a textbox response format, the first open-ended item asked participants to describe the duration of the reporting relationship before the disclosure occurred. Assuming disclosures occur after the reporting relationship commenced did not reflect all participants' experiences. Participant 16, a 61-year-old male employee, became aware of his supervisor of 19 years' minority sexual orientation *before* his current supervisor became his boss, *"I knew before he became my manager. I knew he was gay when he was chief of another fire department. It was well-known from the get-go, we knew he was gay before he ever joined our fire department".* This was also the case for a 27-year-old female employee working in healthcare and

pharmaceuticals who reported that she was aware of her supervisor's minority sexual orientation "*From the start*" (Participant 14). Eligibility criteria required participants to have worked with their current manager for at least one year, thus it was unclear if responses ranging from 2 to 25 that were entered without a time qualifier referred to days, weeks, or months. This provided further impetus to restrict participant responses about disclosure timing a closed-ended format rather than an open-ended textbox. Previous research regarding disclosure timing was consulted to further inform which response options were necessary in a closed-ended format.

Adams and Webster's (2017) vignette study of leaders who disclose a transgender identity illustrates that disclosure timing was a significant moderator such that leaders who disclosed after one week received higher ratings of liking and effectiveness from followers than leaders who had disclosed after one year (Adams & Webster, 2017). Studies regarding minority sexual orientation provided disclosure timing ranges between immediately and "after a time period" (King et al., 2008, p. 568) - such as up to four years. Investigations of the timing of mental illness disclosures demonstrate wide variability with examples of very short duration (i.e., "no time at all", p. 737) to many years (Toth & Dewa, 2014). Rather, mental illness disclosures were most often linked to occurrence of a "triggering incident" (Toth & Dewa, 2014, p. 737) such as the need to access accommodations, disclosing to support a friend, and a range of intra and interpersonal reasons.

Thus, the closed-ended response options available for the item regarding disclosure timing in the data collection instrument used in Phase 2 were informed by the Phase 1 analysis and previous research on multiple concealable stigmas. The following six options in the revised data collection instrument during Phase 2: 1) 'I was aware before they became my

manager/supervisor'; 2) 'Less than 1 week'; 3) 'Less than 1 month'; 4) 'Less than 6 months'; 5) 'Less than 1 year', 6) 'Longer than 1 year, approximately how many years: _____'.

Discloser Identity

The second open-ended item asked participants to describe who first shared the information about their manager's invisible identity with them in an open-ended textbox. Nine participants provided responses indicating that the manager was the individual who disclosed the information (e.g., 'By my manager'; 'themselves'; 'He was upfront during our training'; and 'They shared they were not straight'). Two participants indicated that information about the leader's concealable stigmatized identity had been disclosed by someone besides the leader (e.g., 'Someone else' or 'a work report'). Finally, five participants offered yes/no responses. This is consistent with disclosure literature which makes a distinction between self- and other-disclosures. Thus, the closed-ended responses for the item regarding discloser identity in the Phase 2 data collection instrument were informed by the Phase 1 analysis. The open-ended textbox response format was replaced with the following six-option multiple choice response format in the revised instrument: 1) 'My manager/supervisor themselves'; 2) 'Peer, co-worker or colleague'; 3) 'Someone in senior leadership / top management (other than my manager/supervisor)'; 4) 'Employee(s) that I supervise / manager (i.e. direct reports)'; 5) 'Human Resources or Occupational Health Personnel'; and 'Other, please specify: _____'.

Disclosure Circumstances

The third open-ended item asked participants to describe the location, setting, and medium of communication through which they learned about their manager/supervisor invisible identity. During the coding process, it became apparent that this item was eliciting information

on different aspects of the disclosure circumstance - both the medium and the setting of disclosure. Therefore, this question was broken down into two separate categories, *disclosure medium* and *disclosure setting,* and sub-themes were identified therein. Disclosure medium types included in-person (face-to-face, at my interview); online (e.g., Facebook, Twitter); and over the phone. Disclosure setting types included formal (e.g., in the office, at a meeting on or off-site, training course, conference) and informal work settings (e.g., lunch with co-worker(s), office social), as well as social settings unrelated to work. Thus, the open-ended textbox asking about disclosure medium was replaced with the following six-option multiple choice response format in the revised data collection instrument: 1) 'Face to face'; 2) 'Telephone'; 3) 'Email'; 4) 'Organizational media (e.g., office messenger, company intranet, online meeting etc.)'; 5) 'Personal social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)'; 6) 'Other, please specify: _____.' Similarly, the open-ended textbox asking about disclosure setting was replaced with four multiple choice options: 1) 'Business professional'; 2) 'Business casual'; 3) 'Social', and 4) 'Other, please specify: _____'.

Presence of Others

In Phase 1, participants were asked how many others were present (if any) when they became aware of the information about their manager/supervisor's invisible identity. Participant responses included 'no one', 'one-on-one', 'just me and her', and 'between the two of us'; and 'my colleagues were present'. Two participants provided numbers listing group sizes of fewer than 5 others, and three participants stated group sizes of up to 25 others. Combined with takeaway from the previous question, which demonstrate downward disclosures may also occur online, closed-ended response options for Phase 2 reflect the reality that some disclosures occur in an online/electronic setting, and that disclosures were occurring both one-on-one and in a

range of group sizes. The response format was revised to a sliding number response scale where participants could drag the marker to indicate how many others were present from 0 to 100+. Additionally, the following additional wording was added to the existing item, *"If this communication was electronic, please indicate how many other people were included in the 'To' or 'Cc' address line or the online forum in which it was shared (if any, besides you). You may skip this question if not applicable or if no one else was present."*

Disclosure Motivation and Other Notable Details

The Phase 1 item wording (see Table 2-1) and the open-ended response formats for disclosure motivation and other notable details were retained in the revised data collection instrument and are analyzed in full in the Phase 2 results section. In summary, of the six open-ended questions posed in Phase 1, two open- ended questions were retained across all three phases of data collection (Disclosure Motivation and Other Relevant Details). All other questions were transformed into closed-ended questions as described above. Important takeaways from this analysis include the likelihood for leaders' concealable stigmatized identities to become known before the reporting relationship starts, and the possibility of downward disclosures to occur online, one-on-one or in a group setting in either business casual or professional environments are further discussed in the following section.

2.4.3 Discussion

Descriptive quantitative analysis of Phase 1 data demonstrated that under 7% of participants who had experienced the phenomenon of interest (employees whose current manager or supervisor had disclosed either minority sexual orientation, gender identity or mental illness) completed both questionnaires. Several sampling barriers were present in this study, including self-identification and low base rates, which made it challenging to recruit employees

who had experienced the phenomenon of interest (Bonevski et al., 2014). First, self-identification was present because more managers who identify as minority sexual orientation or gender identity or have experienced mental illness exist than those who openly identify as such and/or have disclosed this in the workplace – especially in leader-follower relationships. Second, the low prevalence of minority identities was also a barrier. It is estimated that 5.1% of U.S. women and 3.9% of U.S. men identify as LGBTQ+ (Ellsworth, Mendy & Sullivan, 2020). With respect to mental illness, it is estimated that approximately 20.6% of U.S. adults experienced mental illness in 2019 (approximately 13.1 million people) (NAMI, 2021). Clearly, not all these individuals will progress to management positions. The presence of these barriers suggests that the population of interest qualifies as a "hard-to-reach" sample (Bonevski et al., 2014, p. 1), which is common in research on minority social identities and marginalized populations.

Recruitment of hard-to-reach sample populations can be addressed in several ways. I selected two recommended methods for phase 2 of data collection – targeted sampling and time-place sampling. Targeted sampling confirms the existence of a sub-group of interest in a population, and then employs a pre-defined quota method to ensure the sub-group of interest is adequately represented in the final sample (Shaghaghi, Bhopal & Sheikh, 2011). Second, time-space sampling recognizes that members of hidden populations may gather in certain places and these venues can be targeted for recruitment of these individuals (Bonevski et al., 2014; Shaghaghi et al., 2011). These methods were complimentary because the key disadvantage of one (cost), was an important advantage of the other (free). Specifically, targeted sampling would require use of the quota feature in an online panel data recruitment service and would be costly; however, I could access an alternate online time-place sample via social media without cost. Therefore, both efforts were employed to bolster the sample size for the quantitative analysis.

Analysis of textual responses from Phase 1 participants whose manager disclosed gleaned several new pieces of information about the nature of downward disclosures. First, direct reports may be aware of the presence of a manager/supervisor's individual identity before they start reporting to this manager/supervisor. Second, direct reports may learn about the manager's invisible identity from the manager themselves or from another source – either a co-worker, or a formal work report or for a job-related reason (e.g., occupational health). Third, downward disclosures may occur in a private (one-one-one) or group setting; via in-person or online mediums; in an environment that is social, casual, or professional. Allowing these three facets (presence of others; setting; medium) of responses to vary in different combinations is important for capturing the full range of the disclosure event experience from the employee's perspective.

2.5 Phase 2 Methods

2.5.1 Procedure

Participants were recruited to complete Phase 2 using two purposive recruitment strategies. The online survey hosting software, *Qualtrics*, and online recruitment platform, MTurk, were the same as Phase 1. In addition, *Qualtrics'* quota feature was used to recruit sample 2a. This required the addition of a sixth screening question, "At work, do you report to a supervisor who has mental illness or addiction or is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender?". After the quota was reached, any additional participants who responded negatively to this item were deemed ineligible and screened out before commencing the survey. Consistent with best practices of online panel recruitment, I maintained a database of workers in which qualifications were assigned to individual workers to ensure a participant could not be included in future recruitment efforts for this same study (Aguinis, Villamor, & Ramani, 2021). To further encourage participation in the second questionnaire, the compensation structure was changed

such that participants received $2USD for completing the first questionnaire and $3USD for the second questionnaire several weeks later. To recruit sample 2b, the time-place approach was employed free of charge by recruiting participants from social media sites to further bolster the sample size.

2.5.2 Sample 2a Data Screening

Of the 427 MTurkers who entered the survey, 82 were screened out because they did not meet the eligibility criteria. The quota feature was enabled and led to screening out of an additional 149 participants who responded negatively to the newly added eligibility question. Another 17 eligible participants were excluded from the analysis because they completed less than 50% of the items (n=13), they failed the attention check (n = 3), or for speedy responding (n = 1). The criteria to determine the cut-off time for speedy responding was the same as Phase 1 and participants whose submissions were completed in less than one second per item were excluded from analysis (Aguinis et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2017).

The mean completion for the remaining 179 participants was 12 minutes, 2 seconds (*S.D.* 7 minutes, 36 seconds; *MIN.* 2 minute, 27 seconds, *MAX.* 46 minutes, 28 seconds). Of the 179 participants invited to participate at Time 2, 171 participants entered the Time 2 survey. Of these participants, 17 of the MTurk IDs did not match with Time 1 responses, leaving 154 responses with a mean completion time of 17 minutes, 7 seconds (*S.D.* 11 minutes, 23 seconds, *MIN*. 4 minutes, 6 seconds, *MAX* 1 hour, 5 minutes, 29 seconds).

2.5.3 Sample 2b Data Screening

Participants in this sample were recruited to complete the Time 1 questionnaire using social media. The quota feature was disabled for this phase of data collection and these participants received no compensation at either time point. To match survey responses of

participants at both time points in a confidential manner, participants were asked a series of questions to generate a unique identification code at time 1 and 2.

Of the 266 participants who entered the survey, 51 were screened out because they did not meet the eligibility criteria. Of the 215 remaining responses, 53 participants did not complete the identification code generation items and were excluded from the analysis leaving 162 participants. Using the same criteria as the previous two samples, two participants were eliminated for speedy responding leaving 160 participants. The mean completion time was 19 minutes, 11 seconds (*S.D.* 29 minutes, 38 seconds *MIN.* 2 minutes, 14 seconds, *MAX.* 4 hours, 17 minutes, 48 seconds). All participants who provided an email address in a separate survey link were invited to Time 2. Of the 75 participants who commenced the second survey, 31 responses to the identifying code items did not match the time 1 codes which left 44 matched responses with a mean completion time of 40 minutes, 3 seconds (*S.D.* 1 hour, 11 minutes, 48 seconds, *MIN*. 30 seconds, *MAX* 6 hours, 43 seconds).

2.5.4 Phase 2 Measures

Time 1

Supervisor Gender: Participants reported their supervisor's gender as male, female, or other. If other was selected, a textbox was provided for a description.

Supervisor Age: Participants reported their supervisor's approximate age by dragging a marker on a scale to indicate their supervisor's age in years.

Participant Gender: Participants reported their own gender as male, female, or other. If other was selected, a textbox was provided for a description.

Participant Age: Participants reported their own age by dragging a marker on a scale to a number that indicated their age in years.

Contact Hypothesis: Participants were asked to answer three questions about their general social circles (not limited to work colleagues only). They were asked, 'Do you have a friend or relative who you know…' 1) is gay, lesbian, or bisexual, 2) has a mental illness, 3) has required treatment for substance abuse. These items were informed by Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory, which suggests that contact between members of in- and out-groups reduces prejudice. Numerous studies support this theory including its application to minority sexual orientations (e.g., Fingerhut, 2011) and mental illness (e.g., Peters & Brown, 2009). These findings consistently suggest that women, educated individuals, and people who have friends from marginalized groups display less prejudice.

Manager-employee contact: Participants were asked to indicate the frequency of manager-employee contact in a typical week as recommended by Epitropaki and Martin (2005) because frequency of communication has been shown to amplify the quality of the relationship between employee and their manager. Response options included 1 (not at all), 2 (a few times per week), 3 (everyday), 4 (more than once per day), 5 (hourly or more).

Invisible Identity – self: Participants were asked, 'Do you identify as a member of one or some of the following minority social group(s)? Please select all that apply'. The dropdown menu provided seven options: 1 - Past or present mental illness, disorder, disease; 2 - Past or present

substance abuse disorder; 3 - Minority sexual orientation; 4 - Transgender or nonbinary gender identity; 5 - Brain injury or cognitive difference; 6 - Learning disability; or 7 – I do not identify as a member of any of the above minority groups.

Invisible Identity – manager: Participants were asked, 'Do you currently report to a manager/supervisor who openly identifies as a member of one or some of the following minority social group(s) that you are aware of? Please select all that apply'. The dropdown menu provided seven options: 1 - Past or present mental illness, disorder, disease; 2 - Past or present substance abuse disorder; 3 - Minority sexual orientation; 4 - Transgender or nonbinary gender identity; 5 - Brain injury or cognitive difference; 6 - Learning disability; or 7 – My manager/supervisor does not identify as a member of any of the above minority groups.

Disclosure detail items presented in column 4 of Table 2.1 were also collected at Time 1.

Time 2

Leader Prototype: Participants rated leadership prototypes using Epitropaki and Martin's (2004) 21-item scale. The leadership prototype consists of four subscales – sensitivity (helpful, understanding, sincere), intelligence (intelligent, knowledgeable, educated, clever), dedication (dedicated, motivated, hardworking), and dynamism (energetic, strong, and dynamic). Participants were asked to rate their current manager on each characteristic using a 7-point scale from 1 'Extremely uncharacteristic' to 7 'Extremely characteristic'. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .96 for all subscales combined.

Trust: Affective trust was measured using five items from Yang and Mossholder's (2010) trust scale. Participants were asked to rate their current manager on a scale of 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree for five items to measure cognitive trust. Sample items of include, 'I'm confident that my supervisor will always care about my personal needs at work', and 'I feel secure with my supervisor because of his/her sincerity.' In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .96.

Leader Vulnerability: Participants assessed leader vulnerability using a measure published by Gibson et al. (2018), which asks participants to rate the extent to which their current manager/supervisor 'displays insecurity' and the extent to which their current manager/supervisor 'seems like they need support" on a scale from 1 - not at all to 7 - very much. To adapt to this measure to a leadership context, wording of the second item was revised to 'looks to his/her direct reports for support'. The reliability of this scale was below acceptable level (.38); therefore, the second item was dropped, and employee ratings of the leader's vulnerability were assessed using the first scale item only.

Leader Liking: Participants assessed leader liking on a scale of 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree using three items from Brown and Keeping (2005). Sample items include, 'I get along well with my supervisor' and 'Working with my supervisor is a pleasure'. Cronbach's alpha was .93.

Leader Effectiveness: Participants rated leader effectiveness using a five-item scale by Vecchio and Anderson (2009). Participants were asked to rate their current manager using a Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree) (reverse-coded). Sample items included "Overall, my leader provides very effective leadership", "My leader would be an example of an ideal

leader", and "This leader helps the organization to thrive". Items were combined and mean ratings were used for analysis. In this study, scale reliability was .97.

Complete measures, stem and item wording are displayed in Appendix B.

2.6 Phase 2 - Combined Sample Descriptive and Qualitative Analysis

2.6.1 Combined Sample Description

Increasing the sample size is one way to increase statistical power, which is "the probability that the statistical test will correctly reject a false null hypothesis" (Burns & Burns, 2008, p. 245). This is because larger samples typically lead to smaller standard deviation of the distribution of the means, lower the standard error, and produce more stable estimates of population parameters (Burns & Burns, 2008). Thus, this section provides a description of all 326 participants who responded at both time points in both phases of data collection (Sample 1, 2a and 2b combined). Fifty nine percent identified as male and the mean age was 39 years (*S.D.* 8.83, *MIN.* 18, *MAX.* 67). One fifth of participants were employed in the telecommunications, technology, internet, and electronics industry (20%), followed by the finance and financial services industry (12%), education (11%), and manufacturing (9%) industries. The other industries accounted for 7% or less of participants' areas of employment respectively. According to participant reports of their supervisors' demographic characteristics, 67% reported to a male supervisor, and supervisor average age was 47 (*S.D.* = 10.05, *MIN.* = 25, *MAX.* = 95).

Nearly 20% (n = 61) of the combined sample reported having a manager/supervisor with a known invisible identity and the other 80% (n = 265) had not. Of the 61 employees who reported having a supervisor whose invisible identity had been disclosed, 28 supervisors had mental illness (includes past or present mental illness, brain injury or cognitive difference, and learning disability) or substance abuse, and 33 supervisors identified as a minority sexual

orientation or gender identity. The gender and age of supervisors who had disclosed were reported by participants as predominantly male (n = 36; 59%) with a mean age of 42 (*S.D.* 11.3, *MIN.* 25 *MAX.* 95). Table 2-4 displays the invisible identity disclosure frequencies.

Table 2-4: Supervisor Invisible Identity Frequencies

	Time 1	Time 2
Sample size	643	326
Participants whose supervisor had disclosed an invisible identity	87 (13.5%)	61(18.7%)
Types of invisible identity(ies)	49 minority sexual orientation or gender identity 38 mental illness including substance abuse	33 minority sexual orientation or gender identity 28 mental illness including substance abuse

In the combined sample, the open-ended responses from the Phase 1 Disclosure Details sample were recoded to match the closed-ended response options developed for the revised questionnaire used in Phase 2 regarding participant reports of the time before the downward disclosure, discloser identity, and disclosure setting. Responses suggest that most downward disclosures occur early in the employee-supervisory reporting relationship (Table 2-5), and they are made by the stigma-holding manager in a face-to-face business casual setting (Tables 2-6, 2-7 and 2-8). Of the 61 participants who had experienced downward disclosures, 49 described how many people were present during the event. The most frequent response was a 1:1 ratio of persons present at the time of the disclosure including only the manager and the employee (n = 11), followed by one or two other co-workers or colleagues (n = 12). When downward disclosures occurred in a group setting, the mean group size was 17 (*S.D.* 26, *MIN.* = 0, *MAX.* = 95).

Table 2-5: Duration of Reporting Relationship Before Disclosure

Response	*Frequency*	*%*
Uncertain	4	6.6
I was aware before they became my manager/supervisor	9	14.8
Less than 1 week	8	13.1
Less than 1 month	8	13.1
Less than 6 months	10	16.4
Longer than 1 year	8	13.1
Longer than 1 year	14	23
Total	61	100

Table 2-6: Discloser Identity

Response	*Frequency*	*%*
"Self-disclosure" (manager/supervisor themselves)	36	59.0
"Other Disclosure"		
Peer, co-worker, colleague	18	29.5
Someone in senior leadership	4	6.6
Direct reports / employees that I manage/supervise	2	3.3
Other	1	1.6
Total	61	100

Table 2-7: Disclosure Medium

Response	*Frequency*	*%*
Face-to-face	47	77.0
Telephone	4	6.6
Email	1	1.6
Organizational media	5	8.2
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)	2	3.3
Other	2	3.3
Total	61	100

Table 2-8: Disclosure Setting

Response	*Frequency*	*%*
Business Professional	19	31.1
Business Casual	29	47.5
Social	13	21.3
Total	61	100

2.6.2 Combined Sample Qualitative Analysis

Of the 61 participants who experienced working with a supervisor with an invisible identity, 53 responded to the two open-ended items of the *Disclosure Details* section that were asked in both phases of data collection. The first question asked the participant's understanding of the discloser's motivation for sharing the identity and the second question asked the participant to describe any other relevant details regarding the disclosure experience. As required by sequential mixed methods, qualitative analysis was conducted in a separate database from the quantitative analysis using rigorous qualitative analysis techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Using essentialist thematic analysis, these responses were coded to better understand participants' perspectives on their supervisors' invisible identity disclosure (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis includes six key phases: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) coding, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, (6) writing up the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To follow these steps, I extracted qualitative responses across both phases from the raw data file and created a disclosure matrix. Next to the raw text responses, I inserted columns contained in the close-ended items, such as participant and supervisor demographics, type of disclosure, and discloser identity to provide a snapshot of the participant's individual disclosure experience and circumstances. After creating the matrix, I sorted the responses by disclosure type, participant gender, supervisor gender, and read raw text responses in each new grouping multiple times to familiarize myself with any patterns in the data. From there, I did first-order coding of the text responses which generated 19 codes that were reflective of participants' language (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). All textual passages from the 53 participants were then tagged with the 19 codes to gauge frequency and identify thematic overlap. Consistent with previous thematic analysis (Byrne, Chadwick, & Hancock, 2020), the

cumulative mention of first-level codes had to exceed minimum number to become a category, (see # of mentions in Table 2-9). After consulting relevant literature, the 19 first-order codes were collapsed into five themes 1) relational; 2) work-related; 3) discloser identity; 4) information sharing; and 5) unsupportive. Table 2-9 provides an overview of how first-level codes were collapsed into themes.

The *relational* category is consistent with previous knowledge gleaned from research about disclosures between co-workers, such that employees perceived the downward disclosures were intended to establish, strengthen, and maintain close interpersonal relationships by entrusting the interaction partner (i.e., employee) with sensitive personal information (Capell et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2020). The *work-related* category suggests reasons for disclosure outside of social motivations; more specifically, job-related reasons, which have been identified as very relevant to mental illness disclosures at work, such as accessing accommodations or occupational medical services (Follmer & Jones, 2017; Toth & Dewa, 2014).

Consistent with disclosure motivations driven by self-verification theory from the perspective of the discloser, the *discloser identity* code illustrates that participants perceived leader disclosures as an effort to identity manage by portraying an image of honesty through information sharing (Follmer et al., 2019). In line with previous minority sexual orientation research from the perspective of the disclosure recipient at the same hierarchical level (King et al., 2008), employees illustrated both supportive and unsupportive reactions about the leader's stigmatized identity. Specifically, *information sharing* includes employee interpretations of leader disclosure that reflect both positive and negative motivations. In some cases, employees perceived the disclosure occurred to make them feel comfortable by sharing a related experience, which could be particularly powerful when coming from an organizational superior because it is

an opportunity for role modeling and allyship between members of under-represented social groups across the organizational hierarchy. On the other hand, information sharing was also perceived negatively, such as attributing the discloser's motivation to disclose as merely propensity to gossip. Finally, in line with stigma theory and evidence of prejudice and discrimination, disclosure of concealable stigmatized identities is, at times, met with negative responses such as describing it as disguising (e.g., Jones, 1984) or dismissing its relevance to work.

Table 2-9: Study 1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Code No.	1st-Level Coding	# of Mentions	Themes	1st-Level Codes Included in Category	Illustrative Quotation
1	Trust in recipient(s)	6	Relational	1, 2, 3, 8, 17, 15	"She wanted me to learn more about her" (Building)
2	Casual Conversation, No big deal, just being friendly	19			"He trusts us a lot that's why he shared the information" (Maintaining)
3	To strengthen the relationship	6			"She was talking about plans she had with her female partner for the weekend." (Casual Conversation)
4	Training or other work-related reason	9	Work Related	4, 5, 12, 13	"We were all getting to know each other during the onboarding and he was talking about the company embracing diversity."
5	Requirement of work, the position	1			"It's because of my position"
6	To set an example, be a role model, send a message	1	Discloser Identity	6, 10, 11, 16	"She said she was a very honest person and likes to put everything on the table". "…because people like to talk about themselves"
7	I (employee/recipient) have the same issue	4	Information Sharing (positive and negative)	7, 9	"Because I told her what I was going through with my depression and anxiety and she decided to share with me to relate to me"
8	Getting to know each other	1			
9	Gossip / Social information sharing	5			
10	Discloser's open personality, approach to being a minority	5			"The person who told me likes to gossip."
11	Proud of (integrated) Identity, role model	0			
12	Team-based nature of work	0			
13	Importance of diversity	4			

14	Questioning relevance to work, Negative reaction	4		Unsupportive	14, 19	"It felt disgusting"
15	To gauge my reaction, no surprises	4				
16	Self-interested discloser	2				
17	Friends outside of work	1				"I thought why this information was being shared to me and why was it relevant to our work. "
18	Irrelevant, not applicable	7				
19	I'm not interested, Doesn't matter	1				

2.7 Phase 2 - Combined Sample Quantitative Results and Analysis

Statistical difference testing was performed to determine if the three samples (1, 2a and 2b) were similar enough for cross comparison. Participant age was assessed using one-way ANOVA and participant gender was assessed using Chi-Square testing. Chi square testing is the most common test of significance to evaluate independence (or association) of categorical data (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Age – Of the participants who reported their age, the mean age of the combined sample (n = 319) was 38.9 years (*S.D.*, 9.2, *MIN* 24, *MAX* 80). The mean ages of participants who responded at time 2 is as follows: Phase 1 (n = 128) 38.3 years (*S.D.*, 8.5, *MIN* 25, *MAX* 69); Phase 2a (n = 153) 39.0 years (*S.D.*, 10.0, *MIN* 24, *MAX* 80); and Phase 2b (n = 38) 40.3 years (*S.D.*, 7.8, *MIN* 24, *MAX* 61). A one-way ANOVA [$F(2,318) = .74$, $p = .48$] determined these means were not significantly different from each other.

Gender –The results of a Chi-Square test show $\chi^2(2, 319) = 20.51$, $p < .001$ a Cramer's V of .25 ($V\in = .25$), which suggested a weak association between phase and gender. This is because more responses from males than excepted were observed in Phases 1 and 2a, and more responses from females than males were observed in Phase 2b. Since I was seeking approximately equivalent proportions of males and females in the final sample, this was not a concern for combining the three samples and participant gender was employed as a covariate in main analyses. A correlation table is displayed in Table 2-10.

Table 2-10: Study 1 Correlation Table

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
1. Participant Gender†	.46	.50	1												
2. Participant Age	37.9	9.08	**.21****	1											
3. Supervisor Gender†	.33	.47	-	.10*****	1										
4. Supervisor Age	46.03	10.00	**.09***	**.31****	-.02	1									
5. Participant Self Invisible Identity†	.20	.40	-	.06	-	-.01	1								
6. Participant Intergroup Contact†	.66	.47	-	**.10***	-	**.10***	-	1							
7. Non-Disclosure †	.86	.35	-	**.12****	-	**.21****	-	-	1						
8. Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Disc. †	.08	.27	-	**-.10***	-	**-.17****	-	-	-	1					
9. Mental Illness Disc. †	.06	.24	-	-.06	-	**-.13***	-	-	-	-	1				
10. Leader Prototype	7.06	1.67	.01	.06	-.03	.01	.04	.05	.05	.02	-.10	1			
11. Affective Trust in Leader	3.71	1.17	.01	-.03	.01	-.09	.02	**.16****	.01	.00	-.01	**.80****	1		
12. Leader Vulnerability	2.49	1.60	-.08	**-.23****	.10	**-.11***	.08	-.09	**-.19****	-.02	**.29****	**-.23****	**-.17****	1	
13. Leader Effectiveness	3.52	1.33	-.09	.05	-.06	-.03	.03	.08	.01	.01	-.02	**.61****	**.62****	**-.26****	1
14. Leader Liking	3.74	1.21	-.05	**.12***	-.06	-.00	.00	.08	.06	-.08	.001	**.62****	**.64****	**-.25****	**.70****

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Categories 7, 8, 9 refer to disclosures made by or about the participant's manager/supervisor; Disc. = Disclosure; Correlations between dichotomous variables indicated with a dash. † Dichotomous variables: Participant Gender and Supervisor Gender: 0 for male and 1 for female; Participant Self Invisible Identity: 0 no, 1 yes;

Participant intergroup contact: 0 no, 1 yes; Supervisor non-disclosure: 0, 1 yes; Supervisor Minority Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes; Supervisor Mental illness and/or Substance Abuse Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes.

Prior to the main analysis, I examined the data to ensure the assumptions regarding linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence required for ordinary least squares regression were met (Hayes, 2013). During the independence checks, I examined the data for multi-collinearity by looking at the intercorrelations between variables. Table 2-11 illustrates several correlations above .7, which suggest multi-collinearity may be an issue in this dataset (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2012). Therefore, I calculated VIFs for the hypothesized mediators through collinearity analysis (Table 2-11). All VIFs were < 4.0 indicating multicollinearity should not be a concern according to guidelines that VIF should not exceed the recommended maximum level of 10 (Meyers, Gamst & Guarino, 2017). The outcomes of these tests suggest assumptions required for ordinary least squares regression had been met.

Table 2-11: Study 1 Collinearity Statistics

Collinearity Statistics			
	Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
Affective Trust in Leader	.996	1.004	.043
Leader Prototype	.993	1.007	.043
Leader Vulnerability	.887	1.128	.043

2.7.1 Assessing Discriminant Validity

To test the discriminant validity of the proposed measurement model for the mediators and outcomes, the fit of several competing models was tested using confirmatory factor analyses. A series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted using maximum likelihood estimation within M*plus* 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2021). Values of the root mean square error of approximation (*RMSEA*) less than .06 and values of the standardized root mean residual (*SRMR)* less than .08 are generally indicators of a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Other fit indices assessed include comparative fit indices (CFI), which range from 0 to 1 with larger

values indicating better fit, and Chi-square goodness of fit estimates to determine whether the observed value is significantly different from the expected value.

In total, the fit of three nested measurement models were assessed and compared: a one-factor model where all 26 items (13 items for leader prototype, 5 for affective trust in leader, 3 for leader liking, and 5 for leader effectiveness) were specified to load on a single latent factor (χ^2 = 2584.56 *df* = 299; *CFI* = .63; *RMSEA* = .157; *SRMR* = .099); a four-factor model where the indicator variables loaded on their respective latent factors and were allowed to correlate (χ^2 = 887.994 *df* = 293; *CFI* = .90; *RMSEA* = .081; *SRMR* = .047); and, finally, a seven-factor model where leader prototype was specified at the dimension level (3 items for sensitivity, 4 items for intelligence, 3 items for dedication, 3 items for dynamism) and the remaining indicator variables loaded on their respective latent factors and were allowed to correlate (5 items for affective trust in leader, 3 items for leader liking, and 5 items for leader effectiveness) (χ^2 = 487.37, *df* = 278; *CFI* = .96; *RMSEA* = .049; *SRMR* = .037). The four-factor and seven-factor models displayed the best fit indices and were selected for a test of Chi square difference was conducted to determine if one offered a significantly better fit than the other $\chi^2(15) = 325.807$, $p<.05$.

Results of this test indicated that the seven oblique-factor measurement model provided the best fit to the data. A second-order factor analysis was conducted with the 13 items of the leadership prototype to compare the fit of a one-factor model, in which all 13 items were specified as a higher order construct (χ^2 = 406.42 *df* = 65; *CFI* = .83; *RMSEA* = .13; *SRMR* = .056), to a four-factor model, in which the four leader prototype dimensions theorized by Epitropaki and Martin (2004) - dedication, dynamism, intelligence, and sensitivity - were specified (χ^2 = 140.76 *df* = 59; *CFI* = .96; *RMSEA* = .067; *SRMR* = .043). A chi-square difference test again confirmed the superior fit of the 4-factor model [χ^2 (6) = 174.91, $p<.00005$]. Due to the

emergence of separate factors, hypothesis testing was conducted at the dimension level. The correlation table at the dimension level is presented in Table 2-12.

Table 2-12: Study 1 Dimension Level Correlations

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. Participant Gender†	.46	.50	1															
2. Participant Age	37.9	9.01	**.21****	1														
3. Supervisor Gender†	.33	.47	-	**.10***	1													
4. Supervisor Age	46.03	10.05	**.09***	**.31****	-.02	1												
5. Participant Self Invisible Identity†	.20	.40	-	.06	-	-.01	1											
6. Participant intergroup contact†	.66	.47	-	**.10***	-	**.10***	-	1										
7. Non-Disclosure†	.86	.35	-	**.12***	-	**.21****	-	-	1									
8. Minority Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Disc.†	.08	.27	-	**-.10***	-	**-.17****	-	-	-	1								
9. Mental Illness Disc. †	.06	.24	-	-.06	-	**-.13***	-	-	-	-	1							
10. Leader Dedication	7.39	1.81	.02	**.11***	-.02	.05	.02	.09	.04	.03	-.08	1						
11. Leader Dynamism	6.69	1.90	-.03	.05	-.05	-.05	.05	-.02	.02	.04	-.06	**.82****	1					
12. Leader Intelligence	7.16	1.65	.03	.04	-.04	.01	.06	.03	.07	.04	**-.13***	**.79****	**.75****	1				
13. Leader Sensitivity	6.95	2.02	.00	.04	-.00	.02	.02	.09	.07	-.02	-.08	**.78****	**.75****	**.79****	1			
14. Affective Trust in Leader	3.71	1.17	.01	-.03	.01	-.09	.02	**.16****	.01	.00	-.01	**.70****	**.73****	**.67****	**.84****	1		
15. Leader Vulnerability	2.49	1.60	-.08	**-.23****	.10	**-.11***	.09	-.09	**-.19****	-.02	**.29****	**-.26****	**-.20****	**-.21****	**-.20****	**-.17***	1	
16. Leader Effectiveness	3.52	1.33	-.09	.05	-.06	-.03	.03	.08	.01	.01	-.02	**.54****	**.53****	**.50****	**.61****	**.62****	**-.26****	1
17. Leader Liking	3.74	1.21	-.05	**.12***	-.06	-.00	.00	.08	.06	-.08	.001	**.54****	**.51****	**.53****	**.65****	**.64****	**-.25****	**.70****

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Categories 7, 8, 9 refer to disclosures made by or about the participant's manager/supervisor; Disc. = Disclosure; Correlations between dichotomous variables indicated with a dash.

† Dichotomous variables: Participant Gender and Supervisor Gender: 0 for male and 1 for female; Participant Self Invisible Identity: 0 no, 1 yes; Participant intergroup contact: 0 no, 1 yes; Supervisor non-disclosure: 0, 1 yes; Supervisor Minority Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes;
Supervisor Mental illness and/or Substance Abuse Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes.

2.7.2 Hypothesis Testing

Using the PROCESS Macro for SPSS 25 (www.afhayes.com; version 3.2, 2019), leaders who had not disclosed a concealable stigmatized identity ($N = 255$) were compared to two groups of leaders who had disclosed a concealable stigmatized identity (minority sexual orientation and gender identity, n = 33; mental illness and substance abuse disorder, $N = 28$). I used PROCESS Model 4 to test the model, which is a macro that uses OLS regression with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals produced using bootstrapping resampling with 5,000 iterations.

Invisible identity disclosure was input as a three-level multi-categorical predictor using indicator coding (Hayes, 2018). Leaders with no known invisible identity (i.e., non-disclosure) were the reference group (all coded as 0s), and dummy variables (D_1 and D_2) were created for the two disclosure types. D_1 represented leader minority sexual orientation or gender identity disclosures and D_2 represented leader mental illness including substance abuse disclosures. D_1 was set to 1 for all participants who identified their leader as having a minority sexual orientation or gender identity and 0 for everyone else; D_2 was set to 1 for all participants who identified their leader as having mental illness and 0 for everyone else (Hayes, 2018). The four dimensions of leader prototype (sensitivity, intelligence, dedication, and dynamism), affective trust in leader, and leader vulnerability were entered as six separate mediating variables. Leader effectiveness was the criterion variable in the first analysis and leader liking was the criterion variable in the second model. Covariates included participant gender, participant age, manager/supervisor age, intergroup contact, manager-employee contact, and the participants' own invisible identity status.

Relative total effects on leader evaluations were estimated by regressing the outcome variables on the multi-categorical predictor variable represented by the two disclosure categories dummy variables (D_1 and D_2) (Hayes, 2018). This produced the results in Tables 2-16 (leader effectiveness) and 2-17 (leader liking) and displayed in Figures 2-1 and 2-2. For parsimony, only significant pathways are indicated with arrows and coefficient estimates, and the direction of values is relative to the non-disclosure reference group.

In both tables, *'a'* represents the path coefficients from the disclosure category to each of the mediators, '*b'* represents the path coefficients from each of the mediators to the criterion variable, *'c''* represents the direct effect from the predictor to the outcome variable, and '*c*' represents the total effect of X on Y which is the sum of the direct and indirect effects ($c = c' + ab$) (Hayes, 2013). Because the predictor is multi-categorical, *'a'* represents the mean difference in the mean rating between the disclosure categories with the non-disclosure reference group (Hayes, 2018). Similarly, 'b' represents the regression coefficient for the mediator in the model of Y. In other words, for two participants in the same disclosure category but different by one unit on the mediator, 'b' is the estimate of how much they will differ on Y (Hayes, 2018).

Hypothesis 1a predicted the leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation/gender identity would be rated significantly higher on effectiveness than those who disclose mental illness/substance abuse. PROCESS output provides estimates of relative total, direct, and indirect of effects of X on Y. These effects were nonsignificant as indicated by confidence intervals containing zero for both the relative total effects for minority sexual orientation/gender identity disclosure (X_1 = -.13, 95% CI -.67 to .42), and mental illness/substance abuse disclosures (X_2 = -.09, 95% CI -.69 to .50), as well as relative direct effects for minority sexual orientation/gender identity disclosure (X_1 = .03, 95% CI -.38 to .45), and mental illness/substance abuse (X_2 = .19,

95% CI -.29 to .67). Thus, hypothesis 1a was not supported because relative to participant ratings of leaders in the non-disclosure category, leaders who disclosed either a minority sexual orientation, gender identity, or mental illness (including substance abuse) were not perceived as significantly less effective than leaders in the non-disclosure category.

Hypothesis 1b predicted that leaders who disclosed minority sexual orientation/gender identity would receive higher ratings on leader liking than leaders who disclosed mental illness/substance abuse. Estimates of total effects illustrate a significant negative total effect of leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures on leader liking (X_1 = -.49, 95% CI -.96 to -.01), but this was not significant for leaders' mental illness disclosures (X_2 = -.06, 95% CI -.58 to .46). Estimates of the relative direct effects of disclosure category on leader liking were nonsignificant as indicated by confidence intervals containing zero for both minority sexual orientation/gender identity disclosure (X_1 = -.27, 95% CI -.61 to .07), and mental illness/substance abuse disclosures (X_2 = .18, 95% CI -.22 to .57). Thus, relative to leaders who do not disclose, leaders who disclosed mental illness were not significantly more or less liked than leaders in the non-disclosure category. Thus, hypothesis 1b was not supported. Interestingly in the total effects model, leaders who disclosed minority sexual orientation may be less liked than leaders in the non-disclosure condition when all covariates are considered in the effect.

Hypothesis 1c predicted that participants would rate leaders in the non-disclosure category highest on both leader effectiveness and leader liking. Omnibus tests were conducted to compare the fit of two models in which one model sets regression coefficients of all mediating variables to zero (null hypothesis) to a second model in which at least one regression coefficient is different than zero (alternative hypothesis). This test was not significant for the relative total effects of disclosure on leader effectiveness [change in R squared = .00, $F(2, 269) = .13$, $p =$

.88)] or the relative direct effects of disclosure on leader effectiveness [change in R squared = .00, F(2, 263) = .29, p = .75]. The same omnibus tests were conducted for leader liking and were not significant for the relative total effects of disclosure on leader liking [change in R squared = .01, F(2, 271) = 2.05, p = .13)] or the relative direct effects of disclosure on leader liking [change in R squared = .01, F(2, 265) = 1.86, p = .16]. These tests further confirm that participant ratings of leader effectiveness and leader liking for each level of the predictor were not significantly different from each other in the total or direct effects model. Thus, hypothesis 1c was not supported. Table 2-13 displays the nonsignificant unadjusted group means of both outcome variables by disclosure category.

Table 2-13: Study 1 Summary of Outcome Variable Means and Standard Deviations by Disclosure Category

	Leader Effectiveness		Leader Liking	
Non-Disclosure	N = 254	3.52(1.33)	N = 255	3.78(1.21)
Minority Sexual Orientation Gender Identity	N = 32	3.56(1.35)	N = 33	3.44 (1.29)
Mental Illness	N = 27	3.42(1.34)	N = 27	3.74(1.11)
Combined Sample	N =313	3.52(1.33)	N = 315	3.74(1.21)

Hypotheses 2 to 4 predicted first-stage mediation effects between disclosure and the three proposed mediators – leadership prototype (H2), affective trust in leader (H3), and leader vulnerability (H4) – such that leaders who disclosed minority sexual orientation or gender identity would be evaluated more favorably than those who disclosed mental illness. Based on results of the CFA, the four dimensions of leadership prototype were entered as separate mediators and the association between disclosure with each dimension of leadership prototype was its own hypothesis test. The relationship between disclosure and follower ratings of leader sensitivity (M_1) were non-significant for minority sexual orientation / gender identity (a_1 = -.36,

p = .37) and mental illness disclosures (a_2 = -.47, p = .29). The relationship between disclosure and follower ratings of leader intelligence (M_2) were non-significant for minority sexual orientation / gender identity (a_1 = -.03, p = .92) but significantly negative for mental illness disclosures (a_2 = -.72, p = .04). The relationship between disclosure and follower ratings of leader dedication (M_3) were non-significant for both minority sexual orientation / gender identity (a_1 = -.05, p = .90) and mental illness disclosures (a_2 = -.37, p = .33). The relationship between disclosure and follower ratings of leader dynamism (M_4) were non-significant for both minority sexual orientation / gender identity (a_1 = -.03, p = .94) and mental illness disclosures (a_2 = -.41, p = .31). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported due to the significant negative association between leader mental illness disclosures and ratings of leader prototype on the intelligence dimension only. Means and standard deviations of followers' perceptions of leader intelligence are displayed by disclosure category are displayed in Table 2-14.

Table 2-14: Study 1 Summary of Mean Intelligence Ratings and Standard Deviations by Disclosure Category

	Leader Intelligence	
Non-Disclosure	N = 252	7.21(1.63)
Minority Sexual Orientation Gender Identity	N = 33	7.35(1.22)
Mental Illness	N = 28	6.46(2.06)
Combined Sample	N = 313	7.16(1.65)

Hypothesis 3 predicted a negative association between disclosure and follower ratings of affective trust in leader (M_5), which was non-significant for both minority sexual orientation / gender identity (a_1 = -.29, p = .21) and mental illness disclosures (a_2 = .04, p = .87). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Hypothesis 4 predicted a positive association between disclosure and follower ratings of leader vulnerability. The relationship between disclosure and

follower ratings of leader vulnerability (M_6) were non-significant for minority sexual orientation (a_1 = -.09, p = .76) and significant for mental illness disclosures (a_2 = 1.80, p < .00) in the leader effectiveness model. Thus, hypothesis 4 was partially supported for mental illness disclosures only. Means and standard deviations of followers' perceptions of leader vulnerability are displayed by disclosure category are displayed in Table 2-15.

Table 2-15:Study 1 Summary of Leader Vulnerability Ratings and Standard Deviations by Disclosure Category

	Leader Vulnerability	
Non-Disclosure	N = 252	2.34(1.46)
Minority Sexual Orientation Gender Identity	N = 33	2.39(1.46)
Mental Illness	N = 27	4.00(2.17)
Combined Sample	N = 312	2.49(1.60)

Hypothesis 5a - c predicted an indirect effect of disclosure on leader evaluations through leadership prototype, affective trust in leader, and leader vulnerability. Examination of bootstrapping confidence levels of all relative indirect effects in both models included zero, thus hypothesis 5 was not supported for leader effectiveness or leader liking.

Table 2-16: Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary Information for Leader Disclosure-Effectiveness Mediation Analysis

	Y				M_1				M_2				M_3				M_4			
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p
D_1	c_1	-.13	.28	.65	a_1	-.36	.41	.37	a_1	-.03	.32	.92	a_1	-.05	.35	.90	a_1	-.03	.38	.94
D_2	c_2	-.09	.30	.77	a_2	-.47	.44	.29	$\boldsymbol{a_2}$	**-.72**	**.35**	**.04**	a_2	-.37	.38	.33	a_2	-.41	.41	.31
M_1																				
M_2																				
M_3																				
M_4																				
M_5																				
M_6																				
Constant	$\boldsymbol{i_y}$	**3.13**	**.59**	**<.00**	$\boldsymbol{i_{m1}}$	**6.10**	**.78**	**<.00**	$\boldsymbol{i_{m2}}$	**6.75**	**.61**	**<.00**	$\boldsymbol{i_{m3}}$	**5.86**	**.67**	**<.00**	$\boldsymbol{i_{m4}}$	**6.14**	**.72**	**.00**
	$R^2 = .03$				$R^2 = .03$				$R^2 = .03$				$R^2 = .04$				$R^2 = .03$			
	F(8,269) =1.05, p = .40				F(8,269) =.93, p = .49				F(8,269) =.94, p = .49				F(8,269) = 1.33, p = .23				F(8,269) = 1.11, p =.36			

Notes: Predictors D_1 leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation**;** D2 leader disclosures of mental illness; Mediators (M): M_1 sensitivity; M_2 intelligence; M_3 dedication; M_4 dynamism; M_5 affective trust in leader; M_6 leader vulnerability; Outcome (Y): Leader Effectiveness
Controls: Participant gender, Participant age, Supervisor age, Intergroup contact, Manager-employee contact, Participant invisible identity.
Bold indicates statistical significance.

Table 2-16 continued on next page.

		M_5				M_6				Y		
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	Coeff.		Coeff.	Coeff.	p		Coeff.	SE	p
D_1	a_1	-.29	.24	.21	a_1	-.09	.31	.76	c'_1	.03	.21	.88
D_2	a_2	.04	.26	.87	$\boldsymbol{a_2}$	**1.80**	**.33**	**.00**	c'_2	.19	.24	.45
M_1									$\boldsymbol{b_1}$	**.18**	**.07**	**<.00**
M_2									b_2	.03	.07	.64
M_3									b_3	.04	.07	.58
M_4									b_4	.05	.06	.47
M_5									$\boldsymbol{b_5}$	**.32**	**.10**	**<.00**
M_6									$\boldsymbol{b_6}$	**-.08**	**.04**	**.07**
Constant	$\boldsymbol{i_{m5}}$	**3.80**	**1.60**	**<.00**	$\boldsymbol{i_{m6}}$	**4.33**	**.58**	**<.00**	i_y	.43	.57	.45
		R^2 = .05				**R^2 = .17**				**R^2 = .46**		
		F(8,269) =1.93, p = .05				**F(8,269) =6.94, p < .00**				**F(14,263) =15.98, p < .00**		

Notes: Predictors D_1 leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation**;** D2 leader disclosures of mental illness; Mediators (M): M_1 leader prototype; M_2 affective trust in leader; M_3 leader vulnerability;
Outcome (Y): Leader Effectiveness
Controls: Participant gender, Participant age, Supervisor age, Intergroup contact, Manager-employee contact, Participant invisible identity.
Bold indicates statistical significance.

Table 2-17: Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary Information for Leader Disclosure-Liking Mediation Analysis

	Y				M_1				M_2				M_3				M_4			
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p
D_1	***c_1***	**-.49**	**.24**	**.04**	a_1	-.50	.40	.21	a_1	-.07	.31	.83	a_1	-.17	.34	.62	a_1	-.11	.36	.76
D_2	c_2	-.06	.26	.83	a_2	-.50	.44	.26	***a_2***	**-.75**	**.35**	**.03**	a_2	-.40	.37	.28	a_2	-.42	.40	.29
M_1																				
M_2																				
M_3																				
M_4																				
M_5																				
M_6																				
Constant	***i_y***	**2.87**	**.47**	**<.00**	***i_{m2}***	**6.39**	**.78**	**<.00**	***i_{m3}***	**6.86**	**.61**	**<.00**	***i_{m3}***	**6.17**	**.70**	**<.00**	***i_y***	**6.47**	**.71**	**<.00**
		R^2 = .07 F(8,271) = 2.40, p = .02				R^2 = .03 F(8,271) =1.09, p = .37				R^2 = .03 F(8,271) =.97, p = .46				R^2 = .04 F(8,271) = 1.39, p= .20				R^2 = .03 F(8,271) = 1.20, p=.30		

Notes: Predictors D_1 leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation**;** D2 leader disclosures of mental illness; Mediators (M): M_1 sensitivity; M_2 intelligence; M_3 dedication; M_4 dynamism; M_5 affective trust in leader; M_6 leader vulnerability; Outcome (Y): Leader Liking
Controls: Participant gender, Participant age, Supervisor age, Intergroup contact, Manager-employee contact, Participant invisible identity.
Bold indicates statistical significance.

Table 2-17 continued on next page.

		M_5			M_6				Y		
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	Coeff.		Coeff.	Coeff.	p	Coeff.	SE	p
D_1	a_1	-.33	.23	.16	a_1	-.05	.30	.86	c'_1 -.27	.17	.12
D_2	a_2	.03	.25	.91	**a_2**	**1.84**	**.33**	**<.00**	c'_2 .18	.20	.38
M_1									**b_1**	**.16**	**.06**	**<.00**
M_2									b_2 .09	.06	.11
M_3									b_3 .02	.06	.79
M_4									b_4 -.05	.06	.31
M_5									**b_5**	**.42**	**.08**	**<.00**
M_6									b_6 -.06	.04	.10
Constant	**i_{m3}**	**3.95**	**.45**	**<.00**	**i_{m2}**	**4.13**	**.58**	**<.00**	i_y .04	.50	.94
		R^2 = .06				**R^2 = .17**			**R^2 = .54**		
		F(8,271) =2.21, p = .03				**F(8,271) =7.17, p < .00**			**F(14,265) =22.44, p < .00**		

Notes: Predictors D_1 leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation**;** D2 leader disclosures of mental illness; Mediators (M): M_1 leader prototype; M_2 affective trust in leader; M_3 leader vulnerability; Outcome (Y): Leader Liking

Controls: Participant gender, Participant age, Supervisor age, Intergroup contact, Manager-employee contact, Participant invisible identity.

Bold indicates statistical significance.

Figure 2-1: Diagram of Parallel Mediation Model with Leader Effectiveness as Outcome

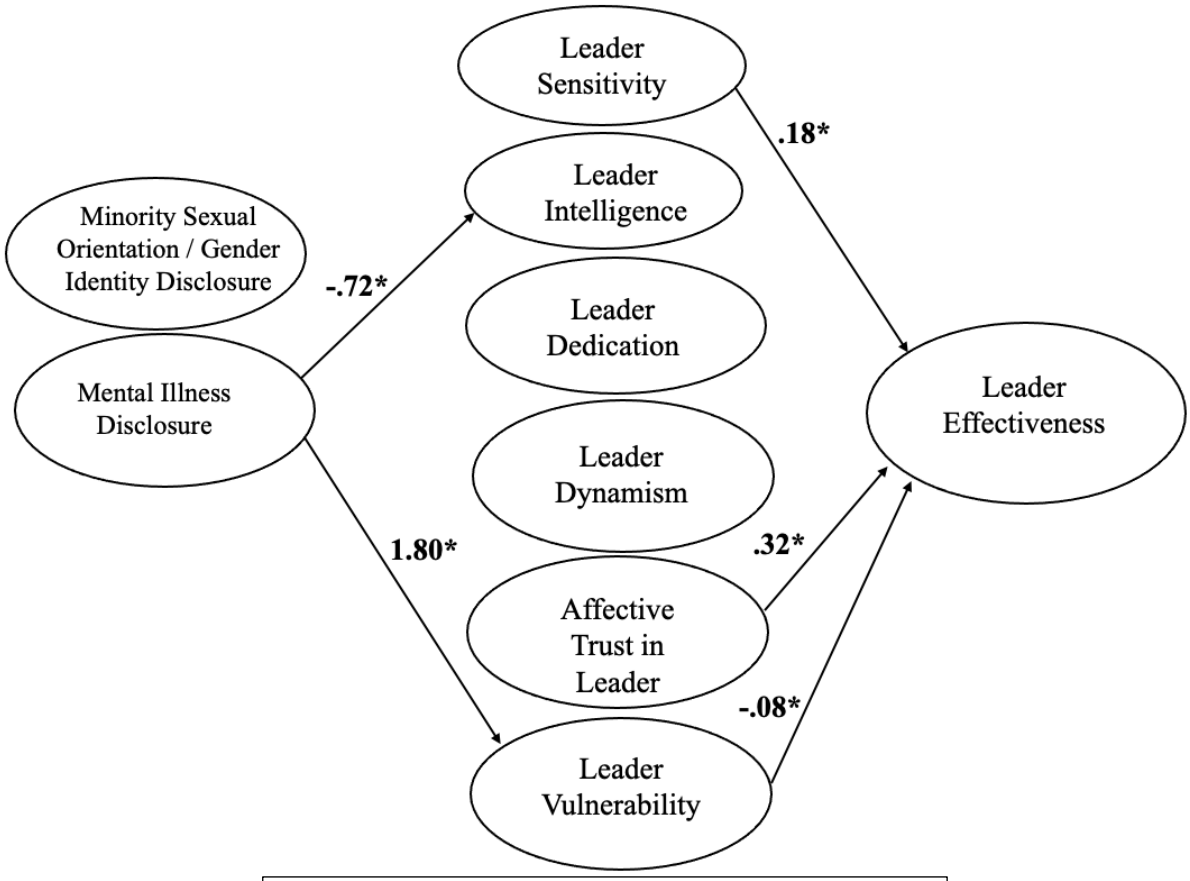
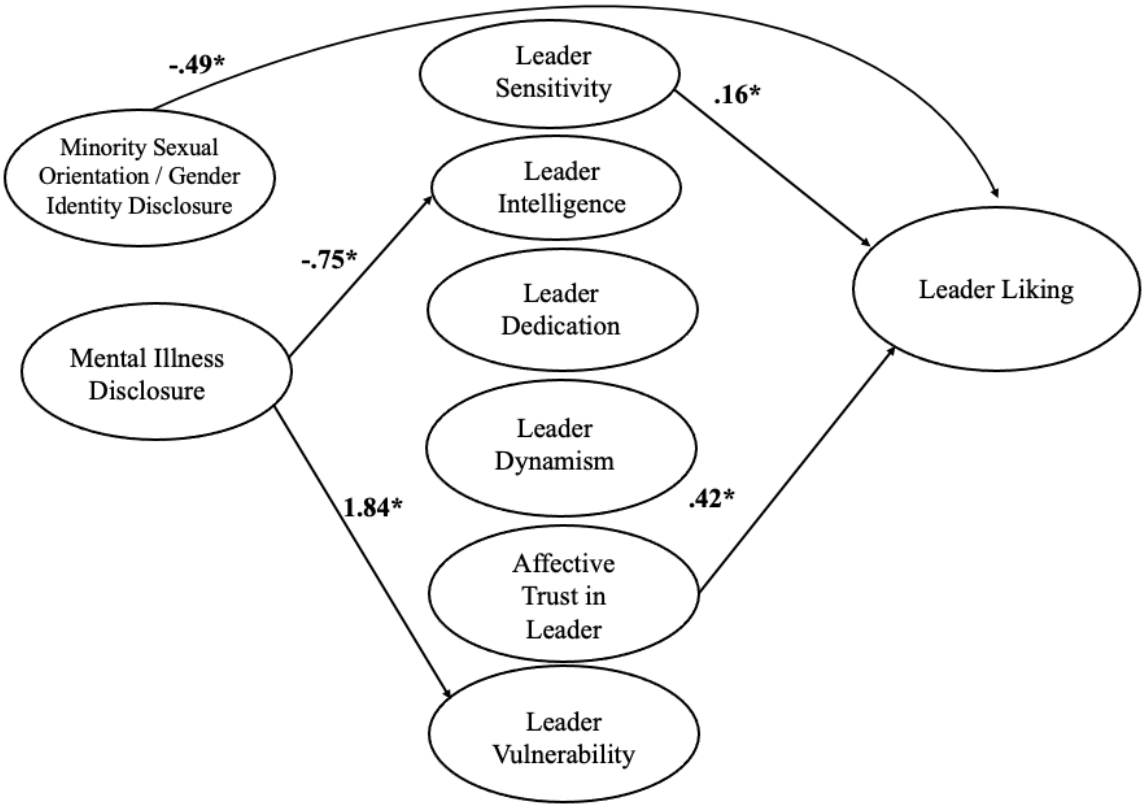


Figure 2-2: Diagram of Parallel Mediation Model with Leader Liking as Outcome



Total Effect Estimate: $R^2 = .07$ $F(8,271) = 2.41$, $p = .02$

2.7.3 Post-hoc Analysis

When conducting statistical testing, it is ideal to have similarly sized groups to decrease the likelihood of violating assumptions of homogeneity of variance between groups (Burns & Burns, 2008). The use of bootstrapping by PROCESS somewhat relaxes this requirement because model estimates are derived using resampling techniques (Hayes, 2013). Regardless, considering there were unequal numbers of participants in the various disclosure categories, the model was re-tested with disclosure a dichotomous predictor. To do this, both disclosure groups (minority sexual orientation and gender identity and mental illness including substance abuse) were combined into one brad disclosure category and compared with the non-disclosure group. Just as the tests for parallel mediation with a three-level multi-categorical predictor, all

bootstrapping confidence intervals estimating indirect effects passed through zero when the predictor was dichotomous. Therefore, the hypothesized mediated effects were nonsignificant whether the predictor was dichotomous or multi-categorical with three levels.

2.8 Study 1 Discussion

Using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, this two-phased study collected data from multiple independent samples to obtain a better understanding of downward disclosures – a phenomenon in personal information about a leader's concealable stigmatized identity is disclosed to organizational members who occupy a lower position in the organizational hierarchy. Preliminary analysis of Phase 1 data informed changes to the data collection instrument that were implemented for Phase 2. This discussion comments on analysis of the combined sample.

2.8.1 Qualitative Discussion

Past research focused on the stigma holders' reasons for disclosing suggest that disclosure motivations may affect how disclosure events unfold and how disclosure ultimately affects interpersonal relationships over time (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). However, employee interpretations of their leader's motivation for disclosing have not previously been investigated. Studies of disclosure motivations as reported by the stigma holders themselves identify two broad categories - approach- or avoidance-focused motivation antecedent goals (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Disclosures motivated by approach-focused goals describe stigma holders who intentionally pursue positive outcomes such as creating understanding, strengthening relationships with others, raising awareness, developing intimacy, feeling accepted, coping, and expressing of hopefulness (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Stigma holders who disclose with an

avoidance-focused goal hope to prevent negative outcomes such as being socially rejected or distanced from others after the disclosure, conflict, or anxiety.

Responses of 53 participants' downward disclosure experience are presented in Table 2-9. The majority of themes suggest employees interpret the disclosure motivation positively, which resembles approach-focused motivation. For example, in the relational thematic category, participants thought the disclosure was motivated by the discloser wanting to develop the relationship, build trust, or strengthen the bond between the discloser and the individual or group who received the disclosure. The information sharing category illustrated that employees held positive and negative interpretations of the disclosure motivation. The emergence of the *unsupportive* category provides rationale for why disclosers may express avoidance-focused motivation (i.e., prevention of negative outcomes) as it suggests the employee disapproves of the shared information.

Other descriptive analysis of *Disclosure Details* responses illustrate that the context of downward disclosures may differ from that of same status or upward disclosures in meaningful ways. Specifically, employees may be aware of their manager/supervisor's minority identity prior to the start of the formal reporting relationship and the information may be shared by someone other than the manager/supervisor themselves. Disclosure literature refers to disclosures made by the stigma holder themselves as self-disclosures (Collins & Miller, 1994); however, analysis of participants' responses about their disclosure experiences reveals that downward disclosures are not always initiated by the manager (See Table 2-6). This could be the subject of future research to examine between group differences. A second key difference of downward disclosures is the possibility for the information to be shared in a group setting, either in-person or online, with more regularity than same status and upward disclosures. This may be

related to increased opportunities for leaders to address groups of people and audiences who will likely be interested in the content of the leader's message due to number and power asymmetry as well as follower outcome dependence on the leader.

Overall, these findings indicate that leader disclosures are largely met with employee support, but this is not uniformly the case and disapproving and stigmatizing reactions are still a reality in terms of sharing concealable stigmatized identities at work – even for the boss. Furthermore, this research contributes to workplace gossip literature, which encourages organizational scholars to identify functions of workplace gossip that are not necessarily deviant (Brady, Brown, & Liang, 2017). Sharing information about a leader's disclosed identity may serve a social function for organizational members or potential applicants. For example, the effects of abusive supervision are less deleterious for highly cohesive groups and teams; information sharing can promote development of the type of cohesion that produces this protective effect (Decoster, Camps, Stouten, Vandevyvere, & Tripp, 2013). Regardless of the leader an organizational member is currently reporting to, information about an organizational leader whose invisible identity has been disclosed may be passed throughout the organization and could subsequently play a role in an employee's desire to seek out or avoid a work group whose leader possesses a minority identity.

2.8.2 Quantitative Discussion

A parallel mediation model was estimated and employee ratings of their manager were compared across three disclosure categories – non-disclosure, minority sexual orientation or gender identity disclosure, and mental illness (including substance abuse) disclosure. The measurement model revealed seven latent constructs (i.e. leader sensitivity, leader intelligence,

leader dedication, leader dynamism, affective trust in leader, leader liking, and leader effectiveness).

Statistically significant relationships in the first stage of the mediation models include follower ratings of leader intelligence and leader vulnerability, which were less favourable for leaders who had disclosed mental illness compared to the other disclosure categories. In both cases, mental illness disclosures had a significant negative association with follower ratings of leader intelligence and significantly positive associations with leader vulnerability (where vulnerability is conceptualized as weakness). Consistent with previous research, significant positive associations observed in the second stage of the mediation model include the paths from leadership sensitivity and affective trust in leader to leadership effectiveness and leader liking. Moreover, a significant negative association was observed between follower ratings of leader vulnerability with ratings of leader effectiveness. Employee perceptions of leader vulnerability were significantly higher when the content of the disclosure was mental illness or substance abuse in comparison to disclosures of minority sexual orientation or gender identity and non-disclosure. Based on implicit leadership theory, which includes strength as a facet of dynamism, vulnerability is not an ideal characteristic for leaders and will likely contribute to other unfavourable leadership evaluations (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Offermann & Coats, 2018).

The deleterious effect of leader disclosure of mental illness on follower ratings of leader intelligence is consistent with extant research as well as hypothesized effects for mental illness disclosures to be more harshly rated in comparison to minority sexual orientation disclosures. For example, disclosure of stigmatized occupational association has resulted in members of the stigmatized occupation being perceived as miseducated (e.g., midwives: Monteblanco, 2018). Decades of research support the claim that intelligence is a key component of effective

leadership (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies 2004); however, the intersection of intelligence as an important leadership characteristic and leaders who possess a minority identity has rarely been considered in extant literature. Peer-reviewed research suggests role schemas of leadership (competence, creativity, intelligence, and reliability) are inconsistent with the stereotypes of mental illness (Cloutier & Barling, 2017). Results of the current investigation suggest negative mental illness stereotypes that have been observed in non-organizational settings, such as association with perceptions of emotional or cognitive instability (Follmer & Jones, 2018; Jones, 2011), translate to the leader-follower context. This could be detrimental for leadership ratings due to the central importance of follower ratings of leader intelligence in terms of explaining variance in ratings of leader effectiveness compared to other dimensions sensitivity, dedication, and dynamism (Tavares et al., 2018).

The total effects (sum of direct (c) and indirect (ab) effects) were non-significant for the leadership effectiveness model, but there was a negative total effect between leaders' disclosure of minority of sexual orientation / gender identity and employee ratings of leader liking (c = -.49, 95% CI -.96 to -.01). Reasons for significance of the total effect in a model that contains non-significant direct and indirect effects may be due to variables not included in the model, significant covariates, or regression coefficients of competing signs in the same model (Darlington & Hayes, 2017; Hayes, 2018). In other words, even though there was a significantly negative total effect, a non-significant direct effect suggests that disclosure may not be a key driver of this decremental effect. Furthermore, this significant negative total effect could be related to the combining of minority sexual orientation and gender identity into one overall category. The relative direct effects of disclosure category on leader liking were nonsignificant as indicated by confidence intervals containing zero for both minority sexual orientation / gender

identity disclosure and mental illness disclosures. Importantly, due to the numerous individual and situational boundary conditions that can play a role in shaping disclosures outcomes, it is not uncommon for studies regarding the disclosure of concealable stigmas to produce null or contradictory results (Sabat et al., 2019). These relationships will be re-examined in Studies 2 and 3.

The current study illustrates a significant negative association between follower ratings of leader vulnerability and leader effectiveness but not liking. This suggests that followers may not dislike leaders who share a minority identity, but they may perceive them as less effective for a leadership role. Given the range of potential moderating and contextual factors at play, null effects are not uncommon in the study of minority identities. For instance, studies examining the effects of minority sexual orientation on ratings of job suitability and workplace incivility found no difference in the experiences reported by minority sexual orientation and heterosexual employees (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2003; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016).

2.8.3 Limitations and Future Research

Previous research has suggested that follower ratings of their leader's prototype, affective trust in their leader, or vulnerability may be linked to decrements in followers' evaluations of their leader following disclosure of the leader's concealable stigmatized in the workplace (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2017; Gibson et al., 2018). However, the three hypothesized indirect effects regarding the mediating roles of leader prototype, affective trust in leader, and leader vulnerability in the leader disclosure-evaluation relationship were not significant in the current study. Thus, the possibility of error in these results must be addressed (Cashen & Geiger, 2004). While the statistical tests did not detect a meaningful difference in follower ratings of leaders who disclosed concealable stigmatized identities in the current research, there is theoretical and

empirical evidence to suggest otherwise. In this study, the non-disclosure group was much larger than the two disclosure groups and statistical tests may have simply lacked adequate power to reject the null hypothesis if false (Cashen & Geiger, 2004). In other words, there is some potential for type II error in these results. Future research should continue to investigate additional mediating mechanisms in the leader disclosure-evaluation process or the same mediating mechanisms with a larger sample to obtain higher statistical power.

Recruiting employees who have experienced working for a manager/supervisor whose concealable stigmatized identity proved challenging to the point of meeting the definition of a hard-to-reach population (Bonevski et al., 2014). Future research could adopt an experimental study design to avoid this recruitment challenge. It would be useful to consider the realities of downward disclosures when crafting future vignettes to study leadership. Within this survey methodology, it is possible that common method bias has influenced the results. However, I have followed suggestions from Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012) to minimize common method bias by collecting data on the predictors and criteria at separate times, instilling psychological separation, using an anonymous survey with previously validated measures (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

The conceptualization and measurement of vulnerability also presents opportunity for refinement. The two-item measure employed by Gibson et al. (2018) to measure vulnerability as a weakness had low reliability in the current study possibly due to changes in wording of the second item. Therefore, vulnerability was examined as a one-item measure in the current analysis and could not be included in the CFA to assess discriminant validity. Future research should explore alternate conceptualizations and measurement of the vulnerability construct.

Finally, there may be important contextual factors that were not captured in the current analysis that could explain these null findings.

CHAPTER 3 - STUDY 2: EXAMINING THE MODERATING ROLES OF LEADER GENDER AND DISCLOSER IDENTITY

Study 1 presented a mixed methods study that examined the downward disclosure experience from the employee's perspective as well as the results of a parallel mediation model of the relationship between three categories of disclosure (leader non-disclosure, leader minority sexual orientation/gender identity disclosure, and leader mental illness disclosure) on employee ratings of leader effectiveness and leader liking through employee ratings of leader prototype, affective trust in leader, and leader vulnerability. In the current chapter, attention is shifted to contextual factors that may attenuate or reverse followers' evaluations of their leader after a concealable stigmatized identity disclosure. In this study, an additional disclosure category is added to create a model with a four level multi-categorical predictor (leader non-disclosure, leader minority sexual orientation disclosure, leader mental disorder/disease disclosure, and leader substance abuse disclosure) to examine the moderating function of leader gender (Study 2a) and discloser identity (Study 2b).

To avoid limitations associated with hard-to-reach populations which can lead to under-powered statistical testing, an experimental approach was chosen to access a larger sample using "paper people" vignettes (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014, p. 356). Using the randomization feature in survey hosting software, *Qualtrics*, all participants were randomly assigned to one vignette in which leader gender and disclosure content were manipulated (Study 2a) and a second vignette in which discloser identity was manipulated (Study 2b). Literature is synthesized to provide rationale for why discloser identity and leader gender may attenuate or reverse the relationships under investigation using an experimental study design. Complete measures, stem and item wording for Studies 2a and 2b are displayed in Appendix C.

3.1 Study 2a: Leader Gender Moderation Model

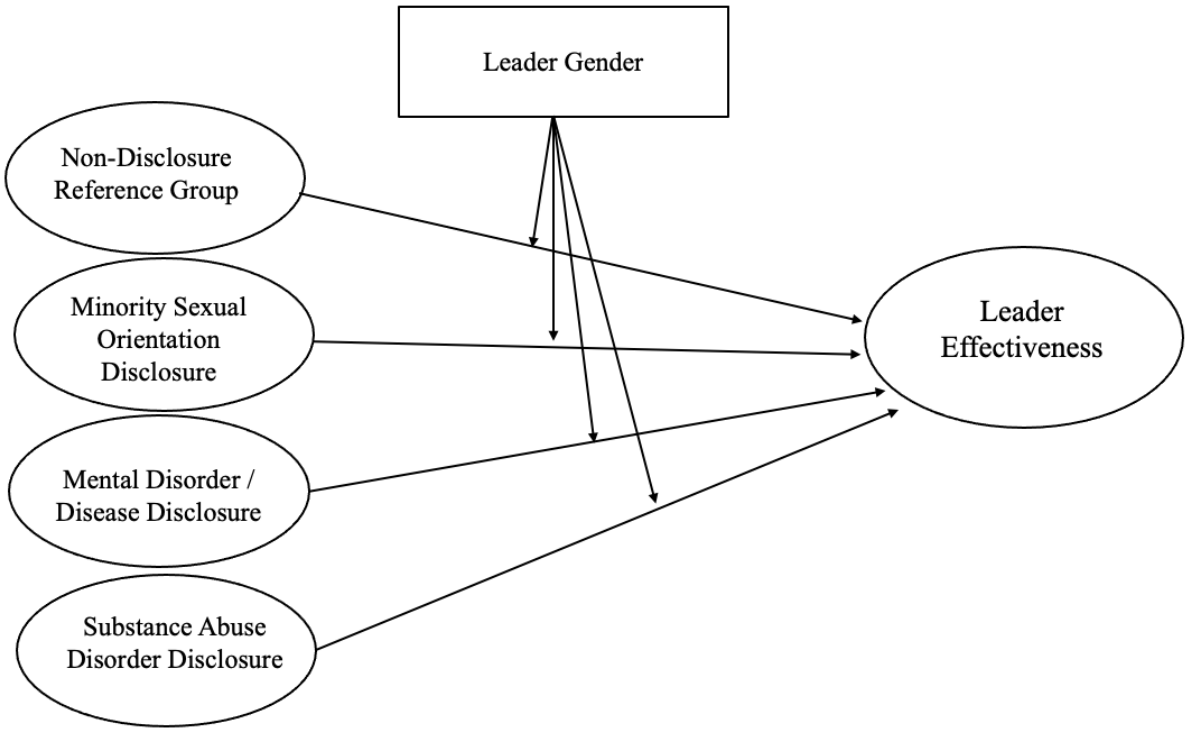
The extent to which disclosure of personal information can discredit a person may exhibit contingencies and vary depending on aspects of the focal individual and the social environment in which they are embedded (Chaudoir & Quinn, 2010). Previous investigations of stigmatized identity disclosures suggest that the circumstances of each individual disclosure may be important considerations for how they are interpreted by the receiver (Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005; Jones & King, 2014). Meta-analysis of disclosure in social settings has demonstrated that study paradigm can affect evaluations of the stigma holder (Collins & Miller, 1994). Furthermore, as mentioned in the Chapter 2 discussion, the Study 1 sample may have lacked the statistical power required to detect significant effects of followers' post-disclosure evaluations of their leaders. Thus, Study 2 employs experimental vignette methodology (EVM) with an additional predictor category to mitigate challenges of studying this hard-to-reach population.

The purpose of including the additional level to the multi-categorical predictor is to take a more fine-grained approach to examine differences in follower reactions based on disclosure content. Specifically, leader mental illness disclosures are separated into two categories - mental disorder/disease and substance abuse. In addition, gender identity is parsed out from minority sexual orientation. Similar to differences in attitudes towards mental disorder/disease and substance abuse, research and theory have demonstrated that attitudes towards minority sexual orientation are becoming more favorable than attitudes towards minority gender identity (e.g., Sabat et al., 2019). Therefore, to avoid conflating minority sexual and gender identity, disclosure of a leaders' minority gender identity is *not* included as a condition in this vignette study. The four-level multi-categorical predictor also allowed for a statistically valid test of previous claims that minority sexual orientation individuals may make better leaders than leaders who do not

possess a sexual minority identity, which were inferred based on analyses of qualitative data (e.g., Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Snyder, 2006). Leadership effectiveness is the outcome variable of interest.

I use evidence from Study 1 predictions to support and develop Study 2a hypotheses with an additional disclosure category. I expect that leaders who disclose mental illness will receive the least favorable follower evaluations of leadership effectiveness. Recognizing that substance abuse is a mental illness, the current study breaks mental illness into two categories – mental disorder/disease and substance abuse – and further hypothesizes that leaders who disclose substance abuse will be least favourably evaluated.

Figure 3-1: Study 2a Moderation Model



3.1.2 Differences in Disclosure Content

Organizational scholars have recognized the need for more in-depth study of mental illness in the workplace and called for investigations at the level of the condition instead of the overly generalized unitary construct of mental illness (Follmer & Jones, 2018). For example, medical journals have studied stigmatizing attitudes displayed by the general public and demonstrated that schizophrenia is the most stigmatized mental illness, followed by bipolar disorder, followed by depression (Ellison, Mason & Scior, 2013); however, it is unclear whether employees' attitudes towards organizational leaders who disclose having these conditions will follow this same pattern.

Evidence regarding prevalence of rates of mental illness among organizational leaders is not readily available; however, studies suggest this is *not* because managers are any less affected by mental illness and substance abuse than the rest of the population (Barling & Cloutier, 2017). Management scholars have long acknowledged the potential for supervisors' heightened risk for mental illness including drug and alcohol addictions (e.g., Dzhingarov, 2017; Murray, 1973). This is consistent with empirical studies that acknowledge a relationship between workplace stressors and organizational culture of alcohol consumption and drug use as a coping strategy (Bacharach et al., 2008; Frone, 2016). Despite the dearth of comprehensive data on the prevalence of specific types of drug use and rates of substance abuse by managers and supervisors, there have been several cases of corporate and political male leaders who shared their experiences of struggling with mental illness including substance abuse in the popular press (e.g., Seamus O'Reagan, Rob Ford: Ubelacker, 2013; Zimonjic, 2017). Finally, practitioner journals, such as the *SAM Advanced Management Journal* and the *Canadian HR Reporter,*

suggest that workplace drug use is on the rise and warns of on-site abuse of substances such as methamphetamines (Davis & Hueller, 2006) and prescription drugs (Wentzell, 2014).

In non-organizational settings, public attitudes towards substance abuse and addiction are significantly more negative than attitudes towards mental illness as indicated by measures of social distance and hypothetical willingness to work with mentally ill individuals as compared to drug addicted individuals (Link et al., 1999; Pachankis et al., 2018). Furthermore, some opinion polls suggest the American public perceives discrimination against drug addiction as more acceptable than discrimination against mental illness and people are more likely to disapprove of policies designed to help persons with drug addiction than policies to assist the mentally ill (Barry et al., 2014). For these reasons it is expected that sexual orientation will be more favorably received than mental illness and substance abuse; however, following results of Study 1, no predictions are offered regarding differences in effectiveness ratings between leaders' non-disclosures and leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures. Therefore:

> *Hypothesis 1: Leaders in the substance abuse disclosure condition will receive the lowest ratings on leadership effectiveness, compared to leaders who disclose mental disorder/disease (2nd lowest), followed by minority sexual orientation and non-disclosure conditions.*

3.1.3 Leader Gender as a Moderator

Employees generally respond positively to leaders who embody strength, competence, intelligence, and a range of other agentic characteristics which are more closely aligned with agentic, masculine norms than communal, feminine norms (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007). The role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders proposes that these preconceived notions of leaders as masculine creates a perception of incongruity between the female gender

role and leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Male leaders are expected to fulfill gender role expectations for agency (e.g., achievement-oriented, competent, ambitious, task-focused, dominant, independent, decisive, objective, etc.) which are congruent with many leadership expectations (Heilman, 2012). While occupying leadership roles, female leaders are still expected to display communal attributes that are associated with the female gender role (e.g., helpful, kind, caring, self-effacing, affiliative, sensitive, understanding, collaborative, etc.). As such, female leaders may be penalized for enacting 'masculine' leadership behaviours as leadership is outside of the typical female gender role (Heilman, 2012). Implicit leadership theory suggests that both sensitivity and masculinity are salient in leadership prototypes (Offermann & Coats, 2018). In terms of leader behaviours that are congruent with pre-existing leadership prototypes, it is possible that male leaders who disclose concealable stigmatized identities may be considered both masculine and sensitive and thus it is unclear which attribute will affect employee's post-disclosure evaluations. While being sensitive is not an agentic trait, it is an expectation for leaders, hence employee ratings of leadership effectiveness will not likely penalize male leaders for disclosure.

Female leaders who disclose a concealable stigmatized identity, on the other hand, may be perceived as sensitive, which is more closely aligned with the communal expectations of their gender role as well as the sensitivity dimension of the leadership prototype. However, the 'think-manager, think-male' paradigm has been observed in North American settings since the 1970s wherein males occupy the majority of top-tier leadership positions objectively, creating a clear prescriptive association between leadership and masculinity (Schein et al., 1996; Krivkovich et al., 2018). Role congruity research supports the existence of gender bias in leader evaluation. For example, for female leaders to be perceived as effective they need to demonstrate both sensitivity

and strength, but male leaders only need to demonstrate strength (Johnson et al., 2008). This "double bind" effect (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 66) results in harsher evaluations for women occupying leadership roles who enact leadership behaviors in comparison to males in a similar role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). To integrate implicit leadership and role congruity theory in the case of female leaders who disclose, it is noteworthy that most prototypical leadership expectations are agentic except for sensitivity (Offermann & Coats, 2018). As this relates to ratings of leadership effectiveness, I hypothesize that based on gender identity alone, female leaders will receive lower ratings than male leaders due to the lack of fit between their female gender and widely held leadership expectations.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a moderating effect of leader gender such that female leaders who disclose a concealable stigmatized identity will be rated lower on leadership effectiveness than male leaders who disclose regardless of disclosure content.

3.2 Study 2a Methodology

3.2.1 Experimental Vignettes

A vignette is "a short, carefully constructed description of a person, object, or situation, representing a systematic combination of characteristics" (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010, p. 128). Paper people vignettes are often used to investigate phenomena that may elicit an emotional reaction from participants (e.g., sexual harassment, childcare-legal compliance: Aguinis & Bradley, 2014) and are common within the leadership field (e.g., Sauer, 2011). EVM is an effective tool to investigate respondent judgements because it allows several explanatory and/or contextual factors to be presented simultaneously while controlling their temporal presentation (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Atzmuller & Steiner, 2010). Systematic variation of independent variables is achieved by altering the vignette text viewed by participants, which minimizes

alternative explanations for covariation and allows for causal conclusions about unconfounded and context-dependent effects of explanatory factors (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Atzmuller & Steiner, 2010).

3.2.2 Instrument Development

A text-only vignette was designed to portray a leader who is otherwise effective based on concepts of transformational leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). It describes a leader with favorable characteristics who is highly qualified, experienced in the field, and takes time to meet regularly with employees. To control for relationship duration, all vignettes indicate the duration of the reporting relationship with the supervisor was six months. This was based on research suggesting that leaders who disclose concealable stigmatized identity should do so between the first week and 12 months of the reporting relationship to avoid negative repercussions from follower evaluations (Adams & Webster, 2017).

Several dimensions of stigma known to affect receiver reactions are equivalent across conditions; specifically, course (the extent to which a stigma persists over time), disruptiveness (if and how a stigma interferes with smooth social interactions) and peril (the extent to which a stigma poses a personal threat or potential for contagion) (Jones, 1984; Pachankis et al., 2018). This is achieved by stating that the disclosure condition had played a role in the fictional leader's life for "quite some time". In the mental disorder/disease and substance abuse conditions, the leader is not acutely ill because the vignettes state that these issues occurred in the manager's past. Thus, these vignettes portray a currently healthy manager who is not acutely ill in the workplace with either a mental disorder/disease or substance abuse. This was important as acute illness could pose a risk to occupational health and safety and enhance rater impressions of peril, disruptiveness, and overall leadership effectiveness.

3.2.3 Procedure

After providing informed consent, participants were informed they would read short scenarios about a fictional leader and were asked to imagine these situations as if it were their own supervisor at their own workplace being described. Participants from the same sample read one vignette for Study 2a and one vignette for Study 2b. In Study 2a, disclosure content and leader gender were varied using a 2 x 4 between-participants factorial design, with leader gender (male, female) and disclosure content (non-disclosure, gay/lesbian, mental disorder/disease, and substance abuse) as the two independent variables. After the vignette, participants responded to stimulus check questions and rated the leader on leadership effectiveness. Participants who did not correctly answer the stimulus check were dropped from the analysis.

3.3 Study 2a: Results

The complete text used in the non-disclosure control vignette is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3-1: Text for Baseline Vignette, Non-disclosure Condition

Matthew/Elizabeth has been your supervisor for approximately 6 months. During that time, you have learned that he/she has an MBA from a reputable university and has ample experience in your field, which was acquired while working with competing firms for the last 15 years. Matthew/Elizabeth does a good job scheduling meetings, staying on budget, and getting projects done by the deadline. When it comes to managing people, Matthew/Elizabeth adheres to the company's human resource policies. He/She neither has "favourite" employees, nor those that he/she "picks on". He/She holds quarterly performance update meetings in which he spends 15 to 30 minutes with each employee in a one-on-one setting to discuss whatever is on their mind. You wouldn't say you are close friends outside of work, but when you run into each other outside of work you spend a few minutes in friendly conversation.

Using the baseline non-disclosure text, leader gender was manipulated by changing the leader's name (Elizabeth/Matthew) and pronouns (She/He). Disclosure content was manipulated by adding one sentence to the non-disclosure scenario and changing the nature of the disclosure

type in the final sentence of each vignette. The sexual orientation disclosure condition included the following additional final sentence:

> *Today you learn that Matthew/Elizabeth is gay/lesbian and he has been in a romantic relationship with a man/woman for quite some time.*

The mental illness disclosure condition included the following additional final sentence:

> *Today you learn that Matthew/Elizabeth has a mental illness and has been successfully managing this condition with medication and counselling for quite some time.*

The substance abuse disclosure condition included the following additional final sentence:

> *Today you learn that Matthew/Elizabeth has a substance abuse disorder and has been successfully managing this condition for quite some time following an intensive rehabilitation program and by continuing to attend narcotics and alcoholics anonymous group meetings.*

3.3.1 Study 2a Measures and Stimulus Checks

In experimental research, stimulus checks are performed to determine the extent to which participants had understood the manipulation. A stimulus check is not necessarily a test of whether the manipulation has had the intended effect on the outcome variable of interest, rather that participants have correctly comprehended the scenario (Ejelöv & Luke, 2020). Therefore, after reading the first vignette, participants were asked to identify the gender of the leader by answering a multiple-choice question with response options of ‘male’, ‘female’, ‘transgender, ‘other, please specify’.

The disclosure content stimulus check question was dependent on the participant’s random assignment to a condition. Participants who were randomly assigned to a leader disclosure of a minority sexual orientation condition were asked to identify the sexual orientation of the leader in the scenario they just read by selecting one of the following four options - heterosexual ("straight"), homosexual male ("gay"), homosexual female ("lesbian"), or other. Participants who were randomly assigned to a leader disclosure of mental illness were asked the

following true or false question: “The leader in this scenario has a mental illness”. Finally, participants who were randomly assigned to a leader disclosure of the substance abuse conditions were asked the following true or false question: “The leader in this scenario has dealt with substance abuse of alcohol and/or drugs”. Participants who were randomly assigned to the non-disclosure condition were not asked about the content of the leader’s disclosure.

Following the stimulus checks, leadership effectiveness was measured using a five-item scale by Vecchio & Anderson (2009) on a Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree) (reverse-coded). Sample items included “Overall, this leader would provide very effective leadership”, “This leader would be an example of an ideal leader”, and “This leader would help the organization to thrive”. Items were combined and mean ratings were used for analysis. I calculated Cronbach’s alpha for all measures to assess scale reliability in the current study. Alpha was .96. for this measure.

3.3.2 Study 2a Sample

All participants were over 18 years of age and working 20+ hours per week at the time of the study. Of the 560 responses initially recruited from social media platforms, 75 were deleted for responding to less than 50% of the questions and 3 were deleted for not having provided informed consent. The median response time of the remaining 482 cases was 3 minutes. To minimize careless responding, participants who completed the survey in less than 40% of the median response time were excluded from the analysis (n = 4) (Huang et al., 2012) for a sample size of 478. Following analysis of the stimulus checks for Study 2a, participants who had responded incorrectly to any stimulus check question were excluded (n = 29) for a final sample size of 449 for Study 2a. The mean age of this sample was 39.3 years of age (range 19 to 77, S.D. 9.0 years), 76% female, 87% residing in Canada.

3.3.3 Study 2a Data Quality and Analysis

For the most part, participants answered stimulus check questions correctly and those who did not were excluded from the analysis. The frequencies of correct responses to the stimulus checks asked after vignette 2a are provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3-2: Results of Vignette 1 Stimulus Checks (Gender as moderator)

Vignette 1 (Gender x Disclosure Content)		Gender		Disclosure Content	
Condition		Correct	Percentage	Correct	Percentage
a	Male, Non-disclosure	59/62	95.2%	N/A	
b	Female, Non-disclosure	52/54	96.3%	N/A	
c	Male, Minority sexual orientation	59/61	96.7%	61/61	100%
d	Female, Minority sexual orientation	54/56	96.4%	54/56	96.4%
e	Male, Mental illness	49/51	96.1%	50/51	98%
f	Female, Mental illness	58/60	96.7%	53/60	88.3%
g	Male, Substance abuse	57/57	100%	53/57	93%
h	Female, Substance abuse	77/77	100%	75/77	97.4%

Prior to the main analysis, I examined the data to ensure the assumptions regarding linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence required for ordinary least squares regression were met (Hayes, 2013). Data were examined to determine if homogeneity of variance assumptions had been violated. First, variance per cell was examined to determine if the variance of one group was more than 4x any other and it was not (SD Range = .78 to 1.23). Additionally, with a minimum of 49 participants in a single cell, group sizes were large and similar enough in size to each other to make this sample robust. Analyses were conducted with and without control variables and the results did not change when controls (i.e., participant age and participant gender) were added, so results are reported without controls (Becker et al., 2016). This analytic decision was encouraged by literature suggesting random assignment of

participants can offset the need to use statistical controls in experimental research (Keppel, 1991). Study 2a correlations are displayed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Study 2a Correlation Table (Gender as moderator)

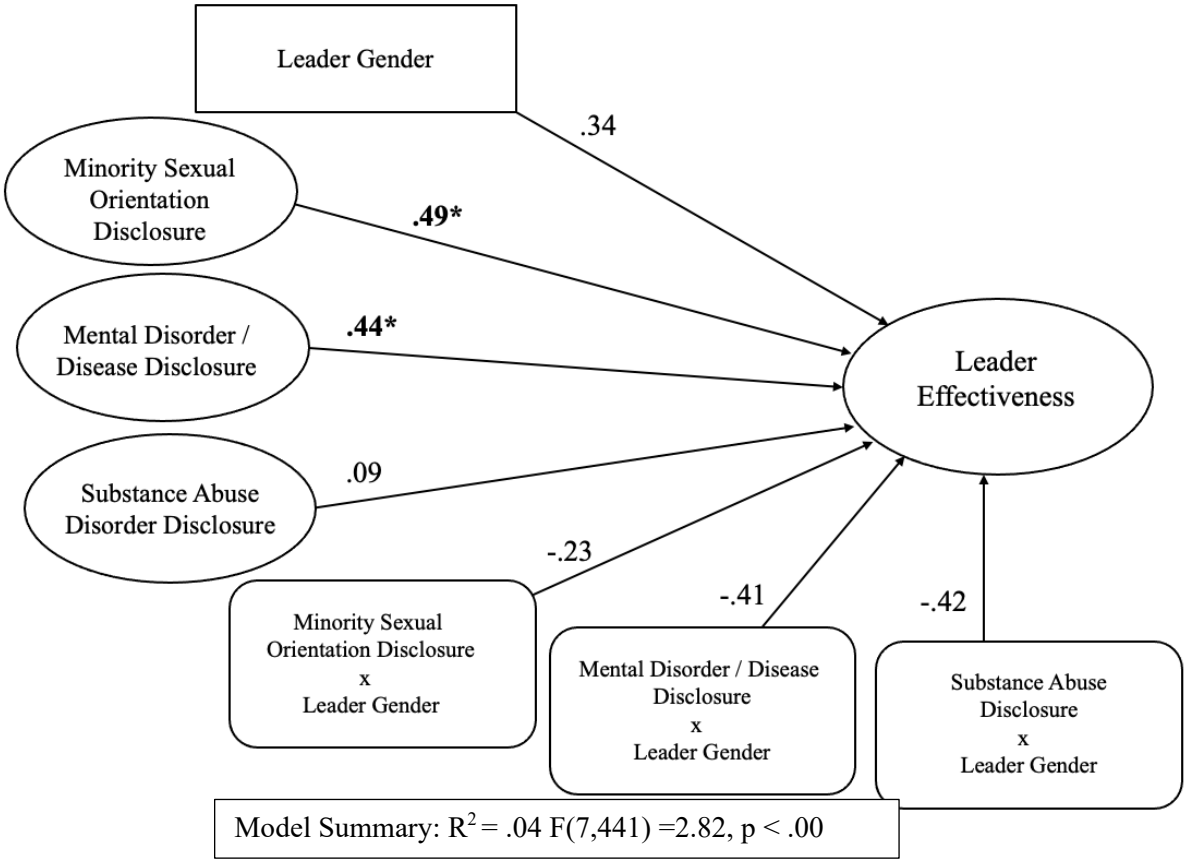
	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Participant Gender†	.76	.43	1						
2. Participant Age	39.24	8.91	-.07	1					
3. Leader Gender†	.52	.50	-	.07	1				
4. Non-Disclosure†	.24	.43	-	-.04	-	1			
5. Minority Sexual Orientation Disc.†	.24	.43	-	-.03	-	-	1		
6. Mental Disorder/Disease Disc.†	.23	.42	-	.03	-	-	-	1	
7. Substance Abuse Disc.†	.28	.45	-	.03	-	-	-	-	1
8. Leader Effectiveness	4.25	1.06	.07	-.01	-.02	-.06	**.14****	.07	**-.14****

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Categories 4, 5, 6 and 7 refer to disclosures made by or about the participant's manager/supervisor; Disc. = Disclosure; Correlations between dichotomous variables indicated with a dash.

† Dichotomous variables: Participant and Leader Gender: 0 for male and 1 for female; Leader non-disclosure: 0 supervisor has disclosed, 1 supervisor has not disclosed; Leader Minority Sexual Orientation Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes; Leader Mental disorder or disease Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes; Leader Substance abuse disorder Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes.

Figure 3-2: Study 2a Moderation Model with Multi-categorical Disclosure Predictor



Study 2a Hypothesis Testing

Data was analyzed using with the PROCESS Macro for SPSS 25 (www.afhayes.com; version 3.2, 2019). This program uses OLS regression to test moderation (Model 1) by producing 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals with 5000 bootstrapping iterations of resampled data. Leaders' invisible identity disclosure was input as a four-level multi-categorical predictor using indicator coding. Leaders with no known invisible identity (i.e., non-disclosure) were the reference group (D_0 all coded as 0s), and dummy variables (D_1, D_2, D_3) were created for the three disclosure types. D_1 represented leader minority sexual disclosure, D_2 represented leader mental disorder or disease disclosure, D_3 represented leader substance abuse disclosure. D_1 was set to 1 for all participants who were assigned to the leader having a minority sexual orientation and 0 for

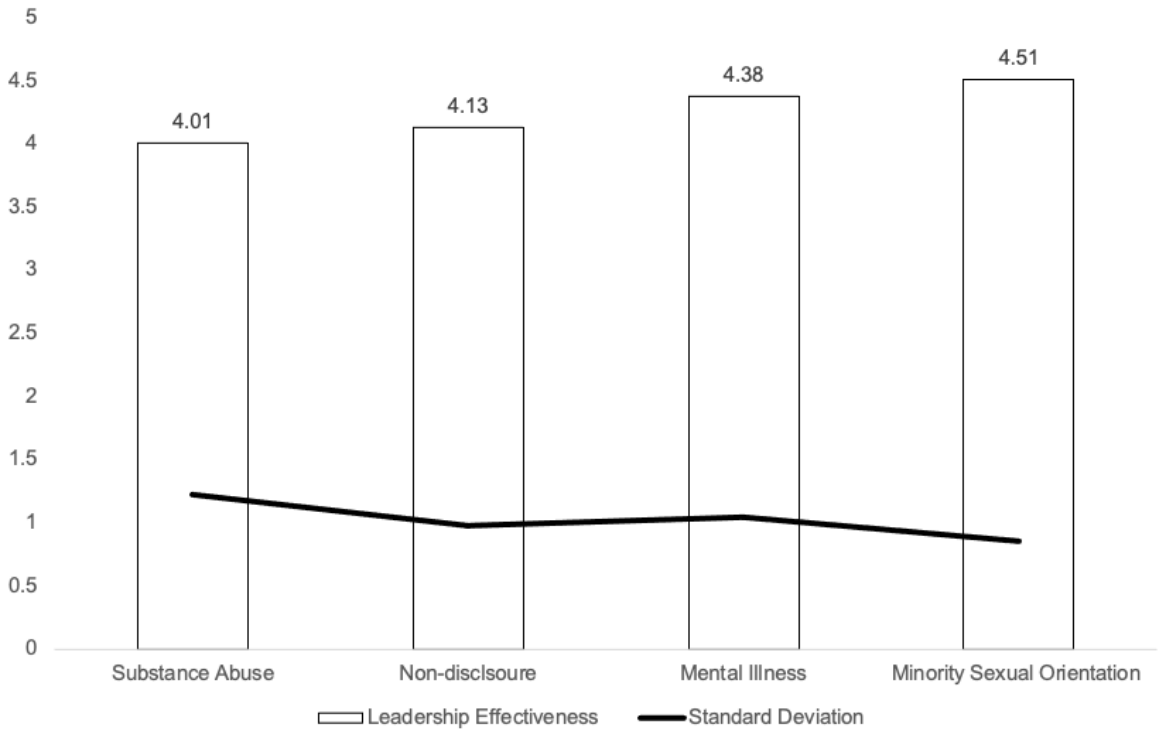
everyone else; D_2 was set to 1 for all participants who identified their leader as having mental disorder or disease and 0 for everyone else, D_3 was set to 1 for all participants who identified their leader as having substance abuse disorder and 0 for everyone else. Leader gender was entered as a dichotomous moderator (0 - male leader, 1 – female leader) and leader effectiveness was the outcome variable.

Hypothesis 1 predicted leaders in the non-disclosure condition would receive the highest ratings of leader effectiveness and disclosure content would predict ratings of leadership effectiveness with substance abuse receiving the lowest ratings, followed by mental disorder/disease and minority sexual orientation. PROCESS Model 1 output was examined to determine significance of estimates of the effect of multi-categorical predictors (D_1 = minority sexual orientation, D_2 = mental disorder/disease, D_3 = substance abuse disorder) on employee ratings of leader effectiveness. Bootstrapping confidence intervals that did not pass through zero revealed a *positive* effect on employee ratings of leader effectiveness following leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation (b_1 = .49, 95% CI .11 to .87) and mental disorder / disease (b_2 = .43, 95% CI .04 to .84), which is opposite the direction of what was hypothesized. This was not observed for leaders' substance abuse disorder disclosures (b_3 =.09, 95% CI -.30 to .48, p = .66). Thus, hypothesis 1 was partially supported because relative to disclosures of minority sexual orientation and mental disorder / disease, leaders whose substance abuse disorder had been disclosed received significantly lower ratings leadership effectiveness.

There was not a significant difference between ratings of leadership effectiveness ratings between the non-disclosure reference condition and substance abuse disorder disclosure condition. Leaders who disclosed minority sexual orientation were rated significantly higher on leader effectiveness than leaders in the non-disclosure and substance abuse conditions but were

not significantly different from leaders in the mental disorder/disease condition. As such, post-hoc Tukey tests show statistically significant differences between leaders in the non-disclosure and minority sexual orientation condition (mean difference = -.38, CI -.65 to -.10, p = .007), minority sexual orientation and substance abuse (mean diff =.50, CI .23 to .76, p < .000,), and between mental illness and substance abuse (mean diff = -.37, CI -.64 to -.09, p = .01). The ordering of group means from lowest (least effective leader rating) to highest (most effective leader rating) was as follows: substance abuse, non-disclosure, mental disorder/disease, minority sexual orientation. Mean ratings of leadership effectiveness by disclosure content are illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3: Employee Ratings of Leadership Effectiveness by Disclosure Category



Hypothesis 2 predicted a moderating effect of leader gender such that female leaders who disclose a concealable stigmatized identity will be rated lower on leadership effectiveness than

male leaders who disclose regardless of disclosure content. To test this hypothesis, PROCESS performs a test of highest order unconditional interaction to determine if there is a significant interaction between any level of the predictor category and the moderator. If this test is significant, it means that adding the interaction terms (products of each level of the predictor * leader gender) significantly improved the fit over a model that is independent of the proposed moderator. This test was not significant [R squared change = .01, $F(3,441)=.97$, $p = .41$], so Hypothesis 2 predicting an interaction between leader gender and disclosure was not supported.

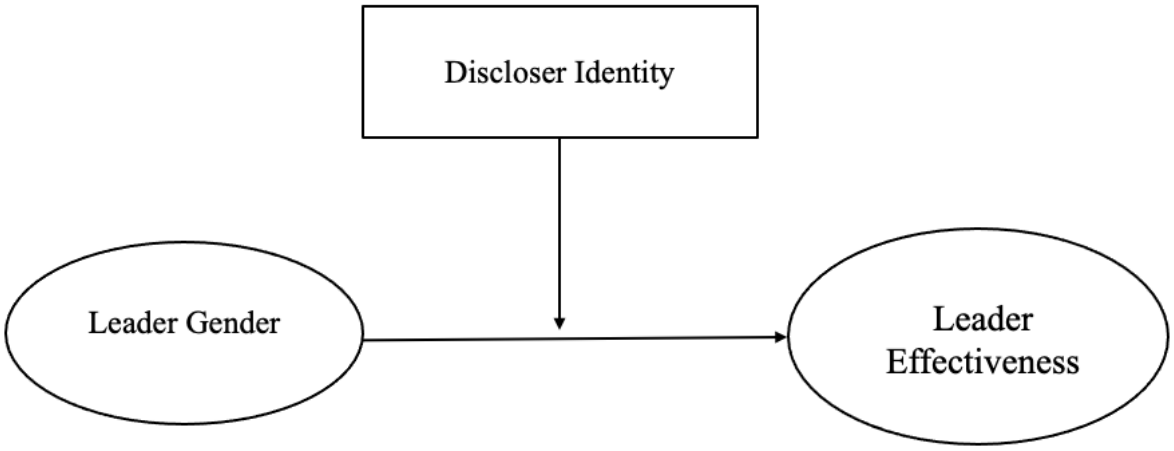
3.4 Study 2b: Discloser Identity Moderation Model

The identity of the discloser is another important consideration in determining the reactions of the disclosure recipient (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2017; Jones & King, 2014). To date, theorizing about concealable stigmatized identity disclosures has assumed that disclosures are always initiated by the stigma holder (e.g., Clair et al., 2005; Jones & King, 2014). Yet the qualitative results from Study 1 illustrated that 41% of downward disclosures were made by someone other than the manager/supervisor. This is consistent with extant literature that suggests mental illness (including substance abuse) disclosures are more likely to be made by an organizational member who is not the stigma holder (Jones, 2011).

Thus, Study 2b extends the results of Study 2a in two important ways. First, the content of the leaders' disclosure is held constant as substance abuse across all scenarios and the manipulated variables include leader gender and discloser identity. This allowed the investigation to focus on the potential for leader gender to have a direct association with follower ratings of leadership effectiveness. This was encouraged by results of Study 2a which suggested the leader gender did not play a moderating role on follower ratings of leadership effectiveness,

but the direct relationship between leader gender and ratings of leadership effectiveness was nearing statistical significance. The conceptual diagram for Study 2b is displayed in Figure 3-4.

Figure 3-4: Study 2b Moderation Model



3.4.1 Discloser Identity as a Moderator

Meta-analyses suggest that recipients of a disclosure tend to react more favorably when they believe the disclosure of personal information was initiated because of something unique or special about him- or herself (Collins & Miller, 1994). In an organization, disclosing a minority identity may be perceived by the recipient as a signal of a desire to establish or affirm a close or improved interpersonal relationship through the sharing of personal information (Ragins, 2008).

One study that examined perceptions of a leader who disclosed a concealable stigmatized identity determined that leaders in the self-disclosure condition (i.e., the stigma holder "came out") were rated as more likeable and more effective than leaders in the other disclosure condition (i.e., the participant "found out" from someone else that their leader was transgender) (Adams & Webster, 2017). Thus, I expect that disclosures delivered by someone other than the stigma holder (i.e., the leader) will not instill the same positive qualities of perceived trust in the

disclosure recipient as a disclosure made by the stigma holder themselves. Furthermore, as second-hand information, other disclosures may be interpreted as gossip and would likely lack the legitimacy of a firsthand disclosure (Brady et al., 2017).

Hypothesis 3: The discloser's identity (i.e., if the leader discloses their own minority identity versus if someone else discloses the information) will moderate the relationship between leader gender and leader effectiveness.

3.4.2 Leader Gender as a Predictor of Leadership Effectiveness

Results of Study 2a suggest that leader gender did not moderate the relationship between leader disclosure and follower ratings of leadership effectiveness. Therefore, the potential of a direct association between leader gender and ratings of leadership effectiveness is examined. Consistent with role congruity theory and supporting research reviewed to develop Hypothesis 2 in Study 2a, a female leadership disadvantage is hypothesized such that leader gender will predict follower ratings of leadership effectiveness.

Hypothesis 4: Female leaders who disclose substance abuse disorder will receive significantly lower ratings on leadership effectiveness than male leaders who disclose substance abuse disorder.

3.5 Study 2b Methodology

3.5.1 Procedure

In the second vignette, disclosure content is held constant (as substance abuse), and discloser identity is varied using a 2 x 2 between-participants factorial design, with leader gender (male, female) and identity of the disclosing party (self, other) as the predictor and moderator. After the vignette, participants responded to stimulus check questions and rated the leader on

leadership effectiveness. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions by survey hosting software, *Qualtrics*.

The discloser identity vignette employed most of the same materials and procedures as Study 2a. The text in the non-disclosure control vignette is the same as Study 2a (Table 3.1). Leader gender was manipulated by changing the leader's name (Elizabeth/Matthew) and pronouns (She/He). Disclosure category was not varied, rather held constant as substance abuse disorder across all Study 2b vignettes. This disclosure type was selected because it was the most highly stigmatized of the four levels of the multi-categorical predictor in Study 2a. Using the baseline non-disclosure text, discloser identity was manipulated by changing the identity of the discloser from the manager to a colleague in the final sentence of each vignette. The same rationale described for the first vignette regarding creating equal conditions about relationship duration and stigma dimensions informed the content of the text manipulations. Given the nature of this manipulation, which required all participants to disclose a history of substance abuse, a non-disclosure control was not included in the discloser identity vignette. The self-disclosure condition read:

> *Today, in your regular quarterly update meeting, Matthew/Elizabeth shares with you that he/she has a substance abuse disorder, and he/she has been successfully managing this condition for quite some time following an intensive rehabilitation program and by continuing to attend narcotics and alcoholics anonymous group meetings.*

The other disclosure condition read:

> *Today, your colleague informs you that your supervisor, Matthew/Elizabeth, has a substance abuse disorder. Your colleague says that your supervisor has been successfully managing this condition for quite some time following an intensive rehabilitation program and by continuing to attend narcotics and alcoholics anonymous group meetings.*

3.6 Study 2b Results

The stimulus checks after the second vignette (where who disclosed was manipulated) asked participants to identify who shared information about the manager's substance abuse disorder by answering a multiple-choice question with the response options of manager him/herself, a work colleague, the receptionist at the office, and other. The measure of leader effectiveness was the same as Study 2a.

3.6.1 Measures and Stimulus Checks

For the most part, participants answered stimulus check questions correctly. The frequencies of correct responses to the stimulus checks asked after vignette 2b are provided in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4 Results of Vignette 2 Stimulus Checks (Discloser identity as moderator)

Vignette 2 (Gender x Discloser Identity)		Gender		Discloser Identity	
Condition		Correct	Percentage		
a	Male, Self-disclosure	112/117	95.7%	112/117	95.7%
b	Female, Self-disclosure	96/99	97%	98/99	99%
c	Male, Other-disclosure	141/148	95.3%	146/148	98.6%
d	Female, Other-disclosure	104/108	96.4%	103/108	95.4%

3.6.2 Study 2b Sample

The same 560 participants recruited for Study 1a were drawn from to formulate the sample for Study 2b. The same 82 cases were eliminated during data cleaning procedure described in Study 2a (i.e., responded to fewer than 50% of the questions, failure to provide informed consent, and careless and speedy responding) (Huang et al., 2012) for a sample size of 478. Following analysis of the stimulus checks for Study 2b, participants who had responded incorrectly to any stimulus check questions were excluded (n = 56) for a final sample size of 422.

The mean age of this sample was 39.4 years of age (range 19 to 77, S.D. 9.0 years), 76% female, 87% residing in Canada.

3.6.2 Study 2b Data Quality and Analysis

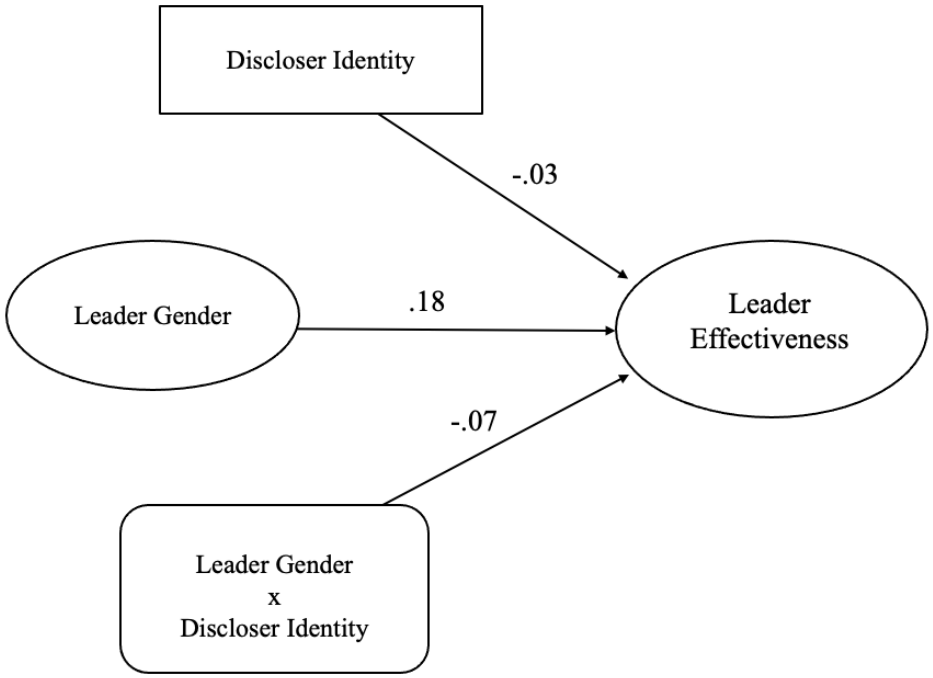
Using the same analytical procedures as Study 2a, I examined Study 2b data to ensure the assumptions regarding linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence required for ordinary least squares regression were met (Hayes, 2013). Study 2b correlations are displayed in Table 3-5 and the statistical diagram is in Figure 3-5.

Table 3-5: Correlation Table for Vignette 2 (Discloser identity as moderator)

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Participant Gender†	.76	.43	1			
2. Participant Age	39.24	8.91	-.06	1		
3. Leader Gender†	.44	.50	-	.07	1	
4. Discloser Identity†	.54	.50	.02	.01	-	1
5. Leader Effectiveness	4.13	1.06	.08	-.01	.07	-.03

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
† Dichotomous variables: Participant and Leader Gender: 0 male, 1 female; Discloser identity: 0 self, 1 other.

Figure 3-5: Study 2b Moderation Model with Substance Abuse Disclosure



Study 2b Hypothesis Testing

Once again, moderation was tested using Model 1 of the PROCESS Macro for SPSS 25 (www.afhayes.com; version 3.2, 2019). Disclosure content was held as a constant as substance abuse for the leaders' disclosure condition. Leader gender was the predictor, discloser identity was the moderator and leader effectiveness was the outcome variable. Hypothesis 3 predicted that discloser identity would moderate the effect of disclosure on leader effectiveness such that self-disclosures would be more favorably evaluated than other disclosures. PROCESS Model 1 output was examined to determine if the interaction was significant. All bootstrapping confidence intervals contained zero, which indicates a non-significant interaction effect between leader gender and discloser identity (b_1 = -.07, 95% CI -.49 to .35), thus hypothesis 3 is not supported. Hypothesis 4 predicted a significant association between leader gender and follower ratings of leadership effectiveness, and this was also unsupported (b_2 = .18, 95% CI -.13 to .48).

3.7 Study 2a and 2b Discussion

EVM was used to examine leader disclosures of one of three concealable stigmatized identities for comparison to a non-disclosure condition on ratings of leadership effectiveness in Study 1a. Leader gender was manipulated in both vignettes, and discloser identity was manipulated in Study 2b. Based on Study 2a results that suggest substance abuse disorder disclosures had the most detrimental impact on ratings of leader effectiveness, this was held constant as the disclosure content across all conditions in Study 2b. Descriptive statistical analyses of manipulation checks illustrated that the predictor categories and moderators of interest had been understood by participants. In Study 2a, disclosure content had a significant effect on ratings of leadership effectiveness such that leaders who disclosed minority sexual orientation were rated significantly higher on employee ratings of leadership effectiveness than leaders who disclosed substance abuse disorder. There was no significant difference between substance abuse disclosures and leaders who did not disclose any concealable stigmatized identity (i.e., non-disclosure condition).

While the positive effects of minority sexual orientation disclosures are somewhat inconsistent with the damaging outcomes predicted by stigma theory (Goffman, 1963; Thomson & Grandy, 2018), it is encouraging because it suggests that not all minority identities lead to devaluation of individuals inside of organizations. This is consistent with social distinctiveness theorizing, which suggests an advantage for individuals who openly identify as having a minority sexual orientation in modern organizations (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Sabat et al., 2019). This contributes to this area of research by providing evidence in support of strengths-based approaches to diversity in leadership. These results also establish a link between disclosure literature, which suggests sharing personal information about oneself can strengthen

relationships with others in social settings (Collins & Miller, 1994), and organizational settings. Consistent with previous research on concealable stigmatized identities in non-organizational settings (Link et al., 1999; Pachankis et al., 2018), leaders who disclosed a history of substance abuse were more stigmatized than minority sexual orientation disclosures. These results align with theory that suggests illness stigmas may be deemed less appropriate for workplace disclosure because they are perceived as less central to one's identity than gender identity or sexual orientation (Brohan et al., 2014; Jones & King, 2014; Ragins, 2008).

Following non-significant results of Study 2a regarding the moderating role of leader gender on follower ratings of leadership effectiveness, the potential for leader gender to have a direct association with ratings of leadership effectiveness and the moderating role of discloser identity was examined in Study 2b, which also produced non-significant findings. Analysis of OLS regression and bootstrapping confidence interval results demonstrated that leader gender and discloser identity did not moderate participant ratings of leadership effectiveness. Based on role congruity theory, it was expected that leader gender would have a dampening effect on follower ratings of leadership effectiveness such that female leaders would be rated lower than male leaders who disclosed. Instead, it is noteworthy that female leaders received a slightly higher overall mean rating on leadership effectiveness than males across all conditions – a finding counterintuitive to role congruity theory. However, past studies of disclosure that were not specific to leadership or organizational settings have illustrated that females typically receive more favorable reactions to disclosures than males (Collins & Miller, 1994). This may be because females in leadership roles who make disclosures are more favorably rated because the disclosure is thought to align with communal expectations related to their gender and the sensitivity expectations predicted by implicit leadership theory (Heilman, 2012; Offermann &

Coats, 2018). Similarly, drawing on the significant positive path between disclosure and vulnerability uncovered in the leadership effectiveness model in Study 1, it is possible that male leaders who disclose were penalized for violating masculine gender norms by signaling weakness through the sharing of personal (Mayer, 2018). Potential reasons for the null results of Studies 2a and 2b may also be related to a shortcoming of either the research design or sampling strategy which are discussed in the next section along with avenues for future research.

3.7.1 Limitations and Future Research

Several notable limitations of the current research include a potential lack of experimental realism, sampling strategy, and low variability in the outcome variable (*S.D.* 1.06). First, as with many laboratory studies, the experimental nature of vignette methodology may have contributed to a lack external validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). This research employed text-only vignettes; a key criticism of EVM is that it lacks external validity because it may seem unrealistic (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). One way to improve external validity is increasing the level of immersion participants experience using technological methods such as audio, video, pictures, or other engaging forms of media (Agunins & Bradley, 2014). Since the current vignette was text only, it may have been lacking the external validity required to produce the expected findings and presents opportunity to improve the level of realism by integrating additional measures of media, such as audio, video, or pictures to make the scenario seem more realistic (Agunins & Bradley, 2014). Second, the sample was obtained using a nonprobability convenience sampling strategy by recruiting participants for free through social media platforms. This type of sampling strategy is known to produce a high level of sampling error (Dudovskiy, 2018). There would be merit in repeating this study with a multimedia EVM using a different recruitment strategy or on different samples. As a follow-up study to this text-only vignette, the

next study employs a multimedia approach that features leader images and recorded conversations between employee, leader, and co-workers to address these limitations. Moreover, the sample for the multimedia vignette study (Study 3) is recruited from an online panel which has documented advantages in terms of rigor and reliability compared to convenience samples from social media (Aguinis et al., 2021).

Third, vignettes were written using principles of transformational leadership. It could be that contextual considerations become more salient when leadership styles are less supportive and positive. Therefore, the current vignette could be improved by presenting the leader as competent (i.e., transactional) but not outstanding (i.e., transformational). Perhaps this type of change might attain more variability in the outcome measure. To examine the under-studied phenomenon of disclosure of leaders' concealable stigmatized identities, and the extent to which this may help or hinder their ability to lead effectively, Study 2 examined employee ratings of their leader after a concealable stigmatized identity has been disclosed in a workplace setting. Results suggest the possibility of a shift towards employees offering support for leaders (i.e., perception of their effectiveness is enhanced) who are open and transparent about their minority sexual orientation, but the presence of strong stigma against mental illness - especially substance abuse – remains prevalent in organizational and leader-follower contexts and influences ratings of leadership effectiveness.

CHAPTER 4 - STUDY 3: CONDITIONAL PROCESS MODEL OF LEADER DISCLOSURE

Study 1 results suggest employee perceptions of their leader's intelligence and vulnerability are negatively affected by mental illness disclosures. Study 2 results indicate that leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation may be evaluated significantly more favorably by followers than leaders who disclose substance abuse. Study 2 also provides a preliminary investigation of the moderating roles of leader gender and discloser identity, which were determined *not* to play a moderating role on follower perceptions of leader effectiveness. Following improvements to the study design and sampling strategy, the current study further considers employee perceptions after leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosures. In this chapter, a conditional process model with a four-level multi-categorical predictor is used to examine the moderating potential of disclosure appropriateness on direct and indirect and direct effects through two proposed mediators. This model investigates the conditional effects of disclosure appropriateness on follower ratings of leadership effectiveness and leader liking through followers' perceptions of affective trust and leader vulnerability.

4.1 Hypothesis Development

Researchers have issued a call for investigation of organizationally relevant phenomenon to expand what is known about the outcomes of disclosure beyond liking in social settings (Gibson et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2020). Factors known to influence post-disclosure evaluations include the content of the disclosure, timing of the disclosure, as well as the gender and identity of the discloser (Adams & Webster, 2017; Collins & Miller, 1994; Mathews et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2020). The experimental nature of vignette methodology allowed me to manipulate several

these variables using a multi-media scenario that offers enhanced external validity over the text-only vignettes utilized in Studies 2a and 2b.

4.1.1 Stigma Disclosures as a Multi-categorical Predictor

A multi-categorical antecedent with four different types of disclosure was included as the predictor. The rationale for the four levels leader disclosure as a multi-categorical predictor (i.e., non-disclosure, minority sexual orientation, mental disorder/disease, and substance abuse) is identical to Study 2.

4.1.2 Disclosure Appropriateness

In social settings, without the contextual considerations of power inherent in organizations, information sharing is viewed as a gesture of friendship and can increase how much the disclosure recipient likes the disclosing party, while concealing the same information may result in social rejection (Collins & Miller, 1994). However, in organizational settings, stigma research and theory provide reason to believe that disclosures of stigmatized content are more likely be deemed inappropriate for workplace discussion due to feelings of awkwardness, inappropriateness, social norm violations and even disgust that may be elicited from some followers (Adams & Webster, 2017; Collins & Miller, 1994; Jones, 1984; Lynch & Rodell, 2018; Sun & Slepian, 2020). Preliminary studies on the intersection of stigma and leadership suggest leaders may face especially harsh consequences for disclosing a stigmatized identity.

Drawing from Jones' (1984) six-dimension stigma framework, investigations of perceptions of various concealable stigmas in social settings (e.g., Pachankis et al., 2018), and literature specific to minority sexual orientation and mental illness, Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature that suggests minority sexual orientation is less stigmatized to mental illness. This is likely linked to others' perceptions of mental illness as being more disruptive,

shorter in course, and higher visibility than minority sexual orientation. As illustrated in Study 2, substance abuse is even more stigmatized and deleterious for ratings of leader effectiveness than mental disorder or disease. Furthermore, minority sexual orientation may be considered more appropriate for workplace sharing due to the expected higher degree of stigma centrality, closeness to one's self concept, identity, and sense of self (Brohan et al., 2014; Jones & King, 2014; Ragins, 2008).

One study of minority sexual orientation disclosures during the hiring process compared disclosures of gay and lesbian identities to disclosures of bisexual identities (Arena & Jones, 2017). These researchers determined that disclosure recipients rated gay/lesbian disclosures higher in appropriateness than bisexual disclosures. When the disclosure was perceived as more appropriate, it positively predicted intention to hire, ratings of person organization fit and recommended starting salary and it negatively predicted job qualifications. Thus, individuals who disclosed a bisexual identity were perceived as less qualified for the job and were negatively affected in terms of likelihood of getting hired, anticipated fit, and starting salary significantly more so than individuals who disclosed a gay/lesbian identity. Just as bisexual identities were more highly stigmatized than gay/lesbian identities, I expect that the type of disclosure will interact with followers' perceptions of appropriateness, which will result in differences in leader evaluations.

> *Hypothesis 1: Disclosure appropriateness will moderate the direct relationship between leader disclosure and leader evaluations (follower ratings of leadership effectiveness and leader liking) such that disclosures of minority sexual orientation will be rated higher appropriateness than substance abuse disclosures, which will lead to more favourable evaluations for minority sexual orientation disclosures.*

4.1.3 Leader Trust and Vulnerability

Given previous research that suggests the positive outcomes of disclosure on trust from the leaders' perspective (Chang & Bowring, 2017; Schneider, 2016), the current study re-examines employee ratings of affective trust following disclosures of leaders' concealable stigmatized identities. In Study 1, statistical inferences about the disclosures-affective trust relationship in Study 1 yielded non-significant findings; however, this may have been due to a lack of statistical power. Consistent with results and literature reviews in Study 1, it is expected that leader mental illness and substance abuse disclosures will be positively associated with employee ratings of vulnerability, which will negatively predict leader evaluations.

Hypothesis 2: There will be significant indirect relationships between leader disclosure as a multi-categorical predictor and leader evaluation through a) affective trust in leader and b) leader vulnerability

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Procedure

The participants for this study were recruited using *Prolific* (www.prolific.co) an online recruitment service based in the United Kingdom since 2014. Eligibility requirements were set to recruit only participants over 18 years of age, whose nationality was Canadian or United States citizens, who were working between 10 and 60 or more hours a week, had an approval rating of 90 or better on previous *Prolific* assignments, and had audio and visual capabilities on their computers. After providing informed consent and entering their Prolific identification number, participants were reminded they would need a computer with functioning audio to complete the three-part vignette procedure. Participants were asked to switch off their phone, email, and any music before commencing the study. They were asked to imagine themselves in a fictional

situation as if it was their own workplace. After informed consent, participants were asked to indicate their own gender identity so they could be sorted into an audio-recording condition in which the gender of the employee in the recorded scenario matched the participant's reported gender. The purpose of gender matching between the participant and the employee in the recording was to enhance experimental realism since participants were asked to imagine themselves as the employee in the recording (Agunis & Bradley, 2014). After the gender match was ensured, participants were randomly assigned to conditions by survey hosting software, *Qualtrics* and counterbalanced across conditions. Each participant completed one vignette followed by a questionnaire containing manipulation checks and previously validated measures (Ejelöv & Luke, 2020; Podsakoff et al., 2003). The first part of the vignette was a text introduction to the fictional workplace. This was consistent across all conditions and is displayed in Table 4-1. This text illustrates that the leader's gender was manipulated using pronouns 'he' or 'she', and a gender appropriate name starting with the letter, 'J'.

Table 4-1: Multimedia Vignette Part 1 Introductory Text

Jason/Jennifer has been your supervisor for approximately 6 months. During that time, you have learned that he/she has an MBA from a reputable university and has ample experience in your field, which was acquired while working with competing firms for the last 15 years. Jason/Jennifer always makes it clear who is responsible for what, and what employees can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved. When it comes to managing people, Jason/Jennifer adheres to the company's human resource policies. He/she neither has "favourite" employees, nor those that he/she "picks on". He/She holds quarterly performance update meetings in which he spends 15 to 30 minutes with each employee in a one-on-one setting to discuss whatever is on their mind. You don't socialize outside of work, but when you run into each other outside of work you spend a few minutes in friendly conversation.

When participants had read the introductory text, they advanced the screen to view an image of the manager/supervisor described in the vignette. While viewing the image, an audio

recording of a conversation between a manager/supervisor and an employee played. During the recorded conversation, the participant is asked to imagine they are the employee having a conversation with their manager/supervisor about how the organization is handling Covid-19. Disclosure category was manipulated using the content of the leader's speech. Table 4-2 contains the audio script for the non-disclosure baseline and manipulations of disclosure content are displayed in Tables 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5. The procedures used to select images and voices to represent leaders are described in the next section.

After completing the questionnaire, all participants were asked stimulus check questions to determine if they had understood the vignette content with emphasis on the manipulated variables of leader gender and disclosure content. Item wording of these stimulus checks are provided in the measures section. After the stimulus check, participants were brought to an optional demographic section before submitting their responses and proceeding to the study debriefing.

Table 4-2: Multimedia Vignette Part 2 – Baseline Self-Disclosure Audio Script

Non-disclosure:

SUPERVISOR: *With the current state of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, I wanted to take a moment to communicate management's position on this virus. The management team is doing everything within our ability and resources to keep you as safe and healthy as possible at work because we don't want anyone getting sick.*

EMPLOYEE: *I appreciate that, but it's not all up to you.*

SUPERVISOR: *It's true, many cases of Covid-19 are transmitted before anyone knows they have been exposed, and with you only being at work for a fraction of your day, we cannot 100 percent guarantee the virus won't enter our workplace.*

EMPLOYEE: *So, what will happen if someone in our workplace gets the virus?*

SUPERVISOR: *Should one of our employees become infected with Covid-19, I want to assure you that the management team will continue to support them for the full duration of their illness and throughout their recovery. When it is safe for them to join us back here at work, they will be welcome.*

EMPLOYEE: *That sounds reasonable to me.*

SUPERVISOR: *As part of the management team's concern for the mental health of all employees, I would like to point out that the Covid-19 virus is a stigmatized illness.*

EMPLOYEE: *What does stigma mean?*

SUPERVISOR: *You may have heard about stigma on the recent Bell, Let's Talk day a campaign launched to raise awareness about stigmatized conditions like mental illness. Other types of stigmas include minority sexual orientations or maybe a race or religion that is different from our own. Sometimes, stigmatized individuals are treated differently, which can lead to prejudice and discrimination against them at work or in daily life. So, even in these stressful times of a global pandemic, we ask that you treat all co-workers returning to work with the same high levels of respect you always have, the kind of respect we show everyone here at our company.*

EMPLOYEE: *Of course.*

SUPERVISOR: *If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. My door is always open.*

EMPLOYEE: *Thanks.*

Table 4-3: Multimedia Vignette Part 2 – Minority Sexual Orientation Self-Disclosure Audio Script

Minority Sexual Orientation:
[INSERT BASELINE TEXT]
EMPLOYEE: *What does stigma mean?*
SUPERVISOR: *You may have heard about stigma on the recent Bell, Let's Talk day a campaign launched to raise awareness about stigmatized conditions like mental illness. Other types of stigmas include minority sexual orientations or maybe a race or religion that is different from our own. Sometimes, stigmatized individuals are treated differently, which can lead to prejudice and discrimination against them at work or in daily life. I can personally relate to the damaging effects of stigma. I have known you for a while now, I respect and trust you, and I want to share with you that I am gay / lesbian and have been in a romantic relationship with a man / woman for quite some time. Stigma is something I have consistently experienced throughout that journey.*
EMPLOYEE: *I had no idea.*
SUPERVISOR: *Yes, but that's beside the point for now. My point is that even in these stressful times of a global pandemic, we ask that you treat all co-workers returning to work with the same high levels of respect you always have, the kind of respect we show everyone here at our company.*
EMPLOYEE: *Of course.*
SUPERVISOR: *If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. My door is always open.*
EMPLOYEE: *Thanks.*

Table 4-4: Multimedia Vignette Part 2 Audio and Visual – Mental Disorder/Disease Self-Disclosure Audio Script

Mental Disorder/Disease:
[INSERT BASELINE TEXT]
EMPLOYEE: *What does stigma mean?*
SUPERVISOR: *You may have heard about stigma on the recent Bell, Let's Talk day a campaign launched to raise awareness about stigmatized conditions like mental illness. Other types of stigmas include minority sexual orientations or maybe a race or religion that is different from our own. Sometimes, stigmatized individuals are treated differently, which can lead to prejudice and discrimination against them at work or in daily life. I can personally relate to the damaging effects of stigma. I have known you for a while now, I respect and trust you, and I want to share with you that I have a mental illness and have been successfully managing this condition with medication and counselling for quite some time. Stigma is something I have consistently experienced throughout that journey.*
EMPLOYEE: *I had no idea.*
SUPERVISOR: *Yes, but that's beside the point for now. My point is that even in these stressful times of a global pandemic, we ask that you treat all co-workers returning to work with the same high levels of respect you always have, the kind of respect we show everyone here at our company.*
EMPLOYEE: *Of course.*
SUPERVISOR: *If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. My door is always open.*
EMPLOYEE: *Thanks.*

Table 4-5: Multimedia Vignette Part 2 Audio – Substance Abuse Disorder Self-Disclosure Audio Script

Substance Abuse Disorder:
[INSERT BASELINE TEXT]
EMPLOYEE: *What does stigma mean?*
SUPERVISOR: *You may have heard about stigma on the recent Bell, Let's Talk day a campaign launched to raise awareness about stigmatized conditions like mental illness. Other types of stigmas include minority sexual orientations or maybe a race or religion that is different from our own. Sometimes, stigmatized individuals are treated differently, which can lead to prejudice and discrimination against them at work or in daily life. I can personally relate to the damaging effects of stigma. I have known you for a while now, I respect and trust you, and I want to share with you that I have a substance abuse disorder and have been successfully managing this condition for quite some time following an intensive rehabilitation program and by continuing to attend a narcotics/alcoholics anonymous group meetings. Stigma is something I have consistently experienced throughout that journey.*
EMPLOYEE: *I had no idea.*
SUPERVISOR: *Yes, but that's beside the point for now. My point is that even in these stressful times of a global pandemic, we ask that you treat all co-workers returning to work with the same high levels of respect you always have, the kind of respect we show everyone here at our company.*
EMPLOYEE: *Of course.*
SUPERVISOR: *If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. My door is always open.*
EMPLOYEE: *Thanks.*

4.2.2 Instrument Development

Visual

A pre-test was conducted to select equivalent supervisor/manager images for the multimedia vignettes. A pre-test was necessary because introducing images into experimental vignettes can confound ratings of focal variables due to variance and bias towards types of esthetics and appearance ratings (e.g., physical attractiveness and professional appearance). Therefore, the image selected for the fictional manager/supervisor was carefully considered (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). The pre-test was conducted on a sample of 100 participants who were over 18 years of age and of Canadian or American nationality and were recruited from online panel service *Prolific*. Consistent with best practices, the pre-test was conducted independent of the sample used for the main vignette data collection (Whiting, Maynes,

Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2012). After providing informed consent, this pool of independent participants rated a series of images on four measures - attractiveness, likeability, warmth, and competence. The six images (three male, three female) were obtained from an eLearning software (*Adobe Captivate*) and are displayed in Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1 Pre-test Images of Male and Female Leaders

Table 4-6 displays mean ratings and descriptive statistics for ratings of attractiveness, likeability, warmth, and competence ($N = 95$). Pre-test analysis for image selection was conducted using hierarchical cluster analysis in SPSS 25. Ward's cluster method produced a two-cluster solution that minimized the squared Euclidean distance between standardized (z-score) variables. This analysis determined that all the female images and the third male image were in

the same cluster (cluster 1) on all four measures (i.e., attractiveness, liking, competence, and warmth). This suggested the third male image was most similar to the female image ratings on all measures, thus the third male image was selected. To determine which of the three female images were most like the third male image on all four ratings, the proximity matrix and dendrogram were examined. The proximity matrix used for analysis is displayed in Table 4-7. The female image with the least total squared Euclidean distance from male three's ratings was selected. To do this, differences between each female image's ratings on attractiveness, liking, competence and warmth from ratings of the same for the third male image were compared. This determined that the first female image most closely resembled the third male image. Thus, the third male image and the first female image were selected to represent the leader in the vignettes due to perceived similarity on attractiveness, likeability, warmth, and competence.

Table 4-6 Descriptive Statistics of Image Pretest (n = 95)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female Image 1 (F1)					
Attractiveness	95	3	7	5.13	.97
Liking	95	1	7	4.67	1.01
Competence	95	2.00	5.00	3.64	.58
Warmth	95	1.00	5.00	3.23	.76
Female Image 2 (F2)					
Attractiveness	95	3	7	5.17	.89
Liking	95	2	7	4.92	.94
Competence	95	2.50	5.00	3.91	.51
Warmth	95	1.50	5.00	3.54	.74
Female Image 3 (F3)					
Attractiveness	95	2	7	4.79	1.01
Liking	95	3	7	5.51	.97
Competence	95	2.50	5.00	3.66	.518
Warmth	95	1.00	5.00	3.24	.83
Male Image 1 (M1)					
Attractiveness	94	1	7	4.59	1.03
Liking	94	2	6	4.66	.94
Competence	95	2.50	5.00	3.55	.56
Warmth	95	1.00	5.00	3.32	.78
Male Image 2 (M2)					
Attractiveness	95	1	6	3.72	1.02
Liking	95	1	7	4.38	1.08
Competence	95	1.50	4.50	3.05	.69
Warmth	94	1.00	5.00	3.07	.91
Male Image 3 (M3)					
Attractiveness	95	3	6	4.36	.81
Liking	95	1	6	4.29	.95
Competence	95	2.00	5.00	3.35	.58
Warmth	95	1.00	5.00	3.02	.81
Valid N (listwise)	92				

Table 4-7: Proximity Matrix Displaying Squared Euclidean Distance Between Image Pre-Test Ratings

Variable		Matrix File Input				
	M3 attractiveness	M3 liking	M3 Competence	M3 Warmth	Rating Differences	Total Image Differences
F1 attractiveness	115.94	126.44	152.82	164.24	559.43	
F1 liking	142.24	118.02	119.41	157.08	536.75	
F1 competence	121.86	121.12	115.21	104.89	463.08	
F1 warmth	152.23	136.99	121.88	137.86	548.96	**2108.22**
F2 attractiveness	116.56	140.66	135.80	147.99	541.02	
F2 liking	158.42	156.31	152.84	163.76	631.34	
F2 competence	143.85	144.01	146.39	144.27	578.51	
F2 warmth	189.38	173.76	155.33	143.72	662.18	2413.04
F3 attractiveness	149.78	157.07	152.85	173.72	633.42	
F3 liking	139.23	187.91	177.06	207.97	712.18	
F3 competence	122.39	141.54	98.31	126.02	488.26	
F3 warmth	160.63	161.89	121.93	137.22	581.68	2415.54

Audio

Each condition was reproduced with a male and female voice to ensure the participant's gender could be matched with the employee's gender in the vignette. For the recording, two voice actors who were biologically brother (age 37) and sister (age 39) read the audio scripts to maximize voice similarity.

4.2.3 Sample

North American participants were recruited using *Prolific* (www.prolific.co) online panel recruitment service. There were 708 participants who clicked on the link to enter the survey. The mean completion time was 927.17 seconds (*SD* = 1564.5), and the median completion time was 703 seconds. There were 31 participants who submitted responses in under 281.2 seconds (40% of the median completion time); consistent with data quality best practices these participants were eliminated from the analysis (McGonagle et al., 2016), leaving 695 responses. Another 27

participants were excluded for responding to fewer than 50% of the items on the questionnaire. Thus, 650 participants listened to the recording, viewed the image, and were asked to imagine this conversation as if it were occurring in their own workplace. Participants who provided incorrect responses to stimulus check questions were excluded from the analysis ($N = 163$). The final sample size was 487 participants.

The mean age of the final sample was 35.8 years of age (*S.D.* 11 years *MIN.* 18 *MAX.* 77) and 52% of participants identified as female. Mean organizational tenure was 6.20 years (*S.D.* 6.19 years *MIN.* 0 *MAX.* 39) and the mean time that participants had been reporting to their current supervisor was 3.90 years (*S.D.* 4.79 years *MIN.* 0 *MAX.* 39). The sample was drawn primarily from Canada and America, with 93.2% of participants identifying one of these two countries as their current country of residence. In terms of education, 48.3% of participants had an undergraduate degree, 21.9% held a Masters, Doctoral, or Professional degree, 15.8% reported having some college, 6.4% had a diploma or technical training, and the remainder reported having a high school diploma or other.

4.2.4 Measures

Disclosure Appropriateness was measured using three items from Arena and Jones' (2017) disclosure appropriateness measure. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed [from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7)] with the following statements: "This manager disclosing parts of their life was not relevant to this conversation" (reversed), "I would have preferred to know less about this manager's life" (reversed) and "I respect this manager's decision to reveal some aspects of their life". To accommodate the non-disclosure vignette condition, an eighth response option, 'Not Applicable' was added to the Likert scale. Scale reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was .69 in this study.

Trust was measured using Yang & Mossholder's (2010) 5-item trust scale. Participants rated the leader in the vignette on a scale of 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree for five items to measure affective trust. Sample items of include, 'I'm confident that my supervisor will always care about my personal needs at work', and 'I feel secure with my supervisor because of his/her sincerity.' Cronbach's alpha was .92 in this study.

Leader Vulnerability: Participants assessed leader vulnerability using two items from Gibson et al.'s (2018) measure of vulnerability, which asked participants to rate the extent to which the leader in the vignette 'displays insecurity' and 'seemed like they needed support' on a scale from 1 - not at all to 7 - very much. Cronbach's alpha was .63 in this study.

Leader Liking: Participants assessed leader liking on a scale of 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree using three items from Brown and Keeping (2005). Sample items include, 'I get along well with my supervisor' and 'Working with my supervisor is a pleasure'. Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Leader Effectiveness: Participants rated leader effectiveness using a five-item scale by Vecchio & Anderson (2009). Participants were asked to rate their current manager using a Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree) (reverse-coded). Sample items included "Overall, my leader provides very effective leadership", "My leader would be an example of an ideal leader", and "This leader helps the organization to thrive". Items were combined and mean ratings were used for analysis; Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Complete measures, stem and item wording for Study 3 are displayed in Appendix D.

*Stimulus Check*s

Leader Gender. Participants were asked to identify the gender of the leader in the scenario. Response options included male, female, transgender, and other.

Discloser Identity. Participants were asked to identify who shared personal information about the supervisor. Response options included the manager him/herself, a co-worker, the receptionist at the office, or not applicable.

Disclosure Content. Participants were asked to "describe the sexual orientation of the supervisor in the scenario you just read" by selecting from response options including heterosexual, homosexual, don't know, and other. Finally, participants were asked to select the option that best described the content of the disclosure made by the supervisor with response options including mental illness, substance abuse, Covid-19, and none of the above.

4.2.5 Data Quality and Analysis

Prior to the main analysis, I examined the data to ensure the assumptions regarding linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence required for ordinary least squares regression were met (Hayes, 2013). Data were examined to determine if homogeneity of variance assumptions had been violated using the same procedures outlined in Study 2.
A summary of cases excluded due to incorrect responses to the stimulus checks is provided in Table 4-8 and Study 3 correlations are displayed in Table in 4-9.

Table 4-8: Results of Study 3 Multimedia Vignette Stimulus Checks

		Incorrect Responses to Stimulus Checks
Sample Size Before Stimulus Checks	N = 650	
Leader Gender		85
Discloser Identity		33
Leader Sexual Orientation		31
Disclosure Content		14
Final Sample Size	N = 487	163

Table 4-9: Study 3 Correlation Table

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Participant Age	35.8	11.00	1										
2. Participant Gender†	.53	.50	.00	1									
3. Leader Gender†	.50	.50	.10*	.08	1								
4. Non-Disclosure	.25	.43	-.06	.03	-	1							
5. Minority Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Disc.†	.24	.43	-.09	-.04	-	-	1						
6. Mental Disorder/Disease Disc.†	.26	.44	**.10***	-03	-	-	-	1					
7. Substance Abuse Disc. †	.25	.43	.05	.05	-	-	-	-	1				
8. Disclosure Appropriateness	4.98	1.29	-.09	.00	-	-	-	-	-	1			
9. Affective Trust in Leader	4.29	.71	.03	.03	-.03	**-.21****	.07	.08	.06	**.37****	1		
10. Leader Vulnerability	1.62	.97	-.02	-.06	-.03	**-.15****	-.03	.04	**.14****	**-.18****	**-.13****	1	
11. Leader Effectiveness	4.46	.63	.03	**.11***	-.02	-.03	.03	.01	-.01	**.43****	**.70****	**-.24****	1
12. Leader Liking	4.21	.67	-.01	**.12****	.12	-.12	**.**03	.06	.03	**.39****	**.71****	**-.12****	**.72****

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Categories 4, 5, 6 and 7 refer to disclosures made by the participant's manager/supervisor; Disc. = Disclosure; Correlations between dichotomous variables indicated with a dash. † Dichotomous variables: Participant Gender and Supervisor Gender: 0 for male and 1 for female; Supervisor non-disclosure: 0 no – participant's supervisor had disclosed, 1 yes – participant's supervisor had not disclosed; Supervisor Minority Sexual Orientation Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes; Supervisor Mental Disorder/Disease Disclosure; Supervisor Substance Abuse Disclosure: 0 no, 1 yes.

4.2.6 Assessing Discriminant Validity

I tested the fit of two competing models to assess the discriminant validity of the proposed measurement model including moderators, mediators, and outcome variables using confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs). CFAs were conducted using maximum likelihood estimation within M*plus* 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Values of the root mean square error of approximation (*RMSEA*) less than .06 and values of the standardized root mean residual (*SRMR)* less than .08 are generally indicators of a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Other fit indices assessed include comparative fit indices (CFI), which range from 0 to 1 with larger values indicating better fit, and Chi-square goodness of fit estimates to determine whether an observed value is significantly different from the expected value.

I compared two nested measurement models: a one-factor model where all 19 items (3 for disclosure appropriateness, 5 for affective trust in leader, 2 for vulnerability, 4 for leader liking, and 5 for leader effectiveness) were specified to load on a single latent factor ($\chi^2 = 903.936$; *df* = 152; *CFI* = .806; *RMSEA* = .107; *SRMR* = .073) and a five-factor model where the indicator variables loaded on their respective latent factors and were allowed to correlate ($\chi^2 = 238.896$; *df* = 142; *CFI* = .975; *RMSEA* = .040; *SRMR* = .051). A Chi square difference test was conducted to determine which model was a better fit. Results indicated that the five oblique-factor measurement model provided the best fit to the data $\chi^2(10) = 441.46$, $p<.005$. Thus, outcome variables were entered separately.

4.2.7 Hypothesis Testing

Using Model 8 of the PROCESS Macro for SPSS 25 (www.afhayes.com; version 3.2, 2019), the conditional direct and indirect effects of leader disclosure as a multi-categorical predictor on leader evaluation (leadership effectiveness and leader liking) through affective trust

in leader and leader vulnerability were examined. In the same manner as Study 2a, leader disclosure was input as a four-level multi-categorical predictor using indicator coding (Hayes, 2018) with non-disclosure as the reference category. Leader effectiveness was the criterion variable (Y) in the first analysis and leader liking was the criterion variable in the second analysis. The moderator was disclosure appropriateness (W) (ratings from 1 to 7). The mediators were affective trust in leader (M_1) and leader vulnerability (M_2). No covariates were specified. This produced the results in Tables 4-10 (leadership effectiveness) and 4-11 (leader liking). The statistical diagrams in Figures 4-2 (leadership effectiveness) and 4-6 (leader liking) provide visual representations of the statistically significant relations. For parsimony, only significant pathways are indicated with arrows and coefficient estimates, and the direction of values is relative to the non-disclosure reference group. All moderation graphs were constructed using the 16^{th}, 50^{th}, and 84^{th} percentiles to represent low, medium, and high levels of the disclosure appropriateness distribution.

Leadership Effectiveness Model

Hypothesis 1 predicted that disclosure appropriateness would moderate the direct relationship between leader disclosure and employee ratings of leader effectiveness. The omnibus test of moderation of the direct effect on leadership effectiveness of disclosure was not significant [R squared change = .00; F(3, 455)= 1.14, p = .33]. Because the conditional direct effect of substance abuse disclosure was significant (c'_3 = -.51, p = .04), the specific relative conditional direct effects were examined. This revealed the direct relationship between disclosure category and leader effectiveness was significantly negative only for disclosure of substance abuse disorder at relatively low (W = 3.67) -.22, t(455)=-2.57, p = .01, 95% CI = -.40 to -.05 and relatively medium (W = 6.33) -.12, t(455)=-2.04, p = .04, 95% CI = -.24 to -.00 levels

of disclosure appropriateness. Thus, hypothesis 1 is partially supported in the leadership effectiveness model only for substance abuse disclosures at relatively low and medium levels of disclosure appropriateness. See Figure 4-5.

Hypothesis 2 predicted significant indirect relationships between leader disclosure and leader effectiveness through a) affective trust in leader and b) leader vulnerability. To determine the significance of indirect effects with multi-categorical predictors, model estimates at different levels of the moderator were examined. Indices of moderated mediation (the product of two regression coefficients that quantifies the change in the indirect effect of disclosure category (X) on leadership effectiveness (Y) through affective trust (M_1) and leader vulnerability (M_2) at various levels of the moderator disclosure appropriateness (W) were examined. When zero is not included in the bootstrap confidence interval for the index of moderated mediation, the indirect effect is significantly linearly related to the moderator.

Affective trust (M_1)

The omnibus test of highest order unconditional interaction between disclosure category and affective trust in leader is significant [R squared change = .02, F(3,457) = 4.05, p = <.00]. Examination of the relative conditional indirect effects reveal the indices of moderated mediation were significantly positive for leader minority sexual orientation disclosure (a_4b_1 = .11, 95% CI = .03 to .10) and mental disorder/disease (a_5b_1 = .14, 95% CI = .04 to .24) through affective trust at relatively medium and relatively high levels of disclosure appropriateness but not for substance abuse disorder. Thus, Hypothesis 2a was supported for minority sexual orientation and mental disorder/disease disclosures at medium and high levels of disclosure appropriateness only in the leadership effectiveness model, which had a positive effect on ratings of leadership effectiveness through affective trust in leader. See Figure 4-3.

Leader Vulnerability (M_2)

The omnibus test of highest order unconditional interaction between the disclosure category and leader vulnerability was not significant [R squared change = .01, F(3,457) = 1.75, p = .16]. Examination of the relative conditional indirect effects reveals that the index of moderated mediation was significant for leader minority sexual orientation disclosure but only at low levels of disclosure appropriateness (a_4b_2 = .11, 95% CI = .03 to .20). Thus, hypothesis 2b was supported for minority sexual orientation disclosure at low levels of disclosure appropriateness, which had a negative effect on ratings of leadership effectiveness through leader vulnerability. See Figure 4-4.

Table 4-10: Coefficients for Conditional Process Model 8 (Leader Effectiveness)

		Consequent			
		M_1	M_2		Y
Antecedent		Coeff.(SE.)p.	Coeff.(SE.)p.		Coeff.(SE.)p.
D_1:	a_1	-.59(.35).09	**1.28(.52).01**	c'_1	-.22(.23).35
D_2:	a_2	**-.84(.36).02**	**1.04(.54).05**	c'_2	-.18(.24).45
D_3:	a_3	-.49(.37).19	**1.19(.56).03**	c'_3	**-.51(.25).04**
W	a_4	.04(.05).43	.01(.08).92		.06(.04).11
D_1 * W	a_5	**.19(.07).00**	**-.23(.10).02**		.02(.05).62
D_2 *W	a_6	**.23(.07).03**	-.15(.10).14		**.**01(.05).82
D_3 * W	a_7	**.16(.07).03**	-.15(.11).17		.08(.05).11
M_1		-	-	b_1	**.59(.03)<.00**
M_2		-	-	b_2	**-.06(.02)<.00**
Constant	i_m	**3.84(.28)<.00**	**1.38(.41)<.00**	i_y	**1.84(.22)<.00**
		R^2 = .20 F(7, 457)=15.85, p < .00	**R^2 = .07 F(7,457) = 4.97, p. < .00**		**R^2 = .56 F(9,455) = 65.27, p <.00**

Notes: Leader Disclosure is a multi-categorical Predictor (X) represented by dummy variables D_1 minority sexual orientation disclosure**;** D2 mental disorder / disease disclosure; D3 substance abuse disorder disclosure. Moderators: Disclosure Appropriateness (W). Mediators (M): M_1 affective trust in leader; M_2 leader vulnerability. Outcome (Y): Leader Effectiveness

Figure 4-2: Conditional Process Model of Disclosure with Leader Effectiveness as Outcome

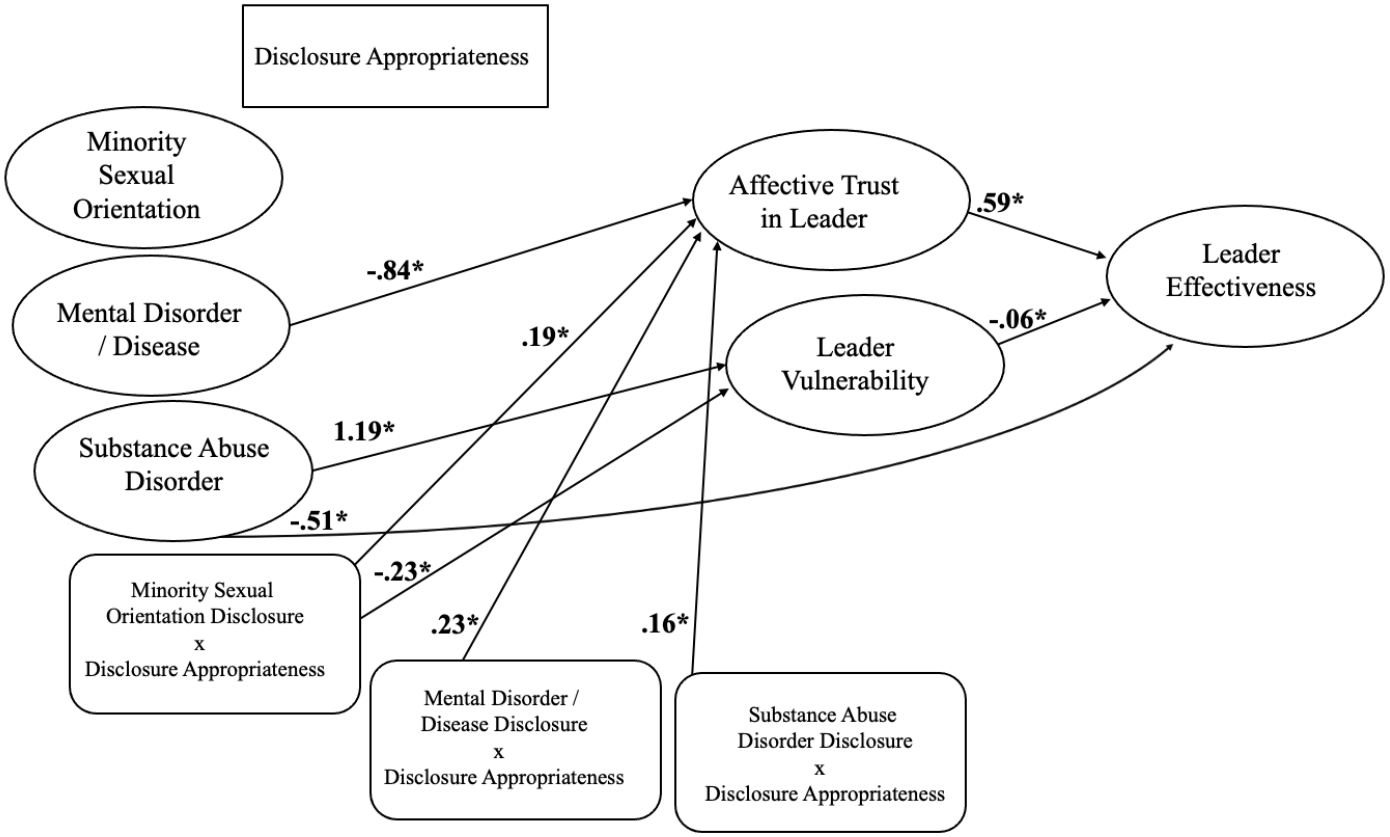


Figure 4-3: Visual Representation of Conditional Effect of Disclosure Appropriateness on Affective Trust by Disclosure Category, Leadership Effectiveness Outcome

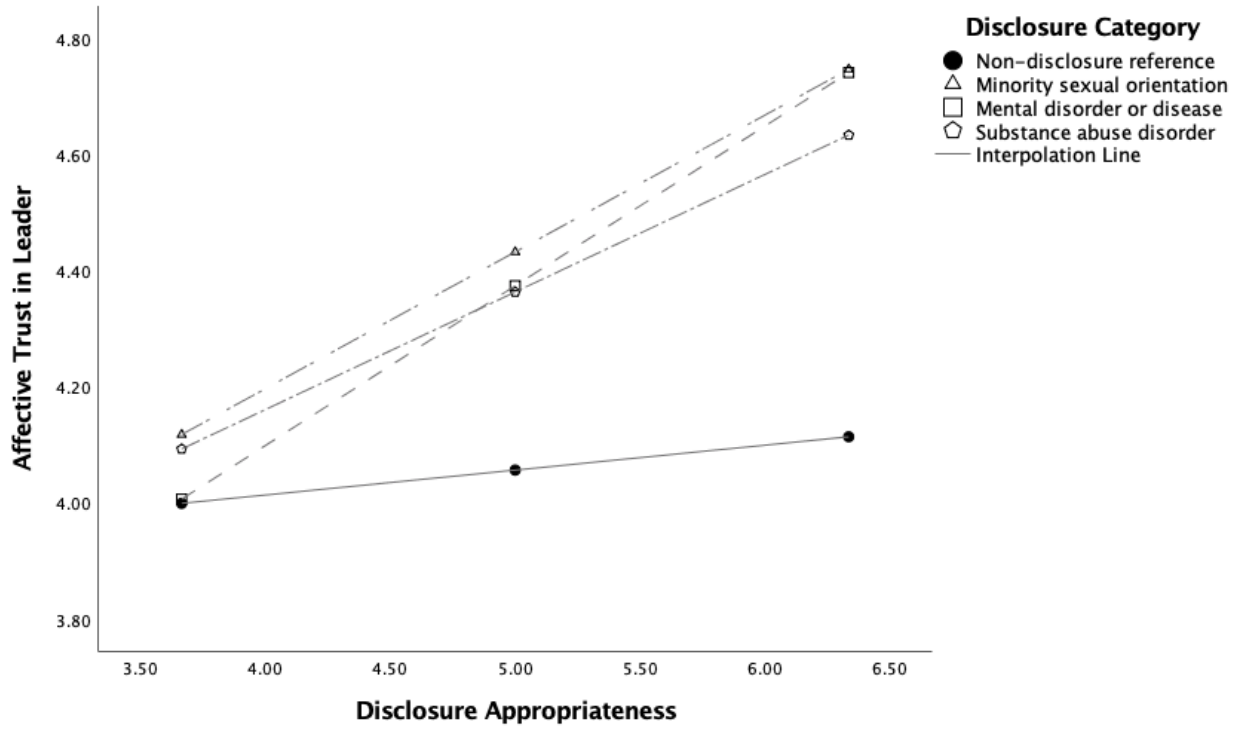


Figure 4-4: Visual Representation of Conditional Effect of Disclosure Appropriateness on Leader Vulnerability by Disclosure Category, Leadership Effectiveness Outcome

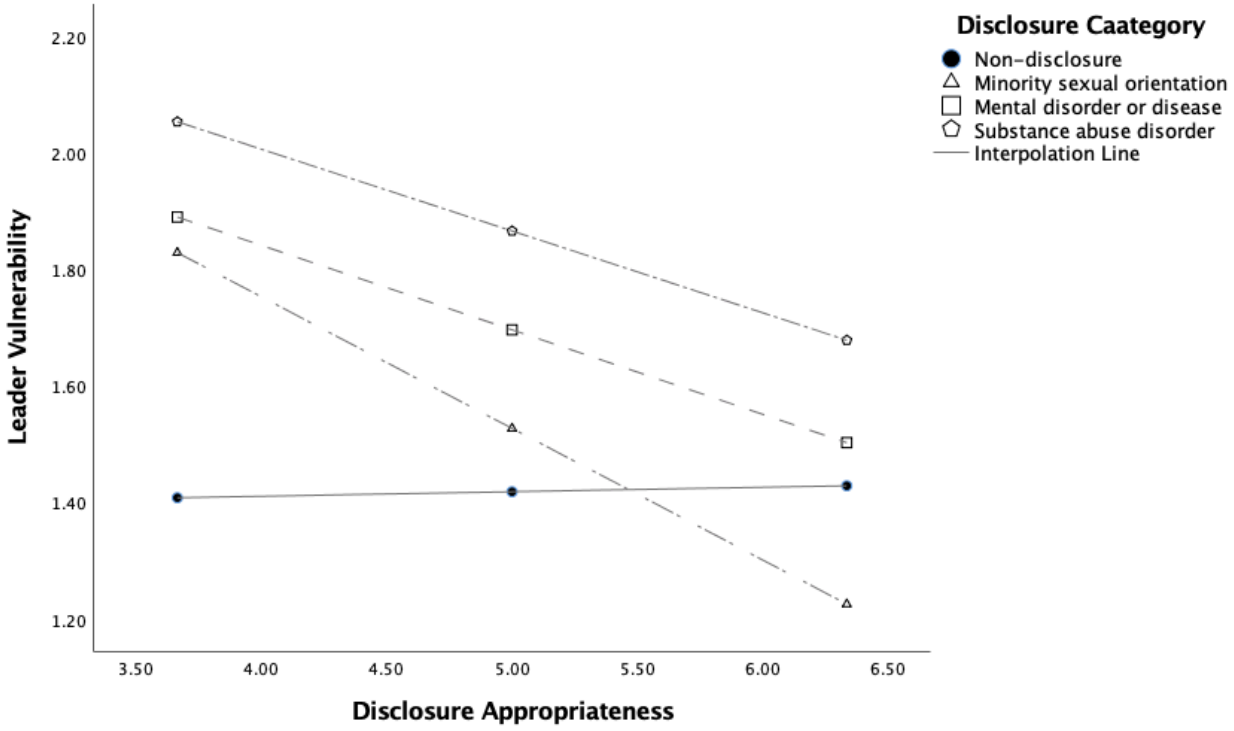
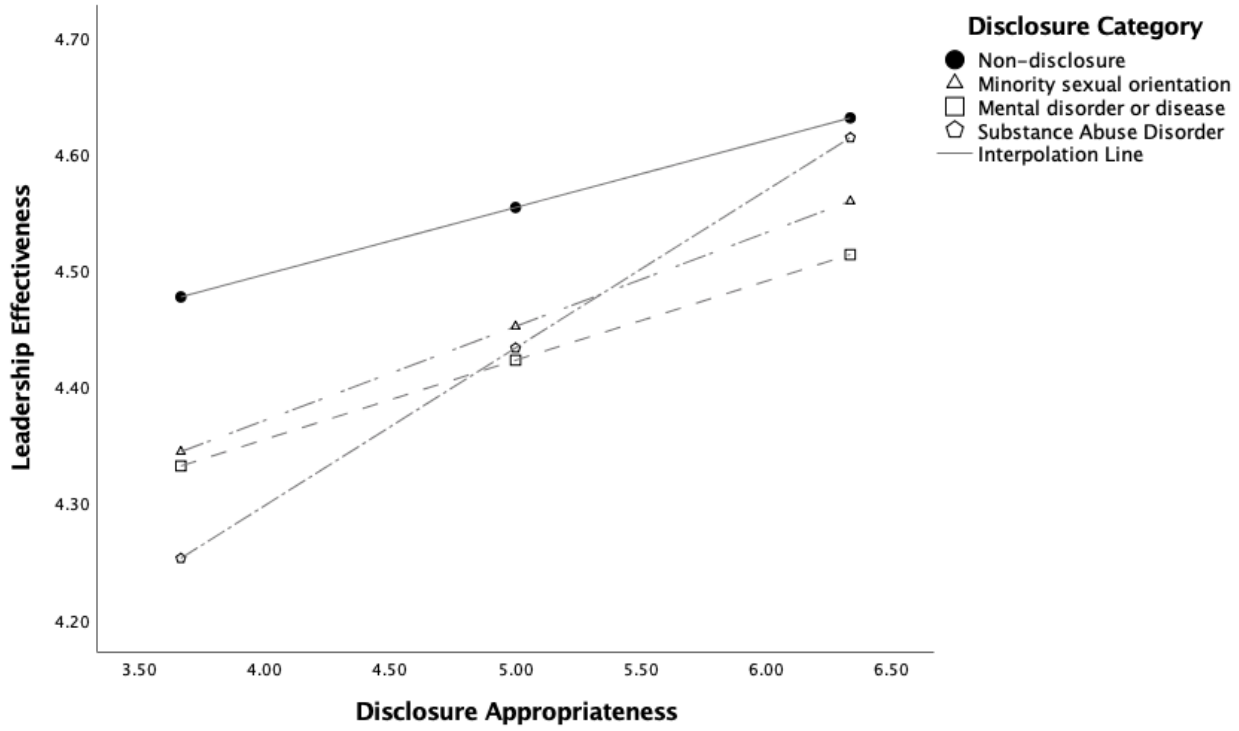


Figure 4-5: Visual Representation of Conditional Effect of Disclosure Appropriateness on Leadership Effectiveness by Disclosure Category



Leader Liking Model

Hypothesis 1 predicted that disclosure appropriateness would moderate the direct relationship between leader disclosure and employee ratings of leader liking. The omnibus test of moderation of the direct effect of disclosure was not significant [R squared change = .00; F(3, 455)= 1.38, p = .25]. Because the conditional direct effect of substance abuse disclosure was significant (c'_3 = -.50, p = .06), the specific relative conditional direct effects were examined, but none were significant in the leader liking model. Thus, hypothesis 1 was not supported in the leader liking model.

Hypothesis 2 predicted significant indirect relationships between leader and leader liking through a) affective trust in leader and b) leader vulnerability.

Affective trust (M_1)

The omnibus test of highest order unconditional interaction between disclosure category and affective trust in leader was significant [R squared change = .02, F(3,457) = 4.05, p = <.00]. Examination of the relative conditional indirect effects reveal the indices of moderated mediation were significantly positive for leader minority sexual orientation disclosure (a_4b_1 = .11, 95% CI = .02 to .21) and mental disorder/disease (a_5b_1 = .14, 95% CI = .04 to .24) through affective trust at relatively medium and relatively high levels of disclosure appropriateness, which had a positive effect on ratings of leader liking through affective trust in leader. Figure 4-7 depicts the moderation graph of this effect.

Leader Vulnerability (M_2)

The omnibus test of highest order unconditional interaction between disclosure category and leader vulnerability was not significant [R squared change = .01, F(3,457) = 1.75, p = .16]. Bootstrapping confidence intervals for all indices of moderated mediation to evaluate the significance of the conditional indirect effect for participants at relatively low, medium, and high in disclosure appropriateness all contained zero and thus were not significant. Figure 4-8 depicts the moderation graph of this effect.

Table 4-11: Coefficients for Conditional Process Model 8 (Leader Liking)

		Consequent			
		M_1	M_2		Y
Antecedent		Coeff.(SE.)p.	Coeff.(SE.)p.		Coeff.(SE.)p.
D_1:	a_1	-.59(.35).09	**1.28(.52).01**	c'_1	-.14(.25).59
D_2:	a_2	**-.84(.36).02**	**1.04(.54).05**	c'_2	-.28(.26).29
D_3:	a_3	-.49(.37).19	**1.19(.56).03**	c'_3	**-.50(.27).06**
W	a_3	.04(.05).43	.01(.08).92		.03(.04).42
D_1 * W	a_4	**.19(.07)<.00**	**-.23(.10).02**		.02(.05).65
D_2 *W	a_5	**.23(.07)<.00**	-.15(.10).14		**.**06(.05).28
D_3 * W	a_6	**.16(.07).03**	-.15(.11).17		.10(.05).07
M_1		-		b_1	**.59(.03)<.00**
M_2		-		b_2	-.00(.02).96
Constant	i_m	**3.84(.28)<.00**	**1.38(.41)<.00**	i_y	**1.51(.24)<.00**
		R^2 = .20 F(7, 457) =15.85, p < .00	**R^2 = .07 F(7,457) = 4.97, p. < .00**		**R^2 = .51 F(9,455) = 52.86, p <.00**

Notes: Leader Disclosure is a multi-categorical Predictor (X) represented by dummy variables D_1 minority sexual orientation disclosure**;** D2 mental disorder / disease disclosure; D3 substance abuse disorder disclosure. Moderators: Disclosure Appropriateness (W). Mediators (M): M_1 affective trust in leader; M_2 leader vulnerability. Outcome (Y): Leader Liking

Figure 4-6: Conditional Process Model of Disclosure with Leader Liking as Outcome

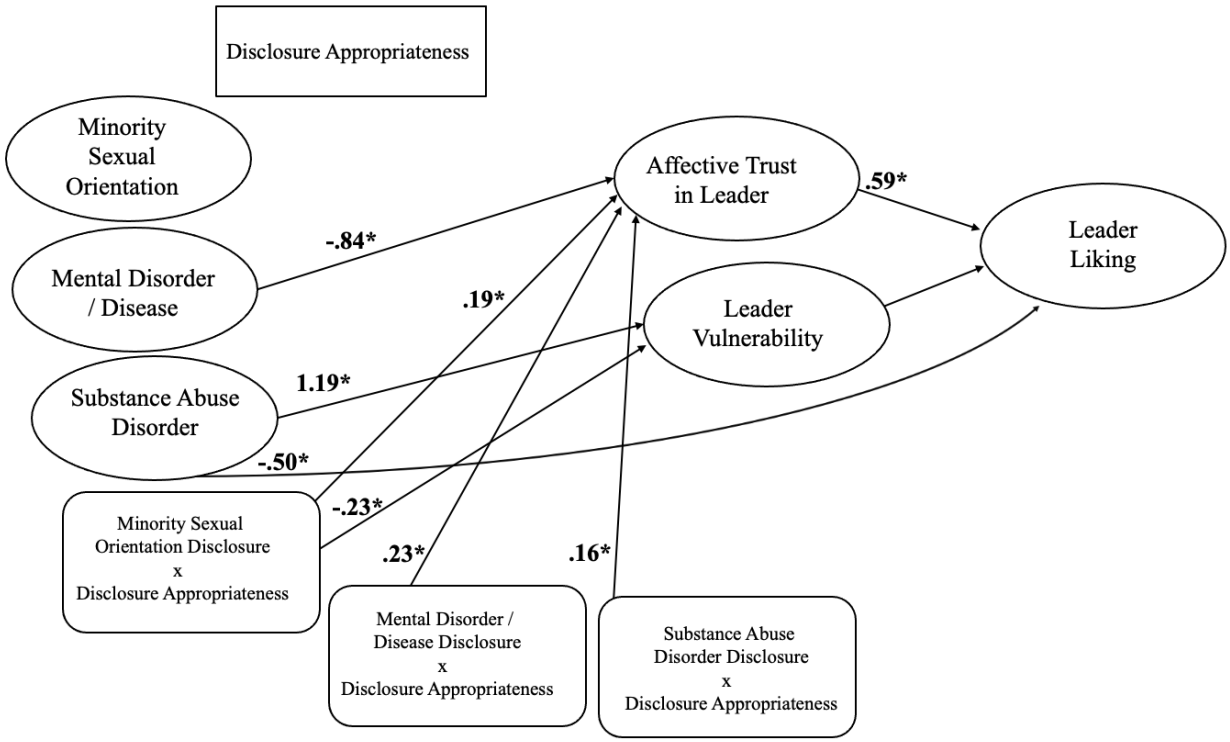


Figure 4-7: Visual Representation of Conditional Effect of Disclosure Appropriateness on Affective Trust by Disclosure Category, Leader Liking Outcome

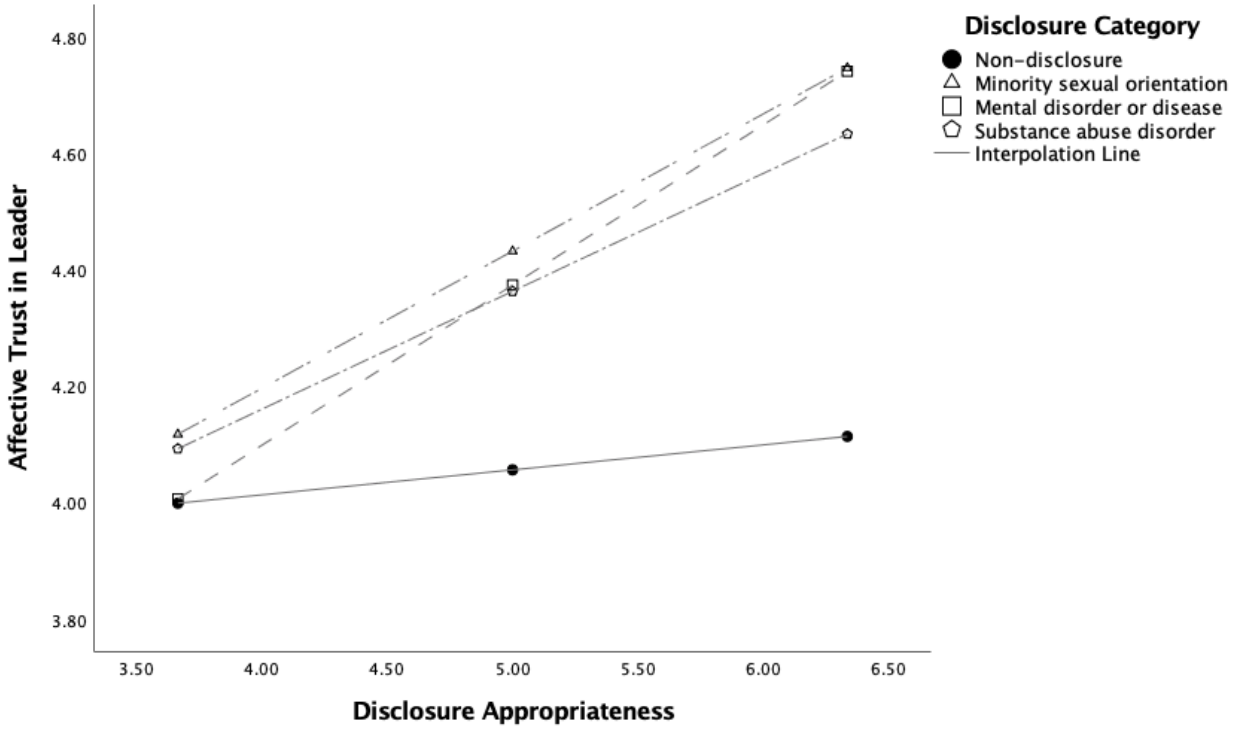
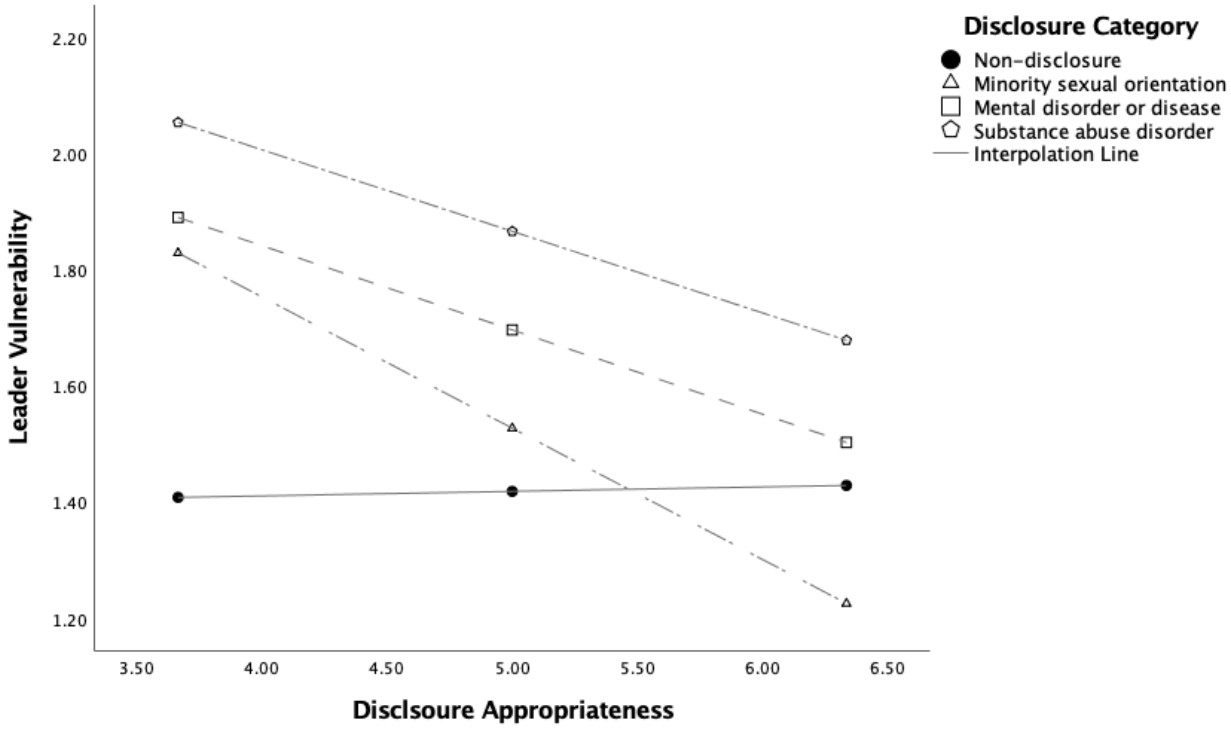


Figure 4-8: Visual Representation of Conditional Effect of Disclosure Appropriateness on Leader Vulnerability by Disclosure Category, Leader Liking Outcome



4.3 Study 3 Discussion

In Study 3 I utilized a multimedia EVM to hypothesize conditional direct and indirect effects of disclosure appropriateness on leadership effectiveness and leader liking following leader disclosure through affective trust in leader and leader vulnerability. To address concerns with external validity, experimental realism, and sample strategy, Study 3 used multimedia vignettes. Once again, results support the claim that disclosures of substance abuse disorders are more highly stigmatized than other disclosure categories. However, there were different outcomes for employee perceptions of leadership effectiveness compared to leader liking. Leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosures did not make a difference to how much employees liked their manager/supervisor, but leader disclosures of substance abuse disclosure directly negatively predicted employee ratings of leadership effectiveness when the disclosure was perceived as inappropriate. Substance abuse disclosures at relatively low and relatively medium levels of disclosure appropriateness received especially low ratings of leadership effectiveness.

In terms of indirect effects, at relatively medium and high levels of disclosures appropriateness, leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation and mental disorder/disease were mediated by employee ratings of affective trust in their, which positively predicted leadership effectiveness and leader liking. At low levels of disclosure appropriateness, leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation had a dampening effect on ratings of leader effectiveness through higher levels of leader vulnerability.

Separating the broad mental illness category used in Study 1 into mental disorder/disease and substance abuse disorder added an additional level of the multi-categorical predictor in the Study 3 model. In both Studies, there was a significant positive relationship between disclosure

and employee perceptions of leader vulnerability; however, based on results of Study 3, perceptions of vulnerability seem to be more related to disclosures of substance abuse disorder than mental disorder/disease – both of which are encompassed under the broader category of mental illness. Consistent with Study 1, affective trust in leader positively predicted ratings of leader liking and leader effectiveness across disclosure categories in Study 3. Further consistent with Study 1, leader vulnerability negatively predicted ratings of leadership effectiveness but not leader liking.

Adding the disclosure appropriateness moderator in Study 3 shed light on when the disclosure process is mediated by affective trust in leader and employee ratings of leader vulnerability. Specifically, positive effects on both leadership effectiveness and leader liking through employee ratings of affective trust occurred only at relatively medium and high levels of disclosures appropriateness for disclosures of minority sexual orientation and mental disorder/disease, but not for substance abuse disorders. Moreover, negative implications of minority sexual orientation disclosures predicted lower ratings of leader effectiveness through higher levels of leader vulnerability but only occurred at low levels of disclosure appropriateness.

4.3.1 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of the current research should be noted. First the images depicted a Caucasian male and female leaders, which created a lack of representation of racial diversity in study material. Two measures in the current were not sufficiently reliable as determined by coefficient alpha (Burns & Burns, 2008) including the two-item measure of leader vulnerability with an Alpha of .63 (Gibson et al., 2018) and the three-item measure of disclosure appropriateness with an Alpha of .69. As with all experimental designs, there is a risk of low

external validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014); however, measures were taken to increase participant immersion over and above text-only vignettes by incorporating multimedia features such as audio and visual stimulus in Study 3.

Despite the above noted limitations, this study arguably makes an important contribution to organizational scholarship as it is one of the first to cross compare employee evaluations of multiple stigmatized disclosures and includes comparison of two different types of mental illness – mental disorder/disease and substance abuse disorder. Additionally, this study extends stigma literature to the leader-follower context and entertains the possibility that, at times, employees or direct reports may be in the position of the relational other in a concealable stigmatized identity disclosure. These results illustrate that employees are more likely to evaluate leaders' substance abuse disclosures more harshly than mental disorder-disease, which may hold important implications for the leader-follower relationship after the disclosure. The possibility of a shift towards employees offering support for leaders (i.e., perception of their effectiveness is enhanced) who are open and transparent about their minority sexual orientation, but the presence of strong stigma against mental illness - especially substance abuse – remains prevalent in organizational and leader-follower contexts and has an effect on ratings of leadership effectiveness. Future research could investigate the possibility of interactions between leader race and employee perceptions of the leader after disclosure.

CHAPTER 5 - GENERAL DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In modern-day organizations, leaders must balance their role demands with increasing expectations to reveal their authentic, true selves in both personal and professional settings. Researchers suggest the "sensitivity sweet spot" to describe the point at which leaders' information sharing can be expected to shift from beneficial (e.g., increased perceptions of leader authenticity and leadership effectiveness) into negative repercussions - such as decrements in employee perceptions of their leader's competence and status (Gibson et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2020). The sensitivity sweet spot hypothesis purports that leader information sharing must be "mild to moderately sensitive in nature" (Jiang et al., 2020, p. 41) to reap these benefits bestowed in favourable employee evaluations. To determine where concealable stigmatized identity disclosures fit into the sensitivity sweet spot hypothesis, this dissertation has considered employee evaluations of leader effectiveness and leader liking after a concealable stigmatized identity disclosure using qualitative and quantitative methods.

5.1 Results Overview

I employ non-experimental and experimental research designs to investigate the mechanisms involved in predicting employee evaluations after a concealable stigmatized identity disclosure, and the factors involved in shaping these reactions. The results of Study 1 offer insight on several meaningful differences between downward and same status disclosures with respect to context (e.g., timing, discloser identity, and disclosure setting), the leader's disclosure motivation, and prevalence of downward disclosures. The descriptive quantitative and qualitative thematic analysis conducted on Phase 1 data in the early stages of Study 1 was important to shaping subsequent studies. In addition to changes to changes in recruitment strategy, this early analysis allowed me to use a closed-ended response format in the data collection instrument used

in Phase 2 of data collection - a rarely used response format in stigma research (Follmer et al., 2019). This iterative process also helped me to identify a relevant contextual variable, disclosure appropriateness, for investigation as a moderator in Study 3.

Study 1 demonstrates a negative total effect of minority sexual orientation and gender identity disclosure on employee ratings of leader liking; however, the direct relationship between leadership effectiveness and disclosure category was not statistically significant. In terms of mediating variables, leaders who disclose mental illness or substance abuse are perceived as less intelligent and more vulnerable than other leaders. The relationship between vulnerability and leader effectiveness is significantly negative; however, vulnerability did not mediate the relationship between disclosure category and leader effectiveness. Study 2 demonstrates that leaders who disclose a history of substance abuse can expect to receive the lowest ratings of leadership effectiveness across four experimental conditions - significantly lower than leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation and mental illness.

Finally, Study 3 reveals that employee perceptions of disclosure appropriateness is an important contextual consideration. In some cases, employee's post disclosure evaluations were made better or worse depending on the extent to which the disclosure is perceived by the employee as appropriate. At relatively medium and high levels of appropriateness, leader disclosures of minority sexual orientation and mental disorder/disease elevated employee trust in their leader, which indirectly bolstered ratings of both leadership effectiveness and leader liking. On the other hand, there was a direct negative relationship between leaders' substance abuse disclosures of low or medium appropriateness and employee ratings of leadership effectiveness. Finally, Study 3 results illustrate that minority sexual orientation disclosures of low

appropriateness will increase employee ratings of leader vulnerability, which subsequently predicts lower ratings of leader effectiveness.

Across all three studies, there is a noticeable pattern of substance abuse disclosures being more highly stigmatized than other disclosure categories as indicated by increased perceptions of vulnerability as weakness following this type of disclosure (Studies 1 and 3) and lower ratings of leadership effectiveness compared to other disclosure categories (Study 2 and 3). Leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures received the most positive employee evaluations in terms of leadership effectiveness (Studies 2 and 3), but there was some inconsistency with this result in Study 1 where a negative total effect was observed. The following sections revisit the research questions, summarize results across studies, and discuss opportunities for future research.

5.1.1 Psychological and Contextual Factors in Downward Disclosure

The first research question guiding this dissertation was: *what are the psychological and contextual factors involved in shaping employee perceptions when a leader's invisible identity is disclosed?*

Contextual Factors

Study 1 reveals important differences about the contextual nature of downward disclosures from same status or upward disclosures. First, direct reports may be aware of a manager/supervisor's individual identity before they start reporting to this manager/supervisor. Second, direct reports may learn about the manager's invisible identity from the manager themselves or from another source – either a co-worker, or a work report or for a job-related reason or task (e.g., occupational health). Third, downward disclosures may occur in a private (one-one-one) *or* group setting; via in-person or online mediums; in an environment that is social, casual, or professional. Allowing these three facets (presence of others; setting; and

medium) to vary in different combinations is important for capturing the full range of the disclosure event experience from the employee's perspective. Assuming disclosures occur after the reporting relationship commenced will not hold in all downward disclosure scenarios.

Five themes describing employee interpretations of disclosure motivations emerged through essentialist thematic analysis conducted in Study 1 – relational, work-related, discloser identity, information sharing, and unsupportive. Consistent with previous research, employees interpreted the reason for leader disclosures positively in most cases. At times, disclosures are made for work-related rather than socially motivated reasons, but this is exception rather than the norm. When disclosure motivation is investigated from the perspective of the discloser, the individual's own self-verification is of interest, but paradigms of impression management are more relevant when disclosure motivation is being assessed by the interaction party. Importantly when employees perceived information was disclosed for the purpose of bonding over similar concerns, an opportunity for role modeling and allyship between members of under-represented social groups across the organizational hierarchy is created. On the other hand, information sharing was also perceived negatively, such as attributing the discloser's motivation to disclose as merely propensity to gossip. Negative, stigmatizing, and discriminatory attitudes were present; however, they appeared less frequently than supportive attitudes. These findings are consistent with stigma theory and past research demonstrating both supportive and unsupportive reactions following disclosure of a concealable stigmatized identity (e.g., King et al., 2008).

Finally, consistent with previous research on minority social identities and marginalized populations, investigations of downward disclosure in real-world settings may face issues associated with "hard-to-reach" samples and require focused recruitment techniques to address these challenges (Bonevski et al., 2014, p. 1).

Psychological Factors

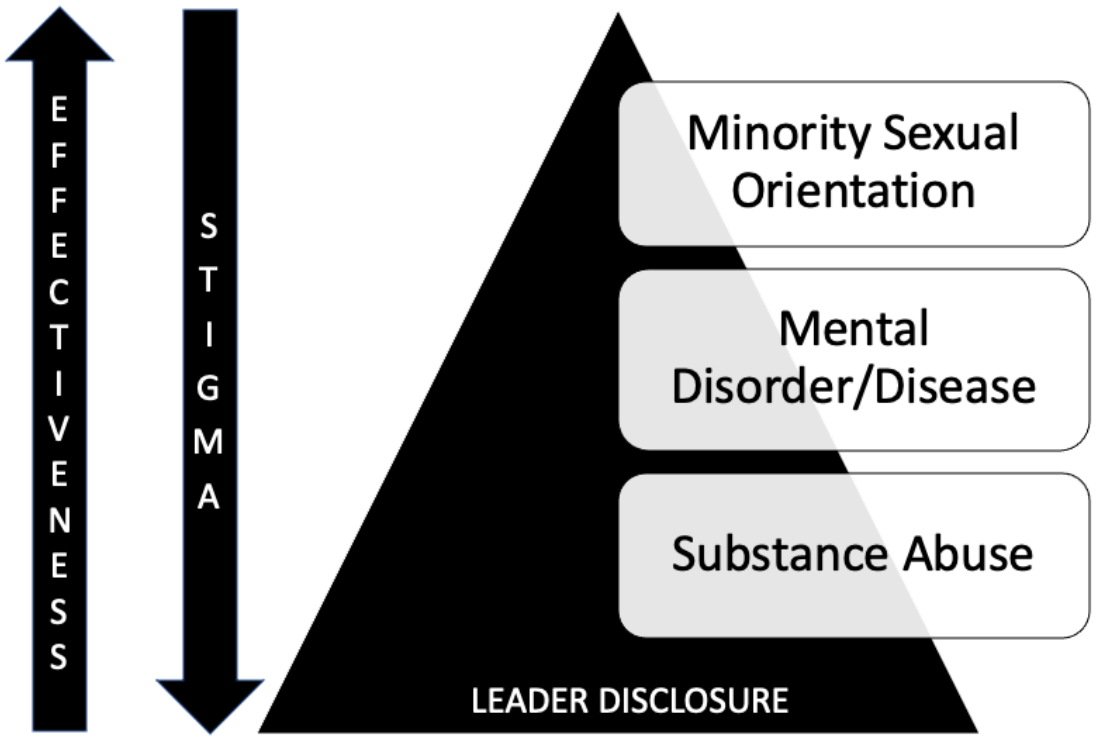
Investigation of a parallel mediation model in Study 1 demonstrates that follower ratings of leader intelligence and leader vulnerability were significantly less favourable for leaders who had disclosed mental illness compared to the other disclosure categories of minority sexual orientation/gender identity and non-disclosure. Mental illness disclosures had a significant negative association with leader intelligence and significantly positive associations with leader vulnerability (where vulnerability is conceptualized as weakness), suggesting worse outcomes of mental illness disclosures compared to minority sexual orientation / gender identity disclosures in the first stage of the mediation process. Consistent with research and theory, significant positive associations in the second stage of Study 1 models between the sensitivity dimension of leadership prototype and affective trust in leader with ratings of leadership effectiveness and liking. Additionally, a significant negative association occurs between follower ratings of leader vulnerability with ratings of leadership effectiveness and liking. Early empirical work on leaders' stigmatized identities (Adams & Webster, 2017; Gibson et al., 2018) and stigma theory (Goffman, 1963) would suggest that these decrements may lead to further declines in employee ratings of leadership effectiveness and leader liking; however, indirect effects were not significant in Study 1 and no significant mediators were identified.

Building on the results of Study 1, Study 2 employs experimental vignette methodology. The results highlight the potential for positive reactions to leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures, which is consistent with meta-analysis on stigma expression from the perspective of the stigma holder (Sabat et al., 2019). At the opposite end of leadership effectiveness ratings was substance abuse disorder, which received the least favourable employee evaluations. This is consistent with extant research that suggests substance abuse is amongst the most highly

stigmatized of invisible identities both inside and outside of workplaces and organizations (Pachankis et al., 2018; Sabat et al., 2019). Moderation analyses demonstrated that leader gender and discloser identity did not significantly moderate the relationship between disclosure and follower ratings of leadership effectiveness, nor did leader gender have a direct association with ratings of leadership effectiveness. Importantly, disclosure category directly affected employee ratings of leadership effectiveness with evaluations following minority sexual orientation disclosures being rated significantly higher than substance abuse disclosures.

Separating the mental illness category (Study 1) into mental disorder/disease and substance abuse disorder (Studies 2a and 3) adds an additional level of the multi-categorical predictor to the models under investigation in Studies 2 and 3. Study 3 demonstrates that indirect effects through affective trust in leader and leader vulnerability are conditional on disclosure appropriateness. Overall, the combined results of the time-lagged questionnaire data collected in Study 1 and the experimental data in Studies 2 and 3 support the existence of a hierarchy of concealable stigmatized identities when it comes to employee ratings of their leaders after disclosure of concealable stigmatized identity, such that leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures are more favorably evaluated by employees than substance abuse, with mental disorder/disease falling somewhere in the middle as depicted in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1: Proposed Hierarchy of Leaders' Concealable Stigmatized Identity Disclosures



Adding the disclosure appropriateness moderator in Study 3 shed light on when the disclosure process is mediated by affective trust in leader and employee ratings of leader vulnerability. Specifically, positive effects on both leadership effectiveness and leader liking through employee ratings of affective trust occurr only at relatively medium and high levels of disclosures appropriateness for disclosures of minority sexual orientation and mental disorder/disease, but not for substance abuse disorders. Moreover, disclosures of minority sexual orientation predicted lower ratings of leader effectiveness through higher levels of leader vulnerability but only at low levels of disclosure appropriateness. Across all three studies,

substance abuse disclosures were more highly stigmatized than other disclosure categories. This effect is especially damaging if the disclosure is perceived by the employee as inappropriate.

The negative total effect of minority sexual orientation disclosure on leader liking observed in Study 1 is inconsistent with the results of Studies 2 and 3. As mentioned in the Study 1 discussion, this significant total effect should be interpreted with caution due to a hard-to-reach population and low statistical power that are likely in this field sample of full-time employees. Furthermore, the significant total effect may have been due to variables not included in the model, significant covariates, or regression coefficients of competing signs in the same model. Additionally, combining of minority sexual orientation and gender identity into one overall category may have contributed to this unexpected result.

5.1.2 Benefits of Diversity in Leadership

Results from Studies 2 and 3 are consistent with strengths-based paradigms – specifically, the social distinctiveness frame of minority sexual orientation disclosures in some contexts (Anteby & Anderson, 2014) and in-group leader credit for either innovation or transgressions (Abrams et al., 2013; Gaffney, Rast, & Hogg, 2018). These strength-based paradigms suggest diverse leaders may sometimes have an advantage over other leaders who do not openly identify as members of a minority or under-represented or stigmatized social group.

Social Distinctiveness

The history of minority sexual orientation has been summarized from its early beginnings of medical abnormality when homosexuality was considered an illness, to more recent emphasis on its potential social advantages (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). Recent theorizing suggests a shift towards social distinctiveness may offer gay and lesbian individuals potential advantages in organizational life given the social progress that has been observed with respect to decreasing

mistreatment and increasing social acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals in North America (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Webster et al, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016).

The social distinctiveness frame emphasizes skills and competencies that may distinguish sexual minority employees from heterosexual employees in a favorable way (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). For example, following a longitudinal analysis with gay and lesbian professionals, Snyder (2006) posits that living with a sense of difference gives sexual minorities learned skills including adaptability, creative problem solving, and intuitive communication. He suggests managers with same-sex orientation tend to see each employee as a unique individual, which gives them an advantage in retaining talent, building job satisfaction, and establishing workplace morale over heterosexual managers. A second study suggests gay men are advantaged in certain industries, such as fashion design (Stokes, 2015).

Leader Credits

In comparison to co-worker violations of group norms, studies have shown that leaders are evaluated differently in terms of group norm violations (Abrams, Randsley de Moura, Marques, & Hutchison, 2008). Specifically, some leaders may not be viewed as a prototypical leader (i.e., lower leader prototype ratings), but be viewed by group members as highly representative of group norms. Due to their high representativeness of group norms, these leaders may be given leeway for disclosure as a type of deviance outside of leadership prototypes because in-group members see the violation to initiate social change and push the work group in a new direction towards a new prototype accepted by that in-group (Gaffney et al., 2018). Similarly, when leaders are perceived to be part of the in-group, their transgressions are more favourably evaluated than out-group leaders (Abrams, Randsley de Moura, & Travaglino, 2013). Thus, a disclosure may be considered a transgression, or a violation of the leadership prototype

(Cloutier & Barling, 2017). This has been referred to as an "innovation credit" (Gaffney et al., 2018, p. 22), and it is granted in cases where leaders who stray from norms are perceived by group members as embodying the future of the in-group prototype and a step towards necessary social change (Gaffney et al, 2018).

5.1.3 Study Setting

A meta-analysis on self-disclosure and liking in non-organizational settings (Collins & Miller, 1994), as well as a meta-analysis of stigma expression (Sabat et al., 2019) suggest that field studies compared to lab studies tended to yield more positive effect sizes. Both publications attribute this effect to the fact that field settings are regarding individuals in real-world settings with close relationships, as opposed to experimental settings in which the relationships under investigation may be fictional and seem contrived to participants. These meta-analyses focus on studies that evaluate disclosure from the perspective of the stigma holder, rather than the other-focused perspective of the current work; however, the possibility remains that effect sizes in Studies 2 and 3 maybe emphasized due to the experimental nature of the study designs. The positive effects observed following leaders' disclosure of minority sexual orientation in Studies 2 and 3 were obtained within the experimental setting, which is expected to produce muted effects on positive outcomes of disclosure. This bolsters the strength of the inference made based on the results of this dissertation that leaders' minority sexual orientation disclosures are at the top of the hierarchy of concealable stigmatized identity disclosures.

5.1.4 Extending Same Status Disclosure Knowledge to Downward Disclosures

Given the newness of empirical interest in leader disclosures of concealable stigmatized identities, the second research question guiding this dissertation was: *Will the role of contextual factors determined in research regarding upward and same status disclosures hold for*

downward disclosures? This is an important question to consider because determining the extent to which past knowledge from research on upward disclosures, as well as disclosures between organizational peers and outside of organizations in general social settings will hold and be applicable to downward disclosures within organizations could yield useful insights and identify important areas for future research. Considering the possibility of stigmatized identities in leadership positions answers the call to investigate inter-categorical intersectionality in organizational settings made by Summers et al. (2018).

Thematic analysis of open-ended text responses describing participants' perspectives on downward disclosures revealed that most employees interpreted their leaders' motivation to disclose in a positive manner consistent with conceptual models that suggest stigma holders are motivated to disclose by an approach-focus, suggesting they are seeking beneficial outcomes (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Further consistent with disclosure of concealable stigmatized identities within employee populations, participants' unsupportive interpretations of their leader's motivation to disclose were also observed, which is aligned with research demonstrating that disclosure can produce a range of positive and negative outcomes in organizational settings (e.g., Lynch & Rodell, 2018). In addition, Study 1 findings suggest that leader disclosures may differ from same status or upward disclosures in meaningful ways. First, employees may have been aware of their manager/supervisor's minority identity prior to the start of the formal reporting relationship. Furthermore, information about the minority identity may be shared by someone other than the manager/supervisor themselves. Participants of this field study revealed that the leader was not always be the individual making the disclosure. Another area of difference in downward disclosures is the possibility for the information to be shared in a group setting, either in-person or online, with more regularity than same status and upward disclosures.

This may be related to increased opportunities for leaders to address groups of people and audiences who will store this information and use it in future evaluations of the leader. As previously discussed, employees will likely closely attitude to the content of information shared by the leader due to number and power asymmetry as well as follower outcome dependence on the leader.

5.2 Contributions

Previous studies offer conflicting information about the social consequences of disclosing concealable stigmatized identities in organizational settings (Lynch & Rodell, 2018), and have rarely considered the circumstance in which a leader openly identifies with a minority identity (see Adams & Webster, 2017 and Jiang et al., 2020 for exceptions). This dissertation may make several important contributions to organizational scholarship. Specific to disclosure research, the current studies develop the body of work that addresses the perspective of the relational other rather than the discloser (Gibson, 2018; Hebl & Dovido, 2005). Specifically, I extend empirical investigations of workplace disclosure to the leader-follower context in workplace settings. In doing so, outcomes beyond liking are considered (e.g., Colins & Miller, 1994); namely, the organizationally relevant outcomes of leadership effectiveness and leader liking (Summers et al., 2018; Sabat et al., 2019). Consistent with Hoffman and Lord's (2013) definition of an event, this study has positioned downward disclosures as an event and doing so responds to calls to expand event-focused leadership research (e.g., Dinh & Lord, 2012).

With respect to the main underlying theoretical framework, Goffman's (1963) stigma theory suggests the possibility for all stigmas or minority statuses to increase the likelihood of negative social evaluations in a certain context. However, the results of this work emphasize the importance of differentiating *between and within stigma* categories as revealed by the different

outcomes observed across disclosure categories. Importantly, these results highlight the necessity to approach mental illness in organizations as nuanced and complex rather than a unitary construct (Summers et al., 2018) due to differences in others' perceptions towards different types of mental illnesses. Obtaining a better understanding of the consequences of disclosing mental illness at work must distinguish between perceptions of specific types of illnesses such as mental disorder/disease and substance abuse (e.g., Follmer & Jones, 2018). Although both mental disorder or disease and substance abuse are squarely rooted in the medical model of illness, studying them separately is a necessary first step required to obtain a level of understanding about mental illness in the workplace that mirrors our fine-grained understanding of physical illnesses at work.

The multi-categorical predictor in all three studies further responds to calls for cross-comparison of different types of stigmas in organizational settings while paying attention to dimension-level differences and contextual factors (Summers et al., 2018). Furthermore, the moderating role of leader gender, discloser identity, and disclosure appropriateness are considered, as well as the mediating function of affective trust in leader and leader vulnerability. Significance of mediating mechanisms was conditional on disclosure appropriateness, which enhances our understanding of the overall process of downward disclosures from the employee perspective. Selecting these mediators for investigation expands our understanding of the roles of leader prototype, affective trust, and vulnerability as conditional explanatory mechanisms in the leader evaluation process, which adds to the particularly sparse literature on vulnerability at work (Neinbar et al.,2015).

In terms of implicit leadership theory, this is one of few rigorous studies to investigate leadership prototypes at the dimension level (e.g., Johnson et al., 2008). It can be inferred from

the current set of studies that downward disclosures have the most impact on ratings of leader intelligence more so than the other dimensions of leader sensitivity, dedication, and dynamism (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). The results suggest that a history of substance abuse disorder is outside the image most people hold of a prototypical leader, which is consistent with previous research (e.g., Cloutier & Barling, 2017); however, leaders who disclose minority sexual orientation may be within the leadership prototype. Finally, this dissertation responds to calls to investigate potentially non-deviant roles of information sharing in organizations (Brady et al., 2017). Sharing information about a leader's disclosed identity may serve a social function in an organization or to potential applicants. Information about an organizational leader whose invisible identity has been disclosed may become available throughout the organization and could subsequently play a role in an employee's desire to seek out or avoid a work group whose leader possesses a minority identity.

5.2.1 Practical Relevance

This dissertation may also make several practical contributions. Importantly, it can offer leaders insight into how they might be perceived by others should they opt to share personal information at work either for personal reasons or with the intention to role model open and transparent behaviour for other organizational members. Organizational leaders who engage in the "cost-benefit analysis" (Ragins, 2008, p. 200) or find themselves in a "disclosure dilemma" (Griffith & Hebl, 2003, p. 1191) as they decide whether or not to disclose at work will benefit from having insight into employee attitudes after disclosure.

This analysis is also relevant to organizational policy and procedure development in the areas of occupational health and diversity. Disclosures become particularly relevant in proximity to return-to-work efforts that occur after a period of organizational absences, such as a leave of

absence for either personal or medical reasons. Organizational leaders may find themselves considering disclosure before or after a period of absence illness, or time off for a milestone personal event, such as a funeral or a wedding. In these cases, research on downward disclosures may be used to inform return-to-work policies and programs in organizations. Finally, these results may be practically useful to incorporate into equity, diversity, and inclusion training in organizations to introduce the possibility of diverse characteristics in managers and supervisors, and to display the conditions that can lead to a positive or negative disclosure experience.

Covid-19 and the resulting economic recession has made mental illness a focal topic in the field of Human Resources Management. This is related to the adverse effects the pandemic has had on many people's mental health in general, as well as the creation of new barriers for individuals with existing mental illness and substance use disorders. For example, the pandemic saw an increase in U.S. adults who reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder from 1 in 10 in the six-month period from January to June 2019, to 4 in 10 over the same period in 2021 (Panchal, Kamal, Cox & Garfield, 2021). This effect on the general population has seeped into the labour market in the form of job loss in some areas, and poor mental health outcomes in others – especially industries that employ essential workers, such as health care, food services, as well as mail, transportation, and shipping (Panchal et al., 2021). It is now more important than ever for organizations to ensure employees are informed about and encouraged to access mental health supports at work. This includes reducing stigma towards mental illness inside of organizations and ensuring policies surrounding mental health leaves of absences and return-to-work are supported by best practices. Furthermore, organizations should take steps to address leaders' mental health and counter normative assumptions that leaders do not experience mental health challenges or mental illness. For researchers, these results highlight features of downward

disclosures that should be considered when crafting leader disclosure vignettes to enhance experimental realism..

5.2.2 Limitations and Future Research

Broadly speaking, the data presented across all studies was single source data provided by employees about their own leader (Study 1) or a fictional leader (Studies 2 and 3). While this is a strength because it adds to the body of stigma and disclosure research from the relational other, it is also a weakness due to the non-relational nature of the data. Future studies should aim to collect dyadic data that can examine the nature and outcomes of leader disclosure using data that offers perspective of both the leader who discloses and the employees who receive the disclosures.

Despite its potential contributions, additional limitations associated with each of the current studies were discussed at the end of each chapter and will be briefly recapped here along with avenues for future research. Due to a hard-to-reach sample, the time-lagged online survey (Study 1) may be lacking statistical power and results should be interpreted with caution. Sampling error may also be present in the sample recruited to respond to the text-only EVM (Study 2) due to reliance on a convenience sample from social media platforms (Dudovskiy, 2018). Furthermore, the text-only nature of the Study 2 vignettes may have led to a lack of experimental realism and external validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Measures were taken to address these limitations in Study 3 by using a multi-media study design with both audio and visual components. Additionally, participants were recruited through an online panel recruitment service which has documented advantages in terms of rigor and reliability compared to convenience samples from social media (Aguinis et al., 2021). However, the use of online panels has also been associated with limitations. Since both MTurk and Prolific were used across all

three studies it is essential to note that best practices for online panel recruitment were followed (Aguinis et al., 2021).

Additional opportunities for future research include examining additional mediating (e.g., explanatory) and moderating (e.g., contextual) factors involved in the downward disclosure process in both experimental and field settings for additional types of concealable stigmatized identities. Similarly, there may be interesting differences between industries and sectors as well as within these segments of analysis as indicated by relevant climate indicators such as diversity climate and/or psychological safety climate. This set of studies is centred around the intersection of leadership identity with gay and lesbian sexual orientations, mental disorder/disease, and substance abuse; however, there are many other dimensions of intersectionality worthy of future investigation. An area in need of increased organizational research in general and disclosure research in particular is regarding non-dichotomous conceptualizations of sexual orientation and gender identity Prime examples include gender fluid or transgender identities, bisexual or other minority sexual orientations, as well as the possibility of multiple layers of stigma within person. Importantly, organizational researchers should study the consequences of disclosure at nuanced levels by considering different types of mental illness. For example, future research could vary and examine different levels in the disorder/disease paradigm (e.g., depression, anxiety, versus PTSD), the type of substance abuse (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, non-illicit drugs), and stage of illness (e.g., acute, recovered). Other characteristics of demographic diversity such as race and age are also ripe for investigation.

Furthermore, incorporating the level of leadership into these investigations would also be fruitful to determine if evaluations differences are dependent on if the leader is near or far (Bligh & Riggio, 2013). Additionally, it would be interesting to consider how leader disclosures relate

to styles identified in extant leadership literature, particularly authentic leadership. To build upon the strengths-based paradigms of diverse leadership, such as social distinctiveness and leader credits, researchers are encouraged to pursue investigations at the group (meso)-level (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Gaffney et al., 2018). For example, in the case of a downward disclosures, perhaps in-group members have concealable stigmas they wish to share, and the leader is paving the way for them to do this. In other words, even if a disclosure is not "leader-like" and in violation of the evaluator's implicit leadership prototypes, the follower may still evaluate them favorably due to innovation credits.

The conceptualization and measurement of employee perceptions of leader vulnerability also presents opportunity for refinement. In addition to the low reliabilities noted for the two-item measure introduced by Gibson et al. (2018), the popular press has rebranded the word vulnerability. In common usage vulnerability is now a more positive concept that signals emotional availability, authenticity, and willingness to connect with similar others (e.g., Brown, 2010). Future research should explore alternate conceptualizations and measurement of the vulnerability construct.

5.2.3 Conclusion

This study is grounded in stigma and leadership theory and relies on research from areas minority identity disclosure, organizational trust, communication, and impression management. It is one of the first studies to cross-compare employee evaluations of multiple stigmatized identities in a leadership context using quantitative methods. It includes comparison of two different types of mental illnesses – mental disorder/disease and substance abuse disorder, and minority sexual orientation. It extends stigma literature to the leader-follower context and entertains the possibility that, at times, employees or direct reports may be in the position of the

relational other when they are the recipient of a leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosure. These results illustrate that employees are more likely to evaluate leaders' substance abuse disclosures more harshly than any other type of disclosure, which may hold important implications for the leader-follower relationship after the disclosure. Leaders' concealable stigmatized identity disclosures did not make a difference to how much employees liked their manager/supervisor, but leader disclosures of substance abuse disclosure directly were detrimental for employee ratings of leadership effectiveness - especially when the disclosure was perceived as inappropriate.

The possibility of a shift towards employees offering support for leaders (i.e., perception of their effectiveness is enhanced) who are open and transparent about a minority sexual orientation, but the presence of strong stigma against mental illness - especially substance abuse – remains prevalent in organizational and leader-follower contexts and may have deleterious outcomes for employee evaluations of their leader. For leaders, disclosure appropriateness is an important consideration that may assist with building trust with followers.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	**20200666-BA**
Approval Period:	September 27, 2019 – September 30, 2020
Funding Source:	Not Funded
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Kara Arnold Business Administration
Title of Project:	*Employee attitudes and outcomes after a leaders' stigmatized identity is disclosed*

September 27, 2019

Ms. Amanda Hancock
Faculty of Business Administration
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Ms. Hancock:

Thank you for your correspondence of September 18, 2019 addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project. ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to September 30, 2020. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project.

The *TCPS2* **requires** that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before September 30, 2020. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. If you need to make changes during the project which may raise ethical concerns, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes for the Committee's consideration prior to implementation. If funding is obtained subsequent to approval, you must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR before this clearance can be linked to your award.

All post-approval event forms noted above can be submitted from your Researcher Portal account by clicking the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Portal homepage. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Blidook, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

KB/bc

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Kara Arnold, Faculty of Business Administration

APPENDIX B: STUDY 1 MEASURES

Implicit Leadership Theories (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005)

Using the 9-point scale from 'Extremely uncharacteristic' to 'Extremely characteristic', please indicate how characteristic each trait would be of your current business leader.

Extremely un-characteristic	Very un-characteristic	Somewhat un-characteristic	Slightly un-characteristic	Neutral / Un-decided	Slightly characteristic	Somewhat characteristic	Very characteristic	Extremely characteristic
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Clever	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Motivated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dedicated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Hardworking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Energetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Domineering	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pushy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Manipulative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Loud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Conceited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Selfish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Masculine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Male	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Affective Trust in Leader (Yang & Mossholder, 2010)

Please complete the table about your current manager/supervisor by indicating your agreement on the 5-point scale.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I'm confident that my supervisor will always care about my personal needs at work.	1	2	3	4	5
If I shared my problems with my supervisor, I know (s)he would respond with care.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident that I could share my work difficulties with my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm sure I could openly communicate my feelings to my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel secure with my supervisor because of his/her sincerity.	1	2	3	4	5

Leader Vulnerability (Gibson, Harari & Marr, 2018)

To what extent does your *current* manager/supervisor...

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	A Moderate amount	A good amount	A great deal	Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Display insecurity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Look to their direct reports for support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Leader Effectiveness (Vecchio & Anderson, 2009)

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about your current manager/supervisor.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I am satisfied with the quality of leadership I receive.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I receive very effective leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
My leader is an example of an ideal leader.	1	2	3	4	5
My leader helps this organization to thrive	1	2	3	4	5
My leader is the kind of leader that others should aspire to become.	1	2	3	4	5

Leader Liking (Brown & Keeping, 2005)

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I think that my supervisor would make a good friend	1	2	3	4	5
I get along well with my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
Working with my supervisor is a pleasure.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: STUDY 2A AND 2B MEASURES

Leader Effectiveness (Vecchio & Anderson, 2009)

If the manager in this scenario, were *your* manager please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I would feel satisfied with the quality of leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, this leader would provide very effective leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
This leader would be an example of an ideal leader.	1	2	3	4	5
This leader would help the organization to thrive.	1	2	3	4	5
This leader is the kind of leader that others should aspire to become.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D: STUDY 3 MEASURES

Disclosure Appropriateness (Arena & Jones, 2017)

To what extent would you agree with each of the statements below if you directly reported to this supervisor:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

This manager disclosing parts of their life was not relevant to this conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I would have preferred to know less about this manager's life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I respect this manager's decision to reveal some aspects of their life								

Affective Trust in Leader (Yang & Mossholder, 2010)

Please complete the next two tables about your current manager/supervisor by indicating your agreement on the 5-point scale.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I would be confident that this supervisor would always care about my personal needs at work.	1	2	3	4	5
If I shared my problems with this supervisor, I know they would respond with care.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm confident that I could share my work difficulties with this supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm sure I could openly communicate my feelings to this supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
I would feel secure with this supervisor because of their sincerity.	1	2	3	4	5

Leader Vulnerability

Based on your impressions of the supervisor in the scenario to what extent do you feel that he/she...

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	A Moderate amount	A good amount	A great deal	Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Displayed insecurity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Seemed like they needed support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Leader Effectiveness (Vecchio & Anderson, 2009)

If the manager in this scenario, were *your* manager please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I would feel satisfied with the quality of leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, this leader would provide very effective leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
This leader would be an example of an ideal leader.	1	2	3	4	5
This leader would help the organization to thrive.	1	2	3	4	5
This leader is the kind of leader that others should aspire to become.	1	2	3	4	5

Leader Liking (Brown & Keeping, 2005)

Based on what you know about the supervisor in this scenario, respond to the following items as if they were your immediate supervisor/manager.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

I think that this supervisor would make a good friend.	1	2	3	4	5
I would get along well with this supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
Working with this supervisor would be a pleasure.	1	2	3	4	5