

December 11, 2011

Dear Researcher,

Thank you for your interest in the Outness Inventory. The scale was published in a scientific journal for use in the public domain. You do not need to contact any of the authors for permission to use this scale in noncommercial research. You may *not* use the scale for commercial purposes without permission.

The following pages contain the scale itself, as well as basic information about the scale. If you have questions or concerns about the scale that are not addressed in these pages, then feel free to contact me using the contact information below. Best wishes with your research!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Mohr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M'.

Jonathan Mohr

Assistant Professor
Counseling Psychology Program
Department of Psychology
2145K Biology-Psychology Building
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742-4411
E-mail: jmohr@umd.edu
Office phone: 301-405-5907
Office fax: 301-314-5966

INFORMATION SHEET: *OUTNESS INVENTORY*

What is the Outness Inventory?

The Outness Inventory (OI) is an 11-item scale designed to assess the degree to which lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals are open about their sexual orientation. Responses on OI items indicate the degree to which the respondent's sexual orientation is known by and openly discussed with various types of individuals (e.g., mother, work peers).

How can OI data be used?

Our analyses suggested that individuals can use the OI in three different ways. First, data from individual items can be used if the researcher is interested in outness to specific figures or types of figures (e.g., mother, work peers). Second, factor analyses indicated that the OI can be used to provide information about levels of outness in three different life domains: family, everyday life, and religion. Finally, analyses suggested that the OI can also be used to provide an index of overall outness.

How is the OI scored?

Out to Family = average of items 1, 2, 3, and 4

Out to World = average of items 5, 6, 7, and 10

Out to Religion = average of items 8 and 9

Overall Outness = average of the above three subscales

Why is Overall Outness scored by averaging subscales rather than items?

The factor analyses used to develop the scale suggested that outness has a hierarchical factor structure, where overall outness is represented by lower level domains of outness (e.g., outness to family, outness in one's religious institution). Thus, from a conceptual and measurement perspective, it makes the most sense to average the subscales rather than the individual items. There is also a practical reason to score Overall Outness in this manner. If Overall Outness were calculated by averaging together individual items, then one would end up with a score that gives less weight to domains associated with fewer items (in this case, Outness to Religion).

Why don't the subscales include item 11 (old heterosexual friends)?

In the exploratory factor analysis used to develop the scale, this item had strong loadings on both Out to Family and Out to World. This finding likely reflects the reality that relationships with old heterosexual friends are like family relationships in some ways, and like everyday friendships in other ways. Because this item did not cleanly load on a single subscale, we did not include it in subscales. However, researchers are free to use respondent ratings on this item in whatever way suits their purposes. In particular, if you are using only a single subscale in your research (e.g., Out to World), then you might consider adding in the item. Similarly, if you are using the measure of overall outness, then it may make sense to include the item.

How are participants supposed to respond to items that represent classes of people (e.g., siblings, work peers)?

Instructions ask respondents to indicate how "generally out" they are to the class of people. Such items do not allow participants to indicate their outness levels to specific people. Thus, in its published form, the measure does not allow researchers to differentiate a participant's outness levels to different siblings. If you wish to make such distinctions in your research, then, as indicated below, we encourage you to consider adding items to the measure. For example, a researcher might consider allowing respondents to indicate outness levels to each of her siblings.

What should be done if participants do not respond to all items?

It is not unusual for participants to leave an item blank because the item is not applicable. For example, some individuals will not be able to provide a rating for "father" because their father died by the time they were aware of their sexual orientation. Similarly, nonreligious individuals will not be able to provide meaningful responses for the religion items. Such situations can be dealt with by simply taking the average of all available information. For example, if a respondent has no response for "father" but has responses for all other Out to Family items, then you can calculate an Out to Family score for this person by averaging the three other relevant items. To calculate person's score for Overall Outness, you can simply calculate the average of all items for which ratings are available. Finally, it is worth noting that unanswered OI items could be handled with advanced methods developed for dealing with missing data, such as

multiple imputation and full information maximum likelihood approaches (see Schafer & Graham, 2002 in *Psychological Methods*).

Can I add items?

Adding items (or even removing items) may be advisable depending on the population you are surveying. For example, if you know that your population includes many individuals from blended families, then you may want to include stepparent items. Decisions about which subscale such items should go in can be made using common sense (e.g., “stepmother” should probably go into Out to Family) or statistical analyses (e.g., factor analyses, examination of item-total correlations).

Can I change the rating scale?

The rating scale is, in part, what makes the OI a unique and sensitive measure of outness. We discourage users from making any substantive changes to the rating scale. With that said, we have received feedback suggesting that it might be worth changing the “RARELY” on rating point 5 to “NEVER or RARELY.”

What are the psychometric properties of the OI?

Data from a large sample of partnered LGB adults provided good initial support for the reliability and validity of the OI. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (conducted separately for women and men) were used to derive the subscales. Before using the OI, we suggest that you read about the instrument development process in the following article:

Mohr, J. J., & Fassinger, R. E. (2000). Measuring dimensions of lesbian and gay male experience. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 33, 66-90.

OUTNESS INVENTORY

Use the following rating scale to indicate how open you are about your sexual orientation to the people listed below. Try to respond to all of the items, but leave items blank if they do not apply to you. If an item refers to a group of people (e.g., work peers), then indicate how out you generally are to that group.

- 1 = person definitely does NOT know about your sexual orientation status
- 2 = person might know about your sexual orientation status, but it is NEVER talked about
- 3 = person probably knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is NEVER talked about
- 4 = person probably knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is RARELY talked about
- 5 = person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is RARELY talked about
- 6 = person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is SOMETIMES talked about
- 7 = person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is OPENLY talked about

- 0 = not applicable to your situation; there is no such person or group of people in your life

1. mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2. father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3. siblings (sisters, brothers)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4. extended family/relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5. my <u>new</u> straight friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6. my work peers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7. my work supervisor(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8. members of my religious community (e.g., church, temple)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9. leaders of my religious community (e.g., church, temple)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10. strangers, new acquaintances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11. my <u>old</u> heterosexual friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0