Transgender TikTok: Analyzing Insider and Outsider Perspectives of a Heavily Debated Topic

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ABSTRACT

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In this qualitative media analysis, I accessed and deconstructed content regarding transgender individuals and topics on the popular social media app: TikTok. The objective was to understand the construction of the transgender child on TikTok. Thirty-five TikTok videos about transgender topics were collected between April and September of 2022 through multiple user accounts. Videos originated either from insider (transgender and nonbinary) or outsider (cisgender) creators. The content in this data was analyzed for its messages, whether opinion- or experience-based, regarding transgender people and concepts. Three emerging themes were extracted from the data: change, harm versus care, and traditional beliefs. TikTok content on transgender issues was not limited to one type of video (i.e., comedy skit, informative lesson, interviews, storytelling). Creators used mixed methods, such as audio, filters, and trending video formats to relay their messages and opinions to their audience. A key finding is that videos were polarized to the two extremes, one affirming and supporting transgender individuals and the other delegitimizing diverse gender identities and promoting harm against transgender individuals.

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Introduction

TikTok, developed by ByteDance, is a video-posting app that allows users to create content, share audio, and follow other users. It was created in 2016 but rose to popularity in 2020, being downloaded 850 million times (Iqbal, 2021). Before 2020, I was under the impression that TikTok was an app for adolescents to participate in viral dances and lip-sync to popular songs. However, after the first COVID-19 lockdown, I found myself bored and decided to download the app as many of my friends were doing. It quickly became the app responsible for the majority of my screen time as I was endlessly scrolling through videos that were specifically tailored to me and my interests. I also realized how much knowledge was being spread on the app. My friends and I would exchange information we learned about any and every topic. I found myself mostly drawn to the 'story time' TikTok videos where creators would tell a true story of their personal lives. These stories ranged from being funny, heartfelt, and sad to terrifying, infuriating, and vindicating. I was enthralled with all of them, especially when they were related to topics that interested me and topics that I have studied, such as child development, education and gender diversity. I learned that virtually any topic can be discussed on the app and quickly realized how important social media was for relating to and teaching others in informal but meaningful ways. Knowing that TikTok was originally only popular among younger generations, I was curious to learn what this meant for younger viewers, especially those exploring diverse gender identities.

The app allows any user to create a maximum 3-minute video with either their original audio (called "sound") or through borrowing audio from another video. Videos play without needing to be started and users can scroll through videos of people they follow or on their "for you" page, which displays videos specifically chosen for them based on an artificial

intelligence algorithm. TikTok is unique to other apps, such as YouTube, in several ways. Its automatically playing, short-video format has been found to promote addictive-like qualities in its users (Su et al., 2021), its demographic is largely under the age of 18 (i.e., 28% in 2021, Iqbal, 2021), and users do not need a large following for their video to go viral, due to the algorithm and "for you" page. Like YouTube, the comment sections of the videos are highly active and often foster support, debates, arguments, and personalized opinions on the content of the video. Due to its relatively new emergence in the world of social media, research on the app is limited. Although many users create comedic, artistic, or informative content, a large number of users – as noted above – discuss their personal life stories, events, and opinions. This means that some users tell stories about raising their transgender children, discuss important events like coming out as transgender to their parents, or give their personal opinions on transgender issues, to name a few examples. This life story use of TikTok provided a valuable hub of information on transgender children, their families, and opinions from the general public on transgender topics.

This paper applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework and focused on expanding the study of the transgender child to include the macrosystem. I examined how cultural beliefs and social attitudes about the transgender child were constructed on TikTok. This focus allowed me to uncover a range of perceptions from a sample of TikTok users. In the early stages of his ecological systems model of human development, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that the microsystem, meaning direct relationships in the child's life (i.e., with parents, siblings, teachers, etc.), was the sole focus of many childcare professionals. Although the microsystem is highly impactful on the child's development, systems that exist outside of the child's immediate or tangible surroundings undergird the experiences of the child and the

people in their micro and meso-systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), particularly now in the age of social media. Therefore, accessing and understanding the macrosystem surrounding the transgender child is important and TikTok allowed me to do just that.

Note About Terminology

The terms *gender expansive*, *gender diverse* and *transgender* will be used throughout this paper. Much of the current research uses *gender non-conforming* and *gender variant*, however, I will be replacing gender non-conforming with gender expansive when speaking about children who defy traditional gender norms, as it fosters positive connotations and does not automatically assume that conformity to the gender binary is expected. I will be replacing gender variant with gender diverse when speaking about children who may not identify with their assigned gender at birth but who have not taken the label of transgender. As well, the word *transgender* is used in this paper to define children who identify with the label and whose gender identity does not match their assigned gender at birth.

Although many of the terms have and can be used interchangeably, the distinctions are helpful to this paper because the experiences can differ greatly between children who do not conform to gender norms and children who identify as a gender outside of their assigned gender, or who identify as transgender. I would also like to mention that umbrella terms like these can never encapsulate all genders that exist outside the binary as they still work within the gender binary. Furthermore, although I feel it is important to move away from classifying every person somewhere within the binary, I will use terms like gender expansive, gender diverse and transgender, which all work within the spectrum. The popular idea that gender is a spectrum places male and female on either end and gender diverse individuals somewhere in between. It is based on genitalia and actively excludes intersex individuals. In my opinion, gender should

instead be considered a constellation with no start or end point and therefore include those who do not view themselves on the spectrum.

Finally, the colloquial expression *outing* (or being outed) will be used in this paper as well. It draws from the popular term "coming out" but instead signifies that someone publicly discloses the gender identity or sexual orientation of another person without their consent. In the LGBTQIA+ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual plus), this is considered a violent act as it can result in serious consequences for the individual (GLAAD, n.d.).

Literature Review

Social, Legal, and Physical Transition

This literature review will mention three different kinds of transition that gender diverse and transgender children may undertake throughout their life course: social, legal, and physical. It should be noted that not all transgender and gender diverse people go through every type of transition and many do not undertake a transition at all (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016). A social transition can include unofficial name changes, pronoun changes, changes in clothing, and changes in hair. A legal transition can include legal name changes, and change of sex and gender on birth certificates, passports, and IDs. A physical transition can include hormone blockers, hormone replacement therapy, gender confirmation therapies, and voice therapy. A physical transition generally begins after the age of 18, with the exception of hormone blockers, which usually start before the child experiences puberty (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016). These are examples of what a transition can look like and while each type of transition can be discussed further, this lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Gender and Development

Gender identity formation begins at a fairly young age. Based on a meta-analysis in 2010 from researchers Carol Lynn Martin and Diane Ruble, most children understand the concept of gender by 21 months, and by two years of age, most identify with a gender label. Despite it being largely unquestioned for cisgender toddlers and young children to identify their gender early on, it remains controversial whether to believe the vocal attestations and physical manifestations of young children who do not identify with their assigned gender. When looking at the HBO documentary *Transhood* (Liese, 2020), three out of four children in the documentary stated their gender identity at ages three or four, prior to their social and, later, physical transition (Kacala, 2020; Haynes, 2020). Several research studies on transgender topics (see Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2014; Sansfaçon et al., 2015) include parent participants with transgender children under the age of seven. These findings suggest that transgender or gender diverse children have early understandings of their gender identity.

It may also be difficult for cisgendered adults to understand and empathise with the gender experience of a transgender child because they may never have questioned their assigned gender as it fit with their experienced gender, ultimately making the two inseparable. Common beliefs identified by Kristina Olson and colleagues (2015) about transgender children include that they are confused or lying about their gender identity. The authors, therefore, sought to compare the cognitive processes of transgender children with their matched cisgender controls. They found no significant differences in implicit and explicit measures of gender preferences and identity between transgender children and cisgender children with the same gender identity (e.g., transgender girls assigned male at birth matched with cisgender girls assigned female at birth). Similarly, they found significant differences in implicit and explicit

measures of preference and identity between transgender children and cisgender children with the same assigned gender (for example, transgender boys assigned female at birth did not match with cisgender girls assigned female at birth). Furthermore, the authors found that implicit and explicit gender preferences and identity of transgender children were significantly associated with their expressed gender identity and not their assigned gender at birth. Despite being preliminary, this area of research is beginning to show that gender, whether conforming or not, is a personal and internal experience rather than a preference. Understanding and validating the gender experience of transgender children has important implications on the type of approach taken by cisgendered professionals, parents, and teachers.

Reparative Versus Affirmative Approach

Darryl Hill and colleagues (2010) describe the differences between the reparative approach and the affirmative approach. The reparative approach is taken when parents, schools, and childcare professionals attempt to restrict the child's gender variant behaviours and have them confine to their assigned gender in expression and self-identification. This is attempted through the use of social reinforcement procedures that can include examples like policing hairstyle, clothing, name choice, the types of play and activities the child engages in, and the types of toys the child has (Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006; Hill et al., 2010). As illustration, one father explained that in the beginning of his daughter's transition he attempted to enforce activities like shooting BB guns and playing football onto his transgender daughter in order to make her more masculine (Kacala, 2020).

The affirmative approach is taken when individuals in the child's life accept them as transgender, allow them to express their gender and support them through social, physical, and legal transitioning (Hill et al., 2010; Riggs & Due, 2014). Affirmation is not synonymous with

acceptance however, as simply accepting gender variance is a passive act. The child may be allowed to engage in non-traditional gendered behaviours and dress in certain ways, but acceptance does little to advocate for the child, create safe spaces or ease the path towards transitioning. Parents, schools, and childcare professionals who take the affirmative approach to their gender expansive children need to actively engage in the process and provide support when needed.

The Microsystem – Home

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined the child's microsystem as those who are in direct relation to the child, which includes individuals in the home environment (i.e., caregivers, parents, and siblings) and school. Current research on transgender and gender expansive children is largely focused on parent-child relationships. Therefore, a review of the literature on these home environments and approaches to care is needed to understand the microsystem of the transgender and gender diverse child. The research on the home will be presented in the following sections: outcomes of each approach (reparative vs. affirmative), barriers to affirmative parenting, and different ways to be an affirmative parent.

Outcomes of Each Approach

Transgender children with parents who ultimately affirm their gender identity face more favourable outcomes (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Simons et al., 2013; TransPULSE, 2013). Parents who initially attempted a reparative approach described an increase in their child's internalizing behaviours (i.e., depression and anxiety) and externalizing behaviours (i.e., physical and verbal aggression) that only subsided after the parents rejected the reparative approach and adopted an affirmative one instead (Hill & Menvielle, 2009). Lisa Simons and colleagues (2013) found a significant increase in life satisfaction and decrease in depressive

symptoms and perceived burden of being transgender in 66 transgender youth with supportive parents. When looking at reports from 84 transgender teenagers, the Trans PULSE project (2013) found a significant difference in life satisfaction, mental health, self-esteem, depressive symptoms, suicide ideation and suicide attempts in favour of those with affirmative parents when compared to those without. For example, 70% of those with affirmative parents reported positive mental health versus 15% of those without, and 4% of those with affirmative parents reported attempting suicide versus 57% of those without affirmative parents. Given the favourable outcomes regarding children's safety and overall wellbeing, affirmation should therefore be considered a form of harm reduction.

Barriers to Affirmative Parenting

Although countless research supports affirmative parenting of transgender children, many parents struggle when their child either comes out as transgender or is gender diverse (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2014; Sansfaçon et al., 2015; Liese, 2020). This could be due to a variety of barriers. Parents may experience a lack of support from their family. For example, in the documentary *Transhood*, the mother of Jay, a trans boy, stated that Jay's grandmother stopped speaking to them and claimed that she [Jay's mom] was abusing her child (Liese, 2020, 0:23:04).The grandparents of Phoenix, a four-year old who identified as a girl in the first part of the documentary, did not show up to his birthday due to disagreeing with Phoenix's affirming parents (Liese, 2020, 0:39:21). Damien Riggs and Clemence Due (2014) found that parents received less help from extended family members unless they could provide a formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria or gender identity disorder. Yet, there is also a lack of support in the medical community. Many parents interviewed recounted traumatic experiences with healthcare professionals, where they were blamed and judged, and their child's gender identity was not

taken seriously (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2014). Parents recounted being instructed to enforce rigid gender norms and reject gender expansion. For example, a parent interviewed by Hill and Menvielle (2009) claims she was instructed to ignore any behaviours that were "feminine" from her child who was assigned male at birth, for instance, artwork deemed feminine. Without support from other family members and childcare professionals, parents may feel ashamed, place blame on themselves, or believe that affirming their child's gender identity is the wrong choice. Even when affirmative social and medical services are available, they are sometimes not accessible to parents. All parents interviewed by Annie Pullen Sansfaçon and colleagues (2015) agreed that the limited resources in their city (Montreal) were difficult to access. One parent even described feeling lost and helpless after a situation in which the pediatrician did nothing regarding their child's suicide ideation. Lack in accessibility also includes financial issues, for instance, many parents expressed stress when discussing hormone blockers for their child (Sansfaçon et al., 2015). This is also demonstrated in a scene in *Transhood* where Jay's mom breaks down in the endocrinologist's office after explaining that her health insurance did not cover the hormone blockers that were unaffordable to her (Liese, 2020, 0:15:09).

Parents can also have issues accepting their child due to their own lack of knowledge and understanding. 38% of participants interviewed by Darryl Hill and Edgardo Menvielle (2009) and three of the four parents from *Transhood* (Liese, 2020) initially believed that their child was going through a phase, and therefore did not affirm their child's gender identity and expression when they first began their social transition or gender expansive behaviours. As much as 60% of the parents in one study had engaged in reparative tactics, like forcing their child to wear specific clothing, before ultimately affirming their child's experienced gender

(Hill & Menvielle, 2009). Through a series of closed- and open-ended question, Riggs and Due (2014) found that parents reported themselves and the siblings of their gender expansive child to be more supportive at the time of the interview than they were three years prior. Fathers and stepfathers were found to be slower than mothers in accepting and affirming their child's gender identity and were significantly more likely to use the pronouns associated with the assigned gender of their child, especially if the assigned gender was male (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2014). Parents across these interviews reported that accepting their child and their gender expression, identity, and behaviours took six months to a year and continued to be an ongoing process.

Finally, parents who had issues affirming their child's gender identity and expression (i.e., name change, clothing, hair style, pronouns) sometimes described a sense of loss. One parent explained that she had to give up on the dreams she had of having a son and what it meant to her to have a son (Hill & Menvielle, 2009). Jay's mom from *Transhood* cried when Jay's deadname (name of person before social transition) was written on the hospital wristband. She explained that despite her therapist saying he was always the same child, she could not help but feel him changing (Liese, 2020, 0:21:19).

A lack of support from the extended family and medical system, along with the need to change one's conceptualization of gender and internalized image of their child are all barriers to providing affirmative care. Parents need to find ways to affirm their gender expansive and diverse children as it is crucial for their children's mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing (see Hill & Menvielle, 2009; TransPULSE, 2013; Simons et al., 2013).

Different Ways to be an Affirmative Parent

Affirmative parenting with transgender and gender diverse children is not always clear,

simple, or – as described above – something that is instantly achieved. Unconditional love from a parent is crucial to affirmative parenting but there are other factors that are important and cannot be fully realized without specific knowledge and external support. Parents interviewed by Riggs and Due (2014) explained how they assisted their child's transition. Some mentioned buying gender-relevant clothing, using correct pronouns, and mentally and financially preparing for a physical transition when their child is older. Other parents were affirmative by doing extensive research on physically transitioning and subsequently providing it to their teen. When asked why she was putting Jay on hormone blockers, Jay's mother reasoned that having a happy son is far better than a suicidal daughter and that it is extremely unlikely that Jay will want to pursue female puberty after the blockers (Liese, 2020, 0:23:11). Similarly, Leena's parents flew across the country to provide Leena with gender reassignment surgery at 19 after Leena explained how uncomfortable she was in her body and experienced extreme and consistent gender dysphoria (Liese, 2020, 1:27:31). Avery's mother explained that she was raised in a Baptist-conservative household and changed her entire worldview to accept her transgender daughter (Liese, 2020, 0:17:10). Other parents displayed affirmative parenting by advocating for their children in schools, the medical sphere and larger society (Sansfaçon et al., 2015).

Affirmative parenting is complex and multi-faceted. It requires time, openness to learn, unconditional love, active support, empathy, and patience. Despite there being many physical, legal, and often personal barriers to become fully supportive parents of transgender children, research suggests that this approach is the only one that has favourable outcomes for the child and their development. The negative response of parents to their child's gender expansion can have serious impacts on the child. Affirming their gender identity and providing a safe space

within the home is sometimes the only acceptance they receive. Indeed, some parents feel hopeless because their support is not enough to counter the discrimination faced in school and one parent described her child's suicide attempt as a direct result of that (Sansfaçon et al., 2015; Davy & Cordoba, 2020).

The Microsystem – School

The literature has shown that affirmative support from parents is complex but necessary for the child's wellbeing and survival. As stated above, gender expansive and transgender children can still struggle in their experiences at school, despite having access to affirmative care at home (Sansfaçon et al., 2015; Davy & Cordoba, 2020). This coincides with Bronfenbrenner's claim that the child's wellbeing and development is largely affected by all systems within the microsystem, or all those who have a direct and tangible relationship with the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, a review of the literature on school staff and peers in relation to the transgender and gender expansive child is necessary to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the microsystem. The research on school will be presented in the following sections: stigma and discrimination, a school's response to discrimination, barriers to affirmative care, and building an affirmative school culture. Stigma and discrimination will include the subsections of peers and school staff.

Stigma and Discrimination

Amongst Peers. Gender stereotyping and policing can begin amongst children as early as three years of age. Starting at the preschool level, children have been observed to police other children when they violate gender norms, such as playing with toys or wearing clothes that do not typically match their assigned gender, and this policing has been shown to continue in primary and secondary school (Martin & Ruble, 2010; Davy & Cordoba, 2020). Transgender-

based violence is also found in reports from parents. Two parents from different studies reported on classmates peeking through the bathroom stalls to find out what their child's genitalia looked like, and another parent reported their child receiving death threats and drawings of them being shot from other children (Hill & Menvielle, 2014; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021). Other parents described their child's suicide ideation and attempts due to their subjection to discrimination in school (Sansfaçon et al., 2015). Verbal abuse was also reported; examples include being called discriminatory names and being singled out in front of other children (Hill & Menvielle 2009; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021). Parents also described instances of physical violence towards their child such as other students destroying personal items like Barbie dolls, students slamming doors on their child, or students punching or hitting their child with objects (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021).

Amongst Staff. Elizabeth Meyer and Bethy Leonardi (2018) found that school staff could also be discriminatory, for example a teacher outed a transgender boy to the classroom after noticing his record showed "female." Hill and Menvielle (2009) and Tania Ferfolja and Jacqueline Ullman (2021) reported teachers pressuring children to use the bathroom of their assigned gender. In an interview with Ellen DeGeneres, Jay from *Transhood* recounted an experience in which his teacher informed other students not to touch the pencil he touched because she believed "transgenderism" could be spread (TheEllenShow, 2021). The idea of "transgenderism" being contagious was also reported by a parent interviewed by Sansfaçon and colleagues (2015) when they explained that other parents did not want their children exposed to that child [of the parent interviewed] out of fear of "contamination." Transgender-based violence in schools is a common occurrence (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Sansfaçon et al., 2015; Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021). The handling of these

situations by teachers and school leaders is critical in addressing and changing toxic school cultures.

School's Response to Discrimination

The anti-bullying policies that take place in schools usually do not account for specific anti-transgender discrimination and Ferfolja and Ullman (2021) argue that these policies are not sufficient in targeting specific discrimination against gender diverse children. The authors also demonstrate how some schools use "band-aid" solutions, or solutions that are surface-level, and do nothing to tackle anti-transgender discrimination amongst peers. Examples of "band-aid" solutions as reported by parents include keeping the child indoors during recess, having them use the staff or disabled washrooms, or restricting any discussion of gender at all (Payne, 2018; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021).

Gender diverse children can sometimes be penalized and blamed by school staff for the discrimination they face. A survey of over 3100 gender diverse students found a positive correlation between levels of experienced discrimination and referrals to the principal, school detention, and suspension of the victimized student (Palmer & Greytak, 2017). The researchers also found an increased tendency for staff to either do nothing about the discrimination, discipline the gender diverse child or instruct the child to change their behaviour. Solutions that do nothing to tackle the structural issues, such as gendered washrooms and uniforms, and that fail to provide resources for peers and teachers, are not sufficient in creating affirmative acceptance in schools.

Barriers to Affirmative Care

Some school staff as reported by Elizabethe Payne and Melissa Smith (2018) discussed their hesitancy towards supporting their transgender students out of fear of not remaining

politically neutral and receiving negative attention from the media and other parents. In these schools, protecting children whose gender identity remained unknown to their classmates was motivated by avoiding controversy, rather than the safety of the child. The researchers argued that the overwhelmingly fearful response to transgender students from their participants directly prevented the possibility for affirmative care (Payne & Smith, 2018). Reactions motivated by the need to contain transgender and gender expansive children limits productive conversations about gender diversity in classrooms and staffrooms (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021).

Other barriers to creating an affirmative school culture include a lack of training, preparation, and exposure from university and pre-service teacher education programs (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Payne & Smith, 2018). Teachers and school social workers interviewed by Payne and Smith (2018) felt ill-prepared and uncertain on how to handle issues of discrimination and policy (i.e., uniforms or bathrooms). They also commented on lacking any knowledge on diverse gender identities and the transgender experience. A few teachers felt the need for transgender students to be outed and to discuss their experience of gender openly in order to foster change in school culture and others explained that their lack of knowledge was due to not having a personal experience with a transgender individual (Payne & Smith, 2018; Mangin, 2020). The idea that transgender children should be responsible for educating their teachers and classmates about gender diversity and using their experience to foster understanding and compassion is ineffective, as it does not promote widespread affirmation and is unfair to the child.

Another barrier to affirmation includes a lack of policies and procedures put in place by the school boards and governments. One teacher described an incident in which the school physician argued that the child was too young to be transgender and others claimed they did

not know what to do, specifically because of a lack in policy (Payne & Smith, 2018). Policy change and implementation could potentially serve as helpful guidance, especially for cisgendered staff who have no previous exposure to the LGBTQIA+ community or transgender issues. The authors recommend that anti-transphobic training for pre-service teachers and school staff can sensitize staff and teach them effective ways to support and affirm transgender and gender expansive students (Payne & Smith, 2018).

Building an Affirmative School Culture

Melinda Mangin (2020) interviewed 20 supportive school leaders that had a transgender student at their school and found that all principals adopted a child-centered approach, where the child's social and emotional development and wellbeing was the primary focus. Principals also showed active engagement in learning about trans-specific issues. Many of them partook in workshops or hired training staff. Although all the principals in this study had chosen to build an affirmative school culture only after being exposed to a gender diverse student, they took action that promoted structural changes for that particular student and future students. Zowie Davy and Sebastian Cordoba (2020) identified similar strategies that led to a supportive school environment for transgender children, such as teachers welcoming name and uniform changes. Empowering the transgender child through education of school staff was often not possible without encouragement or direct action from the family, as many principals explained that their efforts to create an affirmative school culture came from the active involvement of the parents. Consistent open communication between families and school staff was, therefore, critical (Mangin, 2020)

The Mesosystem - Parents and Schools Working Together

Bronfenbrenner (1979) described the mesosystem as the interactions between

individuals in the child's microsystem. Here, the microsystems do not function independently of each other; it is their consistent communication and active involvement together that affects the child and their development. Examples include interactions between parents and teachers, or siblings and parents. This section will focus on the relationship between parents and school staff regarding the wellbeing of the transgender or gender diverse child.

Due to a lack in awareness amongst school staff, parents often need to advocate for their child by educating staff and suggesting ways to foster structural change. All principals interviewed by Mangin (2020) spoke about the importance of open and ongoing communication with the child's family. For some principals, the parent's advocacy and time spent educating staff was the sole and direct contributor to creating an affirmative school environment for their child. One family even paid for the staff to have specific training (Mangin, 2020). A parent with a transgender daughter interviewed by Tara Goldstein and colleagues (2018) described their extensive volunteer work with the school. They explained how they were able to answer gender-specific questions from peers during their volunteer time as a lunchroom supervisor. Mangin (2020) and Goldstein and colleagues (2018) uncover the effects of class in relation to transgender children's access to affirmative schools, as many parents who are less wealthy do not have the time or funds to be as present at the school.

As demonstrated from the current literature review, research on transgender and gender diverse children focuses largely on the direct relationships in the child's life, or, the micro- and meso- systems. Despite being an important factor in the ecology of child development, the macrosystem of the transgender child remains largely ignored.

The Macrosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the macrosystem is concerned with class,

ethnicity, culture and how these elements indirectly affect a child's development. Bronfenbrenner theorized that important cognitive processes such as perception, reasoning, imagination, and evaluation of one's quality of life is dependent on the influences of society. Changes in the macrosystem cause a ripple effect in the subsequent systems. In other words, as societal norms, ideas, and values begin to change, this causes change in lower-level structures, such as the workplaces, schools, and family unit. This top-down effect is explained by Bronfenbrenner through the example of the Great Depression, where he showed that children in working-class families were more heavily impacted in terms of psychological distress compared to their higher-class peers. This ripple effect of the economic crisis on the mental wellbeing of working-class children can be explained by their parent's newfound financial stress as the mediating factor. He also argued that these large shifts in the macrosystem had lifelong effects on these children as they performed worse in school and had fewer goals and aspirations than peers in the upper-class, up until middle age (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The importance of the macrosystem on transgender children's development cannot continue to be overlooked. As Bronfenbrenner demonstrated, teachers' and parents' beliefs can be drawn from cultural and societal norms and attitudes, which ultimately affects which approach they take (i.e., reparative or affirmative) with the child. For this reason, this thesis will expand the study of transgender children to the macrosystem by uncovering societal opinions, reactions, and perceptions of what it means to be transgender. Media culture, specifically social media content, is a significant part of the macrosystem of the transgender child.

Media and Culture

Our views of media are constantly evolving; as something once thought to be harmful to children (RobbGrieco, 2014), now can be used as an empowering tool for self-expression

and connection. This is not to say that we are presently liberated from the potentially harmful effects of modern technology and media. Popular media corporations, like TikTok, are most concerned with appealing to the masses in order to be as profitable as possible (Storey, 2009). The TikTok app – which now dominates social media platforms (Iqbal, 2021) – is notorious for its invasive data collection, which it uses to create tailored content and advertisements (O'Flaherty, 2021). Profit is prioritized over the wellbeing and safety of its users. For instance, despite a large portion of TikTok's demographic being under the age of 18, the app is shown to share content that promotes hate speech, bigotry, and harassment (Weimann & Masri, 2020). Notwithstanding the motives of the app's founders, TikTok can also be a source of empowerment, as users can express their creative talents, collaborate with other users, and recount anecdotes about their relationships, jobs, and families. This binary of hate and positivity can also be found in the comment sections of the app, where many users take the opportunity to express their opinions, especially regarding personal choices on political or controversial topics. The transgender child is one such topic.

While media and technology can be appropriated for educational purposes, they are also used to educate in out-of-school contexts (Domine, 2009). YouTube is well known for how-to videos and make-up tutorials, and TikTok creators are famous for their do-it-yourself (DIY) videos, recipe videos, and historical, political, and factual videos. Many users, for example, create short clips that document their life journeys, transitions, and trials and tribulations. Therefore, users can be exposed to real-life, first-hand experiences of situations they have never experienced before, including parenting a transgender child. This is a potentially new direct relationship between the macrosystem and the individual, in that the use of social media apps has revolutionized our connection to others outside of the traditional

systems (i.e., parents, friends, teachers) and it is important to properly understand the consequent implications of this phenomenon.

The Present Study

This study aimed to use a qualitative approach to explore and understand content about transgender issues and children on the TikTok app. The phenomenon of the transgender child remains controversial in families, schools, and communities. This study used a media analysis approach to examine the transgender child and transgender topics in larger society, or the macrosystem. My research questions were:

1. What perspectives about transgender individuals are presented on TikTok?
2. How is the transgender or gender expansive child represented and constructed on TikTok?

Methodology

Research Design

This research design was an adaptation of Sandra Chang-Kredl and Daniela Colannino's methods in their research on Reddit users' perspectives about best and worst teachers (2017). This study identified and analyzed TikTok content on transgender individuals with a focus on transgender childhood. I included video posts about transgender children and adults, such that TikTok video posts were selected if the content addressed transgender issues, including personal experiences or stories of transgender childhood and adulthood.

Sampling Selection Procedure

TikTok's algorithm is important to understand for the sampling selection of this study. As explained above, TikTok collects data on its users to create a personalized algorithm, displaying content that is specifically tailored to each individual (O'Flaherty, 2021). This was

advantageous to the data collection process as the more I interacted with transgender content (e.g., by liking, sharing, saving the video, and watching it to its full entirety), the more the app produced transgender content for me. To ensure that the algorithm did not produce a skewed representation of the available content, I used two TikTok accounts, with one designated for more affirmative content, and one designated to more negative or "reparative" content. I used hashtags such as "transgender," "transchildren," "transparent," "conservative," "antitrans" to search for initial videos and then continued to search for videos through the "for you" page. I was able to minimize my active search for transgender content, negative or positive, because the algorithm provided me with transgender content on my "for you" page. TikTok videos for this current study were extracted between April and September of 2022. I ended the data collection period when my "for you" page and search results became saturated with the same content.

Reflexivity and Peer Debriefing. My positionality is as an outsider on this topic. I am of white and middle-eastern descent and am white-passing. I am a cisgender woman who uses she/her pronouns. Although I am an outsider when it comes to transgender and gender diverse individuals, I have many personal experiences with close friends who are nonbinary or transgender that have ignited my passion for the topic. As well, my academic background consists of psychology and gender, sexuality, and feminist studies. I acknowledge, however, that my educational and personal experience in topics of gender diversity do not negate my implicit biases as a cisgendered individual. To increase awareness about my personal biases, thoughts, and reflections, I kept a reflexivity journal throughout the research process in which I documented my ideas and perceptions about my data and analysis. By allowing myself time to dissect my thoughts, I was able to consider alternative interpretations, identify the origins of my biases, and be mindful of my preconceptions when analysing the data. Finally, I reviewed

my interpretations with two of my peers in moments of uncertainty as an effort to check potential biases.

Data Coding and Analysis

Thirty-five TikTok videos were identified, extracted and summarized. The username, number of followers, and biography section of the creators' profiles were recorded as well as the number of likes, views and comments of the TikTok video. I used inductive coding with first and second-level coding to analyze the 35 TikTok videos on a qualitative research program called Quirkos. Mai Skjott Linnberg and Steffen Kossgard (2019) argue that inductive coding is best used when there are no prior analyses of the phenomenon, which describes my data set. Part of my inductive process was to primarily use in-vivo first-level codes directly from the data in order to highlight the creators' perspectives (Saldana, 2021). I also used descriptive, emotional, and values first-level codes. For the second-level coding process I used categorization techniques by grouping first-level codes into categories based on similar sentiments and properties to create second-level codes. From there, I extracted three emerging themes from the data. The inductive coding process allowed me to be open to finding meaningful themes about transgender children in social media, an area for which I was not able to find published research.

Findings

I found 35 videos through the two accounts I created that included a large variety of topics surrounding transgender issues. The following sections will discuss positionality (insider or outsider), sentiment (trans-positive or trans-negative) and emerging themes of the data.

Positionality: Insider and Outsider Perspectives. In my data set, 17 TikTok videos were from the perspective of a transgender person (considered an insider perspective) and 18 were from the perspective of a cisgender person (considered an outsider perspective). Four

videos from the outsider perspective were created by parents of transgender children. It should be noted that I only labeled the creator as an insider if they explicitly mentioned they were transgender or non-binary in the video or on their profile. Tables 1 and 2 provide a brief description of each insider and outsider TikTok, respectively (please see Appendix A for full transcriptions and demographic information). It is clear that each TikTok was unique, as content varied in topics, messages, and emotional tones.

Table 1

Descriptions of TikTok Videos: Insider

TikTok	Description
1	Insider using masculine filter to make a joke about how bad it would have been if she did not have trans-affirmative care when she was younger.
2	Insider comparing photos of herself in boy's and girl's cheerleading uniforms. Explains importance of trans-people playing in the sport of their transitioned gender.
3	Insider going to yoga for the first time as a girl and expresses fear of locker room situation. After the class, she concludes that it went well.
12	Insider explaining the history behind the terms: Transexual, Gender Identity Disorder, Transgender and Gender Dysphoria and their links to the DSM.
13	Compilation of pictures and videos of an insider's transition throughout the years followed by a real-time video of him talking about his hopelessness and perseverance.
14	Insider responding to a TikTok where the creator argues that not disclosing one's transgender identity before intercourse is rape. Insider explains that it is a transphobic and discrediting statement.
15	Insider arguing that grieving transitioning children is harmful to their well-being. He says that parents need to provide unconditional love and support instead.
16	Video of insider holding cake while family sings happy birthday and uses his deadname (except sister).
19	Insider uses trend to explain that their parents were accepting when they came out as transgender but not accepting when they actually transitioned.
21	Insider speaking about loving your children unconditionally in response to a comment saying "no kid of mine will be transgender".
24	Insider explaining how his best friend went back to change his name on all photos that displayed his deadname in the caption on Facebook, unprompted.

25	Insider showing their transgender daughter explore gender throughout the years and ends the video with a delayed gender reveal party.
26	Insider coming out as transgender to their parents in a restaurant. They accept it immediately and provide comfort.
27	Insider telling a story about how a classmate was bullied for four years after he admitted he had a crush on her.
28	Insider pleading with viewers who are not transphobic to interact with her video after receiving death threats on a previous video from transphobic viewers.
29	Insider acting out a skit of meeting new people and subtly trying to find out if they are transphobic.
30	Insider making a joke about how she was the only boy born in over 50 years on her mom's side but then turned out to be transgender.

Table 2

Descriptions of TikTok Videos: Outsider

TikTok	Description
4	Interview with outsider (Ben Shapiro) explaining that, in public, he uses pronouns that match the "biology" of a trans-person for the sake of the objective truth and correct speech.
5	Outsider (Candace Owens) on her podcast stating that she believes being transgender is a mental disorder and compares it to her uncle who has delusions about his race.
6	Outsider watching TikTok 7 and labeling it child abuse. Argues that the mother made the decision for her son. Believes children should not be allowed to make decisions about permanently altering their bodies
7	Old clip posted by outsider of her cutting her trans-son's hair for the first time. Mother is very hesitant, and son is persistent and impatient.
8	Outsider arguing that intentionally misgendering people is not discrimination since using "they/them" is not proper. Believes trans-people are emotionally damaged.
9	Outsider pretending to come out in a mocking way as a form of ridicule.
10	Outsider telling the story of his trans-son coming out. He describes his son's gender exploration early on and talks about his testosterone injections as an older teen.
11	Outsider interviews stranger on street about Florida's Parental Rights in Education Bill. Interviewee is against bill.
17	Outsider arguing that transwomen should not be allowed in female sports due to a biological advantage.
18	Outsider disproves TikTok 17 with real-life examples of trans-women in sports and argues that this controversy is about hypothetical situations used to mask transphobia.

20	Young boy sets off paper cannon that blows out blue confetti at a pride event. He runs to his mom (outsider) in a loving embrace as she cries and congratulates him.
22	Outsider asking her son how he feels about his transgender brother coming out and his new chosen name. Her son responds positively.
23	Outsider is helping his younger sister and brother into princess dresses.
31	Outsider commenting on "What is a Woman" documentary, explaining that gender studies professors only have a biological definition of a woman when it comes to the debate on abortion. Claims that biology is the only true way to define a woman.
32	Outsider talking about her tomboy phase as a child and implying transgender boys are simply going through phases.
33	Outsider asking stranger on street “What is a woman?” and interviewee arguing that only women (trans or cis) know the answer. Interviewee leaves after being ridiculed.
34	Outsider (Jordan Peterson) being interviewed about his refusal to use pronouns of a transgender person. He talks about freedom of speech and the legitimacy of trans-people.
35	Outsider explaining why he feels he doesn't need to respect the pronouns of his interviewee.

Sentiment: Trans-positive and Trans-negative. The dataset was further analyzed in terms of sentiment (trans-positive vs. trans-negative) of the TikTok. For this study, the label trans-positive is used to describe videos that legitimize transgender identities through their messages. Outsider perspectives varied in trans-positive and trans-negative messages, with a greater number delegitimizing transgender identities. Figures 1 and 2 display the distribution of trans-positive and trans-negative videos from the outsider and insider perspectives. Out of the 18 outsider videos, two-thirds (12) were negative and the remaining one-third (6) were positive. Not surprisingly, all insider creators posted videos that were trans-positive, even if they discussed negative aspects of the transgender experience (i.e., harm experienced because of discrimination).

Figure 1

Outsider Positionality

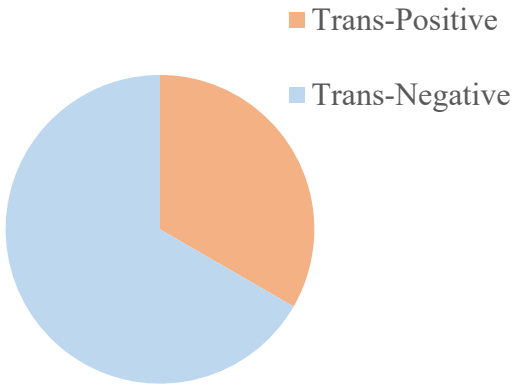
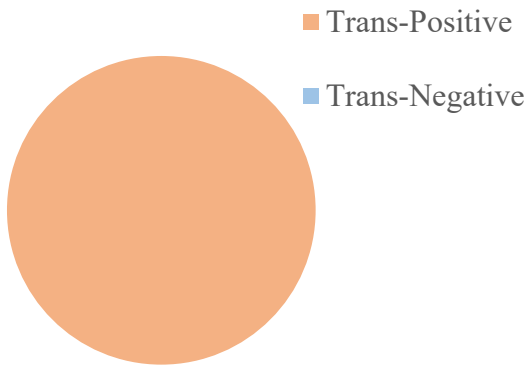


Figure 2

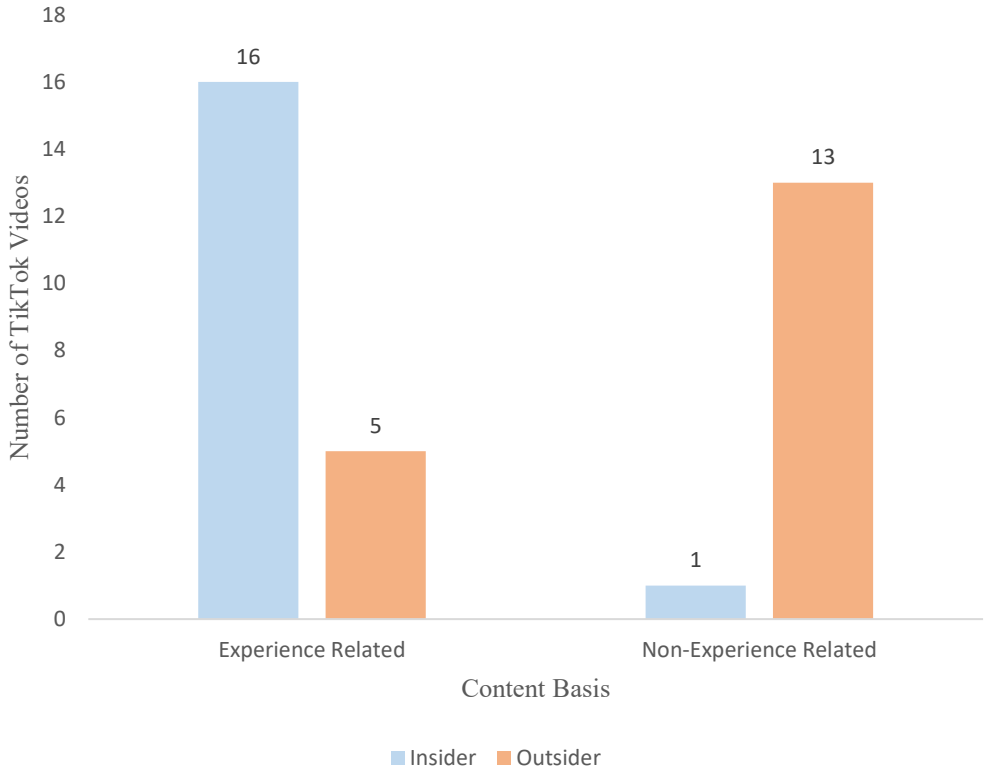
Insider Positionality



In the 35 videos extracted for this study, creators based their content either on personal experience or solely their opinion. Experience in this context refers to a creator reflecting on their direct experience, either as a transgender person or as someone related to a transgender person, when navigating these topics. Figure 3 displays the distribution of experience related videos and non-experience related videos based on perspective. Out of the 17 insider videos, 16 spoke of their own experience and only one did not. Out of the 18 outsider videos, five spoke of their own experience and 13 did not. The 12 outsider trans-negative videos from Figure 1 were simultaneously non-experience related. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, I cannot make causal or correlational statements about these variables, however, future research may inquire into whether real-life experience with transgender individuals affects one's level of acceptance.

Figure 3

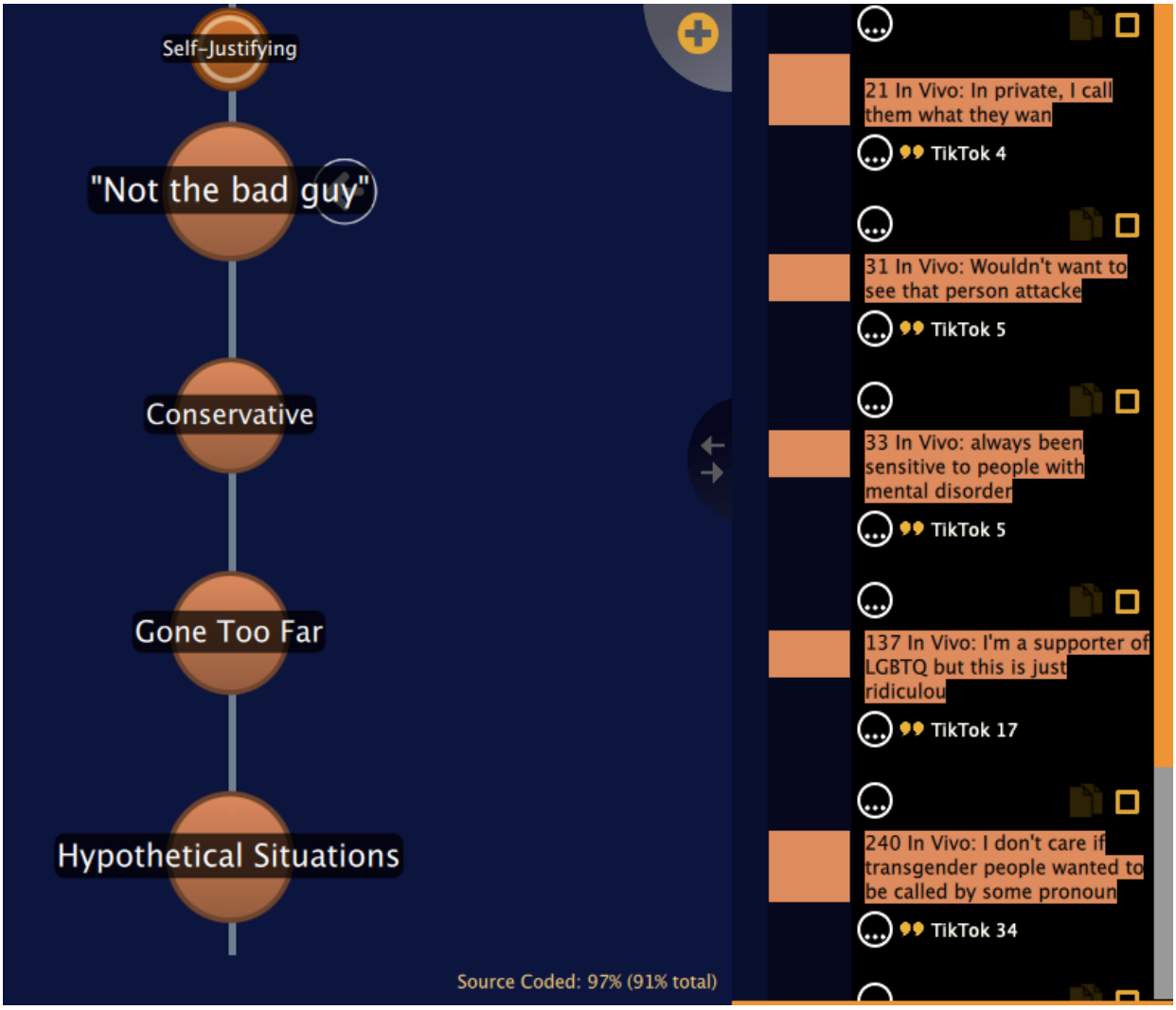
Insider Vs. Outsider Content Basis



To inductively code the TikTok videos, the transcriptions of each individual TikTok video were broken down into first-level codes which were then grouped into second-level codes. The second-level codes were categorized based on first-level codes regarding content and specific message, opinion or information that was discussed or demonstrated. As illustration, Figure 4 shows an example of first-level codes in Quirkos that have been grouped into the second-level code of "not the bad guy". This was then categorized under the subtheme *self-justifying* along with other second-level codes. Please see Appendices B and C for complete first and second-level coding sheets.

Figure 4

Example of First- and Second-Level Codes in Quirkos



Note: The left side displays the subtheme, *self-justifying*, which is the very first bubble. The bubbles connected to *self-justifying* represent the second-level codes "Not the bad guy", "conservative," "gone too far," "hypothetical situations" and "freedom of speech" (not pictured). The arrow pointing to "Not the bad guy" (somewhat hidden behind the word 'guy') indicates the second-level code that was selected. The right side displays the first-level codes that "Not the bad guy" contains, with the respective TikTok video written underneath each code.

Finally, three major themes emerged from these grouped categories: *change*, *harm versus*

care, and *traditional beliefs*. Figure 5 displays the three themes with their respective subthemes in Quirkos. Change was divided into the subthemes of *coming out*, *transition*, and *personal journeys. Harm vs. care* was divided into the subthemes of *perpetrator*, *victim*, and *trans-affirmation*. *Traditional beliefs* was divided into the subthemes of *essentialism*, *choice* and *self-justifying*. Figures 6 and 7 display the distribution of TikTok videos concerned with each subtheme and theme respectively.

Figure 5

Themes and Subthemes in Quirkos

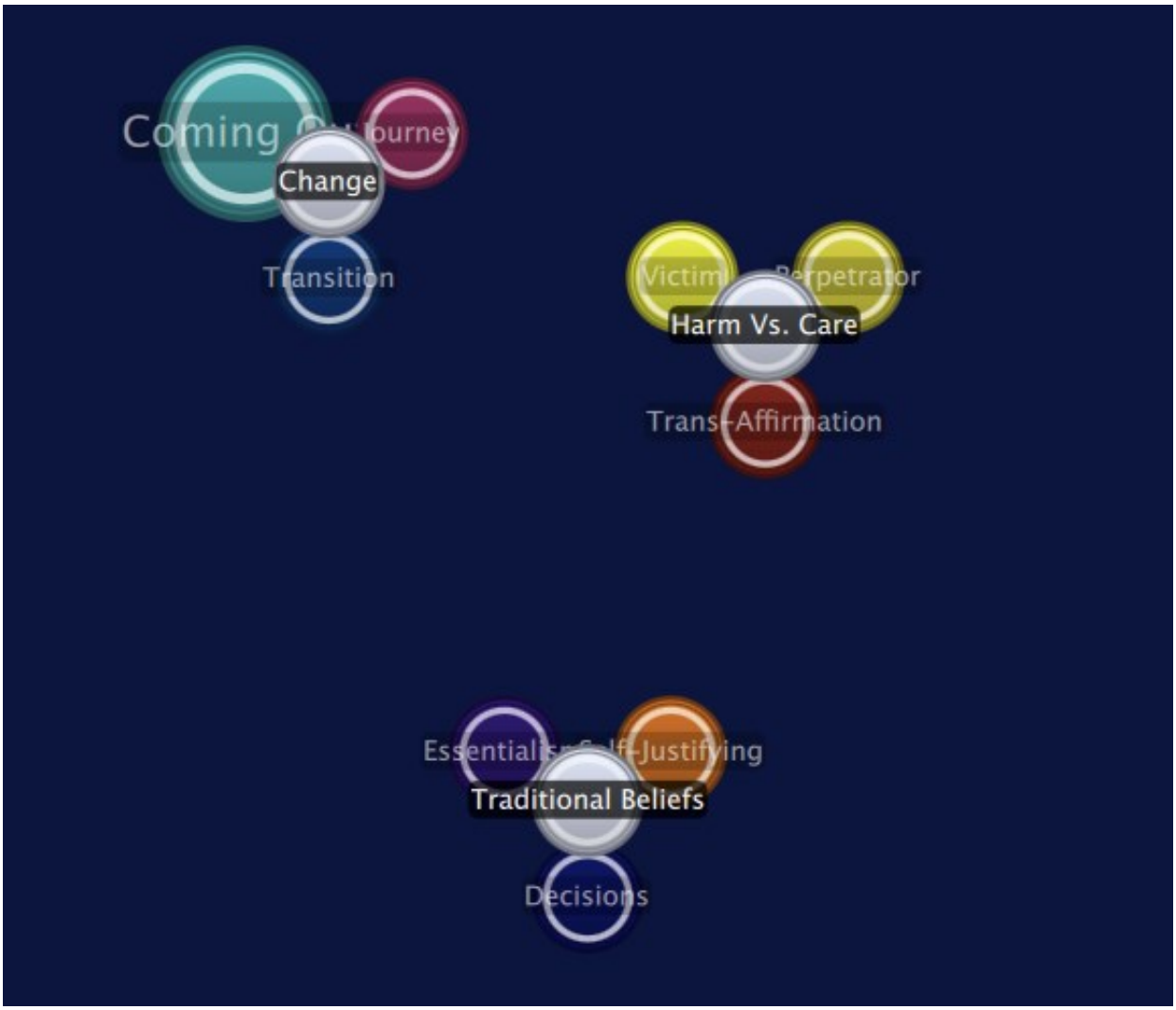


Figure 6

Subthemes of TikTok Videos

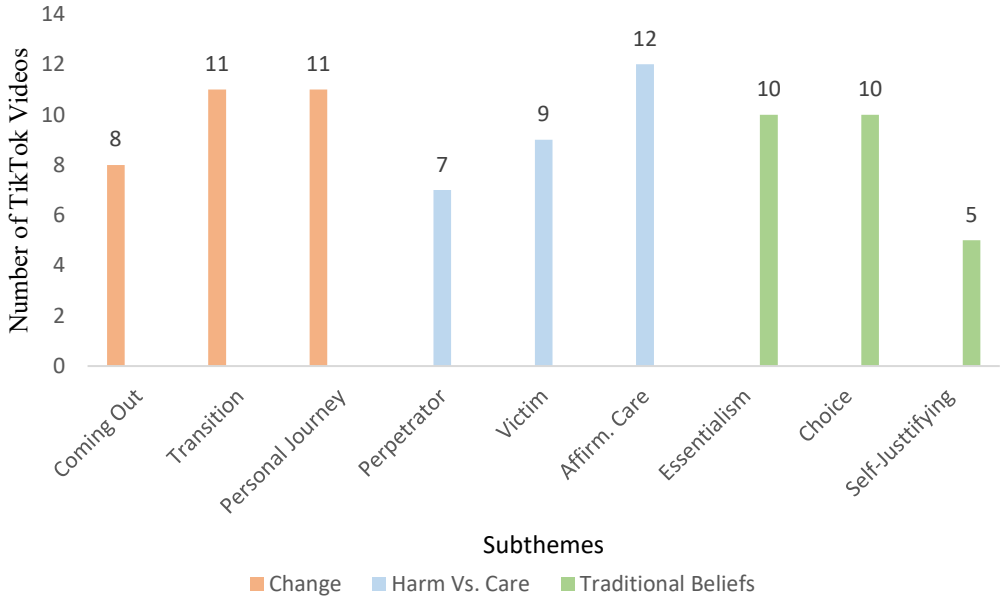
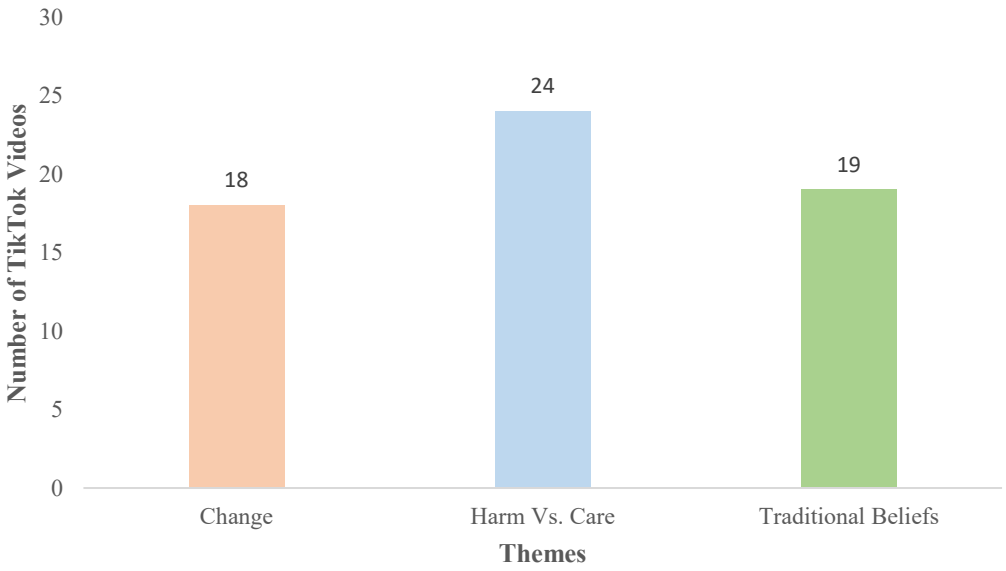


Figure 7

Themes of TikTok Videos



Results and Discussion

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system's theory states that the cultural and social climate of a society has important implications on the development and wellbeing of the child. Social norms and values influence lower-level systems such as schools, hospitals, and family units that directly affect the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Today, social media allows for the influences of societal attitudes and narratives to be directly absorbed by the individual user, including those under the age of 18. Social media applications like TikTok can be a source of mixed messages. TikTok videos for this current study were extracted between April and September of 2022. As described in the Findings, I found 35 videos through the two accounts I created that included a variety of topics surrounding transgender issues. I sought to answer two research questions: (1) What perspectives about transgender individuals are presented on TikTok? and (2) How is the transgender or gender expansive child represented and constructed on TikTok? Three major themes emerged from the data, which were *change*, *harm versus care*, and *traditional beliefs*. Each theme with their sub-themes will be discussed in light of the research on experiences of transgender children, followed by a brief consideration of the polarization of TikTok videos that address gender diversity.

Change

The first theme extracted from my data is *change*, which has been further divided into the sub-themes of *coming out*, *transition*, and *personal journeys*. These three subthemes each represent, at their core, a type of change in the individual. Coming out is the act of disclosing one's gender identity to others. This is not necessarily a single occurrence in one's life, since meeting new people and experiencing new situations may require one to come out more than once. It appeared, however, that the very first experience of coming out was a key moment in the TikTok videos reviewed, signifying an individual's desire for change. Transitioning often

followed the event of coming out and included different versions of change (i.e., physical, social, and legal) that aimed to match the exterior gender presentation of the person to their interior gender identity. Finally, through one's transition, there were personal journeys taken, either by loved ones or by the transgender individual themselves. These sub-themes are described further below.

Coming Out

Eight TikTok videos depict the event of coming out, the emotions prior to coming out, and new experiences after coming out. Several TikTok videos demonstrate that there is often fear of rejection prior to this event, either from strangers or family members. TikTok 26 shows the creator's two parents reacting to him as he comes out as a transgender man. In the video you can hear the shakiness in his voice as he says the words "Ummm. I'm coming out" and you can hear him crying as his father reaches out to hold his hand (James, 2022). The caption of the TikTok reads, "I wasn't exactly expecting the worst however I sure as hell wasn't expecting this." The comedian from TikTok 10 explains how his son was shy and acted clueless when he was first asked if he wanted to live as a boy (Squire, 2021). These findings are consistent with research from Stacey Brumbaugh-Johnson and Kathleen Hull (2019) showing that the process of coming out as transgender is largely based on one's prediction of the reaction from others. In these examples, the transgender individual was hesitant to come out because of their anticipation of rejection from their loved ones.

The issue of navigating new experiences after coming out as transgender was also addressed in two videos. For example, the data shows that coming out to strangers can be dangerous for transgender people because of the possible ramifications from transphobic individuals and groups. Not coming out, however, may require a trans person to use gendered

spaces and services that go against their true gender identity, and as a result, perpetuate gender dysphoria. This is displayed in TikTok 3 when Dylan is nervously navigating gendered locker rooms for the first time as a visibly transgender woman at her yoga studio (Mulvaney, 2022). One transgender creator shows that when choosing to come out to a new group of people, it can be difficult to foresee whether or not it is safe to do so. He demonstrates this by re-enacting a scenario in which he is trying to decipher whether a group of new people are transphobic. The caption on the TikTok reads, "when I was stealth & testing the waters with people I just met that don't know I'm tr4ns" and he lip-syncs to a popular and humourous TikTok audio: "I love gay people... So, what about you guys? Are you guys homophobic?" (TikTok 29; scampscallywag, 2022). These videos are consistent with research showing that coming out is an ongoing process and dependent on the perceived safety of the space and the people involved in the interaction (Brumbaugh-Johnson & Hull, 2019).

Despite the potential danger when coming out to new people, one video shows how others sometimes feel entitled to know whether or not an individual is transgender, especially if that transgender person passes as cisgender. The creator of TikTok 14 made light of the transphobia in this situation by addressing another TikTok posted by a person who states that non-disclosure of one's transgender identity before sexual intercourse should be considered rape:

> I'm a post-op transwoman and I have the parts that fit for me and men are attracted to me for that. I'm not lying about anything. It's not what you said it was. […] You have no idea what I've gone through to be where I am today and to be honest it's really discrediting and super transphobic and it's showing. What you see is what you get so mind your own business. (Tressa, 2021)

These TikTok videos show that coming out can be a pivotal moment for the interactions that one

has with others. It can shift bonds with family members and create dangerous situations for the individual, and, therefore, the time and place of one's coming out should be their own choice. In these examples, coming out was an indicator of change, signifying that a transition will or has occurred.

Transition

Transitioning one's gender is often displayed and talked about in the videos. Eleven TikTok videos include topics surrounding gender transitions. The narrators of these videos are exclusively transgender or parents of transgender children who discuss gender dysphoria, the enduring persistence that they or their children expressed to transition, their or their children's physical and social transition, what it means to transition, and becoming one's true self. These topics are either explicitly discussed or shown through humour, facial expression and tone. In TikTok 2, the creator displays gender dysphoria which is defined as an incongruence between one's experienced or expressed gender and assigned gender at birth (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). She physically cringes when she shows an old picture of her high school self in a male cheerleader uniform. She then describes how uncomfortable she felt wearing it even before realizing she was a transgender woman (Luxx, 2021). In TikTok 7, a child's gender dysphoria is addressed by a mother shown cutting her transgender son's hair for the first time. The mother explains in the video that her son's hair was already mostly gone by that point due to his cutting it and pulling it out himself (Lee, 2021). TikTok videos from parents that depict and discuss the gender dysphoria experiences of their children at younger ages also highlight the enduring persistence of their children to explore different outlets of gender. This is illustrated as well in TikTok 7 when the young boy reassures his mom a total of eight times that he wants short hair. He impatiently asks her to cut it when she expresses uncertainty (Lee, 2021). The

father from TikTok 10 recounts stories of his son at age four insisting that he be referred to as a boy and be called James (Squire, 2021).

The TikTok data also offers insider perspectives on transitioning. Transgender adults reflecting back on moments of gender dysphoria and hopelessness throughout their transition often portrayed messages of self-actualization at the end of their transition stories. For example, one creator shows a series of pictures and videos starting from birth that depict his journey transitioning, including undergoing top surgery (breast removal), hormone replacement therapy, and a legal name change. He ends the slideshow with pictures and videos of himself today, smiling and looking comfortable in his skin. The song in the video picks up tempo at this point and the lyrics sing: "… now I'm free" (TikTok 13; McNee, 2022). After cringing from the photo of herself in the male cheerleader uniform, the transgender woman from TikTok 2 lightens up when showing the picture of herself in her senior year, wearing a girl's uniform. She ends the TikTok saying: "And *this* is how I got to start my senior year. As the woman I always wanted to be, *in* the girl's uniform, *playing* and competing with girls" (Luxx, 2021).

One TikTok creator mentions the medical barriers they faced throughout their transition with the caption: "Let's just say that [my parents] are not mad about the medical barriers for me as a fat person seeking top surgery *3 sunglasses face emojis*" (TikTok 19; Underwood, 2022). The creator does not go into detail about the medical barriers they experienced but research shows that transgender individuals often bring advocates to medical appointments to protect against the potential transphobia from healthcare professionals (Levin et al., 2020). It has been reported by parents, through stories of their transgender children being ignored, rejected and judged, that trans-affirmative medical care is sometimes inaccessible (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2014; Sansfaçon et al., 2015). This particular TikTok suggests that these

transphobic situations can be further complicated by size discrimination. When conducting a systematic review of patients' experiences in healthcare settings, Thanusha Ananthakumar and colleagues (2019) found that medical professionals often blamed health issues on the weight of their patients, without examining or assessing their medical history. The patients felt judged, ignored and were even turned away from receiving services, due to ill-fitting medical equipment (Ananthakumar et al., 2019). The experiences of fat transgender individuals are nonexistent in current literature, therefore, research is needed to assess how these discriminatory practices affect those who are seeking medical assistance when physically transitioning. Ultimately, these TikTok videos offer insight on the different experiences and situations that can occur when transitioning. These stories of internal and external change also demonstrate the challenging journeys taken to reach a point of self-actualization and acceptance.

Personal Journeys

Eleven TikTok videos depict the different journeys involved either with transgender individuals themselves, or individuals with loved ones who are transgender. Two parents made TikTok videos showing their initial reluctance to support their child's gender exploration. TikTok 7 depicts one mother acknowledging her mistake when doubting her child's choice to cut his hair short (Lee, 2021). A parent in TikTok 25 admits that they were wrong to police their child's clothing after they saw how happy their daughter was to know she could dress in girl's clothes more often due to the first COVID-19 lockdown (Joly, 2022). Two transgender men express the difficulty that their loved ones initially had when accepting and acknowledging their new name (nolandintheworld, 2021; Magan, 2022). One transgender individual demonstrates through a niche, audio-visual, TikTok trend how his parents accepted them when coming out but did not support their transition (TikTok 19; Underwood, 2022). These TikTok videos coincide

with research about the gender policing that parents often enforce onto their transgender children during early gender expression (Sansfaçon et al., 2015). The parents' reactions can be partly due the parents' fear of their own and their children's social rejection and the gendered expectations they set at the moment of their child's birth (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Sansfaçon et al., 2015). When these expectations are not met, parents experience grief. The mother in TikTok 7 exclaims: "I'm gonna miss your long pretty hair" before cutting off her transgender son's hair (Lee, 2021).

Another TikTok creator speaks about the grief his family members had expressed to him during his transition and how harmful this was to his mental health as a young transgender teenager (TikTok 15; basictransguy, 2021). Finally, TikTok 22 demonstrates the complexity of these feelings, showing a child expressing his thoughts on his brother's transition: "it's kind of like meeting a new person but then you already know them and they're like your best friend immediately" (Herrera, 2021). In this example, the boy feels that his sibling is no longer the same person prior to his transition, but at the same time, is not a stranger. The data makes it clear that expectations set on individuals based on their gender are deeply ingrained into family members' understanding of their personhood. When one fails these expectations by transitioning, some can see it as the metaphoric death of said person before their transition and may initially be hesitant to accept and allow for any form of transitioning to occur. The TikTok videos from this sample are supported by current research that discuss how it takes time for parents to provide affirmative care and that acceptance can be limited to certain situations (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Riggs and Due, 2014; Sansfaçon et al., 2015, Liese, 2020). Family members have a long journey towards acceptance and much time may pass before they gradually begin to shift their expectations and support their gender diverse child or sibling.

Many transgender individuals used TikTok to make videos that detail their own journeys before and throughout their transition. The transgender man from TikTok 13 begins to cry when reflecting back on the hopelessness and isolation that he felt during his transition: "[…] and um I watched the video myself, as you can see I'm fighting back tears. Um, I share what I share because I was so hopeless at that point in my life" (McNee, 2022). Transgender creators also spoke about the importance of community when navigating the loneliness and despair that is often experienced when transitioning. In the same TikTok, the creator explains that the main motivation in presenting his own journey transitioning was to send a message of hope: "I felt so alone and I hope that this video shows you that it's fucking possible. Happy pride month guys, we're in this together" (McNee, 2022). Creators also discussed the need for a sense of belonging in different communities such as school sports:

> I loved cheer. I lived, breathed and died cheer and being a part of an extracurricular activity and a sport is kind of what saved my life throughout high school and made me felt *[sic]* like I had belonged and had a place. (TikTok 2; Luxx, 2021)

Ultimately, getting through the hardships that came with transitioning and gender dysphoria was not possible without community and a sense of belonging. The type and level of care that individuals received was the next important aspect on Transgender TikTok.

Harm Versus Care

The next theme extracted from my data is *harm versus care*, which has been further divided into the sub-themes of *perpetrator*, *victim*, and *trans-affirmation*. I found that TikTok either provided a space for some creators to make harmful statements against transgender individuals or for transgender creators to speak about their experiences with this type of harm. The antithesis of transgender harm on TikTok contained videos showing or speaking about

different ways to practice trans-affirmative care.

Perpetrator

Seven TikTok videos that promote anti-transgender sentiments also perpetuate harm through their videos. TikTok 33 shows the creator interviewing a gay man with the question "What is a woman?":

> Interviewee: Where does a guy get to say what a woman is. Women only know what women are.
>
> Interviewer: Are you a-uh cat?
>
> *Interviewee pauses*
>
> Interviewee: No.
>
> Interviewer: Can you tell me what a cat is?
>
> Interviewee: This is actually a genuine mistake, I am sorry I even came up here.
>
> (aikidohustler, 2022)

Throughout the video, the creator plays the musical sound clip "Monkeys Spinning Monkeys," which is often used for comedic videos for its infant-like qualities (i.e., light, jaunty, silly, playful). The sound briefly switches to the "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" waiting music when the interviewee pauses before switching back to "Monkeys Spinning Monkeys." His use of capitalization in the caption of the video: "What is a woman? We FINALLY have the DEFINITIVE ANSWER," coupled with the chosen audio, displays the creator's attempt to ridicule and mock the interviewee for defining a woman based on personal identification and not biological factors (aikidohustler, 2022).

Ridicule is also apparent in TikTok 11 where the caption reads "*laughing emoji* Worst take on Florida's Parental Rights in Education Bill goes to:" after the interviewee explains why

she disagrees with the bill (Klug, 2022). The recent passing of Florida's "Parental Rights in Education" bill, colloquially known as the "Don't Say Gay" bill, forbids educators to speak of or instruct students on gender identity and sexual orientation between Kindergarten and third grade (The Florida Senate, 2022). This bill was extensively discussed on TikTok during the data collection period of this study, with users arguing on both sides. In the example from this study, the creator emphasizes the grade level implicated in this bill by repeating it twice to the interviewee:

> Interviewer: […] and the teaching of gender identity and sexual orientation. It banned that for Kindergarten through third graders and in the bill it states, language that is inappropriate for children. Do you guys think that's a good idea for the kids or do you think that's a bad idea for the kids, what do you think?
>
> Interviewee: I-
>
> Interviewer: Kindergarten through third grade. (TikTok 11, Klug, 2022)

This suggests a concern for the age-appropriateness of the subject matter. Sexuality education is a controversial topic in public forums due to the concern for protecting childhood innocence. The idea of the innocent, asexual, and unknowing child is deemed by many childhood researchers and feminist poststructuralists as socially constructed and used as justification to control and restrict the knowledge we share with children (James & James, 2012; Robinson & Davies, 2017; Garlen et al. 2020). There is a collective public fear of corrupting and indoctrinating the minds of 'naturally-born' straight and cisgender children with discourse surrounding gender, sexuality, and sexual diversity. Age-appropriate content regarding gender and sexuality is often based on moralistic idealism (Robinson & Davies, 2017) rather than actual cognitive capacity. Therefore, when alternative models of education are endorsed, or even suggested, such as Ontario's

reformed sexuality education program in 2015 which introduced topics of gender and sexual diversity as early as the sixth grade (Jones, 2019), public panic and protest follow (Bialystok, 2018). The tense conflict that arises from trans-, gay- and sex-positive curriculum discourages schools from providing trans-affirmative care and can further harm the transgender child. Even without policies that attempt to erase transgender identities, school professionals will actively avoid discussing gender diversity in the classroom as an attempt to stay 'neutral' (Payne & Smith, 2018; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021).

Harm was perpetuated by TikTok creators showing disrespect toward transgender individuals. The interviewer in TikTok 35 cuts off his interviewee several times and tells them that their pronouns are not important to him (notanzaa, 2022). The creator of TikTok 6 continuously misgenders a transgender boy, despite it being clear that he uses he/him pronouns and identifies as a boy (miapolitics, 2021). The creator of TikTok 9 actively makes fun of transgender and gay individuals with a skit of her acting as if she was coming out:

> Hey guys. I think it's about time that I really come out and be honest with you all. I now identify as a non-Bidenary ammosexual. And my pronouns are *fucking* American. I hope you all understand and respect my decision. Trump 2024. (unpopular_opinion_queen, 2021)

These creators find different ways to ridicule, mock and disrespect transgender people and allies. By using humour, infantile sounds, emojis, and actively misgendering and ignoring transgender individuals, TikTok provides them with a space to spread harm. This confirms the findings from Weimann and Masri (2020) on the presence of far-right extremist accounts and videos on TikTok. Ashley Austin and colleagues (2022) found that trans-specific microaggressions are significantly associated with increased suicide attempts amongst transgender youth. Even if the

data from this study is online, the aggression, small or large, remains hateful and harmful. Considering the fact that almost one third of all TikTok users are aged 10 to 19 (Iqbal, 2022), anti-transgender videos on the app are a cause for concern. This is not to say that concerned caregivers and childcare professionals should entirely restrict younger generations from the app. The media literacy approach would recommend a healthy balance between empowering and protecting youth when using social media (RobbGrieco, 2014). Furthermore, transgender creators sometimes use their space on TikTok as an outlet to speak out about and overcome their experiences with harm and discrimination either online or in person.

Victim

Nine TikTok videos posted by transgender individuals speak about the harm they have faced in the past or harm that is faced by others in the transgender community, including being othered, bullied, deadnamed, outed by others, misgendered, and being put in dangerous situations. For example, TikTok 16 captions: “POV: you dead name your transgender son on their birthday” and shows the transgender creator holding his cake while the rest of his family sings Happy Birthday to him. You see his expression and body language change drastically moments before his family use his deadname while singing Happy Birthday. He nods and smiles briefly to his sister since she is the only one who uses his chosen name. The lyrics of the song chosen for this TikTok after this very moment are: “Take her name out of your mouth, you don't deserve to mourn, you just love the attention” (nolandintheworld, 2021). Through the visual and auditory cues, the viewer understands how damaging this event was to the wellbeing of the creator. Research from Amanda Pollitt and colleagues (2021) demonstrates the importance of using the chosen name of transgender youth by showing the improvement in mental health outcomes when parents, teachers and colleagues used their chosen name. They recorded a

significant reduction in suicidal ideation, depressive symptoms, and significant increase in self-esteem (Pollitt et al., 2021).

Harm was also experienced outside of the family. TikTok 27 consists of a creator recounting the story of a boy from her school who was bullied for four years after displaying feelings for her, before knowing she was a transgender girl. The creator explains how offended and hurt she felt when faced with this rejection (chezablondexo, 2021). Othering and trans-discrimination in schools were believed by parents to be directly linked to suicide ideation and attempts in transgender youth, despite parental advocacy and support (Sansfaçon et al., 2015; Davy and Cordoba, 2020). Ferfolja and Ullman (2021) explore passive harm within school culture through the power of discourse. Teachers and principals will use the depoliticized term 'bullying' to label trans-discriminatory assault in schools. The researchers argue that bullying discourses ignore power relations and intentions behind the assaulter's actions. They allow school staff to remain ignorant and unreceptive to solutions geared towards dismantling trans-harm, all while placing blame on the individuals involved in the transgression, rather than the gender-policed state upheld in school culture. These instances of trans-based violence in schools should no longer be considered isolated bully-victim occurrences and should instead address the systemic othering that occurs when a student violates traditional gender norms (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021).

Transgender creators were also victims of harm online. A transgender individual in TikTok 28 asks trans-affirmative TikTok users to interact with her video so that her posts would no longer appear on the algorithm of transphobic users. She explains with urgency in her voice that she was receiving a magnitude of death threats in her comments and pleaded for interaction in the form of comments, likes, views, and shares to shift the algorithm (mikaelaistired, 2022).

Too many transgender individuals face intimidating or threatening remarks, whether they be in virtual or real-life spaces. In the case of TikTok 28, simply showing support for the transgender community garnered extreme and dangerous reactions.

Harm was also alluded to by one creator when speaking about the absence of care. One transgender creator made a TikTok video explaining the harm he faces as a young transgender boy because of the lack of support from his family: "And you know what I needed as a trans teen? Support. You know what I needed as a trans teen? People to tell me that I was perfect the way I was including my trans self" (TikTok 15; basictransguy, 2021). He does not go into detail about any specific harm that he faces as a transgender teenager, but it is clear that the neglect and lack of reassurance from his family are enough to cause damage and hurt feelings. In this case, it was not the presence of physical or verbal hatred but absence of affirmative care that caused harm.

Trans-Affirmation

Forms of trans-affirmative care such as advocacy, validation, and unconditional love were exemplified in 12 TikTok videos. As seen above, for the transgender child, school can be a place of victimization and discrimination. The experience of these students can be further complicated by an unsupportive school staff during the time of gender transition. For example, the creator from TikTok 2 explains that she was only allowed to wear the girls' cheerleading uniform because of the persistent advocacy from her support system (Luxx, 2021). Research shows that the accommodation of transgender students by their schools is often only initiated as a reactive measure and is reliant on the advocacy and action by the family of the transgender student (Sansfaçon et al., 2015; Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Mangin, 2020; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021). The school's inaction in supporting transgender students is attributed to a lack in

understanding of transgender issues, and a lack in policy and pre-service preparation regarding transgender students. School staff will ignore their transgender students out of fear of taking a political stance on a controversial issue (Payne & Smith, 2018), therefore trans-affirmation and advocacy from parents are crucial.

Validating one's gender identity was exemplified in the videos by friends and family supporting decisions made regarding one's transition and allowing for children to express their gender as they wish. For example, TikTok 22 shows a mother asking her school-aged son what he thinks of the new chosen name of his transgender brother. He responds that he likes the name and feels that it suits his brother well (Herrera, 2022). Respecting the new name of a transgender individual was extremely validating to some TikTok users. TikTok 24 shows how important it was for the creator's name to be changed on older Facebook posts by his friend:

> And so it really meant a lot to me that he took the time to go back and change something seemingly so small, um. But like that's something you can do as an ally to a queer person who's changing their names and pronouns, go back and start changing captions so that when these memories pop up, they get to feel affirmed (Magan, 2022).

Other examples showed that validation is made possible through active support such as a mother cutting the hair of her transgender son (TikTok 7; Lee 2021), a brother helping his younger brother into a princess dress (TikTok 23; Caballero, 2022) a father administering testosterone to his transgender son (TikTok 10; Squire, 2021), and a parent hosting a second gender reveal party after his daughter came out as transgender (TikTok 25; Joly, 2022). This data supports research that explores ways to provide affirmative care to gender-exploring children. These acts of affirmation are recorded by Riggs and Due's (2014) research showing parents supporting their child's transition through clothing, hairstyle, pronouns and social name change.

Finally, unconditional love was shown when caring for transgender children on TikTok. TikTok 20 shows a young boy of around 6 to 8 years old at a pride event setting off a paper cannon that blows out blue confetti. He then runs to an adult who hugs him and says "good job" in tears. The caption on this TikTok reads: "Charlie wanted to announce to the world that HE is Officially a boy. Congratulations my brave boy you will always be loved *three red heart emojis*" (bambeasters.tshirts, 2022). This TikTok emphasizes unconditional love through the emotion and caption in the video. Research shows that parents with no prior knowledge or experience with transgender individuals can become motivated to understand, support and affirm their child's gender expression and transition by the unconditional love they have for their child (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Frigerio et al., 2021). Despite the many positive representations of support present on TikTok, videos were also created to spread conservative values, which brings me to my third and final theme.

Traditional Beliefs

The final theme extracted from the dataset is *traditional beliefs*, which is further divided into the sub-themes of *essentialism*, *choice*, and *self-justification*. The analyzed videos showed that negative perspectives about transgender individuals on TikTok were often tied to a creator's conservative values and opinions rather than personal experience. These TikTok creators used arguments and tactics to explain and defend their traditional beliefs. Despite these mixed methods, the underlying message always served to invalidate the identities of transgender people.

Essentialism

Ten TikTok videos deny even the possibility of gender diversity by making use of arguments that essentialized gender. Much of the focus is placed on biology, for example in TikTok 4, Ben Shapiro states: "If I'm on stage with a person who is a transgender person, I will

say that they are biologically male if they are biologically male, and I will call them by pronouns that match their biology […]" (conservativeheat2.0, 2021). Another creator attempts to discredit gender studies professors who refuse to define the term 'woman' with biological characteristics. He claims in his TikTok that these same professors would exclude him from debates about abortion because he is a man and cannot get pregnant and, therefore, use biological definitions to define gender when it is convenient to them (TikTok 31; daxalishious, 2022). Three TikTok videos echoed essentialized gender beliefs through asserting that transgender individuals are mentally ill. In TikTok 5, Candace Owens argues that transgender individuals are delusional and are comparable to people with schizophrenic behaviours (politicsasusual, 2021). A man in TikTok 8 labels nonbinary individuals as emotionally damaged (magadon2.0, 2022). Finally, Ben Shapiro from TikTok 4 compares using someone's pronouns to calling someone Napoleon Bonaparte (conservativeheat2.0, 2021). The common misconception that diverse gender identities are born out of mental illness was historically supported by the medical field. Being transgender was classified as an identity disorder, specifically gender identity disorder in earlier versions of the DSM. This was removed as a disorder in the fifth edition which was released in 2013, and replaced with gender dysphoria (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Despite its removal almost a decade ago, the misconception has persisted with many, as shown in this data. This belief is used as justification to take on a reparative approach to gender variance, as if there is something that needs to be corrected in the exploring child (Hill & Menvielle, 2009).

Choice

The idea that gender is solely based on biological characteristics, such as hormones, chromosomes and genitalia, automatically implies that it is a choice to be transgender, which is discussed in 10 TikTok videos. When arguing about transgender women competing in female

sports, one creator says “How a man can decide to compete in a woman’s sport after deciding to be transgender is an absolute joke” (TikTok 17; Niu, 2022). Another TikTok creator talks about tomboy phases in young girls and argues that transgender boys only want to be boys because it is easier than being a girl:

> But then I grew the fuck up. I- it, it was a phase, it was literally a tomboy phase. And it was easy for me to identify with my brothers who were close in age and close in friends, then my way, way older sisters who hated my guts ‘cause I was the annoying little sister, and wanted to steal their clothes. Easier versions right? (TikTok 32; DiFranco, 2022)

The creator from TikTok 6 expands on the idea of transgender identities being a choice by accusing the parents of making transitionary decisions for their children and indoctrinating them with transgender beliefs. She argues that parents of transgender children pressure them into transitioning and labels such parental behaviour as child abuse, under the impression that young children can permanently change their body (miapolitics, 2021).

Users with traditional beliefs about gender consistently used their TikTok platforms to promote and explain their positions. These three creators above used simple but varied reasons to explain why someone would choose to be transgender: to have an advantage in sports, because it is easier to be the “opposite” gender, and because the parent wanted them to. Despite being different, these arguments share the common purpose of delegitimizing transgender identities. As shown, personal experience with transgender individuals was lacking from these opinions, however, other methods of self-justification were used in attempts to provide credibility.

Self-Justifying

Five TikTok videos include instances of individuals prefacing anti-trans remarks with phrases of seemingly good intent. For example, when Candace Owens equates transgender folk

with delusion, she explains that she has always been sensitive to people with mental disorders and would never want to see them harmed (TikTok 5; politicsasusual, 2021). Another example includes a creator saying "respectfully, it doesn't matter," regarding the requested use of they/them pronouns to refer to his nonbinary interviewee (TikTok 35; notanzaa, 2022). In another instance, a creator claims that he supports the LGBTQ community but feels it is ridiculous and incredibly unfair for transgender women to compete in female sports (TikTok 17; Niu, 2022). Ben Shapiro and Jordan Peterson explain how they do not actually care what transgender people call themselves privately, but only fight against pronoun issues in relation to freedom of speech (TikTok 4; conservativeheat2.0, 2021; TikTok 34; great_men_great_quotes, 2022). These "well-meaning sentiments" often precede arguments stating that society has gone too far and sacrificed freedom of speech, fairness in sports, objective truths, and child safety. In these TikTok videos, fear is used as a vehicle of self-justification. For example, Jordan Peterson speaks about government control and restricted liberties in relation to transgender pronouns:

> Who's gonna regulate it? Who's gonna define it? I know the answer to that. The last people in the world you would want to. And then we, we crossed another barrier and we allow the government to compel speech for some hypothetically compassionate reason? No way. That's a really bad idea (TikTok 34; great_men_great_quotes, 2022)

The fear expressed in many TikTok videos are often based on hypothetical situations. The creator of TikTok 18 refutes these hypothetical approches when replying to TikTok 17. While TikTok 17 argues that transgender women are dominating female sports due to their biological advantage, TikTok 18 disproves this by comparing records of female transgender athletes to their cisgendered counterparts. Through the use of statistics, she demonstrates that transgender women are not actually dominating female sports. She concludes her TikTok by

saying:

> So I guess my question is this: why are trans people in sports such a hot button topic, when it seems to only exist as a problem hypothetically. Cause the reality is, trans women are not dominating female sports. […] Why are we talking about hypotheticals, when we could be talking about real-life issues. It seems like some of you only care about female sports when it gives you an opportunity to be transphobic. (dandydemon, 2022)

Creators posting TikTok videos that spread conservative and traditional values used various justification tactics that were based in fear and hypothetical situations. Values like freedom and objectivity were discussed as if on the brink of extinction because of society's validation of the transgender community.

Polarization in TikTok Videos on Transgender Individuals

It is clear through this data that a variety of different perspectives are offered when transgender topics are discussed on TikTok. This analysis revealed both positive and negative discourse surrounding transgender children and adults. However, I only came across negative messages about transgender people by creating a new TikTok account, despite using TikTok in my personal time for several years. After completing a few searches for conservative content, I was surprised with the amount and intensity of harmful videos that were shown and allowed on TikTok. I came to understand the polarization of political ideologies on the app. It is as if there are two different worlds present on the app. Looking through the lens of social psychology, the polarization of TikTok can potentially make users more susceptible to cognitive biases. For example, the primacy effect argues that individuals place more importance on the first piece of information presented to them (Gilovich et al., 2016). Another example is the *availability heuristic*, where we believe something to be true because of the frequency in which it is

presented to us. Finally, this app can facilitate the *confirmation bias*, where one only seeks information that confirms their beliefs (Gilovich et al., 2016). If TikTok is only showing its users content that is based on what they interact the most with, users can overestimate the level of objectivity behind subjective messages and opinions that are created with a specific purpose. Although the initial "for you" page for a new user is generally apolitical, politically-geared TikTok videos are shown at incremental levels of intensity and eventually the "for you" page can become saturated with extreme messages strictly geared towards one end of the political or discursive spectrum.

Although TikTok can potentially create a community of extreme hate of marginalized groups, it can also create somewhat safe spaces of support. Among the positive videos, many creators attempted to inform and educate the viewer on transgender issues. This was either done literally, for example, one creator went in depth about the different transgender terminology and their meanings and origins (TikTok 12; Bailar, 2022), or through storytelling, i.e., talking about relatable personal experiences. Media and technology have been useful tools in the classroom for many decades (Domine, 2009) and trans-informative TikTok content is no exception when it comes to consciousness-raising and positive exposure to the LGBTQ+ community.

When looking at the transgender affirmative perspective, storytelling is frequently used by creators. This method of communication allows for the creator to relate and connect personally to a transgender audience. Kate Ames (2017) argues that media can be a source of connection for marginalized communities where members are usually isolated and ostracized in society. Media creates a space for transgender individuals to share common experiences that they otherwise thought were only experienced by themselves. In this way, an online community is formed where knowledge and advice is passed down to younger generations and newly out

transgender folk. It serves as a way to normalize the transgender experience and foster a sense of belonging (Ames, 2017). Transgender creators on TikTok told stories specific to the transgender experience. Some spoke of transitioning, coming out, experiencing spaces post-transition, and the hardships that come with being transgender. They also used mixed media such as pictures, videos, sounds and text to create layered narratives. These stories helped to build a virtual community where users could connect to one another and build online relationships, which counteract the isolation that many transgender people, especially transgender youth, feel. When transgender people find themselves in living situations in which it is unsafe to be out, with little to no support, and with limited access to affirmative services, online spaces can be their only opportunity for connection. Therefore, despite the concerning presence of transgender hate on TikTok, it can have some beneficial impacts on its users.

Conclusion

Implications

The results from this study show that TikTok provides the individual with an opportunity to discuss and present almost any thought and experience they may have about transgender topics and individuals, including themselves. The videos from this study centred around three core themes – *change*, *harm versus care*, and *traditional beliefs* – but each was unique in their presentation by use of different methods to relay their message, such as video types, sounds, filters, and trends. TikTok creators acted out scenarios in humorous and serious ways, recounted personal stories, documented their experiences in real time, interviewed the public, provided educational content, created visual slideshows of their past, debated other creators on controversial topics, or simply stated their opinions. Because the app affords users with a variety of tools and features to create content that capture the attention of its viewers, there was no limit

to the kinds of videos that revolved around transgender topics. The diversification of these perspectives is important in online public spaces, however the powerful algorithm that TikTok uses for capitalistic gain perpetuates extremism on both sides of the transgender debate by exclusively showing videos tailored to the individual, based on their initial and consistent interaction (i.e., liking, sharing and commenting on videos). This is concerning, especially regarding anti-transgender messages and sentiments. The transgender or gender exploring child is continuously discussed and used by creators to sway viewers on their message, whether it be positive or negative. As shown in the data, TikTok users created different versions of the transgender child and adult: a victim of abuse, an innocent and impressionable child, a child going through a temporary phase, a child entitled to unconditional love and support, a child capable of understanding their own identity, and a child vulnerable to harm but capable of perseverance. The concept of the transgender child is, therefore, manipulated in different ways on TikTok and is transformed depending on the video.

Limitations

The sampling technique and relatively short period of data collection was a limitation of the study. My sampling of TikTok videos in this study consisted of initially searching for transgender videos and then receiving them through the "for you" page. The potential issue with this technique lies with the hashtags used to find videos with transgender content. I quickly realized that searching hashtags such as "transgender" or "genderdiverse" provided me with videos that were generally positive, therefore, to access different videos I used search words such as "conservative" or "antitrans". Even outside of TikTok, the concept of the transgender individual is often a polarizing topic of debate. I assume that on social media if one is neutral about a certain topic, they will not create content about it. Despite this, the search words used in

this study may have led me to somewhat divided areas of the issue. If the period for data collection were longer, I would have not relied on search words to collect my initial videos and would have allowed the "for you" page to provide me with transgender-related videos over time on multiple accounts.

Another limitation of this study is the exclusion of the comments section on the TikTok videos. As a personal user myself, I am often eager to read the comments section when I stumble upon a TikTok video of a controversial issue or opinion on popular culture. In my experience, the comments section provides a space for viewers to accept or reject a video, as a video can go viral for the right or wrong reasons. While this study focused on the rich data of the TikTok videos themselves, the comments sections may have provided useful information on whether the videos were being highly praised or rejected. These could give us further insight into public perceptions of transgender individuals and topics.

This study was also limited by time regarding the number of videos selected in the dataset. Although this is a qualitative study, perhaps a larger dataset would have provided more information and a greater diversification of topics. It is impossible to truly know the limits of discourse surrounding transgender topics on TikTok because the "for you" page has no end and is not based on the followers of the user. At a certain point in my data collection, I began to notice repeating stories and opinions which I used as an indicator to conclude the collection phase in my research process. However, if I were to continue collecting videos for a slightly longer period of time, I believe I would have eventually found new content, especially since videos in my dataset were largely influenced by the specific events occurring in that period of time.

Future Directions for Research

This study provided valuable information on TikTok content accessible to all viewers on the app related to transgender topics. Future research could examine the potential beneficial or harmful effects that such messages can have on viewers, especially younger ones. Research could also look at different sources of social media (Twitter, YouTube, Instagram) and whether the impact of these messages change depending on different mediated variables. Finally, research is lacking when including the voices of transgender youth in their studies. Even in the data from this study, perspectives directly related to transgender children either originated from an outsider, or a transgender adult reflecting back on their past experiences. It is important that future research includes the opinions and perspectives of transgender children and adolescents, not only in terms of media but in every aspect of the transgender experience.

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Appendix A

Transcriptions and Demographic Information of TikTok Videos

TikTok 1 (Accessed April 14, 2022)

Description/Context:

White transwoman and actress Nicole Maines is addressing people who don't support trans children and youth having access to healthcare. She is wearing her hair in a bun and around halfway through the TikTok, she applies a filter that gives her what is traditionally considered "male" features: moustache, wider/square jaw, and thick eyebrows. The joke implies that if she wouldn't have had access to trans-affirmative care as a child, teen and/or young adult (i.e. hormone blockers and hormone replacement therapy) she would have gone through 'male' puberty, which she is saying would have been bad because she does not look good as a man.

Account:

User handle: @nicoleamaines
Name: Nicole A Maines
User Bio: Actor, Trans Activist, Meme Supreme
Followers: 177.3K

TikTok:

Date: 03.04.2021
Length: 11s
Views: 658.2K
Likes: 177.2K
Comments: 1158
Sound used: "Drama effect background"

> *Note: this is a very popular sound used in many TikToks with different contexts and plots. It is usually used for comedic intents and purposes. On its own, it sounds intense and sort of eerie.*

Transcription:

You don't support trans kids having access to healthcare?
Applies filter *TikTok sound starts*
Look at me in a man bun.
Think of the bullet you dodged.
Support trans kids, bruh.

TikTok 2 (Accessed April 14, 2022)

Description/Context:

White transwoman and drag artist Lana Luxx is describing her journey in high school on the cheerleading squad, specifically about which uniform she was allowed to wear. She uses the green screen effect and talks over a picture of her in high school in the boy's cheerleading uniform. She talks about how important cheer was for her in high school and then goes on to explain that she was uncomfortable in the boys uniform during her junior year, which helped her realize she was a woman. She then explains how she begins her transition in her senior year and her coach and peers advocated for her to get to wear the girl's uniform. After this, she switches the picture to one of her a year older in the girl's cheerleading uniform and explains that this was her fully formed self.

Picture one: Lana (left) putting her arm around a teammate (right, face covered with pink heart emoji with "covering for privacy reasons" written on top). Both teammates are in a gymnasium and there are people in the bleachers. Both are wearing uniforms. Lana's is the boy uniform (longer sleeves that are not fitted, the light blue section is not shiny, wearing pants). Her teammate is wearing the girl's uniform which is fitted, and shinier). Lana's hair is tied and she does not appear to be wearing any makeup.

Picture two: Lana sitting outside, on the ground in a mermaid-like pose, with her knees together and her right arm grabbing her right ankle, propping herself up with her left arm. Her hair is blonde and styled and she is wearing minimal makeup. She is wearing the girl's uniform (this one has sleeves up to wrists, and a skirt).

Account:

User handle: @thelandonpatterson
Name: Lana Luxx
User Bio: LANA LUXX, Trans Drag Artist, SHE/HER, On my journey to 300k
Followers: 228.4k

TikTok:

Date: 11.05.2021
Length: 1:03
Views: 79.9k
Likes: 16.4k
Comments: 194
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

So that is me in the boys cheerleading uniform in high school. I know. Um. I loved cheer. I lived, breathed and died cheer and being a part of an extracurricular activity and a sport is kind of what saved my life throughout high school and made me felt like I had belonged and had a place. And uh, I realized why I was so uncomfortable in that uniform and it was 'cause I was a woman and I decided to start transitioning my junior going into senior year. And I had a cheer coach, and I had

peers and support and people there to help advocate for me who were not gonna stop until I got to wear that girls uniform. Because it's important that trans people can participate and can participate as the correct gender.

switches to second photo

And *this* is how I got to start my senior year. As the woman I always wanted to be, *in* the girl's uniform, *playing* and competing with girls.

TikTok 3 (Accessed April 17, 2022)

Description/Context:

Dylan Mulvaney, a white transwoman and actress/comedian, is documenting her transition journey through daily vlogging. In this TikTok she is on "day 25 of being a girl" and is recording her walk to and from yoga class. Before the class, she talks about which locker room she will be using and her experience with using the men's locker room in the past. She also mentions that the reason she hasn't gone to yoga since she came out as transgender is because of her anxiety with using the girl's locker room. After the class she talks about her experience, which was positive, and concludes that the common locker room debate used by anti-trans discourses is unnecessary. She is holding her yoga mat in her inner elbow and has a white fleece jacket on, with white, heart-shaped sunglasses on the top of her head. After class, she is noticeably sweaty and has her hair tied back in a low ponytail. Both before and after class she is walking outside. Her tone of voice is excited and peppy.

Account:

User handle: @dylanmulvaney
Name: Dylan Mulvaney
User Bio: She/they, LA actress/comedian, collab: liza@illuminatesocial.co
Followers: 1.8M

TikTok:

Date: 05.04.2022
Length: 52s
Views: 7.5M
Likes: 1.6M
Comments: 10.5K
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:
Text on top of video reads: "Day 25 of girlhood"

Day 25 of being a girl, and I'm on my way to yoga class for the first time as a woman. And I actually used to be a yoga instructor but I haven't gone because I've been so nervous about the

locker room situation ‘cause actually the last time I went, I used the men’s locker room a few months ago and a guy walked in and was like ‘Oh my gosh this is the men’s locker room’ and I was like ‘Ahhhhh!’. Um but I have my mask. *Shows mask to camera*

Cuts to her about to go in and putting on her mask

I’m going in, wish me luck.

Cuts to her post yoga

That wasn’t that scary! I made a friend in there. And the women’s locker rooms smells so much better than the men’s FYI. And if you’re afraid to use the locker room with a trans person, this is what you’re afraid of *points to her own face*. So let’s just pick a different battle to fight, am I right? Love you.

Waves bye and blows kiss to camera

TikTok 4 (Accessed April 17, 2022)

Description/Context:

Snippet of Ben Shapiro, political conservative commentator, in what looks to be a panel. He is explaining why he does not use an individual’s pronouns that correspond to their gender identity and instead uses pronouns that correspond to their assigned gender. The TikTok cuts to show the crowd and their reactions as Ben speaks. Ben is wearing a blue shirt, has short black hair and is white.

Account:

User handle: @conservativeheat2.0
Name:
User Bio: 167k Patriots, Pierre4PM, Trump2024, @conservativeheat2.0
Followers: 167.4k

TikTok:

Date: 15.11.2021
Length: 40s
Views: 5.7M
Likes: 859.3K
Comments: 17.3K
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:
*Text on top of video reads: Ben Shapiro Heated (*trans flag)* Debate, part 3”*
TikTok starts on just Ben

– person wants me to call them by their pronouns, in private I am happy to call them whatever they want. If they want me to call them Napoleon Bonaparte, I'll do it, I don't care.

cuts to view of back of crowd

It doesn't matter to me. But, in a public setting,

cuts back to view of just Ben

I am not going to sacrifice the validity of truth, on the altar of niceness. I'm not gonna do it. Right? If I'm, if I'm on stage with a person who is a transgender person, I will say that they are biologically male if they are biologically male and I will call them by pronouns that match their biology because this is what pronouns are designed to do. They're not meant to do – they are not designed in order

cuts to view of one participant in crowd nodding along

to describe your subjective feeling

cuts back to view of just Ben

about yourself, which is unverifiable by any objective metric. Ok? Otherwise we cannot have a language, we cannot have a conversation. So, ya, I, I'm, I'm, I object strenuously –

TikTok 5 (Accessed April 17, 2022)

Description/Context:

Snippet of Candace Owens on her podcast show (The Candace Owens Show) explaining to guest how and why she believes being transgender is a mental illness. Candace is wearing a white blouse, capri pants and headband. She has medium dark brown hair and is black. Her guest is also black and wearing a black sweater and blue jeans.

Account:

User handle: @politicsasusual_
Name:
User Bio: Follow for Candace Owens / Conservative Content
Followers: 105.2K

TikTok:

Date: 07.05.2021
Length: 1:03
Views: 121.4K

Likes: 11.0K
Comments: 307
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

TikTok starts on just Candace

I think Trans is a, a mental disorder. I think there's tons- you know gender dysphoria is a mental disorder, there's tons of mental disorders out there. There are people that walk around, down the street and think they are Superman, you know think they can- they have powers, and they can fly and they're batman. And I would never want to see that person attacked. You know?

Cuts to view of Candace Owens and guest

Um, I grew up in a, a family where one of my uncles had severe mental disorders and thought he was an, like, Indian[sic] from a tribe or something, you know?

Cuts back to just Candace

Uh, kind of got it because he was in solitary confinement for too long and he actually went crazy in prison. Um so (guest: mmm) I've always been sensitive to people that have, you know, mental disorders. Um, but, but, when you start saying to society that you now have to pretend that Candace's uncle is an Indian and if you don't, you know, acknowledge him as Pocahontas then you're a bigot, you're, that's, that's wrong. Now you're putting the pressure on me *laughs*, to not just be, you know, accepting of this, but now to play the crazy game and to say if you mispronounce and you don't call him chief Pocahontas, then you're a bigot. (Guest: Yeah). I don't –

TikTok 6 (Accessed May 25, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator plays a snippet of another creator's TikTok that she screen-recorded. The screen recorded TikTok is of a mom cutting her transgender son's hair. Her son is claiming he is a boy before she cuts it. The creator who posted the initial TikTok has "My son who is transgender, Transition Day, advised by his doctor and psychologists *trans flag emoji* Pt 1" written on the bottom and the creator who is commenting on this TikTok wrote "TW *exclamation point emoji*: child ab*se" on top. Only 3 seconds of the screen-recorded TikTok plays before it switches to the actual creator's face. In the frame it shows her upper body and she is indoors. This trigger warning child abuse label stays on throughout the TikTok as she explains her disapproval of the mother's choices and her belief that children get surgical procedures done. She also misgenders the child throughout. She compares the child's gender expression to people claiming personality traits about their pets.

Account:

User handle: @miapolitics
Name:
User Bio: 19 y/o second gen immigrant, Snap: miaginabella
Followers: 48.1k

TikTok:

Date: 22.01.2021
Length: 35s
Views: 889.2K
Likes: 92.2k
Comments: 12.4k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Screen-recorded TikTok:

Child: I'm a boy
Mom: You sure?
Child: Yeah.

Actual Creator's TikTok:

Mhm. So let me get this straight. We don't let five year old's decide what they want to eat for dinner, *but* we *will* let them make sexual decisions that will change them physically and mentally for the rest of their lives. Right… *as she scratches head*. Ok. Mom also claims that this baby girl knew that she was *a boy* *uses finger quotations* when she was Two years old *holds up two fingers*. This is like when someone's like 'oh my cat is vegan' or 'oh my dog is a vegetarian'. Like we know who's making the decisions for them right?

TikTok 7 (Accessed May 25, 2022)

Description/Context:

This TikTok was posted by the mom of a trans boy. It shows them indoors while she is about to cut her sons hair. The creator explains through text on the top of the video that this is a video from a few years ago that she found on her iCloud account showing the first time she ever cut her son's hair. She explains that her son was pulling out a lot of it because of his gender dysphoria and that it was a really hard thing for her to do in the beginning but that now she realizes that is wrong. In the video you can see the mother's hesitation and her son's impatience as she goes to cut it but then pulls her hand back a few times before she does it at the end of the video. At the end it is written that this is not a choice and to support LGBT+ kids.

My son who is transgender, Transition Day, advised by his doctor and psychologists *trans flag

emoji* Pt 1" is written on the bottom of the TikTok and remains there throughout.

Account:

User handle: @jencaitlee
Name: Jennifer Lee
User Bio: Parent by CHOICE, *trans flag emoji* representation matters *wheelchair user emoji*
Followers: 306.5k

TikTok:

Date: 11.01.2021
Length: 59s
Views: 13.2M
Likes: 2.3M
Comments: 11.5k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Child: I'm a boy
Mom: You sure?
Child: Yeah.
Text on top reads: I went through my icloud from several years ago and found the video of me trimming his hair the first time before the barbershop.
Mom: I'm gonna miss your hair. K. I'm gonna cut it off ok?
Child: K.
Mom: Are you sure?
Child: Yeah cut it. Cut it! Cut it!
Text on top reads: I asked him for permission to share. He said he wants to because it was the happiest day of his life!
Mom: Ok I'm gonna cut it off now. *pause* Are you sure?
Text on top reads: He was like *rolling eyes emoji* cut it lady
Child: yeah.
Text on top reads: He had cut out or pulled out most of it already with his dysphoria *sad face emoji*
Mom: you're not gonna be sad if your hair's gone? Are you sure you want short hair?
Child: Uh-huh. Like little hair *signifies small with pinky and thumb*
Mom: Like fuzzies?
Child: Yep. Like all of them.
Text on top reads: He had been insistent, persistent, consistent for awhile
Mom: this is real hard for mommy to do honey. I'm gonna miss your long pretty hair. But are you gonna be so happy with short hair?
Text on top reads: This was 100% wrong of me to say. He knows I am very sorry *sad face emoji*
Child: Uh-huh.

Mom: Are you sure you want short hair?
Child: Yeahhh .
Text on top reads: It's been several years and he is so happy still *heart emoji*
Mom: You're not gonna have long hair like *name, unintelligible*. Do you understand?
Text on top reads: Listen to your kids. Being LGBT+ is not a choice. They need our support.
Child: Uh-huh.
Mom goes in with scissors and finally cuts.

TikTok 8 (Accessed May 31, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator in this TikTok screen-recorded a video before commenting on it. The initial video is of someone arguing about the refusal of other's to use their pronouns (they/them) and labeling the disregard of their pronouns as discrimination. The person is talking to their camera in a car, and seems young. They are white, and wearing colourful clothing. After the screen-recorded video finishes, the creator's response begins and he argues that it is not a form of discrimination to use pronouns that match the individuals assigned gender at birth (if this is not what they identify as) and that it is in fact, a privilege. He seems young but older than the individual in the first video.

Account:

User handle: @magadon2.0.
Name:
User Bio: Ultra MAGA, where all my Patriots, All information provided is educational
Followers: 73.4k

TikTok:

Date: 24.04.2022
Length:
Views: 1.4M
Likes: 205.9k
Comments: 15.8k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Screen-Recorded Video:

Call me they/them and just call me they/them with the same effort you call a woman she/her and a man he/him. This isn't something you get to *yes* about, because if you don't call me by my preferred pronouns, then it's just discrimination.

Creator's response TikTok:

Look, you can't just cry discrimination for hurt feelings regarding pronouns that clearly don't adhere to proper English within a proper context they're going in. Besides what you're talking about is not discrimination, it's privilege. You want humanity to go out of its way to label you something that you're not, just because you say so? I'm sorry honey child, I am sorry. There will be no bending of the knee from me when it comes to your emotional damage.

TikTok 9 (Accessed May 31, 2022)

Description/Context:

This creator is making fun of others who come out publicly to announce their gender or transgender identity and/or sexual orientation. She also makes clear that she supports Trump for the 2024 elections.

Account:

User handle: @unpopular_opinion_queen
Name:
User Bio: Banned 7 times, Controversial queen, check the insta
Followers: 180.4K

TikTok:

Date: 09.08.2021
Length:
Views: 70.3K
Likes: 9566
Comments: 500
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:
Hey guys. I think it's about time that I really come out and be honest with you all. I now identify as a non-Bidenary ammosexual. And my pronouns are *fucking* American. I hope you all understand and respect my decision. Trump 2024.

TikTok 10 (Accessed May 31, 2022)

Description/Context:

This TikTok is a clip from the crowd's view of a stand-up comedian (white) telling the story of his (non-biological) son coming out as transgender. He adds humour to the story and talks about the moment his son came out as well as him receiving testosterone injections.
There is a text on the bottom of the TikTok that remains there throughout and reads: "Story of my trans son coming out."

Account:

User handle: @thebillsquire
Name: Bill Squire
User Bio: Doing Less
Followers: 70.2k

TikTok:

Date: 08.12.2021
Length: 1:36s
Views: 6.2M
Likes: 1.3M
Comments: 4010
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

I have three kids, they're actually my ex-wife's kids from her first marriage, but I raised them like they're my own. I take care of them, I provide for them. They don't see their biological father, so I stepped in that role. Thank you one person. Uhhh hehe. *crowd laughs and begins to clap* Nope too late, the rest of you guys are like "hey, you don't have to do that". Uh. My youngest is 18. He's transgender he's born as a girl lives as a boy now. And let me tell you real quick the story about he came out. He got his haircut real short, about 5, 6 years ago. And after his haircut I said like "hey, just so you know if you wanna live a certain way, all you gotta do is tell us, we'll make that happen". He was kind of shy at first he was like *bows head, speaks in hushed tone* "What? I don't know what you're talking about". And then a couple days later he's like "hey remember what you said after I got my haircut?". *As himself* "Like about you livin' as a boy?". He's like "yeah". I'm like "you wanna do that?" He's like "yeah". I'm like "okay". He's like "wait, you're not mad at me?". And I was like "well when I met you, you were four years old and you'd walk around the house without a shirt on, with a moustache drawn on your upper lip saying 'what's up everybody, my name's James, I'm a dude', so no, *pauses, crowd laughs* we've been waiting on you asshole" *crowd laughs*. And he is an asshole by the way, I don't care what's going on with your front, penis, vagina, you wanna switch 'em around, I don't care. Everyone has an asshole, everyone can be an asshole *crowd laughs*. He's an asshole *crowd laughs*. And that's why I like that he's a little bit older now, cause now he's gettin' injections, and he doesn't like getting shots and I like stabbing him a little bit *crowd laughs*.

TikTok 11 (Accessed August 2, 2022)

Description/Context:

White male asks a stranger on the street their opinion on Florida's Parental Rights in Education Act (colloquially known as the "don't say gay bill"). The interviewee is white and wearing casual clothing and sunglasses, looks to be in 20s or 30s and equates not teaching about different pronouns to not teaching about different verbs and nouns.

"*laughing face emoji* Worst take on Florida's Parental Rights In Education Bill goes to:" is written on the bottom of the TikTok and remains there until 00:06.
Video ends with his youtube handle and "comment your thoughts below"

Account:

User handle: @realjamesklug
Name: James Klug
User Bio: *American flag emoji* Political Commentator, *video camera emoji* Content Creator
Followers: 65.5k

TikTok:

Date: 20.03.2022
Length: 29s
Views: 85k
Likes: 5060
Comments: 798
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Interviewer [James Klug]: –and the teaching of gender identity and sexual orientation. It banned that for Kindergarten through third graders and in the bill it states, language that is inappropriate for children. Do you guys think that's a good idea for the kids or do you think that's a bad idea for the kids, what do you think?

Interviewee: I-

Interviewer: Kindergarten through third grade.

Interviewee: I think it's a bad idea. I don't see what's wrong with pronouns. If we're gonna ban pronouns, should we've banned verbs and nouns as well.

TikTok 12 (Accessed August 3, 2022)

Description/Context:

A transgender man named Skylar speaks about the history of transgender pathologization in the DSM and segues into talking about the terms *transexual* and *transgender*. He discusses their definitions and different connotations and explains why *transgender* is usually preferred over *transexual* and why cisgender people should not be using that term to refer to transgender individuals. In the video, Skylar is wearing a teal shirt and speaking in what seems to be a living room since there is a TV behind him. There is also the transgender flag hanging behind him. The creator put text for the duration of the video in white with a black background. He also included

the terms he spoke about in white writing with a pink background upon first mentioning them.

Account:

User handle: @pinkmantaray
Name: Schuyler Bailar
User Bio: 1st trans athlete on D1 men's team, Harvard Swimming 2019, IG @pinkmantaray
Followers: 57.4k

TikTok:

Date: 12.06.2022
Length: 1:34s
Views: 65k
Likes: 17.8k
Comments: 240
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

So Skylar are you really a transsexual? Welcome back to "Trans Terminology for Pride". Today we're going to talk about transsexualism *motions to text on screen*. Transsexualism (*Transsexualism*) is an outdated term that was used to describe and pathologize trans people and our identities. In 1980 transsexualism *makes air quotes with fingers" was included in the DSM. (*DSM = Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). This meant that being transgender was considered a mental illness. In 1994 they changed it from transsexualism to gender identity disorder but this still pathologized being trans. Gender identity disorder. There was a disorder with our gender identity. In 2012, just 10 years ago, *holds up 10 fingers* they changed this from gender identity to gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is the distress or discomfort that arises from the incongruence between gender identity and gender assigned at birth. This separated the pathologization from the identity and put it on the distress that sometimes we experience. This is really good *holds up two thumbs up*. Why? Because being transgender is not a mental illness but sometimes the distress that we experience can be. For this reason, I strongly discourage people from using transsexual *makes air quotes with fingers* to describe trans people if you are not trans. If you are trans and you use transsexual then great *holds up two thumbs up*, do what works for you. People often ask what the difference is between transsexual and transgender and the main difference is that transsexual usually implies that somebody has done something physically to change their body. This is another reason I discourage people from using transsexual *makes air quotes with fingers* because you don't really know what somebody's done with their body and if you do, you shouldn't be disclosing that to others without their consent. The most kind and inclusive umbrella term to use is transgender *motions to text on screen* and I encourage you to use that, especially if you are not transgender.

TikTok 13 (Accessed August 3, 2022)

Description/Context:

This first half of this TikTok is a compilation of pictures and videos going in chronological order and displaying the creator's gender transition. It begins with baby pictures and ends with pictures of him in present day (aged 22). It then transitions to a video of the creator in his car, speaking about his current life transition involving his career. He is crying and explaining how those pictures and videos of him during his transition reminded him that he can get through it and that it will be okay.

Throughout the compilation, the creator includes text to label different phases of the transition

Account:

User handle: @landoandrew
Name: Landon McNee
User Bio: Transition Coach *trans flag emoji*, Gender Equality and Inclusion Speaker *rainbow emoji*, He/him/his
Followers: 6308

TikTok:

Date: 01.06.2022
Length: 1:56s
Views: 129.7k
Likes: 32.1k
Comments: 1191
Sound used: Song - Free by Cat Burns

Transcription:

Compilation:

*My (*trans flag emoji*) story through photos, Oct 99 – Present*
Picture of two parents, a mother and father holding 3 infants
Picture of 3 infants side by side
Picture of two children (afab) dressed the same with father
Picture of Andrew pre-transition ~3-4 years~
Picture of Andrew pre-transition ~5-6 years~ *Daddy's Girl (*red heart emoji*)
Picture of Andrew pre-transition
Picture of Andrew pre-transition in construction hat and belt costumer *"It's just a Tomboy phase"*
Picture of Andrew pre-transition with zombie make-up face paint *"It's just a Tomboy phase*"
Picture of Andrew pre-transition with sibling and father at wedding (potentially flower girls)
School picture of Andrew ~8-9 years~
Two pictures of Andrew pre-transition smiling ~10-12 years~
Side by side pictures with two year gap *2 years ago vs. today* *on bottom,* *2013 (*right

pointing arrow emoji*) Came Out as Transgender*
Two side by side pictures of Andrew as a teenager, now very masculine presenting
Mirror selfie of Andrew as teenager, again masculine presenting
Picture of Andrew pre-transition toddler and father *2015 (*right pointing arrow emoji*) Unfortunately my father passed in the midst of my transition (*red heart emoji*)
Picture of Andrew pre-transition (~7-9 years) in ocean with father, same text as above
Picture of focused pharmaceutical bottle with blurred image of Andrew smiling behind it
*December 2015 (*right pointing arrow emoji*) start of HRT*
Picture of Andrew as teenager with snapchat caption: "GUESS WHO'S NAME OFIALLY GOT CHANGED TODAY !!!"
*Video of Andrew in room "*This is my voice pre testosterone" *pre-T*
*Video of Andrew in room, exact same setting as previous video "*This is my voice 12 months on testosterone" *1 year on T* *voice is noticeably deeper*
Picture of Andrew in hospital bed with eyes closed, holding two thumbs up *2017 (*right arrow pointing emoji*) underwent top surgery and a tummy tuck*
Mirror selfie of Andrew with dressing and blood bottles strapped to chest with same text as previous picture
Picture of Andrew in doctor's office with nurse or doctor gesturing towards a now flat chest with top surgery scars
Picture of current Andrew at the beach *TODAY (*written in between two twinkle star emojis*) *At this point song used for TikTok goes "Now I'm free"*
Picture of Andrew passing as amab, wearing a jacket
Picture of Andrew at beach

Video in Car:
Today is the start of pride month and I thought that I would show some photos in the midst of my transition that I used to post on YouTube and um I watched the video myself, as you can see I'm fighting back tears. Um *crying now* I share what I share because I was so hopeless at that point in my life. I'm going through another life transition of figuring out where I want to be in my career. And that video brought me back to center and reminded me of 'I fucking did it'. Um. I felt so alone and I hope that this video shows you that it's fucking possible. *takes deep breath* Happy pride month guys, we're in this together.

<u>TikTok 14 (Accessed August 3, 2022)</u>

Description/Context:

This TikTok is stitched onto another TikTok. The first one is a girl bopping her head to an r&b song. text on top of video reads "Unpopular opinion: not disclosing ur trans before intercourse is r@pe". The creator, Emily (white transwoman) stitches this video and argues against that point. She argues that post-op trans people don't owe their sexual partners disclosure of their transgender identity prior to having sexual relations. She also argues that as a cisgender woman, the original creator doesn't get to have an opinion on the topic as she does not understand it.

Account:

User handle: @emilytressa
Name: Emily Tressa
User Bio: 20, NYC, *trans flag emoji, Leo symbol emoji, pink heart emoji*, *letter emoji*
emilytress@gmail.com
Followers: 35.2k

TikTok:

Date: 11.11.2021
Length: 39s
Views: 30.4k
Likes: 5642
Comments: 535
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Stitched TikTok:
Girl bopping her head to an r&b song. text on top of video reads “Unpopular opinon: not disclosing ur trans before intercourse is r@pe”.

Actual TikTok:

It’s an unpopular opinion for a reason. I’m a post-op transwoman and I have the parts that fit for me and men are attracted to me for that. I’m not lying about anything. It’s not what you said it was. And it’s really not your place to comment on it cause you’ve never undergone anything that a transwoman has or those procedures. You have no idea what I’ve gone through to be where I am today and to be honest it’s really discrediting and super transphobic and it’s showing. What you see is what you get so mind your own business.

TikTok 15 (Accessed August 3, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator is responding to a commenter on a previous TikTok asking to normalize parent’s grief of a transitioning child. The creator argues that there is no reason to grieve a transgender person, as no one has died and no one has been lost. That gender-based expectations for children are harmful to children’s health.

Account:

User handle: @basictransguy
Name:
User Bio: BLM, ACAB, Trans rights are human rights!, Ohio *Pinpoint emoji*
Followers: 25.6k

TikTok:

Date: 25.11.2021
Length: 1:32s
Views: 11.2k
Likes: 2271
Comments: 335
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Comment pinned on top of video reads:

"Can we normalize instead of demonize the grieving process that comes with a loved one transitioning?"

Alright, hold on to your horses cause this might be a little bit of a long one. To answer your question in a very short fashion, no. Um, we cannot normalize grieving a trans person transitioning, no. What you're trying to say is that you're grieving the loss of someone when you haven't lost anybody, nobody has died, you know? There's no grieving needing to happen. If you put expectations on a family member or your child to represent a gender identity that you assigned to them at birth then that is your expectations failing you. You shouldn't place expectations on anybody, anybody at all, especially when it comes to gender identity. We're in a day and age where it's very knowledgeable that trans people exist. So if you have a kid and expect it to fulfill its assigned identity at birth and it does then ok there you go, it happen, more than not that's what happens. But if not, you have nothing to grieve over, you have nothing to be sad over. You should be supporting your trans family member. You know though I got people to grieve my former self, I got people like saying all that stuff to me. And you know what I needed as a trans teen? Support. You know what I needed as a trans teen? People to tell me that I was perfect the way I was including my trans self. So all in all, no. We are not normalizing the process of grieving people that transition because that does not help people that transition. And that- that's it.

TikTok 16 (Accessed August 3, 2022)

Description/Context:

A video of the creator, Noland holding their cake on their 25th birthday while their family sings to them Happy Birthday (you can only hear and not see the family members). The balloons are blue and there is a happy birthday banner in the background. The expression on Noland changes from smiling to uncomfortable and upset as the family uses their deadname in the video. The song playing goes "Take her name out of your mouth, you don't deserve to mourn, you just love the attention" (this was a popular song on TikTok at the time) at the exact moment they deadname him. Noland looks at his sister and nods and smiles because she is the only one that uses the correct name. text appears very quickly before disappearing: Nodding my head at my little sister saying my name (meaning, chosen name in this context). Noland then blows out the

candles.

Text reads: POV: you dead name your trans son on their birthday.

Account:

User handle: @nolandintheworld
Name: Noland
User Bio: Latino trans man *pinpoint emoji* Japan, My life is ridiculous, thanks if you follow *trans flag emoji* *butterfly emoji*
Followers: 23.8k

TikTok:

Date: 15.12.2021
Length: 22s
Views: 13.8M
Likes: 2.9M
Comments: 8846
Sound used: Song - Comer Over (Again) by CRAWLERS

Transcription: N/A

TikTok 17 (Accessed August 7, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator, Frank is responding to a comment on a previous video that read "Thoughts on transgender". He seems to be sitting down and is wearing a hoodie and glasses. He argues that since those assigned male at birth are genetically stronger than those assigned female at birth, it is unfair for transwomen to compete in the women's category in sports. He claims he supports the LGBTQ+ community but that this is just scientifically unfair. Also describes being transgender as a choice.

Account:

User handle: @frankniu
Name: Frank Niu
User Bio: retired at 30, full-time dad, niu_xiaofei@yahoo.com, podcast and discord *left downwards pointing arrow*
Followers: 765.3K

TikTok:

Date: 23.03.2022
Length: 36s

Views: 2.6M
Likes: 285.1k
Comments: 33.9k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Men are genetically predisposed to be stronger than women. Competitions should be an even playing field. It is not fair for natural-born women to have to compete with people who were formerly men. This is not a question of sexism, it's a question of fairness. How we have even gotten to this point that it's a question, that it should be asked, is kind of mystifying to me. I'm a supporter of LGBTQ, but this is just ridiculous. How a man can decide to compete in a woman's sport after deciding to be transgender is an absolute joke.

TikTok 18 (Accessed August 7, 2022)

Description/Context:

Creator is responding to the previous creator of a man explaining his views on transgender women in sports. This creator responds to his arguments by talking about the few instances of trans women in sports and showing that they are not actually dominating in sports. She uses the green screen effect in her TikTok to show images and statistics of the athletes to further illustrate her points. She then goes on to say that the problem of 'fairness' is inexistant in real life and that people use that argument as an excuse to be transphobic.

Account:

User handle: @dandydemon
Name:
User Bio: *worm emoji* Los Angeles *worm emoji*, Join the squad *grasshopper emoji* *mosquito emoji*
Followers: 288.5k

TikTok:

Date: 26.03.2022
Length: 2:01
Views: 1.9M
Likes: 462.2k
Comments: 12.6k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Stitched TikTok:

It is not fair for natural-born women to have to compete with people who were formerly men.

Actual TikTok:

I might lose followers for this, but let's talk about trans women in sports. The argument is that trans women are at a biological advantage over cis women and it is unfair for them to compete with cis women in sports. Also, in the comments in the video that I stitched, some people were arguing that it would be very easy for a man to just decide to become a woman just so they could dominate female sports. For the way people talk about it, you'd think that this an epidemic. Genetically superior transwomen infiltrating female sports. So let's take a look at some trans athletes. *switches to photo of Leah Thomas* Let's talk about Leah Thomas cause she's the whole reason that we're having this conversation right now. It is a fact that she did win the 500-yard freestyle. However, she didn't break a record. That record was set by a cis woman in 2017. Also, for the 100-yard and the 200- yard, she came in fifth and eighth place. *switches to photo of Leah Thomas' swim records*. After transitioning, she performed worse. *switches to photo of Veronica Ivy cycling*. Next up we have cyclist Veronica Ivy. *switches to photo of NY times article*. Very talented cyclist, not the fastest, that belongs to Kelsey Mitchell. Kelsey's not trans. *switches to photo of Laura Hubbard*. Then we got Laura Hubbard who competed in the Olympics for women's weightlifting. And did being trans give her an unfair advantage? No. No, she did terribly. And that's kinda it. So I guess my question is this: why are trans people in sports such a hot button topic, when it seems to only exist as a problem hypothetically. Cause the reality is, trans women are not dominating female sports. Let's talk about problems that actually exist in female sports, let's talk about the pay disparity between female sports and male sports. Let's talk about abusive coaches in female sports. Let's talk about eating disorder prevalence in female sports. Why are we talking about hypotheticals, when we could be talking about real-life issues. It seems like some of you only care about female sports when it gives you an opportunity to be transphobic.

<u>TikTok 19 (Accessed August 7, 2022)</u>

Description/Context:

This sound comes from a video of a firework going off and exploding very low. You can hear children yelling/talking in the beginning and then when the fire goes off there is a small explosion sound followed by a larger explosion sound. Many people used this sound on their TikTok's when they want to show things that their friends, family, or spouses do not accept despite accepting something. Typically what happens is text will come up, saying something that, normally, would be considered something very difficult to go through or difficult for others to accept at the same time as the sound of the first, smaller explosion. The creator will make a small punch or tap with their finger along with the explosion sound. That is then followed by a a different text that, normally, would be something easier to go through or accept, paired with the sound of the bigger explosion and a bigger punch by the creator. In this particular version of the trend, the creator has written on top for the duration of the video "Things my parents had to come to terms with". When the little explosion sound comes, the text reads: "Me being trans" and they tap their finger lightly in the air. This is then followed by the loud explosion sound and

the text that pops up reads: “Me transitioning”. At this moment the creator takes a big swing with their fist and punches the air.

The caption on the post reads: Let’s just say that they’re not mad about the medical barriers there are for me as a fat person seeking top surgery *with three sunglasses face emojis*.

Account:

User handle: @jordallenhall
Name: Jordan Underwood
User Bio: N/A
Followers: 26.3k

TikTok:

Date: 22.05.2022
Length: 8s
Views: 25.8k
Likes: 1646
Comments: 17
Sound used: milennial132

Transcription: N/A

TikTok 20 (Accessed August 9, 2022)

Description/Context:

TikTok is a video of a young boy with a transgender flag wrapped around him like a cape. He is standing next to an adult wearing the pride flag as a cape. They are standing in what seems to be a blocked off street and there are people all around, suggesting this is a pride event. Together they set off a paper cannon that shoots out blue powder with confetti. The boy then runs to the sidewalk to hug another adult who says “good job” as they hug and is seemingly in tears.

The caption reads: Charlie wanted to announce to the world that HE is Officially a boy. Congratulations my brave boy you will always be loved *three red heart emojis*

Account:

User handle: @bambeasters.tshirts
Name:
User Bio: Customization shop located in Vancouver BC, Canada. Brand launching soon!!!
Followers: 2456

TikTok:

Date: 31.07.2022
Length: 14s
Views: 1.9M
Likes: 445.9k
Comments: 4443
Sound used: Song - Pride by Emilyplzno

Transcription: N/A

TikTok 21 (Accessed August 9, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator, Chris is standing in front of a rainbow set of curtains and responding to a comment on a previous TikTok saying “no kid of mine will be trans”. Chris explains the unconditional love they felt as they held their new puppy for the first time and explains that they can’t imaging the amount of love they’d feel for their hypothetical child. Their point is that your child is a part of you and you have to unconditionally love, support and protect their child.

Account:

User handle: @chrispaulrainbows
Name:
User Bio: *Canadian flag emoji* *rainbow emoji*, #10kSummerBreak, Author + Illustrator, Follow me on Instagram!
Followers: 288.9k

TikTok:

Date: 02.01.2022
Length: 49s
Views: 131.1k
Likes: 31.8k
Comments: 2960
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

My husband and I picked up our new puppy last night. And I was holding him in my arms on the way home. And I knew I already loved him. New love is such a magical feeling. And I was saying to my husband “I don’t know how people have kids, if I love a dog this much, I can’t imagine what the intense feeling of love would be when having a child.” Like I feel like would be overwhelming. And the responsibility of having that child. It would be like having a piece of your heart walking around on the planet. So my question is, why would you create that little piece of heart if you’re not willing to love it unconditionally and protect it at all costs? That’s my

question.

TikTok 22 (Accessed August 9, 2022)

Description/Context:

Mom is walking with her son (elementary school-aged). The camera is only showing the back of him as she asks him questions about his brother's new name. The text on top of the video reads "My son's reaction to Beau coming out as trans *trans flag emoji*." The mom is asking what her son thinks about his brother's new chosen name. The son says he likes it and he agrees that the name suits him. There is then a second clip of the son explaining what it's like for him to witness his brother's transition/coming out.

Account:

User handle: @tay.herrera
Name: Tay Herrera
User Bio: *pride flag emoji*, BLM, She/Her, Introvert masquerading as a social *butterfly emoji*
Followers: 80.3k

TikTok:

Date: 19.12.2021
Length: 20s
Views: 7.5M
Likes: 1.1M
Comments: 2335
Sound used: Song – Still Falling For You - From "Bridget Jones's Baby"

Transcription:

Mom: You like that name?
Son: Yeah, I really do.
Mom: You think it suits him?
Son: Mhm.
Mom: I think so too, he picked it out himself.
Son: It's kinda, It's almost like, it's kinda like meeting a new person. But then like you already know them and like they're like your best friend immediately.

TikTok 23 (Accessed August 10, 2022)

Description/Context:

The text on the video reads "princess dress up party time" and stays on the video throughout. The caption on the post reads "lucas and luna both love their princess dresses". In the bio of the

creator, she has clearly indicated that she is a mother and that she has 5 children indicated in order of age. There are three people in the TikTok and a dog. We can assume that the older man is her 18-year old son and that the two younger children are her 4-year old son and 3-year old daughter. They are in the living room and the TV is playing in the background. The TikTok starts with the younger son bringing a blue ballgown dress-up dress to her older son. The older son offers his hand out to his younger brother and proceeds to help him get into the dress as the younger sister watches (who is also holding a dress). The video then continues to show the oldest son helping her youngest daughter into a dress as well.

Account:

User handle: @joancaballero_
Name: Joan Caballero
User Bio: Ain't no hood like motherhood, *boy face emoji* 18, *girl face emoji* 13, *girl face emoji* 11, *young boy face emoji* 4, *young girl face emoji* 3
Followers: 115.4k

TikTok:

Date: 09.01.2022
Length: 27s
Views: 5.1M
Likes: 792.2K
Comments: 4890
Sound used: Song – Happier by Olivia Rodrigo

Transcription:

N/A

TikTok 24 (Accessed August 10, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator, Liam uses the green screen effect throughout the whole video with a single picture. The picture is a Facebook memory post from March 9, 2015 of him in a hoodie and sweatpants sleeping on a couch. The caption on the post reads "Liam putting in work". It is posted by a friend of the creator and is from when they were studying abroad together in Poland. Liam is talking in front of this photo and is explaining how this friend who in the beginning of his transition had trouble remembering to use his chosen name, went back to all his old Facebook posts to change his name in the caption to his chosen name. He explains how this is a great way to be a supportive ally to your trans friends and although it may seem small, it could be a big deal for other people.

Account:

User handle: @liammagan
Name: Liam Magan
User Bio: *blue diamond emoji* “Have the courage to be exactly who you are without apology.” *blue diamond emoji* // *trans flag emoji* *transgender symbol emoji*
Followers: 89.2k

TikTok:

Date: 09.03.2022
Length: 1:02
Views: 34.2k
Likes: 9046
Comments: 119
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Ok so this popped up in me memories today. It’s from my time studying abroad, I was taking a nap in the student center, which I did often between classes. And so I was not transitioned at this point when I was in Poland, um but, my friend Dylan went back and changed my name in all of his captions on every photo he shared of us from my birth name to Liam. Which I did not ask him to do, I didn’t even know that he’d done it until like the following year after I came out and I noticed my memories – they all said Liam and I was like ‘oh my gosh’. So I looked through all of his albums of our trips and I noticed he changed every single caption and it just meant so much to me because he was somebody who really struggled with changing my name because it was just hard for him to get used to something new. And so it really meant a lot to me that he took the time to go back and change something seemingly so small um. But like that’s something you can do as an ally to a queer person who’s changing their names and pronouns, go back and start changing captions so that when these memories pop up, they get to feel affirmed.

TikTok 25 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

A similar transition video as TikTok 13 but this time told through the lens of the parent. The first 45 seconds are compilation videos starting from the parents’ finding out about their pregnancy in 2014 to maybe around age 7. The parent (nonbinary) is explaining the signs that Eduardo showed about her transgender identity very early on; mainly that Eduardo always wanted to dress feminine and play with feminine toys when home. She also asked if the covid lockdowns meant she could be a girl all the time. It then cuts to a present day video of the parent getting out decorations and balloons and having a second gender reveal for Eduardo. The parent holds a black balloon over Eduardo’s head and pops it. Pink confetti then falls on Eduardo as she screams that she is a girl. The TikTok switches to another video of Eduardo playing with pink ribbons and again announcing that she is a girl. Text on post: Eduardo’s Gender Reveal (she/her)

Account:

User handle: @jonathanjoly
Name: Jonathan Saccone Joly
User Bio: Non binary dad of 4 *three young girl face emojis and one young boy face emoji*, read my book *trans flag emoji* *praying hands emoji* - link below
Followers: 2.4M

TikTok:

Date: 25.02.2022
Length: 1:02
Views: 4.2M
Likes: 462.3k
Comments: 6604
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Compilation:

Narrator (parent):

Video of wife with pregnancy test and video of wife and new baby
In 2014, my wife and I found out we were pregnant with our second child.
Video of ultrasound and wife excited
After a scan it was concluded, the baby was a boy.
Video of grandma holding ultrasound results and crying
We had a gender reveal party and announced our son.
Video of Eduardo as toddler smiling and wearing sparkly purple Mouse ears headband
It didn't take long for Eduardo to express his draw to his sisters' clothes and toys.
Video of Eduardo playing in a room with a princess dress on
We thought it was cute, and distracted by our own lives we paid no attention.
Video of Eduardo getting his hair cut at the barber, video of E on toy car
As the years went by, Eduardo felt the social pressure to become a boy.
Video of Eduardo frowning at barber and video of Eduardo turning away from sister
So, he started to get quiet and less interested in this world.
Video Eduardo smiling in boy clothes (presumably on his way to or coming from school)
We continued to buy him boy clothes.
Video of Eduardo on floor with sister, both are in princess dresses
Yet at home, he only wore his sister's.
Video of Eduardo in car with boy clothes, video od Eduardo in suit and tie next to sister in dress, video of Eduardo (in shorts and jacket) and sister (in dress and jacket) making silly faces
And whenever he left the house, or went to school, he assimilated back into being a boy.
Video of Eduardo with older sister and two younger siblings, video of Eduardo in a dress with mom, both smiling

And then we had a pandemic and we were all told to stay at home.
Video of Eduardo picking out a dress from a closet while in boy clothes
And Eduardo asked me, 'does this mean I get to be a girl all the time now?' And that's when I realized the mistake we made.
Video dropping packs and balloons
Today, we're undoing that mistake with Eduardo's gender reveal.

Video in living room:

Parent: Alright, count it down. Three, two one! [pops balloon and pink confetti comes out]

Eduardo: Ahh! I'm a girl! I'm a girl!

TikTok 26 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

This is a video of the creator (Cameron) coming out as transgender to their parents. They are all sitting in a booth at a restaurant. As Cameron announces the news, he starts to tear up. The dad then holds out his hand and says that its ok and the mom smiles. For the duration of the TikTok, a cheerful but soft piano song is playing. (This is a popular song to use on TikTok for emotionally positive or sentimental content). Caption on post reads: I wasn't exactly expecting the worst however I sure as hell wasn't expecting this.

Account:

User handle: @cam.jam94
Name: Cameron James
User Bio: *emojis: controller, Filipino flag, trans flag, electric guitar*, We create as we think and speak, *emojis: brain, plant, red heart*
Followers: 11.7k

TikTok:

Date: 11.02.2022
Length: 19s
Views: 9.1M
Likes: 1.5M
Comments: 7379
Sound used: Song – Cornfield Case by Dorian Marko

Transcription:

Cameron: Umm. I'm coming out.
Mom: Ok
Cameron: And… I wanna transition. Which means I… [trails off]

Dad: *nods head and then reaches out hand* It's okay. It's all good. It's okay, alright? *smiles*
Mom: *smiles*
Cameron: Ok [shaky voice]

TikTok 27 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

This TikTok is of the creator telling a story of when she was 11 at school. The story is that a boy got picked on for four years for saying that he liked her (he didn't know she was trans). Although the creator is telling a negative story, she has a comedic tone in her voice.

Account:

User handle: @chezablondexo
Name:
User Bio: Just vibes, 21
Followers: 295.1k

TikTok:

Date: 01.13.2022
Length: 39s
Views: 1.7M
Likes: 260.6K
Comments: 420
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

So I came out as trans when I was about 11 so it was first year of secondary school. And this boy didn't know I was trans and said that he fancied me. Basically he got bullied for about four years because he said he fancied me. Four! Like, it had no effect on me at all but the fact that he got picked on for fancying me. I think that's so mean. People just used to be like 'haha blablabla fancies you' and I was like 'but, is it a bad thing?'. I didn't fancy him back, I just felt very offended.

TikTok 28 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

This TikTok contains the creator, Mikaela, explaining that she's been receiving many comments on her videos from people saying they want to/will kill her. She then pleads for allies and queer people to interact with the post so that she can get back to the "safe" side of TikTok.
Caption on post reads: back to crying for me.
Context note: many users on this app talk about the good and bad side of TikTok. The binary

could also include liberal versus conservative, discriminatory versus progressive, and so on.

Account:

User handle: @mikaelaistired
Name:
User Bio: she/they *trans flag emoji, pride flag emoji*, I'm pretty cool
Followers: 370.7k

TikTok:

Date: 06.02.2022
Length: 17s
Views: 1.2M
Likes: 379k
Comments: 47.3k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Hi, in the last few days I've received an extreme amount of promises to unalive me. It all seems to stem from me saying that trans people can be attractive. So if you're trans or queer or just on the safe side of TikTok, I would really appreciate it if you would interact with this, thank you.

TikTok 29 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator is lip syncing to someone else's sound.
The original sound is of someone in a podcast studio on air, and he asks the other people there if they are homophobic, there is an awkward silence. This sound became popular to use on TikTok videos like these, where the creators are acting out scenarios where they are trying to sus out if they are safe to be out. Although this is quite a serious topic, it is a funny trend since the joke is that in this scenario, the queer person is trying to find out the opinions of potentially discriminatory people in a very obvious way (when you're supposed to do it as discreetly as possible).

Account:

User handle: @scampscallywag
Name:
User Bio: 21+ plz & thanks *no 18 emoji*, lg(B)(T)q+, *trans flag emoji* ftm *strong arm emoji*
Followers: 29.9k

TikTok:

Date: 02.03.2022
Length: 12s
Views: 215k
Likes: 49.9k
Comments: 119
Sound used: poloboy

Transcription:

Text on TikTok: when I was stealth & testing the waters with people I just met that don't know I'm tr4ns

Sound (with creator lip syncing): I love gay people. (other voice in sound: xxx about that). So what about you guys? (other voice in sound: yeah) Are you guys homophobic?

TikTok 30 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

This sound has been used on many TikTok videos explaining the disappointment they were to their family (whether their family was actually disappointed or not). The video usually starts with a text explaining what their family expected and the lyrics of the song goes "so everybody put your hands in the air". Then the video shows the creator dancing and changes the text to write the (usually ironic) disappointment while the lyrics go "it's an all-night party that we're gettin' into, you think it's all over but the joke is on you"

In this video the creator does this exact trend but applies it to the fact that her mom's side of the family hasn't had a boy for 50 years until she came but then she turned out to be a trans girl.

Account:

User handle: @uhllina
Name:
User Bio: *yellow flower emoji*, she/her, 18 year old fat trans girl
Followers: 87.6k

TikTok:

Date: 01.06.2022
Length: 16s
Views: 8.1M
Likes: 1.9M
Comments: 6107
Sound used: the joke is on you. icarly

Transcription:

Text reads: my mom's family excited that I was the first boy born in 50+ years.

Chorus starts: It's an all-night party that we're getting into, you think its's all over but the joke is on you.

Text reads: Trans girl *trans flag emoji*

TikTok 31 (Accessed August 11, 2022)

Description/Context:

The creator is in his car talking about a documentary he watched called "what is a woman". A documentary released this year about trans issues but filmed by a conservative commentator named Matt Walsh. The creator argues that the gender studies professors did not have a biological definition of a woman (i.e. someone with a vagina, uterus and XX chromosomes) but that the next day Roe v Wade was overturned and the same professors used a biological definition to define women and state that this was a women's rights issues. He says he knows that the professors say this because abortion advocates argue that he doesn't deserve to have an opinion on abortion rights due to the fact that he is a man. He then says this goes to show that the traditionally biological definition of a woman is a fact.

Note: Those same professors *did not actually* define a woman in the traditionally biological sense in the context of abortion. He was just assuming they did and generalizing. Usually people who are trans allies use the argument "no uterus, no opinion" to be trans-inclusive.

Account:

User handle: @daxalishious
Name:
User Bio: Click below for Truth-filled Christian content!
Followers: 51.8k

TikTok:

Date: 29.06.2022
Length: 55s
Views: 218.8k
Likes: 32.2k
Comments: 860
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

So, I finally watched the 'what is a woman' documentary last week, and uh, it was interesting

watching gender studies professors not able to answer a basic question like ‘what is a woman?’. But what was even more interesting to me was the next day, Roe v. Wade was overturned um, and those very people who couldn’t define the word woman all of a sudden knew exactly what a woman was. I know this because those very people tell me that I can’t talk about abortion because I’m a man and because can’t get pregnant. But wait, that means a woman must be someone who can get pregnant. You see, at the end of the day, we all know what a woman is. Because it’s obvious. This isn’t a complicated question. And the people who are trying to make it more complicated, are trying so hard to deny a clear fact about this reality.

TikTok 32 (Accessed August 31, 2022)

Description/Context:

This TikTok stitches an original video first. The original video is of a woman saying that she was glad she was born in the 90s. I don’t fully know the context of the original video because it was removed but I can assume based on the actual TikTok that she was saying that she was happy to be born in ‘simpler times’ because now parents let their kids transition too easily.
The actual TikTok is of a young woman explaining how when she was younger she was closer in age to her brothers versus her older sisters. She was a tomboy, wanted to wear boy clothes and be called “Joe” instead of Jodie. She said her parents never asked her if she wanted to be a boy and she didn’t want to cut her breasts off (she mentions that she in fact wanted them enhanced). She then states that now as an adult she is happy as a woman and is straight.

Account:

User handle: @Jodie.difranco
Name: Jodie DiFranco
User Bio: jodiedifranco@gmail.com conservative Merch available *finger pointing down emoji*
Followers: 58.3K

TikTok:

Date: 11.08.2022
Length: 1:39s
Views: 158.2k
Likes: 21.2k
Comments: 504
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

First TikTok:

Text on TikTok: I’m grateful I was born in the 90’s

So I know I’m gonna get a lot of shit for this but I actually just don’t care. I’d like to publicly

thank the universe and my parents for allowing me to be- *actual TikTok starts*

Actual TikTok:

Ok so as a creator, my husband has always told me I should talk more about being a conservative to a woman. Um, but I feel like it's hard because the (unintelligible) I want to talk about I feel like would offend a lot of people. But we're gonna offend some people today, so if you get offended easily keep it going. Um, so when I was a little girl, as, if you watch this original creator's video, you know that like she wanted to be a boy because it was easier and puberty for women sucks ass. Um, I also felt the same. When I was a little girl, I had two brothers who I was close in age group with and I wore their underwear, wore boys clothes, tried to pee standing up, tried out for the football team, the whole 9 yards, dressed as a boy, told people to call me Joe when we were in public. Um, and my parents never were like 'Do you want to be a boy?' 'Jodie, do you want to be Joseph?'. They did question my sexuality, often, uh, asking if I was a lesbian. Uh, I am not. I have kissed chicks, but you know, who hasn't (laughs). But then I grew the fuck up. I- it, it was a phase, it was literally a tomboy phase. And it was easy for me to identify with my brothers who were close in age and close in friends, then my way way older sisters who hated my guts 'cause I was the annoying little sister, and wanted to steal their clothes. Easier versions right? Never wanted to cut my boobs off, in fact I got breast implants cause I wanted bigger boobs. Then I got 'em removed, whole other story, you could go to that playlist.

TikTok 33 (Accessed September 5, 2022)

Description/Context:

Like TikTok 31, this TikTok is inspired by the documentary "What is a woman?" It starts off mid-interview with a stranger in public. We know from the interviewees first sentence that the interviewer asked him to define a woman. The Text on the TikTok and on the actual video is sarcastic as it stating that this person gave a definite answer to the question: "what is a woman", when his actual answer was that he could not answer because he is not a woman. The interviewer than asked the interviewee if they were a cat and then if they could define a cat (with the underlying argument that you don't need to be of that specific thing to be able to define it). The interviewee then says that he regrets agreeing to be interviewed and walks away (underlying assumption that it was a waste of time because the interviewer only meant to mock him and was unwilling in accepting any answer to the question that wasn't biological).

Note: the creator used capitalizations and emojis in strategic places in his text, I believe to ridicule the interviewee. For example, with the line "where does a guy get to say what a woman is?" there is a vomit emoji placed after the word "guy". I believe this is an attempt to make the interviewee seem more hostile. I notice they also highlight the word woman in pink only when it is not preceded by the word trans (and trans is highlighted in yellow, along with men and cat). The sound used is a quirky sound. It is often used in TikTok videos showing animals or children doing funny things or in people making errors. I also believe this was used in a comedic and/or mocking way, with the goal of making the interviewee seem unintelligent.

User handle: @aikidohustler

Name:
User Bio: Life-changing advice, Humor and epic rants, *fire emoji* Aikidoing life to the fullest *fire emoji*
Followers: 17.3k

TikTok:

Caption of the TikTok: That's it. Matt FINALLY gets a good answer. NEVER GIVE UP *fire emoji*.

Date: 23.08.2022
Length: 29s
Views: 4.8M
Likes: 424.2k
Comments: 3807
Sound used: Monkeys Spinning Monkeys

Transcription:

Text on TikTok: What is a WOMAN? We FINALLY have the DEFINITIVE ANSWER

Interviewee: Why are you asking a gay man what it means to be a woman? You should be asking women, especially trans women.
Interviewer: Can't everyone have an opinion about it?
Interviewee: Where does a guy get to say what a woman is. Women only know what women are.
Interviewer: Are you a-uh cat?
Interviewee pauses
Interviewee: No.
Interviewer: Can you tell me what a cat is?
Interviewee: This is actually a genuine mistake, I am sorry I even came up here.

TikTok 34 (Accessed September 5, 2022)

Description/Context:

In this TikTok, Jordan Peterson - a professor who became infamous for is controversial opinion on using the correct pronouns for trans and nonbinary people - is being interviewed on his views on the topic. Ultimately he claims that it is not about the potential 'cost' on the individual to use someone's correct pronouns but that he has an issue with the government making it mandatory. He does admit to believing that pronouns are not factually correct, despite stating that it doesn't bother him if someone requests it in one-on-one interactions.

User handle: @great_men_great_quotes
Name:
User Bio: *upwards pointing arrow* Instagram, YouTube *downwards pointing arrow*, Quotes And Motivation To Strengthen Your Mind And Body

Followers: 80.4k

TikTok:

Date: 24.08.2022
Length: 1:39s
Views: 1.6M
Likes: 113.7K
Comments: 2388
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Interviewer: Or say the example of there are some transgender people who want to not be referred to as he or she, they would prefer to be called zie or they. Um, if somebody wants to be addressed like that, what does it cost me to do that.

JP: It's hard to tell because the devil's always in the details, but as far as I'm concerned, that-that situation is, it's, it's not relevant to the issues for example that I was involved in. I didn't care if transgender people wanted to be called by some pronouns like whatever, that's something for individuals to negotiate. When the, when the government makes that a compulsion and insists in their legislation, that biological sex, uh, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual proclivity very independently, it's like, no they don't. That's wrong factually, and you're not gonna compel my speech. I don't care what your damn justification is.

Interviewer: So you see that as my right, in that you see that as a curtailing of freedom?

JP: It's worse than a curtailing of freedom. It's a demand that the population uses a certain kind of linguistic approach. It's a, it's an appropriation of speech. There's no excuse for that. That never has happened once in the history of English law. Right? It's a barrier that we do not cross. Hate speech laws are bad enough, it's not like there's no hate speech. Like anyone with any sense knows that there's hate speech. Who's gonna regulate it? Who's gonna define it. I know the answer to that. The last people in the world you would want to. And then we, we crossed another barrier and we allow the government to compel speech for some hypothetically compassionate reason? No way. That's a really bad idea.

TikTok 35 (Accessed September 5, 2022)

Description/Context:

This TikTok is an interview of the interviewee explaining that the interviewer choosing to not refer to them with they/them pronouns is disrespectful and an act of violence. The interviewer is in disagreement with this as he states that this would mean that misgendering someone is a crime.

User handle: @notanzaa

Name:
User Bio: *smiling devil emoji* HELP ME GET TO 1 MILL *smiling devil emoji*
Followers: 346.5k

TikTok:

Date: 27.08.2022
Length: 36s
Views: 29.4M
Likes: 1.7M
Comments: 34.7k
Sound used: N/A

Transcription:

Interviewee: What gender do you think I am?
Interviewer: I would assume you're female.
Interviewee: Yeah, so you're making assumptions.
Interviewer: Yes
Interviewee: I identify as a non-binary.
Interviewer: Ok and I don't- respectfully, it doesn't matter.
Interviewee: It does matter actually.
Interviewer: No, let me ask you this, what pronouns should I use?
Interviewee: What? You should use they/them pronouns. So you saying that you don't believe me, is-
Interviewer: And what if I, what if I don't?
Interviewee: If you don't I would consider that disrespectful and that's actually an act of violence to misgender a trans person
Interviewer: That is an act of violence?
Interviewee: That is an act of violence to intentionally misgender someone, yes.
Interviewer: See here we come to the issue and this is why I'm out here. Um, you just said that's an act of violence (interviewee: yes), that means an actionable offence, that means it's a crime

Appendix B

First Level Codes

TikTok 1	
1 You don't support trans kids having access to healthcare?	Emotion: Judgmental
2 *Applies filter* *TikTok sound starts*	Emotion: Humourous
3 Look at me in a man bun.	In Vivo: Me in a man bun
4 Think of the bullet you dodged.	In Vivo: Dodged a bullet
5 Support trans kids, bruh.	Values: B: Supporting Trans Kids
TikTok 2	
6 So that is me in the boys cheerleading uniform in high sch	Emotion: Embarassment, Cringe
7 I loved cheer. I lived, breathed and died cheer	In Vivo: Lived, breath and died cheer
8 and being a part of an extracurricular activity and a sport i	In Vivo: saved my life and made me felt like I belonged
9 And uh, I realized why I was so uncomfortable in that uni	In Vivo: Discomfort in that uniform
10 and I decided to start transitioning my junior going into	In Vivo: People to help advocate for me
11 Because it's important that trans people can participate ar	In Vivo: Important to participate as correct gender
12 *switches to second photo*	
13 And *this* is how I got to start my senior year. As the wor	Emotion: Pride, In Vivo: as the woman I always wanted to b
TikTok 3	
14 *Caption on top of video reads: "Day 25 of girlhood"*	In Vivo: Girlhood
15 Day 25 of being a girl, and I'm on my way to yoga class	In Vivo: First time as woman
16 And I actually used to be a yoga instructor but I haven't	In Vivo: Nervous about locker room, Emotion: Nervous, fea
Cuts to her about to go in and putting on her mask	
17 I'm going in, wish me luck.	Emotion: Nervous, giddy
Cuts to her post yoga	
18 That wasn't that scary! I made a friend in there.	In Vivo: Wasn't that scary
19 And the women's locker rooms smells so much better tha	In Vivo: Women's locker room smells better, Emotion: humo
20 And if you're afraid to use the locker room with a trans p	Values: V: Dismissing anti-trans locker room/bathroom argu
Waves bye and blows kiss to camera	
TikTok 4	
*Caption on top of video reads: Ben Shapiro Heated (*trans flag*) Debate, part 3"*	
Tiktok starts on just Ben	
21 - person wants me to call them by their pronouns, in priv	In Vivo: In private, I call them what they want
22 If they want me to call them Napolean Bonaparte, I'll do	In Vivo: want me to call them Napolean Bonaparte, Values:
cuts to view of back of crowd	
23 It doesn't matter to me. But, in a public setting,	
cuts back to view of just Ben	

I am not going to sacrifice the validity of truth, on the alter (	In Vivo: sacrifice the validity of truth
24 Right? If I'm, if I'm on stage with a person who is a tran	In Vivo: Pronouns that match their biology
25 because this is what pronouns are designed to do.	Values: B: Pronouns are based on genitals
26 They're not meant to do – they are not designed in order	Values: B: Internal gender is subjective
cuts to view of one participant in crowd nodding along	
to describe your subjective feeling	
cuts back to view of just Ben	
about yourself,	
27 which is unverifiable by any objective metric.	Values: A: We can't prove gender identity
28 Ok? Otherwise we cannot have a language, we cannot ha	In Vivo: We can't have a language or a conversation
TikTok 5	
TikTok starts on just Candace	
29 I think Trans is a, a mental disorder. I think there's tons-	In Vivo: Trans is a mental disorder
30 There are people that walk around, down the street and tl	Values: A: Trans people are delusional
37 And I would never want to see that person attacked. You	In Vivo: Wouldn't want to see that person attacked
Cuts to view of Candace Owens and guest	
31 Um, I grew up in a, a family where one of my uncles hac	In Vivo: My uncle went crazy in prison, thought he was an I
Cuts back to just Candace	
Uh, kind of got it because he was in solitary confinement for too long and he actually went crazy in prison.	
32 Um so (guest: mmm) I've always been sensitive to peopl	In Vivo: always been sensitive to people with mental disorde
33 Um, but, but, when you start saying to society that you n	Values: A: Transgender people are delusional
34 Now you're putting the pressure on me *laughs*, to not	In Vivo: Pressure on me to play crazy game
35 and to say if you mispronounce and you don't call him c	In Vivo: then you're a bigot
TikTok 6	
36 Mhm. So let me get this straight. We don't let five year o	In Vivo: life-changing decisions
37 Right… *as she scratches head*. Ok.	Emotion: sarcastic disbelief
38 Mom also claims that this baby girl knew that she was *a l*	In Vivo: Mom claims baby knew she was a boy, Values: B: M
39 This is like when someone's like 'oh my cat is vegan' or	In Vivo: Who's making decisions for them?
TikTok 7	
40 Child: I'm a boy	In Vivo: I'm a boy
Mom: You sure?	
Child: Yeah.	
Text on top reads: I went through my icloud from several years ago and found the video of me trimming his hair the first	
41 Mom: I'm gonna miss your hair. K. I'm gonna cut it off	In Vivo: I'm gonna miss your hair

Child: K.	
42 Mom: Are you sure?	In Vivo: Are you sure?
43 Child: Yeah cut it. Cut it! Cut it!	Emotion: Eager
44 *Text on top reads:* I asked him for permission to share. H	In Vivo: happiest day of his life
45 Mom: Ok I'm gonna cut it off now. *pause* Are you sur	In Vivo: Are you sure?
46 *Text on top reads:* He was like *rolling eyes emoji* cut i	Emotion: Eager
Child: yeah.	
47 *Text on top reads:* He had cut out or pulled out most of i	In Vivo: cut or pulled out hair due to dysphoria
48 Mom: you're not gonna be sad if your hair's gone? Are	In Vivo: Are you sure?
49 Child: Uh-huh. Like little hair *signifies small with pinky	Values: A: Certain
Mom: Like fuzzies?	In Vivo: like little hair, like all of them
Child: Yep. Like all of them.	
50 *Text on top reads:* He had been insistent, persistent, cons	In Vivo: insistent, persistent, consistent, for a while
51 Mom: this is real hard for mommy to do honey.	In Vivo: really hard for mommy
52 I'm gonna miss your long pretty hair.	In Vivo: gonna miss your long pretty hair
53 But are you gonna be so happy with short hair?	In Vivo: are you gonna be happy?
54 *Text on top reads:* This was 100% wrong of me to say. H	In Vivo: Wrong for me to say
Child: Uh-huh.	
55 Mom: Are you sure you want short hair?	In Vivo: Are you sure?
56 Child: Yeahhh .	
57 *Text on top reads:* It's been several years and he is so ha	Values: A: Certain
58 Mom: You're not gonna have long hair like *name, unir	In Vivo: He is so happy still
59 *Text on top reads:* Listen to your kids. Being LGBT+ is r	Values: B: Being LGBT+ is not a choice
Child: Uh-huh.	
Mom goes in with scissors and finally cuts.	
TikTok 8	
60 Look, you can't just cry discrimination for hurt feelings	In Vivo: can't cry discrimination for hurt feelings
61 regarding pronouns that clearly don't adhere to proper E	in Vivo: pronouns don't adhere to proper english
62 Besides what you're talking about is not discrimination, i	In Vivo: its not discrimination, it's privilege
63 You want humanity to go out of its way to label you som	In Vivo: label you something you're not
64 I'm sorry honey child, I am sorry. There will be no bend	In Vivo: no bending of knee from me for your emotional da
TikTok 9	
65 Hey guys. I think it's about time that I really come out ar	Emotion: Sarcastic, Descriptive: anti-Biden, pro-gun
66 And my pronouns are *fucking* American. I hope you all	In Vivo: fucking american

67 Trump 2024.	In Vivo: Trump 2024	
TikTok 10		
68 I have three kids, they're actually my ex-wife's kids fron	In Vivo: They don't see their biological father, so I stepped into that role	
69 Uh. My youngest is 18. He's transgender he's born as a g	In Vivo: born as a girl, lives as a boy now	
70 He got his haircut real short about 5, 6 years ago.	In Vivo: Got his haircut real short	
71 And after his haircut I said like "hey, just so you know if	In Vivo: All you gotta do is tell us, we'll make it happen	
72 He was kind of shy at first he was like *bows head, speak	In Vivo: He was kinda shy at first	
73 And then a couple days later he's like "hey remember wh	In Vivo: I'm like "you wanna do that?" He's like "yeah". I'm like "okay"	
74 He's like "wait, you're not mad at me?".	Emotion: Fear of rejection	
75 And I was like "well when I met you, you were four year	In Vivo: four years old without a shirt on, with a moustache drawn on, say	
76 so no, *pauses, crowd laughs* we've been waiting on yo	In Vivo: we've been waiting on you	
77 And he is an asshole by the way, I don't care what's goin	in Vivo: penis, vagina, you wanna switch 'em around, I don't care.	
78 And that's why I like that he's a little bit older now, caus	In Vivo: now he's gettin' injections, I like stabbing him	
TikTok 11		
79 Interviewer [James Klug]: […] and the teaching of gende	In Vivo: and in the bill It states, language that is inapproriate for children	
80 Interviewee: I-	In Vivo: I don't see what's wrong with pronouns	
Interviewer: Kindergarten through third grade.		
Interviewee: I think it's a bad idea. I don't see what's wrong	with pronouns.	
81 If we're gonna ban pronouns, should we've banned verb	In Vivo: should we've banned verbs and nouns as well	
TikTok 12		
82 So Skylar are you really a transsexual? Welcome back to	In Vivo: we're going to talk about transsexualism	
83 Transsexualism (*Transsexualism*) is an outdated term t	In Vivo: used to describe and pathologize trans people	
84 In 1980 transsexualism *makes air quotes with fingers" v	In Vivo: being transgender was considered a mental illness	
85 In 1994 they changed it from transsexualism to gender id	In Vivo: still pathologized being trans	
86 Gender identity disorder. There was a disorder with our g	In Vivo: there was a disorder with our gender identity	
87 In 2012, just 10 years ago, *holds up 10 fingers* they ch	In Vivo: they changed this from gender identity to gender dysphoria	
88 Gender dysphoria is the distress or discomfort that arises	In Vivo: gender dysphoria is the discomfort arising from the incongruenc	
89 This separated the pathologization from the identity and	In Vivo: this seperated the pathologization from our identity	
90 Why? Because being transgender is not a mental illness b	In Vivo: being transgender is not a mental illness	
91 For this reason, I strongly discourage people from using	In Vivo: I strongly discourage people from using transsexual, if you are n	
92 If you are trans and you use transsexual then great *hold	In Vivo: If you are trans, do what works for you	
93 People often ask what the difference is between transsexu	In Vivo: transsexual implies that somebody has done some physical body	
94 This is another reason I discourage people from using tra	In Vivo: you don't really know what someones done to their body	
95 and if you do, you shouldn't be disclosing that to others	In Vivo: you shoudn't be disclosing that wihtout consent	

96 The most kind and inclusive umbrella term to use is trans	In Vivo: the most kind and inclusive term is transgender
TikTok 13	
97 *My (*trans flag emoji*) story through photos, Oct 99 –	Descriptive: being raised as a girl
Picture of two parents, a mother and father holding 3 infants	
Picture of 3 infants side by side	
Picture of two children (afab) dressed the same with father	
Picture of Andrew pre-transition ~3-4 years~	
Picture of Andrew pre-transition ~5-6 years~ *Daddy's Girl (*red heart emoji*)	
Picture of Andrew pre-transition	
98 *Picture of Andrew pre-transition in construction hat and*	In Vivo: "It's just a tomboy phase"
Picture of Andrew pre-transition with zombie make-up face paint *"It's just a Tomboy phase*"	
Picture of Andrew pre-transition with sibling and father at wedding (potentially flower girls)	
School picture of Andrew ~8-9 years~	
Two pictures of Andrew pre-transition smiling ~10-12 years~	
99 *Side by side pictures with two year gap* *2 years ago vs.	In Vivo: Came out as Transgender
100 *Two side by side pictures of Andrew as a teenager, now*	Descriptive: Masculine presenting
Mirror selfie of Andrew as teenager, again masculine presenting	
101 *Picture of Andrew pre-transition toddler and father* *20	In Vivo: father passed in midst of transition
Picture of Andrew pre-transition (~7-9 years) in ocean with father, same caption as above	
102 *Picture of focused pharmaceutical bottle with blurred in*	In Vivo: start of HRT
103 *Picture of Andrew as teenager with snapchat caption: "*	In Vivo: NAME OFFICIALLY CHANGED !!!
104 *Video of Andrew in room* "This is my voice pre testoste	Descriptive: deepining voice with testosterone
Video of Andrew in room, exact same setting as previous video "This is my voice 12 months on testosterone" *1 year on '	
105 *Picture of Andrew in hospital bed with eyes closed, hold*	In Vivo: underwent top surgery and a tummy tuck
Mirror selfie of Andrew with dressing and blood bottles strapped to chest with same caption as previous picture	
Picture of Andrew in doctor's office with nurser or doctor gesturing towards a now flat chest with top surgery scars	
106 *Picture of current Andrew at the beach* *TODAY (*wri	Descriptive: end of trnasition story
At this point song used for tiktok goes "Now I'm free"	
Picture of Andrew passing as amab, wearing a jacket	
Picture of Andrew at beach	
107 Today is the start of pride month and I thought that I w	In Vivo: show some photos in the midst of my transition
108 I watched the video myself, as you can see I'm fighting	In Vivo: I'm fighting back tears
109 I share what I share because I was so hopeless at that po	In Vivo: I was so hopeless
110 I'm going through another life transition of figuring ou	In Vivo: this video brought me back to center and reminded

111 Um. I felt so alone and I hope that this video shows you	In Vivo: I felt so alone and I hope this video shows that it's fi
112 Happy pride month guys, we're in this together.	In Vivo: We're in this together
TikTok 14	
113 Stitched tiktok:	In Vivo: not disclosing ur trans before intercourse is rape
Girl bopping her head to an r&b song. Caption on top of video reads "Unpopular opinion: not disclosing ur trans before i	
Actual tiktok:	
114 It's an unpopular opinion for a reason.	In Vivo: unpopular opinion for a reason
115 I'm a post-op transwoman and I have the parts that fit f	In Vivo: I have the parts that fit for me, men are attracted to r
116 I'm not lying about anything. It's not what you said it v	In Vivo: I'm not lying about anything
117 And it's really not your place to comment on it cause y	In Vivo: it's not your place to comment on it
118 You have no idea what I've gone through to be where I	In Vivo: you have no idea what I've gone through
119 and to be honest it's really discrediting and super transp	In Vivo: it's discrediting and super transphobic
120 What you see is what you get so mind your own busine	In Vivo: what you see is what you get
TikTok 15	
Comment pinned on top of video reads:	
121 "Can we normalize instead of demonize the grieving pr	In Vivo: can we normalize the grieving process
122 Alright, hold on to your horses cause this might be a litt	In Vivo: we cannot normalize grieving a trans person transiti
123 What you're trying to say is that you're grieving the los	In Vivo: you haven't lost anybody, nobody has died.
124 If you put expectations on a family member or your ch	In Vivo: that is your expectation failing you
125 You shouldn't place expectations on anybody, anybody	In Vivo: you shouldn't place expectations on anybody
126 We're in a day and age where it's very knowledgeable t	In Vivo: it's very knowledgeable that trans people exist, you k
127 You should be supporting your trans family member.	In Vivo: you should be supporting your trans family membe
128 You know though I got people to grieve my former sel	In Vivo: as a teen, I needed support
129 You know what I needed as a trans teen? People to tell r	In Vivo: as a teen, I needed people to tell me I was perfect th
130 So all in all, no. We are not normalizing the process of g	In Vivo: grieving does not help people that transition
TikTok 16	
131 A video of the tiktok user, Noland holding their cake or	Emotion: Disappointed, hurt
132 The song playing goes "Take her name out of your mo	In Vivo: take her name out of your mouth
133 Noland looks at his sister and nods and smiles because s	Descriptive: gender-affirmative younger sister
TikTok 17	
134 Men are genetically predisposed to be stronger than wo	In Vivo: men are gentically predisposed to be stronger than w
135 Competitions should be an even playing field. It is not f	In Vivo: not fair for natural-born women to have to compete
136 This is not a question of sexism, it's a question of fairne	In Vivo: A question of fairness
137 How we have even gotten to this point that it's a questic	In Vivo: how have we even gotten to this point

138 I'm a supporter of LGBTQ, but this is just ridiculous.	In Vivo: this is just ridiculous
139 How a man can decide to compete in a woman's sport a	Values: A: being transgender is a decision
TikTok 18	
140 Stitched Tiktok:	Descriptive: introducing argument of fairness
It is not fair for natural-born women to have to compete with people who were formerly men.	
Actual Tiktok:	
141 I might lose followers for this, but let's talk about trans	In Vivo: the argument is that it isn't fair
142 Also, in the comments in the video that I stitched, some	In Vivo: Arguing it's easy to decide to become a woman to d
143 For the way people talk about it, you'd think that this a	In Vivo: you'd think genetically superior transwomen infilitr
144 *switches to photo of Leah Thomas* Let's talk about L	In vivo: Leah Thomas didn't break a record
145 After transitioning, she performed worse.	In Vivo: after transitioning, she performed worse
146 *switches to photo of Veronica Ivy cycling*. Next up v	In Vivo: not the fastest cyclist
147 *switches to photo of Laura Hubbard*. Then we got La	In Vivo: she did terribl
148 And that's kinda it.	In Vivo: that's kinda it
149 So I guess my question is this: why are trans people in s	In Vivo: it only exists as a problem hypothetically
150 Cause the reality is, trans women are not dominating fe	In Vivo: in reality, transwomen are not dominating female sp
151 Let's talk about problems that actually exist in female sp	In Vivo: let's talk about problems that actually exists in sport
152 Why are we talking about hypotheticals, when we could	In Vivo: why are we talking about hypotheticals
153 It seems like some of you only care about female sports	In Vivo: it gives you the opportunity to be transphobic
TikTok 19	
154 This sound comes from a video of a firework going off	Emotion: Humourous
155 In this particular version of the trend, the tiktoker has w	In Vivo: Couldn't come to terms with my transition
156 The caption on the post reads: Let's just say that they're	In Vivo: medical barriers as a fat person seeking top surgery
TikTok 20	
157 TikTok is a video of a young boy with a transgender fla	Emotion: Pride
158 He is standing next to an adult wearing the pride flag as	Emotion: Pride
159 They are standing in what seems to be a blocked off str	In Vivo: Pride event
160 Together they set off a paper cannon that shoots out blu	Descriptive: Celebration
161 The boy then runs to the sidewalk to hug another adult	in Vivo: Good job, Emotion: Joy
162 The caption reads: Charlie wanted to announce to the w	In Vivo: HE is Officially a boy
163 Congratulations my brave boy you will always be loved	In Vivo: you will always be loved
TikTok 21	
164 My husband and I picked up our new puppy last night.	In Vivo: New love is such a magical feeling
165 And I was saying to my husband "I don't know how pe	In Vivo: I can't imagine the intense feeling of loving when h

166 Like I feel like would be overwhelming.	In Vivo: it would be overwhelming
167 And the responsibility of having that child.	Values: A: Having a child is a big responsibility
168 It would be like having a piece of your heart walking ar	In Vivo: a piece of your heart
169 So my question is, why would you create that little piec	Valeus: B: Children need unconditional love and protection
TikTok 22	
170 Mom: You like that name?	In Vivo: I really do
Son: Ya, I really do.	
Mom: You think it suits him?	
Son: Mhm.	
171 Mom: I think so too, he picked it out himself.	In Vivo: he picked it out himself
172 Son: It's kinda, It's almost like, it's kinda like meeting a	In Vivo: you already know tham and they're you're best frie
TikTok 23	
173 The caption on the video reads "princess dress up party	Values: A: young boys can play with princess dresses, descri
174 Sound used: Song – Happier by Olivia Rodrigo	Emotion: Soft, happy
TikTok 24	
175 Ok so this popped up in me memories today. It's from a	In Vivo: My friend Dylan went back and changed my name
176 Which I did not ask him to do, I didn't even know that	In Vivo: I did not ask him to do this
177 So I looked through all of his albums of our trips and I	In Vivo: he changed every single caption
178 and it just meant so much to me	In Vivo: it just meant so much to me
179 because he was somebody who really struggled with ch	In Vivo: It washard for him to get used to something new
180 And so it really meant a lot to me that he took the time t	In Vivo: and so it really meant a lot to me
181 But like that's something you can do as an ally to a que	In Vivo: that's something you can do as an ally to a queer pe
182 go back and start changing captions so that when these	In Vivo: they get to feel affirmed
TikTok 25	
183 *Video of wife with pregnancy test and video of wife and*	In Vivo: the scan concluded the baby was a boy
In 2014, my wife and I found out we were pregnant with our second child.	
Video of ultrasound and wife excited	
After a scan it was concluded, the baby was a boy.	
184 *Video of grandma holding ultrasound results and cryin*	Emotion: Joy
185 We had a gender reveal party and announced our son.	In Vivo: we had a gender reveal party
186 *Video of Eduardo as toddler smiling and wearing spark*	Desriptive: expressing gender through clothing
187 It didn't take long for Eduardo to express his draw to h	In Vivo: his drae to his sister's clothes and toys
Video of Eduardo playing in a room with a princess dress on	
188 We thought it was cute, and distracted by our own lives	In Vivo: we paid no attention

Video of Eduardo getting his hair cut at the barber, video of E on toy car	
189 As the years went by, Eduardo felt the social pressure tc	In Vivo: Eduardo felt pressure to become a boy
Video of Eduardo frowning at barber and video of Eduardo turning away from sister	
190 So, he started to get quiet and less interested in this worl	In Vivo: he got less interested in the world
Video Eduardo smiling in boy clothes (presumably on his way to or coming from school)	
191 We continued to buy him boy clothes.	In Vivo: we continued to buy him boy clothes
Video of Eduardo on floor with sister, both are in princess dresses	
192 Yet at home, he only wore his sister's.	In Vivo: at home, he only wore his sister's
Video of Eduardo in car with boy clothes, video od Eduardo in suit and tie next to sister in dress, video of Eduardo (in sh	
193 And whenever he left the house, or went to school, he a	In Vivo: when he left the house, he assimilated back into be
Video of Eduardo with older sister and two younger siblings, video of Eduardo in a dress with mom, both smiling	
And then we had a pandemic and we were all told to stay at home.	
Video of Eduardo picking out a dress from a closet while in boy clothes	
194 And Eduardo asked me, 'does this mean I get to be a gi	In Vivo: does this mean I get to be a girl all the time?
195 And that's when I realized the mistake we made.	In Vivo: I realized the mistake we made
Video dropping packs and balloons	
196 Today, we're undoing that mistake with Eduardo's gen	In Vivo: I'm a girl!
Video in living room:	
Dad: Alright, count it down. Three, two one! [pops balloon and pink confetti comes out]	
Eduardo: Ahh! I'm a girl! I'm a girl!	
TikTok 26	
197 Cameron: Umm. I'm coming out.	In Vivo: I'm coming out
Mom: Ok	
198 Cameron: And… I wanna transition. Which means I… [	Emotion: fear/nervousness
199 Dad: *nods head and then reaches out hand*	Emotion: Understanding
200 It's okay. It's all good. It's okay, alright? *smiles*	Descriptive: father is showing unconditional support
Mom: *smiles*	
Cameron: Ok [shaky voice]	
201 Caption on post reads: I wasn't exactly expecting the w	In Vivo: I sure as hell wasn't expecting this.
TikTok 27	
202 So I came out as trans when I was about 11 so it was fir	In Vivo: he got bullied for four years because he said he fan
Basically he got bullied for about four years because he said	he fancied me. Four!
203 Like, it had no effect on me at all but the fact that he go	In Vivo: I think that's so mean
204 People just used to be like 'haha blablabla fancies you'	In Vivo: I was like "but is that a bad thing'

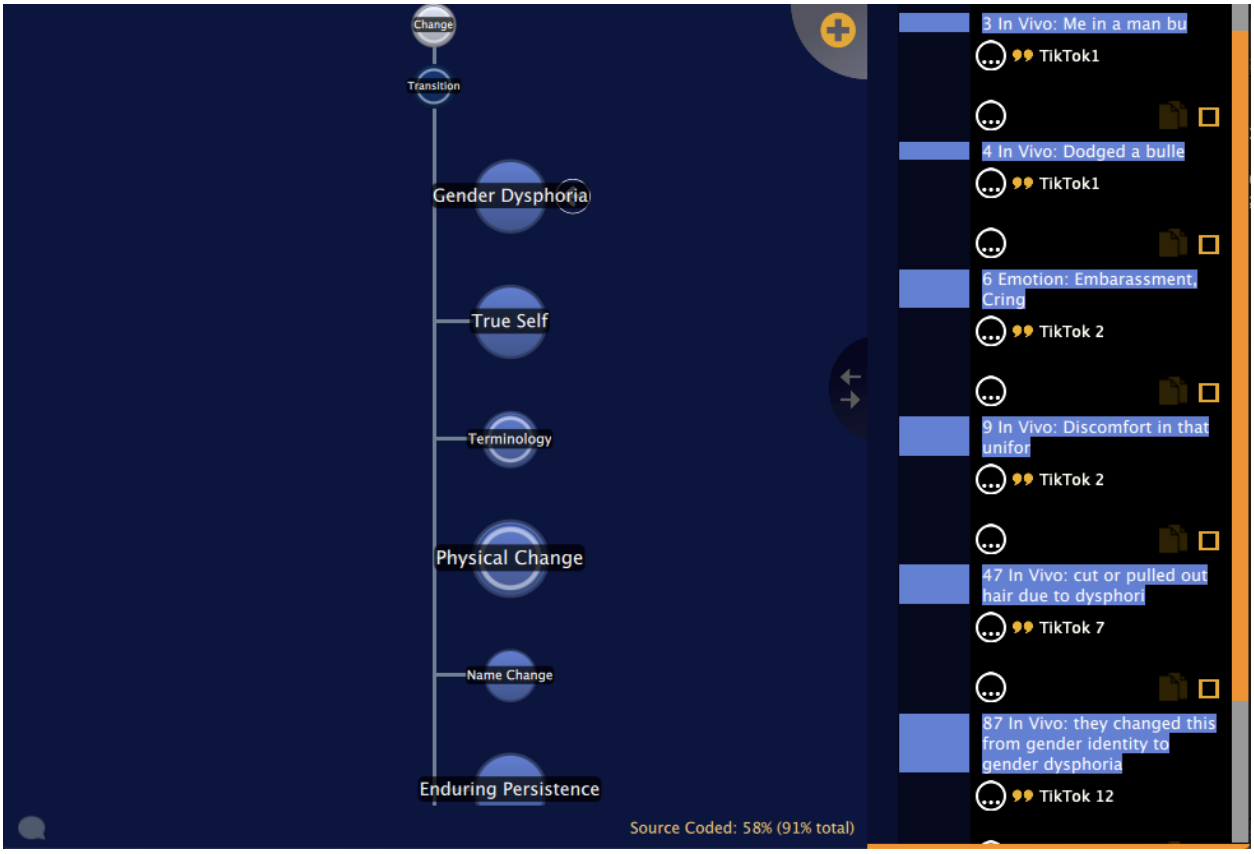
205 I didn't fancy him back, I just felt very offended.	In Vivo: I just felt very offended, Emotion: humour
TikTok 28	
206 Hi, in the last few days I've received an extreme amoun	In Vivo: I've received an extreme amount of promises to una
207 It all seems to stem from me saying that trans people ca	In Vivo: because of me saying that trans people can be attrac
208 So if you're trans or queer or just on the safe side of tik	In Vivo: I would really appreciate it if you would interact wi
TikTok 29	
209 Caption on TikTok: when I was stealth & testing the wa	In Vivo: stealth testing the waters
210 Sound (with tiktoker lipsyncing): I love gay people. (ot	Emotion: Humourous
TikTok 30	
211 Caption reads: my moms family excited that I was the fi	In Vivo: Family excited that I was the first boy
212 *Chorus starts*: It's an all night party that we're getting	Emotion: Humourous
213 Trans girl *trans flag emoji*	Descriptive: Ended up with a girl anyways
TikTok 31	
214 So, I finally watched the 'what is a woman' documenta	In Vivo: Gender studies professors not able to answer a basic
215 But what was even more interesting to me was the next	In Vivo: all of a sudden knew exactly what a woman was
216 I know this because those very people tell me that I can	In Vivo: those people tell me that I can't talk about abortion
217 But wait, that means a woman must be someone who ca	In Vivo: a woman must be someone who can get pregnant
218 You see, at the end of the day, we all know what a wom	In Vivo: this isn't a complicated question
219 And the people who are trying to make it more complic	In Vivo: they're trying so hard to deny a clear fact about this
TikTok 32	
220 Ok so as a creator, my husband has always told me I sh	In Vivo: I should talk more about being a conservative
221 Um, but I feel like it's hard because the *** I want to ta	In Vivo: We're gonna offend some people today
222 Um, so when I was a little girl, as, if you watch this orig	In Vivo: she wanted to be a boy because it was easier and pu
223 Um, I also felt the same. When I was a little girl, I had t	Descriptive: gender exploration as a kid
224 Um, and my parents never were like 'Do you want to b	In Vivo: my parents were never like "Do you want to be a bo
225 But then I grew the fuck up.	In Vivo: I grew the fuck up
226 I- it, it was a phase, it was literally a tomboy phase.	In Vivo: it was a tomboy phase
227 And it was easy for me to identify with my brothers wh	In Vivo: it was easy for me to identify with my brothers who
228 Never wanted to cut my boobs off, in fact I got breast i	In Vivo: never wanted to cut my boobs off
TikTok 33	
229 Caption on tiktok: What is a WOMAN? We FINALLY h	Emotion: Sarcasm
230 Interviewee: Why are you asking a gay men what it mea	In Vivo: you should be asking women, especially trans wom
231 Interviewer: Can't everyone have an opinion about it?	In Vivo: Can't everyone have an opinion
232 Interviewee: Where does a guy get to say what a woma	In Vivo: Women only know what women are

233 Interviewer: Are you a-uh cat?	Values: B: Gender is a biological fact
Interviewee pauses	
234 Interviewee: No.	Emotion: Frustrated/Annoyed
235 Interviewer: Can you tell me what a cat is?	Descriptive: Interviewer trying to ridicule interviewee
236 Interviewee: This is actually a genuine mistake, I am sor	In Vivo: I am sorry I even came up here
237 Caption of the tiktok: That's it. Matt FINALLY gets a g	Descriptive: ridicule and mockery
238 Sound used: Monkeys Spinning Monkeys	Descrptive: mockery
TikTok 34	
239 Interviewer: Or say the example of there are some trans	In Vivo: if somebody wants to be addressed like that, what d
240 Jordan Peterson: It's hard to tell because the devil's alw	In Vivo: I don't care if transgender people wanted to be calle
241 When the, when the government makes that a compulsi	In Vivo: the government makes that a compulsion and insists
242 That's wrong factually, and	In Vivo: that's wrong factually
243 you're not gonna compel my speech. I don't care what	In Vivo: you're not gonna compel my speech
244 Interviewer: So you see that as my right, in that you see	In Vivo: you see that as a curtailing of freedom?
245 JP: It's worse than a curtailing of freedom. It's a deman	In Vivo: it's an appropriation of speech
246 That never has happened once in the history of English	In Vivo: that never happened
247 It's a barrier that we do not cross. Hate speech laws are	In Vivo: Hate speech laws are bad enough
248 The last people in the world you would want to.	In Vivo: the last people in the world you'd want to would reg
249 And then we, we crossed another barrier and we allow t	In Vivo: we allow the governement to compel speech for soe
TikTok 35	
What gender do you think I am?	
250 I would assume you're female.	Values: A: Assuming gender based on physical appearance
251 Yeah, so you're making assumptions.	In Vivo: you're making assumptions
Yes	
252 I identify as a non-binary.	In Vivo: I identify as non-binary
253 Ok and I don't- respectfully, it doesn't matter.	In Vivo: respectfully, it doesn't matter
254 It does matter actually.	In Vivo: it does matter
255 No, let me ask you this, what pronouns should I use?	In Vivo: what pronouns should I use?
256 What? You should use they/them pronouns. So you say	In Vivo: you should use they/them
257 And what if I, what if I don't?	Descriptive: interviewee is cut off and ignored
258 If you don't I would consider that disrespectful and tha	In Vivo: that is an act of vioelence to intentionally misgende
That is an act of violence?	
That is an act of violence to intentionally misgender someone, yes.	
259 See here we come to the issue and this is why I'm out h	In Vivo: that means it's a crime

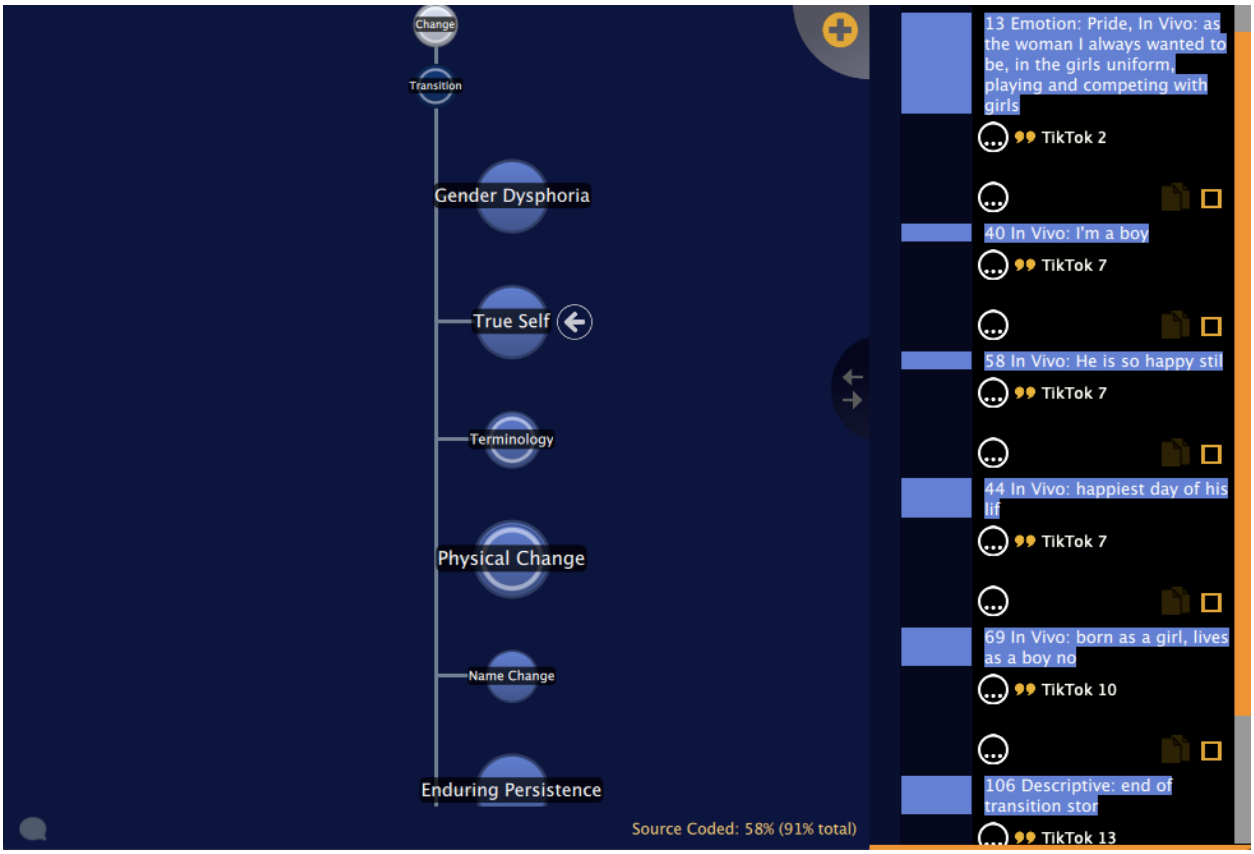
Appendix C

Second Level Codes

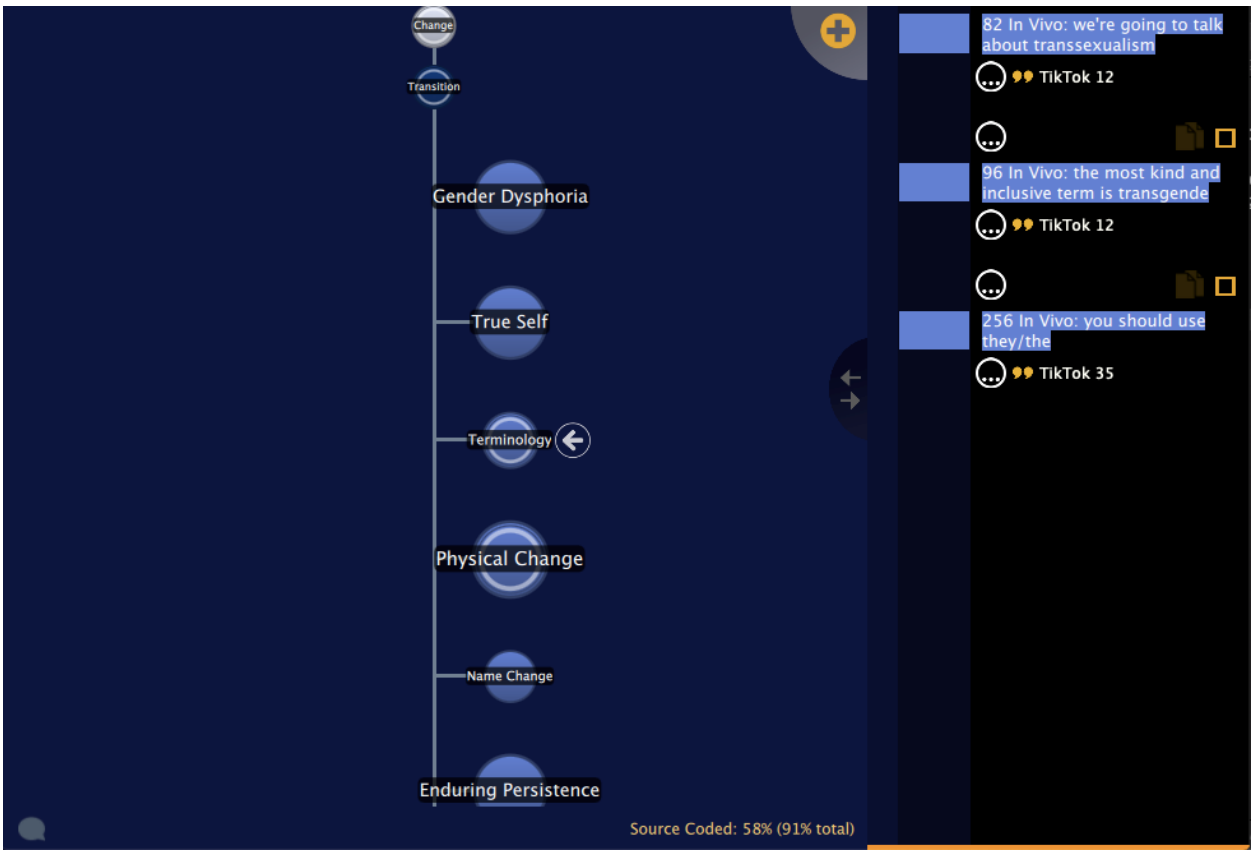
Gender Dysphoria



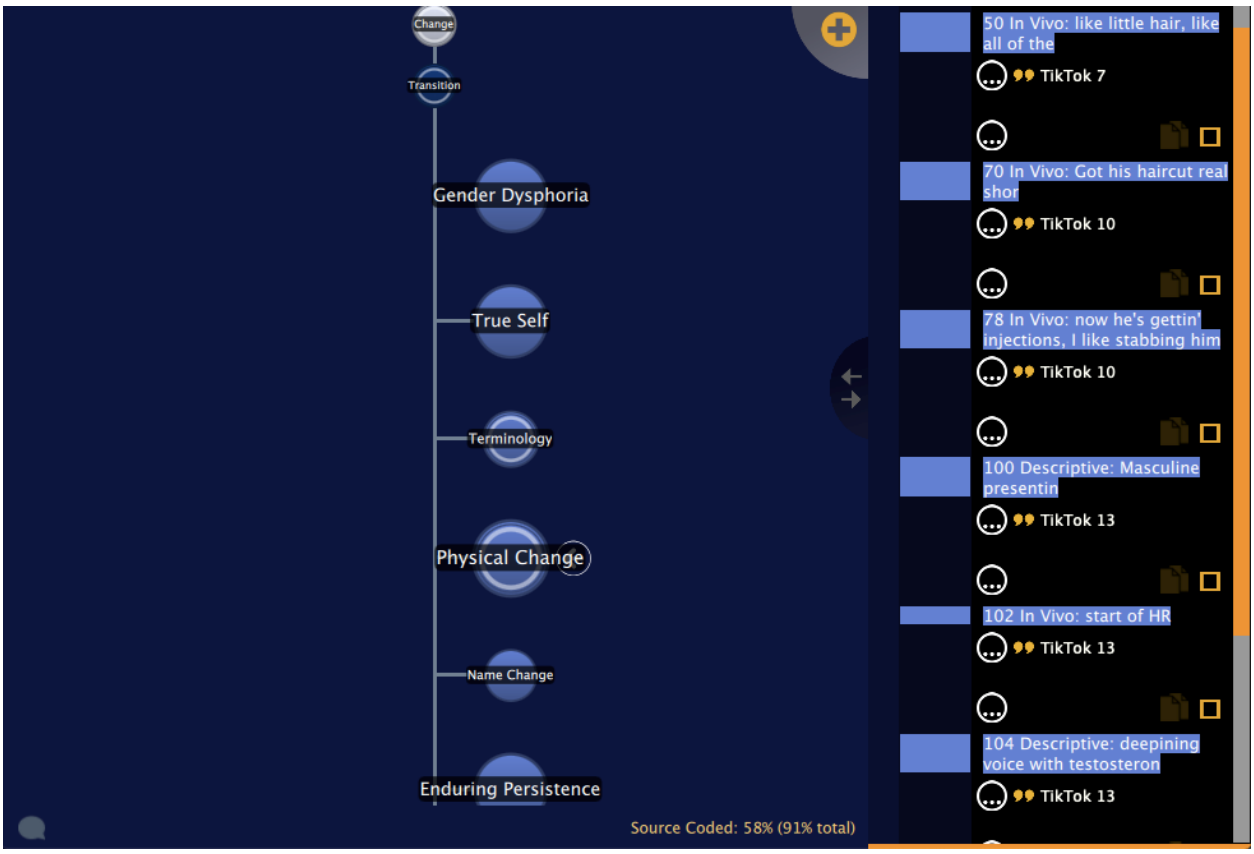
True Self


Change
Transition
Gender Dysphoria
True Self
Terminology
Physical Change
Name Change
Enduring Persistence
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
13 Emotion: Pride, In Vivo: as the woman I always wanted to be, in the girls uniform, playing and competing with girls
TikTok 2
40 In Vivo: I'm a boy
TikTok 7
58 In Vivo: He is so happy stil
TikTok 7
44 In Vivo: happiest day of his lif
TikTok 7
69 In Vivo: born as a girl, lives as a boy no
TikTok 10
106 Descriptive: end of transition stor
TikTok 13

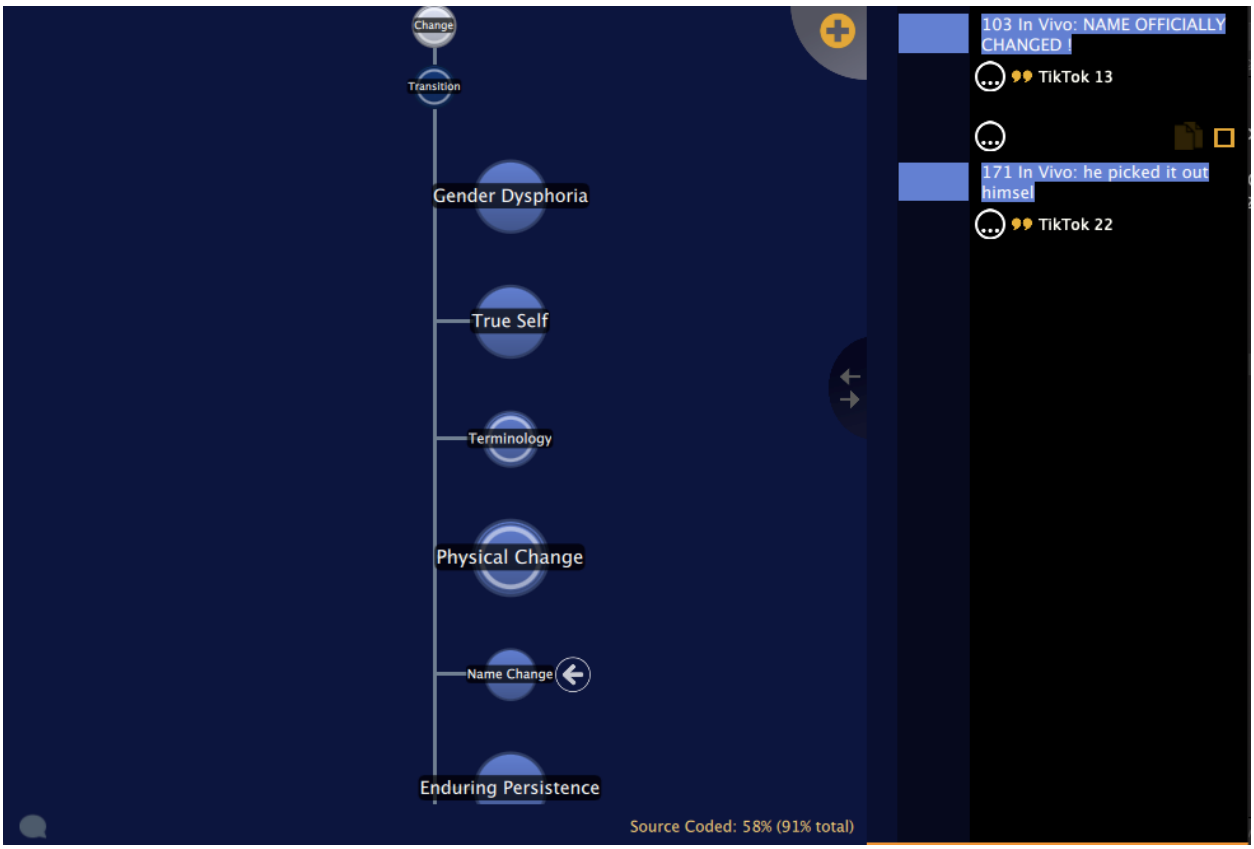
Terminology



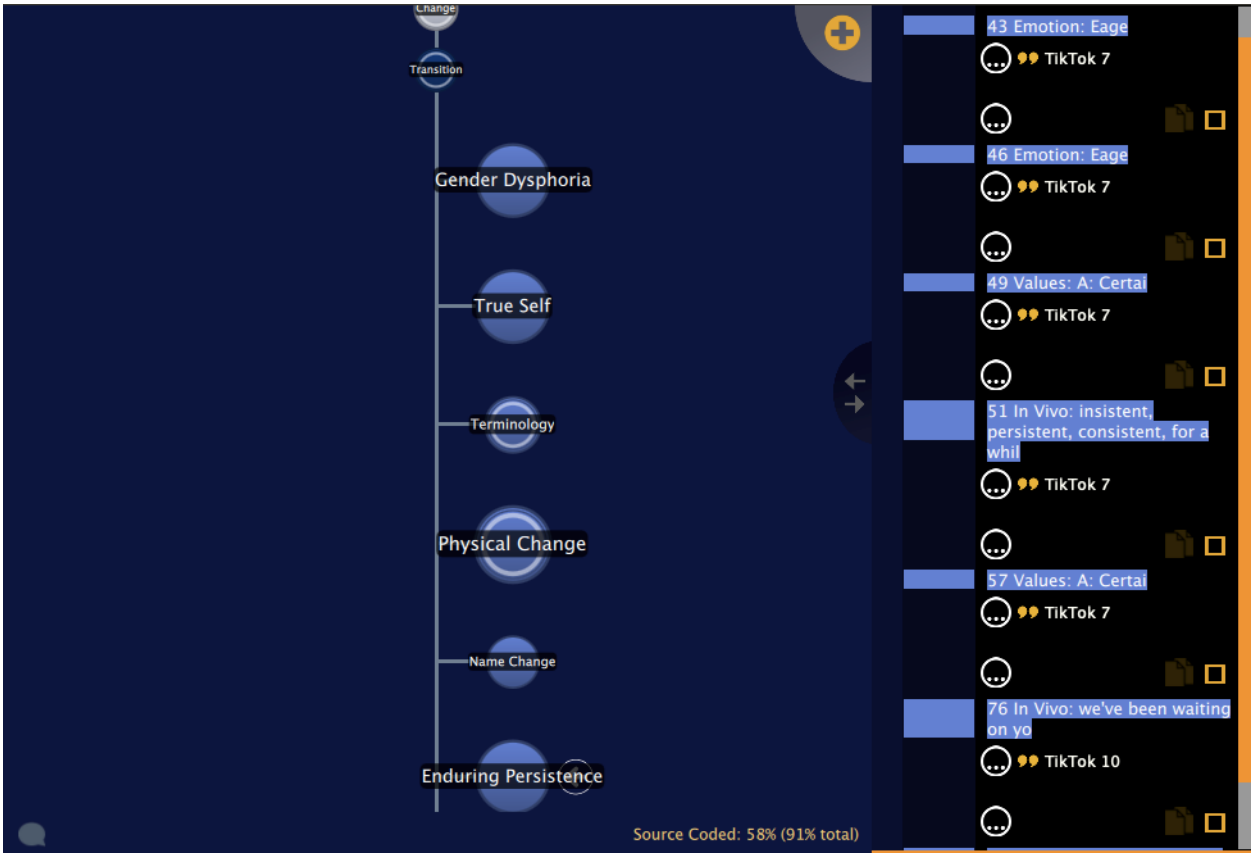
Physical Change



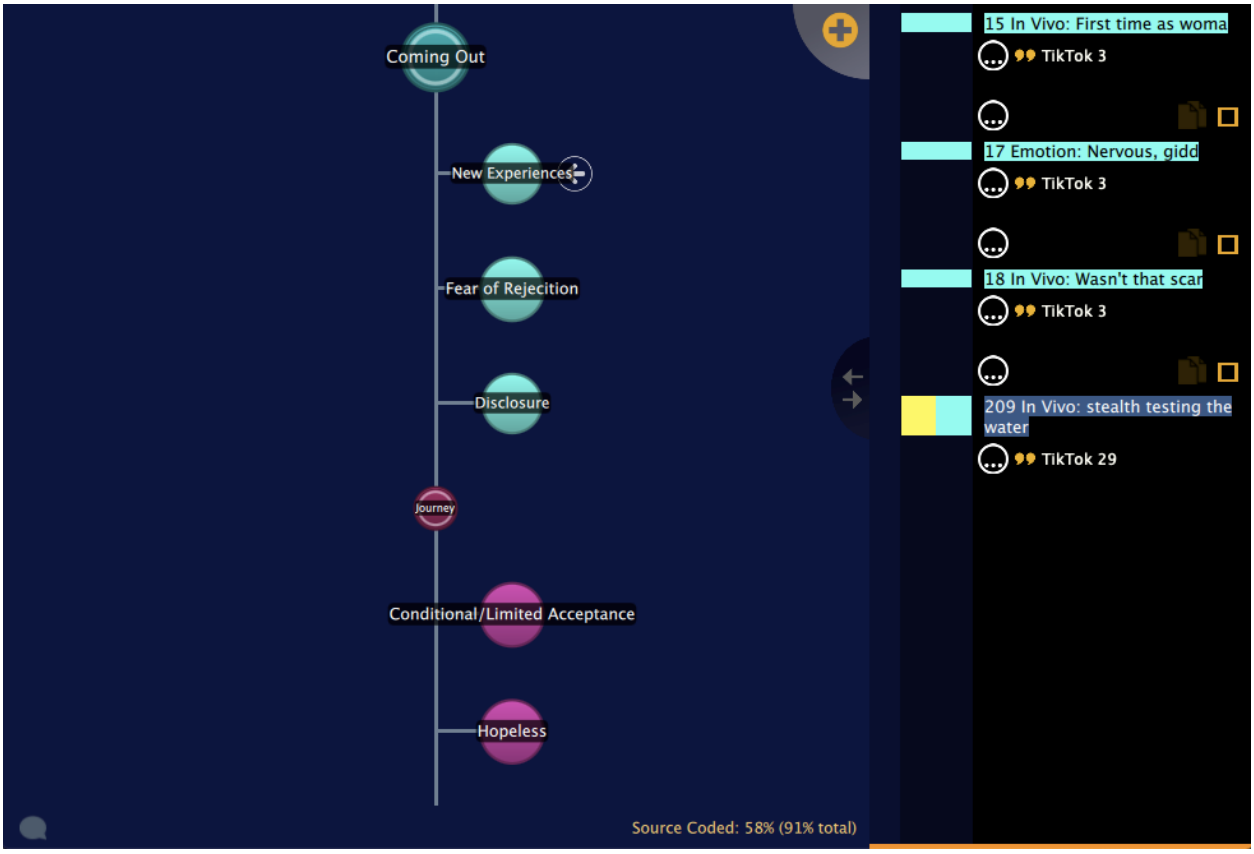
Name Change


Change
Transition
Gender Dysphoria
True Self
Terminology
Physical Change
Name Change
Enduring Persistence
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
103 In Vivo: NAME OFFICIALLY CHANGED !
TikTok 13
171 In Vivo: he picked it out himsel
TikTok 22

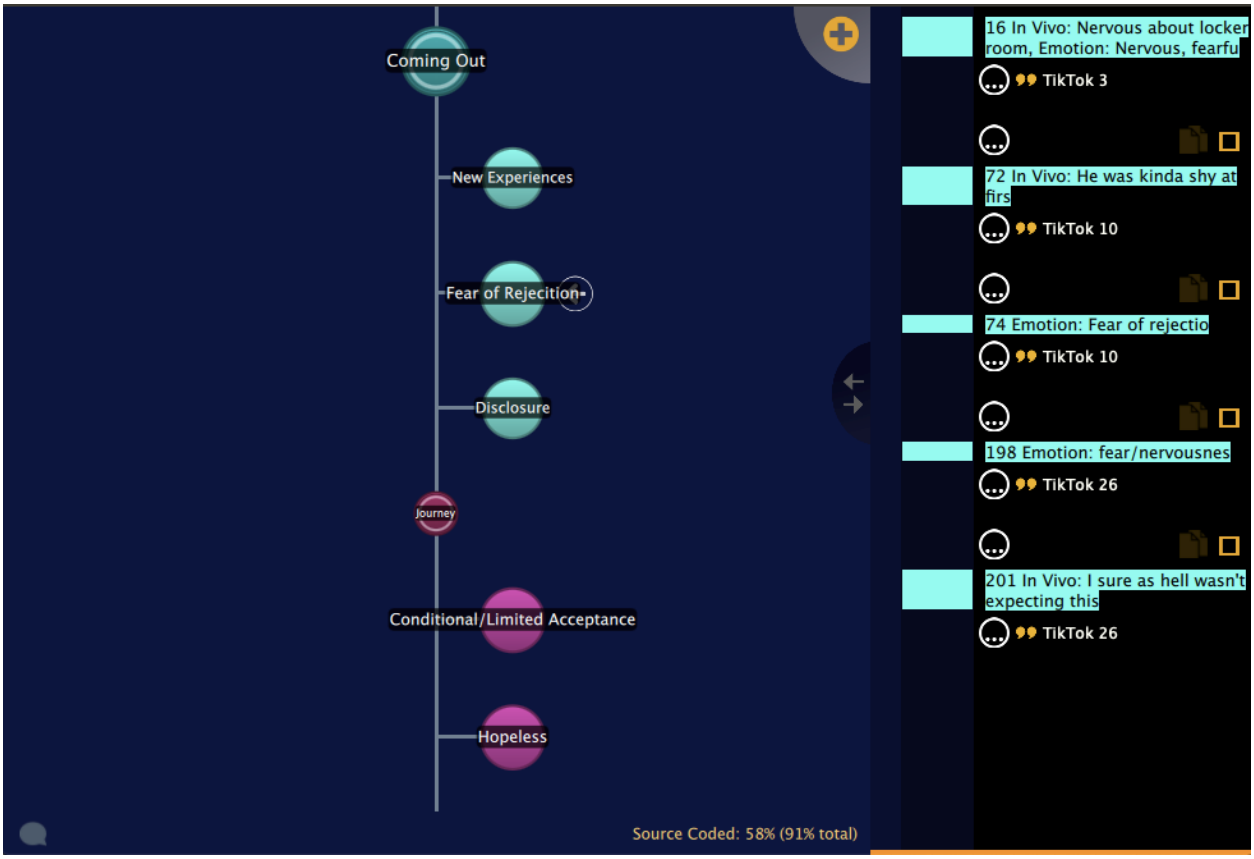
Enduring Persistence



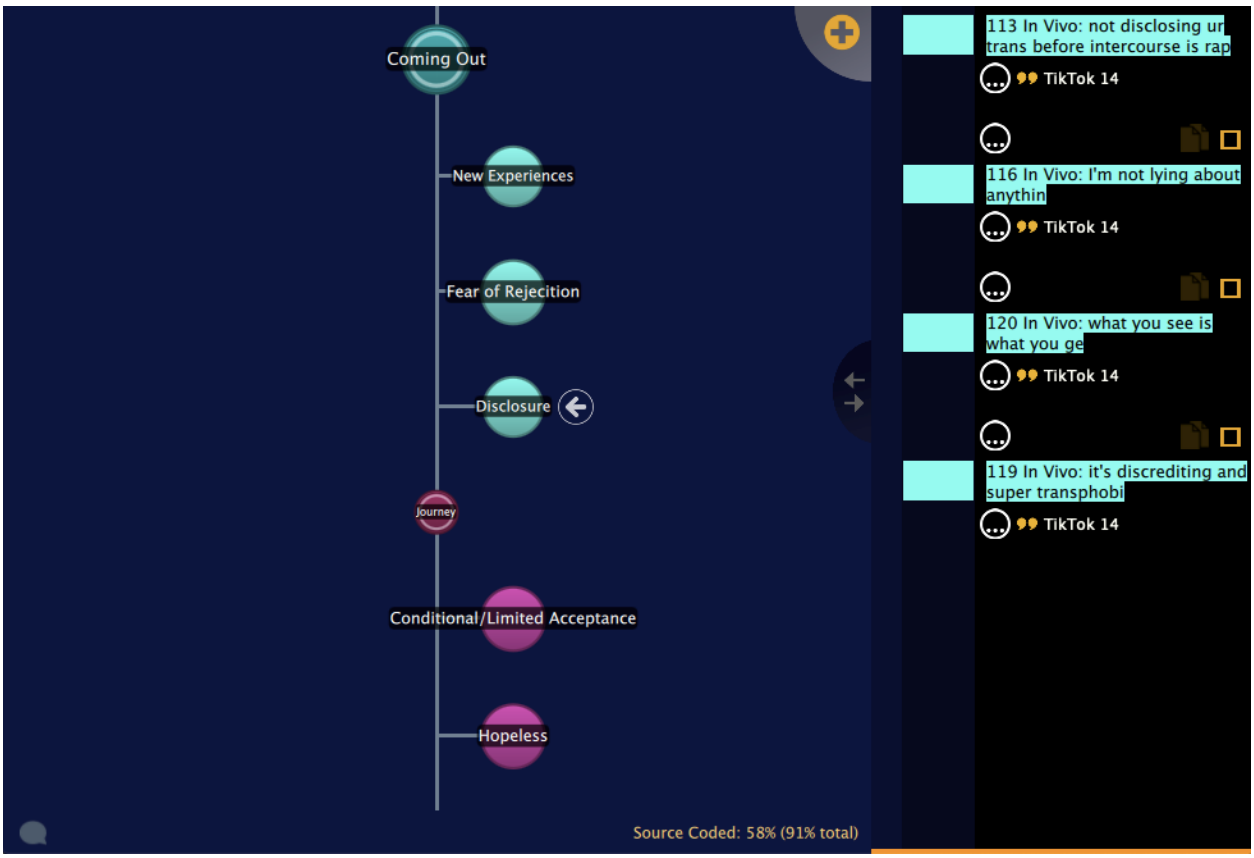
New Experience



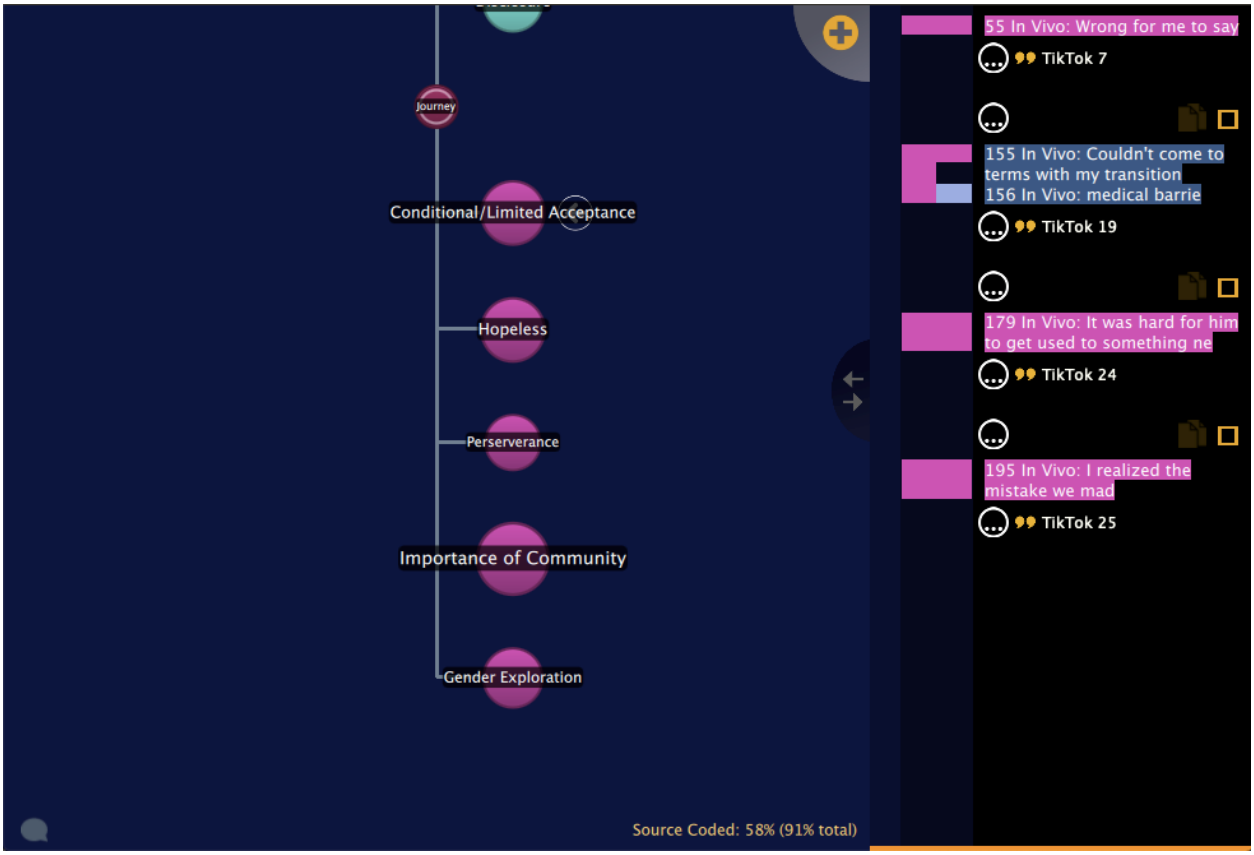
Fear of Rejection



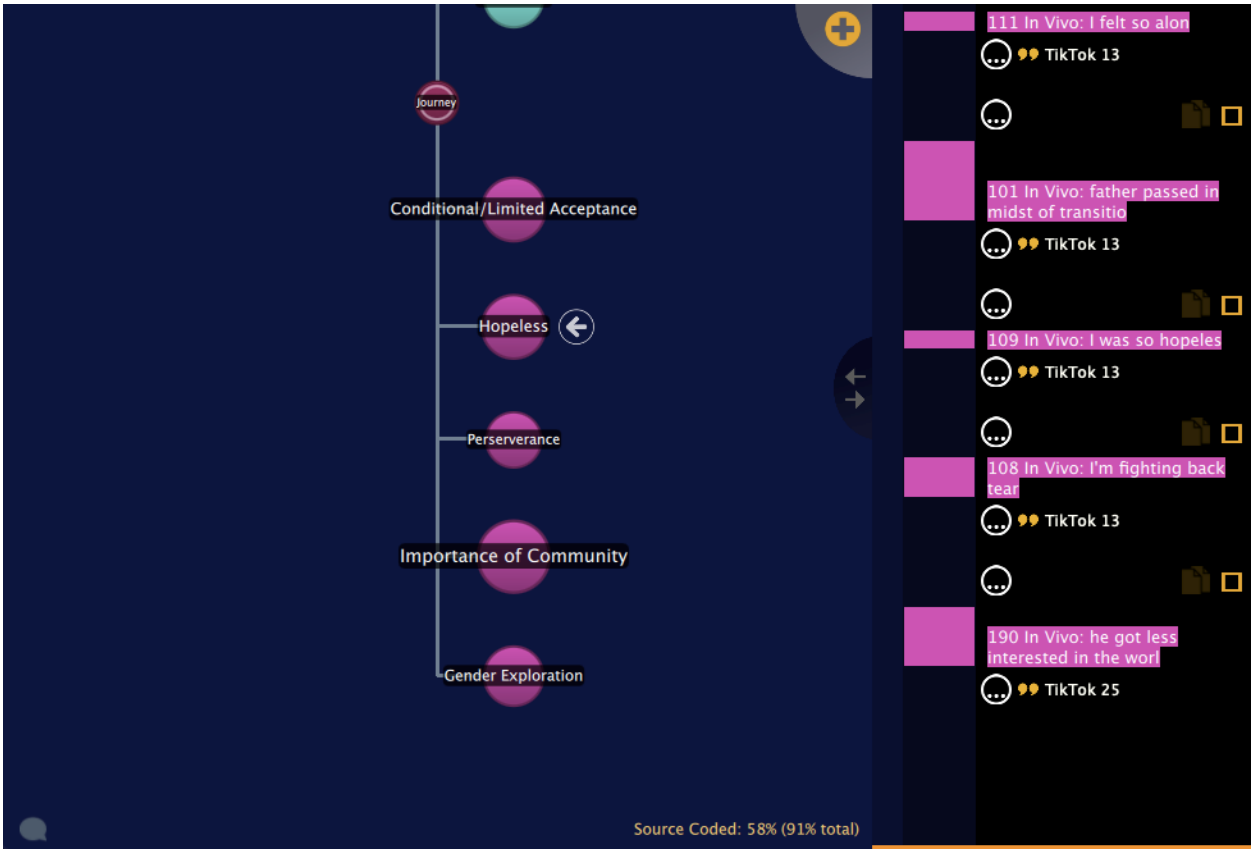
Disclosure


Coming Out
New Experiences
Fear of Rejecition
Disclosure
Journey
Conditional/Limited Acceptance
Hopeless
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
113 In Vivo: not disclosing ur trans before intercourse is rap
TikTok 14
116 In Vivo: I'm not lying about anythin
TikTok 14
120 In Vivo: what you see is what you ge
TikTok 14
119 In Vivo: it's discrediting and super transphobi
TikTok 14

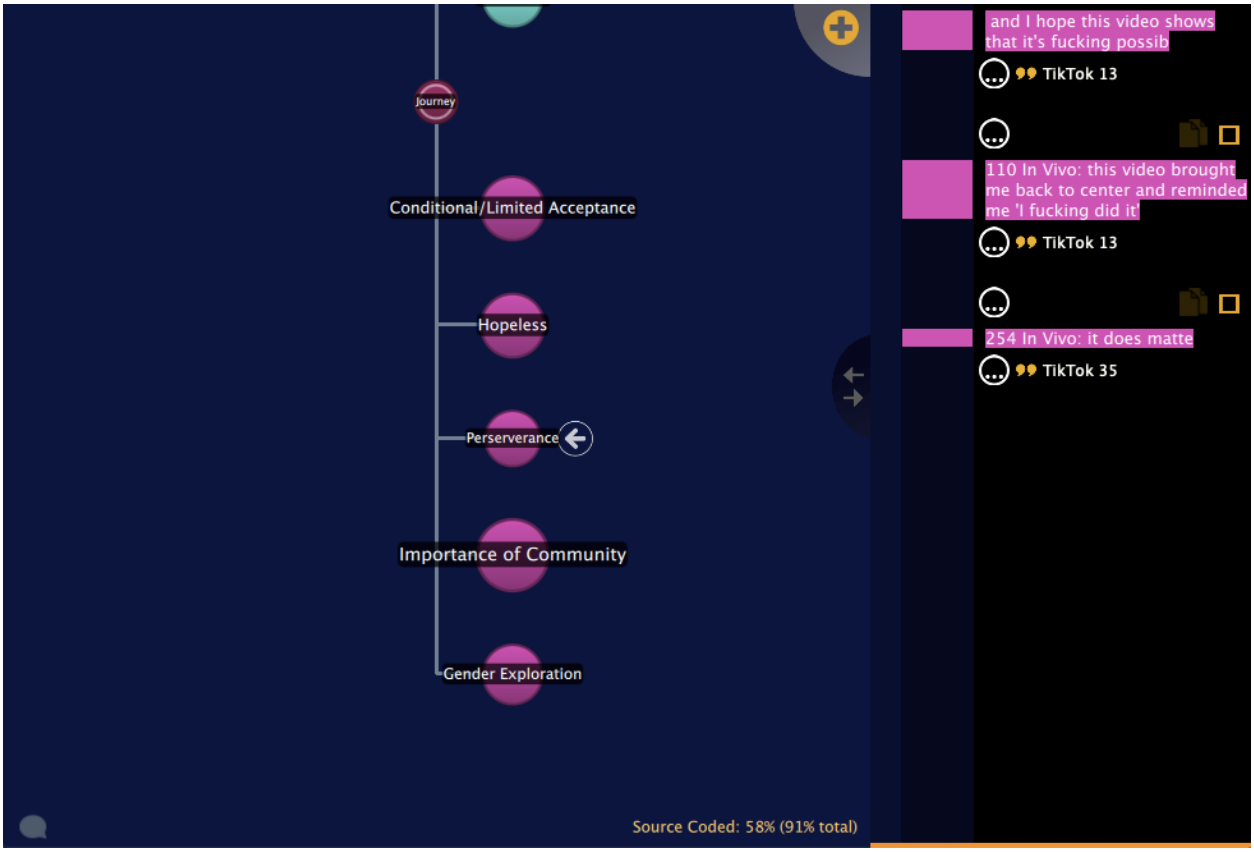
Conditional/Limited Acceptance



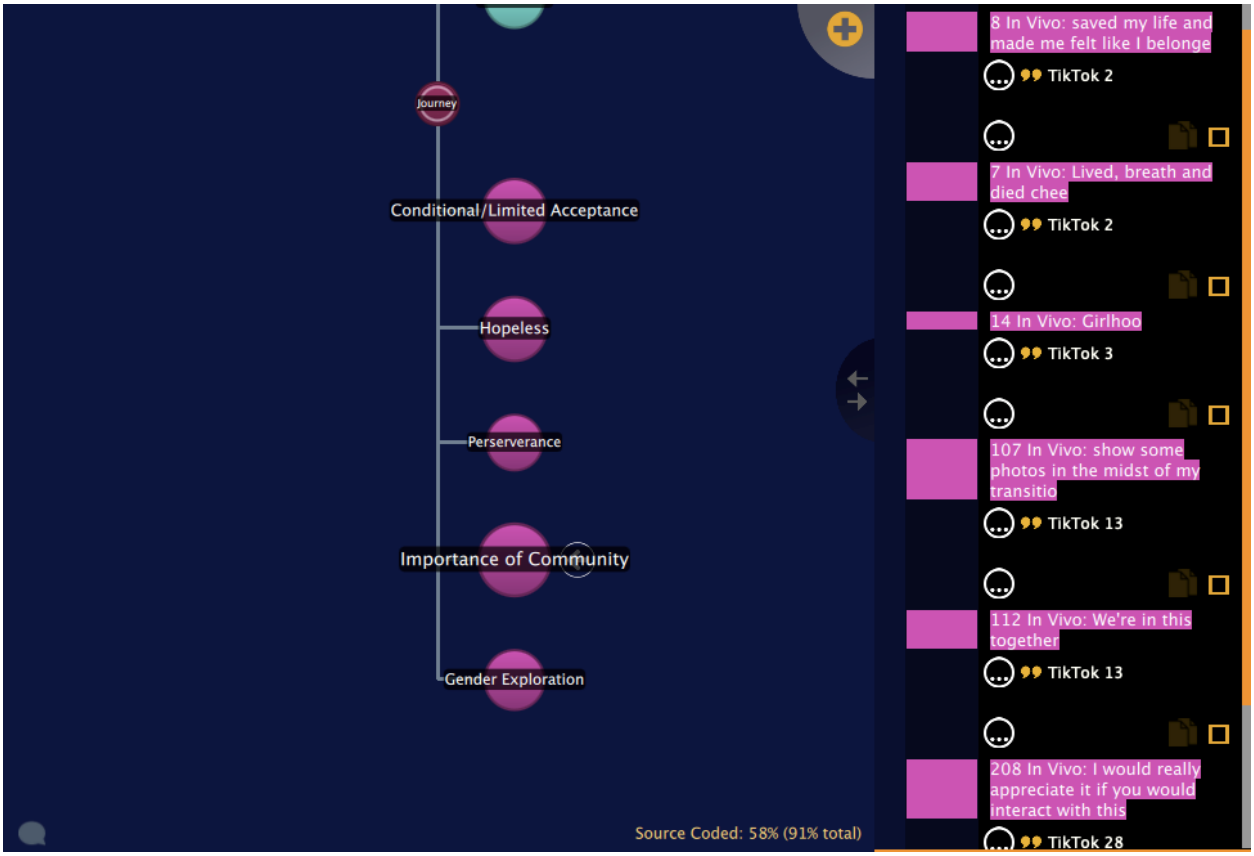
Hopeless


Journey
Conditional/Limited Acceptance
Hopeless
Perserverance
Importance of Community
Gender Exploration
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
111 In Vivo: I felt so alon
TikTok 13
101 In Vivo: father passed in midst of transitio
TikTok 13
109 In Vivo: I was so hopeles
TikTok 13
108 In Vivo: I'm fighting back tear
TikTok 13
190 In Vivo: he got less interested in the worl
TikTok 25

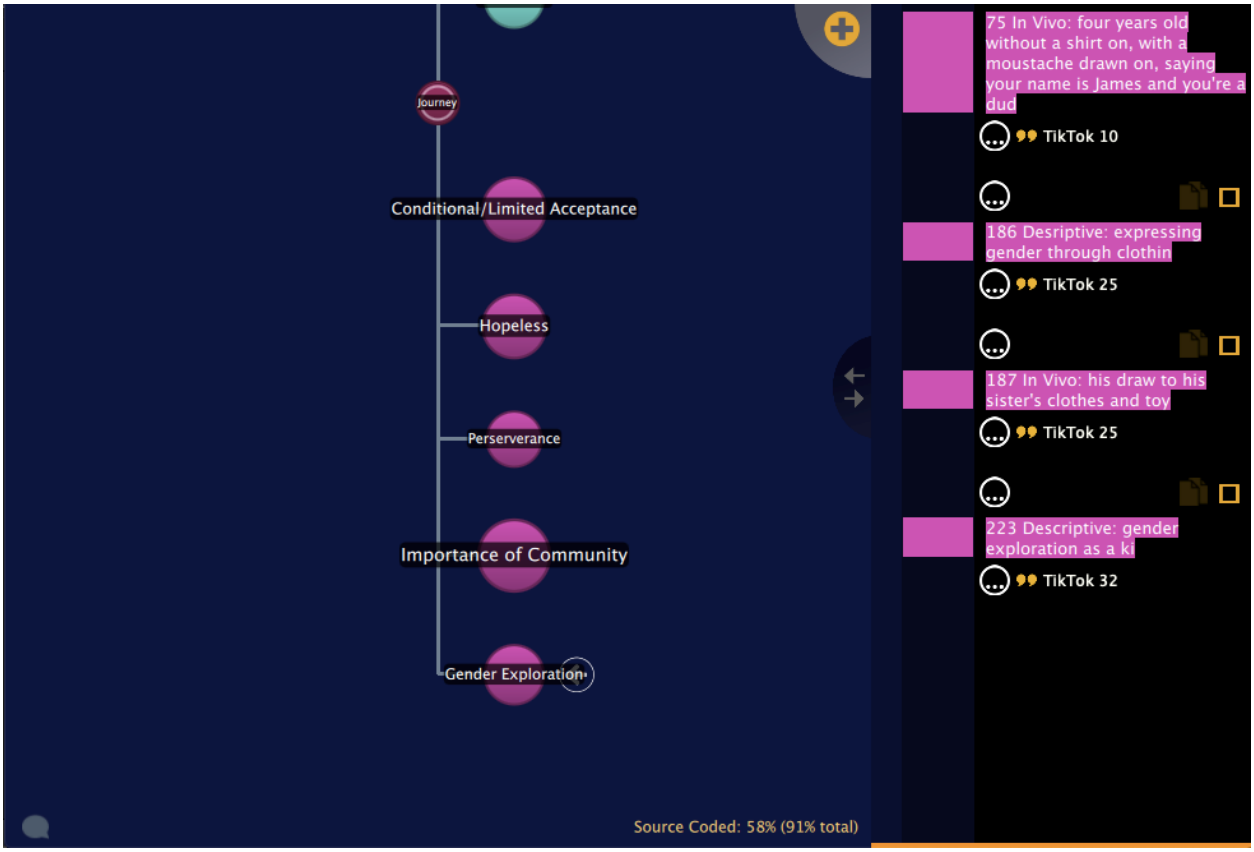
Perserverance



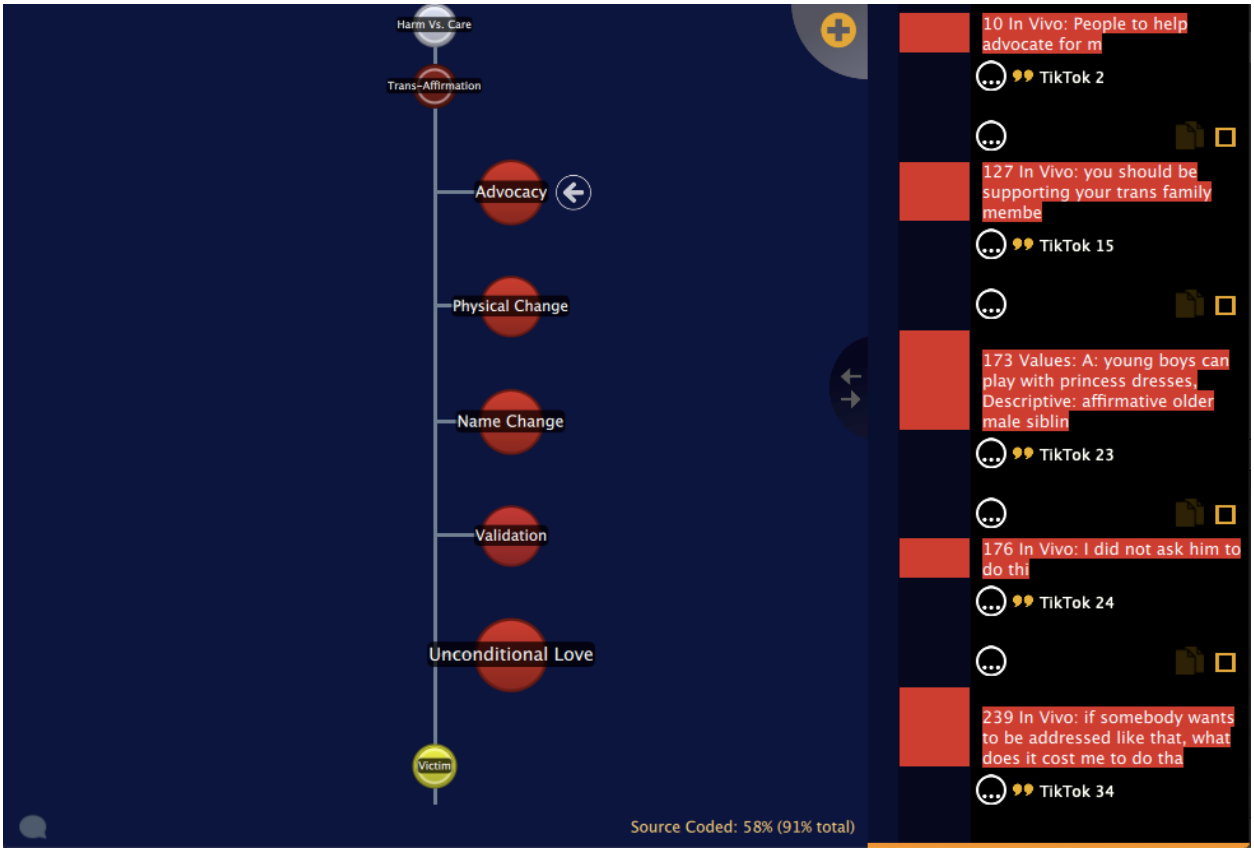
Importance of Community



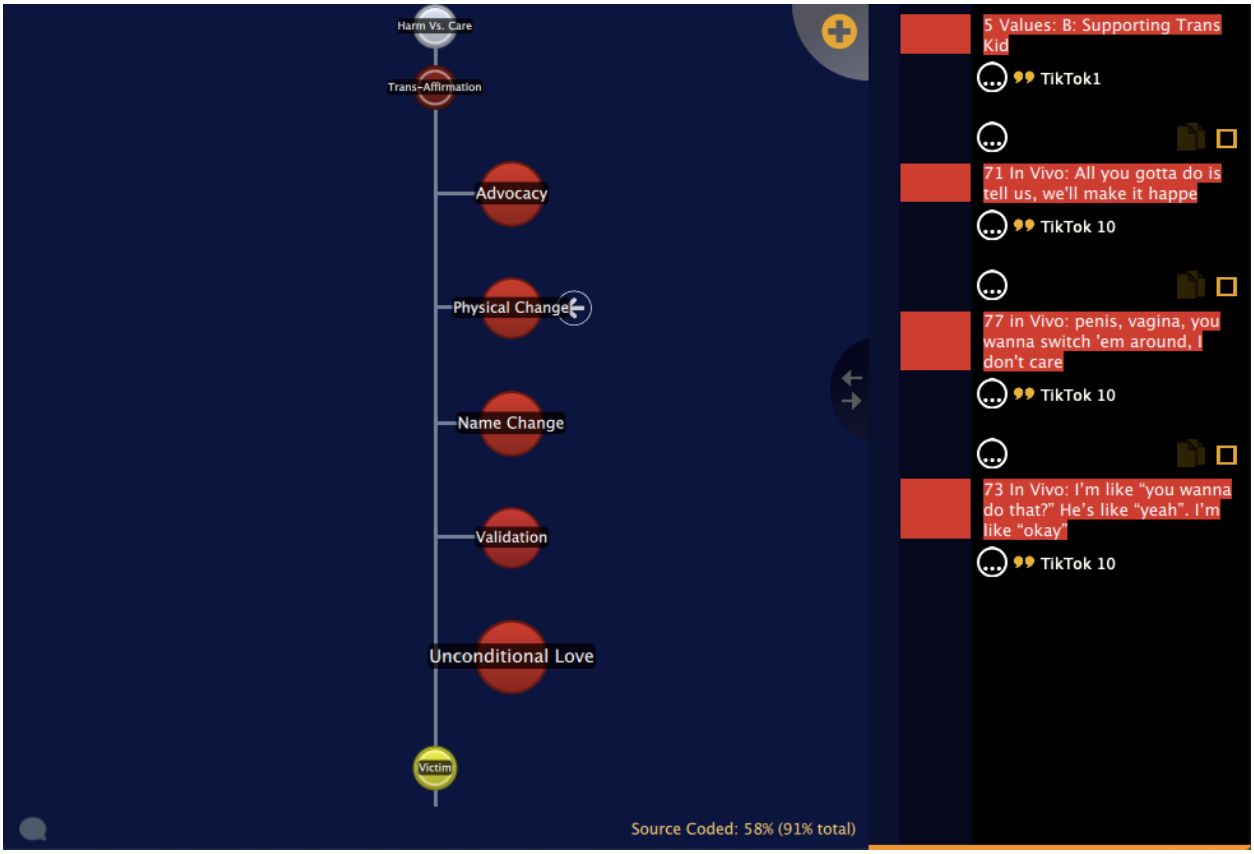
Gender Exploraiton



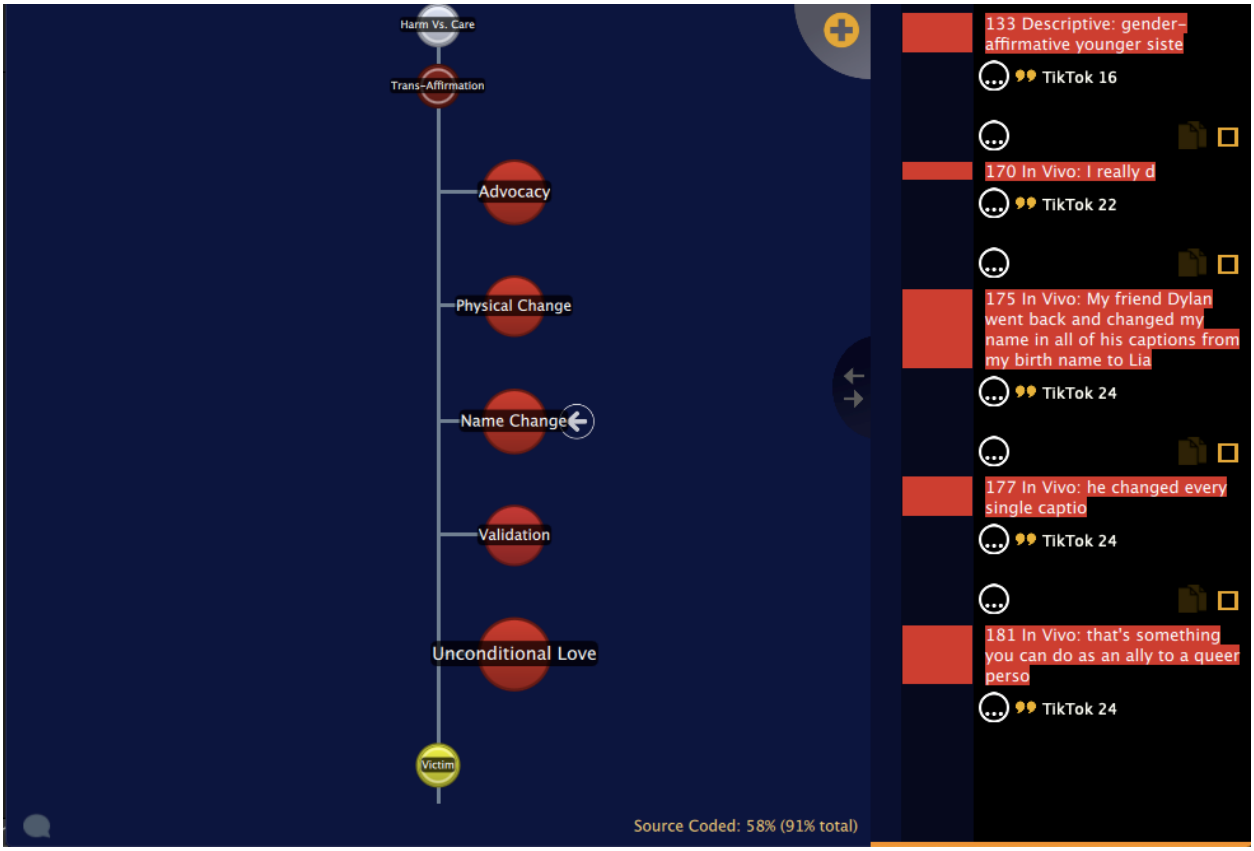
Advocacy


Harm Vs. Care
Trans-Affirmation
Advocacy
Physical Change
Name Change
Validation
Unconditional Love
Victim
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
10 In Vivo: People to help advocate for m
TikTok 2
127 In Vivo: you should be supporting your trans family membe
TikTok 15
173 Values: A: young boys can play with princess dresses, Descriptive: affirmative older male siblin
TikTok 23
176 In Vivo: I did not ask him to do thi
TikTok 24
239 In Vivo: if somebody wants to be addressed like that, what does it cost me to do tha
TikTok 34

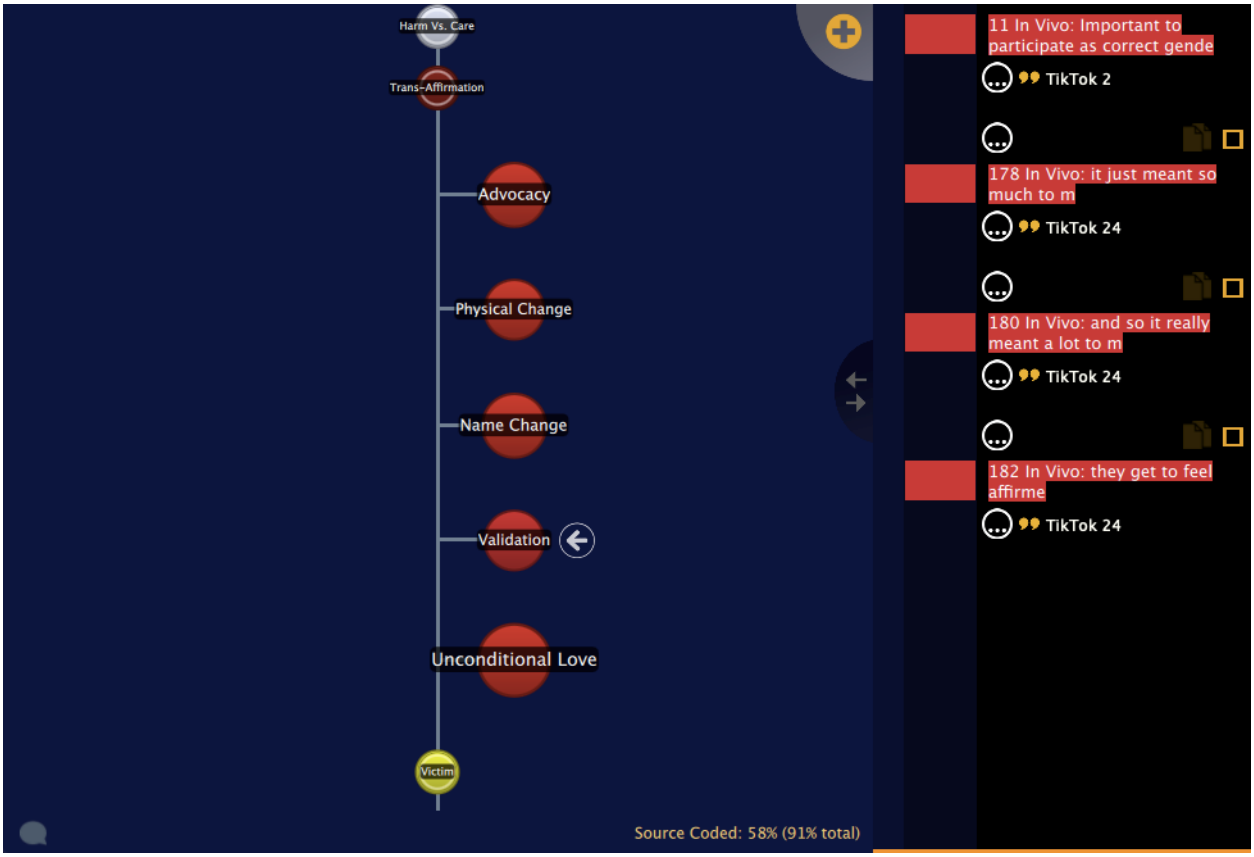
Physical Change



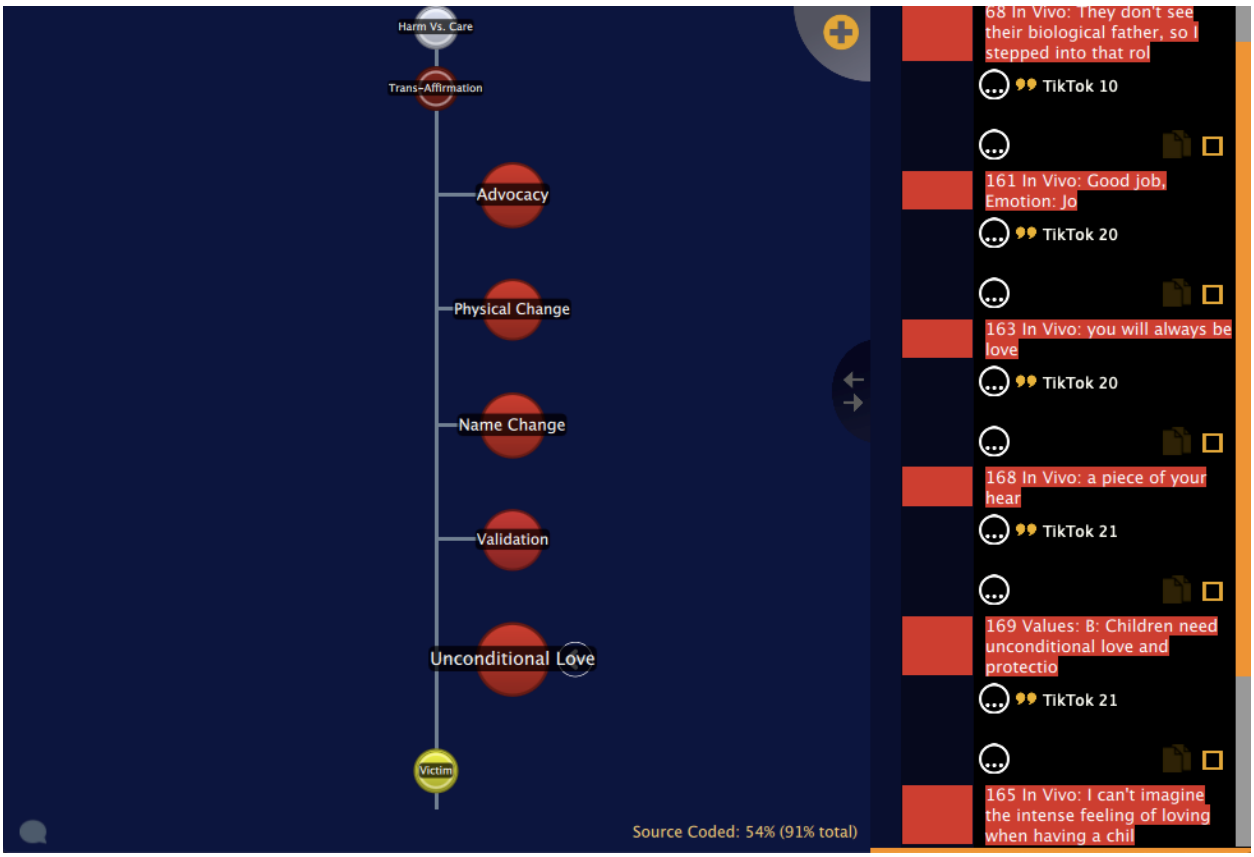
Name Change


Harm Vs. Care
Trans-Affirmation
Advocacy
Physical Change
Name Change
Validation
Unconditional Love
Victim
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
133 Descriptive: gender-affirmative younger siste
TikTok 16
170 In Vivo: I really d
TikTok 22
175 In Vivo: My friend Dylan went back and changed my name in all of his captions from my birth name to Lia
TikTok 24
177 In Vivo: he changed every single captio
TikTok 24
181 In Vivo: that's something you can do as an ally to a queer perso
TikTok 24

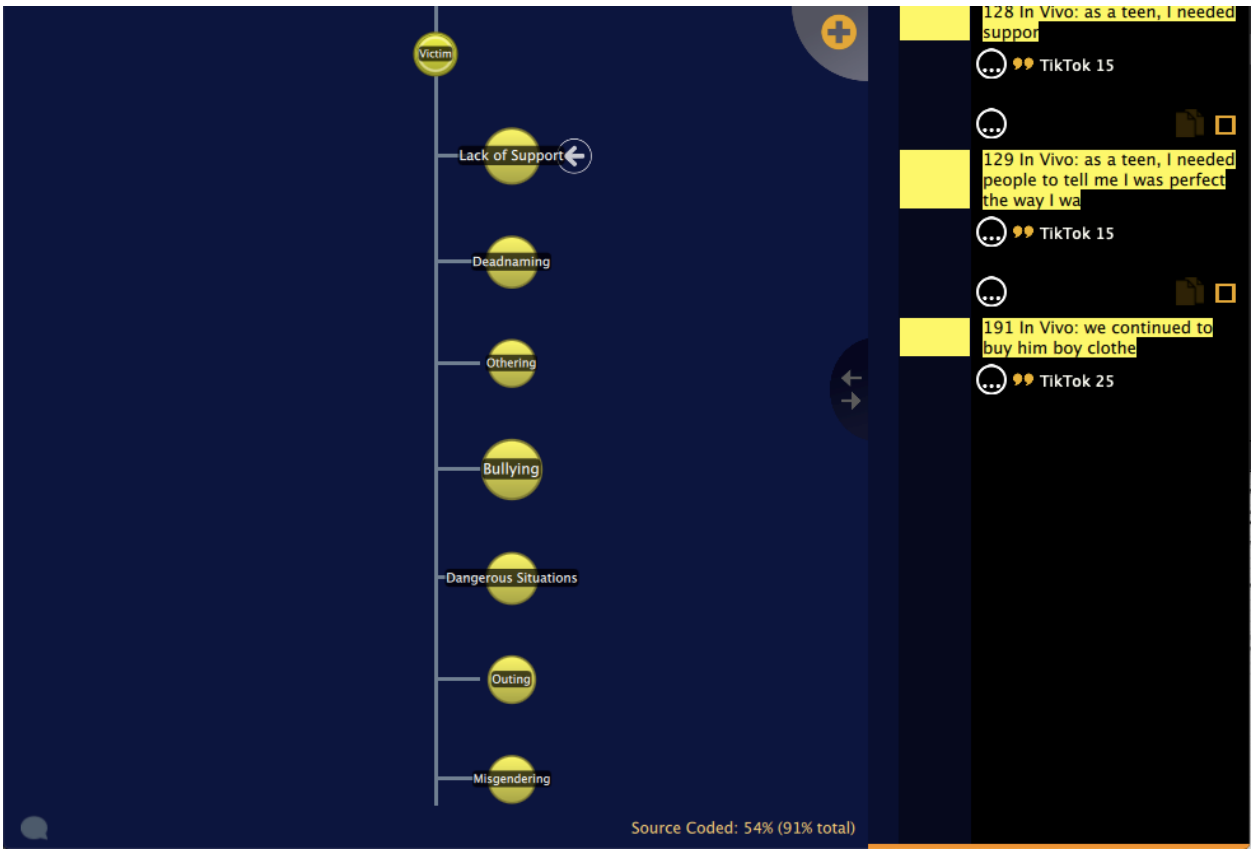
Validation


Harm Vs. Care
Trans-Affirmation
Advocacy
Physical Change
Name Change
Validation
Unconditional Love
Victim
Source Coded: 58% (91% total)
11 In Vivo: Important to participate as correct gende
TikTok 2
178 In Vivo: it just meant so much to m
TikTok 24
180 In Vivo: and so it really meant a lot to m
TikTok 24
182 In Vivo: they get to feel affirme
TikTok 24

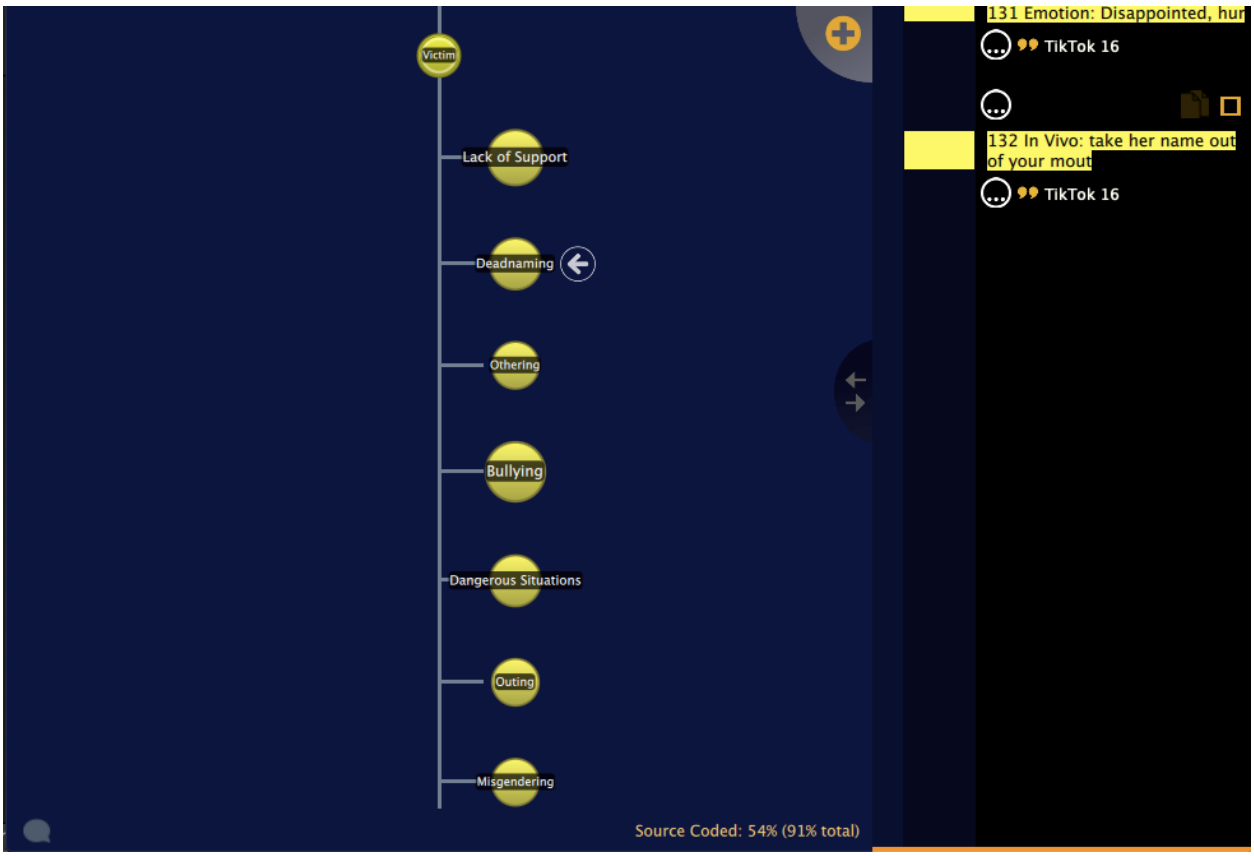
Unconditional Love



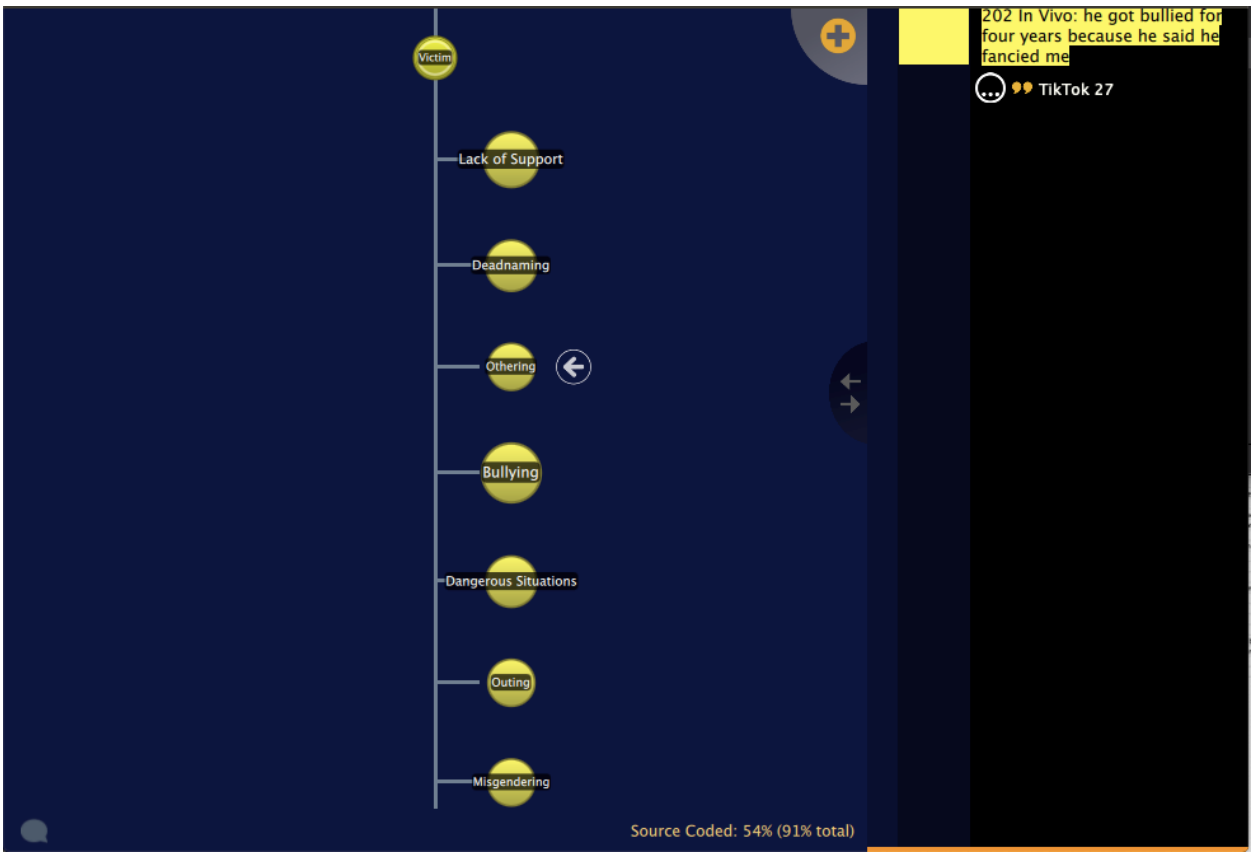
Lack of Support



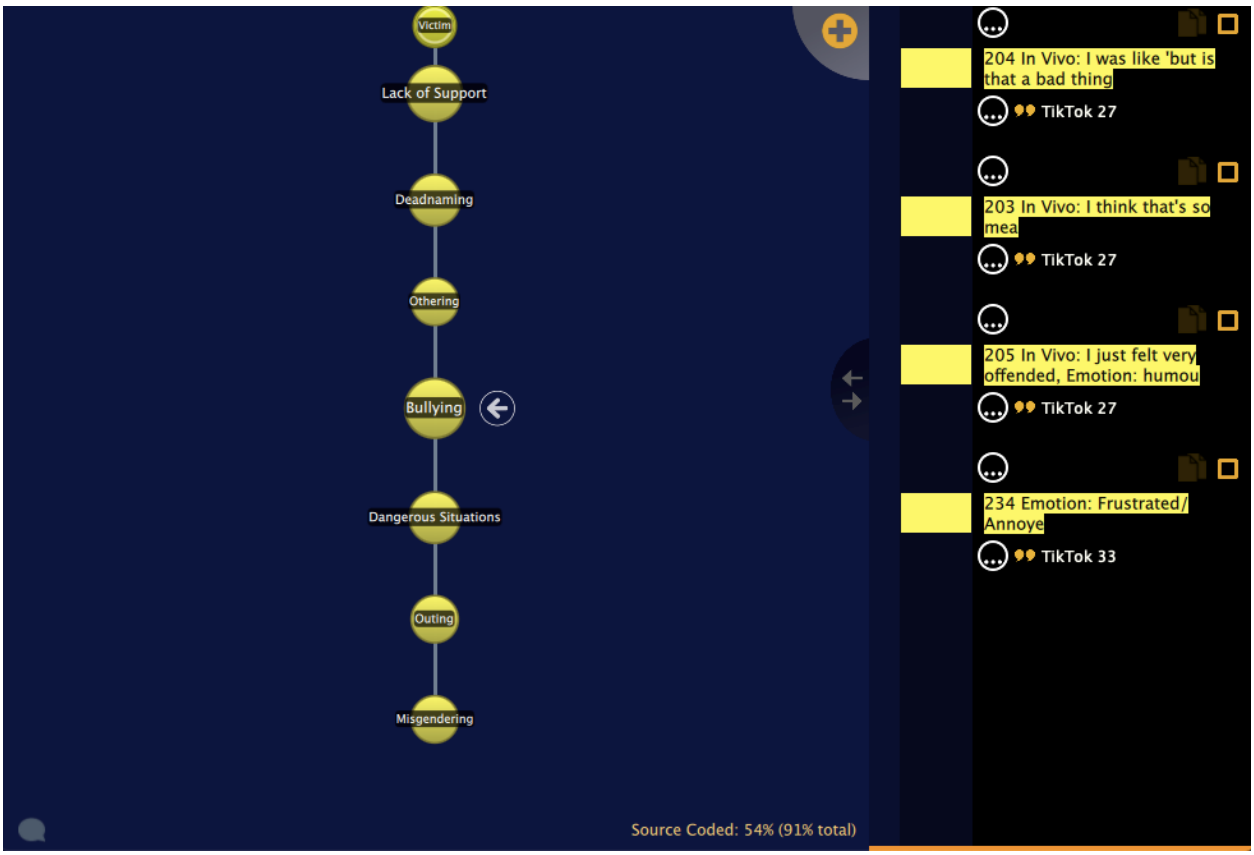
Deadnaming


Victim
Lack of Support
Deadnaming
Othering
Bullying
Dangerous Situations
Outing
Misgendering
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)
131 Emotion: Disappointed, hur
TikTok 16
132 In Vivo: take her name out of your mout
TikTok 16

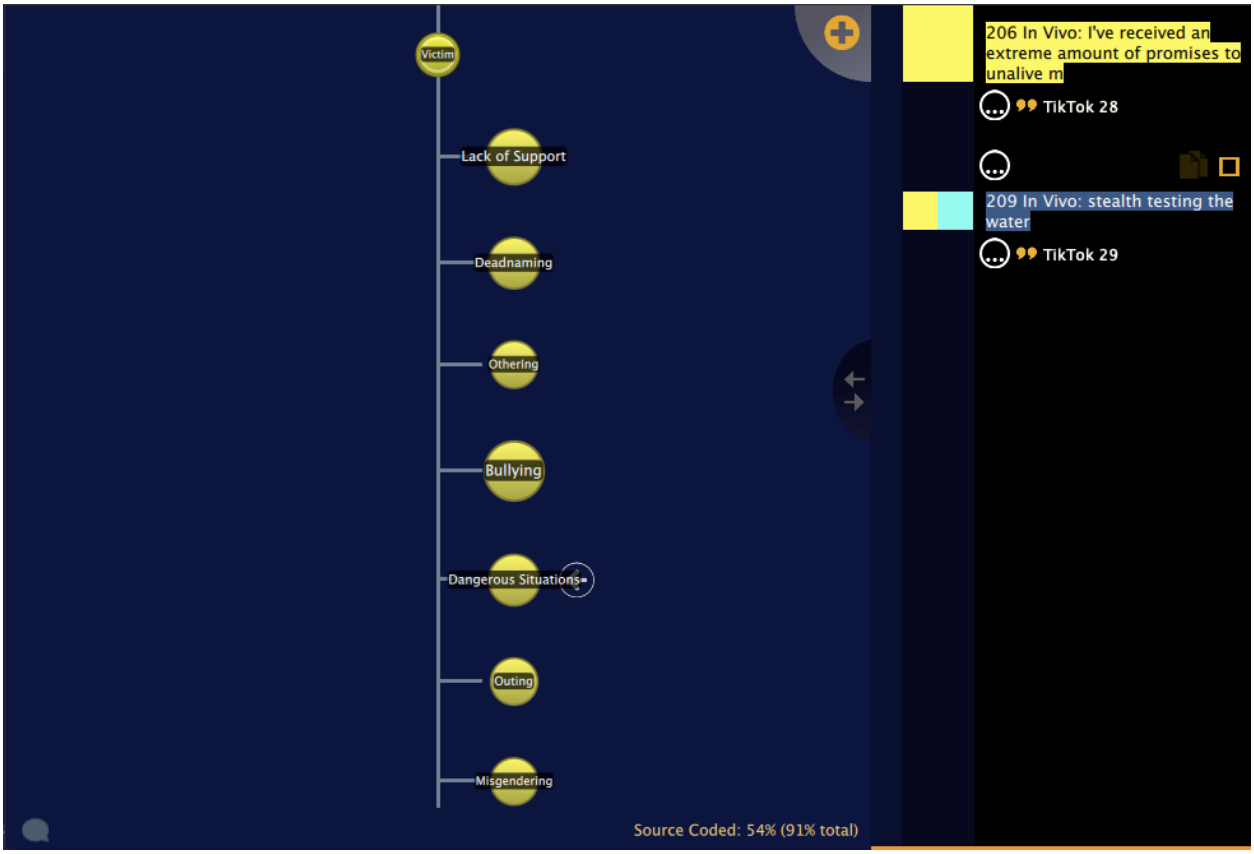
Othering


Victim
Lack of Support
Deadnaming
Othering
Bullying
Dangerous Situations
Outing
Misgendering
202 In Vivo: he got bullied for four years because he said he fancied me
TikTok 27
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)

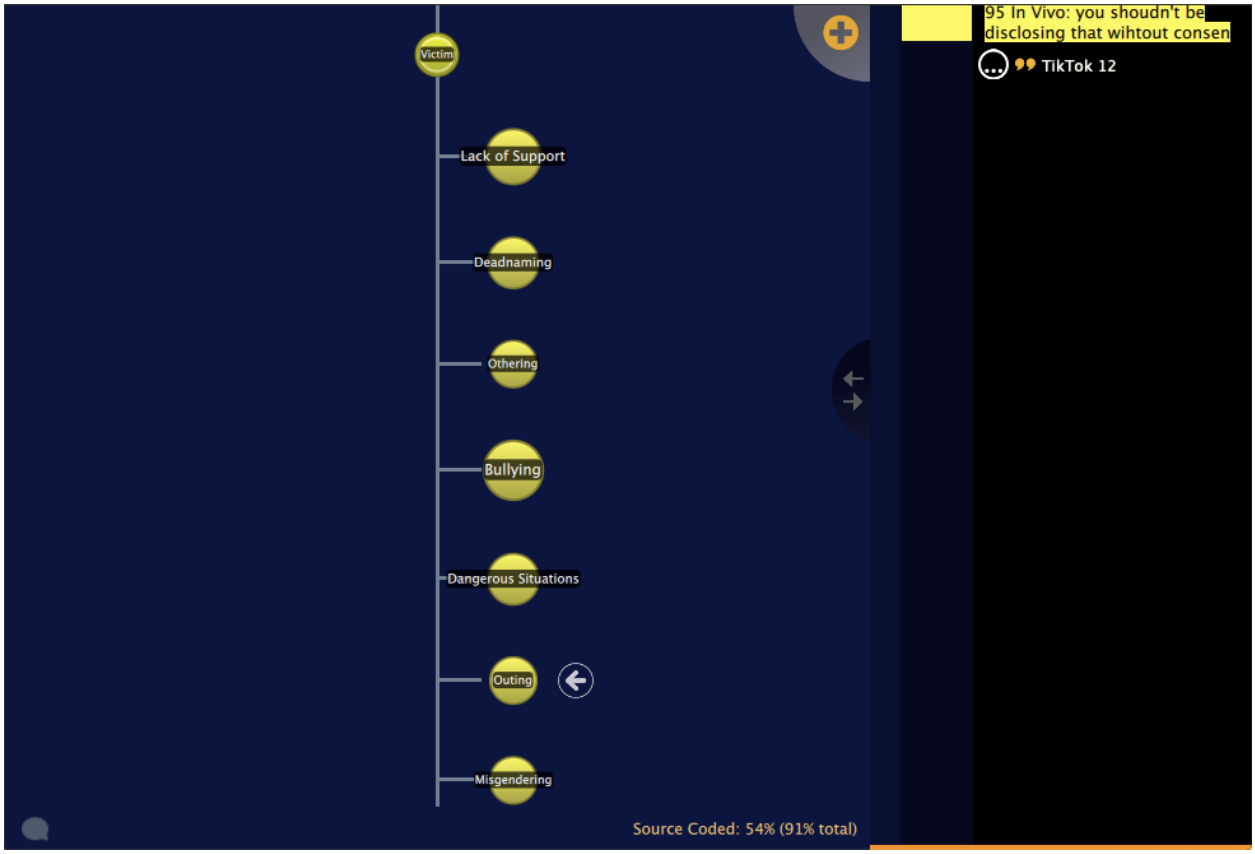
Bullying


Victim
Lack of Support
Deadnaming
Othering
Bullying
Dangerous Situations
Outing
Misgendering
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)
204 In Vivo: I was like 'but is that a bad thing
TikTok 27
203 In Vivo: I think that's so mea
TikTok 27
205 In Vivo: I just felt very offended, Emotion: humou
TikTok 27
234 Emotion: Frustrated/ Annoye
TikTok 33

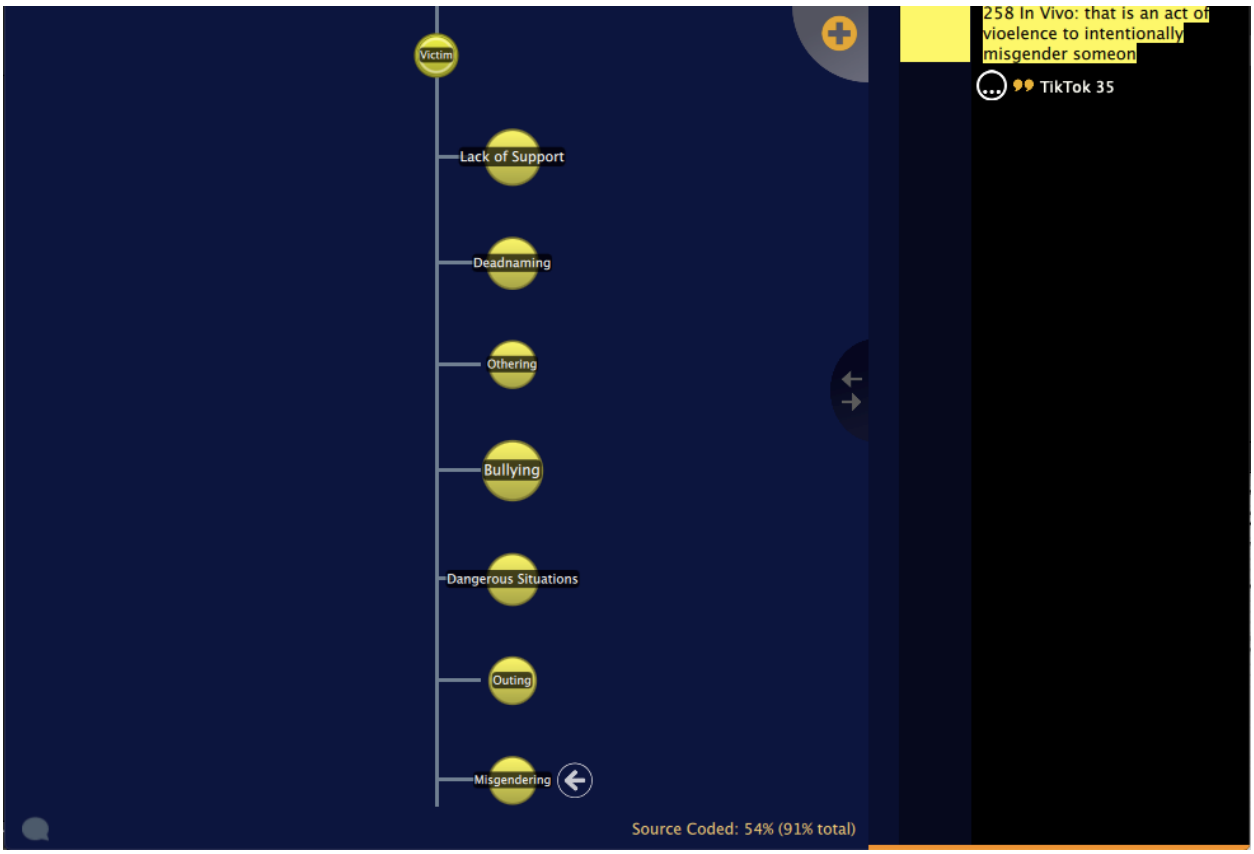
Dangerous Situations



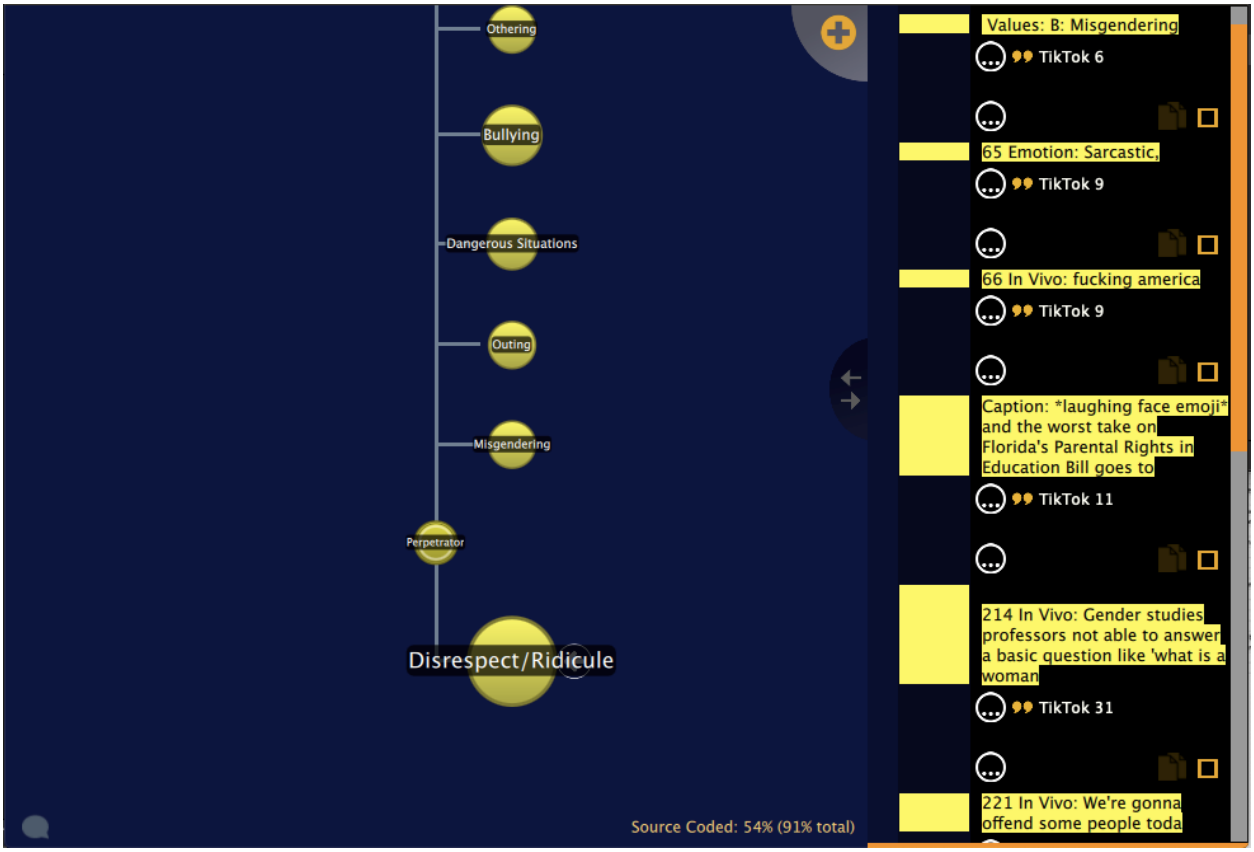
Outing


Victim
Lack of Support
Deadnaming
Othering
Bullying
Dangerous Situations
Outing
Misgendering
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)
95 In Vivo: you shoudn't be disclosing that wihtout consen
TikTok 12

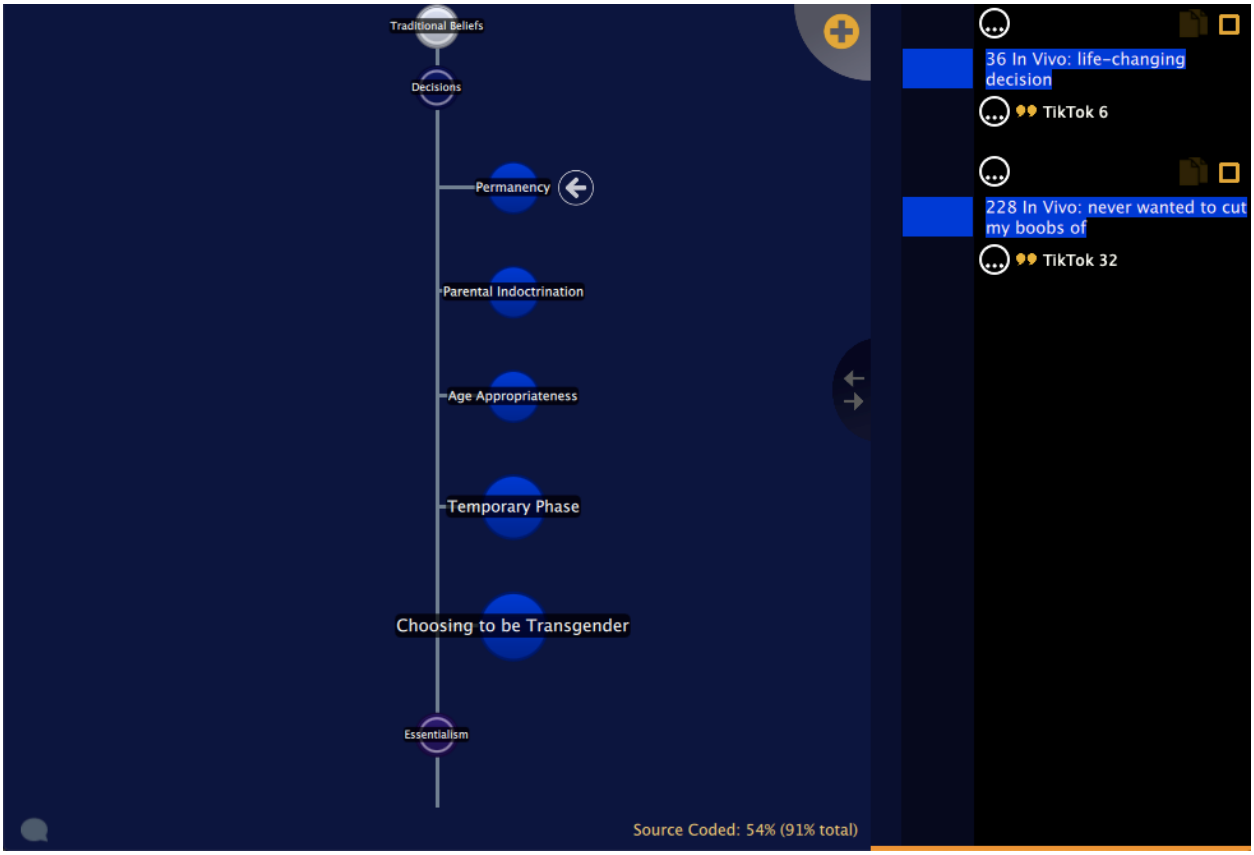
Misgendering



Disrespect/Rididule

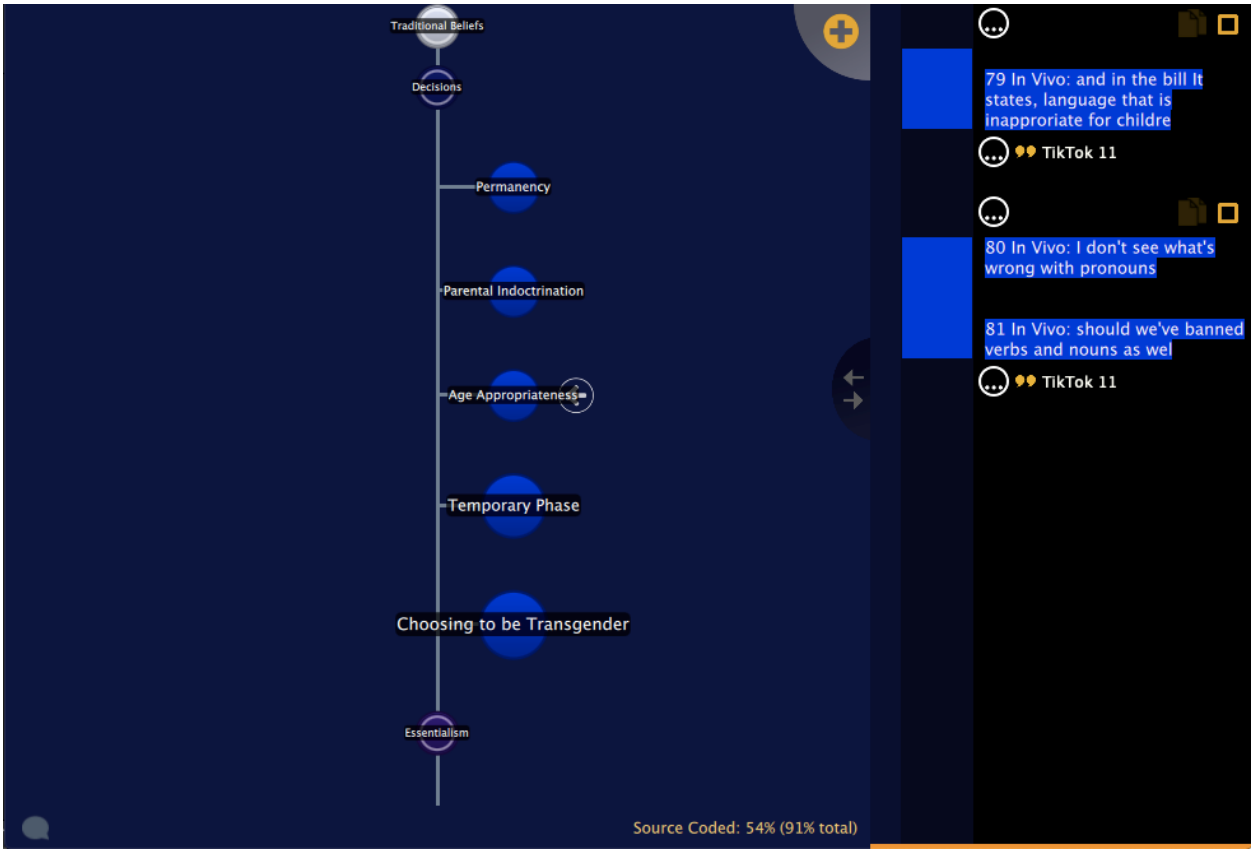


Permanency

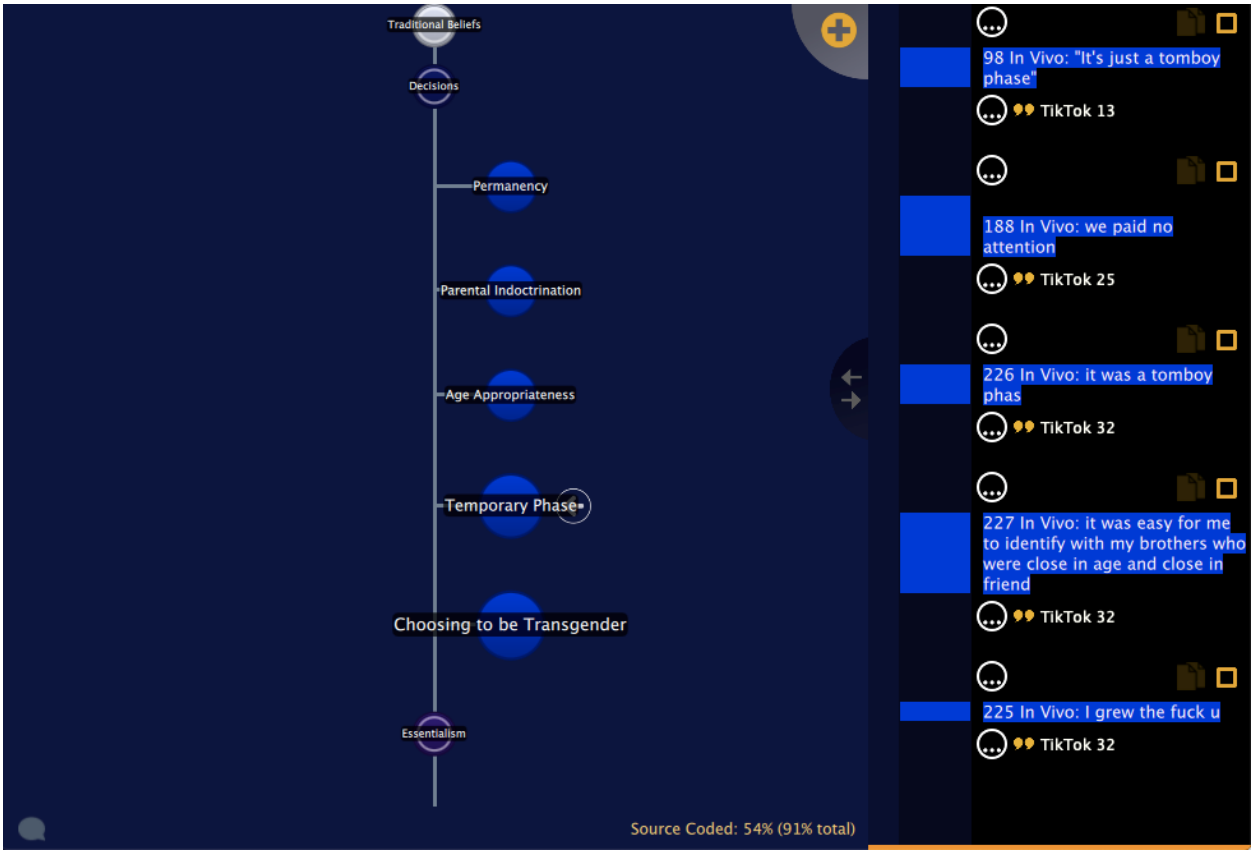

Traditional Beliefs
Decisions
Permanency
Parental Indoctrination
Age Appropriateness
Temporary Phase
Choosing to be Transgender
Essentialism
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)
36 In Vivo: life-changing decision
TikTok 6
228 In Vivo: never wanted to cut my boobs of
TikTok 32

Parental Indoctrination

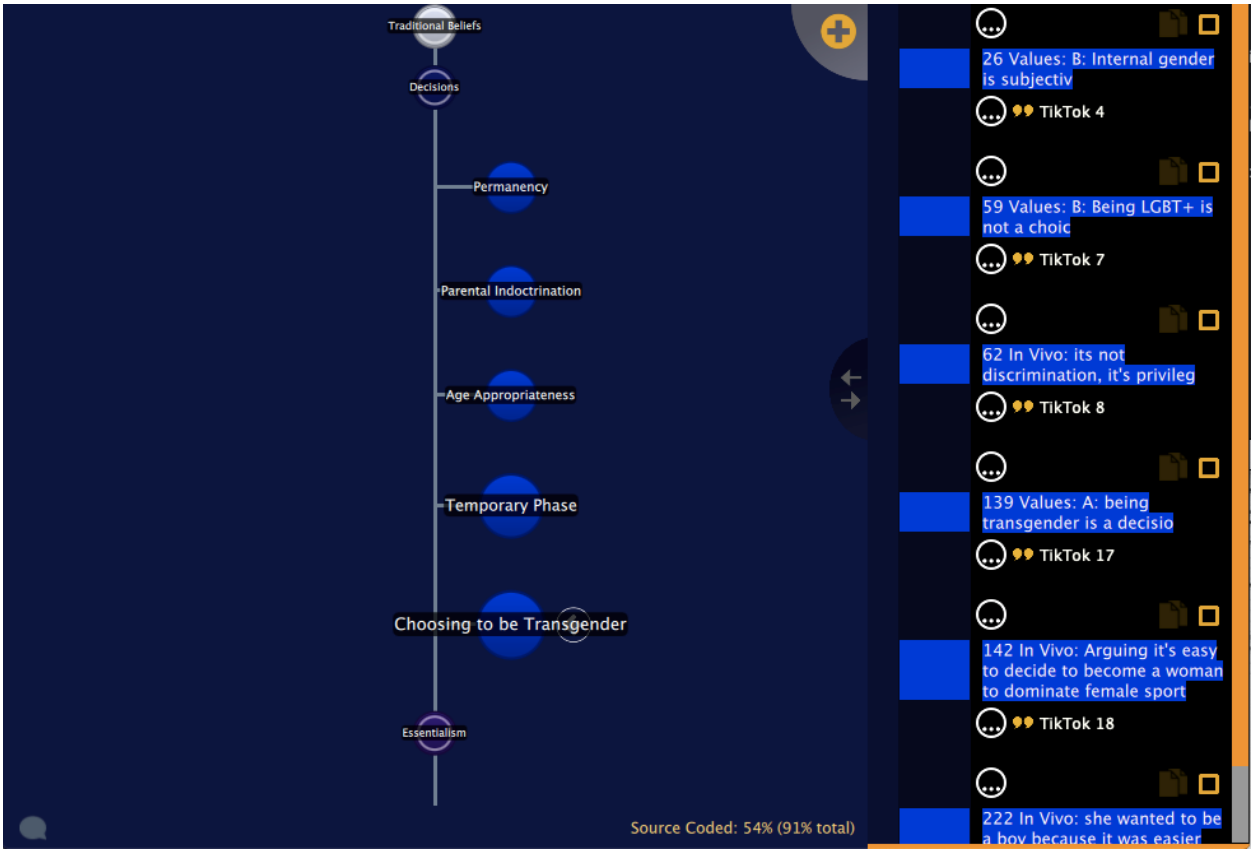
Age Appropriateness



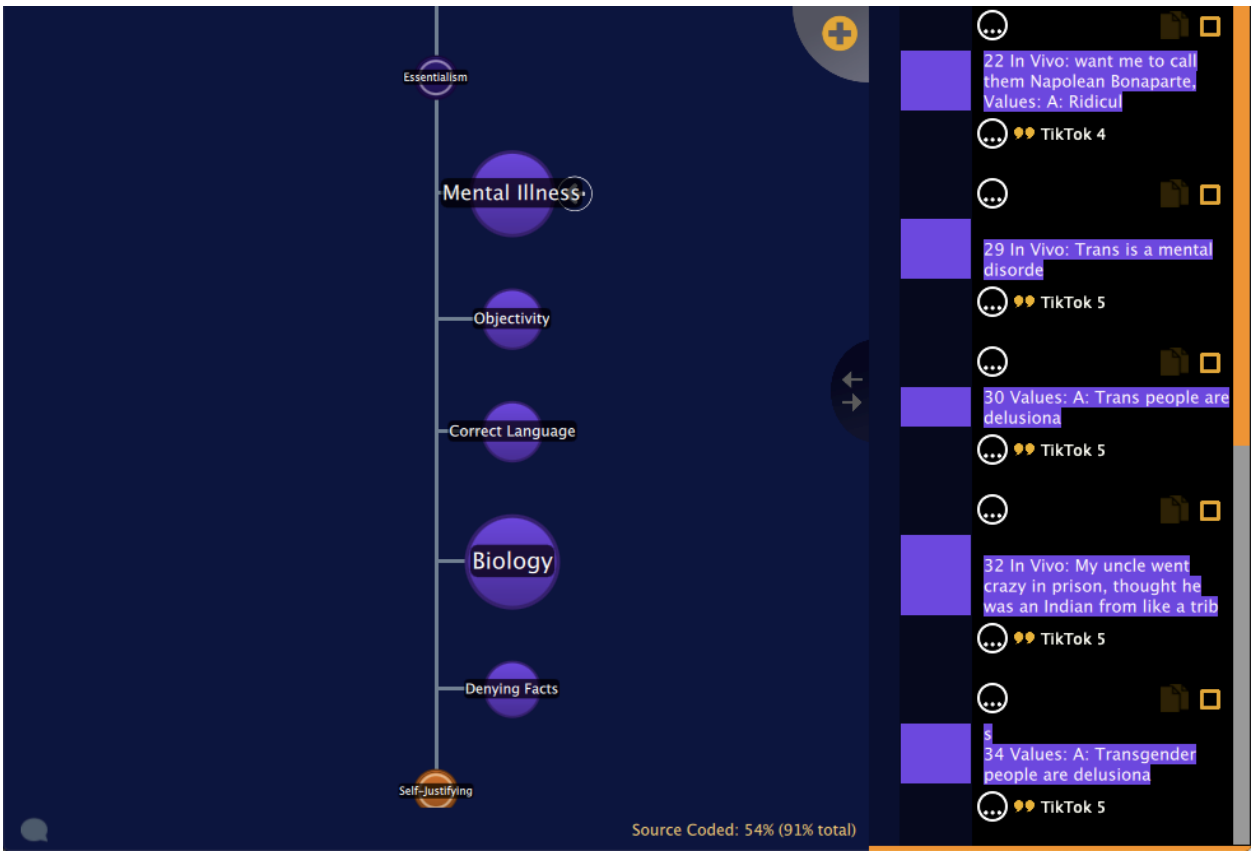
Temporary Phase



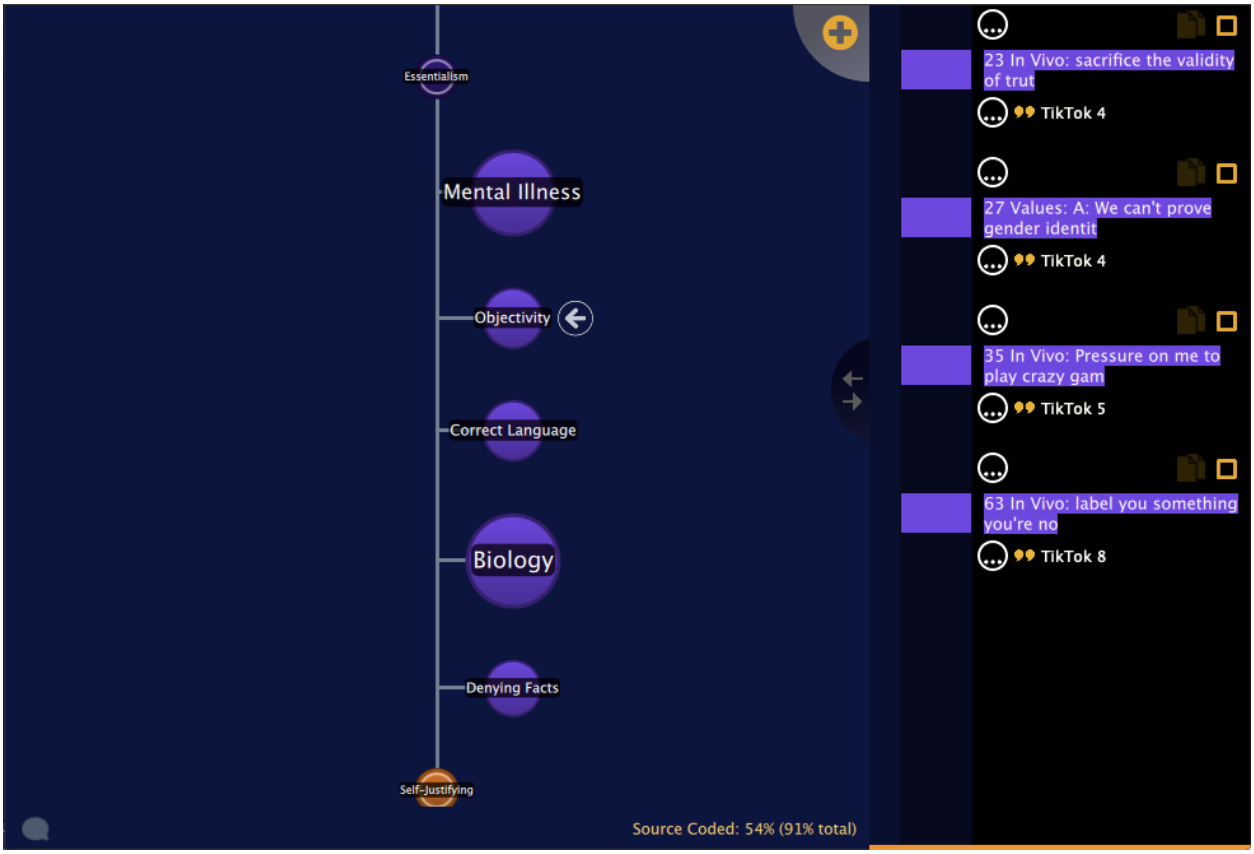
Choosing to be Transgender



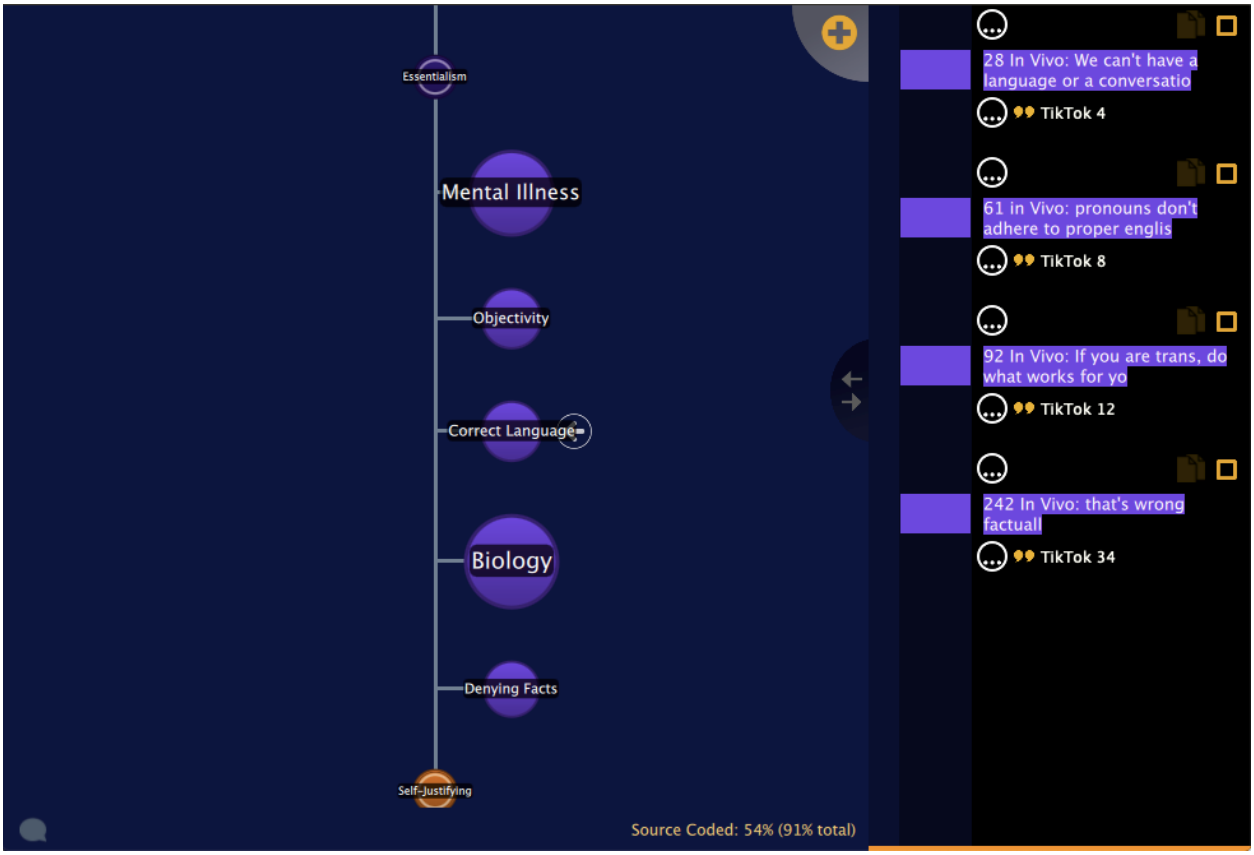
Mental Illness



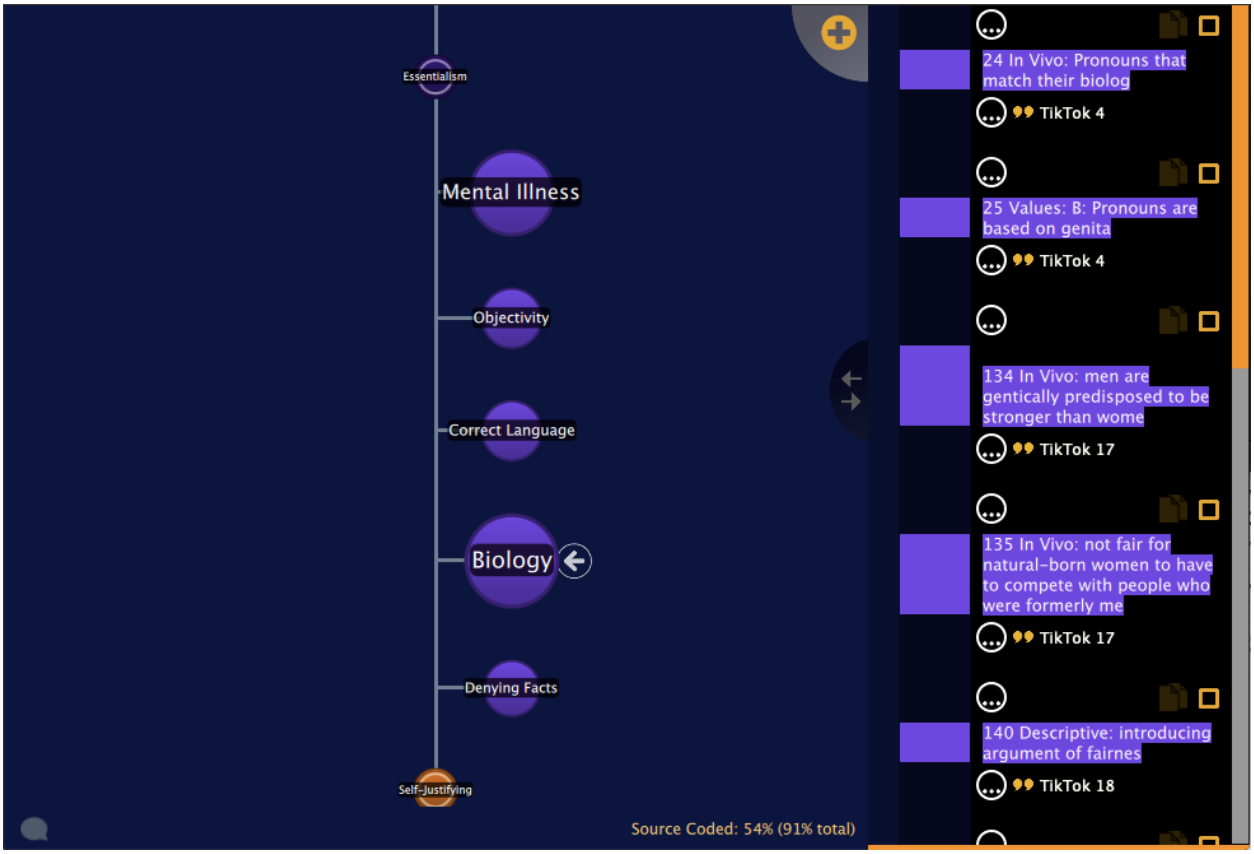
Objectivity



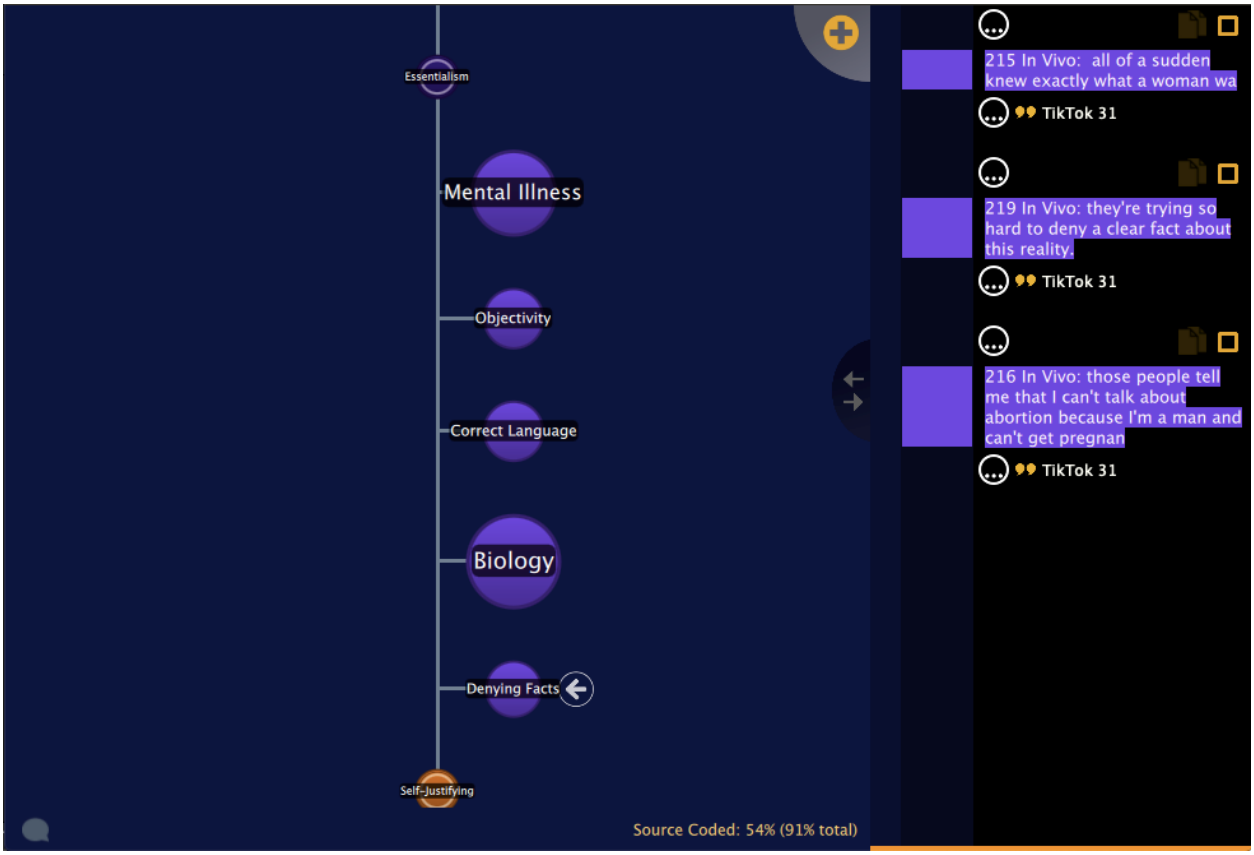
Correct Language



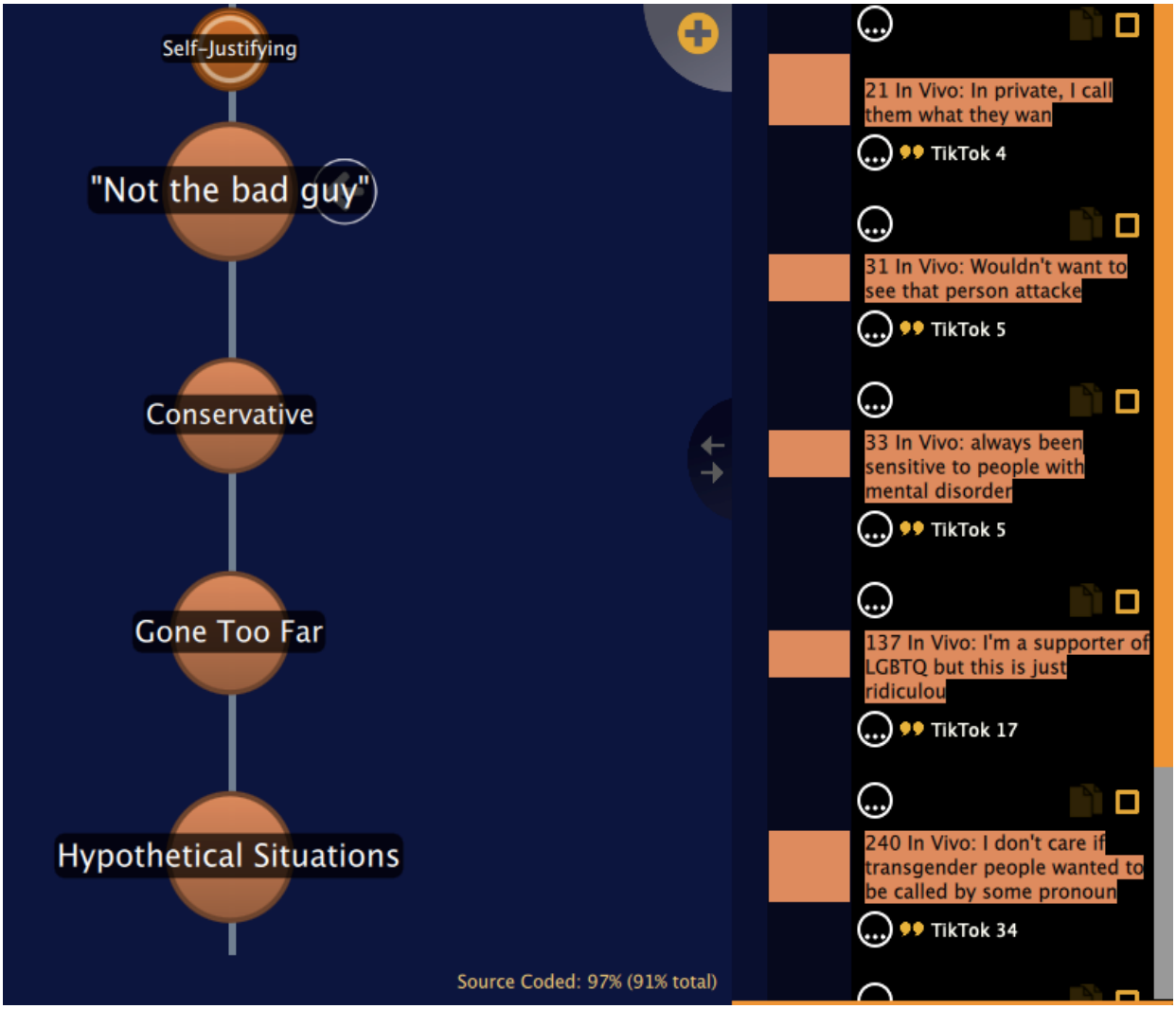
Biology


Essentialism
Mental Illness
Objectivity
Correct Language
Biology
Denying Facts
Self-Justifying
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)
24 In Vivo: Pronouns that match their biolog
TikTok 4
25 Values: B: Pronouns are based on genita
TikTok 4
134 In Vivo: men are gentically predisposed to be stronger than wome
TikTok 17
135 In Vivo: not fair for natural-born women to have to compete with people who were formerly me
TikTok 17
140 Descriptive: introducing argument of fairnes
TikTok 18

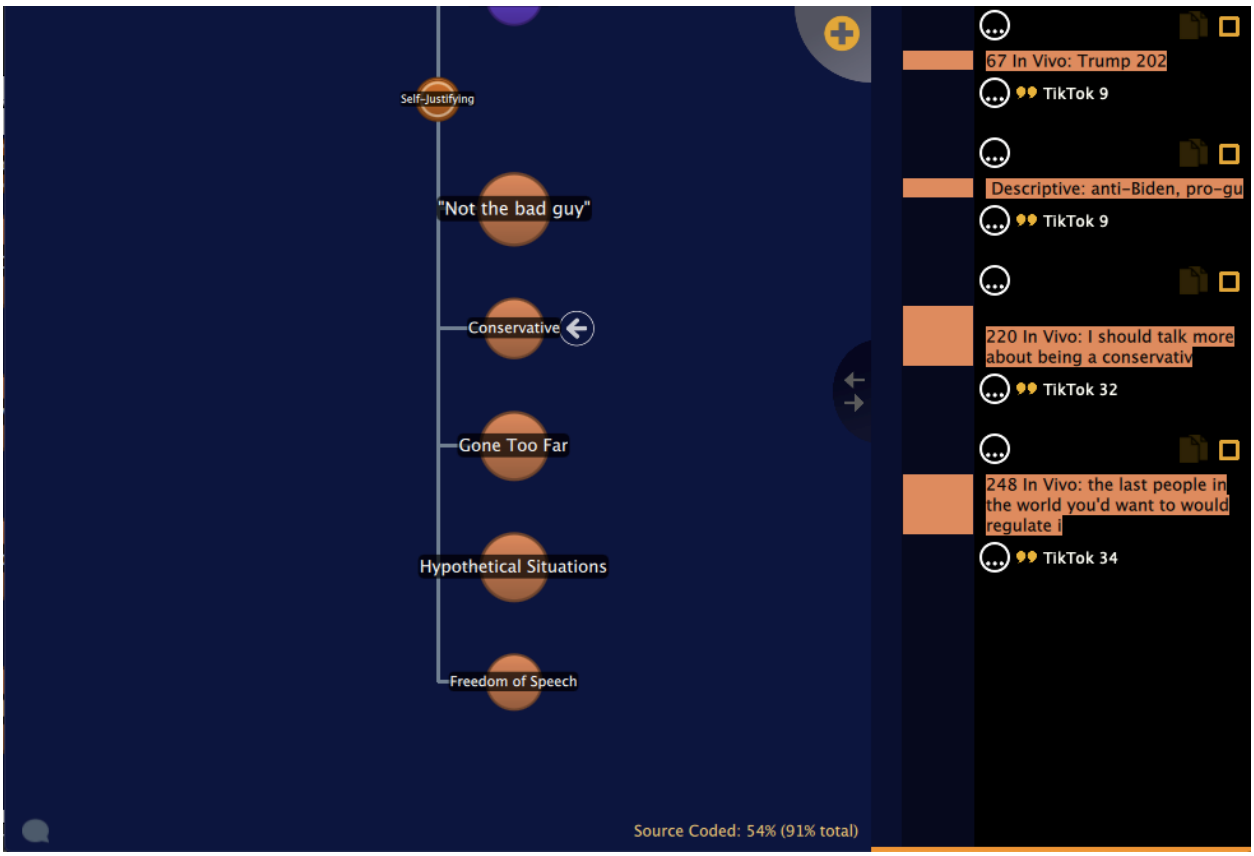
Denying Facts



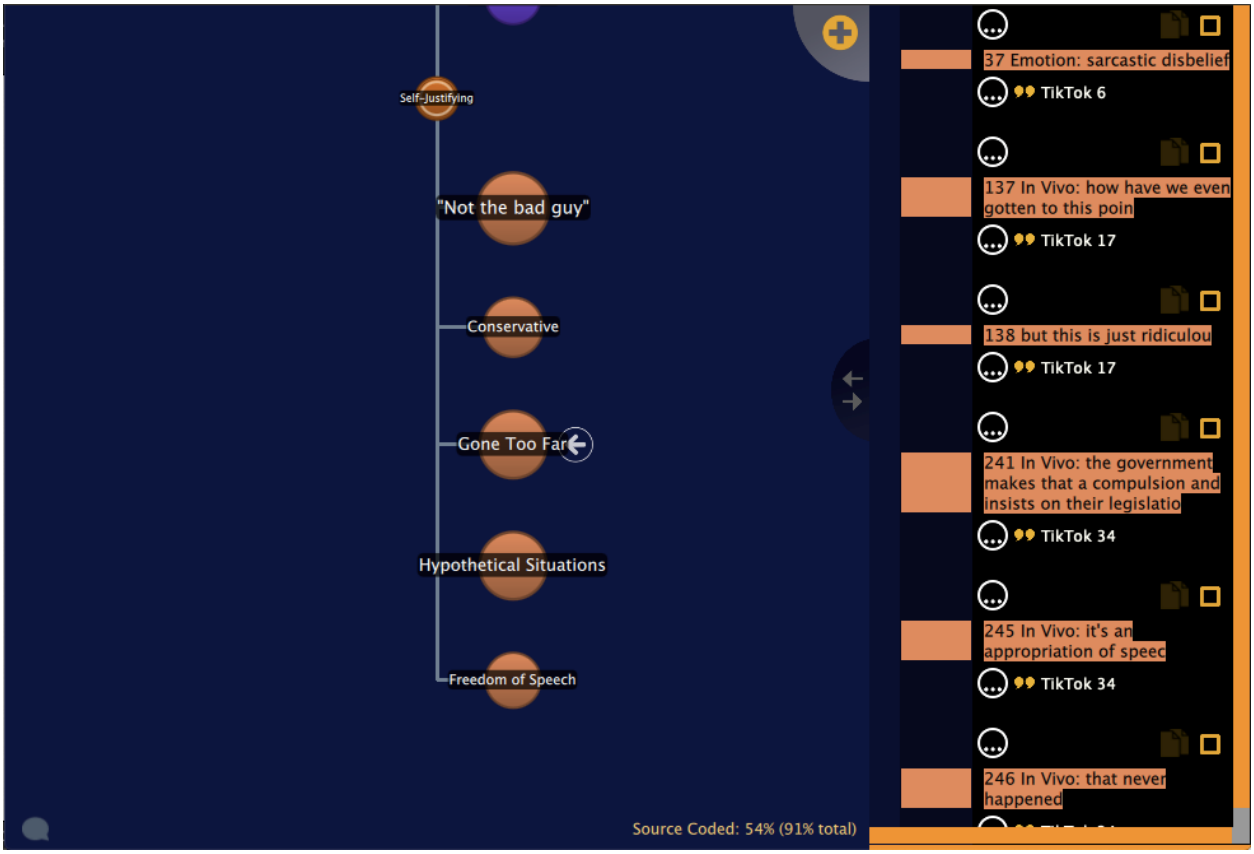
"Not the Bad Guy"



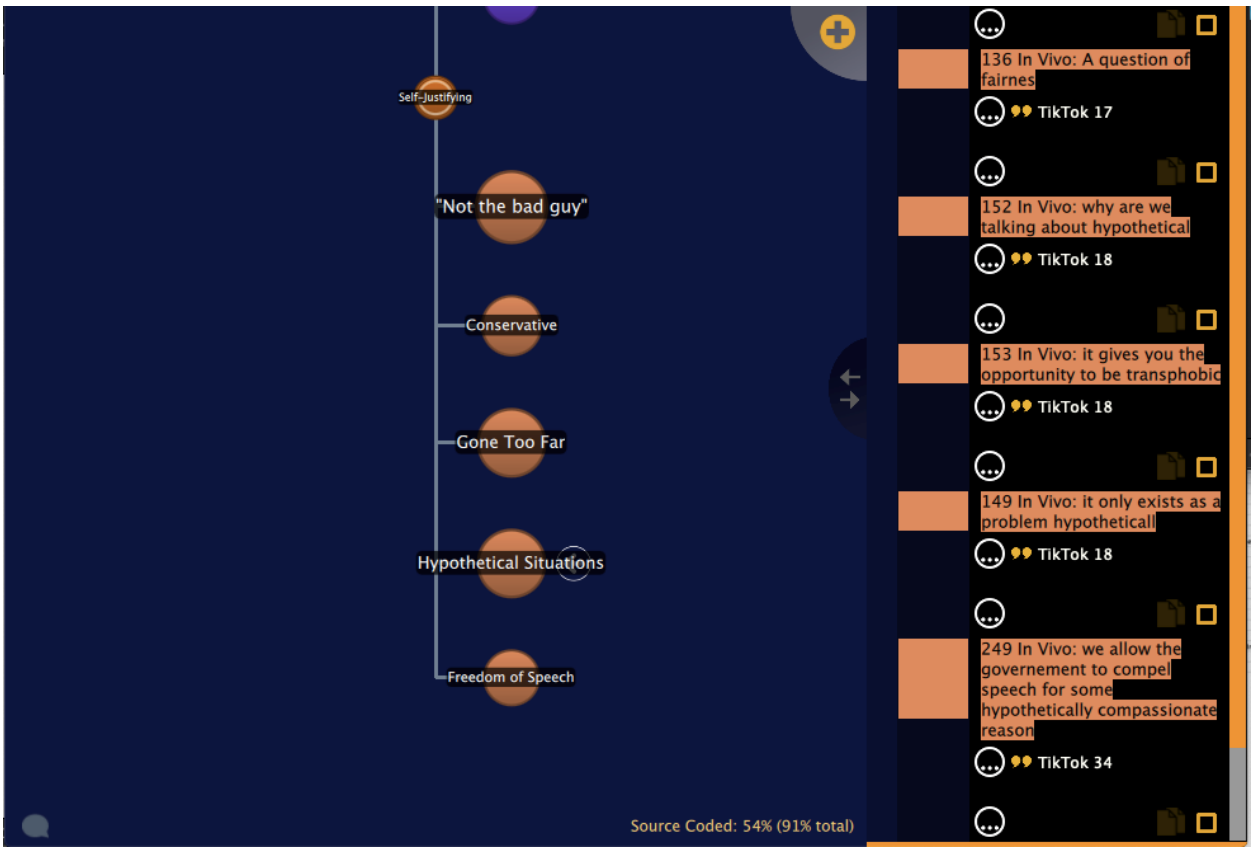
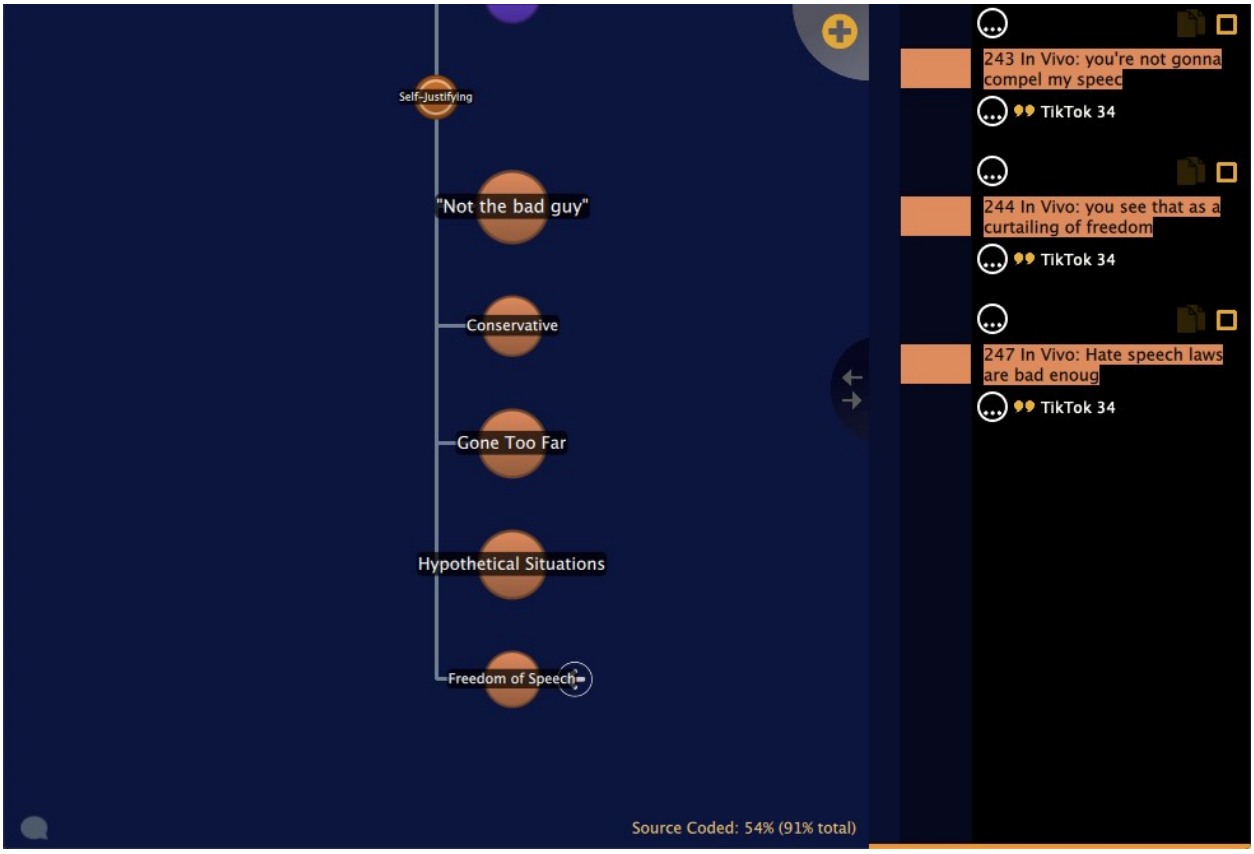
Conservative



Gone Too Far


Self-Justifying
"Not the bad guy"
Conservative
Gone Too Far
Hypothetical Situations
Freedom of Speech
37 Emotion: sarcastic disbelief
TikTok 6
137 In Vivo: how have we even gotten to this poin
TikTok 17
138 but this is just ridiculou
TikTok 17
241 In Vivo: the government makes that a compulsion and insists on their legislatio
TikTok 34
245 In Vivo: it's an appropriation of speec
TikTok 34
246 In Vivo: that never happened
Source Coded: 54% (91% total)

Hypothetical Sitauations



Freedom of Speech