# "I Don't Want Them to Not Know": Investigating Decisions to Disclose Transgender Identity on Dating Platforms

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Dating platform research often focuses on people's decisions about when to reveal certain aspects of themselves to others, or self-disclosure. One example is deciding what to include in one's profile and what to reveal in chat conversations or in person. Transgender people face a particularly acute challenge in self-disclosure, but we know little about how they experience it on dating platforms. Revealing trans status can result in physical or emotional harm, but is also often considered necessary for a successful relationship and for self-fulfillment. To better understand disclosure of sensitive information, we interviewed 20 transgender dating platform users in the U.S. We find that direct, proactive disclosure of trans status was motivated by desires for safety and certainty, though this could involve tension. Physical separation and one-to-many communication surface as key affordances that facilitated disclosure. These results help us better understand motivations behind disclosure decisions.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing → Empirical studies in collaborative and social computing**; *Empirical studies in HCI*; • **Social and professional topics → Gender**;

Additional Key Words and Phrases: self-disclosure; self-presentation; stigma; transgender; gender identity; online dating; privacy

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social technologies that facilitate encounters with other people, be they sexual, romantic, or platonic (e.g., [8, 37, 38, 56, 68, 75]), which we refer to here as "dating platforms," have been a recent CSCW and social computing research focus. The popularity of these platforms has steadily increased in recent years [64], especially among LGBTQ+ people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender minority individuals) [60]. Unlike social networking sites (SNS), dating platforms often bring together strangers who have no existing relationship and must negotiate tensions around issues such as what personal information or characteristics to share with each other [16, 24, 27]. This can be particularly tricky for information that is sensitive in nature.

Most dating platforms afford both one-to-many (the profile) and one-to-one (chat) communication, thus providing both quasi-public and more private venues for disclosing sensitive information. Examining dating platforms allows researchers to understand the dynamics around how people

initiate relationships and establish trust in mediated environments. One important facet of this process for many users is the disclosure of personal, sensitive, or potentially stigmatizing information [8, 38, 56]. Prior work suggests that this disclosure process occurs within and is shaped by the interrelationships between personal, contextual, and technological factors [19, 73].

For people managing a stigmatized identity, decisions to disclose this on dating platforms are complicated by the combination of elevated risk and a limited-cues environment [9]. Disclosing sensitive information means risking negative outcomes or becoming the target of prejudice [29], but these disclosures can also be important for validating self-worth and personal identity [32], accessing social support [18], and strengthening relationships [6, 32, 41]. The limited cues available on dating platforms can further complicate assessing these risks and benefits. People's decisions about whether to disclose potentially stigmatizing information depend, in part, on an assessment of the relative benefits and costs to themselves and their confidant [53], as well as an assessment of their particular social context [32, 54]. However, dating platforms can make both audiences [45] and contexts [9] unclear. This combination may make others' reactions to the disclosure of stigmatizing information even more difficult to predict, thus limiting people's ability to adequately calibrate their disclosure [27].

For researchers and designers to better understand how people decide whether and how to disclose sensitive information, and also better support users as they make these decisions, it is illustrative to focus on the experiences of transgender users of dating platforms. The term "transgender" refers to a person whose gender identity differs from the one they were assigned at birth. Following [61], we use this term to include people with nonbinary and genderqueer gender identities. Following [35] and [36], and consistent with how our participants describe themselves, we also use the term "trans" to refer to this population. We use the terms "cisgender" or "cis" to refer to people who are not transgender [63].

Transgender people face especially high stakes when deciding to disclose their trans status to others, given the disproportionate risk of discrimination and violence [30, 40]. Nonetheless, we know little about how they make these important decisions in the dating platform context. On dating platforms, transgender people who wish to begin new relationships often have limited information to draw from when assessing whether it will be safe or desirable to disclose their trans status to a particular person [27, 53]. While some platforms offer affordances or features that simplify the process, as we discuss in our results, we lack understanding of how such features support people's disclosure strategies. Understanding how transgender daters disclose their trans status, and why they choose to do so, could yield valuable insight into what motivates decisions around disclosing sensitive information on dating platforms. In the paper that follows, we present results from an interview study of 20 transgender-identifying adults about their experiences and use of dating platforms. We sought to answer the following questions: *What are the relationships between disclosure motivations and disclosure strategies? Why do people choose one disclosure strategy over another?*

Our results indicate that the desire for safety and certainty motivated people toward direct, proactive disclosure of their trans status on dating platforms. By leveraging the physical separation and one-to-many reach afforded by dating platforms, participants could limit the potential harm of disclosure while gaining some certainty over the viability of relationships. People who desire a higher degree of certainty may use additional strategies to disclose, to ensure that others have truly gotten the message. Finally, we note that disclosure decisions are rarely simple, and discuss several tensions for participants as they decided whether and how to disclose their trans status.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Although there is a substantial body of research examining the causal links between motivation and decision-making around disclosure on SNS (e.g., [2, 4, 34]), the relationship between *why* people want to disclose sensitive information, and *how* they then choose to do it, remains unclear in the context of dating platforms. Motivations for using SNS are distinct from the motivations for using dating platforms. While SNS are primarily used for sharing information and maintaining social relationships [55], dating platforms are generally used to interact with new people [65, 66, 68]. Dating platform users must therefore negotiate tensions unique to new relationships [24]. Although individual studies have considered particular disclosure strategies on dating platforms, more work is needed to understand the connection between motivation and strategy when it comes to sensitive self-disclosure on dating platforms.

When considering the complexities around disclosing sensitive information, understanding the experiences, motivations, and strategies of transgender people provides rich context. Disclosing one's transgender identity is an extremely challenging, yet personally important, decision for trans individuals [47]. The range of possible reactions to disclosing one's trans status includes loving acceptance [47], fetishization [46], rejection [59], and lethal violence [31]. Faced with that kind of uncertainty, how does one decide whether, and in what way, to disclose? How does one protect their safety and wellbeing in the process?

Research indicates that many transgender people initiating new relationships after their gender transition find it difficult, due to fear of rejection or lack of acceptance of their bodies [57]. At the same time, not disclosing one's trans status is typically not a desirable solution, especially as they are beginning relationships. Romantic relationships can be an important source of identity affirmation [44, 51], and trans individuals in romantic relationships report lower levels of depression than individuals who are single [50]. The ability to affirm and take pride in one's transgender identity helps protect against psychological distress [11]. As such, disclosure is an ongoing part of trans people's lives and relationships, as they manage whether, how, and to whom disclosure will be safe [47].

In the remainder of this section, we will review related work on how people manage the risks inherent in disclosure as they decide whether to share sensitive information in mediated contexts. We will then discuss different disclosure strategies on SNS and dating platforms, and outline how understanding the motivations behind different strategies can help social computing researchers and designers better understand and support disclosures when they do happen. Finally, we will discuss some of the potential risks and motivations for transgender dating platform users specifically.

### 2.1 Managing Risks of Self-Disclosure in Mediated Contexts

Deciding what information to share about oneself can be difficult, especially when that information is sensitive or stigmatizing. Particularly in computer-mediated contexts such as SNS and dating platforms, disclosing sensitive information such as experiences with mental illness [5] or sexual abuse [3], or identity facets such as gender transition [33, 35, 36] and LGBTQ+ identity [19, 20], may be daunting and complex to manage. In deciding whether to disclose, these individuals may face possible rejection [14], stigma and judgment [29], additional stress [35], and further possibility of other undesirable outcomes. However, disclosing sensitive information can be important for people to access crucial social support [35] and affirm their identity [51].

Prior work suggests that the confidant's reaction is one of the most important factors predicting whether disclosure will benefit the person disclosing [32, 43, 48, 58]. To avoid negative responses, and thus reap the social benefits of disclosure, there is substantial evidence that people try to anticipate others' reaction to their sensitive disclosure before it happens [4, 14, 53]. They may send

out trial balloons, such as sharing blog posts about pregnancy loss without discussing their own experiences, in order to evaluate how their social network reacts [4]. Often these decisions are informed by an assessment of a platform's configuration of audiences and norms [19], helping to ensure that sensitive content only reaches what is likely to be an accepting audience. For instance, people in the process of gender transition may take advantage of the relative anonymity of Tumblr for more vulnerable and personal exploration of their identity, then turn to Facebook once they are ready to declare their transition to their broader social network [33].

These decisions may be more difficult to make on dating platforms because people are interacting mostly with strangers [27, 65, 66, 68]. These strangers may have incompatible relational goals [24], and may not be entirely forthright in their self-presentation on the platform [22, 27, 37, 67]. As a result, dating platform users managing sensitive disclosure may try to gather information about a potential partner in order to calibrate their disclosure and protect themselves from harm [27]. For instance, they may "Facebook stalk" in order to gather more trustworthy information about someone [26]. On dating platforms, people might attend to cues others unintentionally "give off" (such as message timestamps) in addition to those that are purposefully "given" (such as flattering profile photos) [27, 28]. When managing sensitive disclosures, such as a potentially stigmatized identity, this kind of information may help people assess the person they are interacting with, and thereby decide what kinds of disclosures they feel comfortable making.

For transgender people, the stress of disclosing to one's social network may be mitigated by the social support received [35]. However, prior work suggests that rejection from others is always a concern, and it can be difficult for trans people to predict how others will react to their disclosure, even if they know the other person well [44]. Research indicates that trans people expect to encounter stigma in everyday life, especially in public spaces or when meeting new people [59]. Trans users of dating platforms consistently describe experiences of objectification, fetishization, invasive and invalidating questions, and harassment [46, 61]. Moreover, transgender people are disproportionately at risk of physical violence from others if they do decide to disclose [30, 40]. Given the high stakes associated with disclosing one's trans identity, and the limited ability of dating platform users to predict others' reactions to that disclosure, trans status disclosure on dating platforms is a productive context for investigating disclosures of stigmatized identities.

## 2.2 Different Forms of Disclosure

Different forms of disclosure may have different motivations behind them. Direct or "willful" disclosures are those in which one "intends to deliberately divulge something personal to another" [32, p. 16]. Indirect disclosures, by contrast, may be "open to interpretation" [4, p. 2]. On SNS, this might take the form of posting content that would hint at a sensitive aspect of the self without directly stating it [4]. Different strategies may be used to disclose the same information, depending on motivation. For instance, people may disclose the breakup of a romantic relationship publicly and directly (e.g., a status post), or by less visibly changing their relationship status on their profile. This decision depends on whether one's goal is to efficiently reach many people, or to keep a personal record of life events [34]. This suggests that it is not only the information being disclosed, but the *motivation* behind that disclosure, that may determine people's disclosure strategies.

Prior work indicates that direct and indirect disclosures may be motivated by overlapping, but distinct, factors. For instance, while [2] identified network-level and societal factors motivating direct disclosure of pregnancy loss, [4] found that these factors did not motivate indirect self-disclosure. This was because the directness of disclosure was a crucial way that network-level and societal motivations could be satisfied: people who want to show support to others or raise awareness cannot do so unless the disclosure is direct. Moreover, [4] found that the same broad motivation could operate slightly differently for some people, resulting in an indirect rather than

direct (or vice versa) disclosure strategy. For instance, both indirect and direct disclosures were motivated by a desire to manage audience reactions and avoid uncomfortable interactions [2, 4]. However, direct disclosures were motivated by the desire to stop the rumor mill and avoid future interactions around a painful topic [2], while indirect disclosures were motivated by a desire to gauge "what types of responses they *would* get if they disclosed directly" [4, p. 13]. Different disclosure strategies serve different functions and allow people to fulfill different goals, and there is evidence that one strategy may not substitute for another.

There is likewise evidence that people use multiple strategies to disclose sensitive information on dating platforms. However, this work has generally focused on one strategy or platform at a time. As a result, we lack insight into which disclosure strategies serve which motivations on dating platforms. A substantial body of work has found that on the one-to-many profile, people tend to strategically reveal information about themselves in order to appear attractive and minimize their risk of rejection [8, 9, 21, 22, 25, 69]. Some users, however, may choose to include indirect disclosures to sensitive information in their profile in order to protect themselves from stigma while still reaching their desired audience [8, 24, 38]. An analysis of profiles on Grindr, a dating platform for GBTQ+ people, found that users employed euphemistic language (e.g., "looking for fun") to indirectly disclose their desire to engage in potentially stigmatizing behavior such as one-off hookups, which might be discussed more directly and privately in chat [8]. Likewise, [38] found that people used the ambiguous phrase "ask me" in their dating platform profiles to signal the possibility of negotiation around risky behavior. Since information cannot be rescinded after it has been divulged, maintaining uncertainty and ambiguity in the profile allows for more fluid negotiation around goals and disclosure within individual relationships [8, 16].

However, there is also evidence that direct disclosure of sensitive information also occurs in dating platform profiles. [38] also found people were more likely to reveal "not negotiable, but still sensitive" information, such as HIV status, directly in the profile rather than in more private channels [38, p. 177]. Grindr users who disclose their HIV status in their profile may do so in order to "organically" filter out users who would be uninterested in sexual contact due to HIV status [70, p. 10]. Similarly, disabled online daters may engage in what [56] has termed "proactive disclosure" of their disability status in order to "weed out" undesirable ableist matches. By directly disclosing sensitive information in profiles, people may avoid wasted time with someone who was going to have an issue with the information. By indirectly disclosing, or disclosing more privately in chat, people may avoid rejection, stigmatization, and harassment [8, 24, 38]. Further, the choice not to disclose sensitive information when given the option may also have social costs. On Grindr, for instance, the decision to keep one's HIV status private may indicate to others that one is attempting to "hide" a positive HIV status, which could also lead to stigmatization and judgment [70].

Different kinds of disclosures happen on dating platforms, however we lack understanding of what motivates people to choose one strategy over another. When managing a stigmatized identity, what wins out: avoiding rejection or avoiding wasting time with people who will ultimately be unsuitable? How do these decisions get made, and what do they depend on? In order to investigate the motivations and subsequent strategies for sensitive disclosures on dating platforms, we consider the experiences and practices of transgender daters.

## 2.3 Research Context: Transgender Users of Dating Platforms

Transgender people, like all people, must make complex decisions around what aspects of the self they wish to share with others. Disclosure[1] of trans status can be a risky and uncertain venture, made

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[1]As [74] argues, there is a distinction between *declaration* and *disclosure* of one's transgender identity. While *declaration* refers to the "initial claiming of a transgender identity", *disclosure* refers to "sharing one's transgender history after transition."

riskier and more uncertain by the platform environment. On SNS, declaring one's trans identity can be a source of social support as well as stress [35]. Additional work has shown how trans people routinely encounter marginalization and harmful experiences when they use socio-technical systems of any kind [46, 61].

For transgender people, the risks of disclosure are real [44, 59]. Nationwide surveys have found that fewer than 20% of adults in the U.S. would consider dating a transgender person [7, 10], and only 15% of adults report they would consider engaging in a sexual act with a transgender person [7]. Beyond rejection, disclosing one's trans status also carries the risk of outright violence, since transgender people, especially women of color, are disproportionately at risk of discrimination, harassment, and assault [31, 40]. Nearly half (47%) of transgender people report having been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime, and more than half (54%) report experiencing some form of intimate partner violence [30]. Nearly 3 out of 4 lethal anti-LGBT hate crimes are committed against transgender women and girls [31]. A particularly clear example of the dangers inherent in disclosing one's trans status can be found in the existence of "trans panic" defenses in the U.S. court system. Defendants charged with the murder of a transgender person have argued, often successfully [71], that the discovery or disclosure of the victim's trans status was so provocative that it drove them to insanity, allowing them to receive a lesser sentence or even avoid conviction entirely [72].

Dating platforms are already characterized by uncertainty [16, 27], as people are interacting with mostly strangers [27] in an environment where contexts are blurred and physical cues are absent [9]. Understanding what motivates trans dating platform users to disclose their trans status or not, and the strategies they employ to do so, is an important step toward understanding how and why sensitive disclosures happen online.

## 3 METHODS

In order to better understand the strategies trans dating platform users employ to disclose their trans status to others, as well as the motivations underlying these strategies, the first author conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 individuals who self-identified as transgender and/or nonbinary and who used dating and hookup platforms at least three times per week.

### 3.1 Participants

Participants were recruited through Facebook advertisements, as well as flyers posted in an LGBTQ+ community center in a major Midwestern city. In addition, the first author enlisted personal contacts to contact the organizers of several trans-specific mailing lists, and asked them to forward recruiting materials to their groups. All recruiting materials specified that participants must self-identify as transgender and/or nonbinary and use dating or hookup platforms at least three times per week.

Our recruitment and analysis were guided by the framework of intersectionality, which asserts that identity markers do not exist independently of each other, and that people are often affected by multiple, converging sources of oppression [17]. Participants completed a brief survey to capture characteristics used to ensure diversity in our sample by including a range of gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, races, and locations. Recent scholarship in HCI has called for an increase in attention to intersectional issues, particularly when studying identity [62]. Research in transgender studies has discussed at length the role of intersectionality in transgender experiences (e.g., [10, 42]),

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In this framework, declaration is part of the process of revealing one's "true" self to others, whereas the choice of whether to disclose one's trans status after declaration has taken place is a matter of sharing aspects of one's personal history [74, p. 60-61]. Participants in this study generally described disclosure as defined by this framework, although several did share stories of declaration from their past during interviews.

Table 1. Participant Demographics and Characteristics

| P | Age | Gender Identity / Identities | Sexual Orientation | Current Area |
|---|-----|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1 | 19 | Agender, Transmasculine | Panromantic asexual (sex favorable) | Urban |
| 2 | 21 | Trans woman | Queer | Urban |
| 3 | 22 | Nonbinary | Queer | Urban |
| 4 | 22 | Non-binary butch lesbian, Woman-aligned non-binary | Lesbian | Rural |
| 5 | 24 | Genderqueer | Queer | Urban |
| 6 | 31 | Male | Gay | Urban |
| 7 | 23 | Genderfluid | Pansexual | Rural |
| 8 | 23 | Binary male, FtM | Bisexual | Suburban |
| 9 | 67 | Transgender female | Bisexual | Suburban |
| 10 | 24 | Woman | Bisexual | Suburban |
| 11 | 22 | Transmasculine | Queer | Urban |
| 12 | 30 | Gender-nonconforming, Transgender, Genderqueer, MtF Transsexual | Pansexual or Queer | Urban |
| 13 | 22 | Female | Pansexual | Urban |
| 14 | 26 | Man/Trans Man | Queer | Urban |
| 15 | 20 | Female | Bisexual-Polyamorous | Rural |
| 16 | 27 | Male | Hetero-leaning Queer | Urban |
| 17 | 22 | Transmasculine | Queer | Suburban |
| 18 | 29 | Non-binary Transgirl | Queer | Urban |
| 19 | 23 | Non-binary, Transmasculine | Queer | Rural |
| 20 | 32 | Genderqueer | Omni/Pansexual | Suburban |

including the ways transgender women are disproportionately affected by institutional oppression (e.g., [40, 49]).

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 67 years old, with a mean age of 26, a median age of 23, and a standard deviation of 10.23. Respondents to recruitment were predominantly white, as were participants in this study. There was one Latinx participant and two biracial participants. As previous research has indicated that disclosure behaviors on dating platforms are heavily mediated by a variety of characteristics including location (e.g., [8, 25, 39]), we considered rurality as an axis of diversity in creating our sample. Details on the diversity of the sample can be found in Table 1. Each participant was compensated with $25, either in cash (for in-person interviews) or via PayPal (for remote interviews).

## 3.2 Procedure

The first author conducted semi-structured interviews between July and September 2018 either in person (N=7) or remotely (N=13) via the secure video chat service BlueJeans, based on participant location and preference. Interviews ranged in length from 54 minutes to 107 minutes (M = 75.75, SD = 13.42).

Both in-person and BlueJeans interviews were audio recorded with participant consent and transcribed by a professional transcription service. The interview protocol focused on participants' experiences with dating and hookup platforms and was adjusted over time in order to explore areas of conceptual interest and engage in theoretical sampling. The interviewer asked participants for

their pronouns during the interview, and explained that those pronouns would be the ones used to describe them in this paper. Thus, our pronoun use here reflects the stated wishes of participants.

## 3.3 Analysis

We employed Charmaz's approach to constructivist grounded theory in our analysis [12, 13] using Dedoose software for qualitative coding. The research team iteratively coded, wrote memos, and performed constant comparison with the interview transcripts in order to develop emergent themes. First, the first author conducted open coding, inductively tagging concepts which emerged directly from the interview transcripts [13]. These emergent concepts were frequently discussed by the research team. Next, the first author and a research assistant conducted axial coding, in which the open codes are related to each other in order to find relationships among the key themes and identify patterns of theoretical value. For the final focused round of coding, the first author read and re-coded each transcript based on the focused codes developed during the second round. Our analysis centers on the reported experiences of our participants, but is undeniably informed by the sensibilities of our research team. The first author, who conducted all interviews and open coding, is a cisgender queer woman. She has had extensive personal experience with trans individuals, including deep involvement with trans activist and social communities. The research team also included a cisgender gay man and a cisgender heterosexual woman.

## 3.4 Limitations

As with all research, this work has limitations that urge caution in interpreting our results. As is true with much qualitative, exploratory work, larger-scale study will be necessary to generalize these findings at the population level. Additionally, we only sampled frequent users of dating platforms (3x/week or more), but infrequent or occasional users may behave differently. Likewise, none of the respondents to recruitment described themselves as heterosexual, and it is possible that heterosexual transgender dating platform users may have different concerns and behaviors in this area. Our recruitment either did not reach or did not appeal to many transgender people of color, a significant limitation that needs to be addressed in future work. Finally, as all members of the research team are cisgender, this analysis may have been enriched by a member researcher's perspective.

## 4 RESULTS

In this section, we first describe the risks participants associated with disclosing their trans status to others, and how participants' desire for *safety* motivated disclosure on dating platforms rather than in-person. Next, we discuss how participants' desire for *certainty* motivated direct, proactive disclosure of their trans status to others. Finally, we discuss how slight changes in motivation introduced tension into disclosure decisions, necessitating different disclosure strategies.

### 4.1 Safety

A key factor in disclosure decisions is weighing potential risks against potential benefits. Participants described the risks they associated with a negative reaction to disclosing their trans status to others. Many expressed concerns, based on their own experiences or others' they had heard about, around their physical safety. P15 was once on a date with a cis man which had been going well, but when she disclosed her trans status to him, "he freaked out." Although he did not physically attack her, she was afraid that he might: "he started shouting slurs and it was like, 'I do not feel safe here.'" As a result, she stressed that when using dating platforms, safety must be her "number one priority."

P7 had heard about others' violent experiences, and was concerned about being targeted on dating platforms because of their trans status. They described hearing on the news about a trans

woman who had been "found dead in a ditch." P7 explained, "that kind of thing always just scares me to death." When meeting a new person face-to-face on a dating platform, they were always concerned "that person could be the person that kills me." For P7, their desire to protect their safety could only be satisfied by refusing to meet people face-to-face from dating platforms unless a mutual friend could vouch for the person.

For many participants, the desire for safety motivated them to directly disclose within the platform, rather than face-to-face. By doing so, participants felt they were protecting themselves against the possibility of physical danger. Consider the case of P6, who lives in a large city and uses Grindr and Scruff. P6 ensured that disclosure of his trans status happened on the platform, rather than face-to-face, because he "would rather risk a negative reaction on an app versus a negative reaction in person." He described some of the very real risks and difficulties he perceived to disclosing in person:

> If I meet someone at the bar, I either have to disclose to them at the bar or find them on the app later and try to start that conversation so I know that they know... I don't want to disclose in a bar 'cause that's a thing you don't like to be shouting over music, necessarily... I'll look them up on Scruff or Grindr later and be like, "Oh hey, it was really great meeting you. We should meet up sometime. Oh by the way, did you read my profile? Did you know I'm trans?" You can go from there. So it's just easier removing yourself from that bar situation, also getting a chance to disclose in a more controlled setting... I mean, 'cause on the off chance they react badly, you're stuck with them face to face and especially if you've been drinking... Yeah, it just feels safer. You have more control over the situation. You're not stuck.

P6 here describes several ways direct disclosure on the platform helps him feel more safe. Face-to-face, if the person reacts badly, or if someone else overhears and they react badly, he feels that he would be "stuck" in a potentially unsafe situation. For P6, protecting his safety means removing himself physically from the person to whom he is disclosing. This substantially reduces the probability of the disclosure resulting in physical violence, bringing the risk level of disclosure to an acceptable level for him.

For participants, concerns around physical safety were also accompanied by concerns about their trans status being inevitably discovered in a more vulnerable context. Specifically, people said that if they did not disclose in the dating platform, the fact of their physical anatomy would make their trans status obvious in a sexual situation. Disclosing their trans status on the platform allowed people to ensure that all parties knew what kind of bodies to expect. For example, P3 proactively disclosed their trans status and chose to be included in people's searches for women on OkCupid because "I don't have a dick and I didn't want people to think that I did." Proactive disclosure allowed them to avoid an "unnecessary conversation" about their anatomy later. Similarly, P9 was "very explicit" about her trans status on her dating profile and early in chat, because she did not see the point in trying to "deceive." The way she saw it, "at the point things got physical it was going to be pretty obvious." For participants, being able to manage others' expectations around their body was another way to protect their safety, or even to avoid an uncomfortable conversation.

These examples illustrate how disclosing on the platform, rather than in person, allowed participants to maintain control over the context in which others learned about their trans status. Leveraging the dating platform allowed participants to create physical distance between themselves and their confidants, as well as be clear about what physical characteristics others should expect. Participants could thus minimize the potential for a harmful reaction in a vulnerable moment. These examples allow us to see how a specific concern - maximizing safety - motivates people to use the dating platform for direct disclosure of their trans status.

## 4.2 Certainty

We found that direct, proactive disclosure was also motivated by a desire to assess people's reactions. Participants considered a person's positive reaction to their trans status as a necessary prerequisite to pursuing a relationship. In this way, even a negative reaction itself could benefit the discloser by providing a measure of certainty. If the person reacted negatively, then participants were certain that this relationship had no future. If the person reacted positively, then they could be certain that they had at least one point of compatibility with their match. In this section, we will first describe how participants were motivated by a desire to avoid the pain of romantic rejection. We will then discuss how proactive disclosure provided a mechanism for participants to achieve an acceptable level of certainty about nascent relationships.

*4.2.1 Risk of Rejection.* While rejection is a concern for virtually all dating platform users, our participants described many cases of being rejected merely because they were trans. P10 said, "people who were attracted to me found out I was transgender, and then stopped being attracted to me." P13 described similarly disappointing experiences on OkCupid, even in cases where there were many other signals the person might be a good match:

> When it comes to me dating, it doesn't matter if it's a guy, girl, or whatever. I have had people be completely interested, have met me and be interested, and then as soon as it comes to light that I'm trans it's just like the floor falls out. Every second up to that point, everything was fine.

Participants expressed that even a neutral reaction to disclosure may be seen as a warning sign. P9, for example, described having been married to a woman, saying she did not declare her trans status until after they were engaged. Her fiancée's reaction appeared to be neutral, and the marriage went ahead, but it ultimately ended:

> I'd come out to my then-fiancée but not until we'd been engaged. We went ahead with it. But when we broke up many years later, she turned to me and said, "You know, I lost all respect for you the first moment I saw you in a dress." I said, "Wait, this was long before we got married. Why did you marry me?" [She said,] "Well, I had told my parents we were engaged. It was all planned." I was like, "Okay." Not going to do that one again.

For these participants and others, knowing how a partner truly feels about their gender identity is crucial information about the viability of a particular relationship. Achieving certainty about how others feel about their trans identity is necessary to avoid heartbreak and rejection in the future.

*4.2.2 Proactive Disclosure.* As others (e.g., [56]) have documented for different populations, a desire to avoid romantic rejection motivated participants to proactively disclose their trans status. Proactive disclosure typically involved directly disclosing one's trans status in the one-to-many format of the dating platform profile, so that the disclosure would be obvious to any potential mates prior to direct interaction. As we describe below, proactive disclosure carried with it the potential for harmful harassment and stigmatization, however the strategy was still popular among participants in this study. Our participants saw proactive disclosure as a way to filter their matches so that people for whom their trans status was an issue would simply leave them alone. By engaging in proactive disclosure, participants could guard their time and emotional energy, reserving them for relationships that might be viable. A crucial aspect of the dating platform in this process was that one disclosure in the profile could reach many people. By allowing other platform users to see this information, participants felt they could be more efficient by talking only with others who did

not respond negatively to this disclosure. For instance, P20 highlighted on their profile that they were a "single, widowed parent" in addition to being transgender. As they explain:

> Anything that I think might end up being a deal-breaker for me I put out there on my profile. I'm okay with that. So I can weed out pretty quickly who is just not at all aligned with who I am.

For P20, a negative reaction to their trans status, their status as a parent, or their status as a widow would be a "deal breaker", and so they wanted to "quickly" identify and discard people who reacted negatively to any part of that. By quickly identifying undesirable matches, participants could quickly identify desirable ones. For example, P4 knew that there were some people on the dating platforms she used who were "not interested in dating butches or they're not interested in dating masculine identified women," and so prominently featuring her butch identity on her profile was a way to "sort through that and [make] sure that I'm connecting and meeting with people who are interested in me for who I am."

We found that because some participants were striving for a high degree of certainty that others did not have a problem with their trans identity, they used disclosure strategies that would ensure others had in fact received and understood the information. This often involved appropriating multiple affordances of the profile in order to make their trans status clear to others. P1 included pictures on his OkCupid profile from before he began medical transition, which he believed others would "read as female." On his profile, he also listed his gender as "trans man." He felt that these methods of disclosing his trans status would mean that it would be "their fault" if others did "not realize I'm trans." P1 felt that proactively disclosing his trans status would allow him to protect himself against not only negative reactions to his trans status, but also from people who were too "oblivious" to notice, who he felt would be undesirable partners for him.

Likewise, P6 used the profile gender categories, profile text, and messaging functions on both Grindr and Scruff to ensure that others understood that he was trans. He had "trans man" as one of the categories he belonged to on both platforms, and "also [said] it in my profile [text] too" because he knew "some people don't pay attention to that part." He hoped that others would "read through my profile," however "if someone's messaging me and we're going to meet up, I make a point of asking them just to make sure." A simple absence of a negative reaction did not necessarily provide the level of certainty that participants wanted, motivating them to disclose their trans status in multiple ways and at multiple points of relationship-building.

## 4.3 Tensions Affecting Disclosure Decisions

Although proactive disclosure was often the best way for participants to achieve the level of safety and certainty they wanted, this strategy was not without tradeoffs or tension. Concerns around online harassment, self-presentation, and relational goals could create tension in people's decisions around disclosure. For some, alternative disclosure strategies, or even not disclosing their trans status at all, provided better ways of resolving these tensions and satisfying their particular motivations. In this section, we outline these sources of tension, and the resultant ways participants approached disclosure.

*4.3.1 Harassment and Transphobia.* Despite the benefits we have discussed, proactive disclosure was not universally described by participants in a positive light. Rather, the nature of the harm they described from this disclosure strategy was different and judged less harmful by participants. One potential source of this harm was harassment and transphobia from other platform users. For instance, P17 described his Grindr profile: "My gender is listed as trans man, but in my actual profile [text] it says 'trans boy, he/him/his.' So they know I'm trans right away. I don't want them to not know that." P17 said that he knew disclosing his trans status in his profile made him the

target of hate messages and fetishists, but these messages did not bother him because he was "just not going to respond to those people." Moreover, by observing how others reacted to his trans status he could determine "if this person views my trans-ness as part of me, part of my identity, or if they view it as something to sexualize." The latter reaction would preclude further interaction. P17 was thus motivated to disclose his trans status, since for him the risk of harm was not great and the information gained was valuable. Over time, however, these experiences of harm could outweigh the benefits of proactive disclosure on a particular platform. P13, who had disclosed her trans status on her Grindr profile, eventually stopped using Grindr because she felt that "dealing with the dick pics, dealing with the people, and dealing with just the dumb messages I got" from cis men made Grindr "not worth it" for her. It is worth noting here that these experiences did not lead P13 to simply adjust her disclosure strategy by removing mentions of her trans status from her Grindr profile, but to abandon Grindr altogether. Participants assessed the potential harm that might result from disclosure, however these assessments could change over time and necessitate an adjustment to their strategies.

*4.3.2  Self-Presentation Concerns.* We further found that tensions around the authenticity of their self-presentation could lead participants to pursue other disclosure strategies in addition to, or instead of, proactive disclosure. For some participants, authentic self-presentation meant ensuring that others had an accurate picture of what they would look like in person. This motivated them to use photos to indirectly disclose their trans status, in combination with more direct disclosure using gender options or profile text. Many participants wanted to reveal their trans status by showing multiple aspects of their identity. This was easier on platforms that allowed multiple profile pictures, such as Tinder. Here, P7 would have "a picture of me in makeup and a skirt, next to a picture with me in a beard wearing a tank top and cargo shorts. I would just mix and match." They were hoping to find "someone that is cool with that, is cool with my look constantly changing where I can be feminine, where I can be masculine, I could be somewhere in between." This was trickier on platforms like Grindr that only allow a single profile photo. Here, P7 tried to use one that still "has some of my masculine features, but still makes me look really feminine," hoping that others would figure out they don't "identify as either."

This motivation toward authenticity, and resultant approach to profile photo selection, was not limited to people with nonbinary identities. P2, a trans woman, had photos on her Tinder profile where "some I look very passable, some I look less passable." She felt that "on top of the fact that I'm telling you in my profile - like, it says trans woman - I want you to know how many facets of my look there are and how my trans-ness informs that." P2 felt it was a question of "honesty" that her pictures accurately reflect what she might look like on a given day, rather than only selecting pictures where she had done her makeup and hair "in a certain way" to look more "passable." Rather than strategically choosing pictures to make herself as "passable" as possible, and thereby maintain ambiguity about her trans status, P2 purposefully chose to highlight how her "trans-ness" affects her look. She could thereby ensure that a potential match would have an accurate understanding of what she looked like in person, allowing her to not only minimize her risk of future rejection and harm, but also to present herself in a way that felt authentic.

However, a desire for authentic self-presentation could motivate participants to not disclose their trans status in their profiles at all. For some, direct disclosure would over-emphasize their trans status in undesirable ways. For instance, P5 chose to disclose their trans status while chatting with others on Tinder, rather than on their profile. As they explain:

> I've always disliked putting a gay sticker on my car. It's just like, there's so much more going on. So writing that word [genderqueer] versus my other identities felt arbitrary. So it's usually a conversation in the first few messages. I'll be like, "by the way..." I want

them to know quickly, this is what I'm about. But I think I'd rather disclose in a more personalized way.

P5 felt that disclosing their trans status in their profile placed "arbitrary" importance on one facet of their identity. Disclosing early in the one-to-one format of chat, however, allowed them to strike a balance between making sure others knew "quickly" that they were transgender, and presenting themselves in a way that felt authentic. It is important to note that P5's motivation was not about avoiding harmful reactions from others, but about avoiding the harm of an inauthentic self-presentation.

*4.3.3 Relational Goals.* We also found cases in which the potential for later harm from non-disclosure did not matter as much because participants were motivated by short-term goals. In these cases, participants might be motivated toward non-disclosure. For example, if P10 was "specifically looking for a one-night stand" on Tinder, then she removed any mention of her trans status or gender identity from her profile. She explained her rationale this way:

> Sometimes you just want to have sex, and dealing with gender-related stuff is very, very draining and also, on occasion, not conducive to having sex...so, sometimes, if you're just looking for sex, it's easiest to present yourself as a cisgender person. And then like I wouldn't ever be in a relationship or even really go on a date with that kind of subterfuge in mind, but I don't have a problem doing that if it was like "Hey, let's meet up at a bar and then, if we hit it off, go home together and have sex and then never talk again."

For P10, when pursuing the short-term goal of hooking up, disclosing at all would be a hindrance. Not only would disclosing be "very, very draining", it would be "not conducive" toward this particular goal. As goals change, motivations and disclosure practices may change along with them.

In this section, we have outlined several ways in which participants were motivated toward certain disclosure strategies. The main motivations for direct, proactive disclosure were safety and certainty. Participants were motivated to protect their physical and emotional safety, so they disclosed their trans status early on, before being physically proximate or developing an emotional bond. Participants also wished to be certain about how others reacted to their trans status, because this reaction in turn provided certainty around whether a potential relationship would be unviable. Participants appropriated multiple affordances of both the profile (e.g., gender options, open text) and chat functions of dating platforms to ensure that others had understood that they were trans, and had in fact reacted well. We further note that factors around safety, self-presentation, and relational goals did introduce tension in how people decided to disclose, sometimes motivating them toward alternative disclosure strategies or even non-disclosure.

## 5 DISCUSSION

We asked about the relationships between motivations and strategies for disclosure on dating platforms, and why people choose one strategy over another. In this paper we have described how transgender daters decide whether and how to disclose their trans status on dating platforms. We have discussed how direct, proactive disclosure meets needs relating to safety and certainty because of the physical separation and efficiency afforded by the platforms. Physical separation allowed participants to fulfill their need for safety by disclosing their trans status in the profile or chat, removing physical violence as a possible outcome of disclosure. The efficient one-to-many communication afforded by the profile also allowed participants to fulfill their need for certainty by ensuring that others had already reacted to the disclosure of trans status by the time they were interacting one-on-one. We contextualize these results with evidence that competing needs may motivate people to use other disclosure strategies instead of or alongside proactive disclosure.

Overall, these results confirm and extend previous work by showing how different disclosure strategies on dating platforms may be driven by differing motivations, underscoring the importance of understanding the *why* of disclosure alongside the *how*.

Our goal for this paper is not to give a systematic framework for disclosure decisions on dating platforms, or around trans identities. Instead, we contribute by demonstrating how a particular set of motivations (safety and certainty) were often satisfied by the strategy of direct, proactive disclosure. Understanding not only *how* sensitive disclosures happen on dating platforms, but *why* they happen in particular ways, improves researchers' and designers' ability to understand and support people's efforts to share information. In this section, we discuss several considerations that may drive people to choose particular disclosure strategies. We then describe some challenges for designers of these platforms to consider.

## 5.1 Motivations and Strategies

Our results suggest several factors that may help researchers understand the causal links between why people wish to disclose sensitive information, and how they then choose to do so, in the context of dating platforms.

*5.1.1 Safety.* Our results show how participants used proactive disclosure to avoid wasting time on anyone who reacted negatively to their trans status. Further, we show how the decision to disclose proactively and directly was motivated by the desire for safety. In order to protect their physical and emotional safety, participants disclosed their trans status before they were in physical proximity to or emotionally bonded with others. Protecting themselves in this way would not be possible if they waited to disclose until, say, the first date.

This confirms and extends prior work suggesting that disclosure on the profile is a way for people to "organically" [70] or "passively" [56] filter matches, such that people who would not be interested in dating them because of their trans status would simply pass them by. Our results suggest that safety, both physical and emotional, may be a strong motivator for direct, proactive disclosure of sensitive information on dating platforms. As we discuss in the rest of the section, the safety motivation is entwined with the certainty motivation, although the two are distinct.

We note that the desire to protect one's physical and emotional safety in these ways was often in tension with the desire to protect oneself from harassing and transphobic messages on the platform. Although proactive disclosure allowed a measure of protection from physical violence and the pain of rejection, we do not wish to imply that it was a perfect solution. Harassing and transphobic messages could clearly cause harm, as others (e.g., [46, 61]) have discussed. Many of our participants expressed a desire for platforms to provide mechanisms that would allow them to proactively disclose their trans status without exposing them to these sorts of messages, and we discuss potential avenues for doing so in section 5.2. Although we did not encounter participants who were motivated toward non-disclosure because of harassment, some participants did report leaving or refusing to use certain dating platforms for this reason. While outside the scope of this particular paper, investigating how concerns around safety motivate choices of one dating platform over another is a potential topic for future study.

We further found that some participants experienced tension between a desire for safety and a desire for authentic self-presentation. For some, proactive disclosure satisfied their motivation to be authentic and honest in their self-presentation. We describe how, for example, some participants specifically chose profile photos they felt would highlight multiple facets of their identity, or to show aspects of their "trans-ness." These findings support previous work indicating that the need for honesty [18] and self-expression [2] may motivate self-disclosure. However, these motivations may also be in tension with the desire to protect oneself from harm. For instance [4] has documented

how, for people disclosing pregnancy loss, the desire for self-expression might be in tension with the desire to avoid stigmatization from others. On SNS, this tension might lead people to use indirect disclosure techniques such as posting happy-seeming photos that, for the poster, serve as a record of a painful time [4]. Previous work on dating platforms has shown that this tension between honesty and safety may be resolved through indirect disclosure on the profile [8, 24, 38]. For some of our participants, however, authentic self-presentation meant not placing what they felt to be unnecessary emphasis on a single aspect of themselves. For example, P5 felt that expressing themselves in an honest way would mean *not* disclosing their trans status on their profile. However, they still wished to reap the safety benefits of disclosure on the platform. For P5, this tension led them to disclose directly in chat, rather than on the profile: still early, but not too early. By taking a closer look at the motivational tension people experience as they decide how to disclose sensitive information, we can begin to see why some strategies might be favored over others

*5.1.2 Certainty.* As our results show, participants wished to be certain about how others felt about their trans status. Knowing how others felt provided a measure of certainty around whether a potential relationship would be viable or not. Certainty also helped protect people from the potential physical and emotional harm of interacting further with a transphobe. These results broadly suggest that certainty may also motivate direct, proactive disclosure on dating platforms. However, we also note that the level of certainty desired may motivate variations on this disclosure strategy.

Others (e.g., [56]) have described how proactive disclosure may be motivated by the desire to know how others felt about the information being disclosed. On SNS, this desire might lead people to "test the waters" by sharing content that sparks discussion around a topic, without directly acknowledging one's personal connection to that topic [4]. Our results build on these findings by showing how the desire for not just knowledge about others' attitudes, but a high level of certainty in that knowledge, motivated people to directly disclose their trans status in a particular way. For participants who wanted a higher degree of certainty that they were not interacting with a transphobe, the absence of a negative reaction to their trans status was not enough. Rather than only using the gender options available to disclose their trans status on the profile, which might have sufficed to filter others out, participants described disclosing their trans status multiple times in multiple ways on the profile. Moreover, some also used the one-to-one chat function to confirm that others had, in fact, received and understood that they were trans, and had reacted in a desirable way. We consider this disclosure strategy as an instance of *grounding* information, motivated by the desire for a high level of certainty that both parties in the interaction were aware of the participant's trans status.

In the linguistic psychology literature, grounding a piece of information means to "establish it as part of common ground well enough for current purposes" [15, p. 221]. We found that multiple direct disclosures allowed participants to essentially ground their trans status, establishing that all parties (themselves and the potential partner) knew that they were trans, and would therefore have the relevant expectations (e.g., what they looked like, what genitals they had) as the relationship progressed. Only through multiple, direct disclosures could participants be sure that the absence of a negative reaction was not simply due to others somehow not reading or not understanding their disclosure. This strategy also had the benefit of allowing participants to make sure that others learned about their trans status on the platform, thereby ensuring there would not be, as many participants put it, a moment of "reveal" or "surprise" later on, when they would be more physically vulnerable (because of proximity) or emotionally vulnerable (because an emotional attachment had been made). In this case, we would argue that, due to the risks we described above, a high degree of certainty around this being shared information was necessary to be sufficient for "current

purposes." By using multiple strategies for revealing the information and looking carefully for what Clark would call evidence that the other person received and understood it, participants could attain the degree of safety and certainty that they wanted [15].

Participants did not necessarily divulge every detail of their gender identity. Rather, like all online daters, they assessed what would be important that others know about them and calibrated their disclosure accordingly. Although having more inclusive gender options was an important and useful feature for participants, using these gender options alone would not afford the level of certainty many participants wanted. Likewise, this level of certainty would not be possible through the hints or oblique references commonly used in indirect disclosure around other kinds of stigmatizing information such as a desire for casual sex [16, 24, 25, 38]. These data suggest that while certainty may strongly motivate direct, proactive disclosure on dating platforms, the level of certainty people want may lead them to adjust their disclosure strategies through mechanisms such as grounding.

*5.1.3 Negotiability.* Finally, we note that many, although not all, participants experienced their trans status as being integral to their understanding of themselves. Thus, disclosing their trans status on dating platforms was motivated, at least in part, by the desire to be accepted and desired as they are. Without that acceptance, the relationship would simply not be viable or desirable. Prior work (e.g., [16, 24]) has shown that maintaining ambiguity around sensitive information in the profile is a useful way to protect oneself from stigmatization while tensions around relational goals and trust are still being negotiated. For many of our participants, however, maintaining ambiguity or uncertainty around their trans status was not desirable because there was simply nothing to negotiate: either accept me for who I am, or I'm not going to talk to you. Taken together with [38], these results suggest that how negotiable the information being disclosed is may be another important consideration for disclosure decision-making.

## 5.2 Challenges for Design

Our findings suggest important challenges for designers to consider. We underscore that our participants had concerns that were specific to disclosing a particular piece of information: their trans status. As such, we echo [1]'s call for user-centered design processes that support transgender technology users and combats their marginalization, and urge designers to consider the specificity of disclosure as they consider design decisions around issues such as privacy and self-presentation. We urge designers to consider the ways that technologies may not be one-size-fits-all, and how different kinds of personal information may motivate different disclosure strategies, and thus necessitate different privacy solutions.

Our participants expressed concern over being targeted for harassment on the platforms they used. One way to address these concerns would be to give dating platform users more fine-grained controls over who can access their profile. Dating platform designers may assume that users want to be seen by and suggested to the highest possible number of others who might be interested, to maximize the probability of a match and subsequent relationship. For our participants, this assumption may be usefully challenged. For instance, some of our participants might wish to not be seen by cis people, or filter out only cis men, but allow trans men to see their profile. Having these sorts of options may lessen the risk of wasting time on incompatible matches, as well as lessen the risk of being the targets of harmful messages. One example of a similar feature already in place is OkCupid's option for people to not see or be seen by straight people. This feature allows people to control the audience for their profiles regardless of their "Looking For" settings [52]. For instance, a bisexual man may opt to be seen by non-straight men and non-straight women, even if straight women would theoretically fall under his "Looking For" settings. This affords users more

control over who sees their profiles based on factors beyond gender and age, which might not be the most relevant factors for some people. By giving people more control over not only who they can see, but who can see them, designers can better support users' efforts to protect their safety and privacy on dating platforms.

People also described putting forth considerable effort in order to effectively ground information about their trans status, often using multiple methods to ensure that others were aware of this information, and that the participant knew the other person was aware. We urge platform designers to more deeply understand users' own definitions of what is important for others to know about them, and support their efforts to communicate that information to others. For example, many online daters use their open profile text to communicate boundaries (e.g., "Don't message me if you don't like cats"). A more formalized mechanism for limiting interaction until one can ensure that information has been received might help mitigate some of the burden of disclosure. One such model may be found in the "pending member questions" feature of Facebook groups. In this feature, group admins may write free-form questions that will be presented to anyone requesting to join the group. Admins can then view the responses to those questions in their pending member queue, and make decisions about whom to allow or exclude based on those responses [23]. These questions represent an opportunity for admins to ensure that prospective group members have read and understood the group rules. Affording platform users a similar level of certainty that others understand important information, and control over who may access their profile, may prove beneficial. For example, a trans user could request to interact only with others who have explicitly indicated understanding and acceptance of their trans status. More generally, we encourage designers to consider the labor and risk involved in conveying sensitive information about the self to others, think holistically about what that information might include, and above all center users in these discussions.

## 6 FUTURE WORK

Our data highlight important areas for future study. First, while our participants touched on what factors influenced their selection of certain platforms over others, this was not the primary focus of this paper. Our findings, taken together with work by Haimson [33] and DeVito et al. [19], which both discuss how considerations around audiences, affordances, and goals affect SNS selection for LGBTQ+ individuals, suggest that future work should consider more specifically what factors influence the selection of dating platforms for non-cisgender and non-heterosexual users. Second, although we recognize the importance of an intersectional lens to understanding the experiences of people managing a stigmatized identity, and we conducted our data collection and analysis with an eye toward key dimensions of diversity in our sample, we still lack a nuanced understanding of how people's behavior around disclosure may differ depending on factors such as rurality, race, and sex assigned at birth. Further research should consider a more in-depth comparison of how disclosure processes on dating platforms function for different groups. Finally, as we note in our results and discussion sections, this study represents a step toward a more complete understanding of the differing motivations and disclosure strategies dating platform users might experience and employ. Future work may consider taking a more comprehensive investigation of disclosure decision-making and processes on dating platforms.

## 7 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we investigate the important role of proactive disclosure on dating platform for transgender daters. Drawing on interviews with self-identified transgender and nonbinary people in the United States who use dating platforms, we make several contributions to CSCW and social computing. Our first contribution is a clearer understanding of decision factors informing direct, proactive disclosures of trans status: certainty and safety. Second, we show how the platform

factors of physical separation and efficient one-to-many communication both motivate and enable proactive disclosure to be an effective strategy. We further suggest several dimensions along which disclosure decisions might be considered and implications for future research and systems. Our contributions provide guidance for researchers and designers in further efforts to understand and support transgender individuals in forming new social ties, and lay the groundwork for future in-depth work on sensitive information disclosures in an increasingly complex platform space.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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