Clothes are more than a hassle for people with disabilities

Generated from News Bureau release: “Apparel Causes Additional Barriers for People Living with Disabilities.”

For millions of Americans with disabilities and their families, a lack of clothing options creates problems that go far beyond fit, say researchers.

“While it may be an afterthought for some, clothing and appearance are not trivial,” says Allison Kabel, assistant professor of health sciences at the University of Missouri. “What we wear matters in how we participate in our communities.

“Job interviews, court appearances, team sports, and formal events are just a few examples of times when standards for appropriate dress exist. For people with disabilities, the lack of adaptive clothing is not just a burden, it is a barrier for community participation.”

Kabel and Kerri McBee-Black, instructor of textile and apparel management, analyzed interviews from a focus group on the topic of clothing and how clothing affected their lives. They say the barriers fall into three basic categories: mechanical and functional, cultural, and sensory sensitivity.

The mechanical aspects of getting dressed were found to be a significant challenge for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Zippers, buttons, shoe laces, and fabric texture often present challenges for those who live independently.
Others reported problems when trying to find clothes that fit. In one example, a child with Down syndrome had to have her clothes attached with safety pins to prevent them from falling off, due to a mismatch between her body proportions and current clothing industry sizing.

Cultural issues present other obstacles for caregivers for people with disabilities. A female caregiver for a male stroke victim from South Asia struggled to care for him when he lost his ability to put on or take off his own shoes or socks due to nerve damage. This was due to cultural prohibitions around the touching of feet.

Focus group participants also identified challenges from trying to dress children of all ages with sensory sensitivities, particularly those with disorders along the autism spectrum.

“Participants of the focus group had no shortage of examples to highlight apparel-related barriers in their day-to-day lives,” Kabel says. “In many cases, the only options are custom-made clothing, which is not accessible due to high costs. Affordable clothes that can be mass produced are necessary to address specific apparel-related barriers identified in our research.”

The study recently was published in *Disability and Rehabilitation*. Jessica Dimka, research fellow at the University of Michigan, also contributed to the study.

Kabel’s future research will be focused on the potential for universally designed apparel and adaptive clothing.
MU Professor: people responding in many ways to Orlando night club shooting

JUNE 14, 2016 BY MIKE LEAR

People are responding in many different ways, trying to process the killing of 49 victims in an Orlando LGBT night club.

**Brian Houston is the director of the Disaster and Community Crisis Center at the University of Missouri.** He said many people might feel worried that a mass shooting like that in Orlando could happen where they live. Many likely feel angry, especially at those they blame.

“At the shooter, anger maybe at politicians or political leaders that are doing things, or not doing things that people think are related to allowing this to happen,” said Houston.

Others might dismiss the incident as not affecting them.

“That may be for a lot of different reasons. 'I'm not part of the LGBTQ community like in this case, or I don’t go to night clubs, or I don't live in a major city, or that could happen in Florida but not Missouri.' It’s kind of … that's a self-defense mechanism and a psychological defense mechanism,” said Houston. “Those justifications are pretty shallow. We’re seeing that these events are happening to all sorts of communities in all sorts of different places, so the rationalizations we make about why it won’t happen to us are really pretty shallow because of course it could happen to any of us at any time, the way these things are going on now.”
Children are likely to have a particularly difficult time dealing with the shooting and other similar events. Houston said it’s important to talk with them about it.

“It’s not an easy subject to talk about and that’s why, I think, a lot of us as parents are hesitant to really engage, but not talking about it always makes it worse. Makes kids think that it’s something that’s so scary and frightening that parents won’t even talk about it,” said Houston. “I think that we, as parents, need to engage with our kids when they raise the issue and maybe find ways to raise the issue as well, to see if there’s something they want to talk about.”

Houston said the thing that worries him the most about mass shootings and other tragedies is how long society will talk about them.

“The fact that the amount of time that we spending arguing and talking about them seems to get shorter and shorter after every event because they’re happening so frequently, and our attention so quickly moves to other things,” said Houston.

**Students clash with university over marijuana t-shirts**

COLUMBIA, Mo. — A pro-marijuana group is considering legal action against the University of Missouri after administrators wouldn't let a student group print t-shirts featuring marijuana.

The MU chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) submitted designs last fall for a new t-shirt design. Like previous NORML shirts, the design
incorporated a marijuana leaf into campus symbols such as the tiger pawprint. But the university rejected this design, citing policy which states "No use of the university's name or logo may be approved in connection with promotion of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs." MU policy requires any student organization seeking to use university imagery to go through the university's Licensing and Trademark Office.

NORML State Coordinator Dan Viets said MU's actions are a direct violation of the First Amendment. He said MU's NORML chapter has been around for decades, and he is unaware of any previous issues with the group's t-shirts. Since MU is a public university and as such, a government entity, Viets said the university cannot discriminate against any speech.

"The same symbols, trademarked or not, that the university claims to own, if they allow other student organizations to use them, then they must allow the MU NORML chapter to use them," he said.

Viets said NORML has enlisted the help of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, or FIRE. He said FIRE in January won a court case against Iowa State University identical to the current situation involving MU. Viets said ISU's NORML chapter sued after the university wouldn't let members wear t-shirts incorporating marijuana into university symbols, and a federal judge sided with the students. More importantly, Viets said the U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the judge's decision. Missouri is also in the 8th Circuit.

University officials declined to discuss the issue on camera. Instead, they released a one-sentence statement reading, "The University of Missouri has received the correspondence from FIRE, and we are carefully reviewing the issues raised in the letter."

The Washington Post

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

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This hacker fights ISIS by spamming its Twitter accounts with porn

A member of the hacking clan "Anonymous" has compromised hundreds Twitter accounts of Islamic State supporters and flooded them with pornography
It started years ago, when at age 16 he bought his first computer, took it home and disassembled it. When he put the machine back together and it refused to run, a local big-box store tech guru taught the teen who would eventually take the alias "Wauchula Ghost" how to hack.

Now he's exercising those demons on the Islamic State.

For the past two months, and with increased fervor after an ISIS supporter attacked an Orlando gay night club over the weekend, Wauchula Ghost, a member of the hacking clan "Anonymous," has compromised hundreds Twitter accounts of Islamic State supporters and flooded them with pornography.

"Daesh doesn't like porn," Ghost said in a phone interview, referring to the Islamic State in its Arabic transliteration. He declined to give his real name. "They don't like women in general. We just started using it to poke fun at them and diminish their presence online."

ISIS has used the Internet to spread its message and find recruits. FBI Director James Comey said Monday he was "highly confident" shooter Omar Mateen, 29, was radicalized "at least in some part through the Internet."

Instead of messages supporting the self-described caliphate or encouraging violence, some 160 accounts hacked by the Ghost have tweeted photos of nude women. Some users' avatars now read "I [heart] porn."

The content is a jab at the group's interpretation of Muslim religious customs that require piety and chastity. By tweeting sexual content rather than traditional battle cries against the West, the Ghost said he wants to undermine the voices of ISIS recruiters and chase them off popular social networks.

"The government really hasn't been doing enough especially on social media," he said. "You see the beheading images everywhere. Kids get online and shouldn't see these images."

But should they see porn?

That's a harder question, one that toes the line between "hactivism" – activism by hacking – and plain, old internet trolling.

Shouting down web-based terrorist recruiting cells, that's a good thing, said Ryan Calo, professor of law at the University of Washington and co-director of the Tech Policy Lab.
Porn on Twitter, maybe not such a good thing, he said. It could be offensive to religious Muslims (or Christians or Jews), the overwhelming majority of whom are not terrorists and want nothing to do with sexually explicit images.

"A hactivist is really someone trying to advance a civil agenda by using their technological tools," Calo said. "To me, it's about targeting appropriately and making sure you're targeting the real enemy rather than Muslim people or the vulnerable."

"If sending this message could end up in the wrong hands, children or nonconsenting adults, that could be a problem," said Sandy Davidson, a professor of communication law at the University of Missouri. "And images present their own problems because once an image is seared in your mind, then you can't unsee it."

Under U.S. law, social media platforms are responsible for policing content users post. Though the government could ask sites like Twitter or Facebook to remove certain material, they cannot be held liable for content posted on their sites and can remove content for any reason whatsoever.

So while the government might have to file paperwork and jump through legal hoops to shut down an extremist's Twitter account, Twitter itself can do so whenever it wants. Since 2015, Twitter has suspended more than 125,000 accounts for threatening or promoting terrorist acts primarily related to ISIS, actions lawmakers have applauded.

"We condemn the use of Twitter to promote terrorism and the Twitter Rules make it clear that this type of behavior, or any violent threat, is not permitted on our service," the company said in a statement.

As the Ghost was mining for accounts Sunday night, he added them to a public list titled, "Jacked accounts." Twitter then suspended them until the list was empty by midday.

He says he plans to continue hijacking ISIS accounts in the future, almost as a kind of Twitter crime fighter, harassing bad guys outside the confines of the law.

"I think we're there to serve a purpose, at least I know I am," he said. "My goal waking up in the morning and see messages from Daesh, telling me they're going to kill me or cut my head off. The madder they get, the happier I get."
To Reassure Nervous Students, Colleges Lean on LGBT Centers

No MU Mention

The mass shooting early Sunday at an Orlando nightclub that left 49 people and the gunman dead has heightened fears of anti-gay discrimination and persecution, especially among the college-aged. While officials were still investigating the shooter’s motives on Tuesday, the effects of the massacre were acute among college students — and not just because several of the victims were enrolled in local institutions.

Young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people are often particularly vulnerable and seeking a supportive community, said Shane L. Windmeyer, executive director of Campus Pride, an organization that promotes the creation of safe environments for LGBT students on college campuses. That often sends them to bars like Pulse, the Orlando club, where gay people are welcomed and their identities are celebrated.

And it makes the shooting all the more painful for them, said D.A. Dirks, co-chair of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals. "This is a very personal tragedy," Dirks said. "To go into a space that should have been safe for folks to celebrate, to gather, to connect — that sense of violation is quite profound."

As acceptance and awareness of LGBT issues have grown in recent years, campuses have sought to institutionalize that welcoming environment, through, among other things, centers that are dedicated exclusively to gay students, faculty, and staff members.
There are about 250 LGBT resource centers on campuses across the country, Mr. Windmeyer said. Such institutional support, he said, is key to making students feel welcome. "We need to have higher expectations for higher learning, and we need to ask them to take responsibility by creating institutional support," he said. "That’s where an LGBT center comes into its importance on campus."

The centers do more than provide a meeting place for gay students. They can provide guidance geared toward LGBT students, who are at higher risk of depression, alcohol abuse, and suicide.

And when tragedy strikes, the centers spring into action. Centers at campuses nationwide hosted vigils and other events on Monday to help gay people cope with the news. At the University of Georgia, for example, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Resource Center hosted a safe space on Monday for people to "be in community and process together."

Staff members at the centers can set a positive example in more than just times of crisis, Dirks said. "Young LGBTQ people need to be able to see that there are staff, faculty, or alumni who have preceded them, who have succeeded in graduating and becoming fully actualized adults."

‘There Was No Support’

Many campuses don’t have dedicated LGBT centers. That’s often because they lack the resources to fund one, Mr. Windmeyer said. In fact, it often takes a crisis to build enough will to create an LGBT center — "the typical higher-ed way of dealing with things," he said.

At Georgetown University, for instance, students protested the institution’s response nine years ago to anti-gay incidents, which helped spur the creation of its LGBTQ Resource Center.

When campuses don’t have centers, responsibilities often fall on other staff members, Mr. Windmeyer said. "We ask LGBT students to do their own programs," he said. "We ask them to run their own safe-zone programs for safety and to feel included. We ask them to basically put the responsibility for their safety on their own backs."
"They shouldn’t be responsible for their own safety," he said.

Dirks found a sense of community at a gay bar at age 19: "There was no visibility on my campus. There was no support on my campus. To go to a bar, where queer people of all stripes and identities and expressions were around, was tremendously eye-opening and liberating in many ways."

"Feeling that safety and feeling that community in that space was really something I didn’t have in my college campus because there was no center and because it was almost 30 years ago, and there was not a lot of visibility for queerness," Dirks said.

In the absence of such centers, bars for LGBT people still serve as key fixtures in college students’ lives. Or in addition to them. Even when campuses offer safe spaces and resource centers, students tend to gravitate to off-campus destinations, away from the rigidity of an academic setting.

One of those places is the Back Door, a nightclub in Bloomington, Ind. LGBT students from Indiana University at Bloomington are visible at the club as patrons and employees, said Sara A. Gardner, who co-owns the club. In the aftermath of the Orlando shooting, the Back Door shared news of a vigil for the town on its Facebook page, Ms. Gardner said.

"We are the only queer bar in town," she said. "We do provide a safe space."