Does Sexual Identity Development Matter for HIV Prevention with Sexual Minority Youth?

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November 6, 2007

Sexual Identity Development (SID) in Sexual Minority Youth

- **Developmental milestones**
  - Timing/sequence/context
    - 1st same-sex attraction
    - 1st same-sex sexual contact
    - 1st self-label
    - 1st disclosure

- **Attitudes, stress, perceptions**
  - Gay-related stressful life events
  - Involvement & connection w/LBGT community
  - Attitudes toward LBGT people, homosexuality

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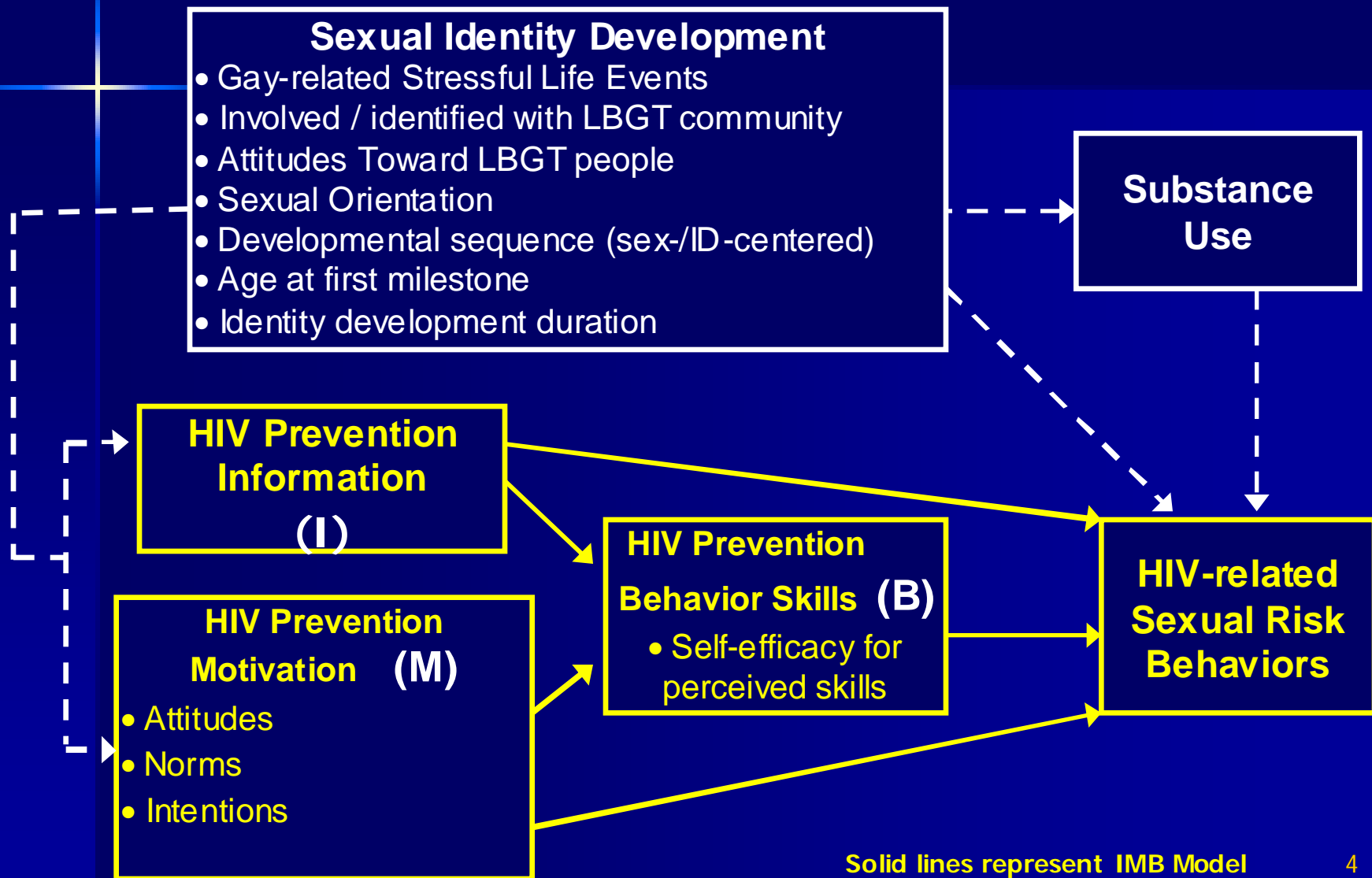# Sexual Identity Development (SID) in Sexual Minority Youth

- **We know**
  - Timing/sequence/context of milestones associated with
    - Victimization experiences
    - Mental health outcomes

  - LBGT-related attitudes & experiences associated with
    - Substance use
    - Mental health outcomes

- **We need to know more**
  - Impact of sexual identity development characteristics & experiences on the SRB of YMSM

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Theoretical Framework

Sexual Identity Development
- Gay-related Stressful Life Events
- Involved / identified with LBGT community
- Attitudes Toward LBGT people
- Sexual Orientation
- Developmental sequence (sex-/ID-centered)
- Age at first milestone
- Identity development duration

Substance Use

HIV Prevention Information (I)

HIV Prevention Motivation (M)
- Attitudes
- Norms
- Intentions

HIV Prevention Behavior Skills (B)
- Self-efficacy for perceived skills

HIV-related Sexual Risk Behaviors

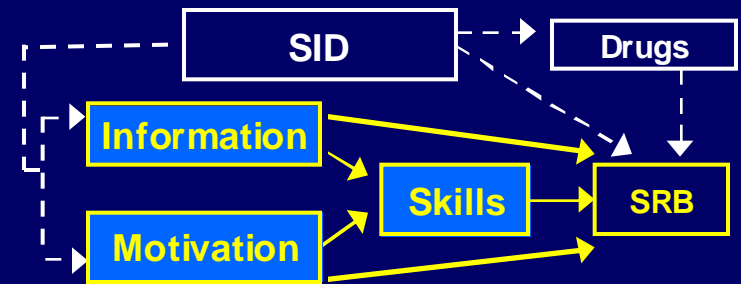**Solid lines represent IMB Model**

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Key Research Question

To what extent does the extended model predict HIV-related sexual risk for sexual minority males compared to the original IMB model?

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METHODS

Measures: IMB

■ **Information**
  - <u>AIDS Information Heuristics</u> subscale *(9 Likert-type items; α= 0.75)*
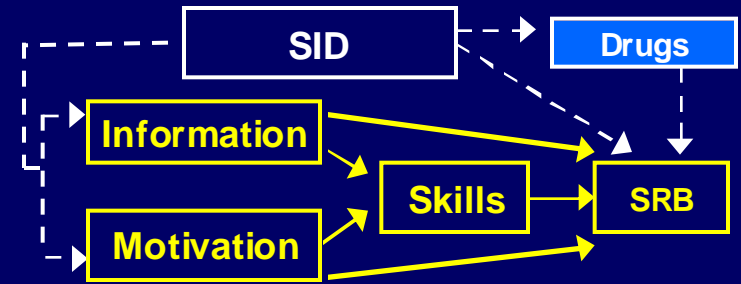
■ Motivation
  - <u>Attitudes</u> *(3 Likert-type items; α=.69)*
  - <u>Friend Norms</u> *(3 Likert-type items; α =.73)*
  - <u>Partner Norms</u> *(3 Likert-type items; α =.76)*
  - <u>Intentions</u> *(3 Likert-type items; α=.76)*
  - <u>Perceived vulnerability</u> *(3 Likert-type items; α=.54)*

■ **Skills Self-Efficacy**
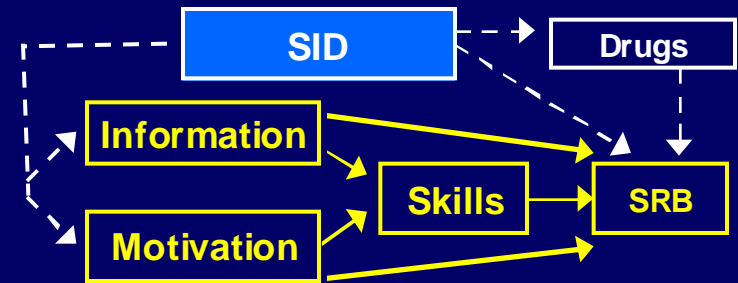 - <u>Condom Use Self-effiacy</u> *(3 Likert-type items; α = .83)*
  - <u>Safer-sex Negotiation Self-efficacy</u> *(5 Likert-type items; α=.72)*

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Measures: Substance Use

- ## Ever used substance
  - *10 yes/no items*
- ## Fx of substance use
  - *10 Likert-type items*

- ## Substances
  - Tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, ecstasy, methamphetamines, inhalants, stimulants, cocaine, heroin, steroids

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Key Measures: SID

- ## SID Milestones
  - 11 items about 6 milestone events *(age, context)*

- ## Sexual Orientation
  - 2 7-point Likert-type items *($\alpha = .93$)*

- ## Attitudes Toward LBGT people
  - 5 Likert-type items *($\alpha = .72$)*

- ## Gay-Related Stressful Life Events
  - 12 yes/no items *($\alpha = .80$)*

- ## Involvement/Connection with LBGT Community
  - 8 Likert-type items *($\alpha = .77$)*

Key Measures: SRB

SID

Drugs

Information

Skills

SRB

Motivation
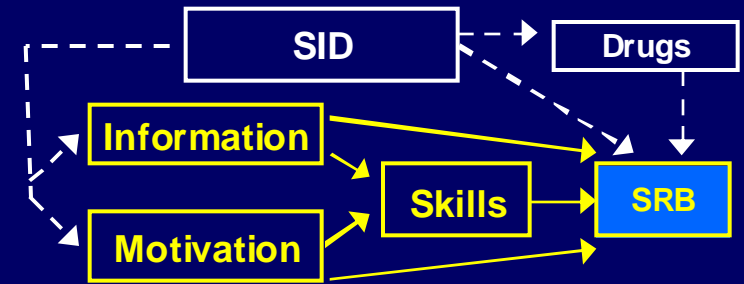
- ■ **Primary SRB Scale**
  - ● Ever had vaginal/anal sex (lifetime)
  - ● Had vaginal/anal sex (last 2 mo.)
  - ● Frequency of condom use for vaginal sex (last 2 mo.)
  - ● Frequency of condom use for anal sex (last 2 mo.)
  - ● Frequency of unprotected sex (last partner)

- ■ **Secondary SRB Scale**
  - ● Sex under influence (last 2 mo.)
  - ● Used drugs to improve sex (last 2 mo)
  - ● Freq of discuss safer sex w/vaginal partner (last 2 mo.)
  - ● Freq of discuss safer sex w/anal partner (last 2 mo.)
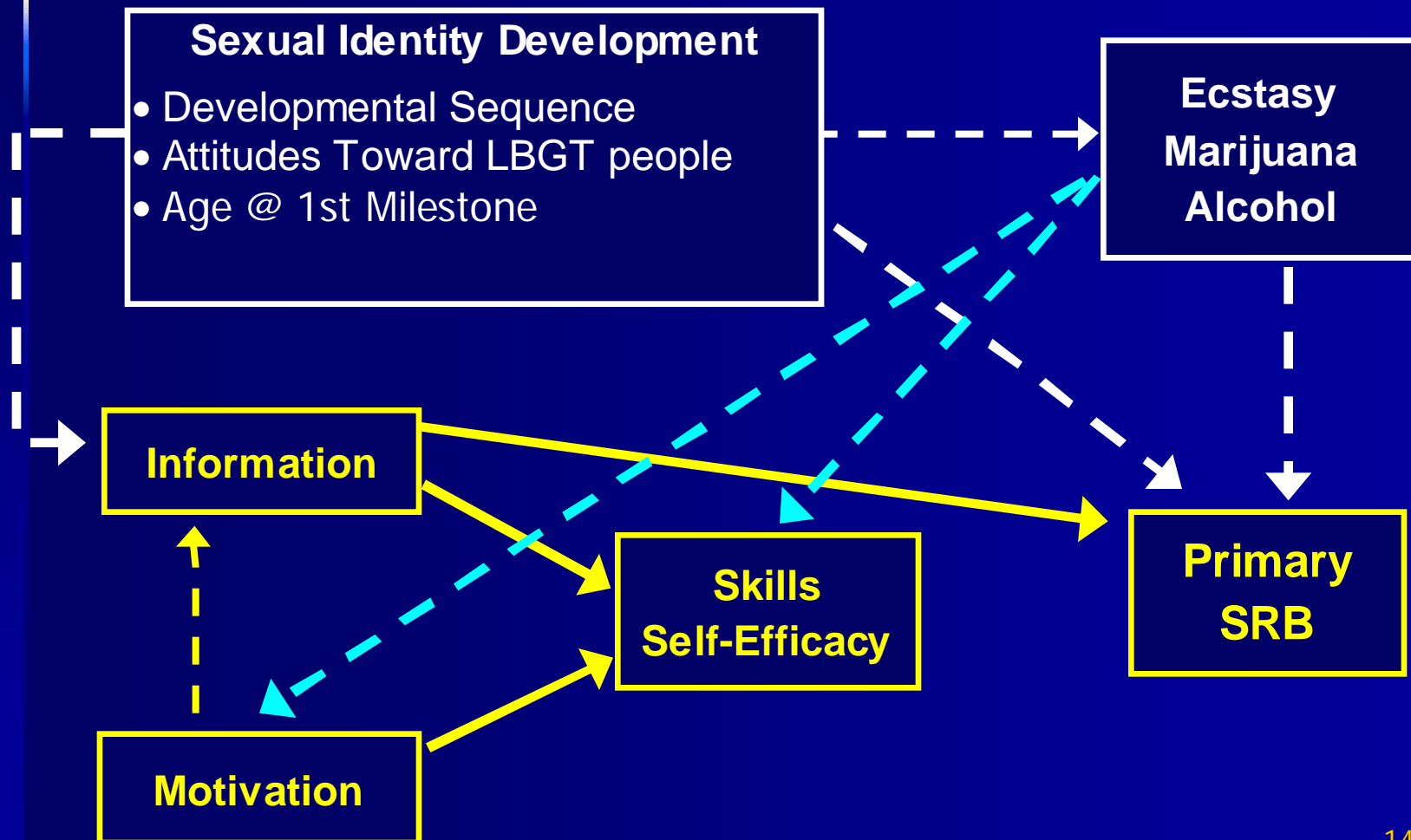
Research Setting & Data Collection Procedures

- LBGT Community Center in Detroit
  - Youth drop-in social program on Friday & Saturday nights
  - Predominantly African American & Caucasian youth
- Self-administered survey
  - Approximately 25 minutes to complete
  - $10 participant remuneration

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Sample

CHARACTERISTICS	n	%
RACE / ETHNICITY		
African American	105	67.31
Caucasian	28	17.95
Non-African American youth of color	23	14.74
GENDER IDENTITY		
Male	144	92.31
Transgender	12	7.69
SEXUAL IDENTITY		
Gay	112	71.79
Bisexual	30	19.23
Other	14	8.97

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RESULTS

Path Analysis Results for Primary Sexual Risk

Sexual Identity Development

- Developmental Sequence
- Attitudes Toward LBGT people
- Age @ 1st Milestone

Ecstasy Marijuana Alcohol

Information

Skills Self-Efficacy

Primary SRB

Motivation

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Path Analysis Results for Secondary Sexual Risk

Sexual Identity Development

- Developmental Sequence
- Attitudes Toward LBGT people
- Sexual Orientation
- Age @ 1st Milestone

Ecstasy Marijuana Alcohol

Information

Skills Self-Efficacy

Secondary SRB

Motivation

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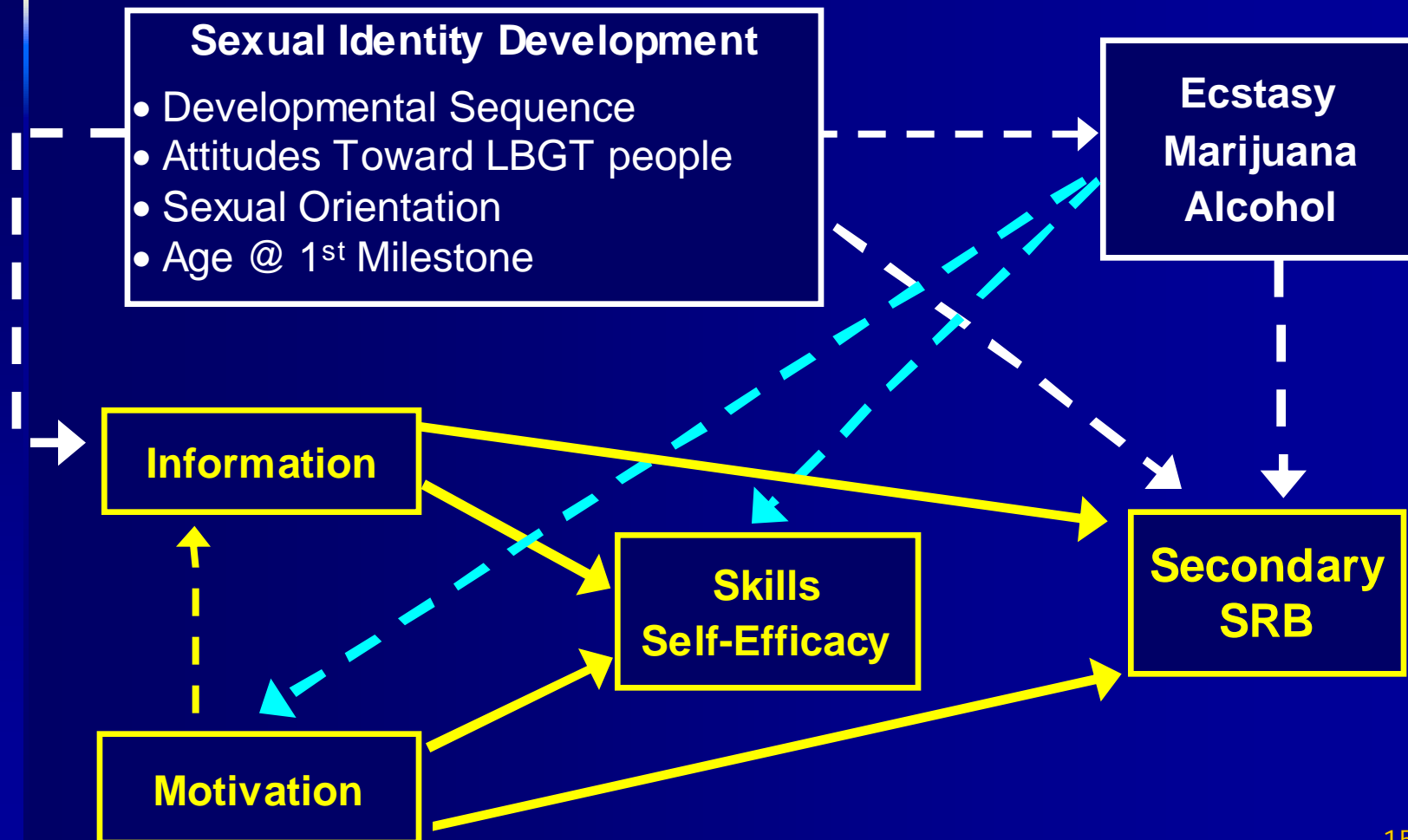
Comparison of Fit of Original IMB & Extended IMB Models

FIT CRITERIA	IMB MODEL		EXTENDED MODEL	
	Primary SRB	Secondary SRB	Primary SRB	Secondary SRB
R^2	.13	.08	**.27**	**.38**
χ^2 (df)	3.70 (2; p=.16)	3.15 (2; p=.21)	**34.63 (30; p=.26)**	**45.23 (37; p=.17)**
RMSEA	.07 (.00 - .19)	.06 (.00 - .18)	**.03 (.00 - .07)**	**.04 (.00 - .07)**
AGFI	**.94**	**.95**	.92	.91
PGFI	.20	.20	**.52**	**.53**
TLI	.94	.96	**.97**	**.95**

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Discussion

- Extended model compared to original IMB model
  - More predictive of SRB
  - Applicability of model for racial/ethnic subgroups
  - Potential to improve model by adding
    - Other SID variables
    - Ethnic identity component

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Discussion

- **Exploration of SID variables**

  - Represented in extended model
    - Attitudes
    - Orientation
    - Developmental sequence
    - Age at first milestone

  - Not included
    - Gay-related stressful life events
    - Involve/Identify with LBGT community
    - Developmental duration

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Limitations

- Cross-sectional data
  - Limitations on causality & unstructured recall
- Sampling
  - External validity
  - Self-selection bias; internal validity
- Self-report data
  - Memory problems; social desirability bias
- Adapting theoretical models
  - Adapted for sexual minority youth (not YOC)

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Implications

- Research
  - Utility of extended model for racial/ethnic subgroups & transgender youth
  - Additional SID constructs

- SID intervention targets for HIV prevention
  - Positive attitudes toward LBGT
  - Same- & opposite-sex safer behaviors
  - Reaching youth prior to first same-sex contact

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Acknowledgements

- **Funding**
  - National Institute of Mental Health (F31MH077529)
  - Comorbidity & Addictions Center, Washington University in St. Louis

- **Mentors**
  - Wendy Auslander, Ph.D.
    - George Warren Brown School of Social Work
  - David Pollio, Ph.D.
    - George Warren Brown School of Social Work
  - Margaret Rosario, Ph.D
    - City University of New York

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