ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Death and Reactions to Acts of Intolerance
AUTHOR(S):	Haley, Mackenzie
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ABSTRACT: This research examines the effects of terror management theory (TMT) and individual reactions to scenarios of acts of intolerance in the form of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) hate crimes, occurring nationally vs. foreign. The mortality salience hypothesis within TMT suggests that when an individual is confronted with thoughts of their own death their need to either invest in or defend their own worldview will increase. Previous research has focused on how differing political worldviews affect how mortality salience is handled and it has been concluded that those with a more conservative worldview will be more likely to defend their worldview more vigorously in the form of hostility or aggression when confronted with mortality salience. Upholding a liberal worldview has been shown to be much less predictable in terms of defense of one's worldview. With the assumption that liberals hold a worldview which emphasizes the core value of tolerance, I sought to investigate how liberals would react to instances of intolerance in their own culture versus worldwide with the expectation that those with a liberal ideology would react most strongly to such instances, especially when the cause is within one's own nation. Each participant was either primed with mortality salience (MS) or a control, followed by a short delay, before proceeding to rate their reactions to 12 scenarios of hate crimes according to how distressing the act was, the severity of the act, and the recommended severity of punishment to the perpetrator. Results will be discussed and directions for future research are offered.