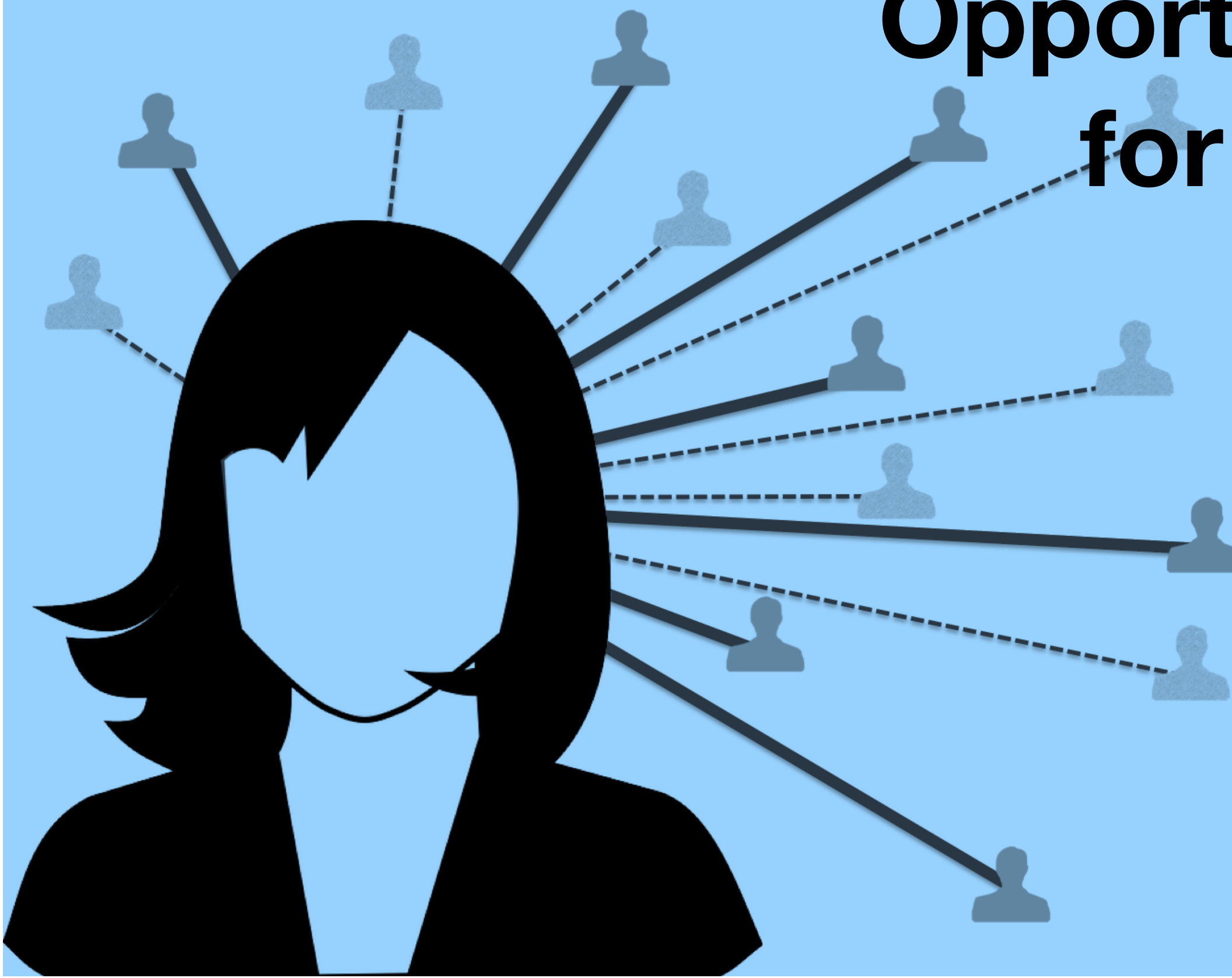


Opportunities and Challenges for Transgender People in Digital Spaces

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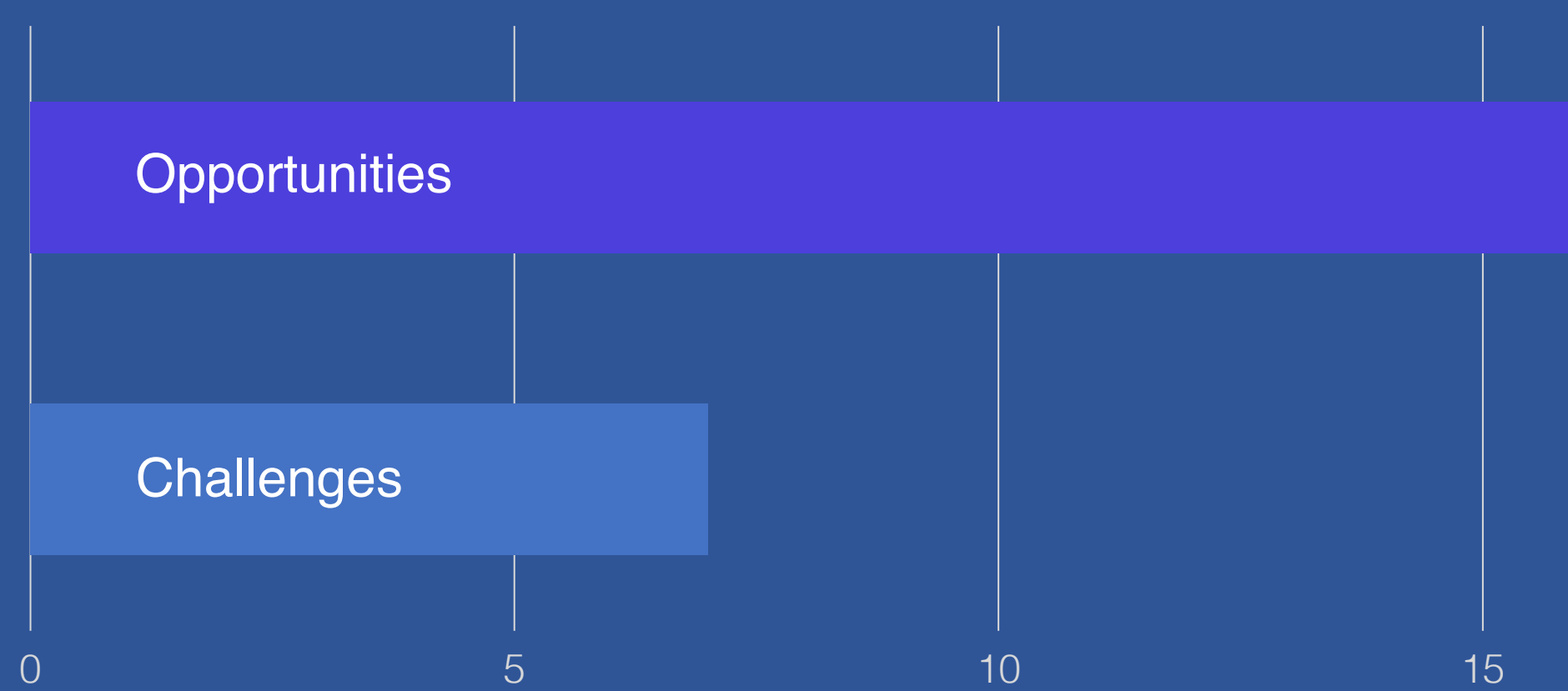


Transgender

“People who move away from the gender they were assigned at birth, people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender.” Stryker, 2009 [10]

Previous Literature

on trans people, digital spaces



Understanding the challenges inherent in digital spaces for trans people, and addressing this gap in the literature, can lead to more inclusive design for digital spaces.

Inclusive design involves:

- Combatting online harassment.
- Supporting multiple identities and pseudonyms.

Researchers can:

- Identify how digital spaces currently, and can in the future, serve vulnerable populations rather than further marginalizing them.
- Help designers of online spaces to understand how to design to embrace, rather than constrain, trans people and others with changing or faceted identities.

Opportunities

Access to information and support

- In ways not possible pre-Internet
- Allows people to more easily navigate transitions
- Resources around trans healthcare, legal support, coming out, and more
- Support communities [2,4,7,12]

Arenas for identity exploration

- Appearance, name, and gender presentation often flexible attributes online
- Identity exploration possible without many of the barriers present in physical world [4,11]

Political organization

- Trans activism more effective online
- Internet reduces barriers to mobilization
- Allows tools and organizing strategies [9]

Challenges

Online harassment

- Trans people especially vulnerable to online harassment
- Including but not limited to: threats, hate speech, offensive or ignorant reactions to trans identity disclosure
- No existing research in this area [3]

Expectation of singular identity

- Many online spaces expect singular, static identity
- Often makes presenting trans identity difficult [5]

Self-presentation difficulties

- Much has been done to address self-presentation difficulties, such as Facebook gender options
- Yet binary gender categories are still programmed into Facebook and other sites [1]

Disclosure difficulties

- Disclosing trans identity on social media is challenging
- Often must come out to everyone at once, or create multiple accounts to manage trans identity disclosure
- Many turn to sites that allow multiple and pseudonymous identities, to engage in identity exploration and to find support and resources [5,6,8]

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