Early gay midlife has the potential to be a very informative life stage for social research given its being a time of significant change in psychosocial identity. Dr. Hajek presents findings from a study that addresses the profound social challenges that often accompany this delicate age transition. His study draws upon face-to-face interview data, a thematic analysis methodology, and a communication theory of identity framework, to explore themes related to gay midlife identity as it emerged through midlife men’s narratives of past intergenerational conversations with younger gay men in which age identity was salient. Open and axial coding revealed three overarching experiential themes and accompanying identity dimensions that will be presented.

Dr. Christopher Hajek received his B.A. in Communication from Loyola University of Chicago, and his M.A. in Communication from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He received his Ph.D. in Communication from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research is grounded in intercultural and intergroup communication in a variety of social contexts. This focus was sparked by his academic and professional experiences in Italy and Hawaii, and his Peace Corps teaching experience in Rwanda immediately prior to that country’s genocide. Dr. Hajek’s current research concerns health and social disparities for gay men, taking into account age identity and intergenerational communication, and their roles in gay men’s well-being. His past intergroup and intercultural communication research has spanned topics ranging from gay—heterosexual interactions, to patient—physician encounters, to attitudes toward police officers across multiple world cultures.