



Allyship as a Tool to End LGBTQ Youth Suicide

AFSP - Stronger Communities

03.07.23



This presentation will focus on active LGBTQ allyship and its impact on LGBTQ youth mental health and suicidality. Highlighting and putting into context the findings of The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, this session will focus on the implications of serving the LGBTQ youth community. The conversation will end with a discussion of practical applications that can be used by all participants to end LGBTQ youth suicide.

Participants will be able to:

- Identify unique mental health challenges facing LGBTQ young people**
- Utilize current data to understand suicide risk and protective factors for LGBTQ young people**
- Devise strategies for creating a safer and more supportive environment for LGBTQ young people in their own community**

The Trevor Project is the world's largest suicide prevention and mental health organization for LGBTQ young people.

Our mission is to end LGBTQ youth suicide — and it is urgent.



Trevor Programs



TrevorLifeline

The only nationwide, 24/7 crisis and suicide prevention lifeline offering free and confidential counseling for LGBTQ youth, available at **1.866.488.7386**.



TrevorChat

A free, confidential and secure instant messaging service that provides live help for LGBTQ youth by trained volunteers. **Visit [TheTrevorProject.org/Help](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/help)**.



TrevorText

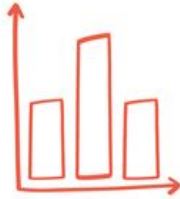
A free, confidential, secure service for LGBTQ youth to text a trained Trevor counselor for support and crisis intervention. **Text “START” to 678-678**.



TrevorSpace

World's largest safe space social networking site for LGBTQ youth. **[TrevorSpace.org](https://www.trevorspace.org)**

Trevor Programs



Research

Regular evaluations & surveys ensure our services reduce risk of suicide & help us learn of the mental health issues affecting LGBTQ youth



Advocacy

We work at the local, state, and federal levels to advocate for legislation that protects the rights of LGBTQ people



Education

We educate adults who interact with youth on LGBTQ competent suicide prevention, risk detection, and response

LGBTQ Youth Suicide

2nd

Leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24

45%

Seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year - 4x more likely than their peers

73%

Reported that they had experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity

1.8 M

LGBTQ youth seriously consider suicide each year

60%

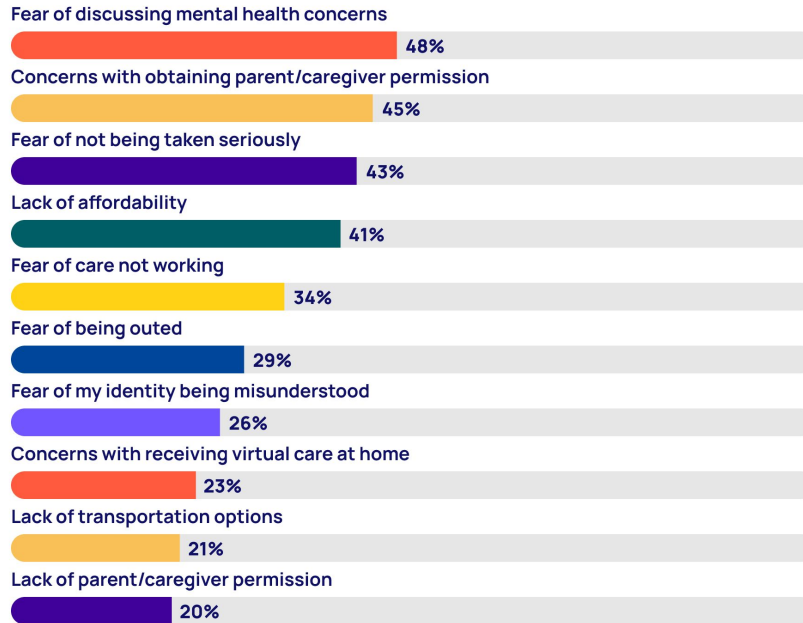
Reported wanting counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to receive it in the past year

40%

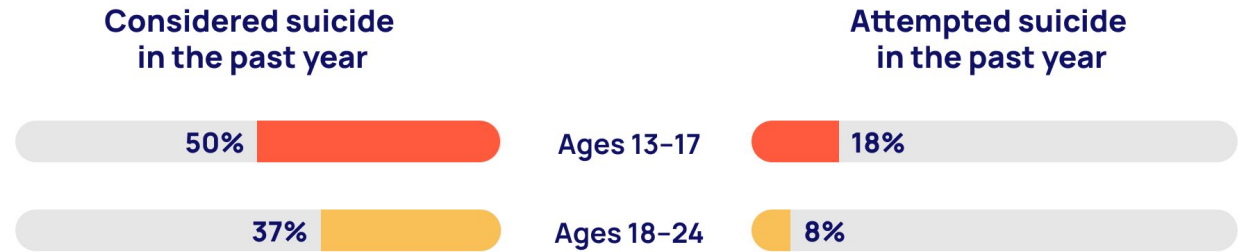
Lower risk of suicide when LGBTQ Youth have one accepting adult in their live



LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care but were unable to get it cited the following top ten reasons



45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.



Considered suicide in the past year



Cisgender
boy/man



Cisgender
girl/woman



Transgender
boy/man



Transgender
girl/woman



Nonbinary/
genderqueer



Questioning

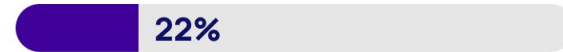
Attempted suicide in the past year



Cisgender
boy/man



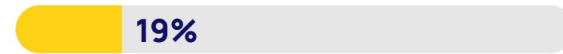
Cisgender
girl/woman



Transgender
boy/man



Transgender
girl/woman

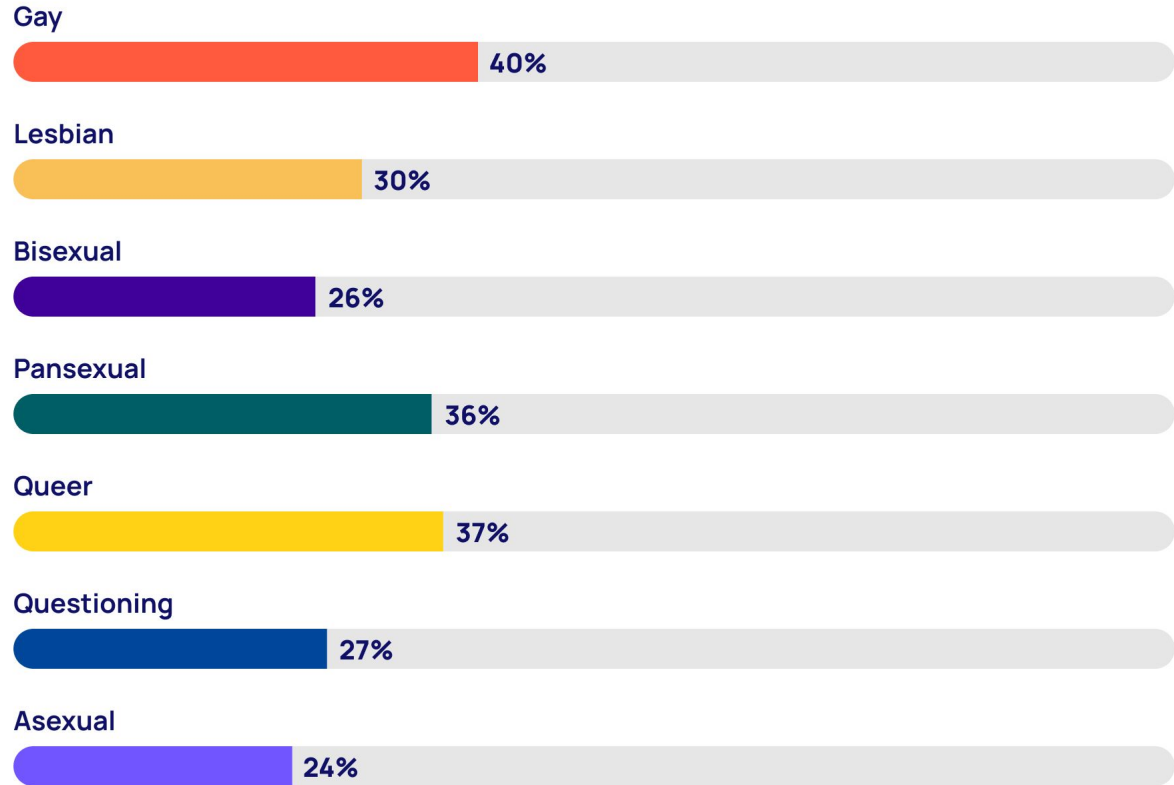


Nonbinary/
genderqueer

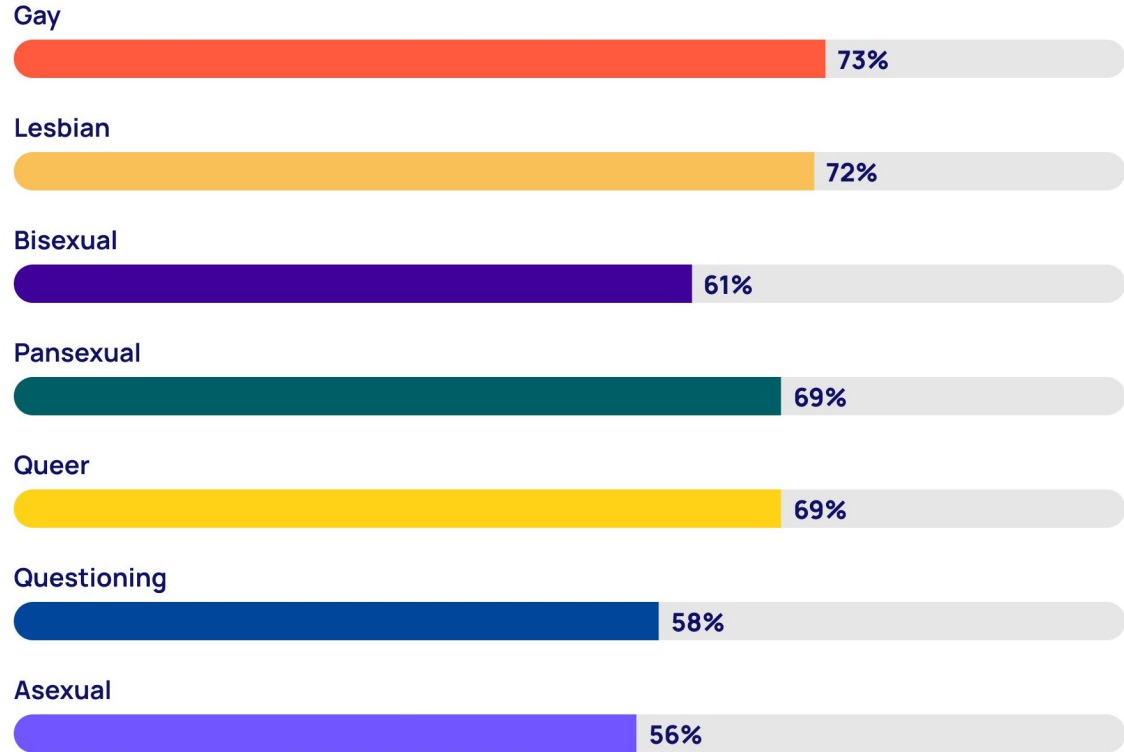


Questioning

31% of LGBTQ youth reported having been physically threatened or harmed due to their sexual orientation



65% of LGBTQ youth reported that they have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

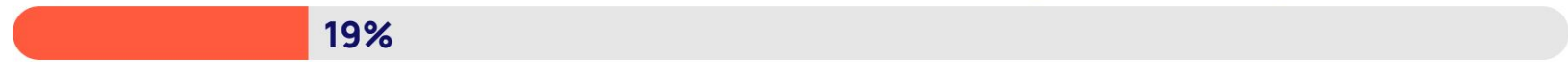


71% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported that they have experienced discrimination based on their gender identity

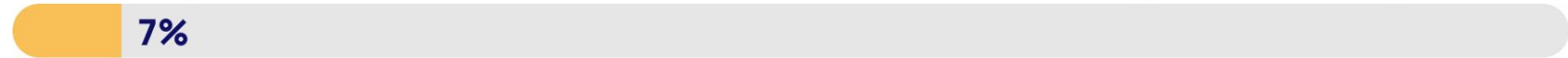


LGBTQ youth who have attempted suicide in the past year, comparison across those who have ever experienced discrimination

Experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



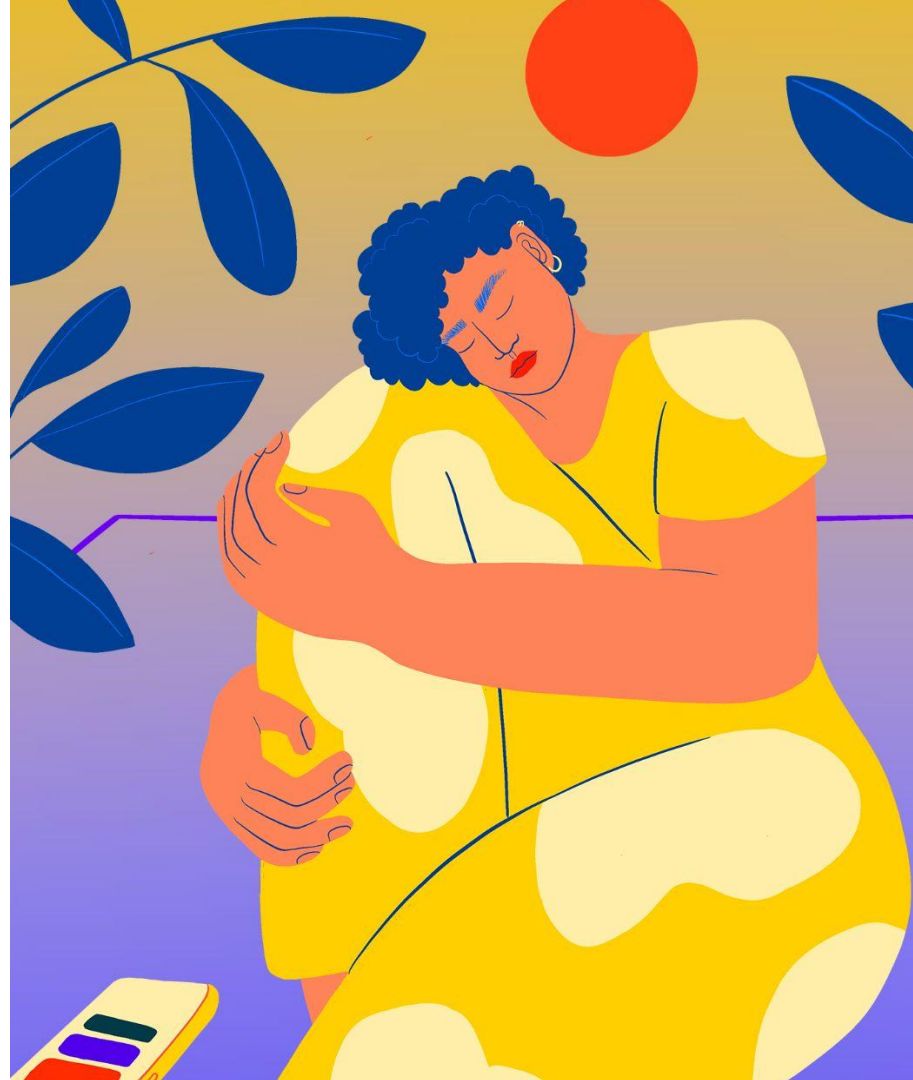
Did not experience discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Transgender and nonbinary youth:

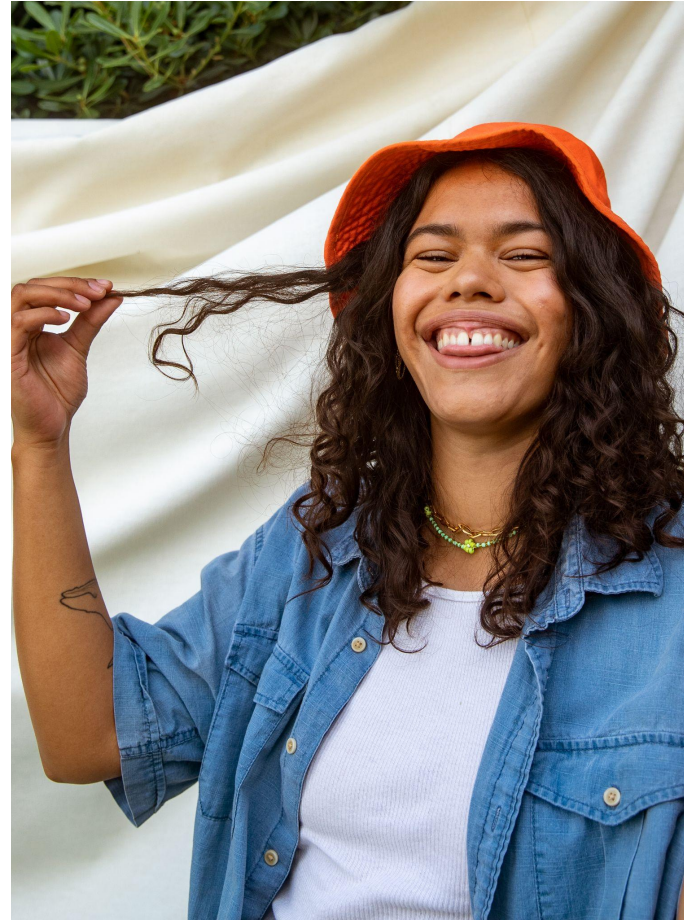
93% said that they have worried about transgender people **being denied access to gender-affirming medical care** due to state or local laws.

91% reported being worried about transgender people **being denied access to the bathroom** due to state or local laws.



What Do You Think

- ✓ What are some of society's misconceptions about LGBTQ identities?
- ✓ Why are these misconceptions so pervasive?



Allyship

LGBTQ 101

What is Allyship?

- ✓ **Supporting** members of a community other than their own.
- ✓ Allyship must be **active (including educating yourself)**, it requires work.
- ✓ Would the community you ally yourself with **consider you** an ally?



Common Language

LGBTQ 101

Gender

A collection of physical characteristics and personal mannerisms society associates with a particular sex.

Gender Identity

Someone's innermost concept of self as masculine, feminine, a blend of both, another gender or set of genders, or lack of gender. This is not always congruent with their sex assigned at birth or their gender assigned at birth.

Gender Expression

The ways in which a person presents themselves to the world through hairstyles, clothing, toys, preferences, mannerisms, or other things.

Transgender (Trans)

A term that describes someone whose gender identity differs from the gender they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender

A term for people whose gender identity matches the sex or gender they were assigned at birth. This is commonly referred to as the opposite of “transgender,” and was created by transgender people who felt that by not having a word to describe non-transgender people, it farther “othered” the transgender community as non-normal.

Genderqueer/Nonbinary

A term used to describe one's gender identity as not fitting into a binary (man/woman) understanding of gender. People who identify as this may express androgyny, gender neutrality, or reject identifying their gender entirely.

Sexual Orientation

Commonly defined as patterns of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to another person or people.

Gay

Commonly used to describe an individual who identifies as a man whose attractions are to some other men. This word has previously been used as an umbrella term for all LGBTQ people, but the more inclusive term is now the “LGBTQ” or “queer” community.

Lesbian

Commonly used to describe someone who identifies as a woman, whose attractions are to some other women.

Bisexual/Pansexual

Used to describe an individual who is attracted to more than one gender. Individuals who identify as this need not have had equal sexual experience with people of multiple genders; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as this.

Historically framed as being attracted to “both” genders, this has been reframed to include people who fall outside the gender binary.

Asexual/Ace

Used to describe someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction. While most people who identify this way desire emotionally intimate relationships, they are not drawn to sex as a way to express that intimacy.

Questioning

Refers to someone who is in the process of discovering or exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity, and who has not claimed a precise identity to use to describe these characteristics.

Queer

Umbrella term used to describe someone who is a sexual or gender minority (generally, not heterosexual and/or cisgender). This word has historically been used as a slur against LGBTQ people, but it has been increasingly reclaimed by LGBTQ communities and is now used by and among some people who are LGBTQ. Note that many folks are still not comfortable using this word or being referred to as this word so it's best to mirror language while using this term.

Pronouns

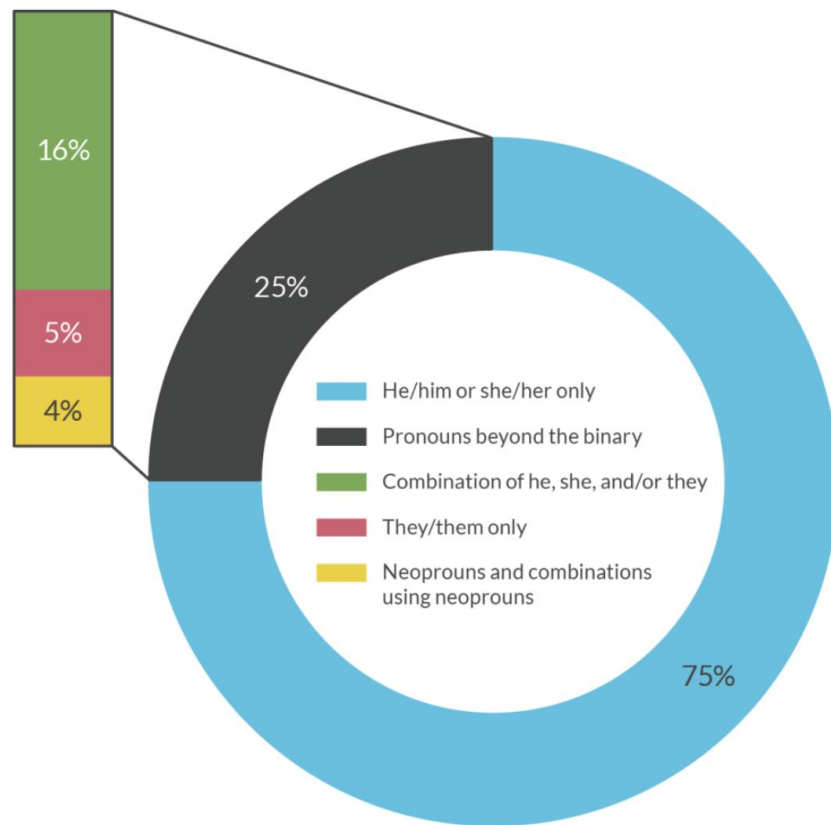
LGBTQ 101

Let's Talk About Pronouns



Why Pronouns Matter

Transgender and nonbinary youth who said their pronouns were respected by most or all of the time attempted suicide at half the rate of those whose pronouns weren't respected



Gender Pronouns

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/ Zirself	Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.

Pronouns In Context

- People choose which pronouns work best for them
- The pronouns a person uses do not need to align with any particular gender identity or expression
- People may use more than one set of pronouns or no pronouns at all
- If you mess up someone's pronouns apologize and move on



GENDER-NEUTRAL TERMS TO ADDRESS A GROUP

Y'ALL PEEPS Pals EPIC DAWGS TEAM
LOVELIES KIDS HUMANS Hey fam
FOLKS Meow-meows Famfam Folx niblings
Peep-a-doodles Sunshines KITKATS EARTHLINGS
beautiful Everyone comrades FRIENDS
people Goblins & Future leaders CHANGE
GUM ghoulies of the world MAKERS
DROPS COOL CATS & KITTENS MORNING HOMIES
Homo Movers & Shakers Rad jazz cats
Sapiens Snicker-doodles HAPPY THEYDIES &
Party PEOPLE GENTLETHEMS
Inspired by @sara_levine † @themilajam @sylviaaduckworth



Final Thoughts on Language

- ✓ Mirror language when talking to a person about their identity
- ✓ Use the affirming exploration technique:
 - “Thank you for sharing that with me. You know, a lot of people use (term) in different ways. When you say that you identify as (term) can you tell me what that means to you?”

Protective Factors

Therapy & medication

Gender-affirming clothing

Family & parental support

The LGBTQ community

Accepting & affirming friends

Hope & excitement for the future

Happy LGBTQ elders & married couples

Online communities & support

Learning about LGBTQ history

Faith & spirituality

Music (BTS, Lil Nas X, etc)

Partners/falling in love

Cishet allies

Learning I'm not alone and there are more people like me

Protective laws/victories for LGBTQ rights

Supportive teachers

Having a safe space to express gender, gender identity, and sexuality

All gender restrooms

Queer role models

Pets/Animals

Taking care of younger siblings

Art, art expression, art therapy/crafting/drawing

Video games/gamer community

LGBTQ clubs on campus

Athletics & Exercise

Going to college

Drag shows

Dance

Living as their authentic self

Escapism/fantasy/fandom

Gender-affirming hormones

Financial stability

LGBTQ celebrities, influencers & representation in media

Self-love & acceptance

Cooking

Active Allyship

Be Kind. Empathy is the best form of communication.

Don't Make Assumptions

Check your own biases

Respect Everyone. Period.

- Your understanding or opinion doesn't dictate respect

Use Inclusive language

- Mirror language
- Being intentional and thoughtful about questions we ask or things we say.

Facilitate Inclusive Pronoun Practices

- Use folks' pronouns correctly and consistently.
- Allow space for sharing pronouns in meetings.
- Use behind name on virtual platforms
- Email signatures

Educate Yourself

- Look up local resources
- Engage in LGBTQ media (literature, TV shows, movies, social media, etc.)
- Attend LGBTQ events (participate as appropriate)

Active Allyship

Provide Gender Inclusive Facilities

- Bathrooms
- Changing rooms/locker rooms
- In-patient care spaces

Encourage & Facilitate Self Advocacy

- Amplify LGBTQ voices
- Champion diversity & inclusion
- Help foster strong connections and community
- Promoting positive media representation

Speak out against LGBTQ harrassment, discrimination, biases, and microaggressions.

Advocate for Change

- Company/Organization Policy
 - HR resources
 - Facilities
 - Non-discrimination Policy
- State & Federal Legislation
 - Oppose anti-LGBTQ Legislation
 - Support LGBTQ non-discrimination
 - Funding and inclusive policy for accessible and affordable mental health care
 - Restricting access to lethal means

Where Can I Learn More?

Research Brief: Mental Health Among Autistic LGBTQ Youth

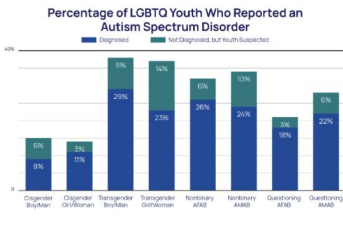
April 2022

Background

Nearly 3% of children and adolescents ages 13-17 and an estimated 2% of adults ages 18-84 have been diagnosed with Autism (clinically referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorders) (Xu et al., 2018; Dietz et al., 2020). In recent years, both scholarship and activism from autistic individuals have shifted the conceptualization of autism away from a developmental disability framework and toward a neurodiversity framework, which recognizes Autism as a different but equally valid way of engaging with and experiencing the world (Happé & Frith, 2020). Autistic individuals report poorer mental health than individuals without autism, who are commonly referred to as "allistic." Autistic youth report higher rates of depression (Pezzimenti et al., 2019) and anxiety (Zaborski & Storch, 2017) than their allistic peers. Rates of dying by suicide are also higher for autistic individuals than for their allistic peers (Hirvikoski et al., 2016). Aligning with the minority stress model (Meyer, 2003), these mental health outcomes may be due to the stress of trying to navigate a world with a stigmatized identity. There is also growing evidence to suggest that autistic individuals are more likely to identify as LGBTQ (Dewinter et al., 2017), and autistic individuals report high levels of gender non-conforming feelings (Dewinter et al., 2017). Further, the prevalence of autism among individuals with gender dysphoria is estimated to be between 6%-25% (Thrower et al., 2019). While there is less research on the mental health of individuals living at the intersection of autism and LGBTQ identities, autistic LGBTQ adults report higher levels of barriers to healthcare, unmet healthcare needs, self-reported mental illness, and being refused services by a medical provider than their allistic peers (Hall et al., 2020). Using data from The Trevor Project's 2021 [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#), this brief examines mental health and suicide risk among autistic LGBTQ youth.

Results

Overall, 5% of LGBTQ youth have been diagnosed with autism. Additionally, 35% suspect they might be autistic. Transgender girls/women (14%) and nonbinary youth assigned male at birth (AMAB) (10%) had the highest diagnosis rates. Transgender boys/men (29%) and nonbinary youth assigned female at birth (AFAB) (26%) had the highest



Research Brief: Substance Use and Suicide Risk Among LGBTQ Youth

January 2022

Background

Both rates of substance use and suicide deaths have increased in the United States over the last ten years, especially among youth and young adults (Curtin & Heron, 2019; Gomes, Tadrous, Mamdani, & Juurlink, 2018; Hingson, Zha, & Smyth, 2019). Those with substance use disorder are at seven times greater odds of dying by suicide, compared to those who do not have a substance use disorder (Conner et al., 2019). National prevalence data on substance use among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) high school students indicate that LGB students use substances at significantly higher rates than their straight peers (Jones et al., 2020). This risk is compounded by LGBTQ youths' increased risk of attempting suicide compared to their straight, cisgender peers (Johns et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020). Given that most previous research on youth substance use relies on federal datasets that have not measured gender identity in ways that include transgender or nonbinary youth, there is little research on transgender and nonbinary youths' substance use. Using data from The Trevor Project's 2021 [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#), this brief examines the relationship between lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youths' substance use and their risk of suicide.

Results

Over half of LGBTQ youth (56%) used alcohol in the last year, including 47% of LGBTQ youth under the age of 21. Over one in three LGBTQ youth (34%) used marijuana in the last year, including 29% of LGBTQ youth under the age of 21. One in 10 (11%) LGBTQ youth reported having used a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them in the last year, and this rate was the same for those under and over the age of 21.

11% of LGBTQ youth reported regular use (defined as daily or weekly use) of both alcohol or marijuana. Rates of regular alcohol or marijuana use were much higher for LGBTQ young adults ages 21 or older than they were for LGBTQ youth under age 21. One in three LGBTQ young adults ages 21 or older (33%) reported regular alcohol use, compared to 5% of LGBTQ youth under age 21. One in five LGBTQ young adults ages 21

Research Brief: LGBTQ Youth in Small Towns and Rural Areas

November 2021

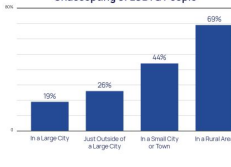
Background

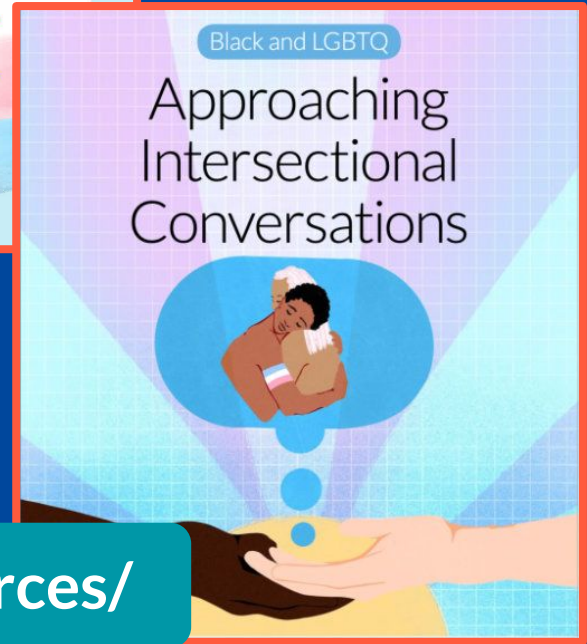
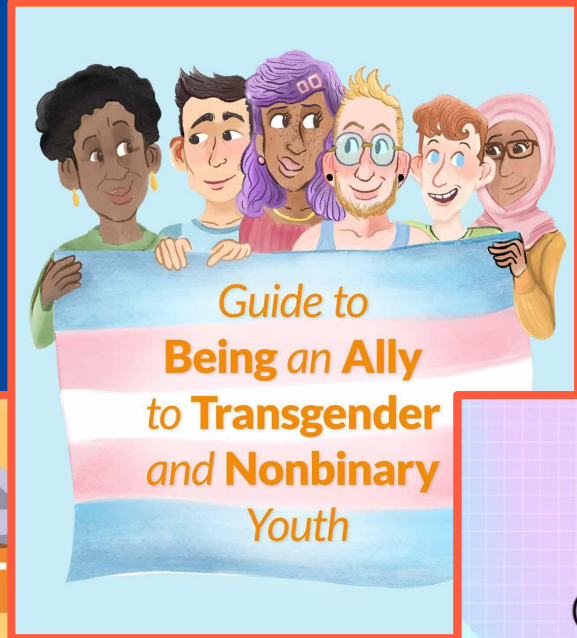
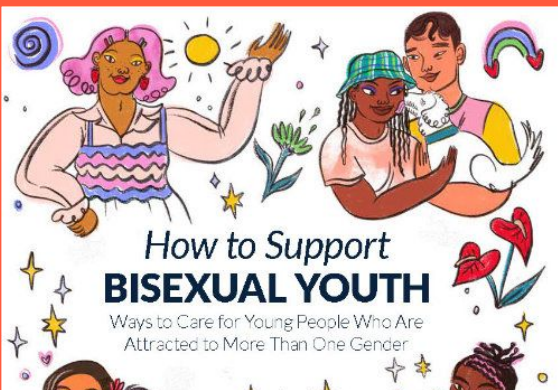
Among the broader population of youth ages 10-24 in the U.S., suicide rates are higher in rural than in urban communities (Fontanella et al., 2015). Further, data from GLSEN's National School Climate Survey indicate that LGBTQ youth from small towns or rural areas are more likely to hear anti-LGBTQ remarks and experience discrimination in schools than those from urban and suburban schools (Kosciw et al., 2020). However, little research has specifically examined differences in mental health and suicide risk based on whether LGBTQ youth live in urban or rural areas. One study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth found that, although both rural and non-rural LGBTQ youth reported significantly greater risk of depression compared to their non-LGBTQ peers, there were no significant differences in depression when comparing rural LGBTQ youth to LGBTQ youth from urban and suburban areas (Price-Feeney, Ybarra, & Mitchell, 2019). Further, a study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth in Canada also found similar rates of depression among rural and urban youth; however, they found that rural LGB boys, but not rural LGB girls, were more likely to consider and attempt suicide than those from urban and suburban areas (Poon & Saewyc, 2009). Given the mixed findings on LGBTQ youth in rural areas and small towns, there is a need for additional research, particularly among transgender and nonbinary youth. Using data from The Trevor Project's 2021 [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#), this brief examines depression and suicide risk among LGBTQ youth from rural areas and small towns compared to urban and suburban areas.

Results

Nearly half (49%) of LGBTQ youth in rural areas and small towns stated that their community was somewhat or very unaccepting of LGBTQ people compared to just over a quarter (26%) of those in urban and suburban areas. In total, only 4% of rural LGBTQ youth reported that their community was very accepting of LGBTQ people. Approximately half of the sample lived in urban (15%) or suburban (34%) areas, with the other half living in a small city/town (41%) or rural area (10%). LGBTQ youth in rural areas and small towns also reported higher rates of experiencing

Proportion of Youth who Described the Area Where They Live as Somewhat or Very Unaccepting of LGBTQ People





thetrevorproject.org/resources/