

# LGBTQ Youth Risk Data

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are coming out and publicly acknowledging that they are LGBTQ at younger ages than ever before. For many LGBTQ youth, sexual orientation or gender identity is why they are in out-of-home care in the first place. Their families may have rejected them outright, or they were forced to escape physically or psychologically abusive families who wanted to “cure” or punish them. Further exacerbating their situation is the harassment and violence that LGBTQ youth often face in school settings. As a result, LGBTQ youth are over-represented in out-of-home systems of care. They are at increased risk of homelessness, dropping out of school, physical or emotional abuse, depression, substance abuse, rape and suicide.

**20-40% of all homeless youth** identify as LGBT.

See Nicholas Ray, Nat'l Gay & Lesbian Task Force Policy Inst. & Nat'l Coal. for the Homeless, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth: An Epidemic of Homelessness* (2006).

**65% of 400 homeless LGBTQ youth** reported having been in a child welfare placement at some point in the past.

See Heather M. Berberet, *Putting the Pieces Together for Queer Youth*, 85 Child Welfare 261 (2006).

**Half of a sampling of gay and lesbian young people** in out-of-home care reported having been homeless at some point in the past.

See Gerald P. Mallon, *We Don't Exactly Get the Welcome Wagon: The Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Adolescents in Child Welfare Systems* (1998).

**When compared to heterosexual homeless youth**, LGBT homeless youth:

- Are physically or sexually victimized by an average of seven more people;
- Leave home an average of 12 times as compared to seven times for non-LGBT youth;
- Have had nearly twice as many sexual partners;
- Have used 11 of 12 dangerous substances more frequently.

See Bryan N. Cochran, Angela J. Stewart, Joshua A. Ginzler & Ana Mari Cauce, *Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents with Their Heterosexual Counterparts*, 92 Am. J. Pub. Health 773 (2002).

## FOSTERING TRANSITIONS

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**63.5% of LGBTQ students** reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, while 43.9% felt unsafe because of their gender expression.

- 81.9% said they had been verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation in the past year and 63.9% said they had been verbally harassed because of their gender expression.
- 38.3% had been physically harassed (*e.g.*, pushed or shoved) in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 27.1% had been physically harassed because of their gender expression.
- 18.3% had been assaulted (*e.g.*, punched, kicked or injured with a weapon) because of their sexual orientation and 12.4% had been assaulted because of their gender expression.
- Less than 40% of students who experienced harassment or assault reported it to school staff. Of those who did report, 36.7% said that no action was taken by the staff.
- Nearly 30% of LGBTQ students surveyed reported missing at least one full day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

See Joseph G. Kosciw, Emily A. Greytak, Elizabeth M. Diaz, Mark J. Bartkiewicz, Madelyn J. Boesen & Neal A. Palmer, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, *The 2011 National School Climate Survey* (2012).

**19% of all transgender people** have been homeless at some point in their lives. 55% of those who tried to access a shelter were harassed by staff or residents and 29% were turned away altogether. Of those who were able to access a shelter, 22% were sexually assaulted by residents or staff.

See Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman & Mara Keisling, Nat'l Ctr. for Transgender Equality & Nat'l Gay & Lesbian Task Force, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (2011).

**Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are 190% more likely** to use drugs and alcohol than their non-LGB counterparts.

See Michael P. Marshal, Mark S. Friedman, Ron Stall, Kevin M. King, Jonathan Miles, Melanie A. Gold, Oscar G. Bukstein & Jennifer Q. Morse, *Sexual Orientation and Adolescent Substance Use: A Meta-Analysis and Methodological Review*, 103 *Addiction* 546 (2008).

**39% of LGBT homeless youth** in one study said they had been kicked out of their homes because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; 45% reported involvement with the juvenile justice system.

See Heather M. Berberet, *Putting the Pieces Together for Queer Youth*, 85 *Child Welfare* 261 (2006).

**62% of LGBT homeless youth** attempt suicide, in contrast to 29% of their homeless non-LGBT peers.

See Nat'l Alliance to End Homelessness, Lambda Legal, Nat'l Network for Youth & Nat'l Ctr. for Lesbian Rights, *National Recommended Best Practices for Serving LGBT Homeless Youth* (2009).

**58% of LGB homeless youth** in one study reported being the victims of sexual assault, versus 33% of their non-LGB homeless peers.

See Les B. Whitbeck, Xiaojin Chen, Dan R. Hoyt, Kimberly Tyler & Kurt D. Johnson, *Mental Disorder, Subsistence Strategies, and Victimization among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Homeless and Runaway Adolescents*, 41 *J. Sex Research* 329 (2004).

**LGB young adults with high levels of family rejection** are significantly more likely to report having attempted suicide, high levels of depression, illegal drug use and unprotected sex compared to LGB adults with little or no family rejection.

See Caitlin Ryan, David Huebner, Rafael M. Diaz & Jorge Sanchez, *Family Rejection as a Predictor of Negative Health Outcomes in White and Latino Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Young Adults*, 123 *Pediatrics* 346 (2009).



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