



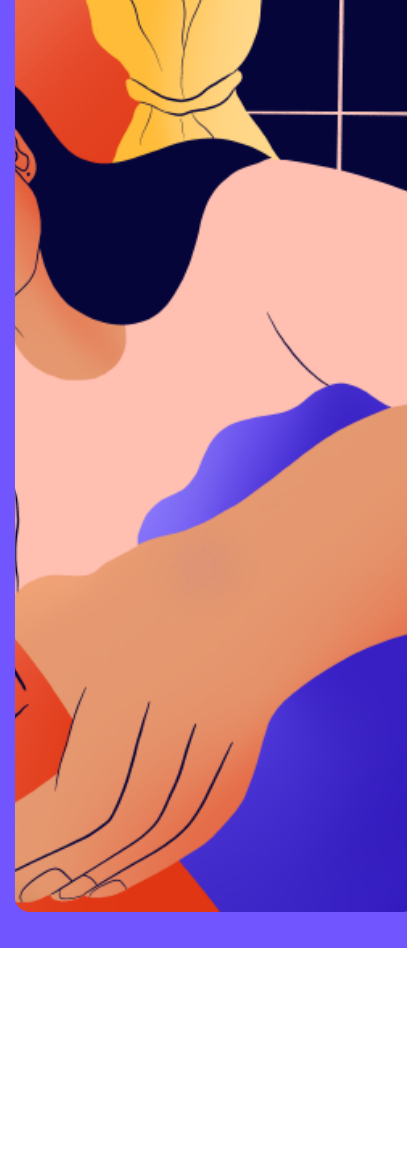
MENTAL HEALTH

Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide

LGBTQ youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity but rather placed at higher risk because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.

ARTICLE LENGTH: MEDIUM | DEC. 15, 2021 | [dropdown]

- Advocacy
- Conversion Therapy
- BIPOC
- Communities of Color
- Suicide Risk Factors
- Transgender



Top-Line Statistics

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 10 to 24 (Hedegaard, Curtin, & Warner, 2018) – and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are at significantly increased risk.
- LGBTQ youth are **more than four times as likely** to attempt suicide than their peers (Johns et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020).
- The Trevor Project estimates that more than **1.8 million LGBTQ youth** (13–24) seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. – and at least one attempts suicide **every 45 seconds**.
- The Trevor Project's **2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health** found that **45% of LGBTQ youth** seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including **more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth**.

The Importance of Intersectionality

- Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how interdependent and multidimensional social identities at the individual level, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, are shaped by interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the societal level, such as heterosexism, cisgenderism, and racism (Crenshaw, 1991).
- This intersection of identities may, in turn, present distinct stressors for some LGBTQ youth compared to others, and minority stress may be most persistent and problematic for youth who occupy multiple marginalized social positions (Cyrus, 2017).
- That said, largely due to sample size limitations, researchers often fail to examine within-group differences among LGBTQ youth, limiting our understanding of within-group disparities in suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- However, existing research points to increased disparities for **bisexual youth, transgender and nonbinary youth, and LGBTQ youth of color**.

Mental Health Disparities Across Social Identities

- **Bisexual Youth**
 - Data shows that bisexual youth, or those who have the capacity to form attraction and/or relationships to more than one gender, report higher rates of depressed mood, bullying, sexual assault, and physical harm.
 - According to The Trevor Project's **analysis of CDC data**, almost half (48%) of bi young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and 27% attempted suicide. Among gay or lesbian youth, 37% seriously considered suicide and 19% attempted. And among straight youth, 14% seriously considered suicide and 6% attempted suicide.
 - These suicide risk disparities among bi youth also remain constant across gender identity and race/ethnicity.
- **Transgender and Nonbinary Youth**
 - Transgender and nonbinary youth face elevated risk for depression, thoughts of suicide, and attempting suicide compared to youth who are cisgender and straight, including cisgender members of the LGBTQ community.
 - A **2020 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, found that transgender and nonbinary youth were **2 to 2.5 times** as likely to experience depressive symptoms, seriously consider suicide, and attempt suicide compared to their cisgender LGBQ peers.
- **LGBTQ Youth of Color**
 - The Trevor Project's **2022 national survey** found that LGBTQ youth of color reported higher rates of attempting suicide than their white peers in the past year. Among the nearly 34,000 LGBTQ youth surveyed, 22% of white youth attempted suicide compared to 21% of Native/Indigenous youth, 20% of Middle Eastern/Northern African youth, 19% of Black youth, 17% of multiracial youth, 16% of Latinx youth, and 12% of Asian/Pacific Islander youth.
 - Across race/ethnicity, Native/Indigenous youth who are Two-Spirit/LGBTQ consistently report the highest suicide risk.
 - The Trevor Project's **research** has found that they were 2.5 times more likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year (33%) compared to their LGBTQ peers (14%). Additionally, this group is also disproportionately represented in reports of foster care, housing instability, and food insecurity.
 - In particular, Black transgender and nonbinary youth report **disproportionate rates** of suicide risk – with 59% seriously considering suicide and more than 1 in 4 (26%) attempting suicide in the past year.
 - These disparities highlight the devastating impacts of historical and ongoing oppression and trauma inflicted on Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Some Key Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth Suicide

- **Minority Stress**
 - The Minority Stress Model, one of the most predominant theories used to explain mental health disparities experienced by LGBTQ individuals, suggests that experiences of LGBTQ-based victimization – and the internalization of these experiences and anti-LGBTQ messages – can compound and produce negative mental health outcomes and increase suicide risk among LGBTQ individuals (Meyer, 2003).
 - A **2021 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, found that greater experiences of minority stress experiences are associated with increased odds of attempting suicide. LGBTQ youth who reported experiencing four types of minority stress – LGBTQ-based physical harm, discrimination, housing instability, and change attempts by parents – were **12 times at greater odds of attempting suicide** compared to youth who experienced none.
- **Rejection and a Lack of Social Support & Affirming Spaces**
 - Research suggests that among LGBTQ youth, only one-third experience parental acceptance, with an additional one-third experiencing parental rejection, and the final one-third not disclosing their LGBTQ identity until they are adults (Katz-Wise et al., 2015). Another study found that LGB youth adults who report high levels of parental rejection are eight times more likely to report attempting suicide and six times more likely to report high levels of depression (Ryan et al., 2009).
 - Many LGBTQ youth lack access to affirming spaces, with only 55% of LGBTQ youth reporting that their school is LGBTQ-affirming and only 37% saying that their home is LGBTQ-affirming. Fewer than 1 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth found their home to be gender-affirming and a little more than half (51%) found their school to be affirming. The Trevor Project's research **consistently finds** that LGBTQ young people report lower rates of attempting suicide when they have access to LGBTQ-affirming spaces.
- **Physical Harm & Bullying**
 - **36% of LGBTQ youth** reported that they have been physically threatened or harmed, and those who did attempt suicide at nearly triple the rate of those who did not in the past year.
 - The Trevor Project's **research** has also found that 52% of LGBTQ youth who were enrolled in middle or high school reported being bullied either in person or electronically in the past year, and those who did had three times greater odds of attempting suicide in the past year.
- **Discrimination**
 - **73% of LGBTQ youth** report that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime, and those who did attempted suicide at **more than twice the rate** of those who did not in the past year.
 - A **2020 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, found that transgender and nonbinary youth who report experiencing discrimination based on their gender identity had more than double the odds of attempting suicide in the past year compared to those who did not experience discrimination based on their gender identity.
- **Conversion Therapy**
 - A **2020 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, found that youth who reported undergoing conversion therapy were more than twice as likely to report having attempted suicide and more than 2.5 times as likely to report multiple suicide attempts in the past year.
 - According to The Trevor Project's **2022 national survey** of nearly 34,000 diverse LGBTQ youth ages 13–24 across the U.S., 17% reported being threatened with or subjected to conversion therapy, including more than 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth and more than 1 in 10 cisgender youth.

Some Key Protective Factors for LGBTQ Youth Suicide

- **Social Support and Acceptance from Adults and Peers**
 - Having **at least one accepting adult** can reduce the risk of a suicide attempt among LGBTQ young people by 40 percent.
 - A **2021 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in *Transgender Health*, found that transgender and nonbinary youth who reported gender identity acceptance from adults and peers had significantly lower odds of attempting suicide in the past year.
 - LGBTQ youth who felt high social support from their family reported attempting suicide at **less than half the rate** of those who felt low or moderate social support.
 - LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported **much lower rates** of attempting suicide than those who do not.
- **Affirming Spaces and Activities, Especially at School**
 - The Trevor Project's **research** has found that LGBTQ youth who found their school and home to be LGBTQ-affirming reported lower rates of attempting suicide.
 - LGBTQ youth who report the presence of trusted adults in their school have higher levels of self-esteem (Dessel et al., 2017) and access to supportive peers is protective against anxiety and depression, including among those who lack support from their family (Parra et al., 2018).
 - Schools also offer youth the ability to participate in extracurricular activities and clubs, which have been found to promote positive youth development (Eccles et al., 2003). The presence of Gender and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs) has been found to significantly reduce the risk for depression and increase well-being among LGBTQ youth and young adults (Toomey et al., 2011).
- **Policies and Practices that Support Transgender and Nonbinary Youth**
 - Transgender and nonbinary youth **attempt suicide less** when their pronouns are respected, when they are allowed to officially change the gender marker on their legal documents, and when they have access to spaces (online, at school, and home) that affirm their gender identity.
 - Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having pronouns respected by all or most people in their lives attempted suicide at **half the rate** of those who did not have their pronouns respected.
 - A **2022 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project researchers, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, found that transgender and nonbinary youth who had changed their legal documents reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide in the past year compared to those who had not.
 - Gender-affirming medical care, such as hormone therapy, is associated with positive mental health outcomes including showing promise for reducing suicide risk. A **2021 peer-reviewed study** by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, found that gender-affirming hormone therapy is significantly related to lower rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth.

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- Advocacy
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- Bisexual
- Communities of Color
- Conversion Therapy
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- Sadness and Depression
- Suicide
- Suicide Prevention
- Suicide Risk Factors
- Support
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The Trevor Project is the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning) young people.

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