

# Health and Well-being of LGBTQ Students: Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Educators

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- Introductions
- LGBTQ Students' Mental Health
- Recommendations
- Resources in Wisconsin
- Questions and Answers



- Why did you attend this presentation?
- What are you hoping to get out of the presentation today?



Let us know if you need a term defined!



ABOUT US

# Some Context for Ezra

# Some Context for Stephanie





# Mental Health Disparities

- Transgender youth report depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and self harm at **2-3 times** the rate of cisgender youth (Reisner et al., 2015)
- 86.3% of LGBTQ youth who drop out of high school leave due to mental health concerns (Kosciew et al., 2015)
- LGB youth are **3 times** more likely than straight peers to report depression and suicidality (Marshall et al., 2011)
- Bi/queer youth and trans youth report **double** the mental health concerns than lesbian and gay youth (Russell & Fish, 2016)

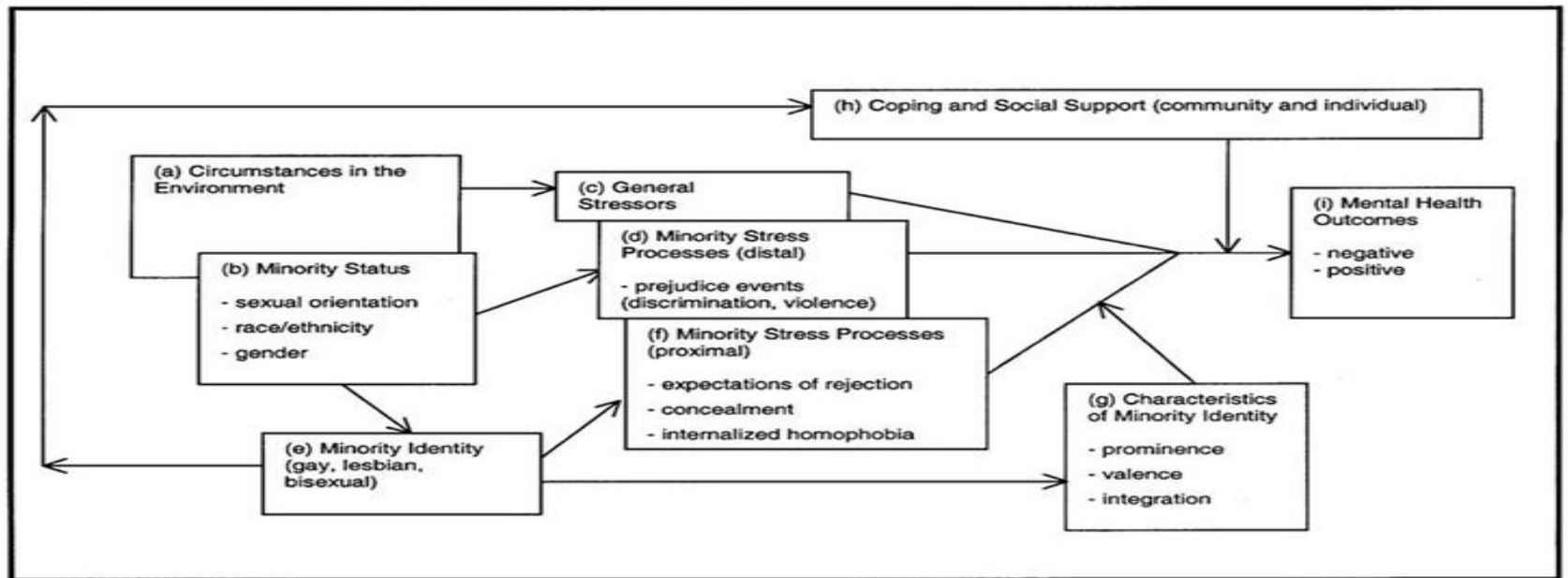


But...LGBTQ Youth are  
not inherently distressed!!



# Minority Stressors

- Minority stress (Meyer, 2003) is: (a) unique, (b) chronic, and (c) socially-based



**Figure 1.**  
Minority stress processes in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations.

# Minority Stressors (Distal)



# Minority Stressors (Proximal)

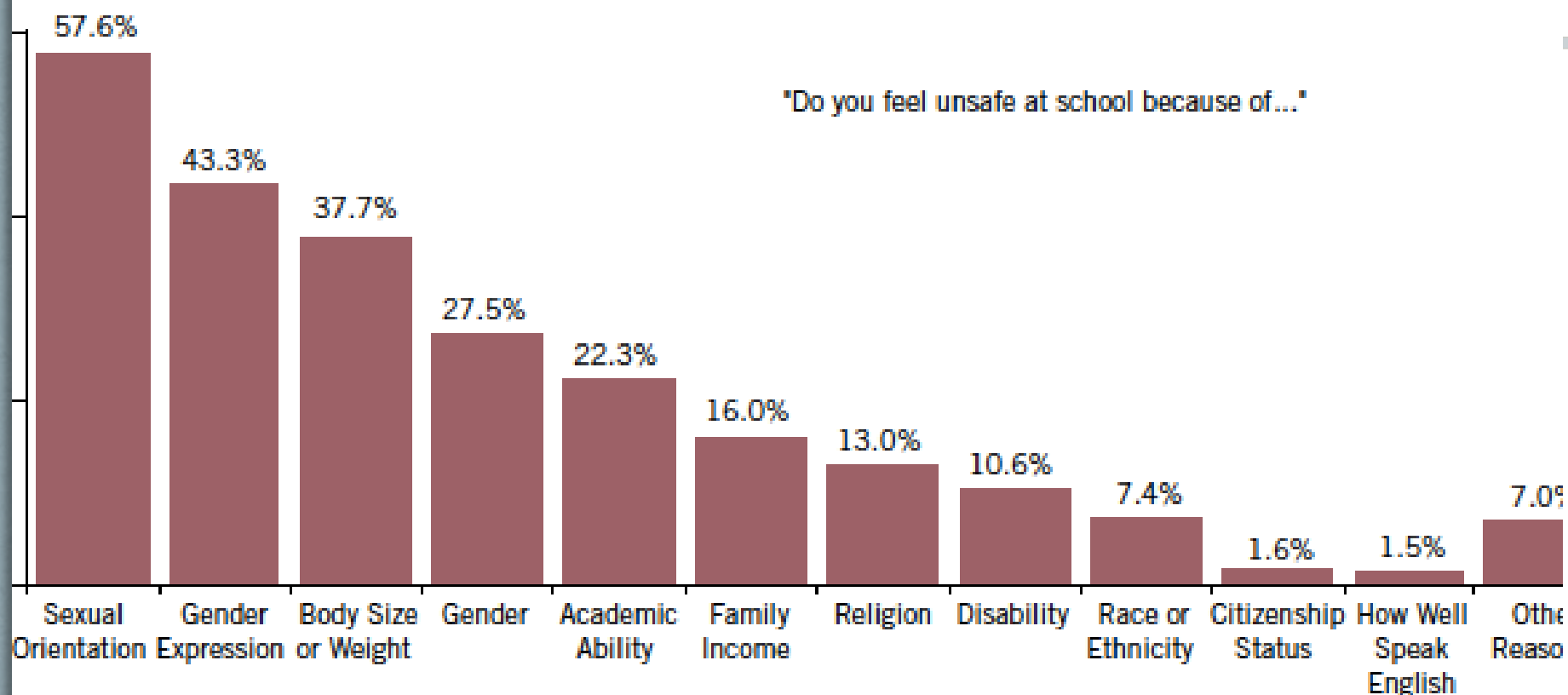


# Snapshot of LGBTQ Students' Experiences

- 2015 GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Education Network) National Climate Survey
- Ages 13 and up and in a K-12 school
- 10,528 youth representing over 3,095 school districts

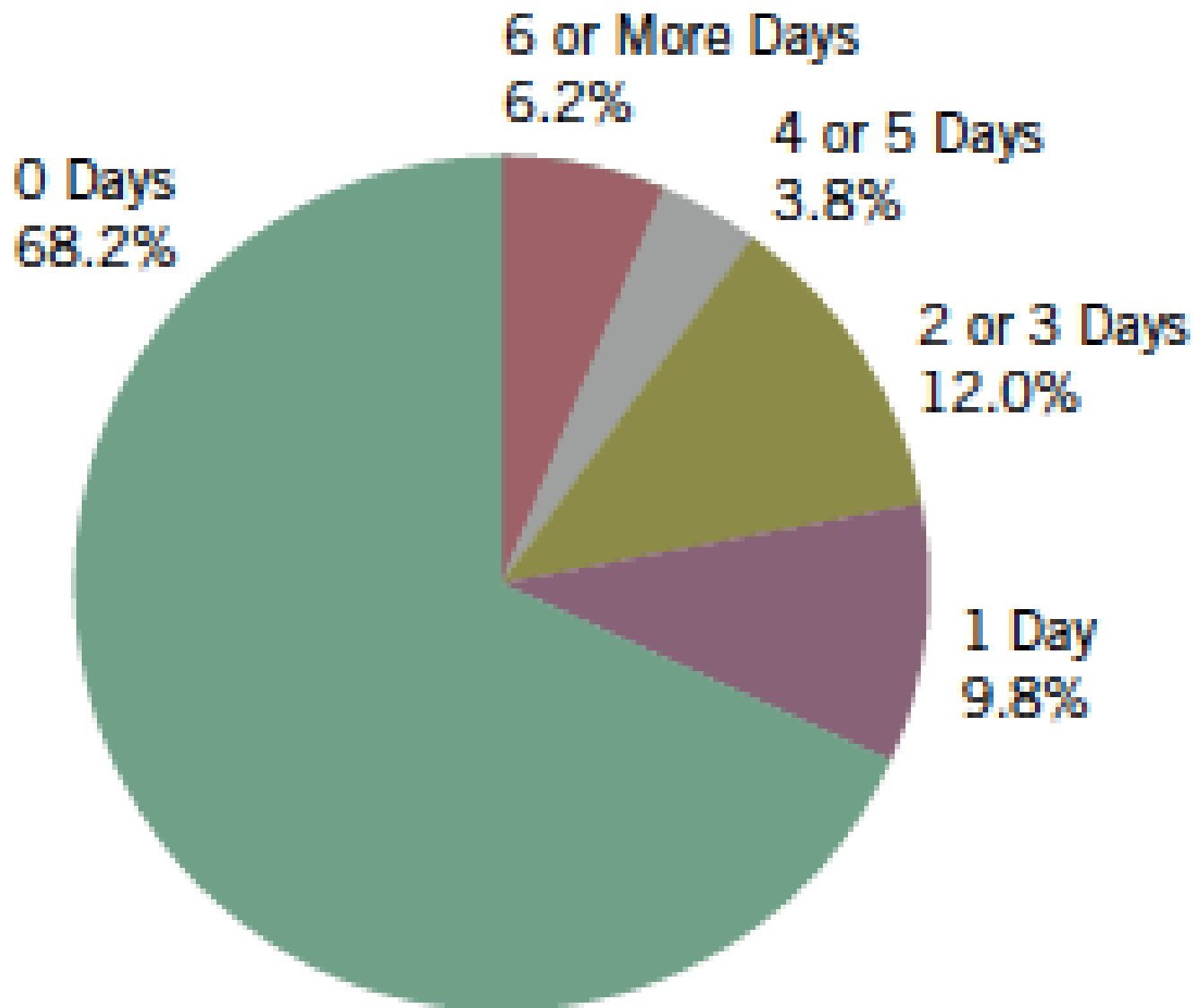
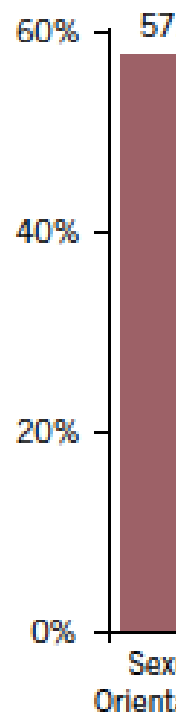


**Figure 1.1 LGBTQ Students Who Felt Unsafe at School Because of Actual or Perceived Personal Characteristics**



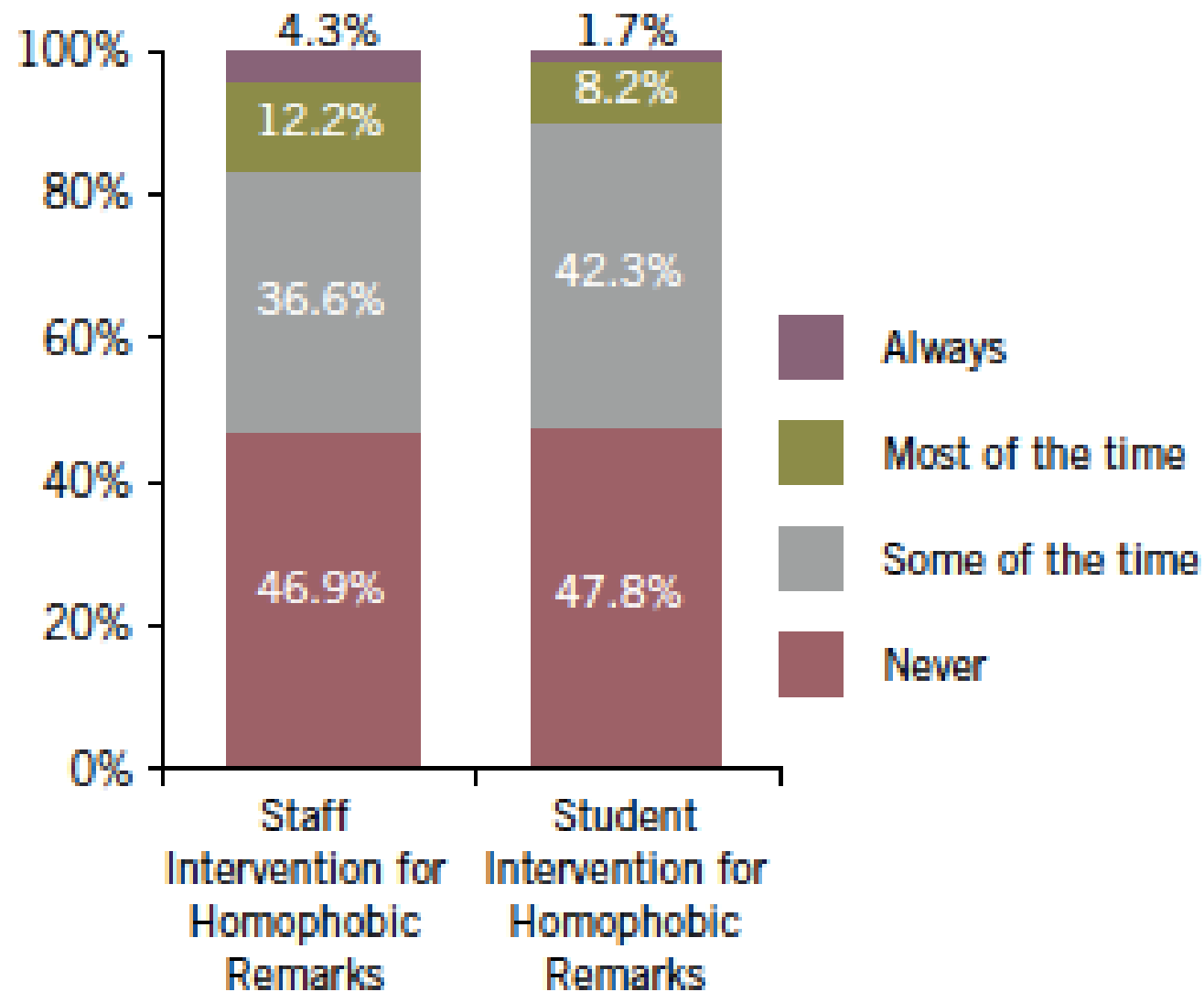
**Figure 1.4 Frequency of Missing Days of School  
in the Past Month Because of  
Feeling Unsafe or Uncomfortable**

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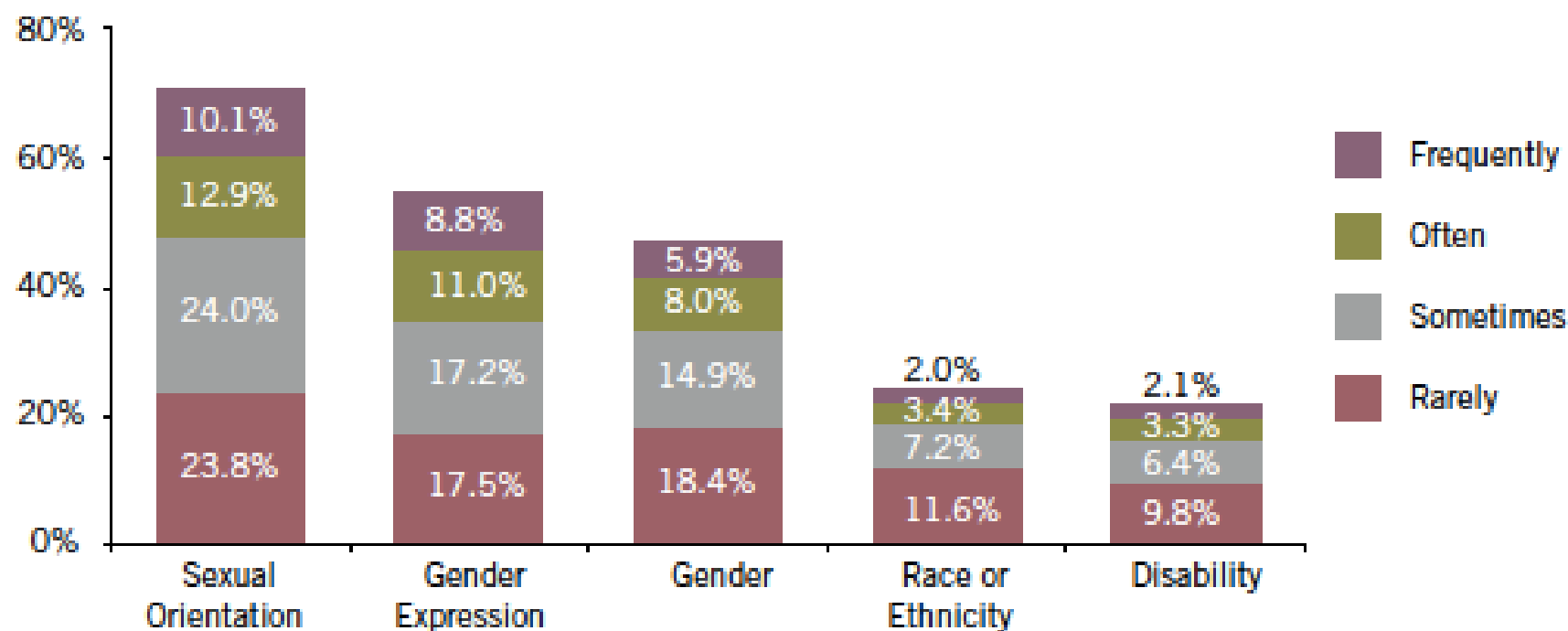


**Figure 1.9 LGBTQ Students Reports of School Staff and Student Intervention in Homophobic Remarks**

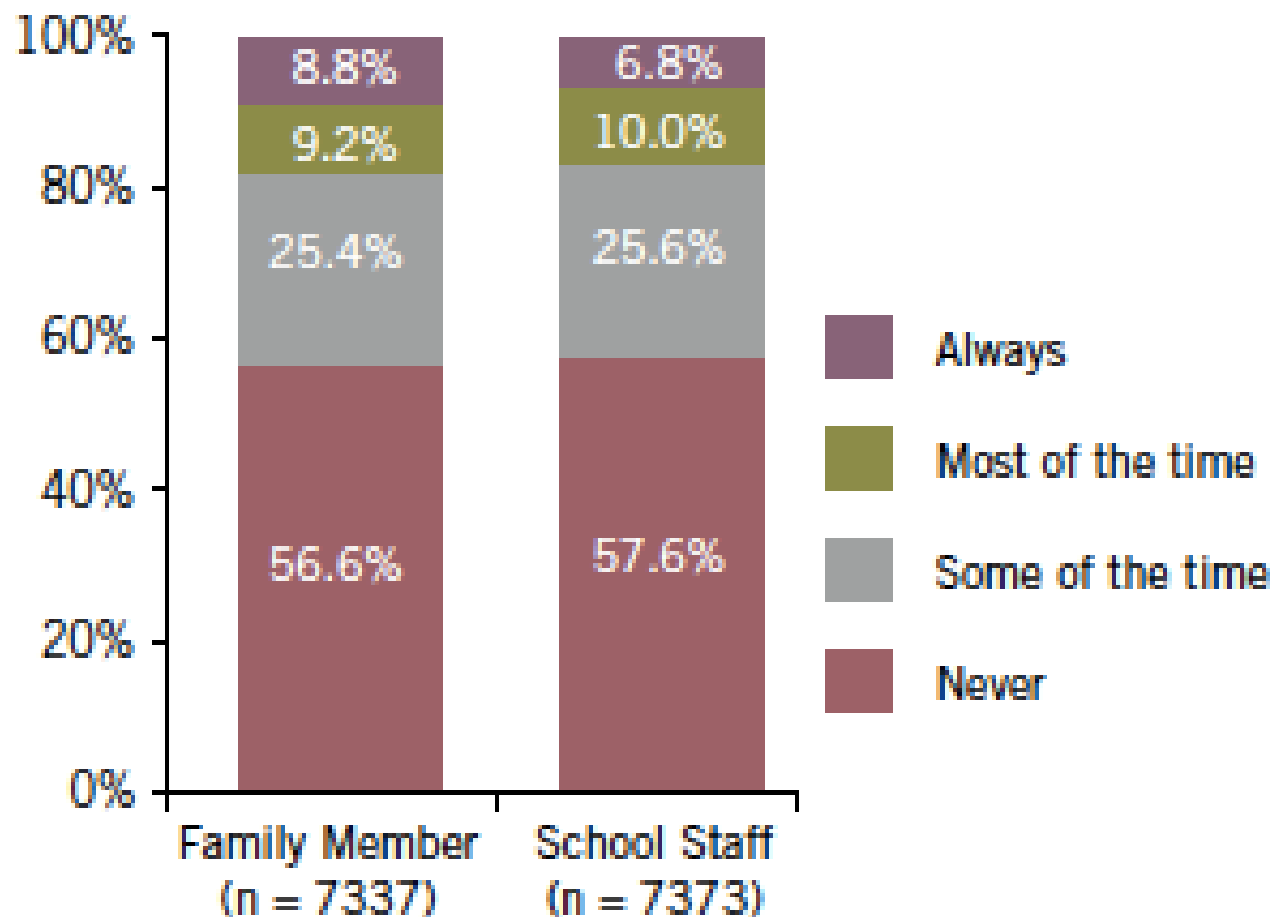


Other Homophobic  
Remarks (e.g., "Gays  
are going to  
ruin the world.")

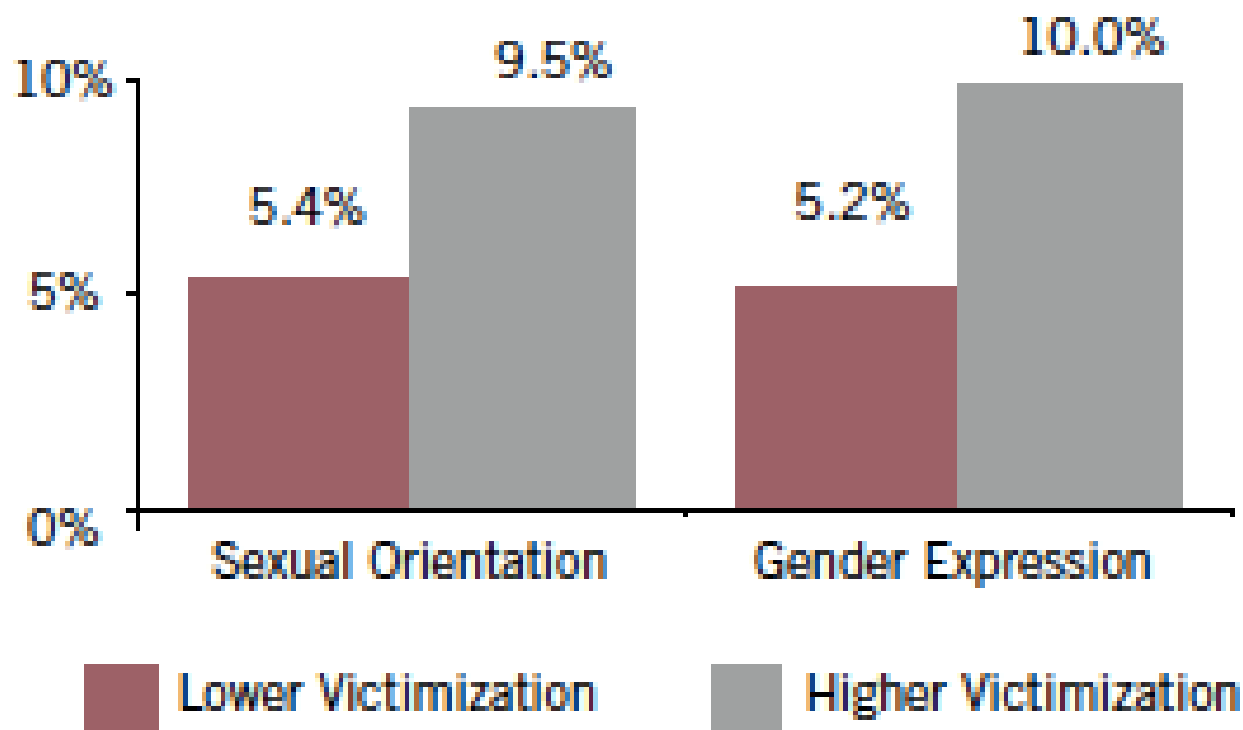
**Figure 1.14 Frequency of Verbal Harassment Experienced by LGBTQ Students in the Past School Year**



**Figure 1.18 Frequency of LGBTQ Students Reporting Incidents of Harassment and Assault**

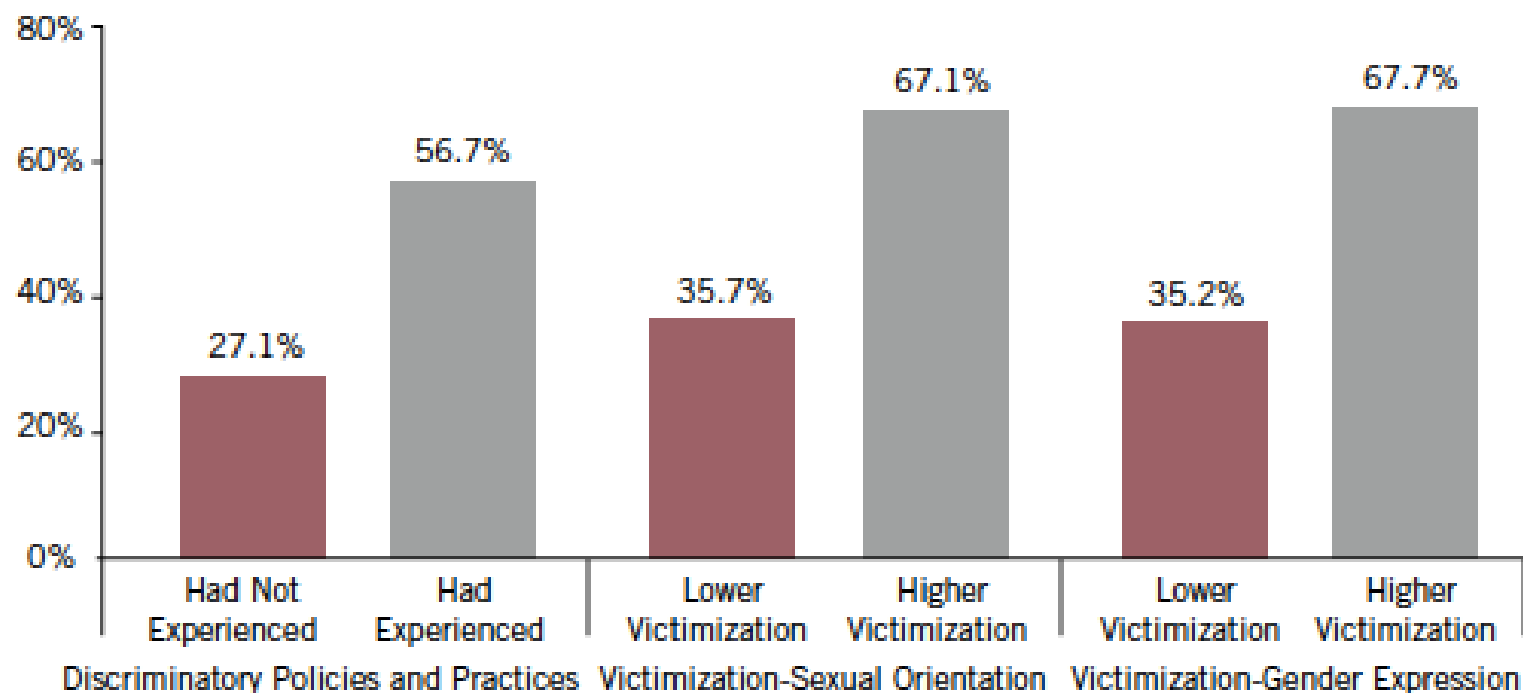


**Figure 1.24 Educational Aspirations and  
Severity of Victimization**  
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Not Planning  
to Pursue Post-Secondary Education)

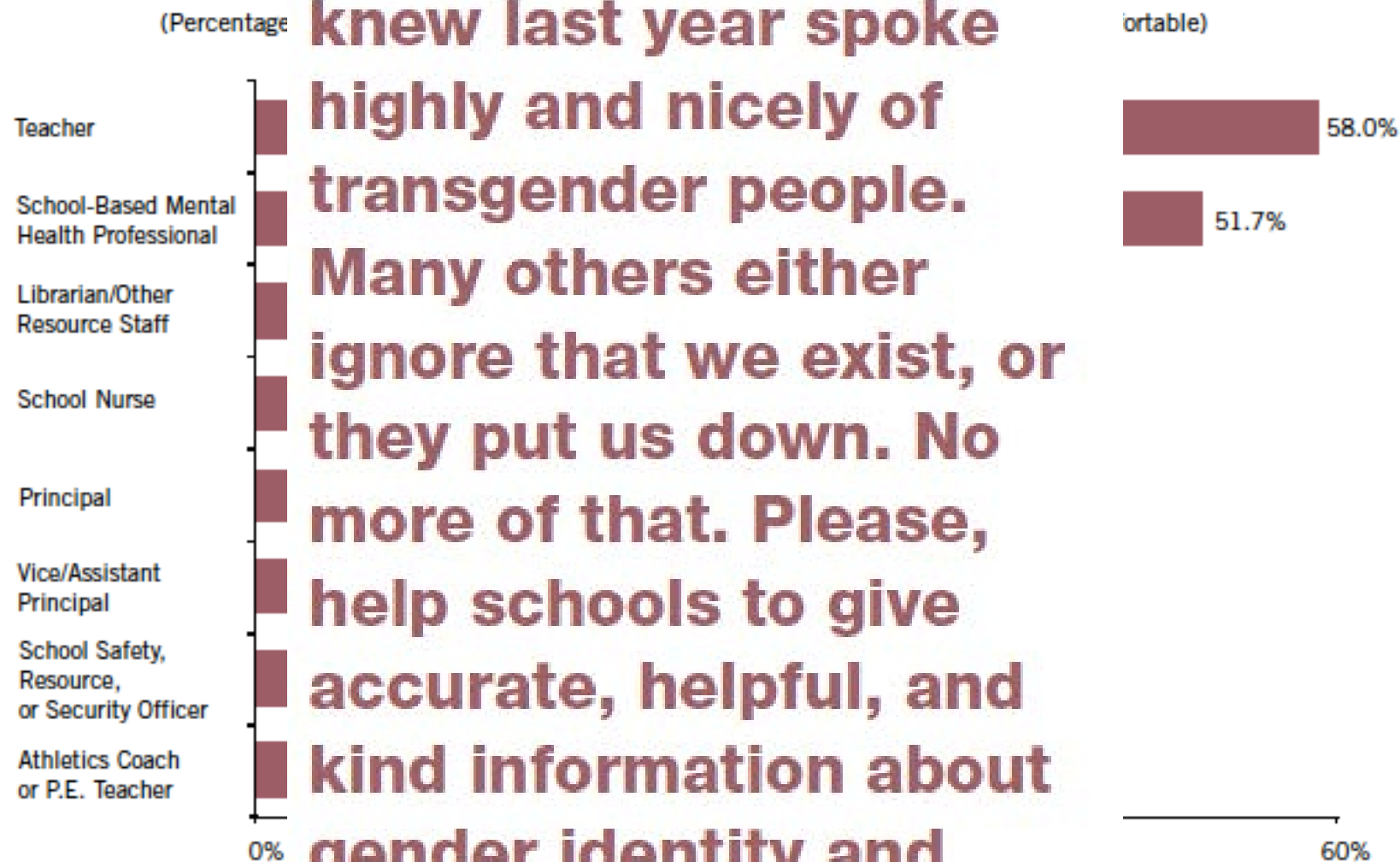


# Well-Being

**Figure 1.30 Depression by Discrimination and Severity of Victimization**  
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Demonstrating Higher Levels of Depression)

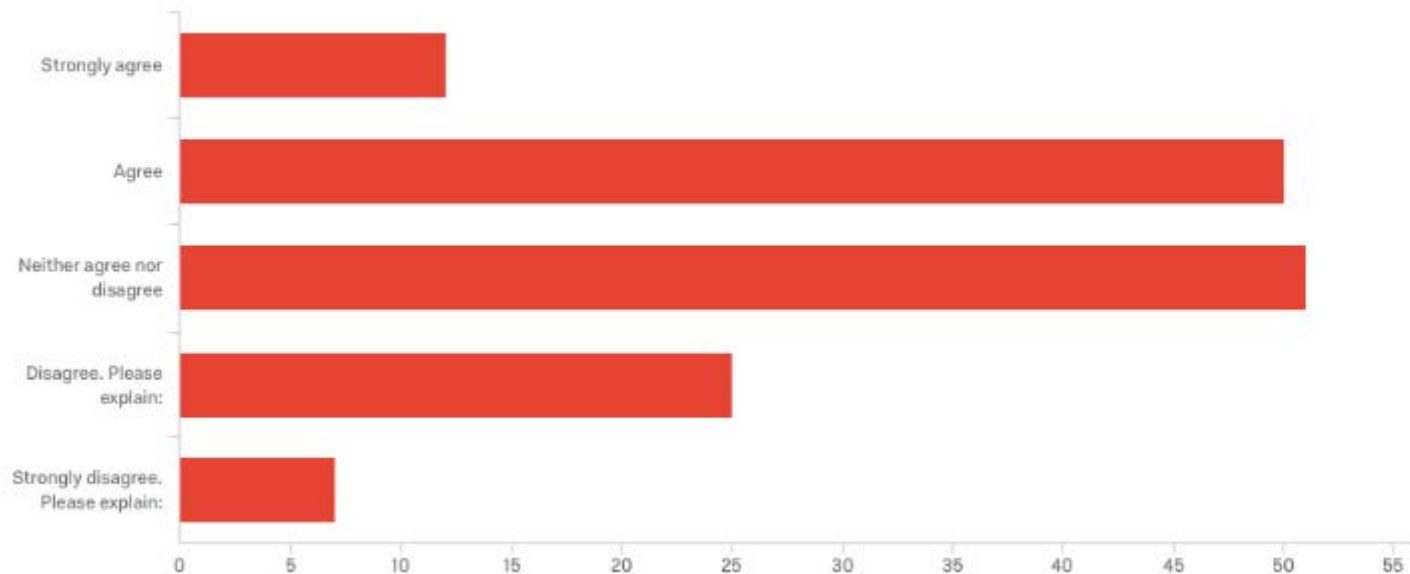


**“Only one teacher I knew last year spoke highly and nicely of transgender people. Many others either ignore that we exist, or they put us down. No more of that. Please, help schools to give accurate, helpful, and kind information about gender identity and sexuality.”**



# Trans Youth in Wisconsin

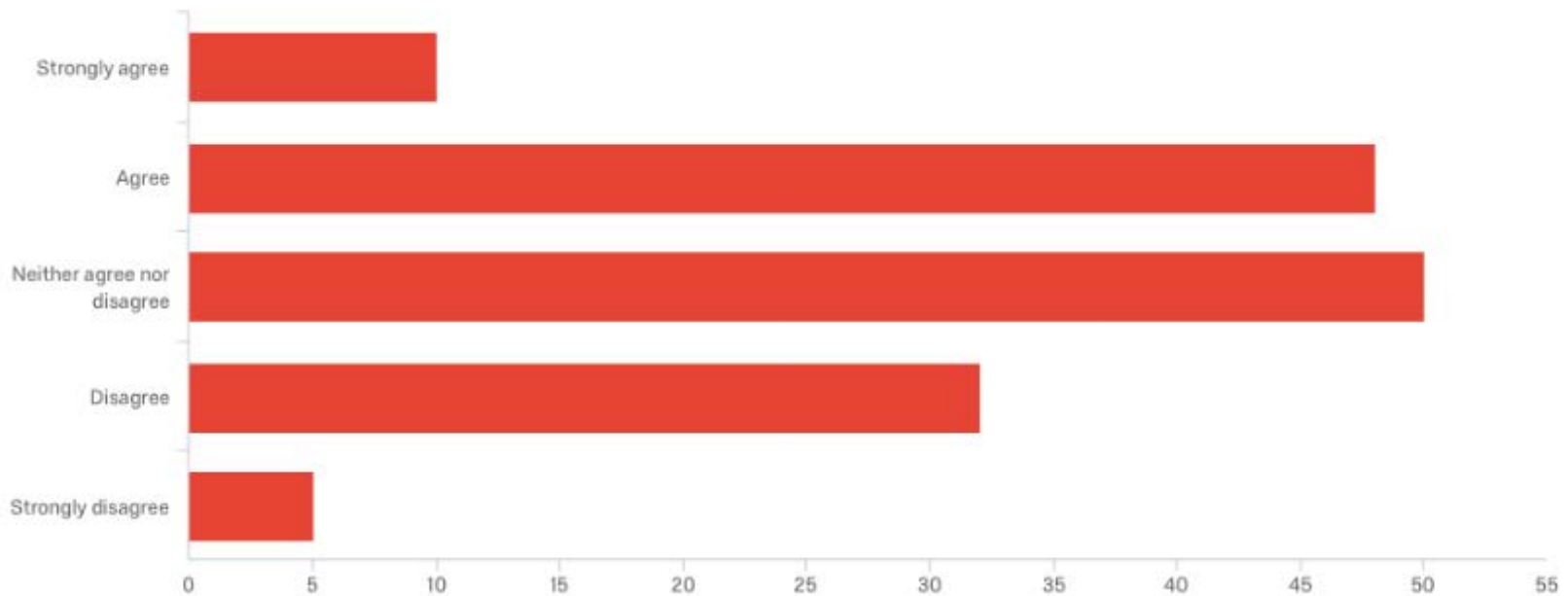
- 170 trans youth across Wisconsin
- 57% report that they do not feel as though they belong at school (neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree)





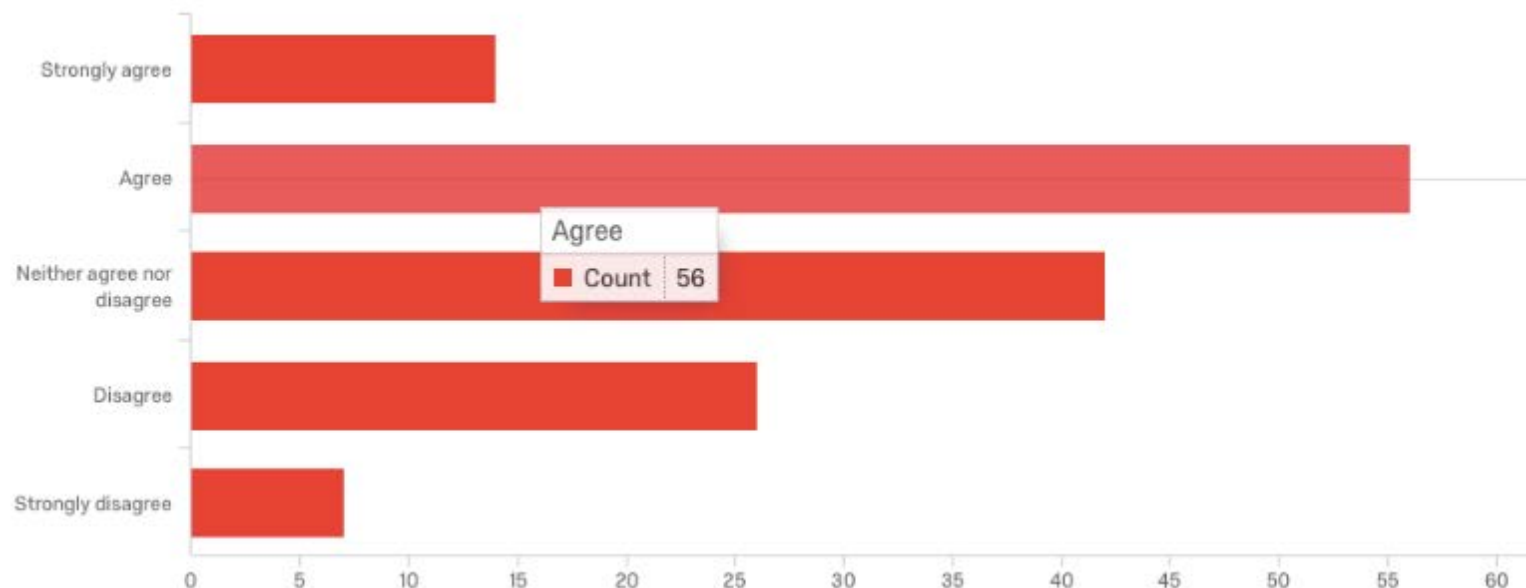
# Feeling Safe at School

- 39% of trans youth feel safe in school (agree, strongly agree)



# Teachers and other Adults Treat Youth Fairly

- 47% report that teachers and other adults treat youth fairly at school (strongly agree, agree)



# Mental Health Trans Youth Wisconsin

- Depression—85.6%
- Anxiety—78.4%
- Suicidal thoughts—63.3%
- Stress—51.2%
- Gender dysphoria—54.7%
- Relationship issues—30.2%
- PTSD—24.5%
- Eating disorder—22.3%
- ADD/ADHD—15.8%
- Anger issues—12.2%
- Bipolar disorder—11.5%
- Borderline personality disorder—9.4%

• Grief or loss—23%

# Specific Harmful Practices toward LGBTQ Students in Schools

- Coming out is secretive and shameful
- Faculty and staff ignoring LGBTQ students
- Not having anyone to talk to about these issues
- Making students create support spaces for themselves
- Giving in to fear
- Untrained staff
- Lack of support around healthy relationships
- Health classes ignoring LGBTQ sexuality
- Associating administration with “bad kids”

# It would have been great if...

- Training staff around LGBTQ students
  - How to intervene when you see bullying
  - How to talk to students who come out to you
- Setting aside a space for LGBTQ students to talk to counselors and let them know that this is an option (make sure your counselors are competent!)
- Changing sex education and health classes
- Have a reporting system regarding harassment—make this explicit to students
- Explicit consequences that focus on anti-LGBTQ language and bullying

# Self Assessment

- Does your school have a GSA?
- Does your school district have a staff member whose job is fully dedicated to LGBTQ students?
- Does your school have an affirming policy about trans and gender diverse students' bathroom use?
- Do you provide trainings to faculty and staff about how to intervene when LGBTQ students hear anti-LGBTQ language or are harassed at school?
- Does your school district explicitly state that LGBTQ issues should be a part of the sex education curriculum?

# Resources

- Contact GSAFE
  - <https://www.gsafewi.org>
- Have a mandated PD training for all faculty and staff
  - <https://www.gsafewi.org/programs/educator-training/>
- School counselors and psychologists should demonstrate competency
  - Take courses focused on LGBTQ clients
  - Certification programs:
    - <https://online.drexel.edu/online-degrees/public-health-degrees/cert-lgbt/index.aspx>
    - [http://s3.amazonaws.com/amo\\_hub\\_content/Association140/files/path-to-certification.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/amo_hub_content/Association140/files/path-to-certification.pdf)
- Reporting procedures updated
  - Simply making an anonymous reporting tool doesn't go far enough
  - Train teachers and staff what is reportable
- Improve LGBTQ sex education
  - <https://www.glsen.org/blog/including-lgbt-content-sex-education-four-wrong-ways-and-one-right-one>





- Schools and admin often think they are doing better than they are—Dunning-Kruger effect
- There is nothing wrong in asking for help—and you're always on the right side of the debate when you're fighting for civil rights in schools

# For More Information About:

- Mental health interventions...
- Mental health disparities...
- Supportive strategies...
- Psychological processes...



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