



SUPPORTING LGBTQ YOUTH: CREATING INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES MAY 02, 2016

ISSUES AFFECTING LGBTQ YOUTH

Lauren Szyper

San Mateo County Pride Initiative



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PRIDE INITIATIVE

- A health equity initiative overseen by San Mateo County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Service's Office of Diversity and Equity created in 2007

- Meets the second Wednesday of every month:

AAA NCNU San Mateo Office

1650 South Delaware Street, San Mateo, CA 94402

3:30-5:00



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PRIDE INITIATIVE VISION AND MISSION

To be an inclusive environment based on equality and parity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and two spirit (LGBTQQI2S) communities of San Mateo County (SMC)



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PRIDE INITIATIVE

PURPOSE

- Serve as a liaison to the San Mateo County LGBTQ Commission
- Organize and provide countywide training and support on LGBTQ issues and efforts
- Help to facilitate networking around LGBTQ efforts in San Mateo County
- Leads the planning of the annual pride celebration



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PRIDE INITIATIVE CURRENT CO-CHAIRS

- Katy Davis, PhD, LCSW

Workforce Education and Training

Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Office of Diversity and Equity

kdavis@smcgov.org

- Lauren Szyper, MS

Program Manager

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Community Action Response Team

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Behavioral Health
& Recovery Services
SAN MATEO COUNTY
Office of Diversity and Equity

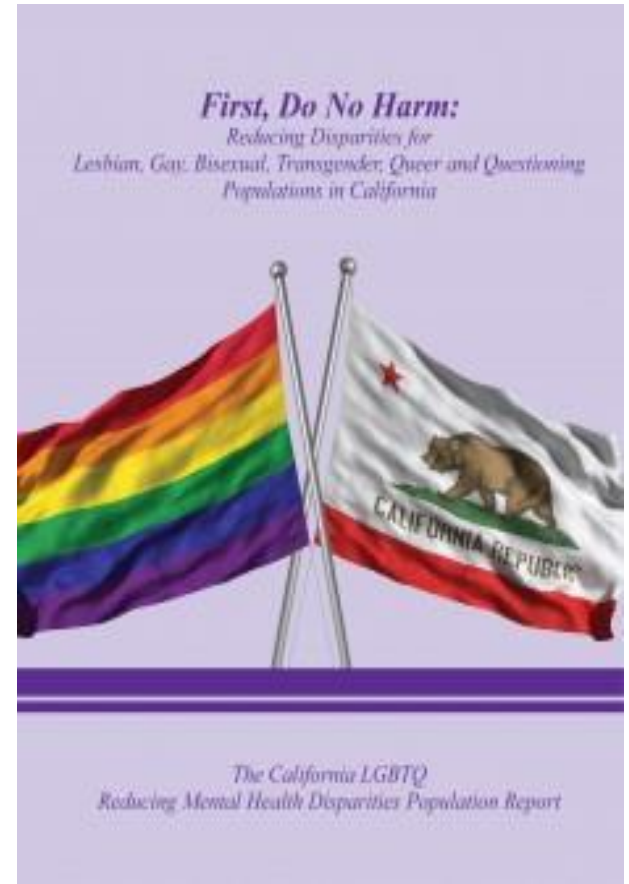


THE CALIFORNIA LGBTQ REDUCING MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES POPULATION REPORT

A two-year study conducted by the Equality California Institute and Mental Health America of Northern California funded through the Mental Health Services Act and released in December of 2012.

The study examined the efficacy of and access to mental health care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Californians.

The LGBTQ Commission and Pride Initiative hosted a community forum in 2014 to update findings in San Mateo County.



CHALLENGES FOUND FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

- LGBTQ youth are challenged to accomplish the already tedious normative developmental tasks of adolescence in a homophobic and heterosexist society.
- LGBTQ youth are coming out at an earlier age than previous generations, age 15 versus age 19 to 23 in the 1980's (D'Augelli, 2006).



CHALLENGES FACED BY LGBTQ YOUTH: LACK OF FAMILY ACCEPTANCE

- Youth who disclose sexual orientation to rejecting families are more likely to be victimized within their own families and either run away or be kicked out of their homes and estranged from their families.
- Higher incidence of homelessness
 - 20% to 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBT
 - Among the documented 1.6 million homeless youth across America, 40% are transgender.
 - LGBT homeless youth are at higher risk for sexual victimization, mental health problems and unsafe sexual practices



CHALLENGES FACED BY LGBTQ YOUTH: LACK OF FAMILY ACCEPTANCE

LGB young adults who reported high levels of family rejection during adolescence were:

- 8.4x more likely to report a suicide attempt
- 5.9x more likely to report high levels of depression
- 3.4x more likely to use illegal drugs
- 3.4x more likely to engage in unprotected sex

...compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.

More than 50% of transgender teens have had at least one suicide attempt by their 20th birthday



Source: C. Ryan Study in Pediatrics, 2009



CHALLENGES FACED BY LGBTQ YOUTH: VULNERABILITY FOR ABUSE

Vulnerability of youth growing up being abused by family members who reject their sexual or gender identity.

- Internalizing the world as unsafe
- Abuse becoming more normalized
- Increased risk of youth seeking partners who are also abusive
 - Further risk of their same-sex partner threatening to tell their parents that they are dating which perpetuates the dating violence for fear that they could be abused by both their family and their partner simultaneously



RATES OF LGBT-RELATED BULLYING

- **LGBTQ youth are significantly more likely to be “targets” of bullying, irrespective of the specific nature of the bullying.**
 - Particularly true of youth with gender-variant appearance, traits, and behaviors.
- **LGBTQ-specific forms of bullying occur at alarming rates (2009 National School Climate Survey)**
 - 84.6% reported being verbally harassed
 - 72.4% heard homophobic remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke”
 - 40.1% reported being physically harassed
 - 18.8% reported being physically assaulted
- **Gender Expression**
 - 63.7% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed
 - 27.2% reported being physically harassed
 - 12.5% reported being physically assaulted
 - More than a third (39.9%) felt unsafe



ISSUES FACED BY GENDER EXPANSIVE YOUTH IN SCHOOL

- 26.1% of students have experienced physical harassment at school due to their gender expression not being what others expect or feel comfortable with
- 11.8% have been physically assaulted
- LGBT students are 5 times more likely to have skipped school in the last month due to safety concerns



Source: GLSEN 2005 survey 1732 students ages 13-20yrs from 50 states from Trans Youth Family Allies



ISSUES FACED BY GENDER EXPANSIVE YOUTH IN SCHOOL

- The avg. GPA for gender variant students feeling physically harassed was $\frac{1}{2}$ grade lower (2.6 vs. 3.1) than students experiencing less harassment
- LGBT students were 2x more likely as the general population of students to report they are NOT planning post-secondary education
- States with inclusive anti-bullying laws and policies that have specific categories for sexual identity and gender identity have significantly lower rates of verbal harassment (31.6% vs. 40.8%)



Source: GLSEN 2005 survey 1732 students ages 13-20yrs from 50 states from Trans Youth Family Allies



SAFE SCHOOLS RESEARCH BRIEF

- Data from the 2003, 2004, and 2005 Preventing School Harassment (PSH) survey.
- The survey was designed to study the experiences of LGBTQQ high school students in California.
- The PSH was developed by the California Safe Schools Coalition and administered by the Gay-Straight Alliance Network

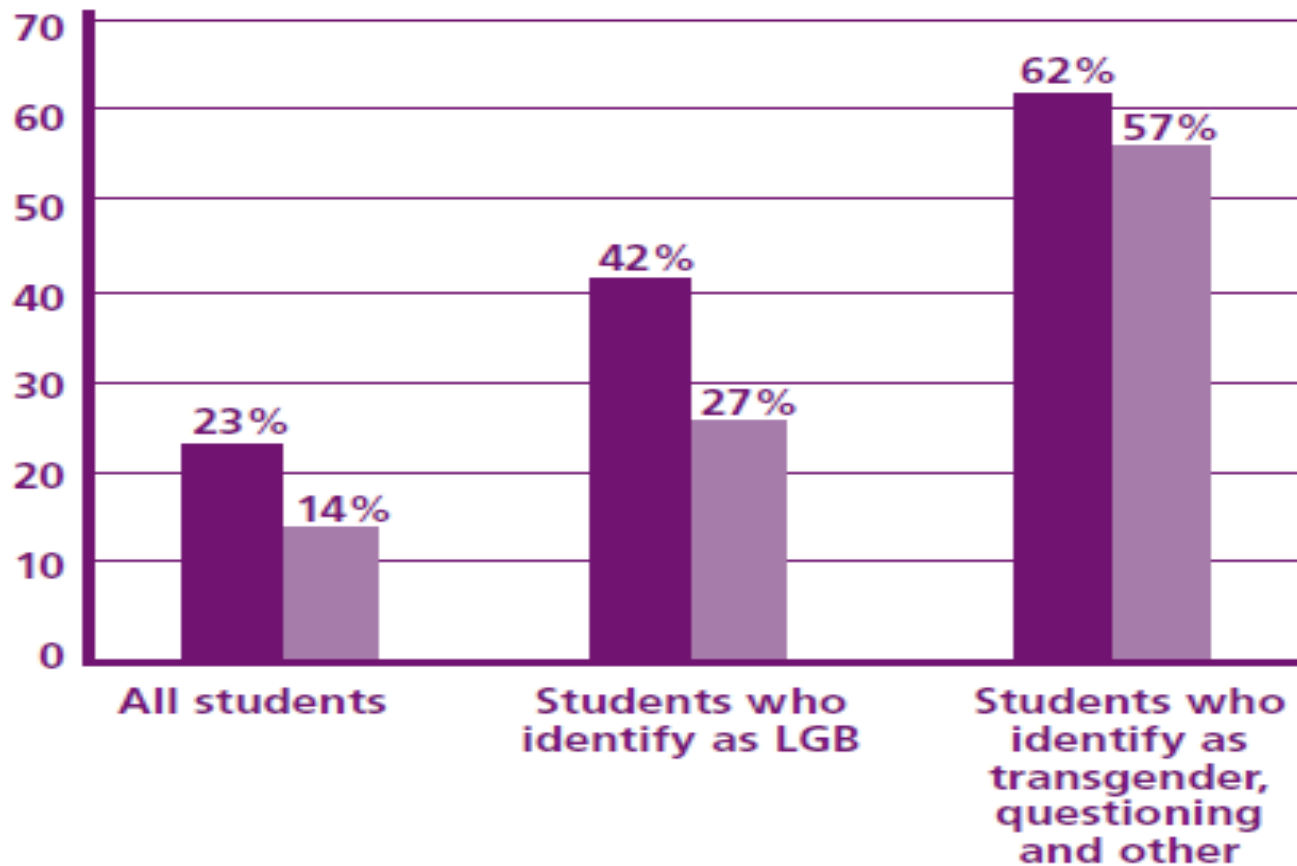


SAFE SCHOOLS RESEARCH BRIEF



HARASSMENT BASED ON GENDER NON-CONFORMITY IS PREVALENT

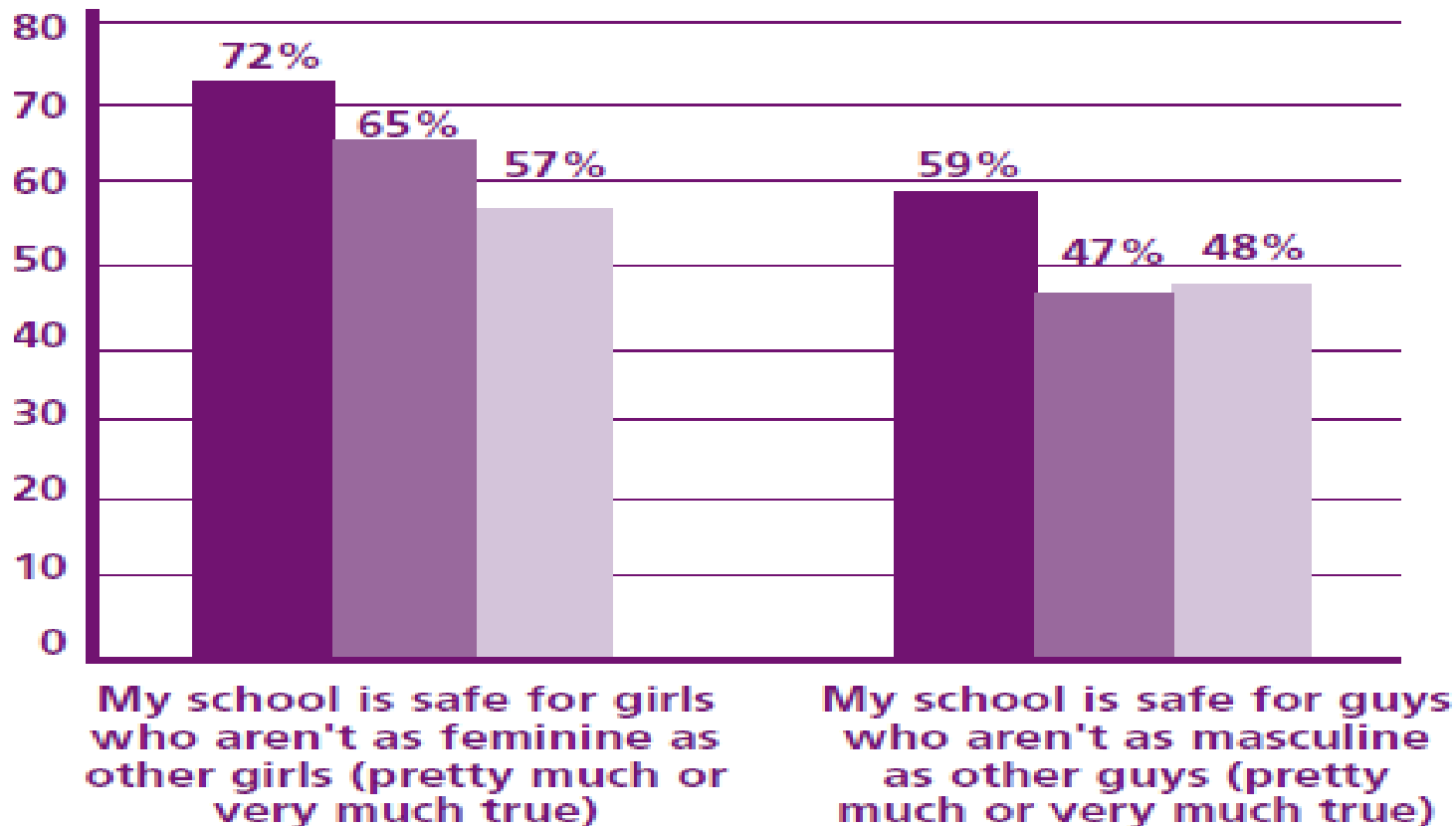
- Students harassed based on gender non-conformity
- Students harassed more than once based on gender non-conformity



SAFE SCHOOLS RESEARCH BRIEF

SCHOOL CLIMATES ARE UNSAFE FOR GENDER NON-CONFORMING STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY BOYS

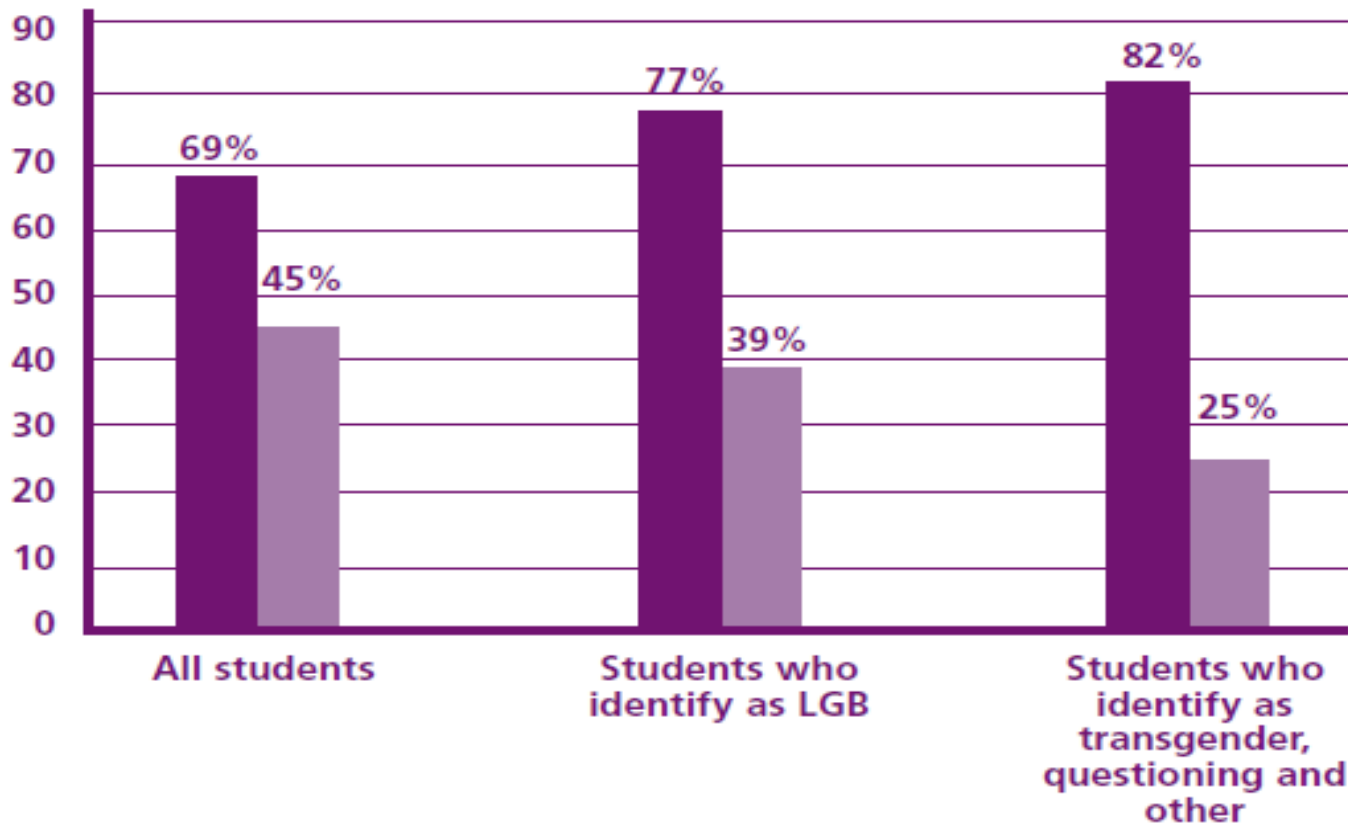
- All students
- Students who identify as LGB
- Students who identify as transgender, questioning or other



SAFE SCHOOLS RESEARCH BRIEF

NEGATIVE COMMENTS BASED ON GENDER PRESENTATION ARE COMMON, AND TEACHER OR STAFF INTERVENTION IS UNCOMMON

- I hear students make negative comments based on gender presentation sometimes or often
- I hear teachers/staff stop negative comments based on gender presentation sometimes or often



EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE DISPARITIES LGBTQ YOUTH FACE

- Gay Straight Alliances (G.S.A.) in schools
 - A G.S.A. collaborative has been formed by the LGBTQ Commission involving the Pride Initiative, the GSA Network, the San Mateo County Youth Commission, Outlet Adolescent Counseling Services, Gender Spectrum, and others to better support existing GSAs and help create new GSAs in all schools and grade levels through San Mateo County
- Youth involvement in the Pride Initiative and the LGBTQ Commission
 - Youth commissioners who work specifically with the Pride Initiative
 - LGBTQ Commissioner who is presently in high school providing a youth perspective
 - Close collaboration with Outlet Adolescent Counseling



EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE DISPARITIES LGBTQ YOUTH FACE

- County-wide training on working with LGBTQ youth promoting affirmative approaches
 - BHRS Pride Initiative facilitated training
 - Outlet Adolescent Counseling Services U.N.I.Q.U.E trainings
- New funding becoming available through the Mental Health Services Act Innovation Funds to create a LGBTQ center in San Mateo County with a youth component to address the disparity of LGBTQ-specific services in this County
- Laws such as AB 1266 which advocates for protection of transgender and gender expansive students in schools.



PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

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