



Presented By: PEI
Student Intern Liz Butler

BRIDGING THE GAP:

Addressing Mental Health
Disparities Among LGBTQ+ Youth

Dane County Youth Assessment
2024

INTRODUCTION

Presenter: Liz Butler, a Policy & Administrative Masters of Social Work Student Interning with Connie Bettin this year at the Department.

Research Focus: Mental health disparities among LGBTQ+ youth in Dane County and Wisconsin.

Research Question: How do social, cultural, and environmental factors influence mental health disparities in LGBTQ+ youth, and what strategies can effectively reduce these disparities?



The significance of this issue cannot be overstated. Mental health disparities among LGBTQ+ youth are pronounced, as they often encounter heightened rates of mental health challenges, including suicidality, depression, and anxiety. These challenges frequently arise from societal discrimination, prejudice, and minority stressors, adversely affecting their overall well-being and potentially leading to severe consequences.

Research conducted by the National Institutes of Health indicates that both U.S. and international studies consistently reveal that LGBTQ and Transgender youth report higher rates of emotional distress, symptoms associated with mood and anxiety disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior compared to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. This trend is also evident among the youth in Dane County, reflecting broader national patterns.

DCYA OVERVIEW



The project is funded by:

- Dane County Human Services
- United Way of Dane County
- Public Health Madison Dane County
- City of Madison
- 17 school districts



A county-wide survey given to 7th-12th grades every 3 years, starting in 1980



In 2024, approximately 25,000 7th- 12th-grade students completed the survey



In 2024, approximately 25,000 students from these grades participated in the survey during the period of January-April of 2024, before we saw a new clear assault against the LGBTQ+ community.



WHY SEPRATE LGBTQ & THE T?

Dane County Youth Assessment Categories



Transgender Identity



Sexual Orientation



Gender Identity

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>

Dane County has opted to separate these identities within the youth assessment to recognize the distinct challenges young individuals encounter based on their diverse identities.

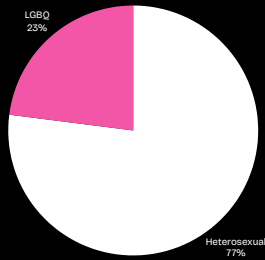
Consequently, data regarding sexuality and transgender identities from the youth assessment will be analyzed separately for comparative purposes, while state data will remain inclusive of both identities, with the occasional inclusion of important separation of Transgender data points that will be exclusive to the inclusive data.

UNDERSTANDING THE DATA - LGBTQ

DEMOGRAPHIC

High School Youth - 15,459

Those who identify as LGBTQ - 3,499



WHAT IS LGBTQ?

As classified in the Youth Assessment:

1. gay or lesbian
2. bisexual
3. pansexual
4. questioning my sexual orientation
5. asexual
6. other, prefer to self-describe

MENTAL HEALTH DATA POINTS

Mental health statistical disparities found between LGBTQ and heterosexual peers in Dane County:

- Major depressive disorder
- Generalized anxiety
- Self-harm
- Suicide ideation

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



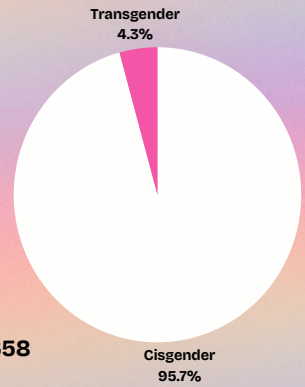
UNDERSTANDING THE DATA -TRANSGENDER

Cisgender: denoting or relating to a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex registered for them at birth; not transgender.

Transgender: individuals whose gender identity and/or expression differ from what is typically associated with the sex assigned at birth

High School Youth - 15,459

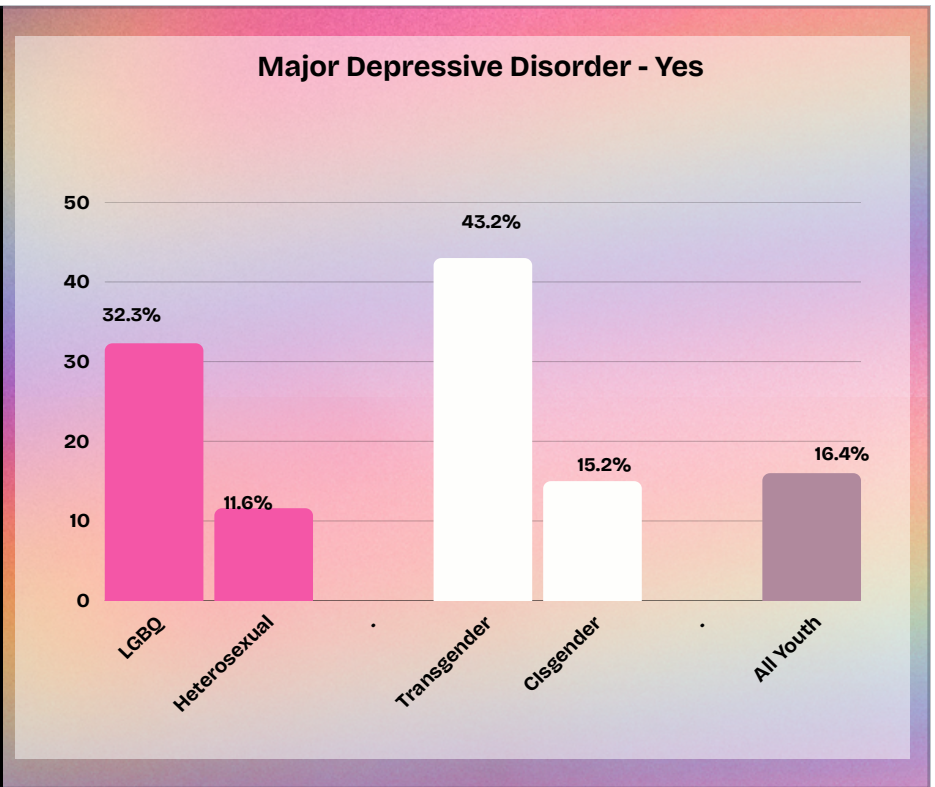
Those who identify as Transgender - 658



MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



(PHQ2_summary Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Major depressive disorder (PHQ-2))
Prevalence of Depressive Disorder Among Youth:

LGBTQ Youth: 32.3%

Heterosexual Youth: 11.6%

Transgender Youth: 43.2%

Cisgender Youth: 15.2%

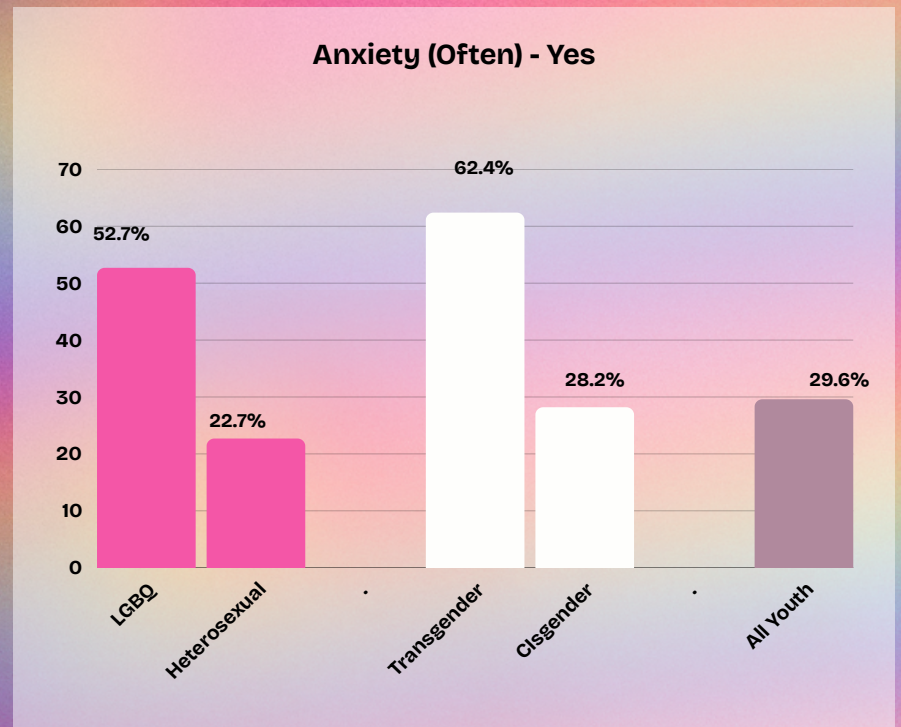
Overall Youth with Depressive Disorders: 16.4%

This analysis highlights the significant disparities in mental health, revealing that while the overall prevalence of depressive disorders among youth is relatively low, LGBTQ and transgender youth face a higher risk compared to their peers, raising concerns we did not see before when looking at overall youth.

ANXIETY

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



(During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?)

The data reveal the following statistics regarding the prevalence of generalized anxiety among different youth demographics:

LGBTQ Youth: 52.7%

Heterosexual Youth: 22.7%

Transgender Youth: 62.4%

Cisgender Youth: 28.2%

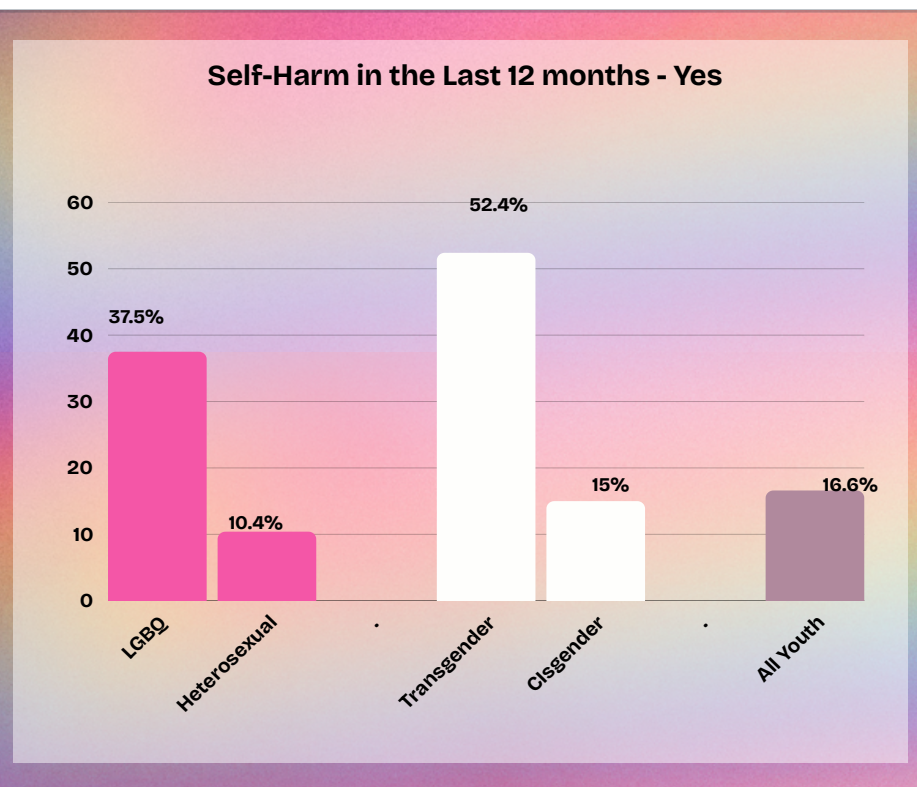
Overall Prevalence of Generalized Anxiety Among All Youth: 29.6%

Among youth struggling with anxiety, there is a notably higher prevalence compared to those facing depressive disorders. The data indicates significantly elevated rates of anxiety among LGBTQ and transgender youth, with over half of LGBTQ and transgender high school students reporting frequent anxiety. By analyzing this data, we gain insight into the prevalence of anxiety disorders within our LGBTQ+ youth population. Specifically, transgender youth face anxiety at twice the rate of the overall youth demographic, an important detail that may be overlooked without isolating this group in the data.

SELF-HARM

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



During the past 12 months, how many times did you do something to hurt yourself on purpose, without wanting to die, such as cutting or burning yourself?

The data on self-harm among youth reveals significant disparities across our youth:

LGBTQ youth: 37.3%

Heterosexual youth: 10.4%

Transgender youth: 52.4%

Cisgender youth: 15%

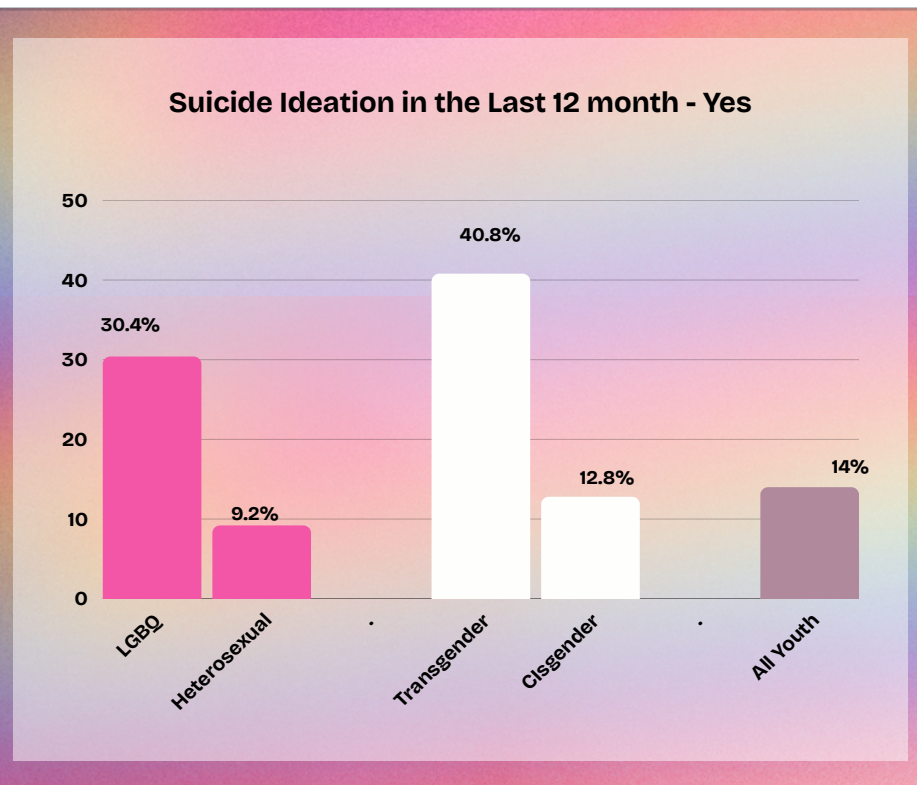
Overall, 16.6% of all youth have engaged in self-harm within the last year.

While any instance of self-harm among our youth is concerning, the rates among LGBTQ+ youth are particularly alarming. Transgender youth report a self-harm rate of 52.4%, which is distressingly high. Self-harm is often viewed as a means to express or cope with emotional distress. There are numerous potential triggers for emotional distress that lead individuals to contemplate self-harm as a way to cope with their emotions. Considering the previous data indicating high rates of depression and anxiety among LGBTQ+ youth, it is reasonable to conclude that many young individuals are experiencing emotional distress, which likely contributes to the concerning rates of self-harm, particularly among our transgender youth.

SUICIDE IDEATION

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



During the past 12 months, have you thought seriously about killing yourself?

LGBQ youth experience a significantly higher rate of suicide ideation compared to their heterosexual peers, with 30.4% of LGBQ youth reporting such thoughts in the past 12 months, compared to 9.2% of heterosexual youth.

Similarly, 40.8% of transgender youth have reported experiencing suicidal ideation in the last year, in contrast to 12.8% of cisgender youth.

Overall, 14% of all youth have experienced suicidal ideation in the past 12 months.

As seen in the graph, LGBQ and transgender youth have reported suicide ideation at rates three times higher than their counterparts. The fact that 40.8% of transgender youth have considered suicide in the last year is deeply concerning.

At a national level, it has been reported that transgender youth attempt suicide at rates more than four times higher than their cisgender counterparts. This issue is reflected in our Dane County data, which shows youth self-reporting suicidal thoughts. Among individuals aged 15 to 19, suicide is the second leading cause of death, and it is the leading cause of death for those aged 14 to 15. Given the alarming rates of suicidal ideation among youth in Dane County, this is particularly troubling, especially in light of previous indications of emotional distress within our youth population. By analyzing this data, we can identify underlying concerns for our youth that are not reflected in the overall percentage reported in the assessment.

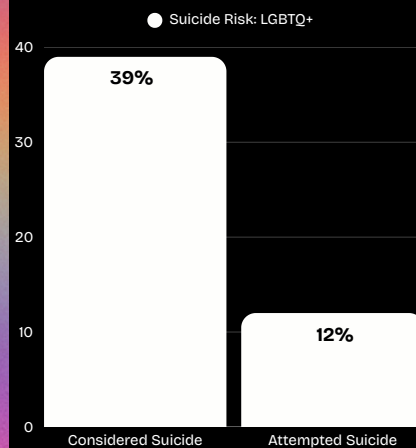
STATE LEVEL DATA

DEMOGRAPHIC

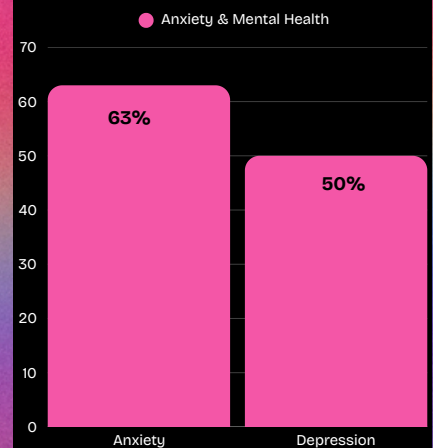
The Trevor Project's 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People, which captured the experiences of more than 18,000 LGBTQ+ young people ages 13-24 across the United States in 2024. The Wisconsin report features data from 358 LGBTQ+ youth living in Wisconsin.



SUICIDE RISK



ANXIETY & DEPRESSION



The Trevor Project's 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People

The Trevor Project's 2024 survey examined the experiences of over 18,000 individuals aged 13 to 24 across the United States, with the Wisconsin report focusing on data from 358 LGBTQ+ youth living in the state.

While the survey combines responses from participants who identify as LGBQ and transgender, it also presents a distinct breakdown for transgender respondents, which will be highlighted in this webinar.

Suicide Risk

- 39% of LGBTQ+ young people in Wisconsin reported seriously contemplating suicide in the past year; among them, 44% of transgender and nonbinary individuals indicated the same.
- 12% of LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin attempted suicide within the last year, including 12% of transgender and nonbinary young people.

Anxiety & Depression

- 63% of LGBTQ+ young people in Wisconsin reported experiencing anxiety, with 68% of transgender and nonbinary youth affected.
- 50% reported experiencing symptoms of depression, including 54% of transgender and nonbinary individuals.



THE CONNECTION TO MENTAL HEALTH & HOW STRESS IMPACTS IT

Teenagers Experience Stress Around

- Being Discriminated Against
- Being Bullied
- Through Experiencing Family Risk Factors

Higher Consequences in Youth

- Higher Levels of Stress can Lead to:
 - Anxiety Disorders
 - Depression
 - Self-Esteem

THE IMPACT OF STRESS

Cianey, C. (2023, August 8). Exploring the impact of school stress on teens' emotional well-being. Relational Psych. <https://www.relatinalpsych.group/articles/exploring-the-impact-of-school-stress-on-teens-emotional-well-being>

Teenagers Experience Stress Related to:

- Discrimination
- Bullying
- Family Risk Factors

For teenagers, the effects of stress can be more pronounced than in adults, primarily due to their developing brains and bodies. Elevated stress levels can result in significant mental health challenges, including anxiety disorders, depression, and diminished self-esteem.

Consequences of Increased Stress Include:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Depression
- Low Self-Esteem

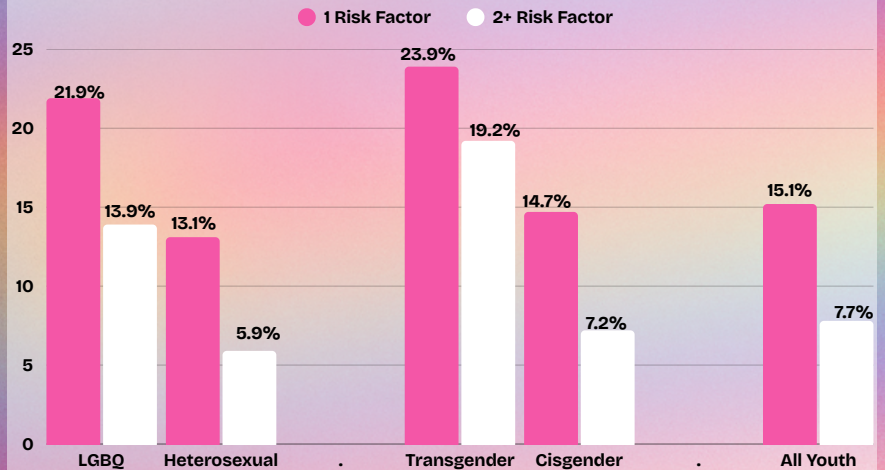
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES: FAMILY RISK FACTORS

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCom mission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>

FAMILY RISK FACTORS

1. My parents have a mental health problem that worries me.
2. My parents have been in prison or jail.
3. My parents have hit me, leaving bruises, marks or any injury.
4. My parents get drunk at least once a week.
5. My parents abuse prescription or nonprescription drugs.
6. My parents physically fight with each other or their partners.



Family Risk Factors identified in the survey include the following:

1. My parents have been incarcerated in prison or jail.
2. My parents have physically abused me, resulting in bruises, marks, or other injuries.
3. My parents consume alcohol at least once a week.
4. My parents misuse prescription or non-prescription drugs.
5. My parents engage in physical altercations with each other or their partners.

One Risk Factor:

- LGBTQ Youth: 21.9%
- Heterosexual Youth: 13.1%
- Difference: 8.8% more LGBTQ youth have experienced at least one family risk factor.

- Transgender Youth: 23.9%

- Cisgender Youth: 14.7%

- Difference: 9.2% more transgender youth have experienced at least one family risk factor.

- Overall Percentage of Youth with One Family Risk Factor: 15.1%

Two Risk Factors:

- LGBTQ Youth: 13.9%

- Heterosexual Youth: 5.9%

- Difference: 8% more LGBTQ youth have experienced two family risk factors.

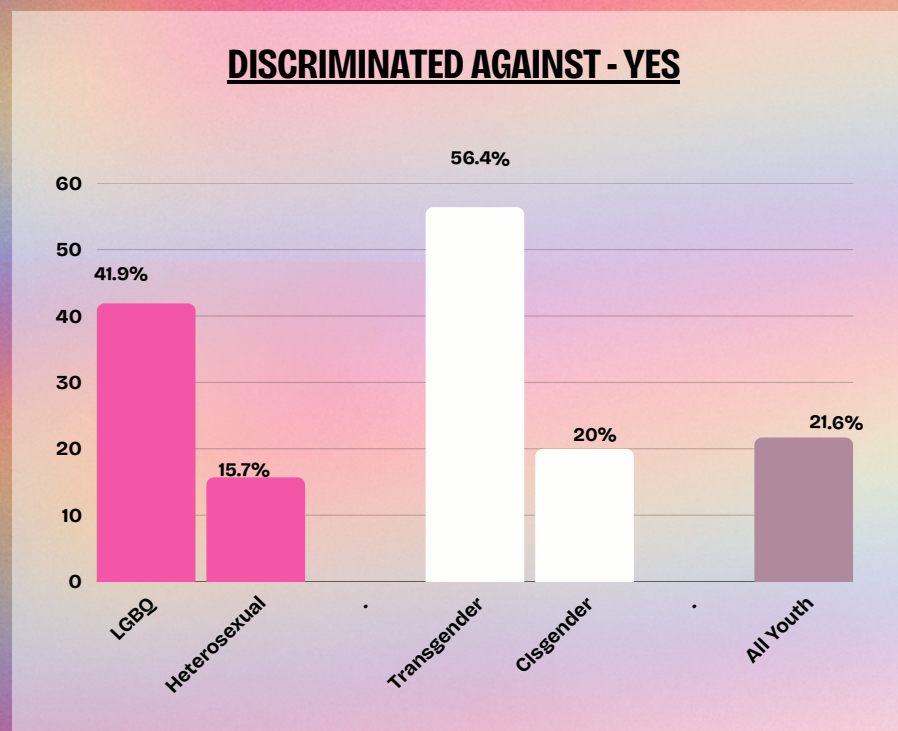
- Transgender Youth: 19.2%
 - Cisgender Youth: 7.2%
 - Difference: 12% more transgender youth have experienced two family risk factors.
-
- Overall Percentage of Youth with Two Family Risk Factors: 7.7%

Family risk factors can profoundly affect mental health by creating stressful home environments for youth, increasing the likelihood of developing mental health disorders, and impacting the quality of early childhood experiences. These factors may lead to various mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, and can also result in higher rates of self-harm and suicidal ideation. The data reveal that transgender youth experience a greater prevalence of two or more family risk factors, while LGBQ youth also show elevated rates compared to their heterosexual peers. These experiences likely contribute to heightened mental health disparities, as previously discussed.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES: DISCRIMINATION

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



Have you been discriminated against, treated unfairly?

LGBQ youth face discrimination at a rate of 41.9%, in contrast to just 15.7% for their heterosexual peers, resulting in a significant disparity of 26.2% more LGBQ youth experiencing discrimination.

Transgender youth report even higher rates of discrimination at 56.4%, while cisgender youth experience a rate of 20%, leading to a difference of 36.4% more transgender youth encountering discrimination.

In total, 21.6% of all youth have faced some form of discrimination.

LGBTQ+ youth frequently endure discrimination based on their sexual or gender identities, which can distort their self-image and create insecurities about who they are. Those affected may feel pressured to conceal their true selves, as exposure to discrimination can lead to internalized homophobia or transphobia. Many young individuals might hide their identities out of fear of rejection or the belief that their identity is incorrect. The overall youth discrimination rate of 21.6% can arise from various factors, including race, religious beliefs, or nonconformity to societal stereotypes, which are also important considerations for the discrimination faced by LGBQ and transgender youth beyond their sexual or gender identity.

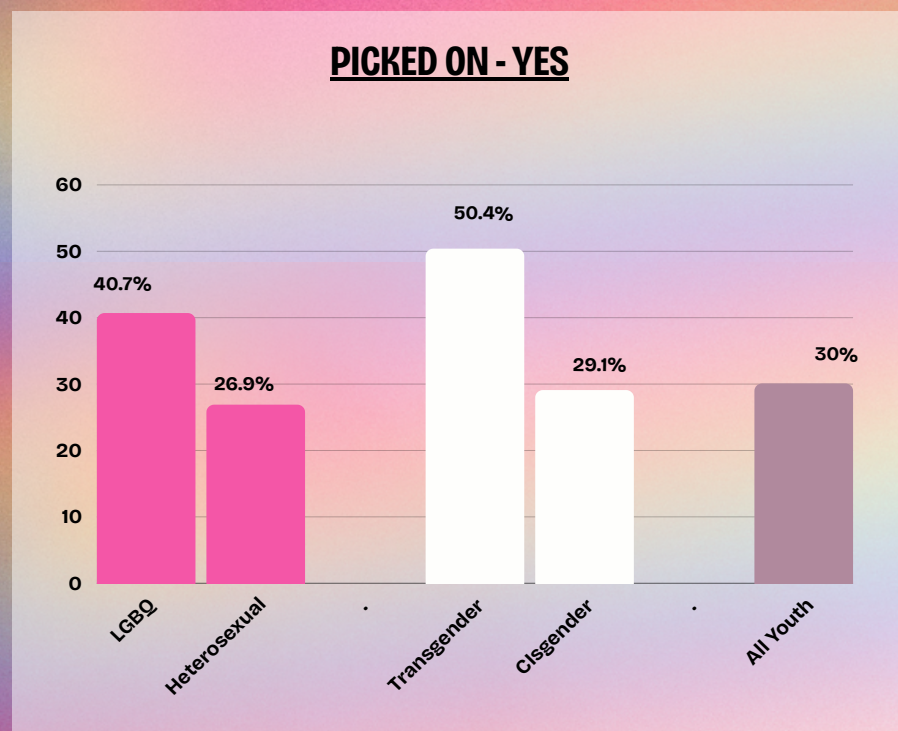
While this statistic may not seem alarming at first glance, the significantly higher rates of 41.9% for LGBQ youth and 56.4% for transgender youth highlight a critical issue regarding discrimination against our youth. This reality can profoundly impact their well-being during a vulnerable period in

their lives, leading to daily anxieties and an increased risk of depression stemming from negative perceptions of their self-identity.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES: PICKED ON

DCYA 2024

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<https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth/YouthCommission/Youth-Assessment/DCYA-2024-09252024.pdf>



How many times were you involved in these activities in the last 30 days . . . ? (victim of bullying)

- (a) Someone made unwanted sexual comments to me.
- (b) I got hit or pushed by other students.
- (c) Other students picked on me.
- (d) I told someone to stop harassing another student.
- (e) Other students made fun of me.
- (f) Other students called me names.

The following statistics highlight the incidence of bullying across various youth demographics:

- LGBTQ Youth: 40.7%
- Heterosexual Youth: 26.9%
- Difference: LGBTQ youth face bullying at a rate 13.8% higher.
- Transgender Youth: 50.4%
- Cisgender Youth: 29.1%
- Difference: Transgender youth experience bullying 21.3% more often.
- Overall: 30% of all youth report having been bullied.

While the disparities among youth being targeted may not seem alarming, it is concerning that half of our transgender youth reported experiencing bullying in the past 30 days. Negative treatment from others, such as bullying, is a significant and consistent risk factor for youth suicide.

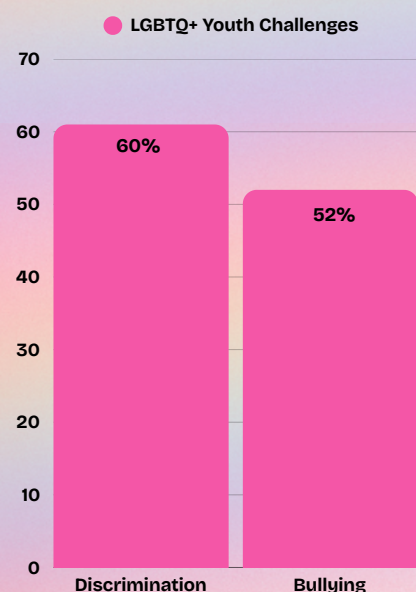
Additionally, LGBTQ youth encounter bullying at much higher rates than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. The fact that half of our transgender youth face bullying raises serious concerns, especially given the already heightened rates of suicidal thoughts among this group.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES: WISCONSIN DATA

Nath, R., Matthews, D.D., DeChants, J.P., Hobaica, S., Clark, C.M., Taylor, A.B., Muñoz, G. (2024). 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project.
www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2024

CHALLENGES FACED BY LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE IN WISCONSIN

- 24%: of LGBTQ+ young people in Wisconsin were physically threatened or harmed
- 60%: of LGBTQ+ young people in Wisconsin experienced discrimination
- 52% of LGBTQ+ young people in Wisconsin experienced bullying



Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Young People in Wisconsin

Research conducted by The Trevor Project in 2024 revealed alarming statistics regarding LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin. Specifically, 24% of LGBTQ+ young individuals reported being physically threatened or harmed due to their sexual orientation or gender identity within the past year.

Additionally, 60% of LGBTQ+ youth indicated they experienced discrimination during the same period. Notably, those who faced discrimination attempted suicide at more than double the rate of their peers who did not encounter such bias.

Furthermore, 52% reported being bullied, either in person or online, in the past year, with those affected exhibiting three times the likelihood of attempting suicide.

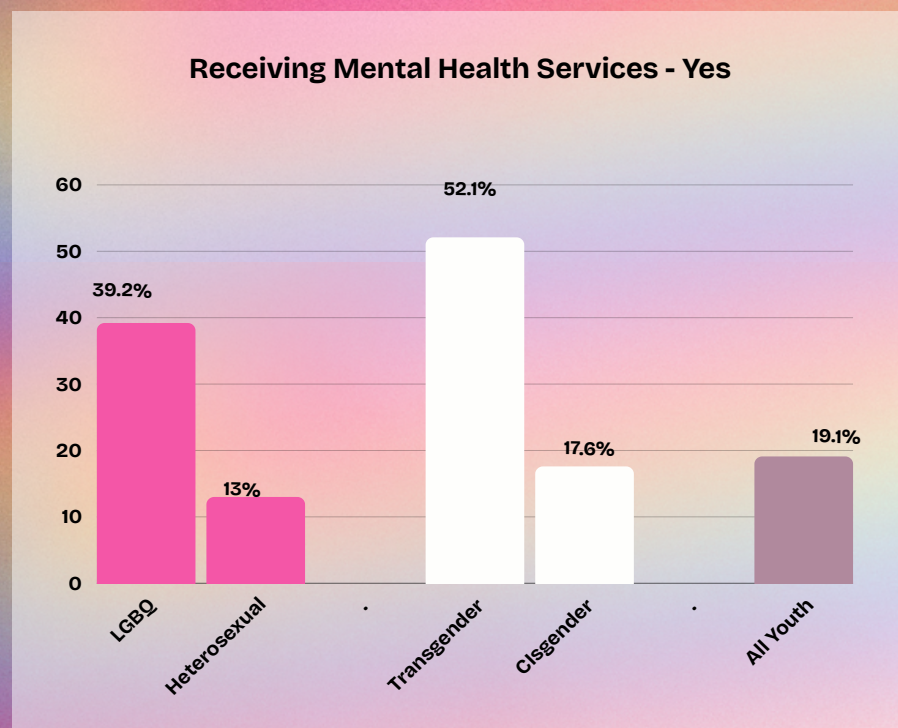
A photograph of a rainbow flag with silhouettes of people forming heart shapes with their hands. The image is framed by a purple border.

HOW PROTECTIVE FACTORS CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT OUR DANE COUNTY YOUTH

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR YOUTH: MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

DCYA 2024

2024 youth assessment. (2024, September 25).
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Are you currently receiving professional mental health services?

The first protective factor we will look at is those receiving mental health services.

LGBQ youth access mental health services at a rate of 39.2%, compared to just 13% of heterosexual youth. This creates a notable gap of 26.2%, highlighting that a significantly larger proportion of LGBQ youth seek these services.

For transgender youth, the access rate is 52.1%, while only 17.6% of cisgender youth utilize similar services. This results in a difference of 34.5%, indicating that transgender youth are more inclined to pursue mental health support.

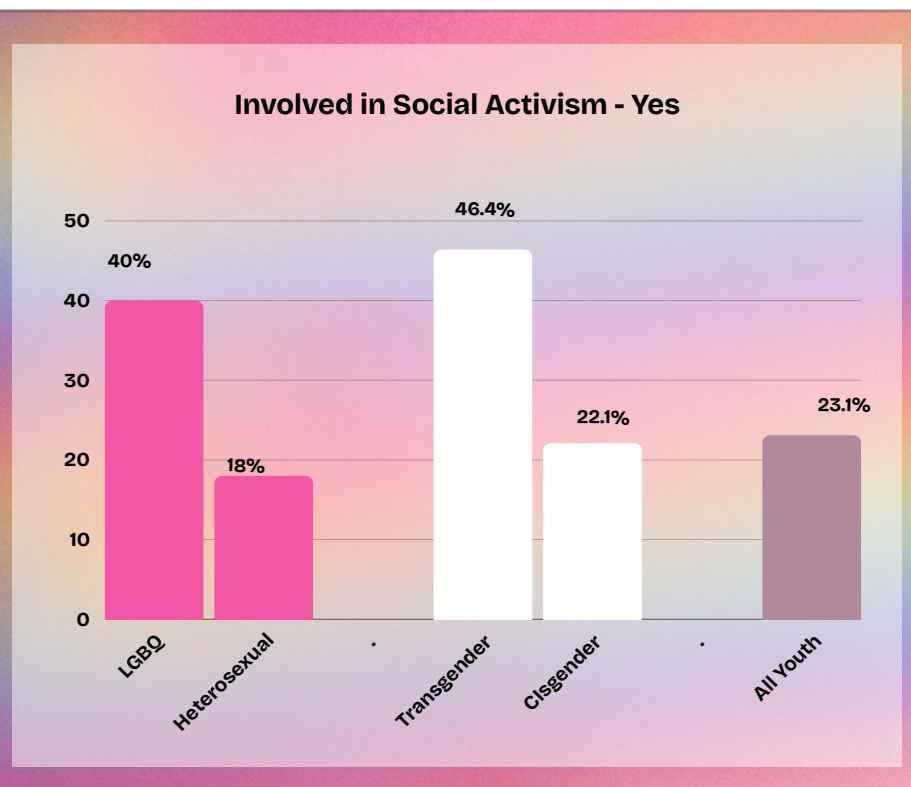
Overall, the proportion of all youth receiving mental health services is 19.1%.

Until now, our focus has been on the negative disparities affecting youth mental health, which are concerning. However, this slide illustrates that some protective factors are being utilized and are available to our youth. Nearly half of LGBQ youth can access mental health services, and more than half of transgender youth receive similar care. While this does not imply that all youth in need can obtain mental health services, it is encouraging to see that a significant portion of our youth can access the support they require.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR YOUTH: SOCIAL ACTIVISM

DCYA 2024

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Have you been involved in any social activism, like marches or protests?

Here are the statistics regarding the protective factors linked to participation in social activism:

- LGBTQ: 40%
- Heterosexual: 18%
- Transgender: 46.4%
- Cisgender: 22.1%

Additionally, the increased rates of engagement in social activism compared to their peers are as follows:

- LGBTQ: 22%
- Transgender: 24.3%

Furthermore, the percentage of youth actively participating in social activism is 23.1%.

While we may not know the specific issues that resonate with the youth involved in social activism, it is evident that LGBTQ+ youth activism plays a vital role in fostering safer, more inclusive environments for all. It enhances their resilience and promotes personal growth.

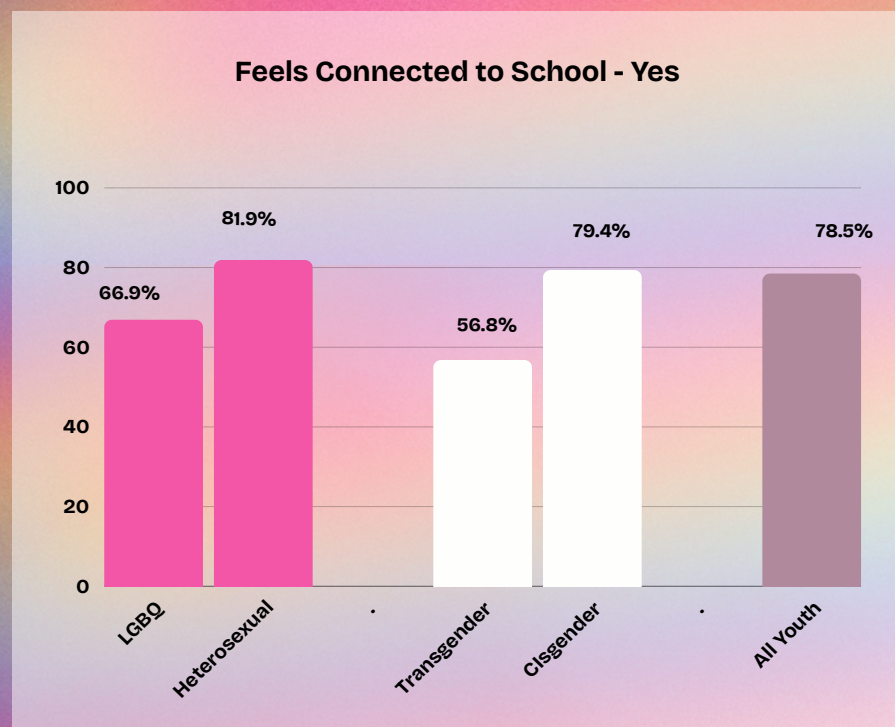
By participating in activism, young people can advocate for their rights, confront discrimination, and drive positive change in their communities and beyond. This engagement helps mitigate the negative effects of discrimination, allowing them to explore their identities in a constructive and

affirming manner. The active involvement of our youth reflects their passion and resilience in standing up for their beliefs, contributing to the development of positive character traits and higher self-esteem, which can significantly benefit their mental health.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR YOUTH: SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

DCYA 2024

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Feeling connected to school (SCALE)

- (a) The rules and expectations are clearly explained.
- (b) I feel close to people in my school.
- (c) I feel safe at my school.
- (d) Teachers and other adults treat students fairly.
- (e) There are adults I can talk to at school if I have a problem.
- (f) I feel like I belong at this school.

The following statistics illustrate the percentages of various groups in relation to their school connection:

- LGBTQ: 66.9%
- Heterosexual: 81.9%
- Transgender: 56.8%
- Cisgender: 79.4%

Notable higher rates of school connection include:

- Heterosexual: 15% higher
- Cisgender: 22.6% higher
- Overall youth feeling connected to school: 78.5%

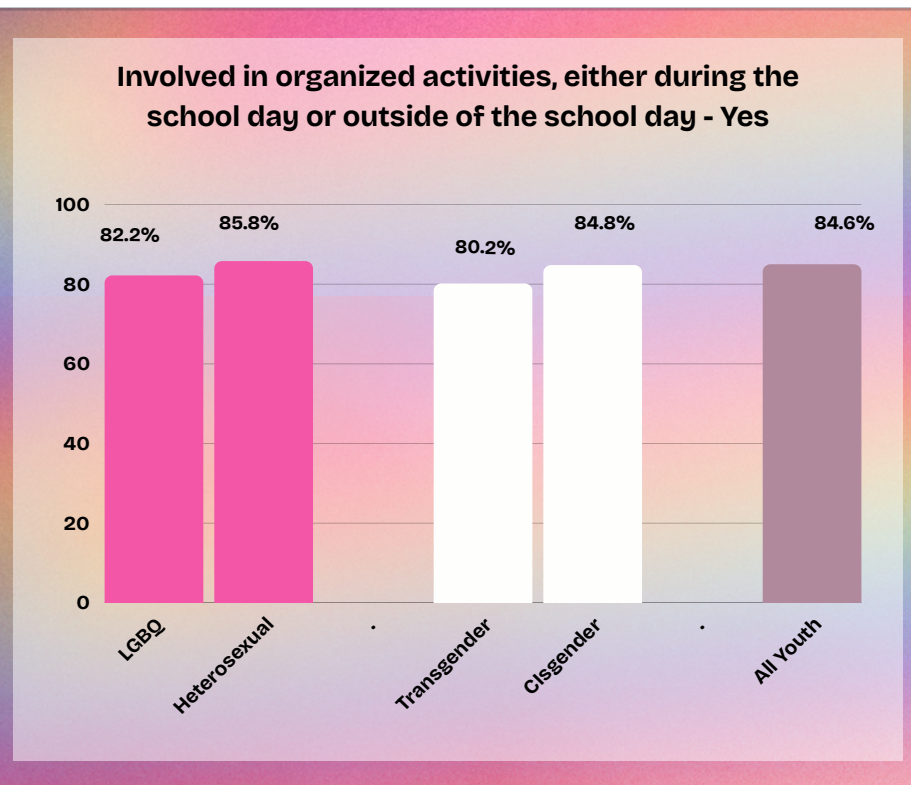
Social connections play a crucial role in supporting youth mental health by nurturing a sense of

belonging, alleviating feelings of loneliness and isolation, and offering support during challenging times. This positive influence is what we aspire to cultivate in our youth to enhance their feelings of acceptance and belonging in their daily lives.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR YOUTH: INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES

DCYA 2024

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The organized activities have been categorized as follows:

- Academic support, including tutoring and homework clubs
- School clubs or competitions, such as forensics and Model United Nations
- Programs centered around music, art, dance, or drama
- Religious or spiritual activities
- Additional programs, clubs, or activities available at schools, community centers, or within the neighborhood

The statistics below reflect the percentage of youth participating in these various groups:

- LGBTQ: 82.2%
- Heterosexual: 85.8%
 - A difference of 3.6% more heterosexual youth
- Transgender: 80.2%
- Cisgender: 84.8%
 - A difference of 4.6% more cisgender youth involved
- Youth who feel a connection to school: 84.6%

We observe a high level of youth engagement in organized activities. As emphasized earlier, this is crucial as it helps reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation—two prevalent factors that can adversely affect mental health. A high rate of youth involvement indicates the development of support systems and protective factors, with the majority of young people feeling connected to

some form of organized activity.



WHY SUPPORTIVE ADULTS ARE CRUCIAL FOR PROTECTING OUR YOUTH

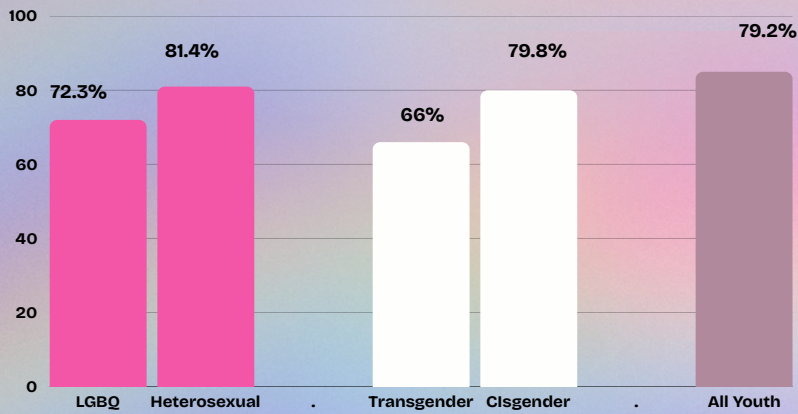
Teachers and Supportive Adults: Essential Pillars in Protecting Our Youth.

Research indicates that LGBTQ youth who have trusted adults present in their educational environments experience enhanced self-esteem (Dessel et al., 2017). Moreover, access to supportive peers serves as a protective factor against anxiety and depression, especially for those lacking familial support (Parra et al., 2018).

The perception of care from teachers correlates with a 34% reduction in the likelihood of suicide attempts among LGBTQ youth within the past year. Additionally, transgender and nonbinary individuals who reported high levels of gender identity acceptance from school professionals demonstrated significantly lower odds of attempting suicide during the same period.

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

How many adults can you rely on if you have a problem and need help (3+)?



How many adults can you rely on if you have a problem and need help?

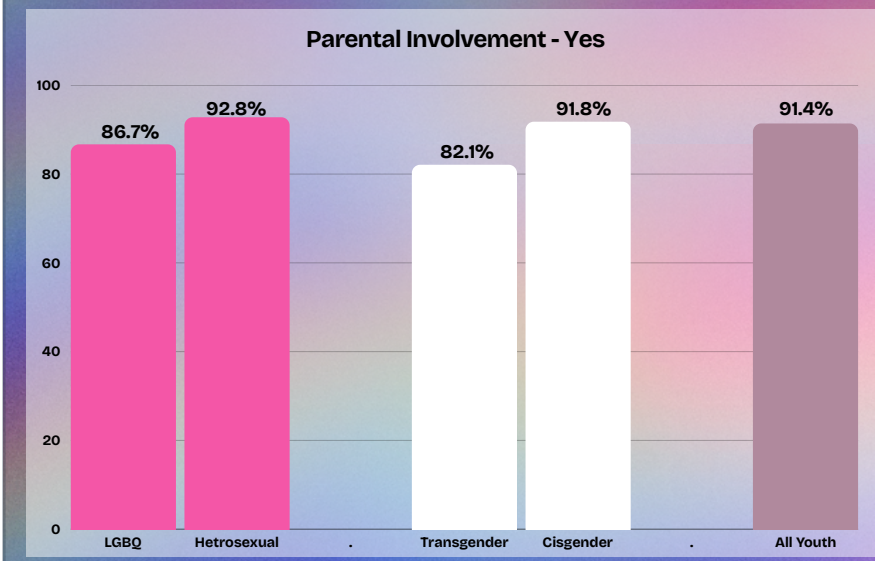
When evaluating the number of adults individuals can depend on for support during difficult times, the following statistics come to light:

Individuals Identifying with 3 or More Adults:

- LGBQ: 72.3%
- Heterosexual: 81.4%
- Transgender: 66.0%
- Cisgender: 79.8%
- All youth feeling connected to school: 79.2%

Protective adults play a critical role for LGBTQ+ youth, as they offer essential acceptance, support, and role modeling, which significantly influence mental health and overall well-being. Research indicates that having at least one accepting adult correlates with a diminished risk of suicidal ideation and attempts, as well as a more positive school experience. The ability of youth to identify three or more supportive adults is a particularly favorable indicator of resilience. Specifically, among LGBTQ youth, mentors can mitigate the adverse effects of bias and victimization by guiding them away from harmful behaviors, helping them navigate challenges, and fostering a positive sense of self-worth (Rummell, 2016). These mentors also provide LGBTQ youth with opportunities to explore and discuss their identities in an empathetic and affirming environment.

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SUPPORTIVE ADULTS



My parents know...

- Knows where I am when I go out
- Sets clear rules about what I can and cannot do
- Has talked with me about my plans
- Has consequences if I break the rules
- Encourages me to do well
- Knows how I'm doing in school
- Talks to me about things that bother me

Youth Reporting Parental Support

- LGBTQ: 86.7%
- Heterosexual: 92.8%
- Transgender: 82.1%
- Cisgender: 91.8%
- Overall youth with identified parental support: 91.4%

It is essential to recognize that LGBTQ youth who perceive strong support from their families tend to exhibit better mental health outcomes and a lower risk of substance abuse, as well as reduced sexual risk behaviors, albeit to a lesser extent. Parental involvement plays a vital role in the well-being of LGBTQ youth by fostering a supportive environment, thereby mitigating the risk of negative mental health outcomes and promoting a sense of belonging and identity. When parents demonstrate acceptance and support, LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience enhanced

mental health, increased self-esteem, and a diminished risk of depression and suicide.

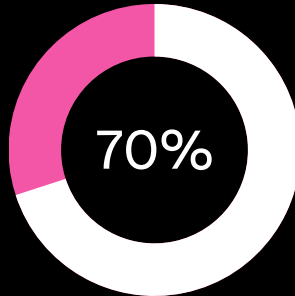
BEING LGBTQ+ IN WI

What makes a space affirming for LGBTQ young people in Wisconsin?

- "other LGBTQ people there who are open about their identity"
- "pride flags"
- "how they treat people"
- "gender-inclusive terminology"
- "kindness and acceptance"
- "I feel comfortable being myself"
- "using my name and pronouns correctly"
- "open and vocal affirmation and support of all identities"

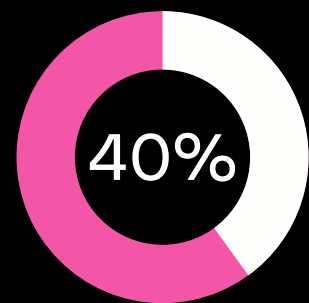


COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE



70% of LGBTQ+ young people in Wisconsin report living in accepting communities

GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS



40% considered leaving Wisconsin due to LGBTQ+-related politics

2022 national survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health ... (n.d.-a).

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/The-Trevor-Project2022-National-Survey-on-LGBTQ-Youth-Mental-Health-by-State-Wisconsin.pdf>

What Makes Spaces Affirming for LGBTQ+ Young People in Wisconsin

From the Perspective of Youth as identified by a survey conducted by the Trevor Project:

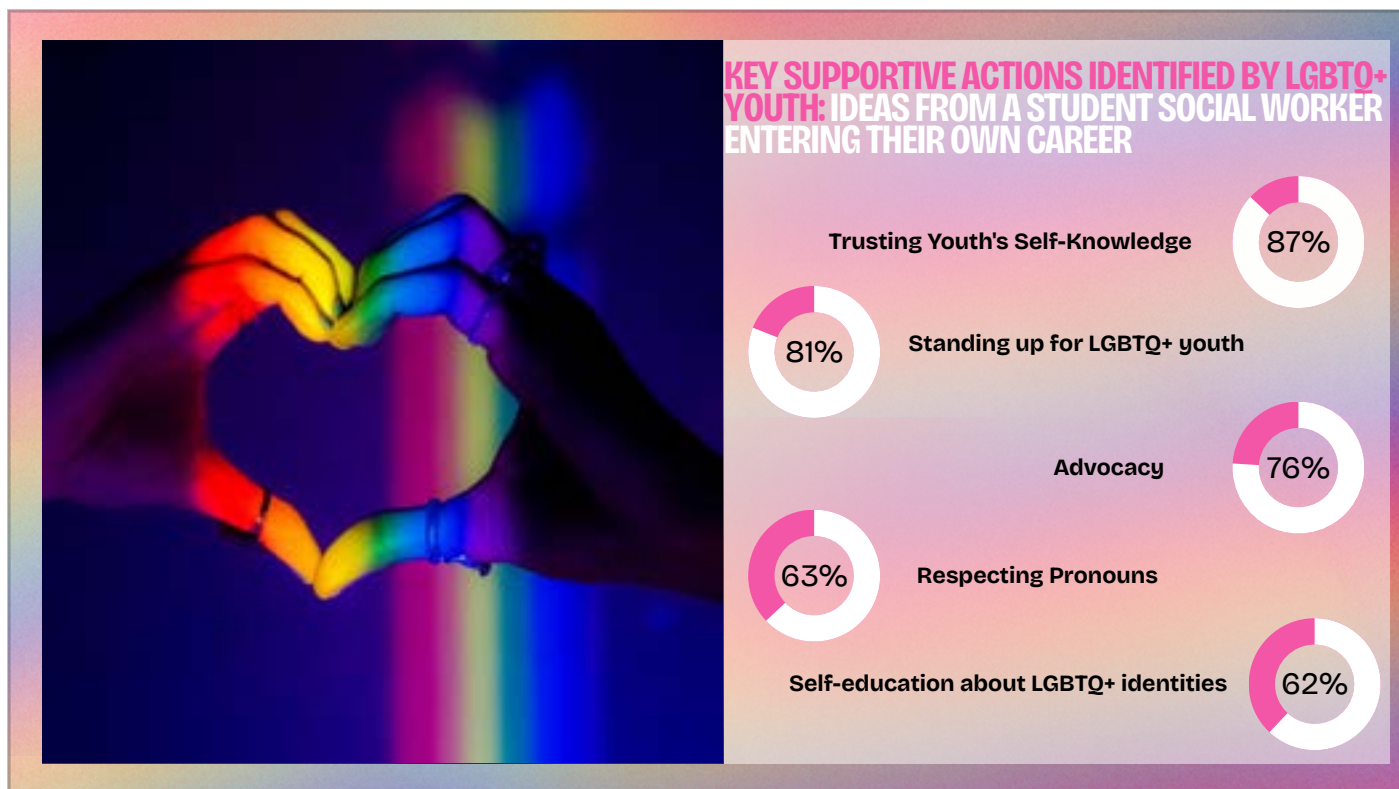
- "Presence of other LGBTQ individuals who are open about their identities."
- "Visibility of pride flags."
- "How individuals are treated."
- "Use of gender-inclusive terminology."
- "Kindness and acceptance."
- "I feel comfortable being myself."
- "Correct usage of my name and pronouns."
- "Open and vocal affirmation and support of all identities."

Community Acceptance:

70% of LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin report that their communities are accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals, with 67% of transgender and nonbinary youth sharing this sentiment.

Geographic Considerations:

40% of LGBTQ+ youth have considered leaving Wisconsin due to political issues related to LGBTQ+ rights.



LGBTQ+ youth have identified the following top five actions that individuals in their lives can take to demonstrate support and acceptance:

1. Trusting that I know who I am: 87%
2. Standing up for me: 81%
3. Advocacy: 76%
4. Respecting my pronouns: 63%
5. Proactively researching LGBTQ+ identities to enhance their understanding: 62%

HOW TO SUPPORT LGBTQ YOUTH?

CREATING LGBTQ-AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS

- Supportive extracurricular activities and Gender and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs)
- Comprehensive suicide prevention education
- Anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies with specific protections
- Protocols for intervention and postvention



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Trainings on affirming environments
- Visual cues of allyship
- Resources for families
- Affirming health care services

Nath, R., Matthews, D.D., DeChants, J.P., Hobaica, S., Clark, C.M., Taylor, A.B., Muñoz, G. (2024). 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project. www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2024

Creating LGBTQ-affirming environments (Trevor Project, 2024) involves several key actions:

- Establishing supportive extracurricular activities and Gender and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs)
- Implementing comprehensive suicide prevention education
- Developing anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies that include specific protections
- Setting protocols for intervention and postvention strategies

Implementation strategies (Trevor Project, 2024) may include:

- Providing training focused on creating affirming environments
- Utilizing visual cues to signify allyship
- Offering resources for families
- Ensuring access to affirming healthcare services



PADLET!

<https://padlet.com/elbutler1115/dcya-lgbq-webinar-8y270iyi1n00gw75>



CONCLUSION

- Addressing the Uncertainty
- Questions?
- Future Questions: Contact Megan Meinen
 - meinen.megan@danecounty.gov

Addressing the Uncertainty

In light of the current political climate, which has fostered a sense of uncertainty regarding our work and its future, it is essential to prioritize self-care.

Drawing inspiration from the Trevor Project, which I have used myself, they have found several strategies that can help mitigate feelings of overwhelm stemming from the negativity surrounding the political agenda. These strategies include:

- Taking a moment to step back from the situation.
- Unclenching your jaw and practicing deep breathing.
- Checking in with yourself to assess your needs, whether that involves rest, nourishment, hydration, or time spent with your trusted community.

It is normal to contemplate the implications of future policies on yourself, your friends, and your family. It is also important to recognize that clarity regarding the political landscape will take time, and changes will not occur overnight. Use this period to care for yourself and consider how you wish to utilize the time leading up to the inauguration, while also contemplating proactive measures to safeguard your rights.

Padlet

Before we conclude for final questions, we will share a link to a Padlet in the chat. The questions

on this Padlet aim to facilitate discussions about your expertise and to share effective practices you have encountered while working with LGBTQ+ youth.



For any future inquiries, please direct your questions to Megan, the PEI Prevention Manager who works directly with the Dane County Youth Assessment.

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THANK YOU!



Presented By: PEI
Student Intern Liz Butler