



BULLYING, HARASSMENT, & VIOLENCE AMONG SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

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MINORITY STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

- The seminal minority stress model has been used to understand why LGBTQ individuals present with higher rates of adverse outcomes (Meyer, 1995, 2003), like an increased prevalence of suicidality (Meyer, Frost, & Neshad, 2014).
- Minority stress has been conceptualized as strain arising from the social position of LGBTQ folks as a stigmatized, disadvantaged, and oppressed group in society (Meyer et al., 2014).
- The combination of stigma-related stressors with typical daily stressors offers a helpful framework that explains the health disparities ever-present among LGBTQ youth.

Bullying in K-12 Schools

- Bullying occurs more frequently among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) youth in American schools than among students who identify as heterosexual (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Espelage et al., 2008; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009; Robinson & Espelage, 2012, 2013).
- 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 40.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010).

2009 Dane County Youth Assessment

(Robinson & Espelage, 2011)

- Compared to straight-identified youth, LGBTQ are at greater risk of:
 - suicidal thoughts
 - suicide attempts
 - victimization by peers
 - high levels of unexcused absences
- The LGBTQ community is diverse in its risk profiles.
- On the positive side, the majority of LGBTQ are *not* at risk; however, the *disproportionate* percentages of LGBTQ students at *mid-level* and *extreme* risk suggest more needs to be done to help these students.

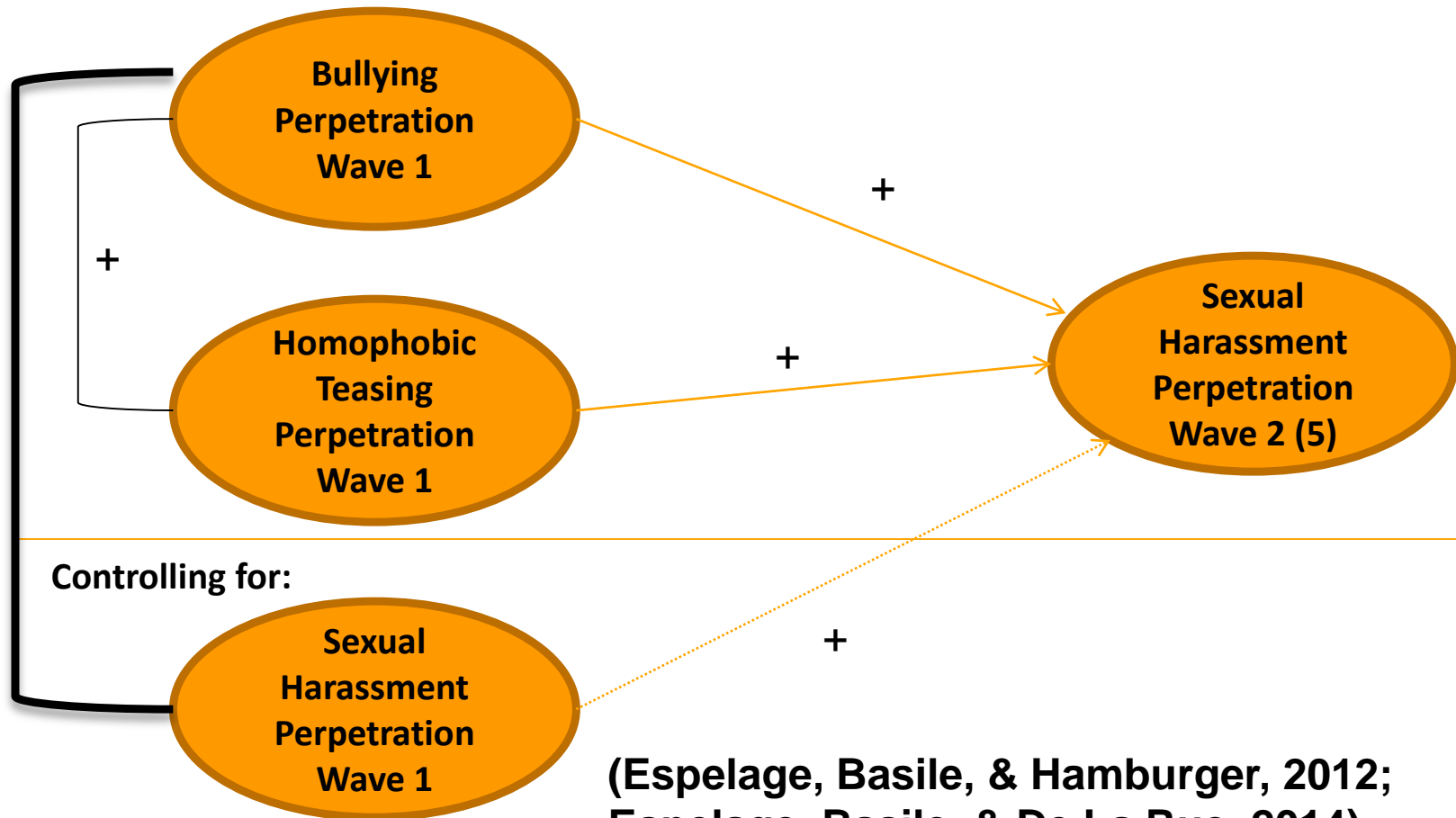
Homophobic Name-Calling

- Large percentage of bullying among students involves the use of homophobic teasing and slurs, called homophobic teasing or victimization (Espelage et al., 2012; Poteat & Espelage, 2005; Poteat & Rivers, 2010).
- The pervasiveness of anti-gay language in schools suggests that most school environments are hostile for LGBT students and create negative environments for their heterosexual peers as well (Espelage & Poteat, 2012).

Homophobic Name-Calling

- Homophobic name-calling is prevalent in middle school.
- Youth who bully resort to homophobic name-calling over the middle school years.
- Bully prevention programs should include a discussion of language that marginalizes gender non-conforming and LGBTQ youth.

Bullying, Homophobic Name-Calling, & Sexual Harassment in Middle School



(Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012;
Espelage, Basile, & De La Rue, 2014)

Take-Away Message

- Strong longitudinal associations among bullying, homophobic bantering, and sexual harassment perpetration.
- Youth who bully will be more likely to engage in sexual harassment toward other peers if they use homophobic slurs.

DATING VIOLENCE AMONG LGBTQ YOUTH

	LGBQ (n = 761) M (SD)	Non-LGBQ (n = 11,033) M (SD)	Significant Mean Differences
Between-Person Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime	.824 (.908)	.493 (.610)	p < .001
Peer Victimization	.708 (.918)	.315 (.554)	p < .001
Teen Dating Violence	.206 (.322)	.066 (.174)	p < .001
Between-School Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime	.544 (.166)	.512 (.146)	p < .001
Peer Victimization	.345 (.061)	.340 (.064)	p = .060
Teen Dating Violence	.080 (.025)	.075 (.018)	p < .001
Dependent Variables			
Anxiety	1.65 (.935)	.968 (.803)	p < .001
Suicidal ideation and attempts	.523 (.759)	.089 (.318)	p < .001

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DATING VIOLENCE AMONG TRANSGENDER YOUTH

	Transgender (n = 197) M (SD)	Non-Transgender (n = 11,597) M (SD)	Significant Mean Differences
Between-Person Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime,	1.36 (1.22)	.500 (.614)	p < .001
Peer Victimization	1.09 (1.28)	.328 (.565)	p < .001
Teen Dating Violence	.371 (.428)	.070 (.179)	p < .001
Between-School Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime,	.525 (.152)	.514 (.148)	p = .289
Peer Victimization	.337 (.054)	.341 (.064)	p = .420
Teen Dating Violence	.078 (.022)	.075 (.019)	p < .034
Dependent Variables			
Anxiety	1.61 (1.15)	1.00 (.819)	p < .001
Suicidal ideation and attempts	.782 (1.05)	.105 (.345)	p < .001

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LGBTQ Bullying is Driven by Peers

- Adolescent peer groups play a significant role in the formation and maintenance of harmful and aggressive behaviors, particularly homophobic behavior (Birkett & Espelage, 2015; Tucker, Ewing, Espelage et al., 2016).
- Peers influence has to be considered in developing and evaluating prevention/intervention programs
 - Only three bullying prevention program attempts to target and shift peer norms and mentions LGBTQ bullying.
 - Need more research on how to shift peer norms to be more supportive of all youth.

2015 Dane County Youth Assessment

(Hatchel, Merrin, & Espelage, in press)

- Various protective factors for LGBTQ youth were examined within the context of peer victimization and suicidality
 - Parental support
 - Self-compassion
 - Perceptions of school connectedness
- A sense of school belonging and connectedness was the most profound protective factor
- School programs concerned with the well-being of LGBTQ youth should aim to cultivate a sense of community and belonging (i.e., GSAs)

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE: STUDENT BEHAVIOR

(ESPELAGE ET AL., 2014)

Variable	Bullying Perpetration		Peer Victimization		Physical Aggression		Willingness to Intervene	
	β (SE)	B	β (SE)	B	β (SE)	B	β (SE)	B
Intercept	.39 (.03)**	-	.96 (.04)**	-	.96 (.05)**	-	2.03 (.04)**	-
Individual								
Female	-.03 (.02)	-.03	-.05 (.03)	-.05	-.20 (.03)**	-.21	.14 (.02)**	.14
Mother's Education	.01 (.01)	.01	.01 (.03)	.03	-.01 (.01)	-.03	.02 (.01)**	.08
White	.17 (.02)**	-.15	.11 (.05)*	.10	-.51 (.05)**	-.47	.18 (.03)**	.17
Hispanic	-.17 (.02)**	-.17	-.23 (.05)**	-.23	-.47 (.05)**	-.46	.09 (.03)**	.09
Asian	-.22 (.04)**	-.07	-.13 (.07)	-.04	-.64 (.06)**	-.21	.19 (.05)**	.06
Bi-racial	.11 (.03)**	-.08	-.01 (.08)	-.01	-.29 (.05)**	-.2	.12 (.03)**	.08
School-level								
Student Intervention	.15 (.14)	.04	-.03 (.18)	-.01	.19 (.20)	.05	-.07 (.10)	-.02
Staff Intervention	.15 (.10)	.04	.30 (.22)	.07	.02 (.19)	.01	-.02 (.11)	-.01
Aggression Problem	-.07 (.08)	-.04	-.14 (.12)	-.08	.09 (.12)	.05	-.18 (.06)**	-.10
School Commitment to Bully Prevention	-.20 (.06)**	-.13	-.42 (.09)**	-.27	-.17 (.08)*	-.11	.08 (.05)	.05
Positive Teacher-Staff-Student Interactions	-.01 (.11)	.01	.14 (.16)	.04	-.23 (.21)	-.07	-.13 (.08)	.02
Gender equity/intolerance of sexual harassment	-.23 (.10)*	-.08	-.71 (.20)**	-.24	-.13 (.14)	-.05	-.13 (.08)	-.05
State	.05 (.05)	.05	-.04 (.03)	-.04	.05 (.07)	.05	.03 (.04)	.03
Free/Reduced Lunch	.01 (.01)	.05	-.01 (.01)*	-.14	.01 (.02)*	.26	-.01 (.01)*	-.12
% Female	-.66 (.29)*	-.07	-.71 (.32)*	-.08	-.45 (.42)	-.05	.17 (.25)	.02
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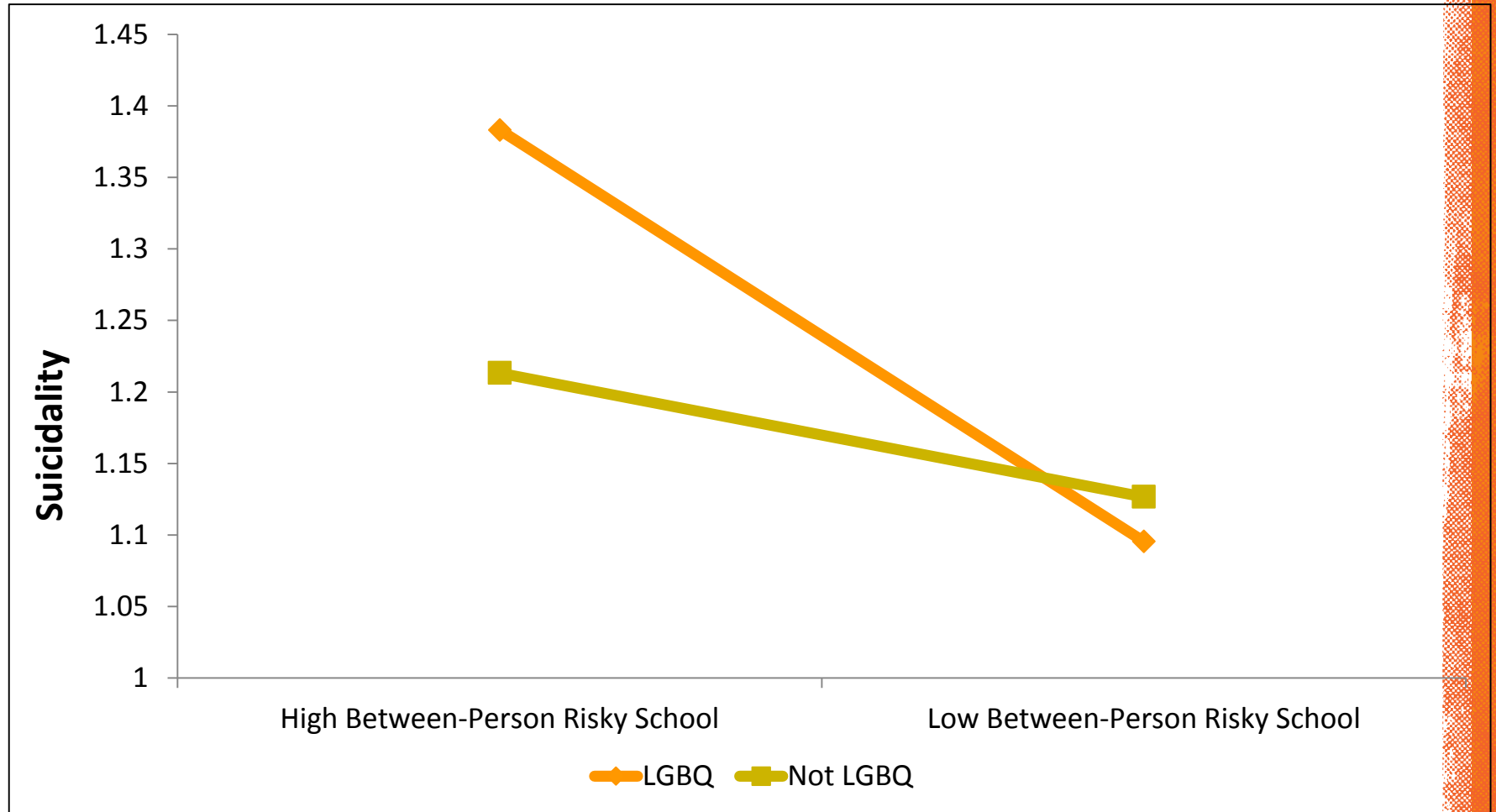
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WHAT ABOUT HOMOPHOBIC NAME-CALLING?

Variable	Homophobic Name-calling Perpetration		Homophobic Name-calling Victimization	
	β (SE)		β (SE)	
Gender equity/intolerance of sexual harassment	-.40 (.11)**		-.36 (.12)**	

Rhinehart & Espelage, 2015

Between-Person Perceptions of School Violence and Crime and LGBQ Identity



Simple Slopes: LGBQ: $\beta = .23$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$; Non-LGBQ: $\beta = .07$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$.

Need to understand the Mechanisms

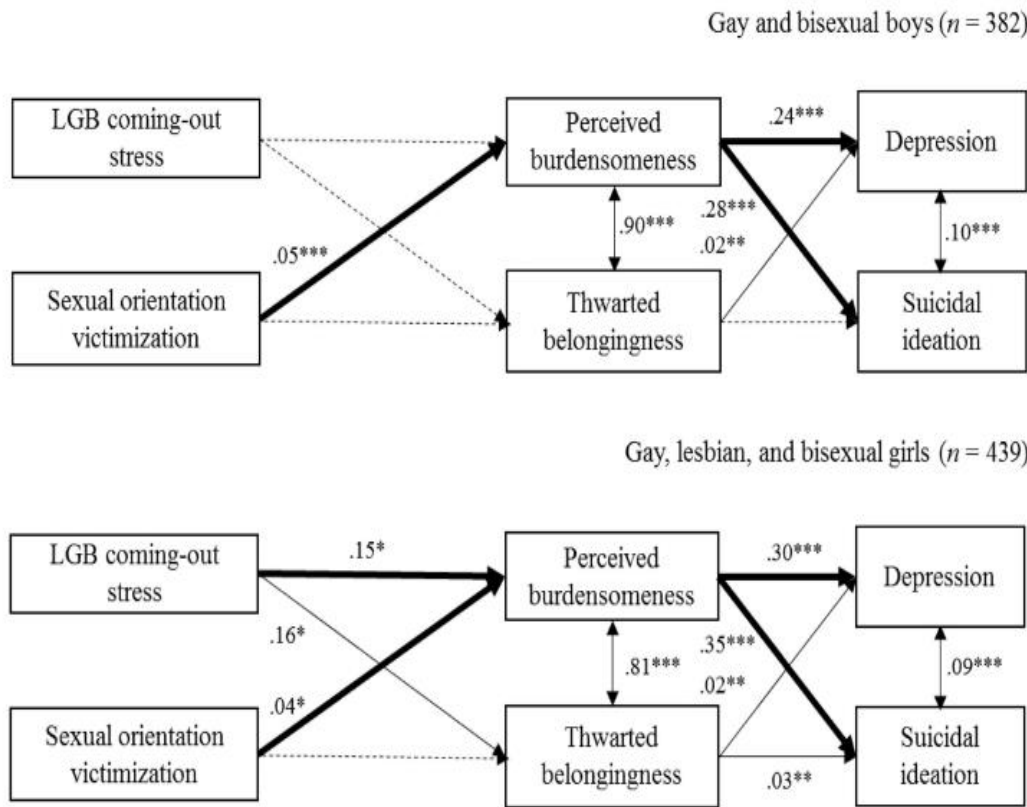


Figure 1. Partially constrained multigroup mediation model of depression and suicidal ideation. Controlling for age, others' perceived knowledge of sexual identity, and membership to a community-based organization. Indirect mediation effects are presented in solid bold arrows. Direct significant relations are presented in solid arrows, direct nonsignificant relations are presented in dashed arrows. Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

What reduces victimization?: Meta-Analysis

- Decreases in rates of *victimization* were associated with the following special program elements:
 - non-punitive disciplinary methods
 - parent training/meetings
 - use of videos
 - cooperative group work
 - greater duration and intensity of the program
- However, work with peers (e.g., peer mediation) was associated with an increase in victimization
- This unintended consequence is not new. Scholars have argued for a decade that peer mediation is contraindicated for bully prevention.

Ttofi & Farrington, 2011

What reduces bully perpetration?: Meta-Analysis

- Decreases in rates of *bully perpetration* for programs that included:
 - parent training/meetings
 - improved playground supervision
 - non-punitive disciplinary methods
 - classroom management & classroom rules
 - teacher training
 - whole-school anti-bullying policy
 - cooperative group work
 - greater number of elements and longer duration of program
- Programs - less effective in the US and in Canada.
- Need research support for the development and evaluation programs for US youth that address the unique needs of rural, urban, and suburban contexts.
- None of these studies addressed homophobic name-calling or assessed LGBTQ; need to do more research to see how these programs need to be expanded to address gender-based harassment.

Ttofi & Farrington, 2011

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- SEL focuses on the systematic development of a core set of social and emotional skills that help youth more effectively handle life challenges, make better decisions, and thrive in both their learning and their social environments.
- A meta-analysis of 213 programs found that if a school implements a quality SEL curriculum, they can expect better student behavior and an 11 percentile increase in test scores (Durlak et al., 2011).
- A large scale clinical trial study of a social emotional learning program in 36 middle schools yielded significant reductions in bullying, homophobic name-calling, and sexual harassment, and strongest effects were found when implemented with fidelity (Espelage et al., 2013, 2014, 2015).

Basic Education

Sex

the difference in biological characteristics of males and females, as determined by chromosomes, hormones, and internal, and external genitalia



Gender

socially or culturally defined ideas about masculinity and femininity



Gender Identity

an individual's internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, something other, or in-between

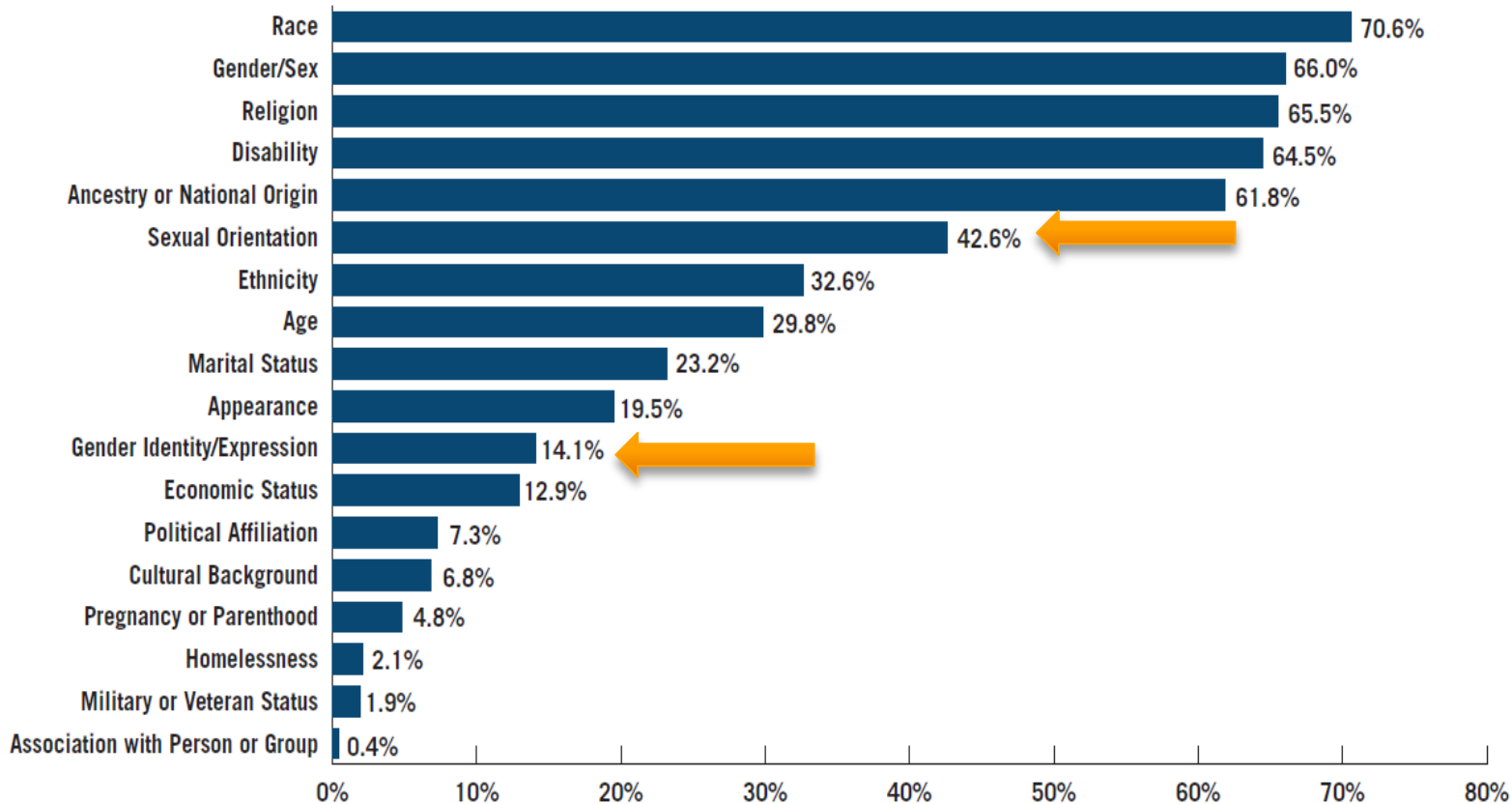


Gender Expression

an individual's characteristics and behaviors, such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions, that are perceived as masculine or feminine

POLICY – PROGRESS IS SLOW

Figure 1.1. Frequency of Enumerated Categories in District Anti-Bullying Policies
(Among Districts with Policies, n=9,296)



Kull, R.M., Kosciw, J.G., & Greytak, E.A. (2015). *From Statehouse to Schoolhouse: Anti-Bullying Policy Efforts in U.S. States and School Districts*. New York: GLSEN.

Recommendations - Educators

- Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) in schools - associated with an increased sense of safety among LGBTQ youth, as well as improved health and educational outcomes such as reduced truancy, fewer injuries at school, and fewer suicide attempts.
- Teachers of all educational levels (K-12) should be educated about sexual identity & gender diversity in youth, and work to communicate this knowledge and consideration to all students in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Need more research to develop and evaluate these teacher trainings on school climate and bullying among all youth.

CALL FOR ACTION

- (1) Need more comprehensive assessments of sex, gender, gender expression; need studies on how assessments drive outcomes of bullying etc;
- (2) Need national datasets with key variables to compliment community samples;
- (3) Need to conduct longitudinal studies that assess gender, sex, sexual orientation alongside other variables that might be potential mechanisms to suicide;
- (4) Bully prevention policies and programs need to address gender-based harassment & bullying & protect all youth;
- (5) Programs need to target adults in our schools and communities to understand gender, sex, gender identity and their impact on victimization experiences & focus on school connectedness.

Next Steps

- **Bullydown Text-Messaging SEL middle school program** (Ybarra, Prescott, & Espelage, 2016).
- **Gender-enhanced SEL Middle School Trial** [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention #1RO1CE002340)
- **SEL, Restorative Problem-Solving/Justice, & Student-Led Campaigns** (National Institute of Justice w/Univ. of Oregon # 2015-MU-MU-K003]
- **Sources of Strength High School Suicide Prevention Evaluation for sexual violence outcomes** (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention #CE0002841-01)