

HEALTH DISPARITIES AMONG SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

Sexual minority youth (SMY) are youth who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB), who are not sure of their sexual identity, or who have any same sex partners. CDC's 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data show substantial health disparities that exist among an estimated 2.6 million sexual minority students, placing them at risk for negative health outcomes, including HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Compared to their heterosexual peers, sexual minority students are more likely to have:

BEEN BULLIED AT SCHOOL



- 33% LGB students
- 24% unsure
- 16% heterosexual
- 36% have same sex
- 19% only opposite sex

BEEN FORCED TO HAVE SEX



- 22% LGB students
- 13% unsure
- 5% heterosexual
- 30% have same sex
- 10% only opposite sex

SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE



- 48% LGB students
- 32% unsure
- 13% heterosexual
- 45% have same sex
- 19% only opposite sex

USED ILLICIT DRUGS



- 23% LGB students
- 27% unsure
- 12% heterosexual
- 36% have same sex
- 19% only opposite sex

MISUSED PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS



- 24% LGB students
- 18% unsure
- 13% heterosexual
- 35% have same sex
- 20% only opposite sex

FELT SAD OR HOPELESS



- 63% LGB students
- 46% unsure
- 28% heterosexual
- 64% have same sex
- 35% only opposite sex

Students who have sexual contact with both sexes are at higher risk than students with only same-sex sexual contact for multiple sexual risk behaviors.

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Many SMY thrive during adolescence, but, stigma, discrimination, and other factors put them at increased risk for negative health and life outcomes. **CDC works with education and public health partners to address health risks and disparities among sexual minority youth.** Together, we can improve the health and lives of sexual minority youth so they achieve their social, emotional, and academic potential.

Resources:

- **CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System** (www.cdc.gov/yrbs)
- **Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report 2007–2017** (www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trendsreport.pdf)
- **MMWR: "Sexual Risk Behavior Differences Among Sexual Minority High School Students — United States, 2015 and 2017"** (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6736a3.htm?s_cid=mm6736a3_e)
- **MMWR: "Violence Victimization, Substance Use, and Suicide Risk Among Sexual Minority High School Students — United States, 2015–2017"** (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6743a4.htm?s_cid=mm6743a4_e)
- **MMWR: "Transgender Identity and Experiences of Violence Victimization, Substance Use, Suicide Risk, and Sexual Risk Behaviors Among High School Students — 19 States and Large Urban School Districts, 2017"** (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6803a3.htm?S_CID=TW_DU032019015)
- **Web page: Health Risks Among Sexual Minority Youth** (www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/smy.htm)



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