

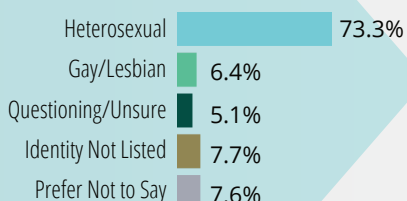
Youth Sexual Orientation and Behavioral Health in Kentucky

Data depicted in this infographic represent responses from over 93,000 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders from 127 KY school districts that participated in the 2021 Kentucky Incentives for Prevention (KIP) Youth Survey. The KIP Youth Survey data allow school administrators, researchers, policy makers and youth-serving agencies to: develop accurate scientific understandings of the experiences and needs of young people, guide the development of targeted programs to support adolescent health and well-being, transform school climates, and procure funding necessary to ensure the continuation of these crucial initiatives.

Research shows that due to elevated experiences of discrimination, sexual minority youth are at increased risk for certain adverse health outcomes, including a higher likelihood of substance use, suicidal ideation, and self-harm. In acknowledgement of this mounting evidence, a question to address sexual orientation was added to the 2021 KIP Youth Survey. The question reads: "Are you: Straight, Gay/Lesbian, Questioning or Unsure, Identity not listed here, Prefer not to say."

Sexual Orientation

Students participating in the 2021 KIP Youth Survey identified their sexual orientation as follows:

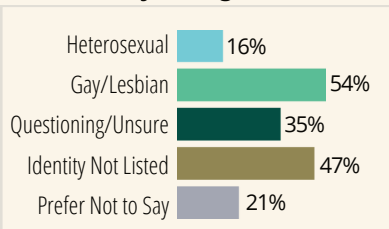


GRADE	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Questioning/Unsure	Identity Not Listed	Prefer Not to Say
6th	64.0%	5.7%	6.9%	8.9%	14.5%
8th	74.7%	6.6%	5.0%	7.1%	6.7%
10th	77.1%	7.0%	4.2%	7.3%	4.5%
12th	78.4%	6.0%	3.9%	7.6%	4.1%

Mental Health

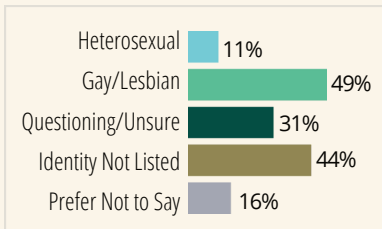
Among all participating grade levels, **gay/lesbian** students, students who responded **identity not listed**, and **questioning/unsure** students were significantly more likely than their heterosexual peers to report experiencing Past 30 Day Serious Psychological Distress, Lifetime Self-Harm, Past Year Suicidal Thoughts, and Past Year Suicide Attempts.

Serious Psychological Distress



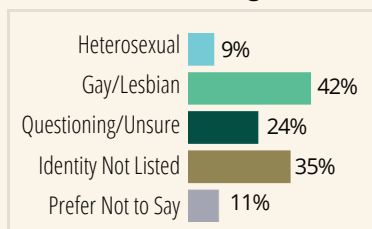
Gay/Lesbian Students **6.6 X** as likely compared to their heterosexual peers

Self Harm



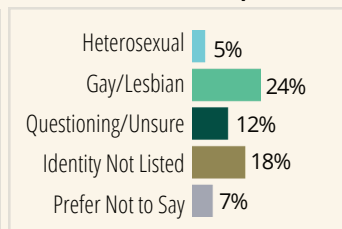
Gay/Lesbian Students **7.9 X** as likely compared to their heterosexual peers

Suicidal Thoughts



Gay/Lesbian Students **7.5 X** as likely compared to their heterosexual peers

Suicide Attempts



Gay/Lesbian Students **6.4 X** as likely compared to their heterosexual peers

Substance Use

Among all participating grade levels, **gay/lesbian** students were...

- 2.2 X** as likely to report **VAPING** in the past 30 days
- 1.7 X** as likely to report using **ALCOHOL** in the past 30 days
- 2.5 X** as likely to report using **CANNABIS** in the past 30 days
- 2.4 X** as likely to report using **ANY SUBSTANCE** in the past 30 days

...compared to their heterosexual peers

Among all participating grade levels, students who responded **identity not listed** were...

- 1.7 X** as likely to report **VAPING** in the past 30 days
- 1.4 X** as likely to report using **ALCOHOL** in the past 30 days
- 2.1 X** as likely to report using **CANNABIS** in the past 30 days
- 1.9 X** as likely to report using **ANY SUBSTANCE** in the past 30 days

...compared to their heterosexual peers



School Safety

Among all participating grade levels, **gay/lesbian** students were more likely to experience violence at school compared to their heterosexual peers. They were...

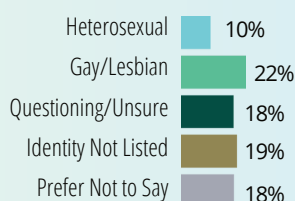
- 2.2 X** as likely to have someone physically threaten, attack, or hurt them
- 2.6 X** as likely to be verbally threatened
- 5.3 X** as likely to have someone make unwanted sexual advances or attempt to sexually assault them
- 3.5 X** as likely to have been bullied or electronically bullied in the past 12 months

Among 10th graders...

- 1 in 4 **gay/lesbian** students
 - 1 in 5 students who responded **identity not listed**
 - 1 in 6 **questioning/unsure** students
- ...felt unsafe or very unsafe at school

Trusted Adult

Percentage of all participating students reporting they **did not** have a trusted adult to whom they could go to for help...



Among all participating grade levels...

Gay/Lesbian students were **60%**, and Students who responded identity not listed were **53%**

less likely to have a trusted adult with whom they could go to for help compared to their heterosexual peers.



CALL TO ACTION

Youth Sexual Orientation and Behavioral Health in Kentucky



1 Educate Yourself

Become familiar with accurate terminology. The National Center for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) has created a glossary of terms related to Youth with Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression available here: <https://sogiecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/QIC-SOGIE-Glossary-4.23.pdf>

Know the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexual orientation is an individual's enduring physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to members of the same and/or different sex and/or gender. Gender identity refers to one's internal sense of who they are and what gender label feels most correct for them. An individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

Understand health disparities. LGBTQ+ youth are at a higher risk for suicide, face higher rates of mental health issues, misuse substances at a higher rate, and experience violence at higher rate, as compared to their cisgender and straight peers. LGBTQ+ young people are not inherently prone to these challenges because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, but rather placed at higher risk because of the mistreatment and stigmatization they face.

Study the minority stress model. The minority stress model puts forward that sexual minority youth experience health disparities because of greater exposure to stress (e.g., experiences of discrimination or victimization, anticipation of discrimination or victimization, concealment of identity, and internalization of stigma) and structural stigma.

Be aware of disparities in education outcomes. LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk for lower educational expectations, a lower sense of belonging and school connectedness, and are more likely to have been affected by school-based discrimination and bullying. LGBTQ+ students in the U.S. are less likely to graduate from high school and attend college. Creating safe and affirming school climates ensures equal access to education and opportunities for improved academic success and well-being for all students.

Recognize the impact of being a trusted adult. Affirming parents and families have a critical impact on the wellbeing of sexual minority youth. Having even just one visibly supportive teacher in a school can ensure that LGBTQ+ students feel safe, welcome and encouraged to learn.

Keep learning. Seek out programs and trainings to increase awareness around issues and policies relevant to LGBTQ+ youth and the adults who support them. Consult verified sources of information, such as The Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity, The Trevor Project, GLSEN, and The National SOGIE Center.

2 Support Youth

Seek out feedback from youth. Ask the young people in your life what they wish you knew - talk to students about what they need instead of assuming what they need.

Welcome discussion about these topics. Ask questions and welcome self-expression.

Provide support and acceptance. Listen openly and own mistakes. Be trustworthy and transparent.

Create safe and affirming spaces at home, school, and in the community.

Connect young people with peer support. Foster supportive relationships and community among students.

Recognize the impact of being a trusted adult. Affirming parents and families have a critical impact on the wellbeing of sexual minority youth. Having even just one visibly supportive teacher in a school can ensure that LGBTQ+ students feel safe, welcome and encouraged to learn.

3 Take Action

Speak up. Use your voice/platform to advocate for policies and laws at the federal, state and local levels that protect all youth. Commit to helping young people create the world they deserve.

Work to decrease barriers to health care. Research indicates that LGBTQ+ youth face systemic barriers to accessing both physical and mental health care. Make sure that all young people know where and how to find help, and offer to assist until care has been secured.

Contribute to the knowledge base. Support research on the experiences of all youth. In order to understand the challenges, strengths and unique needs of different groups, we have to ask about them!

Implement policies and practices to support all youth. Supportive school personnel and administrators make students feel welcome and seen. Schools that implement policies to support diverse groups of youth not only see improvements in health and wellbeing for young people who identify as LGBTQ+, but the entire student body - creating school environments that are safer for ALL students.

Be prepared in a crisis. Engage in suicide prevention training such as Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR), and work to increase awareness of crisis services. If someone in your life needs support, they can call or text 988 or chat 988Lifeline.org to be connected with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.

Inspire youth of ALL identities to be kind, support others, and speak up when they see bullying. Implement zero-tolerance bullying and harassment policies.

AS YOU REVIEW

this infographic summarizing data based on sexual orientation from the 2021 KIP Youth Survey, **please keep the following important cautionary notes in mind.**

Some districts were unable to participate in the 2021 administration.

Participation of the KIP Youth Survey is voluntary on a district level, and due to pressures and constraints on school districts returning from periods of non-traditional instruction, some districts were unable to participate in the KIP Youth Survey 2021 administration. The most notable change from the prior survey administration in 2018 is that Jefferson County Public Schools, the largest school district in the state, did not participate in the 2021 KIP Youth Survey. Fayette County, the second largest district in the state, did participate in 2021. Subsequently, the overall percentage of participating students who self-identified as African American was slightly lower in 2021 (6.5% as compared to 8.4% in 2018), and the percentage of participating students who self-identified as Hispanic was slightly higher (9.1% as compared to 7.9% in 2018.)

The 2021 Youth KIP Survey sample represents fewer students than in prior years.

It is crucial to note that due to COVID-19 causing increased illness and absences, classroom quarantines, and continued remote learning, the 2021 KIP Youth Survey sample represents fewer students than in prior years. It is likely that the participation of students of different races or ethnicities has been impacted by these circumstances to differing degrees.

All students in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in districts that have opted in are invited to participate, but some opt out or are not present to take the survey.

The KIP Youth Survey is designed to be a census, meaning that every student in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in participating school districts is invited to take the survey. Students and their parents/ guardians have the right to opt out at any time before, during, or after the survey. Students who are absent or not present in the classroom at the time the survey is administered do not take the survey.

RESOURCES for supporting LGBTQ+ young people and recognizing health disparities experienced by gender and sexual minority populations:

The National SOGIE Center: <https://sogiecenter.org/>

The Trevor Project: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Youth MOVE Change Initiative: <https://youthmovenational.org/>

The Family Acceptance Project: <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

PFLAG: <https://pflag.org/>

The Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity: <https://lgbtquequity.org/>

GLSEN: <https://www.glsen.org/>

GLAAD: <https://glaad.org/>



The Kentucky Incentives for Prevention (KIP) Youth Survey is Kentucky's largest source of data related to youth use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD), as well as several additional factors related to adolescent social and emotional well-being. Participating school districts and communities utilize their KIP results extensively for grant-writing purposes, prevention activities and other efforts to recognize and meet the needs of their student population.



Survey administration typically takes place every other year in even-numbered years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned October 2020 administration was cancelled. Administration resumed in October 2021, and over 93,000 students representing 127 school districts completed the survey.

The 2021 mid-pandemic administration included the addition of several new questions to address impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, impacts of the racial justice movement, experience of race-based discrimination, sleep habits, sexual orientation, social media use, connection to a trusted adult, extracurricular involvement, vaping and hallucinogenic drug use. Resultant data provide vital insight into the current behavioral health of youth throughout the state.

To learn more about the KIP Youth Survey, visit: www.kipsurvey.com



This infographic was prepared by REACH Evaluation, Louisville, Kentucky
www.reacheval.com