Bias-based bullying and emotional distress among marginalized adolescents: Taking an intersectional approach

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Protection at the Intersections for Queer Teens of Color

Overview

- Bullying and bias-based bullying (BBB)
- Intersectionality and Minority Stress Theory
- Findings from PIQTOC
- Getting the message out

Bullying and bias-based bullying

- Traditional definitions
 - Repeated, intentional, power differential
 - Physical, relational, cyber
- Many "reasons", e.g. peer group, social awkwardness, relationship drama
- Common in adolescence

Bullying and bias-based bullying

- Bullying involvement predicts:
 - Somatic complaints
 - Depression
 - Distress, anxiety
 - Suicidality
 - Eating problems
 - Social adjustment
 - Violence
 - Substance use
 - School-drop out
 - Criminal activity

Bullying and bias-based bullying

- "Bias" or "prejudice" based bullying (BBB)
 - Rooted in stigma, marginalization
 - Racism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia/ cisgenderism, classism, ableism, anti-fat bias, etc.
 - Youth with marginalized identities report higher rates of BBB than peers
 - Even more hurtful than other bullying (Russell et al, 2012; Jones et al, 2018)
 - Attacks identity
 - Reflects structural stigma at multiple levels

Multiple levels o

- Bias-based bullying
 - Overt or subtle, e.g.
 - Violent actions
 - Racist language
 - Misgendering, deadnaming (i.e. using outdated name)
 - Stigmatizing assumptions

•Sexual orientation
•Gender identity Family
•Race
•Peers
•Ethnicity
•Age
•Health care providers
•Ability/disability
.... and more

Multiple levels of stigma



School characteristics, policies, safety
Health clinic

- Few teachers/providers of color
- Disparities in disciplinary practices
- No safe space signage, flags or other visual cues
- Gendered bathrooms

Multiple levels of stigma



- Racism in policing, incarceration
- Bans on gender affirming health care
- Restrictions on involvement in youth sports
- Memes, lawn signs, newspaper ads
- Public discourse

Public policy
Community resources
Social norms
Media content

Multiple levels o



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Overview

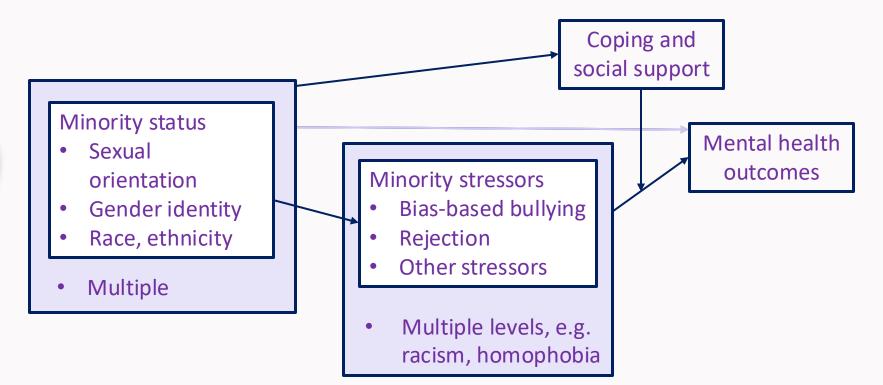
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Intersectionality

- Like everyone, marginalized youth have additional social positions and identities
- Interrelated social positions of power/oppression
- "The point where my oppressed social identities meet and result in unique discriminatory experiences"
 - Gayle Smaller, Jr, Associate Director for DEI in the School of Public Health
 - Kimberlé Crenshaw, Black feminist scholarship (1994)

Minority Stress Theory

A simplified version of Meyer's model (2003)



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Protection at the Intersections for Queer Teens of Color (PIQTOC)

Research Questions

Among adolescents....

- What are differences in <u>bullying</u>, <u>substance use</u>, <u>emotional distress</u>, <u>and protective factors</u> among youth with different social positions (i.e. LGBTQ+ identity, race, ethnicity)?
- How do differences in risk and protective factors, e.g. stigma, explain differences in negative outcomes?

Emotional distress

- High rates of depression, anxiety, suicidality among adolescents
- Significant disparities by racial/ethnic identity, sexual orientation, gender identity/modality
 - 2023 YRBS, suicide attempt: 20% LGBTQ+, 6% cis-het
- Minority stressors contribute to disparities in emotional distress

Existing research

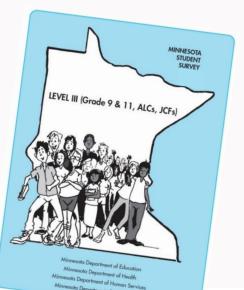
- Rarely examines emotional distress and BBB among youth with intersecting marginalized identities
 - Limited measures, limited intersections
- Combine identity groups due to small numbers
- Regression models
 - Single reference group
 - Higher order interactions

Study Aims

- Aim 1: Extensive <u>statistical analysis</u> of three very large existing datasets
 - Minnesota Student Survey (N~100,000)
 - California Healthy Kids Survey (N~1,000,000)
 - National LGBTQ Teen Survey (N~17,000)
- Aim 2: <u>Qualitative interviews</u> with LGBTQ+ youth of color to more deeply understand quantitative findings and generate recommendations

Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)

- Every 3 years, grades 5, 8, 9, 11
- All school districts invited, 81% participated (2019)
- Online data collection
- 80,456 9th, 11th grade students
 - Highly representative statewide



Measures

- 3 social identities
 - Racial, ethnic identities (6 categories)
 - Sexual identity (5 categories)
 - Gender (4 categories)
 - 5 emotional distress indicators
 - Depressive symptoms (PHQ-2)
 - Anxiety symptoms (GAD-2)
 - Non-suicidal self-injury
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Suicide attempt





Measures

- Bias-based bullying (past 30 days)
 - About race, ethnicity, or national origin
 - About gender
 - About gender expression
 - About sexual orientation

BBB-race BBB-SOGIE



Sample characteristics

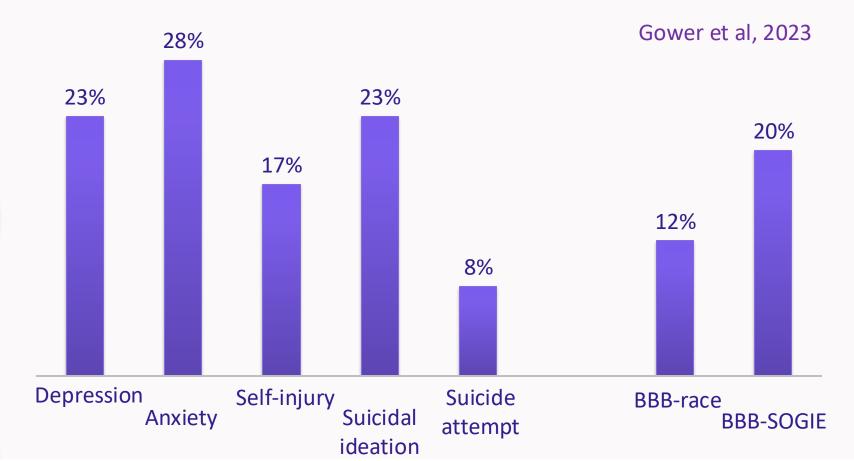
	N	%			
Racial/ethnic identity					
NL American Indian/Alaska Native	941	1.2			
NL Asian/Pacific Islander	5,390	6.7			
NL Black/African American	5,966	7.4			
Latina/x/o	6,826	8.5			
NL White	56,163	69.8			
NL multiracial	4,625	5.7			
Missing	545	0.7			

NL: Non-Latina/x/o

Sample characteristics

	Ν	%	
Sexual orientation identity			
Straight	62,799	78.1	
Gay or lesbian	1,253	1.6	
Bisexual	4,515	5.6	
Questioning	1,662	2.1	
Pansexual/queer	1,701	2.1	
Missing/Other identity	8,526	10.6	
Gender			
Cisgender girl	37,661	46.8	
Cisgender boy	37,486	46.6	
Transgender/gender diverse	1,141	1.4	
Questioning gender	1,179	1.5	
Missing/Other identity	2,916	3.6	

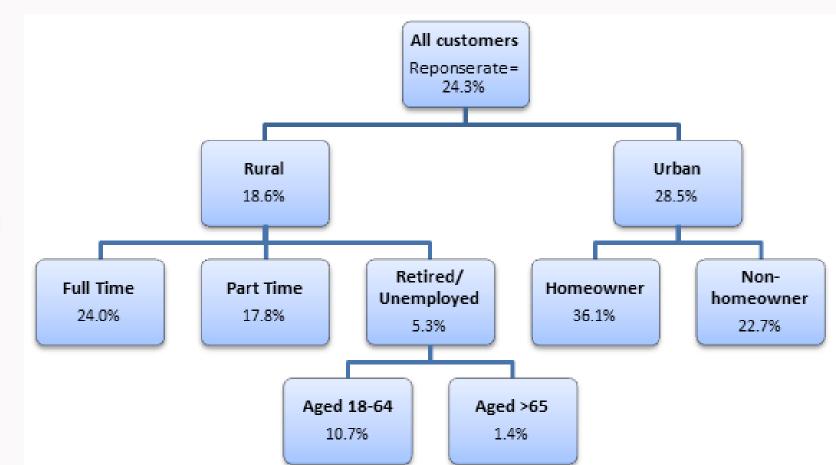
Emotional distress, BBB



Analysis

- Exhaustive Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID)
 - Recommended approach for quantitative studies of intersectionality
 - Data-driven decision tree model
 - Tests all predictors and creates splits between significantly different categories (p<.05, Bonferroni-adjusted), repeats to "terminal nodes"

CHAID – simple example

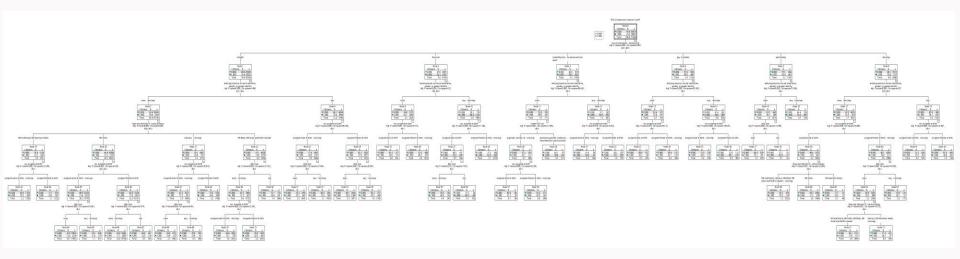


Analysis

- Exhaustive Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID)
 - Data-driven decision tree model, recommended approach for quantitative studies of intersectionality
 - Tests all predictors and creates splits between significantly different categories (p<.05, Bonferroni-adjusted), repeats to "terminal nodes"
- Models include 3 social positions, 2 types of BBB
 - 10 highest prevalence terminal nodes



CHAID – our trees







Depressive symptoms (23%)

Racial/Ethnic identity	Sexual identity	Gender	BBB- race	BBB- SOGIE	Prev, %
NL White, Latina/x/o, AIAN	Gay/lesb.	Cis girl, TGD, quest		Yes	69
	Pan/Queer			Yes	69
	Quest		Yes	No	63
	Bisexual	Cis girl, TGD, quest		Yes	63
	Pan/Queer	TGD, quest		No	59
	Quest			Yes	55
	Bisexual	TGD, quest		No	54
	Straight	TGD, quest		Yes	54
	Bisexual	Cis boy		Yes	52

BBB: Bias-based bullying; SOGIE: sexual orientation, gender identity/expression; NL: Non-Latina/x/o; AIAN: American Indian/Alaska Native; cis: cisgender; TGD: transgender/gender diverse; quest: questioning

Results – summary

- Same patterns for all 5 indicators of emotional distress
 - "yes" on either/both BBB
 - 82% of highest prevalence nodes
 - LGBQ
 - 90% of highest prevalence nodes
 - TGD/questioning youth
 - 54% of highest prevalence nodes
 - Often in combination

Eisenberg et al, 2024

Analysis

- Exhaustive Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID)
 - Data-driven decision tree model, recommended approach for quantitative studies of intersectionality
 - Tests all predictors and creates splits between significantly different categories (p<.05, Bonferroni-adjusted), repeats to "terminal nodes"
- Models include 3 social positions, 2 types of BBB
 - 10 highest prevalence terminal nodes
 - Same social positions but NO on 2 types of BBB shown for comparison

Depressive symptoms (23%)

Racial/Ethnic identity	Sexual identity	Gender	BBB- race	BBB- SOGIE	Prev, %	Same, NO BBB (%)
NL White, Latina/x/o, AIAN	Gay/lesb.	Cis girl, TGD, quest		NO	69 —	▶ 44
	Pan/Queer			NO	69 —	▶ 48
	Quest		NO	No	63	3 5
	Bisexual	Cis girl, TGD, quest		NO	63	▶ 46
	Pan/Queer	TGD, quest		No	59	59
	Quest			[NO]	55 —	▶ 35
	Bisexual	TGD, quest		NO	54	55
	Straight	TGD, quest		NO	54 —	22
	Bisexual	Cis boy		NO	52 —	► 38

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Results – summary

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 - 82% of highest prevalence nodes
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- Prevalence of emotional distress was ~20-60% lower in comparison groups without BBB than in terminal nodes
 - average difference of 39%

Eisenberg et al, 2024

Discussion

- High rates of emotional distress, significant disparities
 - LGBTQ+ youth (esp. intersections)
- Bias-based bullying is an important contributing factor
- Rates of emotional distress still high even among comparison groups w/o 2 types of BBB
 - Eliminating additional forms of stigma may further reduce disparities
- Racial/ethnic identities rarely split out
 - Contrasts with previous findings

Discussion

- Similar findings.....
 - Multiple datasets
 - Cannabis use
 - Asthma
 - Sports involvement
 - Disordered eating

Overview

- Bullying and bias-based bullying (BBB)
- Intersectionality and Minority Stress Theory
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Prevention messages

- Not about social positions or identities!
- Not about mental health services!

- Preventing, intervening on bias-based bullying
 - In schools
 - In families, communities

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Creating psychological safety for all supports healthy youth development

Adolescence is the time when young people get to do the developmental work that prepares them for adulthood.

To succeed at this, youth need: caring adults: connections to their schools and communities:

- basics like food, shelter, and safety and opportunities to test their values and make a difference. Mental health challenges can get in the way of healthy youth development: rates of depression and anxiety are high among adolescents, and suicide is a leading cause of death in this age group.
- According to the CDC's most recent Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, approximately 9%
 - of high school students have attempted suicide."

Bias-based bullying exacerbates young people's mental health issues.

Aggression that stigmatizes a student's identity (e.g. gender, race or ethnicity, sexuality, body size) attacks the core of who they are, and causes cumulative harm.

Being resilient isn't enough. Experiencing bullying is linked to headaches and stomachaches, substance abuse, and poorer mental health, including suicidal ideation. These experiences also severely affect school engagement and academic performance.

66 [My English Teacher], without fail, every single time,

would just shut (my bully) up. She would tell him. Stop

She made sure that I never felt unsafe and hated."

screaming your hatred in this classroom. I will not have it."

curricula that include students' marginalized identities.

Incorporate language and topics into your lesson plans and

Having multiple minoritized identities increases a young person's likelihood of experiencing bias-based bullying.2

E

Suicidal ideation was reported by 81% of bisexual youth who identified as transgender or gender diverse when they were also the targets of bias-based bullying.

56%

suicidal ideation.

But when NOT the targets of

bias-based bullying, that 81%

dropped down to 56% reporting

- Experiences of being stigmatized based on one or more minoritized identities are common among LGBTQ+ youth of color, especially African American youth. As many as 82% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe in school because of the stigma
 - attached to at least one of their actual or assumed personal characteristics.³
- Young people with multiple minoritized identities experienced a third to half as much emotional distress when they did NOT experience bias-based bullying and harassment at school.²

EDUCATORS MAKE GREAT ALLIES.

- 66 [My GSA teacher] compliments me about, like, if I'm doing anything with my
- hair or anything, like basically sharing gender-affirming compliments." For students with marginalized identities, proactive adult support is expecially important.
- 66 [My teacher] made sure that he got my name down on the roster; he
- would make sure to call out my preferred name for attendance." Youth with minoritized gender identities report feeling safer when called by their
 - affirmed name and pronouns.

Youth of color with minoritized gender identities told our researchers, "This is what safe space looks and feels like." YR855 multi-Cologue Rabined Jane 29, 2023. Accessed April 35, 2024. https://www.chi.gov/haddwytech/dat/plut/multi-base 3 Generals, Date: Chi. doi: 10.6.0.00464 AM. Encident P. Tourne D. Banel & St. Wassen D. Environg VG. Application of an interactional liter to base based bullying serving LGBIO-youth of online in the U.S. Stepna & Hadde WS135582 2023.

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- March 1933/55/37. 2025 3 Obening Accessed April 15, 2024. https://www.glan.org/inten/data/s/Red/202210/NSCS-2026 East-of-science-pDipal

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING. EVERY TIME.

ther you encounter racial alurs, fat-shaming, homophobia, xenophobia, or hobia, brief responses and questions are powerful interventions. "Were noon, orer responses and questions are powerter more removed ing to be hurtful with that word?" Or, "I don't find that funny."

Transphobia, in particular, is often expressed with other "isms." Short, strong replies can shift power dynamics, humanize all individuals, and re-establish a

inforce these expectations with your own words, like,

ne here. I will have your back if you are not being treated

ol principal) had to fire a substitute for being absolutely

nultiple times about my identity. He was like, 'We will

this high school.' He's told me that his office is a safe

hological first aid for distressed stude

when support staff are available, and when it

o rant about anything."

isis response team.

oustice's "Speak Up at

hool Guide" GLSEN

When people stare at you as you walk in the room, or when they talk about you or point at you behind your back and they think you don't hear about it or more people sense is you so you make in one reason, or mean usey with savery you so point or you being poor sense with resy terms you soon a need of don't see it: these things add up. They create such a feeling of un-belonging that i just never feel welcome in spaces with my peers anymore." now that young people encounter bullying as a dehumanising series of daily, negative interactions.

ADULT ALLIES ARE PROACTIVE, AS WELL AS RESPONSIVE. often the process for students to report identity-based

Follow up with students privately - whether they were the target or the aggressor. Ask open-ended questions like, "What started this situation?" aggressor. Ask open-ended questions like, "riner statistic uses associated of the statistic of the statistic

66 The GSA is the best place. It's emazing, full of wonderful, unique people. There's just a bunch of unique people, not just gay, straight, just all those amazing people. Being yourself is a big part of just going to high school. Nobody is going to matter in a couple years, so why not start being yourself now."

Follow up with the distressed student to show your continued support. Offer Pollow up with the distressed student to show your cummune support to one to share formal school resources (GSA, counselor) after you have reinforced

OU DO NOT HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT OR PERFECT.

66 She was amazing when I came out to her with my new name and pronouns. She used them right away, even corrected other people when they would misgender or deadname me... Even a lot of our teachers who are allies don't go that far."

Share examples with your fellow educators of proactive allyship, such as transportation, because a lot of times, "I ask trans students what makes them Black people don't have easy feel safe in class in the same way I would access an IEP to support their learning."

include Black people, you're keeping in mind all the different aspects of the Black community: the Black trauma, Black issues, Black families, the issues with

66 If someone mistakenty misgenders you, they automatically apologize and show that they care."

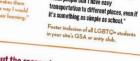
Participate in community conversations about healthy and safe school environments. Host or provide building-wide professional development on LGBTQ+ issues.

Foster inclusion of all LGBTQ+ students in your site's GSA or unity club.

About the research

This research uses existing surveillance data from three addresses to be

66 If it's a Black GSA or a GSA made to Black parents, even just some things like



Instagram posts (YAB)

Youth with minoritized identites experience bias-based bullying which exacerbates mental health issues. Stigma that targets student's identities

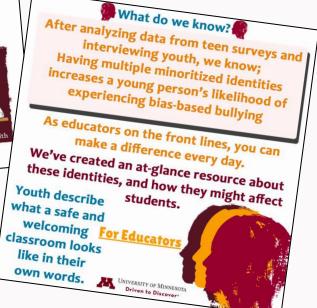
Educators make great allies

""My teacher would shut my bully up by telling him to stop screaming his hatred in her classroom"

"My GSA teacher shares gender affirming compliments"

"My teacher was like 'hey | have some cool resources | can show you' and we talked about it"

"My high school principal fired a substitute for being disrespectful multiple times about my identity. He was like 'We will not have that in this high school he told me his office is a safe snace' attacks the core of who they are causing cumulative harm. Beresilient ISN'T enough Bullying Headaches Stomachaches Ubustance abuse Orien to Discover



Family and friends make great allies.

Adolescence is when young people do the developmental work that prepares them for adulthood

- Youth need caring adults; connections to their schools and communities; basics like food, shelter, and safety; and opportunities to test their values and make a difference.
- Mental health challenges can get in the way of this crucial healthy youth development.
- Rates of depression and anxiety are high among adolescents. Suicide is a leading cause of death in this age group: according to the CDC's most recent Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, approximately 9% of high school students have attempted suicide."

Bias-based bullying - at home or at school worsens physical and mental health issues.

- Aggression that stigmatizes a person's identity (gender, race or ethnicity, sexuality, body size) severely affects physical and mental health and academic engagement.
- Having multiple marginalized identities increases an individual's chances of experiencing bias-based bullying."
- Young people with multiple marginalized identities experience much less - a third to half as much - emotional distress if they do NOT experience bias-based bullying.3
- Being resilient isn't enough: experiencing bullying is linked to headaches and stomach aches, substance abuse, and poorer mental health, including suicidal ideation.

Act daily to stop blas-based

Young people report experiencing

bullying as a dehumanizing series of

Transphobia, in particular, is often

expressed with other "isms," Allies'

short, strong replies can shift power

involved, and reestablish a safe space.

"I don't tolorate hate speech of

any kind in my home."

"Quit throwing shade at

my friend."

daily, negative interactions,

dynamics, humanize everyone

bullying in your family and friend group.

82% As many as 82% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe in school because of stigma based on at least one of their actual or assumed personal characteristics. These experiences are especially common among LGBTQ+ youth of color

This is what it looks to feel safe around friends and families.

Trans or gender diverse teens who report having strong connections with their parents experience much lower rates of emotional distress. Having a network of caring adults can help decrease rates of depression, suicidality, and substance use.²

was like, this is a

acception

different generation.

and I understand that

so I'm going to try to be

66 My mom mentioned that, Hey, we can get

you to a gender doctor." when I was questioning my gender. Not everyone's family is super supportive. I lucked out.

66 The first time I painted my nails, my friend's mom gave me one of her bottles of nail polish for an extra color

66 With my asexuality, my friends were just like. " understand it. I can sympathize. I don't know what you're going through, but that's cool."

66 My parents always 66 The people that I hang compliment me on my around with, they're outfits, and my friends very respectful about also give me platonic my sexuality and my compliments, like 'Oh, Dominican-Ecuadorian you're so pretty' and side. stuff like that.

IT'S SIMPLE:

BE PROACTIVELY.

ASSERTIVELY KIND.

66 I went into my 66 It was scory coming out 8-yeur-old brother's to my abuelita, but she room, and I'm like, was very accepting She 'Yeah, I'm trans,' and he was like, 'Oh. you're trans? What name do you want to go by?"

Follow up with your distressed friend or family member. Offer to share formal resources (GLSEN, a local support group or therapist) after you have reinforced your personal allyship.

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at your home or friend group is a safe space. 🔿 66 When I first came out to him, my uncle said, OK. 1 still love

a advocates for me and she's the person who out the Pride Festival, because I didn't even

ad been calling me mi hija, like "daughter." Now, ne mi hijo, which is a boy term. He's been

ople by their chosen name and pronouns

Very she's going by he/him now Were going to cell him. Widerstand, because Verys corrected Very Corrected Very Corrected Very Corrected rents just told my extended family. Hey, she's going by he/him now w's going by [Name] now, so that's what we're going to call him." is a little harder for my older brother to understand, because s autistic, but once he got the memo, he always corrected father. He was like, 'Actually, [Name] is a boy. y aunt and uncle were very chill about it. We were aying a board game, tabletop game. They asked he what my name and pronouns were. They're really accepting.

e loud in your allyship.

My friends check up on me when anti-queer bills are being proposed. Like, 'Hey, are you good? Do you need anything from me?' I greatly appreciate that. I don't get

66 My grandma tries her best to go with the names and pronouns. If she calls me by my dead name, she'll say, "Oh, I'm sorry, that was the wrong name," and will fix it.

66 When people are passive, it makes it seem like there are equal numbers of people who are really hateful, and loudly hateful and that's frustrating it gives the impression that there is less acceptance than there actually is.

you either way. There's nothing wrong with that.' 66 I knew that my friends would still love me exactly the same

They were just so supportive.

and treat me exactly the same when I came out to them.

Be persistent. When you make a mistake, apologize. Do better next time. -----just have to get used to it." Honestly, she picked up my name and pronouns quicker than my mom and dad did.

Resources

This research uses existing surveillance data from three adolescent health data sets: the This research uses existing survemance data from three addiescent health data series the Minnesota Student Survey, the California Healthy Kids Survey, and the LGBTQ National Teen Minnesota Student Survey, the California Healthy Rids Survey, and the Lisb IQ National Ieen Survey, Quotes come from interviews with 58 trans and gender minority youth of color. To learn Survey. Guotes come from interviews with 59 yrans and gender minomy youth of color. To more about identity-based aggression, visit <u>Health Environments and Stigmatized Youth.</u> VRBSS results. Colorgen: Published Jane 29, 2028. Arcessed September 36, 2024. https://www.odu.gov/tytea/results/indux.ktml General. Rider: Oil oid Ris-González AM, Ercicione D, Russell ST, Wassen RJ, Exemberg ME, Application et al. Internectional lens to bias-based bulying sensing LCBTGP-yrath of obstruct Nex U.S. Stagne & Huaha, MU306-07, 19078. Yorkh of colum In Hu US. Stigma & Health. 8(1):865-571-2026 5 Searchery ME. Lawrences SE. Eadeh HM, Sannak M, Ibler GR, Gover AL. Emotional distress dispurities across maliple intersecting ascala positions: The role of base-based bullying Performance account distribution account of the role of base-based bullying

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66 There are not enough people who are really loud about their support.



Links to resources

• PIQTOC study info: <u>healtheasy.umn.edu/PIQTOC</u>



Acknowledgements

- PIQTOC Co-Investigators
 - Dr. Amy Gower, Dr. Nic Rider, Dr. Stephen Russell, Dr. Ryan Watson, Dr. Lisa Bowleg, Dr. Ana-Maria del Río González
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- Data
 - Minnesota Student Survey data were provided by public school students in Minnesota via local public school districts and managed by the Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team.
- Photos
 - Unsplash.com
 - genderphotos.vice.com

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Protection at the Intersections for Queer Teens of Color

Measures

- 5 emotional distress indicators
 - Depressive symptoms (PHQ-2)
 - Anxiety symptoms (GAD-2)
 - Non-suicidal self-injury
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Suicide attempt

Have you ever seriously considered attempting suicide? (Mark ALL that apply)

Have you ever actually attempted suicide? (Mark ALL that apply)

- No
- Yes, during the last year
- Yes, more than a year ago

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by:

- Little interest or pleasure in doing things?
- Feeling down, depressed or hopeless?
- Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge?
- Not being able to stop or control worrying?

(Not at all, Several days, More than half the days, Nearly every day)

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

- 0 times
- 1 or 2 times
- 3 to 5 times
- 6 to 9 times
- 10 to 19 times
- 20 or more times

Measures

- Bias-based bullying (past 30 days)
 - About race, ethnicity, or national origin
 - About gender
 - About gender expression
 - About sexual orientation

During the last 30 days, how often have other students harassed or bullied you for any of the following reasons?

- Your race, ethnicity or national origin
- Your gender (being male, female, transgender, etc.)
- Your gender expression (your style, dress, or the way you walk or talk)
- Because you are gay, lesbian, or bisexual or because someone thought you were

(Never, Once or twice, About once a week, Several times a week, Every day)