

## **A Child is a Child: LGBTQ+ Youth Health and Wellbeing**

### Explanation of Terminology, Sources, and Citations

#### **Terminology**

This fact sheet uses the term LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other communities) in order to be inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The fact sheet disaggregates data where possible in order to highlight inequities *within* the LGBTQ+ community. We explicitly note where the data in this fact sheet is disaggregated. For example, if the data is specific only to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual youth communities, we use “LGB”. We also indicate where data is only specific to transgender youth communities.

The fact sheet uses the term “BIPOC” which means Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities. People of Color includes Latinx, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Mixed communities.

#### **Sources**

The source of most of the data on this fact sheet comes from four different places (full citations in footnotes):

1) The 2013-2015 statewide California Student Survey (CSS) data as analyzed by the Williams Institute of UCLA School of Law in their 2017 report entitled: "LGBTQ Youth in California's Public Schools: Differences Across the State." The 2013-2015 biennial statewide CSS data are a randomly selected sample of middle and high school students (7th, 9th, and 11th graders) across California. This dataset includes two modules: a core module that assessed key indicators related to school experience and student performance, and an Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) supplemental module that examined students' experiences with alcohol and drugs. Results from the core module (105 schools participated) and AOD module (69 schools participated) were reported separately in this report because of the sample size difference. Results from both modules are representative of California's student population.

2) The 2017-2019 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data as analyzed by West Ed's 2019 report entitled: "Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California." West Ed's analyses is based on survey data collected from approximately 800,000 secondary students in grades 7, 9, and 11. Data in the report was disaggregated by students' gender identify and by sexual orientation. West Ed's study examined 14 measures organized into five domains: school supports, school safety, mental health, school engagement, and academic performance.

3) A 2018 Human Rights Campaign Foundation report entitled "California LGBTQ Youth Report" that analyzed a survey of 1,700 LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-17 living across California administered in 2017. The survey included 150 questions. All respondents self-identified as part of the LGBTQ community by providing a qualifying answer or combination of answers to the

survey questions about sexual orientation, gender identity and sex assigned at birth. While this report provides an overview of the survey data, it does not attempt to represent all of the data or the different intersectional experiences across the LGBTQ community.

4) A 2017 report by Impact Justice and the National Center for Lesbian Rights entitled “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, and/or Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Girls and Boys in the California Juvenile Justice System: A Practice Guide.” The report analyzes data from a survey conducted by Impact Justice of youth in detention halls, ranches, and camps across California with the purpose of determining whether or not race, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation play a part in the decision to detain a young person. The one-page survey instrument was offered in both English and Spanish.

## **Citations**

Language in pink denotes language from fact sheet.

### **1. Population**

- Based on a sample of 28,171 youth aged 11-17 in the 2013-2015 CSS, 10.3% of California’s public middle and high school youth population identified as LGBTQ.<sup>1</sup>
  - 4.3% identified as LGB
  - 0.7% identified as Trans
  - 4.5% marked unsure (was interpreted as questioning)
- Based on a sample of 796,079 youth in the 2017-2019 CHKS, over 13% of CA’s public middle and high school youth population identified as LGBTQ.<sup>2</sup>
- Of the Students who identify as LGBTQ.<sup>3</sup>
  - 8.7% are Black/ African American
  - 54.4% are Hispanic/Latino
  - 2.8% are mixed
  - 20.4% are White
  - 11.3% are Asian
  - 0.9% are American Indian
  - 1.6% are Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander

1) At least 1 in 10 youth enrolled in California’s public middle and high schools identify as LGBTQ+. Of these youth, over 75% are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

<sup>1</sup> Choi, Soon, Laura Baams, and Bianca Wilson. LGBTQ YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE STATE, 2017. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-Youth-CA-Public-Schools-Oct-2017.pdf>, 10

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hanson et al., “Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California • Prepared for The California Endowment,” 2019, <https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Understanding-Experience-of-LGBTQ-Students-in-California.pdf>, 10

<sup>3</sup> Choi, Soon, Laura Baams, and Bianca Wilson. “LGBTQ YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE STATE,” 2017. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-Youth-CA-Public-Schools-Oct-2017.pdf>, 13

Latinx youth in particular make up a large share of LGBTQ+ youth: 1 in 2 students who identify as LGBTQ+ are Latinx.

## 2. Child Wellbeing

- LGB 41.6% report 4 or more ACEs compared to 25.3% for Heterosexual individuals.<sup>4</sup>
- 82% LGBTQ+ BIPOC in California have experienced racism and racial prejudice.<sup>5</sup>

(2) ACEs are Adverse Childhood Experiences of traumatic or stressful life events before the age of eighteen. LGB individuals report disproportionately higher prevalence of ACEs. Over 80% of LGBTQ+ BIPOC youth in California have experienced racism and racial prejudice.

## 3. School Climate

- Absences for not feeling safe at school<sup>6</sup>
  - LGBTQ 2.6%
  - non-LGBTQ 1.0
- Perceive School To Be Safe<sup>7</sup>
  - Middle School
    1. Gender Identity
      - a. Transgender: 37%
      - b. Non-Transgender: 64.9%
    2. Sexual Orientation
      - a. Gay/Lesbian: 44.2%
      - b. Bisexual: 41.3%
      - c. Straight: 66.6%
  - HS
    1. Gender Identity
      - a. Transgender: 36.4%
      - b. Non-Transgender: 58.9%
    2. Sexual Orientation
      - a. Gay/Lesbian: 46.6%
      - b. Bisexual: 44.7%
      - c. Straight: 60.2%

<sup>4</sup>California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network, “Adverse Childhood Experiences and LGBTQ communities,” 2019. <https://secureservercdn.net/166.62.107.55/1mi.abd.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/LGBTQ-ACES-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Campaign Foundation, “California LGBTQ Youth Report,” 2018. <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/YouthReport-California-Final.pdf>, 15

<sup>6</sup> Choi, Soon, Laura Baams, and Bianca Wilson. LGBTQ YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE STATE, 2017. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-Youth-CA-Public-Schools-Oct-2017.pdf>, 16

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Hanson et al., “Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California · Prepared for The California Endowment,” 2019, <https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Understanding-Experience-of-LGBTQ-Students-in-California.pdf>, 63

- Caring Adult Relationships
  - Middle School
    1. Gender Identity
      - a. 42% of Transgender middle school students reported the presence of caring adult relationships at school compared to 63% non-transgender students
    2. Sexual Orientation
      - a. Lesbian/Gay: 51%
      - b. Bisexual: 50%
      - c. Straight: 64%
  - High School
    1. Gender Identity
      - a. 44% of Transgender high school students reported the presence of caring adult relationships at school compared to 59% non-transgender students
    2. Sexual Orientation
      - a. Lesbian/Gay: 54%
      - b. Bisexual: 53%
      - c. Straight: 60%

(3) LGBTQ+ youth are twice as likely as non-LGBTQ+ youth to miss school because they do not feel safe. Only about 1 in 3 transgender youth perceive school to be safe compared to over 60% of non-transgender youth. Only about 4 in 10 transgender youth and 1 in 2 LGB youth report the presence of caring adult relationships in school compared to over 60% of non-LGBT youth.

#### 4. Child Welfare System

- 1.4% Foster care /group care/ waiting placements
  - LGBTQ 1.4%
  - Non-LGBTQ .3%

4) LGBTQ+ youth are three times more likely to live in a foster home or group care, or be awaiting placement than non-LGBTQ+ youth.

#### 5. Juvenile Justice

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hanson et al., “Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California · Prepared for The California Endowment,” 2019, <https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Understanding-Experience-of-LGBTQ-Students-in-California.pdf> . . 63

<sup>9</sup> Choi, Soon, Laura Baams, and Bianca Wilson. “LGBTQ YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS : DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE STATE,” 2017. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-Youth-CA-Public-Schools-Oct-2017.pdf> , 14

- LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system: the percentage of incarcerated LGBTQ+ youth is double that of LGBTQ+ youth in the general population (national statistic).<sup>10</sup>
- CA Data
  - 19% of detained youth are LGBT/GNCT.<sup>11</sup>
  - 12% of boys in the California Justice system are GBC/GNCT. <sup>12</sup>
  - 51.1% of girls in the California Justice system are GBC/GNCT. <sup>13</sup>
  - 90% of GBS/GNCT youth in CA’s juvenile system are youth of color. <sup>14</sup>

(5) Nationally, LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system: the percentage of incarcerated LGBTQ+ youth is double that of LGBTQ+ youth in the general population. Among CA’s incarcerated youth, about 1 in 10 boys and 1 in 2 girls are LGBTQ+. Of these youth, over 90% are BIPOC.

## 6. Mental Health

- Absences for feeling sad/hopeless/anxious<sup>15</sup>
  - LGBTQ 17.1%
  - non-LGBTQ 8.1%
- Chronic Sadness<sup>16</sup>
  - Middle
    - Gender Identity
      - Transgender 60.9%
      - Non-transgender 26.3%
    - Sexual Orientation
      - Gay/Lesbian: 55%
      - Bisexual: 66%
      - Straight: 24%
  - HS
    - Gender Identity

<sup>10</sup>“UNJUST: LGBTQ YOUTH INCARCERATED IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM,” 2017, <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/lgbtq-incarcerated-youth.pdf>, 2

<sup>11</sup> Angela Irvine, Shannan Wilber, and Aisha Canfield, “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, and/or Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Girls and Boys in the California Juvenile Justice System: A Practice Guide,” *Impact Justice and the National Center for Lesbian Rights*, January 2017, <https://impactjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/RAC-CPOC.pdf>, 3-9

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Choi, Soon, Laura Baams, and Bianca Wilson. “LGBTQ YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS : DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE STATE,” 2017. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-Youth-CA-Public-Schools-Oct-2017.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Hanson et al., “Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California . Prepared for The California Endowment,” 2019, <https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Understanding-Experience-of-LGBTQ-Students-in-California.pdf>, 64 and

- Transgender 63.4%
  - Non-transgender 33.3%
  - Sexual Orientation
    - Gay/Lesbian: 57%
    - Bisexual: 68%
    - Straight: 29%
- Suicidal Ideation<sup>17</sup>
  - Percentages of Students Reporting Suicide Ideation, by Gender Identity and School Level
    - Middle
      - Gender Identity
        - Non-transgender 14%
        - Transgender 52%
      - Sexual Orientation
        - Gay/Lesbian: 42%
        - Bisexual: 49%
        - Straight: 11%
    - High
      - Gender Identity
        - Non-transgender 16%
        - Transgender 53%
      - Sexual Orientation
        - Gay/Lesbian: 39%
        - Bisexual: 46%
        - Straight: 13%

6) LGBTQ+ youth are two times more likely to cite feeling sad, hopeless, or anxious as a reason for missing school than non-LGBTQ+ youth. Over 1 in 2 LGBTQ+ youth report feelings of chronic sadness. LGBTQ+ youth are three times more likely than non-LGBTQ+ youth to report contemplating suicide. Over 1 in 2 transgender youth report contemplating suicide compared to about 15% of non-transgender youth.

## 7. Homelessness

- Home Setting<sup>18</sup>
  - Other Relatives Home
    - LGBTQ 3.2%
    - Non-LGBTQ 1.6%
  - A home with more than one family

<sup>17</sup> IBID, 64 and 66.

<sup>18</sup>Choi, Soon, Laura Baams, and Bianca Wilson. "LGBTQ YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA' S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE STATE," 2017. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-Youth-CA-Public-Schools-Oct-2017.pdf> , 14

- LGBTQ 5.0%
  - Non-LGBTQ 3.2 %
- Campground, shelter, car, or other transitional or temporary housing
  - LGBTQ .8%
  - Non-LGBTQ .3%
- hotel/motel
  - LGBTQ .3%
  - Non-LGBTQ .1%

7) Compared to non-LGBTQ youth, LGBTQ+ youth are roughly twice as likely to experience homelessness<sup>19</sup> and living in unstable housing, like sharing a home with more than one family, living with relatives, or staying at a hotel, shelter, campground or other kind of transitional or temporary housing.

<sup>19</sup> As defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. “[USC02] 42 USC CHAPTER 119, SUBCHAPTER VI, Part B: Education for Homeless Children and Youths,” House.gov, 2018, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter119/subchapter6/partB&edition=prelim>. § 11434a