

A CLOSER LOOK: BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



INTRODUCTION

There is little data on the experiences of bisexual transgender^a people. Research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is growing, but when the data are disaggregated to look at the disparities or resilience of particular groups under the LGBT umbrella, the sample size is often too small to analyze with confidence.

The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey,¹ conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality offers a unique opportunity to examine the lives, experiences, disparities, and resilience of bisexual transgender people. This report analyzes data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, documents disparities for bisexual people and offers recommendations for remedying those disparities.

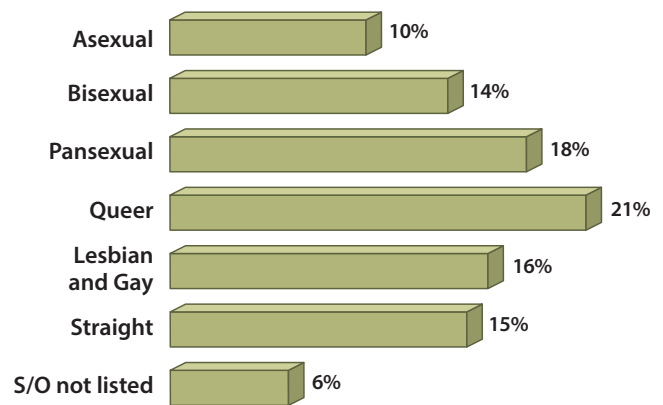
Who Are Bisexual Transgender People?

One-third of respondents to the survey (32%) identified as bisexual or pansexual,^b as shown in *Figure 1*, compared to 16% who identified as lesbian or gay,^c 21% who identified as queer, and 15% who identified as heterosexual.² Transgender women were more likely to identify as bisexual than were transgender men (20% vs. 12%), while there was little gender difference in the respondents who identified as pansexual.³

Younger people were also more likely to identify as bisexual or pansexual compared to older respondents; 36% of transgender people 18-24 identified as bisexual or pansexual, compared to 31% of people ages 25-44, 31% of people ages 45-64, and 26% of people ages 65 and older.⁴

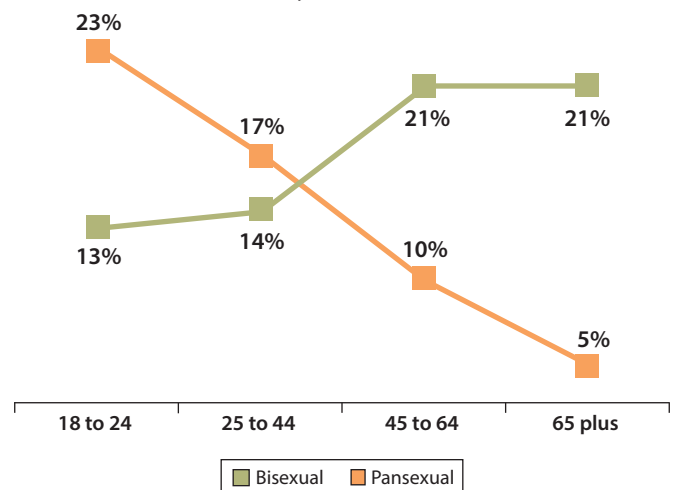
Younger bisexual and pansexual transgender people were more likely to identify as pansexual, while older bisexual and pansexual transgender people were more likely to identify as bisexual (see *Figure 2*).⁵

Figure 1: One-Third of Respondents Identified as Bisexual or Pansexual



Source: Sandy James, et al., "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey," National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016, <http://www.ustranssurvey.org/report>.

Figure 2: Younger Transgender People Are More Likely to Identify as Pansexual



Source: Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.

^a The term "bisexual" refers to a person's sexual orientation and describes people who can be attracted to individuals of more than one gender. The term "transgender" refers to a person's gender identity and describes individuals whose sex assigned at birth is different from the gender they know they are on the inside. At some point in their lives, many transgender people decide they must live their lives as the gender they know themselves to be, and transition to living as that gender. These identities are not mutually exclusive—someone can identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and transgender.

^b Both "bisexual" and "pansexual" are terms used to refer to one's sexual orientation and are used by people who can be attracted to individuals of more than one gender or regardless of gender.

^c Respondents who identified as "same-gender loving" were also included in this category.

The percentage of respondents who identified as bisexual or pansexual varied by race and ethnicity, with biracial/multiracial respondents being most likely to identify as bisexual or pansexual (34%).⁶ Black/African American transgender people were the least likely to identify as bisexual or pansexual (27%).⁷ Thirty-three percent (33%) of white transgender people identified as bisexual or pansexual.⁸ Among Latino/a/Hispanic respondents, 33% identified as bisexual or pansexual; among Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander respondents, 32%.⁹ Among other respondents, the sample size was too small to calculate.¹⁰

Economic Security

Bisexual and pansexual transgender respondents were more likely to live in poverty than were both gay and lesbian and heterosexual transgender people: 33% of bisexual and pansexual transgender people reported living in poverty, compared to 27% of gay and lesbian transgender people and 22% of heterosexual transgender people.¹¹ Poverty often has an impact on other areas of life, such as access to healthcare and health outcomes. For example, one-third (33%) of bisexual and pansexual transgender people reported not seeing a doctor in the past year when they needed to due to cost, compared to 28% of gay and lesbian people and 25% of heterosexual people.¹²

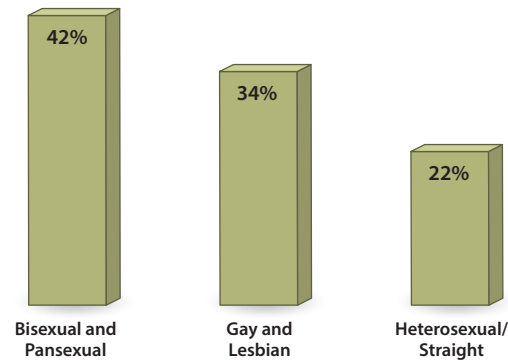
Health

Overall, bisexual and pansexual transgender people were less likely to say that their health was excellent or very good, compared to gay and lesbian and heterosexual transgender people.¹³ Nineteen percent of heterosexual people reported that their general health was excellent, compared to 13% of bisexual people and 9% of pansexual people.¹⁴

Nearly twice as many bisexual and pansexual people as heterosexual people reported having a disability as defined by the American Community Survey (ACS) (see *Figure 3*)¹⁵ The ACS asks respondents whether they have any of the following: hearing disability, vision disability, cognitive disability, ambulatory disability, self-care disability, or independent-living disability.¹⁶ Nearly half (47%) of pansexual people reported having a disability, compared to 36% of bisexual respondents.¹⁷

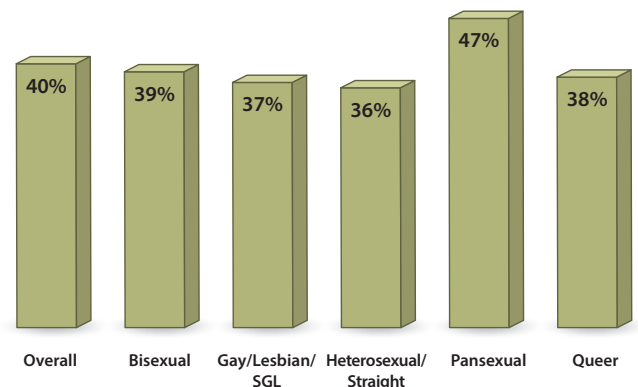
Forty-three percent (43%) of bisexual and pansexual transgender people reported at least one lifetime suicide attempt.¹⁸ Analyzed separately, 47% of pansexual transgender people and 39% of bisexual transgender people who reported at least one suicide attempt (see *Figure 4*).¹⁹

Figure 3: Bisexual and Pansexual Transgender People Are More Likely to Report Having a Disability



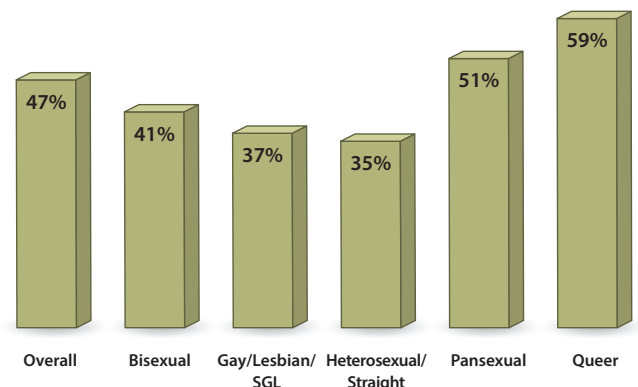
Source: Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Figure 4: Bisexual and Pansexual Transgender People Are Likely to Report At Least One Lifetime Suicide Attempt



Source: Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Figure 5: Pansexual And Queer Transgender People Report Very High Rates of Sexual Assault



Source: Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.

A Few Notes on Methodology

This report summarizes analysis by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality. All differences in analysis are the responsibility of MAP.

This analysis focuses on the demographic and other characteristics of transgender individuals who responded to the U.S. Transgender Survey. It relies on responses to question 2.8 (see below) and focuses on individuals who identified as bisexual and pansexual. It also compares them to respondents who identified as queer, lesbian or gay (or same-gender loving), and heterosexual/straight. While other respondents identified with additional sexual orientations, such as being asexual or writing in a sexual orientation that was not listed, this report focuses specifically on bisexual and pansexual respondents. This analysis includes 84% of respondents who answered this question.²²

2.8 What best describes your current sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Lesbian
- Same-gender loving
- Pansexual
- Queer
- A sexual orientation not listed above (please specify)_____

Age distribution is important to consider when interpreting the findings in this report, as some health indicators and select demographics may correlate with age as much as, if not more so than, sexual orientation identification, thereby affecting the between-group differences. In other words, the age distribution of the respondents may influence the results of the measures reported here. Younger people may be more likely to select these identities.

A different survey of transgender bisexual people interviewed in Canada reported that they frequently felt dismissed by mental health providers.²⁰ One respondent commented that “[t]he general stereotype is that if you’re bisexual, you’re probably not transsexual [sic], you’re just confused. And that if you really are a transsexual and you really are a woman, then you should only be attracted to men[.]”²¹

Violence

Bisexual and pansexual transgender respondents to the U.S. Transgender Survey reported high rates of lifetime sexual assault.^d As shown in *Figure 5* on the previous page, more than half (51%) of pansexual and 41% of bisexual transgender people reported being sexually assaulted in their lifetime compared to 37% of gay and lesbian transgender people and 35% of heterosexual transgender people.²²

^d Results for respondents who were sexually assaulted reflect those who reported that they had “experienced unwanted sexual contact (such as oral, genital, or anal contact or penetration, forced fondling, rape)” in their lifetime.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This report shows that bisexual and pansexual transgender people often experience greater hardships than gay, lesbian, and heterosexual transgender people, particularly in economic security, health, and violence. There are few targeted services for bisexual and pansexual people, much less for bisexual and pansexual transgender people. In order to competently address the needs of transgender people in all areas of life, service providers must understand the diversity of the community and be prepared to serve bisexual and pansexual transgender people.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Sandy James, et al., "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey," *National Center for Transgender Equality*, 2016, <http://www.ustranssurvey.org/report>.
- ² See Figure 4.28 in Sandy James, et al., "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey," *National Center for Transgender Equality*, 2016, <http://www.ustranssurvey.org/report>.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ United States Census, "Disability; American Community Survey (ACS)," <https://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html>.
- ¹⁷ Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Lori Ross, Cheryl Dobinson, and Allison Eady, "Perceived Determinants of Mental Health for Bisexual People: A Qualitative Examination," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol 100, no. 3, 2010, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2820049>.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.
- ²³ See Figure 4.28 and Appendix A in Sandy James, et al., "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey," *National Center for Transgender Equality*, 2016, <http://www.ustranssurvey.org/report>.

This report was authored by:

Movement Advancement Project

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent think tank that provides rigorous research, insight, and analysis that help speed equality for LGBT people. MAP works collaboratively with LGBT organizations, advocates and funders, providing information, analysis and resources that help coordinate and strengthen efforts for maximum impact. MAP's policy research informs the public and policymakers about the legal and policy needs of LGBT people and their families. Learn more at www.lgbtmap.org.

BiNetUSA

As America's oldest advocacy organization for bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer-identified and unlabeled people, BiNet USA facilitates the development of a cohesive network of independent bisexual and bi-friendly communities; promotes bisexual and bi-inclusive visibility; and collects and distributes educational information regarding sexual orientation and gender identity with an emphasis on bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer (bi+) communities. Learn more at www.binetusa.org.

Bisexual Organizing Project

BOP (Bisexual Organizing Project) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit registered in Minnesota that serves the Upper Midwest. We are committed to building the bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer, and unlabeled (bi+) community through regular events and the yearly national BECAUSE conference. BOP is welcoming

and inclusive of everyone, including but not limited to people of all gender identities, sexual orientations, sexes, relationship orientations, ethnicities, abilities, religions, and political affiliations. BOP works in partnership with other groups and individuals in the Upper Midwest who are organizing events serving bisexual and other non-monosexual communities as well as collaborating on national initiatives and programs. Learn more at www.bisexualorganizingproject.org.

Bisexual Resource Center

The Bisexual Resource Center envisions a world where love is celebrated, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression. Because bisexuals today are still misunderstood, marginalized and discriminated against, the BRC is committed to providing support to the bisexual community and raising public awareness about bisexuality and bisexual people. Learn more at www.biresource.org.

National Center for Transgender Equality

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) is the nation's leading social justice advocacy organization winning life saving change for transgender people. NCTE was founded in 2003 by transgender activists who recognized the urgent need for policy change to advance transgender equality. For more information, visit www.transequality.org.