

Not Yet Equal

THE SEQUEL

RESULTS OF THE BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY



Stigma and Resilience
Among Vulnerable
Youth Centre



McCreary
Centre Society

The Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre (SARAVYC) and the McCreary Centre Society are both located on the traditional, unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples. British Columbia, where this survey was conducted, is situated on the lands of more than 198 distinct First Nations, Inuit, and Métis groups with diverse politics, cultures, and networks of kinship.

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Not Yet Equal: The Sequel

Results of the BC Adolescent Health Survey



McCreary
Centre Society



Stigma and Resilience
Among Vulnerable
Youth Centre

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Thank you to all the youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS, the schools who supported them to participate and the nurses and nursing students who administered the survey.

Quotes from sexual minority youth who participated in the survey are included throughout the report.

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KEY FINDINGS

In 2018, 83% of BC youth aged 12-19 identified as straight, 5% as mostly straight, 6% as bisexual, 1% as gay or lesbian, and 4% were questioning their sexual orientation. This represented around 8 in 10 non-binary youth, 2 in 10 girls, and 1 in 10 boys who identified as a sexual minority.

Compared to straight youth, sexual minority youth were more likely to experience challenges to their healthy development

including being more likely than straight youth to report living in an unstable or unsafe home environment, missing out on needed health care, experiencing violence and abuse and using substances.

Boys, girls, and non-binary sexual minority youth reported less positive physical and mental health than their same gender straight peers. For example, 43% of mostly straight, 28% of bisexual, 33% of lesbian, and 56% of questioning girls reported good

or excellent mental health, compared to 71% of straight girls. They were also less likely to exercise regularly.

However, there were some areas where sexual minority youth reported a more positive health picture than their peers. For example, gay boys were more likely than straight boys to have taken dance, yoga or exercise classes in the past year, and to volunteer in the community; and sexual minority youth of all genders were more likely to participate in art, drama, and music.

Sexual minority boys and girls were more likely than their straight peers to reach out to an online community support group for help in the past year, and were also more likely to have accessed a telephone helpline.

Despite ongoing disparities between sexual minority youth and their straight peers, there were some narrowing of the gaps between 2008 and 2018. For example, rates of physical assault more than halved for lesbian girls, and also dropped for bisexual girls and boys, which narrowed the gap between these groups and their straight peers.

Sexual minority youth remained more likely to have considered or attempted suicide than their straight peers. However, gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth were less likely to have attempted suicide in 2018, compared to 2008; and this narrowed the gap in suicide attempts for gay boys and bisexual boys and girls.

Other noticeable improvements for gay, lesbian, and bisexual boys and girls included a narrowing of the gap with their same gendered peers in experiences of pregnancy involvement, sexually

transmitted infections, running away from home, and recent cannabis use. In addition, the disparity between lesbian and straight girls in reports of dating violence narrowed.

Sexual minority young people reported a more positive health picture and plans for the future when they had supportive adults in their family, school and community. Those who did not have supports within their family and/ or school, also reported better outcomes if they had other support in their life, such as an adult in their community who cared about them.



INTRODUCTION

"I think we should have more LGBTQA questions."

.....

This report is the second joint report produced by the University of British Columbia's Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre (SARAVYC) and the McCreary Centre Society (McCreary), using data from McCreary's 2018 BC Adolescent Health

Survey (BC AHS). The first report focused on gender diverse youth, and this report considers the health of sexual minority youth, that is, those who identified as mostly straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or who were questioning their sexual orientation. The current report is a follow-up to a 2007 one which considered the health profile of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth.

The 2007 report focused on data from the 2003 BC AHS and showed concerning disparities between lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and their same gender straight peers. Since then, there have been a number of changes within the education system to better support sexual minority youth; and attitudes towards diversity appear to have improved. The current report therefore profiles the health picture of sexual minority youth in 2018, and considers if there have been any improvements in the health inequalities between straight and sexual minority youth over the past decade (2008-2018).

The BC AHS is the most reliable, comprehensive health survey of adolescents ages 12-19 in public schools in BC. Repeated every 5 years since 1992, the survey involves a large-scale population-based sample. In 2018, over 38,000 young people in 58 of BC's 60 school districts completed the survey, including 6,300 who identified as a sexual minority.

Previously published results of the BC AHS have shown gender differences in many areas of youth health. For example, males consistently report more positive mental health than females and non-binary youth.

However, these results have not considered sexual orientation within each gender group. Therefore, this report focuses on comparisons between sexual minority youth and their same gender straight peers.

.....

“You should do more for LGBTQA+ youth. I think people would benefit from more information about the community because we lack a lot of in life information and this can make kids feel isolated sometimes.”

.....

About the Analysis

All reported comparisons in this report are statistically significant at least at $p < .05$. This means there is less than a 5% likelihood these results occurred by chance.

Where it is not obvious, a note is added to a table or chart if there is no statistically significant difference between percentages.

Any percentage that is marked with an

asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution, as the standard error was higher than others but is still within the releasable range.

Any percentage that is marked NR was not releasable either due to the small number of youth it represents or because it was considered unreliable due to having a high statistical standard error.

The report provides associations, and does not imply causation or the direction of the relationship.

The first part of the report focuses on the health picture of sexual minority youth in 2018. All analyses in this section are conducted by youth's current gender identity (boys, girls, and non-binary youth). The second half of the report looks at trends over time. All analysis in this section had to be analyzed by sex (male or female) as prior to 2018, the BC AHS only asked youth to identify their sex, and did not ask about gender identity. Age-adjusted odds ratios are reported in this section to account for any differences in age between straight youth and their sexual minority peers.

Also, youth who were questioning their sexual orientation could be looked at as a separate category in 2018. This was not possible with earlier versions of the BC

AHS, so these young people are included with straight youth. For this reason, the term 'straight+' is used in the trend analysis.

Analyses were conducted within rather than across each gender identity. For example, straight girls were compared against mostly straight, bisexual, lesbian, and questioning girls but were not compared against straight boys. Also, within each gender, sexual minority youth were compared to straight youth and were not compared against each other. For example, gay boys were compared to straight boys but not to bisexual boys.

Finally, not all analyses which were conducted are included in this report. A separate document, which includes available percentages not reported is available upon request from mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

Limitations

The BC AHS data is considered representative of over 95% of BC youth in Grades 7-12 who were attending mainstream schools in the province. However, it does not capture the health picture of youth who were not attending public school or who were not in school on the day the survey was administered. Youth with certain disabilities, and literacy or comprehension challenges, may also have been excluded.

The question wording on the BC AHS has changed over time as our understanding

of sexual orientation has increased. The current study focuses on the most common sexual orientations reported by youth via forced choice options. In 2018, 0.3% of youth chose not to select one of these options, and wrote in a different sexual orientation, such as asexual or demi-sexual. These youth were not included in the current analyses, and it is therefore not known if their health picture differs from that of youth of other sexual orientations.

Non-binary youth were included in all 2018 BC AHS analyses but due to the small

percentage of BC youth who identified as non-binary (2% overall), results could not always be reported separately. Additionally, previous years' survey results can only be reported for boys and girls as these were the only available gender responses.

There were fewer differences identified within the non-binary group, than there were between straight boys and girls, and sexual minority boys and girls. It is not possible to tell from the data whether this is because there are fewer differences among non-binary youth based on their sexual orientation, or whether it is because of the smaller sample size.

The health picture for questioning youth sometimes appears different to that of other sexual minority youth. This may be because overall questioning youth were younger than youth of other sexual orientations.

"There should be more questions about gender identity & sexuality."



"SOGI 123 is a good step."



Glossary

Bisexual

youth who identified as bisexual or pansexual.

Non-binary

youth who did not identify as male or female (boy or girl).

Protective factors

relationships and experiences in a young person's life that can support them to overcome risks and can contribute to their healthy development, even when they experience health and social inequities.

Questioning

youth who reported they were not yet sure of their sexual orientation on the 2018 BC AHS.

Sexual minority

youth who identified as mostly straight, bisexual, lesbian/gay, or who were questioning their sexual identity.

Straight

youth who identified as straight on the 2018 BC AHS.

Straight+

youth who identified as straight, heterosexual or were not yet sure of their sexual identity (this term is used in the trend analysis to account for differences in survey wording in 2008, 2013 and 2018).



2018 BC AHS

A Profile of Sexual Minority Youth

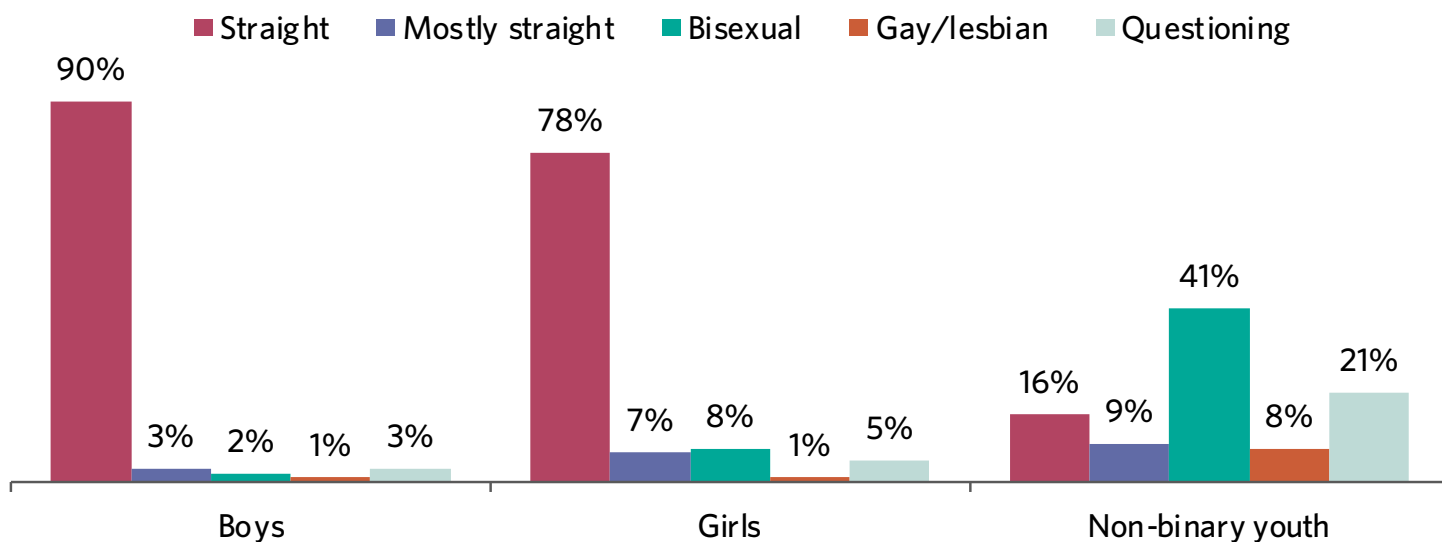
"I am bisexual and want to learn more about who I am."

.....

"I am gay, but not out."

BACKGROUND

Sexual orientation of BC youth



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Note: Percentages do not equal 100% as some youth specified a sexual orientation not listed.

.....

*"I'm not entirely sure yet
about my sexual orientation."*

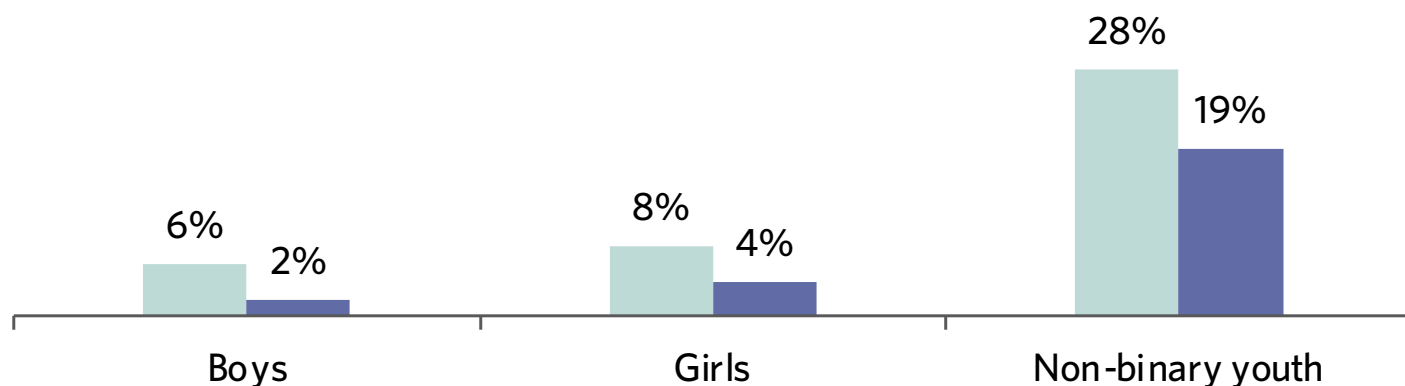
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In 2018, 83% of BC youth aged 12-19 identified as straight, 5% as mostly straight, 6% as bisexual, 1% as gay or lesbian, and 4% were questioning their sexual orientation. There were differences in sexual orientation based on gender identity. Around 8 in 10 non-binary youth, 2 in 10 girls, and 1 in 10 boys identified as mostly straight, bisexual, gay or lesbian, or were questioning their sexual orientation.

Regardless of their gender, younger youth were more likely to be questioning their sexual orientation than older youth, whereas older youth were more likely to identify as a sexual minority. For example, 9% of girls aged 14 and above identified as bisexual, compared to 5% of those younger than 14.

Youth who were questioning their sexual orientation

■ 13 years old or younger ■ 14 or older



Length of Time in Canada

.....

*"[I would like to learn]
more on the diversity in the
LGBT community."*

.....

There were a few differences in sexual orientation based on whether youth were born in Canada or not, as youth of all genders who were born in Canada were more likely than those born abroad to identify as bisexual. For example, 9% of girls and 49% of non-binary youth born in Canada identified as bisexual, compared to 6% of girls and 22% of non-binary youth born abroad.

Urban/Rural Differences

There were few differences in sexual orientation based on whether youth attended an urban or rural school. For example, similar percentages of urban and rural boys identified as mostly straight, bisexual, gay, or questioning. However, rural

girls were more likely to identify as bisexual (10% vs. 8%), as were rural non-binary youth (50% vs. 39%).

Government Care Experience

Sexual minority youth were around twice as likely as straight youth to have experienced government care (such as a foster home or group home) or an alternative to government care (such as a Youth

Agreement). For example, 10% of bisexual girls had been in care, compared to 4% of straight girls. Similarly, 10% of questioning boys had been in care, compared to 4% of straight boys.

Living Situation

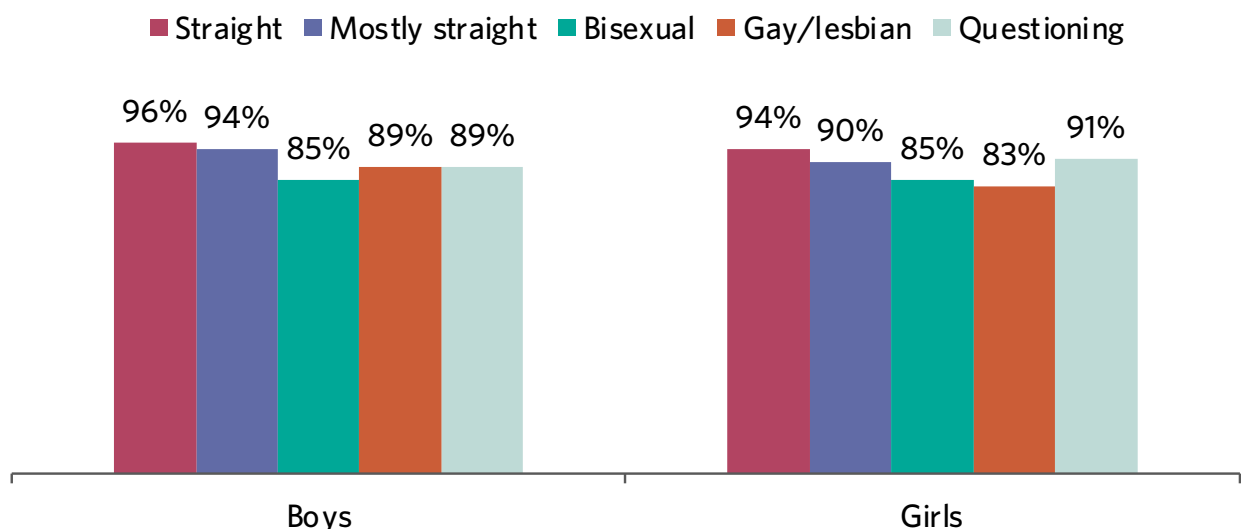
Around 1% of BC youth reported that they lived in households with two mothers or two fathers, with no differences based on youth's sexual orientation, except lesbian girls were less likely to be living with two mothers or two fathers, compared to straight girls.

Sexual minority youth more commonly experienced challenges in their living situation than straight youth, as they were more likely to have moved, run away, or been kicked out of their home in the past year. For example, 13% of mostly straight boys and 14% of bisexual boys

had run away from home during this time, compared to 6% of straight boys.

There were a few other differences in living situations as sexual minority youth were more likely to be living with both parents at different times. For example, 12% of bisexual girls split their time between their parents' homes, compared to 7% of straight girls. Also, sexual minority boys and girls were less likely to feel safe where they were living compared to their straight peers.

Youth who often or always felt safe at home



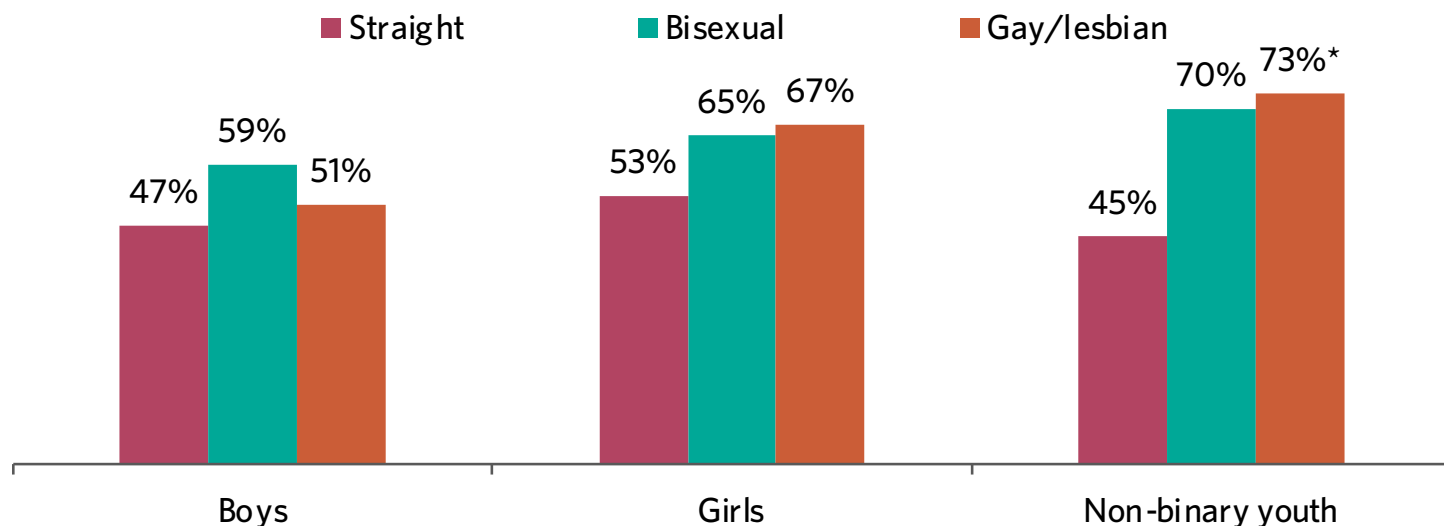
Note: The difference between straight and mostly straight boys was not statistically significant.

Caretaking Responsibilities

Youth were asked about any caretaking responsibilities they had on an average school day. Sexual minority youth were generally more likely than their same gender straight peers to be caring for a pet. There were few other differences except boys who were questioning their orientation were five times more likely than straight boys to be caring for their own child or children (5% vs. 1%). Also, sexual minority girls were more likely than straight

girls to have missed school in the past month because of family responsibilities. For example, 19% of bisexual girls missed school for this reason, compared to 15% of straight girls.

Youth who took care of pets or animals on an average school day



Note: The difference between gay and straight boys was not statistically significant.

* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

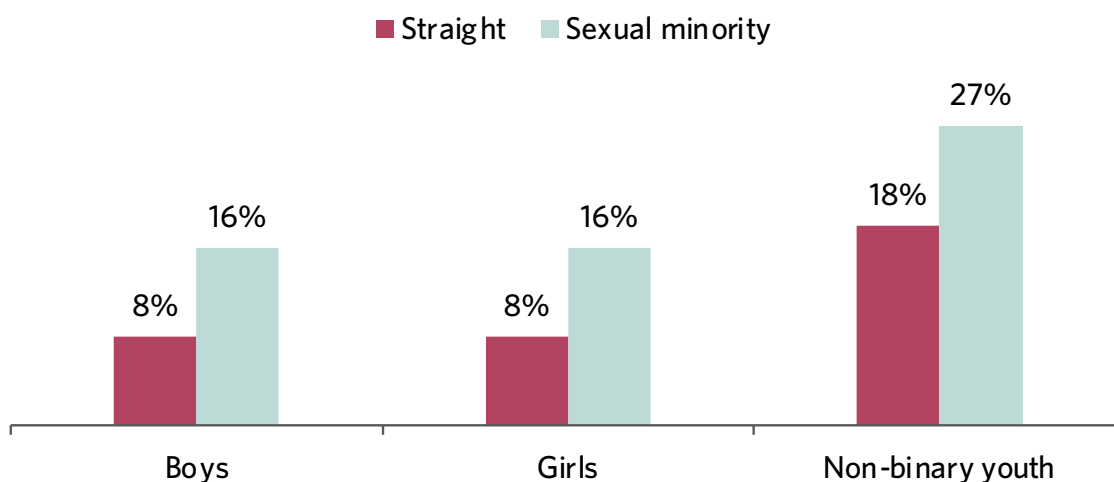
Poverty and Deprivation

Going to bed hungry because there is not enough money for food at home can be a reflection of living in severe poverty. Sexual minority youth were generally more likely than straight youth to go to bed hungry. These youth were also more likely than straight youth to experience other indicators of poverty, such as missing out on extracurricular activities because they could not afford them.

The 2018 BC AHS asked youth whether they had 10 different items BC youth have

identified as important (e.g., money to spend on themselves, a smartphone, a space of their own to hang out in), and if not, whether or not they wished they had them. Sexual minority youth were more likely than straight youth to feel deprived of these items. For example, compared to their straight peers, bisexual girls (9% vs. 3%), and boys (7% vs. 3%) were more likely to have lacked but wished they had three or more items most youth their age had.

Youth who went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food at home



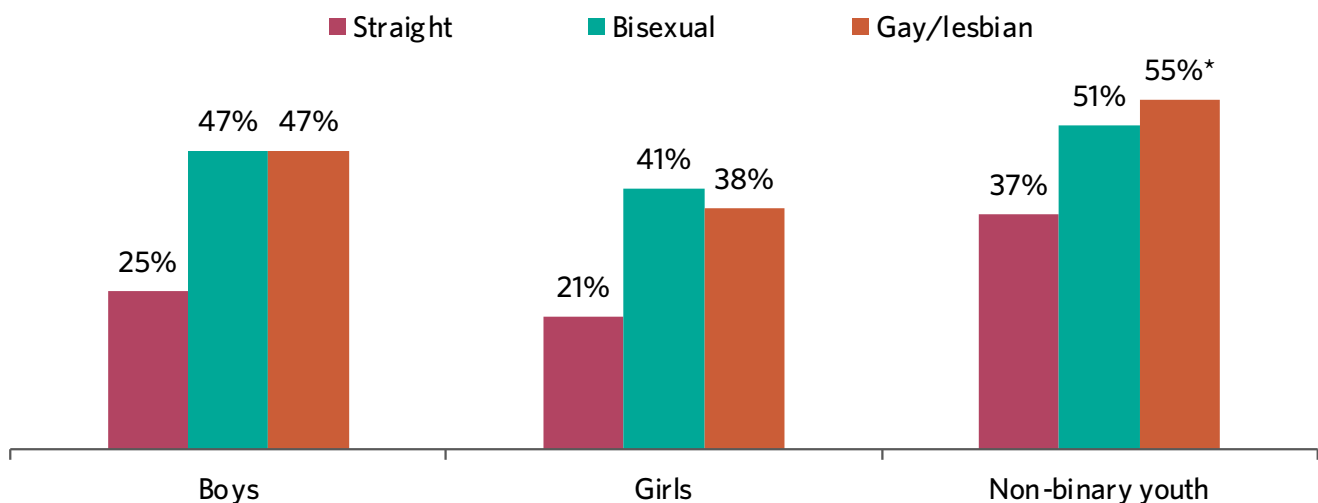
Access to a Phone

Sexual minority and straight youth mostly reported similar rates of having a cell phone or other portable device. However, there were some differences in what they had used their phone for on their most recent school day. Sexual minority youth were generally more likely to have used their phone to communicate with someone they knew online and to look up information. For example, 27% of bisexual boys and 26% of gay boys looked up health information on their most recent school day, compared to 16% of straight boys. Also, 72% of bisexual boys (vs. 61% of same gender straight youth), 79% of bisexual girls (vs. 65%) and 71% of bisexual non-binary youth (vs. 58%) used their phone to look up non-health-related information.



Used phone on last school day to communicate with someone they only knew online

(among youth with a phone)



* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

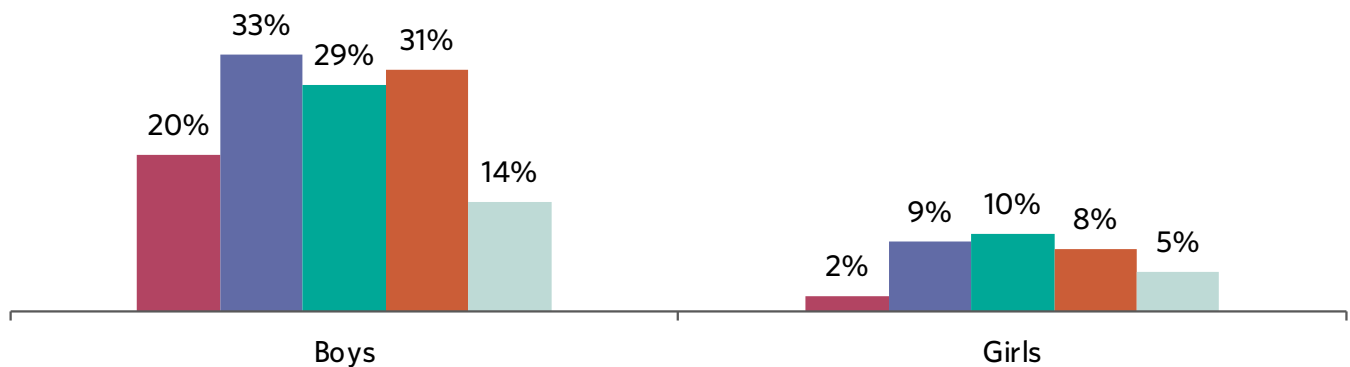
Sexual minority boys and girls were generally more likely than those who identified as straight to use their phone to watch porn or to sext the previous school day. For example, whilst 5% of straight boys and 3% of straight girls had used their phone to sext on their most recent

school day, 15% of gay boys, and 7% of mostly straight girls had done so. The reverse was true among non-binary youth, 19% of non-binary straight youth had used their phone to sext, compared to 9% of bisexual non-binary youth.

Used phone on the their last school day to watch porn

(among youth with a phone)

■ Straight ■ Mostly straight ■ Bisexual ■ Gay/lesbian ■ Questioning



Spirituality

Some youth find spirituality important in their life. However, it appeared to be less important to some groups of sexual minority youth, particularly girls. For example, 37% of bisexual and 29% of lesbian girls felt that spirituality was at least somewhat important in their life, which was lower than the 43% of straight girls who felt this way.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Reflecting findings from previous years, sexual minority youth were less likely than straight youth to rate their health as good or excellent. For example, 65% of gay boys and 54% of lesbian girls rated their health this positively in 2018, compared to 87% of straight boys and 81% of straight girls.

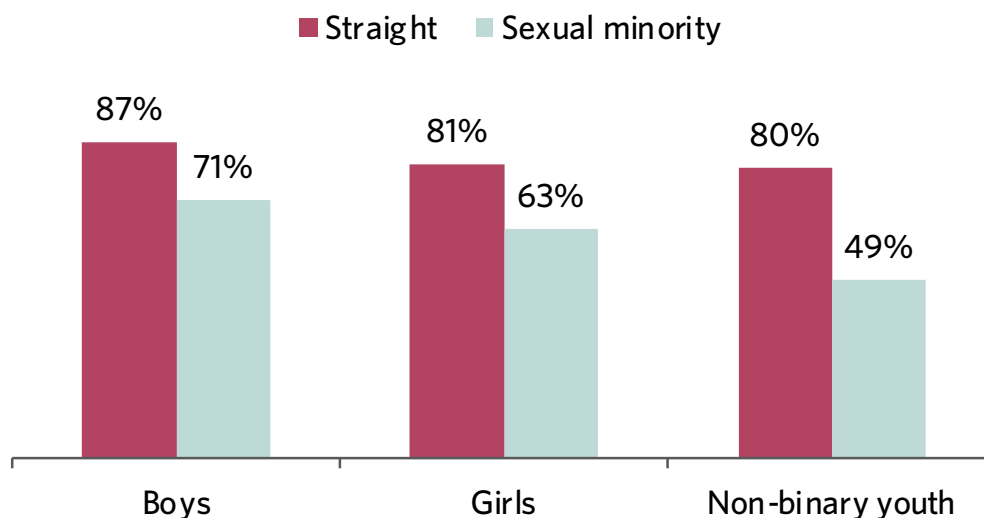
Sexual minority youth were generally more likely than straight youth to report they had a health condition or disability. For example, compared to their same gender straight peers, bisexual boys (57% vs.

.....

"I would like to learn more about LGBTQ+ health (especially sexual health)."

.....

Youth who rated their health as good or excellent

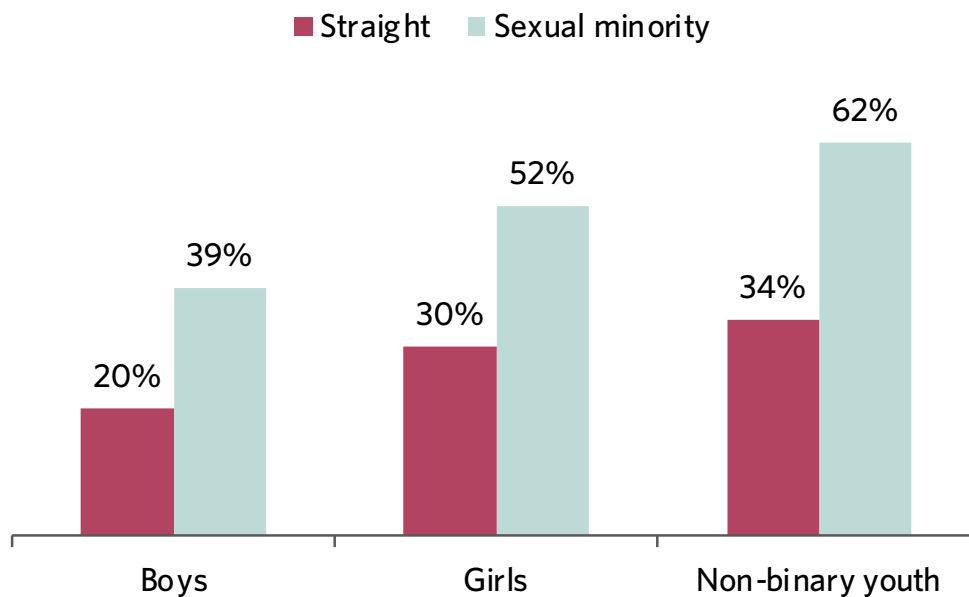


20%), bisexual girls (64% vs. 30%) and bisexual non-binary youth (71% vs. 34%) were more than twice as likely to report they had a health condition or disability.

Among youth who had a health condition or disability, sexual minority boys and girls were more likely to report that their condition prevented them from doing things youth their age could do. For

example, 68% of bisexual non-binary youth with a health condition or disability reported their condition was debilitating (vs. 47%* of straight non-binary youth), as did 62% of bisexual girls (vs. 47% of straight girls), and 47% of bisexual boys (vs. 29% of straight boys).

Youth with a health condition or disability



Physical Activity

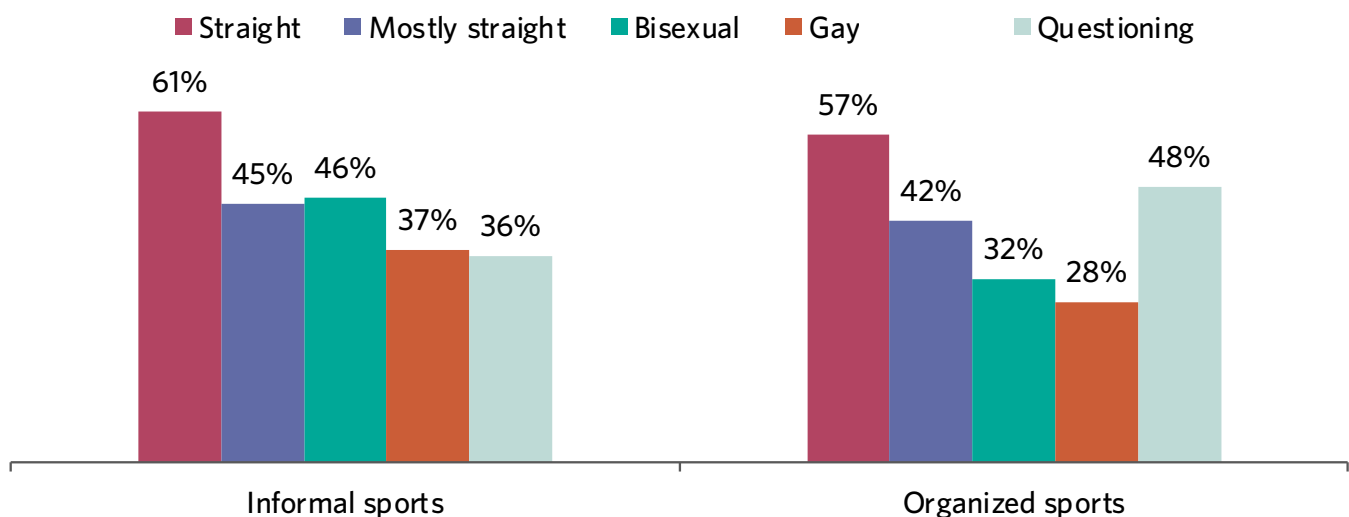
According to physical activity guidelines, youth aged 5-17 should engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day and those aged 18 or older should participate in at least 150 minutes of this type of physical activity each week.

Among BC youth aged 17 and younger, sexual minority boys and girls were generally less likely than their same gender straight peers to have exercised for 60 minutes on at least three days in the past week, and to have exercised daily during this time. For example, a quarter (25%) of straight boys exercised daily, compared to 10% of gay boys. Also, 13% of straight girls exercised this regularly which was more than three times the rate among lesbian girls. The pattern was similar among youth aged 18 or older, with sexual minority boys and girls less likely to have exercised regularly in the past week.

Sexual minority youth were also less likely to participate in all types of extracurricular sports in the past year, including informal, organized, and extreme sports. For example, 26% of straight boys took part in extreme sports, compared to 16% of mostly straight boys, 19% of bisexual boys, 11% of gay boys, and 14% of questioning boys.

Sexual minority girls were also less likely to participate in dance, yoga, or exercise classes. For example, lesbian girls were about half as likely as straight girls to have taken these classes in the past year (19% vs. 37%), including on a weekly basis (11% vs. 25%). However, gay boys were nearly twice as likely as straight boys to have been involved in dance, yoga, or exercise classes in the past year (21% vs. 11%).

Boys who participated at least weekly in informal and organized sports in the past year



Sleep

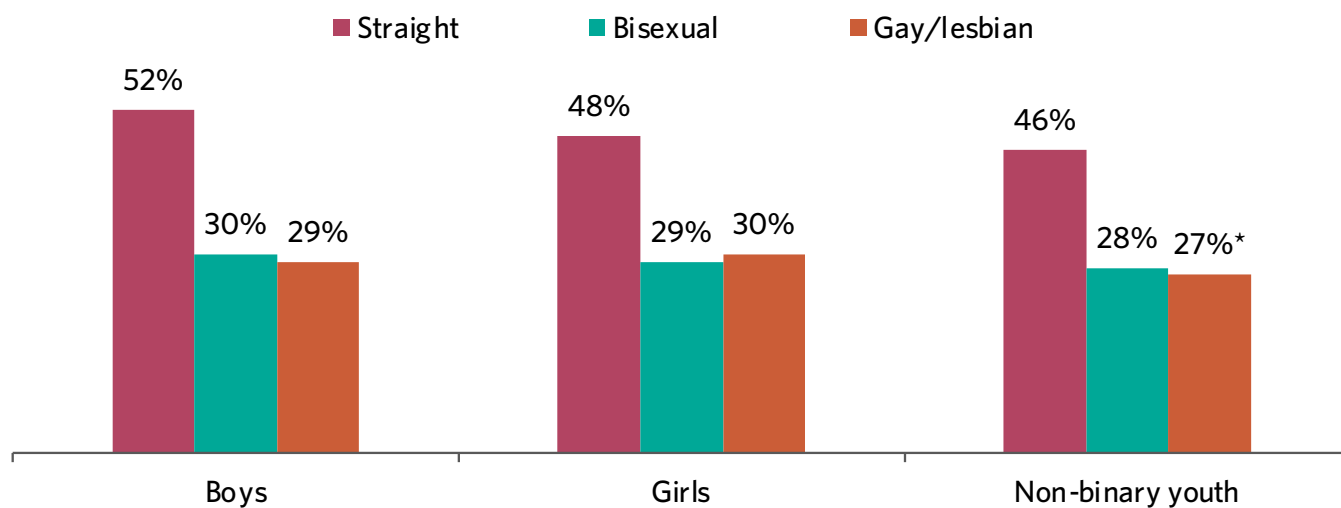
Youth were asked how many hours sleep they got on the night before completing the BC AHS. Sexual minority youth were generally less likely than their straight peers to have slept for at least eight hours. Not surprisingly, sexual minority youth were also less likely to have woken up feeling rested. For example, 43% of bisexual boys and 42% of gay boys woke up feeling rested on the day they took the survey, compared to 54% of straight boys.

Sexual minority youth were generally more likely to be engaging in online or other activities after they were expected to be asleep in comparison to straight youth. For example, 90% of gay boys engaged in at least one online activity after their bedtime, compared to 82% of straight boys. Gay

boys were also specifically more likely than straight boys to be chatting or texting (75% vs. 55%) and sexual minority girls were more likely than straight girls to be gaming (e.g., 22% of mostly straight girls were gaming vs. 15% of straight girls).

Compared to their same gendered straight peers, sexual minority girls were more likely to have missed school because they slept in. For example, 29% of mostly straight girls and 25% of bisexual girls had slept in at least once in the past month, compared to 21% of straight girls. In addition, 9% of bisexual boys had missed school because they slept in on at least three occasions that month, compared to 5% of straight boys.

Slept for at least eight hours on previous night



* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

INJURIES AND INJURY PREVENTION

In the past year, around 1 in 4 youth had sustained an injury serious enough to require medical attention, with few differences based on sexual orientation. However, gay (19%) and questioning (17%) boys and questioning girls (19%) were less likely to have been seriously injured than their same gender straight peers (28% for boys, 25% for girls).

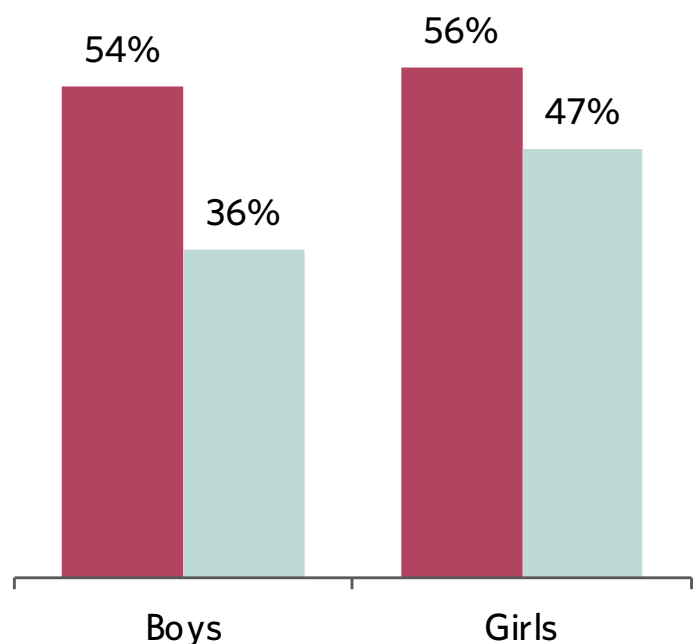
There were few differences in the percentages of youth who had sustained a concussion in the past year, but there were differences in who got treatment. For example, 14% of straight boys and 14% of sexual minority boys sustained a concussion in the past year. However, among these youth, over half of straight boys received medical treatment for their concussion, compared to just over a third of sexual minority boys.

In terms of injury prevention behaviour, some groups of sexual minority youth appeared to take fewer risks. For example, 85% of gay boys always wore a seat belt when riding in a motor vehicle, compared to 73% of straight boys. Mostly straight girls were the one sexual minority group who were less likely to always wear a seatbelt than their same gender straight peers (68% vs. 74%).

Received medical treatment for their concussion

(among those who sustained a concussion in the past year)

■ Straight ■ Sexual minority



NUTRITION

Sexual minority youth were less likely than straight youth to eat three meals a day and to eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner. For example, 57% of straight boys always ate breakfast, compared to 50% of mostly straight, 42% of bisexual, and 40% of gay boys. Sexual minority youth were also less likely to eat their breakfast at home. For example, mostly straight and bisexual girls were less likely than straight girls to eat breakfast at home and were more likely to eat breakfast at school.

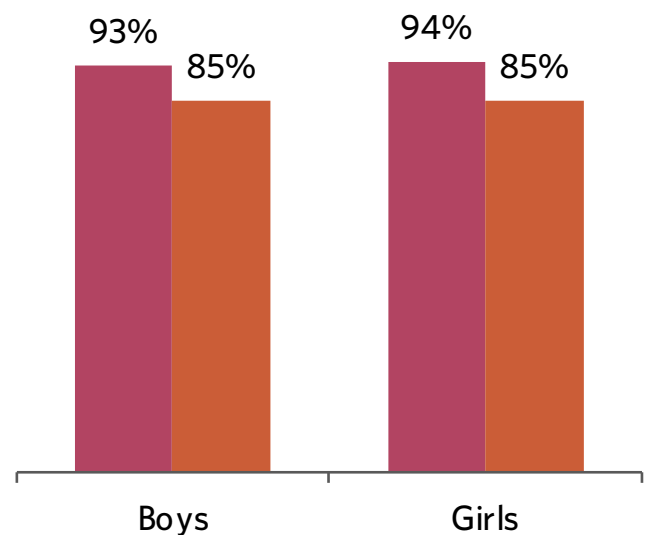
There were also differences in nutritional intake between straight youth and some sexual minority youth. For example, gay boys and lesbian and bisexual girls (90% vs. 94%) were less likely to have eaten fruit and vegetables the previous day compared to straight youth.

Around 1 in 10 straight boys (10%) and girls (12%) had vomit on purpose after eating in the past year, compared to 18% of bisexual boys, 24% of bisexual girls, 18% of gay boys, and 21% of lesbian girls.



Ate fruit or vegetables the day before the survey

■ Straight ■ Gay/lesbian



MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

"There should be more LGBTQ+ recognition, for things like Pride. I have gay friends that feel depressed."

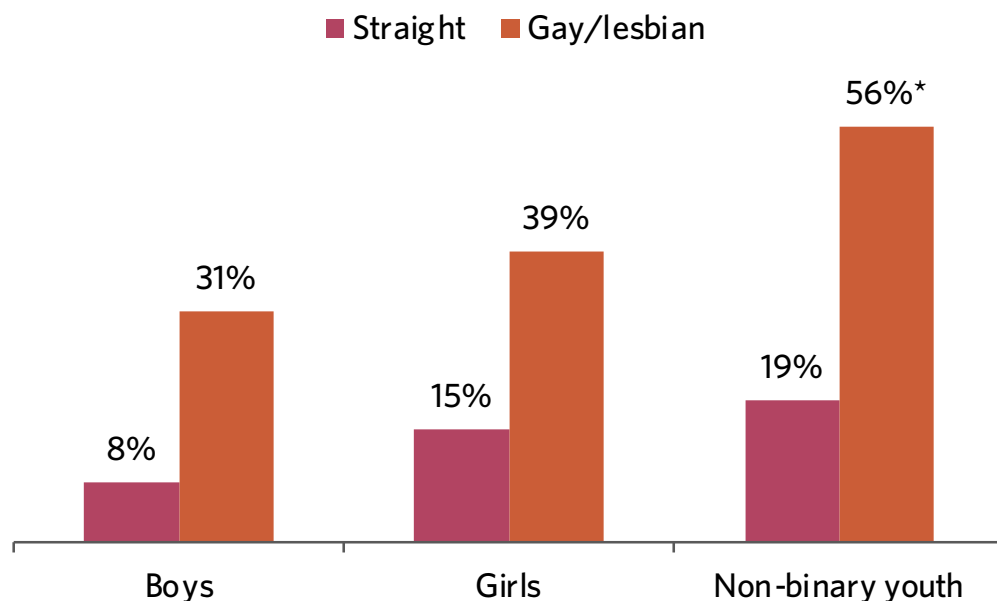
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In 2018, boys, girls, and non-binary sexual minority youth reported less positive mental health than their same gender straight peers. For example, 43% of mostly straight, 28% of bisexual, 33% of lesbian, and 56% of questioning girls reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 71% of straight girls.

Sexual minority youth were generally less likely to report feeling happy in the past month. For example, 18% of bisexual non-binary youth felt happy most or all the time in the past month, compared to 58% of straight non-binary youth.

Sexual minority youth were more likely than straight youth to report they had a mental health condition (such as depression, anxiety, or an eating disorder). For example, 65% of bisexual non-binary youth reported having such a condition (vs. 11% of straight non-binary youth), as did 40% of lesbian girls (vs. 16% of straight girls).

Youth with Depression



* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

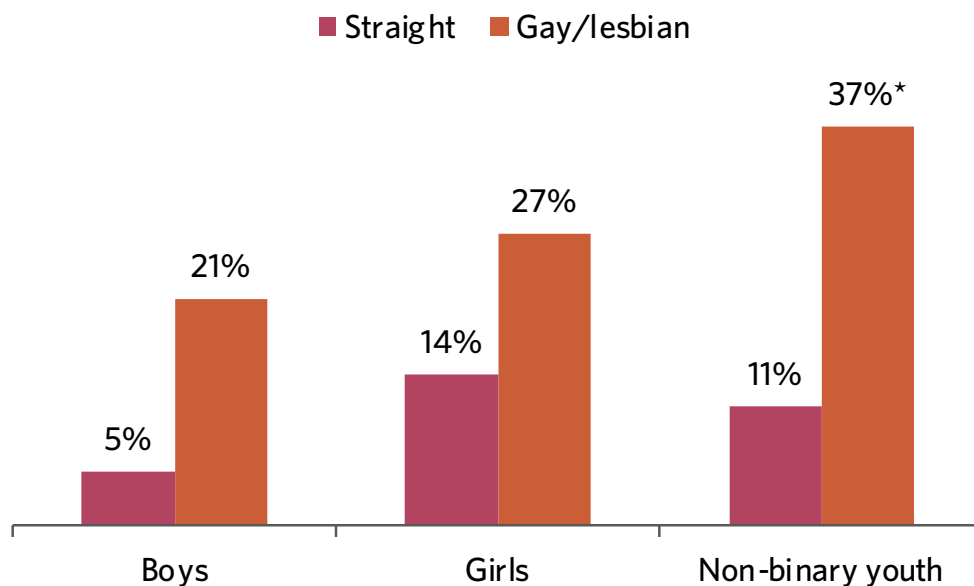
Stress and Despair

Sexual minority youth reported higher levels of stress and despair in the past month, compared to their same gender straight peers. For example, bisexual boys were seven times more likely than straight boys to report experiencing such feelings of hopelessness that they wondered if anything was worthwhile (21% vs. 3%), and gay and lesbian youth were at least twice as likely as their same gender straight peers to have experienced such extreme stress in the past month that they felt unable to cope.



Sexual minority youth were less likely to feel that they managed stress well. For example, 63% of straight boys and 51% of straight girls who experienced stress felt that they managed this well or very well, compared to 43% of gay boys and 36% of lesbian girls.

Felt extreme stress in the past month



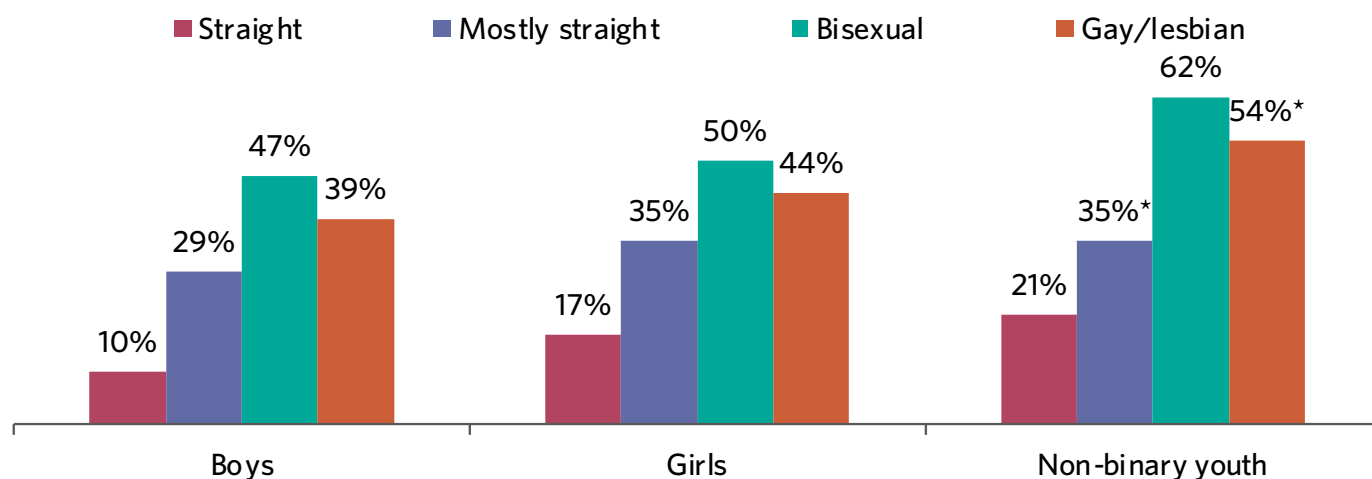
* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Self-harm and Suicidality

Sexual minority youth were more likely than their same gender straight peers to have self harmed, seriously considered or attempted suicide in the past year. For example, 9% of straight boys had cut or injured themselves on purpose without intending to kill themselves, which was less than half the rate of mostly straight (23%), bisexual (36%), and gay boys (31%), and

was also lower than for questioning boys (15%). Also, compared to straight boys, bisexual boys were eight times as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year, while gay boys were six times as likely, and mostly straight boys were four times as likely.

Seriously considered suicide in the past year



Note: The difference between straight and mostly straight non-binary youth was not statistically significant.

* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Quality of Life

Students were asked to rate their quality of life, including how much they agreed that their life was going well, they had a good life, they had what they wanted in life, and they wished they had a different life. Compared to their same gender straight peers, boys, girls, and non-binary sexual minority youth were generally less likely

to rate their quality of life positively. For example, just over half of bisexual (51%) and gay (53%) boys felt that their life was going well, compared to 81% of straight boys; and half (50%) of bisexual non-binary youth wished they had a different life, compared to a quarter (25%) of straight non-binary youth.

Perseverance and Optimism



Sexual minority youth were generally less likely to report feeling skilled and confident. For example, compared to their straight peers, lesbian and gay youth were less likely to feel good about themselves. This may explain why they were also less likely to push themselves to achieve their goals when faced with setbacks, and to feel hopeful. For example, half of bisexual boys (50%) felt quite or very hopeful for the future (vs. 72% of straight boys), as did 40% of bisexual girls (vs. 68% of straight girls) and 23% of bisexual non-binary youth (vs. 46% of their straight peers).

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Sexual minority youth were generally less likely than their straight peers to have seen a dentist. For example, 79% of bisexual and 71% of lesbian girls had seen a dentist within the past year, compared to 85% of straight girls. Some groups of sexual minority youth were also less likely to have accessed a family doctor. For example, 59% of bisexual girls had received healthcare from a family doctor in the past year, compared to 66% of straight girls.

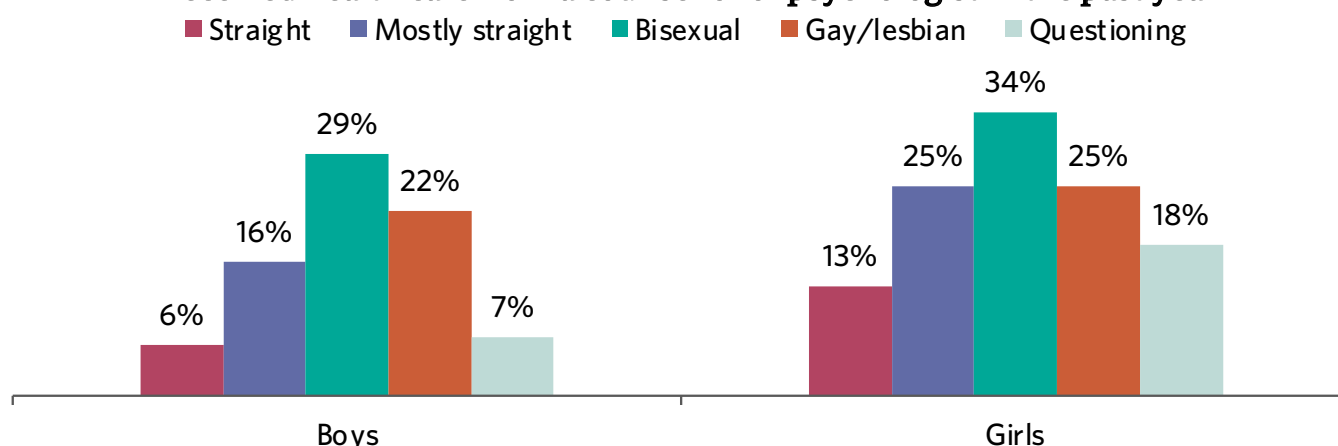
Sexual minority youth who did approach a doctor for help were less likely to find the doctor helpful. For example, 86% of bisexual boys (vs. 94% of straight boys) and 76% of bisexual girls (vs. 91% of straight girls) who asked a doctor for help found them to be helpful.

For each gender, sexual minority youth were generally more likely than their straight peers to have received health care from a youth clinic, or a counsellor or psychologist.

Overall, sexual minority youth were more likely than their same gender straight peers to have missed out on needed health care in the past year. For example, gay boys were more than twice as likely as straight boys to have missed out on needed care (14% vs. 6%), as were bisexual non-binary youth in comparison to straight non-binary youth (31% vs. 12%).

They were also more likely to report missing out on needed mental health services in the past year. For example, mostly straight, bisexual, and lesbian girls were more than twice as likely to have missed out on these services, compared to straight girls.

Received health care from a counsellor or psychologist in the past year



Note: The difference between straight and questioning boys was not statistically significant.

SUBSTANCE USE

Smoking and Vaping

Sexual minority girls were more likely than straight girls to have ever smoked tobacco, and to have smoked recently, including daily. Bisexual (26%) and gay boys (26%) were also more likely to have ever smoked compared to straight boys (19%). Among boys and girls who had smoked tobacco, gay and lesbian youth were twice as likely to have first smoked before the age of 13, compared to their same gender straight peers.

Sexual minority youth generally vaped at similar or lower rates than straight youth. For example, 24% of bisexual non-binary youth had vaped in the past month, compared to 38% of straight non-binary youth.

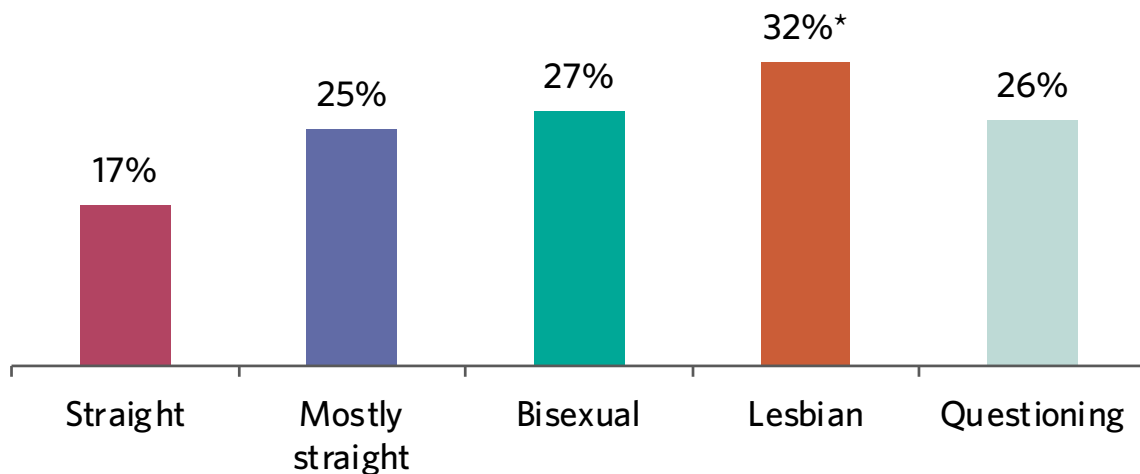
Alcohol and Cannabis

Similar to the pattern seen for tobacco, bisexual boys as well as sexual minority girls had higher rates of having tried alcohol and cannabis. For example, 59% of bisexual boys and girls had ever tried alcohol compared to 44% of their same gender straight peers. Sexual minority girls were also less likely than their straight peers to wait until they were at least 15 to try alcohol or cannabis, a difference not seen amongst boys. Additionally, among girls who had used alcohol, 31% of bisexual girls, 25% of lesbian girls and 25% of

questioning girls had their first drink at age 12 or younger, compared to 16% of straight girls.

Sexual minority youth generally reported similar or lower rates of having used alcohol or cannabis in the past month. However, sexual minority girls were more likely than their straight peers to have used cannabis on six or more days in the month prior to taking the survey.

Used cannabis on six or more days in the past month (among girls who have tried cannabis)



* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Other Substances

Sexual minority boys and girls were generally more likely than their straight peers to have ever used a substance other than alcohol, cannabis, or tobacco. For example, compared to straight boys, bisexual boys were about three times as likely to have tried cocaine (7% vs. 2%) or

hallucinogens (10% vs. 3%). In addition, 10% of mostly straight, 14% of bisexual, and 12% of lesbian girls had misused their prescription medication, compared to 5% of straight girls.

Problematic Use

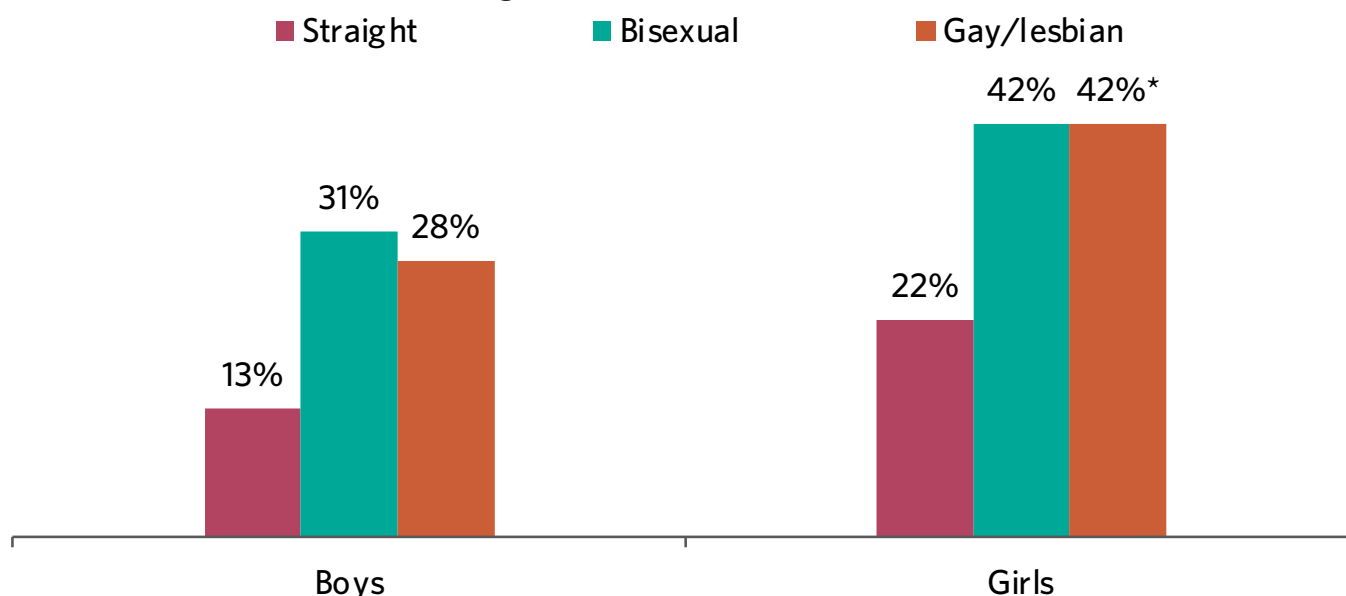
Sexual minority boys and non-binary youth reported that their substance use had become problematic at similar rates to their same gender straight peers. However, sexual minority girls were more likely to report they had needed help for their use

in the past year. For example, bisexual girls were at least twice as likely as straight girls to have needed help for their alcohol use (6% vs. 3%), cannabis use (5% vs. 2%), and use of other substances (3% vs. 1%).

Reasons for Using Substances

Sexual minority boys and girls were generally more likely than straight youth to report that the reason they had last used substances was because of stress, because they felt down or sad, or because they felt there was nothing else to do.

Youth whose reason for the last time they used substances was because they felt down or sad
(among those who used substances)



* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Oral Sex and Intercourse

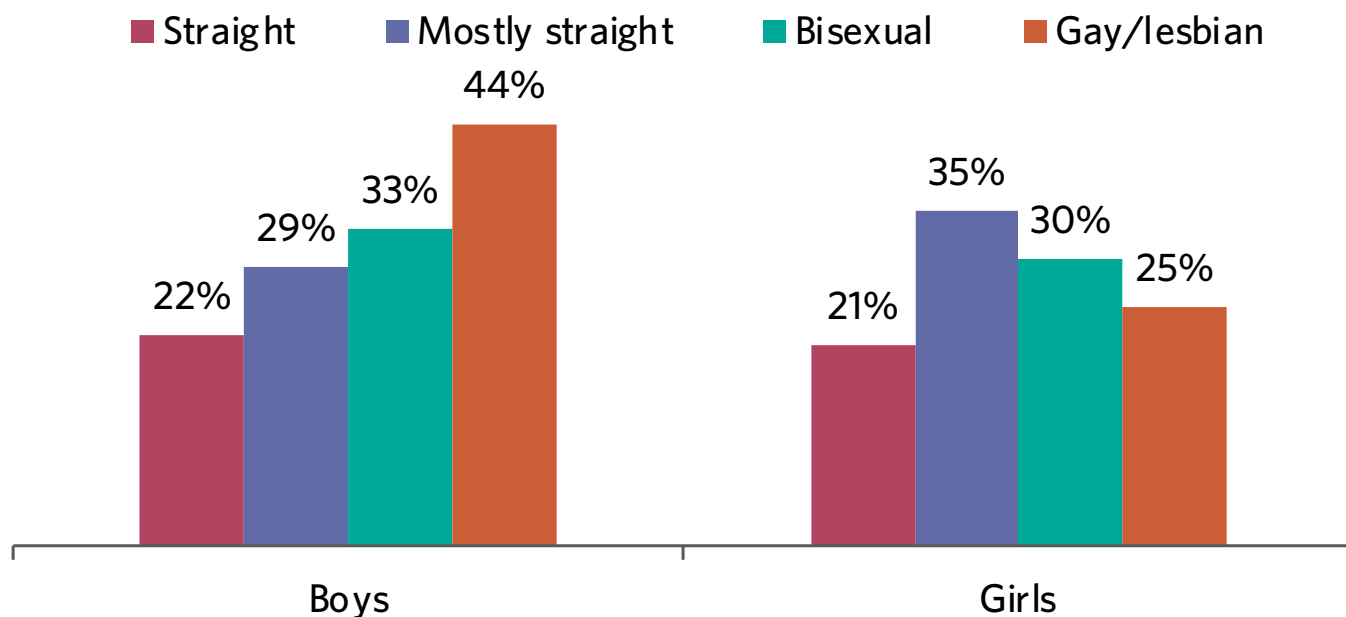
Sexual minority boys and girls were generally more likely than their same gender straight peers to have ever had oral sex but were less likely to use protection the last time they had done so. For example, 9% of mostly straight girls used protection the last time they had oral sex, which was half the rate of straight girls (18%).

.....

"We need proper sex education. We also need to learn about safe gay/lesbian sex."

.....

Ever had oral sex



Sexual minority boys and girls were also more likely to have had intercourse. For example, 31% of mostly straight and 28% of bisexual girls had ever had intercourse, compared to 19% of straight girls. Among youth who had ever had intercourse, lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth were more likely than straight youth to report that the last time they had sex was with a same-sex partner, whereas mostly straight and questioning youth reported similar rates of same-sex partners as their straight counterparts.

Sexual minority and straight youth generally reported similar rates of having used substances before the last time they had sex, having multiple sexual partners, experiencing a sexually transmitted infection and having been involved in a pregnancy. However, there were a few differences. For example, bisexual girls were more likely than straight girls to have mixed substance use and sex (27% vs. 20%; among those who ever had intercourse), had multiple partners in the past year (33% vs. 18%) and been pregnant (2% vs. 1%).

*“We **NEED** better sex ed classes!! I learned everything I know online. Teach kids about sexuality and gender at a young age!! Teach about gay + lesbian sex!!”*

.....

“We need sexual education taught for people who aren’t straight. Here there is a high rate of HIV infections in gay/bisexual men. Specifically due in part to lack of education.”

Unwanted Sexual Activity

Sexual minority youth were generally more likely than straight youth to have been forced into sexual activity by a youth or adult. For example, 13% of gay boys and 21% of lesbian girls had ever been forced into sexual activity, compared to 2% of straight boys and 10% of straight girls.

Sexual minority boys and girls were less likely than straight boys and girls to think

that they could say no to sex with a new partner, sex with a long-term partner, or to sexting. For example, 80% of bisexual boys felt that they could say no to sex with a long-term partner if they did not want to, compared to 88% of straight boys.

VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

Sexual minority boys and girls were more likely to experience violence and discrimination than their same gender straight peers. Some examples include:

Dating violence

Among youth who dated in the past year, 17% of bisexual boys (vs. 7% of straight boys) and 14% of bisexual girls (vs. 6% of straight girls) had been the victims of dating violence.

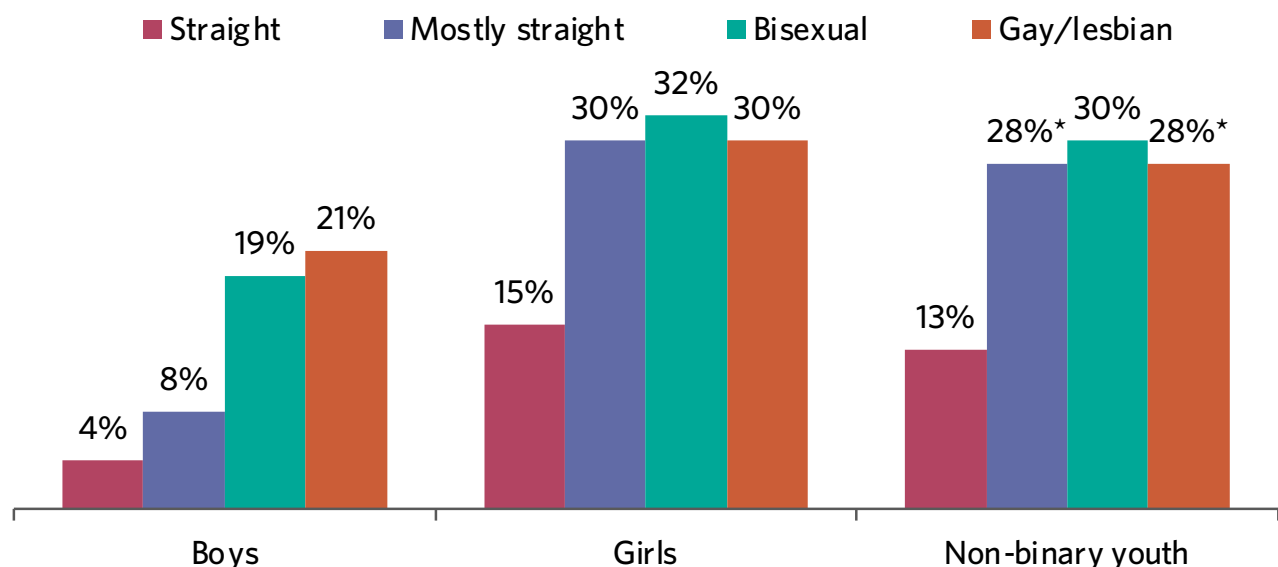
Verbal and physical sexual harassment

Bisexual youth were more likely than their straight peers to have been verbally sexually harassed in the past year (e.g., 44% of bisexual boys vs. 27% of straight boys), including three or more times during that period (e.g., 32% of bisexual girls vs. 18% of straight girls).

Physical and sexual abuse

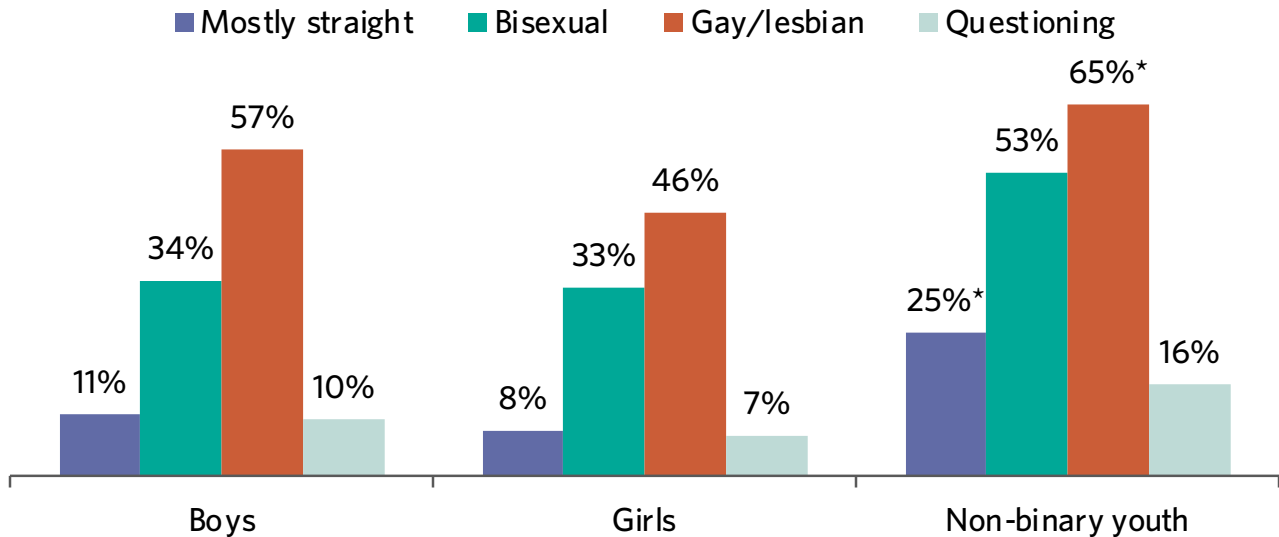
For example, 26% of gay boys (vs. 10% of straight boys), 29% of lesbian girls (vs. 14% of straight girls), and 35%* of gay/lesbian non-binary youth (vs. 16% of straight non-binary youth) had been physically abused.

Ever been sexually abused



* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Discriminated against because of their sexual orientation in the past year



* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Discrimination

Compared to their straight peers, gay boys (64% vs. 31%), lesbian girls (60% vs. 40%), and gay and lesbian non-binary youth (72%* vs. 46%) were more likely to have experienced at least one form of discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation, gender or sex, or physical appearance.

.....

"People need to be educated on LGBTQ related subjects, to help stop ignorance and discrimination."

.....

Being teased, excluded, and/or physically attacked at school or on the way to or from school in the past year

For example, compared to their straight peers, bisexual boys (17% vs 9%) and girls (12% vs. 5%) were more likely to have been physically attacked.

Missing school because of bullying

Ten percent (10%) of bisexual girls (vs. 4% of straight girls) and 5% of bisexual boys (vs. 2% of straight boys), for example, missed class on at least one day in the past month because of bullying.

Missing out on extracurricular activities because of fear of being bullied

For example, 3% of straight boys had missed out for this reason in the past year, compared to 7% of mostly straight, 13% of bisexual, 16% of gay, and 8% of questioning boys.

.....

"I hate hearing 'you're so gay' in the hallways (used as a insult)."

.....



Carrying a weapon for protection

While 11% of bisexual boys and 8% of bisexual girls carried a weapon to school in the past month, 6% of straight boys and 2% of straight girls carried a weapon to school in the same time period.

Being victimized online in the past year

For example, 19% of gay boys had been cyberbullied, compared to 10% of straight boys.

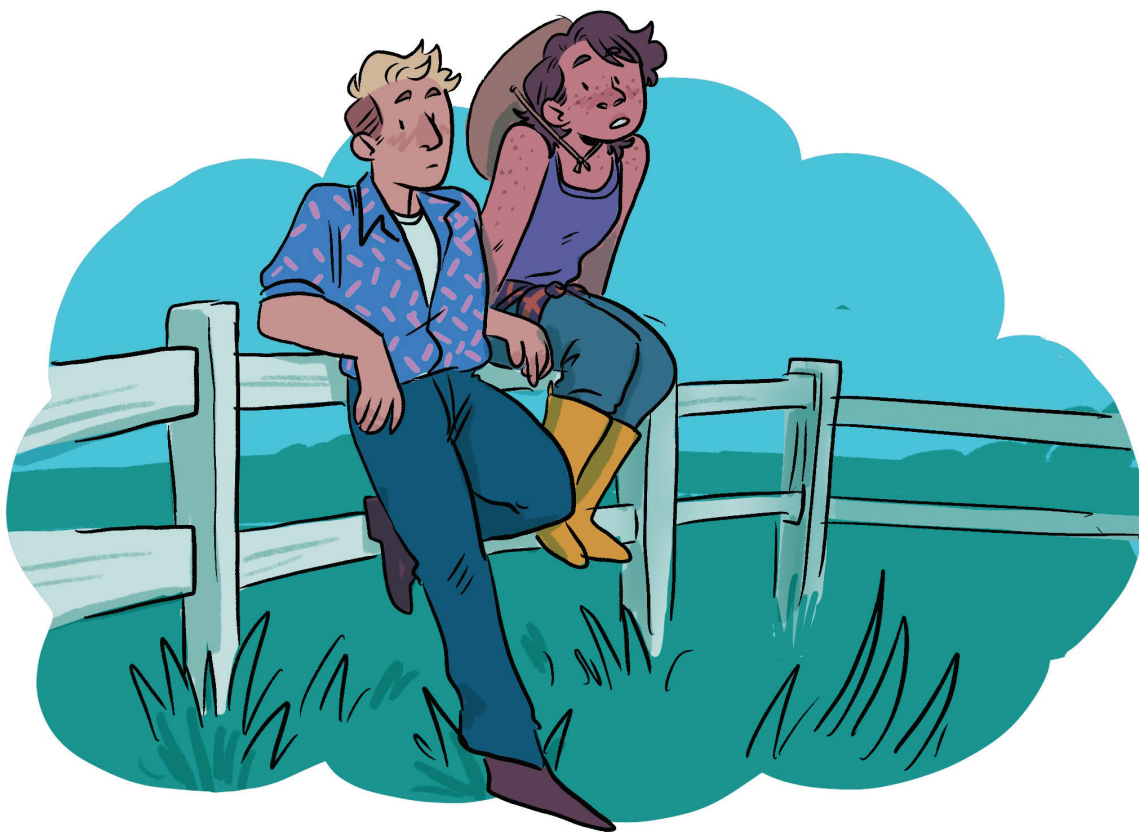
Meeting someone unsafe online

Gay boys were three times as likely to have met someone unsafe (31% vs. 10%) and lesbian girls were twice as likely (31% vs. 20%).

.....

"Teachers should be taught on how to handle homophobia."

.....



SUPPORTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

.....

The previous two sections profiled the background and health picture of sexual minority youth in BC, and compared these to straight youth. This section considers the potential assets and supports that young people may have in their life, and what appears to be associated with having these.

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Quality Time

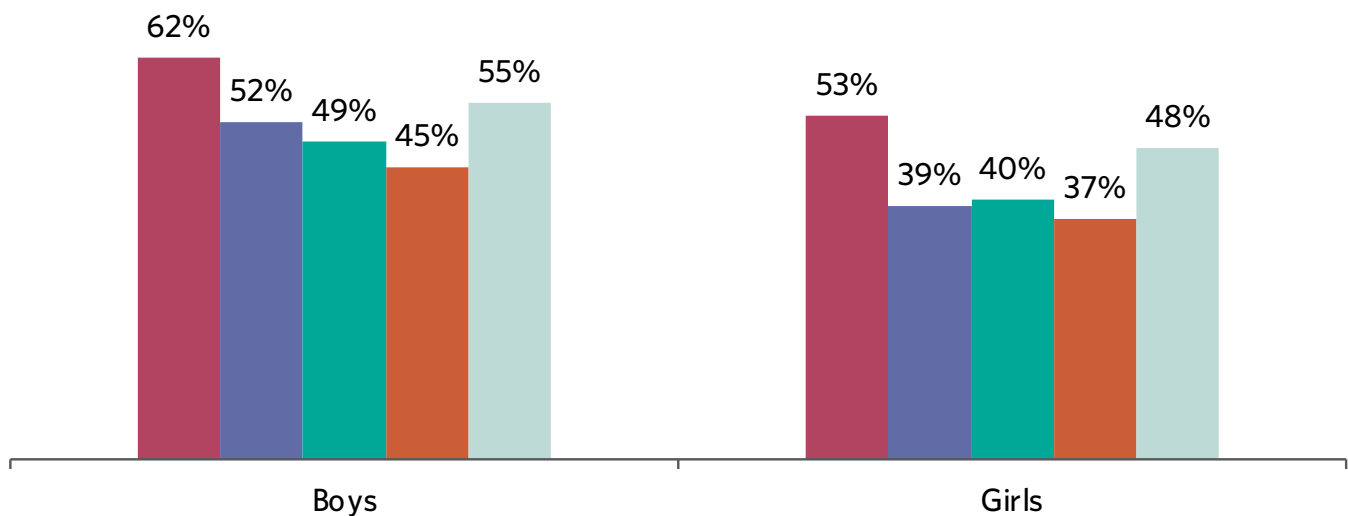
When asked about how much time youth felt they had to do the things they wanted on their own, in nature and with their family, sexual minority boys and girls were less likely to report they had the right amount of time. For example, 57% of gay boys and 53% of lesbian girls felt they got the right amount of time on their own, compared to 71% of straight boys and 66% of straight girls.

However, when sexual minority youth did have enough time to do what they wanted, they reported more positive well-being

and reduced levels of stress. For example, among gay boys, those who felt they spent the right amount of time with their family were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (62% vs. 26%* of gay boys who did not get this time), to feel they have a good life (71% vs. 38%*), and to feel they have what they wanted in life (56% vs. 22%*).

Youth who felt like they have the right amount of time to do the things they want in nature

■ Straight ■ Mostly straight ■ Bisexual ■ Gay/lesbian ■ Questioning



Supportive School Environment

"I am gay and I think that schools should try to be a little more accepting or supportive of this."



Despite important changes within BC's school districts which aim to be more inclusive of different gender identities and sexual orientations, sexual minority youth were generally less likely than straight youth to feel connected and supported at school. Examples sexual minority youth reported include being:

Less likely to feel a part of their school

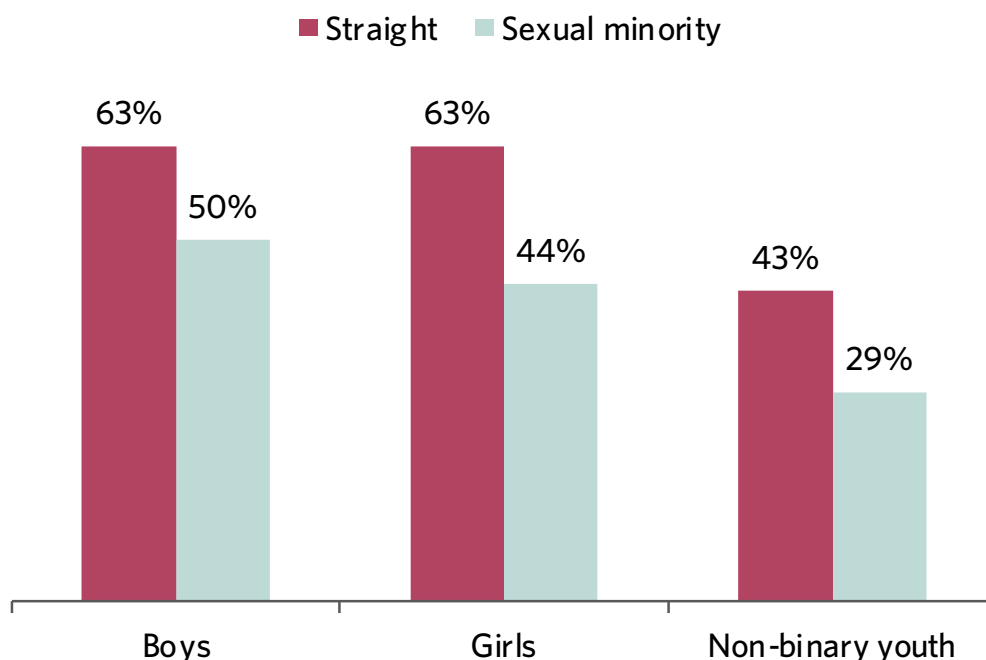
Less likely to feel that staff at their school treated them fairly, expected them to do well, and cared about them

For example, 59% of mostly straight, 56% of bisexual, and 48% of lesbian girls felt that their teacher cared about them, compared to 67% of straight girls.

Less likely than straight youth to have asked a teacher for help in the past year

Among those who asked for help, bisexual boys and girls, and mostly straight girls were also less likely to find them helpful than their straight peers.

Youth who felt like part of their school



Less likely to find a school counsellor helpful (among those who asked for help)

Forty percent (40%) of bisexual girls asked their counsellor for help in the past year, compared to 31% of straight girls; but whilst two thirds (66%) of bisexual girls found the experience helpful, 88% of those who identified as straight found it useful.

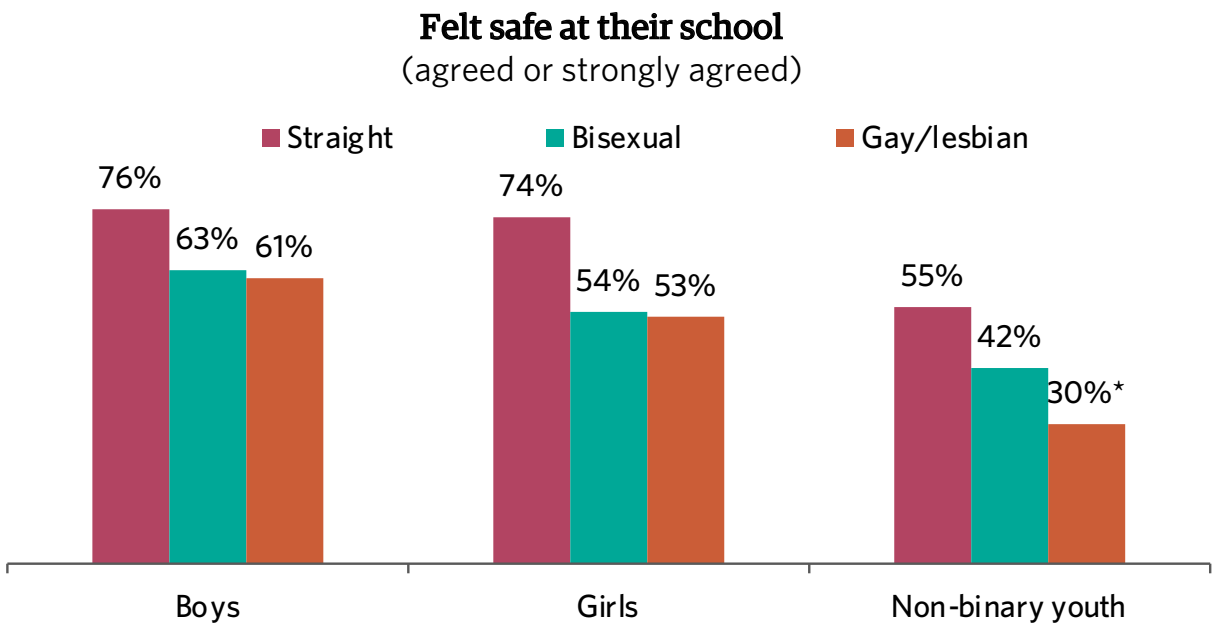
.....

"I would like to learn more about LGBTQ in classes so my peers could also learn & be more accepting."

.....

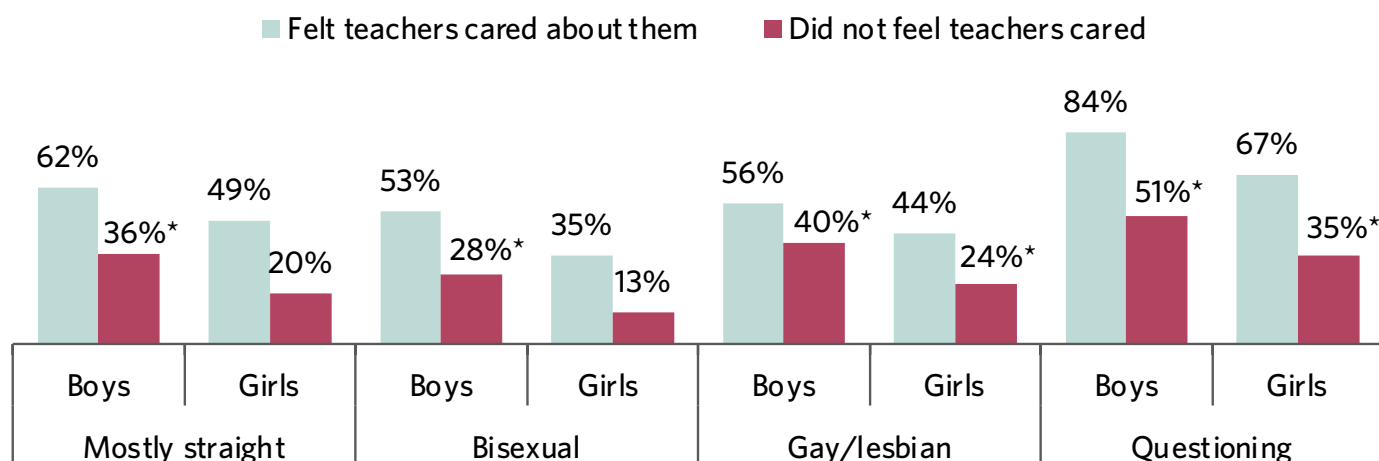
Less likely to feel happy at school

For example, 47% of mostly straight, 40% of bisexual, and 40% of lesbian girls felt happy at school, compared to 60% of straight girls.



* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Good/excellent mental health ratings in relation to feeling cared about by teachers



Note: Differences for gay/lesbian youth were not statistically significant.

* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Less likely to feel safe at school, and getting to and from school

For example, 56% of gay boys (vs. 88% of straight boys) and 68% of lesbian girls (vs. 87% of straight girls) reported usually or always feeling safe in the changing rooms. Similarly, 64% of gay boys and 74% of lesbian girls felt safe in their school washrooms, compared to around 9 out of 10 straight boys and girls.

Sexual minority girls being less likely than straight girls to plan to continue their education after high school

For example, 80% of bisexual girls and 75% of lesbian girls had post-secondary education plans, compared to 89% of straight girls.

More likely to skip school and to miss school because of bullying

Eight percent (8%) of gay boys and 5% of bisexual boys missed school because of bullying in the past month, compared to 2% of straight boys, as did 10% of bisexual girls, compared to 4% of straight girls.

"My school is accepting."

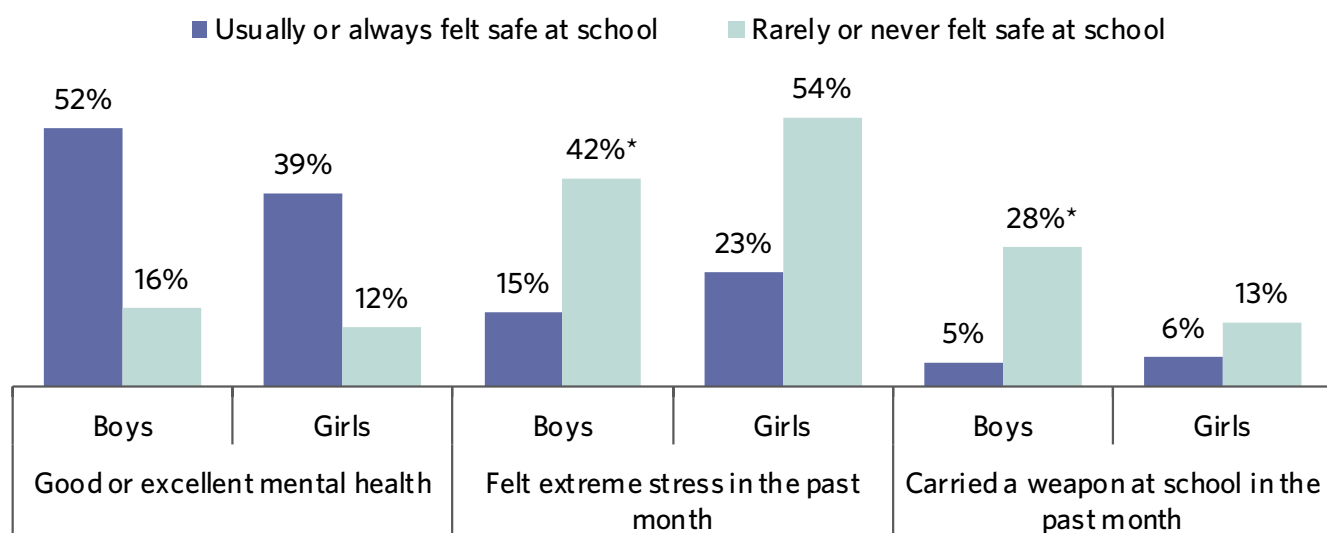


When sexual minority youth did experience a positive and supportive school environment they were more likely to report positive mental health, and to plan to continue their education beyond high school. For example, 90% of gay boys who felt teachers cared about them planned to go on to post-secondary education (vs. 53%* of gay boys who did not feel cared about by a teacher), as did 91% of mostly straight girls (vs. 73% of mostly straight girls who did not feel this way).

Feeling safe at school was also linked to more positive well-being. For example, sexual minority youth who felt safe at school were more likely to report positive mental health and were less likely to have experienced extreme stress or carried a weapon at school in the past month.



Well-being of bisexual youth in relation to feeling safe at school



* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Family

"I have a very good home life, but it feels very hard to talk to my parents about my issues. I am worried that by telling my homophobic father I'm gay, he will not accept me."

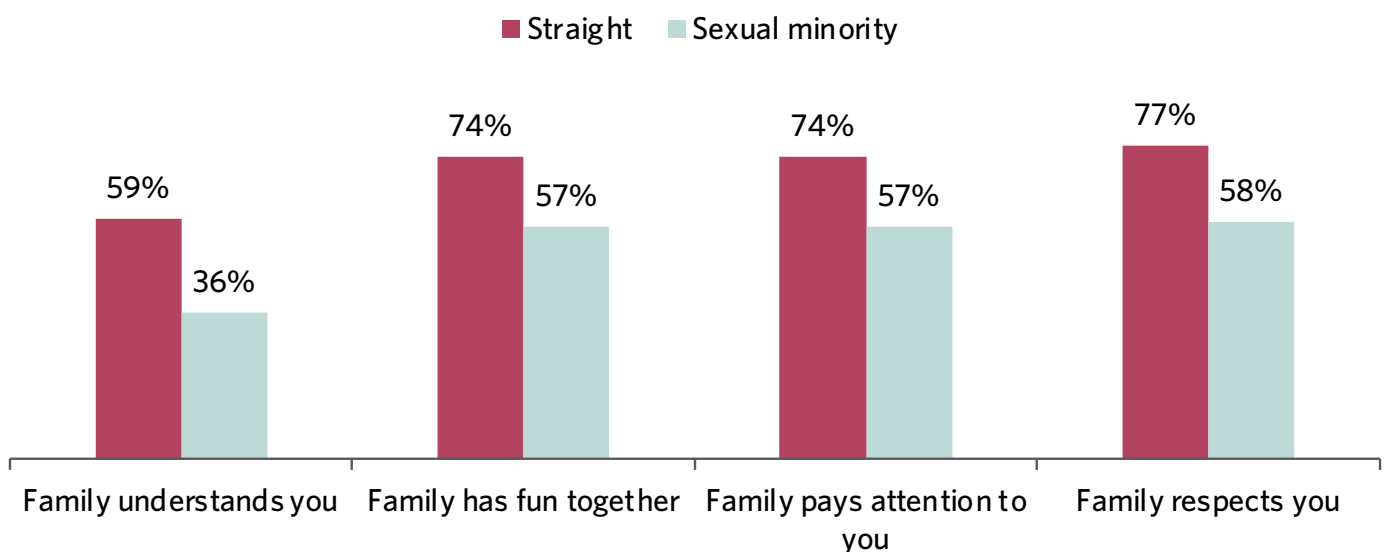
A supportive and accepting family can be key to sexual minority youth's healthy development. In comparison to their same gender straight peers, sexual minority boys, girls, and non-binary youth were less likely to turn to their family for help, find them helpful if they did ask for help or to feel their family understood them, had fun together, paid attention to them, and respected them. For example, 82% of straight boys felt that their family respected them, compared to 68% of mostly straight, 63% of bisexual, 58% of gay, and 75% of questioning boys.

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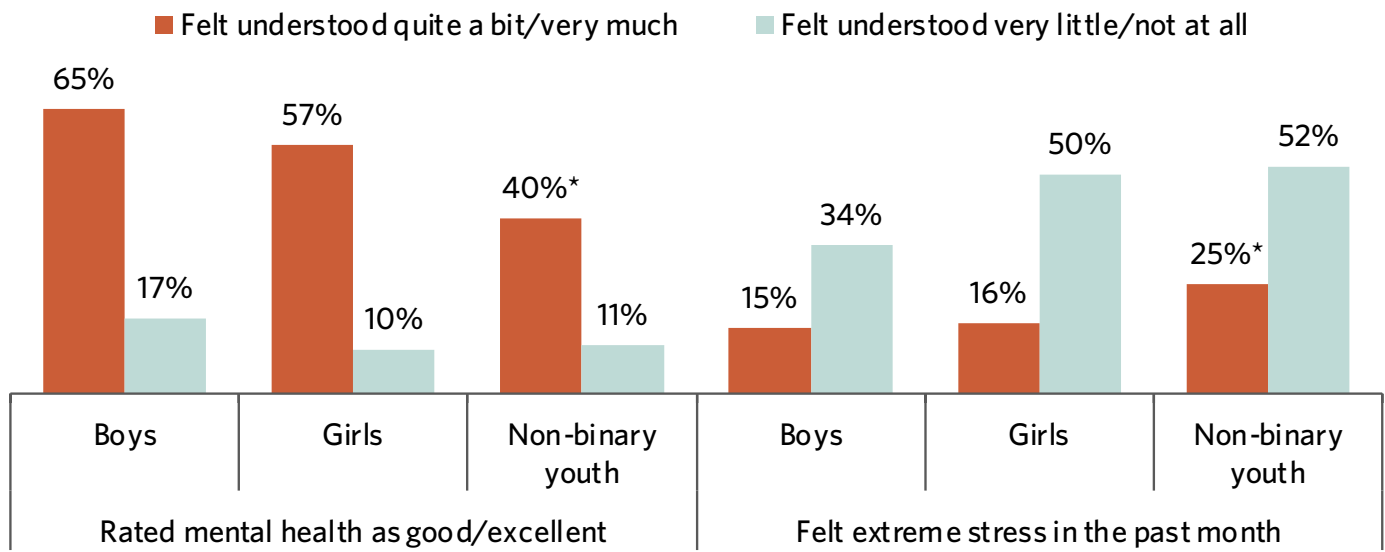
"I think I'm a gay, but I'm afraid to tell my parent!!!"

Although sexual minority youth reported lower levels of connectedness to family than their straight peers, they reported better health outcomes when they did feel connected and supported. For example, sexual minority youth of all genders who reported that their family understood them were more likely to rate their mental health

Girls who felt connected to their family quite a bit or very much



Health of bisexual youth in relation to feeling understood by their family



Note: Differences between genders may not be statistically significant.

* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

as good or excellent and to plan to continue their education after high school. They were less likely to have missed out on needed medical care in the past year.

Having parents or guardians who know what youth are doing in their free time can be an important protective factor against some health risk behaviours, such as heavy substance use and frequent gambling for money. Sexual minority boys and girls were less likely than their straight peers to use the phone to connect with their parents, and to report their parents knew what they did with their free time and with their time online. For example, compared to their same gender straight peers, gay boys (23% vs. 43%), lesbian girls (23% vs. 48%) and gay/lesbian non-binary youth (21% vs. 37%) were less likely to report their parents mostly or always knew what they

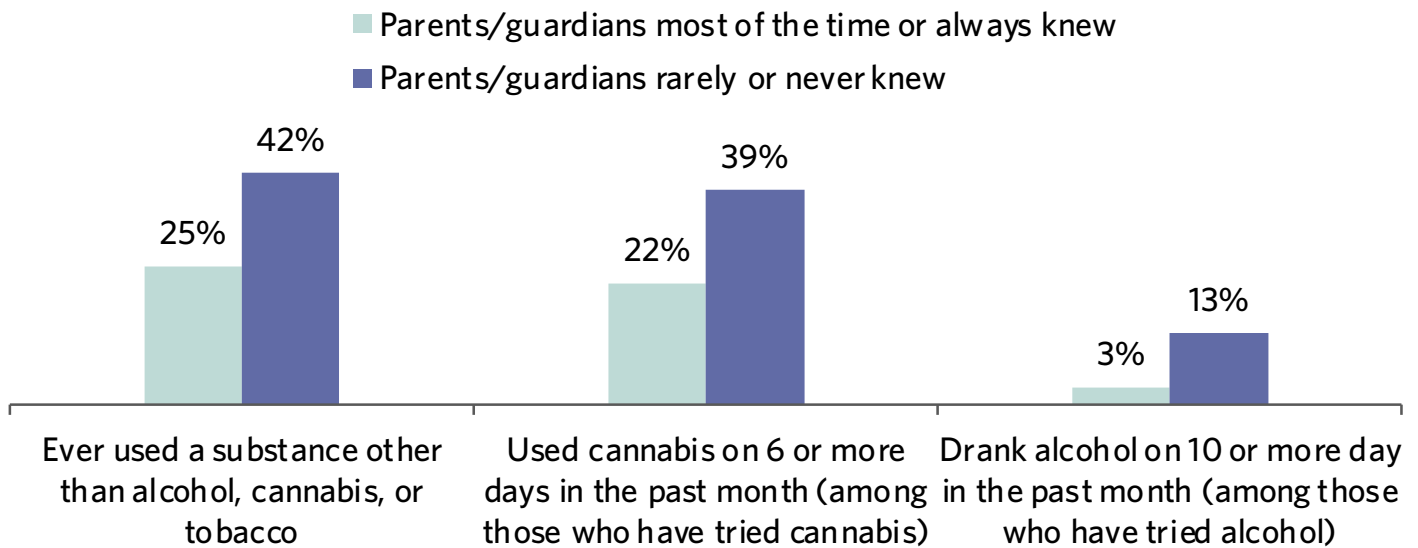
were doing online. However, when sexual minority youth's parents or guardians were aware of what the youth were doing in their spare time they were less likely to have tried substances such as cocaine, ecstasy and crystal meth, and if they did use alcohol or cannabis were less likely to be using these substances regularly.

.....

"I am worried about what my parents would say or do if I even told them I was bisexual."

.....

Bisexual girls' substance use in relation to parental monitoring of free time

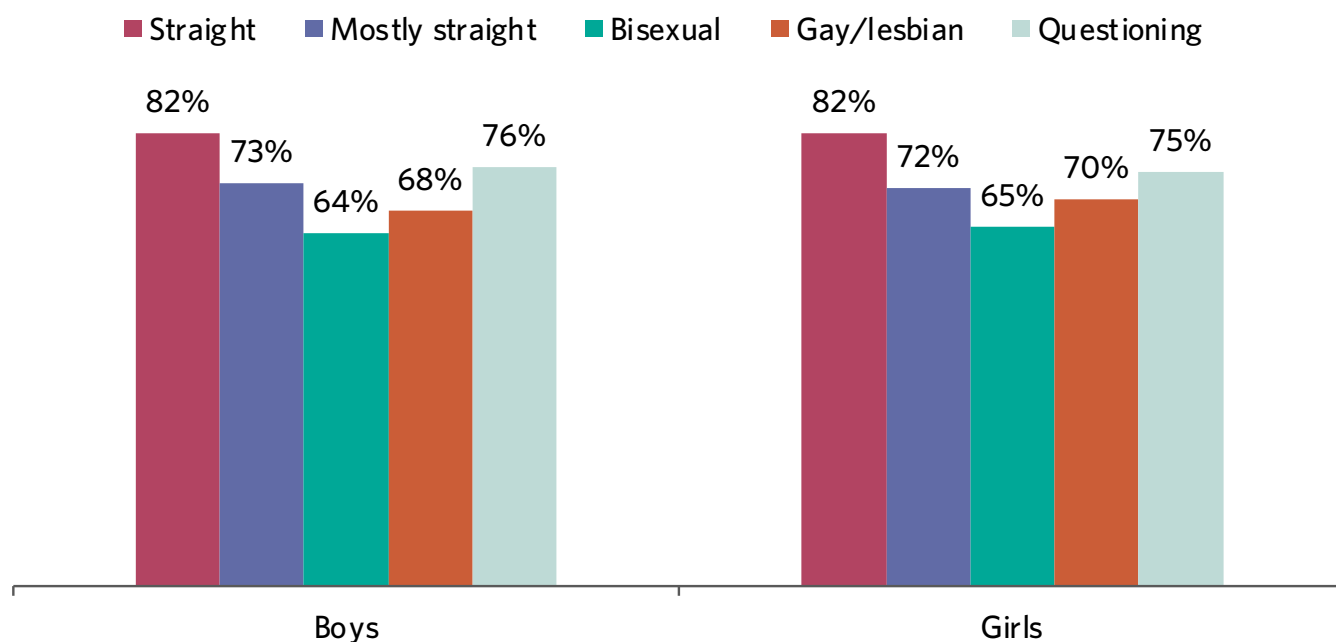


Supportive Adults

Sexual minority youth were generally less likely than their straight peers to approach the adults in their life for help, and were less likely to be able to identify an adult who could help them with tasks such as homework, getting to appointments, applying for post secondary and getting a job. For example, 62% of straight boys and 67% of straight girls had an adult who helped them with their homework compared to 44% of gay boys and 54% of lesbian girls. Many sexual minority youth were also less likely than their straight peers to have an adult in their life they could talk to if they were having a serious problem.



Had a supportive adult they could talk to if they had a serious problem

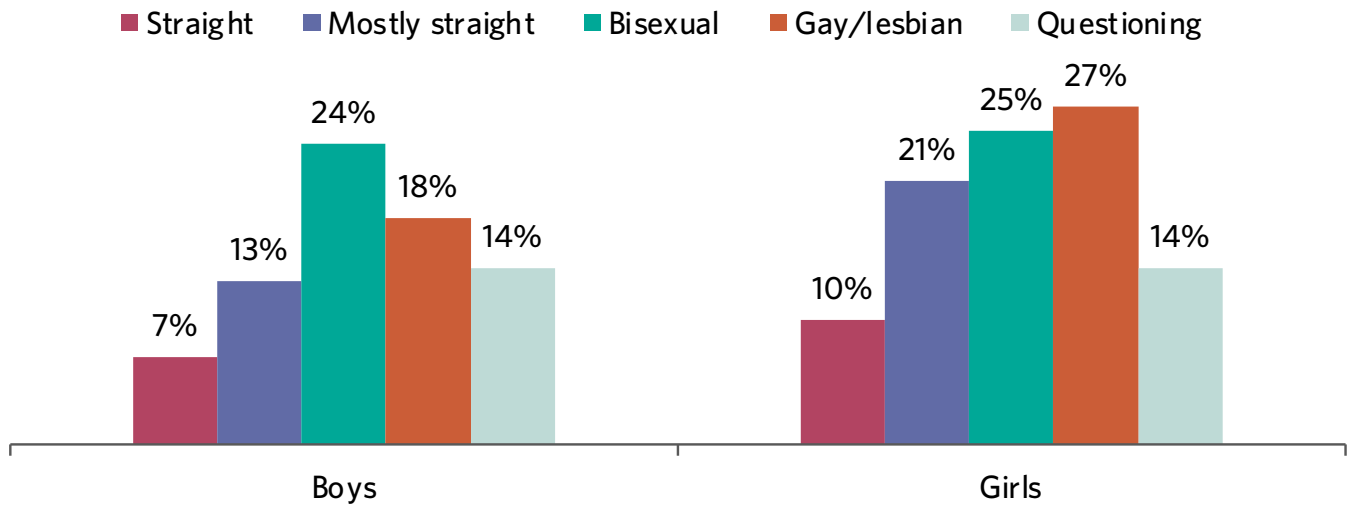


Having an adult to turn to can be particularly beneficial for youth who are less connected to family and school. For example, among bisexual boys who felt less connected to school, those who had a supportive adult they could turn to were nearly three times as likely to report good/excellent mental health as those who did not have such an adult in their lives. Also, bisexual boys who were less connected to school were about a third as likely to have

attempted suicide in the past year when they had this type of adult support (13% vs. 44%* of those without this support).

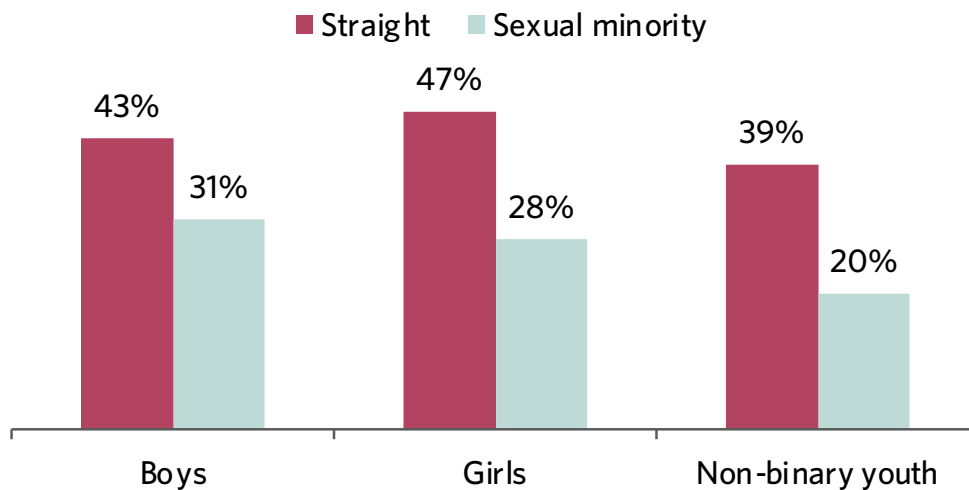
There are some groups of adults who may be particularly helpful to sexual minority youth as, compared to straight boys and girls, sexual minority boys and girls were more likely to approach a youth worker and mental health counsellor.

Asked a mental health counsellor for help in the past year



Connections to Community

Youth who felt quite a bit or very much connected to their community



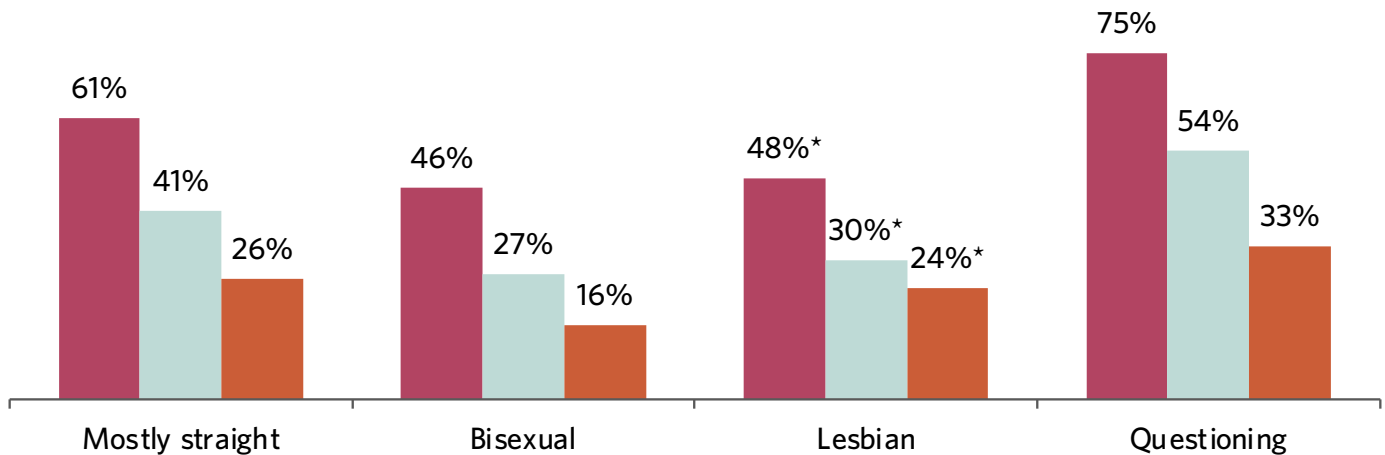
Sexual minority youth were as likely as their straight peers to feel connected to nature, but were less likely to feel connected to their community.

For boys, girls and non-binary youth, feeling connected to their community

was associated with a higher likelihood of positive mental health ratings, and a reduced likelihood that they would miss out on needed health services. For girls it was also associated with a lower likelihood of being victimized online.

Girls' good/excellent mental health ratings in relation to how much they felt like a part of their community

■ Quite a bit/very much a part of community ■ Somewhat ■ A little/not at all a part of community



Note: For lesbian youth, the differences to 'somewhat' were not statistically significant.

Note: Differences between sexual minority groups may not be statistically significant.

* Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Being able to identify an adult in the community who really cared about them was particularly beneficial to young people who were less connected to family and school. For example, among bisexual boys who had less positive relationships with their family, those who had an adult in their community who cared about them were more likely to plan to continue their

education beyond high school (79%* vs. 60%* of those who did not have such an adult). Similarly, among bisexual non-binary youth who were less connected to school, those who had a caring adult in their neighbourhood were more likely to have post-secondary plans (64%* vs. 39%*).

Online Support

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"LGBTQ+ and sex ed! I learned everything I know from online."

.....

Online support can be beneficial to sexual minority youth who may lack in-person connections. Sexual minority boys and girls were more likely than their straight peers to reach out to an online community support group for help in the past year. This may have been particularly beneficial for girls as 73% of bisexual girls and 78%* of lesbian

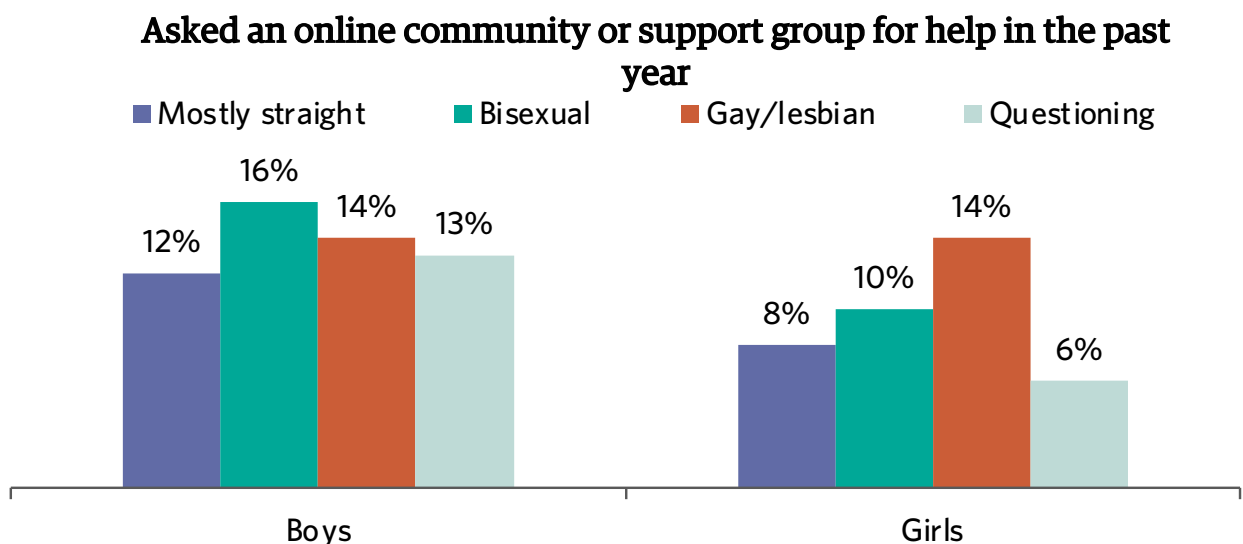


girls who accessed this type of support found the experience helpful, compared to 61% of straight girls.

Sexual minority boys and girls were also more likely to have called a telephone helpline in the past year. For example, 4% of straight girls had called a helpline in the past year, which was at least half the rate of mostly straight (8%), bisexual (10%), and lesbian (11%) girls.



"I would like to learn more about sexuality and where do I fit in that spectrum. I have conflicting thoughts and not many internet resources are helping."



Neighbourhood Safety

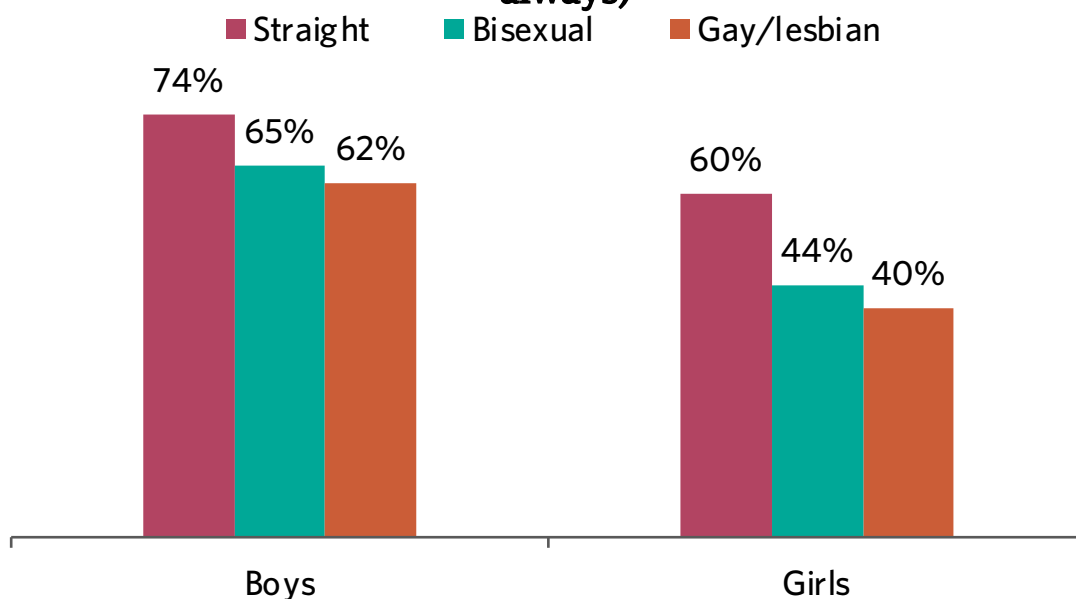
Most sexual minority youth felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day. However, fewer felt this way at night. Also, sexual minority boys and girls were less likely than their straight peers to feel safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime and at night. For example, 88% of mostly straight, 86% of bisexual, 80% of lesbian, and 88% of questioning girls often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the daytime, compared to 91% of straight girls.

Sexual minority boys and girls were less likely to feel safe on public transit than straight boys and girls. For example, 59% of bisexual boys often or always felt safe on transit, compared to 70% of straight boys as did 40% of lesbian girls, compared to 53% of straight girls.

Youth who felt safe in their neighbourhood experienced more positive mental health. For example, 81% of questioning boys who often/always felt safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 63%* of their peers who felt less safe.

The safer youth felt in their neighbourhood, the more likely they were to participate in extracurricular activities. For example, 38% of bisexual girls who often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day played extracurricular organized sports at least weekly in the past year, compared to 19% of bisexual girls who rarely or never felt safe.

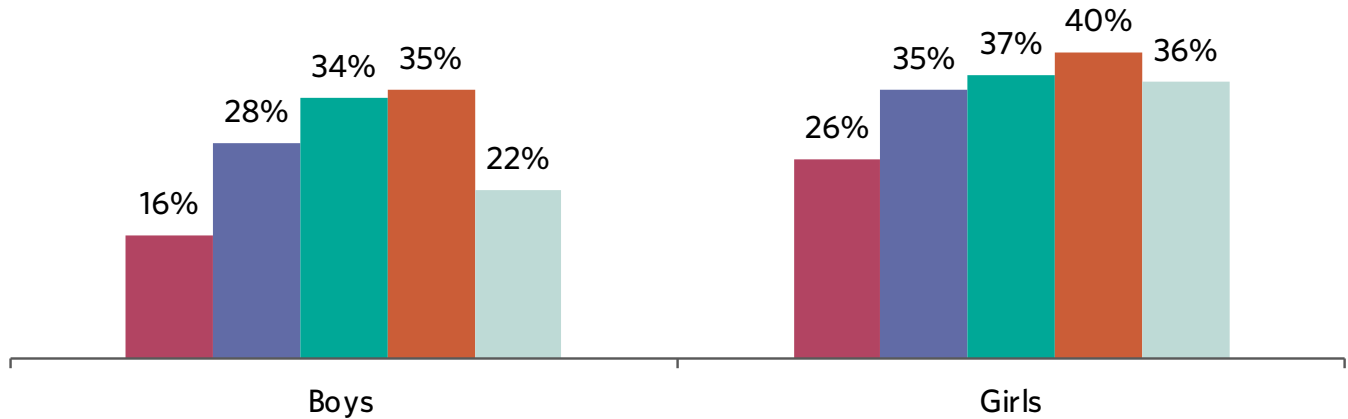
Felt safe in their neighbourhood at night (often or always)



Extracurricular Activities

Participated at least weekly in art, drama, singing, or music groups or lessons in the past year

■ Straight ■ Mostly straight ■ Bisexual ■ Gay/lesbian ■ Questioning



"There's not really a place for us to go anywhere, I guess, if we needed to find a student that's like us, I sometimes feel a little alone."

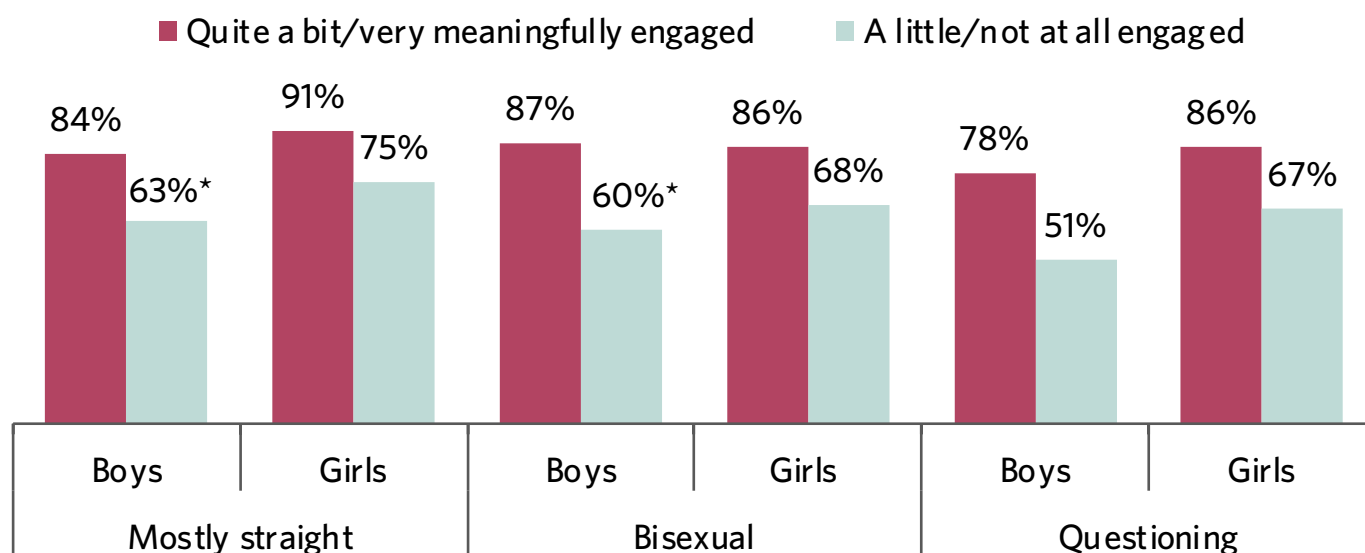


Although sexual minority youth were less likely than their straight peers to participate in extracurricular sports, they generally participated in other types of extracurricular activities at similar or higher rates than their straight peers. For example,

sexual minority youth were more likely to participate in art, drama, and music, and to do so regularly, and gay boys were more likely than straight boys to be volunteering in their community (52% vs. 34%), including on a weekly basis (27% vs. 14%).

The more meaningful sexual minority youth found their activities, the more likely they were to have educational plans for the future and to report positive mental health. For example, 32% of bisexual girls who felt that their activities were quite or very meaningful to them reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 17% who felt their activities were less meaningful.

Post-secondary education aspirations in relation to engagement in meaningful activities



Note: Differences between genders may not be statistically significant. Differences for gay/lesbian youth were not statistically significant (results not shown).

* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Friends

"I'm a bisexual female dating someone who was born a girl, but is questioning their gender identity, and I don't really know how to address them to our in-person friends."

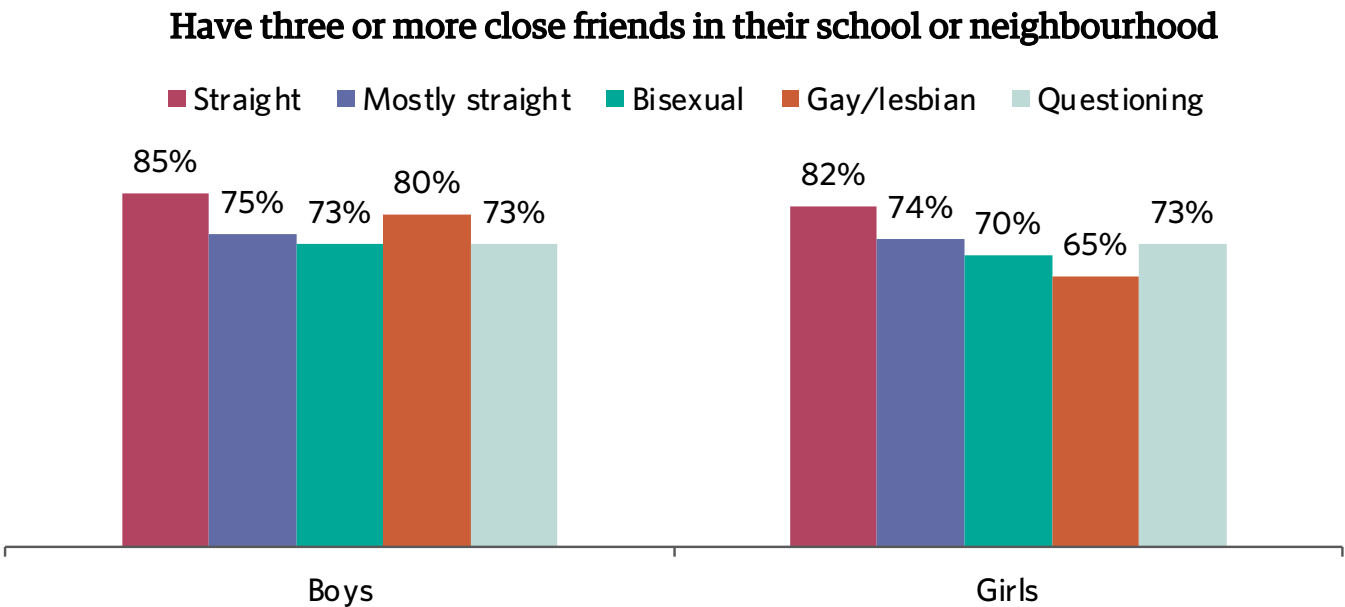
Sexual minority boys and girls were generally less likely than their same gender straight peers to report that they had multiple close friends in their school or neighbourhood, but were more likely to have multiple online friends they had never met in person. For example, 33% of bisexual boys had three or more online friends whom they had never met in person (vs. 21% of straight boys), as did 22% of bisexual girls (vs. 11% of straight girls).

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual boys and girls were more than twice as likely as their same gender straight peers to have dated someone online in the past year they had never met in person.

Youth were asked if they had approached their in-person and online friends for help in the past year and if so, if they had found the experience helpful. Among those who asked for help, sexual minority youth tended to be less likely to find their in-person friends helpful and more likely

to find their online friends helpful. For example, 85% of lesbian girls found the in-person friends they approached to be helpful, compared to 94% of straight girls. Whereas, 90% of bisexual boys and 86% of bisexual girls who approached their online friends for help found the experience helpful, compared to 83% of straight boys and 77% of straight girls.

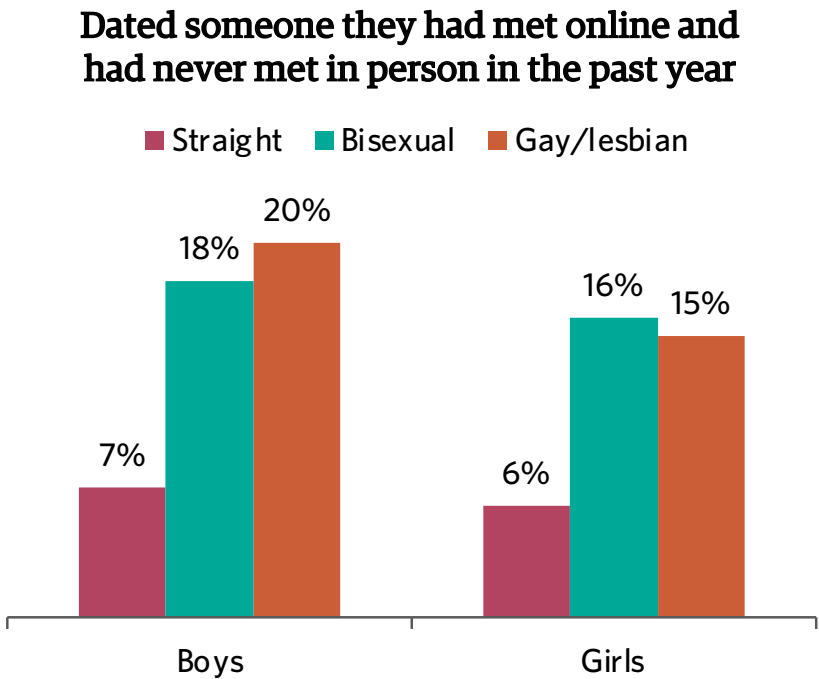
Having friends with healthy attitudes to potential health risk behaviours can be protective for young people. There were



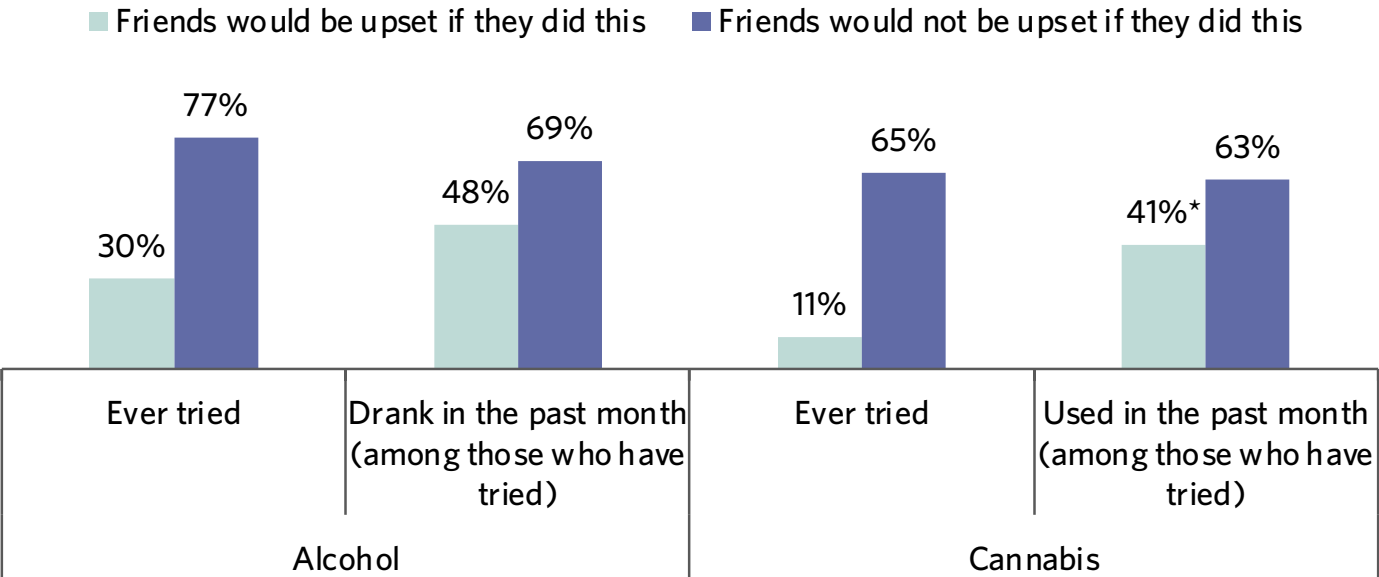
Note: The difference between gay boys and straight boys was not statistically significant.

some differences in attitudes of youth's friends based on their sexual orientation. For example, sexual minority boys were more likely than straight boys to have friends who would be upset if they beat someone up; and mostly straight (45%), bisexual (46%), and lesbian (46%) girls were less likely than straight girls (61%) to have friends who would be upset about them using cannabis.

Sexual minority youth whose friends would be upset with them if they got drunk or used cannabis were less likely to have used these substances, or if they had tried them were less likely to have used them recently.



Bisexual girls substance use in relation to friends' attitudes to potential health risk behaviours



* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.



TRENDS IN THE HEALTH OF SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

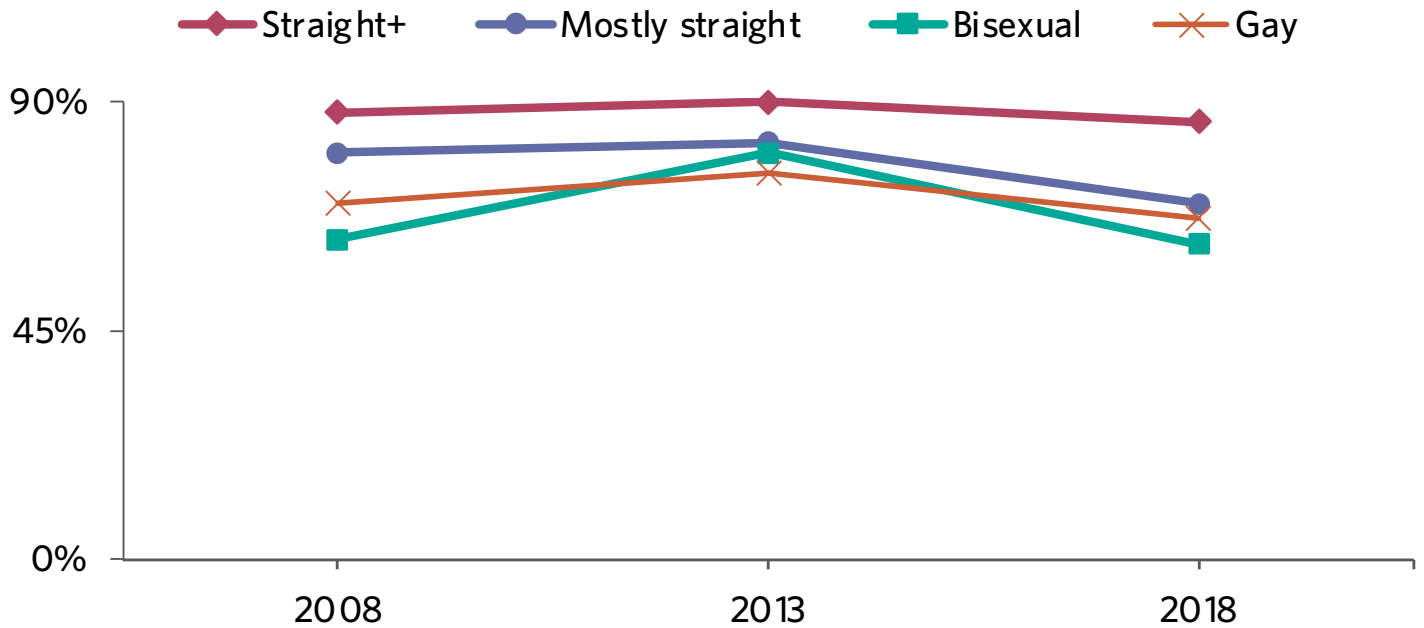
The report has identified a number of disparities in the health of sexual minority youth in comparison to straight youth, as well as in their substance use and exposure to potentially traumatic experiences such as abuse, discrimination and a less stable and safe home life. This section of the report considers some trends in the health picture of the different sexual orientation groups, as well as if there was a narrowing or widening of any disparities between different groups of sexual minority

youth and their same gender straight peers.

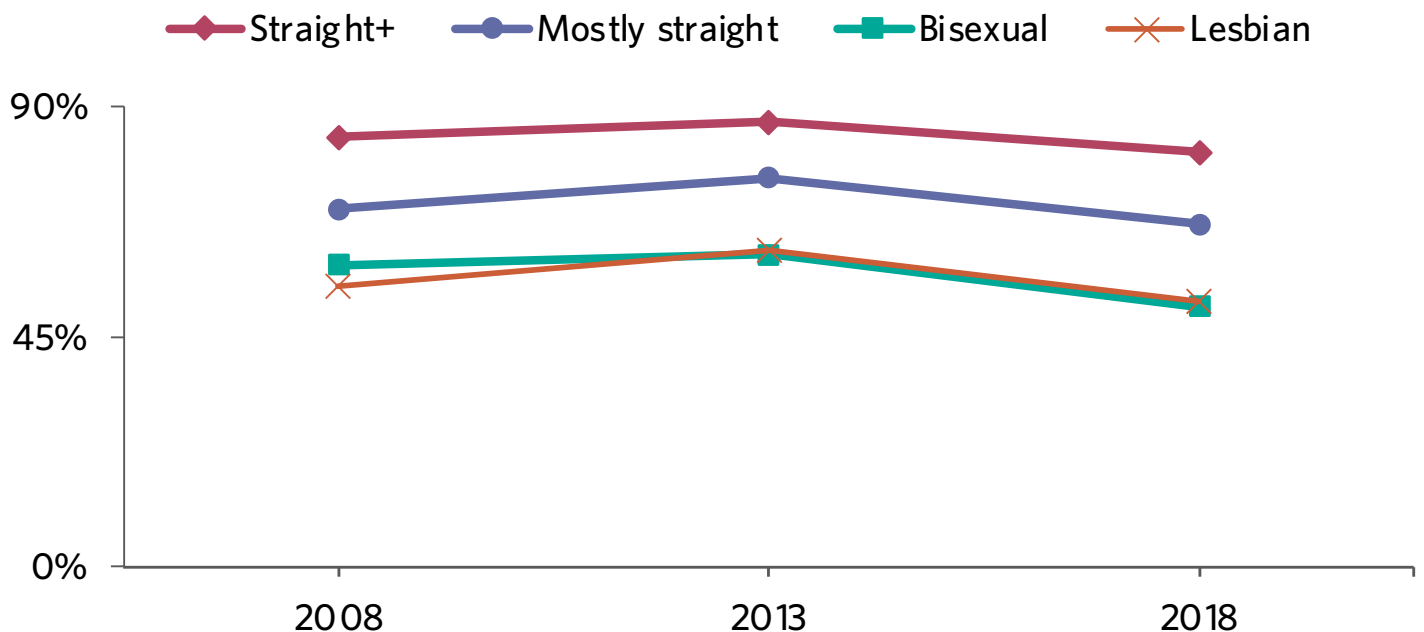
For these analyses, to account for changes over time in the question wording about sexual orientation, the category straight+ is used as a comparison against mostly straight, lesbian, gay and bisexual youth. Also, analyses are conducted by sex rather than gender, to reflect question wording on the 2008 and 2013 BC AHS (see [p. 9](#) for further details).

Self-Rated Health

Boys who described their health as good or excellent



Girls who described their health as good or excellent



For straight+, mostly straight, and bisexual boys and girls, there was an increase between 2008 and 2013 in those who reported good or excellent health followed by a decrease in 2018, whilst there was no change over time in health ratings of lesbian girls and gay boys.

In each survey year, straight+ girls were more likely than sexual minority girls to rate their health as good or excellent, with no improvements in the gap over time. Straight+ boys were also more likely than sexual minority boys in each year to rate their health as good or excellent; however, this gap widened for mostly straight boys between 2008 and 2018, and for bisexual boys between 2013 and 2018. The gap between straight+ boys and gay boys was unchanged.

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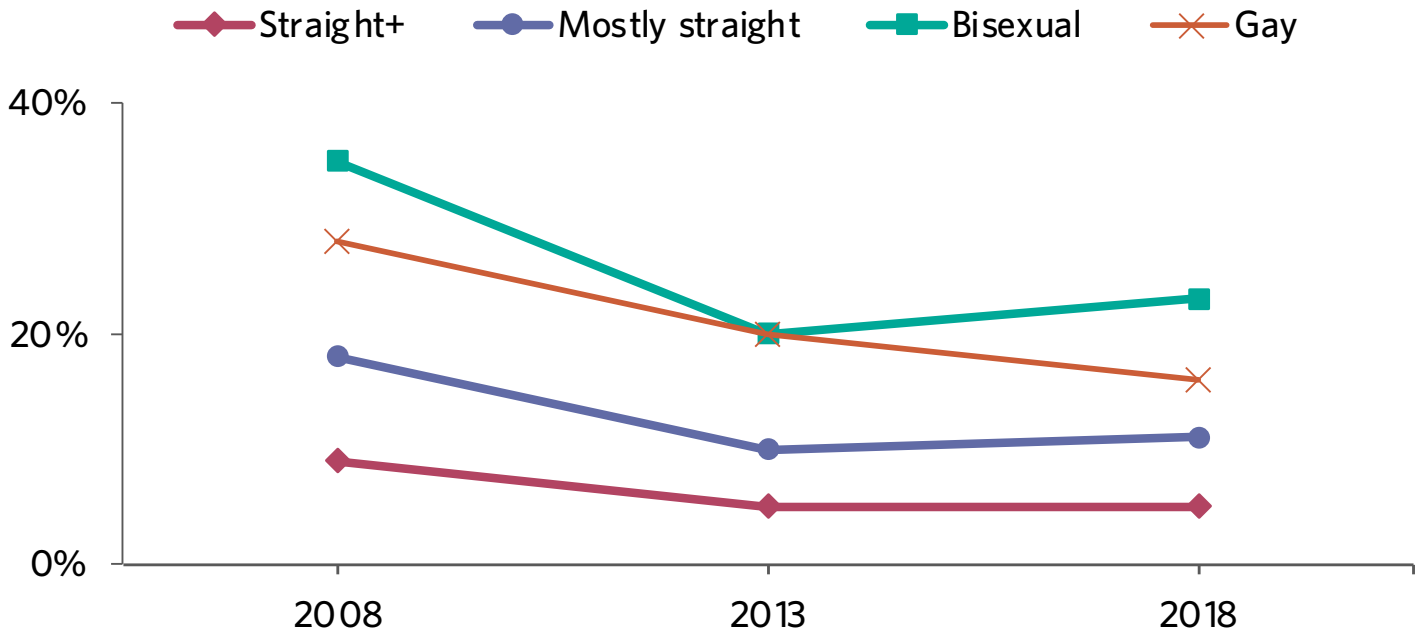
“Teach more about mental and sexual health so many people know nothing and they need to teach to LGBT kids, not just hetero health.”

.....

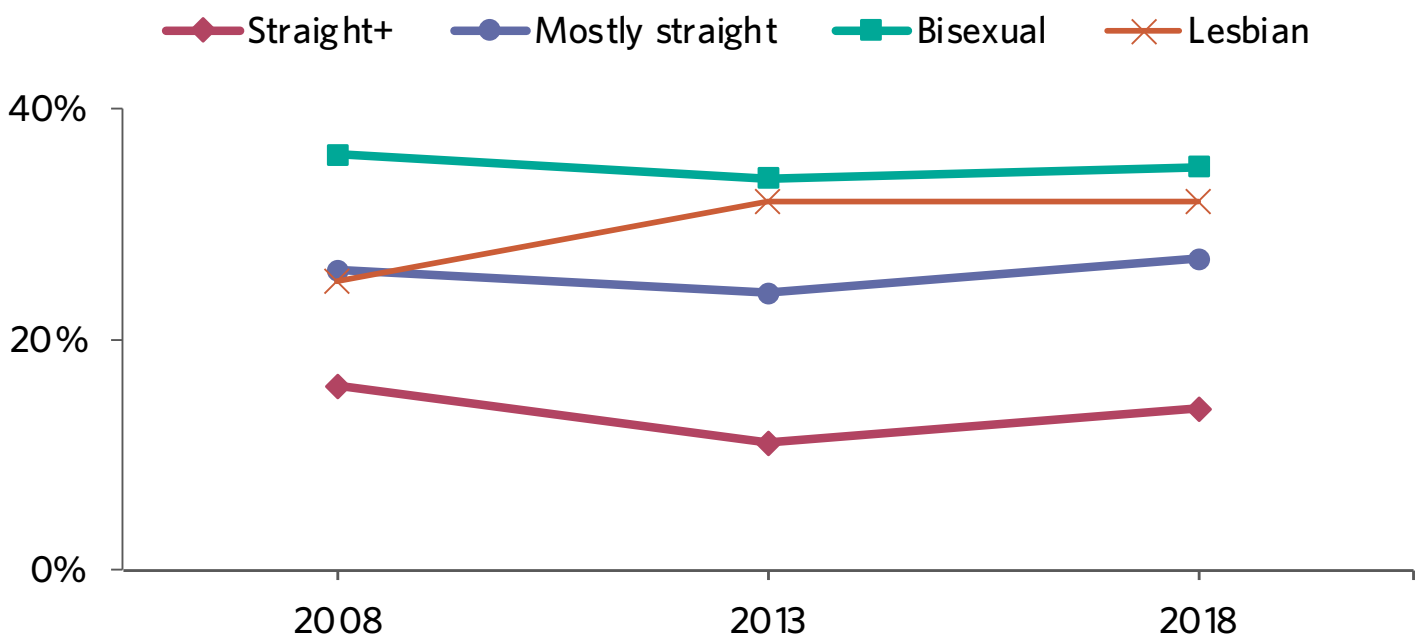


Extreme Stress

Boys who experienced extreme stress in the past month



Girls who experienced extreme stress in the past month



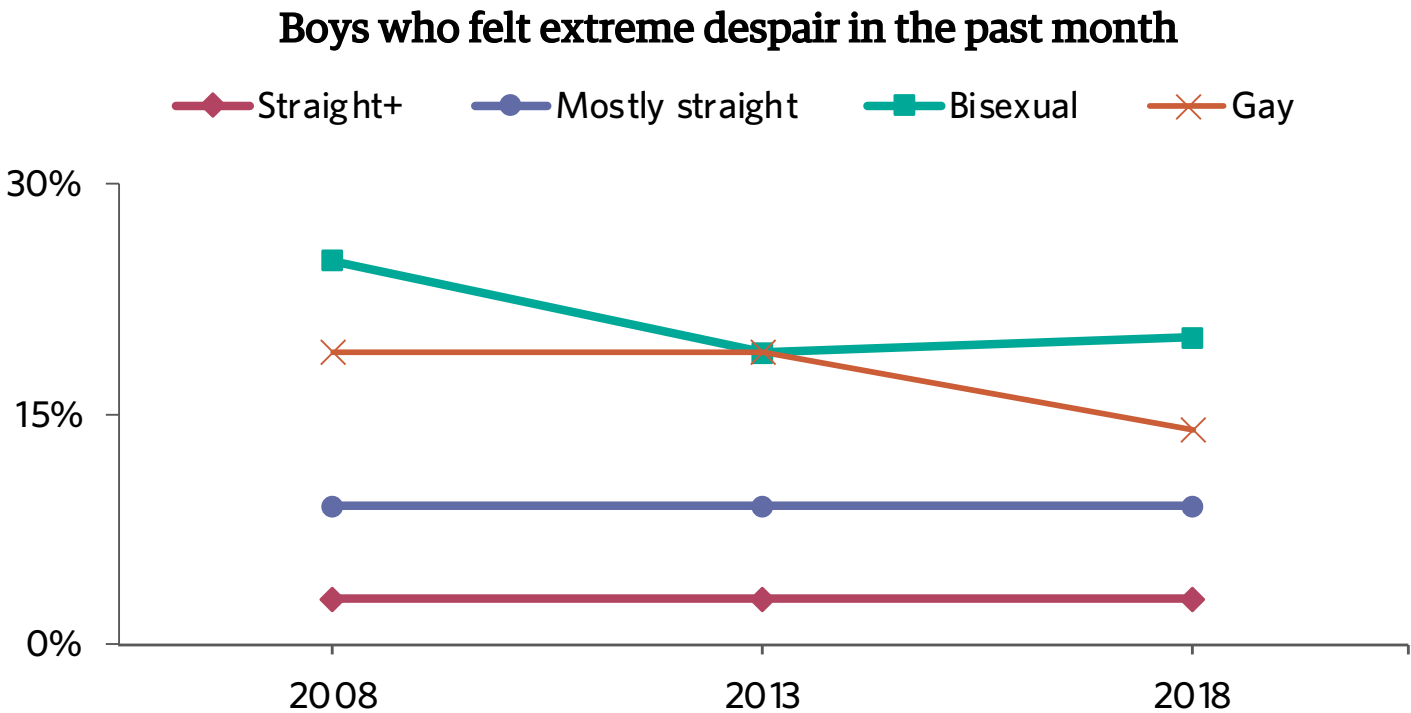
Compared to a decade earlier, all groups of boys reported a decrease in experiencing extreme stress in the past month. Straight+ girls were less likely to report extreme stress in 2013, but percents increased again in 2018, while there were no significant changes in extreme stress among sexual minority girls. There were no changes in the

disparities between straight+ and sexual minority boys and girls except the gap between straight+ and mostly straight girls widened between 2008 and 2018.

Extreme Despair

Rates of experiencing extreme despair remained consistent over time for boys, but increased for straight+ girls between 2008 and 2018; and while the highest percents were among bisexual girls, these did not change over the years. In every year,

sexual minority girls and boys were much more likely to report extreme despair than straight+ peers, and the gaps remained unchanged between 2008 and 2018.



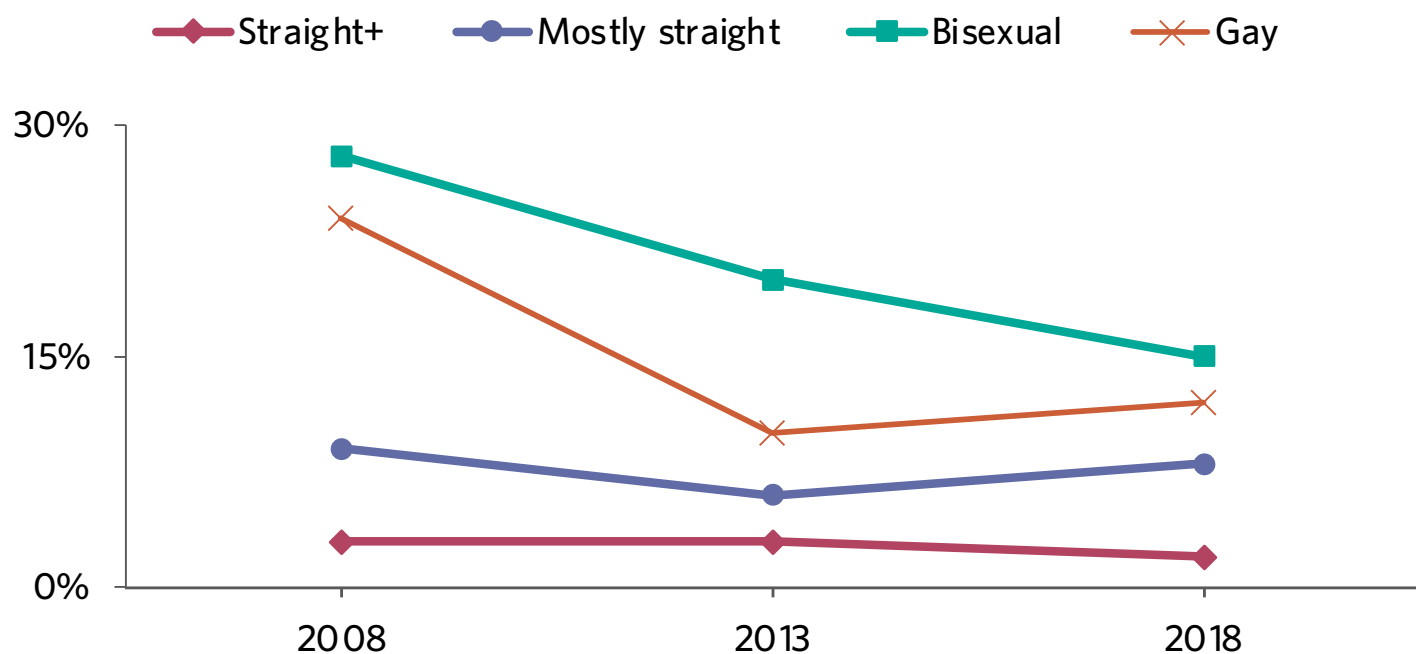
Suicide

Among boys generally, there was a drop between 2008 and 2013 in those who seriously thought about suicide, but this positive trend was reversed in 2018, for all groups except gay boys. In 2008, gay boys were six times more likely and bisexual boys were eight times more likely than straight+ boys to report that they had seriously thought about suicide, and mostly straight boys were 3.5 times more likely. These gaps remained in 2013 and 2018.

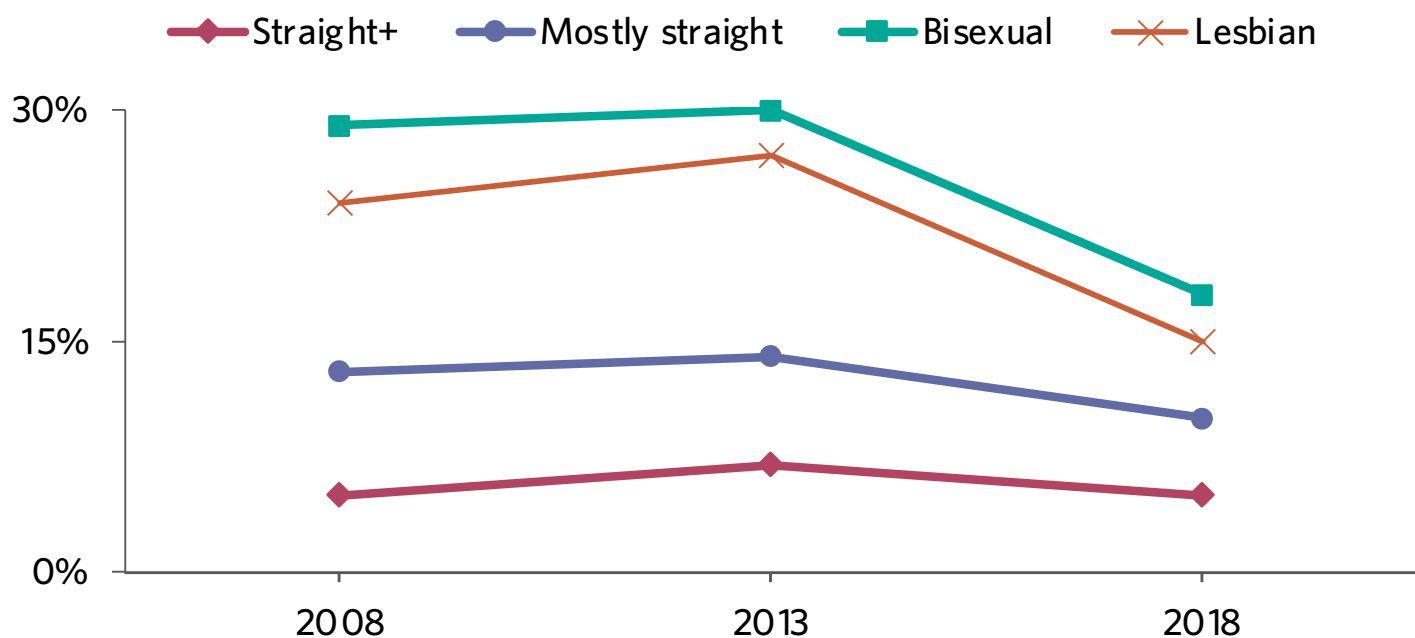
All groups of girls except lesbian girls saw increasing trends in suicidal thought between 2008 and 2018. In every year, sexual minority girls were also much more likely to have seriously thought about suicide than straight+ girls. There was a narrowing gap between straight+ and bisexual girls between 2013 and 2018, which was mostly due to the increase in straight+ girls with suicidal thoughts, but for other sexual minority girls, the gaps remained unchanged.

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual boys and girls were less likely to have attempted suicide in 2018 compared to 2008. Gaps in suicide attempts between straight+ boys and girls and their sexual minority peers existed in all years. In 2008, lesbian girls were six times more likely than straight+ girls to report a suicide attempt, bisexual girls were almost eight times more likely, and mostly straight girls were almost three times more likely to report suicide attempts. Sexual minority boys reported similarly large odds of suicide attempts compared to straight+ boys. The gaps narrowed for gay and bisexual boys between 2008 and 2018, and for bisexual girls between 2008 and 2018, but gaps were unchanged for lesbian and mostly heterosexual peers.

Boys who attempted suicide in the past year



Girls who attempted suicide in the past year

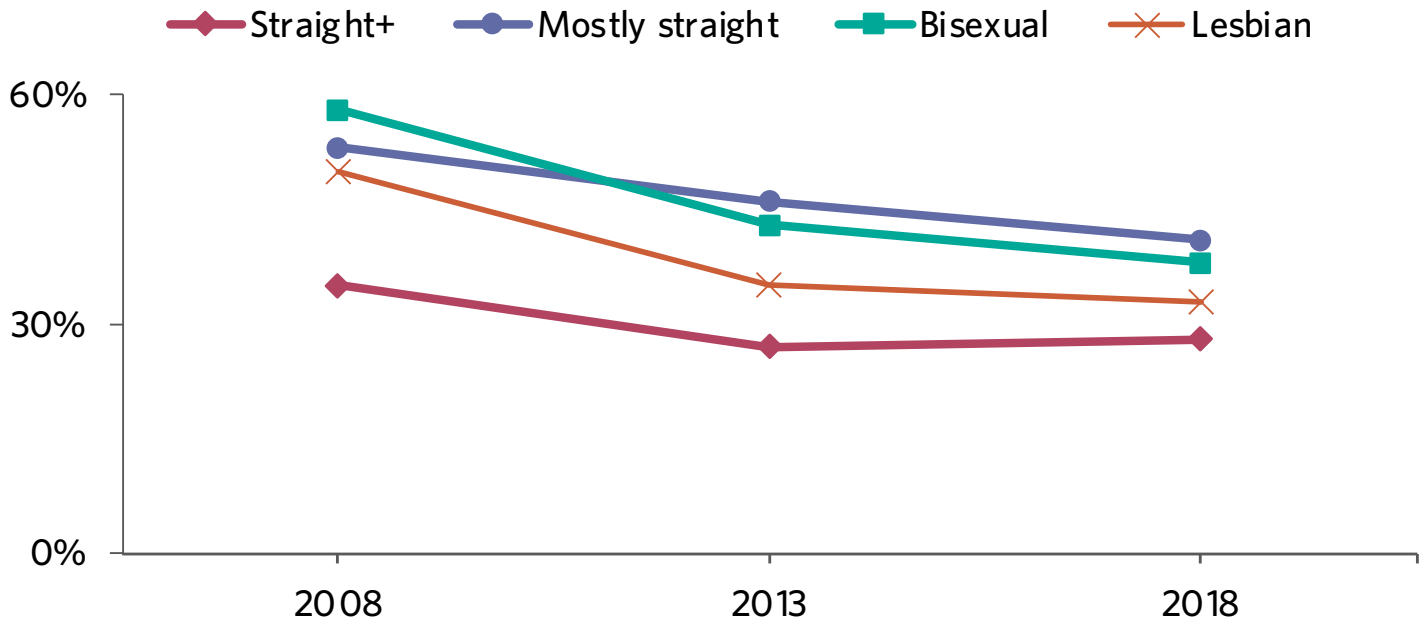


Alcohol Use in the Past Month

Youth in all groups were less likely to have consumed alcohol in the month prior to taking the survey in 2018 compared to a decade earlier, with the largest decreases seen among gay boys and bisexual girls. In 2008, gay and bisexual boys and mostly straight and bisexual girls were more likely to have consumed alcohol recently than

straight+ boys and girls. By 2018, only mostly straight girls and bisexual girls and boys had a higher odds of alcohol use than straight+ boys or girls. The gap narrowed in 2018 for bisexual girls, and was unchanged for bisexual boys and mostly straight girls.

Girls who drank alcohol in the past month



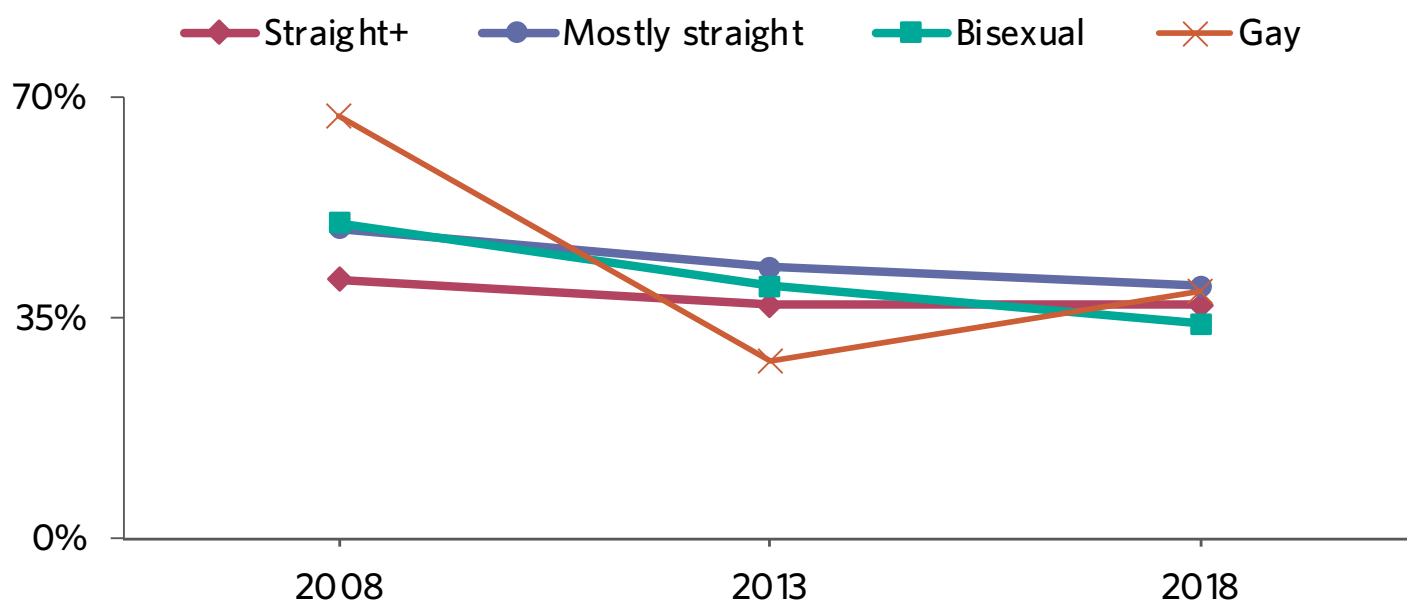
Heavy Sessional Drinking

For all sexual orientation groups, there was a decrease over the past decade in the percentage who drank five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours in the past month, with the most notable drops being among gay boys and lesbian girls. Although in 2008 all sexual minority girls as well as gay boys had higher odds of

drinking this heavily than straight+ youth, by 2018 there was no difference in rates of drinking this heavily between sexual minority boys and girls and their straight+ peers.

Boys who had 5 or more drinks within a couple of hours at least once in the past month

(among those who had tried alcohol)



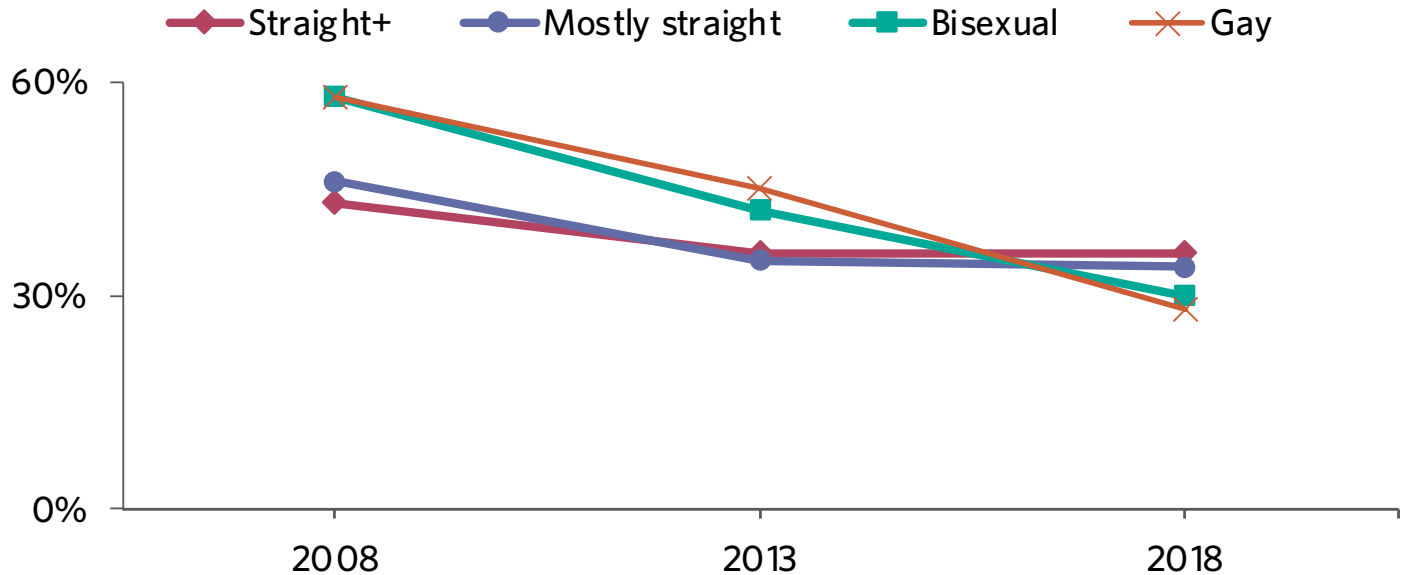
Used Cannabis Last Saturday

Among gay, lesbian, bisexual boys and girls, and straight+ boys and girls, the percentage who had used cannabis on the Saturday before taking the survey declined between 2008 and 2018.

The decrease in last Saturday's cannabis use among bisexual and gay boys ensured that the previously present disparity with straight+ boys in 2008 was no longer evident in 2018.

In 2008, lesbian girls were four times more likely than straight+ girls to have used cannabis on the Saturday before taking the survey, and mostly straight and bisexual girls were twice as likely to use cannabis than straight+ girls their same age. This gap narrowed by 2018 for bisexual and lesbian girls.

Boys who used cannabis last Saturday
(among those who have tried cannabis)

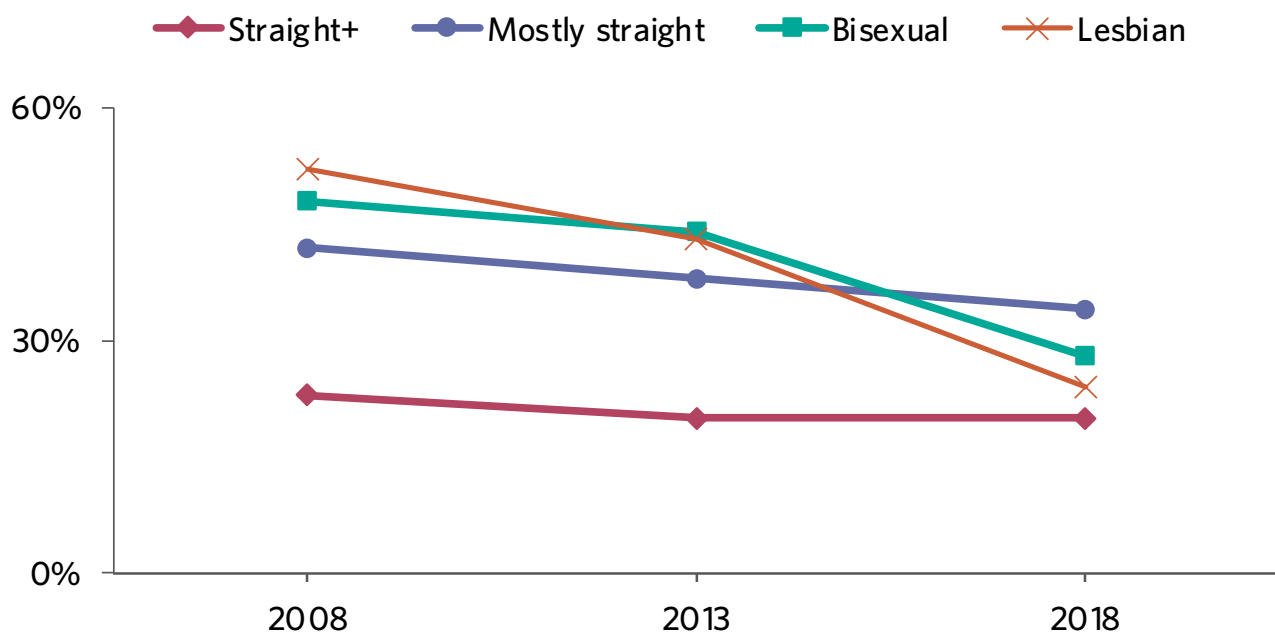


Oral Sex

All groups of youth, except mostly straight boys, were less likely to have had oral sex in 2018 compared to 2008, but in every year, most sexual minority boys and girls (except lesbian girls in 2018 and mostly straight boys in 2008) were more likely to have had oral sex than their straight+ peers. The declines among sexual minority groups

were larger than for straight+ groups. For gay boys and lesbian and bisexual girls, this meant the gap between them and their straight+ counterparts had narrowed by 2018. The disparities for mostly straight youth and bisexual boys were unchanged over time.

Girls who have ever had oral sex

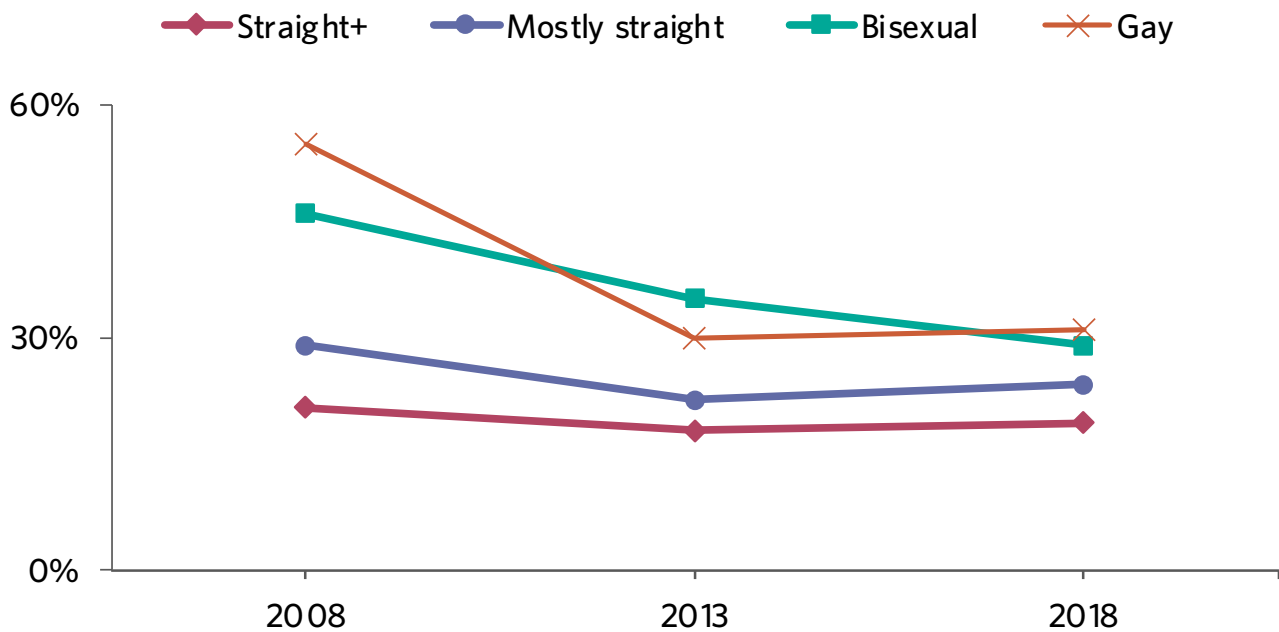


Sexual Intercourse

With the exception of mostly straight boys, sexual minority youth were more likely to have ever had sexual intercourse than straight+ peers in 2008. Youth in all sexual orientation groups were less likely to have

ever had sex in 2018. The decreases were most notable among sexual minority youth, and led to a narrowing of the gap for gay and bisexual boys, and bisexual girls.

Boys who have ever had sex

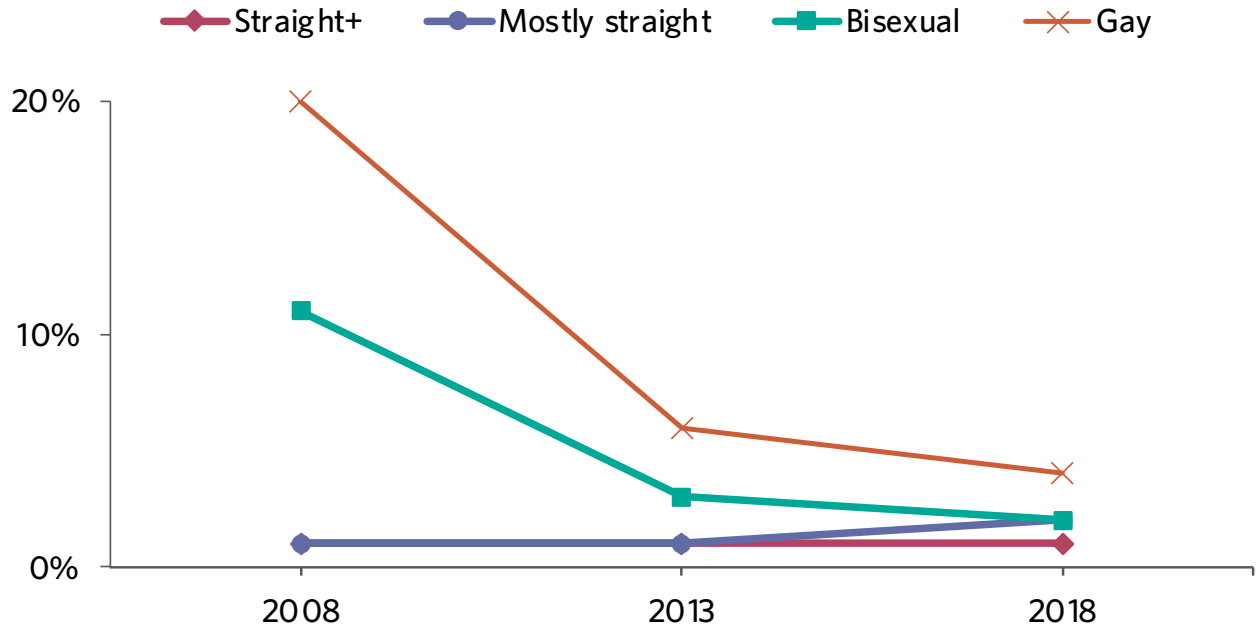


Sexually Transmitted Infections

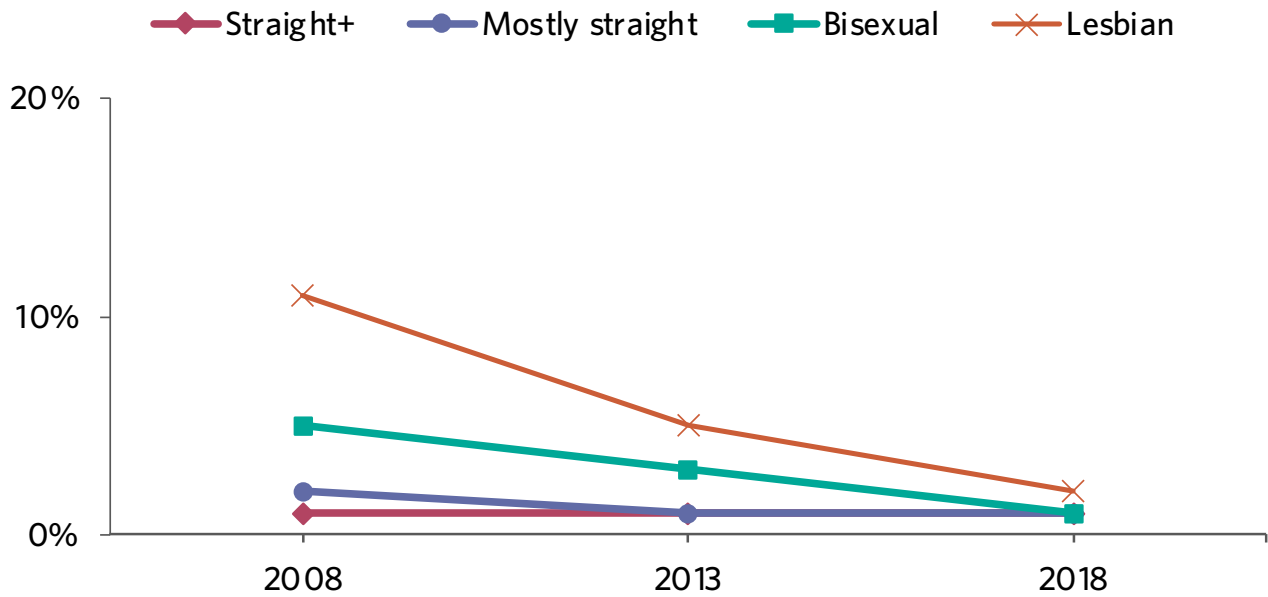
The percentage of youth who had experienced a sexually transmitted infection (STI) decreased over time for straight+, bisexual, and gay boys, as well as for bisexual and lesbian girls. Gay and bisexual boys were more likely than straight+ peers to report STIs in every year, while mostly straight, lesbian and bisexual girls had higher odds of STIs than straight+ girls in 2008, but by 2018, there was no

significant difference in rates of STIs among girls. The decreases were most notable among bisexual, lesbian, and gay youth. However, despite a significant narrowing of the gap in STI rates between gay, lesbian and bisexual youth and their straight+ peers, disparities remained for gay and bisexual boys, while the rates were no longer different for girls.

Boys who have ever had an STI



Girls who have ever had an STI



Substance Use at Last Intercourse

Most sexual orientation groups had similar rates of alcohol or other substance use the last time they had sex in each year: only gay boys and bisexual girls in 2008 were more likely than straight+ youth to say they had used substances the last time they had sex. For all sexual orientation groups, youth in 2018 were less likely to have used alcohol or another substance the last time they had

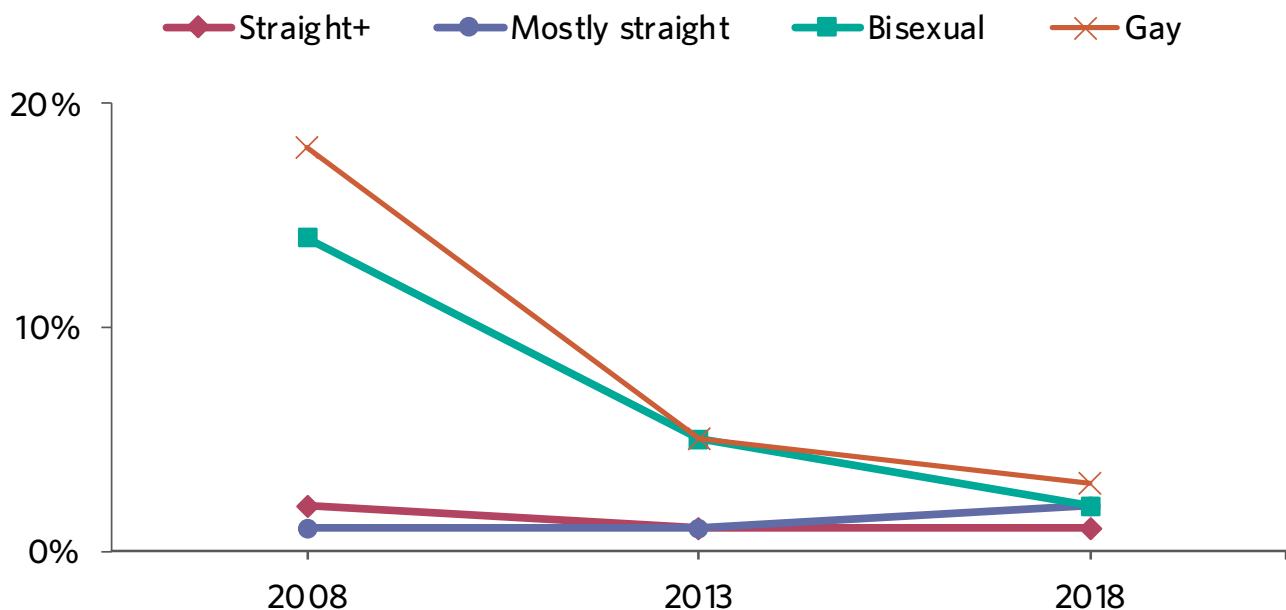
intercourse compared to a decade earlier. The largest decreases were seen among gay boys and lesbian girls, who were around half as likely to mix sex and substance use in 2018 as they were in 2008. The decrease among gay boys was such that the disparity between them and straight+ boys narrowed from 2008, and was generally no longer evident in 2018.

Pregnancy

When *Not Yet Equal* was released in 2007 there was some surprise at the higher percentage of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth who reported being involved in a pregnancy compared to straight youth. Data from the 2008, 2013, and 2018 BC AHS showed that this trend continued, with sexual minority boys and girls still more

likely to report having been involved in a pregnancy than straight+ boys and girls, except for lesbian girls in 2018. However, decreases in pregnancy involvement among lesbian, gay and bisexual boys and girls reduced the disparity between them and straight+ boys and girls considerably.

Boys who have ever been involved in a pregnancy

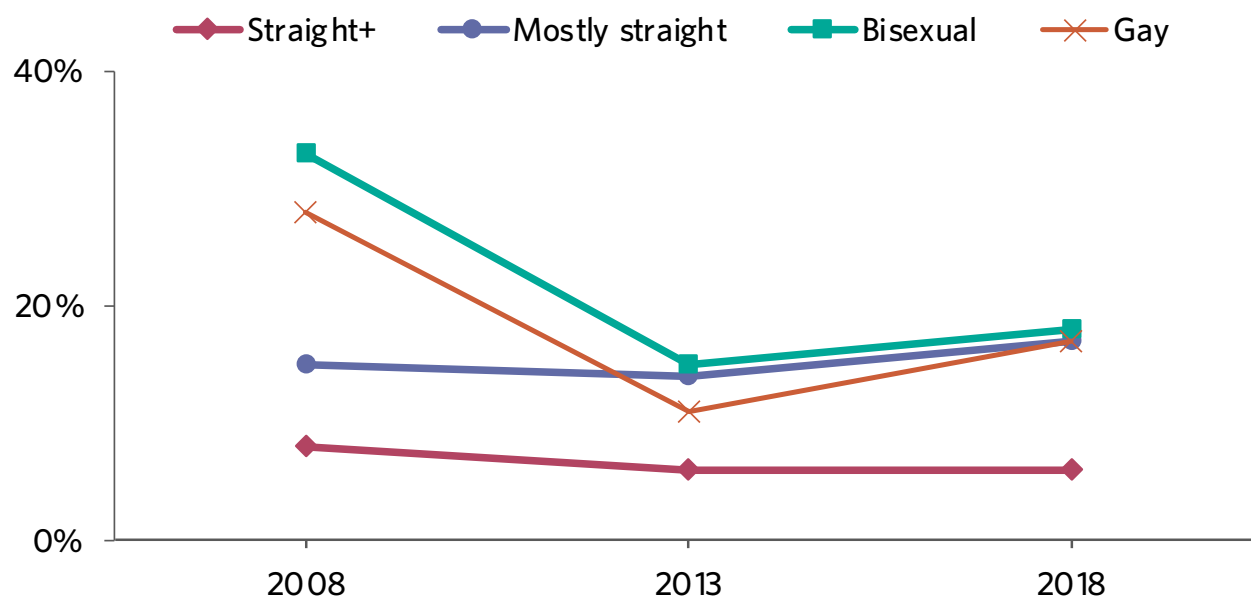


Dating Violence

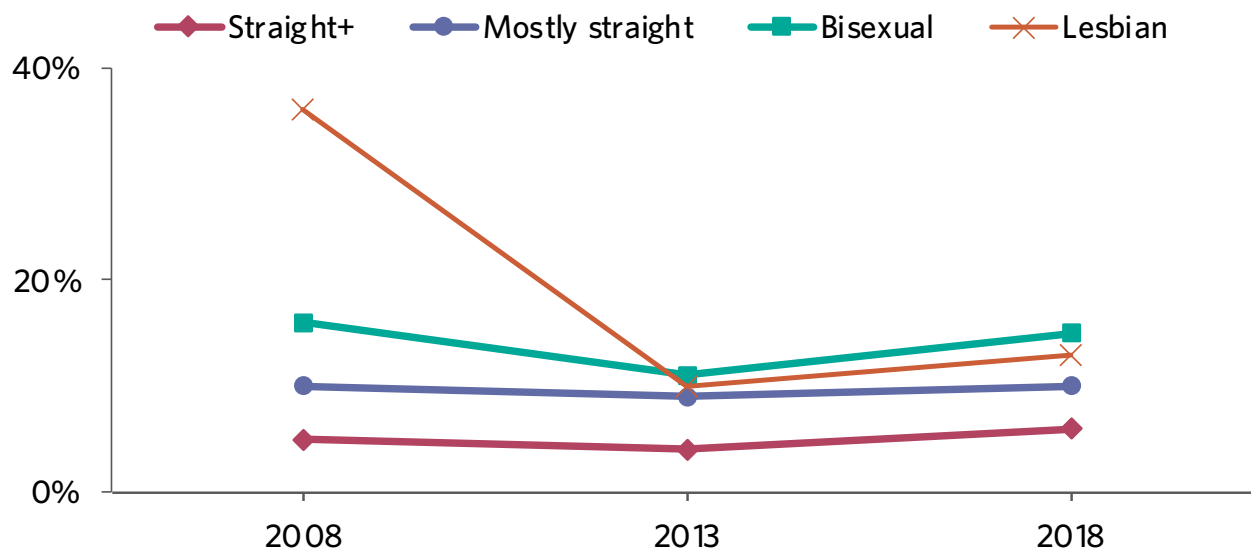
Sexual minority youth continued to experience higher rates of dating violence compared to their straight+ peers in most years. However, there was a decrease in experiences of dating violence among straight+ and bisexual boys and lesbian

girls over the past decade. These decreases reduced the disparity between lesbian and straight+ girls over time, but the other groups had no change in the gap between them and their straight+ peers in reporting dating violence.

Boys who experienced dating violence in the past year
(among those who dated in the past year)



Girls who experienced dating violence in the past year
(among those who dated in the past year)



Bullying

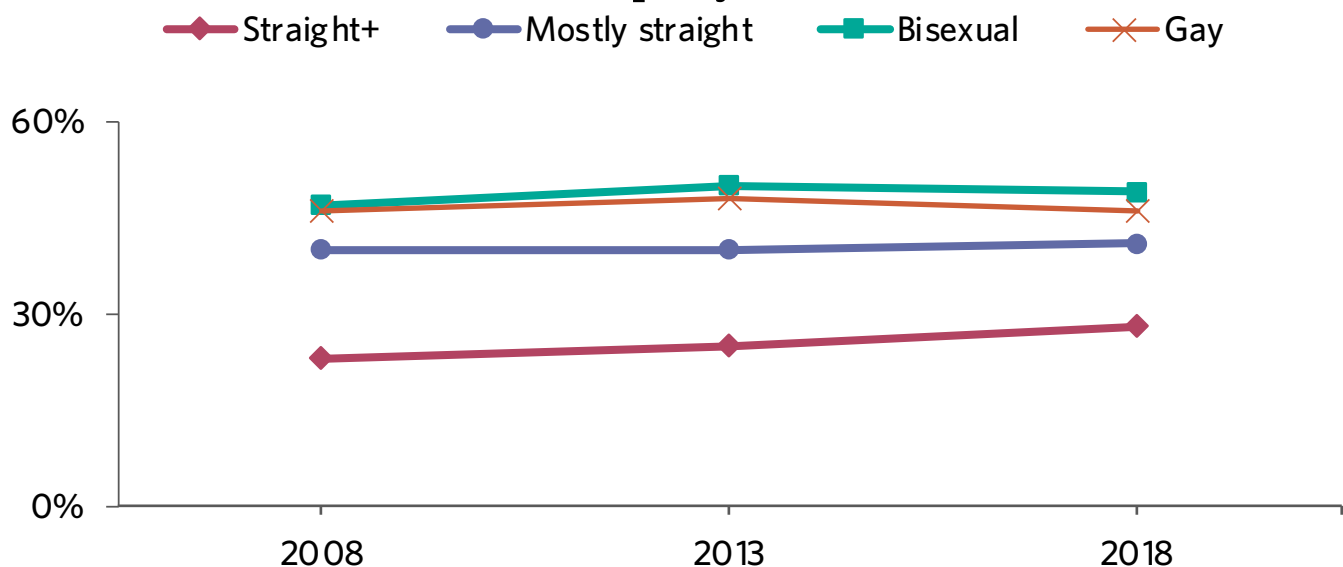
In 2008, sexual minority boys and girls were up to 5 times more likely to have been teased to the point where they felt uncomfortable, compared to straight+ boys and girls. Over time, there was an increase in straight+ youth who reported being teased, a decrease among lesbian girls, and the other orientation groups were mostly unchanged in 2018 compared to 2008. This meant that by 2018 the gap in teasing narrowed for lesbian and bisexual girls, but remained unchanged for other sexual minority groups.

There was also a decrease in the disparity in experiences of social exclusion between mostly straight boys and bisexual girls and

their straight+ peers. However, this was primarily due to an increase in straight+ youth reporting they had been excluded.

In 2008, bisexual and gay boys were at least twice as likely as straight+ boys to have been physically assaulted in the past year, and bisexual and lesbian girls were at least five times as likely as straight+ girls to have had this experience. Rates of assault more than halved for lesbian girls, and also dropped for bisexual boys and girls over the next decade, narrowing the gap between these groups and their straight+ peers.

Boys who were socially excluded at school or on their way to or from school from their group of friends at least once in the past year

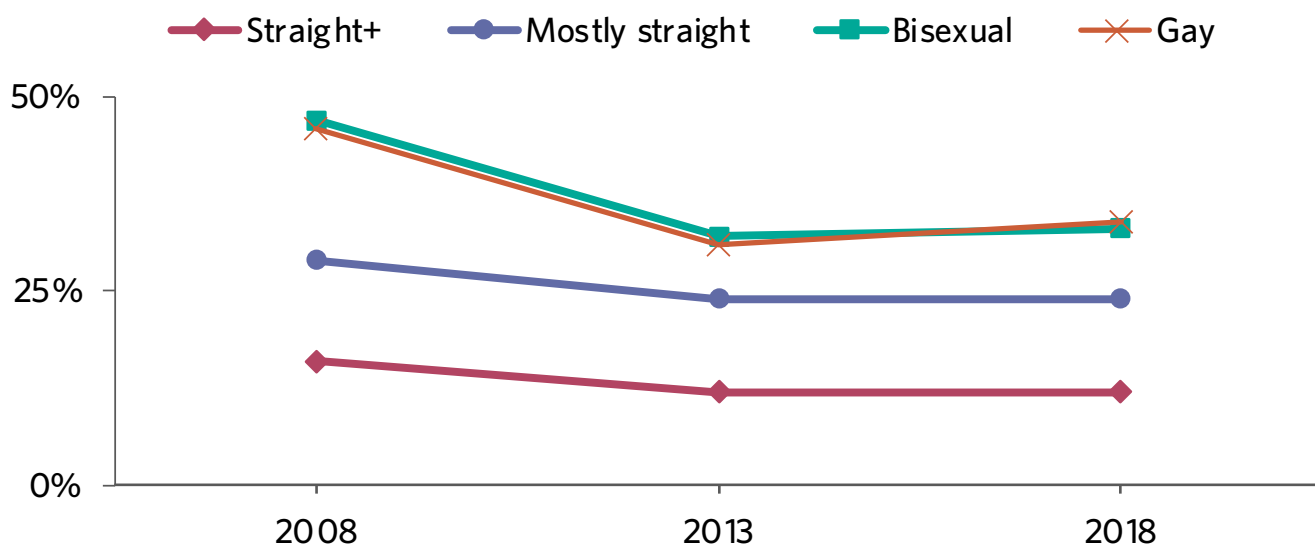


Physical and Sexual Abuse

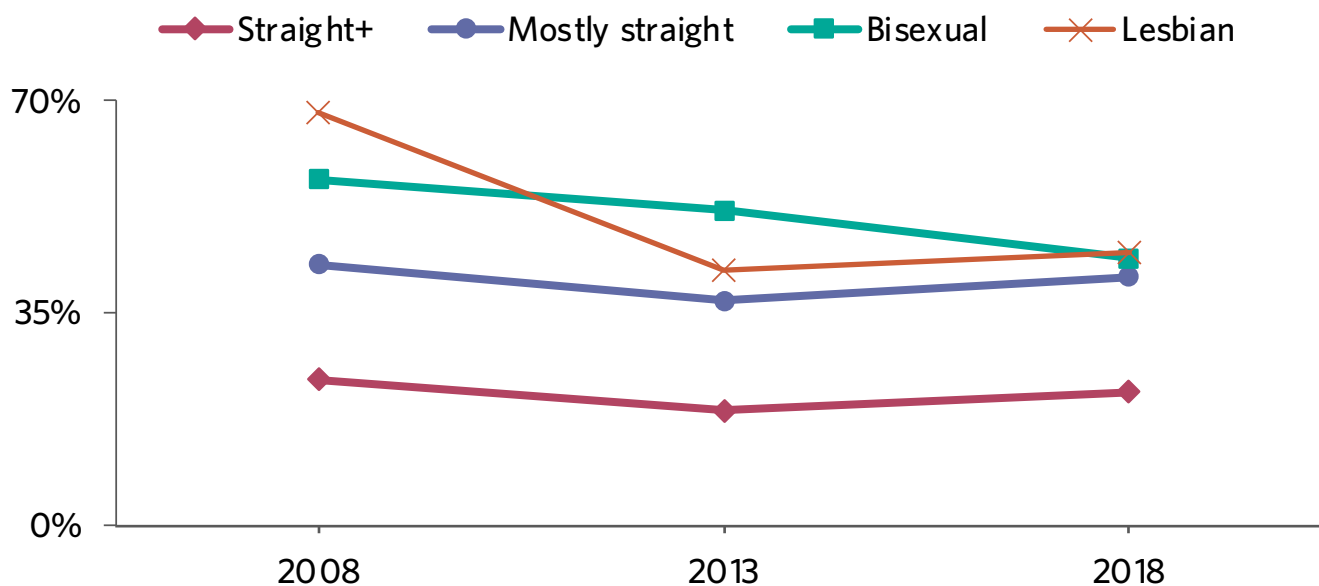
Reflecting the pattern from previous years, sexual minority boys and girls were at least twice as likely as straight+ boys and girls to report that they had been physically

and/or sexually abused. Despite some improvements in the disparities for lesbian and bisexual girls over time, the gaps between the groups persisted.

Boys who had been physically or sexually abused



Girls who had been physically or sexually abused

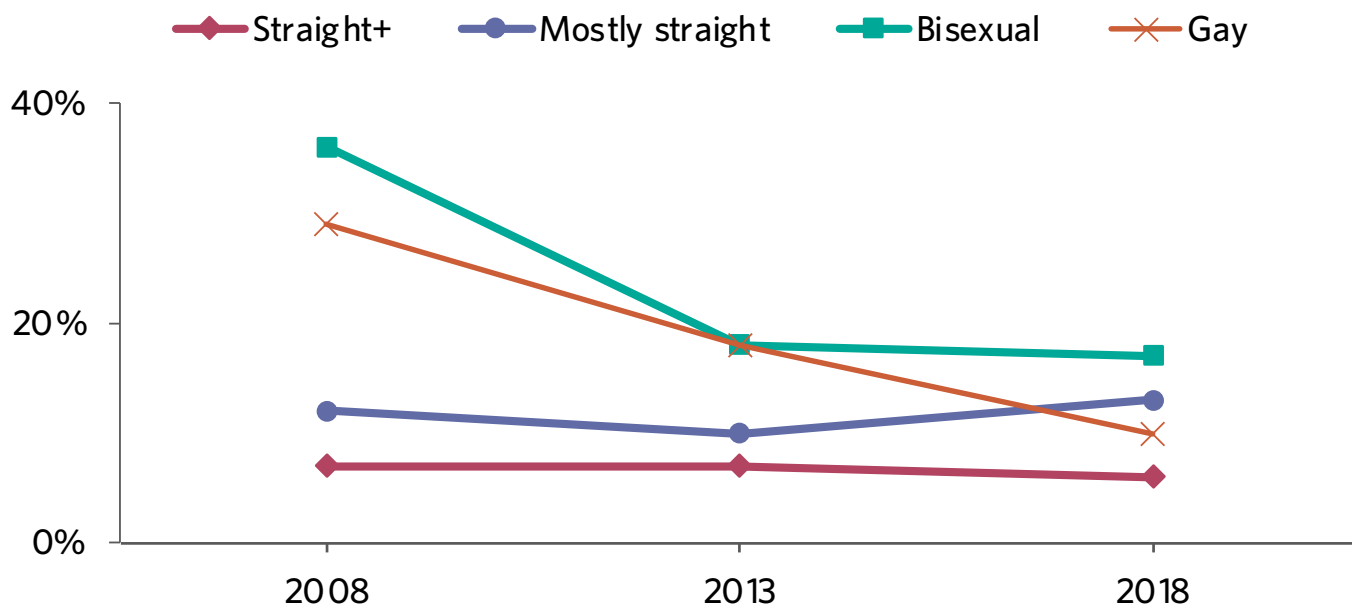


Ran Away in the Past Year

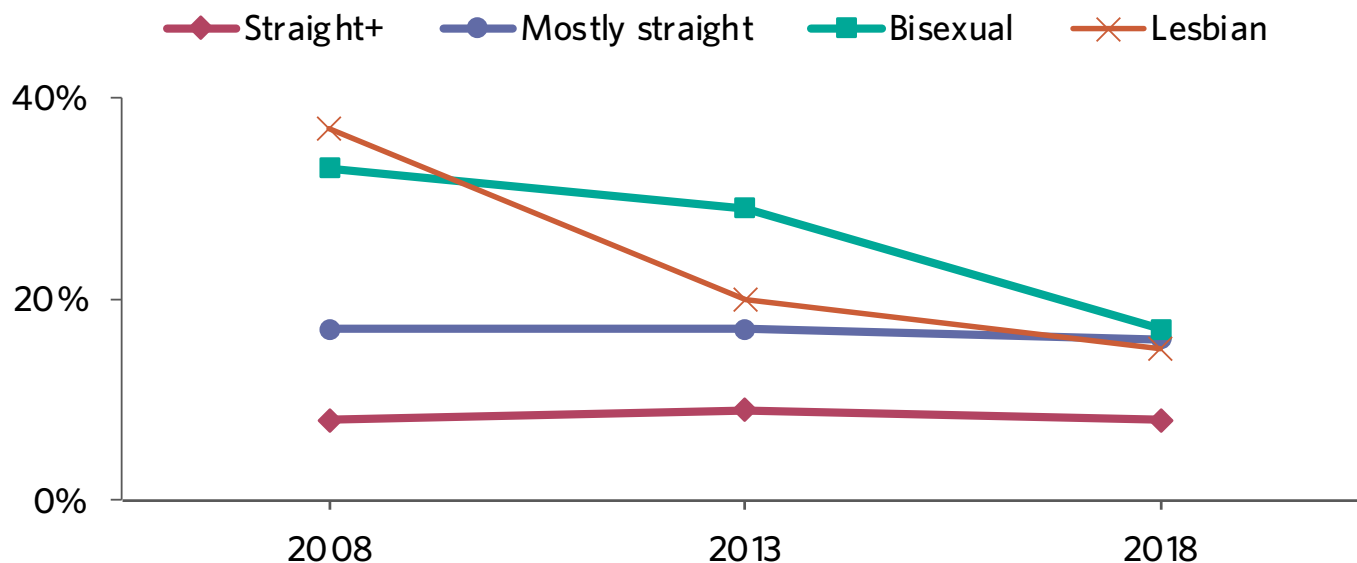
Lesbian, gay and bisexual boys and girls were less likely to have run away from home in 2018 than in 2008. Although these

four groups were also more likely to have run away compared to their straight+ peers, the gap did narrow in 2018.

Boys who ran away from home in the past year



Girls who ran away from home in the past year



Graduation Plans

Nearly all youth in each of the sexual orientation groups planned to graduate high school, and these rates have increased over time for straight+ boys and girls and for lesbian and bisexual girls, but not sexual minority boys. There was a gap between sexual minority and straight+ youth across most years, and gay boys and lesbian girls were the least likely to expect to graduate. Despite those modest improvements for lesbian and bisexual girls, the gap between straight+ boys and girls and their sexual minority peers persisted across the decade.

Reflecting the pattern for high school graduation, straight+ youth were more likely to expect to go on to post-secondary education than their sexual minority peers in most years. However, the rates of gay boys and mostly straight and bisexual girls who planned to go on to post-secondary education increased between 2008 and 2018. The gap narrowed between bisexual girls and straight+ girls, but for all other orientation groups, the gaps remained unchanged over time.

Extracurricular Activities

In 2008, sexual minority boys were about twice as likely as straight+ boys to be engaging in the arts on a weekly basis, and among bisexual boys, this gap increased further by 2018. Sexual minority girls were also more likely than straight+ girls to be involved in arts activities on a weekly basis. However, arts participation decreased among straight+ girls over the decade, so the gap widened between them and other sexual minority girls by 2018.

Engagement in weekly clubs or groups declined for straight+ boys and all girls except for bisexual girls, with the largest drop among lesbian girls whose rate of participation in clubs and groups dropped by almost half over the decade. However, there were no significant disparities in participation in clubs for either boys or girls based on sexual orientation across the years.

Weekly engagement in volunteer activities also declined for the majority of groups, with bisexual youth showing the largest drop in participation. There also were fewer disparities between sexual minority and straight+ youth, with two exceptions: bisexual girls were less likely to volunteer than straight+ girls in 2013 and 2018, while gay boys had a slight increase in participation between 2013 and 2018, which resulted in them being significantly more likely than their straight+ peers to be volunteering in 2018.

There were few changes over time in youth reporting that their activities were meaningful to them, and sexual minority youth remained less likely than their straight+ peers to report that their activities were meaningful.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The health disparities experienced by sexual minority youth compared to their same gender straight peers that were highlighted in the first part of this report show less progress has been made by 2018 than would have been hoped for, given the more inclusive policies and practices that have been implemented across the province. However, the report has also shown that while progress may not be as quick or as broad as we wanted, there have been some significant improvements over time in the gaps which exist.

The report has also shown that despite the challenges to healthy development that sexual minority youth face in this province, many are engaged in their community and school, have plans for the future, and have a circle of support. The report also clearly highlights the role that supportive adults can play for youth, and particularly for those who lack support in key areas of their life such as within their family and school.

.....

“We aren’t taught enough in school [about LGBTQ+ issues] which can make it unsafe or unwelcoming for both students who have and haven’t come out. My peer’s lack of knowledge (or incorrect knowledge) makes school sometimes a very hostile environment for me and other queer students.”

.....

In many ways, the findings in this report reflect those of our recently published report about the health of gender diverse youth, and show the need for specific, targeted approaches to ensure gender and sexual minority young people feel seen and included in all aspects of family, school and community life.

For this reason, McCreary and SARAVYC are currently offering a healthy relationships curriculum aimed specifically at LGBTQ+ youth,* and are hearing from young people who participate how important it is to have a space where they can talk about relationships with young people who have similar identities to themselves. However, such a program in isolation will not address the range of disparities in the health picture of sexual minority young people outlined in this report, and there is an urgent need to fully consider and include the perspectives of young people of all sexual orientations within the institutions that young people encounter.

The final question on the 2018 BC AHS asked youth if there was anything relating to their health that they would like to see addressed in schools. The overwhelming response from sexual minority youth was for more sexual health education which goes beyond discussions of straight sex. Young people also called for more understanding of the mental health of sexual minority youth, greater supports to address discrimination, and for access to resources aimed specifically at them. Given these youth were less likely to access a range of healthcare services, their suggestions are timely and give us some clear indication of where we can begin to focus our efforts.

*To learn more about Taking Pride, the McCreary Centre Society and SARAVYC’s healthy relationships curriculum, please visit <https://www.saravyc.ubc.ca/takingpride/> or contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

McCreary Centre Society

Vancouver, British Columbia

Contact: mccreary@mcs.bc.ca

<https://www.mcs.bc.ca/>



McCreary
Centre Society

Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre

Vancouver, British Columbia

University of British Columbia

School of Nursing

Contact: saravyc@nursing.ubc.ca

<https://www.saravyc.ubc.ca/>



Stigma and Resilience
Among Vulnerable
Youth Centre



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