

The background of the entire page is a solid dark purple. Overlaid on this are several large, thick, light purple arcs that sweep across the page, creating a sense of movement and framing the central text.

VIOLENCE EXPOSURE:

THE VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES OF
MALE, FEMALE, AND NON-BINARY
YOUTH IN BC



McCreary
Centre Society

VIOLENCE EXPOSURE:

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Thank you to all the youth who shared their experiences on the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey. Quotes from those who had experienced victimization are included throughout the report.

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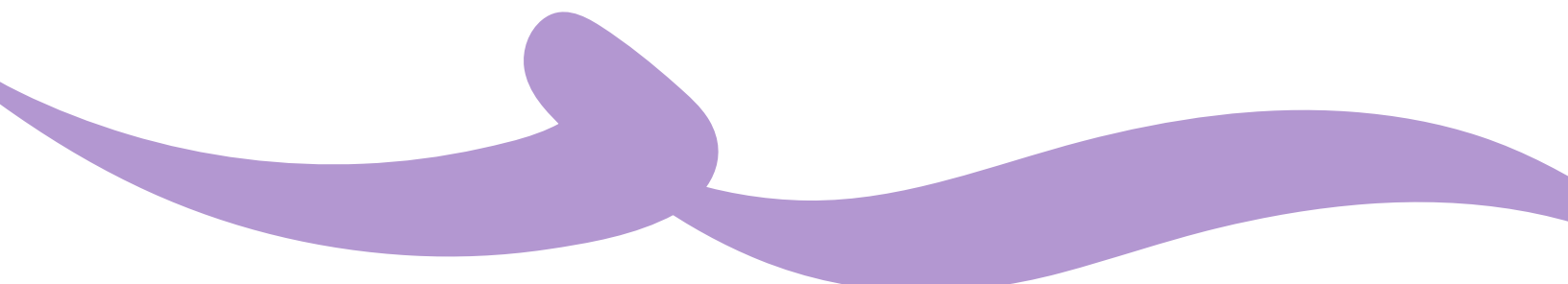


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KEY FINDINGS

- This report highlighted gender differences in numerous types of sexual, physical, and emotional victimization, with non-binary and female youth more likely than males to experience most types of violence, and to have been victimized in multiple ways.
- Despite the prevalence of violence exposure in BC, around a quarter (24%) of youth did not report experiencing any of the forms of victimization they were asked about.
- There were changing trends in violence exposure. For example, sexual abuse, physical sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and gender discrimination rates rose for males and females between 2013 and 2018; and for females there was also an increase in physical assaults, physical abuse, and verbal sexual harassment during this time.
- Some youth appeared to be at greater risk of being victimized, including sexual minority youth and those living in poverty or with a health condition or disability.
- Experiencing earlier sexual violence was associated with subsequent experiences of violence, as those who had experienced prior sexual abuse were more likely to have been victimized in the past 12 months, including males and females being more than twice as likely to have experienced recent intimate partner violence.
- Males who experienced earlier sexual abuse were more likely to become perpetrators of recent violence, such as bullying, than those who had not been victimized in this way.
- Violence exposure was associated with poorer health and well-being including increased risk of experiencing further violence, serious injury, substance use, poorer mental and sexual health, and challenges at school.
- Risks to health generally increased as the number of types of victimization increased. For example, the more types of violence youth experienced, the less likely they were to rate their overall health and mental health as good or excellent, and the more likely they were to report having anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and to have self-harmed and attempted suicide in the past year. Also, the more types of violence they had been exposed to, the more likely youth were to carry a weapon at school.
- Youth who had been victimized reported better health and well-being when they had a supportive family and school, and had someone they knew they could turn to. Helpful resources included adults such as friends' parents, coaches, and school staff, as well as online supports.

INTRODUCTION

This report considers exposure to various types of victimization among male, female, and non-binary young people in British Columbia. The report uses data provided by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19 who completed the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey (2018 BC AHS). Some of the violence, discrimination, and harassment described in this report may not have been identified by the victim or perpetrator as gender-based violence. However, a clear picture of who is more likely to have these experiences was identified in the data.

The report focuses on sexual violence and gender discrimination but also considers other victimization experiences such as physical abuse, severe teasing, social exclusion, physical assault, hostile family environment, and online victimization. The report also considers the potential health impacts of victimization; exposure to multiple types of violence; and how to support youth who have experienced victimization, and particularly gender-based violence.

The report begins by highlighting the gender differences in victimization experiences among BC youth. However, as the report also shows that violence exposure can negatively impact health and well-being for youth of all genders, the remainder of the report focuses on experiences within each gender group.

The report considers the victimization of males, females, and non-binary youth. However, 2018 was the first survey year where students had the option to identify as non-binary. Any reported trends are therefore among youth who identified as male or female. Additionally, whilst similar percentages of male and female students participated in the 2018 BC AHS, the percentage of students who identified as non-binary was small (2%). Therefore, results could not always be reported for this group.

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.

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.

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

For more details about the methodology, sample, and limitations of the BC AHS, please visit www.mcs.bc.ca.

Glossary of terms used in this report

Cyberbullied – Had been bullied or picked on through the internet or other technology in the past year.

Gender discrimination – had been discriminated against on the grounds of their gender/sex in the past year.

Intimate partner violence – had been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating in the past year.

Non-binary – youth who did not identify as either male or female.

Physical abuse – had been physically abused or mistreated by someone in their family or outside their family.

Physical sexual harassment – had experienced unwanted physical sexual contact, such as having been touched, grabbed, pinched, or brushed against in a sexual way in the past year.

Severe teasing – teased at school or on the way to or from school in the past year, to the point where youth felt bad or extremely uncomfortable.

Sexual minority – identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, mostly straight, or questioning.

Verbal sexual harassment – had unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures directed at them in the past year.

For readability the term 'sexual harassment' is sometimes used to refer to experiences of verbal and/or physical sexual harassment in the past year.

Youth were asked specifically if they had experienced sexual abuse. Youth were also asked about other experiences which are forms of sexual abuse (being forced into sexual activity and being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex) but which they may not have recognized as such. Unless otherwise noted, the term 'sexual abuse' refers to having had any of these three experiences.

VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES AMONG BC YOUTH

In this section, the rates of males, females, and non-binary students who had been exposed to various types of victimization are considered.

Physical abuse

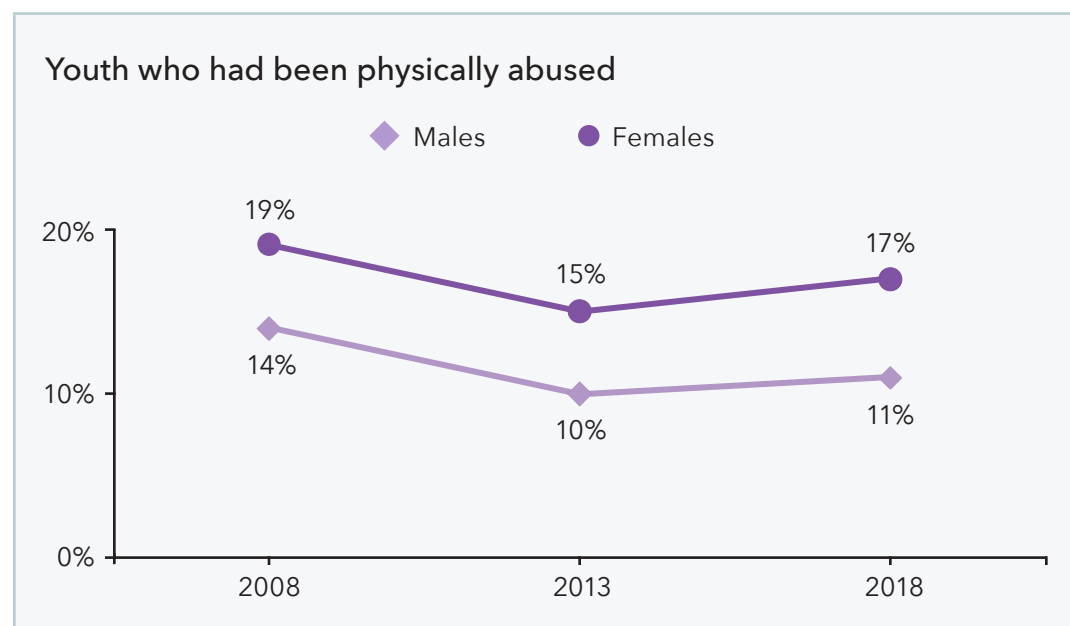
The BC AHS asked participants about their lifetime experience of physical abuse. Males were less likely than females to have experienced this type of abuse (11% vs. 17%), and non-binary students were more likely than both males and females to have been physically abused (27%).

Between 2008 and 2013, rates of physical abuse decreased for males and females. However, in 2018 the percentage of females who had been physically abused rose again, while the rate for males was similar to that in 2013.

Physical assault

Youth were asked if they had been physically attacked at school or on the way to or from school in the past year. Non-binary students were the most likely to have been attacked (18%). This was the one type of violence exposure which was less common among females than males (6% vs. 10%).

The percentage of males who had been physically attacked was similar to five years earlier and lower than a decade earlier (12% in 2008), whereas for females the percentage was similar to a decade earlier and higher than in 2013 (5%).



Note: The difference between 2013 and 2018 was not statistically significant for males.

Intimate partner violence



Over two years ago I was in an abusive relationship ... was sexually assaulted and stalked." Non-binary youth, aged 16



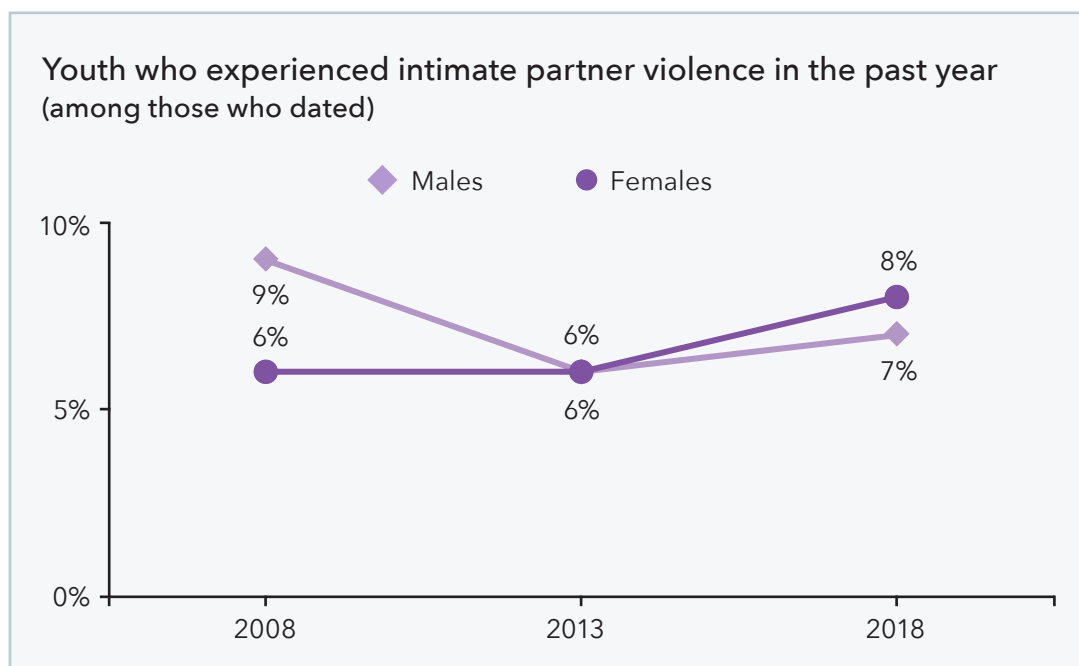
Not my boyfriend now but my last one hit me and forced me to have sex with him. He is now sending threats and saying if I tell anyone he will leak my nudes that I had sent him." Female, aged 14



I was raped by my 19-year-old boyfriend and never reported it." Female, aged 16

Among youth who had dated in the past year, 8% had been hit, slapped, or physically hurt within a dating relationship (3% of all BC youth). Fourteen percent of non-binary youth had this experience, which was higher than the rate among males and females.

The percentage of males who had experienced violence within their dating relationship was higher than five years earlier and lower than a decade earlier. For females rates were higher than in 2008 and 2013.



Note: The difference between males and females in 2018 was not statistically significant.

Sexual harassment



I have been sexually harassed at school by other classmates (not because of how I acted or what I was wearing) because the boy had no respect.” Female, aged 18



I am often emotionally tired from having to constantly say no to guys when they ask for nudes, dates or other stuff and someone has to get them to respect women more because it’s crazy the way they talk about us (I know because I have my close guy friends who tell me the stuff shared on, say, boy’s night).” Female, aged 15



I’m constantly asked for nudes; I never send or even ask.” Female, aged 14

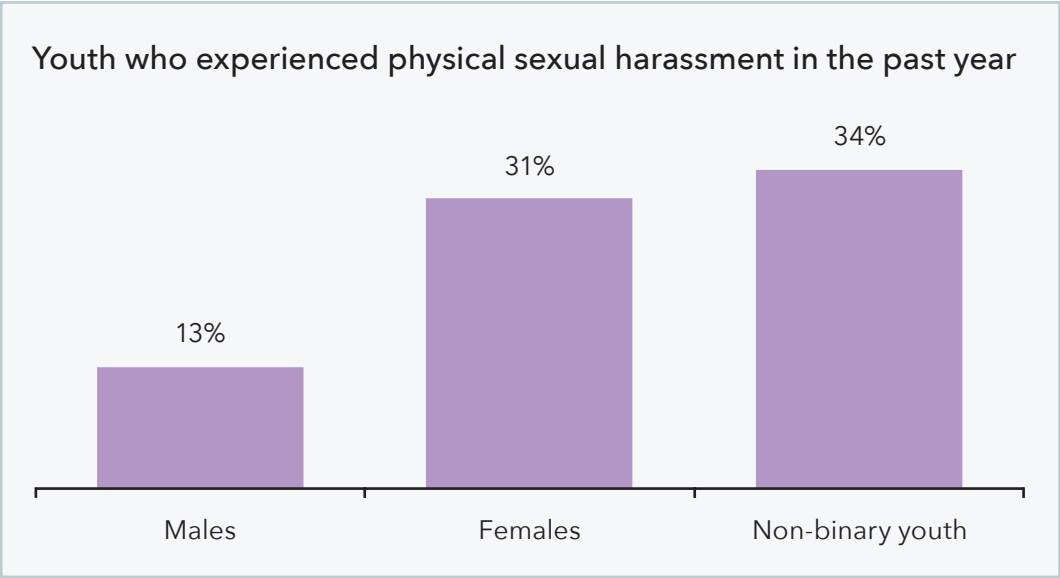
Around half of female and non-binary youth had experienced verbal sexual harassment, compared to 28% of males. For males, this rate represented a decrease from 32% five years earlier, whereas for females this was an increase (50% in 2018 vs. 46% in 2013).

Females and non-binary students reported similar rates of having been physically sexually harassed in the past year, and both genders were more than twice as likely as males to have been harassed in this way.

Compared to five years earlier, rates of physical sexual harassment increased for both males (10% to 13%) and females (26% to 31%).



A guy on the bus grabbed my thigh.” Female, aged 16



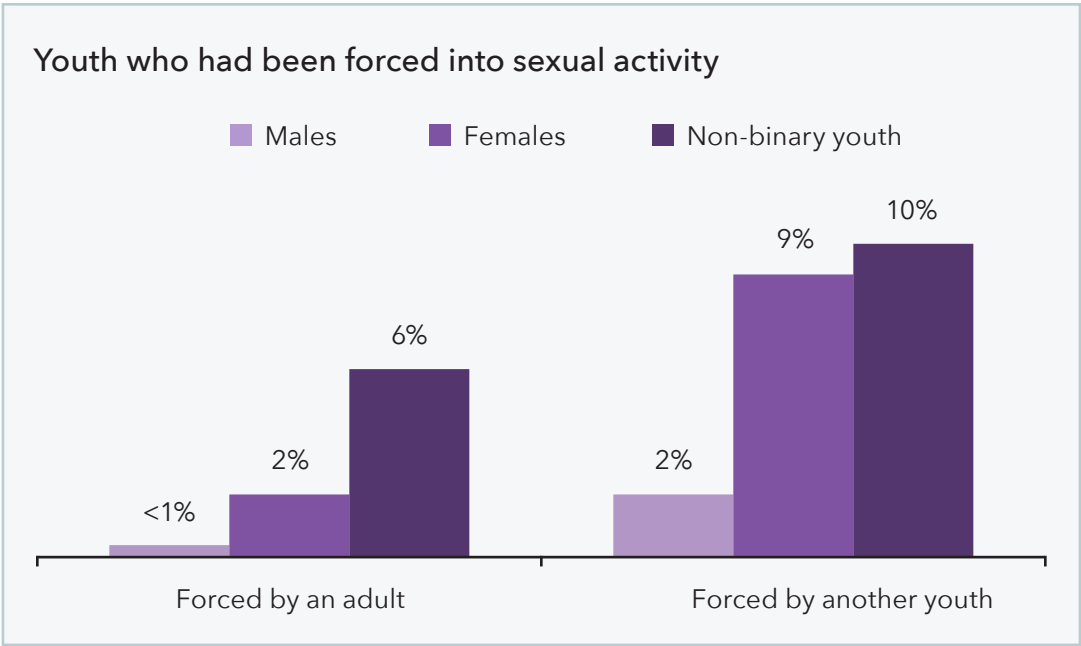
Note: The difference between female and non-binary youth was not statistically significant.

Sexual abuse

- “When you get touched inappropriately you feel really bad, but you just have to act like everything is fine.” Female, aged 13
- “I was sexually assaulted by a peer for 6 months because no one would believe it was happening.” Female, aged 15
- “I have had sex with a man who was 30 years older than me.” Male, aged 17

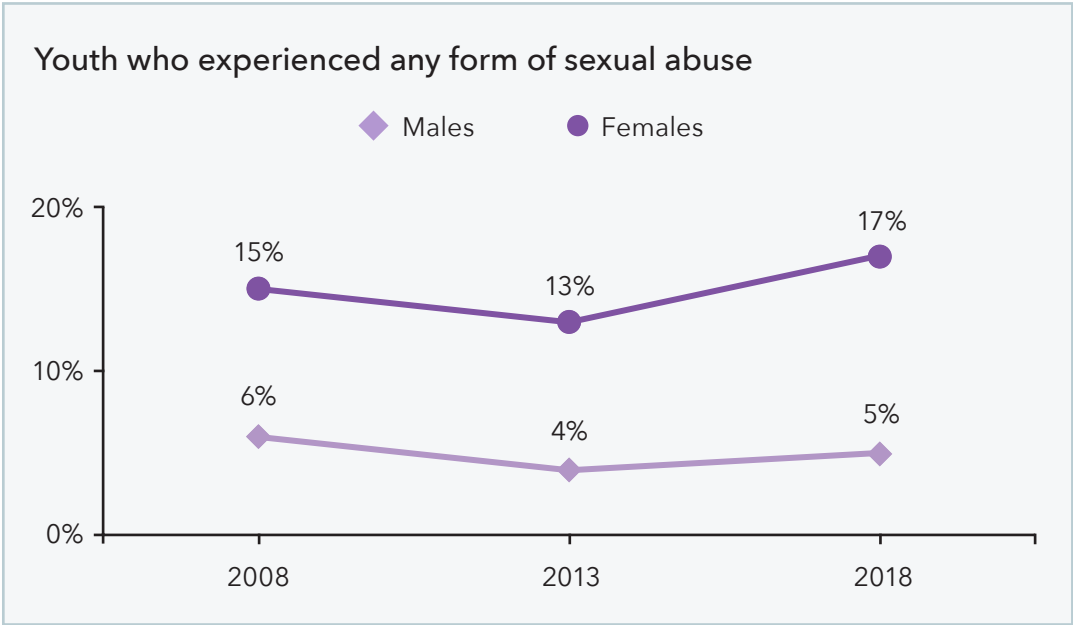
When asked directly if they had ever been sexually abused, female and non-binary youth were over four times as likely as males to report this had happened to them. The BC AHS also asked about other forms of sexual abuse that young people may not recognize as such, including being forced into sexual activity and being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex.

Males were the least likely to have been forced into sexual activity and were less likely than non-binary youth to have been the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex. For example, 13% of non-binary youth who had previously had sex had been the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had done so, compared to 3% of males.



Note: The difference between female and non-binary youth who had been forced into sexual activity by another youth was not statistically significant.

When all three forms of sexual abuse were taken into account (i.e., including youth who reported being forced into sexual activity or being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex, as well as those who directly reported experiencing sexual abuse), almost 1 in 4 (24%) non-binary youth and around 1 in 6 females had been sexually abused, compared to 1 in 20 males. For males and females, these percentages were higher than five years earlier, and for females the percentage was also higher than a decade earlier.



Note: Sexual abuse included youth who reported being forced into sexual activity, or being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex, as well as youth who directly indicated that they had been sexually abused.

Family violence

In BC, most youth felt safe inside their home. However, 1 in 10 non-binary youth, and 1 in 50 males and females did not. In the past year, 6% of males and a similar percentage of females had been kicked out of their home, as had 13% of non-binary youth.

Emotional violence



In the past, I have felt pressured to do sexual things (give oral) to guys my age. I refused at first, but they pressure you in the weirdest way, that's nice and manipulative at the same time. Female, aged 18

It is challenging to determine whether some types of violence youth reported on the BC AHS were emotional, physical, a combination of the two, or some other type. However, two types of emotional violence which were captured were severe teasing and social exclusion.

During the past year while at school or on the way to or from school, 38% of youth had been teased to the point where they felt extremely uncomfortable and a similar percentage had been deliberately socially excluded. Males were less likely to have had either of these experiences. For example, around half of female and non-binary youth had been excluded compared to 29% of males.

Fear of being bullied impacted youth differently by gender. For example, 20% of non-binary youth did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because they were worried about being bullied. Females were also more than twice as likely as males to miss activities for this reason (9% vs. 4%).

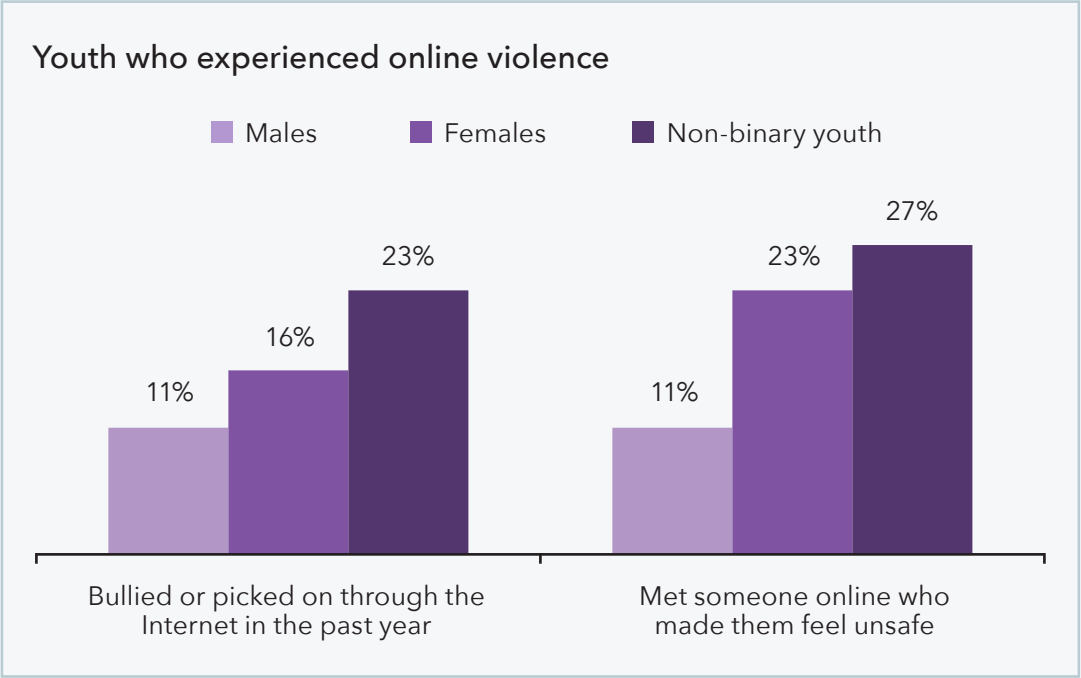
Online violence



I was blackmailed into sending nudes when I was 11 from an 18-year-old guy that had told me he loved me and said he was 13. It was online.” Female, aged 14

Youth were asked about their experiences online, including if they had experienced cyberbullying or had met someone who made them feel unsafe. Non-binary and female youth were more likely than males to have had either experience.

Compared to a decade earlier, males and females were more likely to have met someone online who made them feel unsafe but were less likely to have been victimized online. For example, 23% of females met someone online who made them feel unsafe, compared to 18% in 2008.



Note: The difference between female and non-binary youth who had met someone online who made them feel unsafe was not statistically significant.

School and community safety

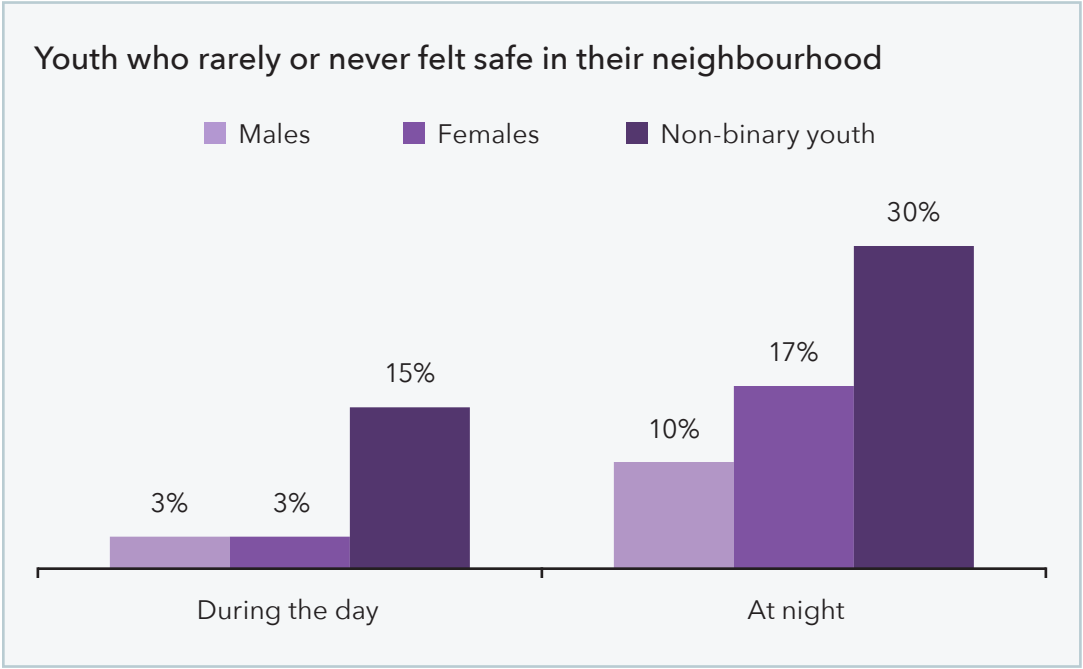
“ I don’t feel safe at school because I got a death threat, and the teachers didn’t really do anything about it.” Female, aged 13

“ I have been raped twice. I do not feel safe, and I hate this town.” Female, aged 15

The majority of BC youth felt safe at their school. However, 22% of non-binary youth, 9% of females, and 7% of males did not feel safe there. Males were not only the most likely to feel safe at school but were also the least likely to have missed classes in the past month because of bullying (2% vs. 5% of females vs. 13% of non-binary youth).

Among young people who used transit, non-binary youth were the least likely to feel safe doing so, and females were less likely than males to feel safe (28% of non-binary youth rarely or never felt safe vs. 14% of females vs. 9% of males). Additionally, 15% of non-binary youth and 3% of males and females rarely or never felt safe on their journey to or from school.

Students were asked about how safe they felt in their neighbourhood during the day and at night. Overall, 31% of non-binary students, 17% of females, and 10% of males rarely or never felt safe there. Females were as likely as males to feel unsafe in their neighbourhood during the day but were more likely to feel unsafe at night.



Discrimination



I believe that within our school there has been discrimination directed towards women, that was not properly addressed by the school.” Female, aged 13

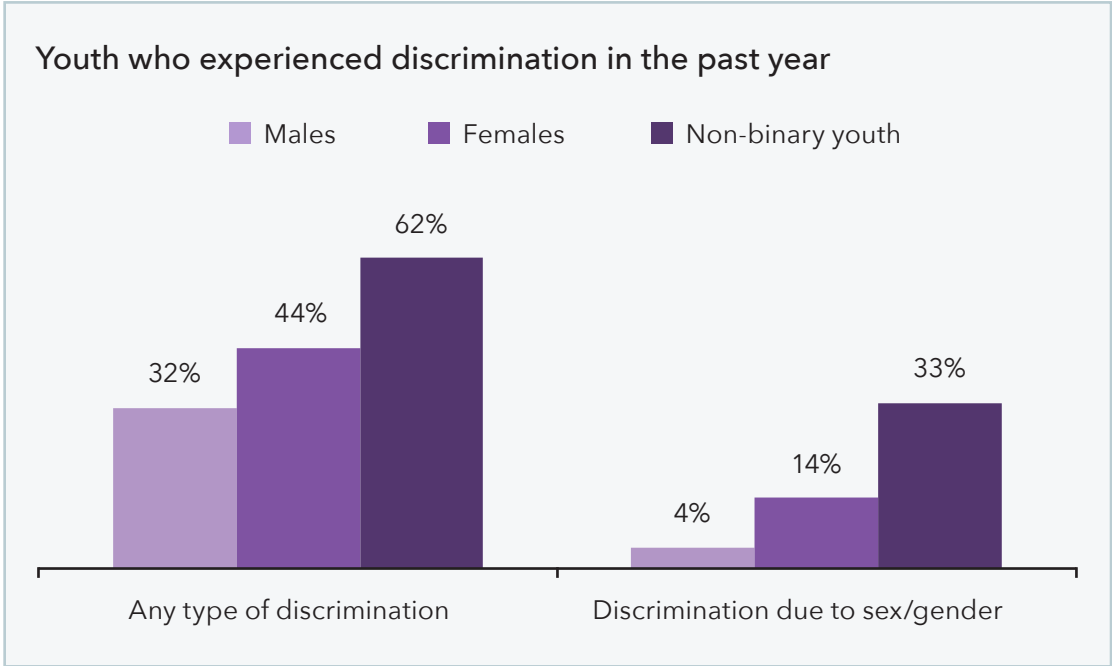
Non-binary youth were the most likely to report they had experienced some form of discrimination in the past year. When asked specifically about being discriminated against or treated unfairly because of their gender or sex, females were more than three times as likely as males to have been discriminated against for this reason and non-binary youth were eight times as likely.

The percentages of youth who experienced gender discrimination were higher than five years earlier for both males (2% in 2013) and females (9% in 2013).

Other types of violence exposure

There were gender differences in other types of violence exposure. For example, among youth who had used substances in the past year, males were the least likely to have experienced unwanted sex after using substances (5% vs. 7% of females vs. 13% of non-binary youth).

In addition, 7% of non-binary youth and 3% of males and females had experienced the death of someone close to them as a result of violence.



YOUTH AT GREATER RISK OF EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

The findings presented so far have shown that female and non-binary youth generally experienced higher rates of victimization than males. Recognizing that there are other aspects of young people's identity that can put them at increased risk of victimization, this section considers three groups of BC youth who experienced violence at higher rates than their same-gender peers.

Sexual minority youth



The discrimination for my sexuality, gender, appearance, disability, and weight come from my parents."

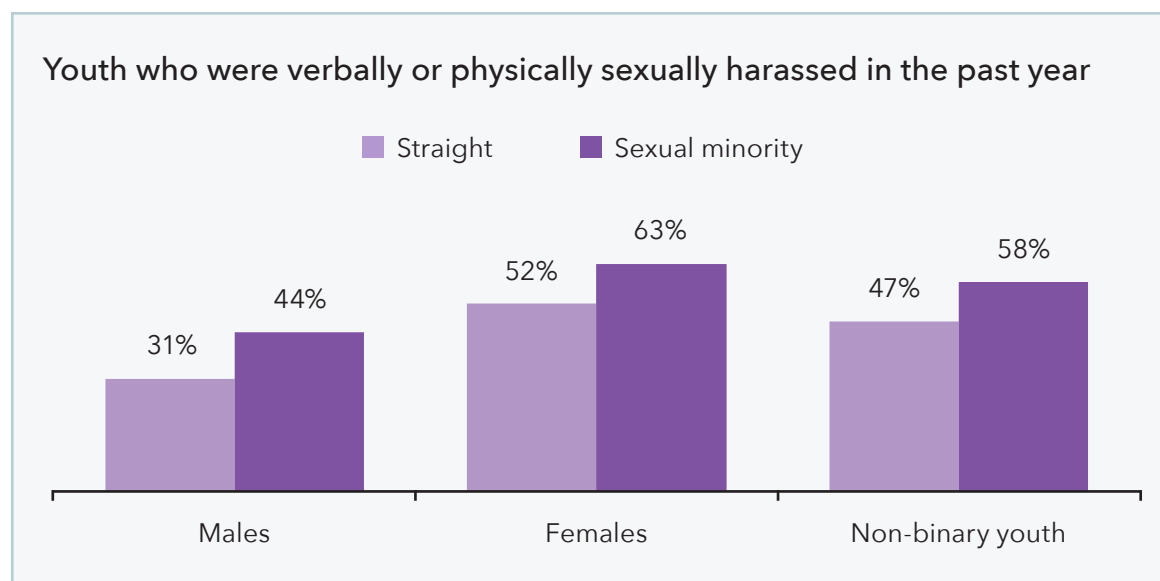
Female, aged 16



[I] have been bullied or harassed for sexuality, gender, looks, etc."

Female, aged 16

Regardless of their gender, youth who identified as a sexual minority were more likely than their same-gender peers who identified as straight to have experienced cyberbullying, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse (such as severe teasing), intimate partner violence, and to have felt unsafe in their neighbourhood. For example, lesbian females were around twice as likely as straight females to have been physically abused (29% vs. 14%) and to have experienced intimate partner violence (14% vs. 6%; among females who dated in the past year).



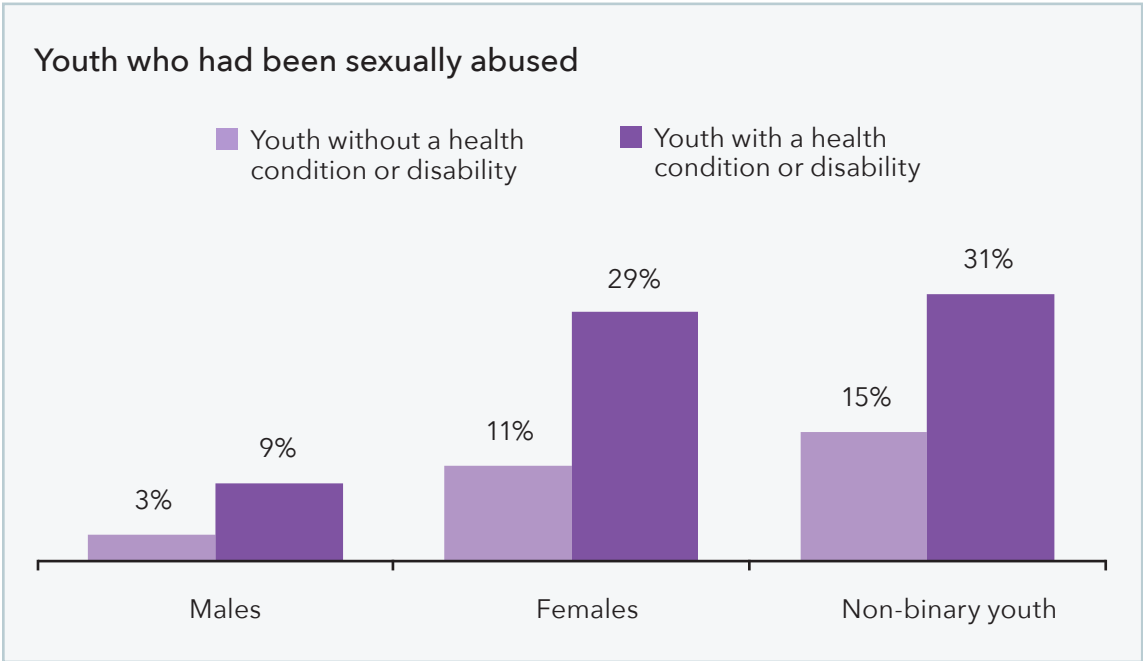
Note: The difference between straight and sexual minority non-binary youth was not statistically significant.

Youth with a health condition or disability

Young people with a health condition or disability (e.g., a physical disability, sensory disability, chronic medical condition, mental health condition, learning disability, or severe allergy) were at increased risk for violence exposure, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, cyberbullying, and intimate partner violence. For example, 20% of males with a health condition had been physically abused (vs. 9% without a health condition), 29% of females (vs. 11%), and 36% of non-binary youth (vs. 15%).

Youth living in poverty

Going to bed hungry because of a lack of money for food can be an indicator of living in extreme poverty. Youth who went to bed hungry for this reason were more likely to have experienced violence. This included intimate partner violence, gender discrimination, severe teasing, social exclusion, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. For example, youth who went to bed hungry at least sometimes due to a lack of money for food were more likely to have been sexually harassed in the past year than those who never went to bed hungry, with similar patterns for males (47% vs. 31%), females (76% vs. 52%), and non-binary youth (66% vs. 52%).



Note: Sexual abuse included youth who reported being forced into sexual activity, or being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex, as well as youth who directly indicated that they had been sexually abused.

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE EXPOSURE

Having established the prevalence of victimization among BC youth by gender and considered three groups of youth at increased risk for victimization, this section shares a few examples of the association between victimization and health and well-being.

Increased risk of further violence exposure

Experiencing sexual violence has been associated with subsequent experiences of violence, and this also appeared to be the case among youth in BC. Youth who had been the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex, and had this experience more than a year before completing the BC AHS, were more likely than youth who had not experienced this type of sexual abuse to have been victimized in the past 12 months. This included being more likely to have been sexually harassed, and to have experienced intimate partner violence. For example, 33% of females who had experienced earlier sexual abuse had experienced recent intimate partner violence, which was more than double the rate among those who had not had this prior experience (14%; among females who had ever had sex and had been in a dating relationship in the past year).

Males who had previously experienced sexual abuse were more likely to have participated in unwanted sex after using substances in the past year, and to have recently perpetrated violence. For example, 29% of males who had experienced earlier abuse had teased, excluded, or physically assaulted another youth in the past year vs. 17% of males who had not experienced earlier abuse. A similar pattern was seen for males in perpetrating cyberbullying in the past year (25% vs. 11%). The link between earlier sexual abuse and recent violence perpetration was not seen for females.

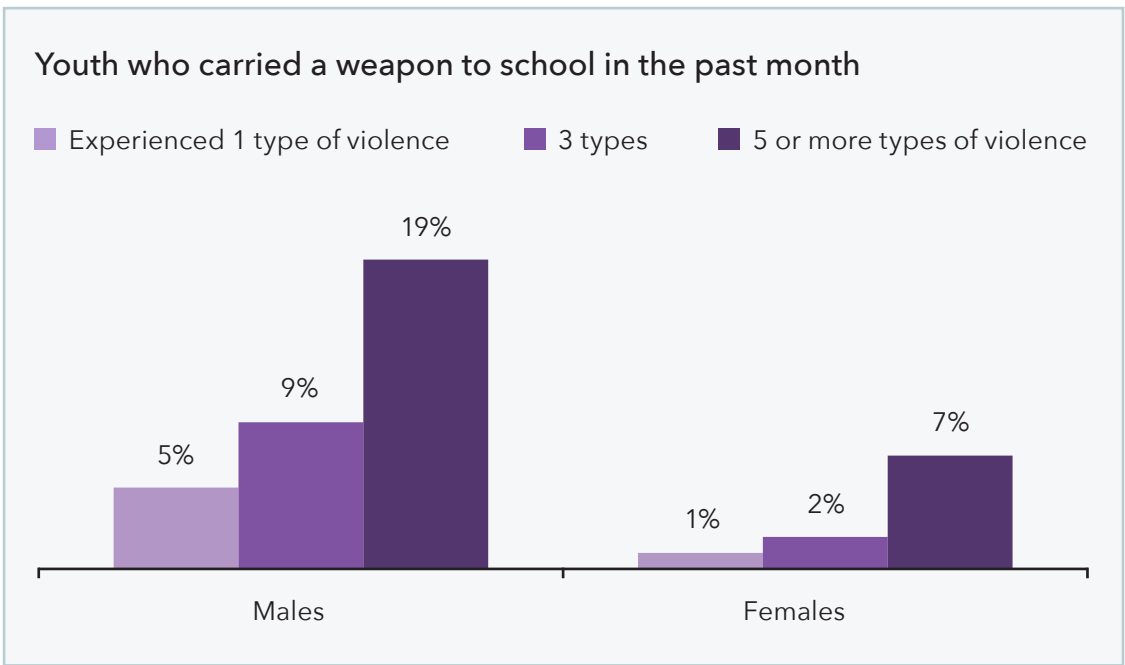
Weapon carrying

In general, females were less likely to have been the perpetrators of violence. However as with males and non-binary youth, those who had been victimized were more likely to carry a weapon. For example, male, female, and non-binary youth who had been physically assaulted were at least three times as likely to carry a weapon to school as those who had not been attacked.

The more types of violence youth were exposed to, the more likely they were to carry a weapon. For example, 25% of non-binary youth who experienced five or more different types of violence had carried a weapon to school in the past month, compared to 13% of those who experienced three types of violence. (For more information about youth who experienced multiple types of violence, see page 24.)

Increased risk of injuries

Among youth of all genders, those who experienced victimization including physical sexual harassment and physical abuse were at increased risk of being seriously injured in the past year. For example, compared to their same-gender peers who had not been physically abused, males (36% vs. 26%), females (34% vs. 23%), and non-binary youth (31% vs. 20%) who had been physically abused were more likely to report they had been injured seriously enough to require medical attention in the past year.



Mental health challenges



I am a 15-year-old girl who has been bullied to the point of being depressed and suicidal."

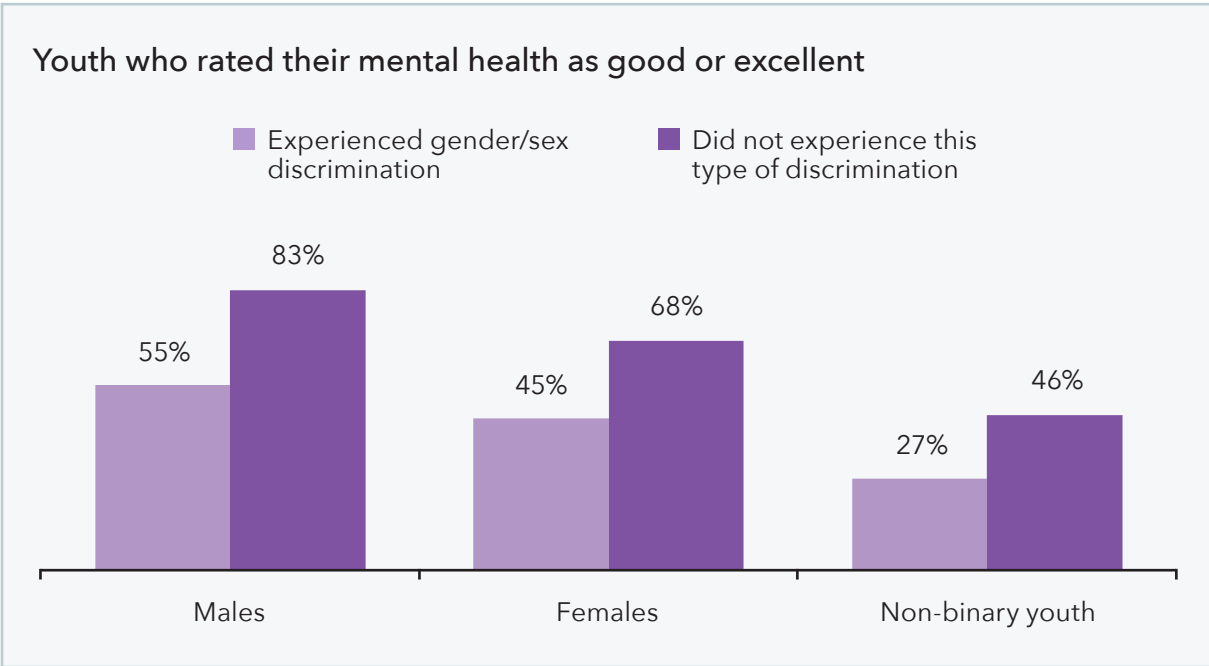


I was attacked by a man I didn't know. He really hurt me. It has given me PTSD and enhanced my anxiety. I have not gotten any help for this and it still scares me to walk alone, and I find myself rebelling [against] adults." Female, aged 14

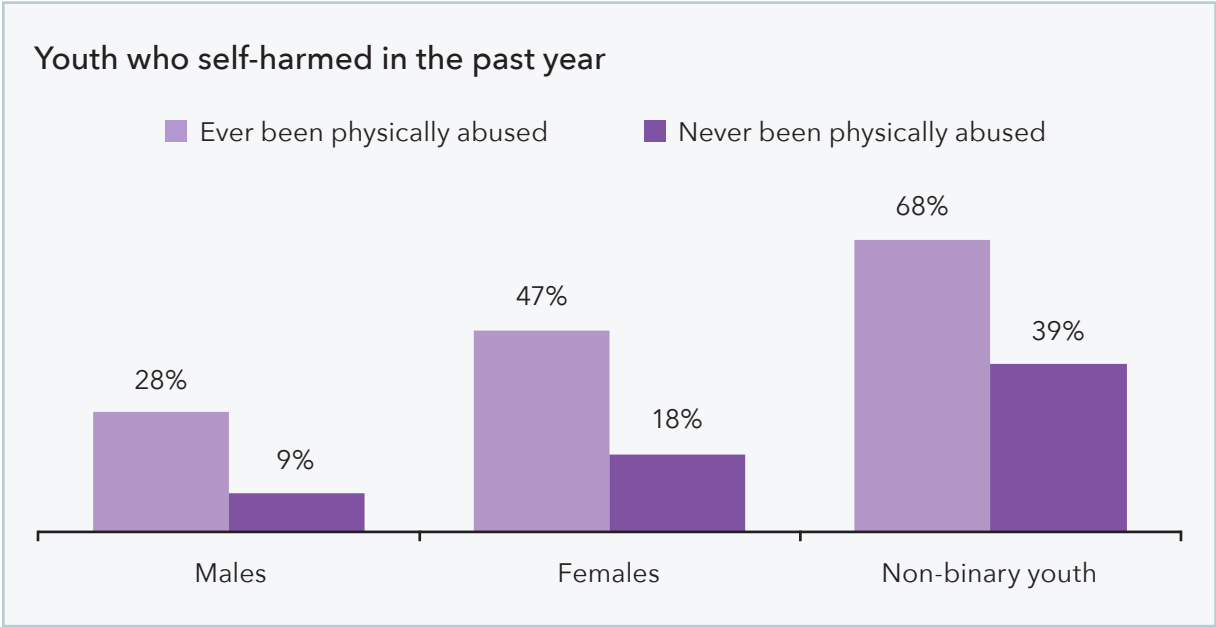


I suffered a lot near the end of my relationship with my girlfriend. I felt as if I was being played and used. Post-breakup, I still often feel stressed." Male, aged 17

Victimization can impact mental health and is associated with an increased risk of experiencing a mental health condition such as PTSD, depression, or anxiety. For example, youth of all genders who experienced sexual abuse, in-person or online bullying, or gender discrimination in the past year were less likely than their peers who did not have these experiences to rate their mental health positively.



Victimization was also linked to self-harm and suicide attempts. For example, youth were more likely to have self-harmed in the past year if they had also experienced gender discrimination during that time or had ever been physically abused.



Feelings about self

Violence appeared to affect how youth felt about themselves. For example, youth were less likely to feel good about themselves if they had been severely teased (males: 55% vs. 76% who had not had this experience; females: 35% vs. 60%; non-binary youth: 21% vs. 40%), or sexually harassed (males: 62% vs. 74%; females: 38% vs. 61%; non-binary youth: 24% vs. 37%) in the past year.

Substance use

Youth who had been victimized were more likely to have used substances, to have used them as a way to manage their feelings and to have used them in ways which were potentially harmful. For example, among those who used substances, youth who had experienced cyberbullying were more likely to report that they last used substances because they felt sad (males: 25% vs. 12% of those who had not been victimized online; females: 41% vs. 20%; non-binary youth: 52% vs. 29%). Also, youth who had been sexually abused were more likely to report their substance use had reached the point where they needed help (males: 19% vs. 4%; females: 16% vs. 3%; non-binary youth: 15% vs. 7%).

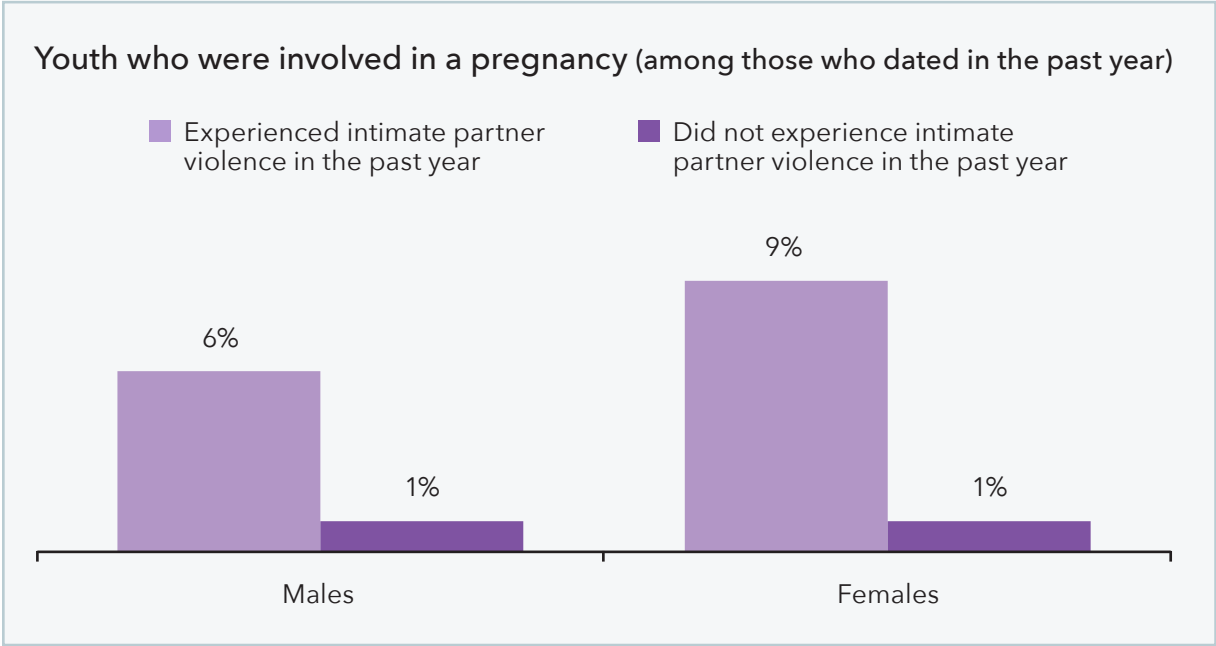
Sexual health



I feel schools should be teaching everyone (especially males) the effects of sexual assault/rape and the importance of consent and self-control.” Female, aged 16

Youth of all genders who were the victim of intimate partner violence were more likely to have been involved in a pregnancy, and males and non-binary youth were more likely to have had a sexually transmitted infection (STI). For example, 5% of males who reported violence within their dating relationship had experienced an STI, compared to 1% of males who dated in the past year but had not experienced violence within that relationship.

Youth who had experienced intimate partner violence were less likely to feel they could say ‘no’ to unwanted sexual activity. For example, they were more likely to feel they could not refuse unwanted sex with a long-term partner, compared to their peers who dated but did not experience this type of violence in their relationship, with similar patterns for males (10% vs. 5%), females (13% vs. 4%), and non-binary youth (21%* vs. 6%).



School



I have been bullied multiple times. But the teachers at my school have done nothing. It makes me feel sad that this happens. Female, aged 12



I don't feel safe at school. My body isn't good enough for other girls. Female, aged 14

Community

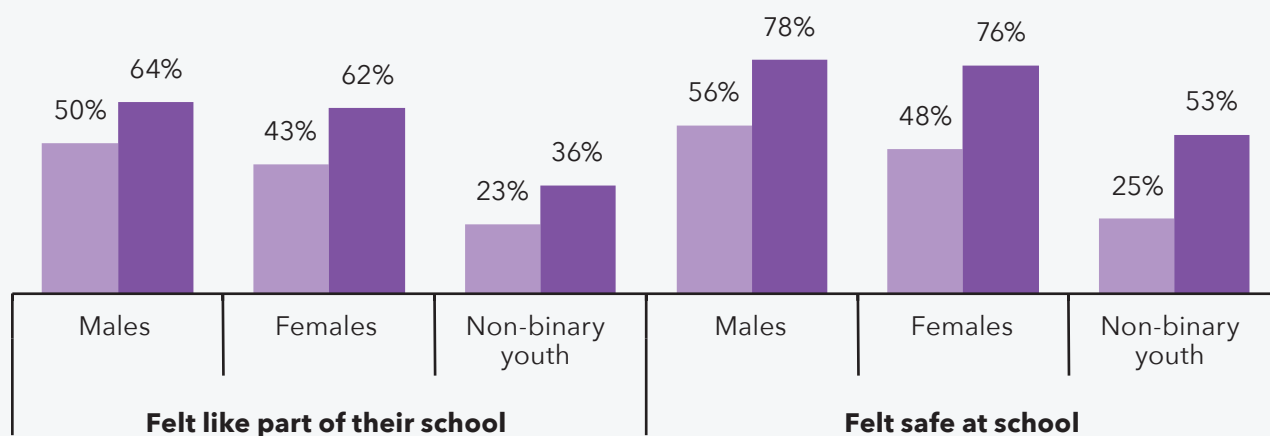
Youth who experienced victimization such as sexual harassment or gender discrimination were less likely to feel connected to their community. For example, compared to their peers who had not experienced sexual harassment in the past year, youth who had been harassed were less likely to feel like part of their community (males: 38% felt connected vs. 44% who had not been sexually harassed; females: 38% vs. 49%; and non-binary youth: 19% vs. 28%).

Violence exposure was linked with youth's schooling, including a higher chance they would miss school in the past month; and lower likelihood they would feel like part of their school, feel safe at school, or plan to graduate high school. For example, compared to youth who had not been sexually abused, males (82% vs. 68%) and females (89% vs. 75%) who had been sexually abused were more likely to have missed class in the past month.

Youth's feelings about school

■ Cyberbullied in the past year

■ Not cyberbullied in the past year



EXPOSURE TO MULTIPLE TYPES OF VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES

This section considers exposure to 13 different types of victimization including examples of sexual, physical, and emotional violence.

Overall, 83% of non-binary youth, 78% of females, and 63% of males had experienced at least one of the 13 types, including 3% of non-binary youth, 2% of females, and less than 1% of males who had experienced at least 10 types. On average, non-binary youth had experienced 3.5 different types of violence, females had experienced 2.8 types, and males had experienced 1.7 types.

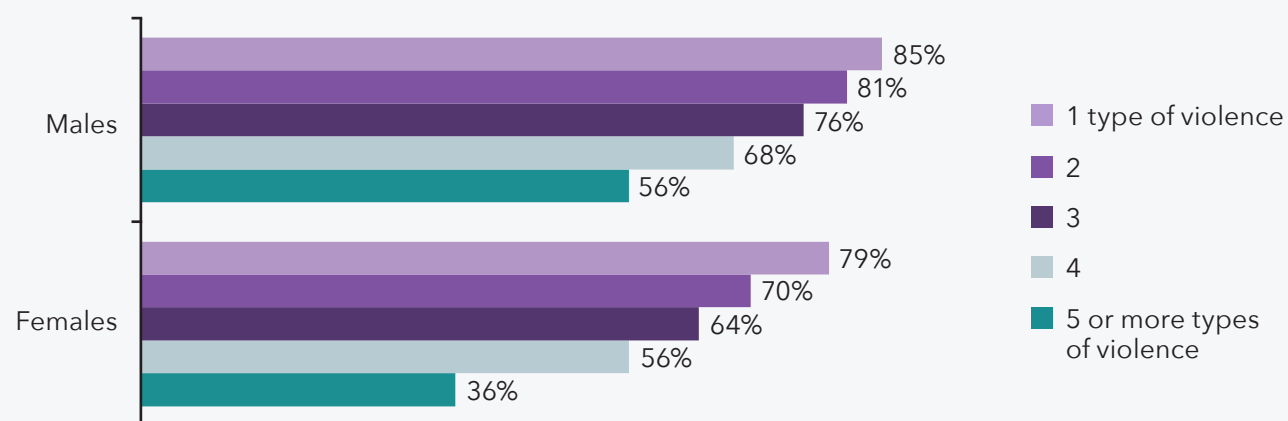
Potential impact

Violence exposure was associated with poorer health, and the risks to health generally increased as the number of types of victimization youth experienced increased. For example, the more types of violence youth experienced, the less likely they were to rate their overall health and mental health as good or excellent, and the more likely they were to report having anxiety, depression, and PTSD; and to have self-harmed and attempted suicide in the past year.

The more types of victimization youth experienced, the less likely they were to report feeling good about themselves and feeling like a part of their school; and the more likely they were to report problematic substance use and to miss school due to skipping, fear of bullying, or because of mental health concerns. For example, 14% of males and females who had been victimized in at least five different ways indicated they needed help with their substance use in the past year, compared to 6% of males and 3% of females who had experienced three types of violence.

In addition, youth who had experienced five or more types of violence were more likely to have been involved in a pregnancy (e.g., males: 3% vs. 1% of those who experienced one type of violence; non-binary youth: 8% vs. 0%) or to have had an STI (2% vs. 1% for males and females; 6% vs. 0% for non-binary youth).

Youth who reported good or excellent mental health in relation to number of victimization experiences



SUPPORTING YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

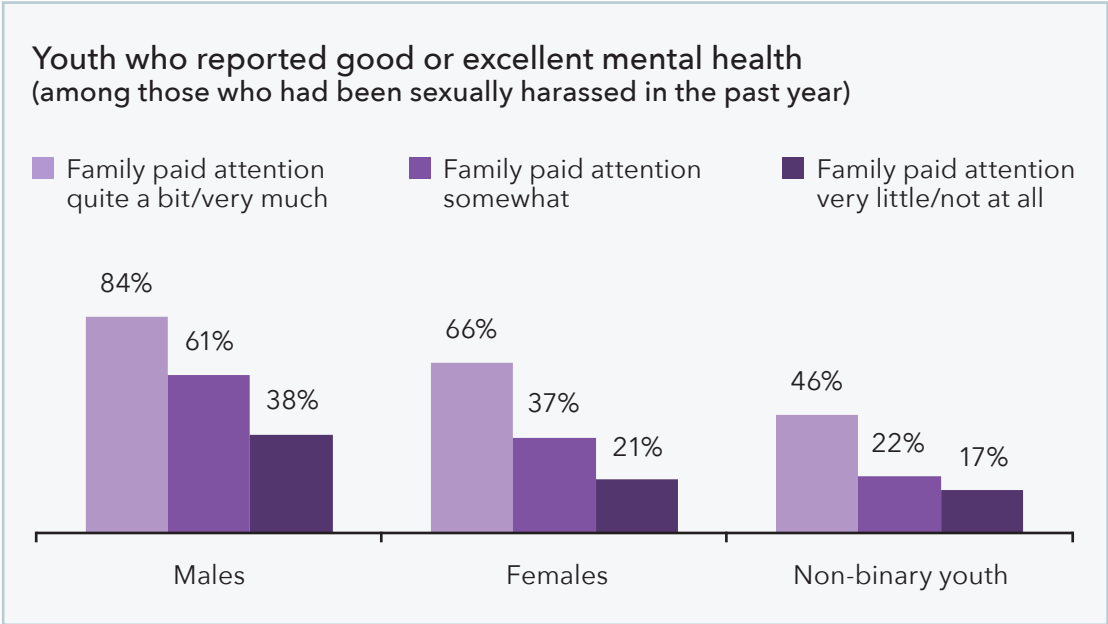
This section considers some protective factors that can promote more positive health and well-being among young people who have been victimized, and specifically focuses on those who have experienced one or more types of gender-based violence (using as examples sexual abuse, verbal or physical sexual harassment in the past year, and gender discrimination in the past year).

Supportive family



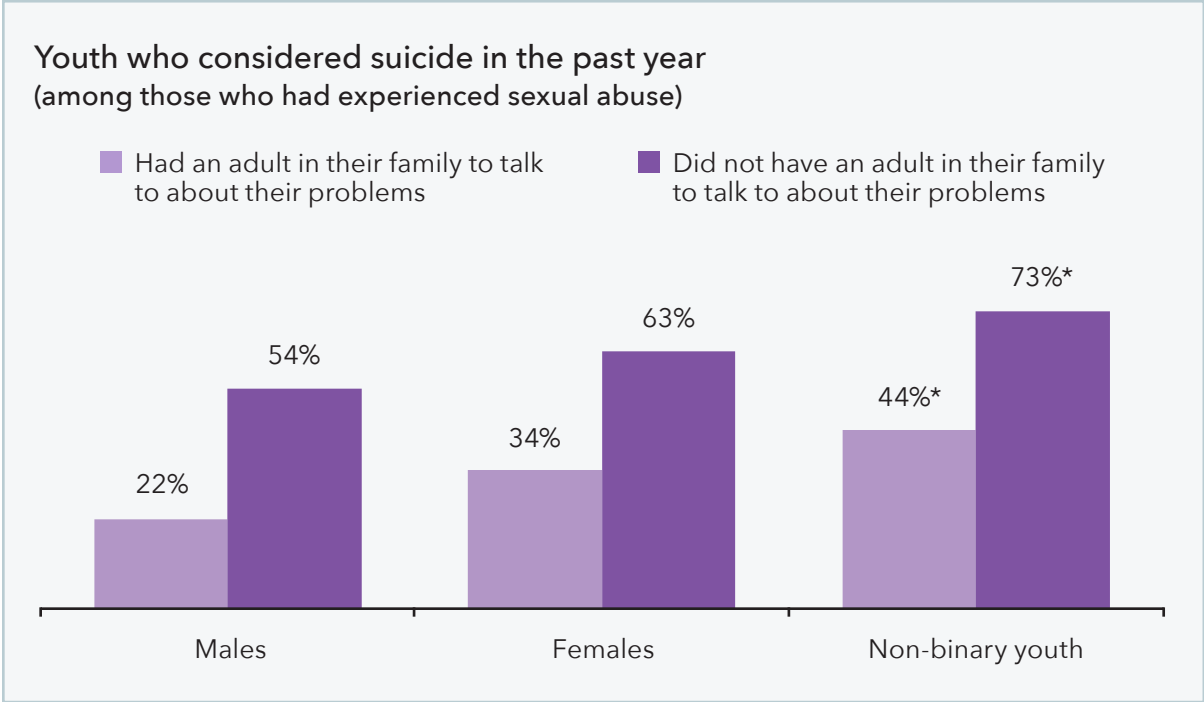
My life is actually the best with my family.” Female, aged 12

Youth who had experienced gender-based violence were more likely to report positive outcomes when they felt their family understood them and paid attention to them. For example, feeling like their family paid attention to them was associated with more positive mental health (including feeling good about themselves and reporting good or excellent mental health), persevering to meet their goals, and lower levels of recent substance use.



Note: For non-binary youth, the difference between those whose families paid attention very little/not at all and somewhat was not statistically significant.
Note: Sexual harassment includes having been verbally or physically sexually harassed in the past year.

Young people who had experienced gender-based violence who could identify an adult in their family they could talk to about their problems were more likely than those without such an adult in their family to feel hopeful for their future, they had a good life, they were good at something, and they could manage their stress well. They were less likely to have experienced extreme stress or despair in the past month, or to have considered or attempted suicide in the past year.



Note: Sexual abuse included youth who reported being forced into sexual activity, or being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex, as well as youth who directly indicated that they had been sexually abused.

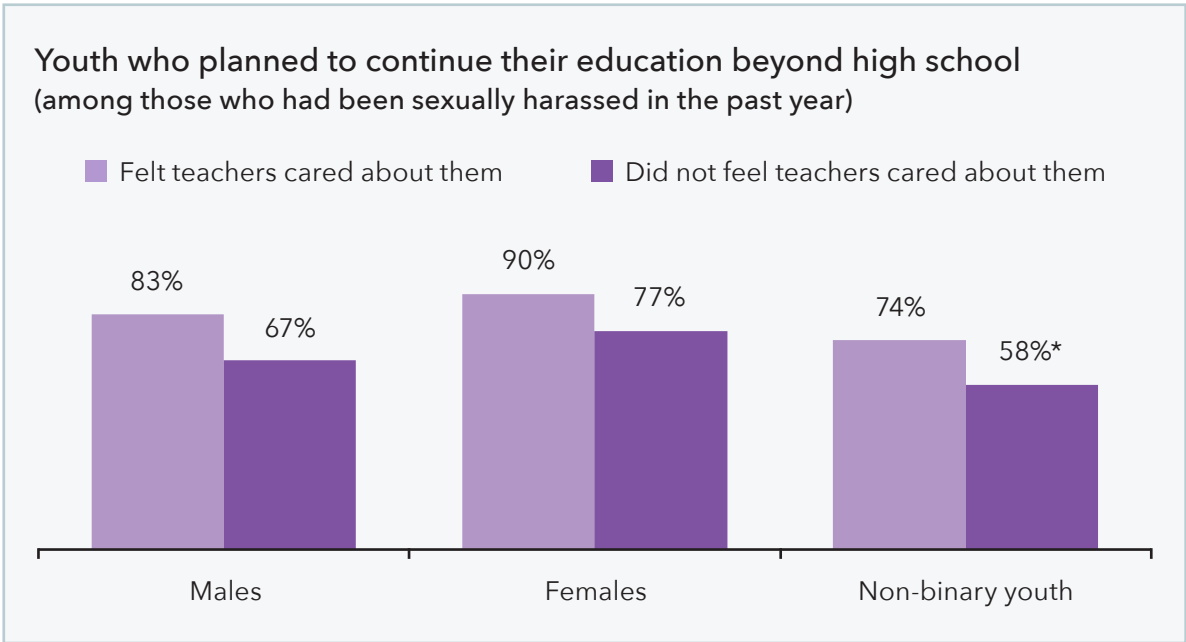
* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Supportive school

A supportive school environment was associated with more positive outcomes for youth who experienced gender-based violence. For example, among youth who had been sexually abused, those who had a caring teachers were less likely to report they had missed school because of bullying.

Similarly, those who had experienced sexual harassment and felt their teachers cared about them were:

- Less likely to miss class in the past month (e.g., males: 72% vs. 81% who did not feel their teachers cared; females: 83% vs. 90%), and specifically to skip class (males: 26% vs. 45%; females: 33% vs. 50%; non-binary youth: 29% vs. 47%*).
- Less likely to carry a weapon at school in the past month (e.g., males: 8% vs. 21%; females: 3% vs. 10%).
- More likely to feel a part of their school (e.g., males: 71% vs. 28%; females: 67% vs. 21%).
- More likely to feel happy to be at school (e.g., males: 70% vs. 24%; females: 63% vs. 16%).
- More likely to feel safe at school (e.g., males: 81% vs. 31%; females: 77% vs. 29%).
- More likely to plan to continue their education after high school.



Note: Sexual harassment includes having been verbally or physically sexually harassed in the past year.
* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but still within the releasable range.

Someone to turn to for help

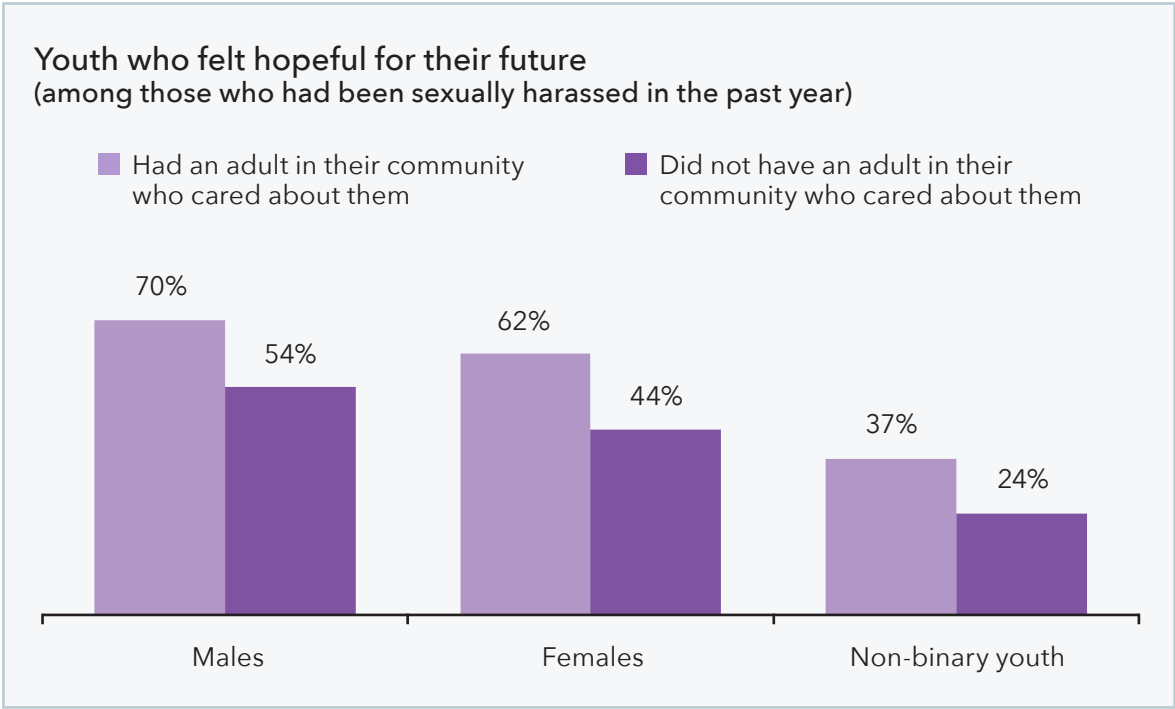
Having people beyond school and family who were supportive when youth approached them for help was protective. For example, among youth who had experienced sexual harassment and approached someone for help in the past year (e.g., friend's parent, friend, nurse, sports coach), those who found at least one person to be helpful were generally more likely than their same-gender peers who did not find anyone they approached helpful to feel like part of their community, be able to name something they were good at, have accessed medical care when they needed it, and report good or excellent mental health (e.g., males: 76% vs. 53%; females: 55% vs. 25%).

Online support

Having access to a helpful online community or support group was linked to positive outcomes for some youth who experienced violence. For example, among youth who had been sexually abused, those who found an online community or support group to be helpful were less likely than those who did not find such a group helpful to experience extreme despair in the past month, or to have attempted suicide in the past year; and males were less likely to have self-harmed in the past year.

Adult in the community who cares

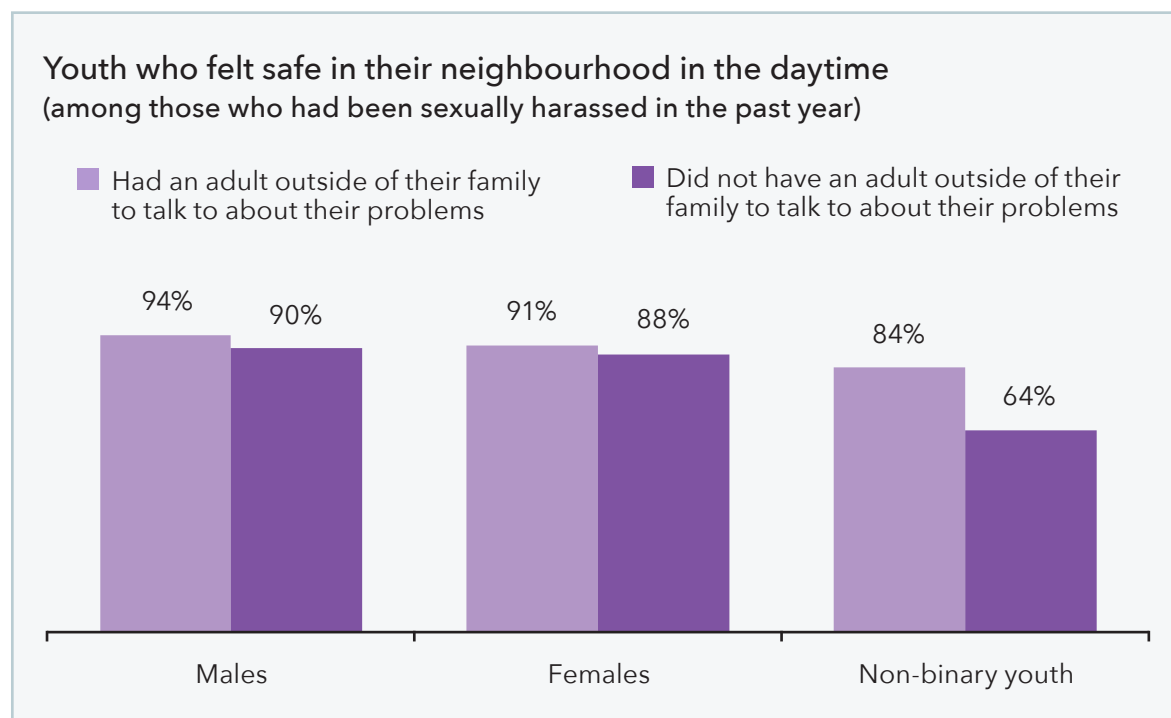
Young people who had experienced gender-based violence and were able to identify an adult in their community who cared about them were more likely to feel connected to their community and to be engaged in community life, such as through volunteering. They were also more likely to feel hopeful for their future.



Note: Sexual harassment includes having been verbally or physically sexually harassed in the past year.

Adult outside family to talk to

Having an adult outside of their family to talk to when they were having a serious problem was linked to higher levels of community connection and involvement for youth who had experienced gender-based violence. Having such an adult to talk to was also linked to youth feeling hopeful for their future and safe in their neighbourhood.



Note: Sexual harassment includes having been verbally or physically sexually harassed in the past year.

Supporting youth who experienced multiple types of violence



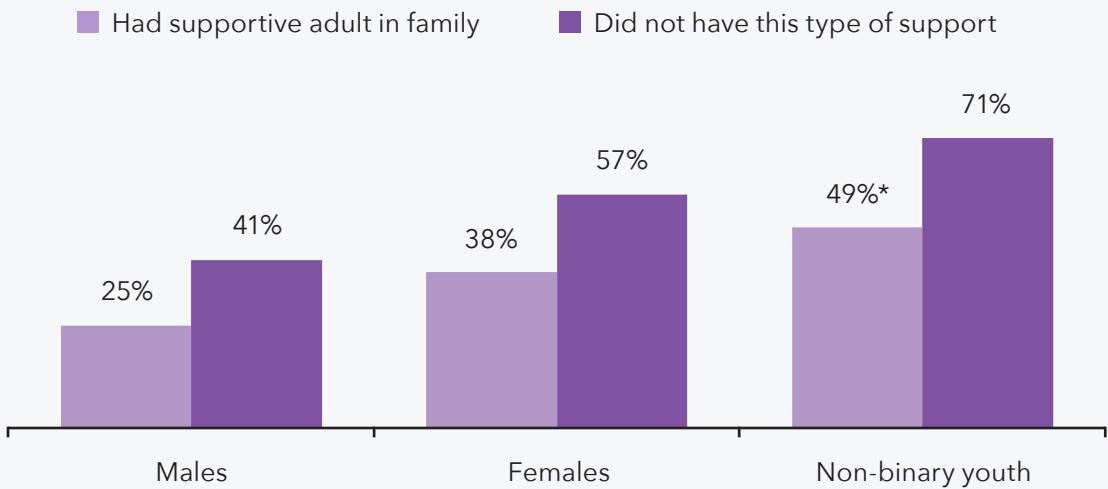
My ex-girlfriend was verbally abusive (never physical) until we broke up. Doing better now though, I have a good support network in my friends and family.”
Male, aged 17

Adults outside the family can be important for youth who do not have a supportive adult inside their family. For example, 28% of females who had experienced five or more types of violence and did not have family support but had another adult they could turn to reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 21% of those without an adult outside the family to turn to. They were also less likely to have self-harmed (53% vs. 60%) or attempted suicide (21% vs. 29%) in the past year.

Almost all youth who had experienced at least five types of violence had experienced sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and/or gender discrimination. This included 93% of males, 99% of females, and 99% of non-binary youth. The presence of protective factors appeared to increase the likelihood that these youth would report better health and well-being. For example, youth who had experienced at least five different types of violence reported better health and mental health when they felt their family paid attention to them and understood them, and when they had an adult in their family they could turn to for support. They were also less likely to have self-harmed in the past year when they had a supportive adult in their family.

Having access to helpful peer supports and a supportive online community were also associated with youth being more likely to report positive overall health and mental health, and to feel good about themselves. For example, males who had experienced five or more types of victimization were more likely to report good or excellent overall health when they had an online community of support that they found helpful (79% vs. 49% of those who did not find this support helpful); females were less likely to have attempted suicide in the past year (19% vs. 42%); and non-binary youth were less likely to have self-harmed in the past year.

Youth who self-harmed in the past year in relation to having a supportive adult in the family (among youth who experienced five or more types of violence)



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

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Findings in this report have shown that BC has a considerable amount of work to do if we are to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) to achieve gender equality and eliminate gender-based violence. Whether looking specifically at gender-based violence or more broadly at a range of victimization experiences, there are clear and concerning gender differences in youth's experiences. However, findings have also shown that youth of all genders can experience violence, and the negative impacts are present for all young people who are targeted.

The report has also highlighted the important roles that families, schools, and supports in the community can play for young people who have been victimized. However, whilst these supports should be acknowledged and developed, it is also important to reduce the number of young people in BC who are victimized. The UN has suggested a number of ways that we can all safely and impactfully make a difference to improve the statistics presented in this report. Their recommendations include:

- Listening to and believing youth who have experienced violence.
- Educating young people about gender, respect, rights, and gender-based violence and learning from them.
- Ensuring there are sufficient appropriate services and supports available to youth who are victimized.
- Ensuring consent is fully understood.
- Being aware of signs someone is in an abusive relationship or experiencing abuse.
- Speaking out against gender inequalities and sexual violence.
- Holding each other accountable and challenging sexist and sexual comments and jokes.
- Taking an evidence-informed approach to understanding the issues and how best to support young people who have experienced victimization.

RESOURCES

If you or someone you know are experiencing violence and need help

Anyone in immediate danger should call **9-1-1**.

VictimLinkBC is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **1-800-563-0808** or email **victimlinkbc@bc211.ca**.

If you need someone to talk to

Kids Help Phone (24 hours a day/7 days a week)
Live chat **kidshelpphone.ca** | **1-800-668-6868**

Crisis Centre (24 hours a day/7 days a week)
1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE)

Youth Space (6pm-Midnight PST, 365 days a year)
Live chat **youthspace.ca** | Text **1-778-783-0177**

Youth in BC Live chat **youthinbc.com**

The KUU-US Crisis Line Society (Aboriginal) 24-hour provincial Aboriginal crisis phone service.
kuu-uscrisisline.ca | **250-723-2040**

McCreary Centre Society resources

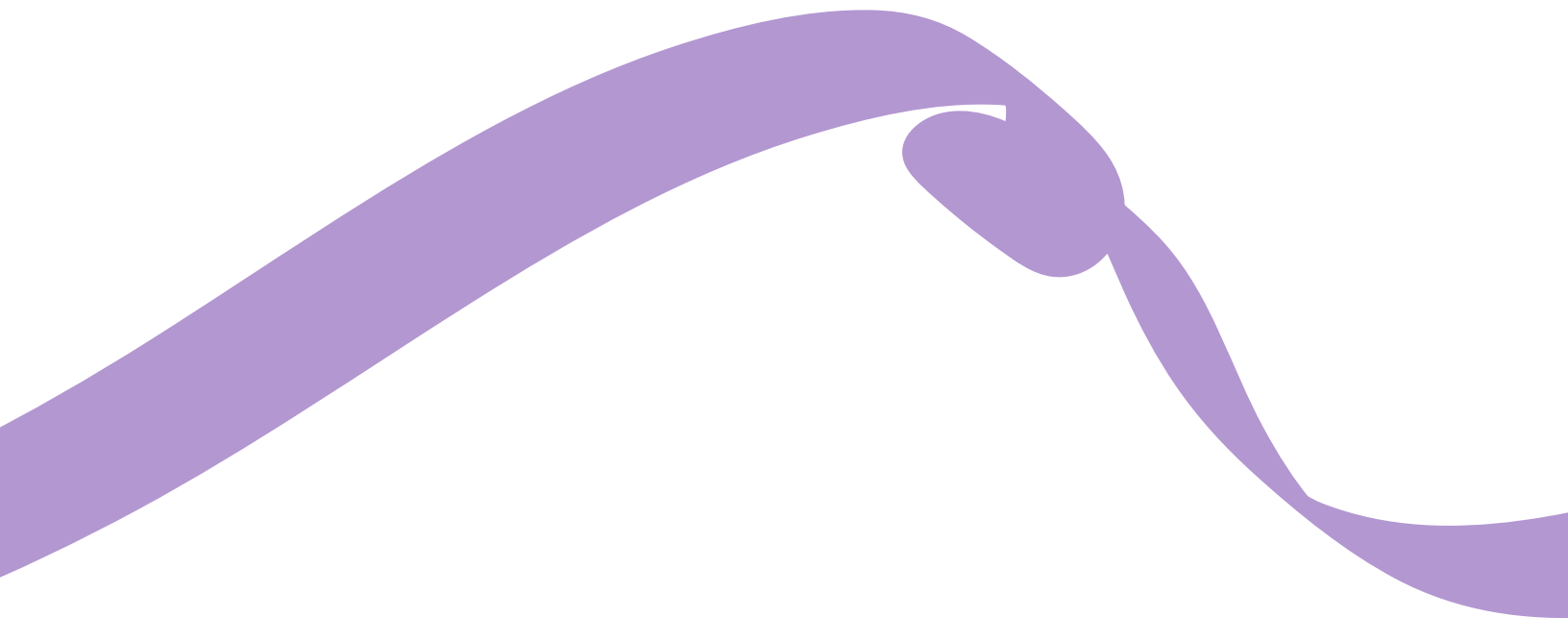
Taking Pride is a healthy relationships curriculum developed by and for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in partnership with UBC's Stigma and Resilience among Vulnerable Youth Centre. The curriculum consists of six workshops and covers topics such as identifying unhealthy relationship patterns, working through conflict, consent, and communication. For more information, please contact Katie at katie@mcs.bc.ca or visit saravyc.ubc.ca/takingpride/.

Balance and Connection in BC: The Health and Well-Being of our Youth shares provincial findings of the 2018 BC AHS. The report is available for download at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/balance_and_connection.pdf.

Balance and Connection in BC Next Steps Workshop Toolkit provides a template to share findings from the 2018 BC AHS with youth. It includes an introduction to the results, activities to learn about risk and protective factors, and discussion questions. The toolkit is available at mcs.bc.ca/next_steps. McCreary staff are also available to deliver the curriculum through interactive workshops.

The Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants are available to BC youth (up to age 29) wanting to carry out projects to support BC youth facing barriers, including youth with experience of homelessness, substance use challenges, and government care. For more information or to apply, visit mcs.bc.ca/trevor_coburn_memorial_grants.

Youth Action Grants (YAGs) were created by McCreary's Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC) to provide BC youth (ages 12–19) the opportunity to deliver a project to improve youth health in their school or community. For more information or to apply, visit mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants.





**McCreary
Centre Society**