

YOUTH SURVEY

FAIRFAX COUNTY

LGBQ YOUTH in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade LGBQ students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey

26% had been sexually harassed



46% of LGBQ males who have had sex did not use a condom at last sexual intercourse



17% have used unhealthy weight loss methods



2x more LGBQ youth get four or fewer hours of sleep on an average school night than non-LGBQ youth

18% have been victims of emotional abuse by dating partners

50% experienced depressive symptoms



What You Need to Know

Sixteen percent of teens in Fairfax County self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning (LGBQ). Many report involvement and support in their families, schools, and community; however, some LGBQ youth face disproportionate challenges.

Depressive symptoms (feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that they stopped doing some usual activities) affect 50% of LGBQ youth and 34% have seriously considered suicide.

Twenty-eight percent of LGBQ youth have used alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in the past 30 days. LGBQ and non-LGBQ youth report similar levels of use of most drugs, including alcohol (15% for each), marijuana (10% for each), cigarettes (3% vs. 2%), and e-cigarettes (8% vs. 9%), painkillers for non-medical reasons (4% vs. 3%), and other prescription drugs for non-medical reasons (5% vs. 3%).

Twenty-two percent of LGBQ youth report that they have been bullied in the past year. These

youth are about 70% more likely to report being a victim of bullying as non-LGBQ youth.

LGBQ youth also face greater risk of becoming a victim of sexual harassment, dating abuse, or cyberbullying.

LGBQ youth who can turn to family and other people in their lives for support are at relatively less risk. They are less likely to abuse drugs, report depressive symptoms, and have sex than LGBQ youth without support.

What Can You Do?

UNDERSTAND, ENCOURAGE, LEARN, AND ACT

Engage your teen. Parents should talk openly with their teen about any problems or concerns and be watchful of risk factors such as bullying, depression or expression of suicidal thoughts.

Understand the link between your reaction and your teen's mental and physical health. Supportive reactions can help youth cope with the challenges they face. Negative reactions are linked to higher rates of homelessness, running away, and mental and physical problems. Parents should have honest conversations with their teens about sex, and about how to avoid risky behavior and unsafe or high-risk situations. Parents who make an effort to know their teen's

friends and know what their teen is doing can help their teen stay safe and feel cared about.

Familiarize yourself with local and national resources. When youth reveal same-sex attractions and relationships, this is an opportunity to better inform and support LGBQ youth and families by linking them with community resources. LGBQ youth may also need access to qualified health care professionals with experience in working with LGBQ youth.

Find out what kind of support, services, and education are in place at your teen's school. A positive school climate has been

associated with a decreased risk for mental health concerns, substance abuse, and unexcused school absences among LGBQ youth. In schools with LGBQ support groups (such as gay-straight alliances), LGBQ students were also more likely to have positive outcomes.

Ask your teen before you "come out" to others on your teen's behalf. Disclosure of a youth's sexual orientation or gender identity is a process. Be careful in your discussion with others to protect your teen's privacy.

Adapted from www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm and www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt

Who Can Help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxCSB>
 Entry & Referral 703-383-8500, TTY 711 24-Hour
 Emergency Services 703-573-5679, TTY 711

FCPS Intervention and Prevention Services 571-423-4020
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>

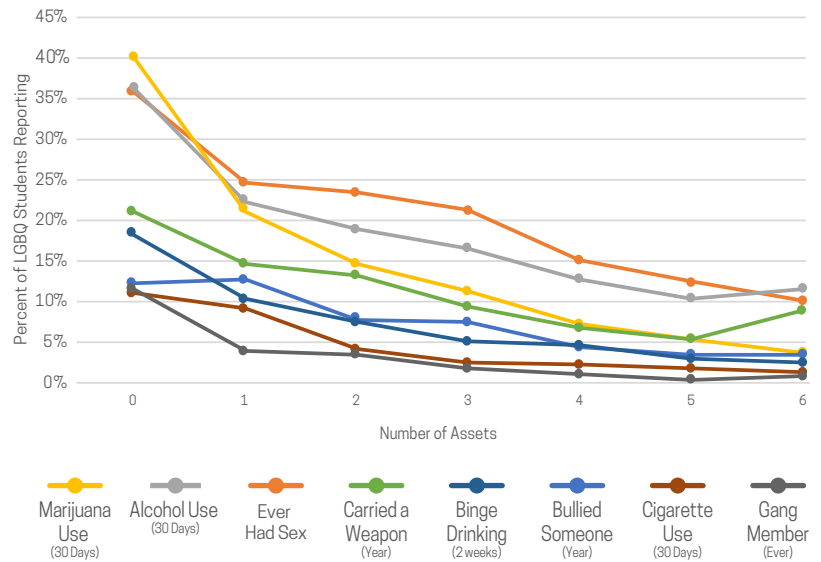
PRC CrisisLink 24-Hour Hotline
 Call 703-527-4077 or text CONNECT to 855-11

Trevor 24-Hour Lifeline
 Call 866-488-7386



Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



Protective Factors

- Having high personal integrity
- Having community adults to talk to
- Performing community service
- Participating in extracurricular activities
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Having parents available for help

Victimization

	LGBQ	NON-LGBQ
BULLYING	22%	13%
CYBERBULLYING	11%	8%
SEXUAL HARRASMENT	26%	12%
RACIAL OR CULTURAL HARRASMENT	48%	47%

Mental Health and Suicide

	LGBQ	NON-LGBQ
HIGH STRESS	49%	35%
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS	50%	24%
CONSIDERED SUICIDE	34%	11%
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE	14%	4%

Sexual Health

	LGBQ	NON-LGBQ
EVER HAD SEX	18%	17%
EVER HAD ORAL SEX	21%	19%
HAD SEX BEFORE AGE 13*	13%	7%
4 OR MORE SEX PARTNERS*	26%	20%

* Among youth who have ever had sex

Teen Dating Abuse Victimization

	LGBQ	NON-LGBQ
CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR	14%	12%
VERBAL ABUSE	10%	5%
PRESSURE TO HAVE SEX	7%	3%
PHYSICAL ABUSE	8%	4%

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

Fairfax County Prevention System
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: LGBT Youth Resources
www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/disparities/smy.htm
www.cdc.gov/lgbhealth/youth-resources.htm

FCPS: Mental Health and Resiliency
<http://bit.ly/FCPSresilient>

Protective Factors

LGBQ youth in Fairfax County report they:

- Have teachers who notice their good work (59%).
- Volunteer for community service (60% in past year).
- Have parents they can go to for help (72%), although this is lower than for non-LGBQ youth (84%).
- Are involved in family decisions that affect them (60%).

The LGBQ data presented represent the responses of youth who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning (not sure). The survey does not ask if students identify as transgender. The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall semester of 2018.

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication
 December 2019