

# LGBT Health – Data Brief

## 2016 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFSS)

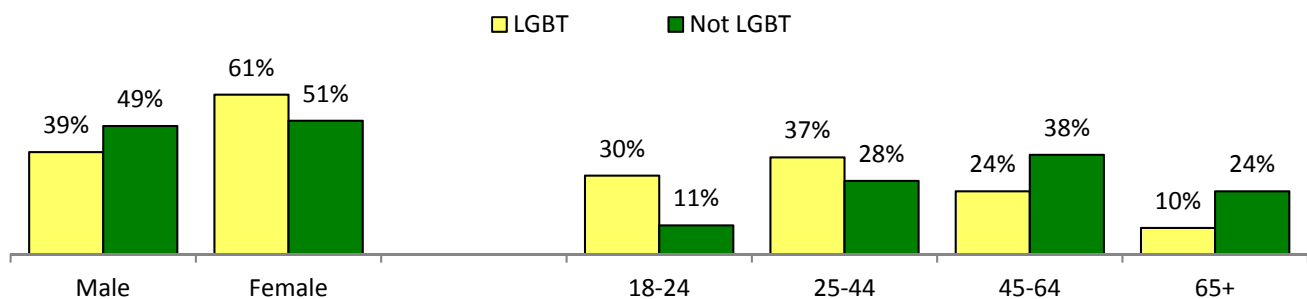
### Background

There is a growing recognition of the health challenges and disparities faced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities (LGBT). This population has been demonstrated to experience higher participation in risk behaviors such as smoking and alcohol use, as well as increased rates of depression and other mental health challenges<sup>1,2</sup>. Vermont 2016 BRFSS data allows us to look at the health of the LGBT adult population.

### Overall

Five percent of the Vermont adult population identifies as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or another sexual identity (LGBT). Six in ten (61%) LGBT adults identify as female, while 39% identify as male. This is higher than the heterosexual population where about half of the population is each gender. The LGBT adult population in Vermont is younger than the heterosexual population. More than half of LGBT are ages 18-44 (66%), which is statistically higher than the 39% seen among those who are not LGBT. Vermont adults who are LGBT are as likely to be a racial or ethnic minority, compared with heterosexual adults (8% vs. 6%).

**Gender and Age Distribution by LGBT Status**

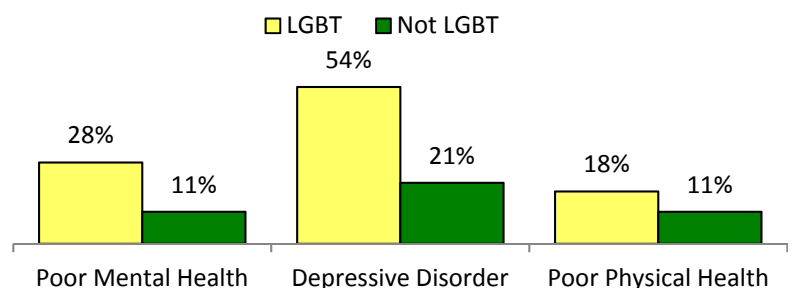


LGBT adults are statistically more likely than non-LGBT adults to live in a home making less than \$25,000 (38% vs. 23%) and less likely to live in a home with an income of at least \$50,000 annually (35% vs. 53%), though this may be influenced by age differences between these populations. Similar proportions of the LGBT and non-LGBT populations have a college degree (36% vs. 33%), are employed (57% vs. 63%), and have children in the home (26% vs. 30%).

### Mental and Physical Health

Vermont LGBT adults are more than twice as likely as hetero-sexual adults to report poor mental health<sup>3</sup>, a statistically significant difference. More than half of LGBT adults have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder, statistically higher than the 21% among non-LGBT adults. Poor physical health is also significantly more likely among LGBT adults than heterosexual adults (18% vs. 11%).

**Mental and Physical Health**



<sup>1</sup> Healthy People 2020: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-health?topicid=25#twentyeight>

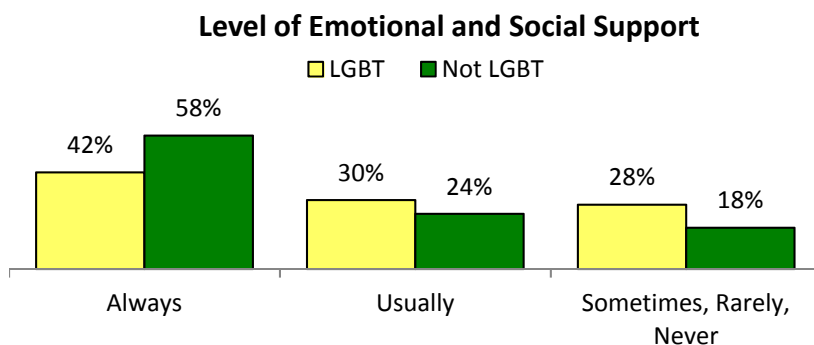
<sup>2</sup> National Alliance on Mental Illness: <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/LGBTQ>

<sup>3</sup> Poor physical and mental health are defined as 14 or more days in the last month with poor physical/mental health.

## Emotional and Social Support

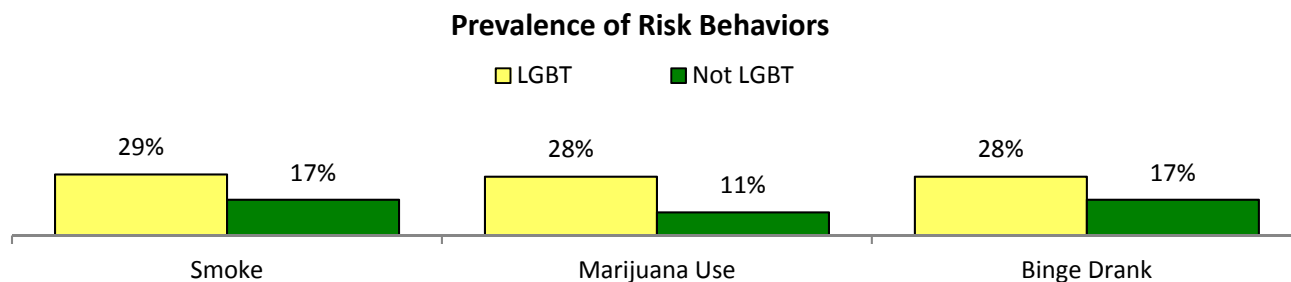
LGBT adults are significantly less likely than non-LGBT adults to 'always' get needed emotional and social support.

Correspondingly, LGBT adults are more likely than heterosexual adults to receive lesser levels of support. The difference between LGBT and non-LGBT adults is statistically significant for 'sometimes, rarely, or never' getting needed emotional and social support.



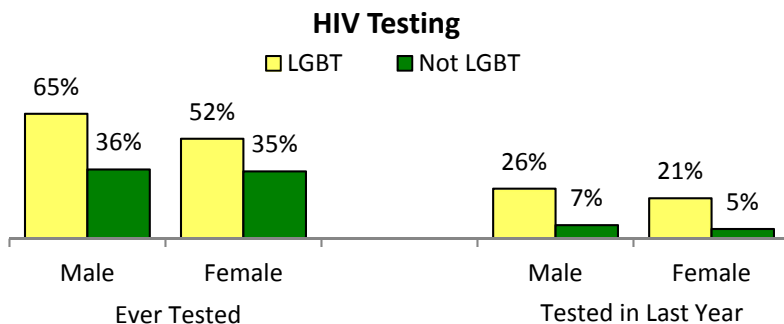
## Risk Behaviors

LGBT adults are significantly more likely than those who are not LGBT to report current smoking, using marijuana, and binge<sup>4</sup> drinking. Heavy<sup>4</sup> drinking rates are elevated among the LGBT population however the difference, as compared with those who are heterosexual is not statistically significant (15% vs. 8%).



## HIV Testing

LGBT adults, particularly men, are at an increased risk of HIV infection. More than half of the Vermont adult LGBT population has ever been tested for HIV and 22% were tested in the last year. Reported ever and recent HIV testing rates are significantly higher among the adult LGBT population than among those who are heterosexual.



Among both sexes, LGBT adults are significantly more likely than their counterparts to have received HIV testing, both ever and in the last year. While LGBT men are more likely than LGBT women to have received HIV testing, differences are not statistically significant.

Nearly two in ten (18%) LGBT adults reported participating in a high HIV transmission<sup>5</sup> risk behavior in the last year. This is significantly higher than the 5% seen among heterosexual adults. Male and female LGBT adults report statistically similar rates of participation in these behaviors (22% vs. 15%), and LGBT adults of both sexes report higher rates of participation than their corresponding non-LGBT counterparts (7% males, 3% females).

For more information on the BRFSS or to suggest ideas for future BRFSS Data Briefs, contact Jessie Hammond, M.P.H. ([jessie.hammond@vermont.gov](mailto:jessie.hammond@vermont.gov)).

<sup>4</sup> Binge drinking is: five or more drinks on an occasion for men and four or more for women. Heavy drinking is: more than two drinks per day for men and more than one per day for women.

<sup>5</sup> High HIV transmission risk behaviors: injected any drug other than prescribed, treated for STD, given/received money or drugs for sex, had anal sex without a condom, and four or more sex partners in the last year.