

Everyone has a gender identity. For transgender people this identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation which refers to one's attraction to others. While many transgender youth thrive during adolescence, stigma, discrimination, and other factors put them at risk for negative experiences and behaviors.^{1, 2}



In 2017, 1.3% of Vermont high school students identified themselves as transgender.

Another 1.6% said they were not sure if they are transgender.

Both transgender youth and youth who are not sure about their gender identity face similar health risks and experience similar health disparities. These risks exceed those experienced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. This brief focuses on the risks faced by youth who identified themselves as transgender.

Violence

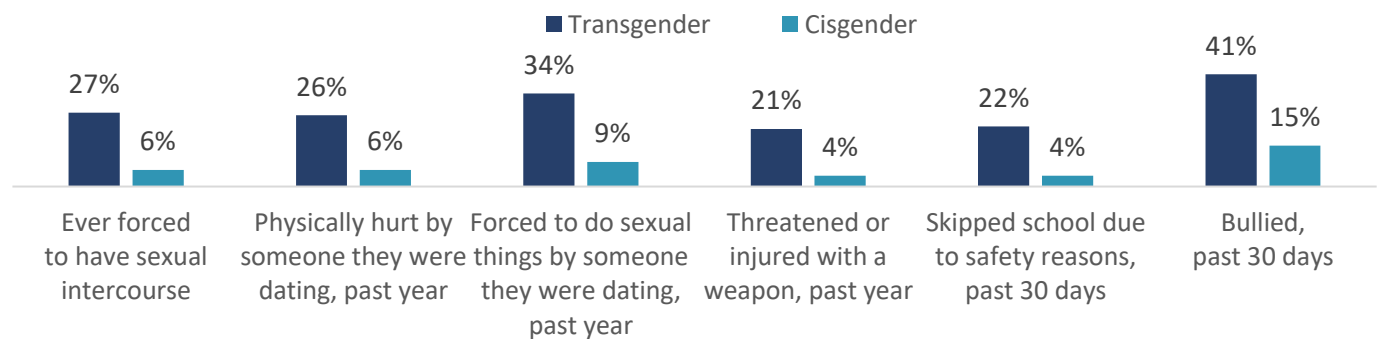
Transgender youth are more likely to experience physical, emotional, and sexual violence compared to cisgender students. In Vermont, transgender students were five times as likely to have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property or skip school because they felt unsafe compared to their cisgender peers. They are also four times as likely to have experienced physical or sexual dating violence or been forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to. Two in five transgender students reported being bullied during the previous month, nearly three times that of their cisgender peers.

KEY DEFINITIONS

- The terms transgender and cisgender are not indicative of sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or gender expression – how one is perceived in daily life.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A persons enduring physical, romantic, emotional, and/or other form of attraction to others.
- **Gender Identity:** One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or other gender(s).
- **Transgender/Trans:** An umbrella adjective for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Cisgender/Cis:** An adjective that means "identifies as their sex assigned at birth."

Source: [Outright Vermont](#)

Physical, Emotional, and Sexual Violence

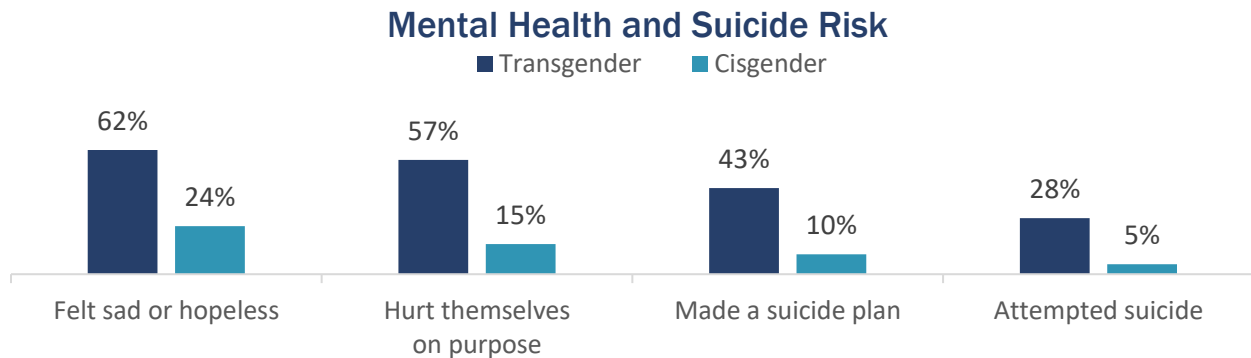


¹ CDC (2017) Sexual Minority Youth in [Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report 2007-2017](#).

² Outright Vermont. [Education and Outreach](#). Accessed June 2019.

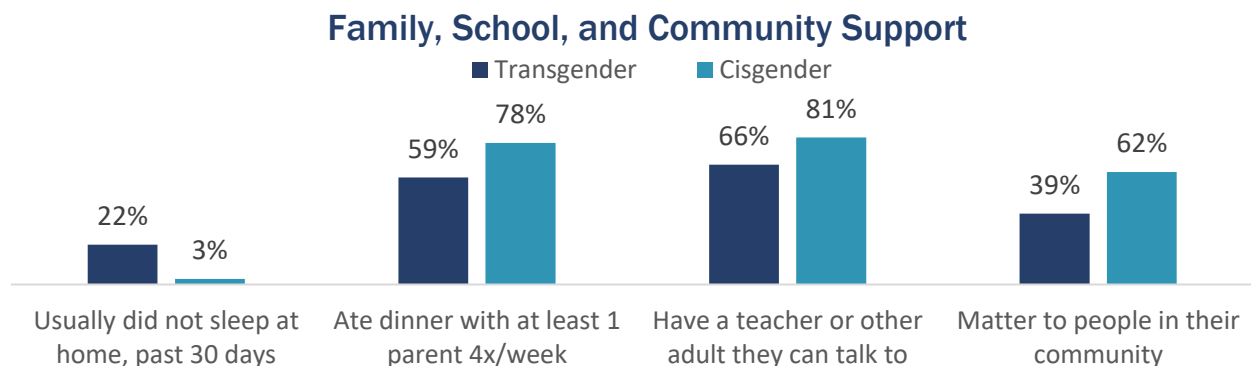
Mental Health

Nearly two-thirds of transgender students reported feeling so sad or hopeless during the past year that they stopped doing some usual activities compared to about a quarter of cisgender students. During the past year, transgender students were nearly four times as likely as cisgender students to have hurt themselves on purpose or make a suicide plan and more than five times as likely to have attempted suicide.



Other Factors

During the past 30 days, transgender students were more than seven times as likely as cisgender students to usually sleep somewhere besides their parent's or guardian's home. Transgender students were significantly less likely to report frequently eating dinner with at least one parent, having an adult to talk to at school and believing they matter to people in their community.



What we can do?

Thriving can be challenging for transgender youth when their identities are not acknowledged by their peers, family, and community. Schools and communities can help by creating a culture that respects and values all students and fosters an understanding and curiosity about gender identity and gender expression. This includes having policies and practices that ensure the environment is free of discrimination and harassment and creating a welcoming and affirming environment in which transgender and gender nonconforming students feel safe, supported, and fully included.^{2,3} Talk to one another, listen to how people self-identify, and figure out what works best for them.²

Have questions or need guidance visit: Outright Vermont <http://www.outrightvt.org/> or **need physician and mental health recommendation visit:** Transgender Youth Program <https://www.uvmhealth.org/medcenter/pages/departments-and-programs/transgender-youth-program.aspx>

For more information about the YRBS contact: Kristen Murray, PhD, YRBS coordinator, Kristen.murray@vermont.gov or visit www.healthvermont.gov/yrebs

³ Vermont Agency of Education (2017) "[Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students.](#)"