



# **All Black Lives Matter:** **Mental Health of Black LGBTQ Youth**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Black LGBTQ youth's identification with multiple marginalized identities might make them more susceptible to negative experiences and decreased mental health. Both LGBTQ youth and Black youth report higher rates of poor mental health due to chronic stress stemming from the marginalized social status they have in U.S. society. However, very little research has quantitatively explored outcomes specific to Black LGBTQ youth. This report utilizes an intersectional lens to contribute to our understanding of the Black LGBTQ youth experience among a national sample of over 2,500 Black LGBTQ youth by highlighting and building upon many of the findings released from The Trevor Project's [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2020](#) as they relate to Black LGBTQ youth.

## **There is significant diversity within the Black LGBTQ youth community.**

- 31% of Black LGBTQ youth identified as gay or lesbian, 35% as bisexual, 20% as pansexual, and 9% as queer
- One in three Black LGBTQ youth identified as transgender or nonbinary
- More than 1 in 4 Black LGBTQ youth use pronouns or pronoun combinations that fall outside of the binary construction of gender

## **Black LGBTQ youth often report mental health challenges, including suicidal ideation.**

- 44% of Black LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, including 59% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth
- 55% of Black LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in the past two weeks, including 70% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth
- 63% of Black LGBTQ youth report symptoms of major depressive disorder including 71% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth
- Self-harm was reported in 44% of Black LGBTQ youth, including 61% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth
- 49% of Black LGBTQ youth reported wanting psychological or emotional counseling from a mental health professional in the past 12 months, but not being able to get it

## **Our research identified many risk factors for Black LGBTQ youth mental health.**

- 9% of Black LGBTQ youth reported having undergone conversion therapy, with 82% reporting it happened before age 18
- 35% of Black LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness, been kicked out, or run away
- 38% of Black LGBTQ youth reported discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity
- 52% of Black LGBTQ youth reported discrimination based on their race or ethnicity
- 17% of Black LGBTQ youth reported that they had been physically threatened or harmed in their lifetime due to their LGBTQ identity
- 25% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth reported that they had been physically threatened or harmed in their lifetime due to their gender identity

**Our research also identified high impact protective factors for Black LGBTQ youth.**

- 82% of Black LGBTQ youth reported at least one supportive person in their life
- Black transgender and nonbinary youth who reported high family support had lower rates of attempted suicide
- 82% of Black LGBTQ youth report access to at least one in-person LGBTQ-affirming space.
- Black youth who had access to at least one LGBTQ-affirming space attempted suicide at 50% lower rates compared to Black LGBTQ youth without access.

**Methodology Summary**

A quantitative cross-sectional design was used to collect data using an online survey platform between December 2, 2019 and March 31, 2020. An analytic sample of 40,001 youth ages 13–24 who resided in the United States was recruited via targeted ads on social media. Youth were asked, “What best describes your race or ethnicity?” with options: Asian/Asian American, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino/Latinx, more than one race or ethnicity, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, White/Caucasian, and another race or ethnicity (please specify). Youth who selected more than one race or ethnicity were asked a follow-up question to select with which races or ethnicities they identified. The current analyses include the 2,586 LGBTQ youth who either only identified as exclusively Black/African American or who identified as multiracial Black/African American, henceforth just referred to as Black unless otherwise specified.

**Recommendations**

Black LGBTQ youth report rates of mental health challenges comparable to or higher than the overall population of LGBTQ youth. These youth are confronted with risk factors that are not only similar to those of other LGBTQ youth but are also very different, such as racial discrimination. Black transgender and nonbinary youth are particularly susceptible. We must confront systemic barriers to Black LGBTQ mental health and well-being. For youth-serving organizations to be inclusive of Black LGBTQ youth, they must approach their work with the dual lenses of LGBTQ inclusion and anti-racism. Further, organizations working to support youth well-being must acknowledge that efforts to improve mental health cannot be “one-size-fits-all,” and, rather, must fit the needs of Black LGBTQ youth, both those that are similar to all LGBTQ youth and those that are unique. This is particularly true for Black transgender and nonbinary youth. Researchers must do more to prioritize the experiences of Black LGBTQ youth in order to inform best practices.

# BACKGROUND

**Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth experience poorer mental health disparities compared to their straight and cisgender peers.** LGBTQ youth report higher rates of depression, anxiety, and other forms of emotional distress compared to straight, cisgender youth (Kann, et al., 2018; Stettler & Katz, 2017) and are also more likely to engage in self-harm, seriously consider suicide, and to attempt suicide (Kann, et al., 2018). LGBTQ youth also face external challenges such as higher rates of bullying and victimization (Birkett, et al., 2009), feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in school (Kosciw, et al., 2018), and discrimination (Almeida, et al., 2009) among others. However, LGBTQ youth are not monolithic and important differences exist within subgroups, particularly among LGBTQ youth who have multiple marginalized identities.

**Being Black in the United States has its own unique challenges and experiences, often coupled with poor outcomes.** To truly understand the experiences of Black youth, we must acknowledge the impact of historical and present-day systems of oppression that have effected Black individuals living in the U.S. Voluminous literature has shown a variety of challenges faced by Black youth stemming from systematic discrimination and racism (Causadias, et al., 2019), which then contribute to Black youth disproportionately facing higher rates of experiencing violence (Sheats, et al., 2018), homicide (CDC, 2013b), involvement in the juvenile justice system (Voisin, et al., 2017), and school discipline (Nance, 2016), among other negative outcomes. Black youth then often report higher rates of poor mental health such as post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic depression (Himle, et al., 2009; Williams, 2007). There is also growing evidence that rates of suicide are increasing among Black youth (Bridge et al., 2019; Lindsay et al., 2019).

**Many of the stressors experienced by LGBTQ youth and Black youth might be even more impactful for youth who are both LGBTQ and Black.** Although both LGBTQ youth and Black youth report higher rates of poor mental health, these are due to chronic stress stemming from the marginalized social status that both LGBTQ and Black individuals have in society rather than being LGBTQ or Black, in and of itself (Jones & Neblett, 2017; Meyer, 2003). From an intersectional perspective, social location — a person's position in society based on a collection of social demographics such as race, class, sexual orientation, etc. — provides unique experiences for people with multiple marginalized identities, such as Black LGBTQ youth, and together, these various identities shape their lived experiences (Bowleg, 2013; Singh, 2013). As such, Black LGBTQ youth's identification with multiple marginalized identities makes them more susceptible to negative experiences and poor health outcomes.

**Having multiple identities may also allow Black LGBTQ youth to thrive despite their status in society.** Having multiple identities does not necessarily mean that each identity is viewed equally in every environment. In other words, though one may have a status or identity that is marginalized in one context, another identity might be more adaptive in that same context. In a study with participants of multiple identities (Pittinsky et al., 1999), individuals were able to shift their identities to one that was more adaptive to a particular situation,

though not necessarily de-identifying with the identity that was not adaptive. For example, Black LGBTQ youth might benefit from a strong racial/ethnic sense of pride or from pride in their sexual or gender identity, depending on the context in which they find themselves. In this sense, the ability to be adaptive with one's identity may be a potential internal source of resiliency for Black LGBTQ youth and impact the findings such that rates of mental health indicators may not necessarily be increased compared to other LGBTQ youth.

**To date, research has largely failed to capture racial, sexual, and gender identities as they co-occur and intersect to produce either risk or protective factors for Black LGBTQ youth.** Quantitative research on LGBTQ youth often fails to specifically examine the experiences and outcomes of Black LGBTQ youth and research on Black youth often fails to consider sexual orientation and gender identity. Exceptions include Consolacion and colleagues' examination of multiple minority status and mental health outcomes among same-sex attracted youth (Consolacion, Russell, & Sue, 2004) and reports released by GLSEN, in partnership with the National Black Justice Coalition, (Truong, et al., 2020) and Human Rights Campaign (2019) that specifically examined Black LGBTQ young people 18 and under. This report utilizes an intersectional lens to contribute to our understanding of the Black LGBTQ youth experience among a national sample of over 2,500 Black LGBTQ youth ages 13–24.

## METHODOLOGY

A quantitative cross-sectional design was used to collect data using an online survey platform between December 2, 2019 and March 31, 2020. A sample of individuals ages 13–24 who resided in the United States was recruited via targeted ads on social media. The final analytic sample consisted of 40,001 LGBTQ youth. In the survey, participants were asked “What best describes your race or ethnicity?” with options: Asian/Asian American, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino/Latinx, more than one race or ethnicity, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, White/Caucasian, and another race or ethnicity (please specify). Youth who selected more than one race or ethnicity were asked a follow-up question, “You said that you belong to more than one racial/ethnic group. With which of the following racial/ethnic groups do you most closely identify? Please select all that apply,” with all of the same response options. The current analyses include the 2,586 LGBTQ youth who either only identified as Black/African American or who identified as multiracial Black/African American, henceforth just referred to as Black unless otherwise specified. The overall survey included a maximum of 150 questions including questions on sexual orientation and gender that aligned with the best practices and questions on considering and attempting suicide in the past 12 months taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

# RESULTS

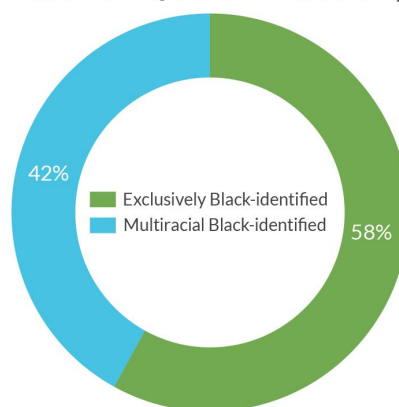
## Diversity among Black LGBTQ Youth

Black LGBTQ youth identify with a diverse range of racial, sexual, and gender identities. From our sample of Black LGBTQ youth, 58% identified exclusively as Black or African American and 42% as multi-racial Black (see the Table on Page 22). Among those who were multi-racial Black, 80% were also White, 24% Hispanic or Latino/Latinx, 18% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 10% Asian American, and 3% Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. Additionally, 3% reported being born outside of the US themselves and 26% reported that at least one parent or caregiver was born outside of the U.S. Also, 2% of Black LGBTQ youth reported speaking a different language at home such as Spanish, Creole, Patois/Patwa, American Sign Language, and Igbo.

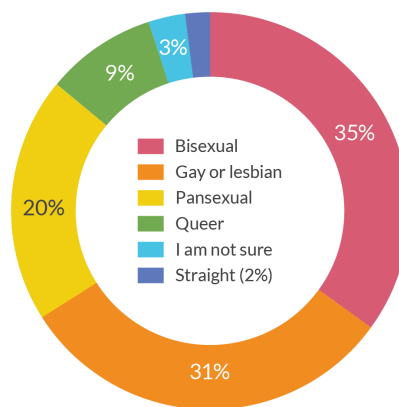
Around 1 in 3 Black LGBTQ youth identified as gay or lesbian (31%) and another third identified as bisexual (35%). An additional 20% identified as pansexual, 9% as queer, 2% as straight, and 3% stated they were unsure of their sexual orientation. Furthermore, 52% of Black LGBTQ youth selected another sexual identity, in a follow-up question, with responses such as asexual, panromantic, polyamorous, biromantic, and demisexual. Additionally, one in three Black LGBTQ youth identified as transgender or nonbinary (30%). Moreover, more than 1 in 4 Black LGBTQ youth use pronouns or pronoun combinations that fall outside of the binary construction of gender such as they/them exclusively or a combination of they/them and she/her or he/him.

Overall, Black LGBTQ youth's sexual and gender identities mirror those of the overall LGBTQ youth sample, 35% of whom identified as bisexual, 33% as gay or lesbian, 17% as pansexual, 10% as queer, 2% as straight, and 3% also stated they were unsure of their sexual orientation. Furthermore, 34% of youth in the overall sample identified as transgender or nonbinary.

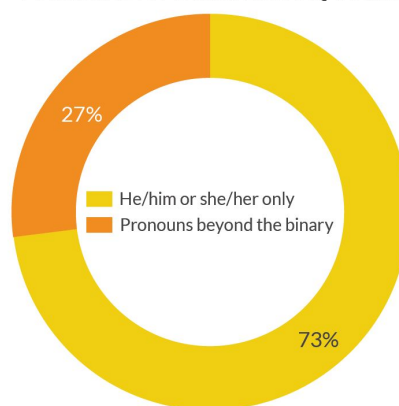
Black LGBTQ Youth Racial Identity



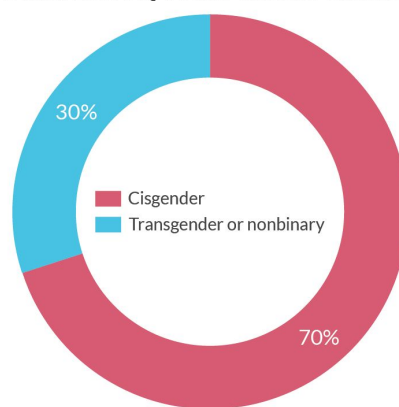
Black LGBTQ Youth Sexual Orientation



Pronouns for Black LGBTQ Youth



Black LGBTQ Youth Gender Identity





## Mental Health and Well-being Among Black LGBTQ Youth

Black LGBT youth report rates of mental health indicators that are comparable to those reported among all LGBTQ youth. Overall, more than half of Black LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in the past two weeks (55%). Rates were higher among Black transgender and nonbinary youth (70%) compared to Black cisgender LGBTQ youth (49%) and among 13–17-year-old Black LGBTQ youth (59%) compared to Black LGBTQ youth who were 18–24 (51%).

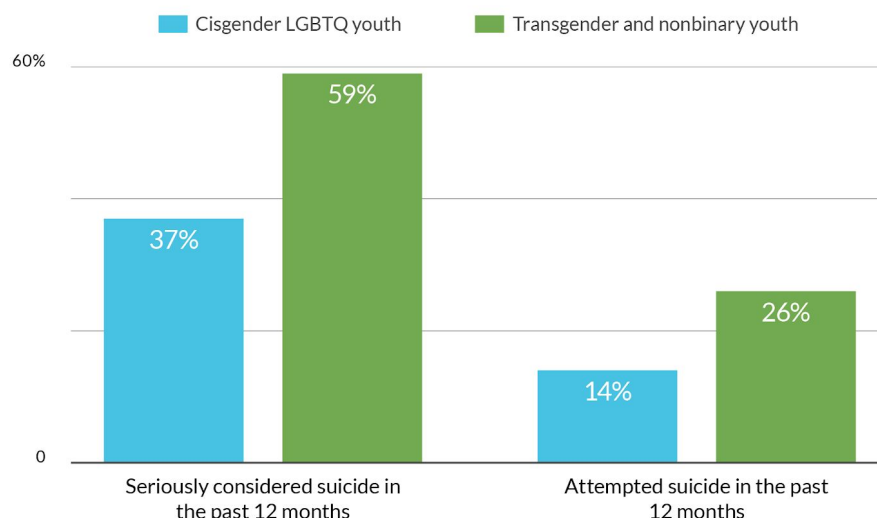
More than 3 out of 5 Black LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of major depressive disorder in the past two weeks (63%). This rate was higher than that reported by the overall LGBTQ youth population (55%). Similar to anxiety, Black transgender and nonbinary youth reported higher rates of major depressive disorder symptoms (71%) compared to cisgender Black LGBTQ youth (59%) as did younger Black LGBTQ youth (66%) compared to older ones (60%).

**63%** of Black LGBTQ youth report **major symptoms of depression**

Self-harm, hurting one's self on purpose, was reported by 44% of Black LGBTQ youth. Rates were much higher among Black transgender and nonbinary youth (59%) and Black LGBTQ youth ages 13 to 17 (50%) compared to cisgender Black LGBTQ youth (37%) and older Black LGBTQ youth (39%).

Forty-four percent (44%) of Black LGBTQ youth reported seriously considering suicide in the past 12 months. This rate was considerably higher among Black transgender and nonbinary youth, 59% of whom seriously considering suicide in the past 12 months compared to cisgender Black LGBTQ youth (37%), though rates were high for both groups. Additionally, half (50%) of 13–17-year-old Black LGBTQ youth in the sample seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months.

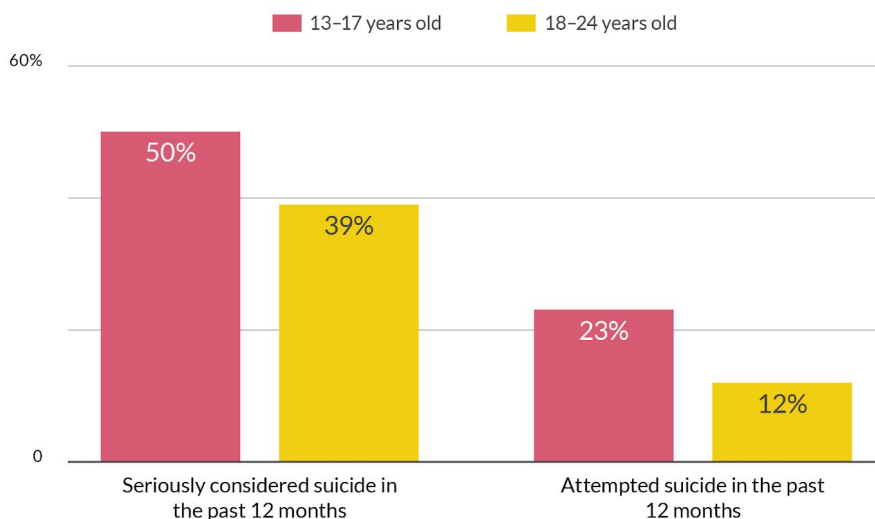
### Suicide Among Black LGBTQ Youth: Gender Identity





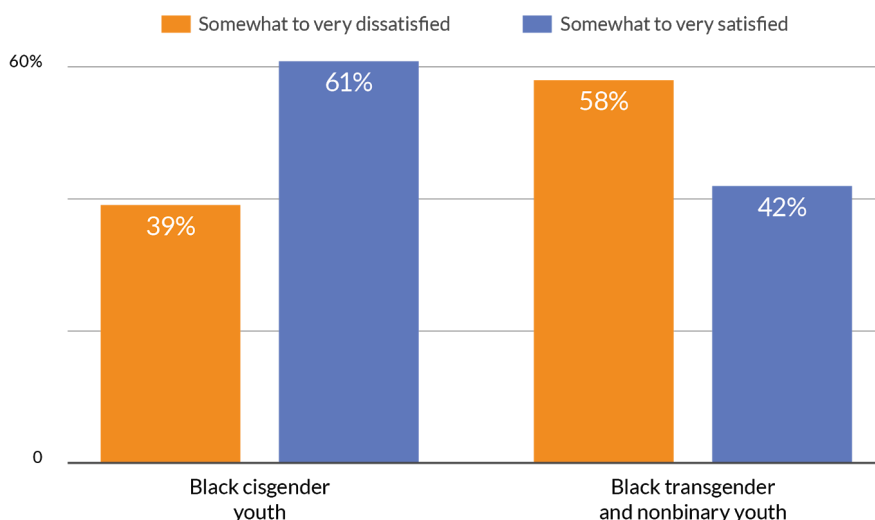
Overall, 17% of Black LGBTQ youth attempted suicide in the past 12 months, including more than 1 in 4 of Black transgender and nonbinary youth. Further, nearly twice as many Black LGBTQ youth ages 13–17 attempted suicide in the past 12 months (23%) compared to Black LGBTQ youth ages 18–24 (12%).

### Suicide Among Black LGBTQ Youth: Age



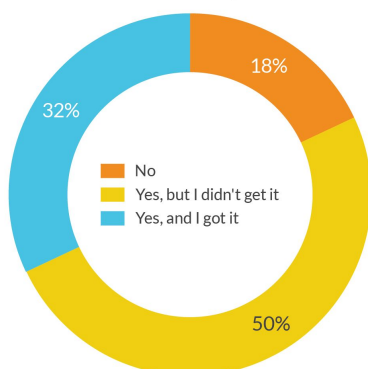
To capture the general feelings of their life, Black LGBTQ youth were asked how satisfied they were with their life. Overall, nearly half (45%) of Black LGBTQ youth stated that they were very dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied with life, including over half of Black transgender and nonbinary youth. This compares to 38% of LGBTQ youth overall reporting being dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied.

### Black LGBTQ Youth Life Satisfaction



## Black LGBTQ Youth's Access to Care

In the past 12 months, have you wanted psychological or emotional counseling from a mental health professional?



**Black transgender and nonbinary youth consistently reported higher levels of each barrier to mental health care compared to their Black cisgender peers**

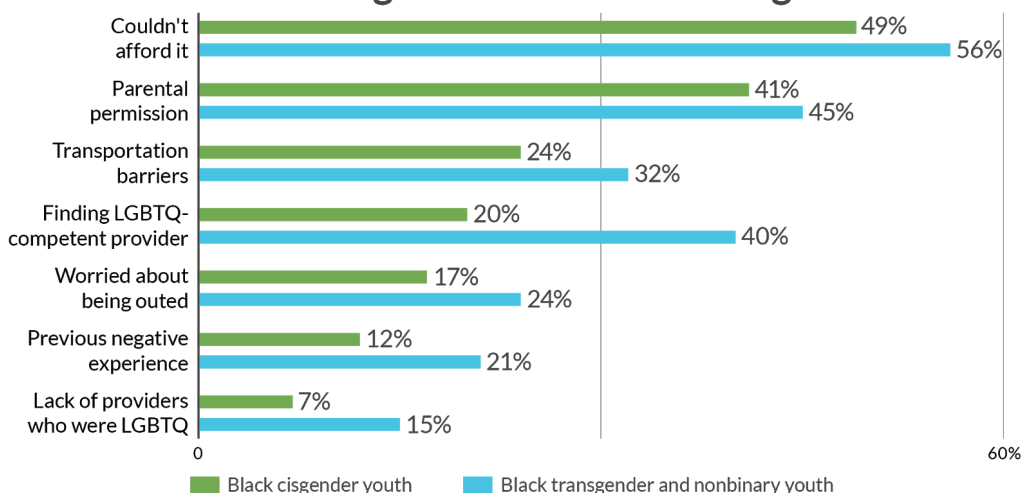
Despite rates of mental health concerns that are equal to or higher than the overall LGBTQ youth population, 60% of Black LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care were not able to get it. Nearly half of Black LGBTQ youth (49%) reported wanting psychological or emotional counseling but were unable to receive it in the past 12 months compared to 32% of youth who wanted it and got it.

Slightly more than half of Black LGBTQ youth cited affordability as the reason for not being able to access mental health care (51%). Over 40% of Black LGBTQ youth were unable to receive mental health care because of concerns with parental permission (42%). Black transgender and nonbinary youth cited concerns with finding an LGBTQ competent provider at twice the rate (40%) of Black cisgender LGBTQ youth (20%) and reported previous negative experiences at higher rates as well (21% compared to 12%).

Black LGBTQ youth also described other reasons for not being able to access mental health care (22%). The included to issues related to trust (*"Can't really trust them"; "I do not trust people easily, not even therapists"*), fear (*"I was too afraid to set up an appointment"*), ineffectiveness (*"Because I thought*

*it was pointless"; "I feel like there's no point tbh"*) and concern about the impact on others (*"Didn't want parents to worry"*), among other reasons. To learn more about Black LGBTQ youth's access to mental health care, please see our report, [Breaking Barriers to Quality Mental Health Care for LGBTQ Youth](#) (Green, Price-Feeney, & Dorison, 2020).

### Black LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care but where unable to get it cited the following reasons:



## Conversion Therapy and Change Attempts Among Black LGBTQ Youth

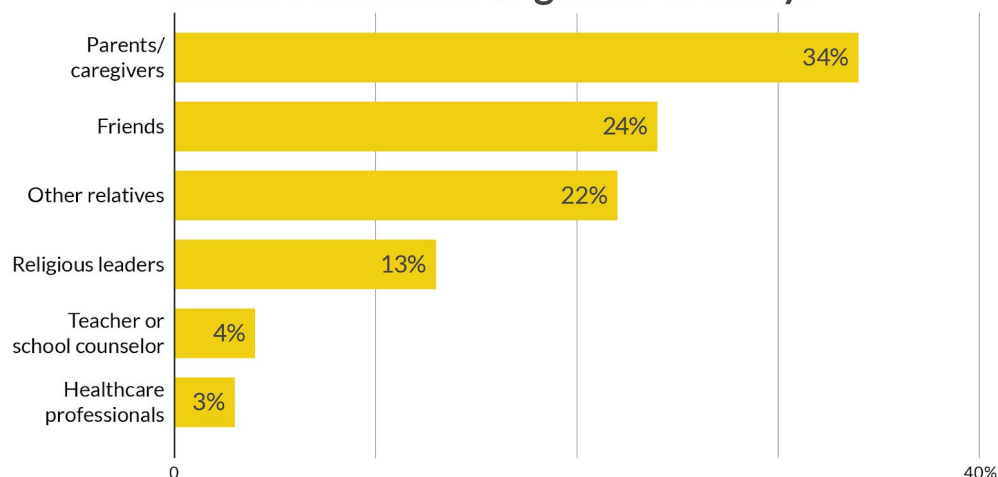
**82%** of Black LGBTQ youth who underwent conversion therapy reported that it was when **they** were under age 18

Conversion therapy, attempts by licensed professionals (e.g. psychologists or counselors) or practices by religious leaders to alter sexual attractions and behaviors, gender expression, or gender identity, is common despite lack of evidence to support this practice. On the contrary, there is mounting evidence of the negative outcomes associated with conversion therapy (Green, et al., 2020). Nine percent (9%) of Black LGBTQ youth report having undergone conversion therapy. Among those who underwent conversion therapy, 65% reported that they had undergone conversion therapy led by a personal religious leader, 47% by an outside religious leader, and 24% stated they'd experienced it through a healthcare professional.

Black LGBTQ youth who underwent conversion therapy reported a 50% increase in rates of attempting suicide in the past 12 months (26%) compared to LGBTQ youth who did not (16%).

Perhaps broader than conversion therapy, though certainly inclusive of it, are attempts by individuals to convince a young person to change their sexual orientation and gender identity. Over half (56%) of Black LGBTQ youth reported that someone attempted to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. While Black LGBTQ youth reported that parents/caregivers (34%) and friends (24%) were the most common people who attempted to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity, these numbers were similar to what was reported by non-Black LGBTQ youth (35% and 28%). In fact, overall, youth who were exclusively Black reported the lowest rates of sexual orientation or gender identity change attempts (52%) compared to both non-Black youth (58%) and multi-racial Black youth (58%). Black LGBTQ youth who reported that someone tried to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity reported nearly twice the rate of suicide attempts (22%) as Black LGBTQ youth who did not report that this happened (12%).

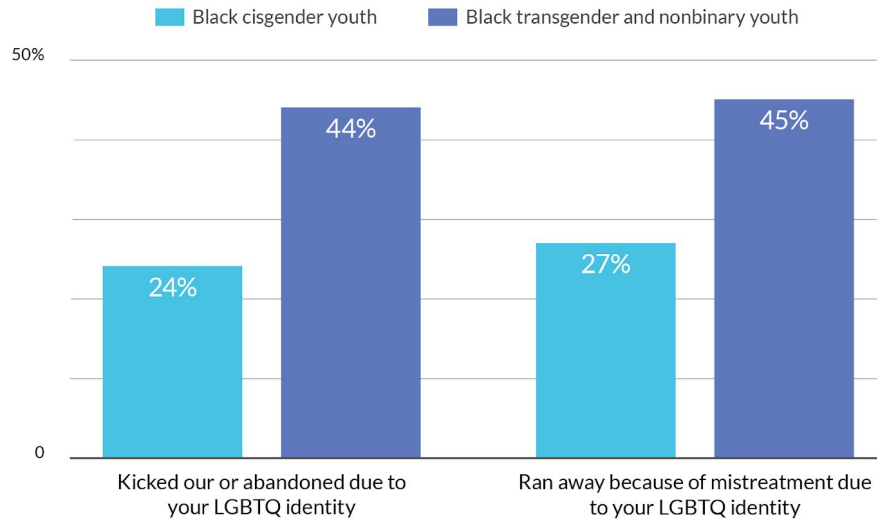
### Who attempted to convince you to change your sexual orientation or gender identity?



## Housing Instability and Food Insecurities Among Black LGBTQ Youth

Overall, 35% of Black LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness, been kicked out, or run away. This rate was higher in Black transgender and nonbinary youth (45%) compared to Black cisgender LGBTQ youth (31%). Furthermore, 28% of Black LGBTQ youth who had experienced homelessness, been kicked out, or run away reported a suicide attempt in the past year compared to 11% who did not.

### Among youth who experienced housing instability:



Youth who reported being kicked out or that they had run away were asked a follow-up question about whether it was due to their LGBTQ identity. Twice as many Black transgender and nonbinary youth reporting being kicked out (44%) or running away (45%) due to their LGBTQ identity as Black cisgender LGBTQ youth (24% and 27%, respectively). Of note, these rates are between 6% and 11% lower among both groups when compared to the overall LGBTQ youth sample.

An often-overlooked aspect of housing instability, 6% of Black LGBTQ youth reported that they had ever been in foster care, which was significantly higher than the rate of non-Black LGBTQ youth involvement in foster care (4%). Furthermore, nearly 1 in 4 Black LGBTQ youth who were involved in foster care reported a suicide attempt in the past 12 months (24%).

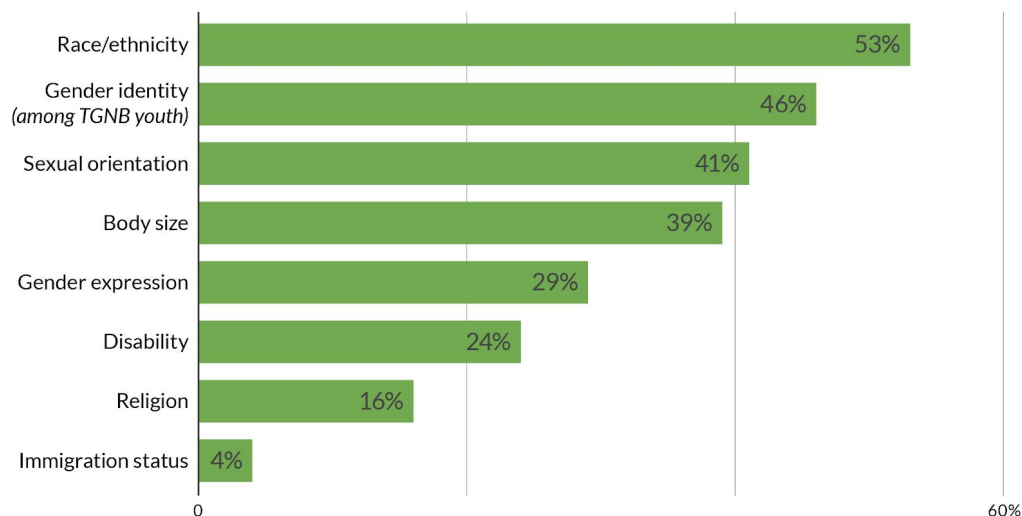
Food insecurity, which is defined as a household's inability to provide food for every person to live an active, healthy life (citation), was reported by 41% of Black LGBTQ youth. Black LGBTQ youth who reported food insecurity reported more than twice the rate of suicide attempts in the past year (26%) compared to youth who did not (12%).

**Nearly 1 in 4  
Black LGBTQ  
youth in foster  
care reported a  
suicide attempt  
in the past year**

## Discrimination and Victimization Among Black LGBTQ Youth

Due to holding many marginalized identities, Black LGBTQ youth are at risk for experiencing discrimination and victimization based on several identities including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. In this sample, more than half of Black LGBTQ youth reported discrimination based on race/ethnicity in the past 12 months (52%). Also, 46% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth reported past-year discrimination based on their gender identity. Among all Black LGBTQ youth, 41% reported discrimination based on sexual orientation in the past 12 months.

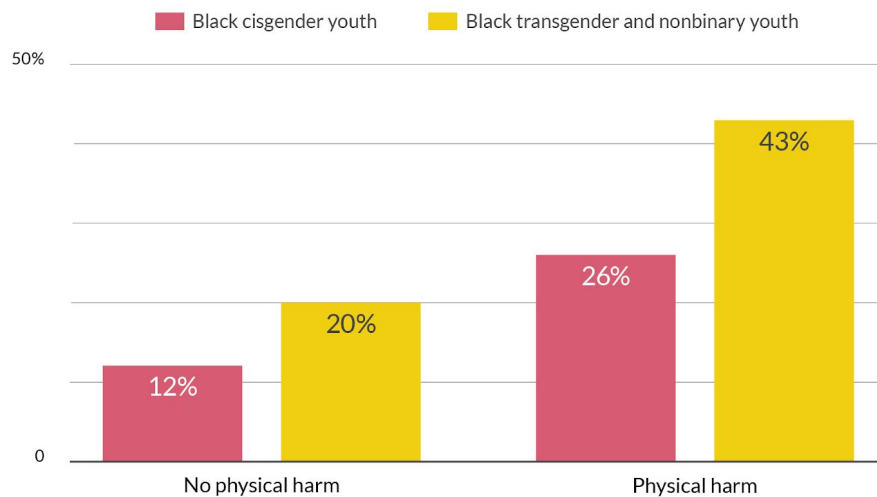
### Past 12 month Discrimination Among Black LGBTQ Youth



Overall, Black LGBTQ youth who experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity reported twice the rate of past-year suicide attempts (27%) compared to youth who did not (12%). There were also increased rates of suicide attempts in the past year among Black LGBTQ youth who experienced race-based discrimination in the past year (20%) compared to those who did not (14%).

Overall, 17% of Black LGBTQ youth reported ever having been physically threatened or harmed due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes 25% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth who reported being physically threatened or harmed in their lifetime due to their gender identity. Black LGBTQ youth who were physically harmed or threatened due to their sexual orientation or gender identity in the past year reported more than twice the rate of suicide attempts in the past 12 months compared to those who were not.

## Black LGBTQ youth who attempted suicide in the past year



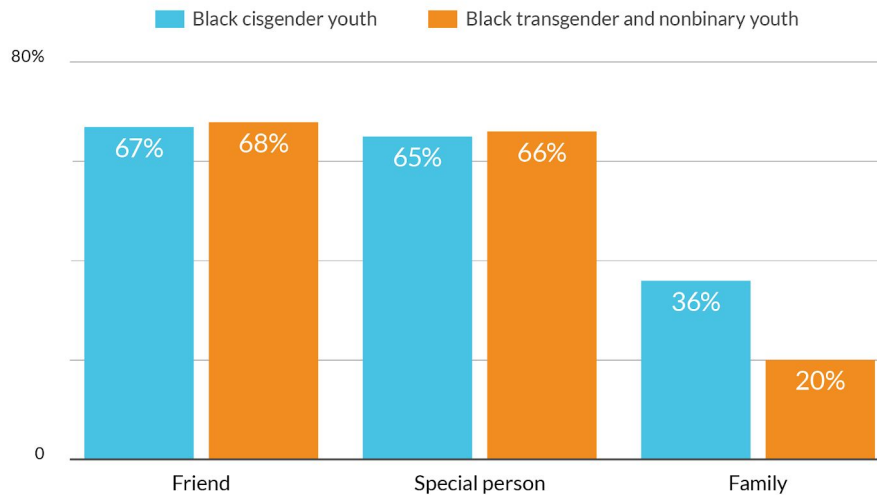
Four percent (4%) of Black LGBTQ youth reported that they had ever been verbally abused, harassed, or assaulted by police specifically due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Black transgender and nonbinary youth reported twice the rate of police victimization (6%) compared to cisgender Black LGBTQ youth (3%). Black LGBTQ youth who were involved with police victimization due to their sexual orientation or gender identity reported rates of suicide attempts (32%) that were nearly double that of youth who were not (17%).

Finally, 13% of Black LGBTQ youth who dated or went out with someone in the past 12 months reported having experienced dating violence, and Black LGBTQ youth who were victims of dating violence reported more than twice the rate of past-year suicide attempts (35%) compared to Black LGBTQ youth who did not (17%).

### Support for Black LGBTQ Youth

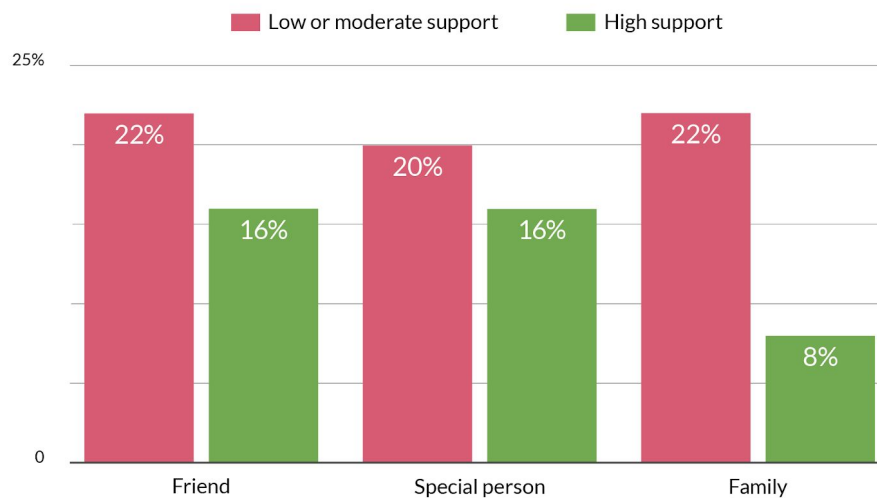
Though things may seem bleak, Black LGBTQ youth are finding ways to thrive and to get support from people and LGBTQ-affirming spaces. Generally, Black LGBTQ youth thrive most when they are able to find support in people (family) and places (work). Specifically, 82% of Black LGBTQ youth report having high levels of support from at least one supportive person in their life among family members, friends, or a special person, such as a romantic partner or someone else perceived as special outside of family or friends. Furthermore, 16% of Black LGBTQ youth who reported high levels of support from at least one person reported attempting suicide compared to 24% who did not.

## Black LGBTQ Youth Social Support



Black LGBTQ youth who had high levels of support among friends, a special person, and family members all showed lower rates of suicide attempts in the past year. However, while Black LGBTQ youth who had high levels of family support had nearly 3 times lower rates of suicide attempt in the past 12 months, less than 1 in 3 Black LGBTQ actually reported having high levels of family support (36%). This was even less frequent, at 1 in 5, among Black transgender and nonbinary youth (20%).

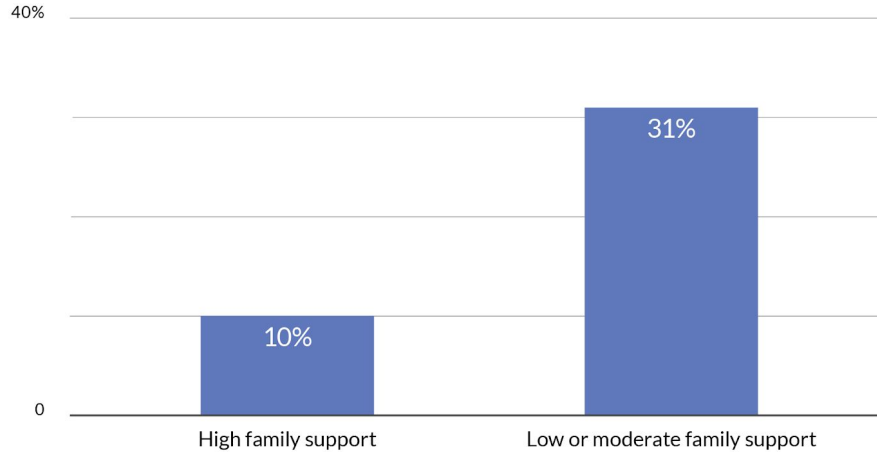
## Black LGBTQ youth who attempted suicide in the past year



Black transgender and nonbinary youth are *particularly* protected by family support. One in three Black transgender and nonbinary youth who reported low family support attempted suicide in the past year (31%). This compares to only 1 out of 10 Black transgender and nonbinary youth who reported high family support.

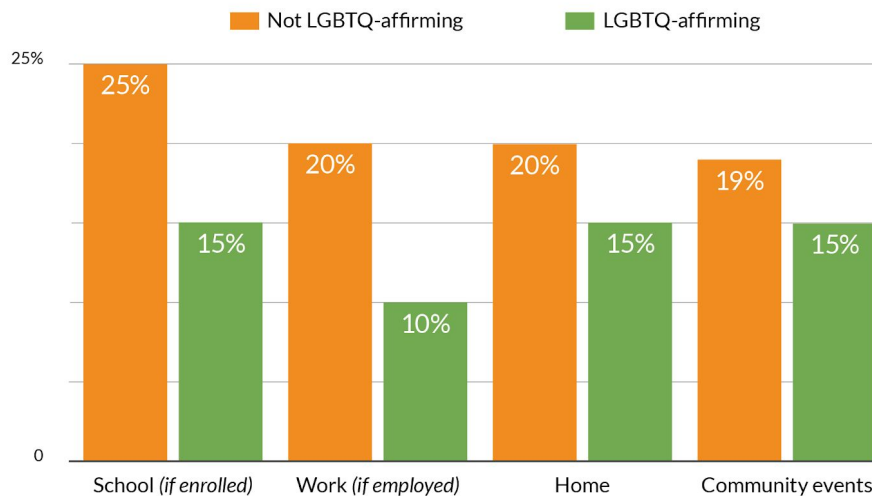


## Black transgender and nonbinary youth who attempted suicide in the past year



Black LGBTQ youth are also finding spaces that are LGBTQ-affirming: 82% of Black LGBTQ youth report access to at least one in-person LGBTQ-affirming space. Black youth who had access to at least one in-person LGBTQ-affirming space attempted suicide at 50% lower rates (16%) compared to Black LGBTQ youth without an in-person LGBTQ affirming space (24%).

## Black LGBTQ youth who attempted suicide in the past year



Being able to find an LGBTQ-affirming space at school, work, home, and in community events all showed decreases in suicide attempt rates for Black LGBTQ youth. Particularly, Black LGBTQ youth who reported that work was LGBTQ-affirming for them reported half the rate of past-year suicide attempts (10%) as those who did not (20%). Unfortunately, less than 1 in 4 Black LGBTQ youth said their workplace was LGBTQ-affirming (18%). Black LGBTQ youth who reported LGBT-affirming spaces at school also reported much lower rates of suicide attempts in the past year (15%) compared to those who did not (25%), with 63% of Black LGBTQ youth reporting access to this space.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Stakeholders must recognize that Black LGBTQ youth are a diverse community whose experiences demand attention and investment to improve well-being.** The current findings show that Black LGBTQ youth are diverse in their sexual and gender identities and backgrounds. They also show that Black LGBTQ youth are at risk for many of the same outcomes as other LGBTQ youth. Black LGBTQ youth report rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide attempts that are comparable to that of the overall LGBTQ youth sample. Furthermore, Black LGBTQ youth are exposed to similar or increased rates of risk factors for suicide, including conversion therapy, housing instability, and racial discrimination. However, it should also be noted that Black LGBTQ youth reported lower rates of some risk factors including physical harm due to sexual orientation or gender identity and having been kicked out or ran away due to their LGBTQ identity. Overall, these findings profoundly support investment in Black LGBTQ youth mental health through increased access to tailored treatment and prevention programs. As outlined in our earlier report on [Black LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#), the development of such programs should include family members, respected community leaders, and Black LGBTQ youth themselves. They also show that Black LGBTQ youth should be treated as a diverse community in itself and should not be treated as uniform.

**The mental health of Black transgender and nonbinary youth must be addressed as a public health crisis.** With 59% seriously considering suicide and 26% attempting suicide in the past year, the mental health of Black transgender and nonbinary youth must be addressed. Black transgender and nonbinary youth are faced with a number of challenges including those related to their gender identity, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity, while also being confronted with stressors faced by all youth. As the disproportionate victimization and murder of Black transgender people continue to rise in the U.S., Black transgender and nonbinary youth need specific attention in prevention and intervention programs that address their unique challenges and experiences.

**Youth-serving organizations must confront systemic barriers to Black LGBTQ mental health and well-being.** In order for youth-serving organizations to be inclusive of Black LGBTQ youth, they must adopt both LGBTQ inclusion and anti-racism policies and programs. LGBTQ-serving organizations must acknowledge that suicide prevention efforts are cannot be “one-size-fits-all,” but rather must be tailored to fit the unique needs of Black LGBTQ youth, particularly Black transgender and nonbinary youth. Furthermore, programs targeted at Black youth must be inclusive and supportive of LGBTQ identities. Finally, our research report on [Breaking Barriers to Mental Health Care for LGBTQ Youth](#) outlines specific ways to address LGBTQ youth’s access to mental health care services, including from an intersectional perspective. Investing in Black LGBTQ youth mental health must be prioritized if we are to see any improvements in these outcomes.

**Research efforts must do more to examine the experiences of Black LGBTQ youth.** Black LGBTQ youth need to be the central focus of more research. While studies have examined Black LGBTQ adults and provided qualitative information about Black LGBTQ youth, there continues to be a dearth of quantitative studies on Black LGBTQ youth. Black youth are no less likely to be LGBTQ and, in fact, might identify as LGBTQ at higher rates than non-Hispanic White youth (Mustanski, et al., 2014), leaving very little excuse for this absence of research findings. Increased data on Black LGBTQ youth will support endeavors to provide vital services and interventions. Large-scale national studies, that have sample size capabilities, should be used to examine outcomes specific to Black LGBTQ youth, and whenever possible, researchers should examine within-in group differences. This should also include the examination of differences within the Black diaspora. Intersectional approaches to research can provide important insight into where resources should be directed.

**Research efforts on Black LGBTQ youth must be sensitive to the experiences and needs of this community and carried out judiciously.** With a history of mistreatment from doctors and researchers, such as the Tuskegee Experiments and J. Marion Sims' surgical procedures on enslaved Black women without anesthesia, many in the Black community are justifiable mistrustful of research efforts. Increasing diversity in training programs to ensure that Black LGBTQ youth have access to Black LGBTQ researchers is a top priority. Furthermore, Black LGBTQ youth should be included in the research process. Finally, research on Black LGBTQ youth should benefit them directly. Conducting research on a population and then failing to give this same population access to the findings, either because of cost or in-group membership, is an injustice. Researchers must make efforts to widely disseminate their research about Black LGBTQ youth so that the youth themselves or organizations in direct contact with them may benefit from their findings. Examples of such dissemination could be presenting findings for organizational leadership, sending a copy of the article to organizational leaders, and writing easily digestible versions of the findings for the general public.

**The Trevor Project is devoted to improving the mental health and well-being of Black LGBTQ youth.** Included in our efforts have been blogs outlining ways in which individuals can [support Black LGBTQ youth mental health](#) and ways to [approach conversations on the intersection of race and LGBTQ identity](#). Our crisis services team aims to provide all LGBTQ youth with high quality, culturally-grounded care and has worked to create a diverse team of counselors that aligns with the demographics of the youth we serve. Additionally, our research team continues its commitment to ongoing dissemination of findings specific to Black LGBTQ youth in order to allow Trevor as well as external partners and stakeholders to better understand and address the needs of Black LGBTQ youth.

## About The Trevor Project

[The Trevor Project](#) is the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, & questioning (LGBTQ) young people. The Trevor Project offers a suite of 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention programs, including [TrevorLifeline](#), [TrevorText](#), and [TrevorChat](#) as well as the world's largest safe space social networking site for LGBTQ youth, [TrevorSpace](#). Trevor also operates an education program with resources for youth-serving adults and organizations, an advocacy department fighting for pro-LGBTQ legislation and against anti-LGBTQ policies, and a research team to examine the most effective means to help young LGBTQ people in crisis and end suicide. If you or someone you know is feeling hopeless or suicidal, our trained crisis counselors are available 24/7 at 1-866-488-7386, via chat [www.TheTrevorProject.org/Help](http://www.TheTrevorProject.org/Help), or by texting START to 678-678.

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**Table: Black LGBTQ Youth Diversity**

<b>Sexual Orientation ( n = 2,576)</b>		<b>Type of School (n = 1,985)</b>	
Bisexual	35%	Middle school	10%
Gay or lesbian	31%	High school	52%
Pansexual	20%	<i>Public</i>	90%
Queer	9%	<i>Homeschool</i>	4%
I am not sure	3%	<i>Private, not religious affiliated</i>	3%
Straight	2%	<i>Private, religious affiliated</i>	3%
<b>Gender Identity (n = 2,566)</b>		GED	.5%
Cisgender woman	50%	Technical school	1%
Cisgender man	20%	Community/junior college	8%
Nonbinary	15%	4-year university	23%
Transgender man	9%	Graduate school	2%
Questioning	5%	Other	2%
Transgender woman	1%	<b>Struggle to meet basic needs (n = 2,234)</b>	18%
<b>Race and Ethnicity (n = 2,586)</b>		<b>Born in the US or US territory (n = 2,578)</b>	
Exclusively Black identified	58%	<b>At least one parent/caregiver born outside of US or US territory (n = 2,561)</b>	26%
Multiracial Black <sup>1</sup>	42%	<b>English most often spoken at home (n = 2,584)</b>	98%
<i>White/Caucasian</i>	80%	<b>Region (n = 2,586)</b>	
<i>Hispanic or Latino/Latinx</i>	24%	South	50%
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native</i>	18%	Midwest	19%
<i>Asian/Asian American</i>	9%	Northeast	15%
<i>Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian</i>	3%	West	15%
<i>Another race</i>	3%		

<sup>1</sup> Percentages exceed 100% because youth were able to select all that apply for race/ethnicity.