



# 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Iowa



# Executive Summary

The Trevor Project, the leading suicide prevention organization for LGBTQ young people, produces innovative original research that amplifies the experiences of diverse LGBTQ young people and brings new knowledge and clinical implications to the suicide prevention field.

Since 2019, our annual national surveys have been among the largest and most diverse surveys of LGBTQ young people in the U.S. For the first time ever, we're publishing the findings of [our national survey](#), which captured the experiences of nearly 34,000 LGBTQ people ages 13-24 across the United States in 2022, segmented by all 50 states.

These data provide critical insights into the suicide risk faced by LGBTQ young people, top barriers to mental health care, the prevalence of anti-LGBTQ victimization, and the negative impacts of recent politics. Importantly, this research also points to ways in which we can all support the LGBTQ young people in our lives by detailing per state LGBTQ young people's access to accepting communities, LGBTQ-affirming spaces, and social support among family and friends – protective factors that are consistently associated with better mental health and lower suicide risk.

It's essential to emphasize that because we still do not have known counts or registries of the LGBTQ youth population comprehensive data on the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ youth remains limited. These findings strive to underscore the unique challenges faced by young LGBTQ people, a group consistently found to be at significantly increased risk for suicide because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.

We hope that LGBTQ young people in every state will see themselves reflected in these experiences that so many have bravely shared; and that these data will equip fellow researchers, policymakers, and other youth-serving organizations in every state with the data necessary to celebrate and uplift LGBTQ young people and advocate for policies that work to end the public health crisis of suicide.

# Mental Health & Suicide Risk in Iowa

LGBTQ young people are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but rather placed at higher risk because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.



## Suicide Risk

**44%** of LGBTQ youth in Iowa seriously considered suicide in the past year

including 52% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

**16%** of LGBTQ youth in Iowa attempted suicide in the past year

including 22% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

## Anxiety & Depression

**76%** of LGBTQ youth in Iowa reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety

including 78% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

**61%** of LGBTQ youth in Iowa reported experiencing symptoms of depression

including 66% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

# Access to Mental Health Care Among LGBTQ Youth in Iowa



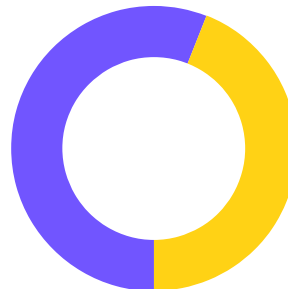
## Access to care

56% of LGBTQ youth in Iowa who wanted mental health care in the past year were not able to get it

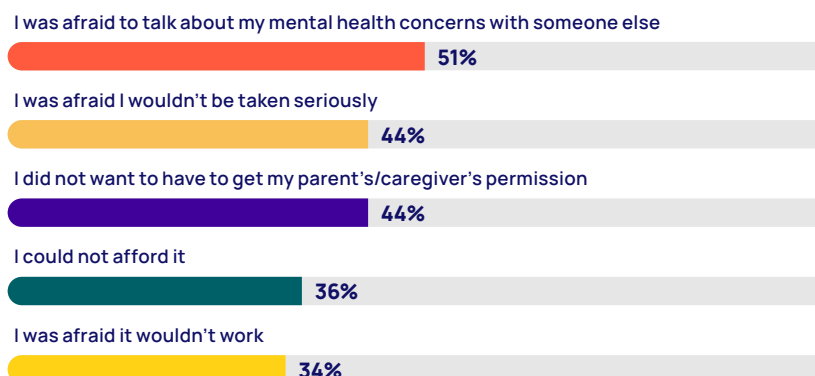
including 54% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

## Access to mental health care among LGBTQ youth

- Wanted but did not receive care **56%**
- Wanted and received care **44%**



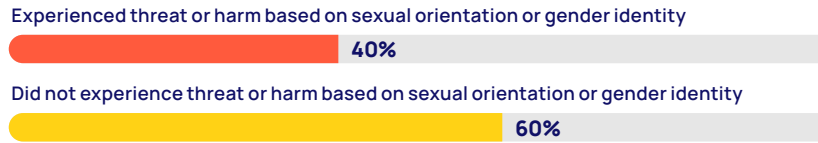
## LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care but were unable to get it cited the following top five reasons:



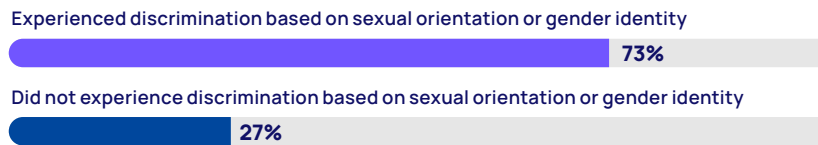
# Challenges Faced By LGBTQ Youth in Iowa

Research consistently finds that LGBTQ youth who have experienced anti-LGBTQ victimization – including being physically threatened or harmed, discriminated against, or subjected to conversion therapy – report significantly higher rates of attempting suicide.

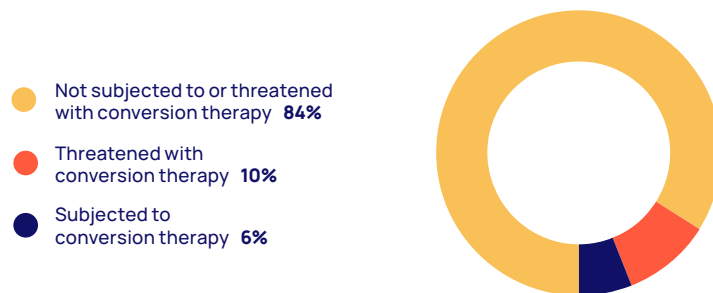
## Rates of LGBTQ youth who have been physically threatened or harmed



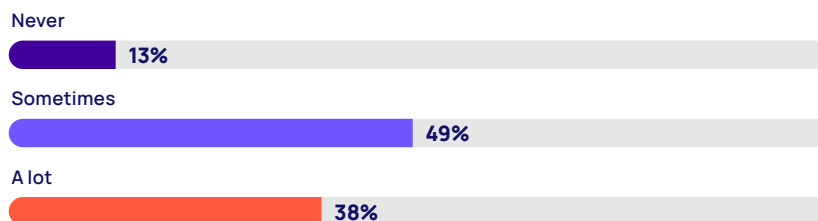
## Rates of LGBTQ youth who have experienced discrimination



## LGBTQ youth who reported being threatened with or subjected to conversion therapy

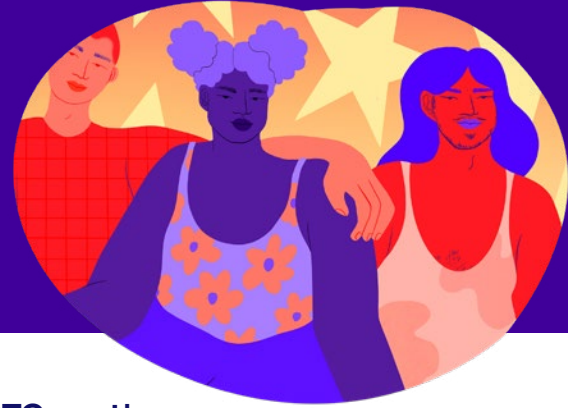


## LGBTQ youth who reported that recent politics negatively impacted their well-being:

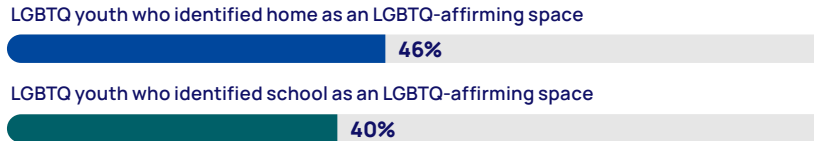


# Ways to Support LGBTQ Youth in Iowa

Research consistently finds that LGBTQ youth who live in accepting communities and feel high social support from family and friends report significantly lower rates of attempting suicide.



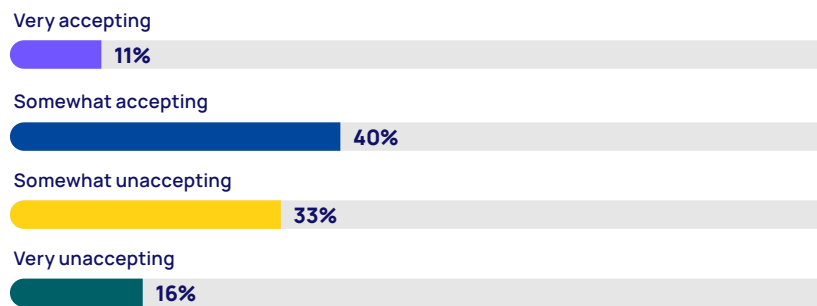
## Access to affirming spaces among LGBTQ youth



## Social support among LGBTQ youth



## Rates of community acceptance of LGBTQ people among LGBTQ youth



## What makes a space affirming for LGBTQ young people in Iowa?



- displaying of pronouns
- diversity of the staff/leadership
- pride flags
- seeing LGBTQ people thrive in the environment
- LGBTQ safe space signs
- signs that say they support the community
- if I'm respected
- the resources available to LGBTQ students

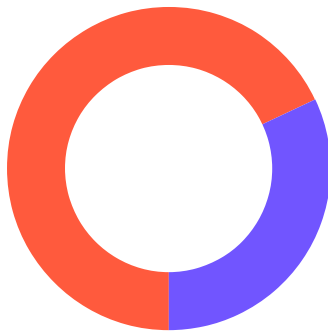
# Demographics in Iowa

The content and methodology for The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health were approved by an independent Institutional Review Board.



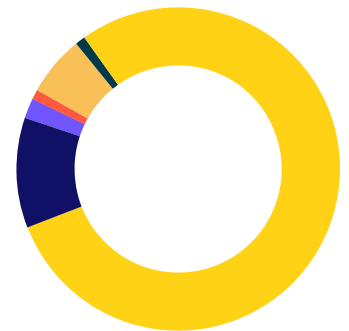
## Age of LGBTQ youth

- 13 to 17 **68%**
- 18 to 24 **32%**



## Race/ethnicity of LGBTQ youth

- Asian American/ Pacific Islander **2%**
- Black **1%**
- Latinx **6%**
- Middle Eastern/ Northern African **1%**
- White **79%**
- More than one race/ethnicity **11%**



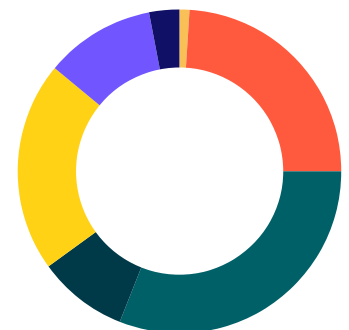
## Gender identity among LGBTQ youth

- Girl or woman **30%**
- Boy or man **23%**
- Nonbinary, bigender, genderfluid, or genderqueer **36%**
- Not sure or questioning **11%**



## Sexual orientation among LGBTQ youth

- Straight **1%**
- Gay or lesbian **24%**
- Bisexual **31%**
- Queer **9%**
- Pansexual **21%**
- Asexual **11%**
- Questioning **3%**



# THE TREVOR PROJECT

The Trevor Project's mission is to end suicide among LGBTQ young people.

We provide 24/7 crisis services for LGBTQ young people via a phone lifeline, text, and chat. We also operate innovative research, advocacy, public training, and peer support programs.



Crisis Services



Advocacy



Peer Support



Education and  
Public Awareness



Research

## Methodology

A quantitative cross-sectional design was used to collect data through an online survey platform between September 20 and December 31, 2021. A sample of individuals ages 13 to 24 who resided in the United States was recruited via targeted ads on social media. No recruitment was conducted via The Trevor Project's website or social media channels. Respondents were defined as being LGBTQ if they identified with a sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual, a gender identity other than cisgender, or both. In order to ensure the representativeness of the sample, targeted recruitment was conducted to ensure adequate sample sizes with respect to geography, gender identity, and race/ethnicity. Qualified respondents completed a secure online questionnaire that included a maximum of 143 questions. Questions on considering and attempting suicide in the past year were taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey to allow for comparisons to their nationally representative sample. Please find a full methodology report at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/#methodology>.