

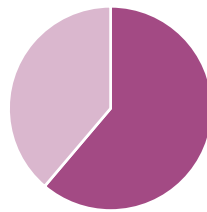
# YOUTH EXPERIENCES



## Bright Spots and Progress

Many youth are reporting generally positive experiences with family.

- For participants under 20, **61.2%** reported none of the listed negative experiences with family.
- For participants 19 and younger, **3 out of 4** reported at least one such positive experience.



**61.2%** of participants under 20 reported none of the listed negative experiences with family.

Youth reported utilizing a range of community programs and services.

- **Nearly 3 in 5** participate in Gender & Sexuality Alliances.
- **Roughly 1 in 3** benefit from Youth Services of Tulsa, Oklahomans for Equality, and the support of a mental health counselor or teacher.
- Others reference support from Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, and PFLAG.

Many are reporting lower rates of negative experiences in school so long as they are aware of antidiscrimination policies in place.

- **3 in 4** students who reported policies for gender identity and/or gender expression said they were able to present in accordance with their gender identity in school.



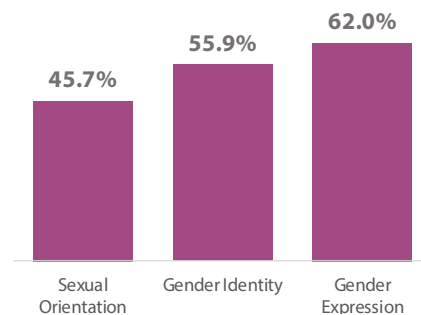
## Challenges

Negative experiences are **common**.

- **Nearly two-thirds** reported at least one of the listed negative experience happening to them in school — **15% higher** than the percentage of youth who reported bullying or harassment at school in 2009.

A **high percentage** of participants reported that their schools do not have, or that they are unaware of, antidiscrimination policies regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression — indicating that there is **room for improvement** among districts to adopt such policies and ensure that students are aware of them.

A high percentage of students responded 'No' or 'Unsure' about their schools having antidiscrimination policies



Among students who did not report their school having all 3 policies, **half** said they were **not** allowed to dress in accordance with their gender identity

## About the Report

The first LGBT Needs Assessment was commissioned in 2004 by Tulsa Reaches Out (TRO). The purpose was to promote access to needed social and health services and to inform the community of the gaps in inclusive policies and practices involving the LGBTQ population.

TRO commissioned The Hope Research Center at the University of Oklahoma's Tulsa for this 2019 Report. The goals in providing this Report are three-fold:

1. **Outreach to community partners**
2. **Inform advocacy groups**
3. **Guide policymakers**

Of the final sample of 818 participants, the mean age was 38.2. The majority (71.9%) identified as white only.

Regarding geography, 82.1% of respondents report living within the Tulsa Metropolitan Statistical Area (TMSA) with the remaining 17.9% living in the surrounding areas across Oklahoma. Nearly all (97.9%) respondents reported English being spoken in the home, whether English alone or in addition to another language.

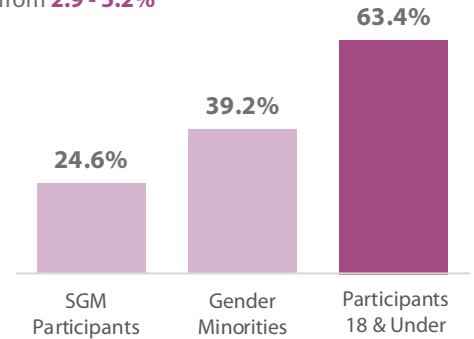
The annual household income for participants and the TMSA appear proportionately similar with only minor differences between groups.

## Challenges

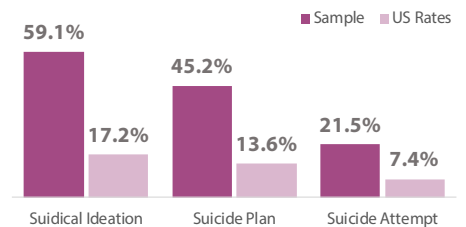
Youth are struggling with mental health and psychological distress.

- Regarding the 4 measures of wellbeing used in this study — hope, flourishing, social support, and civic engagement — youth reported **significantly lower** levels than adults.
- **Nearly two-thirds** of youth reported anxiety depression, or serious psychological distress — **significantly higher** than the rates reported by adult SGM respondents. The rate of psychological distress among SGM youth is **12-15x higher** than the rate of the general population.
- Suicidality is **strikingly high** among SGM youth. **59.1%** of youth (**3x** the national average) reported suicidal ideation, and **21.5%** of youth (**3x** the national average) reported having attempted suicide.
- Youth participants reported relatively high rates of substance use. **30%** reported using tobacco products and **28%** reported marijuana use without a prescription within the past month, and nearly **1 in 4** reported having used illicit drugs in their lifetime.

Youth reported an **alarming high** rate of serious psychological distress, with national estimates of the general population ranging from **2.9 - 5.2%**



Suicidality is **strikingly high** among SGM youth



## The survey indicates important priorities moving forward:

Regarding the most important services needed for SGM individuals:

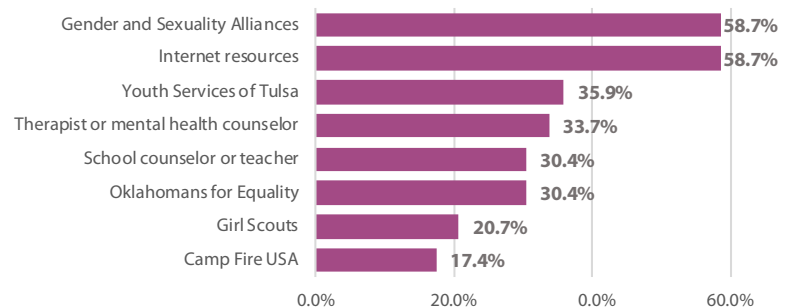
**Youth** indicated preferences for:

- mental health and counseling services
- public awareness about LGBTQ+ issues
- programs for LGBTQ+ youth
- sexual health education

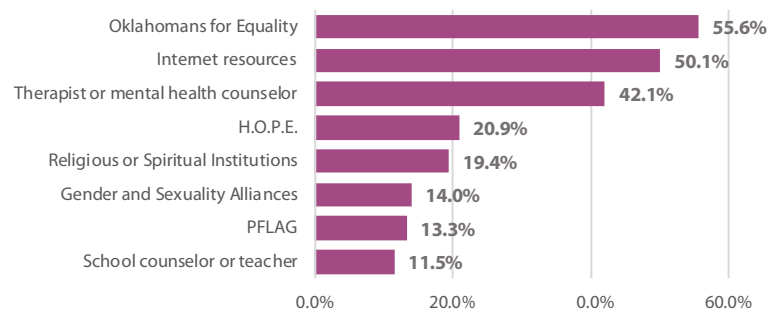
**Adults** indicated preferences for:

- mental health and counseling services
- advocacy at the state legislature
- physical and medical health services
- public awareness about LGBTQ+ issues

The **top 8** agencies, programs, and services accessed by **youth**



The **top 8** agencies, programs, and services accessed by **adults**



We hope readers will consider **committing** their resources, influence, and networks to come up with **creative solutions** to the persistent challenges faced by sexual and gender minorities so that we can continue making progress together as **one community**.