

LGBTQ+ Youth and the Internet

2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report



Last updated November 1, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The internet serves multiple important roles for LGBTQ+ youth. They may browse websites to complete school assignments, play online games with their friends, or use online spaces to find a sense of belonging with other LGBTQ+ youth. One study suggests that LGBTQ+ youth spend an average of 45 minutes more per day online than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. This report uses data from a survey of nearly 13,000 LGBTQ+ youth aged 13-17, to explore some of the positive and negative aspects of LGBTQ+ youth's internet usage.

Key Takeaways

LGBTQ+ Youth Internet Use

✚ **Virtually all (95.3%)** LGBTQ+ youth as well as transgender or gender-expansive youth **(98%)** have used the internet to find information that helps them understand their LGBTQ+ identity.

✚ **Eight in ten (82.5%)** LGBTQ+ youth and **83.2%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth have used the internet for locating information about sexual health information relevant to their identity.

✚ LGBTQ+ youth also use the internet to connect with each other. More than **two-thirds (68.3%)** of LGBTQ+ youth participate in online communities specifically to engage with other LGBTQ+ people in their age group, as well as **73.3%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth.

Anti-LGBTQ+ Content and Cyberbullying

✚ LGBTQ+ youth are inundated with anti-LGBTQ+ content online and are often cyberbullied for one or more of their identities.

- **96%** of LGBTQ+ youth have seen content on social media that was offensive or hurtful toward LGBTQ+ people.
- **49%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **52.9%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) have experienced cyberbullying based on an identity of theirs in the last year.

✚ One in seven **(15.2%)** LGBTQ+ youth and **16.7%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth say they do not feel safe participating in online activities

Reporting Online Harassment and Bullying

+ LGBTQ+ youth, in general, are uncomfortable with reporting cyberbullying to educators or school administrators in their lives, and have little confidence that educators will be able to help.

- **74.4%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **77%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) who experienced cyberbullying would be uncomfortable reporting cyberbullying (or online hate speech in general) to an educator
- **74.7%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **78.1%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) did not believe that if they reported cyberbullying to an educator, that it would help resolve their problem.

+ Barriers to reporting cyberbullying and harassment to social media platforms emerged as well:

- **18.2%** (and **17.5%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) did not know how to report encountered cyberbullying or online hate speech to social media platforms
- **65.5%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **67.3%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) were not confident that, were they to report cyberbullying or hate speech to the social media platform, the platform would take steps to resolve the issue

Online Safety Education

+ **93.4%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **93.1%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) have received some form of education about online safety from a parent, educator or other adult in their life.

Introduction

Roughly half of all teenagers in the United States today use the internet regularly. For LGBTQ+ youth, the internet can be an incredible tool for exploration and community building. Allowing LGBTQ+ youth to explore their identities is vital for them to mature into fully formed adults and to live authentic lives. In fact, 73% of LGBTQ+ youth from an older study said they are more honest online than in the “real world.” LGBTQ+ youth may also use online spaces to connect with peers who have similar experiences. A study suggests that roughly two-thirds (62%) of LGBTQ+ youth may use the internet to connect with other LGBTQ+ people.

However, in recent years, the internet has become an increasingly hostile space where LGBTQ+ people are cyberbullied for their identities and/or exposed to harmful anti-LGBTQ+ misinformation. After Florida passed a “Don’t Say Gay or Trans” bill, for example, the average number of tweets per day using terms such as “groomer” and “pedophile” in relation to LGBTQ+ people surged by 406% in the month after the bill passed. Another survey of adults, after Elon Musk took over as CEO of Twitter, found that 60% of respondents had experienced an increase in abusive and hateful speech on Twitter. Right-wing extremists have also used the internet to terrorize gender-affirming care providers which often went unchecked and led to offline violence. Youth, including LGBTQ+ youth, do not want to be subjected to anti-LGBTQ+ hate online. According to Pew Research Center, 62% of all teenagers in the United States say people should feel welcomed and safe online, rather than preserving people’s ability to speak their minds freely online (of which 38% of all teenagers reported).

It is important to note that this report, and rising levels of online hate speech, comes amidst a national state of emergency for LGBTQ+ people in the United States. Data in this report come from 2022, which, at the time, was the worst year on record for passage of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Since then, the LGBTQ+ community has seen an evermore intensifying wave of attacks, aimed at pushing LGBTQ+ Americans, and specifically transgender Americans, back into the closet, and out of all aspects of daily life. Each year has seen an increase in anti-LGBTQ+ state legislation, with more bills introduced—and passed—in 2022 and 2023 than ever before. The year 2023 saw the passage of over 80 anti-LGBTQ+ bills, the vast majority of which targeted LGBTQ+ youth, and transgender and gender-expansive youth in particular. These bills target all aspects of daily life for transgender and gender-expansive youth, including regulating access to restrooms, locker rooms, and the ability to participate in sports, barring teachers and staff from using their pronouns and chosen names, and denying their access to age-appropriate gender-affirming health care

Following, this report uses data from a large national survey of nearly 13,000 LGBTQ+ youth aged 13-17, supplemented with quotes from interviews of a separate cohort of LGBTQ+ youth, to observe some of the experiences related to internet use. This includes both positive and negative elements of internet use, such as how the internet provides LGBTQ+ youth the opportunity anonymously learn about their LGBTQ+ identities and connect with other LGBTQ+ youth as well as their experiences dealing with and reporting cyberbullying and anti-LGBTQ+ content online. The report also includes quotes, collected in October 2023, from HRC’s current cohort of youth ambassadors, who aren’t the subjects surveyed in this report quant data. The report concludes with action items and steps for various individuals.

ABOUT THE STUDY

In 2022, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation partnered with the University of Connecticut to survey LGBTQ+ youth from across the United States. A total of 12,615 LGBTQ+ identified youth (age 13-18), from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, completed the online survey between January 31 and October 23, 2022. More information about the survey process, materials and respondent profiles can be found in the HRC Foundation’s 2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report.

Finding Information About LGBTQ+ Identity

The internet helps connect LGBTQ+ youth with vital and relevant information about their identities and health—information that often is not available elsewhere in their lives. For instance, LGBTQ+ youth rarely receive sex education relevant to their LGBTQ+ identities because many existing sex education programs are not inclusive of LGBTQ+ people: As reported in the HRC Foundation's [2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report](#), summarizing key findings from the 2022 Youth Survey data also featured in this report, just under one in five (19.6%). LGBTQ+ youth had received LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education. However, the internet can fill this gap by providing the LGBTQ-inclusive resources and education that educators, parents and other youth-serving professionals may lack the training to provide. It can include LGBTQ+ relevant sexual health information around safe sex practices and HIV/Sexually Transmitted infections, as well as information and education on coming out, affirming mental health support, and navigating same-sex relationships or transgender and non-binary identity development.

The vast majority of LGBTQ+ youth participating in the survey report using the internet for this reason (Table 1):

+ Almost all (95.3%) LGBTQ+ youth (and **97.1%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) have used the internet to find information that helps them understand their LGBTQ+ identity.

+ Eight in ten (82.5%) LGBTQ+ youth and **83.2%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth have used the internet for locating LGBTQ+ inclusive sexual and reproductive health information.

According to the HRC Foundation [2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report](#), **57.4%** of surveyed LGBTQ+ youth have experienced some form of rejection by their parents. The anonymity that the internet provides to LGBTQ+ youth is important when they may face rejection from their parents at home:

+ Nine in ten (89.2%) LGBTQ+ youth (and **90.4%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) use the internet for locating information about their LGBTQ+ identity due to fear of being outed (Table 1).

Building Online Communities

LGBTQ+ youth also use the internet to connect with each other. For example, one study found that **50%** of LGBTQ+ youth have at least [one close online friend](#), compared to **19%** of non-LGBTQ+ youth.

For those whose peers at school, or family and community members in their daily lives are not as friendly, the internet can offer an alternate way to find acceptance and connection. **More than two-thirds (68.3%)** of LGBTQ+ youth and **73.3%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth participated in online communities for LGBTQ+ people in their age group (Table 1).

In their own voices...

"Social Media has really helped me see how out and proud so many people are, and in turn this has generally helped me. I am also able to learn so much AND how they overcame them so it can be a way to be inspired for me. -16 year old LGBTQ+ youth"

Feelings of Online Safety and Anti-LGBTQ+ Content

The internet is not always the safest place for LGBTQ+ youth. While the vast majority of LGBTQ+ youth safely access and use the internet, **one in seven (15.2%)** LGBTQ+ youth and **16.7%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth say they do not feel safe participating in online activities (Table 2).

Anti-LGBTQ+ content online shows up across many platforms in various forms, and LGBTQ+ youth can also be exposed to that content. Overall, **96%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **96.9%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) have seen content on social media that was offensive or hurtful toward LGBTQ+ people (Table 2).

In their own voices...

"I have very few spaces online that I feel are actually safe from hate. Most of them are private Facebook groups, but even then transphobia or misogyny will slip in before moderators can remove it. No public groups are safe. Twitter is absolutely not safe, because hate speech is frequently moved to the top of threads and not taken down when reported." -17 year old LGBTQ+ youth

Cyberbullying

Many LGBTQ+ youth experienced cyberbullying for one or more of their identities. Overall, **49%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **52.9%** of transgender and gender expansive youth) have experienced cyberbullying based on an identity (including body weight, race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual identity, religion, immigration status or disability) of theirs in the last year (Table 3).

- ✚ Many LGBTQ+ youth who report cyberbullying indicated that one of the things they were cyberbullied about was their sexual identity, gender or gender expression (Table 3), including:
- For being LGBTQ+ specifically: **35.2%** LGBTQ+ youth; **38.5%** transgender and gender expansive youth
 - Their sexual identity: **34.8%** LGBTQ+ youth; **37.7%** transgender and expansive youth
 - Their gender or gender expression: **36.7%** LGBTQ+ youth; **43.5%** transgender and gender expansive youth

In their own voices...

"Me and my friends have been bullied for being LGBTQ+. I have posted about my identity and been attacked by bigots saying horrid things to me. I've also been rejected by "friends" for my identity and people arguing with me that I'm not valid. My friends have been harassed and grossly fetishized for being LGBTQ+ as well." -17 year old LGBTQ+ youth



Additional Information: Child Exploitation Online

LGBTQ+ youth, and youth broadly, can face many problems while using the internet. While this analysis does not look at youth exploitation and victimization specifically, any youth can be a victim of exploitative behavior online regardless of their sexual identity or gender identity.

In 2022, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received over 32 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation, containing more than 83 million images or other explicit content. This was a significant increase from 2021, which was roughly 29 million reports. The uptick was attributed to an increase in child sextortion, which is when offenders first lure a youth into sharing content, such as sexually explicit photos, then demands a form of payment, threatening to release the content publicly.

The reality is that LGBTQ+ youth are at greater risk of being exploited online, especially sexual exploitation. Research suggests that LGBTQ+ youth are three times more likely unwanted or risky interactions online. LGBTQ+ youth's vulnerability increases online because they are less likely to ask for help when they feel threatened online, often because of fear of being outed.

Reporting Cyberbullying

It is important for youth to learn internet safety and how to report negative interactions and hate speech to social media apps, school officials or to a parent or guardian.

Among LGBTQ+ youth in the sample who reported cyberbullying in the last year, few felt comfortable reporting the cyberbullying to an educator. The reason why this may be the case is that LGBTQ+ youth do not think an educator will help resolve the cyberbullying -- which may be the case if an educator is not empowered to respond to cyberbullying (Table 4):

+ 80% of LGBTQ+ youth (and **81.6%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) who reported being cyberbullied for one or more of their identities said they would be uncomfortable telling an educator about it

+ 80.9% of LGBTQ+ youth (and **83.5%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) said they do not believe reporting cyberbullying to an educator would help resolve their problem.

A lesser amount of LGBTQ+ youth who reported cyberbullying in the last year said they did not know how to use report functions on social media platforms. With the rising levels of anti-LGBTQ+ content online combined with the frequency with which LGBTQ+ youth use the internet; they are likely more prepared to use the report function on a social media or other platform. However, LGBTQ+ youth still lack confidence that reporting could help resolve the cyberbullying they experienced (Table 4):

+ 19.4% (and **17.8%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) did not know how to report cyberbullying to the platform where the bullying occurred

+ 69.1% of LGBTQ+ youth (and **70.5%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) said they were not confident that the platform where their cyberbullying occurred would help resolve the bullying.

Key Terminology

Familiarize yourself with cyberbullying terminology. Though this is a broad overview and not an exhaustive list, it highlights some of the most well-known types of cyberbullying.

- **Doxing** – The act of revealing sensitive or personal information about someone without their consent. This can include home addresses, school, phone numbers, and personal pictures.
- **Catfishing** – The act of taking information and images, typically from other people, and using them to create a fake online identity. Can be done by strangers or even people you know.
- **Cyberstalking** – The act of making someone else afraid or concerned about their safety by tracking their online movements. Can include harassing them on multiple platforms, making threats, and blackmail
- **Trolling** – The act of intentionally trying to incite negative reactions by posting inflammatory or attacking comments online. Often played off as a joke once the desired reaction has been achieved. The intent is to cause chaos and confusion and can be done to individuals or large groups of people.
- **Flaming** – The act of using profane language and insulting comments with the intent of intimidating the victim. It is typically a specific type of trolling with a more specific focus on an individual. Can include using slurs in a "playful" manner, misgendering, deadnaming, and/or using racial charge language.
- **Revenge Porn** – The act of distributing sexually explicit images or videos of individuals without their consent. This is of particular concern due to the rise of sexploitation ([learn more about Sextortion here](#)).
- Also consider visiting HRC Foundation's [Glossary of Terms](#) for common words and terms used to talk about the LGBTQ+ community.

In their own voices...

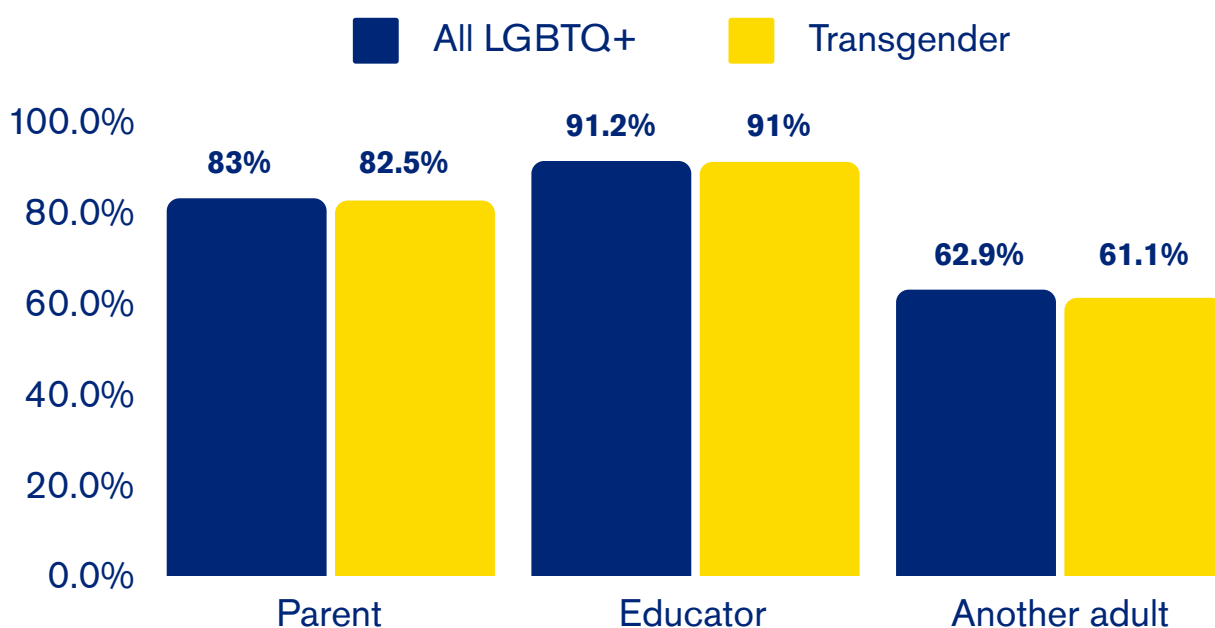
"Social Media Companies bear significant responsibility for keeping LGBTQ+ and other marginalized youth safe online. Unfortunately, the trend recently has been the opposite, with companies taking more of a "hands-off" approach to safety. This has had a tangible impact on the safety of youth online, as hateful comments or messages are not taken down. When I report comments, they're very rarely taken down. Social media companies have a responsibility to be responsive to reports and to be vigilant in enforcing rules against harassment or hate speech." -
-17 year old LGBTQ+ youth

Online Safety Education

It is important that adults educate youth, including LGBTQ+ youth, about how to stay safe online. Fortunately, many LGBTQ+ youth have received some form of education from a parent, teacher or other adult about how to stay safe online or deal with cyberbullying (Figure 1).

Overall, **93.4%** of LGBTQ+ youth (and **93.1%** of transgender and gender-expansive youth) have received some form of education about online safety from a parent, educator or other adult in their life (Table 5).

Figure 1: From Who LGBTQ+ Youth Receive Online Safety Education



Conclusion

In a time when LGBTQ+ people, particularly youth, are under attack, the internet serves an important role connecting LGBTQ+ youth with vital information and with their peers. Despite the positive impact the internet can have on the lives of LGBTQ+ youth, it can also be a source of challenges. Cyberbullying and exposure to anti-LGBTQ+ content online are common experiences for many LGBTQ+ youth. The unfortunate reality is that many youth do not feel that reporting cyberbullying to an educator or a social media platform would help resolve a cyberbullying problem. As a result, parents, educators, youth-serving professionals must double their efforts to create online environments that are safe for LGBTQ+ youth and learn more about how to handle cyberbullying and other harmful content online.

Calls to Action and How to Help

Everyone has a role to play in making the internet a better place for youth. Below are some of the actions one can take toward achieving this goal:

For Educators & Administrators...

- Read [these tips](#) from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, about how to be a trusted adult and ally to youth.
- Provide professional development training to all teachers and staff on how to recognize and respond to biased-based bullying, including cyberbullying. Check out HRC's [Welcoming Schools](#) training program for some examples.
- Ensure your school curriculum incorporates education on [online safety](#) and [cyberbullying](#), and makes resources available to both students and their families.
- Familiarize yourself with safe, age-appropriate, online spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, and share it with your students. Some examples include:
 - [Q-Chat](#), which provides regular free live online chats for LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-19 and is facilitated by vetted volunteers from LGBTQ+ community centers across the country.
 - [Trevor Space](#), which is an affirming online community for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults ages 13-24 moderated by trained staff and vetted volunteers.
- Regularly check-in with students, particularly any student who shows changes in their mood or behavior. Ask thoughtful, open questions about their experiences with bullying and harassment online or in-person and believe students when they share what is happening to them.
- When sharing information regarding cyberbullying to parents and caregivers, consider that while a student may be open about their sexual identity and/or gender identity at school, they may not be out at home, or they may not have a supportive family. Students can be targeted for biased-based bullying regardless of the identity of that student. In other words, heterosexual and cisgender youth can be targeted with anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and harassment online.
- Ensure your school's internet protection software or parental control software does not block youth's access to appropriate LGBTQ+ content such as information about LGBTQ+ identities and age-appropriate sexual health information.
- Provide opportunities for LGBTQ+ students to connect and build community such as having a Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) at school and/or referring students to local LGBTQ+ youth resources. Check out [CenterLink's Database](#) of LGBTQ+ centers to find programs nearby.
- Recognizing that students who bully sometimes experience violence from other students and/or their family, provide support for both victimized students and their antagonists.
- Check out these [sex education tools](#) for educators by Planned Parenthood Federation.

For Parents and Caregivers...

- Believe your children when they disclose their experiences with bullying and harassment in person or online.
- Read [these tips](#) about how to be a trusted adult and ally to youth.
- [Know the social media](#) your child uses and ensure both you and your children have resources to navigate online bullying, harassment, and predators.
- Advocate for professional development training on biased-based bullying, including cyberbullying, to all teachers and staff. Check out HRC's [Welcoming Schools](#) training program.
- Advocate for LGBTQ+ policies and practices at your school and with your local school board.

For Social Media and Tech Companies...

- Ensure trust and safety /content moderation policies explicitly ban hate speech and harassment against marginalized and vulnerable people, with sexual identity, sex assigned at birth, and gender identity/expression all included as protected classes.
- Enforce existing trust and safety content moderation policies against LGBTQ+ focused hate speech and cyberbullying
 - Train content moderators to recognize hateful and abusive speech and remove it from platforms
 - Monitor repeat offenders for content removal, and institute bans or suspensions for these users
- Evaluate AI programs and algorithms to determine if content from LGBTQ+ users, or focused on LGBTQ+ issues, are being disproportionately flagged for removal.

For Youth...

- Report cyberbullying and harassment to a trusted adult as well as the social media or gaming platform where the incidents occur.
- Learn tips for safely engaging online and with social media on [NetSmartz](#).
- Find age-appropriate opportunities online to connect with other LGBTQ+ and allied youth:
 - [Q-Chat](#) – Provides regular free live online chats for LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-19 facilitated by vetted volunteers from LGBTQ+ community centers across the country.
 - [Trevor Space](#) – Affirming online community for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults ages 13-24 moderated by trained staff and vetted volunteers.
- Know that you are not alone and reach out to trusted adults or these resources for support:
 - The Trevor Project (24/7 resources):
 - Crisis Line – 1-866-488-7386
 - [TrevorChat](#)
 - TrevorText – Text “START” to 678678
- [Trans Lifeline Hotline](#) – 877-565-8860
- LGBT National Youth Talkline – 800-246-7743

Acknowledgements

HRC FOUNDATION

The HRC Foundation — a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization — envisions a world where all LGBTQ+ people can participate fully in the systems that shape our daily lives. Through public education, research, and policy and practice change, the Foundation's impact can be felt in schools, on factory floors and corporate suites, and in places of worship. It touches LGBTQ+ lives from childhood through end-of-life, people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities and religious beliefs, in big cities and small towns, in the United States and across the globe.

YOUTH WELL-BEING

The HRC Foundation's Youth Well-Being Program is dedicated to improving the lived experience of LGBTQ+ youth in everyday institutions of daily life—families, schools, after-school enrichment programs, community centers, health and wellness programs, child welfare, and other systems of care. The Youth Well-Being Program includes the Time to THRIVE conferences, Project THRIVE, the Youth Ambassador program, the Parents for Transgender Equality Council and a portfolio of training and educational resources to help youth-serving professionals promote the overall well-being of LGBTQ+ youth.

THE PUBLIC EDUCATION & RESEARCH PROGRAM

The HRC Foundation's Public Education & Research Program spearheads a wide variety of LGBTQ+ advocacy and outreach campaigns, working to ensure that the HRC Foundation's resources and programs are timely, impactful and inclusive. In addition to publishing resource guides, informational materials and reports, the team conducts original quantitative and qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people. The program also collaborates with experts and provides guidance to other HRC initiatives in support of efforts to advance LGBTQ+ equality and well-being.



Thank you to our national Project THRIVE Partner, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children for sharing resources for online safety. Learn more at [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children \(missingkids.org\)](https://www.missingkids.org).

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Ryan Watson, Associate Professor, University of Connecticut

Dr. Ryan Watson is an Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut and was the lead researcher who ran both the 2017 and 2022 LGBTQ+ Youth Study, as well as co-led the 2018 LGBTQ+ Youth Report which utilized data from the 2017 survey, as well as co-led the 2018 LGBTQ+ Youth Report which utilized data from the 2017 survey. His program of research is focused on reducing health disparities among sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth and young adults. Motivated by the urgent need to reduce the inequities in health for vulnerable populations, he has focused his scholarship on SGM youth and young adults, their relationships within family and school contexts, and their health experiences. Collaborating with a prolific team of scholars, he has been awarded over a million dollars in federal funding and published more than 125 peer-reviewed papers in the spirit of better understanding the mechanisms that drive well-documented injustices in health, school, and community experiences for SGM individuals.

Report Authors

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Charleigh J. Flohr is Associate Director of Public Education & Research at the HRC Foundation, where she has been for almost five years. As Associate Director, she conducts statistical analyses and leads data-collection efforts that support public education efforts geared toward increasing public awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ people. Charleigh has nearly a decade of experience in research with experience across multiple organizations, including the Edgar Dyer Institute of Leadership and Public Policy, the Congressional Management Foundation, Center for American Progress, Democracy Fund and the National Center for Transgender Equality. She has several research publications, including peer-reviewed publications. Flohr holds a Master's in Public Policy from Georgetown University, where she studied causal econometrics and survey statistics. She is currently based in Washington, DC.

Shoshana K. Goldberg, PhD MPH, Director of Public Education & Research

Shoshana K. Goldberg is the Director of Public Education & Research at the HRC Foundation. In her role, she oversees research projects that use quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in all aspects and dimensions of daily life, as well as public education products that aim to educate and inform advocates, policy makers and the general public. Prior to joining to HRC, Goldberg held both research and academic positions in the fields of LGBTQ+ health and policy, working with organizations such as The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Strength in Numbers Consulting Group. Through her prior work, she has co-authored numerous academic articles, book chapters and research briefs, gaining expertise in the use of population-based data to understand the demographics of the LGBTQ+ population, as well as how existing social, structural and political factors contribute to vulnerabilities, marginalization and health disparities faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Goldberg holds a Master's of Public Health in Maternal and Child Health, and a Ph.D. in Maternal and Child Health and Epidemiology, both earned from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She is currently based in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Ted Lewis, MEd, Director of Youth Well-Being

Ted Lewis, MEd, serves as the director of Youth & Family Programs in HRC's Foundation. In this role, they work with the All Children-All Families program, HRC Foundation's LGBTQ+ advocacy program within child welfare and social services systems, and the Youth Well-Being program, which is dedicated to improving the lived experience of LGBTQ+ youth in everyday institutions of daily life. Ted brought nearly two decades of experience to their role at HRC. Prior to this role, Ted served as the executive director of Side by Side, a Richmond-based LGBTQ+ youth organization and was the founding LGBTQ+ staff position at UNC Charlotte and the University of Richmond. Ted has also consulted with Fortune 500 companies, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and nonprofit organizations on LGBTQ+ inclusion. They hold a Master's of Education from the University of South Carolina.

Ralph Jones, Manager, Youth Well-Being

Ralph Jones is a community advocate with a background in program creation, public health, and legal theory. He currently serves as the manager of the Youth Well-Being program at the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Within this role he coordinates collaborations between the program and its national partners and manages external communications through the Project THRIVE newsletter. The focus of his work is LGBTQ+ youth prosperity which he does through empathetic partnership to push for changes in inclusive policy. Ralph brings a plethora of lived and professional experienced informed primarily by his time as a health impact specialist with the DC Department of Health where he engaged with Washington DC's BIPOC communities and supported the HRC HBCU Program, eventually co-creating the HBCU PrEP Peer Initiative. He currently holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy with a concentration in Law from the University of New Orleans.