

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Canadian Schools

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What is LGBTTTIQQAAP?

- Sexual and gender minority
- Invisible minority
- Disproportionate targets for violence and victimization
- Coming out at younger ages



Generation Queer

What is life like for LGBTQ youth in schools?

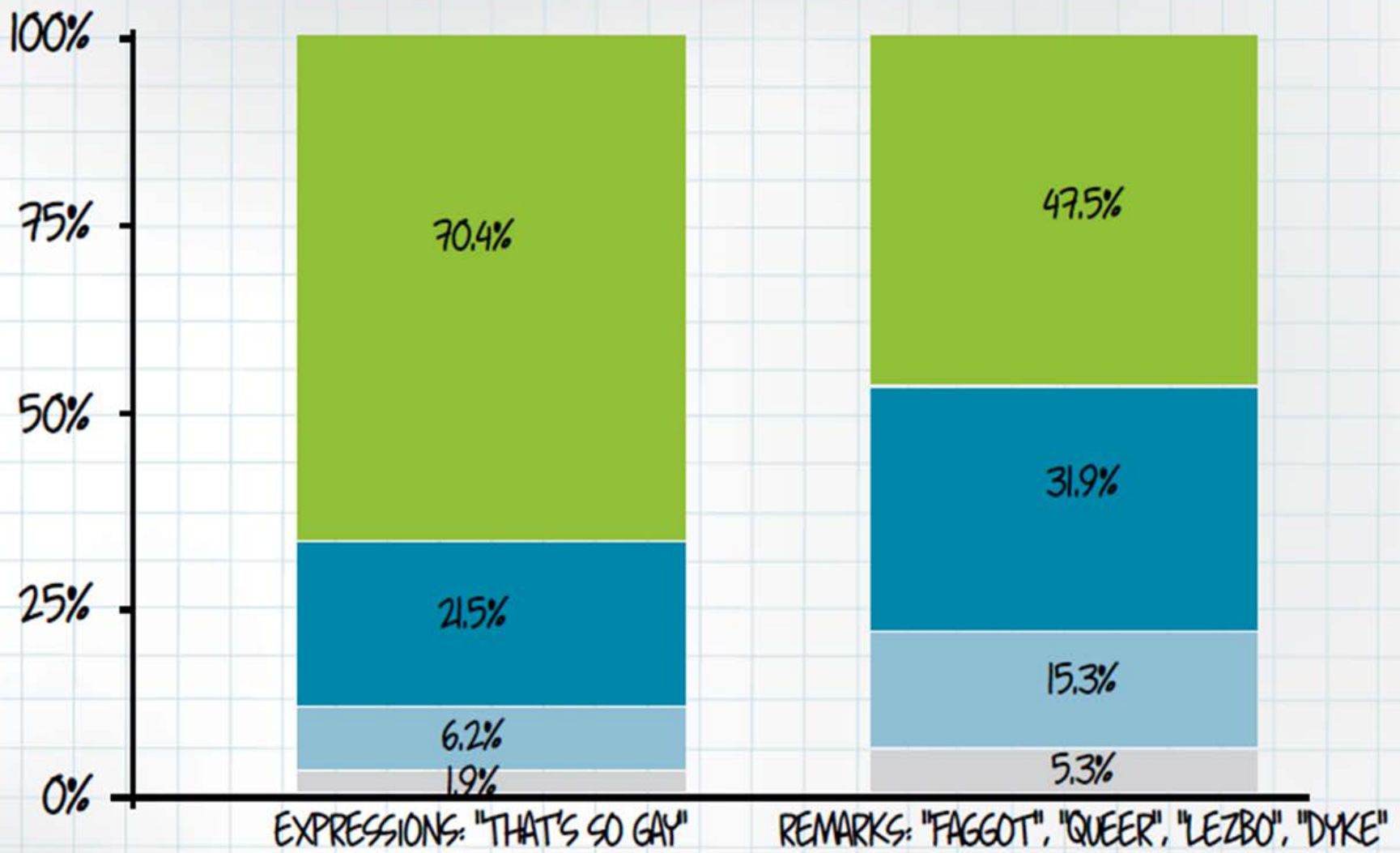
Egale National Climate Survey on Homophobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools

3700 students from across Canada (average age **17.4 yrs**)

- **73%** identified as heterosexual
- **26%** as LGB or questioning
- **3%** as trans-identified

FIGURE 1: FREQUENCY OF HOMOPHOBIC COMMENTS (ALL STUDENTS)

NEVER RARELY (MONTHLY) SOMETIMES (WEEKLY) FREQUENTLY (DAILY)



**NO
HOMO
PHOBES
DOT COM**

<http://www.nohomophobes.com>

Physical Harassment & Student Safety

- **1 in 5 (21%)** of LGBTQ students report being harassed or assaulted
- Students identify locker rooms, washrooms, hallways as dangerous spaces in schools
- **61.3%** of students with one or more **LGBTQ parents** reported feeling unsafe at school
- **52.7%** of LGBTQ participants reported feeling unsafe at school, compared to only **3.4%** of non-LGBTQ respondents

Toronto District School Board – Student Census (2014)

8% of students in grades 9-12 identified as LGBTQ or questioning

High School Completion

- **68%** for LGBTQ vs. **78%** for heterosexual students
- Only **54%** of LGBTQ students applied for postsecondary compared to **68%** of heterosexual students

School Violence

- **27%** of LGBTQ students were threatened with violence at school compared with only **13%** of heterosexual students

Bullying, Harassment, and School Safety

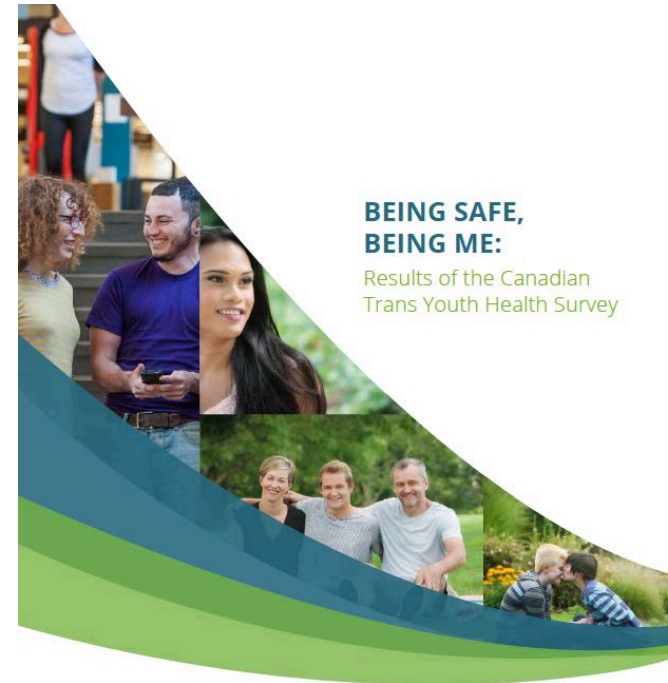
- **47%** of LGBTQ students experienced name calling/insults compared with only **31%** of heterosexual students
- **34%** of LGBTQ students did not feel safe at school compared with only **22%** of heterosexual students
- **19%** of LGBTQ students reported cyberbullying compared with only **8%** of heterosexual students
- **41%** of LGBTQ students did not feel supported by teachers compared with only **31%** of heterosexual students
- LGBTQ students were somewhat more likely to identify as peacemakers at school (**22%** vs. **16%**)

School Participation

- LGBTQ students are much less likely to participate in sports (**27%** vs. **38%**) than heterosexual students
- LGBTQ students are more likely to participate in arts activities (**34%** vs. **24%**) than heterosexual students

Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey (2015)

- **Two-thirds** of transgender youth experienced incidents of discrimination because of their gender identity;
- More than **70%** were victims of sexual harassment;
- **Nearly half** of older transgender youth reported cyber bullying;
- Nearly **two-thirds** engaged in self-harming behaviours in the past year; and
- More than **30%** attempted suicide.
- **70%** reported their families did not understand them.



**BEING SAFE,
BEING ME:**

Results of the Canadian
Trans Youth Health Survey



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



“How many educators are underestimating the extent of homophobia and transphobia in their school cultures and the damage being done to the students in their care?”

Support for LGBTQ youth



Growing up is never easy, but perhaps especially so for children who realise their sexuality or gender identity is different from most around them. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) ideation and activity can start by age 13 years, according to Youth Chances—a 5 year project to survey the experiences of LGBTQ youth in England—which reported its first results last week.

To date, 7000 16–25 year olds, including more than 6500 LGBTQ youth, have participated in the study by the charity Metro, the University of Greenwich, and the management consultancy Ergo Consulting. The results are concerning. Nearly half of LGBTQ youth surveyed reported having experienced harassment or threats and almost a quarter physical abuse. 42% of the LGBTQ group reported seeking medical help for depression and anxiety compared with 29% of heterosexual non-transgender youth. More than half of LGBTQ respondents reported self-harming now or in the past compared with 35% of heterosexual non-trans youth. And 44% of LGBTQ reported ever having thought about suicide compared with 26% of heterosexual

non-trans respondents. The survey also found that schools in particular were fearful and hostile environments for LGBTQ youth and failed badly in educational, emotional, and health information and support.

The results suggest a mental health crisis among LGBTQ youth and, indeed, their heterosexual non-trans counterparts who also reported high rates of problems. The UK Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) latest announcement that it was making youth mental health a priority is therefore welcome. The RCGP is recommending enhanced training in child health and mental health for general practitioners. Training should also include special consideration for mental health issues relating to LGBTQ youth.

Young people, however, might not seek help for mental health problems from the medical profession. Schools should be places where young people can find information and support, but they are not for LGBTQ youth. Remedying this situation requires urgent review by schools about their policies and services for this vulnerable group. ■ *The Lancet*

For the survey see http://www.youthchances.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/YC_REPORT_FirstFindings_2014.pdf

For the RCGP announcement see <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/news/2014/january/gps-make-youth-mental-health-a-priority.aspx>

4 Key Factors that Make a Positive Difference

- (1) Inclusive Curriculum**
- (2) Supportive Teachers**
- (3) Comprehensive Policies**
- (4) Visibility & Inclusion (GSAs)**



iSMSS Studies

- Academic Studies and Research
- NEW Undergrad & Graduate Courses
- Monthly Inside/OUT Speakers' Series
- LGBTQ Student Scholarships

iSMSS Services

- Camp fYrefly: www.CampfYrefly.ca
- fYrefly in Schools – peer-to-peer education program
- Family Resilience Project – Free Community Counselling
- Provincial Gay-Straight Alliance Network & Conference
- UofA Safe Spaces Initiative/Report
- Educational Outreach/PD Workshops
- University of Alberta Pride Week
- Edmonton Queer History Project

www.ismss.ualberta.ca