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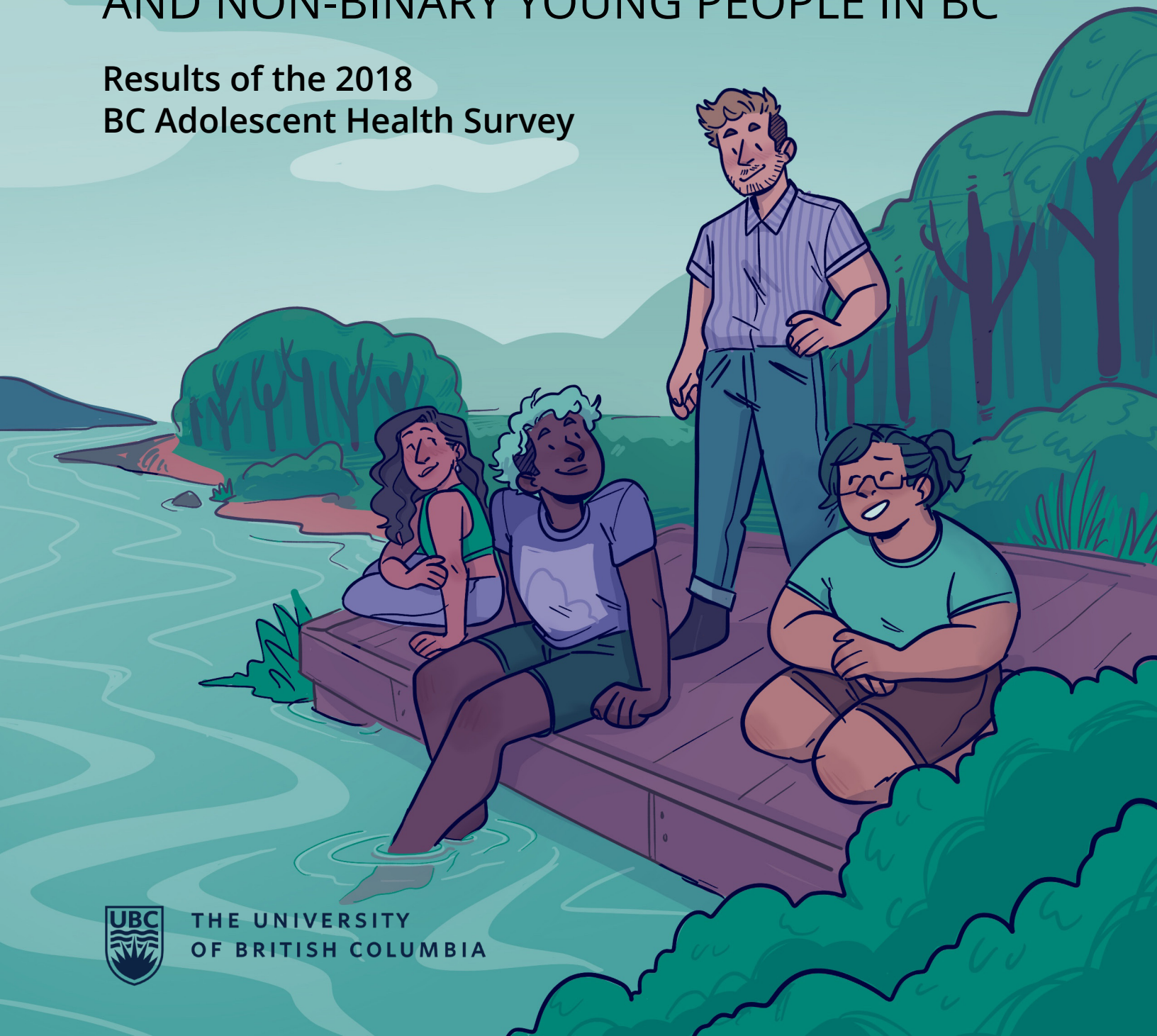


Stigma and Resilience
Among Vulnerable
Youth Centre

GENDER-DIVERSE:

A SPOTLIGHT ON THE HEALTH OF TRANS AND NON-BINARY YOUNG PEOPLE IN BC

Results of the 2018
BC Adolescent Health Survey



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Thank you to all the youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS, the schools who supported them to participate, and the nurses and nursing students who administered the survey.

Quotes from trans and non-binary youth who participated in the survey are included throughout the report.

Thank you also to the Trans and Non-binary Youth Advisories of the Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre (SARAVYC), whose insights in related research also helped inform this report.

McCreary and SARAVYC have had a longstanding partnership to co-conduct research on the health of LGBTQ2S youth, including this focus on gender-diverse youth in the BC AHS.

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KEY FINDINGS

This report focuses on the health profile of different groups of gender-diverse youth (trans boys and girls, non-binary youth, and youth who were questioning or unsure of their gender identity), rather than on comparing gender-diverse youth to cisgender youth (those whose sex assigned at birth and current gender identity match). However, where these comparisons were considered:

- ▶ Gender-diverse youth were more likely to report experiencing discrimination, violence, and food insecurity; and were less likely to have positive experiences at home and school.

Despite these and other negative experiences, the resilience of gender-diverse youth is apparent:

- ▶ About half of trans and non-binary youth in the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they have a good life.
- ▶ Most gender-diverse youth planned to continue their education beyond high school, were hopeful for the future, and had a network of close friends.

Gender-diverse youth face challenges to their healthy development and participation in school and community life. For example:

- ▶ Fewer than half of trans and non-binary youth felt safe at school.
- ▶ About half of trans girls and questioning youth, and fewer than half of trans boys and non-binary youth felt that their teachers cared about them.
- ▶ About 1 in 3 trans, non-binary, and questioning youth felt connected to their school.
- ▶ Fewer than half of trans boys, non-binary youth, and questioning youth, and only 3 in 10 trans girls often or always felt safe when using transit.
- ▶ Fewer than half of gender-diverse youth felt they had an adult in their family who was supportive of them.
- ▶ Among those who had dated in the past year, more than 1 in 10 trans, non-binary, and questioning youth had experienced dating violence.
- ▶ One in 4 did not feel safe in their home.

When gender-diverse youth feel supported and are offered opportunities to fully participate, they report a more positive health picture. For example:



Gender-diverse young people who felt highly connected to their school were more likely to report good or excellent mental health, and were less likely to have forgone physical or mental health care, to have experienced negative consequences of substance use, or to have seriously thought about or attempted suicide.



Gender-diverse youth who reported greater feelings of family connectedness were much less likely to report extreme stress, suicidal thoughts and attempts, or problems with substance use. Youth with high family connectedness were also much more likely to have been able to access physical or mental health care when they needed it.



More than 8 in 10 gender-diverse youth participated in at least one extracurricular activity. Art, drama, singing, and music were popular activities for trans, non-binary, and questioning youth, who were more likely to have participated in these activities than their cis peers. Many gender-diverse youth also participated in volunteer activities at least once per week.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a profile of the health of *gender-diverse* youth in British Columbia (BC). The report uses data from the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). The BC AHS is the most reliable, comprehensive health survey of adolescents ages 12–19 in public schools in BC. Repeated every five years since 1992, the survey involves a large-scale population-based sample. In 2018, over 38,000 young people in 58 of BC's 60 school districts completed the survey, the largest cohort that has participated so far.

This report is intended for a community audience, so details about the sampling, data weighting, statistical methods for analyses, and other technical information are not provided. This information is available upon request to either McCreary (mccreary@mcs.bc.ca) or SARAVYC (saravyc@nursing.ubc.ca).

As with previous BC AHSs, the 2018 survey was developed in consultation with youth, parents, and other experts in young people's health. It was extensively pilot tested before being administered by public health nurses and nursing students to students in mainstream public schools between February and June 2018.



Asking About Gender Identity

Based on young people's input, the 2013 BC AHS included a question about whether youth identified as transgender. The question was the first time a population-based survey in Canada had asked about gender identity beyond binary options of male/man/boy and female/woman/girl, but because there were no previously validated measures for asking young people, the question was untested. Subsequent studies by SARAVYC and other research teams about young people's understanding of gender and how to ask questions about transgender or non-binary gender identities found that particular question was one of the least liked, and not well understood—for example more than 17% of students said they did not know what transgender meant.

For 2018, we drew on research by SARAVYC and others, and on recommendations from Statistics Canada about ways to ask about gender that would include trans and non-binary youth, and those who were questioning their gender. We developed two questions designed to be understandable to young people in this age group: 1) the sex on their birth certificate, with options of male and female (at the time, BC did not have the X option for birth certificates) and 2) their current gender identity, with options that included "male," "female," "I do not identify as male or female," and "I am not sure yet." McCreary researchers then piloted the questions with over 800 young people across BC to ensure they were easily understood by youth aged 12–19.

Combining the two questions allowed us to identify *cisgender* adolescents—that is, those whose sex assigned at birth and current gender identity match—as well as those whose combination of assigned sex at birth and current gender identity do not match, e.g., *trans boys*, *trans girls*, *non-binary*, and *questioning* young people.

Although we recognize that young people might choose among a variety of different terms to identify their gender, for this report we use the terms *cis boys* and *cis girls* for cisgender adolescents; *trans boys* for those who identified their sex assigned at birth as female but their current gender identity as male; *trans girls* for those whose sex assigned at birth was male and their current gender identity is female; *non-binary* for those who indicated they did not identify as either male or female; and *questioning* for those who were unsure of their gender identity.

About This Report

Since the large majority of adolescents identify as cisgender (98%), their responses are the primary results reported in publications from the BC AHS, such as *Balance and Connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth*. This report instead focuses on the 2018 BC AHS responses of trans, non-binary, and questioning youth, reported separately, so that their experiences and voices are visible. There are also a few comparisons to cis girls and cis boys, where this is relevant to understanding the health picture of gender-diverse youth.

The report is divided into six main sections. The first provides background information about the sub-sample of gender-diverse young people who

completed the survey, the second considers some potentially adverse experiences or challenges to growing up healthy, and the next section focuses on their health profile. The fourth section looks at relationships and environments that support healthy development, while the fifth section looks at how these different supports serve as protective factors linked to better health or lower odds of health problems. The report concludes with a summary of the findings and discusses how the results can be used to foster the health of trans, non-binary, and questioning young people in BC.

Because gender-diverse youth are a relatively small sub-sample of BC AHS participants, the percentages reported for each of the different gender-diverse groups may not be statistically significantly different from each other, even when they might look different. The estimates for gender-diverse groups are nearly always significantly different from cisgender youth where comparisons occur in the report, unless we note it.

Comparisons noted between gender-diverse youth and cisgender youth in this report, or between different gender-diverse groups, are statistically significant at $p < .05$. This means there is up to a 5% likelihood that these results may have occurred by chance.

Any percentage marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution, as it has a higher than expected standard error, but is still within an acceptable range. Where the number of responses is too low or the standard error is too high for stable estimates, we will use the term *NR* for *Not Releasable*.

While the 2018 BC AHS is considered representative of 95% of young people ages 12–19 in mainstream schools in BC, gender-diverse youth may be more likely to be attending alternative schools, or not attending school, or they may be more likely to be absent from school because of potential unwelcoming school environments. The survey was a paper and pencil survey, only in English, and so may have excluded some gender-diverse young people with disabilities, language or literacy challenges. As a result, these results may not represent the experiences of all gender-diverse youth in BC.

“I don’t know if I feel like I’m in the right body. For years I’ve been thinking I should’ve been born in the other gender. I’m too scared to change because of what my family [and] friends would think.”

Youth aged 15, Fraser

Glossary

BC AHS

British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey

CISGENDER YOUTH

Youth whose sex assigned at birth and current gender identity match.

CIS BOYS

Youth who identified their sex assigned at birth and their current gender identity as male.

CIS GIRLS

Youth who identified their sex assigned at birth and their current gender identity as female.

ENACTED STIGMA

The ways that others target someone of a stigmatized group to show that they are not accepted.

GENDER-DIVERSE

An umbrella term for trans boys, trans girls, non-binary youth, and youth who were questioning or unsure of their gender identity.

LGBTQ2S

An acronym of gender and sexual minority identities that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Two Spirit.

McCREARY

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NON-BINARY YOUTH

Youth who did not identify as male or female.

NR (NOT RELEASABLE)

The number of responses was too low or the standard error was too high for stable estimates.

QUESTIONING YOUTH

Youth who were unsure of their gender identity.

SARAVYC

Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre

TRANSGENDER YOUTH

Youth whose combination of assigned sex at birth and current gender identity do not match.

TRANS BOYS

Youth who identified their sex assigned at birth as female and their current gender identity as male.

TRANS GIRLS

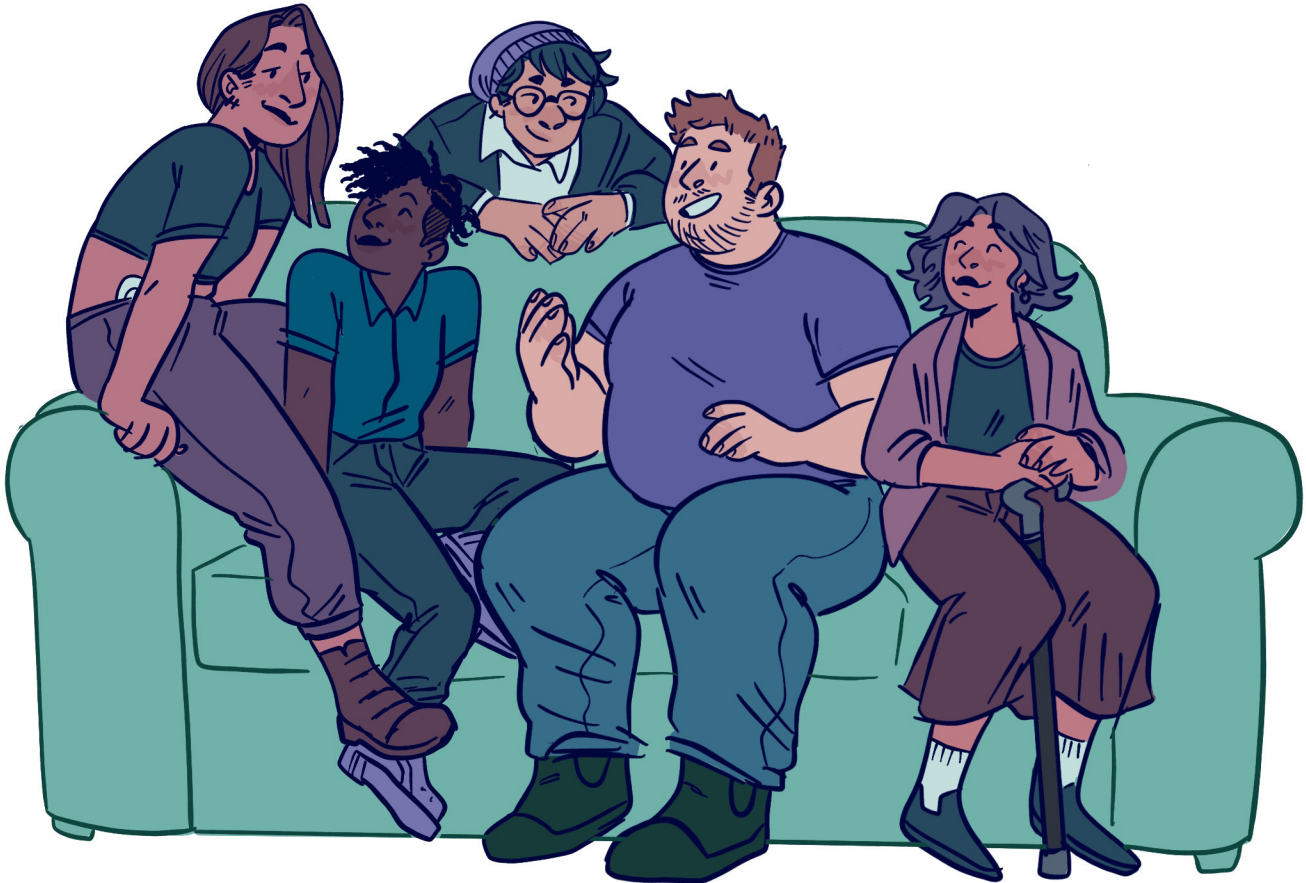
Youth who identified their sex assigned at birth as male and their current gender identity as female.

SECTION 1:

GENDER-DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE IN BC

In 2018, over 38,000 young people aged 12–19 from across BC participated in the BC AHS. The average age of youth who participated in the survey, regardless of gender identity, was 15 years old, i.e., trans, non-binary, and questioning youth in the BC AHS were similar ages to cisgender youth.

Nearly 49% of students identified as cis boys and a similar 49% as cis girls. Also, 2.5% of students indicated a gender-diverse identity: 0.5% identified as transgender (just over 0.1% as trans girls, 0.3% as trans boys), nearly 0.8% identified as non-binary, and 1.3% were unsure or questioning their gender identity. Based on the weighting of responses, these percentages represent an estimated 6,295 gender-diverse young people enrolled in mainstream schools in Grades 7–12 throughout the province.



Born in Canada

To help understand young people's backgrounds and experiences, the BC AHS asked youth whether they were born in or outside of Canada. Trans girls were least likely to have been born in Canada (64%*), while trans boys were most likely to have been born in Canada (84%). Seventy-nine percent of non-binary youth, and somewhat fewer questioning youth (67%), were born in Canada.

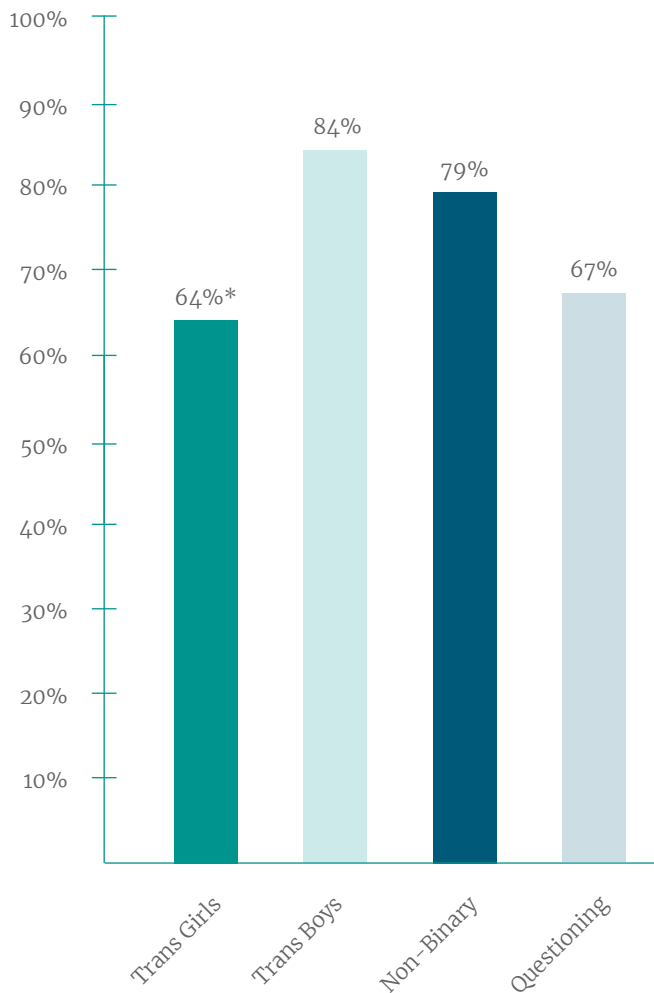
Language

Forty-six percent* of trans girls and 35% of trans boys reported speaking a language other than English at home. A higher percent of non-binary (56%) and questioning youth (58%) reported they spoke a language other than English at home.

YOUTH BORN IN CANADA

** Interpret with caution, high standard error.*

Note: The difference between questioning youth and trans boys and non-binary youth was statistically significant. No other differences were statistically significant.



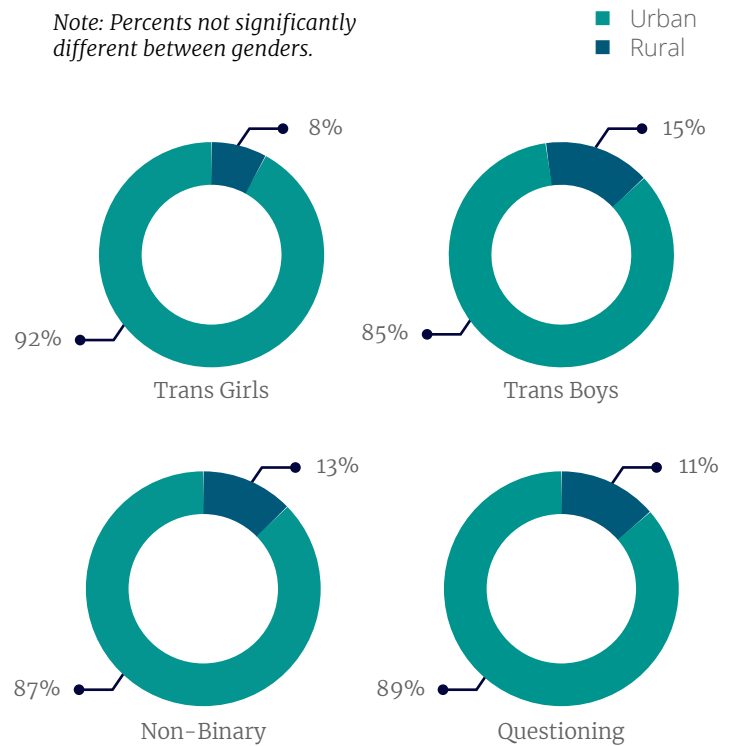
Where Youth Live in BC

Regardless of their gender identity, the majority of youth lived in urban areas of the province. Trans boys were somewhat more likely to be living in a rural area (15%) while trans girls were least likely to be living in a rural area (8%).

Most youth lived in the Fraser Health region, while fewer than 10% of youth were located in the Northern Health region.

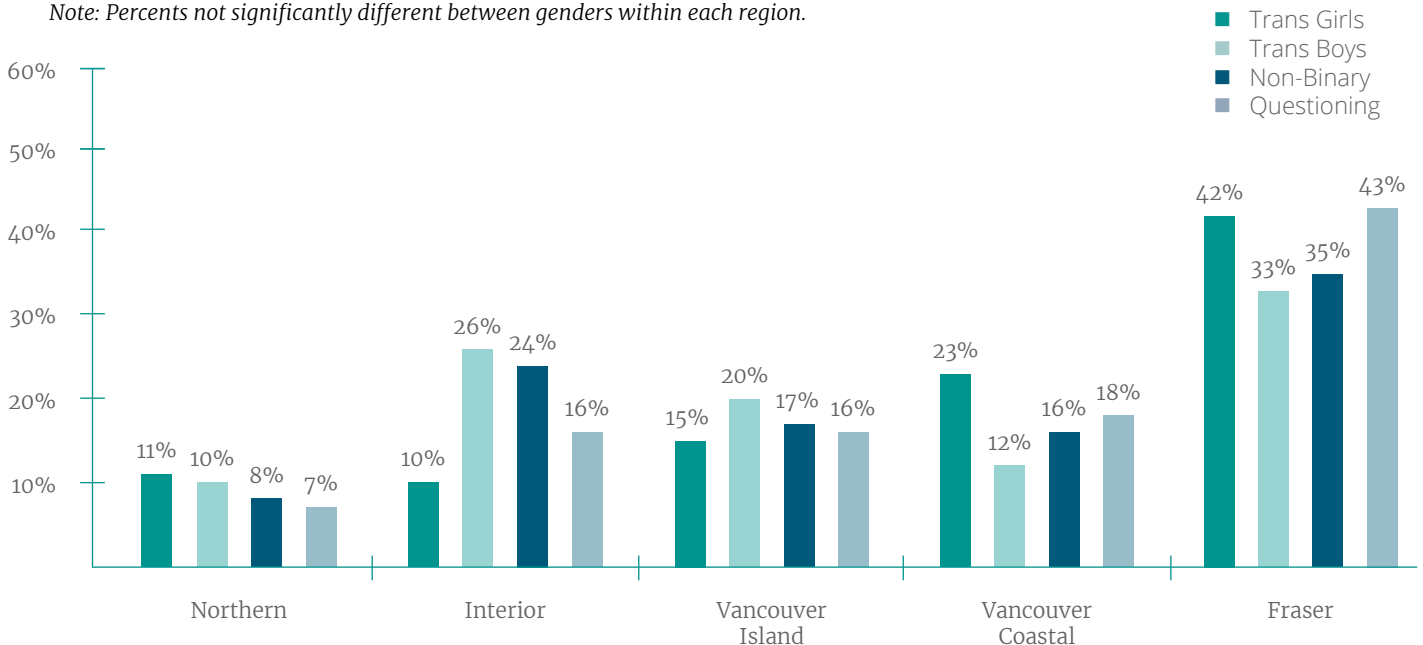
ARE YOUTH LIVING IN RURAL OR URBAN AREAS?

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



WHERE DO GENDER-DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE?

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders within each region.



Housing Instability

About 1 in 3 trans girls (31%*), non-binary youth (33%), and questioning youth (35%) had moved at least once in the past year. About 1 in 4 trans boys reported they had moved in the past year (24%), which was similar to cis boys and girls.

While most gender-diverse youth had not run away from home in the past year, nearly 1 in 3 trans girls (29%*) and about 1 in 5 non-binary youth, questioning youth, and trans boys (all 19%) had run away from home at least once in the last year, all of which were higher than cis youth.

Compared to their cisgender peers, trans, non-binary, and questioning youth were more than twice as likely to report having been kicked out of their home within the past year.

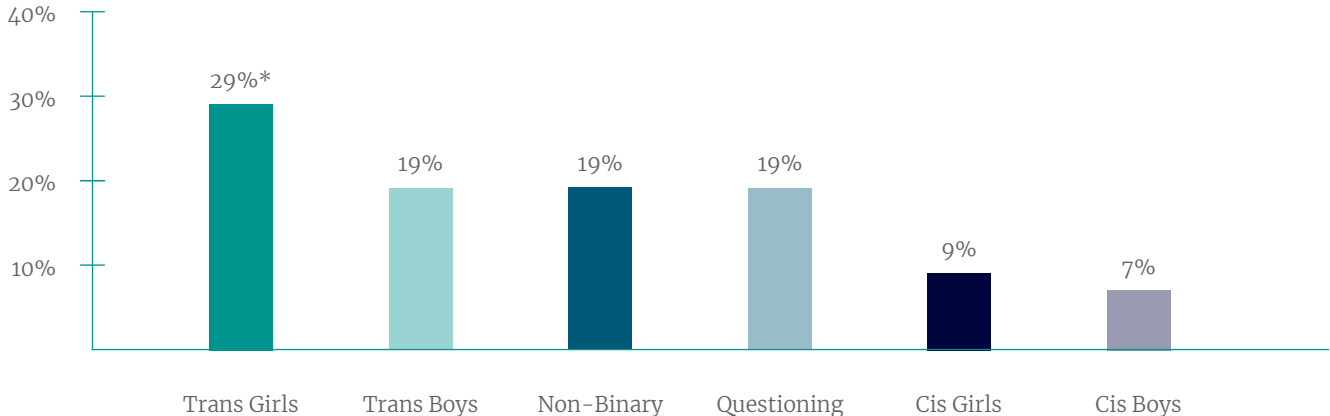
“I have not ever run away from home, but I thought about it.”

Youth aged 16, Interior

RUN AWAY IN THE PAST YEAR

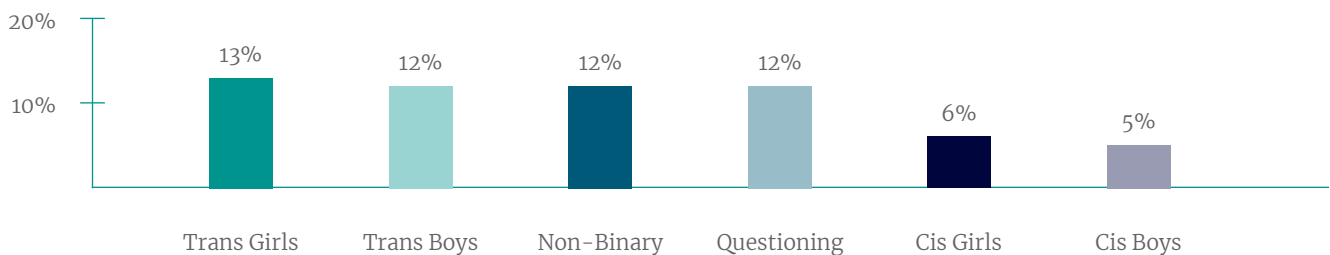
Note: Percents not significantly different between gender-diverse youth.

* Interpret with caution, high standard error.



KICKED OUT IN THE PAST YEAR

Note: Percents not significantly different between gender-diverse youth.



SECTION 2:

RISKS TO HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Marginalization, violence, discrimination, and deprivation all have effects on healthy development for young people. Gender-diverse youth may experience greater adversity and lower supports, which can help to explain health differences.

The experiences of gender-diverse youth may not be fully captured by the BC AHS, but these data do highlight some of the ways in which society may not accept and support gender-diverse young people.



Limited Access to Resources

“I am transgender, but my family doesn’t have enough money for me to start hormone replacement therapy.”

Youth aged 15, North

Deprivation

The 2018 BC AHS included a new 10 item measure of deprivation. For many items, a greater percent of gender-diverse youth reported they did not have these items but wanted them compared to cis boys and cis girls (although the differences between gender-diverse groups were not statistically significant). Sometimes the genders were similar to either cis boys or cis girls, but not usually both. These will be described below.

When asked if they had clothes that allowed them to fit in or feel they belong, about 7% of questioning youth, 7% of non-binary youth, 9% of trans boys, and 18%* of trans girls said they did not have these, but wanted them. Similarly, about 20%* of trans girls reported not having access to a space of their own to hang out in, while somewhat fewer questioning youth (16%), non-binary youth (13%), and trans boys (13%) said they did not have a space of their own to hang out in. Most gender-diverse youth felt they had access to the equipment they needed to participate in extracurricular activities, but around 1 in 10 did not (14%* of trans girls, 8% of trans boys, 8% of non-binary youth, and 9% of questioning youth).

Access to Technology and Transportation

Access to technology and transportation were among the few areas where gender-diverse youth were similar to cisgender peers. For example, about 1 in 10 gender-diverse youth did not have a smartphone but wanted one, which was not significantly different from cisgender youth.

Trans girls were more than 12 times as likely to say that they did not have access to the Internet, but wanted it (12%*), compared to their cis peers (<1%), but they were the only gender-diverse group that was different from cis youth. Four percent of questioning youth, and 2% of trans boys and non-binary youth also reported not having access to the Internet but wanting it.

About 11% of trans girls, 9% of questioning youth, 7% of trans boys, and 5% of non-binary youth told us that they did not have access to transportation but wanted it. These percents were all significantly different from cis youth except for non-binary youth, but not from each other.

Spending Money

Nearly a quarter of trans girls (23%*) and trans boys (23%), 17% of non-binary youth, and 16% of questioning youth said that they did not have money to spend on themselves but wanted it. These percents were higher than those for cis boys (10%) and cis girls (9%), but were not significantly different from each other.

Cisgender youth were less likely to report being deprived of money for school supplies, school trips, and to do extra-curricular activities compared to all gender-diverse groups: 3% of cis boys and 4% of cis girls did not have money for school supplies, compared to 20%* of trans girls, 12% of trans boys, 11% of non-binary youth, and 9% of questioning youth.

Quiet Place to Sleep

About 14%* of trans girls, 9% of trans boys, 6% of non-binary youth, and 8% of questioning youth said they did not have a quiet place to sleep at night, but wanted one, all of which were higher than cisgender peers (2%) but the estimates between gender-diverse groups were not significantly different from each other.

Hunger

When asked if they had access to lunch, or money for lunch, at school, 12%* of trans girls, 11% of trans boys, and 8% of non-binary and questioning youth reported not having consistent access to lunch, but wanting it, which was higher than 4% of cis boys and cis girls.

An additional question asked youth how often they went to bed hungry as a result of not having enough money for food at home. While about 1% of cis girls and cis boys reported often or always going to bed hungry, trans girls and trans boys were 6–8 times as likely, and non-binary and questioning youth were about 2.5–5 times as likely as cis youth to go to bed hungry often or always.

Loss and Bereavement

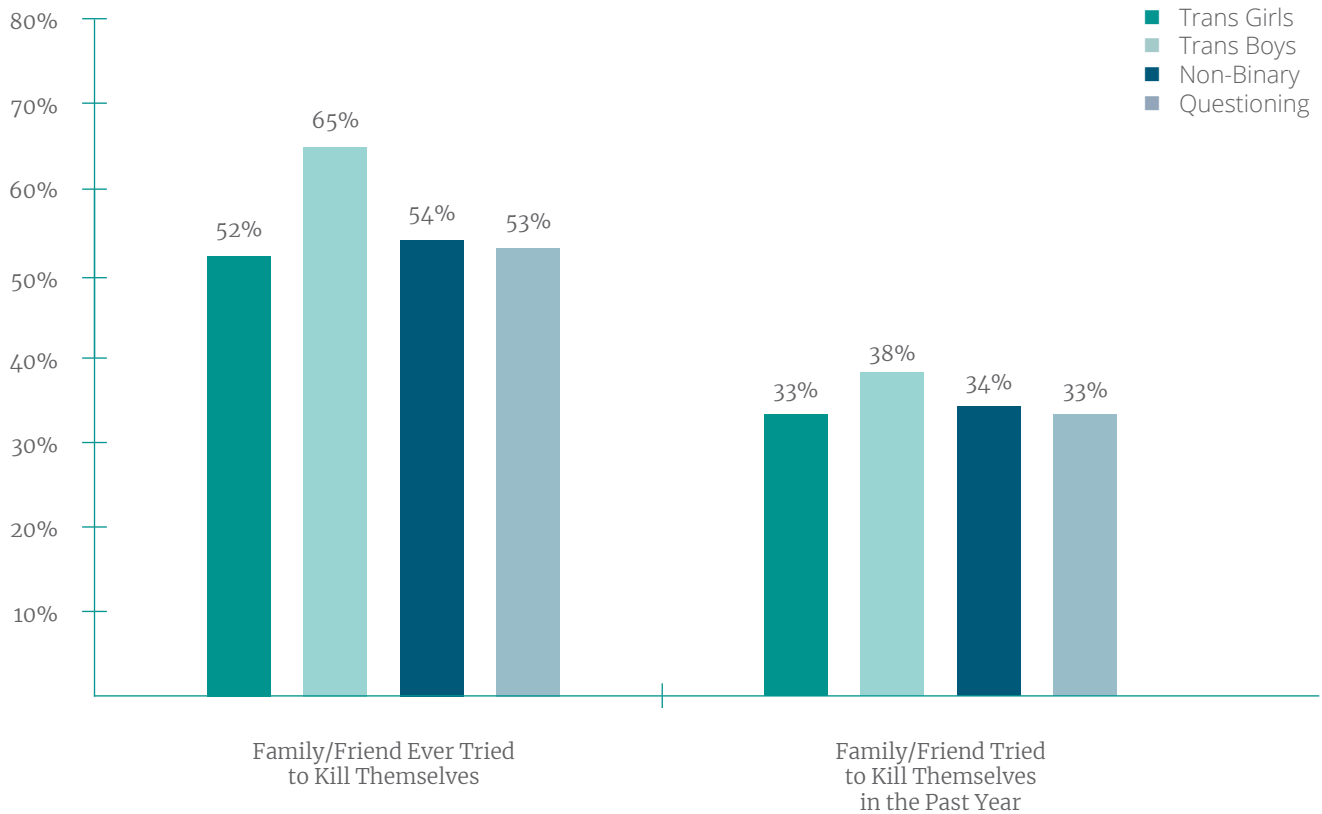
Family and Friend Suicide Attempts

The BC AHS asked respondents if any of their close friends or family members had attempted or died by suicide, and if these experiences had happened in the past year. More than half of trans, non-binary, and questioning young people reported

having at least one family member and/or friend who had attempted suicide. About 1 in 3 gender-diverse youth had a friend and/or family member attempt suicide in the past year.

FAMILY/FRIEND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Violence and Discrimination

“[We need] more sexual education—specifically LGBTQ+ education. We aren’t taught enough in school which can make it unsafe or unwelcoming for both students who have and haven’t come out. My peers’ lack of knowledge (or incorrect knowledge) makes school sometimes a very hostile environment for me and other queer students.”

Youth aged 13, Fraser

Physical Abuse

Youth were asked if they had ever been physically abused. While the majority of youth had not had this experience, 31% of non-binary youth, 29%* of trans girls, and 25% of questioning youth reported ever having experienced physical abuse. Also, 39% of trans boys had been abused, which was statistically significantly higher than for questioning and cisgender youth, but not significantly different from trans girls and non-binary youth.

Bullying

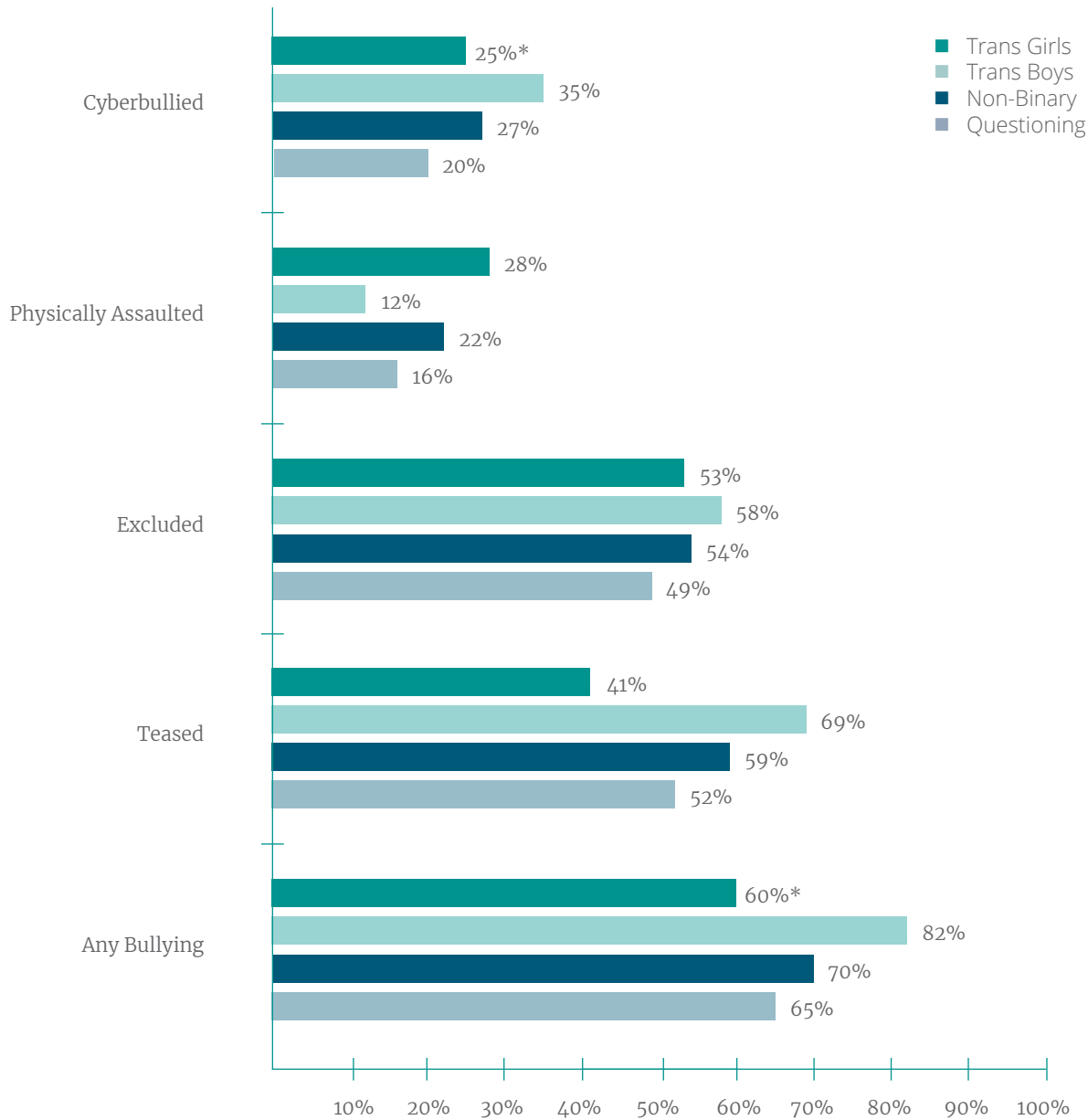
Youth were asked if they had been bullied at school or on the way to or from school within the past year. The different types of bullying included being teased, being deliberately excluded from activities, and physical assault. The overwhelming majority (82%) of trans boys had been the victims of bullying, as had 70% of non-binary youth. Over half of trans girls (60%*) and questioning youth (65%) had also been victims of at least one form of bullying.

Gender-diverse youth experienced relatively similar rates of bullying, and similar to cis girls, but generally higher than cis boys, except for physical assault. Cis girls reported the lowest rate of physical assault of any group (6%), while about 1 in 10 trans and cis boys reported being physically assaulted in the past year, and trans girls, non-binary, and questioning youth had higher rates of assault (trans girls estimates should be considered with caution).

When asked if they had ever bullied another youth, fewer than 10% of transgender and questioning youth, and 16% of non-binary youth, reported that they had done so within the past year (with no statistically significant differences).

BULLYING VICTIMIZATION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Note: Differences between trans boys and questioning youth were statistically significant for 'cyberbullied.' No other differences were statistically significant.



“I would like to learn more about LGBTQ in classes so my peers could also learn & be more accepting.”

Youth aged 14, Vancouver Coastal

Online Relationships

Youth were asked if someone had bullied or picked on them through the Internet or other technology in the past 12 months. Around 1 in 4 non-binary youth (27%) and trans girls (25%*) responded “yes,” as did 35% of trans boys and 20% of questioning youth. The only significant differences were between trans boys and questioning youth.

Youth were also asked if they had ever been the perpetrator of cyberbullying themselves. Compared to other gender-diverse youth, fewer trans girls (6%) reported having ever cyberbullied someone else; less than 10% of trans boys, non-binary youth, and questioning youth reported engaging in this behaviour.

Youth were asked if they had a significant other whom they had met online in the past year and had never met in person. Gender-diverse youth were more likely to have a romantic partner online compared to cis boys or cis girls (7%). Twenty-nine percent of trans boys, 28%* of trans girls, 19% of non-binary youth, and 17% of questioning youth reported having had an online partner.

Youth were asked if they had ever met anyone online who had made them feel unsafe. Thirty-one percent of trans boys and 20%* of trans girls responded “yes,” as did 27% of non-binary youth and 26% of questioning youth. These estimates were not significantly different from each other.

Verbal and Physical Sexual Harassment

Youth were asked if they had experienced sexual comments, jokes, or gestures directed at them in the past year. Compared with cis boys, all other gender identities were more likely to report verbal or physical sexual harassment, although the percents did not differ significantly from cis girls or between gender-diverse groups.

The majority of non-binary youth (55%) reported verbal harassment and 39% experienced physical sexual harassment within the past year. Around half of trans boys and questioning youth had faced verbal sexual harassment, and 30–31% had experienced physical sexual harassment. Forty-six percent* of trans girls had experienced verbal sexual harassment and 15%* reported physical sexual harassment in the past year.

“LGBTQ+ and sex ed! I learned everything I know from online :)”

Youth aged 17, Vancouver Coastal

Dating Violence Among Those Who Dated

When asked if someone they were dating had physically hurt them within the past year, 14% of trans girls, trans boys, and non-binary youth, and 12% of questioning youth responded “yes.”

Trans and non-binary youth were nearly twice as likely to have experienced dating violence compared to cis youth.

Sexual Abuse

The BC AHS asks about sexual abuse in a number of different ways, including directly asking about sexual abuse, whether youth were forced to have sex when they did not want to, or were under the legal age of consent during their first sexual experience. Compared to cis boys (4%), all other gender groups were much more likely to report sexual abuse: 17% of cis girls and 21%* of trans girls reported similar rates of sexual abuse, while questioning youth (22%), trans boys (27%), and non-binary youth (28%) were more likely to report sexual abuse than cis girls. However, the estimates of gender-diverse youth reporting sexual abuse were not significantly different from each other.

“Over two years ago I was in an abusive relationship... Today I am two years clean from self-harm, haven’t thought of suicide in two years, been single (mostly) & had healthy relationships!”

Youth aged 15, Fraser

Healthy Relationships Resource

Taking Pride, a new LGBTQ2S healthy relationships program designed with youth for youth by McCreary and SARAVYC, is available to GSAs or LGBTQ2S community groups across BC. See more info on page 59 or visit saravyc.ubc.ca/takingpride.

Discrimination

Young people were asked if they had been discriminated against or treated unfairly in the past year, due to their race, ethnicity, or skin colour; gender or sex; disability; physical appearance; weight; sexual orientation; and/or how much money they or their family made.

Trans, non-binary, and questioning youth often face a greater degree of marginalization and violence compared to cisgender youth. For example, trans boys (79%), non-binary youth (66%), and questioning youth (59%), were more likely to have experienced any form of discrimination in the past year, including racism, compared to cis girls (44%), and were about twice as likely to report any form of discrimination compared to cis boys (32%).

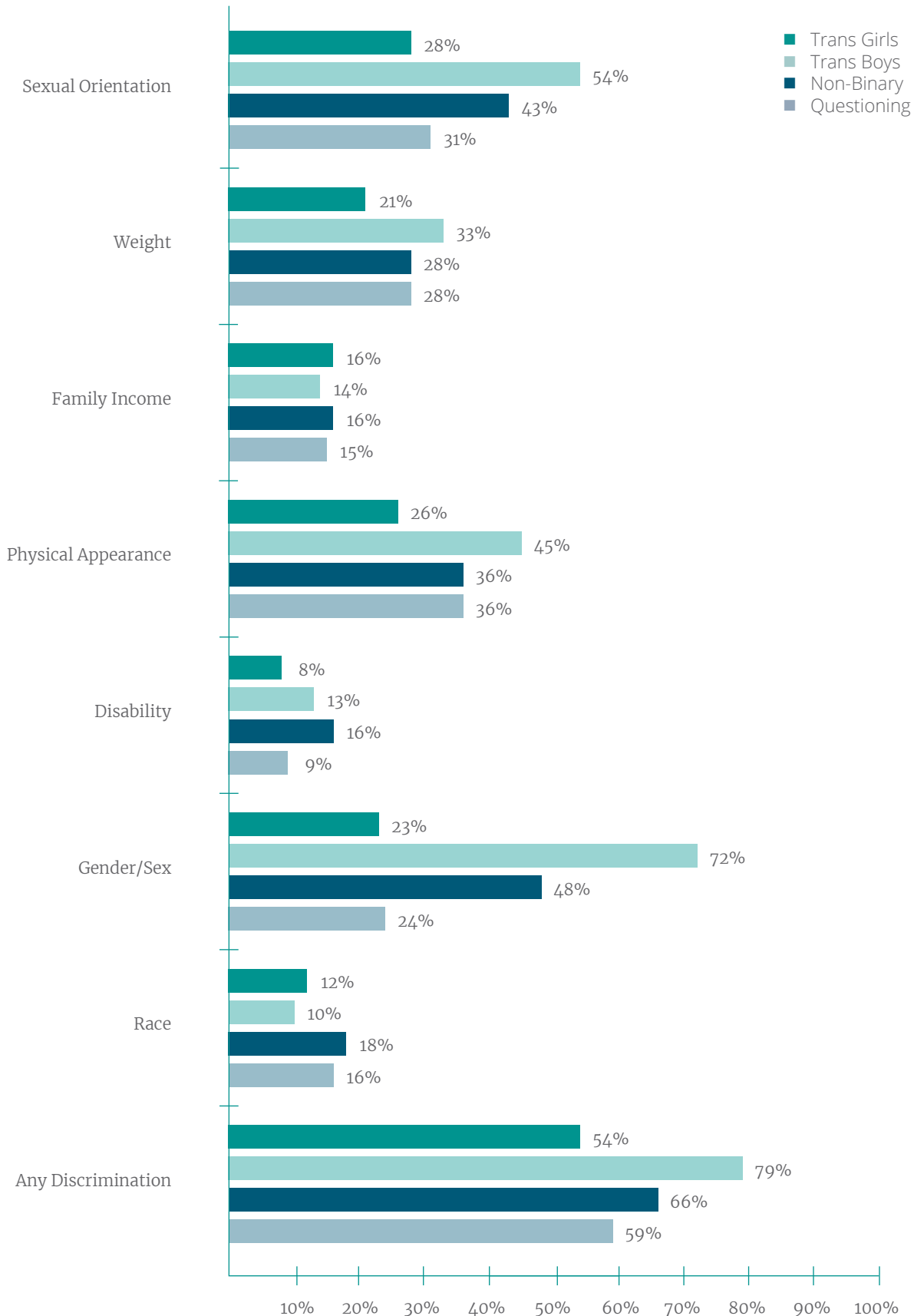
For most individual types of discrimination except racial discrimination, gender-diverse youth were also more likely to report that type of discrimination than cis boys, but not always different from cis girls. Gender-diverse youth were most likely to experience discrimination due to their sex or gender, with a significantly higher percent of trans boys reporting gender discrimination compared to other gender groups. Trans boys also reported the highest rates of discrimination based on sexual orientation (54%) or physical appearance (45%), but these percents were not significantly different from other gender-diverse groups, although they were different from cisgender boys and girls. Although gender-diverse students were just as likely as cisgender students to report racial discrimination, at least 1 in 10 gender-diverse youth reported being discriminated against based on race, ethnicity or skin colour.

“People need to open their eyes and take their heads out of their ass and start treating people like they’re human and that we are all the same.”

Youth aged 16, Interior

DISCRIMINATION BASED ON:

Note: Differences between trans boys and other gender groups were statistically significant for 'gender/sex.' No other differences were statistically significant.



SECTION 3:

HEALTH PROFILE

As shown in the previous section, trans, non-binary, and questioning youth often experience more discrimination, bullying, and violence than their cis peers. Research has shown that those experiences of *enacted stigma* can contribute to stress, which in turn affects people's physical and mental health. Therefore, it is not surprising that gender-diverse youth

reported feeling extreme stress in the past month at a rate 4–6 times higher than cis boys (6%) and 1.5–2 times higher than cis girls (17%). Addressing discrimination and improving support for gender-diverse youth is critical for improving the health of trans, non-binary, and questioning young people in BC.



Physical Health

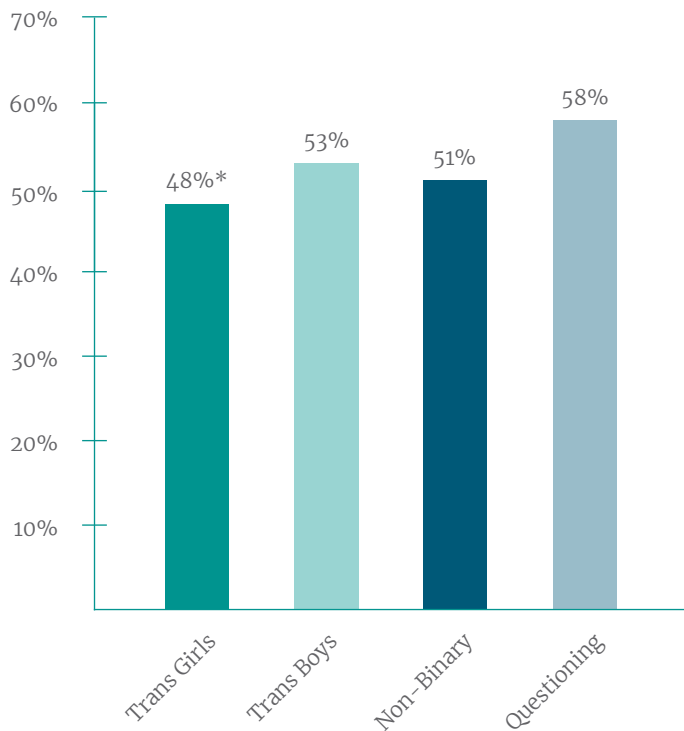
Self-Rated Physical Health

Youth were asked to describe their overall physical health. About half of trans girls (48%*), trans boys (53%), non-binary youth (51%), and questioning youth (58%) rated their physical health to be good or excellent. These were not significantly different from each other.

RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED GOOD/ EXCELLENT PHYSICAL HEALTH

* Interpret with caution, high standard error.

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Sleep Hours and Waking Up Feeling Rested

“I have insomnia, and my parents refuse to help despite the doctor’s recommendations.”

Youth aged 14, Vancouver Island

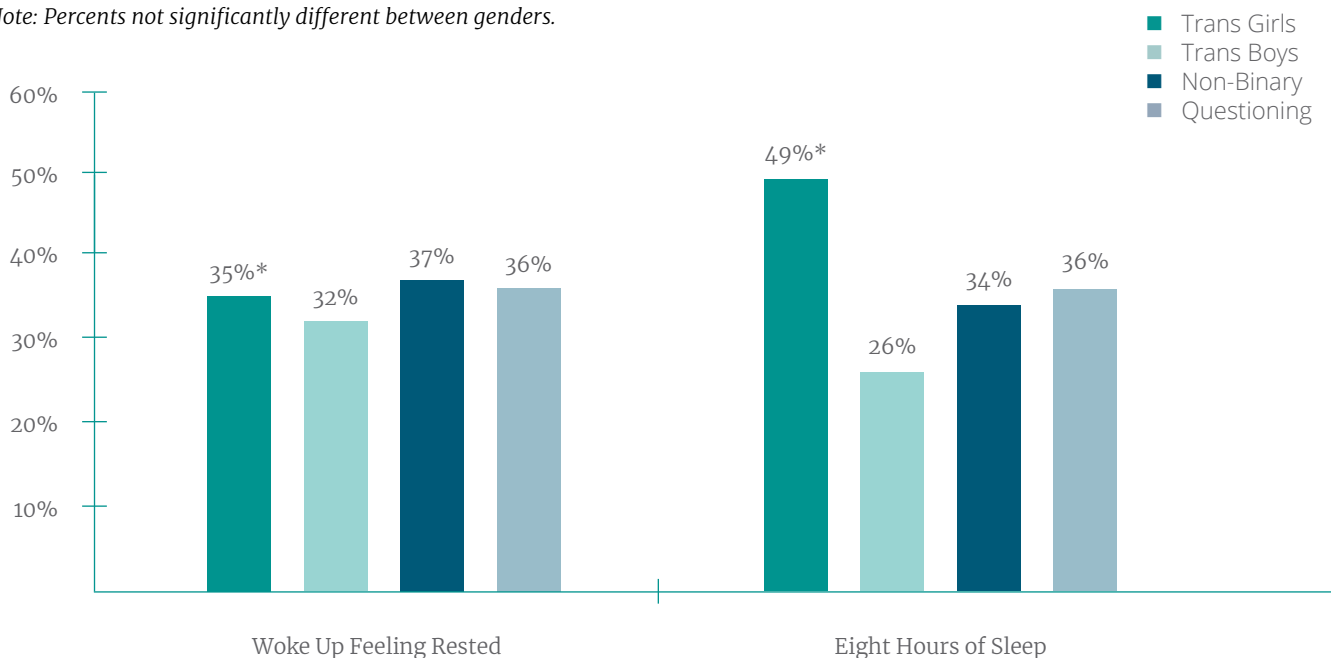
Getting enough sleep has been shown to help reduce stress and improve physical and emotional well-being for young people. Fewer than half of questioning youth, non-binary youth, trans boys, and trans girls said they got at least eight hours sleep on the night before they completed the BC AHS. Of these, trans girls were the most likely to report they had got eight or more hours of sleep (49%*), while trans boys were the least likely (26%). These estimates were significantly lower for cis boys and girls.

About one third of trans girls (35%*), trans boys (32%), questioning youth (36%), and non-binary youth (37%) reported feeling well-rested when they woke up on the day they took the survey, and these estimates were not significantly different between gender-diverse groups.

SLEEP QUALITY

* Interpret with caution, high standard error.

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Health Conditions

“My pre-existing health problem, while has not been a problem in the last year, has severely impacted my mental/physical health in the past for a long period of time.”

Youth aged 13, North

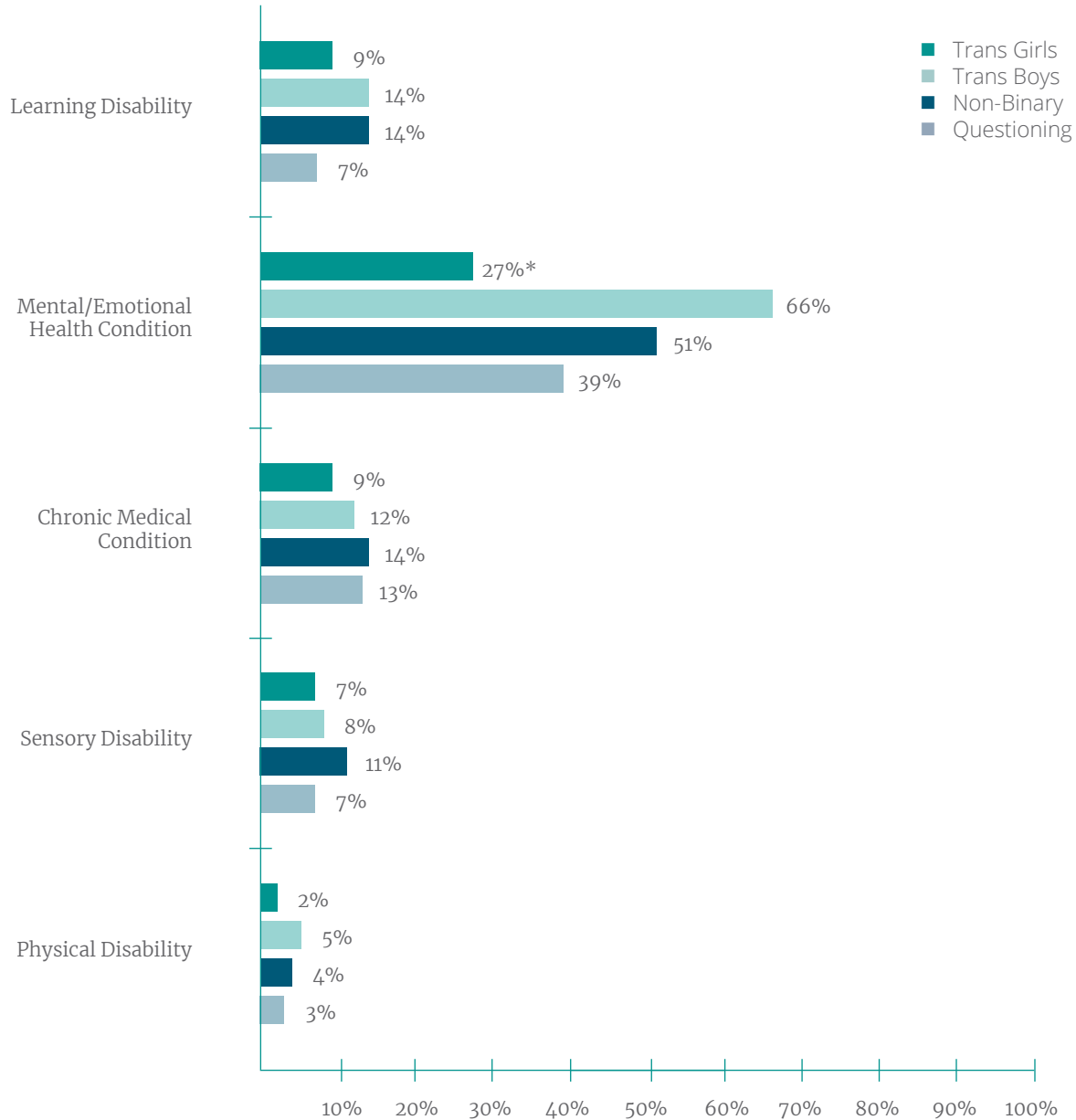
Youth were asked about health conditions they experienced, including physical, sensory or learning disabilities, mental health or emotional conditions, severe allergies, or other chronic medical conditions.

Trans boys and non-binary youth were most likely to report having at least one health condition (75% of trans boys and 65% of non-binary youth, compared to 54% of questioning youth and 44%* of trans girls). This was primarily due to mental or emotional health issues; 66% of trans boys and approximately half of non-binary youth reported that they had a mental or emotional health condition, significantly higher than trans girls and questioning youth.

More than half of questioning youth said they had at least one health condition, including 13% who reported having a long-term or chronic health condition, 39% who had a mental or emotional health condition, and fewer than 3% who had a physical disability. Forty-four percent* of trans girls reported having at least one health condition, including 9% who had a long-term/chronic medical condition and 27%* who had a mental or emotional condition. Three to four percent of gender-diverse youth reported having a severe allergy requiring an EpiPen.

HEALTH CONDITIONS

Note: The differences between trans boys and non-binary youth compared to trans girls and questioning youth were statistically significant for 'mental/emotional health condition.' No other differences were statistically significant.



Exercise

Guidelines recommend young people engage in regular moderate to vigorous physical activity, and like their cisgender peers, the majority of gender-diverse youth did not meet age-specific recommendations for daily physical activity. Similar but small numbers of gender-diverse youth met the guidelines for daily exercise: 15%* of trans girls, 14% of non-binary youth, 12% of trans boys, and 12% of questioning youth said they had done at least 60 minutes of physical activity on each of the last seven days.

Vomited on Purpose After Eating

Eating disordered behaviours can be a response to gender distress among trans and non-binary young people. In the BC AHS, students were asked if they had caused themselves to vomit on purpose after eating in the past year. The majority of youth of all genders had not done so, but 31% of questioning youth, 24% of non-binary youth, 28% of trans boys, and 21%* of trans girls reported having vomited on purpose in the past year. These estimates were not significantly different from each other.

“IDK if it’s relevant but I’ve had an eating disorder since I was 13 and never known resources for it. It’s important to get those out there so more kids don’t end up the way I am.”

Youth aged 17, Interior

Mental Health and Well-being

As reported earlier, far more trans and non-binary youth experienced discrimination and violence than their cisgender peers, and these experiences have been consistently linked to distress and mental health challenges for young people. Therefore, it is not surprising that all of the measures of mental health challenges, including self-rated mental health, stress, and self-harm were higher among nearly all groups of gender-diverse youth compared to cisgender youth, unless noted below.

All of the measures of mental health challenges, including self-rated mental health, stress, self-harm, and suicidality, were higher among nearly all groups of gender-diverse youth compared to cisgender youth, unless noted below.

“[I want to learn about] gender identity/lgbtq mental health and how to deal with it.”

Youth aged 12, Vancouver Coastal

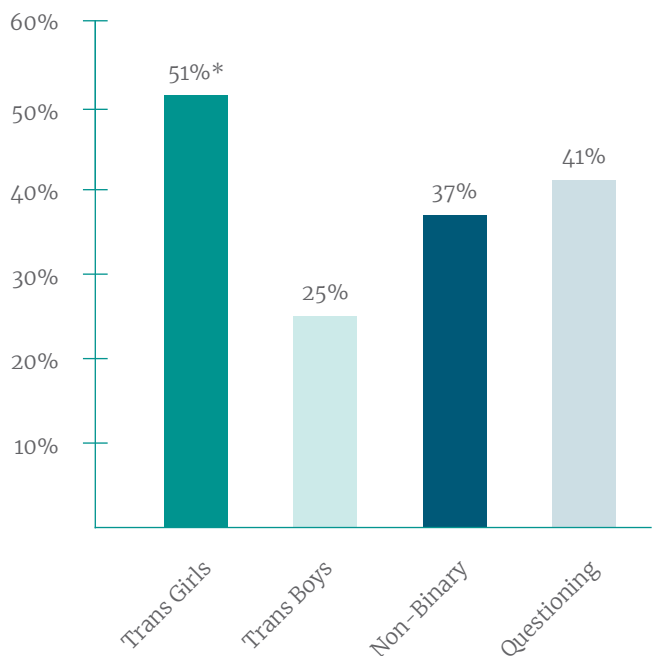
Self-Rated Mental Health

One in 4 trans boys rated their mental health as good or excellent, and this was significantly lower than all other groups except non-binary youth (37%). A slightly higher percent of questioning youth (41%) and half of trans girls reported their mental health to be good or excellent (51%*).

RESPONDENTS WHO RATED THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AS GOOD/EXCELLENT

** Interpret with caution, high standard error.*

Note: The difference between trans boys compared to trans girls and questioning youth was statistically significant. No other differences were statistically significant.



Extreme Stress and Managing Stress

Gender-diverse youth were more likely to report extreme stress than cis boys. Trans girls and cis girls were not significantly different from each other, but other groups were also more likely to report extreme stress than cis girls. Thirty-four percent of trans boys, 32% of non-binary youth, 25%* of trans girls, and 24% of questioning youth reported that they had experienced extreme stress in the past month, compared to 6% of cis boys and 17% of cis girls.

Among those who reported feeling stressed in the past month, fewer than 15% of cis girls and even lower numbers of gender-diverse youth felt that they could manage their stress very well, compared to cisgender boys (24%).

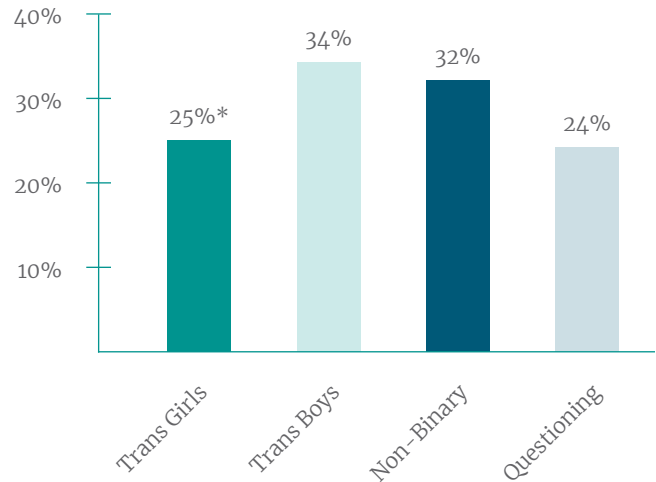
“I have stress due to my parents not approving of the LGBTQ community.”

Youth aged 15, Interior

EXTREME STRESS IN PAST MONTH

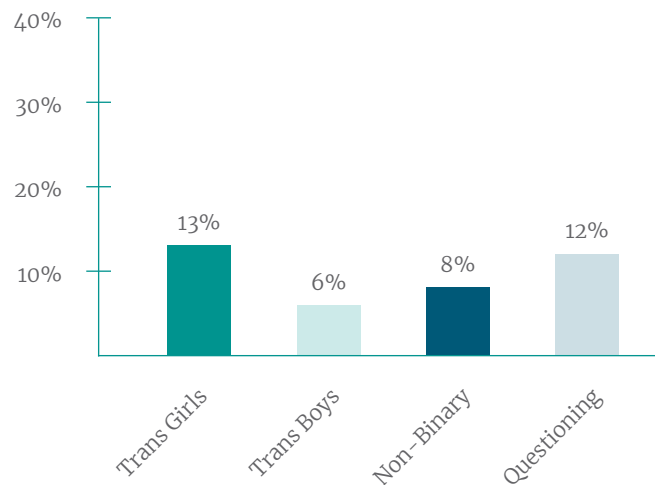
* Interpret with caution, high standard error.

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



MANAGED STRESS VERY WELL AMONG THOSE WHO FELT STRESSED

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Feelings of Despair

Young people were asked if they had felt so sad, discouraged, hopeless, or had so many problems that they wondered if anything was worthwhile. Most gender-diverse youth did not report feeling extreme or overwhelming despair, but around 1 in 4 did: 29% of trans boys, 28%* of trans girls, 26% of non-binary youth, and 20% of questioning youth, although these percents were not significantly different.

Self-Harm

Between a third to just over half of gender-diverse youth reported self-harm: 32%* of trans girls, 43% of questioning youth, 54% of non-binary youth, and 55% of trans boys had cut or injured themselves on purpose at least once in the past year without intending to kill themselves. However, these percents were not significantly different.

“I am a 15 year old girl [who] has been bullied to the point of being depressed and suicidal. I have OD on pills [twice] within the last 18 months and I cut often.”

Youth aged 15, Interior

Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts

Fifty-eight percent of trans boys, 49%* of trans girls, 45% of non-binary youth, and 45% of questioning youth had seriously thought about attempting suicide in the past year. Fewer than half of these youth reported one or more suicide attempts in the past year, including 19% of trans boys and non-binary youth, 17%* of trans girls, and 15% of questioning youth.

“I’ve thought about suicide but never considered actually attempting it.”

Youth aged 14, North

“I have attempted suicide 6 times and spent over a month in a youth psychiatric unit.”

Youth aged 15, Interior

Resources for Youth

Provincial and national resources available to support the health and well-being of young people in BC, including resources for youth in crisis, are listed on pages 59–61.

Feeling Hopeful

The BC AHS does not only ask about mental health challenges, but also about aspects of positive mental health. A key measure of positive mental health is hope for the future. Overall, around 1 in 3 gender-diverse youth—44%* of trans girls, 40% of trans boys, 31% of non-binary youth, and 37% of questioning youth—said they felt quite a bit or very hopeful for their future.

Happy in the Past Month

More than one third of questioning youth (37%) and over half of trans girls (53%*) reported feeling happy most or all of the time in the past month, and slightly fewer than 1 in 3 trans boys (31%) and non-binary youth (30%) said that they had felt happy most or all of the time in the past month. The only percents that were significantly different from each other were between trans girls and non-binary youth.

Perseverance

Youth were asked how often they pushed themselves to achieve their goals when things went wrong. Around 1 in 4 gender-diverse youth reported that they always persevere when faced with obstacles, including 22% of non-binary youth, 23% of questioning youth, 26% of trans boys, and 34%* of trans girls. These percents were not significantly different from each other.



Sexual Health

“Is it illegal to have sex if you both agree to it?”

Youth aged 13, Interior

Fewer than 1 in 4 of all youth had given or received oral sex, including 17%* of trans girls, 19% of questioning youth, 23% of trans boys, and 25% of non-binary youth. Similar rates of sexual intercourse were also reported by questioning youth (18%), trans boys (22%), non-binary youth (24%), and trans girls (24%*). The percentages of gender-diverse youth who had oral sex or sexual intercourse were not significantly different from each other or from cisgender youth.

Among those in all gender groups who had ever had sex, around 1 in 4 reported having used alcohol or other drugs the last time they had sex. Estimates for gender-diverse groups had higher than expected standard errors.

Youth who had ever had sex were also asked whether they or their partner used a condom or other barrier the last time they had sex. Gender-diverse youth were less likely than their cisgender peers to have used a condom or other barriers: 69% of cis boys and 59% of cis girls compared to 27%* of trans boys, 36%* of non-binary youth, and 40%* of questioning youth (trans girls NR).

Pregnancy involvement was uncommon among all gender groups, but did vary. No trans boys reported they had ever been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant. Fewer than 1% of cisgender youth, 4% of non-binary youth, and 4% of questioning youth reported pregnancy involvement (trans girls NR).

Substance Use

Alcohol

Approximately half of youth, regardless of gender, reported ever having tried alcohol, including 53% of trans boys, 47% of non-binary youth, 46%* of trans girls, and 42% of questioning youth.

Tobacco Use

While most youth had never smoked tobacco, about one quarter of gender-diverse youth reported having smoked a tobacco product at least once, including 27% of non-binary youth, 26%* of trans girls, 24% of trans boys, and 23% of questioning youth. These rates were not significantly different from cisgender peers except higher among non-binary youth. Similar percents of gender-diverse and cisgender youth reported vaping,

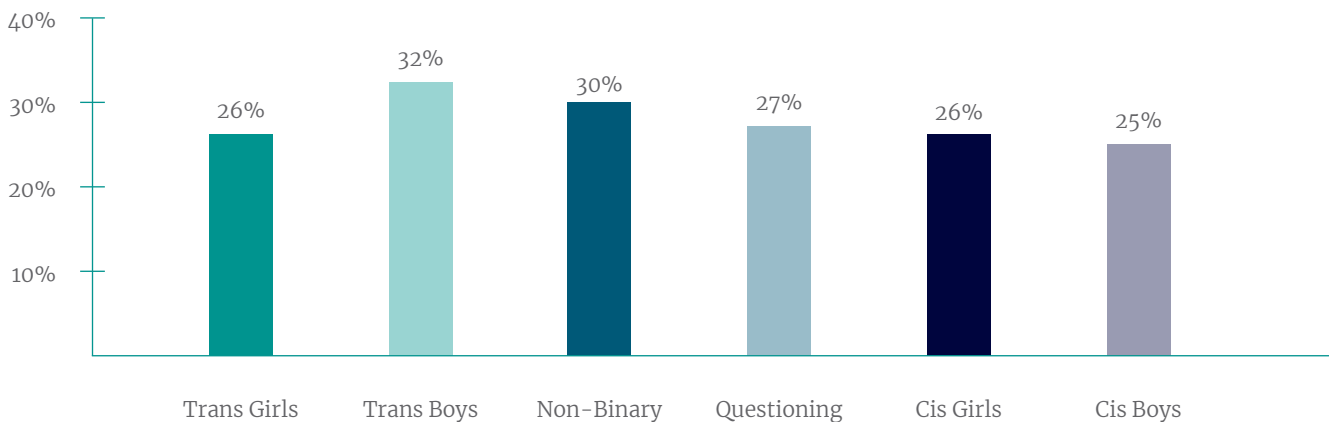
with about 1 in 5 young people reporting vaping with nicotine, and a similar percent reporting vaping without nicotine. About 1 in 10 gender-diverse youth had smoked cigarettes in the past month, which was similar to cis girls, but slightly higher than cis boys.

Cannabis Use

Most youth had not tried cannabis, but around 1 in 4 youth reported having ever used cannabis. There were no differences in the percent of cisgender and gender-diverse students who had tried cannabis.

EVER TRIED CANNABIS

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Other Drugs

Youth were asked about their lifetime use of substances other than alcohol and cannabis. Most youth reported never having taken any of the substances they were asked about such as ecstasy, cocaine, crystal meth, and heroin.

Other than alcohol and cannabis, the substances most often used by youth, regardless of gender, were prescription pills without a doctor's consent (8–16%), followed by mushrooms (6–12%). These estimates were not significantly different across all gender groups.

A small percent of non-binary youth reported having used cocaine (6%), hallucinogens (8%), ecstasy/MDMA (7%), and inhalants (8%). Fewer than 4% of non-binary youth said they had ever used amphetamines, crystal meth, heroin, or ketamine. A similarly small percent of questioning youth also reported use of cocaine (6%), hallucinogens (6%), ecstasy/MDMA (4%), inhalants (5%), amphetamines (4%), crystal meth (4%), heroin (4%), and ketamine (2%). The number of trans youth who said they had used these substances was too few to accurately report.

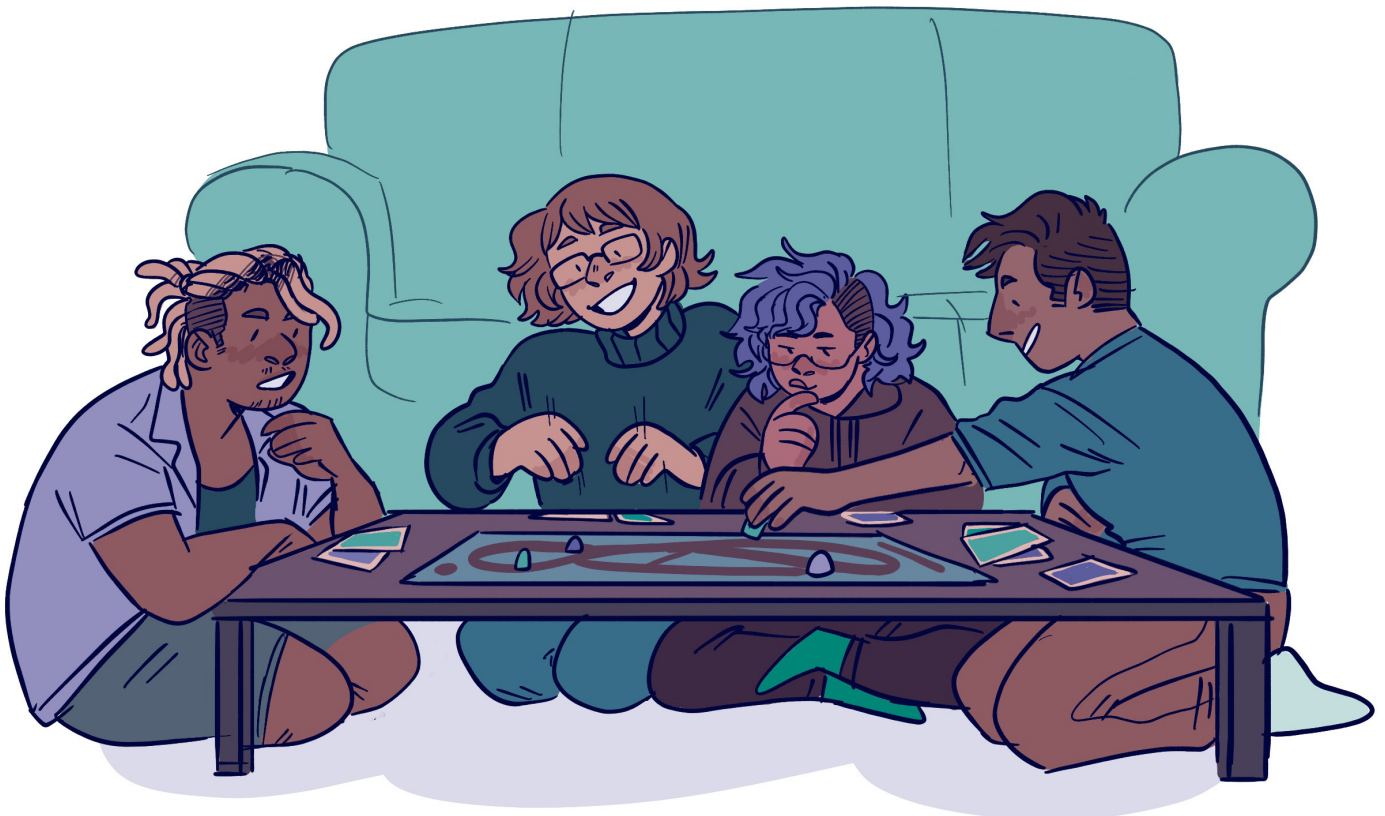
SECTION 4:

SUPPORTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Family, friends, school, and community are important sources of safety and support for young people that help them to be healthy and thrive. Although many gender-diverse young people felt well-connected to their families, friends, school, and community, they did not experience the same level of support as their cisgender peers. For example, while about 6 in 10 cis boys (62%) and cis girls (59%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a part of their school, only about 3 in 10 non-binary youth (28%), trans boys (32%), and trans girls (34%*) did.

Over half of cis girls (54%) and two thirds of cis boys (67%) felt that their family understood them, but around a quarter of trans boys (23%) and non-binary youth (25%), and about one third of questioning youth (31%) and trans girls (38%*) felt their family understood them.

Cis youth were more likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood, on public transit, and at home compared to trans, non-binary, and questioning youth.



Family

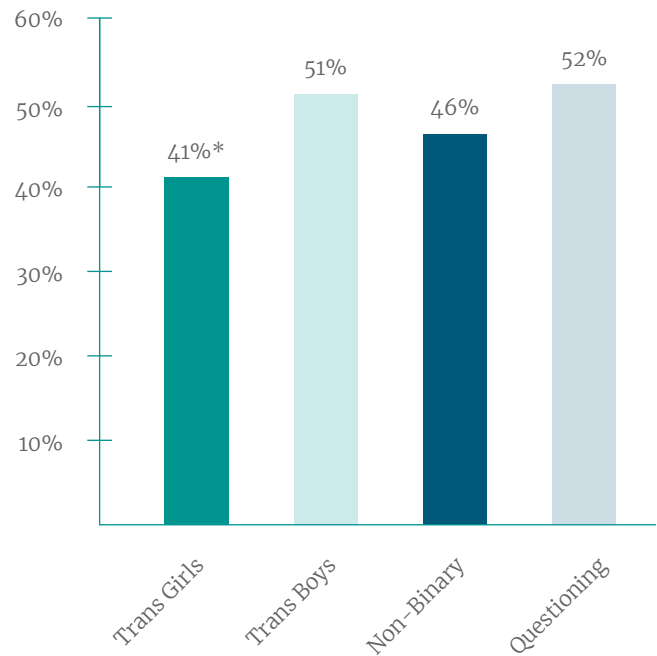
Family Connectedness

Youth were asked about their relationship with their family. Many youth, including nearly half of non-binary (47%) and questioning youth (49%), and around 2 in 5 trans girls (40%*) and trans boys (44%) said they had fun with their family quite a bit or very much. Around half of gender-diverse youth reported feeling that people in their family respect them quite a bit or very much. Although many trans girls (41%*), trans boys (51%), non-binary youth (46%), and questioning youth (52%), said their family paid attention to them, fewer gender-minority youth felt that their family understood them. Most questioning youth (69%), non-binary youth (75%), trans boys (77%), and trans girls (62%*) reported feeling that people in their family understood them very little or not at all. These results were not significantly different.

MY FAMILY PAYS ATTENTION TO ME QUITE A BIT/VERY MUCH

** Interpret with caution, high standard error.*

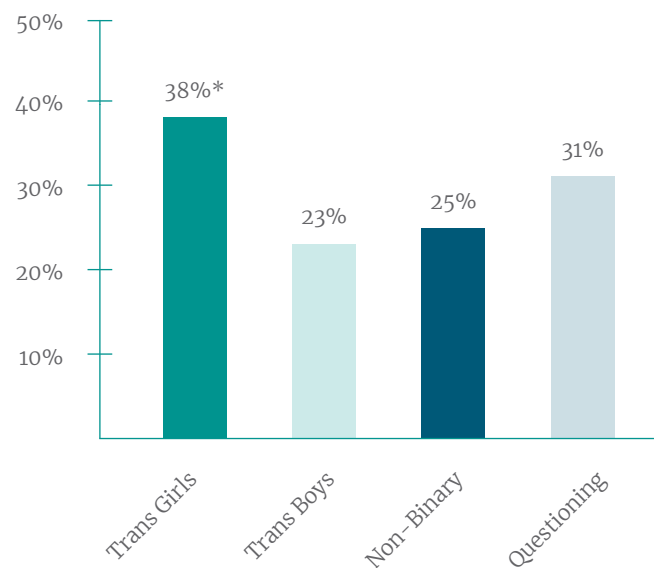
Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



MY FAMILY UNDERSTANDS ME QUITE A BIT/VERY MUCH

** Interpret with caution, high standard error.*

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Parental Monitoring

Young people were asked how much their parents or guardians knew about what they do in their free time and online. Around half of trans girls (51%*), trans boys (53%), non-binary youth (52%), and questioning youth (52%) said that their parents or guardians knew what they were doing in their free time most or all of the time. Fewer youth reported that their parents or guardians knew what they were doing online most or all of the time: 27% of questioning youth, 31% of non-binary youth, 21% of trans boys, and 30%* of trans girls.

Safety Inside the Home

While most young people often or always felt safe in their home, some did not. About 3 in 4 trans boys, non-binary youth, and questioning youth, and two thirds of trans girls* reported feeling safe in their home often or all of the time, although these were not significantly different from each other.

“I’m scared to tell my parents I’m LGBTQ+ because I’m afraid they might not accept me. It causes me a lot of stress and anxiety and I wish I could tell them that I’m their son, not daughter.”

Youth aged 13, North

School

School Plans

The majority of youth planned to finish high school and go on to post-secondary education, and estimates were not significantly different from each other. Eighty percent of trans boys, 76% of non-binary youth, 71% of questioning youth, and 68%* of trans girls planned to finish high school. Roughly 2 in 3 trans boys (70%), non-binary youth (70%), questioning youth (65%), and trans girls (61%*) planned to attend post-secondary education.

School Connectedness

Youth were asked a series of questions to understand how connected they felt to their school community. While some trans girls (34%*), trans boys (32%), non-binary youth (28%), and questioning youth (36%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt part of their school, most gender-diverse youth did not. Fifty-four percent* of trans girls, 45% of trans boys, 46% of non-binary youth, and 55% of questioning youth agreed or strongly agreed that teachers at their school care about them, and approximately 1 in 3 gender-minority youth agreed or strongly agreed that other school staff care about them.

Most trans girls (62%*), trans boys (67%), non-binary youth (63%), and questioning youth (66%) agreed that school staff expected them to do well, however, slightly more than a third of trans girls (43%*), trans boys (34%), non-binary youth (32%), and questioning youth (41%) agreed that they are happy to be at their school.

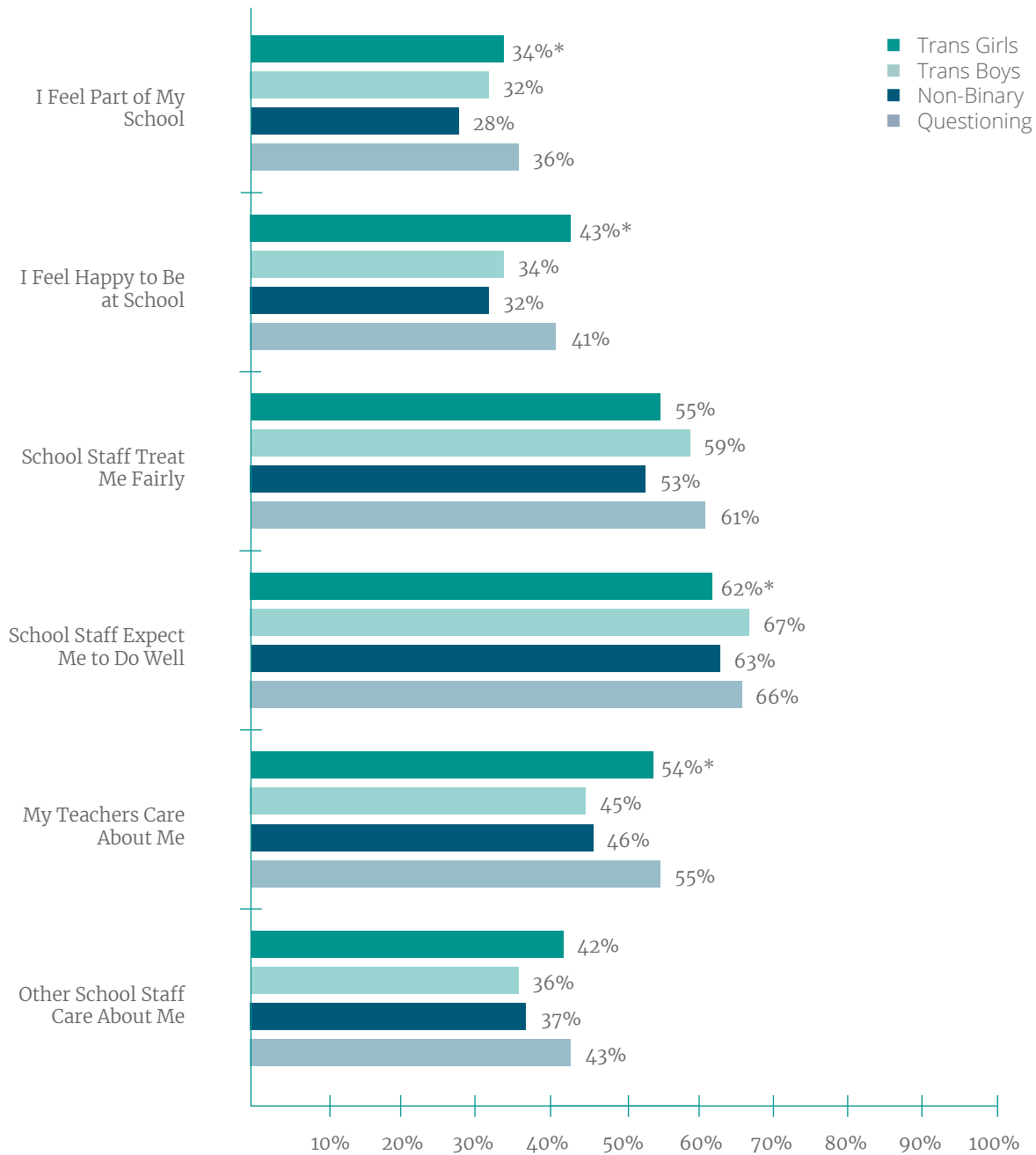
“I would like schools to talk more about gender and sexuality. The stress I went through discovering my gender is something I want other kids to be able to avoid.”

Youth aged 18, North

SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS (AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE)

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.

* Interpret with caution, high standard error.



“Schools are a very stigmatized space for the LGBTQ+ community... [There] should be more education for learning about LGBTQ+ —SOGI 123 is a good step.”

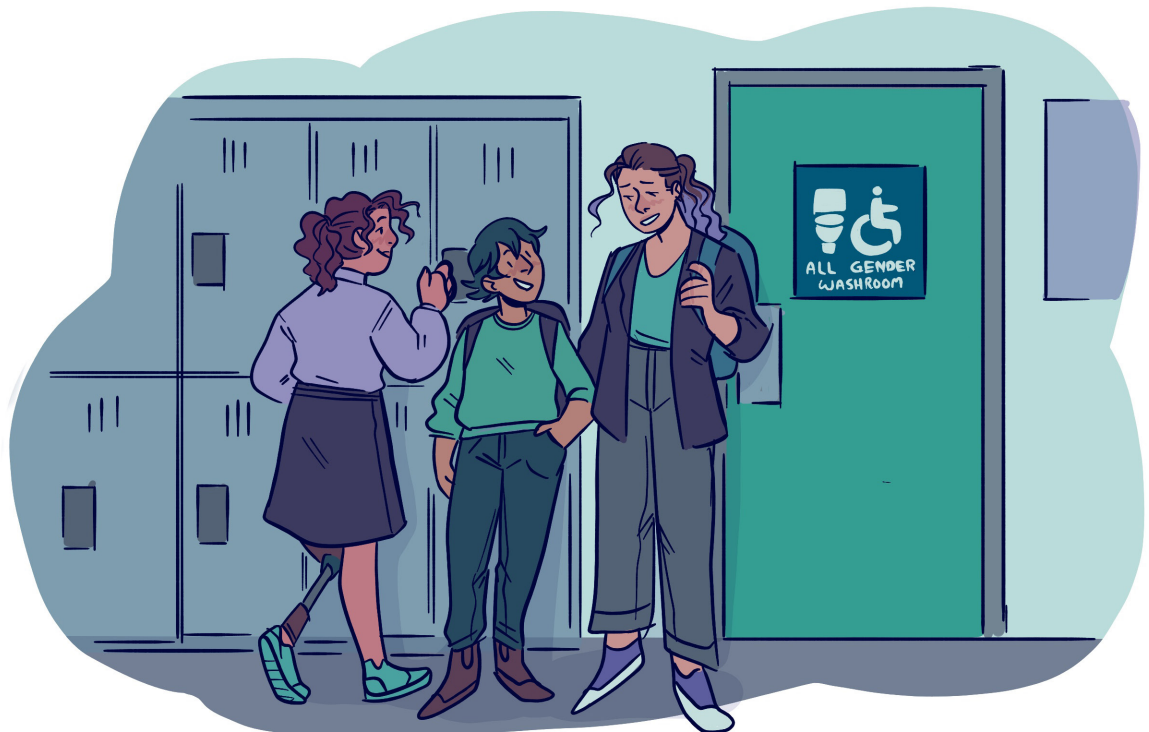
Youth aged 18, Vancouver Island

School Safety

Gender-diverse young people were much less likely to report feeling safe in different parts of the school than their cis peers. While many trans girls (69%*), trans boys (75%), non-binary youth (69%), and questioning youth (75%) said that they usually or always felt safe in their classroom, this means at least 1 in 4 gender-diverse youth did not. Trans, non-binary, and questioning youth reported that some locations in their schools felt safer than others. For example, among trans boys, 86% usually or always felt safe in the library, whereas 41% usually or always felt safe in the washroom, and 32% usually or always felt safe in the changing rooms. Trans girls, non-binary youth, and questioning youth also reported feeling safe in the library and classroom more often than in the washrooms, changing rooms, and hallways. Percents were similar between gender-diverse groups except between trans boys and non-binary youth in changing rooms and washrooms.

“The bathroom/not/safe feeling is cos I’m trans and get wild looks and sometimes get beaten up.”

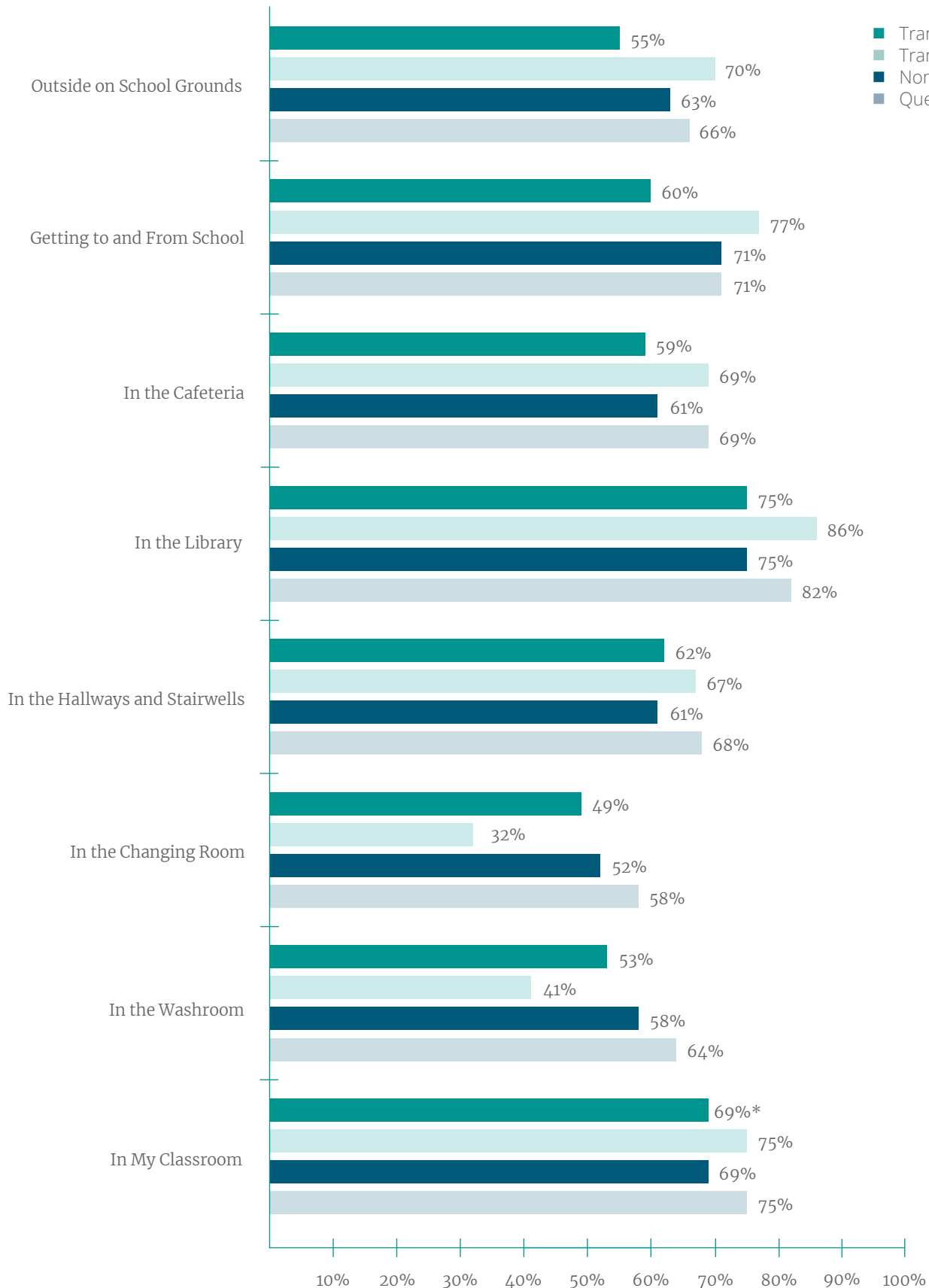
Youth aged 15, Vancouver Coastal



AT SCHOOL, I USUALLY OR ALWAYS FEEL SAFE...

Note: The difference between trans boys and non-binary youth was statistically significant for 'in the changing room' and 'in the washroom.' No other differences were statistically significant.

* Interpret with caution, high standard error.



Extracurricular Activities

Youth were asked whether they had participated in activities outside of school in the past year, such as organized, informal, or extreme sports; dance, yoga, and exercise classes; cultural activities; art, drama, singing, or music; clubs or groups; and/or volunteering activities. At least 4 out of 5 youth said they had participated in one or more extracurricular activities in the past year.

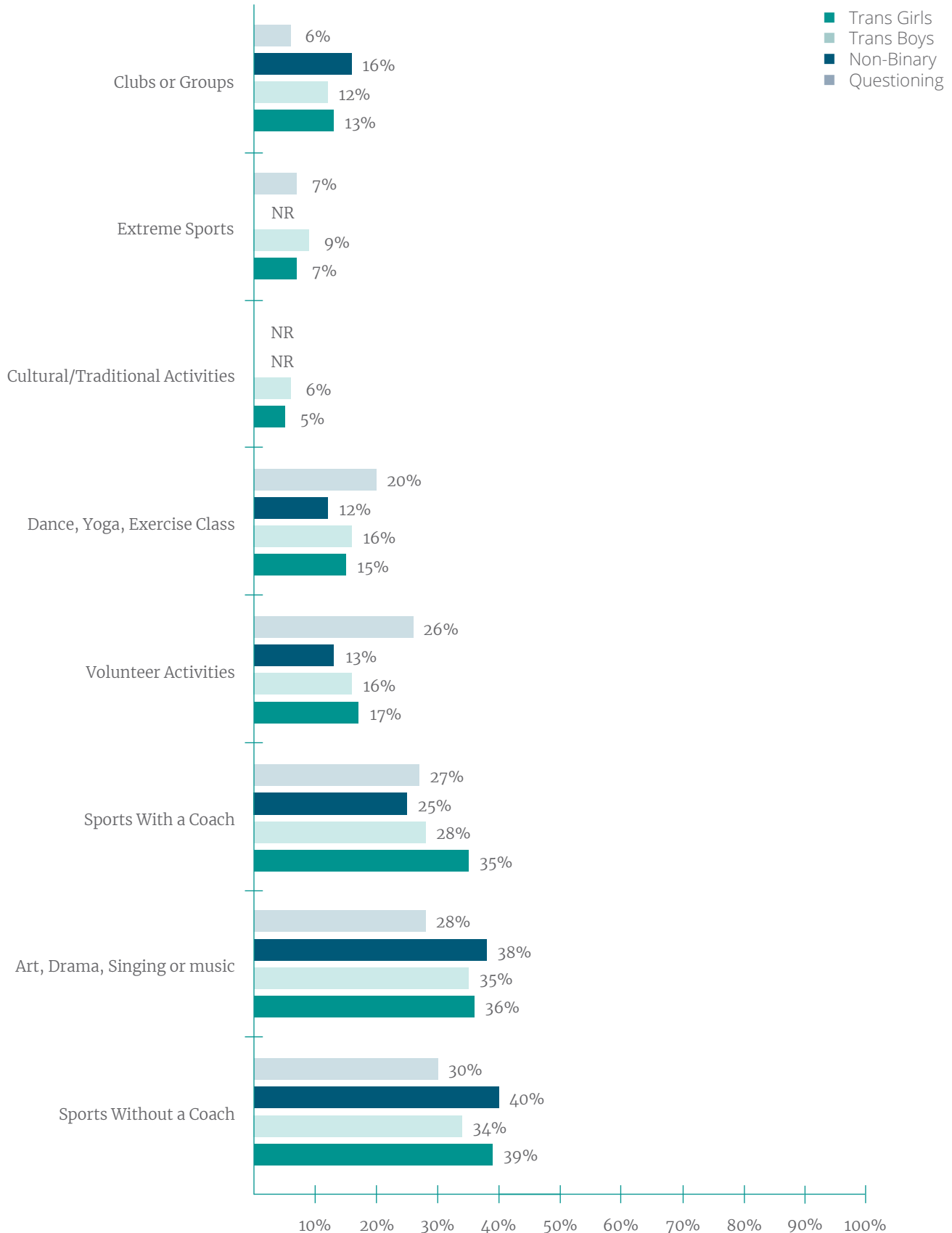
More than a third of trans boys (38%), non-binary youth (35%), and questioning youth (36%), and slightly fewer trans girls (28%), participated in art, drama, singing, and/or music activities, which was higher than cis boys but not cis girls. Fewer than 1 in 10 youth participated in cultural or traditional activities, regardless of gender (trans youth NR).



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.

NR: The number of responses was too low or the standard error was too high for stable estimates.



Community

Caring Adult in Neighbourhood

About half of trans girls (49%*), trans boys (48%), questioning youth (50%), and non-binary youth (55%) felt there was a supportive adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them.

Connection to Community

Around 1 in 5 trans girls (20%*), trans boys (20%), non-binary youth (22%), and questioning youth (23%) reported feeling that they were quite a bit or very much connected to their community. Gender-diverse youth were about half as likely to feel part of their community compared to their cis peers.

Neighbourhood Safety

While most youth said that they often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the daytime, about 1 in 3 trans girls (32%*), 28% of non-binary and questioning youth, and 21% of trans boys said that they did not, although these were only significantly higher than cisgender youth. Youth were generally less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood at night, and gender-diverse youth were less likely than cisgender youth to feel safe at night. Only 38%* of trans girls, 45% of trans boys, 43% of non-binary youth, and 44% of questioning youth reported often or always feeling safe in their neighbourhood at night.

Safety on Transit

Many young people use public transit to travel to and from school, participate in extracurricular activities, access community supports, and visit friends. Lack of safety on public transportation can affect young people's ability to access resources or to feel part of their community.

Among those who used public transportation, more than half of gender-diverse youth said they rarely or never felt safe on transit. Thirty percent* of trans girls, 40% of questioning youth, 43% of non-binary youth, and 49% of trans boys reported often or always feeling safe on public transit.

“I have anxiety disorder and depression it affects how safe I feel in my community.”

Youth aged 15, Vancouver Coastal

Supportive Relationships

Supportive Adult in and Outside the Family

The presence of a supportive adult in a young person's life is an important protective factor for trans, non-binary, and questioning youth. Fifty-five percent* of trans girls, 46% of questioning youth, 45% of trans boys, and 43% of non-binary youth said they had a supportive adult in their family. Only 17%* of trans girls, 26% of non-binary youth, 26% of questioning youth, and 34% of trans boys said they had a supportive adult outside of their family, which was significantly higher than cis boys but not cis girls. The majority of gender-diverse youth said they did not have any supportive adult in their life.

“I need more people to talk to.”

Youth aged 12, Interior

Friends

Youth were asked how many close friends they had in their school or neighbourhood. Most youth had at least one such friend, including 89%* of trans girls, 89% of non-binary youth, 89% of questioning youth, and 92% of trans boys. Sixty-three percent of non-binary youth, 66%* of trans girls, 66% of questioning youth, and 68% of trans boys said they had three or more friends. However, about 1 in 10 gender-diverse youth said they had no friends in their school or neighbourhood.

Overall, more than half of gender-diverse youth, including 50%* of trans girls, 50% of questioning youth, 53% of non-binary youth, and 63% of trans boys, had at least one online friend who they had never met in person. Thirty-nine percent* of trans girls, 34% of trans boys, 26% of non-binary youth, and 25% of questioning youth had three or more such online friends. Trans boys, non-binary, and questioning youth but not trans girls were significantly more likely to have online friends they had never met in person than either cis boys or cis girls.

Access to Services

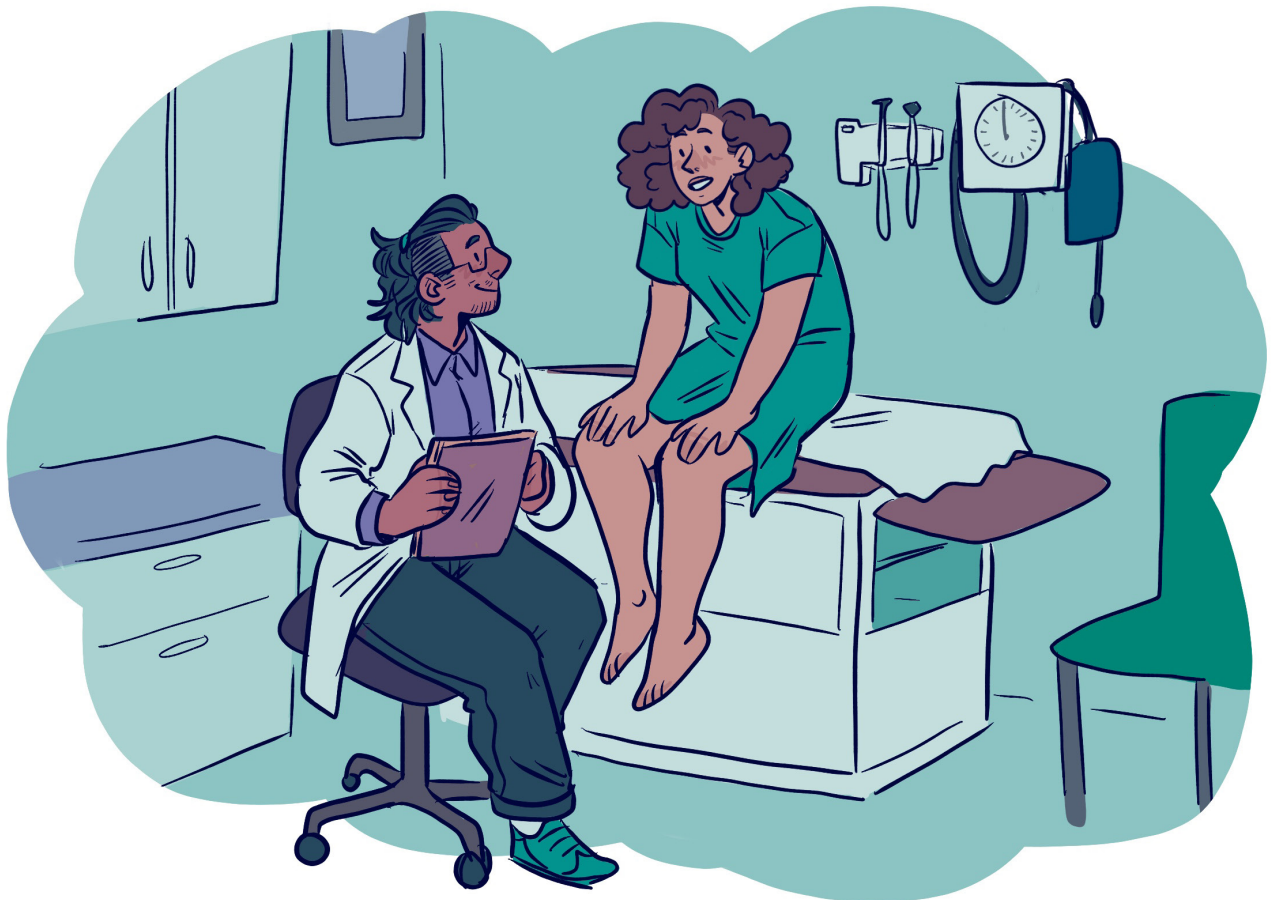
“In the past couple of years I have dealt with depression and anxiety, but I have thankfully got the help I needed.”

Youth aged 16, Interior

Physical, Mental and Emotional Health Care

While 6% of cis boys and 10% of cis girls reported not getting health care in the past year when they needed it, about 1 in 5 questioning youth (21%), trans boys (20%), and non-binary youth (18%) had needed medical help in the past 12 months but did not get it (the number of trans girls with foregone health care was

not releasable). More than half of trans boys (54%), 50% of non-binary youth, 44% of questioning youth, and 37%* of trans girls, reported they had needed mental health services but did not get them, which was higher than cis girls (26%) and much higher than the 9% of cis boys who missed out on needed mental health services.



Health Services in the Past Year

Young people accessed many different kinds of mental and physical health services in the past year, including family doctors, youth clinics, traditional healers, and school wellness centres. Youth most often reported seeking care at their family doctor’s office. Many gender-diverse youth also accessed care through counsellors/psychologist, walk-in clinics, youth clinics, and the emergency room. Results were not significantly different between gender groups, except trans boys were more likely to access counsellors/psychologists than all other gender groups, and more likely to access youth clinics than questioning youth.

“I went to my local youth clinic for the first time last month and they were very kind and helpful.”

Youth aged 15, Vancouver Coastal

ACCESSED HEALTH SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR

* Interpret with caution, high standard error.

Note: The difference between trans boys and all other gender groups was statistically significant for ‘counsellor/psychologist,’ and between trans boys and questioning youth for ‘youth clinic.’ No other differences were statistically significant.

NR: The number of responses was too low or the standard error was too high for stable estimates.

	Trans Girls	Trans Boys	Non-Binary	Questioning
Family Doctor	46%*	64%	51%	53%
Nurse	NR	14%	8%	8%
Walk-in Clinic	25%*	34%	32%	33%
Youth Clinic	9%	16%	8%	5%
Emergency Department	NR	18%	18%	13%
Traditional Healer	NR	4%	3%	2%
Counsellor/Psychologist	15%*	45%	29%	24%

Young People's Strength and Resilience

Subjective Well-Being

Youth were asked to rate their quality of life. About half of trans boys (50%) and non-binary youth (49%), and more than half of questioning youth (55%) and trans girls (61%*) agreed or strongly agreed that they have a good life. Fewer gender-diverse youth, 23% of trans boys, 31% of non-binary youth, 35% of questioning youth, and 35%* of trans girls, said they felt that they had what they wanted in life. Around 1 in 3 trans girls (36%*), questioning youth (31%), and non-binary youth (29%), and about 1 in 5 trans boys (21%) agreed or strongly agreed that their life was going just right.

Although 55%* of trans girls, 45% of questioning youth, 39% of non-binary youth, and 38% of trans boys agreed or strongly agreed that their life was going well, more than half of trans boys (53%) and trans girls (52%*), and more than a third of questioning youth (41%) and non-binary youth (37%) wished they had a different life.

“I know that I have a good life and that I have plenty of reasons to be happy, but I often feel unworthy or undeserving of happiness/pleasures. I have not/don't plan on telling my parents for fear they will worry too much and/or treat me differently. I am doing my best to get/ feel better on my own.”

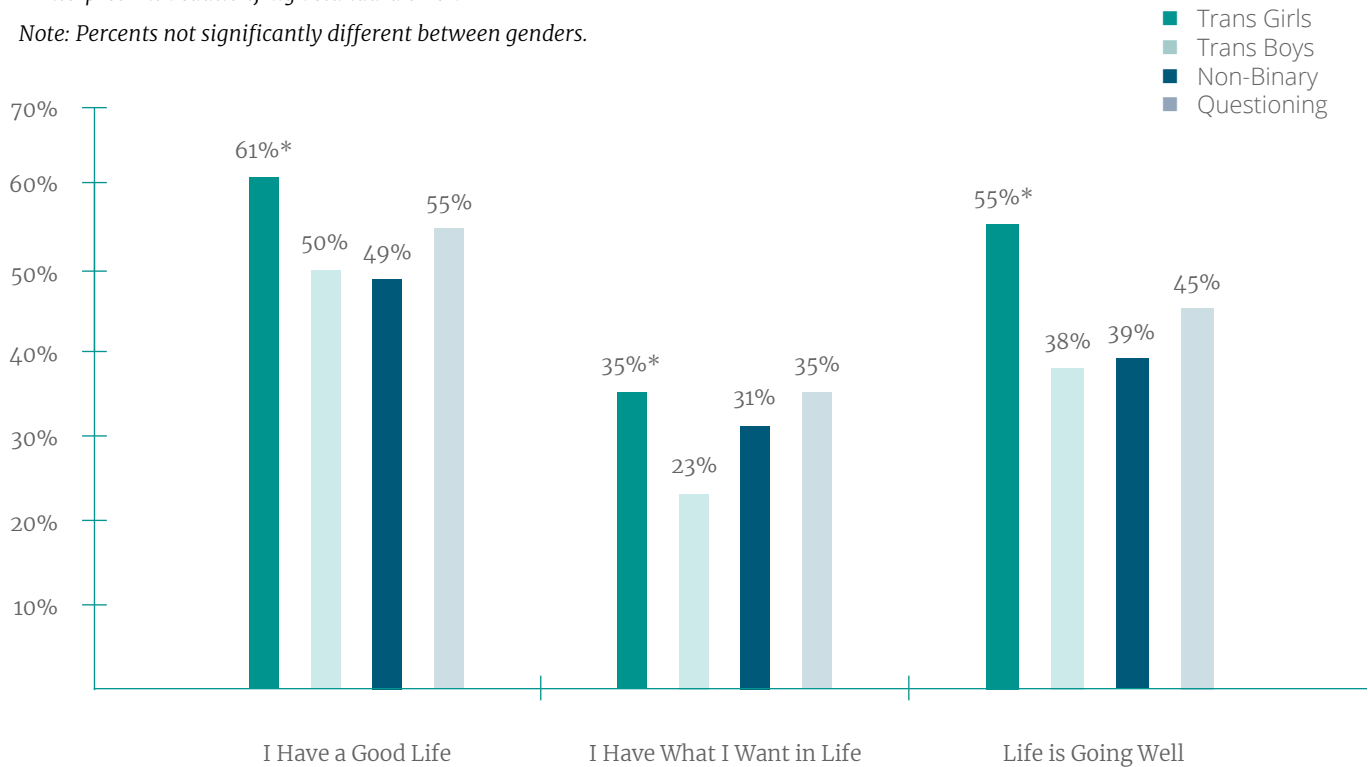
Youth aged 17, Fraser

All of these measures of subjective well-being were significantly different from cisgender peers, but the estimates were not significantly different between gender-diverse groups.

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

** Interpret with caution, high standard error.*

Note: Percents not significantly different between genders.



Self-Esteem

Youth were asked how much they agreed with the statement “I usually feel good about myself.” Close to half of trans girls (45%*) told us they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, which was similar to cis girls, and higher than for trans boys. Fewer questioning youth (31%), non-binary youth (30%), and trans boys (24%) agreed or strongly agreed that they usually felt good about themselves, but these did not differ significantly from each other, although estimates were lower than for cis boys and girls.

Meaningful Engagement

Previous research has shown that engagement in meaningful activities, where young people have a voice and their ideas are taken up, contributes to positive well-being. We asked young people

how meaningful the activities they are involved in are to them. Similar percents of gender-diverse youth reported this kind of meaningful engagement: about half of trans boys (51%) and non-binary youth (48%), 43%* of trans girls, and 40% of questioning youth reported that their activities were quite or very meaningful to them.

A smaller number of gender-diverse youth reported having a voice in activities. About a quarter of trans boys (28%), non-binary youth (24%) and questioning youth (24%), and 15%* of trans girls reported feeling that their ideas were listened to and acted upon quite a bit or a lot of the time, although these percents were not significantly different from each other.

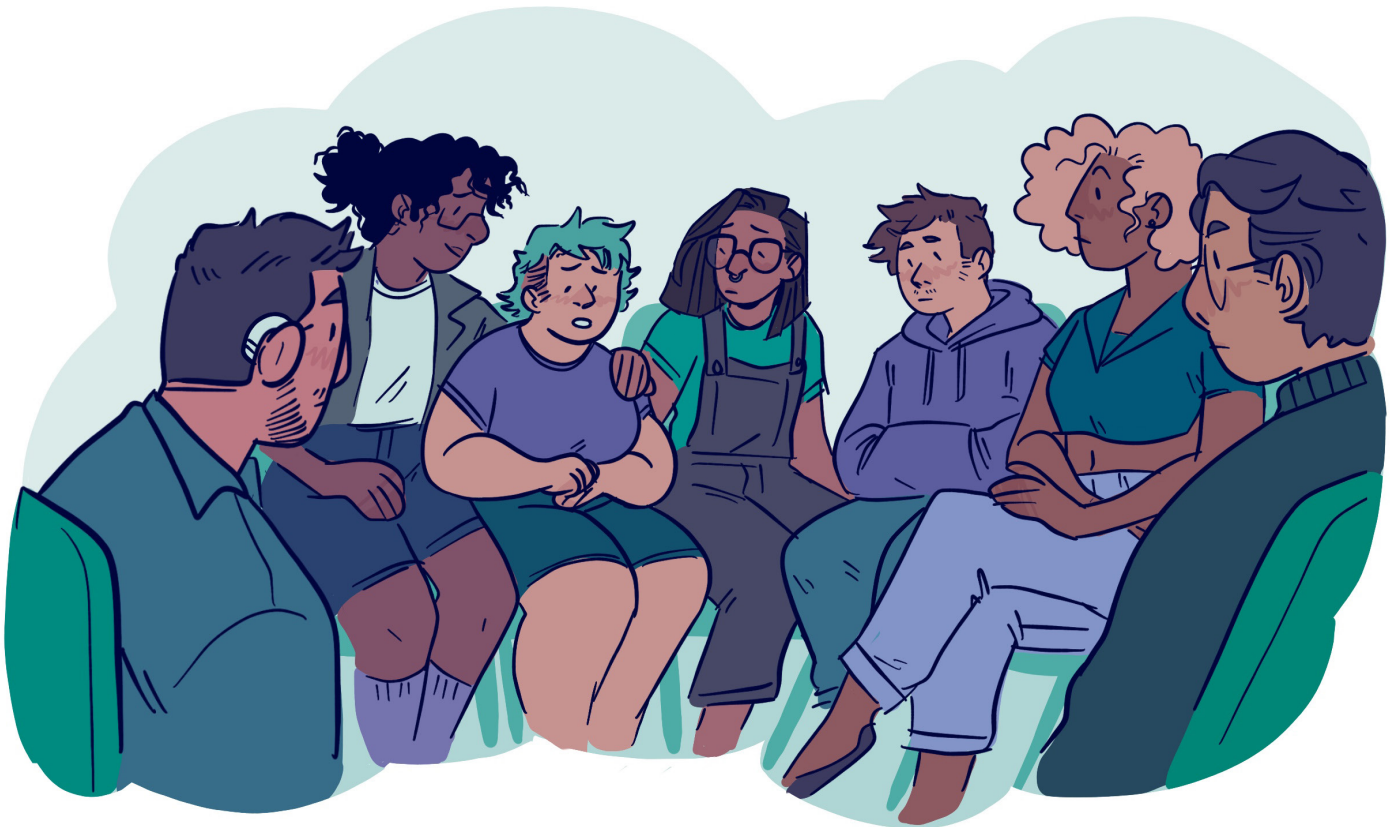


SECTION 5:

THE ROLE OF PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN SUPPORTING HEALTH

Protective factors are those relationships, supports, activities, and coping skills that help foster healthy development for young people, and reduce the odds of poor health outcomes, especially when they face stressors such as stigma, discrimination, and violence. We examined five specific factors that have been shown to be protective for a number of

different health issues, to see whether they demonstrate similar relationships for gender-diverse youth. We looked at the odds that youth would report a more positive health picture if they had various protective factors in their life. For example, how much more likely youth were to report positive mental health if they felt connected to their family.



Family Connectedness

Family connectedness measures the extent to which a young person feels their family has fun together, pays attention to them, understands them, and respects them. Greater family connectedness was a strong protective factor for trans, non-binary, and questioning youth linked to better mental and physical health. For example, trans, non-binary, and questioning youth who were highly connected to their family were 93% to 96% less likely to report extreme stress in the past month. Youth with high family connectedness were also much less likely to have missed out on physical or mental health care when they needed it: the odds of foregone physical care were

around 95% lower, and for foregone mental health care, around 90% lower. Trans girls and non-binary youth with very supportive families were around 85% less likely to report three or more negative consequences from drinking alcohol or using other substances in the past year.

Trans, non-binary, and questioning youth who felt highly connected to their family were significantly less likely to have had suicidal thoughts in the past year (around 93% to 99% lower odds of suicidal thoughts). They were also 90% to 95% less likely to have attempted suicide in the past year compared to gender-diverse youth who had very low family connectedness.



School Connectedness

“I think there needs to be more LGBT+ education as no one really knows anything and so LGBT+ kids feel less alone.”

Youth aged 13, Interior

School connectedness measures school belonging, that is, the extent to which students feel a part of their school, and happy and safe at school, as well as how much they feel teachers and other school staff care about them, treat them fairly, and expect them to do well.

Gender-diverse youth who felt strongly connected to their school community also reported feeling much safer at school compared to youth who felt less connected; youth who feel safe at school are better able to learn and do well at school. Trans, non-binary, and questioning youth who felt a high degree of school connectedness were also more than 6 times as likely to say that they planned to go on to post-secondary education.

School connectedness was also an important protective factor for mental and emotional health for most genders. With the exception of trans girls, gender-diverse youth who felt highly connected to their school were over 8 times more likely to report good or excellent mental health, and were also significantly less likely to have missed out on needed emotional and physical health care (around 80% less likely to miss needed emotional health care, and around 90% less likely to miss needed physical health care). All gender-diverse groups of youth were significantly

less likely to report problem substance use (around 90% lower odds). Trans boys, non-binary youth, and questioning youth were also much less likely to have had suicidal thoughts in the past year, and were less likely to have attempted suicide in the past year compared to their peers who felt less connected to their school community (around 85% less likely).

“I’d like schools to talk more about LGBT.”

Youth aged 14, Interior

Regular Exercise

Non-binary youth who had exercised on at least two of the past seven days were over 4 times more likely to report that they felt good about themselves than non-binary youth who exercised less. The relationship between exercise and self-esteem was not clear among other gender-diverse groups, likely due to sample size issues.

Supportive Friends

Having at least one close friend was a protective factor for positive mental health among some gender-diverse groups. Questioning youth were more than twice as likely to report they felt happy most or all of the time in the past month if they had at least one close friend. Trans boys who had at least one close friend were 75% less likely to have felt extreme despair in the past month compared to trans boys without a close friend.

Sufficient Sleep

Getting enough sleep appeared to be beneficial for both the mental and physical health of some groups of gender-diverse youth. Non-binary and questioning youth who reported getting at least eight hours of sleep the night before taking the survey were more than 3 times as likely to report good or excellent physical health compared to those who slept less than eight hours, but this relationship was not significant for trans girls and trans boys, potentially because of insufficient power to detect differences for these two groups. Trans boys, non-binary youth, and questioning youth but not trans girls were also 2 to 3 times more likely to report good or excellent mental health if they got at least eight hours of sleep, compared to their peers who didn't get enough sleep.



SECTION 6:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



This profile of trans, non-binary, and questioning youth shows they face a number of challenges and have a number of strengths that can support their health and well-being. Compared to cisgender peers, gender-diverse youth face higher rates of discrimination and violence, and lower levels of safety and support. As a result, it is not surprising that they experience higher levels of stress, and face higher risks for self-harm, including suicidal thoughts and attempts. Unfortunately, they were also more likely to miss out on needed physical and mental health care.



However, gender-diverse youth also have areas where their health and social engagement are similar to cisgender peers, and for the most part, they are similar to each other. For example, the large majority of gender-diverse youth plan to complete high school and go on to post-secondary education. Most gender-diverse youth report involvement in one or more extracurricular activities, and they are more likely to be engaged in arts, drama, singing, and music activities than cis boys. The large majority of gender-diverse youth have close in-person friends, and they are more likely to also have online friends than their cisgender peers. They reported similar rates of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis use as cisgender youth, and were just as likely to report sexual experience.

“Gender dysphoria is often the source of panic attacks for me, although I try not to let it run my life. Most people are accepting but some (including family) are not.”

Youth aged 14, Fraser



While there are some disparities and areas of concern, and room for improvement, the majority of gender-diverse young people are doing well, often in spite of the challenges they encounter in their schools and communities. Importantly, key protective factors such as family and school connectedness are also protective for gender-diverse youth; when they have high levels of support from family, from teachers, and a sense of safety and belonging at school, they are far less likely to report mental health problems and suicidal thoughts and attempts, and more likely to report good or excellent health, happiness, and self-esteem.



These responses from trans, non-binary, and questioning young people underscore how we must work to reduce stigma and discrimination, and related violence and rejection, i.e., enacted stigma. At the same time, working to foster safer and more supportive school environments, and helping families better understand and support their gender-diverse young people, are likely to benefit them even when they experience stigma and violence from others in the community. Gender-diverse young people have ideas about how to create safer and more supportive environments that help them to thrive; we owe it to them to listen and act on those ideas to improve their health and their futures.

APPENDIX:

RESOURCES

SARAVYC & McCREARY RESOURCES

Balance and Connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth

This report shares provincial findings of the 2018 BC AHS. Regional reports are also available which share BC AHS results at the Health Service Delivery Area level, as are special topic fact sheets and infographic posters.

Website: https://www.mcs.bc.ca/download_resources/

Balance and Connection in BC Next Steps Workshop Toolkit

This toolkit provides a workshop template to share findings from the 2018 BC AHS with BC youth. It includes an introduction to the results, activities to learn about risk and protective factors, and discussion questions to explore youth health in youth's school or community. An accompanying PowerPoint is also available.

Website: https://www.mcs.bc.ca/next_steps/

Taking Pride

Taking Pride is a 2SLGBTQIA+ healthy relationships curriculum available to GSAs or 2SLGBTQIA+ youth groups across BC. The six-module workshop series was developed by SARAVYC and McCreary in partnership with BC youth. The six-workshop series covers topics like communication skills, consent, relationship violence, recognizing healthy and unhealthy relationships, and supporting friends.

Website: <https://www.saravyc.ubc.ca/takingpride/>

Email: katie@mcs.bc.ca

Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants

The Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants are available to BC youth (up to age 29) wanting to carry out projects to support vulnerable youth in BC, including youth with government care experience, youth who are homeless, and those with substance use challenges.

Website: https://www.mcs.bc.ca/trevor_coburn_memorial_grants

Youth Action Grants (YAGs)

YAGs were created by McCreary's Youth Advisory & Action Council (YAC) to provide BC youth (ages 12–19) the opportunity to deliver a project to improve youth health in their school or community.

Website: https://www.mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Kids Help Phone

Kids Help Phone offers 24/7 support, including professional counselling, information and referrals, and volunteer-led, text-based support to young people in both English and French.

Website: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

Hotline: 1-800-668-6868

Text: 686868

PFLAG Canada

24/7 support. Provides support, information and resources to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning people, as well as to their families and friends.

Website: <https://pflagcanada.ca/>

Call toll-free: 1-888-530-6777

Email: info@pflagcanada.ca

Trans Lifeline

This line is primarily for transgender people experiencing a crisis. This includes people who may be struggling with their gender identity and are not sure that they are transgender. While our goal is to prevent self-harm, we welcome the call of any transgender person in need. We will do our very best to connect them with services that can help them meet that need.

Website: <https://translifeline.org/>

In Canada Call: (877) 330-6366

In USA Call: (877) 565-8860

BRITISH COLUMBIA RESOURCES

Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre

Provides low barrier support and wellness services to trans and gender-diverse people.

Website: <https://cwhwc.com/>

Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of BC

Is available 24/7 via regional distress phone line, provincial phone line, and Seniors' Distress Line. Also, offer online distress services 13 hours a day (noon to 1am).

BC: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

Vancouver: 604-872-3311

Sunshine Coast/Sea to Sky: 1-866-661-3311

Online Chat Service for Youth: <https://youthinbc.com/>

Online Chat Service for Adults: <https://crisiscentrechat.ca/>

Interior Crisis Line Network (ICLN)

A network that links five crisis lines in the Interior Region (Cranbrook, Kelowna, Trail, Vernon and Williams Lake) through a single number. It is available 24/7/365 throughout Southern Interior and makes crisis line service available to everyone in the Interior Region.

Website: <http://www.interiorcrisisline.com/>

Call: 1-888-353-2273 (1-888-353-CARE).

Foundry BC

Foundry offers young people ages 12–24 health and wellness resources, services and supports, both online and through integrated service centres in communities across BC.

Website: <https://foundrybc.ca/>

Qmunity

Community centre that provides services to the LGBTQ community, including Gab Youth drop-in, support programs, support groups and counselling.

Website: <https://qmunity.ca/>

Trans Care BC

Trans Care BC supports the delivery of equitable and accessible care, surgical planning, and peer and community support for trans people across the province.

Website: <http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc>

Youthspace.ca

Emotional support and crisis intervention services for children and young people under the age of 30. The Support Team is a group of professional volunteers and staff trained to listen without judgment and offer support via live chat and discussion forum; not licensed counsellors. E-counselling provided by Pacific Centre Family Services Association.

Website: <https://youthspace.ca/>

Text: 778-783-0177

Email a Youth Counsellor from Pacific Centre Family Services Association at youthtalk2@pcfesa.org



McCreary
Centre Society



Stigma and Resilience
Among Vulnerable
Youth Centre



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