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SESSION 1

## Past year bullying online and via text messaging for LGBT versus non-LGBT youth in national samples of adolescents in the U.S.

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\* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses may be available by contacting CIPHR for further information.

**CIPHR**  
Center for Innovative  
Public Health Research  
Decoding how technology influences and can improve public health

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## BACKGROUND

Because of contextual factors (e.g., prejudice and social isolation), lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth consistently report victimization rates higher than heterosexual youth.

- It is possible LGBT youth may similarly face increased risk for victimization online.
- Alternatively, because the Internet equalizes the playing field by 1) stripping away visual, verbal, and physical cues, and 2) allowing people to communicate and find social support that may be lacking in face-to-face relationships, the Internet may represent a positive influence in the lives of LGBT youth.

## TEEN HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY SURVEY: RECRUITMENT

A 'general' population was recruited through the **Harris Poll Online (HPOL)** opt-in panel (n=3,989 respondents)

Invitations noted that the survey was about "health and the internet".

An oversample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) teenagers was recruited through the **Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**'s contacts (n=1,918 respondents).

Invitations noted that we were particularly interested in hearing from LGBTQ youth.

Weighting was used to merge the two samples, and to approximate a nationally representative sample

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- U.S. resident
- Ages 13 to 18
- In 5<sup>th</sup> grade or above; and
- Assent to participate in the survey
  - Parental permission requirements waived
- Valid responses: >5 minute survey, age confirmation at beginning and end of the survey, and 80% of main questions given a 'valid' response

## SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS (N=5,542)

- Demographic characteristics
  - Mean age: 15.7 years (SE: 0.03; Range: 13-18 years)
  - 67% White, 19% Hispanic
  - 57% Female
  - 33% Suburban setting, 28% urban, 39% small town
  - 59% household income 'similar' to other people's
- 89% attend public school
- 22% evangelical / born again Christians

## MEASURING BULLYING

Bullying and harassment can happen anywhere, like at school, at home, or other places you hang out.

In the past 12 months, how often were you bullied or harassed by someone about your age...?

- Every day or almost every day
- Once or a few times a week
- Once or a few times a month
- Once or a few times in the past 12 months
- Never in the past 12 months

In-person

By phone call (on a cell phone or landline)

By text message

Online

Some other way

## MEASURING SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Below is a list of terms that people often use to describe their sexuality or sexual orientation. How would you describe your sexuality or sexual orientation? Please select all that apply.

- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Straight/heterosexual
- Questioning
- Queer
- Other, please specify
- Not sure

Measure from GLSEN School Climate Survey

## MEASURING GENDER IDENTITY

What is your gender? Your gender is how you feel inside and can be the same or different than the answer you gave above. Please select all that apply.

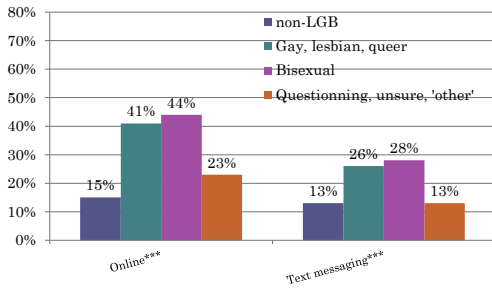
- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other, please specify:

[Hyperlink] Why are we asking about both sex and gender?

Biological sex is determined by our chromosomes, our hormones and reproductive organs. Typically, we are assigned the sex of male or female at birth. Gender refers to cultural values (roles, behaviors, activities and attributes) that a society associates with males and females. Gender also refers to how one defines oneself. For many people, there isn't a difference between these terms, but for some people, their gender is different from their biological sex.

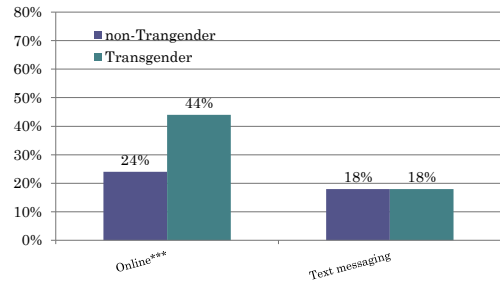
Measure from GLSEN School Climate Survey

LAST-YEAR TECHNOLOGY-BASED BULLYING EXPERIENCES BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION



\*\*\*p<=0.001

LAST-YEAR TECHNOLOGY-BASED BULLYING EXPERIENCES BY GENDER



\*\*\*p<=0.001

LAST-YEAR TECHNOLOGY-BASED BULLYING EXPERIENCES BY MODE AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Mode	Hetero-sexual (n=3380)	Gay/ lesbian / queer (n=1282)	Bisexual (n=655)	Questioning / unsure / other (n=225)
In person***	37	64	54	56
Online ***	15	41	44	23
Text messaging***	13	26	28	13
Telephone***	10	21	18	9
Some other way***	7	28	22	15

LAST-YEAR TECHNOLOGY-BASED BULLYING EXPERIENCES BY MODE AND GENDER

Mode	Non-transgender (n=5353)	Transgender (n=189)
In person***	44	68
Online ***	24	44
Text messaging	18	18
Telephone*	13	22
Some other way***	13	30

## MEASURING SOCIAL SUPPORT

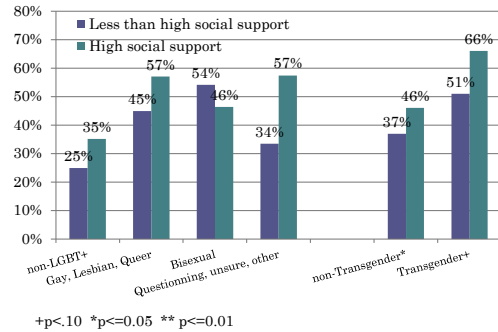
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Very strongly disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Mildly disagree
- Neutral
- Mildly agree
- Strongly agree
- Very strongly agree
- Do not want to answer

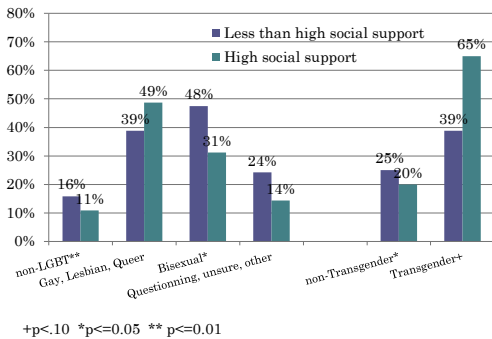
1. I can talk about my problems
2. I can share my happy and sad moments
3. I can count on my friends when things go wrong
4. My friends can really try to help me

Measure from Modified from Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support  
 Offline social support: Cronbach's alpha = 0.94 (n=5,542)  
 Online social support: Cronbach's alpha = 0.94 (n=2,131)

## ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN ONLINE SOCIAL SUPPORT AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED BULLYING AMONG YOUTH WITH ONLINE FRIENDS (N=2,144)



## ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN OFFLINE SOCIAL SUPPORT AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED BULLYING (N=5,542)



## LIMITATIONS AND OFFSETTING STRENGTHS

- As with all self-report measures, some youth respondents may not have accurately disclosed their sexual orientation, bullying involvement or social support.
- Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, temporality is not implied
- However, this is the first nationally representative survey with sufficient numbers of LGBT youth to allow for complex examinations of bullying and its sequelae

## CONCLUSIONS

- Findings suggest that LGBT youth are significantly **more likely** to be bullied online and via text messaging than their non-LGBT peers.
- Technology does **not** appear to create a more level playing field for sexual minority youth, at least within the context of bullying victimization.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Contrary to expectations, **online social support** is **not** directly associated with reduced odds of online bullying – in fact, there is suggestion that the opposite is true. Small sample sizes make interpretations difficult.
- There is some suggestion that **offline social support** **may be** associated with reduced rates of online bullying for some young people.
- Further examination is needed to better understand when and why social support is influential and when and why it is not.

## CONCLUSIONS

- **Traditional (in-person) settings** continue to be the **most common place** where youth are victimized across sexual orientation and gender types.
- Ongoing scientific inquiry about the health consequences of cyberbullying should not come at the cost of continued research on victimization in more traditional settings.

## TEEN HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY SURVEY: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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