



*Understanding and Overcoming the Challenges Faced by LGBTQI Youth
in Schools and Communities Webinar*

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Understanding and Overcoming the Challenges Faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth in Schools and Communities

*The First Webinar in a Series Hosted by
The Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention*



Webinar Objectives

- Improve understanding about the importance of becoming an ally to LGBTQI youth
- Learn the importance of teaching children to be accepting and tolerant at an early age
- Gain knowledge about efforts to change the culture of schools and communities to be more accepting and a safer place for LGBTQI youth



Inequities in Education and Psychological Outcomes Between LGBTQI and Straight Students in Middle and High Schools



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Definitions - LGBTQI

- **Lesbian** - A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.
- **Gay** - Men attracted emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually to men. Colloquially used at times as an umbrella term to include all LGBTQI people.
- **Bisexual** - A person who is attracted to two sexes or two genders, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally. This used to be defined as a person who is attracted to both genders or both sexes, but since there are not only two sexes (see intersex and transsexual) and there are not only two genders (see transgender), this definition is inaccurate.
- **Transgender** - Transgender (sometimes shortened to trans or TG) people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with.



Definitions - LGBTQI

- **Queer** - An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTIQ people. A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid. A simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and desires. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer. Many older LGBT people feel the word has been hatefully used against them for too long and are reluctant to embrace it.
- **Questioning** - The *questioning* of one's gender, sexual identify, sexual orientation or all three is a process of exploration by people who may be unsure, still exploring, and concerned about applying a social label to themselves for various reasons.
- **Intersex** - Intersexuality is a set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. That is, intersex people are born with "sex chromosomes," external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female. The existence of intersexuals shows that there are not just two sexes and that our ways of thinking about sex (trying to force everyone to fit into either the male box or the female box) is socially constructed.



LGBTQI & Bullying/Victimization

- Large percentage of bullying among students involves the use of homophobic teasing and slurs, called homophobic teasing or victimization (Espelage et al., 2009; Poteat & Espelage, 2005; Poteat & Rivers, 2010)
- Bullying and homophobic victimization occur more frequently among LGBT youth in American schools than among students who identify as heterosexual (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009)
- LGBT youth report indicated 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, and 40.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010)



2009 Dane County Youth Assessment

(Robinson & Espelage, 2011)

- Compared to straight-identified youth, LGBTQ youth are at greater risk of:
 - suicidal thoughts
 - suicide attempts
 - victimization by peers
 - high levels of unexcused absences.
- The LGBTQ community is diverse in its risk profiles.
- On the positive side, the majority of LGBTQ youth are *not* at risk; however, the *disproportionate* percentages of LGBTQ students at *mid-level* and *extreme* risk suggest more needs to be done to help these students.



Need to Intervene Early

- While some developmental patterns are common to straight- and LGBTQ-identified students, there are significant differences between these students in developmental trends related to school belongingness and unexcused absences, with LGBTQ youth at early risk.
- Follow-up analyses indicated that victimization DID NOT explain elevated suicidal risk among LGBTQ youth (Robinson & Espelage, in press).
- By raising awareness of educational inequities related to LGBTQ identification, this study lays the descriptive groundwork for interventions aimed at improving psychological and educational outcomes for these students (Robinson & Espelage, 2010).

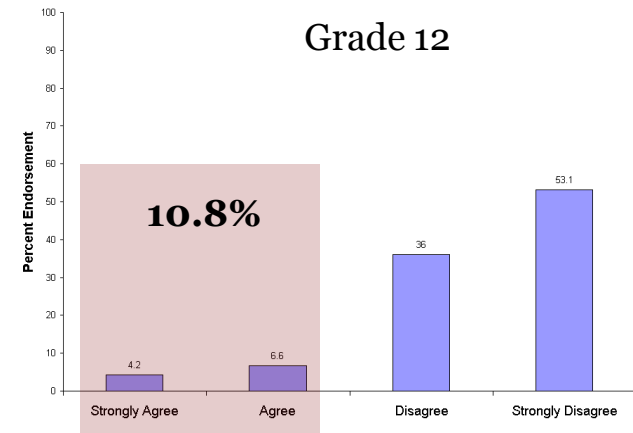
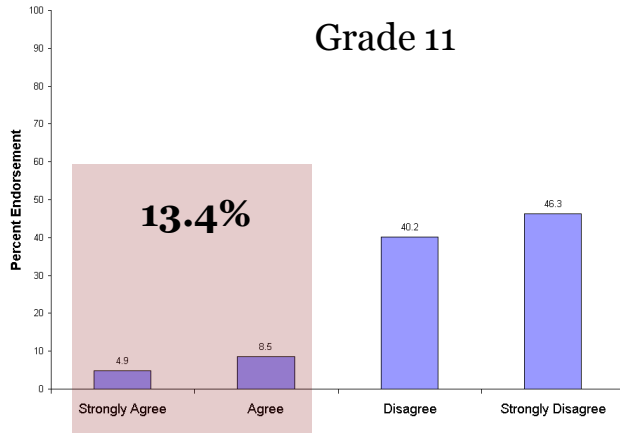
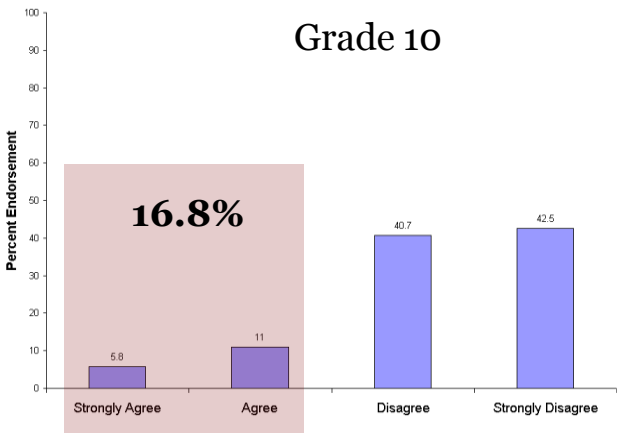
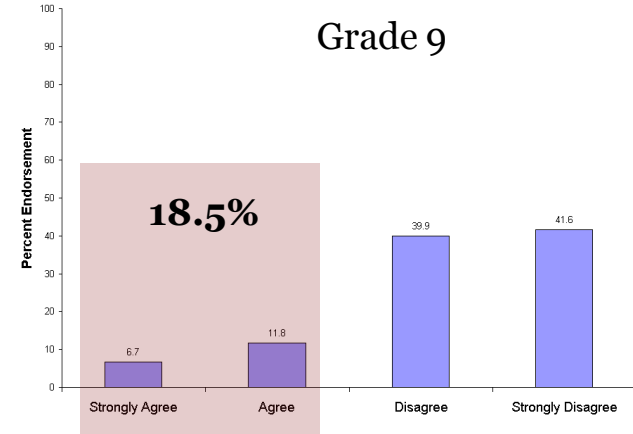
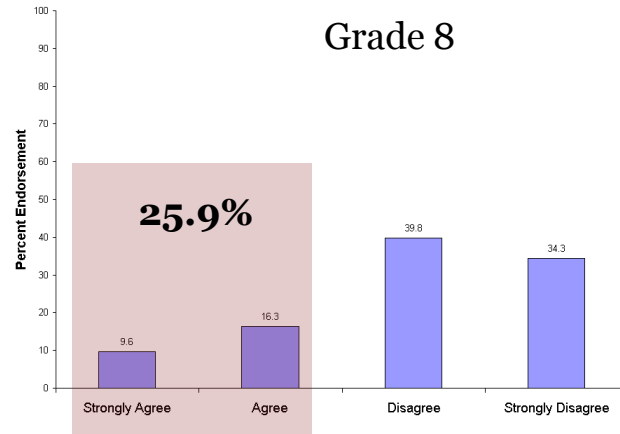
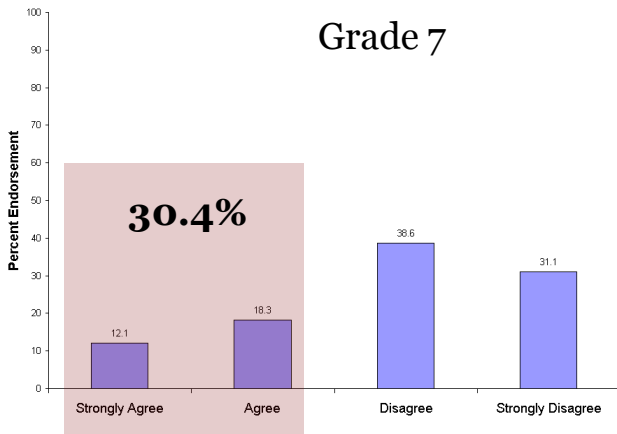


Poll Question #1



“I could never stay friends with someone who told me he/she was gay/ lesbian”

(Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009)



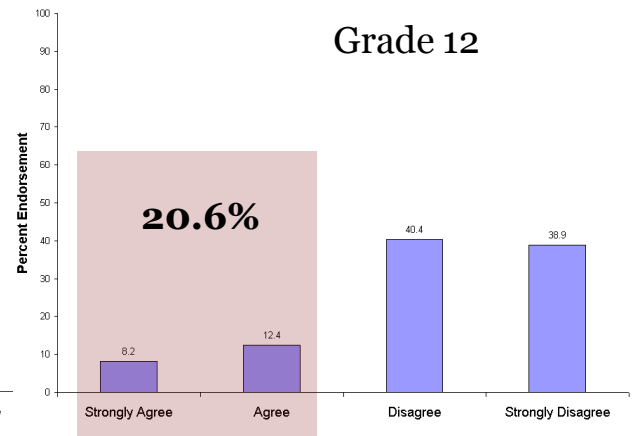
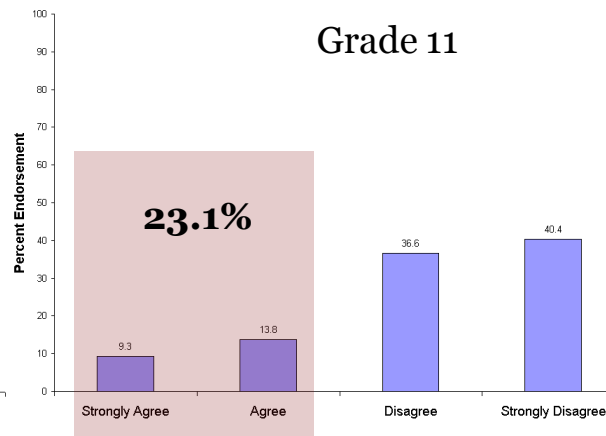
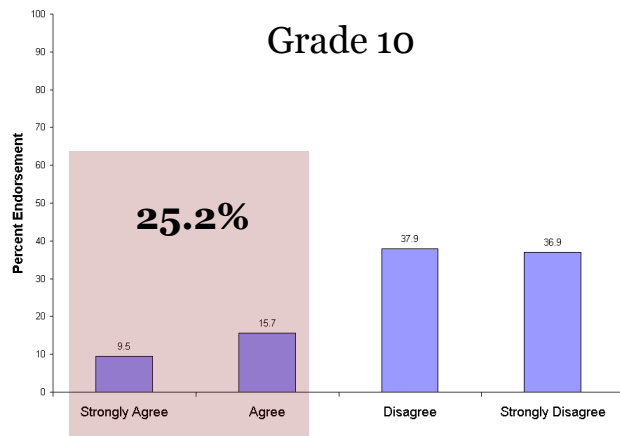
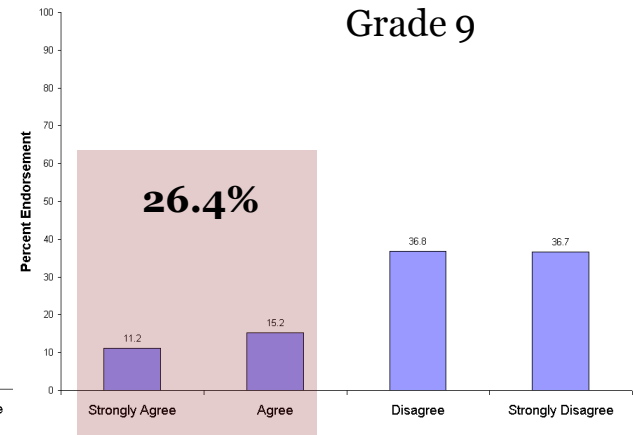
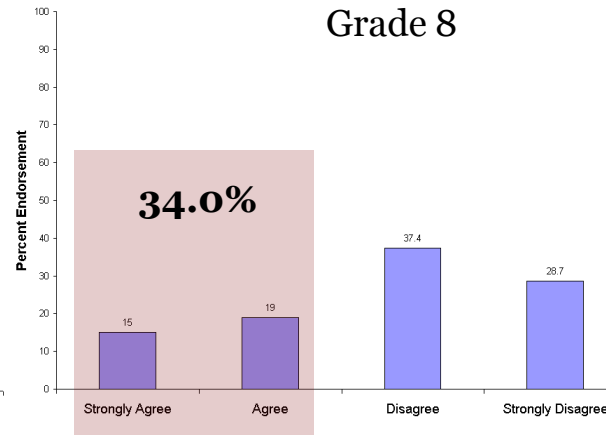
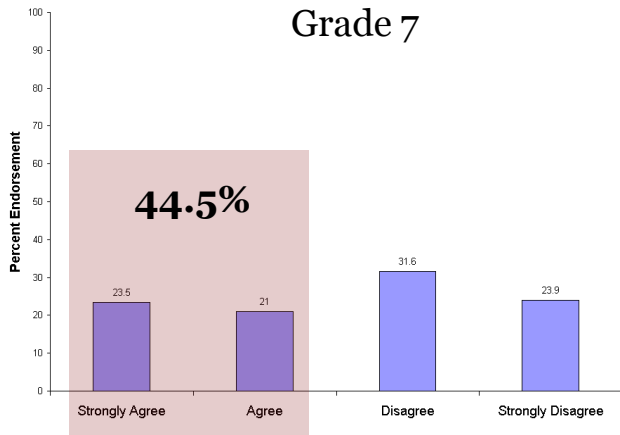


Poll Question #2



“I would rather attend a school where there are no gay or lesbian students”

(Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009)





LGBT Bullying is Driven by Peers

- Adolescent peer groups play a significant role in the formation and maintenance of harmful and aggressive behaviors, particularly homophobic behavior (Espelage & Polanin, 2010; Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2009).
- Peer influence has to be considered in developing and evaluating prevention/intervention programs.
 - Only one bullying prevention program attempts to target and shift peer norms and mentions LGBT bullying.



Bullying Perpetration & Subsequent Sexual Violence Perpetration Among Middle School Students



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&

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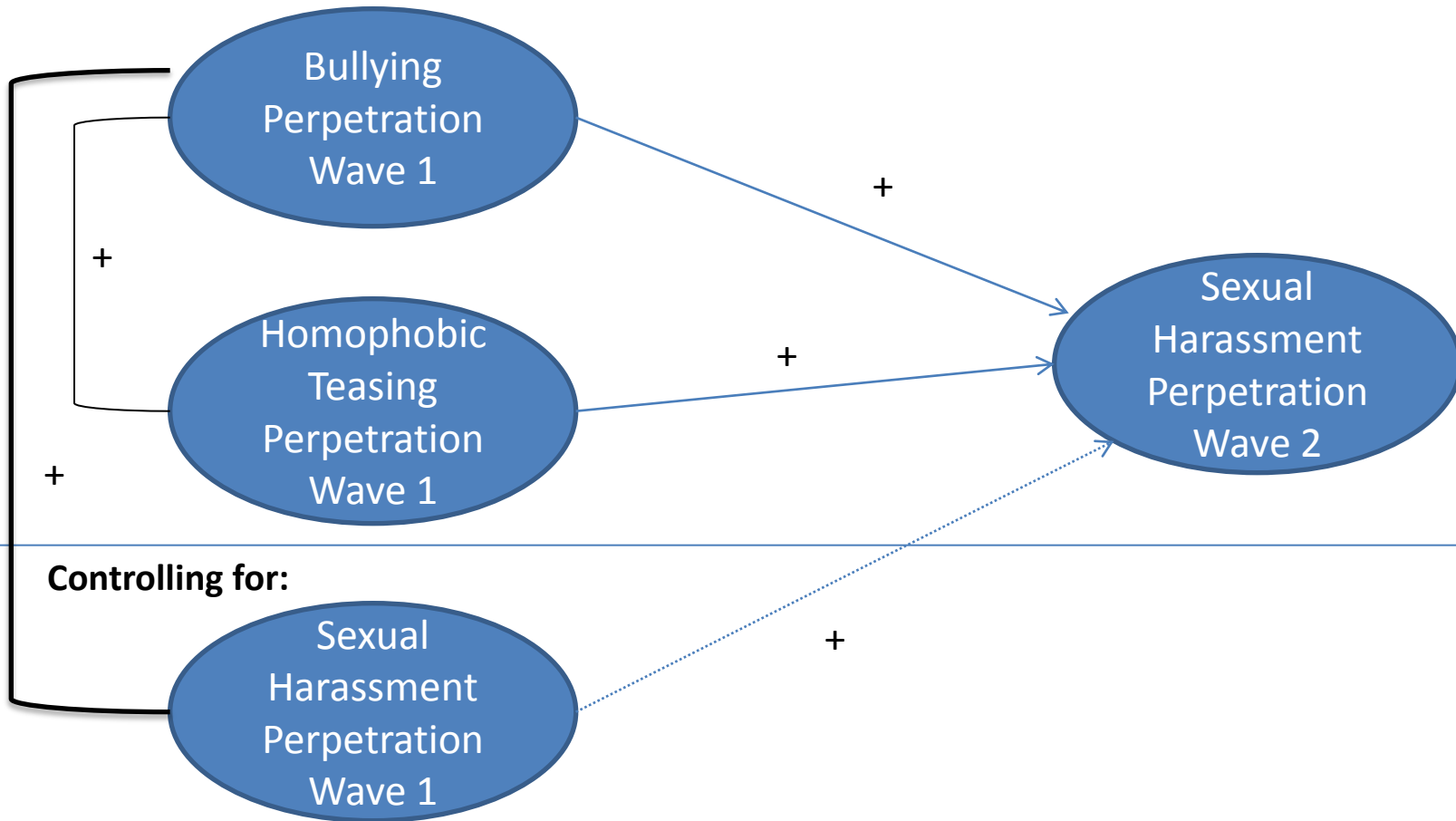
Division of Violence Prevention

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia

Merle E. Hamburger, Ph.D.

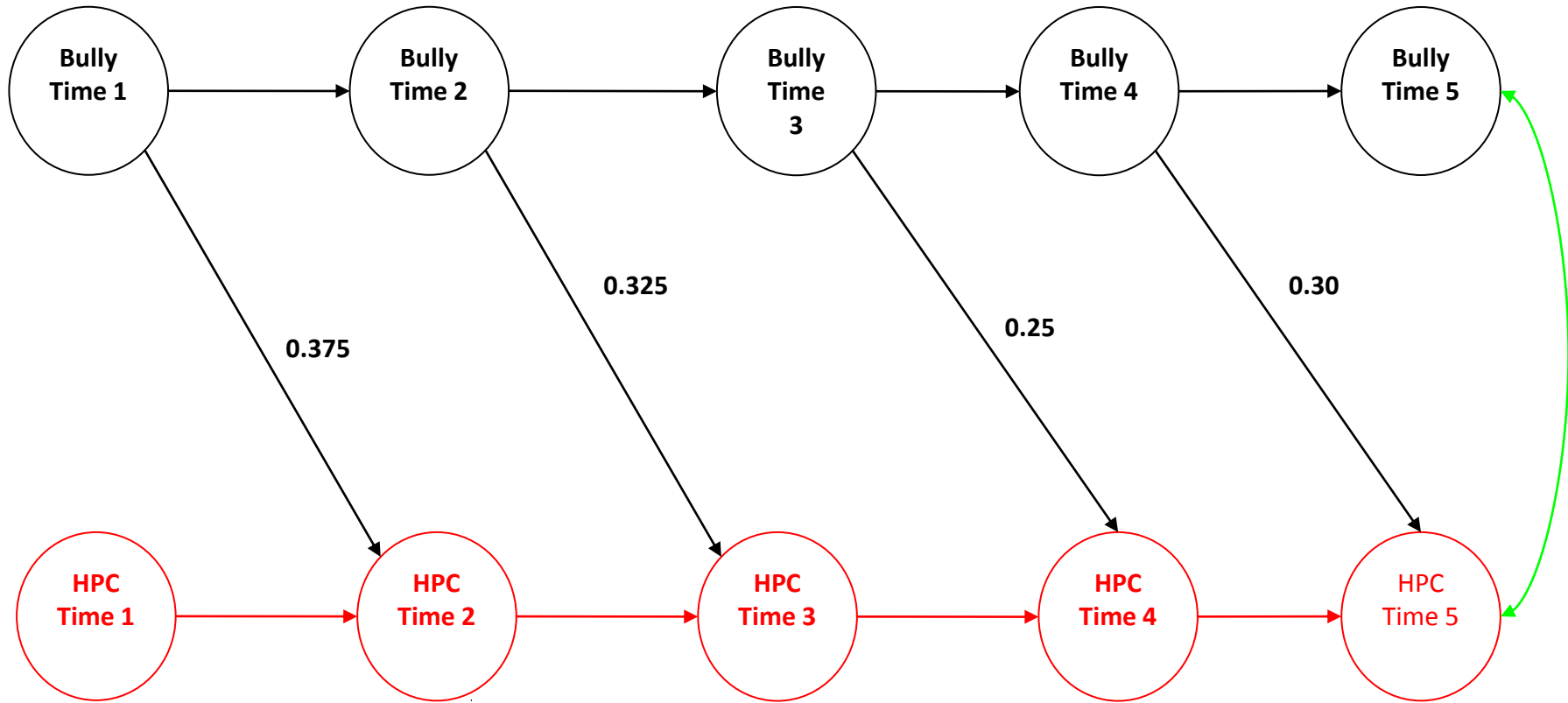


Longitudinal Results





CAUSAL LINK: Bullying – Homophobic Teasing



Model Fit: $\chi^2_{(340, n=790)} = 1366.088$; RMSEA = .057_(0.053; 0.060); NNFI = .0985; CFI = .988; (Espelage, Rao, & Little, 2012)



Future Analyses Underway

- Bullying perpetration causally linked to homophobic teasing perpetration
- Relation between bullying perpetration and sexual harassment perpetration explained by homophobic teasing perpetration
- Association between bullying perpetration and homophobic perpetration was explained by higher levels of traditional masculinity
- Bullying perpetration, homophobic bullying perpetration, and sexual harassment perpetration develops from peer influence, modeling, and socialization



Suggestions

Addressing homophobic teasing explicitly within a bullying prevention curriculum may be a way to delay development of sexual harassment. At a minimum, homophobic teasing should be addressed by adults:

That's so
gay

- What does that mean?
- You think it means 'stupid,' but it actually refers to a person's sexual orientation.
- You might be surprised to know that what you said may hurt someone's feelings.
- How can something have a sexual orientation?

You throw
like a girl

- Are you saying that I am a girl?
- Are implying that girl's can't throw?
- People do have different abilities, but that does not mean you need to be so mean.

You're such
a fag/dyke

- That type of language is not acceptable.
- We don't use those words here.



**Questions submitted during the presentation will
now be addressed!**



LGBT Inclusion in Communities, Families, and Schools: Causes for Concern and Hope



Kim Westheimer
Director
Welcoming Schools
Human Rights
Campaign Foundation



Poll Question #3





Growing up LGBT In America

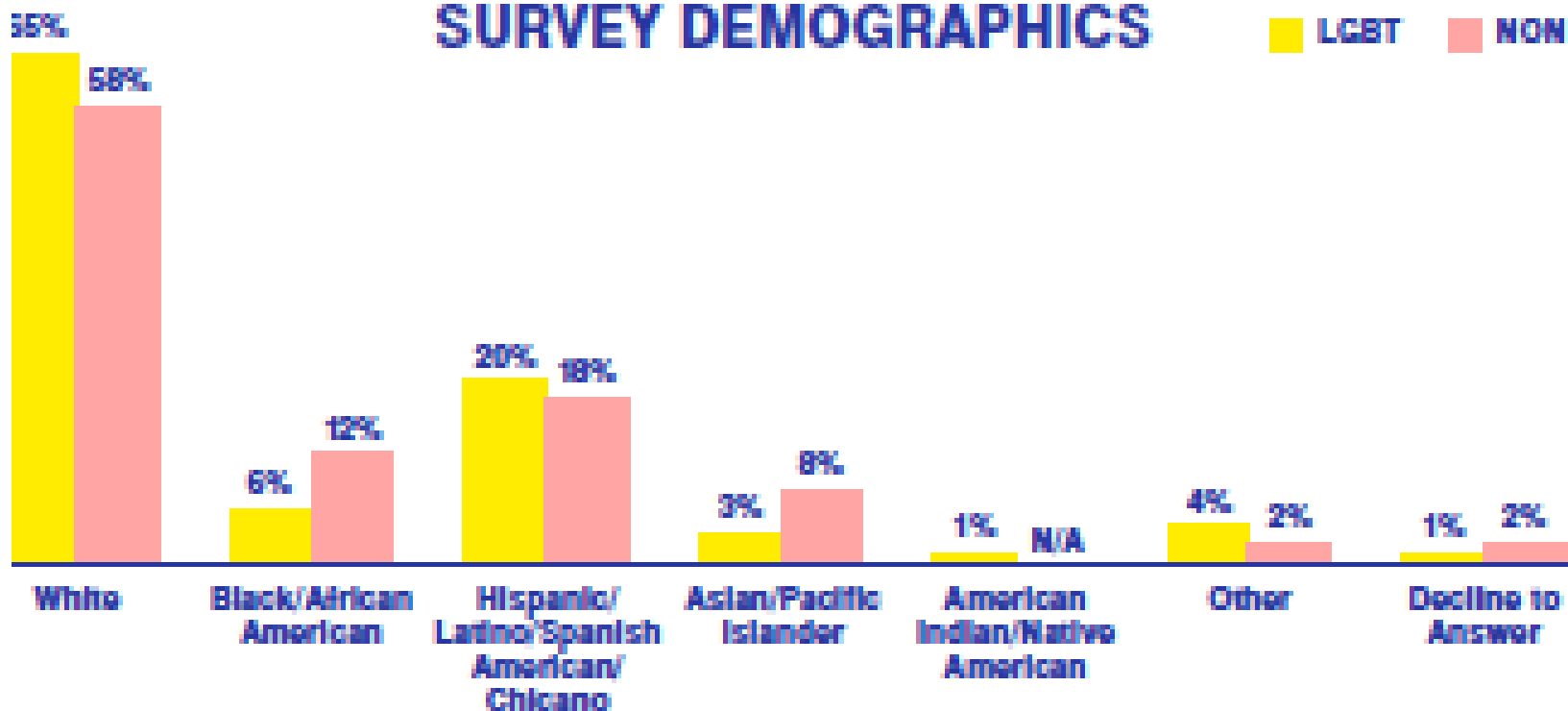
HRC Youth Survey Report
Top Line Findings

- Acceptance by family, peers, schools & community
- Access to LGBT affirmative support
- Exposure to harassment, bullying and exclusion
- Connection to welcoming religious or spiritual communities
- Sense of optimism about the future



Growing up LGBT In America

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS





Differences Among Demographics

- Youth of color are more likely to be **out to their peers and in school**
- White youth are more likely to be **out to their families**
- Transgender youth are more likely to **report intolerance** in their community and less acceptance by their families and more likely to be harassed and excluded by peers
- Will it get better?
 - gay male (50%), lesbian (38%), bisexual (34%), queer (31%), transgender (28%)



Poll Question #4





Most Important Problems

LGBT youth identified

- 1 Non-accepting families (26%)**
- 2 School/bullying problems (21%)**
- 3 Fear of being out or open (18%)**

Non-LGBT youth identified

- 1 Classes/exams/grades (25%)**
- 2 College/career (14%)**
- 3 Financial pressures related to college or job (11%)**



Need for Support and Affirmation

“I HAVE BEEN GRACIOUSLY RECEIVED BY MY PEERS, BUT THE BIGGEST ISSUE I FACE IS MY

“I CAN’T COME OUT TO ANYONE I KNOW AT CHURCH BECAUSE THEY WILL IMMEDIATELY SEE ME AS A BAD PERSON.”

“I LIVE IN SUCH A NARROW-MINDED COMMUNITY IT’S REALLY HARD ON ME. I DEAL WITH SO MUCH IGNORANCE ON A DAILY BASIS.”

PARENTS,

“IT’S VERY EASY TO LOOK AT ME AND TELL I’M GAY AND IT MAKES ME FEEL

AFRAID TO WALK AROUND

KNOWING THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE IN MY HOMETOWN THAT HATE ME, AND PEOPLE LIKE ME ENOUGH TO ATTACK ME.”

I HAVE BEEN CALLED SICK AND PERVERTED BY THEM.”

“I WISH I COULD MEET MORE GAY PEOPLE TO TALK TO AND GET TO KNOW.”



Need for Support and Affirmation

Nearly six in ten LGBT youth (**57%**) say that churches or places of worship in their community are not accepting of LGBT people; a third (**35%**) say their own church or place of worship is not accepting.

1/3
NEED AN ADULT

TO TALK TO

LGBT youth are more likely than non-LGBT youth to report that they do not have an adult they can talk to about personal problems.

Among LGBT youth, about a third (29%) disagreed with the statement "There is at least one adult I can talk to about personal problems." Only 17% of non-LGBT youth disagreed with that statement.

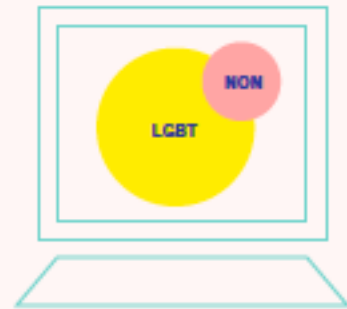


GROUP ACTIVITY

Only **18%** of LGBT youth say they participate very often or sometimes in an LGBT group outside of school. However, **52%** of LGBT youth say they participate very often or sometimes in an online community that addresses issues facing LGBT youth.



ONLINE GROUP ACTIVITY



Roughly three-quarters (**73%**) of LGBT youth say they are more honest about themselves online than in the real world, compared to **43%** among non-LGBT youth.



Families

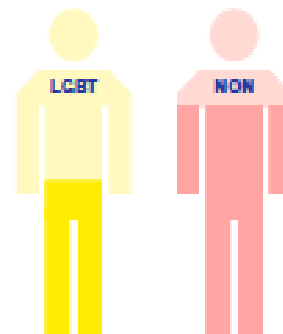
YOUTH

Out to immediate family

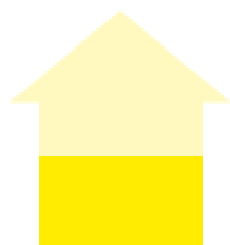
YOUTH

Out to extended family

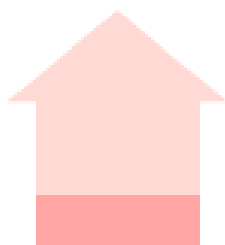
More than half (**56%**) of LGBT youth say they are out to their immediate family; a quarter (**25%**) are out to their extended family.



About half (**49%**) of LGBT youth say they have an adult in their family they could turn to for help if they felt worried or sad. Fully **79%** of non-LGBT youth have an adult in their family they could turn to for help.

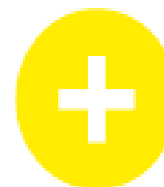


Families
Accepting



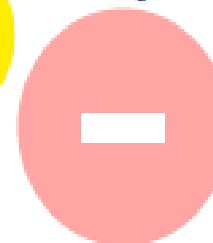
Families
Not Accepting

6 in 10 LGBT youth say their family is accepting of LGBT people, while a third (**33%**) say their family is not.



Positive
Messages

Negative
Messages



Less than a third of LGBT youth (**32%**) chose their family among a list of places where they most often hear positive messages about being LGBT; nearly half (**46%**) chose their family among a list of places where they most often hear negative messages about being LGBT.



Gay Straight Alliance (GSAs) & Acceptance



About a third (36%) of LGBT youth participate often in an LGBT club in school, such as a Gay Straight Alliance, while most (64%) do not.

Students who reported that their school had a GSA reported more acceptance in their school and from peers



Poll Question #5





With One Supportive Adult

Youth were more likely to report that they were:

- **Happy**
- **Felt like they fit in**
- **Their schools and communities were supportive of LGBT youth**



Hopeful Signs

- 91% of LGBT youth are **out to close friends**
- Over 90% expect that they will succeed in **college and the workplace** (85% of transgender youth)
- 84% expect they will form a **life-long partnership** with someone they love (72% of transgender youth)
- 63% take part in **after-school activities**
- 75% say their **peers have no problem** with them being LGBT



Poll Question #6





Sense of Optimism About the Future

Similar between LGBT and non-LGBT youth

BUT

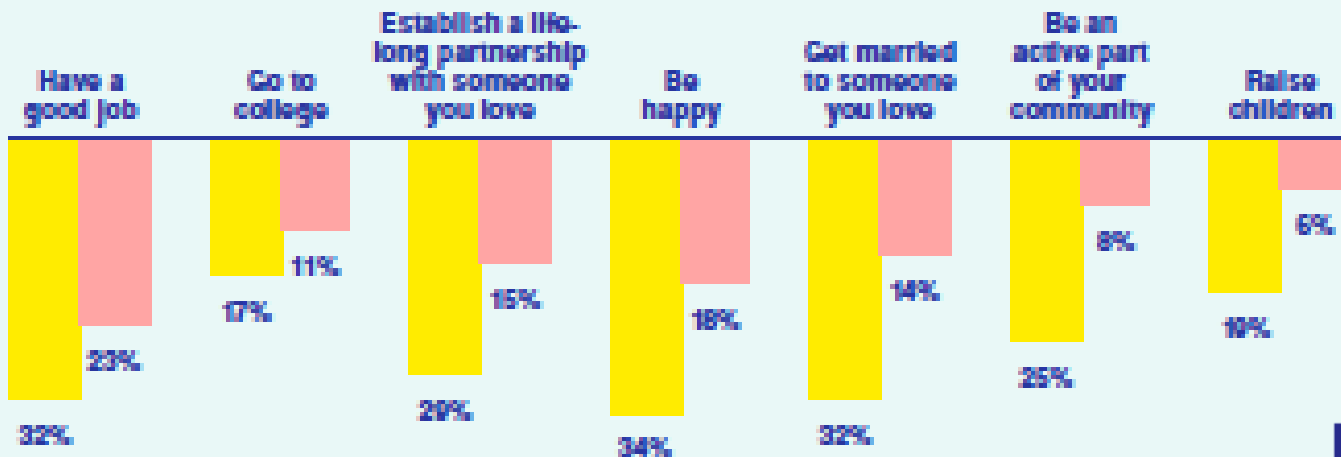
Optimism is based on leaving home community. LGBT youth are **2 X's** as likely to report they need to leave their homes than non-LGBT youth



DECLINE IN OPTIMISM

(Percentage decline in likelihood of life achievements if youth stay in same city/town)

■ LGBT ■ NON



Only **21%** of LGBT youth say there is a place in their community that helps LGBT people or where LGBT youth can go to be accepted.



Need for Early Intervention



- Children say they **fear anti-gay harassment more** than any other kind of name-calling (Drake, 2003)
- **26% of elementary school students** hear anti-gay language in school (GLSEN, 2012)



Poll Question #7





WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

6 TO 12 YEAR OLDS TALK ABOUT GAYS AND LESBIANS



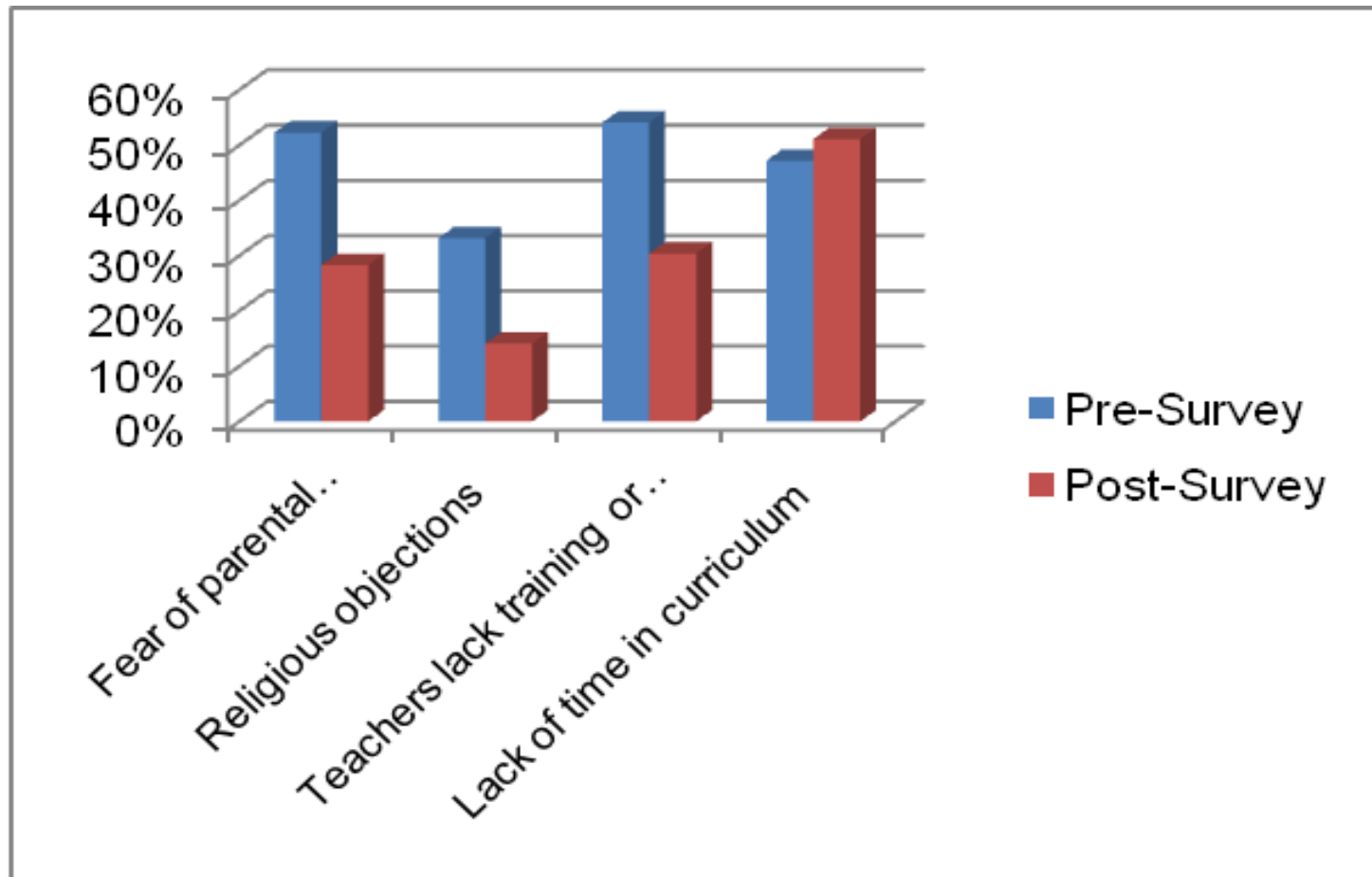


Poll Question #8





Changes in Views of Obstacles





Steps to Engage Communities

- Connect with existing initiatives
- Local leadership
- Professional development
- Family engagement
- Evaluation



Poll Question #9





**Questions submitted during the presentation will
now be addressed!**



Save the Date for Webinars 2 and 3!

Topics:

LGBTQI Youth and Their Families

&

LGBTQI Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

Tentatively scheduled for July & August 2012



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