



Washington LGBTQ+ Survey



Overview

- **Survey design and methodology**
- **Demographics and policy experiences**
- **Health**
- **Economic and financial experiences**
- **Safety, hate crime experiences, incarceration**
- **Dissemination**

Washington LGBTQ+ Survey: Design and Methodology

Overview

- Recognize team and partners
- Discuss survey design and methodology
- Share outreach approach and outcomes
- Show participant feedback about survey experience

Research Team and Partners

Research team

- Leadership:
 - Traci Gillig
 - Crystallee Crain
- Research assistants:
 - CJ Janssen
 - Ron Price
 - Oaklen Warren
 - Axis Zarcone
 - Zak Moreno
 - Christina Nickerson



Partners

- **Prevention at the Intersections** (complete project)
- **WSU Social and Economic Sciences Research Center** (complete project)
- **Charles Watson II** (March – June 2025)
- **RCB Communications** (November 2024 – January 2025)
- **data2insight** (August 2024 - January 2025)
- **Delve** (March 2024 – January 2025)
- **Sankofa Consulting** (December 2023 - July 2024)

Advisory panel

- Nikki Brueggeman – Whitman College
- Erin Fordyce – NORC
- Robin Lang – Washington State Department of Veteran's Affairs
- Gabe Neuman – GSBA
- Julia Przedworski – Pride in Numbers
- Tracy Simmons – FAVS News

Survey Design and Methodology

Timeline

- **December 2023:** Research team began working with the LGBTQ Commission
- **January 2024:** Team led grounding session with the LGBTQ Commission
- **February – May 2024:** Team designed questionnaire and outreach approach, reviewed with LGBTQ Commission and advisory panel, submitted study plan to Washington State Institutional Review Board (WSIRB), pilot tested survey materials, established social media and website, produced branded items, conducted media relations
- **June 1, 2024:** Launched data collection, tracked/reported preliminary outcomes
- **January 31, 2025:** Closed data collection, started full data analysis
- **May 17, 2025:** Presented preliminary findings
- **June 25, 2025:** Delivered final report and presentation

Project goals

- Research team aimed to meet the LGBTQ Commission's goals stated in the RFQQ and expressed through the grounding session and subsequent conversations, including:
 - Capture LGBTQ+ Washingtonian's demographics; geographic locations; health, safety, and economic/financial experiences; primary needs
 - Reach LGBTQ+ Washingtonians across the lifespan
 - Engage hard-to-reach communities such as Two-Spirit, rural, and older LGBTQ+ people
 - Provide data to help the LGBTQ Commission make informed policy recommendations

Research team aims

- Team also desired to:
 - Co-create survey with a diverse group of LGBTQ+ people across the state
 - Empower LGBTQ+ Washingtonians to share their unique experiences
 - Ensure accessibility
 - Engage with the community in various ways
 - Examine survey data as a whole and intersectionally
 - Provide results that lend themselves readily to policymakers, community members, and others

Survey design

- Drew from the diversity of our team members to create an inclusive survey
- Team members have experience in:
 - Leading survey-based, mixed method research with LGBTQ+ adolescents through adults
 - Engaging with BIPOC communities
 - Understanding experiences of transgender, nonbinary, and rural Washingtonians
- Incorporated established survey scales/items when available, and designed new ones when needed



Survey items and scales

- Demographics
- Policy experiences
- Health, medical experiences, and social support
- Economic and financial experiences
- Safety experiences
- Incarceration experiences
- Source of hearing about survey

How safe do you feel as an LGBTQ+ person in the state of Washington?

- ☐ Extremely safe
- ☐ Very safe
- ☐ Somewhat safe
- ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe
- ☐ Somewhat unsafe
- ☐ Very unsafe
- ☐ Extremely unsafe

Open-ended survey questions

- For all participants:
 - *“What would you like to see the Washington state government do to help LGBTQ+ people who live in Washington?”*
 - *“Is there anything else you’d like to share with us about being LGBTQ+ in Washington?”*
 - *“Is there anything you’d like to share with us about your experience with this survey?”*

Open-ended survey questions

- For participants who experienced barriers to obtaining gender-affirming care:
 - *“Please explain the barriers you encountered when trying to obtain insurance coverage for gender-affirming care.”*
- For previously incarcerated participants:
 - *“Did your LGBTQ+ identity negatively affect your treatment by other inmates or personnel while incarcerated?”*
 - *“Did you have difficulty receiving healthcare that affirmed your LGBTQ+ identity while incarcerated?”*

Protecting participants

- Anonymous survey
- Parental permission for adolescents ages 11 to 17 (WSIRB-required)
- Separate questionnaire for entering \$50 raffle drawing
- Data stored in secure, password-protected spaces, with limited access

Review and pilot testing

- Internal team review
 - Survey team represents queer individuals of a range of ages, identities, backgrounds
- Review by LGBTQ Commission leadership and commissioners
 - Options to provide feedback via a Qualtrics questionnaire and in a Zoom meeting
- Pilot testing with LGBTQ+ people of various ages, abilities, identities, and life experiences
 - Interview/survey completion sessions conducted

Inclusive materials

- Translated English questionnaire and informational materials into Spanish and Chinese
- Created online and paper-and-pencil questionnaires



Preliminary data analysis and cleaning

- Monthly preliminary analysis during data collection to guide outreach
- Participants were screened for study eligibility based on the following criteria:
 - Living in or being a resident of Washington State
 - Being age 11 or older
 - Identifying as LGBTQ+
 - Not having previously completed the survey
- Multiple team members conducted rigorous screening for invalid responses (bots, etc)

Data analysis

- Statistical analyses (frequencies, descriptives, correlations, regressions) conducted by WSU SESRC and lead principal researcher (SPSS v28)
- Qualitative analysis and coding of open-ended responses led by WSU SESRC, supported by WSU research assistants
 - SESRC inductively analyzed selections of participants' written responses to create codebooks
 - SESRC staff and research assistants used the codebooks to assign codes to participants' written responses
 - Intercoder reliability established between coder pairs

Outreach

Outreach approach

- WSU Media Relations activities prior to study launch generated statewide coverage and enthusiasm about the project



New WSU study will examine Washington's rainbow reputation

By KIRO 7 News Staff

November 28, 2023 at 5:44 pm PST



Outreach approach

- Timed survey launch to align with start of Pride
- Shared the survey link online
 - Posted on @walgbtqsurvey social media
 - Emailed to LGBTQ+ and other relevant organizations
- Conducted additional media relations
- Distributed and posted print materials
- Hosted in-person outreach and survey administration events



Focused outreach

- Preliminary analysis of participant race/ethnicity showed underrepresentation of Latine and Asian people
- In September 2024, team launched focused outreach:
 - Additional engagement with relevant community organizations, student groups, businesses, etc
 - Op-ed in *International Examiner*
 - Targeted online ads
 - Public service announcements in English, Spanish, Chinese
 - Recruitment through survey firm SAGO



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Edward R. Murrow
College of Communication

International Examiner

OPINION

The critical importance of BIPOC representation in state LGBTQIA+ survey

By Dr. Crystallee Crain - January 13, 2025



Free pride flag image, public domain LGBTQ CC0 photo.

As activist June Jordan reminds us, “We’re the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

The [Washington LGBTQ+ Survey](#), led by Washington State University’s Murrow College of Communication and sponsored by the [Washington State LGBTQ Commission](#), stands as a landmark initiative in understanding and supporting our state’s diverse Two-spirit — an umbrella term for third genders in Native America — and LGBTQIA+ communities.

It is a first-of-its-kind statewide survey aimed at raising the voices of queer adolescents and adults living in Washington to state policymakers. While the survey has successfully gathered insights from more than 5,400 Two-spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members across every Washington county, a crucial demographic gap has emerged that demands our immediate attention and action before the survey closes on January 31, 2025.

Communities of color know all too well that without information about us we can’t make the case for the social and political changes needed. Two-spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities of color face additional barriers and exclusions that the Washington LGBTQ+ Survey aims to provide context for.

Outreach outcomes

- Sample of nearly 6,700 LGBTQ+ participants
- Representation across lifespan, from adolescents to older adults
 - Participants ranged in age from 11 to 98 years old
- Participants from every Washington county
- More than half of participants are transgender, nonbinary, or another non-cisgender identity
- Diversity across race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and other key characteristics and experiences represented

Participant Feedback

Participant feedback

- Of 935 participants who responded to the question “*Is there anything else you’d like to share about the survey?*”:
 - 60.4% shared Positive Emotional Responses
 - 28.4% shared Survey Content Feedback
 - 5.8% shared Survey Flow Feedback
 - 2.9% had Data-Related Questions
 - 2.6% shared Negative Emotional Responses

Washington LGBTQ+ Survey: Demographics and Policy Experiences

Overview

- Selection of demographics
- Experiences with living in Washington, LGBTQ+ resources and policies, gender-affirming legal processes
- Suggestions for policy improvements

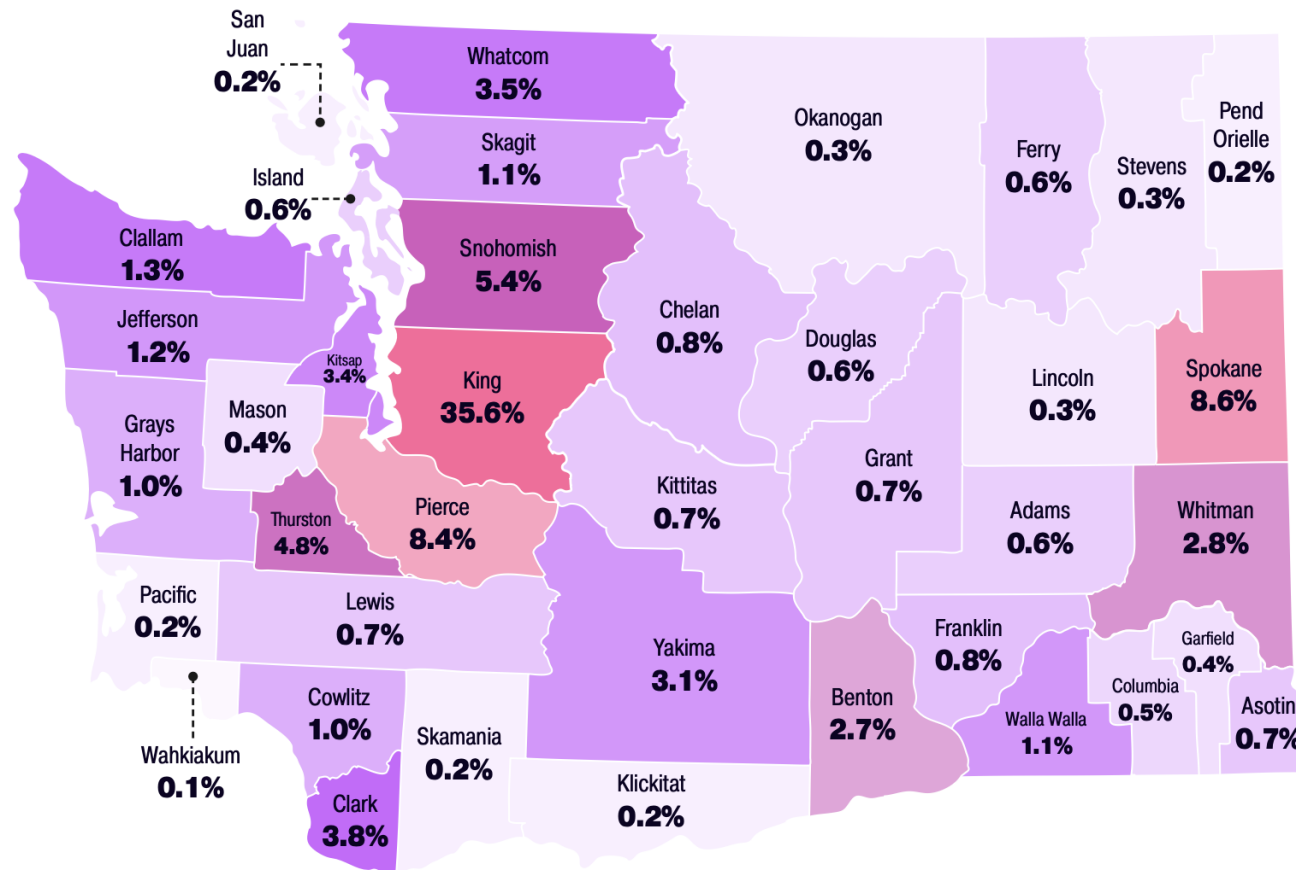
Demographics

(6,659 survey participants)

County of residence

Percent of Survey Participants Residing in County

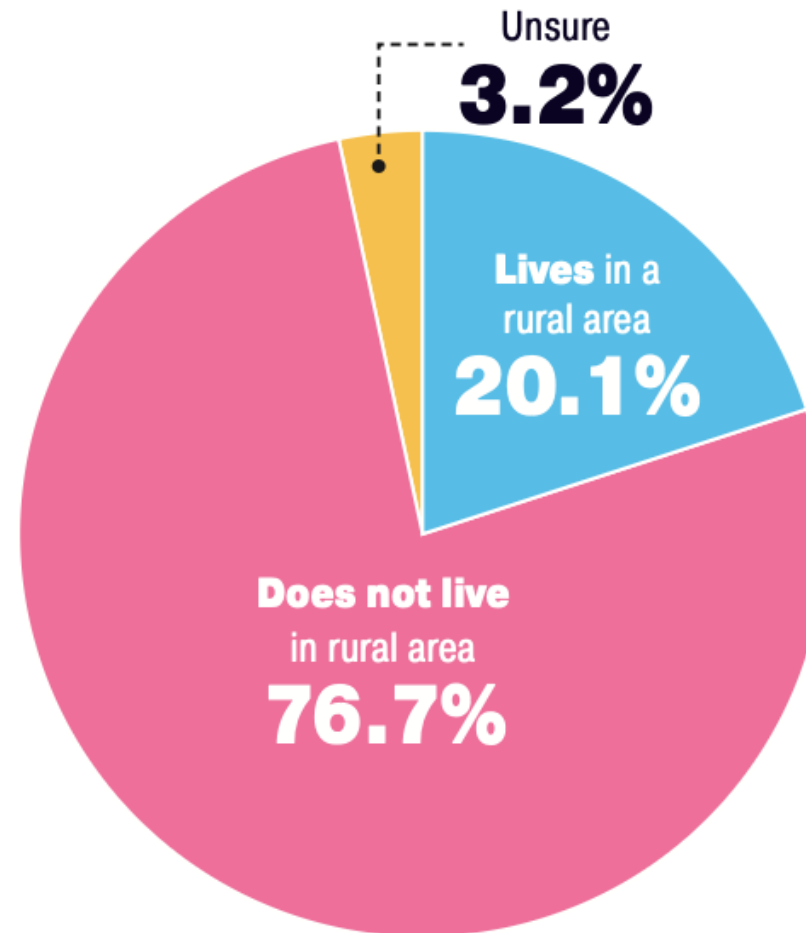
(6,098 participants)



Rural area residence

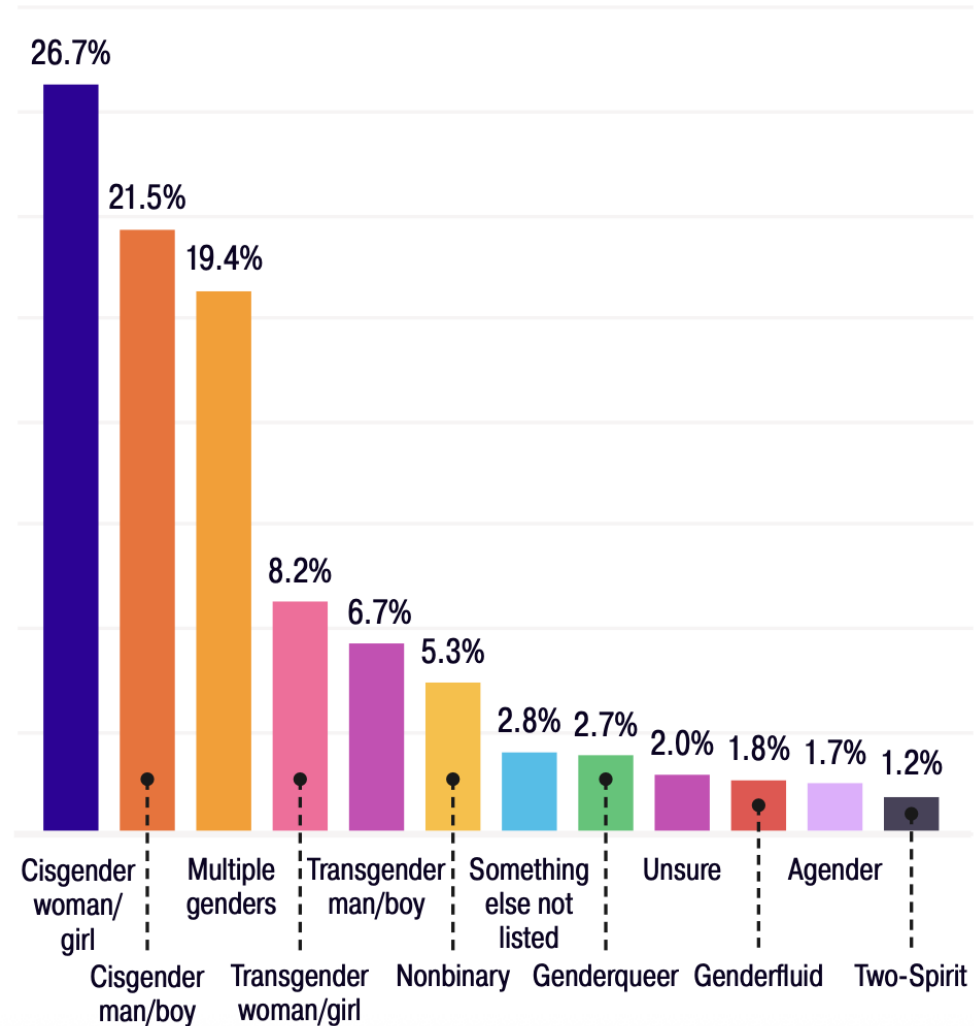
Do you live in a rural area
(that is, an area not
immediately surrounding a
city; a small town generally
surrounded by open land)?

(6,091 participants)



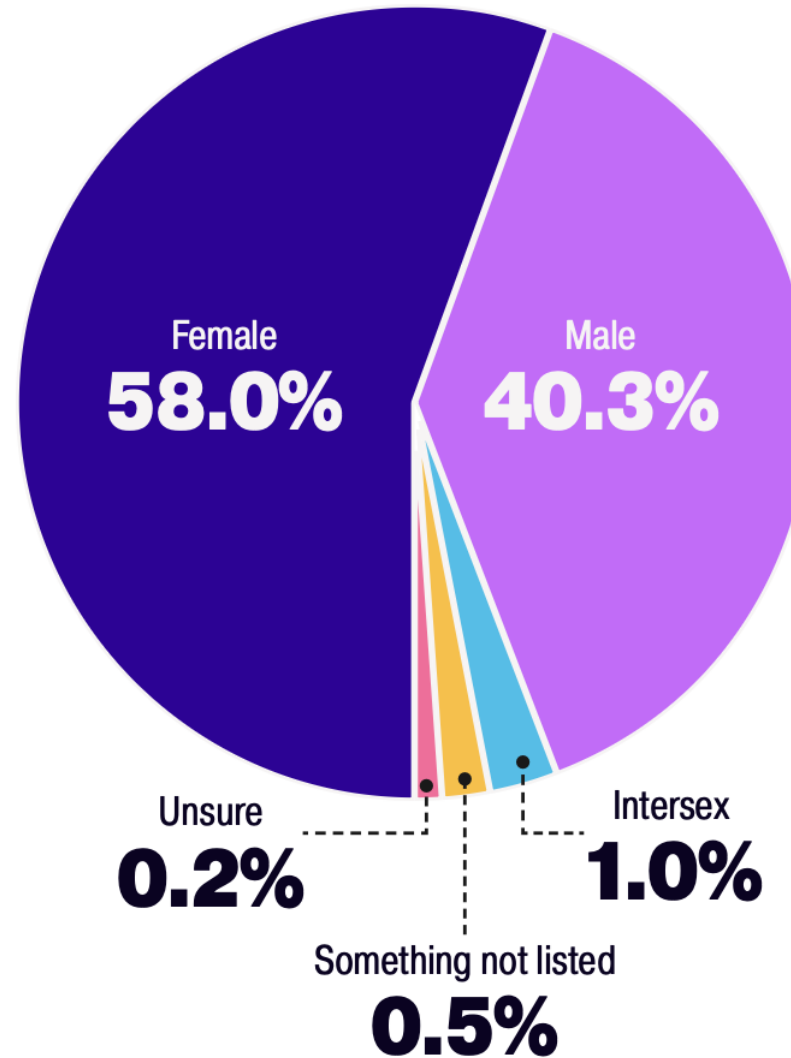
Gender

Which describes your gender?
(6,163 participants)



Sex

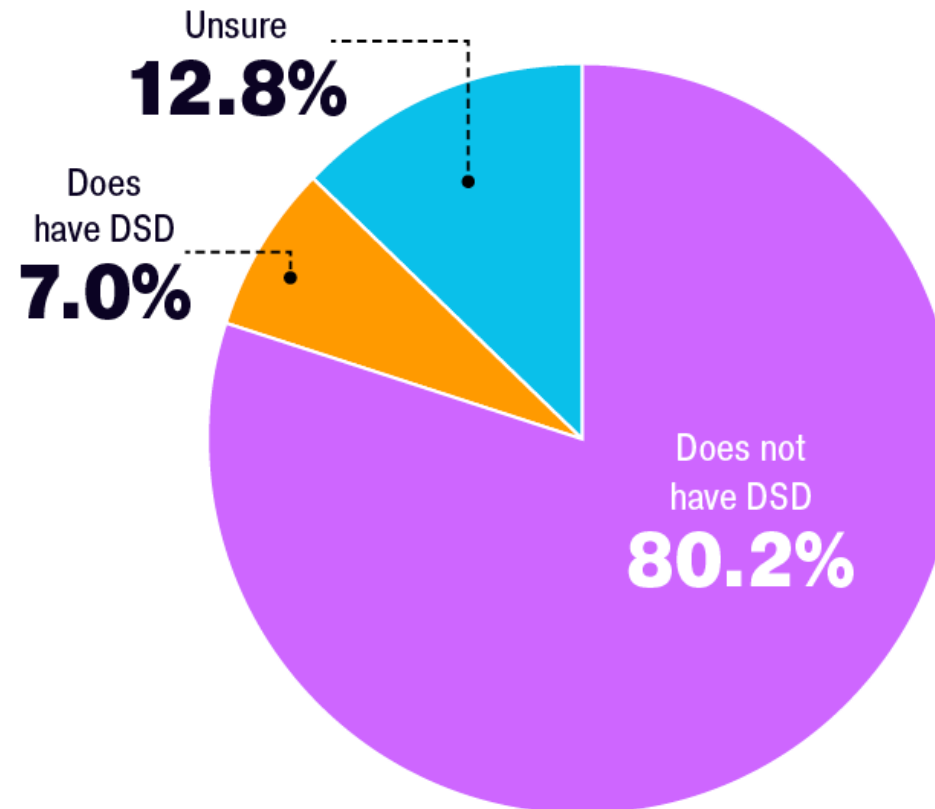
What sex were you assigned at birth?
(6,155 participants)



Difference of sex development

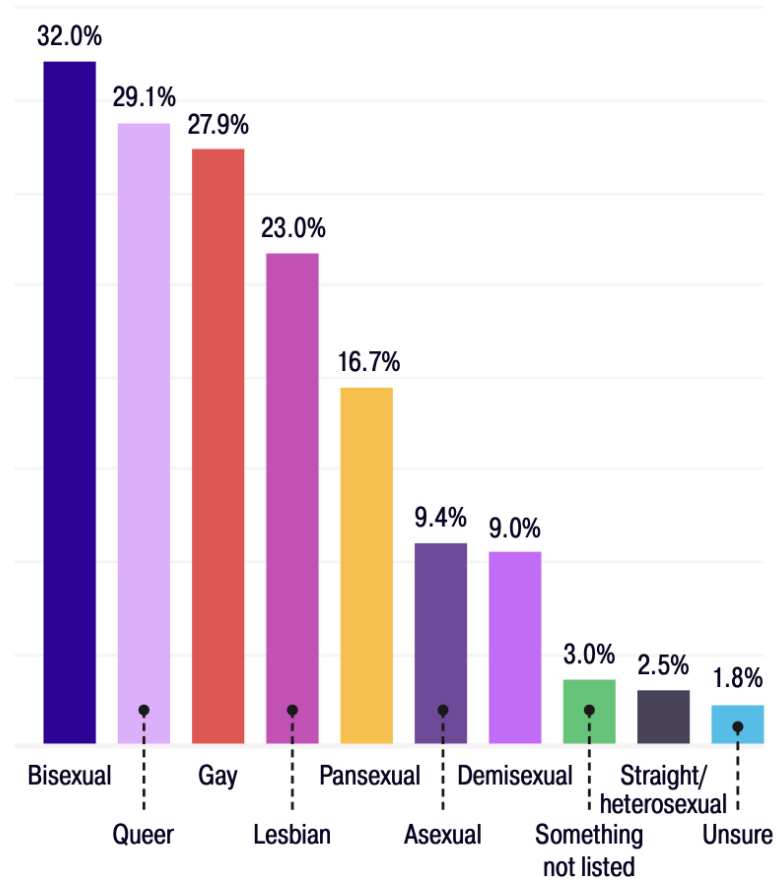
Do you have a difference of sex development (DSD)?

(6,164 participants)



Sexual orientation

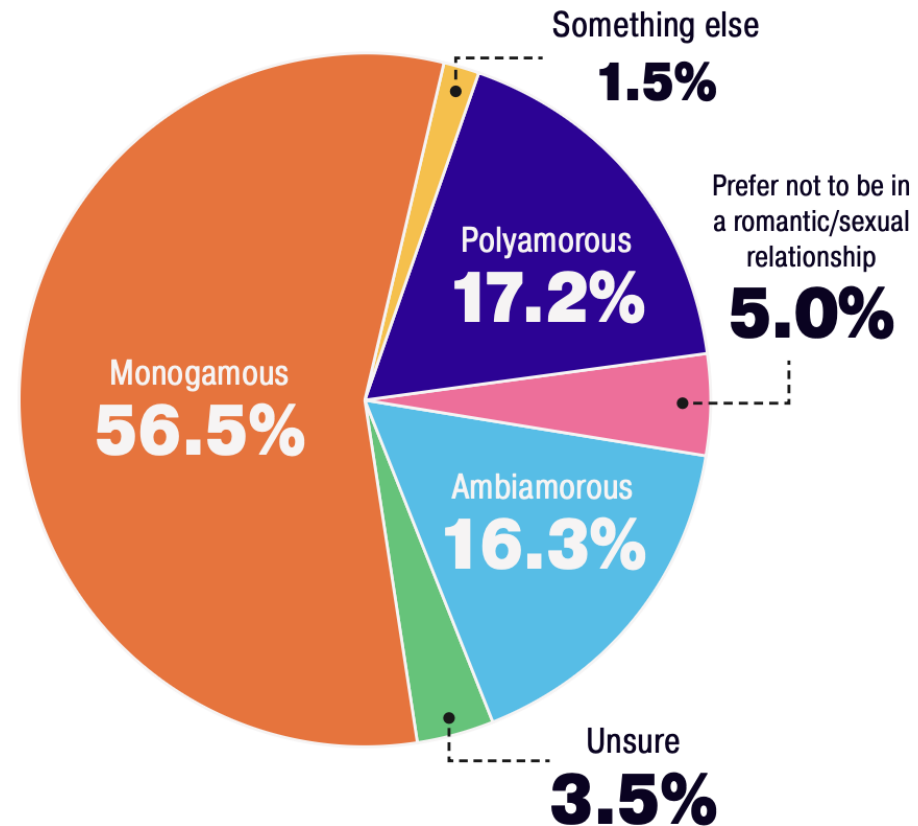
Which sexual orientation describes you?
(6,166 participants)



Relationship structure

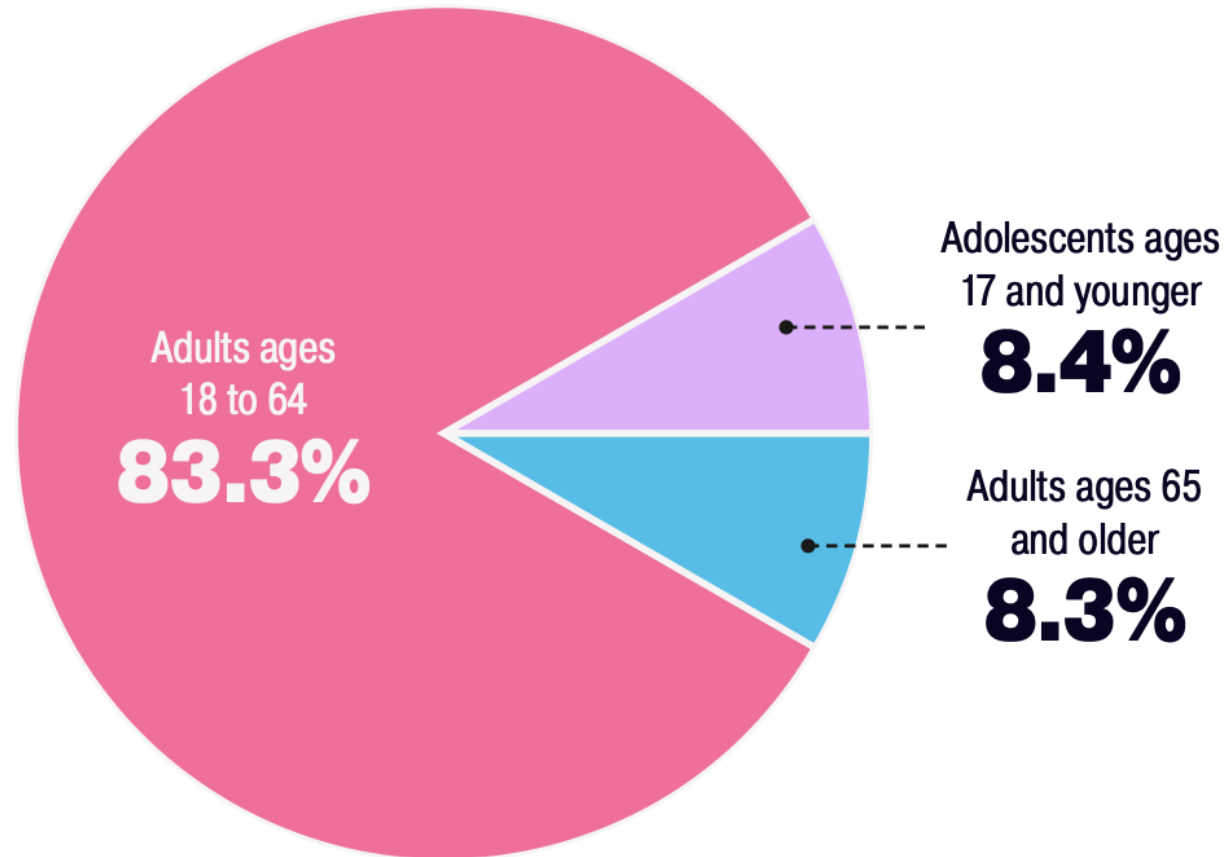
Which best describes your preferred romantic/
sexual relationship structure?

(6,148 participants)



Age

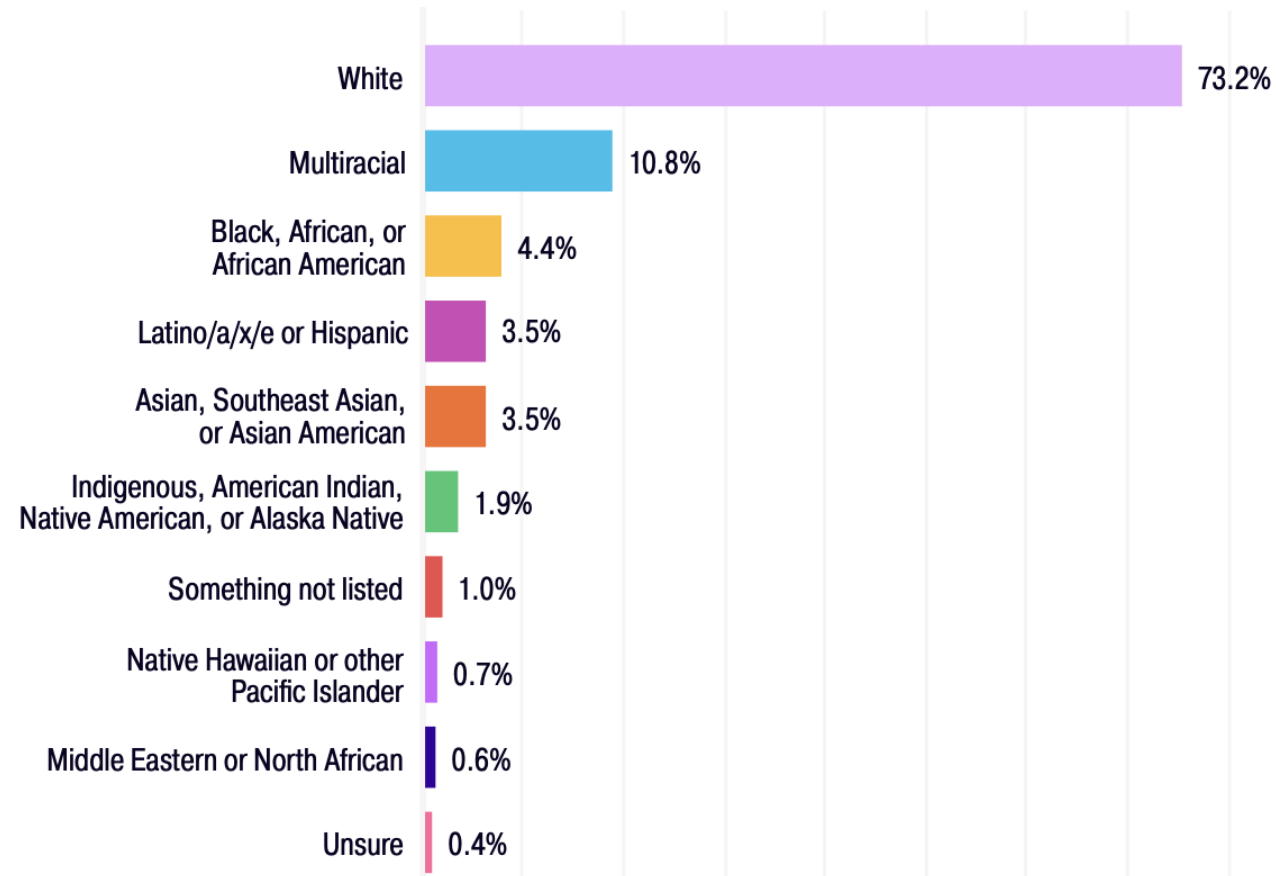
What is your age range?
(6,138 participants)



Race/ethnicity

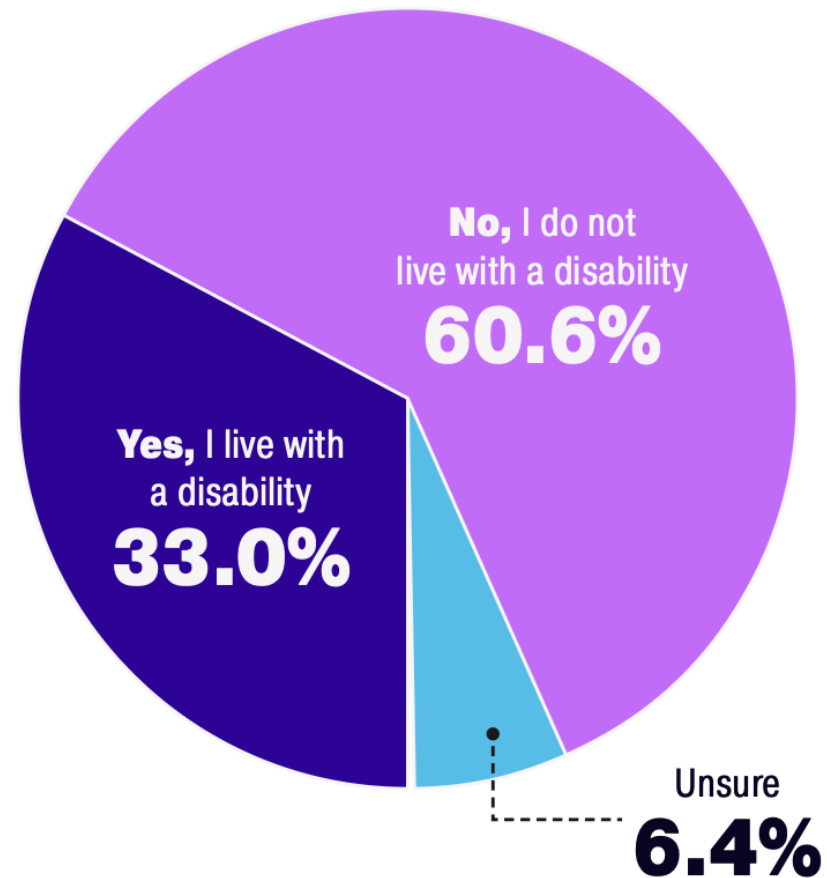
What is your race/ethnicity?

(6,138 participants)



Disability

Do you live with a disability?
(6,148 participants)



Living in Washington

Top things liked

- Main themes:
 - Community (29.0%)
 - Acceptance (23.1%)
 - Legal protections (14.9%)
 - Natural environment (8.0%)
 - Safety (7.3%)
 - Politics (6.9%)
 - Healthcare (6.6%)
 - Locations and sense of place (4.5%)
- Complete table of themes, subthemes, and quotes is in the report

What are the top three things you like most about living in the state of Washington as an LGBTQ+ person?

(Random selection of 1,900 participants)

LGBTQ+ Resources and Policies

Availability of resources

Which best describes how available LGBTQ+ resources are to you in Washington?

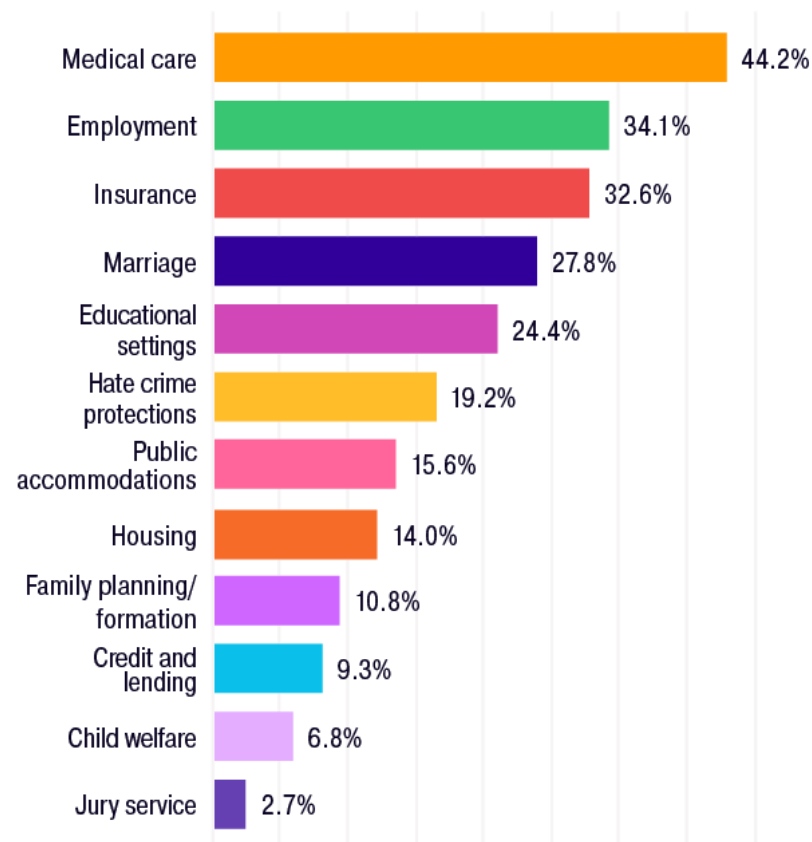
(6,648 participants)



Policies and protections

Have you benefited from Washington policies or legal protections for LGBTQ+ people in the following contexts?

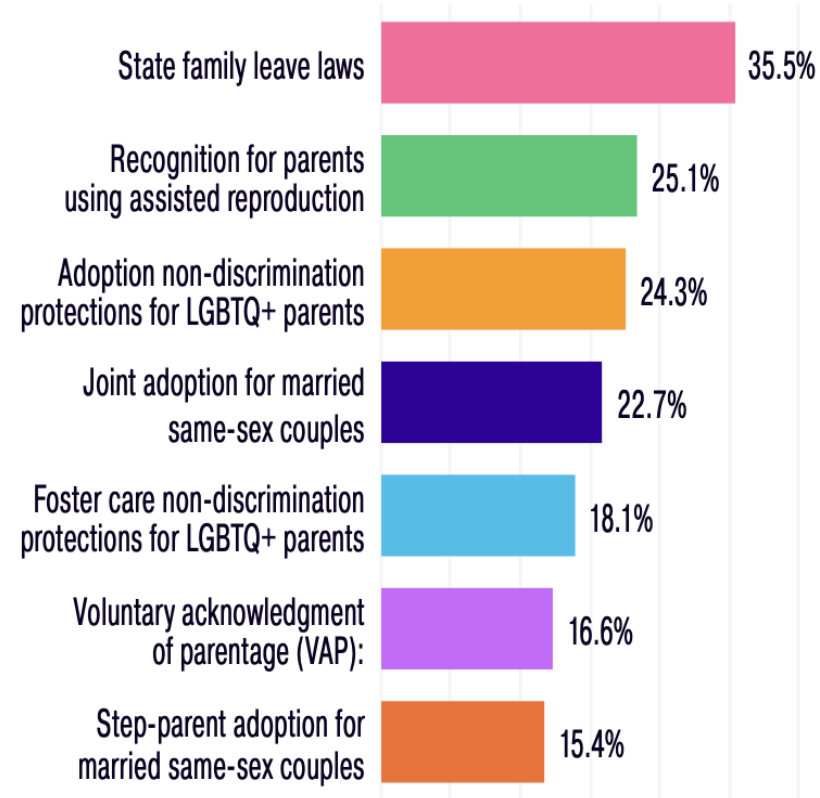
(6,607 participants)



Family planning policies

Of the 10.8% of participants who benefited from family planning policies, these were the top policies they benefited from:

(714 participants)

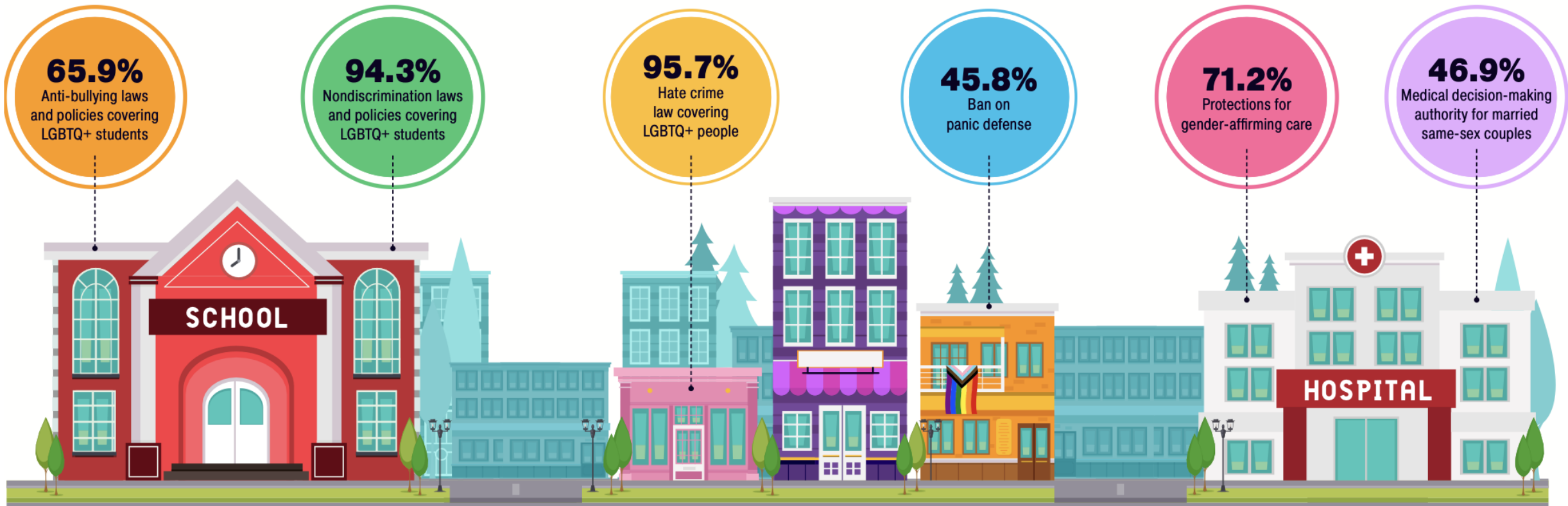


Education, hate crimes, medicine

Of the 24.4% of participants who benefited from educational setting policies/protections, these were the top policies they benefited from:
(1,369 participants)

Of the 19.2% of participants who benefited from hate crime policies/protections, these were the top policies they benefited from:
(1,048 participants)

Of the 44.2% of participants who benefited from medical care policies/protections, these were the top policies they benefited from:
(2,292 participants)



Attitudinal effects of policies

To what extent do you believe these state policies and legal protections have improved attitudes of the general public toward LGBTQ+ Washingtonians?

(6,490 participants)

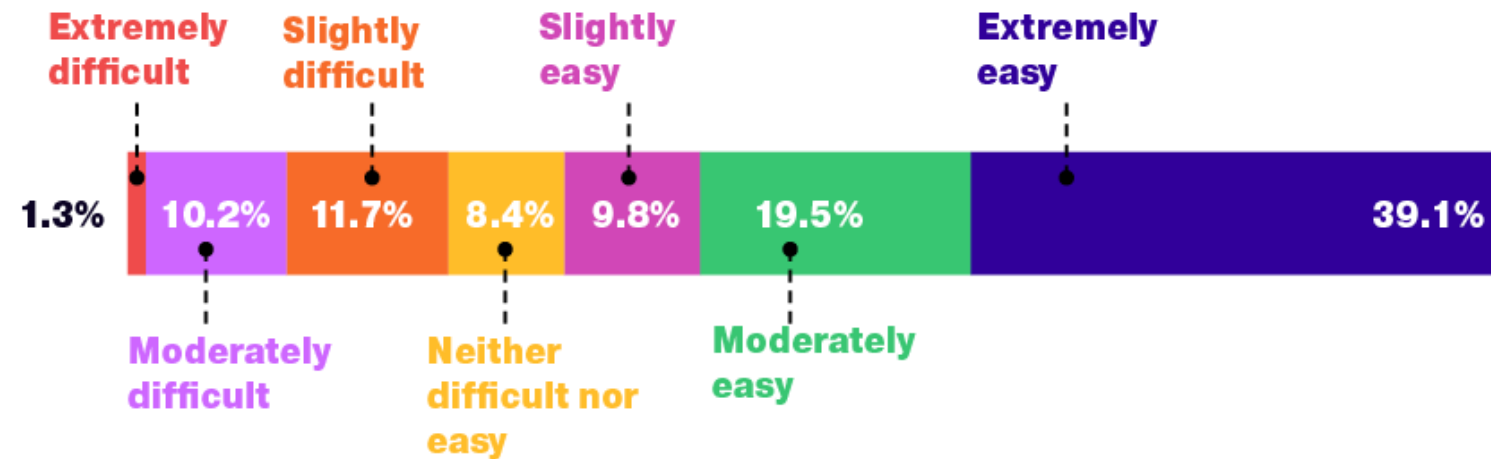


Experiences with Gender-Affirming Legal Processes

Driver's license change

How was your experience changing your sex or gender on your driver's license while living in Washington?

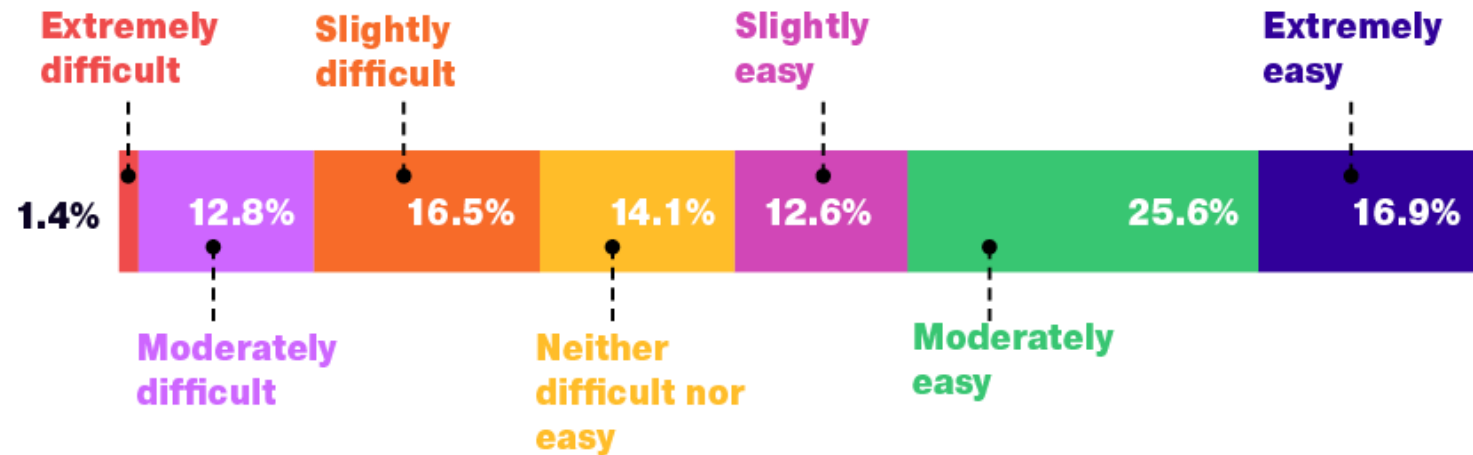
(1,188 participants)



Legal name change

How was your experience changing your legal name while living in Washington?

(1,390 participants)



Suggestions for Policy Improvements

How WA government can help

What would you like to see the Washington state government do to help LGBTQ+ people who live in Washington?

(5,420 participants)

- Main themes:
 - Legislation, legal protections (22.6%)
 - Healthcare (17.1%)
 - Federal issues (9.5%)
 - Education (9.3%)
 - Housing (6.8%)
 - Community (6.8%)
 - Representation/visibility (5.7%)
 - Public funds (4.5%)
 - Regional issues (4.0%)
 - Employment (3.6%)
 - Law enforcement (2.1%)
 - Aging and elder care (1.8%)
 - Parenting/youth (1.6%)
 - Anti-trans stances (0.7%)
 - Judicial issues (0.5%)
 - Taxes (0.3%)
 - Other feedback (3.1%)

Washington LGBTQ+ Survey: Health

Overview

- **Mental health**
- **Substance use and behavioral health**
- Physical health and wellness
- **Healthcare access and utilization**
- **Discrimination in healthcare**
- Health services for older adults
- Sexual health
- **Intersectional analyses**
- Presidential election effects

Mental Health

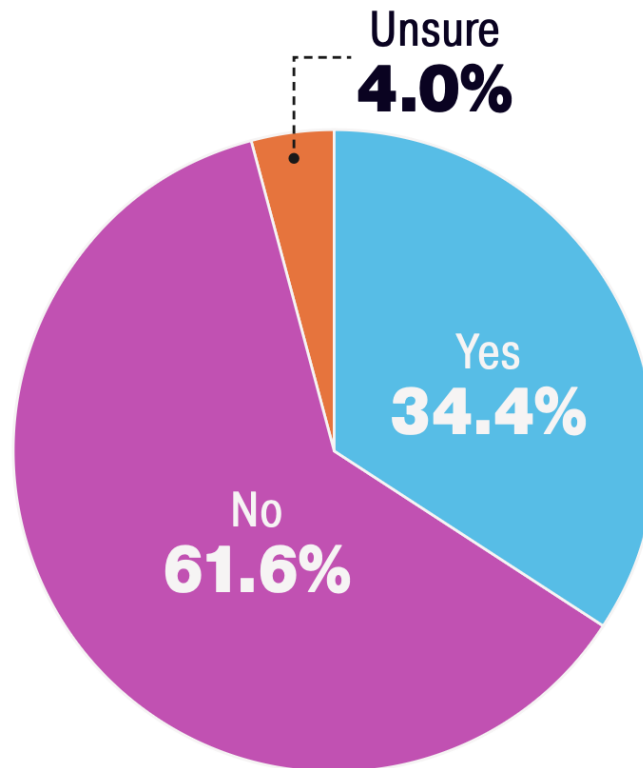
Depressive symptoms, anxiety

- On average, participants experienced:
 - More than **two days of depressive symptoms** in the past week ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.79$)
 - More than **three days of anxiety** in the past week ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 2.20$)

Suicidal ideation

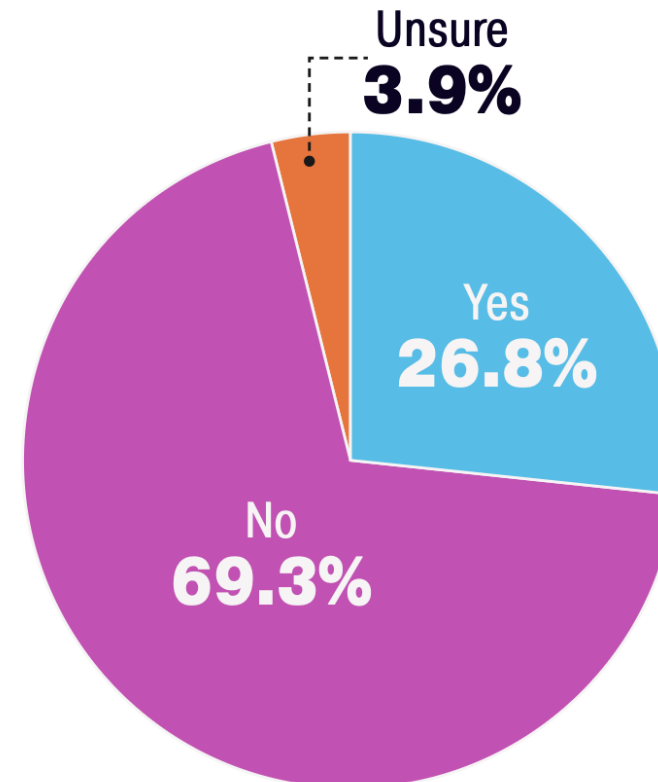
In the past 12 months, have you ever wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?

(6,202 participants)



In the past 12 months, have you ever had any thoughts about killing yourself?

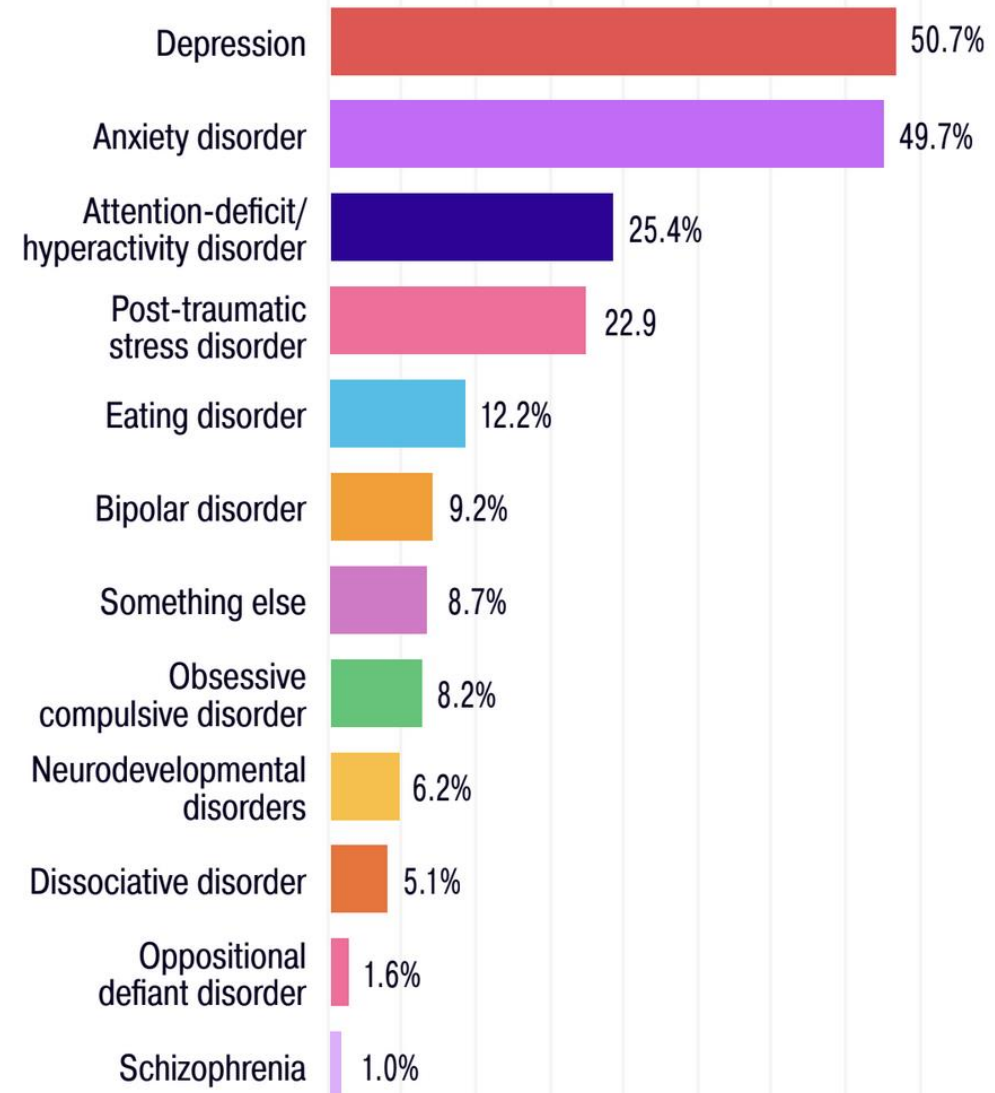
(6,201 participants)



Mental health diagnoses

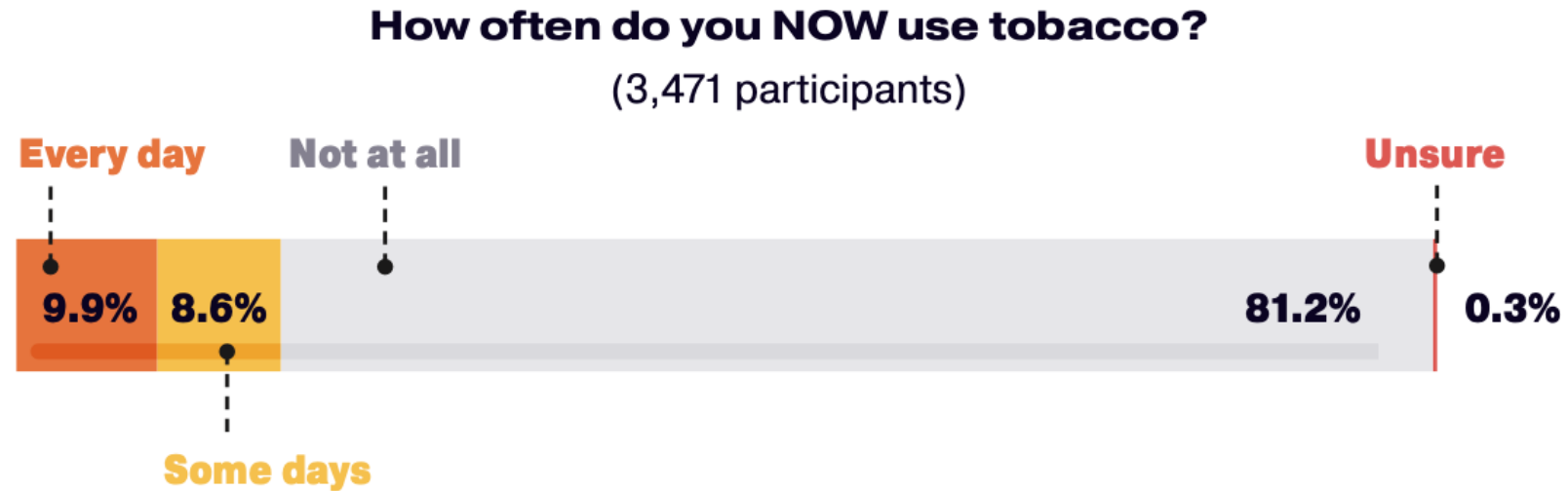
Which diagnoses have you received from a medical professional at any time in your life?

(6,213 participants)



Substance Use and Behavioral Health

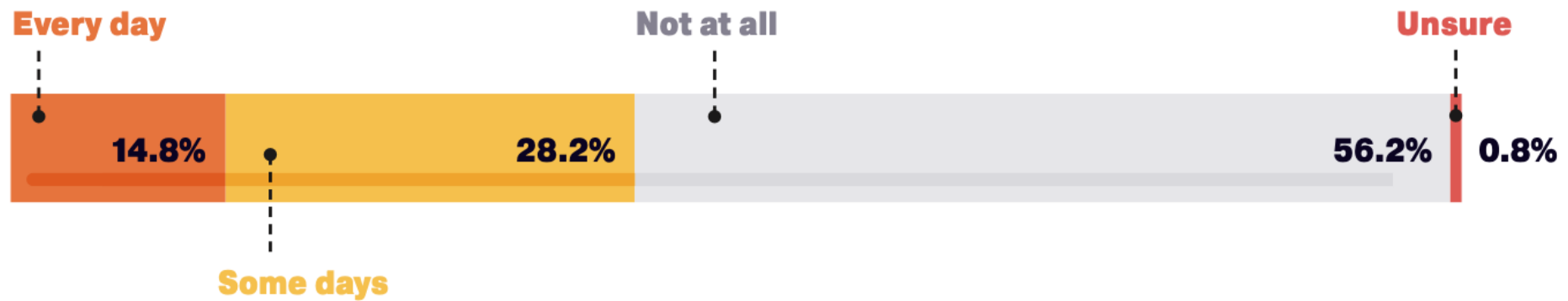
Tobacco use



Marijuana use

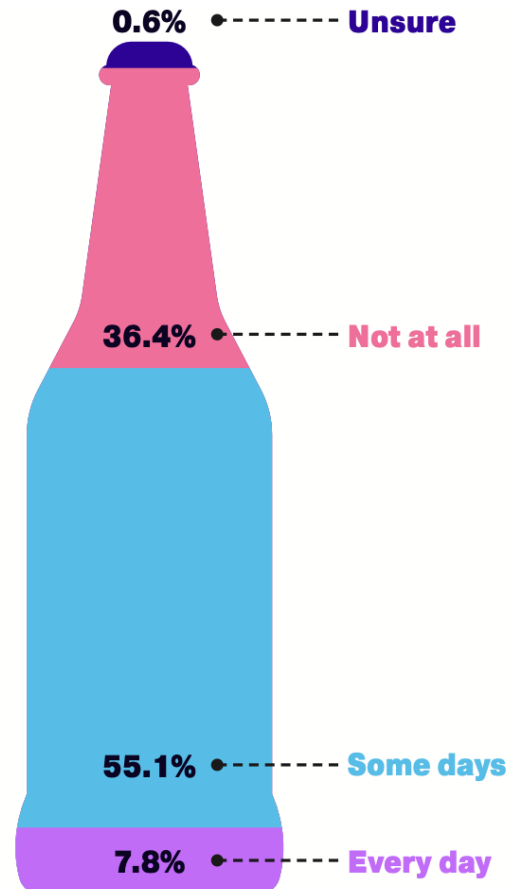
How often do you NOW use marijuana?

(3,461 participants)



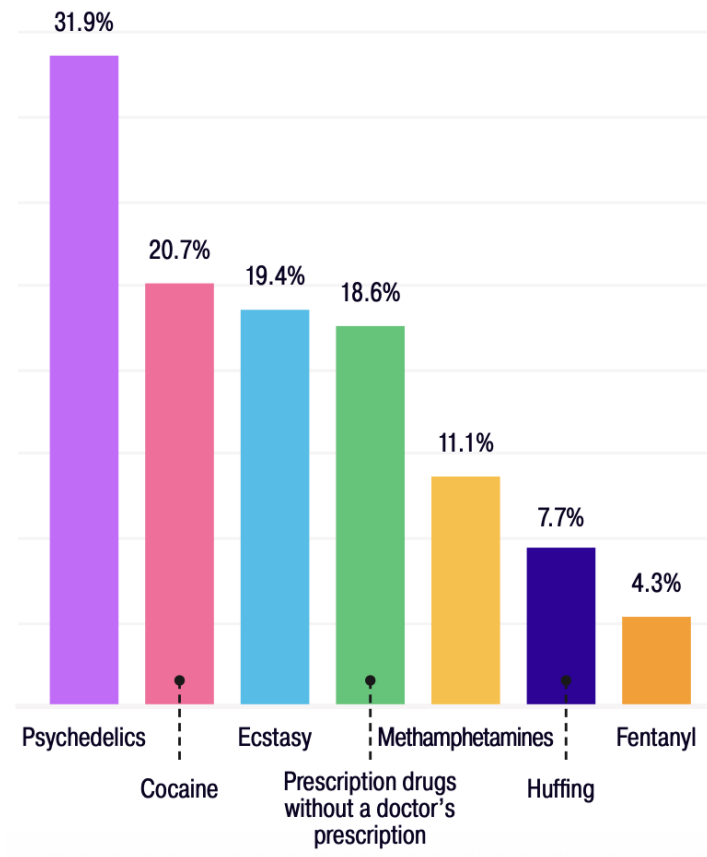
Alcohol use

How often do you drink alcohol?
(5,636 participants)



Controlled substance use

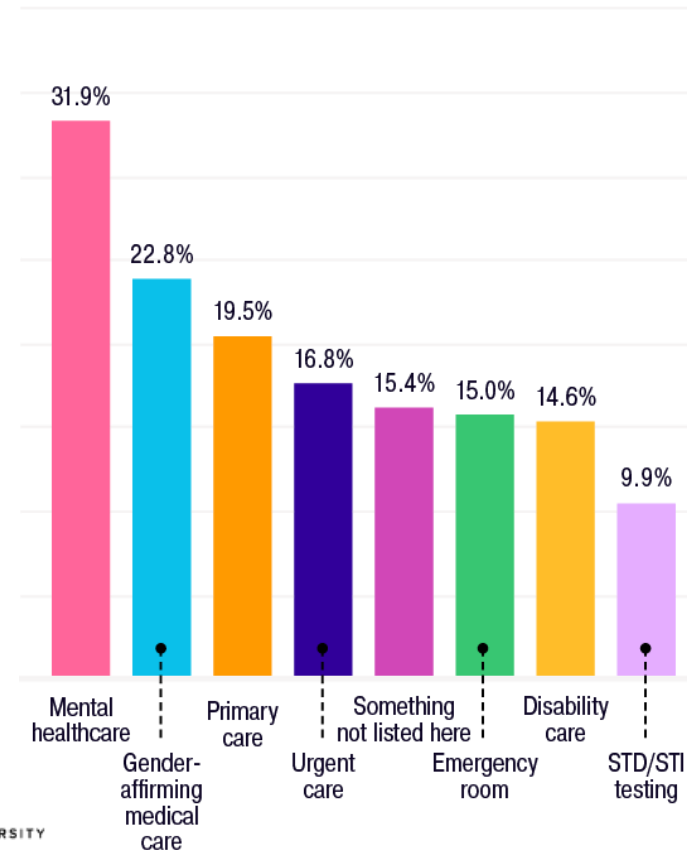
For the 38.3% of participants who reported using illicit substances, these were the types used:
(2,555 participants)



Healthcare Access and Utilization

Inaccessible medical care

Of the 44.0% of participants who weren't able to access care, the following types of care were inaccessible:
(2,011 participants)

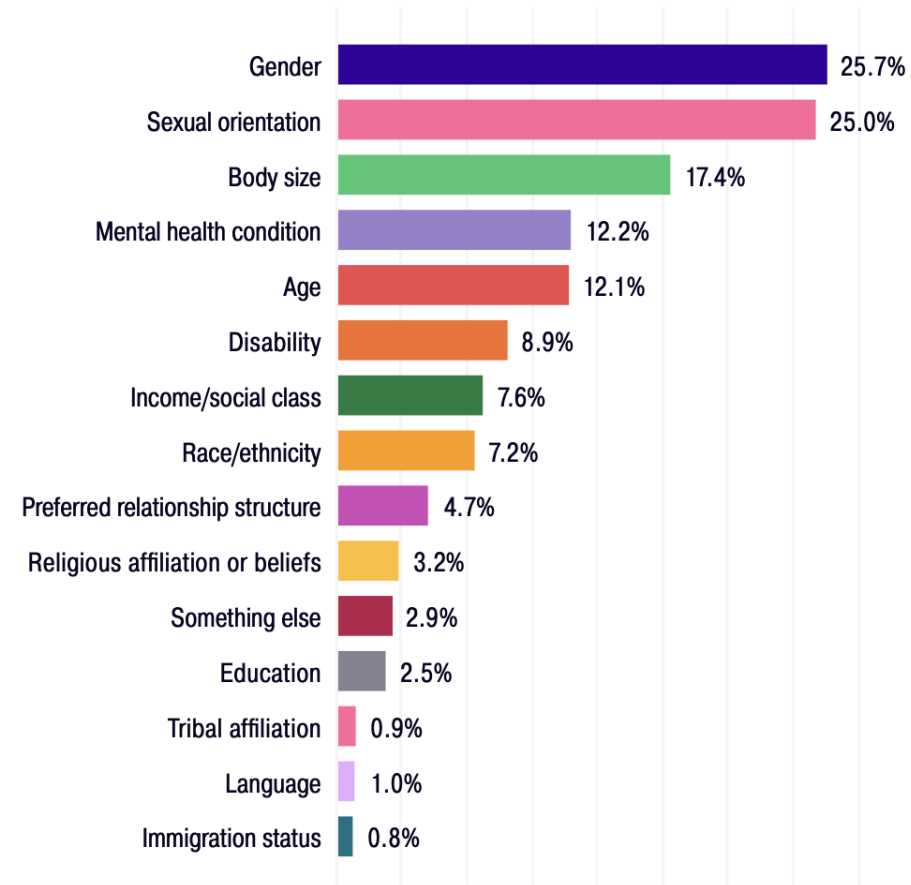


Discrimination in Healthcare

Medical setting discrimination

Do you feel that you have experienced discrimination in a medical setting in WA based on any of your characteristics?

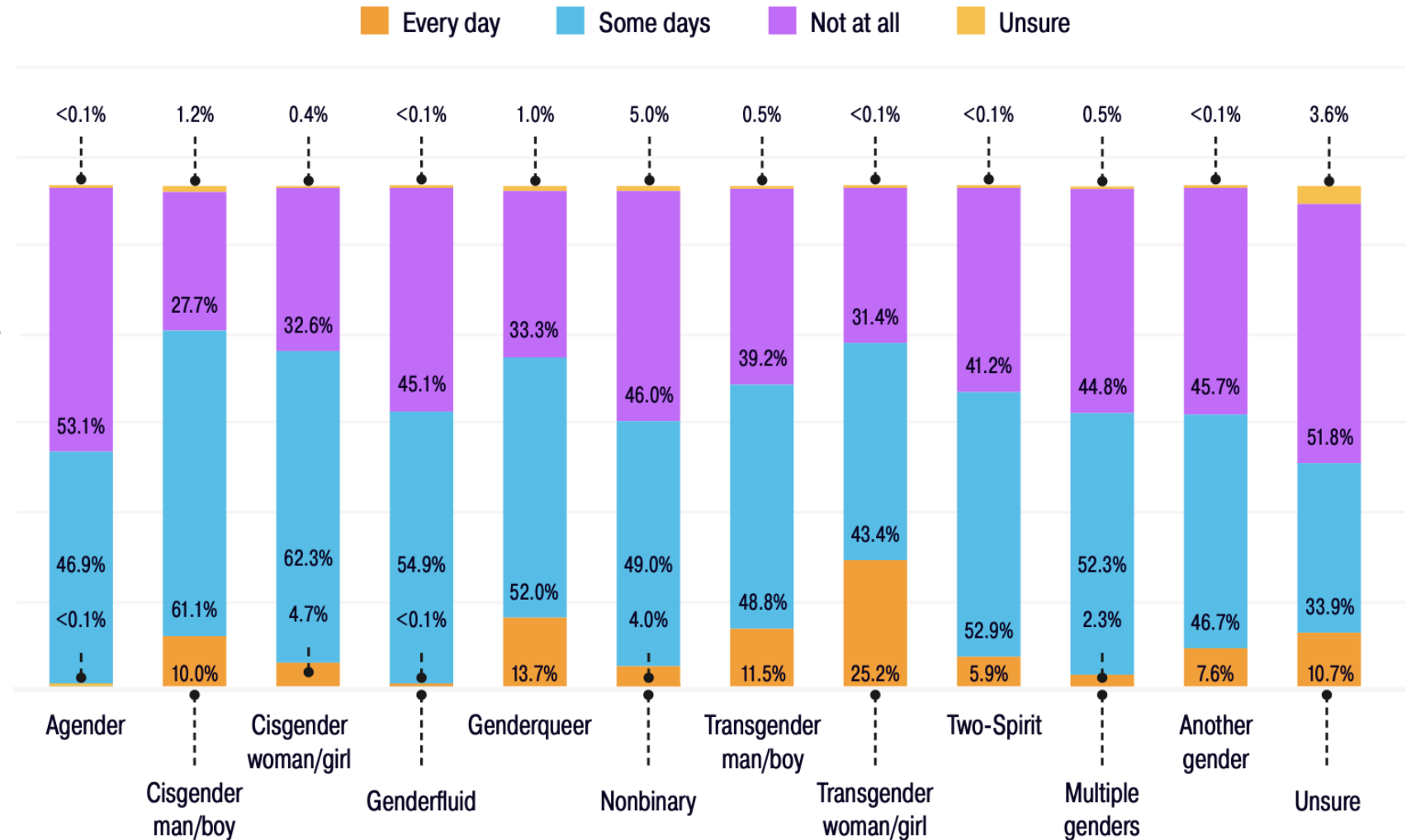
(6,319 participants)



Intersectional Analyses

Alcohol use x gender

How often do you NOW consume alcohol?
(3,440 participants)



Washington LGBTQ+ Survey: Safety, Hate Crimes, and Incarceration

Overview

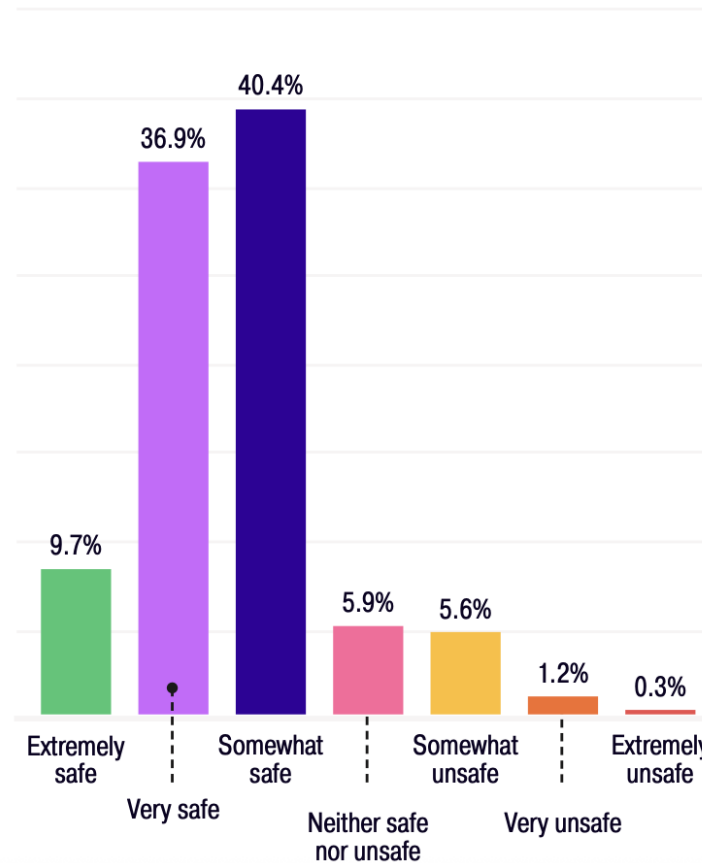
- LGBTQ+ identity and safety
- LGBTQ+ community connections
- Incarceration and related experiences

LGBTQ+ Identity and Safety

Perceived safety

How safe do you feel as an LGBTQ+ person in the state of Washington?

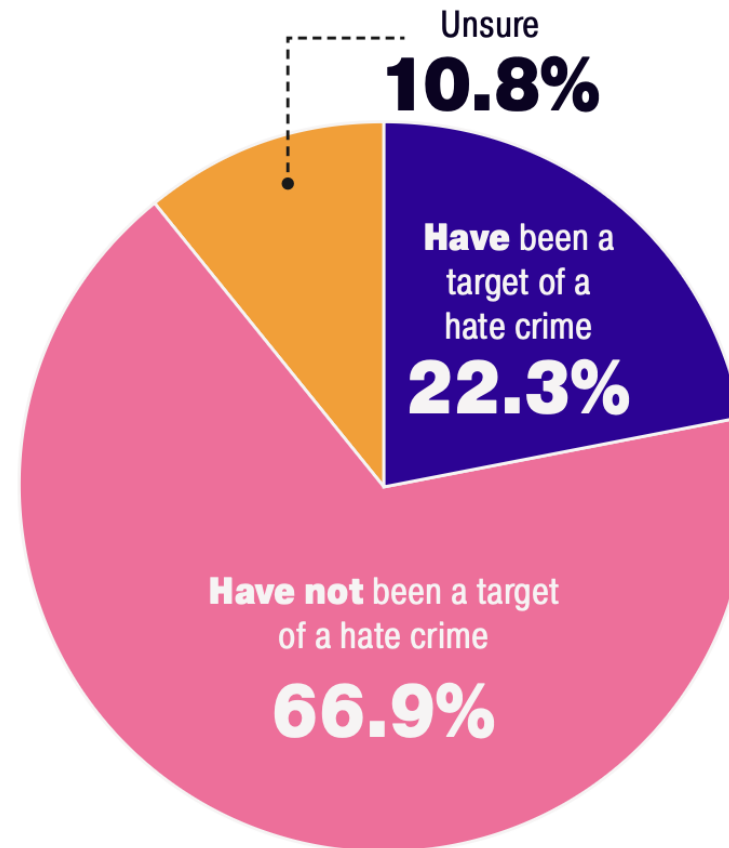
(6,187 participants)



Hate crime victimization

While living in Washington, have you ever been a target of a hate crime?

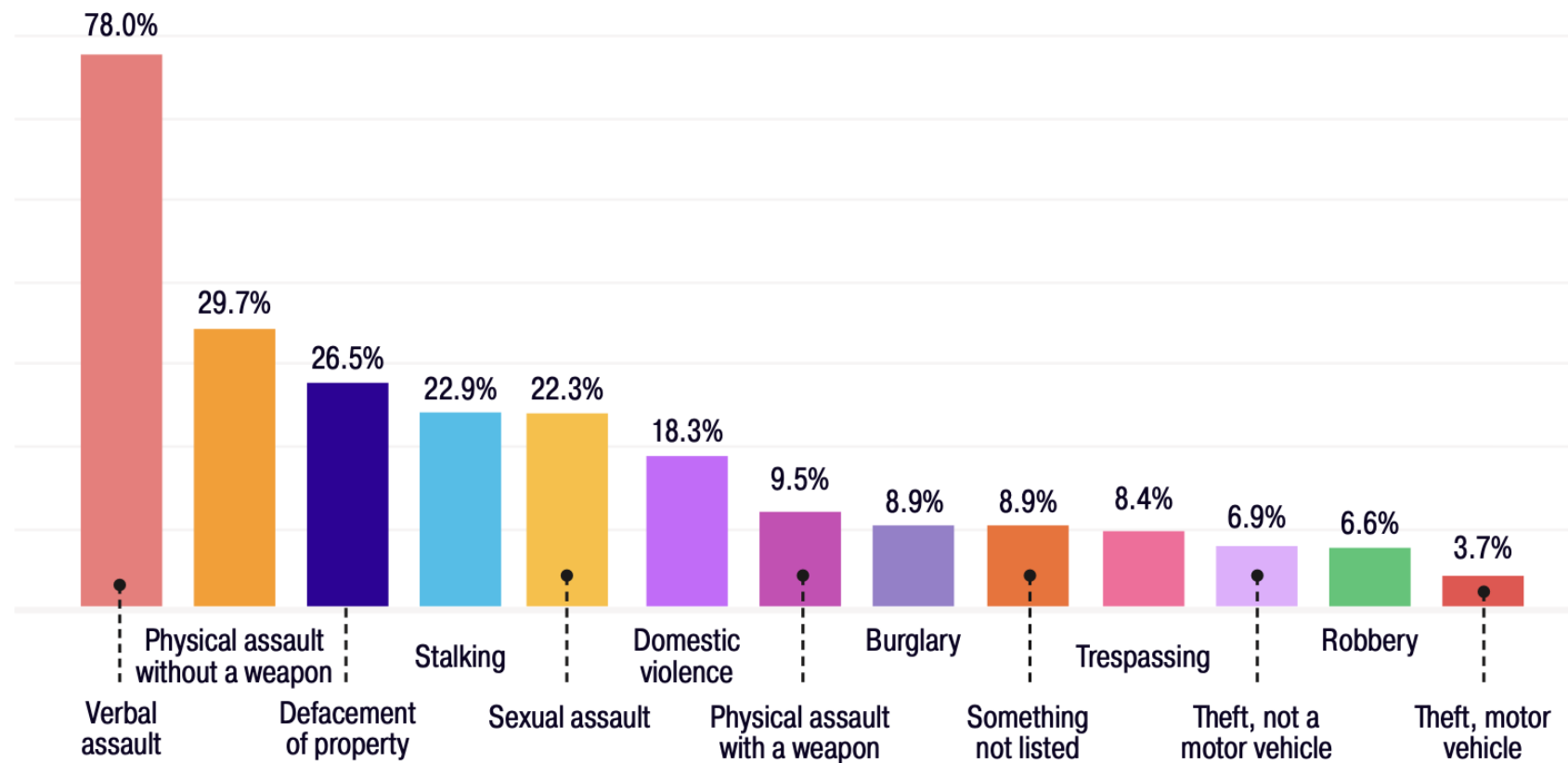
(1,880 participants)



Hate crimes experienced

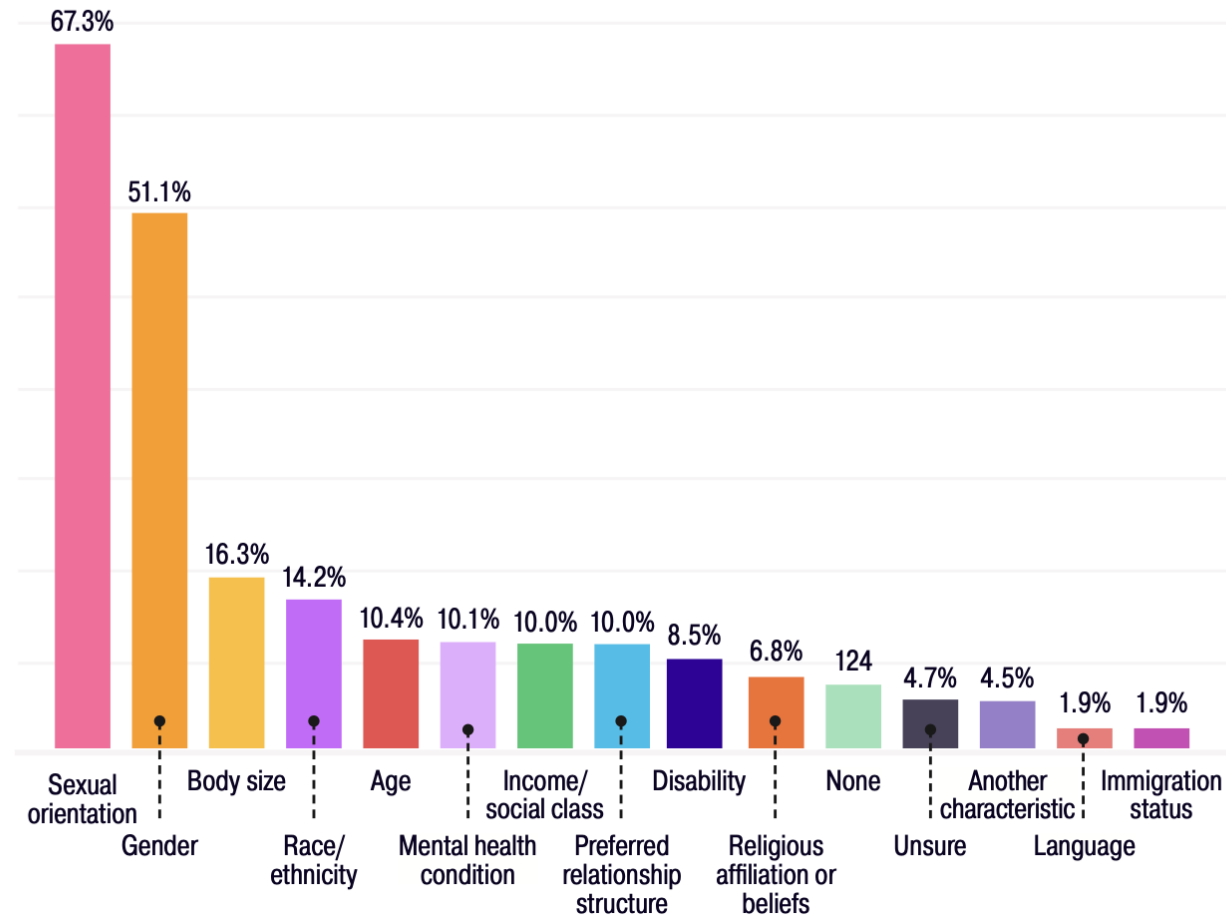
Which hate crimes you have experienced while living in Washington?

(2,045 participants)



Identities prompting hate crime

What do you think motivated the actions of the offender?
(2,040 participants)

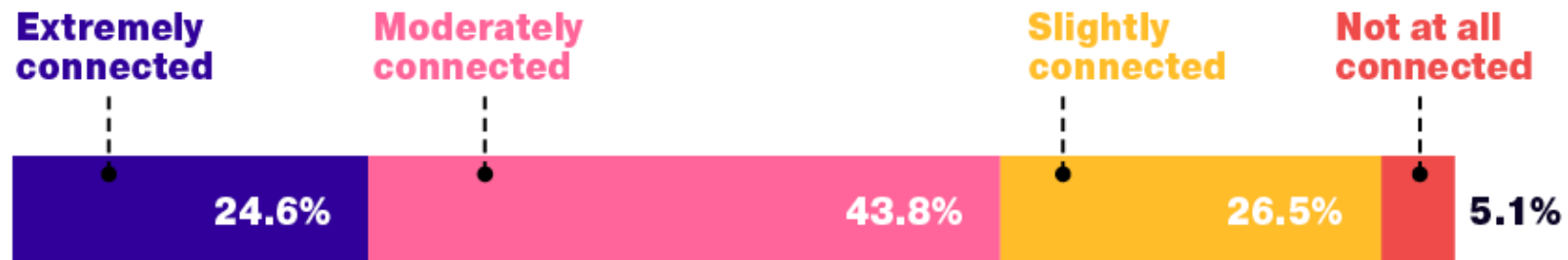


LGBTQ+ Community Connections

Connectedness to community

To what extent do you feel connected to an LGBTQ+ community in Washington?

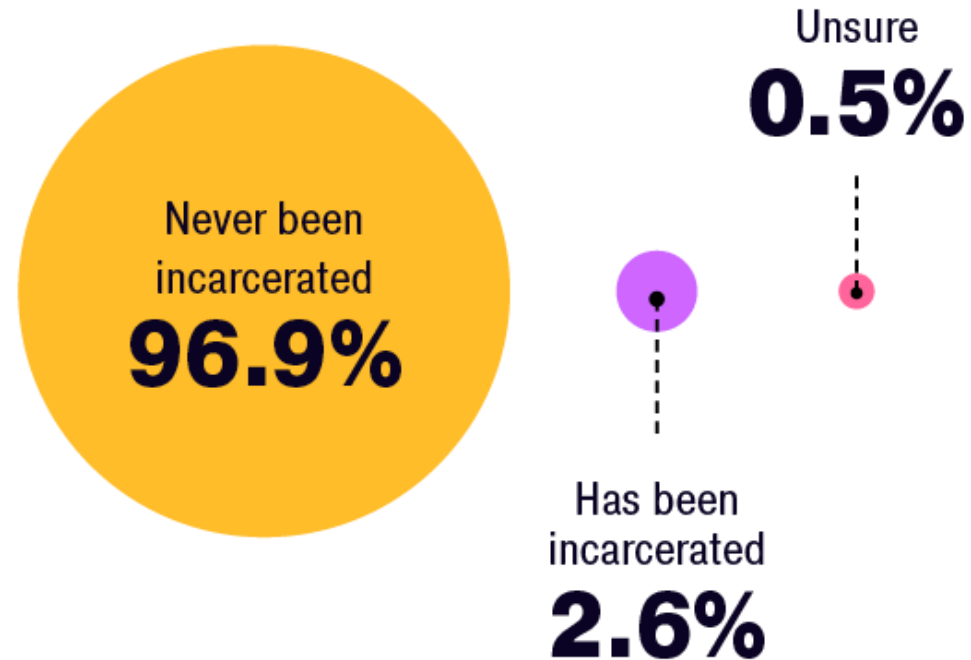
(6,659 participants)



Incarceration and Related Experiences

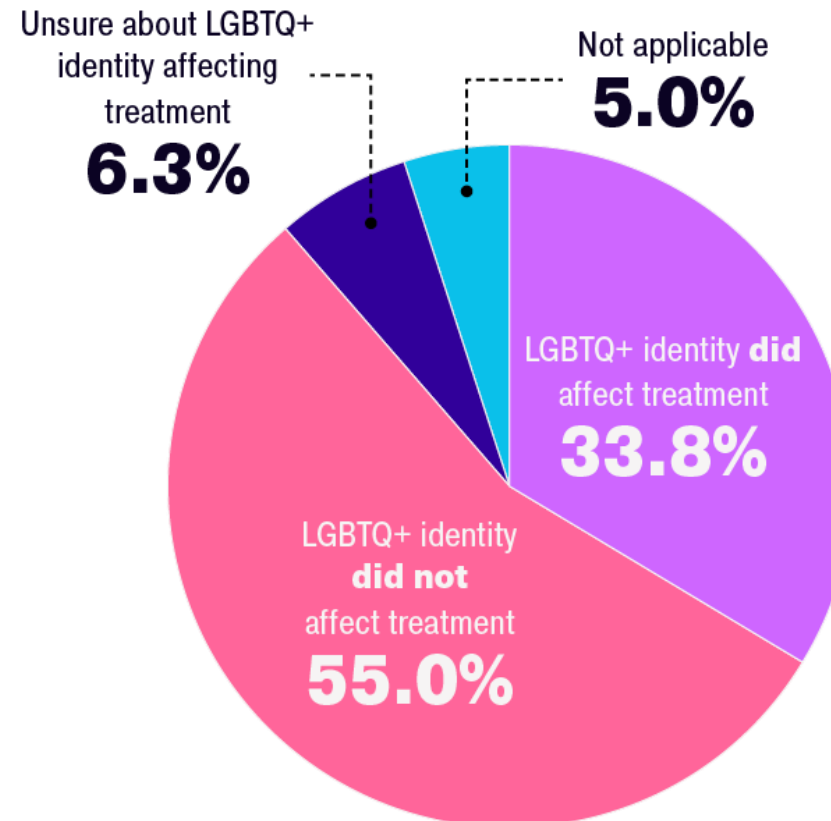
Prior incarceration

Have you ever been incarcerated in
Washington?
(6,056 participants)



Treatment by others

Did your LGBTQ+ identity negatively affect your treatment by other inmates or personnel while incarcerated?
(160 participants)



Treatment by others

Did your LGBTQ+ identity negatively affect your treatment by other inmates or personnel while incarcerated?
(67 participants)

Negative experience **67.2%**

Witnessed or experienced mistreatment by other incarcerated individuals 41.8%

Experienced mistreatment by staff 14.9%

Incarcerated in wrong-gender area 7.5%

Staff weren't educated/trained 3.0%

Neutral experience **32.8%**

Wasn't 'out' as LGBTQ+ 14.9%

Treated the same 9.0%

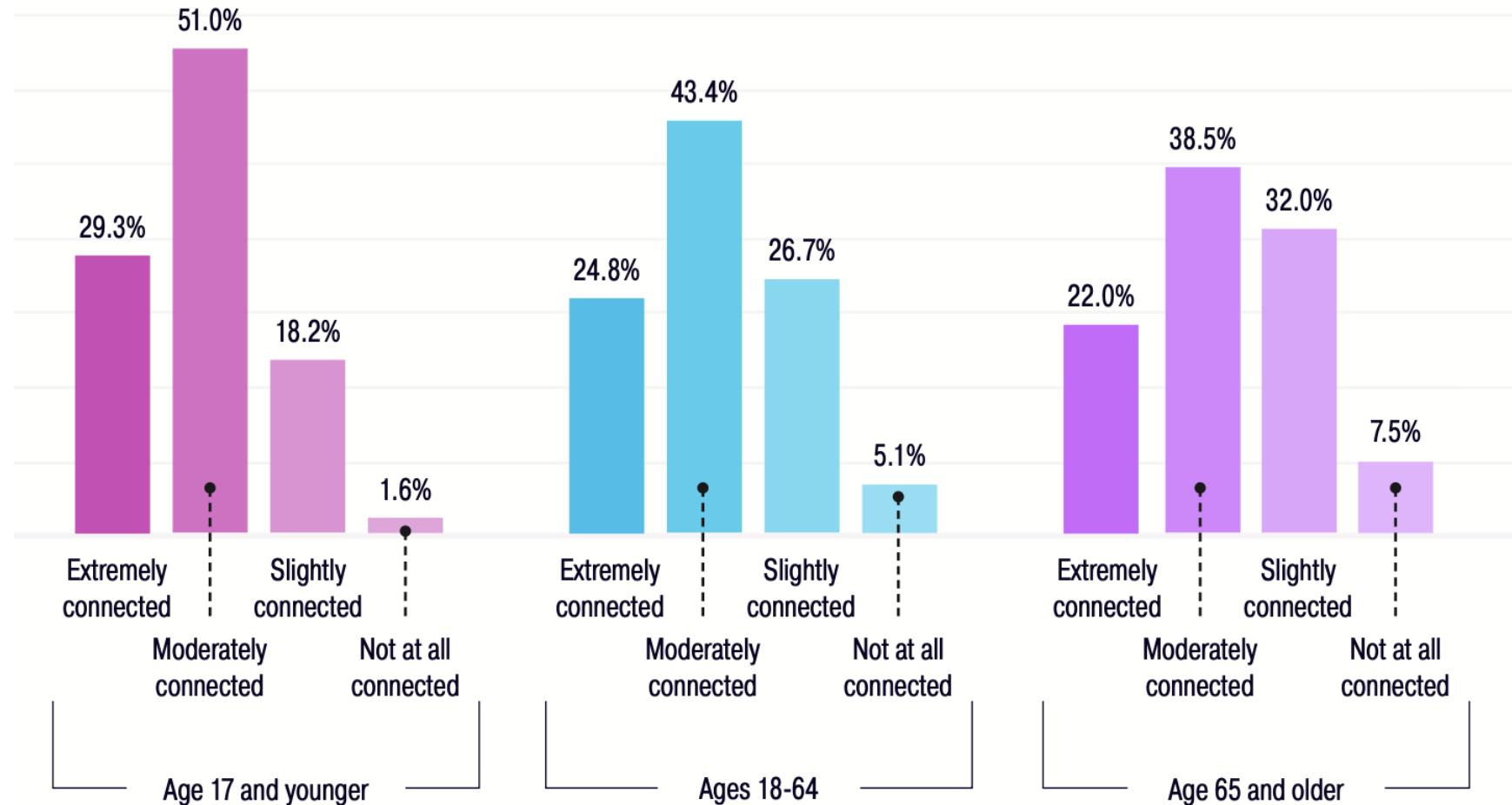
Wasn't in long enough to experience anything negative 9.0%

Intersectional Analyses

Community connectedness x age

To what extent do you feel connected to an LGBTQ+ community in Washington?

(6,659 participants)



Dissemination

Completed and ongoing

- Completed:
 - Tabling at June 2025 Pride events to preview report release
 - Media and community outreach
 - Day-long hybrid report share-out event (June 25)
- Ongoing:
 - Events with community orgs
 - Conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications
 - Commission using findings to inform policy recommendations
 - Engagement with other state commissions and agencies
 - GIS mapping

Questions?