

Minority Stress in the LGBTQ+ Community



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Describe the topic

- Minority stress describes above average levels of stress occurring in people of stigmatized minority groups. It is caused by many things such as poor social support, race, low socioeconomic status and sexuality. Minority stress is set off by the workings, organizations, structures and mentalities that presently form our world.

- However, individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ have distinct pressures that are not part of the traditional heterosexual lifestyle and that is something that I wish to bring attention to as I feel that it has been swept under the rug compared to the other minorities.

- The LGBTQ+ community doesn't get much attention when it comes to mental health, especially in young teens and adults who are struggling with their sexuality and have no support system to rely on. Without being able to lean on these support systems, this can lead to the person suffering from depression, suicidal behaviors, substance use, and eating disorders, just to name a few.

- It is imperative that we as a society should take this seriously and take the necessary steps to provide a safe support structure for the people in the community.

Why is this topic important to you

- Growing up in a heavily religious home, it's not always been easy and smooth sailing which is why I have a strong connection towards this topic. Some people used said religion as a tool to be hateful but I met people that thought differently and gave me the courage I needed to be proud of who I am. I want to create a campaign that brings more awareness to this subject, proving that it's not something that should be swept under the rug and that it needs to be addressed and supported now.



Do you have first-hand knowledge about it

- I do possess first-hand knowledge on this subject. Over the many years after discovering my sexuality, I had to do a lot of research and learned about minority stress during my exploration.

- It is a topic that is applied to almost all aspects that make up a person. Everybody is different and minorities tend to get the short end of the stick. Stress that is not handled properly can cause physical and mental health issues, which is true for all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race or ethnicity.

- The qualities of minority stress and the difficulties faced by disadvantaged groups raise the probability of mental health issues in individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.

- When you are in a situation where danger is always present, it is natural to erect shields and remain vigilant. Avoiding potential rejection is the simplest way to prevent worrying about whether someone will take a liking to you. If everything appears intimidating, it might be safer to stay at home by oneself.

Is it a topic that personally affects you

- This topic brings a lot of emotions out of me. As someone who is apart of the LGBTQ+ community I have experienced firsthand sexuality minority stress. With the stress comes mental challenges and struggles and I have and know people who have experienced struggle because of their sexuality. **Minority Stress** can create insecurities about how you view yourself. And if not advised or paid attention to, it can lead to a multitude of problems such as self-harm, drugs, suicide, etc...



Is it a topic that affects your family

- Growing up in a religious home, my family carried different beliefs but still respects the culture and the community. However, this topic is not talked about enough therefore my family is not quite educated on this subject.
- But by enlightening them with more information, they will be able to understand me more as a person and the things that I have to go through in life as a gay man. I have also known some close friends who are apart of the lgbtq+ community that have suffered minority stress as well and never got the support needed.



Picture taken from LGBTQ & GENDER STUDIES, Center for. "Resources." CLGS, 21 Mar. 2023, <https://www.clgs.org/multimedia-archive/52-ways-45-a-genuine-welcome-is-a-stated-welcome/>.

Insight Statement

I want to create a campaign that brings awareness to minority stress and mental struggles in a community that isn't talked about enough. The difficulties and disadvantages that the public doesn't know much about.

Interview Discussion Guide

General Questions:

1. Do you feel that your experiences as a double minority cause you to have different experiences from other members of the lgbtq community?

- Have you experienced a form a racial discrimination from other members in your community?

2. What does minority stress mean to you?

- Do you think that type of stress exist in the lgbtq+ community? If so, have you experienced it?

3. What do you feel is the biggest obstacle you have faced as a minority in the lgbtq community?

- How did you overcome that situation?

4. How should parents approach their child or children that are struggling with minority stress, while being lgbtq+?

- What about teachers in schools? How should they approach this?

Thoughts and Key Words

• I want to create a comfortable and silent atmosphere. This topic is a powerful but sensitive one and to get a genuine response I need to make my interviewee feel secured. The tone will be serious as the things that we will be talking about is delicate, especially if the interviewee is sharing a personal experience; I need to be respectful and have open ears. I also want this to not be just considered an interview but a genuine conversation about a topic that means so much and affects our lives.

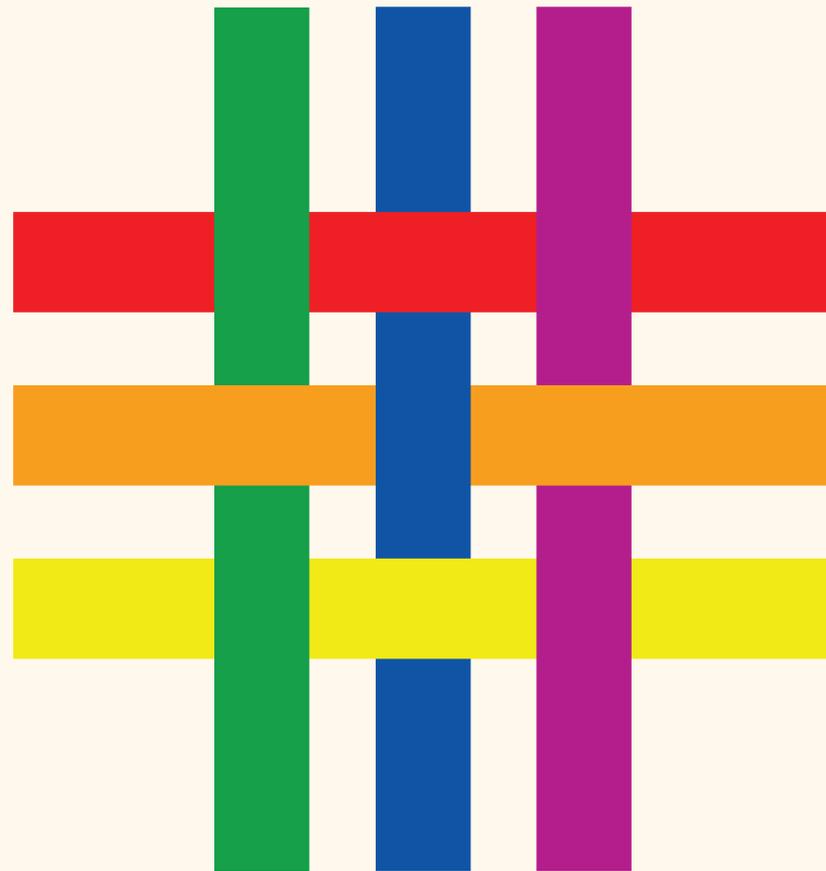
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal Behaviors
- Eating Disorders
- Boundaries
- Language
- Learning
- Family
- Supportive
- Mental Health
- Counseling
- Diversity
- Chronic
- Emotions
- Bullying
- Acceptance
- Rights
- Equality
- Campaign
- Worldwide

Distilled/Synthesized Interview #1

- Interviewee felt that being apart of the lgbtq+ group and being a black male on top of that added additional stress. He had considered that the black community is much more unaccepting of lgbtq+ community than other race groups, describing the specific situation as "volatile".
- To him Minority Stress means how the outside world treats and views him as a minority. Dealing with the incoming mental hurdles and challenges that other people like straight white males wouldn't have to go through.
- Believes that creating online groups/safe spaces is one of the best ways to help someone with no form of support system.
- Keeping the negative emotions in and not confiding in someone would lower his self esteem and possibly turn to self harm.
- Believes that religion is a big part as to why the LGBTQ+ is looked at as wrong.
- Thinks that teens and young people can live easier lives being apart of the lgbt community because of how much representation is present in today's day and age compared to how it was years ago.



Distilled/Synthesized Interview #2



- Volunteering for the Brooklyn Pride Center during the pandemic he noticed that there was not enough support from the older generation and even those from the younger generation. The youth should find access to support groups because they can help things such as housing, proper level of support and help find them a community.
- Minority Stress can create insecurities about how you view yourself. And if not advised or paid attention to, it can lead to a multitude of problems such as self-harm, drugs, suicide, etc...
- Has seen parents and those of an older generation not be accepting towards their children thus leading to cases of homelessness. Because of this and other reasons he believes teens have it worse.



Distilled/Synthesized Interview #2

- Religion is heavily part of the reason why the LGBTQ community is not accepted and even thinks that some people don't even really believe in the religion itself and just uses it as a curtain to be hateful.
- Interviewee believes because he is a double minority, he has to deal with both racism and homophobia. "People will see you as black first because that's how it is naturally but if they know that you happened to be gay they will layer that on top of each other and make it a much larger issue."
- Shares his experiences of facing racism within the LGBTQ community itself. Mentions how he was fetishized a lot by people who are "fair skinned" and if he did not fulfill their fetish then they would not see him as a person. They would revert to bombarding him with racial slurs and insults.



Distilled/Synthesized Interview #3

- Believes that religious views are a prime reasoning for opposition. But early experiences in your childhood can cause hateful thoughts and trauma. If not treated it can carry its way to adulthood.
- Believes that society refuses to discuss issues and problems regarding the LGBT community. He feels that society is becoming more regressive than progressive.
- To fix this issue he thinks that people should treat those as LGBTQ as just normal people. To the public they are seen as different, whether if it's because they "dress differently", behave differently and love differently, to them it's not seen as normal.
- Has faced several homophobic encounters in the school and resorting to doing drugs and self harm to alleviate the pain.
- Feels that being a double minority is very hard because the stress of being black and gay leaves him extremely vulnerable to receive attacks not from just the outside majority but also from the black and even some in the LGBTQ community.
- Interviewee thinks that teens have it worse just from his own experiences when he was a teen. They have to deal with possible scrutiny from parents, the media, classmates, and if they are on social media, random haters on there.



Connections

- All interviewees believed that religion/religious views are main reason as to why the LGBTQ+ community is not accepted.
- All interviewees have faced stress from being a double minority. Facing struggles from both of the communities they belong too. (Black and LGBT)
- Despite all parties being in the same minority group, interviewee #1 and #2 feel discomfort to white males in the LGBT community because of past experiences where they were treated them as inferior or just objects and tools.
- All interviewees believe that news medias don't cover enough about LGBTQ+ issues. Whether if its about mental struggles, suicide, depression, anxiety or homelessness.
- All interviewees believe that support systems and groups are crucial to someone's recovery.
- All interviewees also think that the portrayal of LGBT folks in media define who they are in real life. Whether that be how they act, how they dress or the language/slang they use. (Sterotypes)



Themes/Thoughts

Theme: Double Minority

Thoughts:

- There is a feeling of anxiety when you are both black and LGBT. Homophobia exists within the black community and racism exists within the LGBT community as well. You are vulnerable to both sides and receiving abusive comments is much easier.

- When someone is black and apart of the LGBTQ community they tend to face both racism and homophobia. People will see you as black first and being LGBT is another layer on top for society to see and treat you as different.

Themes/Thoughts

Theme: Religion

Thoughts:

- People, whether its on social media or a physical interaction would use religion as a scapegoat just to be hateful and homophobic despite them not even believing in the religion itself. Both personal and the interviewees experiences taught me that.

- There are all kinds of religions in the world but there are some that doesn't accept the actions, ideas, and practices of those in the LGBT community. Everyone is entitled to their own options and beliefs but that isn't an excuse to be outwardly hateful towards a group of people.

Statistics/Data

- American NGO The Trevor Project was established in 1998. Their efforts are concentrated on preventing suicide among young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or questioning. They provide a toll-free helpline where experienced counselors may give confidential support.

- Additionally, the 2020 National Poll on “LGBTQ Adolescents Mental Health” by the Trevor Project, the biggest survey of its kind ever, reflects the perspectives of over 40,000 LGBTQ youth in the United States. The information I gathered is from their official website as well as their 2021 Vanity Teen magazine publication. I also used information from Campus Pride, another organization that assists the needs of those from the LGBTQ+ Community. Here are a few key findings:



Risk of Depression, Suicide and Substance Abuse

LGB Youth Are

3X

as likely to

CONSIDER SUICIDE

as straight youth

4^{1/2}X

more likely to

ATTEMPT SUICIDE

than straight youth

2X

as likely to feel

SAD OR HOPELESS

every day for 2 or
more weeks in a row
as straight youth

4^{1/2}X

more likely to make a suicide
attempt resulting in

**INJURY, POISONING
OR OVERDOSE**

that has to be treated by a doctor

**Risk for
Transgender Youth**

Transgender youths who are rejected by their families are more than

8X

more likely to

ATTEMPT SUICIDE

78%

of transgender students in grades K-12

REPORT HARSH HARASSMENT

with 35% reporting physical assault and 12% reporting sexual violence

15%

of transgender students

LEAVE SCHOOL

in K-12 settings or higher education due to the extremity of harassment

1/2

of those who leave school report

EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

**Risk for
Homelessness**

MORE THAN 1 IN 4

gay teens are

**THROWN OUT OF
THEIR HOMES**

ABOUT 62%

of LGBT homeless youth have

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

LGBT homeless youth are

7X

more likely than their
heterosexual peers to be

LEAVE SCHOOL

54%

of homeless LGBT youth say

**ABUSE IN
THEIR FAMILY**

is a contributing factor to homelessness

Threat of Violence, Physical Assault and Bullying
LGB YOUTH ARE

2X

more likely to be

BULLIED

than heterosexual youth

3X

more likely to be forced to have
SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

than heterosexual youth

2.5X

more likely to experience
**SEXUAL DATING
VIOLENCE**

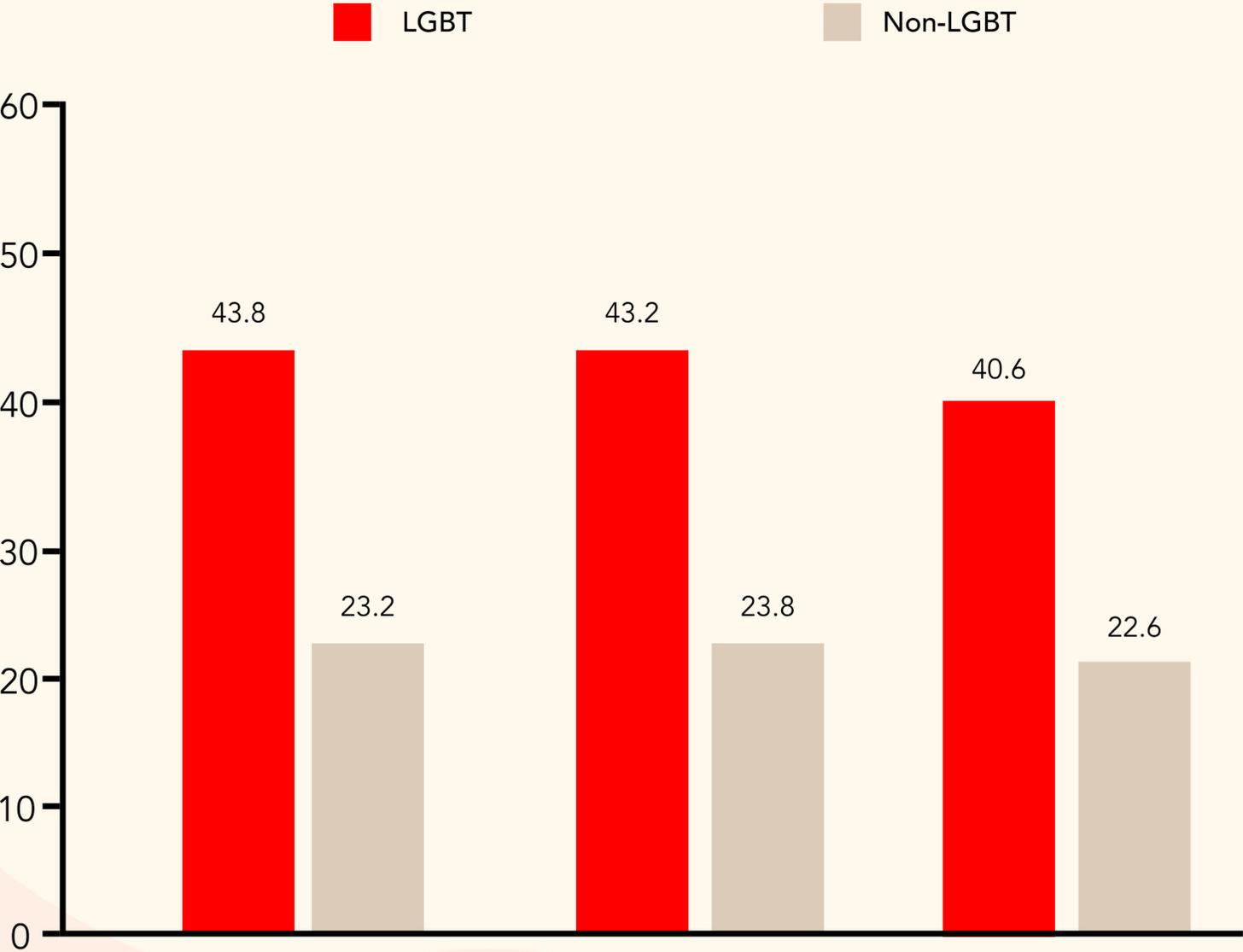
than heterosexual youth

2X

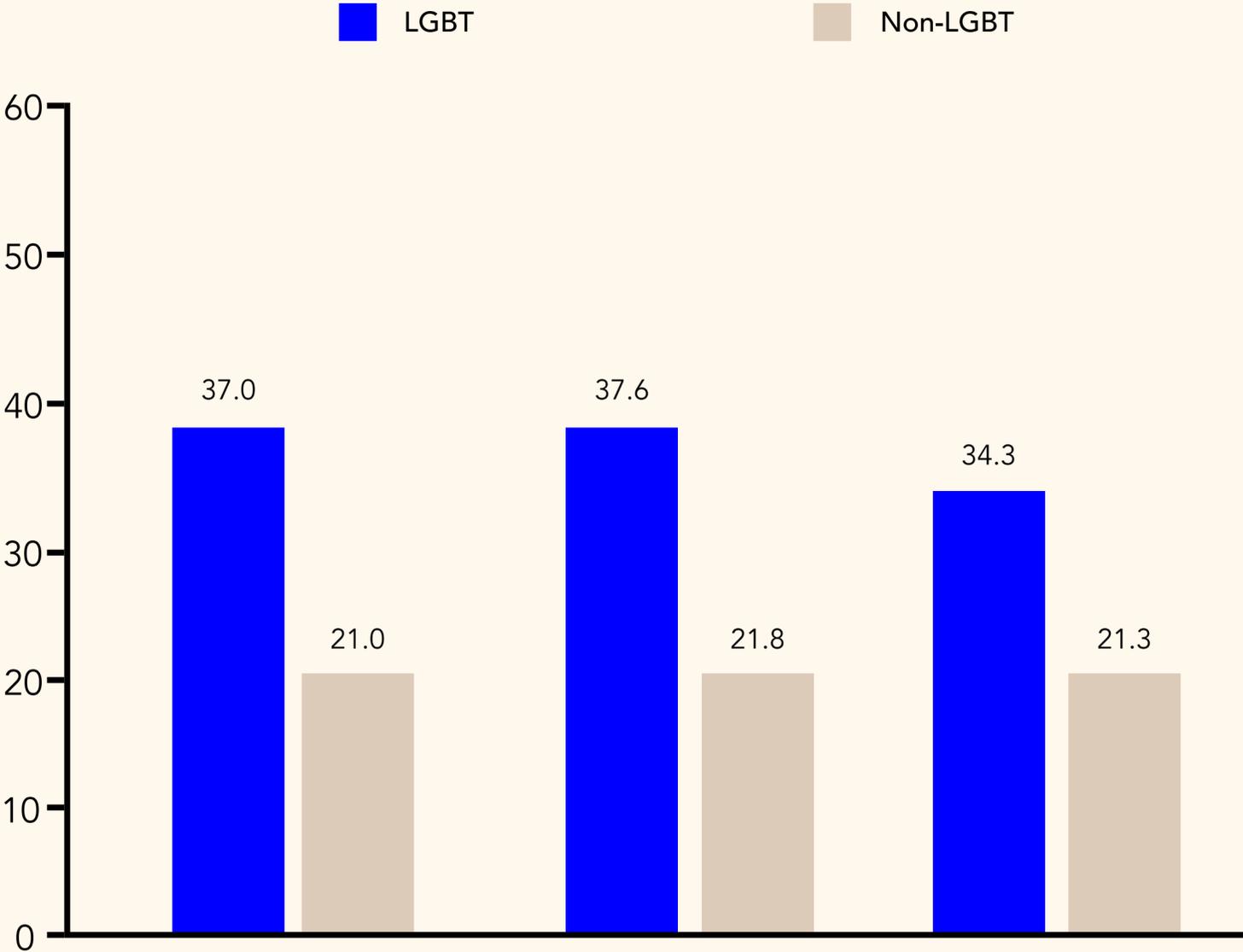
more likely to be
**THREATENED
OR INJURED**

with a weapon on school property
than heterosexual youth

Statistics/Data



Percentage of U.S. Adults Living Alone Who Report Symptoms of Anxiety by LGBTQ Status: 2021-2022

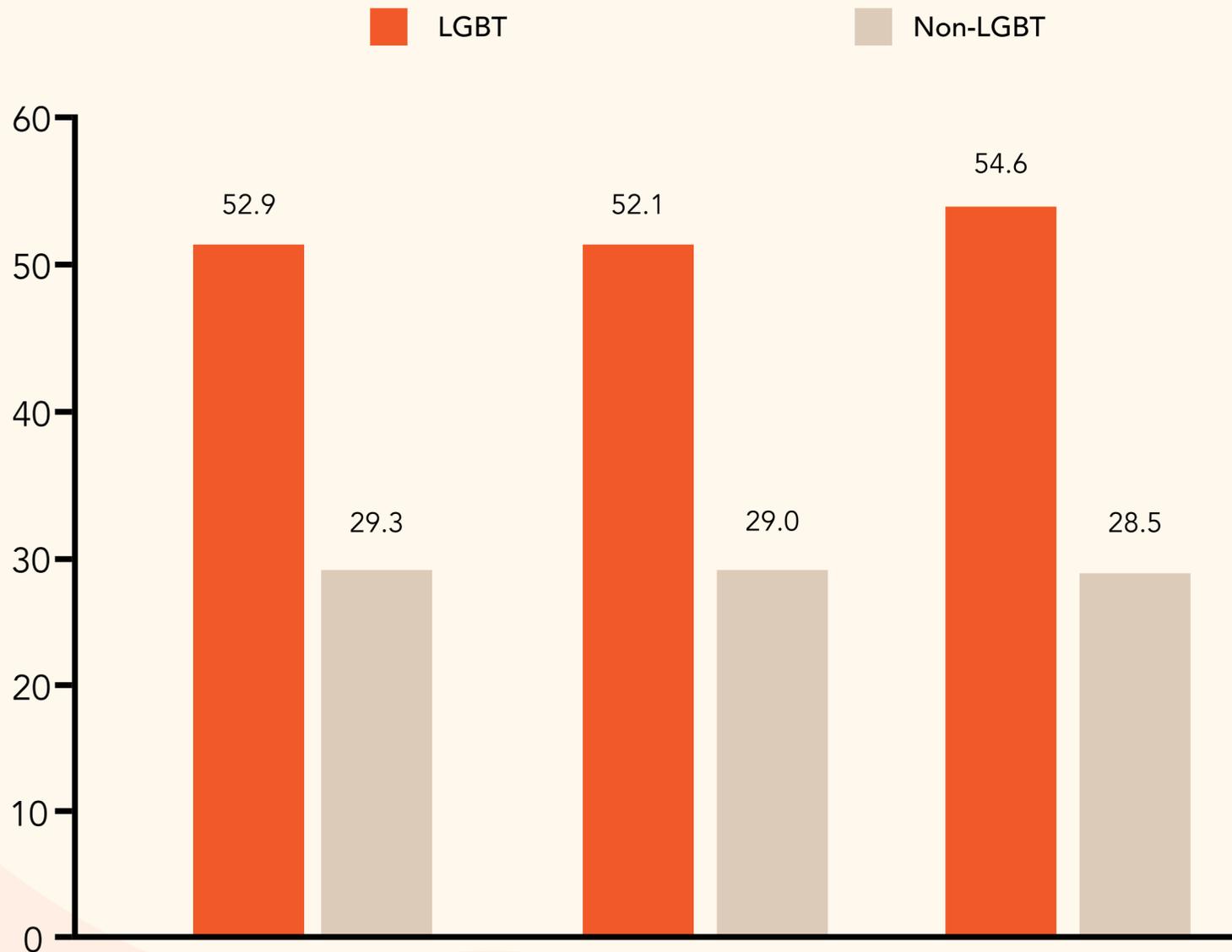


Percentage of U.S. Adults Living Alone Who Report Symptoms of Depression by LGBTQ Status: 2021-2022

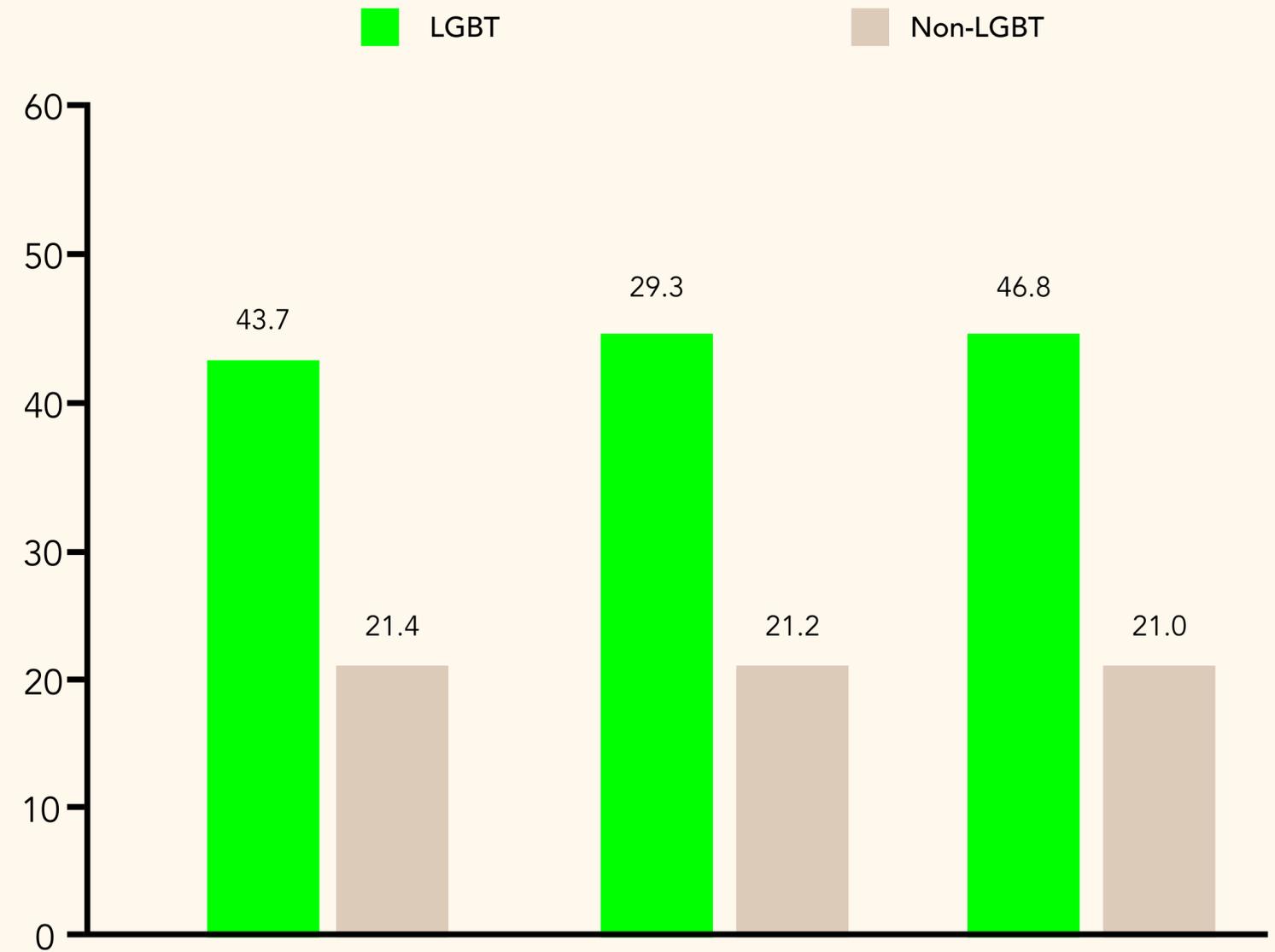
Statistics/Data

- Over half of transgender and nonbinary adolescents had given suicide a serious thought in the past year, with 40% of LGBTQ+ youth having done so.
 - 29% of LGBTQ+ young people have been homeless, evicted from their homes, or fled away.
- 61% of transgender and nonbinary young people said they had been discouraged or prohibited from using a restroom that matched their gender identification.
- In the past, 48% of LGBTQ children said they desired counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to get it.
- Youth who identify as LGBTQ reported that social media had a significant influence on their mental health and wellbeing, both positively (96%) and negatively (88%).

Statistics/Data



Percentage of U.S. Adults With Symptoms of Anxiety Living in Households With Children by LGBTQ Status: 2021-2022



Percentage of U.S. Adults With Symptoms of Depression Living in Households With Children by LGBTQ Status: 2021-2022

Therefore Equations

1 DATA

- In the past, 48% of LGBTQ children said they desired counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to get it.

THEREFORE

- Most of these children never had the opportunity to explore solutions and find the answers needed to put them on a path to stability. Due to a lack of study of LGBTQ mental struggles, children are either denied help or the professionals don't know enough.



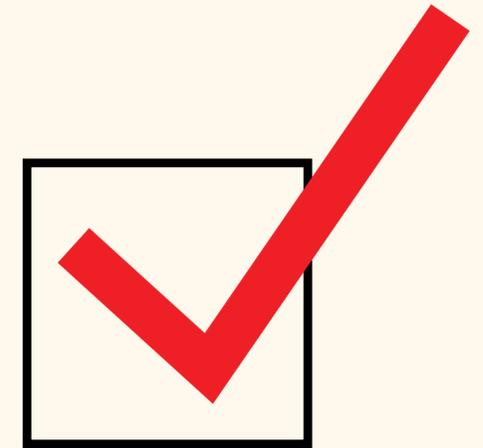
Therefore Equations

1 FACT

- Suicide is the second highest cause of mortality among young people, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) adolescents are disproportionately at risk.

THEREFORE

- Most support systems and campaigns need to be established so that young people and adolescents have somewhere to turn to and prevent them from putting their lives at risk. These actions can lower the rate of suicides in the LGBTQ community.



Final Thoughts

To further improve my research I could interview people from other cultures, ethnicity, religions, and social classes. A different perspective can be useful in obtaining more information and opinions. It could also be good to get the opinion of a person that is outside the LGBTQ community sphere.

Opportunity Design

- People have been making pride related art that has inspired many including myself. These can be flyers, flags, and social events. The creation of a social space digitally and physically can be a great design opportunity. A billboard promoting support groups, call lines and seminars can be helpful in spreading the word that those in the LGBTQ+ Community struggling are not alone and there is help available.
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Citations/Links

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THANK YOU!

