



2019 DELAWARE STATE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE

SUBSTANCE USE AND RELATED ISSUES

CHAPTER 12: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Youth

prepared for

Director Elizabeth Romero and the

Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

&

The Delaware State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

with funding from the

Strategic Prevention Framework - Partnerships for Success Program

Introduction: The Role of the Delaware State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup and the Purpose of the Epidemiological Profile

All states, including Delaware, have received support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) to establish a Statewide Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW). Some SEOWs, including Delaware's, are incorporated as part of a SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG) or Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) grant. The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) in the Delaware Health and Social Services has been the recipient of an SPF-SIG grant and, more recently, of a SPF-PFS grant. The SEOW is a group of people and organizations in the state that have and use analytical data concerning drug and alcohol use and abuse and related behaviors and consequences; this information can be used to establish and monitor indicators related to substance abuse prevention. Formerly known as the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance (DDATA), Delaware's SEOW mission is to bring data on substance abuse and related behavioral problems to the forefront of the prevention planning process by pursuing the following goals:

- To build monitoring and surveillance systems to identify, analyze, and profile data from state and local sources
- To provide current benchmarks, trends, and patterns of substance abuse consumption and consequences
- To create data-guided products that inform prevention planning and policies
- To train agencies and communities in understanding, using, and presenting data effectively

This report, the Delaware State Epidemiological Profile, was developed by the SEOW to disseminate data for strategic planning, decision-making, and evaluation. Using indicators that are available on an ongoing basis, the report briefly describes Delaware-specific patterns of consumption, context, consequences, and trends of substance use, especially among young people.

Chapter 12 covers lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning youth in Delaware. To review the complete Delaware Epidemiological Profile, other chapters, or SEOW data products, please visit the UD [Center for Drug and Health Studies Delaware Epidemiological Reports](#) page.

SEOW Collaborators

Thank you for your participation and commitment to data-driven prevention planning, practice, and evaluation! We are especially grateful for the support from Director Elizabeth Romero and the team at the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health for their guidance and collaboration.

atTAcK Addiction

Christiana Care Health System

Delaware Academy of Medicine

Delaware Afterschool Network

Delaware Criminal Justice Council

Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Delaware Council on Gambling Problems

Delaware Courts - Office of the Child Advocate

Delaware Criminal Justice Information System

Delaware Department of Education

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families

Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services

Delaware Health and Social Services

Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance

Division of Public Health

Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Delaware Information and Analysis Center

Delaware Multicultural and Civic Organization

Delaware Prevention Coalition

Delaware State Police

Department of Safety and Homeland Security

Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement

Division of Forensic Science

KIDS COUNT in Delaware, University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

La Esperanza Community Center

Latin American Community Center

Mental Health Association in Delaware

Nemours Health and Prevention Services

Office of Controlled Substances

Delaware Division of Professional Regulation

Delaware Prescription Monitoring Program

Open Door Inc.

Wesley College

West End Neighborhood House

University of Delaware

Student Health & Wellness Promotion

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Delaware State Epidemiological Profile Overview

Each year, the Center for Drug and Health Studies at the University of Delaware, the facilitator of the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW), releases the Delaware State Epidemiological Profile, a project funded under the federal Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success initiative. This report (2019) highlights the most recently available data on substance use among various populations across both Delaware and nationwide. Its information is intended to help decision-makers and stakeholders across the state accomplish goals related to needs assessments, strategic planning, and evaluation.

In its entirety, this report includes the following chapters:

1. State Demographic Background
2. Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes
3. Alcohol
4. Marijuana
5. Opioid Use and Other Trends
6. Other Illegal Drugs
7. Substance-Exposed Infants
8. Gambling
9. Mental Health
10. Persons with Disabilities (new to the report this year)
11. Adverse Childhood Experiences
12. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Youth
13. Transgender Youth
14. Protective Factors

Chapter 12: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Youth

National Overview

Data at the national level shows patterns of health disparity in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) youth community. One meta-analysis and review found that on average, LGBQ youth were 190% more likely to misuse substances than heterosexual youth (Marshall et al., 2008). Another meta-analysis found significantly higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation for sexual minority youth compared to other youth (Marshall et al., 2011). These studies suggest that victimization, discrimination, and the stress associated with both may be risk factors for both substance abuse and poor mental health status among LGBQ youth individuals.

Delaware Overview

Eleven percent of Delaware high school youth who responded to a 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) question about sexual orientation reported that they identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. An additional three percent indicated that they were not sure of their sexual orientation (Q or questioning). Compared to data from the 2015 YRBS, it appears the gap is narrowing across several measures; however, LGBQ youth continue to appear to be at disproportionate risk for negative psychosocial concerns. This population reported increased rates of substance use and poorer mental health than their heterosexual peers. It is important to note that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is not the cause of increased risk behaviors; rather, internal and interpersonal conflicts very likely contribute to the heightened risk that these teens experience. Uncertainty may create even greater challenges, as the following slides illustrate that the youth who report that they unsure of their sexual orientation report highest rates of smoking cigarettes, binge drinking, and the use of numerous illegal drugs.

In terms of mental health, more than half of LGBQ youth (52.5%) reported feeling sad or hopeless for two weeks or more in the preceding year. They reported higher rates of always worrying and feeling afraid than their straight peers. LGBQ youth are at elevated risk for self-harm and suicide comparatively. Almost 39% of LGBQ youth purposefully hurt themselves (without intending death) at least once in the last year compared to 10% of heterosexual youth. Further, 30.6% of LGBQ youth planned suicide and 18% attempted suicide at least once within the last year, as opposed to nine and five percent respectively among their heterosexual peers.

Strategies to prevent substance use disorders and mental illness are designed to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors. Risk and protective factors are relevant across several domains (individual, family, peers, and communities) and during various stages of the life cycle. Data from the YRBS show two domains where sexual minority youth in Delaware have increased risk factors: LGBQ youth reported poorer relationships with their parents than other youth and increased rates of bullying victimization. Data from the 2017 Delaware YRBS show that across the entire student population, students who report positive relationships with their parents have lower rates of substance abuse and better mental health status (see Chapter 14 in

this report). In this instrument, positive parental relationships are measured by youths' perceived parental pride, parental interest in youth activities, and comfort in sharing thoughts and feelings with parents. As the following charts illustrate, straight teens reported higher rates of parental support compared to their LGBQ peers. LGBQ youth were more likely to report that they avoided going to school due to feeling unsafe and were bullied (on school property and electronically) at rates approximately twice that of their heterosexual peers. Additionally, LGBQ youth reported they were more likely to bring a weapon to school at least once within the last 30 days (6.3%), compared to 2.9% among heterosexual youth.

Data from the Delaware YRBS show LGBQ students report significantly higher rates of past-month use of cigarette, alcohol, marijuana, and prescription painkillers (without a prescription) compared to other students. They were more than twice as likely to report current cigarette use than their heterosexual peers. Seventeen percent of sexual minorities reported binge drinking in the past month, compared to 15% of heterosexual students. Past-month marijuana use was also higher among LGBQ youth than among their heterosexual peers (32% versus 23%). Sexual minorities reported more than twice the past-month use of prescription pain medicine (10.7%) than their heterosexual peers (4.9%). Across all drug categories, sexual minorities reported significantly higher rates of ever using drugs than heterosexual students.

The following charts depict the rates of substance use, mental health concerns, protective factors, and bullying experienced by Delaware high school students by reported sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay/lesbian, bisexual, or unsure). It is important to remember that differences in these rates are not intrinsically associated with being LGBQ but are largely due to internal and external challenges that these youth may face related to their sexual orientation. Efforts to increase parental and peer support for all students, and for this group in particular, will be essential to create prevention strategies for LGBQ youth.

2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Reported Sexual Orientation of Delaware High School Youth (in ages)

	Percentage	N
Heterosexual	86%	2309
Gay or Lesbian	3%	81
Bisexual	8%	207
Unsure	3%	83

Figure 190: Sexual orientation, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Who Reported Smoking Cigarettes
on One or More of the Past 30 Days
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

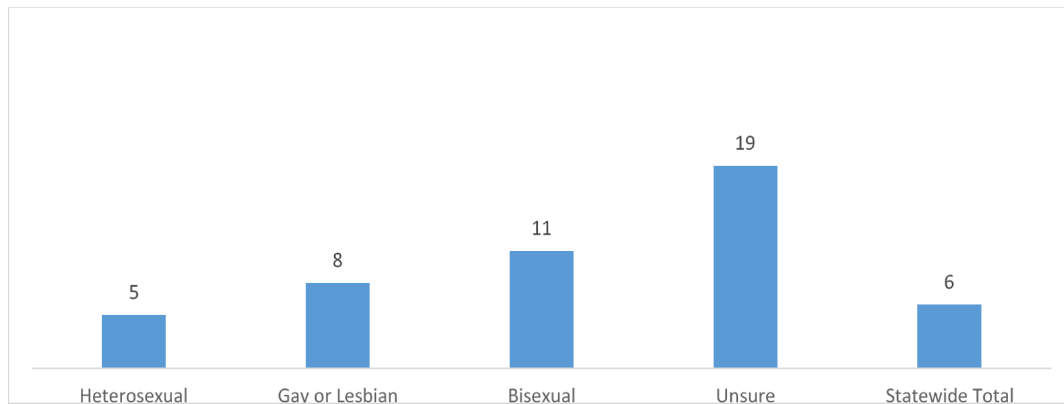


Figure 191: Sexual orientation, smoked in the past 30 days, 2017

High School Students Who Reported Smoking a Whole Cigarette
for the First Time Before Age 13
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

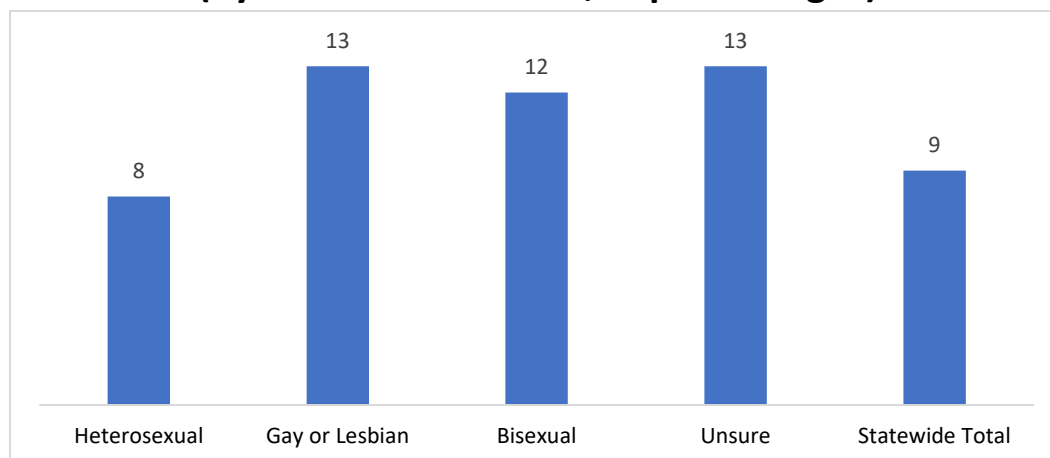


Figure 192: Sexual orientation, first smoked whole cigarette before age 13, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Who Reported Having
at Least One Drink of Alcohol on One or More of the Past 30 Days
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

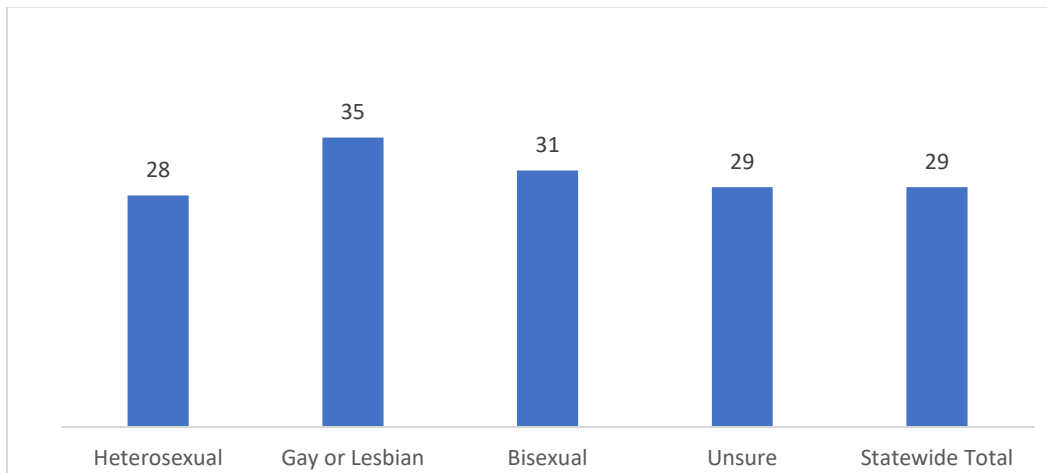


Figure 193: Sexual orientation, had at least 1 drink in past 30 days, 2017

High School Students Who Reported
Drinking Alcohol Before Age 13
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

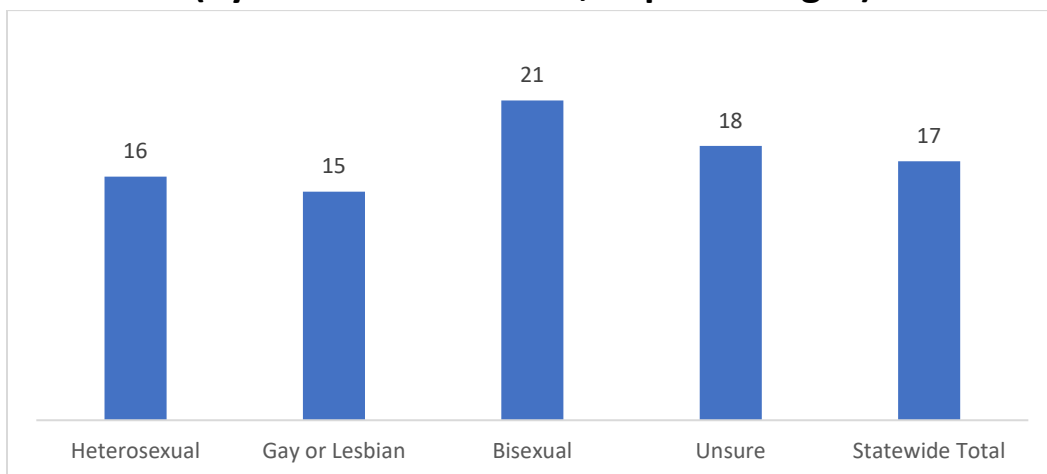


Figure 194: Sexual orientation, drank alcohol before age 13, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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**2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Binge Drinking
One or More Times in Past Month
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)**

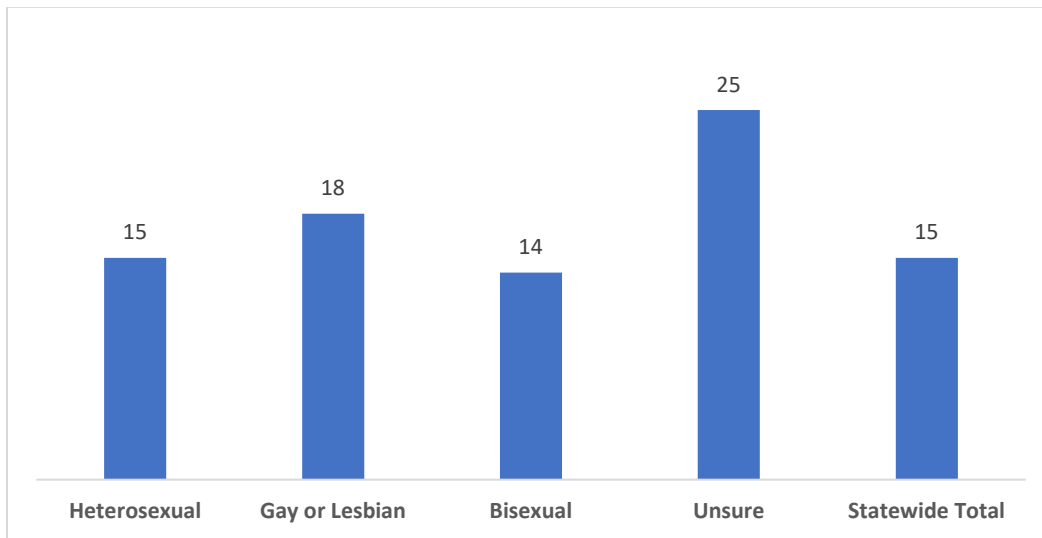


Figure 195: Sexual orientation and binge drinking, HS, 2017

Note: "Binge drinking" is defined as five or more drinks of alcohol in a row for males/four or more drinks for females.

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Who Reported Using Marijuana
One or More Times During the Past 30 Days
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

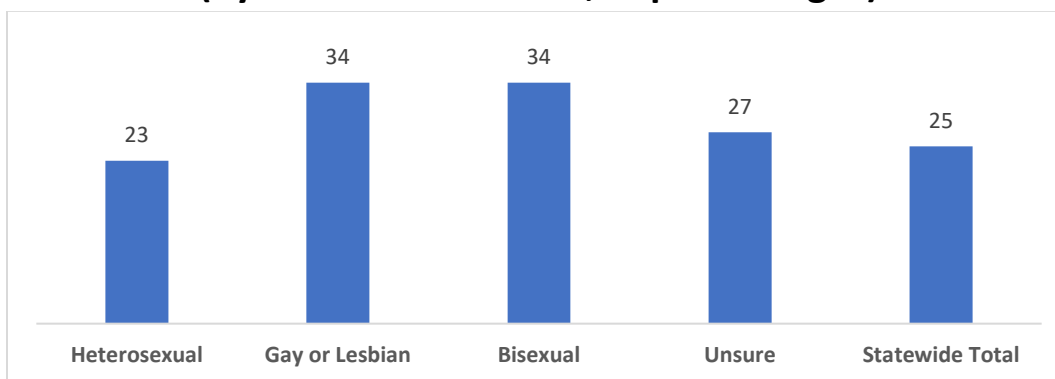


Figure 196: Sexual orientation, used marijuana in past 30 days, 2017

High School Students Who Reported Smoking Marijuana
Before Age 13
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

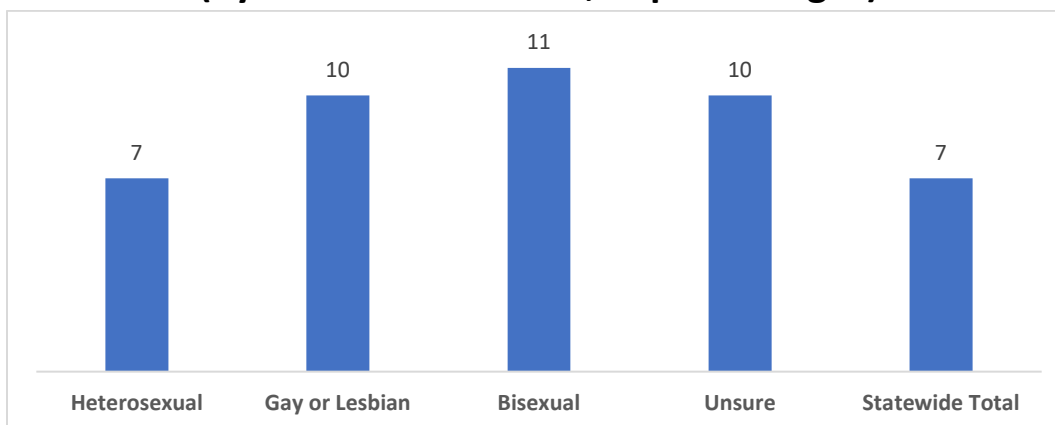


Figure 197: Sexual orientation, used marijuana before age 13, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey High School Students Who Reported Ever Using Other Illegal Drugs in their Lifetime (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

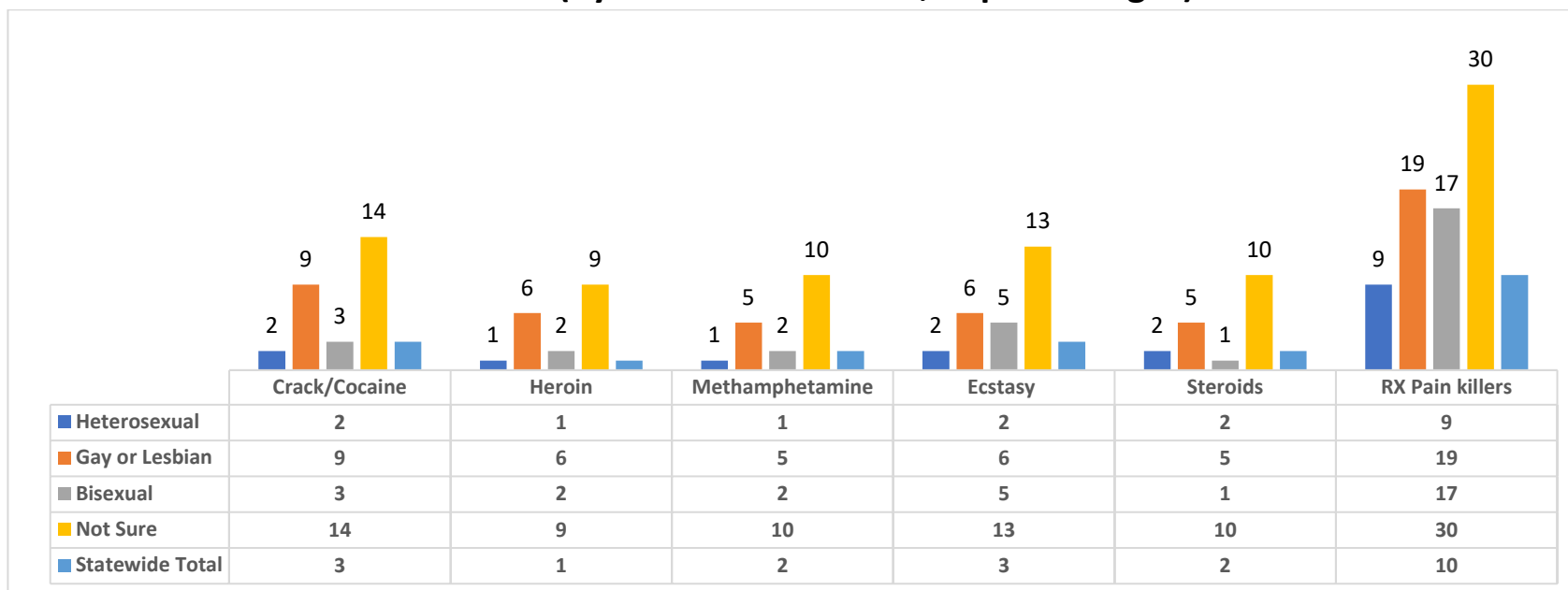


Figure 198: Sexual orientation, used other illegal drugs in lifetime, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

High School Students Reporting Having Sexual Intercourse (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

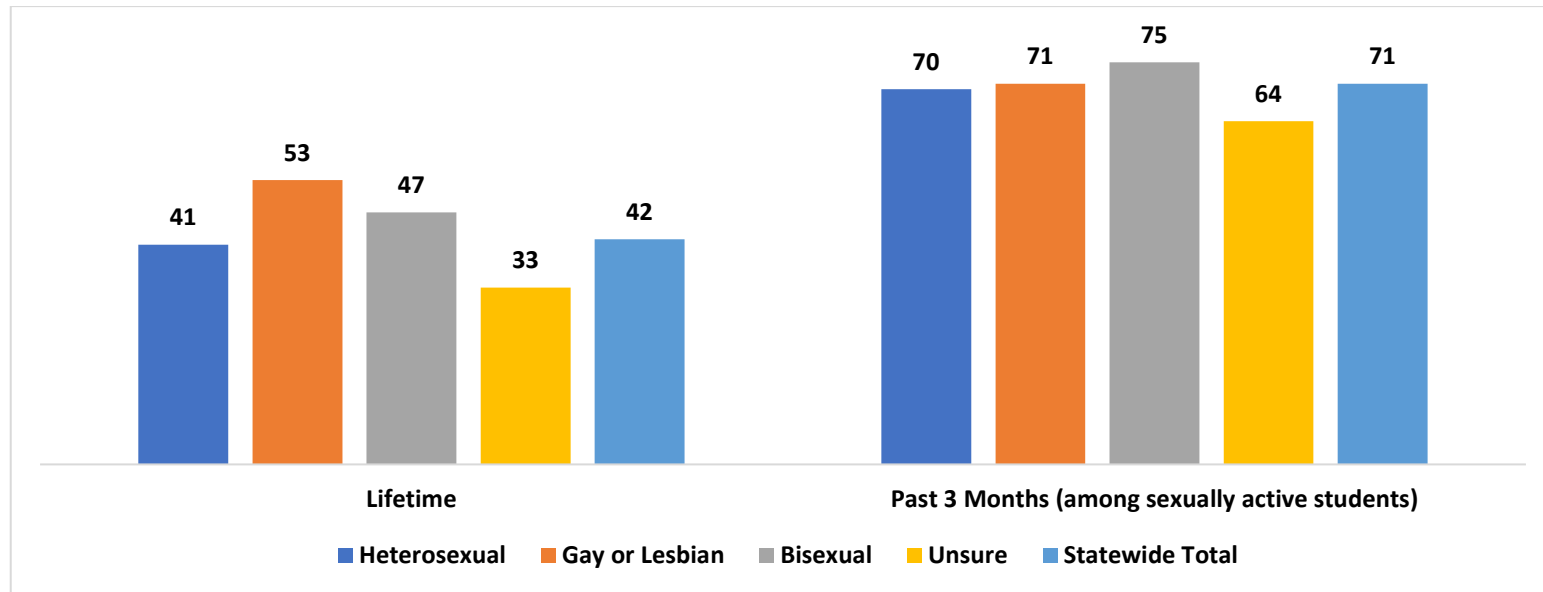


Figure 199: Sexual orientation, reported having sexual intercourse, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Who Reported Using a Condom
the Last Time They Had Sexual Intercourse
(among sexually active students, in percentages)

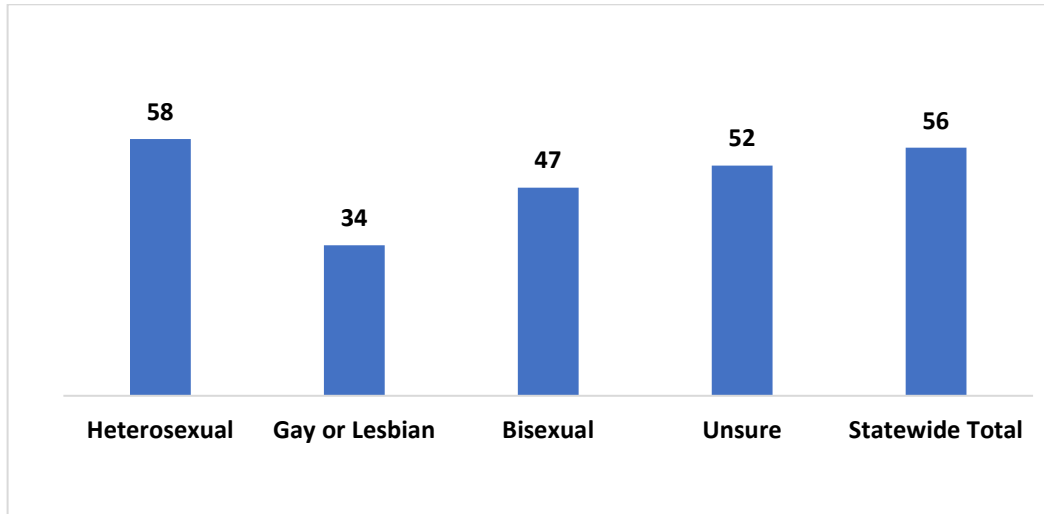


Figure 200: Sexual orientation, reported using condom, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

High School Students Who Reported Drinking Alcohol or Using Drugs Before their Last Time Having Sexual Intercourse (among sexually active students, in percentages)

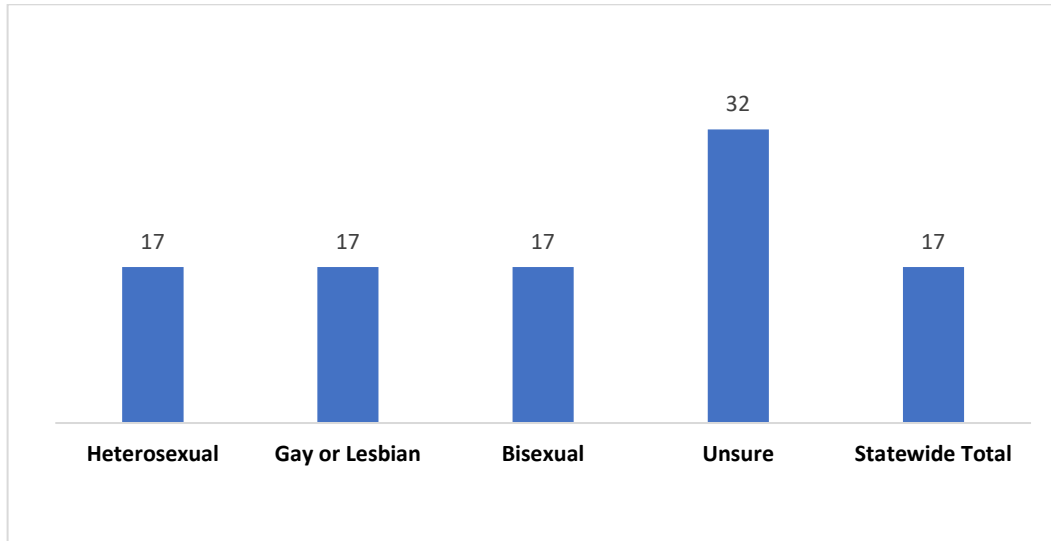


Figure 201: Sexual orientation, used alcohol/drug before last sexual intercourse

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey High School Students Who Reported Getting into a Fight in the Past Year (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

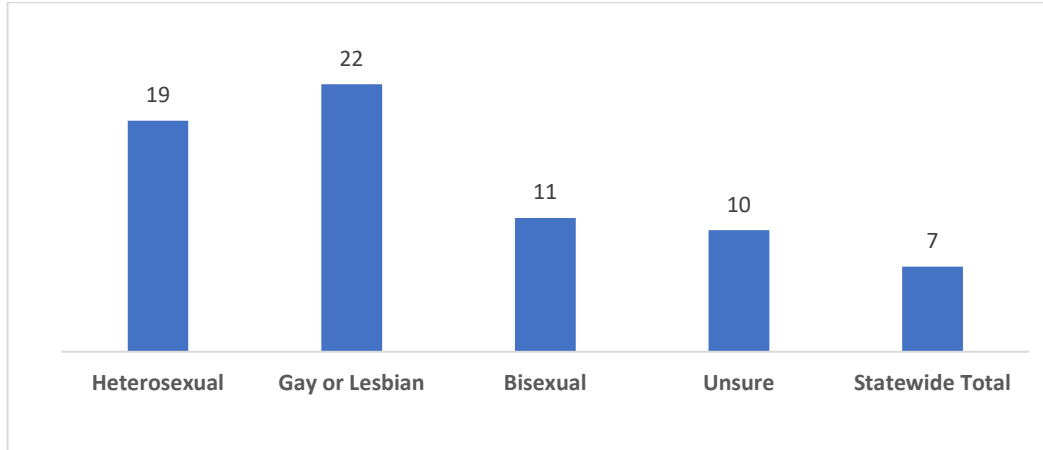


Figure 202: Sexual orientation, got into fight in past year, HS, 2017

High School Students Who Reported Carrying a Weapon on School Property in the Past 30 Days (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

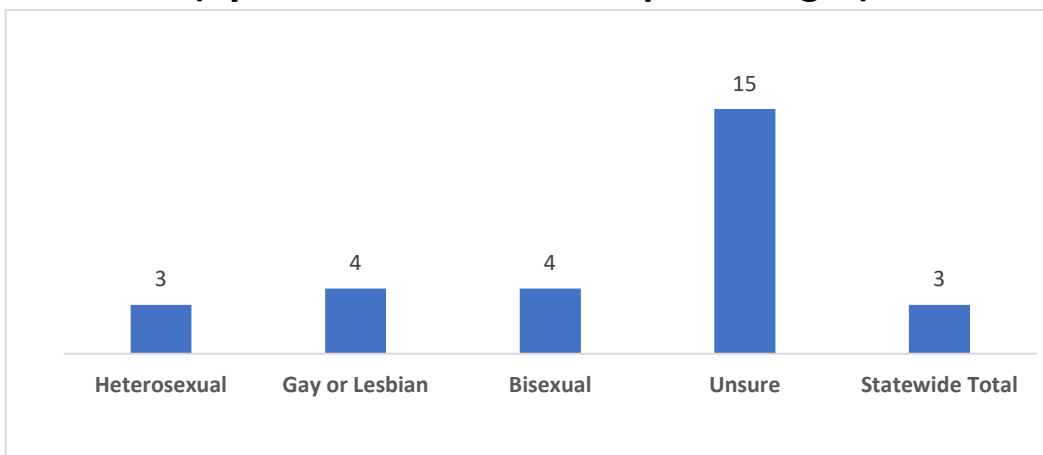


Figure 203: Sexual orientation, carried weapon on school property in past 30 days

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Who Reported Being
Bullied at School in the Past Year
(in percentages)

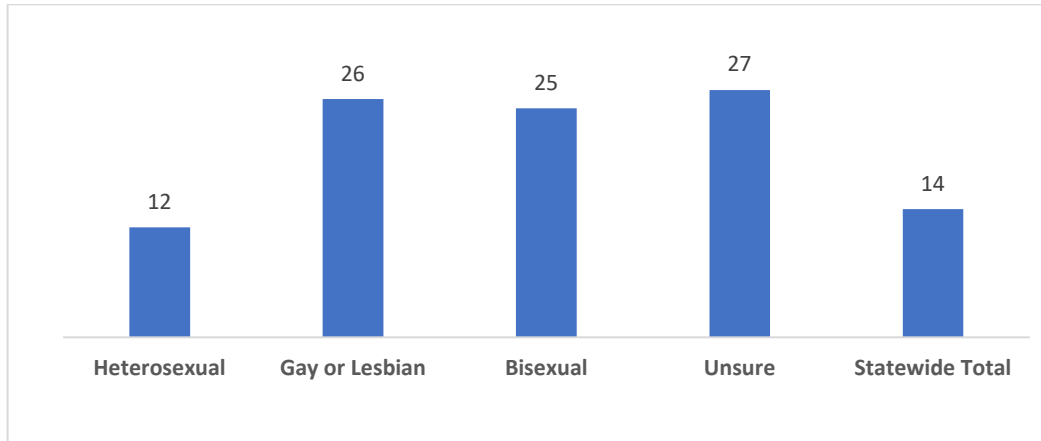


Figure 204: Sexual orientation, reported being bullied in past year, HS, 2017

High School Students Who Reported Being
Electronically Bullied in the Past Year
(in percentages)

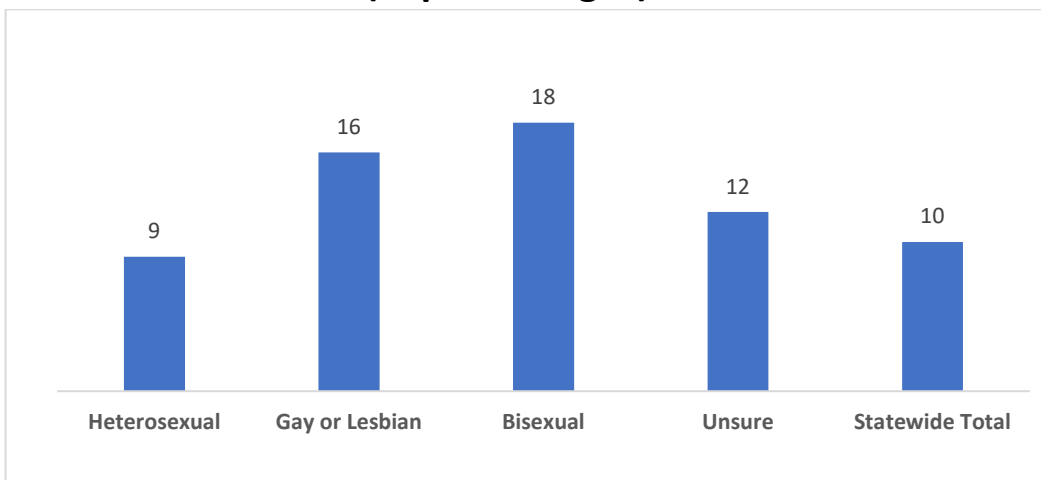


Figure 205: Sexual orientation, reported being bullied electronically, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
High School Students Who Reported Not Going to School
for One or More Days
Because They Felt Unsafe in the Past 30 Days
(by sexual orientation, in percentages)

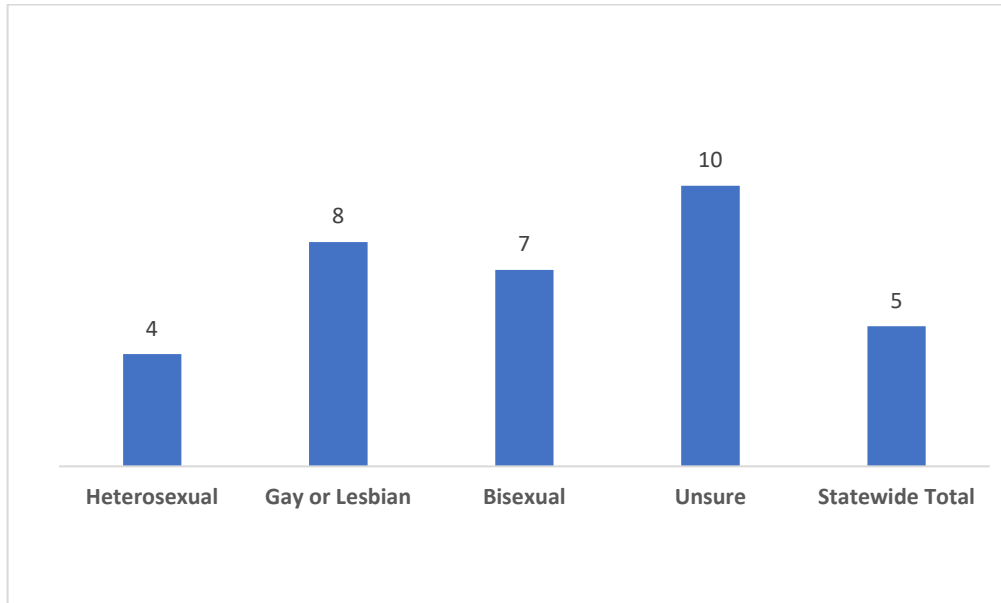


Figure 206: Sexual orientation, did not go to school b/c felt unsafe in past 30 days

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

High School Students Who Reported their Parent(s) Show They are Proud of Them (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

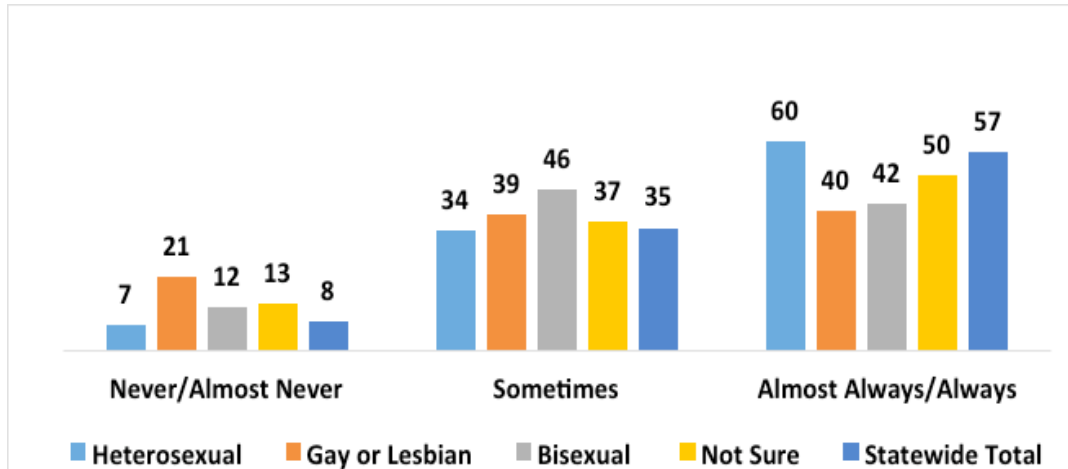


Figure 207: Sexual orientation, parents show they are proud of them, HS, 2017

High School Students Who Reported their Parent(s) Take an Interest in their Activities (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

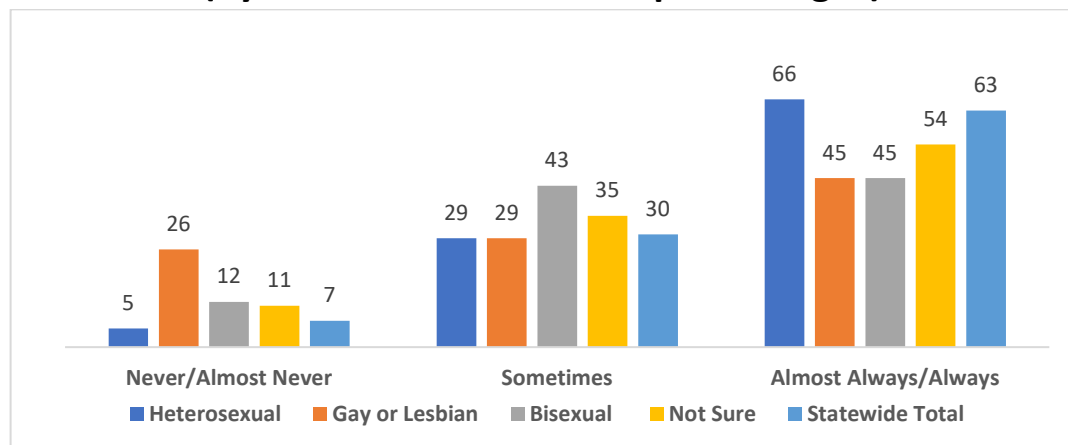


Figure 208: Sexual orientation, parents take interest in activities, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey High School Students Who Reported that their Parent(s) Listen to Them When They Talk (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

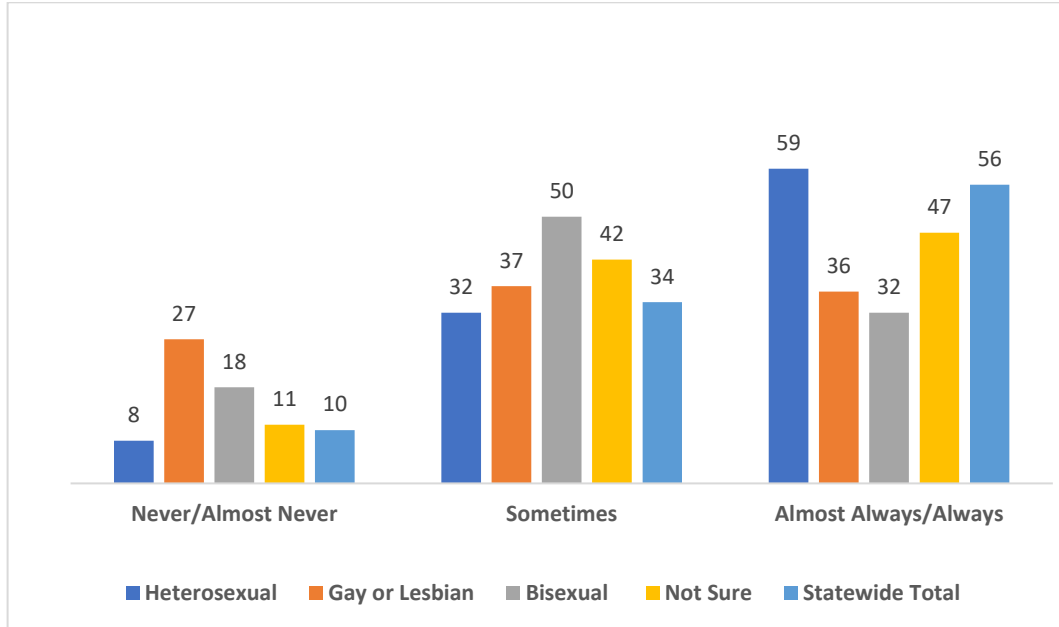


Figure 209: Sexual orientation, parents listen to them, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

High School Students Who Reported Feeling Sad or Hopeless for Two or More Weeks in the Past Year (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

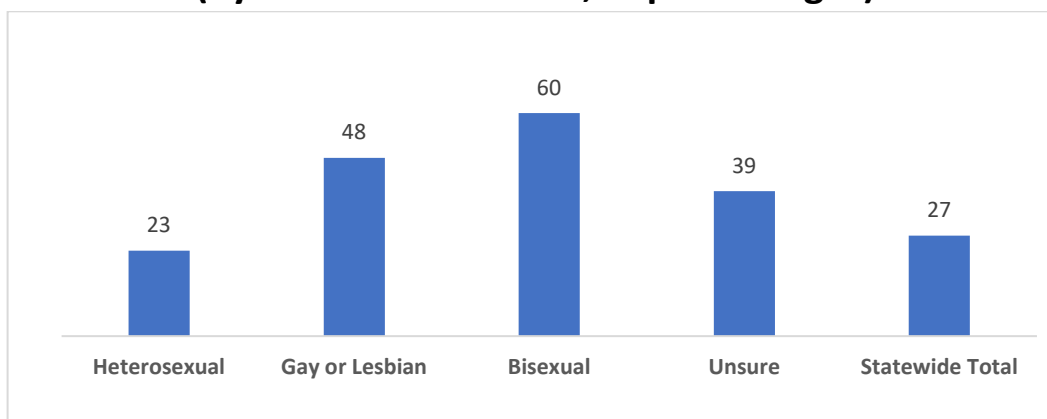


Figure 210: Sexual orientation, felt sad/hopeless for 2+ weeks in past year, HS, 2017

High School Students Who Reported Self-Harming, Considering Suicide, Having a Suicide Plan, or Attempting Suicide in the Past 12 Months (by sexual orientation, in percentages)

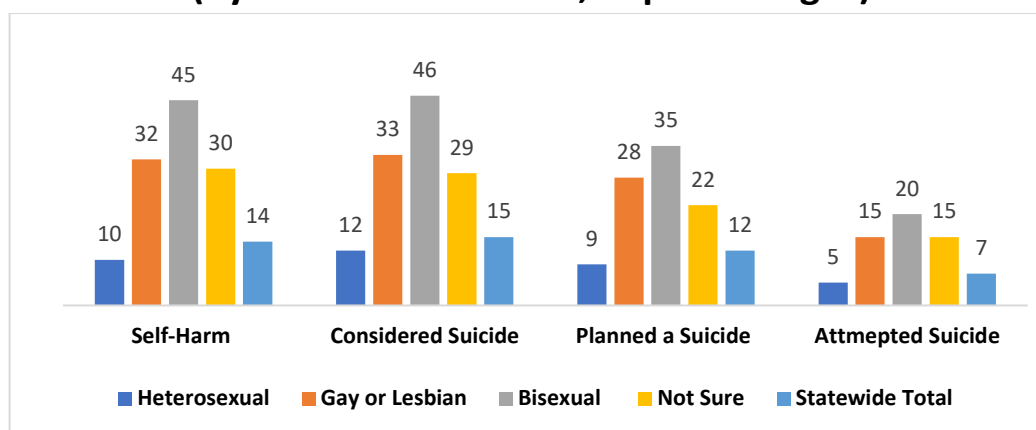


Figure 211: Sexual orientation, considered self-harm or suicidal behaviors, HS, 2017

Source: ["2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware\).](#)

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Transgender Youth

Delaware Department of Education. (n.d.). [Table]. Statewide Fall Enrollment (2017-2018).

Retrieved May 16, 2018 from

<http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/CommonControls/Reporting.aspx?districtCode=0&schoolCode=0&dataBlock=Demographics&catBlock=Student7Race&Language=English&type=CatUrl>

Grossman, A. H., & Daugelli, A. R. (2007). Transgender Youth and Life-Threatening Behaviors. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 37(5), 527-537.

doi:10.1521/suli.2007.37.5.527

Meerwijk, E. L., & Sevelius, J. M. (2017). Transgender Population Size in the United States: A Meta-Regression of Population-Based Probability Samples. *American Journal of Public Health*, 107(2). doi:10.2105/ajph.2016.303578

Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(4), 205-213. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x

Data Sources for the 2019 Delaware State Epidemiological Profile

Data Instrument	Administered/Compiled by	Most Recent Data	Trend Range
Data Base/ Diagnostics Plus	-	-	1989-1993
Delaware Annual Traffic Statistical Report	Delaware State Police/Delaware Statistical and Analysis Center	2015	-
Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS)	DELJIS	2016	-
Delaware Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)	DE Division of Public Health (sponsored by the CDC)	2017	-
Delaware Household Health Survey	Delaware Public Health Institute	2015	-
Delaware Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)	Delaware Office of Controlled Substance, Division of Professional Regulation	2017	2013 - 2017
Delaware School Survey (DSS) – 5 th , 8 th , and 11 th grades	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD	2018	1995 - 2016
Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – High School	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD (sponsored by DE Division of Public Health and the CDC)	2017	1999 - 2015
Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – Middle School	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD (sponsored by Nemours)	2017	1999 - 2015
Department of Public Instruction	-	1994	-
Monitoring the Future	University of Michigan	2018	-
National High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey	US Centers for Disease Control	2017	1995 - 2017
National Poisoning Data System	American Association of Poison Control Centers	2014	2012-2017
Performance Measures, Delaware	National Highway Safety Administration	2017	

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	2017	2002 - 2017
Tobacco Free Kids Organization	Tobacco Free Kids Organization	2014	-
Treatment Admissions Data	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, collected by Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health	2018	2002 - 2018

In addition to the data sources for the figures and tables in the 2019 report, the following data sources are also cited throughout the narrative:

- America's Health Rankings
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Delaware Health Tracker
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Kaiser Family Foundation
- PolicyMap
- Prescription Behavior Surveillance System at Brandeis University
- Tobacco21.org
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Census Bureau