



Exploring LGBT youth self-harm, suicidal feelings and help-seeking:

Results

Background

Previous research from around the world has shown that LGBTQ youth (under 25 years old) are at much higher risk of suicide and self-harm compared to heterosexual and cisgender young people. Research over the last four decades shows that LGBT youth rates of suicide attempts can be between four and seven times those of their heterosexual and cisgender peers. So far, there haven't been any studies in the UK that examine why this gap exists. There also haven't been any studies that have explored the help-seeking behaviours of LGBTQ young people when they are self-harming, or the types of help that they would choose to use. The lack of this information makes it difficult to address the higher rates of LGBT youth self-harm and suicide.

LGBT youth rates of suicide attempts can be between four and seven times those of their heterosexual and cisgender peers

Aims of the study

This study was conducted to understand why LGBTQ young people in England experience higher rates of self-harm and suicidal feelings and to gather evidence about how, when and why they seek help (or do not seek help). By better understanding these things, people that design or implement policies or practices will be more able to help LGBTQ youth who are self-harming or having suicidal feelings.

Method and sample of the study

It was important for us that the perspectives and experiences of LGBTQ young people were at the heart of this research. We started by doing 29 interviews with gender and sexually diverse young people from around England. Half of these were online (n=15) and half were face to face (n=14). Using what they told us, we created an online questionnaire. 789 young people took part in this questionnaire. This sample was diverse in terms of age, gender identity and sexuality, and included people with different religions, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Some key numbers:

- 789 participants aged between 13 and 25, with a mean age of 18.6
- 43.5% (n=343) were trans or unsure about gender identity
- The identity that the largest proportion of participants identified with was Bisexual (24.7%, n=195), followed by Gay (16.2%, n=128), Pansexual (15%, n=118), Lesbian (13.1%, n=103), Queer (12.1%, n=95), Asexual (4.3%, n=34), Questioning (4.2%, n=33), Heterosexual (straight) (4.1%, n=32), Other (3.3%, n=26) and Unsure (3%, n=24).
- Ethnicities: White British (83%, n=655), Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) (9%, n=71), White (other) (8%, n=63)
- Disability: Disabled participants made up 25.2% of the sample (n=199)