

UNICORN MARCH PRESENTS

# WHAT DO ACES FACE?



[unicornmarch.org](http://unicornmarch.org)

# FIRST, A FEW QUICK DEFINITIONS


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## WHY "UNICORN MARCH"?

The "unicorns" of the LGBTQIPA+ community are groups that are rarely seen, and rarely supported. Unicorn March is all about pride and support for these groups, year-round.

## WHAT ARE ACES?

Asexuals, or "aces," aren't sexually attracted to men. Or women. Or any other genders.



Some aces can get turned on by the idea of enjoyable sex; some just don't enjoy it, or are repulsed by it. But they don't get turned on by people.

The ace spectrum also includes people who are *demisexual* and *grey-ace*.

## **DEMISEXUALS**

Demis don't experience sexual attraction without deep emotional intimacy. Most people go on first dates to see if they feel attraction; demis don't know if they'll ever feel it for a given person.

## GREY-ACES

Like many grey areas, "grey-ace" covers a lot of territory.

Grey-aces identify with the experiences shared overall by the ace community. But they might feel unsure about whether they sometimes experience sexual attraction.

They may experience it only vaguely, conditionally, or, like many demis, very, very rarely. Or they may experience some sort of sexual attraction, but not any particular drive or interest in sex.

The beauty of the grey-ace label is that people can connect to the ace-spec community without having to put their reasons into words.




## **WOW, THAT SOUNDS CONFUSING!**

It can be! And the lack of widespread information about asexuality makes it even more confusing.

If you don't know what asexuality is, it's easy to assume that you're sexually attracted to someone, when really you just want to date them.

Or to think you must be bi or pan, because you experience the same amount of (or lack of) attraction to all genders.

Or to distinguish between sexual attraction to people, and free-floating sexual arousal in general.



Most people assume that if they have any sex drive at all, it must mean they're attracted to people.

But there's a difference.

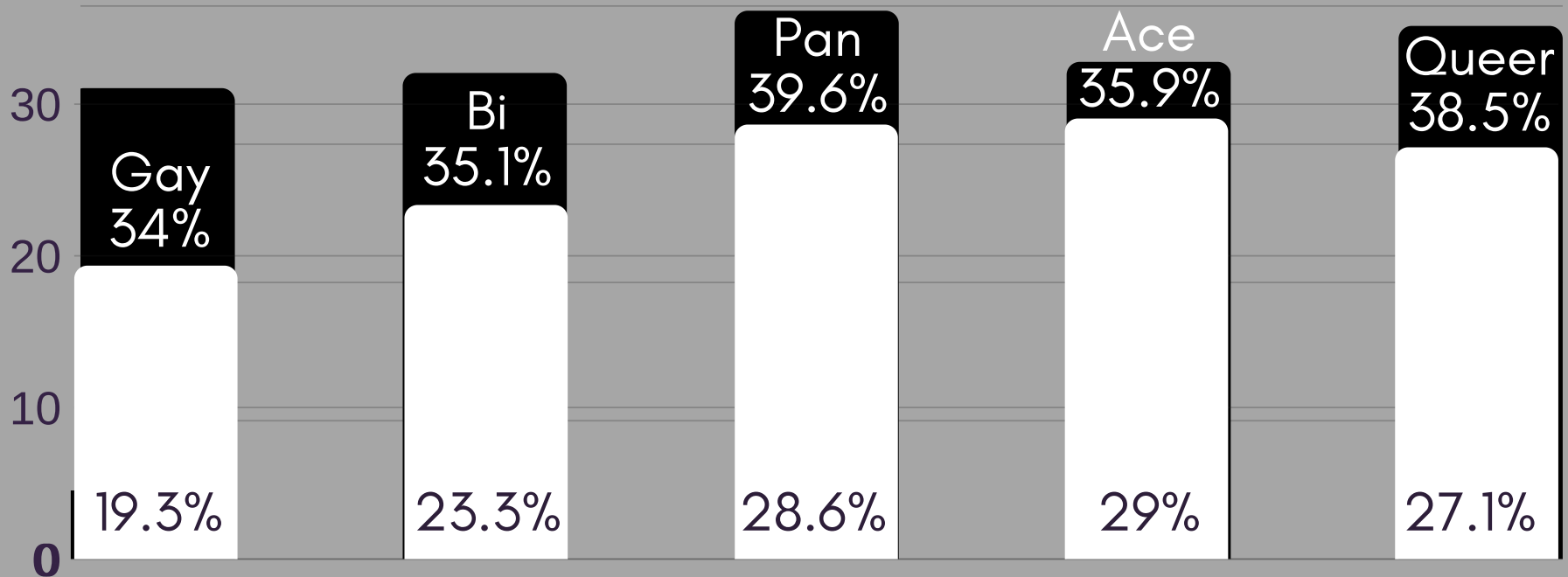
And even when we don't notice the difference, it has an impact on our lives.

**Let's look at that impact now.**

# IN THE WORKPLACE

This is the percent of each group, at work, that experiences **verbal harassment; exclusion from activities; being nonconsensually outed; the threat or act of physical or sexual harassment or violence; or other inappropriate comments or conduct.**

*Columns in white are cis people, black are trans people.*



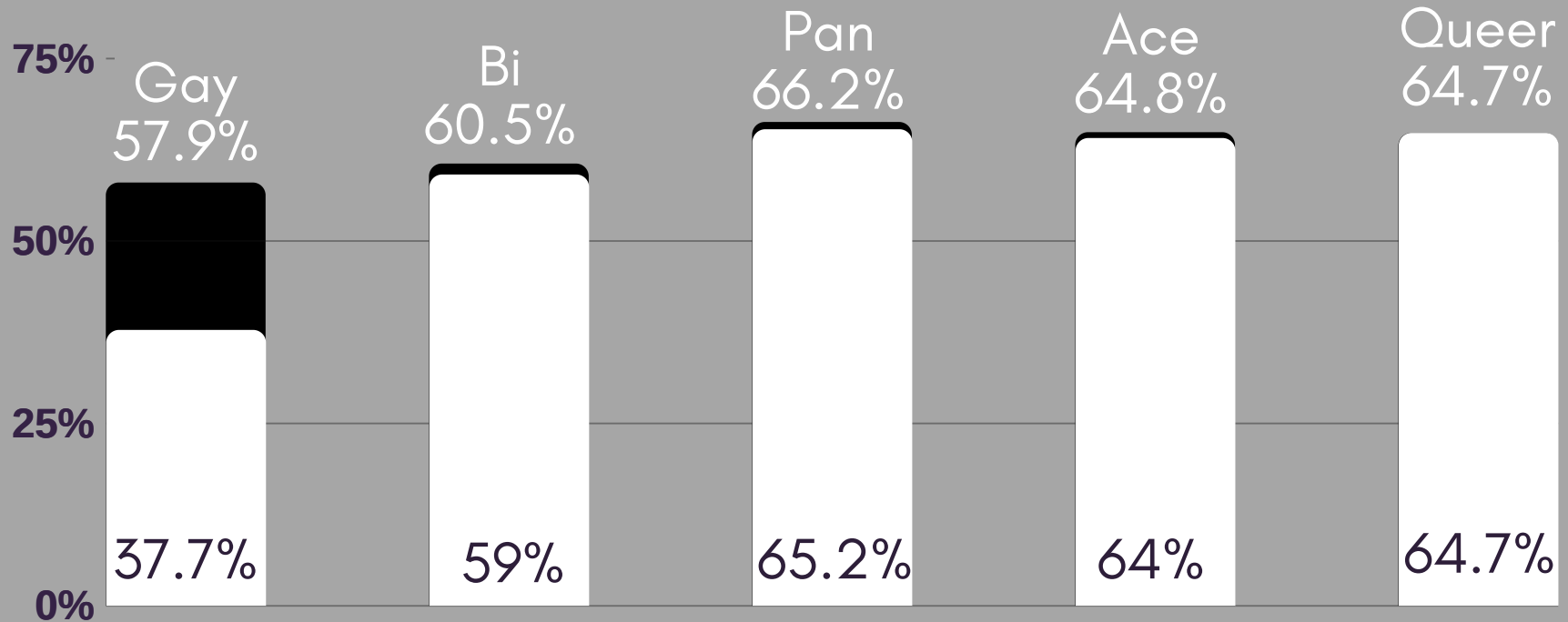
Source: UK Government Equalities Office. (2017) National LGBT Survey.

# IN THE WORKPLACE

Even grimmer: the statistics for personal income.

The levels of harassment and abuse that all of us face, in many areas of our lives, hurt our mental health, our ability to function, our ability to stay in school, to learn or work, or to look for work. This leads directly to the cycles of poverty and homelessness that so many of us struggle with.

For further comparison, 49.1% of intersex people overall, and 51.7% of hetero trans people, live in poverty. *Columns in white are cis people, black are trans people.*



Source:: UK Government Equalities Office. (2017) National LGBT Survey.



## Sexual Harassment

Gay/  
Lesbian  
65%

Ace  
69%

Bisexual  
75%

## Barriers to Education

In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission surveyed 30,000 students, across every university in the entire country.

These statistics are from their experiences in 2015 and 2016 only.

All Trans &  
Gender-Diverse  
72%

All Trans &  
Gender-Diverse  
16.2%

Bisexual  
18%

Gay/  
Lesbian  
8%

Straight  
6%

Straight  
48%

## Sexual Assault

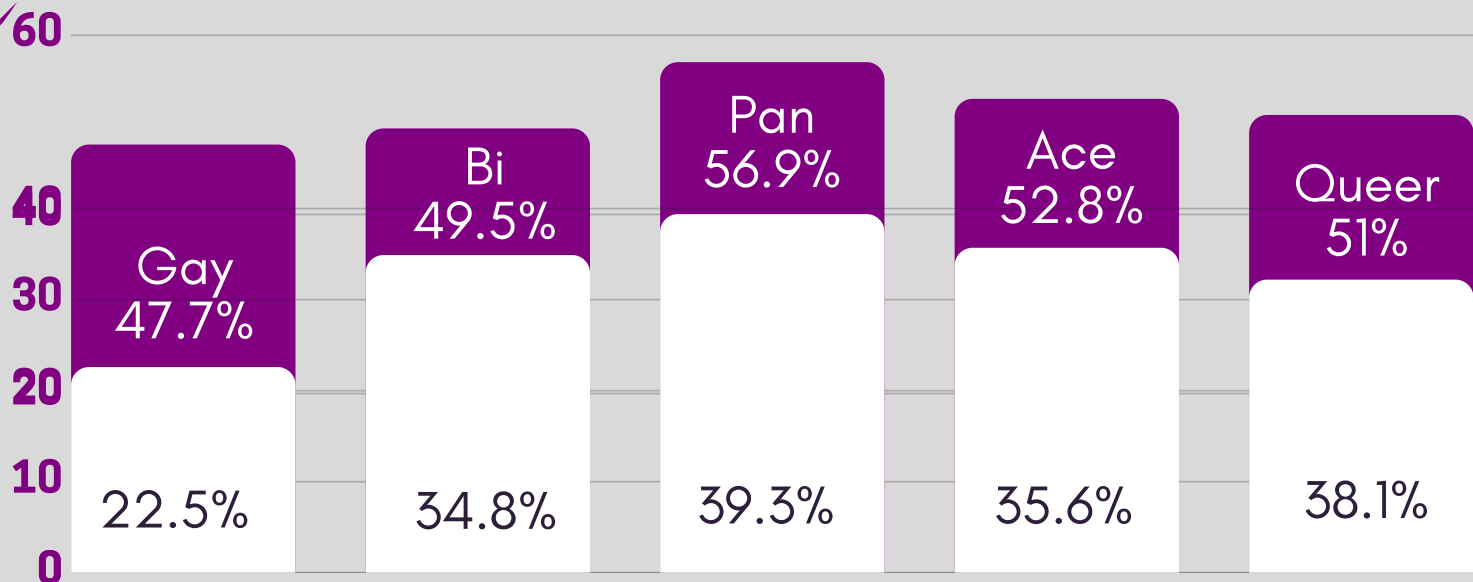
Ace  
15%

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission. Change The Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017)

# HOME SWEET HOME

The white columns show the percent of each group that **at home, in the past year**, experienced verbal harassment, insults, or other hurtful comments; coercive or controlling behavior; being nonconsensually outed; the threat or act of physical or sexual harassment or violence; or other inappropriate comments or conduct.

*Cis respondents are represented by white bars, trans respondents by purple bars.*



"So-called conversion therapies, sometimes also referred to as cure, aversion or reparative therapies, are techniques intended to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity... commonly ranging from pseudo-psychological treatments to spiritual counselling.

"In extreme cases, they may also include surgical and hormonal interventions, or so-called 'corrective' rape."

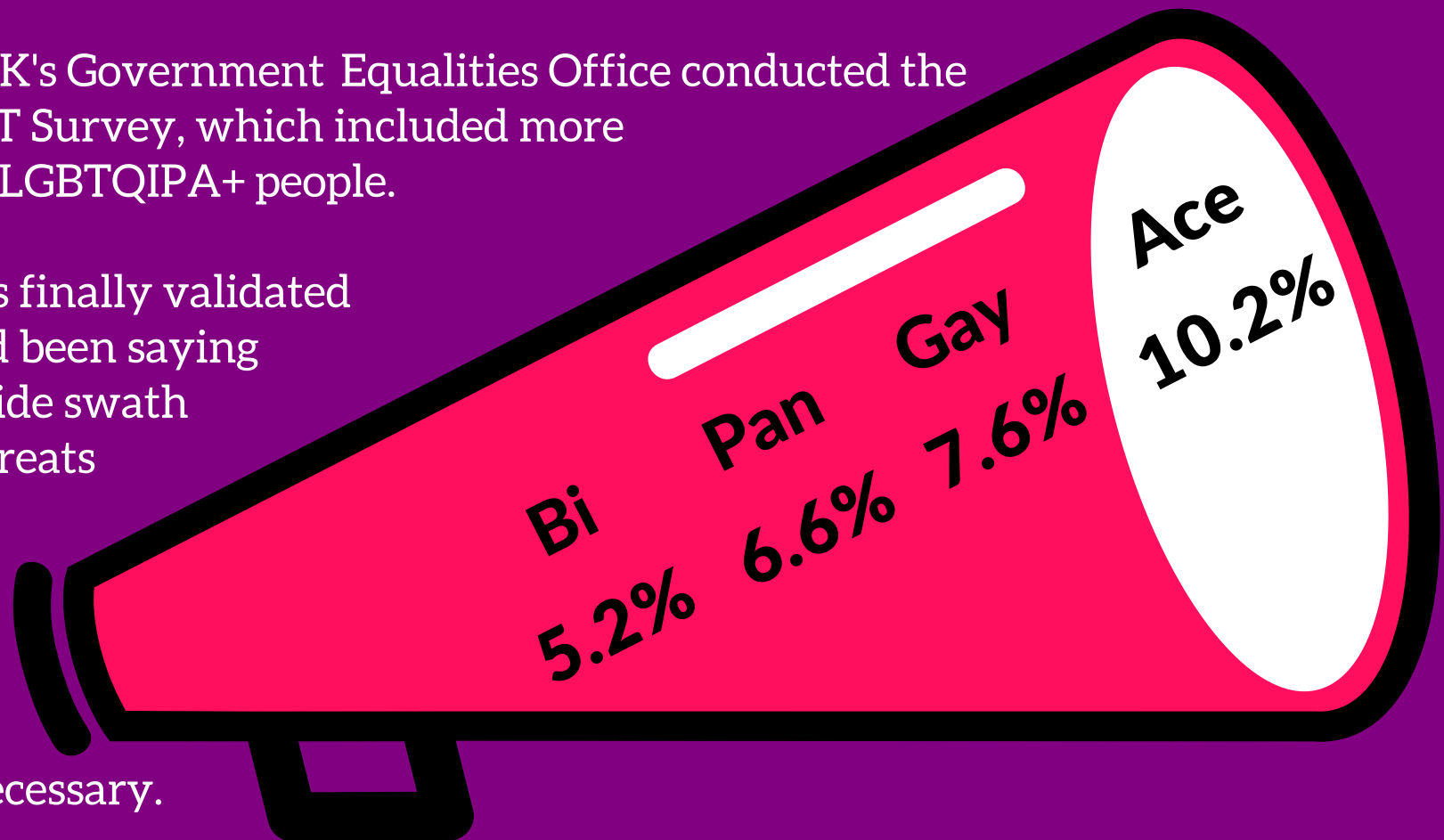
# CONVERSION THERAPY

The least- studied asexual experience by far is also one of the most damaging -- and most common.

In 2017, the UK's Government Equalities Office conducted the National LGBT Survey, which included more than 108,000 LGBTQIPA+ people.

Their findings finally validated what aces had been saying for years: a wide swath of the world treats their sexual orientation as a disease to be "cured."

By force, if necessary.



Percentages are of cis people who have had, or been directed to, conversion therapy for their orientation. Trans responses are omitted here for clarity, as they could have been targeted for gender, orientation, or both.

# HOMELESSNESS IS NOT AN EVENT

"...For LGBTQA youth, while disclosures of stigmatized sexual or gender identities typically did not instantly result in getting kicked out, it often arrived in the context of already stressed parent-child relationships and other parental and family struggles that were years in the making.

"Many of these youth eventually left in order to escape the stigma and discrimination they had endured within their families for quite some time. [They reported] some of the highest rates of adversity scores in our survey, often while stably housed."

# HOMELESSNESS

A higher likelihood of becoming homeless is one of the most socially visible effects of oppression. According to the national 2016-17 Voices Of Youth Count, bi/pan youth are 1.35 times more likely to experience homelessness than their cis and straight peers. Gay and lesbian youth are 1.53 times more likely. Trans youth are 1.7 times more likely. And ace youth are at 1.98 times greater risk, or about **twice as likely to become homeless.**



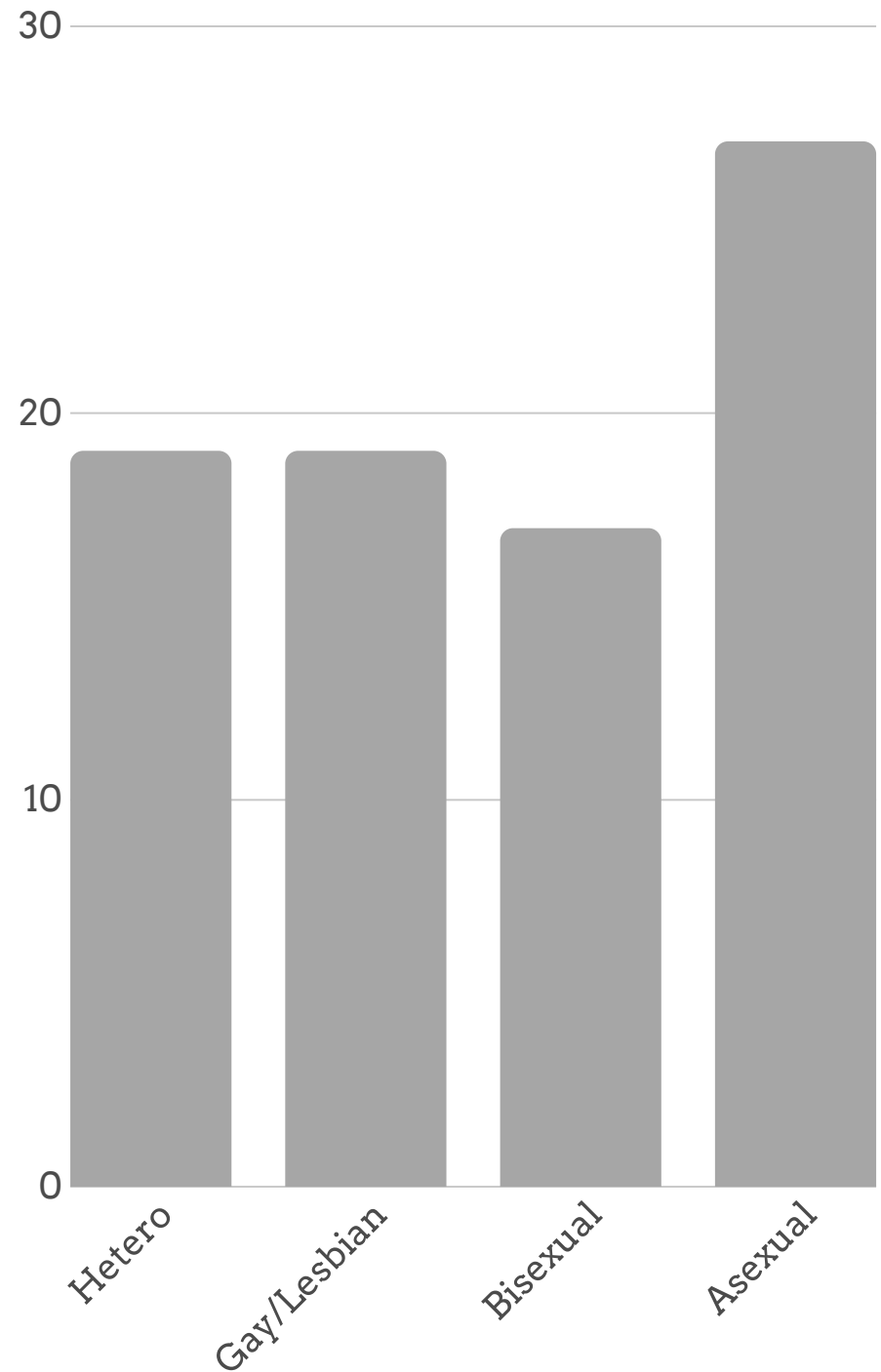
Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2017) Youth Homelessness in San Diego County, California: Findings from the youth count, brief youth survey, and provider survey.

In 2011, the National Transgender Discrimination Survey spoke with 6,450 trans people, creating a detailed portrait of transgender life.

We all know the trans community struggles with very high homelessness rates. So high that even heterosexual trans people have the same likelihood of having been homeless at some point as their gay and bi transgender peers: around 19%.

But if you're trans and ace? 27%.

SOURCE: "LGB WITHIN THE T,"  
THE WILLIAMS INSTITUTE



"If asexual people feel similar pressure to other sexual minorities to conform to heterosexual norms, then it is possible that they too may have elevated rates of mental health problems."

MORAG A. YULEA, LORI A. BROTTOR AND BORIS B. GORZALCAA  
"MENTAL HEALTH AND INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING IN SELF-  
IDENTIFIED ASEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN"



# MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

These are each group's mean scores on clinical assessments for depression and generalized anxiety disorder. GAD is diagnosed at scores of 10 or higher. Scores of 10-14 on the PHQ-9 indicate moderate depression.

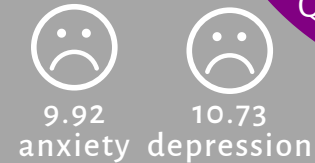
## HETEROSEXUALS



## GAY MEN/ LESBIANS



## BISEXUALS



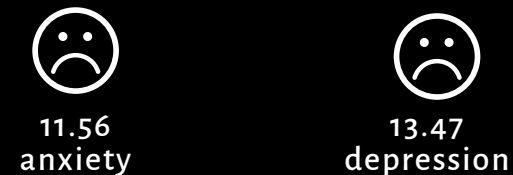
## ASEXUALS



## PANSEXUALS



## DEMISEXUALS



Source:

Borgogna, N. C., et al. 2018. Anxiety and Depression Across Gender and Sexual Minorities: Implications for Transgender, Gender Nonconforming, Pansexual, Demisexual, Asexual, Queer, and Questioning Individuals.

# SUICIDALITY

**26%**  
of cis aces

in a 2011 study had suicidal thoughts/feelings  
**in the two weeks prior to the study,**  
compared to 24% of cis LGB  
and 12% of cis straight subjects.

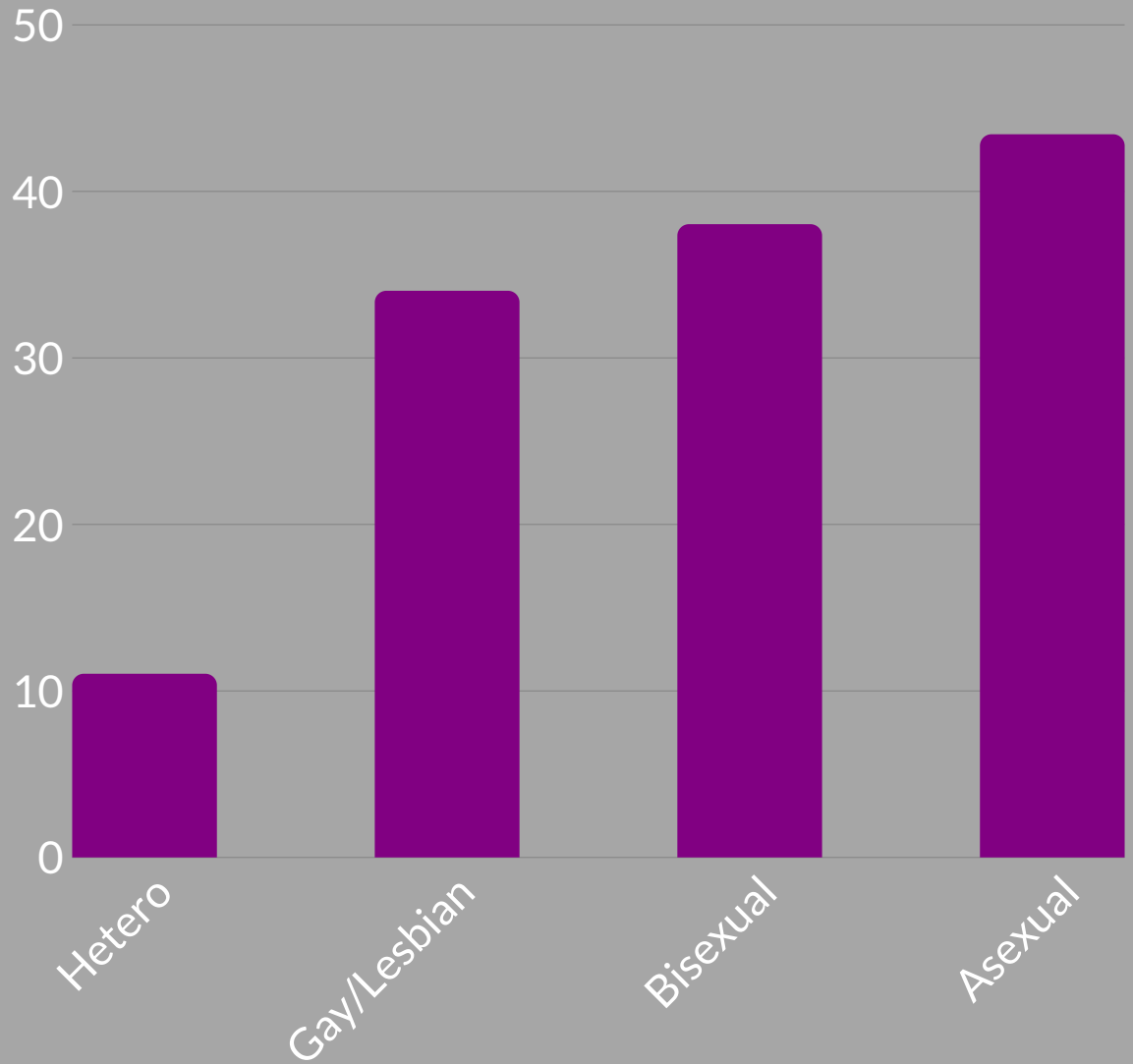
SOURCE: "MENTAL HEALTH AND INTERPERSONAL  
FUNCTIONING AMONG SELF-IDENTIFIED ASEXUAL  
MEN AND WOMEN," YULEA, BROTTTO, & GORZALSKA,  
2011

# Have you ever seriously considered suicide?

11% of cis straight people have thought about it at some point in their lives. So have 34% of cis gay and lesbian people, and 38% of cis bisexuals.

In the cis ace community, that number jumps to

# 42%



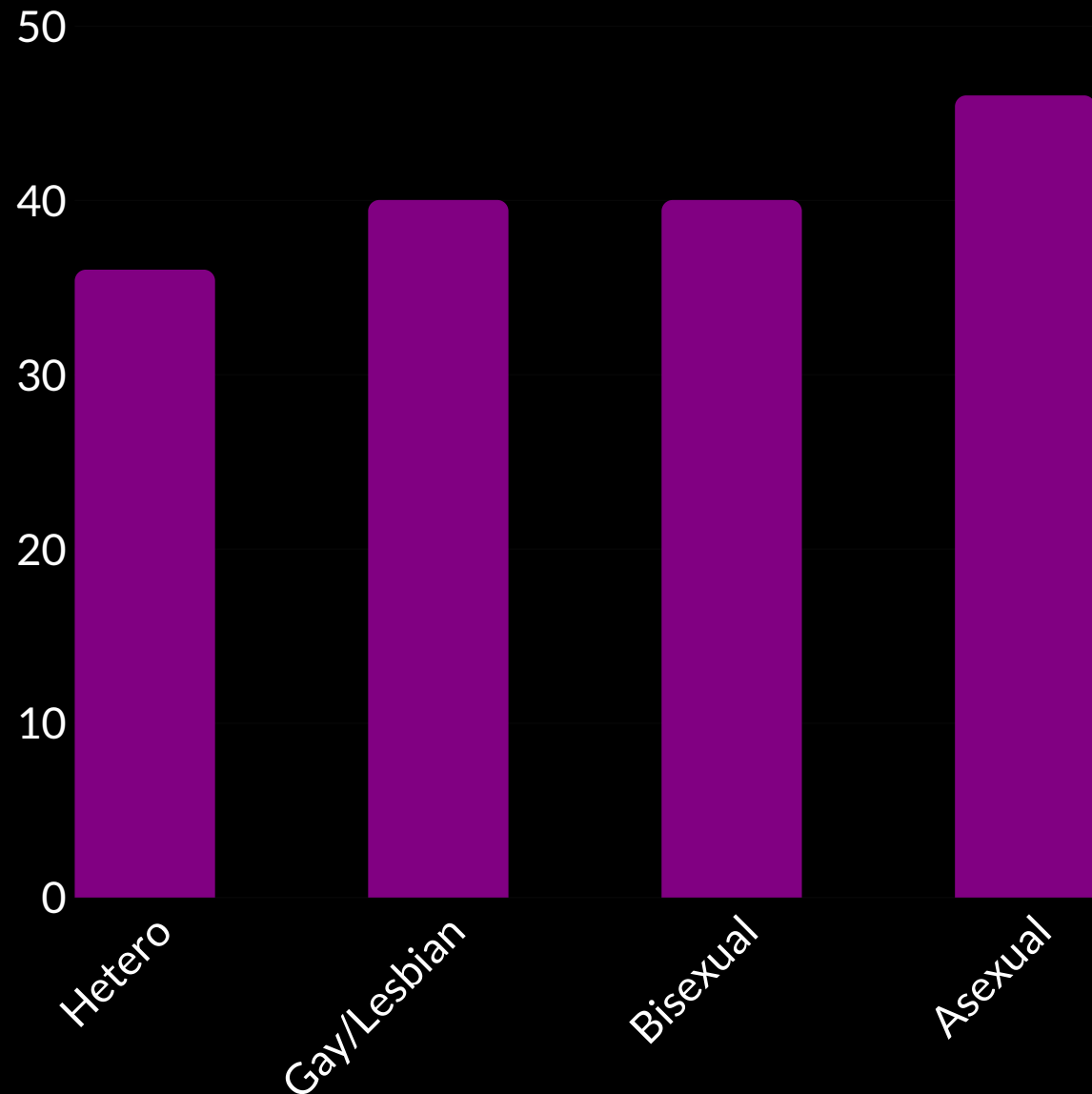
Sources: Salway et al (2019). A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Disparities in the Prevalence of Suicide Ideation and Attempts Among Bisexual Populations.

Bauer et al (2016). The 2016 Asexual Community Survey Summary Report.

Asexual trans  
people have the  
highest rate of  
*attempted suicide*  
of all sexual  
orientations:  
a shocking

**46%**

*Remember, that statistic only measures those who attempted it. In one study of nearly 2,000 trans people aged 14-30, 95.5% of subjects reported having had suicidal thoughts and feelings at some point in their lives.*



Sources: Grant, Jaime M. et al. 2011. Injustice at every turn: A report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey.

Kuper et al. 2018. Exploring Cross-Sectional Predictors of Suicide Ideation, Attempt, and Risk in a Large Online Sample of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth and Young Adults.