

Violence and LGBTQ+ Communities

What Do We Know, and What Do We Need to Know?

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Executive Summary

Many local, state, and federal initiatives that have the potential for profound impacts on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) communities, known more inclusively as “sexual and gender minorities,” are under consideration in legislative bodies across the country. Indeed, more than 200 pieces of legislation addressing the rights and privileges of LGBTQ+ individuals were introduced at the state level in 2016 alone (Lang, 2016). While the legislative intentions behind such initiatives are doubtless complex, debates surrounding them have been heated and often highly polarized—with some vocal proponents asserting a need for protection from potential harms perpetrated by “biological men . . . in women’s bathrooms, showers or locker rooms” and others suggesting that members of LGBTQ+ communities might need protection from harm (Campbell, 2016; Dastagir, 2016; Harrison, 2016; Marusak, 2016; NC Senate Floor Debate on HB 2, 2016).

In this context, RTI International assessed the available research evidence on experiences of violence and victimization in LGBTQ+ communities. We reviewed prior research on violence and LGBTQ+ communities, conducted an inventory of existing data sources, and worked with The Henne Group on a series of formative focus groups to better understand our findings. This review is the first to summarize evidence on perpetration, victimization, consequences and reporting of victimization, and issues of fear and safety across several large fields of research.¹

¹*This report does not aim to investigate, nor to draw conclusions about, the various legislative intentions behind local, state, or federal policy initiatives. Rather, we aim to use existing research evidence to better understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals who might be impacted by such initiatives.*



Key Findings

- There is no evidence indicating that LGBTQ+ persons pose a threat to non-LGBTQ+ persons in public (or private) spaces.
- Numerous studies suggest that LGBTQ+ persons are more likely to be victims of various forms of violence and victimization, including physical and sexual assault, harassment, bullying, and hate crimes. LGBTQ+ persons experience violence and victimization in disproportionate numbers throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.
- Despite the perception that society is becoming more open and welcoming of LGBTQ+ persons, victimization disparities have not improved since the 1990s (when they were first measured). Some forms of victimization, particularly those affecting youth, appear to be worsening. This has serious, lifelong impacts on the physical and behavioral health of LGBTQ+ youth and adults.
- Physical and verbal victimization of LGBTQ+ students during the school day is commonplace. School-based victimization erodes young people's feelings of safety in school, diminishes attendance and academic achievement, and steeply increases their risk of suicide.
- Contradicting the conventional image of bias-related victimization as perpetrated by strangers or acquaintances, bias-related verbal, physical, and sexual victimization by close family members (particularly parents and the male partners of bisexual women) is partly responsible for overall higher victimization rates among LGBTQ+ individuals.

Perpetration Research

We found very limited evidence on the perpetration of violence and abuse by LGBTQ+ individuals:

- We found few studies that compared sexual assault perpetration by sexual or gender minorities with that by heterosexuals.
- Evidence is inconclusive on differences between sexual minority and heterosexual youth in the use of bullying tactics. We found no studies that described perpetration of these behaviors by sexual minority adults or by any gender minority populations (youth or adult).
- Research comparing intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration among sexual minority and non-minority adults is mixed and inconclusive. Sexual minority youth (broadly defined by recent studies to consist primarily of students who report a “questioning” orientation of any kind) may be more likely to perpetrate teen dating violence (TDV) than those who identify as definitively heterosexual. Research on differences in IPV and TDV perpetration between gender minorities and non-minorities was not found.
- We found no studies on homicide perpetration by sexual or gender minorities.

Key Terms in Research about LGBTQ+ Experiences

Research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities uses a number of terms for sexual orientation and gender identity that are substantively distinct and not interchangeable:

- **LGBTQ+:** Abbreviation for terms sexual- and gender-minority people may self-identify with (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer), with the “+” signifying that there are many others
- **Sexual minority:** A person who reports same-sex attraction, same-sex sexual behavior, or a non-heterosexual identity
- **Gender minority:** A person who does not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth (and may identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender fluid, gender nonconforming, or something else)
- **Cisgender:** A person who identifies with the gender assigned to them at birth

In this report, we use a combination of these terms to accurately represent the populations on which prior research studies have focused. To be most accurate and inclusive in discussing work with varied definitions, we use “sexual and gender minorities.”

Since “sexual and gender minorities” is not a term of self-identification and is not in common use even among those to whom it refers, we use the more widely understood term, “LGBTQ+ individuals” in presenting high-level summary findings.

Victimization Research

Although research on victimization and LGBTQ+ communities is in its early stages, many studies suggest that LGBTQ+ persons are at elevated risk for various forms of violence and victimization, including physical and sexual assault, harassment, bullying, and hate crimes:

- Sexual minority individuals are more likely than heterosexuals to be victims of childhood physical and sexual abuse, based on consistent findings across a large body of research. Preliminary research suggests experiences of childhood victimization may be common among gender minority individuals as well.
- Sexual minority youth are more likely than heterosexual youth to be victims of bullying and bias-related victimization, based on strong and consistent evidence across many large studies.
- Studies using a variety of methods have found that sexual minorities, particularly bisexual women, are at elevated risk of sexual assault victimization. Sexual and gender minority adults also appear more likely to be victims of physical assault.
- There is strong, consistent evidence that bisexual women and girls are at elevated risk for IPV and TDV and they appear to be particularly likely to be victimized by their male partners. Studies have found higher risk for IPV victimization among other sexual minorities, as well, though some find rates comparable to victimization of heterosexuals.

- Evidence that sexual or gender minority individuals are at elevated risk for homicide is inconclusive. However, preliminary evidence suggests that homicides related to anti-LGBTQ+ bias may be more brutal than other homicides.
- Strong evidence indicates that sexual and gender minority individuals who are younger, low income, of color, or gender nonconforming; who disclosed their sexual identity at a younger age or ran away from home; who abuse alcohol; or who live in rural or impoverished communities or attend schools without gay-straight alliances are at higher risk of victimization than other sexual and gender minorities are.
- Victimization disparities between sexual minority and non-sexual minority individuals appear to be stable or increasing (depending on the form of victimization) in the two decades since they began to be assessed.

Research on Consequences and Reporting of Violence

Research on the consequences of victimization among LGBTQ+ individuals finds that victimization experiences are consistently correlated with a range of negative outcomes among youth and adults, including the following:

- Mental health conditions, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts
- Sexual risk-taking, HIV status, and other serious physical health issues
- Decreased school involvement and achievement

Evidence on reporting of victimization among LGBTQ+ individuals is relatively thin, but qualitative data and small surveys suggest serious mistrust of police and fears related to police bias and violence.

Research on Fear and Safety in Public Spaces

Our review found limited research on fear and perceptions of safety in public spaces among LGBTQ+ individuals. However,

- Multiple studies offer strong evidence that sexual minority youth experience more fear of victimization at school than heterosexual youth do.
- Unpublished, formative focus group data find that sexual and gender minority adults manage a constant awareness of the potential for victimization by using a variety of everyday strategies to protect their personal safety in public.

Limitations of the Current Evidence Base

The existing body of research on perpetration and victimization among sexual and gender minorities is subject to both measurement and design limitations. Measurement is challenging in violence and victimization research generally, but research on LGBTQ+ victimization and perpetration experiences is further limited by weak and inconsistent measurement of sexual and gender minority status and possibly by underreporting associated with the dual stigma of minority status and victimization or perpetration.

In addition, many studies in this area used convenience samples or other non-probability-based sampling strategies that do not allow researchers to generalize their results beyond the individuals who directly participated in the study. Others used secondary data collected for other purposes, which may not include sexual or gender minority individuals in large enough numbers to draw reliable conclusions. Finally, research on the experiences of gender minority individuals (including transgender individuals) lags behind research on sexual minority individuals (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer individuals) and is particularly lacking in many of the areas we reviewed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite limitations, research strongly suggests that the widespread victimization of LGBTQ+ individuals is an urgent issue affecting public education, public safety, and public health. These facts suggest that efforts to protect society's most vulnerable might include a focus on preventing the further victimization of LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly young people in schools. Potential programmatic supports and policy remedies could include the following:

- Creating safer environments for youth—at home, at school, and beyond
- Improving and expanding resources for LGBTQ+ victims
- Addressing public, institutional, and organizational policies that reinforce a broader culture of anti-LGBTQ+ bias and discrimination

Further research is sorely needed, as made evident in the many limitations in current scholarship that we document in this report. Future studies should focus on areas with direct relevance for policy and intervention, such as:

- Describing changes in victimization and perpetration experiences over time and across the life course
- Understanding how fear of victimization may shape LGBTQ+ individuals' life choices and life chances
- Identifying key mechanisms and subgroup differences in victimization risk and impact within LGBTQ+ communities

Background and Purpose

Policy Background

Legislative initiatives with the potential to profoundly affect the rights and privileges of LGBTQ+ individuals are a phenomenon in the U.S., with 200 such bills introduced in 2016 alone (Lang, 2016). Such initiatives take a variety of forms, such as restricting transgender students' access to sports league participation (as in South Dakota House Bill [HB] 1112) or protecting “religious freedom” by allowing individuals or businesses to deny services to LGBTQ+ persons (as in Georgia’s “religious liberty” bill).

Many efforts in this arena are “bathroom” bills, which place limitations on (or remove protections for) transgender individuals' use of public bathrooms and other public facilities. For example, North Carolina’s HB 2, passed in 2016, requires that all public restrooms and changing facilities be segregated by biological sex as assigned on the user’s birth certificate. Wyoming’s HB 244, introduced in early 2017, would similarly prohibit an individual from using a public sex-segregated restroom or changing facility if the individual’s sex (assigned at birth) does not correspond to the area’s designation.

Recent examples of the “bathroom” bill approach—most commonly, requirements that a school must restrict all group restrooms and similar facilities for the use of only one sex—are shown in Table 1.



Table 1. “Bathroom” Bills – State Legislative Initiatives

Introduced	Policy	Brief Description/Purpose
December 1, 2015	Missouri SB 720	Requires “every public school restroom, locker room, and shower room designated for student use . . . shall be designated for and used only students of the same biological sex. A student who asserts to school officials that his or her gender is different from his or her biological sex may be provided with alternative restroom, locker room, or shower room accommodations. Acceptable accommodations may include but are not limited to, access to single-stall restrooms, unisex restrooms, or controlled use of faculty restrooms, locker rooms, or shower rooms.” The bill requires schools to delineate restrooms and public facilities for male and female students only. The bill instructs schools to provide accommodations for students whose gender identity and biological sex are different.
December 3, 2015	Missouri HB 1624	Requires that “each school district . . . designate each bathroom and changing room located in a public school building in the district as for the exclusive use of individuals of only one sex.” The bill requires school boards to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
January 20, 2016	Illinois HB 4474	“Requires a school board to designate each pupil restroom, changing room, or overnight facility accessible by multiple pupils simultaneously, whether located in a public school building or located in a facility utilized by the school for a school-sponsored activity, for the exclusive use of pupils of only one sex.” The bill requires school boards to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
January 21, 2016	Tennessee HB 2414/ SB 2387	“Public schools shall require that a student use student restroom and locker room facilities that are assigned for use by persons of the same sex as the sex indicated on the student’s original birth certificate.” The bill requires school boards to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
February 1, 2016	Oklahoma HB 3049	“Require[s] that student restrooms, locker rooms and showers which are designated for one biological sex shall only be used by members of that biological sex.” The bill requires school districts to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
February 1, 2016	Oklahoma SB 1014	“It shall be unlawful for a person to use a gender-specific restroom when that person’s biological gender is contrary to that of the gender-specific restroom.” The bill requires that sex-segregated public restrooms be used only by persons who were assigned that sex at birth.
February 8, 2016	Kentucky HB 364	“Create new sections of KRS Chapter 158 to ensure that student privacy exists in school restrooms, locker rooms, and showers; require students born male to use only those facilities designated to be used by males and students born female to use only those facilities designated to be used by females; require schools to provide the best available accommodation to students who assert that their gender is different from their biological sex; identify consequences for using facilities designated for the opposite biological sex; identify the Act as the Kentucky Student Privacy Act.” The bill requires schools to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
February 23, 2016	Mississippi HB 1258	“It shall be unlawful for a person to knowingly and intentionally enter into restroom facilities or other bath facilities that were designed for use by the gender opposite the person’s gender at birth. No public or private business entity, school or jail shall be required to construct gender neutral restrooms or bath facilities.” The bill requires that sex-segregated public restrooms be used only by persons who were assigned that sex at birth.

Introduced	Policy	Brief Description/Purpose
March 19, 2016	Kansas SB 513	"In all public schools and postsecondary educational institutions in this state, student restrooms, locker rooms and showers that are designated for one sex shall be used only by members of that sex. In any other public school facility, postsecondary educational institution facility or setting not specified in subsection (a)(2) where a student may be in a state of undress in the presence of other students, school or institution personnel shall provide separate, private areas designated for use by students based on their sex." The bill requires school boards to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
March 21, 2016	Minnesota HF 3395/3396 and SF 3002	"No claim of nontraditional identity or 'sexual orientation' may override another person's right of privacy based on biological sex in public facilities such as restrooms, locker rooms, dressing rooms, and other similar places, which shall remain reserved for males or females as biologically defined." The bills require employers and schools to restrict restrooms, locker rooms, and dressing rooms based on biological sex and prevent claims of discrimination on that basis.
March 23, 2016 (PASSED, In Effect)	North Carolina HB 2	"An act to provide for single-sex multiple occupancy bathroom and changing facilities in schools and public agencies and to create statewide consistency in regulation of employment and public accommodations." The bill requires public agencies to restrict all group restrooms and changing facilities for the use of persons of one biological sex as assigned on the user's birth certificate.
April 4, 2016	South Carolina S 1203	"This state may not enact local laws, ordinances, orders, or other regulations that require a place of public accommodation or a private club or other establishment not in fact open to the general public to allow a person to use a multiple occupancy bathroom or changing facility regardless of the person's biological sex." The bill prohibits local governments from stipulating that residents may use public facilities that do not match their biological sex.
May 23, 2016 (PENDING)	Alabama SB 1	Requires that "restrooms, bathrooms, or changing facilities open to the public" be " (1) Facilities designed to be used by one person at a time; (2) Facilities designed to be used by multiple persons of the same gender; or (3) Facilities designed to be used by multiple persons at once, irrespective of their gender, that are staffed by an attendant stationed at the door of each rest room to monitor the appropriate use of the rest room and answer any questions or concerns posed by users." The bill imposes sex-segregation restrictions on public facilities and stipulates criminal and civil enforcement.
December 6, 2016 (PENDING)	Washington HB 1101	Amends non-discrimination law to clarify that "Nothing in this chapter grants any right to a person to access a private facility segregated by gender, such as a bathroom, restroom, toilet, shower, locker room, or sauna, of a public or private entity if the person is preoperative, nonoperative, or otherwise has genitalia of a different gender from that for which the facility is segregated." The bill clarifies that persons whose gender identity does not match their sex do not have the right to access sex-segregated facilities that correspond to their gender identity.



Introduced	Policy	Brief Description/Purpose
December 16, 2016 (PENDING)	South Carolina HB 3012	Stipulates that "a local government or other political subdivision may not enact a law, ordinance, order, or other regulation that would require a place of public accommodation, private club, or other establishment to allow a person to use a multiple occupancy bathroom or changing facility regardless of the person's biological sex." The bill states that local governments cannot create laws that mandate public spaces or private entities to provide accommodations for persons whose gender identity does not match their sex.
January 3, 2017 (PENDING)	Kentucky HB 106	Requires "the executive branch of state government to designate every multiple occupancy bathroom or changing facility it controls to only be used by persons based on their biological sex; requires cities, counties, urban-counties, consolidated local government, charter counties, and unified local governments to designate every multiple occupancy bathroom or changing facility it controls to only be used by persons based on their biological sex." The bill requires school boards to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
January 3, 2017	Virginia HB 1612	Requires that a "government entity that owns, leases, or otherwise controls a government building shall ensure that all restrooms and changing facilities located in such building provide physical privacy from members of the opposite sex. Any restroom or changing facility located in such building designed to be used concurrently by more than one individual shall be designated for use only by members of one sex." The bill requires public schools, public institutions of higher education, and government buildings to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
January 4, 2017 (PENDING)	Missouri SB 98	"Requires that all school restrooms, locker rooms, and shower rooms accessible for use by multiple students be designated for and used by male or female students only." The bill requires school boards to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
January 4, 2017 (PENDING)	Missouri HB 202	Requires "all public restrooms, other than single occupancy restrooms, to be gender-divided. Any single occupancy public restroom may be designated as a unisex restroom." The bill requires public restrooms to be divided by gender.
January 5, 2017 (PENDING)	Kentucky HB 141	"Require students born male to use only those facilities designated to be used by males and students born female to use only those facilities designated to be used by females; require schools to provide the best available accommodation to students who assert that their gender is different from their biological sex; establish a cause of action for damages if facilities designated for the opposite biological sex are used." This bill requires that all schools designate restrooms or changing facilities for the use of students of only one sex, determined by chromosomes and assigned at birth. Schools can provide accommodations for transgender students with parent permission.
January 5, 2017 (PENDING)	Minnesota HF 41	"A public school student restroom, locker room, changing room, and shower room accessible by multiple students at the same time shall be designated for the exclusive use by students of the male sex only or by students of the female sex only. Nothing in this section shall prohibit public schools from providing accommodation such as single-occupancy facilities." The bill requires schools to restrict all group restrooms and public facilities for the use of students of one sex only.
January 5, 2017 (PENDING)	Texas SB 6	"Relating to regulations and policies for entering or using a bathroom or changing facility; authorizing a civil penalty; increasing criminal penalties." This bill authorizes a civil penalty for anyone whose sex does not match the sex of the changing facility or restroom.

Introduced	Policy	Brief Description/Purpose
January 25, 2017 (PENDING)	Illinois HB 664	“Requires a school board to designate each pupil restroom, changing room, or overnight facility accessible by multiple pupils simultaneously, whether located in a public school building or located in a facility utilized by the school for a school-sponsored activity, for the exclusive use of pupils of only one sex. Authorizes a school board to provide reasonable accommodations to a pupil to use a single-occupancy restroom or changing room or the regulated use of a faculty restroom or changing room.” This bill requires that all schools designate restrooms or changing facilities for the use of students of only one sex, determined by chromosomes and assigned at birth. Schools can provide accommodations for transgender students with parental permission.
January 25, 2017 (PENDING)	Missouri HB 745	Requires that “every public school restroom, locker room, and shower room designated for student use and accessible by multiple students at the same time shall be designated for and used only by students of the same biological sex.... A student who asserts to school officials that his or her gender is different from his or her biological sex may be provided with alternative restroom, locker room, or shower room accommodations.” This bill stipulates that all school restrooms, locker rooms, and shower rooms must be designated for and used only by students of the same “biological sex.” The bill permits schools to provide alternative accommodations for transgender students with parental permission.
January 25, 2017 (PENDING)	Wyoming HB 244	“An act relating to public indecency; creating the crime of public indecency for using a public bathroom or changing facility designated for the opposite sex; providing exceptions; and providing for an effective date.” This bill would establish a crime of public indecency if an individual uses a public sex-segregated bathroom or changing facility that does not correspond to that person’s biological sex.
January 26, 2017 (PENDING)	Kansas HB 2171	“All student restrooms, locker rooms and showers that are designated for one sex shall be used only by members of that sex.... Students who, for any reason, desire greater privacy when using a public school restroom, locker room or shower room, or other facility described in subsection (b), and whose parent or legal guardian provides written consent to school officials, may submit a request to such officials for access to alternative facilities.” This bill requires schools to designate restroom and changing facilities to be used by male or female students. Schools are permitted to create accommodations for transgender students with parental permission. The state attorney general is compelled to investigate any violations of this law.

As shown in Table 1, North Carolina’s HB 2 has been signed into law, and many similar initiatives are under current consideration in other states. Efforts by the federal government to curtail implementation of sex-segregated bathroom laws and policies such as HB 2 (including a directive that students in public schools may use the restroom of their choice) have drawn a lawsuit from 21 states (Emma, 2016).

Although no single rationale is provided by state policymakers, statements by advocates in the general public for LGBTQ+-related legislative initiatives reference the importance of defending members of the general public from potential public safety threats believed to arise from policies allowing transgender persons in public bathrooms. For example, some advocates and supporters in the general public rallied in favor of HB 2 under the slogan “keep women and children safe” and emphasized cisgender North

21 states have joined suit against the federal government for its directive that students in public schools may use the restroom of their choice, and three other states have introduced “bathroom bills” similar to HB 2.

Carolynians’ need for protection from the victimization they might be exposed to if forced to share public facilities with potential sex offenders (Campbell, 2016; Dastagir, 2016; Harrison, 2016; Marusak, 2016). Others have expressed concern that individuals might pretend to be of a different sex to gain access to bathrooms for crime perpetration, and that restrictions based on sex as defined on birth certificates would mitigate this possibility (Campbell, 2016; Dastagir, 2016). Regarding a “bathroom” bill being proposed in Texas for the 2017 legislative season, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick emphasized the need to provide “women and girls . . . privacy and safety in their restrooms, showers and locker rooms” (Dart, 2017).

Yet some have suggested that enforcing sex-segregated public facilities, as these bills do, may have a serious tradeoff: making transgender persons more likely targets for violence or verbal victimization (Herman, 2013; National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, 2016). In this context, it is important to investigate the available evidence on LGBTQ+ individuals not only as potential perpetrators, but also as potential victims of violence and abuse. (The question of whether non-transgender individuals are likely to temporarily assume an alternate gender expression for the purpose of committing criminal offenses in public restrooms is investigated elsewhere; see, for example, Steinmetz, 2016.)

Purpose of This Study

RTI International, a North Carolina-based nonprofit research institute with a mission to “improve the human condition by turning knowledge into practice,” self-funded this study to identify research evidence that could inform public policy questions related to LGBTQ+ communities, violence, and victimization. The resulting effort, summarized in this report, focused on the following questions:

1. Are LGBTQ+ individuals more likely than non-LGBTQ+ individuals to perpetrate physical or sexual violence; partner violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; or homicide?
2. Are LGBTQ+ individuals more likely than non-LGBTQ+ individuals to be victims of physical or sexual violence; partner violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; or homicide?
3. What consequences do LGBTQ+ victims experience? How likely are they to report victimization, and what shapes those decisions?
4. How safe do LGBTQ+ individuals feel in public spaces? Do fears of violence or perceptions of safety differ by gender identity or by geographic region?

This report does not aim to investigate, nor to draw conclusions about, the various legislative intentions behind local, state, or federal policy initiatives. Rather, we aim to use existing research evidence to better understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals who might be impacted by such initiatives.

Methods

To answer these questions, RTI conducted a comprehensive evidence review, the results of which are the primary focus of this report. To better understand the findings from the evidence review and inform future scientific research in this area, we collaborated with The Henne Group (THG, <http://www.thehennegroup.com>; a market research firm based in San Francisco) on a series of THG-led formative focus groups on safety and victimization convened with LGBTQ+ residents in four U.S. states. Finally, RTI completed an inventory of available secondary data sources that could be used for future analyses designed to address gaps or limitations in the evidence base that we identified in the evidence review.

Evidence Review

The evidence review included peer-reviewed studies and selected gray (non-peer-reviewed) literature released in English-language publications from the United States and other Western countries in the last 20 years (from 1996 to 2016). The following search terms were used to identify abstracts:

- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, transsexual, homosexual, same-sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual minorit* OR sexual and gender minorit* AND
- violen*, victim*, perpetrat*, assault, rape, bully/bullied/bullying, harass*, abuse, safe*, fear

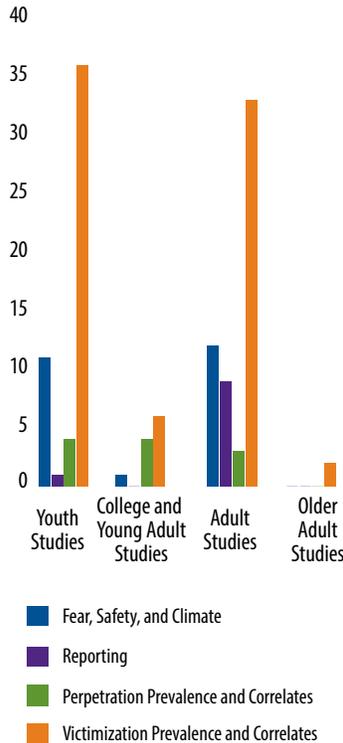
We conducted the search using multiple databases: PubMed; Web of Science, including Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, and the Conference Proceedings Citation Index for Science and for Social Sciences & Humanities; PsycINFO; and the New York Academy of Medicine Grey Literature Database. Among the 153 abstracts the search generated, we identified 75 articles as relevant to the study focus and reviewed them. Based on citations in these 75 articles, we identified and reviewed another 27 peer-reviewed articles not captured in the original search, for a total of 102 articles.

Briefly Summarizing Diverse Research Methods

Research findings on each topic are summarized in this report according to salient study design characteristics, using these categories:

- Studies using nationally representative samples
- Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods
- Studies using large non-nationally representative samples (this category combines studies that used locally or regionally representative samples, such as state-based Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, and studies that used other large, non-probability-based samples)
- Studies using administrative data
- Sibling studies
- Studies using small non-probability-based samples
- Longitudinal studies
- Qualitative studies

Studies with Evidence on Violence and LGBTQ+ Communities (by Study Population)

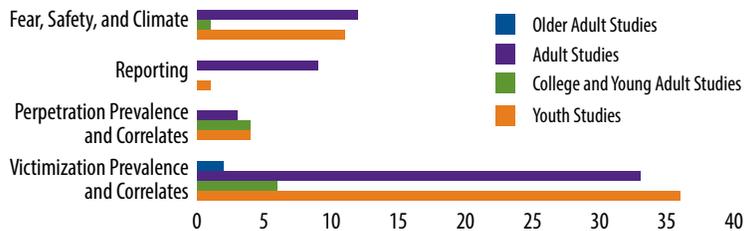


Study findings described in the resulting 102 articles were abstracted into an Excel database, categorized according to the following three topics:

1. **Study population**, including youth, young adults, adults, and elders
2. **Behavioral focus**, including childhood sexual abuse, childhood physical abuse, bullying (including verbal abuse and physical assault), teen dating violence, sexual assault, harassment and hate crimes (including bias-motivated physical assault), intimate partner violence, and findings on multiple or cumulative forms of violence
3. **Dimension of victimization or perpetration experiences examined**, including perpetration prevalence and correlates, victimization prevalence and correlates, fear and perceived safety, and reporting

Research findings were summarized by the question to which they related and by salient aspects of study design, noting research limitations. This report does not attempt to share findings from every study reviewed. For example, it generally does not describe the prevalence of various forms of victimization and perpetration from small non-probability-based samples of sexual or gender minorities that did not include a comparison population, unless studies with stronger methods were not available for a particular subpopulation (e.g., gender minorities). We did not rate the relative strength of each study's methods quantitatively, but we do note key methods differences relevant to the substantive focus of each focal question. (Limitations of these studies are discussed in "Limitations of the Research Reviewed," on page 16.)

Studies with Evidence on Violence and LGBTQ+ Communities (by Topic)



Formative Focus Groups

As described in the “Results” section, our literature review identified a great deal of evidence indicating widespread victimization of LGBTQ+ persons (Question #2) but little research on how members of LGBTQ+ communities might internalize or reflect these experiences in their day-to-day feelings of fear and safety (Question #3). Guided by the results of our literature review, RTI worked with The Henne Group (THG) to plan and conduct a series of exploratory, open-ended focus groups and individual interviews to better understand the existing evidence base and help to inform future scientific research that might address the apparent gaps.

The THG-led focus groups and one-on-one interviews were held in late 2016 in San Francisco; New York City; Durham, North Carolina; and rural Wyoming. In San Francisco, New York, and Durham, THG held separate focus groups with transgender residents and with other LGBTQ residents, aimed at building a preliminary understanding of how members of LGBTQ+ communities think and talk about violence and safety. In Wyoming, one small focus group and a one-on-one interview were conducted in person in a small rural town, and the remaining interviews with rural Wyoming residents were conducted using a web-based videoconference platform.

These exploratory focus groups and individual exploratory interviews were conducted by an expert interviewer from THG with over 30 years of experience conducting qualitative research on sensitive topics in LGBTQ+ communities. Group and individual interviews covered the following:

- General issues impacting LGBTQ communities
- Perceived safety in public spaces
- Factors shaping perceived safety in public spaces
- Safety skills and strategies (including individual, community, and policy strategies)

After each focus group or individual interview, the facilitator prepared a memo to the full THG-RTI team summarizing themes and findings. All focus groups and individual interviews were transcribed. Sample audio recordings from the groups were reviewed by a combination of THG and RTI staff to verify and elaborate on themes identified in the facilitator memos. RTI and THG worked together to compare and summarize themes from all sites, highlighting both cross-site and site-specific findings. Findings from these analyses appear in the text box “Focus Group Findings on Fear and Safety in LGBTQ+ Communities” on page 43. Selected quotes from focus group participants that help to illuminate a particular evidence review finding or gap appear alongside the relevant subsection of the evidence summary in the “Results” section.

Inventory of Secondary Data Sources

RTI completed an inventory of available secondary data sources that might be used to address aspects of the study questions that were not well addressed by existing evidence, particularly the identified gaps in the evidence base with regard to perpetration (Question #1) and feelings of fear and safety (Question #4). Staff reviewed publicly available information on national criminal justice datasets, national public health datasets, and other RTI-collected data and summarized available measures of:

- Sexual orientation
- Gender (including transgender and cisgender)
- Victimization and perpetration
- Feelings of fear or safety or assessments of victimization-related “climate”

The inventory included five national public health datasets (the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, the Youth Risk Factor Survey, the National Violent Death Reporting System, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, and the National Survey of Family Growth), three national criminal justice datasets (the National Incident-Based Reporting System [NIBRS], the National Crime Victimization Survey, and the School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey), and five other large datasets that were either collected by RTI or that RTI staff helped design or analyze (the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study [CCSVS], the National Survey on Child and Adolescent Well-being, the National Inmate Survey, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, and the Dating Matters Evaluation).

This effort also identified non-peer-reviewed analyses that two *New York Times* reporters conducted with Federal Bureau of Investigation data (Mykhyalyshyn & Park, 2016), as well as unpublished analyses conducted by RTI staff with NIBRS and CCSVS data, each of which could be informative in guiding future analyses to address gaps identified from the evidence review and focus groups. Findings from these exploratory analyses appear in the text box “Criminal Justice Agency Data on Hate Crime Victimization” on page 29.

Limitations of the Research Reviewed

The body of research on violence and victimization in LGBTQ+ communities on which this study focused is limited by two overarching issues: (1) inconsistencies across studies in the definition and measurement of key constructs and (2) limitations in study design (particularly sampling methods). An understanding of these issues is important in accurately interpreting the findings summarized in this report.

Definition and Measurement Issues

Violence and victimization researchers have taken diverse approaches to defining and operationalizing the constructs on which our research questions focus. These constructs include those related to sexual and gender minority status (sexual orientation and gender) and those related to experiences of violence and victimization (physical and sexual violence; intimate partner violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; and homicide).

Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender

Sexual orientation. Sexual orientation, sometimes referred to as “sexual preference” in older works, comprises three dimensions of experience (Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys, 2016):

- **Sexual attraction** refers to the sex or gender to which someone feels attraction. Cognitive interviewing results suggest that this dimension of sexual orientation is conceptualized not only in physical terms but also in terms of “affection, affiliation, and emotional preference” (p. 20).
- **Sexual behavior** refers to the sex of a person’s sexual partners (e.g., individuals of the same sex, different sex, or both sexes) during a particular reference period.
- **Sexual identity** refers to whether and how a person self-identifies with a particular orientation, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer.

Researchers and federal scientists are working to build consensus on the meaning of sexual orientation and the importance of capturing all three of these dimensions of sexual orientation in research studies (Jans, 2016; Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016). However, most prior work has operationalized just one or two of these dimensions of sexual orientation—most often sexual identity only (Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016).

Recognizing a wide diversity of experiences as well as diverse measurement approaches, researchers have come to use the term “sexual minority” to describe individuals whose reports of any of the three dimensions of sexual orientation (attraction, behavior, or identity) are in the minority in general-population samples (Math & Seshadri, 2013). Because of the variety of sexual orientation measures used by studies in this review, we use “sexual minority” in this report to refer to study respondents who reported minority sexual attraction, behavior, or identity, or some combination thereof.



Gender. Gender is “a construct of biological, psychosocial, and cultural factors generally used to classify individuals as male or female” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 4) and is understood to include two major dimensions (Jans, 2016):

- **Gender identity** refers to one’s self-defined sense of one’s own gender, such as male/man, female/woman, transgender, or genderqueer.
- **Gender expression** refers to the use of behaviors, dress, mannerisms, and vocalizations that are socially understood as masculine or feminine.

Many of the studies included in this review operationalized gender using single-item approaches, which often fail to ask about transgender identity at all, or else may capture only individuals who self-define as “transgender.” Such approaches can fail to represent the experiences of those with other minority gender identities (e.g., genderqueer, agender, gender nonconforming) or who experience a disconnect between their gender expression and the sex they were assigned at birth but do not self-define as “transgender” (e.g., individuals who self-define simply as “male” or “female” after making a gender transition) (The GenIUSS Group, 2014; Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016). Experts in gender measurement in survey research currently favor dual-item approaches that ask first about the sex assigned or identified at birth and then about an individual’s gender identity or expression (e.g., The GenIUSS Group, 2014), but these approaches are not yet in wide use (Federal Interagency Working Group, 2016).

Reflecting these wider issues in the measurement of gender, the studies reviewed in this report defined and operationalized gender in a variety of ways, differing from one another and from the currently preferred two-item measurement approach. Given the current conceptual and measurement diversity, we use the term “gender minority,” which includes all individuals who report minority forms of gender identity or expression (Reisner et al., 2015), to describe persons who reported any non-normative experiences of gender in the studies we reviewed.

Implications of limitations in measurement of sexual orientation and gender.

The studies included in this review captured sexual orientation and gender in diverse ways. First, many studies across this body of work operationalized gender as a single, dichotomous variable (male or female) and did not include any measure at all of gender minority status. Second, studies that did measure these constructs often took incomplete and conceptually overlapping approaches to operationalizing them. For example, many studies used single-

item approaches to measure gender minority status that assess whether respondents self-identify as “transgender” (but not whether they have other minority normative gender identifications or expressions), and many others used sexual orientation measures that only elicited information on the sexual identity dimension of orientation (but not on attraction or behavior).

For this reason, if the same respondent had been interviewed for several different studies included in this review, that respondent might have been classified as a sexual or gender minority in one but analyzed with the majority population in another. This inconsistency prevents reliable comparison of estimates across studies—even for studies that use the same measures of violence and victimization experiences, which often is not the case (see “Measuring Experiences of Violence and Victimization,” below). In addition, the low construct validity of some measures used, and the resulting imprecision in classifying sexual or gender minority status, means that even within-study comparisons between the experiences of sexual or gender minority participants and nonsexual or gender minority participants are somewhat limited.

More consistent operationalization of sexual orientation and gender in future work would enable better comparisons of findings across studies. Furthermore, the use of valid and conceptually complete measures would support a more precise understanding of observed differences within studies between the experiences of sexual or gender minority study participants and others.

Measuring Experiences of Violence and Victimization

Whether focused on sexual and gender minorities or not, research on experiences of violence and victimization is affected by inconsistent conceptualization and operationalization of these experiences.

Intimate partner violence, physical assault, and sexual assault.

A longstanding measurement issue that affects research on various forms of interpersonal violence, particularly sexual assault and nonlethal intimate partner violence, is to what extent a research measure imposes a researcher’s, or requires a respondent’s, labeling of a certain behavior or experience as abuse, assault, or violence (Follingstad & Ryan, 2013). Among intimate partner violence researchers, this issue has been functionally resolved through the movement toward use of behaviorally specific measures (Grych & Hamby, 2014). In sexual assault research, both labeling approaches and behaviorally specific approaches exist, producing wide differences in estimated prevalence (Krebs, 2014).

The sexual assault measurement approaches used in many of the studies included in this review are also inconsistent with regard to whether they elicit all experiences that conform to the legal definition of sexual assault, which is “any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient” (Office on Violence Against Women, 2016). Some studies focus only on rape (“the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim”) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). Others capture forms of nonconsensual sexual contact other than rape but do not include instances of sexual contact that occur when one party is incapacitated or otherwise unable to consent (Krebs, 2014).

In addition, this review incorporates both studies of intimate partner violence (which captured physical, sexual, and verbal victimization committed by current or former intimate partners) and studies of general violence and victimization (which captured all experiences of physical, sexual, or verbal abuse during a reference period). Reflecting a challenge in the wider literature on interpersonal violence (World Health Organization, 2013), the more general violence and victimization studies tended to capture such experiences of abuse regardless of victim-perpetrator relationship, and often did not present incident data separately depending on whether the perpetrator was or was not an intimate partner.

Bullying and harassment. The conceptualization and measurement of bullying and harassment experiences among the studies we reviewed is similarly varied. Bullying and harassment experiences may or may not be conceptualized and measured in a manner that takes into account the context of the incident(s)—both whether there is an interpersonal power differential of some kind between victim and perpetrator and whether the incident(s) take place in a setting that places the victim at a generalized disadvantage (Hamburger, Basile, & Vivolo, 2011; Welsh, 1999). In addition, a recent sharp increase in studies that focus on or include electronic forms of bullying and harassment has not been accompanied by any definitional consensus or measurement consistency (Grych & Hamby, 2014).

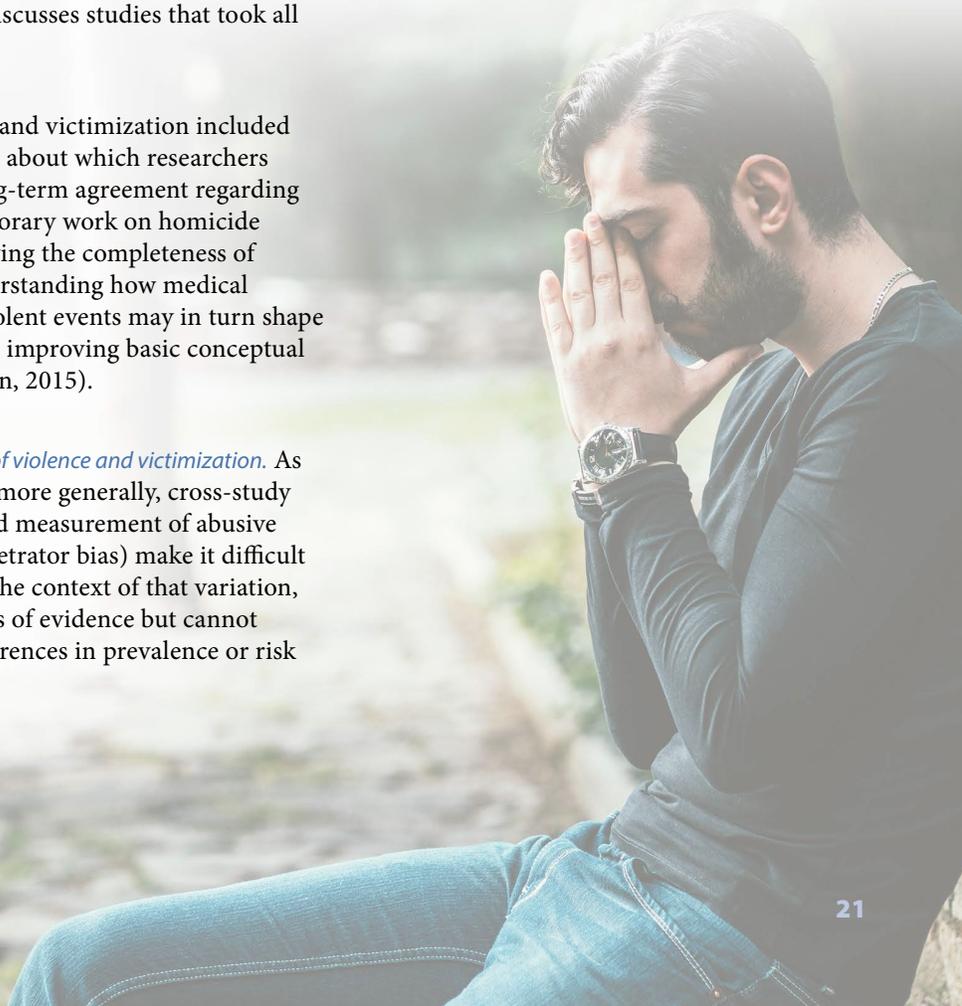
Hate crime. In addition to issues in the measurement of sexual and gender minority status and of violence and victimization experiences, the body of work reviewed in this report is affected by challenges in assessing whether an event was motivated by bias. A hate crime is defined as “a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin” (National Institute of Justice, 2017). Research on hate crimes thus relies on the ability

of victims or other reporters to assess whether a perpetrator was motivated by bias, but “imputing offenders’ motives is difficult” (Harlow, 2005, p.2). The studies included in this review used either victim perception or law enforcement officer classification to identify bias-related events. Sexual minority victims tend to rely on statements made by perpetrators or other contextual cues, such as whether the victim was holding hands with a partner or exiting a known gay establishment at the time of an incident (Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2002). Among those incidents reported to police (already a small and nonrandom sample of incidents [Meuchel Wilson, 2014; Stotzer, 2009]), the decision to classify an incident as a hate crime is made by a law enforcement officer. Some evidence suggests that officers rarely use the bias designation in official incident reporting, even for incidents in which coinciding hate speech or other contextual information suggests a bias motivation (Human Rights Campaign, 2015).

Further, studies of bias-related victimization vary in terms of whether they focus on hate crimes that were reported to police, victimization experiences that could be classified as hate crimes from self-report data, or experiences of bias-related victimization more generally (whether they meet the legal definition of a crime). Still other studies aimed to capture all of a respondent’s experiences of violence and victimization, including both bias-related and non-bias-related events, but did not always present data for bias-related events separately. This review discusses studies that took all four approaches.

Homicide. Among the forms of violence and victimization included in this review, homicide is the only one about which researchers appear to be in fairly complete and long-term agreement regarding definition and measurement. Contemporary work on homicide measurement tends to focus on improving the completeness of existing homicide data sources or understanding how medical advances that reduce the lethality of violent events may in turn shape the meaning of “homicide,” rather than improving basic conceptual clarity or operationalization (Addington, 2015).

Implications of limitations in measurement of violence and victimization. As in violence and victimization research more generally, cross-study differences in the conceptualization and measurement of abusive experiences (including the role of perpetrator bias) make it difficult to compare findings across studies. In the context of that variation, this review describes emerging patterns of evidence but cannot definitively identify similarities or differences in prevalence or risk factors across multiple studies.



In addition, estimates of violence and victimization experiences from studies that used measures with low construct validity (such as sexual assault studies that captured whether respondents experienced incidents they would label as rape, but did not capture other experiences that might meet scholarly or legal definitions of sexual assault) must be understood as preliminary and not definitive.

Study Design Issues

The manner in which a study is designed and implemented affects the quality and utility of the data in several ways. In the body of research reviewed in this report, the key study design factors that impact the validity of the estimates include the sampling approach (i.e., how research participants were selected), the sample size (i.e., how many individuals were included in the study), and the data structure, particularly whether the study was designed to be cross-sectional or longitudinal. These considerations affect not only the validity of the estimates generated by an individual study and the extent to which the research questions intended to be addressed can be appropriately answered by the chosen methodology, but also the ability to compare estimates across studies.

Sampling Strategies

At the broadest level, the sampling strategies used in the studies included in the current review can be classified as either probability-based or non-probability-based. Probability-based approaches use some form of random selection (e.g., random sampling, stratified sampling), such that every individual in the target population has an equal probability of being selected. This approach is the most appropriate method for ensuring that the sample reflects the characteristics of the population from which it was drawn and has the advantage of allowing sampling error (i.e., the degree to which the sample differs from the target population) to be calculated and reported along with any prevalence estimates that are developed (Daniel, 2012).

With non-probability-based approaches, sample members are selected from the population in a nonrandom manner (e.g., convenience sampling, snowball sampling). This approach is often used when individuals' membership in a particular population subgroup cannot be determined during the selection process because such information is not available. Most studies included in our review used non-probability-based approaches to address research questions focused on understanding the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals. The main limitation of this approach is that the extent to which the sample members differ from the target population cannot be determined, so it is impossible to know whether sample members' characteristics and experiences are representative of the target population of interest (Daniel, 2012).

In considering the strength of the evidence, studies employing probability-based approaches should be given more weight than non-probability-based approaches. (This is the rationale for the order in which the results are presented in the findings section of this report.) Some of the probability-based studies included in the review were designed to be nationally representative, whereas others used locally or regionally representative samples. Therefore, the population to which the results can be generalized (e.g., adolescents in the United States) should be kept in mind. Many non-probability-based approaches are exploratory in nature and are not intended to yield estimates for a particular population. However, despite their limited utility in generating prevalence estimates, findings from the non-probability-based studies included in this review can facilitate an understanding of the relationships among various constructs (e.g., the mental health consequences of victimization among a convenience sample of LGBTQ+ adults).

Sample Sizes and Power Constraints

Another factor to consider when weighing the evidence among the studies included in this review is the size of the sample from which estimates were developed. Sample size is often related to the sampling approach used, in that non-probability-based studies typically have much smaller sample sizes than probability-based approaches. Although larger sample sizes generally result in prevalence estimates that are more precise from a statistical perspective, it should be kept in mind that even the large, nationally representative studies included in this review have power constraints. This is because one purpose of the current review was to compare estimates for LGBTQ+ populations and non-LGBTQ+ sample members, which entails subgroup analysis (i.e., generating separate estimates for LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals within a particular sample).

The precision of the estimate generated for a particular subgroup is directly related to the number of individuals in the subgroup and how many of these individuals experienced the particular outcome of interest within the subgroup. Because of these considerations, it should be kept in mind that estimates for particularly small subgroups (e.g., gender minorities) and/or for particularly rare behaviors (e.g., self-reported perpetration of sexual assault) are often not even reported by researchers, because the estimates are considered to be extremely unstable—or, if reported, are often associated with very wide margins of error. This limitation could be overcome by oversampling sexual and gender minorities in large probability-based studies, but this approach was not taken in any of the studies included in this review.

Data Structures

A final study design characteristic that should be evaluated when weighing the strength of the evidence is the appropriateness of the data structure to the aim to identify the physical and behavioral health consequences of victimization. The most appropriate design for determining the impacts of victimization is a longitudinal design, in which data are collected on sample members at multiple points in time. Such an approach would likely result in data collection from at least some individuals who had never experienced victimization at their first study interview, but who were victimized prior to one of the follow-up interviews, so that analyses could compare changes in behavioral health status over time between victims and non-victims. However, implementing longitudinal studies can be extremely expensive, due to the need to follow individuals over an extended period of time, and analytic techniques can be complicated, particularly given the strong association between previous victimization and revictimization.

With cross-sectional studies, in which data on both victimization history and physical/behavioral health are collected at a single point in time, it is impossible to determine whether the victimization preceded the outcome of interest. Such studies often ask individuals about their victimization experiences during a particular reference period (e.g., childhood, adolescence) and then measure their current behavioral health status, with analyses focusing on comparisons between victims and non-victims. With this design, it is not possible to conclude that a history of victimization caused (or even preceded) a particular behavioral health problem. Therefore, findings based on cross-sectional studies merely identify an association between the two experiences.

Results

In this section, we present available evidence for each of the questions that guided this work. We first summarize the very limited research base on perpetration of physical or sexual assault; intimate partner violence and teen dating violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; and homicide by sexual or gender minorities compared with non-minorities. We then review a more extensive body of existing evidence on those same forms of victimization among sexual or gender minorities and non-minorities, as well as risk factors for victimization and trends in victimization over time. Finally, we discuss prior research on consequences, reporting, and fear.

1 Are LGBTQ+ people more likely than non-LGBTQ+ people to perpetrate physical or sexual violence; partner violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; or homicide?

Physical or Sexual Assault Perpetration

Studies using large, non-nationally representative samples. Among adolescents surveyed by the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, youth with same-sex attraction were more likely than those with only heterosexual attraction to report using or threatening to use a weapon on someone, a difference that disappeared when researchers controlled for children's own histories of violent victimization and witnessing violence (Russell, Franz, & Driscoll, 2001). Another analysis using the same dataset found that youth who identified as lesbian and bisexual were more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to be involved in nonviolent delinquency; a weak difference between lesbian and heterosexual girls was also present for violent delinquency (Beaver et al., 2016). Krahé and Berger's (2013) study with a general college student population found that students who had sexual contact with both same-sex and different-sex partners were more likely to report perpetrating any form of sexual assault or sexual coercion than those who had only different-sex contacts.

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. Krahé and colleagues' (2000) study with a convenience sample of gay men (N=310) found that 5% of respondents reported ever perpetrating sexual assault, 6% reported using verbal coercion to convince a partner have sex, and 16% reported having sex with a partner who was incapacitated. The study did not include a comparison population.

Bullying, Harassment, and Hate Crime Perpetration

Studies using nationally representative or other probability-based samples. Berlan and colleagues' (2010) analysis of data from the population-based Growing Up Today Study found that sexual minority youth were less likely than their heterosexual peers to report bullying perpetration.

Little research evidence exists to facilitate comparisons of sexual assault perpetration by sexual or gender minorities and non-minorities.

Evidence is inconclusive regarding differences between sexual minority and heterosexual youth in the use of bullying tactics; such differences, when they appear, seem to be fully driven by differences in direct and indirect victimization. Evidence on perpetration of these behaviors by adults or gender minority individuals was not identified by our review.

Studies using large non-nationally representative samples. Among adolescents who participated in the Minnesota Student Survey (N=122,180), sexual minority youth were more likely than heterosexual youth to be perpetrators of bullying, and those with discordant sexual orientation (same-sex sexual behavior but heterosexual identification) were the most likely among all sexual minority or majority groups to perpetrate physical and relational bullying (Eisenberg et al., 2015).

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Perpetration

Evidence on IPV perpetration differences between sexual minority and non-minority adults is mixed and inconclusive. Very preliminary evidence suggests that sexual minority youth (as broadly defined by recent studies, with gay or lesbian youth comprising a very small proportion of this group) may be more likely to perpetrate TDV than those who identify as being certain of a completely heterosexual identity. This review did not identify prior research on differences in IPV and TDV perpetration between gender minorities and non-minorities.

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Badenes-Ribera and colleagues' (2016) systematic review of research on IPV experiences among sexual minority women found that prior studies (all using non-probability-based samples) measured a diverse set of perpetration behaviors and produced a very wide range of perpetration estimates that do not support credible comparison with IPV perpetration estimates among non-sexual-minority women.

Studies using large, non-nationally representative samples. Analyzing data from a large sample of college students (N=4,081) with a small subsample of students in same-sex relationships (N=121), Graham and colleagues (2016) found that those in same-sex relationships were more likely to perpetrate partner violence resulting in injury than those in different-sex relationships. Dank and colleagues' (2014) analysis (which did not control for demographic differences or differences in victimization experiences) of TDV in a nonrepresentative sample of middle and high school students at 10 schools found that sexual and gender minority youth (N=229, most of them "bisexual," "questioning," or "other") were more likely than heterosexual youth to use violence against a dating partner (Dank et al., 2014). Reuter and colleagues' (2015) analysis of longitudinal data from adolescents in seven Houston-area schools found that youth who reported TDV perpetration at baseline were more likely to identify as sexual minority (N=131, with the largest group being "mostly heterosexual") than "completely heterosexual" youth at 2-year follow-up.

Homicide Perpetration

This review did not identify any prior empirical work on rates or relative risk of homicide perpetration by any sexual or gender minority group.

No studies identified in our search offered empirical evidence on homicide by sexual or gender minority individuals.

Summary of Perpetration Research Limitations

Literature on sexual or gender minority perpetration of the forms of abuse and criminalized behavior on which this review focused—including physical or sexual violence; intimate partner violence and teen dating violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; and homicide—is limited. Studies of sexual minority perpetration have focused primarily on sexual assault, partner violence, and bullying. No evidence was found on perpetration of harassment or bias-related crimes by sexual or gender minorities. Consistent with limitations in perpetration research generally, research on violence perpetration by LGBTQ+ individuals is limited by the fact that many studies ask only about victimization (Ruiz-Perez et al., 2007) and that self-reports of perpetration often appear low relative to self-reported victimization (e.g., Krebs et al., 2016). In addition, subsamples of sexual and gender minorities in population-based studies that do measure perpetration are typically small, which may further constrain the estimation of perpetration rates or relative perpetration risk.

This review found very limited evidence on perpetration among sexual or gender minorities generally, and nothing to support the assertion that gender minorities (including transgender individuals) are more likely than their cisgender counterparts to perpetrate violence.

The most notable gap in the evidence base is the lack of identified studies showing that gender minorities are more likely than non-minorities to perpetrate any of the forms of abuse or criminalized behavior examined in this review. Consequently, none of the research literature identified in this review lends support to claims that the presence of transgender individuals in the bathrooms of their choice poses a threat to public safety.

2 Are LGBTQ+ people more likely than non-LGBTQ+ people to be victims of physical or sexual violence; partner violence; bullying, harassment, or hate crimes; or homicide?

This section reviews the research evidence on the prevalence of various forms of victimization found among sexual or gender minorities compared with their heterosexual or cisgender counterparts, including physical and sexual violence; intimate partner violence and teen dating violence; bullying, harassment, and hate crimes; and homicide.

Sexual minority individuals are more likely than heterosexuals to be victims of childhood physical and sexual abuse, based on consistent findings across a large body of research. Preliminary research suggests experiences of childhood victimization may be common among gender minority individuals as well, but evidence on comparative prevalence or risk was not found.

Childhood Physical and Sexual Abuse

Studies using nationally representative or other probability-based samples.

Two studies using nationally representative telephone survey data found that (1) sexual minority adults were more likely than heterosexuals to report serious physical maltreatment by a childhood caregiver (Corliss et al., 2002) and (2) adults who had ever lived with a same-sex intimate partner were more likely than those with (exclusively) different-sex cohabitants to have experienced sexual assault as children and to have been physically assaulted as children by an adult caretaker (Tjaden et al., 1999). Another study (Austin et al., 2008) found that 19% of lesbian and bisexual women had experienced childhood sexual abuse—a rate that was twice that of their heterosexual counterparts. Another study using a population-based sample found that 15% of gay men and 11% of bisexual men reported childhood sexual abuse, and that sexual minority men were up to five times as likely as heterosexual men to have experienced it (Hughes et al., 2010).

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. A meta-analysis of data from 37 U.S. and Canadian studies found that sexual minority youth were 3.8 times more likely to experience childhood sexual abuse and 1.2 times more likely to be physically abused by a parent or guardian compared with non-sexual-minority youth (Friedman et al., 2011). A systematic review by Balsam & Hughes (2013) found that most community-based studies estimated the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse in sexual minority populations around 30-40%. The same review found that childhood physical abuse was also more commonly reported and more severe among sexual minority individuals than among their heterosexual counterparts; however, many of the studies reviewed used small and/or non-probability-based samples, and absolute differences were not always statistically significant (Balsam & Hughes, 2013).

Sibling studies. Sibling studies indicate that sexual minority youth are more likely than heterosexual youth living in the same households to be victimized. Using data from a convenience sample of 1,245 sexual minority adults and heterosexual siblings, Balsam and colleagues (2005) found that sexual minority participants were more likely than their heterosexual siblings to have experienced childhood sexual abuse and physical or verbal abuse from their childhood caregivers. Similarly, Stoddard and colleagues' (2009) study of 324 matched lesbian-heterosexual sister pairs found that lesbian siblings were more likely than their heterosexual sisters to have experienced childhood physical and sexual abuse.

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. Several studies using small non-probability-based samples found high prevalence of childhood verbal, physical, and sexual abuse among sexual minority youth (Hequembourg et al., 2015; Hequembourg et al., 2013; D'Augelli, 2003; D'Augelli et al., 2002). Lombardi and colleagues' (2001) study with a web-based convenience sample of 402 transgender adults found that experiences of verbal abuse and physical violence, including victimization in the childhood home, were common.

Qualitative studies. Qualitative interviews with a purposive sample of Spanish transgender individuals found that childhood sexual abuse was a common experience among study participants (Fernández-Rouco et al., 2016).

Criminal Justice Agency Data on Hate Crime Victimization

Mykhalyshyn & Park's (2016) analysis of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that LGBT people are more likely to be targeted for hate crime victimization than any other minority group in the United States. Among crime data submitted by local law enforcement agencies to the National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2,606 crimes were coded by officers as bias-related incidents. Of those, 519 (or about one in five) were identified by police as being anti-LGBT (Richardson, unpublished analysis, 2016).

Still, these data paint an incomplete picture of anti-LGBT hate crime. A Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of data from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system finds that less than one-half of hate crimes are ever reported to police (Meuchel Wilson, 2014). Moreover, crimes reported to police as apparently related to bias might not be designated as hate crimes in criminal justice agency data systems. A Human Rights Campaign analysis found that formally reported incidents in which bias motivation was documented (for example, homicides during which the perpetrators were witnessed using homophobic and transphobic slurs) were not consistently designated as hate crimes in the Uniform Crime Reporting system (Human Rights Campaign, 2015).

Sexual minority youth are more likely than heterosexual youth to be victims of bullying and bias-related victimization, based on strong and consistent evidence across many large studies.

“In high school, they will throw you around a bit, push you, then throw you in the car and take you five miles out of town and strip you to your underwear and let you walk up to town.”

—Gay male participant in THG-RTI focus group (rural Wyoming)

Bullying, Harassment, and Hate Crime Victimization

Studies using nationally representative or other probability-based samples.

Berlan and colleagues’ (2010) analysis of data from the population-based Growing Up Today Study found that sexual minority youth were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report bullying victimization.

Studies using large, non-nationally representative samples. Data from 5,907 middle- and high school-aged youth surveyed in the Teens, Health, and Technology Survey found a high prevalence of sexual harassment among girls who identified as lesbian or queer (72%), girls who identified as bisexual (66%), boys who identified as gay or queer (66%), and transgender youth (81%) (Mitchell et al., 2014). Analysis of data from 3,636 Canadian adolescents found that sexual minority youth (including “questioning” youth) were more likely than heterosexual youth to be victims of bullying, peer sexual harassment, and peer physical abuse (Williams et al., 2003). In a large study of middle and high school students of all sexual and gender identities in Washington State, 9-14% of male students and 6-11% of female students (depending on the grade) reported being bullied because of their perceived sexual orientation (Patrick et al., 2013).

Analysis of pooled Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data from 55,016 youth found that sexual minority youth were more likely than youth of heterosexual identity and sexual experience to skip school because they felt unsafe, to be involved in physical fights, and to have their belongings stolen or damaged at school (Russell et al., 2014). Other analyses of pooled state and district YRBS data have found that sexual minority youth were at higher risk of being bullied at school, being threatened or injured with a weapon, or being involved in physical fights at school (O’Malley Olsen et al., 2014).

Greytak and colleagues’ (2016) study using weighted web panel data from 1,367 middle and high school students found that 22% had experienced verbal harassment related to their gender expression and 19% had experienced verbal harassment related to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. The U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), which surveyed a convenience sample of 27,715 transgender respondents from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, found that 10% of respondents who were out to their immediate families as transgender reported that a family member had used violence toward them because of their gender (James et al., 2017). Among those who were out (or perceived) as transgender as youth, most reported experiencing some form of bias-related victimization—including harassment (54%), physical assault (24%), and sexual assault (13%) (James et al., 2017).



Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Friedman and colleagues' (2011) meta-analysis found that sexual minority youth were 1.7 times more likely to be threatened or injured with a weapon or otherwise assaulted by a peer at school than non-sexual-minority youth were. Across studies reviewed by Balsam & Hughes (2013), gay and bisexual men appear to be at higher risk for hate-related victimization than lesbians and bisexual women are. Balsam and Hughes found evidence across studies (several using large school-based samples) that sexual and gender minority youth face a variety of forms of physical and verbal abuse and harassment at school and a threatening school climate.

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. In D'Augelli et al.'s (2002) community sample of sexual minority adults, the majority reported having experienced verbal abuse in high school due to their sexual orientation and 11% had been physically assaulted in high school due to their sexual orientation. Among participants in Martin & Alessi's (2012) small nationwide survey of gay and bisexual men, 72% reported some form of bias-related physical or verbal victimization in the past 6 months. Huebner and colleagues (2004) found that the 6-month prevalence of anti-gay verbal abuse experienced by a convenience sample of gay and bisexual men in three Southwestern cities was 37%, and the 6-month prevalence of anti-gay physical violence was nearly 5%.

Studies focused on transgender samples tend to find high rates of hate-related victimization. Among transgender participants in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 26% had ever experienced a bias-related physical assault due to their gender identity or expression, including 19% who had experienced such an assault at the hands of a family member (Grant et al., 2011). In another small, convenience sample of transgender individuals, most respondents had experienced bias-related verbal (83%) or physical (36%) victimization (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006). Boza and Nicholson Perry's (2014) study with transgender Australian adults found that 69% had experienced at least one form of bias-motivated victimization related to their gender identity or expression.

Sibling studies. Factor and Rothblum's (2008) study of transgender adults and their siblings found that transgender siblings were more likely than gender-conforming siblings to experience any harassment.

Qualitative studies. In an ethnographic study of transgender individuals in the Midwest, Jauk (2013) recounts an array of experiences of bias-related victimization that participants reported experiencing over their lifetimes, often repeatedly.

"Every weekend there is some incident. Somebody is getting beat up, mugged, taken to the hospital ..."

—Gay male participant in THG-RTI focus group (San Francisco)

"Once you've been read as being a trans person, you check out, they check out. For us it's safety. For them, it's discomfort. It's a heightened stigmatization."

—Transgender participant in THG-RTI focus group (Durham, NC)

Adult Physical or Sexual Assault Victimization

Studies using a variety of methods found that sexual minorities, particularly bisexual women, are at elevated risk of sexual assault victimization. Sexual and gender minority adults also appear more likely to be victims of physical assault.

Studies using nationally representative samples. A nationally representative telephone surveys showed that persons with same-sex intimate cohabitants were more likely than those with different-sex cohabitants to have been sexually or physically assaulted as adults by all types of perpetrators, including intimate partners (Tjaden et al., 1999). Mahoney and colleagues (2014) used British Crime Survey data to determine that being a member of a sexual minority group made individuals more likely to experience any form of victimization; bisexual persons were particularly likely to be victims of sexual violence and to be victimized by members of their own households.

Studies using large, non-nationally representative samples. Krahe & Berger's (2013) study of college-aged adults found that victimization was more common among respondents who had both same-sex and different-sex sexual contact; these respondents tended to experience sexual aggression in their different-sex relationships.

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. A review of studies on sexual assault including 139,635 among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults found lifetime sexual assault prevalence estimates between 16% and 85% for women and 12% to 54% for men, with lower estimates typically generated by studies using probability-based sampling. Although most forms of sexual assault and sexual abuse were more commonly reported among women than men, men were more likely to report hate-related sexual assault (Rothman et al., 2011). Balsam & Hughes' (2013) review found that, across studies, lesbian and bisexual women tended to experience adult sexual assault at comparable or somewhat higher rates as heterosexual comparison group women; differences between gay and bisexual men and heterosexual comparison men were consistently more pronounced. Cross-study comparisons suggest that gay male and bisexual survivors of childhood sexual abuse may be more likely than heterosexual men or lesbian women to experience sexual assault revictimization as adults (Balsam & Hughes).

Stotzer's (2009) review of several self-report studies with non-probability-based samples found that sexual assault was extremely common among transgender individuals: around half of transgender respondents in these self-report surveys had been victims of sexual assault in their lifetimes, with a median age at first sexual assault sometime in adolescence (from 12 to 15 years old, depending on the study). Testa and colleagues, summarizing results of several needs assessments studies with transgender respondents (all without comparison groups), noted that such studies had found lifetime physical assault victimization rates of 43–60% and lifetime sexual

assault victimization rates of 43–46% (Testa et al., 2012). Sexual violence experienced by transgender individuals was often reported to be hate-related: estimates of the lifetime prevalence of hate-related sexual assault victimization ranged from 13% to 86% among the studies reviewed (Stotzer, 2009).

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. Two separate studies using small non-probability-based samples of lesbians and bisexual women (Hequembourg et al., 2013) and gay and bisexual men (Hequembourg et al., 2015) found that bisexual women were more likely than lesbians to report having experienced adult sexual assault victimization, that adult sexual assault victimization for sexual minority individuals generally occurred with male perpetrators, and that bisexual women reported experiencing more severe and more recurrent adult sexual assault victimization than lesbians did.

Using data from a convenience sample of 1,124 LGBTQ adults, Langenderfer-Magruder and colleagues (2016) found that transgender persons had experienced sexual assault more than twice as often as cisgender sexual minority individuals. Analysis of Virginia Transgender Health Initiative Survey data found that 40% of transgender respondents (46% of transgender men and 36% of transgender women) had experienced physical violence since age 13, with most (59%) reporting three or more lifetime physical assaults and a median age at first assault of 16 (Xavier et al., 2007). Additional analysis of the same dataset found that study participants attributed roughly half of these physical assaults to their gender identity or expression (Barboza, Dominquez, & Chance, 2016). Most in this study population who had experienced physical assault reported that at least one of the assaults had been related to their gender identity or expression (Xavier et al., 2007).

Prevalence was lower but still substantial in Testa and colleagues' (2012) sample of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, 38% of whom had experienced at least one incident of physical violence in their lives and 27% of whom had experienced at least one incident of sexual violence. In this sample, almost all victims reported that at least one of the physical or sexual victimization events they had experienced was related to their gender identity or expression.

Sibling studies. Balsam and colleagues (2005) determined that sexual minority individuals were more likely than their heterosexual siblings to experience physical and sexual assault as adults. Stoddard and colleagues (2009) found that lesbian women were more likely than their heterosexual sisters to experience sexual assault as adults.

Qualitative studies. Fernández-Rouco and colleagues' (2016) study found that recurring adult sexual assault victimization was common among their purposive sample of transgender individuals in Spain.

“We were raised, as female-bodied people, to be afraid of men, to be afraid of dark places, to be afraid of being alone. Then you transition, and you still hold that fear. I’m equally targeted now, but in a different way, and it’s equally terrifying.”

—Transgender participant in THG-RTI focus group (Durham, NC)

There is strong, consistent evidence that bisexual women and girls are at elevated risk for IPV and TDV, and they appear to be particularly likely to be victimized by their male partners. Many other studies have found higher risk for IPV victimization among other sexual minority groups as well, though some find rates comparable to heterosexual comparisons.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Victimization

Studies using nationally representative samples. Using data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, Walters, Chen, and Breiding (2013) estimated the lifetime prevalence of IPV victimization at 61% for bisexual women, 44% for lesbians, 35% for heterosexual women. Rates of lifetime IPV victimization were lower among men overall and were highest among bisexual men (37%), followed by heterosexual (29%) and gay men (26%). Among bisexual women who experienced any lifetime IPV victimization, 90% reported that they had been victimized by male partners only (Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013). Messinger's (2011) analysis of data from the National Violence Against Women survey, which included adult men and women, found that respondents who had ever lived with a same-sex partner were twice as likely to have experienced IPV as those who had not. Tjaden and colleagues' (1999) study using the same dataset suggests that this IPV victimization disparity may be primarily due to victimization differences between men who had ever lived with male intimate partners and those who had not.

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Many studies of IPV among sexual minority individuals and same-sex couples using non-probability-based samples have found that sexual minority individuals (or same-sex couples) tend to experience IPV at similar or somewhat higher rates than heterosexual (or different-sex couple) comparisons (Badenes-Ribera et al., Murray & Mobley, 2009; Nowinski & Bowen, 2012; Stiles-Shields & Carroll, 2015). Review studies also note consistent findings, based on a variety of research approaches, that bisexual women are at higher risk for IPV victimization than either heterosexuals or members of other sexual minority groups are (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2016; Balsam & Hughes, 2013).

Studies using large non-nationally representative samples. Among young adults in Edwards and colleagues' (2015) study of New England college students (N=6,030), sexual minority students were twice as likely to report physical IPV and twice as likely to report sexual IPV as heterosexual students were. Analyses of Youth Risk Behavior Survey data by Luo and colleagues (2014) and Martin-Storey (2015) found that sexual minority youth were more likely to experience teen dating violence than heterosexual youth were, as did Dank and colleagues' (2014) 10-school study. Youth who had both same-sex and different-sex sexual contact were significantly more likely to experience physical dating violence than those who had only same-sex contact (Luo et al., 2015). Langenderfer-Magruder and

colleagues' (2016) study of sexual and gender minority survey respondents found that transgender individuals were more likely than cisgender sexual minority individuals to report experiencing IPV in their lifetimes.

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. Whitton and colleagues' (2016) longitudinal study, which examined TDV victimization in a community convenience sample of sexual and gender minority youth, found that bisexual youth were more likely than lesbian and gay youth to be victims of sexual partner violence, and transgender youth were more likely than cisgender LGB youth to be victims of physical or sexual partner violence. Although most research does not capture the sex of victim's partners or perpetrators (Messinger, 2014), some preliminary evidence suggests that bisexual women may be particularly vulnerable to abuse from male partners (Hequembourg et al., 2013). (To avoid duplicating the efforts of several recent systematic reviews summarizing findings on sexual minority IPV victimization prevalence and relative risk from prior studies using small non-probability-based samples [e.g., Badenes-Ribera et al., Balsam & Hughes, 2013; Murray & Mobley, 2009; Nowinski & Bowen, 2012; Stiles-Shields & Carroll, 2015], we did not focus on resummarizing those older works.)

Homicide Victimization

Studies using administrative crime or service provider data. Official criminal justice data compiled from the National Incident-Based Reporting System suggest that bias-related homicide is an extremely rare event. In 2012 and 2013, among just three homicides that were tagged by law enforcement as bias-related, one was coded as anti-gay (Richardson, unpublished analysis, 2016). Administrative data compiled from local service providers by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs identified 24 bias-related homicides of LGBTQ+ or HIV-affected people in 2015; this figure represented a 20% increase over 2014 reports (Waters et al., 2016). Analyses of homicides motivated by anti-LGBTQ+ bias conducted using a variety of open data sources (yielding more cases than those coded in law enforcement records) suggest that victims of anti-LGBTQ+ homicides appear more likely to be killed by weapons other than firearms, more likely to be killed by multiple perpetrators (Gruenewald, 2012; Gruenewald & Kelley, 2014), and more likely to sustain gratuitous injuries during the homicide (Bell & Vila, 1996) compared with victims of other homicides. A Human Rights Campaign study on homicides of transgender people from 2013 to 2015 estimated that transgender women are at least 4.3 times more likely to be homicide victims than cisgender women (Human Rights Campaign, 2015).

"I was in fourth grade in Laramie when Matthew Shepard happened, and that had a big impact on my life. I had always kind of known I was different and when I found out, you know, somebody was murdered ... number one, just somebody murdered in Laramie was a huge deal, and then finding out later on in life that he was a gay student that was murdered, it was a pretty big deal."

—Gay male participant in THG-RTI focus group (rural Wyoming)

Some preliminary evidence suggests that homicides related to anti-LGBTQ+ bias may be more brutal than typical homicides. Although evidence that sexual or gender minority individuals are at elevated risk for homicide in inconclusive, exploratory focus group data suggest that high-profile bias-related homicides may be influential in shaping understandings of safety or vulnerability to violence among sexual and gender minorities.

Strong evidence indicates that sexual or gender minority individuals who are younger, low income, of color, or gender nonconforming; who disclosed their sexual identities at a younger age or ran away from home; who abuse alcohol; or who live in rural or impoverished communities or attend schools without gay-straight alliances are at higher risk of victimization than other sexual or gender minority individuals.

Risk Factors for Victimization

Studies using nationally representative samples. Analyses using data from a national survey that included 5,420 LGBT students found that LGBT youth who were younger, white, transgender, or living in the South were more likely to experience sexual orientation or gender identity-related assault or harassment at school (Kosciw et al., 2010). In separate models focused on community-level variables, living in rural or impoverished areas or in areas with lower average educational attainment was associated with increased chances of school-based victimization; regional effects disappeared in these analyses (Kosciw et al., 2010).

Studies using large non-nationally representative samples. Evidence from two studies indicates that LGBTQ+ youth are targeted for victimization based on gender nonconformity (D'Augelli et al., 2002; Toomey et al., 2010). Geospatial analysis of police records with data from the Boston Youth Survey found that sexual minority youth living in neighborhoods with higher rates of anti-LGBT hate crimes were more likely to report relational and electronic bullying victimization than those in neighborhoods with lower prevalence of reported hate crimes were (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2015). Sexual orientation-related disparities in school victimization experiences as reported in the YRBS were not evident among African American youth, who experienced high rates of such forms of victimization regardless of sexual identity or behavior, nor among Asian American youth, who experienced the lowest rates of victimization regardless of sexual identity or behavior (Russell et al., 2014). In Greytak and colleagues' (2016) Harris Poll web sample of 1,367 middle and high school students, those who attended a school with a gay-straight alliance (36% of the sample) were less likely to hear anti-LGBTQ+ bias speech in school.

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Balsam & Hughes' (2013) review suggests that, although communities of color have often been underrepresented in prior research on sexual minority victimization experiences, preliminary evidence indicates that sexual minorities of color are at increased risk for childhood physical and sexual abuse or adult physical assault compared with white sexual minority individuals. Toomey and Russell's (2016) meta-analysis of data from 18 studies found that effects of sexual minority status on likelihood of school-based victimization were stronger among boys. Balsam & Hughes's (2013) review finds a pattern of evidence across studies that younger age, gender nonconformity, early disclosure of sexual identity, running away, and alcohol abuse may expose sexual minority individuals to increased victimization risk. A meta-analysis that combined data from five studies with 62,923 participants found a strong and consistent association between the presence of a gay-straight alliances and

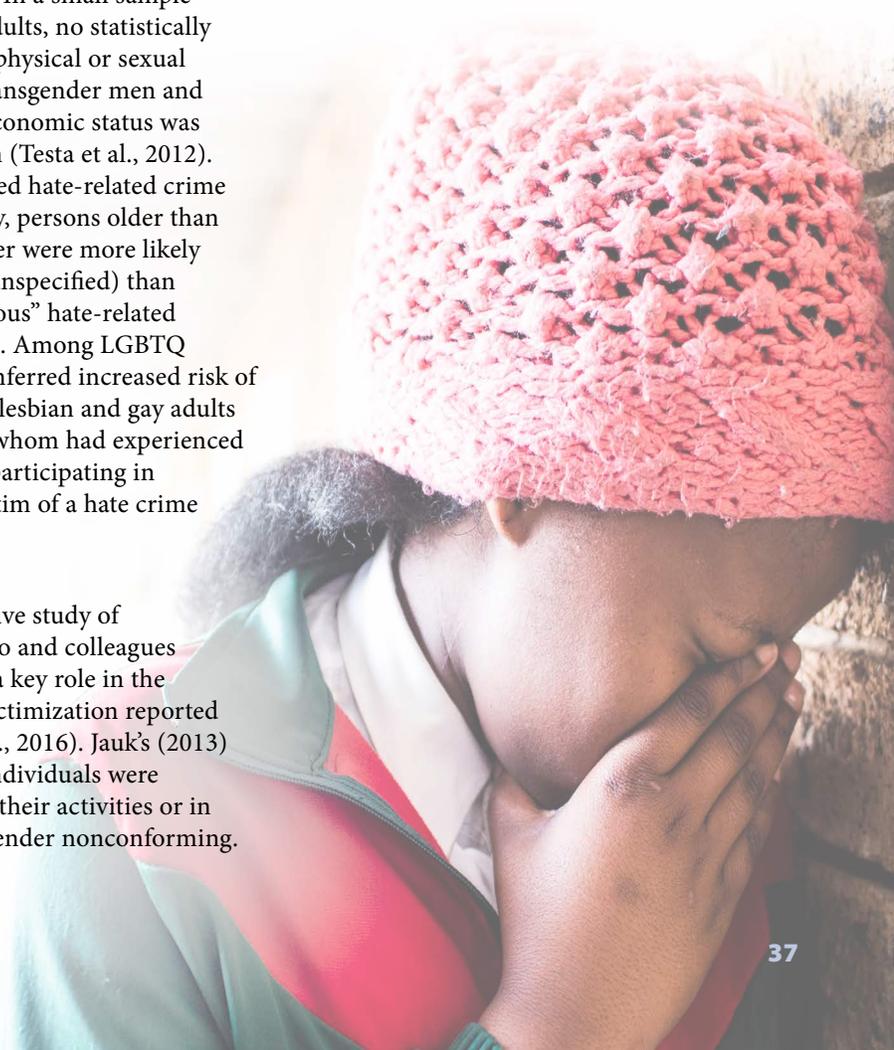
reduced likelihood of students experiencing anti-LGBT peer victimization or fearing for their safety (Marx & Kettrey, 2016). Stiles-Shields and Carroll's (2015) review of research on IPV in same-sex relationships found that risk factors included the presence among one or both partners of depression, anxiety, PTSD, insecure attachment, or exposure to violence in the family.

Studies using administrative service provider data. The majority of anti-LGBTQ+ bias-related homicides reported to anti-violence service providers from 2012 to 2015 targeted transgender women of color (54% in 2015), and most victims were under age 36 (79% in 2015) (Waters et al., 2016). In general, LGBTQ+ people of color and undocumented LGBTQ+ people were significantly more likely to experience physical forms of victimization than white and citizen victims (Waters et al., 2016).

Single-sample longitudinal studies. Findings from longitudinal studies of LGBTQ+ youth indicate that victimization may tend to decrease as youth mature into adults, although some LGBTQ+ individuals experience sustained or increasing victimization from childhood to early adulthood (Birkett et al., 2015).

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. In a small sample of transgender and gender nonconforming adults, no statistically significant differences were found in rates of physical or sexual violence by age, race/ethnicity, or between transgender men and transgender women. However, higher socioeconomic status was protective against sexual assault victimization (Testa et al., 2012). In a small sample of LGBT adults who reported hate-related crime victimization to a local victim services agency, persons older than age 45, Latino/Latina, and male or transgender were more likely to be victims of “serious personal offenses” (unspecified) than of hate-related property crimes and “less serious” hate-related personal offenses (Kuehnle, & Sullivan, 2006). Among LGBTQ individuals, being gender nonconforming conferred increased risk of victimization (D’Augelli et al., 2002). Among lesbian and gay adults in a Swedish urban area—about a quarter of whom had experienced hate-related victimization—being “out” and participating in city nightlife increased the risk of being a victim of a hate crime (Tiby, 2001).

Qualitative research methods. In a small qualitative study of transgender adults in Spain, Fernández-Ruoco and colleagues identified childhood sexual abuse as playing a key role in the etiology of recurrent adult sexual assault revictimization reported by many participants (Fernández-Rouco et al., 2016). Jauk's (2013) ethnographic study found that transgender individuals were particularly targeted for violence at points in their activities or in phases in their lives when they were visibly gender nonconforming.



Victimization risk among sexual minority individuals appears to be stable or increasing (depending on the form of victimization) since the 1990s.

Temporal Trends in Victimization

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Three large meta-analytic studies that examined changes in sexual minority victimization rates or the magnitude of sexual minority-related victimization disparities since the 1990s all found stability or increases in such rates or disparities over the last two decades (Friedman et al., 2011; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Toomey & Russell, 2016). Disparities between sexual minority and non-minority individuals in childhood physical and sexual victimization have remained stable (Friedman et al., 2011), as have observed rates of 13 of the 16 forms of victimization included in Katz-Wise & Hyde's (2012) meta-analysis. Disparities in sexual harassment and workplace victimization experienced by sexual minorities and non-minorities in adulthood appear to have increased (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). Rates of school-based victimization appear to have increased among sexual minority youth in recent decades (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Toomey & Russell, 2016), as have rates (in studies using U.S. samples) of physical or sexual abuse by a family member and non-family sexual assault (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012).

In addition to limitations common to general victimization research, research on sexual and gender minority victimization experiences is limited by inconsistent measurement of sexual and gender minority status, small sexual and gender minority samples, and possibly stigma-related underreporting.

Summary of Victimization Research Limitations

Research on victimization among sexual and gender minority individuals has been constrained by limitations in victimization research generally (inconsistent operationalization of victimization, differences in reference period, and various sampling strategies that do not support generalization of findings) as well as limitations specific to research with gender and sexual minorities, including inconsistent inclusion and operationalization of sexual and gender minority status, small sample sizes of sexual and gender minorities (which makes it difficult to generate precise estimates in these subgroups), and potential underreporting of sexual or gender minority status in surveys due to stigmatization of those identities. The very low reported prevalence of transgender individuals and other gender minorities in general population and LGBTQ+ studies, perhaps exacerbated by the stigmatization of gender nonconformity and transgender experience, has made comparisons of victimization experiences between transgender and gender-conforming persons particularly elusive (Testa et al., 2012).

3 What consequences do LGBTQ+ victims experience? How likely are LGBTQ+ victims to report victimization, and what shapes those decisions?

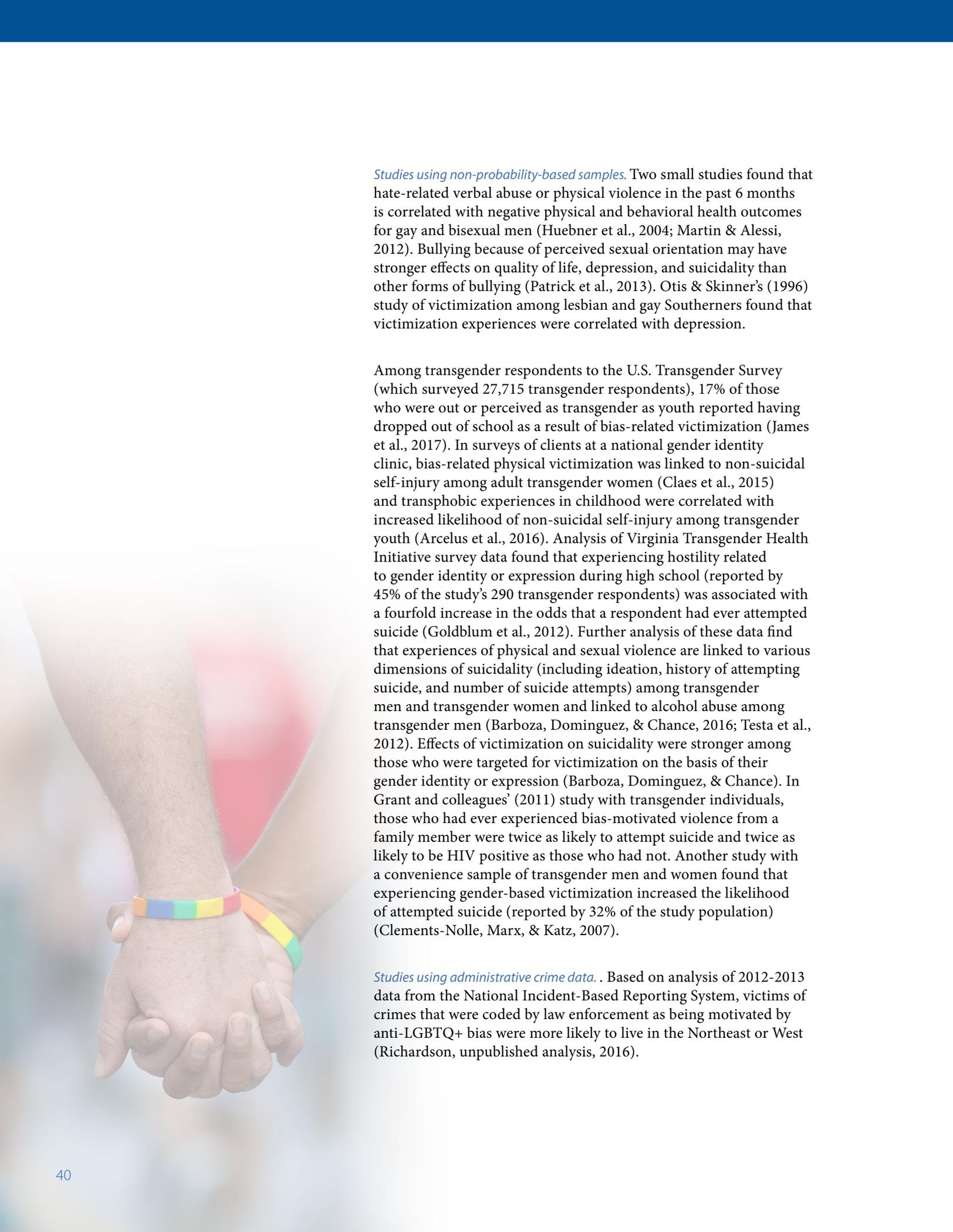
Consequences of Victimization

Single-sample, longitudinal studies. A longitudinal study with LGBT youth in Chicago found that, even when victimization experiences subside as youth mature, negative impacts of on behavioral health are sustained over the long term (Mustanski et al., 2016).

Single-sample cross-sectional studies. Childhood physical and sexual abuse, adolescent sexual assault, and peer victimization have all been correlated with negative physical and behavioral health outcomes among LGBT persons, including suicidality and depression, as well as disruptions in school involvement and achievement, including truancy (Andersen et al., 2014; Andersen et al., 2015; Cenat et al., 2015; Collier et al., 2013; D’Augelli, 2003; Fernández-Rouco et al., 2016; van Bergen et al., 2013; Robinson & Espelage, 2013; Friedman et al., 2011; Patrick et al., 2013; Brennan et al., 2007; Kalichman et al., 2001; Rosario et al., 2004). Sexual minority individuals who experienced physical and relational bullying as high school students were more likely to report physical health issues as adults than their counterparts who did not experience bullying (Zou et al., 2013). A few smaller studies suggest that particularly strong effects on behavioral and physical health are evident when victimization is discriminatory in intent (Herek et al., 1999; Russell et al., 2012; Russell et al., 2011; Sinclair et al., 2012), and an analysis of National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health found that teen dating violence in same-sex couples may produce more negative outcomes (such as violent delinquency) than TDV in different-sex couples (Gehring & Vaske, 2015).

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Balsam & Hughes’s (2013) review finds evidence that victimization experiences among sexual minority individuals are linked to a wide range of physical health conditions, behavioral health conditions (including “depressive and anxiety disorders, suicidality, eating disorders, personality disorders, and substance use disorders”), and sexual risk-taking. Cross-study evidence also suggests that, consistent with minority stress theory, victimization experiences may interact with experiences of discrimination to produce more severe negative outcomes for sexual minority victims than victimization experiences unaccompanied by discrimination (Balsam & Hughes).

In a range of studies, victimization experiences are clearly and consistently correlated with behavioral health conditions and suicidality, sexual risk-taking and HIV status, other long-term physical health issues, and decreased school involvement and achievement among sexual and gender minorities. Such effects are often sustained many years after a victimization event.



Studies using non-probability-based samples. Two small studies found that hate-related verbal abuse or physical violence in the past 6 months is correlated with negative physical and behavioral health outcomes for gay and bisexual men (Huebner et al., 2004; Martin & Alessi, 2012). Bullying because of perceived sexual orientation may have stronger effects on quality of life, depression, and suicidality than other forms of bullying (Patrick et al., 2013). Otis & Skinner's (1996) study of victimization among lesbian and gay Southerners found that victimization experiences were correlated with depression.

Among transgender respondents to the U.S. Transgender Survey (which surveyed 27,715 transgender respondents), 17% of those who were out or perceived as transgender as youth reported having dropped out of school as a result of bias-related victimization (James et al., 2017). In surveys of clients at a national gender identity clinic, bias-related physical victimization was linked to non-suicidal self-injury among adult transgender women (Claes et al., 2015) and transphobic experiences in childhood were correlated with increased likelihood of non-suicidal self-injury among transgender youth (Arcelus et al., 2016). Analysis of Virginia Transgender Health Initiative survey data found that experiencing hostility related to gender identity or expression during high school (reported by 45% of the study's 290 transgender respondents) was associated with a fourfold increase in the odds that a respondent had ever attempted suicide (Goldblum et al., 2012). Further analysis of these data find that experiences of physical and sexual violence are linked to various dimensions of suicidality (including ideation, history of attempting suicide, and number of suicide attempts) among transgender men and transgender women and linked to alcohol abuse among transgender men (Barboza, Dominguez, & Chance, 2016; Testa et al., 2012). Effects of victimization on suicidality were stronger among those who were targeted for victimization on the basis of their gender identity or expression (Barboza, Dominguez, & Chance). In Grant and colleagues' (2011) study with transgender individuals, those who had ever experienced bias-motivated violence from a family member were twice as likely to attempt suicide and twice as likely to be HIV positive as those who had not. Another study with a convenience sample of transgender men and women found that experiencing gender-based victimization increased the likelihood of attempted suicide (reported by 32% of the study population) (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2007).

Studies using administrative crime data. . Based on analysis of 2012-2013 data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, victims of crimes that were coded by law enforcement as being motivated by anti-LGBTQ+ bias were more likely to live in the Northeast or West (Richardson, unpublished analysis, 2016).

Qualitative studies. Fernández-Ruoco and colleagues' (2016) study with Spanish transgender adults suggested that participants experienced a variety of negative mental health and substance abuse consequences associated with recurrent sexual assault victimization beginning in childhood. Qualitative interviews with young gay men involved in gangs and other criminalized activity found that childhood bullying and harassment victimization and witnessing violence shaped respondents' decisions to perpetrate violence (Panfil, 2014).

Reporting of Victimization

Studies using small non-probability-based samples. Sexual minority respondents in two studies were less likely to report hate-related crimes than other crimes, due to concerns about “secondary victimization” from police bias, fears of public outing, and skepticism about whether perpetrators would be punished (Herek et al., 1999; Herek et al., 2002). Reporting to police was relatively rare among transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in the Virginia Transgender Health Initiative survey: 11% of physical assaults and 9% of sexual abuse or sexual assaults were reported (Testa et al., 2012). Huebner and colleagues (2004) found that being younger, HIV-positive, and more out about their sexual orientation was associated with higher likelihood of reporting victimization to police among gay and bisexual men. In another study using a convenience sample of sexual minority adults, reporting to police was more likely for “serious” personal and property offenses and for crimes resulting in death or injuries requiring medical attention, and less likely for crimes involving Latino/Latina victims (Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2006). Among Jacobson and colleagues' (2015) convenience sample of sexual and gender minority university students recruited through campus LGBTQ centers, respondents who identified as masculine (across all gender or sexual orientation categories) reported more victimization than respondents who identified as feminine.

Studies using administrative service provider data. Guadalupe-Diaz's (2016) study using administrative data on victims of IPV in same-sex couples from a service provider in the Southeast found that sexual minority men, sexual minorities of color, and those who had previously had contact with the police regarding a same-sex domestic violence case were less comfortable reporting to the police. Among individuals who reported bias-related (anti-LGBTQ+ or anti-HIV+) victimization to a local anti-violence program, transgender individuals were twice as likely as gender-conforming sexual minority individuals to report a known perpetrator (Waters et al., 2016).

Studies using qualitative methods. Reporting of hate-related victimization was also rare among Jauk's ethnographic study sample of transgender individuals in the Midwest; victims cited fears of violence and discrimination from the police when describing their decisions not to report (Jauk, 2013).

Research evidence on reporting by sexual or gender minority individuals is relatively thin, but suggests serious mistrust of police and fears related to police bias and violence.

4 How safe do LGBTQ+ people feel in public spaces? Do fears of violence or perceptions of safety differ by gender identity or by geographic region?

Fear of Victimization

Multiple studies offer strong evidence that sexual minority youth experience more fear of victimization at school than heterosexual youth. Unpublished focus group data find that sexual and gender minority adults use a variety of day-to-day strategies to avoid victimization and manage an ever-present awareness of the potential for victimization.

Study using nationally representative or other probability-based samples.

An analysis of 2000-2010 data from 5,086 adult participants in the nationally representative U.S. General Social Survey found that women and sexual minorities were more likely than heterosexual men to report fear at night (Meyer & Grollman, 2014). LGBTQ+ college students who participated in the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study were more likely than their heterosexual peers to rate their campus climate poorly with regard to sexual harassment and sexual assault (Krebs et al., 2016).

Studies using meta-analytic or systematic review methods. Pooled analyses of state and district YRBS data, as well as meta-analysis of data from 37 American and Canadian studies show that compared with heterosexual youth, sexual minority youth are significantly more likely—2.4 times in Friedman and colleagues' meta-analytic estimation—to skip school because of fearing for their safety (O'Malley Olsen et al., 2014; Friedman et al., 2011). These differences in feelings of fear have remained relatively stable since the 1990s (Friedman et al., 2011).

Small non-probability-based samples. Among a convenience sample of lesbian and gay adults in a large Swedish city, prior hate crime victimization (reported by one-quarter of respondents) and being male were associated with increased fears of victimization (Tiby et al., 2001). Among a convenience sample of lesbian and gay adults in a rural U.S. state, women feared personal victimization more than men did, but men and women rated their risk of victimization equally. Many sexual minority adults curtail their activities outside of the home in response to perceived victimization risk (Otis, 2007). Having been previously victimized, having a lower income, and living in a disadvantaged neighborhood were all associated with increased fears of victimization (Otis, 2007).

“This is my world...and it's a very scary place.”

—Transgender participant in THG-RTI focus group (New York City)

Qualitative studies. Jauk's (2013) ethnographic study of transgender adults in urban communities in the Midwest found that lifetime experiences and fears of hate-related victimization had profound effects on the daily routines and life choices of transgender individuals.

Focus Group Findings on Fear and Safety in LGBTQ+ Communities

In August and September 2016, THG collaborated with RTI to hold a series of formative focus groups and individual interviews with convenience samples of sexual minority and gender minority participants in San Francisco; New York City; Durham, North Carolina; and rural Wyoming. The aim of the focus groups was to develop a preliminary understanding of fear and safety issues in LGBTQ+ communities that were not addressed by the existing research evidence identified in our review.

Across the groups, transgender and cisgender (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer) participants noted that despite political and social progress, they were highly aware of threats to their personal safety and organized everything from their spatial routines to aspects of their personal gender expression out of an awareness of the possibility of victimization. Some participants noted feeling particularly unsafe in rural areas and places where a high volume of alcohol is being consumed. Transgender participants noted particular fear in situations that could bring them into contact with law enforcement, the Transportation Security Administration (e.g., body scans), or require them to present legal identification that does not match their gender identity and gender expression.

Some participants said that, in an attempt to avoid victimization, they present a more conforming gender expression when walking in public, avoid holding hands, avoid wearing clothing or accessories that would identify them as gay, and stay on guard and vigilant. Transgender participants suggested that access to affordable health care was also a critical safety issue; the inability to physically transition made some feel less safe. Participants across regions tended to identify youth and transgender women as being the LGBTQ+ communities most at risk for victimization, noting the particularly vulnerability conferred by an inability or lack of resources to remove oneself from unsafe situations.

Participants in the North Carolina and Wyoming groups and interviews tended to think of violent, bias-related victimization as a somewhat more distant prospect than did those in San Francisco and New York. Further probing, however, revealed that North Carolina and Wyoming participants were less likely to be conspicuously or consistently out and visible compared with their more urban counterparts and felt that their successful passing as straight and/or cisgender helped them to stay safe in their adult lives. However, transgender and cisgender lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer participants participants described how political rhetoric surrounding debates over “bathroom” legislation had created a particular feeling of fear and vulnerability (Henne, 2016a, 2016b).

Conclusions

This section highlights key findings from this review, makes recommendations for preventing and responding to victimization in LGBTQ+ communities on the basis of these findings, and identifies gaps in the research that could be addressed to guide future intervention.

Key Findings on Violence and LGBTQ+ Communities

Previous reviews on violence and LGBTQ+ communities have typically focused on a single sexual or gender minority identity or a single form of victimization (e.g., intimate partner violence experiences among lesbian and bisexual women). This review is the first to summarize evidence across several bodies of research on victimization and perpetration experiences among diverse LGBTQ+ populations, as well as research on risk factors, temporal trends, consequences, fear, and reporting. Looking across the existing research in this way reveals several striking findings.

Victimization disparities appear to have remained stable or worsened in recent decades. Despite perceptions that society is becoming more open and accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals, estimates of victimization disparities between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ populations appear to have generally worsened or been sustained since the 1990s, when they first began to be measured. The current historical moment—a time when more LGBTQ+ persons are choosing to be “out” in more contexts in their lives (Pew Research Center, 2013), and in which youth are coming out as sexual and gender minorities at younger ages (Mayer et al., 2008)—presents unique dangers to LGBTQ+ individuals. As Katz-Wise and Hyde note, “Sexual orientation is often a hidden status, resulting in less victimization for those who are not visibly a sexual minority” (2012, p. 157), an observation backed up by consistent findings in the research base reviewed here that gender nonconformity and disclosure of sexual minority identity are risk factors for victimization. The very “outness” and gender nonconformity that decades of collective struggle have made possible for some LGBTQ+ individuals may also expose them to victimization at higher rates than ever before, particularly during childhood.

Schools are not safe places for LGBTQ+ youth. Prior research on fear of victimization with other subpopulations (such as women and elders) has tended to focus on feelings of safety in public spaces. Focus groups with LGBTQ+ adults suggest that many are not afraid of violence because they are managing to avoid, or to keep their sexual or gender minority status hidden in, contexts in which it might

provoke violence or victimization—but children may be least able to do this because they have little choice over their exposure to school contexts that may not be safe or tolerant. Childhood victimization and bias-related forms of victimization have particularly pronounced, long-term effects on physical and behavioral health and achievement that are critical to address to ensure that the current generation of LGBTQ+ youth survives childhood and reaches a thriving adulthood.

Unlike other victims of bias-related violence, LGBTQ+ individuals are often victimized by close family members. Physical and sexual violence and hate-related verbal abuse from close family members—particularly parents of LGBTQ+ youth and male partners of bisexual women—appear to contribute heavily to elevated rates of victimization among LGBTQ+ individuals. Evidence further suggests that many contemporary LGBTQ+ youth are forced to choose between two risky situations: remaining in an abusive or intolerant home environment where they may be exposed to further victimization by family members, or running away from home, which also places them at elevated risk of victimization.

Preventing and Responding to Victimization in LGBTQ+ Communities

These findings identify an urgent need to prevent and address high rates of victimization in LGBTQ+ communities through programmatic supports and policy remedies. Such measures might include the following:

- **Create safer environments for youth.** LGBTQ+ youth, particularly gender nonconforming youth and those who come out at younger ages, are in urgent need of safe and tolerant environments. Competency and advocacy training for school psychologists and teachers—who generally report supportive attitudes toward LGBTQ+ students but a lack of knowledge and skills to advocate for them—could help to create more supportive, less hostile school climates (Dragowski et al., 2016). Fostering the further development of gay-straight alliances in schools, which seem to offer some protection against school-based victimization risk, is another promising approach (Marx & Kettrey, 2016). Although secondary schools are not permitted to ban gay-straight alliances if they allow other extracurricular groups (per the Federal Equal Access Act of 1984), school principals still commonly take measures to exclude them (American Civil Liberties Union, 2015). Such discriminatory practices must be addressed and replaced with active support for groups and services that make schools safer. Longstanding calls to create alternative environments for LGBTQ+ youth to spend free time away from home safely (e.g., Russell et al., 2001) are still highly relevant as well.

“HB 2 gives bigoted people permission to be bigoted toward us.”

—Transgender participant in THG-RTI focus group (Durham, NC)

- **Improve and expand resources for LGBTQ+ victims.** Affirming and culturally responsive services for LGBTQ+ victims are critical, given the high prevalence of victimization and the fact that help-seeking often requires that LGBTQ+ victims disclose one or more stigmatized experiences, such as minority sexual identity or sexual experience, minority gender identity or nonconforming gender expression, or violence within the family. Such efforts might involve expanding on (and better funding) emerging models developed by the domestic violence advocacy community (e.g., Quinn, 2010) and longstanding efforts by LGBTQ+ community centers in many cities to connect victims with available resources. In addition, given reluctance among LGBTQ+ victims (particularly those in the most vulnerable groups) to seek police help, LGBTQ+ victim safety might be best supported by efforts to expand community-based restorative justice initiatives (Waters et al., 2016), such as Spirit House’s pioneering Harm Free Zone Project in North Carolina.
- **Address policies that reinforce a broader culture of anti-LGBTQ+ bias and discrimination.** The evidence reviewed here suggests that creating a nondiscriminatory climate at the societal and organizational levels is an important aspect of preventing anti-LGBTQ+ violence and also lessening the severity of its impact. Yet recent state legislative initiatives, such as Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 2015 and North Carolina’s “bathroom” bill of 2016, could impact the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals by signaling normalized discrimination (Wang et al., 2016). Such policies are not conducive to public health and public safety. In addition, public schools charged with ensuring equal access to educational resources (U.S. Department of Education, 2014) should create environments where LGBTQ+ children do not have to choose between getting an education and keeping themselves safe.

Improving Research to Support Informed Policy and Programming

While the evidence base summarized here warrants an immediate policy and practice response, much remains unknown about LGBTQ+ communities and violence.

- The concepts that are central to understanding these issues—sexual orientation and gender as well as the various forms of violence and abuse—have been defined and measured in different (and sometimes weak) ways in prior research. Many studies treated gender as a single, dichotomous variable (male or female) and did not include any measure at all of gender minority status. Other studies used incomplete and conceptually overlapping measures of sexual orientation, gender, and certain forms of victimization such as sexual assault. These measurement issues make study findings less valid and more difficult to compare.
- In addition, many of the studies we reviewed were subject to design limitations that impact the validity of the estimates. These include issues with how research participants were selected, how many individuals were included, and whether the study collected data over time or at a single point. These considerations affect how well a particular study can answer its research questions, and also limit the ability to compare estimates across studies.

Future research in this area is sorely needed, and should focus on generating findings with direct relevance for policy and intervention. Such efforts might include the following:

- **Implement more rigorous measures and study designs to understand the prevalence and risk of victimization.** Improvements in measurement and sampling would enable researchers to generate more precise estimates of victimization and victimization disparities. Future studies should include the sexual orientation and gender measures recommended by the Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys (2016) and pursue alternative probability-based sampling methods that ensure adequate sample sizes of sexual and gender minority participants while also maintaining the representativeness of the overall study population.
- **Describe change in victimization and perpetration over time and across the life course.** Designing effective supports and interventions requires better information on variation in the form, setting, interpersonal context, and impact of victimization and perpetration experiences among LGBTQ+ individuals over the life course (Friedman et al., 2011). Long-term, longitudinal

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data collection with a large sample of sexual and gender minority participants would support an improved understanding of how victimization and perpetration experiences may change with general-population developmental and life milestones (e.g., leaving one's childhood home, entering or leaving the workforce, entering or leaving an intimate partnership) as well as potential LGBTQ+-specific milestones, such as coming out, transitioning, or forming connections within an LGBTQ+ community. Such work could also help to identify life stage-specific barriers and facilitators to disclosure and help-seeking, and differences in how help-seeking efforts are typically received (Friedman et al., 2011) to inform more tailored outreach and service delivery strategies.

- **Examine how fear of victimization may shape LGBTQ+ individuals' life choices and life chances.** Although evidence suggests that direct victimization experiences are not uncommon for LGBTQ+ individuals, fears of victimization may be even more pervasive—and thus, even broader in their impact. Qualitative and survey-based research is needed to explore what shapes fear of victimization (Otis, 2007) and how fear of victimization may in turn shape proximal life choices (such as risk behavior, school attendance, and community or civic engagement) and longer-term outcomes (e.g., educational attainment, employment, family formation, social isolation or connectedness). Such studies might seek to engage both community and institutional samples in urban and nonurban settings to avoid over-representing large urban centers and respondents who are more “out” and potentially less fearful.
- **Identify key mechanisms and subgroup differences in victimization risk and impact within LGBTQ+ communities.** Prior work has identified a variety of demographic, behavioral, and contextual risk factors for victimization, primarily through cross-sectional correlation analysis. However, the kind of longitudinal data collection described above (if well powered) could also enable a more rigorous and finely grained examination of the intersection of how other marginalized identities or experiences of marginalization may interact with sexual and gender minority status to shape victimization risk and impact (Russell et al., 2014; Ryan & Rivers, 2003; Friedman et al., 2011). Tests of moderation and moderated mediation could help to identify subgroup distinctions in mechanisms of risk and of impact that would yield helpful insight for tailored intervention design. These analytic strategies could also help to inform the design of LGBTQ+-affirming intervention approaches. Such approaches might be strengthened by an empirical understanding of how LGBTQ+-specific experiences (such as identification with a sexual or gender minority identity, disclosure or public “outness,” gender-nonconforming expression, and ties to LGBTQ+ community) may interact to elevate or reduce the likelihood or impact of victimization.

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