



# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning (LGBQ) Youth



## 2018 DELAWARE STATE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE: SUBSTANCE USE AND RELATED ISSUES

Prepared by the

*University of Delaware* [Center for Drug and Health Studies](#)

&

*Its State Partners*

for

**The Delaware SPF-PFS Program,  
The Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health,  
&  
The State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup  
(SEOW, formerly the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking  
Alliance/DDATA)**

Sponsored by Award SP020704 to the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Delaware Health and Social Services, from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Please address all inquiries to: Laura Rapp, PhD, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice: [lrapp@udel.edu](mailto:lrapp@udel.edu).

# **Introduction:**

## **The Role of the Delaware SEOW and the Purpose of the Epidemiological Profile**

All States, including Delaware, have received support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) to establish a statewide epidemiological workgroup or SEOW. In Delaware, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) in the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services is the recipient of a Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success Grant (SPF-PFS) and the SEOW is part of this initiative. The SEOW (formerly known as the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance, or DDATA) is a group of stakeholders representing organizations that collect and use data on substance use, associated behaviors, and their consequences in order to establish and monitor indicators related to substance abuse prevention. The SEOW's mission is to bring this data to the forefront of the prevention planning process. Its goals are:

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

This annual report highlights the most recently available data on substance use and related issues in Delaware. It also includes special topics, such as populations that experience disproportionate risk for substance use or related behaviors. The information is intended to help decision makers and stakeholders throughout Delaware accomplish their goals related to needs assessments, strategic planning, and evaluation. The 2018 report consists of twelve sections: a state demographic background; tobacco and electronic cigarettes; alcohol; marijuana; opioid use; other illegal drugs; substance exposed infants; gambling; mental health; substance use and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); substance use among the LGBTQ population and new data on Transgender youth in Delaware; and protective factors.

The 2018 Delaware Epidemiological Profile is available, along with all SEOW data products, from the [Center on Drug and Health Studies at the University of Delaware](#) website.

## ***Thank You, SEOW Collaborators***

*for your participation and commitment to data-driven prevention planning,  
practice, and evaluation!*

atTAcK Addiction	Division of Forensic Medicine
Christiana Care Health Systems	Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families
Delaware Academy of Medicine	Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health
Delaware Criminal Justice Council	Trauma Informed Care
Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Delaware Information and Analysis Center
Delaware Council on Gambling Problems	Delaware Office of Controlled Substance
Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS)	Division of Professional Regulation, Prescription Monitoring Program
Delaware Afterschool Network	Mental Health Association of Delaware
Delaware Courts – Office of the Child Advocate	Delaware Prevention Coalition
Delaware Department of Education	Delaware State Police
Delaware Department of Health and Social Services	DEMCO
Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance	La Esperanza
Division of Public Health	KIDS COUNT in Delaware, University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service
Division of Services for the Aging and Persons with Disabilities	Latin American Community Center
Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health	Nemours Health and Prevention Services
Delaware Department of Homeland Security	Open Door, Inc.
Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement	Wesley College
	West End Neighborhood House
	University of Delaware
	Student Health and Wellness Promotion

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# Table of Contents

Introduction:	2
The Role of the Delaware SEOW and the Purpose of the Epidemiological Profile	2
Table of Figures	6
Executive Summary	12
Introduction: The Role of the Delaware SEOW and the Purpose of the Epidemiological Profile	12
Delaware Data: State Demographic Background	13
Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes (Vaping)	13
Alcohol	14
Marijuana	15
Opioids and other Trends	15
Other Illicit Drug Use	16
Substance Exposed Infants	16
Gambling	17
Mental Health	17
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	18
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning (LGBQ) and Transgender Youth	18
Protective Factors	19
Delaware Data:	20
State Demographic Background	20
New Castle County	21
Kent County	22
Sussex County	22
Medically Underserved Areas	23
An Overview of the 2018 Delaware State Epidemiological Profile Report	24
Overview: Statewide Consumption Patterns of Select Substances	25
Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes (Vaping)	40
National Context	40
Tobacco Use in Delaware	42
Tobacco Prevalence Indicators	44
Tobacco Exposure and Culture in Delaware	57
Tobacco Trends and Comparisons to U.S. and Region	67
Perceived Risks and Consequences	75
Alcohol	78
National Overview	78
Alcohol Use in Delaware	78
Alcohol Prevalence Indicators	82
Alcohol Trends and Comparisons to U.S. and Region	91
Perceived Risk and Consequences Behavior	100
Marijuana	110
National Overview	110
Use of Marijuana in Delaware	112

Marijuana Prevalence Indicators	114
Marijuana Trends and Comparisons to U.S. and Region	123
Perceived Risk and Consequences	131
Opioid Use and Other Trends	138
National Overview	138
Delaware Context	140
Other Illicit Drug Use	151
National Overview	151
Delaware Context	152
Other Illegal Drug Prevalence Indicators	154
Trends and Comparisons of Other Illegal Drug Use	161
Other Illegal Drug Perceived Risks and Consequences	166
Figure 115 Number of alcohol and prescription drug suspected poisoning calls, 12-24, Delaware 2012-2017	169
Substance Exposed Infant Births (SEI) in Delaware	172
Gambling	180
Overview	180
Delaware Youth	181
Mental Health	186
Overview	186
Delaware Youth	187
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)	197
Overview	197
Delaware Context	198
Reported Risk Behaviors for Students who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences:	200
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning (LGBQ) Youth	221
LGBTQ Student Risk and Protective Factors (Self-reported)	224
Transgender Youth	239
Protective Factors	242
References	256
2018 Data Sources	269

## **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning (LGBQ) Youth**

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

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

Data at the national level shows similar patterns of health disparity in the LGBQ community. One meta-analysis and review found that on average LGBQ youth were 190 percent more likely to misuse substances than heterosexual youth (Marshal, et al. 2008). Another meta-analysis found significantly

higher rates of depression and suicidality for sexual minority youth compared to other youth (Marshal, et al. 2011). These studies suggest that victimization, discrimination, and the stress associated with both may be risk factors for both substance abuse and poor mental health status among LGBQ individuals.

Strategies to prevent substance use disorders and mental illness are designed to increase protective factors, and reduce risk factors. Risk and protective factors are relevant across several domains (individual, family, peers and communities), and during various stages of the life cycle. Data from the YRBS show two domains where sexual minority youth in Delaware have increased risk factors: LGBQ youth reported poorer relationships with their parents than other youth and increased rates of bullying victimization. Data from the 2017 Delaware YRBS show that across the entire student population, students who report positive relationships with their parents have lower rates of substance abuse, and better mental health status (see the Risk and Protective Factors chapter in this report). In this instrument, positive parental relationships are measured by youth perceived parental pride, parental interest in youth activities, and comfort in sharing thoughts and feelings with parents. As the following charts illustrate, straight teens reported higher rates of parental support compared to their LGBQ peers. LGBQ youth were also more likely to report that they avoided going to school due to feeling unsafe, and were bullied (on school property and electronically) at rates approximately twice that of their heterosexual peers. Additionally, LGBQ reported they were more likely to bring a weapon to school at least once within the last 30 days (6.3%) compared to 2.9% among heterosexual youth.

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

heterosexual peers (4.9%). Across all drug categories, sexual minorities reported significantly higher rates of ever using drugs than heterosexual students.

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



## **LGBTQ Student Risk and Protective Factors (Self-reported)**

### Data Source and Notation

All data presented below comes from the 2017 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Because of small sample size in the subcategories, weights were turned off.

## 2017 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey

### Reported sexual orientation of Delaware High School Youth

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

Figure 168 Percentage of high school students who reported identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or not sure

Note:

Unweighted Data

Source:

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Tobacco Use

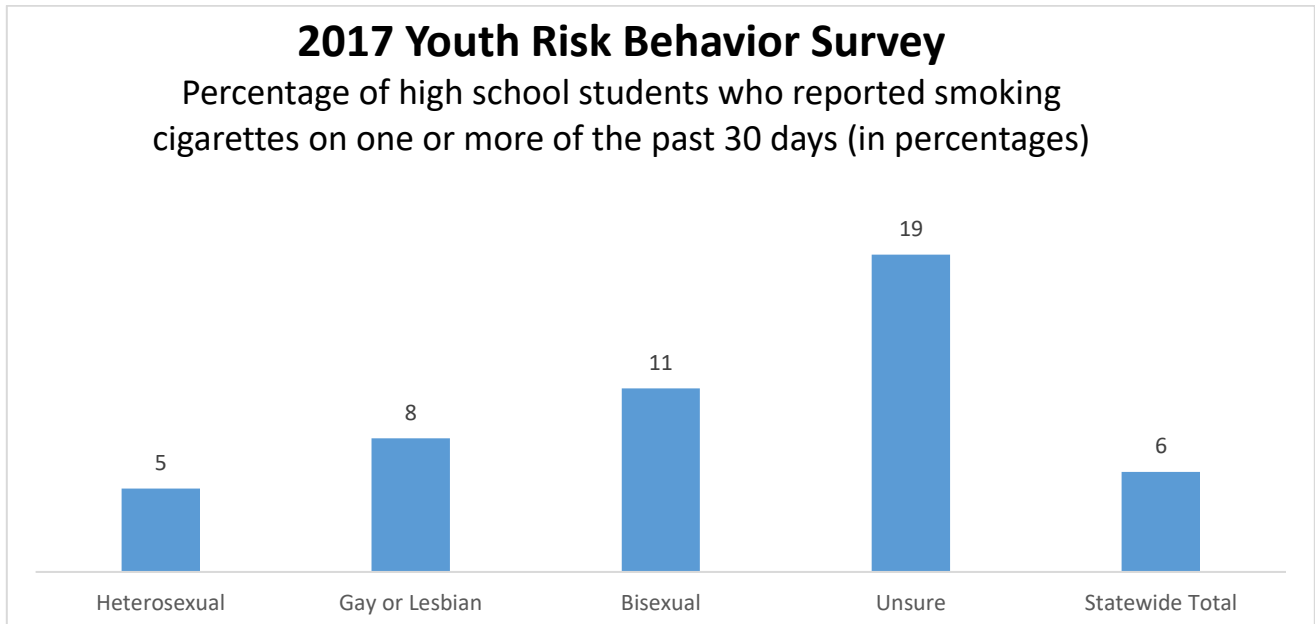


Figure 169 Percentage of high school students who reported smoking in the past 30 days, by sexual orientation

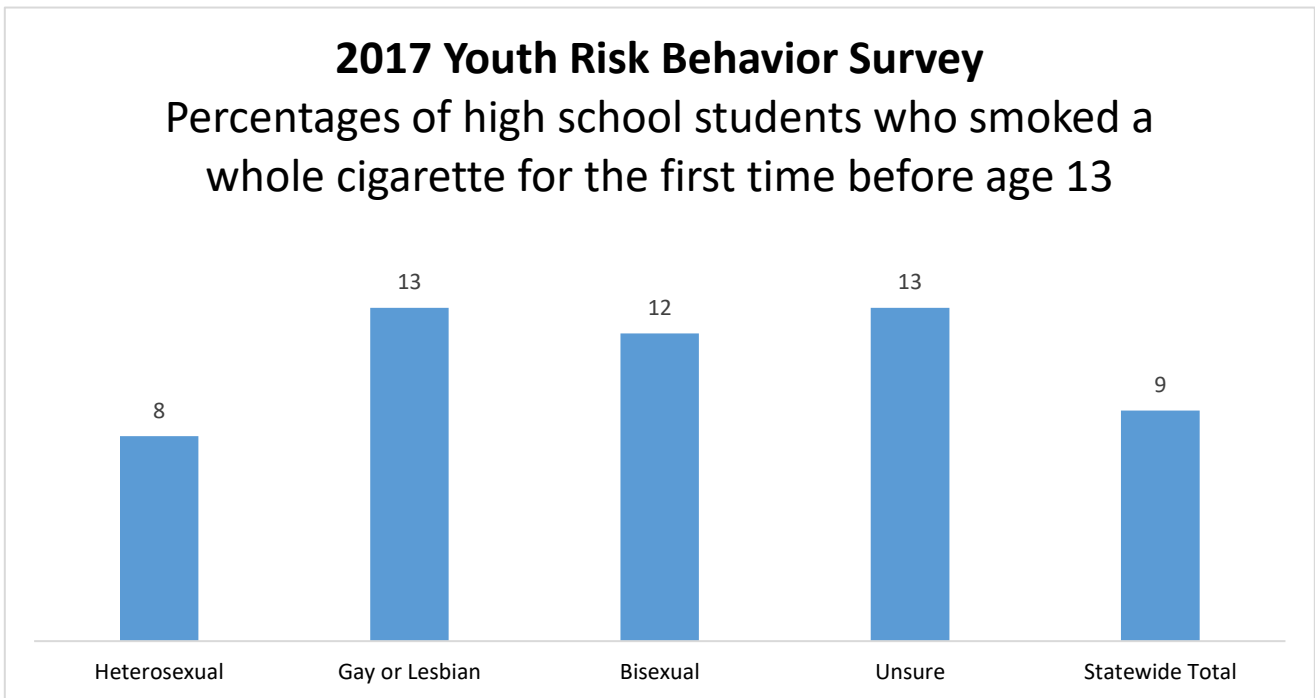


Figure 170 Percentage of high school students who reported first smoking before age 13

Note:

Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Alcohol Use

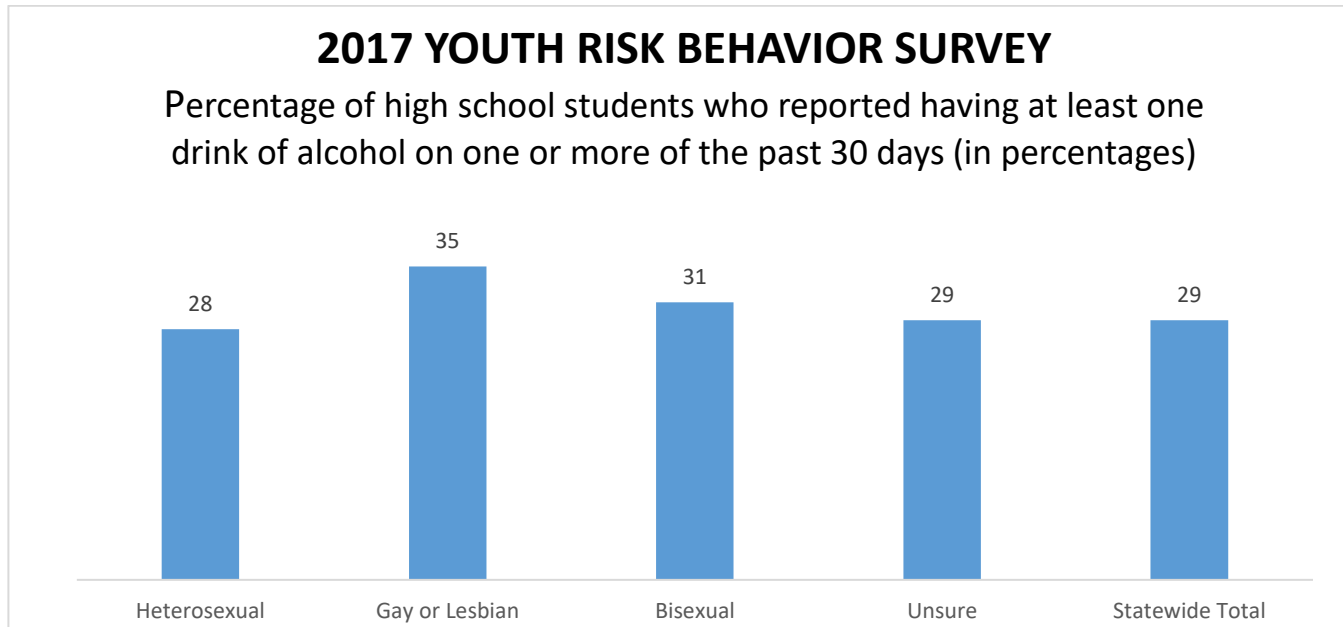


Figure 171 Percentage of high schools students who reported having at least one drink of alcohol in the past month, by sexual orientation

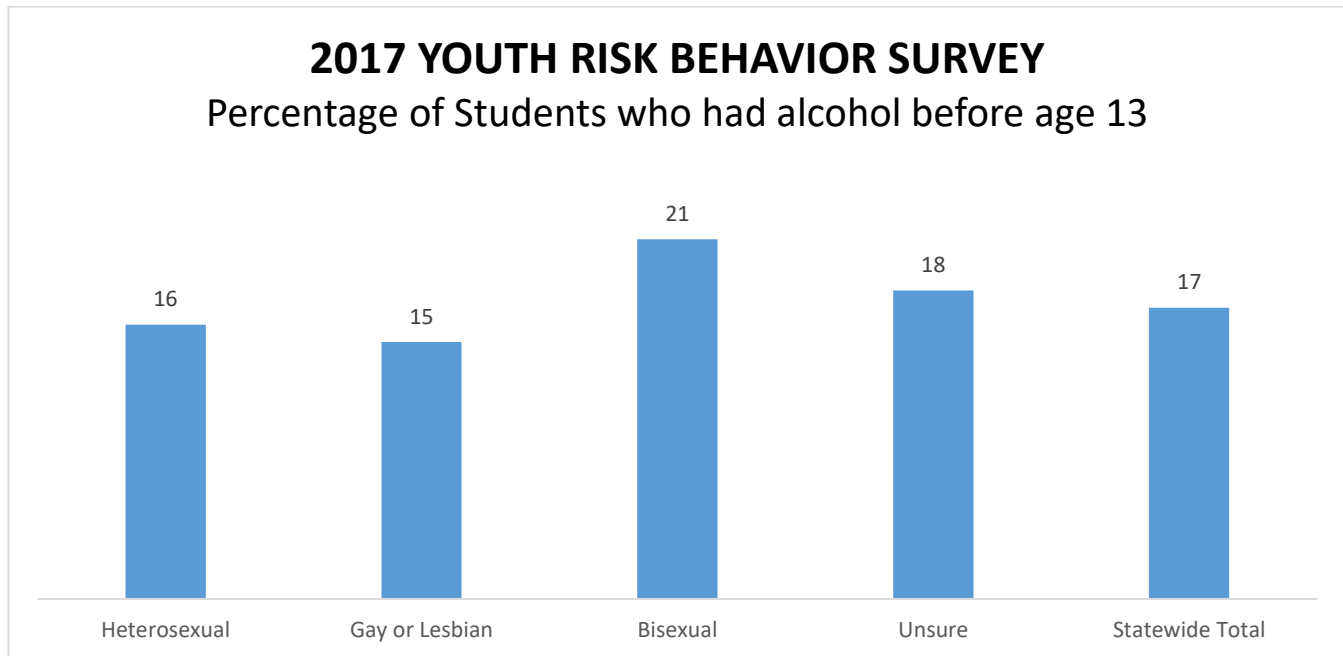


Figure 172 Percentage of students who reported drinking before the age of 13, by sexual orientation

Note:  
Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

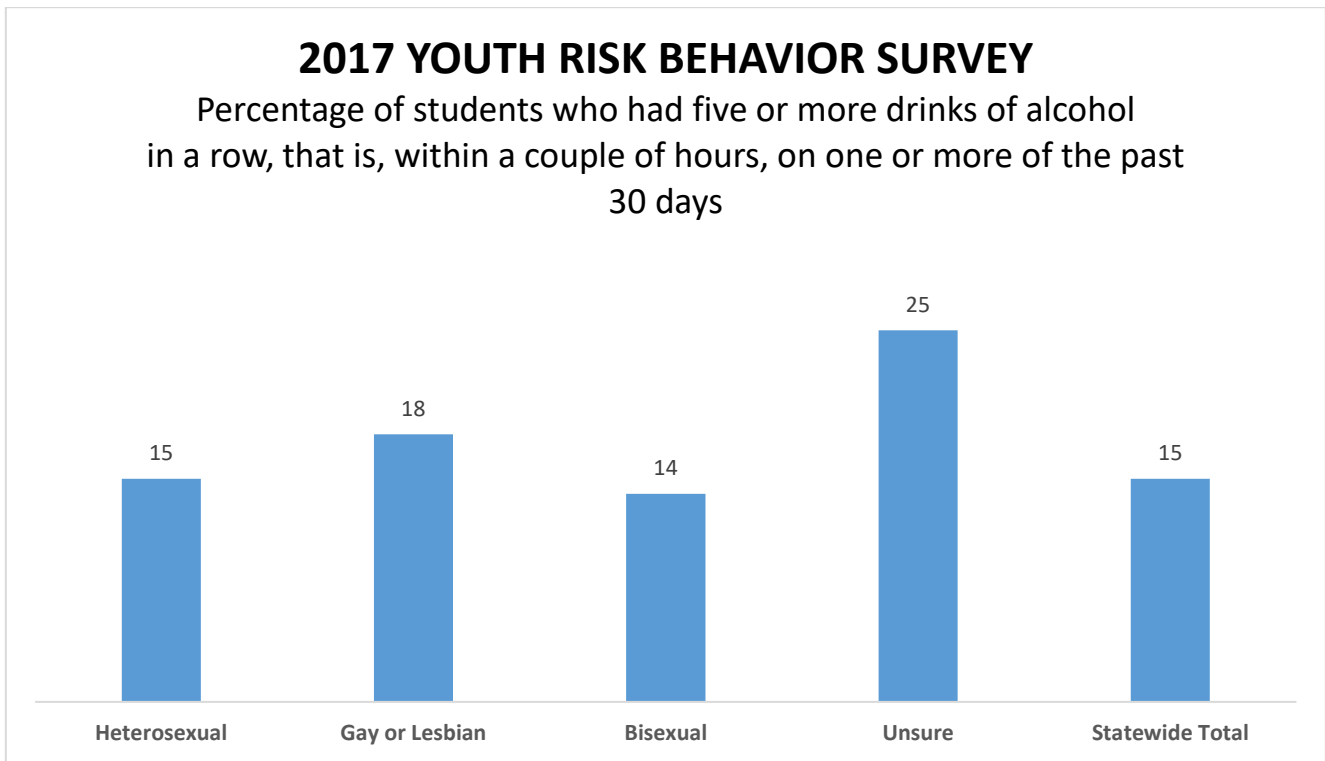


Figure 173 Percentage of students who reported binge drinking in the past month, by sexual orientation

Note:

Unweighted Data

Source:

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Marijuana Use

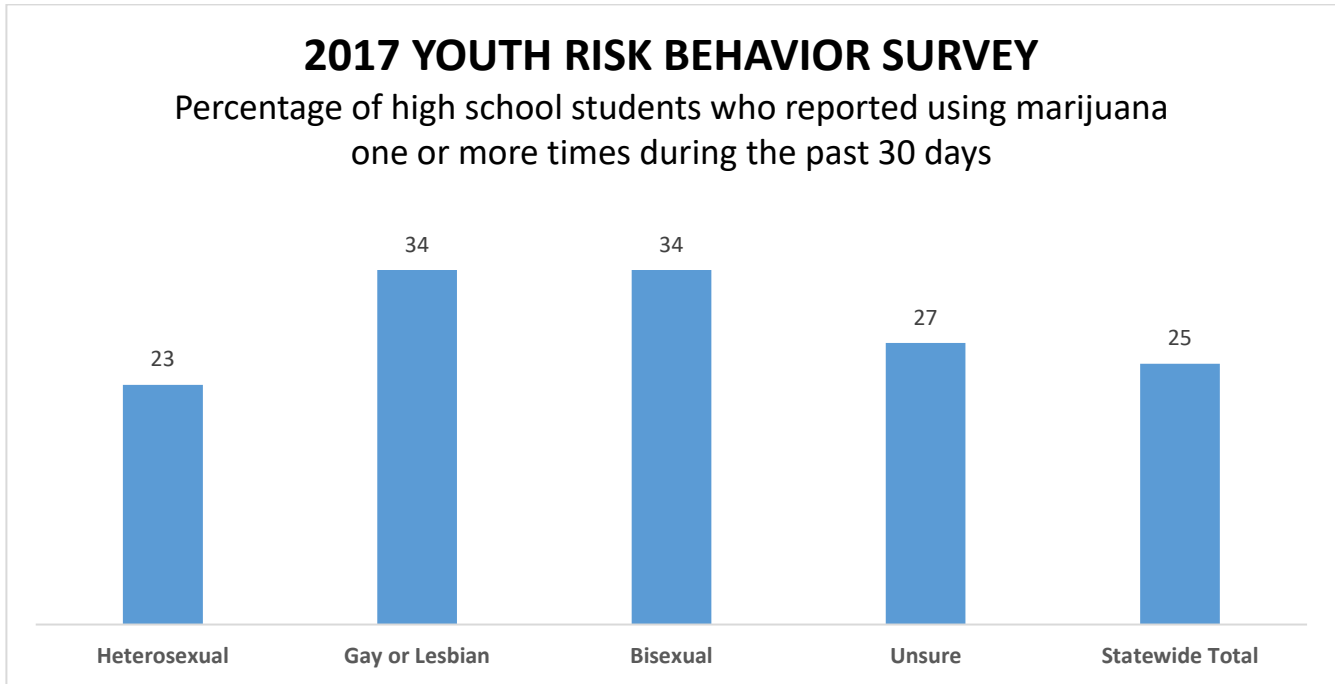


Figure 174 Percentage of high school students who reported using marijuana in the past 30 days, by sexual orientation

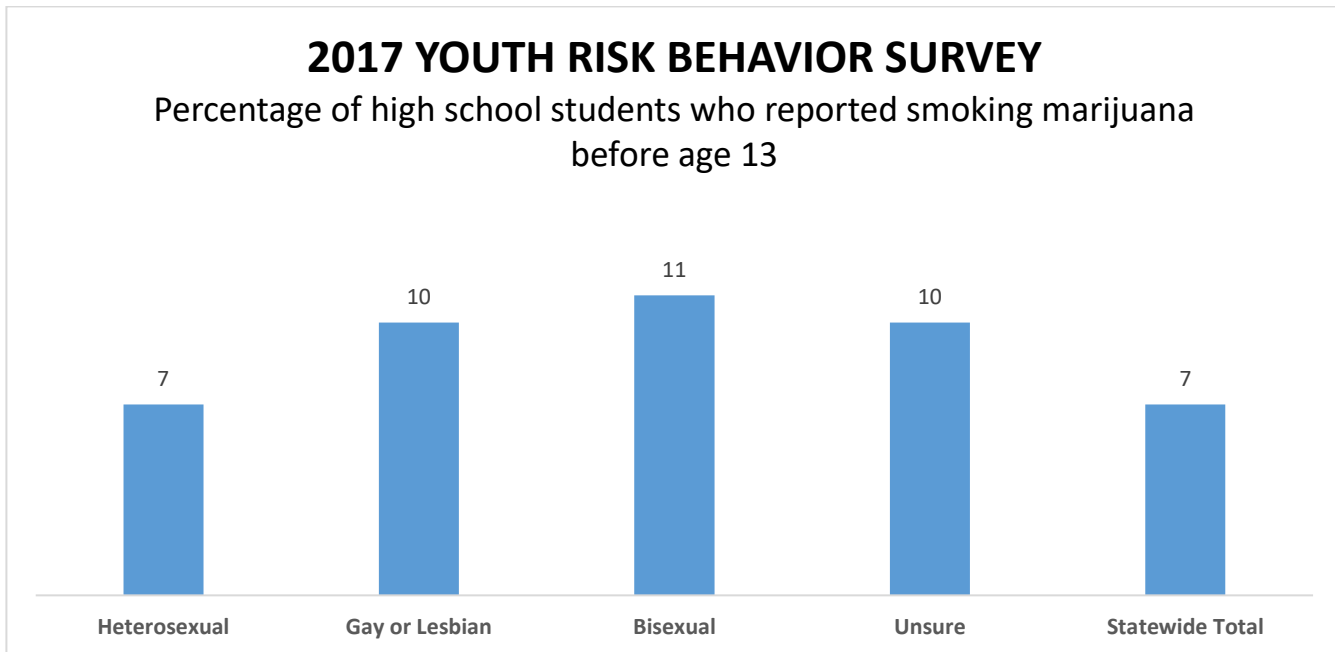


Figure 175 Percentage of high school students who reported using marijuana in the past 30 days by sexual orientation

Note:  
Unweighted Data

Source:

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Miscellaneous Drug Use

### 2017 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Percentage of high school students who reported ever using other illegal drugs in their lifetime

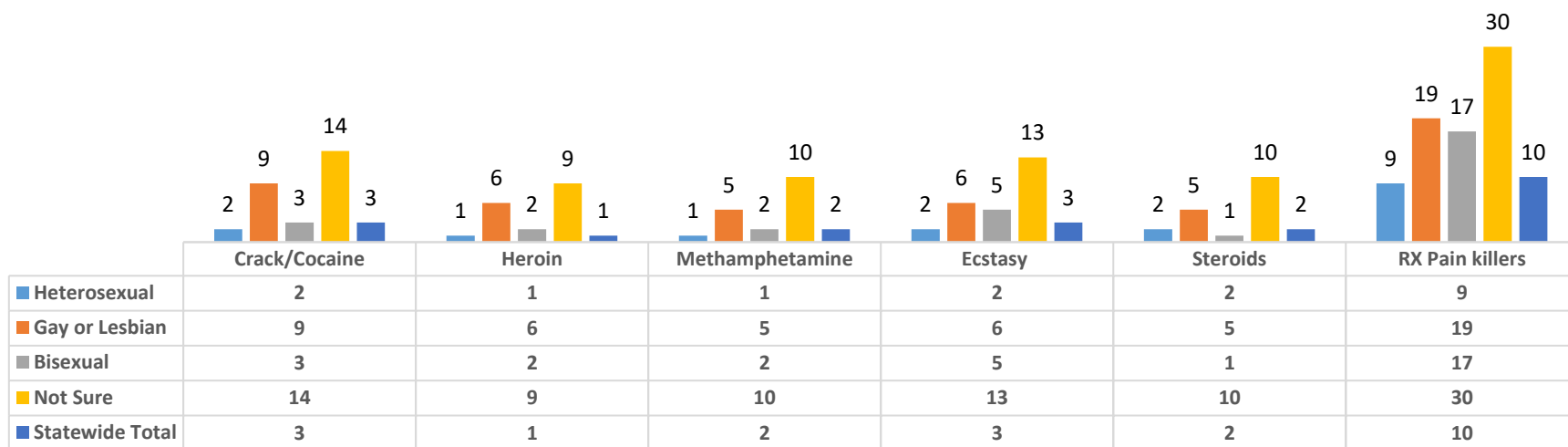


Figure 176 Percentage of high school students who reported ever using selected illegal drugs

Note:  
Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Sexual Activity

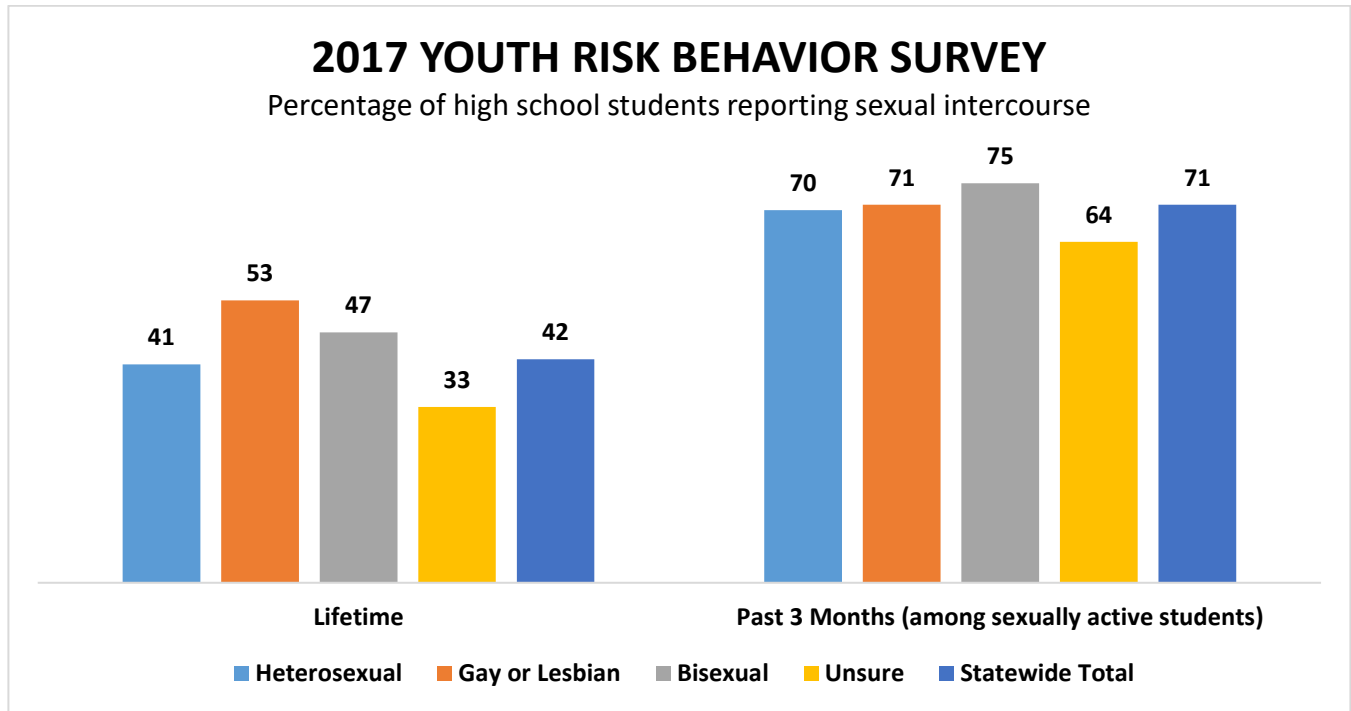


Figure 177 Percentage of high school students reporting sexual intercourse, by sexual orientation

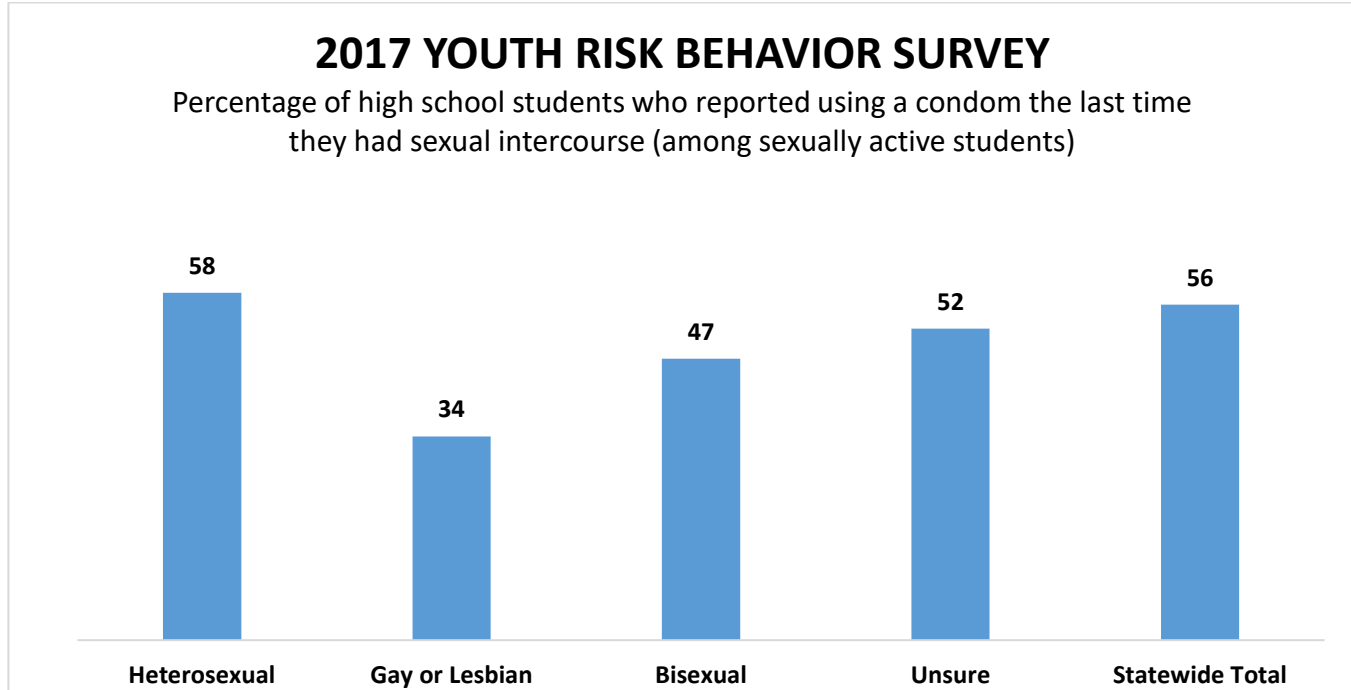


Figure 178 Percentage of high school students who reported using a condom, by sexual orientation

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



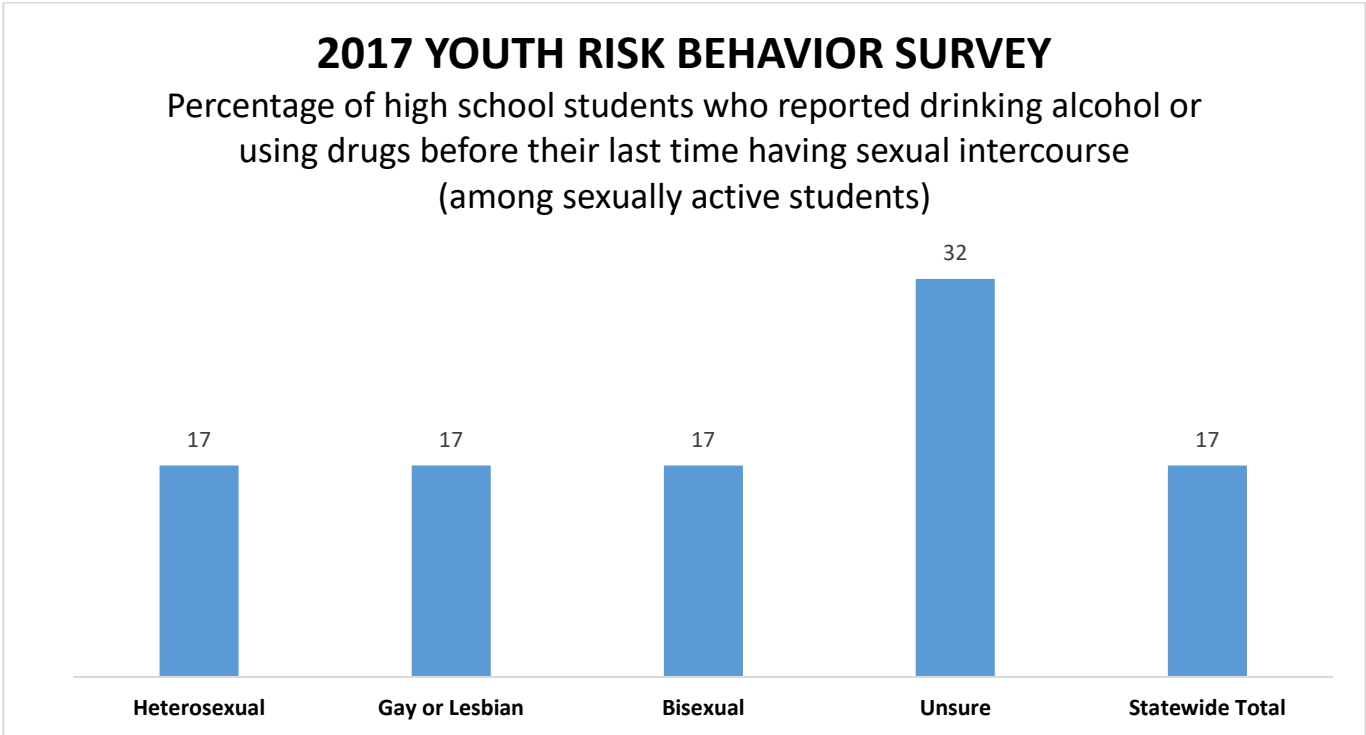


Figure 179 Percentage of high school students reported drinking alcohol or using drugs before last sexual intercourse.

Note:

Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Fighting and Weapon Use

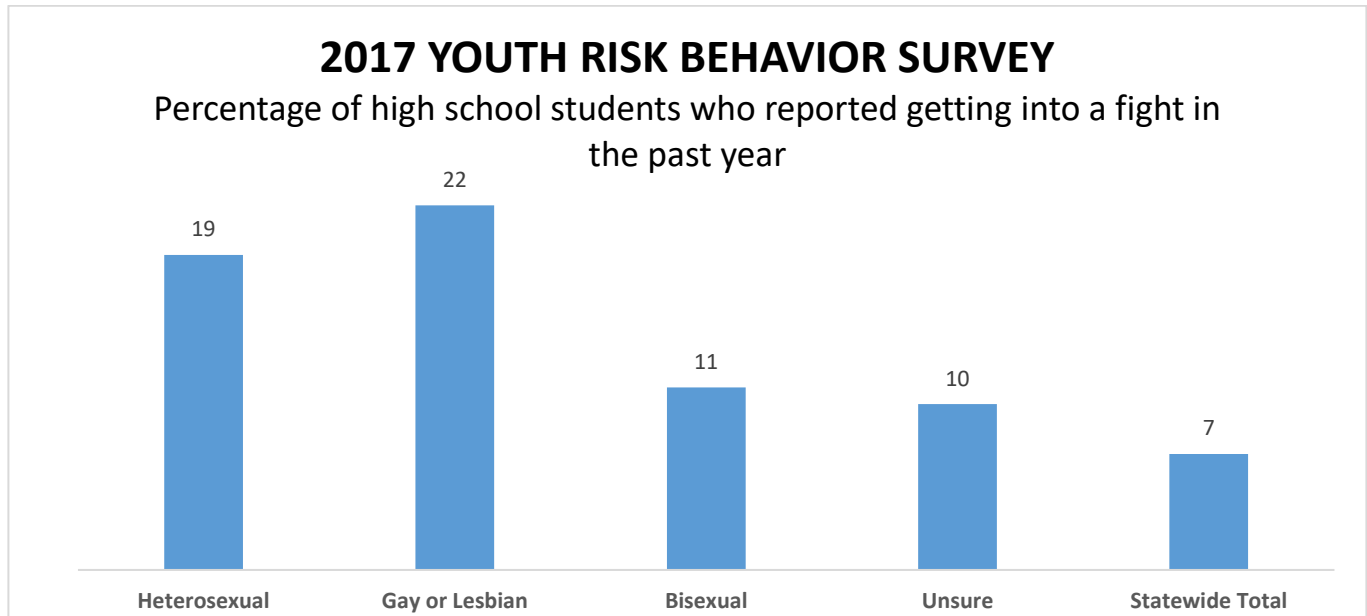


Figure 180 Percentage of high school students who reported getting into a fight in the past year, by sexual orientation

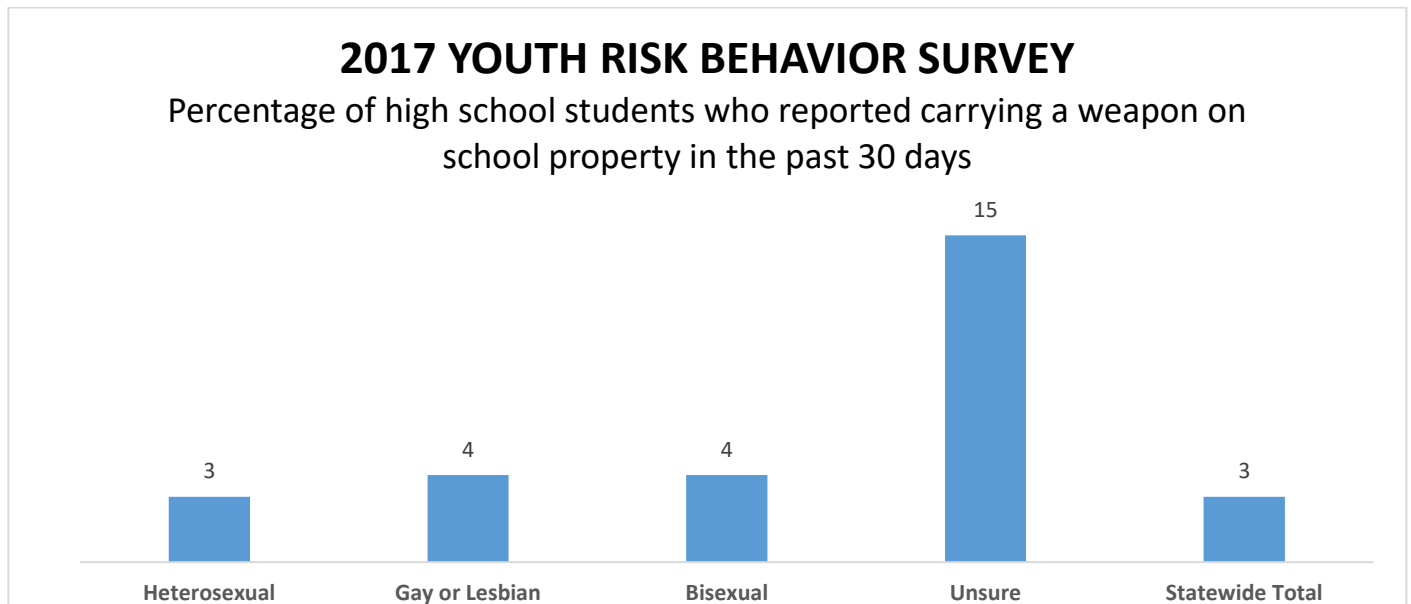


Figure 181 Percentage of high school students who reported carrying a weapon on school property in the past 30 days, by sexual orientation

Note:

Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Bullying

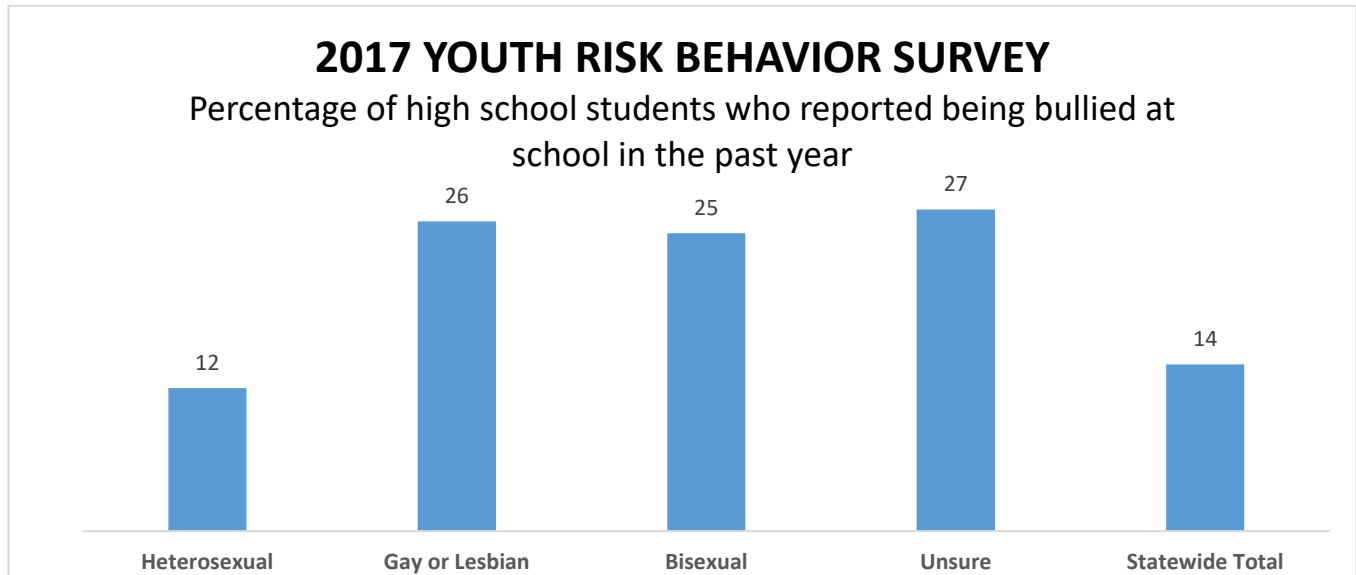


Figure 182 Percentage of high school students who reported being bullied in the past 30 days, by sexual orientation

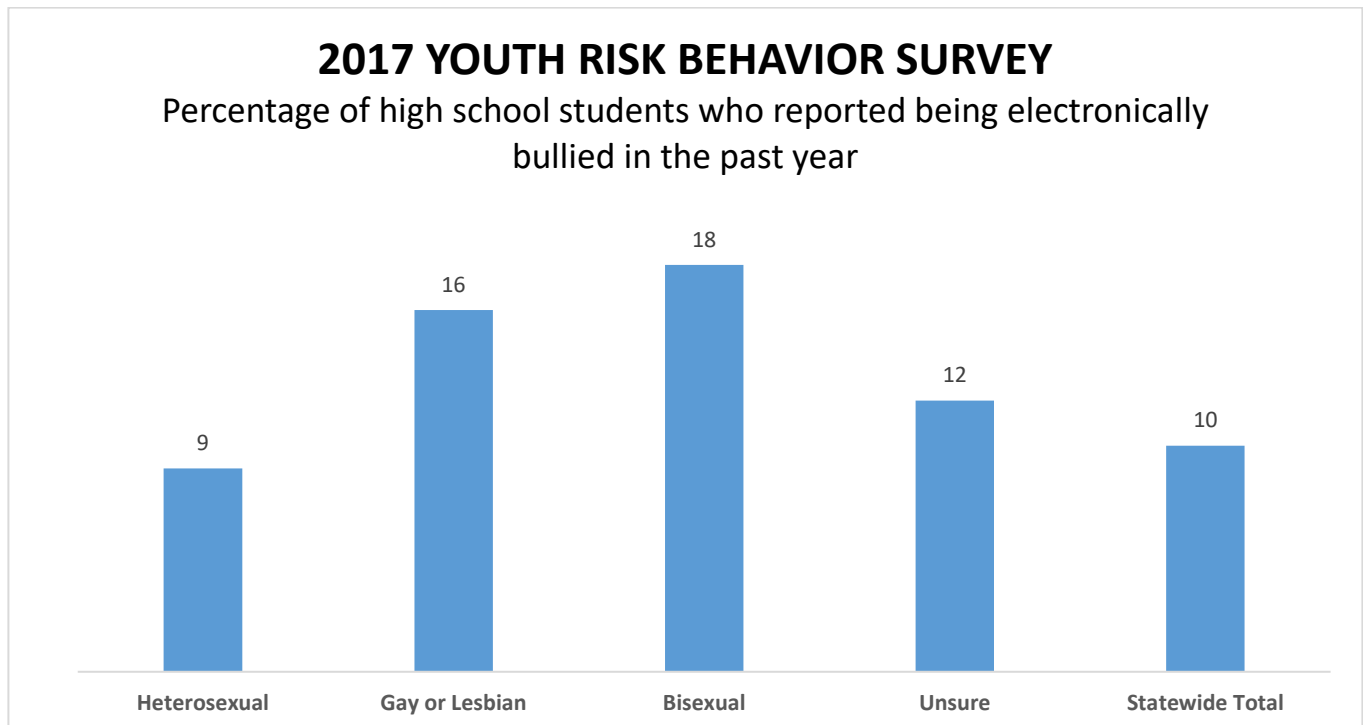


Figure 183 Percentage of students who reported being bullied electronically, by sexual orientation

Note:

Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

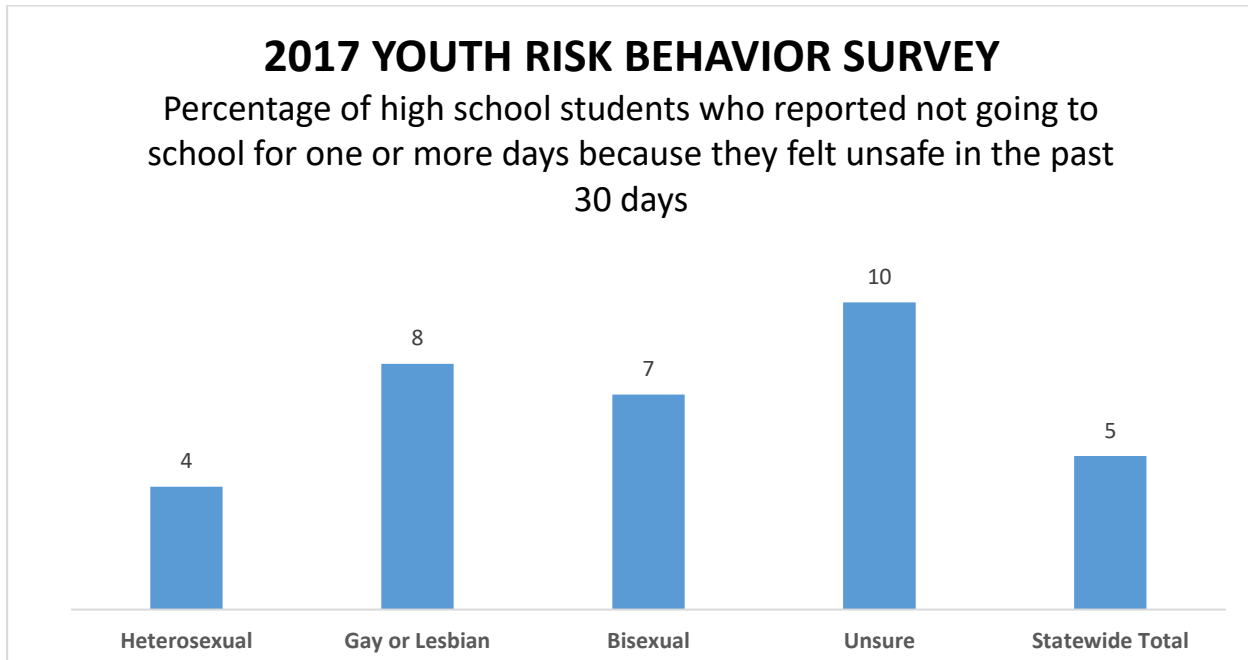


Figure 184 Percentage of high school students who reported not going to school because they felt unsafe

Note:

Unweighted Data

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Parental Relationships

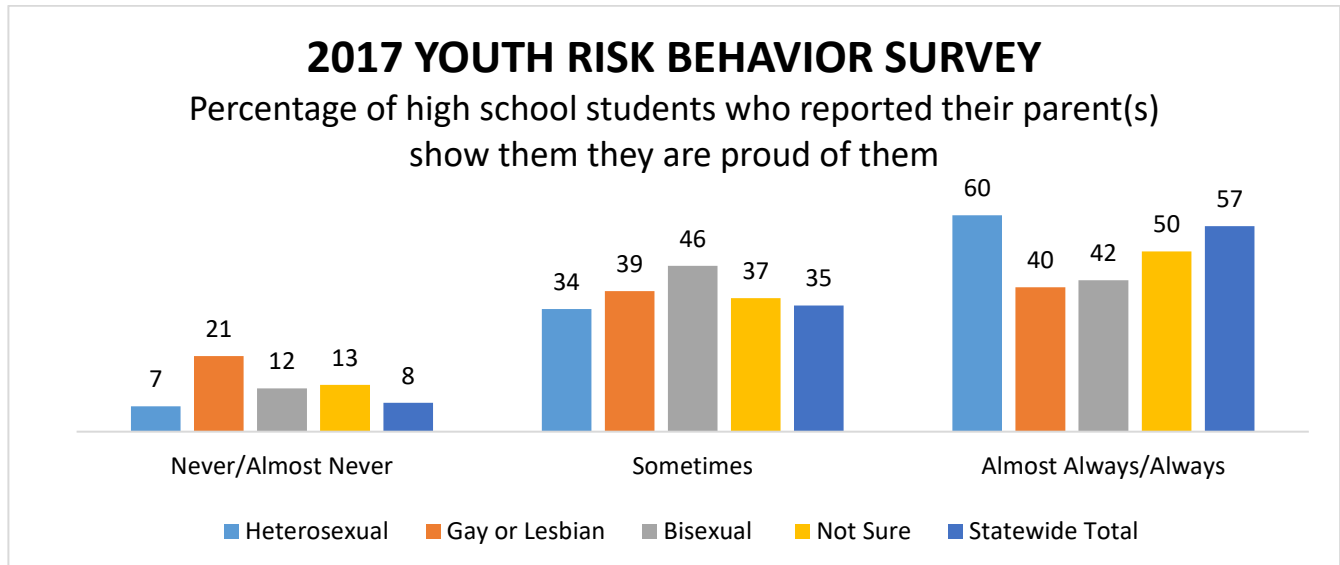


Figure 185 Percentage of high school students who reported their parents show them they are proud of them, by sexual orientation

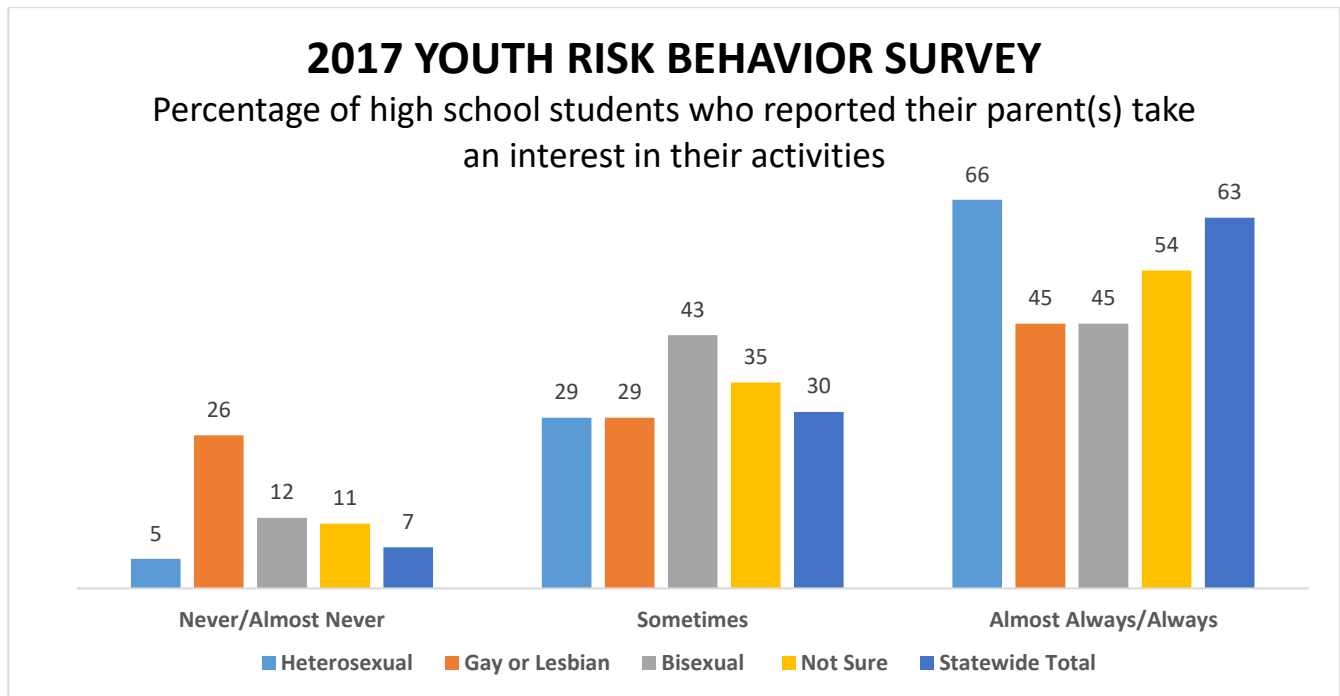


Figure 186 Percentage of high school students who reported their parents take an interest in their activities, by sexual orientation

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

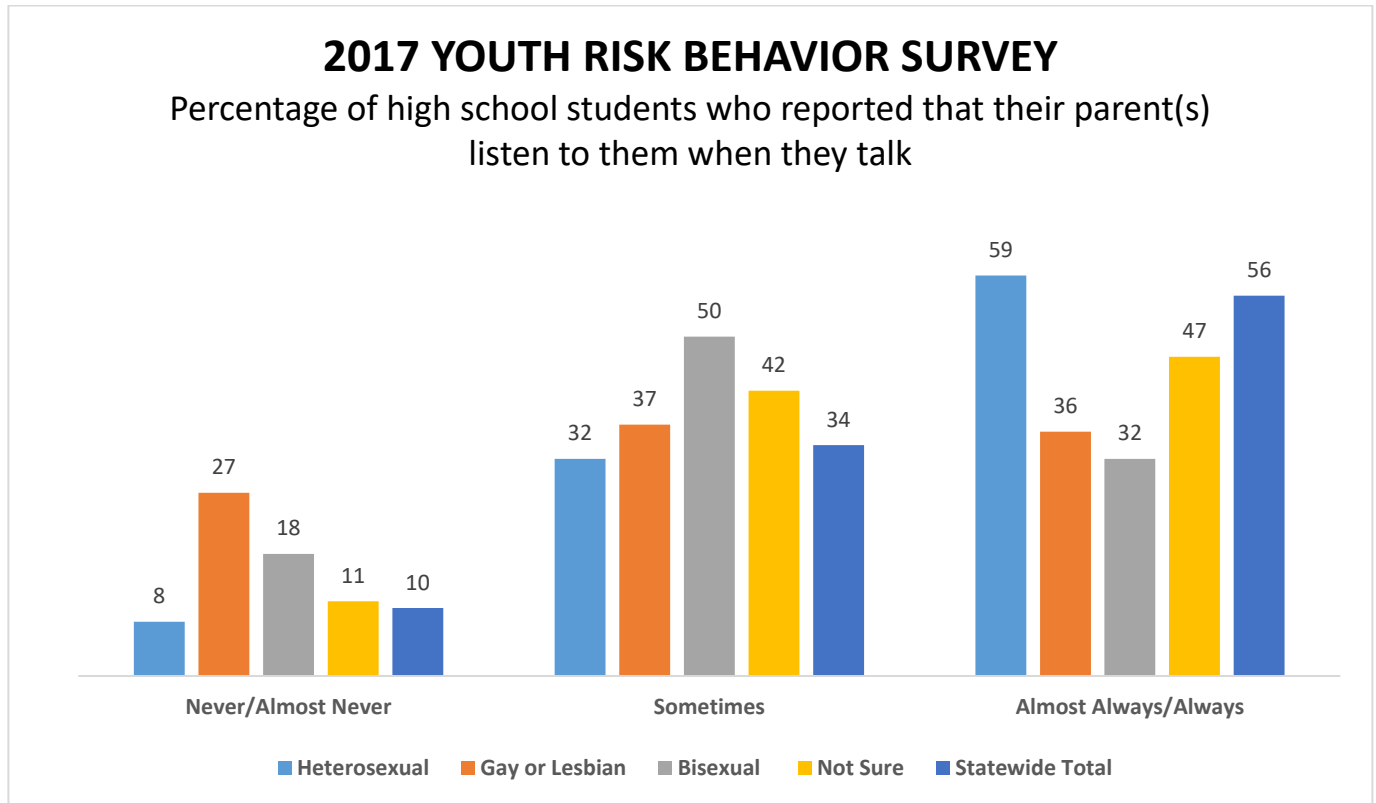


Figure 187 Percentage of high school students who reported their parents listen to them, by sexual orientation

Note:

Unweighted Data

Source:

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

## Mental Health

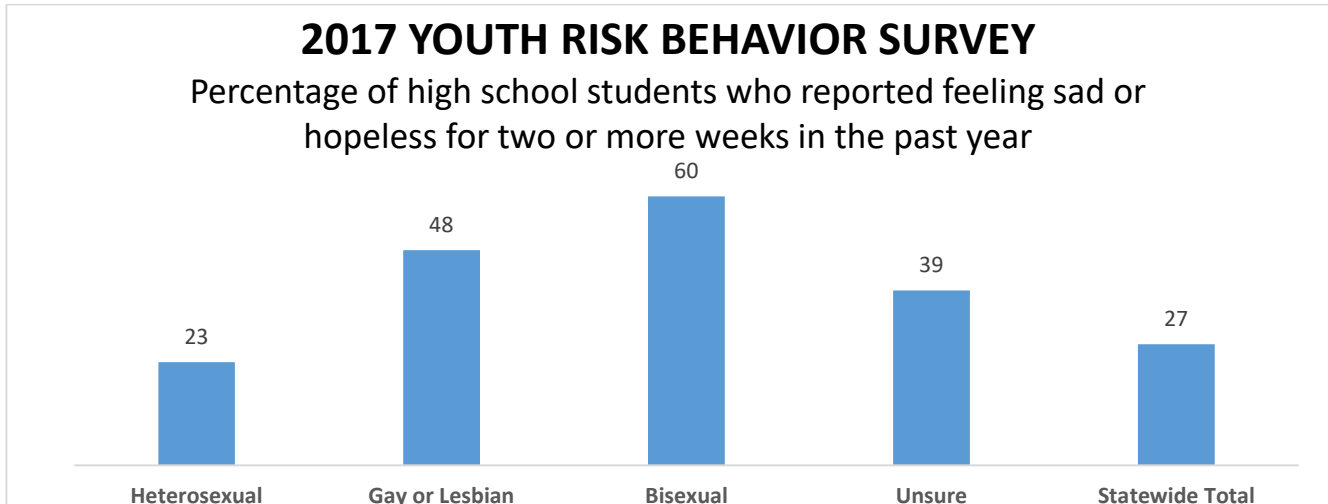


Figure 188 Percentage of high school students who reported feeling sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in the past year, by sexual orientation.

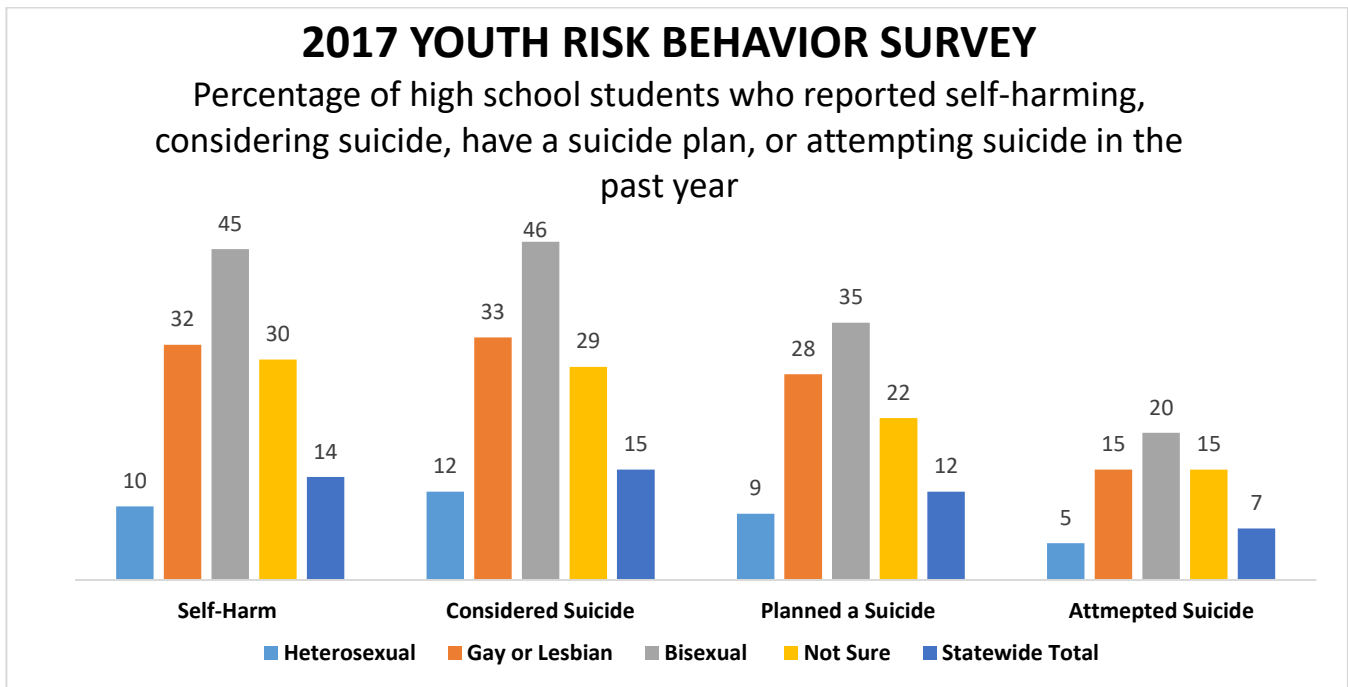


Figure 189 Percentage of high school students who reported self-harming, considering suicide, having a suicide plan, and attempting suicide, by sexual orientation.

Note:  
 Unweighted Data  
 Source:

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

[Back to table of figures](#)

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## 2018 Data Sources

Data Instrument	Administered/Compiled by	Most Recent Data	Data Range
Data Base/Diagnostics Plus	-	-	1989-1993
Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS)	DELJIS	2016	-
Delaware Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)	DE Division of Public Health (sponsored by the CDC)	2015	-
Delaware Courts	Office of the Child Advocate	2017	-
Delaware Department of Health and Social Services	DE Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health	-	2012 – 2017
Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security	Medical Examiner, Division of Forensic Medicine	2016	2014 – 2016
Delaware Household Health Survey	Delaware Public Health Institute	2015	-
Delaware Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)	Delaware Office of Controlled Substance, Division of Professional Regulation	2015	2013 – 2015
Delaware School Survey (DSS) – 5 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , and 11 <sup>th</sup> grades	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD	2017	1995 – 2017
Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – High School	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD (sponsored by DE Division of Public Health and the CDC)	2017	1999 – 2017
Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – Middle School	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD (sponsored by Nemours)	2017	1999 – 2017
Delaware Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) – 6 <sup>th</sup> =12 <sup>th</sup> grades	Center for Drug and Health Studies, UD (sponsored by the DE Division of Public Health and the CDC)	2016	-
Department of Public Instruction	-	1994	-
Monitoring the Future	University of Michigan	2017	2016 – 2017
National High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey	US Centers for Disease Control	2017	1995 – 2017
National Poison Data System	American Association of Poison Control Centers	2012	2012-2017
Performance Measures, Delaware	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	2016	2007 – 2016
National Survey of Children’s Health	US Census Bureau	2016	2016
National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	2015-2016	2002 – 2016
Treatment Admissions Data	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, DE Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health	2017	2003 – 2017

In addition to the data sources for the figures and tables in the 2018 report, the following data sources are also cited throughout the narrative:

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- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Delaware Health Tracker
- Delaware State Police/Delaware Statistical and Analysis Center
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Kaiser Family Foundation
- KIDS COUNT in Delaware
- PolicyMap
- Prescription Behavior Surveillance System at Brandeis University
- Tobacco21.org
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Census Bureau