

# Expert

# Q & A



## The Vulnerabilities of LGBTQ and Homeless Youth to Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

**Featured Host:**  
Dr. Meredith Dank

June 21, 2017

*The session is being recorded.  
The audio for today's session will play through your  
computer speakers.*

# Technical Overview

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- If you are experiencing any technical issues with the audio for this session, please let us know in the Chat box.
- As with all technology, we may experience a momentary lapse in the webinar session. In the event of a problem, please be patient and remain on the line. If the problem persists, please contact our technical specialist, Jason Adams, by sending him a private chat or by emailing him at [jadams@ovccttac.org](mailto:jadams@ovccttac.org) for technical assistance.
- Today's session will be recorded and made available on the OVC TTAC Expert Q&A Past Sessions tab.
- Please type your questions in the Chat box, and we will address as many as possible during this session.



# Overview of Adobe Connect

The screenshot displays the Adobe Connect interface during a webinar. The main window shows a presentation slide titled "Expert Q & A" with the subtitle "Applying for VOCA Formula Funds on the State Level: How to Navigate the New Final Rule, Increased VOCA Funding, and the State Administrating Agency Applications". The slide also includes logos for the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, OVC, and OVCTTAC, along with the date "February 15, 2017" and a note that the session is being recorded. The interface includes a top toolbar with "Draw" and "Stop Sharing" buttons, a right-hand sidebar with "Attendees (1)" (listing Danielle McLean), "Instructions" (audio and chat instructions), and "Chat (Everyone)". A bottom toolbar shows navigation controls and a "Sync" button. Below the main window is a "Caption Viewer" for "AC9\_ClosedCaptioning\_v.4.1.swf" with settings for font size (18 pt) and color (White (B)), and a "Waiting for Captions" status.



# Q&A

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**Dr. Meredith  
Dank**



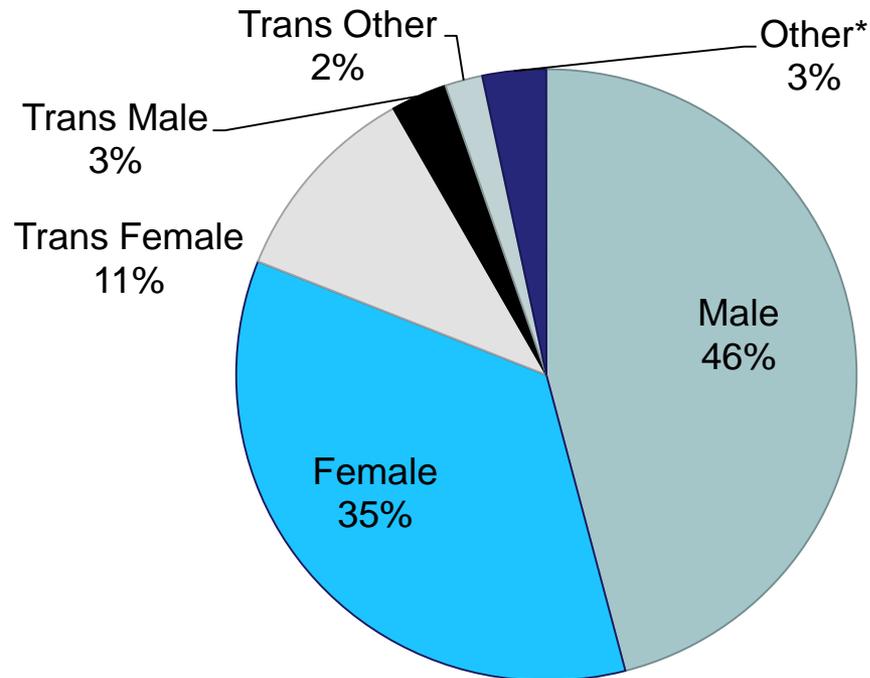
# Terminology

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- **Youth engaged in survival sex:** The terms “youth engaged in survival sex” and “youth who exchange sex for money and/or material goods (e.g. shelter, food drugs, etc.)” are used here to reflect young people’s experiences of involvement in the commercial sex market in their own terms. These terms describe a behavior as opposed to labeling the youth themselves.
- **Exploiter:** An individual who uses tactics involving force, fraud, and coercion to control a young person’s involvement in the commercial sex market.
- **Peer facilitator:** A peer, who may or may not be engaged in survival sex, who provides nonexploitative support to someone engaging in survival sex, such that the person engaging in survival sex does not have limited mobility; decides what they do and what they trade sex for; and is not subject to force, fraud, or coercion.



# Gender

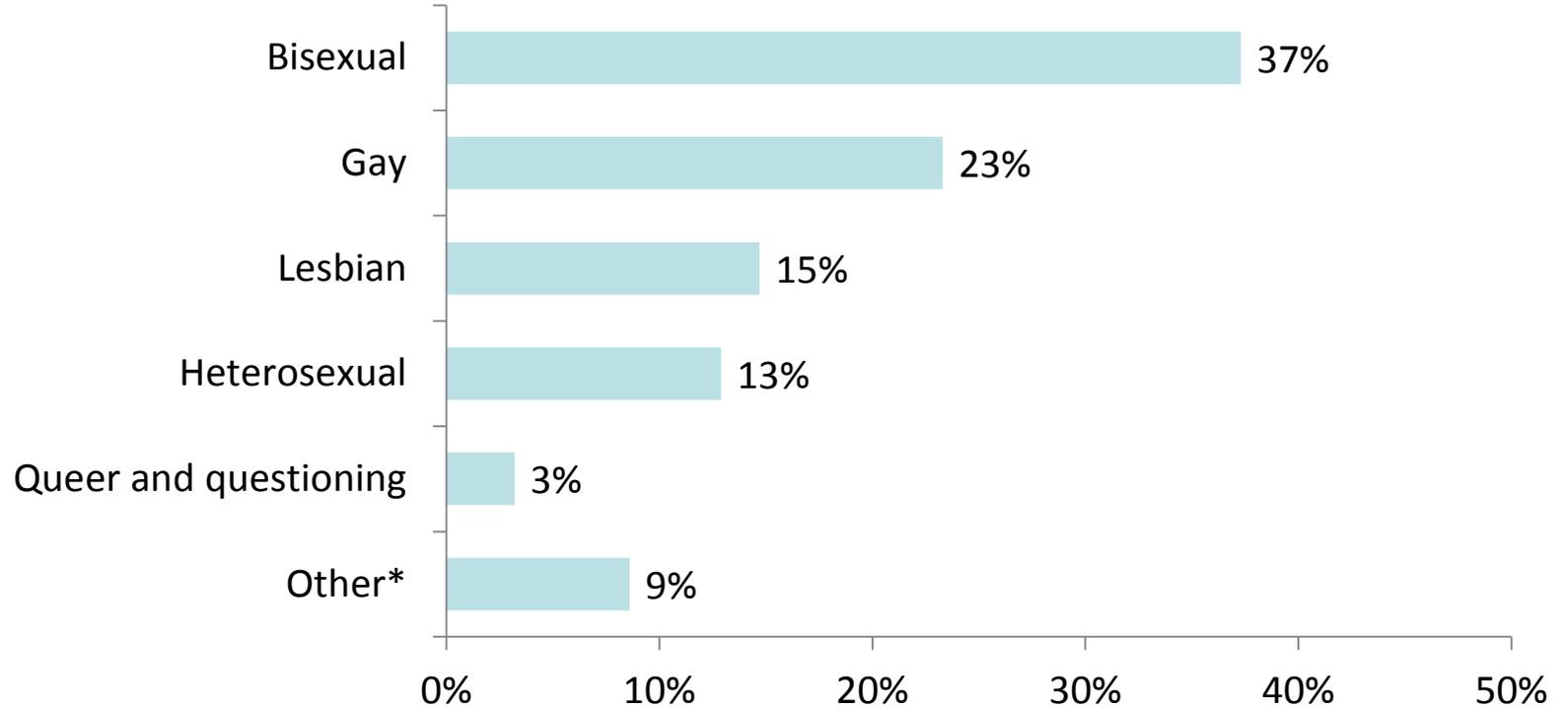


\*Includes queer/questioning, androgynous, femme, gender non-conforming, and genderless

- Half identified as male, one-third as female
- 11% identified as transgender female, 3% identified as transgender male



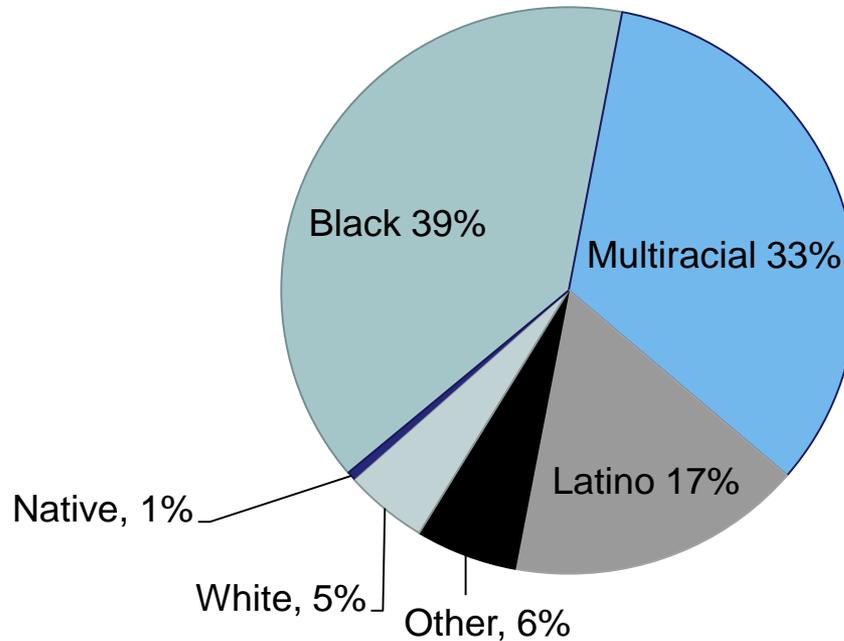
# Sexual Orientation



\*Includes open, pansexual, no preference, and no label



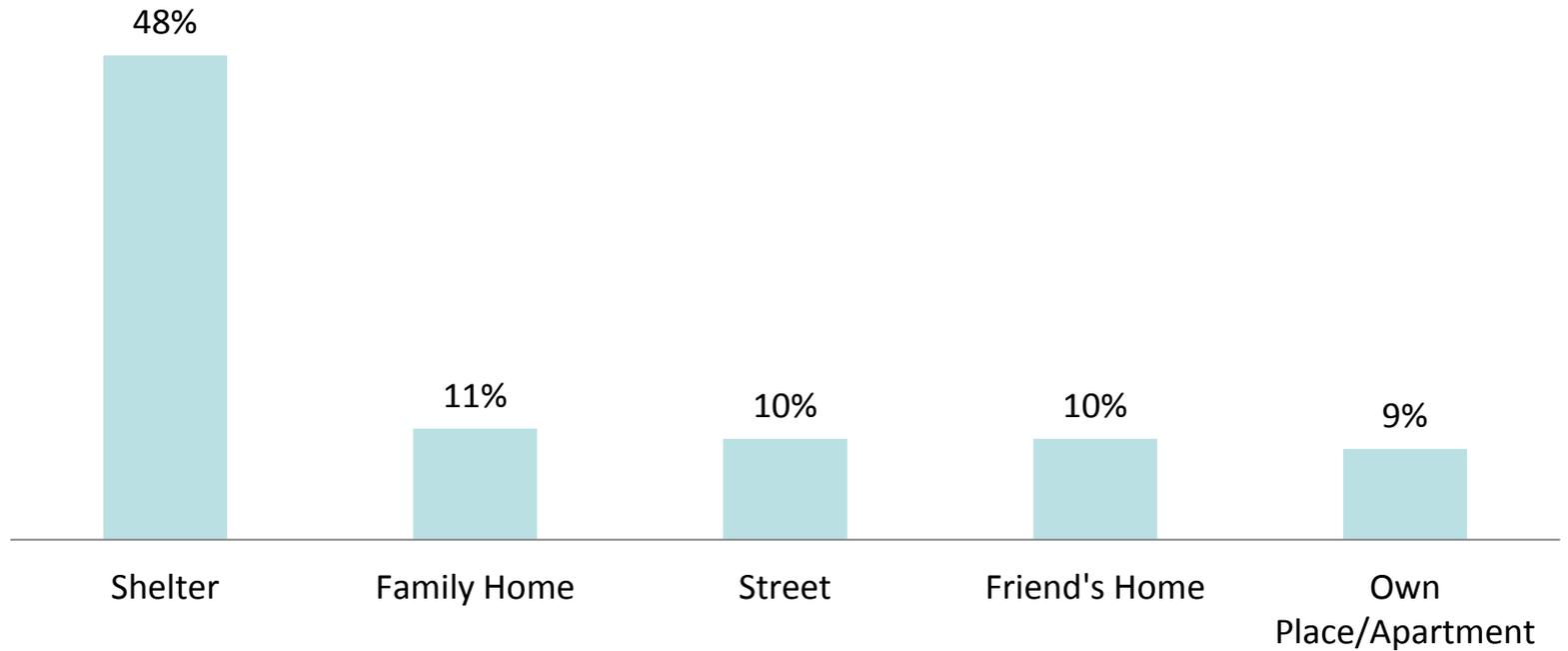
# Race



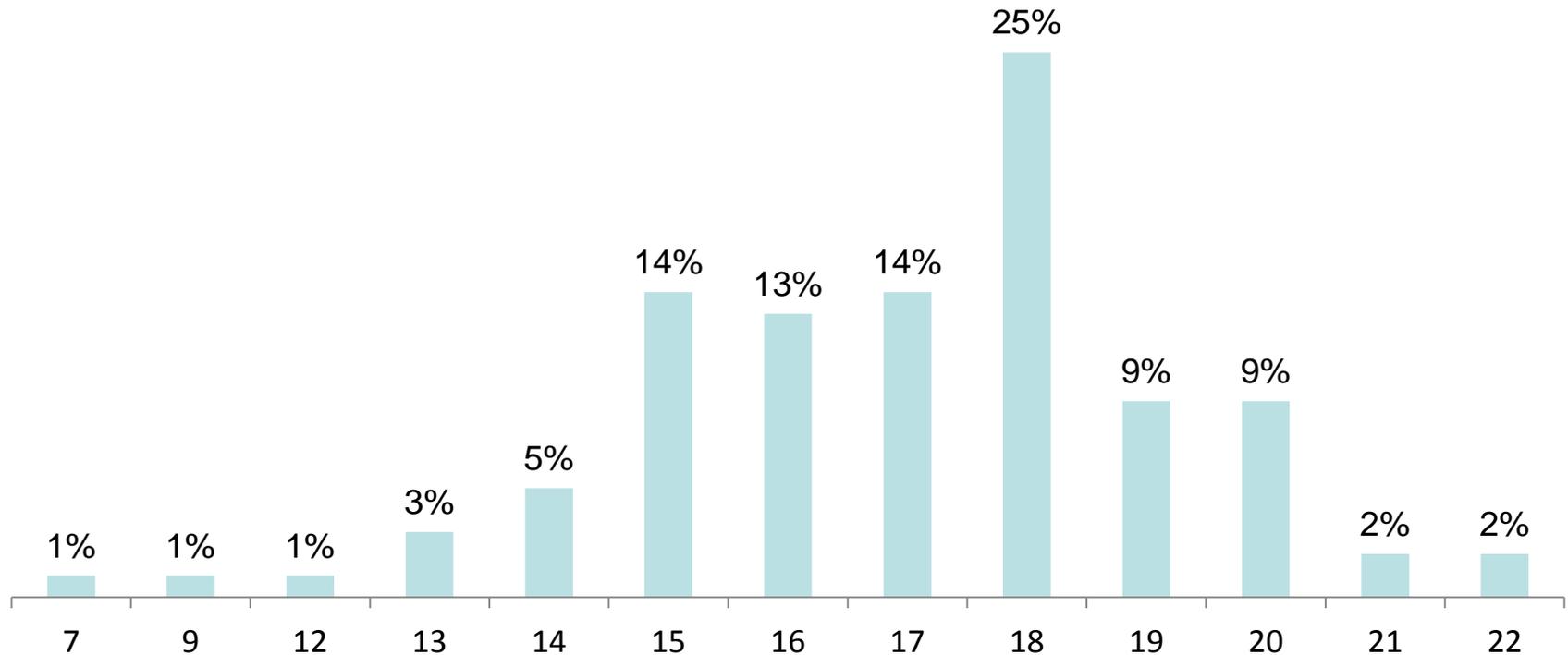
- Majority of youth were people of color
- 39 % identified as Black/African-American
- 17% as Hispanic/Latino
- 33% with more than one race and/or ethnicity



# Living Situation



# Age First Engaged in Survival Sex



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# Why are youth who identify as LGBTQ+ at such a high risk for human trafficking?



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**Please explain the difference between "survival sex" and "commercial sexual exploitation."**



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**What do you see as the biggest hurdles to eradicating the exploitation of this population?**



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**What are the resiliency and protective factors that providers can leverage when serving survivors who identify as a part of the LGBTQ+ community?**



# Resiliency

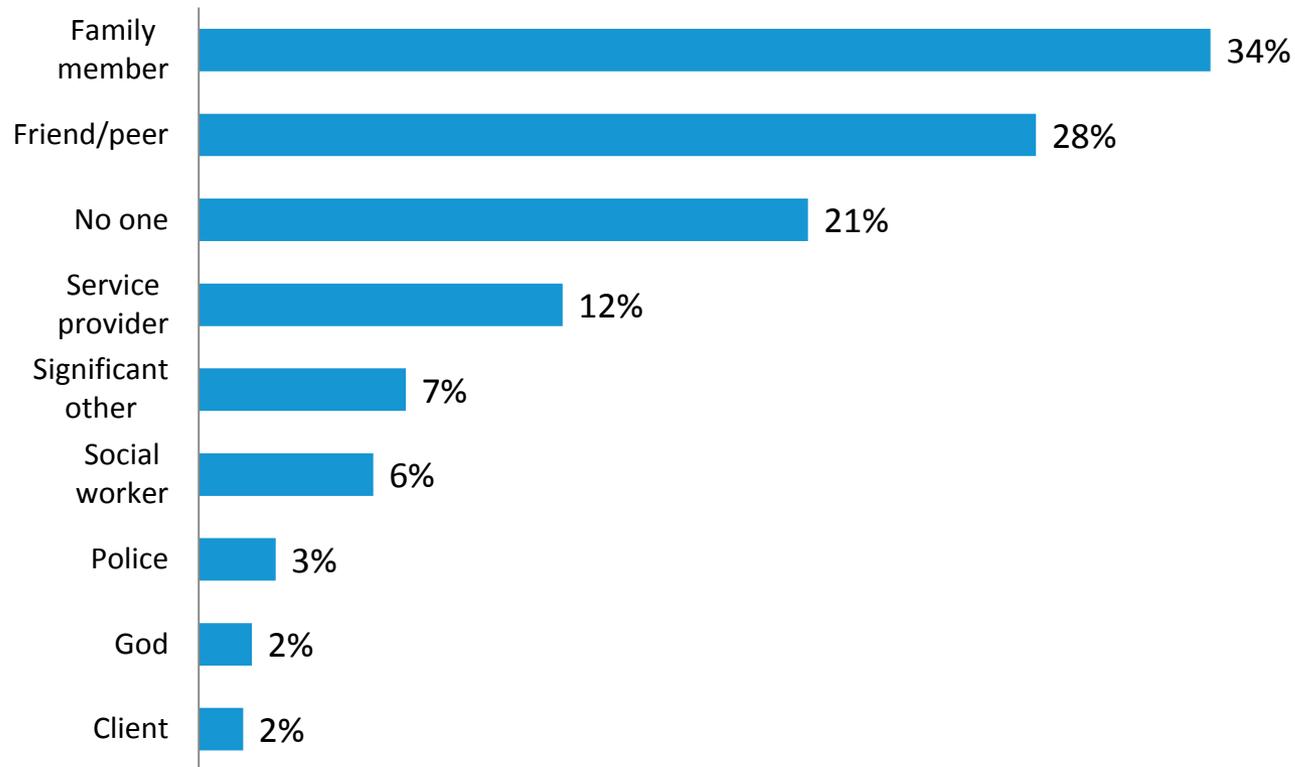
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There are many positive things about trading sex. You can trade sex for the life of your kids, you can trade sex to keep your apartment, you can trade sex to feed yourself...Some people think that the sex trade is the worst thing you to do cause your selling yourself...but when it boils down to it, if you have no food in your stomach, if you have no transportation, but you have a man in your face willing to give you money for a half hour, you put your pride to the side, you throw everything out the window and you forget who you are and you forget what you're doing and you learn to be someone else.

*19 years old, Latino, gay, male*



# Who Youth Go To When in Trouble

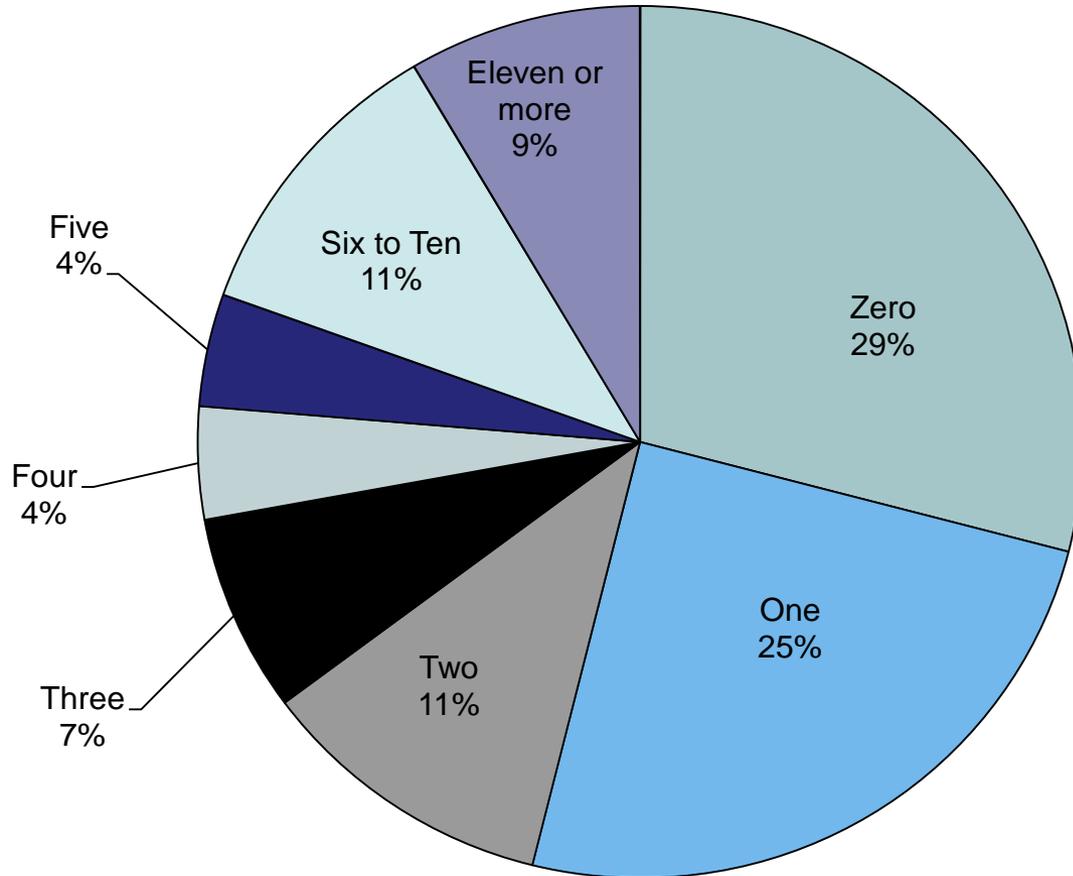


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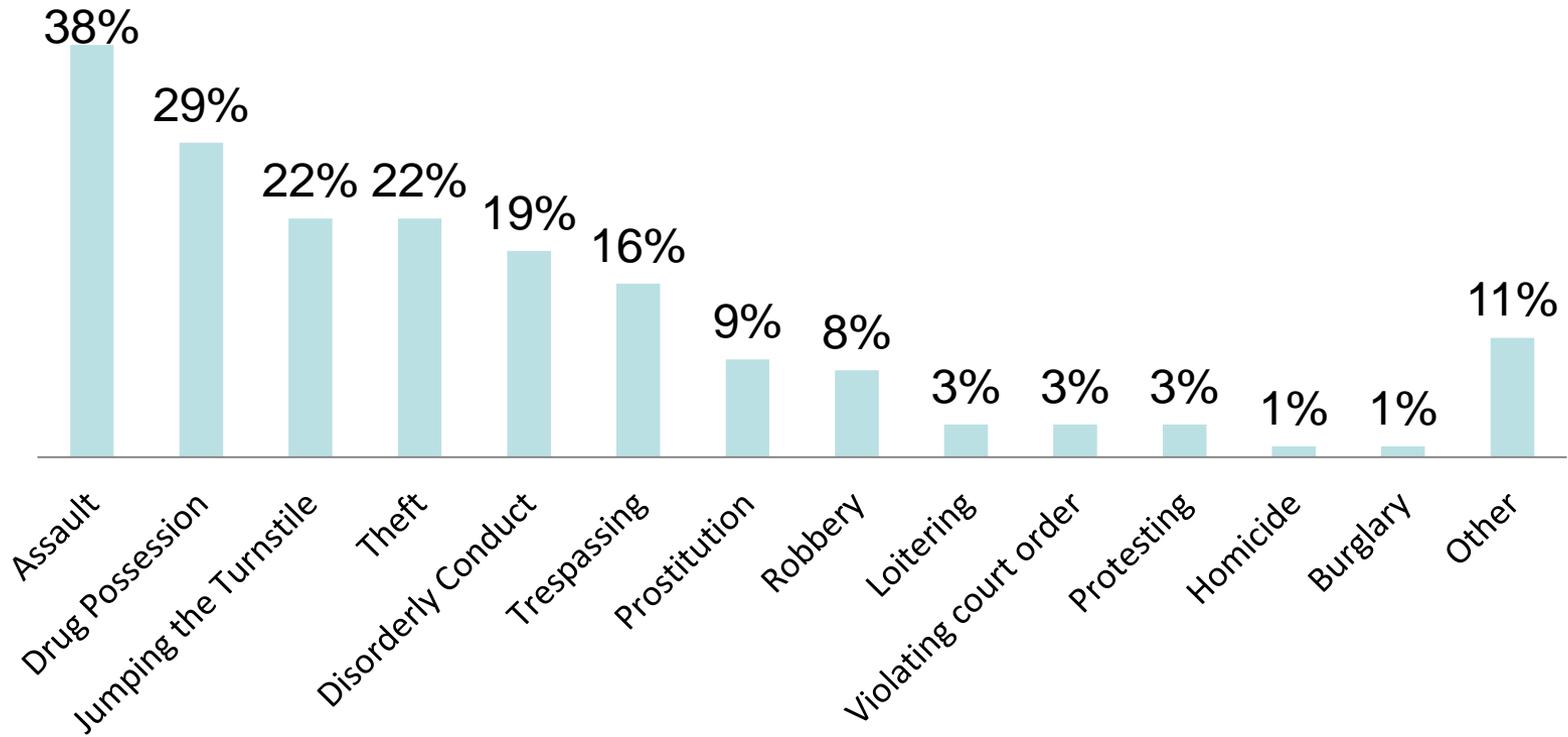
# What contextual factors contribute to exploitation of, and violence toward LGBTQ+ youth?



# Number of Arrests



# Arrest Charges



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**What are indicators to look for when identifying youth that are involved in situations they describe as "survival sex?"**



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**How can we best help youth who rely on "survival sex," and are at risk of trafficking?**



# Recommendations from Youth

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## Increased Comprehensive Short-Term and Long-Term Shelter Options, Including Options for Youth under the Age of 16 and More Beds Designated for LGBTQ Youth

“More serious intensive housing, because they say, “Oh, I’ll put you on this list,” but like the list is a 1,000 years long, a little more seriousness with the housing systems, that’s all.”

*--20 years old, multiracial, gay, male*



# Recommendations from Youth

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## Expansion and Funding of All Services and Shelter Beds to Youth up to 24 Years Old

“The thing about it is like with certain services like they have to cut you off at 21. You can't be in there if you are over 21. Like I'm 21 so I really can't be in there anymore. Because of the funding and some of the sponsors, when you are 21-24 they don't really, they don't feel like you are a youth, they feel like you are a grown-up.”

*--21 years old, black, bisexual, transgender female*



# Recommendations from Youth

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## Mentorship Programs That Help LGBTQ Youth Navigate City Agencies and Service Providers to Determine What Will Work Best for Them in Gaining Stability in Their Lives and Meeting Their Goals

“I’m taking help from anywhere that I can at this present time because it’s like this is a real difficult moment for me, and the only knowledge that I would have of any other places or anything like that would be based on my own research or whatever. I would kind of like want somebody who been there before and done that to better explain things in depth for me, to see which program to weed out and which one to keep instead of visiting all 13 of them and then find out only two of them are [useful].”

*-- 20 years old, black and Latino, bisexual, male*



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**Based on the current research, what are considered best practices for how to identify and engage LGBTQ+ youth who are at a high risk for human trafficking?**



# Screening and Assessment Tools

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## **Covenant House Assessment Tool:**

<https://d28whvbyjonrpc.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/attachments/Covenant-House-trafficking-study.pdf>

## **Urban Institute Screening Tool:**

To be Released Fall 2017



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**What do you consider the critical aspects of screening and identifying potential victims in this population?**



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**What types of considerations, in terms of service delivery, are particularly important for this population?**



# Recommendations

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- Develop accessible street-based and comprehensive drop-in services and peer-led outreach.
- Improve safe and supportive short-term shelter, long-term affordable housing, and family-based placement options subject to periodic review.
- Create safe and supportive housing and placement protocols specific to transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals.
- Broaden access to and improve gender-affirming health care.



# Recommendations

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- Adopt nondiscrimination, confidentiality, and complaint procedures in shelters, programs, and out-of-home placements.
- Develop living-wage employment opportunities.
- Improve food security among LGBTQ youth.



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**What are some ways service providers can show LGBTQ+ clients that their agency is safe and inclusive?**



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**Recently we have seen issues where children are trading sex for hormones to support their gender identity. How can we address this if state agencies are unable to provide this type of treatment to minors?**



# Access to Hormones

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“Everyone deserves access to quality health care, regardless of one’s ability to pay for it. Some cities have clinics designed to treat transgender youth specifically: for example, Callen-Lorde Community Health Center runs Health Outreach to Teens (HOTT) in New York City; Howard Brown offers a low-income walk-in clinic for LGBT people in Chicago; and Dimensions Clinic offers low-cost health services for queer, transgender and questioning youth in San Francisco. Most state Medicaid programs do not cover transition-related health care, but a growing number of states are lifting these discriminatory exclusions (**California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont and D.C.**) If you apply for Medicaid to cover your transition-related health care and are denied coverage, contact Lambda Legal’s Help Desk.”

<https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-youth-faq>



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# What can we do in our rural counties to help this minority group?



# Resources

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## PFLAG

<https://www.pflag.org>

## Trevor Project

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org>

## Rhodes Perry Consulting

<http://www.rhodesperry.com>



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**If a victim doesn't express to you that they identify as LGBTQ+, is it ever appropriate to suggest or inquire about the potential of referral to allied organizations?**



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**What's next for the research field in this area? What are future research questions we should seek to answer as a result of your work?**



# Next Month

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- **Topic:** Addressing the Impact of Trauma When a Mass Violence Incident Occurs
- **Presenters:** Krista Flannigan and Herman Millholland
- **Date:** July 26, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. e.t.



# Thank You!

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To learn about upcoming Expert Q&A sessions, please visit the OVC TTAC Expert Q&A page at [www.ovcttac.gov/ExpertQA](http://www.ovcttac.gov/ExpertQA).

If your question was not addressed in this session, you can email your question to our presenter:

**Dr. Meredith Dank:** [mdank@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:mdank@jjay.cuny.edu)

