In 2015, a higher percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students in grades 9–12 (34 percent) than of heterosexual students (19 percent) reported that they had been bullied on school property during the previous 12 months.

Sexual minority youth (those who identify as gay, lesbian, and bisexual and those who are not sure about their sexual orientation) are at a greater risk of harassment, victimization, and social isolation, compared to heterosexual youth (Williams et al. 2005; Button, O'Connell, and Gealt 2012). These experiences can lead to more depression symptoms, suicidal thoughts, and problem behaviors among sexual minority youth, as well as lower academic outcomes and increased unexcused absences from school (Burton et al. 2013; Kosciw et al. 2013; Robinson and Espelage 2011). These hostile experiences, combined with their resulting negative outcomes, were also found to be factors contributing to sexual minority youth's higher rates of substance abuse (Goldbach et al. 2014).

This spotlight uses the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to examine the differences in students' reports of bullying and electronic bullying, involvement in physical fights and weapon-related incidents, alcohol and marijuana use, and illegal drug availability by sex and sexual orientation. In 2015, the YRBS added a new question to identify students' sexual orientation by asking students in grades 9–12 which of the
following best described them—"heterosexual (straight)," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," or "not sure." In this spotlight, students who identified as "gay or lesbian" or "bisexual" are discussed together as the "gay, lesbian, or bisexual" group. Although there are likely to be differences among students who identify with each of these orientations, small sample sizes preclude analysis for each of these groups separately. Students were not asked whether they identified as transgender on the YRBS.

**Figure S3.1. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported being bullied on school property and electronically bullied during the previous 12 months, by sex and sexual orientation: 2015**

1 Bullying was defined for respondents as "when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again."

2 Being electronically bullied includes "being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting."

NOTE: "On school property" was not defined for survey respondents. Students were asked which sexual orientation—"heterosexual (straight)," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," or "not sure"—best described them.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2015.

In 2015, approximately 89 percent of students in grades 9–12 identified as heterosexual, 8 percent identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and 3
percent were not sure about their sexual orientation (table S3.1). Among male students, 93 percent identified as heterosexual, 4 percent identified as gay or bisexual, and 3 percent were not sure about their sexual orientation. Among female students, 85 percent identified as heterosexual, 12 percent identified as lesbian or bisexual, and 4 percent were not sure about their sexual orientation.

In 2015, a higher percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students than of heterosexual students reported that they had been bullied\(^6\) on school property\(^7\) during the previous 12 months, overall (34 vs. 19 percent) as well as among male (26 vs. 15 percent) and female students (37 vs. 23 percent; figure S3.1 and table S3.1). The percentage of students reporting being bullied on school property was also higher for students who were not sure about their sexual orientation than for heterosexual students, overall (25 vs. 19 percent) and among male students (32 vs. 15 percent). Additionally, a higher percentage of lesbian or bisexual female students than of gay or bisexual male students reported being bullied on school property (37 vs. 26 percent), while a higher percentage of male students who were not sure about their sexual orientation reported such bullying compared to their female counterparts (32 vs. 19 percent).

With respect to electronic bullying,\(^8\) a higher percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students reported being electronically bullied during the previous 12 months in 2015 than did heterosexual students, overall (28 vs. 14 percent) as well as among male (22 vs. 9 percent) and female students (30 vs. 21 percent). The percentage of students who reported being electronically bullied was also higher for students who were not sure about their sexual orientation than for heterosexual students, overall (23 vs. 14 percent) and among male students (22 vs. 9 percent).
Figure S3.2. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported having been in a physical fight at least one time during the previous 12 months, by location, sex, and sexual orientation: 2015

![Figure S3.2](image)

NOTE: The term "anywhere" is not used in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) questionnaire; students were simply asked how many times in the past 12 months they had been in a physical fight. "On school property" was not defined for survey respondents. Students were asked which sexual orientation—"heterosexual (straight)," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," or "not sure"—best described them.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2015.

In 2015, higher percentages of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students and students who were not sure about their sexual orientation reported being in a physical fight anywhere and on school property during the previous 30 days than did heterosexual students. About 28 percent of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students and 35 percent of students who were not sure about their sexual orientation reported being in a physical fight anywhere, compared with 22 percent of heterosexual students (figure S3.2 and table S3.1). Similarly, 11 percent of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students and 15 percent of students who were not sure about their sexual orientation reported being in a physical fight on school property, compared with 7 percent of heterosexual students.
The same patterns by sexual orientation were observed in the percentages of female students reporting being in a physical fight. Among female students, 30 percent of lesbian or bisexual students and 26 percent of students who were not sure about their sexual orientation reported being in a physical fight anywhere, compared with 14 percent of heterosexual students. In addition, higher percentages of female students who were lesbian or bisexual (10 percent) and not sure about their sexual orientation (9 percent) reported being in a physical fight on school property than did their heterosexual peers (4 percent). Among male students, a higher percentage of students who were not sure about their sexual orientation than of heterosexual students reported being in a physical fight anywhere (44 vs. 28 percent) and on school property (19 vs. 10 percent).

In 2015, a higher percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students than of heterosexual students reported that they were threatened or injured with a weapon\textsuperscript{10} on school property during the previous 12 months, overall (10 vs. 5 percent) as well as among male (12 vs. 6 percent) and female students (9 vs. 4 percent). In addition, the percentage of students reporting being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property was higher for students who were not sure about their sexual orientation than for heterosexual students, overall (13 vs. 5 percent) and among male students (17 vs. 6 percent).

There were no measurable differences by sexual orientation in the percentages of all students or male students who reported carrying a weapon\textsuperscript{11} anywhere at least 1 day during the previous 30 days in 2015. However, the percentage of female students who reported carrying a weapon anywhere was higher for lesbian or bisexual students than for heterosexual students (16 vs. 6 percent). On school property, a higher percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students than of heterosexual
students reported that they had carried a weapon at least 1 day during the previous 30 days, overall (6 vs. 4 percent) and among female students (5 vs. 1 percent). The percentage of female students reporting carrying a weapon on school property was also higher for students who were not sure about their sexual orientation than for heterosexual students (4 vs. 1 percent).

Figure S3.3. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported using alcohol at least 1 day during the previous 30 days and using marijuana at least one time during the previous 30 days, by sex and sexual orientation: 2015

NOTE: Students were asked which sexual orientation—"heterosexual (straight)," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," or "not sure"—best described them. The term "anywhere" is not used in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) questionnaire; students were simply asked how many times or how many days they engaged in the specified behavior. "Anywhere" includes on school property.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2015.

In 2015, a higher percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students than of heterosexual students reported that they had used alcohol at least 1 day during the previous 30 days, overall (40 vs. 32 percent) and among female students (42 vs. 32 percent; figure S3.3 and table S3.1). A higher
percentage of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students than of heterosexual students also reported using marijuana at least one time during the previous 30 days, overall (32 vs. 21 percent) and among female students (34 vs. 18 percent). Among all students, the percentage who reported using marijuana at least one time during the previous 30 days was higher for students who were not sure about their sexual orientation than for heterosexual students (26 vs. 21 percent).

Higher percentages of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students and students who were not sure about their sexual orientation reported that illegal drugs were offered, sold, or given to them on school property during the previous 12 months in 2015 than did heterosexual students, overall (29 and 28 percent, respectively, vs. 21 percent) and among female students (30 and 26 percent, respectively, vs. 17 percent). No measurable differences by sexual orientation were observed in the percentages of male students who reported alcohol use anywhere, marijuana use anywhere, or the availability of illegal drugs on school property.

This spotlight indicator features data on a selected issue of current policy interest. For more information: Table S3.1, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016b), (http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/pdfs/ss6509.pdf).

6 Bullying was defined for respondents as "when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again."

7 "On school property" was not defined for survey respondents.

8 Being electronically bullied includes "being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting."

9 The term "anywhere" is not used in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) questionnaire; students were simply asked how many times or how many days they engaged in the specified behavior. "Anywhere" includes on
school property.

10 Survey respondents were asked about being threatened or injured "with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club."

11 Respondents were asked about carrying "a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club."