

Sexual and Dating Violence Among Asian and Pacific Islander (API) American Transgender Youth

Background

Studies of health disparities often find that Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Americans are among the healthiest of all racial and ethnic groups. They report lower rates of substance use, HIV and STIs, teen pregnancy, poor mental health, intimate partner violence, and youth violence.¹⁻⁶ However, this brief amplifies the All Students Count Coalition’s report, **On All Sides: How Race, Ethnicity & Gender Influence Health Risk for Transgender Students of Color**,⁷ which, using data from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) of high school enrolled youth across the United States, highlights alarming findings about API transgender youth who are **over nine times as likely** as cisgender API youth to experience sexual dating violence.

Though research is limited, the available literature reveals that many of the sexual orientation and gender identity health disparities observed in the general population are present within API populations as well. API LGBTQ+ youth and adults report more experiences of discrimination and higher rates of sexual risk-taking, depression, and substance use relative to their straight, cisgender API peers.^{8,9}

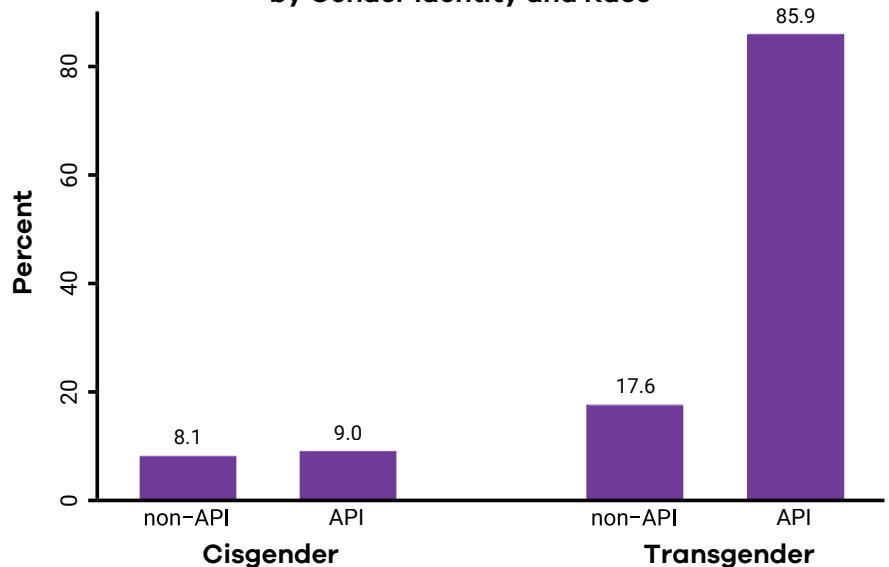
Less is known about how API LGBTQ+ people, especially API transgender youth, differ from LGBTQ+ people of other racial/ethnic identities. While one study found that API LGB young adults were significantly more likely than API heterosexual peers to have experienced childhood sexual abuse,¹⁰ two recent studies found that API transgender adults are at a lower risk for experiencing sexual assault or intimate partner violence than transgender adults who are Black, Latinx, or white.^{11,12} However, the research conducted for the All Students Count Coalition’s report, **On All Sides**, challenges those findings by uncovering high rates of risk experienced by API transgender youth.

Findings

The **On All Sides** report amplified the key findings featured below:

- An estimated 85.9% of API transgender youth experienced sexual dating violence in the previous year, defined as being “forced to do sexual things that you did not want to do” by “someone you were dating or going out with.”
- In comparison, 17.6% of non-API transgender youth, 9% of API cisgender youth, and 8.1% of non-API cisgender youth had experienced sexual dating violence in the previous year.
- Put another way, API transgender youth are over 9 times as likely as cisgender API youth (RR=9.5; 95% CI: 6.8, 12.1; p<0.001), and almost 5 times as likely as non-API transgender youth (RR=4.9; 95% CI: 3.2, 6.5; p<0.001), to have experienced sexual dating violence.

Experienced Sexual Dating Violence in the Prior Year by Gender identity and Race



Recommendations

Despite this study's limitations in not being able to distinguish between transgender women/girls, transgender men/boys, nonbinary people, and Two-Spirit people, and the challenges with disaggregating across ethnic subgroups of API people, the substantially higher risk of sexual dating violence observed among API transgender youth is concerning. Stakeholders should consider the following recommendations:

- **Advocates:** Include the leadership of **API transgender youth** in campaigns to develop resources and community-based strategies to address sexual dating violence.
- **Educators:** Sexual dating violence prevention **curricula and programs** must be inclusive of transgender API youth and incorporate findings described in this brief.
- **Policymakers:** Include **culturally-grounded care** for API transgender youth across child and youth-serving systems, including healthcare, child welfare, and juvenile justice.
- **Researchers:** Studies must be undertaken to **identify and explore the underlying social and structural factors** that contribute to the disproportionate and concerning risk for sexual dating violence experienced by transgender API youth.

To read the full All Students Count Coalition's report, **On All Sides**, please visit:

<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/on-all-sides>.

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