



July 9, 2024

LGBTQ+ Responsive URM Programs and Services

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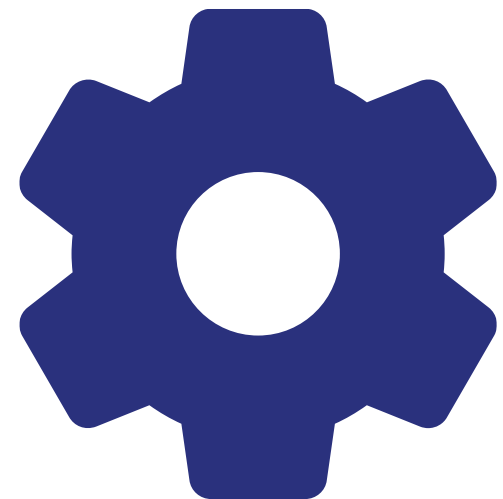
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Switchboard is a one-stop resource hub for refugee service providers in the United States.





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This is a webinar, so you're joining on listen-only mode.





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Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting



Due to the large number of learners on today's webinar, we've disabled the chat box.





Though disabled for learners, keep an eye on the chat for messages from Switchboard and links to various resources we'll be mentioning throughout.





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Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting



You do have the option to send messages to the speakers and co-facilitators via the Q&A.





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Chat



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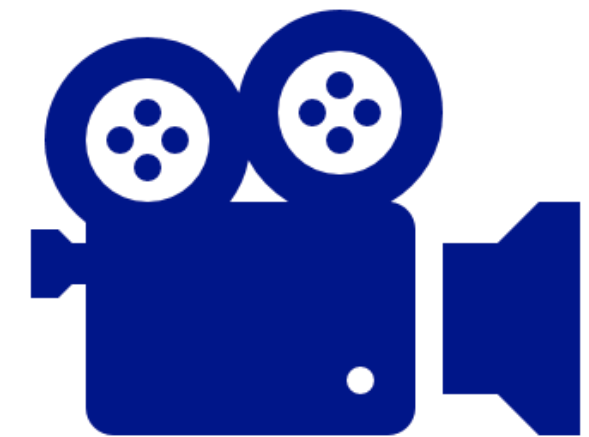


Q&A

Leave Meeting



**Today's webinar will
run for 75 minutes
and is being recorded.**





You'll receive an email with the recording, slides, and recommended resources within 24 hours.

The webinar transcript, along with the recording, will also be posted on the Switchboard website.





Last, we ask that you kindly complete our webinar satisfaction survey at the conclusion of our session.





This short, 6-question survey helps us here at Switchboard continuously improve our training and technical assistance offerings to you all.





Thank you for joining today's training!

We will begin momentarily.



Today's Facilitator



**Claire Hopkins,
she/her**

Training Officer, Child
and Family Services,
Switchboard

Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

IDENTIFY

the unique risks and challenges to LGBTQ+ individuals, focusing on unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs)

2

DEVELOP

strategies to foster inclusivity, address biases, and enforce anti-discrimination policies to create a safe and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ URMs in organizations and service delivery

3

USE

approaches that provide LGBTQ+ friendly placements, including staff and foster parent training, recruitment, and retention

4

APPLY

actionable steps to ensure safe, supportive environments for LGBTQ+ URMs in your service delivery



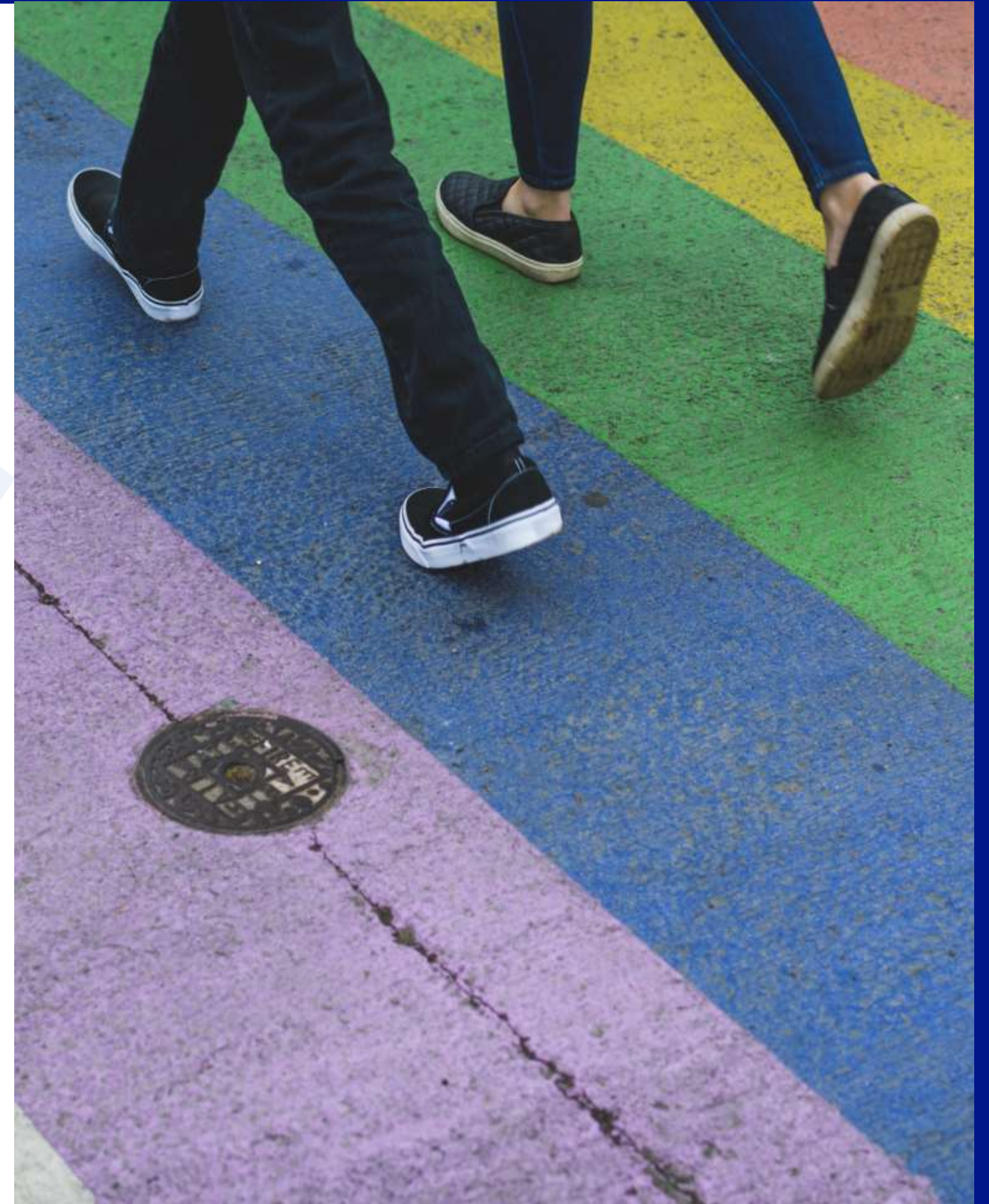
1

Identifying Risks and Challenges

to LGBTQ+ individuals and unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs)

Ground Rules

- Remember why we are in resettlement: to serve all refugees equitably and respectfully
- Stay curious and open; learn and connect with others
- Maintain professionalism regarding cultural/religious backgrounds
- Be kind to yourself as you learn and improve service; extend kindness to staff with varying experience levels





Every LGBTQ+ story is unique.

Every LGBTQ+ newcomer's experience is different and shaped by many stories and their own personhood.

Always go deeper to get to know the person and their experience.

72 COUNTRIES
STILL WITH
ANTI-GAY LAWS

CALL
ME
KUCHU

Cultural Sensitivity & Terminology

- Even if newcomers identify as LGBTQ+, they may not be familiar or comfortable with all these terms, especially if their home country or community stigmatizes different LGBTQ+ identities

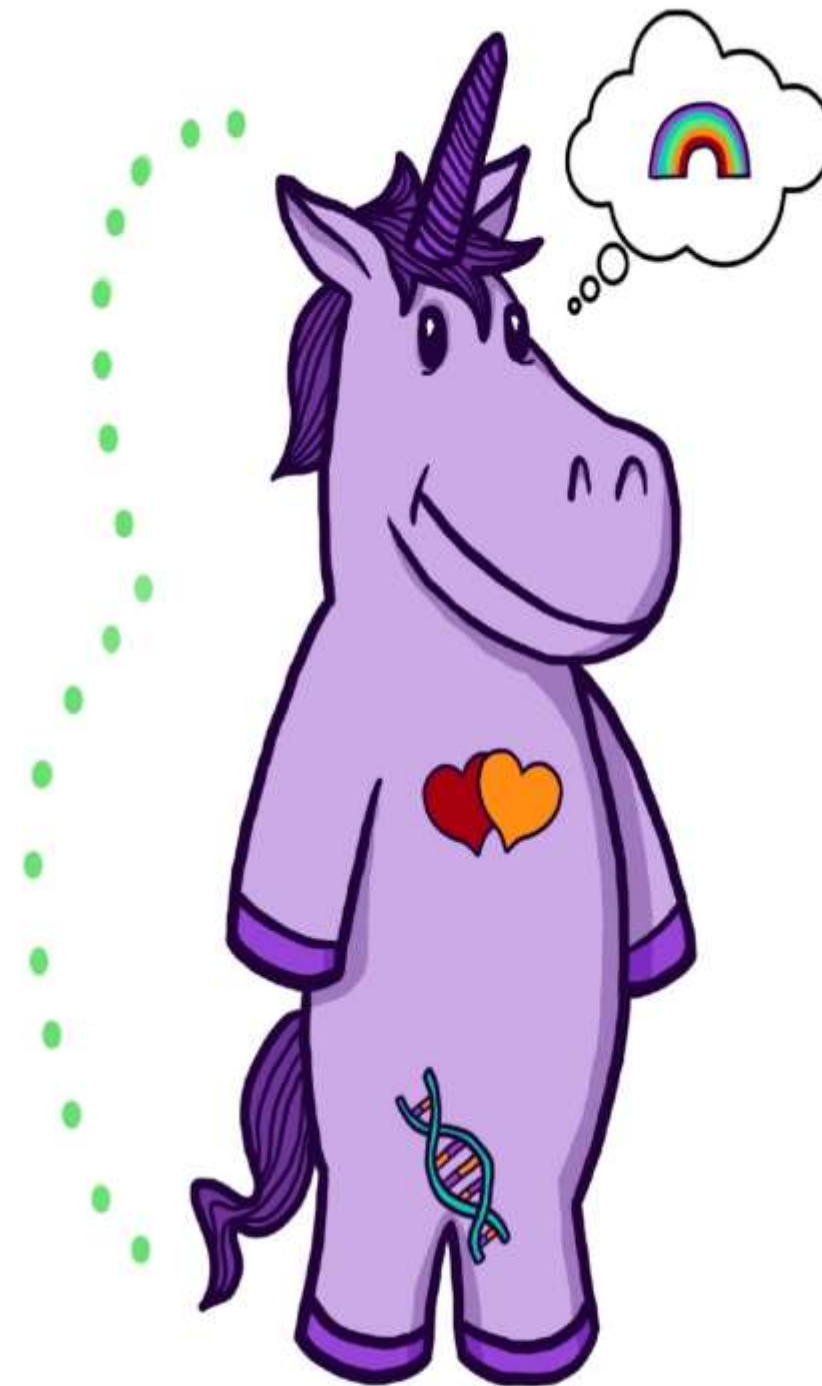
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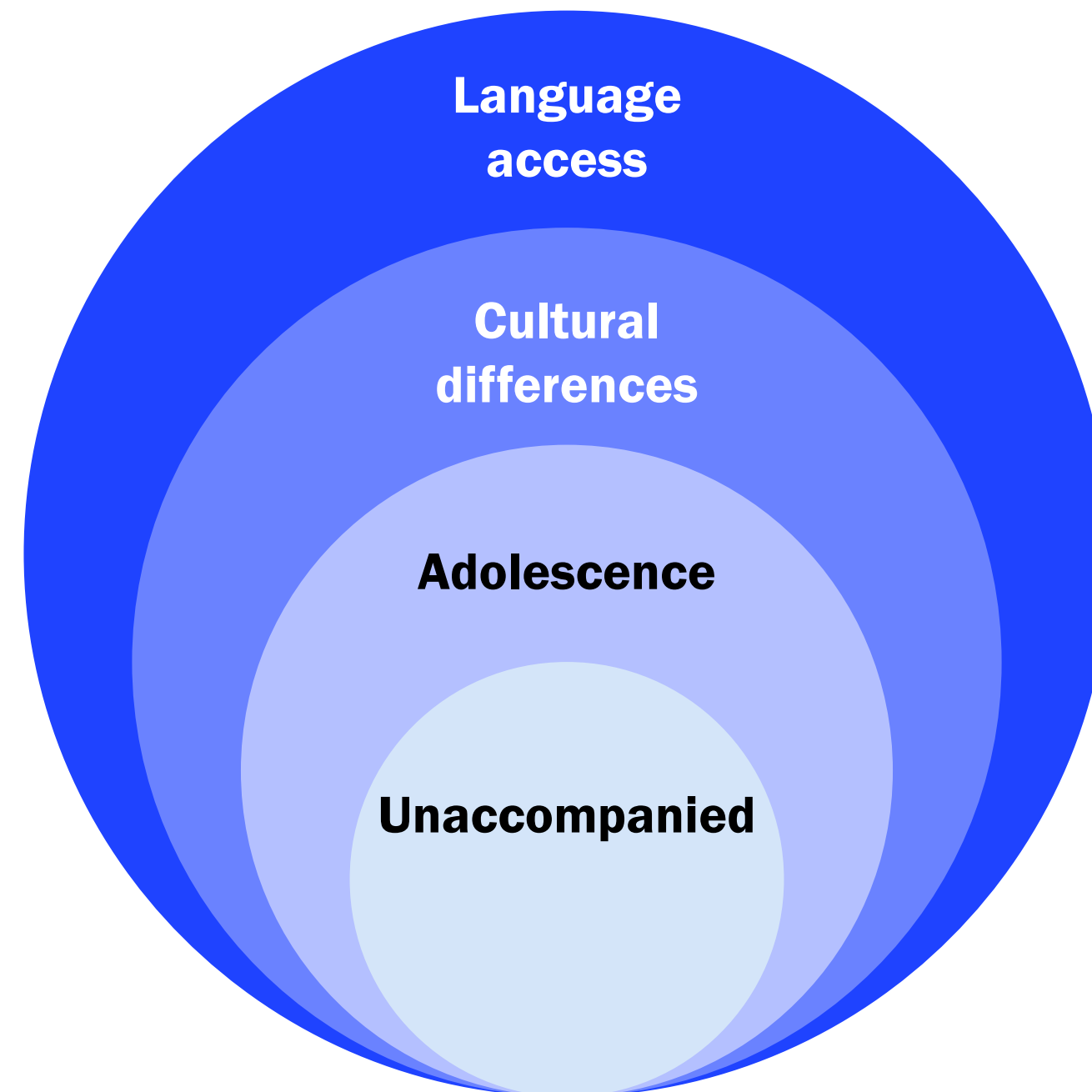
The “Gender Unicorn”:

A Visualization of SOGIE

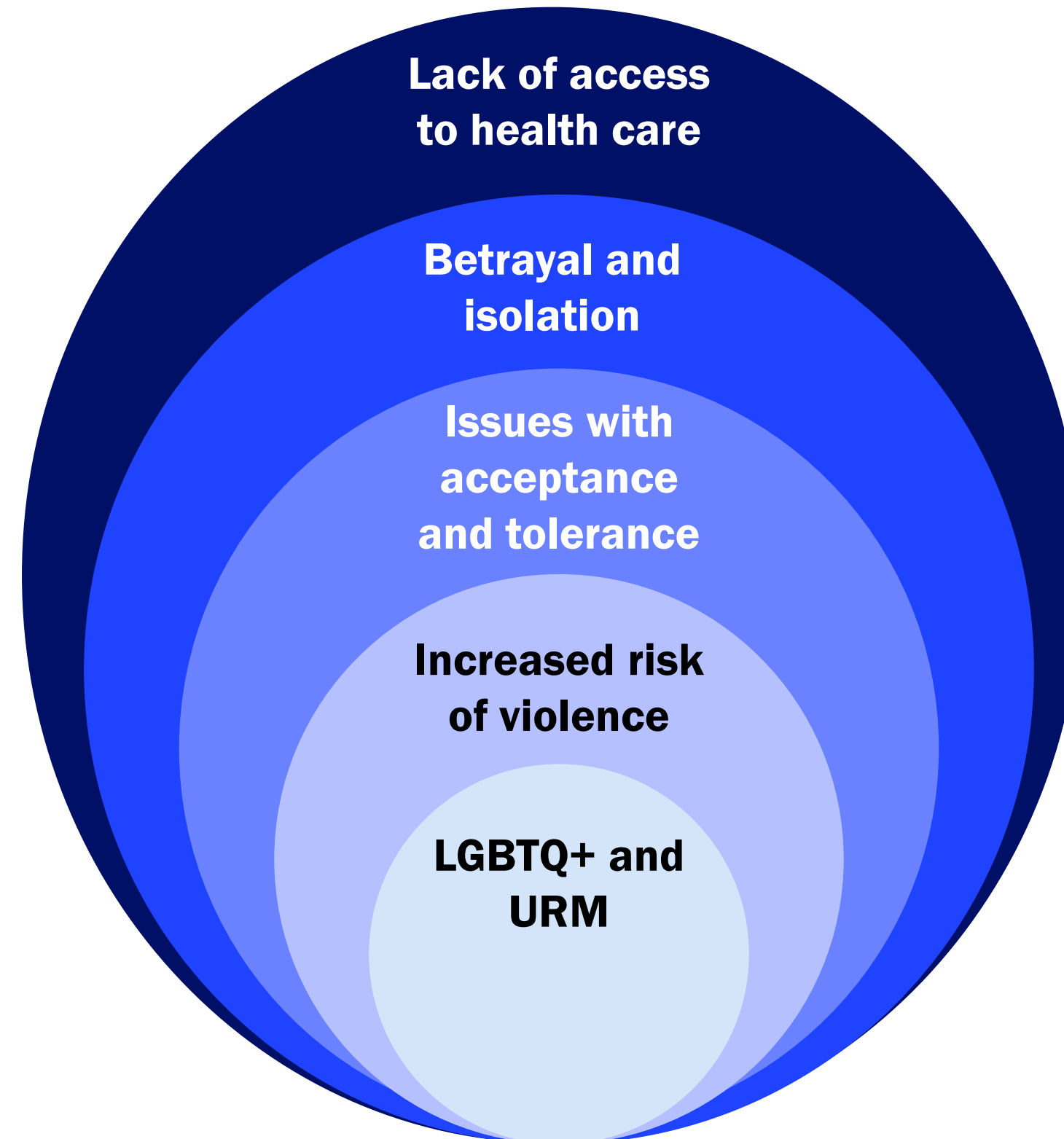


Source: Trans Student Educational Resources.
(2015). *The gender unicorn*.
<https://transstudent.org/gender/>

Unique Factors in URM Service Delivery



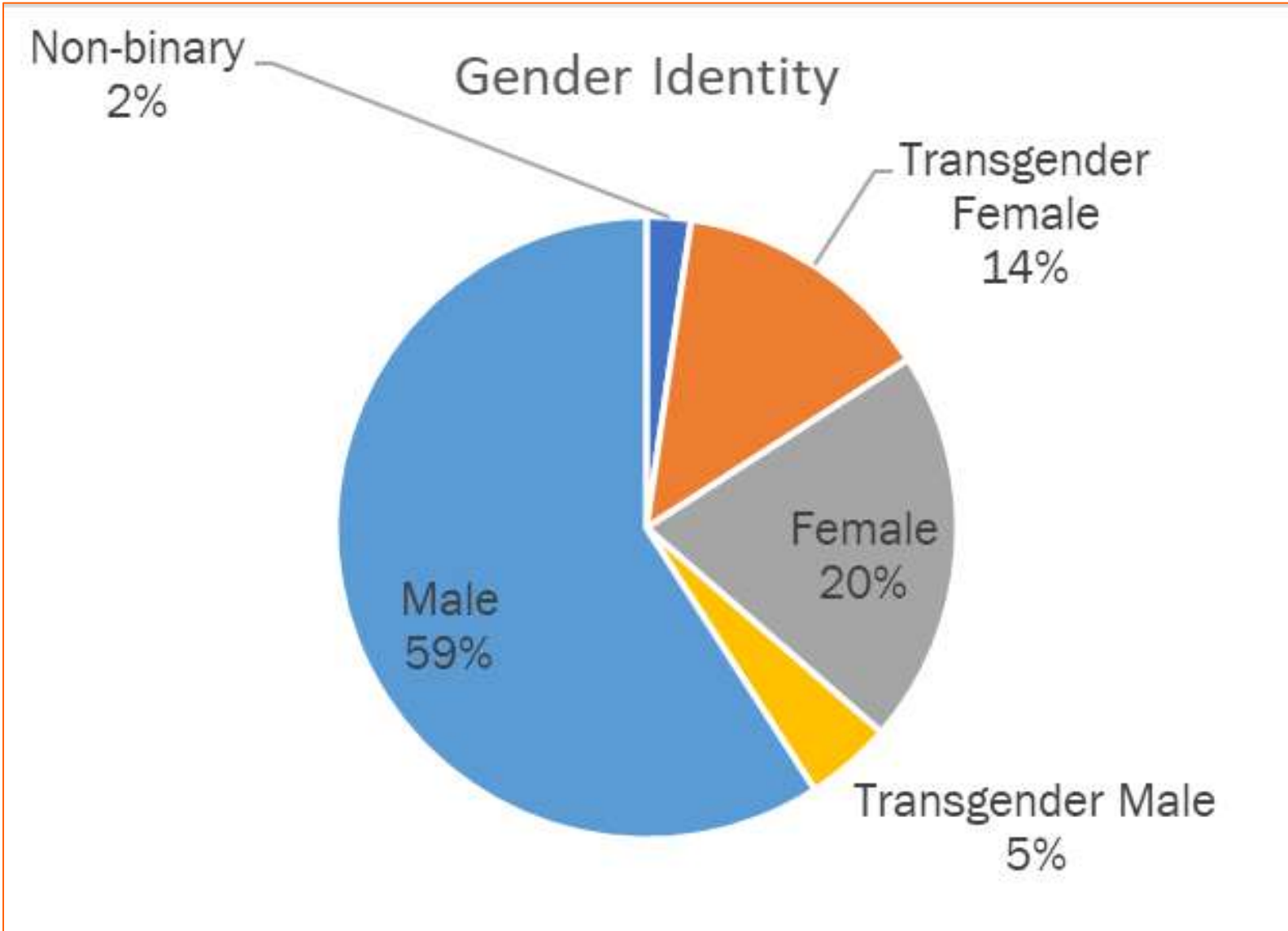
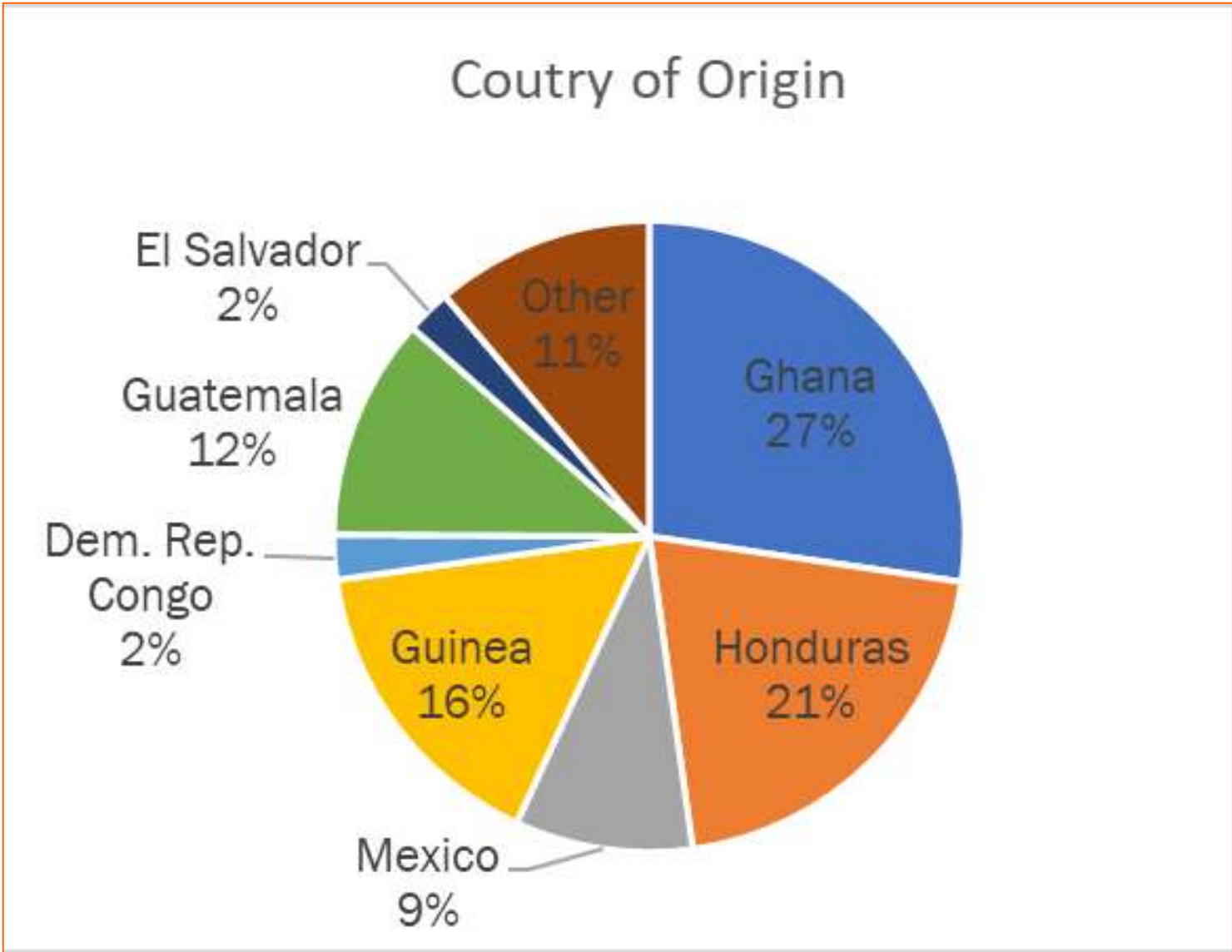
Unique Factors in LGBTQ+ URM Service Delivery



LGBTQ+ URM Representation



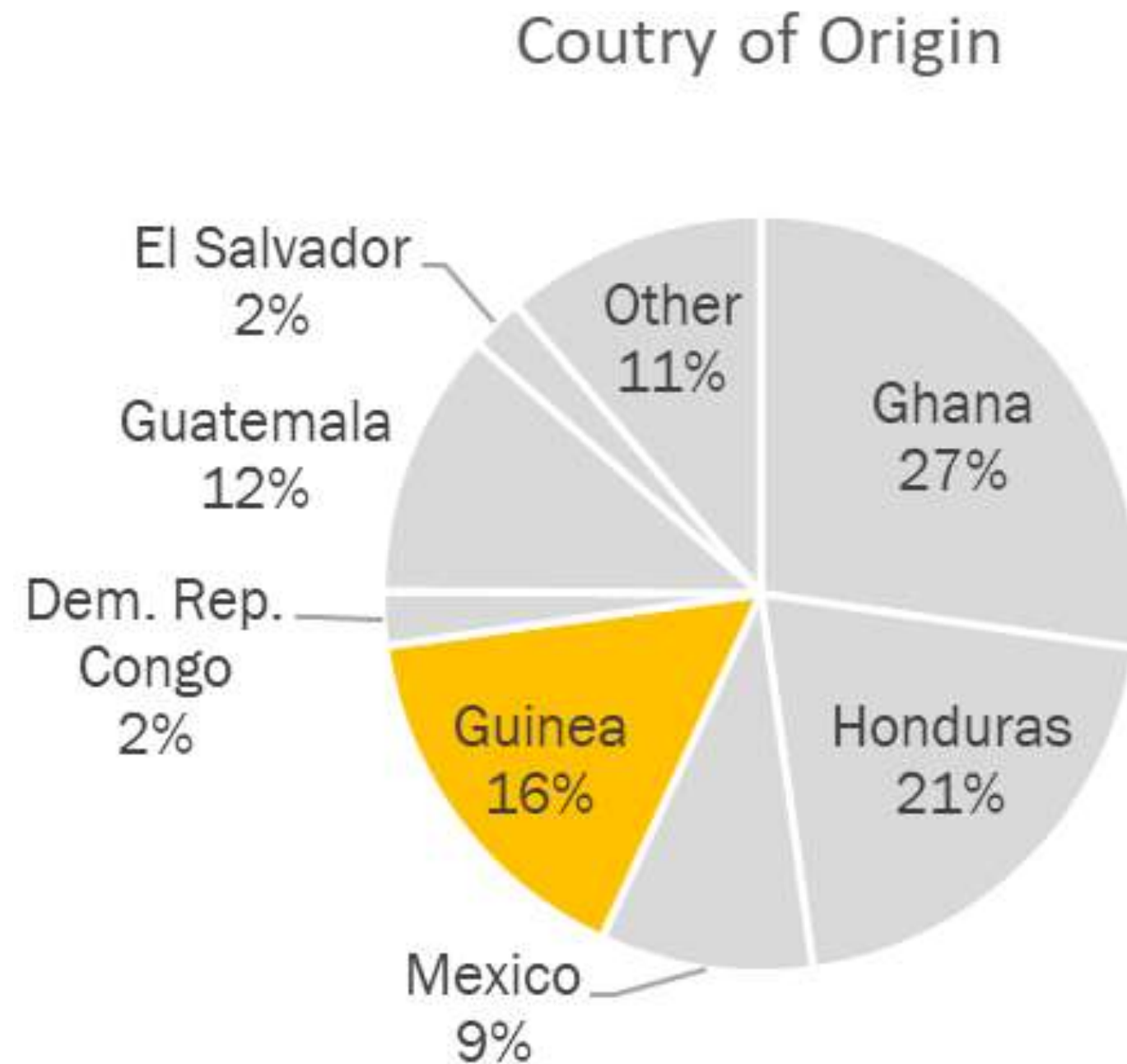
(Oct 2022 - May 2024)



LGBTQ+ URM Representation



Example: Guinea



- § Consensual same-sex sexual acts: **Illegal**
- § Criminalization: maximum 3 years in prison and a fine
- § No protection against discrimination for health, education, employment, housing; no hate crime law

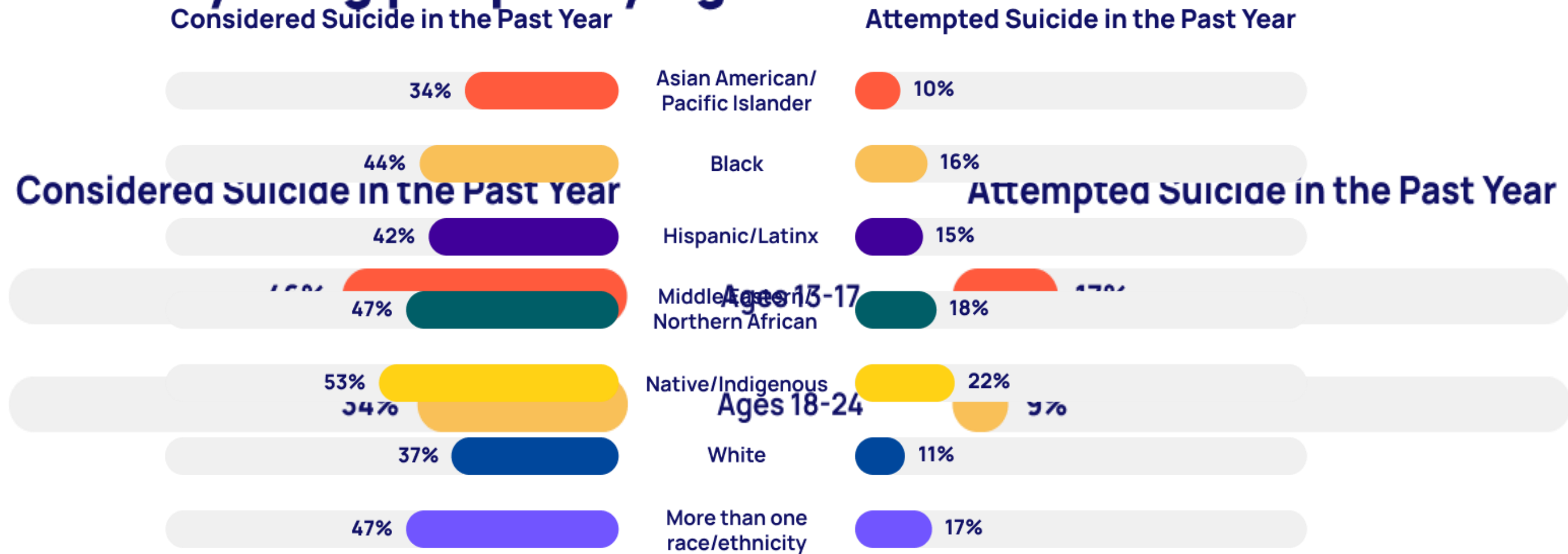
Source: [ILGAWorld Database](#), 2017–2024

The majority of LGBTQ+ young people consider or attempt suicide.

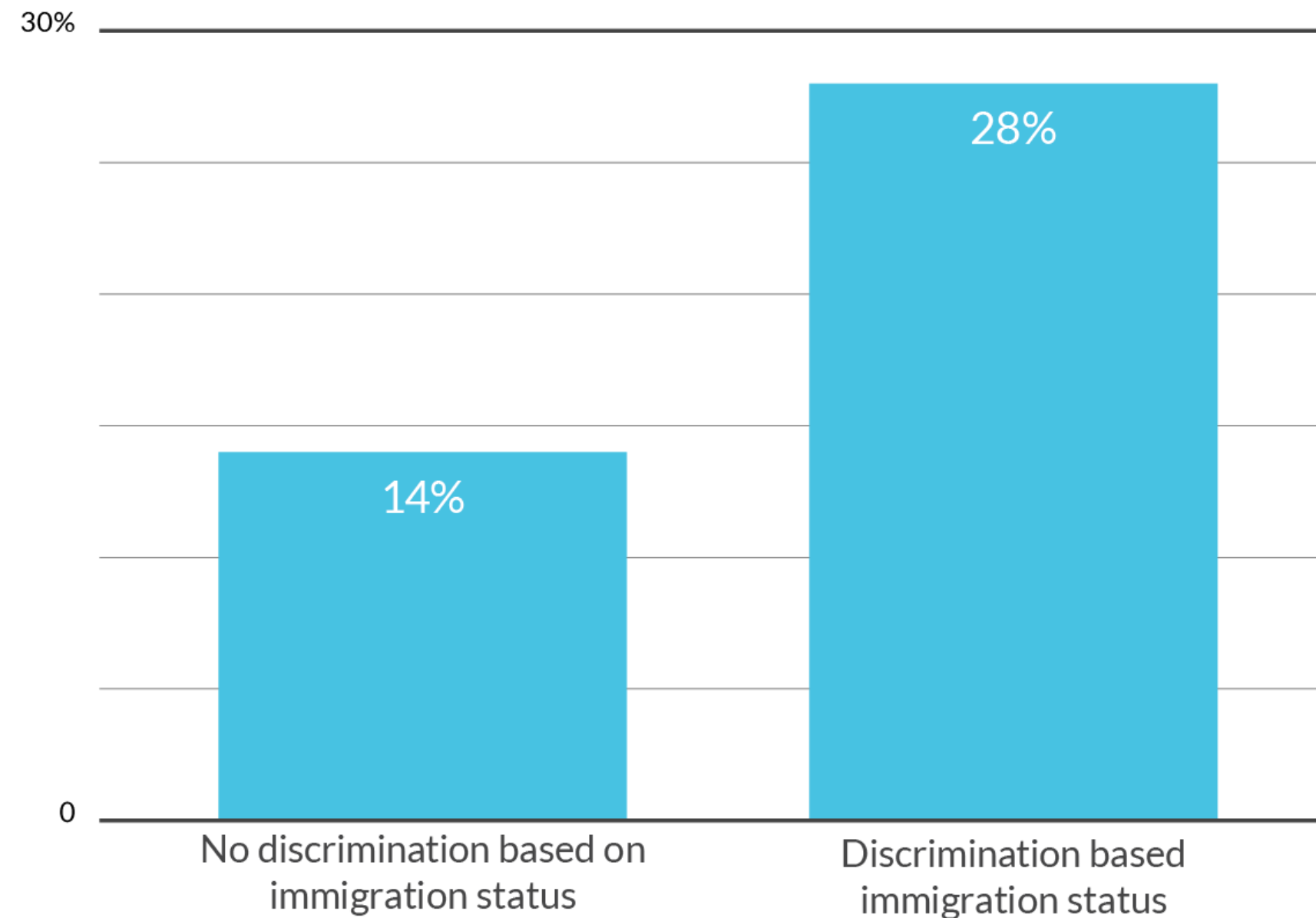


Rates of considered and attempted suicide among LGBTQ young people by race/ethnicity:

Rates of considered and attempted suicide among LGBTQ young people by age:



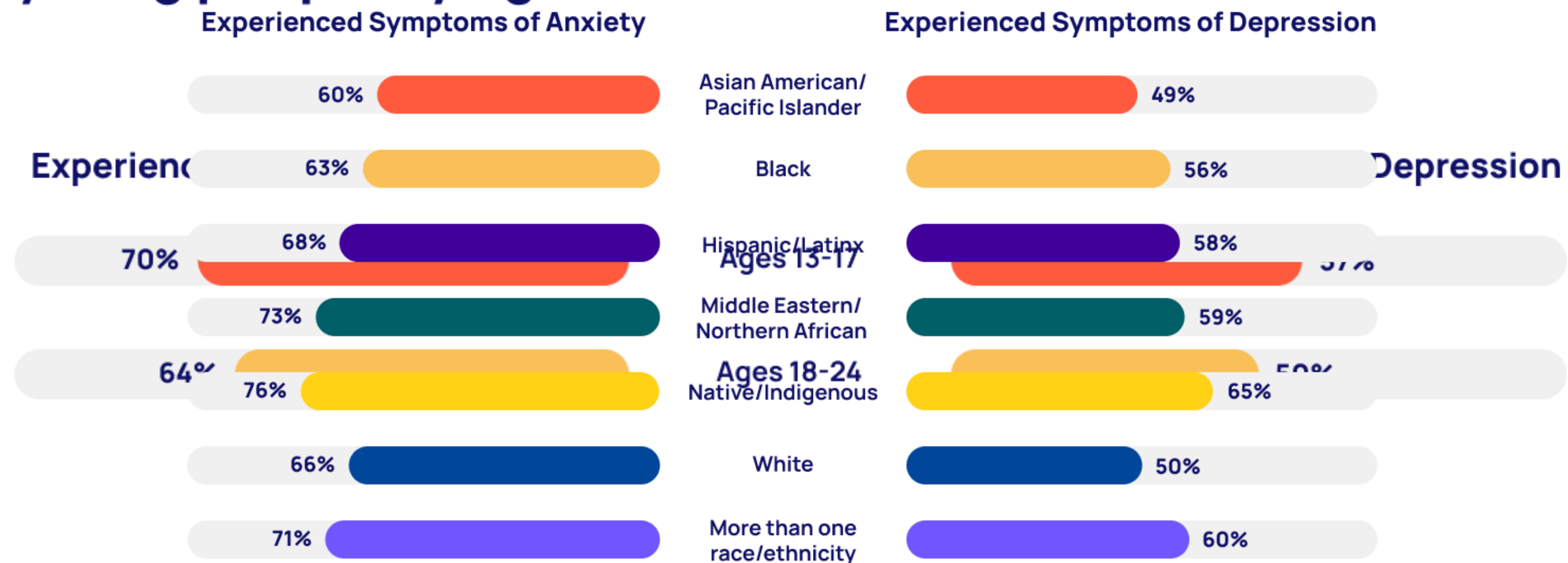
Discrimination based on immigration status increases suicide attempt odds by over 2.5 times in first-generation LGBTQ+ youth.



Over half of LGBTQ+ young people experience symptoms of anxiety or depression.



Anxiety & depression symptoms reported among LGBTQ young people by race/ethnicity:
Anxiety & depression symptoms reported among LGBTQ young people by age:



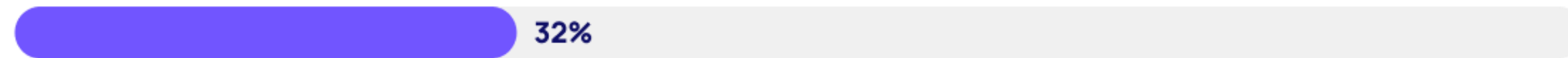
The majority of LGBTQ+ young people who are enrolled reported negative experiences in school.



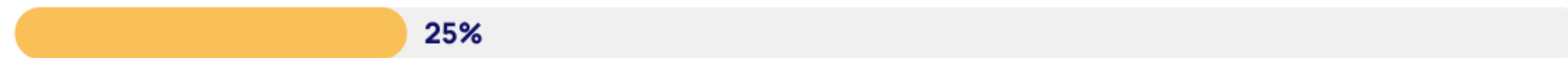
I was verbally harassed because people thought I was LGBTQ



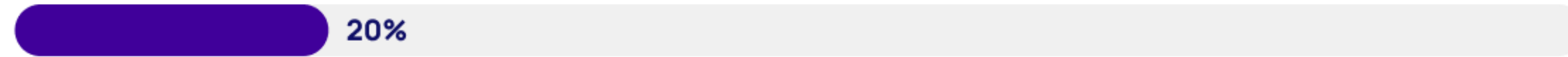
I wasn't allowed to dress in the way that fit my gender identity or expression



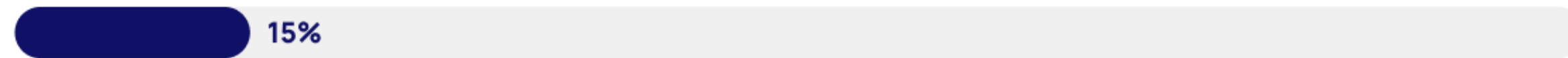
I was disciplined for fighting back against bullies



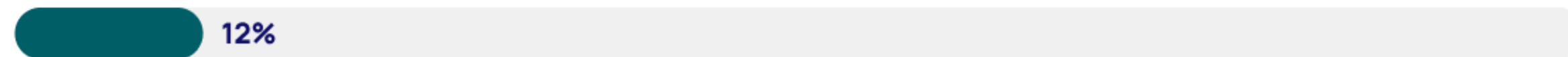
I experienced unwanted sexual contact because people thought I was LGBTQ



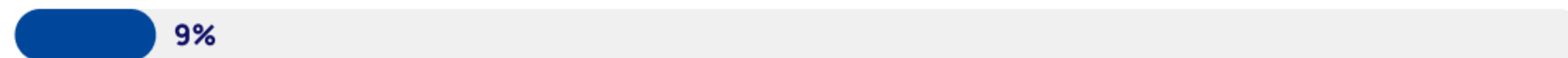
I believe I was disciplined more harshly because teachers/staff thought I was LGBTQ



I left a school because because the mistreatment was so bad



I was physically attacked because people thought I was LGBTQ





2

Developing Strategies to Foster Inclusivity

Addressing Biases and Enforcing Anti-Discrimination Policies



Strategies to Foster Inclusivity

- Set and maintain an inclusive tone
- Use inclusive language
- Create affirming physical environments
- Implement anti-discrimination policies and anti-bias training



Setting the Tone:

Case Scenario – Abdi

When Abdi walked into the resettlement agency to meet with his caseworker for the first time, he and his foster mom noticed that staff have pronouns on their name tags. During the meeting, the caseworker asked Abdi if he would like to share his pronouns and confirm his chosen name. When leaving, Abdi also noticed a colorful sign that said, “You Are Safe Here” in multiple languages.

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What are some additional ways you might ensure the tone of your interactions and your organization's environment are welcoming, inclusive, safe, and affirming?

Language Matters!



- Be mindful of cultural considerations around LGBTQ+ terms
- Include pronouns in introductions
- Use accurate pronouns and chosen name
- Consider the impact of non-inclusive documentation
 - Legal documentation/referrals may not include accurate SOGIE
- Use gender-neutral language
 - **Partner** instead of husband, wife, girlfriend, or boyfriend
 - **Foster parent** instead of foster mom or dad

Physical Environments Considerations

- Have gender-inclusive bathroom options
- Include representation of LGBTQ+ folx on marketing materials
- Encourage staff to freely express their gender identities
- Make inclusive signage, posters, and resources visible in multiple languages
 - E.g., “You are safe here.”
- Offer pronouns for visitor name tags, staff badges, and email signatures



RESTROOM



Anti-Discrimination Policies and Environments



- Does your organization have a policy? Are they aligned with ORR Policy Letter 24-02 on anti-discrimination? What are state and funders' policies?
- Create environments and an organizational culture that welcomes questions and values continued education
- Call “up” staff regarding any discriminatory behavior, be consistent, and hold folx accountable
- Consistently uphold diversity, equity, and inclusive values with colleagues

Personal Biases



1

**Acknowledge
that everyone
has biases**

2

**Reflect upon
your personal
biases**

3

**Reframe
your
perceptions**

4

**Encourage and
provide
inclusive and
equitable
services**

How Biases May Present in LGBTQ+ Responsive Services



“The referral says this youth identifies as a trans female. We will never find a foster home for them and having her go in the girls’ group home will be too much work.”

“Why are we meeting to talk about finding an affirming URM foster home for a female Muslim? Muslims aren’t lesbian, so she can go anywhere.”

“We cannot accept another gay URM. They are always just seeking attention and engage in too much sexual activity. Our foster parents talk to one another, so there isn’t anyone willing to accept her.”

Positive Impacts of Inclusivity

- Decreased risk of suicide
- Lower suicidal ideation and behavior when using youth's chosen name
- Improved mental health
- Increased sense of belonging and integration
- Positive behaviors, attitudes, and academic performance



LGBTQ+ young people described what a world would look like where all LGBTQ+ people are accepted.



Source: The Trevor Project. (2023). *U.S. national survey on the mental health of LGBTQ young people.*
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/>



3

LGBTQ+ Friendly Approaches

For Placements, and Staff and Foster Parent Recruitment, Training, and Retention

Ask yourself...



Does my organization have a public stance on LGBTQ+ acceptance?

Regardless of this stance, what is the organization's reputation in the community?

Do we have current education and training?



What is the acceptance culture of my program?

Do we have current LGBTQ+ staff and foster parent representation?

Do our paperwork and marketing include SOGIE and anti-discrimination language?

Inclusive Tone at the Organizational Level



1

Hire intentionally

- Use inclusive language in job descriptions and interviews

2

Implement consistent, frequent, and updated training

- Use voices and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ folx in content creation and training delivery

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What challenges have you encountered while implementing LGBTQ+ services?



Cultural Considerations and Norms for Trainings

- LGBTQ+ URMs are facing compounded discrimination
- Consider the impact of having to adapt and learn if their SOGIE is safe in different environments
- Gender non-conforming URMs may be targeted or harassed for their perceived SOGIE



Creating LGBTQ+ Friendly Placements

LGBTQ+ Friendly Group and Independent Living Homes



- Address inclusive nature of the home before (if possible) and at intake of every youth
- Do not out anyone. State that inclusivity is a part of the program and bullying is not tolerated
- Do not isolate trans youth
- Create safe spaces to allow for questions that might be uncomfortable
- Share with youth what LGBTQ+ acceptance and norms look like at local, state, and federal levels



LGBTQ+ Friendly Foster Homes

Reflect on your assessment of the current foster home pool and where your organization stands to guide recruitment and retention strategies.



Creating LGBTQ+ Friendly Foster Homes

- Provide community education and awareness as needed
- Identify affirming community spaces
- Recruit and train foster parents
- Appeal to target audience



Retaining LGBTQ+ Friendly Foster Homes

- Navigate positive and negative reactions from foster parents
- Be intentional, flexible, and creative about placements and support services
- Ask questions and avoid assumptions about youth and foster home's SOGIE demographics and preferences
- Use client-centered approaches to help build community and support for URMs

What if I have conflicting ethical, cultural, or religious beliefs myself?



- Recall our ground rules:
 - Stay curious and open; be kind to yourself as you learn and improve service
 - Maintain commitment to serving all URMs equitably and respectfully
 - Extend kindness to staff with varying experience levels
- Avoid referring out or refusing service based on personal beliefs
- Seek supervision to process your conflicts
- 1:1 consults with Switchboard

“I am not an expert; I am not ready to serve LGBTQ+ clients.”



As an ethical and thoughtful case manager, you *are* ready to work with LGBTQ+ clients!

- Listen to clients, and commit to lifelong learning
- Affirm your support to clients, and be honest about your learning curve
- Find more expert/appropriate referrals when dealing with specialized gender-affirming care, legal questions, mental health referrals, etc.



Case Scenario: Foster Parent Training

Your program is licensing a group of Congolese community members. You inform the group that today you will be going over LGBTQ+ topics. Several members express that this is viewed as a sin in their community and ask to skip this section of the training.



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How might you explain the importance of covering the LGBTQ+ training topic while being empathetic of their cultural and religious values?

Suggested Perspectives

What is your goal?

- Is it to get a family or staff member to know everything about the LGBTQ+ community?

Or

- Is it to offer education in a way that reaches your audience and ultimately reduces harm and elevates safety for LGBTQ+ URM?





4

Ensuring Safe, Supportive Environments

For LGBTQ+ URMs in Service Delivery



Balance and Intersectionality

- **SOGIE is not someone's entire identity**
 - What other skills and identities are important to the youth?
- **Stay strengths-based and client-centered**
 - Ask questions! Some folx may feel safer identifying with their cultural community vs. LGBTQ+ community.

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What ideas might you take from this webinar to implement in your service delivery for LGBTQ+ URMs?



Questions?

Type your question in the **Q&A**

Click **thumbs-up**  to vote for others' questions



Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat to access our feedback survey!

- Five questions
- 60 seconds
- Help us improve future training and technical assistance



Recommended Resources



- Switchboard Podcast: [Serving LGBTQ+ Newcomers](#) (2023)
- Switchboard Evidence Summary: [What Works to Support LGBTQ+ Refugees?](#) (2022)
- Switchboard Resource List: [Creating Safe Spaces for LGBTQ+ Clients](#) (2021)
- Heartland Alliance, Guide: [Rainbow Response: A Practical Guide to Resettling LGBT Refugees and Asylees](#) (2012)
- The Trevor Project, [2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People](#)
- ILGA, [World Maps](#) and [Database](#) (2017–2024)
- Office of Refugee Resettlement, [Policy Letter 24-02](#) (2024)



Learning Objectives



Now you are able to:

1

IDENTIFY

the unique risks and challenges to LGBTQ+ individuals, focusing on unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs)

2

DEVELOP

strategies to foster inclusivity, address biases, and enforce anti-discrimination policies to create a safe and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ URMs in organizations and service delivery

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USE

approaches that provide LGBTQ+ friendly placements, including staff and foster parent training, recruitment, and retention

4

APPLY

actionable steps to ensure safe, supportive environments for LGBTQ+ URMs in your service delivery



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