Fact Sheet: Eating disorders in LGBTQ+ youth

Eating Disorders

28.8 million, or 9% of all Americans will suffer an eating disorder (ED) in their lifetimes.

EDs have the 2nd highest mortality rate of any mental health condition, with one death every 52 mins.

ED care is some of the most expensive mental health care, costing U.S. families and employers almost $65B each year.

Eating Disorders

Of LGBTQ+ youth, 9% are diagnosed and an additional 29% suspect they have an ED.

Racial disparities in ED diagnosis prevail among LGBTQ+ youth.

Indigenous and Multiracial LGBTQ+ youth reported the highest rates of ED diagnosis, with an additional 1/3 of each group suspecting an ED.

Black LGBTQ+ youth are diagnosed at half the rate of White LGBTQ+ youth, despite sharing similar rates of ED suspicion.

EDs' impact on suicidality

LGBTQ+ youth diagnosed with an ED are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than LGBTQ+ youth who never had or suspected they had an ED.

Transgender & nonbinary youth at even higher risk for EDs.

Trans and nonbinary individuals also engage in disordered eating as a way to mitigate gender dysphoria:

- Transmasculine individuals to suppress breast growth, reduce hips, and eliminate menstruation
- Transfeminine individuals to achieve an idealized feminine appearance
- Nonbinary individuals in pursuit of an androgenous thin ideal
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Sources


3. Eating Disorders among LGBTQ youth - The Trevor Project

4. National Survey on LGBTQ Youth 2021 - The Trevor Project
