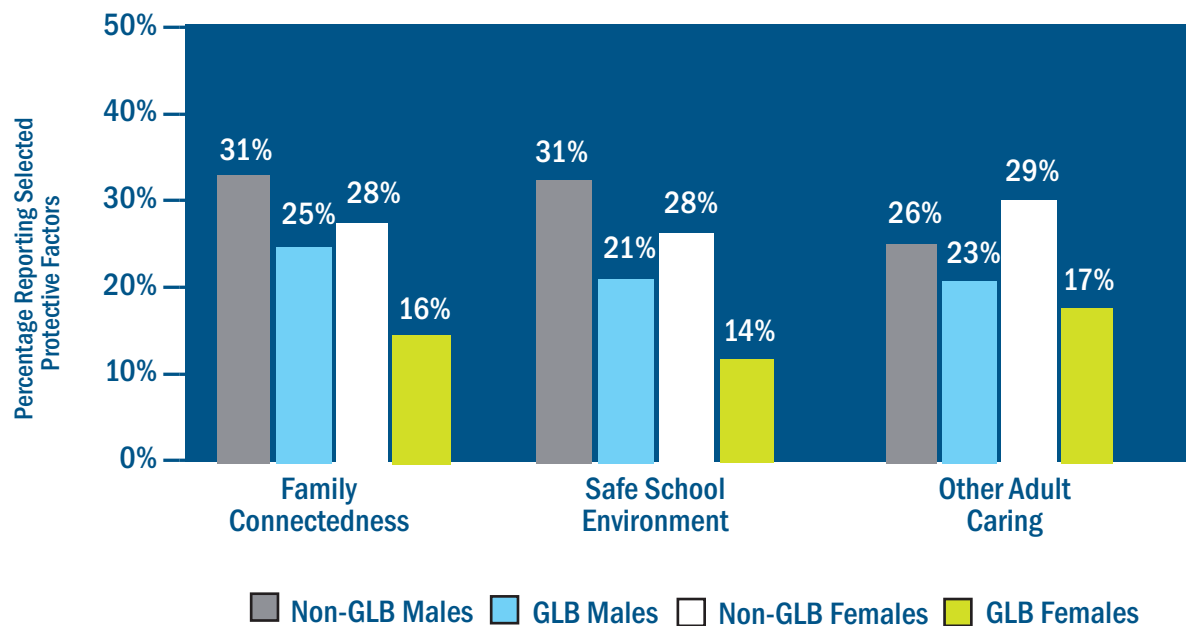




Gay and Lesbian Youth Lack Protections Against Suicide Behaviors

The findings from a large-scale survey of ninth- and twelfth-grade students in Minnesota in 2004 confirm previous findings that gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) youth are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts than their heterosexual peers.¹ Results indicate that sexual orientation accounts for little of the disparity in suicide behavior rates between GLB and non-GLB youth. Instead, the lower levels of protective factors reported by GLB youth, such as family connectedness, a safe school environment, and the concern of adults other than parents and teachers, are associated with the increased suicide behavior rates. GLB females reported higher levels of suicidal behavior than their female peers (52% vs. 25% - suicide attempt; 73% vs. 53% - suicidal thoughts) and lower levels of three significant protective factors than their female peers (16% vs. 28% - family connectedness; 14% vs. 28% - safe school environment; and 17% vs. 29% - other adult caring). The same trend is true for GLB males and their peers. GLB males reported higher levels of suicidal behavior than their male peers (29% vs. 13% - suicide attempt; 47% vs. 35% - suicidal thoughts) and lower levels of protective factors than their male peers (25% vs. 31% - family connectedness; 21% vs. 31% - safe school environment; and 23% vs. 26% - other adult caring).

Rates of Reported Protective Factors Among GLB and Non-GLB Youth, 2004



Source: Eisenberg, M. E. and Resnick, M. D. (2006). Suicidality among gay, lesbian and bisexual youth: The role of protective factors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol. 39, pp. 662-668.

¹ Sexually active students (N = 21,927) were identified as GLB if they reported engaging in sexual intercourse with same-sex partners within the previous year and non-GLB if they reported only opposite-sex intercourse.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

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