

Suicide & Hate Crimes

“If any other population attempted suicide as frequently as trans people, the government would declare a public health crisis. Trans people don’t commit suicide because they’re trans; they commit suicide because the rest of us don’t treat them like people.” -Mark Joseph Stern for Slate

For many trans people, the situation can seem hopeless. If you are visibly trans, you are constantly vulnerable to teasing, harassment, threats—and even violence. If you keep your gender dissonance hidden, you may feel you are living a lie. These and other pressures of being transgender lead a staggering number of trans people to attempt suicide.

41% of trans people have attempted suicide.

This far exceeds the 1.6% of the overall U.S. population who report a suicide attempt within their lifetime.

The prevalence of suicide attempts is even higher among:

- Native American (56%), Black (49%), and Hispanic trans people (47%)
- Trans men (46%)
- Trans people who live in extreme poverty (earning less than \$10K/year) (54%)
- Trans people who have not attended college (48–49%)
- Young trans people (18–24 years old) (45%)
- Those who disclose to everyone that they are trans (50%)
- Those who report that others can tell always (42%) or most of the time (45%) that they are trans
- The risk is lower for those whose families accept them (32%) and higher for those whose families don’t (51%).

Definitions

transbashing - The act of verbally, physically, or sexually assaulting a person because they are trans (or perceived to be trans).

trans-panic defense - A legal defense stating that shock at discovering unexpected genitals can incite a would-be lover to commit a crime of passion against a trans person, making subsequent assault excusable.

Trans women of color are more victimized by hate violence than any other minority group in the United States.† Trans women of color make up around 2% of the LGBTQ population but more than 50–60% of anti-LGBTQ homicides each year.‡ ||

Of the 24 documented anti-LGBTQ homicides in the United States in 2015, 16 were trans or gender non-conforming people; 13 were trans women of color.§

Of the 28 documented anti-LGBTQ homicides in the United States in 2016, 19 were trans or gender non-conforming people; 17 were trans women of color. ||

Black trans women comprise the highest number of victims of anti-trans homicides,|| while Native trans women comprise the highest percentage of victims relative to the size of their demographic (the Native population).

Transgender people are 2.3 times more likely to experience discrimination and 1.6 times more likely to experience threats and intimidation than cisgender gay and bisexual people. ¶ Transgender women are 6 times more likely to experience physical violence when interacting with police than cisgender gay and bisexual people. **

*National Center for Transgender Equality and The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, “Injustice at Every Turn,” 2011.

†Don Terry, “In the Crosshairs,” Southern Poverty Law Center, June 9, 2015.

‡Trav Pittman, “Four Years to Live: On Violence Against Trans Women of Color,” Huffington Post, Nov. 24, 2015.

§National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, “Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in 2015,” June 14, 2016.

||National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, “Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in 2016,” June 12, 2017.

¶National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, “Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2012,” June 4, 2013.

**National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, “Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2013,” April 4, 2014.