

Southern Survey Research Brief: *Conditions and Life Experiences of Transgender Southerners*



Introduction to the Research Brief

This research brief provides a general overview of the responses provided by 1,125 people who identified as transgender and 297 people who identified as “other”. This is a subset of findings from the responses provided by 6,502 individuals who completed the LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey. The General Findings Report¹ revealed the disparities that transgender people face in the South. This brief shines a spotlight on how this pervasive discrimination affects the education, employment, health and well-being of transgender people.

As you read this report, it is important to keep in mind that this study is based on a convenience sample of individuals who volunteered to complete an online survey. In this regard, the findings may not represent *all* transgender people in the South. Nevertheless, we believe these data provide an important resource for community leaders and policymakers as it represents one of the largest studies of transgender people living in the U.S. South.

About the LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey

The LGBTQ Institute at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, in partnership with Georgia State University, conducted the *Southern Survey* to improve public knowledge about the conditions and life experiences of LGBTQ Southerners. The data were collected using an untraceable, online, anonymous survey of self-identified LGBTQ adults living in 14 U.S. states, including: *Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.*

The survey instrument was developed in close collaboration with a wide range of LGBTQ advocates, academics, and organizations with the aim of collecting critical data on educational and employment status, health and access to healthcare, social and political involvement, and experiences of sexuality and/or gender-related discrimination. The survey was distributed online with the help of more than 140 community-based organizations across the South. The General Findings Report is an overview of the responses provided by 6,502 individuals who completed the survey. More detailed information on the overall study design and methodology is available in a separate report and in the full study protocol.²

¹ <https://www.lgbtqsouthernsurvey.org/general-findings-report>

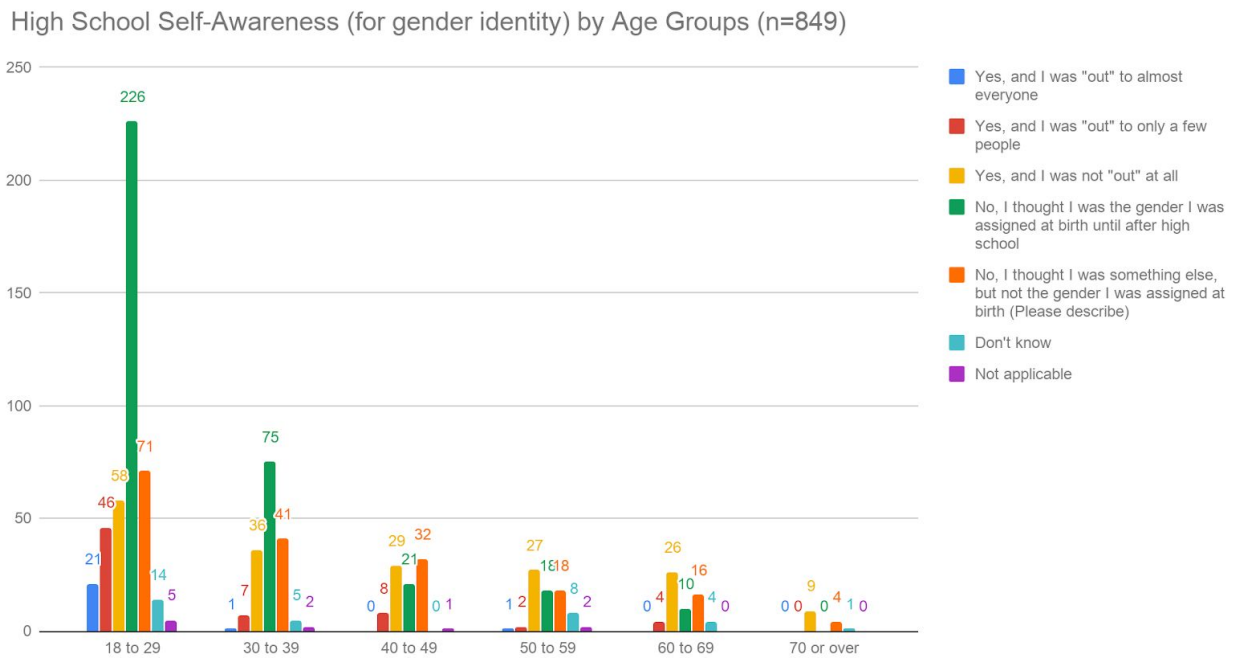
² Roemer, Ryan, and Eric R. Wright. 2018. Southern Survey 2017: Study Design and Methodological Overview. Available at <https://www.lgbtqsouthernsurvey.org/survey-design-and-methodological-overview>.

Education

High School Self-Awareness

When examining high school self-awareness for gender identity by age groups, younger respondents were more likely to be self-aware of their transgender status than older respondents were when they were in high school. However, many respondents identified as their sex assigned at birth until after high school, regardless of age.

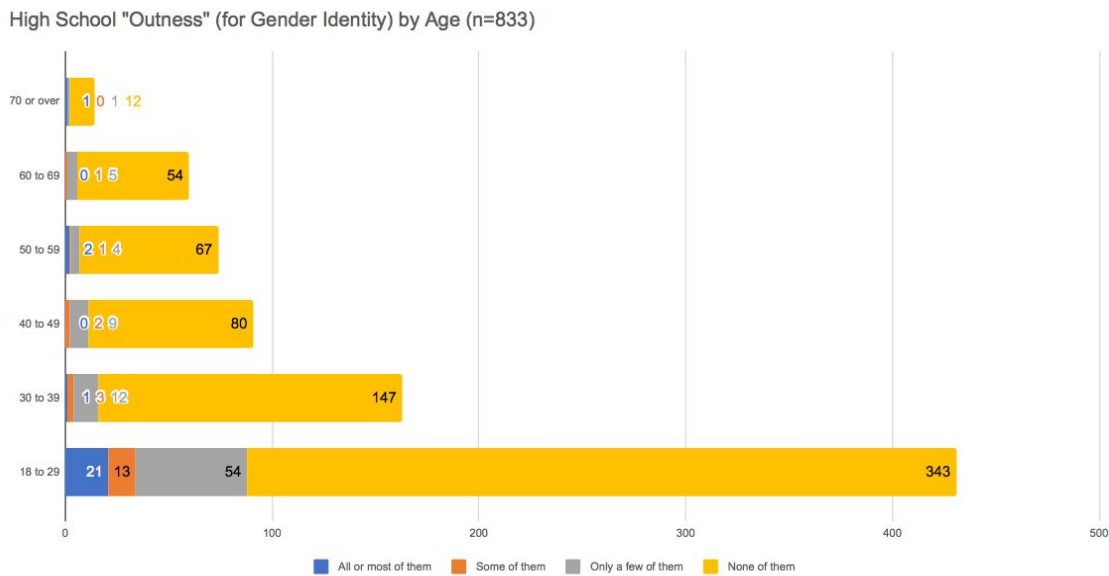
Figure 2.3b: High School self-awareness (for gender identity) by age group, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=849)



High School “Outness”

Younger transgender individuals are reporting roughly equivalent levels of “outness” at school today, as older respondents reported of their “outness” in high school.

Figure 2.3d: High school “outness” to others (by gender identity) by age group, Southern Survey 2018 (n=833)

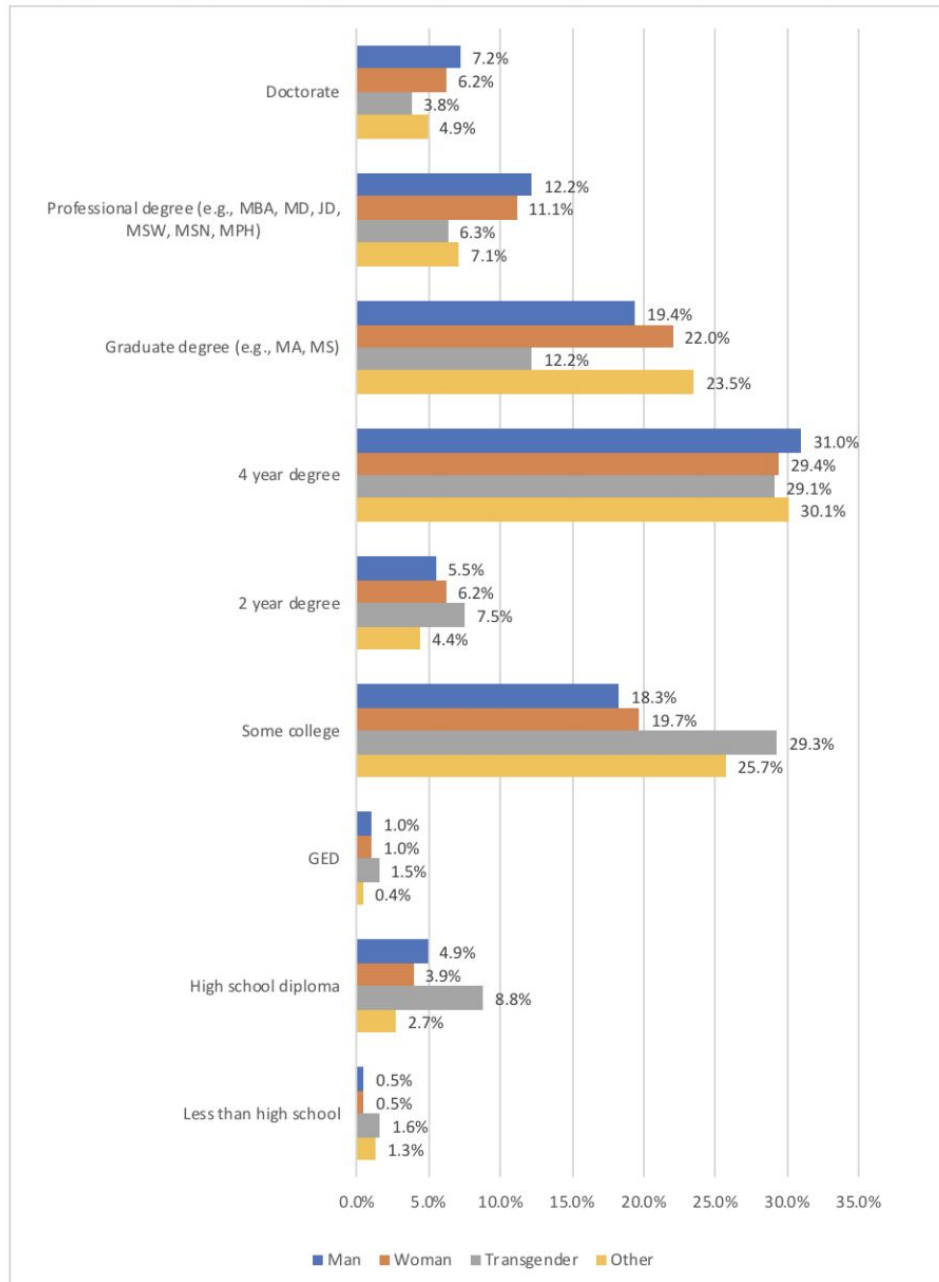


Taken together, these two figures describing “high school self-awareness” and “high school outness,” imply that even though younger transgender people in the South who participated in this study are aware of their gender identity at a younger age, they are not coming out earlier.

Educational Attainment

Respondents who self-identified as transgender and other gender identities were significantly less likely to have advanced degrees than non-transgender people.

Figure 2.1c: Educational attainment by gender, LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey, (n=5,017)

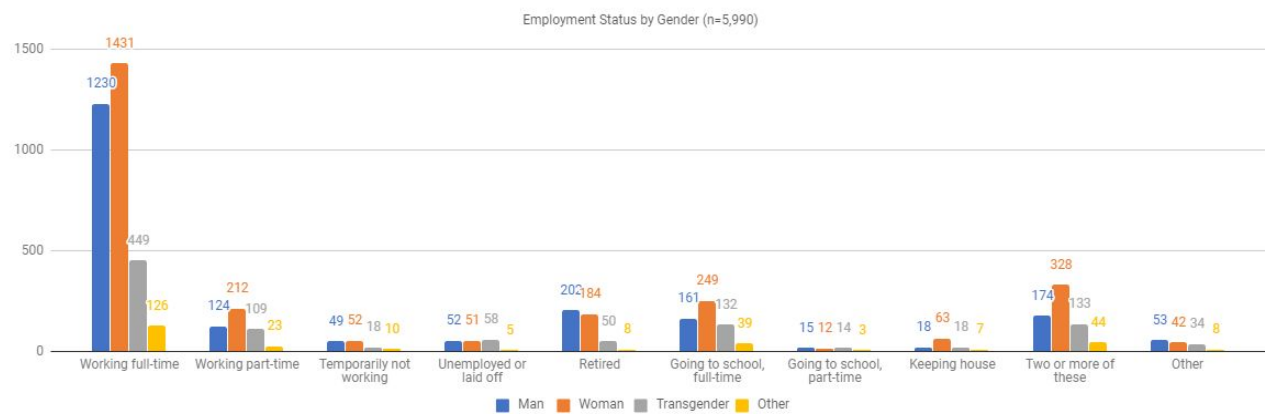


Employment

Employment Status

LGBT Southerners who self-identified as transgender and other gender identities were less likely to work full-time than those who identify as a non-transgender man or woman.

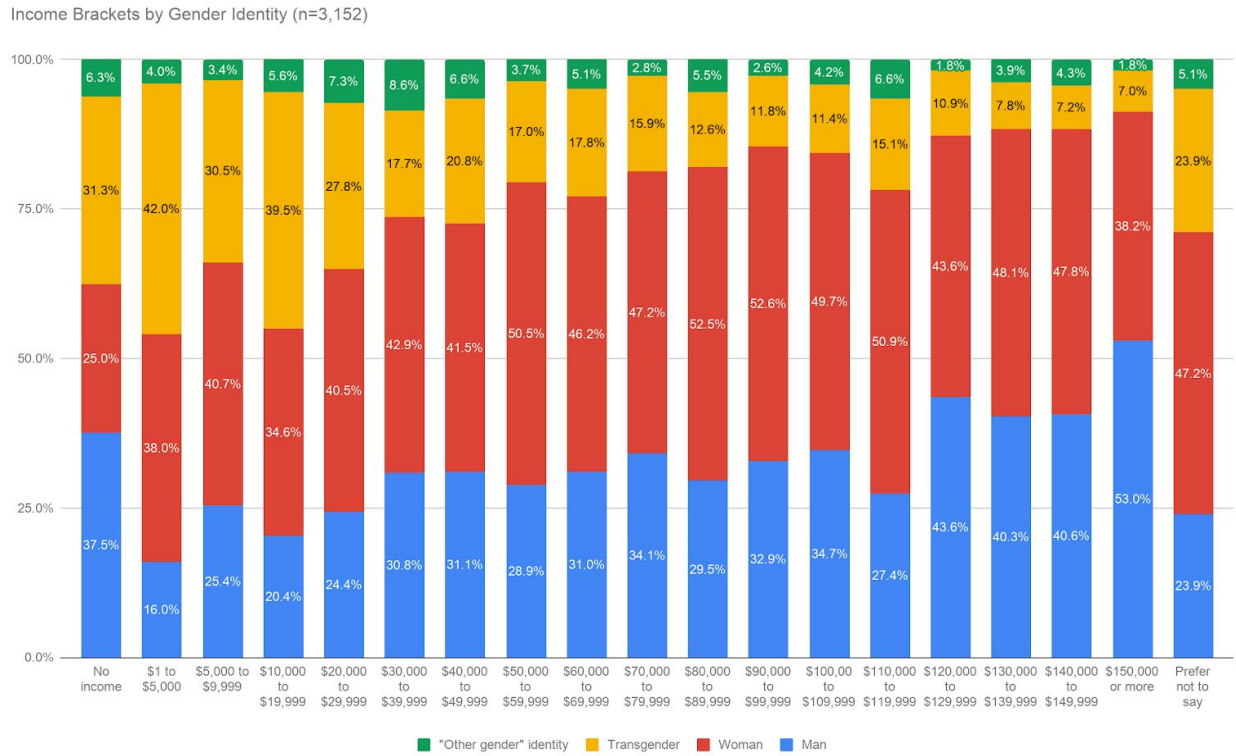
Figure 2.2c: Employment status by gender, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=5,990)



Household Income

Transgender individuals are more likely to report having lower household incomes than non-transgender persons.

Figure 2.2h: Household income by gender identity, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=3,152)



Acceptance of Gender Identity in the Workplace

71.2% report their workplace is only “somewhat”, “not too”, or “not at all” accepting of transgender employees. Less than a third report their workplace is “very” accepting.

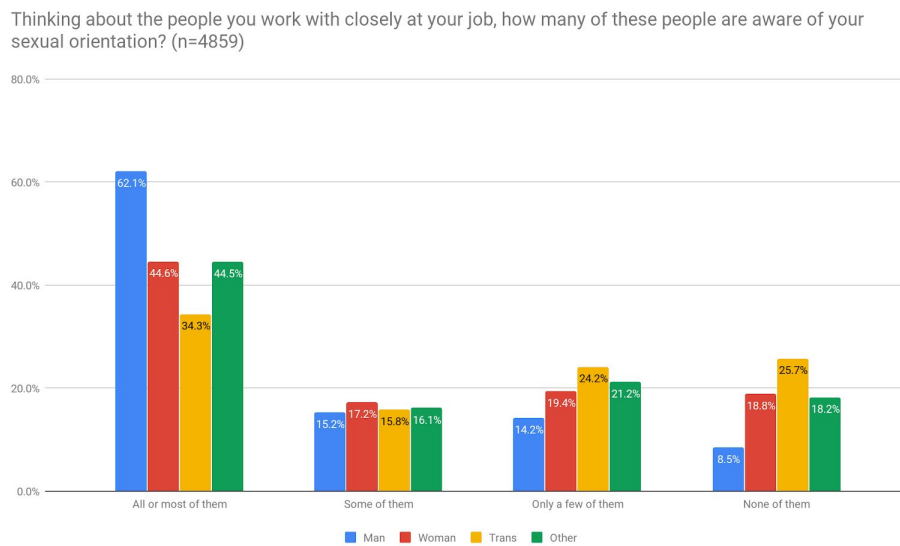
Table 2.4b: Workplace acceptance of transgender employees, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=855)

Reported acceptance of transgender employees (n=855)	
	%
Very accepting	28.8%
Somewhat accepting	40.1%
Not too accepting	18.5%
Not at all accepting	12.6%
Total	100%

“Outness” at work about sexual orientation

Only 34.3% of transgender employees are “out” to all or most of their close coworkers about their sexuality compared to 62.1% of non-transgender men employees and 44.6% of non-transgender women employees.

Figure 2.4c: How many people are aware of your sexuality by gender identity, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=4,859)



“Outness” at work about transgender identity

Half of transgender employees are “out” about their transgender identity to only a few (21.3%) or none (33.4%) of their fellow employees who they work closely with.

Table 2.4c: How many people are aware of your transgender identity, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=856)

How many of the people you work closely know you are transgender (n = 856)	
	%
All or most of them	31.3%
Some of them	14.0%
Only a few of them	21.3%
None of them	33.4%
Total	100%

Workplace Anti-Discrimination Policies

Of respondents who reported their company having a nondiscrimination policy, only 58.6% of transgender employees, compared to 81.5% of non-transgender men and 71.1% of non-transgender women employees, feel their company upholds the policy.

Table 2.4f: Does your company uphold its non-discrimination policy by overall total and gender identity, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=2,443)

Do you feel that your company upholds its non-discrimination policy? (n=2443)					
	Man	Woman	Transgender	Other	Total %
Yes	81.5%	71.0%	58.6%	69.4%	72.8%
No	5.9%	9.6%	14.1%	14.3%	9.1%
Don't Know	12.6%	19.4%	27.3%	16.3%	18.1%
Total					100%

Workplace Allies

Transgender employees are more likely to report having fewer allies at work.

Table 2.4g: Work allies, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=4,327)

Do you have someone at work you would consider an ally? (n=4,327)										
	Heterosexual	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Other Sexuality	Man	Woman	Transgender	Other	Total %
Yes, many individuals	32.0%	36.4%	44.0%	20.5%	24.3%	43.1%	30.5%	21.6%	31.5%	33.4%
Yes, a few individuals	31.5%	35.5%	30.5%	32.0%	36.1%	30.8%	34.8%	34.2%	29.0%	33.0%
Yes, one individual	11.8%	11.4%	7.9%	14.9%	15.7%	7.7%	12.6%	16.5%	15.5%	11.7%
No, no individuals	16.3%	12.7%	12.5%	27.2%	17.8%	13.3%	17.2%	21.4%	20.0%	16.7%
Don't know	8.4%	4.1%	5.0%	5.5%	6.0%	5.1%	5.0%	6.3%	4.0%	5.2%

Discrimination in the Workplace

Transgender Southerners are three times more likely to have been denied a job and twice as likely to be physically harassed or harassed verbally or in writing. They are twice as likely to either stay in a job they would have preferred to leave or have left a job because of discrimination. They are also less likely to seek promotions, talk about personal topics, or participate in social activities with co-workers.

Table 2.5a: Experiences of Discrimination, Southern Survey, 2018

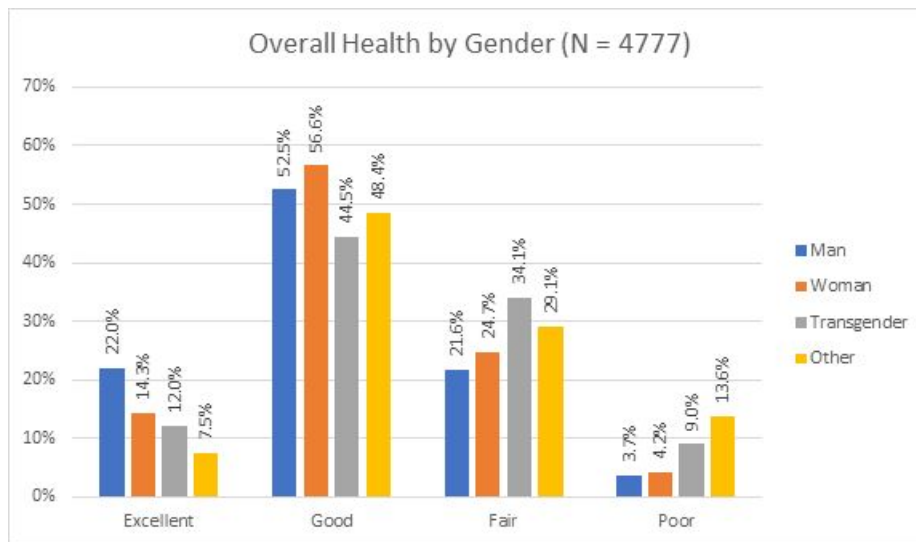
In the past 12 months have you...	LGB	Trans
Been denied a job you applied for	4.8%	19.80%
Been denied a promotion	3.8%	8.5%
Received a negative job evaluation	3.9%	10.9%
Been harassed verbally or in writing by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	12.9%	24.7%
Been physically harassed by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	2.5%	5.0%
Been sexually harassed by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	6.0%	6.9%
Been physically assaulted by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	0.60%	2.10%
Been sexually assaulted by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	0.90%	1.8%
Been fired from a job	3.0%	7.3%
Stayed in a job you would prefer to leave	15.0%	35.2%
Did not seek a promotion or raise	9.0%	22.9%
Changed jobs	9.2%	20.2%
Avoided talking about personal topics with coworkers, supervisors, or bosses	59.4%	76.4%
Avoided participating in after work social activities with coworkers, supervisors, or bosses	34.7%	54.0%

Health and Wellness

Overall Health

A higher percentage of transgender and other gender respondents reported poor health compared to non-transgender men and women respondents.

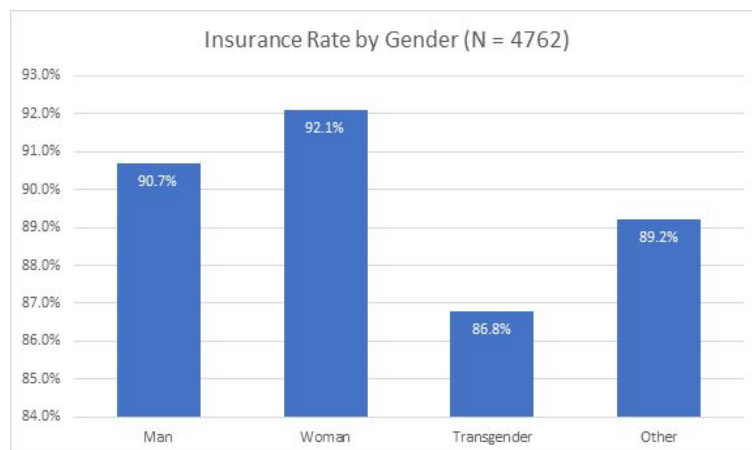
Figure 3.1b: Overall Health by Gender, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=4,777)



Health Insurance

Transgender respondents had lower rates of insurance compared to other genders.

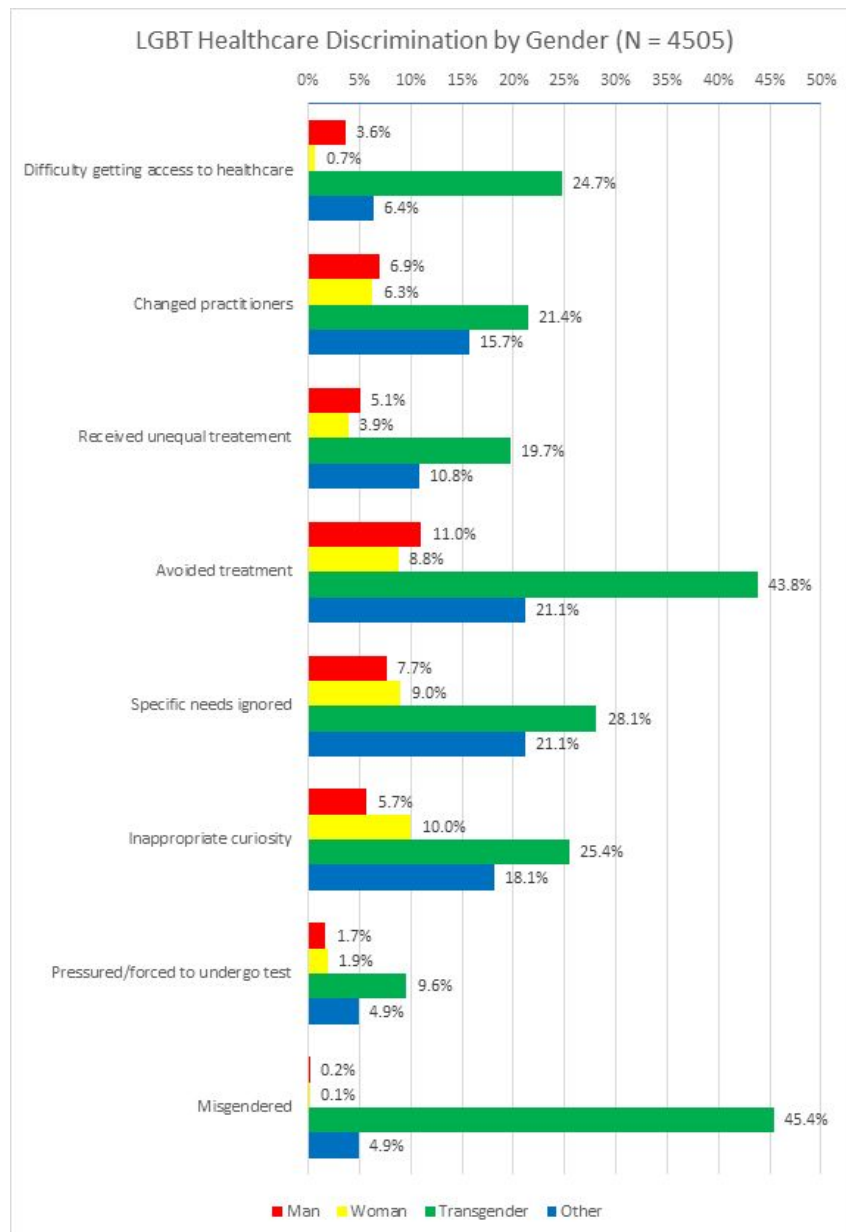
Figure 3.2b: Insurance Rate by Gender, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=4,762)



Discrimination in Healthcare

One third (33%) of all respondents reported some form of discrimination when trying to access healthcare services because of their transgender status in the past 12 months, with nearly half of these individuals choosing to avoid treatment.

Figure 3.5: LGBT Healthcare Discrimination by Gender, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=4,505)

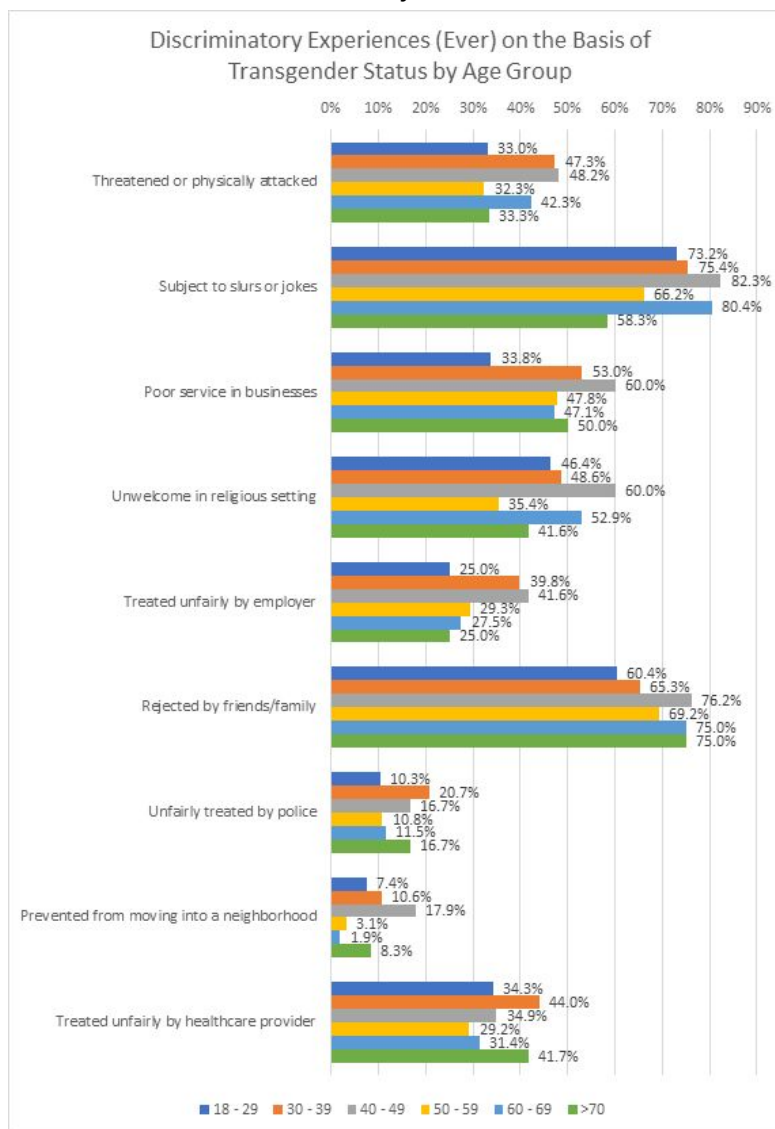


Other Types of Discrimination

Discrimination on the Basis of Transgender Status

The most common forms of discrimination on the basis of transgender status experienced by respondents in the past 12 months was being subject to slurs and jokes (46.8%), being rejected by a friend or family member (35.7%), receiving poor service in restaurants, hotels, or others places of business (24.6%) and being made to feel unwelcome at a place of worship or religious organization (20.4%).

Figure 4.3: Discriminatory Experiences (Ever) on the Basis of Transgender Status by Age Group, Southern Survey, 2018 (n=739)



Discrimination on the Basis of Transgender Status vs. Sexual Orientation

In the past 12 months, transgender respondents reported nearly twice as much discrimination across all domains than those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Both transgender and those identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual experienced discrimination at roughly the same amount overall when asked if they had ever experienced the types of discrimination described in the survey. However, transgender people are still twice as likely to report having been denied care or having been treated unfairly by a healthcare provider at some point in their lives compared to lesbian, gay, or bisexual respondents.

Figure 4.1: Discrimination on the basis of Sexual Orientation compared to discrimination on the basis of Transgender Status, LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey, 2018

Table ___ Discrimination on the basis of Sexual orientation compared to discrimination on the basis of Transgender Status, LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey				
Types of Discrimination	Last 12 Months		Ever	
	<i>LGB</i>	<i>Transgender</i>	<i>LGB</i>	<i>Transgender</i>
Been threatened or physically attacked	4.4%	16.6%	38.6%	38.3%
Been subject to slurs or jokes	25.7%	46.8%	77.4%	74.4%
Received poor service in restaurants, hotels, or other places of business	13.1%	24.6%	42.0%	44.6%
Been made to feel unwelcome at a place of worship or religious organization	14.1%	20.4%	56.1%	47.8%
Been treated unfairly by an employer in hiring, pay, or promotion	5.4%	14.4%	26.2%	30.4%
Been rejected by a friend or family member	17.4%	35.7%	63.7%	65.2%
Been unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police	1.6%	4.6%	9.8%	13.4%
Been prevented from moving into a neighborhood because landlord/realtor refused to sell or rent a house or apartment	0.8%	2.8%	5.5%	8.5%
Been denied care or treated unfairly by a healthcare provider	3.3%	17.6%	15.5%	35.9%

Acknowledgements

The LGBTQ Institute at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights would like to acknowledge the LGBTQ individuals who took the survey. Your willingness to be part of one of the largest studies of LGBTQ people in the South will help the public and many local, state, and national organizations better understand what it is like to be LGBTQ in the Southeastern United States. We hope that these data can be used to help direct efforts that will make the South a welcoming and safe place for LGBTQ people. ***We are grateful to you. Thank you.***

We also want to thank all survey partners³ who helped us conduct this survey across the South. The LGBTQ Institute could not have done this without the support of local, state, and regional grassroots organizations. We are grateful to you all and look forward to future collaborations.

When referencing this document, we suggest the following citation:

Roemer, Ryan, and Eric R. Wright. 2018. *LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey Research Brief: Conditions and Life Experiences of Transgender* Southerners*

The LGBTQ Institute at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights *is a trusted convener for thoughtful dialogue and our education programs serve as a catalyst for action. We explore critical issues through research with a specific focus on the U.S. South while connecting academics to advocates to advance LGBT equity.*

Georgia State University *is an enterprising urban public research institution in Atlanta. A national leader in graduating students from diverse backgrounds, Georgia State provides a rich experience with award-winning housing, hundreds of student clubs and organizations, and one of the most diverse student bodies in the country.*

³ A full listing of all survey partners can be found within the LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey General Findings Report which can be accessed at <https://www.lgbtqsouthernsurvey.org/survey-partners>