

Transgender Individuals and Mental Health

Many transgender individuals struggle with depression since they feel they have been in the wrong body for many years. Many are also dealing with complicated relationships with their family and peers.

- According to the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention in 2014, the prevalence of suicide attempts among respondents to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS), conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and National Center for Transgender Equality, is 41 percent, which vastly exceeds the 4.6 percent of the overall U.S. population who report a lifetime suicide attempt.
- Suicide attempts among trans men (46%) and trans women (42%) were slightly higher than the full sample (41%).
- Analysis of other demographic variables found prevalence of suicide attempts was highest among those who are younger (18 to 24: 45%), multiracial (54%) and American Indian or Alaska Native (56%), have lower levels of educational attainment (high school or less: 48-49%), and have lower annual household income (less than \$10,000: 54%).
- Respondents who experienced rejection by family and friends, discrimination, victimization, or violence had elevated prevalence of suicide attempts, such as those who experienced the following:
 - — Family chose not to speak/spend time with them: 57%
 - — Discrimination, victimization, or violence at school, at work, and when accessing health care
 - Harassed or bullied at school (any level): 50-54%
 - Experienced discrimination or harassment at work: 50-59%
 - Doctor or health care provider refused to treat them: 60%
 - Suffered physical or sexual violence:
 - — At work: 64-65%
 - — At school (any level): 63-78%
 - — Discrimination, victimization, or violence by law enforcement
 - Disrespected or harassed by law enforcement officers: 57-61%
 - Suffered physical or sexual violence: By law enforcement officers: 60-70%
 - — Experienced homelessness: 69%
- Reported lifetime suicide attempts decreased with age, from a high of 45 percent for 18-44 year-olds to 33 percent for 55-64 year-olds and 16 percent for those over 65 years.⁷
- Respondents who indicated “white” race/ethnicity had the lowest prevalence of lifetime suicide attempts at 38 percent, while American Indians and Alaska Natives reported the highest at 56 percent.
- Generally, those with greater educational achievement were less likely to report having attempted suicide, with 31 percent of respondents with a graduate degree, compared to 49 percent of those with a high school diploma, reporting a lifetime suicide attempt.

- Those with higher household income had a lower prevalence of lifetime suicide attempts, with 26 percent of those with income exceeding \$100,000 saying they had ever attempted suicide, compared to 54 percent of those with income less than \$10,000.

Much more detailed information can be found at this link:

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/AFSP-Williams-Suicide-Report-Final.pdf>

HRT has helped many transgender people feel a lot more stable, less anxious and panicky. They start to have more positive emotions after some time on HRT.

Some transgender people decide not to use hormone therapy. Some also decide whether they want to have gender reassignment surgery.

Having a good doctor, a good therapist (if needed and wanted), and understanding family and friends is essential to the mental health of a transgender person.

Hormone Therapy - quote from a patient

"The hormone therapy reduced stress and anxiety. It was a positive effect on my mental health, which improved even before physical changes began to occur. The air was fresher; the sun was brighter."

Many students in college are just deciding to come out as a transgender individual after leaving high school, their family and friends to live somewhat on their own for the first time where they can hopefully express themselves as they feel. We teachers may be the first people they come into contact with, and if we can show them that we have an open, inclusive and trans-affirming space to offer, we might be just one small part of the positive side of their life journey.

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