



# Sexual Minorities in Minnesota

SUMN.org FACT SHEET

2018

## Substance Abuse Prevention

This fact sheet provides state-level data on substance use and related factors to help guide decisions about prevention efforts for sexual minorities (SMs). Sexual minority status can refer to a person's sexual orientation (such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning or queer), or to a person's gender identity (for example, transgender, genderqueer, or genderfluid). Data for these groups can be used to justify need for prevention funding, monitor substance-related trends, and plan programs and initiatives by establishing community-level prevention priorities.

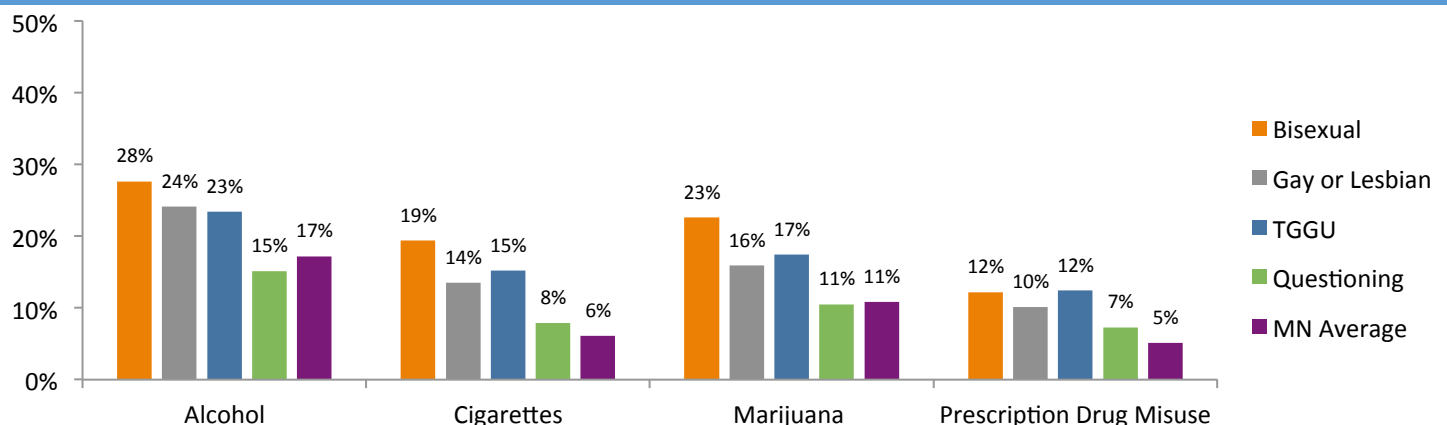
In 2016, 10.3% of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students taking the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning (LGBQ). Further, 2.7% of students identified as transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or unsure of their gender identity (TGGU). According to Gallup data published in 2015, 3.6% of Metro-area Minnesotans identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

*For more information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, consequences, contributing factors, and treatment, as well as mental health data, visit [SUMN.org](http://SUMN.org)*

## Key Findings

- Most subgroups of SM students are more likely than the state average to report past 30-day alcohol use, binge drinking, tobacco use, and marijuana use
- LGBQ adult students are as likely as the state average to report past-month alcohol use, but bisexual women are more likely than lesbian or heterosexual women to report binge drinking in the past two weeks
- LGBQ adults are more likely to report cigarette and e-cigarette use
- LGB students perceive high risk of harm from most substances, but are less likely than heterosexual students to report their friends disapproving of substance use
- Sexual minority students are much more likely to report mental health issues

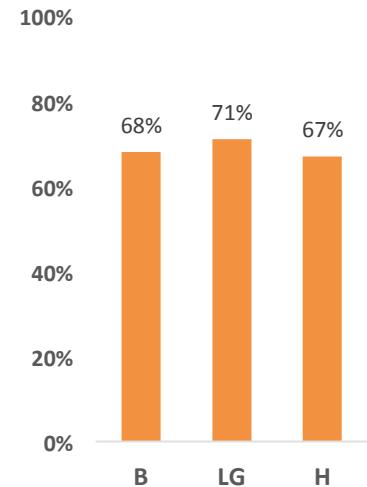
## Past 30-Day Substance Use, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)



## Adult Substance Use

### Alcohol

- According to the College Student Health Survey (CSHS) Report for the years 2007-2011, past-month alcohol use was reported by 68% of bisexual and 71% of gay and lesbian adult college students in Minnesota.
- From 2007 to 2011, CSHS found that male heterosexuals were most likely to report binge drinking, at 40.2%, while lesbians were least likely, at 25.1%. Bisexual women were more likely to report bingeing than either lesbian or heterosexual women (29.5%, 25.1%, and 26.9%, respectively). Men, across groups, were more likely to report bingeing than women.
- The 2015 Minnesota Survey on Adult Substance Use (MNSASU) found that LGB people were slightly more likely than heterosexuals to have used alcohol in the past month (58% vs. 56%); and to have engaged in binge drinking (17% vs. 14%) and drinking games (6% vs. 5%).



**Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay, and Heterosexual Adult Students Reporting Past 30-Day Alcohol Use (CSHS 2007-2011)**

### Tobacco/Nicotine

- According to the 2015 MNSASU, the state past 30-day cigarette smoking rate for LGB adults is 21%, and 16% for heterosexuals. Additionally, more LGB people have used e-cigarettes (10% vs. 5%).
- In comparison, the 2014 Voices of Health (VOH) survey found that 25% of LGBTQ respondents characterized themselves as current smokers.

### Marijuana

- The 2007-2011 CSHS survey found gay and lesbian adult students reported much higher levels of past 30-day marijuana use than heterosexual students (16.8% vs. 10.3%), with bisexual students reporting the highest rate (23.6%).

## Youth Substance Use

Compared to state averages from the Minnesota Student Survey, sexual minority students are more likely to report past 30-day rates of alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use, and overall prescription drug misuse.

### Alcohol

- Past 30-day alcohol use was reported by 28% of bisexual students, 24% of gay and lesbian students, 15% of questioning students, and 17% of heterosexual students in 2016. Female LGBQ students were more likely to report past-month alcohol use: 28% vs. 25% for bisexuals; 25% vs. 23% for gay and lesbian students; 16% vs. 14% for questioning students. Male TGGU students were more likely than female to report use: 25% vs. 23%. Past 30-day binge drinking (defined as having five or more drinks in a row on one occasion) was reported by 11% of SM students, compared to the state average of 8%.

### Tobacco/Nicotine

- Past 30-day cigarette smoking in 2016 was reported by 19% of bisexuals, 14% of gay and lesbian students, 8% of questioning students, and 15% of TGGU students, compared to the state average of 6%. Past-month e-cigarette use was reported by 23% of bisexuals, 18% of gay or lesbian students, 11% of questioning students, and 19% of TGGU students, compared to a 13% state average.

SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, provides survey reports, data, and other resources on substance abuse and other health issues pertaining to the LGBTQ population.

To learn more, go to: <http://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/lgbt>

## Marijuana

- Past 30-day marijuana use in 2016 was reported by 23% of bisexual students, 16% of gay and lesbian students, 11% of questioning students, and 17% of TGGU students. The state average was 11%.

## Prescription Drug Misuse

- Past 30-day prescription drug misuse was reported by 12% of bisexual students, 10% of gay and lesbian students, 7% of questioning students, and 12% of TGGU students, as compared to 5% for the Minnesota average.

## Contributing Factors

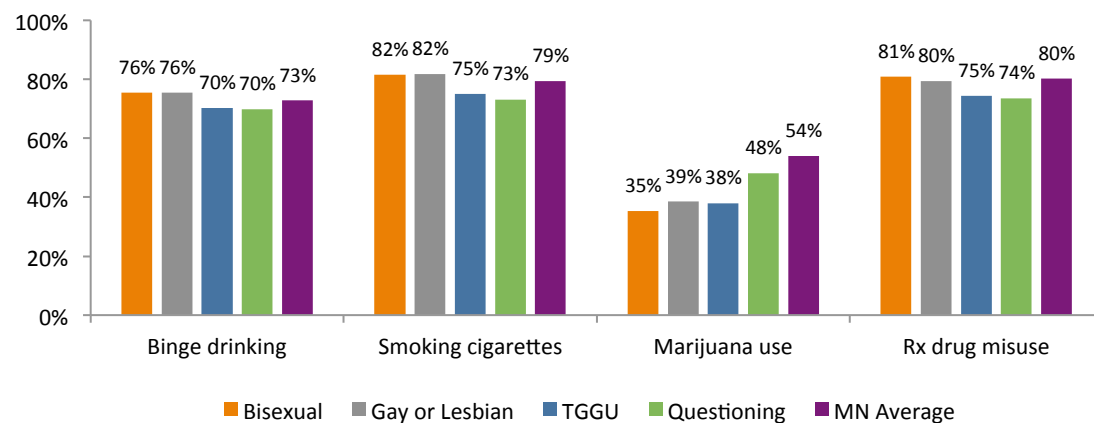
Low perception of harm and community norms favorable toward substance use contribute to alcohol, tobacco, and drug use in a community.

## Perceived Harm

LGB 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders were as likely or more likely than the state average to believe that people put themselves at great or moderate risk of harm, physically and in other ways, by consuming five or more alcoholic drinks once or twice per week, smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day, or by using prescription drugs prescribed for someone else. Questioning and TGGU students were less likely to perceive harm from using those substances. All SM students were less likely than the state average to perceive harm from using marijuana.

Questioning students were the least likely to perceive harm from any substance use, other than marijuana (see graph below).

**Perception of Great or Moderate Harm from Substance Use, by Sexual Orientation, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 MSS**



## Perceived Peer Disapproval

Although perception of harm is comparable among students in most categories, SM students find their peers to be more permissive: among LGB and TGGU students, 65-69% said their friends would think it's very wrong or wrong for them to have one or two drinks of alcohol nearly every day, compared to a state average of 74%. Similarly, only 46-50% of LGB and TGGU students felt their friends would feel it's very wrong or wrong for them to smoke marijuana, compared to a 66% state average.

## Mental Health

Having a mental health disorder such as depression or anxiety is a risk factor for substance abuse, and many individuals suffer from co-occurring substance use and mental disorders. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 23% of suicides are alcohol-related.

In 2016, sexual minority 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students were vastly more likely than the state average to report any past year suicidal ideation—see graph. They were also much more likely to report any self-harm in the past year: 55% of bisexuals, 44% of gay and lesbian students, and 32% of questioning students reported self-harm, compared to 12% of heterosexual students.

In addition, sexual minority 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than the state average to report feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past two weeks: 82% of bisexuals, 74% of gays and lesbians, 64% of questioning students, and 80% of TGGU students reported feeling this way, compared to 39% of heterosexual students.

According to the CSHS survey, LGB adult students were also more likely to report a diagnosis of depression in the past 12 months, with 18% and 17% of male and female bisexuals, and 12% of gays and lesbians reporting a diagnosis, compared to 5% and 10% of heterosexual males and females.

To learn more about mental health and its relationship with substance abuse, read the SUMN fact sheet on this topic, on the SUMN website at: [http://www.sumn.org/~media/498/Mental\\_Health\\_2017\\_SUMN\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.sumn.org/~media/498/Mental_Health_2017_SUMN_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

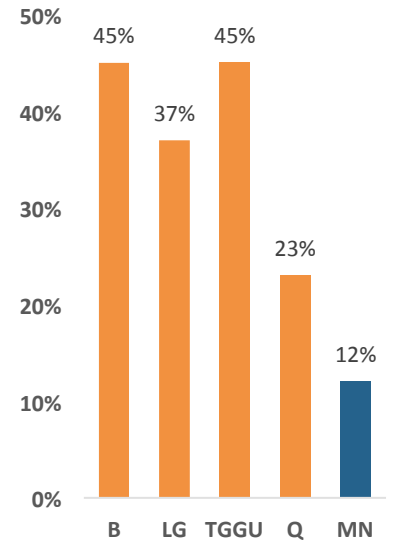
A number of risk and protective factors are associated with not only substance use but also mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Examples of shared protective factors are youth being able to talk to their parents about problems they're having, and feeling safe (at home, at school, and in your neighborhood). Examples of shared risk factors are adverse childhood experiences, dating violence, and bullying. For data on shared risk and protective factors, visit SUMN.org.

## State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Minnesota's SEOW has been monitoring substance abuse trends since 2007. The Workgroup helps guide prevention planning at the state level, and provides training and technical assistance to communities. In 2008 the SEOW launched the Substance Use in Minnesota (SUMN) website to ensure quick and easy access to data for prevention professionals.

### SUMN.org

SUMN is a one-stop-shop for data, tools, and prevention resources. Visitors can search county, regional, and state level data by topic, by location, and by demographic producing tables, charts, graphs, and maps. View and download data products, such as this fact sheet, and find tips on finding, analyzing, translating, using, and disseminating data.



**Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay, TGGU, Questioning, and Total MN 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders Reporting Any Past Year Suicidal Ideation (MSS 2016)**

Funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division

## Contact Us

For questions or more information regarding the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup or SUMN.org, please email: [info@sumn.org](mailto:info@sumn.org)

To contact the Regional Prevention Coordinator for your region, please visit: [www.rpcmn.org](http://www.rpcmn.org)