

Health Behaviors of Missouri Transspectrum College Students

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is a statewide coalition of 21 public and private colleges and universities in Missouri with the mission of building safe and healthy campuses. PIP tracks students' high-risk behaviors and behaviors that promote health and wellness through the annual implementation of the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) survey. By examining student health behaviors, PIP can track the well-being of Missouri college students of specific subpopulations. This brief focuses on the health behaviors of Missouri transspectrum college students.

Overview of Transspectrum Population

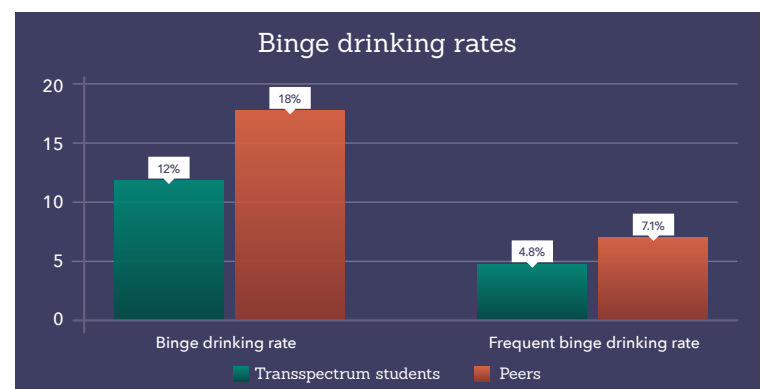
Within this brief, transspectrum students include students who identify as transgender, gender queer, gender non-binary, and self-identify their gender. In Missouri, approximately 1.0% of college students identify as transspectrum students. Within this population, 23% identify as transgender, 48% identify as gender queer or gender non-binary, and 40% self-identify. Seventy-six percent (76%) of transspectrum students identify as white, and 24% identify as non-white. Fifty-one percent (51%) of transspectrum students report that they have a disability. As this is the first time PIP has been able to write about transspectrum students, this brief includes ample information on this population's health behaviors.

Key Findings

- Report lower rates of binge drinking and frequent binge drinking
- Report slightly lower rates of tobacco use and slightly higher rates of marijuana use
- Experience higher rates of abusive relationships
- Experience higher rates of overwhelming and unbearable stress
- Experience higher rates of mental health concerns
- Report higher rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts

Alcohol

According to the MACHB, 76% of transspectrum students have consumed alcohol in the past year, and 66% of transspectrum students report that they first started drinking alcohol before the age of 21. Transspectrum students report binge drinking, having five or more drinks in a two hour period, at a lower rate than their peers (12% v. 18%). They also report frequent binge drinking, binge drinking three or more times in the past two weeks, at a lower rate (4.8% v. 7.1%).



When asked why they consume alcohol*, the most common responses reported by transspectrum students included having fun with friends (67%), wanting to relax (62%), liking the taste (51%), and liking the feel (46%). In addition, transspectrum students report slightly higher rates of experiencing alcohol abuse in the past year than their peers (5.6% v. 2.4%).

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Tobacco, Marijuana, and Other Drugs

Twenty-one percent (21%) of transspectrum students report using tobacco in the past year, which is slightly less than their peers (25%). In their lifetime, students on the transspectrum report using marijuana at higher rates than their peers (43% v. 29%). In addition, in the past year, transspectrum students report using marijuana derivatives (14% v. 11%) and edibles (27% v. 17%) at slightly higher and rates than their peers.

Relationships and Intimate Partner Violence

Transspectrum students report experiencing abusive relationships in their lifetime at a much higher rate than their peers (51% v. 30%), with higher rates of verbal (42% v. 20%), sexual (22% v. 9.1%), physical (19% v. 8.3%), and psychological (46% v. 22%) abuse in these relationships*. In the past year, transspectrum students report experiencing an abusive relationship twice as much as their peers (30% v. 14%). They report similar rates of verbal abuse (30% v. 30%), but report higher rates of sexual (13% v. 10%), physical (11% v. 9%), and psychological (45% v. 32%) abuse.

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More transspectrum students have experienced non-consensual sexual contact in their lifetime than their peers (38% v. 21%) and slightly more in the past year (8.7% v. 7.6%). For transspectrum students who have experienced sexual contact against their will, 29% report that it occurred while attending their current college or university, while 7.1% preferred not to respond.

Mental Health, Well-being, and Suicide

In the past two weeks, 99% of transspectrum students report experiencing stress, reporting higher rates of overwhelming stress (37% v. 26%) and unbearable stress (11% v. 4.1%) than their peers. Of transspectrum students who report experiencing stress in the past two weeks, 51% report that stress has impacted

their academic life considerably to a great deal and 50% report that it has impacted their personal life considerably to a great deal. The main sources of stress* for transspectrum students include academics (89%), financial concerns (67%), mental health issues (65%), time management (60%), future plans (57%), and family (53%).

The MACHB asks students to report the mental health concerns that they experienced in the past year*. Transspectrum students report experiencing higher rates of major depression (66% v. 26%), anxiety (83% v. 52%), sexual assault (7.0% v. 3.5%), eating disorders (16% v. 7%), chronic sleep issues (34% v. 19%), self-injury (24% v. 5.0%), panic attacks (51% v. 24%), and bipolar disorder (13% v. 2.2%).

	Transspectrum	Peers
Anxiety	83%	52%
Panic attacks	51%	24%
Chronic sleep issues	34%	19%
Major depression	66%	26%
Self-injury	24%	5.0%
Eating disorders	16%	7.0%
Bipolar disorder	13%	2.2%
Sexual assault	7.0%	3.5%

Transspectrum students report having suicidal thoughts in their lifetime (73% v. 41%) and in the past year (49% v. 20%) at much higher rates than their peers. In the past year, 5.5% of transspectrum students report attempting suicide, which is a higher rate than their peers (1.8%). In addition 55% of transspectrum students have been concerned about a friend having suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

*indicates check all that apply

Help-Seeking

When personal concerns arise, the main on-campus resources that transspectrum students report that they feel they can go to include friends (76%), the university counseling center (43%), faculty (35%), or an academic advisor (25%). Off-campus, these students report that they can go to friends (82%), parents (48%), a dating partner or spouse (38%), siblings (33%), a mental health professional (22%), or a chat or online support (22%).

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Of transspectrum students who had thoughts of suicide or attempted suicide in the past year, 69% sought assistance, primarily from* the university counseling center (39%), a religious or spiritual advisor (7.7%), an off-campus medical doctor (7.7%), or an off-campus mental health center (7.7%).

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of transspectrum students report that they would be likely to very likely to bring up the topic of suicide with someone at risk, and 90% report that they would be likely to very likely to refer someone at risk of suicide to a local resource.

Resources

Fifty-six percent (56%) of transspectrum students report that they would be willing to complete an online suicide prevention training program. Ask. Listen. Refer. is an online suicide prevention training program that trains participants to identify people at risk for suicide; recognize risk factors, protective factors, and warning signs of suicide; and to respond and get help for people at risk. For more information, visit asklistenrefer.org.

Trans Lifeline is a national trans-led organization that offers direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis. If you are in need of support from the Trans Lifeline, call (877) 565-8860, or visit www.translifeline.org. In addition, the Trevor Project

provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people under the age of 25. It also provides a number of helpful, educational resources to support these individuals. For more information on The Trevor Project, visit www.thetrevorproject.org.

Every year in June, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and its allies celebrate Pride Month, which honors the 1969 Stonewall riots, which were a catalyst in liberation of gay rights. Specifically to college students, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Centers on campuses host events, offer safe environments for students, and provide educational resources and programs.

To learn more about the trans community in the United States, visit www.ustranssurvey.org for the report of the 2015 Transgender Survey. Please be sure to educate yourself on this population and the experiences that they bring to the college community. It is important to continuously strive to create safe environments for all students.

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

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