



Bullying and Suicide Preventio

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Bullying @ School and
On-line National
Conference

Omaha, NE

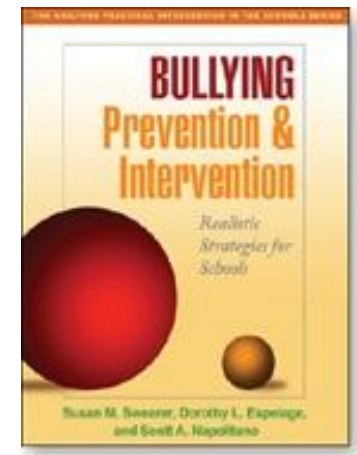
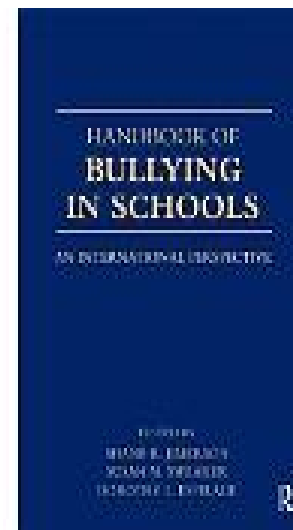
June 13, 2011



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Comments based on these books and special online issue of Education.com:

- Special issue, "Bullying: At School and Online" of Education.com.
- www.education.com



Available from: www.amazon.com



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The "It Gets Better" Project

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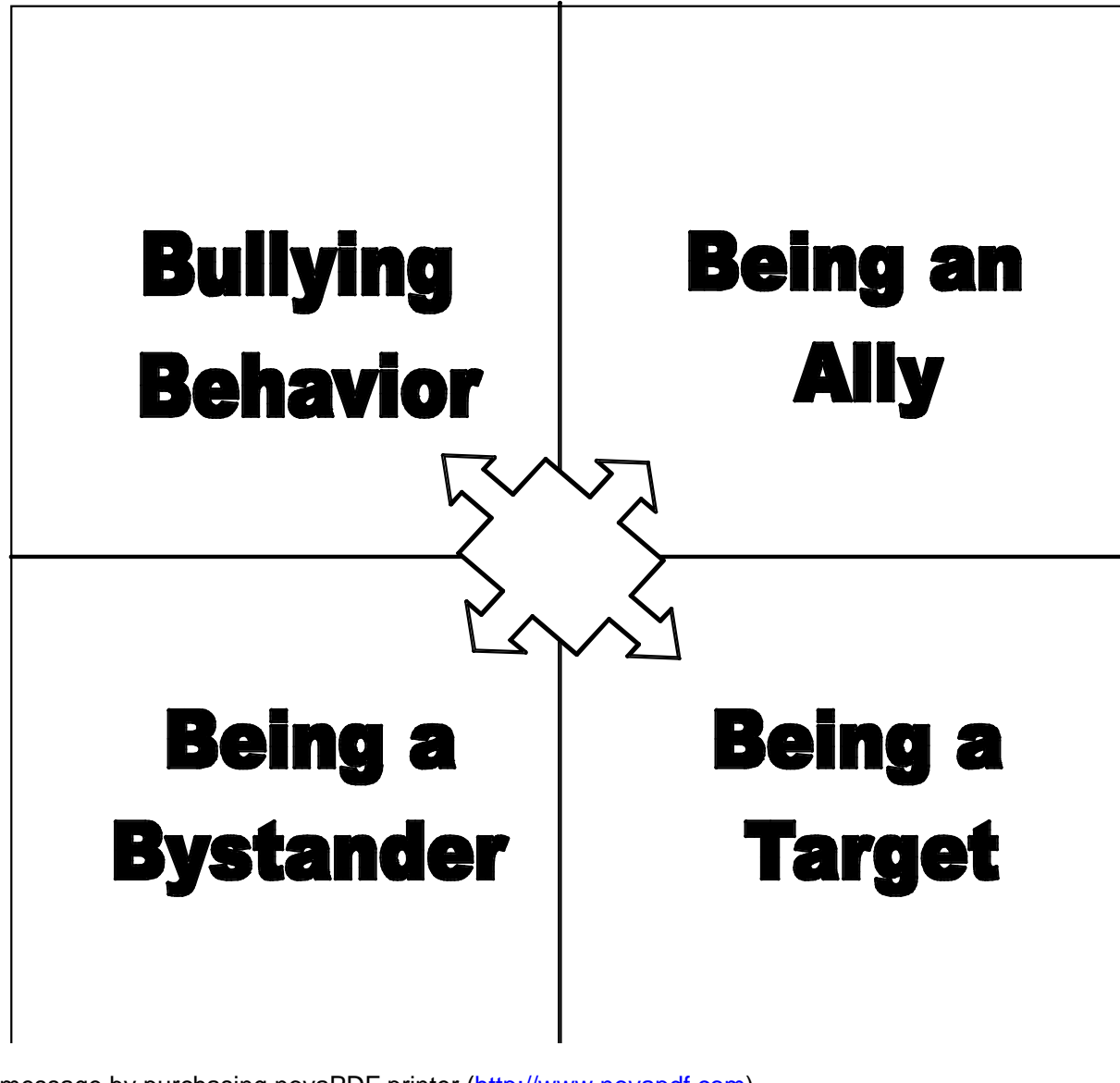
Bully/Victim Continuum

- Bully - reports bullying others
- Victim - reports being bullied by others
- Bully-victim - reports bullying others & being bullied
- Bystander - reports observing others being bullied
- No Status/Not involved - does not report any involvement with bullying



Let's Get Real

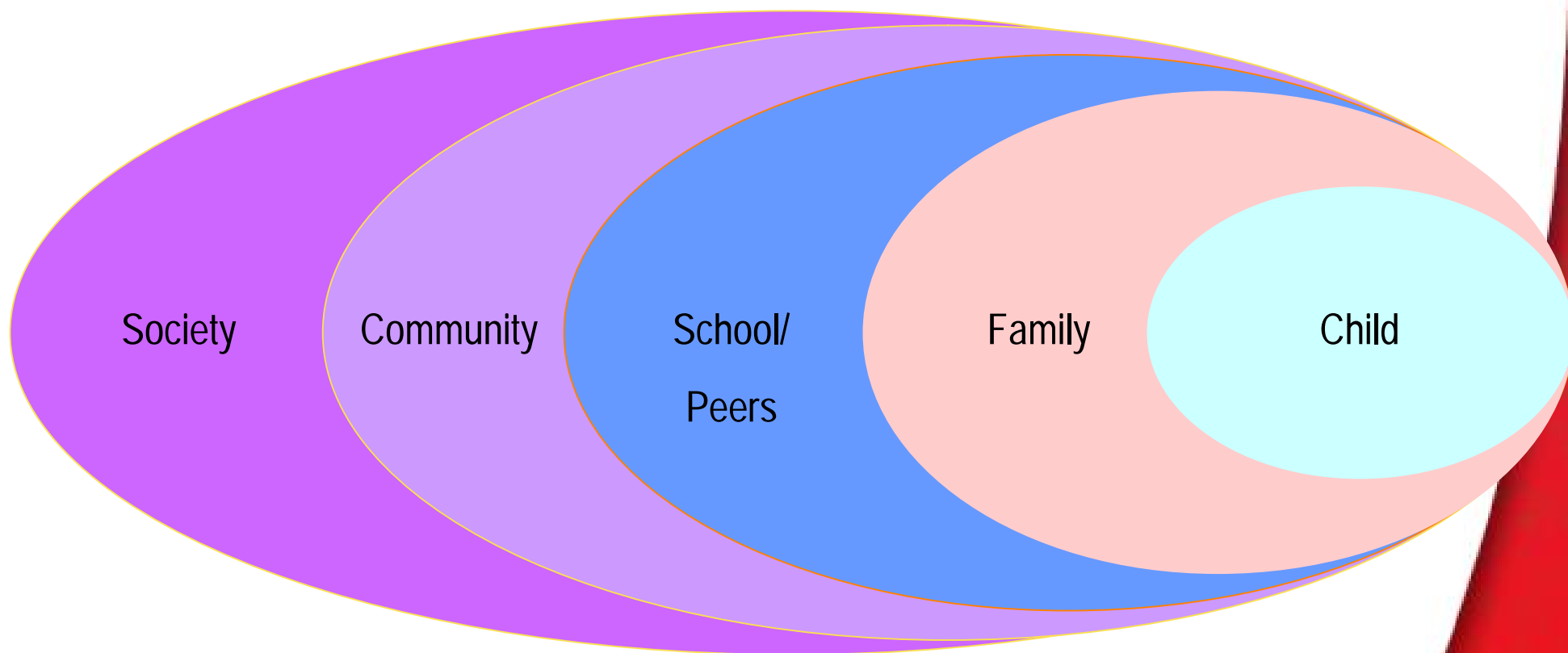
The 4-Square Relational Model



A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orpinas & Horne; 2006;

Swearer & Espelage, 2004)



Washington Post: "5 Myths of Bullying"

- Bullying is the leading cause of suicide
According to the National Institute of Mental Health, suicide is the third-leading cause of death for 15-24 year-olds behind traffic accidents and homicide. And while individuals who are bullied are at increased risk for self-harm, it's too simplistic to blame the deaths of bullying victims solely on bullying.
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, risk factors for suicide include a family history of suicide, depression or other mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, a stressful life event or loss, easy access to firearms and medication, exposure to the suicidal behavior of others and incarceration. Bullying is certainly a stressful life event and can be a trigger for suicide, but other underlying factors are usually involved as well. Interpreting a teenager's suicide as a reaction to bullying ignores the complex emotional problems that American youth face. Bullying is a contributing factor for suicide. However, how can we understand and address the complexity of suicidal behaviors if we only blame the name-callers?



A Reader's Response....

- Do you have any champagne left over from New Years Eve? If so, go drink yourself a toast. And I hope it is flat.
- Nevertheless, thanks. I get it now. The problem I had when I was 13 was NOT because my uncle told me that people like me were going to Hell, and that it would be a good thing if we all got killed in traffic accidents, as the gay son of family friends just had been. The earlier the death, the fewer the chances to sin. Perfectly logical.
- Silly me. Turns out that the only reason this was a problem was because my Daddy has a gun. Thank you for clearing that up. I spent a whole 30 minutes with that gun in my hand before I decided not to use it.
- If that gun had not been in the house, clearly there would have been no problem at all, and everything would have been sweetness and light.



A Happy Ending...

- Arguments that posit the idea that addressing aspect A will have no effect on aspects B, C, D, and E always end up getting used as an excuse to do nothing. The fuzzier a problem looks, the less likely it is to be addressed. My criticism of your column is that this is exactly how it will be perceived, and that is how it may be used.
- And I now understand that neither of us wants that.
- Thank you for your consideration of my reactions, and for the time you took to



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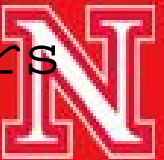
Bullying and Suicide Prevalence Rates

- Involvement in bullying is correlated with a higher risk of suicide (Kim & Levanthal, 2008; Ivarsson, Broberg, Arvidsson, & Gillberg, 2005)
- Prevalence rates are based primarily on the results of cross-sectional studies
 - Cross-sectional studies indicate the odds ratios for bullying involvement and increased risk of suicidal ideation and/or suicide attempts range from 1.4 to 10.0 (Kim & Leventhal, 2008)
 - Longitudinal odds ratios range from 1.7 to 11.8 for suicidality and bullying behaviors when victimization in particular is examined (Klomek,



Suicidalinity and Bully/Victim Status

- Overall, the notion that bullying and victimization lead to suicidalinity is supported across studies (Klomek et al., 2010)
 - Victims of bullying are between 2.5%-11% more likely to experience suicidal ideation than students who observe bullying or students who bully others (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfield, & Gould, 2007)
 - Youth who are involved in multiple bullying roles have thoughts of ending one's life more often than students who categorize themselves as only bullies, victims, or bystanders (Rivers & Moret, 2010)



Suicidality and Bully/Victim Status

- Bully-victims have the highest risk for suicidal ideation (Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen, Rimplea, & Rantanen, 1999)
 - This finding is consistent with the consensus that bully-victims are the most at-risk subgroup psychologically
- Bullies endorsed a higher level of suicidal thoughts than victims (Roland, 2002)



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Gender Differences

- Bullying leads to suicidality, but there is some evidence to suggest this relationship varies based on gender (Klomek et al., 2010)
 - At least one study found that girls who were involved in bullying reported higher suicidal thoughts than boys (Roland, 2002)
 - Finnish study suggests that bullying led to suicidality regardless of other factors for girls, while bullying led to suicidality only if other psychopathological factors were present for boys (Klomek et al., 2009)



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The Role of Other Risk Factors

- Additional research is warranted to determine if bullying alone leads to suicide, or if other factors contribute to this correlation
- One finding suggests that victimization negatively impacts social hopelessness, which mediates the relationship between bullying and suicidality (Bonanno & Hymel, 2010)
- In a sample of adolescents, bullying was found to be an independent risk factor for suicidality (Kim, Leventhal, Yoh, & Boyce, 2009)



LGBTQ Youth

- Special populations of students (e.g., LD, juvenile delinquents, LGB youth) who are involved in bullying report higher rates of suicidality than their average peers (Kim & Leventhal, 2008)
- LBG youth report higher prevalence of suicide, particularly for youth who are questioning their sexual orientation (D'Augelli, 2002)



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- **Inequities in educational and psychological outcomes between LGBTQ and straight students in middle and high school**

Revision under review at
Educational Researcher

*Joseph Robinson, Ph.D. & Dorothy L. Espelage,
Ph.D.*



Main findings

- Compared to straight-identified youth, LGBTQ are at greater risk of:
 - suicidal thoughts
 - suicide attempts
 - victimization by peers
 - high levels of unexcused absences
- The LGBTQ community is diverse in its risk profiles.
 - e.g., transgender youth appear to be particularly at risk, with many of them clustering in the most extreme categories (e.g., having suicidal thoughts almost all of the time; skipping school very often).
- On the positive side, the majority of LGBTQ are *not* at risk; however, the *disproportionate* percentages of LGBTQ students at *mid-level* and *extreme* risk suggest more needs to be done to help these students.



Different trends

- While some developmental patterns are common to straight- and LGBTQ-identified students, there are significant differences between these students in developmental trends related to school belongingness and unexcused absences, with LGBTQ youth at early risk.
- By raising awareness of educational inequities related to LGBTQ identification, this study lays the descriptive groundwork for interventions aimed at improving psychological and educational outcomes for these students.



The analytic sample

- We excluded students with unrealistic heights and weights (to protect against non-serious responses)
- We also excluded students who said they were simultaneous both LGBTQ and not LGBTQ (i.e., ambiguous sexual identity students).
 - For completeness, we later reran all of our analyses to see if our results would change if these students were included, and all results that LGBTQ students were at higher risk persisted.



Co-identification in the sample

- Of the 14,070 students with valid (i.e., non-ambiguous) responses to LGBTQ

identification:

	Straight	LGBTQ	L	G	B	T	Q
	(N=13267)	(N=803)	(N=82)	(N=79)	(N=397)	(N=108)	(N=249)

*Column percent
identifying as:*

Lesbian	0.0	10.2	100.0	25.3	5.0	16.7	7.2
Gay	0.0	9.8	24.4	100.0	5.8	16.7	5.2
Bisexual	0.0	49.4	24.4	29.1	100.0	22.2	12.0
Transgender	0.0	13.4	22.0	22.8	6.0	100.0	5.2
Questioning	0.0	31.0	22.0	16.5	7.6	12.0	100.0



Methods

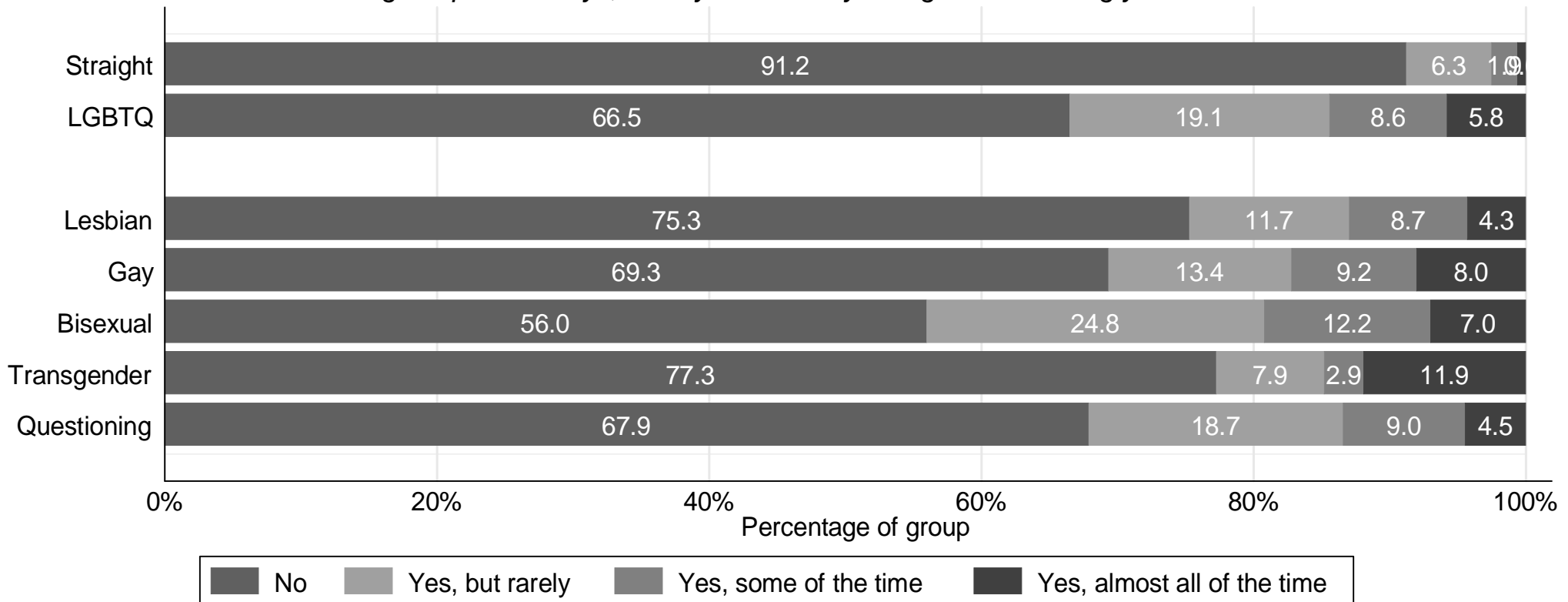
- Using the Dane County Youth Assessment (DCYA), our models appropriately account for:
 - The differences in school climates and student outcomes
 - The “nesting” of students within schools (e.g., the possibility of shared experiences)
 - The ability of LGBTQ students to co-identify as more than one subgroup (e.g., a lesbian who also identifies as gay)
 - Differential developmental trends between middle and high school for LGBTQ- and straight-identified students
- We now present results that take all of this into consideration, but put the regression results into a digestible form.



Suicide ideation

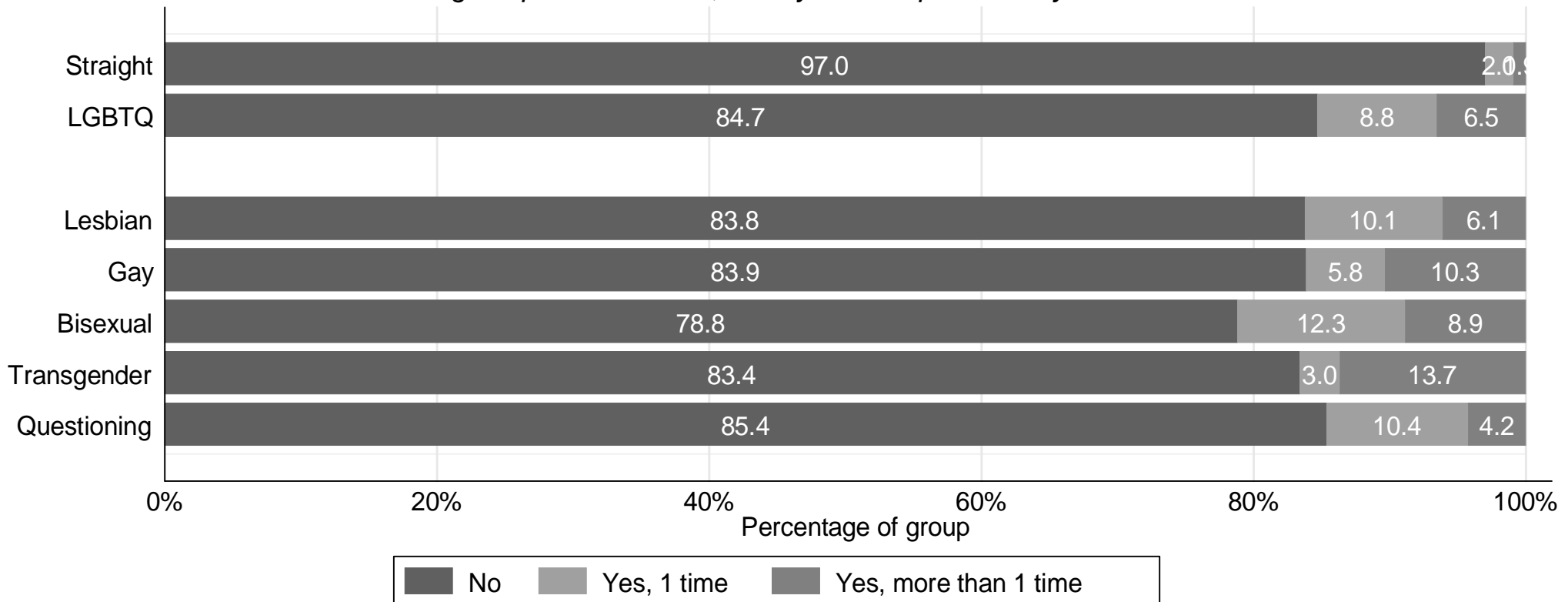
Suicide ideation, by LGBTQ identification

During the past 30 days, have you seriously thought about killing yourself?



Suicide attempts

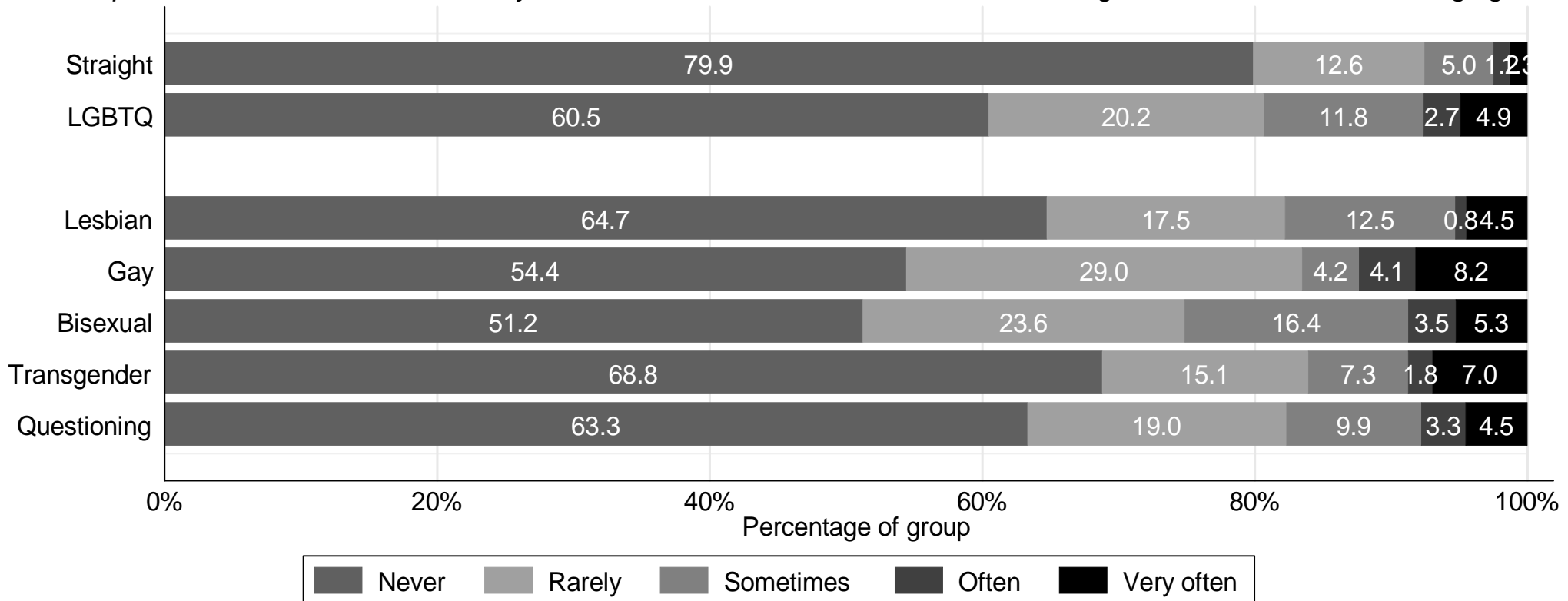
Suicide attempts, by LGBTQ identification
During the past 12 months, have you attempted to kill yourself?



Cyber-bullying victimization

Cyber-bullying victimization, by LGBTQ identification

In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened or harassed through the internet or text messaging?



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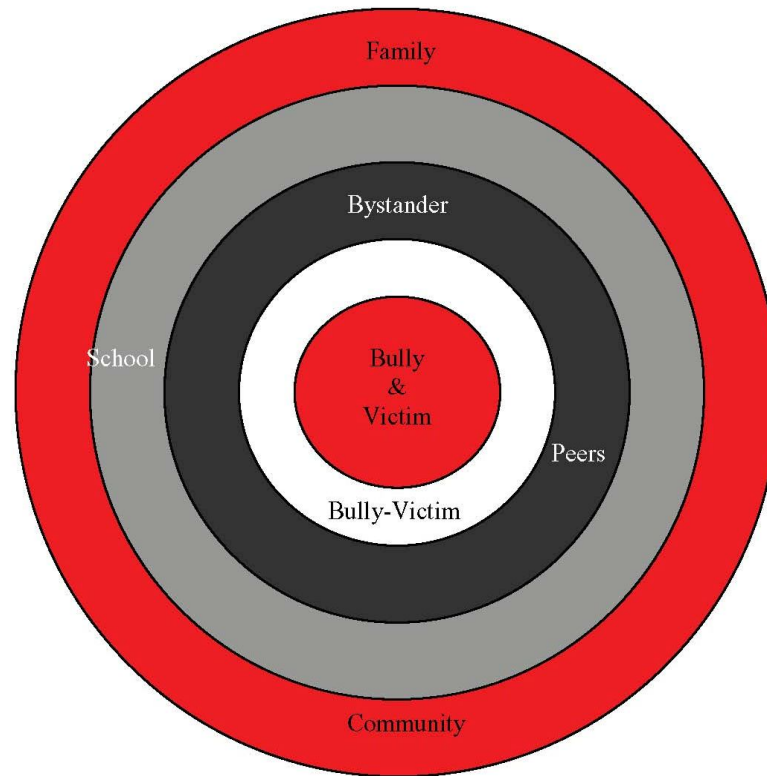
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- If you think you're too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito.



--African Proverb



Target Bullying Survey and Intervention System: Ecologically-Based Prevention and Intervention



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www.targetbully.com and brnet.unl.edu