

# Boulder County 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Results by Sexual Orientation (countywide data)

The 2003 Boulder County Youth Risk Behavior Survey included a demographic question allowing students to identify their sexual orientation. National data show that students that identify themselves as being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (GLBQ) their sexual orientation were at risk for significant health disparities when compared to their heterosexual counterparts.<sup>16</sup> Research shows that GLBQ youth often internalize negative societal messages regarding sexual orientation. This, in turn, may influence them to use negative coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, in an attempt to manage stigma and shame, to deny same-sex sexual feelings, or as a defense against ridicule and violence.<sup>17</sup>

Gay male adolescents are two to three times more likely than their peers to attempt suicide. Evidence suggests lesbians have higher rates of smoking, obesity, alcohol abuse, and stress than heterosexual females.<sup>18</sup> In one nationwide survey, over 83% of GLBQ students reported verbal harassment at school, and over 39% of all GLBQ youth reported being punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon at school because of their sexual orientation.<sup>19</sup> Another study found that GLBQ students were significantly more likely to use crack cocaine, cocaine, anabolic steroids, and inhalants than their heterosexual peers.<sup>20</sup>

The issues surrounding personal, family, and social acceptance of sexual orientation can place a significant burden on mental health and personal safety.<sup>18</sup> We have known that these risk factors are present for GLBQ youth on a national level, yet we had no reliable local data to show us whether health disparities in this population occurred in Boulder County as well. This was the impetus for collecting information on sexual orientation.

Although this report primarily documents the risk behaviors of youth within the Boulder Valley School District, these countywide data by sexual orientation are important to include. The analysis by sexual orientation utilized countywide data in order to get the most accurate picture of GLBQ youth in Boulder County. These data, which reveal disturbing disparities in health risk behaviors, are relevant for both St. Vrain Valley and Boulder Valley School Districts.

The following tables provide a view of the countywide data according to sexual orientation. For this analysis, the data are categorized as “Heterosexual” or “Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, & Not sure.” An additional response option to the question regarding sexual orientation, “None of the above,” was not included in this analysis. Those identifying as “Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, & Not sure” comprise 5.6% of our sample population, with 92.5%

identifying as “Heterosexual.” Based on enrollment figures for both SVVSD and BVSD high schools, the 5.6% of the sample population who identified as “Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, & Not Sure” represents approximately 858 Boulder County high school students, or the equivalent of all of the 2003 graduating seniors at both Fairview and Skyline High Schools.

## Unintentional Injury - seatbelts & drinking/driving

<i>Rarely or never wore seatbelts*</i>	<i>Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol†</i>	<i>Drove after drinking alcohol‡</i>
<b>Total</b> 5.2% (4.6-5.7)	<b>Total</b> 24.4% (23.3-25.4)	<b>Total</b> 11.7% (10.9-12.4)
<b>Heterosexual</b> 4.6% (4.1-5.1)	<b>Heterosexual</b> 23.6% (22.5-24.7)	<b>Heterosexual</b> 10.8% (10.0-11.6)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 14.1% (10.0-18.1)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 37.0% (31.5-42.4)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 26.1% (21.3-31.0)

\* When riding in a car driven by someone else

† One or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey

## Tobacco Use - cigarettes

<i>Smoked a whole cigarette before age 13 years</i>	<i>Current cigarette use*</i>	<i>Current frequent cigarette use†</i>
<b>Total</b> 14.0% (13.1-14.9)	<b>Total</b> 22.2% (21.1-23.2)	<b>Total</b> 8.9% (8.2-9.6)
<b>Heterosexual</b> 13.0% (12.1-13.8)	<b>Heterosexual</b> 20.6% (19.5-21.6)	<b>Heterosexual</b> 7.9% (7.2-8.6)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 32.0% (26.4-37.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 48.9% (43.2-54.6)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 26.1% (21.3-31.0)

\* Smoked cigarettes on 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

† Smoked cigarettes on 20 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

## Tobacco Use – smokeless tobacco & cigars

<i>Current smokeless tobacco use*</i>	<i>Current cigar use†</i>	<i>Current tobacco use‡</i>
<b>Total</b> 8.2% (7.6-8.9)	<b>Total</b> 15.3% (14.4-16.2)	<b>Total</b> 30.3% (29.1-31.4)
<b>Heterosexual</b> 7.8% (7.1-8.5)	<b>Heterosexual</b> 14.8% (13.9-15.7)	<b>Heterosexual</b> 28.8% (27.7-30.0)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 14.8% (11.2-18.4)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 23.9% (19.2-28.6)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b> 54.4% (48.8-60.1)

\* Used chewing tobacco or snuff on 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

† Smoked cigars on 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

‡ Smoked cigarettes or cigars or used chewing tobacco on 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

## Alcohol Use

<i>Drank alcohol before age 13 years*</i>		<i>Current alcohol use†</i>		<i>Binge drinking‡</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.6%</b> (24.5-26.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>46.3%</b> (45.1-47.6)	<b>Total</b>	<b>31.0%</b> (29.9-32.1)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>24.3%</b> (23.2-25.5)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>45.3%</b> (44.0-46.5)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>30.0%</b> (28.9-31.2)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>46.1%</b> (40.3-51.8)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>64.4%</b> (58.8-70.0)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>46.6%</b> (40.9-52.3)

\* More than a few sips

† Drank at least 1 drink of alcohol on 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

‡ Drank 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row (within a couple of hours) on 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

## Marijuana Use

<i>Tried marijuana before age 13 years</i>		<i>Lifetime marijuana use*</i>		<i>Current marijuana use†</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.4%</b> (8.7-10.2)	<b>Total</b>	<b>42.4%</b> (41.2-43.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>23.9%</b> (22.9-24.9)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>8.9%</b> (8.2-9.7)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>41.2%</b> (40.0-42.5)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>22.6%</b> (21.6-23.6)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>18.0%</b> (13.6-22.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>62.0%</b> (56.5-67.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>45.3%</b> (39.8-50.9)

\* Ever used marijuana

† Used marijuana 1 or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey

## Substance Use on School Property

<i>Smoked cigarettes on school property*</i>		<i>Drank alcohol on school property*</i>		<i>Used marijuana on school property*</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.9%</b> (8.2-9.6)	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.9%</b> (5.4-6.5)	<b>Total</b>	<b>7.1%</b> (6.5-7.7)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>7.7%</b> (7.0-8.4)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>4.9%</b> (4.4-5.4)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>6.3%</b> (5.7-6.9)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>29.1%</b> (24.2-34.1)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>22.9%</b> (18.3-27.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>20.8%</b> (16.5-25.1)

\* One or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey

# School Climate

<i>Can talk to adult at school if having a problem*</i>		<i>Felt too unsafe to go to school†</i>		<i>Feel unsafe or afraid at school‡</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.3%</b> (65.1-67.4)	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.1%</b> (3.6-4.6)	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.8%</b> (1.5-2.2)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>66.9%</b> (65.7-68.1)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>3.0%</b> (2.5-3.4)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>1.3%</b> (1.0-1.7)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>55.6%</b> (50.0-61.2)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>22.9%</b> (18.0-27.8)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>10.1%</b> (7.6-12.6)

\* At least 1 teacher or other adult

† On 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

‡ Most or all of the time

## Harassment – race/ethnicity & GLB (gay, lesbian, or bisexual)

<i>Harassed*</i>		<i>Harassed because of race or ethnic origin*</i>		<i>Harassed because someone thought they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual*</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.6%</b> (31.4-33.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>7.1%</b> (6.4-7.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.5%</b> (5.9-7.2)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>30.9%</b> (29.7-32.1)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>6.1%</b> (5.5-6.8)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>4.9%</b> (4.3-5.5)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>59.9%</b> (54.3-65.6)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>22.4%</b> (17.8-27.0)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>33.3%</b> (27.8-38.7)

\* At school (or on the way to or from school) during the 12 months preceding the survey

## Harassment – religion, appearance, & unwanted sexual attention

<i>Harassed because of religious beliefs*</i>		<i>Harassed because of weight, size or physical appearance*</i>		<i>Received unwanted sexual comments or attention*</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.2%</b> (5.6-6.8)	<b>Total</b>	<b>15.4%</b> (14.4-16.3)	<b>Total</b>	<b>19.2%</b> (18.3-20.2)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>5.5%</b> (4.9-6.0)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>14.1%</b> (13.1-15.1)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>17.8%</b> (16.8-18.8)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>17.9%</b> (14.1-21.7)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>36.6%</b> (31.1-42.1)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>43.1%</b> (37.6-48.6)

\* At school (or on the way to or from school) during the 12 months preceding the survey

## Violence – weapons & physical fights

<i>Carried a weapon*</i>		<i>Carried a gun*</i>		<i>In a physical fight†</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.8%</b> (12.9-14.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.5%</b> (3.0-4.0)	<b>Total</b>	<b>25.3%</b> (24.2-26.4)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>12.8%</b> (11.9-13.6)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>3.0%</b> (2.6-3.5)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>24.2%</b> (23.1-25.3)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>32.1%</b> (26.7-37.4)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>11.6%</b> (7.9-15.2)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>44.3%</b> (38.7-49.8)

\* On 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

† One or more times during the 12 months preceding the survey

## Violence - weapons & physical fights on school property

<i>In a physical fight on school property*</i>		<i>Carried a weapon on school property†</i>		<i>Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property*</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.9%</b> (11.1-12.8)	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.9%</b> (5.3-6.5)	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.3%</b> (4.7-5.8)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>11.3%</b> (10.4-12.1)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>5.0%</b> (4.4-5.5)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>4.6%</b> (4.1-5.2)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>23.1%</b> (18.0-28.3)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>22.3%</b> (17.6-27.0)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>16.0%</b> (11.9-20.1)

\* One or more times during the 12 months preceding the survey

† On 1 or more of the 30 days preceding the survey

## Violence – sexual assault & dating violence

<i>Ever forced to have sexual intercourse</i>		<i>Ever touched sexually when they did not want to be touched*</i>		<i>Hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend‡</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.0%</b> (5.4-6.6)	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.7%</b> (17.7-19.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>7.2%</b> (6.6-7.9)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>4.2%</b> (3.7-4.7)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>16.6%</b> (15.7-17.6)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>6.4%</b> (5.8-7.0)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>35.1%</b> (29.7-40.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>53.4%</b> (47.7-59.0)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>20.5%</b> (16.1-24.9)

\* Other than forced sexual intercourse

‡ Hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose during the 12 months preceding the survey

# Suicide

<i>Felt sad or hopeless*</i>		<i>Seriously considered attempting suicide†</i>		<i>Attempted suicide‡</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.5%</b> (24.4-26.6)	<b>Total</b>	<b>19.5%</b> (18.5-20.5)	<b>Total</b>	<b>15.2%</b> (14.3-16.2)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>24.1%</b> (23.0-25.2)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>16.8%</b> (15.9-17.8)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>13.5%</b> (12.6-14.4)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>49.5%</b> (43.8-55.2)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>63.3%</b> (57.9-68.7)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>44.0%</b> (38.3-49.7)

\* Almost every day for 2 weeks or more during the 12 months preceding the survey

† One or more times during the 12 months preceding the survey

## Other Drug Use – lifetime cocaine, inhalant, & ecstasy use

<i>Lifetime cocaine use*</i>		<i>Lifetime inhalant use†</i>		<i>Lifetime ecstasy use‡</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.1%</b> (9.4-10.9)	<b>Total</b>	<b>10.6%</b> (9.8-11.3)	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.5%</b> (5.9-7.1)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>9.0%</b> (8.3-9.7)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>9.1%</b> (8.4-9.8)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>5.3%</b> (4.8-5.8)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>28.9%</b> (23.9-33.8)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>34.4%</b> (28.8-40.0)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>27.3%</b> (22.3-32.3)

\* Ever tried any form of cocaine (e.g., “powder,” “crack,” or “freebase”)

† Ever sniffed glue or breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high

‡ Ever used ecstasy

## Sexual Behaviors – sexual activity & multiple partners

<i>Ever had sexual intercourse*</i>		<i>Currently sexually active*</i>		<i>Four or more sex partners during lifetime</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.3%</b> (33.2-35.4)	<b>Total</b>	<b>25.2%</b> (24.1-26.2)	<b>Total</b>	<b>8.7%</b> (8.0-9.4)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>32.9%</b> (31.7-34.0)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>24.1%</b> (23.0-25.1)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>7.4%</b> (6.7-8.0)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>57.7%</b> (51.9-63.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>43.6%</b> (37.9-49.2)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>32.0%</b> (26.8-37.2)

\* One or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey

## Sexual Behaviors – pregnancy, 13 or younger, & alcohol/drugs

<i>Have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant</i>		<i>First sexual intercourse at 13 years of age or younger</i>		<i>Alcohol or drugs at last intercourse*</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.4%</b> (2.0-2.8)	<b>Total</b>	<b>7.9%</b> (7.2-8.5)	<b>Total</b>	<b>23.2%</b> (21.1-25.3)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>1.9%</b> (1.6-2.3)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>6.7%</b> (6.0-7.3)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>20.6%</b> (18.5-22.7)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>11.2%</b> (7.6-14.7)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>28.5%</b> (23.5-33.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>48.2%</b> (40.4-55.9)

\* Among currently sexually active students

## Body Weight

<i>At risk for becoming overweight*</i>		<i>Overweight*</i>		<i>Thought they were overweight</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5%</b> (8.8-10.2)	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.6%</b> (5.9-7.2)	<b>Total</b>	<b>25.6%</b> (24.5-26.7)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>9.2%</b> (8.5-9.9)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>6.3%</b> (5.6-6.9)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>23.9%</b> (22.8-25.0)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>14.5%</b> (10.7-18.4)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>11.8%</b> (8.1-15.4)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>53.0%</b> (47.4-58.5)

\* Based on body mass index reference data from the National Center for Health Statistics

## Nutrition and Physical Activity

<i>Ate 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables per day*</i>		<i>Played on one or more sports teams †</i>		<i>Watched TV 2 or less hours/day ‡</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.2%</b> (20.2-22.3)	<b>Total</b>	<b>62.4%</b> (61.2-63.5)	<b>Total</b>	<b>72.9%</b> (71.9-74.0)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>20.9%</b> (19.8-22.0)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>63.5%</b> (62.3-64.7)	<b>Heterosexual</b>	<b>73.2%</b> (72.1-74.3)
<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>26.5%</b> (21.6-31.5)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>43.9%</b> (38.5-49.4)	<b>Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, and Not Sure</b>	<b>68.4%</b> (63.2-73.6)

\* During the 7 days preceding the survey

† During the 12 months preceding the survey, including those run by school or community groups

‡ During an average school day

# References...

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- <sup>3</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, "Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>.
- <sup>4</sup> Tobacco Information and Prevention Source, "Tobacco Use in the United States," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/overview/tobus\\_us.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/overview/tobus_us.htm).
- <sup>5</sup> National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, "Targeting Tobacco Use: The Nation's Leading Cause of Death 2004," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/aag/pdf/aag\\_osh2004.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/aag/pdf/aag_osh2004.pdf).
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- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 1994: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr\\_1994/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr_1994/index.htm).
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