
Family Matters: Fast New Facts about Transgender People and SOFFAs (Significant Others, Friends, Family and Allies)

In February 2011, the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) released the largest-ever survey of transgender and gender non-conforming people, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (available at http://transequality.org/PDFs/NTDS_Report.pdf). Nearly 6,500 responded to this wide-ranging questionnaire. Here are some highlights relating to transgender and gender non-conforming people and their family members.

You win some and you lose some

- 70% of children still speak to and spend time with their transgender/gender non-conforming parent
- 61% say their family relationships have slowly improved after coming out and/or transitioning
- 57% experienced some level of family rejection
- 55% of intimate relationships survive the transgender person's coming out and/or transition (or ended for a reason other than gender)
 - 55% of those who transition lose their intimate partnership
- 45% say their family is as strong now as it was before they came out
- 43% maintained most of their family bonds
- 40% said one or more relatives "chose not to speak or spend time with me" due to their gender identity/expression

Racial minority transphobia is a myth

- Contrary to some stereotypes, families from racial minorities are more supportive of their transgender members than are white families. The percentage of families judged "as strong today" as they were before the transgender person came and/or transitioned are:
 - 55% of African-American families
 - 49% of Asian-American families
 - 48% of American Indian families
 - 47% of Latino/a families
 - 45% of white families

"Outness" to family members

- 57% of transgender and gender non-conforming people are out to family members
 - 68% of FTMs are out to family members
 - 62% of MTFs are out to family members
 - 35% of gender non-conforming members are out to family members
 - 10% are out to "no one" at home (which may include people other than family)
 - 4% of transitioned people are out to "no one" at home

Parenting

- 38% are parents (in the general public, 64% are parents)
- 61% of male-born cross-dressers are parents
- 82% of those who transitioned at age 55 or older are parents

- 38% of those age 25 to 44 are parents
- Post-disclosure relationships with children vary
 - 71% maintained their relationships with their children
 - 49% said things remained the same or was “in some ways better, in some ways worse”
 - 29% said their relationships with their children worsened post-disclosure
 - 22% said their relationships with their children improved
 - 13% said a court or judge had stopped or limited their relationships with their children due to their transgender identity or gender non-conformity

Friends

- 58% had lost at least one close friendship as a result of their gender identity/expression

Family violence

- 19% had experienced domestic violence because of their gender identity or expression
 - 22% of MTFs experienced bias-related domestic violence
 - 21% of gender non-conforming people experienced bias-related domestic violence
 - 15% of FTMs experienced domestic violence because of their gender identity
- 48% of those who experienced domestic violence *also* experienced homelessness

Discrimination against SOFFAs

- 14% reported that due to their gender identity, their spouse or partner experienced job discrimination
 - If the transgender person lost their job due to bias, the spouse’s risk of experiencing his or her own job discrimination doubled, to 28%
- 11% reported that due to their gender identity, their child experienced job discrimination
 - If the transgender person lost their job due to bias, the child’s risk of experiencing his or her own job discrimination more than doubled, to 25%

The protective effects of family acceptance

- Those who had rejecting or accepting families or who did or did not experience domestic violence (DV) had sharply different risks for other problems:
 - Suicide attempts 51% versus 32%
 - Homelessness (DV) 48% versus 9%
 - Drug/alcohol use (DV) 47% versus 19%
 - Sex work (DV) 29% versus 7%

“My sister has faced more outright discrimination for her support of me than I have. I transitioned in her last year in high school, the students verbally harassed her regularly to the point that she considered dropping out and just getting her GED. Teachers would also verbally harass her, saying things like ‘You will go to hell for your support of that abomination’ and generally treating her unequally compared to other students.”