

Gender Expressionⁱ

QUESTION AND RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- Q1. A person's appearance, style, dress, or the way they walk or talk may affect how people describe them. How do you think other people at school would describe you?
- A. Very feminine
 - B. Mostly feminine
 - C. Somewhat feminine
 - D. Equally feminine and masculine
 - E. Somewhat masculine
 - F. Mostly masculine
 - G. Very masculine

Rationale for Including:

Youth whose gender expression does not fit traditional roles based on their sex assigned at birth, often referred to as gender nonconforming, gender expansive, or non-binary youth, are at increased risk for a variety of negative health risks, including victimization (bullying, abuse, sexual harassment) and negative behavioral health outcomes (depression, suicide, drug use).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has approved this question that allows Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) sites to examine gender expression and gender nonconformity among students and their association to various health risks.

Four YRBSS sites (Broward County, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, California; and San Diego, California) have used use the question in two YRBSS cycles. However, this question cannot be used to identify transgender students, and an individual's gender expression may not correspond to their gender identity or transgender status.

HOW IS THIS INFORMATION USEFUL TO SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS?

The gender expression question will help educators, policymakers, advocates, and public health practitioners to develop a greater understanding of gender expression and gender nonconformity and how they relate to health risks among students.

Data from sites that have used the question show that gender expansive youth are less likely than their peers to succeed academically. Therefore, sites that include the gender expression YRBSS question are better situated to understand the depth and breadth of the problems faced by gender expansive students, to create or modify programs and policies to meet their particular needs, and to improve their academic success. If state and local education and

health agencies have no way to identify the health risks facing gender expansive students, they will be unable to address the needs of these vulnerable students.

Examples of Data Use:

Bullying and Harassment. Feminine male students, like LGBTQ students and students with disabilities, are at heightened risk for bullying and harassment. Schools should include this population in anti-bullying interventions and specifically include gender expression as a protected characteristic.

Weapons in School. Although many schools target interventions to reduce weapons in school toward males, our results show that masculine females are far more likely to bring weapons to school than other females. By broadening prevention efforts to include this population, schools can better target programs and improve safety.

Substance Use. Gender expansive students are at greater risk for usage of particular substances. For example, masculine females are more likely to smoke at school, use smokeless tobacco, and have used heroin, while feminine males are more likely to have used methamphetamines. This information can help schools to identify health risks and target prevention and treatment programs.

¹ Source: Reproduced in part from: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/publications-a-z/2686-gender-expression-a-the-youth-risk-behavior-surveillance-system-identifying-and-addressing-vulnerable-student-health-risks>