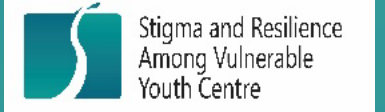




THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



# The Perception Gap: Sexual health among trans and nonbinary vs. cisgender peers in Western Canada

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Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre

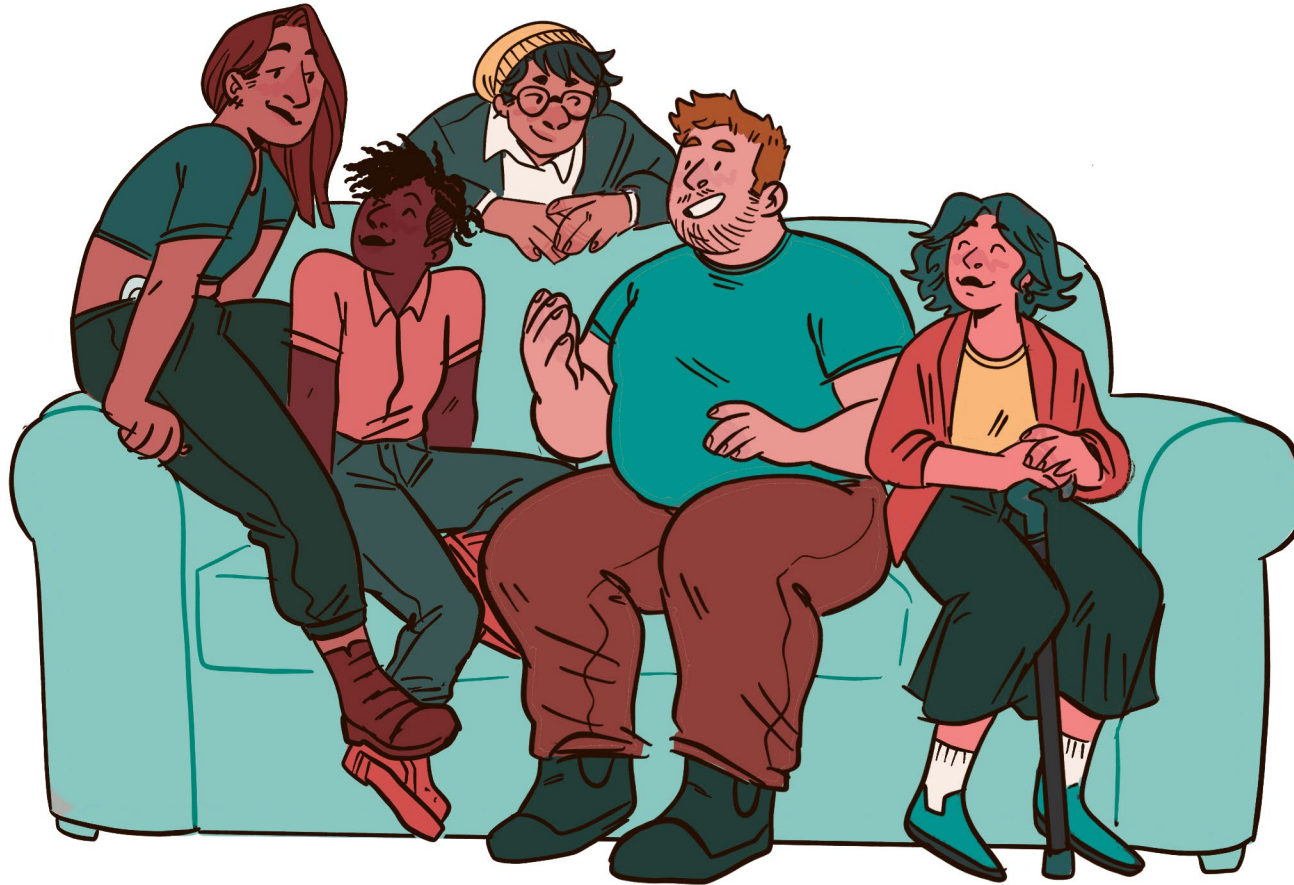
School of Nursing, University of British Columbia

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# Gender diverse youth: Increasingly contested existence



# Do they even have romantic relationships...or sex???



Dysphoria  
Stigma  
Discrimination  
Fear  
Or  
Love  
Intimacy  
Exploration

# Limitations of extant research

- Contradictory findings
- Mostly qualitative research, clinical or convenience samples—potentially skewed
- Smaller population-based analyses may have too few gender diverse youth for stable estimates

# Our Questions

**What are different gender diverse youth's sexual behaviours and sexual health outcomes?**

**Are there disparities/differences vs cisgender youth?**

# Data Source

2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey

## Youth Health Survey

McCreary Centre Society

Oh, that's good to know!

Have a look at the consent form for more information!

If you have any questions, contact Annie at [annie@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:annie@mcs.bc.ca) Visit [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca) for more information.

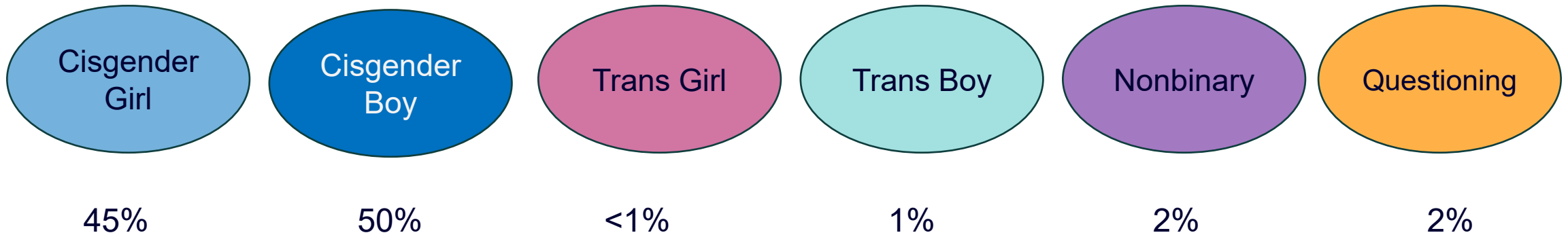
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

REGION	SCHOOL DISTRICT	SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	CLASS	MONTH	DAY	DAY OF WEEK
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

- BC Adolescent Health Survey of 2023
- Stratified random cluster sample (classrooms in grades over regions)
- Grades 7 to 12 in public schools across province
- Administered by public health nurses
- Anonymous, pencil/paper & digital
- 38,500 young people
- Population-based, representing 98% students in province

# Measures: Gender and Sex at birth

- Two questions: Sex assigned at birth, and gender identity
- Combined, they give us options:



- About 500 trans youth, 1000 nonbinary, representing nearly 20,000 gender diverse youth across BC

# Measures: Sexual health & behaviours

- Ever had sex
- Ever had oral sex
- Methods used to prevent pregnancy at last sex
  - Effective contraceptive methods (pill, patch, depo, IUD, etc.)
  - Ineffective (withdrawal) or no method
- Condom use at last sex
- Pregnancy involvement (getting pregnant/causing a pregnancy)
- Ever diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection by a doctor or nurse

# Measures: Sexual health education

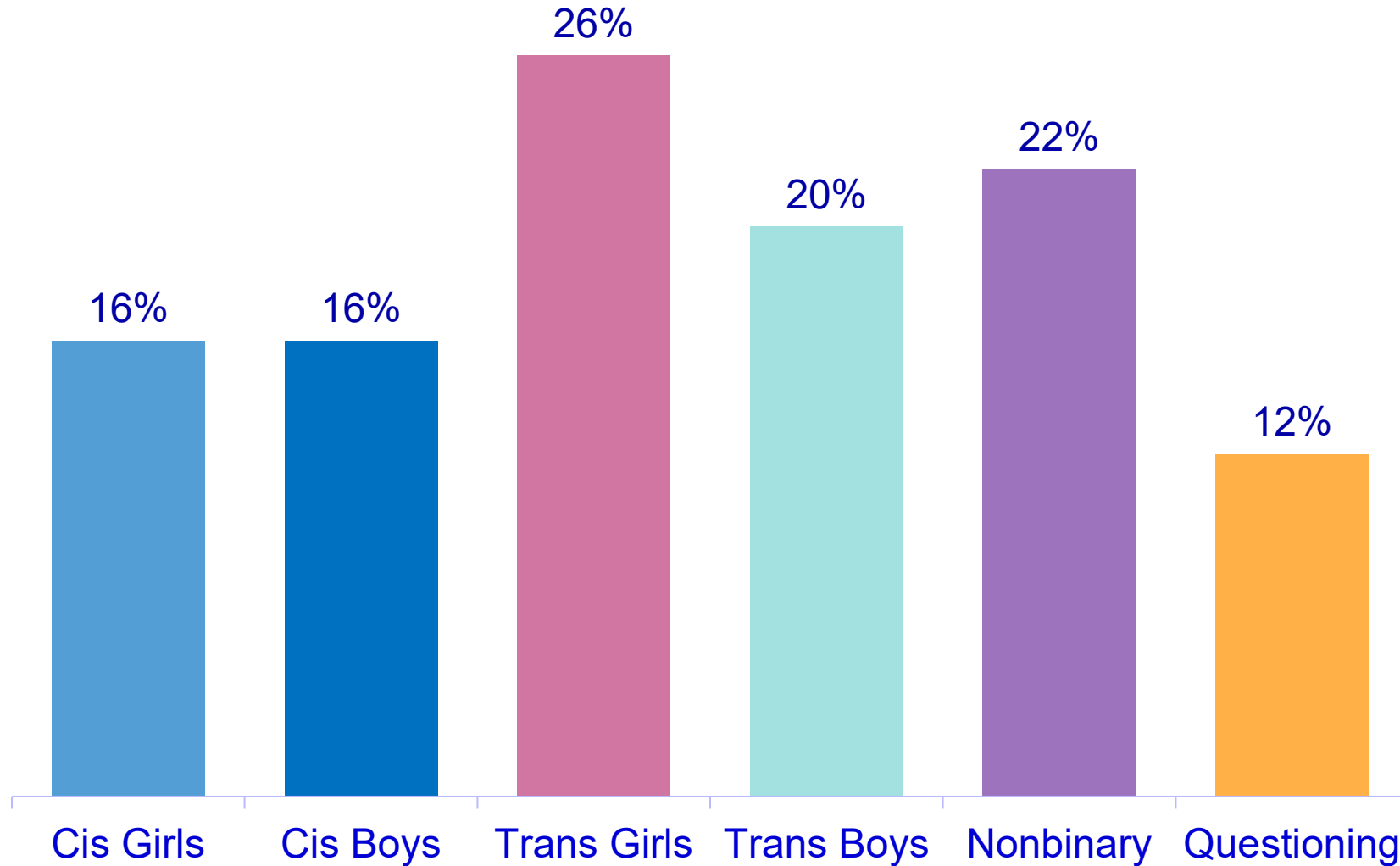
- Have you received sex education at school?
  - No | Yes, and it was helpful | Yes, but it was not helpful
- Started at the right age
- Was relevant to my gender identity
- Was relevant to my sexual orientation
- Was relevant to my disability or health condition
- Was respectful of my culture / religion



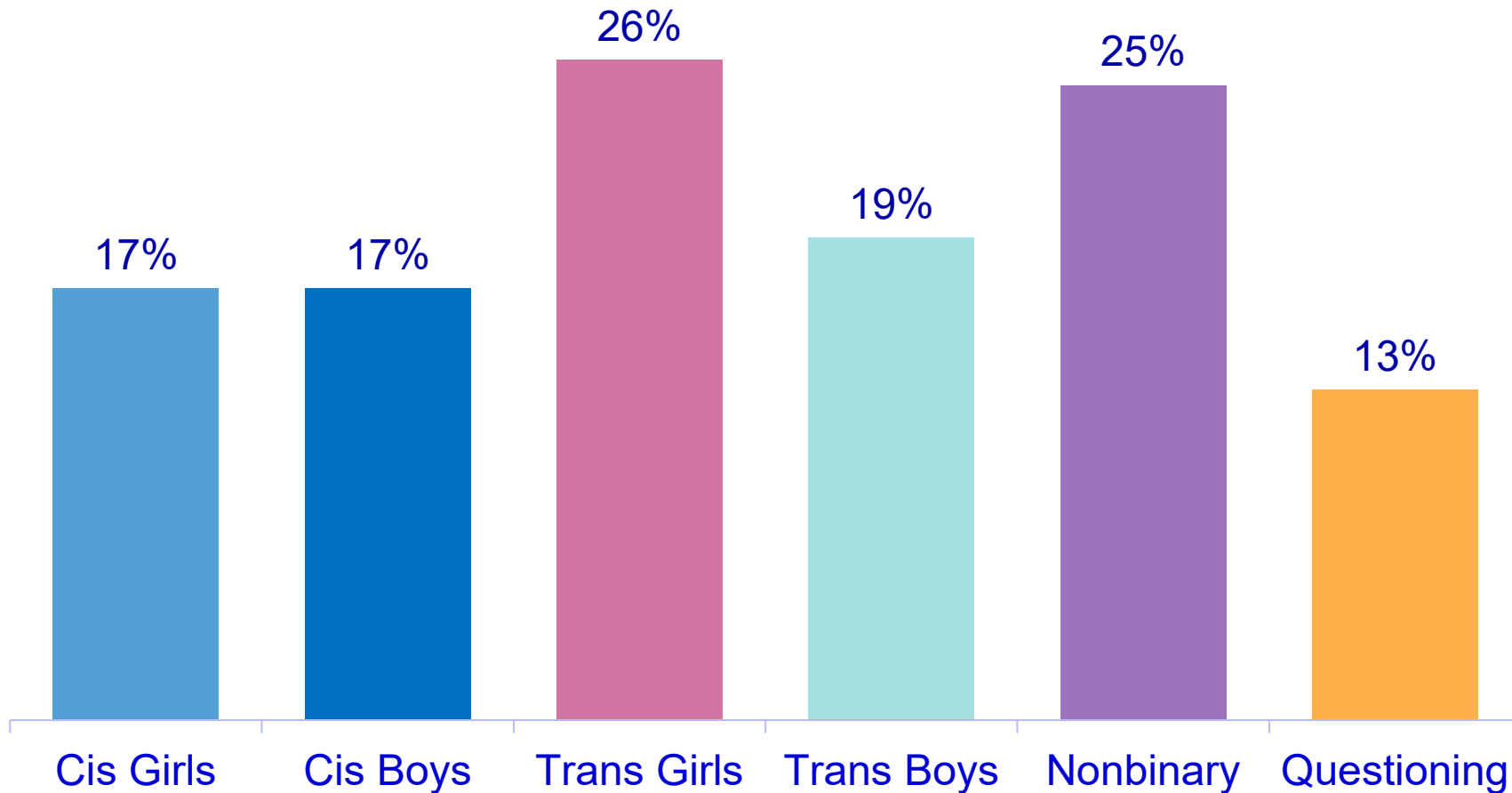
# Analyses

- Analyses conducted using SPSS Complex Samples.
- Cross tabulations and 95% CI to estimate the prevalence for all the sexual health outcomes
- Comparisons between gender groups tested with Rao Scott Chi Square (adjusts for complex samples)

# Results: Ever Had Sex



# Results: Ever Oral Sex



1 in 3 gender diverse  
had same-sex partner  
at last sex  
vs.  
7% cisgender youth

# Results: Contraception & Condom Use

- Gender diverse youth used a variety of methods to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex: the pill, condoms, withdrawal—but not significantly different from cisgender peers
- Condom use at last sex:
  - 54% cis girls, 62% cis boys
  - 41% trans girls, 38% trans boys
  - 37% NB, 34% questioning
- All lower than cisgender peers



# Results: Pregnancy Involvement & STIs

- Relatively rare, but 3% of trans girls / boys / nonbinary report pregnancy involvement vs. <1% cis girls / cis boys
- STIs diagnosed by a doctor or nurse:
  - 3% trans boys / nonbinary, 2% trans girls / questioning
  - <1% cisgender youth

# Results: Sexual health education

- Most youth received sex education at school (79% to 87%).
- 10% of all groups said it was not respectful of culture / religion
- Half of trans and nonbinary youth (47% to 52%) said it was not relevant for their gender identity vs 12 to 13% cis youth
- A lower percent of trans boys and nonbinary youth reported feeling that their sex education started at the right age, 68% and 71% vs 77% cisgender

# Summary

- Trans, nonbinary, and questioning youth do have sex!
- Disparities compared to cisgender peers
- Pregnancy, STIs, and condom use



## Next steps



**Given recent increases in anti-trans and anti-sex ed protests and policies in Canada, we need to advocate for:**

- ✓ **Gender-inclusive sexual health education**
- ✓ **Better educated health care providers**
- ✓ **More access to free condoms**

# Co-Authors and Funding

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# Thank You!

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