



Injustice at Every Turn:

A look at Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander respondents in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey

In 2008, the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force launched a nationwide study of anti-transgender discrimination in the United States. Over a six-month period, 6,456 transgender and gender non-conforming people answered a seventy-question survey, reporting on their experiences of discrimination and abuse at home, in school, in the public sphere, and in the workplace, as well as with landlords, doctors, and public officials, including judges and police. The survey results revealed that transgender and gender non-conforming people face pervasive discrimination in virtually all aspects of their lives.

One of the most important findings of the study was that the combination of anti-transgender bias with structural and interpersonal racism meant that transgender and gender non-conforming people of color, including those who are Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander (API), experience particularly devastating levels of discrimination. In response, the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) has partnered with the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to offer this report on discrimination against API transgender and gender non-conforming people.

The information in this report is based on the experiences of the 212 respondents who described themselves on the survey as Asian or Pacific Islander only or Asian or Pacific Islander and multiracial.ⁱ Of the API respondents, 84% were U.S. citizens and 16% were non-citizens. The numbers of undocumented and documented non-citizens on their own were not large enough to do individual analysis. However, in the full NTDS report, undocumented immigrants reported even higher rates of discrimination and we expect API

respondents would exhibit the same pattern.

When this report uses the phrase “due to bias,” it refers to questions on the survey that asked about respondents’ experiences of anti-transgender bias, but the results also show the complex interactions of that bias with race, socioeconomic status, and language ability.

Key Findings

- Discrimination was pervasive for all respondents who took the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, yet the combination of anti-transgender bias and persistent structural and interpersonal acts of racism was especially devastating for API transgender people and other people of color.
- API transgender and gender non-conforming people often live in extreme poverty, with 18% reporting a household income of less than \$10,000/year. This is higher than the rate for transgender people of all races (15%) and six times the general API population rate (3%). This is over four times the general U.S. population rate (4%).ⁱⁱ
- API transgender and gender non-conforming people are affected by HIV in devastating numbers; nearly 5% reported being HIV positive and an additional 10.48% reported that they did not know their status. This compares to rates of 2.64% for transgender and gender non-conforming people of all races, 0.01% for the general API population, and 0.60% for the general U.S. population.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Forty-four percent (44%) of API transgender and gender non-conforming people have experienced significant family acceptance. Those respondents who were accepted by their families were much less likely to face discrimination.
- Over half (56%) of API respondents reported having attempted suicide, compared to 41% of all study respondents and 1.6% of the general U.S. population.^{iv}



Education

65% of API respondents who attended school expressing a transgender identity or gender non-conformity faced harassment.

API respondents who attended kindergarten through twelfth grade expressing a transgender identity or gender non-conformity reported alarming rates of **harassment (65%), physical assault (39%), and sexual assault (19%) at school**; harassment was so severe that

it led 11% to **leave school**. Six percent (6%) were also **expelled** due to bias.

Respondents who were harassed and abused by teachers in kindergarten through twelfth grade settings showed **dramatically worse health and other outcomes** compared to those who did not experience such abuse. **Peer harassment and abuse** also had highly damaging effects.



Employment Discrimination

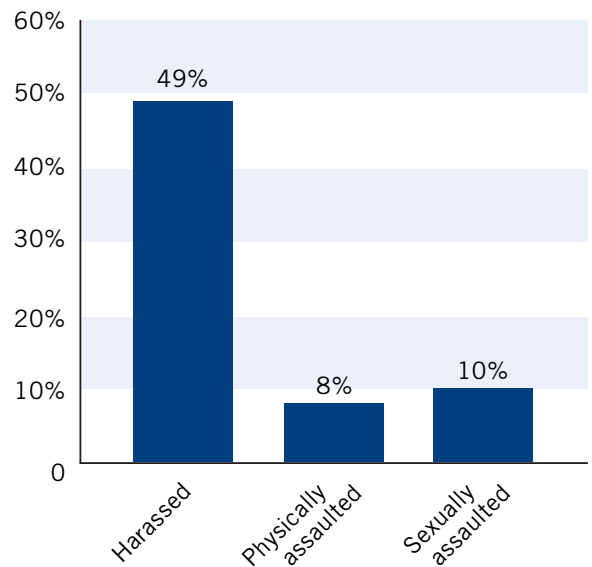
API transgender and gender non-conforming people had a **very high unemployment rate** at 12%. This is higher than the rate of the general U.S. population (7%) at the time the survey was fielded.^v

Twenty-one percent (21%) of API respondents **lost a job due to bias**, and 41% **were denied a job** because of their transgender identity or gender non-conformity.

Forty-nine percent (49%) of API respondents were **harassed**, 8% were **physically assaulted**, and 10% were **sexually assaulted at work**.

Twenty-three percent (23%) of API respondents reported being forced to participate in the underground economy for income, including **sex work and drug sales**.

Mistreatment at Work



Housing Discrimination and Homelessness

API transgender and gender non-conforming people endured various forms of direct housing discrimination; 21% reported being **refused a home or apartment** due to bias, and 7% reported being **evicted** due to bias.

API respondents were **much less likely to own homes** than the general population with a rate of 18%. This compares to 32% of transgender people of all races in the study and 67% of the general U.S. population.^{vi} Also, for comparison, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that “minority home ownership” nationwide is 49.7%.^{vii}

21% of API transgender and gender non-conforming people reported having been refused a home or apartment due to bias.

Fourteen percent (14%) of API respondents reported **experiencing homelessness** at some point in their lives, almost twice the rate of the general U.S. population (7.4%).^{viii}





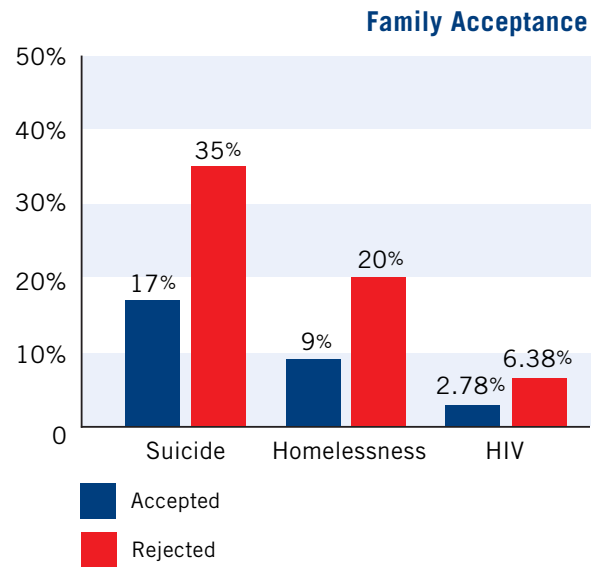
Family Life

Forty-four percent (44%) of API transgender and gender non-conforming people reported experiencing **significant family acceptance**. Those respondents who were accepted by their families were much less likely to face discrimination.

API respondents who were accepted by their families had **attempted suicide** at a rate of 17% compared to 35% for those who weren't.

API respondents who were accepted by their families had **experienced homelessness** at a rate of 9% compared to 20% for those who weren't.

API respondents who were accepted by their families are **HIV positive** at a rate of 2.78% compared to 6.38% for those who weren't.



Health Care

Health outcomes for API transgender and gender non-conforming people show the **appalling effects of social and economic marginalization**, including higher rates of being HIV positive, smoking, drug and alcohol use and suicide attempts compared to the general population.

Eighteen percent (18%) of API respondents reported being **refused medical care due to bias**.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of API respondents reported **postponing care when they were sick or injured due to fear of discrimination**.

Forty-three percent (43%) of API respondents reported having **attempted suicide**, compared to 41% of all study respondents and 1.6% for the general U.S. population.^{ix}

API transgender and gender non-conforming people were **affected by HIV in devastating numbers**; 4.76% reported being HIV positive and an additional 10.48% reported that they did not know their status. This compares to rates of being HIV positive of 2.64% for transgender respondents of all races, 0.01% for the general API population, and 0.60% of the general U.S. population.^x

API transgender and gender non-conforming people are **less likely to have accessed counseling and mental health services**. Anecdotally, we know this is often due to language and cultural barriers, which have consequences for people wishing to seek certain forms of transition-related medical care that are dependent on prior counseling.



Methodology

The National Transgender Discrimination Survey was developed and fielded by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Links to the online NTDS survey instrument were distributed through a network of more than 900 trans-serving and trans-led advocacy and service organizations, support groups, list-serves and online social networks. Nearly 2,000 paper surveys were distributed to hard-to-reach transgender and gender non-conforming populations. A total of 6,456 completed questionnaires were included in the final data set, 212 of which were API including multiracial people.

The NTDS was administered in two languages – English and Spanish. However, nearly 80% of API Americans speak

a language other than English at home and 36% describe themselves as speaking English less than “very well.”^{xi} Unfortunately as a result, the NTDS was inaccessible to large portions of the API population. This not only skews the findings presented here but also underscores the need for better, more accessible survey instruments in future research. Furthermore, although we are proud to have enough API respondents to do meaningful data analysis, more could be learned about the specificities of individual communities’ experiences if our dataset were larger and we were able to disaggregate by ethnicity, revealing the nuances of discrimination against groups in the many and varied Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander communities.

For the full report and detailed recommendations, please visit our websites at www.TheTaskForce.org or www.TransEquality.org (see: http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/ntds or <http://transequality.org/Resources/index.html>). More information about the survey is available at www.EndTransDiscrimination.org.

Notes

- i. Some numbers in this report differ slightly from numbers in other reports based on the NTDS data because generally those reports break out respondents who were only API from those who were API multiracial. API multiracial respondents were included in the general multiracial category. In this report, however, API-only and API multiracial respondents were counted together.
- ii. U.S. Census Bureau, “Current Population Survey,” Annual Social and Economic Supplement (Washington, DC: GPO, 2008).
- iii. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, “HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet: Latinos and HIV/AIDS” (2006): <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/upload/6007-03.pdf>; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, “2010: A Global View of HIB Infection” (2010): http://www.unaids.org/documents/20101123_2010_HIV_Prevalence_Map_em.pdf
- iv. “U.S.A. Suicide: 2002 Official Final Data,” prepared for the American Association of Suicidology by John L. McIntosh, Ph.D. Official data source: Kochanek, K.D., Murphy, S.L., Anderson, R.N., & Scott, C. (2004). Deaths: Final data for 2002. National Vital Statistics Reports, 53 (5). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 2005-1120. Population figures source: table I, p.108. of the National Center for Health Statistics (Kochanek et al., 2004), see http://www.sprc.org/library/event_kit/2002datapgv1.pdf.
- v. Seven percent (7%) was the rounded weighted average unemployment rate for the general population during the six months the survey was in the field, based on which month questionnaires were completed. See seasonally unadjusted monthly unemployment rates for September 2008 through February 2009. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The Employment Situation: September 2008,” (2008): http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst1_10032008.htm.
- vi. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “U.S. Housing Market Conditions, 2nd Quarter, 2009” (Washington, DC: GPO, 2009): http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/ushmc/summer09/nat_data.pdf.
- vii. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “U.S. Housing Market Conditions, 2nd Quarter, 2009” (Washington, DC: GPO, 2009): http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/ushmc/summer09/nat_data.pdf. HUD did not define “minority” in this report.
- viii. United States Conference of Mayors, “Hunger and Homelessness Survey” (2006): 48, <http://usmayors.org/hungersurvey/2006/report06.pdf>.
- ix. “U.S.A. Suicide: 2002 Official Final Data,” prepared for the American Association of Suicidology by John L. McIntosh, Ph.D. Official data source: Kochanek, K.D., Murphy, S.L., Anderson, R.N., & Scott, C. (2004). Deaths: Final data for 2002. National Vital Statistics Reports, 53 (5). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 2005-1120. Population figures source: table I, p.108. of the National Center for Health Statistics (Kochanek et al., 2004), see http://www.sprc.org/library/event_kit/2002datapgv1.pdf.
- x. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, “HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet: Latinos and HIV/AIDS” (2006): <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/upload/6007-03.pdf>; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, “2010: A Global View of HIB Infection” (2010): http://www.unaids.org/documents/20101123_2010_HIV_Prevalence_Map_em.pdf
- xi. U.S. Census Bureau, “Selected Population Profile in the United States - 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates” (2011): <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>



1322 18th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 422-4909 • nqapia@gmail.com
www.nqapia.org



1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 903-0112 • ncte@nctequality.org
www.nctequality.org



1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 393-5177 • info@TheTaskForce.org
www.thetaskforce.org