

WANTED: MORE ASKABLE ADULTS

A SURVEY OF VERMONT'S YOUTH

REPORT

October 2018



Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence



Thank you to...

- The Youth of Vermont
- Vermont Network Youth Advocacy Task Force members
- Our Community Partners

This document as well as the Executive Summary can be found here: <https://vtnetwork.org/publications/>

For support about domestic, dating, and sexual violence, please find your local Vermont Network Program [here](#):

<https://vtnetwork.org/get-help/>

FOR STATEWIDE HOTLINES:

Domestic Violence Hotline

800-228-7395

Sexual Violence Hotline

800-489-7273

For support, advocacy, and celebration of young queer people in Vermont:

[Outright Vermont](#)

<http://www.outrightvt.org/>

802-865-9677

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HISTORY AND SURVEY DESIGN

In November 2017, The Youth Advocacy Task Force (YATF)¹ of the [Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence](#) designed and launched an informal online survey for Vermont youth up to age 24 ([Appendix A](#)). The YATF's purpose in creating this survey was to better inform their advocacy and outreach work. They sought to listen to Vermont youth about what issues concerned them in their schools/communities and homes, what they thought would help, and in what ways they would consider being involved in solutions.

The opening message read: *The Vermont Network Youth Advocates are asking Vermont Youth what is important to you. We hope to use your responses to help us know how Youth want to be involved and how we can be better advocates for you.*

On each new section of the survey, a link directed participants to Vermont Network Domestic and Sexual Violence Member Organizations and addressed participant confidentiality.

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#). Remember that not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

The survey collected ages by range and provided write-in fields for *gender identity* and *town you live in*. The YATF felt strongly that the survey not prescribe gender identities to enable freedom of identity language. The towns were collected to narrow down data by service area.

The survey consisted of **six questions**. Four questions asked youth to rank their concerns and helpful responses from 1-3 [1 (*most concerning/helpful*), 2 (*Meh*), 3 (*least concerning/helpful*)]. Two additional questions asked them to *check all that apply* for *issues experienced* and how they might consider *taking action to help*. A *not applicable* (N/A) option was available as well as fill-in comment boxes for each question.

¹ *The Youth Advocacy Task Force (YATF) is a statewide coalition of advocates, educators and partners who are champions for children and Youth. We acknowledge the specific injustices experienced by young people and are dedicated to holding their integrity and human rights as paramount in our commitment to promoting healthy sexuality and safe and respectful relationships for all people.*

The six questions

1. Please rank your level of worry or concern about these issues in your school and/or community.
2. If you or any other young people you know have personally experienced any of these issues or concerns in school and/or your community, please check which ones. Check all that apply.
3. Rank the actions that you think would help change your school and/or community concerns.
4. Please rank the issues that you are concerned about at home.
5. Rank the actions that you think would help your concerns at home get better.
6. In what ways would you consider taking action to help make any of your concerns get better! Check all that apply.

A long list of **concern/issue options** ([Appendix A](#)) to be ranked included: *drug and alcohol use, racism, rape, sexism, abuse, xenophobia, homophobia/transphobia, suicide, bullying, dating violence, stress, mental health and food/heat/housing insecurity, etc.* Many of the issues hyperlinked to online definitions. Paper surveys were accompanied by a definitions sheet ([Appendix B](#)).

A similar list of **helpful actions options** ([Appendix A](#)) to be ranked included: *having more askable/supportive adults, school workshops, training for school staff/adults, more youth as leaders, counseling/support groups, youth action groups, DCF intervention, money, housing, police/courts, hotlines, etc.*

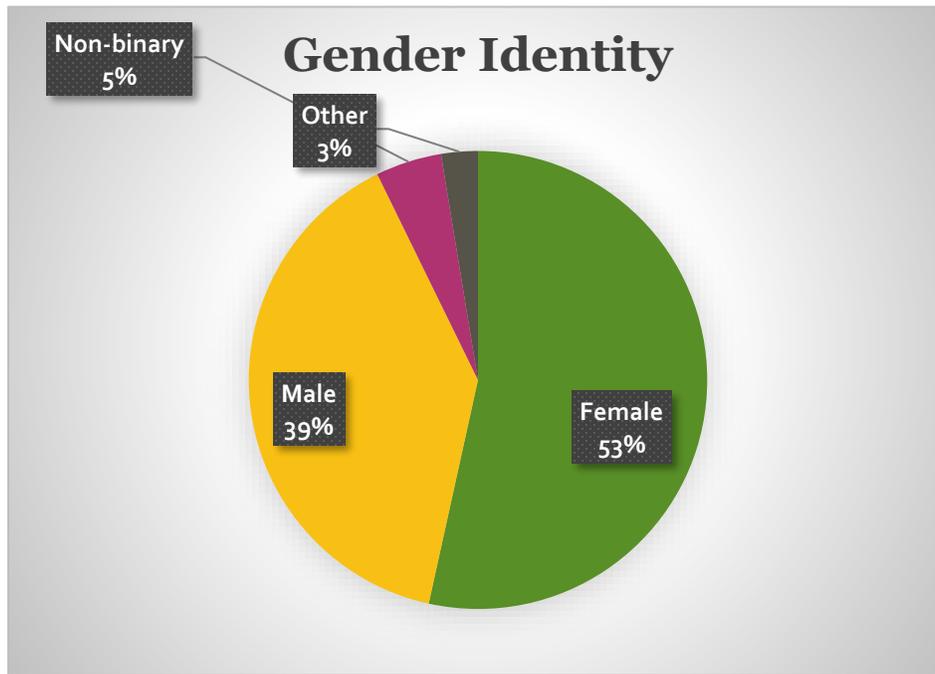
The survey was distributed electronically using social media and in paper form by The Vermont Network and its Member Organizations, and through statewide partners and contacts at Vermont schools.

DATA SUMMARY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Five-hundred-eighty-four Vermont youth participated in the survey with a 68% completion rate. Fifty-three percent of youth identified as female, 39% as male, and five percent with nonbinary/genderqueer identities (Fig 1).

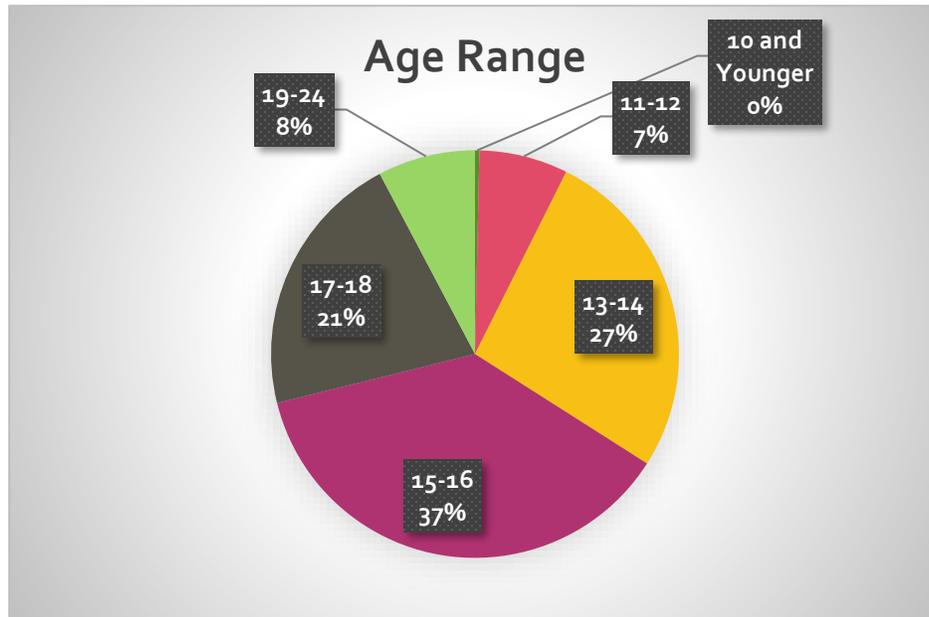
Fig 1



Nonbinary and nonbinary/genderqueer identities included trans-masculine, trans-feminine, grey gender, queer, fluid, and questioning, among others.

The largest age group to respond were 15-16 year-olds at 37%, followed by 13-14 year-olds at 27%. Twenty-one percent of respondents were ages 17-18, eight percent were ages 19-24, and seven percent were ages 11-12. Two incomplete responses came from youth 10 and younger (Fig 2).

Fig 2



Regionally, nearly 70% of participants came from Washington and Orange Counties and the greater Hardwick area. Rural areas were much better represented than urban areas. Chittenden and Rutland Counties combined made up less than six percent of the responses.

WHAT IS CONCERNING YOUTH IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES?

BROADLY

Overall, drug use was of biggest concern to participants (44%). The next three **big concerns** were: *alcohol use* (37%), *sexism* (36%) *body shaming* (34%), and *racism* (32%) (Fig 4).

Youth commented that they were additionally concerned about *depression*, *eating disorders*, *being bullied by teachers*, *shootings*, and *using vape devices* (e.g. JUUL, etc.).

When asked about issues/concerns that they or someone they knew experienced, 83% chose bullying. Over 50% of respondents indicated *alcohol use* (61%), *drug use* (60%), *body shaming* (55%), *sexism* (52%) *sexual harassment* (51%), and *racism* (41%) (Fig 3).

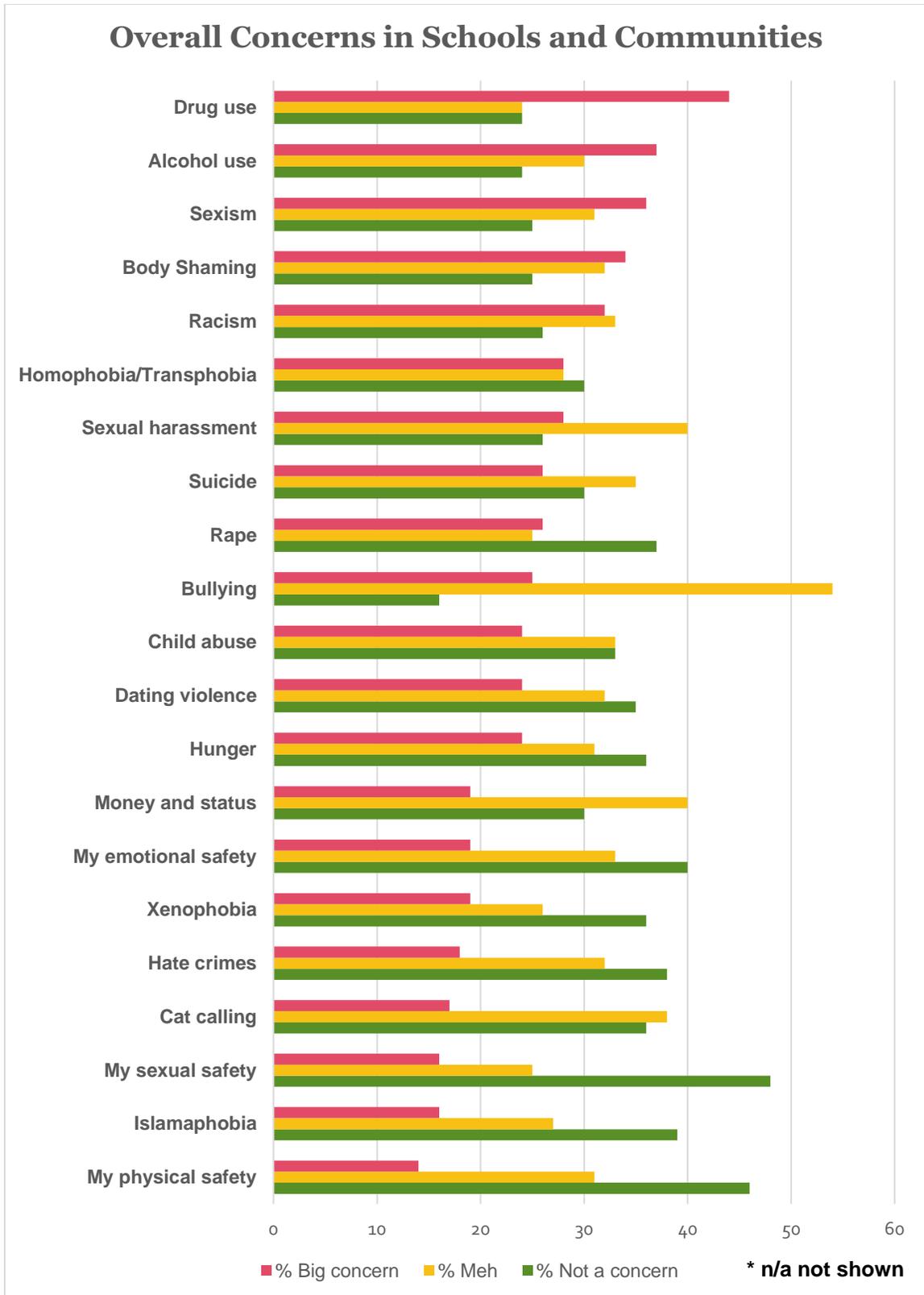
In addition, youth commented about a general *fear of new ideas* and *lack of open mindedness* in their schools and communities. Other issues that were mentioned included: *online identity theft*, *lack of resources for mental health support*, *rape in families*, and *death threats toward gay students*.

Fig 3

Issues/concerns experienced by Vermont youth or other young people they know	
BULLYING	83%
ALCOHOL USE	61%
DRUG USE	60%
BODY SHAMING	55%
SEXISM	52%
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	51%
RACISM	41%



Fig 4



BY GENDER IDENTITY AND AGE

Drug and alcohol use and sexism ranked as **big concerns** consistently across gender identities and age groups (except alcohol use for 11-12 year-old participants). Concurrently, *bullying, body shaming*, and other sexism/sexual harassment related issues were experienced (by themselves or someone they

All genders ranked concern for their own emotional safety above their physical and sexual safety – the highest among nonbinary/genderqueer identified youth.

know) at high rates across gender identities and ages. All genders ranked concern for their own emotional safety above their physical and sexual safety – the highest among nonbinary/genderqueer identified youth (Figs 5-7).

Nonbinary/genderqueer youth and youth ages 19-24 ranked oppression related issues highest. This is most likely because of personal experiences of oppression based on gender identity as well as a more socially conscious view of the world that often comes with adult age and experiences. These two groups also had more experiences related to poverty and limited resources and bigger concern for personal safety. This may be due to precarious and

independent living situations and separation from family and home.

Fig 5

Gender Identity	Top concerns/issues	Experienced by them or someone they know	Observations
Nonbinary/ Genderqueer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Homophobia/transphobia (67%) 2. Racism (61%) 3. Sexual harassment (56%) 4. Sexism, drug & alcohol use (all 50%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Homophobia/transphobia (94%) 2. Bullying (83%) 3. Family poverty/few resources (83%) 4. Sexism (78%) 5. Body shaming (72%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homophobia/transphobia ranked highest • Oppression related issues (homophobia/transphobia, sexism, & racism) above drug & alcohol concerns • Personal sexual, physical, & emotional safety a <i>big concern</i> for 17%-45% (highest among genders)

Female	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drug use (50%) 2. Body shaming (44%) 3. Alcohol use (43%) 4. Sexism (42%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying (87%) 2. Body shaming (63%) 3. Alcohol use (63%) 4. Drug use (62%) 5. Sexism (62%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of sexism, racism, & homophobia/transphobia in top 10 concerns • Personal physical, sexual, & emotional safety a <i>big concern</i> for 16%-22%
Male	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drug use (35%) 2. Alcohol use (28%) 3. Sexism (26%) 4. Child abuse (23%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying (80%) 2. Alcohol use (60%) 3. Drug use (56%) 4. Body shaming (38%) 5. Suicide (37%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally less concerned than other genders about issues (lower %) • <i>Drug use</i> is the only issue ranked more concerning than not • Personal sexual, physical, & emotional safety a <i>big concern</i> for 11%-13% (lowest among genders)
Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug use • Alcohol use • Sexism (Fig 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Body Shaming • Bullying experienced over 80% by all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal emotional safety more of a concern than physical or sexual safety for all.

Note: Youth who identify as LGBTQ may be represented in all categories; **BOLD** words indicate commonalities

Fig 6

Top Concerns in School/Community by Gender Identity

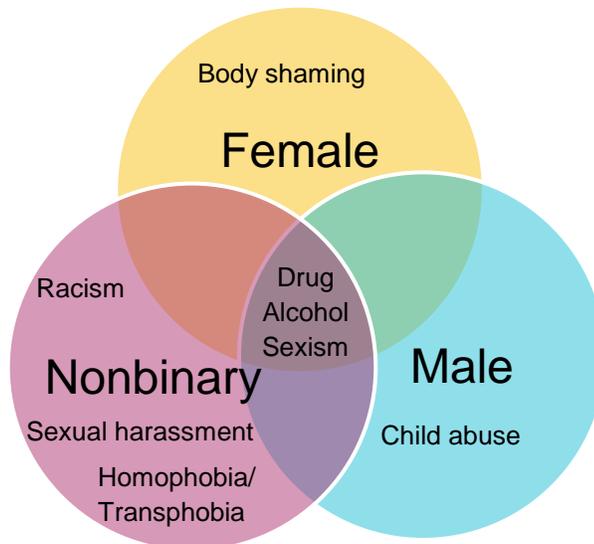


Fig 7

Age Ranges	Top concerns/issues	Experienced by them or someone they know	Observations
11-12	<p>All ranked 19%-20%:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying 2. Rape 3. Sexism 4. Drug use 5. Suicide 6. Child abuse 7. Hunger 8. Body shaming 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying (80%) 2. Body shaming (50%) 3. Racism (45%) 4. Cat calling (40%) 5. Sexual Harassment (35%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 concerns rose to the top, however all ranked higher as <i>not a concern at all</i> (29%-50%) • Youngest group generally less concerned than older peers • Sexual harassment experiences emerging • Personal physical, emotional, & sexual safety a <i>big concern</i> for 6%-13 % • Racism experienced at 45% although only <i>big concern</i> for < 10%
13-14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drug use (37%) 2. Alcohol use (34%) 3. Racism (31%) 4. Sexism (29%) 5. Suicide (28%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying (82%) 2. Alcohol use (51%) 3. Body shaming (46%) 4. Sexism (44%) 5. Drug use (37.5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual harassment experiences ranked a close 6th at > 36% • 36% ranked <i>sexism as not a concern at all</i> although experience is significant • Personal physical, emotional, & sexual safety a <i>big concern</i> for 15%-17% • 14%-15% concerned about Islamophobia & Xenophobia
15-16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drug use (47%) 2. Alcohol use (37%) 3. Body shaming (36%) 4. Sexism (35%) 5. Racism (30%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying (86%) 2. Drug use (73%) 3. Alcohol use (68%) 4. Body shaming (57%) 5. Sexual Harassment (56%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in concerns & experiences around drug & alcohol use • More concern for sexism related issues than younger peers • Personal sexual, physical, & emotional safety a <i>big concern</i> for 10%-19 %

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexism experiences ranked a close 6th at 55%
17-18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Drug use (45%) Sexism (43%) Alcohol use (41%) Rape (35%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying (84%) Drug use (66%) Alcohol use (63%) Sexual harassment & Body shaming (52%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual harassment, racism, body shaming, & dating violence all ranked between 32%-34% as a <i>big concern</i> Personal physical, sexual, & emotional safety a <i>big concern</i> for between 17%- 21%
19-24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Drug use (77%) Racism (70%) Bullying, dating violence, alcohol use (all 67%) Sexual harassment & sexism (both 63%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Body shaming (89%) Sexism (82%) Sexual Harassment (79%) Bullying, alcohol, family poverty/few resources (all 75%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher number of older youth ranked issues as a <i>big concern</i> (all > 20%, most > 50%). Homophobia/transphobia, xenophobia, islamophobia a <i>big concern</i> for > 55% Personal physical, emotional, & sexual safety a <i>big concern</i> for 20%-40% Most issues were experienced by > 50% Poverty/few resources showed up as a significant experience
Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug use Sexism Alcohol use (ages 13+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying Body shaming Sexual harassment related issues Drug & alcohol use (ages 13-18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal safety ranks lower among issues; highest for oldest group High drug & alcohol experiences & concerns (ages 13+) Drug use biggest concern for ages 13+ Bullying less of a concern for ages 13+ yet experienced by all

Note: **BOLD** words indicate commonalities

WHAT WILL HELP IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES?

BROADLY

Overall, the most requested actions to help youths' school/community based concerns were *having more askable/supportive adults* (51%), *support for youth initiatives* (46%), *training for school staff/adults in community* (46%), *more youth as leaders* (44%), and *counseling/support groups* (41%) (Fig 8).

Youth mentioned the need for mandatory training for teachers and educators. There was a sense that *nothing really changes when it comes to harassment* and several mentioned that school dress codes promoted *body shaming among women and should be removed*.

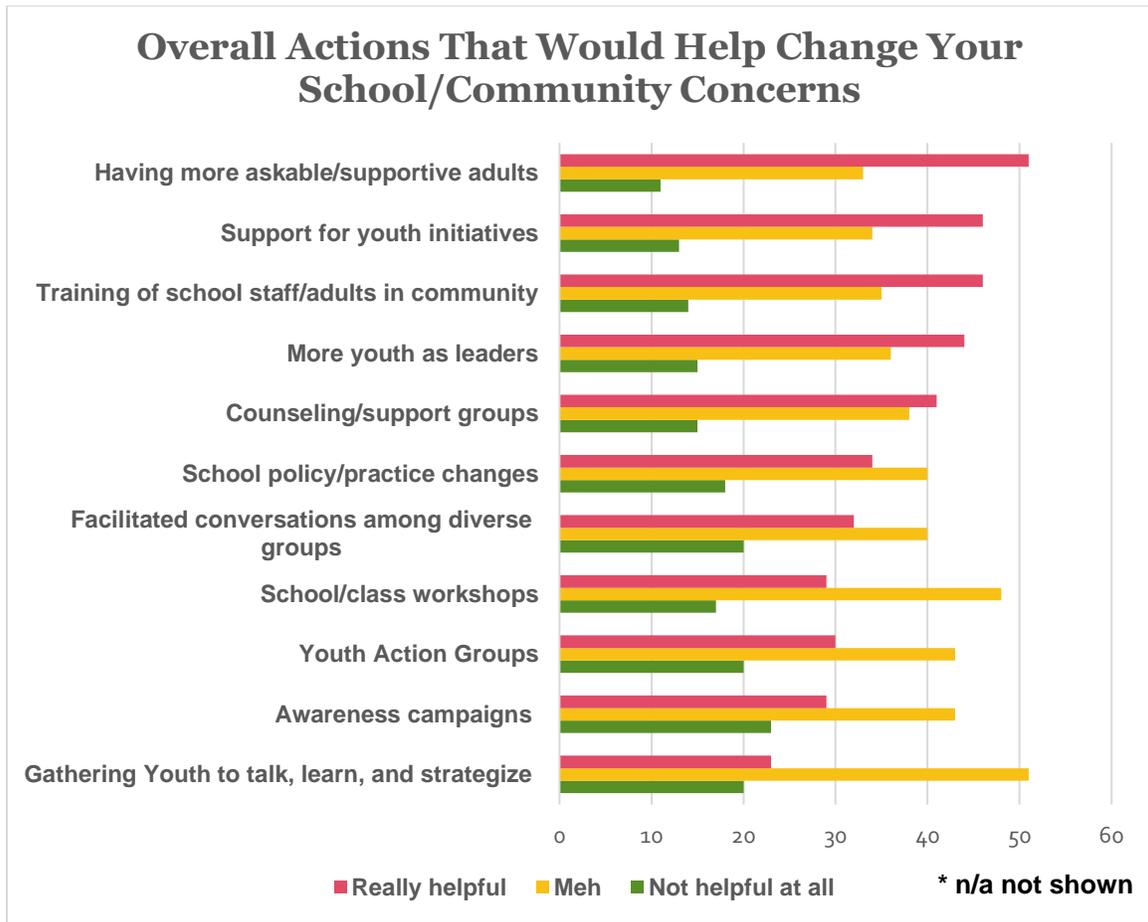
Many also acknowledged the challenges of engaging students in issues or related events because *many people in Vermont aren't exposed to diversity or different walks of life*. Further: *It's not a priority, they don't see how it relates to them*. Some youth suggested initiatives promoting diversity and youth legislative days as possibly helpful actions.

Comments suggested the need for general training for educators and more Youth initiatives promoting diversity.

School dress codes were mentioned as problematic - promoting body shaming among women.



Fig 8



BY GENDER IDENTITY AND AGE

Having more askable adults was ranked high across all gender identities and age groups as **really helpful** actions that would change concerns in schools and communities. In addition, *support for youth initiatives* and *training of school staff/community adults* was ranked high across genders and most ages. Having *more youth as leaders* was ranked **really helpful** increasingly as youth aged (33% for the youngest group to 63% for the oldest). This could be attributed to assuming more leadership and increased power in their lives. *Changes in school policy* and *counseling and support groups* also ranked high for some age groups (Figs 9-11).

Nonbinary/genderqueer (83%) identified youth and youth ages 17-18 (73%) ranked *having more askable adults* highest. Perhaps these groups represent life and developmental circumstances that rely heavily on the support of adults. Similarly, nonbinary/genderqueer (94%) and youth ages 19-24 (73%) ranked the *training of school staff and adults in their community* as **really helpful** ways to mitigate their concerns.

To varying degrees, awareness campaigns, facilitated conversations, gathering youth to talk, youth action groups, and school workshops were ranked neutral to unhelpful.

To varying degrees, *awareness campaigns, facilitated conversations, gathering youth to talk, youth action groups, and school workshops* were ranked neutral to unhelpful.

Nonbinary/genderqueer youth and youth 19-24 years old seemed particularly hopeful as more than 50% of them found between eight to 10 of the 11 solutions as **really helpful** ways to create change.



Fig 9

Gender Identity	Top <i>really helpful</i> actions for school/community concerns	Least helpful actions	Observations
Nonbinary/ Genderqueer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of school staff/adults (94%) 2. Having more askable adults (83%) 3. School classes/workshops, facilitated conversations, school policy changes, support for youth initiatives (72%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest ranked actions focused on having more adults educated & available for support • Youth related actions (groups, workshops, initiatives) came next as did school policy changes • > 55% of participants ranked 10 out of 11 choices as more helpful than not • Only gender identity group that notes school workshops & conversations as <i>helpful</i>
Female	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having more askable adults (62%) 2. More youth as leaders (56%) 3. Training of school staff (55%) 4. Support for youth initiatives (54%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering youth to talk, learn, strategize • School/class workshops • Awareness campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of adult & youth focused actions • Youth action groups, facilitated conversations, school policy, & counseling/support groups between 37%-49% <i>helpful</i>
Male	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for youth initiatives & having more askable adults (35%) 2. Training of school staff/adults (32%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth action groups • Gathering youth to talk, learn, strategize • Facilitated conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally lower % of males find actions <i>helpful</i> • School policy, more youth as leaders, & counseling/support groups between 25%-30% <i>helpful</i>

Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having more askable adults • Training for adults • Support or youth initiatives (Fig 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaigns 33% or less for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonbinary/ genderqueer & female identified youth ranked more actions as <i>really helpful</i>
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Note: Youth who identify as LGBTQ may be represented in all categories; **BOLD** words indicate commonalities

Fig 10

Top Really Helpful Actions for School/Community Concerns by Gender Identity

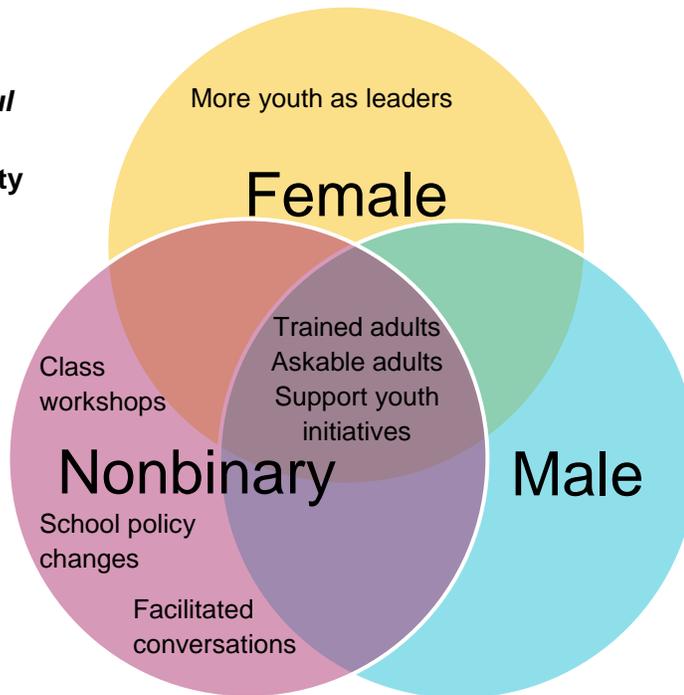


Fig 11

Age	Top really helpful actions for school/community concerns	Least helpful actions	Observations
11-12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counseling/support groups (43%) 2. Youth initiatives (39%) 3. Youth as leaders (33%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering youth to talk, learn, strategize • Facilitated conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age group seemed empowered to be leaders & open to individual support • After top four <i>really helpful</i> actions, most participants picked

	4. Having more askable adults (33%)		<i>meh, not at all helpful, or n/a</i>
13-14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More youth as leaders (36%) 2. Training of school staff/adults (36%) 3. School policy change & having more askable adults (34%) 4. Youth initiatives (33%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering youth to talk, learn strategize • Youth action groups • Facilitated conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After top two <i>really helpful</i> actions, most participants picked <i>meh, not at all helpful, or n/a</i>
15-16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having more askable adults (54%) 2. Training of school staff/adults (45%) 3. More youth as leaders (43%) 4. Counseling/support groups & youth initiatives (about 40%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering youth to talk, learn strategize • School/class workshops • Facilitated conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase focus on adult related actions • Larger percentage of participants chose <i>really helpful</i> actions
17-18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having more askable adults (73%) 2. Youth initiatives (70%) 3. Training for school staff/adults (61%) 4. More youth as leaders (56%) 5. Counseling/support groups (46%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering youth to talk, learn strategize • Awareness campaigns • School/class workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase focus on adult related actions • Larger percentage of participants chose <i>really helpful</i> actions
19-24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of school staff/adults (73%) 2. Youth initiatives (70%) 3. School policy changes (67%) 4. Youth as leaders (63%) 5. Having more askable adults (60%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaigns • Youth action groups • Gathering youth to talk, learn strategize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50%-73% of participants ranked 8 actions as <i>really helpful</i> • No action was ranked <i>not helpful at all</i> by > 20% of participants • Hopeful

Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having more askable adults • Youth as leaders • Youth initiatives • Training for adults (ages 13+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering youth to talk, learn strategize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School policy change ranked higher by 13-14 & 19-24 year-olds • Counseling & support groups ranked higher by 11-12 & 15-18 year-olds
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Note: **BOLD** words indicate commonalities

WHAT IS CONCERNING YOUTH AT HOME AND WHAT HELPS?

BROADLY

Overall, stress (36%) was the highest ranked concern at home and the only choice that was more of a concern than not. Mental health and emotional safety concerns followed (12-20%). Youth were much less concerned about issues at home than about ones at school and in their communities. **It is encouraging that 14 of the 18 listed concerns were ranked as a big concern by less than 10% of participants** (Fig 12).

When ranking actions that would help concerns at home (Fig 13), youth ranked *money* (21%), *counseling/support groups* (19%), and *having more askable/supportive adults in their lives* (14%) highest.

In their comments, youth connected anxiety and stress with increased homework and not enough free time with family and friends.

Several participants commented that they didn't have any concerns at home. Others commented about personal experiences of family suicide and a general sense of hopelessness when it comes to things that might be helpful. Another link evidenced by several comments is that between high levels of stress and unmanageable and uncoordinated homework loads. In their comments, youth connected anxiety and stress with increased homework and not enough free time with family and friends.

Fig 12

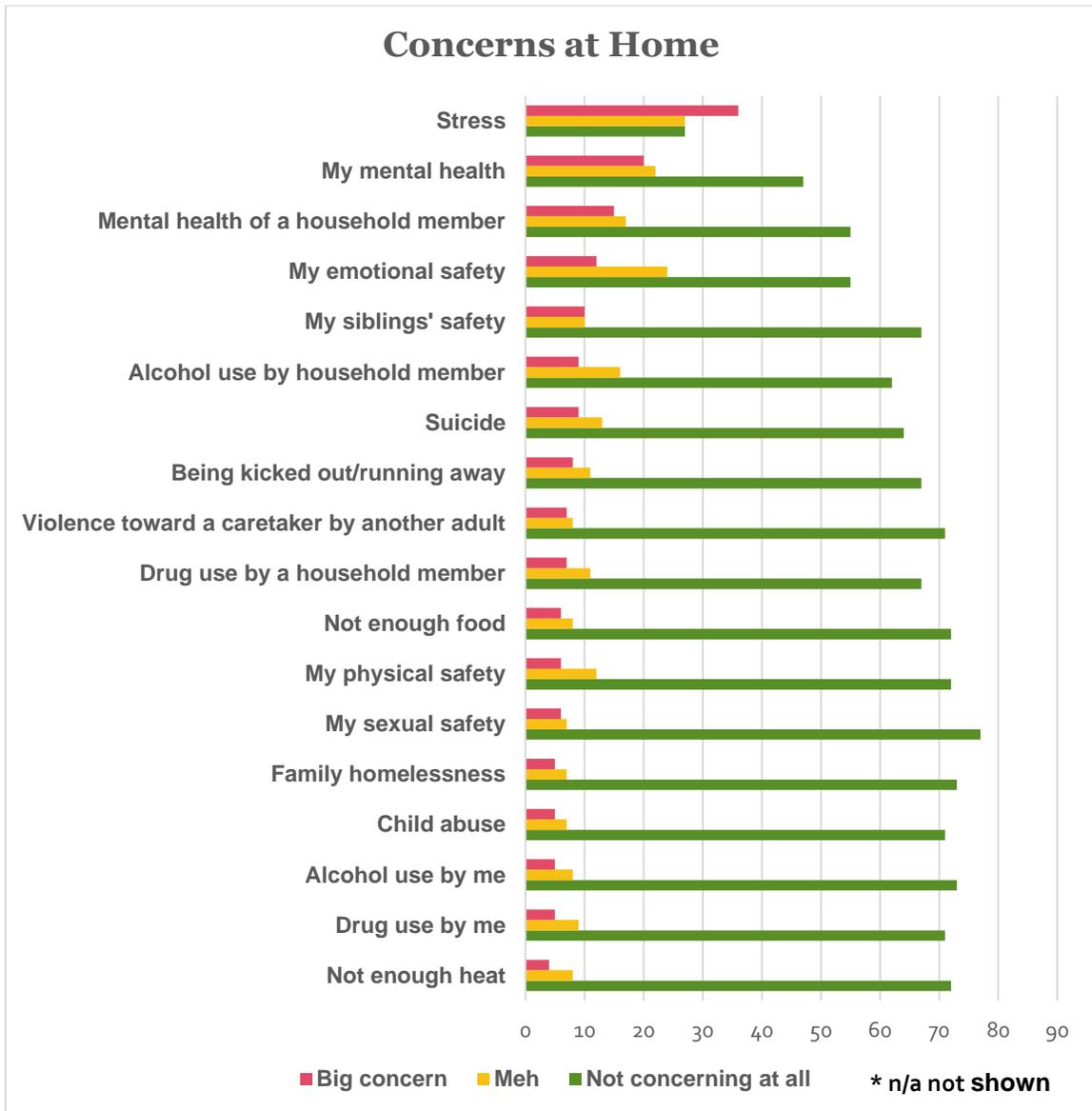
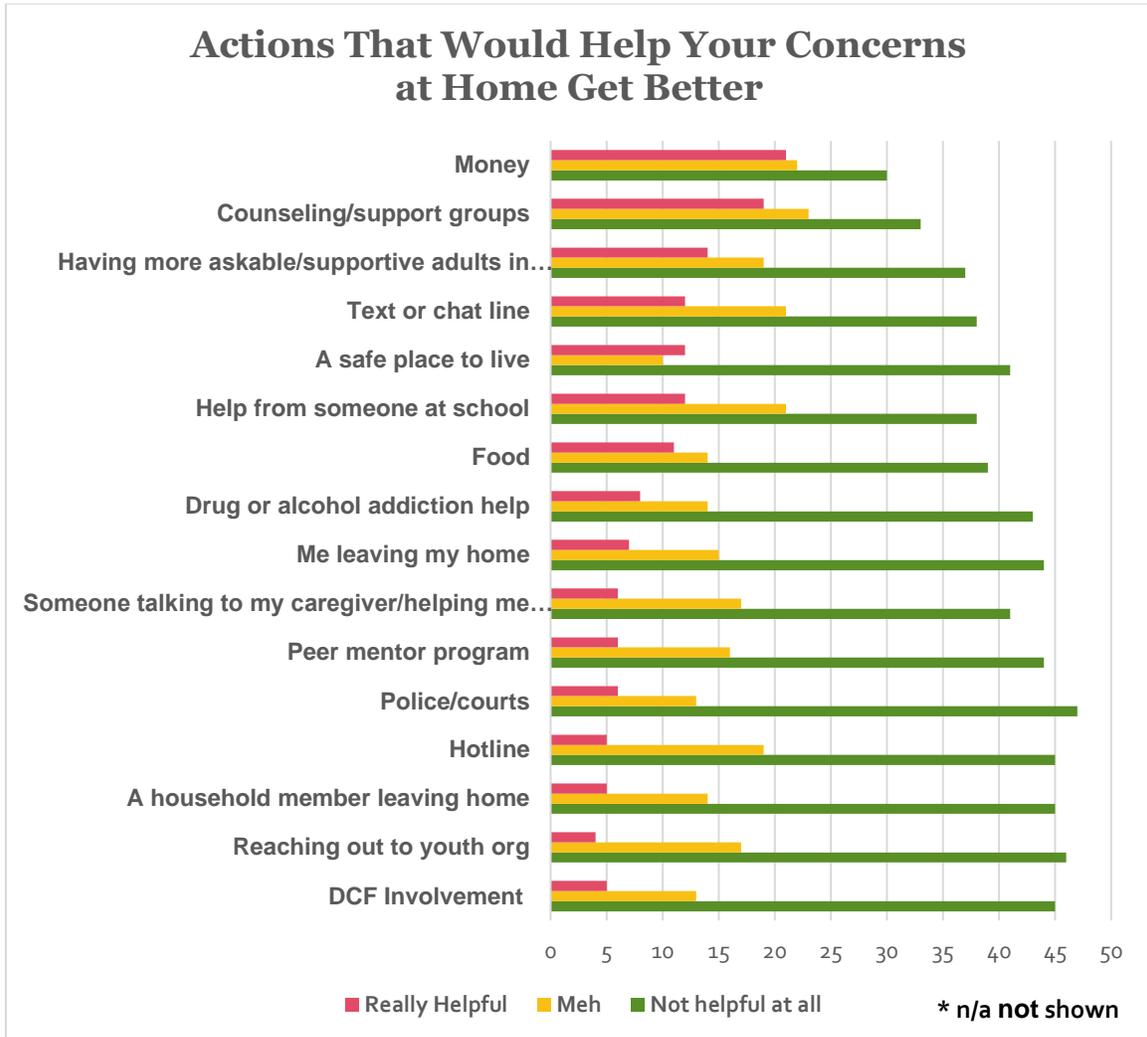


Fig 13



BY GENDER IDENTITY AND AGE

Although most youth were less concerned about issues at home, worries about stress and personal and household members' mental health were high across all gender identities and age groups. Stress and mental health concerns increased with age along with concerns for personal emotional safety. Nonbinary/genderqueer youth identified highest levels of stress and concern for mental health followed by females and then males (Figs 14-16).

All genders ranked *money*, *counseling/support groups*, and *having more askable adults* as helpful actions. Although ranking any action as **really helpful** was

rare, as ages increased, so did the interest in helpful responses. The least helpful actions included *hotlines, systems interventions (DCF, police/courts), and household members leaving home.*

Stress and mental health concerns increased with age along with concerns for personal emotional safety.

It is easy to assume that the high levels of stress can be linked to mental health and emotional safety concerns. It is also easy to connect the overwhelming helpfulness of *money, counseling, and connection to supportive adults* as reasonable responses to the high level of individual and household stress.

Fig 14

Gender Identity	Top concerns at home	Most helpful actions for concerns at home	Observations
Nonbinary/ Genderqueer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (67%) 2. My mental health (60%) 3. Mental health of household member (47%) 4. My emotional safety, my siblings' safety, alcohol use by a household member (20%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counseling/ support groups (47%) 2. Money/safe place to live (43%) 3. Text/chat line (40%) 4. Having more askable adults (30%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big drop in concerns after top 3 • More highly ranked helpful actions than other gender identities • Least helpful actions: someone talking to my caregiver, police/courts, DCF involvement, someone leaving my home, & hotline
Female	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (42%) 2. My mental health (21%) 3. Mental health of household member (14%) 4. My emotional safety (12%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counseling/ support groups (22%) 2. Money (22%) 3. Having more askable adults (15%) 4. Text/chat line (12%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action ranked as <i>really helpful</i> by more than 22% • Least helpful actions: DCF involvement, youth orgs, someone leaving my home, police/courts, & hotline

Male	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (27%) 2. My mental health (15%) 3. My siblings' safety (12%) 4. Mental health of household member (11%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Money (19%) 2. Having more askable adults (13%) 3. Counseling/ support groups (11%) 4. Help from someone at school & safe place to live (9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action ranked as <i>really helpful</i> by more than 19% • Least helpful actions: peer mentoring, youth orgs, hotline, & someone talking to my caregiver
Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress • My mental health • Mental health of household member <p>(Fig 15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling/ support groups • Money • Having more askable adults <p>(Fig 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least helpful actions include hotlines for all groups • System interventions (DCF/police/courts) for nonbinary/ genderqueer youth & females

Note: Youth who identify as LGBTQ may be represented in all categories; **BOLD** words indicate commonalities

Fig 15

Top Concerns at Home by Gender Identity

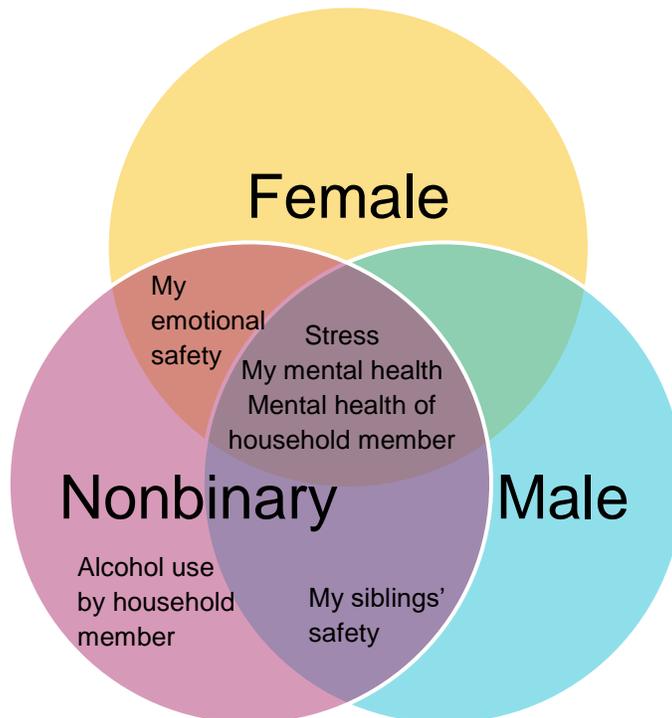


Fig 16

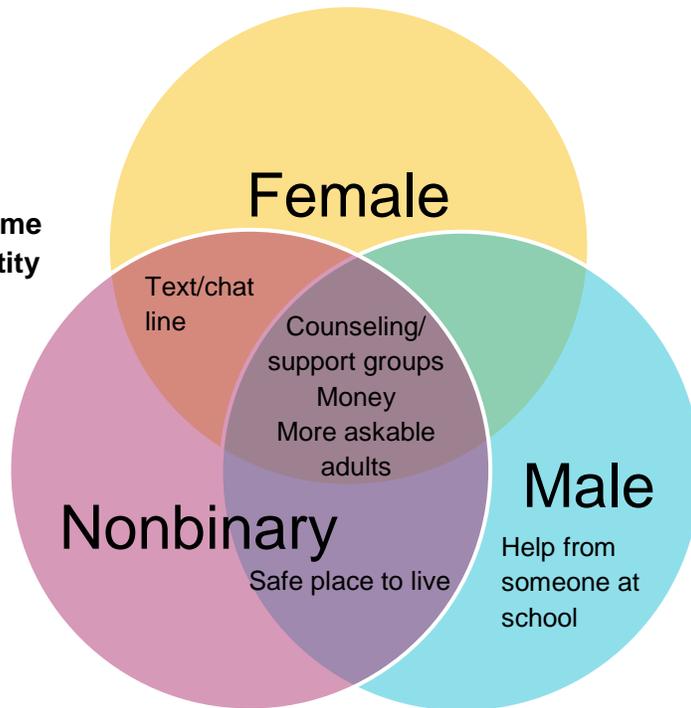
Age	Top concerns at home	Most helpful actions to help at home	Observations
11-12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (10%) 2. My siblings' safety (7%) 3. Violence toward a caretaker by another adult (7%) 4. My mental health (7%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Money (7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 10% of the youngest age group ranked any issue as a <i>big concern</i> at home. • Big drop in concern after top 4 • Only age group that ranked violence in their home as a top concern • No actions other than <i>money</i> ranked as <i>really helpful</i>
13-14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (29%) 2. My mental health (20%) 3. Alcohol use by household member (16%) 4. My siblings' safety (15%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Money (14%) 2. Safe place to live (13%) 3. Text/chat line (12%) 4. Addiction help, food, having more askable adults (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress & mental health concerns begin to increase
15-16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (38%) 2. My mental health (21%) 3. Mental health of household member (16%) 4. My emotional safety (10%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counseling/support groups (23%) 2. Help from someone at school, money (17%) 3. Having more askable adults (16%) 4. Text/chat line (12%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress a more significant concern than younger peers • More interested in reaching out to others for help • Exact same concerns as older peers
17-18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress (45%) 2. My mental health (15%) 3. Mental health of household member (12%) 4. My emotional safety (11%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Money (31%) 2. Counseling/support groups (19%) 3. A safe place to live (15%) 4. Having more askable adults (12%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exact same concerns as 15-16 & 19-24 year old peers • Big drop between stress & other concerns

19-24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stress (67%) My mental health (48%) Mental health of household member (30%) My emotional safety (26%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Money (60%) Counseling/support groups (52%) Having more askable adults (41%) Food (33%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exact same concerns as younger peers at higher % <i>Food</i> ranked high as <i>helpful</i>
Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress & my mental health (all) My siblings' safety (ages 11-14) Mental health of household member & my emotional safety (ages 15+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money (all) More askable adults (ages 13+) Counseling & support groups (ages 15+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress increased with age Concern for one's own emotional safety & personal & family mental health increased with age

Note: **BOLD** words indicate commonalities

Fig 17

Top Helpful Actions for Concerns at Home by Gender Identity



HOW WOULD YOUTH CONSIDER TAKING ACTION?

BROADLY

Overall, youth ranked 10 actions that they would consider taking to help make their concerns better. Participants were significantly more apt to *reach out to a friend* than any other action to address their concerns (Fig 18).

Fig 18

How Would You Consider Taking Action to Help Make Any of Your Concerns Get Better?

Reach out to a friend	70%
Take a leadership role	45%
Reach out for support for myself	44%
Do a school awareness project	38%
Work to make policy/law changes	37%
As a peer counselor	36%
Attend a youth conference	35%
Attend a school workshop	33%
Challenge someone on their abusive behavior	33%
Be on a youth action group	32%

BY GENDER IDENTITY AND AGE

Youth who identified as **nonbinary/genderqueer** ranked policy, learning, and leadership actions highest. *Working to make policy/law changes* (71%), *attending youth conferences and workshops*, and *taking leadership roles* (64%) were highest. Forty-three percent said that they would *challenge someone on their abusive behavior*.

Female identified participants chose *reaching out to a friend* (75%) highest. Their next actions were a combination of leadership, learning, and support: *take a leadership role* (49%), *reaching out for support for myself* (48%), *school awareness project* (46%), and *making policy/law changes* (41%). Thirty-five percent said that they would *challenge someone on their abusive behavior*.

Male identified youth chose *reaching out to a friend* (64%) highest followed at a much lower percentage by *taking a leadership role* (38%) and *reaching out for support for themselves* (37%) – similar to females. Although their overall percentages of considered actions were lower, males were the only gender that ranked *challenging someone on their abusive behavior* (29%) in their top four actions.

Nonbinary/genderqueer identified youth considered actions that were environmentally impactful, like making policy changes, while females and males both chose *reaching out to a friend* as by far their most considered action.

Youth 11-12 years old ranked *reaching out to a friend* and *taking leadership roles* highest at 64%. These were followed by *attending school workshops* and *doing school awareness projects* (57%). Thirty-six percent said that they would *attend a youth conference*, *participate on a youth action group* and *reach out for support for themselves*.

Youth 13-14 years old ranked *reaching out to a friend* (70%) by far their most considered action. This was followed by *taking leadership roles* and *reaching out for support for themselves* (36%). Next, this age group felt most comfortable *attending school workshops* and participating in *school awareness projects* (31%).

Youth 15-16 years old ranked *reaching out to a friend* (76%) the highest of all age groups followed by *reaching out for support for myself* at a much lower rate of 46%. This group then chose participatory focused actions next including: *school awareness projects* (40%), *attending youth conferences* (39%), and *taking a leadership role* (37%).

Youth 17-18 years old was the only age group to rank *taking leadership role* (63%) ahead of *reaching out to a friend* (61%) and who included *working to make policy/law changes* (53%) in their top three choices.

Youth 19-24 years old picked relationship focused actions highest: *reach out to a friend* (67%), *reach out for support for myself* (63%), and *as a peer counselor* (59%). These were followed by *taking leadership* (56%) and *making policy changes* (52%). This group was most apt to *challenge someone on abusive behavior* (41%).

As youth aged, there seemed to emerge some unique qualities to the actions that they would consider. These may indicate starting places for engaging youth to take actions about their concerns (Fig 19).

Fig 19

Ages	Interests
11-12	Supporting peers, engaging in school, learning, and leadership
13-14	Supporting peers
15-16	Supporting peers and reaching out for support for themselves
17-18	Leadership, supporting peers, and policy change
19-24	Supporting peers, reaching out for support for themselves, peer counseling, policy change, and bystander action

SUMMARY

Vermont Youth’s Big Concerns

In school and communities

- Drug use
- Alcohol use
- Sexism (body shaming and harassment)
- Personal emotional safety (above physical or sexual safety)
- Bullying and body shaming experienced at high levels

For nonbinary/genderqueer youth, add:

- Homophobia and transphobia

For nonbinary/genderqueer and 19-24 year-old youth, add:

- Family poverty and having few resources

At home

- Stress
- Mental health of self and household members
- Emotional safety

What Helps

In schools and communities

- Having more askable/supportive adults
- Support for youth initiatives and leadership
- Training of school staff and adults in the community
- Counseling and support groups
- School policy changes

Additionally

- More text and chat lines
- Change dress code policies, decrease homework load, increase diversity training
- Less awareness campaigns, school workshops, conversations, and hotlines

At home

- Money
- Counseling and support groups
- Having more askable/supportive adults

Additionally

- More access to mental health support
- Less hotlines, systems' interventions, people leaving home

How Would Youth Consider *Taking Action*?

- Reaching out to a friend
- Taking a leadership role
- Reaching out for support for myself

For nonbinary/genderqueer youth and 17-24 year-old youth, add:

- Working to make policy/law changes

RECOMMENDATIONS

More to explore

The results of this youth survey provide a solid foundation from which to engage in more conversations with young people in Vermont. A deeper dive with youth from more diverse and populated areas in Vermont would provide a more realistic picture of the experiences of all Vermont youth. More age and gender specific information gathering would also be informative.

It would be helpful to clarify how youth define broad issues like *sexism* and behaviors like sexual harassment and body shaming. It would also be informative to hear how youth might connect their top concerns (drug and alcohol use and sexism, for instance) through stories. More in-depth input from youth of all ages and genders about how they define *askable/supportive adults* and *youth leadership* would give the survey results more meaning. Finally, it would be most valuable to hear stories from Vermont youth about times when they felt supported by *askable adults* and situations when *youth leadership* was supported in ways that felt empowering and genuine.

Recommendations

Be an askable/supportive adult

- Ask young people what makes an *askable/supportive adult* and become one.
- Listen and be available.
- Ask youth about their concerns and offer support.
- Find and share information and resources with youth about their concerns including: drug and alcohol use, sexism, and gender identity and sexual orientation related concerns.

Step up, get trained, and change policies that address the concerns of youth

- Learn what you need to know to support all youth – including understanding gender identity issues, homophobia, transphobia, sexism (including harassment and body shaming), and emotional wellbeing.

- Use your power to assist youth to change policies that address their concerns. For instance: dress codes, sexism, racism, diversity issues, less stressful homework loads, and bullying.

Less stress and more emotional support for youth

- Consider the emotional well-being of young people as a priority.
- Ask young people about their stress. Ask how things are at home and in school. Help them find mental health support when they ask for it.
- Advocate with systems to lessen the load and support youth to manage school work and make space for free time to create a healthy balance.

Support youth to reach out to their peers

- Offer guidance and resources to support the strong inclination for youth to reach out and offer support to their friends.
- Create and support peer counseling and support options in your environments.

Support youth as leaders and youth powered initiatives

- Ask and listen to what youth are passionate about.
- Support their ideas, decisions, power, and leadership.
- Notice where young people are in their development and life circumstances to help them find their path of involvement.

APPENDIX A – YOUTH SURVEY



YATF Vermont Youth Survey

Thank you for taking our survey!

The Vermont Network Youth Advocates are asking Vermont Youth what is important to you. We hope to use your responses to help us know how Youth want to be involved and how we can be better advocates for you.

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#).

Not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

First, a few questions about you....

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#).

Remember that not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

1. Your age

- 10 Years old or younger
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15-16
- 17-18
- 19-24

2. Your gender Identity

3. Town you live in

Next, we're going to ask you about concerns you might have within your school and/or community....

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#).

Remember that not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

4. Please rank **your level of worry or concern** about these issues **in your school and/or community**. 1 is most concerning, 3 is least concerning. Click on hyperlinks for working definitions and resources.

	1. A BIG concern	2. Meh	3. NOT a concern at all	N/A
Bullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual harassment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cat calling (street harassment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dating violence (violence in relationships)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My physical safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My emotional safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My sexual safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suicide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money and status	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hunger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Xenophobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Body shaming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hate crimes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Islamophobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homophobia/Transphobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

5. **If you or any other young people you know** have personally experienced any of these issues or concerns **in school and/or your community**, please check which ones. **Check all that apply.**

- Bullying
- Sexual Harassment
- Cat calling
- Dating violence (violence in relationships)
- Rape
- Racism
- Sexism
- Drug use
- Alcohol use
- Suicide
- Child abuse
- Body shaming
- Hunger
- Xenophobia
- Hate crimes
- Islamaphobia
- Homophobia/Transphobia
- Family Poverty/having few resources
- Other (please specify)

6. Rank the actions that you think would help change your school and/or community concerns. 1 is most helpful, 3 is least helpful.

	1. REALLY helpful	2. Meh	3. NOT helpful at all	N/A
Gathering youth to talk, learn and strategize (a youth conference, for instance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School/class workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Action Groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More youth as leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitated conversations among diverse groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School policy/practice changes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awareness campaigns (posters, social media, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training of school staff/adults in community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having more ask-able/supportive adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Counseling/Support groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support for youth initiatives (ex. Access to grants, support finding resources, mentors, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)



YATF Vermont Youth Survey

And now, concerns in your home....

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#).

Remember that not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

7. Please rank the issues that you are **concerned about at home**. 1 is most concerning, 3 is least concerning.

	1. A BIG concern	2. Meh	3. NOT concerning at all	N/A
My physical safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My emotional safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My sexual safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My siblings' safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Violence toward a caretaker by another adult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol use by me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug use by me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mental health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug use by a household member(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol use by a household member(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health of a household member(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being kicked out/running away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough heat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suicide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

8. Rank the actions that you think would help your concerns at home get better. 1 is most helpful, 3 is least helpful.

	1. <u>Really</u> helpful	2. <u>Meh</u>	3. <u>NOT</u> helpful at all	N/A
Counseling/support groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug or alcohol addiction help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hotline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text or chat line	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help from someone at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police/courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Someone talking to my caregiver or helping me talk to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A safe place to live	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Me leaving my home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Another household member(s) leaving my home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reaching out to a Youth specific organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer Mentor program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having more ask-able/supportive adults in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DCF involvement (VT Department for Children and Families/Family Services - Child Protection)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

And, finally....

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#).

Remember that not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

9. In what ways would you consider taking action to help make **any of your concerns** get better! **Check all that apply.**

- As a peer counselor
- Working to make policy/law changes
- Attend a Youth conference
- Attend a school workshop
- Be on a Youth action group
- Take a leadership role
- Do a school awareness project
- Reach out to a friend
- Reach out for support for myself
- Challenge someone on their abusive behavior
- Other (please specify)



YATF Vermont Youth Survey

Thank you so much for participating!!

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program [here](#).

Remember that not giving your name will ensure that your information remains confidential.

APPENDIX B – YOUTH SURVEY DEFINITIONS PAGE

Gender identity: a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female, or neither male nor female.

Bullying: A person who uses strength or influence to harm or intimidate those who are weaker.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances made by an employer or superior, especially when compliance is made a condition of continued employment or advancement.

Cat Calling (street harassment): A loud whistle or a comment of a sexual nature.

Dating Violence (violence in relationships): Controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It can happen in straight or gay relationships. It can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination.

Rape: Unlawful sexual intercourse or any other sexual penetration of the vagina, anus, or mouth of another person, with or without force, by a sex organ, other body part, or foreign object, without consent of the victim.

Racism: Hatred or intolerance of another race or other races.

Sexism: Attitudes or behavior based on traditional stereotypes of gender roles.

Xenophobia: Fear or hatred of foreigners, people from different cultures, or strangers.

Body Shaming: The action or practice of humiliating someone by making mocking or critical comments about their body shape or size.

Hate Crimes: A crime, usually violent, motivated by prejudice or intolerance toward an individual's national origin, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

Islamophobia: Dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force.

Homophobia: Dislike of or prejudice against homosexual people.

Transphobia: Dislike of or prejudice against transsexual or transgender people.

Poverty: The state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support; condition of being poor.

If you or someone you know needs help, find your local Network Program at <http://vtnetwork.org/get-help/>

Thank you to...

- The Youth of Vermont
- Vermont Network Youth Advocacy Task Force members
- Our Community Partners

This document as well as the Executive Summary can be found here: <https://vtnetwork.org/publications/>

For support about domestic, dating, and sexual violence, please find your local Vermont Network Program [here](#):

<https://vtnetwork.org/get-help/>

FOR STATEWIDE HOTLINES:

Domestic Violence Hotline

800-228-7395

Sexual Violence Hotline

800-489-7273

For support, advocacy, and celebration of young queer people in Vermont:

[Outright Vermont](#)

<http://www.outrightvt.org/>

802-865-9677

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