

Sexual Health And the Role of Education

Our study

We looked at what young adults know about sexual health, and whether those who identified as cisgender heterosexual (CH) found their sex education to be more inclusive of their identity than 2SLGBTQIA+ participants.

What we found

- 2SLGBTQIA+ participants used the internet and/or social media for sexual health information more than their cisgender heterosexual peers
- 2SLGBTQIA+ participants did better on the sexual health literacy quiz than their cisgender heterosexual peers
- 2SLGBTQIA+ participants said that they engaged in safer sex practices for penile-anal sex more often than their cisgender heterosexual peers
- On average, reported use of safer sex practices in each group was between 'never' and 'rarely' for all sexual activities, including penile-anal sex. Reported rates of STI testing were also between 'never' and 'rarely' for both groups

Definitions

Cisgender: Someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth

2SLGBTQIA+: Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and many other diverse genders and sexual orientations

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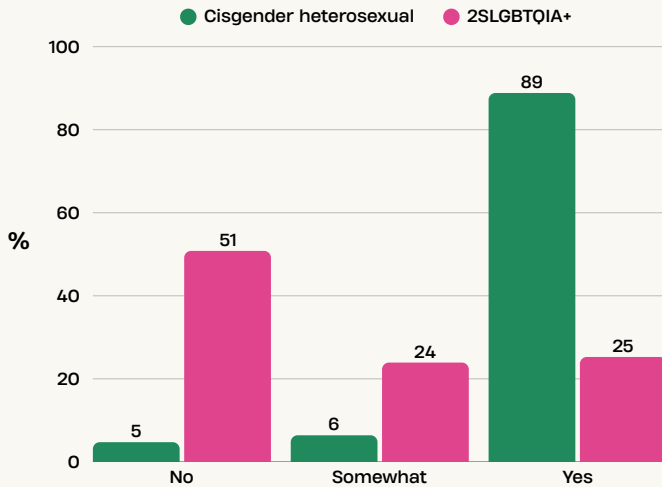
Sex Education for Every Body

Making sexual health education inclusive benefits everyone!

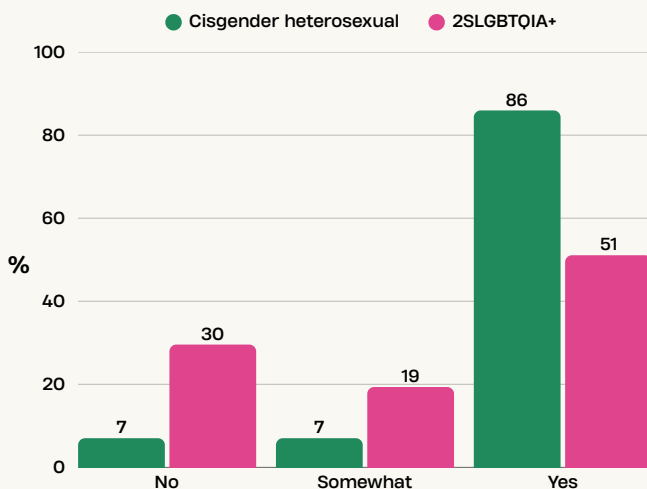
Is sex ed inclusive?

Short answer... nope!

In our study, 2SLGBTQIA+ participants said the sex ed they received was not affirming and inclusive of their sexual orientation or gender identity, especially when compared to their cisgender heterosexual peers.



Was the sex ed you received relevant to and inclusive of your sexual orientation?



Was the sex ed you received relevant to and inclusive of your gender identity?

Why inclusive sex ed benefits everyone

The Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education

The Canadian Guidelines (SIECCAN, 2019) state that SHE should be 'comprehensive,' including things like positive aspects of sexuality and diverse identities. Access to comprehensive SHE is a human right. It reduces rates of bullying, increases sexual health literacy, and promotes healthy sexual decision making skills (*Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021; SIECCAN, 2019*).



Sex isn't only penis-in-vagina intercourse!

When we see sex as more than just one thing, it gets easier to talk about consent, safety, and what actually feels good, which could lead to more enjoyable sex (*Wright et al., 2024*).

Of the participants in our study who have had sex, the five most commonly reported sexual acts were:

- Penile stimulation with hands/fingers (77%)
- Clitoral/vaginal stimulation with fingers (76%)
- Oral sex with a penis (76%)
- Penis in vagina sex (74%)
- Oral sex with a vulva/clitoris/vagina (58%)
- Sex toy for clitoral/vaginal stimulation (48%)

Safer sex practices

Which safer sex practice(s) you choose to use can depend on the kinds of sex you engage in, and whether you are trying to prevent pregnancy, STIs, or both!

Kinds of safer sex practices:

Barriers (like external condoms, internal condoms, dental dams, and gloves) can help protect against STIs and pregnancy.

Contraception (like IUDs, the pill, the patch, and the implant) can be used by people with a uterus to help protect against pregnancy.

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) and **PEP** (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) are medications that can help prevent the spread of HIV.

STI testing can help prevent the spread of STIs.

- Only 19% of 2SLGBTQIA+ and 16% of cisgender heterosexual participants said they always get tested before or after each new sexual partner

Consent is another important safer sex practice!

Consent is permission for something to happen. It can be sexual or non-sexual (like asking a friend for a hug). F.R.I.E.S. is a helpful acronym for understanding consent. Consent should be:

Freely given
Reversible
Informed
Enthusiastic
Specific

