

*Psychosocial Challenges Experienced
by Delaware LGBTQ Youth:
Data from the 2015 Youth Risk
Behavior Survey*

University of Delaware
Center for Drug and Health Studies
Spring Symposium
April 27th 2016
Newark, Delaware



The Big Picture

Nationally, research indicates that, for many possible reasons, adults and youth who identify themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Questioning (LGBQ) are at disproportionate risk for:

- substance abuse (with heavy use continuing into later life)
- emotional health issues
- experiencing trauma
- unique health needs

Experiencing Greater Risks

Among adults:

- Bisexuals report the lowest levels of emotional well-being and bisexual women are at increased risk for hazardous drinking.
- Lesbians are at considerably higher risk for drinking heavily.
- Gay, lesbian, and bisexuals experience elevated rates of intimate partner violence.
- Smoking rates are also elevated.

(SAMHSA, 2010; O'Cleirigh, 2015)

Feeling Unsafe

Among students:

2013 National School Climate Survey

- 55.5% LGBT youth felt unsafe in their schools
- nearly three-quarters experienced verbal harassment
- more than one-third experienced physical harassment
- 16.5% experienced physical assault
- nearly half experienced cyber-bullying

(Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network/GLSEN, 2013)

Feeling Unsupported

Almost as disturbing, more than half of students who were harassed or assaulted did not report these incidents because they thought it would be ineffective to do so.

Of those who reported these incidents, 61.6% reported nothing was done by school staff in response.

(Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network/GLSEN,
2013)

Complex Dynamics

Higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, and suicide may be related to:

- internal and external conflicts
- minority stress
- discrimination
- verbal and physical abuse
- negative experiences when “coming out”
- isolation
- substance abuse

(SAMHSA, 2010; O'Cleirigh, 2015)

Delaware Picture

The Delaware Youth Risk Behavior High School Survey (YRBS), based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention YRBS, is administered to a random and representative sample of Delaware public school students in the spring of odd numbered years.

The Center for Drug and Health Studies (CDHS) administers the survey on behalf of the DE DHSS Division of Public Health, and uses the data to evaluate state and community projects, most notably the DE DHSS Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health's Strategic Prevention Framework – Partnerships for Success initiative. CDHS promotes the use of the data through the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW).

YRBS 2015 High School Question

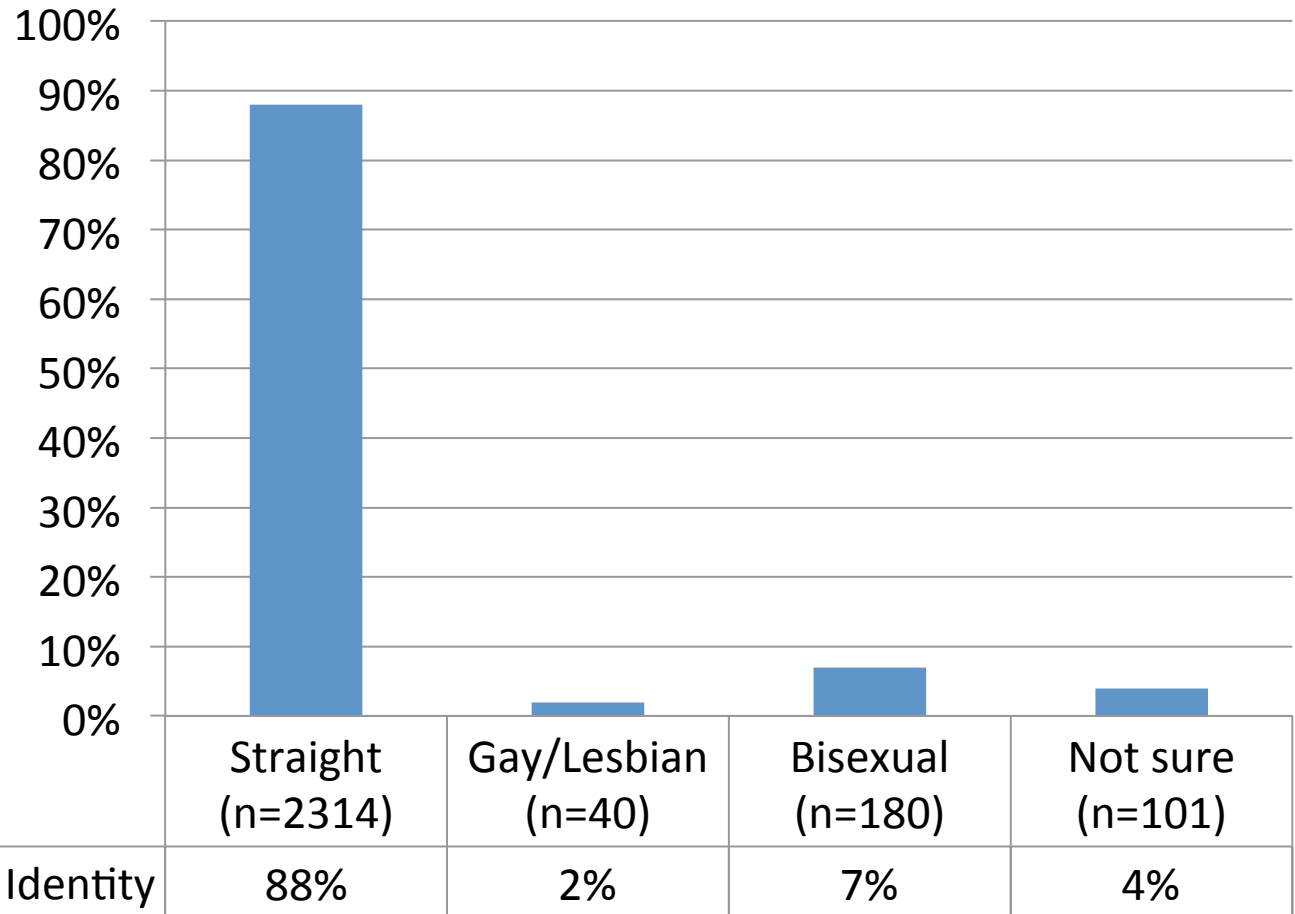
Which of the following best describes you?

- Heterosexual (straight)
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Not Sure

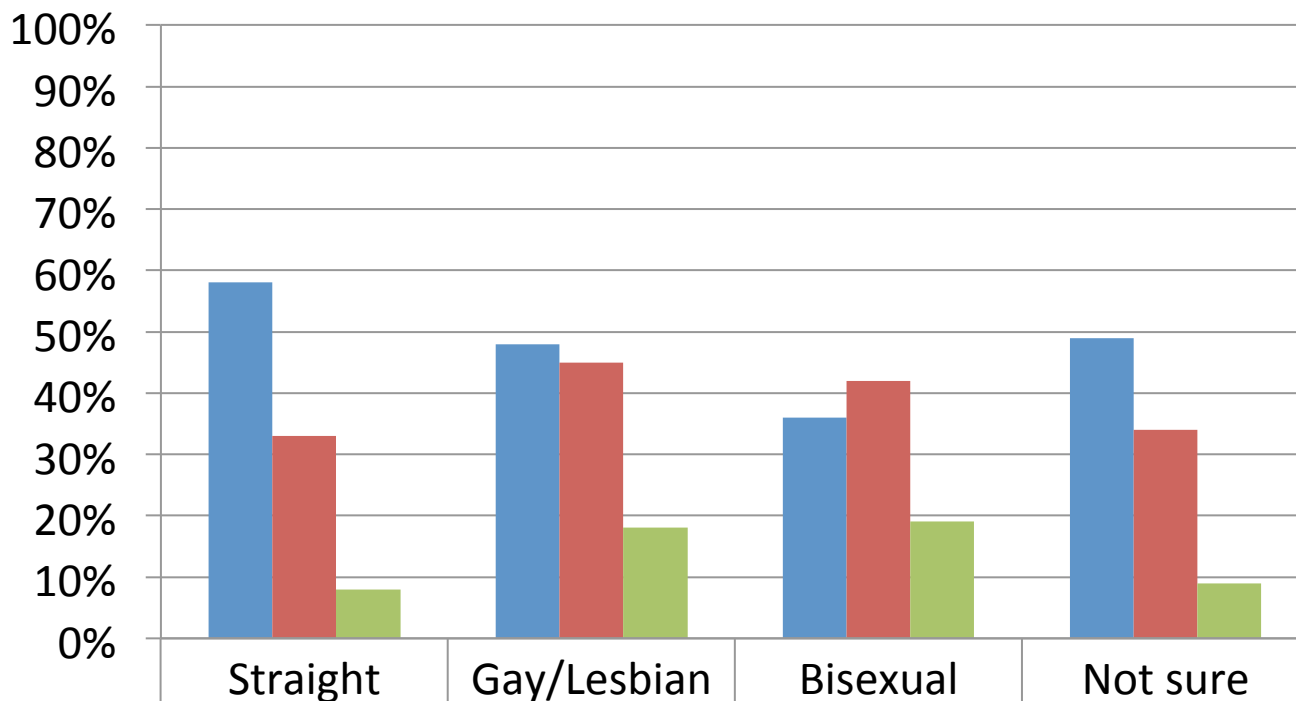
External Factors: Risk/Protective factors for LGBTQ students

- Family relationships
- School relationships
- Peer relationships

LGBQ Youth: Self-reported sexual identity (N=2635)

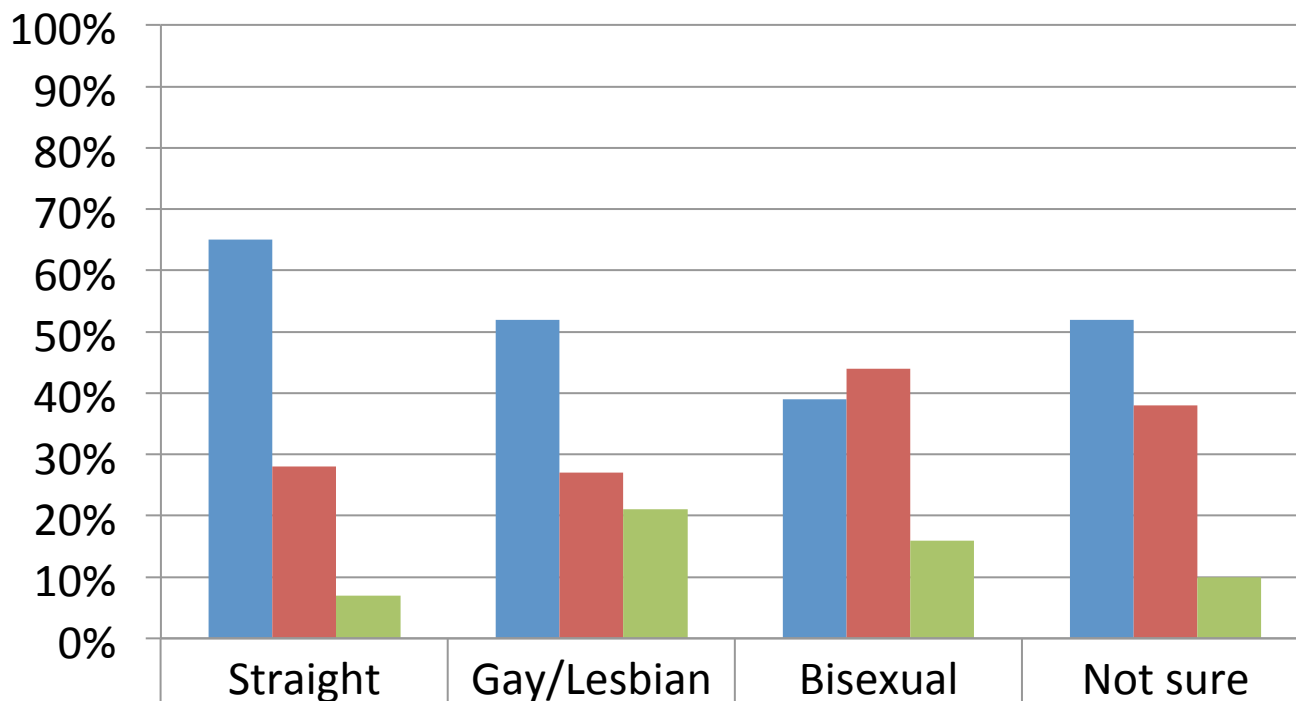


LGBQ Youth and Family Relationships: Parents show they are proud of them



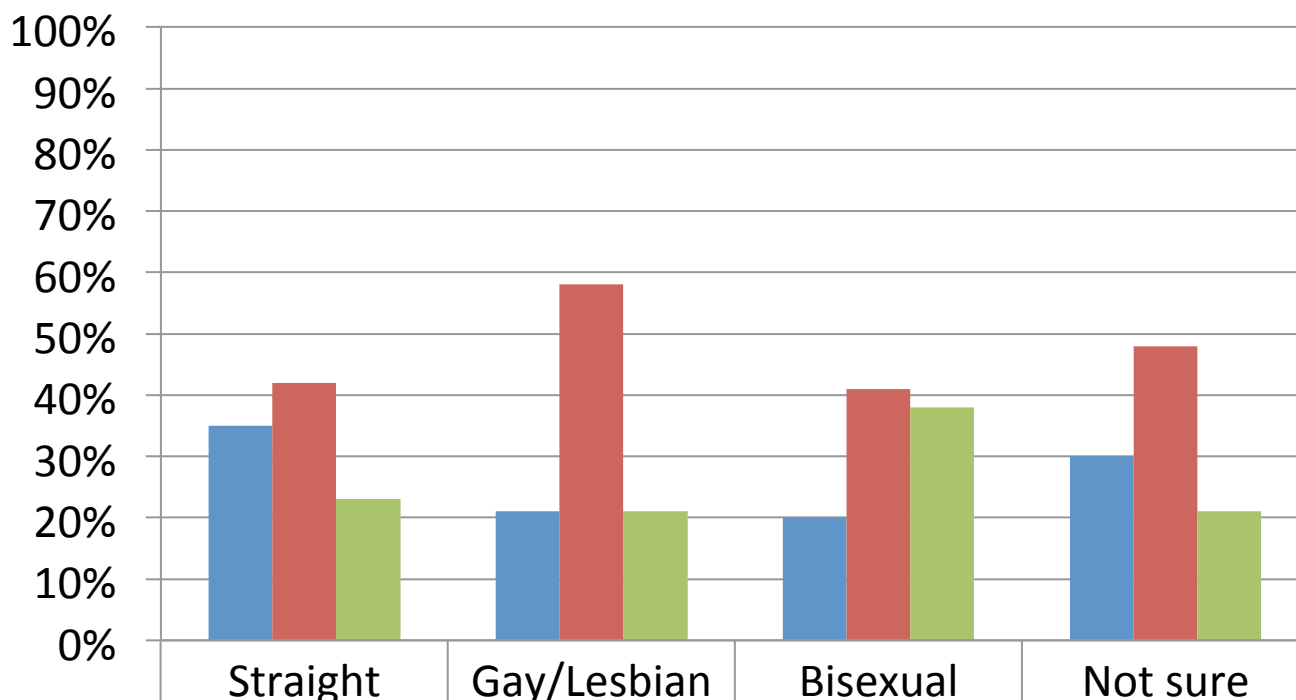
always/almost always	58%	48%	36%	49%
sometimes	33%	45%	42%	34%
never/almost never	8%	18%	19%	9%

LGBQ Youth and Family Relationships: Parents take interest in their activities



always/almost always	65%	52%	39%	52%
sometimes	28%	27%	44%	38%
never/almost never	7%	21%	16%	10%

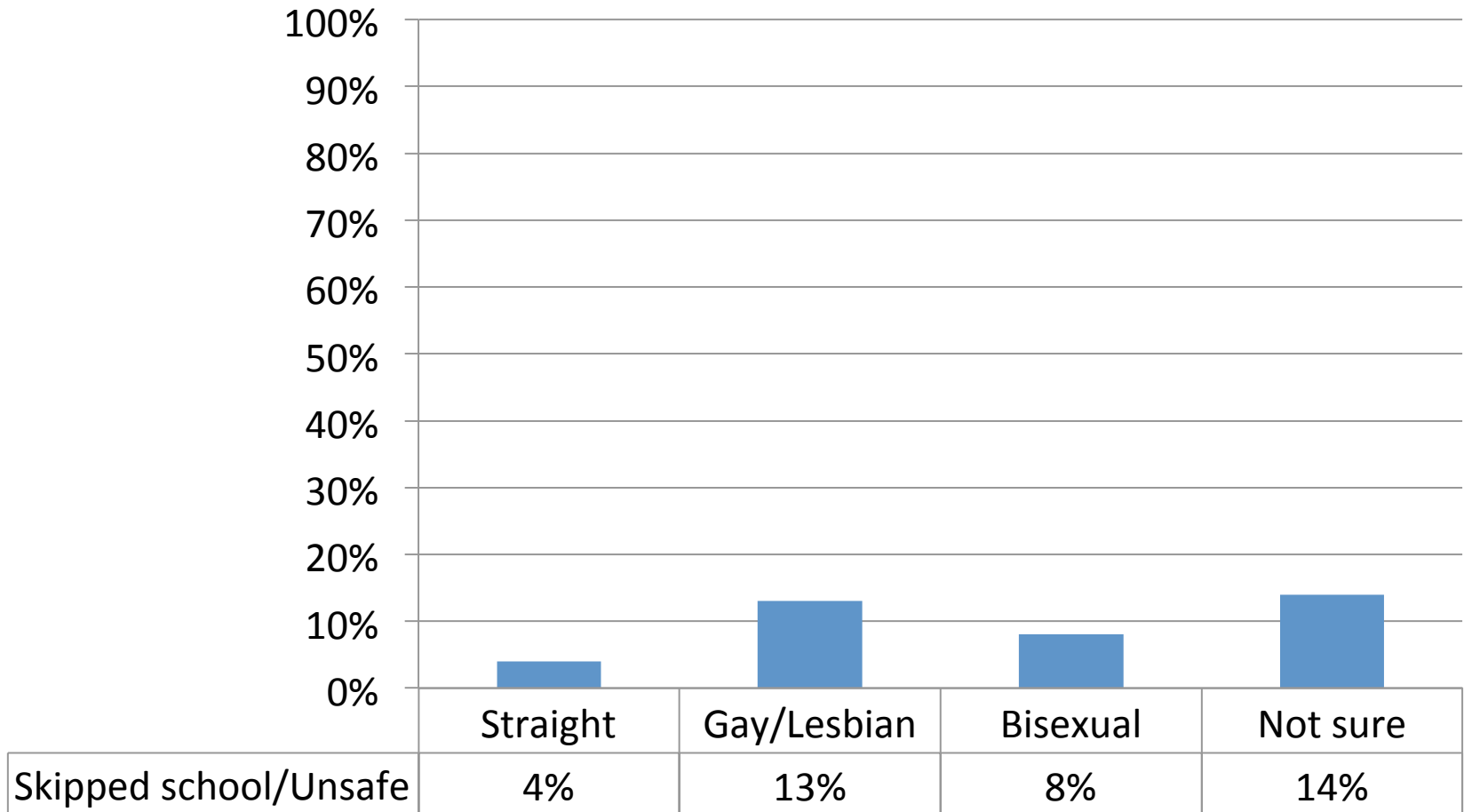
LGBQ Youth and Family Relationships: Comfortable sharing thoughts/feelings with parents



always/almost always	35%	21%	20%	30%
sometimes	42%	58%	41%	48%
never/almost never	23%	21%	38%	21%

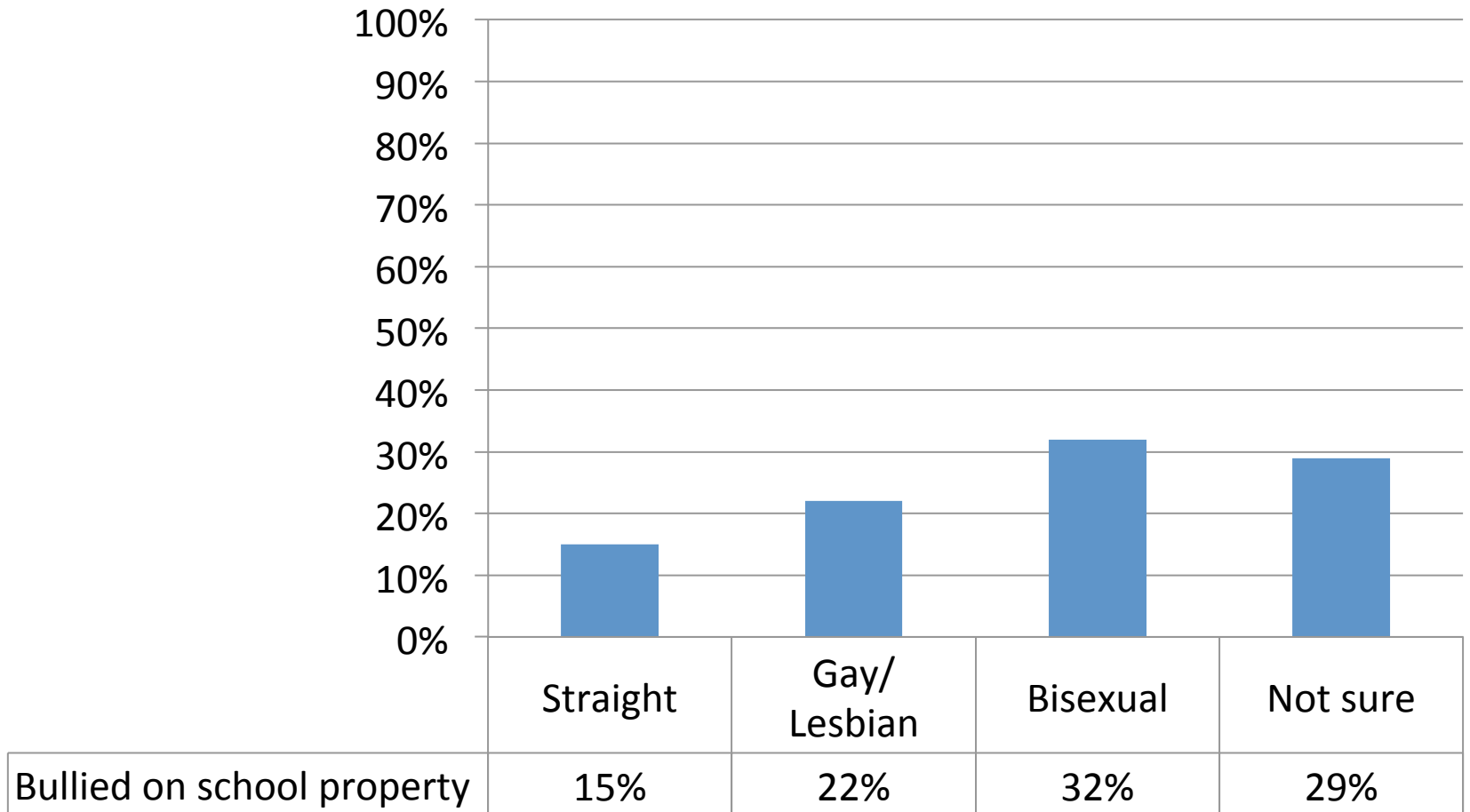
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and School: Did not go to school because felt unsafe



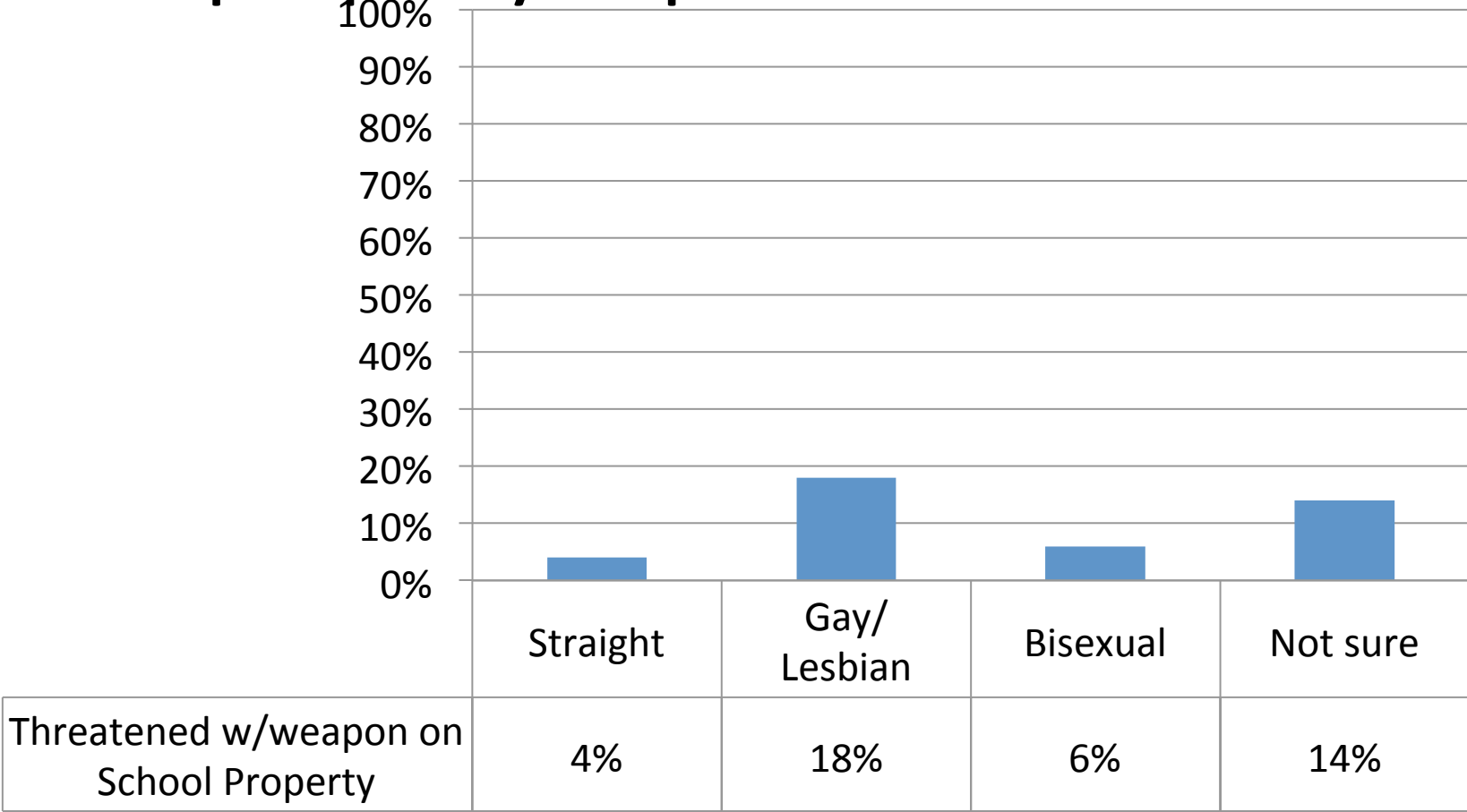
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and School: Bullied on school property or at school event



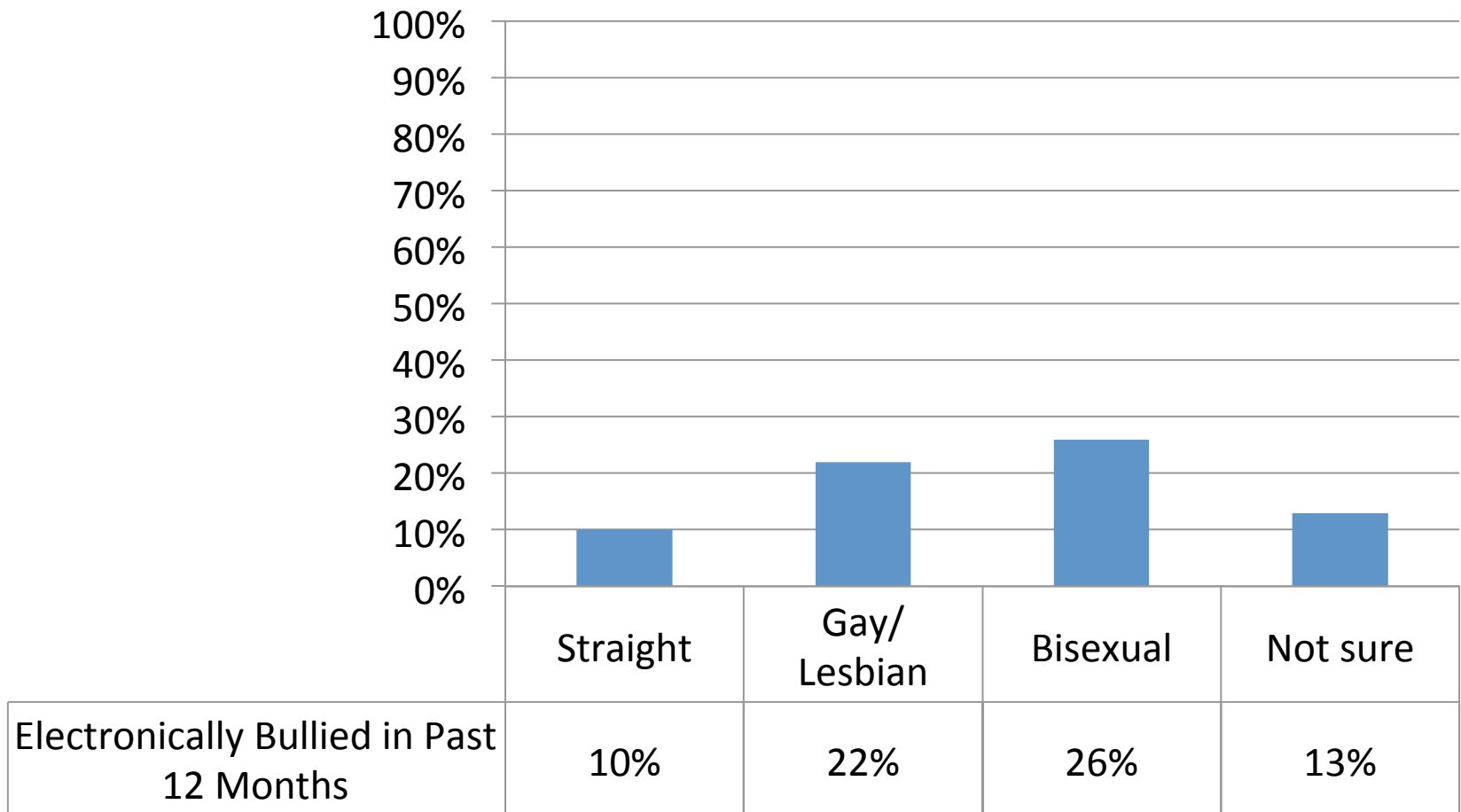
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and School: Threatened/ injured with a weapon on school property in past 12 months



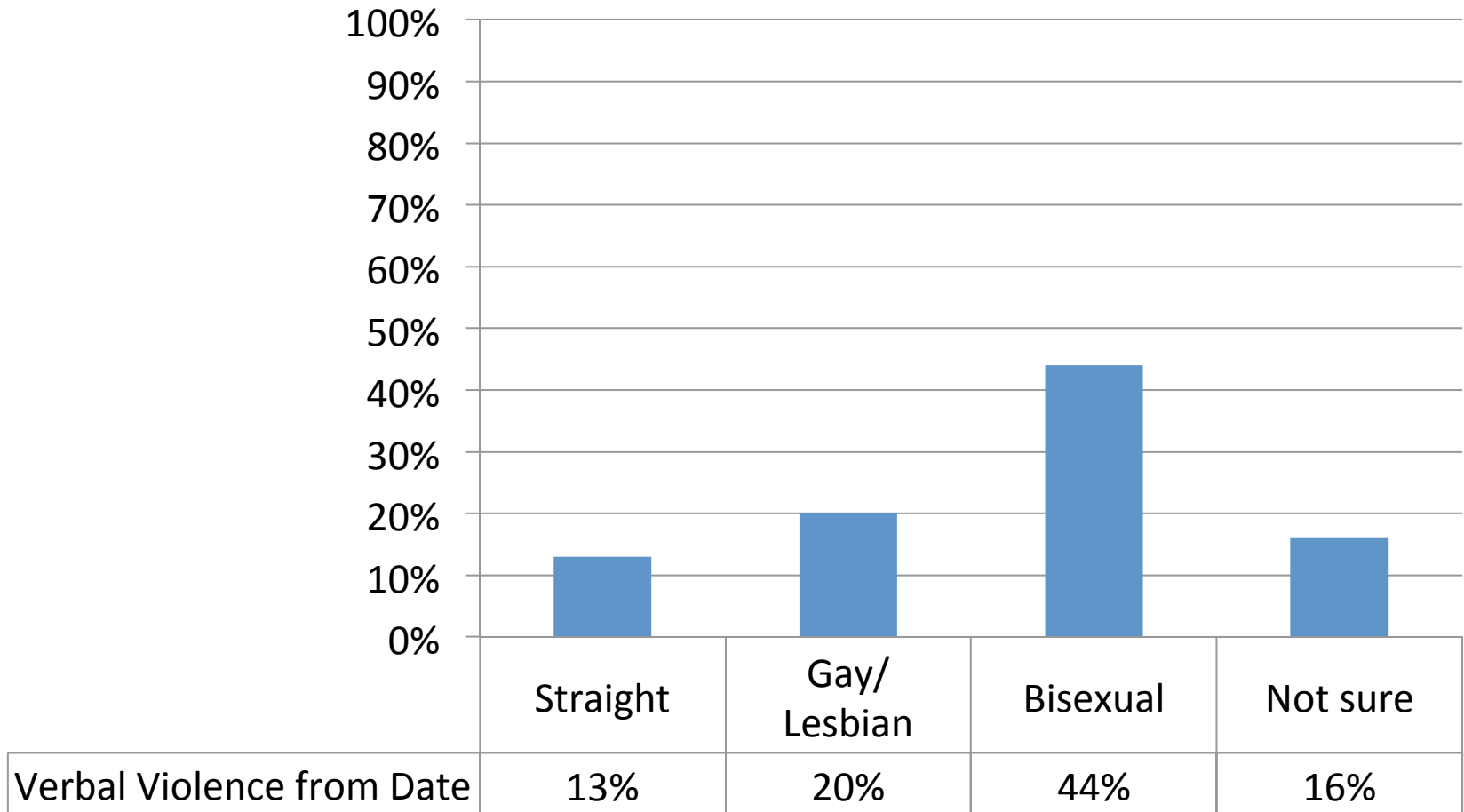
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and Peers: Electronically bullied in past 12 months



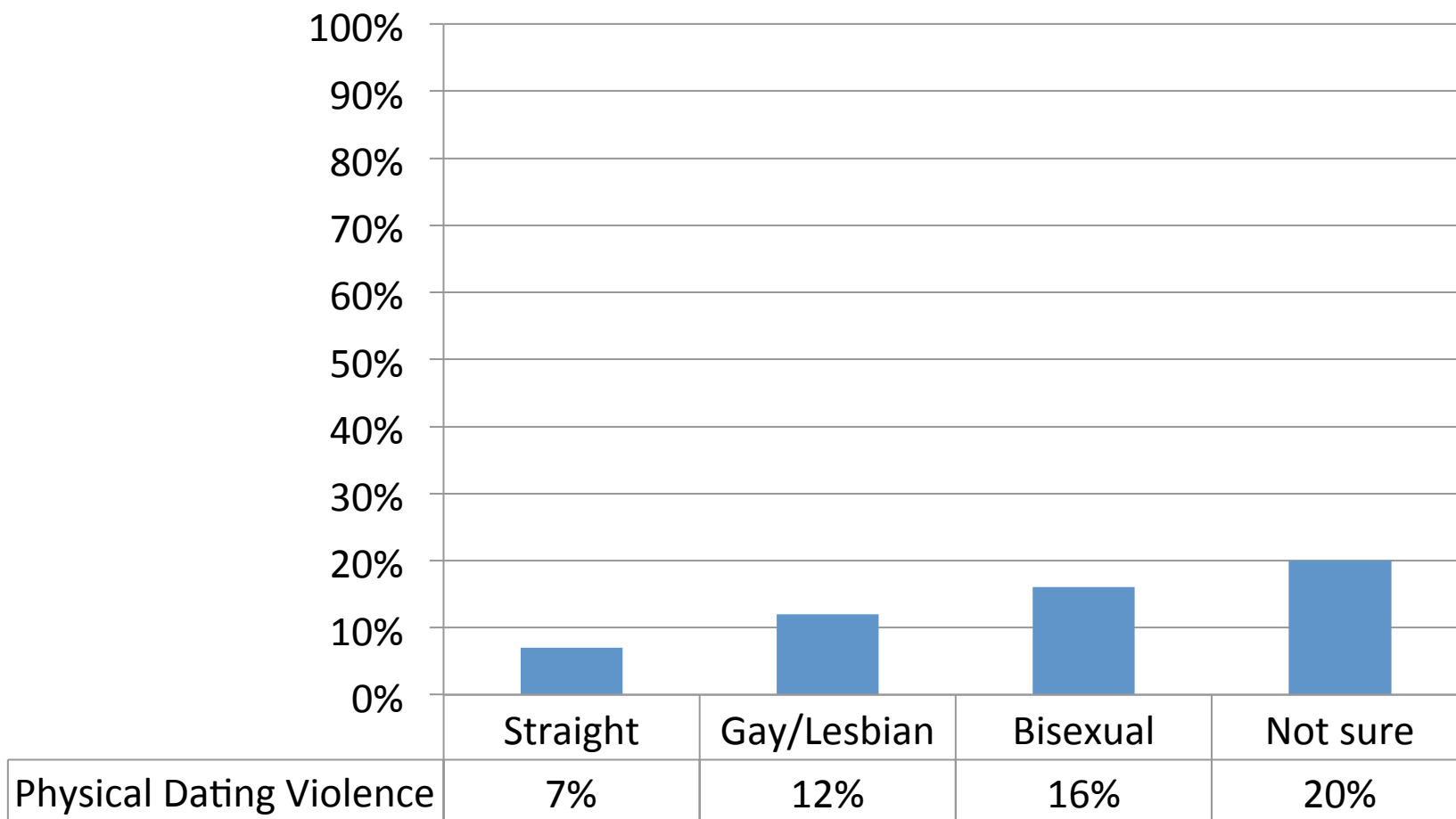
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and Peers: Verbal violence from a date in past 12 months



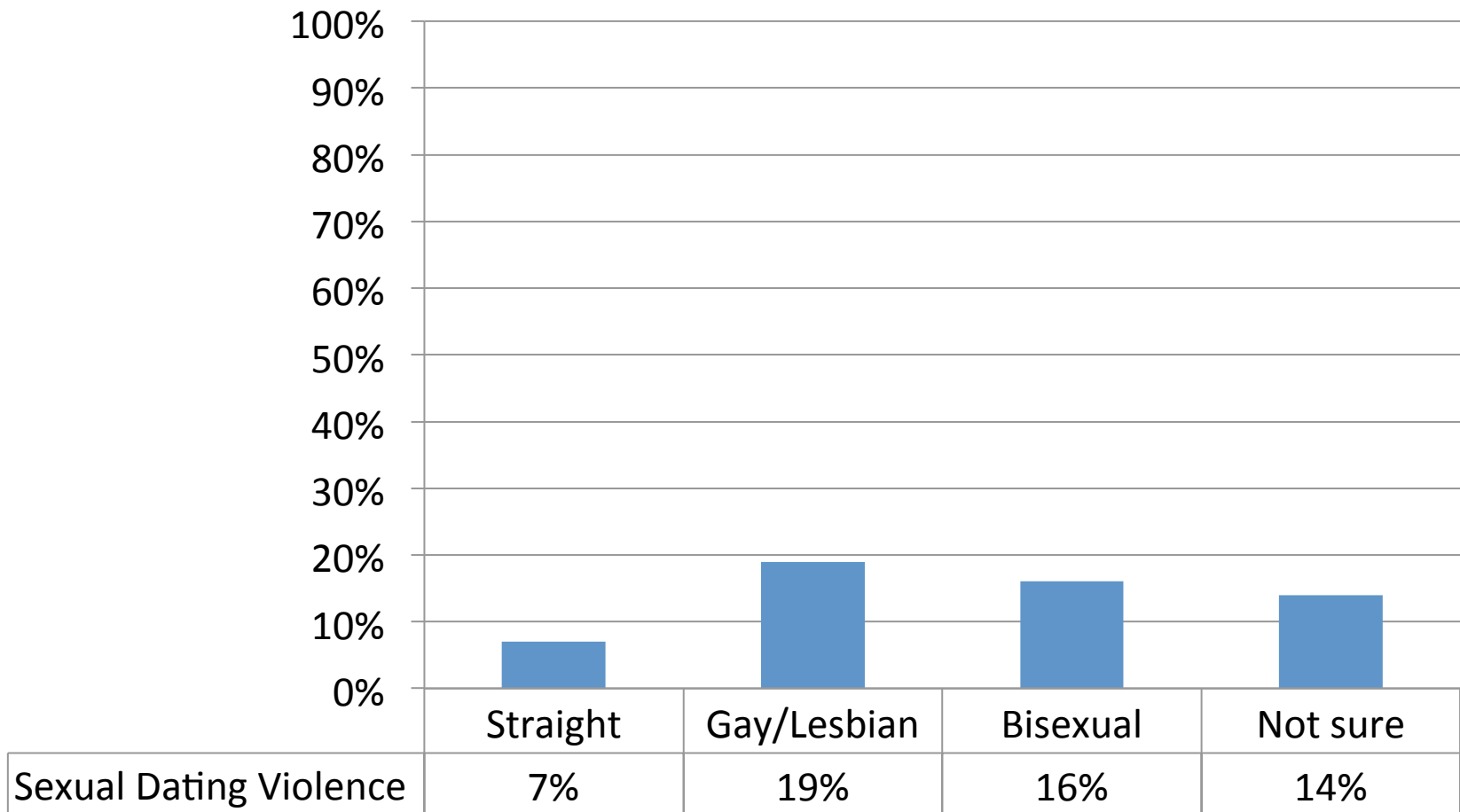
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and Peers: Physical violence from a date in past 12 months



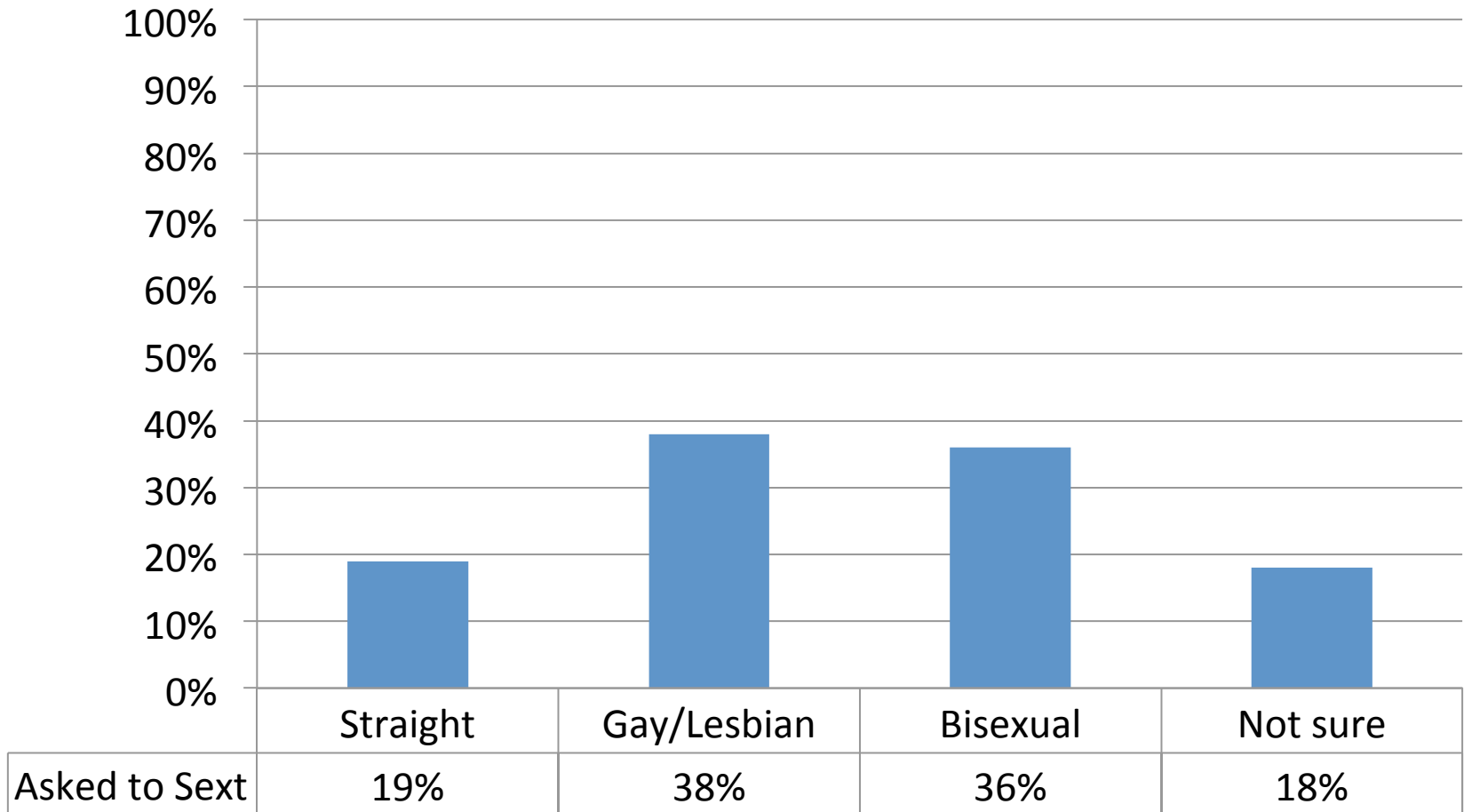
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and Peers: Sexual violence from a date in past 12 months



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and Others: Asked to sext a revealing photo in past 30 days

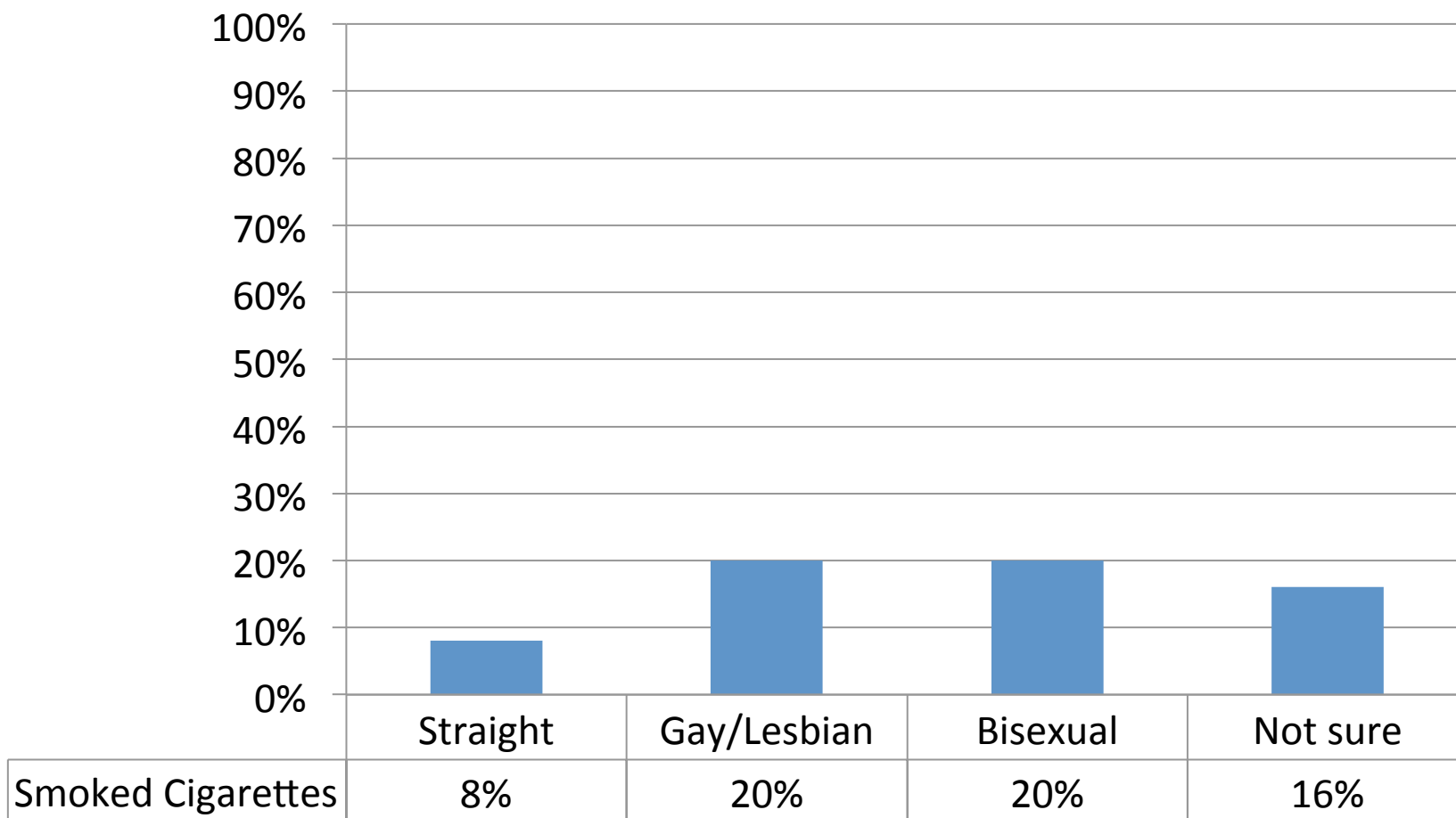


Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking behaviors reported by LGBTQ students

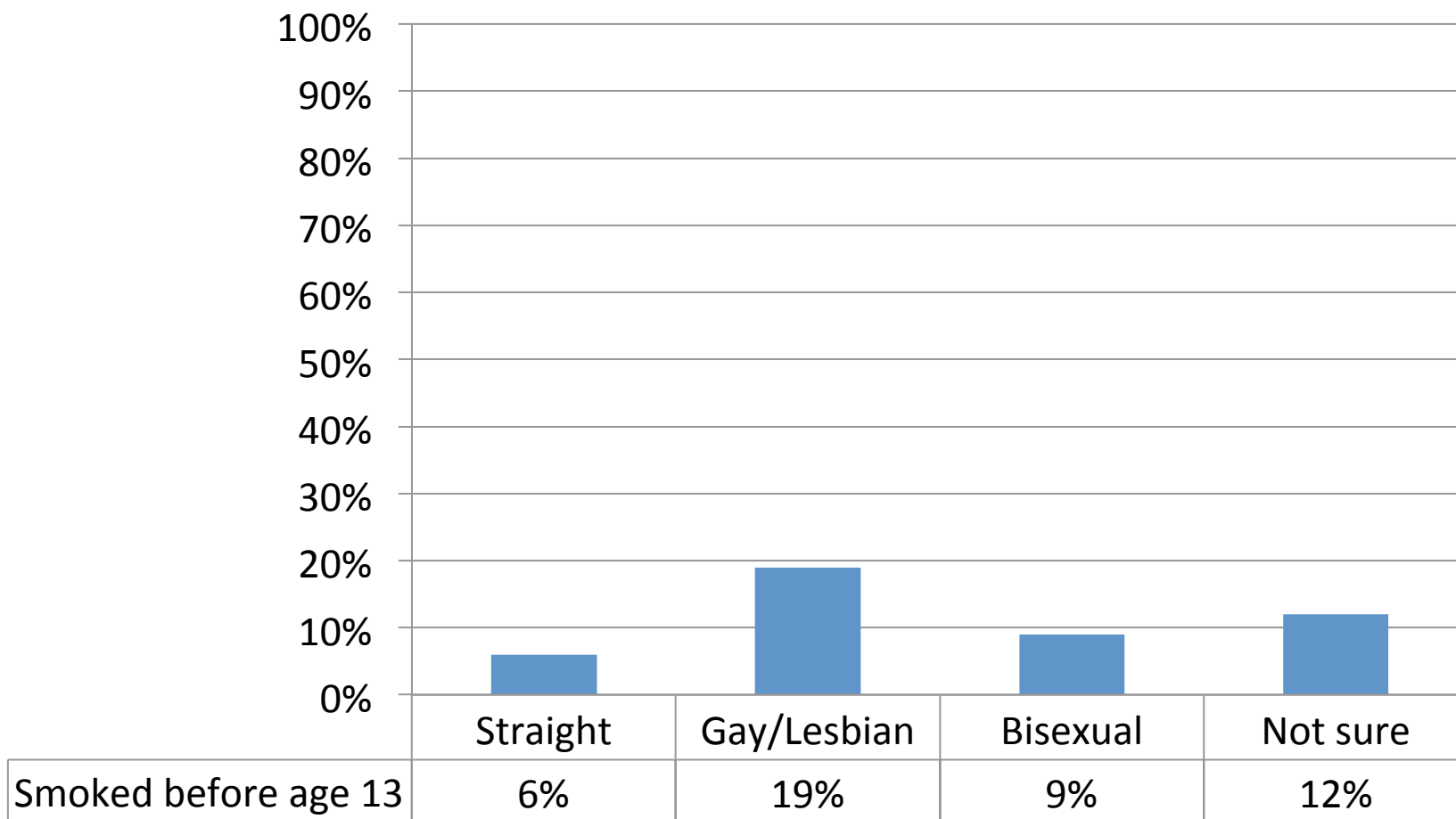
- Substance abuse
- Violence and Self-harm
- Sexual risk-taking

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : smoked cigarettes in past 30 days



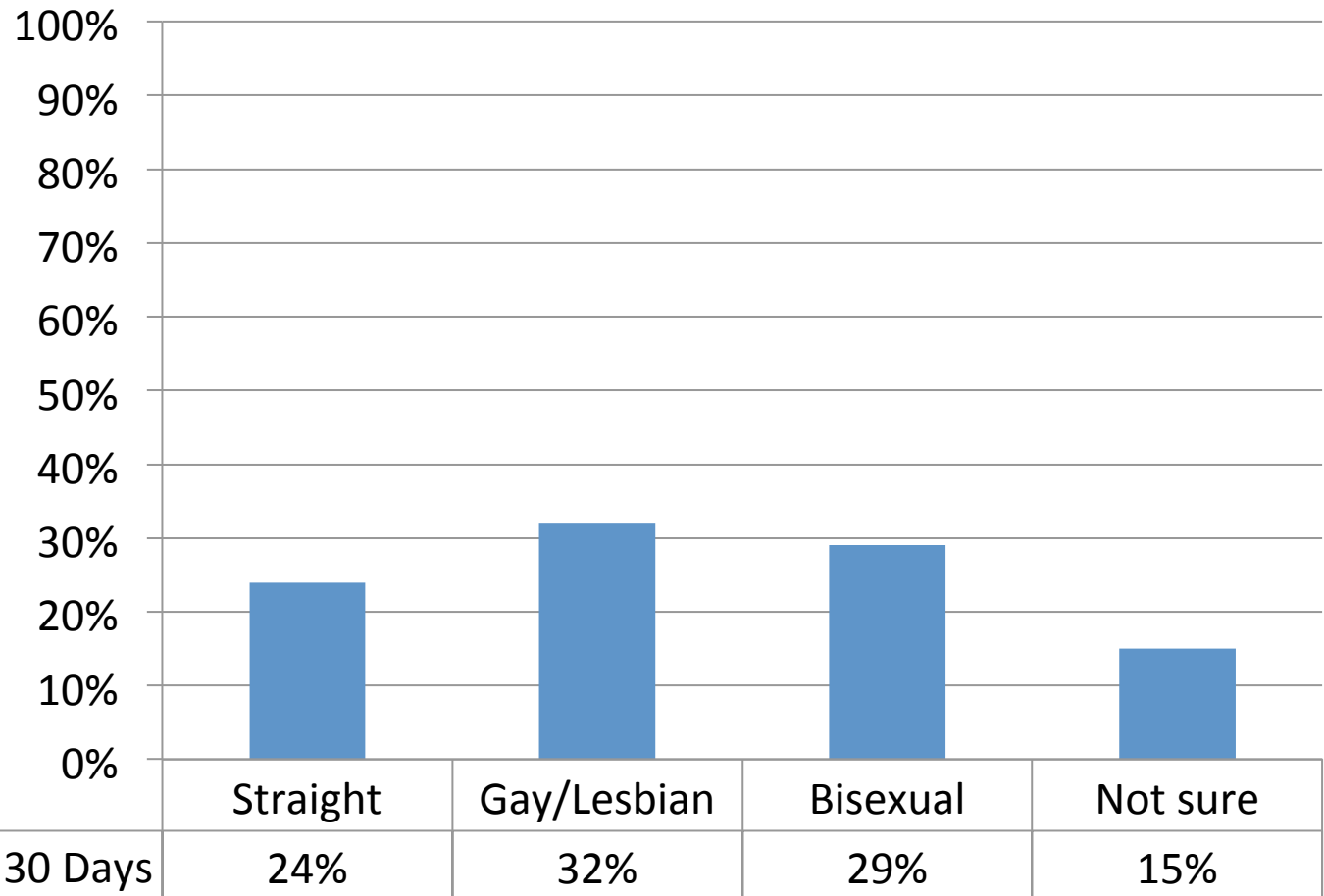
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Smoked cigarettes before age 13



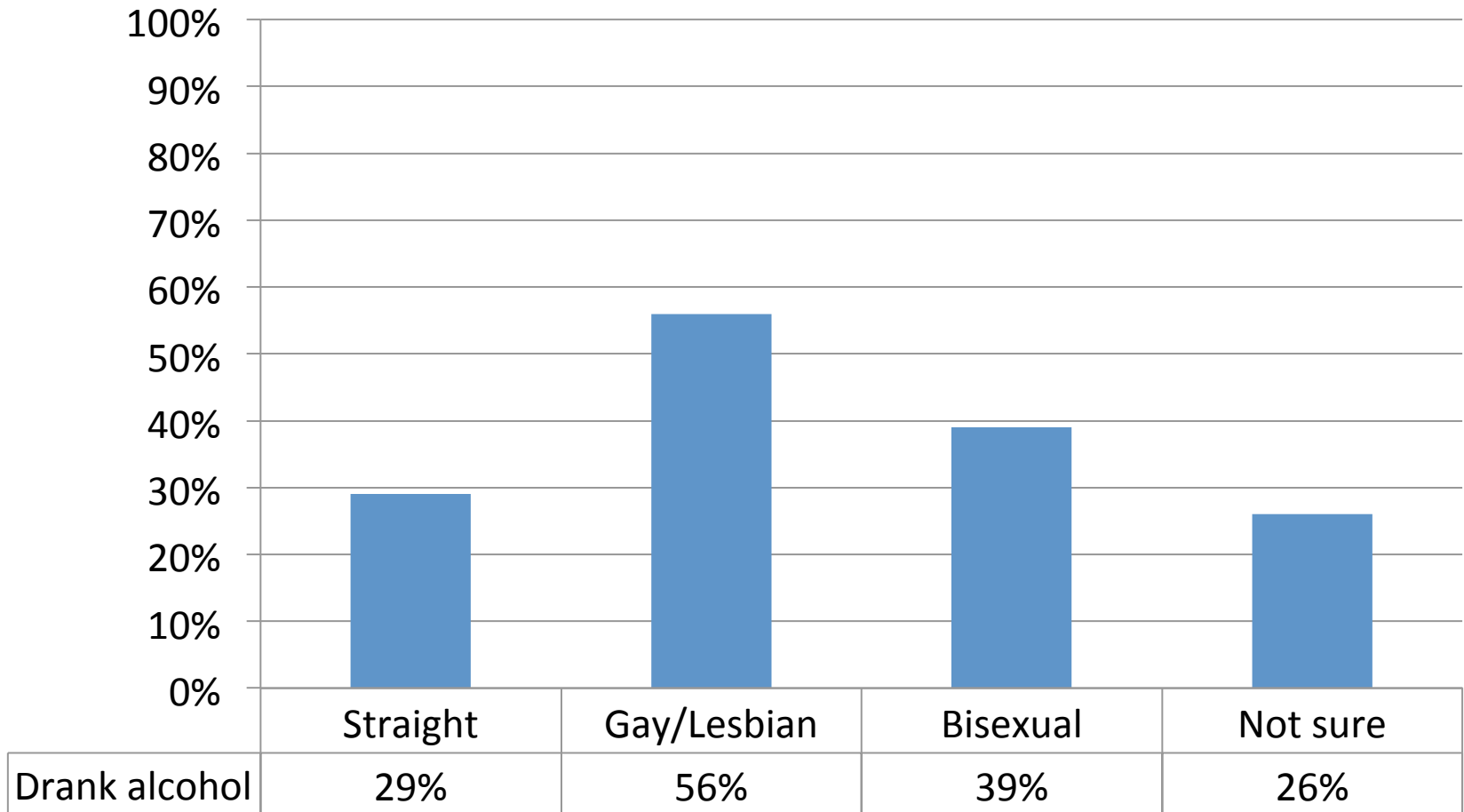
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth :

Vaping in past 30 days



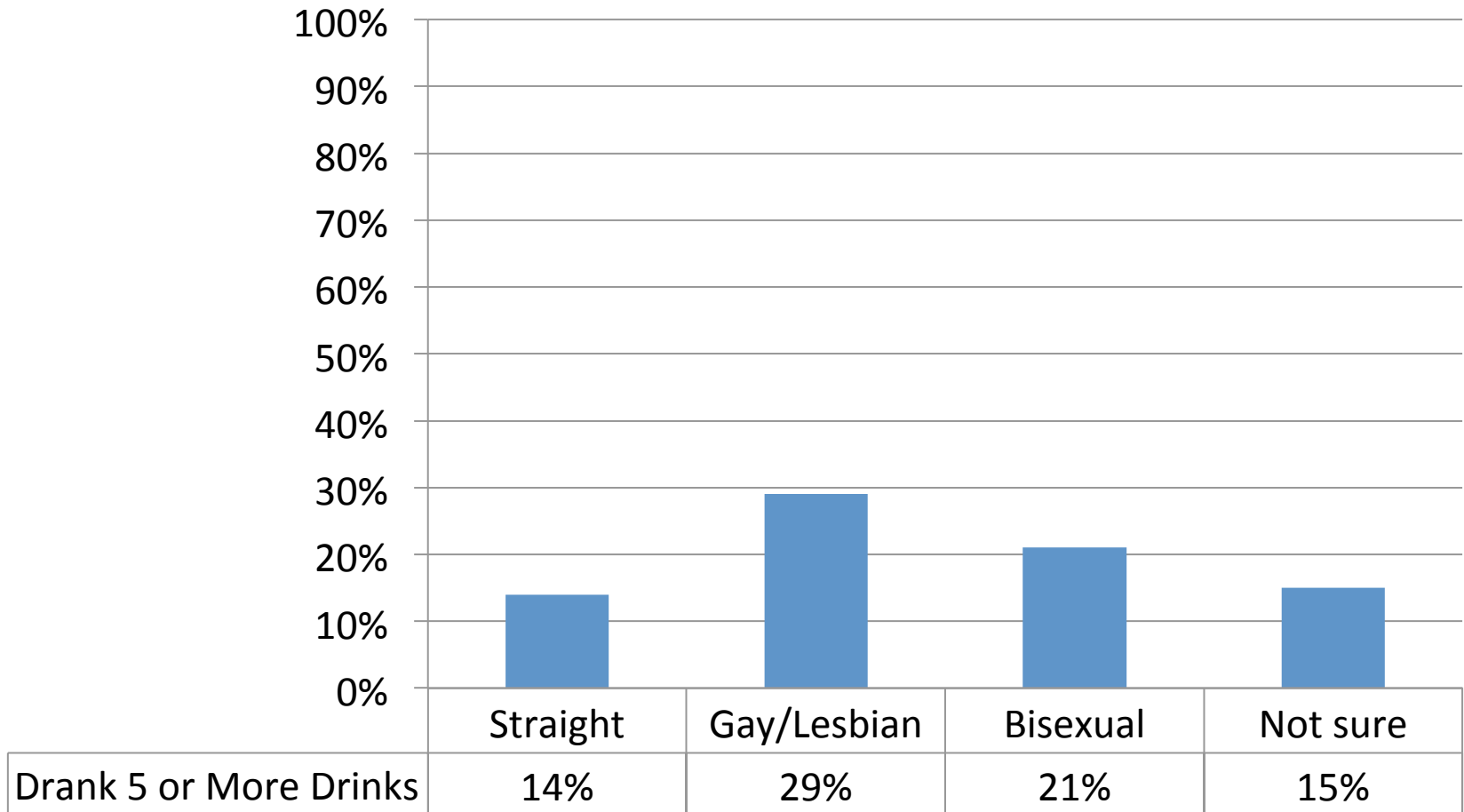
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth :

Drank alcohol in past 30 days



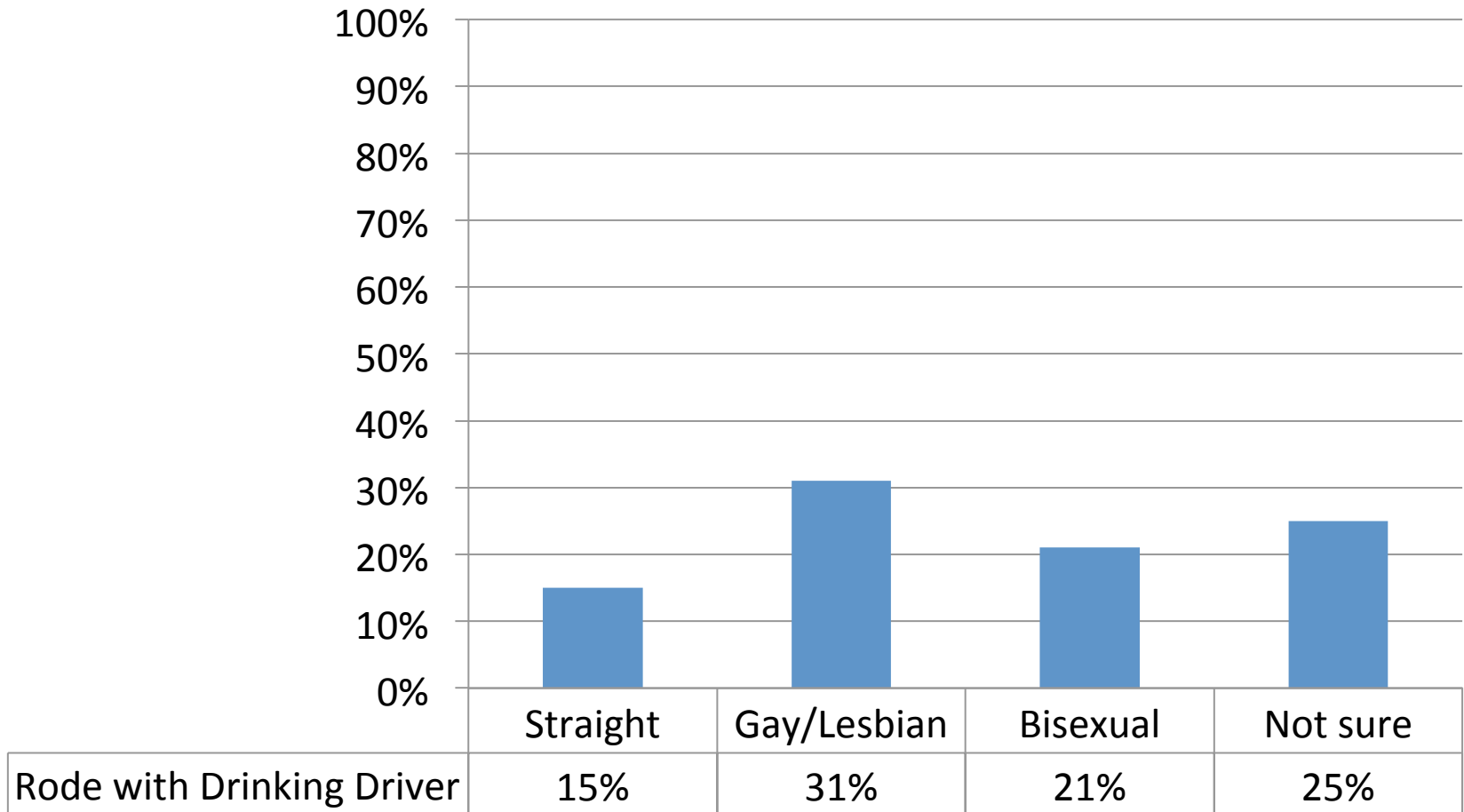
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row



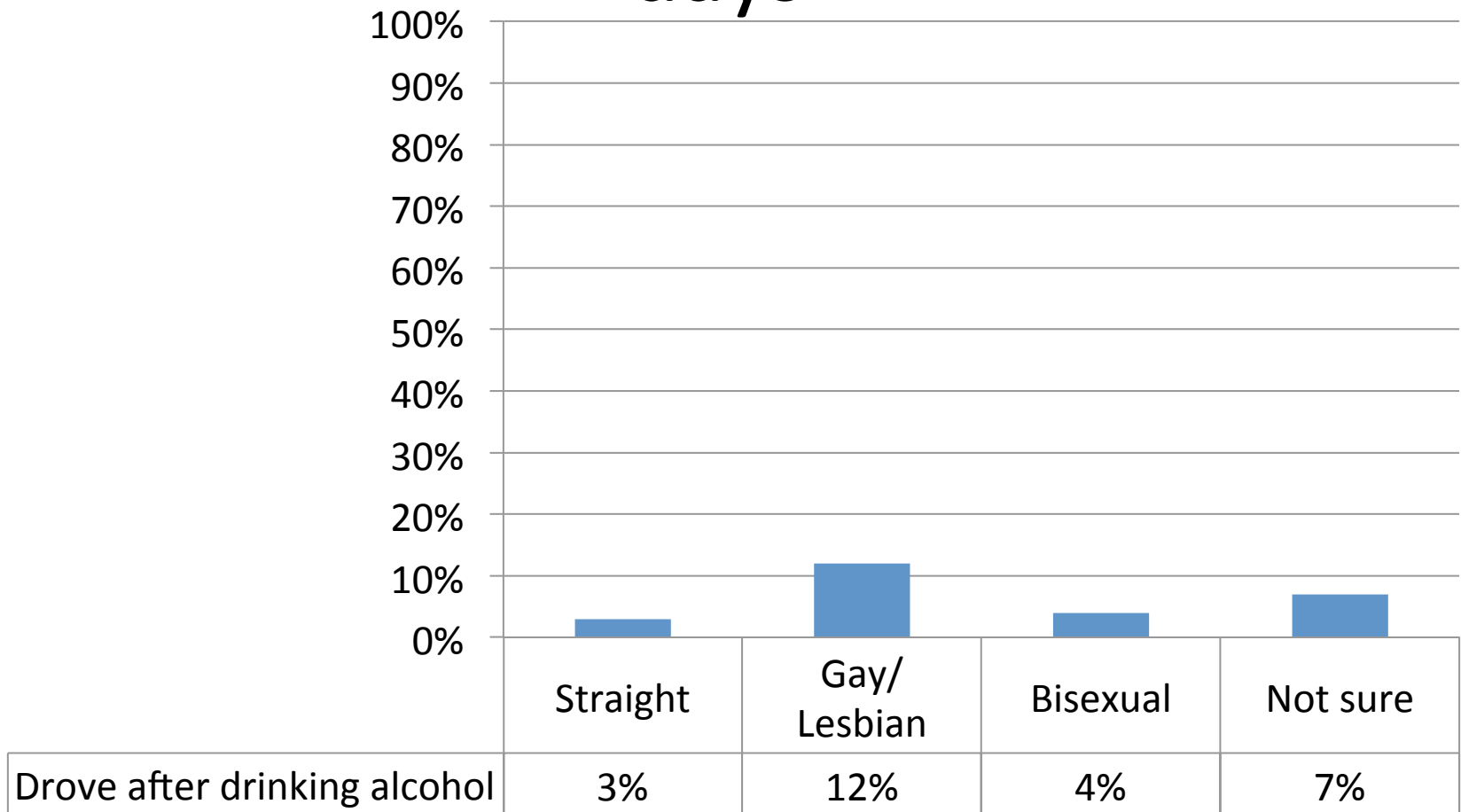
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Rode with drinking driver in past 30 days

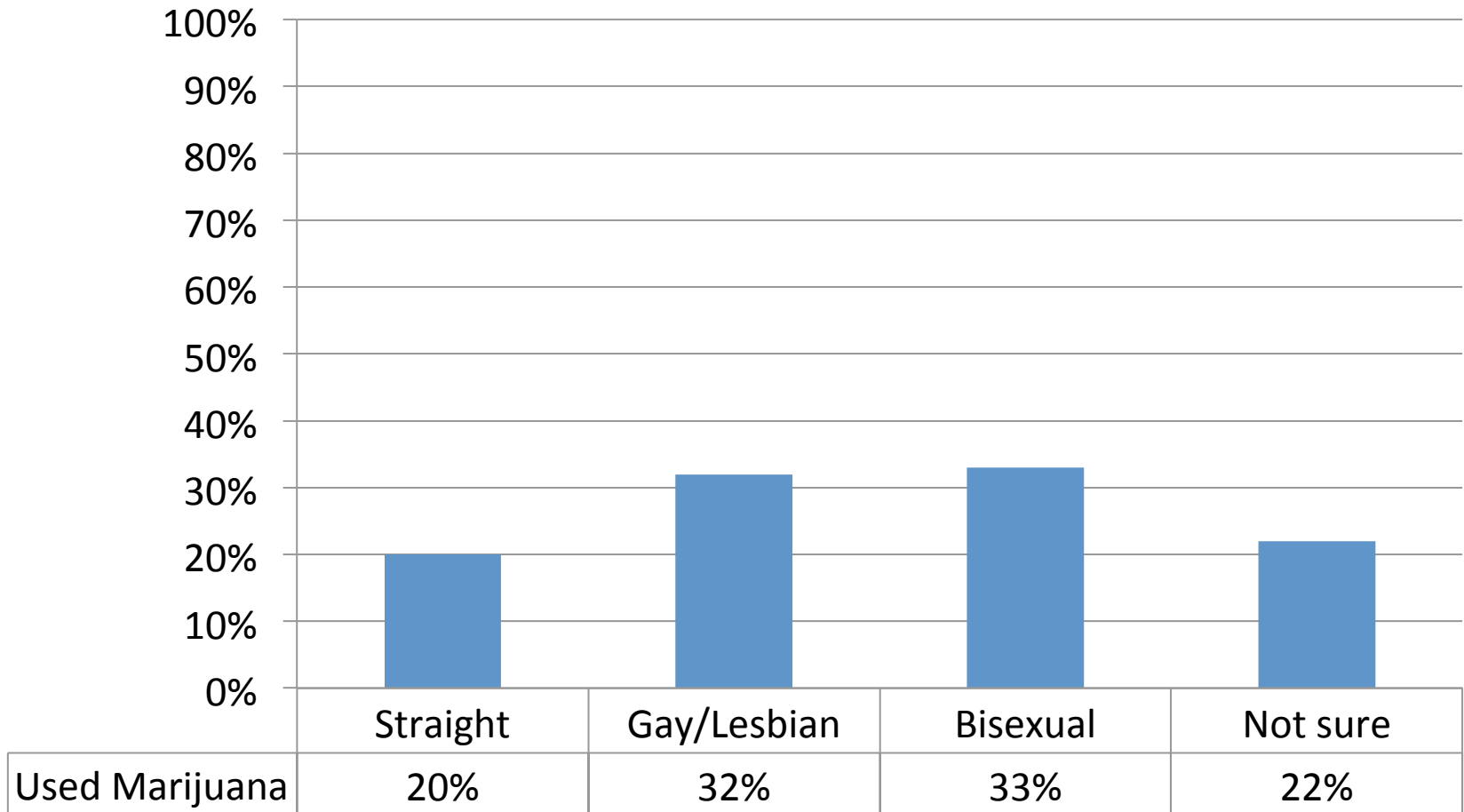


Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Drove after drinking alcohol in past 30 days

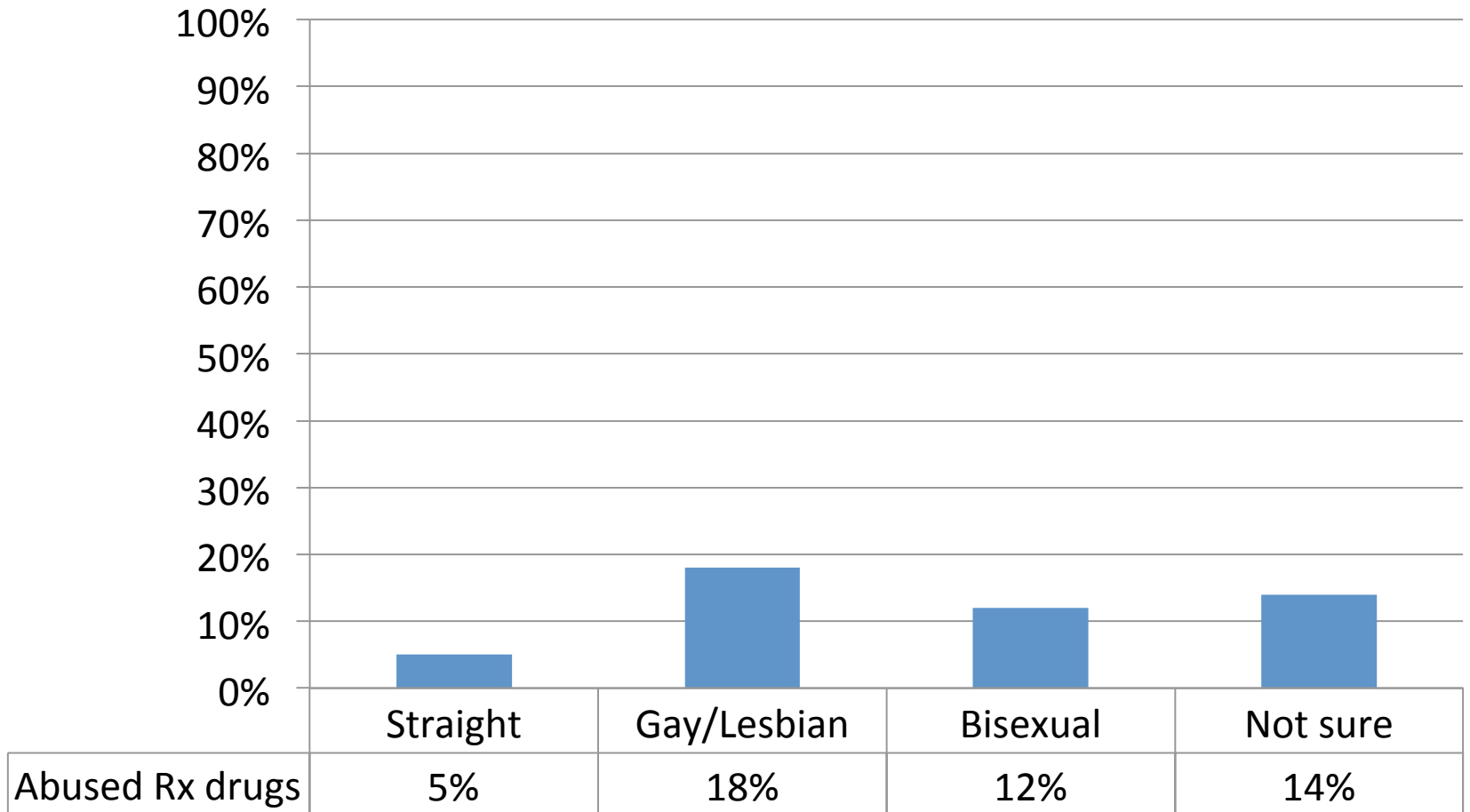


Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Used marijuana in past 30 days



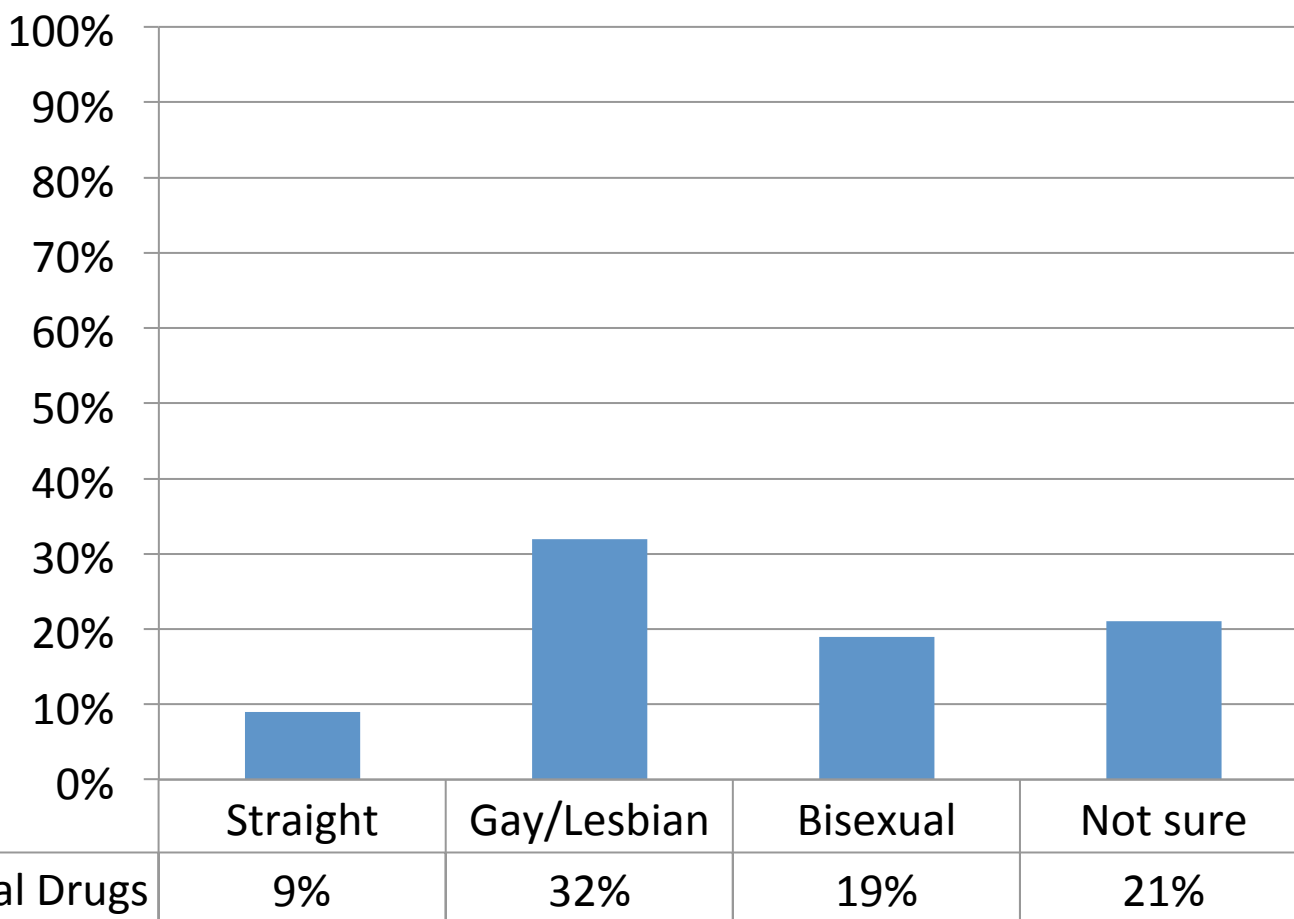
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Abused prescription drugs in past 30 days



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

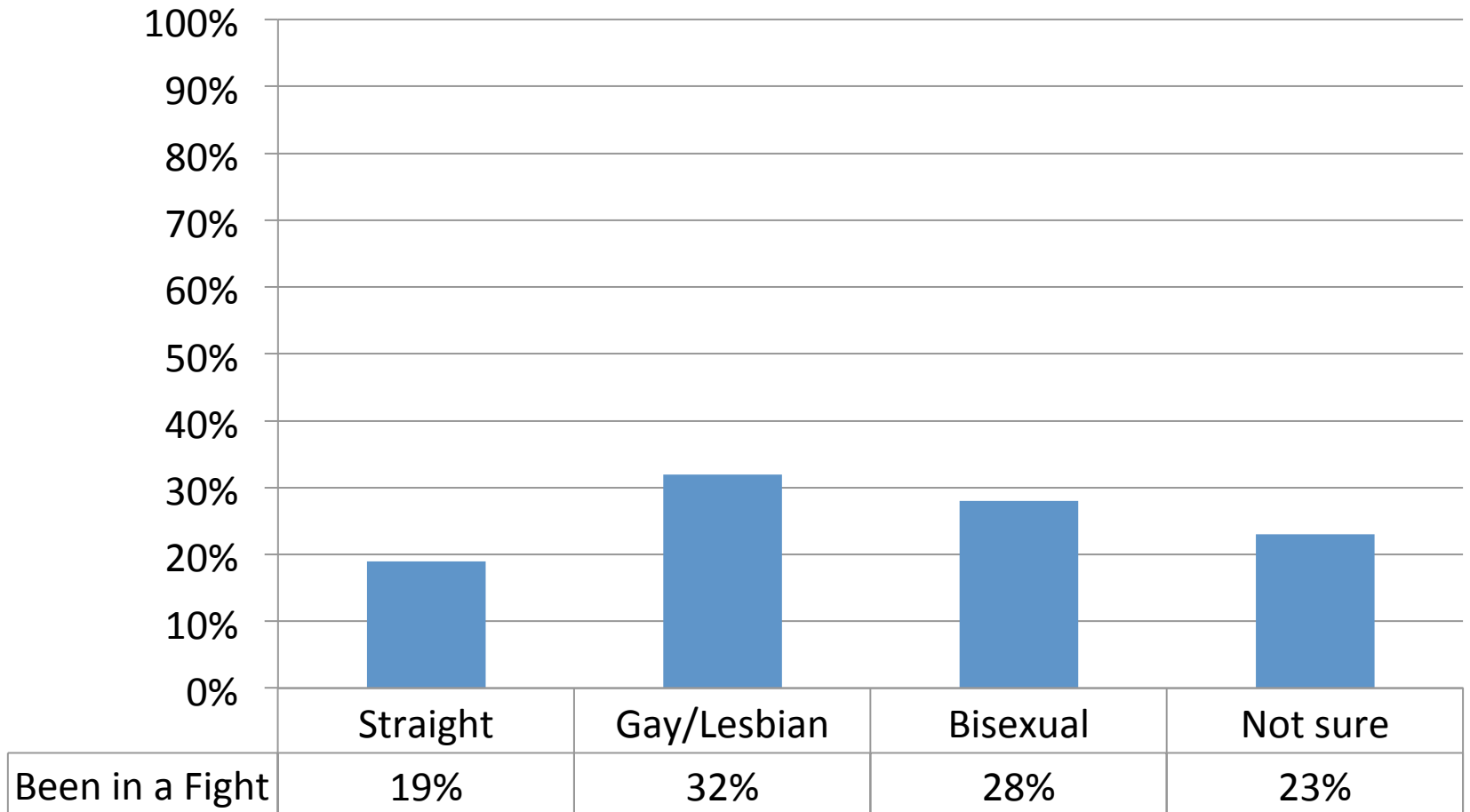
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Used other illegal drugs in their lifetime*



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies;
*Other illegal drugs include: Crack/Cocaine, Inhalants, Heroin, Methamphetamines, Ecstasy, synthetic marijuana, and steroids without a prescription

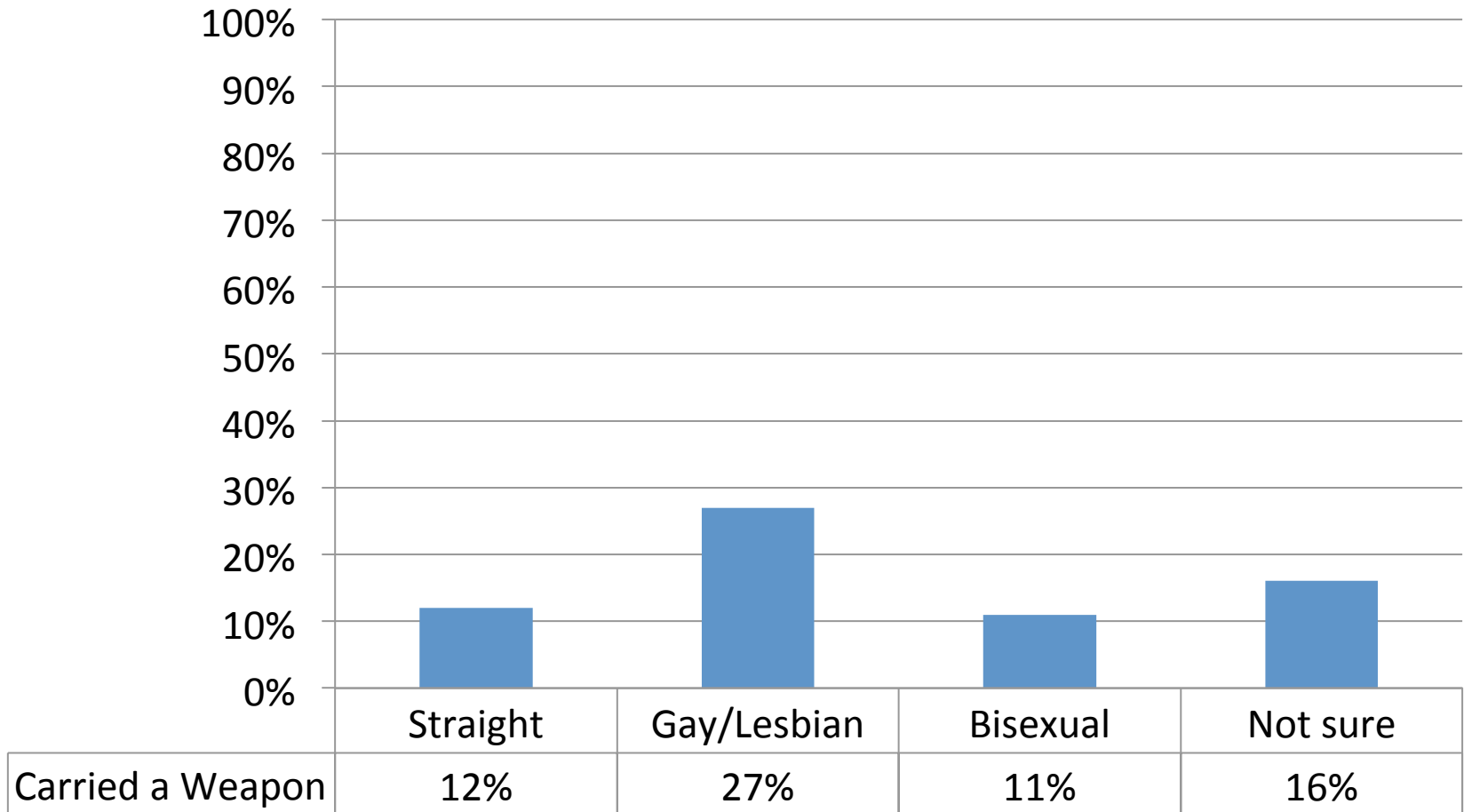
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth :

Been in a fight in past 30 days



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

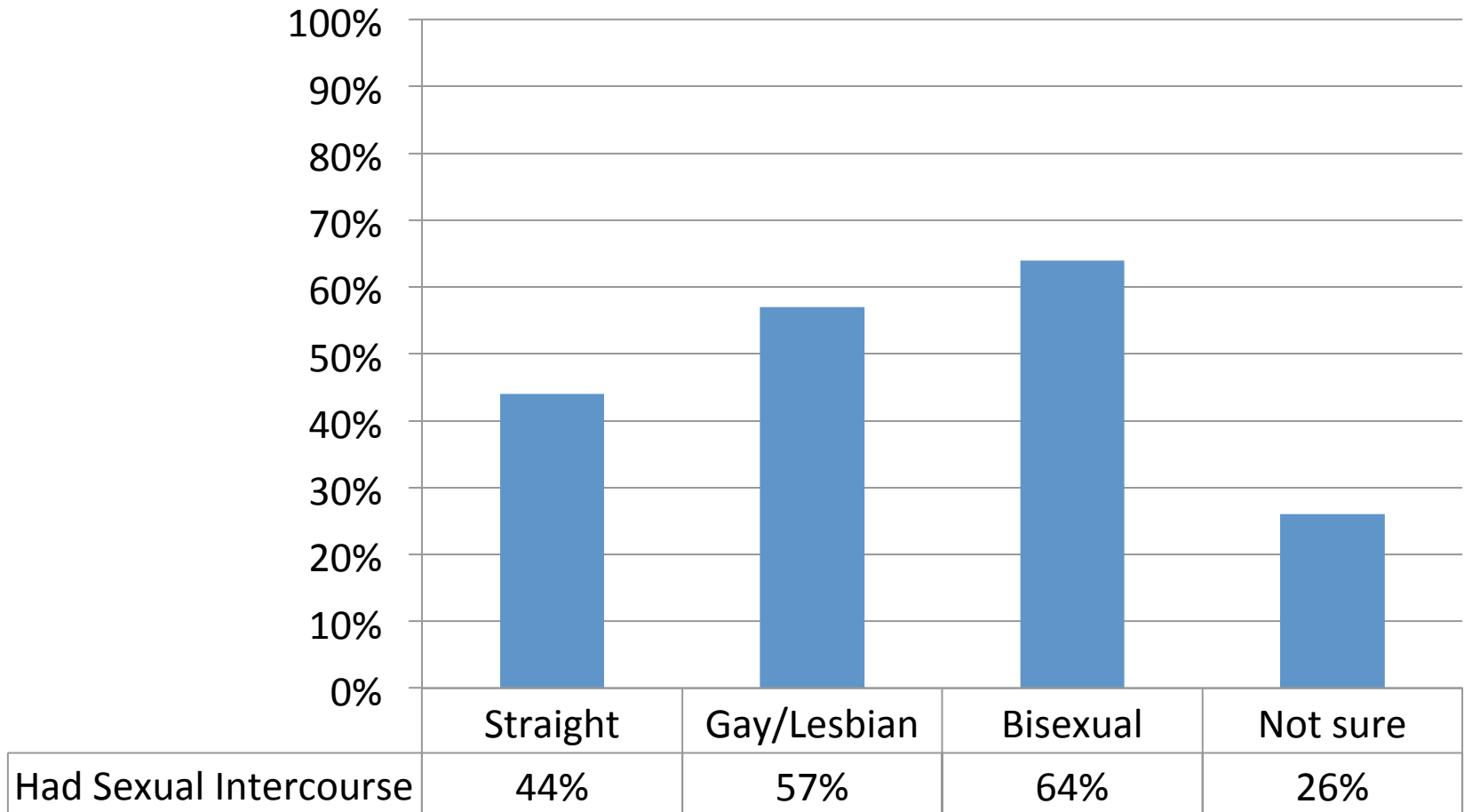
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Carried a weapon



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

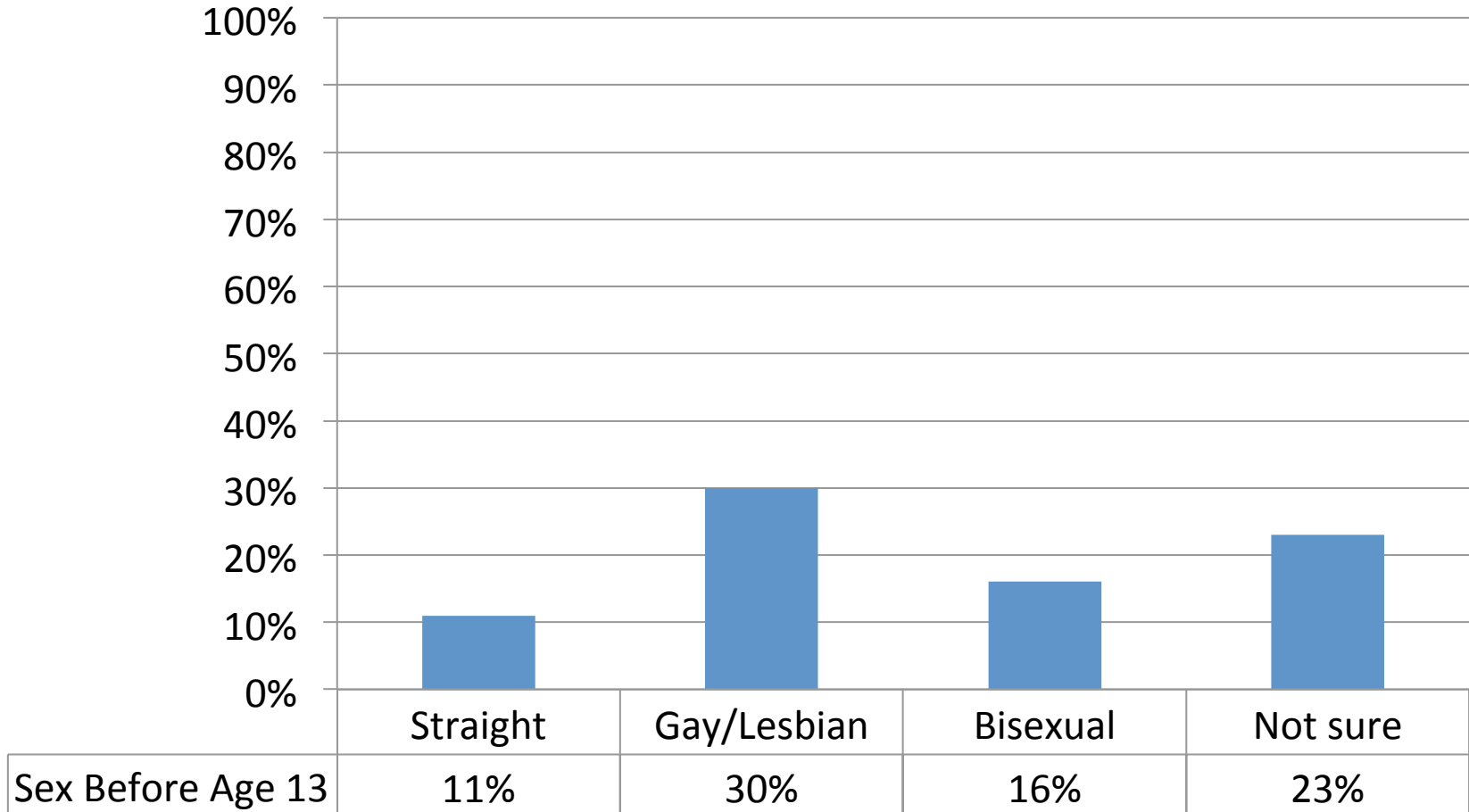
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth :

Ever had sexual intercourse



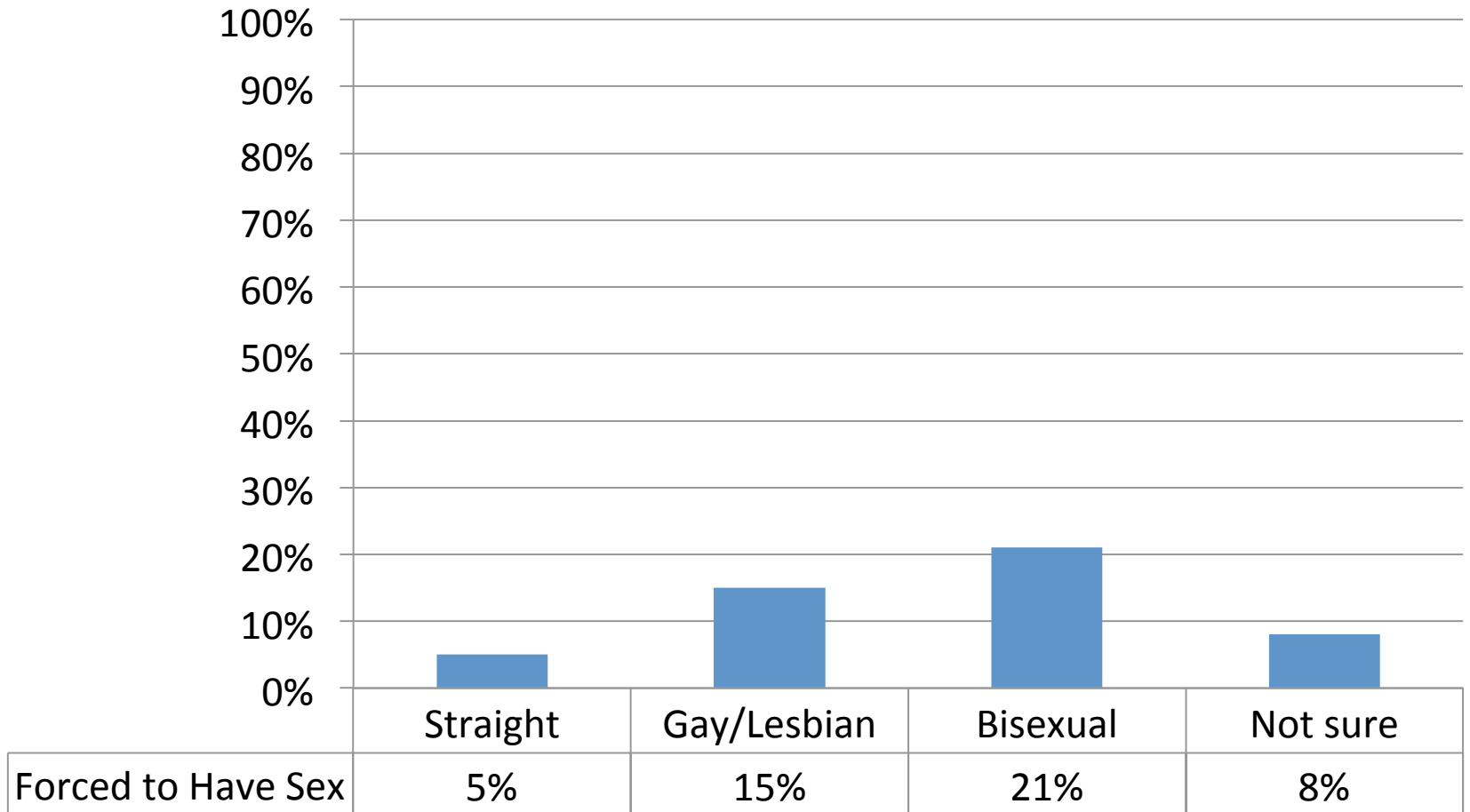
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Had sexual intercourse before age 13 (among those sexually active)



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

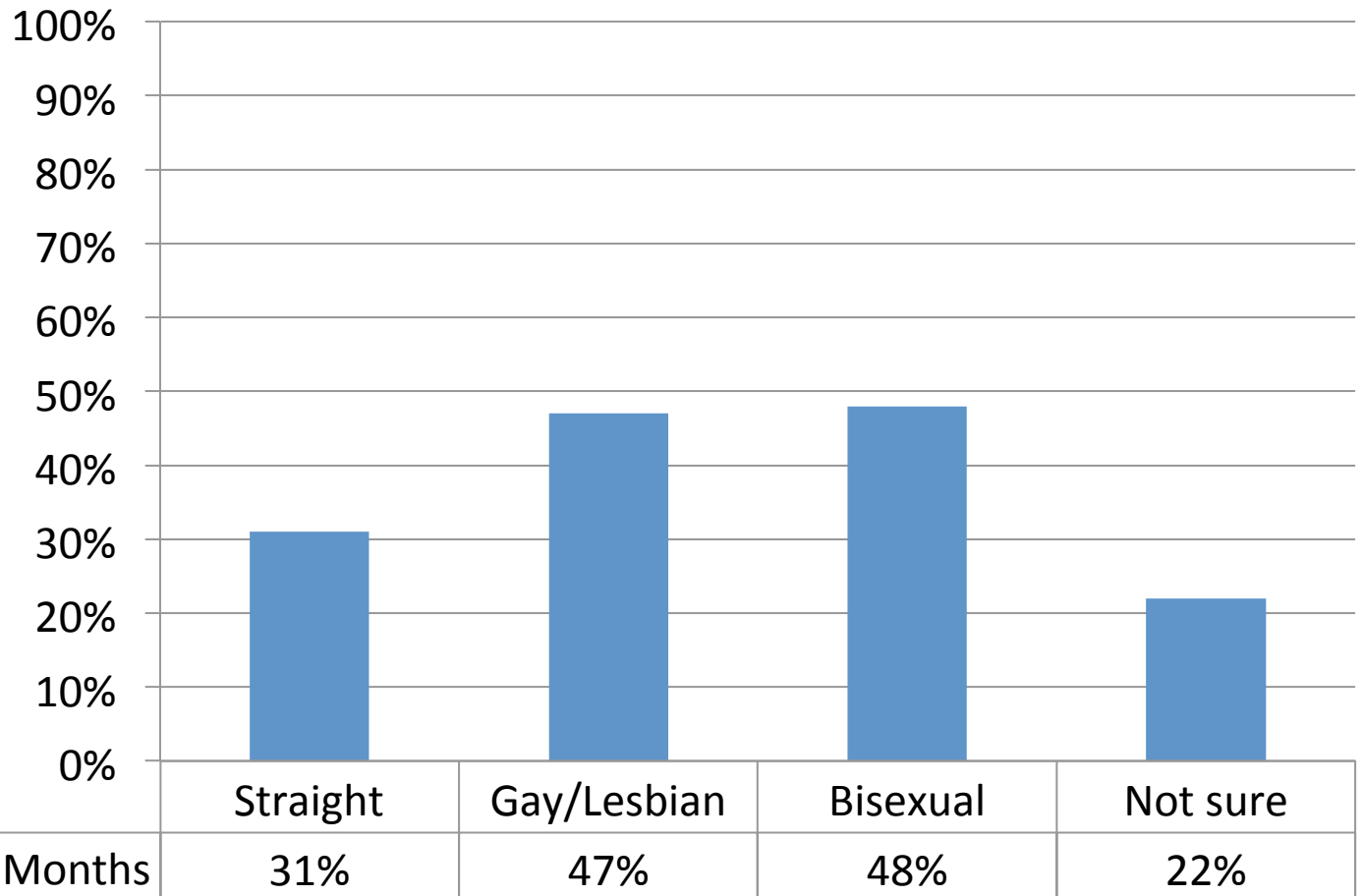
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Forced to have sexual intercourse when didn't want to



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

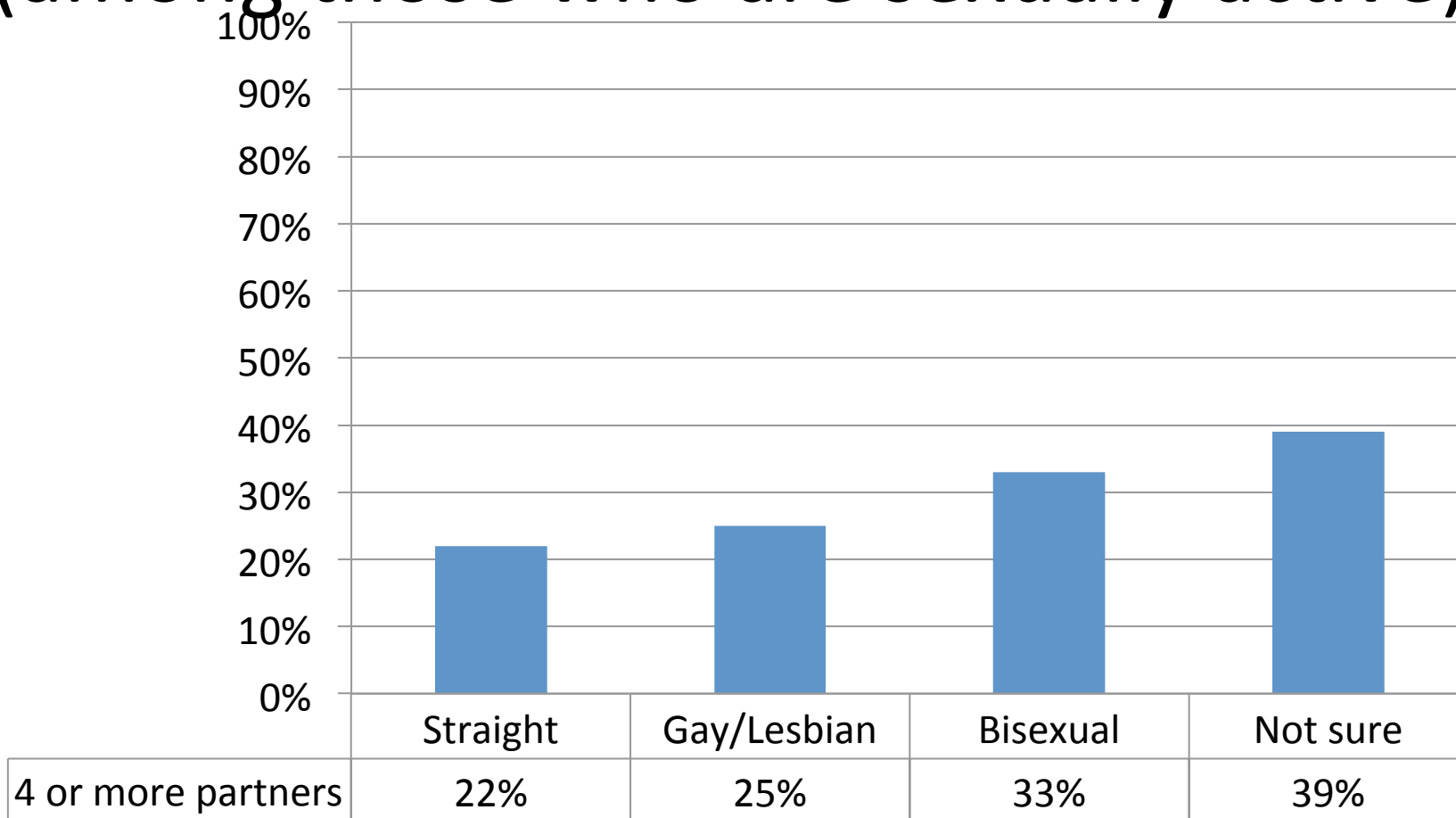
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth :

Had sexual intercourse in past 3 months

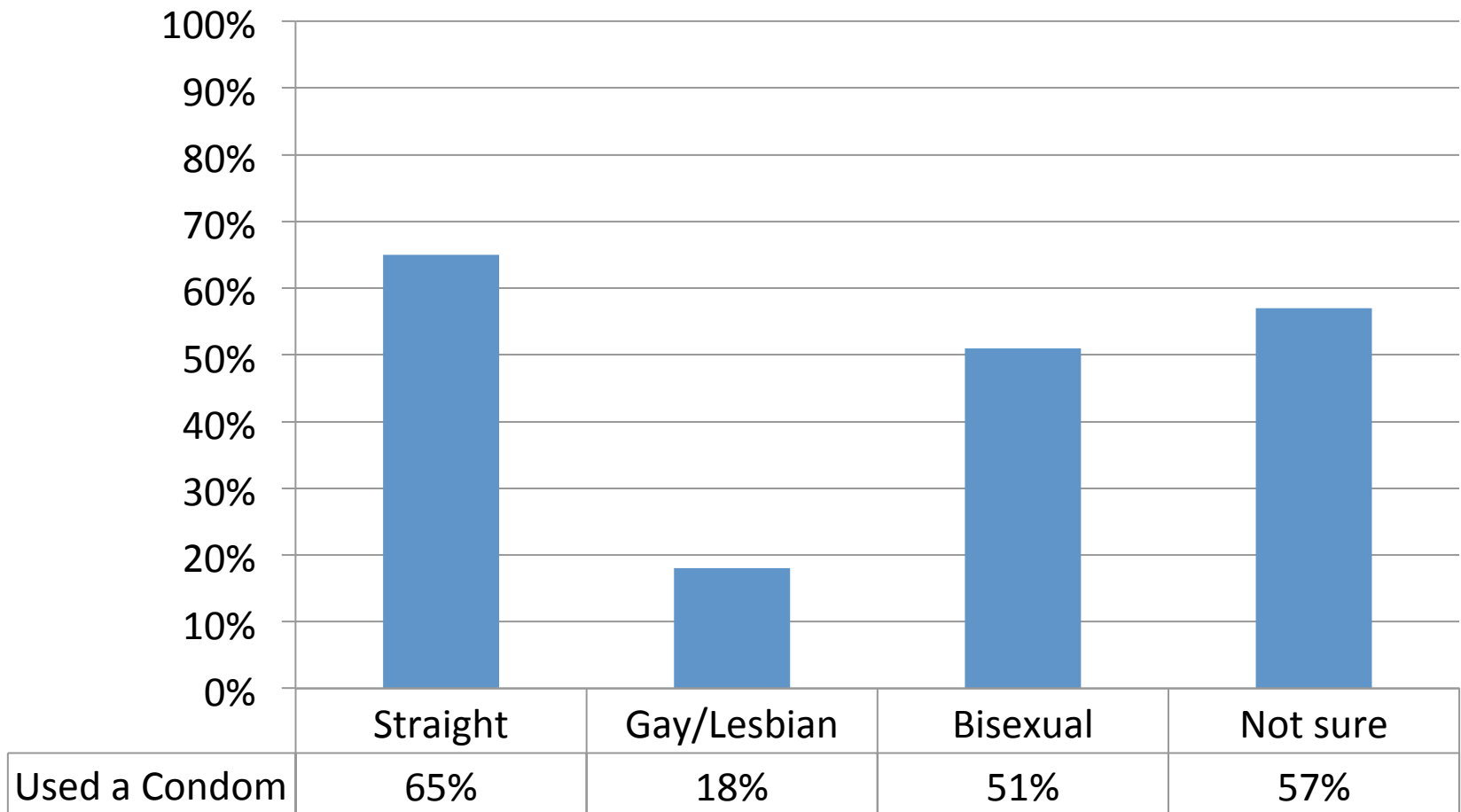


Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : 4 or more partners in past 3 months (among those who are sexually active)

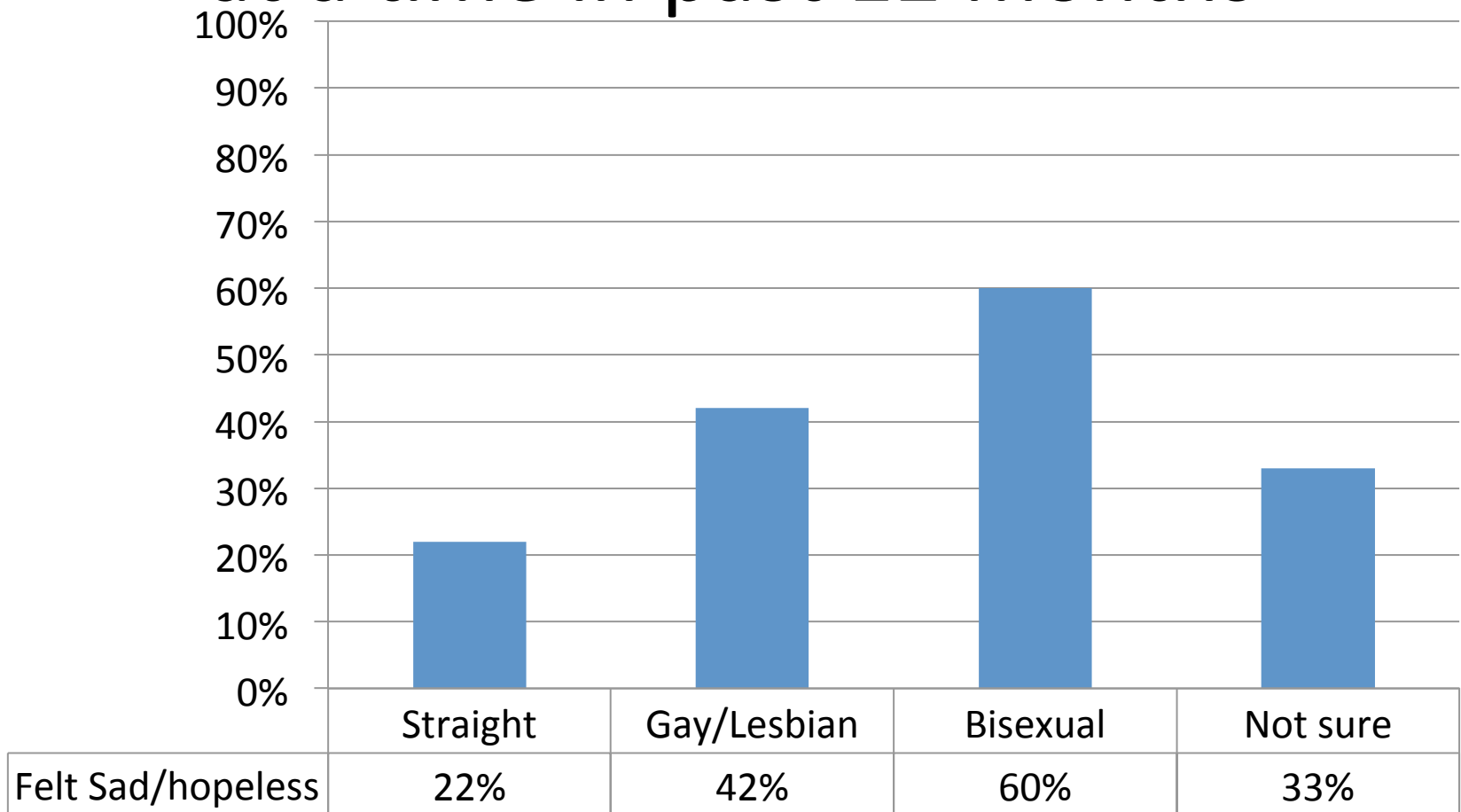


Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Used a condom last time they had sexual intercourse



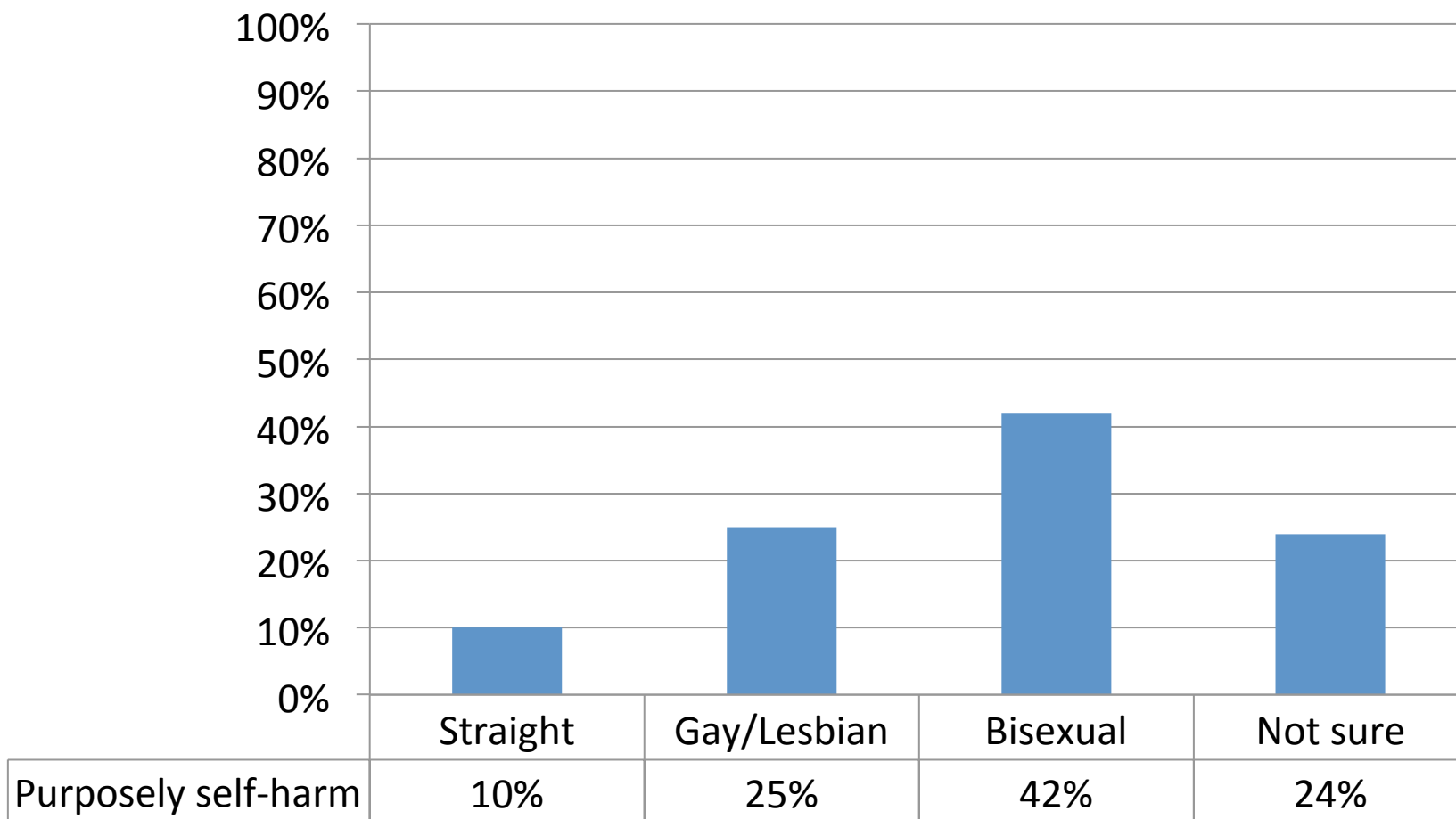
Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

LGBQ Youth and Mental Health: Felt sad or hopeless for two or more weeks at a time in past 12 months



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

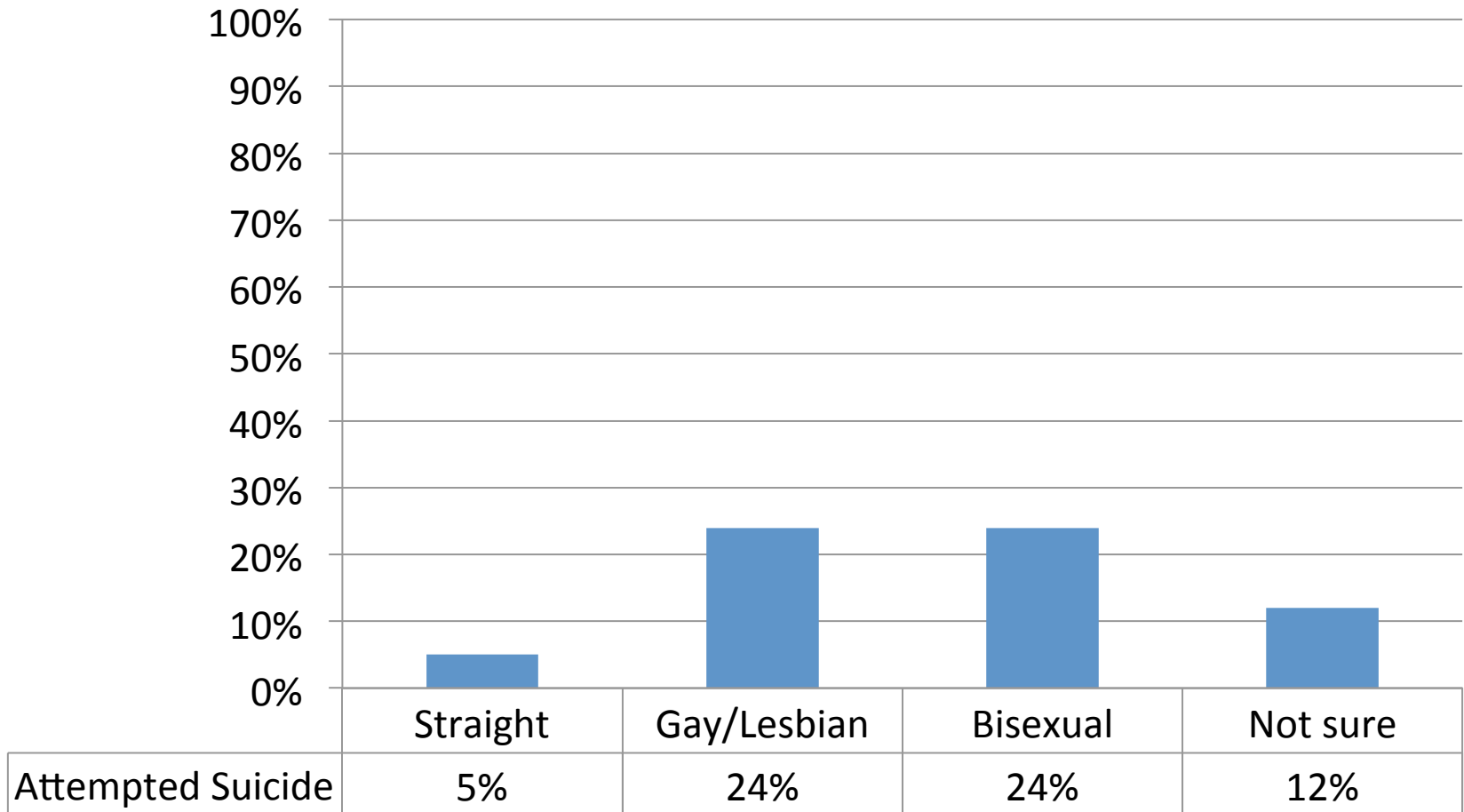
Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth : Purposely hurt/cut themselves in past 12 months



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Risk-taking Behaviors of LGBTQ Youth :

Attempted suicide in past 12 months



Source: 2015 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Health Studies

Life is a lot more complicated than a bar chart.

All relationships have multiple dimensions.

Actions are interactive. Behaviors are not simple actions or consequences, but more like

drops in the flow of a stream that has changing boundaries and is deflected by obstacles which may have been either randomly or strategically placed—we don't know which. Each drop is self-propelled to some degree and propelled by these other forces to some degree.

Limitations

- Self-reported data and sensitive subject matter
- Data pool limited to public schools
- Potential impact of drop out rates
- Large sample size but smaller numbers among certain sub populations

Community Advocacy and Support



PRIDE

A UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE INITIATIVE

PRIDE Council's Mission...

...to organize community resources, including corporate, education, health, government and religious organizations, to improve the lives of Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth and adults in Delaware.

PRIDE Council Resources

Information and support materials are available online for these and other initiatives at:

<http://uwde.org/affinity-groups/pride-council>

- **Annual Anti-Bullying/Gay-Straight Alliance Summit**
- **Gay-Straight Alliances**
- **Delaware LGBTQ Health Equity Task Force**
- **Resource Guide for Delaware LGBTQ Youth & Their Families**
- **FACEBOOK Affinity Group:
United Way of Delaware's PRIDE Council**

Special Thanks!

Community Guest Speaker:

Robert Martz

Senior Resource Development Consultant

United Way of Delaware



References

Delaware data (unweighted) reported in this presentation is taken from the Delaware 2015 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Data from this and previous administrations of the YRBS are available from the CDHS website at:

<https://www.cdhs.udel.edu/seow/school-surveys/youth-risk-behavior-survey-%28yrbs%29>

Additional References

- Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN, 2013). *2013 National School Climate Survey*. Retrieved on 4/27/2016 from: http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report_0.pdf.
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The Center for Drug and Health Studies (CDHS), affiliated with the University of Delaware Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, facilitates collaborative, multidisciplinary, and multi-sector research on substance abuse, health risk behavior, health services, and health policy. We strive to produce and disseminate data that is timely, meaningful, and usable by a variety of stakeholders, ranging from community members to State agencies to national entities. For more information, please visit: www.cdhs.udel.edu.

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