

Oregon Youth Sexual Health Plan: 2023 Final Report

GOAL 4

Non-consensual sexual behaviors are reduced

When the Oregon Youth Sexual Health Plan was developed in 2009, young people shared the importance of preventing sexual violence and abuse. In response, partners across the state worked to **build a stronger foundation of sex education as a strategy for reducing sexual violence.**

Improved funding and actions

- Newly passed state policies such as the Human Sexuality Education Law (2009), the Healthy Teen Relationships Act (2013) and Erin's Law (2015) require sexual violence prevention and child abuse prevention to be taught in each grade from kindergarten through high school.
- The LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan (2020) prompted the 2022 Oregon Legislature to provide funding to improve health and education outcomes for gender-expansive youth and youth with marginalized sexual orientations. This includes strategies and programs to make schools more inclusive and welcoming, and thus safer, for students of all identities.

Accountability and youth-led advocacy

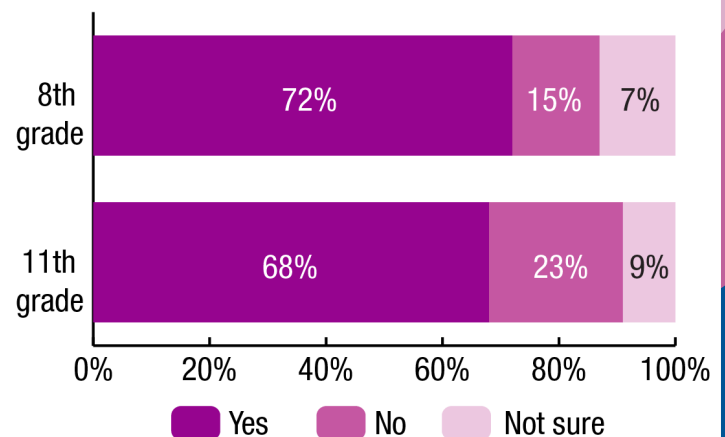
- The 2020 Student Health Survey (formerly Oregon Healthy Teens Survey) included more options for gender identity and sexual orientation. This provides more data around sexual violence and LGBTQ2SIA+ students.
- The Oregon Sexual Violence Prevention Resource Map launched in 2019. It shows survey results about sexual violence among 11th-grade students.
- Students across Oregon staged walkouts to bring attention to sexual harassment and violence on K–12 campuses and to demand that leadership better protect students.

Keeping students safe

In a public health approach, primary prevention of sexual violence and abuse refers to methods that prevent incidents before they begin. This is unlike other prevention methods that rely on those at risk of assault to put an end to violence. Primary prevention targets and dismantles beliefs, behaviors and environments that foster sexual violence and abuse. A K–12 comprehensive sexuality education curriculum that includes defining healthy relationships, boundaries and consent, and emotional regulation and expression is considered an essential primary prevention strategy for youth sexual violence.¹

Most Oregon eighth- and 11th-grade students reported being taught in school about healthy and respectful relationships during the 2021–2022 year. In a 2021 online survey of Oregon school districts, respondents listed **state curriculum guidance and community resources and partners** as the most helpful factors in developing a comprehensive plan of instruction for sexuality education.² These results show Oregon's commitment to reducing sexual violence through primary prevention methods.

Taught in school about healthy and respectful relationships by grade level, Oregon, 2022



Source: Oregon Student Health Survey, 2022

Only 45 percent of Oregon 11th graders reported having a trusted teacher or other adult in their school to whom they could go for help dealing with sexual assault or dating violence. **Reducing and preventing sexual violence requires all of us to support healthy communication with young Oregonians and respond appropriately and adequately if they experience personal violence.**

Sexual violence and health equity

For every item in the 2022 Student Health Survey about dating and sexual violence, 11th graders with disabilities reported statistically significantly higher rates than students without disabilities. These results in Oregon reflect national and even global outcomes, as studies consistently find higher rates of sexual and intimate partner violence experienced by people with disabilities.³

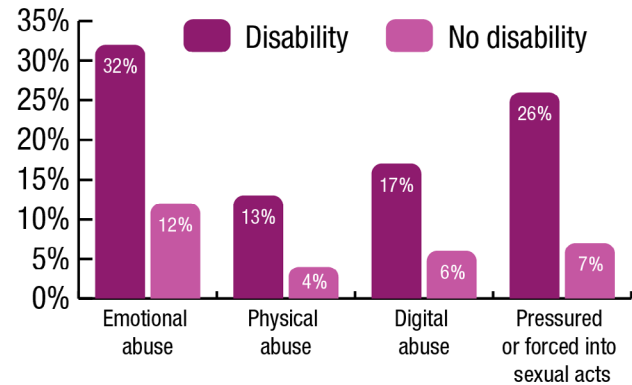
Since 2020, Oregon Health Authority has partnered with Oregon Health & Science University to launch an evidence-based, federally funded, **comprehensive sexuality curriculum for transition programs serving young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.** As of July 2023, 158 educators from 56 programs and community organizations have been trained to teach this curriculum. Plans to reach more age groups and locations are underway.

Action item: Reducing sexual violence for youth of all genders

Changes to the 2020 and 2022 Student Health Surveys provided new data on experiences of sexual violence, particularly among transgender and gender-expansive youth. These youth reported rates of sexual violence statistically significantly higher than the statewide average.

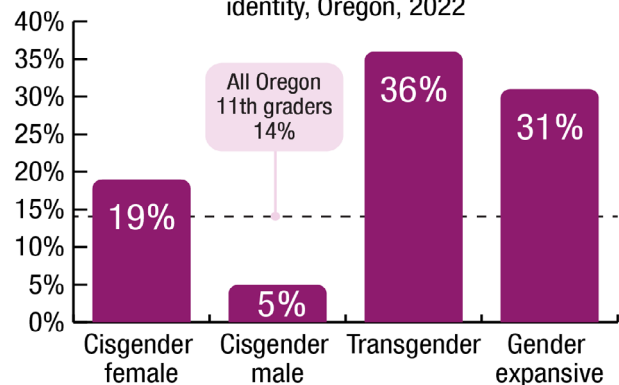
Following feedback and recommendations from the legislatively mandated Oregon LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan, the Oregon Department of Education released *Supporting Gender Expansive Students: Guidance for Schools* in January 2023. This report emphasizes the need for **equity in instructional materials and all-gender instruction during sexuality education** to affirm all students' identities and right to safe environments and relationships.

Dating and sexual violence experienced by 11th-grade youth by disability status, Oregon, 2022



Source: Oregon Student Health Survey, 2022

Eleventh-grade youth who have ever been pressured or forced into sexual acts by gender identity, Oregon, 2022



Source: Oregon Student Health Survey, 2022

1. Schneider M, Hirsch JS. Title. Comprehensive sexuality education as a primary prevention strategy for sexual violence prevention [Internet]. 2018;21(3): 427-637. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018772855>
2. Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division. Sexual Violence Prevention Resource Map [Internet]. 2021. Available from: <https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=4bf3974813d4436793660897cb923311>
3. Mailhot Amborksi A., Bussi eres E-L, Vaillancourt-Morel M-P, Joyal CC.). Sexual violence against persons with disabilities: A meta-analysis. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse [Internet]. 2021;23(4): 1330-1343. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838021995975>

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