



Executive Summary

Erased in School, Educated Online:

LGBTQQ Men and the Sex Ed Gap

Previous research conducted by It's On Us found that LGBTQQ men were more likely to correctly distinguish healthy versus unhealthy relationships and felt more comfortable discussing sexual violence than a broader sample of men. Knowing that these men face inconsistent representation and greater stigma in sex education, It's On Us set out to explore this pattern of increased knowledge and comfortability with topics of sexual violence. This research is the first report in a larger series focused on how college men's exposure to sex education informs their views on sexual and dating violence.

The goal of "Erased in School, Educated Online: LGBTQQ Men and the Sex Ed Gap" was to better understand the settings in which young LGBTQQ men received sex education prior to college, as well as the beliefs and attitudes towards sex and relationships that were most commonly shared in each setting. This report features survey data from 512 young LGBTQQ and 494 straight cisgender men between 18–25 years old who are currently enrolled in college.

Key Findings:

- Young LGBTQQ men were more likely to report receiving sex education in both school and online settings than cisgender straight men.
 - Young LGBTQQ men may turn toward online resources to address any stigma or gaps in knowledge they may have been taught in school.
- When looking for information online, young LGBTQQ men were more likely to report turning to reputable sexual health and medical websites, whereas cisgender straight men were more likely to conduct a general internet search.
 - Because LGBTQQ men may be trying to fill knowledge gaps, find answers about their own experiences, and combat stigma or stereotypes about their own identities, they may intentionally seek out resources that they can trust to be accurate.



- Compared to school settings and conversations with their parents, young LGBTQQ men felt online spaces gave them greater access to information on topics relevant to their sexuality and sexual health.
- Young LGBTQQ men labeled online spaces as more sex positive than other educational settings.
 - Young LGBTQQ men may seek out online resources and queer sex education influencers that are more sex positive and cover a broad range of topics to find information more inclusive of their experiences.
 - Although there may be positive outcomes associated with young LGBTQQ men turning to online spaces, misinformation and vulnerability to online abuse remain serious threats to young men's safety and well-being.

Recommendations:

Policy and Activism

- Communities in the United States need federal, state, and local funding for comprehensive sex education.
- School districts need sexual health education policies that require medically accurate information, including inclusive and historically accurate information about LGBTQQ experiences, as well as increased funding, training, and resources for educators.
- The current attacks on LGBTQQ-inclusive programming and topics in classrooms, as well as federal and state cuts to sex and health education, will perpetuate and exacerbate harm against young LGBTQQ men in classrooms, increasing the likelihood they will turn to online spaces.
- If policy reform is not possible at the state or local level, organizers can partner with local and national sexual health organizations and LGBTQQ-serving programs to implement LGBTQQ-inclusive programming that is not reliant on their educational institutions.



Parents and Trusted Adults

- Parents and trusted adults should build awareness of reliable and inclusive resources — like free sex education service providers — to better prepare for discussions of these topics with young LGBTQQ people.
- Community groups can partner with local nonprofits or government services, such as health or recreation centers, family wellness organizations, and sexual/domestic violence response agencies, to create community-based educational opportunities.
- Advocates can fundraise and donate to local agencies that are equipped to provide sex education on topics like healthy relationships, sexual communication, and more.

Educational Institutions

- K–12 educators should increase education for students on media literacy and online safety to support LGBTQQ youth in adopting safe practices when using online settings for sex education.
- Educational institutions should strive for gender-inclusive sexual health and violence prevention education and incorporate lessons that directly relate to the unique experiences of LGBTQQ students within the context of historical and present systemic injustice.
- Institutions can partner with local agencies or trained peer educators to expand the information, resources, and connections available to their students.
- Educators must provide opportunities for LGBTQQ students to share their needs and experiences to inform institutional strategy around sex education and fairly compensate these students for their time and effort.
- Leaders should demonstrate institutional courage through continued investment in programs that support LGBTQQ health, well-being, and safety through policy, funding, and practice.

The next study in this series will be published in early 2026, and the findings will help develop It's On Us' prevention training and further research.