

## FACT SHEET



I found the courage to accept myself for who I am. I am non-binary, I am lesbian – that’s OK. BYS provided the “stepping stones” to find out who I am and offered a safe space to do this.

# Sexuality diverse young people and mental health

## 7 year analysis, 2015-2022

**Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) assists vulnerable young people to find and maintain appropriate housing, address physical and mental health issues, and establish successful relationships and support networks.**

BYS has collected self-reported mental health diagnoses and self-rated mental health data from everyone accessing ongoing planned support since 2015. We’ve analysed this data to compare demographic factors such as age, gender, cultural identities, sexuality, experience of disability, and parenthood.

Over 2,300 young people provided information about their sexuality and mental health at intake. This factsheet summarises the mental health assessment data for **sexuality diverse young people**. Over the last 7 years, over one in five (21%) young people supported by BYS identified as a diverse sexuality (not heterosexual).

### Sexuality diverse people and homelessness:

Queer youth frequently become homeless following their “coming out,” or disclosing their sexuality or gender identity to friends and family, increasing the likelihood of them needing support from organisations such as BYS.

Australian research indicates over a quarter of all queer respondents and nearly half of all trans respondents felt that their experience with homelessness was related to their sexuality or gender identity.<sup>i</sup>

### Sexuality diverse people and mental health:

Research and real-life experiences have found that LGBTIQ+ people have an increased risk of depression and anxiety, substance abuse, self-harming and suicidal thoughts.<sup>ii</sup>

One recent study reported that almost two thirds (64%) of sexuality and gender diverse young people in Australia report having a mental health diagnosis.<sup>iii</sup>

### Sexuality diverse includes people who identified as:

- GAY
- LESBIAN
- QUEER
- PANSEXUAL
- BISEXUAL
- SAME-SEX ATTRACTED
- ASEXUAL
- NEUTRAL
- UNDECIDED
- OTHER

<sup>i</sup>Hill et al., 2021. *Writing Themselves in 4: The Health and Wellbeing of LGBTQA+ Young People in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University

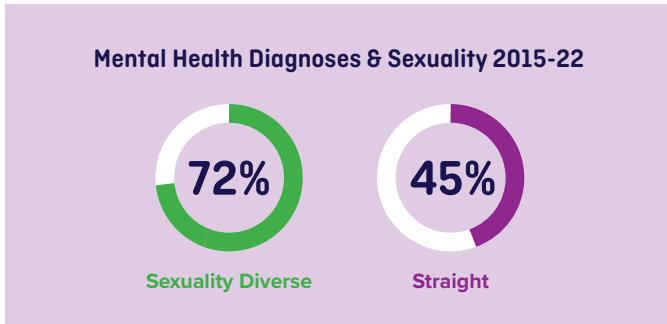
<sup>ii</sup><https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-lgbti-people/factors-affecting-lgbti-people>

<sup>iii</sup>Hill et al., 2021.

# Sexuality diverse young people and mental health

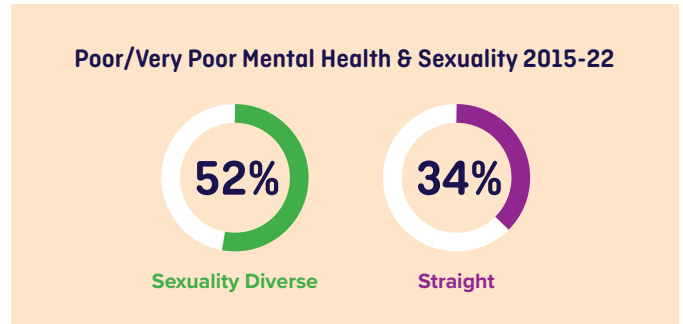
7 year analysis, 2015-2022

## Our data on mental health diagnosis - 2015-2022:

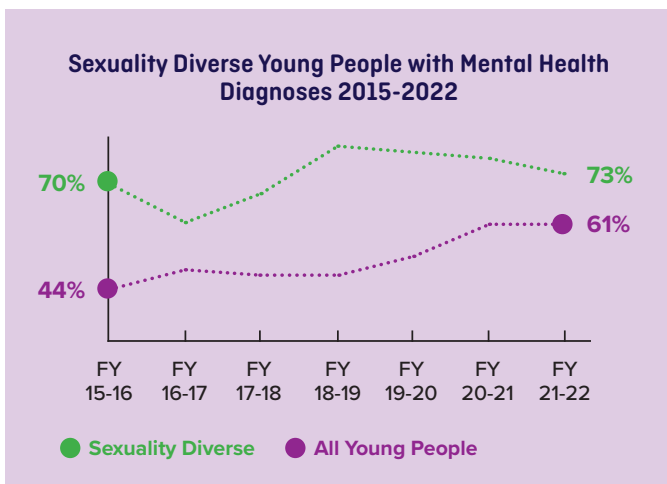


At intake, we found that sexuality diverse young people were **much more likely** to disclose having a mental health diagnosis (72%) compared to straight young people (45%).

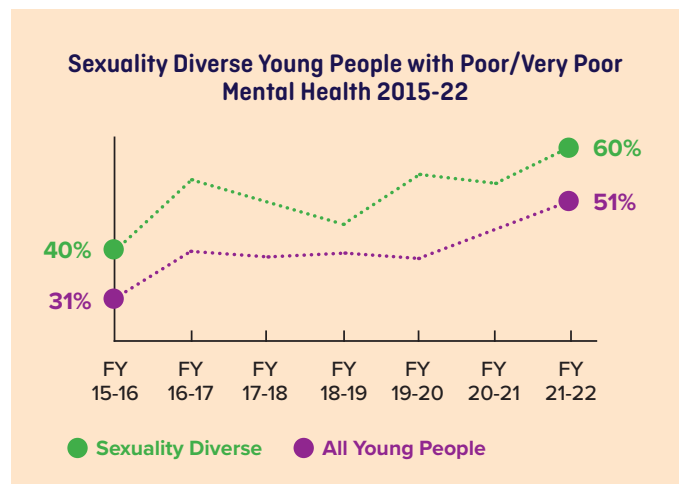
## Our data on self-rated mental health - 2015-2022:



We found that sexuality diverse young people were **much more likely** to self-rate their mental health as poor/very poor (52%) compared to straight young people (34%).



Although self-reported mental health diagnoses rose across the 7 years for all young people, rates for sexuality diverse young people remained **relatively stable**.



Across the 7 years, the proportion of young people self-rating their mental health as **poor/very poor** rose, with the average for sexuality diverse young people surpassing 50% in 2019-20.

## CONCLUSION

The findings in this report highlight the need for expanded mental health supports for sexuality diverse young people. There are mild/ moderate early intervention supports and acute mental health crisis services available, but few free, accessible, and timely support for young people who fit between acute crisis and early intervention in Brisbane.