



OOGACHAGA
Embracing Diversity
a part of SPACES

Impact of
HOMOpHobia
TRANSpHobia
on LGBTQ individuals in Singapore

Summary Report





Homophobia and transphobia are defined as a range of negative attitudes and feelings towards homosexuality and transgenderism. These phobias also affect people who are identified as or perceived as being homosexual and transgender, respectively. These negative attitudes may include antipathy, contempt, prejudice, aversion, and irrational fear of homosexuals and/or transgender people. Being a minority population, some members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) community in Singapore may have experienced homophobia or transphobia in their lives.

Oogachaga Counselling and Support (Oogachaga) is Singapore's only community-based organisation providing counselling and support for the LGBTQ community.

In March 2012, Oogachaga conducted its first survey on homophobia and transphobia, titled "Impact of Homophobia and Transphobia on the LGBTQ individuals in Singapore". It is also the first Singapore-based survey that is conducted to understand the possible relations between homophobic and transphobic experiences, and behavioural issues and suicidal ideations in the LGBTQ community.

We are pleased to release the summary report of this survey on 17 May 2012, which is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Key findings

The survey received overwhelming response from the community with more than 450 completed responses.

The survey presented the following key findings:

- a. 60.2% of the respondents indicated they have had experiences with sexual orientation and/or gender identity-based abuse and discrimination. Transgender females have the highest incidence rate (94.4%), followed by males (62.5%);
- b. The most common forms of abuse or discrimination faced by LGBTQ individuals are homophobic jokes and being called by derogatory names;
- c. Most respondents have experienced sexual orientation and/or gender identity-based abuse and discrimination in schools and from the general heterosexual population;
- d. LGBTQ individuals who have had experiences with sexual orientation and/or gender identity-based abuse and discrimination, reported a significantly higher incidence rate of self-reported behavioural issues;
- e. LGBTQ individuals, who have had experiences with sexual orientation and/or gender identity-based abuse and discrimination, reported a significantly higher incidence rate of having suicidal thoughts or attempts.



By releasing this summary report, Oogachaga wants to raise the awareness among the following population:

a. LGBTQ community:

- Many LGBTQ individuals face homophobic and transphobic abuse and discrimination from others. It is important that LGBTQ individuals adopt positive coping strategies while the LGBTQ groups and individuals work together to reduce the incidence of discrimination.
- There are many LGBTQ resources available that LGBTQ individuals who are struggling with these issues can seek help and support from.

b. Helping professionals in the social service, healthcare and mental health care sectors:

- The homophobic and transphobic abuse and discrimination faced by their LGBTQ clients and its direct or indirect consequences on their clients' mental well being.
- Professionals and volunteers in these sectors can play a more active role in reducing the incidence of discrimination and in supporting their LGBTQ clients and patients.

c. Professionals in the education sector:

- Homophobic and transphobic abuse and discrimination are pressing issues faced by LGBTQ students.
- Educators, supporting staff and students can play a more active role in addressing these discrimination in schools and in supporting their LGBTQ students and classmates.

We acknowledge that given the nature of the online survey, the findings from this survey may not be representative of the whole LGBTQ community nor has it covered all aspects of homophobic and transphobic situations in Singapore. We will plan to conduct a more comprehensive study in this area.

If you are keen to participate in a study that is related to this survey or get more updates from Oogachaga Counselling and Support, please subscribe to our mailing list on <http://www.oogachaga.com/congregaytion/users/letter>

If you have any recommendation to this report or the survey, please contact us at contact@oogachaga.com.



A. Profile of respondents

1. Gender Identity

The survey received a total of 519 responses since it was launched in March 2012. 448 respondents completed the survey.

Gender	Percentage
Female	35.3
Male	58.6
Transgender Female	3.5
Transgender Male	2.7

2. Age range

Most of the respondents are in their 20s to 30s, which is expected as this is an online survey.

Age Group	Percentage
More than 60 years	0.2
51 to 60 years	3.5
41 to 50 years	8.3
31 to 40 years	20.6
21 to 30 years	50.7
20 years or younger	16.7

3. Singaporean and Singapore Permanent Residents, Foreign Residents

Nationality and Residency Status	Percentage
Singaporeans and Singapore Permanent Residents	91.7
Foreign Residents living in Singapore	7.1

Since the objectives of the survey is to understand the current homophobic and transphobic experiences faced by LGBTQ individuals in Singapore, the remaining 1.2% of the respondents who are foreigners and accessing the survey outside Singapore were directed to exit the survey.

4. In terms of ethnic composition of the respondents, 76.6% Chinese, 6.4% Malay, 6.8% Indian, 3.7% Caucasian and 1.8% Eurasian. 4.7% of the respondents indicated mixed racial parentage or other races.
5. Most of the respondents have higher education with 51.4% have university and postgraduate degree. 38.2% of non university graduates have post-secondary education.



6. Sexual Orientation by gender identity

Sexual Orientation (in percentage)	Male (n=294)	Female* (n=178)	Transgender Female (n=18)	Transgender Male (n=14)	Overall (n=504)
Lesbian	0	39.9	27.8	0	15.1
Gay	75.6	0	11.1	0	44.4
Bisexual	8.6	15.7	11.1	7.1	11.3
Questioning	3.5	4	0	7.1	3.5
I do not use label	5.5	12.4	27.8	35.7	9.5
Heterosexual/ Straight	6.5	21.3	16.7	35.7	13
Others	0.3	6.7	5.5	14.4	3.2

**Two female respondents who have indicated as “gay” in their responses are added to the “lesbian” data.*

7. Sexual Attraction by gender identity

A number of respondents indicated different sexual attractions from their sexual orientation identities.

Sexual Attraction (in percentage)	Male (n=294)	Female (n=178)	Transgender Female (n=18)	Transgender Male (n=14)	Overall (n=504)
Sexually attracted to only my own gender	80.6	44.6	50	7.1	64.7
Sexually attracted to only the opposite gender	5.8	20.3	22.2	28.6	12.3
Sexually attracted to both gender	11.6	28.2	16.7	35.7	18.2
Not sexually attracted to any gender	0.7	1.2	11.1	21.4	1.8
Not sure about own attraction	1.3	5.7	0	7.2	3



B. Experience of Sexual Orientation and Gender-Identity based abuse or discrimination

For the purpose of this study, respondents (except transgender male and female) who indicated the following are excluded from the data as they do not fall under the LGBTQ population:

- a. Heterosexual and;
- b. They are sexually attracted ONLY to people of the opposite gender

1. Percentage of respondents who had/have such experiences

Among the four gender identity groups, Transgender Female faced the highest incidence rate of discrimination and abuse, followed by male.

Any experience with abuse and discrimination that is based on sexual orientation and gender identity	Male	Female	Transgender Female	Transgender Male	Total and Percentage
Yes	170 (62.5%)	70 (52.2%)	17 (94.4%)	7 (50%)	264 (60.2)
No	102 (37.5%)	64 (47.8%)	1 (5.6%)	7 (50%)	174 (39.8)

2. Types of abuse and discrimination

Across all the gender identity groups, LGBT individuals indicated that passing homophobic jokes and derogatory name calling were the most frequent type of abuse or discrimination they faced. In venue-based settings, school-based abuse and discrimination is the highest.

What are the types of abuse and discrimination? (In percentage)	Male (n=170)	Female (n=70)	Transgender Female (n=17)	Transgender Male (n=7)
Controlling of your mind or thoughts	34.5	45.7	52.9	42.9
Threatening to out your sexual orientation or gender identity involuntarily	25.3	30.0	23.5	28.6
Rape, molestation or sexual harassment	20.1	17.1	29.4	14.3
Physical attack or controlling of your movement	10.9	7.1	23.5	28.6
Passing homophobic jokes or calling you derogatory names due to your sexual orientation or gender identity	77.6	54.3	70.6	85.7



Sexual orientation or gender identity based discrimination in school	45.4	44.3	52.9	71.4
Sexual orientation or gender identity based discrimination in workplace	24.1	28.6	23.5	42.9
Sexual orientation or gender identity based discrimination in private or public institutions (such as denial of service or access by institutions)	13.2	18.6	35.3	71.4

3. Sources of abuses and discriminations

Who are the people/group of people who abuse and discriminate? (In percentage)	Male (n= 170)	Female (n=70)	Transgender Female (n=17)	Transgender Male (n =7)
Parents	26	48	73	43
Siblings	19	20	20	29
Current spouse or partner	2	3	27	14
Former Spouse or partner	5	8	27	29
Sexual partners	14	3	13	29
Children	4	6	20	29
Friends	51	48	40	86
Relative outside your family	32	35	53	57
Complete strangers	52	58	67	57
People at your school (teachers or classmates)	65	56	53	71
People from your workplace (colleagues or superiors)	34	39	27	57
People from government institutions (such as National Service)	47	20	33	29
People from medical or social institutions	12	17	33	57
People from religious institution	46	47	53	43
People from the LGBT population	19	9	40	57
People from the general heterosexual population	61	68	60	86



4. Common coping strategies

Coping strategies	Percentage
I spoke with supportive family members	9.1%
I spoke with supportive friends	48.0%
I spoke with professional counsellors and/or therapists	8.3%
I sought help from the authorities (i.e., police, school teachers, principal, officers)	3.5%
I personally retaliated against the last or ongoing abuse and/or discrimination	23.2%
I did not adopt any coping strategies to deal with these abuse and/or discrimination	37.0%
Others (please specify)	15.4%

The most common coping strategy among the respondents is to talk to a supportive friend. A large number of the respondents do not have any coping strategy to deal with the abuse and discrimination that they faced.

5. The impact of these incidences of abuse and discrimination.

When asked what the impact of these abuse and discrimination are, some respondents stated that these incidents have made them stronger or become a better and more accepting person. They have also learnt to be more protective of themselves physically and emotionally. Some took the opportunity to educate and raise awareness of LGBT individuals.

However, a large number of respondents stated that these incidents affected their self esteem and views about their self worth. Some went deeper into the closet and avoided socialising with their friends and families. A small number indicated that they suffered from depression. Some left their families and their home countries. One person abandoned his studies due to discrimination in school. One transgender female abandoned her plan for transition, a decision which she regretted.



C. Self Reported Behavioural Issues

1. Comparison of respondents who had homophobic and transphobic experiences versus those who did not.

The following table has confirmed our hypothesis that LGBT individuals who have experienced homophobic and transphobic abuse and discrimination have a higher incidence rate of self-reported behavioural issues.

At this stage, it is not possible to conclude that homophobic or transphobic experiences are directly related to these respondents' behavioural issues. Oogachaga plans to conduct a more comprehensive study which provides more insight on this possible relation.

Have you engaged in any of the following behaviours?								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoidance of sex Compulsive shopping Eating disorders (Anorexia, Bulimia or Binge eating) Excessive drinking Excessive exercise Excessive sexual activity Excessive smoking Excessive use of non prescribed / prescribed medicine Excessive use of the Internet Problem gambling Self mutilation (such as cutting yourself without the intention of Suicide) Social Isolation Unprotected sexual activity (having penetrative sex without condoms) Use of inhalants Use of synthetic drugs 							
	Those who have experienced abuses and discriminations.				Those who have NOT experienced abuses and discriminations.			
	Male	Female	Transgender Female	Transgender Male	Male	Female	Transgender Female	Transgender Male
Yes	110 (71.4%)	46 (70.8%)	14 (93.3%)	5 (71.4%)	40 (39.2%)	27 (42.2%)	0 (0%)	5 (71.4%)
No	44 (28.6%)	19 (29.2%)	1 (6.7%)	2 (28.6%)	62 (60.8%)	37 (57.8%)	1 (100%)	2 (28.6%)



2. Comparison of different types of behaviours between who had homophobic and transphobic experiences versus those who did not.

The following table illustrates the differences between the two LGBT groups for each specific behavioural issue.

Type of behaviours	Those who have experienced abuses and discriminations. (in percentage)	Those who have NOT experienced abuses and discriminations. (in percentage)
Avoidance of sex	42.3	36.1
Compulsive shopping	44.5	25.3
Eating disorders (Anorexia, Bulimia or Binge eating)	34.1	22.9
Excessive drinking	24.7	25.3
Excessive exercise	19.8	15.7
Excessive sexual activity	35.7	24.1
Excessive smoking	22.5	25.3
Excessive use of non prescribed / prescribed medicine	13.7	9.6
Excessive use of the Internet	62.6	56.6
Problem gambling	2.2	2.4
Self mutilation (such as cutting yourself without the intention of suicide)	23.1	30.1
Social Isolation	58.2	37.3
Unprotected sexual activity (having penetrative sex without condoms)	31.9	37.3
Use of inhalants	8.2	15.7
Use of synthetic drugs	8.8	10.8



D. Self Reported Suicidal thoughts and attempts

1. Comparisons of respondents who had homophobic and transphobic experiences versus those who did not.

The last section in the survey asked about the suicidal thoughts or attempts among the LGBTQ population. With the exception of transgender male, those who have experienced abuse and discriminations report a higher incidence rate of suicidal thoughts and attempts.

	Have there been occasions when you had suicidal thoughts or attempts?							
	Those who have experienced abuses and discriminations				Those who have NOT experienced abuses and discriminations			
	Male	Female	Transgender Female	Transgender Male	Male	Female	Transgender Female	Transgender Male
Yes	97 (63.0%)	45 (69.2%)	12 (80.0%)	5 (71.4%)	31 (31.3%)	31 (48.4%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (85.7%)
No	57 (37.0%)	20 (30.8%)	3 (20.0%)	2 (28.5%)	68 (68.7%)	33 (51.6%)	1 (100%)	1 (14.3%)
	154	65	15	7	99	64	1	7