



Bi+ Sexual Health and HIV Study: Characteristics of the sample

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Disclosures

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Overview

- Demographics
 - Age
 - Geography
 - Cultural Identity
 - Socioeconomic
- Sex, gender and sexual identities
 - Mental Health
 - Drug use
 - Discrimination
- Conclusions

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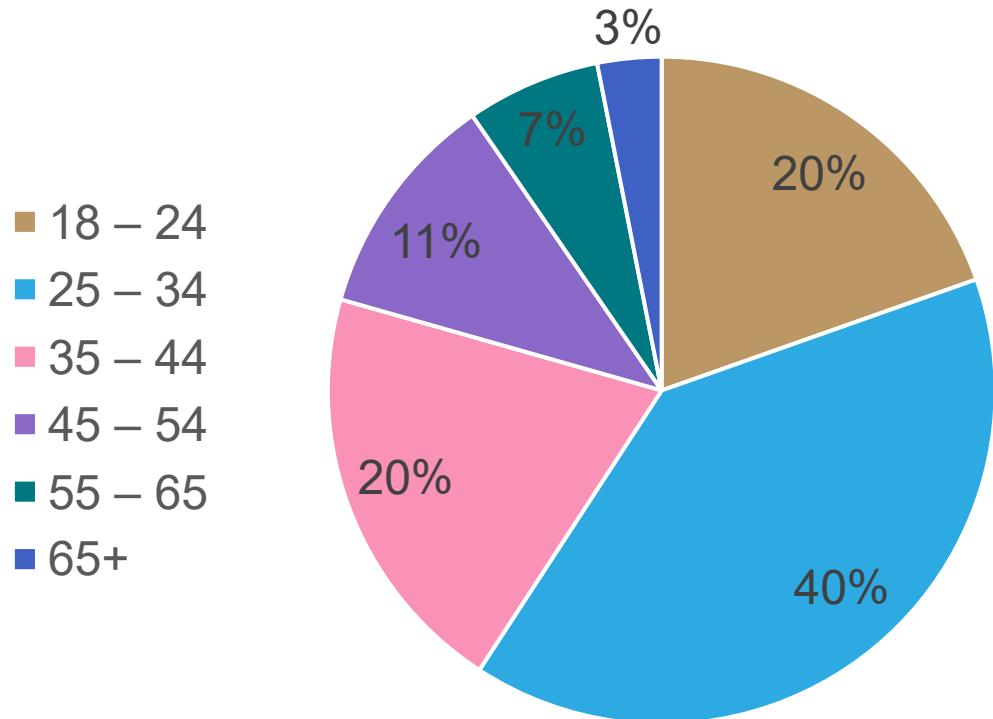


The sample

- This presentation will focus on the **2,109** participants who completed the entire survey.

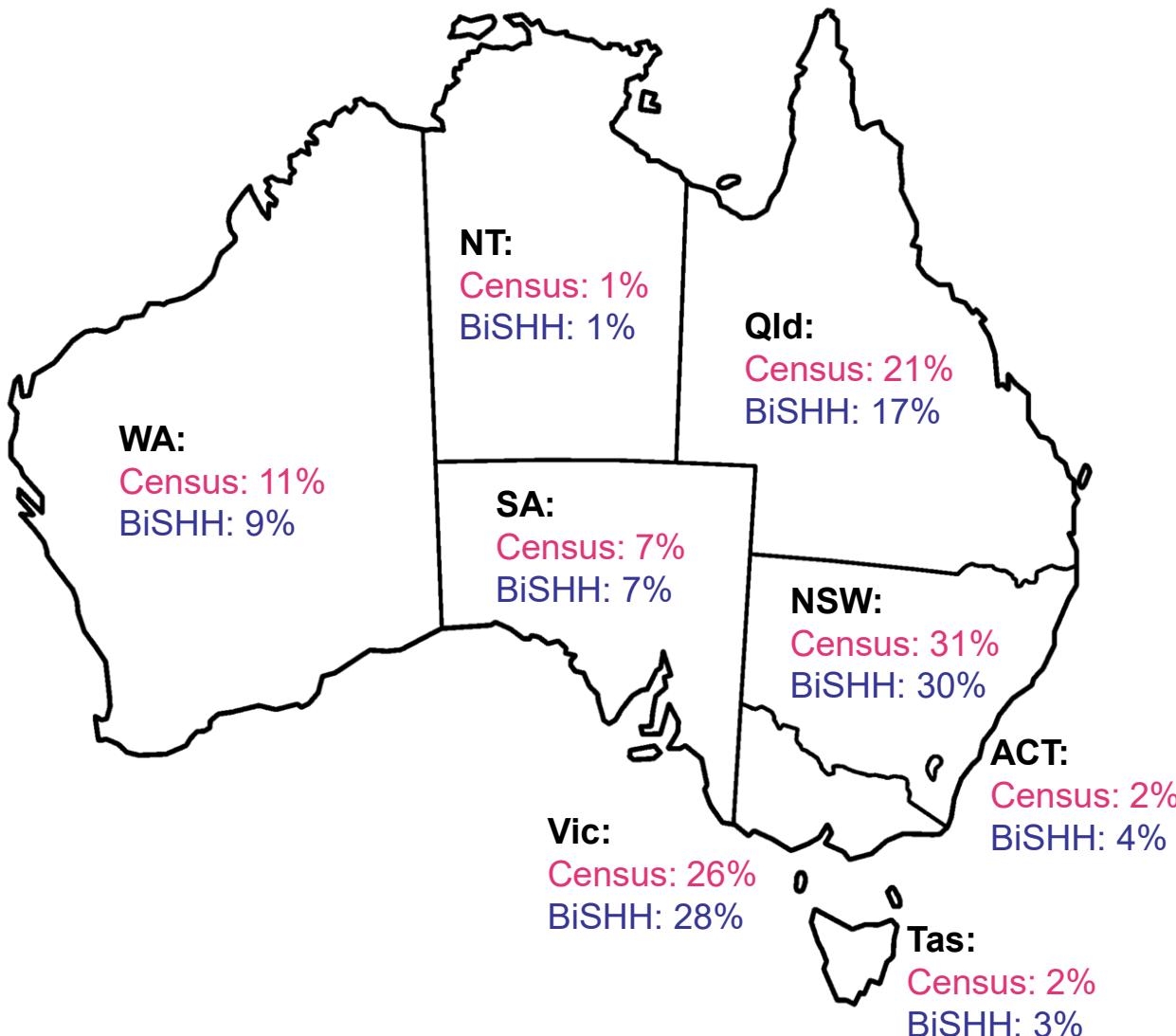
Results: Age

- Age ranged from 18 to 85 years, with a median of 32 years.



Gender	Median Age
Cis woman	31
Trans woman	33
Non-binary/gender diverse	30
Trans man	27
Cis man	44

Results: Geography



Regionality	BiSHH
Inner suburbs of major capital cities	25%
Middle suburbs of major capital cities	25%
Outer suburbs of major capital cities and other major cities	28%
Regional, remote and very remote	23%

Results: Cultural diversity

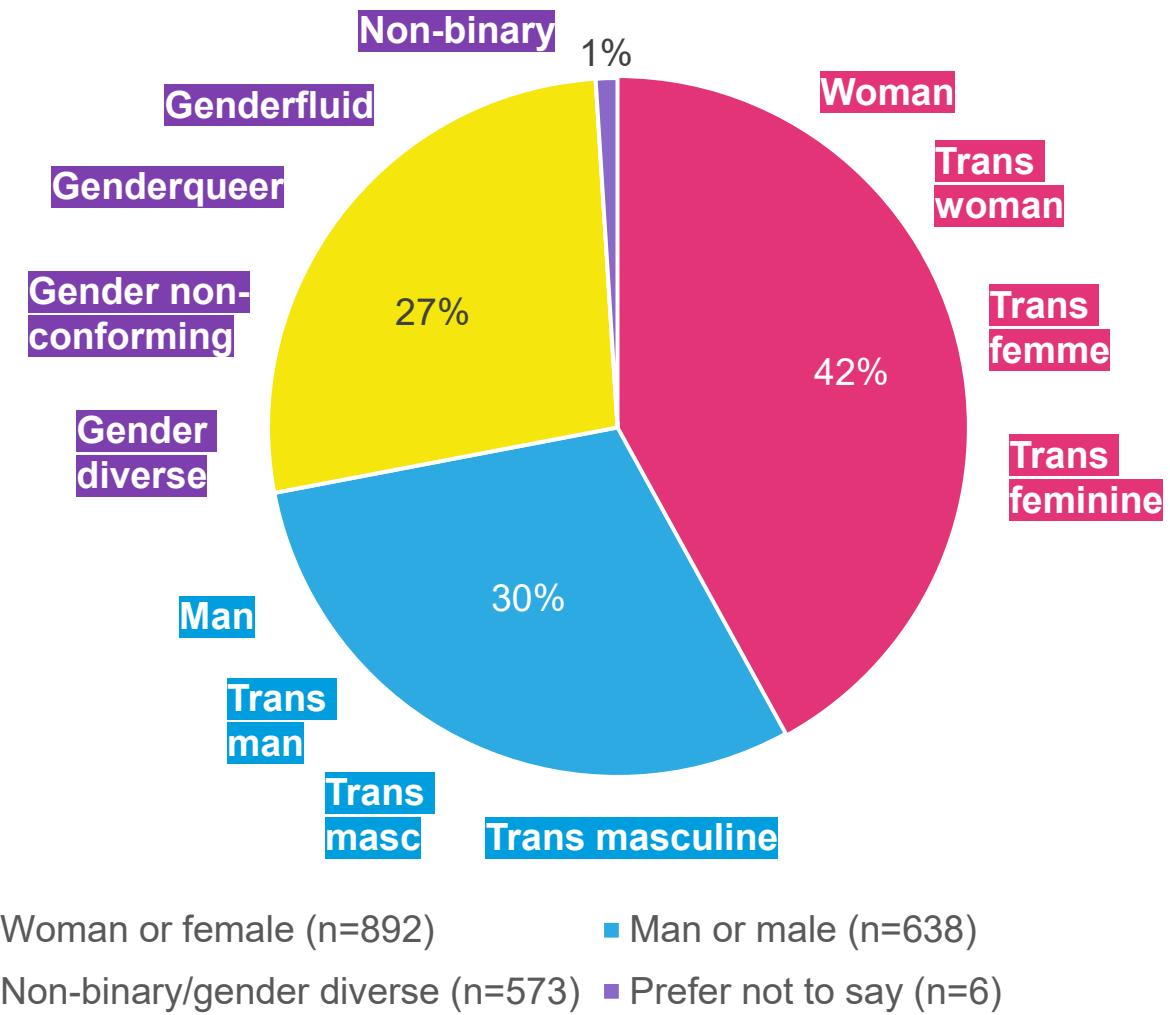
- 4% were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Region of birth:
 - 84% were born in Australia
 - 12% were born in another high-income English-speaking country (e.g. UK, US, NZ) or in Europe
 - 3% were born in Asia
 - 2% were born somewhere else
- 74% of those born overseas had lived in Australia for more than 10 years.
- Cultural background
 - 86% had Anglo or European ancestry only
 - 14% had another ancestry or had mixed ancestry

Results: Socioeconomic

- 55% had a university education, while 28% were currently studying.
- Employment:
 - 46% were working full-time and 33% were working part-time or casually
 - 22% were not working (e.g. retired, receiving government payments, unemployed)
- Annual income:
 - 40% earned below \$50,000
 - 33% earned between \$50,001 and \$100,000
 - 22% earned over \$100,001
 - 5% preferred not to say

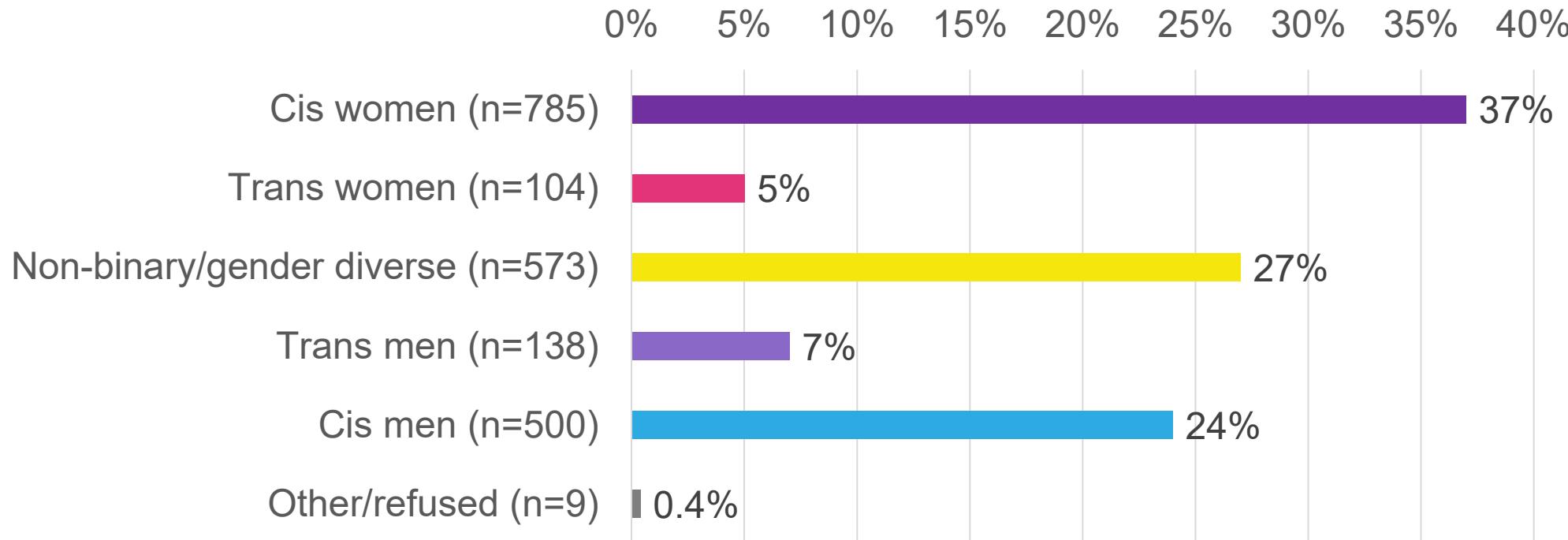
Results: Sex and gender

- 1.8% reported a variation of sex characteristics
- Gender identity (self-described):
 - 42% woman or female
 - 30% man or male
 - 27% non-binary or gender diverse
- In total:
 - 61% were cis
 - 39% were trans and/or non-binary/gender diverse



Results: Gender categories

- Sex at birth and current gender identity were combined to form mutually exclusive categories for gender.

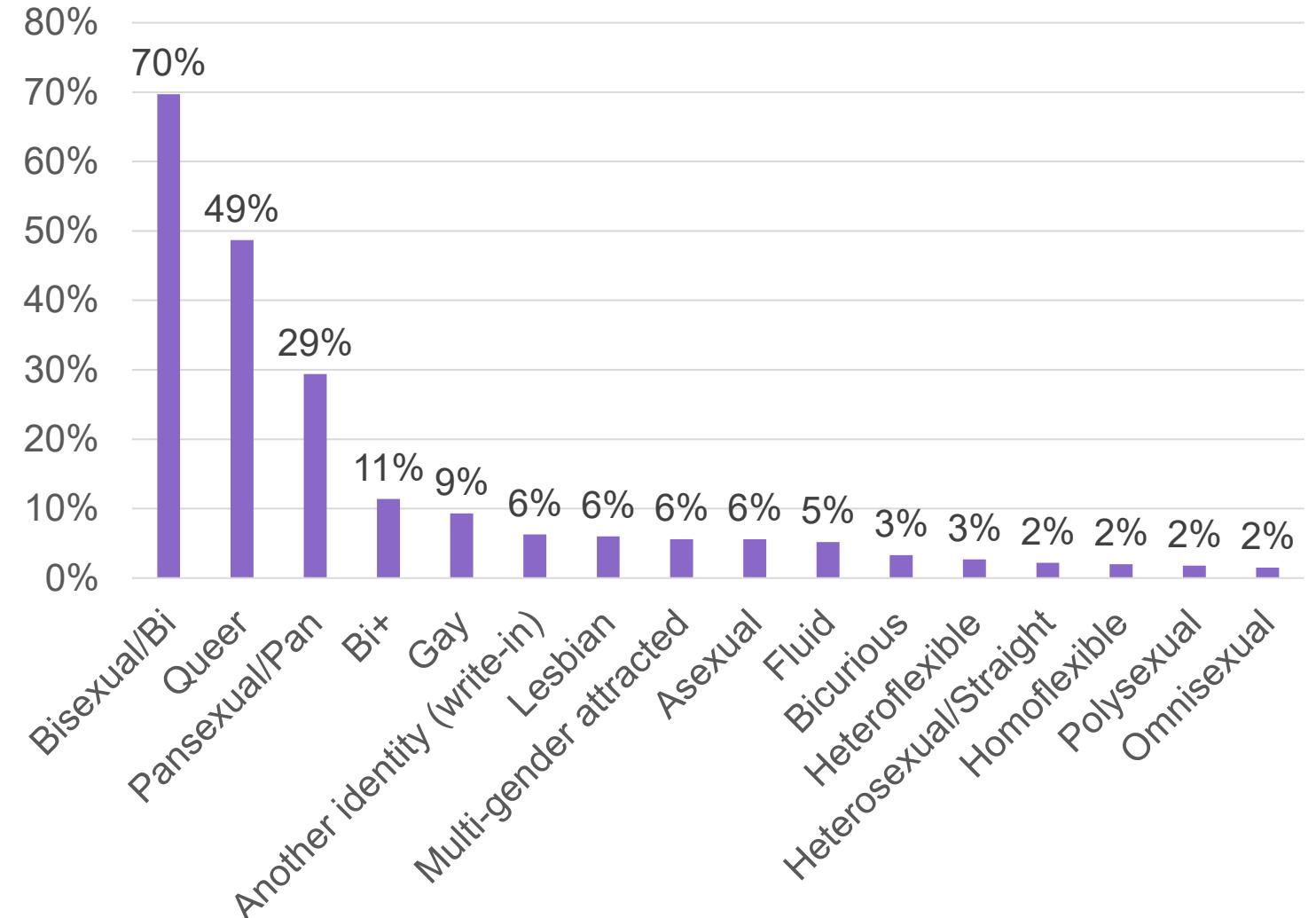


Results: Sexual identity

- Since sexual identity is the core concept underlying BiSHH, a detailed and respectful exploration of the participants' sexual identities was needed.
- First, participants were asked to select as many sexual identities as applied to them, from a pre-specified list which also had 3 write-in boxes.
- Second, from the identities they selected, they were asked if there was one identity they identified with the most, and were given an option of “No, multiple identities are equally important to me”.

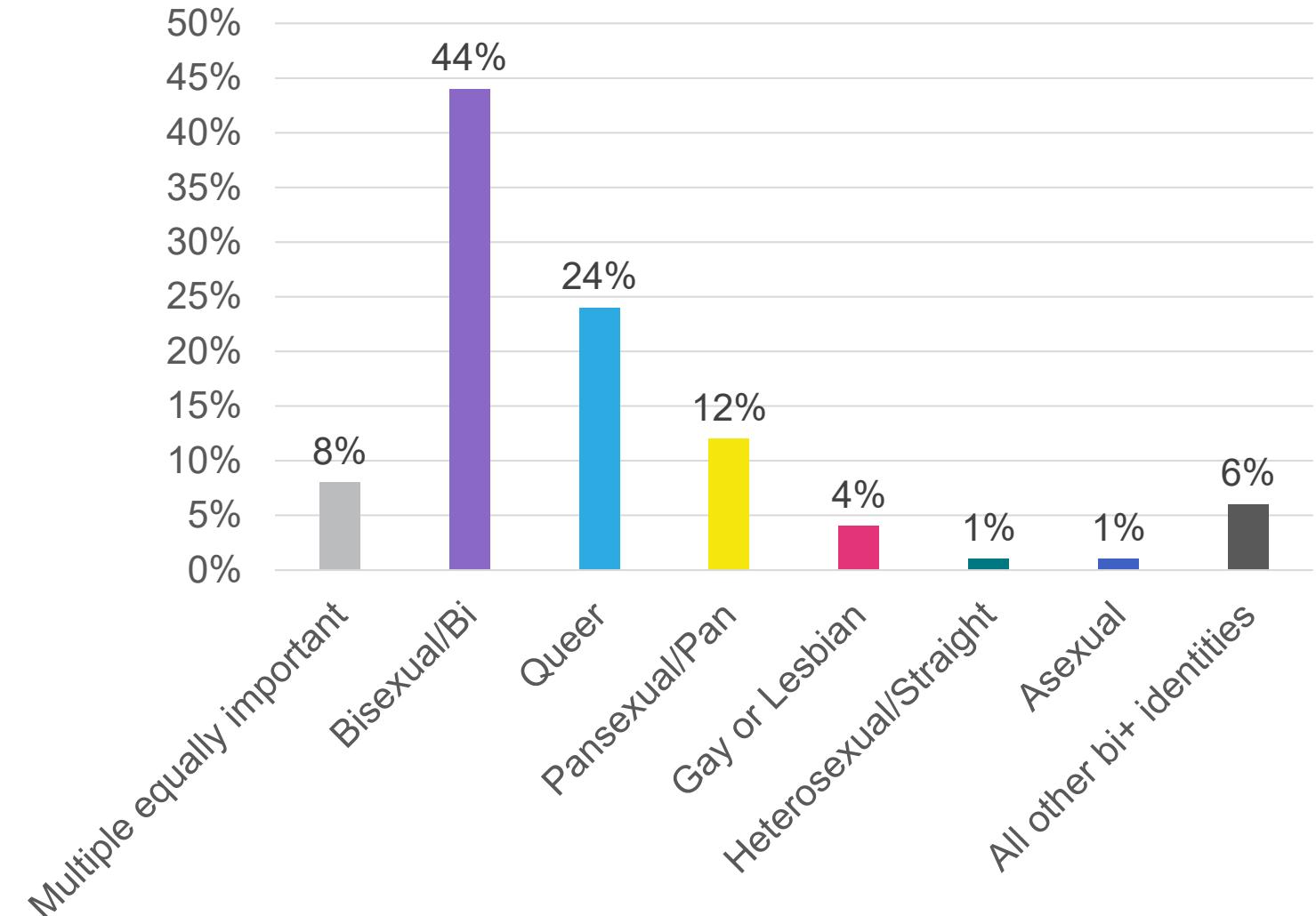
Results: Sexual identity (Multiple choice)

- 44% chose one identity, while 56% chose more than one.
- The “Big Three” were:
 
 - Bisexual / bi
 - Queer
 - Pansexual / pan
- “Monosexual” identities were not uncommon.

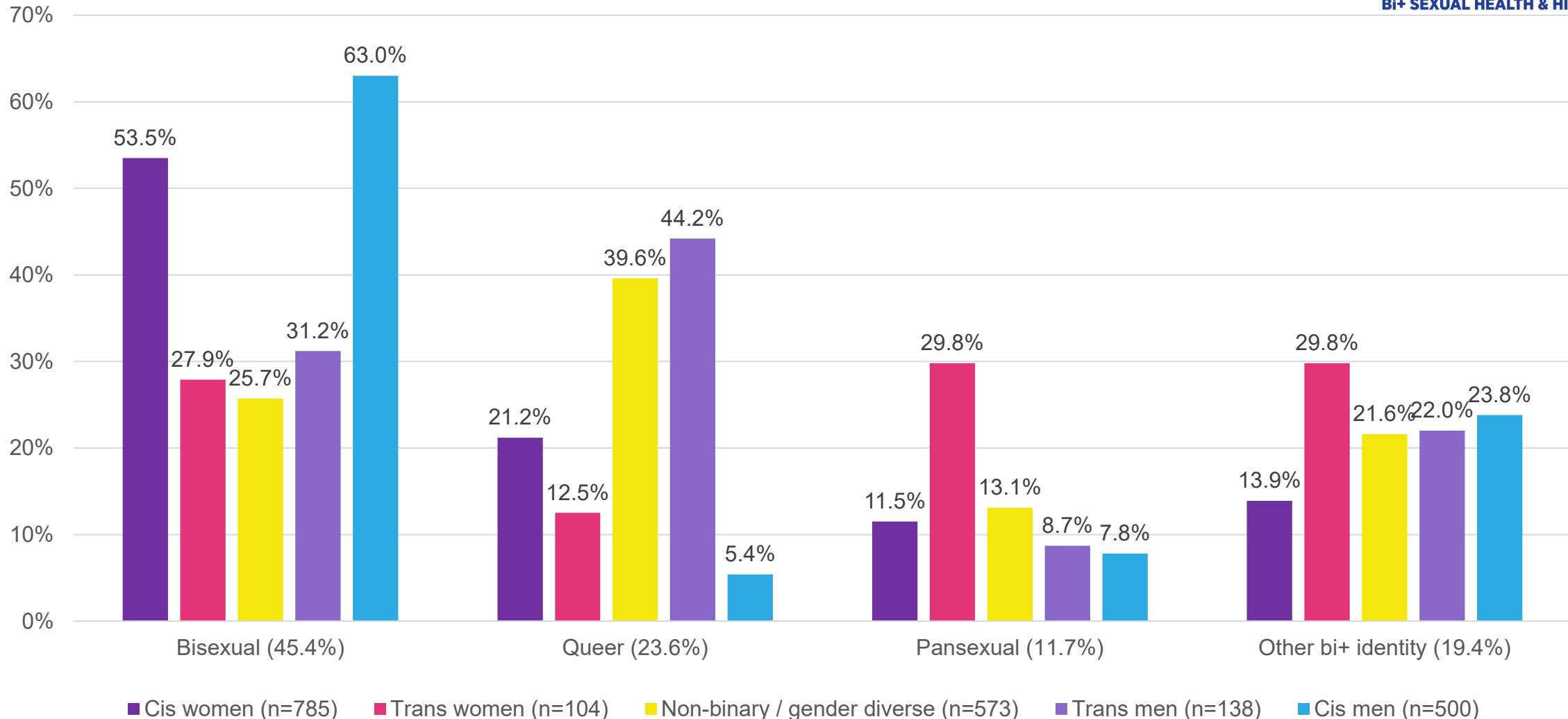


Results: Sexual identity (Single choice)

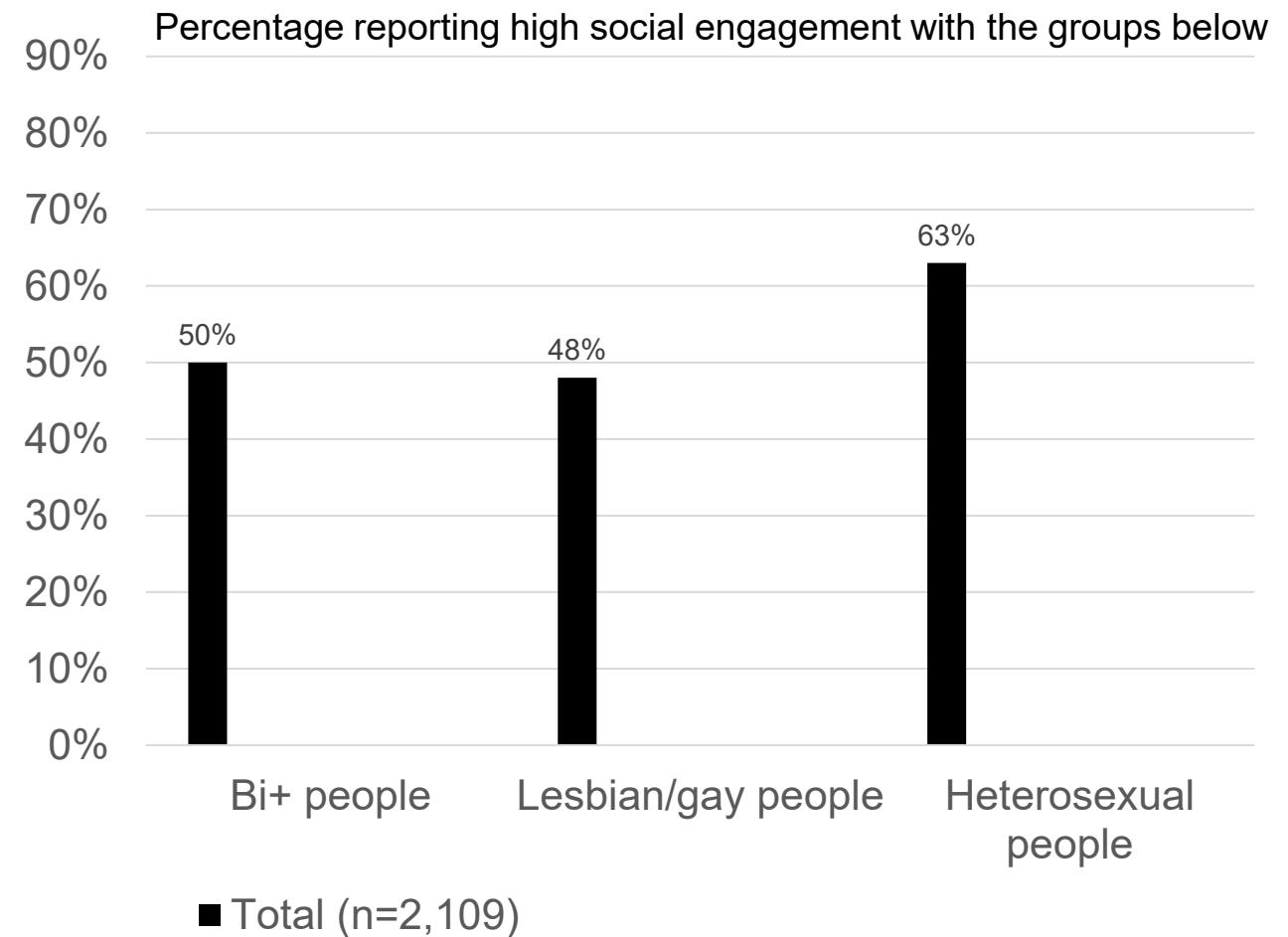
- The “Big Three” remained:
 
 - Bisexual / bi
 - Queer
 - Pansexual / pan
- 8% had multiple, equally important identities
- 5% had a “monosexual” identity.
- 1% were asexual.



Results: Sexual identity (Single choice)

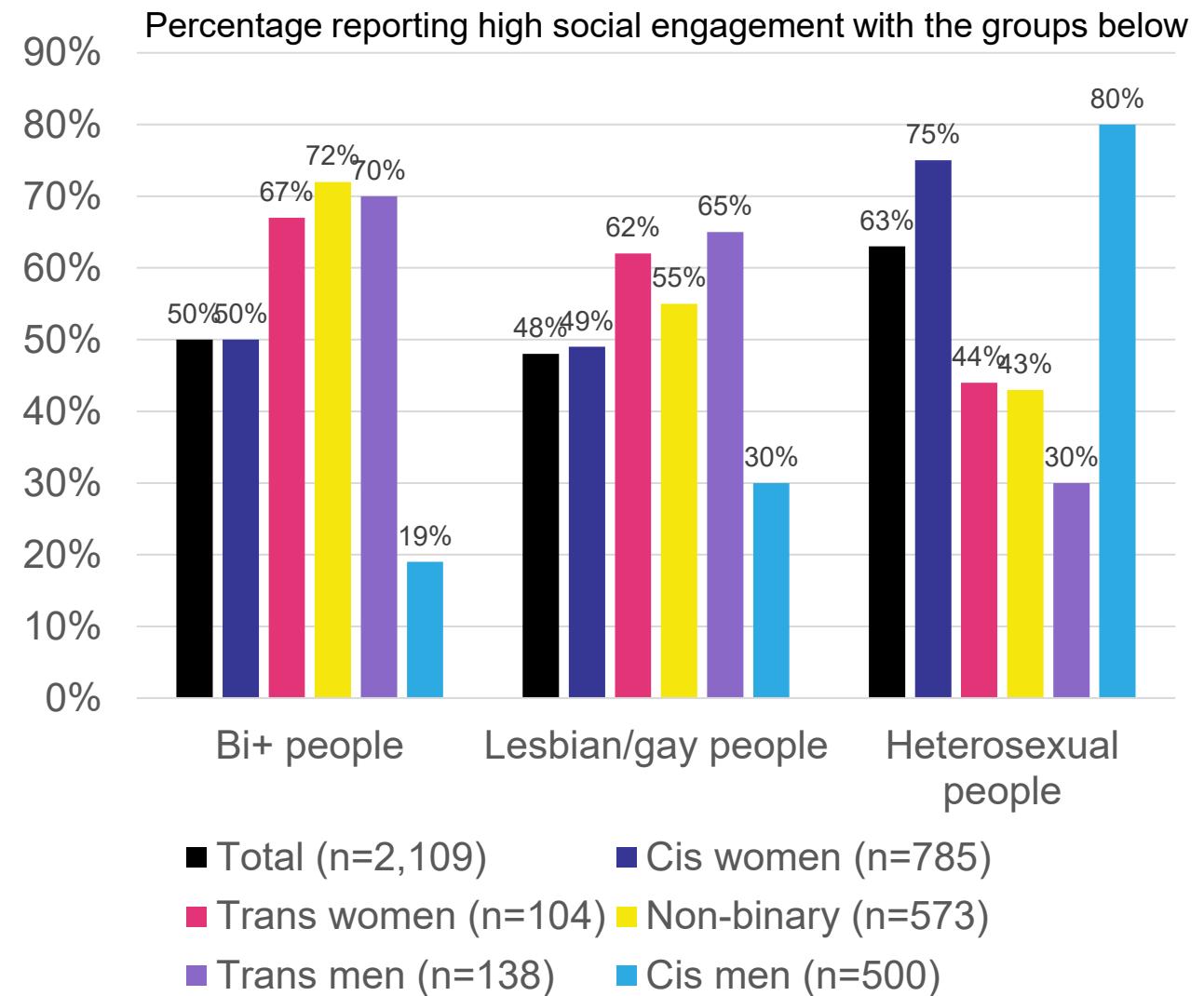


Results: High social engagement

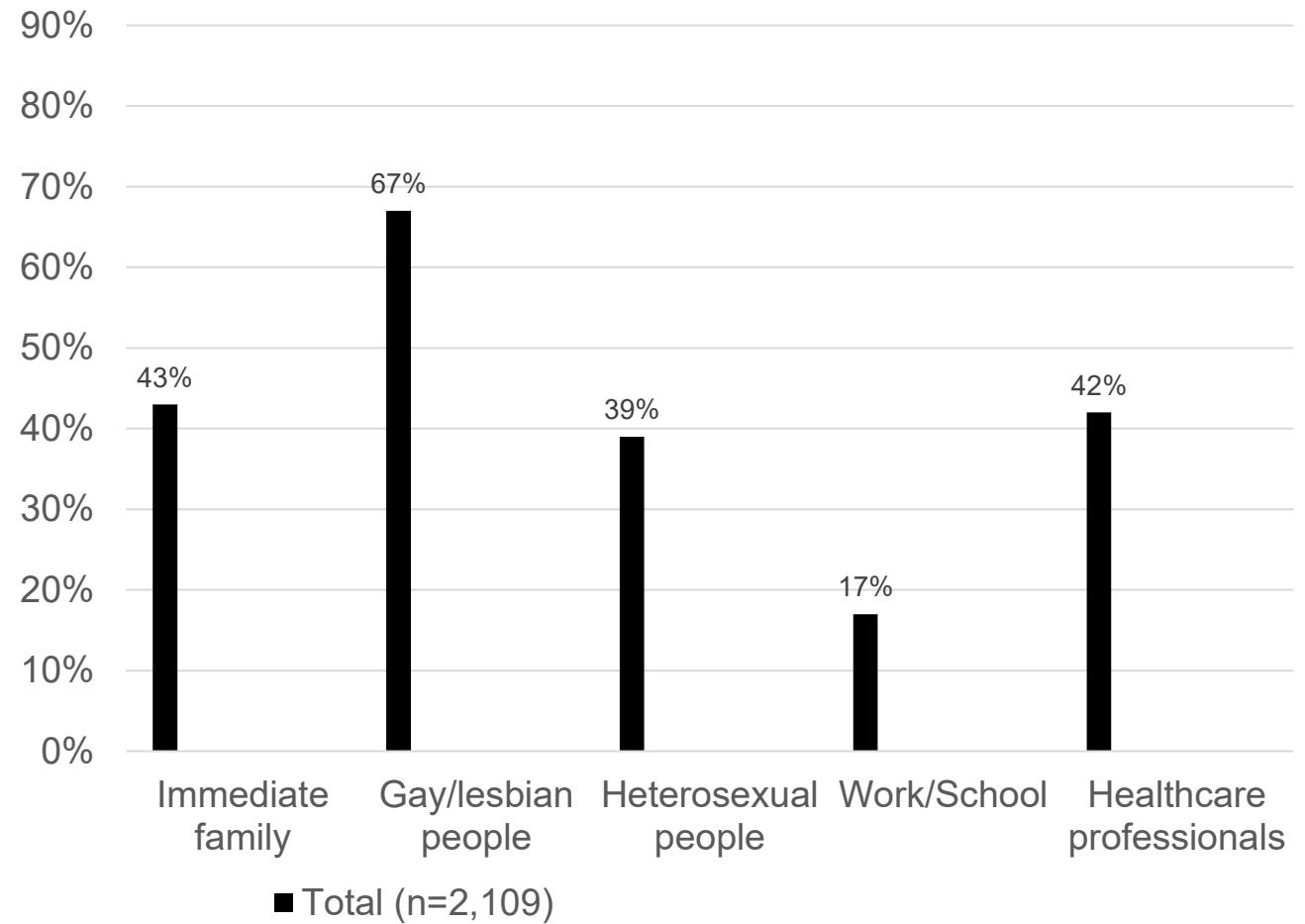


Results: High social engagement

- Cis participants had highest engagement with heterosexual friends.
- Cis men had lowest engagement with bi+ and lesbian/gay friends.
- TGD people had higher engagement with bi+ and lesbian/gay friends.

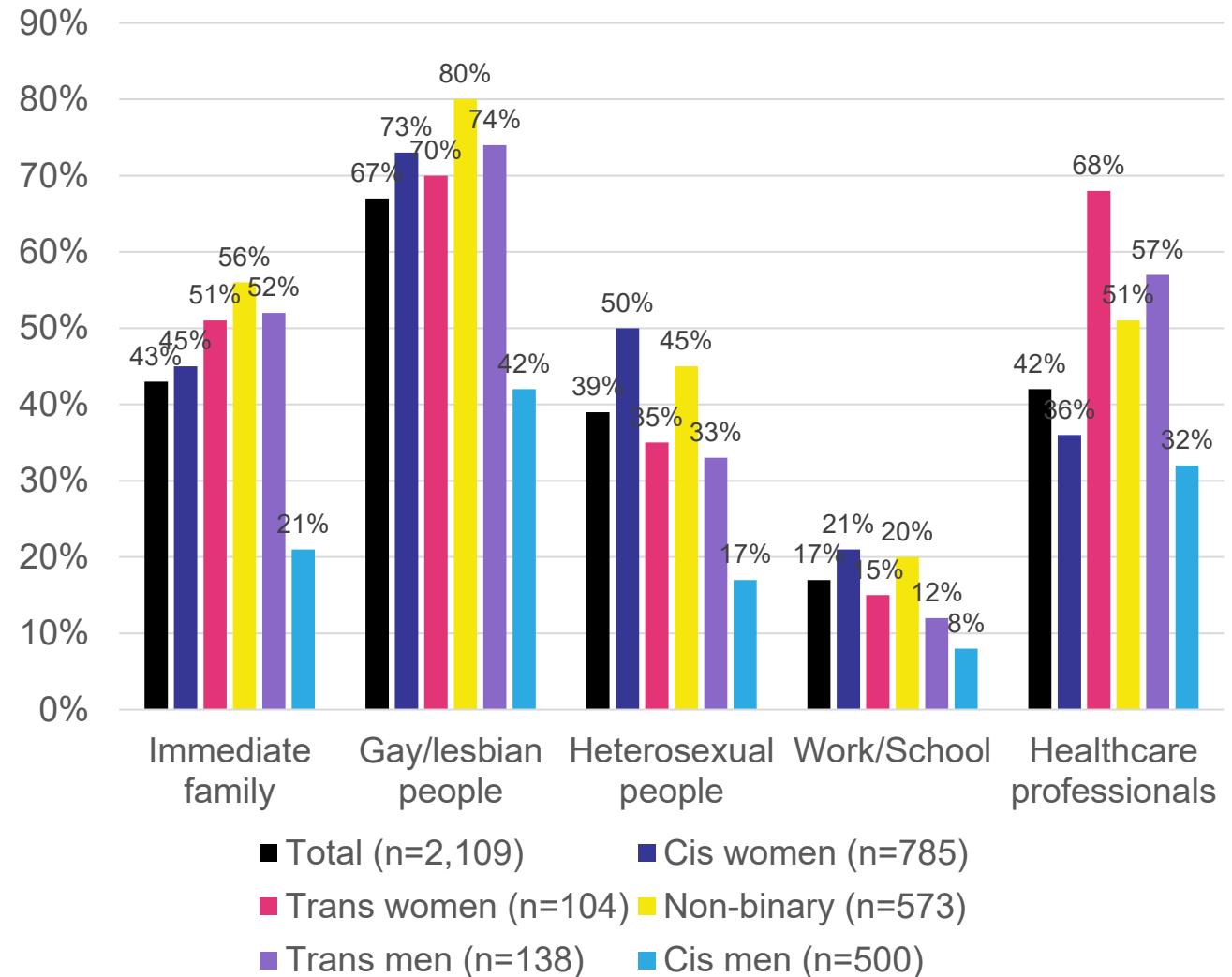


Results: “Outness” about being bi+



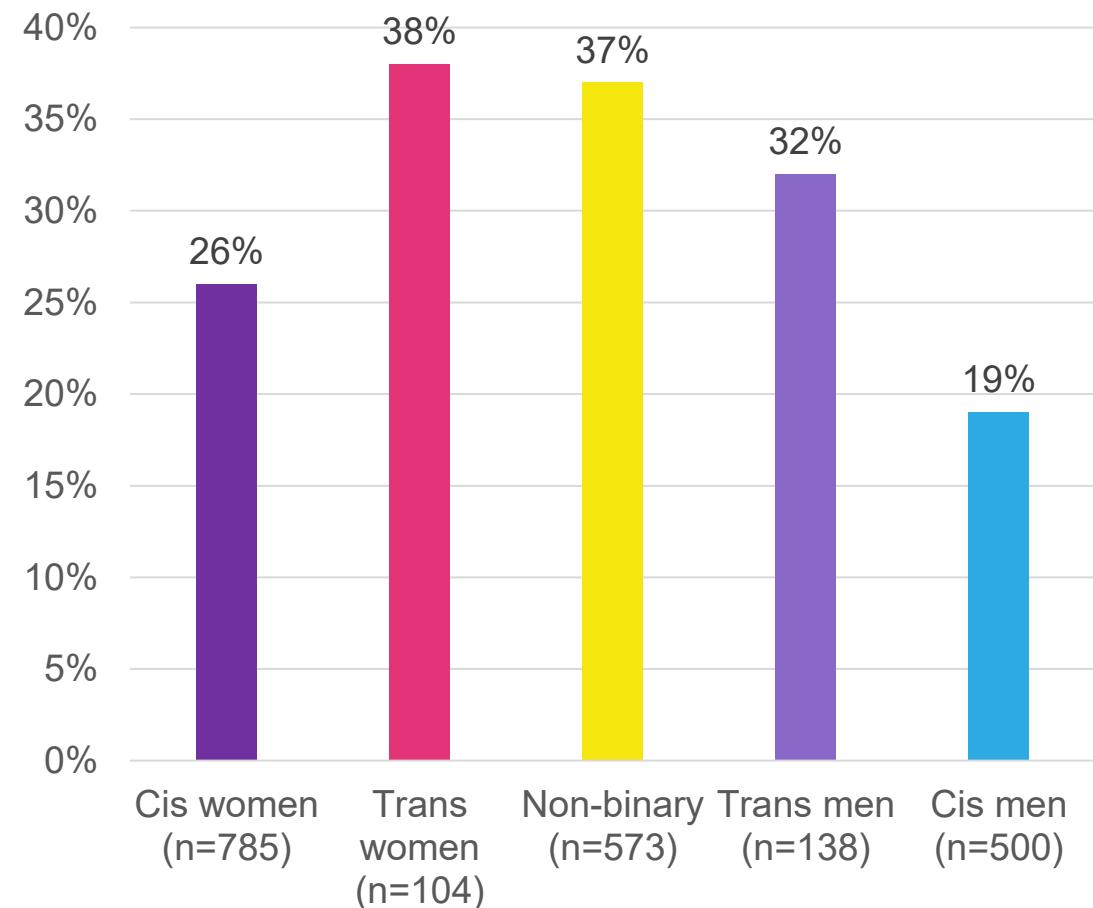
Results: “Outness” about being bi+

- Cis men less likely to be “out” across all categories.
- A third of cis men and women were “out” to healthcare professionals.



Results: Mental health

- We used the 6-item Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6).
- **28%** had a K6 score indicative of a probable serious mental illness.
 - Double the Australian population (17.0%)¹
 - Lower than *Private Lives 3* (bisexual = 66.7%, pansexual = 75.9%)²

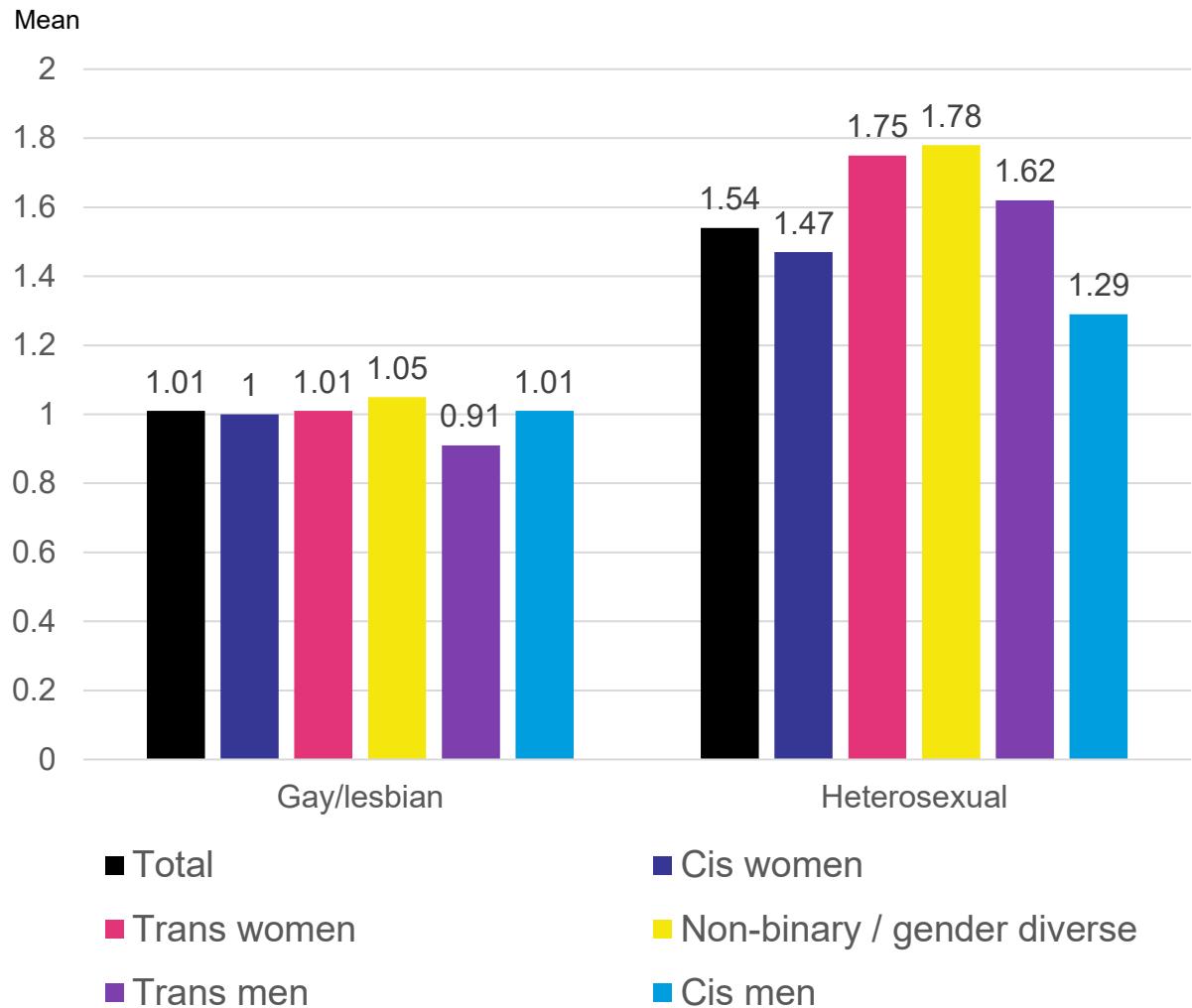


¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. Prevalence and impact of mental illness Canberra, ACT: AIHW; 2025 [Available from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/mental-health/overview/prevalence-and-impact-of-mental-illness#psy>

² Hill, A. O., Bourne, A., McNair, R., Carman, M. & Lyons, A. (2020). *Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia*. ARCSHS Monograph Series No. 122. <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs/work/private-lives-3hdistress>.

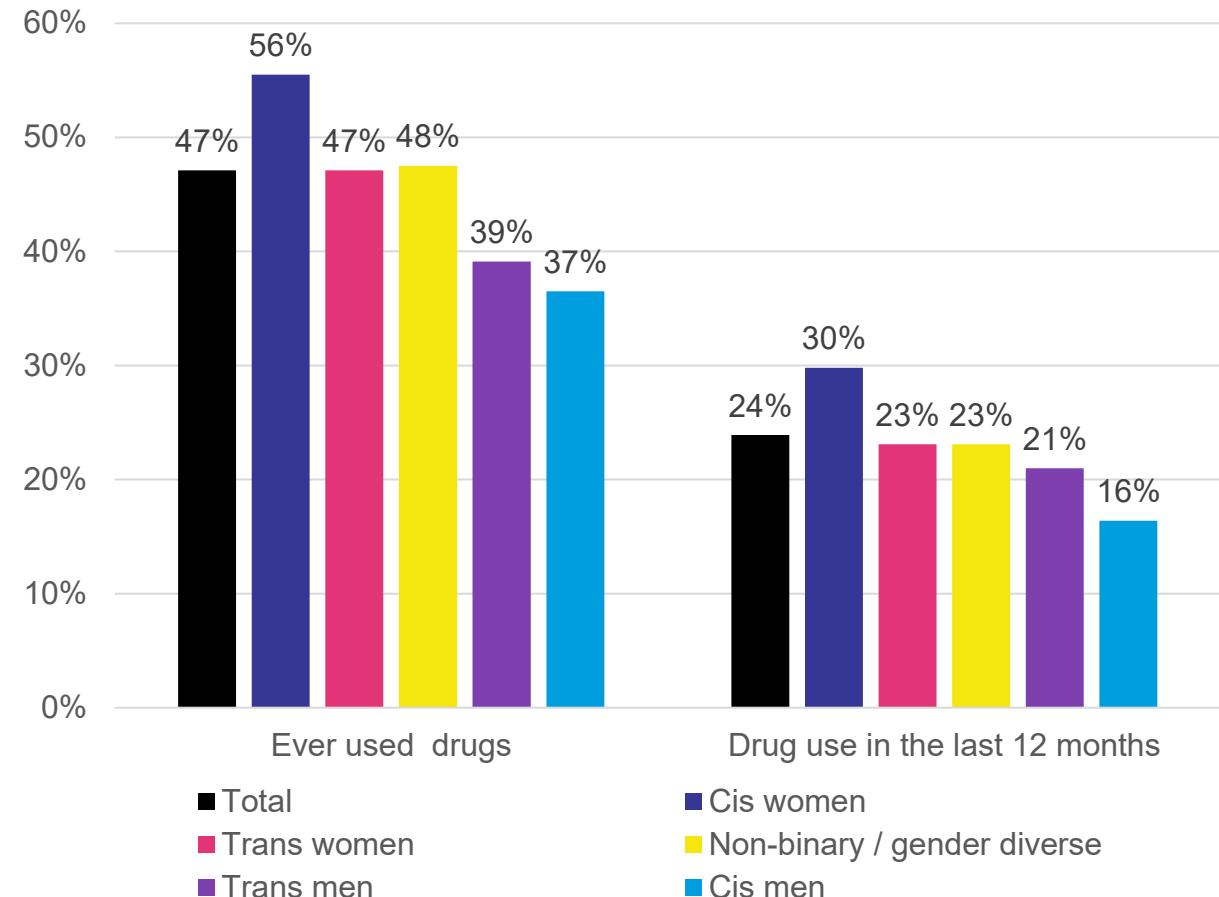
Results: Discrimination

- We used an adapted version of the Brief Anti-Bisexual Experiences Scale.
- **1.5 times higher** levels of bi+ negativity and discrimination from heterosexual people than compared to gay/lesbian people.



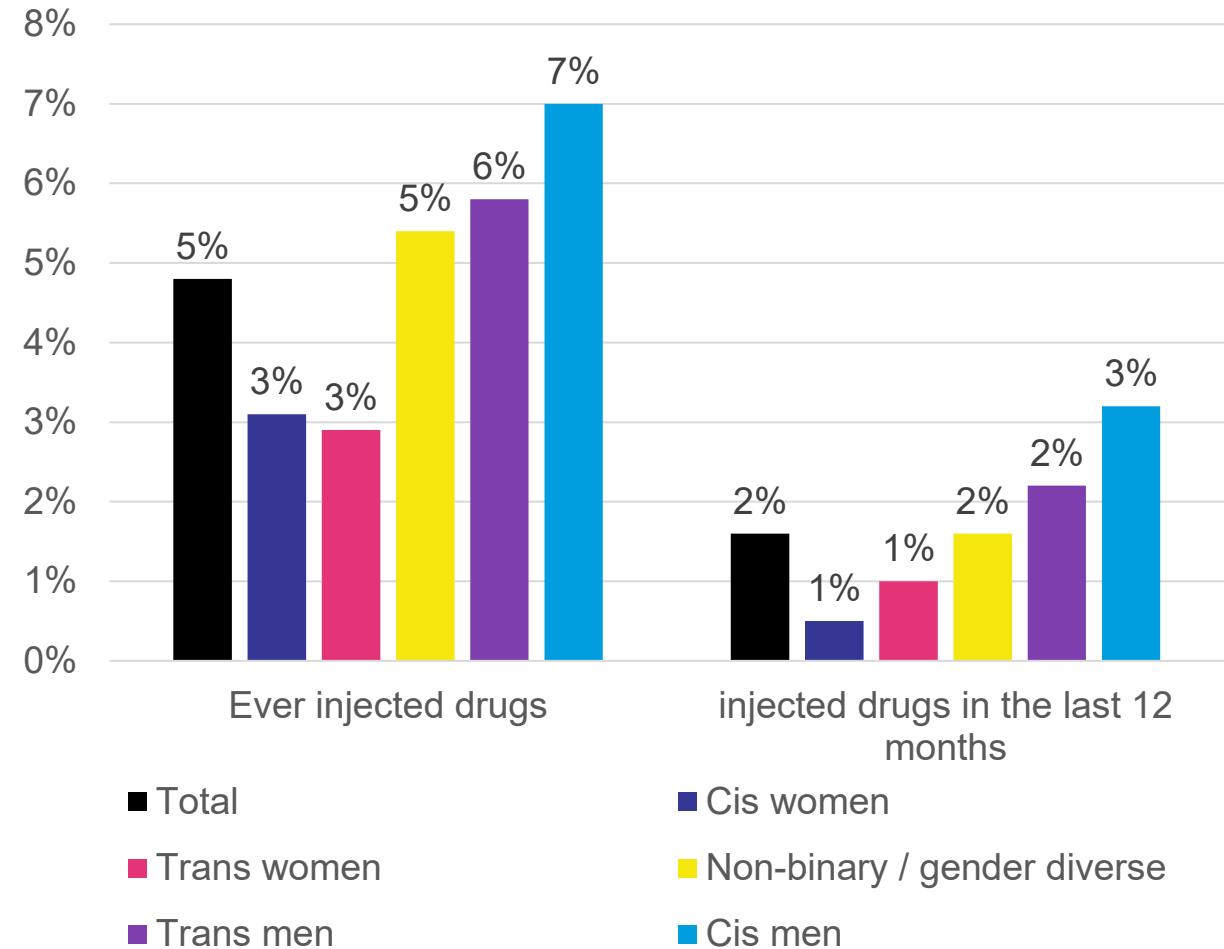
Results: Drug use

- **46.9%** had ever used illicit drugs.
 - Representative of the general Australian population (47%).¹
- **23.7%** had used illicit drugs in the last 12 months.
 - Slightly higher than the general Australian population (18%).¹



Results: Injecting drug use

- **4.8%** had ever injected drugs
 - 3 times the general Australian population (1.4%).¹
- **1.5%** had injected drugs in the last 12 months
 - 8 times the general Australian population (0.2%).¹



Results: Sexual violence and coercion

- 1,939 participants completed this optional section of the survey.
- **64%** had experienced sexual violence and coercion since the age of 18.
 - Four and a half times higher than the general Australian population.¹
 - Cis men were less likely to have experienced sexual violence or coercion (34%). However, this is five times higher than the general male population.
- **40%** told anyone about the last experience.
 - 37% told an informal support (e.g. friend, partner, family, co-worker or another person)
 - 19% told a service (e.g. mental health or medical professional, crisis helpline, police, sexual assault, domestic violence or LGBTQ+ service)

Conclusions

- Our sample of participants lived across all regions of Australia.
- Bi+ people have a wide range of gender and sexual identities.
- Fewer than half of participants were out to their healthcare professionals.
- Bi+ people experience adverse health outcomes compared to the general Australian population:
 - Higher probable mental illness.
 - Higher levels of recent drug use including injecting drug use.
 - More likely to have ever experienced sexual violence and coercion.

Acknowledgments

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