Transgender and Disability Intersections: A Discussion

Gender Odyssey Seattle 2018

Please note: all citations are, unless stated otherwise, from James, S.E., Herman, J.L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC*: National Center for Transgender Equality

* 28% of USTS respondents identified ourselves as disabled (n=7,760) while 39% indicated we had one or more disability as described in the American Community Survey (n=10,809)[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + USTS respondents were six times (30%) more likely to have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition (n=8,315)
    - USTS= 30% - US population=5%
  + USTS respondents were four times (22%) more likely to have difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or getting groceries, due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition (n=6,097)
    - USTS= 22% - US population=6%
  + At least once in the past year before the survey was taken (2015), 1 out of 3 respondents didn’t see a doctor when needed because we couldn’t afford to. (n=9,146) It was worse for disabled USTS respondents—42% (n=3,259) of us didn’t see a doctor when needed because we couldn’t afford to.
    - USTS= 33% - USTS + Disabled= 42%
  + 39% of USTS respondents were currently experiencing psychological distress at the time of the survey (within the last 30 days) (n=10,809). 59% of disabled USTS respondents reported currently experiencing psychological distress at the time of the survey (n=4,578)
    - USTS= 39% - USTS + Disabled=59%
  + 82% of us (n=22,726) have seriously thought about committing suicide at some point in our lives. 40% of USTS respondents (n=11,086) have attempted suicide in our lifetimes. If we are also disabled, 54% of us (n=4,190) have attempted suicide.[[2]](#footnote-2)
    - Suicide attempt rates are much worse for those of us who are transgender men (45%) or a people of color (Native American 57%, multiracial 50%, Black 47%, Latin@ 45%, Middle Eastern 44%) (compare to transgender women=40%; white=37%)
      * Multiple forms of discrimination compound the problems. Two-thirds (66%) of us who are both Native American/Alaskan Native and are also Disabled have attempted suicide in our lifetimes. (41% of the 319 NA/AN respondents identified as disabled n=131; NA/AN + Disabled n=86) [[3]](#footnote-3)
        + USTS= 40% - USTS + Disabled=54% - US Population=4.6%
    - 47% of us have been sexually assaulted in our lifetimes. (n=13,026)[[4]](#footnote-4)
      * Those of us who were Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB) were the most often targeted, including transgender men (51%) and non-binary AFAB (58%)
      * 72% of us who who have ever done sex work for money
      * 65% of us who have ever been homeless
      * 65% of us who are Native American
      * 61% of us who identify as Disabled (n=4,734)
      * 84% of us who are both Native American + Disabled[[5]](#footnote-5)
        + USTS= 47% - USTS + Disabled=61%
    - Even before the so-called “Bathroom Bills”, we have had difficulty finding a safe place to pee. 59% (n=16,352) of us have sometimes (48%) or always (11%) avoided using a public restroom (i.e., work, school) because of fear of discrimination, harassment, assault, and other problems.[[6]](#footnote-6)
      * Transgender men like us were far more likely (75%) to avoid public restrooms, as well as undocumented immigrants (72%), and those of us without “Passing privilege” (80% of us who said others could always or usually tell; 72% of us who said that others could sometimes tell. Contrast this with 48% of us who avoid public restrooms even though we think others can rarely or never tell that we are transgender.)
    - Poverty also affects us at a much greater rate. 29% of USTS respondents live in poverty (n=8,037) compared to US Pop (12%).[[7]](#footnote-7)
      * +Disability 45%, OR Latin@ 43%, NA/AN 41%, multiracial 40%, Black 38%.
      * 8% of us were evicted from our homes in the past year because we are transgender. (n=2,217) [[8]](#footnote-8)
      * 23% of us (n=6,374) experienced 1 or more forms of housing discrimination (which either prevented us from gaining housing or caused us to lose our housing) in the past year because we are transgender. Most vulnerable are those of us who have ever worked in the underground economy (59%) and those of us who have ever been kicked out by our family because we were trans (59%).
        + Unsurprisingly, we also have high rates of homelessness. 30% of us (n=8,315) have experienced homelessness at some point in our lives. 12% of us (n=3,326) were homeless in the past year because of being transgender.
* Over 1/3 of the sample of the USTS were non-binary (p.7) although a specific percentage was not given.

The USTSurvey uses the outdated colonial phrase “American Indian” when describing Native Americans. This is also the way this check box is named in US population surveys. When referring to this group, we used the term Native American or Native American/Alaskan Native, abbreviated as NA/AN. The Survey abbreviates it as AI/AN.

1. USTS 2015 Survey, p 57 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. USTS, p 114 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-AIAN-Report-Dec17.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. USTS p 205 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-AIAN-Report-Dec17.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. USTS p 228 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. USTS, p 144 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. USTS, p 180 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)