

Executive Summary: LGBT Discrimination in Tallahassee

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Description of the Sample Survey Questionnaires were distributed to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered residents of the Tallahassee area through the Family Tree, the Metropolitan Community Church, the Prime-Timers group,, the FSU LGBT Student Union, and the local transgender support group. In total 127 questionnaires were returned using this method. Of these respondents, 121 people identified themselves as white, 2 as black, 1 as Hispanic and 3 as two or more races. In addition there were 66 lesbian women, 47 gay men, 7 bisexual women, 3 bisexual men, and 4 transgendered individuals (3 M2F and 1 F2M).

Experiences with Hostility, Discrimination, and Harassment Respondents were asked about their experiences in Tallahassee of various kinds of hostile behavior, discrimination, and physical harassment. Hostility can be made evident through words or behaviors intended to intimidate or otherwise communicate the anger or disdain of the perpetrator. Discrimination is behavior that singles out persons because of their identity and causes them to be treated differently or unfairly than others receiving the same service or doing the same work. Physical harassment includes behaviors that use physical force or presence to intimidate, disturb, or upset the intended target of the harassment.

Results In the Tallahassee area 46% of the sample (37% of the LGBT men and 53% of the LGBT women) experienced verbal harassment. At the same time 18% of the sample (20% of the men and 17 % of the women) experienced some form of discrimination in housing or employment. Finally in terms of violence 13% of the sample (16% of the men and 12% of the women) indicated that they had experienced physical harassment while living in Tallahassee. These numbers suggest that while the LGBT population in Tallahassee is somewhat less likely to experience verbal harassment than in other parts of the country, they are more likely to experience discrimination. The results for physical violence are split with men in Tallahassee experiencing less violence than other parts of the country and women in Tallahassee experiencing somewhat more violence. Furthermore both gender dissonant women (women who identify themselves as more masculine or butch) and gender dissonant men (men who identify themselves as less masculine or macho) each experience markedly higher incidence of hostility, discrimination, and harassment. These figures suggest that in order to provide more complete protection from discrimination for LGBT individuals, it is important to not simply list sexual orientation as a protected class, but also to add gender identity or appearance to the list of protected classes.

Experiences of Gender Dissonant and Non-Dissonant Men and Women

TYPES OF EXPERIENCE		LGBT MEN			LGBT WOMEN			TOTAL
		Not GD	GD	Both	Not GD	GD	Both	
Has respondent experienced	NO	24	8	32	28	8	36	68
hostility in TLH	%	70.6%	47.1%	62.7%	51.9%	36.4%	47.4%	53.5%
	YES	10	9	19	26	14	40	59
	%	29.4%	52.9%	37.3%	48.1%	63.6%	52.6%	46.5%
	Total	34	17	51	54	22	76	127
Has respondent ever experienced	NO	30	11	41	45	18	63	104
discrimination in TLH	%	88.2%	64.7%	80.4%	83.3%	81.8%	82.9%	81.9%
	YES	4	6	10	9	4	13	23
	%	11.8%	35.3%	19.6%	16.7%	18.2%	17.1%	18.1%
	Total	34	17	51	54	22	76	127
Has respondent ever experienced	NO	29	14	43	48	19	67	110
physical harassment in TLH	%	85.3%	82.4%	84.3%	88.9%	86.4%	88.2%	86.6%
	YES	5	3	8	6	3	9	17
	%	14.7%	17.6%	15.7%	11.1%	13.6%	11.8%	13.4%
	Total	34	17	51	54	22	76	127

Where gender dissonant means self identified gender is very butch for women or NOT macho for men
Source: Tallahassee LGBT Survey