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**BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION**

# **Key Insights into the experiences of LGBTQ Californians from a Statewide Survey about COVID-19, Equity, and Domestic Violence**

April 2021

Blue Shield of California Foundation sponsored a statewide survey of 1,918 California adults 18 and older to understand experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, equity, and domestic violence. The non-partisan research firm PerryUndem developed and analyzed the survey and Ipsos fielded the survey online January 6 – 22, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

The survey found that many Californians are experiencing serious impacts from the pandemic, and provides insights to their experiences with race, health, finances, and a growth in the conditions that cause domestic violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has had major effects on the mental and emotional health and financial stability across many communities. The survey data offer insights into the experiences within diverse LGBTQ communities, while revealing the intense impacts they are feeling. Following are some key insights from the 293 LGBTQ Californians who participated in our survey:

## **COVID-19 IMPACTS**

LGBTQ adults are experiencing serious impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic including feelings of isolation, depression, concerns about their safety, and economic strain. Key findings include:

- 89% of LGBTQ respondents say the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major (33%) or minor (56%) effect on them and their families.
- Since the pandemic started, 78% of LGBTQ Californians say they have felt isolated from others and 62% say they have felt trapped in their homes.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey of 1,918 California adults included: 428 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) adults; 423 Black adults; 401 Latinx adults; and 293 LGBTQ adults. The survey was offered in English, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Tagalog, and Spanish. The margin of sampling error for total results is + 3.2 percentage points.

- Nearly two-thirds report feeling unsafe (64%) or depressed (64%); and 43% report feeling panic and severe anxiety.
- There have also been deep economic impacts of the pandemic. 35% report their incomes have gone down. More than a quarter say they have had to go to work even though they felt unsafe (29%) and one in five say they have lost a job (20%).

## DISCRIMINATION

LGBTQ Californians also report feeling and experiencing the effects of discrimination in their lives. Key findings include:

- 93% of LGBTQ adults believe racism has increased (68%) or stayed the same (25%) in recent years.
- Two-thirds of LGBTQ adults feel it is a “bad time” to be a transgender or nonbinary person (67%) in America; half say the same about being a LGTBQ person (54%).
- More than one in four LGBTQ Californians (26%) say they do not feel personally accepted as an equal and valuable member of society.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

One purpose of the survey was to better understand feelings about and experiences with domestic violence. The results show that the vast majority of LGBTQ Californians see this as a serious issue that should be addressed by the public. They strongly support alternatives to jail for those who cause domestic violence as well. Key findings include:

- 92% of LGBTQ adults say domestic violence is a serious problem in society right now.
- 76% of LGBTQ adults feel domestic violence is a public issue that should be addressed by all of us in society. Less than one in ten (9%) say it is a private issue that should stay within families.
- 93% of LGBTQ adults think the pandemic and the stay-at home orders in California have made domestic violence incidents more likely to occur.
- 78% of LGBTQ adults believe the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders have made it harder for people experiencing domestic violence to reach out for help.
- 84% of LGBTQ adults support alternatives to jail for people who cause domestic violence. This could be counseling, including substance abuse counseling, supervision by a social worker, or restitution to the person who experienced the violence (for example, paying for their therapy, medical expenses, or loss of employment).