

Lessons learned from conducting online focus groups of transgender and nonbinary adults

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Fast Facts

- 6 focus groups
 - 1 of transgender women
 - 1 of transgender men
 - 1 of nonbinary adults
 - 3 mixed groups of people who fell into one of the above categories
 - **Lesson:** Having some shared-identity groups and some groups with a mix of gender identities worked well
- Conducted online in March 2022
 - **Lesson:** Provide tech support
- 90-minute groups with 4-5 participants in each
 - **Lesson:** Be prepared to skip questions (either decide in advance, or on the fly)

Recruitment

- Targeted email outreach among panel of qualified candidates as well as connections through professional networks and LGBTQ+ organizations, followed by screening call
- Recruited 6 participants per group (to seat 4-5)
 - **Lesson:** Overrecruit
- \$175 incentive + entry into raffle for additional \$25 for arriving early
- **Lesson:** Check for relationships between participants

Screening Questions

Which of the following terms best describes your gender? Are you a man, a woman, nonbinary, or do you use another term that I haven't mentioned? **[IF R SAYS ANOTHER IDENTITY: What term do you use?]**

Man

Woman

Nonbinary

Another identity (**Specify: _____**)

Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)

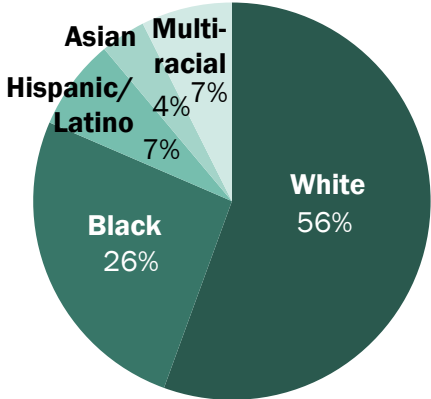
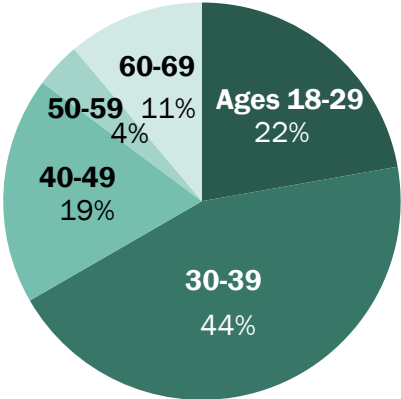
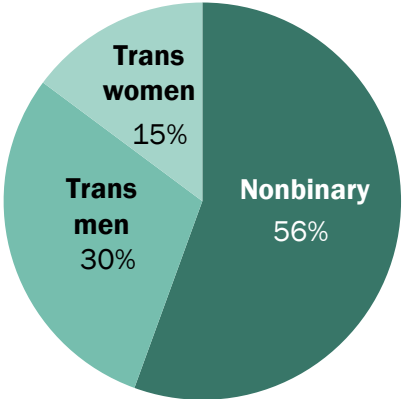
Do you consider yourself to be transgender?

Yes

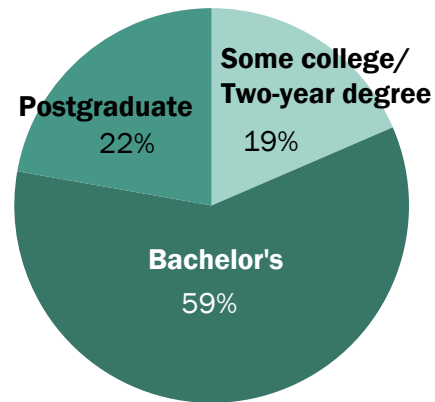
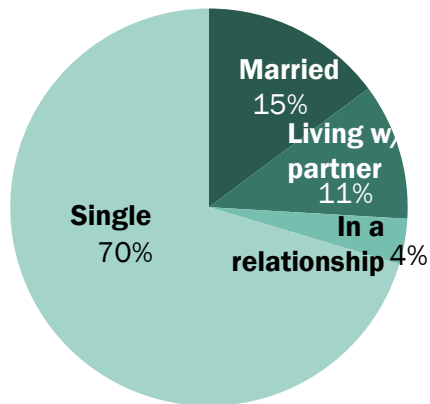
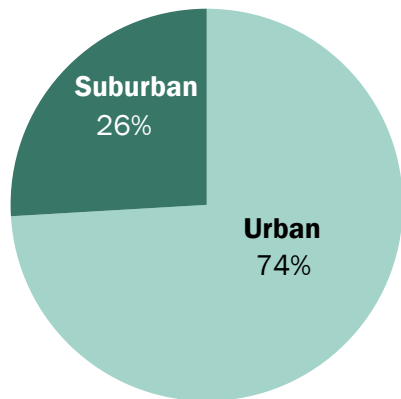
No

Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)

Focus Group Composition



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Conducting the Focus Groups

- **Lesson:** Pay attention to sensitive language in the screening questionnaire and discussion guide
 - Avoid language that is outdated or seen as offensive by many trans people
 - Ask participants for their preferred name and the pronouns they use (*and use them*)
 - Be aware that not everyone will use the “transgender” label; follow their lead
- **Lesson:** Hire experienced moderators who are trans/nonbinary themselves
- **Lesson:** Set ground rules, allow participants to skip any sensitive question
- **Lesson:** Ensure confidentiality

Key Takeaways

- Approach the topic with sensitivity and respect. Partner with or hire trans/nonbinary people to help develop materials and to moderate, if the research team is mostly cisgender.
- Carefully plan the screening questionnaire, focus group structure, and discussion guide to meet the project's goals
- Overrecruit, and have a plan to keep the groups running smoothly (offering tech support, cutting/reordering questions if it's moving too slowly)

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