



# IPV in LGBTQ+ communities during COVID

Sarah Peitzmeier, PhD

# Domestic Violence Is a Pandemic Within the COVID-19 Pandemic

ANALYSIS WOMEN **THE WIRE**

## As COVID-19 Raged, the Shadow Pandemic of Domestic Violence Swept Across the Globe

Restrictions on mobility and loss of economic opportunities necessitated by the COVID-19 lockdowns have resulted in a significant rise in domestic violence cases across the world. India saw a 100% jump in the number of victims seeking help during the lockdowns.

The New York Times

THE INTERPRETER

## *A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide*

Movement restrictions aimed to stop the spread of the coronavirus may be making violence in homes more frequent, more severe and more dangerous.

## Domestic violence shadow pandemic has not gone away after lockdown

August 20, 2020 5:26am EDT

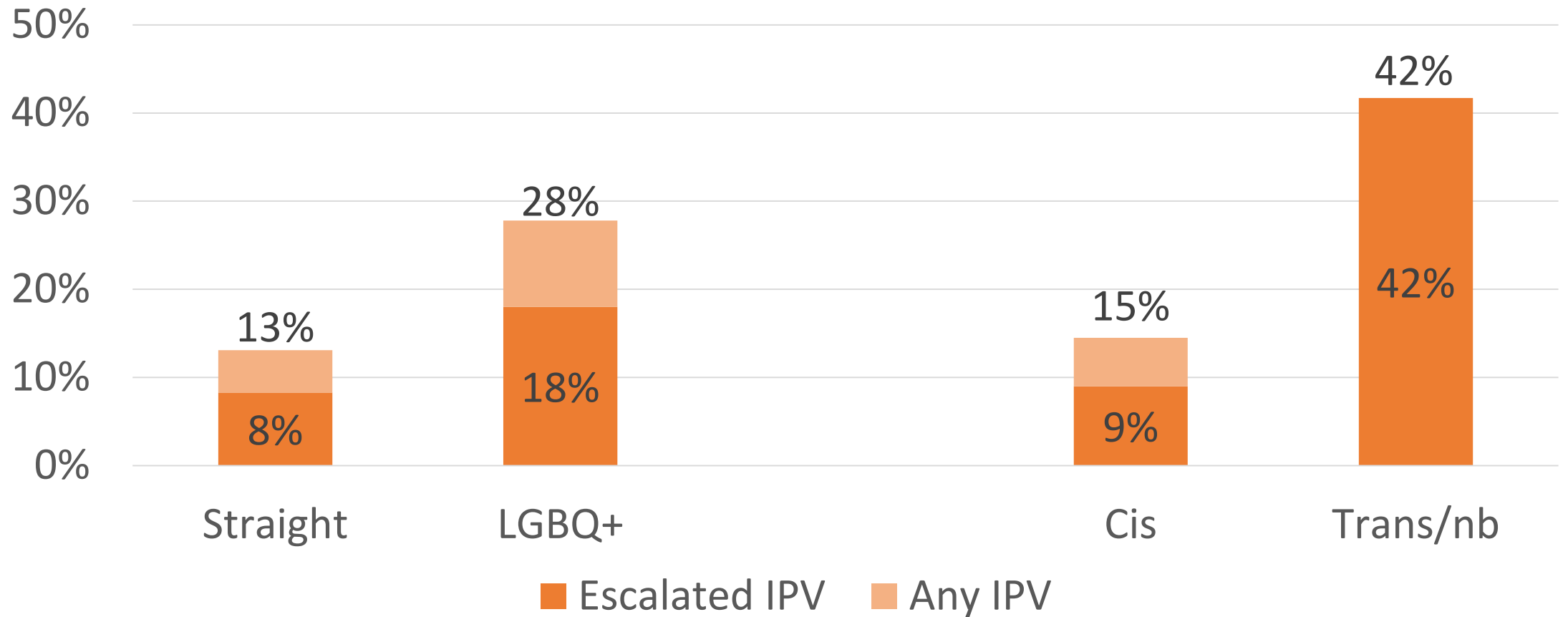


Children are at high risk of domestic violence and abuse, but are often left out of research and strategies to address it. Joaquin Corbalean P/Shutterstock

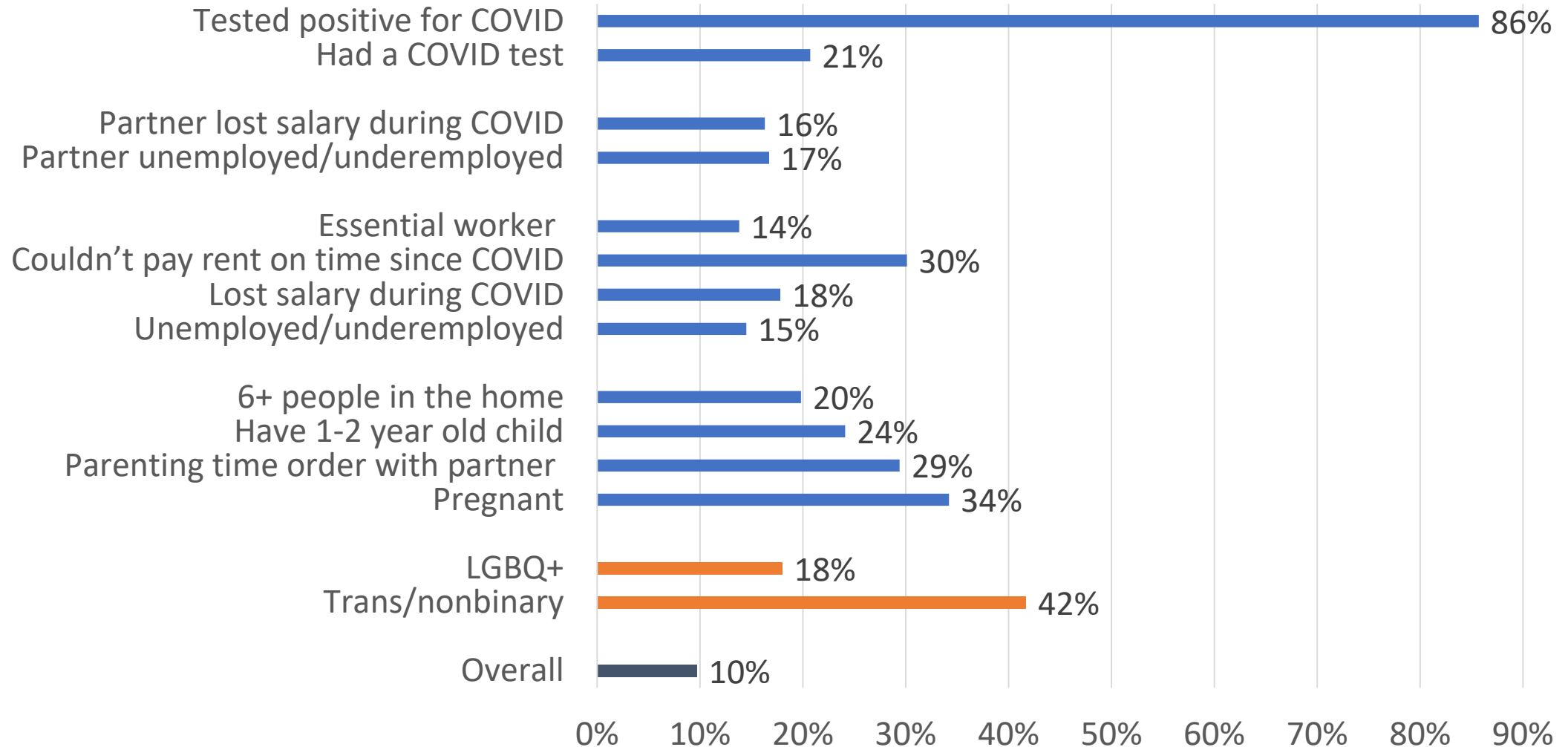
# Methods

- Online survey of **1169 women and transgender/nonbinary individuals** throughout Michigan.
  - 18+, women and/or trans, partnered in the last year, lived in Michigan
- Recruited through Qualtrics Panels matched to state distributions:
  - At least 15% rural
  - 15% Black; 6% Latino; 5% Asian; and 7% multiracial or other race/ethnicity
  - We also ensured at least 21% were aged 55+
- Did not quota sample for but ended up with:
  - **158 LGBTQ people and 24 trans/nonbinary people** (not mutually exclusive)
  - Matching the state income distribution
- Collected between **June 26** and **August 11**, 2020. 20 validated items assessing physical, sexual, psychological, and tech-facilitated IPV
- Ethical/safety considerations → IRB approval and study collaboration with the Michigan DV and SA Treatment and Prevention Board

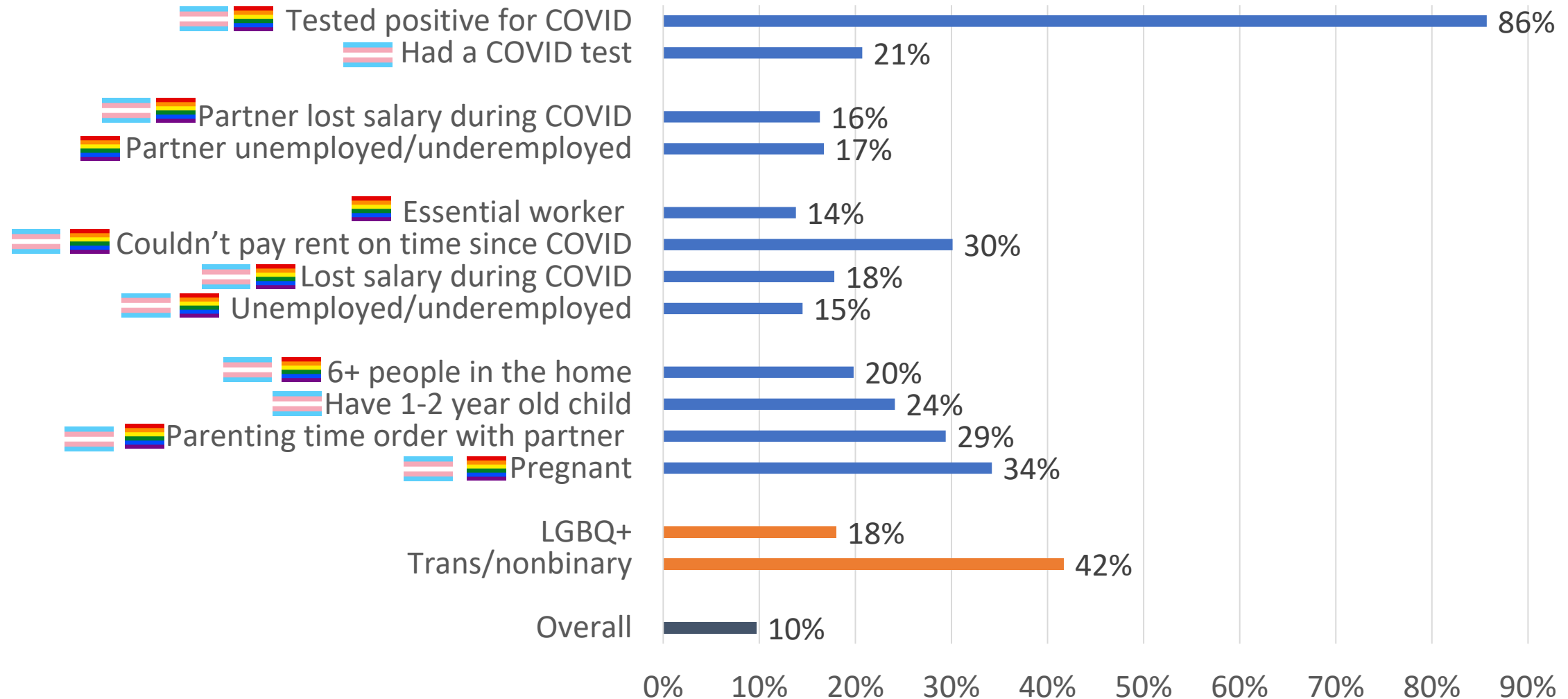
# LGBTQ Michiganders more likely to experience IPV and more likely to say it got worse during COVID



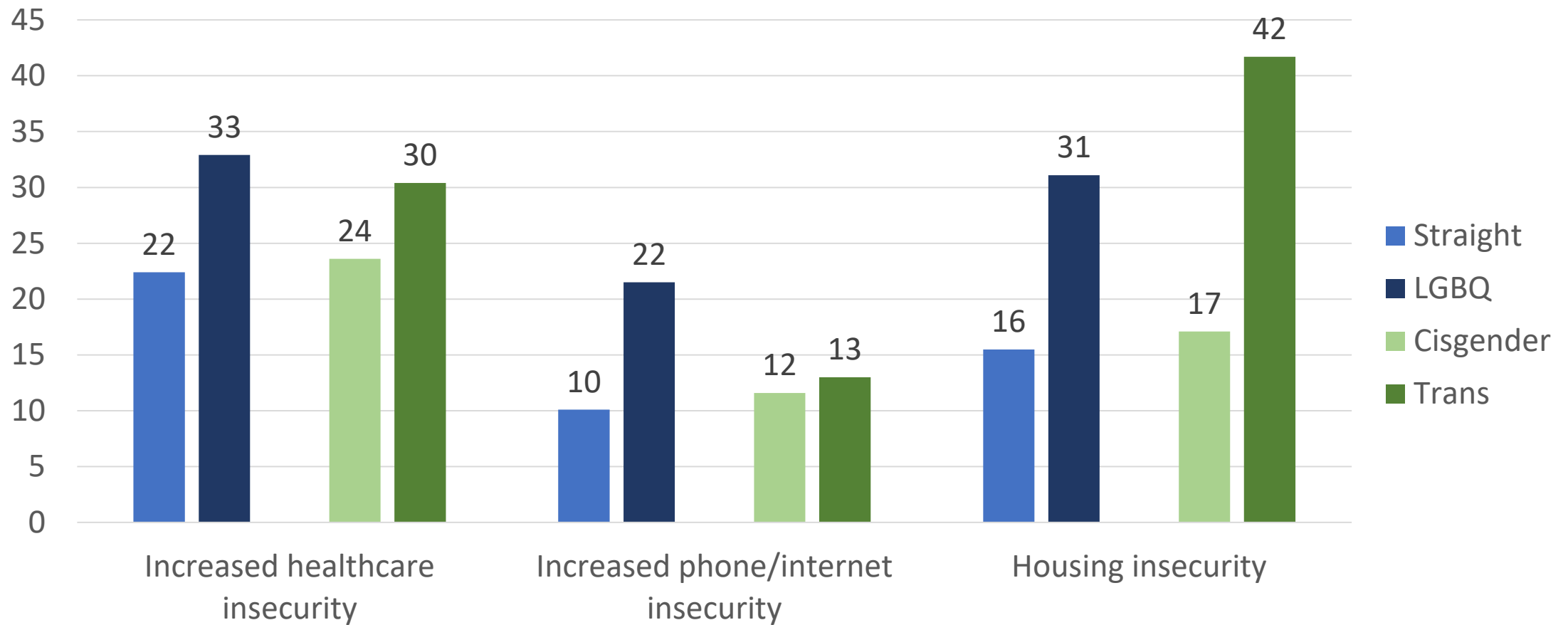
# Risk factors for IPV escalation during COVID



# Risk factors for IPV escalation during COVID



# COVID-period increases in economic and healthcare insecurity disproportionately affected LGBTQ+



# LGBTQ+ survivors had higher levels of helpseeking but also higher unmet needs

	Cis/hetero survivors (N=123)	LGBTQ survivors (n=50)
Wanted to see doctor about IPV, but afraid partner would find out	18.0%	34%*
Wanted to see doctor about IPV, but afraid of COVID	19.7%	28.0%
Wanted to contact IPV org, but afraid partner would find out	13.8%	34.0%*
Wanted to contact IPV org, but afraid of COVID	12.2%	26.0%*
Wanted to contact IPV org, but their services were limited due to COVID	16.4%	36.0%*
Needed but did not receive...		
Housing	8.9%	24%
Help with Protective Order	5.7%	14%
Counseling or emotional support	5.7%	14%
Medical care for injuries	4.9%	4%
SANE exam	0.8%	6%
Medical care for pregnancy/sexual health	2.4%	2%

# There are many potential touchpoints to reach survivors, even during lockdowns

Potential touchpoints, given the percentage of LGBTQ+ survivors who:



## **COVID Testing Sites**

Tested COVID+ (26.5%)

Had a COVID test (38.8%)



## **Prenatal + pediatric clinics, schools/daycare**

Were pregnant (32%)

Had an infant/toddler (22%)



## **Workplaces + unemployment services**

Essential worker (52%)

Unemployed (20%)



## **LGBTQ community orgs**

Percentage of LGBTQ+ survivors who went to public spaces during lockdown:



## **Stores**

Grocery (88%)

Liquor store (24%)

Restaurants (16%)



## **Pharmacy and hospital**

Pharmacy (30%)

Hospital (10%)

Universal education and referral to IPV services at prenatal and pediatric clinics, pharmacy, daycares/schools, COVID testing sites. Educational campaigns through workplaces, unemployment services, LGBTQ orgs, grocery/liquor stores, public transport

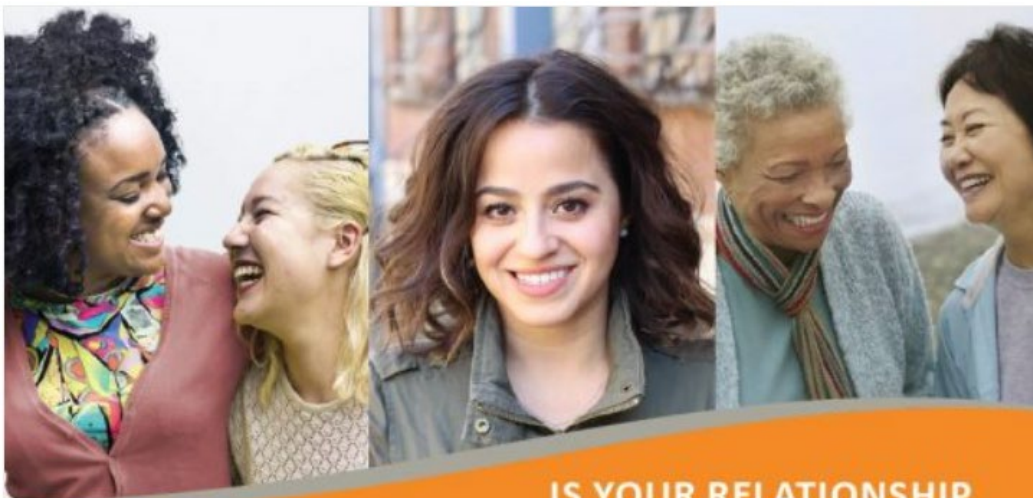
# Universal education + empowerment approaches hold promise for PHEs



- Obviates some of the time and skill needed to screen and obtain disclosures when health system is overwhelmed
- Prevalence is so high, particularly in LGBTQ populations, that education to patient and by extension their community has high yield of reaching survivors
- Particularly useful for LGBTQ+ communities with higher prevalence of medical mistrust and prior negative experiences in the medical system, where obtaining a disclosure may take a long period of relationship building
- For those who are being seen by televisit, obviates need for survivor to disclose violence to provider if abuser is listening in on the conversation without the provider's knowledge

# Example script

*Because people are more stressed than ever, we are sharing ideas about helping yourself and people you care about. Some types of stress that people are feeling are not having enough food to eat, not having a stable place to live or getting behind on the rent, worries about having enough hot water or heat, not having childcare, feeling lonely or sad, or experiencing stress in a relationship. We want to you to know that we are here for you. We send over a resource sheet to all families, such as fresh food, who to call for help with utilities, numbers to call if you are stressed, lonely, or **experiencing violence**, and childcare. **One of the things on the resource list we talk to everyone about is how more stress in our relationships may come with fighting or harm, and that can affect our health. There is free, confidential help available if you know someone who is being hurt in their relationship.** Before we end our visit, I want to take a pause and see if there is anything that this conversation has brought up for you that you would like to discuss. It is your choice if you want to share, and we provide resources to all families.*



IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP  
AFFECTING YOUR HEALTH?

**Trans/GNC? In a relationship?**  
Caring Relationships,  
Healthy You



**Caring Relationships,  
Healthy You**



# Takeaways

- LGBTQ+ individuals were disproportionately affected by both IPV and surges in IPV severity during the early COVID period
- LGBTQ+ individuals subject to complex constellation of other risk factors, and increases in levels of those risk factors, during the early COVID period
- Despite this, many opportunities to reach survivors even during lockdowns
- Universal education and empowerment approaches may be particularly helpful for LGBTQ+ individuals and PHEs



# Thank you

Sarah Peitzmeier

[speitzme@umich.edu](mailto:speitzme@umich.edu)

@sarahpeitzmeier