

Fast Facts

Survey of Violence & Discrimination Against Sexual Minorities by Susan Wright

The 2008 survey saw a total of 3,058 responses collected. Of those, 2,412 respondents resided in the United States (83.4%). Of the remaining 480 respondents, a total of over 42 other countries were represented.

Where appropriate, the data is compared to the 1998 Violence & Discrimination Survey Against Sexual Minorities which collected over 1,000 responses to similar questions over the course of a year. The 1998 survey did not cover business or event-related experiences of harassment, nor did it ask about Internet experiences. The 2008 survey also included more questions about sexual activity and identity.

Table 1. Gender

	<u>2008</u>	<u>1998</u>
Woman	51%	46%
Man	45%	51%
Transgender	5%	1%
Intersexed	1%	2%

Table 2. Sexual Orientation

	<u>2008</u>	<u>1998</u>
Heterosexual	41%	40%
Bisexual	35%	36%
Gay/lesbian	22%	22%
Other	7%	4%

A total of 1,146 (37.5%) respondents indicated that they had either been discriminated against, had experienced some form of harassment or violence, or had some form of harassment or discrimination aimed at their BDSM-leather-fetish-related business. Of the respondents who reported some form of persecution, 476 (41.5%) identified as male, 615 (53.7%) identified as female, 9 (.8%) identified as intersexed and 78 (6.8%) identified as transgendered. (Sexual orientation, like gender, was a question which required some answer, but allowed respondents to choose as many as they felt might apply, so the percentage totals more than 100%.)

Of the 1,146 respondents who indicated that they had either been discriminated against or had experienced some form of harassment or violence, 380 (33.2%) identified as heterosexual, 440 (38.4%) identified as bisexual and 292 (25.5%) identified as gay or lesbian. Another 97 (8.5%) indicated that they identified in some other way from heterosexual, bisexual or gay/lesbian. (Sexual orientation, like gender, was a question which required some answer, but allowed respondents to choose as many as they felt might apply, so the percentage totals more than %100.)

The sexual orientation of respondents who were discriminated against or had experienced some form of harassment or violence is compared in Table 6.1 to the total percentage of respondents who identified their orientation. It is interesting to note that Gay/lesbian, Bisexual and Other respondents have slightly higher rates of persecution than their average percentage of total respondents, while Heterosexuals are less likely to be discriminated against.

Table 3. Sexual Orientation and Discrimination

	<u>Total % 2008 respondents</u>	<u>% persecuted</u>
Gay/lesbian	22%	25.5%
Bisexual	35%	38.4%
Heterosexual	41%	33.2%
Other	7%	8.5%
total	105%	105.6%

In 1998, the survey asked: "Are you completely 'out' about your involvement in sexual minority practices?" 62% stated they were not "completely out." That is statistically almost the same as the 59.5 and 59.7% of respondents in the current survey who said they weren't out to work and/or family.

11.3% (346) of the total number of respondents (3,058) reported being discriminated against by professional or personal service providers. That is 30% (346) of the respondents who were discriminated against (1,146). Those respondents could check one or more of the specific ways they were discriminated against (Table 8.), with 48.8% discriminated against by a medical doctor, and 39.3% discriminated against by a mental health practitioner.

Table 4. Discrimination by Professionals

Medical Doctor	48.8%
Mental Health practitioner	39.3%
Police or govt. employee	25.4%
Other Professional service provider	8.4%
Lawyer	7.8%
Other Personal service provider	6.1%
Dentist	1.7%
Building contractor	1.7%
Accountant	1.2%
Other	6.9%

In total, 203 (6.6%) respondents stated their business had been harassed or discriminated against. Respondents could check one or more of the specific ways they were discriminated against (Table 5.).

Table 5. Business Discrimination

Negative media coverage	26.1%
Harassment by police/author	22.2%
Harassment by neighbors	20.7%
Harassment by organizations	20.2%
Loss of lease	17.7%
Refused credit card services	14.8%
Loss of business	13.8%
Refused insurance coverage	8.9%
Loss of occupancy certificate	4.9%
Arrest	3.0%
Fines	2.0%
Other	24.6%

When asked, "Have you curtailed your use of the Internet for fear of prosecution?" More than one-third of the respondents, 1,065 (34.8%) of the 3058 respondents, said "yes". Respondents could check one or more of the specific ways they curtailed their Internet use (Table 10.).

Table 6. Curtailed Internet Use

Didn't post image	71.5%
Didn't visit website	45.7%
Didn't post text	43.4%
Didn't link to website	38.7%
Didn't join email group	31.0%
Posted 18-over warn	25.7%
Barred users	16.1%
Didn't add meta-text	8.0%
Other	11.0%

9.3% of respondents, 285 out of the total returned surveys, reported that US 2257 had an impact on their use of the Internet. Of the 1,065 respondents who indicated that they had curtailed their use of the Internet regarding BDSM activities, 214 (20.1%) reported that US 2257 was a significant reason for that curtailment.

When respondents who experienced violence and/or harassment were asked, "Did you press charges?" 90% said no as compared to 96% of the respondents in the 1998 survey who did not press charges.

Table 7. Reasons declined to press charges

Fear of further harassment	41.0%
Fear of family disapproval	24.1%
Fear of job safety	22.2%
Fear of legal repercussions	21.9%
Fear of losing child custody	10.6%

Other

34%

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