SEXUAL ORIENTATION & GENDER IDENTITY DIVERSITY IN ENTERTAINMENT:

Experiences & Perspectives of SAG-AFTRA Members

By M. V. Lee Badgett & Jody L. Herman

SAG·AFTRA

the Williams INSTITUTE

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A LETTER FROM THE

SAG-AFTRA PRESIDENT

From the founding days in the 1930s, both SAG and AFTRA have been concerned with the challenges of inequality and lack of access to employment in our industry. As one union, SAG-AFTRA continues to be committed to positively influencing the entertainment, news and media industries through diversity policies and committees. The star power and greater visibility enjoyed by historically underrepresented performers today, is a direct result of decades of activism of individual minority groups, advocacy and civil rights organizations, and the union.

SAG-AFTRA is proud to honor that commitment through the commission of this study as we strive to attain full inclusion and equal employment for all members who represent the wide diversity of our global society.

Initiated by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Committee, this unprecedented study was designed to learn more about the experiences and perspectives of LGBT and non-LGBT actors, and I would like to recognize the LGBT Committee for their leadership and foresight; in particular the ceaseless dedication by the Committee Co-Chairs, Jason Stuart and Traci Godfrey. I would also like to thank everyone at the Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy at UCLA for conducting the research and authoring the study—their academic rigor and institutional integrity have produced a truly remarkable report. This initiative would not have been possible without funding from the SAG-Producers Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund (IACF); we salute the IACF Trustees for their support and willingness to blaze this trial with us. And a well-deserved congratulations to our Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel, Duncan Crabtree-Ireland and the Equal Employment Opportunities & Diversity Department, led by Adam Moore, for their work on this project over the past three years.

In light of the exceptional and, until now, largely undocumented employment situation of LGBT actors in the industry, this examination of their situation, including working conditions and hiring patterns, is the groundbreaking first step necessary to give this group a legitimate voice that moves beyond anecdotal stories and experiences; providing insight into every facet of what our members go through when preparing for, seeking and landing work. We are now in a position to move the ball forward and ensure that those future SAG-AFTRA members can benefit from what we will achieve as a result of this study's impact.

In solidarity,

Ken Howard
President, SAG-AFTRA

A LETTER FROM THE

NATIONAL CO-CHAIRS

SAG-AFTRA LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER COMMITTEE

As sexual and gender orientation are not necessarily visible traits, LGBT people face a unique kind of social scrutiny based upon whether they are perceived to be LGBT or not. In the case of LGBT actors, many have expressed social and professional pressure to hide their orientation for fear of disparate treatment or even loss of employment. In 2006, when the SAG Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Actors Committee was founded, it was formed to provide support to LGBT actors so that they would no longer feel as if they needed to hide who they were in order to work in this business. The SAG-AFTRA LGBT committee continues this work and encompasses all SAG-AFTRA members working in entertainment and news media—our purpose is to provide support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members and to educate the membership, the industry and the public on LGBT issues with a focus on ending discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, the committee focuses on identifying the attitudes and perceptions that lead to the limitations placed on LGBT actors to play only LGBT roles or stereotyped LGBT roles in order to find ways to overcome these obstacles so that to LGBT actors can play diverse roles.

In light of the exceptional and largely undocumented employment history of LGBT actors in the entertainment industry, the committee sought funding to conduct a first-of-its-kind, in-depth look into the lives of performers. We are extremely grateful to the SAG-Producers Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund for their support and funding that made this study possible.

As revealed in the following pages, although our industry is heading in the right direction, there is clearly work left to do as certain attitudes and behaviors persist and continue to put pressure on actors to stay in the closet. We are confident that this unprecedented study will have profound ramifications for the entertainment industry as a whole. By utilizing the data it contains as it reflects the realities performers face, we can identify the obstacles to equal employment opportunities and full inclusion. With a shared goal of our audition rooms and workplaces free of discrimination and harassment, we look forward to working with our industry partners to implement strategies that will affect even greater positive change and realize this goal.

We would like to thank all those members who participated through focus groups and as survey responses; your candor has shed light on experiences of both LGBT and non-LGBT performers and will serve as the basis for recommendations on how to improve the relationships and work environment of everyone who works in this industry. On behalf of the entire SAG-AFTRA LGBT Committee, we want to acknowledge the incredible work done by The Williams Institute at UCLA and, in particular, Dr. M. V. Lee Badgett and Dr. Jody Herman for their extraordinary dedication and commitment to this endeavor as well as their continued efforts to illuminate LGBT experiences and perspectives.

In solidarity,

Traci Godfrey & Jason Stuart
National Co-Chairs, SAG-AFTRA LGBT Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Though the entertainment industry through film, television, and other media reflects positive social changes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in the U.S., we currently know little about the progress toward full inclusion of LGBT performers in entertainment.

This study expands the research on diversity and inclusion in entertainment and provides the first insight into how sexual orientation and gender identity influence performers' experiences working in the profession. In this study, we compare the working conditions and professional outcomes of LGBT performers with those of non-LGBT (non-transgender heterosexual) performers. We explored the ways in which performers find work in the entertainment industry and the climate in which they are working through an online survey of 5,700 SAG-AFTRA members conducted in fall 2012.

In general, SAG-AFTRA provides a supportive union environment for LGBT performers, with members holding very supportive views about LGBT people – much more so than the general public. Respondents were generally supportive of LGBT people playing heterosexual and non-transgender roles. For example, 80% of respondents agreed that transgender women should be considered for roles written for women and that transgender men should be considered for roles written for men.

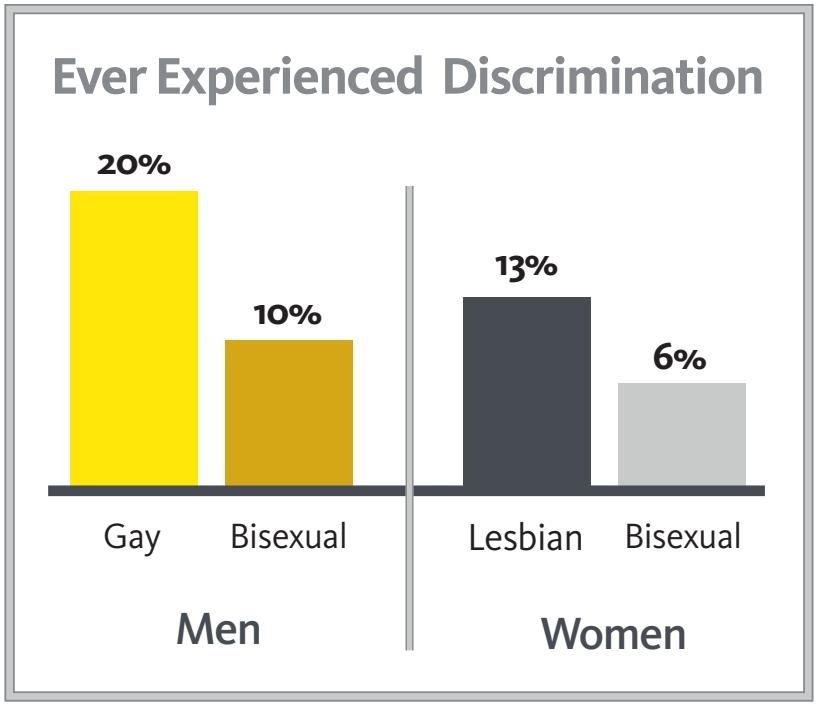
However, we found that LGBT performers may have substantial barriers to overcome in their search for jobs.

53% of LGBT respondents believed that directors and producers **are biased against** LGBT performers in hiring.

About a third of respondents believed that casting directors, directors, and producers may be biased against LGBT performers, meaning sexual orientation and gender identity could factor into their hiring decisions.

- 53% of LGBT respondents believed that directors and producers are biased against LGBT performers in hiring, and 34% of non-LGBT respondents reported this same perceived bias.
- 31% of all respondents indicated they think casting directors are biased against LGBT performers.

Though respondents generally thought that LGB actors are "marketable" as heterosexual romantic leads, they also believed that producers and studio executives think LGB actors are less "marketable" to the public than heterosexual actors: 45% of LG respondents strongly believed that producers and studio executives think LG performers are less marketable, whereas 27% of bisexual respondents and 15% of heterosexual respondents strongly agreed.



- Over half of LGB performers have heard directors and producers make anti-gay comments about actors. About a fifth of LG performers have experienced casting directors making comments about their sexual orientation or gender expression that made them uncomfortable.

- LGBT respondents are less likely than heterosexual respondents to have an agent, which may put LGBT performers at a disadvantage when looking for work.

- Nine percent of LG respondents reported that they had been turned down for a role due to their sexual orientation, while 4% of bisexual respondents reported this.

When LGBT performers find work, their treatment on the job is different in some ways and similar in some ways to the treatment of non-LGBT performers. Our findings suggest that differences in on-the-job experiences and discrimination continue to put LGBT performers at a professional disadvantage.

- On set, more than half of LGBT performers had heard anti-LGBT comments, and over a third had witnessed disrespectful treatment that has also been noticed by non-LGBT performers.

- Judging from their most recent jobs, LGB performers are getting similar types of roles and jobs as heterosexual performers. But their earnings outcomes suggest differences in opportunities: bisexual men earned less over the year, while lesbian and gay actors had lower average daily earnings than heterosexual actors.

- The percentage of non-LGBT respondents who reported directly witnessing discrimination against LGBT performers, 13%, is very close to the 16% of LGBT respondents who reported experiencing discrimination or harassment.

- Gay men were the most likely to report they have experienced some form of discrimination, with one in five reporting an experience. Bisexual actors were about half as likely to report discrimination as gay or lesbian actors.

- Gender nonconforming gay and bisexual men were more likely to experience discrimination, as were men who were out professionally. [1]

Findings from our survey suggest that when a performer plays an LGBT role, that experience may have an impact on them and their future roles. Most heterosexual performers (71%) have never played an LG role over the course of their career, but 58% of lesbian and gay performers and 33% of bisexual performers have. Only 4% of all respondents have played a bisexual role. Notably, respondents were less likely to have played a transgender role. Fourteen percent (14%) of LG performers and 8% of bisexual performers have played a transgender role. Few non-LGBT performers (3%) have played a transgender role. The dearth of transgender roles is likely to be one reason for this difference.

- More than a third of survey respondents (about 35%) agreed that performers in LGB roles will be thought of as LGB themselves.

- While most respondents who played gay roles believed it had no impact on subsequent roles, a quarter of LGB respondents and one fifth of bisexual

On set, more than half of LGBT performers had heard anti-LGBT comments.

FOOTNOTE

1. As we explain in more detail later in this report, a woman is "gender nonconforming" if she reports that others would consider her equally masculine and feminine or somewhat, mostly, or very masculine in her appearance or mannerisms; a man was gender nonconforming if he is considered equally masculine and feminine, or somewhat, mostly, or very feminine.

respondents believed it affected their later work.

Our survey suggests that coming out is an important decision for LGBT performers, a decision with potential effects on those performers' careers. They worried that being out will hurt their professional life, while at the same time they saw that being out can result in potential improvements to their sense of well-being and their ability to improve their professional prospects.

- Lesbian and gay performers were more likely to be out professionally than are bisexual actors. A small minority of lesbian and gay actors said they are not out in their professional lives, while a majority of bisexuals said they are not out.

- LGBT actors were less out to industry professionals with more decision-making power or influence than they are out to others in their professional lives.

- Being out as an LGBT performer is a complicated concept and not necessarily completely under the control of LGBT performers, since many reported that other people can tell they are LGBT, especially for those who are gender nonconforming.

- Among lesbian and gay respondents who were out, 72% said it had no effect on their careers, and many would encourage other LGBT performers to come out.

Despite the barriers for LGBT performers described in this report, most respondents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, saw opportunities improving for LGB actors and for transgender actors. Almost no one thought that opportunities for LGBT actors were getting worse. The pattern that emerges from the survey results suggests both positive conclusions about progress for LGBT performers and indications that more work will be necessary to make the workplace an equal and fully welcoming place for LGBT performers. ●

Among lesbian and gay respondents who were out, **72%** said it had no effect on their careers, and many would encourage other LGBT performers to come out.

1. INTRODUCTION

On issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, the entertainment industry reflects the social changes taking place in the country as a whole in many ways. As visibility and the movement toward legal equality have progressed for LGBT people in the U.S., television shows have steadily increased the number of LGBT characters. Films have made perhaps less progress toward a broad representation of LGBT characters but show improvement over earlier eras. [2] Prominent actors have begun to come out publicly as LGBT in increasing numbers.

However, behind those headlines, we currently know little about the progress toward full inclusion of LGBT performers in the entertainment industry. Past SAG-AFTRA studies have studied different aspects of diversity among actors, with studies of actors with disabilities, Latino actors, Black actors, and aging actors. This study continues in that tradition to provide the first insight into how sexual orientation and gender identity influence performers' experiences, as we compare the working conditions and professional outcomes of LGBT performers with those of non-LGBT (non-transgender heterosexual) performers.

On one hand, the industry's roots in creative work are thought by many to create a supportive place for LGBT people to work, including performers. On the other hand, anecdotal reports of discrimination against or harassment of LGBT performers suggest the possibility of a more challenging environment for LGBT people. In addition, the industry's economic imperative — to provide entertainment to a broad market — seems to some industry observers to create potential risks for casting LGBT actors in roles that the viewing public may not accept. This survey goes beyond those assumptions to provide data on a large sample of heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender performers who are members of SAG-AFTRA.

We begin with a brief discussion of the methodology of the study. SAG-AFTRA emailed a link to the online survey to its 160,000 members in the fall of 2012. From September to December, 5,692 members responded, including self-identified 465 gay men, 61 lesbians, 301 bisexual men and women, and 7 transgender respondents.

After describing the methodology, this report sets the context with a discussion of the attitudes of SAG-AFTRA members toward LGBT people. Data from this study confirm the impression that performers hold generally liberal views on LGBT issues. Even so, a small minority of heterosexual respondents is still not comfortable with LGBT people. Also, heterosexual as well as LGB actors who are not transgender are less comfortable working with transgender performers.

From there, the report compares the experiences of LGBT and non-LGBT performers at three different stages of their professional activities: pre-job preparation, the process of getting jobs, and on-the-job experiences. The pre-job preparation section shows that LGBT performers and non-LGBT performers undergo similar training and efforts to improve their skills. If anything, LGBT performers appear better prepared by the

Performers who were out professionally mostly thought that their openness had little or no effect on their careers.

2. See two recent reports by GLAAD: "Where We Are on TV: 2012-13 Season," available at http://www.glaad.org/publications/wherewareontv12; "2013 Studio Responsibility Index," available at http://www.glaad.org/sri.

measures from the survey.

Getting jobs is a difficult process for performers, who usually audition and compete for roles. LGBT performers appear to face barriers in their search for jobs, including discrimination that influences both the types of roles and whether they get roles. For instance, one-third of all respondents agree that those in a position to hire and fire (casting directors, directors, and producers) are biased against LGBT performers. LGB performers are also more likely to have played LGB roles, and therefore, are more at risk than heterosexual performers to be typecast as LGB in future roles. Some LGBT performers reported direct experiences of discrimination in hiring, and for those who did, those experiences can have a negative impact on their ability to find work.

Once they are on set, performers work with people in other professions in an intensely collaborative effort to create a television show, film or other entertainment product. The LGBT performers in our survey had similar sorts of roles and types of work as the non-LGBT performers did. However, our analysis of important job outcomes suggests that LGBT performers might also experience disadvantages compared with non-LGBT performers. Lesbians and gay men had lower earnings per day than heterosexuals, while bisexuals' earnings suffered because they work fewer days than heterosexuals.

Next, we focus on LGBT performers' decisions about whether to disclose their sexual orientation or transgender status. In general, lesbian and gay performers were more open professionally about their sexual orientation than were bisexual performers. LGBT performers were more likely to be out to other performers, and their openness to other groups in the profession dropped steadily as those groups' decision-making power increased, with the least openness to producers, the media, and industry executives.

LGBT performers appear to have different strategies for managing their public identities. Gender nonconformity was more common for LGBT performers than for non-LGBT performers, and less conforming performers were more likely to be perceived by others to be LGBT. Also, some LGB performers were more assertive than others in correcting others who thought they were heterosexual. LGBT performers came out for different reasons but tended to believe that being out was good for their professional standing as well as their own mental health and well-being. Performers' concerns about the potential damage to their careers were motivations to not be out, however. Overall, though, performers who were out professionally mostly thought that their openness had little or no effect on their careers. When we asked all survey respondents about what they have seen and experienced on the job in terms of the treatment of LGBT performers, differences emerged. Almost one in eight (13%) of non-LGBT performers report witnessing discrimination against LGBT performers, including anti-gay comments by crew, directors, and producers. One in six (16%) LGBT performers reported experiencing some form of discrimination or harassment. Gender nonconforming and LGBT performers who were more open about being LGBT were more likely to report discriminatory experiences.

The pattern that emerges from the survey results has both positive conclusions about progress for LGBT performers and indications that more work will be necessary to make the workplace an equal and fully welcoming place for LGBT performers. ●

Almost one in eight of non-LGBT performers report witnessing discrimination against LGBT performers, including anti-gay comments by crew, directors, and producers.

2. METHODS

This report is based on an original survey conducted with SAG-AFTRA members, which was fielded from September through December 2012. The survey was developed with the input of SAG-AFTRA members who attended focus groups to discuss issues facing LGBT performers in the entertainment industry. The survey covers a range of topics, including demographics, work history, attitudes and beliefs of respondents and others in the entertainment industry, the workplace climate for LGBT performers, and experiences looking for work and working as a performer.

The survey was made available online and announced using multimedia outreach, including emails, social media (Twitter and Facebook), a dedicated web page on the SAG-AFTRA website, web videos, announcements in newsletters and the SAG-AFTRA magazine, and other media with the goal of reaching all 160,000 SAG-AFTRA members.

We received a total of 7,898 responses to the survey. After "cleaning" the dataset to remove those who were under 18, those who were not SAG-AFTRA members, those who had not worked as a performer in the past 10 years, and duplicate and incomplete responses, our final sample consisted of 5,692 respondents, including 465 gay men, 61 lesbians, 301 bisexual men and women, and 7 transgender respondents.

Survey respondents were randomly selected to take either a long form version of the survey or a short form version of the survey. The long form survey asked many detailed questions of respondents, including a battery of questions about their attitudes toward LGBT people. Due to a concern about people dropping out of the survey due to its length, we created the short form version, which was limited to demographics, work history and experiences looking for work, and working as a performer. Because respondents were randomly selected into either form, common questions between the two surveys could be pooled for analysis. About 4,400 respondents took the long form survey and 1,300 took the short form survey.

TABLE 2.1 (next page) describes the demographics of the survey sample, including sex, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other demographics.[3] Respondents came from 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and from outside the U.S. Eighty-five percent of respondents are straight/heterosexual, 9% are gay or lesbian, and 5% are bisexual.

A comparison with available SAG-AFTRA data on members' age, sex, and location suggests our survey sample is a representative

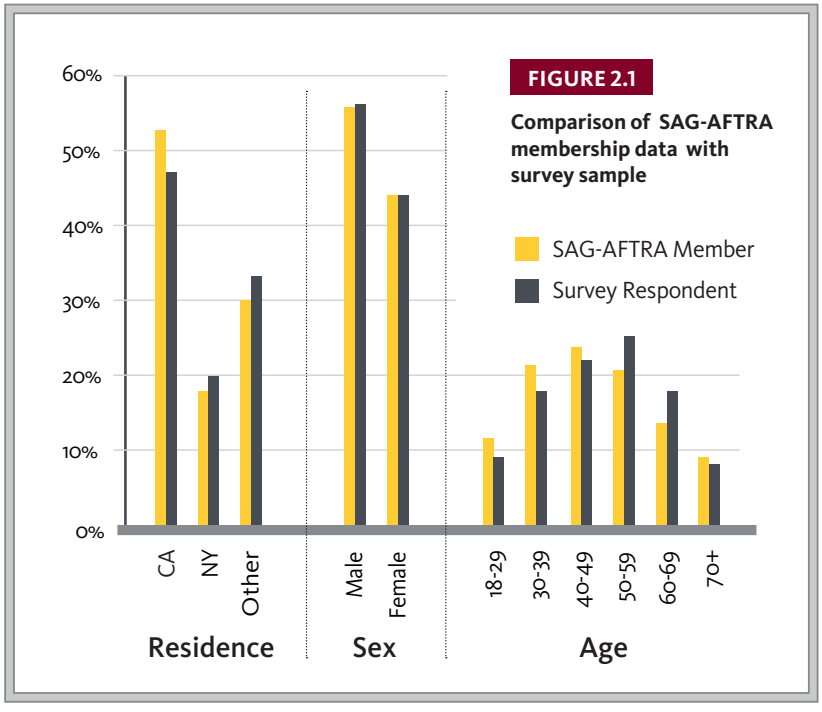


FIGURE 2.1
Comparison of SAG-AFTRA membership data with survey sample

3. Columns in each section may not add to 100% due to rounding.

4. For the purposes of this report, "transgender" describes people whose gender identity today is different from the gender assigned to them at birth. "Trans" is sometimes used in this report with the same meaning as "transgender." "Transgender woman/women" refers to people who are transitioning or have transitioned from male to female. "Transgender man/men" refers to people who are transitioning or have transitioned from female to male.

sample overall. **FIGURE 2.1** (previous page) compares those measures and shows that the sex of our respondents is comparable, with 56% of members and of respondents reporting that they are male (and 43% female). The location measures and age distribution are also very similar. Our sample is slightly older and slightly less likely to live in California, but those differences are not large.

When we compare LGBT respondents to heterosexual respondents in Table 2.1, we see that they are quite similar along most demographic lines. Some clear differences emerge, however. The LGBT sample is more male, younger, less likely to have children and less likely to be married or partnered than are the non-LGBT respondents.

Unfortunately, we only received seven valid responses from transgender respondents.[4] Throughout this report, we include findings for these seven individuals where possible. These respondents were sometimes pooled with lesbian, gay, and bisexual respondents to analyze the group of LGBT respondents as a whole. We refer to respondents in this report as "LG" for lesbian and gay respondents, "LGB" for lesbian, gay, and bisexual respondents, and "LGBT" for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender respondents.

The researchers for this study utilized statistical tests and models (including chi-square tests of independence, t-tests, and regression analysis) to conduct the analyses presented in this study. Statistical significance is sometimes mentioned in this report based on the results of these tests and models. If a sexual orientation difference is not statistically significant, we mean that the difference between LGB and heterosexual actors might have been observed just by chance. When the difference is not statistically significant, we generally conclude that no meaningful difference exists. Formal tables of test statistics and regression results are not included in this report but are on file with the authors. ●

85% of respondents are straight/heterosexual, **9%** are gay or lesbian, and **5%** are bisexual.

TABLE 2.1

Demographics of SAG-AFTRA Survey Respondents

Demographic Category	Full Sample	LGBT	Non-LGBT
STATE OF RESIDENCE			
California	47%	46%	47%
New York	20%	27%	19%
Other place of residence	33%	27%	34%
RACE / ETHNICITY			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	1%	1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	5%	5%	5%
Black / African-American	12%	10%	12%
Latino or Latina	5%	5%	5%
Multi-Racial	8%	8%	8%
White	70%	72%	69%
GENDER			
Male	56%	77%	52%
Female	44%	22%	48%
Transgender Men and Women	0.1%	1%	0%
AGE			
18-29	9%	12%	8%
30-39	18%	17%	18%
40-49	22%	26%	21%
50-59	25%	28%	25%
60-69	18%	12%	19%
70+	8%	5%	9%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION			
Straight / Heterosexual	85%	0%	100%
Gay or lesbian	9%	63%	0%
Bisexual	5%	37%	0%
MARITAL STATUS			
Married	42%	14%	47%
Living w/partner (not married)	13%	27%	11%
Neither married nor living w/partner	45%	60%	43%
CHILDREN UNDER 18			
Yes	16%	7%	18%
No	84%	93%	82%
DISABILITY			
Yes	12%	13%	12%
No	88%	87%	88%
OVERALL HEALTH			
Excellent	42%	43%	42%
Very good	38%	37%	38%
Good	16%	16%	16%
Fair	3%	3%	3%
Poor	1%	1%	0%

3. SUPPORTIVE UNION MEMBERSHIP

In general, SAG-AFTRA members who responded to this survey hold very supportive views about LGBT people and are much more supportive than the general public. In the SAG-AFTRA survey and public opinion polls, almost everyone surveyed believes that LGBT people should have equal rights in employment opportunities.[5] A large majority, 85% of our sample, including 83% of non-LGBT respondents, supports the right to marry for same-sex couples, compared with 51% of the U.S. public in a recent survey.[6] Respondents are also much more likely than the public to say that sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are not wrong at all.[7]

Almost all performers report feeling very comfortable being around lesbians (76%) and gay men (77%), and only a small minority report being very uncomfortable being around gay men (7%) or lesbians (6%). **FIGURE 3.2** (next page) shows that 91% express comfort with lesbians and gay men, and 9-10% are uncomfortable.

Respondents were less comfortable working with transgender actors. If an actor they had worked with in the past had surgery to transition to a different gender, 83-85% of performers said they would feel comfortable working with that person, and 15-17% would be uncomfortable, as shown in Figure 3.2. In general, almost all respondents saw someone transitioning to live as a different gender as positive (25%) or neutral (60%), and 15% thought of it as negative.[8]

One reason for the generally supportive views might be that performers are likely to know and work with LGBT people. Almost 60% of survey respondents report personally knowing 20 or more lesbian, gay, or bisexual people. Only 4% report knowing no LGB people. Respondents are less likely to know a transgender person, however: 41% report knowing no transgender people, and 51% know one to five transgender people. **FIGURE 3.3** (next page) shows that the percentage of respondents who are very comfortable with each group increases as they know more LGB or transgender people. For example, while 56% of people who know one trans man are very comfortable working with a trans man actor, 86% of people who know 11-20 transgender people are very comfortable working with a trans man. (The numbers of people who know more than 20 transgender people are very small, perhaps accounting for the slight decrease in being "very comfortable" for that group.) This pattern of increasing comfort from those who know more LGBT people is evident for all three groups. ●

Almost 60% of survey respondents report personally knowing 20 or more lesbian, gay, or bisexual people.

Only 4% report knowing no LGB people.

5. From Newsweek poll, September 2008.
6. Pew Research Center, "In Gay Marriage Debate, Both Supporters and Opponents See Legal Recognition as 'Inevitable,'" June 6, 2013, http://www.people-press. org/2013/06/06/in-gay-marriage-debate-both-supporters-and-opponents-see-legal-recognition-as-inevitable/, last accessed 8/9/13.
7. From general public's responses in 2010 General Social Survey.
8. The wording of these questions in the survey instrument differs slightly from the description provided here. Based on cognitive testing of survey questions with non-transgender respondents, prior research has found that the phrase "sex change operation" or "changing one's sex" are better understood than "transition" by non-transgender survey respondents. Therefore, the original survey used those phrases instead of the wording described here.

FIGURE 3.1 Attitudes of SAG-AFTRA members on LGBT issues

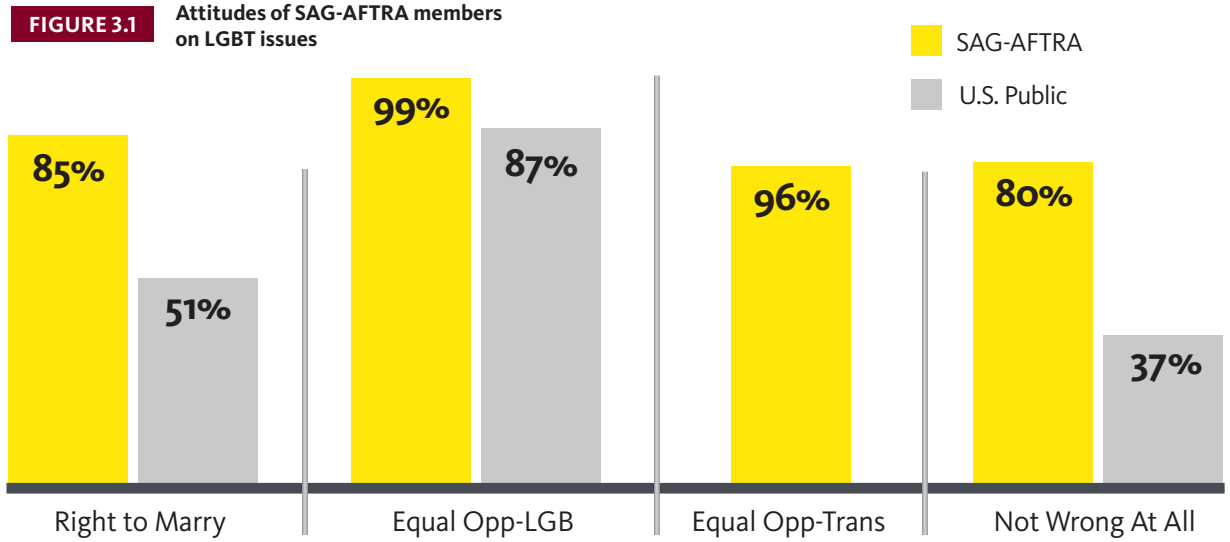


FIGURE 3.2

Comfort with LGBT people

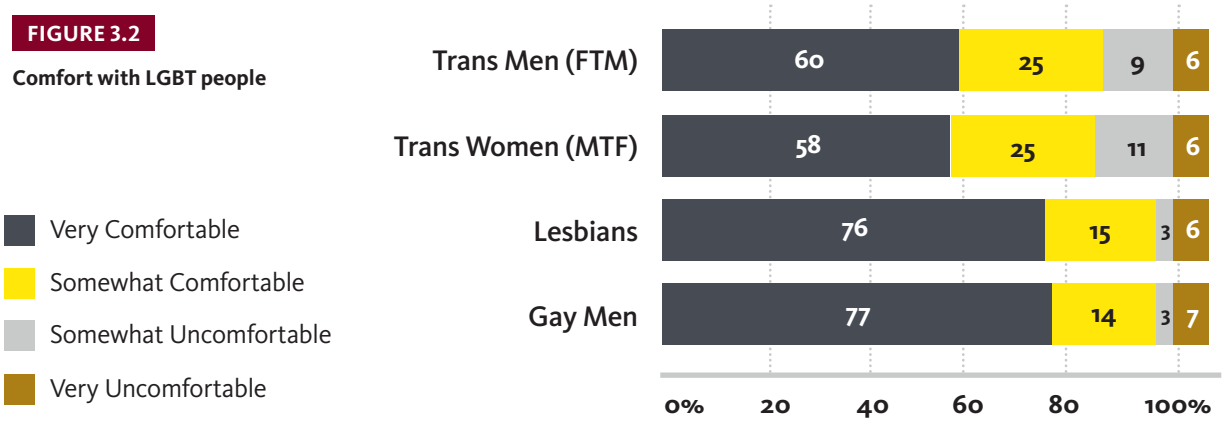
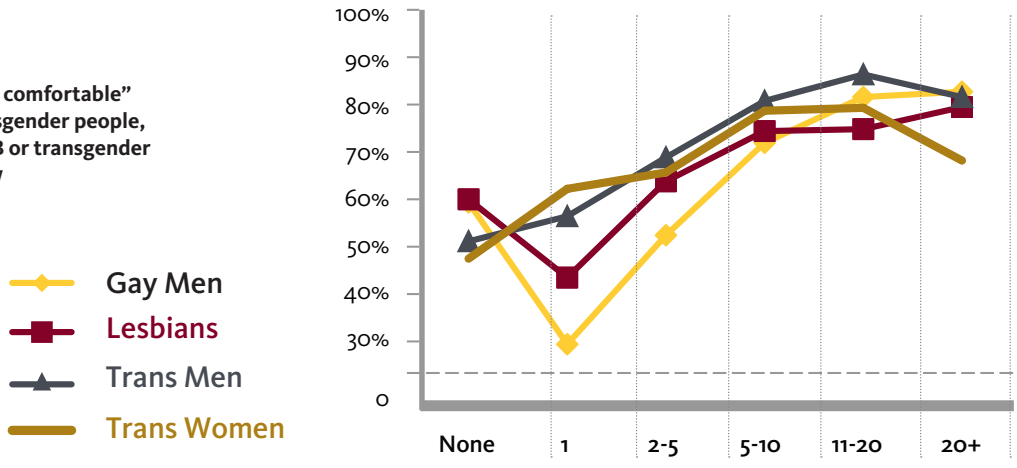


FIGURE 3.3

Percentage "very comfortable" with LGB or Transgender people, by number of LGB or transgender people they know



4. PRE-JOB PREPARATION

People enter the entertainment industry with varying levels of education, training, and experience that prepare them to work as performers. In this section, we look at the pre-job preparation of LGBT performers versus non-LGBT performers, including education and professional training, prior experience as a performer, networking, and history of union membership to see if LGBT performers are just as prepared as others for work in the entertainment industry. Our analysis shows that LGBT performers undergo similar training and efforts to improve their skills as non-LGBT performers. By some measures, LGB performers seem better prepared than their heterosexual peers. Our sample of transgender performers is too small to draw any firm conclusions, especially since not all of our transgender respondents completed questions about pre-job preparation. However, individual responses are reported below.

Education, professional training, and prior acting experience

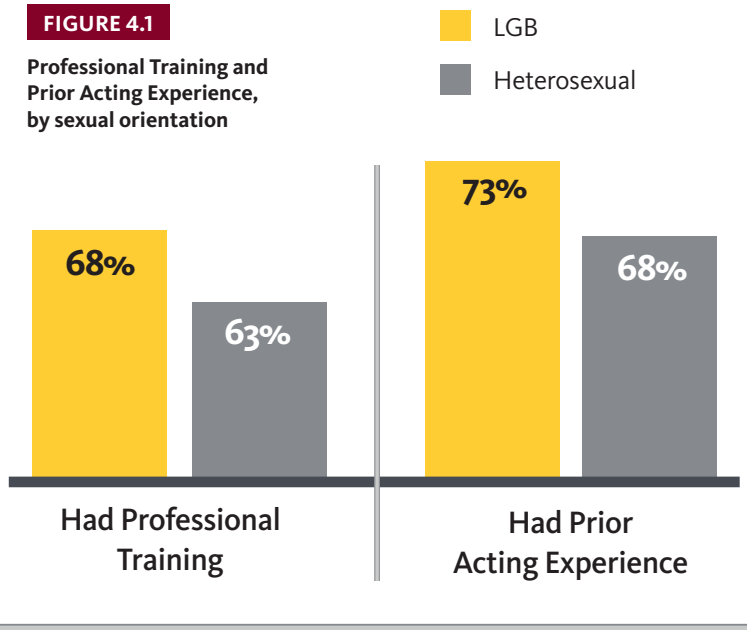
Overall, LGBT survey respondents have similar educational attainment to non-LGBT respondents, with about 68% of each group having a bachelor's degree or higher. However, when looking at more specific groups of respondents, gay men and lesbians have higher educational attainment, with 72% having completed a bachelor's degree or higher. Bisexual respondents had relatively lower educational attainment at 62% with a bachelor's degree or higher.

As **FIGURE 4.1** shows, LGB respondents received more professional training than heterosexual respondents (68% versus 63%), including courses in acting, non-degree acting or theater programs, and college degrees in acting or theater. One transgender respondent reported having professional training of some kind.

LGB respondents also reported having more prior experience as performers than their heterosexual counterparts (73% versus 68%). Prior performing experiences could include performing in school or community theater, performing for pay in a movie, tele-

FIGURE 4.1

Professional Training and Prior Acting Experience, by sexual orientation



vision, commercial, or stage production, or performing as background in a SAG-AFTRA production. No transgender respondents reported having any pre-professional performing experience.

Acting classes and networking

We found no significant differences in the amount of time LGBT and non-LGBT respondents spent taking acting classes or participating in networking activities to become better known to casting directors or other decision-makers in the industry. The majority of respondents (61%) spent zero to five hours in these activities each week. Notably, bisexual respondents had the highest percentage of those spending 41 or more hours per week in these activities at 12% versus 8% of LG respondents and 9% of heterosexual respondents. One transgender respondent reported spending one to five hours per week in these activities.

Union membership

Membership in a professional performers union has certain eligibility requirements and serves as an important indicator of a performer's connectedness to and history with the profession. Of course, all survey respondents are currently members of SAG-AFTRA, but some have been members longer than others. The majority of survey respondents had been members of SAG-AFTRA (SAG or AFTRA before the merger) for 10 or more years (61%). Gay and lesbian respondents were more likely to have been a SAG-AFTRA member for 10 or more years than other respondents (65% versus 61% for heterosexual respondents and 54% for bisexual respondents). One transgender respondent reported being a member of SAG-AFTRA for one to five years.[9]

We asked if respondents were members of other unions as well. Forty percent (40%) stated they were a member of another union. Of that 40%, 83% were also members of the Actors' Equity Association (Equity). LG respondents were more likely to also be a member of another union (50% versus 39% of heterosexual respondents and 33% of bisexual respondents). LG respondents were more likely than others to also be a member of Equity in addition to SAG-AFTRA. No transgender respondents reported being a member of another union.

Summary

LGB performers seem to have equal or better preparation for working as performers in the entertainment industry as heterosexual performers. While we might expect this preparation to improve professional outcomes for LGB people, the next sections discuss the barriers to employment that LGB performers experience in the entertainment industry. Due to our small sample of transgender performers, further research is needed to assess whether transgender performers have more or less professional training and experience than their non-transgender counterparts. ●

LGB performers seem to have **equal or better** preparation for working as performers in the entertainment industry as heterosexual performers.

9. The remaining 6 transgender respondents did not respond to this question in the survey.

5. GETTING JOBS AS A PERFORMER

Actors have a variety of ways to find work as a performer: through agents or managers, responding directly to job postings or announcements, or through their personal networks. Typically, performers compete for roles through an audition process, which may or may not result in being hired for the job. To explore how the hiring process may differ for LGBT actors versus non-LGBT actors, the survey asked several questions about looking for work and finding work as a performer. These questions tell us much about the barriers that may exist for LGBT performers in the job market. For instance, prejudicial attitudes and assumptions about the marketability of LGBT actors, including in romantic roles, may negatively impact the employment climate for LGBT performers. Assumptions about the limitations of LGBT performers and the types of roles they can play, including assumptions about whether LGBT performers can play non-LGBT roles, may limit LGBT performers' opportunities. LGBT performers might be put at a disadvantage compared to their non-LGBT peers in access to finding work or in the process of auditioning for jobs. Finally, LGBT performers playing LGBT roles could result in typecasting or in some way limit the ability of LGBT performers to be hired for subsequent non-LGBT roles. This section describes these findings on getting jobs as a performer.

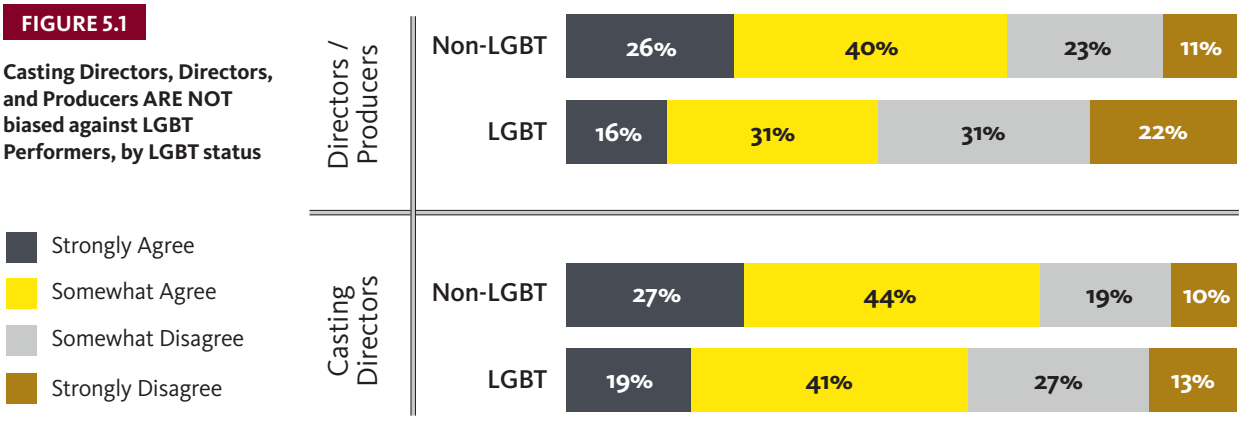
EMPLOYMENT CLIMATE FOR LGBT PERFORMERS

Bias and perceived marketability

The attitudes of those in positions to influence the hiring and firing of performers, including casting directors, directors, and

FIGURE 5.1

Casting Directors, Directors, and Producers ARE NOT biased against LGBT Performers, by LGBT status



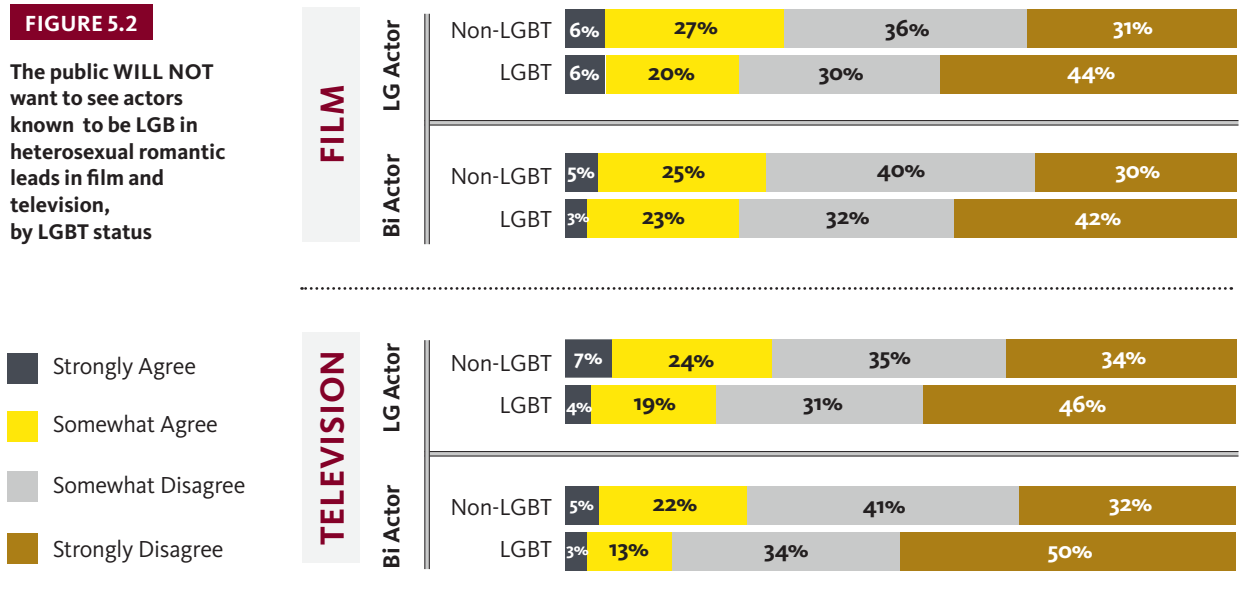
producers, may impact the ability of LGBT performers to find work. Most survey respondents strongly (26%) or somewhat (43%) agreed that casting directors choose the best actor for the job regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, meaning that casting directors are unbiased against LGBT performers. However, 31% of all respondents indicated they think casting directors are biased against LGBT performers. Respondents are slightly more likely to think that directors and producers are biased against LGBT performers than casting directors (37% versus 31%).

As **FIGURE 5.1** (previous page) shows, LGBT respondents are more likely than non-LGBT respondents to report that casting directors, directors, and producers are biased against LGBT performers. For instance, 53% of LGBT respondents reported directors and producers are biased in hiring, whereas 34% of non-LGBT respondents reported they are biased. Regardless of these differences, a substantial number (about one-third) of respondents believe that those in positions to hire performers are biased against LGBT performers. These biases could pose a barrier to employment for LGBT performers.

Whether LGBT performers are believed to be "marketable" to the public may influence their ability to find work or be hired for certain roles as performers. We asked respondents about their beliefs regarding the "marketability" of a LGB performer and their beliefs about the opinions of those in positions to hire performers. **FIGURE 5.2** shows responses to questions about whether the public will want to see performers who are known publicly to be LGB playing heterosexual romantic lead roles in film or on television. Most survey respondents believe the public would want to see movies and television shows with LG or bisexual performers in heterosexual romantic lead roles. LGBT respondents are more likely than straight respondents to believe so. For instance, 84% of LGBT respondents believe the public would want to see an actor known

FIGURE 5.2

The public WILL NOT want to see actors known to be LGB in heterosexual romantic leads in film and television, by LGBT status



to be bisexual in a heterosexual romantic lead on television, whereas only 73% of non-LGBT respondents share that belief. Overall, respondents seem slightly more likely to believe that the public would be accepting of known bisexual actors as heterosexual romantic leads than actors known to be lesbian or gay.

Based on respondents' beliefs about the public's desires to see LGB actors in heterosexual romantic leads, it seems that the vast majority of performers do not think that LGB performers would be less marketable to the public, even as romantic leads. Yet, respondents do believe that producers and studio executives consider known LGB performers to be less marketable. As **FIGURE 5.3** shows, notably, 45% of LG respondents strongly believe producers and studio executives think LG performers are less marketable, whereas 27% of bisexual respondents and 15% of straight respondents strongly agree. To the extent that these perceptions of studio executives' and producers' beliefs are accurate, the belief that LGB performers would be less marketable may serve as yet another barrier to employment for LGB performers.

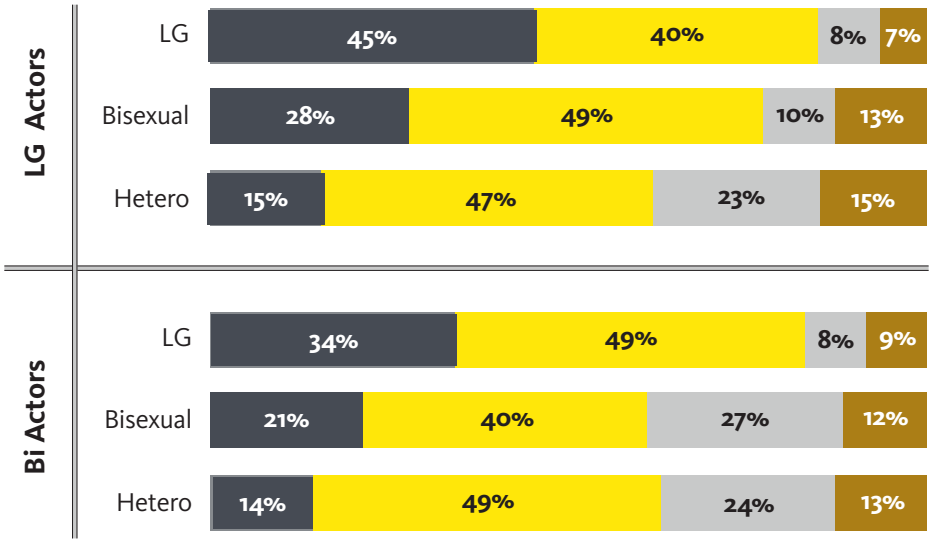
Assumptions that limit LGBT performers

Assumptions about the limitations of LGBT performers and the types of roles they can play, including assumptions about whether LGBT performers can play non-LGBT roles, may limit LGBT performers' opportunities. For instance, is a straight male actor better at playing a straight male role than an equally-talented gay male actor would be? Is a lesbian actor better at playing a lesbian role than an equally-talented straight female actor would be? In four scenarios that were presented, survey respondents generally rejected the idea that the person playing a role consistent with their sexual orientation would be better at playing that role. In general, over 80% of respondents were neutral or disagreed (somewhat or strongly) with the idea that actors are better at playing roles congruent with their sexual orientations.

80% of respondents agreed that transgender performers can play non-transgender roles equally as well as non-trans performers.

FIGURE 5.3

Studio executives and producers believe that actors who are publicly known to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual are less marketable, by sexual orientation



Respondents generally agree that transgender and non-transgender performers would be equally able to play transgender and non-transgender roles. About 80% of respondents agreed (strongly or somewhat) that transgender performers can play non-transgender roles equally as well as non-transgender performers. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents also agreed that non-transgender performers can play transgender roles equally as well as transgender performers.

We also asked if transgender women should be considered for roles written for women and transgender men should be considered for roles written for men, even if those roles are not transgender roles. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents agreed that transgender women should be considered for roles written for women and that transgender men should be considered for roles written for men.

In general, as shown in **FIGURE 5.4**, LGBT respondents were more likely to strongly agree that transgender performers can play non-transgender roles and should be considered for roles consistent with their gender identity. For instance, 56% of LGBT respondents strongly agreed that transgender performers can play non-transgender roles equally well versus 47% of non-LGBT respondents. However, the strength of support from LGBT respondents decreases in the case of non-transgender performers playing transgender roles. Forty-seven percent (47%) of LGBT respondents and non-LGBT respondents strongly agree that non-transgender performers would be just as able as equally-talented transgender performers to play transgender roles.

Finding jobs as a performer

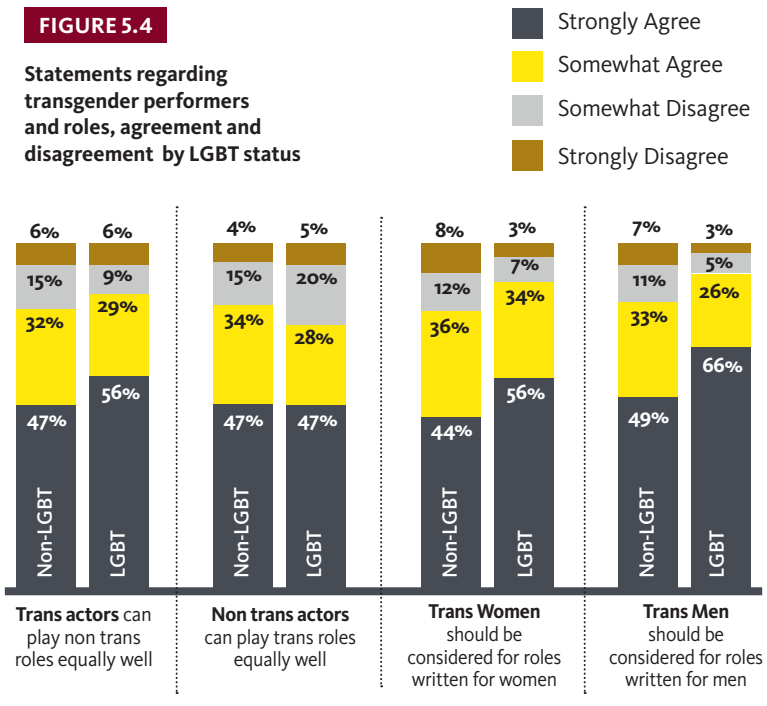
How performers find work may reveal important differences between LGBT and non-LGBT performers. In this survey, the majority of all respondents found out about their last acting job through an agent (34%) or through a casting director (21%). Respondents also reported finding out about their last job online or through a print announcement (18%), through a friend or colleague (12%), through their manager (5%), and through other means (10%). LGBT respondents were slightly less likely than non-LGBT respondents to have found out about their last job through an agent (31% versus 35%) and more likely to have found out about their last job through a casting director (24% versus 21%) or online or a print announcement (20% versus 17%).

Overall, LGBT respondents are less likely than straight respondents to have an agent, which may put LGBT performers at a disadvantage when looking for work. LGBT respondents are less likely to have an agent than non-LGBT respondents (47% versus 52%), but this difference is most striking for

LGBT respondents are less likely than straight respondents to have an agent, which may put LGBT performers at a disadvantage when looking for work.

FIGURE 5.4

Statements regarding transgender performers and roles, agreement and disagreement by LGBT status



gay and bisexual men versus straight men (46% versus 54%). Of those who have an agent, LGB respondents are less likely than straight respondents to be satisfied with their current agent (28% versus 32%). No transgender respondents had agents.

Of the LGB respondents who have an agent, 70% of LG respondents are "out" to their agent about their sexual orientation, but only 25% of bisexual respondents are "out" to their agent. Very few LGB respondents report that their agent had ever advised them to not be open to others about their sexual orientation (6% of LG respondents, 3% of bisexual respondents). A few respondents noted that while their agents had not directly instructed them to not "come out," they have been instructed to "butch it up" for auditions.

Playing LGBT roles and the impact on future roles

In focus groups with LGBT performers, some participants described having played gay roles in the past and believing that those roles impacted their ability to play subsequent heterosexual roles. Some described scenarios where they and other performers were later "typecast" into gay roles because of their prior work and credits. Others described heterosexual actors playing gay roles and concerns these actors had about being perceived as gay because of those roles. In this survey, we asked a series of questions to determine if and why performers would play gay roles and what impact they believe those roles would have on future work. Understanding if typecasting occurs would reveal what particular barriers people who play gay roles, particularly LGBT performers, may have in finding future work.

Most straight performers have never played an LGBT role over the course of their career. LGB performers are about twice as likely at straight performers to have played an LG role (58% versus 29%) and bisexual performers are in between

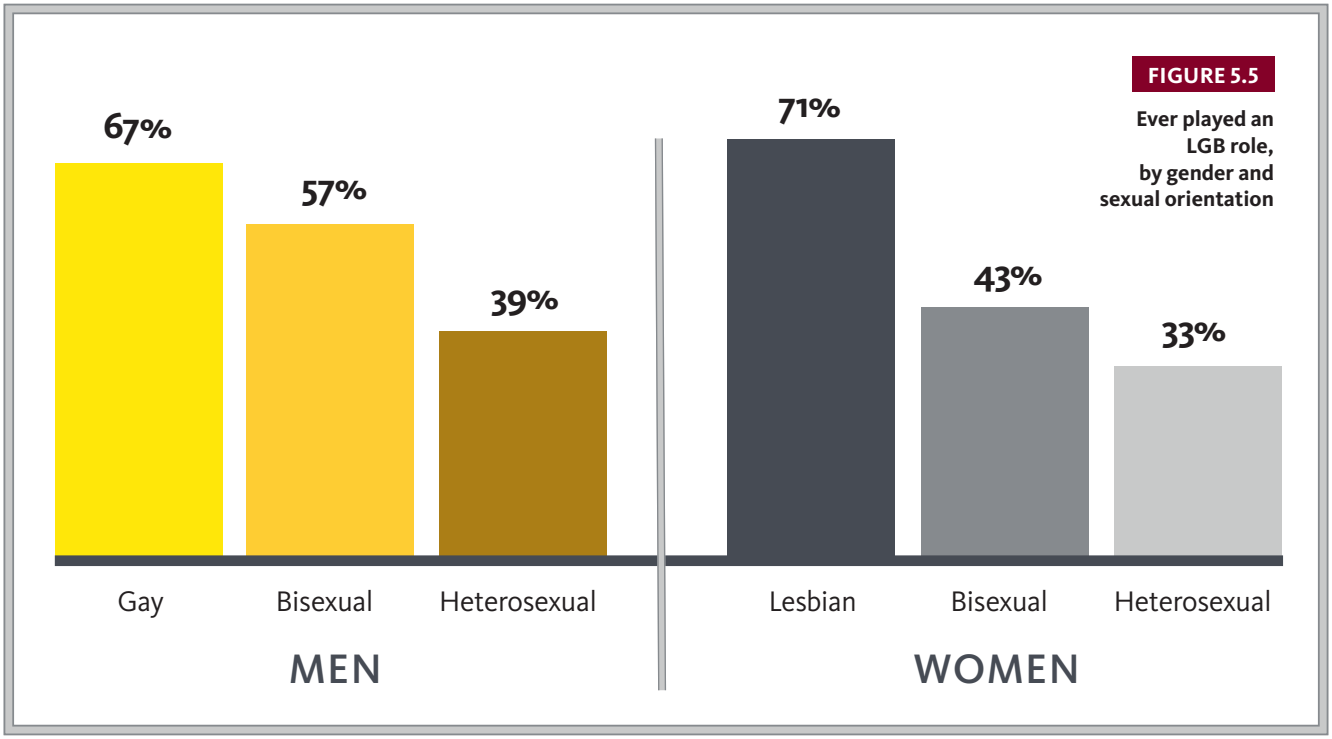


FIGURE 5.5
Ever played an LGB role, by gender and sexual orientation

(33%). Only 4% of all respondents have played a bisexual role. As shown in **FIGURE 5.5** (previous page), heterosexual (39%) and bisexual men (57%) are less likely than gay men (67%) to have played an LGB role. Heterosexual women (33%) and bisexual women (43%) are less likely than lesbians (71%) to have played an LGB role.

Respondents were less likely to have played a transgender role. Fourteen percent (14%) of LG performers and 8% of bisexual performers have played a transgender role. Few straight performers (3%) have played a transgender role. One transgender respondent had played a transgender role and one transgender respondent had played a gay role. The dearth of transgender roles is likely to be one reason for this difference.[10]

We asked respondents who had never played an LGB role about why they have never played such a role. Most of these respondents (74%) reported that they were willing to play an LGB role but had not been offered one. But the second most common response was that they do not want to play such a role, which was the response of 17% of straight actors who had never played an LGB role. Only two LGB respondents selected this option. Ten percent of straight actors and 6% of LGB actors reported that their agents will not submit them for LGB roles. Other reasons for not playing an LGB role include believing playing an LGB role would make it harder to get cast in future roles they want (4%), fear they would be typecast in the future (4%), and worry that people would think they are LGB themselves (4%).

Several respondents (13%) wrote in their own unique response to this question. Some straight respondents said they would not want to take a role away from an LGB actor. Other straight respondents expressed potential discomfort with the role if intimacy with an actor of the same gender was required. Some straight actors questioned their ability to portray an LGB character. One simply explained, "I would be terrible at it. I would not know what to do."

We asked respondents when given a choice between a gay or straight role that would be equivalent in all other aspects, which role would they choose? Most respondents (68%) said the sexual orientation of the role wouldn't factor in their decision, but 15% of LG respondents had a preference for the gay role and one third of straight respondents had a preference for the straight role. Bisexual respondents were the most likely to say the sexual orientation of the role wouldn't factor into their decision (85%).

To explore the impact of playing LGB roles, we asked respondents if playing an LGB role would make others in the entertainment industry believe they are LGB themselves. More than a third (about 35%) agreed that performers in LGB roles will be thought of as LGB themselves. Yet, the most common answer (about 40% of respondents) "strongly disagree" that performers in LGB roles would be considered LGB themselves by others in the entertainment industry.

We asked performers who had performed in LGB roles whether those LGB roles had had an effect on the likelihood that they will be hired for non-LGB roles. LGB respondents were much more likely than straight respondents to say that playing an LGB role had had an effect on being hired for straight roles (26% LG, 20% Bisexual). Only 3% of straight respondents reported that playing an LGB role had an effect on likelihood of being cast in a subsequent straight role.

When asked to explain their answer, one respondent, who said there had been an effect of being hired for subsequent

Some straight respondents said they would not want to take an LGB role away from an LGB actor.

10. See GLAAD's recent report "Where We Are on TV: 2012-13 Season," available at http://www.glaad.org/publications/wherewareontv12.

straight roles, explained, "It did [have an effect], but I worked hard to change that perception, and I have overcome it. I am a straight actor who played a number of gay roles early in my career. Go figure." Another respondent stated, "When you are out and play gay roles, the casting community and producers have a hard time seeing you in straight roles." Another respondent wrote, "I'm an out gay actor who played a gay character in a movie. It is career kryptonite."

Yet, most actors believed there had been no impact of playing an LGB role on their subsequent roles. Many stated gay roles they had played were not well-known enough to have any impact, such as roles in smaller productions or student films. Several pointed out that they work in theater, where there seems to be less of a concern about having previously played gay roles, or are character actors where sexual orientation is less relevant. Many offered explanations similar to the following: "I am an actor. I play a variety of roles; that is what 'acting' is." One gay actor described a different type of issue in being cast in gay roles: "Despite being gay, some casting agents/directors won't even hire me for gay roles, because they don't feel I 'look' gay."

This survey did not ask about whether playing transgender roles had any impact on playing subsequent non-transgender roles.

Overall, the vast majority of respondents have not avoided playing gay roles due to any concerns about their careers and future roles. Most responded that they simply haven't had the opportunity to play gay roles. However, there is some evidence that straight performers would prefer to play straight roles. While most respondents who played gay roles believe it had no impact on subsequent roles, a quarter of LGB respondents and one fifth of bisexual respondents did believe it impacted their later work. Clearly for some respondents, playing gay roles has negatively impacted them playing a wider variety of roles in subsequent work.

Discrimination in hiring

As described earlier in this section, agents are an important source for finding jobs. We asked if respondents had ever been dropped by their agent because they are, or were believed to be, LGB. Very few respondents (1%) reported having been dropped by their agent for this reason. Four percent said they did not know if their agent had dropped them for being LGB. No transgender respondents reported they had been dropped by an agent for being transgender.

Casting directors are considered by some to be the "gate keepers" to being hired as a performer. We asked respondents whether a casting director had ever made any references or comments about their sexual orientation or gender expression (i.e. their masculinity or femininity) that made them uncomfortable during an audition process.

Twenty-one percent of LG respondents and 11% of bisexual respondents reported casting directors had made such comments. One transgender respondent reported that a casting director's comments had made them uncomfortable.

Though the vast majority of respondents had not experienced casting directors making comments that made them uncomfortable, a few described their experiences to illustrate what they had experienced and what impact it had on them. One respondent explained, "I have only had a casting director ask me to 'butch it up' in an audition once. I was startled but not offended." Another

"Despite being gay, some casting agents/ directors won't even hire me for gay roles, because they don't feel I 'look' gay."

recounted being asked to play a gay role in a more stereotypical manner: "When casting gay roles for television and film, the casting directors (or producers or writers) tend to want the acting to be 'obviously' gay. I find this troublesome since I AM gay and think that I should be able to just be me. It feels awkward to be asked to be 'more gay' in order to please the casting directors." One respondent described his experience with a particular casting director:

"[S]he initially asked if I had a girlfriend call on my behalf for directions. I don't understand any relevance of the question, but nonetheless brushed it off. The casting director asked me about it again, then finally in the parking lot one night asked point blank if I am gay. I gave a non-answer, saying that I can be if a role required it. Then, she advised me to be more masculine like some [actors] who could turn it on and off. She meant well by this gesture, but it made me feel uncomfortable because I didn't see it as being a factor in my career when indeed it is. I have not since been contacted for auditions with this casting director, though I would not necessarily assume it is for the lack of being masculine."

Finally, we asked respondents if, in the last five years, they had been turned down for a role because a casting director, director, producer, or executive believed they were gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Nine percent of LG respondents reported that they had been turned down for a role for this reason, while 4% of bisexual respondents reported this. No transgender respondents reported they had been turned down for a role for being transgender, but two transgender respondents were not sure.

Summary

In this section, we have explored the ways in which performers find work in the entertainment industry and the climate they are operating in. LGBT performers may have substantial barriers to overcome in their search for jobs. While the majority of respondents would agree that those in a position to hire and fire performers are not biased against LGBT performers, a substantial number do believe they are biased. LGBT performers are less likely to find work through an agent. LGB performers are more likely to have played LGB roles, and therefore, are more at risk than heterosexual performers to be typecast into gay roles in the future. Some LGBT performers reported direct experiences of discrimination in hiring, and those experiences had a negative impact on their ability to find work. ●

9% of LG respondents **reported that they had been turned down for a role** because a casting director, director, producer, or executive believed they were gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

6. WORKING AS A PERFORMER

Once performers have booked a role, they go to work. While working on jobs, their experiences can vary in a variety of ways, such as the type of role, the prominence of the role, and what they are paid. In this section, we compare the experiences of LGBT and non-LGBT performers on several outcomes to see if the quality of jobs and actual outcomes are the same across groups. These comparisons presented here suggest that on some measures, LGBT performers are doing well and are faring the same as non-LGBT performers. But on other measures, LGBT performers' experiences suggest particular challenges. Survey questions about hearing anti-gay or anti-transgender slurs and about experiencing discrimination suggest that LGBT performers face unequal treatment.

In some cases, sexual orientation differences studied in this section were not statistically significant. That is, the difference between LGB and heterosexual performers might have been observed just by chance even if there was no true difference. When the difference is not statistically significant, we conclude that we can detect no meaningful difference given the sample sizes from our survey.

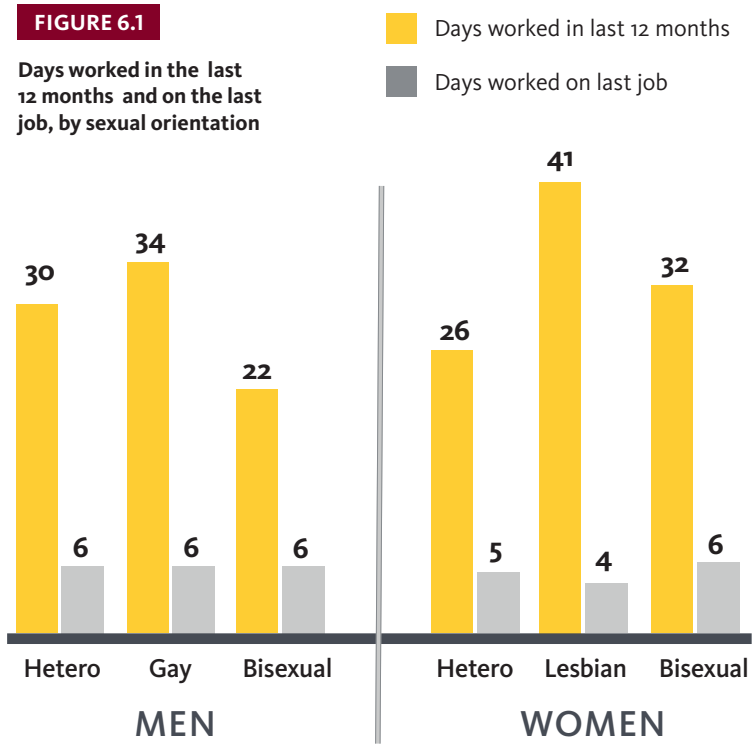
Recent work

Some obvious measures for performers concern how often they work and the prominence of their roles. The survey included some questions by which to compare these outcomes, and we saw no differences by sexual orientation in these outcomes. Unfortunately, the sample size for transgender respondents was too small for analysis.

First, there were no significant sexual orientation differences in when respondents last had a paid acting job. Overall, 45% had a job within the last three months, while 16% had last had a job two or more years ago. Gay and bisexual men were more likely than heterosexual men to have gotten their most recent job in Los Angeles or New York (compared with all other locations).

FIGURE 6.1

Days worked in the last 12 months and on the last job, by sexual orientation



Second, in their last job, LGB and heterosexual performers worked in the same types of media: 35% were in television, 29% in film, 19% in commercials, 6% in voiceovers, and 4% in new media and in industrial work. Music videos, performance capture, and audio books accounted for less than 1% each of recent roles.

Third, role types in the most recent job were also basically the same across sexual orientation. One fifth (20%) of recent jobs were in lead roles, 31% in supporting roles, 33% in background roles, 8% in voiceover roles, and 7% in other roles.

Days worked in last 12 months and on last job

Differences emerged in other measures, however. Another measure of the quality of a job is how long it lasts. We asked respondents how many days they had worked in the last 12 months and how many days their last job lasted. **FIGURE 6.1** (previous page) shows that gay men, lesbians, and bisexual women worked more days in the past year than heterosexuals of the same sex, while bisexual men worked fewer days than did heterosexuals – these differences were statistically significant. There were no sexual orientation differences in the number of days for the respondent's last job, though.

Earnings from acting

Earnings from acting are another important measure of how well actors are doing on the job. We asked actors to report their earnings from acting in the last 12 months in a range, which we condensed in **TABLE 6.1**. For the most part, earnings do not differ in a statistically significant way across sexual orientation: the LGB actors are arranged across the categories in a similar way as heterosexuals. Many actors, whether lesbian, gay, bisexual, or heterosexual, earned nothing from acting in the prior year, and more than half earned less than $10,000. The only statistically meaningful difference is between heterosexual men and bisexual men—bisexual men are more likely to be in the lower earning categories than are heterosexual men.

We also used the more detailed categories to estimate an earnings value for each respondent using the middle point of each range. The gray bars in **FIGURE 6.2** (next page) show that gay men's annual average acting earnings are a bit higher than heterosexual men's earnings (but the

TABLE 6.1

Self-reported earnings from acting, by sexual orientation

	MEN			WOMEN		
	Hetero	Gay	Bisexual	Hetero	Lesbian	Bisexual
No earnings	16%	18%	17%	15%	15%	17%
0-$9,999	52%	48%	56%	59%	59%	55%
$10,000-29,999	17%	18%	12%	15%	15%	16%
$30,000-50,000	5%	7%	11%	5%	4%	5%
$50,000-99,999	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	2%
$100,000 and up	5%	4%	1%	2%	4%	6%

difference is not statistically significant), while bisexual men's earnings are again much lower on average. Women of all sexual orientations earn less than do men, in general, but there is no significant difference in earnings for lesbians or bisexual women when compared to heterosexual women.

The earnings picture looks somewhat different when we compare the data reported by employers to SAG-AFTRA, the gold bars in Figure 6.2. We asked respondents to report their SAG-AFTRA membership numbers, which allowed us to match their survey responses to the union data. Only 1,343 did so, however, so our sample sizes of bisexual men and women and lesbians are quite small, less than 31 each, which limits our ability to draw strong conclusions from that data.

In general, those reporting their membership numbers appear to have lower earnings from acting than their self-reported income on the survey, as a comparison of the gold and gray bars in Figure 6.2 shows. Perhaps the survey responses reflected income from non-SAG-AFTRA-covered employment, or possibly lower earning actors were more likely to give us their membership identification numbers.[11] Overall, LGB actors earn less than heterosexual actors of the same sex according to SAG-AFTRA data, but the only difference that is statistically significant is again the lower earnings of bisexual men. The other differences are not statistically meaningful; that is, we cannot reject the possibility that the other sexual orientation differences that we observe are the result of chance.

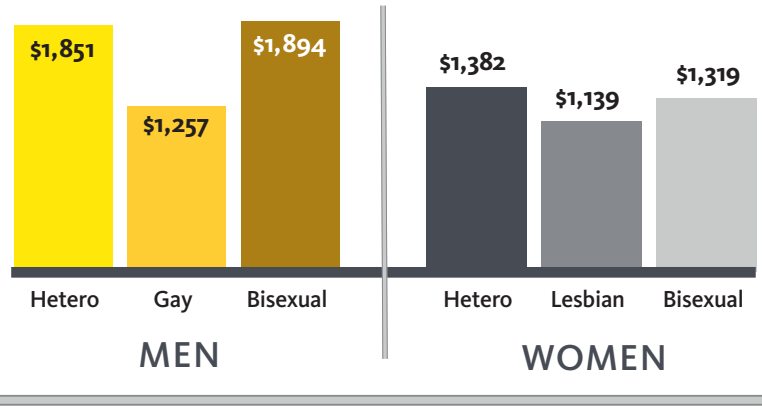
Finally, in more detailed statistical comparisons not reported here, we took into account the differences in age, experience, race, training, California or New York residence, disability, and marital status (and sometimes outness and gender nonconformity)[12] to see if there are remaining

FIGURE 6.2

Average annual earnings from acting, by sexual orientation

FIGURE 6.3

Calculated average daily earnings, by sexual orientation



11. Employers report earnings to SAG-AFTRA up to various caps, but very few of those who reported their membership number were above the typical cap in reported earnings. Most respondents who gave us their membership numbers reported higher acting earnings in the last 12 months (mostly 2012) than their total SAG-AFTRA earnings data record for 2012.

12. In some models we also included variables for outness and gender nonconformity. As we mention in the next section, a woman is "gender nonconforming" if she reports that others would consider her equally masculine and feminine or somewhat, mostly, or very m asculine in her appearance or mannerisms; a man was gender nonconforming if he is considered equally masculine and feminine, or somewhat, mostly, or very feminine.

differences in acting earnings by sexual orientation. While earnings of LGB actors are lower than heterosexual earnings in those comparisons, none of the differences are statistically significant.

Putting together the data on yearly earnings with the data on the number of days worked gives a less optimistic view on gay and lesbian actors' economic outcomes. Dividing actors' 12 month earnings by their days worked, presented in **FIGURE 6.3** (previous page), shows that gay and lesbian actors' average daily earnings are lower than for heterosexuals. Bisexual actors' daily average earnings are statistically indistinguishable from heterosexual actors.

Thus we see some evidence in this survey of economic disadvantages for bisexuals in earnings because they work fewer days, and for lesbian and gay actors because they have lower average daily earnings.

Discrimination while working as a performer

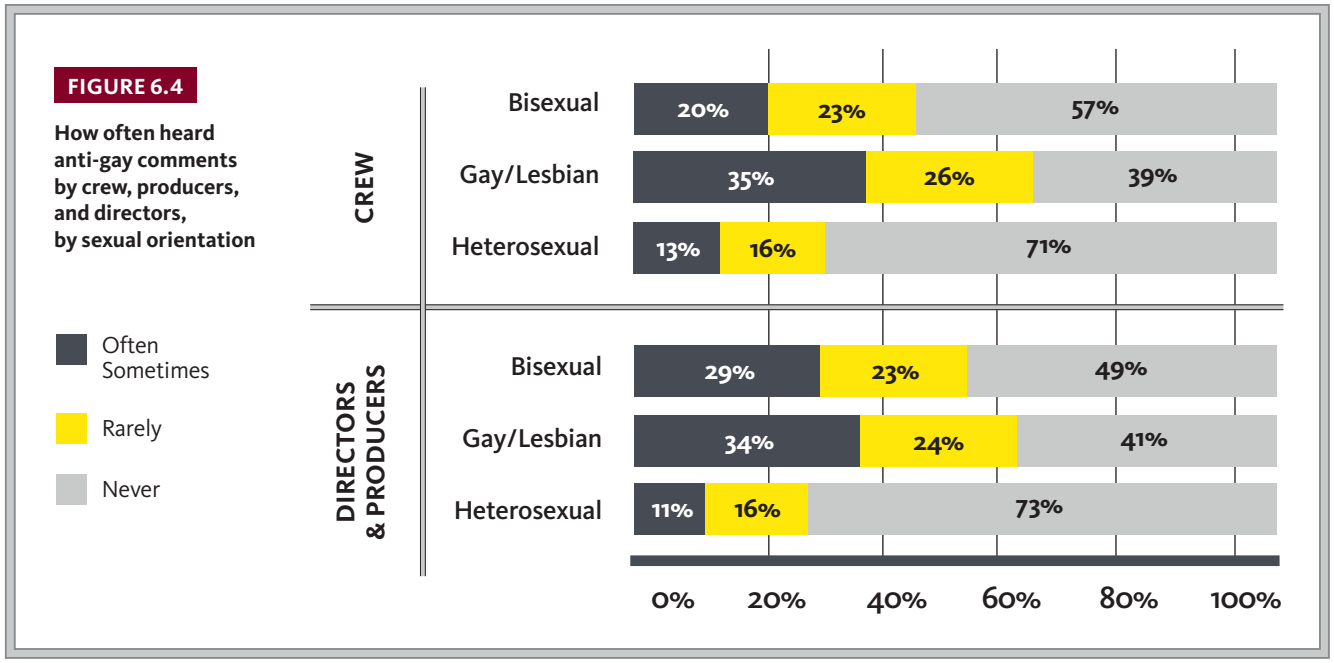
Other survey questions asked more directly about performers' on-the-job experiences related to sexual orientation or gender identity. Such experiences include hearing anti-gay comments and observing LGBT performers treated with less respect.

Anti-gay comments

Our survey uncovered evidence of anti-gay slurs and less respectful treatment directed at LGBT performers while on set. We asked all respondents about whether they had ever heard crew members or directors and producers make anti-gay comments about performers. Regardless of sexual orientation, respondents reported hearing anti-gay comments. **FIGURE 6.4** shows that more than a quarter of heterosexual respondents have heard crew, producers, and directors make anti-gay comments at some point, and 11% of heterosexual performers have heard them often or sometimes. More than half of LG respondents report having heard anti-gay comments from the crew, directors, and producers, and a third report having heard them often or sometimes.

There are several reasons why LGB respondents might have heard many more anti-gay

Regardless of sexual orientation, respondents reported hearing anti-gay comments.



comments than heterosexual respondents. First, some of those comments might have been directed at the LGB performers themselves, so heterosexual performers would hear fewer of them. Second, heterosexual respondents might not have noticed anti-gay comments that would stand out as obvious to LGB respondents.

Respectful treatment

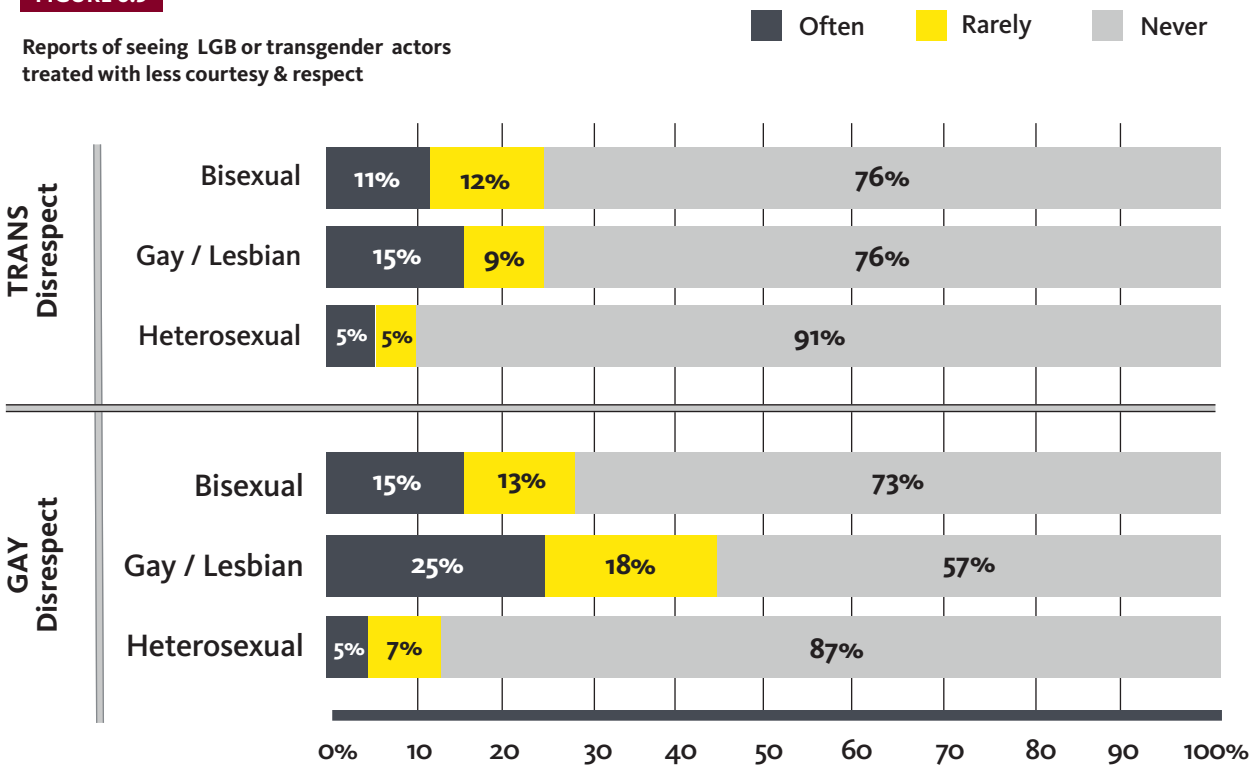
We also asked if respondents had ever seen an LGB or transgender actor treated with less courtesy and respect on set than heterosexual or non-transgender actors. **FIGURE 6.5** shows that about 10% of heterosexual actors and one-quarter of bisexual actors report having seen transgender or LGB actors treated with less respect. Lesbian and gay actors are even more likely to have observed disrespectful treatment against LGB actors than those other groups, with 25% reporting seeing such treatment often or sometimes and another 18% seeing it rarely. The lesbian and gay actors are also the most likely to report seeing transgender actors treated less respectfully either often or sometimes than are the other groups.

To get a comparative perspective on whether there is differential treatment on the job by sexual orientation, we asked all respondents about whether they had been fired during an acting job, outgraded/eliminated, or dropped by their agent in the last 12 months. **FIGURE 6.6** (next page) shows that gay and bisexual men were more likely than heterosexual men to have experienced that treatment in the last 12 months. A more detailed analysis (not reported here) that takes other

About 10% of heterosexual actors and 1/4 of bisexual actors report having seen transgender or LGB actors treated with less respect.

FIGURE 6.5

Reports of seeing LGB or transgender actors treated with less courtesy & respect



characteristics into account confirmed the higher probability of experiencing this treatment for bisexual men. (Gay men also had higher rates in the detailed analysis, but they were not statistically significant.) Lesbian and bisexual women had the same experience as heterosexual women in both Figure. 6.6 and in the detailed analysis.

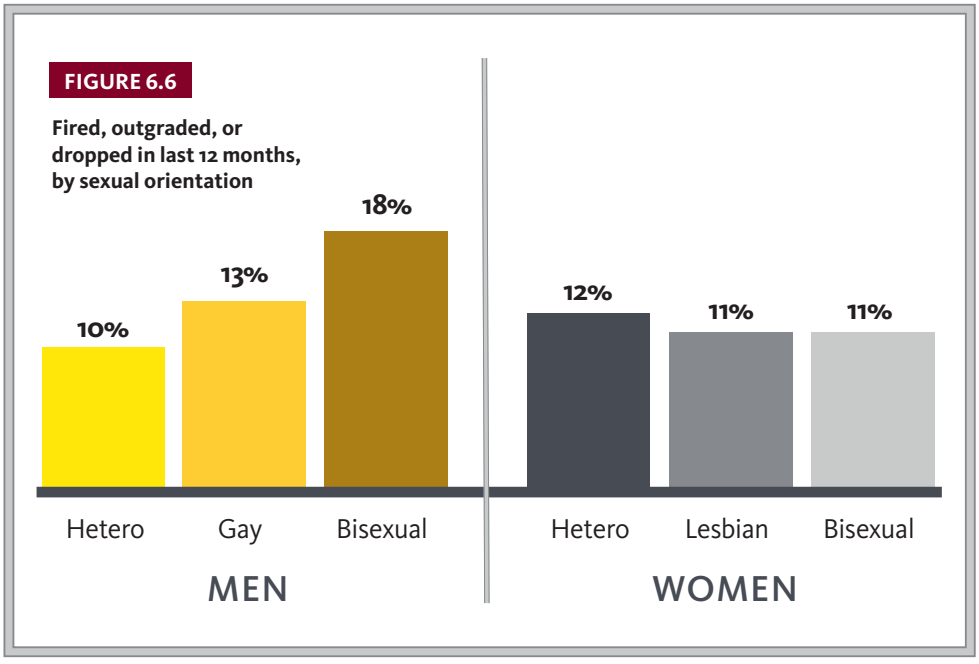
Taken together, these measures of discrimination suggest that LGBT people are subjected to different working conditions. They sometimes experience less respect and courtesy, they are subjected to hearing slurs, and they sometimes experience other harmful outcomes, such as being fired or harassed.

These findings also give somewhat conflicting views on discrimination against bisexuals, and bisexual men in particular. On one hand, bisexual men are less likely than gay men to report experiencing discrimination. On the other hand, when compared with heterosexual men, bisexual men are at a heightened vulnerability to being dropped, cut, or fired on the job, suggesting that they do experience different treatment from heterosexuals on the job. As discussed later in the section on being "out" as an LGBT performer, the survey found that bisexual men are the least likely to be out professionally among all LGB people, but these findings suggest that they still experience discrimination despite their attempts to keep their sexual orientation hidden.

Summary

Judging from their most recent acting jobs, LGB actors are getting similar types of roles and jobs as heterosexuals. But their earnings outcomes suggest differences in opportunities: bisexual men earn less over the year, while lesbian and gay actors have lower average daily earnings. On set, LGBT performers hear slurs and experience disrespectful treatment that has also been noticed by non-LGBT performers. The data presented here suggest that differences in on-the-job experiences continue to put LGBT performers at a professional disadvantage. ●

Bisexual men are the least likely to be out professionally among all LGB people, but these findings suggest that they still experience discrimination despite their attempts to keep their sexual orientation hidden.



7. BEING 'OUT' AS AN LGBT PERFORMER

One common issue in the lives of LGBT performers concerns how open, or "out", they will be in their professional lives with respect to their sexual orientation or transgender status. Sexual orientation and gender identity are not always easily observable characteristics, and one might think that professional performers have a greater capacity than the average LGBT person to manage the perceptions of others. But performers might have more at stake in making decisions about coming out, given the wide range of people with decision-making influences in their lives, from casting directors to producers to the general public. Concerns about professionalism and discrimination underlie performers' decisions about coming out in the survey.

We assessed performers' outness in several different ways. In the simplest measure shown in **FIGURE 7.1**, respondents could say that they were "not out in my professional life" in response to a question about the impact of being out. Very few lesbians (21%) and gay male respondents (27%) said they were not out, but most bisexual respondents, whether male or female, said they were not out. Bisexual men, in particular, were most likely, with 68% reporting that they were not out.

Another direct measure shows the subtleties of what it means to be out professionally. We asked LGB respondents how often they were out to different groups in the entertainment industry—to all, most, some, or none of those in each group. **FIGURE 7.2** (next page), shows several patterns. First, in general, lesbian and gay respondents were much less likely to be not out (i.e. were more likely to be out) than were bisexual respondents. In fact, the vast majority of bisexual respondents were largely not out to anyone in each of the more detailed categories of industry professions shown in Figure 7.2.

Second, LGB respondents are less out to those with more decision-making power or influence. While more than half (53%) of lesbian and gay actors were out to all or most of their fellow actors, only 36% are out to all or most agents they know. Outness drops dramatically from there, with only about one in five who are out to directors, casting directors, crew members, producers, and

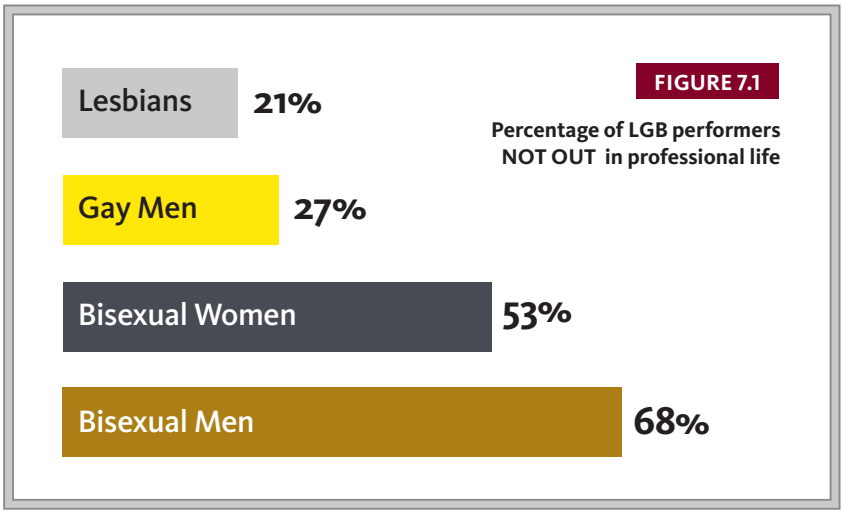


FIGURE 7.1
Percentage of LGB performers NOT OUT in professional life

the public. Outness to the media and to industry executives drops even further: only 13% of actors are out to all or most industry executives.

Transgender performers tend to not be open about their gender identity or transgender status in their professional lives, typically answering some or none to most professional categories. Because of the small number of transgender respondents, we cannot report more detailed figures.

As we reported in an earlier section, we also asked LGB performers whether they are out to their agents, if they have one, as opposed to agents in general (as in Figure 7.2). Lesbian and gay respondents are more likely to be out to their agents (70%) than are bisexual respondents, only 25% of whom are out to their agent. Very few LGB people with agents, less than 10%, reported that their agents have advised them not to be out.

"Outness" is a complicated concept, however, and might not be completely in the control of an LGBT performer. In response to a different question, many LGB respondents report that the people they work with can always, often, or sometimes tell they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual even if they don't tell them. About half (52%) of lesbian and gay respondents report that others can at least sometimes tell they are LG, while 20% of bisexual respondents report that others at least sometimes can tell they are bisexual.

An important signal that might be construed as indicating that someone is LGB is gender nonconformity. We asked all respondents two questions about how masculine or feminine other people would describe their appearance, style, or dress and, separately, their mannerisms, such as the way one walks or talks. We combined that information and

While **53%** of lesbian and gay actors were out to all or most of their fellow actors, only **36%** are out to all or most agents they know, and only **13%** of actors are out to all or most industry executives.

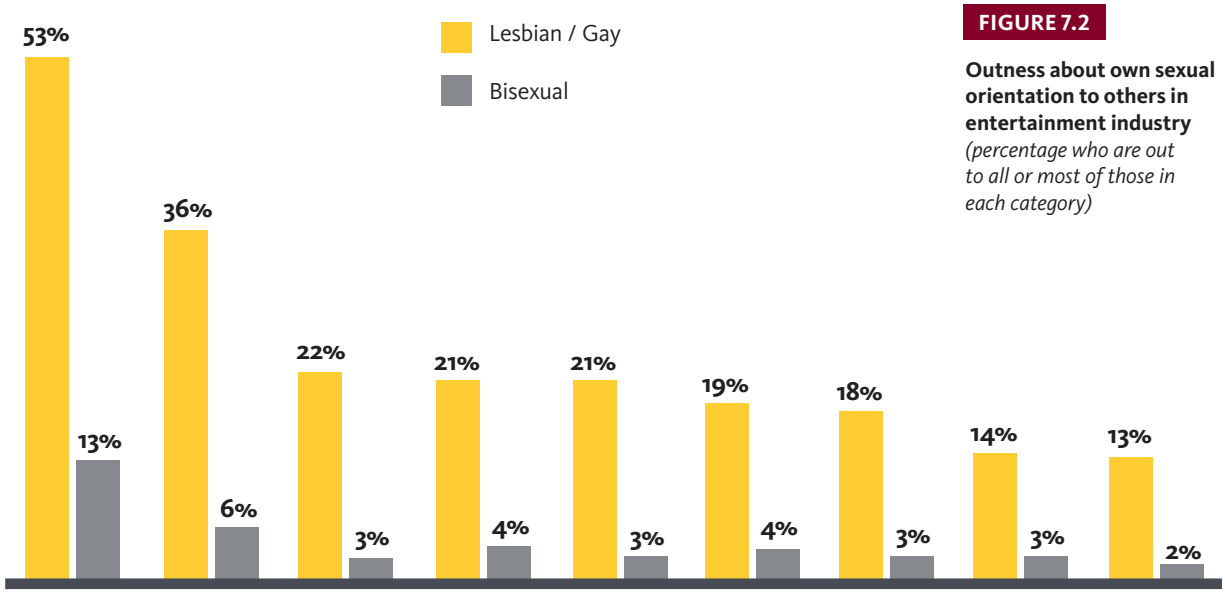


FIGURE 7.2

Outness about own sexual orientation to others in entertainment industry
(percentage who are out to all or most of those in each category)

called a woman "gender nonconforming" if she reports that others would consider her equally masculine and feminine or somewhat, mostly, or very masculine; a man was gender nonconforming if he is considered equally masculine and feminine, or somewhat, mostly, or very feminine.

Very few heterosexual respondents reported being perceived as gender nonconforming (only 7%), while 20% (bisexual) to 21% (lesbian and gay) reported that others would see them as gender nonconforming (**FIGURE 7.3**). In other words, most LGB people think they are not gender nonconforming, but a correlation with sexual orientation exists. As a result, some people might use gender nonconformity as a signal of a performer's sexual orientation.

The reports from LGB respondents support that connection, in fact. Gender nonconforming respondents are twice as likely as gender conforming respondents to say that others can tell they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. **FIGURE 7.4** shows the strongest connection for lesbian and gay performers: 81% of gender nonconforming performers say others can tell versus 44% for gender conforming performers. Gender conformity plays a similar but less strong role for bisexual performers, with 40% of gender nonconformers saying others can tell versus 14% of gender conformers.

However, gender nonconformity clearly does not completely explain why some people "can tell" that someone is LGB, even as nonconformity appears to be a way that respondents are out to others. It is possible that LGB respondents do not accurately assess the degree to which others perceive them as gender nonconforming, but it is also possible that other kinds of behaviors, like discussing opinions about LGBT issues, are also ways that performers are perceived as out.

The survey included a question that sought out how active LGB performers are in being out: How often have you allowed someone in a professional setting to assume you are heterosexual without correcting them? LGB performers who say that they never, rarely, or sometimes fail to correct the wrong assumption would appear to be more out — and more assertively out — than those who always or often fail to correct the assumption of heterosexuality. In our focus group discussions about being out, some participants mentioned situations in which those assumptions put them in an uncomfortable position of either going along with the assumption, or

FIGURE 7.3 **Percentage of respondents who are gender nonconforming, by sexual orientation**

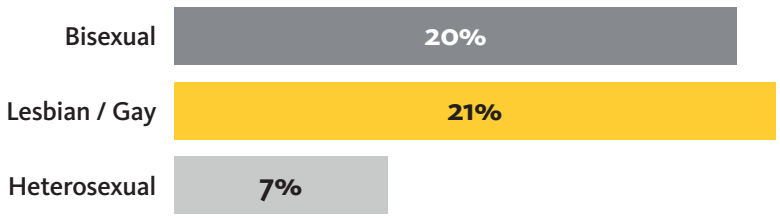
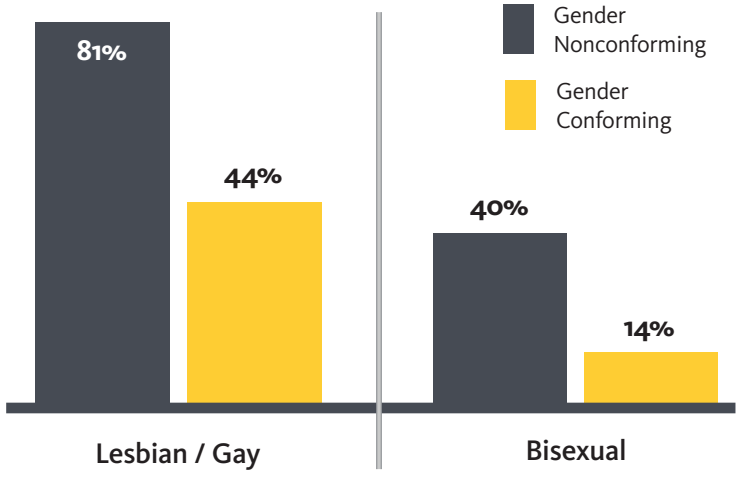


FIGURE 7.4 **Percentage of respondents who say people can tell they are LGB, by gender nonconformity**



having to come out.

Survey respondents provided recent examples of allowing someone to think they are heterosexual in professional contexts. People noted several common situations, such as when people informally discussed different-sex partners/spouses: "If a group of colleagues, cast, crew, etc. were discussing girlfriends or dating, if they didn't assume I was gay, out of fear of being ostracized I would allow them to think I was straight." A similar assumption can arise in more formal contexts, too: "I did [a] commercial. At one point they asked for an emergency contact 'like your wife or girlfriend.' I gave my mom as a contact instead of my male partner." And some situations are particularly uncomfortable: "When someone would tell a gay joke or make a comment about someone who was gay (to me), I assume that they think I'm straight. And I don't say anything. Even if they make a derogatory statement like faggot (and I hear that every day), I say nothing."

Slightly more than half of lesbian and gay respondents (54%) say that they at least sometimes make corrections in those contexts (rather than rarely or never), compared with about one quarter, or 26%, of bisexual respondents. Perhaps not surprisingly, gender nonconforming respondents are more likely than gender conforming respondents to correct the assumption of heterosexuality, even though nonconforming respondents' gender presentation might be expected to reduce such assumptions.

Some other questions asked about the factors that influence respondents' decisions about disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We asked respondents to choose from a list of

Gender nonconforming respondents are **twice as likely** as gender conforming respondents to say that others can tell they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Gender nonconforming respondents are **more likely** than gender conforming respondents to correct the assumption of heterosexuality.

TABLE 7.5

TOP FIVE REASONS: TO BE OR NOT TO BE OUT

TO BE OUT

Being out is better for my mental health and well-being.

You have more control if you come out yourself instead of being "outed" by someone else.

Hiding my sexual orientation would make me feel dishonest.

Being open about who I am has improved the quality of my work.

Being out means I can be myself in an audition.

NOT TO BE OUT

My sexual orientation is nobody's business.

Being out would be seen as a marketing liability by directors, producers, or executives.

As an out actor, I would be typecast in stereotypical gay roles.

Coming out may result in my being fired or not being hired.

Coming out means I would not be able to play heterosexual romantic roles.

reasons that people might choose to be out and reasons that some might choose to not be out. **TABLE 7.5** (previous page) shows the top five reasons that influenced LGB respondents' decisions to be or not to be out.

Most of the reasons to not be out involve concerns about losing out on professional opportunities, either by being typecast or through more direct discrimination. Respondents thought those reasons were more important than are reactions of crewmembers or the media.

When asked about reasons to be out, LGB respondents picked reasons that suggest that being out was good for their professional standing as well as their own mental health and well-being. The more professional considerations included improving the quality of one's work and doing better in auditions, as well as having more control over who knows about one's sexual orientation. While the number of transgender respondents prevents a similar ranking, the reasons they listed for disclosing their transgender status are quite similar in terms of focusing on their own psychological well-being and their professional outcomes.

We asked three other questions to assess how satisfied LGB actors are with their experiences of being out. First, as noted earlier, we asked those who were out whether coming out has affected their career negatively, positively or had no effect. Among lesbian and gay respondents who were out, 72% said it had no effect on their careers. Roughly equal and smaller percentages, 14% each, said that it had either a positive or negative effect. Bisexual respondents were more likely to say that being out did not affect their careers, with 87% reporting no effect 2% reporting a positive effect, and 10% reporting a negative effect.

The other two questions asked half of the sample (including heterosexuals)

FIGURE 7.6

Would you advise an LGB performer to come out?

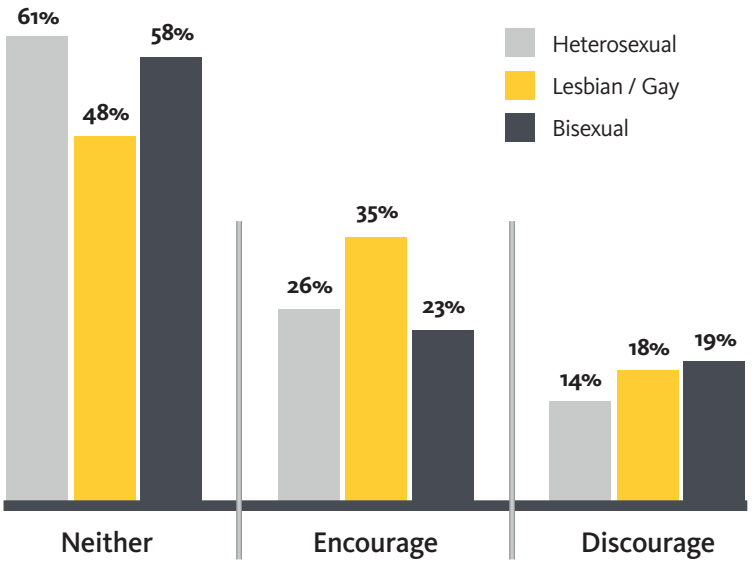
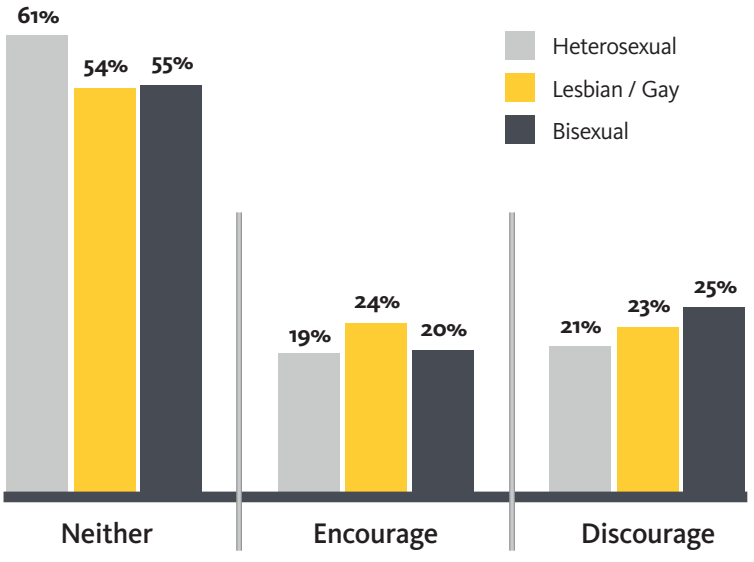


FIGURE 7.7

Would you advise a transgender performer to come out?



about what advice the respondent would give to another performer entering the profession who was considering coming out as LGB or, in the alternative question posed to half the sample, coming out as transgender. Would they encourage them to come out, discourage them from coming out, or neither? "Neither" was the most common response to both questions.

In general, as a comparison of **FIGURE 7.6** with **FIGURE 7.7** shows (previous page), respondents of all sexual orientations were more likely to encourage an LGB performer to come out than a transgender performer. Lesbian and gay respondents were somewhat more likely to encourage a transgender performer to come out than were heterosexual and bisexual respondents. The lesbian and gay respondents were much more likely to advise LGB performers to come out than were heterosexual and bisexual respondents, but LGB respondents were also slightly more likely to discourage LGB or transgender performers from coming out than were heterosexuals.

LGB respondents' own experiences appear to influence the advice that they would give. Perhaps not surprisingly, lesbian and gay respondents who thought that coming out had either had no effect or a positive effect on their own careers were more likely to say they would encourage an LGB or transgender performer to come out. For example, 42% of those with neutral or positive experiences would encourage an LGB performer to come out, while only 33% of those with a negative experience would encourage and 12% of those who are not out would encourage. (The samples for bisexuals were too small to do a similar analysis.)

The respondents who would not encourage or discourage LGBT performers to come out echoed some of the same reasons noted earlier for being out or not out. Some respondents focused on the psychological well-being of the performer: "I would advise the actor to do what is best for their own psychological and emotional welfare before their professional welfare. Even though I think it's not good for your career, I still, on principle, would encourage others not to hide who they are. It's more important than success."

Others worried about the professional impact of coming out, both negative and positive. Many offered more nuanced advice.

- "If he or she was a drop dead gorgeous male or female romantic lead, I'd suggest staying in the closet — I think it's easier for character actors to 'come out.'"

- "I would advise my friend to get known in the industry first."

- "That is their decision to make, but they should know that it may lead to them only playing those roles."

- "I'm bi so I don't go around discussing what isn't relevant to my job, but if submitting for a lesbian role, I do mention that in special notes to casting so they know that I am comfortable kissing girls."

- "It would depend on their physical characteristics. If they were fully passable [sic] in their chosen gender, they should not bother to come out. If they still display aspects of their pre-transition gender, they would have trouble hiding their TG nature, so perhaps they should come out."

- "It depends. I feel that the theater community is more accepting of gays, lesbian and bisexual actors than the TV/film community."

Among lesbian and gay respondents who were out, **72% said it had no effect on their careers.**

Respondents **worried about the professional impact** of coming out, both negative and positive.

Other respondents agreed that the information is nobody's business. One performer's words summarized many people's advice: "It's really no one's business. I would [want] to find out why this person wants to do this. If they feel like they have been living a lie then by all means I would encourage that person because no one should live like that. Any other reason I would just tell them it's really no one's business what their gender is. People should just accept you for who you are." Privacy was also a key theme in these responses: "Keep it private. Most people on set will figure it out but you don't need to announce it to everyone."

Some respondents' advice depended on the race of the performer, suggesting that the impact of being LGBT varies with the race of the performer: "It would really depend on the race of the actor. I am sorry but SAG-AFTRA may want to dispel this, but racism is still quite prevalent in this industry and it is MUCH easier to be a CAUCASIAN gay/lesbian/transgender performer than it is to be one of color."

Interestingly, even though they often had witnessed anti-gay comments or discrimination against LGBT actors, some non-LGBT respondents also worried about their competence in giving advice: "I think there are lots of reasons to make this decision and it should be entirely personal. And as a straight man, how can I even begin to give advice on the subject?"

Summary

Overall, the survey sketches out important patterns related to disclosing one's sexual orientation or transgender status. Our survey suggests that coming out is an important decision for LGBT performers, a decision with potential effects on those performers' careers. They worry that being out will hurt their professional life, while at the same time they believe that being out can result in potential improvements to their sense of well-being and their ability to improve their professional prospects.

LGBT actors manage this personal information in several ways.

- Lesbian and gay performers are more likely to be out professionally than are bisexual performers. A small minority of lesbian and gay performers say they are not out in their professional lives, while a majority of bisexuals say they are not out.

- LGBT performers are less out to those with more decision-making power or influence.

- Many LGB performers will at least sometimes correct others in professional settings who mistakenly assume that they are heterosexual.

Outness is a complicated concept, though, and not necessarily completely under the control of LGBT actors. Many report that other people can tell they are LGBT, especially when their gender expressions are at least somewhat gender nonconforming. On the other hand, LGBT performers who are gender nonconforming are also more out to others in the profession.

Positive or even neutral experiences with coming out appear to create a more supportive environment for other performers to come out. LGB performers who come out without incurring any negative professional harm are more likely to encourage other LGB performers to come out. ●

Privacy was also a key theme in these responses:

"Keep it private. Most people on set will figure it out but you don't need to announce it to everyone."

8. OVERALL ACCOUNTS OF DISCRIMINATION

The survey for this study covered a wide array of topics in regard to respondents' experiences finding jobs and working in the entertainment industry. In addition to our comparison of employment outcomes in the previous sections, we also asked some general questions about whether respondents had ever witnessed or experienced this type of discrimination. In these overall measures, we found that 13% of non-LGBT respondents and 16% of LGBT respondents reported witnessing or personally experiencing some form of anti-LGBT discrimination or harassment at some point in their working lives. Furthermore, we asked respondents to describe an incident they had witnessed or experienced. This section describes these findings related to accounts of discrimination.

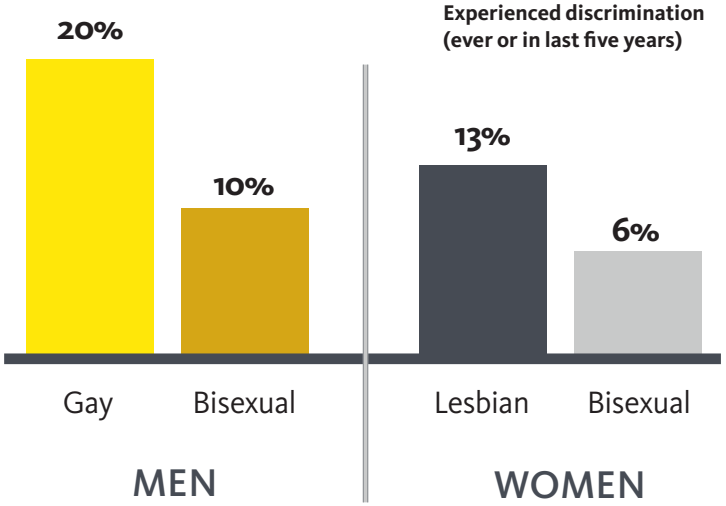
Ever witnessing or experiencing discrimination

The survey asked whether non-LGBT respondents had ever witnessed discrimination against an LGBT performer. We found that 13% of non-LGBT actors say they have ever witnessed discrimination against LGBT people, which is almost the same percentage who reported seeing LGB actors treated with less courtesy and respect.

In this survey, we asked LGBT people a more specific series of questions about treatment in the last five years that was due to being LGB or transgender: having been turned down for a role, being fired during a job, being harassed verbally or in writing, being dropped by an agent, or other forms of discrimination. Because small numbers reported any single form of such treatment, we combined them into one measure that captures having experienced one or more forms of discrimination. We then combined the long-form responses to the detailed questions with short-form responses to a broader question about experiencing discrimination over a longer timeframe, ever in their careers. Overall, 16% of LGBT actors report discriminatory experiences. Overall, **FIGURE 8.1** shows that gay men are the

FIGURE 8.1

Experienced discrimination (ever or in last five years)



most likely to report some discrimination, with one in five reporting an experience. Bisexual actors are about half as likely to report discrimination as gay or lesbian actors.

Our very small sample of transgender respondents makes a detailed analysis impossible, but two-thirds reported one of those types of discrimination in the last five years.

Overall, then, the percentage of non-LGBT actors who directly report witnessing discrimination is very similar to the percentage of LGBT actors who report experiencing discrimination.

Personal recollections of witnessing discrimination

The stories from witnesses reveal the range of types of experiences they have seen LGBT actors face.

A large number of examples relate to the casting process, with many relating to gender nonconformity or for transgender actors:

- "I've seen gay men read for straight roles and when they left the room, the casting director indicated that they would not be taken seriously in the straight role because they were gay."

- "A director told me to recast a role after he found out the lead was a gay male."

- "An openly gay extra was fired because the lead character felt uncomfortable having him around. In fact, two were fired a week apart for the same reason."

- "I've witnessed actors discarded following an audition as being 'wrong' for a role because of perceived sexual image. As in 'he's too fey to play it,' or 'she's too butch to play it.'"

- "A friend almost cast a transgender actress and then found out and reconsidered because there would be a kiss with an actor and he did not know how the actor would feel."

Many other examples concern on-set experiences:

- "People referred to the [transgender] performer as a 'tranny' and made references to using prostitution to pay for the procedures, all behind the performer's back."

- "Female actress making a disgusted face and saying 'he's so gay' towards a cast member. A general feeling of 'I can't talk too much to this guy' from a TV crew towards an actor. All this needs to stop."

- "A transgender person ...[was] told not to use the changing room to change in, but given no alternative except the bathroom to change in. Most people from background to crew members treated them like an outcast."

Personal recollections of experiencing discrimination

LGBT actors also told stories about their own experiences with discrimination:

- "I was told by my agent that the casting director was afraid that I would come off as uncomfortable when put into a scene in the actual production with a female love interest. I wasn't even given the opportunity to read opposite an actress at the callback for the part."

- "I was cast in a commercial – although I have no proof, I believe

Bisexual actors are about **half as likely** to report discrimination as gay or lesbian actors.

that after I was overheard talking about marriage equality that the producers decided to fire me....I was pulled aside and told that they had made a mistake hiring me – that they had meant to hire someone else. I later heard from other actors that they were scrambling trying to find another actor to come to set to replace me."

"Director/writer fired me four weeks into rehearsal stating I wasn't 'masculine' enough for the role as he'd conceived it, tho[ugh] this note had not been stated before. And this was shortly after I had come out (not come on) to him."

Analyses of the survey data and these stories from respondents suggest that discrimination is complex, with gender conformity and outness playing some role in increasing the vulnerability of LGBT actors to discrimination. To see more clearly which characteristics were associated with a higher probability of reported discrimination, we used more detailed statistical tests. In particular, we focused on the role of sexual orientation, outness, and gender nonconformity after taking into account other differences among actors (sex, race, age, location, training, experience, disability, and marital status). The small sample of lesbian and bisexual women made this detailed analysis impossible for our sample of women, unfortunately.

However, the analysis for men showed that gender nonconforming gay and bisexual men were more likely to experience discrimination than those who are gender conforming, as were men who were out professionally. Gay and bisexual men who report that others would perceive them as gender nonconforming in mannerisms or appearance are about twice as likely as gender conforming men to report an experience of discrimination or harassment, holding other factors constant. Gay and bisexual men who report that they are not out professionally are approximately half as likely to report discrimination as those who are out. This more detailed analysis suggests that discrimination against LGB people may be subtle and influenced by the openness of an actor in being LGB, as the section above on being out as an LGBT performer also discussed. ●

Gay men are the **most likely** to report some discrimination, with **one in five** reporting an experience.

9. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

To conclude this study, we looked to the progress in employment for LGBT performers in the entertainment industry. We asked survey respondents, "Compared to 10 years ago, do you believe employment opportunities for LGB (and asked separately, transgender) actors are improving, staying the same, or getting worse?"

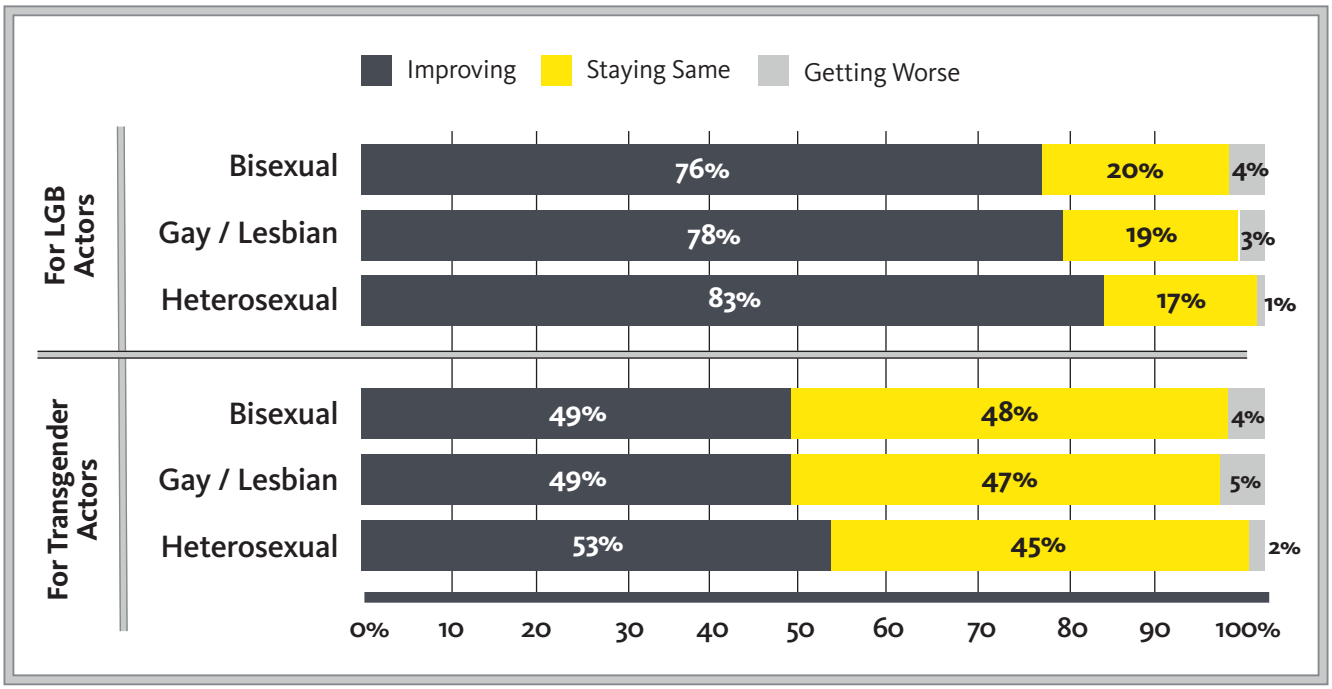
Most respondents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, saw opportunities improving for LGB actors and for transgender actors, as shown in **FIGURE 9.1.** Almost no one thought that opportunities for LGBT actors were getting worse.

Heterosexual respondents were slightly more positive than LGB respondents, perhaps reflecting the fact that some discrimination might be invisible to heterosexuals, as discussed earlier. Respondents generally agreed on improvements in opportunities for LGB actors, but they were evenly split on whether opportunities were greater or stayed the same for transgender actors.

Clearly, actors are, for the most part, very optimistic about the direction of change for opportunities for LGBT performers, even as their responses identified concerns about unequal treatment of and outcomes for LGBT actors. While the direction of change might be positive, the survey results suggest that additional work needs to be done to address discrimination and harassment against LGBT performers in the entertainment industry. ●

FIGURE 9.1

Employment opportunities today for LGB or transgender actors compared to 10 years ago



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