



**Homeschool Alumni Reaching Out**  
presents

**A Complex Picture:**

Results of a 2014 Survey of Adult Alumni of the Modern Christian Homeschool Movement  
Installment 7: Sexuality  
December 1, 2015

Data analysis provided by:



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Read the first installment, which includes a description of the survey methodology, [here](#). The second installment, which focuses on demographic variables, can be found [here](#). The third installment, which discusses academics and other non-academic educational aspects, is [here](#). The fourth installment, focusing on food and health, is [here](#). The fifth installment, on the topic of religion, is [here](#). The sixth installment, discussing respondents' current families and careers, is here. *Note that this survey should not be used to make any generalized statements about homeschoolers as a whole; the only people it can be used to make claims about are the 3,702 people who took the survey.*

## 0. Introduction to Installment 7: Sexuality

In this installment, we discuss aspects of respondents' sexualities. Section 1 provides demographic information on respondents' sexual orientations. Section 2 shows their changing attitudes towards LGBTQ\* people. Section 3 discusses several aspects of the sexual ideology respondents were taught in their homeschooling environment. Section 4 provides participants' responses to questions about BDSM/kink.

### 1. Sexual orientation

As shown in Figure 1, 83% of respondents identified as 'Straight'. This means that around one in five respondents identified as having a sexual orientation *other than* 'Straight'. The most common of these was 'Bisexual' at 7% of the total sample. Each group of 'Gay', 'Asexual', 'Pansexual', and 'Lesbian' respondents composed 1-2% of the total sample. Around 1-2% of respondents also identified as both 'Bisexual' and 'Pansexual'; 1-2% identified as both 'Straight' and 'Asexual'; and 1-2% identified as both 'Straight' and either 'Bisexual' or 'Pansexual' or both. The rest of the respondents either identified as multiple orientations or as 'Other'.

Figure 1: Respondents' sexual orientation

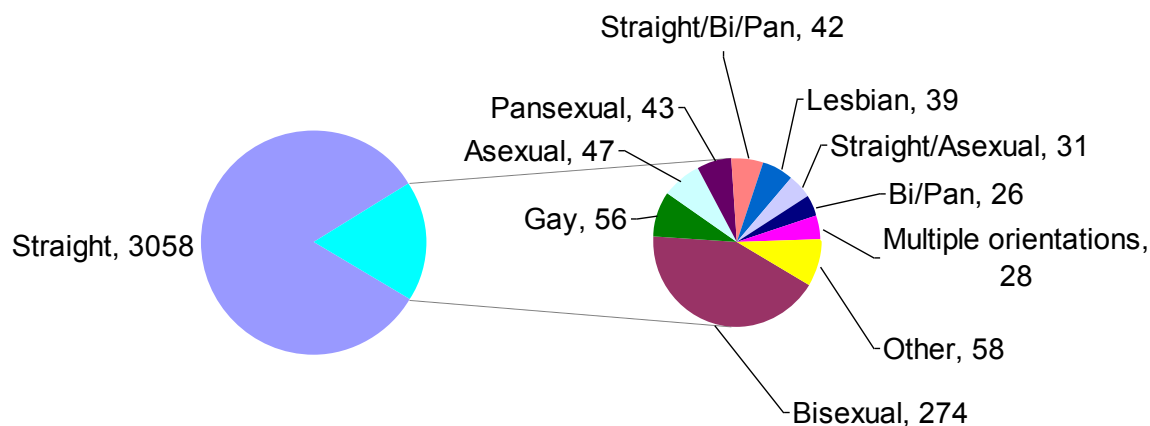
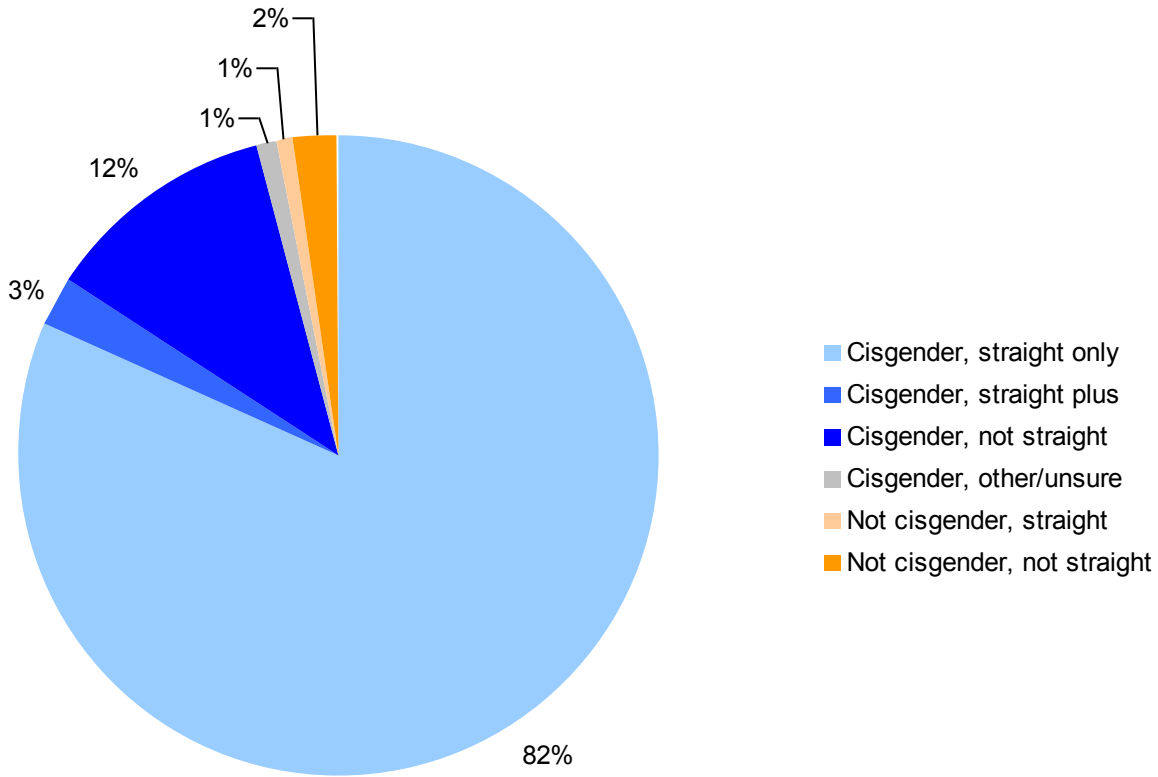


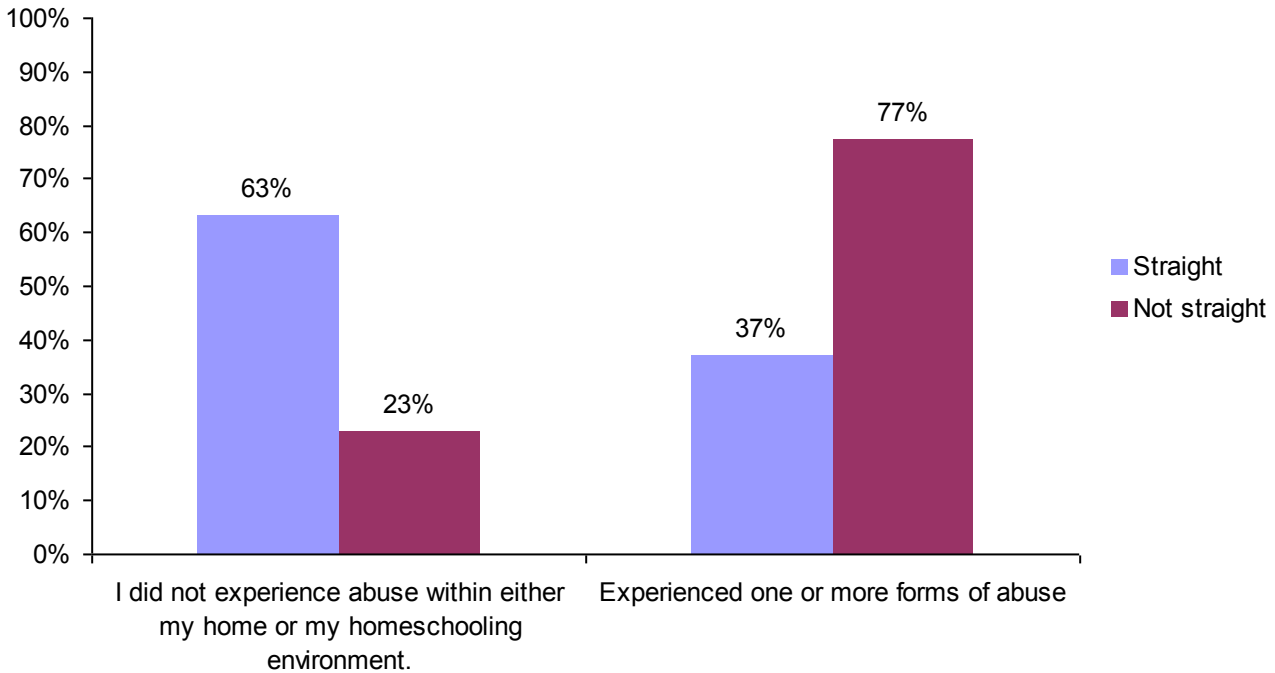
Figure 2 shows an analysis of this data which includes gender identity (providing an estimate of the percentage of the sample who identified as LGBTQ\*). Around 82% of respondents were cisgender and straight. A further 3% identified as cisgender and straight plus at least one other orientation. Around 12% of respondents were cisgender and did not identify as straight. Around 3% of respondents did not identify as cisgender.

Figure 2: Respondents' gender identity and sexual orientation



Sexual orientation correlated very strongly with respondents' reports of abuse, as shown in Figure 3. Respondents who identified as not straight were more than twice as likely to have experienced abuse as straight respondents—77% of respondents who were not straight reported experiencing some form of abuse.

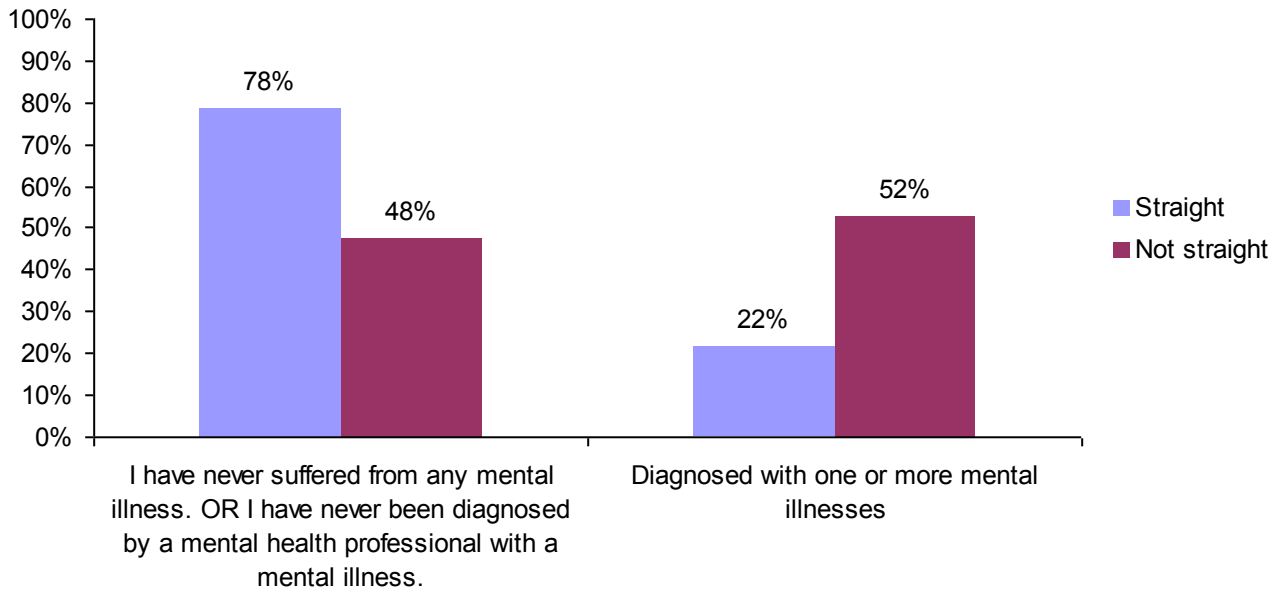
Figure 3: Did you experience abuse WITHIN either your home or your homeschooling environment?



Sexual orientation also correlated strongly with respondents' reports of diagnosed mental illness (Figure 4). Respondents who were not straight were more than twice as likely to have been diagnosed with a mental

illness as straight respondents—52% of respondents who were not straight reported having been diagnosed with a mental illness by a mental health professional.

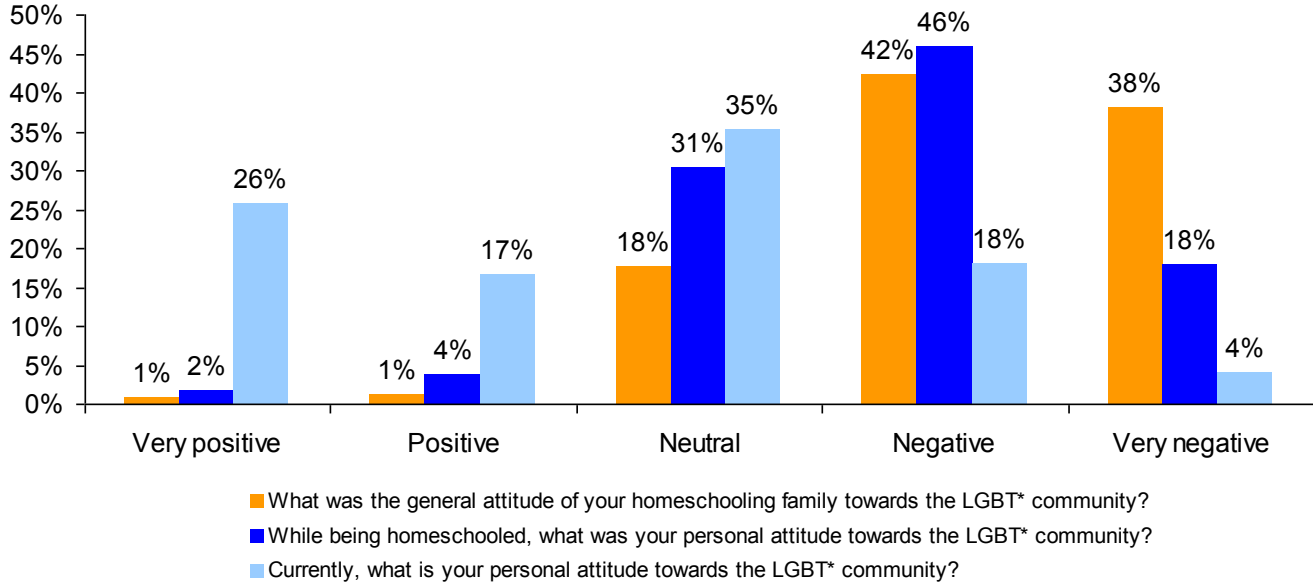
**Figure 4: Have you ever been diagnosed by a mental health professional with any mental illnesses?**



## 2. Attitudes towards LGBTQ\* people

Respondents reported having more positive attitudes towards LGBTQ\* people than their families did while they were being homeschooled. Further, their attitudes became dramatically more positive during adulthood. As shown in Figure 5, respondents reported that their families' attitudes averaged 1.85 (where 5 is 'Very positive' and 1 is 'Very negative'). While being homeschooled, respondents reported that their attitudes averaged 2.25. At the time of the survey, respondents' attitudes averaged 3.42—a more than 150% increase since childhood.

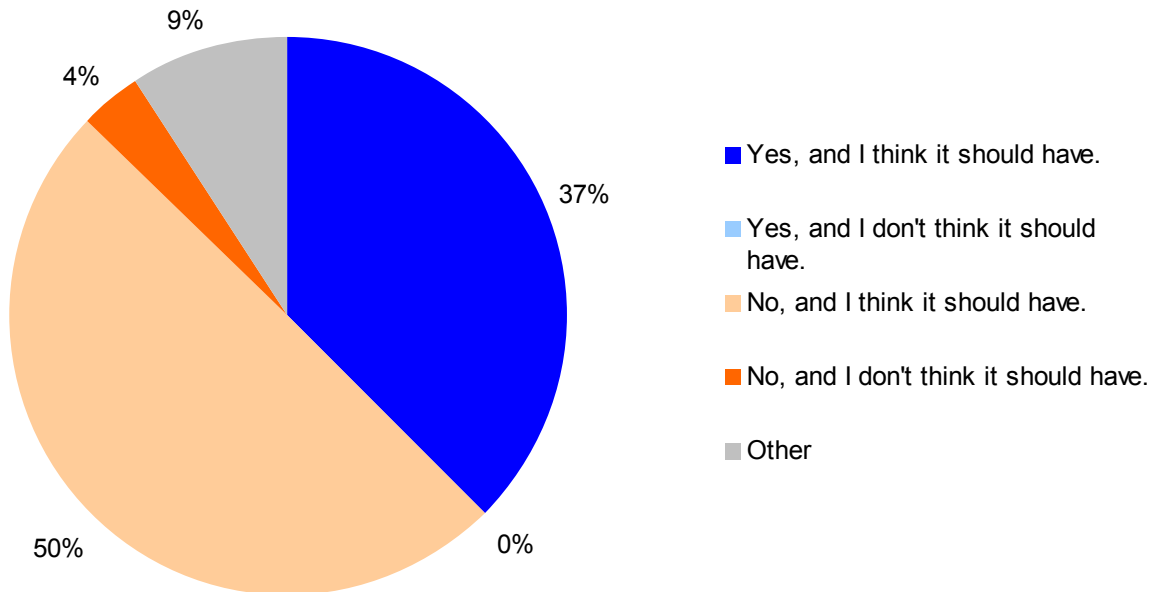
Figure 5: Change in respondents' attitudes towards LGBTQ\* persons



### 3. Sexual ideology

In the survey, “sex positivity” was defined as “an understanding of sexuality that emphasizes its potentially positive force in one’s life, rather than emphasizing it as problematic, disruptive, or dangerous.” Approximately 87% of respondents agreed that sex positivity *should* have been communicated during their homeschool education, while only around 4% disagreed (a further 9% selected ‘Other’). However, fully half (50%) of respondents said that their education did not include a discussion of sex positivity, but that they wished it had (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Do you believe your homeschool education communicated sex positivity to you?



“Body positivity” was defined in the survey as “a view of your own body and others’ bodies as good, natural, and healthy, rather than objects of danger, shame, or scorn.” Approximately 94% of respondents agreed that body positivity *should* have been communicated during their homeschool education, while only around 1% disagreed (a further 5% selected ‘Other’). However, 45% of respondents said their education did not include a

discussion of body positivity, but that they wished it had. A slightly larger proportion (49%) of respondents reported that body positivity *had* been communicated to them.

Figure 7: Do you believe your homeschool education communicated body positivity to you?

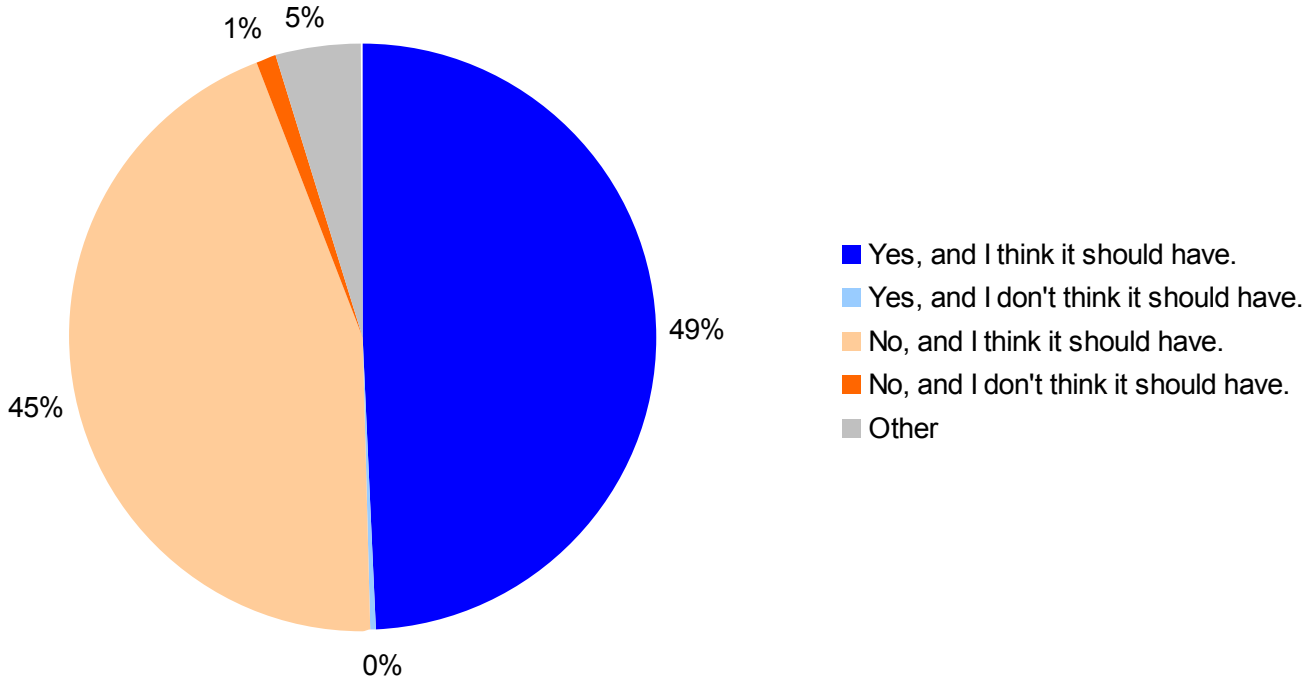


Figure 8 shows that only about 55% of respondents received any education regarding sexual consent, while 40% of respondents did not receive education about sexual consent (a further 4% selected 'Other', many of whom indicated that they were dissatisfied with all the answer choices).

Figure 8: If you received sex education while being homeschooled, was the importance of consent expressly emphasized?

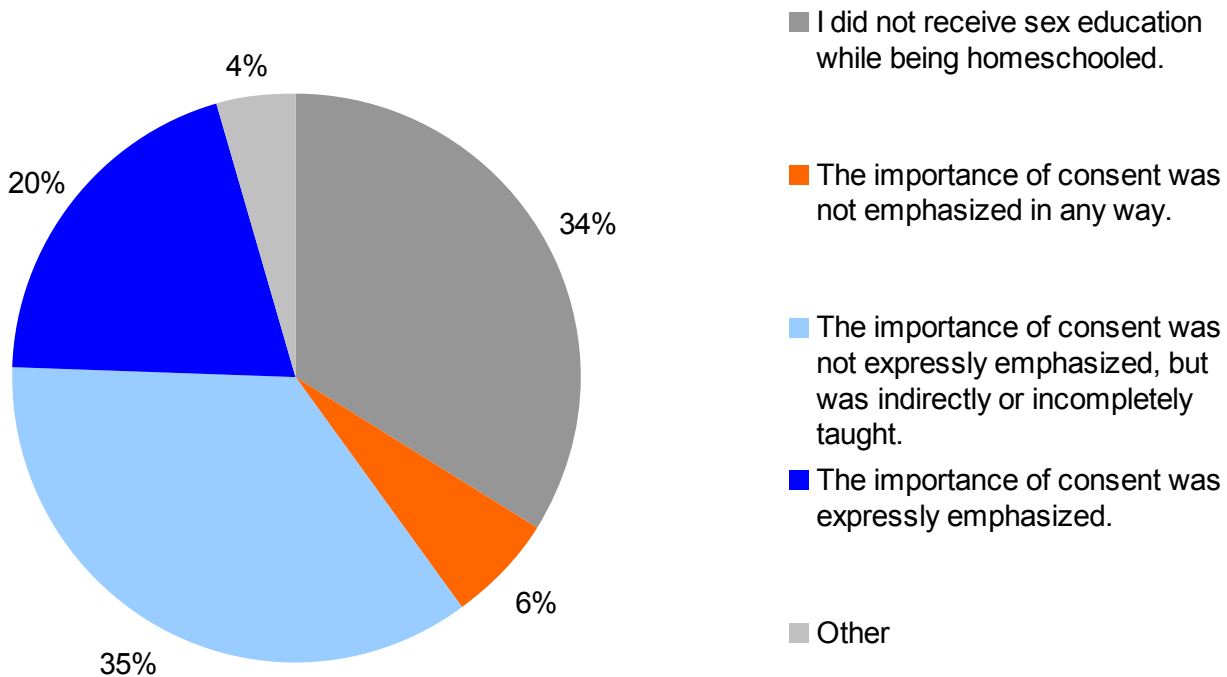
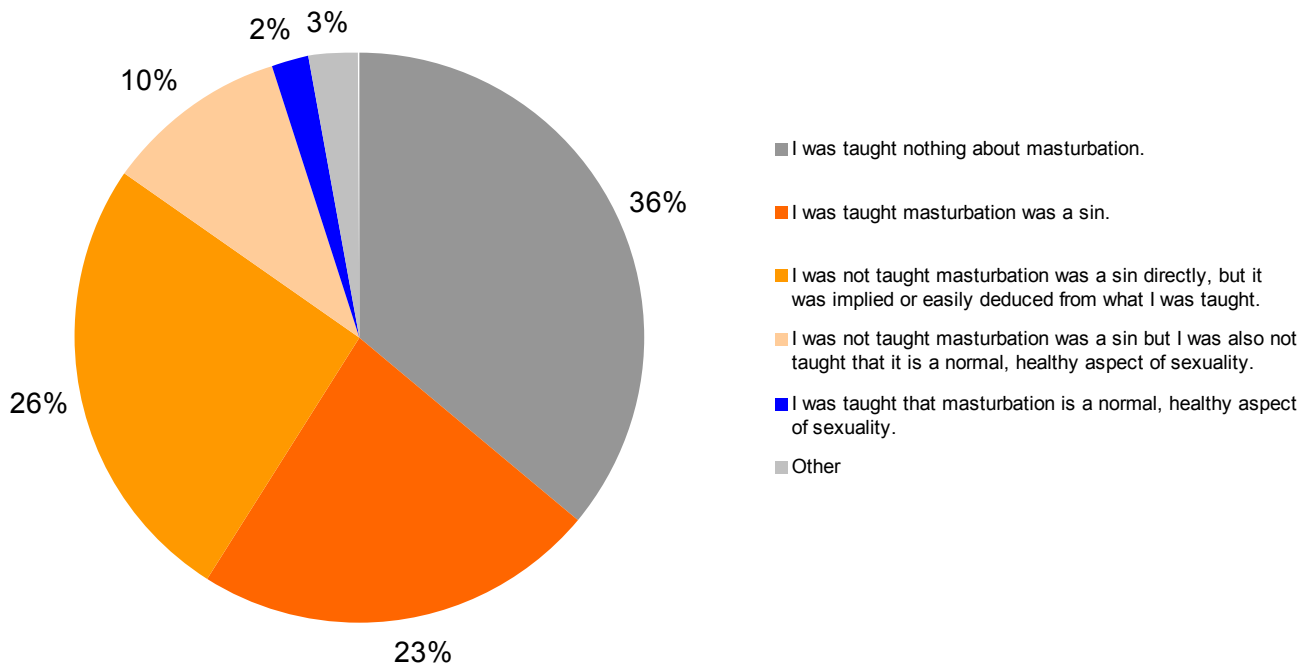


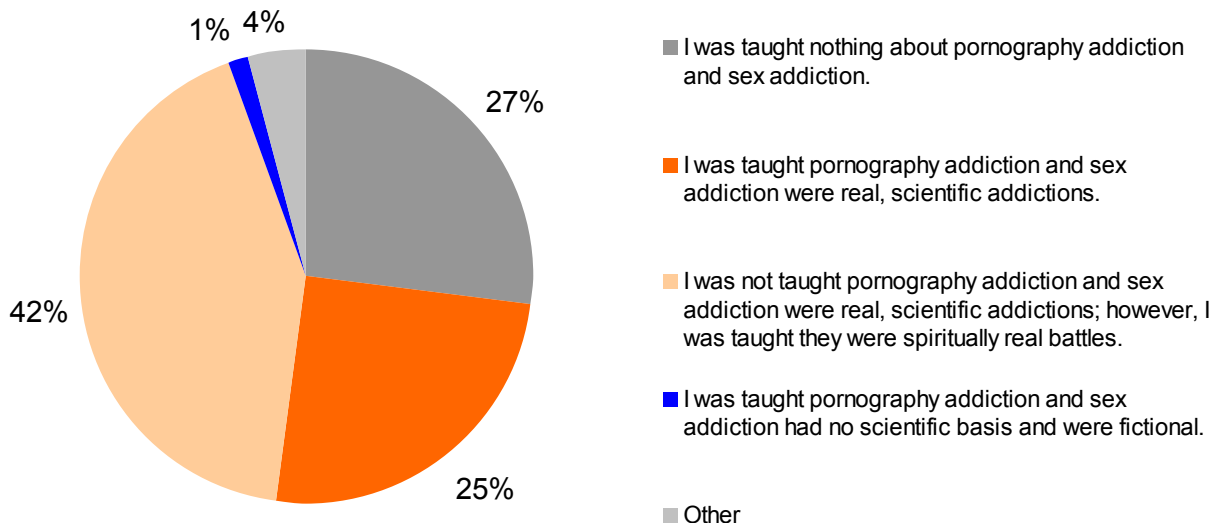
Figure 9 shows that approximately half of respondents (49%) were taught directly or indirectly that masturbation was a sin. A further 36% were taught nothing about masturbation, while 2% were taught that masturbation was a normal and healthy aspect of sexuality.

Figure 9: Were you taught masturbation was a sin?



One-quarter (25%) of respondents were taught that pornography addiction and sex addiction were real, scientific addictions, as shown in Figure 10. A further 42% of respondents were taught that pornography and sex addictions were spiritual battles. Around one-quarter (27%) of respondents were taught nothing about pornography addiction and sex addiction, and 1% were taught that pornography and sex addiction were fictional.

Figure 10: Were you taught pornography addiction and sex addiction were real, scientific addictions?



#### 4. Attitudes towards kink/BDSM

Figure 11 shows that, while 21% of respondents who reported experiencing some form of abuse replied either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to the statement 'I have engaged in BDSM/kink activities', only 9% of those who did not report experiencing abuse did so.

Figure 11: I have engaged in BDSM/kink activities.

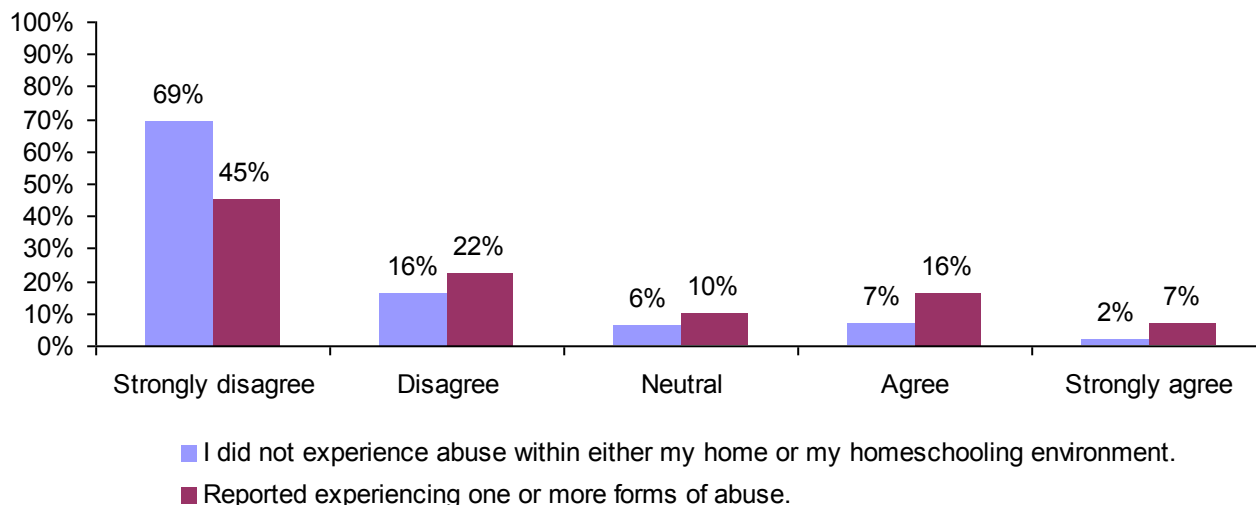
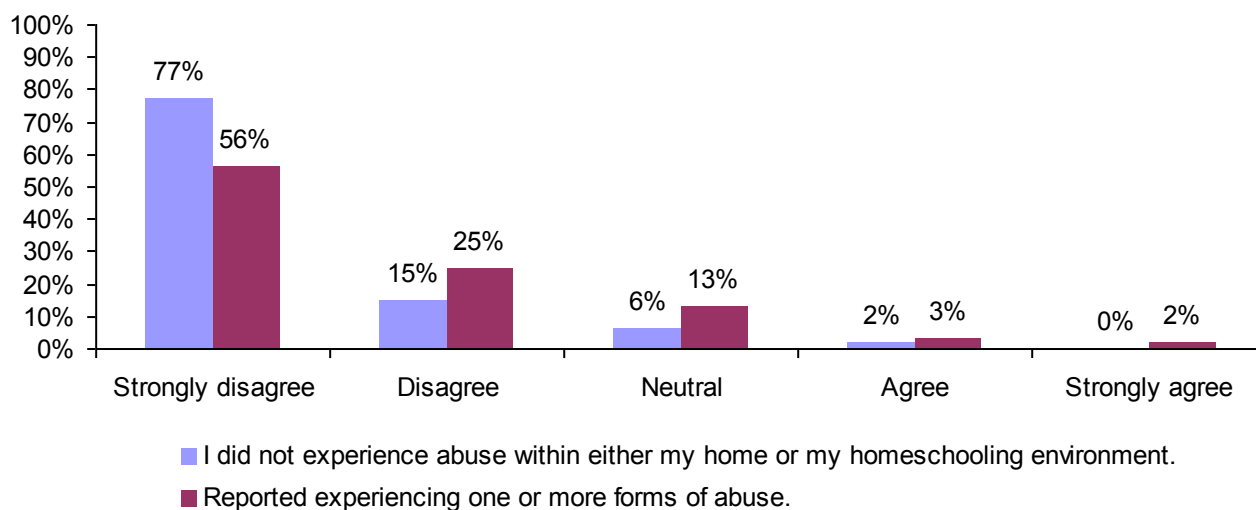


Figure 12 shows that, while 5% of respondents who reported experiencing some form of abuse replied either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to the statement 'I consider BDSM/kink to be an important part of my identity', only 2% of those who did not report experiencing abuse did so. (The overall figure was around 3%).

Figure 12: I consider BDSM/kink to be an important part of my identity.



[Studies have shown](#) BDSM/kink practitioners to be generally well-adjusted, suggesting that childhood experiences of abuse are not correlated with BDSM/kink behaviors, despite the fact that “a number of clinical case reports have suggested this to be the case”. The HARO survey data does show a slight correlation between experiences of abuse and engagement in BDSM/kink; however, it also shows that sexual and gender minority respondents were far more likely to have been abused as children, and this community may be [more likely to participate in BDSM/kink](#). The slight correlation may also be due to small sample size. It is unlikely that the survey’s findings on BDSM/kink in the homeschool alumni community are particularly meaningful. Survey responses to the other questions in this vein are shown in Table 1.



**Table 1: Survey responses to questions on BDSM/kink**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I am familiar with BDSM/kink.	20%	8%	12%	46%	15%
I am attracted to BDSM kink.	45%	20%	17%	12%	5%
I find BDSM/kink to be traumatically triggering.	46%	20%	23%	8%	3%
I find BDSM/kink to be therapeutic.	58%	18%	19%	5%	1%

## 5. Conclusion

The majority of respondents were cisgender and heterosexual, while around one-fifth (18%) identified as LGBTQ\*. Among sexual and gender minorities, the largest group were bisexual; asexuals were also well-represented. Sexual orientation correlated strongly with respondents' reports of abuse and mental illness: 77% of non-straight respondents reported abuse and 52% of non-straight respondents reported a diagnosis of mental illness. In general, respondents' attitudes towards LGBTQ\* people were neutral to positive and had changed dramatically since their childhoods, where they had been negative on average. Their families' attitudes had been even more negative. In terms of sexual ideology, 50% of respondents wished that their education had been sex-positive, and 45% of respondents wished that their education had been body-positive. Around 40% of respondents did not receive education about sexual consent, and 49% of respondents were taught that masturbation was a sin. One-quarter of respondents were taught that pornography addiction and sex addiction were based in sound science. Though there was a slight correlation between childhood experiences of abuse and adult engagement in BDSM/kink, only around 3% of respondents considered BDSM/kink to be an important part of their identity.