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### The Utilization and Experiences of Safe Places for Black Transgender Individuals and Students

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# The Utilization and Experiences of Safe Places for Black Transgender Individuals and Students

Janiah Lambert '21 – (Sponsor: Professor Nicole Overstreet)



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## Introduction

- Microaggressions are a common experience for black transgender and nonconforming individuals (TGNC) while being in safe spaces
- With the intersection of Black and transgender identities, Black transgender individuals have unique experiences that differ from each individual identity
- Microaggressions impact Black transgender individuals on an emotional and cognitive level
- Due to a lack of social support, Black transgender individuals often form their own social support and safe spaces
- While supporting Black transgender individuals, it is important to understand cisgender norms, racism, and the structures that make it difficult for support to be received

## Methods

- 12 articles were used in the literature review
- Articles were obtained from PsychINFO, an assisting graduate student, and references from other articles
- Articles used were based on 1) transgender individuals 2) black transgender individuals 3) intersectionality of identities 4) cisgender norms 5) support for transgender individuals

## Research Question

How do black transgender individuals/students use safe spaces and what are their experiences in them?

## Suicide Among Black LGBTQ Youth: Gender Identity

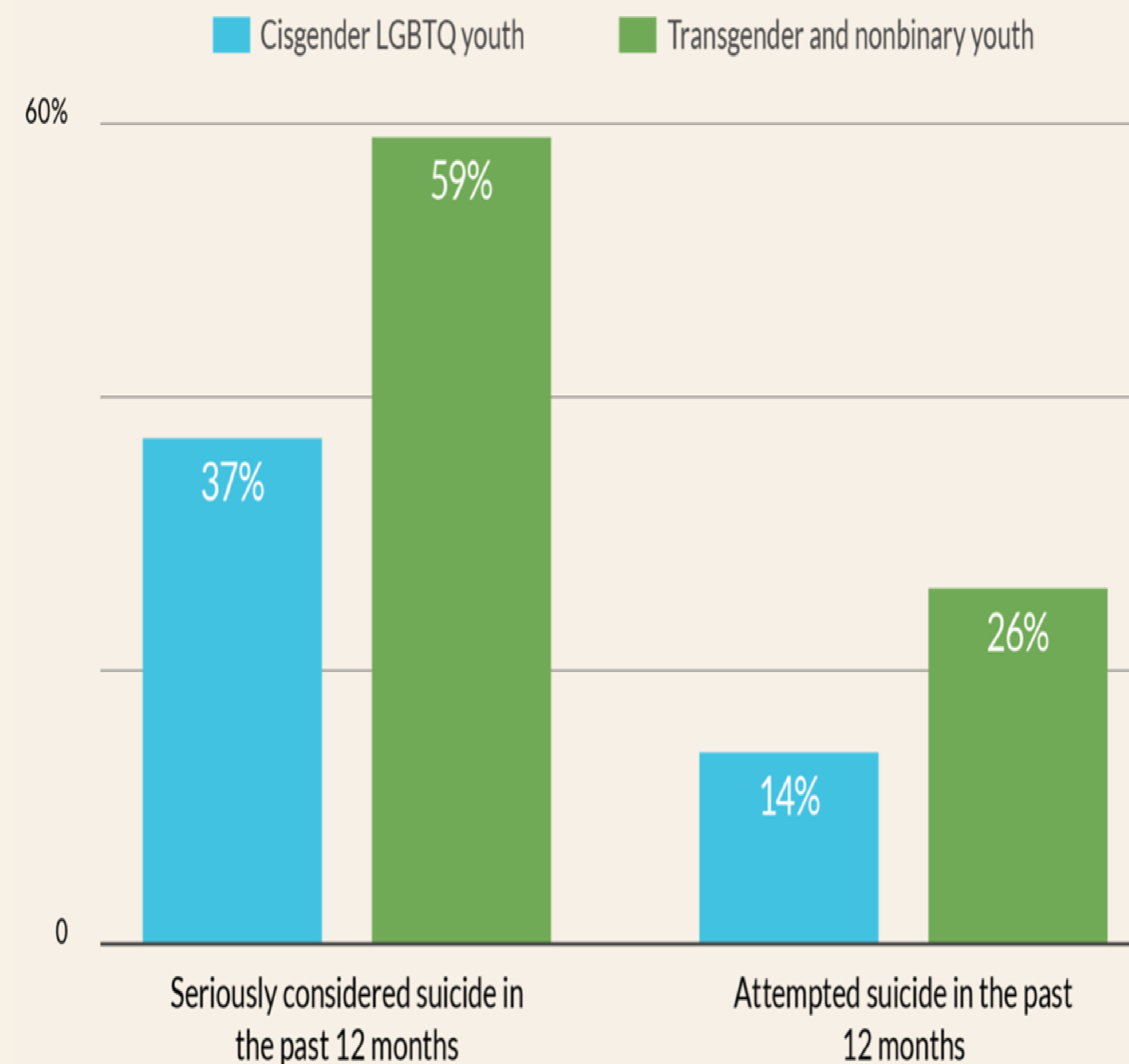


Figure 1: Image from [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

## Results

### Transgender Microaggressions

- Microaggressions has been a major research focus within TGNC populations
- 12 common themes of microaggressions include:
  - 1) The use of transphobic/incorrect gender terminology
  - 2) Assumption of universal transgender experience
  - 3) Dehumanization of transgender individuals
  - 4) Discomfort/disapproval of transgender experience
  - 5) Endorsement of gender normative and binary culture/behavior
  - 6) Denial of existence of transphobia
  - 7) Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality
  - 8) Physical threat or harassment
  - 9) Denial of individual transphobia
  - 10) Denial of personal body privacy
  - 11) Familial microaggression
  - 12) Systemic and environmental microaggressions.

## Results (continued)

### Microaggressions in Academia

- Microaggression themes experienced specifically by transgender *students* include structural oppression, cisgender bias, faculty knowledge gaps, visible discomfort, pervasive nature of transphobia, and social exclusion
- Another nuance that was discovered is that in some women only safe spaces, TGNC women are not allowed due to heterosexism
- Not only are safe spaces limited for transgender students they are also limited for transgender staff in academia

### Unique experiences of Black Students

- Black students at universities have reported racism/discrimination in safe spaces. These students report feelings of isolation, frustration, and self doubt from racial microaggressions
- Black LGBTQ members often form their own safe spaces due to the racial microaggressions they receive in LGBTQ safe spaces. Additionally, transgender individuals form their own safe spaces because they receive gender microaggressions in Black safe spaces.
- Technology based social support, such as blogs, social media apps, and websites, is on the rise within TGNC populations
- Social support is a major buffer for stress, and Black transgender individuals face a lot of stress. A lack of social support can impact how individuals view themselves and cope through stress.

## Future Goals

- Develop further research and bridge gaps in the research community on black transgender individuals
- Providing safe spaces for black transgender individuals
- Dismantling racist and cisgender microaggressions in safe spaces and academia
- Providing more education about black transgender experiences