



Belonging and Social Emotional Health Among Holyoke Students

Findings from the 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (10th and 12th grade)



About the Public Health Institute of Western MA

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts supports communities in their efforts to become measurably healthier and more equitable through community engagement, convening collaborative partnerships, communications, data analysis, research and evaluation, and policy advocacy.

Health Equity Statement

A historic legacy of social, economic, and environmental inequities, such as racism and gender-based discrimination, are embedded in societal institutions and result in poor health. These unjust inequities affect communities differently with some bearing a greater burden of poorer health. These inequities can influence health more than individual choices or access to healthcare. PHIWM recognizes its responsibility to dismantle these injustices by promoting health through policies, practices, and organizational systems that benefit all.

Thank you to our 2024-2025 funder!

The 2024 Holyoke Youth Health Surveys were administered with support from the Springfield Department of Health & Human Services.

PublicHealthWM.org

What is the Youth Health Survey?

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts and Holyoke Public Schools administered the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to youth in grades 10 and 12 (4/14/25-4/17/25) in Holyoke Public Schools. See the [webpage](#) for methods and responses to all questions. This report contains information about students in 10th and 12th grade who took the YRBS.

What were students asked?

The Youth Health Survey asked a variety of questions focused on health outcomes and behaviors, as well as risk and protective factors. [Click here](#) to view the full surveys and responses to all questions.

What did we look at?

Demographic characteristics of the survey respondents were similar to those reported by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). We looked at the results for all students, but also by their identities. We checked for differences between students' experiences by race/ethnicity, gender identity, and LGBTQ+ experience using chi-square tests. In order to have enough participants to examine results by identity, we combined the 10th and 12th grade respondents. Additionally, where possible, we compared to the [2023 MA Youth Health Survey](#).

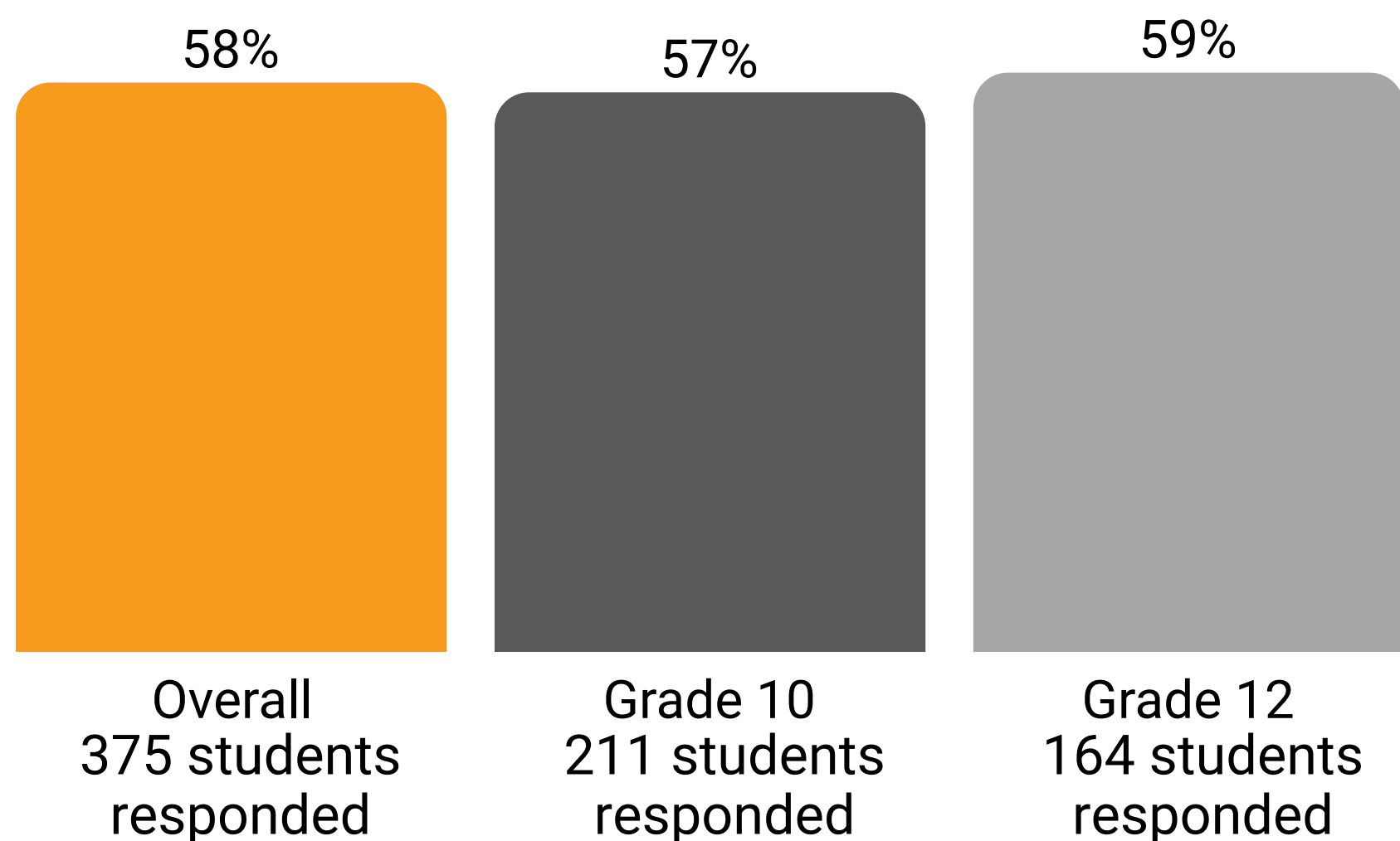


Demographics



2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 10 and 12 grade students in Holyoke

Response rates by grade



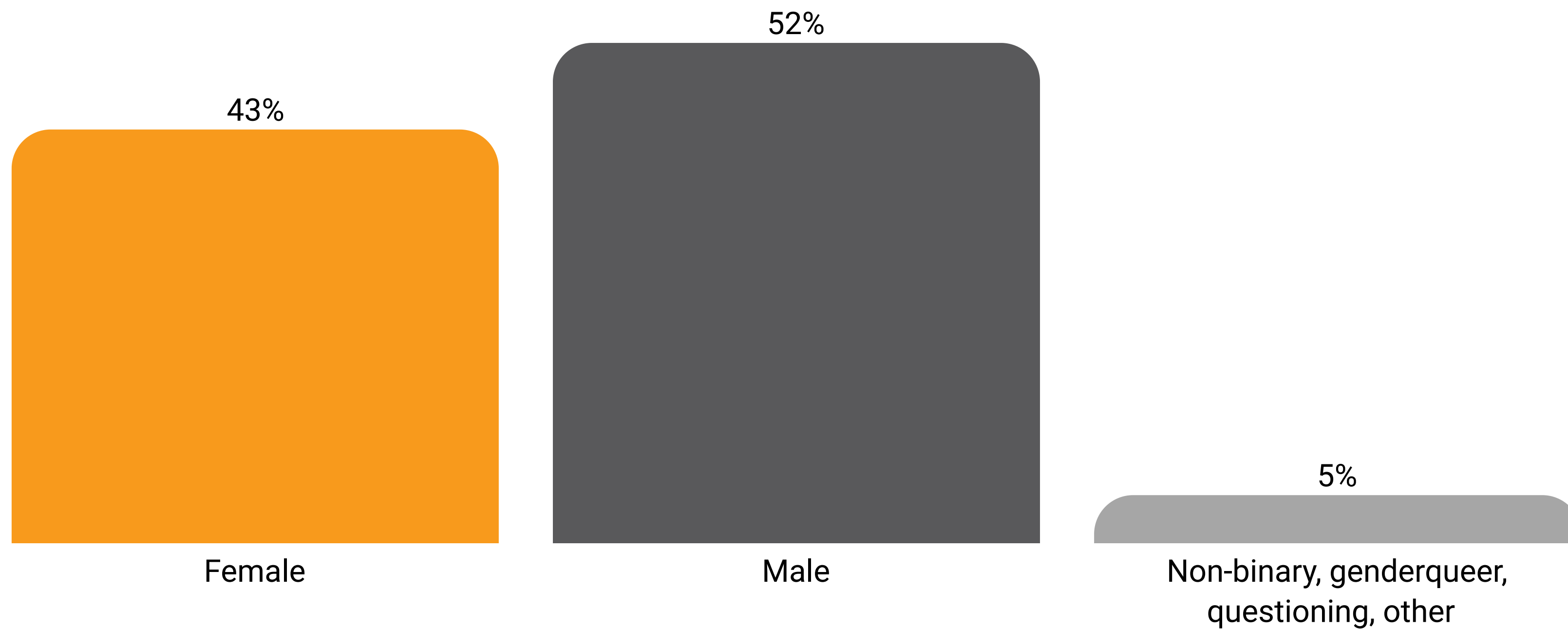
We calculated participation rates based on enrollment data at Holyoke Public Schools. Guardians were able to opt out through a passive consent process, and students could opt out of the survey on the day of administration. Additionally, some students were absent during the survey period, which may bias the results if these students were significantly different than their peers.

Due to low response rates, these responses are not representative of all students at Holyoke Public Schools. Interpret data with caution.



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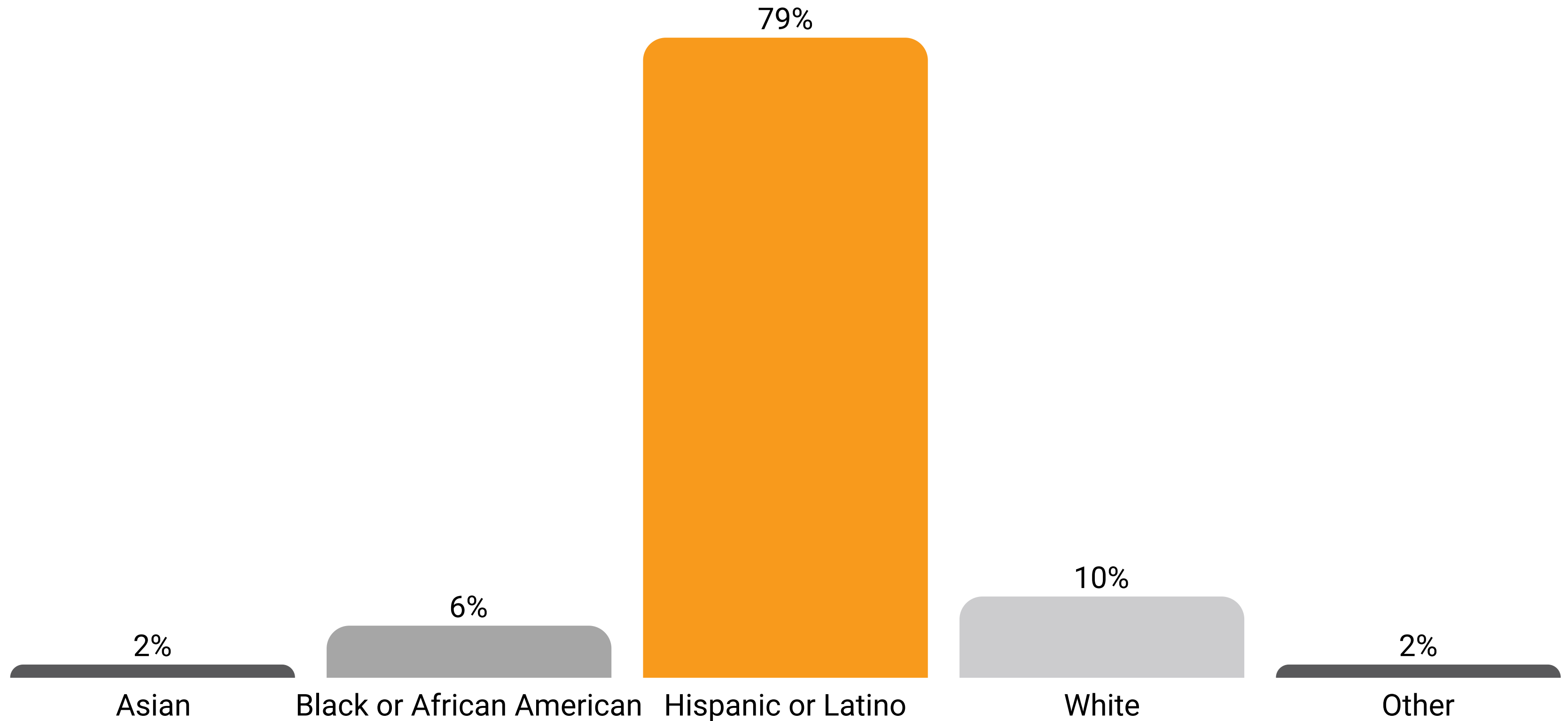
Gender identity





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Race/ethnicity

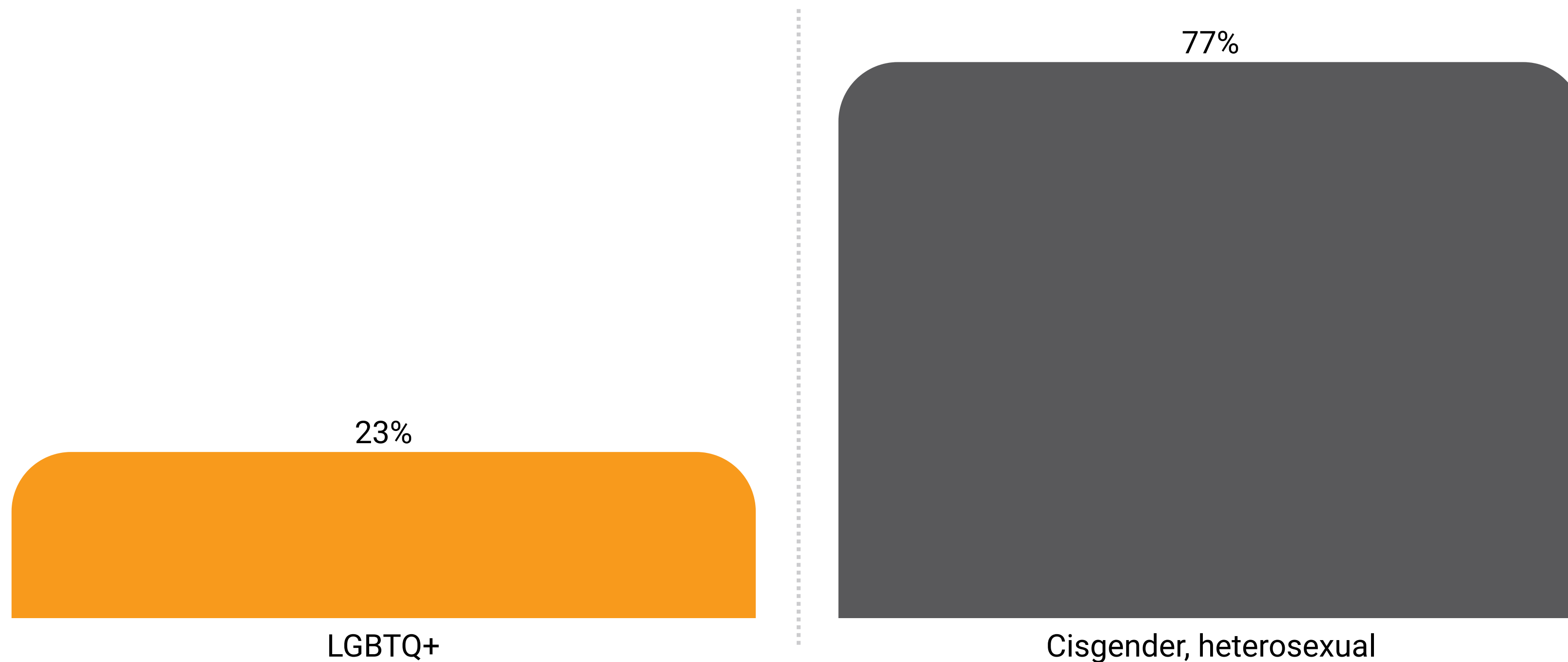


<1.5% of students identified as American Indian or Alaska Native alone



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LGBTQ+ identity

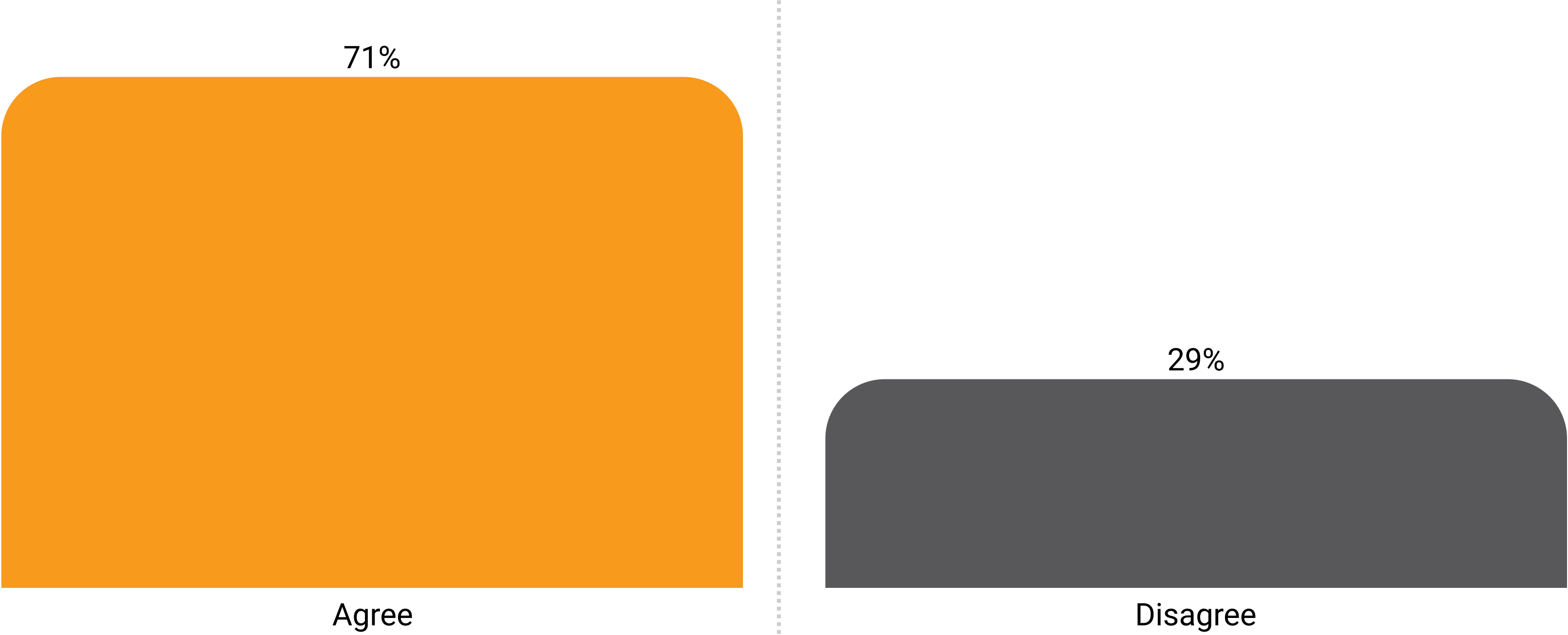


Overall



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I feel like I belong at my school.



In a similar question statewide, 55% of 10th/12th grade students responded that they feel they belong “quite a bit” or “a lot” at school.



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I feel close to the people at my school.



No statewide comparison available



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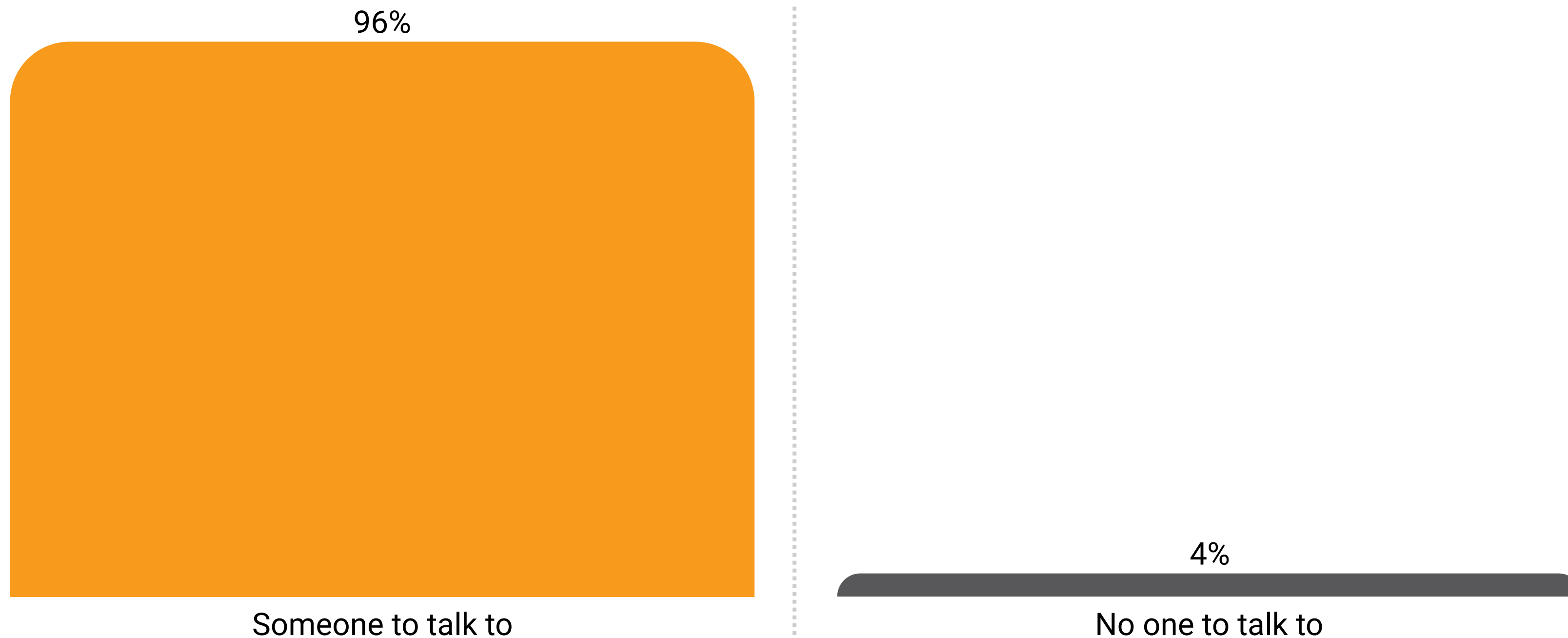
My identities are represented in the things I learn in school.





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Someone to talk to about a personal problem



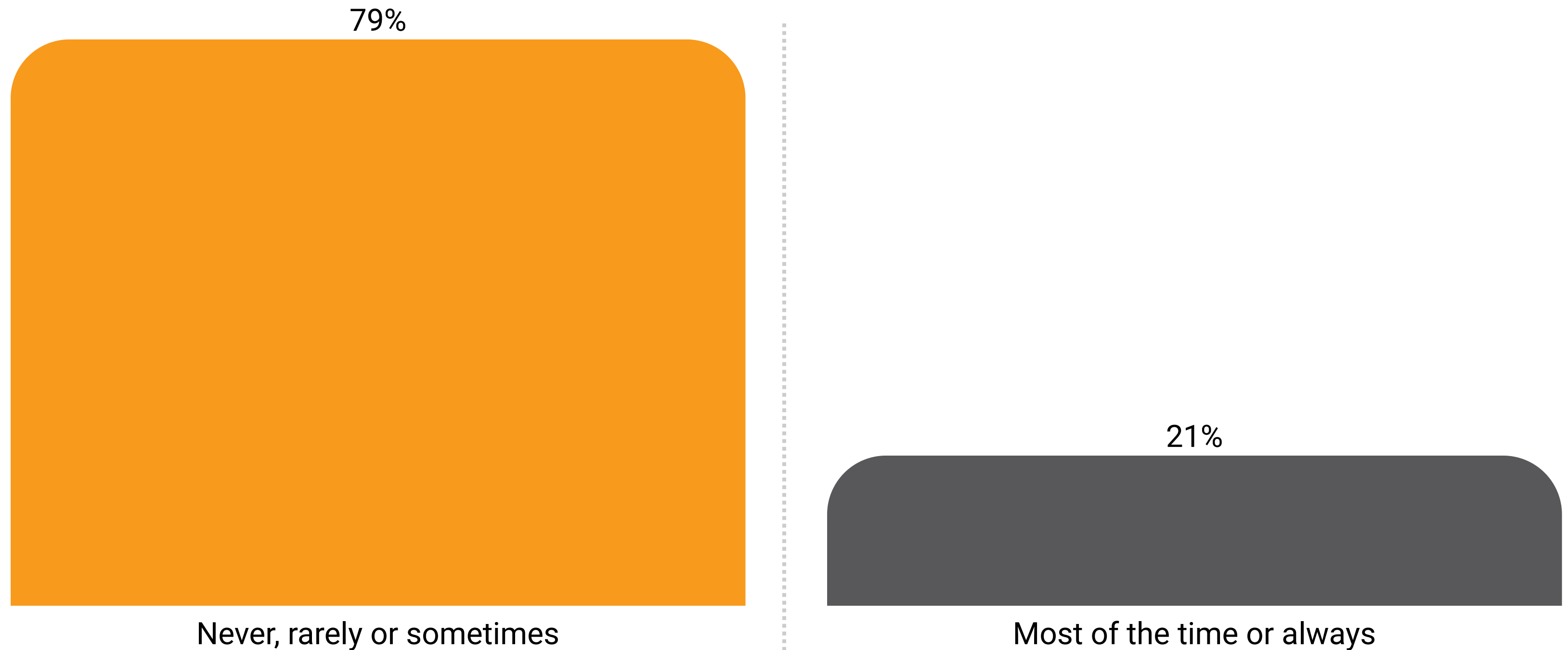
Calculated based on a series of questions asking whether students could talk to the following if they had a personal problem: Adults in their home; school psychologist, school counselor, or school nurse; teacher or other adult at school; psychologist, therapist, counselor, doctor, or nurse outside school; adult in the community; friend/non adult family member; friend online; another person

In a similar question statewide, 90% of 10th/12th graders reported having someone to talk to.



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Feelings of loneliness



Though the MA YHS does not ask about loneliness, this mirrors a [national trend](#) of rising loneliness and isolation among young people.

Differences by gender

All statistical testing in this section compares to female students.



2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 10 and 12 grade students in Holyoke

I feel like I belong at my school.

The percentage of students who reported that they agree that they belong at their school by gender:



* indicates that the differences were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ as compared to female participants.
Only male and female identifying students are captured here, as there were not enough nonbinary, genderqueer, questioning, or other students to report.



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I feel close to the people at my school.

The percentage of students who reported that they agree that they feel close to the people at their school by gender



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My identities are represented in the things I learn in school.

The percentage of students who reported that they agree that they feel represented by the things they learn at school by gender:



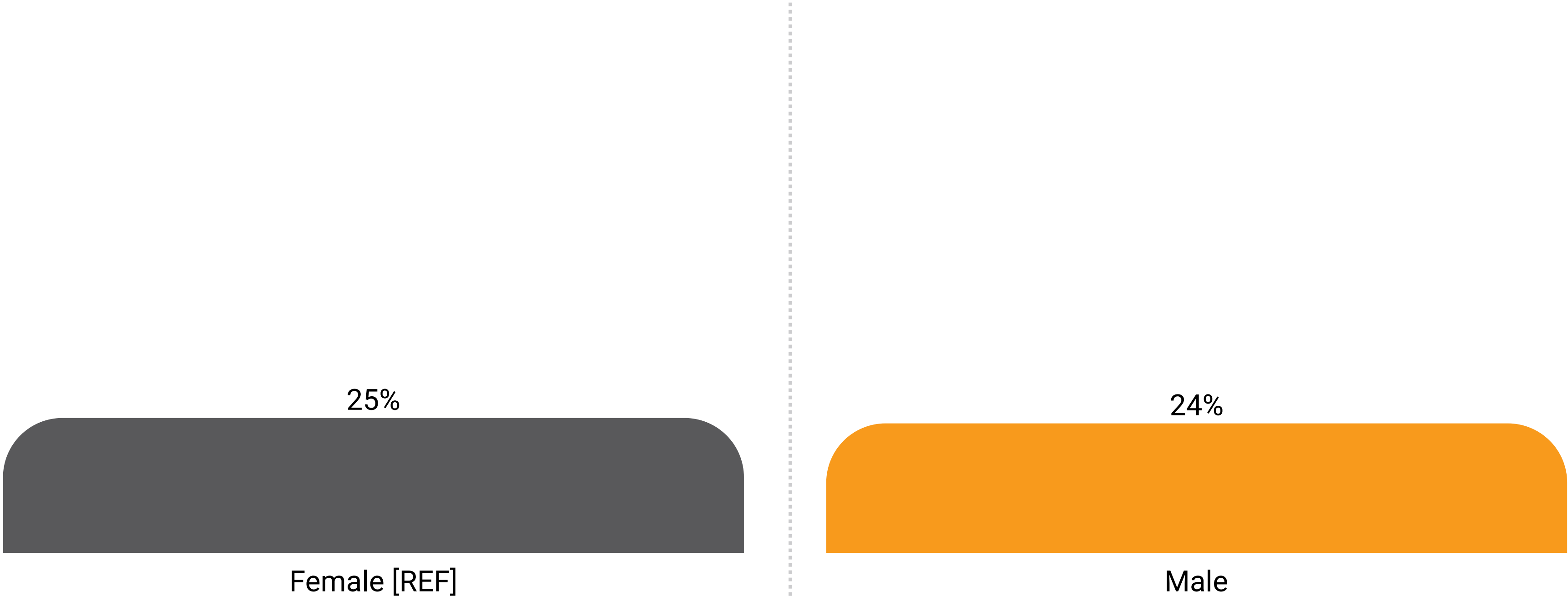
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Feelings of loneliness

The percentage of students who reported feeling lonely “most of the time” or “always,” by gender:



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Differences by LGBTQ+ experience

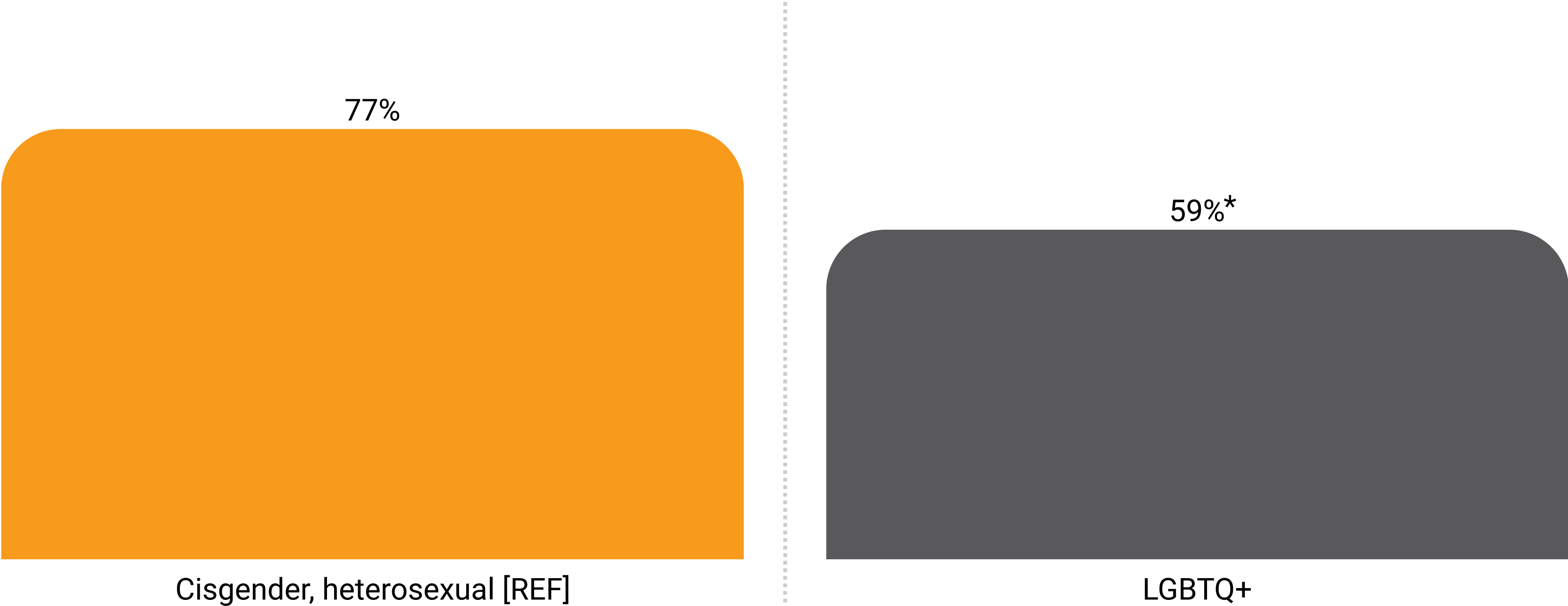
All statistical testing in this section compares to cisgender, heterosexual students.



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I feel like I belong at my school.

The percentage of students who reported feeling that they agree that they belong at school by LGBTQ+ experience:



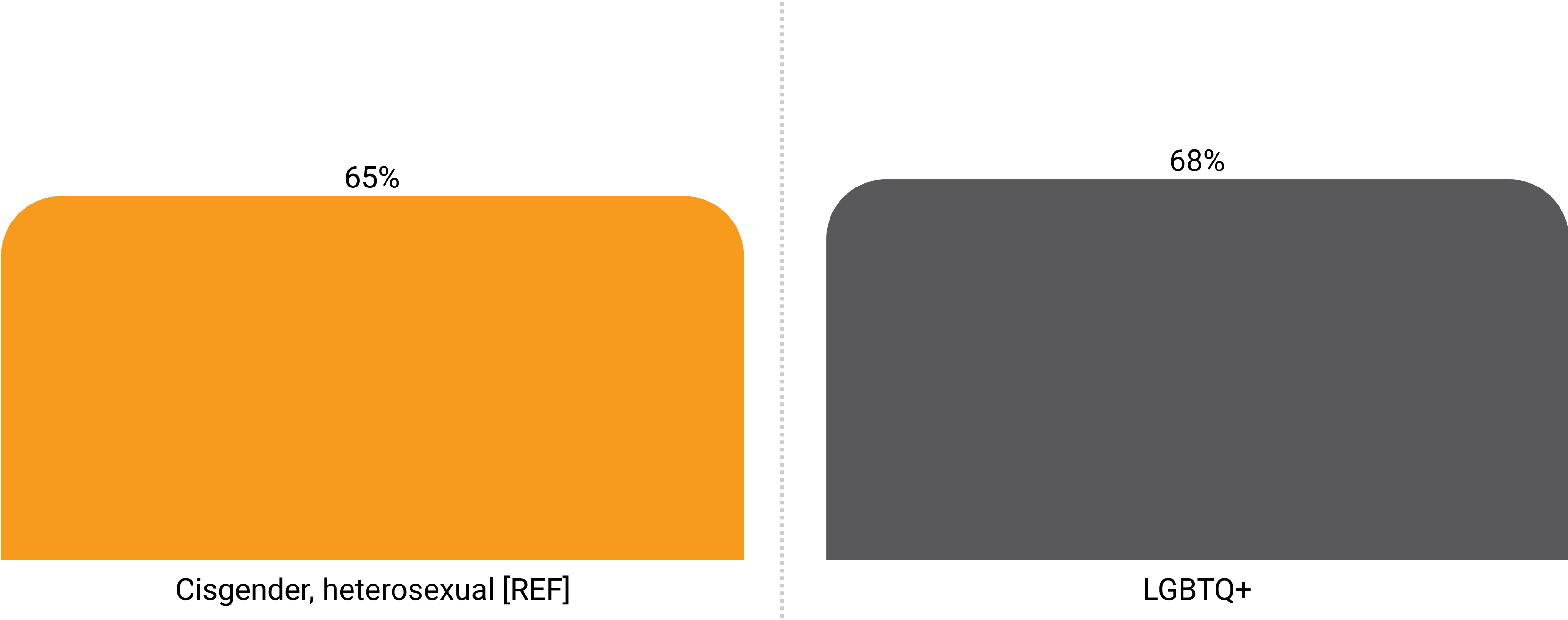
* indicates that the differences were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ as compared to cisgender, heterosexual respondents.
LGBTQ+ students included students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, queer, some other sexual identity; and/or transgender; and/or nonbinary, questioning, or other gender



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I feel close to the people at my school.

The percentage of students who reported that they agree that they feel close to the people at their school by LGBTQ+ experience:



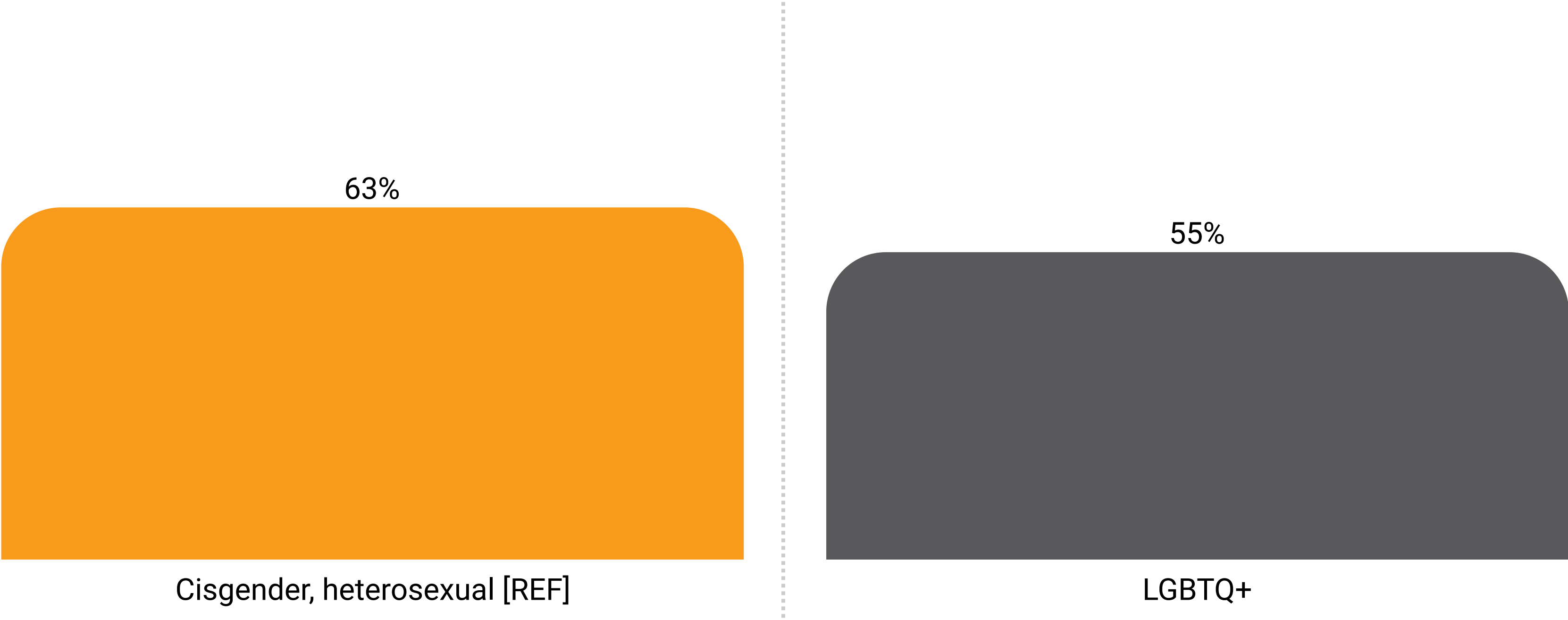
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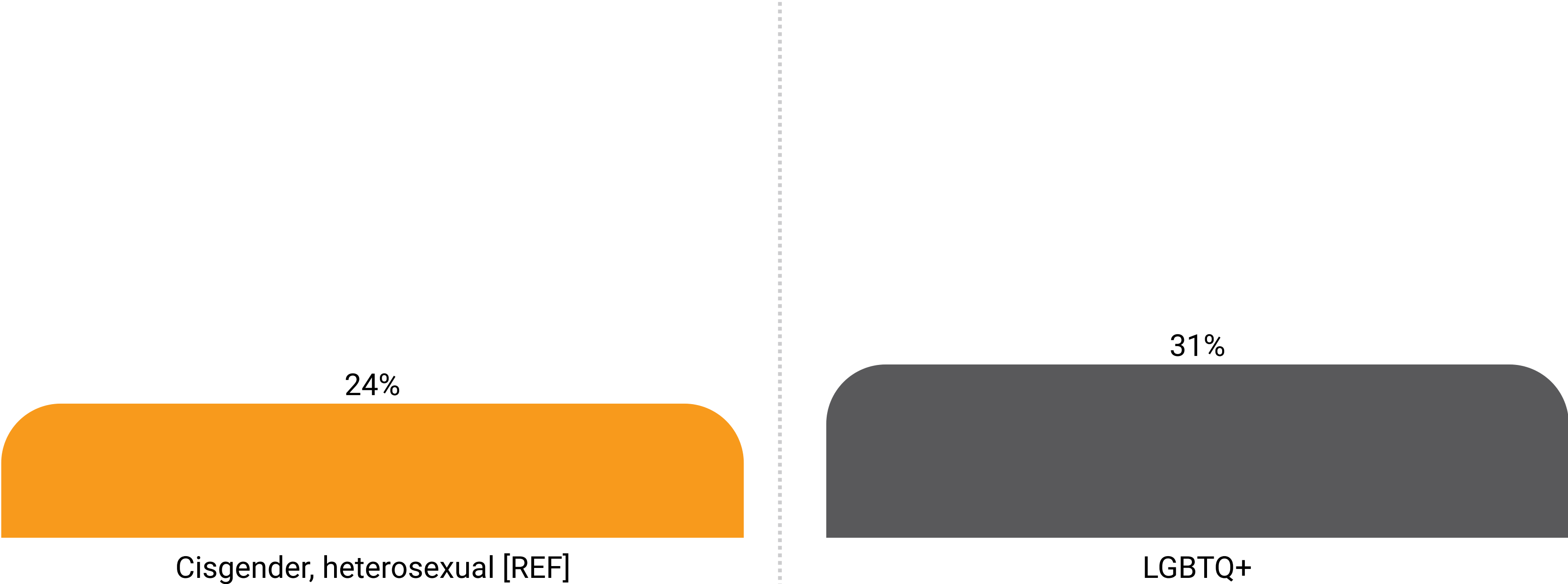
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LGBTQ+ students included students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, queer, some other sexual identity; and/or transgender; and/or nonbinary, questioning, or other gender

Differences by race/ethnicity

All statistical testing in this section compares to White, non-Hispanic students. Only Hispanic or Latino and White, non-Hispanic students had a sample size large enough to report.



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I feel like I belong at my school.

The percentage of students who reported feeling that they agree that they belong at school by race/ethnicity:



* indicates that the differences were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ as compared to White, Non-Hispanic respondents.



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I feel close to the people at my school.

The percentage of students who agree that they feel close to the people at their school by race/ethnicity:



* indicates that the differences were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ as compared to White, Non-Hispanic respondents.



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My identities are represented in the things I learn in school.

The percentage of students who agree that they feel represented by the things they learn in school by race/ethnicity:



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