

# Suicide and Self-harm

## in the Transgender Community



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland

**“You come to a point when you think, it’s not worth it, you know, there has to be something more, you kind of pray for death. You wish yourself that you were dead, that’s the only way to describe it. You can’t be bothered going on living; you just want it to end.”<sup>1</sup>**

Transgender people experience significant social isolation, marginalisation and discrimination. This results in trans people being particularly vulnerable to self-harm and suicide.

### FACTS & FIGURES

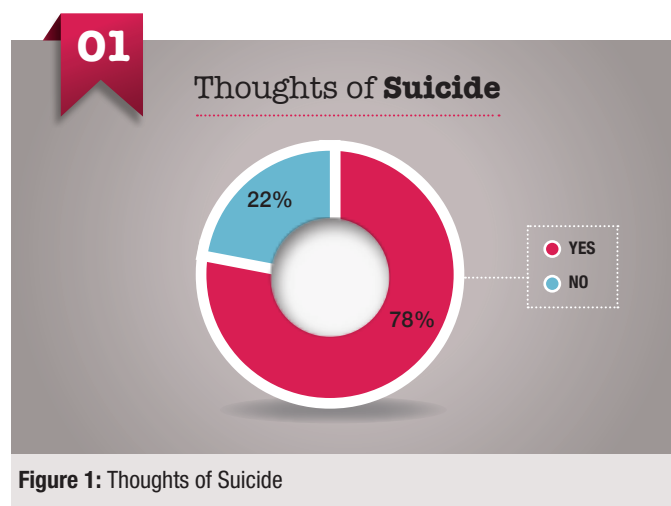
International research suggests that between 77- 83% of trans people have seriously considered ending their life (suicide ideation). This research has also shown that between 32-54% of trans people have attempted suicide.<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>

In the Irish study *Supporting LGBT Lives*, the researchers found that 80% of trans respondents reported having seriously thought about ending their lives and 26% reported that they had attempted suicide at least once.<sup>6,7</sup>

TENI published *Speaking from the Margins: Trans Mental Health and Wellbeing in Ireland* (2014), which is the largest survey (N=164) on trans mental health conducted in Ireland. The following results come from this report.

### SUICIDE IDEATION

- 78% of respondents said they had thought about ending their life.
- 63% of respondents said they thought about attempting suicide in the last year.



Thirty-two percent said they had thought about attempting suicide once or twice, 14% said they thought about it monthly, 15% said they thought about it weekly and 2% said they thought about attempting suicide daily. When asked if there were any trans related reasons that made you think about, or attempt to, end your life, 71% of people said yes.

<sup>1</sup> Mayock, P., Bryan, A., Carr, N. and Kitching, K. (2009) *Supporting LGBT Lives: A Study of the Mental Health and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People*, National Office for Suicide Prevention, BeLonG To Youth Services and GLEN, Dublin (<http://www.glen.ie/>).

<sup>2</sup> Grant, J.M., Mottet, L.A., Tanis, J., Harrison, J., Herman, J.L., Keisling, M. (2011) *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

<sup>3</sup> Trans Pulse. (2010) *Ontario's Trans Communities and Suicide: Transphobia is Bad for Our Health*. Trans Pulse E-Bulletin, V1(2) ([www.transpulse.ca](http://www.transpulse.ca)).

<sup>4</sup> Dean, L., Meyer, I. H., Robinson, K., Sell, R. L., Sember, R., Silenzio, V. M. B., et al. (2000) Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender health: Findings and concerns. *Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association*, 4(3), 102-151.

<sup>5</sup> Kenagy, G. P. (2005) Transgender health: Findings from two needs assessment studies in Philadelphia. *Health & Social Work*, 30(1), 19-26.

<sup>6</sup> Mayock, P. and Bryan, A. (2009) *Supporting LGBT Lives: The Mental Health and Well-Being of Transgender People in Ireland*. 'Transforming Attitudes' – Transgender Human Rights Conference, April 17-18th.

<sup>7</sup> Mayock, P., Bryan, A., Carr, N. and Kitching, K. (2009) *Supporting LGBT Lives: A Study of the Mental Health and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People*, National Office for Suicide Prevention, BeLonG To Youth Services and GLEN, Dublin (<http://www.glen.ie/>).

**“The feelings of being incomplete as a person, neither female or male and being trapped in limbo between social groups... Excluded from female society but not fitting into male society simultaneously is very isolating. Problems in work due to ignorance of my gender identity problems has led to periods of no income which endorses feelings of failure & losing hope.”**

**“I regularly self-harmed prior to coming out as trans due to frustration, self-loathing, stress and in an effort to calm down when feeling suicidal.”**

## CONCLUSION

The high rates of suicidality and self-harm in trans communities is related to a variety of complex factors such as social exclusion, family rejection, isolation, stigmatisation and discrimination. There is an urgent need for investment in suicide prevention campaigns, interventions and research as well as diverse collaborations between mental health services and community organisations.

The introduction of inclusive gender recognition legislation is vital to creating a society that accepts and protects trans people. Legal recognition will allow trans people to be better integrated into their communities as they will be able to live their true identities, without having to worry about being outed (trans status disclosed) when they produce identification at work, school or in daily life. The legislation will also send a positive message that trans lives matter which is vital in countering negative mental health outcomes. To truly support trans people, trans experiences must be valued as part of a diverse and pluralistic Irish society.



TENI, Unit 2, 4 Ellis Quay. Dublin 7, Ireland

[www.teni.ie](http://www.teni.ie) | [info@teni.ie](mailto:info@teni.ie) | (01) 873 3575



Transequality



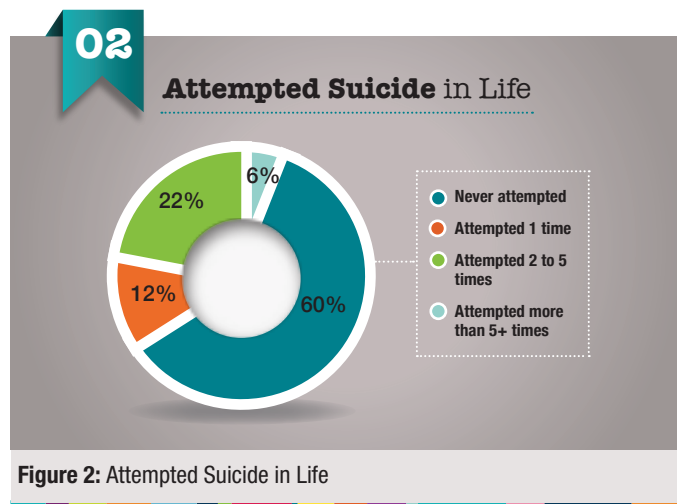
@TENI\_tweets



TransgenderEquality

## ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

- 40% of respondents said they had attempted suicide in their life.
- 12% attempted once, 22% attempted 2-5 times and 6% attempted suicide more than 5 times.



## SELF-HARM

- 44% of respondents said they self-harmed. 38% reported self-harming in the past and 6% currently self-harm.

When asked if there were trans related reasons for self-harming, 57% said yes.