Survey Measures of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Results from GLOBE Expert Review

April 6, 2017

Executive Summary

Below is a summary of the expert feedback on sexual orientation and gender identity survey measures. Feedback came from 31 experts over about one month in early 2017. A table is included for each of the 8 questions for which feedback was obtained, noting the question and response option wording, a one-word summary of the question clarity and response option feedback, and the percentage of respondents who said that most people would feel "very comfortable" answering this question on a CATI survey. Also included in the table is the percentage of respondents who named this question as their "most preferred" way to ask about either sexual orientation or gender identity, as appropriate.

Sexual orientation

Question 1:		Clarity:	High
Do you consider yourself to be: (select one)		Categories:	Inadequate
1 = Straight		Percentage "very comfortable":	70%
2 = Lesbian or gay		Percentage most preferred:	68%
3 = Bisexual			
4 = Other			

Respondents found the question to be clear, though some noted that more categories were needed. Others mentioned disliking the category "other." Fully 7 in 10 said that they thought people would be "very comfortable" answering this question on a CATI survey. Overall, this question was the most favored of all presented, with 19 out of 25 respondents (68%) saying it is the preferred way of asking about sexual orientation.

Question 2:		Clarity:	Moderate
Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? (Select one)		Categories:	Inadequate
1 = Gay		Percentage "very comfortable":	48%
2 = Straight, that is, not gay		Percentage most preferred:	7%
3 = Bisexual			
4 = Something else			

Some respondents mentioned that this question is worded awkwardly, but overall, most found this question to be clear. Almost half noted that "lesbian" was not included as a response option, indicating that this would be inadequate for some respondents. Several respondents noted that the category "something else" is inappropriately worded and does not collect qualitative data on the self-identity. About half of respondent (48%) said that most respondents would feel "very comfortable" answering this question on a CATI survey. Overall, this question was the least favored of all presented, with only 1 out of 25 respondents (4%) identifying it as the preferred way of asking about sexual orientation.

Question 3: Which of the following do you consider yourself to be? (Select one) 1 = Heterosexual 2 = Lesbian or Gay 3 = Bisexual	Clarity:	High
	Categories:	Inadequate
	Percentage "very comfortable":	63%
	Percentage most preferred:	11%

Most respondents found this question to be clear. However, many mentioned that response options were not sufficiently exhaustive, including that there was no "other" category for those who do not feel represented by the three given categories. A few also noted that while "heterosexual" is used, "homosexual" is not, suggesting that there is an imbalance in response options. That said, 63% of respondents said that many people would feel "very comfortable" answering the question on a CATI survey.

Question 4: Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? (Select one) 1 = Gay (for males) / Lesbian or gay (for females) 2 = Straight, that is, not gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Something else	Clarity:	High
	Categories:	Complicated
	Percentage "very comfortable":	42%
	Percentage most preferred:	14%

Most respondents said this question was clear. In terms of response options, a few found them to be overly complicated, while some commented on the use of the phrase "not gay" as being unnecessary to the question. Still others disliked the "something else" category. Fully 2 in 5 respondents (42%) said most respondents would feel "very comfortable" answering this question on a CATI survey. Asked about the skip pattern, the majority of respondents (73%) said that the response options should not be based on previous gender identity questions, but that all respondents should get all response options to the question, arguing that by retaining all options for all respondents, the respondent is freer to identify as s/he sees appropriate, that it is more inclusive to keep all options for all respondents, and that not depending on a previous response will prevent data errors based on missing or inappropriate responses to previous questions.

Gender Identity:

Question 5: Are you…? (select one) 1 = Male 2 = Female	Clarity:	High
	Categories:	Inadequate
	Percentage "very comfortable":	64%
	Percentage most preferred:	4%

Most respondents found the question to be clear, though some said it was overly simplistic and conflates biological and socially constructed gender identities. Almost all respondents who provided feedback on this question found the response categories to be too limited, suggesting additional categories and the inclusion of an "other" category. Still, 64% said that they thought many respondents would feel comfortable answering this question on a CATI survey, noting that while the majority of

people would not find this question troubling, non-cisgender respondents could struggle with a response. Overall, this question was the least favored of all presented, with only 1 out of 26 respondents (4%) identifying it as the preferred way of asking about gender identity.

Question 6: What is your current gender identity? (select all that apply) 1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Trans male/transman 4 = Trans female/transwoman 5 = Genderqueer/gender non-conforming 6 = Different identity (please state): _____	Clarity:	High
	Categories:	Exhaustive
	Percentage "very comfortable":	71%
	Percentage most preferred:	27%

Almost all respondents found this question to be clear. Many indicated that the response options were exhaustive, though some noted they were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Some warned against the use of the word "queer," while others said that the trans male and trans female options might be confusing. Fully 71 percent said that most respondents would be comfortable answering this question on a CATI survey, however a few noted that cisgender respondents might be overwhelmed by the number of non-binary categories.

Question 7: Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth. For example, a person born into a male body, but who feels female or lives as a woman. Do you consider yourself to be transgender? (Select one) 1 = Yes, transgender, male to female 2 = Yes, transgender, female to male 3 = Yes, transgender, gender non-conforming 4 = No	Clarity:	High
	Categories:	Clear
	Percentage "very comfortable":	60%
	Percentage most preferred:	19%

Many respondents found this question to be clear, though a few said that cisgender respondents might be overwhelmed by the length of the question stem. About half of respondents said that the response options were clear, while others said that option 3 seemed unreliable, that there was a need for additional categories, and that some who have transitioned genders might not identify as transgender in this question. Three in five (60 percent) said that most respondents would feel "very comfortable" answering this question on a CATI survey, though some mentioned that genderqueer respondents might struggle with a response. Note that while some respondents said they thought most people would find this question uncomfortable to answer, they added the caveat that it was a good and important question to ask.

Question 8:	Clarity:	Clear
What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? (select one) 1 = Male 2 = Female	Categories:	Inadequate
How do you describe yourself? (select one) 1 = Male	Percentage "very comfortable":	62%
2 = Female 3 = Transgender 4 = Do not identify as female, male, or transgender	Percentage most preferred:	50%

All respondents who provided feedback on this question found it to be clear and did not find any of the words unfamiliar, ambiguous, or otherwise unclear. Some noted that the response options could be expanded, while others said that the response options were not mutually exclusive. Just over six in ten respondents (62%) said that most people would feel "very comfortable" answering this question on a CATI survey. Overall, this is the most favored way of asking about gender identity, with 13 out of 26 respondents (50%) saying this is their preferred question for gender identity.

Preferred Question Stem:
Most respondents (11 out of 25, or 44%) preferred the question stem: "…you consider yourself to be…" when asking about sexual orientation and gender identity, arguing that it emphasizes individual self-report and did not imply doubt, noting that it does not use the terms "think" and "describe." Some (6 out of 25, or 24%) preferred "…best represents," noting that this question stem is empowering for respondents, that it acknowledges that the given options may not completely capture their sexual orientation or gender identity, and that it does not doubt the respondents answer.

Introduction

In consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ICF methodologists developed an instrument designed to solicit feedback from experts in the GLOBE community at CDC. This instrument was not intended to be a survey; rather, it was designed to collect qualitative reflections from people with expertise in LGBT health issues and/or survey methodology. This goal is reflected in the opening instructions to respondents, wherein they are asked for their "assessment of the questions listed below," and urged not to answer the questions themselves, but rather to "provide feedback on their shortcomings and how they might be improved."

Once the instrument was finalized, ICF programmed it into an online platform. This platform generated a unique URL for respondents to access the instrument. CDC sent out the invitations to the GLOBE community, encouraging response and including the unique URL, on February 26, 1017. There was one follow-up email for non-respondents on March 13, 2017, and by March 20, 2017, 31 responses had been collected and data collection was ended.

In total, respondents were asked to provide feedback on 8 questions related to measuring sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI).

Table 1. Questions for Review and the Corresponding Construct It Measures			
Question Number	Question Text	Measuring	Source
1	Do you consider yourself to be: 1 = Straight 2 = Lesbian or gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Other	Sexual orientation	BRFSS
2	Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? 1 = Gay 2 = Straight, that is, not gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Something else	Sexual orientation	NHIS
3	Which of the following do you consider yourself to be? 1 = Heterosexual 2 = Lesbian or gay 3 = Bisexual	Sexual orientation	NSDUH
4	Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? 1 = Gay (for males)/Lesbian or gay (for females) 2 = Straight, that is, not gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Something else	Sexual orientation	NCSV
5	Are you…? 1 = Male 2 = Female	Gender identity	
6	What is your current gender identity? 1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Trans male/transman 4 = Trans female/transwoman 5 = Genderqueer/gender non-conforming 6 = Different identity (please describe)	Gender identity	GeniUSS
7	Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth. For example, a person born into a male body, but who feels female or lives as a woman. Do you consider yourself to be transgender? 1 = yes, transgender, male to female 2 = yes, transgender, female to male 3 = yes, transgender, gender non-conforming 4 = No	Gender identity	GeniUSS
8 (series)	What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? 1 = Male	Gender identity	GeniUSS

Table 1. Questions for Review and the Corresponding Construct It Measures			
Question Number	Question Text	Measuring	Source
	2 = Female How do you describe yourself? 1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender 4 = Do not identify as female, male, or transgender		

Respondents were presented the question text, and then asked a series of reflective questions about the text, including:

- **Question clarity:** Did this question make sense to you? Were any of the words unfamiliar, ambiguous, or otherwise unclear?
- **Response option clarity and adequacy:** Are response options mutually exclusive and exhaustive? Are any of them unclear or using words with which you are unfamiliar?
- **How comfortable would you feel** answering this question during a CATI (telephone) interview?
- **Additional comments:** How comfortable do you think most people would feel answering this question during a CATI (telephone) interview?

Note that because question 4 depends on a skip pattern to fill the first response option, respondents were asked an additional question:

> For this question, the first response option is determined by how respondents previously reported their sex. Those who identify as female are given the option "lesbian or gay." Those that identify as male are given the option "gay."
>
> In your experience, should the response options be based on the previous response to sex, should respondents get all response options regardless of their self-identified sex, or something else?
> - Based on a previous response to sex
> - All respondents get all options
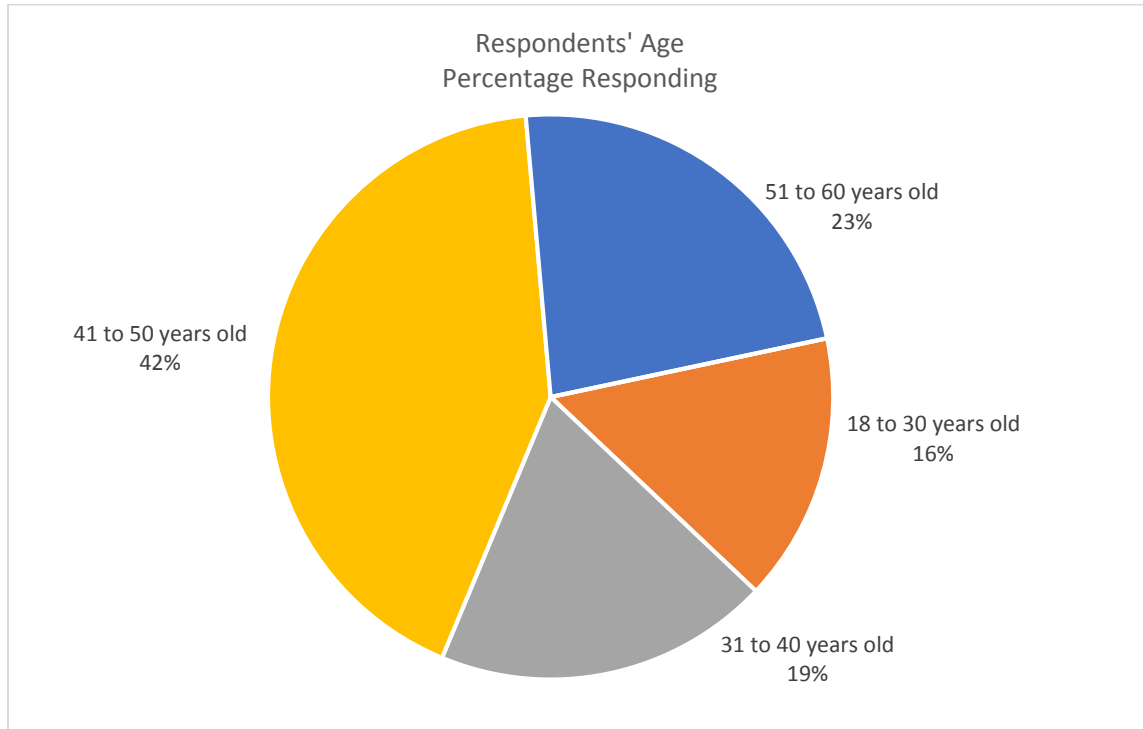> - Something else
>
> Why did you select this response - either based on self-identified sex, all respondents get all options, or something else?

Respondent Age

A total of 31 people responded to this request for feedback, though not all 31 provided responses for all questions. Of the 26 who responded to the age question, most were between the ages of 41 and 50 years old, with some being slightly older (51 to 60 years old) and slightly younger (31 to 40 years old).

Just 4 respondents reported being ages 18 to 30 years old. No respondents were younger than 18 or older than 61 years old.

Figure 1. Respondents' Age

Respondents' Age
Percentage Responding

- 51 to 60 years old 23%
- 18 to 30 years old 16%
- 31 to 40 years old 19%
- 41 to 50 years old 42%

Sexual Orientation Questions

Question 1:
Do you consider yourself to be: (select one)
1 = Straight
2 = Lesbian or gay
3 = Bisexual
4 = Other

Question Clarity:

In general, respondents found this question to be clear. One commented that the "question makes sense," while another said that "the words are familiar and clear."

Response Option Clarity:

Many respondents (10 out of 29 providing comments on this question) found the response options to be clear and adequate as they are written. Five respondents, however, mentioned that the response options should include the words "heterosexual" and "homosexual" along with straight and gay (respectively). Likewise, several respondents mentioned that additional response options should be

added to the question, including pansexual, asexual, queer, polyamorous, questioning, and unknown. Two respondents suggested including a "decline to answer" category.

Notably, nine respondents commented on the "other" category in this question. Several requested a text box to capture specifications of 'other.' A few recommended the inclusion of examples to prompt those responding 'other' to write in a descriptor, including pansexual, asexual, and other sexual orientations. Two respondents found the word 'other' to be an inappropriate option, stating that the word "other" might be insensitive to members of the LGBT community.

Response Comfort:

Table 2. Response Comfort for Question 1		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	3	10%
Somewhat uncomfortable	2	7%
Mostly comfortable	4	13%
Very comfortable	21	70%

When asked about general level of comfort responding to this question, most respondents indicated that most people would feel comfortable answering this question on a CATI survey. Some mentioned that particular groups of respondents might be more comfortable than others answering this question, including those under the age of 50. Three respondents noted that those who are "newly out as gay/lesbian or bisexual" might not be comfortable answering this question, and that their answer and comfort level might change depending on where the respondent is during an interview and who may be hearing their responses. Interestingly, one participant stated that he noticed the numbers at the start of each response option. This respondent stated that reading the response options with the numbers would be a way to make participants feel more comfortable, as they would be able to answer with the number, and not the category label, if not in a completely private space. A few mentioned that while most people would feel comfortable answering this question, "there are still individuals that will not answer truthfully about sexual orientation, but really [there is] nothing you can do about this."

> **Question 2:**
> **Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? (Select one)**
> **1 = Gay**
> **2 = Straight, that is, not gay**
> **3 = Bisexual**
> **4 = Something else**

Question Clarity:

Overall, most respondents found the question clear. However, a number of respondents commented that while the question might be clear, it is not well worded: one mentioned that "'how you think of yourself' is weird and could be taken the wrong way." Another commented that the question is "fine, just didn't like the wording," and several others commented that they preferred the previous question's wording. Note that one respondent voiced concern that the question stem does not clearly indicate that the question is about sexual orientation, and that without this indication, respondents might answer about gender identity in the "something else" field.

Response Option Clarity:

Almost half of respondents who provided comments on this question objected that "lesbian" was not included as a response option. These respondents indicated that it was not adequate for gay to represent both lesbians and gay men. One said, "some lesbians might choose 'something else' because they think of 'gay' as being a term for men."

Twelve respondents (of the 23 who commented on this question) commented on the response option "straight, that is, not gay," saying that the definition was unnecessary, with one asking "why is there a clarifying statement for 'straight'?" Another mentioned that "straight is not the inverse of gay. If you are bisexual, you are not gay, but you are also not straight."

The category 'something else' also elicited responses. While one respondent appreciated the category as labeled, several others objected to the use of "something else," indicating that it implies that participants are "things." In terms of including additional categories, one respondent mentioned changing 'something else' to "some other identity," while others mentioned adding the terms homosexual, heterosexual, asexual, and don't know, or including a text box to capture other responses.

Response Comfort:

Table 3. Response Comfort for Question 3		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	2	7%
Somewhat uncomfortable	5	19%
Mostly comfortable	7	26%
Very comfortable	13	48%

The majority of respondents mentioned that they would feel comfortable answering the question, and that they thought that others would also feel comfortable answering this question on a phone survey. Three respondents mentioned that lesbians might not be comfortable responding to the question, as the term lesbian is not included in the response options. Likewise, one respondent suggested that survey respondents might not be comfortable with the question because it "sounds judgmental and

collapses important identity distinctions," while another respondent offered that this item seemed "more sensitive than the first question."

> **Question 3:**
> **Which of the following do you consider yourself to be? (Select one)**
> **1 = Heterosexual**
> **2 = Lesbian or Gay**
> **3 = Bisexual**

Question Clarity:

Most respondents stated that the question "makes sense," though two offered minor changes to the wording of the question. One suggested removing the words "to be" from the end of the question, while the other suggested changing the end of the question to read "…to be now" or "…to be currently."

Response Option Clarity:

Most respondents who gave feedback on this question expressed concern that the response options were not sufficiently exhaustive. About half suggested additional response options, including pansexual, asexual, or queer. Likewise, about as many mentioned that the item needed an "other" category in order to, as one respondent said, "leave room for the respondent to identify their sexual orientation as anything that is non-binary." A few respondents noted an imbalance in the response options, saying that the use of the term heterosexual was "more scientific," but the use of the terms lesbian or gay are "less scientific." Respondents suggested including both response labels for each: heterosexual or straight and lesbian or gay or homosexual.

Response Comfort:

Table 4. Response Comfort for Question 3		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	2	7%
Somewhat uncomfortable	3	11%
Mostly comfortable	5	19%
Very comfortable	17	63%

The majority of respondents who commented on the comfort of answering this question during a CATI survey indicated that most people would feel comfortable. Three respondents mentioned that those who may have responded with "other" or "something else" to previous questions would not be comfortable answering this question, as they would not know how to provide a response.

> **Question 4:**
> **Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? (Select one)**
> **1 = Gay (for males) / Lesbian or gay (for females)**
> **2 = Straight, that is, not gay**
> **3 = Bisexual**
> **4 = Something else**

Question Clarity:

Most respondents mentioned that this question was clear, and one called it "excellent." However, a few respondents offered that the word "think" in the question stem might not be appropriate. Said one, "why not just say 'represents your sexual orientation?' It's not how I THINK of myself, it's my orientation." Another suggested that the word "represents" in the question stem was not accurate, while still another mentioned the need to end the question with "now" or "currently."

Response Option Clarity:

While a few respondents found the response options to be clear, exclusive, and exhaustive, many more voiced a number of concerns with the response options for this question. Some found the first response option to be "overly wordy and complicated," and that there was no need to explain which terms were for males and which for females. This may be due to a misunderstanding that this response option is filled based on previous identification of being male or female, and the parenthetical words are not displayed to survey respondents.

Others had trouble with the wording of response options for this question. A few find it unnecessary to explain that straight is 'not gay,' while others again mentioned that 'something else' is not an ideal category to capture identities outside of the given categories. A couple of respondents mentioned the need to expand the categories to include don't know, or other categories of sexual orientation (i.e., asexual).

Response Comfort:

Table 5. Response Comfort for Question 4		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	3	12%
Somewhat uncomfortable	6	25%
Mostly comfortable	5	21%
Very comfortable	10	42%

Most respondents said that other people would feel comfortable answering this question on a CATI survey. A few respondents said they think that some would be uncomfortable providing a response to

this question, including that a "something else" option might offend some participants. One respondent suggested reworking the question as a yes/no select all that apply question.
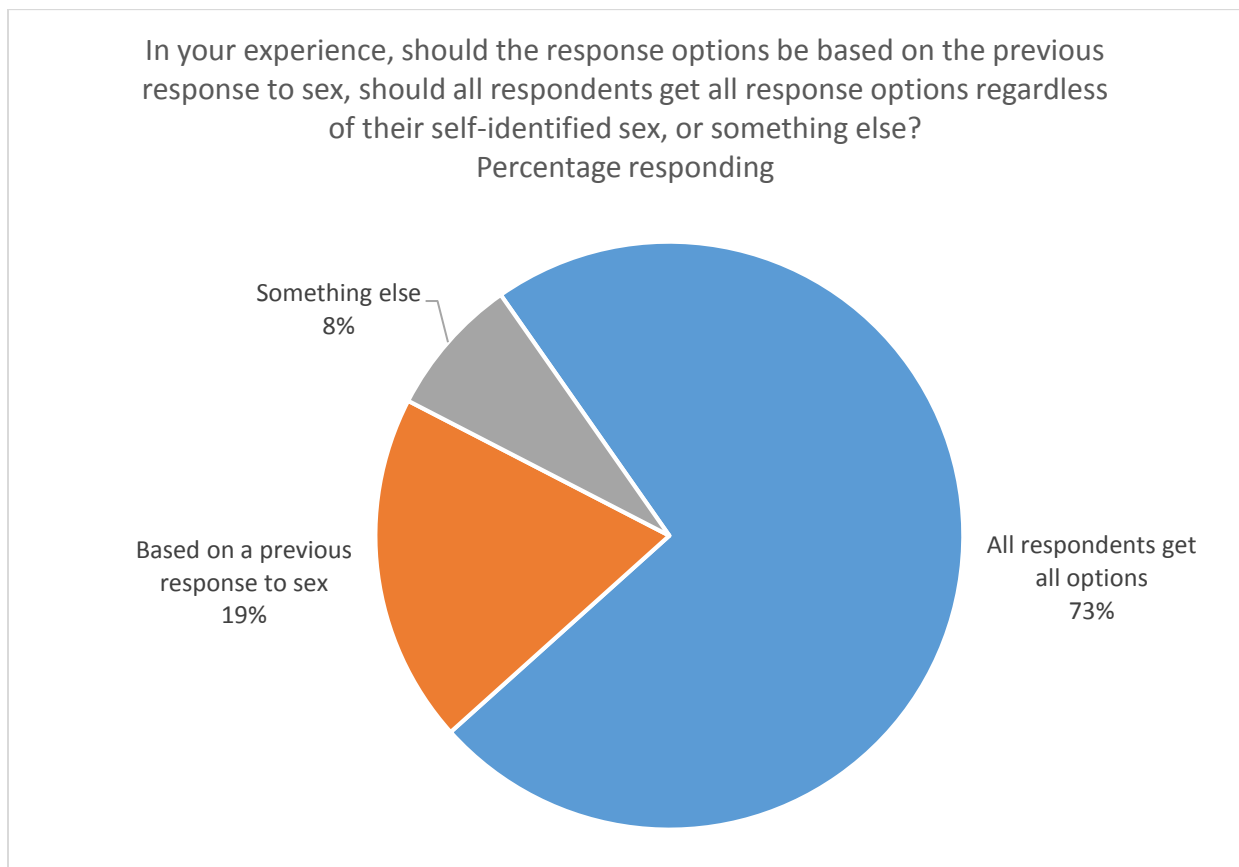
Skip Pattern:

Unlike previous questions, the response categories for question 4 are dependent on respondents' previously reported sex. GLOBE experts were asked their opinions on this category filling:

> For this question, the first response option is determined by how respondents previously reported their sex. Those who identify as female are given the option "lesbian or gay." Those that identify as male are given the option "gay."

> In your experience, should the response options be based on the previous response to sex, should all respondents get all response options regardless of their self-identified sex, or something else?

Asked as a close-ended question, almost three in four GLOBE respondents (73 percent) said that "all respondents should get all options" to the question. Another almost one in five (19 percent) said that response options should be "based on a previous response to sex." Just 8 percent said "something else" should be done with the response categories to this question.

Figure 2. Handling response options to question 4

In your experience, should the response options be based on the previous response to sex, should all respondents get all response options regardless of their self-identified sex, or something else?
Percentage responding

Something else
8%

Based on a previous
response to sex
19%

All respondents get
all options
73%

As a follow up, respondents were asked "why did you select this response – either based on self-identified sex, all respondents get all options, or something else?" For those that selected "based on a previous response to sex," respondents were motivated mostly by the burden of the response options. They commented that by using previous data to fill the response options, the question would have lower burden as a result of eliminating response options that would not be selected anyway and making the response options to later questions less confusing or more consistent.

For those respondents who selected that "all respondents get all options," there were three main reasons for not wanting to use the pre-fill. The first is that it is the simplest for both the respondents and the interviewer, with one saying "leave it more open, because you don't want to tell people of either sex how they should label their sexual orientation." Another reason some respondents did not prefer the pre-fill is because it was most inclusive of all different kinds of identities that may not be captured if a pre-fill is used. For example, one respondent mentioned that "I have trans friends who consider themselves gay and some consider themselves straight. They all should have the opportunity to answer this question." Finally, a few respondents mentioned concerns about getting the cleanest data by having the question independent of previously collected data, with one saying that this would result in data that are "clearer and less chance for an error."

Gender Identity Questions

> **Question 5:**
> **Are you…? (select one)**
> **1 = Male**
> **2 = Female**

Question Clarity:

While most respondents found the question to be clear, two did describe it as "over simplistic," and another offered a rewrite of the stem, suggesting: "What do you consider your gender?" Several respondents mentioned that as written, the question is unclear as to whether the response should be biological sex at birth or current gender identity, with one saying "the question is unclear. Is it referring to how I was assigned at birth? Is it referring to how I self-identify?"

Response Option Clarity:

Almost all respondents who provided feedback on the categories for this question found them to be too limited. Respondents noted that additional options may be useful, suggesting transgender, agender, nonbinary, or transwoman and transman, while still others mentioned that the question needed an "other" category with a qualitative capture for respondents to describe their gender identity. Additionally, one respondent mentioned that asking for one exclusive gender identity is outdated. This need for expanded response options was summarized by one respondent, saying "there are now over 30 distinct gender identities. We no longer live in a binary world."

Response Comfort:

Table 6. Response Comfort for Question 5		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	4	16%
Somewhat uncomfortable	2	8%
Mostly comfortable	3	12%
Very comfortable	16	64%

Several respondents said that "most" or the "vast majority" of people would feel comfortable answering this question. However, many respondents suggested that non-cisgender individuals would not be comfortable answering this question, with one respondent remarking "transgendered folks would be very uncomfortable" answering this question.

> **Question 6:**
> **What is your current gender identity? (select all that apply)**
> **1 = Male**
> **2 = Female**
> **3 = Trans male/transman**
> **4 = Trans female/transwoman**
> **5 = Genderqueer/gender non-conforming**
> **6 = Different identity (please state): _____**

Question Clarity:

Asking about the question stem, only one respondent mentioned that "gender identity" might not be the best terminology for this question, commenting that "the term 'gender identity' can be confusing…I would just ask 'are you' and give them the above options." All others who offered feedback for this question found the question to be clear, though some offered alternative wording, including "do you consider yourself as…," "which of the following do you best identify as….," and providing separate questions for sex at birth and current gender identity.

Response Option Clarity:

Most respondents indicated that the response options were clear. A few described the response options as "exhaustive," and some noted that the response options were not mutually exclusive, since respondents could select more than one category. However, several respondents voiced some concern about the response options as written. Some of these respondents expressed that "trans male/transman" and "trans female/transwoman" were not clear, while another warned against using the term "queer." One mentioned that a general population survey may not need so many response categories. Interestingly, whereas in earlier questions, respondents rallied for a qualitative capture for

'other' categories, in this case, one respondent recommended against providing a space to fill in a "different identity," saying that "these [responses] are difficult to analyze because they can't be collapsed into an existing category. You could probably just leave it at 'different identity' without allowing them to write in their own reply to avoid the headache" of handling these data.

Response Comfort:

Table 7. Response Comfort for Question 6		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	3	12%
Somewhat uncomfortable	1	5%
Mostly comfortable	3	12%
Very comfortable	17	71%

Most respondents thought that most people would feel comfortable answering this question in the context of a CATI interview. However, five respondents offered that cisgender individuals might not be comfortable answering this question because of the number and text of response categories. Said one, "cisgender people might be put off by all of the options and hearing the term 'genderqueer.'" Additionally, one respondent suggested adding a norming statement similar to question 7 ("Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth") to help respondents feel more comfortable with the options to this question.

> **Question 7:**
> **Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth. For example, a person born into a male body, but who feels female or lives as a woman. Do you consider yourself to be transgender? (Select one)**
> **1 = Yes, transgender, male to female**
> **2 = Yes, transgender, female to male**
> **3 = Yes, transgender, gender non-conforming**
> **4 = No**

Question Clarity:

Most respondents found this question to be clear, and one went so far as to say that it has "excellent wording and clarity." A few respondents noted cisgender respondents might feel confused by this question and transgender respondents might find the question to be overly simplistic, with one saying that the "majority of cisgender people will be confused by this long description, and you run the risk of angering transgender people who feel like this description over-simplifies their life experience."

Response Option Clarity:

About half of those who provided a response on response option clarity found the response options to be clear and adequate. However, several noted some confusion about the third response option, "yes, transgender, gender non-conforming," noting that they were unfamiliar with the terminology and were not clear on how it would be applied. This sentiment was expressed by one respondent saying, "response choice number three seems confusing…you're transgender but also gender non-conforming?" Others noted that this question had no other/specify option, and still others suggested additional response categories, like intersex. Of note, a couple of respondents mentioned that because this is a 'one step' gender identity question, some transgender respondents may not be captured by the response options provided, saying, "many people who have transitioned do NOT identify as transgender, even if it is described as it is in the question stem, and therefore, this question would not capture these individuals who have cross-sex experiences."

Response Comfort:

Table 8. Response Comfort for Question 7		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	4	16%
Somewhat uncomfortable	2	8%
Mostly comfortable	4	16%
Very comfortable	15	60%

About half of those who provided a comment for this question said that most people would feel comfortable answering this question. On the other hand, some mentioned that there are instances where people may not feel comfortable answering this question, including those who are intersex, heterosexual and cisgender respondents, and, as one respondent commented, "genderqueer folks would take issue with this question." Note, though, that some respondents who said this question might be uncomfortable to answer also noted that it was a good and important question to ask

Question Clarity:

All respondents who provided feedback found this question series to be clear, and did not find any of the words unfamiliar, ambiguous, or otherwise unclear. Note that two respondents suggested that asking about an assigned sex at birth might be unfamiliar or upsetting to some, prompting one respondent to suggest changing the question stem to "what sex was listed on your birth certificate?" A few respondents mentioned changing the word "describe" to "identify" in the second question, while still others suggested adding the word "now" to the end of the question.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? (select one)
1 = Male
2 = Female

How do you describe yourself? (select one)
1 = Male
2 = Female
3 = Transgender
4 = Do not identify as female, male, or transgender

</div>

Response Option Clarity:

While most respondents thought that the response options were clear, many noted that they were not adequate. Some suggested that more response options were needed, including trans male/transman, trans female/transwoman, genderqueer/gender non-conforming, intersex, different identity, and not applicable. Additionally, some respondents suggested that the existing response options were not mutually exclusive, and that for this question, respondents should be given the option to 'mark all that apply.'

Response Comfort:

Table 9. Response Comfort for Question 8		
Number and Percentage responding		
	Number	**Percentage**
Very uncomfortable	3	13%
Somewhat uncomfortable	2	8%
Mostly comfortable	4	17%
Very comfortable	15	62%

Most respondents noted that they would feel comfortable answering this question series. Two thought that transgender respondents might feel uncomfortable providing a response, and another two suggested that both transgender and cisgender respondents might feel uncomfortable answering this question series.

Preferred Question Stem

Respondents were then asked about their preferred question stem for questions of sexual orientation and gender identity. Throughout the questions listed on this form, a few different phrases were used as question stems. Which of the following is your preferred question stem?

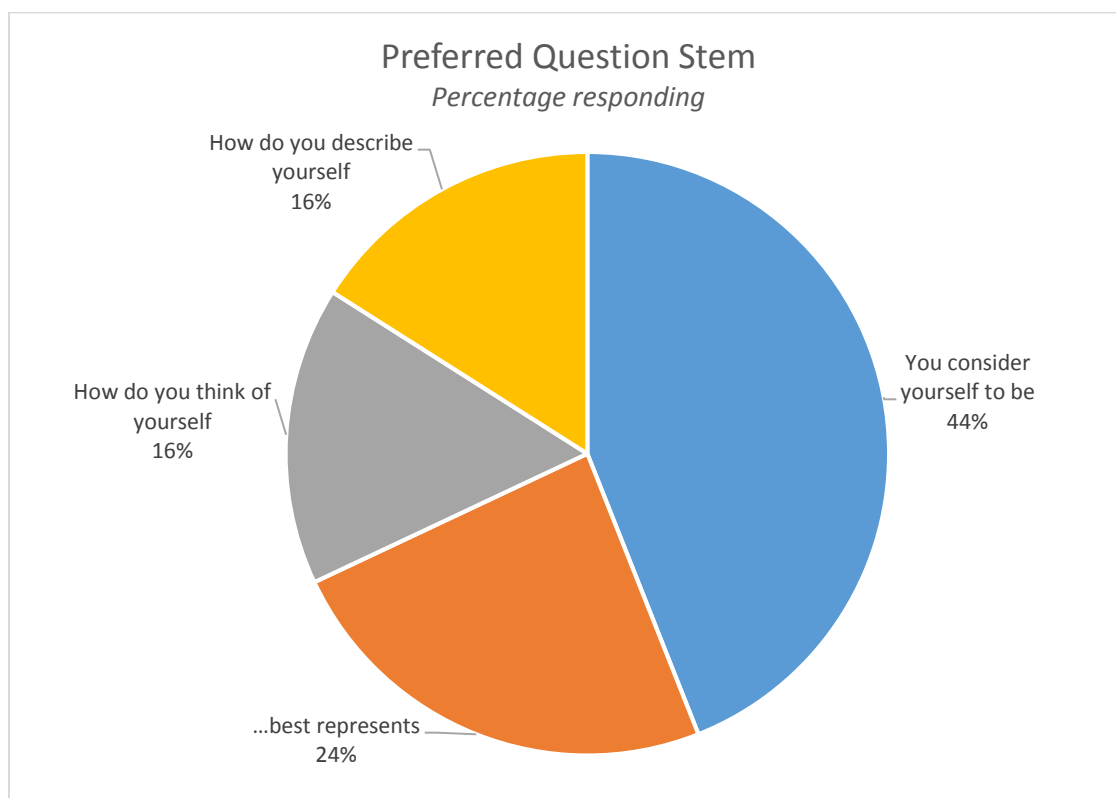1 "...you consider yourself to be..."
2 "...best represents..."
3 "How you think of yourself..."
4 "How you describe yourself..."

Most respondents (11 out of 25) preferred the first option, "…you consider yourself to be… as the question stem for these questions. Some (6 out of 25) preferred"…best represents" as the question stem. Even fewer preferred "How do you describe yourself," or "How do you think of yourself" (4 out of 25 respondents each) as the most appropriate questions tem.

Asked why they prefer the stem that they chose, those that chose option one pointed to the emphasis it places on the individual and self-report. One mentioned that the use of the phrase "consider yourself seem[ed] the best term that is somewhere between gender identity (how you think of yourself) and gender expression (how you describe yourself)." Another appreciated that this question stem did not seem to imply doubt, noting that "describe" and "think" might sound like the responses were untrue.

Figure 3: Preferred Question Stem

Preferred Question Stem
Percentage responding

How do you describe yourself 16%

How do you think of yourself 16%

You consider yourself to be 44%

…best represents 24%

Those that chose 'best represents' as their preferred question stem mostly pointed to the phrase as being empowering. One respondent mentioned that it is their preferred stem because it is not "doubting the validity of [respondents'] identity or accusing, as if that gender/sexual identity doesn't really exist but you 'think' you have that identity." Still another liked "best represents" because it is the only stem that "recognizes that the correct answer might not be present."

For those that preferred "how do you describe yourself," the emphasis is on the word "describe," with respondents saying it felt "concrete" and "personal." Describe, for one respondent, includes "both how I internally identify and also how I would externally identify myself to others." Describe, for some, is more meaningful than 'consider,' because 'consider' might be "interpreted to mean that the person isn't

really whatever they identify and that they just 'consider' themselves as that." Only one respondent provided feedback on a preference of "how do you think of yourself," stating that this one is preferred because "in my heart I am one way and outwardly I am different. This question stem helps make it easier to express this."

Preferred Sexual Orientation Question

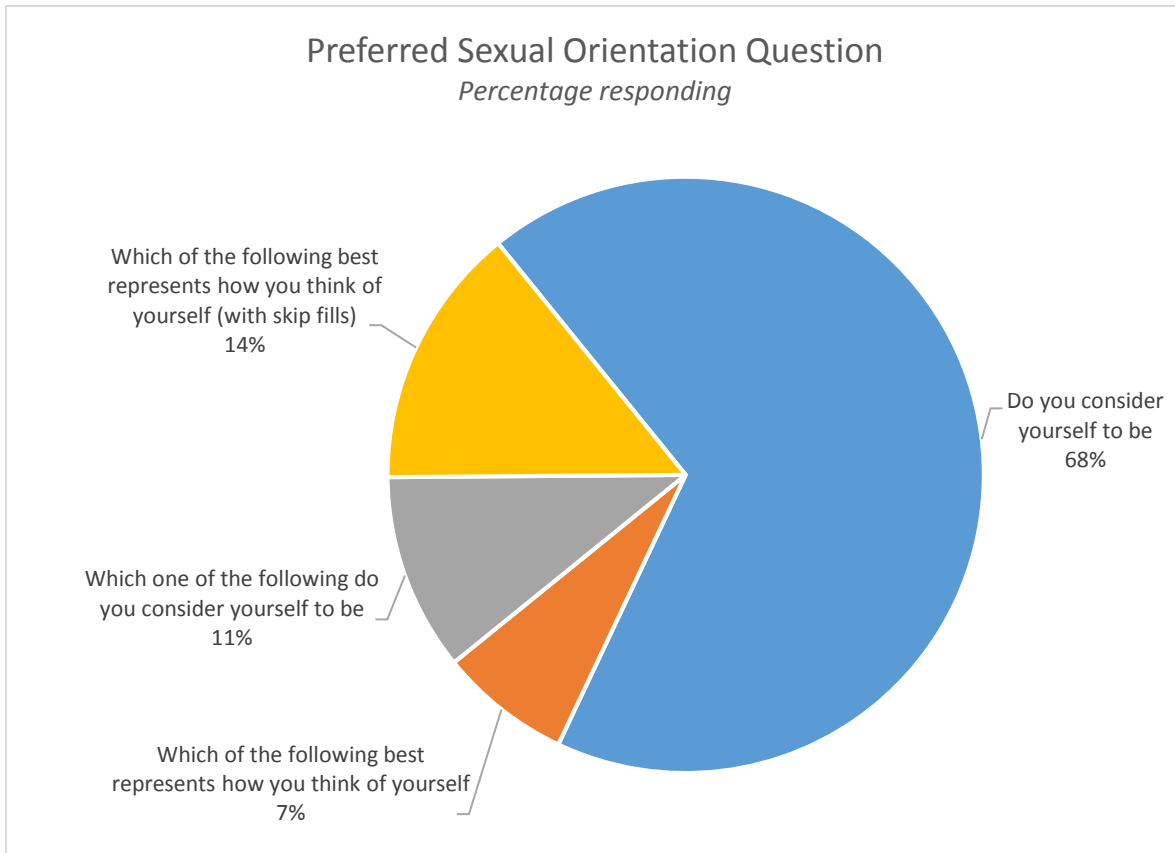| Table 10. Preferred Sexual Orientation Question			
Number and Percentage responding			
Question Number	**Question Text**	**Response Options**	**Number Favoring**
1	Do you consider yourself to be:	1 = Straight 2 = Lesbian or gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Other	19
2	Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?	1 = Gay 2 = Straight, that is, not gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Something else	1
3	Which one of the following do you consider yourself to be?	1 = Heterosexual 2 = Lesbian or Gay 3 = Bisexual	2
4	Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?	1 = Gay (for males) / Lesbian or gay (for females) 2 = Straight, that is, not gay 3 = Bisexual 4 = Something else	3

At the conclusion of the form, respondents were asked to select their preferred sexual orientation question from the four presented for feedback. Most respondents preferred the first question, "Do you consider yourself to be: straight, lesbian or gay, bisexual, other." When asked why, the majority of respondents mentioned that this question was "straightforward," "simple and clear," "to the point," and used "plain language." Respondents said that the response options were inclusive, exhaustive, and clear. While overall respondents preferred this question, a few did mention that the term 'other' could be replaced with 'something else' to soften the language.

The one in three respondents who did not choose the first question as their preferred way of asking about sexual orientation were also asked a follow-up question on why they selected the question that they did. Those that chose question two, "Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? Gay, straight, that is not gay, bisexual, something else," mentioned that the way the question is phrased is what made it the preference, with one saying, "I prefer 'best represents.' I would add 'gay or lesbian' as an option, though, instead of just 'gay'" as a category. Question three – "Which one of the following do you consider yourself to be? Heterosexual, lesbian or gay, bisexual" – was described as "good" by one respondent and as straightforward by another. And, for question four – "Which of the

following best represents how you think of yourself? Gay/lesbian, straight that is not gay, bisexual, something else" – was described as being the most inclusive of the options, with one respondent mentioning the use of "something else" in place of an "other" category was particularly inclusive.

It should be noted that one respondent disliked all of the options presented on this form. In this case, it is the wording of the question stem that is at odds. This respondent stated: "I would prefer 'What is your…?' To me, [the words] 'think' or 'consider' implies it is up for debate."

Figure 4: Preferred Sexual Orientation Question

Preferred Gender Identity Question
Most respondents preferred question series 8, the two-step reporting of gender identity: "What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? Male, female; How do you describe yourself? Male, female, transgender, do not identify as female, male, or transgender." Asked why this is the preferred way of asking about gender identity, respondents noted that it provided more data than other questions. Said one, "the two-step approach [to asking gender identity] seems best for distinguishing biological sex at birth and current gender identity." Another echoed this sentiment, saying that this question is "both technically accurate and would completely capture any gender or sexual identity. The phrasing and response categories are appropriate and sensitive" to all needs.

Table 11. Preferred Gender Identity Question			
Number and Percentage responding			
Question Number	Question Text	Response Options	Number Favoring
5	Are you…?	1 = Male 2 = Female	1
6	What is your current gender identity? (select all that apply)	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Trans male/Transman 4 = Trans female/Transwoman 5 = Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming 6 = Different identity (please state): _____	7
7	Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth. For example, a person born into a male body, but who feels female or lives as a woman. Do you consider yourself to be transgender?	1 = Yes, transgender, male to female 2 = Yes, transgender, female to male 3 = Yes, transgender, gender non-conforming 4 = No	5
8 (series)	Question 8 What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? (select one) How do you describe yourself? (select one)	1 = Male 2 = Female 1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender 4 = Do not identify as female, male, or transgender	13

For other versions of the gender identity question, very few respondents provided any context to why they chose the question they chose. Asked about question 5, one respondent simply stated: "I am a gay white male," indicating that he would have no trouble answering the question. Respondents who preferred question 6 did so because it is the most inclusive, least confusing question of the set. It should be noted, though, that one respondent suggested taking "the response options from question six and mak[ing] them the options for the second question in question 8, and [that would be] the best way to collect these data." The few that chose question 7 as their preferred way of asking about gender identity did so because they thought that the question is clear, with one respondent saying that it includes "its own internal clarification for respondents who do not know the meaning of transgender." Another mentioned that question 7 was the "most personal" way of asking about gender identity.

Preferred Gender Identity Question
Percentage responding

Are you…
4%

What is your current gender identity
27%

Do you consider yourself to be transgender
19%

What sex were you assigned at birth? How do you describe yourself?
50%