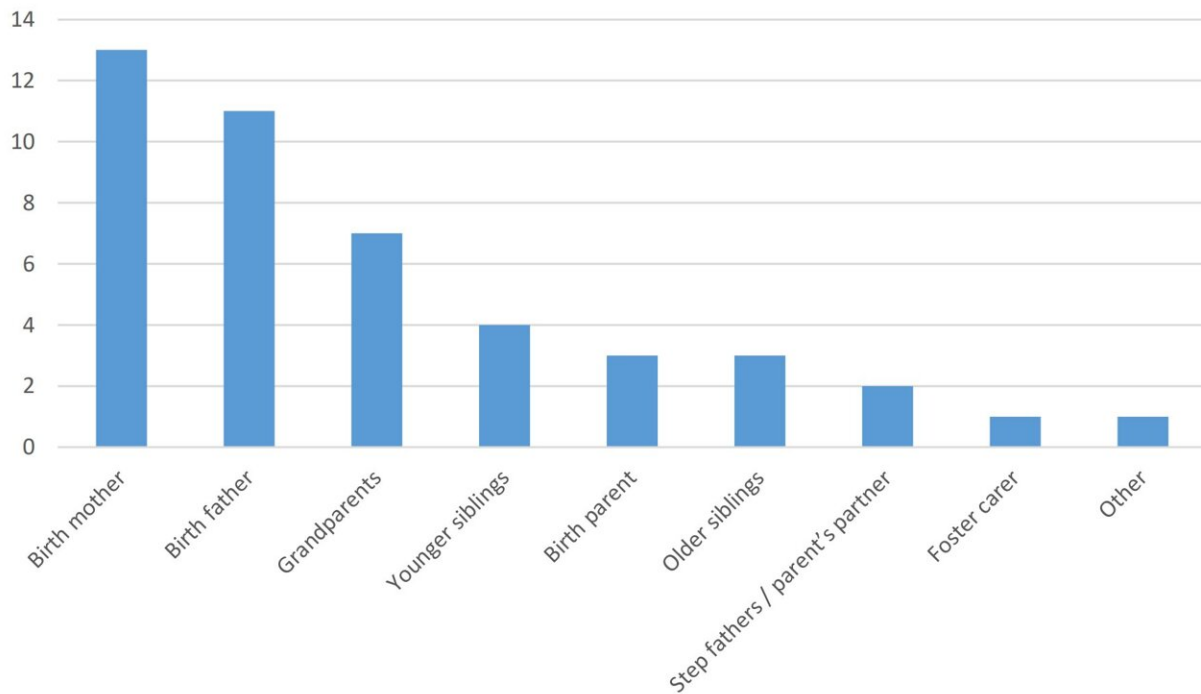


# Examining young Australians' experiences of identity abuse in family violence

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Perpetrators of LGBTIQ+ identity abuse. Credit: *Monash University* (2023).  
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A new Monash University report examines young Victorians' experiences of identity abuse in the context of family violence and finds it often occurs alongside other forms of abuse.

The [report](#) published today reveals [young people](#)'s self-reported experiences of gender-identity and LGBTIQ+ identity abuse in [family violence](#) settings, including the significant social, emotional, educational, physical and cultural impacts of family violence.

Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre Director Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon co-authored the report with Drs Rebecca Stewart and Jasmine McGowan.

"The young people involved in this study described the significant impacts of gender identity and LGBTIQ+ identity abuse in their lives. There is a clear need to build more accessible and tailored supports to better support their safety needs," Professor Fitz-Gibbon said.

Identity-based abuse of the young people, aged 16 to 20, involved in this study, experienced in the context of family violence, was often perpetrated by a number of family members, and in a significant number of cases went unreported to anyone outside of family and friends.

"We need to increase awareness of gender-identity and LGBTIQ+ identity abuse. Family and friends play a critical role as the most likely first points of contact for young people to disclose their experience of violence," Professor Fitzgibbon said.

The report found that 26 of the youth surveyed reported LGBTIQ+ identity abuse, of those 85 percent were verbally abused, 58 percent suffered [physical abuse](#) and 23 percent had experienced death threats.

"The experiences of the young people who participated in this study demonstrate that identity abuse is not experienced in a vacuum—it typically occurs along with numerous other forms of family violence, and has significant impacts beyond the ways it targets a young person's gender and [sexual identity](#)," Professor Fitz-Gibbon said.

Eleven of the Victorian young people in this study reported experiencing family violence due to both their LGBTIQ+ and gender identities.

"It is critical that we develop specialist child-centered responses to cater to the diversity of young people's identities and to best meet the safety needs of children and young people," Professor Fitz-Gibbon said.

Thirty-eight youth surveyed experienced cultural impacts following family violence victimization, with an 18-year-old non-binary participant saying "I cannot be my true identity around my family" after enduring both LGBTIQ+ and gender identity abuse. While another non-binary youth said they'd been taught by [family members](#) to "be racist, homophobic and transphobic."

The report identified a critical need to improve awareness of different forms of identity-based [abuse](#) and to build more effective support across schools and the specialist service system.

"When young people do disclose their experience of family violence it is critical that they are validated, that their risk is effectively assessed, and they are connected with the supports required to support their safety effectively," Professor Fitz-Gibbon said.

"Our study shows that we are falling short of delivering upon these objectives for young victim-survivors with diverse identities."

This report builds on the recent Monash University "I believe you" report in its commitment to centering the experiences of children and young people, and acknowledging children as victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual [violence](#) in their own right.

**More information:** Kate Fitz-Gibbon et al, Young people's experiences of identity abuse in the context of family violence: A

Victorian study, *Monash University* (2023). [DOI: 10.26180/22191319](https://doi.org/10.26180/22191319)

Provided by Monash University

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