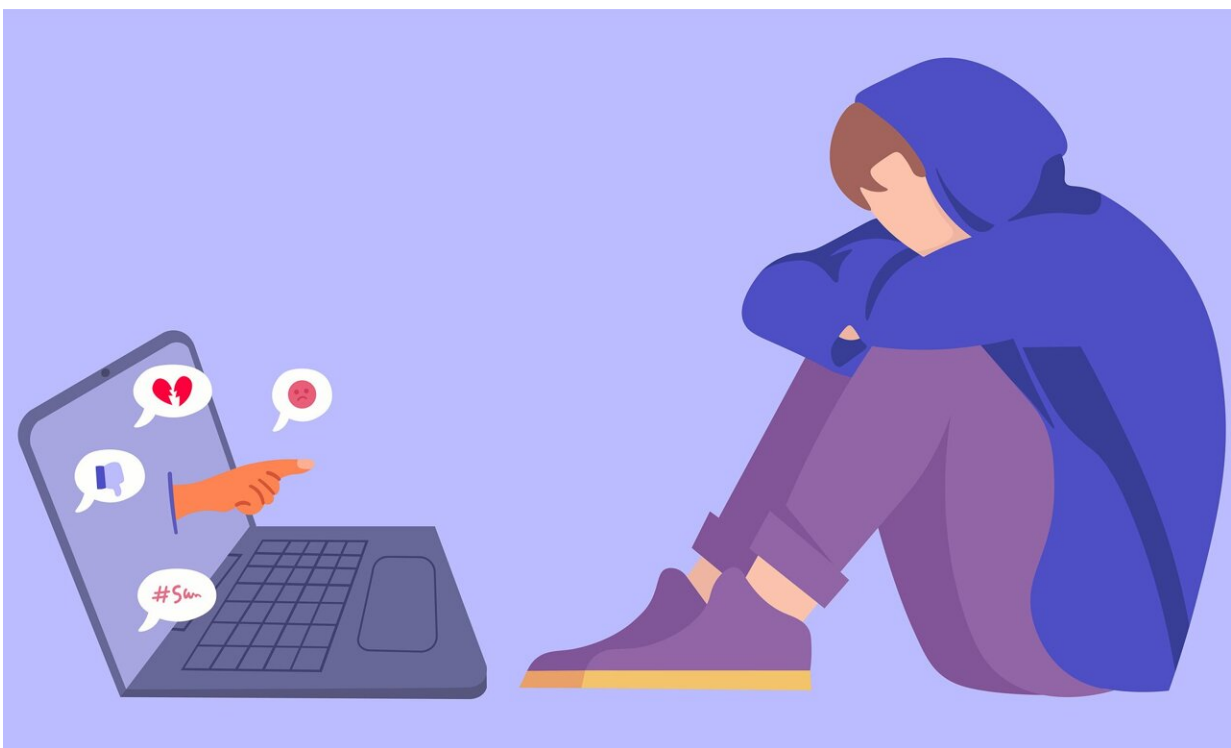


# Study finds bias-based bullying amplifies emotional distress in youth with multiple marginalized social positions

February 13 2024

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Youth who share similar social positions of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender have much greater levels of emotional distress if they have experienced bias-based bullying—defined as racist,

homophobic or transphobic bullying—according to a new study from the University of Minnesota Medical School.

The study, [published in \*Pediatrics\*](#), analyzed 2019 Minnesota Student Survey data on more than 80,000 students in grades 9 and 11.

"We hear a lot about mental health disparities affecting [minority youth](#), and a common misinterpretation is that 'those kids' have problems. This study really shows that when kids are harassed or bullied for just being who they are—that's the problem, that's where we need to make changes," said Marla Eisenberg, ScD, MPH, a professor at the U of M Medical School and faculty with the School of Public Health.

The research team used models to identify rates of depression, anxiety, self-injury, [suicidal ideation](#), and suicide attempts. They found the level of [emotional distress](#) was as much as 60% lower among adolescents with the same social positions but no bias-based bullying experience.

The findings suggest that bias-based bullying is a contributing factor to emotional distress among youth with multiple marginalized social positions. The authors suggest that bias-based bullying is an important point for intervention and mitigation of mental health disparities, particularly among LGBTQ+ adolescents.

The research team is planning to conduct additional research on ways to prevent bias-based bullying and support diverse youth, particularly through schools and social media.

**More information:** Marla E. Eisenberg et al, Emotional Distress Disparities Across Multiple Intersecting Social Positions: The Role of Bias-Based Bullying, *Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2023-061647](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-061647)

Provided by University of Minnesota Medical School

Citation: Study finds bias-based bullying amplifies emotional distress in youth with multiple marginalized social positions (2024, February 13) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-bias-based-bullying-amplifies-emotional.html>

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