

LGBTQIA+ IN CANNABIS



LGBTQIA+ IN CANNABIS INDUSTRIES

The number of LGBTQIA+ respondents to the Women in Cannabis Study was remarkable, but the unique challenges facing those in this community can be especially daunting.

27% of survey participants are LGBTQIA+. The high number may be indicative of a wider acceptance of queer people in the cannabis industry or at the very least an improved level of comfort in identifying as such.

However, sexual harassment and self-esteem struggles are likely to affect queer women in cannabis even more than their heterosexual counterparts, which is in line with national averages. They are also more likely to consume cannabis as a way to cope with mental health issues.



*The majority of LGBTQIA+ face daily battles just for the right to thrive — **our existence is resistance.***

There's a constant fear of being fired, a fear of being rejected. People get freaked out just because we're being who we are.

Queers built the foundation of what we have. Medical cannabis came about in California in the Bay Area — it was led by the queers. And we used our plight of dealing with AIDS to get medical cannabis for underserved communities.

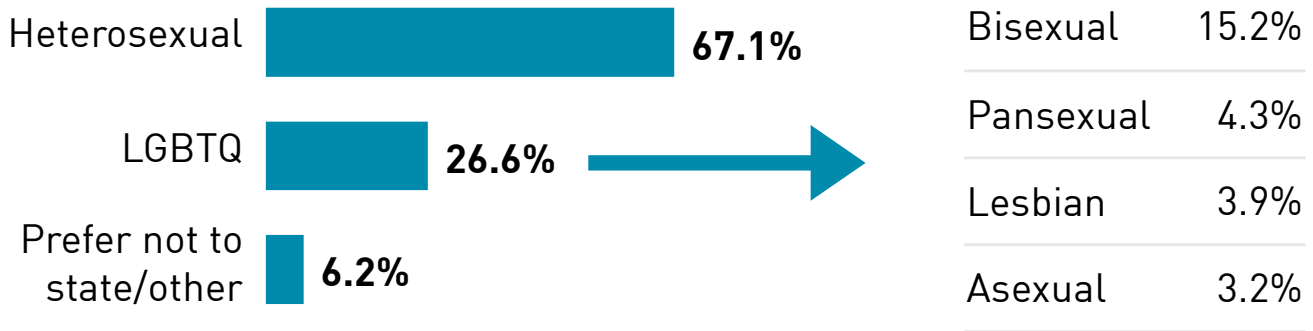
And now that the industry is becoming more corporate, we're seeing queer people being marginalized.

FOUNDER & CEO, CA

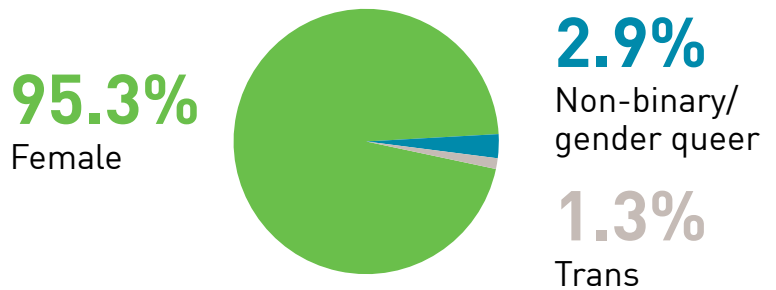


LGBTQIA+ IN CANNABIS INDUSTRIES

27% of study participants are LGBTQIA+.



Of this 27% of the total sample, the majority are female, and 4.2% are non-binary, genderqueer and trans people.



This group is more likely to be a full-time employee for a plant-touching or ancillary business company than a business owner. In addition, they are less likely to also serve on a Board of Directors, or act as an Investor, Advisor, or Owner/Founder in addition to their current role in cannabis.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	HETERO	LGBTQIA+
Full-time Employee	37%	56%
Business Owner	43%	31%
NOT an Investor, Advisor, Board Member, Owner/Founder	40%	50%

Q1. How do you identify?

Q2. What is your sexual orientation?

Q5. What is your employment status in the cannabis/CBD/hemp industry? Choose all that apply.

Q39. In addition to your current position in the cannabis industry, are you also any of the following?

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SELF-ESTEEM

Study data shows that for those who are LGBTQIA+, there were some clear disparities highlighting the often devastating discrimination that still exists for these communities today.

40% reported being sexually harassed while working in the cannabis industry.

	HETERO	LGBTQIA+
Yes, while working in the cannabis industry	27%	40%
I have not experienced sexual harassment at work	34%	25%

LGBTQIA+ people were also more likely to say self-esteem issues negatively impacted them professionally.

	HETERO	LGBTQIA+
Under-valuing or under-charging for your time	72%	77%
People pleasing	50%	60%
Feelings of inadequacy (imposter syndrome)	44%	58%
Difficulty saying no	37%	52%
Lack of boundaries	35%	43%
Lack of assertiveness	34%	46%
Over-apologizing	26%	39%





IN MY WORDS...

I started growing illegally in Florida.

To avoid more stigma and much worse, jailtime, I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. My first job offer was in cannabis at a dispensary in Berkeley.

I have experienced all kinds of discrimination for my chronic illness and been harassed and coerced by supervisors of the opposite and same gender unfortunately.

There are a lot of issues when it comes to power dynamics nowadays, and unless we have a broad coalition that expresses the interest of laborers in cannabis, then we will continue to be exploited.

SALES ASSOCIATE, CA



THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CANNABIS

LGBTQIA+ respondents use cannabis more frequently and for more reasons – both medicinal and recreational – than their heterosexual counterparts.

FREQUENCY OF USE

	HETERO	LGBTQIA+
Use cannabis several times per day	48%	61%

MEDICINAL USE

Mental health conditions (anxiety, PTSD, etc.)	54%	72%
General physical health & wellness	41%	52%

RECREATIONAL USE

Relaxation	80%	87%
Creativity	48%	62%
Focus	40%	52%
Productivity	42%	51%
Sensory enhancement	31%	49%
Spirituality	31%	47%
Social use	54%	59%

Q61. How frequently do you use cannabis products that include THC and/or CBD?

Q66. Do you use cannabis for any of the following medical issues?

Q64. Do you use cannabis for any of the following "performance enhancement" or non-medicinal reasons? Check all that apply.





IN MY WORDS...

I've used cannabis for depression for nearly 27 years.

I've been bullied by family – demeaned and everything short of being disowned. I've been labeled a low-life, a stoner and lazy.

I have a brain, I'm insanely intelligent and have the unique ability to turn scientific terminology into language that people can actually understand.

I'm often talked down to by male superiors, I'm grossly underpaid and undervalued. I really am treated badly by my male bosses, and when I stand up for myself – it gets worse.

I just want to be respected in this industry and for the work that I do. I want to take my career further, but because I'm so hidden by my male superiors, no one knows who I am. I want to be taken seriously in this industry.

FREELANCE WRITER & CONTENT CREATION SPECIALIST, AZ



IN SUMMARY...

Queer women helped build the foundation of the cannabis industry, and while their numbers are considerable, the severity of the issues they deal with can be extreme — and even dangerous.

LGBTQIA+ women in cannabis occupy several areas of the supply chain, most likely in plant-touching operations. They tend to consume more frequently throughout the day when compared to heterosexual counterparts although this trend could potentially be attributed to the fact that queer women are more likely to be using the plant to cope with anxiety, depression, or PTSD.

Sadly, LGBTQIA+ survey respondents experienced sexual harassment on the job in far higher numbers than heterosexual participants. 40% of queer women stated they have been harassed while employed in cannabis, with only one in four saying they had never been harassed at work (regardless of industry).

Bullying, discrimination, and violence are real fears queer people must deal with daily, adding another layer of strife to the myriad challenges already facing women in cannabis.



Do you feel the cannabis industry is safe and equitable for queer women??



REPORT CHAPTERS

Interested in learning more? Download additional results at womenincannabis.study/study-chapters.

Introduction

Methodology

Who are the Women Working in Cannabis?

Which Roles do they Play in the Industry?

Why Work in Cannabis?

What Relationship Do Women Have with Cannabis?

What are the Barriers to Success?

What Else Holds Women Back?

BIPOC Women in Cannabis

LGBTQIA+ in Cannabis

How do Women Define Success?

We Have the Data, Now What?

Leverage the Power of the Data

Profiles of Women in Cannabis

Contributors

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THANK YOU

WOMEN IN CANNABIS
a Living History

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