Homosexual Urban Legend: 30% Of Teen Suicide Victims Are Homosexuals

For more than a decade, Traditional Values Coalition has been repeatedly exposing the myth of an "epidemic" of "homosexual" teen suicides.

Now, a psychologist has published the results of two studies that-once again-expose the Homosexual Urban Legend that teens who have homosexual feelings are committing suicides in record numbers.

Homosexual activists have repeatedly claimed for more than ten years that 30% of all teens who have attempted suicide are homosexuals. The mythological 30% figure was concocted by a homosexual social worker named Paul Gibson who wrote "Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide," published in 1989. It has been thoroughly debunked, but homosexuals continue to use the figure because it supports their political and social agenda.

This 30% myth has been used over and over again to convince public school officials to establish pro-homosexual counseling programs, special clubs for homosexuals run by Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) teenagers, and sensitivity/anti-homophobia training sessions to convince straight students that homosexual behavior is normal.

The latest studies that expose the 30% urban legend appear in the December, 2001 issue of Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. The author of these studies is Cornell University psychologist Ritch Savin-Williams.
Savin-Williams says previous homosexual teen suicide studies were flawed and exaggerated because they were drawn from group homes or runaway shelters where the most troubled teens gather. Researchers also took at face value the claims that these teens made about their attempts at suicide.

Savin-Williams surveyed a more representative group of teens. He focused on 349 students, ages 17 to 25. When these students told him they had tried to kill themselves, he asked them what method they had used.

Savin-Williams discovered the following:

- Over half of these reported suicide attempts turned out to be "thinking about it" rather than attempting it.

- One study of 83 women showed a true suicide rate of 13% for those who hadn't attended a support group. (Between 7% and 13% of all teens have tried to kill themselves, according to latest figures.)

- Another survey of 266 college men and women found that teens who think they are homosexuals were not much more likely to have attempted suicide than straight students. Homosexual students were more likely to have reported "attempts," but these turned out to be "thinking" about suicide rather than actually doing it.

According to Savin-Williams, homosexual teen suicide statistics unfairly "pathologize gay youth, and that's not fair to them." Savin-Williams is not "anti-homosexual," but has apparently attempted to conduct honest research.

In fact, Beth Reis, a pro-homosexual activist with the Safe Schools Coalition solicited a clarification from Savin-Williams on his research. Reis was concerned that his work might have been misreported in the media. It was not.

Savin-Williams responded to her by noting: "When I solicit a broad spectrum of youths with same sex attractions, and not only those who openly identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual while in high school, and asked in-depth questions about their suicide history, I found statistically no difference in the suicide attempt rate based on sexual attractions. Although same-sex attracted youths initially reported a higher rate of suicide attempts, on further probing this sexual attraction disappeared." Savin-Williams believes that pro-homosexual adults have done a disservice to homosexual teens by creating a "suffering, suicidal, tragic" script for them that often leads these troubled teens to report attempted suicides when these events did not occur.

According to Savin-Williams, homosexuals do a disservice to "gay" teens when they "paint them with one rather narrow negative brush stroke." Homosexuals, however, have won great inroads into public schools by claiming that "gay" teens are killing themselves in record numbers. This 30% suicide claim is now gone-and activists are finally being forced to admit this fact-something they had refused to do for more than a decade.
Human Rights Campaign (HRC), an aggressive homosexual group has continuously pushed the 30% urban legend over the years. HRC spokesman David Smith reluctantly admitted that the 30% figure is wrong, but he told USA Today, "Nobody disputes the fact being gay or lesbian in high school is not a very pleasant experience. The core problem is prejudice and harassment that goes unchecked in school settings. School officials take no action. We need to address that problem head-on."

Homosexual activists like David Smith have ignored more than a decade of studies debunking the 30% statistic. As noted above, the 30% urban legend was created by homosexual social worker Paul Gibson in 1989. Gibson's flawed study became an appendix in a Health and Human Services report entitled, "Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide." Although Gibson's work was repudiated by then-Secretary of HHS, Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, homosexual activists were successful in using Gibson's work to push for "gay" counseling programs and "tolerance" curricula in our nation's public schools. Gibson's report, for example, was used by activists in Massachusetts to establish a state-wide gay and lesbian youth commission funded with millions of dollars by the state.

Gibson's 30% figure was based, in part, on a quotation from a homosexual activist in the Washington Blade who speculated that 3,000 homosexual teens killed themselves each year.

Inaccurate Report Still Used To Promote Homosexual Agenda

Activists continue to use his report, despite the fact that his work has been debunked. What are the most frequently quoted "facts" from Gibson's report? They are:

1. That homosexual teens account for one third of all teen suicides;
2. That homosexual teens are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual counterparts;
3. That suicide is the leading cause of death among "gay" and "lesbian" youth;
4. That "gay" youth suicide is caused by internalized homophobia and violence directed against struggling teen homosexuals.

Few journalists took the time to actually analyze Gibson's report when it came out. As a result, his non-facts became part of the culture. One enterprising journalist who actually studied the report is Delia M. Rios with the Newhouse News Service. Her report, "Statistics on gay suicides are baseless, researchers say," was published in the Seattle Times on May 22, 1997.

Rios quoted Peter Muehrer, with the National Institutes of Mental Health. Muehrer said most major research studies citing a link between sexual orientation and suicide are
"limited in both quantity and quality." He also said there are no agreed-upon standards in suicide research and reliable methods for measuring suicide attempts are nonexistent.

Because of these factors, said Muehrer, "...it is not possible to accurately compare suicide attempt rates between gay and lesbian youth and non-gay youth in the general population." According to Muehrer, "There is no scientific evidence to support this (30%) figure."

Peter Labarbera, author of The Gay Youth Suicide Myth published by the Family Research Council, quotes Dr. David Shaffer, one of the nation's leading authorities on youth suicide. Shaffer analyzed Gibson's figures and observed: "I struggled for a long time over [Gibson's] mathematics, but, in the end, it seemed more like hocus-pocus than math."

In short, while Gibson's non-facts are still being used by homosexuals to promote the recruitment and seduction of children in our nation's public schools, there is now new evidence from Cornell's Savin-Williams, showing that suicide among homosexual teens is no more likely than among heterosexual teenagers.

The cold, hard fact is that teens who are struggling with homosexual feelings are more likely to be sexually molested by a homosexual school counselor or teacher than to commit suicide over their feelings of despair. In fact, TVC's Special Report, Homosexual Child Molesters [ Download PDF version ] reveals new statistics on the high rates of homosexual molestation of children in our nation's public schools. Statistics show that homosexual school personnel account for as many as 40% of all child molestations in schools. The fact that homosexuals account for only 1-2% of the population should be of great concern to parents and school officials. Homosexuals should be kept away from children, not serve as mentors for them in schools.