



# IMPACT OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON FAMILIES WITH TRANS & NONBINARY ADOLESCENTS IN NEW ENGLAND

## A Brief Report

### Authors

David R. Pletta, MPH  
Jessica D. Kant, LICSW, MPH  
Diane Ehrensaft, PhD  
Melissa MacNish, LMHC  
Sean Cahill, PhD  
Sabra L. Katz-Wise, PhD

### When were data collected?

Interview data came from Waves 3 & 4 of the Trans Teen and Family Narratives Project (TTFN), with participants being invited to interview in both waves:

#### Wave 3

- Mar 2017 - Oct 2017
- 4-10 months post-election.

#### Wave 4

- Nov 2017 - Jun 2018
- 11-18 months post-election.

### Who was considered eligible for the study?

Families from TTFN that had at least two members participate in both Waves 3 & 4 were included in the current study.

**November 2016**, the Republican nominee, Donald J. Trump, was elected as the 45th President of the United States. Since then, discriminatory policies targeting the transgender community have increased in number at both the national and state level.



- Transgender and nonbinary (TNB) adolescents already had (on average) poorer physical and mental health compared to their cisgender (non-trans) peers.
- Families with TNB adolescents may have felt especially stressed or stigmatized following the presidential election, especially when transgender-hostile policies were made (e.g., bathroom bills, transgender military ban).
- This analysis used qualitative data from the Trans Teen and Family Narratives Project (TTFN) to study the ways New England families with TNB youth experienced the social and political climate after the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

*[I'm] more fearful of my child being harmed because people seem to be a little bit more free with their discrimination and their hate these days. So it kind of heightens your fear a little bit, but it hasn't personally affected us. So there's nothing that's happened to us personally, but there's that underlying fear that it will. Someday, what's gonna happen, you know? - Caregiver to a 20-year-old nonbinary youth*



- Interview data came from TNB youth, their caregivers, and their siblings (N=20 families: 20 TNB teens, 11 siblings, & 29 caregivers).
- Transcripts were analyzed by two coders (one cisgender man, one transgender woman) using a technique called thematic analysis.

Participant: So we have a no politics agreement at, like, family dinners, like, in my house, just me and my parents... No politics whenever we're breathing near each other, you know. It's not allowed. It's been banned. - 16-year-old trans boy

**Themes included:**

- ✦ Descriptions of daily life for trans people in America (e.g., being discriminated against, feeling dehumanized)
- ✦ Thoughts about what the sociopolitical climate is like nationally (e.g., anger toward political figures)
- ✦ Ways people resisted unwanted changes and advocated for their needs (e.g., confronting misinformation online, going to protests)
- ✦ Factors that made changes in the sociopolitical climate better or worse for families (e.g., families that were already politically divided became even more divided).

**Results** show the 2016 presidential election changed *who*, and *how*, family members (TNB youth, caregivers, siblings) communicated with others about politics, especially with social media. TNB youth and their families often felt anxious about changes that could happen to the sociopolitical climate and how those changes could impact the TNB youths' rights and safety. Findings from this study could inform family therapy, intervention design, and reforming public policy.

**Most recent political views**

● Very Liberal    ● Liberal    ● Moderate    ● Conservative    ● Very Conservative

