

*\*Indicates statistically significant difference*

Youth are also more accepting of others than they were 20 years ago. Among youth in grades 7–12 today, 59% agree with the statement “Gay or lesbian relationships are okay, if that is a person’s choice,” compared to 31% who agreed with this in 1989.<sup>2</sup> Girls are more likely to say this than boys (65% vs. 54%). African American preteens and teens (48%) are less likely to agree that gay or lesbian relationships are okay than are preteens and teens from other minority groups (68% of Asians and 64% of Hispanics).

“While it is refreshing to see evidence that nearly 60 percent of youth, particularly girls and racial/ethnic minorities, say that diversity is important to them, findings from this study suggest that there may be more we can do to assist American boys and girls in valuing the rich cultural diversity our nation has to offer.”

—Janie Victoria Ward, professor of education, Simmons College

<sup>1</sup> Not all of the comparisons between racial and ethnic groups for this specific question are statistically significant.

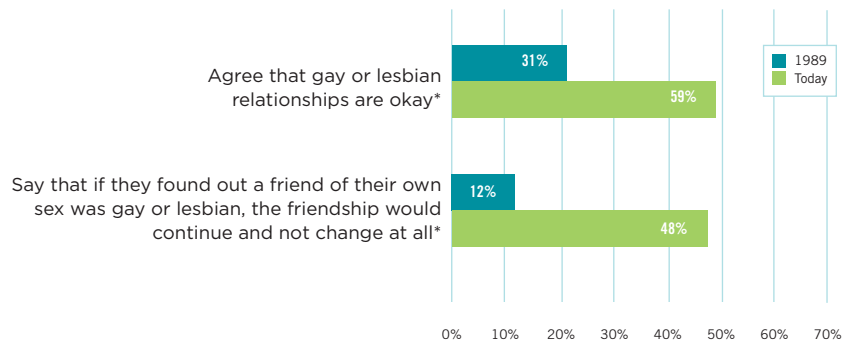
<sup>2</sup> “Gay or lesbian” was referred to as “homosexual” in the 1989 survey. For comparison purposes, it was necessary to keep the phrasing of all questions as close to the original as possible.

“I would like to be an accepting person—a person who is open to all kinds of ideas and accepts people for who they are. They shouldn’t have to hide any part of themselves around me. I’m not judging them.”

—Sohini Bandy,  
National Girl Consultant  
to Girl Scouts of the  
USA; Austin, Texas

As well, almost half of 7th- to 12th-graders today (48%, compared with 12% in 1989) say that if they found out one of their same-sex friends was involved in a gay or lesbian relationship, they would continue the friendship unchanged. These numbers are very different by gender—almost 6 in 10 girls (59%) would continue the friendship compared with fewer than 4 in 10 (38%) of boys. Furthermore, boys are nearly three times as likely as girls to say their friendship would probably come to an end (20% vs. 7%) and a substantial percentage of boys (17%) admit to not knowing what they would do. More Asian (57%) and Hispanic preteens and teens (56%) would continue the friendship than African American (47%) and White (45%) youth in the same age bracket.

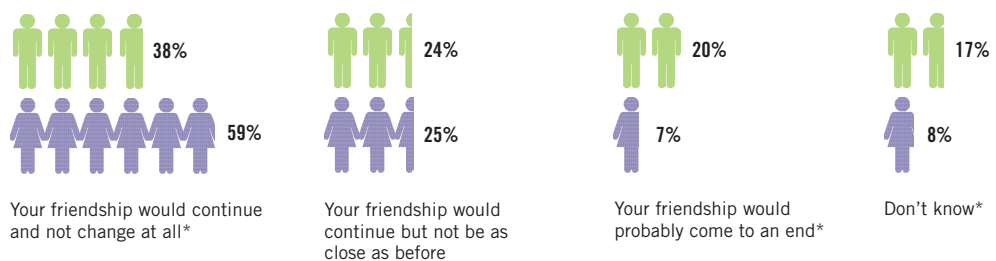
#### ATTITUDES OF 7TH- TO 12TH-GRADERS TOWARD GAY/LESBIAN ISSUES



\*Indicates statistically significant difference

#### RESULTS OF DISCOVERING A SAME-SEX FRIEND IS INVOLVED IN A GAY/LESBIAN RELATIONSHIP (responses of 7th- to 12th-graders)

“I just think there is more openness about [being gay or lesbian] now. You had to keep it a secret back then.”  
—mother of teenage girl,  
New York City



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