Grand River
Community
Health Centre

2SLGBTQIA+ NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2023

Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations

Topics

Introduction

This report is to inform the findings from an environmental scan and to provide an analysis of a 2SLGBTQIA+ needs assessment survey. This study was conducted by a Community Development student during a summer integrated learning placement with Grand River Community Health Centre. The purpose of this study was to engage and hear from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community residing in Brantford, Brant County, and Six Nations of their experiences accessing services and supports. This report will highlight the findings of the needs assessment survey results and empirical evidence obtained by direct community engagement. The report will outline the methodology used, summarize the key findings, and provide recommendations to enhance the experiences of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations.

Methodology: A comprehensive online survey was developed using an online app called Survey Monkey to gather data from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The survey consisted of 15 questions both closed-ended and open-ended, while being mindful of the possibility of participants needing support during or after the survey questions. A preamble for the survey was attached to the survey outlining crisis numbers if support was needed. Consent was explained and participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time and could skip any questions. There was no monetary compensation however participants could enter a draw for an advertised prize. The survey covered various aspects such as demographics, experiences, specific needs, and programming interests. A literature review of local studies was conducted and used to address themes that arose from the data collection. Further evidence and data was gathered from 2SLGBTQIA+ community meetings and events.

Data Collection: 117 surveys were completed. 12 surveys were excluded due to not meeting the inclusion criteria of identifying as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community or not residing in Brantford, Brant County or Six Nations. Identifying as straight was part of the exclusion criteria however it was determined that some people who are Trans identify as straight therefore did not get the opportunity to complete the survey. The data collection period lasted from June 17th, 2023 to July 14th, 2023. The survey was available online through a QR code prepared on Survey Monkey. Surveys could be accessed in paper form at local agencies, pop-up events and local community agencies. Hand delivery of the surveys to local community agencies allowed for networking and community engagement. In-person delivery of surveys to agencies was beneficial for relationship building and marketing GRCHC programs and opportunities for partnerships. Participants were informed that the data they provided was being collected anonymously and that they could stop their participation in the survey at any time or refuse to answer any questions. Posters with the link to the survey were posted on social media, Facebook and Instagram, around the GRCHC building as well as emailed to community partners and GRCHC staff. The first pop-up event was at Pride in the Park Located in Brantford ON, and the second pop-up event although not specifically for 2SLGBTQIA+ still allowed for community engagement. Survey data was uploaded and will be stored in GRCHC survey monkey account. Surveys left at community agencies were picked up weekly and manually entered into Survey Monkey. Paper copies of completed surveys were manually uploaded to GRCHC's secure database and secured with a password. Paper surveys were then destroyed. Focus group recruitment was unsuccessful as there was no response due to the lack of time remaining for this project. *Please note: question 7 (What type of programs are you interested in attending (Check all that apply), unfortunately, this question was incorrectly formatted, and did not allow participants to "check all that apply". This affected all surveys completed online by using the QRC provided. Paper copies of the survey were done correctly and this data was kept separately and added manually.*

Keywords

2SLGBTQIA+ Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities

Two Spirit (2S)
An umbrella term for the many Indigenous traditional identities forcefully suppressed by colonization. The term honours the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction and its connection to community and spirituality. An individual may choose to use this term instead of, or in addition to, identifying as LGBTQI.

Lesbian
A person who identifies as either woman or nonbinary and who experiences attraction to the same or similar genders.

Gay
A person who experiences attraction to people of the same gender as themselves.

Bisexual
A person who experiences attraction to both people of their own gender and people of gender different from their own.

Transgender (Trans)
A person whose gender identity does not correspond with what is socially expected based on their sex assigned at birth. It can be used as an umbrella term to refer to a range of gender identities and experiences.

Queer
An umbrella term that may variously describe 2SLGBTQI communities, one's relationship to a particular community, or an individual identity.

Questioning
An umbrella term for the process of reconciling one's felt sense of self in terms of gender and/or attraction and the language one uses to describe those experiences. It may be experienced for a single period, episodically, or persistently over one's lifetime.

Intersex
A person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside of the conventional classifications of male or female.

Asexual
A person who does not experience sexual attraction, and/or who has little to no interest in sexual activity.

+ is inclusive of people who identify as part of sexual and gender-diverse communities, who use additional terminologies

Pansexual (Pan)
A person who experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction to others, regardless of gender.

Cisgender
A person whose gender identity corresponds with what is socially expected based on their sex assigned at birth (e.g. A person who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man).

Nonbinary (Enby)
A person who experiences their gender as not exclusively man or woman. When used as an umbrella term, it encompasses identities reflecting a range of gender experiences.
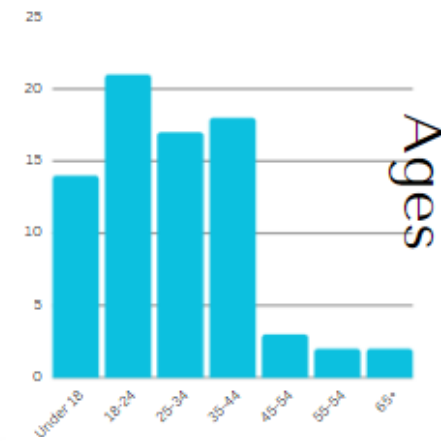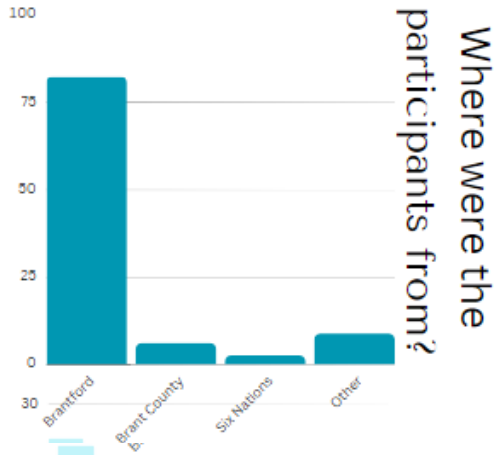
Gender Fluid
A person whose gender identity is experienced as not being fixed and that shifts and varies over time and in relation to the context.
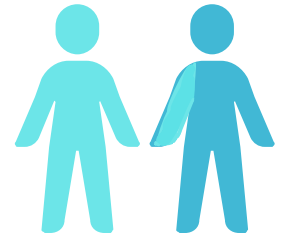
Heteronormative
Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation i.e. assuming everyone is straight.

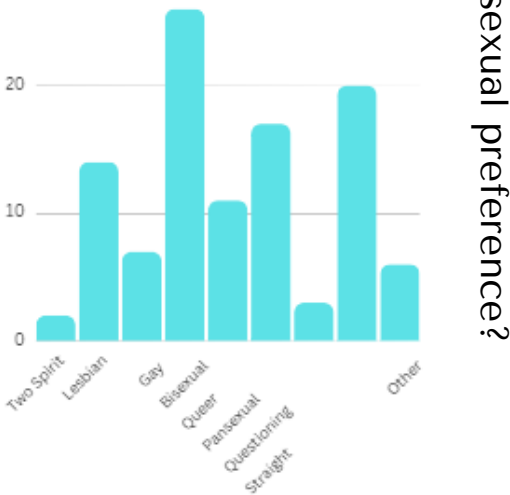Resource: Click to complete list and other educational tools. https://egale.ca/awareness/terms-and-definitions/

An Assessment of Needs for 2SLGBTQIA+ Services in Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations

Where were the participants from?

Ages

Are you aware of 2SLGBTQ+ services at Grand River Community Health Centre?

No: 50.65%
Yes: 49.35%

How did they identify?

What was their sexual preference?
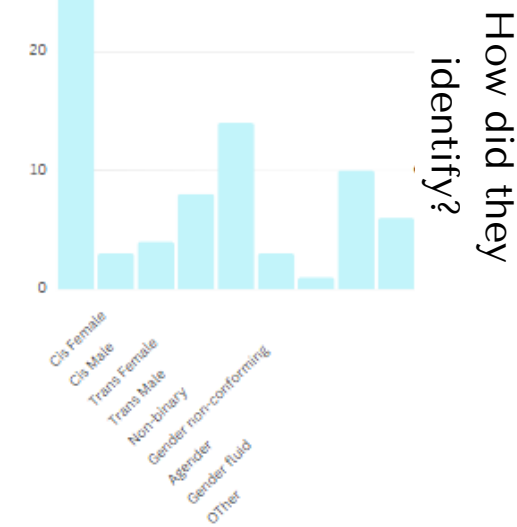
What education is needed?

- Self
- Families
- Service providers
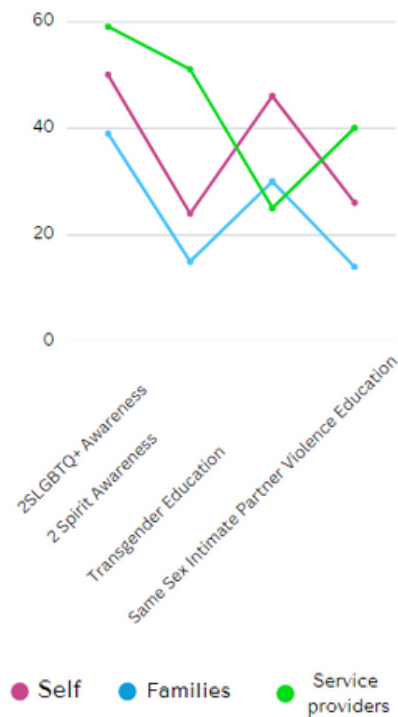
The main issues :

Sense of belonging 62.34%

Education/ awareness 57.14%

Access to mental health services 55.84%

Programs geared to 2SLGBTQI+ 55.84%

Socialize/ Relationship building 54.55%

Safer physical space 50.65%

Stigma and discrimination 50.65%

Visibility 46.75%

Access to health services 36.36%

Transgender support 29.87%

Access to addiction services 29.87%

0 4

Q1 Where do you live?

Brantford 82.30%
Brant County 6.19%
Six Nations 2.65%
Other (please specify) 8.85%

82.3% of individuals that took this survey reside in Brantford
6.19% reside in Brant County and 2.64% identified as residing on the Six Nations
8.85% choose other with comments of Hamilton, Paris and Norfolk

Q2 Sexual Orientation

Two-Spirit 1.89%
Lesbian 13.21%
Gay 6.60%
Bisexual 24.53%
Queer 10.38%
Pansexual 16.04%
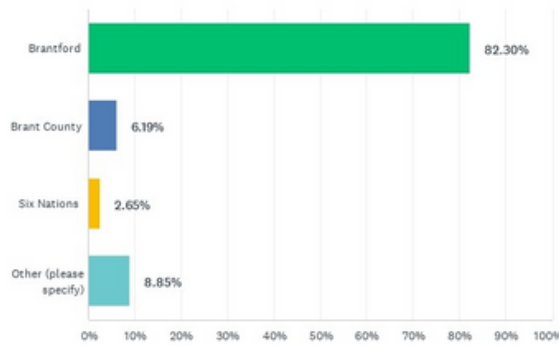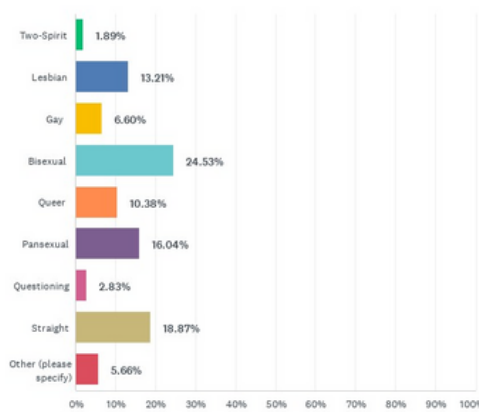Questioning 2.83%
Straight 18.87%
Other (please specify) 5.66%

Out of 106 responders 24.53% self-identified as Bisexual, 18.87% as Straight, 1.89% as Two-Spirited, 2.83% of responders stated they're questioning, 13.21% responded Lesbian, 6.60% identified as Gay, 10.38% identified as Queer, and 16.04% as Pansexual

Others identified as asexual, demisexual and grey sexual.

Q4 Age

Under 18 18.18%
18-24 27.27%
25-34 22.08%
35-44 23.38%
45-54 3.90%
55-64 2.60%
65+ 2.60%
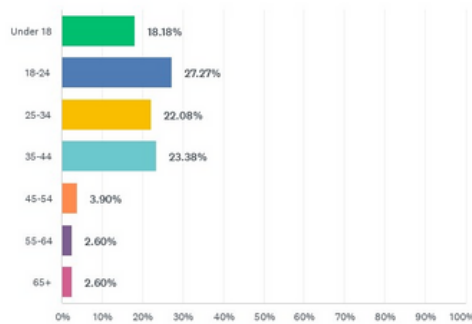
Youth under 18 represented 18.18% and 18-24 represented 27.27%
Participants aged 25-44 represented 45.46% of respondents
Individuals 45+ accounted for 9% of the data

Q3 Gender

Cis female 35.53%
Cis male 3.95%
Trans female 5.26%
Trans male 10.53%
Non-binary 18.42%
Gender non-conforming 3.95%
Agender 1.32%
Gender fluid 13.16%
Other (please specify) 7.89%
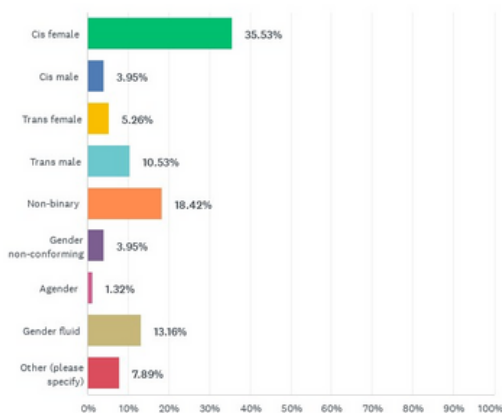
Cis female (35.53%) and Non-Binary (8.42%) were the highest self identified genders.
The next highest representation was also outside of the binary with Gender Fluid, Trans male and females which made up 15.79% of responses

Q5 What would you say are the main issues facing 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in Brantford/Brant County/Six Nations? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Sense of Belonging — 62.34%
Safe physical Space — 50.65%
Access to Health Services — 36.36%
Access to Mental Healt... — 55.84%
Access to Addiction... — 29.87%
Transgender Support — 57.14%
Visibility (Lack of see... — 46.75%
Programs that are geared t... — 55.84%
Education/Awareness — 57.14%
Socialize/Relationship... — 54.55%
Stigma/Discrimination — 50.65%
Other (please specify) — 6.49%

Of the 11 proposed issues, 8 of the responses were over 50%. Participants agreed on the top 8 issues being: Safe physical space,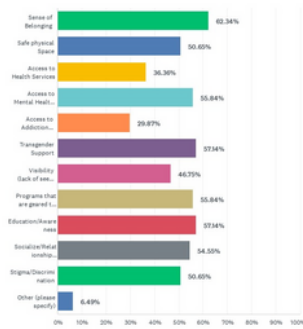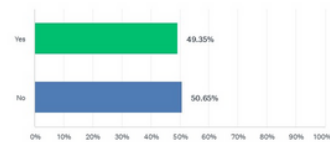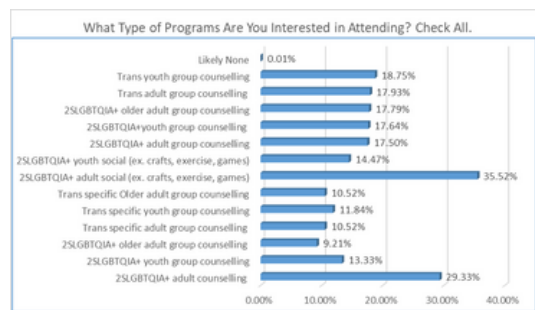 Access to Mental Health, Programs that are geared to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Education and Awareness, Socialization/Relationship Building, Stigma/Discrimination, Sense of Belonging and Transgender Support.

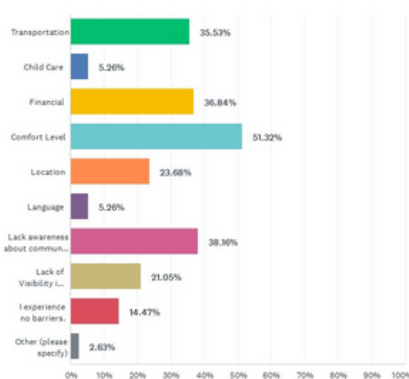**Q6 Are you aware of the 2SLGBTQIA+ services and programs at GRCHC?**

Yes — 49.35%
No — 50.65%

Of the 77 respondents to this question, 50.65% were not aware of the 2SLGBTQIA+ services offered at GRCHC.

What Type of Programs Are You Interested in Attending? Check All.

Likely None — 0.01%
Trans youth group counselling — 18.75%
Trans adult group counselling — 17.93%
2SLGBTQIA+ older adult group counselling — 17.79%
2SLGBTQIA+ youth group counselling — 17.64%
2SLGBTQIA+ adult group counselling — 17.50%
2SLGBTQIA+ youth social (ex. crafts, exercise, games) — 14.47%
2SLGBTQIA+ adult social (ex. crafts, exercise, games) — 35.52%
Trans specific Older adult group counselling — 10.52%
Trans specific youth group counselling — 11.84%
Trans specific adult group counselling — 10.52%
2SLGBTQIA+ older adult group counselling — 9.21%
2SLGBTQIA+ youth group counselling — 13.33%
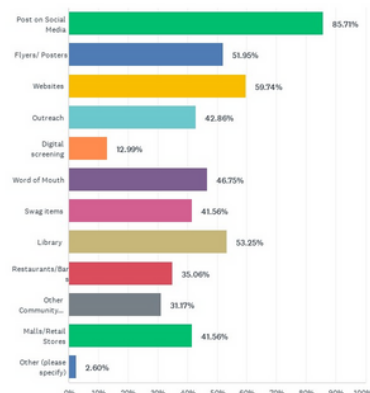2SLGBTQIA+ adult counselling — 29.33%

The data on survey monkey is incorrect due to a format error. The chart to the left is with the correct data. Please see Methodology for explanation. The data shows that 2SLGBTQIA+ social groups has the most interest followed by 2SLGBTQIA+ counselling , Youth programming and Trans social groups (including cooking).

Q8 What barriers (if any) do you experience accessing social services and/or support in Brantford/Brant County/ Six Nations as a person who identifies as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

Transportation — 35.53%
Child Care — 5.26%
Financial — 36.84%
Comfort Level — 51.32%
Location — 23.68%
Language — 5.26%
Lack awareness about commun... — 38.16%
Lack of Visibility i... — 21.05%
I experience no barriers. — 14.47%
Other (please specify) — 2.63%

51.32% identified comfort level as a barrier to accessing social services and support. Lack of awareness also ranked high with 38.16%. Followed by lack of visibility (21.05%), transportation (35.53%), financial (36.84%), language (5.26%) and childcare (5.26%).

Q9 What do you feel is the best approach for service providers to reach 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Brantford/Brant County/Six Nations? Check all that apply.

Post on Social Media — 85.71%
Flyers/ Posters — 51.95%
Websites — 59.74%
Outreach — 42.86%
Digital screening — 12.99%
Word of Mouth — 46.75%
Swag items — 41.56%
Library — 53.25%
Restaurants/Bar — 35.06%
Other Community... — 31.17%
Malls/Retail Stores — 41.50%
Other (please specify) — 2.60%

Digital platforms, websites and the library were identified as the best approach for service providers to market (over 50%).
Websites, flyers, word of mouth, swag items and malls were also selected (over 40%).

Survey Results

What learning or educational workshops would YOU be interested in? Check all that Apply.

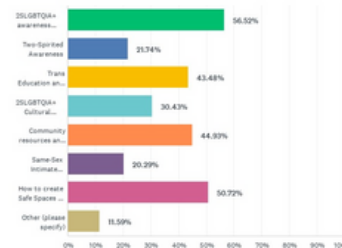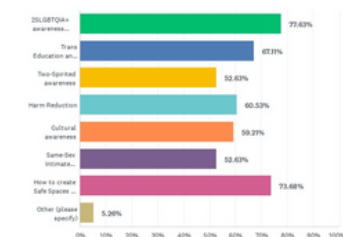- 2SLGBTQIA+ understandin... — 64.94%
- Two-Spirited Awareness — 31.17%
- Mental Health Awareness — 64.94%
- Addiction Awareness ... — 42.86%
- Trans Education/Aw... — 59.74%
- Parenting — 29.87%
- Skill Based Learning — 32.47%
- Same-Sex Intimate... — 33.77%
- Community Resources an... — 40.26%
- Housing — 33.77%
- Immigration — 16.88%
- Other (please specify) — 2.60%
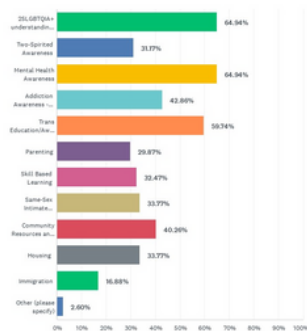
Q11 What Learning or Educational workshops would YOUR FAMILY be interested in? Check all that Apply.

- 2SLGBTQIA+ awareness... — 56.52%
- Two-Spirited Awareness — 21.74%
- Trans Education an... — 43.48%
- 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural... — 30.43%
- Community resources an... — 44.93%
- Same-Sex Intimate... — 20.29%
- How to create Safe Spaces ... — 50.72%
- Other (please specify) — 11.59%

Q12 What Learning or Educational workshops would you want Service Providers to have? Check all that Apply.

- 2SLGBTQIA+ awareness... — 77.63%
- Trans Education an... — 67.11%
- Two-Spirited awareness — 52.63%
- Harm Reduction — 60.53%
- Cultural awareness — 59.21%
- Same-Sex Intimate... — 52.63%
- How to create Safe Spaces ... — 73.68%
- Other (please specify) — 5.26%

64% of respondents had a personal learning interest in 2SLGBTQIA+ understanding our community (internal bias, assumptions, intersectionality) and mental health awareness.
59.74% expressed interest in Trans education/awareness while 31.17% selected Two-Spirited education

Q13 What Hours would increase your participation in 2SLGBTQIA+ programs and services at GRCHC?

- Morning - 8am-12pm — 14.67%
- Afternoon - 12pm- 5pm — 48.00%
- Evening- 6pm-7:30pm? — 74.67%
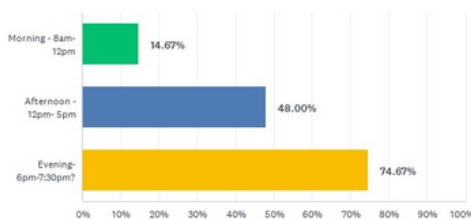
74.67% prefer evening programming from 6 pm to 7:30 pm and 48% chose afternoon hours from 12 pm to 5 pm

Q. 14 What would make our 2SLGBTQIA+ community Safe and Vibrant?

"Good Visibility and a clear online presence"

"Having 2SLGBTQIA+ facilitators/staff involved in community outreach, groups and educational programs etc. makes for the space to fel morre authentic and comfortable"

" I love when people working in the community have their pronouns on their nametags, or specify their pronouns"

"Coffee, Game Nights/Hangouts"

"Having programming spread throughout the city instead of centralized could open opportunities to a larger number of residents"

"It feels really welcoming and nice to see all the community outreach posters with all the colours and different community"

"Create safe space and opportunities for the 2slgbtqia+ community"

"Visibility/Diversity"

"To have people reduce the amount of active hate speech towards our communities that is starting to heighten"

"Education on Destigmatizing and dismantling internalized home/transphobia"

"Consistency in support"

07

The key findings from the survey and community engagement emerged 5 themes: sense of belonging, safety/safe space, inclusion/visibility, education/awareness and programming/outreach.

A Sense of Belonging:

Within the data collected for this needs assessment, 62.34% of respondents identified a sense of belonging as a main issue for them. A sense of belonging is "a human emotional need to affiliate with and be accepted by members of a group" (Cherry, 2023). Research indicates that belonging is a fundamental human need, comparable to food and water (Wildman, 2022, Hall, 2014). Conversely, lack of belonging can negatively affect health and mental well-being. Therefore, creating a sense of belonging is essential for the health and well-being of individuals who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Not having a sense of belonging contributes to a low comfort level, not seeing themselves in services, as well as experiences of discrimination and stigma that affects one's ability to seek help and isolate.

Safety/Safe Space

A safe physical space to access services and gather is essential for one's sense of safety. However, this has been a barrier for many 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations. According to the survey, 50.65% of respondents agreed that safe physical space and visibility are major issues when seeking supports. Currently, there is no designated space for this community. As a result, this community has to use spaces that reinforce the very norms and beliefs that create the barriers in the first place: heteronormativity and heterosexism. These are the sources of homophobia and discrimination against 2SLGBTQIA+ people (Morse, 2021). Some community members shared their experiences of accessing spaces that claimed to be "safe", but were not. They often felt unwelcome or invisible in rooms that lacked any visual representation of themselves, such as boardrooms or office spaces. Creating a safer space includes displaying non-discriminatory policies, pro-2SLGBTQIA+ symbols, magazines, posters, information, decorations or images that depict 2SLGBTQIA+ people and families (Comeau et al, 2023). This would also reduce the barriers to services and increase ones connection to their community.

Visibility/Inclusivity

Visibility and inclusion are crucial for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, especially when they face hate and barriers in accessing services and support. Seeing oneself represented in the community and in the advertising of services can increase the comfort level and reduce the heteronormative beliefs that marginalize this community. Policies and procedures require evaluation to determine their impact on this community and ensure that services and programs are inclusive and responsive to their needs. According to the survey, 50.65% of the respondents were not aware of GRCHC services, which indicates a need for more outreach and advertising in surrounding areas. It is important to find ways to engage with the hidden and vulnerable members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community who do not attend events or are too afraid to reach out. They are at the highest risk and they need to see themselves and their needs reflected in our services and supports.

Education and Awareness

Education and awareness are crucial issues for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This needs assessment asked three questions about the learning/educational workshops that community members, their families, and their service providers require. The results showed that 77.63% of the respondents wanted their service providers to learn about stigma, bias, assumptions, and intersectionality. This topic was also selected for themselves and their families. Wildman (2017) reported that biases often manifest in the body language of service providers when interacting with 2SLGBTQIA+ clients. Therefore, training is an important step for examining our own beliefs and how they may harm others who do not conform to social norms. Mental health, and Tran's awareness were also key learning or educational workshops that respondents would be interested. Overall there is a need for service providers and community members to complete current, inclusive, and participatory training.

Programming and Outreach

Many of the barriers being experienced as expressed in the survey also had to do with awareness, and lack of visibility. 51.32% felt that their comfort level created a barrier to accessing support and services. There are many reasons that contribute to someone's comfort level, however when it comes to people who identify outside the society norm there is another layer of complexity. Some of these complexities occur because people may not be out, they may be questioning and unsure how they would be perceived. Many community members suggested on-line meetings could be offered while in-person groups are being held. Many expressed an interest in 2SLGBTQIA+ specific counselling, social groups like crafts, games and exercise. These community specific groups are beneficial for building relationships in the comfort of their own space. Program planning requires an understanding of how one is getting to the service, and who is being isolated due to transportation issues. GRCHC serves a large catchment area, and offers services and programs that are free of charge, however over 36% of respondents stated that transportation and financial issues were barriers for them. Social media is a great way to market programs although some community members rely on word of mouth for events such as Brantford's Pride in the Park 2023, where GRCHC had a booth. To increase outreach and engagement, staff could participate in more events, meetings, and increase partnerships to share each other's resources. This will enhance the programs and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Key Findings

Recommendations

Safer spaces / Safety

- Provide training and education sessions for program planners, staff, and volunteers to enhance their understanding of 2SLGBTQ+ issues, terminology, and best practices
- Pronouns on name badges, when introducing self announce your own pronouns
- Incorporate 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive language and policies

Inclusion/Visibility

- Ensure that program planning is inclusive and responsive to the needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, it is crucial to actively involve community members from this demographic
- Including a rainbow or pride awareness in public places
- Ensure equal opportunity for 2SLGBTQIA+ employment and include diversity inclusion in job posting

Education and Awareness

- Provide training and education sessions for program planners, staff, and volunteers to enhance their understanding of 2SLGBTQIA+ issues, intersectionality terminology, and best practices i.e. minority stress
- Continue this study by conducting focus groups with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Include community stakeholders and participants in program development
- Offer educational workshops for the community

Programming/Outreach

- Collaborate with 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations through partnerships with local LGBTQ organizations and community centers to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks. Collaborative efforts can help to identify gaps in existing services, develop joint initiatives, and ensure that program planning is informed by the experiences and needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Review and revise program materials, policies, and guidelines to ensure they are inclusive and affirming of 2SLGBTQIA individuals. Use gender-neutral language, avoid assumptions about sexual orientation or gender identity, and promote an environment that respects and values diversity
- Ensure that outreach and marketing is reaching people who live outside immediate area
- Attend/participate in community events
- Offer on-line access for groups (Zoom)

- **The Bridge Brant:** A grassroots committee that works to identify and address inequalities that are experienced by Brantford and Brant County's Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (2SLGBTQ+) population. Through education and programming, the Bridge aims to promote the importance of acceptance and inclusion in an effort to eliminate stigma, bullying and discrimination at all levels of community life.
- **Brantford Pride:** The Brantford Pride Committee is dedicated to imagining and collectively organizing around the dream of an inclusive community where we can all live and love.
- **Belonging Brant:** Is based around community or citizen-led initiatives.

2SLGBTQIA+ Trainings & Resources

Worqshop: Safe Space Training

Spectrum: https://www.ourspectrum.com

MACKS- Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors

Egale: https://egale.ca/ (An introduction to 2SLGBTQI Identities and Common Workplace inclusion practices

Anti-Black Racism/Anti-Oppression
Across Boundaries: https://acrossboundaries.ca

Rainbow Health Ontario
https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/

519
https://www.the519.org/

HIGHLIGHTS OF GRCHC

GRCHC provides community-based primary health care and offers a range of services to support the emotional, physical, and social needs of individuals and communities. GRCHC hosts a Gender Affirming Clinic for people with gender expansive, trans and non-binary identities, as well as a peer led support group for trans and non-binary adults and a 2SLGBTQIA+ social group. GRCHC has recently implemented an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. GRCHC is dedicated to maintaining a safer and inclusive environment for the 2SLBGTQIA+ community they serve.

"Attending this group is my anchor. I know I am safer to be me.".
Annoyomous participant of the Gender Journy Peer support group

"Wish the group was offered more than once a month"

We heard you

- 2SLGBTQIA+ Social Connections Group - Now meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday from 5:30pm - 7:30pm NEW TIME!
- Gender Journey Support Group - Meets the 2nd and the 4th Thursday from 5:30pm - 7:30pm NEW TIME!

GRCHC Marks Pride 2023

- Attended Pride Flag Raising
- Hosted an "End of Pride" BBQ for participants of 2SLBGTQIA+ social group and Gender Journey Peer Support group.
- Hosted a Booth at Brantford Pride Event

Conclusion

This report presents the results of a needs assessment conducted with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations. The report identifies the specific needs, barriers and gaps that this community faces, as well as the strategies to address them. The report highlights the importance of creating a sense of belonging and safety for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, who often experience fear, trauma and discrimination when accessing services. The current statistics are very alarming. The 2SLGBTQIA+ community is 2x less likely to see a doctor, (Wildman, 2022); 60% suffer from increasing mental health impacts, (Egale, 2020), LGBTQIA+ youth 4x more likely to commit suicide (Trevor project, 2022) as well hate crimes targeting sexual orientation increased 64% between 2019-2021 (Government of Canada 2023). It is safe to say that this community is experiencing a crisis in this present day which makes it imperative that we ensure our services are appropriate and accessible to all.

The report concludes by emphasizing the need for collaboration and co-creation with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, following the principle of "nothing for us, without us". The needs assessment emphasizes that focus groups are an essential next step to learn about barriers and gaps from the voices of the Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations 2SLGBTQ+ community. This will enhance the knowledge gained in the survey results. There are many opportunities for GRCHC and the community to grow together and build a community that is inclusive and safer.

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