

Working with LGBTQ2S Clients for Service Providers

LGBTQ2S (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer and Two-spirit) clients face a number of barriers that most people in society do not have to worry about. These barriers result in problems getting an education, gaining employment, accessing health care, finding appropriate housing, and other issues. It's important as service providers to recognize these barriers and strive to improve safety and access for LGBTQ2S clients.

Barriers for LGBTQ2S Clients

- Poverty as a consequence of discrimination, limited educational opportunities, and unemployment.
- Lack of emotional, economic, and housing support from family due to family rejection.
- Substance abuse and addiction from coping with constant stress and pressure of discrimination against LGBTQ2S people.
- Lack of education and training due to harassment and discrimination at school and at the workplace.
- Increased likelihood of mental health issues as a result of living in a homo/bi/transphobic society, including anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and suicidality.
- Inability to access LGBTQ2S competent health care resulting in health issues that go undiagnosed, along with negative health outcomes due to marginalization.

Did You Know...

- Studies show that between 20% to 50% of all homeless youth identify themselves as LGBT despite the fact that LGBT approximately make up to 10% of the general population
- LGB youth rejected by their family are 8 times more likely to attempt suicide compared to LGB youth who face little or no rejection, up to 25% of gay teens are rejected
- A study in Ontario found that 71% of trans people make less than \$30,000 a year and 50% make less than \$15,000 a year
- LGB people in Canada are 2 to 4 times more likely to be violently victimized compared to heterosexuals
- Focus groups conducted by SHARP reported that 85% of trans people experienced violence because of their gender identity or sexual orientation
- One study found that 50% of all homeless LGBTQ youth attempt suicide
- LBQ females are 4 times more likely to use substances compared to heterosexual females

- Increased risk of getting HIV or other STIs from having to resort to survival sex in order to gain basic necessities to survive.
- Frequent victims of violence and hate crimes from relatives and strangers.
- Decreased self-esteem due to shame, isolation, and internalized homo/bi/transphobia.
- Many LGBTQ2S individuals encounter even more barriers as they have to face multiple levels of discrimination due to intersecting oppressions (like being Aboriginal, living with a disability, being a visible minority, etc)

Housing-related Issues

- Intolerance from family members and pervasive homo/bi/transphobia can lead to LGBTQ2S youth running away from home or being kicked out.
- Many emergency and temporary shelters are segregated by gender, making it difficult for trans clients to find an appropriate shelter to go to. They may not feel safe at the shelter or they may be denied service.
- A large portion of LGBTQ2S clients feel uncomfortable or unsafe in shelters due to discrimination by others and a lack of support by staff members.
- LGBTQ2S folks have been kicked out of shelters because staff members blame them for causing trouble when in fact, conflicts arise from homo/bi/transphobic behaviour and physical assaults by other residents.
- Some shelters lack appropriate privacy for trans people in the arrangements for bathrooms, showering, and sleeping. Trans people may be less comfortable or safe exposing their bodies to others and are at a greater risk of violence.
- LGBTQ2S may be told to suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity if they wish to remain at a shelter or facility.
- Difficulties finding housing in private sectors that are inclusive and non-discriminatory towards LGBTQ2S people.
- Harassment from neighbours and roommates who are homo/bi/transphobic.
- Fear of rejection by landlords and housing providers who discriminate against trans people because of discrepancies in pictures or gender on ID.

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