

GBV

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

500 YOUTH

On behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada, Wisdom2Action engaged with approximately 500 youth, LGBTQ2+ youth in particular, across Canada to identify the particular ways LGBTQ2+ youth are impacted by Gender-Based Violence (GBV), from January to March 2019. The objectives of this engagement including allowing LGBTQ2+ youth to share the impact of GBV on their lives and identify their priorities related to addressing and preventing GBV.

It is clear that GBV remains an all too common experience for LGBTQ2+ youth. Youth emphasized the breadth and depth of the impact of GBV on their lives. In particular, participants emphasized the prevalence of:

LGBTQ2+ YOUTH

- Street harassment and a lack of public safety, particularly with regards to trans, gender non-conforming and racialized youth;
- Sexual violence, with an emphasis on sexual assault and intimate partner violence;
- Violence in schools, particularly bullying, verbal, physical and social violence, and lack of educator capacity to support LGBTQ2+ youth;
- Lack of safety in family contexts, particularly with regards to trans- and gender-diverse youth, and racialized young people;
- Public perceptions of LGBTQ2+ identities, with an emphasis on negative portrayals of LGBTQ2+ communities and the lack of positive LGBTQ2+ role models, and;
- Negative experiences with health and social services, in particular due to service providers unable to provide LGBTQ2+-inclusive care.

LGBTQ2+ youth emphasized the negative health, social and economic impacts of GBV, including increased prevalence of mental health problems, increased isolation, poverty and unemployment, homelessness and prevalence of suicidality among LGBTQ2+ youth. They also connected their experiences to larger systems of exclusion and oppression, such as racism -including environmental racism, as well as classism, and other issues.

SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

LGBTQ2+ youth articulated a diversity of program and service recommendations to address GBV and improve outcomes among LGBTQ2+ youth. Recommendations included:

- Education initiatives targeted at the general public, service providers and educators, and young people;
- Peer support services for LGBTQ2+ youth, including youth groups, community and social programming and intergenerational community programs;
- Family services and supports, in particular, counselling services, parent-focused education and parent-led peer support programs;
- Housing and homelessness services, including LGBTQ2+ youth shelters, LGBTQ2+ youth employment programs and more inclusive mainstream youth housing and homelessness services;
- Comprehensive sexuality education for LGBTQ2+ youth, with an emphasis on sexual health, consent, healthy relationships and communication, and;
- Community, Health and Social Services, particularly more inclusive mainstream health and social services, services targeted at LGBTQ2+ youth in particular, peer driven programming, and virtual support services.

PRIORITIES OF ACTION

The consultation sought to identify key priorities of action related to LGBTQ2+ youth and GBV. The following three issues were identified as the most important action areas:

- **Education:** Participants prioritized public education, youth and family education and service provider education as key areas of action to address GBV.
- **Housing and Homelessness:** Participants emphasized the need for action targeted at those LGBTQ2+ most vulnerable to GBV, particularly street-involved and homeless youth.
- **Health and Social Services:** Participants consistently identified difficulties accessing inclusive health and social services, the inability of service providers to deliver LGBTQ2+ inclusive services, and the need for LGBTQ2+ youth-specific services.

LGBTQ2+ youth are passionate and committed to addressing the issue of GBV because it has a pervasive effect on their lives, impacting their experiences of community, school, family and home, relationships, activism and health care. The powerful response to this engagement opportunity is testimony to their commitment and capacity to mobilize and lead change.