

EVIDENCE BRIEF

Living in a liminal space: Experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ official language minority Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Intersectionality is a social theory used to understand the unique experiences of marginalised populations belonging simultaneously to multiple minority groups. Intersecting minority identities, such as ethnolinguistic and 2SLGBTQ+ identities, compound and exacerbate the person's experience of identity-based stigma. Using a survey of 80 respondents, an exploratory needs analysis was conducted on the intersection of official language minority and sexual/gender minority in the province of Manitoba, Canada.

KEY FINDINGS

- Reported discrimination pertained most often to sexual orientation or to speaking French.
- About one-quarter of respondents reported experiencing discrimination based on linguistic identity, mental health and age, some of which was experienced within 2SLGBTQ+ communities.
- Fear of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or of being 'outed' as a sexual minority impeded service access and utilisation.
- One-third of French speakers reported feeling unwelcome by 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Conversely, over half considered Manitoba's French-speaking communities as unwelcoming of 2SLGBTQ+ people.
- More than half of respondents reported having trouble forming relationships or making friends, a sense of isolation or lack of relationships with peers, or the absence of a 2SLGBTQ+ support network in French.
- Over 90% reported 2SLGBTQ+ –affirming, French–language mental health supports as an unmet need within their community.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Considering the greater needs of this population, more psychological support and mental healthcare that is congruent with the patients' cultural and linguistic needs should be made available.
- Researchers, decision-makers, and community stakeholders should endeavor to appreciate the unique intersectionality of marginalised French-speaking official language minority 2SLGBTQ+ people as they experience complex realities which underscores the need for social support and access to mental healthcare in their language.

INTERPRETATIONS

- Dual identities have the potential for exacerbating experiences of marginalisation and stigmatisation and 'othering' in both communities of belonging.
- Almost all respondents indicated that their most pressing needs pertained to social supports. Indeed, such supports have been identified as a robust protective factor for mental health and general wellbeing among 2SLGBTQ+ populations
- The harmful impacts of COVID-19–related isolation and psychopathology were even greater for 2SLGBTQ+ populations compared to the general population; such disparities predate the public health crisis, particularly among ethnically diverse 2SLGBTQ+ populations.

For more information, see: Prada, K., de Moissac, D., Gueye, N. R., Hardy, S., & Avanthay-Strus, J. [Living in a liminal space: Experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ official language minority Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Culture, Health & Sexuality. 2022, 25(11) : 1465-1482.

For questions or comments, please contact Kevin Prada (Kevin.prada@mail.mcgill.ca).

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