Safe, stable, long-term: Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is a non-profit research organization, created specifically to develop, field test, and rigorously evaluate new programs. SRDC's two-part mission is to help policy-makers and practitioners identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of all Canadians, with a special concern for the effects on the disadvantaged, and to raise the standards of evidence that are used in assessing these policies.

Since its establishment in December 1991, SRDC has conducted over 450 projects and studies for various federal and provincial departments, municipalities, as well as other public and non-profit organizations. SRDC has offices located in Ottawa and Vancouver, and satellite offices in Calgary, Halifax, Hamilton, London, Moncton, Montreal, Regina, Toronto, and Winnipeg.

For more information on SRDC, contact

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
55 Murray Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3
613-237-4311 | 1-866-896-7732
info@srdc.org | www.srdc.org

Vancouver Office
890 West Pender Street, Suite 440
Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 1J9
604-601-4070

Remote offices:
Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick,
Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan
1-866-896-7732

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

PREAMBLE

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PROJECT PARTNERS

Mentor Canada

Mentor Canada is a coalition of organizations that provide youth mentoring. Mentor Canada's goal is to build sector capacity to expand access to mentoring across Canada. Their work is focused in four areas: research, technology, public education and development of regional networks. Mentor Canada was launched in 2019 by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, the Alberta Mentoring Partnership and the Ontario Mentoring Coalition. Mentor Canada is actively seeking to engage organizations from across Canada to work with them and promote the mentoring movement. Working together, their goal is to build sector capacity to empower every young person to fulfil their potential.

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) is a nonpartisan research and policy partnership between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness. Led by Stephen Gaetz, President & CEO, the COH works in collaboration with partners to conduct and mobilize research designed to have an impact on solutions to homelessness. The COH evolved out of a 2008 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded project called the Canadian Homelessness Research Network and is housed at York University.

CONTENT WARNING

This report contains references to and descriptions of experiences that may be upsetting or triggering to some readers. This includes but is not limited to homo/bi/transphobia, homelessness, intimate partner violence, identity-based rejection, family conflict, poverty, substance use, and instances of prejudice, discrimination, microaggressions, and violence targeting 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

POSITIONING THE PROJECT TEAM

The research and broader project team is comprised of queer researchers and academics, allies, and organizations that collectively aim to support and empower 2SLGBTQ+ youth to thrive in by developing, understanding, and promoting evidence-based strategies to preventing and ending youth homelessness. By exploring the 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences and protective factors and strategies, they collectively aim to support and empower 2SLGBTQ+ youth to thrive.

We recognize that every person holds multiple intersecting identities, and that while categories and groupings can be helpful in certain circumstances, in practice we take a holistic, person-centered approach to the work we do. Although we bring expertise related to evaluation design, methodologies, and operationalizing evaluation approaches across contexts and populations, we understand that it is essential to involve individuals with lived experience from the population of focus.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite evidence that 2SLGBTQ+ youth also face distinct barriers to accessing housing and housing services, such as discrimination, violence, and a lack of tailored housing options and supports,[8] the available literature is underdeveloped. Specifically, data on housing and employment is limited, with the *National Housing Strategy* pointing to significant gaps in housing research on the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.[9] There is also a notable lack of research on the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth seeking long-term – rather than emergency or transitional – housing and whether they feel supported in the current homeless and housing.[10–12] In general, more comprehensive data is needed to support evidence-based policy making to improve and better target interventions.[13]

Our project, *Safe, Stable, Long-term: Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum,* is aimed at addressing these research gaps, guided by the overarching research question: **What are the barriers and facilitators of access to stable, safe, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth?** We adopted a multi-phased research approach consisting of an environmental scan of the literature and existing services in Canada, followed by qualitative data collection, and knowledge translation activities. We focused on understanding youth's holistic experiences across their housing journeys, as well as the providers, programs, and policies that exist along the housing continuum, including those that address the closely connected health, education, employment, and social needs and realities of 2SLGBTQ+ identified youth.

This project is a collaboration between Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), along with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) and Mentor Canada; along with service providers and youth who provided their time, experiences, and invaluable insights into this work.

RÉSUMÉ

Malgré les preuves indiquant que les jeunes LGBTQ2S+ font également face à des obstacles distincts pour accéder à des logements et à des services de logement, comme la discrimination, la violence et le manque d'options de logement et de soutien adaptés[8], la documentation disponible est insuffisante. Plus précisément, les données sur le logement et l'emploi sont limitées. En effet, la *Stratégie nationale sur le logement* cerne des lacunes importantes dans la recherche sur le logement portant sur les besoins des jeunes LGBTQ2S+[9]. Il y a également un manque notable de recherche sur les expériences des jeunes LGBTQ2S+ à la recherche d'un logement à long terme – plutôt qu'un logement d'urgence ou de transition – et sur la question de savoir si ce groupe se sent soutenu dans sa situation actuelle d'itinérance et de logement[10–12]. De façon générale, des données plus complètes sont nécessaires pour appuyer l'élaboration de politiques fondées sur des données probantes afin d'améliorer et de mieux cibler les interventions[13].

Notre projet, *Sûr, stable et à long terme : Soutenir les jeunes LGBTQ2S+ dans le continuum du logement,* vise à combler ces lacunes en matière de recherche. Il est guidé par la question de recherche fondamentale suivante : **quels sont les facteurs qui aident les jeunes LGBTQ2S+ à avoir accès à un logement sûr et stable à long terme et les obstacles qui les en empêchent?** Nous avons adopté une approche de recherche en plusieurs phases comprenant une analyse de l'environnement de la documentation et des services existants au Canada, suivie d'une collecte de données qualitatives et d'activités d'application des connaissances. Nous nous sommes concentrés sur les expériences globales des jeunes tout au long de leur parcours de logement ainsi que sur les fournisseurs, les programmes et les politiques qui existent le long du continuum du logement et qui, entre autres, répondent aux réalités et aux besoins étroitement liés de santé, d'éducation, d'emploi et de vie sociale des jeunes LGBTQ2S+.

Ce projet est le fruit d'une collaboration entre la Société de recherche sociale appliquée, l'Observatoire canadien sur l'itinérance et Mentor Canada, ainsi que de l'apport des fournisseurs de services et des jeunes qui ont offert leur temps, leur expérience et de précieux renseignements dans le cadre de ce travail.

INTRODUCTION

FOCUSING ON 2SLGBTQ+ ACCESS TO HOUSING

Available data and literature exploring relationships between housing, formal and informal social supports, economic security, and health and mental health care access for 2SLGBTQ+ youth suggest queer youth in Canada face compounded and intersectional barriers to having a safe place to call home (Abramovich & Shelton, 2017; Abramovich & Pang, 2020). Current work exploring the complex landscape facing queer youth in their access to safe, stable, and long-term housing across Canada notes that 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, particularly youth, are more likely to experience poverty, housing instability, and homelessness. Queer youth are overrepresented in homelessness: it is estimated that 2SLGBTQ+ youth comprise up to 40 per cent of homeless youth in Canada, while they represent only 5 to 10 per cent of the total population of youth (Ross & Khanna, 2017; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017; Abramovich, 2019). Despite documentation that indicates 2SLGBTQ+ youth face distinct barriers when it comes to securing housing, including discrimination and violence as well as a lack of tailored housing options and services (Abramovich, 2014), the literature on the subject is underdeveloped. Specifically, data on housing and employment is limited, with the National Housing Strategy pointing to significant gaps in housing research on the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth (CMHC, 2018). There is also a notable lack of research on the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth seeking long-term – rather than emergency or transitional – housing (Woolley, 2015).

Exploring 2SLGBTQ+ youth journeys accessing housing through multiple data points

In this project, we take a phased approach to addressing some of these research gaps, by 1) synthesizing available literature and evidence related to 2SLGBTQ+ youths' journeys on the pathway to being housed; and 2) exploring the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and service providers working to support queer youths' access to housing, on their journeys to accessing safe, stable, and long-term housing. As a part of this work, we concurrently built a group of advisors with lived experience, particularly in Phase 2, via ongoing collaboration and co-design with service providers and 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Together with our project partners, we build on findings from our knowledge synthesis in Phase 1 to address the following overarching research question: **what are the barriers and facilitators of access to stable, safe, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth?**

What we learned in Phase 1

In Phase 1 we conducted a targeted review and synthesis of literature related to the prevalence, outcomes, and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum, and triangulated this review with secondary analyses of point-in-time count data (PiT count), and Mentor Canada survey data exploring experiences of people between the ages of 18-30 on a wide range of social, economic, family, and wellbeing risk and protective factors in adolescence and early adulthood. Figure 1 presents an overview of facilitators and barriers identified through the literature and secondary data analyses in Phase 1, by stage of the housing continuum (CMHC, 2018).

In general, our findings from Phase 1 echo existing literature, namely that 2SLGBTQ+ youth and adults are overrepresented 'downstream' in the continuum, particularly homelessness. With access to the Mentor Canada dataset, we were able to explore how gender and 2SLGBTQ+ identity influence homelessness – namely those who identify as men, regardless of whether they identify as 2SLGBTQ+, report higher rates of homelessness. Along the continuum, 2SLGBTQ+ identified individuals experience discrimination when it comes to accessing any type of housing – from emergency shelters to home ownership –at the systemic level, exemplified by the overrepresentation of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in homelessness, with an underrepresentation of programs, services, and investments addressing the unique needs of queer youth in Canada.

Finally, we learned that 2SLGBTQ+ identified people's need to conceal integral components of their identities is a consistent, continuous, and compounding factor when considering 2SLGBTQ+'s groups' access to housing. For queer-identified folks, a lack of emotional and physical safety, and ongoing stigma drive decision points and impact the availability and accessibility of options across the housing continuum.

Figure 1   Phase 1 summary report: experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum

Homelessness	Emergency Shelters	Transitional Housing	Social Housing	Rental Housing	Home Ownership

Key Themes & Findings

2SLGBTQ+ youth experience homelessness at high rates, earlier ages & for longer duration	Often discussed in conjunction with homelessness	Sexual stigma – particularly for participants in relationships with other residents	Long wait lists, strict socializing and visitation rules, mistreatment by staff/residents, absence of options in smaller communities	Some indication of rental market discrimination for same-sex couples - particularly for male couples, and racial minority couples (US-specific)	Lower rates of home ownership among 2SLGBTQ+ adults
Between ~21-30% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as 2SLGBTQ2S+	Concealment in order to access services – negative health consequences	Several 2SLGBTQ+ specific programs in Canada have strong connections to external supports, emphasis on goal setting, emphasis on communication/transparency	Challenges with intake process: lack of prioritization based on age, other forms of vulnerability	Challenges for trans renters - perceived need to conceal to access, concerns about safety with roommates	Lower mortgage approval rates, higher interest rates and other fees during mortgage application process
~23% of LGBTQ2S+ youth report experiences of homelessness	Homo/bi/transphobic discrimination, abuse, and violence, particularly when youth are racialized and/or trans		RainCity as an example of promising, population-specific program	Unwillingness to report landlords - perceived as unenforcable, expensive, time-consuming, risky, particularly in smaller/rural communities	
Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, women, and trans youth at high risk	Unaware of how to access appropriate reporting mechanisms, or skeptical of positive outcomes of reporting			Staying in unsafe/subpar housing due to low vacancy and high rent costs	
Experiences of stigma, violence, discrimination on the streets	Inaction from shelter staff in response			*Note: Reliable research is hampered by limited data collection, underrepresentation in shelters/programs, hidden homelessness, unwillingness to disclose*	
Child welfare involvement, familial neglect & instability, identity-based rejection, school-based bullying, physical/sexual abuse, and childhood trauma precede homelessness	Hidden exclusion from shelters – inadequate training, no referral partners, exclusionary forms, reliance on gender binary				

Facilitators   Strong peer and chosen family network | Family and natural supports | Safe, inclusive & affirming housing programs, supports, and non-housing environments | Systemic and structural facilitators | Individual-level protective factors

Barriers   Identity-based rejection | Family conflict and instability | School-based marginalization, violence and discrimination | Child welfare and foster care involvement | Poverty and income insecurity | Employment experiences and inequities | Criminalization and legal barriers | Health and wellbeing | Gaps within housing programs | Access to and availability of long-term housing | Systemic and structural discrimination and oppression | Lack of specialized services and staff training

Recommendations for Change

Prevention and family-based intervention | Training & capacity-building for service providers | Fostering inclusion in shelter, housing & programs | Population-based services | Improving housing availability, affordability, & policy | Support for protective factors for income, employment, health & social wellbeing | Enhancing data and research capacity | Systemic and structural intervention

What is missing from existing data and literature

Despite what we were able to explore in Phase 1, there were key gaps in the literature and data landscape. We used the housing continuum as a framework to search, extract, and analyze data: this supported the current state of the fields of scholarship exploring 2SLGBTQ+ youth and housing, in which research and findings centre/focus on discrete points along this continuum (CMHC, 2018). Gaps we sought to address in Phase 2, through in-depth, qualitative exploration of youth and service provider experiences, are:

- **Information about transitions within and between points in the housing continuum:** as literature often focused on efficacy of interventions, services, programs, and supports, the movement between and within these points in the existing continuum was sparse.

- **Information about rental housing and home ownership experiences:** there was a dearth of research reporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiences once they transitioned out of emergency, social, and supported housing environments, and into market rental situations.

- **Service provider plans, processes, and approaches to supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth**, both from specific 2SLGBTQ+ oriented organizations, and more general housing and social supports for youth.

Addressing gaps through experience data

This report presents our approach to, and findings resulting from, a participatory research process in which youth and service providers' experiences anchor the identification and validation of critical junctures in a complex journey through housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Using an approach rooted in design thinking, we build on these identified junctures to identify, validate, and prioritize key touchpoints (or salient moments), along this journey, and provide program, service, and systems-level recommendations grounded in a diverse set of youth and service provider perspectives.

Research questions

We aimed to address the following research questions in Phase 2:

- What are the critical junctures along the housing continuum experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada?

- How do 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and service providers, experience these critical junctures?

- How can experiences inform contextually responsive program, policy, and systems recommendations that support 2SLGBTQ+ youth in accessing safe, stable, long-term housing?

METHODS

GROUNDING DATA IN LIVED EXPERIENCE

We drew upon experience-based co-design (EBCD) methodology to identify, validate, and prioritize key touchpoints identified by youth and service providers to improve support for, and access to, housing for/by 2SLGBTQ+ youth across the housing continuum. User-driven approaches centering user experience have become increasingly employed to elicit the voice of vulnerable populations to improve processes and services in the public sector (Bowen et al., 2013; Mulvale et al., 2016). EBCD was first applied to the area of healthcare design/redesign in the early 2000s, and has since been applied to constellations of interrelated health and social systems, services, and supports (Bate & Robert, 2007; Mulvale et al., 2016). In applying EBCD to the experiences of 2SLBGTQ+ youth, we found services and supports related to housing for this group formed a relatively distinct juncture among those identified by youth, along the housing continuum. As such, through this process, we both identified critical junctures and touchpoints at these junctures that encompassed housing-specific supports, but that also reflected a much broader youth experience.

Design approaches have arisen parallel to participatory methods in research, shifting the paradigm from 'research on' to 'research with' (Buchanan et al., 2007; Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Cousins & Earl, 1992; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). The EBCD process has previously proved helpful in engaging and validating diverse voices and perspectives, fostering mutual respect and understanding, and improving service design (Hackett et al., 2018). These approaches also aim to rectify power imbalances in the process of development and evaluation of programs and services (Johnston-Goodstar, 2012; Paradies, 2016).

This study leveraged aspects of EBCD and participatory methods to centre youths' voices and journeys throughout the process. The EBCD method "starts with the experience of service users" and maintains this focus through "processes of joint exploration" (Tew, 2002, p. 146). Thus, qualitative and in-depth experiential data was first collected from youth and service providers, who were involved in validation, prioritization, and co-design following the initial analysis (see Figure 2 at the end of this section). We employed journey mapping as a tool to identify key stages and transitions in youths' housing journeys. This approach involves identifying *critical junctures* along youths' journeys, which are common points along a journey that are identified by multiple youth and serve as a common organizing principle or anchors. These critical junctures may be

physical (e.g., location, or a type of housing such as shelters, transitional housing, rentals, etc.), states of being (e.g., homeless, precariously housed, securely housed); circumstantial (e.g., living with family, friends, strangers, alone), processes (e.g., seeking housing, maintaining housing, leaving housing), and more. Along critical junctures, experiential data can be mapped to represent key *touchpoints* and *highs/lows*. These represent not only key barriers, enablers, and supports at critical junctures, but also the experience of and their influence on participants.

The research took place iteratively, and in collaboration with participants. In applying EBCD to exploring queer youths' housing journeys and experiences with housing precarity, the research team wanted to keep the critical junctures/points of the continuum open to definition by youth and service providers, as well as their experiences at these critical junctures/points. To do so, throughout the entire process, we conducted several rounds of data collection, feedback, validation, and member checking to ensure we were capturing participants' intended meaning, and experiences accurately.

Data was collected and analyzed concurrently and on a rolling basis, serving two purposes; 1) each stage of data collection (interviews, workshops, and asynchronous feedback) fed into the next, such that protocols and preliminary analyses could be iteratively refined; and 2) as a harder-to-reach population, we experienced delays in recruiting 2SLGBTQ+ youth who have experienced housing instability. Rather than delay the collaborative research component, this allowed for the collection and engagement of service provider data, and the integration of youth data as it was collected over time.

Service provider recruitment

As a part of Phase 1, the research team, including project partners, conducted an environmental scan of organizations and programs providing, directly or indirectly, housing support to 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada (for more information on the environmental scan, see the *Phase One Report)*. In Spring 2022, we drew a list of 16 service providers across Canada from this inventory, which met the following criteria:

- a) housing services and supports and/or b) services and supports that, while not housing-specific, may interact with housing barriers or needs (e.g., community organizations, health centers, employment services);

- services that are a) population-focused (i.e., targeted to 2SLGBTQ+ youth) or b) generalized, if the service provider has made specific efforts to incorporate and address the needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ youth population within their programming. Given the scope of the project and small sample size, we did not recruit services that do not specifically support 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Email invitations were sent directly to the 16 organizations by SRDC team members and shared within Mentor Canada and the COH's networks of youth serving organizations. Service providers were first invited to participate in a 90-120 minute virtual interview. Those who participated in interviews were invited to participate in the service provider co-design workshop, and/or provide feedback on workshop outputs asynchronously. Invitations to provide asynchronous feedback were extended to other staff within participating organizations, as well as those who were unable to participate in the initial interviews, with consent from the service providers who had participated in the interview round.

Youth recruitment

Identities

Recognizing that queer identities, intersecting identities, and contextual factors are complex and diverse within and across individuals, and these interact with diverse contexts, we aimed to sample for maximum variation of youth experiences across geographic and contextual factors in Canada for this exploratory research. For Phase 2, we defined 'youth' as an individual aged 18-30, and 2SLGBTQ+ as any person who identifies as gender and/or sexually diverse.

Stage of housing continuum

We recruited youth age 18-30 who live in Canada, identify as a sexual and/or gender minority, and have experienced housing precarity (as defined by the youth, e.g., homelessness, shelter use, couch-surfing, challenges paying rent, overcrowding, safety concerns, etc.). We aimed to talk with youth who were relatively 'upstream' in their access to housing, older youth (24-30) who could reflect upon the variation of experiences from late adolescence into emerging adulthood, and youth who had a wide range of experiences. The 'upstream' criterion was in place given the study's focus on determining pathways out of housing instability and insecurity, as well as approaches and practices that youth identify as having supported them transitioning to more safe, stable, and secure housing. This criterion also reduced the likelihood of greater risk or vulnerability among participants, as we recognize that the necessity of conducting virtual interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic decreases our ability to adequately identify and support participants in crisis. We note that criteria related to youths' current access to housing were guidelines as opposed to rigid inclusion/exclusion criteria so as to be as inclusive as possible while facilitating safe and supportive data collection processes.

Sequencing of recruitment

Youth were recruited first to participate in a semi-structured interview beginning in April 2022, and were then invited to participate in subsequent participatory research activities. Youth recruitment included outreach on social media (via Reddit, Facebook, and Twitter) posted by SRDC and partner organizations COH and Mentor Canada. Interview invitations sent to service providers included a request to distribute the youth recruitment materials, and respondent-driven sampling from both youth and service providers was used. Youth were screened for the above eligibility criteria by submitting a screener survey and/or participating in a 3-to-5 minute phone call with an SRDC researcher. Youth who participated in interviews were invited to participate in subsequent co-design workshops, provide asynchronous feedback on workshop outputs, and work one-on-one with the research team in an advisory role on future project phases.

Service provider and youth recruitment occurred concurrently; due to the timing of recruitment activities (Spring to Summer 2022), service providers had more availability toward the initial phase of interviews, and youth interviews continued after the service provider co-design workshop took place.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Figure 2 depicts the iterative process of data collection, analysis, validation, and co-design throughout Phase 2, including where outputs from each stage informed subsequent activities.

Figure 2   Connecting data collection activities
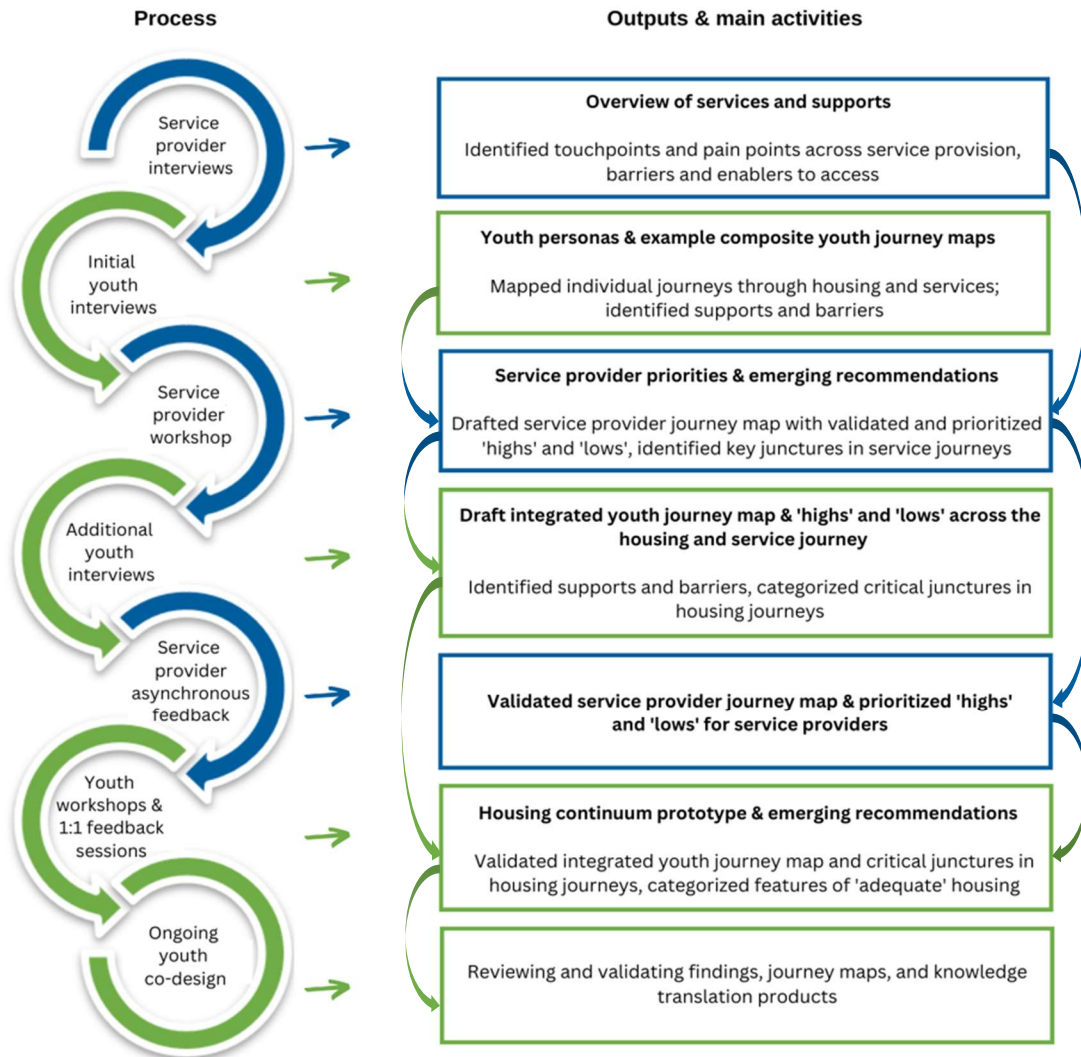
Interviews

Data were collected for the co-design process in several iterative stages. First, service providers and youth were invited to participate in 90-minute semi-structured interviews. Service provider interviews were conducted in June and July 2022; youth interviews took place between May and August 2022. Researchers followed semi-structured interview guides, summaries of which can be found in Appendix B. Interviews were audio recorded with consent and transcribed using the Zoom transcription feature. Notes were taken throughout the interview by an SRDC researcher.

Co-design workshops

We worked with service providers and youth to explore how to validate experience data gathered through the interview process, in a way that was feasible and aligned with scheduling constraints, virtual connectivity, and preferences of participants. Through ongoing discussions with service providers and youth, we decided to host small group virtual co-design workshops, followed by 1:1 conversations, and the option to provide asynchronous feedback (in writing, by email, or through comments on prepared documents).

Because this work is in an exploratory phase, and services, perspectives, and experiences were captured from organizations and youth across Canada, youth and service provider workshops were hosted separately. This also allowed more targeted discussions at this stage of validation, and allowed for full exploration of the breadth of youth journeys within and outside of services. For both youth and service providers, we facilitated 75-to-90-minute co-design workshop sessions in July and August 2022. The workshops were audio recorded with consent and transcribed using the Zoom transcription feature. Notes were taken by SRDC researchers throughout the workshop and added by participants using Miro, a collaborative online whiteboard. Researchers condensed and de-identified verbal comments and annotations on the Miro board and integrated them into the next stages of analysis.

Service providers: We provided service providers an overview of the emerging findings from both service providers and youth were presented alongside the draft journey map and youth personas, which were shown to exemplify how a touchpoint with a support or service provider may appear throughout youths' lifelong journeys. In a validation exercise, participants engaged in reflective and collaborative discussions about common themes. On the Miro board, participants indicated key 'highs' and 'lows' that were their biggest concern or priority for their individual role or program. Participants then discussed service gaps, how supports and services may be designed and implemented to improve care experiences, and possible barriers. Collectively, they began to identify solutions that would be most impactful from their perspective at the service provider, organizational, community, stakeholder, and policy levels.

Youth: We presented youth with a summary of the data collected, a draft integrated journey map incorporating service provider perspectives, and themes that emerged about important features of housing. In a validation exercise, participants provided feedback on the draft journey map verbally and using Miro annotations. Participants then reviewed categorized features of 'good' housing that emerged throughout interviews. These components were edited, added, removed, re-categorized, and validated by the other youth. Finally, youth discussed supports and services that would be helpful, how current supports and services could be improved, and overall solutions and recommendations toward their design and implementation. Throughout, youth provided feedback on terms, phrasing, and representation of the data. In particular, youth expressed the need to distinguish between 'adequate' and 'inadequate' housing. This informed

analysis, to be included in the final report, about key distinguishing factors and considerations re: the key features of 'inadequate', 'adequate' and 'ideal' housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. While a more fulsome conceptualize of adequate, inadequate, and ideal are forthcoming in the final report, we refer to 'adequate housing'

Asynchronous Feedback

PDF versions of each respective workshop outputs were emailed to service provider and youth workshop participants who requested them, as well as service providers who were unable to attend the workshop, for **asynchronous feedback** including further comments and validation. Service providers were invited to share the maps with colleagues or provide feedback individually. We provided this option to be as inclusive as possible – we integrated feedback received into the presented versions of the journey maps (below in *Findings*). One youth who had experiences in transitional housing was provided the service provider map for validation. Final, integrated youth journey maps have not been shared with service providers to date; this will take place in knowledge translation activities planned in the lead up to the final project report.

Ethics Approval

Prior to beginning data collection, we obtained ethics review and approval from the Community Research Ethics Office in April 2022.

PARTICIPANTS

SERVICE PROVIDERS

We spoke with service providers (n=7) who supported or led programs that engage with 2SLGBTQ+ youth at various points in their housing journeys. These included those running services related to transitional or supportive housing, wrap-around supports, and case management, among others. For the most part, service providers described supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth in longer-term (i.e., several months or longer) transitional housing. All but one service provider worked with organizations that were directly involved in providing housing supports; five service providers worked in programs that directly provide housing. These included organizations and programs that were population-specific (e.g., exclusively serving 2SLGBTQ+ community and/or youth) or more general in nature. Although no programs were exclusive or targeted to Indigenous youth, three service providers noted that over 50-75% of the youth they serve identify as Indigenous. Participants staffed programs operated across British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Service providers we interviewed represented a mix of roles, including frontline workers (n=3); program managers (n=2); and director-level staff (n=2). Figure 3 represents the geographic spread of the programs across the five regions of Canada in blue.
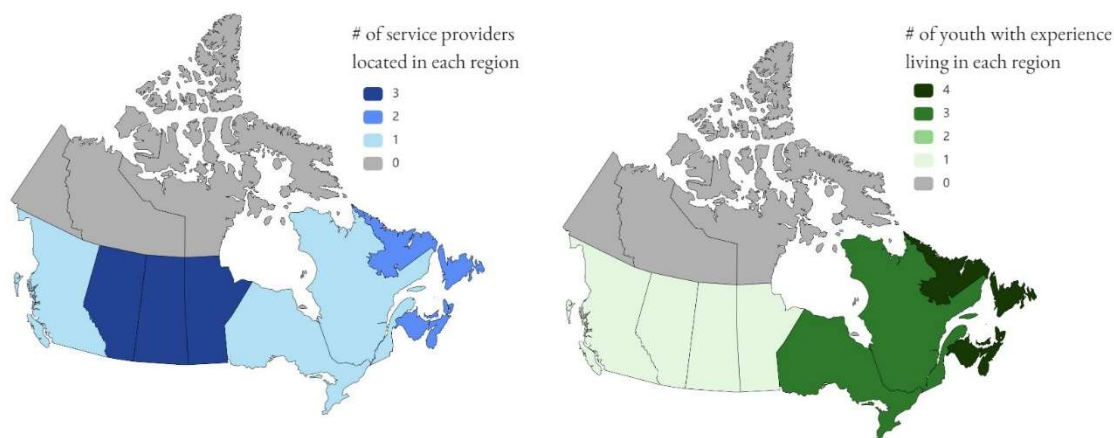
YOUTH

Youth (n=7) in our sample brought a diversity of housing experiences, including street homelessness, couch-surfing, shelter use, in-patient clinical services, supportive and transitional housing, and rentals. All seven participants were sexual minorities, including those who identified as bisexual, queer, lesbian, and greysexual/asexual. Five participants self-identified as gender minorities (e.g., transgender, non-binary, and/or genderqueer). One participant identified as Two-Spirit. Youth spoke to experiences living in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia; two youth reported living in a rural area, and five in an urban environment. Figure 3 represents the geographic spread of participants' lived experiences across the five regions of Canada in green.

Participants were aged 22 to 30, six of whom were 24 or older. Several participants also opted to share other aspects of their identity that had shaped their housing journeys. To this end, participants also brought lived experience as youth who identified as disabled (n=3), neurodivergent and/or autistic (n=5), Indigenous (n=1), and racialized (n=1). Four youth identified as white/Caucasian and one did not disclose their race or ethnicity. Throughout data

collection, analysis, and writing this report, the research team has checked in with each youth to assess their comfort with how and which parts of their identities are shared in this report. Given the small sample of youth, and the methodology employed, we recognize each youths' unique perspective, and acknowledge that inclusion of identity is within the context of gathering in-depth experience data, using qualitative methods. As such, each person's unique identity and experiences represent their own respective journey, and while that one person's journey and identity may be transferable to others' contexts and experiences, they are not meant to be generalizable to, or speak for, a larger group. For example, one youth identified as Two-Spirit and Indigenous, and wanted their experiences to be understood as necessarily inseparable from their identities, while at the same time not wanting those aspects of their identity to mean more or less than any other part of themselves or with greater emphasis than the identities of other participants.

It is also important to acknowledge youth experiences cannot be generalized to represent the experiences of all identity groups represented within the sample. While our analyses follow the EBCD methodology of drawing key touch points from experience data shared by participants, we conceptualize each individual youths' journey fulsomely and as the underlying unit of analysis for our work. We plan to present these individual journeys, co-authored with youth, in future research. Any reference to participants' identities, identifying characteristics, or demographics (such as in this paragraph) were checked with youth, as were quotes, phrasing, and interpretation of feedback within all stages of data collection.

Figure 3   Geographic spread of service provider and youth participants

FINDINGS

In this Phase we set out to gather experience data from 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and service providers working within programs and organizations providing housing-related or wrap-around services and supports to 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Canada. Grounded in the stages of the housing continuum (CMHC, 2018), we attempted to align touchpoints from youth and service providers to these stages; instead, the EBCD process led us to youth-conceptualized definitions of critical junctures in their *journeys to accessing housing*, along with touchpoints within and between those critical junctures. Through service provider experience data, we defined junctures along the housing-related *service journey*, including moving into, and out of, these services, and captured touchpoints along these service junctures from both perspectives.

We therefore present two streams of findings, representing two journey 'levels' or foci – one focused on youths' overall housing journeys, with identified critical junctures on the pathway to accessing housing; and one focused on journeys through services and supports provided to 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

We first present youth-identified critical junctures along their housing journeys, and related touchpoints, describing the highs/lows and facilitators/barriers of accessing and maintaining housing representing a range of safety, stability, and consistency over time. We then present touchpoints on the journey into and through housing-related programs and services for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, from service provider and youth perspectives.

MAPPING 2SLGBTQ+ YOUTHS' JOURNEYS

Overall, the data highlight the rich diversity of 2SLGBTQ+ youths' housing experiences, which were intimately shaped by their personal circumstances, social location, and access to supports, among other things. Youth were vulnerable and forthcoming in sharing their experiences with us, and taking the time to guide us through the nuance and complexity of these experiences.

Youths' journeys accessing, maintaining, and leaving housing or shelter – of any kind – are non-linear. The non-linear trajectory of youths' movement through housing was defined by two aspects: order and reoccurrence. Even amongst youth who experienced the same or similar types of housing, the order in which they accessed them was not predictable or progressive in nature. For example, one youth moved from their family home to couch-surfing before entering an independent rental, while another left their family home for an independent rental followed later by a period of couch-surfing. In terms of reoccurrence, youth experienced some types of housing more than once, often in a cyclical nature. For instance, some youth would couch-surf with friends in between periods of living in various independent rentals; another moved back and forth between shelters and group homes as they aged out of each. Often, youth transitioned

through the same type of housing in succession, such as couch-surfing with multiple people, or moving from one independent rental to the next in what youth sometimes referred to as the "rental loop."

We provide two simplified example, composite journeys in Figure 4 to demonstrate the non-linear and sometimes cyclical nature of the experiences youth described. It should be noted that independent housing, while the end-point in these two example journeys, is not a permanent state, nor is it necessarily the end of their journeys.

**Figure 4   Example housing journey maps for youth**
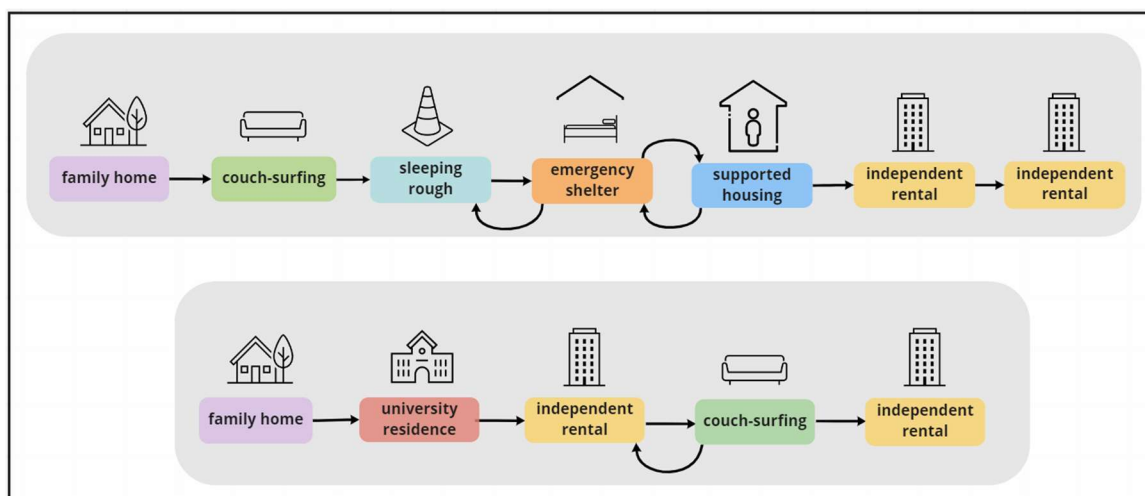
CRITICAL JUNCTURES IN QUEER YOUTHS' HOUSING JOURNEYS

What emerged through interviews with youth were a set of critical junctures along their journeys accessing and trying to access housing: **place of origin**, being **unhoused**, being **housed through a support/service**, and **independent rentals**. In terms of housing type alone, youth reported their near-term housing goal to be independently housed, in a rental apartment or house, and their ultimate, long-term goal as **ownership** of a house or apartment.

Figure 5 provides an overview of these junctures. As noted above, these critical junctures are not experienced linearly within youth journeys. We present a prototype of a more fulsome continuum in a subsequent section.

Figure 5   **Critical junctures along queer youths' housing journeys**
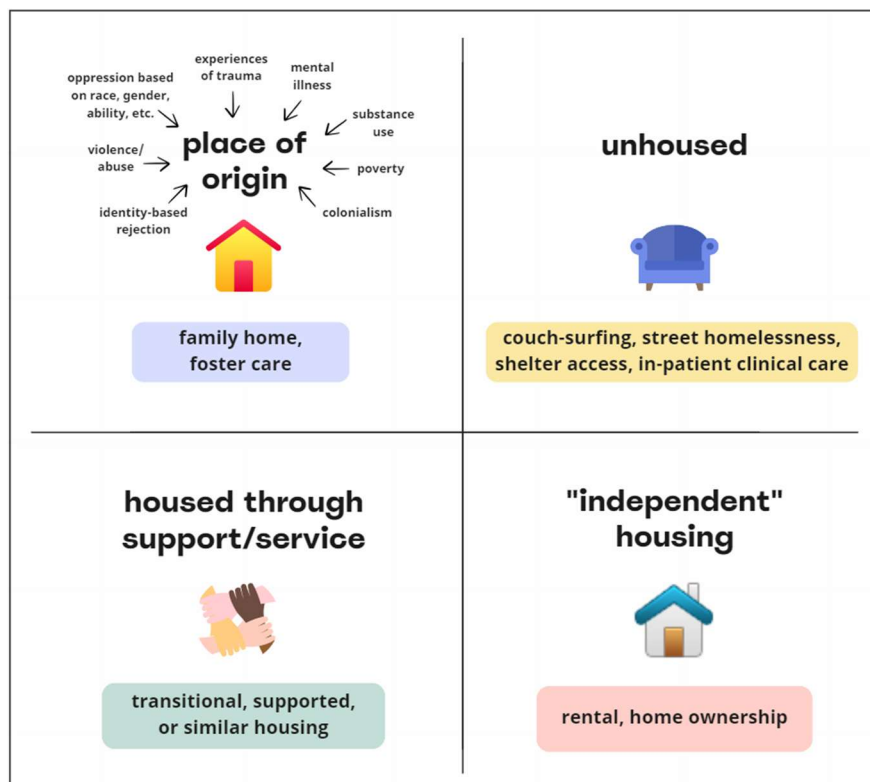
Place of origin

All youth participants identified the beginning of their housing journey at their family home. While this was the case for those we spoke with, youth equally acknowledged that the concept of family home may not resonate for those with other experiences (e.g., foster care) or who may not consider this stage of housing to be "home." Thus, we use the term "family home" for those to whom it applies, but reference this stage more generally as "place of origin" in broader contexts.

Identity and level of comfort at the place of origin

When first living in their family homes, youth had access to some extent of support in the form of free shelter, food, free/reduced utilities and groceries, and access to transportation, among others. However, living with family was particularly challenging for many youth, especially those who had to navigate strict rules, cultural norms, and homo/bi/transphobia on the part of their parents.

Youth pointed to ways that living with parents restricted their independence. For example, one participant expressed a desire to move out of her parents' home but worried about the implications of doing so given cultural expectations: *"I'm actually South Asian, and normally you stay with your parents until you're married: that's how it is."* For the most part, these restrictions centered around youths' ability to explore their gender and/or sexuality. As a result, some refrained from fully embracing their 2SLGBTQ+ identity when living with their parents until they felt confident they could support themselves if they suddenly needed to, especially when they knew they had few alternatives. As one bisexual woman who currently lives with her parents described, *"I don't exactly have a stable housing situation, because my parents could tell me to go and there's nothing I can do about it."* Fearing the repercussions of coming out or being outed to her parents with whom she lived, this participant avoided dating anyone other than cisgender men or accessing 2SLGBTQ+ services. Some youth had told their parents that partners they brought home were merely friends. Others anticipated disapproval from their parents and avoided bringing partners home altogether, sometimes risking their safety in the process: one participant described frequent encounters with the police when spending time with partners in parked cars in parking lots.

Moving from the place of origin

Two youth were open about their gender and sexuality while living in their family home and were ultimately forced to leave. Both described coming out and living openly as queer as the catalysts that compounded existing tensions with their parents. One recalled:

> *"Things were already not great, because I had previously struggled with mental health issues unrelated to my gender and sexuality, and my parents had a hard time grasping that. And so, this was just another thing on top of that, and they were like, 'absolutely not, we can't handle this.'"*

Another youth described a similar experience:

> *"The coming out, it was hard. I grew up in a really religious household...It blew up in a really big fight one night [...] I was a very complex teenager, my mom honestly got overwhelmed by a) having a queer child, b) having a child with addiction, and c) a child with complex mental health needs, and [...] put her hands up in the air. [...] it had been bubbling up – figuring out my identity at young age, it had been a long time coming."*

While one of these youth was kicked out immediately after coming out, the other observed their home go from *"being secretive to suffocating."* This added further nuance to narratives around 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness, where family conflict was associated not with coming out, but with living an openly-queer life:

*"When I started seeing my partner and wasn't hiding the fact that I was seeing
my partner and becoming more of my own person, that's when things took a turn
for the worse: I was actually kicked out of my house, thrown out of my house.
[…] I would say it was like an escalation up until a breaking point […] [My
parents] went to a lot of trouble to try and separate us, to try and prevent me
from my partner or from connecting with the community. When I was living with
them like they would monitor my phone. They would change passwords on the
family computer. They refused to drive me places, which, maybe that sounds
pretentious, but we didn't live anywhere near public transportation, and I
couldn't afford to pay for a cab, so I literally couldn't go out anywhere if my
parents didn't drive me somewhere. I'd just be isolated. […] It got to a point
where it was getting in fights daily…probably over a month of just fighting,
swearing, yelling at each other, crying a lot. There was one time where my dad
told me to leave and to never come back."*

Finally, some youth left home willingly or on more positive terms, looking to pursue education,
explore their identities, or seek independence. Some felt that they could not explore themselves
or have a chance to grow while living with family, regardless of whether they expected their
parents to be supportive. Some have since come out to their parents and maintained support,
while one continues to hide their identity until they no longer need their parents' material
support as a safety net. The data we collected about youths' positive experiences *while* living
with family were sparse and lacked detail. While this may suggest that the positive aspects of
living in family homes were deprioritized in youths' considerations of what impacted their
housing journeys, it is likely that this data gap was influenced by our approach to the semi-
structured interviews, as we asked youth to imagine their "experiences with housing insecurity
or instability as a story" and asked: "where would it start?"

Unhoused

Youths' experiences being unhoused included living out of their car, sleeping at work, street
homelessness, couch-surfing or "house hopping," and stays in shelters and in-patient clinics.
These experiences were interspersed throughout most youths' journeys – some temporary (e.g.,
a few days or weeks) and others longer-term (e.g., several months). Typically, youth were in this
position after suddenly losing their previous housing – for example facing identity-based
rejection from their parents, being evicted or kicked out, or leaving a situation with immediate
and extreme safety hazards. If youth did not have the means to couch-surf (e.g., friends who
were able to support them or had their own space), they had lived out of their car, employer's
office, or went without shelter. Without shelter at night, youth slept in parks, walked throughout
the night, or visited 24-hour stores. For one youth, this experience was 'hidden' – he had an
apartment, but was unable to stay there when his partner was home, resulting in periods of 16 to

18 hours with nowhere to truly live or sleep. He described the toll this took on him: *"It was not a good year [....] [what prompted my move] was a safety – a need to get out of here. Again, I was outside more often than not for a whole year. My body was being run down, my mental health was in the dumpster."*

Seeking shelter while unhoused

While couch-surfing, most youth stayed with a friend, friends' parents, or contact from a large community network (e.g., the drag community). In some cases, they were able to stay as long as needed and had a positive social experience. Others had limited options and stayed in places where they had to conceal their identity and faced risks to their independence, autonomy, and safety. One youth stayed temporarily with a family they knew were strictly religious and non-affirming because they had no other resources to secure housing in the immediate future: *"It's just wild to me that I was like, 'yeah, this is a safe place.' Because looking back on it, it was absolutely not."* Another in their early teens had connected with people on meet-up apps in-between periods of a few days staying with friends and classmates or having no shelter: *"I also realize this was super risky at some points, but I'd actually go on meet-up apps [...] and if I talked to people long enough I'd be like, 'hey, can I crash there?' So, it really was whoever, wherever."*

Moving from being unhoused

Leaving any type of homelessness the youth experienced was prompted by either positive drivers – such as finding suitable independent housing or entering longer-term shelter offered by a formal service – or from necessity – for example, the place they are couch-surfing becomes unavailable, or their current circumstance becomes dangerous, such as extreme weather while experiencing street homelessness or violence/abuse/harassment from others while couch surfing or in a shelter. When moving from being unhoused into independent housing, positive drivers included: increased financial resources, often from a new source of income/support or having had the ability to save money while couch-surfing; newly available housing opportunities, such as vacancy in a friend's or family member's rented or owned home; and sufficient time to search for independent housing that met their needs, such as affordability, safety, and accessibility, often gained by having access to temporary shelter in the meantime, such as couch-surfing or a shelter. Positive drivers out of homelessness also included access to appropriate and beneficial service-provided housing, sometimes facilitated by awareness of a service, positive outreach and recruitment efforts from the support or other service providers, and reaching eligibility criteria (e.g., age). No youth in our sample had returned to their place of origin from being unhoused.

While positive drivers were largely characterized by one's ability to move (and usually, the choice to alternatively stay in their current situation in the shorter-term), negative drivers were

largely characterized by necessity and urgency. While couch surfing, these included instances in which the youths' friends moved, their friends could no longer support them financially or did not have the power to allow them to stay (such as those who lived with roommates or parents), and their friends' lease was threatened by the landlord. While experiencing street homelessness, the drivers included extreme weather conditions, and while staying in shelters included harassment/violence from staff and other youth or adults, aging out, or being kicked out for contravening the rules.

While positive drivers related to the type of housing youth were moving to (for example, the availability of a service-provided shelter or increased finances/affordable housing), when youth moved from being unhoused out of necessity, the type of housing they moved to was dictated more by the options available to them than it was their reason for moving or the circumstance they were leaving (i.e., couch-surfing, street homelessness, or shelter). This is because the circumstances driving the necessity to move were often urgent and occasionally unanticipated, leaving little time for youth to explore their options, and driving them toward the first or only available alternative, whether it be service-provided housing, independent housing regardless of its suitability (e.g., dangerous/"sketchy," unaffordable, under illegal leasing terms), or perhaps (although not within our sample) their place of origin. Alternatively, youth remained unhoused and started couch-surfing or stayed with a different person, went from couch surfing to street homelessness or living in their car, or temporarily accessed emergency shelter.

Housed through a support/service

One youth shared experiences living in temporary housing through a formal service provider, including what they defined as group homes, transitional housing, and supported housing (e.g., a "mental health-approved home" to which they were referred from a staff member of an in-patient program). None of the youth we interviewed had lived in social housing; while one youth had attempted to access subsidized housing to support her transition out of her family home, she was faced with years-long wait lists and strict, population-specific eligibility criteria excluding her based on too-high income and being without children. We included emergency/temporary shelters in the "unhoused" category rather than housing through a support/service. Though shelters may seem to fit the definition of 'housing through a service' on the surface, our choice to categorize them otherwise reflects survey and population data that frequently group living in a shelter together with being completely unhoused, couch-surfing, and living out of a car as forms of 'homelessness' (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2016).

Service providers and youth reported that youth independently accessed these services from word-of-mouth or in response to outreach, or received referrals from a social worker/family services or other service providers typically in housing or healthcare. Youth came from independent housing while living with an abusive partner or which they could no longer afford,

street homelessness, in-patient hospital and rehabilitation clinics, other service-provided shelter (e.g., group home, transitional housing), family homes, and foster care.

Further explorations of touchpoints, and experiences in service-provided shelter, and housing-related services more broadly are found below (see *Touchpoints along the service continuum* section).

Independent rentals

All youth we spoke to experienced renting more than one house or apartment along their journey. This meant renting outside of a formal service/support or living with their parents who provided material supports, but not necessarily renting alone. Arrangements included living in university residence; living with strangers with shared space but separate individual leases; living with acquaintances/friends/partners on a shared or individual lease with shared space; renting from acquaintances/friends/connections with or without officially being on a lease; and renting alone. Living with roommates or partners/friends was an experience shared among all youth, and most had experienced renting alone.

University or scholarly residence

For youth who attend post-secondary school, those who do not live with their family may live on or nearby campus in residence buildings/dormitories associated with the school – particularly during the first year. For those youth, this is typically the first independence they experience living separately from relatives or guardians.

Although six of the seven youth we interviewed had attended post-secondary school, and all had left their family homes, only two lived in residence. Both youth identified as autistic and found it difficult to live with others; one experienced bullying, and the other, though they "got along with" their roommates, described the environment as "toxic." Most people living in the residences threw frequent parties, which neither youth enjoyed and which contributed to their negative experiences: *"at that age, you have to be a party person to get along with most people – didn't like parties so I didn't like it."* Overall, these experiences directly contributed to the youths' resolve to live alone in the future.

Two youth considered living in residence, but instead moved to an independent rental with roommates. The biggest barrier was cost; residence was more expensive than independent rentals, required payment upfront, and required the purchase of a meal plan. The remaining two youth had already lived independently – as well as experienced being unhoused and/or accessed service-provided shelter – for a number of years when they began post-secondary education, and did not report considering moving into residence.

Overall, we collected little data about youths' experiences living in university/scholarly residence, the factors that drive the decision and ability to live in residence, and the influence that experiences living in residence have on future housing journeys and decisions. While some may assume that living in residence is a common and formative experience among youth beginning post-secondary education, the barriers and influences surrounding this decision, for queer youth especially, need more investigation. Assuming this housing situation as a milestone for youth has implications for youth who do not or cannot access it.

University or scholarly residence was difficult to classify along the four critical junctures identified along youths' housing journeys in this study. While it is independent housing, there are built in supports and services for youth, such as residence assistants. In our current prototype of a housing continuum for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (see section *revisiting and revising the housing continuum* below) this housing type may be classified as "semi-independent," however a much larger sample is needed to make this determination; it is likely that a larger sample beyond this exploratory study would result in a modified and more nuanced housing continuum model with adjusted classifications or critical junctures, and thus attempting to fit this housing type into our existing and exploratory classifications, is not appropriate or accurate.

Identity and level of comfort in independent rentals

Living independently gave many youth an opportunity to explore and express their gender and/or sexuality for the first time. Feeling able to explore and express their identity was reported by youth as being facilitated by living with other members of the community, with friends/partners with whom they were familiar and trusted, or by living alone in a safe environment, with access to queer, or queer-adjacent formal and informal supports.

A few youth reported living in households composed entirely of 2SLGBTQ+ people, and found safety, joy, and validation in a space where they could be unapologetically themselves. Others found solace in the control that came with living alone. While many participants shared positive experiences living alone or hoped to in the future, this was especially valuable for multiple queer, neurodivergent participants:

> *"If I'm excited and I want to excitedly stim about something I can do that, whereas with roommates I wouldn't have just because I was around people...You notice the difference when you're alone because you feel just a lot lighter. Living alone means I can unwind and be fully myself."*

For one participant in particular, this experience was pivotal to fully exploring and expressing their identity:

> *"When I first moved out by myself, it was...that year that I actually came out. I think living alone did in a way have something to do with that, just because I was able to kind of process my thoughts and figure myself out a little better without always being overwhelmed by everything around me."*

However, these living arrangements did not guarantee the youth did or could openly express their identity. Youth who lived with roommates or nosy landlords faced ongoing barriers to privacy. Some concealed their identity from their landlords or roommates as a precaution; one youth had carefully decorated their apartment to avoid outing themself to their landlord: *"I do a lot of preventative things now. I don't have anything like [pride flags] up just because I don't want to risk it. [...] you hear the stories [...] you don't always know what people are thinking."*

Youth who did openly express and explore their gender occasionally faced invasions of privacy, assault, and harassment from roommates and partners. One youth described living with an abusive former partner while beginning to explore their trans identity, and knowing that *"I couldn't really be my full self there…it wasn't a safe space for me to come out in as a trans person."* Another previously lived with roommates whose visitors would try to "turn them straight," in turn informing their decision to remain closeted as gender fluid with future roommates. Had this scenario been different, they noted that they *"wouldn't have had to pretend to be someone else to make sure my housing is secure."*

Trading off between affordability and safety

Youth often described housing that was affordable as being at odds with personal safety and wellbeing. Often, living with roommates or in structurally/environmentally unsafe housing was more affordable, resulting in youth weighing their safety, health, and privacy against their ability to afford housing at all or to afford other necessities (e.g., food, utilities, healthcare). Participants described living in residences that they knew did not meet building codes, including apartments that were leaky, mouldy, or infested with mice. Some alluded to the impacts of vicarious or secondary trauma when living with roommates, including other 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. For example, while one participant was initially keen to move in with the other *"token queer person"* in their university program, this quickly became unsustainable in light of ongoing mental health and relationship challenges within the household. One person previously had Christian missionaries as their landlords who would enter their unit unannounced and *"try to save me."* Many youth reported they previously lived with roommates or partners who were abusive, homo/bi/transphobic, racist, violent, or otherwise erratic, making them feeling unsafe in their own homes:

> *"Being someone who presents very feminine [and] was really young at the time, I was like, 'I don't know how to keep myself safe.' I had a lock on my bedroom door but I was like, 'can I go out to the kitchen? Who's going to be outside my home when I come home?' I had one class that ended quite late in the evening, and whenever I walked home I was always on the phone with a friend because I was scared of going home."*

In general, professional, communicative, and understanding landlords helped youth feel more in control of their housing. Still, youth categorized the majority of their rental situations as precarious and feared that they could be kicked out, evicted, or otherwise forced to leave with little to no notice. At any point, rentals could become unaffordable due to a loss of their current income, rent hikes, or needing to pay more than their portion of rent. In the latter case, roommates on a shared lease may be unable or unwilling to pay their share of rent due to financial precarity or interpersonal conflict, requiring others to take on this burden; *"My ex wouldn't make his half of the rent. Then I'd have to cover for him and like I was I didn't have*

*enough to do that. So I had to work ridiculous hours again, so that I would have money for future
months, just in case that happened again. I needed to be able to do that.*" In a few cases,
participants had moved into rental units with a shared lease, experienced a relationship
breakdown, and were forced to pay the full cost of rent upon their friend or partner leaving.
Otherwise, the youth themselves may have been forced out by their roommate or landlord for
reasons such as interpersonal conflict, damages caused by roommates on a shared lease, and
extreme safety hazards.

Moving towards more secure independent housing

On the other hand, youths' ability to leave independent housing that was unsuitable due to issues
of precarity, safety, or privacy was often barred by affordability and availability of other rentals.
One participant lacked the financial or community resources to leave an abusive partner with
whom he had moved across the country, while others felt stuck in leases for units that were
unsafe or that they could no longer afford. When youth suddenly lost independent housing or it
became unsafe/hazardous enough that they felt the immediate need to leave with little time to
search elsewhere, they were more likely to end up couch-surfing, homeless, or moving to the
first housing they could find and access regardless of its quality or suitability. If youth could
remain in their independent rental in the short term, they were afforded more time to plan their
transition and search for suitable housing that met their needs, and were more likely to stay in
the cycle of independent rentals. For youth entering into independent renting, longer-term
couch-surfing, living temporarily with their parents, or living in supported/transitional housing
offered some the time to save money and/or stabilize other aspects of their lives such as
employment, education, and healthcare needed to support the transition; *"I had accessed in-
patient services in the hospital again [...] at that point I did a lot of work, worked on trauma
hard, and I was able to process a lot of it, and that's where my resiliency really kicked in. There
was a lot that happened which kind of switched gears [...] [I was] in different services, which
allowed me to access additional funding to go to private trauma-informed counsellor, so
processing all of that was really big. Having the stability of housing, working on school
applications, getting accepted into school, it all happened very quickly."*

The majority of youth cycled through multiple rentals – consecutively or punctuated by other
types of shelter – over the span of months and years. The type of housing they transitioned from
and into spanned the types of shelter listed above: directly from their family home, service-
provided shelter (in this case, transitional housing), couch-surfing or homelessness (such as
sleeping in their car or at work), and other independent rentals. Experiences that impacted
movement through or maintaining independent rental housing are summarized in Figures 6 and
7 on the following page. These experiences were, for the most part, similar and consistent
regardless of the type of housing youth were moving from (e.g., place of origin, couch surfing,
another independent rental) and moving to, unless otherwise noted within the figure.

Ownership

No youth we spoke to had ever owned a home. All were 'comfortable' or currently satisfied with their housing for the time being, but all would like to eventually own a house or apartment by themselves or with a partner, children, and/or pets.

Youth perceived home ownership to be outside of the realm of possibility, but maintained it as a "big dream." In addition to individual and current barriers to the transition from rental to ownership including income and employment instability, housing availability and affordability, 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported a lack of access to intergenerational capital or broader family financial support. Because all youth we spoke to were concerned with navigating the immediate effects of not having access to a financial safety net (e.g., ongoing and persistent income insecurity, poverty), home ownership was not perceived to be among the available choices in the near or immediate term.

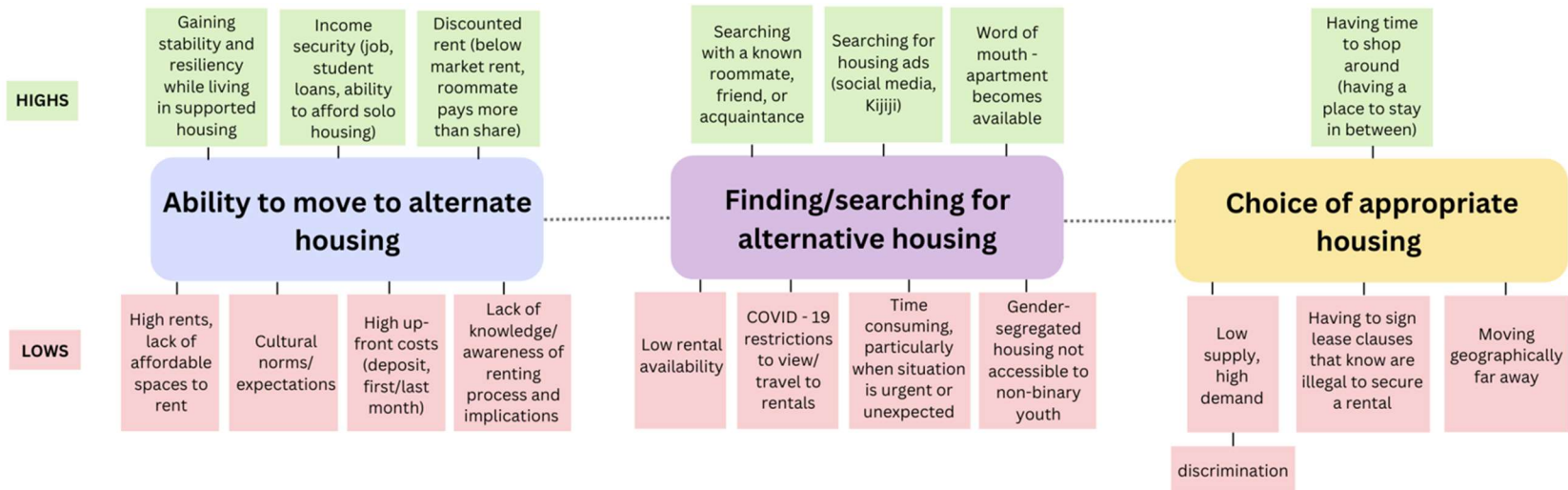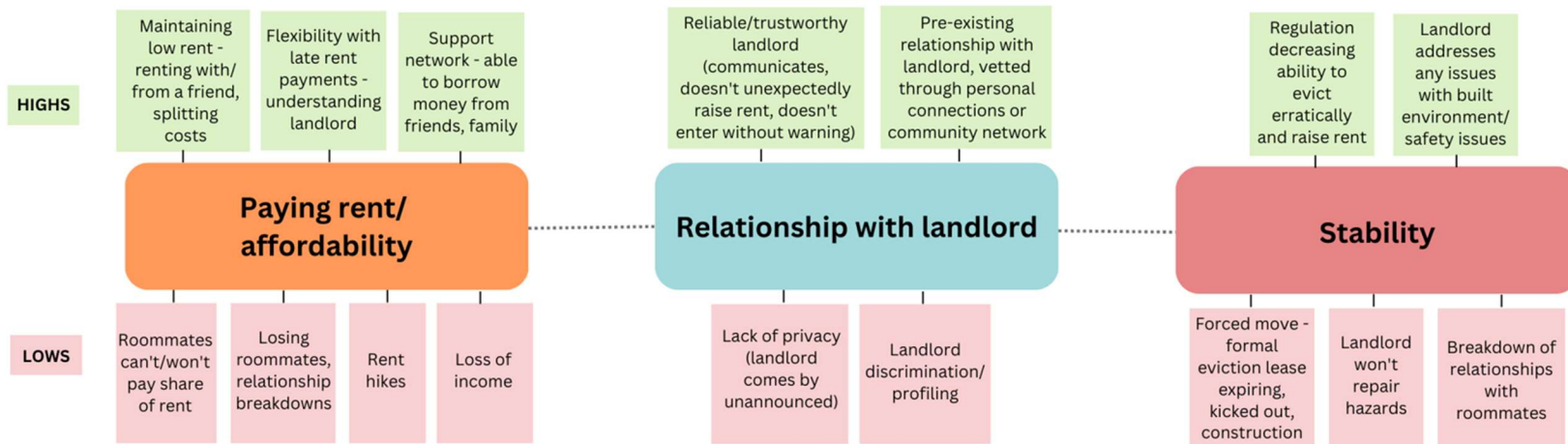**Figure 6**   **Finding and securing independent rentals – highs and lows**

Figure 7   **Maintaining independent rentals – highs and lows**

OVERARCHING TOUCHPOINTS ON YOUTHS' JOURNEYS TO HOUSING

2SLGBTQ+ youth described their personal journeys in and through various types of housing as fundamentally shaped by their identities, the services and supports available to them, and a host of other contextual factors. Despite this, our data equally point to a number of overarching and interrelated themes that characterized youths' experiences across diverse social locations and geographies. Below, we describe how four key themes fundamentally shaped youths' experiences within housing and transitions across housing types: *1) exploring and expressing identity, 2) stability and predictability, 3) autonomy, freedom, and privacy, and 4) physical and emotional safety.*

Exploring and expressing identity

Youth widely described the complexities of navigating their gender, sexual, or other identities (including race, Indigeneity, and neurodivergence) at every stage of their housing journeys, particularly in the context of disclosure and outness. Exposure to discrimination and structural disadvantage, as a result of youths' 2SLGBTQ+ identity in particular, often created the foundations for housing instability and unpredictability.

For many 2SLGBTQ+ youth, negotiating identity and disclosure was a thread that ran across their housing journeys. Even after leaving their family home, several participants had made the difficult decision to conceal their 2SLGBTQ+ identity to secure or maintain housing or access services and supports. In general, 2SLGBTQ+ youths' capacity to explore and express themselves relied on them having housing that facilitated this. For some, this meant moving out of a place that lacked the privacy or emotional support needed to come into their 2SLGBTQ+ identity. For others, housing offered connections to culture and community, from a Two-Spirit youth gaining a Two-Spirit mentor through their service provider to the safety and validation of living exclusively with other 2SLGBTQ+ youth in transitional housing and independent rentals.

Stability and predictability

Unpredictability was a common feature in the housing journeys of youth and prevailed across all types of housing. For example, youth either had lost or worried about losing their housing following parents downsizing to a smaller residence, untenable rent increases, underfunded housing services, or threats of eviction from landlords, among other examples. For the 2SLGBTQ+ youth we spoke with, unstable or unpredictable housing bred further instability and unpredictability. Working overtime, juggling multiple part-time jobs, or engaging in sex work

served as opportunities to generate extra income in the face of unaffordability. However, many of these activities were described as taking a toll on youths' mental and physical wellbeing, particularly due to the amount of time and energy it took to juggle multiple jobs, school, and/or family obligations, the instability of many part-time, minimum wage jobs, and identity-based discrimination faced in the workplace. Meanwhile, youth described a constant state of vigilance that characterized the entirety of their housing journeys, along with the sense of needing to be prepared to leave or be kicked out at any given moment. Ultimately, escaping the cycle of housing precarity was described as extraordinarily challenging, impossible, or simply a matter of luck.

Autonomy, freedom, and privacy

Youth described varying degrees of autonomy, freedom, and privacy throughout their housing journeys. For many youth, being their authentic selves came at the expense of these features, effectively forcing a choice between self-expression and independence. Whether it was being forced to live with roommates who were discriminatory or violent, relying on friends' generosity to escape an abusive relationship, or negotiating imbalanced landlord-tenant relationships, many 2SLGBTQ+ youth continued to see autonomy, freedom, and privacy as privileges that remained out of reach.

Physical and emotional safety

Unfortunately, threats to physical and emotional safety made frequent appearances in the housing journeys of the youth we spoke with. Often, these experiences were in addition to the persistent fear of getting kicked out and the emotional toll of identity concealment.

While our participants were keenly aware of the toll their housing experiences had taken on their health and well-being, most had pursued or endured these scenarios in the absence of any other choice. Some had knowingly moved into unsafe living situations because they lacked time, money, knowledge about available supports or alternative housing arrangements. Others had normalized their experiences: *"I just kind of thought that's how it was for people."* Concerns of safety also prevented youth from accessing services or supports, or made youth feel unsafe while in transitional housing: *"[I] didn't necessarily feel comfortable in a shelter setting, [I'd] had a lot of bad experiences with people downplaying the domestic abuse."* Poor housing conditions, such as mould, leaks, and broken appliances were often difficult to have fixed or leave until youth could afford more expensive housing. Identity-related safety was often mitigated by staying with other 2SLGBTQ+ youth, known roommates, or alone; however, these situations sometimes delved into toxic relationships which created further issues of emotional and/or physical safety.

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES ACROSS YOUTHS' JOURNEYS

Nested within the broader youth journey are supports aimed at serving queer youth, which focus on or are adjacent to housing support. Building on the touchpoints from the youth perspective related to accessing and maintaining independent housing, we focus in this section on programs, services, and supports that both youth and service providers identified as being meaningful in facilitating 'high points' on their housing related journeys.

Establishing and building support systems

Both youth and service providers underscored the importance of community, cultural, family, and peer relationships for 2SLGBTQ+ young people. **Connections with 2SLGBTQ+ mentors and peers with shared lived experiences** offered youth safety, comfort, and confidence. Many youth expressed the powerful role of queer kinship in their lives and several youth described being connected to the broader 2SLGBTQ+ community as playing an important support role throughout their journeys. While this was not limited to housing, some youth had found roommates or places to rent through 2SLGBTQ+ friends, community connections, or informal networks of queer youth sharing housing information on social media (e.g., Facebook). For one participant who had previously done sex work, a close and supportive network of other 2SLGBTQ+ sex workers offered access to potential clients as well as essential information about safety.

For some youth, establishing or strengthening their connection to the broader 2SLGBTQ+ community may be supported by more formal channels. Youth described accessing queer spaces or drop-in centres for coffee or social events, with one service provider pointing to the longer-term benefits: *"[This] create[s] a positive network...giving youth a safe place now, but to be able to have connections, networks, or even skills to keep going [when they leave]."* For several service providers, it was essential that housing or wrap-around programs targeted at 2SLGBTQ+ youth sought to foster or grow a sense of community. In practice, this meant prioritizing **hiring staff with shared lived experiences**, encouraging youth to socialize and build connections with each other as well as program staff, and participating in Pride and other culturally-specific activities (e.g., drag shows). Service providers offering population-focused supportive housing in particular had observed firsthand the positive effects of youth living alongside 2SLGBTQ+ peers with the support of 2SLGBTQ+ staff. In some cases, providers saw benefits even for youth who had not directly participated in their programs, particularly in the absence of other supports, services, or spaces geared towards 2SLGBTQ+ youth. One service provider had observed this in their organization's supportive home for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, noting that *"even for people for whom that wasn't home, there was a sense of home and safety."*

Finally, we heard about support via biological family, chosen family, or other supportive adults. A few youth benefited from financial, housing, or emotional support through positive relationships with parents or other family members. In other cases, youth maintained material support from family even when the relationships were not fully accepting – such as living with their parents or receiving occasional financial support for rent – by hiding their 2SLGBTQ+ identity. However, service providers widely observed relationship breakdowns between 2SLGBTQ+ youth accessing programs and their families. Some had supported youth to reconcile with family members through mediation, education, and awareness-building (e.g., sharing resources, having parents learn from 2SLGBTQ+ staff or attend community events), and – where safe, appropriate, and desired by the young person – reunification. One service provider saw themselves as additionally playing a preventative role by providing education to parents and the broader community. The organization hosts public and community events with a view to normalizing acceptance and support for 2SLGBTQ+ youth: "*specifically for parents, [those events have] had a huge impact, where the parent is trying to learn … what the child might be going through, or the youth might be going through, or their adult child might be going through … I've seen that those kind of opportunities allow for parents or anyone to kind of step in, who might not understand it, [and] have a moment to kind of have dedicated time to learn.*" In some cases, youth valued support from other adults in their lives, including mentors, community leaders, program staff, and partners' or friends' family members. Again, where relationships with their familial relatives were strained or non-existent due to identity-based rejection, chosen family in the queer community became even more impactful: "*it [became] very clear that these people aren't people I consider to be my actual family. Chosen family became very, very, very important to me from a really young age.*"

Driving transitions: Leaving short-term or unsafe housing

Youth described several factors that contributed to their ability to transition out of or leave short-term and/or unsafe housing. For one participant, **financial support from friends and family** made the difference in being able to leave an abusive ex-partner with whom he was living. While this example highlights the importance of assisting 2SLGBTQ+ youth to leave dangerous or unsafe housing situations, we also heard about support for planned housing transitions. Aging out of a transitional housing program was made easier for one youth with **furniture donation** from the service provider, in addition to the overall stability they had gained throughout their time there: "*I was able to be an adult, more or less.*"

In periods of being unhoused, 2SLGBTQ+ youth we spoke with had urgently sought and acquired housing through several means, including housing services. However, most commonly, youth credited **couch-surfing or staying with friends or peers** as a key support for seeking shelter during times of crisis, though acknowledged that this was typically a temporary solution during an urgent situation:

> *"I got connected to some folks who are older and had always had housing
> security...They would invite me to come and stay with them...There was no
> expectation of me while I was there. That kind of became my safe space in
> between places when my housing was falling apart, but I knew it wasn't a long
> term place for me. I wish that it could have been. I think it would have made the
> last number of years easier"*

Others had obtained temporary shelter through more formal means. While most of the youth we
spoke with had not accessed formal housing services, one had previously accessed an **emergency
shelter in their city:** *"I actually was able to stay there for a couple of weeks one time when I was
stranded in the city. If it wasn't for them, I probably wouldn't have made it, because it was the
dead of winter."* Meanwhile, another individual highlighted short-term housing stability as a key
supportive aspect of a month-long **in-patient treatment program** they accessed for substance
use.

Identifying and maintaining independent or more permanent housing

Service providers described supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth to identify and secure appropriate and
accessible housing, either when leaving their programs or more generally. This involved
considering youth's budget and other needs, assisting with their search for housing options, and
supporting them through the rental application process. In some cases, service providers had
pre-existing relationships with landlords who they felt comfortable referring youth to; others
shared instances where youths' transition to independent housing was made easier by being able
to move in with friends they had made while living in supportive housing.

More informally, **networks and word-of-mouth** had been invaluable to youth in pursuing
longer-term housing, particularly in gauging the safety of a landlord, building, or roommates.
2SLGBTQ+ peers and community-led initiatives had helped youth stay informed in their pursuit
of rental housing, from acquaintances seeking housemates to which landlords to avoid:

> *"I'm actually in a Facebook group that's an LGBT safe housing network, where
> people are like, 'hey, I'm leaving this place, my landlord is trans-friendly, so if
> someone's looking for a place, please reach out.'"*

Several youth had received **informal financial or in-kind assistance** during periods when they
struggled to pay their rent or afford rental housing altogether. Some had borrowed money from
friends or family, while others benefited from reduced rent or greater flexibility with late
payments when renting from someone they knew personally. Several had benefited from the
economies of scale associated with living with others, although - as previously discussed - this
came with its own unique challenges. A few participants had negotiated agreements with

partners or roommates with whom they were friends to pay a smaller share of rent to reflect their lower income and/or student status.

Access to **legal advice and information about tenant rights** had also contributed to youths' ability to maintain housing, including via free legal clinics, referrals to legal aid, or knowledge and capacity-building led by service providers. Of note, the majority of youth reported a desire for a service or educational source supporting their learning or exercise of tenants' rights, but none knew whether a resource existed or how to access it during their time of need. One student noted a legal service was available through their university but were unsure whether they supported housing; another contacted a tenant helpline but found them "unhelpful."

Meeting youths' holistic needs

Many youth reported struggling with food insecurity, particularly when faced with paying rent or buying groceries. In response, participants described using formal services such as **food banks**, accessing **discounted or healthy food via their educational institutions**, or being fed at 2SLGBTQ+ organizations or drop-in centres. Service providers had also offered a range of material supports to youth accessing housing or other services, including **prepaid cell phones**, **groceries**, and **transportation**. In other cases, youth **received referrals to other organizations** through formal services, from which they could access these or similar resources. Some youth received similar supports through informal networks of friends, family members, co-workers, and roommates, including sharing food, offering transportation, and gas money. Service providers also sought to **equip 2SLGBTQ+ youth to identify and access these types of services and supports moving forward**, either upon leaving the program or moving to another area.

Support securing a steady source of income

Beyond support to pay rent or meet other basic needs, we also heard about supports that helped 2SLGBTQ+ youth secure a steady income, with knock-on effects for their housing situations. This frequently meant accessing and maintaining paid employment. In terms of gaining employment, service providers had assisted youth to open bank accounts, obtain government-issued identification, write resumes and cover letters, practice interviewing, identify safe and appropriate job opportunities, and submit job applications. Meanwhile, youth had found jobs through connections and **networking with friends, teachers, or other peers**. Once in employment, our findings highlighted several contributors to 2SLGBTQ+ youth keeping their jobs. These included **transportation to and from work** from coworkers or service providers, **flexible work schedules**, **accommodations** for disability and/or neurodivergence, and **2SLGBTQ+-inclusive workplaces** (e.g., respect for pronouns, gender-neutral washrooms, etc.).

In some instances, youth had sought government support during periods of income insecurity. The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) had offered one participant stability after losing their job during COVID-19. Service providers also described helping 2SLGBTQ+ youth to **navigate provincial social assistance and disability benefits**, including determining eligibility, submitting applications, and accompanying youth to interviews with case workers.

Pursuing education

The majority of participants were pursuing or had completed post-secondary education, in part with a view to fostering longer-term stability or higher-paying jobs. **Institutional support via grants and scholarships** had been crucial for some 2SLGBTQ+ youth to afford tuition and remain in school, especially when their parents were unable or unwilling to support them. Service providers had also supported youth to access and succeed in education, including assisting youth to apply for and enrol in courses and offering **homework help**.

Maintaining physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing

Acknowledging the relationship between housing and health, our conversations revealed myriad ways 2SLGBTQ+ youth had been supported in the realm of physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. Several youth had accessed counselling or therapy through various sources, seeking support related to sensory issues, intergenerational trauma, and conflict with peers, among other things. While this was sometimes free of charge (i.e., through a post-secondary institution), some service providers had paid for or **subsidized mental health care** costs for 2SLGBTQ+ youth they served. **Support groups**, including peer support, were also cited as valuable.

Service providers widely recognized the importance of 2SLGBTQ+ youth having accessible, appropriate, and affirming health care, with some seeing this as a key predictor of youths' success upon transitioning out of supportive housing in particular. Many had offered support via transportation to and from medical appointments, **in-house sexual health resources**, or help **finding and connecting to a primary care provider:** *"Finding a doctor who is able to serve [2SLGBTQ+ youth] while also respecting their identity is huge."*

Emotional and moral support were also highlighted as key in youths' health journeys. 2SLGBTQ+ youth spoke to the power of having someone, such as a friend, **accompany them to medical appointments**, a role which many service providers had also played. This was an especially important support as many youth have had negative experiences in these settings, particularly in mental health and transition-related care. One youth recalled their experience with a support worker when living at a transitional house: *"When I said, 'I need help, I need to go to hospital,' [they] went and sat there for 14 hours [with me]. I felt very heavily supported...they*

played a vital role, and I'm very thankful for them." Another youth highlighted the value of peer support in the context of uninformed or non-affirming health professionals, referencing an appointment to seek documentation to facilitate their medical transition: *"I was smart enough to bring a support person because...the professional invalidated everything about me."* In other cases, service providers or peers played a more active role: for instance, advocating for the use of a youth's proper pronouns and name during interactions with doctors, pharmacists, or other health care professionals. Service providers sought to strike a balance between supporting youths' agency and stepping in where appropriate, and viewed this as a valuable way to build youths' capacity for self-advocacy moving forward.

Lastly, access to social and/or medical transition were central to the wellbeing of many trans, non-binary, and other gender minority youth. Service providers described offering a range of supports to facilitate this, including supporting youth to navigate the process of changing their name and/or gender marker on legal documents and identification, connect with specialized health care providers, obtain necessary diagnoses or medical documentation to proceed with medical transitions, **apply for and access gender-affirming care** (e.g., hormone replacement therapy, gender-affirming surgery), and cover other **transition-related costs** (e.g., binders, clothing, fees to change name/gender marker).

TOUCHPOINTS ALONG THE SERVICE CONTINUUM

The following touchpoints, and associated highs and lows, and barriers and facilitators, represent critical junctures along the housing-related service continuum. These touchpoints were synthesized based on data from service providers and youth; where specified, findings are derived from data from ongoing engagement and validation with youth participants.

Figure 8 represents a journey map validated by service providers and youth: it represents the touchpoints as identified and prioritized by service providers and youth within the formal service landscape for queer youth. These include services and supports within, and outside of, transitional housing programs and include other community-based supports. Below, we describe the barriers and facilitators youth face to accessing, maintaining, and benefitting from supports, as well as the highs/lows experienced during their journeys through (or attempting to access) services.

Figure 8   Critical junctures along journeys through housing-related services and wrap-around supports
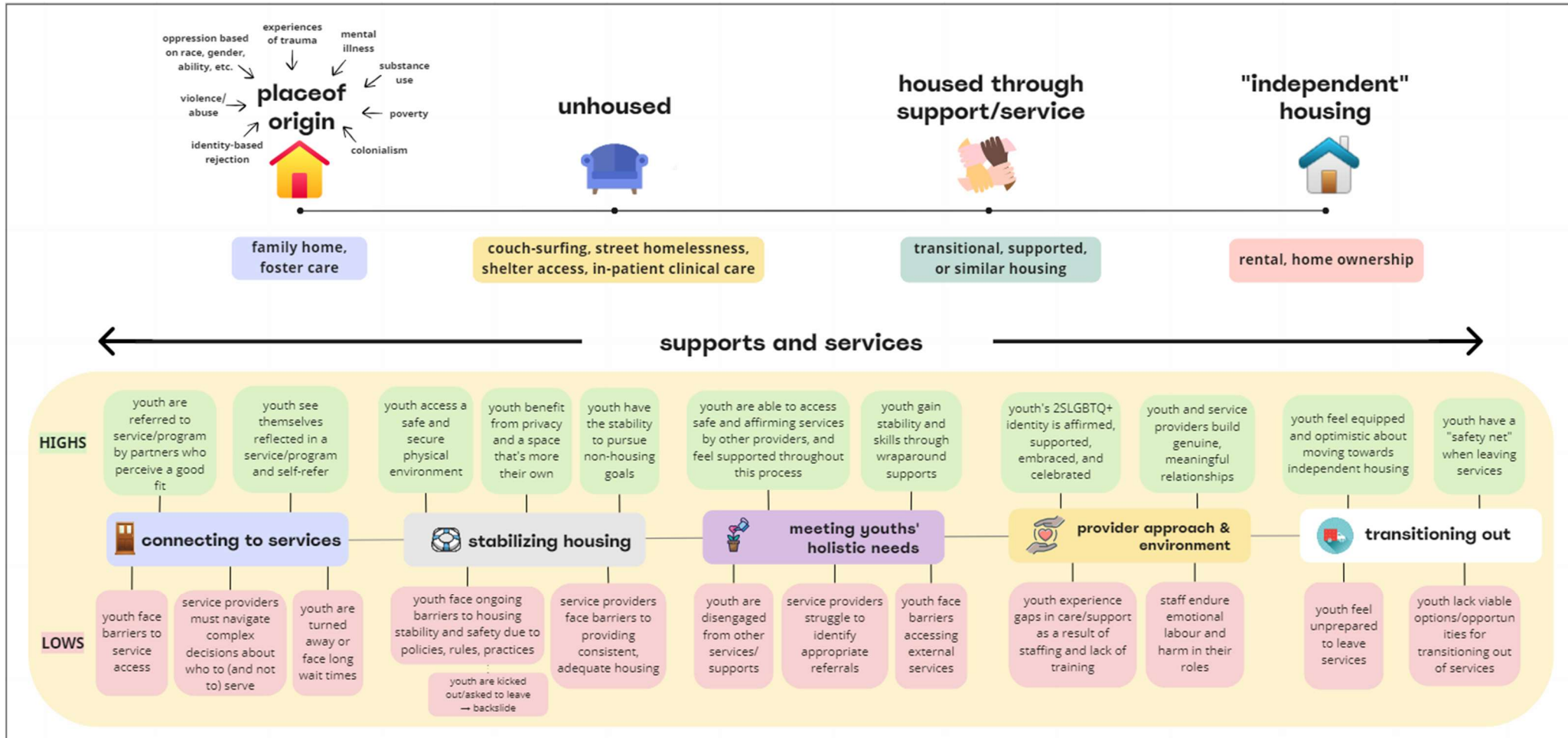
Connecting to services – awareness, availability, and eligibility

Service providers received self-referrals from youth as well as formal referrals though other service providers and housing services. Having partner and community networks that were familiar with the service and eligibility criteria supported a good fit between the youths' needs and services abilities, therefore decreasing the chance that the youth would be turned away. Most programs accepted both formal and self-referrals, acknowledging that youth who are disconnected from services have no avenue to be referred. Awareness of the program and eligibility criteria, however, pose an issue; **many youth are unaware of what services exist** for numerous reasons, including knowing where to look or who to contact, a lack of connections between services/spaces they do access, (e.g., through other service providers such as counselling, university campuses/schools) and not having access to a computer or internet.

Many services were **logistically difficult to access**, even if youth were aware of them. For example, one food bank operated only from 9am to 5pm, when one youth worked. Similar resources were located too far to reach, without any public transportation routes to access them. Often, services were in such high demand, exacerbated by Covid-19 increasing need and reducing capacity, that they had long waitlists or offered no waitlist at all. This was especially true for access to gender affirming care and mental health services, for which waitlists were often months – or years – long. For rural youth, a lack of services was even more apparent; some had to travel out of town, for which they may not have transportation. In Maritime provinces, one service provider explained that many transgender youth had to travel outside of their province to access gender-affirming surgery. They also described a lack of generalized housing and healthcare services in remote areas: *"before Covid, a lot of it was like – if it wasn't in your area, you suffered, basically, or you moved. That's literally it with healthcare, physical or mental. That was just any kind of service."* However, moving some programs and services online allowed the program to reach larger and broader audiences across multiple remote communities, invite speakers that had experiences in those areas, and network with more partners.

 Cost was a huge barrier for participants that prevented or delayed access to supports, particularly involving mental healthcare, diagnoses and transitional healthcare. **University-provided insurance** or care networks aided some youth, however, coverage and availability was limited to access sufficient levels of care. Another access barrier to services related to youths' willingness and comfort; many had **negative past experiences** that made them distrustful of services, particularly in healthcare. For some, these were compounding experiences with service providers that lead to unease around accessing services in the sector in general: *"he looked at me […] and shouted across a crowded space […] 'are you like, gonna get everything rearranged, or…' and gestured to himself. […] I was like, 'that is so rude – what is wrong with you?' He tried to [justify] himself, he's like: 'no, I'm a paramedic, like, I'm cool.' [If] that's your way showing me that you are comfortable with trans people existing, that's not making me feel very comfortable*

with you right now. So accessing any kind of services for me is always – there's always so much anxiety because I'm never sure if I'm going to actually get help, or if I'm gonna be put into a worse situation as a result of that interaction."

In other cases, services were deemed **inaccessible or unsafe**, especially due to their gender identity; *"I knew where [the shelter] was, and there was a lot of trouble around there all of the time. I saw that as I was just wandering around, so I just couldn't picture myself in that setting, and being safe."* While some services were targeted to 2SLGBTQ+ populations, these posed barriers to youth who feared outing themselves or their peers by accessing them.

When youth did locate a service, many were frustrated by **strict eligibility criteria** that did not account for contextual circumstances. Many youth, particularly in independent housing, were "ineligible at the margin," in that they "*make too much [money]*" to use a service, but could not afford necessities without it. Others struggled to receive income assistance that accounted for dependent parents and children they co-parented. At times, this resulted in frustration that dissuaded youth from pursuing further supports. In other cases, this encouraged youth to prioritize necessities based on what they could receive supports for: *"I read that if you have to choose between keeping the lights on and food, choose to keep lights on because there are food banks."* Sometimes, supports were **gender-segregated** or otherwise not appropriate for queer and gender-minority youth, who would have to hide their identity and misgender themselves to access them. **Unclear eligibility criteria** led to youth applying for or attempting to access services that would not accept them, which in turn dissuaded some youth from applying in the future and made them feel hopeless: *"all I know is […] you get those rejections, and sometimes it proposed me forward, and it makes me ruthlessly efficient, and sometimes it shuts you down, and at those times my mental health was not great, and it just shut me down."* **Warm hand-offs between service providers** kept youth on the path to finding and using eligible services, which were aided by networks and partnerships among services.

Service providers also struggled to navigate complex decisions about who (and who not) to serve. Often, this was a function of **limited resources, such as staff and funding**, which limited a service's scope of care. For example, transitional housing supports frequently referenced a need for youth to have reached a certain level of independence, as their house was not staffed full time or sufficiently to provide an adequate level support. One service provider recalled a youth whose needs were higher than they could support, who ultimately had to return to their family home before they were ready, which was "not ideal at all." Others have had experiences where youth who gain too much independence too quickly 'backslide' downstream, or staff burn out or quit while attempting to serve beyond their capabilities. Given the lack of services downstream, however, some youth may face cyclical barriers to gaining the level of stability needed to access supports at all. Some service provides had **in-depth intake processes** that involved an intake interview and/or assessment to discuss a youth's needs, and both the youth's

and service provider's goals and expectations to determine whether the service was an appropriate fit.

Stabilizing Housing

Youth and service providers noted that **stabilizing housing** was a key step to **building independence and pursuing non-housing goals**, particularly during periods of being precariously housed or unhoused. Prior to entering transitional housing, one youth struggled to attend high school while moving between shelters and group homes: *"I was too preoccupied trying to stabilize my life."* These goals included managing substance use, advancing their education, seeking employment, reconnecting with family, accessing general and transition-related healthcare, etc.

Access to a **safe and secure physical environment** was especially crucial for 2SLGBTQ+ youth who have experienced high rates of violence, abuse, harassment, and exclusion: *"Safe and affirming housing was the first glimpse of safety I'd had since early childhood."* Service providers also noted that having their own room and bathroom, and a space that felt like theirs, was key to having a feeling of independence and privacy. Houses that were owned, rather than rented by, transitional housing supports allowed youth to decorate the space and make it their own; it also allowed service providers the ability to renovate as needed, such as building additional suites or adding an additional bathroom.

Transitional housing services faced numerous barriers to providing consistent, adequate housing. If the housing they provide is rented, they face risk of eviction or non-renewal of the lease. When finding new rental housing, service providers face landlord discrimination and misconceptions about the property being used as transitional housing. **Lack of sustainable funding** negatively impacted service providers' ability to maintain adequate space and property to run their service. Some, thus, charged rent to youth below market rate, which they could waive or receive late if they owned, rather than rented, the property. Providers of wrap-around supports similarly **struggled to secure a physical property** out of which to run drop-in and community-based services.

Some youth faced ongoing barriers to housing stability once living in transitional housing. Some of these barriers were due to policies, rules, and practices that lead to youth being removed from or leaving the home prior to a planned transition. **Policies, practices, and staff that were not trauma-informed** and prepared to support youth who had experienced chronic homelessness made them feel unsupported and staff underequipped: *"when people get into safe spaces it's a known fact that that's when the trauma surfaces and the behaviour surfaces."* **Insufficient or inappropriate codified policies, training and built-in supports** also related to

individual/interpersonal factors, such as conflict with other youth and struggling to adapt to a consistent housing environment in which they would *"self-sabotage."*

Meeting youth's holistic needs

Part of, and a function of, stabilizing housing relates to **access to wrap-around services and supports**. In transitional housing, many expressed a goal of supporting youth in accessing safe and affirming services by other providers, and feeling supported throughout this process. The service providers we spoke to addressed these needs in two main ways: 1) staff have flexible roles to assist youth based on their individual needs; and 2) helping youth access external services/providers.

Most staff described having a **flexible role as support workers or case managers** who *"[were] whatever youth need."* This ranged from helping youth overcome access barriers to education, employment, income, healthcare, transitional care, and more, by helping them navigate application processes, pay documentation fees, connect them to services, and gain knowledge and skills for independence. Service providers also reported **advocating for and accompanying youth** to medical appointments, with healthcare professionals, parents, and schools. This was a support that many youth, including those who had never accessed formal services, had wished was available to them while navigating independent housing and homelessness. One youth recalled the powerful impact of receiving this support: *"Staff were there to support me in what seems like miniscule actions but were integral to healing."*

When staff were unable to provide a service themselves, they would often refer youth to external providers and organizations. However, all service providers we spoke to acknowledged the **lack of external services** available to refer to. In other cases, there is a notable lack of services altogether, meaning youth must travel or move out of the transitional housing to an area where they could access them. The **lack of existing services** is exacerbated for queer youth, as fewer service providers are 2SLGBTQ+ friendly/affirming, and even fewer provide specialized gender-affirming care that gender minority youth may need, such as hormone replacement therapy or gender reassignment surgery.

To navigate this dearth of services, all service providers we spoke to relied heavily on **partner networks and community connections**. Some have built these networks with time and experience, or belong to a parent organization that provides broader support. Others "vetted" service providers and partners to ensure they were 2SLGBTQ+ affirming. These networks provided shorter wait times, discounted fees, convenience, and safety in the referral process.

Provider approach and service environment

Most 2SLGBTQ+ youth served by the service providers we spoke to had faced identity-based rejection at some point in their lives, whether from family/friends/partners, roommates, employers, or other services. Throughout youths' housing journeys, their ability to freely explore, express, and celebrate their identities was a key factor that impacted their wellbeing, confidence, and connection to support networks within their community. Many 2SLGBTQ+-focused services, including transitional housing, had **connection to community and peers** as a core feature of their approach. This included living with other 2SLGBTQ+ youth, interacting with **staff with lived experience**, hosting and accompanying youth to community events, and connecting youth to mentors and leaders.

Service providers strove to **build genuine, meaningful relationships with youth** to build feelings of trust, safety, and security: *"I felt very heavily supported, [support worker] was a huge cheerleader for my victories and sorrows, experiences – it validated a lot for me."* This also allowed them to more freely express and explore their identities, made them feel more safe, and increased trust in the staff. Service providers nurtured these connections by normalizing conversations about identity, relationships, and sex with a **compassionate and non-judgmental approach** and with **practices supporting identity exploration** (such as checking in with pronouns regularly). In a non-2SLGBTQ+ focused shelter, one youth faced discrimination and harassment based on their identity, but remembers the impact of one staff member using their proper name and pronouns. Our findings also highlight the importance of recognizing the diversity of 2SLGBTQ+ youth and the various communities with which they may identify. For example, one Two-Spirit youth had benefited immensely from the guidance of a Two-Spirit staff member at a program they had accessed, especially in navigating and understanding their identity. Similarly, service providers identified **culturally-specific and safe approaches** to support Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer youth accessing their programs, including connecting youth with Elders and mentors, hiring Indigenous staff, creating a specific program role to support Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer youth, **integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and healing (**e.g., within services and programs, and facilitating access to ceremony.

Youth in transitional housing experienced gaps in care largely as a result of **staffing constraints** and lack of training. Not only are there too few staff to provide support to youth 24/7, but those who are available often lack knowledge and confidence as a result of **insufficient and inconsistent training**. Within and outside of transitional housing, some services **lack codified policies to address conflict and discrimination** among youth and between youth and staff. This can lead to a lack of trust from youth that there will be follow-through if issues are reported, and a lack of action when issues arise. Service providers described barriers to training such as a lack of time, funding, and access to experts and materials. For those receiving Ministry-funded training, most training was prescribed and covered the "bare minimum" and did not cover population- or service-specific needs. Programs found the flexibility to pivot and

implement training as needs arise helpful, while others rely on staff with lived experience to help design, locate, and deliver education. Staff, however, cautioned the possibility of burnout and undue burden on these staff, especially for a population often tasked with "educating allies."

Finally, service providers in transitional housing supports discussed the difficulty of providing holistic and sustainable care to youth. Many service providers and youth noted that **age caps and time limits** constrained youths' ability to move at their own pace, created anxiety, and led to youth exiting before they were ready to live more independently. Instead, **allowing youth to move at their own pace** and using **youth-led goals** to drive service provision was recommended by most service providers. One noted the particular importance of this practice, as forcing youth to participate in programming or use wrap-around supports had been met with resistance and backslide in the past. Service providers endorsed *"restructuring what it means to deliver these services"* so that youth maintain flexibility and autonomy in their own journeys. However, they also noted that funding often constrained this ability; some funding prescribes mandatory programming, and often define what "success" looks like for youth – whether as participation in programs or length of service use. In particular, funding for transitional programs tends to be short-term in comparison to how long the service is needed, but *"funders expect results"* in order to renew funding. Others noted that mandatory and prescribed participation in group homes are a function of the colonial systems and structures in which they operate, citing *"decolonizing 2SLGBTQ+ housing"* as an important step in this direction.

Transitioning out of services

The process by which, and when, youth transition out of services has an impact on the sustainability of their independence. It was noted that "success," and the determination whether a youth is ready to move out of transitional housing or leave another service, is incredibly individual. Most transitional service providers again emphasized the importance of youth-led progression, often with check-ins and goal setting to work together until the youth felt they were ready. In general, service providers classified "successful" transitions as those that led to youth securing and maintaining independent housing, or another appropriate type of supported housing, whereas re-entry into homelessness, shelter use, or couch surfing indicated that further support was needed. Positive transitions were described by youth and service providers with two key features: whether youth feel (and are) equipped and optimistic about moving towards independent housing, and whether **youth have a "safety net" when leaving services**. Youth acquired confidence and independence through increased stability in employment, education, health, and skills such as budgeting and knowledge of tenant laws to navigate and recognize rental discrimination. Service providers noted that confidence in oneself and identity was also an indicator of longer-term success, built by connection to and pride in their community, and increased confidence self-advocating. **Assisting with the next step**, such as finding independent housing or acquiring furniture was also helpful. However, youth who had **continued support**

and networks to help them transition into and maintain independent housing was also important. Some service providers "leave the door open" to youth such that they can continue to receive a level of support necessary until it is no longer needed. Building in services that last for youth is also key; connecting youth to continued wrap-around services, building strong networks to communities and service providers that youth can maintain on their own, and teaching youth how to find and access supports if they move to a new location all contribute to a wider safety net of support.

Negative experiences in transitions out of services were marked by departure before the youth felt ready to leave and a **lack of viable options and opportunities to move forward**. **Age caps** were the most notable barrier to youth maintaining service support until they were equipped to live more independently. A lack of viable supports to transition to, or a warm hand-off to those supports, often meant youth may be forced into independent housing before they are stable enough to maintain it, or end up moving 'backwards'. Youth and service providers noted a **lack of targeted services across housing types**; for example, social housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth was not available to transition into as a step toward independent living. In one example, a youth aged out of one program, but there were no similar programs available at the same level of support for the next age group. One Two-Spirit youth cycled through multiple shelters and group homes for this reason: *"There would be these lulls where my [social] worker would say 'well this is your only option so you're going to go stay in x shelter.' And some of those were domestic violence shelters for women but they just had no where to put me, so they'd pop me somewhere so I had somewhere [to stay]."*

More broadly, the **lack of affordable independent rentals** and **high cost of living** meant that youth leaving independent housing may have few options ahead of them: *"as a young adult transitioning out of supportive housing, the biggest issue was the accessibility of financially-affordable housing."* Like other youth, they may face income insecurity and a lack of safety and housing stability as a result of unaffordable housing, even when they have stable income/employment supports.

INTERCONNECTIVITY OF KEY BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO ACCESSING HOUSING

The degree to which 2SLGBTQ+ youth have the opportunity to access adequate housing is influenced by many interconnected individual, contextual, market, and policy/systems-level factors (Figure 9). These factors include individual access to financial resources, formal and informal supports and networks, and knowledge and confidence about how to advocate for one's own rights in the housing and other sectors. At community/contextual levels, the availability of and investment in queer-friendly, queer-tailored, and queer-inclusive supports, including inclusive healthcare and gender-affirming care, dictates the menu of options for 2SLGBTQ+

youth who may require informal and formal supports. Finally, the municipal, regional, provincial/territorial, and federal landscape of regulations influence the degree to which housing markets adhere to guidelines that protect individuals against discrimination, and sudden evictions, unreasonable requirements, and unsafe/illegal housing circumstances.

Figure 9   Key factors influencing youths' housing experiences and transitions

2SLGBTQ+ youth face trade-offs to secure housing

The nature of the trade-offs 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported making in order to have *any* type of housing – including precarious and unsafe housing – were wide-ranging, and notably severe. For example, youth reported trading off personal physical safety in order to have shelter, having to choose the degree to which they conceal their queer identity(ies), trading off food for shelter or utilities, and shelter for healthcare. Youth reported continuously having to factor their identity(ies) at a formative age/stage of life, into a complex calculus of surviving precarity, searching for more safety, stability, and security within housing arrangements, and meeting

other basic needs for survival such as food and healthcare, and safe social connections. Each factor acts as a lever, and is inextricably linked with other factors and decision-points.

With the rising cost of living and without reliable access to income, 2SLGBTQ+ youth struggled intensely to transition towards more stable housing. Poverty, income insecurity, and a lack of affordable housing were among the most urgent challenges for many participants in their housing journeys, with major consequences in terms of housing mobility. Other youth shared similar periods of struggling to afford rent, food, and other necessities, in some cases unbeknownst to friends, family members, employers, or landlords. Paid employment had not necessarily shielded 2SLGBTQ+ youth from these challenges; even when working full time or multiple part-time jobs, some youth still struggled to make ends meet. Youths' housing journeys were intimately informed by their access to economic and household resources, including income, food, and hygiene facilities - and most often, a lack thereof. This often began early in youths' housing journeys: for instance, one participant had been kicked out of their parents' house suddenly, and was forced to leave without any possessions or personal savings. Periods of homelessness or transition were punctuated by major barriers to accessing shower facilities or food. Some youth also identified the hidden costs of being unhoused, from being unable to accumulate and store possessions to the higher price of food that does not require refrigeration or cooking.

In some cases, the resources gained through a job extended beyond a paycheque: one had stayed at their workplace during periods of being unhoused without their employer's knowledge, while another relied heavily on the gender-affirming healthcare (i.e., hormone replacement therapy) offered through their employee benefits. Others had engaged in survival strategies such as sex work, selling drugs, or theft to meet basic needs. Most commonly, 2SLGBTQ+ youth had to rely on a combination of sources to support themselves through their housing journeys.

Ultimately each participant reported high levels and long periods of time throughout which they faced extreme income insecurity, and as a result, the inability to control, choose, or predict where, if, or how they would access housing.

CO-DESIGNING SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REVISITING AND REVISING THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

From early on in this project, we opted to use the housing continuum as a framework to guide and anchor our findings (see the illustration below). While several variations exist, the housing continuum has gained prominence as a framework that broadly refers to the range of available housing options available within a community. Typically, a successful housing system is characterized by individuals' progression through this continuum: "people need to move along the housing continuum to make sure everyone's needs are met" (IHA, 2017; United Way Halifax, 2020).

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

HOMELESSNESS — EMERGENCY SHELTER — TRANSITIONAL HOUSING — SUPPORTIVE HOUSING — COMMUNITY HOUSING — AFFORDABLE HOUSING — MARKET HOUSING

Source: CMHC, 2018

Our findings and those of others have highlighted the distinct and often disadvantaged nature of 2SLGBTQ+ youths' housing experiences and journeys. However - despite its prominence as a way to characterize experiences and measure progress - our findings suggest the housing continuum is limited in its capacity to meaningfully reflect the realities of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. As it stands, the housing continuum serves to misrepresent or omit entirely defining characteristics of 2SLGBTQ+ youths' housing journeys, including those we spoke with and those represented in research elsewhere. More specifically, we summarize limitations and tensions that arose in our research across four key areas below.

Omission of key housing types

Most variations of the housing continuum include housing types similar to those presented above. While some of these categorizations did resonate with our participants (e.g., transitional housing, market rental), all youth we spoke with described key moments in their housing journeys that were imperfectly represented on the continuum, if at all. For instance, the early housing experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., living with parents, foster care) are not well accounted for within this framework, despite their major role in shaping journeys and outcomes,

particularly for youth and emerging adults. This omission has been noted elsewhere; for example, "childhood housing" – including family shelter/housing and foster care/group homes – was noted in journeys of youth born and raised in Canada for the role it plays in key drivers of housing precarity (Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth, 2020). In our study, youth made clear distinctions between the housing situations that immediately preceded their transition into independent living (at any place on the continuum) and those later on, even where these technically constituted the same type of housing. Couch-surfing is another type of shelter or housing that is difficult to place on the continuum, despite its prevalence among 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Abromovich & Pang, 2020). As a form of hidden homelessness, 2SLGBTQ+ youth who are couch-surfing may not identify or be counted as homeless (Norris & Quilty, 2020; McCready, 2017). At the same time, couch-surfing is not necessarily captured elsewhere, making it hard to place on the existing framework. As noted above, university or scholarly residence, which may represent a key transitional stage to living independently for some youth, is also omitted. Lastly, 2SLGBTQ+ youth residing in institutional settings may struggle to see themselves reflected in the current continuum. Because 2SLGBTQ+ young people are disproportionately impacted by criminalization as well as the mental health and substance use crisis, many may spend periods living in jails, prisons, hospitals, or rehabilitation/detox centres. Service providers' accounts of limited organizational and/or staff capacity to adequately support high-needs youth in transitional or supportive housing offers additional context for this finding. These residences are challenging to place on the continuum, particularly given the varied circumstances, duration, and perspectives of these experiences among youth.

Oversimplification of housing pathways

The current continuum depicts a linear and straightforward pathway through housing that - while arguably unrealistic for most individuals - appears especially at odds with 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences. As a result, it risks obscuring the complexity of 2SLGBTQ+ youths' housing journeys. Youth described a high degree of transience, highlighting brief and recurring stays with friends between periods of sleeping rough or renting, as well as cycling through shelters, transitional houses, or rental units. Many shared experiences that suggested moving forward and backward along the continuum, sometimes in drastic ways (e.g., becoming homeless after attaining market housing). Several also described "skipping" certain housing types as they progressed through housing or in their entirety, in some cases due to a lack of awareness or availability. To this end, both service providers and youth noted the absence of supportive, community, or affordable housing options - both for 2SLGBTQ+ youth and more generally. As a result, the transition from stages earlier in the housing continuum to market housing may require youth to make a much bigger leap.

Lack of context

Part of the appeal of the housing continuum is its simplicity; however, this also presents its own challenges. Without recognizing the context in which it operates, this type of framework risks perpetuating the assumption that access to and progression through various housing types is distributed equitably within society. In reality, 2SLGBTQ+ youth are over- or underrepresented in different types of housing; they also face a range of distinct, structural barriers to transitioning through the continuum. However, these barriers - along with the systems that produce them - are nowhere to be found.

Assumptions about desired outcomes

Lastly, the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth complicated and problematized the assumptions about desirability that underpin the housing continuum. 2SLGBTQ+ youth questioned whether any movement along the housing continuum should unequivocally be viewed as progress, pointing to instances where youth may view experiences towards the beginning of the continuum more favourably than those towards the end. Youths' widespread experiences with unsafe, unsustainable, or unaffordable rental housing remain invisible in a housing continuum that considers market rentals to be among the best possible outcomes and represents them as a single state. The youth we spoke were also skeptical of home ownership as the ultimate aim depicted in many versions of the housing continuum; market ownership was often viewed as aspirational rather than an attainable goal.

PROTOTYPING A QUEER-CENTERED CONTINUUM

Ultimately, there appear to be some significant implications of using the housing continuum as a mechanism for understanding of or measurement in the context of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. The continuum largely obscures the messiness and complexity of 2SLGBTQ+ youths' journeys, prescribes norms and expectations that may not resonate with 2SLGBTQ+ youth themselves, and may further marginalize the distinct experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Recognizing this, we sought opportunities to adapt or create a version of the housing continuum that more closely reflected the experiences and journeys of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Following initial interviews with both youth and service providers, we presented a revised version of the housing continuum in follow-up discussions with youth for discussion and validation, and then went on to incorporate this feedback. The result is a prototype representing a potential alternative to the housing continuum in the context of 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Figure 10). This prototype resonated with the youth we spoke to, who validated the organizing principle and key categories. We continue to refine and discuss this model with the youth, as well as the distinction between

adequate and inadequate housing, and the concept of 'ideal' housing. An updated model will is provided in the subsequent integrated report.

Figure 10   Prototype of an alternate housing continuum for 2SLGBTQ+ youth
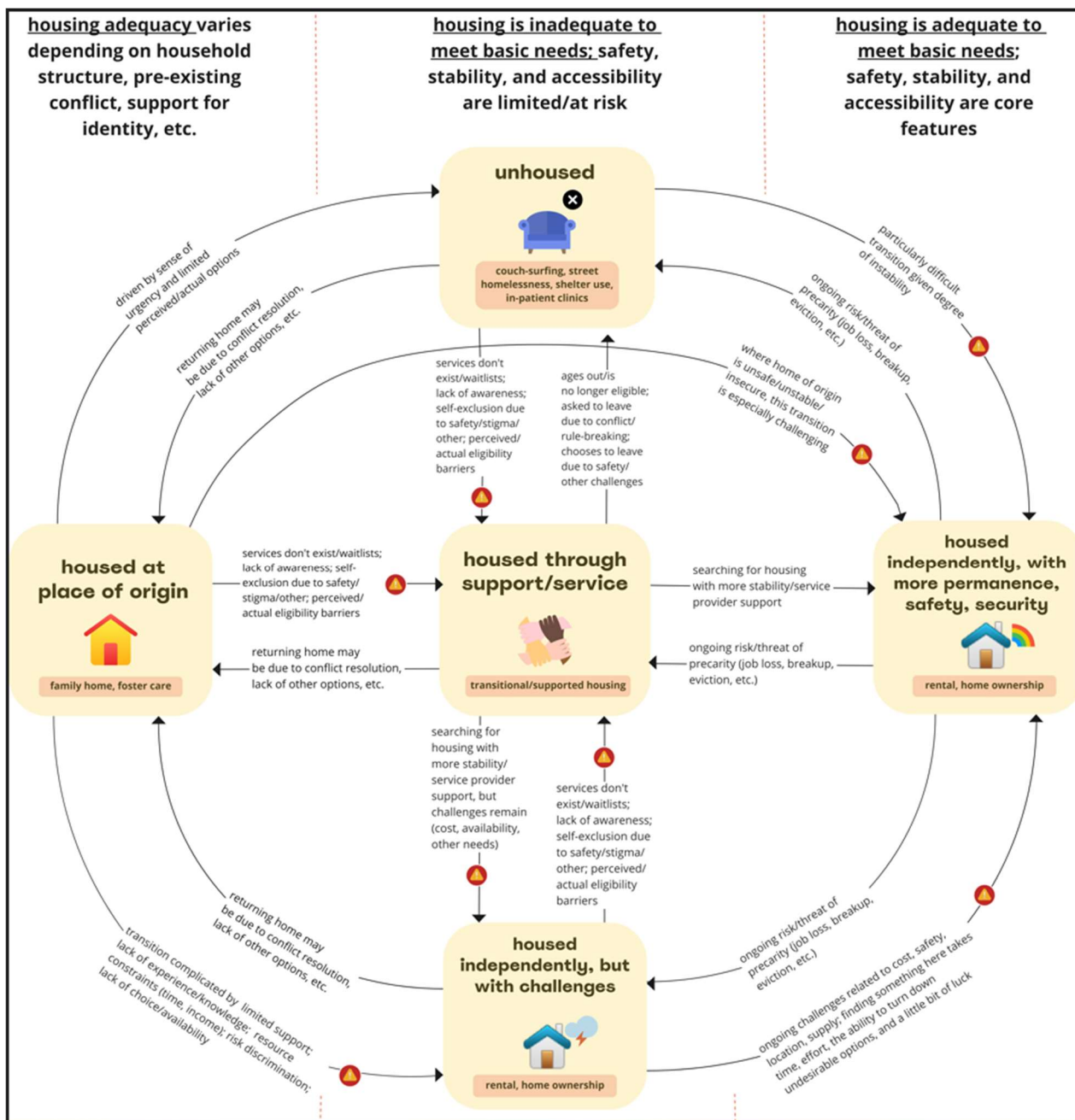
The first column represents a youths' **place of origin**, which may include a family home or foster care. Experiences in this stage differ among youth; while some have positive experiences characterized by safety and material support, many experiences in and contextual features of youths' place of origin impacted their journey into housing precarity and instability, including experiences of trauma, poverty, identity-based rejection, violence/abuse, substance use, and mental illness.

The second column represents the various stages/phases of housing that are associated, to different extents, with features of housing precarity (including instability, insecurity, and unsustainability). Experiences in and drivers between being **unhoused** (including homelessness, couch-surfing, emergency/temporary shelter); **housed through a support/service** (which were viewed as more permanent than couch surfing or shelter access, but often still 'temporary', in that many supportive housing options currently available to youth are not designed nor equipped to provide long-term or permanent housing); and living in **"independent"** housing that the youth rent or own, are widely characterized by trade-offs. 2SLGBTQ+ youth are forced to make difficult decisions about what to sacrifice in order to secure and retain housing (e.g., leaving a middle-income but transphobic family to couch-surf; living with a violent partner because living alone is unaffordable, etc.) and feel their housing inadequately meets their basic needs.

The third column represents 2SLGBTQ+ youths' notions of housing adequacy – e.g., what is safe, stable, and secure *enough* – which are fundamentally shaped by their past experiences and what they perceive to be available to them. Many youth are still making trade-offs in this stage, and this is often still far from their ideal or best-case housing situation.

Youth explored the possibility of adding a forth column to depict "ideal" housing, distinct from the third column as they no longer feel they are making trade-offs or desire further movement in their housing journeys. For most youth, this was represented by home ownership and characterized by an ideal location, and living with their partner, children, and/or pets. This was heavily interconnected to what youth identified as the key features of "adequate" housing, which will be explored and presented in in the subsequent integrated report.

Key features and distinctions from the linear housing continuum include:

- **Shifting away from structuring the continuum based on the type/form of housing and towards the quality, characteristics, and acceptability of housing**. Housing "adequacy" and perceived stability was often a more meaningful marker for youth, and allows for more differentiation between the same "types" of housing/shelter that in reality produce very different levels of housing precarity (i.e., the difference between an "inadequate" and "adequate" or "good" rental. However, the features of housing that distinguish whether housing is adequate or inadequate, vary significantly based on individuals' needs, goals, and

experiences. Youth were very clear that the distinction between these types of housing – represented at the bottom of column two and in column three – is crucial, and we continue to investigate with youth how these distinctions may be represented.

- **More intentionally visualizing youths' movements through housing**, the complexity this entails, and the multi-directionality of this. This includes representing journeys that are multi-directional, cycle through different experiences within the same housing "type" (e.g., unhoused"), and do not necessarily include experiences in each stage. We have begun to demonstrate the supporting and inhibiting drivers of transitions, and where these transitions may be especially difficult, with the youth involved in this study. In next steps, we will continue to refine and co-design this model.

DREAMING BIG: SOLUTIONS AND PATHWAYS FORWARD

In our conversations with both 2SLGBTQ+ youth and service providers, we sought participants' thoughts on solutions that might support better housing experiences and outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. These discussions elicited a rich array of ideas and suggestions than span diverse levels (e.g., structural, organizational, individual), housing stages (e.g., emergency shelters, renting), and audiences (e.g., service providers, policymakers). In many cases, solutions that were shared responded to specific gaps, barriers, or challenges in participants' own experiences. In other instances, they represented a bold vision to build something better. Most - if not all - are aligned with existing recommendations that have been forwarded by researchers, civil society, and advocates.

Synthesized and organized across six overarching themes, the ideas, recommendations, and solutions identified by 2SLGBTQ+ youth and service providers in our conversations are presented subsequently. The quantity and breadth of solutions put forward by participants reflect their passion, expertise, and commitment to this issue, as well as the clear urgency and complexity in addressing it. In some cases, youth struggled to identify ways forward as a function of their own experiences: *"I've kind of been pushed into this corner where I can only think in really practical terms, because I've had everything else kind of stripped away...I hope others can certainly dream big about what the future might look like."*

While the ideas shared below are intended to be specific and direct, many emerged from higher-order questions and objectives that emerged through our conversations: *How can the housing system and actors within it better acknowledge and respond to the systemic and structural nature of 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences? What strategies exist to shift the balance of power towards 2SLGBTQ+ youth facing homelessness or housing insecurity? How can resources be directed to 2SLGBTQ+ youth and those best-placed to support them? What is or should be the role of community care in pursuing housing equity for 2SLGBTQ+ youth?* And lastly, *what do*

future housing systems, services, and policies grounded in anti-oppressive, justice, empathy, and compassion look like? The following proposals only begin to grapple with these considerations.

Educating, knowledge-sharing, and awareness-building

- Provide **education and training for service providers, landlords, and other actors** within the housing system interacting with 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including on equity and anti-oppression, affirming and including 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and human rights and legal obligations: *"I wish [service providers] wouldn't have been uneducated so it wouldn't have been my job to explain everything."*

- Ensure that 2SLGBTQ+ youth are **aware of the formal services and supports available to them,** and that this information is readily available and shared in the appropriate fora: *"There's not a lot of readily accessible information about who the contact people are, or where the supports are, or what they even do."*

- Pursue strategies to **encourage service uptake and reduce self-exclusion** among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including through 1) building broader understanding of the causes and experiences of housing instability and insecurity, 2) combating stigma and shame associated with poverty, homelessness, and/or service use, and 3) ensuring 2SLGBTQ+ youth see their experiences reflected in eligibility criteria, particularly given high rates of hidden homelessness: *"I think it's quite a common experience, especially within minority groups...there's someone worse off than me that needs it more. If there was a resource like...'this is what you're experiencing, you deserve help with that, and here's a program that can help...' Targeting the right audience instead of just 'this is available for people who need it': you need to define what the person who needs it looks like."*

- Establish or strengthen **formal and informal channels for 2SLGBTQ+ youth to access information** about housing opportunities, services, landlords, and/or roommates. Social media platforms dedicated to 2SLGBTQ+ housing, crowdsourced information about safe landlords or buildings (e.g., something similar to Rate My Professors), and related approaches were identified as actual or potential ways to equip 2SLGBTQ+ youth with knowledge about where, from whom, and with whom they live or access services: *"I have this tiny Facebook group for a safe housing network. But it would be cool if that existed on like a wider scale...maybe there's an organization that can approve a rental company or approve a landlord as being queer-friendly...and then people who are looking to rent could look for that stamp of approval and be like, 'okay, someone's already researched this for me. I know that if I rent through this person, then I don't have to hide myself. I can just be open about who I am."*

- Build **knowledge and capacity among 2SLGBTQ+ youth** via accessible workshops or materials on tenant rights, budgeting and financial management (e.g., paying bills, filing income tax), applying for and accessing benefits (e.g., social assistance), and navigating the mental health system.

Strengthening formal housing services and supports

- Improve the **availability, flexibility, sustainability, generosity of funding** for housing and related services, programs, and supports for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Funding opportunities should reflect the need for permanent services that offer predictability for both providers and youth. Relatedly, there is a need for greater funding that covers administrative or overhead costs (e.g., physical space or buildings, staff).

- Implement **existing promising practices and policies** related to housing services for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including those involving staff education and training, gender inclusion, harassment and violence, anonymity and privacy, and so on.

- Establish more **population-specific housing options and services** tailored to 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Population-specific supports should also reflect the diversity of backgrounds, needs, and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth: this could mean offering supports than span various housing types (e.g., shelters, transitional homes, educational residences, rental apartments), offer youth choice in terms of approach (e.g., harm reduction as well as abstinence-based models), and create dedicated space for specific youth (e.g., gender minority youth, Two-Spirit and Indigequeer youth).

- Normalize the expectation that **all housing and related services, supports, and programs be inclusive and safe for 2SLGBTQ+ youth**. This is in addition to any population-specific supports: while these were described as crucial, a "no wrong door" approach should ensure that 2SLGBTQ+ youth are supported and affirmed regardless of where they may go.

- Explore additional opportunities to **build sector capacity** to design and implement housing services for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., fora for sharing promising practices and lessons learned, guidance for those seeking to establish population-specific programs, etc.).

- Consider ways to increase the **representation of 2SLGBTQ+ people in frontline service delivery roles**, recognizing the value and importance of lived experience in these positions.

- Establish **dedicated positions or roles** within housing-related services, for instance outreach workers, counsellors, or housing support workers focused primarily or exclusively on 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

- Explore opportunities to **reduce strict eligibility criteria or conditions** for accessing formal services, for instance eliminating strict requirements regarding substance abstinence or extending eligible age ranges: *"There's a lot of youth groups that are only up to 18 or 24. That doesn't always cut it: there's some of us who are still 30 and under that could really use these supports."* Relatedly, service providers should seek to recognize and mitigate bias during application and intake processes, recognizing that some 2SLGBTQ+ youth accessing services may not align with stereotypes or expectations about the "typical" client.

- Expand the **breadth and scope of housing-related programs and supports** available to 2SLGBTQ+ youth through formal services. Examples shared included pro bono legal support, help finding and securing housing, donations or community swaps for furniture and homeware items, and advocacy in interactions with landlords or in the rental market more broadly: *"They could give me a list of landlords to contact, but I had that information...I needed some advocacy; I needed help to be able to actually get into a space."*

Fostering kinship, community, and natural supports

- Facilitate more opportunities for **peer mentorship and support** among 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

- Improve access to **institutional, structural, and financial support for community-led, grassroots initiatives** supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth: *"In an ideal world LGBT people wouldn't have to be the ones looking out for each other...But I think that's kind of how it works. That's kind of what community care is, and community care is so foundational to everything that we do. I think if there was a group of people who are willingly advocates, and that's what they do...then they could create something like that to help support other people."*

- Support initiatives that enable 2SLGBTQ+ communities and youth to **socialize and connect with one another**, including through dedicated physical space that is accessible and age-inclusive.

- Seek opportunities for the housing system to acknowledge, validate, support, and strengthen **queer kinship and chosen family** in the housing journeys of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth to thrive

- Improve access to and quality of **mental health care** that is appropriate, affirming, and inclusive of 2SLGBTQ+ people and youth.

- Support 2SLGBTQ+ youth to **access and succeed in employment**, including at the service delivery (e.g., wrap-around supports or grants to support career transitions), employer (e.g.,

education and training, workplace flexibility and accessibility), and policy (e.g., living wage laws, stronger anti-discrimination legislation) levels.

- Pursue policy responses to **poverty and income insecurity** among 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., introducing a basic income guarantee, improving access to and generosity of provincial social assistance programs).

- Provide additional **in-kind supports** to 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing housing instability or insecurity, including those improving food security (e.g., grocery store gift cards), access to technology (e.g., cell phone), and affirming gender expression (e.g., binders, clothing).

Creating more just housing systems

- Treat 2SLGBTQ+ youth as a **distinct and priority population** within federal housing policy and funding envelopes.

- Provide 2SLGBTQ+ youth with **direct and targeted income assistance** at key moments in their housing journeys. This could include financial support for those leaving unsafe housing, renters (e.g., urgent rent support, money for security deposits), or first-time home buyers, and could be coordinated by government, non-profit, or community-based actors.

- Reduce **barriers to rental and ownership** for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, for instance through alternate or more flexible approaches to credit scoring, debt or student loan relief, or other opportunities to help youth qualify for a lease or mortgage.

- Invest in **Housing First approaches** to respond to 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness.

- Pursue policy interventions that **mitigate power imbalances between landlords and 2SLGBTQ+ youth renters**. This includes improvements to anti-discrimination and tenants rights legislation that favours 2SLGBTQ+ youth renters, more accessible and equitable complaint processes, and stronger enforcement and accountability measures targeting landlords.

- Increase the **supply of available and accessible housing** for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. This involves the introduction of new affordable and subsidized/rent-geared-to-income units as well as stronger regulation of existing developments (e.g., restrictions on short-term rentals such as Airbnb).

- Protect 2SLGBTQ+ youth and all renters against **unsustainable and unpredictable rent increases** (e.g., via stronger rent control policy).

- Explore opportunities for **2SLGBTQ+ youth to directly inform Canada's housing system** by drawing on their own lived experience, as well as to be compensated for these contributions. This could take the form of advisory groups, individual consultants, or wider consultation to seek input on housing policy, programs, and related endeavours.

- Seek opportunities to **institutionalize 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion** across the housing system, including among service providers, banking professionals, developers, and policymakers.

Addressing research and knowledge gaps

- Continue to support research on the **housing journeys, experiences, needs, and successes of 2SLGBTQ+ youth**. In particular, pursue research that adopts an intersectional approach and that invites further nuance and specificity through a more narrow focus on particular histories, identities, or contexts. For example, future research could explore the distinct housing experiences and journeys of 2SLGBTQ+ youth who are neurodivergent, trans or non-binary, trauma survivors, or who live in remote, rural, northern, or on-reserve settings.

- Prioritize **inclusive, participatory, and community-based research** that is informed by 2SLGBTQ+ youth (*"asking queer folks about their experience and what we need to move forward"*), meaningfully engages affected communities, and that values lived experience as a valid and necessary contribution to evidence generation.

NEXT STEPS

We are continuing to co-create and refine 2SLGBTQ+ youth characterizations of adequate housing, and individual, program, and policy-level implications of both Phases 1 and 2. In our final project report, together with youth collaborators, we will:

- present and contextualize the findings of Phase 2 within the broader systems and policy landscape, including findings from the Phase 1 knowledge synthesis;

- provide a finalized 2SLGBTQ+ youth-centered housing journey framework;

- present 2SLGBTQ+ youth-identified conceptualizations of 'inadequate', 'adequate', and 'ideal' housing.

REFERENCES

Abramovich, A. (2014). *Young, Queer and Trans, Homeless, and Besieged: A Critical Action Research Study of How Policy and Culture Create Oppressive Conditions for LGBTQ Youth in Toronto's Shelter System*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Abramovich, A. & Shelton, J. (2017). Introduction: Where are we now? In A. Abramovich & J. Shelton (Eds.), Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S. (pp. 1-12). Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Abramovich, A. (2019). *Creating LGBTQ2S Inclusive, Affirming, and Safe PiT counts.* The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness & CAMH. Retrieved from: https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/creating-lgbtq2s-inclusive-affirming-and-safe-pit-counts

Abramovich, A. & Pang, N. (2020). Understanding LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in York Region Report. Retrieved from: https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/understanding-lgbtq2s-youth-homelessness-york-region

Alabi B, Appiah A, Brennan K, et al. (2022). Safe, stable, long-term: supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum. *Phase 1 Report*. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.

Bate, P., & Robert, G. (2007). Bringing User Experience to Healthcare Improvement: The Concepts, Methods and Practices of Experience-based Design. Radcliffe Publishing.

Bowen, S., McSeveny, K., Lockley, E., Wolstenholme, D., Cobb, M., & Dearden, A. (2013). How was it for you? Experiences of participatory design in the UK health service. *CoDesign*, *9*(4), 230-246.

Buchanan, D. R., Miller, F. G., & Wallerstein, N. (2007). Ethical issues in community-based participatory research: balancing rigorous research with community participation in community intervention studies. *Progress in community health partnerships: research, education, and action*, *1*(2), 153-160.

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness [CMHC]. (2016). Canadian Definition of Youth Homelessness. Homeless Hub. https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/canadian-definition-youthhomelessness

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation [CMHC]. (2018). *Canada's National Housing Strategy.* Retrieved from: https://www.placetocallhome.ca/what-is-the-strategy

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation [CMHC]. (2019). About Affordable Housing in Canada. Retrieved from: https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/affordable-housing-in-canada

Cargo, M., & Mercer, S. L. (2008). The value and challenges of participatory research: strengthening its practice. *Annual Review of Public Health,* 29, 325-350.

Collins, P.H. (2015). Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology, 41*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142

Cousins, J. B., & Earl, L. M. (1992). The case for participatory evaluation. Educational evaluation and policy analysis, 14(4), 397-418.

Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth. (2020). Young person's journey into and out of housing precarity [electronic resource]: new to Canada. https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/archive/publications/nhs/solution_labs/nhs-2-2_kp_journey-into-and-out-of-homelesness_archetypal-maps_final.pdf

Frederick, T. J., Chwalek, M., Hughes, J. R., Karabanow, J., & Kidd, S. A. (2014). How stable is stable? Defining and measuring housing stability. *Journal of Community Psychology, 42*(8), 964-979. 10.1002/jcop.21665

Gates, T. (2017). Chosen families. In J. Carlson, & S. Dermer (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of marriage, family, and couples counseling,* 1, 240-242. SAGE Publications.

Hackett C.L., Mulvale G., Miatello A. (2018). Co-designing for quality: Creating a user-driven tool to improve quality in youth mental health services. *Health Expectations*, 21(6), 1013-1023. doi:10.1111/hex.12694

International Housing Association [IHA]. (2017). IHA Housing Continuum: Working draft 4.0. https://www.internationalhousingassociation.org/fileUpload_details.aspx?contentTypeID=3&contentID=259600&subContentID=706095&channelID=38488

Johnston-Goodstar, K. (2012). A funny thing happened at the internship today: A reflection on ethical dilemmas, decision-making, and consequences of a questionable field work situation. Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping, 18(2), 60-63.

McCready, L. T. (2017). Black Queer Youth, Unstable Housing and Homelessness: Understanding the Impact of Family Conflict, School and Community-Based Violence on Racialized LGBTQ2S Youth. In A. Abramovich & J. Shelton (Eds.), Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S. (pp. 205-216). Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Mulvale, A.; Miatello, A.; Hackett, C.; and Mulvale, G. (2016) "Applying experience-based co-design with vulnerable populations: Lessons from a systematic review of methods to involve patients, families and service providers in child and youth mental health service improvement," Patient Experience Journal, 3(1), 15.

Norris, M. & Quilty, A. (2020). Unreal, unsheltered, unseen, unrecorded: The multiple invisibilities of LGBTQI+ homeless youth. Critical Social Policy, 41(3), 468-490. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0261018320953328

Paradies, Y. (2016). Colonisation, racism and indigenous health. Journal of Population Research, 33(1), 83-96.

Pruden, H., & Salway, T. (20020) What and Who Is Two-Spirit? In Health Research. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Retrieved from: https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52214.html

Ross, L.E.& Khanna, A. (2017). What are the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+) people that should be addressed by Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy (CPRS)? Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Toronto, Canada. Retrieved from http://lgbtqhealth.ca/projects/docs/prsjointsubmission.pdf

Statistics Canada. (2016). Study: Hidden Homelessness in Canada, 2014. The Daily. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/161115/dq161115b-eng.htm

Tew, J. (2002). Going social: Championing a holistic model of mental distress within professional education. Social Work Education, 21(2), 143–155.

The 519. (2020). *The 519's Glossary of Terms, facilitating shared understanding around equity, diversity, inclusion and awareness.* The 519. https://www.the519.org/education-training/glossary

United Way Halifax. (2020). What is the housing continuum? Retrieved from: https://www.unitedwayhalifax.ca/blog/what-is-the-housing-continuum/

Wallerstein, N. B., & Duran, B. (2006). Using community-based participatory research to address health disparities. *Health promotion practice*, *7*(3), 312-323.

Woolley, E. (2015). *What studies have been done on queer and/or trans* youth seeking long-term housing?* The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. Retrieved from: https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/what-studies-have-been-done-queer-andor-trans-youth-seeking-long-term-housing

APPENDIX A: KEY TERMS

2SLGBTQ+: An acronym that stands for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, with the "+" representing all other gender and sexual minority identities (e.g., Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Non-binary, Questioning). Other acronyms used to refer to the sexual and gender minority community include 2SLGBTQQIAA+, 2SLGBTQIA+, LGBTQ2S+, LGBTQ2IA+, LGBTQ+, LGBTQ, LGBTQ2S, LGBT2SQ+, and LGBTQIA+. While this report uses the 2SLGBTQ+ acronym, other researchers, organizations, or institutions may use alternate acronyms based on their own organizational policies.

Chosen family: Emerging from 2SLGBTQ+ contexts, "chosen families are nonbiological kinship bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love" (Gates, 2017).

Cisgender: A term to describe someone whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth (e.g., someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman); the opposite of transgender (The 519, 2020).

Emergency shelters: Emergency shelters include overnight shelters and hotel stays for people who are homeless, as well as shelters and hotel stays for those impacted by family violence (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016).

Gender minority: People whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth, whether that's transgender men, transgender women, or non-binary people, who may or may not also identify as transgender (Brennan et al., 2021).

Hidden homelessness: Hidden homelessness refers to the experiences of living "without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing" (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016, p. 1). The distinction on surveys is often made, for example, between questions such as "Have you ever been homeless, that is, having to live in a shelter, on the street, or in an abandoned building?" to measure homelessness, and "Have you ever had to temporarily live with family or friends (i.e., couch surfing), in your car or anywhere else because you had nowhere else to live?" to measure hidden homelessness (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Homelessness: Homelessness describes individuals, families, or communities without "stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it", and the societal barriers and systemic issues that drive that lack of housing (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016, p. 2).

Home ownership: Home ownership in this report includes both affordable home ownership and market home ownership, and can include multi-unit and single family home ownership, or shared equity models such as mobile homes or housing cooperatives (CMHC, 2019).

Housing continuum: The housing continuum is a model of housing that delineates eight different housing experiences on a horizontal axis, from homeless on the far left, moving through emergency shelters, transitional housing, social housing, affordable rental housing, affordable home ownership, market rental housing, and ending at market home ownership on the far right. While the traditional supposition would be that individuals will move from left to right with homeownership as the ultimate goal, here we use the housing continuum as a more general way of identifying different housing scenarios, with the acknowledgment that movement along the continuum is not necessarily linear or unidirectional (CMHC, 2018).

| HOMELESS | EMERGENCY SHELTERS | TRANSITIONAL HOUSING | SOCIAL HOUSING | AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING | AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP | MARKET RENTAL HOUSING | MARKET HOME OWNERSHIP |

Housing instability: Definitionally, housing instability varies across sources, but generally encompasses a threat to housing security across such dimensions as housing type, housing history, housing tenure, financial status, legal standing, education and employment status, harmful substance use, and assessments of satisfaction and stability (Frederick et al., 2014). This can encompass a wide variety of experiences related to housing, including homelessness and shelter use, challenges with paying rent, overcrowding, safety concerns related to housing, frequently moving, or spending the majority of household income on housing.

Intersectionality: Grounded in Black feminist thought, intersectionality proposes that "race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive characteristics, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (Collins, 2015, p. 2).

Rental housing: Rental housing in this report refers to both affordable rental housing and market rental housing. This includes purposeful long-term rental units and private rentals, as well as different housing types (e.g., apartments, townhomes, single family homes, etc.) (CMHC, 2019).

Sexual minority: Sexual minority refers to individuals whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, etc.).

Social housing: Social housing refers to government-assisted housing that provides lower cost rental units to households with low-to-moderate incomes, including public housing, not-for-profit and cooperative housing, rent supplement programs, and rural and Indigenous housing programs.[74]

Transgender: Transgender describes someone whose sex assigned at birth is different than their gender identity. For instance, someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a man (trans man). Transgender is an umbrella term for those choosing to identify as such, and includes those who are trans binary (i.e. identify as transgender and as a man or woman) or trans non-binary (i.e. identify as transgender but not as either a man or woman, including genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, and so on) (Brennan et al., 2021).

Transitional housing: Transitional housing bridges the gap between unsheltered homelessness or emergency shelter accommodation and more permanent housing. Transitional housing typically also provides services beyond basic housing needs, offers more privacy for residents, and emphasizes social engagement, with a set time limit on accommodations (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016).

Two-Spirit: an English umbrella term coined by Indigenous members of the LGBTQ+ community that transcends Western and colonial ideas of gender and sexuality. Often used to describe someone who possesses both masculine and feminine spirits, Two-Spirit is a cultural term reserved only for those who identify as Indigenous (Pruden & Salway, 2020). Some Indigenous people identify as Two-Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer.

Youth: A broad definition of youth has been used in this report. No strict age limit or cut-off was imposed, but different sources referenced used a variety of age ranges, from under 18 years old to under 30 years old. When exact definitions of youth are used, they are referenced in the text.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW GUIDES

Note: Below is a summary of the topics and high-level questions contained in the interview guides used with youth and service providers; phrasing is condensed and does not include the introduction or consent script. Because interviews were semi-structured, not all participants discussed the same topics or addressed questions in the same order.

YOUTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE: SUMMARY

Introduction

1. **Tell me a little bit about yourself and your background.**

▪ Is there anything about yourself, like your gender, sexual orientation, age, cultural, or racial identity, whether you identify as disabled, the kind of community you live in, etc. that you would like to share?

▪ What province(s) are/were you in? Rural or urban?

2. **What does "safe, stable, and secure housing" mean to you?**

3. **What do you consider to be your 'end goal' or most ideal living situation?**

▪ What are your next steps? What needs to be in place to reach that goal?

Your housing journey

4. **If you were to think of your experiences with housing insecurity or instability as a story, where would it start? Then, we'll ask about your transition to the next type of housing, and what that was like, and so on, up to your current housing situation.**

▪ How did you get there? How did you find it? What was the transition like?

▪ Who else lived there?

▪ What was the experience in that housing – good/bad aspects?

▪ How long were you there? Why/how did you leave?

- What else was happening in your life – work, school, health, relationships, activities?

Supports throughout your housing journey

5. **Have you accessed formal supports?**

- If yes: what, when, how, why? What was the experience like? What made it good/bad?

- What informal supports helped you transition between or maintain housing?

6. **Were there times you needed supports but did not have/could not access them? Why? What was the impact?**

7. **How, if at all, do you think your gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or any other part of identity has affected your housing journey?**

- Were any supports especially relevant because of your identity?

- Were there things you felt you couldn't access, or supports you didn't have, because of your identity?

Conclusion

8. **What do you think needs to happen for all 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada to attain safer, more stable, and longer-term housing? In an ideal world, what changes would you like to see to make this a reality?**

9. **Other suggestions, comments, or questions?**

SERVICE PROVIDER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE: SUMMARY

Introduction

1. **Tell me a little bit about yourself, your role, and the organization you work with.**

2. **Who does your organization serve? Are there eligibility criteria/conditions to access?**

3. **What services/supports does your organization provide?**

- How do you promote services/do outreach? What is the intake process?

- How long do clients typically use your service? Why do youth typically leave your organization/stop accessing services? What tends to be the next stage for them? Can they re-enter/re-access the service later?

- Do you collaborate with other service providers or organizations? How do you decide who? What are the goals of these partnerships, and with what effects?

- (How) has Covid-19 impacted your organization or services?

Serving 2SLGBTQ+ Youth

4. **What does "safe, stable, and secure housing" for 2SLGBTQ+ youth mean to you?**

5. **Have you noticed any distinct/unique needs among 2SLGBTQ+ youth? How do you approach services differently for this population?**

- What have been the most important practices/considerations/supports in providing services to 2SLGBTQ+ youth? Which have made the biggest difference for the youth you serve?

- What challenges have you seen/experienced serving 2SLGBTQ+ youth? How have you addressed these as an organization/service provider? What has/has not worked?

- Are there any other "factors for success" you have noticed are especially important?

6. **Are there any other structural factors in place at your organization to help provide inclusive and effective services for 2SLGBTQ+ clients?**

- How were these policies/training programs/procedures/etc. developed? Were 2SLGBTQ+ service users/providers involved in the development?

7. **As a service provider, what would help your ability to serve 2SLGBTQ+ youth? Are there things you see those youth needing right now that you aren't able to provide?**

Conclusion

8. **What do you think needs to happen for all 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada to attain safer, more stable, and longer-term housing? In an ideal world, what changes would you like to see to make this a reality?**

9. **Other suggestions, comments, or questions?**