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

Phase 1 Report

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NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY | STRATÉGIE NATIONALE SUR LE LOGEMENT

Canada

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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.

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.

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

Emergency shelters: Emergency shelters include overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters 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 "people living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing" (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2017, 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, 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, 2019)

Housing instability: A general term that encompasses a wide variety of challenges related to housing, including homelessness and shelter use, as well as more general challenges with paying rent, overcrowding, 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).

Point-in-Time counts: The point-in-time counts are a Canadian community level measure of homelessness, including both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.

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).

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).

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 (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2021).

Survival sex: Survival sex is a form of sex work engaged in by a person because of their extreme need.

Transgender: Transgender refers to 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).

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.

INTRODUCTION

2SLGBTQ+ individuals, particularly youth, are more likely to experience poverty, housing instability, and 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 safe, stable, long-term 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 (2018) pointing to significant gaps in housing research on the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.   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).

THIS PROJECT

The project *Safe, Stable, Long-term: Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum* aims to address these gaps, guided by the following research question: **what are the barriers and facilitators of access to stable, safe, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth?**

This research is a collaboration between the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), and MENTOR Canada, and is funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

This project is occurring over multiple phases:

1. **Phase 1** includes a review of literature related to 2SLGBTQ+ experiences of housing instability, a review of secondary data collected through a national survey of youth, and Point-in-Time (PiT) counts, and a desk review and survey of service providers currently offering housing supports for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

2. **Phase 2** focuses on qualitative data collection with 2SLGBTQ+ youth with experiences of housing instability or access issues related to housing, as well as housing service providers working with 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

3. **Phase 3** runs parallel to phases 1 and 2, and involves the development of an advisory group to ensure that methodologies and findings are grounded in community contexts, and that results are shared back effectively and inclusively with communities on an ongoing basis.

THIS REPORT

This report shares findings from Phase 1 of the project, which drew from several data sources to explore the current state of research and service offerings related to housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Findings from the separate activities pursued during Phase 1 follow this introduction. These findings include a literature review (led by SRDC), secondary data analysis of PiT data (led by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness) and the National Youth Mentoring Survey (led by SRDC and MENTOR Canada), and a desk review and survey of current services and programs (led by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

The report ends with a discussion, which brings together the findings from the different phase components, and addresses our three key research questions for Phase 1:

1. What is the scope of housing instability among 2SLGBTQ+ youth?

2. How are the housing experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ unique in comparison with other groups?

3. What services and policies are available that support the housing needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, we summarize findings from the literature review led by SRDC, which outlines the existing literature on the topic and serves to contextualize and inform other research activities throughout this project. Following the methods using to guide the review, findings are shared related to 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences and outcomes across different stages of the housing continuum, housing-related barriers and facilitators, and emerging recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

The literature search involved a targeted scan of peer-reviewed and grey literature examining housing and homelessness experiences, outcomes, barriers, and facilitators among 2SLGBTQ+ youth. We took an intersectional and iterative approach to searching and extracting relevant information. Searches were continually adapted and updated, with a view to seeking literature across a range of identities and housing experiences, along the continuum of housing security. Our inclusion criteria were articles focusing on 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness, and access to housing, and literature, and literature exploring experiences of people living in Canada (Ecker, 2016). The search employed a broad definition of youth: while searches sought to identify sources explicitly concerned with youth and young people, no strict age limit or cut-off was imposed, with a small number of more general or adult-focused sources included as deemed appropriate (e.g., those with implications that might reasonably extend to young adults). This is aligned with the approach employed in Ecker's (2016) aforementioned review, acknowledging the limited availability of studies in this research area given its infancy as well as youths' diverse experiences of gender and sexual identity that spans ages and stages or the housing continuum.

In terms of recency, we focused on articles published from 2016 onwards, until November 2021, when our search was complete. Given one of our team members had completed a literature review on 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness in Canada (Ecker, 2016), we first updated this search from to cover the period from its date of publication to the above-mentioned date.

Due the paucity of literature in this area, additional sources falling beyond this scope (e.g., outside the Canadian context, published prior to 2016, not exclusively youth-focused) were hand searched and included and reviewed as deemed relevant. This is in line with the review's iterative and practical search approach, which aimed to draw out insights related to the research questions while identifying gaps related to the project at hand. The review had the additional aims of seeking sources focused on stages of the housing continuum beyond homelessness (e.g., transitional housing, rental experiences, etc.), as well as intentionally drawing out experiences, implications, and outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth occupying multiply-marginalized social locations, in line with an intersectional approach to inquiry.

Database searches drawing on a range of search terms[1] were conducted on Project MUSE, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. The search process was also replicated across Google, the Homeless Hub, and Trans PULSE. Any source deemed immediately not relevant in the search process (i.e., with no clear mention of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals or housing experiences) was excluded from the review process.

Altogether, this process resulted in a total of 120 sources, which were retrieved online and catalogued. Sources were diverse in nature, and included peer-reviewed articles, non-profit and independent research reports, policy documents, books and book chapters, and program evaluations, among others. Following their retrieval, all documents were subject to a comprehensive data extraction and analysis process. Key variables of interest included the source's relevance (e.g., low, medium, or high); study characteristics (e.g., jurisdiction, housing continuum stage of primary focus); research population characteristics (e.g., sexual and/or gender identities considered, age range); methods; key findings or outcomes; housing facilitators and/or barriers; intersectional considerations; and recommendations from the study.

This literature review ultimately draws from 95 sources, the findings of which are presented across three main areas: 1) main themes and outcomes across the housing continuum, 2) barriers and facilitators to safe, stable, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and 3) recommendations emerging from the literature.

EXPERIENCES & OUTCOMES ACROSS THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

In this section, we present key findings from the literature related to the diverse housing experiences and outcomes of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Findings are structured along the housing continuum, beginning with homelessness and moving to emergency shelters, transitional housing, social housing, rental housing, and home ownership.[2] We also draw out specific programming examples as available to illustrate relevant experiences and outcomes.

Homelessness

Of all the stages of the housing continuum, homelessness was by far the most prominent focus in the literature, with over half of sources reviewed focusing on 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness.

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[1] Searches employed varied combinations of search terms, which included: bisexual, queer, trans*, Two-Spirit, LGBT*, gender minority, sexual minority, youth, young people, teenage*, adolescent, housing, homeless*, shelter, transitional, rent*, home ownership, Canada.

[2] The housing continuum traditionally distinguishes between affordable and market rate rental and ownership. Given the lack of literature on these stages of the continuum for LGBTQ2S+ youth, these are merged together for the purposes of this review to present all rental and all ownership-related findings.

While definitions of homelessness varied between sources, and was not defined as part of our inclusion criteria, many used a similar definition to that of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2016): "the situation and experience of young people [...] who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence."

The high rate of homelessness among 2SLGBTQ+ youth was widely referenced in the literature (Abramovich, n.d., 2019; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017b; Gaetz et al., 2018; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019). Just under one-third (29.5 per cent) of respondents to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness's Without a Home survey self-identified as 2SLGBTQ+ (Gaetz et al., 2016). Another source suggested that 2SLGBTQ+ youth make up between 25 and 40 per cent of all youth experiencing homelessness in Canada, despite comprising only 5 to 10 per cent of the overall youth population (Abramovich, 2019).

The underrepresentation of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in housing programs and shelters, the absence of data collection related to sexual and gender identity, youths' unwillingness to disclose, and the prevalence of hidden homelessness (e.g., couch-surfing) among this population all serve as barriers to accurately measuring the prevalence of 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness (Abramovich, n.d., 2019; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017b; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Lalonde et al., 2018; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019). This is further complicated by the finding that 2SLGBTQ+ youth may be less likely to self-identify as homeless, particularly if they are not sleeping on the street (Norris & Quilty, 2020; McCready, 2017). Taken together, this suggests that the prevalence of 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness in Canada may be even higher than existing estimates propose. Furthermore, several sources underscored the exacerbated risk of homelessness faced by certain subgroups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including those who are Indigenous, racialized, newcomers, women, and/or transgender (Abramovich, n.d.; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Hao et al., 2021; Page, 2017; Saewyc et al., 2017; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; True Colors United, 2019; LoSchiavo et al., 2020).

Another common theme that arose explored distinct features or characteristics of homelessness among 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Several studies articulated commonly-shared experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth prior to becoming homeless, including involvement with the child welfare or foster care systems, familial neglect or instability, identity-based rejection, school-based bullying or harassment, physical or sexual abuse, and childhood trauma (Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Cohen et al., 2017; Côté & Blais, 2021; Fraser et al., 2019; Gaetz et al., 2016; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Robinson, 2018a, 2018b; Saewyc et al., 2017; True Colors United, 2019). Notably, these experiences were frequently characterized as disproportionately affecting racialized, Indigenous, and gender-diverse 2SLGBTQ+ youth. These and other experiences which may foster housing instability among 2SLGBTQ+ youth are more fulsomely explored later in this review.

The literature pointed to longer durations and an earlier age of homelessness for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, combined with experiences of stigma and homo-, bi-, or transphobic violence and discrimination on the streets (Abramovich, n.d.; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017b; Choi et al., 2015; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Kidd et al., 2019; Gaetz et al., 2016; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018). Instances of violence and discrimination are described as distinct for 2SLGBTQ+ youth who face further marginalization on the basis of race or ethnicity: "in such cases of violence against racialized LGBTQ homeless youth, it is often an intersection of various markers of 'otherness' that make these youth 'too visible' and easy targets" (Daniel & Cukier, 2015, p. 50; Saewyc et al., 2017; Page, 2017; McCready, 2017; Kidd et al., 2019). In general, 2SLGBTQ+ youth appear to be at a higher risk of encountering both physical and sexual violence on the streets: one source noted that homeless 2SLGBTQ+ youth experience sexual assault at three times the rate of their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts (Cray et al., 2014). Trans and gender-diverse youth may be at an amplified risk of violence (Fraser et al., 2019). However, data on experiences of physical and/or sexual violence among LGBTQ2S+ youth experiencing homelessness - including that which is recent, Canada-focused, an allows for disaggregation (e.g., by race, gender, etc.) – are sorely lacking.

Existing research also suggested that 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to engage in survival sex, face criminalization and police scrutiny, and interact with the justice system than the general homeless youth population (Barrow, 2018; Chan & Huys, 2017; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Fraser et al., 2019; True Colors United, 2019). In one case study, Chan and Huys (2017) reflected on their experiences working in legal aid, suggesting a direct link between the diverse identities of 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness and their likelihood of justice system involvement.

The link between housing and health outcomes also emerged as a key theme in the literature. 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness were found to be more likely than their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers to engage in risky sexual behaviours, with increased exposure to sexually transmitted infections as a result (Abramovich, 2016a; Fraser et al., 2019; McCann & Brown, 2019). Findings related to substance use were more mixed, but generally pointed to higher prevalence of substance use and substance-related hospitalizations among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, with some exceptions (Abramovich, n.d., 2016a; Fraser et al., 2019; Kidd et al., 2017; Kidd et al., 2019; Hao et al., 2021). Drawing on national survey data, Kidd et al. (2017) found higher rates of substance use among 2SLGBTQ+ compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness. Regarding mental health, 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness were found to face greater stress levels, higher prevalence and severity of mental health disorders (including anxiety, depression, and PTSD), and increased likelihood of suicidal ideation and attempts (Kidd et al., 2017; Fraser et al., 2019; Hao et al., 2021; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Rhoades et al., 2018). Poor mental health outcomes were also exacerbated among Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ youth, attributed to higher rates of violence and discrimination, as well as fewer sources of support (Kidd et al., 2019; Saewyc et al., 2017).

Other group-specific outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness included barriers to accessing affirming health care, feelings of isolation and a desire for community, and the ongoing psychological strain of concealment, both on the streets and when accessing services (Abramovich, 2016a; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Norris & Quilty, 2020). Relatedly, a small number of sources emphasized the distinct effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for this population. These included exacerbated mental health and substance use issues, fewer housing options, reduced access to key services (e.g., employment, health, etc.), increased risk of contact with abusive family members, and limited connection to affirming or inclusive community or cultural spaces (Thulien et al., 2020; Abramovich et al., 2021; Buchnea & McKitterick, 2020). Drawing on survey and interview data with 2SLGBTQ+ youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness, Abramovich et al. (2021) underscored the role of COVID-19 in prohibiting access to essential services for this group: "numerous integral health care, social support, and housing services previously available to LGBTQ2S youth at risk of, and experiencing, homelessness have closed their doors or are not accepting as many clients due to the COVID-19 pandemic" (p. 12).

While shelters are discussed in greater detail subsequently, 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences accessing homelessness services also emerged as a theme. Literature characterized homelessness service agencies by the lack or absence of specialized service offerings for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, relevant staff training, codified inclusion or anti-discrimination policies or procedures, and provider knowledge of available resources or appropriate referral partners (Abramovich & Shelton, 2017a; Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016). One source, drawing on qualitative data with service providers in Edmonton, found that these gaps frequently existed despite providers expressing openness and willingness to support 2SLGBTQ+ clients (Boucher & Boyd, 2018). In their analysis of 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness in Montréal, Côté and Blais (2019) described three profiles of homelessness agency users: 1) those who passively accepted discriminatory or unsafe practices in order to meet basic needs, 2) those who resisted using these services as means of self-protection, and 3) those with positive experiences, particularly in comparison to negative experiences in the family home. Importantly, the literature framed barriers to service uptake as greater for certain groups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness, including those who are Indigenous (e.g., lack of culturally-competent training or services), disabled (e.g., lack of support for navigating complex disability and income supports), and/or racialized (e.g., increased reluctance to use services and/or disclose) (Lalonde et al., 2018; Norris & Quilty, 2020).

Disclosure also posed a challenge for youth accessing homelessness services or agencies. In their analysis of survey data with 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness in the United States, Shelton, Poirier, et al. (2018) found that the majority of youth had not been asked about their sexual orientation, gender identity, or pronouns when accessing services. Disclosure is further complicated by youths' willingness or desire to disclose: research from both the United States and Canada found that while some youth reported feeling safer or more affirmed when asked these questions upon intake, others remained fearful due to prior negative experiences or

anticipated discrimination (Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Boucher & Boyd, 2018). Côté and Blais (2019) described the resulting predicament for youth as being forced to choose between disclosure or concealment in order to access crucial services and supports. Together, these findings suggest that how – and by whom – disclosure questions are asked may be just as important as whether they are asked at all.

Finally, homelessness exits and coping strategies also emerged as themes in the literature review. While the importance of examining sustained exits from homelessness was emphasized in the literature – along with the compounded barriers to achieving this for multiply-marginalized youth – there is an absence of research on this subject focused explicitly on 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Ecker, 2016; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019). While some studies identified coping strategies employed by 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness (e.g., turning to music or faith, relying on inner strength and resilience, finding ways to exercise personal agency), there was also an emphasis on pursuing structural measures to meaningfully address 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness (Shelton et al., 2017; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018; Robinson, 2021). To this end, Gaetz (2017) posed the following question: "if homelessness services actively participate in reproducing the homophobia and transphobia that contribute to youth homelessness in the first place, we have to ask ourselves: What is the necessary policy context that will ensure all young people, regardless of their gender and sexual identities, get what they need to help them move forward in their lives in the safest, healthiest and most inclusive way possible?" (p. 312). This is illustrated through calls for research on successful exits from homelessness, a practice-level focus on prevention and longer-term support and housing options, and the role of policy in effecting change (French, 2017; Gaetz, 2017; Ecker, 2016).

Emergency shelters

Frequently discussed in conjunction with homelessness more broadly, 2SLGBTQ+ youths' access to and use of emergency shelters was the focus of several sources reviewed, including many in the Canadian context. Studies frequently reported on the absence of emergency shelter services – including those that are tailored to or inclusive of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, especially outside of urban areas (Abramovich, 2016a; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Casey, 2019). Emergency shelters that accept and meaningfully include transgender individuals, particularly trans women, as well as racialized or Indigenous service users (i.e., through the provision of culturally-competent services and supports) were noted to be especially lacking (Lyons et al., 2016; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Casey, 2019; Toronto Aboriginal Support Service Council, n.d.). Relatedly, some sources described the practice of concealment among 2SLGBTQ+ youth and adults in order to access services, a strategy which – while potentially effective in the short-term – can pose negative mental health-related consequences (Abramovich, 2016b; Lyons et al., 2019; Velkoff et al., 2016).

When 2SLGBTQ+ youth do have access to emergency shelters, research found that they are frequent targets of homo/bi/transphobic discrimination, abuse, violence by other service users, especially when youth are racialized and/or transgender (Abramovich, n.d., 2013, 2016b; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Daniel & Cukier, 2015). Referencing qualitative research with service providers and 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness in Toronto, Abramovich (2016b) also demonstrated the role of hegemonic masculinity in fostering distinct and amplified experiences of violence for young 2SLGBTQ+ men. Where instances of discrimination or violence occurred, Abramovich (2013) found that 2SLGBTQ+ youth may not be aware of or have access to the appropriate reporting mechanisms, or may choose not to report due to skepticism about a positive outcome, internalized shame, or social pressure from other shelter users. When a young person does decide to come forward about an incident, the literature described cases of shelter staff responding with inaction or failing to identify the homo/bi/transphobic nature of the event in required reporting, reinforcing the aforementioned skepticism on the part of youth (Abramovich, 2016b). In some instances, staff themselves perpetrated identity-based abuse or discrimination (Abramovich, 2016b; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020).

Beyond these more explicit experiences of harassment, discrimination, and violence, the literature widely pointed to a more implicit or hidden exclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ youth from emergency shelters in Canada. Among shelter staff, limited understanding of the distinct nature of 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness, inconsistent or inadequate training, and the absence of relationships with appropriate referral partners were cited as prevalent and pressing issues (Abramovich, 2013, 2016b). Abramovich (2016a) detailed the "institutional erasure" (p. 88) of 2SLGBTQ+ youth from emergency shelters, sustained by policies and processes such as exclusionary language on intake forms and shelter and housing programs' common reliance on a strict gender binary. Trans and gender-diverse youth were especially impacted by this latter practice, often facing the impossible choice between accessing services that do not align with their gender identity or attempting to conceal their transness – a challenging given the scarcity of privacy in most shelter environments (Abramovich, 2016a; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020). As Abramovich (2016a) described, "the expectation that shelter residents will fit into the gender binary makes the shelter system an especially difficult place for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals" (p. 88).

Ultimately, Abramovich (2016b) referred to an "overall atmosphere of normalized oppression" (p. 1490) that characterizes 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences in emergency shelters. In some cases, this resulted in 2SLGBTQ+ youth engaging with emergency shelters more cautiously or selectively – or even avoiding them altogether (Abramovich, 2016a; Samuels et al., 2018).

Transitional housing

While not as prevalent as literature focused on homelessness and emergency shelters among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, several sources related to transitional housing were identified during the literature search process. One study, drawing from qualitative interviews with queer women sex workers in Vancouver, highlighted barriers related to sexual stigma in participants' access to supported housing or residential addiction treatment; interviewees who were in relationships with other residents described being forced to choose between their relationship and ongoing access to housing (Lyons et al., 2019). Other sources reviewed focused on describing or evaluating specific population-based transitional housing programs that exclusively serve 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including several in the Canadian context. As such, we focus here on the key program characteristics and outcomes that emerged from the literature.

Two sources focused on YMCA Toronto's Sprott House, a one-year transitional housing program for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Miller et al. (2017) summarized several core components of the program, including strong connections to external supports and organizations, an emphasis on youth-led goal-setting, and the prioritization of open communication and transparency, including via regular opportunities for feedback from youth. In an evaluation involving interviews and surveys with thirteen participating youth, Abramovich and Kimura (2019) found several positive outcomes for youth living at Sprott House, including slightly reduced unemployment rates, increased safety (particularly for trans youth), higher life satisfaction, improved sense of community and connection, and improved mental health and wellbeing, albeit minimal change in terms of family connectedness. Ultimately, "youth participants described YMCA Sprott House as an incredibly important program that provided safety, connection, community, and stability to its residents" (Abramovich & Kimura, 2019, p. 9). Ongoing gaps or additional recommendations for Sprott House within the literature included the provision of amplified mental health supports for youth, as well as establishing culturally-specific and appropriate supports and services for racialized residents (Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Miller et al., 2017).

Hartman and Lawson (2019) observed similarly-positive outcomes in their pilot evaluation of Saskatoon's Pride Home, a longer-term supported housing option for 2SLGBTQ+ youth that encompasses mentorship, counselling, opportunities to build life skills, and other wraparound supports. The evaluation affirmed the ongoing need for and benefits of tailored housing options for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Saskatoon: residents and staff described high levels of satisfaction with the program as well as an improved sense of stability, greater access and belonging to the 2SLGBTQ+ community, enhanced life skills, increased self-worth and agency, and decreased substance use (Hartman & Lawson, 2019). Youth residing at Pride Home also reported feeling more affirmed in their 2SLGBTQ+ identities and achieving progress towards their career and educational goals (Hartman & Lawson, 2019). The program's early success was attributed to strong relationships between residents and staff as well as its youth-centred design, though transportation was cited as an ongoing barrier for youth (Hartman & Lawson, 2019).

Finally, one source focused on a population-based host program in Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Minnesota, which matches 2SLGBTQ+ youth with host individuals or families for approximately one year in duration (Simões & Adams, 2017). The authors described a strong commitment to youth choice (e.g., youth review host applications), a thorough host recruitment and training process, and a high degree of autonomy by program staff (Simões & Adams, 2017). Despite this, the program has encountered challenges associated with its reliance on volunteer hosts and absence of government funding, including reduced capacity as well as a disproportionate number of hosts being from a white, middle-class background (Simões & Adams, 2017). While outcomes for participating youth were not provided, this program offers a unique model for transitional housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth that is distinct from others reviewed here.

Ultimately, literature on the experiences and outcomes of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in transitional housing - while still limited compared to that on homelessness or emergency shelters - underscored the strong potential of targeted, population-based programs in supporting youth at this stage of the housing continuum. While data on longer-term outcomes for participating youth were not readily available, existing research pointed to these programs showing promise in supporting safety, community, and wellbeing outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Social housing

Of the sources reviewed, few made explicit reference to social housing. One report, drawing on community consultations with gender minority individuals in British Columbia, articulated numerous barriers associated with this stage of housing, including long wait lists, strict socializing and visitation rules, mistreatment by staff and residents, and the complete absence of these facilities in smaller communities (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020). This report also highlighted issues with social housing providers' intake processes, particularly the lack of prioritization based on age-related or other forms of vulnerability: "no priority is given for Trans+ people, or for youth, or people with multiple intersecting experiences of discrimination" (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020, p. 8).

Despite the dearth of literature focused on this stage of the housing continuum, RainCity Vancouver's housing project for 2SLGBTQ+ youth offers one relevant case study in the realm of social housing. Designed as a population-based program within a broader housing and social services agency, the project offers long-term, subsidized housing for 18-24 year-old 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness. Participating youth must have access to $375 monthly for rent, and are offered support both to find and maintain housing as well as via access to transportation, food, and training certificates, among other wraparound services (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). According to available data, a high proportion of participating youth have been Indigenous (59 per cent) and/or trans (69 per cent), with mental health challenges and difficulty accessing other housing supports commonly cited during intake (Munro

et al., 2017; McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Core program features include an emphasis on relationship and community-building, an anti-oppressive approach to service provision, and an ongoing commitment to rehousing youth if placements are unsuccessful (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). This latter point warrants highlighting in the context of other findings: Youngbloom et al. (2021), in a quantitative analysis of housing loss among youth in rapid rehousing programs in Texas, found a significant relationship between 2SLGBTQ+ identity and experiences of housing loss. In their study, 2SLGBTQ+ youth had an odds of housing loss nearly six times higher than non-2SLGBTQ+ youth, underscoring the importance of RainCity's commitment to this practice (Youngbloom et al., 2021).

A 2017 evaluation of the project observed several promising outcomes, including a high degree of satisfaction with housing and wraparound services offered, reduced involvement in the criminal justice system, and improvements in health and wellbeing, food security, and communication and goal-setting skills (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Youth perceived staff to be informative, trusting, and relatable, and especially valued the program's commitment to offering Indigenous cultural supports (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). In follow-up survey, all participants reported that the program helped them improve their housing situation, reduce their number of moves, and reduce their risk of homelessness (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Staff also described instances of youth engaging in education, employment, or volunteer work while participating in the program, and youth reported better job market knowledge and access as well as employment planning skills in surveys (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). In addition to outcomes measured by the evaluation, Munro et al. (2017) gestured to the project's success in fostering "immeasurable outcomes" (p. 150) for youth: for instance, the restoration of dignity. While the evaluation uncovered some challenges for RainCity's project - including food insecurity among residents and tensions associated with its harm reduction approach - it is ultimately characterized as a promising example of what social housing might look like for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). In particular, Munro et al. (2017) highlighted the program's novelty in its application of a Housing First model for this population: "another solid outcome from the project is that it shows that Housing First ethics and practices work with youth" (p. 148).

The absence of research on - as well as programs that offer - social housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth is a finding it itself, limiting the comprehensive understanding of this stage in the housing continuum for this population. Despite this, RainCity's housing project offers one useful case study to explore what a population-based, community-housing approach might mean for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada.

Rental (affordable & market rate)

Few sources reviewed offered an in-depth consideration of either affordable or market rate housing. Those that did were primarily based outside Canada or not youth-specific. One

exception, a 2016 report from the Saskatchewan Housing Initiative Partnership identified affordable rental housing as a key priority for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Saskatoon; however, it did not provide more detailed information about rental access and experiences.

In the American context, two recent studies used matched email correspondence tests methods to measure the prevalence of rental market discrimination for same-sex couples (Hellyer, 2021; Schwegman, 2018). However, outcomes between the two studies differed, despite methodological and jurisdictional similarity. Hellyer (2021) found minimal differences in landlord response rates between emails coded as being from same-sex versus different-sex couples and concluded that there is "little evidence of strong discrimination against same-sex couples" (p. 6) in the rental market. Conversely, Schwegman's (2018) found the opposite: "same-sex couples, especially same-sex male couples and [racial] minority same-sex couples, face higher barriers to access rental housing in the United States" (p. 17). Hellyer (2021) posited that variances between testing protocols as well as changed market conditions due to COVID-19 might explain the differences in these findings. The literature search process revealed no comparable study conducted in the Canadian context.

While not exclusively focused on youth, a small number of sources provided valuable insights on the rental market experiences of transgender individuals. This research highlighted the distinct challenges faced by transgender renters, including the perceived need to conceal or modify one's gender expression in order to access housing as well as concerns about safety when renting with roommates (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Glick et al., 2020). During consultations with transgender individuals in British Columbia, participants described an unwillingness to report landlords due to this process being perceived as unenforceable, expensive, time-consuming, or risky, particularly in smaller or more rural communities (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020). Further, many transgender renters shared experiences of remaining in unsafe or subpar housing situations due to a combination of low vacancy rates and high rent costs (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020).

Two articles focused on on-campus housing for college or university students, the findings of which are summarized here given their relevance for youth. Amos et al. (2021) found discomfort to be a common sentiment among 2SLGBTQ+ students living in on-campus housing in the United States. In interviews, this was attributed to discriminatory roommates, an unsupportive policy environment, and overall safety concerns (Amos et al., 2021). Another study uncovered additional challenges for transgender students, including an ongoing need to navigate or monitor their gender expression in communal spaces (e.g., showers), transphobic violence or discrimination, and the separation from peers resulting from gender segregation (Pryor et al., 2016). Drawing on interview data, Pryor et al. (2016) concluded that while some transgender students were able to reside in on-campus housing safely and comfortably, "most students truly lacked a place to call home" (p. 55). Both of these qualitative studies involved students attending

American institutions, and pointed to systemic housing related challenges that 2SLGBTQ+ youth encounter while pursuing post-secondary education.

Taken together, the available albeit limited research gestured at several challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in terms of accessing and sustaining safe and affordable rental housing. While most research focused on 2SLGBTQ+ adults, it seems reasonable to suggest that the findings would likely extend to youth as well.

Home ownership (affordable & market rate)

Very few sources reviewed explicitly considered themes and outcomes related to home ownership among 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. While available research fell largely outside the scope of this review as a result of jurisdictional focus (i.e., the United States) and study population (i.e., 2SLGBTQ+ individuals of any age), we offer a summary to illustrate what we might reasonably anticipate for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada at this stage of the housing continuum.

Available evidence pointed to lower rates of home ownership among 2SLGBTQ+ adults in the United States, with just under half (49.8 per cent) of sexual and gender minority adults owning their homes compared to 70.1 per cent of their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts (Conron, 2021; Romero et al., 2020). Within the 2SLGBTQ+ community, home ownership rates were found to be lower among transgender as well as racialized individuals (Romero et al., 2020; Conron et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2019). Further, "same-sex couples are significantly less likely to own their homes than different-sex couples (63.8% and 75.1%, respectively)" (Romero et al., 2020, p. 3). Beyond home ownership rates alone, public opinion research out of the United States showed that cisgender lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals were more than twice as likely to report being prevented from moving into or buying a house or apartment than non-2SLGBTQ+ people (Meyer, 2019). Finally, another study drawing from American mortgage lending data found that same-sex couples experience lower approval rates and higher interest and other fees than different-sex couples during the mortgage application process (Sun & Gao, 2019).

While perhaps unsurprising given lower rates of home ownership among youth and young adults more broadly, the relative absence of research and data on longer-term and more permanent housing options for 2SLGBTQ+ youth may also serve as a finding in itself.

BARRIERS & FACILITATORS TO SAFE, STABLE, LONG-TERM HOUSING

In this section, we draw from the literature to summarize findings related to the core research question guiding this project: what are the barriers and facilitators of access to safe, stable, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth? This section prioritizes barriers and facilitators that are population-specific, including those that are uniquely experienced by (or amplified for) 2SLGBTQ+ youth. As such, this summary should not be taken as a comprehensive description of all barriers and facilitators, given that determinants or drivers applicable to all individuals - or even all youth - are not captured here. Further, certain barriers or facilitators may be more or less relevant to different demographics of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including transgender youth, those in more specific age ranges, racialized youth, and Indigenous youth. These qualifications are described as relevant and appropriate.

Barriers

Barriers to 2SLGBTQ+ youth accessing safe, stable, and long-term housing that were commonly identified in the literature include identity-based rejection, involvement with the criminal and child welfare systems, systemic and societal discrimination, gaps in housing availability and supports, and barriers related to income, employment, education, health, and family. While each of these barriers is described separately below, it should be noted that they are often mutually compounding and operating in tandem to inhibit 2SLGBTQ+ youths' movement throughout the housing continuum. Further, the differential impacts of these barriers for subgroups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth is also worth emphasizing. For instance, experiences of family-based and shelter violence appear exacerbated for gender-diverse youth, while barriers to targeted service access are heightened for bisexual youth (Baker et al., 2018; True Colors United, 2019). In short, some of the barriers presented may be more prevalent or impactful for certain groups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Identity-based rejection

Among the most frequent barriers to safe, stable, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth identified in the literature was familial rejection due to sexual or gender identity (Abramovich, n.d., 2013; Cohen et al., 2017; Gaetz et al., 2018; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Baker et al., 2018; Doyle, 2017; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; Glick et al., 2020; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Romero et al., 2020; Simões & Adam, 2017; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.). While family conflict is cited as the number one cause of youth homelessness, family conflict resulting from a young person disclosing or being outed to their families represents an experience distinct to 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Abramovich, 2013; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017b;

McCann & Brown, 2019; Saewyc et al., 2017). In their analysis of data from youth accessing crisis prevention services in the United States, Rhoades et al. (2017) found that sexual and gender minority youth who have disclosed their identity to their parents were 56 per cent more likely to experience homelessness. Meanwhile, those who experienced parental rejection were 75 per cent more likely to experience homelessness (Ibid). In the available research, identity-based rejection typically resulted in housing instability in one of two ways: 1) youth were forcibly ejected from their homes or 2) youth opted to leave or runaway, due to unsafe or discriminatory home environments or in anticipation of discrimination upon disclosure (McCandless, 2017; Wheeler et al., 2017; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Côté & Blais, 2021; Samuels et al., 2018; McCann & Brown, 2020). In some studies, trans youth were found to be more likely to run away or be kicked out of their homes, which some attributed to "lower levels of awareness, understanding, and acceptance of transgender identities within communities and families […] mirroring societal attitudes at large" (Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018, p. 26; Choi et al., 2015). The distinct experiences of Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ youth were also stressed, where familial rejection may lead youth to leave a small town or reserve entirely, resulting in further isolation from community-based connections and supports (Saewyc et al., 2017). As a barrier to safe, stable, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, identity-based rejection can serve as both an immediate cause of homelessness for this population and a driver of poorer long-term outcomes in terms of education, employment, and access to resources (Abramovich, 2013; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020).

Family conflict and instability

Conflict and instability among parents or families - including high rates of physical or sexual violence and abuse, substance use, poverty and economic insecurity, and mental illness - were widely cited as factors contributing to 2SLGBTQ+ youth leaving or being removed from their homes (True Colors United, 2019; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.; Taylor et al., 2020; Saewyc et al., 2017; Fraser et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2015; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Abramovich & Pang, 2020). While these experiences may act as barriers to housing stability for all youth, the literature pointed to their disproportionate or differential effects for those who are 2SLGBTQ+: "LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth have similar reasons for leaving home, but LGBT youth leave home more often than non-LGBT youth" (Choi et al., 2015, p. 12). Importantly, several sources emphasized the relationship between family conflict or instability and identity-based rejection, framing families' reactions to youths' gender or sexual identity as being fundamentally informed by pre-existing challenges and volatility (Wheeler et al., 2017; Robinson, 2018a; Fraser et al., 2019). In other words, when youth come out (or are outed) to families who are already experiencing poverty, mental illness, racism, or other structural issues, the identity-related conflict may be exacerbated or heightened. As Robinson (2018a) explains, "by focusing on poverty and instability, the violence of marginalization and its connection with familial strain […] become more structural ways of understanding how rejection, homophobia,

and transphobia may transpire within underresourced environments" (p. 122). By understanding identity-based rejection in the context of systematically-shaped family conflict and instability, we are better-placed to challenge stereotypes of racialized or low-income families as being intrinsically more likely to reject their 2SLGBTQ+ children (Robinson, 2018a).

As with identity-based rejection, demonstrated effects of family conflict and instability include both short-term housing challenges as well as prolonged experiences of stress, anxiety, fear, and low self-esteem (Abramovich & Pang, 2020). This barrier may also take the form of intimate partner violence among older youth, for whom accessing safe housing may be complicated by confinement in their home, the withholding of gender-affirming objects like hormones or binders, or the risk of being outed by a partner (Lalonde et al., 2018).

School-based marginalization, violence & discrimination

Experiences of homo-, bi-, or transphobia in school and education systems serve as another barrier to 2SLGBTQ+ youth attaining safe, stable, and long-term housing. A number of sources described 2SLGBTQ+ youth encountering a wide range of challenges in educational environments, including punishment for violating gender norms, identity-based bullying or harassment, a lack of intervention or support from teachers or administrators, rejection from peers, and - in the case of post-secondary education - financial barriers to tuition (Barrow, 2018; Doyle, 2017; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016). Together, these experiences have been found to result in sexual and gender minority youths' disengagement from school, truancy, and poorer educational performance (Barrow, 2018; True Colors United, 2019). In the short-term, violence and discrimination encountered at school - particularly when compounded by family conflict or other forms of structural oppression (e.g., racism) – were framed as leading to 2SLGBTQ+ youth leaving home and/or becoming homeless (Côté & Blais, 2021; McCready, 2017; True Colors United, 2019). In the long term, poorer educational attainment for 2SLGBTQ+ youth as a result of these negative experiences has been found to have downstream effects on employment and financial prospects, exacerbating barriers to housing access and affordability (Glick et al., 2020; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Romero et al., 2020). As Wheeler et al. (2017) explained, "when LGBTQ2S students must navigate these types of negative experiences in educational environments - environments in which they would otherwise be preparing for success in the force and gaining life skills - the risk of sustaining cycles of poverty and homelessness is increase" (p. 52). In this way, the role of education in enhancing social mobility may be constrained for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Kia et al., 2020).

Child welfare & foster care involvement

The overrepresentation and negative experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth within child welfare and foster care systems emerged as another key theme in the literature. Several sources pointed to

homo-, bi-, or transphobic attitudes and behaviours by foster parents, other young people in care, and administrators as leading to 2SLGBTQ+ running away or being kicked out, and facing housing instability as a result (Dank et al., 2015; Fraser et al., 2019; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Côté & Blais, 2021; True Colors United, 2019; Robinson, 2018b; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018). Frequently-cited experiences among 2SLGBTQ+ youth in care include the absence of safe or welcoming placements, a lack of training and awareness among child protection workers and caregivers, gender segregation in foster or group home settings, hostility or violence from peers, and being disciplined for behaviours that may be deemed appropriate (e.g., dating) among non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (Government of Ontario, 2018; Robinson, 2018b). Sexual and gender minority youth may also encounter amplified challenges upon aging out of care, including inadequate safety nets or social networks that can facilitate housing access or stability (Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Choi et al., 2015; Côté & Blais, 2021; Robinson, 2018b; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018).

The implications of child welfare and foster care involvement appear particularly pronounced for certain groups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Kidd et al. (2019) attributed the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in care in Canada to their disproportionate removal from families by child protection services. A study of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in the United States found that transgender youth ran away from foster homes in higher frequency than their cisgender counterparts (Kidd et al., 2019; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018). Wheeler et al. (2017) characterized the foster care system as a "pipeline into homelessness for LGBTQ2S youth" (p. 53), further serving as a barrier to housing access and stability for this population.

Poverty & income insecurity

The poverty experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ youth themselves was characterized in the literature as a key barrier to accessing safe, stable, and long-term housing. The inadequacy of income assistance programs, a lack of material or financial support from families, the high costs of gender transition, and lower employment incomes among sexual and gender minority individuals all operate to foster or exacerbate poverty and income insecurity among 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Lalonde et al., 2018; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.; Romero et al., 2020; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Prokopenko & Kevins, 2020). These realities may be more pronounced for certain groups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including youth with disabilities who experience heightened barriers to accessing income, and Black youth who already face an increased risk of poverty (Lalonde et al., 2018; McCready, 2017). Taken together, poverty and income insecurity were described as directly inhibiting 2SLGBTQ+ youths' capacity to pay for shelter, exacerbating the issue of housing affordability for this population (Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Glick et al., 2020; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Romero et al., 2020).

Employment experiences & inequities

Given the direct relationship between employment and income, 2SLGBTQ+ youths' limited access to employment and poor work related outcomes can act as barriers to housing access and retention. Access to safe and well-paid employment among sexual and gender minority youth is constrained by a number of factors, including hiring and wage discrimination, poorer educational attainment, a lack of networks or work experience, reduced access to transportation, and existing housing instability (Romero et al., 2020; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Glick et al., 2020; Doyle, 2017; Conron, 2021; McDowell, 2021). For some youth, marginalization on the basis of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, and age interact to foster disproportionate and distinct experiences of employment inequity or discrimination (Saskatchewan Housing Initiative Partnership, 2016; Wheeler et al., 2017). 2SLGBTQ+ youth may be particularly vulnerable to employment precarity or job loss (Prokopenko & Kevins, 2020). Ultimately, the literature described negative employment experiences compounding the aforementioned issues of income insecurity, with further implications for housing affordability and access (MacEntee et al., 2021; Ferguson, 2017; Romero et al., 2020).

Criminalization & legal barriers

The literature depicted a mutually-reinforcing relationship between 2SLGBTQ+ youths' involvement in the criminal justice system and experiences of housing insecurity or instability. Barriers to housing access or security play an explanatory role in 2SLGBTQ+ youths' engagement in criminalized behaviours: as Wheeler et al. (2017) described, "when systems are not set up to meet the needs of LGBTQ2S young people, they look elsewhere for support and stability" (p. 54). In the sources reviewed, the criminalization of income-generating or other behaviours that 2SLGBTQ+ homeless youth may be more likely to engage in - including panhandling, sleeping rough, and drug use - posed numerous challenges for housing security and stability (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Barrow, 2018; Chan & Huys, 2017; Lyons et al., 2019; McCandless, 2017). In particular, the criminalization of sex work was cited as having disproportionate consequences for youth who are women, transgender, and/or racialized, who may be more likely to rely on this as a source of income and be targeted by law enforcement (Wheeler et al., 2017; True Colors United, 2019).

Homelessness agencies and other outreach services can encounter greater barriers to connecting with criminalized 2SLGBTQ+ youth, who may pursue invisibility to avoid being identified or targeted by police (Barrow, 2018; Daniel & Cukier, 2015). This is especially noteworthy given the documented context of negative relationships between street-involved 2SLGBTQ+ youth and the police, including perceived experiences of homo/bi/transphobia (McCandless, 2017).

Writing of their experiences at a Toronto-based legal aid clinic, Chan and Huys (2017) described instances of 2SLGBTQ+ newcomer and refugee youth being afraid or unable to qualify for

benefits, access housing, attain employment, or seek services due to lacking the necessary identification or residency status, exacerbating their risk of homelessness and victimization. More generally, criminalized 2SLGBTQ+ youth may also face distinct barriers accessing services, government benefits, housing, or employment, as a result of having a criminal record (True Colors United, 2019; Chan & Huys, 2017). Chan and Huys (2017) described instances of 2SLGBTQ+ youth facing criminal charges or fines, strict bail conditions, or incarceration, resulting in them losing employment, being unable to pay rent, and having restricted access to certain people or locations, including community spaces or shelters. They also pointed to awareness and access barriers to avenues of legal recourse among 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing criminalization, which can exacerbate negative housing-related and other consequences (Chan & Huys, 2017).

Legal issues beyond criminalization, such as experiences of discrimination, victimization, or other human rights violations – can also pose barriers to 2SLGBTQ+ youths' access to safe, stable, and long-term housing. The experiences of young 2SLGBTQ+ renters have been found to be characterized by evictions, illegal fees and entry by landlords, and poor property upkeep, sometimes attributed to homo/bi/transphobia (Chan & Huys, 2017; Gaetz, 2002). These types of experiences can result in housing precarity and instability among youth, who may choose or be forced to abandon established housing in favour of couch-surfing or shelter use (Chan & Huys, 2017; Gaetz, 2002).

Health & wellbeing

Health and wellbeing among 2SLGBTQ+ youth both shape and are shaped by experiences of housing and homelessness. While health-related challenges might reasonably serve as a barrier to any individual in accessing and maintaining housing, several sources pointed to distinct experiences, risks, and issues among 2SLGBTQ+ youth. In two separate studies involving 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Vancouver and York Region, participants reported that poorer mental health made it more challenging for them to find and maintain housing and/or employment (McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Abramovich & Pang, 2020). LoSchiavo et al. (2020) echoed this in quantitative research with sexual minority young adults in New York City, finding a significant relationship between odds of experiencing homelessness/unstable housing and both severe depression as well as poor self-rated health more broadly. A higher prevalence of substance use and risky sexual behaviours among 2SLGBTQ+ youth compared to their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers was also described as exacerbating housing instability (McCann & Brown, 2019; Robinson, 2021).

Importantly, 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences of poor mental and physical health, substance use, and risky sexual behaviour are often explicitly framed as being shaped by stigma and discrimination. Taken together, specific negative or traumatic events in the lives of many 2SLGBTQ+ youth – for instance, school-based bullying, exposure to homo/bi/transphobia,

familial rejection, and societal discrimination more broadly – can contribute to low self-esteem, feelings of isolation, and the pursuit of harmful coping mechanisms, with knock-on effects on housing (Robinson, 2021; Fraser et al., 2019; LoSchiavo et al., 2020; McCann & Brown, 2019). While the directionality of these relationships was beyond the scope of their study, LoSchiavo et al. (2020) ultimately suggested that the "discrimination and stigma experienced by [sexual and gender minority...] individuals may lead to poorer mental health states, as controlling for these factors explains the significant relationship between housing and mental health" (p. 8).

Gaps within housing programs: access, appropriateness & effectiveness

When 2SLGBTQ+ youth experience housing instability or homelessness, gaps in the housing and social supports system may themselves inhibit service uptake and effectiveness for this population. As a result, 2SLGBTQ+ youth often stand to benefit less – or even be harmed by – the very programs and supports designed to support them. Sources described 2SLGBTQ+ youth being refused access to or kicked out of services based on their gender or sexual identity, appearance, age, or without being given a reason at all (Schwan et al., 2018; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Sharifi, 2016; Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Munro et al., 2017). In the Vancouver context, Lyons et al. (2016) observed distinct barriers for transfeminine people in accessing women's shelters, which often mandate – formally or informally – adherence to a traditional standard of femininity. Further, some sources conveyed the notion that 2SLGBTQ+ youth may be turned away from services as a result of not aligning with providers' stereotypes of homeless youth (for instance, because they were couch-surfing rather than living on the street), pointing to the importance of culturally-relevant and contextualized understandings of homelessness and housing insecurity (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Norris and Quilty (2020) highlighted this challenge in the context of Ireland's application of Housing First approaches, which may risk overlooking 2SLGBTQ+ youth due to an emphasis on rough sleepers and long-term emergency shelter users. Access to necessary programs and services can be further constrained by knowledge (i.e., of available supports) and transportation barriers on the part of 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; McCandless, 2017). Finally, research described instances of 2SLGBTQ+ youth engaging in self-exclusion from programs or supports, due to assumptions of ineligibility or failing to identify with the labels or language employed by service providers (for instance, "homeless") (Norris & Quilty, 2020; McCready, 2017).

When 2SLGBTQ+ youth do have nominal access to housing and other related services, these have rarely been designed with them in mind; sources cited the negative impacts of funding and capacity limitations on the few 2SLGBTQ+-specific programs, supports, and shelters that do exist (Abramovich, 2013; Casey, 2019; Choi et al., 2015; Page, 2017). Studies reported that hostile or discriminatory staff and residents, the informal or formal reinforcement of the gender binary

(e.g., through gender segregation in shelter environments), and providers lacking an awareness and understanding of the unique needs and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth further contributed to the distinct housing experiences of this population (Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Abramovich, 2016b; Miller et al., 2017; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Romero et al., 2020). Furthermore, the literature provided several examples of services and programs being limited in their capacity to meaningfully include and benefit 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Those mentioned included the absence of population-specific supports (e.g., guidance navigating gender affirmation, family reunification programs), a lack of diversity among service providers, staff being unaware of relevant grants or programs available to 2SLGBTQ+ youth for referral purposes, and the prevalence of time-bound or shorter-term programs, which may be less suited for youth with more complex challenges and needs (Seibel et al., 2018; Cohen et al., 2017; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; Miller et al., 2017; Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2020). In pursuit of a universalistic approach to service delivery, Boucher and Boyd (2018) depicted providers failing to meaningfully consider experiences or challenges that disproportionately impact 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., sex work, unique health risks), resulting in supports that leave certain barriers or inequities unaddressed. Ultimately, the lack of cultural awareness and competency in many housing and related programs serves to undermine their relevance and effectiveness for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, limiting these services' capacity to support this population along the housing continuum (Abramovich, 2016a; Choi et al., 2015). The impact of this may be especially pronounced for gender minority youth: in surveys with 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness in the United States, compared with their sexual minority poeers, transgender youth were considerably more likely to identify the lack of culturally-competent services as a reason for homelessness (Choi et al., 2015).

The design and delivery of housing and related programs informs if and how 2SLGBTQ+ choose to engage with them. Several sources framed the avoidance of agencies and other supports as a common practice among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, motivated by mistrust, fear, discomfort associated with having to explain one's identity and needs to service providers, and anticipation of identity-based violence or discrimination (Abramovich, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.; Robinson, 2021; Norris & Quilty, 2020; MacEntee et al., 2021; Glick et al., 2020; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Youngbloom et al., 2021; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Baker et al., 2018; Boucher & Boyd, 2018). In the case of shelters, youth opting to remain in precarious or unsafe housing situations faced greater exposure to other risks, including sexual violence and negative encounters with law enforcement (Côté & Blais, 2019; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016). Service avoidance in the context of ongoing and persistent homo/bi/transphobia can further exacerbate disparities experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ youth: as Boucher and Boyd (2018) articulated, "individuals can only benefit from a service they access" (p. 24; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020). Importantly, the prevalence and implications of service avoidance may be greater among racialized 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Drawing on focus groups with racialized 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness in Toronto, Daniel and Cukier (2015) found that "society's fundamental lack of understanding with

regard to LGBTQ racialized homeless youth [...], as well as the racism and discrimination they face, make this community particularly resistant to accessing support services or shelters" (p. 52-53).

Even when youth do engage with housing or other programs, sources cited fear, shame, and mistrust as preventing them from disclosing their 2SLGBTQ+ identity to service providers, which can further restrict their access to affirming, inclusive, and relevant support and care (Abramovich, 2016a; Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018). While the effects of service avoidance and identity concealment for 2SLGBTQ+ youth themselves are of utmost importance, the literature emphasized implications for service providers themselves. The absence of out 2SLGBTQ+ youth accessing housing and related services risks signalling to providers that their current practices and approaches are acceptable, given the lack of obvious need or demand (Abramovich, 2016a, 2016b; Boucher & Boyd, 2018). Without seeing a clear impetus for change, service providers may continue to provide services that fail to adequately support 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Access to & availability of long-term housing

Looking beyond shelter or other transitional housing options, several sources identified factors that prevent 2SLGBTQ+ youth from accessing longer-term housing. The access and affordability of longer-term housing options were cited as pressing issues, particularly in the context of ongoing income disparities experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals as well as the rising costs of accommodation of traditionally-queer neighbourhoods due to gentrification (Sharifi, 2016; Saskatchewan Housing Initiative Partnership, 2016; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; McDowell, 2021; MacEntee et al., 2021; McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Studies suggested that 2SLGBTQ+ youth face amplified barriers to finding safe housing given their identities and experiences, along with the cost-prohibitive nature of living alone (Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Pryor et al., 2016). As a result, 2SLGBTQ+ youth pursuing more permanent housing are often faced with choosing between safety, affordability, and a location with easy access to other community members and supports (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Discrimination by landlords and property owners - on the basis of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, class, and/or ability - was widely identified as a barrier, resulting in 2SLGBTQ+ youth facing inequitable access to housing and rental markets (McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Schwegman, 2018; Conron, 2021; McDowell, 2021; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Cohen et al., 2017; Gaetz et al., 2018; Glick et al., 2020; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; MacEntee et al., 2021; Romero et al., 2020; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018). In one qualitative study, Vancouver-based queer women sex workers attributed barriers to housing access they had experienced in part to diverse and intersecting forms of stigma, including related to gender, partnership status, partner gender, substance use, sex work, and poverty (Lyons et al., 2019). Additional barriers noted in the

literature as restricting 2SLGBTQ+ youths' capacity to find and maintain long-term housing include poor credit history, mental health and substance use challenges, and interpersonal conflict with roommates (Cohen et al., 2017; McCreary Centre Society, 2017).

Finally, some sources referenced challenges related to the design and delivery of housing programs. There was a noted absence of programs and services for 2SLGBTQ+ youth at later stages in the housing continuum, including supported, community, or transitional housing (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Youngbloom et al., 2021; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016). Where 2SLGBTQ+ youth do have access to these programs, they may struggle when transitioning into more permanent housing. In the evaluation of RainCity in Vancouver, participants expressed a desire for greater support through this transitional phase, referencing a lack of emotional and material support by the program (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Similarly, Miller et al. (2017) articulated the immediate and multiple challenges encountered by youth leaving Toronto's year-long Sprott House program: "youth are faced with the difficulty of finding affordable housing in a city where rent continues to skyrocket, in a society where they face multiple forms of oppression. Staff struggle to support youth in finding appropriate living arrangements once their stay [...] is over" (p. 176).

Systemic & structural discrimination & oppression

While referenced throughout this review, it is important to explicitly name systemic and structural discrimination and oppression as barriers to 2SLGBTQ+ youths' access to safe, stable, and long-term housing. As emphasized in the literature, homo/bi/transphobia, racism, colonialism, adultism, sexism, ableism, and poverty remain embedded in and sustained by families, schools, workplaces, churches, health care providers, social service agencies, and governments, fundamentally shaping 2SLGBTQ youths' individual housing experiences and outcomes (True Colors United, 2019; Munro et al., 2017; Lalonde et al., 2018; Schwan et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Gaetz et al., 2016; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Robinson, 2021; Abramovich, 2013; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019). Together, these intersecting and compounding forms of prejudice and discrimination "limit opportunities, lead to distress and exclusion, and undermine housing stability" (Gaetz, 2017, p. 311) for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, particularly those who are multiply-marginalized (Romero et al., 2020). By framing 2SLGBTQ+ youths' experiences in this way and resisting the individualization of barriers, we move towards an understanding of housing insecurity and instability as systematically-enacted and enforced (Munro et al., 2017).

Facilitators

Having explored barriers in detail, this section summarizes factors identified in the literature that can facilitate 2SLGBTQ+ youths' movement along the housing continuum. While discussions of barriers were more common, facilitators noted in the literature included the role of strong

familial and peer networks, the availability of and access to inclusive housing and non-housing supports, and facilitators operating at systemic or structural levels (e.g., policy change). As with the barriers, these facilitators should not be understood as necessarily distinct from one another, and are likely to be differentially prevalent or impactful for certain groups of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Of note, some studies pointed to the role of individual-level protective factors among 2SLGBTQ+ youth – for instance courage, agency, and strategies of resistance and resilience – in fostering positive housing outcomes (Côté & Blais, 2019; Baker et al., 2018; LoSchiavo et al., 2020; Lalonde et al., 2018; Shelton et al., 2017). While acknowledging the immense fortitude that 2SLGBTQ+ youth often display in the face of ongoing marginalization and oppression – as well as the potential value of programs seeking to strengthen these characteristics – this review intentionally prioritizes facilitators that are external in nature, with a view to shifting responsibility for attaining positive outcomes away from individual 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Strong peer & "chosen family" network

A strong peer and chosen family[3] network can support 2SLGBTQ+ youths' access to safe, stable, and long-term housing in diverse ways. Several sources underscored the importance and value of social relationships and access to community networks for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, who may lack the same support and acceptance from their biological families (Thulien et al., 2020; Barrow, 2018; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012). In some cases, these networks were described as offering tangible or material support to 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including financial assistance, access to resources, and a place to stay in instances of housing insecurity (Glick et al., 2020; Baker et al., 2018; Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018). Analyzing survey data with 2SLGBTQ+ young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the United States, Shelton, DeChants, et al. (2018) posited a direct relationship between the availability of kinship networks and shorter durations of homelessness. Relatedly, research on Sprott House and RainCity programs found that relationships built between participating youth fostered positive individual outcomes upon exiting the program, including through improved access to a network of supportive friends and potential roommates (Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Munro et al., 2017). In a case study of the RainCity program, Munro et al. (2017) emphasized its intentional focus on fostering connections between youth, along with the material results of this approach: "we have had young people evicted, or whose housing did not work out for some reason, who did not have to go to a shelter while we found them new housing, because one of the other youth shared their apartment in the interim. This is proof that natural connections are necessary to protect youth in the long term from homelessness" (p. 145).

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[3] 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).

Beyond these more material benefits, strong kin and friendship networks may also serve a protective or preventative function. Reflecting on research with Black 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Toronto, McCready (2017) noted that "access to supportive social networks [...] could help racialized LGBTQ2S+ youth form meaningful relationships that could mediate or reduce the structural conditions leading to their housing vulnerability" (p. 212). For 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability, these networks were characterized as playing an essential emotional support role, helping youth to feel less isolated, cope with experiences of discrimination or oppression, navigate mental health challenges, and develop a positive sense of self-identity and belonging (Youngbloom et al., 2021; Robinson, 2021; McCann & Brown, 2020; Barrow, 2018). Daniel and Cukier (2015) reported similar findings from qualitative research with racialized 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Toronto, highlighting the safety and protection that established peer networks can offer to street-involved youth. For Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ youth in particular, Saewyc et al. (2017) gestured at the value of culturally-specific kinship networks emerging from an analysis of the British Columbia Homeless and Street-Involved Youth Survey. While noting the need to interpret results with caution, they found potentially-positive associations between youths' involvement in cultural activities as well as engagement with an Elder and numerous health outcomes, including self-reported mental health and substance use (Saewyc et al., 2017). In the face of trauma, discrimination, and inequity, chosen families and kinship networks can offer 2SLGBTQ+ youth "social and emotional support, safety, and a sense of belonging that [they] need to survive and thrive amidst challenging and unstable circumstances" (True Colors United, 2018, p. 70).

In their interpretation of findings from ethnographic research with 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Texas, Robinson (2018a) proposed that 2SLGBTQ+ youth with relative economic and class privilege may experience greater access to – and therefore benefit disproportionately from – the types of kin and friendship networks described here. With this in mind, service providers engaging with 2SLGBTQ+ youth may be especially well-positioned to support the establishment and strengthening of these connections. To this point, several sources framed community and relationship-building as an important feature of successful housing programs for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, serving to foster better experiences and outcomes among participants (Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Munro et al., 2017; Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Eisenberg et al., 2017; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Miller et al., 2017).

Family & "natural supports"

While acknowledging that this may not be universally attainable, the presence of affirming and supportive biological families was frequently mentioned as an important factor in supporting housing outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. As with peer and kinship networks, Glick et al. (2020) described the material (i.e., income and housing) assistance that supportive families can provide 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Illustrating this, several sources noted a relationship between 2SLGBTQ

youths' familial support and their likelihood of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Quantitative research with transgender youth in Ontario found that "having adequate housing was reported by 100% of youth with parents strongly supportive of their gender identity and expression, but only by 45% of youth whose parents were not strongly supportive" (Travers et al., 2012, p. 3). Seibel et al.'s (2018) research with transgender and gender-diverse individuals in Brazil produced similar findings, including that a lack of parental support increased respondents' chance of living without fixed housing nearly four times.

With this in mind, a number of sources highlighted the role of family-based interventions in facilitating improved housing outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, intended to support those at risk of or already experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Examples cited included supporting families to accept and understand their child's identity, employing preventative strategies (e.g., providing financial assistance or educational resources about gender and sexuality), and expanding the availability of therapeutic and case management services (Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; True Colors United, 2019). While access to family reunification supports also emerged as a potential facilitator, such an approach is unlikely to be accessible or desirable for all 2SLGBTQ+ youth; moreover, research exploring the effectiveness of these interventions is limited (Cohen et al., 2017; Barrow, 2018; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Rice et al., 2018; Wheeler et al., 2017). Acknowledging this, in their Youth Homelessness Strategy, the Calgary Homeless Foundation (2017) emphasized the role of natural supports in facilitating positive housing and other outcomes for youth, embracing flexibility in determining what qualifies as these supports: "reunification with families is not always an option, particularly for Indigenous and LGBTQ2S youth. The natural supports youth want support engaging with should be determined by youth, rather than preconceived notions about what families should look like" (p. 43). The importance of enabling youth choice as it relates to family unification cannot therefore be understated.

Safe, inclusive & affirming housing programs & supports

Just as programs and supports that are poorly-suited to the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth can present barriers to their movement along the housing continuum, those embodying safe, inclusive, and affirming practices can have the opposite effect. To this end, the literature identified a wide range of promising practices for housing service providers. These include:

- Employing out 2SLGBTQ+ staff and volunteers;

- Creating warm and welcoming physical service environments (e.g., comfortable furnishings, visual symbols of inclusion such as Pride flags);

- Screening for 2SLGBTQ+ competency during staff and volunteer hiring processes;

- Building relationships with, and referring youth to, other 2SLGBTQ+-affirming organizations capable of offering support;

- Ensuring the consistent use of inclusive language;

- Creating gender-inclusive physical spaces, including washrooms and sleeping environments;

- Allowing youth to self-disclose 2SLGBTQ+ identity if, how, and when they choose to;

- Developing and enforcing organizational safety and inclusion policies, practices, and guidelines;

- Integrating gender and sexuality-related information and resources into intake processes;

- Offering services or supports tailored to 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., family counselling, support pursuing legal name and gender changes, programming that facilitates community connections); and,

- Training staff and volunteers on 2SLGBTQ+ awareness and inclusion (Abramovich, 2013; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Choi et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2017; Doyle, 2017; Hao et al., 2021; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; Johns et al., 2018; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Miller et al., 2017; Munro et al., 2017; Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018).

Sources pointed to broader approaches to service delivery that may produce better outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Describing a 2SLGBTQ+-specific emergency shelter in Michigan, Doyle (2017) emphasized the distinct value of a trauma-informed approach in this context. The incorporation of harm reduction principles was also highlighted as a promising practice by both RainCity and Sprott House, whereby youth are not evicted from programs in the instance of ongoing substance use (McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Miller et al., 2017; Munro et al., 2017). Reflecting on this approach as RainCity staff, Miller et al. (2017) conveyed that "this has largely resulted in youth feeling able to approach us, feeling secure in knowing that they can make mistakes, and that their housing will not be jeopardized" (p. 177). Aforementioned evidence pointing to higher prevalence of substance use among 2SLGBTQ+ youth further underscores the potential positive impact of such an approach. The literature hypothesized that 2SLGBTQ+ youth may draw distinct benefits from services that remain flexible in response to clients' non-linear housing and other trajectories, offer a continuum of individualized supports (including wraparound supports such as food, transportation, clothing, and healthcare), and continue to engage with and support youth upon program departure (Doyle, 2017; Hartman & Lawson, 2019; MacEntee et al., 2021; McCann & Brown, 2020; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Munro et al., 2017; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Ferguson, 2017).

Relatedly, the literature highlighted the value of programs that prioritize genuine relationships between staff and participating youth. Closer connections between 2SLGBTQ+ youth and shelter or agency staff were attributed to a sense of acceptance, the perception of trust and confidentiality, and - in some instances - shared 2SLGBTQ+ identity (National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Norris & Quilty, 2020; Côté & Blais, 2019; Johns et al., 2018). Where these relationships existed, the evidence pointed to youth feeling safer and more comfortable engaging with programs and seeking out support from staff (Norris & Quilty, 2020; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Côté & Blais, 2019). In an evaluation of RainCity, 87 per cent of participating youth indicated that support from program staff assisted them in maintaining housing (McCreary Centre Society, 2017). Similar findings regarding the role of staff relationships were noted in research with 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Ireland (Norris and Quilty, 2020).

Together, the practices discussed, including organizational inclusion strategies and tailored approaches to service delivery, offer strategies to facilitate 2SLGBTQ+ youths' movement along the housing continuum. Findings suggested that 2SLGBTQ+ youth appear more likely to access, engaged with, and benefit from programs they perceive to be safe and inclusive (Norris & Quilty, 2020; McCreary Centre Society; Côté & Blais, 2019; Abramovich, 2013; Doyle, 2017; Miller et al., 2017; Youngbloom et al., 2021; Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018). As Shelton, Poirier, et al. (2018) described, "when [2SLGBTQ+ youth] feel validated and comfortable, they more be more able to more fully engage in services rather than constantly worry about the impact their identity may have on their experiences and safety" (p. 21).

Finally, sources discussed the role of certain types of services in facilitating improved housing outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Some highlighted the distinct value - and relative absence of - services for 2SLGBTQ+ youth beyond emergency or shelter housing. By offering supports such as rent subsidies, opportunities to build life skills, and access to supportive landlords, rapid rehousing and transitional housing programs may be better positioned to support 2SLGBTQ+ youth to seek and maintain longer-term housing (Cohen et al., 2017; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Page, 2017). Finally, some sources suggested that population-specific services or programs may best foster the necessary safety and relevance to maximize benefits for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Abramovich, 2013; Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Ferguson, 2017).

Safe, inclusive & affirming non-housing environments

As referenced throughout this review, there are clear and documented relationships between experiences and outcomes within housing and non-housing domains for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Non-housing environments that foster safety, inclusion, and affirmation among 2SLGBTQ+ youth can also serve to facilitate enhanced housing outcomes.

Several sources proposed that by supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youths' wellbeing through low-barrier access to substance use and mental health treatment, inclusive and affirming health care, and gender affirmation procedures, youth may be better equipped to engage with and benefit from housing programs they are accessing, seek and maintain housing with greater stability, or avoid becoming housing-insecure in the first place (Wheeler et al., 2017; McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Seibel et al., 2018; Gaetz et al., 2018). Meanwhile, safe and welcoming school environments - characterized by inclusive curricula, 2SLGBTQ+ staff representation, and the presence of gender and sexuality alliances – were viewed as promoting better educational outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, with further advantages for income and housing (Wheeler et al., 2017; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Barrow, 2018). 2SLGBTQ+ youths' access to safe, meaningful, and stable employment can also foster the economic independence that can support housing security (Wheeler et al., 2017; Ferguson, 2017; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017). While this facilitator demands action by a wide range of stakeholders - including governments and employers – sources offered examples of housing programs that meaningfully support 2SLGBTQ+ youth to find and retain employment skills-building, job search assistance, and employer training and referrals (McCreary Centre Society, 2017; Wheeler et al., 2017; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Ferguson, 2017; Doyle, 2017; Cohen et al., 2017). Research also highlighted examples of 2SLGBTQ+ youth whose housing challenges were mitigated or improved as a result of accessible and compassionate support when navigating the criminal justice system (Chan and Huys, 2017).

Systemic & structural facilitators

The literature identified a range of facilitators operating at systemic or structural levels. Addressing the "structural and systemic factors that contribute to housing precarity and social exclusion" (Gaetz et al., 2018, p. 28) - including poverty, racism, and criminalization - was characterized as a way to improve housing outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, despite not being named as the explicit policy goal (Wheeler et al., 2017). Further to this, Gaetz (2019) emphasized the supportive role of governments in enacting policies and programs that combat homo/bi/transphobia, educating and supporting families, and fostering safety and inclusion in diverse institutions and systems. Meaningful and inclusive youth engagement at both the policy and programmatic levels was described as facilitating more responsive and effective approaches to 2SLGBTQ+ youth housing, in addition to building buy-in and support among youth (Robinson, 2018b; Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018; True Colors United, 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

This section offers recommendations to support 2SLGBTQ+ youth along the housing continuum, as identified in the literature. These include those emerging from study findings as well as from

participants themselves, and often involve addressing the barriers and/or strengthening the facilitators that have been discussed throughout this review. Broadly, recommendations include those related to prevention and family-based interventions, staff and service provider education and training, considerations for general and population-specific housing and other programs, research and data, and systemic and structure factors. While presented thematically, the mutually-reinforcing nature of many of these recommendations - as well as the anticipated value of multiple simultaneous interventions - warrants mention from the outset (Côté & Blais, 2021).

Prevention & family-based interventions

Prevention strategies were widely described as crucial to building the protective factors that reduce the likelihood of 2SLGBTQ+ youth becoming homeless or housing-insecure in the first place. Several sources advocated for greater attention to preventative measures in homelessness and housing strategies, in addition to policy responses to combatting the systemic oppression and discrimination that underpin inequitable outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018; French, 2017; Gaetz et al., 2018; Lalonde et al., 2018; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017). More specifically, the implementation of preventative and protective interventions targeting families, schools, and other institutions with which 2SLGBTQ+ engage emerged as a common recommendation. Sources suggested several family-based interventions to build acceptance and understanding among parents and guardians, including improving access to educational materials, offering counselling, and sharing strategies to better affirm and support 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Travers et al., 2012; Abramovich, 2016a; Côté & Blais, 2021; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Taylor et al., 2020; McCann & Brown, 2019). Writing specifically of trans youth, Travers et al. (2012) framed both policymakers and service providers as responsible for facilitating these types of interventions. In educational contexts, the literature reviewed recommended training teachers and other school staff to better support 2SLGBTQ+ students - including while coming out - and exploring the implementation of gender-sexuality alliances (Côté & Blais, 2021; McCann & Brown, 2019; Abramovich, 2016a; Abramovich & Pang, 2020). Improving partnerships between youth-serving organizations, reviewing policies related to aging out of foster care, and increasing the availability of supports for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., legal advocacy, knowledge about tenancy rights) were also suggested in the literature (Côté & Blais, 2021; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; Abramovich & Pang, 2020).

The above recommendations aim to reduce the likelihood of 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing housing instability or insecurity. When prevention is not possible, several sources recommended improving access to appropriate and culturally-relevant services seeking to reunite 2SLGBTQ+ youth with supportive family members (Abramovich, 2016a; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; McCann & Brown, 2020). This recommendation is a cautious one: while family reunification may be feasible and desirable for some youth, deeply-held discriminatory beliefs, diverse cultural and community contexts, and experiences of poverty and precarity were all

identified as factors that can mitigate the effectiveness of such an approach (Barrow, 2018; Fraser et al., 2019; MacEntee et al., 2021; Robinson, 2018a). Robinson (2018a) stressed the need for "new ways to engage with and help parents, especially underresourced and marginalized parents and families" (p. 11) beyond acceptance and reunification strategies, alluding to approaches that meaningfully address families' material and socioeconomic realities.

Education, training & capacity-building for staff & service providers

While framed as inadequate on their own, education, training, and capacity-building for youth-serving individuals and organizations were commonly recommended in the literature (Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; Choi et al., 2015). Sources drew attention to the importance of standardized, mandatory, ongoing, and readily-available education and training for housing service providers as well as teachers, employers, mental health and child welfare workers, and other stakeholders engaging with 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Abramovich, 2013, 2016a; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Côté & Blais, 2021; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; French, 2017; Gaetz et al., 2018; Government of Alberta, 2017; Lalonde et al., 2018; Lyons et al., 2016, 2019; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; McCann & Brown, 2019, 2020; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Norris & Quilty, 2020; Robinson, 2021; Romero et al., 2020; Saewyc et al., 2017; Schwan et al., 2018; Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018; Simões & Adam, 2017; True Colors United, 2019). The literature identified numerous topics and themes for inclusion in education and training, including: basic 2SLGBTQ+ competency (e.g., key terms, pronouns, etc.); intersectionality and anti-oppression; unlearning homo/bi/transphobia; 2SLGBTQ+ allyship; fostering stigma-free environments; distinct challenges and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, including those who are multiply-marginalized; relevant policy and legislation, including anti-discrimination and tenancy laws; cultural safety and sensitivity; and anti-racism and anti-colonialism (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Chan & Huys, 2017; Côté & Blais, 2019; Gaetz et al., 2018; Lyons et al., 2019; McCann & Brown, 2019; McCready, 2017; Saewyc et al., 2017; Schwan et al., 2018; Shelton, Poirier, et al. 2018; Simões & Adam, 2017). Sources articulated the need to better equip front-line staff to offer appropriate resources and referrals to 2SLGBTQ+ youth;, including building referral partners' commitments and practices surrounding 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion as well as awareness of population-specific supports (e.g., transition-related treatment) (Abramovich, 2013; Boucher & Boyd, 2018; Chan & Huys, 2017; Kia et al., 2020). Finally, several sources recommended training and capacity-building with respect to the application of trauma-informed models of practice (Abramovich & Kimura, 2019; Lyons et al., 2016; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Saeywc et al., 2017; Samuels et al., 2018).

Fostering 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion in shelter, housing & other programs

A large number of recommendations focused on improving safety and inclusion for 2SLGBTQ+ youth accessing housing and other relevant programs, many of which were outlined previously in this review. Given the dearth of population-specific programs and services, recommendations focused on "building the capacity of existing housing programs to serve LGBTQ2S youth in a safe and affirming manner" (Abramovich, 2016a, p. 90). To this end, suggested strategies at the service provider level included: abolishing discriminatory policies or practices at the organizational level; recruiting diverse staff and volunteer teams; creating staff positions explicitly focused on serving 2SLGBTQ+ youth (e.g., peer outreach workers); implementing and enforcing anti-discrimination and anti-homo/bi/transphobia policies; supporting youth to navigate if, how, when, and to whom they self-disclose; developing more transparent and rigorous complaint procedures; offering activities or supports specifically tailored to 2SLGBTQ+ youth; building capacity for 2SLGBTQ+-inclusive community and partner referrals; incorporating flexibility, safety, and confidentiality into programming; ensuring that intake processes, forms, languages, and physical spaces (e.g., washrooms) are gender-inclusive; and seeking and incorporating advice and feedback from 2SLGBTQ+ youth on a regular basis (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Abramovich, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2020; Côté & Blais, 2019; Doyle, 2017; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; Gaetz et al., 2018; Government of Alberta, 2017; Lyons et al., 2016; National LGBTIA+ Health Education Center, 2020; Rhoades et al., 2018; Youngbloom et al., 2021). Furthermore, sources underscored the need for service providers to respect self-identification within their programming. Of particular relevance for transgender and gender-diverse youth, this involves ensuring individuals are able to access services that align with their lived gender, including in shelter, foster care, and environments typically characterized by gender segregation (Abramovich, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Lyons et al., 2016; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Robinson, 2018b).

At the policy level, recommendations focused primarily on building capacity in and accountability for 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion among service-providing organizations. Suggested actions for federal and subnational governments included: developing provincial housing and shelter standards that clearly articulate 2SLGBTQ+-inclusive service delivery models; legislating respect for and accommodation of self-identification in housing services; prohibiting youths' exclusion from services based on 2SLGBTQ+ identity; making access to funding conditional on 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion; and increasing support for longer-term and transitional housing options for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Abramovich, 2016a; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Lalonde et al., 2018; French, 2017; Schwan et al., 2018; Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Gaetz et al., 2018).

Introducing population-based services & housing solutions

While recommendations widely focused on improving services and programs that serve the broader population, sources also emphasized the importance of approaches targeted to 2SLGBTQ+ youth. The literature articulated a clear need for shelter, transitional, and social housing options - as well as complementary programs and supports - designed specifically with 2SLGBTQ+ youth in mind (Abramovich, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Abramovich & Pang, 2020; Buchnea & McKitterick, 2020; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Côté & Blais, 2019; Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2012; Eisenberg et al., 2017; French, 2017; Hao et al., 2021; Lalonde et al., 2018; Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Romero et al., 2020; Saskatchewan Housing Initiative Partnership, 2016; Schwan et al., 2018; Sharifi, 2016). The availability of programs and services designed for and led by racialized, Indigenous, and gender-diverse 2SLGBTQ+ youth also emerged as a recommendation (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Glick et al., 2020; Government of Ontario, 2018; Robinson, 2021). Population-based programs were framed as a promising strategy to better respond to 2SLGBTQ+ youths' unique and specialized needs, and maximize the safety, acceptance, relevance, appropriateness, and effectiveness of services (Abramovich, 2013, 2016a; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Youngbloom et al., 2021).

Improving housing availability, affordability & policy

With a view to supporting positive outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth at later stages in the housing continuum, sources recommended improving the availability of community, transitional, and supportive housing options, as well as expanding access to affordable housing (Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Saskatchewan Housing Initiative Partnership, 2016; Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, n.d.; Wheeler et al., 2017). Additional recommendations regarding housing policy more broadly included the introduction of a dedicated national strategy on 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness, the development of 2SLGBTQ+ advisory groups to support other relevant strategies or plans, and stronger engagement and consultation with 2SLGBTQ+ youth with lived experience in policy and program development (Abramovich, n.d.; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017a; Casey, 2019; MacEntee et al., 2021; Robinson, 2021; Wheeler et al., 2021).

Support for other protective factors: income, employment, health & social

As explored earlier in this review, available evidence pointed to diverse non-housing facilitators that can meaningfully support improved housing outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Given this, several recommendations involved the strengthening of diverse protective factors for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Short-term rental assistance, more accessible and generous income support policy, and increasing minimum wages were all presented as potential income-based approaches (Shelton, DeChants, et al., 2018; Glick et al., 2020; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020). Relatedly, some sources forwarded employment-related recommendations, including strengthening

workplace anti-discrimination legislation and incorporating job training and search skills into housing programs (Maccio & Ferguson, 2016; Ferguson, 2017). In terms of health, proposed solutions consisted of fostering more inclusive and affirming health services, improving access to gender-affirming care among those experiencing poverty and homelessness, and exploring tailored interventions for substance use for 2SLGBTQ+ youth (McCann & Brown, 2019; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020; Abramovich et al., 2021; Hao et al., 2021). Increasing funding for and expanding access to mental health supports was also a common suggestion, including services that explicitly consider the distinct needs and challenges of 2SLGBTQ+ youth (Thulien et al., 2020; Schwan et al., 2018; McCann & Brown, 2019; Kidd et al., 2017; Gaetz et al., 2016; Aaron Devor Knowledge Services, 2020). Finally, sources recommended that service providers work to acknowledge, respect, and strengthen chosen family and kinship networks among 2SLGBTQ+ youth, recognizing the material and emotional support these connections can offer (True Colors United, 2019; Thulien et al., 2020).

Enhancing data & research capacity

Several studies offered recommendations focused on the role of data and research in helping inform more equitable, effective, and evidence-based approaches to 2SLGBTQ+ youth housing and homelessness. While acknowledging challenges related to disclosure and accurate measurement of identity, some recommendations sought to address 2SLGBTQ+ youths' ongoing invisibility and underrepresentation in housing data: this included pursuing the systematic inclusion of gender and sexuality questions in relevant data collection activities (e.g., Point in Time counts) along with the consistent disaggregation of outcomes data (Norris & Quilty, 2020; Abramovich, 2019; Baker et al., 2018; Casey, 2019; Romero et al., 2020; Thulien et al., 2020). Furthermore, some sources underscored the need to further develop research capacity in this area more generally, and proposed improved funding and support for research grounded in an innovative, community-based, and intersectional approach to inquiry (Abramovich, 2013; French, 2017; Lalonde et al., 2018).

Systemic & structural interventions

Finally, the literature highlighted a range of recommendations comprising systemic and structural interventions, with a view to shedding light on and addressing "the structural inequities and systemic barriers faced by young people who experience or are at risk of experiencing homelessness" (Wheeler et al., 2017, p. 50-51). Dismantling systems of cis- and heterosexism, racism, colonialism, and adultism were framed as crucial objectives (True Colors United, 2019; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; Glick et al., 2020). With this overarching aim in mind, a number of recommendations targeted primarily at governments emerged, including: decriminalizing sex work, drug use, and other behaviours in which 2SLGBTQ+ youth may be overrepresented; including gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality as protected

characteristics in anti-discrimination and other equity-related legislation; taking purposeful steps to fulfill the recommendations outlined by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and incorporating an intersectional lens within all policy and programming endeavours (True Colors United, 2019; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019; Saewyc et al., 2017; Romero et al., 2020; Dank et al., 2015; Glick et al., 2020; Lyons et al., 2019; McCandless, 2017; Page, 2017; Robinson, 2021).

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT DATA

Following the literature review, this section offers an analysis of Point-in-Time (PiT) counts through a 2SLGBTQ+ lens, led by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. Beginning with an overview of approaches to PiT counts in the Canadian context, it proceeds with findings from an analysis of PiT count data from across the country. Acknowledging the limitations of this data – to be discussed subsequently – this section seeks to shed light on prevalence of 2SLGBTQ+ housing insecurity and instability at various stages of the housing continuum, including homelessness, emergency shelters, and transitional housing.

PIT COUNT APPROACH: EVERYONE COUNTS

Employment and Social Development Canada (2021) defines PiT counts as a "community-level measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness" (ESDC, 2021a) PiT counts provide a one-day snapshot of homelessness in a community, and represent one way to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and unsheltered locations. In 2018, 61 communities across Canada participated in *Everyone Counts,* the country's second nationally-coordinated PiT count.

As part of this enumeration effort, PiT counts also include survey questions that attempt to better understand the population of people experiencing homelessness. The aforementioned 2018 PiT count included questions related to gender and sexual orientation, with these and available response options as follows:

- **What gender do you identify with?** Female/Woman; Male/Man; Two-Spirit, Trans female/Trans woman; Trans male/Trans man; Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming; Not listed, Don't know, Decline to answer. Gender minorities were identified based on those who selected Trans female/Trans woman; Trans male/Trans man; Two-Spirit; and Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming.

- **How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian?** Straight/Heterosexual; Gay; Lesbian; Bisexual; Two-Spirit; Questioning; Queer; Not listed; Don't know; Decline to answer. Sexual minorities were identified based on those who selected Gay; Lesbian; Bisexual; Two-Spirit; Questioning; and Queer (ESDC, 2021b).

Although PiT counts are a useful source of information on the prevalence of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, and the characteristics of those who experience homelessness, they are not without limitations. PiT counts only provide a snapshot of homelessness, and therefore will not reach all people experiencing homelessness in a community over time. In particular, PiT

counts often do not reach people experiencing "hidden" homelessness, such as those living temporarily with family, friends, or in their car.

In the context of this project, the limitations of PiT counts in accurately capturing data may be especially pronounced for 2SLGBTQ+. A combination of factors – including underrepresentation in shelters and other housing programs, a higher prevalence of hidden homelessness among this population, and practices of concealment to avoid being targeted by law enforcement – may result in the underestimation of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in PiT Count Data (Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Abramovich, n.d., 2019; Abramovich & Shelton, 2017b; Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017; Lalonde et al., 2018; Shelton & Abramovich, 2019). In addition, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals may be reluctant to participate in counts because they feel unsafe disclosing their identity and/or fear discrimination and stigma from the surveyor (Abramovich, 2019). With this in mind, it is recommended that PiT counts be complemented by other data-gathering mechanisms, especially with a view to better understanding 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness. Further, the results presented below should be understood in the context of these limitations.

LOCAL PIT COUNT DATA

Following *Everyone Counts* in 2018, many communities made their PiT Count results publicly available, which were identified to inform this analysis. Reports from 36 communities were located through an initial web-based search. In the case of New Brunswick and Quebec, local data from communities in each province were reported in aggregate, encompassing an additional 10 communities (n=4 in New Brunswick and n=6 in Quebec). One exception was Montreal, where city data was made available. Altogether, this data represents 10 out of 13 provinces and territories, with no local PiT counts located for Prince Edward Island, Yukon, or Nunavut. The provincial/territorial breakdown of local PiT count data is summarized in Table 1. Of note, local PiT count reports varied somewhat in which data they presented (e.g., whether reported results included gender and sexual orientation), therefore the communities represented in certain findings following this section may vary based on the available data.

Table 1   Local PiT counts available, by province

Province/Territory	Number of Communities	Names of Communities
Alberta	6	▪ Calgary ▪ Edmonton ▪ Grande Prairie ▪ Lethbridge ▪ Red Deer ▪ Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray)

Province/Territory	Number of Communities	Names of Communities
British Columbia (BC)	8	▪ Abbotsford ▪ Kamloops ▪ Kelowna ▪ Nanaimo ▪ Nelson ▪ Prince George ▪ Vancouver ▪ Victoria (Greater)
Manitoba (MB)	3	▪ Brandon ▪ Thompson ▪ Winnipeg
New Brunswick (NB)	Provincially aggregated (4)	▪ Bathurst ▪ Fredericton ▪ Moncton ▪ Saint John
Newfoundland & Labrador (NL)	1	▪ St. John's
Northwest Territories (NT)	1	▪ Yellowknife
Nova Scotia (NS)	1	▪ Halifax

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

Province/Territory	Number of Communities	Names of Communities
Ontario	19	▪ Barrie/Simcoe County ▪ Belleville ▪ Brantford ▪ Dufferin County ▪ Durham Region ▪ Guelph-Wellington ▪ Kingston ▪ Lambton County ▪ London ▪ Nipissing/North Bay ▪ Ottawa ▪ Peel Region ▪ Peterborough ▪ St. Catharines/Niagara/Thorold ▪ Sudbury ▪ Thunder Bay ▪ Toronto ▪ Windsor ▪ York Region
Saskatchewan (SK)	2	▪ Regina ▪ Saskatoon
Quebec (QC)	1 + Provincially aggregated (6)	▪ Montreal Provincially aggregated: ▪ Drummondville ▪ Gatineau ▪ Quebec City ▪ Saguenay ▪ Sherbrooke ▪ Trois-Rivières
Total	42 individual communities, and two provincial aggregates that encompass an additional 10 communities	

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation   45

FINDINGS: ANALYSIS OF PIT COUNT DATA

Everyone Counts: Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness in Canadian Communities

Gender identity results

Aggregating the data from 61 communities, the 2018 national PiT count provided a breakdown of the number of gender minority individuals surveyed during the counts. With regards to gender identity, 2 per cent of respondents identified as trans male/trans man, trans female/trans woman, genderqueer/gender non-conforming. Identifying as a gender minority was most common among young people (age 13 to 24), accounting for 4 per cent of total youth responses.

Sexual Orientation Results

Sexual orientation was reported by age group. Identifying as a sexual minority was most common among young people, with 21 per cent of youth (aged 13 to 24) identifying as a sexual minority. These responses were less frequent with age, with 11 per cent of adults (age 25 to 49), 6 per cent of older adults (age 50 to 64), and 5 per cent of seniors (65 and older) identifying as a sexual minority.

Local PiT counts

Gender identity results

Table 2 below presents the percentage of PiT count respondents who identified as gender minorities (as defined previously) by community (or, where relevant, province). The community with the highest proportion of gender minority respondents was Nelson, British Columbia, while several communities reporting that none of their PiT count respondents identified as a gender minority. While these results represent all respondents, not just youth, the national results presented above would suggest that identifying as a gender minority is more common among young people than among older adults, and as such the proportion of youth identifying as a gender minority in each community may be higher.

Table 2   PiT respondents who identified as a gender minority, by community

Province/ Territory	Name of Community	% of respondents who identified as a gender minority
BC	Nelson	7%
ON	Dufferin County	5%
ON	Lambton County	4%
BC	Kamloops	4%
ON	Kingston	4%
MB	Thompson	4%
ON	Belleville	3%
QC	Montreal	3%
BC	Prince George	3%
ON	Windsor	3%
NB	*Provincially aggregated*	3%
MB	Brandon	2%
ON	Nipissing/North Bay	2%
ON	Ottawa	2%
ON	Peel Region	2%
SK	Regina	2%
NL	St. John's	2%
BC	Victoria (Greater)	2%
MB	Winnipeg	2%
ON	York Region	2%
QC	*Provincially aggregated*	2%
BC	Abbotsford	1%
ON	Brantford	1%

Province/ Territory	Name of Community	% of respondents who identified as a gender minority
ON	Durham Region	1%
ON	Guelph-Wellington	1%
NS	Halifax	1%
BC	Kelowna	1%
ON	London	1%
BC	Nanaimo	1%
ON	Peterborough	1%
ON	St. Catharines/Niagara/Thorold	1%
ON	Toronto	1%
BC	Vancouver	1%
AB	Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray)	1%
NWT	Yellowknife	0%
AB	Calgary	0%
AB	Edmonton	0%
ON	Barrie/Simcoe County	0%

As demonstrated in the graph, most communities reported that 1 to 4 per cent of their respondents identified as a gender minority.

Figure 1   PiT respondents who identified as a gender minority, by community
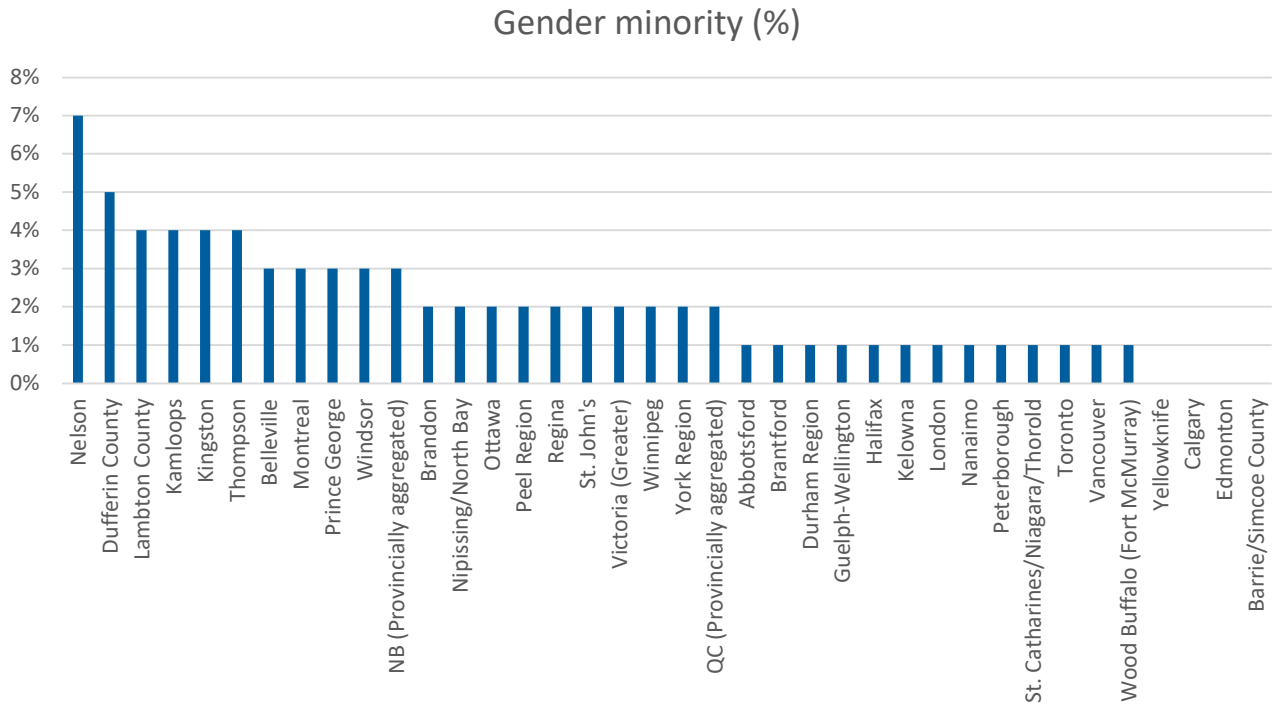
Gender minority (%)

Looking at the breakdown of gender minority respondents by province, territory, and size of community did not shed light on any evident patterns related to identifying as a gender minority. However, this community-level information does provide additional context for the nationally-aggregated data discussed in the previous section. While 2 per cent of respondents identified as a gender minority nation-wide, there appears to be considerable variation between communities: while some communities reported as many as 7 per cent of their respondents identifying as gender minorities, others reported a value of 0 per cent. While beyond the scope of this analysis, this raises the question of whether these differences are an accurate representation of demographic variations between communities or attributable to some other factor. For instance, communities reporting proportions of gender minority respondents far below the national average may be explained by low levels of trust between gender-diverse community members and those responsible for conducting the PiT Count. Alternatively, it may point to genuinely-low levels of gender minority homelessness in the community. In high-reporting communities, we might ask whether individuals in that community are more willing to self-identify (and if so, the reason for this increased willingness), as well as explore the need for more targeted services in the instance of higher prevalence.

Sexual orientation results

Table 3 presents the percentage of PiT count respondents who identified as sexual minorities by community (or, where relevant, by province). The community with the highest proportion of sexual minority respondents was Nelson, British Columbia; that with the lowest proportion was Calgary, Alberta. Seven communities included breakdowns of sexual minority identity by age, with the remainder providing percentages for the entire sample. In cases where age breakdowns were provided, results demonstrated that sexual minority young people are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness.

Table 3   **PiT respondents who identified as a sexual minority, by community**

Province	Name of Community	% of respondents who identified as 2SLGBTQ+
BC	Nelson	26%
ON	Kingston	17%
NB	*Provincially aggregated*	*17%*
ON	Nipissing/North Bay	16%
ON	Lambton County	14%
ON	Sudbury	14%
ON	Guelph-Wellington	13%
BC	Kamloops	13%
QC	Montreal	13%
ON	Ottawa	13%
BC	Victoria (Greater)	13%
BC	Abbotsford	12%
BC	Vancouver	12%
ON	Windsor	12%
QC	*Provincially aggregated*	*12%*
ON	Belleville	11%
ON	Dufferin County	11%

Province	Name of Community	% of respondents who identified as 2SLGBTQ+
SK	Saskatoon	11%
ON	Toronto	11%
ON	Brantford	10%
AB	Grande Prairie	10%
ON	London	10%
ON	St. Catharines/Niagara/Thorold	10%
MB	Winnipeg	10%
ON	Durham Region	9%
SK	Regina	9%
NL	St. John's	9%
MB	Thompson	9%
ON	Barrie/Simcoe County	8%
MB	Brandon	8%
AB	Edmonton	8%
ON	Peel Region	8%
ON	Peterborough	8%
ON	York Region	8%
BC	Nanaimo	7%
ON	Thunder Bay	7%
AB	Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray)	7%
BC	Kelowna	6%
AB	Lethbridge	6%
AB	Red Deer	4%

Province	Name of Community	% of respondents who identified as 2SLGBTQ+
NWT	Yellowknife	4%
AB	Calgary	3%

As demonstrated in the graph in Figure 2, most communities reported that between 5 and 15 per cent of their respondents identified as a sexual minority.

Figure 2 **PiT respondents who identified as a sexual minority, by community**
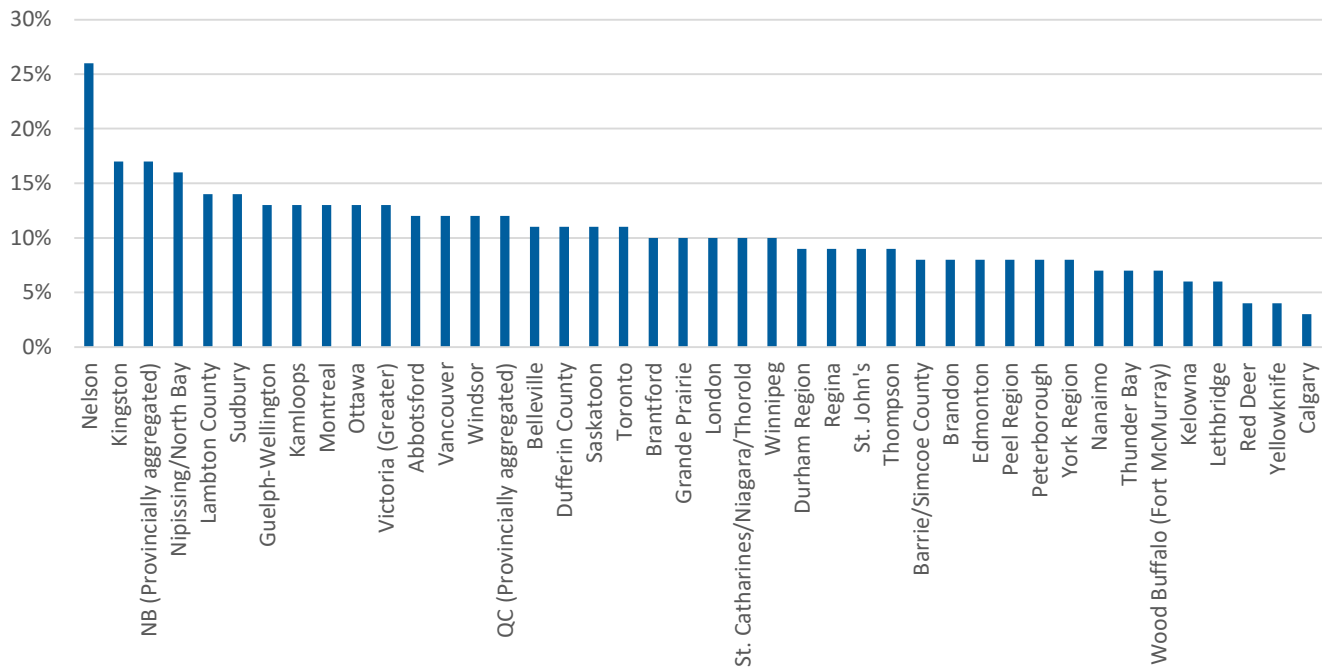
As with gender identity, there were no obvious trends detected on the basis of province, territory, or size of community. National survey results indicated that 21 per cent of youth identified as a sexual minority, with considerable variation between communities (3 to 26 per cent). As with the above, this breakdown can provide insight into potential communities where housing services designed with sexual minority individuals in mind may be particularly relevant, or communities where participants are more or less likely to self-disclose their sexual orientation while accessing services.

ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH MENTORING SURVEY

This section shares findings from secondary data analysis of the National Youth Mentoring Survey, led by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation and MENTOR Canada. Given high proportions of sexual and gender minority survey respondents – nearly 20 per cent as 2SLGBTQ+, and over 4 per cent as transgender – this data offers a unique look at 2SLGBTQ+ youths' attitudes and experiences, including that of homelessness.

METHODOLOGY

The National Youth Mentoring Survey was a nationally representative online survey of 2,838 young adults between the ages of 18 to 30, conducted between January and March 2020. The survey included a measure of previous experiences with homelessness, as well as variables exploring socio-demographic information, educational experiences, employment and income, meaningful relationships, self-worth, social capital, help-seeking behaviour, mental health, belonging, trust, and community involvement.

The primary dependent variable of interest was a dichotomous variable measuring whether or not respondents had experienced homelessness, either between the ages of 12 and 18, since turning 18, or had experienced homelessness in either period. This question does not define a specific experience of homelessness, and could be interpreted broadly by respondents. As a result, we cannot ascertain whether respondents' experiences of homelessness were characterized by couch-surfing, emergency shelter use, or something else. Given some evidence suggesting that youth may be less likely to identify as being or having been homeless, the prevalence of homelessness as measured in this survey may be underrepresented (Norris & Quilty, 2020; McCready, 2017).

The explanatory variables explored 2SLGBTQ+ identity in several ways:

- **2SLGBTQ+ identity:** A binary variable was derived which categorized respondents who selected non-heterosexual sexual orientations (lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, or queer, asexual, Two-Spirit), identified as transgender, or identified their gender as non-binary or an Indigenous or other cultural gender minority (i.e. Two-Spirit). This was in comparison to non-2SLGBTQ+ respondents (i.e. those who identified as heterosexual, who did not identify as transgender, and who did not identify as non-binary or an Indigenous or other cultural gender minority (i.e. Two-Spirit)).

o   Further analysis examined the **interaction between gender and 2SLGBTQ+ identity**, looking at the experience of 2SLGBTQ+ men, 2SLGBTQ+ women, non-2SLGBTQ+ men, and non-2SLGBTQ+ women. Non-binary or other gender minority individuals, whom were all categorized as 2SLGBTQ+, had an insufficient number of responses for further analysis.

- **Transgender identity:** Respondents were asked the following question: "Do you identify as transgender, trans, or within the trans umbrella?", with the response options of "Yes," "No," and "Prefer not to say." The analysis compared those who selected "Yes" with those who selected "No."

Additionally, the analysis explored the relationship between the abovementioned 2SLGBTQ+ identity variables and several potential independent variables and covariates (see Table 4), which were derived from the team's experience and expertise in this field.

Table 4   Independent variables and covariates

Categories	Independent variables and covariates
Socio-demographics	- Indigenous status - Born in Canada - Disability status[4] - Racialized identity[5]

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[4] Disability status was identified in two distinct ways. The first question asked if "At any point in your life, have you had a physical or mental condition or health problem that reduced the amount or kind of activity you could perform at home, school, or in any other pursuit such as transportation or leisure?", which is presented as "Disability (reduced activity)". The second question asked "Did you ever receive a professional diagnosis of a disability or disorder?", presented as "Disability (professional diagnosis)".

[5] Racialized identity was derived on the basis of respondents' ethnocultural or racial identity, which included options for South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, White, Other, Unsure, and Prefer not to say, and allowed respondents to select all that applied. Results were dichotomized into two groups: those who selected 'White' only, and those who selected non-white responses, or a combination or responses. While this is an imperfect methodology that collapses distinct identities into a single 'non-white' category that fails to recognize the distinct experiences of different racial and ethnocultural groups, limited sample sizes within the individual groups makes analysis of each racial/ethnocultural identity challenging.

Categories	Independent variables and covariates
Supportive relationships	▪ Presence of a meaningful person in the respondent's life, ages 6-11, 12-18[6] ▪ Presence of anyone in respondent's life they would consider a mentor, ages 6-11, 12-18[7]
Education and employment	▪ High school completion ▪ Pursued further education after high school ▪ Highest education completed ▪ Educational aspirations ▪ Current NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) status
Health and well-being	▪ Self worth ▪ Mental health ▪ Mental well-being ▪ Social capital ▪ Sense of belonging

Analysis included descriptive statistics and significance testing using chi-squared and t-tests to explore the differences between groups.[8]

FINDINGS

2SLGBTQ+ identity

Of the 2,838 respondents to the the National Youth Mentoring Survey, 2,586 responded to the questions allowing them to be categorized by 2SLGBTQ+ status. Of these respondents, 19.8 per cent identified as 2SLGBTQ+.[9]

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[6] The survey defined "meaningful person" as anyone with whom the respondent spent time or who did a lot of good things for them, not including a parent or guardian. A meaningful person could sometimes be called a mentor or a role model.

[7] The survey defined a "mentor" as someone other that the respondents parent(s) or guardian(s) who is usually older with more experience than them, who they could count on to be there for them, believed in and cared deeply about them, and inspired them to do their best, and influenced what they do and the choices they made then or make now.

[8] Statistically significant results are indicated using asterisks, where ** indicates significance at 5%, and *** at 1%.

[9] The difference between the total survey sample (n=2,838) and the sample comparing 2SLGBTQ+ identified individuals to non-2SLGBTQ+ identified individuals (n=2,586) is a result of missing data for the relevant survey questions.

An overview of key findings is presented in Tables 5 and 6 below. Table 5 presents a summary of results from binary variables, where a percentage can be presented for both 2SLGBTQ+ respondents and non-2SLGBTQ+ respondents. Table 6 presents the results of findings from scales (i.e., multiple questions that are combined to present an overall scale).

Table 5   **Binary variable results by 2SLGBTQ+ identity**

	2SLGBTQ+	Non-2SLGBTQ+	Significance
Dependent variables (experiences of homelessness)			
Homeless between the ages of 12-18	14.3%	8.2%	***
Homeless since turning 18	16.0%	8.1%	***
Ever homeless since turning 12 years old	22.5%	11.9%	***
Socio-demographic information			
Indigenous identity	19.2%	8.9%	***
Born in Canada	87.7%	85.1%	
Disability (reduced activity)	68.5%	41.2%	***
Disability (professional diagnosis)	78.6%	58.7%	***
Racialized identity	39.4%	35.0%	
Supportive relationships			
Presence of a meaningful person (ages 6 to 11)	57.8%	61.8%	
Presence of a meaningful person (ages 12 to 18)	65.0%	66.9%	
Presence of a mentor (ages 6 to 11)	42.1%	41.8%	
Presence of a mentor (ages 12 to 18)	45.8%	45.8%	
Education and employment			
High school completion	90.9%	94.6%	***
Pursued further education after high school	78.5%	82.5%	**
Highest education completed (Some university or more)	53.1%	58.0%	
Educational aspirations (Some university or more)	60.0%	62.4%	

	2SLGBTQ+	Non-2SLGBTQ+	Significance
Currently NEET	17.0%	11.7%	***
Health and well-being			
Mental health (Good/Excellent)	45.6%	68.4%	***
Sense of belonging (Strong/Somewhat strong)	41.2%	48.8%	***

Table 6   Scale results by 2SLGBTQ+ identity

	2SLGBTQ+	Non-2SLGBTQ+	Significance
Health and well-being			
Self worth	17.6	20.2	***
Mental well-being	21.2	23.4	***
Social capital	12.3	13.2	***

Overall, 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported significantly higher rates of homelessness compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth. Since turning 12, 22.5 per cent of youth who identified as 2SLGBTQ+ had experienced homelessness compared to 11.9 per cent of non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (***). Looking at the separate age categories:

- Between the ages of 12-18, 14.3 per cent of 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported that they had experienced homelessness, compared to 8.2 per cent of non-2SLGBTQ+ youth during the same age range (***); and,

- After turning 18, 16.0 per cent of 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported that they had experienced homelessness, compared to 8.1 per cent of non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (***).

Looking at demographic characteristics, 2SLGBTQ+ youth were also more likely to:

- Identify as Indigenous (19.2 per cent) compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (8.9 per cent, ***);

- Identify as Black (8.2 per cent) compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (5.4 per cent, **); and,

- Report having a disability (as defined by having a physical or mental condition or health problem that reduced the amount or kind of activity they could perform at home, school, or

in any other pursuit such as transportation or leisure) (68.5 per cent) compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (41.2 per cent)(***).

The presence of a meaningful person in youth's lives at both 6 to 11 years of age and 12 to 18 years of age was slightly lower for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in comparison to their non-2SLGBTQ+ counterparts, but this was not statistically significant. That said, in other analyses of this data set focused on youth's identification of unmet needs in regards to mentorship, results found that 69 per cent of sexual minority youth reported unmet mentorship needs, in comparison to 54 per cent of total respondents (**).[10]

In regards to education and employment, 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported:

- Lower rates of high school completion (90.9 per cent) compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (94.6 per cent)(***);

- Lower rates of pursuing further education after high school (78.5 per cent) compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (82.5 per cent)(**); and,

- Higher rates of current NEET status (17 per cent) compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ youth (11.7 per cent)(***).

2SLGBTQ+ youth also reported lower mental wellbeing, social capital, and self worth. In particular, 2SLGBTQ+ youth were less likely to report:

- Having good or excellent mental health (45.6 per cent) compared to their non-2SLGBTQ+ counterparts (68 per cent)(***); and,

- Having a strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging (41.2 per cent) compared to their non-2SLGBTQ+counterparts (48.8 per cent)(***).
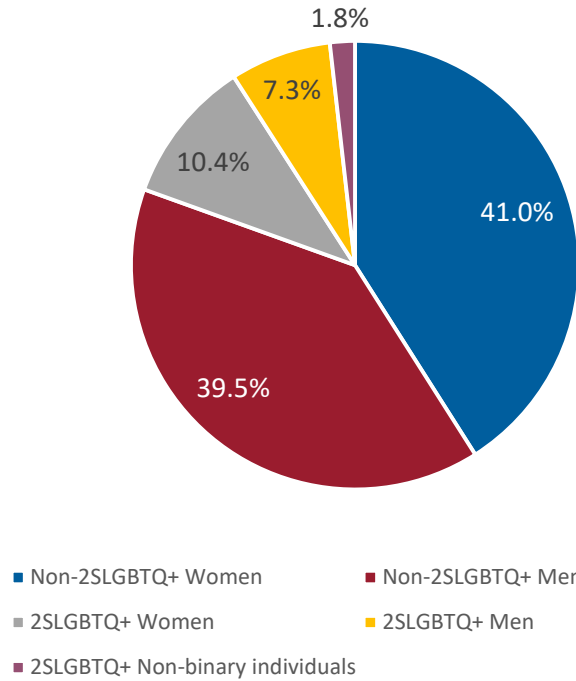
Gender and 2SLGBTQ+ identity

The breakdown of 2SLGBTQ+ identity and gender is represented in Figure 3, below.

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[10] Unmet mentorship needs were identified using the question: Were there times you would have wanted a mentor or more mentors but did not have access to one?

Figure 3   2SLGBTQ+ identity by gender[11]

Regarding our dependent variable (the proportion of survey respondents who reported experiencing homelessness since turning 12 years old) 2SLGBTQ+ men had the highest reported rates (24.6 per cent), followed by 2SLGBTQ+ women (20.6 per cent), non-2SLGBTQ+ men (15.0 per cent), and non-2SLGBTQ+ women (8.8 per cent) (see Figure 4). The proportion of 2SLGBTQ+ non-binary individuals is not reported due to small sample sizes.

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[11] Sample size: 2,571

Figure 4   **Homelessness rates from 12 years of age onwards, by 2SLGBTQ+ identity
and gender**
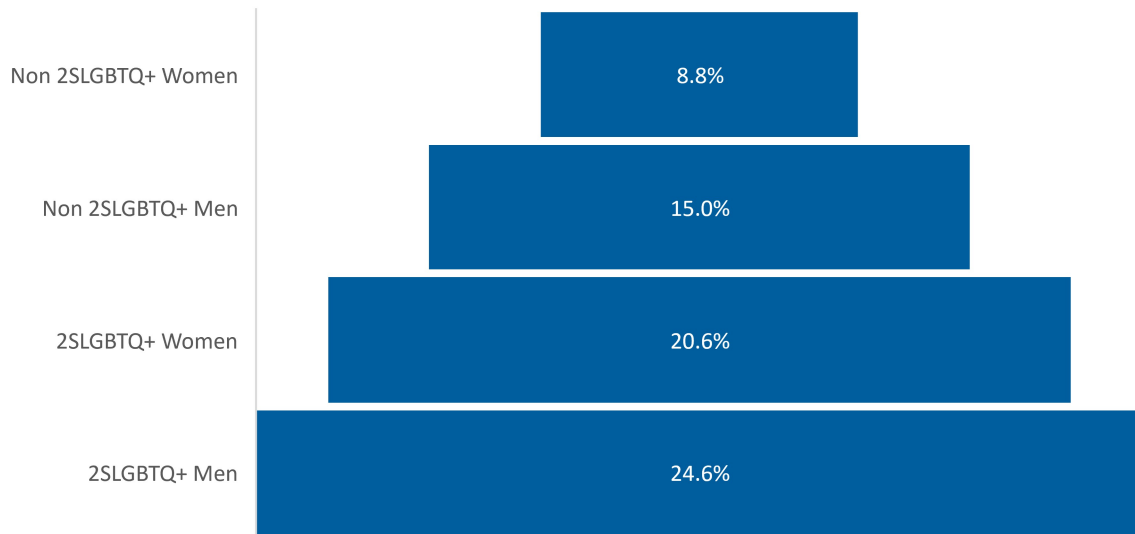
These results indicate high rates of 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness in comparison to non-
2SLGBTQ+ youth regardless of gender. We also noted patterns in experiences of homelessness
by gender, with men reporting higher rates of homelessness than women regardless of
2SLGBTQ+ identity.

Transgender identity

The National Youth Mentoring Survey included 126 respondents who identified as transgender,
representing 4.1 per cent of the total sample. An overview of key findings is presented in Tables 7
and 8 below.

Table 7   **Binary variable results by Transgender identity**

	Transgender	Not transgender	Significance
Dependent variables (experiences of homelessness)			
Homeless between the ages of 12-18	20.6%	9.1%	***
Homeless since turning 18	19.8%	9.2%	***
Ever homeless since turning 12 years old	30.2%	13.4%	***
Socio-demographic information			

	Transgender	Not transgender	Significance
Indigenous identity	30.9%	10.2%	***
Born in Canada	89.6%	85.0%	
Disability (reduced activity)	78.8%	44.5%	***
Disability (professional diagnosis)	64.4%	62.5%	***
Racialized identity	41.9%	36.5%	
Supportive relationships			
Presence of a meaningful person (ages 6 to 11)	64.3%	61.0%	
Presence of a meaningful person (ages 12 to 18)	65.2%	66.3%	
Presence of a mentor (ages 6 to 11)	50.0%	41.8%	
Presence of a mentor (ages 12 to 18)	52.8%	45.3%	
Education and employment			
High school completion	84.8%	93.6%	***
Pursued further education after high school	84.9%	80.8%	
Highest education completed (Some university or more)	52.7%	56.9%	
Educational aspirations (Some university or more)	59.5%	61.6%	
Currently NEET	87.3%	86.4%	
Health and well-being			
Mental health (Good/Excellent)	59.3%	65.2%	
Sense of belonging (Strong/Somewhat strong)	54.3%	47.8%	

Table 8   Scale results by transgender identity

	Transgender	Not transgender	Significance
Health and well-being			
Self worth	18.0	19.8	***
Mental well-being	20.5	23.0	***

	Transgender	Not transgender	Significance
Social capital	11.8	13.0	***

Transgender youth were more likely to report having experienced any homelessness from the age of 12 onwards (30.2 per cent) in comparison to youth who did not identify as transgender (13.4 per cent)(***), including:

- Between the ages of 12 to 18, 20.6 per cent of transgender youth reported experiencing homelessness, in comparison to 9.1 per cent of youth who did not identify as transgender (***); and,

- Since turning 18, 19.8 per cent of transgender youth reported experiencing homelessness, in comparison with 9.2 per cent of youth who did not identify as transgender (***).

Transgender youth were also more likely to:

- Identify as Indigenous (30.9 per cent) compared to youth who did not identify as transgender (10.2 per cent)(***); and,

- Report having a disability (as defined by having a physical or mental condition or health problem that reduced the amount or kind of activity they could perform at home, school, or in any other pursuit such as transportation or leisure) (78.8 per cent) compared to youth who did not identify as transgender (44.5 per cent)(***).

The presence of a meaningful person in youth's lives at both 6 to 11 years of age and 12 to 18 years of age was not statistically different for transgender youth in comparison to youth who did not identify as transgender. Although not statistically significant, there were several instances (presence of a meaningful person between the ages of 6 to 11; and presence of a formal mentor in both age ranges) where transgender respondents reported higher rates than cisgender respondents. Analyses which explored unmet mentorship needs found that 75 per cent of transgender youth reported having unmet mentorship needs in comparison to 54 per cent of all respondents, although this difference was also not statistically significant.

Transgender youth also:

- Were less likely to have completed high school (84.8 per cent) compared to youth who did not identify as transgender (93.6 per cent)(***);

- Reported lower mental wellbeing, social capital, and self worth compared to youth who did not identify as transgender (***).

While the observed patterns were similar for both the broader 2SLGBTQ+ group and transgender youth specifically, homelessness and high school non-completion rates were more pronounced for transgender youth, who also reported higher rates of Indigenous identity and self-reported disability status.

While the analysis did not seek to make comparisons between sexual and gender minority individuals or articulate findings for specific 2SLGBTQ+ identities (with the exception of transgender respondents), our findings allude to the presence of exacerbated inequities for transgender youth. For instance, while 11.9 per cent of non-2SLGBTQ+ respondents reported experiencing homelessness since the age of 12, 22.5 per cent of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents overall responded as such, and 30.2 per cent of transgender respondents. Similar patterns emerged with regard to the scale-based measures of mental well being and social capital, whereby a hierarchy is observed with non-2SLGBTQ+ reporting highest rates, followed by 2SLGBTQ+ respondents, and transgender respondents at the bottom. These findings appear particularly striking in the context of persistent data gaps in data collection regarding gender minority identities, pointing to within-group disparities and inequities that may disproportionately affect transgender individuals (Brennan et al., 2021)."

REVIEW OF 2SLGBTQ+ HOMELESSNESS SUPPORTS IN CANADA

Finally, this section provides findings from a review of existing supports for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals across Canada, particularly in the context of homelessness. Led by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, this section draws on two separate sources to summarize some of the available service offerings for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in Canada, including those specific to youth.
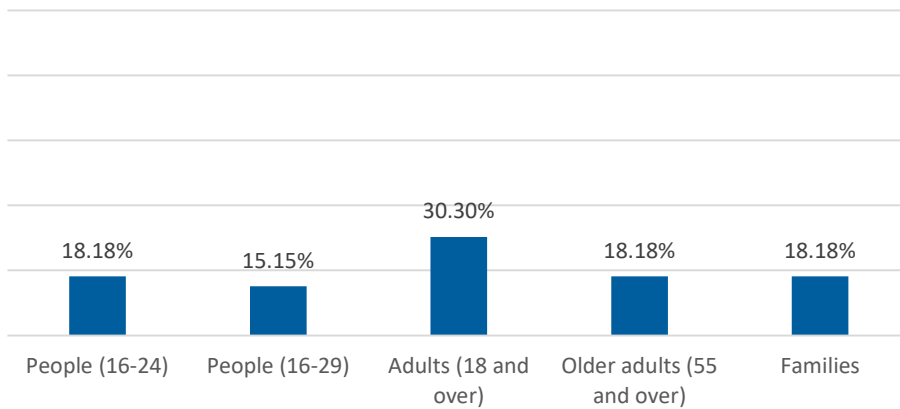
METHODOLOGY

Two methods to data collection informed this activity: 1) a desk review seeking to develop a program inventory of existing organizations providing services to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in Canada, relying on both the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' internal library and a broader web search, and 2) an online survey assessing the number of agencies across Canada that are offering supports to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals experiencing homelessness.

The survey was distributed through several channels, including the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' weekly newsletter (sent out twice) and social media channels (i.e., Twitter, Facebook) as well as Reaching Home's monthly newsletter (sent out once). The survey covered information on where organizations were located, the type of services offered, data collection practices, organizational policies and practices, and the supports for and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ service users. In total, 25 agencies participated, with respondent characteristics summarized subsequently.

Over half of the respondents were based in Ontario, with additional representation from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec. Over two-thirds of the respondents were in urban areas, with 17 per cent in suburban areas, and 13 per cent in rural areas. Two organizations identified as being Indigenous led.

Respondents were asked to identify the age groups that their agency works with. In some cases, agencies worked across age spectrums and in other cases, agencies worked with specific populations. Below is the distribution of age groups that agencies work with.

Figure 5   Service providers by age group served

		30.30%		
18.18%	15.15%		18.18%	18.18%
People (16-24)	People (16-29)	Adults (18 and over)	Older adults (55 and over)	Families

Respondents were also asked if they provide services to specific genders. For example, some agencies may provide supports exclusively to cisgender and transgender women, whereas other organizations may provide services to people of all genders. Just over half of the agencies reported providing gender-based services. The majority of these agencies were offering services specific to cisgender and transgender women and non-binary individuals.

FINDINGS

2SLGBTQ+ Program Inventory

Beginning with findings from the desk review, 24 organizations were identified that provide supports for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and populations. This includes organizations working specifically with youth, as well as those that serve individuals across age ranges. Further, organizations offer a variety of different types of programs, including housing-specific programs as well as those offering other supports, including social engagement, health and well-being, education, and outreach.

Table 9   2SLGBTQ+ program inventory

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
Alberta	Calgary	Calgary Outlink	Calgary Outlink	Drop-In	Calgary Outlink is a community-based, not-for-profit charity dedicated to providing support, education, outreach, and referrals for the LGBTQ2IA+ and allied community in Calgary, Alberta.
Alberta	Calgary	Trellis Society	Aura	Housing	Aura is a Housing First program for youth ages 14 to 24 that works alongside LGBTQ2S+, gender nonbinary and gender nonconforming youth who are at risk of or are currently experiencing homelessness.
Alberta	Edmonton	Community Health Empowerment & Wellness Project	OUTpost	Drop-in	CHEW Project provides frontline support, opportunities for health and wellness, and to help find hope for 2SLGBTQ+ youth and emerging adults facing barriers to mental health, oppression, poverty, homelessness, substance use, sexual health, sexual exploitation/sex work. CHEW's team creates pathways to resilience through no cost access to basic needs (shower, laundry, food hampers, clothing, bus tickets), mental health supports, harm reduction, social services, cultural connections, social activities, and STI testing.
Alberta	Edmonton	2-Spirit Society	2-Spirit Society	Programming	Provide social, health, and/or cultural programs and services primarily for 2-Spirit, IndigiQueer and/or LGBTQIA+ communities.

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
British Columbia	Vancouver	RainCity Housing and Support Society	Housing First LGBTQ2S+ Youth Housing	Housing	The first program of its kind in Canada, RainCity Housing and Support Society opened a Housing First outreach program specifically for youth who have experienced chronic and/or episodic homelessness and who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or Two Spirit. Individuals come off the street, build supportive networks, find and secure housing, and pursue employment.
British Columbia	Vancouver	Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA)	2-Spirit Collective	Drop-In	UNYA's 2-Spirit Collective provides support, resources and programming for Indigenous youth, ages 15 to 30, who identify as 2-Spirit or LGBTQ+ and for those who are questioning their sexual or gender identities.
British Columbia	Vancouver	Broadway Youth Resource Centre	Kwayatsut and Sequoia House	Housing	16 units of housing specifically for 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying youth, since 2013. BYRC also offers a variety of programming geared specifically to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.
Northwest Territories	Yellowknife	Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife	Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife	Drop-in	The Rainbow Youth Centre is a space for 2SLGBTQQIAA+ youth, their families, their friends and their community to spend time. Officially opened on August 22, 2016 as a safer hang-out space and started regular programming in September 2016.
Ontario	Hamilton	Good Shepherd	2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Mental Health Clinician	Mental health services	The 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Mental Health Clinician offers short individual mental health support and counselling for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth ages 16-25 living in Hamilton, ON. Support is provided out of Good Shepherd Notre Dame House, St. Joseph's Health Care Youth Wellness Centre, or in the community.

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
Ontario	Ottawa	Youth Services Bureau	Spectrum LGBTQ Community Youth Group	Drop-in	Spectrum provides workshops, discussion groups, and art collaborations, as well as counselling services, peer mentoring, and primary care resources. Spectrum can help with challenges like depression, anxiety, and suicide while also offering practical support to navigate the mental health, housing, and educational systems.
Ontario	Ottawa	Youth Services Bureau	McEwan Supportive Housing	Housing	22 Units supporting 30 youth (14 single apartments and 8 two bedroom). Supported by a community developer working with the tenant community toward setting and achieving their collective goals and offering safe space, social connection, and inclusion through various events. Individual supports provided to each tenant by housing-based case managers either with LGBTQ2S+ identities or having been trained in key competencies relating to the realities experienced by this population.
Ontario	Ottawa	Western Ottawa Community Resources	Queerios	Drop-In	Queerios is a social space for LGBTQ+* youth, run by LGBTQ+ staff. Youth can hang out and meet new people, access resources, gain support from staff, and learn about their history. The program runs in-person on Thursdays from 5 pm-8 pm.

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
Ontario	Toronto	Friends of Ruby	Friends of Ruby	Housing	The Friends of Ruby Home is a transitional house built specifically for LGBTQI2S youth and is a place where youth can focus on life skills, get connected to community supports through case management and work towards living independently within 1 year. It has 31 suites, with two suites having a double bed for couples and five being fully accessible.
Ontario	Toronto	Friends of Ruby	Friends of Ruby	Drop-in	The Friends of Ruby drop-in centre is the place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and two-spirit youth in the GTA (aged 16-29) to find counselling, practical supports and a sense of community.
Ontario	Toronto	Supporting Our Youth (SOY)	SOY'S Internal Housing Program	Housing	In 2004, SOY began its partnership with St. Clare's Multi-Faith Housing Society to address LGBT2SQ+ youth homelessness through stable housing, a connectionn to community, and one-on-one support. 20 rent-geared-to-income units of housing available to LGBT2SQ+ youth 27 years old and under to apply for when units become available. The length of the program is up to three years, or up until someone's 30th birthday. Supports are provided so that LGBT2SQ+ youth can work on their other self-identified life goals, such as: navigating immigration and settlement; finding income; pursuing education; looking for work; exploring career goals; exploring gender and sexuality; navigating familial relationships; defining their health and wellness; and growing as people.

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
Ontario	Toronto	Supporting Our Youth (SOY)	Drop-in	Drop-in	Groups are where the SOY community really comes together. Groups are welcoming places of respect, connection and fun. In groups, there's lots of time for art, discussion, games, and even field trips. SOY runs many different groups and some are for youth who identify in certain ways and others are for youth who share a specific interest.
Ontario	Toronto	The 519	Housing Services	Housing	The 519 is committed to providing housing and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, 2-spirit youth ages 16-29. The 519 provides one-on-one services which assist youth with housing applications, housing searches, referrals to community resources, housing services and programs. We can also support youth in eviction prevention, addressing issues of discrimination in housing and assistance with furniture.
Ontario	Toronto	YMCA	Sprott House	Housing	First opened its doors in September 2007 and is one of the first 2SLGBTQ+ transitional housing programs for youth in Canada. YMCA Sprott House provides one year of supported residential living for up to 25 young people between the ages of 16 to 24.
Ontario	Waterloo Region	OK2BEME	OK2BEME	Counselling	OK2BME is a set of free, supportive services for LGBTQ2+ identified children, teens and their families in Waterloo Region. The OK2BME program consists of confidential counselling services, youth groups for individuals 12-18, and public education, consulting and training.

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
Ontario	Windsor	FiveFourteen	FiveFourteen	Foster care	FiveFourteen is a foster care agency for LGBTQ2S youth in Ontario, and the only one in Canada. It is a queer-owned and operated, and we believe in supporting the youth of our community. It has LGBTQ2S-positive foster homes in Windsor and London. It connects youth and their foster families to a network of LGBTQ2S positive and specialist supports and services, and help build strong and lasting connections in LGBTQ2S communities. For 17 and under.
Ontario	York Region	Blue Door	INNclusion 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Supportive Housing Program	Housing	Program provides safe, stable housing for four youth who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, who are at risk of and/or experiencing homelessness in York Region for up to one year while they work with a peer mentor to set and achieve their goals and surrounding education, health, housing, and employment.
Quebec	Montreal	Coalition jeunesse LGBTQ	Jenunes Queer Youth	Programming	Jeunes Queer Youth is a "by and for" youth program, which means that we believe that queer and trans youth are best placed to identify the type of sex education they wish to receive.

Province	City	Name of Organization	Name of Program	Type of Program	Description
Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	OUTSaskatoon	Pride Home - 2SLGBTQ Youth Housing	Housing	OUTSaskatoon opened Pride Home in January 2017 in order to provide a place for 2SLGBTQ youth to live open and free lives. Pride Home is a place where gender and sexually diverse youth are celebrated and supported and where they have the support and services that they need to thrive. Pride Home is a five-bedroom home with shared communal spaces. Each bedroom has a private bathroom, mini-fridge, and workspace, and shared spaces include the kitchen, living room space, and an art and recreation space. It is semi-independent housing. Youth will have a lease agreement and working relationship with a professional property management company.
Saskatchewan	Regina	John Howard Saskatchewan	Lulu's Lodge	Housing	Lulu's Lodge is a 5-bedroom supportive transitional home for LGBTQQ2S+ youth aged 16-21 facing homelessness in Regina. The program provides a live-in mentor, guidance and support around education, physical health, mental wellness, family reunification, legal matters, and advocacy. Referrals are made to community agencies ensuring a continuum of care.

While not an exhaustive list, this inventory helps demonstrate the geographic dispersion of programs and variety of foci.

While the inventory found some provincial/territorial diversity, there was an absence of identified 2SLGBTQ+-specific programs in Atlantic Canada, the Territories, and Central Canada (particularly Manitoba). Provinces with more representation show distinct clusters in major cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver, indicating potential gaps in smaller and more remote communities.

Among the housing programs identified, the most common model was limited term transitional housing, where participants are able to access the program and affiliated housing for a period of usually between one and three years, although programs identified also included Housing First models, and those that provide assistance in looking for and accessing housing and responding to housing discrimination. Outside of housing specific programming, many of the programs identified provided a variety of social, health, well-being, education and employment supports.

2SLGBTQ+ service offerings

Of the service provider survey respondents, 61 per cent indicated that they do offer supports specific to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, while 30 per cent indicated they did not, and 9 per cent didn't know whether they did or did not.

The most common type of service offerings were outreach supports, drop-in programming, and case management supports. A smaller number of agencies offered emergency shelter and/or housing. The complete list of services is presented below. "Other" responses included services focused on harm reduction, peer support, mental health supports, and youth justice programming.

Table 10   2SLGBTQ+ service offerings

Support offered	Proportion reporting
Outreach supports	21%
Case management	18%
Drop-in programming	18%
Transitional housing (time-restricted, non-permanent housing)	13%
Permanent scattered-site, supportive housing (permanent housing in scattered-site units with off-site supports)	11%
Emergency shelter	5%
Other	5%
Permanent congregate, supportive housing (permanent housing with on-site supports)	5%
Healthcare services	3%

Respondents were asked if 2SLGBTQ+ individuals were involved in service provision in their agencies. Over half of the participants indicated that 2SLGBTQ+ staff were involved in providing services (59 per cent), while 23 per cent indicated they were not involved, and the remaining respondents (18 per cent) indicating that they either didn't know or preferred not to answer.

Similar results were found when respondents were asked if 2SLGBTQ+ service users and service providers were involved in the development of these service offerings for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals,

with 58 per cent reporting that they were, 21 per cent reporting that they weren't, and 21 per cent reporting that they didn't know.

Respondents were also asked if they noticed any differences in service needs among 2SLGBTQ+ service users compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ individuals. Just over half of the respondents (57 per cent) identified that they did notice differences, while 22 per cent reported not noticing differences, and 22 per cent reported that they didn't know.[12]

Respondents who identified differences in the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ users were asked to indicate some of the unique service needs of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. Responses given related to the discrimination that 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, particularly transgender individuals, face in the community in relation to housing, the lack of access to affirming health care, particularly among transgender individuals, and the safety needs of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. Examples of specific responses provided by organizations were:

- Trans women have higher levels of violence and discriminations. High level of distress.

- Additional challenges accessing primary health care, discrimination based on sexual orientation from landlords

- During COVID-19, much higher isolation/loss of meeting in community groups/locating supportive counselling and medical care/housing issues

- Additional barriers to housing, single rooms, safety considerations

- Need for population-based services and housing due to safety, provision of healthcare services specific to the needs of the population, transitioning supports for trans identified youth, etc.

- It is complicated by their HIV health which is still isolating and stigmatizing being 2SLGBTQ+ increases the service needs

- The 2SLGBTQ+ people we have worked with have had needs related to their gender transition process and some had needs related to how they could come out to family and their community.

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[12] At this time, we are unable to delve further into the circumstances that led to respondents selecting 'Don't know'.

- [Organization] was created to address the unique needs of 2SLGBTQI+ youth. There are several examples of unique needs such as practical needs associated with documentation, health needs when transitioning, experiencing of dysphoria affecting mental health and wellbeing, safer housing to avoid discrimination and bullying, dealing with family rejection, etc.;

- 2SLGBTQ+ communities have particular safety needs as well as occasionally different mental/physical health needs

- [There is] an extra layer of bias and barriers in securing housing with market landlords. Challenges with community connection for racialized communities where culture can impact connection

Organizational Policies and Procedures

Over two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) indicated that staff at their organization received training specific to 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

A little more than half of respondents shared that they have specific policies that protect the rights and safety of 2SLGBTQ+ service users and staff (52 per cent), with the remaining reporting that they do not have policies, or are unaware whether policies exist (48 per cent).

The same proportion of respondents selected that their organization collects data related to sexual orientation and gender identity (52 per cent). The remaining organizations either didn't collect data on these factors, didn't know, or preferred not to answer (48 per cent A smaller number of respondents did not know if their organization collected this information.

Interestingly, among these results, the proportion who respond 'Don't know' to the various questions indicate a certain lack of organizational promotion of 2SLGBTQ+ specific training, policies, and data collection if they do exist, and for those reporting 'No', a notable lack of those organizational supports.

Community Response to 2SLGBTQ+ Homelessness

Respondents were asked if their local community had a plan to end homelessness that explicitly addressed 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness. Responses were mixed, with 45 per cent of respondents indicating their community did address 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness, 35 per cent indicating that their community did not address 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness, and 20 per cent not knowing if their community addressed 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness in local plans.

Figure 6   **Service providers who reported the presence of community plans to address 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness**

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know
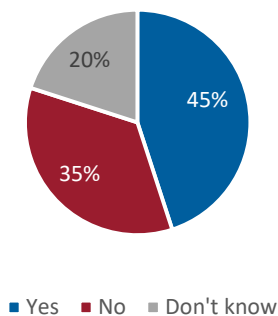
Other Thoughts

To close the survey, respondents were asked if they were other 2SLGBTQ+ specific supports that they would like to see in their organization. Responses included more affordable housing, more choice in housing options for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals including congregate settings, more welcoming spaces for transgender individuals, peer programming, and more education on the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals experiencing homelessness. Specific responses included:

- More welcoming of trans people in all shelters.

- More scattered-site housing options or buildings to accommodate the demand for housing

- More affordable housing and rent control

- Specialized education, training and resources

- More choice in housing options, preventive peer programing for queer youth and more funding for queer specific services

- Specific shelter offerings for the population as hidden homelessness numbers are likely higher than is actually represented in shelter data

- Drop-in based services, population based shelter services, increased healthcare supports.

- More housing opportunities

- Information education acceptance that we are a diverse population

- A shelter specifically for 2SLGBTQ+ people

- Stronger integration between service providers to support youth living homelessness towards independent living and well-being

- I would love to see a 2SLGBTQ+ specific service in [city] for adults (right now the only supports are for youth)

- Congregate site housing supports specifically for this community

Youth-Focused Organizations

Below we present some of the results from youth-specific service providers. Given that 2SLGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented among young people who experience homelessness, it is important to understand if their service needs are being addressed.

2SLGBTQ+ Service Offerings

Of the 13 youth-focused respondents who provided an answer, 77 per cent indicated that they do offer supports specific to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

The most common type of service offerings were outreach supports, case management, drop-in programming, and health care services. A smaller number of agencies offered emergency shelter and/or housing. The complete list of services is presented below. "Other" responses were services focused on harm reduction, peer support, mental health supports, and youth justice programming.

Respondents were also asked if 2SLGBTQ+ individuals were involved in service provision and development. Three-quarters of participants indicated that 2SLGBTQ+ staff were involved in providing services, and that 2SLGBTQ+ service users and staff were involved in the development of services (75 per cent).

Respondents were also asked if they noticed any differences in service needs among 2SLGBTQ+ service users compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ individuals. Just over two-thirds of the respondents identified that they did notice differences (67 per cent).

Organizational Policies and Procedures

Over 80 per cent of respondents providing youth programming indicated that staff at their organization received training specific to 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

A little more than half of respondents shared that they have specific policies that protect the rights and safety of 2SLGBTQ+ service users and staff (58 per cent).

Again, a little more than half of respondents selected that their organization collects data related to sexual orientation and gender identity (58 per cent).

DISCUSSION

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF HOUSING INSTABILITY AMONG 2SLGBTQ+ YOUTH?

The results presented here corroborate findings from the literature that 2SLGBTQ+ youth experience higher rates of homelessness in comparison to their non-2SLGBTQ+ counterparts, and that these rates are particularly high for transgender youth. For example, national PiT data indicated that approximately 21 per cent of youth experiencing homelessness in 2018 identified as 2SLGBTQ+, despite representing only 5 to 10 per cent of the overall youth population. The literature review also suggested that that 21 per cent figure may be underestimating the true homelessness rate of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, with sources reviewed ranging from 25 to 40 per cent of homeless youth (Gaetz et al., 2016; Abramovich, 2019). Meanwhile the National Youth Mentoring Survey indicated that 22.5 per cent of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents had experienced homelessness since turning 12, almost double the 11.9 per cent of non-2SLGBTQ+ youth who reported experiencing homelessness during the same age range.

While the actual prevalence of 2SLGBTQ+ homelessness and emergency shelter use likely varies across different communities in Canada, different aspects of sexual orientation and gender identity, and other identity factors (e.g., race, Indigenous status), these high rates demonstrate the need to address the particular drivers of 2SLGBTQ+ youth homelessness, and facilitate 2SLGBTQ+ youths' transition from homelessness towards more stable housing.

Outside of experiences of homelessness, as demonstrated through self-reported rates and PiT counts, the scope of more broad housing instability, including transitional and social housing use, rental discrimination, and home ownership rates, for 2SLGBTQ+ youth are limited.

HOW ARE THE HOUSING EXPERIENCES OF 2SLGBTQ+ YOUTH UNIQUE IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER GROUPS?

Findings from our study indicate that 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiences are unique in comparison to other groups.

2SLGBTQ+ youth in the National Youth Mentoring Survey reported lower rates of high school completion, mental wellbeing, social capital, and self worth. The literature review identified common experiences for 2SLGBTQ+ youth prior to experiencing homelessness, especially those related to involvement in child welfare systems, familial reject and instability, identity-based rejection, school-based bullying or harassment, physical or sexual abuse, and childhood trauma.

2SLGBTQ+ youth also experience particular barriers related to discrimination and violence across different life domains, including their families and the child welfare system, school systems, employment, the legal system, and the health system, in addition to their unique experiences in the housing system.

Housing specific challenges identified in both the literature review and the survey of service providers included increased experiences of discrimination (e.g., in emergency shelters, landlord discrimination), safety concerns, and specific health needs. The literature pointed to longer durations and an earlier age of homelessness for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, as well as experiences of stigma and homo-, bi-, or transphobic violence and discrimination on the streets, and in housing services. These experiences were particularly prominent for transgender youth, and youth of colour.

Results from the National Youth Mentoring Survey also demonstrate a high degree of overlap between 2SLGBTQ+ identity and other identities, including Indigenous identity, and disability status, indicating the importance of intersectionality within those experiences

WHAT SERVICES AND POLICIES ARE AVAILABLE THAT SUPPORT THE HOUSING NEEDS OF 2SLGBTQ+ YOUTH?

Service providers reported providing specific supports to the 2SLGBTQ+ community, the majority of which fall into the category of outreach, case management, and drop-in programming. The prevalence of drop-in programming specifically points to the importance of community building support for 2SLGBTQ+ communities. 2SLGBTQ+ specific housing supports were less commonly reported, and service providers identified a desire for more 2SLGBTQ+ specific housing.

However, almost one-third or organizations surveyed did not offer services specific to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, identifying a potential gap in program resources and training to address the specific needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, particularly given their over representation among homeless youth.

The literature review suggests that housing options should also include a diverse array of options, including people having choice in the type of housing that is offered. Currently, most housing options are transitional and not permanent. More housing programs, like Rain City's Housing First program, need to be implemented to provide longer-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, particularly youth. This is an opportunity to develop Housing First services that are tailored to the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Service providers also generally reported that their 2SLGBTQ+ specific supports tend to be provided by 2SLGBTQ+ staff, and that their development is informed by 2SLGBTQ+ staff and service users. Most service providers reported providing training specific to 2SLGBTQ+ community, and only approximately half reported having policies in place to protect the community, and collecting data on gender and/or sexual orientation. This suggests a gap related to community and service provider guidelines for 2SLGBTQ+ services, and points to the the ongoing data challenges related to collecting sexual orientation and gender information that is linked to program usage and outcomes.

The service provider survey was largely completed by urban and suburban respondents, and more work needs to be done to better understand the needs and experiences of programs and service users in rural communities.

Finally, the literature review identified particularly supportive services and policies related to safe, inclusive and affirming program offerings, both for housing as well as for other services, such as health care services and employment supports. There is also a need for services to be person-centred and driven by 2SLGBTQ+ youths' choices in regards to the types of housing and supports that they would like to receive.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

This report represents the culmination of Phase 1 activities of this project.

Phase 2 will focus on qualitative data collection with 2SLGBTQ+ youth with experiences of housing instability or access issues related to housing, as well as housing service providers working with 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Next steps for Phase 2 include the development of a sampling strategy, protocols, and a research ethics board application for qualitative activities, building on findings from Phase 1.

Based on Phase 1 results, and given that the Phase 2 research activities are still being finalized, likely avenues of inquiry include:

- Youth experiences of moving between different stages of the housing continuum, such as between transitional housing and independent housing, including service supports, gaps, and suggestions.

- 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.

- Service providers working with and supporting youth in aspects of housing beyond just homelessness, emergency shelters, and transitional housing, as well as organizations working in those areas, in order to generate a better understanding of how to support 2SLGBTQ+ youth across the housing continuum.

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